

Islamic-Iranian Studies and Studies Concerning Iran in the Islamic Period in German-speaking Countries: Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Austria, and Switzerland

This contribution is dedicated to the memory of Fritz Wolff, author of the famous and voluminous Glossary of Ferdawsi's Shāh-nāmeḥ. This glossary was offered by the National-Socialist government as the official German present to Iran on the occasion of the Ferdawsi Commemoration Festivities in the year 1935. Fritz Wolff, not having been allowed to participate in these festivities, died a few years later in a Nazi concentration camp.

In contrast to the situation in most countries, in German-speaking countries the study of Iran is not concentrated in one academic discipline. As a result, the attempt to "reconstruct" the history of Iranian Studies inevitably involves various disciplines. The individual results of these together form the kaleidoscopic spectrum of studies on Iranian themes in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

I. Iranian Linguistics and Philology

The only academic discipline in the German language area that includes the name "Iran" is the one called "Iranistics" (German "Iranistik"). For a long time this discipline was considered to be the exclusive domain of those languages and dialects that belong to the Iranian language group. Methodologically Iranistics focuses on Linguistics and Philology. Most, if not all, scholars in this field

would accept this definition of the discipline even today. Therefore, the English translation "Iranian Studies" for the word "Iranistik" as Iranistics is called in German usually leads to misunderstandings. A more correct rendering would be "Iranian Linguistics and Philology."

The modern study of Iran came into being in the early nineteenth century when the classical philologist Georg Friedrich Grotefend from the University of Göttingen deciphered the Old Persian cuneiform script on the basis of the inscriptions of Behistun near Kermanshah (Bakhtaran). Iranistics developed more or less by analogy with and alongside Indian philology. The great interest Iranian philology aroused in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries among German intellectuals was mostly due to its close relationship with Indo-European and Comparative Linguistics.

The question of the historical and linguistic origin of Germanic peoples, turned the similarities between Indo-European languages into an important field of study. In addition, efforts were made to find this communality of languages replicated in the form of an "Indo-European" communality of peoples, and to reconstruct on this basis the original people of so-called Aryans. In the nineteenth century these efforts became crystallized in a widespread attempt by German nationalists to find a prehistoric foundation for their arguments. Unlike the situation in early colonial powers like France and England, in Germany the inspiration for the general interest in Iranian philology did not primarily stem from motives of economics and direct domination. Rather, the political motivation for the interest in Iranian themes had an ideological and idealist base: the exploration of Iranian philology was, at least sometimes, seen as a contribution to the quest for the "Aryan" roots of the German people.

It is particularly, though not exclusively, in Germany that this "Aryan" element has played an important role. There it came to exist side by side with the ideal, characteristic of all European bourgeois until well into the twentieth century, to engage in "pure" scholarship beyond mundane and trivial utilitarian considerations. A general and by no means unpolitical interest in the "Aryan" roots of the Germans created a fertile climate for a healthy growth of the discipline of Iranian philology in Germany. Due to the antiquarian, exclusively philological orientation of this field, Iran scholars never felt politically involved. Even when their research themes concerned modern languages and dialects, these were treated as equivalents of Old Persian and Avesta and not as living languages. This attitude

may be called typical and continues to characterize many Iran scholars until the present. This situation also explains the fact that many who specialize in Iranian languages and philology in the German Federal Republic and Austria are still not affiliated with university departments of Iranian studies, but work in departments of Indo-European studies. They are nevertheless "real" Iran scholars as the careers of Manfred Mayrhofer in Vienna, Karl Hofmann in Erlangen, Helmut Humbach in Mainz, Bernfield Schlerath in West Berlin and Rudiger Schmitt in Saarbrücken demonstrate.

The Iranistics tradition continues in the German Democratic Republic as well. Its representatives there are mostly students of the late master of Iranian philology Heinrich Junker. The discipline is currently attached to the Humboldt University in East Berlin, where it is taught by Manfred Lorenz. The famous Iranian author Bozorg Alavi was for many years active in the same department. In contrast to the situation in West Germany, however, the philological research of Iran scholars at the Humboldt University focuses on the present, and is above all practically oriented. This reflects the specific conception of science and scholarship in the German Democratic Republic, which is to a considerable degree distinguishable from the tradition described above. Their concentration is on questions of lexicography, as illustrated in the Persian-German dictionary of Junger and Alavi; and on grammar, as reflected in the Persian textbook of Alavi and Lorenz and the Pushtu grammar of Lorenz. Another focus is Persian literature. This has resulted in a great number of translations into German. Particularly noteworthy in this respect is Bozorg Alavi's *History and Development of Modern Persian Literature* (Alavi, 1964). This work, which after two decades continues to be the most comprehensive and detailed presentation of modern Persian literature, still awaits an English translation. A third focus is research on modern Iranian languages in the Soviet Union such as Ossetic and Tajik.

A second center of Iranian philology in the traditional sense is the Iranian Philology Department of the Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic, which operates under the directorship of Werner Sundermann. This department concentrates its research on the so-called "Turfan texts," the archives of the German expeditions to Turfan in Central Asia before the First World War. These archives are mostly part located in East Berlin.

West Germany currently has three university departments of Iranistics: Hamburg, Göttingen, and West Berlin. Iranian philology, as such, is taught in Hamburg by Ronald Emmerick, whose

specialty is Middle Iranian languages, above all Kurdish and Pushtu; and in Berlin by Günter Gobrecht, whose research concentrates on Old, Middle, and Modern Iranian languages, with an additional focus on Kurdish.

Notwithstanding these traditions, considerable change has taken place in the German conception of Iranian Studies in the course of the twentieth century. Figures who come to mind in this context, like Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Wolfgang Lentz and Walther Hinz, will be discussed below.

II. Iranian Studies as Part of the Discipline "Islamology" (Islamwissenschaft) and the Problem of Oriental Studies.

In the universities of the German-speaking world it was customary during the nineteenth century to group the philological study of the non-European areas (Africa and Asia) under the heading "Oriental Studies." The representatives of this field generically called themselves "Orientalists." The "Iranists" were no exception to this rule. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, various subfields became clearly defined. Thus, Iranian philology emerged as one of a series of independent research fields, including Indology, Turcology, Semitic, and Arabic philology. The term "Oriental Studies" (*Orientalistik*) continues to exist in common parlance to this day. Today, however, someone in the German-speaking world who calls himself an Orientalist always means that he studies non-European languages, and especially those of Asia and North Africa.

Islamology as a discipline originated in the context of Orientalism but clearly combined philological elements with other themes and methods. This field brought together the philological treatment of Arabic, Persian and Turkish, and questions of a religious nature about Islam, as well as about the history and literature of the Islamic Middle East. The twentieth century saw an expansion in the methodology of research on Islam through the disciplines of political science, history, and cultural and social anthropology. Individual universities witnessed the rise of widely divergent approaches and concepts within the field of Islamic Studies. This overall tendency is increasingly marked by an attempt to overcome the philological Orientalist legacy in the self-definition of the field.

