

ISTVÁN ORMOS

THE EARLY MAGYARS IN THE JAYHĀNĪ TRADITION

Reflections on István Zimonyi's book

“Muslim sources on the Magyars”

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ISTVÁN ZIMONYI's present book¹ deals with an account of the Magyars in the ninth and tenth centuries, mainly before their arrival and final settlement in their present-day habitat in Central Europe (the so-called "Conquest"). It is part of a succinct description of the peoples of Eastern Europe which has come down to us in several, slightly different, versions in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. It is generally assumed that they all derive from an Arabic work composed by the wazīr Jayhānī in Bukhārā in the Sāmānid Emirate around the beginning of the tenth century, which has not survived. The extant versions also contain some later interpolations.

I shall address only certain selected aspects and problems; an exhaustive critical evaluation would amount to sizeable volumes.²

The work in question is the English translation of a book originally published in Hungarian in 2005.³ It was also published in German translation in 2006.⁴ It deals first with the Jayhānī tradition, presenting an account of Jayhānī's person, his activities, his sources and the works which preserved his account of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Then follow the versions of the Magyar chapter in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, accompanied by English translations. An interpretation of the contents of the Magyar chapter follows sentence by sentence, with a detailed philological analysis of the questions involved in essay form. Finally, the author offers a tentative reconstruction of an *English version* of the original Arabic text with a presentation of the various stages of its growth. Zimonyi speaks of reconstructing the "original text". However, it was in Arabic. What he is offering his readers is an English version.

The present work is in fact a sequel to an earlier joint publication by the author and the late Hansgerd Göckenjan (d. 2005) of Giessen, which treated in a similar way the whole so-called "Jayhānī tradition", i.e. all the texts preserving Jayhānī's Arabic account of the peoples of Eastern Europe.⁵ It contained the texts in German translation only, without the originals, and naturally enough, it dealt with the Magyars in considerably less detail than the work under review.

These works by Zimonyi go back ultimately to a collection encompassing all the basic texts in Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) dealing with the nomads in Eastern Europe who were migrating in an east-west direction in the period in question. Among these were the Magyar tribes, also moving westwards in the steppe belt until they finally reached their present-day habitat. This collection of texts (the originals and their Hungarian translations accompanied by commentaries) was prepared in the 1920s by Mihály Kmoskó (d. 1931), professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Budapest.

¹ István Zimonyi: *Muslim sources on the Magyars in the second half of the 9th century. The Magyar chapter of the Jayhānī tradition.* (East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 35). Leiden–Boston, Brill 2016. ISBN 978–90–04–21437–8 (hardback). Also available as an e-book.

² A shorter version of the present publication appears as a review article in the pages of *The Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* under the title "Texts on the early Hungarians in the Jayhānī tradition". A review in Hungarian has been submitted to *Keletkutatók [Oriental Studies]*. – The marks *sic*, [!] and [?] are only rarely used here. (They would have been necessary in too many places.) The author asks the reader to trust him that careful proofreading has taken place before publication.

³ Zimonyi: *Muszlim források.*

⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslimische Quellen.*

⁵ Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte.*

He more or less completed his manuscript but did not succeed in publishing it. This was finally achieved by Zimonyi about seventy years later, between 1997 and 2007.⁶ Numerous translations included in the present work were actually made from Kmoskó's Hungarian versions.

Zimonyi's book in Hungarian, and its German version, generated a discussion which resulted in several publications. I published an extensive review of the Hungarian original followed by a separate publication containing further additions.⁷ András Róna-Tas published a one-page remark on my review, while Zimonyi replied to the additions.⁸ My reply followed in two parts.⁹ I also published a short English summary of the controversy.¹⁰ (I published altogether 148 pages, Zimonyi 9 pages and Róna-Tas one page.)¹¹ Zimonyi leaves all of them, amounting to 158 pages, unmentioned in the present work, although he has tacitly accepted some of the criticisms and modified his text accordingly. I consider Zimonyi's silence unfair towards his readers as he is withholding from them important information concerning the subject in question. He is thus preventing them from creating an independent and objective evaluation, which must always be founded on an overall assessment of all relevant facts.

Two points must be made right at the beginning. First, Zimonyi is presenting the English translation of a book which was originally published in 2005. Soon after its appearance I voiced numerous criticisms, some of which he tacitly accepted but most of which he chose to ignore. This means that a considerable part of the criticisms offered below are nothing new but represent the reiteration of previous statements. It goes without saying that the book would have improved considerably if he had heeded them. The second point is that, to a great extent, Zimonyi's work is based on Oriental (mainly Arabic) texts, which he quotes in English translation. However, he did not prepare these from the originals himself, but relied on earlier renditions. Moreover, the present book itself was translated from Hungarian to English, and the translations from Arabic, Persian and Turkish were stylistically revised by a native speaker of American English. In other words, we are dealing here with translations which were prepared in several stages involving several persons and several languages. Such an approach is obviously fraught with risks, especially in view of the fact that Zimonyi apparently lacks an adequate command of the languages involved (except Hungarian and possibly Turkish) which would have enabled him to remove the inadequacies and inconsistencies arising from this polyphonic approach, while putting the final integrating touches to the book.

In addition to an excellent command of all the languages involved, such as Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Latin and Russian, a detailed treatment of these texts including philological commentaries on all their aspects requires a thorough familiarity with a great number of widely divergent fields, such as the history of Eastern Europe, the Byzantine

⁶ Kmoskó: *Mohamedán I/1–3*. An eminent Syriac scholar, Kmoskó also dealt with relevant works in Syriac. His manuscript was edited by Szabolcs Felföldi, one of Zimonyi's pupils: Kmoskó: *Szír írók*.

⁷ Ormos: *A magyar őstörténet*. Id.: *Kiegészítések*.

⁸ Róna-Tas: *Észrevételek*. Zimonyi: *Hamzától*.

⁹ Ormos: *Rövid viszontválasz*. Id.: *Adalékok*.

¹⁰ Id.: *Remarks*.

¹¹ The contributions to this discussion are now accessible on the internet. See the Bibliography below.

Empire and Central Asia, the ethnography of the peoples involved, etc., etc. As far as the languages in question are concerned, Arabic plays a central role in this account. In addition to the most important variants, the original was in Arabic, and most of the secondary sources consulted for the philological commentaries are in Arabic, too. Many of these texts suffered considerably during transmission. Copyists were often ignorant people, who understood little of the texts they were copying. Sometimes they were Persians or Turks whose knowledge of Arabic was minimal. In our case, the situation was further aggravated by the nature of the texts in question: they discussed peoples, persons and events of which even educated Muslims in the Caliphate had hardly any knowledge. This was a serious handicap because Arabic texts, as a rule, do not indicate vowels, and in medieval manuscripts even diacritical signs differentiating various consonants with an identical “skeleton” (script line; *rasm*) were either sparingly used or omitted altogether. In consequence, wherever such appeared, more often than not they did not come from the authors reflecting their understanding of their own texts but originated with copyists on the basis of their knowledge of the language and the subject matter involved: they were often full of mistakes. The modern editor’s general rule in editing Arabic manuscripts, therefore, is to disregard the diacritical dots in their transmitted form and insert them instead as seems most appropriate based on his knowledge of the Arabic language and the subject. Another general problem is that the relevant authors were not always good stylists: they had difficulty in expressing themselves, in formulating precisely what they wanted to communicate. Thus their texts are often not easy to understand. Quite often our texts are not original accounts but compilations from various sources. In such cases, it is often difficult to know where certain sentences really belong, how they were misunderstood or/and modified by the compiler. The peoples of Eastern Europe at this time produced no written documents worth mentioning; we do not even know what language(s) some of them spoke. Thus we are dependent on second-, third- or fourth-hand accounts, which every now and then mixed these peoples up or simply modified data in accordance with what their authors deemed appropriate.

The author of the present monograph is a specialist in Altaic studies and Turcology. As is clearly shown by his treatment of Arabic texts, he knows some Arabic but his familiarity with it is not sufficient for dealing with the texts in a sovereign way. He relies on translations, without noticing when they contain omissions or mistakes, and he is often at a loss when different translations offer different interpretations of one and the same text. Every now and then, however, he modifies the translations he is quoting, yet without indicating his intervention.

The original texts in Arabic, Persian and Turkish

Zimonyi presents the Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts of the Jayhānī tradition in the originals as well as in parallel English translation. In the Hungarian edition he claimed to have presented “new critical editions” of the texts. However, it has been possible to show that the Arabic texts could not be regarded as critical editions. In fact Zimonyi was demonstrably unfamiliar with the very nature of a critical edition. In the present English

to the Hungarian form, while the form in Leeuwen-Ferré is strongly reminiscent of the South-Arabian tribe *Kinda*: it is in fact a case of what Zimonyi elsewhere calls “motivated erratum” and “motivated misinterpretation” (e.g., Amul < Atil).¹⁵ There are some mysterious letters in the critical apparatus at the bottom of the page which Zimonyi fails to explain. They can only be interpreted if the reader consults the edition by Leeuwen and Ferré: they are sigla referring to manuscripts. Once again there are mistakes in the critical apparatus, among them the reference “¹⁴ Kunik-Rozen: ايين ”. In the place in question we find a different form: “(sic) ايين ”. As for Abū l-Fidā’s text in the present book, it is slavishly reproduced from the edition of 1840 by Reinaud and Mac Guckin de Slane: the form طائفة reflects the orthographic habits of their day.¹⁶ This use of the *madda*-sign is avoided nowadays, even if it occurs in a given manuscript, and one writes طائفة instead. It is a sign of dilettantism to use a *madda*-sign in this position in a modern publication.¹⁷

From among the Arabic texts, Ibn Rusta’s account of the Magyars is the most interesting and intriguing. It is normally used in de Goeje’s critical edition published by Brill in 1892.¹⁸ In it de Goeje relied on the unicum manuscript in the British Museum known at the time. However, in 1915 another manuscript entered the University Library in Cambridge and appeared in the catalogue published in 1922.¹⁹ Subsequently it was mentioned by Brockelmann in his *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* published by Brill, by Kračkovskiy in his seminal monograph on Arabic geographical literature and also by Tadeusz Lewicki in his publication of Ibn Rusta’s relevant pages in Arabic and Polish.²⁰ However, none of these great scholars actually saw the manuscript. When in 2005 Zimonyi published his “new critical edition” of Ibn Rusta in the Hungarian original of the present work, he did not even mention it because he was not aware of its existence. It was in the course of the doctoral procedure at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2005 that one of his referees, István Elter, called his attention to this omission.²¹ Later on the Cambridge manuscript was demonstrated to be a late and inferior copy made from the London manuscript and therefore played no role in the establishing of the text.²² Zimonyi now includes a mention of it in the present work.

¹⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 220, 220 (n. 720), 273.

¹⁶ Wright: *Grammar* I, 24CD (§22).

¹⁷ On the modern use, see *ibid.*, I, 25A (§23). Parallel cases for speakers of Hungarian and Russian: It is as if one would write “czirógatja az asszonynépet” and “вдали от родного города” in a modern publication instead of “cirógatja az asszonynépet” and “вдали от родного города”.

¹⁸ On this edition, see the Appendix.

¹⁹ Browne: *Supplementary hand-list* 165: Suppl. 1006 [Or. 920(8)].

²⁰ Brockelmann: *Geschichte*, Supplementband I, [1937], 406, no. 5. Kračkovskiy: *Izbrannye* IV [1957], 159, n. 8. Lewicki: *Źródła* II/2 [1977], 17–18.

²¹ Around 2005 Zimonyi submitted his work to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences for the degree of Doctor of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

²² These two manuscripts have an interesting story. Led by a desire to establish secure transport lines between Britain and India, the British government commissioned Captain Henry Blosse Lynch (1807–1873) to undertake reconnaissance surveys in the area of the Persian Gulf in 1831–1832 and also in 1838–1839. He married the dashing beautiful daughter of the colourful British diplomat in Iraq, Robert Taylor, and his Armenian wife, who was reputedly related to the Shah’s family in Iran. Robert Taylor was the owner of the London manuscript. Captain Blosse Lynch’s son, Henry (Harry) Blosse Lynch

Let us have a look at how Zimonyi sought to improve de Goeje's critical edition in the Hungarian original of the present work. It is informative to do so, because it sheds light on his concept of a critical edition, on his familiarity with Arabic and on the standard of his methods in general. First he eliminated de Goeje's emendation of *Mujfariyya* to *Majghariyya*.²³ Another improvement concerns the passage in Ibn Rusta's text where he discusses how the Magyars oppressed the neighbouring Slavs by imposing heavy burdens (taxes) on them (*wa-yulzimūnahum al-mu'an al-ġalīza*), which the London manuscript renders thus: ويلزمونهم المون الغليظة.²⁴ It is evident that in a moment of absent-mindedness, the copyist transferred the *hamza* sign to the neighbouring word, therefore both Khvol'son and de Goeje tacitly emended it to ويلزمونهم المون الغليظة . Zimonyi evidently considered this an ill-advised and unjustified interference on Khvol'son and de Goeje's part. In his turn, correcting their reading, he re-introduced the erroneous manuscript form into his new critical edition, at the same time also retaining the correct *hamza* sign above the noun: ويلزمونهم المون الغليظة . Of course, the form ويلزمونهم with a *hamza* in this position is impossible in Arabic. I pointed this out at the time.²⁵ Zimonyi did not react to my criticism, but this improvement disappeared: it is absent both from the German translation and the present work. Another improvement of Zimonyi's upon de Goeje was to use the form المسمي (with final *yā'* ي with the optional dots denoting the vowel *ī* here) as the passive participle required by the context instead of the regular form المسمى displaying an *alif maqṣūra* without the two dots (ى denoting the vowel *ā*) as prescribed by Arabic orthography. There are three possible explanations for this erroneous form, which does not appear even in the manuscript but represents Zimonyi's own contribution and his own improvement on Khvol'son and de Goeje: he lacks a familiarity with the elements of Arabic writing, or with the basics of Arabic morphology – or both. I did not mention it explicitly at the time. It has survived ever since – both in the German translation and in the present English version.²⁶ Moreover, in the *apparatus criticus* which he had added to Ibn Rusta's text I found two mistakes.

In a Hungarian context, in his monograph on the relationship of the Magyars with Oriental peoples Count Géza Kuun published Ibn Rusta's account of the Magyars in Arabic at Kolozsvár in 1895. Kuun's text was based on a proofsheets of de Goeje's edition which de Goeje had kindly put at Kuun's disposal during a visit to Leiden in May 1891, even before the appearance of his own edition. Kuun supplied it with a Latin translation. The Arabic text is impeccable.²⁷ Goldziher offered Kuun his help in

(1862–1913), who was also deeply interested in the area of the Persian Gulf, was the owner of the Cambridge manuscript. Ormos: Remarks 381–383. Kessler: *Journey XVII–XIX*, 335.

²³ On this subject, see the Appendix (n. 235) below.

²⁴ The manuscript has a final *hā'* in the last word; for the sake of clarity, I have replaced it with a *tā'* *marbūta* here. – I.O.

²⁵ Ormos: A magyar őstörténet 739–740. Id.: Remarks 380.

²⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslimische Quellen* 34 (line 3 [Ar.]). Id.: *Muslim sources* 38 (line 3 [Ar.]).

²⁷ Kuun's letter of 15 July 1892 to Goldziher. Goldziher Correspondence, Oriental Collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, GIL/23/19/003. Kuun: *Relationum* II, 176–177. Goldziher published a review of volume I: *Budapesti Szemle* 76, 1893, 311–315; *Westöstliche Rundschau* 1, 1894, 77–79, and of volume II: *Budapesti Szemle* 83, 1895, 147–150. It appears from Kuun's letters to Goldziher written in 1894 that the Appendix to volume II with Ibn Rusta's Arabic text

proofreading, of which the latter happily availed himself.²⁸ It is odd to see that Zimonyi never mentions this work in his publications, not even Kuun's Latin rendering among the translations of Ibn Rusta's account.²⁹ Thus we can state that – even if we leave his treatment of the name of the Magyars (on which see below) out of consideration – Zimonyi's text is inferior to de Goeje's critical edition. This means that Zimonyi's third effort within ten years at producing an acceptable text of Ibn Rusta's relevant brief paragraph has also failed. His task would have been very simple: he should have copied de Goeje's text without modification.

In this context Zimonyi also mentions that “In Hungary, the founder of Hungarian Turcology, Ármin Vámbéry, was the first to use the Jayhānī tradition”, citing his *A magyarok eredete* of 1882.³⁰ This is not true. In 1871 Antal Edelspacher de Gyorok published a report on Ibn Dasta's (=Ibn Rusta's) account of the Magyars in the journal of the Hungarian Historical Association (*Századok* [=Centuries]), which he brought out as a separate publication in a revised version in 1877.³¹ His report, which also mentions the parallel accounts by Bakrī, Abū l-Fidā' and Šukrallāh, is based mainly on Khvol'son's publication. It is worth mentioning that within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy Ibn Rusta's relevant paragraphs were also published in German translation in 1871.³²

The name of the Magyars in the Jayhānī tradition

There is one aspect of the present work which captures the reader's attention early on: it is the name of the Magyars in the Jayhānī tradition texts. On account of the uncertainty of transmission, the Magyars appear under a wide variety of name-forms in the actual manuscripts: *M.ḥ.f.r.ya* / *M.j.f.r.ya* / *M.j.gh.r.ya* / *M.j.ʿr.ya* / *M.ḥ.r.qa* / *Muḥtariqa* etc. There is a general consensus among Arabists dating back to 1849 that the correct reading is *Majghariyya*, which is based on the only precise form to be found in Arabic literature. In accordance with the rules of the art, they regard all the other forms as copyists' errors, which are very common in Arabic manuscripts.³³ Just to name the most illustrious of these scholars: Defrémery, Khvol'son, de Goeje, Goldziher, Kunik, Rozen, Barthold, Barbier de Meynard, Kramers, Marquart, Wiet, Kmoskó, Minorsky, Czeglédy, Lewicki, Németh, Zakhoder, Martinez, Ḥabībī, Bosworth. Zimonyi rejects this view. The reader is eager to see what he has to offer instead. However, the result is disappointing. Zimonyi fails to give a clear-cut, definitive answer to this question, and it is impossible to discover what in his view the name of the Magyars actually was in the Jayhānī tradition. His

was printed in Leipzig through the good offices of Goldziher. It was also Goldziher's advice to place the Appendix with the Oriental texts at the end of volume II. On Kuun's book, see the Appendix to the present article. Since 1920 Kolozsvár has belonged to Romania and its present name is Cluj.

²⁸ Kuun's letter of 15 July 1892 to Goldziher. Goldziher Correspondence, Oriental Collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, GIL/23/19/003.

²⁹ For some more details of Kuun's editions of 1895 and 1900, see the Appendix.

³⁰ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 1. Vámbéry: *A magyarok* 99–100, 133–134. (=Id.: *Ursprung* 88–90, 115–125.)

³¹ Gyoroki [Edelspacher]: Ibn-Dasztā. Antal Edelspacher (Gyoroki): *Ibn Dustah*.

³² Roesler: *Studien* 359–363. Cf., *ibid.*, 336–337. Robert Rösler (1836–1874) was an Austrian historian.

