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# A HISTORY OF PERSIAN NAVIGATION





ALEXANDER'S VOYAGE ARRESTED BY OCEAN-CURRENTS IN THE SEA OF CHINA

From the *Iskandar-nāma*, British Museum MS, Or. 6810 f. 225<sup>b</sup>





FOR CONSULTATION ONLY  
A HISTORY OF PERSIAN  
NAVIGATION

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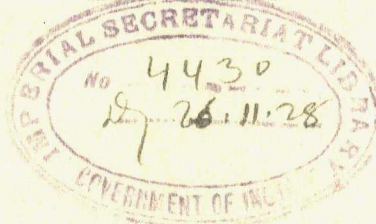
BY

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WITH A FOREWORD BY  
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WITH TWO PLATES IN COLOUR AND  
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TO  
MY BELOVED WIFE,  
**KISHWAR BĒGUM**

WHO HAS MADE GREAT SACRIFICES FOR  
MY SAKE, AND WHOSE DEVOTION IT IS  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO REQUITE

من تو شدم تو من شدي من تن شدم تو جان شدي  
تا کس نه گوید بعد از این من دیگر تو دیگری





## FOREWORD

I have read parts of Prof. Hādī's book on Persian Navigation with great interest and profit. Besides the innumerable Persian, Arabic and Chinese sources, he has utilized all the available sculptural, pictorial and numismatic material in establishing the conclusion that whilst the land empire of the Sāsānids perished with the fall of Yazdigird the maritime activity of the Persians continued till the caliphate of al-Mutawakkil, when it began to be displaced by the Arabs. The author's great capacity for sustained work, his infinite patience in sifting the details of evidence, and above all his youthful enthusiasm for the subject of his study—all this is abundantly clear from the remarkable work that he has produced. I have no doubt that Prof. Hādī's work is a very important contribution to modern historical research relating to Persian antiquities. It is needless to add that Prof. Hādī is a brilliant Persian scholar from whose pen yet greater things are expected.

MUHAMMAD IQBĀL

*Lahore*





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## PREFACE

A history of Persian navigation has, I believe, not yet been written: excess of material was there, but bias had stifled inquiry. Writer after writer has declared that the Persian dreaded and abhorred the sea: what Sir John Malcolm whispers in the ear<sup>1</sup> William Vincent proclaims from the housetops<sup>2</sup>. Lord Curzon uses the Persian navy for his mirth and laughter<sup>3</sup>; Sir P. M. Sykes, generally restrained and sober in his judgment, sees in Persian navigation almost a contradiction in terms<sup>4</sup>. These are historians, deriving their authority for a denunciation of Persian sea-power directly from the verdict of history. Says the boldest among them: "The Persians were never a maritime people. History nowhere speaks of a Persian fleet in the Indian Ocean, or even in the Gulf of Persia; and in the Mediterranean, their sea-forces always consisted of Phoenicians, Cyprians, or Egyptians." It was realized, however, even before the ink on the page was dry that these words were broad and bold; the aid of a footnote was accordingly imported, "I speak of a navy, not ships for trade," and the matter allowed to remain floating in void. Elsewhere footnotes were found insufficient protection against generalization: what was said was unsaid, the change of judgment occurring in less than a dozen pages. "The Persians seem to have had an unconquerable aversion to the sea," says R. H. Major on the second page of his introduction to *India*

<sup>1</sup> J. Malcolm, *History of Persia*, Vol. II., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> W. Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Vol. II., p. 14, London (1807).

<sup>3</sup> G. Curzon, *Persia*, Vol. II., p. 388, London (1892).

<sup>4</sup> P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. I., pp. 4 and 27, London (1915).





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*in the Fifteenth Century*, whilst on page ten, he begins "to entertain a more reasonable notion" of Persian navigation:

"The Persians, who, as we have already said, had in earlier times manifested an extreme dislike to maritime commerce, began, after the subversion of the Parthian Empire, to entertain a more reasonable notion of its importance and value. Having learnt from the small Indian traders, who frequented the various ports in the Persian Gulf, with what safety and rapidity the voyage from thence to Malabar and Ceylon might be performed, they fitted out vessels which made this voyage annually, and thus, in exchange for specie and some of the commodities of their own country, they brought home not only the costly products of India, but also those of China, which they were enabled to procure at Ceylon. By this channel the luxurious inhabitants of Constantinople were furnished in large abundance with the manufactures of Hindustan; and by this means, in conjunction with other causes, the Egyptian trade was subjected to a depression almost amounting to annihilation....The success of the Persians in their commerce with India, which was mainly due to the advantage of their physical situation, increased to such an extent, that at length the whole of the silk trade, which from time immemorial had been imported into Ceylon from China, fell into their hands."

Can a nation which fitted out vessels to make an annual voyage from the Persian Gulf ports to Malabār and Ceylon be charged with an unconquerable aversion to the sea? Inconsistency and contradiction are invariable accompaniments of generalization and generalization is the tombstone of the historian.

Throughout this book an attempt is made to divorce legend from history and fiction from fact: the evidence is presented both for and against, and the evidence is sifted before the conclusions are drawn. References have been given everywhere, but I must frankly acknowledge my indebtedness to Prof. G. Rawlinson, Mr W. H. Schoff, M. G. Ferrand, Mr B. Laufer, and Major F. B. Pearce. The limitations of the libraries in India have prevented me from using Prof. P. Pelliot's works and from taking full advantage





## PREFACE

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of the contributions of Dr F. Hirth to sinology. For this reason I have avoided, in the present volume, a consideration of Persian navigation in the Caspian Sea.

There remains the pleasant task of adding a few personal touches. Foremost amongst my supporters has been the Vice-Chancellor of my own University, Nawwāb Sir Muḥammad Muzzammilu'llāh Khān, K.C.I.E., O.B.E., who has always taken interest in my work and who has now given me the opportunity of becoming a pupil of Sir E. Denison Ross at the London School of Oriental Studies. Many books, otherwise inaccessible, were sent to me by my friend Mr J. Chapman, the talented librarian of the Imperial Library at Calcutta, and the encouragement to put the material into shape came from the ex-Vice-Chancellor, Ṣāhibzāda Āftāb Aḥmad Khān, Barrister-at-Law, of 'Aligarh. Professors Douglas Hamer and G. H. Luce of the Rangoon University, Mr Bashīru'd-Dīn, Assistant Librarian of the Lytton Library, and Professors A. S. Tritton, A. M. Quraishī, M. M. Sharīf, A. B. A. Ḥalīm, A. A. Memon, and E. C. Dickinson of my own University have overwhelmed me with their affection and sympathy: I can hardly claim any merit for myself so deep is my obligation to my friends. I must also acknowledge the help I have received from Sir Hormusji C. Dinshaw, Sir Sulṭān Aḥmad, and Messrs 'Umarbhai Chāndbhai and M. Faḍlu'd-Dīn, but no help could be greater than that extended to me by the Universities of Bombay, Mysore, and Ḥaidarābād, where, through the courtesy of Sir Chimanolāl Setalwad, Sir Brajendranāth Seal, and Nawwāb Sir Ḥaidar Nawāz Jang, I was able to deliver extension lectures on some aspects of Persian literature and civilization. Finally, I have to tender my thanks and gratitude to His Holiness Sayyidnā wa Mawlānā Ṭāhir Saifu'd-Dīn, the High Pontiff or the *Dā'ir-Muṭlaq* of the Dā'ūdī Borah community. His Holiness is the





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fifty-first Pontiff of the line which is connected with the illustrious Fāṭimid Caliphs of Egypt, and his predecessors hailed originally from Yemen where they held the title of Sultān.

My wife has been of great help to me in preparing the index and my learned friend, Mr J. Allan of the British Museum, has kindly read the proofs and supplied me with the casts of Achaemenian coins: the other plates have been reproduced by the kind permission of the authorities concerned—in particular, of the British Museum and the India Office.

HĀDĪ ḤASAN

*School of Oriental Studies*  
*London, June 1928*



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**PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN  
LEGENDARY TIMES**



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN LEGENDARY TIMES

The first shipbuilder among the Persians was the legendary Jamshīd of the Pīshdādian dynasty, who traversed "the waters with his ships and passed from region to region with celerity<sup>1</sup>." Thereafter, in the reign of Dāhhāk, a large punitive expedition was despatched against Bahū or Sarandīb-Shāh of Ceylon, a vassal of Mahārāj, the ruler of India. It appears that Mahārāj suddenly faced with the rebellion of Bahū applied to his overlord, Dāhhāk, then holding his court at Jerusalem, for immediate help. And the dragon's wrath being enkindled, the orders went forth to Garshāsp the Irānian general to "seize Bahū and drag him in bonds to the court of Mahārāj and raise him to the gallows<sup>2</sup>." And so the royal fleet of several thousand sail<sup>3</sup> leaves Jerusalem and covering in six months the distance of a year is at Kalah, a maritime city on the southern mainland of India<sup>4</sup>. Thence the army is conveyed to Ceylon where Bahū had assembled sixteen thousand war-elephants and two million troops to resist the invasion. The military details, however, do not concern us: Bahū was beaten, and the Persian army came home victoriously in a hundred and twenty ships<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī:

گذر کرد از آنپس بکشتی بر آب ز کشور بکشور برآمد شتاب

<sup>2</sup> The *Garshāspnāma* of 'Alī bin Aḥmad al-Asadī, completed in A.H. 458 = A.D. 1066.

سوی کشور هند پرواز کن سرانندیب شه را ز کین ساز کن  
بهو را ببند و ز آنجا بیار بدرگاه مهرراج بر کش بدار

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*:

بفرموده امر تا ز دریا کنار بیآرند کشتی هزاران هزار

<sup>4</sup> So should it be according to the Romance, but history equates Kalah to Kedah or Kerah (Kra) on Malacca. "The other attempts to locate the position of Kalah—on Ceylon (harbour of Ghālī; Galle, Point de Galle, so Reinaud and Dulaurier), Malabar (so Renaudot), Coromandel (so Gildemeister)—should now be definitely rejected as wrong." See the article Kalah, *Ency. of Islām*.

<sup>5</sup> The *Garshāspnāma*:

به ایرانیان داد کشتی دو شصت بدو کشتی او با سپه بر نشست



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN

supplied by the grateful Mahārāj. Had death thinned the ranks of the combatants or the yesty waves swallowed the Persian fleet?

The picturesque contents of the *Garshāspnāma* do not permit analysis or investigation, but not for this reason may the argument of Sir W. Ouseley be disregarded. "The three years which Solomon's servants, going and returning, employed on the Ophirian voyage," says he, "is a space of time exactly agreeing with the 'one year and six months'<sup>1</sup> assigned for GARSHASP'S expedition to Ceylon. And this will not seem a very immoderate allowance if we consider that in those early ages navigation was but imperfectly understood; that the small and fragile ships were ill adapted to a considerable expanse of ocean, and generally conducted along the coast by means, not only of sails, but occasionally of oars, and that a circuitous progress so performed between the Elanitick gulf and Taprobane or Ceylon, must have required much time, even without the frequent necessity of stopping at various places, to obtain fresh water and supplies of food, or the delays caused by accidental injuries and commercial navigation<sup>2</sup>."

With the transfer of government from the Pishdādians to the Kayānians the scene of action shifts from Sarandīb to Hāmāwarān. In touring through his territory Kay Kā'ūs passes through Nimrūz and reaches the coast of Makrān and resolves to make a sudden

<sup>1</sup> The translation is either incorrect, or based on an incorrect copy of the *Garshāspnāma*, for the text of the British Museum MS. Or. 2878 f. 16<sup>b</sup> is :

بشش ماه یکساله ره بر نوشت بی آزار و خرم بخشگی گذشت

In six months he traversed the distance of a year,  
and landed gaily without mishap.

Similarly, according to the MS. Persian Class II No. 3, Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, f. 39<sup>a</sup> :

بشش ماه یکساله ره در نوشت بی آزار و خرم ز دریا گذشت

It is twice stated on f. 269<sup>b</sup> that the MS. was transcribed at Shīrāz in 625 A.H., but this date should be corrected to 825 A.H. : in both places the original 8 has been removed with the end of a knife, and, to prevent the ink from spreading, the 6 has been inserted away from the 8 of which the outlines are still visible.

<sup>2</sup> W. Ouseley, *Travels in the East*, Vol. I., pp. 51-52, London (1819).



## LEGENDARY TIMES

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descent upon Hāmāwarān<sup>1</sup>. And so innumerable boats and ships are built<sup>2</sup> and the king embarks with all his troops and leaving the waters of Zirreh behind<sup>3</sup> sails a thousand leagues<sup>4</sup> till at last he is in sight of land again with Berber on his right and Miṣr on his left and Hāmāwarān straight before him<sup>5</sup>. Of the toponyms mentioned by Firdawsī, Hāmāwarān is, according to Prof. Darmesteter, a form of the word Ḥimyar, a synonym for Yemen, whilst Berber is "the Berbera nearly opposite Aden on the British Somali coast protectorate. This is the Pun-t of the Egyptian hieroglyphs, and was then, and is still a great trading station. When the south-west monsoon changes into the north-east thousands of traffickers begin to arrive and the place is kept busy from October to April<sup>6</sup>."

The other names present no difficulty: Nimrūz is Sīstān<sup>7</sup>; Miṣr is Egypt; and the coast of Makrān is the coast of Balūchistān. Firdawsī's use of the word Zirreh, however, has given rise to unnecessary confusion. Zirreh represents today one of the three main depressions of Sīstān, being usually a salt desert and less frequently a marsh or a lake<sup>8</sup>. But formerly, according to General A. Houtum

<sup>1</sup> The *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī :

شده شاد دل شاه گیتی فروز	بزد کوس و بر داشت از نیمروز
گذر کرد از آپس بهمکران زمین	از ایران بشد تا بتوران و چین

<sup>2</sup> *Idem* :

بیآراست لشکر بدو در نشاخت	بی اندازه گشتی و زورق بساخت
---------------------------	-----------------------------

<sup>3</sup> *Idem* :

بسر آمد ز آب زره پا سپاه	خبر شد بدیشان که کاوس شاه
--------------------------	---------------------------

<sup>4</sup> *Idem* :

اگر پای را رای کردی شمار	همانا که فرسنگ بودی هزار
--------------------------	--------------------------

<sup>5</sup> *Idem* :

رهش در میانه بدانسو که خواست	بدست چپش مصر و بربر براست
بهر کشوری در سپاهی گران	به پیش اندرون شهر هاماوران

<sup>6</sup> Warner and Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdawsī*, Vol. II., p. 79.

<sup>7</sup> G. le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 334. Lit. 'mid-day' or the Southern Land, "a name said to have been applied to the province in regard to its position to the south of *Khurāsān*."

<sup>8</sup> G. Curzon, *Persia*, Vol. I., p. 226.