In Germany the study of Islam has always had an "Arabocentric" overtone. This is in contrast to the orientation that

has been more prevalent in Austria. The centuries-long confrontation between the Habsburgs and the Ottoman Empire caused a number of nineteenth and twentieth century Austrian Orientalists to concentrate on Turkish rather than on Arabic. This led to them to "discover" Persian as the most important cultural language of the Ottoman Empire. The prominent scholar Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall founded, on the basis of this interest, a scholarly tradition which subsequently spread to Germany as well.

This tradition is marked by a lively interest in medieval and modern history, as well as in the literature of the Islamic Near East, with a focus on Turkish with Persian in second position. Arabic obviously remained crucial and could not be neglected. Similarly, the Islamic religion in this approach was seen as empirically important, but less so as a discrete topic of research. Nevertheless, the representatives of this orientation and their successors saw themselves above all as Islamologists and "Orientalists," and to some extent as scholars engaged in "applied Oriental philology." Until recently the history and literature of Islamic Iran was seldom the object of research for professional historians and scholars of literature. This situation has advantages as well as drawbacks. Among the former is the fact that scholars traditionally have an excellent knowledge of the languages and original sources of the area they study. The drawback is that the same scholars tend to familiarize themselves either late, insufficiently, or perhaps not at all, with the theoretical developments and issues in the general fields of history or literature. On the other hand, the lack of attention by scholars trained in history or literature continues to leave this kind of scholarship, by and large, as the only approach to the study of Islamic-Iranian history and literature. Only in the German Democratic Republic has this problem been partially overcome. There Iranian literature is a topic for Iran scholars. Iranian history, however, which should be a field for general historians, does not at present receive a great deal of attention.

This lack of attention to Iran and Islam does not hold for other disciplines, such as geography, political science, cultural and social anthropology, archaeology and art history. Because of this division of labor, however, it is hard to find researchers in these fields whose linguistic abilities match those of the Islamologists.

A further special feature--which has both negative and positive sides--is that many Islamologists who have contributed to research on Iran have not concentrated exclusively on Iranian issues. For a long time this situation led to an emphasis on Arab themes at the

expense of Iranian ones. In the meantime, the study of the language, history, and culture of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey has evolved into an autonomous field in the German-speaking world. This new field of Ottoman Studies is the result of the cooperation of Turcologists and Islamologists interested in Ottoman issues. A similar development has developed in the case of Islamic-Iranian Studies. However, the results of this combination have thus far not been as convincing as in the Turkish case.

As a result of all this, the languages, history and culture of Islamic Iran lack a clear disciplinary foundation. They have always been and still are treated in the context of Iranian philological studies or, more frequently, of scholarship on Islam, and often receive marginal and optional attention. The development of Iranian studies since 1979 illustrates this situation. Communication problems with Iranian scholars and institutions after the revolution have caused many Islamologists who were formerly interested in Iran to divert their attention to Arab topics, just as some Iranists have switched from contemporary Iranian topics to problems of ancient history.

III. Languages, History, and Culture of Islamic Iran as a Topic of Research Scholars of Islam and Iran

The origins of the traditionally strong German tendency to focus on languages, history and culture within Islamic and Iranian studies go back to the first half of this century. In the case of Iranian philology the three scholars who deserve mention are Hans Heinrich Schaeder, Wolfgang Lentz, and Walther Hinz. Schaeder was professor of Iranistics in Berlin before the Second World War, and later went to Göttingen. Hinz was professor of Iranistics in Göttingen until the 1970s, and Lentz for many years occupied the same position at the University of Hamburg.

To all three the traditional confinement of Iranistics to pure philology seemed too narrow already in the early 1930s or even before. Schaeder devoted his research to problems of universal history and comparative civilization and searched for the Iranian contribution to the development of human civilization. It is worth noting that it was precisely through this approach that the above mentioned nineteenth century themes, and in particular the quest for the origins of "Aryanism," reemerged in new garb. This inevitably brought Schaeder close to the cultural notions of the National-Socialist ideology.

Wolfgang Lentz was above all concerned with the enrichment of Iranian philology through methods and questions pertaining to the social and ethnographic sciences. For him the real aim of Iranistics was the study of the socio-cultural preconditions of Iranian peoples. In his eyes, studying these would create a new meaning for a philology which he no longer saw as an ultimate goal but rather as a tool.

With his book *Iran's Emergence as a Nation-State in the Fifteenth Century* in 1936, Walther Hinz provided a breakthrough in the historical study of late medieval Iran in Germany. This was the first time he had embarked on a research theme that had originated somewhere else--in Russia. The development of a concentration on Iran within the discipline of history in Czarist Russia was undoubtedly related to that empire's strong colonial interests in Central Asia and Iran. Equal weight has to be given, however, to the specific development and nature of the fascination it aroused among Russian orientalists. With scholars like Khanykov, Dorn, and, above all, Vladimir Bartol'd (Wilhelm Barthold), a leading school of Central Asian and Iranian historical studies emerged within Russian scholarship on Islam. It was above all Vladimir Minorsky who helped transmit the tradition of this school to France and the Anglophone realm.

In Germany it was Walther Hinz whose historical research on medieval and early modern Iran established a long-term tradition that included both the fields of Iranistics and Islamology. Two scholars who worked from Hinz from the very beginning were Hans Robert Roemer and Bertold Spuler. Roemer later was professor of Islam at the University of Freiburg for many years, while Spuler occupied the same chair in Hamburg. Spuler's specific Iranian interests centered on the time from the early Islamic period to the end of the Mongol period. Roemer rather specialized, like Hinz, on post-Mongol dynasties like the Timurids and Turkmens down to the fall of the Safavids in the early eighteenth century.

These activities turned premodern Iranian history into a respected and relatively widely studied field of research at German universities after the Second World War. None of the three scholars mentioned intended to transform the study of the Islamic era in Iranian history into an autonomous discipline, as was to be the case with Ottoman studies. While Hinz emphasized the historical perspective as a legitimate broadening of the field of Iranian studies, Spuler and Roemer conceived of the same approach as an extension of Islamology. None of the three ever exclusively concentrated on

their common theme. Hinz became increasingly interested in ancient Iranian themes after 1960 and largely gave up his medieval and pre-modern studies. Since that time, his interests have been increasingly directed toward the civilization and languages of the Achaemenids and of ancient Elam.

