

THE NAME OF TASHKENT

by
PENTTI AALTO
Helsinki

The Latin geographer Iulius Honorius (fifth century A. D.) in his *Cosmographia*, included in the collection *Geographi Latini Minores* edited by A. Riese (Heilbronn 1878), chapter 38, gives a list of peoples of the "Northern Ocean". In fact the names quoted, as far as they can be identified, seem to go towards the East from Scythia. The second of the peoples named, *Borysthenes gens*, looks quite clear. Pomponius Mela 2,6 and Pliny nat. 4,82 also quote it as the name of a tribe. Honorius chapter A 6 again quotes a number of the same names as names of townships (*oppida*) but not *Borysthenes*, though it is mentioned as *oppidum* by both Pliny and Martianus Capella 6,663. This latter author, again, does not know it as the name of a *gens*. Chapter A 13 of Honorius quotes a list of peoples of the "Oriental Ocean" with partly the same names. This list obviously follows a different source than the others, and it is therefore difficult to find out which of the names, if any, should correspond to *Borysthenes*. It seems that such lists have been written on lines in some sources, in columns in others, and that the original order has often been fatally mixed up in copying a list. It is also probable that lists have often been copied from maps.

In the *Cosmographia Anonymi* (sixth century A. D.) included in the same collection, chapter 13 the names of the tribes of the *Oceanus Orientalis* have been mixed up and are full of the copyists' errors. The unknown compiler begins his list with plural accusatives *Persas, Grecos, Anthrophagos, Isauros*, but then changes into plural nominatives. In chapter 38 this text gives a list of the peoples of the Northern Ocean, closely related to the above list of Iulius Honorius. Instead of the name *Borysthenes* the anonymous compiler gives *Staastenes*, a name totally unknown. It would therefore seem appropriate to regard it as erroneous and to replace it with *Borysthenes* without any further consideration. The fundamental principle

of textual criticism is, however, to give preference to a lectio difficilior since it is easier to understand that an odd-looking form like *Staaatenes* had been replaced by some copyist with a familiar one than the other way round. Such a lectio difficilior must, of course, make sense in some way. It seems that there is indeed some evidence which could be presented in favour of *Staaatenes*.

In the Greek text of the great inscription of Shapur I we read (l. 4-5) ... ἕως Κας, Σωδικηνῆς καὶ Τσατσηνῆς ὄρων ... 'up to Kash, Sugd, and Chachastan mountains' corresponding in the Parthian version¹ to *Kaš Swgd W Šaš[stn TWR*. Our above Latin name would thus be identical to the Greek Τσατσηνη, which renders the old name *Čāč* of the city known later as Tashkent. The Parthian form *Šaš* seems to reflect the same form of this name as is known from Arabic. Widengren,² when describing the wars of Khusrau Anoshurvan, quotes Dainawarī and Mirxōnd, who tell of the Turkic conquest of *Šāš*, Ferghana, Samarkand, Kaš, Nasaf, and Bukhara, while the *Shahnameh* gives the name as *Čāč*.³ In Manichaean Sogdian we find *č'č'ny* = *čāčānē 'a native of Čāč'.⁴

Pulleyblank⁵ wants to connect the name *Čāč* with the Yenisseian word for 'stone:' Ket. *tyes*, Kot. *śis*, Pumpokolsk *čys*, and sees in it a relic of the Hūna occupation of Sogdiana in the fifth and sixth centuries. However, the occurrence in the inscription of Shapur I (240-272 A. D.) shows that the name must be dated much further back in time. The Chinese sources quoted by Chavannes contain numerous references to Tashkent transcribed in various ways, in most of the older cases with the hieroglyph *shih* 'stone' (Giles 9964, Mathews 5813). These references are dated from ca. 600 A. D. onwards. On his pilgrimage to India (629-645 A. D.) Hsüan-tsang travelled through the country of *Chaj* on the Yaxartes. In note 310 to his edition of the *Oγuz Qaγan* (*SPAW* 1932 XXV p. 714) W. Bang proposed to derive *čaš* phonetically from Turkic *taš* through a distance assimilation referring to Chuvassian *t'sul* < *čaš < taš. The name must in any case be older than the Turkic domination of

¹ Sprengling, M., *Third Century Iran: Sapor and Kartir*, Chicago 1953, p. 7.

² Widengren, Geo, "Xosrau Anoshurvan, les heptalites et les peuples turcs", *Orientalia Suecana* 1, 1952, p. 76.

³ Ibid. p. 78, cf. p. 83.

⁴ Henning, W. B., *Sogdica*, London 1940, p. 9.

⁵ Pulleyblank, E. G., "The Consonantal System of Old Chinese", *Asia Major* IX, 1972, p. 248.

the country of Tashkent. The Soviet orientalist E. D. Polivanov⁶ states that a popular etymology interprets the name as "the City of *Taş*," this latter being regarded as a hero of hoary antiquity. Polivanov himself (p. 399) sees in the name an Iranian compound **taž(i)-kent* later phonetically developed to *Taşkent*.