Schindler, "there were probably a number of distinct lakes, now patches of salt desert, which are spoken of in the popular legends of Persia as a vast sea extending from Kazvin on the north to Kerman and Mekran on the south, (and) from Savah on the north to the Sistan depression in the east. These legends, which I have heard at many places on the confines of the desert, not only speak of a great sea, but also mention ships, islands, port, and lighthouses. The old town on the hills north-east of Kazvin is popularly called a lighthouse, and the village Barchin, north of Yezd, and not far from Maibud, is called an old seaport and custom-house<sup>1</sup>." Agreeing, therefore, with Schindler and Sykes in the extension of an inland sea over what is now the *Īrānīan* plateau<sup>2</sup>, it would appear that the geographical change was met, not by the coinage of a new word, but by the retention of the old *Zirreh* and the transformation of its sense. The modern word for a swamp has thus come to be identical with the ancient word for the sea, and the *Zirreh* of Firdawsī therefore is not the *Sīstān* depression of today but the great inland sea of pre-historic times. This view is moreover supported by the evidence of philology, for *Zirreh* is merely the Pahlawī form of the Persian *daryā*, a sea, lake, or river. From this Warner concludes that "such an expression as 'the sea of Zirih' is not only tautological but distinctly misleading. We translate 'Zirih' sea. The expedition of Kay Kā'ūs looks like an attempt to capture an ancient trade-route<sup>3</sup>."

So far on the basis of legend. But the expedition, though denied the weight of history, has not failed to secure the support of historians. *Ṭabarī*, *Mas'ūdī*, and *Tha'alībī* for example agree in crediting Kay Kā'ūs with the temporary conquest of Yemen. "After having visited *Khurāsān*, *Jibāl*, *Fārs*, and *ʿIrāq*," says *Tha'alībī*, "and having examined the situation of those provinces, and set up administrators therein, Kay Kā'ūs left for Yemen. And as he drew near the King *Dhū'l-Adh'ār*, son of *Dhū'l-Manār*, son of *al-Rā'ish*, the *Ḥimyarite*, marched against him with the Qails of

<sup>1</sup> *Geographical Proceedings*, 1888, f.n., p. 625.

<sup>2</sup> P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. I., p. 25, London (1915).

<sup>3</sup> Warner and Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, Vol. II., p. 80.



the Ḥimyarites, the princes of Qaḥṭān, and the tribes of Barbary. A fierce battle took place and the full cup of death continually went round the ranks of the armies<sup>1</sup>."

Tha'ālībī's account is at once an abridgement and an enlargement of the *Shāhnāma*, for, on the one hand, the details of the voyage are omitted, and on the other, the Ḥimyarite king is specifically mentioned by name. Now, according to Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, al-'Abd Dhū'l-Adh'ār the Ḥimyarite was brother to Ifrīqīs and son to Abraha Dhū'l-Manār, the son of al-Ḥārith al-Rā'ish<sup>2</sup>, so that the several accounts are corroborative of one another. But because fact and fiction are freely miscible it is best perhaps not to attempt any reconciliation of legend with history.

Meanwhile, to return to the *Shāhnāma*, Kay Kā'ūs defeats the king of Hāmāwarān, and obtains, as a prize of war, the hand of Sūdāba, whose beauty had made the victor a willing captive. The way is thus open to Arab treachery which succeeds where Arab valour had failed: Kay Kā'ūs is lured into a fortress and there confined. The mournful tidings reach the ears of Rustam and become the signal for the mobilization of an army, which is hurried across to Hāmāwarān by sea, for the way by land was tedious<sup>3</sup>:

He ordered the host to embark and take dire revenge on Hāmāwarān,  
And travelled by the sea-route, for the way by land was tedious.  
The mighty host drew near to Hāmāwarān, in ships and boats,  
And resolved on carnage and destruction: all compunction was banished from the heart.

<sup>1</sup> Ath-Tha'ālībī, *Histoire des Rois des Perses*, ed. H. Zotenberg, p. 158 :

فطوف في خراسان و الجبال و فارس و العراق و طالع احوالها و رتب عمالها و امتد الي  
بلاد اليمن فلما شارفها خرج اليه ملكها ذوالاذعار بن ذى المنار بن الرائش الحميري  
في اقبال حمير و انياب قحطان و جمرات بربر فتقاتلوا قتلاً شديداً و دارت عليهم كاس  
الموت دهاقاً

<sup>2</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *The Shāhnāma* :

بفرمود تا بو نشیند سپاه	پی رزم هاماوران کینه خواه
سوی ژرف دریا بیآمد بجنگ	که بر خشک بر بود ره با درنگ
بکشتی و زورق سپاهی گران	رسیدند نزدیک هاماوران
بتآراج و کشتن بیآراستند	از آزر دلها به پیرآستند



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN

The arrival of the Persian fleet gave the *coup de grâce* to Hīmyarite machinations, whilst the invincible Rustam completely re-established the prestige of the Persian army by doubly redoubling strokes upon the foe. The task of the punitive expedition was thus accomplished, and with the release of Kay Kā'ūs, and his triumphal return to Īrān, the tale has all been told.

The technique of telling will be discussed hereafter; meanwhile in connection with the interminable feud between Īrān and Tūrān, there arises another opportunity for naval action. Kay Khusraw, grandson and successor to Kay Kā'ūs, is hot on the trail of Afrāsiyāb, whose way of life has fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf. Safety lies in flight, and flight takes him along Mount Ispuruz "of the Alburz range bordering Māzandarān<sup>1</sup>" towards the sea "which can be none other than the Caspian<sup>2</sup>." There, before the deep to which he saw no middle and no end, Afrāsiyāb stood for a while hesitating, for he was between the devil and the deep sea<sup>3</sup>. Eventually, the die was cast and Afrāsiyāb sailed away, hoping to escape and be at rest<sup>4</sup>. But neither the unassailable palace-fortress of distant Khwarazm, nor the impassable barrier of the sea could check the advance of the vindictive Kay Khusraw. "If

<sup>1</sup> et <sup>2</sup> Warner and Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausi*, Vol. IV., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *The Shāhnāma*:

چو نزدیک آن ژرف دریا رسید      مر او را میان و کرانه ندید  
بفرمود تا مرد کشتی شمار      بسازد بکشتی ز دریا گذار  
بدو گفت پر مایه افراسیاب      که خرم کسی کو بمیرد بآب

And when he reached the deep, of which he saw neither the middle nor the end,  
He bade the shipman prepare a ship to carry him across;

'For,' said the mighty Afrāsiyāb, 'happy is he who finds a watery grave.'

<sup>4</sup> *The Shāhnāma*:

بفرمود تا مهتران هر کسی      بآب اندر آرند کشتی بسی  
سوی گنگ دژ بادبان برکشید      ز نیک و ز بدها سر اندر کشید

He ordered the captains to put several vessels out to sea ;  
And set sail for Gang-dizh, renouncing both good and evil.



## LEGENDARY TIMES

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heaven will favour us," said he, "we shall bear the host across the sea<sup>1</sup>."

And so Kay Khusraw proceeded to track Afrāsiyāb down in his retreat across the sea. The route lay through Makrān where Kay Khusraw tarried a whole year<sup>2</sup>, impressing ships and crew<sup>3</sup>. And when his necessaries were embarked<sup>4</sup>, and provisions for a year stowed in<sup>5</sup>, he prayed to God for a safe and prosperous voyage<sup>6</sup>. The sea was rough, and all hearts were distressed, but they kept their course and sailed steadily on, till after a six months' voyage, the north wind arose and drove the fleet towards 'the Lion's Mouth'<sup>7</sup>. The King's prayer, however, did not remain unanswered :

<sup>1</sup> *The Shāhnāma:*

بر آب زره بگذرانم سپاه اگر چرخ گردان بود نیک خواه

<sup>2</sup> *Idem:*

جهاندار سالی بمکران بهاند ز هر جا کشتی گران را بخواند

The world-lord remained a year in Makrān and summoned pilots from all places.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem:*

چو آمد بنزدیک آب زره کشادند گردان میان از گره  
همه کار سازان دریا براه ز چین و ز مکران همی بود شاه

And when he reached the sea, the warriors loosened their belts ;  
The King had impressed for the voyage seamen from China and Makrān.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem:*

بخشکی بکرد آنچه بایست کرد چو کشتی بآب اندر افکند مرد

He did on land what men must do before putting out to sea.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem:*

بفرمود تا توشه بر داشتند ز یکساله تا آب بگذاشتند

He bade them take a year's provisions for the voyage.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem:*

همی خواست از کردگار بلند که او را بخشکی برد بی گذند

He besought the Creator to take him to dry land without mishap.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem:*

بششاه کشتی برفتی بر آب کزو ساختی هر کسی جای خواب  
بهفتم که نیمی گذشتی ز سال شدی کژ و بیمراه باد شمال  
سر بادبان تیز بر کاشتی خله پیش ملاح نگذاشتی  
بجای کشیدی ز راه خرد که ملاح خواندیش فرم الاسد



God had ordained that wind and wave should omit their moral nature and let the royal fleet go safely by<sup>1</sup>. And so, after a perilous voyage of seven months<sup>2</sup>, in a sea infested with terrible and prodigious things<sup>3</sup>, the ships sailed safely into port and discharged their precious freight.

For six months they sailed on the deep and the vessels were their couch ;  
On the seventh month, after the lapse of half-a-year, the north wind became wild and contrary ;  
It deflected the sails of the ship with violence ; it did not permit the helmsman to keep his helm ;  
It drove the ship from its proper course to a place which the sailors call 'the Lion's Mouth.'

<sup>1</sup> *The Shāhnāma :*

چنان ساخت یزدان که باد و هوا نشد تند با اختر بادشاه

God had ordained that wind and storm should not deal ungently with the fortune of the King.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem :*

گذشتند بر آب در هفت ماه که بادی نکرد اندر ایشان نگاه

They crossed the sea in seven months, nor did a tempest visit them (again).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem :*

شگفت اندر آن آب مانده سپاه	نمودی بانگشت هر يك بشاه
بآب اندرون شیر دیدند و گاو	همیداشتی گاو با شیر تاو
همان مردم و مویها چون گمند	همه تن پر از پشم چون گوسفند
گروهی سران چون سر گاو میش	دو دست از پس پشت بد پای پیش
یکی تن چو ماهی و سر چون پلنگ	یکی سر چو گور و تنش چون نهنگ
یکی را سر خوک و تن چون بره	همه آب از اینها بدی یکسره
نمودی همی این بدان آن بدین	همی خواندندی جهان آفرین

The soldiers marvelled at the waters and pointed out to the King  
What they saw—lions and oxen, fighting in the deep ;  
And men with hair like lassoes, and covered with wool, like the bodies of sheep ;  
Others, with heads like buffaloes and with hands behind and feet in front.  
There was a fish with the head of a wolf, an ass with the trunk of a crocodile,  
And a lamb with the head of a hog—and the water teemed with them.  
They pointed the monsters out to one another, and called upon God (for protection).



And Kay Khusraw was lifted up in heart and led his troops through the strange land which lay before him, a land where the tongue of Makrān was spoken, and where the cities resembled those of Chin. And he went straight on and seized Gang-dizh and stayed there a whole year but the elusive Afrāsiyāb was nowhere to be found. Could he have recrossed the Zirreh to seize the undefended throne of Īrān in the absence of the king?

And on a sudden doubt changed into certainty, and fear over-ruled revenge, making the king change his line of action : revenge had suggested pursuit ; danger now counselled retreat.

And so the disappointed king returned to port and embarked his troops in a thousand ships, all well manned and stoutly rigged: the sails had been inspected by the king himself, and the crew drawn from seamen of approved allowance. And a couple of pilot-boats led the way, as they were ordered out to sea earlier than the rest. And the stars were kind and the sea slumbered ; while a favourable breeze uprose and sat in the shoulder of the sail, so that seven months sufficed to complete the voyage of a year<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *The Shāhnāma :*

فرود آمد و بادبانها بدید	چو خسرو بنزدیک دریا رسید
ز دیدار با گیو چندی براند	دو هفته بر آنروی دریا بماند
دو زورق بآب اندر انداختند	بفرمود تا کار بر ساختند
بآب اندرون راند پس شهریار	پس زورق اندر ز کشتی هزار
که بر ژرف دریا دلیری نمود	شناسای کشتی هر آنکس که بود
بدریای بی پایه اندر کشند	بفرمود تا بادبان بر کشند
چنان تیز شد باد در هفت ماه	همان آب دریای یکسال راه
که از باد کژ آستین تر نگشت	که آناه و لشکر بدینسو گذشت

The King alighted, when he reached the sea, and inspected the sails, And remained on the shore a fortnight, talking much with Giv of all that he had seen.

Then he ordered his men to set about their work and launch a couple of boats on the sea ;

And he bade a thousand ships to be put to sea in the wake of the (pilot-) boats ;



The reader is now in possession of all the facts, both trivial and important. Rarity has dictated their treatment *in extenso*; details have been given because details of the sea are not usually given by Firdawsī. "The poet," says Prof. Nöldeke, "and the whole tradition lies behind him, has no experience whatever of the sea, one might even say travelling by sea<sup>1</sup>." For "while Afrāsiyāb in his flight from Kay Khusraw could have crossed no other sea than the Caspian, yet Kay Khusraw is described as sailing from and returning to the shore of Makrān, *i.e.* Balūchistān<sup>2</sup>"—a puzzle, solved only by assuming with Firdawsī that "Īrān, the Central Clime of the Seven Climes into which the earth was divided, was surrounded by the circumambient ocean, and that the Indus, Oxus, Arras, Euxine, Bosphorus, Sea of Marmora, Dardanelles, Nile, and the Indian Ocean, were a chain of rivers, lakes, gulfs, and seas, all in communication with each other<sup>3</sup>." Even so, confusion is not altogether eliminated, for the whirlpool called 'the Lion's Mouth' is a feature not of the Waters of Zirreh but the Sea of China.

And in this sea (of Chīn and Māchīn) there are whirlpools, which are called 'the Lion's Mouth' or also Durdawr, wherein every ship that enters is lost, unless God wills otherwise. And mariners know these (dangerous) places in the rolling sea, and avoid them for the sake of safety<sup>4</sup>.

And he bade all who were expert mariners, or showed courage on the high seas  
To sail upon the bottomless deep.

And so favourable was the wind that the voyage of a year was completed within  
seven months;

And the King crossed over with his army, and not a deck was moistened by a  
contrary wind.

<sup>1</sup> Th. Nöldeke, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, Vol. I., p. 177.

<sup>2</sup> Warner and Warner, *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, Vol. IV., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, Vol. I., p. 71.

<sup>4</sup> Hamdu 'llāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhatu 'l-Qulūb*, ed. G. le Strange, p. 239 :

و در این بحر گردابه‌هاست که آنرا فرلاسد خوانند و در دور نیز گویند اگر کشتی  
درو افتد جز بپاشد الله خلاصش نباشد و در دریا و رزان آن مقامها را بشناسند و از  
آن احتراز نمایند تا در امان باشند



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Cosmogony, then, has enabled Firdawsī to evade oceanography, but how was he to find a mask for veiling his ignorance of seacraft and navigation? He was prepared for any port in a storm, if only a port could be found. Imagination could create sea-monsters but could not build ships or drive them. Nothing therefore was done since nothing could be done: the reader may search the *Shāhnāma* in vain for an account of ships or nautical technique.

This defect which the *Shāhnāma* shares with Persian literature in general has undoubtedly strengthened the theory of Persian aversion to the sea. But though Persian literature has feared and avoided the sea Persia herself has not. The literary evidence conflicts with the historical and must be kept apart. Because Firdawsī's description of the sea is incorrect does his evidence in favour of the sea-voyages of Kay Kā'ūs and Kay *Khusraw* become incorrect? Because Asadī did not know the sea must the naval expedition of Garshāsp be rejected? Truth is not a lie if spoken by the devil: the accounts of Asadī and Firdawsī do not lack veracity because they lack personal acquaintance with the sea.