³³ Different views have been voiced, though, concerning some vowels (*Mujghariyya*, *Majghiriyya*) but the generally accepted form is *Majghariyya*. For further details, see the Appendix (n. 235) below.

central thesis is that Jayhānī “fabricated” (Zimonyi’s own expression) a folk etymology for the original name of the Magyars: *Muḥaffariyya*, “People of the Depressed Land” or “People of the Sunken Earth”.³⁴ In this case then, it is clearly the word that Jayhānī must have used in his own work, too. And again in this case, there is no way of knowing what earlier form Jayhānī had replaced with it.³⁵ It is also clear that it is this name that all compilers excerpting from Jayhānī’s work and copying from it must in their turn have used in their own works, too.³⁶ Then suddenly Zimonyi informs his readers that “the designation of the Magyars is *m.jf.r* in the Jayhānī tradition.”³⁷ This comes as a surprise because it is incompatible with his previous claim. If Jayhānī did in fact invent the folk etymology *Muḥaffariyya*, as Zimonyi claims, why would he have used *Majfariyya* instead? One creates folk etymologies in order to replace earlier forms that one considers unintelligible. On the other hand, if Jayhānī used *Majfariyya* in his own book, how can we know of the alleged folk etymology (*Muḥaffariyya*) just referred to? There is no explicit reference to it anywhere in Oriental literatures (Arabic, Persian and Turkish). Then we discover the form *Majghariyya*, too, appearing in several Arabic and Persian texts as presented by Zimonyi.³⁸ So much so, that he even discusses its phonetic aspects.³⁹ The perplexed reader then turns to the texts themselves, to see how in Zimonyi’s view the name of the Magyars actually appears in them, and what he finds is truly baffling. To take just one example, Zimonyi aims to convince his readers that Gardīzī behaved in a most peculiar way. Namely, he used *Muḥaffariyān* at the beginning of the first line on the first page of his account, subsequently switching to *Maḥghariyān* after a few words in the same line.⁴⁰ Then he changed his mind and used *Majghariyān* in line 3. Then changing his mind again he wrote *Maḥghariyān* in line 9, just in time to change his mind once again by writing *Majfariyān* in line 10. Then he changed his mind again, writing *Majghariyān* in line 5 on the following page,⁴¹ repeating it in line 6, too, before changing his mind again and writing *Majfariyān* in line 8, repeating it in lines 9 and 11, and then changing his mind yet again and switching to *Majghariyān* in line 4 on

³⁴ Zimonyi adopted this thesis from Kmoskó. On the miraculous “Depressed Land”, see the Appendix.

³⁵ Without adducing any reference or proof, Zimonyi seems to be claiming in one place (p. 66) – in rather opaque wording – that it was *Majar* and that its written form may have served as the basis from which Jayhānī “may have fabricated” his folk etymology *Muḥaffariyya*. This is a supposition lacking any textual evidence. If this were the case, Zimonyi would have to account for the letter/sound *f*. Why would Jayhānī have invented a folk etymology by adding a new element to the form he wanted to explain? This alien element would have produced a new form, sounding completely different from the primary one, thus greatly compromising any eventual connection between them. In the hypothetical case of having to explain the form *Majar*, for instance the form *Majarī/Majariyya* would have suggested itself as the obvious choice for a popular etymology by linking it to the root √ *J-R-Y* “to run” just as in Modern Cairene Arabic. (The popular name of the express trains “*magari/majari*”, which used to be imported from Hungary [*al-Majar*], is nowadays generally thought to refer to their *speed*.) Of course, in this case there would be no connection to the “Depressed Land”.

³⁶ It is not clear whether Zimonyi is aware of this conclusion or not, because he nowhere says so.

³⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 84.

³⁸ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 44 (Bakrī), 46 (Abū l-Fidā’, *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam*), 50 (Marwazī).

³⁹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 60–61.

⁴⁰ The references are to Zimonyi’s version of Gardīzī’s text. *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

the subsequent page,⁴² finally repeating this last form in line 5. Nobody in possession of sound judgement will believe the absurd claim that in a relatively brief text Gardīzī would have used four different words indiscriminately to denote the Magyars! In actual fact, the skeleton of the script (*rasm*) is identical in each case, it is only the diacritical dots that are placed differently. Are we to believe that Gardīzī placed the dots haphazardly, at random? Is it not plausible to assume instead that Gardīzī placed the dots identically each time and used only one word? In a similar vein, is it reasonable to assume that Marwazī used *Majfariyya* at the beginning of his account and then, suddenly changing his mind and placing the dots differently, started using *Majghariyya* instead?⁴³ And that both of them did all this with Jayhānī’s text in front of them, which they were excerpting from, where in the relevant places they saw *Muḥaffariyya*? In a similar vein, are we to believe that Ibn Rusta wrote *Majfariyya* (or *Mujfariyya*) when excerpting from Jayhānī’s work, in spite of seeing *Muḥaffariyya* in Jayhānī’s manuscript in front of him?⁴⁴ I have counted altogether *seven* different forms referring to the Magyars in the main texts of the Jayhānī tradition as determined by Zimonyi in the present book. (I left his so-called “critical apparatuses” out of the equation.) Is it reasonable to assume that all these authors, depending on a single source, would have used seven different words indiscriminately?⁴⁵ Such a claim is against all reason! Instead, we must assume that Gardīzī had a definite idea regarding the name of the Magyars and that he used it everywhere in his work. Nor was the case any different with our other authors. Neither did the great authors of Arab and Islamic civilization, such as Avicenna, Averroes, Rhazes and al-Fārābī, insert diacritical dots haphazardly when composing their epoch-making books, but worked with a clear mind, carefully recording their ideas in writing – whether with dots or without. What is true, however, is that our authors, who can be reckoned among the greatest minds of human civilization by any account, constitute a marked contrast to the uneducated, careless copyists who produced any amount of gibberish by putting the dots in the wrong places, haphazardly, at random, because they were simply doing their job, earning a living, not interested in the texts themselves and not worrying whether the texts were coherent – as is attested in innumerable manuscripts and is well known among trained Arabists who have experience in editing Arabic texts and dealing with them. It is the modern editors’ task to restore the authors’ original texts from the corrupt versions that can be found in surviving manuscripts.

The confusion is heightened further by Zimonyi’s references to forms which our authors, e.g. Ibn Rusta, Bakrī, allegedly used. In doing this he is confusing the forms an author might have written down himself with those recorded by ignorant later copyists in distorted variants. We do not know exactly what forms our authors used because their manuscripts, the so-called “authors’ copies (autographs)”, have not survived. We only have copies at our disposal, which contain – on occasion very serious – copyists’ mistakes in large numbers. Zimonyi keeps mixing up these forms, e.g.: “Ibn Rusta

⁴² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴⁵ They appear as genuinely different words, though, differentiated only by the diacritical dots.

recorded *al-m.jf.riyya* in general and *m.hf.riyya* once.”⁴⁶ Elsewhere he writes: “Al-Bakrī preserved the authentic *b.jānākiyya* بجاناكية, while Ibn al-Rusta [*sic*] has the misspelled [*sic*] form *b.khānākiyya* بخاناكية”;⁴⁷ or in another place we read: “Ibn Rusta clearly used the letter *f*, and similarly Gardīzī has *f* five times...”,⁴⁸ etc. It is essential to point out that *we do not know what letters Ibn Rusta used himself*; we only know what our Ibn Rusta manuscript contains, which was copied by an ignorant copyist who may have been just one of a longer series of copyists involved in the transmission of the text. (He was probably a Persian who seems not even to have understood the text in many places, because his Arabic was poor.)⁴⁹ The same is true for Gardīzī, Bakrī and all the other authors. In the absence of autographs, it is the task of editors and scholars to determine to the best of their knowledge what form the respective authors may have used.

Zimonyi refers to alleged authors’ copies of our Arab authors elsewhere, too: “The form *majghir* or *majghar* has usually been reconstructed from the authors’ manuscripts of the Jayhānī tradition.”⁵⁰ We have no such manuscripts of the Jayhānī tradition. If only we had. In actual fact, the form *majghar* etc. was reconstructed on the basis of one single piece of information contained in Abū l-Fidā’s text.⁵¹

We can thus state that Zimonyi’s treatment of the name of the Magyars and its actual forms in manuscripts amounts to total confusion. It is beyond doubt that the “folk etymology” *Muḥaffariyya* and its “later developments” as posited by Zimonyi are in fact copyists’ errors. Since this aspect is of cardinal importance in his treatment of the original (Arabic, Persian, Turkish) texts of the Jayhānī tradition, all these texts must be avoided. The only relief I can feel in this respect is to see that at last Zimonyi has been persuaded to abandon his weird Arabic etymologies of the name *Majghar* and of its manuscript variants (“later developments”). In the Hungarian and German versions of the present work he listed among them *majfar*, “an impediment to venery, a cause of diminishing the seminal fluid; anti-venereal food”, without offering any explanation as to why on earth the Arabs should have named the Magyars after “a cause of diminishing the seminal fluid” or a food that inhibits sexual activity.⁵² It was regrettable that Zimonyi did not even feel the necessity to justify such a weird claim.

One of the most important and at the same time most difficult texts treated here is Gardīzī’s version, because we have only two, relatively late and corrupt manuscripts at our disposal. It is a serious shortcoming of the present book that Zimonyi did not make use of the new critical edition by Raḥīm Riḍāzāda Malik, which came out in Teheran in 2005, that is *eleven years* before the publication of the present work.⁵³

⁴⁶ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁹ This was Khvol’son’s opinion; he was the first to study the part dealing with Eastern Europe in detail. He published the relevant part of the manuscript in 1869. Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya* 10.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁵¹ See n. 233–235 and the corresponding paragraph in the Appendix.

⁵² Zimonyi: *Muslim források* 54. Id.: *Muslimische Quellen* 53–54. Ormos: *A magyar őstörténet* 745. Id.: Remarks 384–385.

⁵³ Gardīzī: *Zayn*. I am indebted to Éva Jeremiás for kindly drawing my attention to this publication and putting it at my disposal shortly after its appearance.

Zimonyi appears to be unaware of its existence, although he might have read about it in Bosworth's preface to his translation of Gardīzī's work, which he seems to have consulted.⁵⁴

Translations

Zimonyi's translations of the Arabic texts of the Jayhānī tradition on pp. 39–55 of the present work contain numerous inaccuracies and errors. If one compares them with the Hungarian original and the German translation in the publication by Göckenjan and Zimonyi, there are many differences. One cannot say which one is best. There are quite a number of good solutions in the German translation contained in Göckenjan and Zimonyi's publication which Zimonyi replaced with inferior and erroneous ones in his own two books, which came out later. This is a clear indication that the German translation was prepared by Göckenjan alone. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain why Zimonyi chose faulty translations in many places in his later publications once he had already found ostensibly better solutions. It can be stated that in the majority of cases the versions contained in the present English translation are inferior to all three publications. One of the reasons is that one or more persons undertook a stylistic revision of the English translations without consulting the original Arabic texts. Thus the result is a stylistically good but often inaccurate free paraphrase of the original texts, which contains a number of errors. (In the present case, the statement that the style is good refers to the translations only.)⁵⁵

Examples from Ibn Rusta

To demonstrate the problems involved, some examples from Ibn Rusta follow here. Zimonyi's paragraph numbers have been adopted.⁵⁶

● 2. Arabic: *wa-l-Majghariyya jins min al-Turk*. Zimonyi's translation: "The Magyars are a Turkic people." Correct translation: "The Magyars are a race of the Turks.;" or: "The Magyars are a kind of the Turks." Namely, *jins* (< Greek γένος) is "a genus, kind, or generical class ... comprised under a superior genus, in relation to which it is a species, or sort".⁵⁷ This word does in fact mean "nation, people" in modern Arabic, but it is the result of an apparently late development. The earliest occurrence of this meaning listed by Dozy is dated 1847 (in the dialect of Algiers).⁵⁸ Kazimirski, Lane and Steingass do

⁵⁴ Bosworth says it does not supersede Ḥabībī's earlier critical edition, yet he also mentions that he had not been able to compare the two texts carefully by the time of writing, and on occasion he also quotes better readings by Riḍāzāda Malik. This means that it should definitely have been consulted. Gardīzī: *Ornament* 8, 116 (n. 27), 117 (n. 6). I have briefly checked the account on the Magyars and I have found one alternative reading worthy of consideration. See n. 77 and the corresponding paragraph below.

⁵⁵ On Zimonyi's English style in general, see the relevant section below.

⁵⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 39.

⁵⁷ Lane: *Lexicon* 470c.

⁵⁸ Dozy: *Supplément* I, 225.

not even list the meaning “nation, people”. Göckenjan’s rendering is unacceptable here: *Die Ungarn gehören zu den Türken*. [=The Hungarians belong to the Turks.] This is not a translation but a paraphrase.⁵⁹

● 4. “Their chieftain rides at the head of 20,000 horsemen.” Zimonyi skips the word *miqdār* before the numeral. Correct translation: “Their chieftain rides at the head of *approximately* 20,000 horsemen.”⁶⁰ Zimonyi might have wished to consult Göckenjan’s correct German translation or Wiet’s precise French rendering, for instance.⁶¹

● 5. The conjunction *li-anna* never means “while”; its meaning is “because”. — This sentence is of great significance, but its interpretation is fraught with insurmountable difficulties. The translation of the sentence runs as follows: “The leader is called *k.n.d.h.* This name is the title⁶² of their king, because the name of the person ruling over them is *j.l.h.* All Magyars obey what their leader called *j.l.h.* orders them to do in the field of warfare, resistance and other things.” The problem is whether the words *k.n.d.h.* and *j.l.h.* refer to one or two persons. In our second sentence, there is evidently an opposition between the two clauses connected by “because”. The problem is the nature of the opposition: between which parts of the sentence does the opposition subsist? The first possibility is that it subsists between the title of the king and his (personal) name [*ism*], and in this case the sentence refers to one and the same person. The word *ism* “name” occurs twice in the sentence. The first time, it appears, it has more or less the meaning of “word”, while the second time it is a technical term of name-giving: it means “personal name”, the equivalent of “given name” in the Western world. In this case the expression *al-rajul al-mutamallik ʿalayhim* is interpreted as a synonym of *malik* “king”, in the sense of “the person exercising royal power”, which our author used in order to avoid repetition and to make his style more lively. The expression refers to the same “king”, while the structure “called *j.l.h.*” in the clause “their leader called *j.l.h.*” is a parenthetic (descriptive, amplifying) structure, which can also be dropped without changing the meaning of the sentence.⁶³ The second possibility is that the opposition subsists between the king and the person effectively ruling over the Magyars, who are two distinct persons. In this case the word *al-rajul al-mutamallik ʿalayhim* is interpreted as “the person effectively ruling over them”, in contradistinction to their king. Here the construction “called *j.l.h.*” in the expression “their leader called *j.l.h.*” is a restrictive (defining) structure, which forms an essential part of the clause by *defining* it and which therefore cannot be dropped.⁶⁴ The sentence is in fact ambiguous to all intents and purposes; it is impossible to say which interpretation is preferable. Zimonyi is right to point out that the sentence is “equivocal as to whether it refers either to two names or

⁵⁹ Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 67.

⁶⁰ See Baranov: *Slovar*’ 800b.

⁶¹ Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 68. Ibn Rusteh: *Atours* 160.

⁶² The interpretation of the word *šīʿār* is problematic. Its basic meaning is “distinctive mark”, “sign”.

⁶³ See, e.g., Schibsbye: *Grammar* 242.

⁶⁴ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 242.

titles of a single ruler or to two rulers in different positions.” He continues: “Nevertheless, in context the latter seems preferable.”⁶⁵ Why? I cannot see anything in Ibn Rusta’s context that would support such a claim. In my view, this problem cannot be solved on the basis of this text alone. Among all the parallel versions it is only Gardīzī’s Persian text which is unequivocal in this respect, stating that *k.n.d.h* is the name of their “greater” (*bozorgtar*) king; their leader who “names the tasks” is called *j.l.h*.⁶⁶ This reference is thus to two rulers beyond any doubt.

The interpretation of this sentence in Gardīzī’s text has been somewhat problematic in Jayhānī scholarship. The Persian text in both manuscripts is clear: *wa ān sālār ki shughllhā khwānad ū-rā j.l.h khwānand* “that leader who names the tasks [to be done] they call *j.l.h*”.⁶⁷ The problem is the expression *shughllhā khwānad*, which is, however, quite clear in our view: “names the tasks [to be done], names the works [to be done], determines affairs, defines / appoints / assigns / fixes them”. The verb *khwāndan* means “to read, to call” (Steingass), also *constituere, designare* “to assign, appoint, fix, settle; to fix, appoint” (*muqarrar kardan, ta’yīn namūdan*) (Vullers).⁶⁸ Let us now examine how our predecessors interpreted this sentence. Barthold’s version (1897) is good: “the title of the leader who runs the affairs is *j.l.h*.” (титул того начальника, который заведует делами – Джыла).⁶⁹ Count Géza Kuun, who did not know of Barthold’s edition and translation, published a good Hungarian version in 1900: “[The person] who runs the affairs, they call *jila*.” (*A ki az ügyeket intézi, azt dsilá-nak nevezik*).⁷⁰ Martinez’s version of 1982 cannot be accepted: “that leader who appoints [officials to their] offices (...), they call the *jula*.”⁷¹ Nyitrai produced his Hungarian version of 1996 on the basis of Martinez, so it must be rejected too.⁷² In his turn, Zimonyi borrowed his earlier Hungarian version from Count Kuun: “The leader who is running the [state] affairs, they call *Ĝ.l.h*.” (*Azt a főnököt, aki az [állami] ügyeket intézi, Ĝ.l.h-nak nevezik*).⁷³ He retained it in the Hungarian original of the present work.⁷⁴ Zimonyi normally borrows translations from Czeglédy and not from Kuun. Why the sudden departure? The answer is simple: Czeglédy did not translate this sentence. Göckenjan’s German translation is in actual fact a free rendering based on the context: “The name of the leader who actually rules, they name *Ĝula*.” (*Den Namen jenes Anführers aber, der*

⁶⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 118.

⁶⁶ Gardīzī: *Tārīkh* 586.

⁶⁷ I have studied both manuscripts on microfilms in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

⁶⁸ Vullers: *Lexicon* I, 741a. On Vullers’s source, see *ibid.*, VII (no. 4). Leverett: *Lexicon* 200, 249.

⁶⁹ Barthold: *Otčet* 122. In accordance with normal usage, we have adopted the modern orthography in this quotation.

⁷⁰ Keleti kútfök 167. Kmoskó heavily criticized Count Kuun for being unaware of Barthold’s publication. In actual fact, Kuun prepared his own version before the publication of Barthold’s work, as the proofreading took place in 1897. However, Kuun’s subsequent publication on Gardīzī’s relevant chapters, which came out in 1903, is also unaware of Barthold’s edition and translation. Kuun: *Gardēzi*.

⁷¹ Martinez: Two chapters 160.

⁷² Nyitrai: *A magyar őstörténet* 73.

⁷³ I object to his choice of the word *főnök*, which I consider anachronistic, too modern, therefore inappropriate in the present context.

