COMPETING NARRATIVES BETWEEN NOMADIC PEOPLE AND THEIR SEDENTARY NEIGHBOURS

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Central Asia in the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna

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The objective of this study is to introduce Central Asia and West Turkestan as seen in the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna. Anonymous of Ravenna was an Italian cleric, living in Ravenna at the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th century. He is known in literature under several names: Geographus Ravennas, Anonymous of Ravenna, Geographer of Ravenna, Cosmographer of Ravenna. Anonymous of Ravenna collected and penned the geographical and cosmographical insights of his own age. Posterity has named his work the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna (in Latin: *Ravennatis Anonymi Cosmographia*).

There is no extant autograph manuscript of the Cosmography, but three copies have survived the centuries. One of the copies of the Cosmography, the Paris Manuscript, was made in the 13th century, and survived in the French Royal Library. The second manuscript was written in the 14th century and is kept at the Library of the Vatican in Rome. The third manuscript was created in the 14th-15th centuries, and it was found in the Library of Basel (Schnetz 1940: IV–VII). The first printed issue of the Cosmography was published in 1688 in Paris, based on the Paris Manuscript (Porcheron 1688).

The first critical edition of the Cosmography was issued by Moritz Pinder and Gustav Parthey in Berlin in 1860 (Pinder & Parthey 1860). The second critical edition of the Cosmography was published by Joseph Schnetz in 1940, but his work did not include an index of the toponyms (Schnetz 1940). Marianne Zumschlinge has prepared the index of toponyms for Schnetz's publication and issued the whole work (Zumschlinge 1990). A German translation of the Cosmography was published by Joseph Schnetz in 1951 (Schnetz 1951).

The medieval manuscripts of the Cosmography do not include a map, but in the 19th century two charts were created based on the script of the Cosmography. The first map was constructed by Heinrich Kiepert, a cartographer, in 1859 (Kiepert 1859), the second one was published by Konrad Miller in 1898 (Miller 1898).

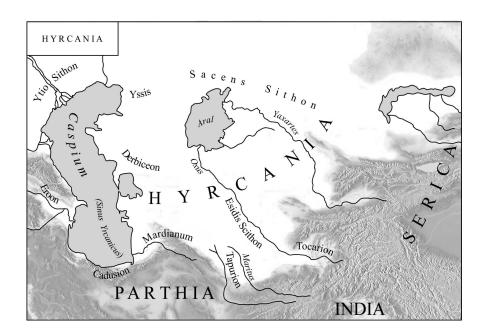
The Cosmography consists of five books. The first book contains an introduction to the work and a description of the world's partitions. Anonymous of Ravenna divided the Earth into three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe. The second volume of the Cosmography contains the description of Asia, and the third

one is about Africa. The fourth volume of the Cosmography presents the description of Europe. In the fifth book, a list of seas, gulfs, and ports follows (Cosmographia 1940: I–V). In the texts of the Cosmography several geographic mistakes and inaccuracies are present, since Europeans had only limited knowledge about the distant parts of the world, Asia and Africa, at that time.

For the construction of the Cosmography, Anonymous of Ravenna used the works of ancient Roman and Greek authors. Beyond these, he could have obtained additional information from merchants, envoys and sailors. In the Cosmography, the data from ages past was mixed with the information from Anonymous' own age. Anonymous of Ravenna mentions that he took over data from Isidore of Seville (Isidorus Hispalensis) (Cosmographia I.5), as well as from Castorius, the Cosmographer of the Romans (Castorius Romanorum cosmographus) (Cosmographia II.12). Upon comparing the geographical names of the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna with an old Roman chart, there are several identical toponyms. Thus, we can assume that Anonymous of Ravenna used this old Roman chart in writing his Cosmography. A copy of this old Roman map has luckily survived the centuries and become known as Tabula Peutingeriana or the Peutinger Table in modern ages (TP 1976; TP.DE). With the help of this chart, several geographical names of the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna can be identified. Among his sources, Anonymous of Ravenna listed also the names of Jordanes and Aristarchus (Cosmographia I.12, IV.8), as well as Aithanarit, Attanaridus, Eldevaldus and Marcomirus, whom he called the philosophers of the Goths (Gothorum phylosophi) (Cosmographia IV.12, IV.13). Anonymous of Ravenna also mentions the names of several ancient authors whose works have not survived.

Joseph Schnetz has written several studies about the sources of the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna (Schnetz 1932; Schnetz 1934; Schnetz 1942). Franz Staab has also written a study about the sources of the Cosmography (Staab 1976). Toumo Pekkanen has investigated the names of the cities of Pontus in the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna (Pekkanen 1979). Alexander Podossinov has translated a significant part of the Cosmography into Russian, and his publication includes detailed comments (Podossinov 2002). Keith J. Fitzpatrick-Matthews has examined a chapter of the Cosmography concerning Britannia (Fitzpatrick-Matthews 2013).

Hereafter there is the exposition of Central Asia according to the Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna, with the following sections: 1. Name and area of Central Asia, 2. List of the rivers of Central Asia, 3. Exposition of the provinces of Central Asia, 4. List of the cities of Central Asia.