The *Garshāspnāma* and the *Shāhnāma*, therefore, have at least a claim to be heard. The mists of legend gather round the route of Garshāsp and Kay Kā'ūs in the southern sea, and Nature has conspired with antiquity in covering the track of Kay *Khusraw* in the northern sea with dust, but is there no Kindly Light to grant even a distant vision of the royal fleet, indistinguishable with its Kāwa flags from the aerial blue, still floating on the waves of time, to Sarandib and Himyar and Gang, from one arm of the circum-ambient ocean to another?





CSL

# ACHAEMENIAN NAVIGATION





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The history of Achaemenian navigation can be compressed into a single sentence: the Achaemenians were not drawn to the sea but driven to it. For the Persians, who had migrated overland to Fārs<sup>1</sup>, were an agricultural or pastoral people<sup>2</sup>, unacquainted with maritime affairs<sup>3</sup>. But when the land-empire of Persia, on reaching the coast of Asia Minor, found itself confronted with the naval strength of Greece and Egypt, the acquisition of sea-power could no longer be delayed—unless the Achaemenians wished to abandon their scheme of world-imperialism, and even the territory they had already gained. Now the people of the Asiatic seaboard, and especially the Phoenicians, were a race of mariners and could therefore help Persia in taking the short cut to the acquisition of sea-power; in other words, a fleet was necessary, but it was not necessary to build a fleet when a fleet could be obtained. Consequently, the subjugation of the Greek colonies in Asia Minor was effected so mildly that only the Phocaeans and the Teians quitted their homes to found Hyela and Abdera<sup>4</sup> whilst the others “remained in their own countries and submitted to the commands imposed on them.” Similarly, the Phoenicians were allowed semi-independence and taxed only a shilling and eightpence per head, although “in modern communities the incidence is generally from ten to twenty times as much<sup>5</sup>.” The result was that without ever building a single ship “Persia bore undisputed sway in the Levant during the whole period of her existence as an empire,” and for short intervals—from 525 B.C. to 480 B.C., and again from 345 B.C. to 332 B.C.—was even the mistress of the Mediterranean Sea<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III, p. 365, London (1879).

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, I, 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, I, 143.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, I, 167 et 168.

<sup>5</sup> G. Rawlinson, *Phoenicia*, p. 194.

<sup>6</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III, p. 194, London (1879).



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And so, realizing their own limitations, the early Achaemenians behaved gently with the seafaring people they had subdued. "Xenophon considered the arrangement and stowage of the Phoenician ships under Persian rule as superior to that of the vessels of his own countrymen<sup>1</sup>," and according to the statue of Utcha-Herresenet, known as the Pastophorus of the Vatican, Cambyses not merely restored the Egyptian temple at Saïs but "performed an act of worship after the manner of the old kings of Egypt, and poured out a libation to the goddess Neith, and made gifts to her temple<sup>2</sup>." Similarly, Darius founded a college at Saïs for educating priests in the secretarial art<sup>3</sup>, repaired the temple of Ptah at Memphis<sup>4</sup>, and in honour of the Egyptian Sun-god Amen-Rā built a temple, inscribed with a hymn, in the oasis at Khârga<sup>5</sup>. Finally, Darius completed for Egypt the great canal from the Nile to Suez :

"Neco," says Herodotus, "was son of Psammitichus, and became king of Egypt : he first set about the canal that leads to the Red Sea, which Darius the Persian afterwards completed. Its length is a voyage of four days, and in width it was dug so that two triremes might sail through, rowed abreast. The water is drawn into it from the Nile, and it enters a little above the city of Bubastis, passes near the Arabian city Patumos, and reaches to the Red Sea. The parts of the Egyptian plain that lie towards Arabia were dug first ; above this plain is situated the mountain that stretches towards Memphis, in which are the quarries. Along the base of this mountain, therefore, the canal is carried lengthways from the west to the east, and then it stretches to the defiles, passing from the mountains towards the meridian and the south inwards as far as the Arabian gulf....Neco stopped digging it in the middle of the work<sup>6</sup>."

The Grecian account is substantiated by the internal evidence of the large stelae, with the titles and figure of Darius, found at various places along the canal ; there is a stele near Suez, for example, with the following inscription :

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *Phoenicia*, pp. 195-196.

<sup>2</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Egypt*, p. 46, London (1902).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, pp. 66-69.

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus, II., 158.





- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1 XERXES       | 4 PHARNABAZUS |
| 2 ARTAXERXES   | 5 TIRIBAZUS   |
| 3 TISSAPHERNES | 6 TIRIDATES   |

PERSIAN COINS IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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"Thus spake king Darius, I am a Persian, and by the help of the Persians I captured Egypt. I ordered this canal to be dug from the river Nile (Pirāva) which floweth in Egypt to the sea which goeth forth from Persia. This canal was dug even as I ordered<sup>1</sup>."

It was not only in the west that a conciliatory policy was adopted towards seafaring people, for when Babylon fell before Cyrus in 538 B.C. there were, according to the cylinder of Cyrus, "rejoicings and festal shouts in the palace of the Babylonian king<sup>2</sup>." The suicide of Cambyeses, however, in 521 B.C. led to the usurpation of the kingdom by Gaumata, and the assassination of Gaumata, who had won popular favour by remitting taxes and abolishing conscription, encouraged the provinces, including Persia herself, to revolt against the Great King. Babylon, in particular, held out for more than two years, and when it fell, after a long siege, in 519 B.C., its fall was attended by a boisterous ruin. "Since the taking of the city," says Herodotus, "the Babylonians have been harshly treated, and ruined in fortune, so all the meaner sort, from want of a livelihood, prostitute their daughters<sup>3</sup>."

The effect of revenge and retribution has been minimized by Mr Kennedy, and, on the other hand, prominence has been given to a theory, which, because of its recurrence, deserves to be carefully examined:

"The decline of Babylon begins with Darius. The Babylonians hated him; they twice revolted against him, and were independent for years; and he chastised them. Xerxes wreaked his vengeance on them, and dared to plunder the sanctuary of Bel. And so from the commencement of the fifth century, the commercial tablets become scarce, the canals fall into disrepair, and dams impede the entrance of the Euphrates and the Tigris. Herodotus was a witness to the great and increasing poverty of the common people under Persian rule. From this time forward the decline of Babylon is continuous, and Bel and Nebo are no longer to avail. The Chaldeans transferred their commerce to Gerrha, beyond the reach of the Great King's jealousy. In after days the foundation of

<sup>1</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *A History of Egypt*, p. 64, London (1902).

<sup>2</sup> P. M. Sykes, *A History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 161, London (1915).

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, I, 196.



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Seleucia drained what life was left, and by the days of Strabo Babylon had sunk to be a village and a name.

The Persian blight destroyed not only Babylon; it extended to Egypt, and the merchants of Yemen entered into the commercial inheritance of both<sup>1</sup>."

Now, according to Diodorus Siculus, the Egyptians themselves regarded Darius as the sixth of the law-givers of Egypt, and deified him in his lifetime and even worshipped him on his death as an Egyptian king<sup>2</sup>. Herodotus, moreover, whilst admitting the poverty of the Babylonians has also taken care to point out that the survival of the Babylonian race was due exclusively to the efforts of Darius<sup>3</sup>, but apart from this, what is the evidence of the historian Xenophon during the immortal retreat to Trebizond in the year 401 B.C.?

"When I cast my eyes around and beheld how spacious and beautiful a country the Persians were masters of, how they abounded in provisions, slaves, cattle, gold, and rich apparel; and, on the other hand, reflected on the situation of our men, who had no share of all these advantages...I was more afraid of peace than now I am of war<sup>4</sup>."

There were "large and populous" cities in Babylonia—like Carmande on the Euphrates<sup>5</sup>, Opis on the Physcus<sup>6</sup>, and Caenae on the Tigris<sup>7</sup>—all thriving on an excellent system of irrigation:

"From thence they made, in two days' march, eight parasangs, and passed two canals, one upon a bridge, the other upon seven pontoons. These canals were derived from the Tigris; from them ditches were cut that ran into the country, the first broad, then narrower, which at last ended in small water-courses<sup>8</sup>."

Similarly, though the Greek historians of Alexander delight in attributing the weirs on the Tigris to the timidity of the Persians,

<sup>1</sup> J. Kennedy, Early Commerce of Babylon with India, *J.R.A.S.* (1898), p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, I, 195.

<sup>3</sup> See Herodotus, III., 159.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Bk. III., Eng. tr. by E. Spelman, p. 75, London (1817).

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, Bk. I., Eng. tr., p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, Bk. II., Eng. tr., p. 60. Opis was near modern Baghdād.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, Bk. II., Eng. tr., p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> *Idem*, Bk. II., Eng. tr., p. 58.



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“who were unskilled in maritime affairs<sup>1</sup>,” it has now been shown by William Vincent that the weirs were not for obstructing the stream but “for keeping up the waters to inundate the contiguous level<sup>2</sup>.” Tavernier mentions a dyke one hundred and twenty feet high in the fall, between Mosul and the Great Zab, and Niebuhr saw dykes at Lemboun on the Euphrates, and at Högnè, Eski Mosul, and Higré on the Tigris<sup>3</sup>—“the last of these in the very place where a mound had been demolished by Alexander, and all of them maintained for the purposes of navigation.” But even more conclusive, perhaps, is the number of flourishing towns and harbours described by Nearchus (326–325 B.C.) on the Persian coast: in Carmania, for example, there were firstly, the villages of Sidodont, Tarsias, and Cataea; secondly, the town of Badis, a well cultivated place with a great store of vines and corn; thirdly, the town of Harmozia, opposite the modern island of Hurmuz, abounding in everything except olives; and finally the island-town of Oaracta, which produced plenty of vines, palm-trees, and corn, and contained ports, and was well inhabited<sup>4</sup>. Beyond Carmania was the imperial province of Pārs or Persis, containing (i) the village of Ilas, (ii) the haven of Cicandrus, (iii) the inhabited island of pearl-fisheries, (iv) the haven of Ochus, (v) the town of Apostana,

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *History of Alexander's Expedition*, Bk. VII., Ch. VII., tr. by Rooke, London (1814):

“These weirs were put down by the Persians, who were unskilled in maritime affairs, to render the navigation of the Tigris so difficult as to hinder any enemy's fleet from invading them that way. However, Alexander looked upon them as the contrivance of cowards...and he ordered them to be entirely cleared away, and the river laid open.”

<sup>2</sup> William Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Vol. I., p. 505, London (1807). Similarly, in Sāsānian times, “powerful dams—shadhrawān—with the necessary sluices had been erected at various places to enable the water thus dammed back to be led by numerous small canals to fields on a higher level.” M. Streck, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, article on Kārūn, p. 779 a.

<sup>3</sup> Niebuhr, *Voyage en Arabie*, Vol. II., p. 307, Amsterdam (1780).

<sup>4</sup> Arrian, *Indian History*, Ch. 32–37.



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(vi) the many villages lying in the cup of a noted bay, (vii) the town of Gogana, (viii) the safe harbour near the mouth of the Sitacus, (ix) the well inhabited garden-town of Hieratis, with a canal navigable to seagoing craft, (x) the town of Taöcé on the Granis, (xi) the safe harbour at the mouth of the Ragonis, and (xii) the unsafe harbour at the mouth of the Brizana<sup>1</sup>. "Thence the fleet entered upon the country of Susa...; huge posts or pieces of timber are fixed here and there...to guide mariners in their course, and prevent their falling in among the shallows<sup>2</sup>."

It is not possible, therefore, to accept the generalization of Mr Kennedy. The Persians did not love the sea, but they loved sea-power and tried "to create a direct communication between the seclusion of Persis and the commerce of the world<sup>3</sup>." Consequently, the Nile canal was constructed and the construction of this canal was supplemented by an exploration of the Indian Ocean—from the Gulf of Persia to the delta of the Indus, and thence to the apex of the Erythraean Sea.

"A great part of Asia," says Herodotus, "was explored under the direction of Darius. He, being desirous to know in what part the Indus (which is the second river that produces crocodiles) discharges itself into the sea, sent in ships, both those on whom he could rely to make a true report, and also Scylax of Carinda. Accordingly, they set out from the city of Caspatyrus and the country of Pactyice, and sailed down the river, towards the east and sunrise, to the sea; then sailing on the sea westward they arrived in the thirtieth month at that place (Suez) where the king of Egypt despatched the Phoenicians to sail round Libya. After these persons had sailed round, Darius subdued the Indians and frequented this sea<sup>4</sup>."

It is noteworthy that Darius himself frequented the Persian Gulf, so that the inference—

"The Indian conquest led to the establishment of commercial relations with the natives, which issued in a regular trade, carried on by coasting-vessels between the mouths of the Indus and the Persian Gulf<sup>5</sup>"

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *Indian History*, Ch. 38-39.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, Ch. 40-41.

<sup>3</sup> Eduard Meyer, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, article on Persia, Ancient History, Vol. XXI, p. 209 b.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, IV., 44.

<sup>5</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III, p. 431, London (1879).



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—which the modern historian draws from the Father of History seems to me perfectly legitimate. And indeed no other conclusion is possible on the evidence of Nearchus in the Gulf of Persia.

To pass now to the minutiae of Achaemenian sea-power, with the moral support of a hired fleet supplied by Phoenicia and the semi-Phoenician Cyprus<sup>1</sup>, and with the material aid of Phanes, the Halicarnassian, who had filled sheep-skins with water and loaded them on to the backs of camels, Cambyzes poured his troops into Egypt and conquered the country (527 B.C.). Thereafter, three separate expeditions were planned—against Carthage, Ammon, and Ethiopia. The last two proved abortive; the first was not even consummated. For the Phoenicians on whom depended the naval force refused to break the double bonds of oath and kinship merely to secure the approbation of Cambyzes, and Cambyzes himself, on the other hand, seeing that the submission of Phoenicia had been voluntary and that its retention was necessary for the retention of Egypt, was unwilling to resort to the employment of force. The time had not yet come when the Great King could scourge the sea<sup>2</sup> or decapitate seamen with impunity<sup>3</sup>.

Only by a slow process, therefore, did Achaemenian sea-power become Achaemenian in the Mediterranean Sea. At first, the Persian element is merely the Persian flag. Later, Persian officers are found sailing, surveying, and spying in the company of foreigners<sup>4</sup>. Later still, Persians have risen to the rank of admirals and have begun to conquer the islands in the Mediterranean Sea<sup>5</sup>. Eventually, the entire fleet is in the hands of Persian admirals<sup>6</sup>, and is stiffened by the *epibetae* or marines, drawn from the three races—the Persians, Medes, and Sacae<sup>7</sup>.

But to proceed. The attempt of Darius to control the nomads of Scythia led to a resumption of naval activity in the Mediterranean

<sup>1</sup> Cyprus was ethnically connected with Phoenicia and had therefore revolted from Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, VII., 35.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, III., 135, 136.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, VII., 97.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, VIII., 90.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, V., 26.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, VII., 96, 184.



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Sea. First of all, about fifteen Persian spies, who were put in charge of Democedes to report on the maritime tracts of Greece, procured a couple of Sidonian triremes and a large trading-vessel, and sailed as far as Crotona in Magna Graecia, and returned with written information<sup>1</sup>. Thereupon, Ariaramnes, satrap of Cappadocia, crossed the Euxine with a small fleet of thirty penteconters<sup>2</sup> and succeeded in capturing the brother of a Scythian chief. Finally, the Bosphorus was spanned by the Samian Mandrocles, and a fleet of six hundred sail was levied from the subject-races of Asia Minor to protect the passage of the Persian army.