Roemer distinguished himself, aside from his work on Iranian history, by extensive research on late medieval Egypt, particularly the Mamluk period. Bertold Spuler, on the other hand, never ceased to link his Iranian interests to a pronounced affinity with Islamic religious history and Turcology. Both he and Roemer always took great care to transmit and present the entire field of Islamology in their research as well as their teaching. Their multi-faceted approach, which they also transmitted to their students, has its advantages. That it has its shadow side as well is illustrated by the fact that their "school," which has been in existence for some forty years now, has not found disciplinary recognition either in Islamology or in the field of Iranistics. This was demonstrated in the choice of their academic successors: Hinz was succeeded in Göttingen by an outstanding philological "Iranist" with strong ties to classical Iranian philology, while Roemer and Spuler passed their chairs to eminent representatives of Islamology. None of these, however, concentrates on the languages, history and culture of Islamic Iran.

Currently there are only two German universities with a more or less institutionalized research concentration on Iranian history, culture and society in the Islamic period. These are Tübingen, with Heinz Gaube, and West Berlin, led by the present author. Efforts continue to have Iranian Studies finally recognized and institutionalized as a full-fledged academic field within Iranistics.

IV. The "Historical School" of Walther Hinz, Hans Robert Roemer, and Bertold Spuler

Since 1945 a number of scholars have received their academic education in the tradition of the three above-mentioned masters. Here attention will only be given to those among their students who felt or still feel an affinity with the previously described historical approach, as well as to those scholars who, though not their immediate students, were heavily influenced by them. Here, too, it should be noted that many of these have not limited themselves to the topic of historical Iran but have frequently turned to other fields, such as Iranian philology, Islam, or even Turcology.

The history of facts and events (*histoire des évènements*) has dominated the field from the beginning and still prevails. This dominance is warranted in the sense that there continue to be great factual gaps in historical research on Iran. In addition to Hinz's above-mentioned work on Iranian history prior to the Safavid's taking power, mention should be made of Spuler's monumental oeuvre on Iran in the early Islamic period and under the Mongols, and of Roemer's presentation of Iran's history from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

A particular focus of this school is on institutional history. The results of this orientation certainly form the most valuable collective contribution of German Iran specialists to the study of medieval and early-modern Iranian history.

Following the example of Minorsky's edition and English translation of the *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk*, Walther Hinz published a manual of taxation from the 1363 (Hinz, 1952). Some of Hinz's students wrote their dissertations on other accounting manuals from the later Middle Ages (Nejat Göyünç, 1962; Mirkamal Nabipour, 1973). Hans Robert Roemer's interest at first lay in the so-called *insha* (style) literature. In addition to his own publications, for example of state correspondence from the Timurid period (1952), he has inspired various students and friends to do similar work. Examples are Heribert Horst's work on administration under the Seljuks and Khwarezmshahs (1964) and Gottfried Herrmann's edition and German translation of Khwandamir's *Nāmeḥ-ye Nāmī* (1968), which began as a dissertation under Hinz's supervision.

One of Roemer's particular interests was the editing of historical documents, that is, Persian diplomatic and paleographic works (Roemer, 1954 and 1957). In the last thirty years much work has been done in Germany on Persian historical documents and the scholars involved were in many cases influenced by Hinz, Roemer, and Spuler. A detailed overview of these studies on diplomatics can be found in the bibliography of a collection of Persian *farmāns* by the present author (Fragner, 1980). Mention should also be made here of the study of Islamic chancelleries by Heribert Busse (1959), as well as of the same author's important essay on the study of Persian documents (Busse, 1961), and his entry "Diplomatic" in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition. Busse's first two works deserve to be made available to international Iran scholarship through translations. Among more recent work mention should be made of Renate Schimkoreit's *Registers of Safavid Farmans* (Schimkoreit, 1982) and Monika Gronke's study on private

documents from pre-Mongol Ardabil (Gronke, 1985). Gottfried Herrmann in Göttingen has done valuable work on diplomatics in the Mongol period (Fragner, 1980; Herrmann, 1968). Together with Iranian and Soviet scholars, German historians have perhaps made the most important contribution in the last forty years to the study of Persian legal documents and diplomatics.

Aside from numerous monographs, German scholars have also published important analyses and synthetic studies on institutional history, especially concerning Safavid history. Two works by Klaus-Michael Röhrborn, a student of Spuler, are particularly noteworthy in this respect (Röhrborn 1966 and 1977). Both are among the best works published on the Safavids in the last few decades.

The transition from institutional history to socioeconomic history is fluid. In the latter field Walther Hinz's work broke new ground in Germany (Hinz, 1949, 1950, 1952). Paul Luft, one of Hinz's students, now at the University of Durham, England, shows Hinz's inspiration in his dissertation on Iran under Shah Abbas II (Luft, 1968). An extraordinary work is the masterful study of Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche on the social history of Isfahan in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Quiring-Zoche, 1980). Also very interesting is Heinz Georg Migeod's still unpublished dissertation on the structure of Iranian society in the second half of the nineteenth century (Migeod, 1956). Migeod is another of Walther Hinz's students. In this context the present author's contribution to the sixth volume of *The Cambridge History of Iran* should also be noted (Fragner, 1986).

Another historical field that has received much attention is the edition and translation (mostly into German) of important narrative sources, such as chronicles. This was one of Roemer's particular fields of attention. A number of dissertations devoted to this area have been written under his supervision. Most of these have been published by Klaus Schwarz publishing company (formerly in Freiburg, currently in Berlin). The most recent of these works is an excellent German translation and analysis of the *Rostam al-Tavārikh* of Mohammad Hashem Asef from the early nineteenth century (Birgitt Hoffmann, 1986). Heribert Busse has translated the important Qajar text *Fārsnāmeḥ-ye Nāserī* into English (Busse, 1972).

The Qajar period has been studied as well in recent years. Migeod (1956), Busse (1972) and Hoffmann (1986) have already

been mentioned. Heribert Busse deserves much credit for developments in this field (see Busse, 1973). His student Kamran Ekbal combined an interest in the study of legal documents with the question of early British penetration in Iran (Ekbal, 1977). Ekbal, who currently teaches in Bochum, has continued to work on the nineteenth century. The present author, finally, has dealt with a special genre in nineteenth century Iranian history in his *Persian Memoir Literature as a Source for Modern Iranian History* (Fragner, 1979).

As was noted above in a different context, despite the success of the Hinz-Roemer-Spuler school, many scholars of Iranian history have turned their backs to this subject. Busse now concentrates on the Arab world; as is partly true for Horst and Niewohner. Erika Glassen has switched to comparative literature while Röhrborn nowadays deals mainly with Turcology from a philological perspective. Iranian history has not succeeded in holding these people's research interests.

There are, however, a few German-speaking historians of Iran who fall outside the above-mentioned framework. A notable example is the originally Czechoslovakian Austrian Karl Jahn who for many years taught at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. His life work was devoted to Iran in the Ilkhanid period, and above all to Rashid ad-Din Fazlallah, the historiographer and vizir of the early fourteenth century Mongol rulers. It is thanks to Karl Jahn's indefatigable labor that we possess an edition and German translation of the entire historiographical work of this extraordinary historical figure.