⁷⁴ Zimonyi: *Muszlim források* 37.

faktisch regiert, nennen sie Ğula.)⁷⁵ Zimonyi’s new version in the present work is without foundation: “that chieftain who practices (the royal) power, they call *j.l.h.*”⁷⁶ Now, the new Gardīzī edition of 2005, which Zimonyi is unaware of, contains an emendation in this place: instead of *ki shughlhā kh^wānad* (خواند) it has *ki shughlhā rānadh* (راند) “who drives/leads/manages/guides the affairs”.⁷⁷ This emendation is not based on the testimony of manuscripts. Nevertheless it is a good emendation producing a plausible reading. Its genesis can also be easily accounted for: the verb *kh^wānand* (خوانند) occurs in this passage twice, therefore the copyist automatically wrote *kh^wānad* (خواند), which is quite similar in shape. Yet this emendation is not necessary because the actual reading of both manuscripts makes perfect sense, as we have just seen.⁷⁸

It must also be pointed out that controversial aspects are not absent from this passage. The relationship between the *kende* and the *gyula* can be reconstructed as follows on the basis of Ibn Rusta and Gardīzī: the *kende* is a nominal king, habitually riding out at the head of approximately 20,000 warriors, while the *gyula* is the actual ruler, including military leadership. This seems to be the only possible way of harmonizing the information contained in these two sources. Yet the emerging picture is not wholly satisfactory. Firstly, there seems to be some contradiction between the *kende* riding out at the head of all those warriors and the *gyula*’s role of military leader. What are all those warriors doing in the *kende*’s retinue? Are we to assume that they are there to display all the “pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war”⁷⁹ just for “publicity’s sake” in the modern meaning of the term, to demonstrate the king’s power and the state’s formidable might? Secondly, riding out at the head of such a great number of warriors seems to be at variance with the role of a purely nominal ruler carefully avoiding any activity that could be detrimental to his well-being, as such a role is usually interpreted. Something seems to be wrong with this passage and to an extent that makes the chance of a convincing reconstruction of the original highly unlikely.

- 6. Arabic: *wa-lahum qibāb*. Zimonyi: “They are tent-dwelling people.” Correct translation: “They have dome-shaped tents.”
- 8a. *wa-masākinuhum* does not mean “the lands of the Magyars” but “their dwelling places”.
- 8b. “When the days of winter come, all of them *set up their camps on* the river, whichever of the two rivers lies nearer to them.” Zimonyi copied this version from

⁷⁵ Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 172. This assumption is corroborated by Göckenjan’s note 434 on the same page.

⁷⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 41. Once again we witness the phenomenon of Zimonyi adopting a totally wrong and unacceptable form despite having earlier found the evidently correct one. This is a clear sign of his helplessly erring between all sorts of translations and solutions without being able to choose the right one.

⁷⁷ Gardīzī: *Zayn* 395.

⁷⁸ I am indebted to Lutz Richter-Bernburg for his help in the interpretation of the Persian text.

⁷⁹ Shakespeare: *Othello*, III, 3.

Wiet.⁸⁰ However, Arabic *qašada* does not have this meaning. Correct translation: “When the days of winter come, all of them *go to* the river, whichever of the two rivers lies nearer to them.”

● 8c. Zimonyi: “It is the *most* appropriate winter quarters for them.”⁸¹ Zimonyi copied his translation from Kmoskó.⁸² Our translation: “It is *more* suitable for them to stay there in winter.” The relative *awfaq* can be interpreted both as comparative and superlative. In the present case the comparative “more suitable” fits the context better than Zimonyi’s “most appropriate”, because it is the more suitable of the two choices the Magyars have in winter, namely between staying in the open steppe somewhere between the two rivers, where it is difficult or nearly impossible to obtain food in the cold days of winter, and spending the winter in the vicinity of one of the two rivers, where they can easily catch fish. However, it is certainly not the best conceivable way of spending the winter in general. As far as I can see, apart from Kmoskó (and Zimonyi in his footsteps), all translators (Kuun, Czeglédy, Göckenjan, Khvol’son, Marquart, Wiet and Zakhoder alike) have chosen the comparative here.⁸³ — The structure of the sentence and its semantics leave no doubt that the subject must be interpreted as “stay”, “sojourn”, instead of Kmoskó’s and Zimonyi’s “quarters” – the word *muqām* has both meanings.⁸⁴

● 14a. Arabic: *wa-lahum al-ghalaba ‘alā man yalīhim min al-Šaqāliba*. Zimonyi: “They overcome all the Šaqāliba who are their neighbours.” The problem with this translation is that the Arabic original describes a state, a condition, and not an action. This aspect is emphasized by the *absence of a finite verb* in our sentence. It has an abstract noun instead (*ghalaba* “superiority”, “predominance”): “They have superiority/predominance over the neighbouring Šaqāliba.” This form also serves as an infinitive (“to subdue”, “to be victorious”, “to subdue”). Infinitives of this class of verbs (stem I) in Arabic have no particular form which would identify them as verbs, so their verbal nature is not transparent, in contradistinction to many languages. Such a form does not readily lend itself to translation by a *dynamic* finite verb, as is the case in Zimonyi’s version. Preferable translations: “They dominate the neighbouring Šaqāliba.” Or: “They are stronger than the neighbouring Šaqāliba and have them under their control.” The translations by Khvol’son, Kuun (twice), Kmoskó, Wiet, Zakhoder and Göckenjan are all correct.⁸⁵ It seems that Zimonyi here copied Czeglédy’s translation in a somewhat infelicitously simplified way. Czeglédy rendered the relevant expression with the verb “to defeat”, yet

⁸⁰ Ibn Rusteh: *Atours* 160.

⁸¹ Also Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 202.

⁸² Kmoskó: *Mohamedán* I/1, 208.

⁸³ Kuun: *Relationum* I, 165. Keleti kútfök 168–169. *A magyarok elődeiről* 88. Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 72. Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya* 26. Marquart: *Streifzüge* 516. Ibn Rusteh: *Atours* 160. Zakhoder: *Kaspiyskiy svod* II, 51.

⁸⁴ Kmoskó: *Mohamedán írók* I/1, 208. Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 202. Kuun: *Relationum* I, 165. Keleti kútfök 168–169. *A magyarok elődeiről* 88. Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya* 26. Marquart: *Streifzüge...*, 516. Zakhoder: *Kaspiyskiy svod* II, 51.

⁸⁵ Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya* 27. Kuun: *Relationum* I, 166. Keleti kútfök 169. Kmoskó: *Mohamedán írók* I/1, 208. Ibn Rusteh: *Atours* 160. Zakhoder: *Kaspiyskiy svod* II, 55. Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 73.

he was evidently aware of the problems this created, so he qualified the statement by adding the Hungarian equivalent of “constantly” in brackets: (*Állandóan*) *legyőzik...* [“They (constantly) defeat...”].⁸⁶ Zimonyi omitted this sensible addition. Czeglédy in his turn seems to have been influenced by two parallel passages, one in Ibn Rusta and one in Gardīzī. The passage in Ibn Rusta is only distantly related and presents no difficulties: *wa-yughīrūna ‘alā l-ṣaqāliba* “they [habitually] raid the Slavs...”.⁸⁷ The passage in Gardīzī presents problems. Several scholars have interpreted it in a similar way: (Martinez) “They are al[ways] conquering the Saqlābs”;⁸⁸ (Barthold) “Всѣ они производятъ набѣги на славянь. [“They all carry out raids on the Saqlābs”].⁸⁹ No doubt they were all influenced by the auxiliary verb *kardan* “to do”, “to make”, in their interpretation, seeing a dynamic action full of energy here, in contradistinction to a stative condition. However, in addition to “to be victorious over”, “to assault”, etc., *ghalaba kardan* also means “*praevalere*” “to be stronger or more powerful” and “*superiorem esse*” “to be superior”.⁹⁰ Both Ibn Rusta and Gardīzī had the same source, therefore their versions cannot be distant from each other. Since Ibn Rusta’s relevant phrase cannot mean “they overcome all the Saqlāba” for the reason referred to above, it is possible to establish two close texts only if one adapts the Persian version of Gardīzī to Ibn Rusta’s Arabic version. The resulting Gardīzī version here will be: “*Together they dominate the Saqlābs*”, that is only *the entire tribe* of the Magyars taken together is able to dominate them: “*wa īṣān hama bar Saqlāb ghalaba konand.*” The expression *īṣān hama* means “they all”, as Barthold interpreted it; it does not mean “they always”, as Martinez translated it.⁹¹ Incidentally, Czeglédy seems to have vacillated on this issue. Elsewhere he summarized this passage on the Magyars in Jayhānī as *a szlávok felett ... kényük-kedvük szerint uralkodva súlyos adókat vetettek ki rájuk...* “*having the Slavs under control at their pleasure, ... they levied upon them heavy taxes...*”.⁹²

● 14b. Arabic: *wa-yulzimūnahum al-mu’an al-ghalīza*. Zimonyi’s translation: “imposing harsh provisions/victuals upon them”. Our translation: “levying harsh burdens upon them”. The word *mu’na* (pl. *mu’an*) has a number of meanings, most of which seem too specific in the present case, because in addition to provisions, victuals and various taxes, this word also covers “work”, “hard work”, “burden”, “trouble”, “pains”.⁹³ In actual fact, what our author wants to say is ostensibly that the Magyars extort from the Slavs whatever they need and whatever they can, and they do so without mercy. Thus Kuun’s original choice is to be preferred, where he uses the Latin expression *dura onera*, “harsh

⁸⁶ *A magyarok elődeiről* 88.

⁸⁷ (142^{ult})

⁸⁸ Martinez: Two chapters 161.

⁸⁹ It has been necessary to retain the pre-revolution Russian orthography in the quotation because it differentiates between всѣ “all” in “all of them” and все (=всѣ) “all” as in “always”.

⁹⁰ Vullers: *Lexicon* II, 614. Leverett: *Lexicon* 696c.

⁹¹ I am indebted to Lutz Richter-Bernburg for his help in dealing with the Persian text.

⁹² Czeglédy: Szakrális 14. [= Id.: *Magyar* 213]. (The tense is wrong: the predicate should be in the present.)

⁹³ Dozy: *Supplément* II, 573–574.

burdens”.⁹⁴ Peter Golden’s “raw materials” sounds too specific as well as somewhat anachronistic.⁹⁵ I am not happy with “imposing” either and would prefer to use “levy”. “Imposing harsh provisions upon them” is more or less acceptable: it means that they make tough demands of some nature. On the other hand, “imposing harsh victuals” suggests forcing them to *accept* bad food.

● 16b. Arabic: *wa-dafa‘ū ilayhim al-raqīq wa-akhadhū l-dībāj al-rūmī wa-l-zilliyyāt wa-sā’ir matā‘ al-Rūm*. Zimonyi: “They buy Byzantine (rūmī) brocade, woollen carpets and other Byzantine goods for the slaves.”⁹⁶ This translation cannot be accepted. Our translation: “They hand over the slaves to them and take [from them] Byzantine brocade, woollen carpets and other Byzantine goods.” Essentially, the inhabitants of the Byzantine port *barter* with the Magyars; in the Arabic sentence there is no reference to buying or money. Zimonyi may have been misled by the Arabic verb *dafa‘a*, which means “to pay” in modern Arabic. However, this is a secondary, derived meaning. Its fundamental meaning is “to push”, “to drive”, “to hand over”. The modern meaning “to pay” is derived from *dafa‘a thamanan* “to hand over [the] price”. And in Modern Standard Arabic the object of *dafa‘a* is the merchandise one is going to receive (to hand over the price of the merchandise > to pay the price of the merchandise > to pay [for] the merchandise).⁹⁷ This is just the opposite of our case here, where *dafa‘a* has the “captives” to be handed over as its object. Zimonyi might have wished to consult Göckenjan’s precise German translation of this sentence, for instance.⁹⁸ I am sure he has it on his desk.

Some more problematic examples

In a quotation from Ibn al-Faqīh al-Hamadhānī Zimonyi’s translation reads as follows – our parallel translation appears in a different typeface:

● “The third sea is the Khurāsān or Khazar Sea, due to its proximity to the Khazars. It extends from them to Mūqān, Ṭabaristān, Khwārazm and Bāb al-Abwāb.

“The third sea is the Khurāsāni or Khazar Sea, [so called] due to the Khazars’ proximity to it. [It extends] to Mūqān, Ṭabaristān, Khwārazm and Bāb al-Abwāb.

⁹⁴ Kuun: *Relationum* I, 166. Cf. Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 327–328.

⁹⁵ Golden may have been influenced by the modern expression *mu’an ḥarbiyya* “war materials” in Wehr: *Dictionary* 889.

⁹⁶ See also Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 335.

⁹⁷ Sharbatov: *Slovar’* 641.

⁹⁸ Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 74–75.

● From the sea of Jurjān **to the Gulf of the Khazars** it is a *ten*-day trip with favorable winds on the sea, or *eight* on the land [?].^{98a}

From the Sea of Jurjān to the Khazar city of Khamlīkh it is a ten-day trip. When the winds are favourable to them [=to the travellers],⁹⁹ eight days by sea and [another] two days by land.

● The sea is also called the ‘circle of Khurāsān’; its diameter is one hundred parasangs, and if someone wanted to walk around it, it would cover a distance of one thousand five hundred parasangs.

This sea is [also] called the Khurāsān Circle. Its diameter is one hundred parasangs and its circumference is one thousand and five hundred parasangs.

● The fourth (sea) between Rūmiyya and Khwārazm (and in it there is) an island called Tūliyya. No ships operate on him [*sic*] at all.”¹⁰⁰

The fourth [=sea] is the one between Rūmiyya and Khwārazm [on which there is] an island called Tūliya. No ship has ever been anchored on it.”

Apart from everything else, it sounds definitely odd in Zimonyi’s translation that the overland route between two points on a sea is considerably shorter than the sea-route – when even the winds are favourable! The “Gulf of the Khazars” above makes no sense and Lewicki convincingly argues, adducing parallel examples from other geographers, that *Khalīj* [=Gulf] is a copyist’s mistake for the Khazar city of *Khamlīkh* (*Khamlīkh madīnat al-Khazar*).¹⁰¹ But in that case one must emend the text accordingly! Zimonyi quotes Lewicki’s relevant note here but fails to draw the necessary conclusion and leaves the incomprehensible text untouched. He also mis-copies the term *al-Dawwāra al-Khurāsāniyya* [concord! he writes *al-Khurāsānī*], but he is right in stating that the first constituent part of the term is unclear. The rest of his summary of Lewicki’s argument is inadequate and incomprehensible, because he misunderstands Lewicki’s point. His rather opaque interpretation seems to suggest that Lewicki thinks this term refers to the *province* of Khurāsān, since “in any case, the province of Khurāsān bordered on the coast of the Caspian Sea”. But Lewicki says something else. He merely states that *dawwāra* means a “piece of land with the same length and width”, a “geometrical figure without corners” and “roundness”. Then Lewicki describes what the word *Khurāsāniyya* means, adding that the borders of Khurāsān extended as far as the Caspian Sea in the ninth–tenth centuries. But from the context it is absolutely clear that *dawwāra* refers

^{98a} Zimonyi wants us to believe that the sea route between two points in the Caspian Sea, or rather on its shore, is longer than the land route, especially when the winds are favourable!

⁹⁹ It is a common feature of this and related Arabic texts that a general or impersonal subject is referred to as “they”. Emphasis mine. – I.O.

¹⁰⁰ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 212–213. Ibn al-Fakīh: *Compendium* 7–8. All emphases in the quotation mine. – I.O.

¹⁰¹ In addition to Lewicki’s data one could also mention that *Khamlīkh* is often spelled *Khamlīj* and is regularly mixed up with *Khalīj* in manuscripts of various works. Cf. Ibn Khordādhbeh: *Masālik* 124 (k), 154 (m), 155 (d).

here to the Caspian Sea and *not* to Khurāsān. Here Lewicki stops, apparently at a loss and unable to solve the riddle.¹⁰² Zimonyi is helpless, too. However, finding the solution to this problem is not as difficult as it first seems. The Arabs (and Muslims in general) conceived of the Caspian Sea as a *circle*. This appears clearly in the map of the Caspian Sea in Ibn Ḥawqal’s work, about which Ibn Ḥawqal explicitly wrote: “The [Caspian] Sea was drawn in the shape of a circle in the centre of the map.”¹⁰³ The map with the conspicuous circle was reproduced in Kramers’s edition, as well as in the French translation by Kramers and Wiet, both of which are well known to both Lewicki and Zimonyi alike.¹⁰⁴ Zimonyi himself included this map with the circle in Kmoskó’s translation of Ibn Ḥawqal’s relevant sections.¹⁰⁵ He evidently forgot about it with the progress of time.

In the essay on the seas we find the following translation of a passage from Mas‘ūdī: “The Sea of Bunṭus (Black Sea) and the Sea of Māyuṭis (Sea of Azov) should be considered also as one sea, although the land narrows the field at some points between the two (seas), as it would form a strait between the two seas. It is called Māyuṭis (Sea of Azov), not because it is wider and richer in water, and it is called as Bunṭus (Black Sea), not because it is narrower and has less water. The names Māyuṭis (Sea of Azov) and Bunṭus (Black Sea) cannot be unified (in one name). If we designate them in other parts of this book as Māyuṭis (Sea of Azov) and Bunṭus (Black Sea), we mean a larger sea and a smaller (sea consequently).”¹⁰⁶ This rendition is hardly comprehensible. It makes little sense and what it apparently claims (“cannot be unified [in one name]”) is just the opposite of what Mas‘ūdī actually says. Our translation runs as follows: “The Sea of Bunṭus [Black Sea] and the Sea of Māyuṭis [Sea of Azov] must be one sea, even if the land constricts them at some points and that [part] becomes sort of a strait between the two waters. The fact that that part which is wide and has much water is called Māyuṭis and that part which is narrow and has little water is called Bunṭus does not prevent the name Māyuṭis or Bunṭus from comprising both. When we express ourselves in some places in the text of this book using the word Māyuṭis or Bunṭus then it is exactly this meaning that we aim at by it, comprising [both] the wide and the narrow parts.”

For the sake of easy comparison, our translation appears below sentence by sentence in a different typeface:

¹⁰² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 212–213. Lewicki: *Żródła* II/1, 53 (n. 40); 54 (n. 42).

¹⁰³ Ibn Ḥawqal: *Opus* 386. Also in Zimonyi’s edition of Kmoskó: *Mohamedán* I/2, 96–97 (drawing), 108 (Hung. transl.).

¹⁰⁴ It is contained in MS 3346 of the Old Seray Library at Istanbul (copied in 479/1086) of Ibn Ḥawqal’s *Kitāb ṣūrat al-ard*. It is the manuscript on which Kramers’s second edition of that work was based. It is reproduced on p. 387 of the edition in question and also in the French translation by Kramers and Wiet. Ibn Ḥawqal: *Configuration* 376–377. Both these publications are well known to Lewicki and Zimonyi alike so it is rather strange that neither noticed this map, which is indeed quite a striking piece of drawing.

¹⁰⁵ Kmoskó: *Mohamedán* I/2, 96–97 (no. 3).

¹⁰⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 219. Cf. Maḥouđi: *Prairies* I, 272–273. Mas‘ūdī: *Prairies* (ed. Pellat) I, 146 [§294]. Mas‘ūdī: *Prairies* (transl. Pellat) I, 112 [§294].

● “The Sea of Buntus (Black Sea) and the Sea of Māyutiṣ (Sea of Azov) should be considered also as one sea, although the land narrows the field at some points between the two (seas), as it would form a strait between the two seas.

“The Sea of Buntus [Black Sea] and the Sea of Māyutiṣ [Sea of Azov] must be one sea, even if the land constricts them at some points and that [part] becomes sort of a strait between the two waters.

● It is called Māyutiṣ (Sea of Azov), not because it is wider and richer in water, and it is called as Buntus (Black Sea), not because it is narrower and has less water. The names Māyutiṣ (Sea of Azov) and Buntus (Black Sea) cannot be unified (in one name).