And so Darius crossed over into Europe with his troops, whilst his fleet passed through the Cyanean isles, sailed up the river Ister, and laid down a bridge of boats at a distance of two days' course from the river's mouth. The invasion, however, proved sterile: Darius achieved nothing against the elusive Scyths.

But because the primary object of the expedition had failed the Persians in Europe did not despair of seeing an extension of Persia in Europe: Megabazus remained behind and conquered Thrace and Macedonia (514 B.C.); whilst Otanes, the successor of Megabazus, secured the naval aid of the Lesbians and reduced the islands of Lemnos and Imbros (505 B.C.). Persian influence in the Mediterranean was thus slowly increasing, and neither the abortive expedition of Megabates, who vaunted his rank as admiral over two hundred triremes by binding the captain of a Myndian ship through the lower rowlock of his vessel so that the head should be without and the body within<sup>3</sup>, nor the defection of Aristagoras, who raided Sardis, the capital of Asia Minor, with five Eretrian and twenty Athenian ships, nor yet the Ionic Revolt and the defeat of the Perso-Phoenician fleet off Cyprus, could definitely cripple the power of the Great King. Cyprus was recovered within a year; the Carians, the Hellespontines, and the Aeolians were subdued; the cities of Ionia fell; and in spite of the three hundred and fifty-

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, III., 135-138.

<sup>2</sup> Ctesias, *Exc. Pers.*, para. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, v., 32-33.



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three triremes of the Ionians, Miletus was almost annihilated. The strength of the rebel fleet deterred the Persian generals from giving battle "because they were not masters at sea<sup>1</sup>"; on the other hand, the Samians argued that "if they should overcome Darius with his present fleet (of six hundred sail) another, five times as large, would come against them<sup>2</sup>." And so the Samians returned to their allegiance, followed by the Lesbians—and the Ionic Revolt was over (494 B.C.).

"Darius was now free to turn from the agents of the revolt to the accomplices"—principally Athens and Eretria. The fire of revenge smouldered in the heart of the Great King, where, like the fire in a Magian temple, it was nourished night and day and never allowed to die<sup>3</sup>. And so the land army was mobilized and sent to the Hellespont *en route* to Attica, whilst Mardonius, the son-in-law of Darius, assumed the supreme command over both the army and navy, and proceeded by sea from Cilicia to Ionia. Thence, pacifying the Ionian towns by giving them a form of self-government, Mardonius sailed to the Hellespont and transported the troops into the enemy's country. The Thasians and the Macedonians, who had regained independence during the Ionic Revolt, were easily subdued, but the drawn battle with the Brygi, and the loss of three hundred vessels and twenty thousand lives in a storm off the promontory of Athos<sup>4</sup>, so damped the ardour of Mardonius that he withdrew his forces and returned to Asia (493 B.C.).

But Darius was superior to his misfortunes and by 490 B.C. a new fleet of six hundred sail had assembled in Cilicia to carry out the old purpose. The supreme command was taken from Mardonius and given to Datis and Artaphernes; the army was stiffened by cavalry—a Persian speciality; and to facilitate the adoption of the direct sea-route, a number of horse-transporters were added to the triremes. And for a while all went well: Delos, Carystus, Tamynae,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, VI., 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, VI., 16.

<sup>3</sup> At each meal, a servant called out to Darius: "Sire, remember the Athenians."

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, v., 105.



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Choerea, and Aegilia were taken piecemeal, and the independence and even the existence of Eretria was annihilated.

Meanwhile, Hippias, son of Pisistratus, had joined the Persians and suggested the suitability of Marathon for a cavalry engagement. The advice was sound; the result, disastrous. The Persians lost at Marathon barely one-tenth of their strength and their strength was ten times that of the enemy, but they had lost faith in themselves and their one desire was to reach the ships and be safe at sea. Seven galleys were lost in the flight; the others made for Phaleron hoping to get the Athenians in the rear. But the Athenians had detected the move and guarded Phaleron, and Datis who only contemplated an entry by the backdoor sailed away to Asia Minor.

"When the news of the battle fought at Marathon reached Darius, son of Hystaspes," says Herodotus, "he then became much more incensed and was still more eager to prosecute the war against Greece." But whilst the preparations were still incomplete Egypt revolted under Khabbisha (486 B.C.) and death stayed the hand that was to whip the Athenians into servitude (485 B.C.).

Nevertheless, the imperial policy of Darius lived on, and within two years after the reconquest of Egypt and the fall of Babylon (483 B.C.)<sup>1</sup> all Persia was in Europe. For "Xerxes, son of Darius, led five million two hundred and eighty-three thousand two hundred and twenty men to Sepias and Thermopylae...but of so many myriads of men, not one of them, for beauty and stature, was more entitled than Xerxes himself to possess this power<sup>2</sup>."

To insure and expedite the transport of the army, Phoenician and Egyptian engineers had been asked to bridge the Hellespont from Abydos to Sestos. After an unsuccessful attempt for which the engineers were beheaded, and the sea scourged, branded, and fettered<sup>3</sup>, a double bridge of triremes and penteconters, united by shore cables of exceptional strength, and overlain by a platform of tree-trunks, earth, and brushwood, was stretched across the

<sup>1</sup> Babylon never recovered from the attack of Xerxes, and became "a hissing and a name." This applies only to the town, not the province.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus VII., 186-187.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, VII., 34.





sea<sup>1</sup>—"and the highroad of Xerxes, as Aeschylus calls it, was complete."

Nor were the interests of the navy ignored: a couple of Persian engineers, Bubares, son of Megabazus, and Artachaeus, son of Artaeus, converted the promontory of Athos, where the fleet of Mardonius had suffered shipwreck, into a canal "of such a width that two triremes might pass through rowed abreast<sup>2</sup>." "No portion of the Greek coast," says Prof. Rawlinson, "is so dangerous as that about Athos: Greek boatmen, even at the present day, refuse to attempt the circumnavigation.... The construction of a canal in such a locality was certainly better than the formation of a ship-groove or diolcus—the substitute proposed by Herodotus—not to mention that it is doubtful whether at the time that this cutting was made ship-grooves were known even to the Greeks<sup>3</sup>."

Meanwhile the fleet of Xerxes, having supervised the crossing of the army, set sail and arrived at Doriscus, where it was reviewed by the king from aboard a Sidonian vessel. There were 1207 triremes, of which the Phoenician contribution was 300, the Egyptian 200, the Cyprian 150, the Cilician, the Ionian, and the Hellespontine 100 each, the Carian 70, the Aeolian 60, the Lycian 50, the Pamphylian and the Dorian 30 each, and that of the Islanders 17. Each trireme had a native crew of 200 men, and a Persian crew of 30 marines<sup>4</sup>. There were, moreover, 3000 triëconters, penteconters, light-boats, and long horse-transports; and each of these had a crew of about eighty men. Altogether, therefore, Xerxes had 4207 ships and 517,610 men at Doriscus, but these numbers were increased afterwards by a Thracian reinforcement of 120 triremes and 24,000 men. Four admirals were in charge of the fleet, and all

<sup>1</sup> On the completion of the work, Xerxes threw a Persian sword and a golden cup and bowl into the sea. Was it an offering to the sun, or the effect of remorse?

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, VII., 24.

<sup>3</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III., pp. 450-451, London (1879).

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, VII., 96 et 184.



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of them were Persian: Achaemenes, the brother of Xerxes, commanded the Egyptian ships; Ariabignes, son of Darius and Gobryas, and, therefore, a half-brother of Xerxes, commanded the Ionian and Carian ships; whilst, of the remaining vessels, some were in the control of Prexaspes, son of Aspathines, the others of Megabazus, son of Megabates<sup>1</sup>. The vice-admirals, mentioned by Herodotus, are foreigners; whilst the captains of the Grand Fleet are not mentioned either severally or collectively.

From Doriscus the fleet accompanied the land army to Acanthus where it received orders to proceed to Therma. Accordingly, it set sail, passed through the canal of Athos, and reached its destination augmented by the hundred and twenty ships of the Thracians. Xerxes, upon his arrival, went on board a Sidonian vessel and explored the mouth of the Peneus, for what were Athens and Sparta to him but mere items in a tourist's itinerary?

On leaving Therma a squadron of ten ships advanced to Scyathus, where it seized three Grecian ships that were keeping a look-out. But Xerxes was soon to discover the fickleness of fortune: the Persian fleet, whilst riding at anchor between the city of Casthanaea and the coast of Sepias, was caught in a violent storm and shorn of about four hundred triremes and innumerable transports and provision-ships "so that this wreck proved a source of great profit to Aminocles, a Magnesian, who possessed land about Sepias<sup>2</sup>." And the Greeks poured out libations to Poseidon, whom they sur-named the Deliverer, and moved up their ships to Artemisium, "hoping that there would be only some few ships to oppose them."

But the bulk of the Persian fleet was there, and in the best of spirits. And in order to prevent the escape of the Greeks who had fallen into their hands the Persians detached a couple of hundred ships to sail round Euboea and seal up the straits of Euripos. But as the Persian squadron was approaching the Coela of Euboea, the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and the squadron was wrecked: "all this was done by the deity that

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, VII., 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, VII., 188-191.



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the Persian might be brought to an equality with the Grecian, or, at least, not be greatly superior."

Meanwhile, after an indecisive engagement in which they lost thirty vessels, the Persians at Artemisium took the offensive and crippled one-half of the Athenian fleet. Then came the news of the forcing of Thermopylae, and the Greeks fell back. Darkness and Persian indolence lent them aid; and by the break of day even the damaged ships of the Athenians were gone.

Both the land and the sea-route now lay open to the Persians. Xerxes marched to Athens and burnt its shrines in revenge for the destruction of Sardis; the fleet sailed down the Euripos and rounding Sunium came to anchor in the bay of Phaleron.

In the neighbourhood lay the Grecian fleet in the haven of Salamis. Eurybiades was in command and it was the general opinion of the officers of the confederate fleet that they should sail to the Isthmus and fight before Peloponnesus "for if they should be conquered by sea, whilst they were at Salamis, they would be besieged in the island, but if at the Isthmus they might escape to their own cities<sup>1</sup>." The fear of Persian sea-power would have indeed subdued the judgment of Eurybiades<sup>2</sup> had not Themistocles threatened to abandon Greece, if Greece should abandon Salamis. And the threat was grim, for out of a total of three hundred and eighty ships, Themistocles was in command of two hundred.

Meanwhile, Xerxes had almost recuperated his naval loss, for Aeschylus states that "a thousand ships (for well I knew the number) the Persian flag obeyed: two hundred more and seven o'erspread the seas<sup>3</sup>." "As at Artemisium the only fear felt was lest the Greeks should fly, and in that way escape chastisement<sup>4</sup>." Two hundred ships were therefore ordered to surround all the passages,

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, VIII., 49.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Themistocles, p. 113, Langhorne's tr. (London).

<sup>3</sup> Aeschylus, *Persae*, II., 343-345.

<sup>4</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III., p. 463, London (1879).



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and to enclose the islands<sup>1</sup>; whilst Xerxes climbed a rocky cliff at break of day to watch the sea-fight with his own eyes (480 B.C.).

"The Persian fleet was drawn up in three lines and stimulated by the presence of the king assumed the offensive. The Grecian vessels were of small draught and receded to the shore; the Persian ships were heavy and unwieldy, and in giving pursuit, began to grind in the shallows. As the day advanced the sea-breeze produced a high surf in the channel." The triple line impeded retreat; the narrow space promoted collision: Themistocles had shown his wisdom both in selecting the place for his ships and the time for his action. By evening the Persian fleet was a wreck and a debris; five hundred vessels had gone down and with them the admiral of the fleet and the brother of the Great King:

"Ariamaenes, the Persian admiral, a man of distinguished honour, and by far the bravest of the king's brothers, directed his manoeuvres chiefly against Themistocles. His ship was very tall, and from thence he threw darts and shot forth arrows as from a castle. But Aminias the Deccelean, and Sosiscles the Pedian, who sailed in one bottom, bore down upon him with their prow, and both ships meeting they were fastened together by means of their brazen beaks; when Ariamaenes, boarding their galley, they received him with their pikes, and pushed him into the sea. Artemisia knew the body amongst others that were floating with the wreck, and carried it to Xerxes<sup>2</sup>."

The defeat of Salamis made Xerxes tremble for his life. Laying therefore the flattering unction to his soul that he had gained the immediate object of the expedition, namely, the conquest of Athens, and that the ultimate task of subduing Greece could be left to a satrap, he made Mardonius the generalissimo of 360,000 troops, and with the rest of his army retreated towards the Hellespont. As before, Xerxes took the land-route, whilst the remnants of the Persian fleet went ahead for protecting the bridge. The effort, however, proved futile. For though the advice of Themistocles to conquer Asia in Europe by breaking the bridge<sup>3</sup> was overruled by

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Themistocles, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Themistocles, p. 116, Langhorne's tr.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Aristides, p. 87, Langhorne's tr.



Aristides, who desired a riddance of evil by facilitating the flight of the Great King<sup>1</sup>, nevertheless, the sea, which had been branded and fettered and scourged, had not been equally forgiving. A storm had destroyed the labour of the preceding year and the army had to cross over in ships<sup>2</sup>.

There is no doubt that Mardonius felt himself equal to the task he had undertaken. "At sea in your wooden towers," wrote he to the Greeks, "you have defeated landsmen unpractised at the oar; but there are still the wide plains of Thessaly and the fields of Boeotia, where both horse and foot may fight to the best advantage<sup>3</sup>." But Plataea was to be the graveyard of Mardonius and his horse and foot: the disaster of Salamis was to remain irretrievable.

Meanwhile, the remnants of the Grand Fleet had evaded a Grecian squadron off Calami in the Ionian territory, and obtained the shelter of the land forces at Mycale<sup>4</sup>. But if the Persians could draw their ships ashore and fence them in with a rampart of stone and wood, the Greeks also could fight a naval battle on land. For they disembarked and met the Persian troops and beat them—and the ships became the spoils of war to be ruthlessly fired.

The Battle of Mycale completed the work of Salamis, and Persia was no longer able to retain her territory in Europe<sup>5</sup>, or even on the Asiatic seaboard, from Ionia to Pamphylia (479–466 B.C.). And then, in 466 B.C., came a repetition of Mycale, for Tithraustes, the Persian admiral, whilst planning to overrun the coast of Asia Minor with about six hundred ships and a large army, found himself confronted, not with the eighty ships of his Phoenician allies, but with the two hundred galleys of the Athenian Cimon. Seized with panic, Tithraustes converted his navy into a river-flotilla, and pushed up the Eurymedon and finally sought safety in flight. Two hundred of his vessels fell into the hands of the enemy—"a certain

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Aristides, p. 87, Langhorne's tr.

<sup>2</sup> Herodotus, VIII., 117.

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Aristides, p. 87, Langhorne's tr.

<sup>4</sup> Herodotus, IX., 96.

<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the town of Doriscus.



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proof," says Plutarch, "that the Persian fleet was very numerous." The Persian army now came to the rescue and was almost pulverized, whilst a similar fate befell the Phoenician squadron off Cyprus, so that by the time of Xerxes' assassination in 465 B.C. the Persian navy had acquired a negative value—it was nowhere to be seen but on land, and on land it was nothing but an encumbrance to the army.