It seems, however, that the Turkic *taş* 'stone' can here very well be considered a translation of older names of the same city. Even before the above *Čač*, etc. there occur in our sources names with the meaning 'stone'. Pulleyblank (l. c.) connects the older types with the name *Chih* 'stone' of an important branch of the Hsiung-nu. According to the Chinese sources the area was inhabited by *Ch'iang-ch'ü* or *K'ang-chü*, in Pulleyblank's opinion very likely of Tokharian origin. On the authority of H. W. Bailey he derives the latter name from Tokh. A *kānk-*, which probably means some kind of 'stone'.⁷ A couple of passages in the Han shu (quoted by Pulleyblank *JRAS* 1966 p. 28 fn. 8) show that the *K'ang-chü* were already in contact with the Chinese under the Emperor Wu, who came to the throne in the year 140 B. C. *K'ang-chü* would further be connected with **kham-kjat* (for **Kam-kar*?), the capital of *Shih* mentioned in Chinese sources in 658 A. D.⁸ and with the name *Kankar* given to the lower Yaxartes by Ibn Chordadhbih.⁹ It might be possible to see in the latter component of these names the Iranian (Khotanese) **kara* 'town'.

On the other hand we find in Iranian and Indian sources names of places or peoples probably situated in the same region, which either by their forms are strongly reminiscent of the above *Kang* or have the meaning 'stone'. Tale IV 21 in the *Sūtrālamkāra* tells of the piety of a painter from Puṣkalavatī who had visited the country *Aśmaka* ("Stony") where he had decorated a Buddhist monastery (Lévi *JA* X:12, 1908, p. 88). Foucher¹⁰ (II p. 644) identified this place with Tashkent. According to the tradition the *Sūtrālamkāra* is a work of the famous Aśvaghōṣa, a contemporary of Kaṇiṣka.

⁶ "O proishoždenii nazvaniya Taškenta", *V. V. Bartol'du turkestanskije druž'ya, učeniiki i počitateli*, Tashkent 1927, p. 400.

⁷ Herzfeld, E., *Archaeol. Mitt. aus Iran II*, Berlin 1930, p. 59 sees here an Iranian *Kaṇha* 'Wasser, Fluß'.

⁸ Chavannes, E., *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) orientaux*, St. Pétersbourg 1903, p. 141.

⁹ Marquart, J., "Über das Volkstum der Komanen", *Abh. d. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen*, Ph.-hist. Kl. NF XIII: 1, Berlin 1914, p. 168.

¹⁰ Foucher, A., *L'Art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhara I-II*, Paris 1905-1951.

Other scholars want to attribute this work to Kumāralāta, the founder of the Sautrāntika school dated in the second century A. D. In the Bṛhatsaṃhitā 14, 22 by Varāhamihira (died 587 A. D.) *Aśmaka* is the name of a northwestern country.¹¹

Lamotte¹² quotes the Chinese translation (made by Kumārajīva) of the Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra, the author of which knew the great cities of the North like Alasanda and Tashkent, without, however, mentioning the name under which this latter city occurs in the text.

In the Mahābhārata we find in some manuscripts a name *Kaṅka* occurring in a context which seems to support its connection with the above *Kaṅg*: 2, 47, 1850 *śakās tukhārāḥ kaṅkāśca*, 12, 65, 2429 *śakās tuṣārāḥ kaṅkāśca pahlavāśca*. In the Bhāgavata Purāṇa 2, 4, 18 the *Kaṅkāś* are mentioned together with the Kirātās, Hūnās, Andhrās, Pulindās, Pukkasās, Ābhīrās, Yavanās and Khasās, in 9, 20, 30 again with Kirātās, Hūnās, Yavanās, Andhrās, Khasās and Śakās. In neither case does the poet seem to have had in mind any specific geographic setting: he just quotes a number of names of barbarous peoples, in the first case to emphasize the universality of God, in the latter again to describe the great extent of the conquests of Bharata.

In Iran the name in question seems to occur as early as the Avesta (Yašt 5, 54) as *Kaṅha*, said to be a high holy castle, outside of which the hero Tusa meets his enemies, the offspring of Vaēsaka. In the later tradition *Kaṅg-diz* is a holy place, situated in the East, protected by seven walls with fifteen gates, inside of which there are rivers and fertile gardens. Barr (*Avesta*, Copenhagen 1954, p. 205) translated *Kaṅg-diz* 'Malmborgen,' i.e. "Ore-Castle." In the Pahlavi literature the descriptions of *Kaṅg-diz* feature legendary colouring. One of the more detailed ones is met with in the Ayātkār i Žāmāspik VII 2 *Kaṅgdiz Syāwaxš i bāmīg kard abar kamāl i dēwān u-š rāh i pērāmōn haft sad frasang. 3 u-š haft parisp ast: nazdist āhanēn, dōdīgar rōyēn, sidīgar pōlāwatēn, čahārum brinžēn, paṅčum kāskēn, šašum asēmēn, haftum zarrēn*: 2 'Kangdiz was built by Syawaxš the glorious on the heads (*kamal*) of *dēvs*, and the road around it is 700 parasangs. 3 And it has 7 encircling walls: the first of iron, the second of copper, the third of steel, the fourth of

¹¹ In the Mahābhārata 7, 85, 3049 and 8, 8, 237 a people *Aśmakāḥ* occurs in a context which might refer to India.