The fact that that part which is wide and has much water is called Māyutiṣ and that part which is narrow and has little water is called Buntus does not prevent the name Māyutiṣ or Buntus from comprising both.

● If we designate them in other parts of this book as Māyutiṣ (Sea of Azov) and Buntus (Black Sea), we mean a larger sea and a smaller (sea consequently).”

When we express ourselves in some places in the text of this book using the word Māyutiṣ or Buntus then it is exactly this meaning that we aim at by it, comprising [both] the wide and the narrow parts.”

In his *Tanbīh* Mas‘ūdī mentions again that some people regard the Black Sea and the “Lake” of Azov as one sea.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the highly problematic nature of this paragraph also escaped Zimonyi’s attention. The proportion of the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea is in need of clarification, because Mas‘ūdī’s claim is at variance with real facts and with his own statements made elsewhere. Here he says that the Sea of Azov is much bigger than the Black Sea. It must be a mistake: perhaps a copyist mixed the names up in the course of transmission.¹⁰⁸ Mas‘ūdī seems to have been aware that the Black Sea is much bigger than the Sea of Azov, as is demonstrated by relevant parallel statements made elsewhere in the same work and in his *Tanbīh*.¹⁰⁹ This question is in need of further clarification, because the state of Mas‘ūdī’s familiarity with the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov and might also compromise his reports on the Magyars.

Marwazī has the following brief statement on the Magyars: *wa-lahum tharwa wa-amwāl zāhira*. Zimonyi copied Minorsky’s translation: “They have wealth and *visible*

¹⁰⁷ Mas‘ūdī: *Tanbīh* 67.

¹⁰⁸ We have pointed out elsewhere that the text of Mas‘ūdī’s *Murūğ* as it is available to us in the latest, and so far best, edition by Pellat, is far from being in a satisfactory state: there are numerous manuscripts in accessible (mainly European) collections which nobody has seen. They were known to Pellat when he prepared his edition, but he did not consult them, because he felt too old and tired, as he tells his readers in the introduction.

¹⁰⁹ Maçoudi: *Prairies* I, 260–261. Mas‘ūdī: *Prairies* (ed. Pellat) I, 140 [§278]. Mas‘ūdī: *Prairies* (transl. Pellat) I, 107 [§278]. Mas‘ūdī: *Tanbīh* 66–67. Cf. Dunlop: Baḥr Buntus. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² I, 927. Dunlop: Baḥr Māyutiṣ. In: *ibid.* I, 934.

property...” What is visible property? We suggest the following version instead: “They have wealth and *conspicuous* possessions...”¹¹⁰

Zimonyi’s translation of a passage on the Magyars in Bakrī runs as follows: “Their morals are satisfying except that they leave their women with their slaves and guests and those who want them [the women] to be alone.” I suggest another version: “Their morals are satisfactory except that they make their women available to their slaves and guests and those who want to be left alone with them.”¹¹¹

A quotation from Qudāma, which runs *wa-laysa ahluhū aṣḥāb ḥarb li-annahū lā yablughu ilayhim maghāzī l-muslimīn wa-lā ghayrihim...*, was translated by Zimonyi as follows: “*Their commander is not a general*, since neither the raids of the Muslims nor others can reach them.”¹¹² Our translation: “*Its population is not warlike* because neither the raids of the Muslims nor of others reach them.” Zimonyi’s translation was made from the Hungarian version by Kmoskó, who for some odd reason totally misunderstood this passage: Qudāma says nothing of a general.¹¹³

In an interesting passage on the Volga we read in Zimonyi’s translation: “It is said that more than seventy streams branch out from this river. Its main body flows by Khazarān till it falls into the sea. It is said that if this river’s upper courses *were* collected into one, its waters *would exceed* the Oxus (Jayḥūn). Its *size and weight* of water are such that when it reaches the sea it continues to flow as a river for two-days’ journey...”¹¹⁴ We offer an accurate translation instead: “It is said that more than seventy streams branch out from this river. Its main body flows by the Khazars till it falls into the sea. It is said that when the waters of this river *are* [still] united in one river higher up [along its course] it *exceeds* the Oxus (Jayḥūn). The *abundance* of these waters and their *profusion* reach such a degree that when it reaches the sea it continues to flow as a river for two-days’ journey...” Zimonyi copied his English translation from Dunlop, who, alas, misunderstood the text and Zimonyi failed to notice it.¹¹⁵ The point is that the meaning is not conditional, and certainly not unreal conditional: the waters of this river *are indeed* united in one trunk before reaching the delta. The Arab author had heard and did not doubt that the Volga is bigger than the Oxus before it splits into many branches, yet he had not seen it himself because he only visited the Delta region. This case is informative in so far as this passage occurs both in Iṣṭakhrī and in Ibn Ḥawqal, (in slightly different versions, though), and both were translated by Kmoskó, and the translation was edited and published by Zimonyi. Kmoskó’s translations are not unambiguous, though not necessarily wrong: they are vague, so that it is not clear whether he failed to understand the sentences or was simply sloppy in his formulation. In any case, Kmoskó’s wording is of no help in elucidating the precise meaning of these sentences.

¹¹⁰ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 358. Marvazī: *On China* 22*, 35.

¹¹¹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 361. Al-Bakrī: *Masālik* 490.

¹¹² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 226.

¹¹³ Kmoskó: *Mohamedán* I/1, 164. Emphasis added. – I.O. For *aṣḥāb ḥarb*, cf., Brünnow, Fischer: *Chrestomathy*, 31a (Glossary); cf. *ibid.*, 47⁸ (Ar.). Kazimirski: *Dictionnaire* I, 168.

¹¹⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 232. al-Istakhrī: *Viae* 222. Ibn Ḥawqal: *Opus* 393. Emphasis added. – I.O.

¹¹⁵ Dunlop: *History* 95.

The crux of the matter here is the perfect with the temporal *idā*. It is only in the modern language that *idā* is often treated as a conditional particle.¹¹⁶

Distinguishing between good, less good and bad translations

It also happens that Zimonyi is unable to tell a good translation from a bad one even if presented with it. Thus, for instance, in Idrīsī's description of the miraculous "Depressed Land" or "Sunken Earth", which is bordered by perpendicular walls so that no one can descend there or ascend from it, Idrīsī writes that from above the vague shape of a river can be perceived in the distance as a *khayāl*, a faint shadow, a mirage. This is quite a simple Arabic sentence and there can be no doubt as to its precise meaning. However, when Kmoskó prepared his translations in the 1920s, he did not have the original Arabic text at his disposal because it had not yet been published in print, and in the absence of anything better he resorted to the notoriously unreliable French translation (1836–1840) by a member of the French Expedition to Egypt and Napoleon's favourite Oriental adviser and dragoman, Pierre Amédée Jaubert, who, basing his interpretation on another meaning of the word *khayāl*, visualized ghosts (*fantômes*) walking along the riverbank.¹¹⁷ Kračkovskiy pronounced a stern warning: "Executed in excellent French on the basis of the Paris (not the best) manuscript, [this translation] met with positive appraisal at the beginning. However, a deeper study of Idrīsī by subsequent scholars revealed its total unreliability. A detailed analysis of its most typical misunderstandings was carried out by Dozy and de Goeje. Since then various scholars repeatedly emphasized the inadmissibility of its perusal in a study with any claim to seriousness." The grand old master of modern Arabic studies in Russia pointed out in his seminal monograph on geographical literature in Arabic, published posthumously in 1957, that in the case of Idrīsī one had to rely on manuscripts or relevant monographs: one should avoid Jaubert's translation even if it was the only printed text available.¹¹⁸ Some decades later Idrīsī's text became accessible in a good printed edition and thus Zimonyi was able to compare it with Kmoskó's translation, upon which he basically relied.¹¹⁹ It is evident that Zimonyi did study the Arabic original because he made some modifications to Jaubert's version. He realized – correctly – that *khayāl* was a singular form, thus he replaced Jaubert's and Kmoskó's "ghosts" with one "ghost" only. He also detected a preposition *fī* "in", thus he concluded that the ghost could not be walking *along* the riverbank but had to be *in* the river, probably swimming and splashing happily around in the water. This was an erroneous conclusion because the personal suffix attached to the preposition was in the feminine, therefore it could not refer to the river, which was masculine. It referred to *arḍ* "earth", which is feminine and meant here the Depressed Land (Sunken *Earth*). Moreover, the subject of the relative sentence was the river and

¹¹⁶ Temporal *idā* "may usually be rendered by the present" in English, as is well known. Wright: *Grammar* II, 12B; 12, rem. *; 14B.

¹¹⁷ Édrisi: *Géographie* II, 438. Kmoskó: *Mohamedán* I/1, 125 (n. 408).

¹¹⁸ Kračkovskiy: *Izbrannye* IV, 288. On Jaubert, see Nouvelles et mélanges. *Journal Asiatique* 4. série, 9 (1847) 80–83. Pierre Amédée Émilien Probe Jaubert. In: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* XV, 281.

¹¹⁹ Al-Idrīsī: *Opus* 961.

not the alleged “ghost”. There were several other grammatical and semantic features, too, which were incompatible with Zimonyi’s Hungarian translation and which he did not notice.¹²⁰ Thus it is not true to say that Zimonyi chose a possible meaning from among several options which yielded a correct alternative translation: the references of the personal suffixes and the syntax of the passage make it categorically impossible to accept the translation he offered. In the present work Zimonyi simply copied the translation of this section from a recent English publication, with the result that it contains some modifications as compared to the Hungarian original.¹²¹ However, the authors of the English translation, van Donzel and Schmidt, also relied on Jaubert’s French translation without consulting the original Arabic text. They use the word “spectre”, which is a synonym for “ghost”. Zimonyi reverted to the plural form, giving “spectres”, thus going back on the emendation that had been correct in the Hungarian version. In actual fact, here Zimonyi had to make an independent decision because his English source contained a misprint, which he recognized: “there is a river which flows from north to south, on which *spectres appears...*”.¹²² And he made the wrong choice: instead of retaining the singular form of the Arabic original, which he had already noted and adopted in his Hungarian version, here he “corrected” this error of the English translators in the wrong direction by adopting the erroneous form by Jaubert. Closely following Jaubert’s translation (*un fleuve ... « sur lequel apparaissent des fantômes »*), he also replaced the Hungarian equivalent of “in” with “on”: “The most surprising thing is that there is a river which flows from north to south, **on** which spectres appear...”¹²³ Zimonyi’s subsequent modifications merely reveal his perplexity. He is unable to produce a correct translation even of this rather simple passage, the Arabic original of which he had definitely checked. We can see him hopelessly lost among the Arabic original and various translations which surpass each other in the number of errors (Jaubert, Kmoskó, van Donzel and Schmidt). Zimonyi does in fact refer to van Donzel and Schmidt’s work in the footnote attached to this passage, but his reference (p. 220) is wrong, because the passage in question is in fact to be found on p. 196. This means that the interested reader will not find any trace of the English version on the page indicated and will therefore be unable to discover the true state of affairs and will attribute the translation to Zimonyi.

Here follows the Arabic text in the translation of van Donzel and Schmidt (made from Jaubert’s version), which Zimonyi also copied.¹²⁴ For the sake of comparison, our translation is added in a different typeface. Our annotations follow in a third typeface.

¹²⁰ Zimonyi: *Muszlim források* 54.

¹²¹ Donzel, Schmidt: *Gog and Magog* 196.

¹²² Emphasis added. – I.O.

¹²³ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 63. Édrisi: *Géographie* II, 438. Emphasis added. – I.O.

¹²⁴ The version by van Donzel and Schmidt, which Zimonyi also copied, is not a precise translation of Jaubert’s text, either; they treat it rather freely. There can be no doubt that Jaubert’s *fantômes* is a gross misunderstanding. However, there are other differences, too, between Jaubert’s text and the Arabic original as it is now accessible in a printed edition. Jaubert worked on the basis of a manuscript. It is not clear how much the differences are due to Jaubert’s insufficient knowledge of Arabic and how much to

- “And Al-Jayhānī reports in his book: the travellers,^a having come out of the fetid land, see this valley.^b

“Al-Jayhānī recounted in his book that they^c passed it^d after they had left the Fetid Land.

^{a, b}There is no such word in the Arabic text. ^cThe antecedent of this pronoun is missing owing to careless compilation. It may have been the expression “Sallām and his companions”, for instance. ^dNamely, the Depressed Land, which was mentioned in the previous sentence.

- They travel^a along the rims^b during one day, but are unable to descend into it on any side, because the terrain^c is very deep and the approaches^d grim.

They caught sight of it^e and walked along it^f one day long. It is a piece of land to which nobody can descend from any of its sides because its depression is so deep and [it is] so difficult [to descend on] its sides.

^aThe tense is wrong. ^bThe Arabic text does not mention rims. ^cThe Arabic text has “pit” or “depression”. ^dThe Arabic text has “its sides”. ^{e, f}=the Depressed Land

- However, they are^a of the opinion that this land is^b inhabited, for on several spots they see^c smoke during broad daylight and fires during the night, which appear and disappear at intervals.^d

It is inhabited. They discovered this by seeing smoke in many places during daytime and fires in the night similar to the appearance of stars flaring up and disappearing time and again.

^{a, b, c}The tense is wrong. ^dThe reference to the stars, which can be found both in the Arabic original and in Jaubert’s French translation, is missing here.

- The most surprising thing is that there is a river which flows from north to south,^a on which spectres^b appear^c and whose banks^d are covered with buildings.^e

Among the things in it^f the most astonishing is that there is a river in it^g appearing as a mirage crossing its territory from the south to the north. [The clear signs of] the [aforementioned human] habitation^h are on it.ⁱ

^aThe Arabic text has “from south to north”, in contradistinction to Schmidt and van Donzel’s version. ^bThe correct interpretation is “mirage” or perhaps “shadow”. Namely, one cannot discern the river clearly from above because of the great distance. ^cSchmidt and van Donzel have an obvious misprint (“appears”) here, which Zimonyi corrected to “appear”. ^dThere is no such word in the Arabic text. ^eThe word

his eventual free treatment of his text. It is also possible that some differences at least are due to differences in the manuscript he was using.

‘*imāra* does indeed mean “building”, especially in modern Arabic, but it stands to reason that the word appearing here is the related ‘*amāra*, the infinitive of the verb ‘*amara* “to thrive, prosper, flourish”. The semantic field of this word encompasses such meanings as “[a place] became inhabited”, “became stocked with people”, “is in a flourishing state”, thus it also means “civilization”, but it also occurs as a transitive verb “to inhabit”. In the present case, this word has the adjective *ma‘mūra* “inhabited” a few lines above as the antecedent, therefore it is much more likely to mean “human habitation”, “human civilization” here. Though not decisive, the fact that this word is in the singular points in this direction too. Idrīsī/Jayhānī used it as a passive participle in the sentence above: “It is inhabited [*ma‘mūra*].” Thus ‘*amāra* in fact refers back to this previous statement by being definite (definite article *al-*). ^f ^g = the Depressed Land. ^hSee note “e” in the present paragraph. ⁱThe pronoun “it” refers to the river. The literal meaning of the sentence is: “[It is] on it^a [that the clear signs of] the [aforementioned human] habitation^b are [=can be perceived].” In this sentence, “^a” refers to the river, while “^b” refers to the earlier sentence “It is inhabited”.

● But it is impossible to descend into the valley^a or to climb out of it because the rims are steep.”^b

Nobody at all can descend to it^c nor ascend from it because this is impossible.”

^aThere is no “valley” in the Arabic original. Here the text has “it” referring to the “[Depressed] Land”. ^bThere are no “steep rims” in the Arabic original. ^c= the Depressed Land.

Philological analyses (Essays)

As has been pointed out above, Zimonyi presents lengthy philological analyses, mainly in the form of essays, in connection with the sentences of the Magyar chapter in the Jayhānī account. They are of varying interest. We will now look at some of them.

On the subject of the Magyars’ habitat in the vicinity of the Black Sea, Zimonyi presents a twenty-eight-page essay on seas in Arab and Muslim geographical literature in general.¹²⁵ For the purpose of the present book it would have sufficed to offer a summary of the information that is relevant to the book’s subject on half a page or one page at most, since there are only three seas of interest here: the Caspian, the Black Sea (with the Sea of Azov) and the Mediterranean. Another possibility would have been to write an exhaustive monograph on the subject. What we have instead, are long and difficult passages from geographical works where the textual transmission and the texts themselves are often problematic and thus they display many variants. This is partly because the Arabs’ and Muslims’ knowledge of the seas was quite vague and controversial at the time. There are many mistakes in the texts, too. It is easy to see that they are in need of extensive

¹²⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 202–230.

commentaries if any use is to be made of them.¹²⁶ However, commentaries are few and meagre here. In addition, the whole section is in awkward English, so that reading it is something of an ordeal. I have serious doubts whether anyone besides me will ever read it from beginning to end.

Zimonyi's long discussion of tents and his remarks on the subject elsewhere are severely handicapped by the terminological confusion they display. Several Arabic and Persian words (*qubba*, *khayma*, *bayt*, *khargāh*) occur in the relevant texts referring to "tents", and several English equivalents (dome, tent, house, yurt, felt-huts, etc.) are used to denote them in the English texts. In addition to his own text, Zimonyi quotes a number of English translations from various scholars, who all use these words in their own particular ways and Zimonyi keeps the original wording in each case. The result is that a given Arabic or Persian word has different equivalents in English in the various translations, while one and the same English word or expression stands for different Arabic or Persian forms. In the ensuing confusion the helpless reader is totally lost, unable to guess what these words exactly mean and who writes exactly what.¹²⁷

Ibn Rusta informs his readers in a famous passage that at some earlier date the Khazars surrounded themselves with a moat as protection against the Magyars and other peoples. According to the generally accepted interpretation, this passage refers to the building of the fortress of Sarkel on the Lower Don, which is known from Byzantine sources. Zimonyi first addressed this passage in 1996, declaring it to be out of the question that the Khazars would have defended themselves by a moat around a fortress in the steppe, and that therefore it was impossible to establish any connection between this passage and the Magyars. Rather, Zimonyi declared, the whole passage was a literary topos relating to the famous Battle of the Moat at Medina in 627, in which the Prophet Muhammad played an outstanding role.¹²⁸ I pointed out in a review at the time that it was difficult to see why the Khazars could not have constructed a moat around a fortress in a plain. After all, moats were usually constructed around fortresses located in plains and not on mountain peaks.¹²⁹ Zimonyi's statement was all the more remarkable because he was living in the city of Szeged in southern Hungary, a location which is geographically strikingly similar to Sarkel. Namely, Szeged lies on the river Tisza in the Great Hungarian Plain, and in medieval times a fortress was built on the banks of the river surrounded by a moat, which was connected to the river and filled with its water as an additional defensive measure. When he wrote the Hungarian original of the present book, Zimonyi was unaware that extensive archeological excavations had been carried out on the site of

¹²⁶ See e.g. note 105 and the corresponding paragraph in the main text above. It concerns the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, i.e. two seas of considerable importance in early Hungarian history.

¹²⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 173.

¹²⁸ Zimonyi: A 9. századi 57. This wholly untenable idea was repeated in Göckenjan, Zimonyi: *Berichte* 74, n. 102. Moreover, it is difficult to see why an interpolation is unlikely to refer to an *earlier* event, as the authors claim.