Name and Area of Central Asia

Central Asia (West Turkestan) is presented under the moniker *Hyrcania* or *Yrcania* in the second book of the Cosmography. Anonymous of Ravenna called Hyrcania a *patria*, thus he considered it to be a politically organized area or country. Hyrcania had provinces (*provincia*), rivers and cities (Cosmographia II.8-9). The name of *Hyrcania* originates from the ancient Greek authors. In the Geography of Strabo, *Hyrcania* was located south-east of the Caspian Sea (Strabo XI.7.1-3; XI.8.1). However, the meaning of *Hyrcania* changed in the early Middle Ages; in the 7th century it did not mark the same area it did in the age of Strabo.

Anonymous of Ravenna described *Hyrcania* as a great country. The Western border of *Hyrcania* was the Caspian Sea and the *Hyrcan Bay (Sinus Yrcanus)*. According to the Cosmography, the entrance of the Caspian Sea *(Caspium)* was in the Northern Ocean, and that two were connected, and a cove of this sea was the Hyrcan Bay *(Sinus Yrcanus)* (Cosmographia II.8). Hyrcan Bay had several different names in the Cosmography: *colfus Hyrcanicus, colfus Hyrcanie Isson* (Cosmographia V.16; V.19). Thus, according to Anonymous of Ravenna, Hyrcan Bay was a great bay of the Caspian Sea, and the Western border of Hyrcania was the coastline of the Caspian Sea.

South of Hyrcania, *Parthia* was located, and in close proximity to Hyrcania there was also Media Maior. The area of Hyrcania extended far and was also adjacent to *India Syrica* (Cosmographia II.8–9). *Syrica* meant the "country of silk", which was China. Anonymous of Ravenna had limited information about the Eastern countries, and often mentioned India together with China, thus we can find the names *India Serica* and *India Syrica* in the Cosmography (Cosmographia II.3; II.8). In another case Anonymous of Ravenna mentioned the name of China separately, writing that the country of China (*patria Syrica*) is bordered by the ocean (Cosmographia II.3).

The Rivers of Central Asia

Anonymous of Ravenna remarked that several rivers ran through the area of Hyrcania. Among these, he listed Iaxartis (Syr Darya), Oxus (Amu Darya), Austiani/Astias, Grinus/Nigrinus, Maritus/Maritis, and Sicris by name (Cosmographia II.8). In his Geography, Strabo mentioned Margus, a river of Margiana (Strabo XI.10.1). This river can be identified with the river Maritus/Maritis, which is called Murghab in the present era (Podossinov 2002: 231. n. 139). According to Anonymous of Ravenna, the river Sicris ran into the Caspian Sea (Cosmographia II.12). In the last segment of the Tabula Peutingeriana, the name of the river Sicris is found in the form of Sygris, running through the area of Mardiane, and flowing into the Caspian Sea (TP Segm. XI.1-2; TP.DE Segm. XII.1-2). The Sygris sprung from the Bariani (Bactriani?) Mountains (Podossinov 2002: 231. n. 140; 372). The Austiani/Astias and Grinus/Nigrinus were rivers of Hyrcania, and also ran into the Caspian Sea (Cosmographia II.8; II.12); these two rivers cannot be accurately identified. The river Nigrinum can also be found in the last segment of the Tabula Peutingeriana, running north from the river Oxus (Amu Darya), springing from the highlands of the Sagae Scythae people, and running into the Caspian Sea (Mare Hyrcanium) (TP Segm. XI. 2-4; TP.DE Segm. XII. 2-4). Nigrinus means "Black River" and can possibly be identified with the Syr Darya (Podossinov 2002: 23. n. 138; 374).

Exposition of the Provinces of Central Asia (Hyrcania)

According to Anonymous of Ravenna, Hyrcania had eleven provinces: Mardianum, Derbiceon, Cadusion, Eroon, Issis, Esidis Scithon, Ytio Sithon, Sacens Sithon, Tapurion, Tocarion, Erurion (Cosmographia II.8).

The areas of *Mardianum*, *Derbiceon*, *Eroon*, *Tocarion* and the three Scythian provinces *Esidis Scithon*, *Sacens Sithon*, *Ytio Sithon* can be roughly identified based on the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (TP Segm. XI; TP.DE, Segm. XII).

The province *Mardianum* (*Mardiane*) was located at the lower section of the river *Sygris*, South-East of the Caspian Sea (TP Segm. XI.2; TP.DE, Segm. XII.2).

Ytio Sithon (Otios Cythae) was situated North-West of the Caspian Sea (TP Segm. XI.1; TP.DE, Segm. XII.1).

According to the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, *Esidis Scithon* (*Essedones Scythe*) was located at the middle section of river Oxus (TP Segm. XI.3; TP.DE, Segm. XII.3). The Province of *Issis* may be the equivalent of *Esidis Scithon* (Podossinov 2002: 224. n. 113; 376). Miller localized the area of *Essedones Scythe* in the Tarim basin (Miller 1916: 625 map 201).