Herbert W. Duda, who for years was professor of Turcology and Islam at the University of Vienna, deserves mention in this context as well. Aside from his mostly Ottoman interests, he did extensive research on the Persian historiography of the Seljuks in Anatolia. The most visible result of this research is the German translation of what is perhaps the most important Rum-Seljukid chronicle, the *Al-awāmir al-'alā'īya fī al-umūr al-'alā'īya* of Ibn Bibi (Duda, 1959). The cultural-historical achievements of Iranian scholars in Tübingen will be discussed below.

V. Trends in Research on the Civilization of Iran as Part of Islamology

Literature

One of the great figures of twentieth century German Islamic scholarship was Helmut Ritter. He considered philology and a scientific analysis of Islam to be preconditions for an understanding of traditional Islamic culture. His research included much more than just Iranian or Persian themes. When he did focus on Iran, he dealt primarily with the intersection of literature and Islam, or, more precisely, of poetry and Sufism. His approach toward Persian poetry and (mainly Persian) Sufism became exemplary for later generations of German-speaking Islam scholars and not just for his students. We are indebted to him for a magnificent study of imagery in the poetry of Nezami (Ritter, 1927), as well as for the monumental study *The Ocean of the Soul*, an eminent work on the literary and religious expressions of the Sufi circles around Farid ud-Din Attar (Ritter, 1955).

Similar themes are still being explored today by the brilliant Swiss Islamologist Fritz Meier, who teaches at Basel. Among his masterful writings is an analysis of the quatrains transmitted through popular literature by the libertarian medieval woman poet Mahsati. Meier not only examines this kind of poetry on its literary merits, but also for the way it reflects material culture and expresses the spiritual world of the anonymous members of medieval Iranian urban society (Meier, 1963). Among the most impressive in scholarship and esthetically most enjoyable works on Iran is certainly Meier's historical-biographical study on the mystic Abu Sa'id b. Abi al-Khair from Khorasan (Meier, 1976). It is an indispensable work for everyone who deals with Sufism.

Persian poetry and mysticism similarly occupy a central place in the work of the prominent German Islamic scholar Annemarie Schimmel. Many of her writings are in English and are well known in the English-speaking world. One of her special merits is the attention she has given in her work to the often neglected Indian component in Persian literature. A good example is her latest publication (Schimmel, 1984). Among scholars of Persian literature she has received the greatest publicity in non-academic West German intellectual circles.

The Austrian Wilhelm Heinz, who teaches at the University of Würzburg, has authored a pioneering study on the "Indian style"

(*sabk-e hendi*) of Indo-Persian poetry, a literary style so difficult that it is not readily accessible to a non-native speaking audience (Heinz, 1973). The most recent work on classical Persian poetry is by Shams Anwari-Alhosayni (1986), who examines the genre of literary riddles in classical literature.

Johann Christoph Bürgel, a German scholar affiliated at present with the University of Zürich, bridges classical and modern literature with his literary analyses and translations. The same is true of the late Rudolf Gelpke, the Swiss scholar who during his lifetime was perhaps more familiar with modern Persian literature than anyone else in the German-speaking world. Gelpke was a student of Fritz Meier. Another specialist in modern Persian literature who deserves mention is Eberhard Krüger from Munich. His most outstanding work is an analysis of the oeuvre of Sadeq Hedayat (Krüger, 1977).

Gottfried Herrmann from Göttingen has also dealt with modern Persian prose. He has edited, with Faramarz Behzad, a specialist in German literature at the University of Tehran, an anthology of twentieth century Persian short stories in German translation (Behzad-Bürgel-Herrmann, 1978).

Persian literature in German translation comes mostly from the pen of academics whose field is philology. This is especially true of the Iran scholars from the German Democratic Republic, who rightfully regard this as an important public task for academic specialists. Examples are Manfred Lorenz and Werner Sundermann; and reference has already been made to the pioneering quality of the history of modern Persian literature by Bozorg Alavi, who lives in East Berlin (Alavi, 1964).

Lastly, the field of so-called popular literature ought to be mentioned. German scholarly contributions to this field are scattered and sometimes hard to find. Two works by young scholars, Roxane Haag-Higuchi (1984) and Ulrich Marzolph (1984), analyze Persian folk tales. The study of the Austrian Turcologist Ingeborg Thalhammer (now Baldauf), who is currently at Bamberg, on Uzbek popular songs from northern Afghanistan is also noteworthy in this respect because the Uzbeks in question form a bilingual--Uzbek-Persian--group (Thalhammer, 1984).

Cultural-Historical Iranian Research in Tübingen, including the "Tübingen Atlas of the Near East"

An unusual area of research which has its roots in the two traditional fields of Iranian philology and Islamology is represented by Heinz Gaube at the Oriental Seminar of the University of Tübingen. Gaube creatively combines the methodology of Iranian and Arabic philology with techniques from archaeology and geography. This leads to an interesting approach toward questions of the history of settlement and building on the Iranian plateau. The results of this research are reflected in a long-term study on the history of settlement and communications in the southern Iranian province of Arrajan/Kughiluyeh from the Arab invasion to the end of the Safavids (Gaube, 1973); an English language study of the structural history of traditional city building entitled *Iranian Cities* (Gaube, 1979); and an analysis of the bazaar of Isfahan, done in collaboration with the geographer Eugen Wirth (Gaube and Wirth, 1978).

The last-mentioned work appeared in the context of the interdisciplinary project called "Tübingen Atlas of the Near East." Aside from the great number of geographical maps on historical, social, and cultural themes, a few other publications related to this project must be mentioned here. One is by the Islamologist Heinz Halm, who has written a detailed study on the spread of the Shafi'i legal school in medieval Iran (Halm, 1974). Dorothea Krawulsky has published two important contributions in the field of historical geography, an historical-geographical survey of thirteenth and fourteenth century Ilkhanid Iran (Krawulsky, 1978), and a philological and content analysis of the description of the province of Khorasan by the Timurid geographer Hafez-e Abru (Krawulsky, 1984).

Religion and the History of Science

From the foregoing discussion it should be clear that research on religious issues in Iran more often than not takes place in conjunction with the investigation of literary and historical problems. Currently the most prominent German scholar of Iranian mysticism is the historian of religion and student of Fritz Meier, Richard Gramlich. He is author of a three-volume study entitled *The Shi'i Dervish Orders of Iran*, a work that ought to be part of every serious Iran library (Gramlich, 1965, 1976, 1981). This is, in fact, a huge encyclopedia of Sufism from the perspective of contemporary social and spiritual life in Iran. Gramlich is one of the

more productive Islamologists in this field. His other writings concentrate less on Iran, however. For years the theology of the Twelver Shi'a has been the object of study for Abdoljavad Falaturi, who is professor of Islam at the University of Cologne. In this work, too, Iran is not always the main object of research. Currently, Falaturi is working on an analysis of the religious element in post-revolutionary Iranian textbooks.