¹²⁹ Ormos: *Honfoglaláskor* 282–283. One can easily check photos of Lichtenstein Castle (Württemberg) in Germany, for instance, on the internet.

Sarkel before the Tsimlyansk Reservoir waters submerged it in 1952.¹³⁰ Indeed, both moat and rampart were found.¹³¹ In the Hungarian version of the present book Zimonyi's central claim was that his Hungarian predecessors (Kmoskó and Czeglédy) had misinterpreted and mistranslated the passage in question by interpreting *khandaq* as rampart, while in actual fact it meant moat. I pointed out in a review that while the basic meaning of the word *khandaq* was indeed moat, in a broader sense it also meant rampart, and also both structures together, as is the case in many languages, not just Arabic. In other words, these two concepts are closely connected to each other because both structures are constructed together in most cases: the earth excavated from the moat is heaped up in the adjoining place to form a rampart as an additional defensive structure. In the interim, Zimonyi seems to have been informed of these facts. Yet he does not offer an adequate account of the current state of our knowledge concerning this question, but gets lost in unimportant details as well as offering an account of the Battle of the Moat, which is out of context here.¹³²

Ibn Rusta mentions in a famous passage that the Magyars regularly conduct raiding parties against the Slavs, seizing captives from them whom they take to a Byzantine port, trading them with the local residents for various luxury articles. The name of the port appears as Karkh in de Goeje's critical edition and its identification is hotly debated among specialists, although the majority tends to agree that it refers to the city of Kerč in the Crimea. In an essay on this problem Zimonyi repeats the argument which he adopted from one of his pupils, Szabolcs Polgár. This argument was based on Polgár's claim that there is a common noun, *karkh*, of Aramaic origin, meaning "city", "town", in Arabic. Thus the word could refer to any town in the area. In consequence, the sentence "they take them to a Byzantine port which is called Karkh" simply means that "they take them to the town".¹³³ Therefore, in Polgár's view, its identification need not be based on phonetic similarity but can be determined by historical and geographical aspects. Polgár and in his footsteps Zimonyi both attributed this "philological" argument to Gyula Németh. I demonstrated that this attribution was devoid of any foundation, because they had totally misunderstood Németh's statement on this subject.¹³⁴ Without

¹³⁰ Artamonov: *Khazarskaya krepost'* 321–341, esp. 323–325. Id.: Sarkel–Belaya Veža. In: *Trudy* I, 8–11, fig. no. 1–2. Id.: *Istoriya khazar* 300. Pavel Aleksandrovič Rappoport: Krepostnye sooruzheniya Sarkela. In: *Trudy* II [1959], 9, 12–14, fig. no. 5. [Pletneva] Pletnjowa: *Chasaren* 47, 101–103. Ead.: *Sarkel i «Shelkoviy put'»* 4–8, 166. Ead.: *Očerki* 85–100, esp. 87, fig. 59–60. Golden: *Studies* I, 69 (n. 213). The site of Sarkel was first identified by Popov in 1895 on the Lower Don. His identification was convincingly proven by Artamonov, who excavated the archaeological site in large-scale projects in the 1930s and from 1949 until 1951 before it was submerged by the Tsimlyansk reservoir (now Tsimlyansk Sea) in 1952. The processing and publication of Artamonov's rich results were carried on by his pupil Pletneva after his death in 1972. She also mentions that systems of moats and mounds were always used around Khazar fortresses excavated in the Daghestan plain to the west of the Caspian sea. [Pletneva] Pletnjowa: *Chasaren* 47.

¹³¹ [Pletneva] Pletnjowa: *Chasaren* 101–102 (with ground-plan).

¹³² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 343. Cf. Ormos: Remarks 390–392.

¹³³ It is plausible to assume that he was influenced by the well-known etymology of Istanbul. See Halil İnalçık: Istanbul. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² IV, 224. J[ohannes] H[einrich] Mordtmann: (al-)Kus-tantīniyya. *Ibid.*, V, 532.

¹³⁴ Zimonyi: *Muszlím források* 248. Ormos: A magyar őstörténet 761–763. Id.: Remarks 389–340.

entering into the moot question of the identification of this port, I pointed out at the time that there was no such common word in Arabic and that even if there had been, the sentence in question cannot be interpreted as Polgár suggests because in such a case the word “town” would have to be definite, which is not the case here. It is well known that common nouns are often employed as geographical names in Arabic (just like in other languages), and thus they subsequently become proper nouns. However, in Arabic they are always definite. Just to name a few examples: *al-Sawād* [“blackness” > “arable farm land” > “Iraq, Babylonia”],¹³⁵ Iraq [*al-‘Irāq*; according to one interpretation it is derived from the common noun *‘irāq* “side”, “shore”, i.e. of the Tigris and Euphrates],¹³⁶ *al-Jibāl* [“mountains” > (former) Media]¹³⁷ and Medina [*al-Madīna* “the Town”]¹³⁸ first and foremost. In the course of his efforts Polgár completely lost sight of the relevant Arabic sentence, which is unequivocal in indicating the *name* of the given city. For pragmatic reasons, one does not say: “until they arrive with them at the Byzantine *port which is called town*.” This untenable theory is repeated here in a rather vague and scarcely comprehensible way.¹³⁹ Moreover, Zimonyi mentions that “the form Kerč appeared *only* in the 10th century”.¹⁴⁰ This is true,¹⁴¹ yet the implication of this formulation is unacceptable. Namely, Zimonyi treats it as a proof that this chronological fact precludes its occurrence in Ibn Rusta’s text.¹⁴² However, this is by no means so. Even if this name first appeared in the tenth century as far as surviving documents are concerned, it may still have existed at the end of the ninth century (or even earlier), when Ibn Rusta’s account of the Magyars was written. It must be taken into account in general that we are dealing here with a region about which we possess few written documents.

Zimonyi offers an essay on the fortresses which the Slavs built against the Magyars according to Gardīzī. Its central piece is an account of Slav fortress-building technique as related by the Andalusian traveller Ibrāhīm ibn Ya‘qūb, who – as Zimonyi explicitly mentions – “also visited Prague”. This famous traveller visited many places all over Europe in the second half of the tenth century. If Zimonyi singles out Prague from all the places Ibrāhīm mentioned in his travelogue, his readers will inevitably

¹³⁵ See Brünnow, Fischer: *Chrestomathy* 58.

¹³⁶ Lane: *Lexicon* 2021.

¹³⁷ Brünnow, Fischer: *Chrestomathy* 33. L[aurence] Lockhart: *Djibāl*. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² I, 534.

¹³⁸ See August Fischer: [Medina]. *Islamica* 1 (1925) 552. W[illiam] Montgomery Watt, R[ichard] B[ayly] Winder: al-Madīna. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² V, 994.

¹³⁹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 336–337.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 336. Emphasis added. – I.O.

¹⁴¹ Yet the precise details are far from clear. Cf. Firkowitsch, Harkavy: *Denkmäler* 39, 158, 284 [*ad p.* 140, n. 2]. Harkavy: *Briefwechsel* 87, 93–94. Bruun: *Černomor’e* II, 315–316, 320–321. Kuun: *Relationum* I, 185. Marquart: *Streifzüge* 162–164, 506–507. Tomaschek: *Goten* 38; cf. also *ibid.*, 3, 45. Kokovtsov: *Perepiska* 102; 107, n. 20. Wilhelm Barthold: Kerč. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*¹ IV, 855–856. Barthold’s additional information with the form *Karj* (just like the form in our text of Ibn Rusta as edited by de Goeje) refers to a report from the year 698 AH [=AD 1298–1299] in the Arabic chronicle of Rukn al-Dīn Baybars (d. 725/1325). Tiesenhausen: *Sbornik* I, 89. Clifford Edmund Bosworth: Kerč. In: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² IV, 891–892.

¹⁴² Of course, this circumstance would also support the interpretation of this word in accordance with Polgár’s view.

conclude that the building technique Zimonyi is quoting refers to Prague. However, this is not the case. It is now well known that Ibrāhīm's account offers an astonishingly precise description of a particular building technique applied by Slavs living in the vicinity of the Baltic Sea in the area of present-day northern Germany before it was invaded and conquered by Germanic tribes. It has also been convincingly demonstrated that the account in question refers in fact to two Slav fortresses: Michelenburg-Mecklenburg in the vicinity of modern Wismar and the earlier Slav fortress on the site of modern Schwerin. It is also known that the Slavs did not bring with them a common building technique when they dispersed from their original habitat. Instead, each tribe developed its own technique in close interaction with its new neighbours. Thus it is evident that the building technique used by Slavs in modern northern Germany in the second half of the tenth century has no relevance to fortresses built by Slavs against the Magyars in Eastern Europe at a distance of c. 950 miles to the east approximately one century earlier.¹⁴³

Reconstructing Jayhānī's original text

At the end of his work Zimonyi promises his readers a tentative reconstruction of the original text of Jayhānī's chapter on the Magyars.¹⁴⁴ However, what we find in the given place is not the allegedly original text, which was in Arabic, but an English version. Apart from this circumstance, this is an endeavour that obviously suggests itself, yet it is at the same time highly problematic, especially if we consider all the previous – often quite controversial – observations and commentaries that have been made on the subject. The result is no less problematic. First of all, it is a problem of a theoretical nature that Zimonyi should be undertaking this on the Magyar chapter alone, treating it as an independent unit, whereas it in fact forms part of a greater corpus, Jayhānī's account of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Thus it stands to reason that any effort at a reconstruction would first have to consider the wider context, i.e. Jayhānī's whole account. There are many cross-references among his information on these peoples. It is only on the basis of the findings of such an undertaking that any reconstruction of the Magyar chapter can be considered with a view to special features. Second, there are many more details to analyze and elucidate before such an attempt can be undertaken.

Various problems

In a quotation from Ibn Faḍlān's travel account Zimonyi mentions King Askal. A note is sadly lacking here, mentioning that it is not clear in the Arabic text whether Askal is the name of the king or of his tribe: "King Askal" or the "king of the Askal".¹⁴⁵ The

¹⁴³ See Ormos: Remarks 392–394.

¹⁴⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 371–373.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 74. Opinions differ on this matter.

Arabic expression is ambiguous. It is well known that one of the three tribes of the Volga Bulgars was called Askal.¹⁴⁶ It would be odd if their king had been called Askal, too.

In one place the reader is captivated by the idea of a number of miraculous fish “that can be red”. There is a strand of medieval Arabic geographical literature that abounds in all sorts of miraculous beings and phenomena, therefore the idea seems to fit into the context. Before the reader’s eyes the image of *changeant* fish is conjured up, fish resembling fabrics with changing colours and hues: “There then follows a story of miraculous, meat-giving fish that can be red which were sent to the peoples of Gog and Magog to feed them.” But alas! A cursory check of Zimonyi’s source reveals that there is only one fish and the source says nothing about its colour: Zimonyi simply misspelt “read” as “red”.¹⁴⁷

A quotation from Ibn Faḍlān’s travel account runs as follows: “I stayed night and a day (used to sleep) in house, which was inside another house (*bayt jawfa bayt*), and in which a Turkish felt tent (*qubba* [recte: *qubbat*] *lubūd turkiyya*) was pitched.”¹⁴⁸ Here Zimonyi transposed the singular indefinite article “a”, in accordance with his unorthodox usage of this element, to produce an ungrammatical sentence. Apart from this stylistic infelicity, the sentence has more fundamental problems. Namely, staying day and night in a house is not the same thing as sleeping in it. Nor does one sleep day and night, unless one is seriously ill, which is certainly not the case here. What Zimonyi has done is copy a faulty English translation of a sentence from one publication, at the same time conflating it with another interpretation based on a different reading of a certain word (أيام) without even indicating his own modifications. Namely, if the diacritical dots are placed differently the word in question can be read either as *ayyām* (“days” أيام) or as *anāmu* (“I sleep” انام). This other interpretation, by Zeki Validi Togan and Kračkovskiy (adopted by Kovalevskiy), was based on the form *ayyām* as transmitted in the manuscript and goes as follows: “I stayed in a house (with rooms inside each other)¹⁴⁹ for days, wrapped in clothes and furs, but [even so] my cheek stuck to the pillow sometimes.”¹⁵⁰ However, both Czeglédy and Kračkovskiy later emended *ayyām* to *anāmu*: “I regularly slept in a house ..., wrapped in clothes and furs, but [even so] my cheek stuck to the pillow sometimes.”¹⁵¹ I think that the transmitted reading is wholly

¹⁴⁶ Cf., e.g. Ibn Rosteh *Aʿlāk* 141–142.

¹⁴⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 65.

¹⁴⁸ Zimonyi does not indicate that this translation is by Frye in his own revision.

¹⁴⁹ The precise interpretation of the corresponding Arabic expression is much debated. We do not deal with it here, because it does not affect us. It seems that there was another room (?) within the house, inside which a felt tent was pitched. Ibn Faḍlān stayed and slept in this tent. The point is that it was so terribly cold that despite the “protective shell” of several layers he was still freezing. Zimonyi was interested in the tent in question. In his discussion of this reference he merely reiterates some of the views on the matter. Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 142 (n. 406).

¹⁵⁰ Togan: *Reisebericht* 8 (Ar.), 15 (Germ.). [Kovalevskiy:] *Puteshestviye* 58. Kovalevskiy’s name is missing from this edition because in October (or February) 1938 he was arrested and sentenced to penitentiary labour in the Gulag. He was released in 1945.

¹⁵¹ Czeglédy: *Zur Meschheder Handschrift 237* [= Id.: *Collected papers* 73]. Kovalevskiy adopted the same reading in the second edition of his work, attributing the emendation to Kračkovskiy: Kovalevskiy mentions in a footnote that in the preparation of his second edition he also consulted Kračkovskiy’s pencil notes in the margin of the German and Russian editions of 1939. Kovalevskiy: *Kniga* 105, 124,

acceptable: “I stayed in a house ... for days, wrapped in clothes and furs, but [even so] my cheek stuck to the pillow sometimes.” This would mean that it was so terribly cold that Ibn Faḍlān did not go out for several days. However, the reading offered by Czeglédý and Kračkovskiy is preferable because it corresponds to the context better: Ibn Faḍlān’s cheek presumably froze to the pillow while he was asleep and so the emphasis is on sleeping.¹⁵² Now, by conflating the two mutually exclusive readings without explanation or commentary, Zimonyi has succeeded not only in producing an inconsistent sentence but also a syntactically incorrect one, and all this within quotation marks, as if it had been the very wording of his source.¹⁵³ One reading is “for several days”, while the other is “I regularly slept”. One must choose: one or the other.

In connection with Idrīsī we read of “the wall of Gog and Magog, and *behind* it the unknown Muslim people”. There was indeed a population of Muslims somewhere “to the west of the wall”, but certainly not *behind* it: behind the wall were the wild barbaric peoples of the north lying in wait to invade and destroy the civilized world. Idrīsī would not have regarded Muslims as barbaric.¹⁵⁴

In one place Zimonyi refers to some unspecified “quotations” which Yāqūt collected in his geographical dictionary. Zimonyi is silent about their origin although in actual fact these are Prophetic Traditions, i.e. sayings of or about the Prophet Muhammad, as clearly appears from the introductory formula at the head of the entry, which Zimonyi completely omits in his quotation: “*wa-fī l-ḥadīth anna l-Nabī ṣallā [A]llāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallama qāla...*” In the subsequent quotation it is not clear, either, *who* is speaking in the various sentences. There is an error in the translation too: “The rule (or the Caliph’s office) will remain with my sons until the red-faced people overcome their *fame...*” *Recte*: “The rule (He also said [elsewhere]: the Caliph’s office) will remain with my sons until the red-faced people overcome their *power* (Ar. *‘izz*)...”¹⁵⁵

Zimonyi’s ignorance of Latin results in outlandish forms, incomprehensible quotations and misunderstood translations. In one place we read: “Epiphaneus episcopus Constantina mentioned a ravine...”¹⁵⁶ Zimonyi relied here on the misread title page of a textual edition, from which he was unable to reconstruct the correct form of the name: *Epiphanii episcopi Constantiae opera*. The corresponding English form is “Epiphanius bishop of Constantia” [thus; not *Constantina*]. Elsewhere Zimonyi quotes and translates an important Latin footnote by de Goeje from his edition of Ibn Rusta on the name form

176 (n. 130). Czeglédý’s article came out in 1950–1951, Kračkovskiy died on 29 January 1951 and Kovalevskiy’s second edition was published in 1956. In all probability, this emendation was suggested by Czeglédý and Kračkovskiy independently of each other.

¹⁵² In agreement with Hellmut Ritter, Czeglédý thought that the form *ayyām* was incorrect instead of the correct form *ayyāman*, which is why he thought that it could not have been the original reading. However, this is not a decisive argument because our account is not a Classical Arabic text but belongs to the sphere of Middle Arabic where forms like *ayyām* commonly occur in related contexts. Czeglédý: *Zur Meschheder Handschrift 237* [= Id.: *Collected papers* 73].

¹⁵³ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 142.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 63. Idrīsī: *Opus* 935.

¹⁵⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 92. Jacut: *Wörterbuch* I, 838. “He” with a capital H refers to the Prophet Muhammad.

¹⁵⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 66.

of the Magyars. The quotation contains mistakes which make it unintelligible and the translation is also wrong.¹⁵⁷

Zimonyi repeatedly refers to the Hungarian chronicler “Simonis de Kéza” (thirteenth century). However, the correct form is “Simon de Kéza”. Zimonyi is unaware that the form he regularly uses is the genitive of the name, which appears on the title page of the relevant printed edition in accordance with accepted practice for works by Latin and Greek authors.

In one place Zimonyi refers to an area indicated as *Pannonoiorum et Avarum solitudinis* by Abbot Regino of Prüm.¹⁵⁸ The correct form is *Pannoniorum et Avarorum solitudines*. Regino uses the accusative form, which is identical with the nominative in this case. In Zimonyi’s view the title of the series *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* means “On Muslim Geographical Literature”.¹⁵⁹ Not a single word is correct. *Recte*: “Library of Arab Geographers”. In one place we read: *Anno Hegira*;¹⁶⁰ *recte: Anno Hegirae*.

Zimonyi should have consulted somebody with a modicum of Latin. His knowledge of Greek is also nil, as appears from the Hungarian original of the present work and his second dissertation submitted for his doctorate from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, but for this latest book he seems at last to have consulted somebody and most of the Greek forms are now correct.¹⁶¹

In one place we find the following: “the Bulgar-Turkic loanwords in Hungarian were *copied* from the Volga Bulgars...”¹⁶² This is an odd usage, smacking of diletantism. One would normally say “borrowed”.

In another place we read: “Ligeti expressed his doubts about the *determination* of the Danube Bulgarian language.” *Recte*: “identification”/“classification”.¹⁶³

Another odd sentence: “It implies that the Magyar tribal confederation would have avoided and minimizes contacts with the Khazars.”¹⁶⁴ *Recte*: “It implies that the Magyar tribal confederation in fact avoided the Khazars and minimized contacts with them.”

A further misleading sentence: “The relevance of the debate is clear: if the Khazars spoke Common-Turkic, Magyars ought to have avoided the territory of the Khazars, i.e. the region circumscribes the Caucasus, Volga and Don, and Bulgar-Turkic could have had contacts with Hungarian in the Volga-Kama region and in the vicinity of the Black Sea.”¹⁶⁵ *Recte*: “The point of the debate is clear. If the Khazars spoke

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 58, n. 6.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 264

¹⁶¹ In his second dissertation, he based his “detailed philological analysis” of sections of *De administrando imperio* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus “on the best translations available”. Such an approach attests to a highly unorthodox approach to philology; it was, however, lauded in enthusiastic terms by his referees. Just to make it clear: in orthodox circles, philological analyses are based exclusively *on original texts*.