¹² Lamotte, E., "Sur la formation du Mahāyāna", *Asiatica*, Leipzig 1955, p. 391.

bronze, the fifth of lapis lazuli, the sixth of silver, the seventh of gold.' A very similar description is met with in the Bundahišn chapter XXXII 12; the seven walls are there of gold, of silver, of bronze, of iron, of glass, and of lapis lazuli. With these descriptions I would compare that of Tashkent given in Moslem sources: "Shâsh, in the 4th (10th) century, was a city of many walls. There was, in the first place, an inner town, with a castle, or citadel, and these two were surrounded by a wall. Outside the inner town was the inner suburb, surrounded by its own wall, and beyond this again lay the outer suburb, with many gardens and orchards surrounded in turn by a third wall. Lastly there was the Great Wall, which...protected the whole district, making a great semicircular sweep round Shâsh to the north, from the bank of the Turk river on the east to the Jaxartes on the west."¹³

That *Kang* in Pahlavi was not exclusively a legendary name might be shown by § 57 of the text *Husraw i Kawātān u rēdak*. There the page explains to the king that the best wine is the "wine of *Kang* when they prepare it well" (*may i kangīg ka nēwag wirayēnd*); the Arab translation has the name *Balkh* here.

According to Barthold (*Enzyklopädie des Islam* IV, Leiden 1934, p. 745) al-Bīrūnī's *Ta'rikh al-Hind* seems to be the first work in which the name *Taškent* occurs, but identified with the *Λίθινος Πύργος* of Ptolemy. Since in the Avesta (Bartholomae 674) *daēza* means 'Häufen, Schichten von Erde, Steinen,' Pahlavi *diz* would be a very close synonym of *kurgan*. Lamotte¹⁴ speaks of the Sarvāstivāda School as having been represented in Central Asian oases like Kashgar, Tashkurgan, Aqsu, etc. and quotes (ibid. p. 598) *Kabhandā* as the Sanskrit name of Tashkurgan. Ptolemy's *Λίθινος Πύργος* has been identified e.g. by Pelliot (*BEFEO* V, 1905, p. 496) with the present day Tashkurgan. Since in the Geography of Ptolemy we in fact find two descriptions and locations of "Stone-Tower," Berthelot¹⁵ considers it possible that there may have existed two (perhaps even more) localities having this same name. Marquart¹⁶

¹³ Le Strange, G., *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge 1905, p. 480f.

¹⁴ Lamotte, E., *Histoire du bouddhisme indien*, Louvain 1958, p. 601.

¹⁵ Berthelot, A., *L'Asie ancienne centrale et sud-orientale d'après Ptolémée*, Paris 1930, p. 207.

¹⁶ Marquart, J., "Erānšahr nach der Geographie des Ps. Moses Xorenac'i", *Abh. d. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen*, Ph.-hist. Kl. NF III: 2, Berlin 1901, p. 155 n. 49.

criticizes al-Bīrūnī's identification as being based on the sense of the Turkic name which according to him was only a Turkization of the older Čāč: neither here nor later does Marquart seem to have thought of the sense of the older names. In the *Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānshahr* (ed. by G. Messina S. I., *Analecta Orientalia* 3, Roma 1931) Marquart states (p. 26): "*Kaṅ(h)* was first located in the 2nd century B. C. at Čāč (Taskānd)... In the first century B. C... the name *K'ang-kü*, later abbreviated to *K'ang*, was applied to Sogdiana and its capital Samarkand." E.g. in the Chinese sources translated by Liu Mau-tsai¹⁷ *K'ang* occurs several times and is consequently rendered with Samarkand.

In any case it seems that since time immemorial the various names of Tashkent have been translations or transformations of older ones and have always had the sense 'stone.' The name Čāč, according to Pulleyblank of Hunnic origin, would thus be the basis for Τσατσωνη in the Shapur inscription, and this again could be the basis for the above *Staastenes* in the *Cosmographia Anonymi*, which seems to be quite unique in the Roman literature.

¹⁷ *Die chinesischen Nachrichten zur Geschichte der Ost-Türken (T'u-küe)* (= *Göttinger Asiatische Forschungen* Bd. 10), Wiesbaden 1958, pp. 56, 128, 412, 466.