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The Geographical Nomenclature of Places between Merv and Herat

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CORRESPONDENCE.

The Geographical Nomenclature of places between Merv and Herat.

3, OBSERVATORY AVENUE, KENSINGTON, W.

IN the September number of the 'Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society,' Professor Vambéry lays down the correct spelling of certain places in the disputed country between Merv and Herat. With every respect for the distinguished traveller's Oriental scholarship and literary powers, and admiring the intelligence he has displayed in generally compassing the mode of transcription which commends itself in these modern days to English Orientalists, I must enter a quasi protest against the wholesale adoption of his rules as defined in his examples. Let me, for instance, at once take exception to twelve of the twenty-eight words he has qualified as Persian by prefixing the letter P. They are:—

Chemeni-bid,	which I should write	Chaman-i-bid.
Chihar-bag	"	Chahárbâgh.
Cheshme-i-Sebz	"	Chashmah-i-sabz.
Chihil Ghez	"	Chihlgaz.
Ghermab	"	Garmâb.
Keman-i bihisht	"	Kamân-i-bihisht.
Khurshid Kalesi	"	Khurshid Kal'ahsi.
Nemeksár	"	Namaksár.
Penjdeh	"	Panjdeh or Panjdih.
Ruzenek	"	Ruzanak.
Dihan	"	Dahan or Dahân.
Tanghi Darya	"	Tang-i-dariya.

I have respected the more familiar letter-combinations in "Merv" and "Herirûd," though both are strictly unwarranted. The former is shown by the Professor himself to be from "Mar"; and the latter finds authority for "Hari" in the "Hariva" of the inscriptions of Darius. But the *e* is seldom, if ever, required to supplement *a* or *i* according to the true Persian pronunciation. It belongs to the Persian of Turks on the west and Indians on the east, too frequently accepted as genuine by European students. The *h* which has been added to *chashma* and *kal'a* represents a *real* transcription, but may be omitted on the understanding that the final unaccented *a* is accepted as *ah*. Why the *gh* has been discarded for *g* in *bâg*, and, on the other hand, why *gh* has been used for *g* in *Garmâb*, cannot be intelligible to English apprehension, under any rules of transliteration.

The above I may call my own indeliberate remarks on a paper which had escaped notice until long after publication; but the following notes are mainly the outcome of attention to the views of others:—

1. May not the "Chihlgaz" translated as "forty yards," be held to mean forty tamarisk-trees—a rendering of the word "gaz" already suggested in "Darah-gaz"?

2. "Robat," an Arabic word interpreted as "a building," must be the *ribât* of Freytag and the *Ķāmûs*, explained in the former as "firma structura," in reality a "fortified caravansarai."

3. The two places named respectively "Kelle-Hauz" and "Kelle-burun"—interpreted as the "skull reservoir" and the "cape of the skulls"—may probably

be misreadings for *Kal'ah-i-Hauz* and *Kal'ah-i-búrún*, the "fort of the reservoir," and the "fort of the promontory—or bluff."

4. "Kom-bau," the name of a pass and rivulet, is possibly *اوجده*, *khumbah áo*, the "stream of the jar" (strictly *khumbahi-ab*, the "jar of water") according to an old Persian tradition that a jar was found in the neighbourhood. *Áo* is a well-known vulgarism for *áb*, "water."

5. "Mulla Khairan Tekke," translated "the Tekke Mulla Khairan," may rather be the "tak'iya," or "shrine" of Mulla Khairan.

6. "Nihál-shíni," translated the "sprout of joy," is not improbably a corruption of the common Persian compound "n'al-shikan," the "shoe-breaker."

7. The compound "Yeke-tut," said to be the "single mulberry-tree," is surely the "two mulberry-trees," if indeed Turkish, as stated. If Persian, "one tree" is intelligible.

8. May not the word "Kuyrukli," translated "having a tail," be "Kur-ugli," a well-known proper name?

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The Reported Subsidence of one of the Faroe Islands.

COPENHAGEN, HAVNEGADE 35, K.
October 11th, 1885.

In the 'Proceedings' of the R.G.S. for September last, page 611, an account was given of the subsidence of the rocky islet Munken, one of the Faroe islands, translated from *Amtstidende for Færøerne*. When it was reported here that some part of the Munken had fallen in, an order from the Minister of our Navy, Mr. Ravn, was sent to my son, Captain Frederick Irminger, who this year commanded the station around Iceland and the Faroes, to examine the Munken, and herewith I take the liberty of sending you the result of the examination, which shows that the Faroe newspaper was not correct in its information. The examination of Munken gives the following:—This rock lies about $3\frac{1}{4}$ nautical miles from the most southern point of Suderoe. A part of Munken is fallen down; but still this rock has a height of 30 feet above the level of the sea, and will, in clear weather, with the eye elevated 18 feet, be seen at a distance of 11 nautical miles. The three flat rocks lying close to the north-east of Munken, called "Fleserne," have a height of about 16 feet above the level of the sea. The situation of Munken is $61^{\circ} 22' 5$ N. lat., and $6^{\circ} 45' 5$ W. long. (Greenwich).

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