¹⁶² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 347.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 347.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 348.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 348.

Common Turkic, then the Magyars avoided their territory, i.e. the region demarcated by the Caucasus, the Volga and the Don. Consequently, Bulgar-Turkic may have come into contact with Hungarian in the Volga-Kama region and in the vicinity of the Black Sea, and it was in these two latter regions that Bulgar-Turkic loanwords entered Hungarian.” Another possibility: “The point of the debate is clear. If the Khazars spoke Common Turkic, then the Magyars did not pass through their territory, i.e. the region demarcated by the Caucasus, the Volga and the Don. Instead, it was in the Volga-Kama region and in the vicinity of the Black Sea that Bulgar-Turkic loanwords entered Hungarian.”

In one place Zimonyi surprises his readers with the hair-raising form “Abū'l-‘Abdallāh”, which demonstrates an utter lack of familiarity with the basics of Arabic grammar (construct state!). In addition, this form occurs in a quotation, where Zimonyi’s source gives the correct form Abū ‘Abdallāh.¹⁶⁶ In another place the reader comes across the atrocious form “Ibn al-Rusta”.¹⁶⁷

In one place the famous German-Russian Orientalist *Fraehn* appears as *Fraehns*.¹⁶⁸ An odd English sentence: “Another aspect must have taken in to consideration...” *Recte*: “Another aspect must be taken into consideration...”¹⁶⁹

In his own text Zimonyi refers to the junction between the Don and the Volga as if it actually existed, although the point of the whole argument is that there is no such junction, contrary to what some Arab and Muslim geographers believed.¹⁷⁰ The distance between the two rivers is about 63 miles at the closest point. Zimonyi certainly knows this, as appears from his argumentation, but the English text is incorrect and misleads the reader.

It is unacceptable to translate the Russian *gorodišče* as “hillfort”. This word in fact designates a “fortified settlement”, which can be – but is by no means necessarily – located on a hill.¹⁷¹ The Dnieper did not have waterfalls but rapids (or cataracts) before 1932.¹⁷² Forchheim was not the name of the Frankish king to whom Svatopluk submitted, as Zimonyi claims, but the important royal centre where (the legates of) Louis the German and Svatopluk concluded a peace treaty.¹⁷³

The Arabic word *ḥadd* (pl. *ḥudūd*) plays an important role in these texts and Zimonyi discusses its meaning too, without, however, arriving at a clear-cut result.¹⁷⁴ The interpretation of this word was controversial in earlier scholarly literature. The question was

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8. Al-Muqaddasi: *Best divisions* 3. Zimonyi misquotes Jayhānī’s name in another respect too, where both the Arabic text and the English translation have the correct Arabic form *al-Jayhānī* with the article which must be used in quotations.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 222.

¹⁷¹ *Bol’shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* VII [1972], 122–123.

¹⁷² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 322.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 298.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 77–78 and *passim*.

whether it denoted a *line*, as was the case with English “border”, or rather an *area* as the frequent occurrence of the preposition *fī* “in” in connection with it seemed to suggest. Now, availing myself of tools that were not accessible to our predecessors, I browsed a large corpus of Arabic texts (*alwaraq.net*) for this word and came to the following conclusion. *Hadd* definitely means an area, a strip of land of some width, which at the same time constitutes the border between two adjoining territories. The frequent use of the preposition *fī* (“in”) in connection with it is decisive in this respect. On the other hand, the emphasis is quite often on the demarcation of two territories, and in these cases it seems correct to translate it as “border”, which essentially denotes a demarcation line between two territories. However, when the emphasis is on something lying *within* this area, it seems preferable to use the expression “border area” in translation. — The pair of expressions *awwal^u ḥaddⁱⁿ* and *ākhir^u ḥaddⁱⁿ* “first border” vs. “last border” often occurs in our texts. In the case of the second expression, Zimonyi repeatedly fluctuates between *ākhir^u ḥaddⁱⁿ* (“last border”) and *ākhar^u ḥaddⁱⁿ* (“other border”): the two expressions look identical in normal Arabic consonantal writing. This is a clear indication that he does not have his own opinion on the subject but uses various translations and interpretations in different places, without remembering how he approached the same question elsewhere. The interpretation *ākhar^u ḥaddⁱⁿ* can be found in Vámbéry’s translation of Bakrī’s account of the Magyars, from where Zimonyi may have borrowed it.¹⁷⁵ However, it is unacceptable because these countries or peoples have “many borders” (*ḥudūd*) in the view of Arab and Muslim geographers; the “other border” would only work if they had two borders. However, even at the beginning of the Magyar chapter in Ibn Rusta we read: *awwal ḥadd min ḥudūd al-Majghariyya* “the first border from among the borders of the Magyars”, that is “the first of the Magyars’ borders”, the one nearest to the author in question.

Even the brief description of such a generally known item as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is unreliable. Zimonyi speaks of a German edition (published between 1913 and 1934) and a second, revised English version between 1960 and 2004.¹⁷⁶ In actual fact, the first edition was published in three parallel versions in English, French and German between 1913 and 1936, while the second edition came out in two parallel versions in English and French between 1954 and 2004. Although it does contain some material from the first, the second is certainly not a revised edition but a new publication in its own right; it is officially called a “new edition” and rightly so. It is true that the first volume of the second edition is dated 1960, but its publication in fascicles began in 1954. These dates have their own significance if we consider that this edition was published over the period of half a century. It is important to know when a given entry was written because it represents the state of our knowledge at the date of publication. And as Zimonyi’s book was published in 2016, he could also have mentioned the *Encyclopaedia of Islam Three*, the publication of which started *nine* years earlier, in 2007. It contains important entries on the subject of Zimonyi’s book. In actual fact, there was no necessity to discuss the history of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* in this place.

¹⁷⁵ Keleti kútfők 195. Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 45, 47, 363.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

In connection with the second (new) edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Zimonyi refers to the entry on the Magyars as follows: “T. Lewicki, ‘Madjar, Madjaristan: In the Pre-Ottoman Period, The Hungarian Muslim in the 3rd–8th/9th–14th centuries’: EI² V, 1010–1024.”¹⁷⁷ Apart from the wrong length in Madjaristan (*recte*: Madjaristān), much of this is pure fantasy on Zimonyi’s part. Who or what is the mysterious “Hungarian Muslim” referred to here? Zimonyi’s “The Hungarian Muslim in the 3rd–8th/9th–14th centuries” does not appear in the given reference. The entry goes: “T. Lewicki: ‘Madjar, Madjaristān, I. In pre-Ottoman period.’ EI² V, 1010–1022. Gy. Káldy-Nagy: ‘Madjar, Madjaristān, II. The Ottoman period.’ EI² V, 1022–1024.”

Discussing the various forms of the name Majghariyya, on p. 62 Zimonyi quotes a form from “Shukrallāh’s Turkic translation”.¹⁷⁸ It is “a new extended [*sic*] form *m.ħt.rqa*, the past participle of the verb stem VIII. *muħtaraqa*. The meaning of the verb *iħtaraqa* is ‘to be burnt down’, derived from the stem I. *ħaraqa* ‘burn’. It is thus an example of adding a new letter to the original name (محرقه محترقه)”. Zimonyi seems to be unaware that the concept of a past participle is unknown in Arabic. This language has active and passive participles, but nothing else in this respect, and the form adduced by him is a *passive* participle. Quite apart from this, there are other objections to his reading of this word. Namely, the active form of this verb has an intransitive or passive meaning in stem VIII *iħtaraqa*: “to burn (intransitive)”, “to be set on fire”.¹⁷⁹ In such cases, the meaning required by Zimonyi is connected to the *active* forms, including the active participle *muħtariqa*. This form with the corresponding meaning is attested for Persian and Turkish, too.¹⁸⁰

The whole book is highly inaccurate and unreliable. To give just one extreme example: Zimonyi’s complete disorientation is shown by his treatment of the title of the account on the Magyars in Bakrī’s work. In the Arabic text of Bakrī, the form *al-Majghariyya* appears in the title, while in the corresponding English translation on the opposite page Zimonyi transcribes this word as *M.hf.riyya*. The confusion is heightened when the reader realizes that the form *Majghariyya* is in fact Leeuwen and Ferré’s emended reading, while both manuscripts which they consulted have *Majfariyya* in this place. The source of Zimonyi’s *M.hf.riyya* here is Kunik and Rozen’s diplomatic edition of an Istanbul manuscript. As is common in diplomatic editions, Kunik and Rozen reproduce in the main text the reading of the manuscript, which they regard as corrupt, indicating in a footnote that the correct reading here is Defrémery’s *M.j.gh.riyya*. In his turn, Zimonyi makes an effort at reproducing, in his own so-called “critical apparatus”, the reading contained in Leeuwen and Ferré’s critical apparatus, but unable to carry out this truly difficult task, he commits a mistake in copying this word as المحفريية (*al-M.hf.riyya*) instead of the form Leeuwen and Ferré use: المجفريية (*al-M.j.f.riyya*).¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 5, n. 33.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 62. A few lines earlier he refers to it as a “Turkish translation”.

¹⁷⁹ Lane determines *iħtaraqa* (stem VIII) as a “quasi-passive” of *aħraqa* (stem IV) or *ħaraqa* (stem I). Lane: *Lexicon* 551c.

¹⁸⁰ Redhouse: *Lexicon* 1758b. Steingass: *Dictionary* 1183b.

¹⁸¹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 44–45. Kunik, Rozen: *Izvestiya* I, 45. Al-Bakrī: *Masālik* 449.

Zimonyi misunderstands Martinez's introduction in claiming that "Martinez published an English translation ... on the basis of a facsimile of the Cambridge manuscript".¹⁸² Martinez says explicitly that his translation is based among others on "the Cambridge manuscript, a facsimile of which follows the article".¹⁸³ (In actual fact, the poor quality reproduction, which is almost illegible, can hardly be called a facsimile.) The fact that Martinez appended a "facsimile" to his publication does not mean that he based his study on it. And what is more, he could hardly have based his translation on a "facsimile" which he published together with it. I am not aware of any other published "facsimiles" of Gardīzī's text. Martinez does not inform his readers whether he actually saw the manuscript or not. Zimonyi's whole paragraph is awkward and confused.

Zimonyi mentions that when in 1184 Vselovod III [*sic; recte: Vsevolod III*], Grand Prince of Vladimir-Suzdal "besieged the capital of the Volga Bulgars", "according to the Ipatiev Chronicle, a Volga Bulgar army of *six* thousand men was sent to relieve the siege of the capital".¹⁸⁴ However, the source he refers to speaks of *five* thousand only. Zimonyi seems to have misread the number indicated with a letter of the Cyrillic alphabet. It would have been helpful if he had also added some commentary on the dating of this campaign to 1184, because it is listed in his source under the year 6690 (=1182).¹⁸⁵

When a letter in a transcribed word is not known, Zimonyi uses the sign *x* to denote it, e.g., *Wāxīx*,¹⁸⁶ *x.jgh.ūyān*,¹⁸⁷ *x.jf.rīyān*,¹⁸⁸ *al-x.jf.r*.¹⁸⁹ However, he does not explain this expedient anywhere, with the result that few of his readers will be aware of the meaning of this device, while many will no doubt interpret the *x* as *ks*, reading *Wāksīks* etc.

The interpretation of the word *dīf* (pl. *ad'āf*) appears to present a difficulty for Zimonyi. In the singular it means "twice/double", in the plural "many times/multiple".¹⁹⁰ In one place he has already corrected the erroneous form which I pointed out in a previous review, but has failed to do so a little further down, in a quotation from Bakrī, where "twice as many pagan Pechenegs" should be replaced with "many times more pagan Pechenegs".¹⁹¹

The French *nom* means "name" and not "title", as Zimonyi wants to have us believe. He quotes the French passage "*car véritable son nom est Djalāh [sic]*" translating it as "because his real title was *djalāh*".¹⁹² instead of the correct "because his real name is *djalāh*." Of course, two words in the French passage have been erroneously transposed; Wiet wrote: "*car son véritable nom est Djalāh*."¹⁹³

¹⁸² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 20.

¹⁸³ Martinez: Two chapters 113–114.

¹⁸⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 108. Italics added. – I.O.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Berežkov: *Khronologiya* 197–199.

¹⁸⁶ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 359.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁹⁰ Brünnow, Fischer: *Chrestomathy* 66.

¹⁹¹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 105, 108. Ormos: *A magyar őstörténet* 752.

¹⁹² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 118.

¹⁹³ Ibn Rusteh: *Atours* 160.

The Arabic *shi‘ār li-malikihim* means “a symbol of their king” and not “symbol of one of their kings” as Zimonyi erroneously believes.¹⁹⁴ This is an elementary grammatical mistake!

Zimonyi writes: “The k.n.d.h (كنده) form in the Jayhānī tradition can be read only *künde* or *kende*. The Hungarian *kündü* cannot be derived from these forms due to the word final -e...”¹⁹⁵ This statement is without foundation: the final *hā’* in this form can stand with practically any vocal, especially in foreign words. See, for instance, the name of the famous Egyptian religious reformer محمد عبده *Muḥammad ‘Abduh*, pronounced ‘*Abdu*. Consequently, the form *k.n.d.h* (كنده) can just as well stand for *kündü*.

In the quotation from Ibn Rusta on the Slavs, the Arabic word *aṭibbā’* does not mean “physicians”, as is evident from the context. Rather, it denotes “sages”, “magicians”, “priests” or “shamans”.¹⁹⁶ The original meaning of the word is “[a person] possessing knowledge”; cf. Arabic *ḥakīm* “wise” > “physician”, “doctor”.

In one place we read: “They *used to* travel with the luggages, tents...”¹⁹⁷ *Recte*: “They regularly travel with luggage, tents...”, because the sentence is in the present tense. The Hungarian *szoktak*, as is well known, is an exceptional case of a past form possessing the grammatical meaning of the present. The basic difference between “used to” and the Hungarian *szokott/szoktak* is so well known even among Hungarians with a limited familiarity with English that the authors of a guide to how to avoid the typical mistakes committed by Hungarians learning English did not find it necessary to discuss it: “*Used to* referring to a habit or state in the past is mostly well known and causes few problems.”¹⁹⁸

Sometimes word forms from different languages are mixed up, e.g., in one place a Russian word (шалаш) is quoted as *salas* (“hut”). However, this is its transcription in Hungarian; in English it should be *shalash*.¹⁹⁹ In one place Zimonyi mentions “one of the most eminent rulers of the *Buyiden* [this is the German form; *recte*: *Būyids*]”.²⁰⁰

In connection with Ibn Rusta, Zimonyi claims that “De Goeje published the same complete manuscript...”²⁰¹ The manuscript in question is incomplete, being mutilated at the end, leaving the text ending abruptly in the middle of a sentence. An unknown number of quires is missing at the end.²⁰² What Zimonyi had in mind here was probably that de Goeje published the complete *surviving* text.

In a list, Hippocrates appears among the Eurasian *peoples* presumably mentioned by al-Jayhānī, which seems rather odd.²⁰³

¹⁹⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 118 (n. 297).

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 124. Cf. *Hudūd al-‘ālam* 101. Togan: *Reisebericht* 136.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 160–161 (n. 513).

¹⁹⁸ Doughty-Thompson: *Problem English* 130 (no. 150, 1).

¹⁹⁹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 147.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰² Ormos: *Remarks* 382.

²⁰³ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 27.

A lack of harmonization of data from different sources

Zimonyi quite often quotes translations from different sources, without however feeling the necessity of harmonizing them with each other. Thus, for instance, Ibn Rusta describes the way two Volga Bulgars greet each other when they meet, using the verb *sajada*, and Zimonyi translates it as “to prostrate oneself”. He goes on to adduce a parallel passage from Ibn Faḍlān’s description of the way two Oguz chiefs greet each other when they meet. However, the translation he is quoting here renders the same act denoted by the same word *sajada* as “making obeisance”.²⁰⁴ Now, “obeisance” and “prostration” are two distinct things: the former is “the act of bending your head or the upper part of your body”, while the latter is “the action of lying with your face downwards”.²⁰⁵ It seems not to occur to Zimonyi to harmonize the two versions, which have different origins, nor to see that these statements are in need of some commentary. What do these people precisely do when they meet? In actual fact, the range of meaning of *sajada* is wider than just “to prostrate oneself” as a familiar technical term of Islamic prayer: its original meaning is “to bend oneself down”, “to bow down”.²⁰⁶ At first sight it appears unlikely to visualize people lying with their faces downwards in the open air whenever they meet. Careful consideration however suggests that Ibn Rusta does indeed mean prostration. He stresses that this is something “unbelievers” do. Bending one’s body does not contradict the tenets of Islam, while prostrating oneself before anybody other than God certainly does. In addition, the whole context of the story strongly suggests a strange, somewhat unusual practice which Arabs and Muslims find distinctly odd. Just as an aside, getting the right spelling of the words prostrate, prostration, etc., seems to have presented a difficulty for Zimonyi: he also uses such unorthodox forms as “prostating”²⁰⁷ and “postration”,²⁰⁸ in addition to the regular forms.

One might ask: what relevance do these many minor details have to early Hungarian history which I subject to criticism? Is it really so important what *sajada* means here and how Volga Bulgars and Oguz chiefs greet each other? Do they affect the overall importance of Zimonyi’s work? We may retort: Details like these do not affect the great strands of Magyar history. But why does Zimonyi deal with them at all then? The present work is not of a theoretical nature, offering a new overall view of early Magyar history, where a few minor details may not count and may not affect the validity of an entirely new comprehensive theory. There is no such theory here. The book is of a philological nature, discussing many such questions of detail (in actual fact, it is a collection of such details) which, though important in themselves, do not add up to a qualitatively higher entity. It is precisely these details for which readers will consult it. And if those very details are not reliable, then the whole work loses its viability.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 333–334.

²⁰⁵ Hornby: *Dictionary* 1044, 1213.

²⁰⁶ See, e.g., Lane: *Lexicon* 1307. Baranov: *Slovar’* 434. Wehr: *Dictionary* 462–463.

²⁰⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 333.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 333–334.