Nevertheless, it must be stated to the credit of Persia that Ariamaenes or Ariabignes sank with his ships at Salamis, that Boges or Butes, the governor of Eion, burnt himself with his colleagues on the funeral pyre<sup>1</sup>, and that "none were able to drive out Mascames from Doriscus though many made the attempt<sup>2</sup>." And it was not a vain boast of the Great King that he was master of the sea<sup>3</sup>, for he narrowed and enlarged its domains as he willed: he had made the strait of Hellespont an isthmus, and the isthmus of Athos a strait.

Nor is this the final word on the naval ambitions of Xerxes, for by granting a conditional pardon to Sataspes, son of Teaspes, of the Royal House, who had been convicted of the capital offence of rape, Xerxes made the circumnavigation of Africa literally a problem of life and death. The royal culprit took an Egyptian vessel, sailed through the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, doubled Cape Solois of Libya, and steered to the south, but "after traversing a vast extent of sea in many months, when he found that he had still more to pass, he turned back<sup>4</sup>"—willing to face the inexorable Xerxes rather than the illimitable sea.

Where the greater malady is fix'd  
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'ldst shun a bear  
But if thy flight lay toward the raging sea  
Thou'ldst meet the bear i' the mouth.

Sataspes pleaded the ingenious defence—*Actus Dei nemini nocet*: he had sailed past a nation of elusive pygmies, clad in garments

<sup>1</sup> Herodotus, VII., 107 *et* Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Cimon.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, VII., 106 *et* Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Cimon.

<sup>3</sup> Herodotus, VII., 34.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, IV., 43.



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of palm leaves, but could not sail any farther, because his ship was stopped. But Xerxes realized that Sataspes could argue better than perform, and violate better than fulfil, and enforced, accordingly, the sentence of death.

And so concluded the first phase of Achaemenian history. Hereafter, the dream of world-imperialism was not to be realized by pitting Persia against Greece but by setting the Grecian states against one another. And as a corollary to this new policy of *divide et impera*, Greek captains were to assist the satraps as the *de facto* leaders of the armies of Persia, and Greek mercenaries were to displace the Immortals as the *corps d'élite* of the Great King.

Meanwhile, the collapse of the Persian navy reacted on the loyalty of Egypt: the Persian troops were defeated near Papremis in the Delta, and the satrap Achaemenes was slain (459 B.C.). Thereupon, the rebel leaders, Inaros and Amyrtaeus I, lured Athens with the prospects of a *coup de grâce*, and an Athenian fleet of two hundred sail made itself master of the Nile and of two-thirds of Memphis<sup>1</sup>. Artaxerxes, the son and successor of Xerxes, stooped to bribery; but the attempt was premature and Sparta rejected the darics offered for an invasion of Attica.

Persia now took the field against Egypt. A battle was fought; the Egyptians were beaten; and the Athenian fleet retired to Prosopitis, an island in the Nile. For eighteen months the siege went on, till Megabyzus, by turning the course of the stream, forced the Athenians, as it were, to set fire to their own ships<sup>2</sup>. Then came a tardy reinforcement of fifty sail, which was routed by the Phoenicians with heavy loss, and with the execution of Inaros and the flight of his companion, the revolt was over (455 B.C.).

But Athens remembered the fall of Prosopitis, and gathered a fleet, and despatched Cimon with two hundred ships to wrest Cyprus from the Persians (449 B.C.). The task was heavy, for Artabazus, the Persian admiral, had three hundred ships at Cyprus<sup>3</sup>, whilst a

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, I, 104, tr. B. Jowett, Oxford (1900).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, I, 109.

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. XII, Ch. I, tr. G. Booth, London (1814).



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thousand times as many men lay encamped in Cilicia in charge of Megabyzus. Moreover, sixty of the Athenian ships had to be detached for service in Egypt, where Amyrtaeus I was hiding<sup>1</sup>, and a substitute had to be found for Cimon who had died before he could proceed to the blockade of Citium<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, Citium and Malus were forced, and of the Phoenician and Cilician ships a hundred were taken, and the rest, pursued almost to the camp of Megabyzus<sup>3</sup>, were beaten on land.

Athens now settled down before the walls of Salamis, the capital of Cyprus, and though no attempt was made by Persia to raise the siege—"for the Athenians were masters at sea"—the town proved impregnable. Artaxerxes, who was anxious to retain Cyprus for the defence of Egypt, saw the war-weariness of the besieging army, and concluded the "Peace of Callias" on the following conditions<sup>4</sup>:

- (i) the Greek cities in Asia to receive freedom and self-government ;
- (ii) Persian commanders not to come within three days' journey of the sea ;
- (iii) Persian men-of-war not to sail beyond Phaselis in the Levant or beyond the Cyanean isles in the Euxine ;
- (iv) Athens to relinquish Cyprus, and to recall her squadron from Egypt ;
- (v) and Athens not to invade any of the provinces of Artaxerxes.

The "Peace of Callias" lasted till 415 B.C., when the collapse of the Athenian expedition against Sicily disturbed the balance of power in favour of Persia, and induced Darius Nothus, who had succeeded Artaxerxes as the Great King, to order a renewal of tribute from the Grecian colonies in Asia Minor. The task was assigned to the satraps, Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, who economized labour by entering into an offensive and defensive alliance with Sparta: the Great King was "to be sovereign over all the territory and all the cities which were in his possession then, or

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, I., 112.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem* ; but according to Diodorus Siculus (XII., I.) Cimon died after the "Peace of Callias."

<sup>3</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. XII., Ch. I.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*.



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had been in the possession of his forefathers before<sup>1</sup>,” and for this concession, Sparta and Persia were to be the common enemies of Athens.

The satraps, however, were not aiming at reciprocity. For, as Tissaphernes himself admitted to the younger Cyrus, “all I have hitherto done was in pure compliance with the advice of Alcibiades, studying only that no party of the Grecians should grow too strong, but that all might be kept in weakness through their own embroilments<sup>2</sup>.” Accordingly, when Sparta pressed for aid against Athens, Tissaphernes brought his reinforcement of one hundred and forty-seven Phoenician galleys, but only as far as Aspendus and no farther<sup>3</sup>. Similarly, when Mindarus, the Spartan admiral, was awaiting at Miletus the three hundred Phoenician galleys of Pharnabazus<sup>4</sup>, there only came the tardy information that the Phoenicians had returned to Phoenicia.

But whilst the satraps were economizing, the younger Cyrus, who coveted the Persian crown, was offering the Spartan ambassadors at Sardis both five hundred talents in specie and his own private money and even the very throne on which he was sitting<sup>5</sup>. And so within a couple of years the power of Athens was broken: in September 405 B.C. the Athenian fleet was destroyed at Aegospotami, and in April 404 the Long Walls and the fortifications of the Peiraeus were dismantled.

Meanwhile, Egypt had revolted under Amyrtaeus II, a grandson of Amyrtaeus I, and the identity of interests had prompted Cyrus to supply five and twenty ships to the Egyptian admiral, Tamos, who had been besieging Miletus against Tissaphernes<sup>6</sup> (405 B.C.).

<sup>1</sup> Thucydides, VIII., 18, tr. B. Jowett, Oxford (1900).

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. I., tr. by the ‘Translator of Thucydides,’ p. 19, London (1816).

<sup>3</sup> Thucydides, VIII., 87.

<sup>4</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. XIII., Ch. iv.

<sup>5</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. I., tr. by the ‘Translator of Thucydides,’ p. 18, London (1816).

<sup>6</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Bk. I., tr. by E. Spelman, p. 21, London (1817).



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For his treason Cyrus was recalled to Susa, where, finding that his arrival synchronized with the accession of his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon to the throne of Persia, he attempted fratricide and was sentenced to death.

But Cyrus was not reserved for the gallows: the intercession of the Queen-Mother obtained him an unconditional pardon, and so, returning to Asia Minor, he applied to Egypt and Sparta for the price of his friendship, and raised eventually a native army of a hundred thousand men and a Grecian corps of thirteen thousand mercenaries. Moreover, "five and thirty ships, with Pythagoras, a Lacedaemonian, at the head, sailed from Peloponnesus, and came to Cyrus, being conducted from Ephesus by Tamos, an Egyptian, who carried with him five and twenty other ships belonging to Cyrus<sup>1</sup>." The expedition, however, was not destined to succeed: Cyrus fell in the Battle of Cunaxa (401 B.C.); the Asiatics returned to their allegiance; and the Greeks cut their way through to Trebizond, in the face of all the armies of the Great King.

The hostility of Sparta and the impotence of Persia could no longer be disguised and, to err on the safe side, Tissaphernes drew up a programme for the construction of three hundred Phoenician galleys<sup>2</sup>, with which Sparta was to be deprived of the empire of the sea<sup>3</sup>. The news leaked out; Agesilaus, king of Sparta, crossed over to Asia Minor (399 B.C.); and the darics were shipped to Europe for circulation at Argos, Thebes, Corinth<sup>4</sup>, and probably elsewhere. And after a contest of six years the darics triumphed: Agesilaus was driven out of the country "by ten thousand of the Great King's archers" (for the Persian money bore the impression of an archer); the Spartan fleet of Pisander was beaten near Cnidus (394 B.C.) by the Athenian and Phoenician ships of Conon and

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Bk. I., tr. by E. Spelman, p. 21, London (1817).

<sup>2</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. III., tr. by the 'Translator of Thucydides,' p. 79, London (1816).

<sup>3</sup> Plutarch, *Lives*: Life of Agesilaus, Langhorne tr., Gr. Section, Vol. I., p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. III., Eng. tr., p. 86.



Pharnabazus<sup>1</sup>; and the insular possessions of Sparta were taken. Pharnabazus, indeed, was even prepared "to go to Laconia and revenge himself to the utmost of his power," and within a year after Cnidus actually ravaged the Peloponnesian coast<sup>2</sup>. Conon, of course, was present throughout, and for his services received the gold with which the Long Walls of the Peiraeus were rebuilt.

Sparta now resumed the rôle of a friend, and borrowed the ships of which Tiribazus was master, and stopped the navigation of vessels from Pontus to Athens<sup>3</sup> (387 B.C.). The policy of the Great King had completely succeeded: he had fought with Sparta against Athens, and with Athens against Sparta, and was reopening the cycle. "Hence it was," says Xenophon, "that when Tiribazus issued out the notification, that all states, who were desirous of a peace on the terms which the King prescribes, should assemble together, they were all soon assembled. And now in the presence of them all, Tiribazus, having first showed the king's signet, read aloud the contents of his mandate, as followeth :

"Artaxerxes the king thinks it just that the cities in Asia and the two isles of Clazomenae and Cyprus should be his own ; but that all the rest of the Grecian cities, both small and great, should be left free and independent, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Seiros ; these, as formerly, to continue in subjection to the Athenians. And whatever people refuseth this peace, I myself, with such as receive it, shall make war against that people, both by land and sea, both with ships and with money<sup>4</sup>."

Greece accepted the "Peace of Antalcidas" without a murmur but Evagoras of Cyprus, who was in the fifth year of a successful revolt and had an army of six thousand men and a fleet of a hundred and thirty sail, exclusive of fifty Egyptian and twenty Tyrian vessels<sup>5</sup>, was hardly the person to listen and obey. His fleet

<sup>1</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. IV., Eng. tr., p. 103. Diodorus (XIV., IX.) says that the Spartans had 85 ships and the Persians 90.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, Bk. IV., Eng. tr., p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Bk. V., tr. by the 'Translator of Thucydides,' p. 134, London (1816).

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. XV., Ch. I.



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was scattered by the three hundred galleys of Tiribazus and Gaios; his island was overrun by the three hundred thousand troops of Orontes; his capital was assailed for six years until its fall was imminent. But when the time came for the *coup de grâce* Orontes and Tiribazus had fallen out amongst themselves, and the pretender was told that on payment of an annual subsidy he could retain both his capital and his title of king.

Meanwhile, by fear and favour, Persia had recovered the seaboard of Asia Minor, and there only remained the subjugation of Egypt. According to Diodorus, when the king's forces came to Acre in Phoenicia there were two hundred thousand Persians under Pharnabazus and twenty thousand Greeks under Iphicrates, whose services had been obtained from Athens. The navy comprised (i) three hundred galleys of three tiers of oars on a bank, (ii) two hundred galleys of thirty oars a-piece, and (iii) a vast number of transport-ships<sup>1</sup>. But all the troops and ships of Persia had nothing more than a spectacular effect, for the seven mouths of the Nile had been blocked, and though a force was secretly landed, Pharnabazus hesitated in accepting the advice of Iphicrates to march on Memphis before the Egyptian army could mobilize. And whilst he delayed the Nile rose and flooded the country—and Iphicrates and Pharnabazus went their ways for they had parted<sup>2</sup> (374 B.C.).

The failure of the Egyptian expedition brought on a general revolt of the satraps, and by 362 B.C. all Asia Minor had seceded from Persia. Sparta abetted the insurrection, whilst Tachos, king of Egypt, sent a fleet of two hundred ships under the Athenian Chabrias, and an army of ten thousand Greek mercenaries under the Spartan Agesilaus, for an invasion of Syria. But once again the darics proved invincible, and whilst the satraps were being crushed

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. xv., Ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Iphicrates, knowing the readiness of the tongue of Pharnabazus and the slowness of his actions, one day accosted him in this manner—That he wondered that one who was so voluble in his speech should be so slow in his actions. To which Pharnabazus answered—That he was master of his words, but the king, of his actions."





at home, there arose a civil war in Egypt to end the foreign war of Tachos.

Artaxerxes Mnemon died in 359 B.C. in the ninety-fourth year of his life and the forty-sixth year of his reign. It is the tendency of modern historians to make Persia responsible for the failures of Artaxerxes, and to credit the achievements of Artaxerxes to Greece<sup>1</sup>. But it is unnecessary to withhold from Persia what Greece herself has conceded: Pharnabazus was present as an admiral in the Battle of Cnidus, Tiribazus and Gaios led the attack on Cyprus, and Pharnabazus cooperated with Iphicrates in the attack on Egypt. Finally, though the royal coinage<sup>2</sup> is usually devoid of marine representations, there is at least one gold stater, now preserved in the De Luyne collection, which bears on the obverse the royal Persian archer, as on the darics, and on the reverse, a prow of a galley<sup>3</sup>. It was probably minted at Cyzicus in honour of the king who had enforced the "Peace of Antalcidas" and recovered the control of the sea.

Artaxerxes Ochus now succeeded to the throne of Persia and immediately after massacring the royal family turned his attention towards Egypt. The expedition failed; Cyprus and Phoenicia revolted; and nothing was left, apparently, but the unconquerable will. Entrusting the Cyprian war to Idrieus, prince of Caria, Artaxerxes raised a force of thirty thousand horse and three hundred thousand foot, and marched through Syria, and encamped near Sidon. Paralysed with fear the Sidonians fired the town and burnt themselves to ashes, and, incidentally, released the king from a Phoenician war.

Artaxerxes now continued his march on Egypt: Cyprus had been reduced by Idrieus, and ten thousand mercenaries had arrived from Greece. The army was divided into three corps and each corps was placed under the dual command of a Greek and a

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Eduard Meyer, *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. XXI., p. 212 a, Cambridge (1911), *et* G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*, Vol. III., p. 480, London (1879).

<sup>2</sup> In contradistinction to the coins issued by satraps or subordinate kings.

<sup>3</sup> Barclay V. Head, *The Coinage of Lydia and Persia*, p. 51, London (1877).