The work on the '*uṣūl al-fiqh* in Twelver Shi'i jurisprudence by Harald Löschner, a law specialist from Erlangen, falls outside the scope of this discussion but should not be left unmentioned (Löschner, 1970). The majority of today's German Islam specialists do not accord a central place to the Twelver Shi'a while professional legal scholars do not usually deal with Islamic problems at all.

Iranian religious history for the Safavid period was discussed in section IV. The Islamic Revolution and its aftermath, on the other hand, has received surprisingly little attention, aside from a series of scholarly essays (see Ende, 1980; Fragner, 1983; Roemer, 1982). Two recent M.A. theses should therefore be mentioned as welcome additions to this field. One was submitted in the field of Islamology and the other in Iranian philology. The first is Jürgen Jakobis's not yet published work on the historical conception of the late revolutionary theologian Motahhari. The second is a study by Fatemeh Samazadeh on the "Islamization" of post-revolutionary Iranian schoolbooks and curricula (Samazadeh, 1986). Noteworthy, in addition, is the first German Islamological dissertation on the Islamic Republic of Iran, a study of Sylvia Tellenbach on the Iranian constitution of 1979 (Tellenbach, 1985). She wrote this dissertation in Freiburg under the supervision of Roemer.

Non-Islamic religious movements and communities in modern Iranian history have been dealt with only sparingly by scholars of Iran and Islam. The Iran scholar Farhad Sobhani at the Free University of Berlin is exceptional in including the Babi and Baha'i faiths in his research and teaching. Other religious communities, such as the Yazidis and the Ahl-e Haqq, have occasionally been the object of social and anthropological research. The modern and contemporary Zoroastrian community has thus far scarcely been examined in Germany. On rare occasions Iranian Christians form the topic of research in the context of Semitic studies, as is also the case with the studies on the Mandaeans and their language by Rudolf Macuch, a Semitist from Berlin (Macuch, 1976). The present author is not aware of any German material on Iranian Jews in modern contemporary times.

VI. Political Science and Contemporary History

In the field of political science at German-language universities, the Near and Middle East has been discovered in the last twenty years as an increasingly important area of investigation. Here, however, Iranian themes take a position far behind the Arab world, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the Turkish Republic. This situation is clearly incongruous since economic relations between the German Federal Republic and Iran have been important both before and since the Islamic revolution. West German intellectuals, in turn, have been critically interested in Iran ever since the mid-1960s. Their interest mostly concerns political solidarity with oppositional currents in Iran. This has led to a great number of publications on the political situation in the country directed to a larger public audience. Much of this work was and is of a high level and in many cases written by academically trained political scientists. The number of thorough research publications in this field has remained limited, however. Most of the work in question, however high its quality, is journalistic in orientation. Despite a grey area in which the boundaries between scholarly and journalistic literature become fuzzy, the two categories proceed from different assumptions. This difference is particularly strong given the academic tradition in German-speaking countries. The area between political science and more general publications includes books like *Iran* by Ulrich Gehrke and Harald Mihnert (1975) and Friedrich Kochwasser's *Iran and Us* (1961). The German critical intellectual scene of the late 1960s and 1970s was strongly influenced by a book by the political scientist Bahman Nirumand from West Berlin, intitled *Iran* (1967). This book, more than any other, affected the New Left in Germany in their thinking about the problems of the Third World. Nirumand has recently published a book on the effects of the revolution in Iran (Nirumand, 1986).

Space does not permit a comprehensive overview of the sometimes very interesting German literature on the Islamic revolution and the Islamic Republic. The just published work *Iran-Iraq: 'Until the Godless are Annihilated'* may be called representative of this genre (Malanowski-Stern, 1987).

In the domain of academically researched material the harvest is much more meagre. No political science research institute has an institutionalized concentration on Iran. Where the Middle East, as such, does figure as a focal point, for example, in the Federal Republic in Erlangen, West Berlin, and the Arnold-Bergstraesser

Institute in Freiburg, interest centers on the Arab countries and Turkey.

The same can be said about the German Democratic Republic. There, and especially in Leipzig, interdisciplinary concentration on the Middle East is more developed than in other German-speaking countries. Two important works in the last few years are the fruit of that approach. One is the first and as yet only German translation of Khomaini's *Hokūmat-e Eslāmi*, (Itscherenska-Hassan, 1983).

The other is a detailed description and analysis of the revolution and its consequences in Iran, collectively authored in Leipzig (Ebert-Fürtig-Müller, 1987). Not surprisingly, the authors of this important book, which has appeared in West Germany as well, follow the methodology and perspective generally employed in the Marxist-Leninist social sciences. But this is precisely what contributes to the study's relevance. West German political science has as yet not produced anything comparable in terms of research.

In 1979 and 1980 the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which has close ties with the German Social-Democratic party, organized two international conferences on the Islamic revolution. The proceedings have been published in a book entitled *Iran in Crisis* (Bonn, 1980). A 1984 conference organized by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation dealt with questions concerning the Iran-Iraq war. Other important publications on Iran and Afghanistan are those that have appeared from the Berlin Institute for Comparative Social Research. Particularly noteworthy in this respect are two publications with contributions of high quality, edited and published without organizational support by Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer and Kurt Greussing, two young committed scholars from West Berlin (Greussing-Grevemeyer, 1980; Greussing, 1981). The contributions to the second volume by Anglophone authors have also appeared in English (see Nikki R. Keddie, ed., *Religion and Politics in Iran* (New Haven, 1983). Unfortunately, the German articles have not been made accessible to an English-reading audience.

Overall over the past twenty or thirty years, political scientists have paid little attention to Iran since the First World War. However, the historian and political scientist Ahmad Mahrads has done systematic research. Above all he has examined German-Iranian relations in the Reza Shah period on the basis of archival material (Mahrads, 1976, 1977, 1985). Other publications have appeared rather fortuitously, in the sense that they were the outcome

of dissertations and not the fruit of planned research projects (see, for example, Ravasani, n.d.; and Zürrer, 1978).

The only scholarly institute that deals with present-day Iran, albeit without any university ties, is the German Orient Institute in Hamburg under the energetic directorship of Udo Steinbach. *Orient*, the institute's quarterly journal, regularly includes articles on Iran. This journal, moreover, offers the best cross-section of current German research on contemporary Middle Eastern political questions (see Ende-Steinbach, 1984).

VII. The Social Sciences and Cultural and Social Anthropology

The lack of direction in Iran-related political science research holds even more for social science research in the German-speaking world. Research on Iranian topics does not take place in an organizational, or even a discursive framework, but rather proceed haphazardly and on a purely individual basis. Here, too, it should be noted that most German sociologist and anthropologists interested in the Middle East deal primarily with the Arab world and Turkey. An exceptional case is the concentration on Afghanistan, which in a wider sense is an "Iranian" focus, to be discussed in section IX.