“Special hyphen”

Zimonyi attributes “crucial importance” to what he calls a “special hyphen” in the division of Ibn Rusta’s passage, so much so that he even indicates these signs in his rendition of Ibn Rusta’s Arabic text.²⁰⁹ What he has in mind is the so-called *nihāya*-sign, an “end”-sign marking the *end* of a section, which is in fact often used in manuscripts to *divide* a text into sections in accordance with the context. Therefore it is a mistake to call it a hyphen because a hyphen signals *close connection* between two words or elements of a word, or that they have been separated for some accidental reason, e.g. at the end of a line. We read in a widely used style guide to British English usage: “The primary function of the hyphen is to indicate that two or more words are to be read together as a single word with its own meaning.”²¹⁰ Zimonyi was evidently misled by the reference to *division* in one of the Hungarian descriptions of this mark (*elválasztójel*, literally “division mark”), failing to realize that in this case the emphasis is on *connection*, which is just the opposite of what the *nihāya*-sign stands for. Its normal Hungarian equivalent is *kötőjel* (literally “connecting mark”).²¹¹ The problem with these signs is that they do not belong to the text and as a rule it is impossible to know who inserted them. Maybe the author himself, but it is equally possible that it was an ignorant copyist in the course of the transmission. Zimonyi has the right to divide the text as he likes but it is a mistake to attribute any significance to these signs. And if he is interested in them, his first priority should be to analyze their occurrences in the whole manuscript, because only then would it be possible to say anything about the way they are used here. It is not enough to consider only the few lines that discuss the Magyars. However, it should be regarded as a strong warning that even in our relatively short paragraph this sign is conspicuously missing at the end of the passage referring to the erection of Sarkel, where there is indeed a big break in the flow of the text. This means that even within our short passage its usage is inconsistent. It may be mentioned for comparison that this sign is widely used in Ibn Faḍlān’s unicum manuscript. In the first edition of his book on Ibn Faḍlān, Kovalevskiy carefully indicated these signs in his Russian translation, remarking at the same time that “it is by no means used in the same way everywhere” and that “sometimes it does not quite appear to be in the right place”.²¹² In the second edition he omitted these signs altogether, limiting himself to occasional references to where they occur in the wrong places, where uneducated or careless copyists had inserted them.²¹³

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 366.

²¹⁰ Fowler: *Modern English usage*, 255. Emphasis added. – I.O.

²¹¹ The hyphen is called *elválasztójel* (“division mark”) in Hungarian only at the end of a line, when a word has to be divided into two parts on account of its length. See, e.g., Ország, Futász, Kövecses: *Hungarian-English dictionary*, 356, 855. Webster 1114.

²¹² [Kovalevskiy:] *Puteshestviye* 25.

²¹³ Kovalevskiy: *Kniga* 160 (n. 13) with further references.

English style

In general, I regard it as inappropriate that persons who are not native speakers of a given language should comment on the style of a publication in that idiom. However, in the present case I cannot refrain from infringing this rule, because its linguistic shape is an essential feature of the book under review, deeply affecting its scholarly value. Three parts can be distinguished in the book in this respect. One minor part is in idiomatic American English. Among others, this part includes the English translations of the texts of the Jayhānī tradition in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. However, the problem with this part is that the person who undertook the stylistic revision apparently did not check the original Arabic etc. texts but relied on intermediary versions, allowing the translations to become free paraphrases under his pen.²¹⁴ A good example of this approach is the following sentence from Ibn Rusta’s description of the Magyars: *lahum qibāb*. It can be perfectly translated into English: “They have dome-shaped tents.” However, here we read: “They are tent-dwelling people.”²¹⁵ The general idea is of course correct, yet this cannot be considered an accurate translation: the words “dwelling” and “people” do not even appear in the original.

Another problem is that the person who undertook the stylistic revision had little familiarity with the subject matter. Such an approach is not devoid of pitfalls, as can be shown in the sentence mentioning the Magyars in the steppe in the vicinity of the Black Sea: “The relevant section on the *Magyar capital* must have borrowed from a source which al-Jayhānī did not improve upon with the knowledge of his contemporaries.”²¹⁶ There is no such section. In any case, it is anachronistic to speak of a **Magyar capital in the south-Russian steppe**. What happened? Zimonyi (or his translator) mixed up the English word “capital” with the German *Kapitel* (“chapter”) when preparing the first (rough) translation of the book.²¹⁷ There can be hardly any doubt that what Zimonyi originally meant was “the Magyar chapter of Ibn Rusta”, which appeared as “the Magyar capital of Ibn Rusta” in the first English version. The person undertaking the stylistic revision found this expression awkward and adjusted it to produce an acceptable sentence, but without being familiar with Ibn Rusta’s text or being aware that there was no Magyar capital at the time.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ His name appears on p. XII in the Preface.

²¹⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 39.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 227. Italics mine. – I.O.

²¹⁷ In one place Zimonyi expressly names “capital” as the English equivalent of Hungarian “*fejezet*” (=“chapter”) in the Bibliography. *Ibid.*, 391, top line.

²¹⁸ English and French use the expression “false friends / *faux-amis*” for the phenomenon when two words of the same origin have different meanings in different languages: both the English “capital” and the German *Kapitel* share a common origin: Latin *capit[is]* (<*caput*) “head”. The best example of this phenomenon I have ever encountered is the Hungarian *parizer*, which is of German origin. It entered colloquial Hungarian around 1881 from the dialect of Vienna, where it meant a sort of sliced sausage and it was borrowed into Hungarian with the same meaning (*Pariserwurst*, with the short form *Pariser*). A friend of mine on a visit to Berlin wanted to display his knowledge of German when going to do some shopping and told his hosts that he wanted to buy half a kilo of *Pariser*. Whereupon they burst into laughter and it took some time before they could tell him that in northern Germany this word meant “condom” (probably from *Pariser Brief*, cf. “French letter”).

The second part, which in fact constitutes the bulk of the book, was translated by someone whose English was mediocre at most, and this part was not subjected to stylistic revision. However, it is evident that the author himself tampered with it in many places, correcting and modifying it, on occasions inserting new expressions or whole sentences. His English is best characterized by the sentence in the *Preface* in which he expresses his thanks to the series editor and the native speaker of English who undertook the stylistic revision: “I thank to him and Mikael Thompson to read my text and polishing my English version.”²¹⁹

The text is often clumsy and difficult to read. Indeed there are many sentences which I could only understand by translating them into Hungarian in order to work out what the author might have had in mind. In a number of cases it was impossible to understand Zimonyi’s text.²²⁰

Some elementary errors: “Paragraphs 2 and 3 can be connected *with one another context*, as the first border of the Magyars east of the Volga is the consequence of their Turkic origin”. *Recte*: “Paragraphs 2 and 3 can be connected with *another context*, as the first border of the Magyars east of the Volga is the consequence of their Turkic origin.” This is a literal rendering of the Hungarian *egy másik szövegkörnyezettel*, where the translator mistook the singular indefinite article for the numeral “one” in Hungarian.²²¹

Zimonyi’s treatment of grammatical agreement signals a boldly innovative approach to English syntax. The reader encounters unorthodox forms, even in quotations, e.g., “The bride-price [they pay] for *a women* is wild animals...” in a quotation from Martinez, though the singular indefinite article is of course absent in Zimonyi’s source.²²² This feature is not an isolated case in his oeuvre: we can find it in other publications, too, where the indefinite article is the result of Zimonyi’s own modification of a traditional form: “A Fourteenth-Century *Vocabularies* in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian and Mongolian.”²²³ Elsewhere in the present book we come across “*a historical phenomena*” and “*a needles*”.²²⁴

Further examples of unorthodox usage:

- “The Slavic-Magyar *relations is* discussed ...”²²⁵
- “*Khazars merchants* were active among ...”²²⁶

²¹⁹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* XII.

²²⁰ See for instance the paragraph from *Mas’ūdī* on the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov quoted above in connection with note 105.

²²¹ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 367. We disregard here the awkward construction of the sentence in general. It takes some time to work out what Zimonyi actually wants to say.

²²² Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 362.

²²³ Zimonyi, Karatay: Preface. In: *Central Eurasia* X. The editors showed a lack of sound judgement when they thought they can do without having their preface checked by a native speaker of English.

²²⁴ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 67, 360.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 309.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 314.

● “the death of the three *brothers* (the legendary *founder* of *cities* Kiy, Shchek and Khoriv) ... ”²²⁷;

recte: “the death of the three *brothers* (the legendary *city founders* Kiy, Shchek and Khoriv) ... ”

It may not be evident from Zimonyi’s rendering that the text is about *three* brothers who founded *one* city, Kiev. In actual fact, this is a most intriguing mistake. If we want to explain its genesis, we must assume that the translator rendered Hungarian *városalapító* as “founder of city”. When forming the plural, he treated the English compound as one unit, just like its Hungarian counterpart, appending the plural suffix to its end *városalapító / városalapítók* ~ “founder of city” / “founder of cities”. He failed to realize the structural difference between the two compounds: in the Hungarian form the head follows the modifier, while in the English form the opposite is the case. In both languages, the plural suffix must be appended to the head in this case. It would have been preferable to use the compound “city founder” / “city founders” instead.

In one place we read of Ibn Rusta’s *chapters* on the Khazars.²²⁸ In actual fact, there is only *one* such chapter. This is possibly another case of the erroneous use of the plural.

Usually the reader can quickly work out what went wrong, but this is not always the case: “The place in which the Turks used formerly to be is called after the *names of the river* that *run* through it, Etel and Kuzu, and in it the Pechenegs live now.” Now, is Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus speaking of one river or two rivers? This is an important question. One cannot guess: the answer can be found out only if one looks up Zimonyi’s source, which he failed to copy correctly: “ after the *names of the river* that *runs* through it...”²²⁹

In a quotation from Martinez we find the following sentence: “[While the land of] the Turks, the Saqlāb, and [the tribes of] Gog and Magog as far as China fell to Japheth.”²³⁰ Zimonyi apparently failed to realize that he omitted the main clause of a compound sentence, thus rendering it meaningless. The original of this quotation in his source is in order.

In Zimonyi’s essay on the seas the word “straits” occurs many times. The problem with this word is that it is often used in the plural form “straits” with a singular meaning in English. Zimonyi’s text is inconsistent in this respect: since he also uses the singular form “strait” along with “straits”, one never knows how many straits are actually meant whenever the form “straits” occurs.

The sheer quantity of misprints, orthographical and grammatical errors in the book under review is *horrendous*. I cannot remember ever having come across a publication which contained even a fraction of the number found here.²³¹ To publish anything in such a condition is an insult to the reader. It is a disappointment

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 315.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

²²⁹ On this sentence, see Moravcsik: *Árpád-kori* 47–48 (n. 37). Cf. also Gyóni: *Magyar nyelv* 21–23.

²³⁰ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 92.

²³¹ It is not easy to differentiate between misprints and grammatical errors. At first I was inclined to regard most unorthodox forms as misprints. However, later on I came to the conclusion that the fault lay with Zimonyi’s English.

to see that we have reached an age when a publishing house such as Brill, formerly of such repute, apparently sends a manuscript to the printer without anybody having read it.

CONCLUSION

Zimonyi's work possesses all the appurtenances of a serious philological work: transcription, footnotes in profusion, facsimiles of texts in Oriental characters, etc., etc. This all looks very formidable to the uninitiated reader and Zimonyi's numerous fans and enthusiastic colleagues without any knowledge of Arabic will no doubt regard it as a top achievement of philology. Scholars able to read and interpret the texts, however, will see in Zimonyi's work a mockery of philology, because serious content, solid method and careful presentation are completely lacking.

It is beyond a doubt that the author has done a formidable amount of work, especially in view of his insufficient familiarity with most of the languages involved. Yet the volume of the work he accomplished was not commensurate with the task he had set himself. He miscalculated, gravely underestimating the amount of work to be done and the difficulties inherent in the task ahead. In actual fact, much more work needs to be done in terms of carefully elaborating and clarifying many details before such a comprehensive treatment of the subject can be attempted with any reasonable prospect of success. This was a premature undertaking, ill conceived and misbegotten. We can state that the book under review is in general utterly inaccurate and unreliable. No piece of information can be trusted unless the reader checks it for himself/herself. In assessing the present book, the words of Mihály Kmoskó, which he wrote in another context in 1927, are entirely apposite: "Most of our specialists in the early history of the Magyars will be familiar with the so-called Oriental sources (i.e. the relevant pages in the works of Arab and Persian authors) on the basis of the present publication, deluding themselves with the false hope that the heuristic part of the scholarly work pertaining to these Oriental sources has been definitively completed and that there is nothing left to be done. Yet in actual fact the situation is such that we have to start everything again from scratch."²³²

APPENDIX

THE NAME *MAJGHARIYYA* IN THE JAYHĀNĪ TRADITION AND THE "DEPRESSED LAND"

Phonetic aspects

The reading *Majghariyya* was determined on the basis of Abū l-Fidā's *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, which is the *only* place in Arabic literature to adduce this name in a special redundant way which unequivocally determines the consonant letters. Abū l-Fidā' (d. 1331) was an unoriginal, rather late compiler who, however, had access to important sources which have since disappeared. It was Charles Defrémery who in 1849 first suggested adopting

²³² Kmoskó: *Gardīzī* 149; with modifications. – I.O.

this form as the preferable reading for the apparently meaningless form *Muḥaffariyya* in a relevant passage by Bakrī; he also identified it as the name of the Magyars.²³³ In his standard critical edition of Ibn Rusta, Michael de Goeje also accepted the form as defined by Abū l-Fidā'. In this, just as in the whole section on Eastern Europe, de Goeje relied heavily upon Daniel Khvol'son, who had edited the relevant section with extensive commentary. In his turn, Khvol'son had also accepted Abū l-Fidā''s reading.²³⁴ De Goeje and Khvol'son must have known Defrémery's article but they must also have had direct recourse to Abū l-Fidā''s work, which was at the time available in printed form and was widely used by the scholarly community.²³⁵

As I pointed out earlier, it is easy to demonstrate that it is in accordance with a certain phonetic rule of Arabic that in a text without diacritical dots, Arabs will always interpret the consonants according to certain phonological rules. In this case, *Majghariyya*, a name with which even most educated Arabs are unfamiliar, the third consonant would be interpreted as *f*, not *gh*. The ethnonym *Majghar[iyya]* has the form of a typical Arabic word formed from the supposed root *√ *J-GH-R* with the help of the prefix *m*, like *maktab* ("office" from the root √ *K-T-B* "to write"), *maḥmal* ("litter" from the root √ *H-M-L* "to carry") or *mablagh* ("amount" from the root √ *B-L-GH* "to reach"). However, there is a phonological rule in Arabic which forbids two consonants which are produced in the same place or in closely adjoining places in the speech organs from occurring together as first and second radicals in a word. The word *Majghar* contravenes this rule and is thus impossible in Arabic because *j* and *gh* are incompatible in this position. The sound *j* developed from an original *g* (as in English "get") and continues to behave phonologically as *g* in standard Arabic. This means that when Arabs unfamiliar with the foreign word *Majghar[iyya]* see it in a manuscript in a defectively written form, where the second radical can be read equally well as *ṣ*, *gh*, *f* or *q*, they will interpret it as *f* because it is the only choice in accordance with the rules of Arabic phonology, or, to put it in another way, with their own linguistic instinct. The same considerations are valid for *ḥ* as the first radical, too.²³⁶

Zimonyi is mistaken in assuming that de Goeje determined the reading *Majghariyya* on the basis of the tribal name Μεγέρη as quoted by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.²³⁷ In actual fact, it was Defrémery who determined the reading of this word. His reading was subsequently adopted by Khvol'son and de Goeje alike, as we have seen above. In addition, Zimonyi misunderstands de Goeje's relevant Latin footnote, which he quotes with several mistakes so that the whole quotation becomes unintelligible. The translation (or rather paraphrase) which he gives of it, is wrong, too. What de Goeje says here is that *Majghariyya* "are the Magyars, cf. Μεγέρη in Constantine Porphyrogenitus". This means that in de Goeje's opinion there was some relationship between the forms

²³³ Defrémery: Fragments 473. Cf. Zakhoder: *Kaspiyskiy svod* II, 48.

²³⁴ Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya*.

²³⁵ Aboulféda: *Géographie* [1840]. Cf. also Abou'l Fédâ: *Géographie* [1846]. At the same time, an excellent manuscript of Abū l-Fidā''s work was kept at Leiden University Library, and there can be no doubt that de Goeje regularly consulted it, too. See Ormos: *A magyar őstörténet* 743.

²³⁶ Id.: Remarks 386.

²³⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 58.

Majghariyya and Μεγέρη, but he does not say what sort of relationship it was.²³⁸ Zimonyi also errs in assuming that de Goeje chose *ghayn* instead of *fā'* in *Majghariyya* on the basis of γ in Μεγέρη. First, de Goeje is silent on the motivation for his choice. Second, in Byzantine Greek the pronunciation of γ was *gh* before the vowels *a*, *o* and *u*, but *y* (as in English *you*) before *e* and *i*.²³⁹ Therefore speakers of Byzantine Greek pronounced γ as *y* (as in English “you”) in Μεγέρη: *Meyeri*.²⁴⁰ This is a well-known elementary fact, which de Goeje was surely aware of. Rather, it is to be assumed that it was between *jīm* in *Majghariyya* and γ in Μεγέρη that he saw some sort of connection.

Zimonyi discusses the phonetic aspects of the name *Majghariyya*, too, without being aware that the phoneme *j* represented by the letter *jīm*, which is of central importance in our case, is perhaps the most unstable member of the phonemic inventory of Arabic, with a wide variety of pronunciations. This phoneme presents a number of difficulties which cannot be disregarded in a phonetic analysis of the word *Majghariyya*. Originally the sound in question was the velar plosive *g* (as in English “get”) just as in the other Semitic languages, and it was only later, some time after the emergence of Islam, that by way of a continuous forward shifting (palatalization) it gradually became the palato-alveolarized affricate *j* (as in English “jam”), as prescribed by modern Quran reciters. The general trend of this process is transparent but its details and precise chronology are far from clear. It is assumed that an important intermediate stage in this process was the realization of this phoneme as a palatalized *g'* or *d'* (Hungarian *gy*). It is also known that this phoneme is pronounced in a wide variety of ways in modern Arabic dialects (*j*, *ž* [as in French *jour*], *z*, *dz*, *g*, *č*, *ć* [as in German *Zeit*], *y* [as in English “you”], *g'*, *d'*, etc.) and we are also aware of some swift changes that have taken place in this respect in certain areas in recent periods.²⁴¹ There is nothing to suggest that the situation was different in earlier times. This means that throughout history this sound has been characterized by a high level of instability in Arabic. In our case the situation is rendered even more complicated by the circumstance that important agents in this process, like Jayhānī, Ibn Rusta, Gardīzī and the anonymous author of *Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam*, for instance, were Iranians whose mother-tongues were Persian dialects and who used this language in everyday speech, while in writing they availed themselves partly of Arabic and partly of Persian. How did they pronounce this sound? Thus aspects of Persian historical phonetics and dialectology must also be taken into account. This all means that the question of how the letter *jīm* was actually pronounced in *Majghariyya* is in need of

²³⁸ Ibn Rosteh: *Aʿlāk* 142 (note d).

²³⁹ Zimonyi himself quotes such an example (γυλάς ~ *yila*) elsewhere in his book, without noticing its relevance to the present question. Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 120. Cf. Constantine Porphyrogenitus: *De administrando imperio* 178 (lines [49], 51, 68). Moravcsik: *Byzantinoturcica* II, 115. Gyóni: *Magyar nyelv* 43–45.

²⁴⁰ The Hungarian sound which Greek γ was used to represent here did not exist in Byzantine Greek. It is assumed that it was Hungarian *gy* (IPA ɟ as in Hungarian *gyula* or Russian дед). In actual fact, the precise nature of this consonant is far from clear. Gyóni: *Magyar nyelv* 171–172. Bárczi: *Magyar hangtörténet* 119–120. Ormos: *Adalékok* 31.

²⁴¹ Cf. Id.: Remarks 388–389. For detailed references, see Id.: Kiegészítések 1143 (n. 57) (also on the internet; see the Bibliography).

careful investigation. It is impossible to make sound statements on the phonetic shape of *Majghariyya* without having conducted such an analysis.²⁴² This has not happened so far.

