NOTES AND COMMENTS

I found Dr. Percy Kemp’s article, “An Eighteenth-Century Turkish Intelligence Report,” [IJMES, 16:4 (November, 1984), 497–506] to be quite interesting. However, I noticed that he carried on an error in Stanford Shaw’s translation of Niẓāmnāme-i Mısıır into English. He, too, mistakenly used the word “people” within the following excerpt (p. 501):

Since ancient times the people of Egypt have been experts in deceit and trickery. The varieties of stratagems and deceits used against ancient kings and former princes are well known. Shaw translated the Ottoman Turkish word kavim, a loan from the Arabic qawm, as “people.” However, other than people, kavim also meant tribal family, sect or any tightly knit group. In the context of the Niẓāmnāme, its most probable meaning was the latter and, more specifically, the group of tyrants who not only oppressed the people of Egypt but also deceived the Ottoman State. According to the Niẓāmnāme, the most influential of these tyrants were the Mamlûks and the retired officers of the “Azab and Janissary corps.” The Niẓāmnāme also refers to the people of Egypt, but then the word ahâlî, also a loan from Arabic, is used to mean “people.”

Another indication that kavim used in the above context does not mean “people” is that there is no historical evidence whatsoever either in the Niẓāmnāme or in other historical sources that the Egyptian people have been experts in deceit and trickery or that they have used stratagems and deceits against kings. On the other hand, there is frequent mention about the tyrants or oppressors of the people who use such stratagems and deceits.

This error is probably due to a slight oversight on the part of Professor Shaw, who is otherwise an accomplished scholar of Ottoman and Turkish studies. The modern Arabic usage of qawm as nation or people could possibly be a reason that leads scholars to use it in that sense even when they see it in an Ottoman text of the eighteenth century.

In the same issue of IJMES, there is a book review by Feroz of Ömer Kürkçüoğlu’s book entitled Osmanlı Devleti’ne Karşı Arap Bağimsizlik Hareketi (1908–1918). Here, Professor Ahmad is quite right when he states that he was disappointed by the author’s almost exclusive reliance on British sources and his neglect of Ottoman-Turkish and Arabic sources. Thus, events are examined through a British perspective that is replete with bias and distortion. It is an unfortunate reality that Turkish historians who study modern or contemporary Turkish-Arab relations do not know Arabic and, likewise, their Arab counterparts do not have a knowledge of Turkish. Thus, an Arab historian who studies Turkey will have to rely almost totally on Western sources while his Turkish counterparts will do the same when examining the Arab world. Since the Turks and the British were in opposing camps during World War I, it is not surprising that British and, for that matter, other Western powers have tried to set the Turks against the Arabs. This is why the virtually exclusive reliance on Western sources culminates in a biased and distorted account and analysis of the events.

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Editor’s note: Professor Geyikdagi’s comments are important and I regret their belated publication.
In "Study of Middle Eastern Women" [IJMES, 18:4 (November, 1986), 501-9], Professor Suad Joseph has made a factual error that merits a friendly response. On two occasions (pp. 503 and 506), Dr. Joseph erroneously refers to me as a "Western" and an "American" "feminist." I wish to offer three points of correction: First, I am an Iranian, raised by a Muslim woman in an Armenian family in the cities of Abadan and Shiraz. I am a graduate of the Iranian public school system and have attended Shiraz University. Second, I am a political scientist with specialization on women in politics, and comparative and Middle East politics. Third, as one who adheres to objective standards of scholarship, I am compelled to raise the following questions: Why should the national backgrounds of scholars be used as a variable in assessing their works? Doesn't that personalize the review process? Isn't it a deterministic approach?

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In my review article, "The Study of Middle Eastern Women: Investments, Passions and Problems," [IJMES 18:4 (November, 1986), 501-9], I misidentified Professor Eliz Sanasarian as an "American" or "Western" feminist. Professor Sanasarian has kindly informed me that she is "an Iranian, raised by a Muslim woman in an Armenian family in the cities of Abadan and Shiraz," a graduate of the Iranian public school system and has also attended Shiraz University. I appreciate Professor Sanasarian's correction and apologize for the error.

