

IN MEMORIAM

J. A. BOYLE

(1916–1978)

The first work which at once secured to Professor Boyle a highly estimated place among the leading scholars in Persian historical studies was his translation of the *Ta'rikh-i-Jahān-Gushā* of the Persian historian 'Alā'u-'d-Dīn 'Aṭā-Malik-i-Juvainī. He began to work on this text during his studies in pre-war Germany where he learned at the universities of Göttingen and Berlin. He got the first impetus to work on Juvainī's text in Berlin, as a pupil of Professor Schraeder, and later it was V. Minorsky, then Professor at the University of London, the best scholar of the time and field, who introduced him into the methodology of text editing. A version of Part I of *The History of the World Conqueror* (I–II, Manchester, 1958) was included in his PhD dissertation which was submitted to the University of London in 1947.

His small work *A Practical Dictionary of the Persian Language* (London 1949) was intended for students. In 1950 he became senior lecturer at the University of Manchester. As a visiting Professor he worked 1959–1960 at the University of California, Berkeley and then returned to Manchester where he became Professor of Persian studies in 1966. In the same year he published his *Grammar of Modern Persian* (Wiesbaden 1966).

His interest was focused on Persian history and historiography of the Mongol period. As the editor and one of the major contributors he had an overview of the Saljuq and Mongolian periods in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. V (1968). After having published his Juvainī-monograph he edited the other basic work of the Mongol period, that of Rashīd-al-Dīn. The history of Juvainī breaks off in the reign of the Great Khan Möngke (1251–1259) and the part of Rashīd-al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* which has been translated by Professor Boyle (*The successors of Genghis Khan*, New–York–London 1971) carries the history of the Mongolian Empire down to the reign of Temir Öljeitü (1294–1307). On the qualities of Boyle's translations I quote Owen Lattimore: «... no matter how recondite the subject, he sets it forth in an easy, plain English, light in its touch, that invites the unlearned reader as well as the specialist into a study and library of a scholar who is as unpretentious as he is learned» (Preface to J. A. Boyle, *The Mongolian World Empire 1206–1370*, London 1977, p. II).

The best qualities of scholarship, wide overview and philological accuracy, phantasy and abundant knowledge of the facts, the ability of finding what is interesting and important at the same time, characterized his papers as well. The history of the Mongolian Empire is one of the most difficult targets because the most different sources have to be synoptically dealt with, Chinese and Latin, Armenian and Georgian, Russian and Tibetan, Turkish and Arabic and their testimony has to be confronted with those written in Persian. In this painstaking work an important task is to identify places, persons, titles and events occurring in various sources in different forms.

Major contributions to the historical geography of the period are among others the following papers: *The Summer and Winter Camping Grounds of the Kereit* (CAJ 17, 1973, 108–110), *Iru and Maru in the Secret History of the Mongols* (HJAS 17, 1954, 403–410), *The Seasonal Residence of the Great Khan Ögödei* (*Sprache, Geschichte und Kultur der altaischen Völker*, Berlin 1974, 145–151), *The Burial Place of the Great Khan Ögödei* (*Acta Orient. Havniae* 22, 1970, 45–50), *The capture of Isfahan by the Mongols* (*Atti del Convegno Internazionale sul Tema: La Persia nel Medioevo*, Rome 1971, 331–336), *Sites and Localities Connected with the History of the Mongol Empire* (*Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Mongolists*, Ulan Bator 1972, 75–79).

The task of identifying persons and titles are the main subject of such papers as: *The Mongol Commanders in Afghanistan and India According to the Ṭabaqāt-i-Nāṣirī of Jūzjānī* (*Islamic Studies* 2, 1963, 235–247), *On the Titles Given in Juvainī to Certain Mongolian Princes* (HJAS 19, 1956, 146–154), *The Posthumous Title of Bathu Khan*. (*Proceeding of the IXth Meeting of the PIAC*, Naples 1970, 67–70), *Some Additional Notes on the Mongolian Names in the History of the Nation of the Archers* (*Researches in Altaic Languages*, Budapest 1975, 33–42).

The historian was always interested in the customs and beliefs of the Mongols as can be seen from his papers as: *Kirakos of Ganjah on the Mongols* (CAJ 8, 1963, 199–214), *A From of Horse Sacrifice Amongst the 13th- and 14th-Century Mongols* (CAJ 10, 1965, 145–150), *A Eurasian Hunting Ritual* (*Folklore* 83, 1972, 177–193), *The Thirteenth-Century Mongols' Conception of the After-Life: The Evidence of their Funerary Practices* (*Mongolian Studies* 1, 1974, 5–14 and in: *The journey to the other world*, Cambridge and Ipswich, 1975, 27–41), *Narayrgen or the People of the Sun* (*Altaica Collecta*, Wiesbaden 1976, 131–136), *The Attitude of the Thirteenth-Century Mongols towards Nature* (CAJ 22, 1978, 177–185), *The Owl and the Hare in the Popular Beliefs of the Medieval Mongols* (CAJ 23, 1979, 65–71).

While working with the historical sources of the Mongolian period he followed up many folkloristic themes to be found in these sources. Already in his text editions he recognized the presence of the Alexander Romance to which he devoted two special papers: *The Alexander Legend in Central Asia* (*Folklore* 85, 1974, 217–228) and *Alexander and the Mongols* (*JRAS* 1979, 123–136), another folkloric theme is death with in the paper *The Old Man in the Trunk: The Greek Origin of a Theme in the Oghuz-nāma* (*Aspects of Altaic civilization* II, Bloomington 1978, 11–15).

Probably his interest in folk-literature led him to the work of the mystical poet of the 12th century, Faridu-'l-Din 'Aṭṭār-i Neishābūrī, whose *Ilāhī-nāma* he translated into English (Manchester 1977). The result of his studies on the origin of many topics in the *Ilāhī-nāma*, among others the Alexander Romance, the Arabian Nights and 'Aṭṭār's poetical version of the world-wide known tale of the Magician and his Apprentice is the subject of his paper: *Popular Literature and Folklore in 'Aṭṭār's Mathnavī* (*Colloquio Italo-Iranico sul Poeta Mistico Fariduddīn 'Aṭṭār*, Rome 1978, 57–70).

Professor Boyle took an active part in the international life of scholarship and when present in any of the congresses and conferences his wise humanity and gentle humour always warmed the air around him. He organized twice the Permanent International Altaistic Conference in Manchester (1967, 1978) the scholarly and friendly atmosphere of which many of us will remember for ever.

Professor Boyle had very close contacts with his Hungarian colleagues who highly esteemed his work and expressed this by electing him honorary member of the Csoma de Kőrös Society in 1973.

His intinely death deprived us of a great scholar and a good friend.

A. Róna-Tas