Popular etymology

The underlying idea of the popular etymology “people of the Depressed Land” in connection with the Magyars was first formulated briefly – though somewhat differently – by Kmoskó in 1927 and Zimonyi picked it up again and further elaborated it in 2005.²⁴³ This is a legitimate thesis which corresponds perfectly with the rules of Arabic paleography. Let us look into the details.

There are two types of popular etymology of relevance for us. In the first the original name is not modified but an explicit explanation is added to it. This is the case with the name of the Turks (Arabic *al-Turk*), which Zimonyi also refers to in his book: “Leave (Arabic *tārikū* or *utrukū*) the Turks (*al-Turk*) alone as long as they leave you alone!”²⁴⁴ In accordance with the Arabs’ concept of the “radical consonants”, which constitute the skeleton of a given word, the word “Turks” (*al-TuRK*) is of the same origin as the verb “to leave” ($\sqrt{T-R-K}$).²⁴⁵ In the second type, which is of relevance here, the original, “nonsense” form of a word is replaced with another modified one, a “comprehensible” word, as in the English “cockroach”: it replaced *cucaracha*, which had been borrowed from Spanish. (The meaning of “cock” is well known and “roach” is a kind of fish). In this second type the original “nonsense” form is dropped from the language.²⁴⁶

Zimonyi claims that the folk-etymological form *Muḥaffariyya* meaning “People of the Depressed Land” or “People of the Sunken Earth” is in fact a cryptic reference to the Bashkirs/Magyars living between the middle course of the Volga and the southern slopes of the Ural mountains, thus linking them to the nomad Magyars in the South Russian steppe north of the Black Sea. A serious problem with this claim is that he does not expound it properly, giving all the relevant and interconnected details to allow the reader to form a precise idea of his claim with all its ramifications. Thus substantial aspects remain obscure.²⁴⁷ It would be essential to know exactly *what* Jayhānī invented in Zimonyi’s view and *how*. The story of a miraculous Depressed Land had existed previously, as Zimonyi himself informs us. According to Jayhānī’s description, this land

²⁴² These considerations are also valid for other relevant words containing the letter *jim* in the Jayhānī tradition, such as *jula*, *bajanāk*, *bašjird*, *burjān*, *Kerč*, etc.

²⁴³ Kmoskó: Gardîzî 150–151. Zimonyi: Das eingegrabene Land 50–64. Id.: *Muslim sources* (62–)66.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 91–92.

²⁴⁵ This is a so-called Prophetic Tradition, i.e. an utterance by the Prophet Muḥammad. Cf. Lane: *Lexicon* 305b. Goldziher: *Muhammedanische Studien* I, 270. [=Id.: *Muslim Studies* I, 270].

²⁴⁶ The German toponym *Rosswain* (in modern Saxony) is an instructive example of this kind of popular etymology. The present meaning (“Steed’s Vine”) has been current since the twelfth century and is displayed in the coat of arms of the town, in which a white steed with a flowing mane walks toward the viewer’s left (“dexter”; “horse passant”) in front of a green vine with yellow grapes. However, this place name goes back to the earlier Slavic population of the area and was originally *Rusavin* “Rusava’s [settlement]”, where *Rusava* is a personal name deriving from Old Sorbian *rusŭ* “red”, “light brown”, “blond”. Eichler, Walther: *Städtenamenbuch* [II], 234–235.

²⁴⁷ See, e.g., Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 64, 66, 367.

was located in a deep pit surrounded by perpendicular walls so that its inhabitants were unable to ascend them nor was anybody able to descend to explore this miraculous plot. Similar stories were recorded by Mas'ūdī (d. 956) and Marwazī (d. after 1120) and there had been precursors in Antiquity, too, as Zimonyi rightly emphasizes. Then what is it exactly that Jayhānī did with it? It is part of Sallām's travel account. Was it Jayhānī who inserted the story into the travel account? Did he himself invent the account, too, in order to use the name in the story as a folk etymology for the Magyars? Did he explicitly localize it in an area in close connection with the Bashkirs/Magyars? Although this localization is not as self evident as Zimonyi would have us to believe, because the latest solid study on the subject, for instance, identifies the Depressed Land with the Tarim Basin in the Taklamakan Desert in Northwest China, which is quite a long way from the southern slopes of the Ural mountains.²⁴⁸ Basing himself on Sallām's travel account, Jayhānī gives a short description of the People of the Depressed Land: their main characteristic is that absolutely nothing can be known about them apart from the fact of their very existence, because they are inaccessible. These unknown people living on the bottom of a pit somewhere in the far North can hardly be identical with the handsome martial warriors nomadizing in the Pontic steppe, about whom we possess a number of facts! What is the precise relationship between the two? And if Jayhānī names these people the People of the Depressed Land (*Muḥaffariyya*) and not *Majghariyya*, which certainly resembles the Magyars' self-designation (Magyar) and seems to be related to it, how can we know that they are Magyars at all? This needs to be proved.

Although Kmoskó did not expound his view on the subject in detail when he first voiced this idea in 1927, he seems to have had in mind that whenever readers came across the name *Majghariyya* in a text, they would at once realize that if they omitted the diacritical dots and supplied it with other, wholly different dots and read *f* instead of *gh*, then it would be the name of the Depressed Land, a subtle reference to the Magyars/Bashkirs living in the vicinity of the middle course of the Volga, where – according to him – the Depressed Land was located, which Sallām the Interpreter passed on his way to the Great Wall of China (?). However, such an assumption is not in accord with the rules of Arabic paleography: one cannot read one and the same word in different ways simultaneously. It must be regarded as a serious inconsistency that Kmoskó declares in three places at least that Sallām's travelogue is mere fiction, therefore it does not reflect real facts: he did not undertake the journey ascribed him at all. (In one place he describes Sallām's account as “humbug”).²⁴⁹ Of course, in this case the whole description of the Depressed Land is mere invention, too. Moreover, there are two basic difficulties which cast essential doubts on the validity of Kmoskó and Zimonyi's thesis. First, no reference to this alleged folk etymology can be found anywhere in Arabic literature, as far as I am aware; nor have Kmoskó and Zimonyi succeeded in producing one. The Arabs love such etymologies. It is hardly believable that nobody would have mentioned it if it had ever occurred to anyone. One thinks here, for instance, of the popular etymology of the name

²⁴⁸ Donzel, Schmidt: *Gog and Magog* 196.

²⁴⁹ Ormos: *Kiegészítések* 1137.

of the Turks based on the Arabic verb *taraka*, “to leave”, as quoted by Zimonyi elsewhere in his work.²⁵⁰ Second, the word *mahfūra* is supposedly the folk etymology of the name *Majghariyya* (if one considers the skeleton of the script [*rasm*] only). However, it is not a good match, because it has an additional letter *wāw* in it, which seriously weakens the correspondence assumed by Kmoskó and Zimonyi. To solve this problem, Kmoskó posited an intermediary form, (*al-arḍ al-*)*muḥaffara*. It is indeed a *possible* form in Arabic but it is not attested anywhere to my knowledge, and Kmoskó and Zimonyi have also failed to produce even a single occurrence of it. It is difficult to see why Jayhānī should have availed himself of a previously unknown form (*muḥaffara*) in one section of his work, while using another form (*mahfūra*) in the very description of the given spot of land. And this form is not attested anywhere! There is a further inconsistency in Zimonyi’s claim. The popular etymology concerning the “Depressed Land” plays a central role in his argument. But if and whenever Jayhānī and his followers used other forms than *Muḥaffariyya* in their works – there were six of them at least and this happened quite often in Zimonyi’s view –, then this popular etymology got lost. Similarly, even if it existed, the popular etymology *Muḥaffariyya*, “the People of the Depressed Land”, would only work in Arabic, where speakers familiar with the root $\sqrt{H-F-R}$ can be assumed to be able to infer the meaning of a form *muḥaffar*. This is no longer valid for Persian and Turkish, which are not even related to Arabic. There this popular etymology will not work, because speakers of these two languages will not readily be able to establish any connection between the words *mahfūr* and *muḥaffar*[*iyya*], even if they existed in their languages. Yet this particular Arabic word (*muḥaffar*) does not even seem to exist in them because it does not occur in any of the authoritative dictionaries of Barbier de Meynard, Redhouse, Richardson, Steingass, Vullers and Zenker.²⁵¹ Thus it stands to reason that authors writing in Persian and Turkish, such as Gardīzī, the anonymous author of *Ḥudūd al-‘Ālam*, ‘Awfī, Shukrallāh and his Turkish translator, Fārisī, Muḥammad Kātib and Ḥājji Khalīfa would rather have translated this word into their respective languages in their own works when excerpting Jayhānī’s book, or would at least have explained to their readers this Arabic popular etymology of allegedly essential importance. There are *seven* such authors and none of them felt the necessity to do so. How can one account for the fact that this popular etymology, assumed by Kmoskó and Zimonyi as something evident to all Arabic speakers, was apparently lost on all of these authors, who otherwise had a good knowledge of Arabic?

In my opinion, this whole state of affairs proves that the origin of *al-arḍ al-mahfūra* is independent of the Magyars. Any relationship between the two, therefore, can only be accidental and *al-arḍ al-mahfūra* cannot have been invented as a folk etymology of *Majghariyya*. As a matter of fact, Zimonyi himself claims that the story predates Jayhānī. But then what did Jayhānī do with it exactly in Zimonyi’s opinion?

²⁵⁰ See, e.g., Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 92.

²⁵¹ Barbier de Meynard: *Dictionnaire*. Redhouse: *Lexicon*. Richardson: *Dictionary*. Steingass: *Dictionary*. Vullers: *Lexicon*. Zenker: *Handwörterbuch*. It does not occur in these dictionaries; some of them list *mihfar* / *mihfara* / *mihfār* “spade” pertaining to this root, but nothing else.

Zimonyi is not aware of the precise role played by the name of the Magyars in the manuscripts in question. In accordance with the rules of textual criticism, the name of the Magyars should appear in the printed texts in the form in which we think the author himself used it when composing his account.²⁵² One must make up one's mind and decide according to the best of one's knowledge what term Jayhānī may have used and then stick to this form throughout. It is not admissible to have different forms popping up in different texts all the time.

One of the troubles with Zimonyi's thesis is that he is unable to assess the degree of significance, that is the relative value, of the various, often serious, copyists' errors that Arabic manuscripts abound in, as he has never worked on Arabic manuscripts.²⁵³ He attributes too great a significance to forms originating with uneducated and careless copyists, who sometimes did not even know Arabic properly, because they were Persians or Turks by birth, speaking Persian and Turkish respectively, as has already been mentioned above.²⁵⁴ It is well known that copyists, Arabs and non-Arabs alike, very often understand but little of what they are actually copying, therefore they commit many, often glaring, mistakes. I once worked on a beautifully written medieval manuscript supplied with all possible diacritical dots. In one place it contained the expression من ابن بناتها *min ibn banātihā* "from the son of her daughters", which did not make any sense in the given context. After some time I realized that most of the diacritical dots had been misplaced and that the expression in question should be read as من اين نباتها *min ayna nabātuḥā* "where does it originate from?", namely a muscle, because the text in question was an anatomical treatise. What had happened was that the copyist was working from a manuscript without diacritical dots, and supplied them in his copy to produce fully intelligible Arabic words, without however taking any account of the context, and thus writing down plain nonsense, which he apparently failed to notice and which in any case did not trouble him. This case is not exceptional; such cases are very common in Arabic manuscripts. Zimonyi's *Muḥaffariyya* is not much different from "the son of her daughters", which in itself is plain nonsense. What we perceive is that Zimonyi is completely lost among the different forms, erring helplessly among the various readings of *Majghariyya* in manuscripts.

In actual fact, similar cases occur elsewhere in Zimonyi's present book, too. For instance, we read of a case where the name *Atil* is written as *Amul* in a manuscript. The case is evident: the copyist read the relevant word as *Āmul*, because he was familiar with the name of this famous Iranian port on the Caspian Sea but had apparently never heard of *Atil*, the Khazar capital. Zimonyi, correctly, calls this "a typical case of motivated

²⁵² This consideration is not valid for diplomatic editions, which however do not affect us here.

²⁵³ I do not claim that he has never seen Arabic manuscripts at all, because he indeed checked a part of his texts in the relevant manuscripts. However, I do say that comparing a few lines in a printed edition with the corresponding manuscript text is not the same as working on a previously unknown manuscript and trying to make sense of a text with few and sometimes misplaced diacritical dots or none at all.

²⁵⁴ Khvol'son writes about the copyist of Ibn Rusta's London manuscript that he evidently did not understand everything he was copying, because he was most probably Persian by birth. In all probability, his native tongue was Persian, too, and he did not know Arabic properly. Ibn-Dasta: *Izvestiya* 10.

erratum” and also “motivated misinterpretation” elsewhere.²⁵⁵ This is precisely the same phenomenon as the relationship between *Majghariyya* and the Depressed Land.

In my view, there is no connection between the Magyars and the Depressed Land. There was a tradition of a Depressed Land of uncertain origin in the geographical literature of the Arabs, which abounds in similar miraculous stories (*‘ajā’ib wa-gharā’ib*). Different authors located it in different places in the world, but always on the outskirts of the inhabited *oikumene*, in unknown areas, where nobody went and which nobody visited. Its localization in the area east of the middle course of the Volga is only one of the numerous attempts, and a very vague one indeed. Namely, the description where it occurs, the travel account of Sallām the Interpreter, is partly very vague itself, and partly of highly doubtful authenticity. It is unacceptable to treat as a self-evident truth beyond question the localization of the Depressed Land in Bashkiria or Magna Hungaria, where those Magyars lived who had not wandered to the south and then to the west with the majority of their tribe but had remained behind in their old habitat and where the Dominican monk Julian succeeded to find them in the 1230s.²⁵⁶ Zimonyi writes: “It is obvious that the fetid land and the depressed land to its north ... can be located on the southern slopes of the Ural mountains.”²⁵⁷ However, it cannot be so obvious as Zimonyi wants us to believe because a recent authoritative publication – also quoted by Zimonyi – claims that the river crossing the Depressed Land “may well be” the river Tarim, therefore localizing the land in question in the Taklamakan desert in Northwestern China, as has already been referred to.²⁵⁸ I do not want to take sides in this question. I merely want to point out that the localization of this area is utterly vague. In my view, any resemblance between the corrupt manuscript form *Mahfariyya/Muḥaffariyya* and the Depressed Land (*al-ard al-mahfūra*) is due to mere chance and Arab authors and readers never saw any connection between it and the Magyars. The name of the Magyars in this tradition is *Majghariyya*.

Remarks on Count Kuun’s editions

We have mentioned above that Kuun published Ibn Rusta’s account of the Magyars in Arabic in an impeccable Arabic edition in 1895.²⁵⁹ In 1900 he published it again, this time accompanied by a Hungarian translation, on the occasion of the thousand-year anniversary of the “Conquest”. Once again Kuun reproduced de Goeje’s text, with the addition of some vocal signs and diacritical marks. There is, however, a mistake in it: in the last line of the account (in de Goeje’s text) in the word *sā’ir* he placed the vowel sign belonging to the hamza sign *above* (سَائِر) instead of *below* it – he could have placed it below the line, too.²⁶⁰ This is of course an impossible form, one that does not exist in Arabic: it does not conform to the rules of Arabic grammar and orthography. It appears from Kuun’s letters to Goldziher that Goldziher cooperated in the proofreading

²⁵⁵ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 220, 270 (n. 720), 273.

²⁵⁶ See, e.g., Macartney: *Magyars* 156–173. Fodor: *Où le Dominicain* 9–20.

²⁵⁷ Zimonyi: *Muslim sources* 64.

²⁵⁸ See n. 248 above.

²⁵⁹ See n. 27 above.

²⁶⁰ Keleti kútfök 170.

of both publications of 1895 and 1900, and it is also evident that Kuun regularly consulted him on the subject in connection with the Hungarian publication of 1900 and on the subject of Arab-Islamic geography in general. At the same time, especially in the case of the publication of 1900, proofreading was somewhat problematic. The bulk of it took place in 1897, mostly in the summer, when the Goldziheres were on their summer holiday in Styria, while the Kuuns stayed mostly in Transylvania. Proofsheets, which came in irregular batches, had to be sent after them and exchanged between them. In his letters, Kuun complains of various difficulties in this respect, in addition to problems with his eyes. It is hardly conceivable that both would have overlooked سائر. It appears from Kuun's letters to Goldziher that the latter's cooperation started with the proofreading of the appendix to the 1895 publication containing the Oriental texts – it was Goldziher who offered his help to Kuun, who gladly accepted it. It then continued all the way through the 1900 publication. Kuun also repeatedly asked his younger friend to check his translations. To our great regret, we have only Kuun's letters at our disposal, but not Goldziher's replies.²⁶¹ In connection with Ibn Rusta, Kuun seems initially to have relied on Khvol'son's edition. However, in May 1891 he spent a few days in Leiden, where he also visited Michael Jan de Goeje, who received him cordially and kindly put at his disposal the proofsheets of his Ibn Rusta edition, which had not yet appeared in print. De Goeje also gave Kuun permission to use his text in the work to be published in Hungary. Somewhat later, apparently unaware of Kuun's visit to Leiden, Goldziher strongly recommended Kuun to rely on "de Goeje's revised edition", which had meanwhile appeared. However, this recommendation proved superfluous because of Kuun's visit to Leiden. Now, in his letter Goldziher speaks of "Ibn Rusta's revised text published by de Goeje".²⁶² This seems to suggest the existence of a mysterious first edition of Ibn Rusta by de Goeje, and what Goldziher seems to be saying is that Kuun should use the second edition by de Goeje instead of the first. Now, the widely used current edition of Ibn Rusta by de Goeje in BGA VII bears the line *Edit. secunda* on the Latin title page. (It is missing on the Arabic title page.) This indication had always intrigued me, as I had never come across a corresponding *first* edition. Thus, at long last, there seemed to be a proof that a first edition indeed existed. To clarify the matter, I turned to Jan Just Witkam (Leiden) for information on where this first edition could be consulted, and he promptly answered my inquiry. He informed me that *Edit[io] secunda* refers here only to al-Ya'qūbī's *Kitāb al-Buldān*, which forms the second part of the present volume (BGA VII), because de Goeje originally published part of it as his doctoral dissertation in 1860.²⁶³ There is no mysterious first edition of Ibn Rusta by de Goeje nor is there a second one: he published only one edition of this work.²⁶⁴ Indeed, upon closer examination it is clear that *Edit. secunda* is printed in very small letters just

²⁶¹ Goldziher Correspondence, Oriental Collection, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, GIL/23/19. Within the context of the present review only a few steps could be undertaken to trace Kuun's *Nachlass*, without any result. Further steps are necessary.

²⁶² Mentioned in Kuun's letter of 15 July 1892.

²⁶³ De Goeje: *Specimen*.

²⁶⁴ Email message of 23 March 2016. On this edition, see Witkam: Michael Jan de Goeje 1-9. I am indebted to Jan Just Witkam for providing me with a pdf-file of his biographical note.

below *al-Jakûbî*. Thus Goldziher's suggestion can only be interpreted as meaning that he regarded de Goeje's text as revised in its relationship to Khvol'son's edition. At the same time I must confess I feel some clarification of this matter would have been welcome in the Preface. I cannot remember ever having come across a work in which one half was a first edition and the other half a second.

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²⁶⁵ Kovalevskiy's name is missing from this edition because in October (or February) 1938 he was arrested and sentenced to penitentiary labour in the Gulag. He was released in 1945.

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