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Persian: the Greek commanders were Lacrates, Nicostratus, and Mentor; the Persian commanders, Rosaces, Aristazanes, and Bagaios. The last two were also admirals—the former over “four score galleys,” the latter over “a considerable navy”—for Persia led three hundred galleys against Egypt, besides six hundred ships of burden and transport-ships.

Meanwhile, Nectanebo, king of Egypt, was laughing the Persian power to scorn: his country was fortified; his army was large—about eighty thousand natives and twenty thousand Greeks; and his navy was specially equipped for service on the Nile. But a single reverse changed the overweening confidence to temerity: Nectanebo retired to Memphis *en route* to Ethiopia, and Egypt was in the hands of the enemy.

The reconquest of Egypt was the last triumph of the Achaemenian empire. Bagaios was given unlimited powers, and Mentor, the satrapy of the Asiatic seaboard; and for a time the many states became one under the Great King (343–338 B.C.). And then, on a sudden, the wide arch of the ranged empire fell, and all was over.

It is a remarkable fact that though Persia “by virtue of her shipping held the sovereignty of the sea<sup>1</sup>” she made no effort to prevent Alexander from crossing the Hellespont. The first naval encounter was at Miletus (334 B.C.), and even at Miletus, Memnon, the brother of Mentor, displayed more the strength of the Persian fleet than its utility, for “he sailed all day long in view of the Grecians, hoping by that means to dare them to an engagement at sea.” Alexander, however, was not prepared “to fight a fleet so numerous as the Persian, or to engage the expert Cyprians and Phoenicians, or to try the skill and valour of the Macedonians on so unstable an element<sup>2</sup>.”

Thereupon, Memnon formed the bold design of transferring the war into the enemy's country and had taken Antissa, Methymna,

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *History of Alexander's Expedition*, Bk. I., Ch. XIX., tr. by Rooke, London (1814).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.



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Pyrrha, Erissa, Mitylene, Lesbos, and even the Cyclade isles<sup>1</sup>, when he sickened and died, and, with him, the last hope of Darius Codomannus, the last of the Great Kings. Such, at any rate, is the version of Diodorus; but, on the other hand, Arrian credits Autophradates and Pharnabazus with the reduction of Mitylene, where Memnon had died before the fall of the town<sup>2</sup>. It appears also from Arrian's account that the two Persian satraps did not abandon Memnon's plan of invading Euboea, for, at Siphnus, King Agis of Sparta interviewed them and "required money for the use of the war, and as many sea and land forces as they could spare to be sent into Peloponnesus<sup>3</sup>." Eventually, Agis received ten ships and thirty talents of silver, and it looked as though Persia might still be saved, for said Alexander to his troops at Tyre:

"I can by no means deem it safe to undertake an expedition into Egypt, whilst the Persians have the sovereignty of the sea; nor to continue our pursuit of Darius, whilst Tyre remains unsubdued, and our enemies have Egypt and Cyprus in their possession. This I hold dangerous—lest if they should regain their seaports, and by the help of their fleet transfer the war into Greece<sup>4</sup>."

But Autophradates and Pharnabazus lacked initiative and the paralysis of the defeat of Issus (333 B.C.) spread to the navy, which kept at sea merely because it was less dangerous there than on land. And since the Persian navy was not built by Persia, the squadrons of Sidon, Aradus, and Byblus deserted the Persian cause on hearing that Alexander was master of their respective cities; and Cyprus followed soon after. The fall of Tyre (332 B.C.) completed the process, and hereafter, with the solitary exception of Magaios, the son of Pharnuchis, who was the captain of a trireme<sup>5</sup> in the fleet of Nearchus, there is no trace of Achaemenian Persia on the sea—the unstable element had allied itself with Alexander.

<sup>1</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library*, Bk. xvii., Ch. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Arrian, *History of Alexander's Expedition*, Bk. ii., Ch. i.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, Bk. ii., Ch. xiii.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, Bk. ii., Ch. xvii.

<sup>5</sup> Arrian, *Indian History*, Ch. 18.





CSL

**TRADE-CONDITIONS IN THE EAST BEFORE  
THE RISE OF SĀSĀNIAN PERSIA**



## TRADE-CONDITIONS IN THE EAST BEFORE THE RISE OF SĀSĀNIAN PERSIA

"There was a man," says Agatharchides, "famous for his valour and his wealth, by name Erythras, a Persian by birth, son of Myozaeus. His home was by the sea, facing toward islands which are not now desert, but were so at the time of the empire of the Medes, when Erythras lived. In the winter-time he used to go to Pasargadae, making the journey at his own cost, and he indulged in these changes of scene, now for profit, and now for some pleasure of his own life. On a time the lions charged into a large flock of his mares, and some were slain; while the rest, unharmed but terror-stricken at what they had seen, fled to the sea. A strong wind was blowing from the land, and as they plunged into the waves in their terror, they were carried beyond their footing; and their fear continuing, they swam through the sea and came out on the shore of the land opposite. With them went one of the herdsmen, a youth of marked bravery, who thus reached the shore by clinging to the shoulders of a mare. Now Erythras looked for his mares, and not seeing them, first put together a raft of small size, but secure in the strength of its building; and happening on a favourable wind, he pushed off into the strait, across which he was swiftly carried by the waves, and so found his mares and their keeper also. And then, being pleased with the island, he built a stronghold at a place well chosen by the shore, and brought hither from the mainland opposite such as were dissatisfied with their life there, and subsequently settled all the other uninhabited islands, with a numerous population; and such was the glory they ascribed to him, because of these his deeds, that even down to our own time they have called that sea, infinite in extent, *Erythraean*. And so, for the reason here set forth, it is to be well distinguished (for to say *Erythra thalatta*, Sea of Erythras, is a very different thing from *Thalatta Erythra*, Red Sea); for the one commemorates the most illustrious *man* of that sea, while the other refers to the colour of the *water*. Now the one explanation of the name, as due to the colour, is false (for the sea is not red), but the other, ascribing it to the man who ruled there, is the true one, as the Persian story testifies<sup>1</sup>."

The story, however, is more Persianized than Persian. For just as the Persian Gulf derives its name, not from the extinct empires of antiquity bordering on its shores, but from the youngest

<sup>1</sup> Agatharchides quoted by Schoff, in his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, pp. 50-51 (1912).



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surviving empire of Persia, so the Erythraean story is a Persian story merely because it has been preserved by the Persians. "Thousands of years before the emergence of the Greeks from savagery, or before the exploits of the Phoenicians in the Mediterranean and Atlantic, human culture and commerce had centred in the countries bordering on the Persian Gulf, and the peoples of that region, the various Arab tribes, and more especially those ancestors of the Phoenicians, the mysterious *Red Men*, were the active carriers or intermediaries<sup>1</sup>." Then as time went on, the Red Men left their homes in Elam, and settled in the islands of Bahrain<sup>2</sup>, and from there they spread along South Arabia, and the shores of the Red Sea—making the green one Red. How long they lived and ruled in South Arabia is uncertain but it was apparently in 1800 B.C. that they were driven out by the descendants of Joktan, the Arabic Qaḥṭān. "And Hazarmaveth came and governed and gave his name to the kingdom of Hadramawt, while his brother Jerab, the Arabic Yarub, was the grandfather of Saba, the founder of the great Sabaean kingdom, and builder of the royal city of Marib or Seba in South-western Arabia<sup>3</sup>."

Now, these Arabs, unlike their companions in the hinterland of Arabia, were born traders and sailors, and from the moment they seized the coast of Arabia, they seized also "the lucrative commerce which supplied precious stones and spices and incense to the ever-increasing service of the gods of Egypt. This was their prerogative, jealously guarded, and upon this they lived and prospered according to the prosperity of the Pharaohs. The muslins and spices of India they fetched themselves or received from the Indian traders at their ports on either side of the Gulf of Aden; carrying them in turn over the highlands of the upper Nile, or through the

<sup>1</sup> Schoff: notes to his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Innumerable tumuli with cyclopean masonry of the well-known Phoenician pattern cover the central island of the group; ivories of Phoenico-Assyrian shape, and at least one cuneiform inscription, have been found there." *J.R.A.S.* (1898), p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, p. 18 (1920).





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Red Sea and across the desert to Thebes or Memphis<sup>1</sup>." And as time went on and the Arab retained his monopoly, he built up a magnificent civilization, of which the first written record is supplied by Agatharchides, president of the Alexandrian library, in the year 113 B.C. :

"Sabaea abounds with every production to make life happy in the extreme : its very air is so perfumed with odours that the natives are obliged to mitigate the fragrance by scents that have an opposite tendency, as if nature could not support even pleasure in the extreme. Myrrh, frankincense, balsam, cinnamon, and cassia are here produced from trees of extraordinary magnitude. The King, as he is on the one hand entitled to supreme honour, on the other is obliged to submit to confinement in his palace, but the people are robust, warlike, and able mariners ; they sail in very large vessels to the country where the odoriferous commodities are produced ; they plant colonies there, and import from thence the larimnon, an odour nowhere else to be found ; in fact there is no nation upon earth so wealthy as the Gerrhaeans and Sabaeans, because of their situation in the centre of all the commerce which passes between Asia and Europe. These are the nations which have enriched the Syria of Ptolemy ; these are the nations that furnish the most profitable agencies to the industry of the Phoenicians, and a variety of advantages which are incalculable. They possess themselves every profusion of luxury, in articles of plate and sculpture, in furnishing of beds, tripods, and other household embellishments, far superior in degree to anything that is seen in Europe. Their expense of living rivals the magnificence of princes. Their houses are decorated with pillars glistening with gold and silver. Their doors are crowned with vases and beset with jewels ; the interior of their houses corresponds to the beauty of their outward appearance, and all the riches of other countries are here exhibited in a variety of profusion. Such a nation, and so abounding in superfluity, owes its independence to its distance from Europe ; for their luxurious manners would soon render them a prey to the sovereigns in their vicinity, who have always troops on foot prepared for any conquest, and who if they could find the means of invasion, would soon reduce the Sabaeans to the condition of their agents and factors, whereas now they are obliged to deal with them as principals<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Schoff : notes to his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Agatharchides, quoted by William Vincent, in his *Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Vol. II, pp. 33-35, London (1807). Agatharchides is placed by Blair in 177 B.C., by Dodwell in 104 B.C., and by Schoff in 113 B.C.



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The first attempt to deprive the Arabs of the monopoly of the Indian trade was made in 18 B.C. when Ælius Gallus was ordered by the Emperor Augustus to explore both Arabia and Ethiopia. But the credit for opening the Indian ocean was to go to a Roman slave and not to a Roman general, for Ælius Gallus could only advance into Arabia as far as Radman<sup>1</sup> whilst a free slave of Annius Plocamus reached the coasts of Carmania, whither he was accidentally driven by the north winds<sup>2</sup>. Shortly after this, in the year 45 A.D., the navigator Hippalus, who "had observed the periodic change of the Indian monsoon (doubtless long known to Arab and Hindu), made a successful trading voyage and returned with a cargo of all those things for which Rome was paying so generously: gems and pearls, ebony and sandalwood, balms and spices, but especially pepper<sup>3</sup>." The discovery of the monsoons was like an 'Open Sesame' to the Romans but the Arab was still there and had not been annihilated.

Of the trade in the Indian Ocean about this time an unknown merchant of Berenice has left an imperishable record in his *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. The seaboard of the Indian Ocean, its winds and waves and rocks, the builders and agents and the captains of ships, the gatherers of incense and ivory and spices, the buyers and sellers of the souls of men, the immemorial monopoly of the Arab, the quaint seacraft of the Hindu, the adventurous instinct of the Roman, the distance from port to port and the way of the ship in the midst of the sea—all this is treated in its entirety and with the faithfulness of personal observation. As this sea-trade, which the Roman shared with the Arab and the Hindu, became afterwards almost a Persian monopoly, it is necessary to give the salient features of the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*.

The principal ports of Egypt for the Eastern trade were Myos-hormus and Berenice. "Vessels bound for Africa and Southern

<sup>1</sup> A. Sprenger, The Campaign of Ælius Gallus in Arabia, *J.R.A.S.* (1872), pp. 121-141.

<sup>2</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. VI., Ch. XXII., Eng. tr., p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> Schoff: intr. to his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 6.





Arabia left Myos-hormus about the autumnal equinox, when the N.W. wind then prevailing carried them quickly down to the gulf. Those bound for India or Ceylon left in July, and if they cleared the Red Sea before the first of September they had the monsoon to assist their passage across the ocean." At Adulis (Massowa) on the coast of Ethiopia, ivory, tortoise-shell and rhinoceros-horn were exported in exchange for cloth, base metals and presents for the king. Next came a series of ports on the Horn of Africa, and the nearest of them all to Arabia was Avalites, the modern Zeila. "Ships are customarily fitted out from Ariaca (the Gulf of Cambay?) and Barygaza (Broach) bringing to these far-side market-towns the products of their own places—wheat, rice, clarified butter, sesame oil, cotton cloth, and girdles, and honey from the seed called sacchhari." The Indian and Arabian trade was not confined merely to the Horn of Africa; it extended down Azania or the Eastern coast of Africa, as far as Rhapta. "The people of Muza send thither many large ships, using Arab captains and agents, who are familiar with the natives and intermarry with them, and who know the whole coast and understand the language." And all along the coast the trade was brisk, uniform, and lucrative, for the native of the Dark Continent who had no need for the precious commodities of his country—rhinoceros-horn, tortoise-shell, and ivory—willingly exchanged them for hatchets and awls and various kinds of glass-beads, and the produce of Indian farms and fields. At Rhapta, the trade came abruptly to an end, for the unexplored ocean lay beyond, mingling with the Western Sea<sup>1</sup>.

But to return with the *Periplus* to the Arabian peninsula, there were the two market-towns of Petra to the north and Muza to the south—the former at the junction of the caravan-routes from Yemen and the Persian Gulf; the latter on the sea-route to Berenice, Rhapta, and Barygaza. In general, the eastern shore of the Red Sea was bleak and inhospitable, but farther south, on the southern coast of Arabia, there were a number of flourishing ports, like Cana and Moscha, whence the incense from the incense-land—

<sup>1</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, paras. 1-18.



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the Zafāri mountains, the Zafāri and Junūba districts, the Hadramawt valley, and the opposite Somali coast of Africa—was shipped “for temple-service on the Nile or Euphrates, on Mount Zion, or in Persia, India or China.”

Passing now to the Persian Gulf, there was Apologus on the Euphrates and Charax Spasini (Muḥammadarah) on the *Shatṭa* 'l-'Arab. “To either place large vessels were regularly sent from Barygaza, loaded with copper and sandalwood, and timbers of teakwood, and logs of blackwood and ebony.” Ommana, on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf, commanded a large shipbuilding industry, and from all the three towns of the Gulf there were exported to Barygaza and also to Arabia, purple and clothing and wine, and many pearls, and a great quantity of dates, gold, and slaves.

“Beyond the Ommanitic region there is a country also of the Parsidae, of another Kingdom, and the bay of Gedrosia, from the middle of which a cape juts out into the bay. Here is a river affording an entrance for ships, with a little market-town at the mouth, called Oraea.... This country yields much wheat, wine, rice, and dates, but along the coast there is nothing but bdellium<sup>1</sup>.”