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John Woods's review of James J. Reid, Tribalism and Society in Islamic Iran, 1500-1629 [TSII] (IJMES, 18:4 [November, 1986], 529-31) distorts the author's statements. Space considerations do not permit an answer to every item raised by Woods. The most serious issue is Woods's misreading of a statement I made concerning the Chaghatai language. He says: "The capstone of Reid's 'Timurid/Chaghatayid' thesis is the dubious assertion that Chaghatay or Central Asian literary Turkic developed under the Timurids somehow became the spoken language of the Qizilbash tribesmen (pp. 16, 22, 28, 33 note 23, 107-8, 113 note 4)" [p. 531]. He then cites the following passage (TSII, p. 22): "By the mid-sixteenth century Chaghatai had not yet become the lingua franca of the qizilbash ruling elite so most of the qizilbash continued to speak various Turkish, Kurdish, and perhaps Luri dialects." Note that my statement refers only to "ruling elite." Then Woods states that I do not indicate when the Turkic population of Iran abandoned Chaghatai and reverted to Azeri and other dialects. Woods demonstrates that he did not read TSII carefully or completely in these remarks. I make no reference to a "people," only to a few elite personalities at court. The specific words used in TSII on the pages cited by Woods read as follows: p. 16—"qizilbash aristocracy"; p. 22—"ruling elite"; p. 28—"chieftains and retainers spoke Chaghatai Turkish"; p. 33 note 23—"MK which is in Chaghatai"; pp. 107-8—cites Minorsky in discussing the influence of Chaghatai Turkish on "the language spoken or used by Shāh Ismā' īl I"; p. 113 note 4—Minorsky "does not consider the possibility that scholars trained in Chaghatai in Khorasan were already serving the Safavids and that imitation alone would not suffice to influence their lan-
guage." Woods ignores the entire argument about the difference between "kizilbash" and "qizilbash" (the latter referring not to a people, but to an elite military status), the hierarchical nature of the uymaq ("An uymaq was nothing more than a great ranking system implanted within Safavid society at large"—TSII, p. 66), and the existence of the qizilbash as a special ranking or set of ranks at the upper end of the social hierarchy. Woods is perhaps disturbed by the fact that TSII does not treat a tribe as a compact organism within which all members speak the same language or possess the same common ethnic traits. The evidence cannot support such a conclusion. Far from being the "capstone" of any theory, these statements cited by Woods and other comments in the book refer to hierarchy, elite personalities, and court culture. Mīr 'Alī Shīr-i Navā'ī's works were read at the Safavid court. That I recognize Persian also as an important court language is evident from my use of Persian chronicles written by qizilbash writers. Woods needs to learn the difference between a few in the elite and the larger populations they ruled and governed (TSII, pp. 66–80). The reviewer is so accustomed to equating leaders with ethnic groups that he does not understand the dynamics of hierarchical societies where the leaders speak one language, their retainers speak another dialect or language, and their subjects speak other totally different dialects. Woods's ability to analyze scholarship is disappointing.

As for the claim that Timur awarded grants to the Safavid murshid, I never claimed that the documents were valid. This section of TSII (p. 84) treats all the early history of the Ṭālīsh with doubt. Beginning with sentence 3 of the last paragraph on p. 84, the text states that Saft al-Dīn's ancestors "seem" to have had ties with Talish groups. Sentence 4 says that after 1334, the Talish "appear" to have entered into a relation of dependence with the Safavid murshid, Sadr al-Dīn. Sentence 5 characterizes Khunjī's passage about Ṣadr al-Dīn as "extremely vague." Sentence 6, the statement to which Woods refers, is not to be taken as a specific comment on Timurid history, but as a sign of the relative wealth of the murshid dominating the Safaviyya Order. That the documents were not accepted as fully valid is supported by TSII (p. 184), which states "accounts of Timur-i Lang's grants."

As for the "Uīghūr-oğlu," no definite origin can be traced for Bābā Ilyās Sulṭān. In a passage dealing with the ways in which Safavid-era elites perceived their ancestry, it is not necessary to take cognizance of the role played by Chinggis Khan. It is sufficient to state the possibilities. In fact, this passage cited by Woods demonstrates further that no "T/C thesis" was posed—but that only questions were asked. The discussion begins with the variant spellings of Uīghūr-oğlu that indicate that even the name "Uīghūr" may not be correct. The source that cites Uighur-oğlu as a name and uses this form consistently is Khándamīr, an administrator of the Timurid ruler Muhammad Zaman Mirza. The passage states further:

The origin of the term is obscure, but several possibilities might be mentioned. The first is that this family represented descendents of Uīghūrs or Sinicized Uīghūrs transferred from the Uīghūr steppe or China at some point during the thirteenth century, when such transfers were common. It is more likely that this family was descended from Uīghūrs, who, in the late fourteenth century, had been imported from the Uīghūr steppe and Besh Balīgh into the realm of Timur-i Lang as administrators. But in the long run, none of these explanations can be totally satisfying, since a number of other explanations for the term can be given (TSII, p. 111).

The role of this entire chapter is to deal solely with the problems presented by Safavid sources, and to question these problems from different angles. The aim is not to treat the history of the Timurid or Chinggisid empires, but to demonstrate some of the small ironies of appellation and naming that occur constantly in the Safavid chronicles, and
that even intend to make the tracing of origins impossible. If Woods wishes to deal with Persian or Turkish sources, which he does not do well, he must learn to understand their rhetorical ambiguities.

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In his rebuttal of my review of his *Tribalism and Society in Islamic Iran, 1500–1620* (IJMES, 18:4 [November, 1986], 529–31), James J. Reid asserts that I have distorted his statements and misunderstood his intentions. His response, however, is not convincing, and is couched in the same unfortunate phraseology that I criticized in *TSII*.

For example, in attempting to defend his contention—still unsupported by the evidence—that Chaghatay Turkish became the Safavid court tongue at a certain point, he seems totally unaware of the antithesis between the terms “elite” and “lingua franca.” Furthermore, in connection with the question of the spurious Timurid grants to the Safavid family, Reid contends disingenuously that he never claimed that the documents in question were valid, yet in *TSII* (p. 84), he writes, “Documents from the period of Timur-i Lang clearly show [emphasis mine] that the Safavid murshid was later a powerful landowner and that Timur increased the wealth and prestige of the Talish chiefs even more.” Finally, on the presence of Uyghurs on the Iranian plateau, Reid resorts to a convoluted self-justification that simply avoids the issue of shoddy scholarship raised in this regard by my review.

If Reid fancies himself becoming a competent historian, he must first master the basics of critical thinking, effective expression, and research methodology.

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