In the 1970s, the sociological discourse of Iranian and Turkish intellectuals stimulated a relatively lively interest in pre-modern social formations among German social anthropologists working on the Middle East. An indication of this trend was the popularity of Maxime Rodinson's *Islam and Capitalism* in sociological seminars at German universities. In addition, there was the resonance of the so-called "feudalism debate" among international and German historians. All of this led to a debate over the Marxian notion of the "Asiatic mode of production" and Wittfogel's concept of "Oriental despotism." As far as Iranian society was concerned, this discussion mostly consisted of students, usually Iranian, submitting papers and presentations to sociology seminars. The main obstacle for a broadening and deepening of this discussion in the Iranian case was an almost total lack of communication between the discourse of the above-mentioned Iran scholars of the Hinz-Roemer-Spuler type and these historically interested social scientists.

Nevertheless, the sociology dissertation of Susan Sarkhosh from Münster attempts to analyze nineteenth-century Iranian society on the basis of the "Asiatic mode of production" concept (Sarkhosh, 1975). The same question of pre-modern social formations was the theme of a volume edited by Georg Stauth, a sociologist from

Bielefeld (Stauth, 1980). Stauth, however, criticized the "Asiatic mode of production" and the "Oriental despotism" concepts. Forthcoming is a study by Kurt Greussing on authority, economy, and segmentary society in the social history of Iran. The volumes by Greussing and Grevemeyer mentioned in section VI (1980, 1981) should be mentioned in this connection, too. It is striking that none of the German Iran historians from the fields of Islamology and Iranistics has as yet taken a position on premodern social structures in Iran. The present author is probably the only exception, with a presentation on questions of pre-modern social structures in Iranian history delivered at a conference in Vienna in 1979 (Fragner, 1984).

Cultural anthropology occasionally deals with Iranian topics. Its marked preference for tribes and minorities, however, does not lessen the randomness in choice of topics, which is even greater than in the case of political and social research.

VIII. Geography

If the social sciences in German-speaking countries hardly function as the galvanizing force for academic research on Iran, this is even more true in the case of geography, and particularly cultural geography. A great deal of material that in other countries would be produced by social anthropologists comes under these headings in West Germany and Austria.

Iran has been a favorite research ground for German geography for many decades. The most prominent figure in this respect is certainly Eckart Ehlers, a geographer specializing in Iran who was long active at the University of Marburg before accepting a position at the University of Bonn.

An enumeration of Ehlers' works on Iran would take too much space. Besides, he has lightened our task by publishing a complete annotated bibliography of German geographical research on Iran that includes his own work (Ehlers, 1980a, in German and English). One of Ehlers' works that cannot be left unmentioned, however, is his *Iran: Principal Aspects of its Geography* (1980b). This work is without a doubt the best comprehensive overview of Iran from a geographical point of view, and should be a reference work for all who deal with cultural and social aspects of Iran. It is definitely a book to be translated into English and Persian.

Ehler's research deals primarily with urban-rural relations and local and regional networks and connections in Iran. These themes

have become the object of investigation for many of his students as well. The published series founded by him under the title *Marburg Geographical Studies* testifies to that by including a great number of studies on Iran. His circle of students and associates is truly international as it includes scholars like Michael Bonine at the University of Arizona and Mostafa Momeni at the Melli University in Tehran. The research done by the "Ehlers School" is marked by an intensive fieldwork component. Ehlers has a colleague in Günther Schweizer, a geographer who used to work at Tübingen and who resembles Ehlers in his concentration on Iran.

Another center for geographical research on the Middle East is the University of Erlangen, even though there Iran is less central than it is for Ehlers and Schweizer. While at Erlangen Wolfdieter Hütteroth mainly focuses on modern and Ottoman Anatolia, Syria, and Palestine, and Günther Meyer concentrates on nomadic and sedentary interaction in the Fertile Crescent, Eugen Wirth more frequently works on Iran. In addition to the already mentioned book on the bazaar of Isfahan, which he coauthored with Henz Gaube, Wirth stands out for creative work on general topics that are of interest to the Iran scholar. Examples are two seminal articles he wrote on the Islamic city and on the structure of the bazaar (Wirth, 1974, 1974-75).

Except in the German Democratic Republic, most geographers in the German-speaking world who work on the Middle East operate with the notion of "rent capitalism," using it either positively or critically. This concept, which is supposed to be characteristic of pre-modern Middle Eastern economies into the modern age, was originally developed as a theory around 1950 by Austrian geographer Hans Bobek. Bobek was one of the Viennese geographers who already before World War II had a lively interest in Iran. Over time, he and others like Stratil-Sauer, developed a detailed net of infrastructures for fieldwork that in recent decades has benefited both their own research and that of their students. The theory of "rent capitalism" was mainly the result of Bobek's years of field work in Iran (Bobek, 1959, 1974). Among his students and younger colleagues in Austria and West Germany he was able, through his elaboration of the theory of "rent capitalism," to arouse interest in Iran as a country. This theory, which offered a socio-economic model to explain underdevelopment in the Third World, finally received international recognition in countries like the United States and France, where it has also been criticized. Among Bobek's students in the last twenty years are a number of committed Iran scholars who do interesting research on social and geographic

topics. Examples are Seger, who works on urban structures, particularly the bazaar of Tehran (1979, 1979), and Pozdena, who studies tribes and rural occupations in Baluchistan (1975, 1978). In geography, the collaboration between geographers who concentrate on Iran and Islamologists and Iranists *per se* is intensive and thus contrasts markedly with the situation in the social sciences described above.

IX. Afghanistan and Central Asia

In the German-speaking world--again with the exception of the German Democratic Republic--a small but solid multidisciplinary community has formed of scholars interested in Afghanistan. This community has its center in the field of social and cultural anthropology. For many of these scholars the initial motivation to deal with Afghanistan came from the country's romantic reputation in the 1960s and until 1979 as an unmodernized state in which travel was still an adventure. In the course of time, the resulting academic concern with Afghanistan has led to scholarly works, sometimes of high quality.

The Viennese cultural anthropologist Alfred Janata provided an early impetus to research on Afghanistan around 1960. This resulted in the establishment of a scholarly forum for Afghan studies, the so-called *Afghanistan-Journal*. This journal used to be published by an Austrian publishing company but was discontinued some four years ago.