The province *Sacens Sithon (Sagae Scythae)* was situated in the steppe zone, north of the river *Nigrinum*, at its headwaters according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (TP Segm. XI.1–4; TP.DE, Segm. XII.1–4; Podossinov 2002: 224. n. 115, 371–372). Miller localized the region of *Sagae Scythae* north of Lake Aral (Miller 1916: 625 map 201).

The area of *Derbiceon (Derbicce)* was marked as being East of the Caspian Sea, and north of the mouth of the river *Oxus* on the map of the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (TP Segm. XI.2; TP.DE, Segm. XII.2; Podossinov 2002: 374). On his own chart, Miller localized the region of *Derbicce* east of the Caspian Sea. Long ago, one of the branches of the river Oxus ran into the Caspian Sea. The region of *Derbicce* lay at the banks of this ancient branch of the river *Oxus* (Miller 1916: 625 map 201).

Tapyri could be equivalent to the territory of the *Tapyri*. According to Strabo, the *Tapyri* lived between the Hyrcanians and the Arians (Strabo XI.8.8). It was also Strabo who wrote about the *Tapyri* that they lived between *the Hyrcanians* and *the Derbices* (Strabo XI. 9.1). According to the geography of Strabo, the region of the *Tapyri* people can be identified with the area of *Tapurion* province.

The province *Eroon* can be identified with the region of the *Hiroae* people on the chart page of *Tabula Peutingeriana* (TP Segm. X.5; TP.DE Segm XI.5; Miller 1916: 623, 625 map 201).

The Tocharians (*Tocharoi/Tochari*) had conquered the region of ancient Bactria between 133–129 B.C. and settled down there (Strabo XI. 8.2; Enoki 1994: 174; Harmatta 1994: 480). The name of *Bactria* was changed to Tokharistan, and this area was at the upper section of Oxus (Enoki 1994: 167–168; Litvinsky 1996: 362–364, 488–9, Map 1). In the Cosmography, the province *Tocarion* can be identified with the region of the *Tochari. Tocarion* province can also refer to the areas of the *Tanchire* (Tokhar) people according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana* (TP Segm. XI.5; TP.DE Segm. XII.5; Miller 1916: 626; Podossinov 2002: 378).

The region of the province *Cadusion* can be localized south of the Caspian Sea, where, according to Strabo, the Cadusian (*Cadusii*) people lived (Strabo XI. 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 8.8, 13.6; Podossinov 2002: 224. n. 111).

The name of province *Erurion* was corrected to *Frunon* by Schnetz (Cosmographia II.8; Podossinov 2002: 225. n. 118). The geographical location of this province cannot be exactly determined.

Cities of Central Asia

Anonymous of Ravenna remarks that in the provinces of Hyrcania there were several cities, among which he listed twenty: Cipropolis, Axara, Portum, Castillum, Tarsambaram, Aquilleam, Belalus, Garreas, Camia, Sazala, Armastica, Theladalfir, Telada, Ucubri, Lalla, Liponissa, Tilida, Sanora, Tegamina, Gravete (Cosmographia II.8).

Schnetz corrected the name of *Cipropolis* to *Ciropolis*. Based on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, Miller localized *Cyropolis* at the mouth of the river Cyrus (Cosmographia 20.49; Miller 1916: 654–655; Podossinov 2002: 227, n. 121; Cohen 2013: 215). Besides this, there was another *Ciropolis* (*Cyropolis*) near the river Jaxartes, which is identified with the present-day settlement of Ura-Tyube, located in Tajikistan (Strabo XI. 11.4; Dandamayev 1994: 44; Negmatov 1994: 442; Cohen 2013: 251–254).

Podossinov identified the names of the cities of Hyrcania, and then localized them. Most of the listed cities were situated along the trade routes of the Caucasus, west of the Caspian Sea (Podossinov 2002: 227–230, map 21). According to the Cosmography, these cities were located in Hyrcania in *Eroon* province and its close proximity.

Summary

The Cosmography of Anonymous of Ravenna summarized the geographical knowledge of the era of the author. The Cosmography incorporates both data coming from the books of ancient authors and information from Anonymous of Ravenna's own era.

Anonymous of Ravenna put down the ancient Roman and Greek geographical names, but by the 7th century, the content and meaning of these had changed. In ancient geographical literature Hyrcania was a lesser country located to the southeast of the Caspian Sea, however in the Cosmography, the region of Hyrcania extended over the whole of Central Asia. Thus, by the 7th century, the meaning of Hyrcania had changed. The area of Hyrcania lay between the Caspian Sea and China, and between Parthia and the steppe zone.

The great rivers of Central Asia (Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Murghab) ran across the region of Hyrcania. According to Anonymous of Ravenna, Hyrcania had eleven provinces, among which he named three *Scythian* provinces, which can identified with the territories of nomadic people. The provinces of Hyrcania got their names from ancient nations. Anonymous of Ravenna also listed twenty cities of Hyrcania, but most of these were situated in the area of the Caucasus. Anonymous of Ravenna called Hyrcania a country (*patria*) consisting of provinces, thus he considered it as a politically organized region. Therefore, we can assume

that Anonymous of Ravenna described Central Asia as an empire under the name of *Hyrcania*.

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