Arrian also mentions the town of Oraea, lying at the mouth of the river Arabius, which forms the boundary between the Oritae and the Arabii<sup>2</sup>, whilst Charax Spasini, named after Spasinus, king of the neighbouring Arabians<sup>3</sup>, was the capital of an Arab state with a small amount of independence. There is little doubt that during the loosely-organized Parthian empire, the Arabs, finding the coast clear, extended their trade and colonies to the northern littoral of the Persian Gulf, for apart from Charax Spasini and the river Arabius there was the Arab town of Atra on the west of the Tigris, governed by its own kings and in later Parthian times a place of special importance<sup>4</sup>. The rise of the Sāsānian empire prevented the encroachment of the Arabs, but with Islām the process

<sup>1</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, para. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Arrian, *Indian History*, Ch. 21, tr. Rooke, London (1814), Vol. 2, p. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, VI., 31.

<sup>4</sup> Article on Persia ; Ancient History, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXI. p. 216 a.



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was resumed, so that the south-western province of Persia, called Khūzistān, bears the alternative name of 'Arabistān even today.

But the presence of the Persian element must not be ignored because of the existence of the Arabian element in the Parthian sea-trade. The farthest point on the south coast of Arabia, belonging to the Arabs, was Asich or Ra's Hāsik ( $17^{\circ} 23' N.$ ,  $55^{\circ} 20' E.$ ). "Beyond that," says the *Periplus*, "there is a barbarous region which is no longer of the same kingdom, but now belongs to Persia<sup>1</sup>." The Parthian empire, founded by Mithradates I (c. 170–138 B.C.) and restored by Mithradates II (124–88 B.C.) and Phraates III (70–57 B.C.), never succeeded in annihilating the independence of Persia. "Persis," says Prof. Meyer, "never became a part of the empire of the Arsacids, although her kings recognised their supremacy, when they were strong (Strabo, xv., 728, 736). From *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (33–37) we learn that the authority of Persia extended over the shores of Carmania, and the opposite coasts of Arabia. A Persian king, Artaxerxes, is mentioned in a fragment of Isidore of Charax (Lucian, *Macrobi*, 15). Other names occur on their coins...Darius, Narses, Tiridates, Manocibr and others<sup>2</sup>." The territory comprising Persis, Carmania, the southern shore of the Persian Gulf, and the modern province of 'Umān, was, therefore, under Persian control at the time of the *Periplus*, and this control could not possibly have been exercised without the possession of sea-power. And the Persians of Carmania were not, apparently, without a fleet even before the time of the *Periplus*, for Pliny records "that Numenus, lord deputy vnder K. Antiochus, ouer Mefena, and general of his army, defeated the nauy of the Perfians in sea-fight, and the fame day with the opportunity of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, para. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Eduard Meyer, article on Persis, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. XXI, p. 254. The recent work of Mr G. F. Hill leads to the same conclusion: these kings of Persis ruled from about 250 B.C. to 226 A.D., and it was in their kingdom with its two large cities of Pasargadae and Persepolis that the coins were struck. See *Catalogue of Greek Coins in the British Museum* (Persia), plates 29–37, and intr. pp. clx.–clxi., London (1922).



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tide returned to land againe, and gaue their horfemen an ouerthrow: whereupon, in memoriall of a twofold victory in one day atchieued, he erected two triumphant trophies, the one in honour of Iupiter, and the other of Neptune<sup>1</sup>." According to F. Justi, this engagement took place in 165 B.C.<sup>2</sup>, but the details are lacking, and the author of the *Periplus*, in sailing from Arabia to India, seems to have gone direct from Kuria Muria to Masira and thence to the mouth of the Indus, so that the most significant part of his voyage is the briefest, being based only on hearsay.

There remains now the coast of India, of which the principal ports were Barbaricum (Karachi) and Barygaza (Broach) to the north; Muziris (Cranganore) and Nelcynda (Kottayam) to the south-west; Camara, Poduca, and Sopatma to the south-east; and Ganges on the delta of the Ganges. Muziris and Nelcynda exported large quantities of pepper, malabathrum, fine pearls, and silk cloth, and, like the ports of Coromandel, commanded an extensive coastal and sea-borne traffic:

"The thriving town of Muchiri (Muziris) where the beautiful large ships of the Yavanas<sup>3</sup> bringing gold, come splashing the white foam on the waters of the Periyar, which belongs to the Cherala, and return laden with pepper<sup>4</sup>.... Fish is bartered for paddy which is brought in baskets to the houses; sacks of

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. VI, Ch. XXVIII, Eng. tr., p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> "Autophradates is probably the person whom Numenus the general of Antiochus IV fought against in 165 B.C." *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, p. 487, Strassburg (1896-1904).

<sup>3</sup> Yavanas = Greeks (*Iaones*); also Persians (as in Raghu's conquest, described by the Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa in the fourth canto of *Raghu Vamsam*—vide M. M. Ganguly, *Orissa and her Remains*, p. 98, 1912), Arabs, and the people of the Western Laos or the Shan country. "Yavana, Yona, Yon, and Yuen, if not translations of C'hieng must be imitative renderings of Yüan and Yüeh.... C'hieng (mixed or crossed) is the Thai synonym of the Chinese Yüeh, in Annamese Viet." Vide G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geog. of East Asia*, pp. 133-134, and p. 120, n. 3; also p. 128, n. 2, and p. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Erukkadur Thayankannanar in the *Akam* (a collection of 401 different pieces composed on various occasions by more than 200 Tamil poets), v. 148, tr. V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, Madras and Bangalore (1904), p. 16.



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pepper are brought from the houses to the market; the gold received from ships, in exchange for articles sold, is brought to shore in barges, at Muchiri, where the music of the surging sea never ceases, and where Kudduvan (the Chera king) presents to visitors, the rare products of the seas and mountains<sup>1</sup>."

It is noteworthy that a frequent symbol of the Andhra coinage is a ship with two masts and "the maritime traffic to which the ship bears witness is also attested by the large numbers of Roman coins found on the Coromandel coast<sup>2</sup>."

Similarly, on the eastern coast of India, the evidence of the *Periplus* is corroborated by the evidence of Tamil poetry. The Camara of the *Periplus*, for example, is identical with Pukâr or Kaviripaddinam of the *Chilappathikaram* :

"Near the beach were raised platforms and godowns and warehouses, with windows shaped like the eyes of the deer, where the goods landed from ships were stored<sup>3</sup>. Here the goods were stamped with the tiger-stamp (the emblem of the Chola kings) after payment of customs' duty, and passed on to the merchants' warehouses<sup>4</sup>. Here were also the quarters of foreign traders who had come from beyond the seas, and who spoke various tongues...<sup>5</sup>. Horses were brought from distant lands beyond the seas; pepper was brought in ships; gold and precious stones came from the northern mountains; sandal and aghil came from the mountains towards the west; pearls from the southern seas and coral from the eastern seas. The produce of the region watered by the Ganges; all that is grown on the banks of the Kaviri; articles of food from Elam or Ceylon and the manufactures of Kalakam were brought to the markets of Kaviripaddinam<sup>6</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Paranar in the *Puram*, v. 343, tr. V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> E. J. Rapson, *Coins of the Andhra Dynasty*, p. lxxxii. London (1908). Cf. Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. VI., Ch. XXXIII., Eng. tr. by P. Holland, London (1601), p. 33 :

"It costs our State to furnish a voyage into India fifty millions of Sesterces. For which the Indians send back again commodities, which being at Rome, are sold for an hundred times as much as they cost."

<sup>3</sup> V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Paddinappalai*, II, 134-136, in V. Kanakasabhai, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> *Chilappathikaram*, v. I., 10, in V. Kanakasabhai, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> *Paddinappalai*, II, 185-191, in V. Kanakasabhai, p. 27.



## TRADE-CONDITIONS IN THE EAST

The delta of the Ganges<sup>1</sup> was, apparently, the terminus of Roman trade at the time of the *Periplus*. Later, 166 A.D., "a party of foreigners representing themselves as sent by An-tun (the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius) arrived by sea in Tongking, and proceeded thence overland to the court of the Emperor Huan-ti. Later still, in 226 A.D., another westerner came to China, also a merchant from Ta-ts'in, Ts'in-lun by name; he also landed in Tongking, and was sent overland to the court of the Emperor Suan-ch'üan<sup>2</sup>." The sea-route to China, however, was by no means a discovery of the Romans, for Chinese junks sailed to Malabar in the second century B.C., and probably earlier<sup>3</sup>. But in pre-Sāsānian times these voyages were not made with any regularity, and since China was the only source of silk—for the antiquity of the industry in India does not go beyond the Christian era—the bulk of the silk-trade had to come overland, even as the *Periplus* has recorded:

"Under the very north, the sea outside ending in a land called This, there is a very great inland city called Thinae, from which raw silk and silk yarn and silk cloth are brought on foot through Bactria to Barygaza, and are also exported to Damirica by way of the river Ganges. But the land of This is not easy of access; few men come from there and seldom<sup>4</sup>."

The overland journey comprised the *Nan-lu*, or southern way, and the *Péi-lu*, or northern way, and led as follows:

"Singanfu, Lanchowfu, Kanchow, Yümenhsien, Anischow, Lop Nor to Tsiemo (the *Asmiraea* of the Greeks) where the routes divided. The *Nan-lu* followed south of the Tarim River to Khotan and Yarkand, thence over the Pamirs and westward to the Oxus and Bactra. This was the earliest route opened by the Chinese army under Pan Chao, being cleared in 74 A.D. The second route, the *Péi-lu* or 'northern way,' followed the same course from Singanfu to Tsiemo, thence north of the Tarim through Kuché and Aksu to Kashgar, and

<sup>1</sup> The *Chilappathikaram*, II, 99-103, mentions the seaport Gangai on the banks of the Ganges. V. Kanakasabhai, *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Chau Ju-kua*, ed. F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, p. 5, St Petersburg (1911).

<sup>3</sup> Schoff, *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 214. Regular trade between Yünnan and Pegu began only in the 2nd century A.D. (*Chau Ju-kua*, p. 6, n. 2).

<sup>4</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, para. 64.



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over the tremendous heights of the Terek to the Jaxartes and Samarcand. Thence a route lay southward to Bactra, while another lay southwestward more directly to Antiochia Margiana (Merv). This second route was opened by Pan Chao in 94 A.D.... At Bactra, this overland trade route branched again, following westward through the Parthian highlands to the Euphrates, or southward to Bamian, the Cabul valley, the Khyber Pass, and the Indus. From Taxila, the highway of the Maurya dynasty led through the Panjāb to the capital at Palibothra, with a branch from Mathurā southward to Ozene and the Deccan. The route down the Indus to its mouth was less important owing to the character of the tribes living on the lower reaches. This is indicated by the text<sup>1</sup>, which says far more of the products carried by the overland route to Barygaza than of those coming to Barbaricum<sup>2</sup>."

Afterwards, with the rise of Sāsānian Persia, and with that of Persian navigation, the silk-trade fell completely into the hands of Persia. That portion of it which came overland had already been monopolized by the Parthians and passed *ipso facto* to the Persians with the transfer of the empire; but that portion which came by sea, or found its way through Bactra to the ports of India, was won by sheer competition and the development of a Persian marine. And to a study of this new power which supplanted both the Roman and the Arab trader in the Indian Ocean it is now time to proceed.

<sup>1</sup> i.e., *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*.

<sup>2</sup> Schoff, notes to his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, pp. 268-270.





CSL

## SĀSĀNĪAN NAVIGATION



## SĀSĀNIAN NAVIGATION

Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān, the son of Sāsān the shepherd, and the adopted son of Pāpak, the Prince of Pārs, was the first king of the second national empire of Persia—the Sāsānian. Towards the north and south the new empire was coextensive with the old, while towards the east and west, though occasionally the Indus<sup>1</sup> and the Nile<sup>2</sup> were reached, the permanent limits were Makrān and the left bank of the Euphrates. "In his inscriptions, the Sāsānian King assumes the title of the 'King of the Kings of the Īrānians and non-Īrānians' but the only non-Īrānian land he ever held was Eastern Mesopotamia." The Sāsānian empire, indeed, was even more a continuation of the Kayānian empire than the Achaemenian: under the Kayānian Splendour<sup>3</sup> the Sāsānian king came to the throne, and under the Kayānian flag<sup>4</sup> the Sāsānian armies marched to battle. The very name Sāsānian is Kayānian, for the shepherd Sāsān was the seventh in descent from Gushtāsp, the patron of Zoroaster. And as Ardashīr was the son of Sāsān it was but natural for him to become the "Defender of the Faith" and to advance "the Good Religion" of Zoroaster once again to the position of the state religion of Persia.

It is vital, therefore, to the subject of Persian navigation to decide whether the sea was a creation of Ahrīman or of Ahūra Mazda. In the year 66 A.D. Tiridates, king of Armenia, and brother of the Parthian Vologaeses I, had to travel to Rome to receive the diadem at the hands of Nero, and because the journey was

<sup>1</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *Invasion of the Panjāb by Ardashīr Pāpakān*, *J.R.A.S.* (April 1920), pp. 221–226.

<sup>2</sup> In 616 A.D., Shahr-Barz, the Persian general, captured Alexandria.

<sup>3</sup> Farr-i-Kayāni or Royal Splendour which conferred, on all the legitimate Kings of Persia, royalty by divine right and divinity by right of royalty.

<sup>4</sup> The usurper Dāhhāk was put down by the blacksmith Kāwa whose leathern apron became the standard of national liberty.



performed by land Tiele has come to the conclusion that the sea is Ahrimānian<sup>1</sup>.

“This would probably mean,” says Moulton, “that a first-century Arsacide inherited an old Iranian impulse, and the action would thus be in line with Xerxes’ defiance of an element the Aryans never knew, and therefore never loved as the Greeks and the Germanic races have done. But Tiele has unwarrantably ignored the reason assigned by Pliny that Tiridates would not pollute a sacred element, as a sea-traveller must do<sup>2</sup>, and our inference is that the sea, like the other waters, was a creature of Ormazd for the Magi, and the horror at Xerxes is characteristic of them. I do not press the notice of Herodotus (VII, 91) that the Magi sacrificed to the Thetis and the Nereids, genii of the sea, for we are expressly told that they were prompted by the Ionians, but I feel convinced that Tiele is doubly wrong<sup>3</sup>.”

More direct evidence is, however, available. The Pahlawī *Madegane-lak-yom*, written by Dastūr Adarbad Marespand, about the fourth century A.D., in admonition to his son, Zartuštra, gives in detail the peculiar virtues of each day of the Zoroastrian month, and says that the tenth day of each month, called the day of Āvān, “is for making a voyage over the sea, for irrigation, and the digging of canals, for cleansing the waters of a well, for planting trees, and for sowing corn<sup>4</sup>.” Similarly according to the Pahlawī *Kār-nāma*, when Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān came to the Gulf of Persia, and “saw the ocean before his eyes, he offered thanksgiving to God, and called that place the city of Bōkht Artakhshīr, and ordered an Ātash-i-Wahrām to be enthroned on the sea-coast<sup>5</sup>.” And, according to Procopius, when Nūshīrwān reached Seleucia on the Mediterranean coast in the year 540 A.D., “he bathed himself alone in the sea-

<sup>1</sup> C. P. Tiele, *Geschichte der Religion in Altertum*, p. 250, Vol. II., Gotha (1903).

