Aubin Jean
Études sur l'Iran médiéval, géographie historique et société
éd. Denise Aigle

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It is difficult to imagine what the field of Iranian history in the Mongol period would look like today had Jean Aubin chosen a different profession. Any scholar working on questions of social and commercial networks, religious movements and their political dimensions, or the ways local events are connected to broader historical currents in medieval Iran owes a debt to the scholarship of Jean Aubin. Twenty years after his death, editor Denise Aigle has brought together seventeen of Aubin's articles in a volume published in the series *Cahiers de Studia Iranica*. The volume highlights Aubin's contributions to the history of Iran between the 11th and 15th century, with particular focus on Khurasan, Fars, and Azarbayjan during the rule of the Chinggisids and their successors.

The volume begins with an introductory article by Aigle, situating Aubin's work as part of the field of global history in France. As Aigle points out, orientalist knowledge, typically considered the province of Islamic history, acquired an international dimension thanks to Aubin (p. 16). Indeed, one of the most remarkable features of Aubin's scholarship is his ability to connect the details of the lives of individuals locally to wider political and economic patterns. Such a multi-layered approach is apparent throughout this collection.

The book is divided into four thematic sections. Part I brings together six of Aubin's articles, published between 1959 and 1979, centering on questions of urban history and the ways cities were connected to each other, their agrarian surroundings, and to more extensive trade networks. The selections are not organized chronologically, but rather begin with an article in which Aubin attempts to provide a framework for thinking about Iranian history through an urban lens.(1) Here he lays out thematically many of the concepts that are applied in subsequent articles in this first section, including the relationships between cities and their surrounding rural districts, the intersection of agricultural and nomadic interests, and the urban built environment, including the autonomous quarters that shape social dynamics within the city. By placing this article first in the collection, editor Aigle has provided the reader with a gateway to Aubin's approach to history, namely the investigation of social relationships between religious, economic, and political elites at the level of local interests. Other articles in Part I explore questions of how urban elites negotiate their positions in relation to larger political developments, looking at a particularly turbulent period in Kirman under the Buyids in the year 1000,(2) and the relations between the notables of Sirjan in Kirman with the Ilkhanid and post-Ilkhanid military elites.(3) This section also gathers examples of Aubin's work on the relationship between the coast of the Persian Gulf and the hinterland in Fars. The article "La ruine de Sīrāf et les routes du golfe Persique aux xie et xiie siècles" examines the decline of the Persian Gulf port of Siraf after the Buyid period as a point of contact in trade between China and the India Ocean on one hand, and Iran on the other.(4) The decline of Siraf illustrated changing patterns of trade in Fars during the Mongol period, a topic Aubin explored further in his 1969 article(5) on the changing routes in the province in the 13th-15th centuries, a time when Shiraz came to play a more significant role politically and economically. The final article in Part I moves the focus to Khurasan, while offering another look at two networks of routes under the Mongols — those of the nomads and the merchants.(6) Aubin shows clearly the ways in which the interests of the Mongols were closely tied to these networks, and how their power resided at their intersection.

Part II examines religious and cultural elites, in four articles published between 1957 and 1981. The editor again has chosen as the opening to this section an article that clearly demonstrates Aubin's interest in understanding the ways in which the urban elite negotiate their position with the pastoral military elite, in this case in Seljukid Sabzavar in Khurasan.(7) Aubin explores this theme once again in his 1975

(1) « Éléments pour l'étude des agglomerations urbaines dans l'Iran médiéval », published originally in *The Islamic City*, eds. S. M. Stern and A. Hourani (Oxford, 1970), p. 65-75.

(2) « La guerre au Kirmān en l'an mil », published originally in *Studia Iranica* 8/2 (1979), p. 213-221.

(3) « "La question de Sīrğān au xiiie siècle », published originally in *Studia Iranica* 6/2 (1977), p. 285-290.

(4) « La ruine de Sīrāf et les routes du golfe Persique aux xie et xiie siècles », published originally in *Cahiers de Civilisation médiévale* II/3 (1959), p. 295-301.

(5) « La survie de Šīlāu et la route de Ḫunj-ō-Fāl »," published originally in *Iran* 7 (1969), p. 21-37.

(6) « Réseau pastoral et réseau caravanier: les grand'routes du Khorassan à l'époque mongole », published originally in *Le monde iranien et l'Islam* 1 (1971), p. 105-130.