Private initiative is responsible for the extensive "Afghanistan Archives" in Liestal, Switzerland, whose services are available to academic institutes. The sociologist Christian Sigrist from Münster is one of those interested in traditional Afghan tribal institutions. In West Berlin a small group of Afghanistan scholars works intensively together. These include the historian and political scientist Jan-Heeren Grevemeyer, and the cultural anthropologists Wolfgang Hozwarth and Rolf Bindemann. One of Grevemeyer's works is a political history of Badakhshan from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (1982), while another study, *On the Political Culture of Afghanistan in the Twentieth Century*, is about to come out. He currently is working on an analysis of the transformations within the anti-Soviet resistance movement of the political elite and their ideology. Hozwarth and Bindemann are preparing the publication of two studies on the socio-cultural structures and institutions of the two Afghan provinces of Badakhshan and Hazarajat.

The renowned Margret Reut holds a prominent position among Swiss Afghanistan scholars. She is affiliated with the Seminar for Islamology at the University of Bern but does most of her research and writing (in French) in Paris. One of the few Turcologists who work on Afghanistan is Ingeborg Thalhammer (now Baldauf), who has been mentioned before. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has not diminished the enthusiasm of these scholars interested in Afghanistan, only some of whom have been mentioned. The country has become inaccessible to them, but in response, most scholars have attempted to continue their research by shifting their fieldwork activities to the refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran.

Scholarship on Afghanistan has gained momentum in the last few years in the German Democratic Republic as well, though under different circumstances. A fresh interest in the country is reflected in the publications of the Iran scholar Manfred Lorenz from Berlin. Aside from his grammar of Pushtu, the only one in German, he has recently translated a collection of Afghan fairy tales into German (Lorenz, 1979 and 1985).

Central Asia to some extent falls within the research parameters of scholars whose concern is the history of Iran in Islamic times. After all, the boundaries of Iranian-Islamic civilization by no means coincide with those of the modern country of Iran. Hinz (1936) and Roemer (1952) showed an early interest in the Timurids. Roemer inspired Ulrich Haarmann (1974) and Ursula Ott (1973) to work on Transoxania in the sixteenth century. Early twentieth century Transoxania has for some time been an object of research for the present author as well (Fragner, 1979). The next sections will have more information on Central Asia.

The overall conclusion must be, however, that the Islamic-Iranian aspects of Central Asia have received little attention in German-language Iran research. The Iran elements in the Islamic history of India have been neglected even more.

X. Linguistics and Language Research

As mentioned before, the investigation of Iranian languages is the current occupation of the traditional field of Iranistics. Nonetheless, research on modern Iranian languages, and in particular the study of recent linguistic phenomena, in no way compares in volume in the study of ancient tongues. In the field of Kurdish Donald McKenzie from Göttingen is a leading figure at German universities. He regularly offers courses in Kurdish and

Pushtu, something which otherwise is only done at the Free University of Berlin in the case of Kurdish, and occasionally at Hamburg. In West Berlin Feryad Omar is currently working on dictionaries of North and Central Kurdish.

For the last few decades the Iranist Wilhelm Eilers and his students at the University of Würzburg have dominated the linguistic study of the modern Persian language. In addition to several studies on Iranian dialects and an etymological study of names of birds in Persian (Ulrich Schapka, doctoral dissertation), the most important work is Eilers' massive German-Persian dictionary, of which, thus far, only volume one (A-D) and a few additional fascicules have appeared (Eilers 1959 seq.). In West Berlin Faramarz Behzad is currently engaged in a similar project that will result in a medium-size German-Persian lexicon. The Persian-German dictionary produced in East Berlin by Junker and Alavi and printed in Leipzig has already been mentioned (Junker-Alavi, 1965), as has the Persian grammar of Alavi and Lorenz, which also appeared in East Germany (Alavi-Lorenz, 1967). Its Western counterpart was done by Farhad Sobhani in West Berlin and came out in the early 1960s (Sobhani 1962). A gap-filling piece of research is the as yet unpublished comparative study of modern Persian and Tajik by the East Berlin scholar Manfred Lorenz.

A particularly interesting contribution to the linguistic research on Iranian culture comes from the unexpected corner of Turcology. The scholar who deserves to be mentioned first in this respect is Gerhard Doerfer from Göttingen, who has put a most important reference work at the disposal of Persian language and literature studies in the form of a four-volume work entitled *Turkic and Mongolian Elements in New Persian* (Doerfer, 1963-75). This is clearly a work that illustrates the multilingual dimension of the German "Orientalist" tradition. Doerfer, together with his student Semih Tezcan, now at Bamberg, also deserves credit for the "discovery" and analysis of two independent and until recently unknown Turkic languages in Iran, Khalaj which is spoken between Qomm and Saveh, and Torke-ye Khorasani, which is found around Bojnord. Doerfer has further broken new ground in a field that is most important to the study of Iranian civilization, the mutual influence the Persian and Turkic dialects in the twentieth century. His test case study is on North Tajik dialects in the Pamir and Farghaneh regions (Doerfer, 1967). Doerfer has pointed to the common occurrence in the Iranian cultural realm of Persian-Turkic bilingualism, a phenomenon that has received very little attention worldwide due to a general ignorance of Turkish among Iran

scholars. Amirpur-Ahrandjani, finally, has written on Azeri Turkish (1971).

XI. Art, Music and Archaeology

Iranian-Islamic art does not constitute an independent subject at any German-language university or research institute. The few places where it is studied are not academic institutions but museums and collections, and there it falls within the category of Islamic art. There is hope, however, that the University of Bamberg will shortly be awarded a chair in Islamic art.

Specialists in Islamic art, such as Klaus Brisch at the Museum for Islamic Art in Berlin, generally do not exclusively specialize on Iranian themes. Barbara Finster is something of an exception, even though she has recently been concentrating mostly on Yemen. This situation stands in striking contrast to the fact that the more important collections of Islamic art in the German language area contain many Iranian objects and sometimes even count them among their most prized possessions. This holds for the above-mentioned museum in West Berlin as well as for the exquisite Islamic section of the Pergamon Museum in East Berlin and the unique rug collection in the Museum for Applied Art in Vienna.

Iranian archaeology in Germany is primarily pre-Islamic, as is reflected in the activities of the Tehran section of the German Archeological Institute. A striking exception to this rule is Wolfram Kleiss, the First Director of this section, with his long-term study of pre-twentieth century bridge and caravanserai building in Iran. Kleiss's publications are too numerous to be enumerated here. Suffice it to refer to the journal of the German Archeological Institute, *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* (Archeological Reports from Iran) which regularly includes articles on archaeology in Islamic Iran. A forthcoming publication of Kleiss, coauthored with the Iranian archeologist Kiani, is a work on caravan routes in Iran. It should finally be mentioned that one of the oldest of German excavations in Iran, the one at Takht-e Solaiman, includes, among other things, an Ilkhanid palace from the thirteenth century.

In this context the merits of Heinz Gaube from Tübingen become visible once again. With his interdisciplinary research on Iranian history he uniquely combines archaeological and art historical techniques with philological and historical methods.