(7) « L'aristocratie urbaine dans l'Iran seldjoukide: l'exemple de Sabzavār », published originally in *Mélanges offerts à René Crozet* (Poitiers, 1966), p. 323-332.

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article on a family of sayyids in Yazd,[8] showing the ways such local religious elites could serve the Mongols' interests while also benefiting from the Ilkhans' patronage of Islamic institutions. Aubin's attention to local historiography in Fars is demonstrated in his article on Muḥammad Shabānkāra'ī,[9] whose work shines a light on Shiraz, the Persian Gulf and Luristan under the Mongols and their successors, a model which Naṭanzī picked up in the Timurid period. Part II closes with Aubin's monumental article, published in 1957, on Timurid philanthropy in Shiraz,[10] demonstrating once again the juncture of the economic and political interests of the military and local religious elites in the urban space of the city.

Part III is devoted to Mongol Azarbayjan, a reminder that in addition to Aubin's work on Fars and Khurasan, his work in northwestern Iran, particularly on early Ṣafavī Ardabil, is a critical part of his oeuvre. Aubin's work with Ibn Bazzāz's *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafā* in particular provides a foundation for his studies of Mongol and post-Mongol Azarbayjan. Here Aubin demonstrates multiple methodological approaches to the text, which can at times be dismissed for its miraculous "non-historical" qualities. Aubin's use of *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafā* as a source for the management of landed property around Ardabil,[11] for the Turkization of Azarbayjan by examination of changing place names,[12] and the life of the master of the Ṣafaviyya order's founder, Shaykh Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gīlānī,[13] are all subjects of Aubin's work collected here.

The fourth and final section rounds out the volume with four articles that deal with the political dimensions of social identity and organization. Aubin's 1969 article "L'ethnogenèse des Qaraunas"[14] remains the foundational work for understanding the emergence of the quasi-tribal group in the Ulus Chaghatay in the 14th century that played a major role in the history of Khurasan and Transoxiana, as well as the rise of Timur. Aubin's meticulous tracing of the history of the Qaraunas sheds light more broadly on questions of what a tribe was more generally in the Mongol and post-Chinggisid periods. The next article in this section examines the events after the death of Abū Sa'īd Bahādur Khān, and the 1336 quriltay that followed.[15] Here Aubin gives close attention to the *Dhayl-i Majma' al-Ansāb* by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Faryūmadī, continuing the history of Shabānkāra'ī. The final two articles bring us back to Khurasan at the beginning and the end of the Sarbadar phenomenon.[16] Both works, published two years apart, are indispensible for understanding the popular religious elements that existed alongside the Mongol military elite within the Sarbadar movement.

As a whole, the book is essential for any library dedicated to the history of the Mongols and their legacy in Iran. The editor has included an extensive index, as well as a complete chronological bibliography of Jean Aubin's scholarship. The volume is a worthy testament to Aubin's enormous contribution to Iranian history.

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(8) « Le patronage culturel en Iran sous les Ilkhans. Une grande famille de Yazd », published originally in *Le monde iranien et l'Islam* 3 (1975), p. 107-111.
(9) « Un chroniqueur méconnu, Šabānkāra'ī », published originally in *Studia Iranica* 10/2 (1982), p. 213-224.
(10) « Le mécénat timouride à Chiraz », published originally in *Studia Islamica* MCMLVII (1957), p. 71-88.
(11) « La propriété foncière en Azerbaïdjan sous les Mongols », published originally in *Le monde iranien et l'Islam* 4 (1976-1977), p. 79-154.
(12) « Le témoignage d'Ebn-e Bazzāz sur la turquisation de l'Azerbaydjan », published originally in Études irano-aryennes offertes à Gilbert Lazard, *Cahiers de Studia Iranica* 7 (Paris: 1989), p. 5-17.
(13) « Šayḫ Ibrāhīm Zāhid Gīlānī », published originally in *Mélanges Irène Melikoff*, *Turcica* 21-23 (1991), p. 39-53.
(14) « L'ethnogenèse des Qaraunas », published originally in *Turcica* 1 (1969), p. 65-94.
(15) "Le quriltai de Sulṭān-Maydān (1336)," published originally in *Journal Asiatique* (1991), p. 175-197.
(16) "Aux origins d'un movement populaire médiéval. Le Šayḫisme du Bayhaq et du Nichapour," published originally in *Studia Iranica* 5/2 (1976), p. 213-224; "La fin de l'État Sarbadar du Khorassan," published originally in *Journal Asiatique* (1974), p. 95-118.

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