The study of traditional non-European music is by no means overrepresented at German-language universities. It is therefore all the more important to point to the existence at the Free University of Berlin of a department of comparative music as part of the Institute of Musicology. This department, under the directorship of Josef Kuckertz, studies, among other things, the classical traditional music of Iran and Central Asia. Scholars and students furthermore have a most knowledgeable source of expertise on the classical music of Islamic Iran and other Islamic regions in the person of Habib Hassan Touma. Thomas Ogger has recently submitted a dissertation to this department in which he compares the Segah *maqām* in Iranian and Iraqi artistic music. This work is scheduled for publication soon.

XII. Conclusion: The Interaction of Politics, Society, and Scholarship in Research on Iran

The foregoing discussion has made it clear that history in the German-speaking countries has not prepared the conditions for a concentrated and centralized approach to the study of Iran, either in the humanities or the social sciences. This is equally true for the Middle East at large. "Middle East Centers" are unknown in the German language area. The only field that by definition deals with Iranian topics is the field of Iranistics, which has its roots in philology and linguistics. The continuing problems in applying Iranistics to historical and social questions have been amply discussed above. An indication that these problems are still with us is the enduring reluctance in the field to view Iranian Islamic civilisation as an autonomous object of research. The field of Islamology has always been more of a refuge than an abode for those engaged in research on Islamic Iran. Since the retirement of Bertold Spuler and Hans Robert Roemer, no university in Germany has a department for Islamology that concentrates expressly on Iran.

In other disciplines--with the exception of geography--a focus on Iran is even more fortuitous. The strength of Iranian studies, under these conditions, depends entirely on the individual scholar who is interested in Iran and who, in addition, manages to establish a reputation in his own discipline. Their own strength and nothing else explains why scholars like the geographer Ehlers and the historically oriented Hinz, Roemer, and Spuler, were able to establish a "school" of their own. Within a wider framework of politics and society, German research and scholarship on the Middle East and Iran evinces the important, even overwhelming, role of chance. The even wider context of the relationship in modern

German-speaking societies between the humanities and the social sciences and the political, social, and economic conditions in those societies falls outside the scope of this discussion and will therefore not be attempted here.

Why does German-language scholarship on Iran often seem fragmented and lacking in autonomous critical discourse? In answer to that question it must be observed that beginning in the nineteenth century, so-called Oriental scholarship has always occupied a marginal position in German intellectual life. German popular expressions that indicate the frivolousness, the lack of substance, and privileged nature of something like Oriental studies testify to that position. Those engaged in Oriental studies and particularly Iranian studies, for the most part operated on the margin of both academic and political and social life. Eyebrows raised in puzzlement are often the telling public reaction to someone who declares his or her intent of studying Iran.

This situation has led many Middle East and Iran scholars to feel estranged from social and political circumstances and to form a self-image built on the idea of belonging to an intellectual elite of privileged people. Generations of scholars have felt this way. A lack of political interest and a resulting naiveté would easily lead them to follow intellectual trends of their time rather unthinkingly.

This circumstance has never been propitious for intellectual radicalism, progressiveness, or non-conformism. It was more likely to breed an attitude of uncommitted conservatism, shot through, in many cases, with some mild form of old-fashioned European liberalism. Theoretical discussions did not take place even then, criticism of the academic structures and traditions was usually deflected through the advocacy of new research topics. An example was the call for more attention to post-Mongol and Safavid times, something which was absolutely unconventional in the 1930s.

The totalitarian National Socialist ideology implicitly required scholars of the type just described to work for the "benefit of the populace," and to serve the interests of the fascist state. This claim by the state, however, at the time contained an offer. The period between 1933 and 1945 was the first time that many philology scholars occupied non-academic public positions, for example, in the diplomatic service or as interpreters for the German army. In the case of scholars of Islamic Iran, this did not necessarily result in a fusion of their private circumstances and their scholarly work. They were able to continue their research only along prescribed lines, but

in their case there was little overlap with National Socialist political interests. This was not always true everywhere. Thus, some Turcologists made their research totally subservient to the German war propaganda against the Soviet Union. This problem was hardly relevant in the case of scholarship on premodern Iran. Due to its marginal position, this kind of scholarship, barring a few exceptions, was not substantially influenced by the National Socialist ideology from 1933 to 1945. A different picture arises from more popular forms of publication, for example travel literature. This non-academic genre did cause quite a few "Middle East experts" to follow the example of Sven Hedin, a then very popular Asia explorer from Sweden known for his eulogies and dedications to National Socialism.

It is easier to detect influences of National Socialism in scholarship on pre-Islamic Iran. This comes out most clearly in a revival of the nineteenth century quest for Aryan origins, mentioned above. While there is no reason to attach moral praise to scholarship on Islamic Iran because of its relative lack of ideological fervor, this very fact does serve as an example that marginality has its positive side.

For the development of the general discourse of the social sciences in the Federal Republic of Germany and Austria, the period of National Socialism proved to be a disaster. In West Germany it took until the 1960s, and in Austria even longer, before a critical form of social science was reestablished. It was equally recently that the traditional "Orientalist" fields gradually opened themselves up to discussions on social theory and methodology, often via disciplines like history, linguistics, and literature.

The same period witnessed the rise of independent political science and sociology research on countries and societies of the Middle East. Terms like "dependency theory," "Third World theory," "development theory," "Palestinian question," and the "military complex in the Middle East," were current coin for many political and social scientists around 1970, but had as yet hardly affected scholarship on Iran and Islam. The resulting communication problems have been largely overcome in the last fifteen years, but the marginality and individual character of the field persists as a typical feature. We are, on the other hand, currently in the process of creating a uniformly accepted discourse that is embraced by all those engaged in the study of Iran and the Middle East at large. The Middle East geographers who have been discussed at some length

are to be credited with the pioneering of such a common discourse perhaps more than they themselves realize.

Not unexpectedly, Middle East research has gone a different direction in the German Democratic Republic. Where the German-speaking West took a long time and effort to reestablish a theoretical framework in the social sciences the foundations for such a framework in East Germany were laid already in the 1950s for both the social sciences and the humanities. The wider framework in which this development took place was the building of a theoretical and ideologically homogenous socialist society, a task which conditioned and determined a variety of differentiated developments. Since, however, Iran scholarship occupies a marginal position in this other Germany as well, there, too, a uniform discourse in Middle Eastern studies is hard to discern. In the West as well as the East, the individual scholar has never ceased to be decisive in research on Iran. In the personal experience of this author, that circumstance, on balance, might be considered in some respects to be positive or, at least, of some personal convenience.

Translated by Rudi Matthee

Selected Bibliography of Recent Scholarship on Iran during the Islamic Period from the Federal Republic of Germany (including West Berlin), the German Democratic Republic, Austria, and Switzerland

Abbreviations:

T.A.V.O.: *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*

W.Z.K.M.: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

Z.D.M.G.: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

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