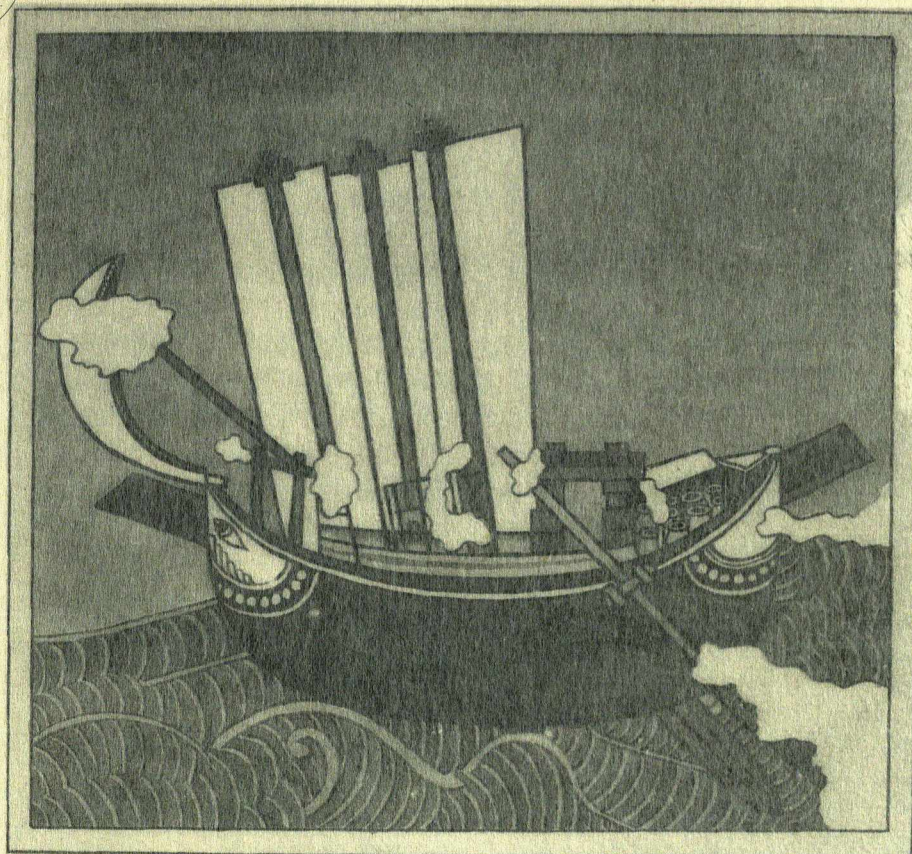
<sup>2</sup> Magus ad eum (Neronem) Tiridates venerat...ideo provinciis gravis. Navigare noluerat, quoniam exspuere in maria aliisque mortalium necessitatibus violare naturam eam fas non putant.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, footnote 2, p. 216 ; et p. 419.

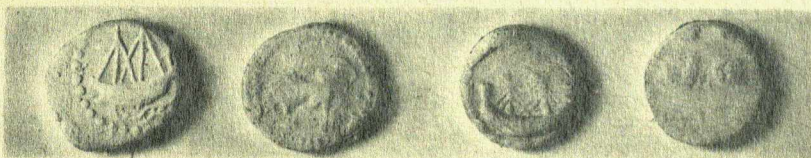
<sup>4</sup> D. F. Karaka, *History of the Parsis*, Vol. I., p. 137, London (1884).

<sup>5</sup> *Kār-nāma-i-Artakhshīr-i-Pāpakān*, IV., 7-8, tr. D. D. P. Sanjāna, Bombay (1896).





1



2

3

- 1 'PERSIAN' SHIP AJANTA  
 2 PALLAVA COIN, COROMANDEL COAST  
 3 ANDHRA COIN, COROMANDEL COAST



water, and after sacrificing to the sun and such other divinities as he wished, and calling upon the gods many times, he went back<sup>1</sup>." Moreover, the glory of the Kayānians produced by Mazda, which accompanies all the legitimate kings of Īrān, from the Pishdādians to the Sāsānians, "hovers in the middle of the sea Wouru-Kasha<sup>2</sup>" and "the Tūrānian Frangrasyān tried to seize it in the sea Wouru-Kasha<sup>3</sup>." It is not quite clear whether the sea Wouru-Kasha is salt or fresh<sup>4</sup>, but as the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea are salt and as navigation is expressly recommended on the day of Āvān, neither can the sea be Ahrīmanian, nor can Zoroastrianism be opposed to maritime activity.

Passing now from the evidence of religious history to political, Ḥamza of Iṣfahān writes about 961 A.D. that Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān founded the following number of cities<sup>5</sup>: (i) Wahashat Ardashīr وَهَشَت اَرْدَشِير, (ii) Rām Ardashīr or Rishahr رِيشَهَر, (iii) Rām Hurmuz Ardashīr رَام هَرْمُز اَرْدَشِير in Khūzistān, (iv) Būd Ardashīr بُود اَرْدَشِير, one of the cities of Moṣul, (v) Batn Ardashīr بَتْن اَرْدَشِير, one of the cities of Bahrain, (vi) Inshā Ardashīr اِنْشَا اَرْدَشِير or Karkh Maisān كَرْخ مِيسَان on the Dujail, (vii) Bahman Ardashīr بَهْمَن اَرْدَشِير or Bahmanshīr بَهْمَنْشِير on the Tigris, (viii) Ardashīr Khurra اَرْدَشِير خَرّه or Firūzābād فِرَوُزآبَاد about seventy miles from Shīrāz, (ix) the two neighbouring cities of Hurmuz Ardashīr هَرْمُز اَرْدَشِير, the one inhabited by the aristocracy and called Hurmshīr هَرْمُشِير; the other inhabited by merchants and called Hūjistān Wājār هُوَجِسْتَان وَاجَار, (x) and finally the two distinct cities of Bih Ardashīr بِه اَرْدَشِير, the one in

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, Bk. II., XI. (1), tr. H. B. Dewing, p. 351 (1914).

<sup>2</sup> *Yasht*, v. 42 : *vazaiti maidhim zrayangho Wouru-Kashahé*.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, XIX., 56.

<sup>4</sup> The Wouru-Kasha, apparently a fresh-water inland sea, is connected, by the lake Çatavaeça, with the large salt-water sea called Puitika. A strong high wind in the lake Çatavaeça prevents the saline and solid element of the Puitika from entering the clear and pure waters of the Wouru-Kasha. See the *Bundahishn*, Ch. XIII. *On the nature of seas* in F. Justi, *Der Bundelesh*, p. 15, Leipsic (1868).

<sup>5</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, pp. 46-49, Leipsic (1844).



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Kermān and the other constituting one of the cities of the imperial capital or Madā'in مدائن. Of these cities, Hūjistān Wājār was identical with Sūqu 'l-Aḥwāz on the river Kārūn; Bih Ardashīr or Wih Ardashīr was a restoration of Seleucia; Wahashat Ardashīr or Wahistābād Ardashīr was the port of Ubullah<sup>1</sup>; Inshā Ardashīr or Karkh Maisān was a sister town to Ubullah near Baṣra; Bahman Ardashīr, corrupted by the people of Baṣra to Bahmanshīr, was likewise near Baṣra; Rām Ardashīr or Rīshahr was on the Persian Gulf, six miles south of the modern Būshahr; and Batn Ardashīr or Bit Ardashīr was on the line of sea-coast, called Khatt, opposite the island of Baḥrain. The *Kārṇāma*, moreover, has supplied the names of Guzarān<sup>2</sup>, Rāy-i-Shāpūr<sup>3</sup>, Artakhshīr Gādmān<sup>4</sup>, Rāmishna-i-Artakhshīr<sup>5</sup>, and Bōkht Artakhshīr, of which the first is unidentified, the second is Jundai Shāpūr, the third is Fīrūzābād, the fourth is Rām Ardashīr or Rīshahr, and the fifth is the town already described as lying on the Persian Gulf. Finally, the *Nuzhatu 'l-Qulūb* and other works, with the exception of the *Tārīkh-i-Guzīda*, ascribe the town of Hurmuz on the mainland<sup>6</sup>, opposite the island of Hurmuz, also to Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān, who is further credited by Justi with the foundation of Duhmi Ardashīr and Dastagird or Eski Baghdād<sup>7</sup>. Altogether, therefore, about eighteen towns are supposed to have been built or rebuilt by Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān, and it is a remarkable fact that as many as eleven of these are seaports, for they either lie on the coast itself, or on rivers navigable to sea-going craft. And as, according to Ḥamza, Batn Ardashīr was in the neighbourhood of Baḥrain, and was named after its walls, built by the conqueror in alternate layers of bricks and of Arab bodies, it is evident that the maritime activity of Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān

<sup>1</sup> Ferd. Justi, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, p. 517, Strassburg (1896-1904).

<sup>2</sup> The *Kārṇāma*, VIII., 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, x., 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, iv., 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, iv., 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ḥamdu 'llāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhatu 'l-Qulūb*, ed. G. le Strange, Persian Text, p. 141 (1915). See also *Encyclopaedia of Islām* under Hormuz.

<sup>7</sup> Ferd. Justi, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, p. 517, Strassburg (1896-1904).



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extended beyond the Persian coast and had, as its ulterior object, the literal conversion of the Gulf of Persia into a Persian gulf.

The imperial capital was Ctesiphon or Madā'in, مدائن, literally, a collection of towns. Built by Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān on the left bank of the Tigris, opposite the ruins of Seleucia, it grew under the later kings by the addition of new towns and thus acquired a collective name. Not far distant, in the neighbourhood of ancient Babylon, was the town of Hīra, the capital of an Arab state dependent on the Sāsānian empire. "Hīrah," says le Strange, "had been a great city under the Sāssānians. Near by stood the famous palaces of As-Sadīr and Al-Khawarnak, the latter built according to tradition, by Nu'mān, prince of Hīrah, for King Bahrām Gūr, the great hunter. The palace of Khawarnak with its magnificent halls had mightily astonished the early Moslems when they first took possession of Hīrah on the conquest of Mesopotamia<sup>1</sup>." With Sāsānian influence so predominant it was not possible for the Arab capital to impair the prosperity of the Īrānian, and Ctesiphon continued to be the premier entrepôt of Eastern trade up to the very rise of Islām. There is evidence, at any rate, that as late as the time of Nūshīrwān, Ctesiphon had not even completed its growth, for Kubād (487-531 A.D.), according to Ḥamza, built the town of Hanbū Shābūr هنبو شاور near Madā'in, and Nūshīrwān (531-579 A.D.) added to Madā'in the city of Bih-az-Andīv-Khusraw به از اندیو خسرو or "better-than-Antioch-Khusraw." The days, indeed, had come when the Arabian element was to be sought in the Persian trade, and not the Persian element in the Arabian.

But the control of trade, and especially the sea-trade of the Gulf<sup>2</sup>, was not acquired by Persia without a struggle. On the death

<sup>1</sup> G. le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> The *Chin-shu*, written before the middle of the 7th century, and embracing the period 265-419 A.D., states: "The inhabitants of An-hsi (Persia) and T'ien-chu (India) have trade with the people of Ta-ts'in (Syria) by sea; the profit of this trade is hundredfold." F. Hirth, *China and the Roman Orient*, p. 45 (1885). An-hsi generally means Parthia, but as the *Chin-shu* deals with a period when Parthia was no longer in existence (having been subdued by Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān in 226 A.D.) the word An-hsi has to be translated here as Sāsānian Persia.



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of Hormisdas II in the year 309 A.D. "his adult sons were disqualified because of their Hellenic sympathies, and the crown placed on the late king's embryo, which the *Mobed* declared was male." The forecast proved true, and the posthumous son ascended the throne of Persia as *Shāpūr* the second, known to Arab historians as *Shāpūr Dhū 'l-aktāf*, and to European historians as *Shāpūr the Great* (310–379 A.D.).

The minority of *Shāpūr* served as an incentive to Arabian aggression, and "from the land of 'Abdu'l-Qais, Baḥrain, and Kaḏima a numerous army crossed over by sea to the port of Rīshahr and the coasts of Ardashīr *Khurra* and Fārs" and plundered the neighbouring country<sup>1</sup>. And so matters stood for a while until *Shāpūr* came of age, and took the offensive and hurled back the invaders to the coast (326 A.D.). "Then," says *Ṭabarī*, "*Shāpūr* crossed the sea with his companions, and disembarked at *Kharr* and traversed the land of Baḥrain slaying the inhabitants.... And he went straight on and came to Hajar and slaughtered the Arabs of Tamīm, Bakr bin Wā'il and 'Abdu'l-Qais<sup>2</sup>." Similar was the fate of al-Yamāmah, al-Madīna, and the Bakr and Taghlib<sup>3</sup>, and since the Arabs, who were taken in captivity, had their shoulders pierced and tied together with a rope<sup>4</sup>, *Shāpūr* received the title of *Dhū 'l-aktāf* or "Lord of the Shoulders." In his *Sāsānian Coins* published in 1924, Mr F. D. J. Paruck states that "the Pahlavi expression for the Arabic *Zulaktāf* is not known<sup>5</sup>," but Ḥamza of Isfahān states explicitly in his *Annals* that "*Shāpūr*, who was

<sup>1</sup> *Ṭabarī*, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I., p. 836 :

فسار جمع عظيم منهم في البحر من ناحية بلاد عبد القيس و البحرين و كاظمة حتى  
 اناخوا براشهر و سواحل اردشير حره و اسيا فارس

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, pp. 838–839 :

ثم قطع البحر في اصحابه فورد الخط و استقري بلاد البحرين يقتل اهلها..... ثم  
 مضي علي وجهه فورد هجر و بها ناس من اعراب تمير و بكر بن وائل و عبد القيس  
 فافشى فيهم القتل و سفك فيهم من الدماء

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 839.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥamza of Isfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> F. D. J. Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 91.



called *Dhū'l-aktāf* by the Arabs, was named by the Persians, *Hūya Sunbā* هویه سنبا, from *hūya* هویه 'shoulders' and *sunbā* سنبا 'perforated'<sup>1</sup>.

But the Arabs, though driven from the Persian Gulf, were still supreme in the Indian Ocean, and Fa-hian, who visited Ceylon in 414 A.D., says that "the houses of the Sa-poh (Sabaeen) merchants are very beautifully adorned<sup>2</sup>." From this date, however, the decline of the Arab begins, for the adventurous Bahrām Gūr (420–438 A.D.) travelled incognito to India<sup>3</sup>, whence, according to Ṭabarī, he returned with an Indian wife<sup>4</sup> and the rich dowry of Daibul, Makrān, and the adjacent parts of Sind<sup>5</sup>. Prof. Rawlinson has summarily rejected the evidence of Ṭabarī<sup>6</sup>, and Mr Paruck has as readily accepted it<sup>7</sup>, and since material evidence is not obtainable in support of either opinion it is best perhaps to compromise; and as Daibul was the rich sea-port at the mouth of the Indus, and since Makrān and Sind are both maritime provinces, the most charitable interpretation of Ṭabarī would be that the sea-coast of Makrān to the port of Daibul was subdued by the Persians economically. And this inference, which involves an expansion of Persian maritime activity, can be most amply demonstrated by the course of subsequent events, for in 512 A.D. Persian vessels were found in active competition with Rome in the distant ports of Ceylon.

"I must here relate," says Cosmas Indicopleustes, "what happened to one of our countrymen, a merchant called Sopatrus, who used to go to the Indies on business, but who to our knowledge has now been dead these five and thirty

<sup>1</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Beal, *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Intr. lxxiv., Vol. I., London.

<sup>3</sup> Mirkhwānd, *Rawḍatu 'ṣ-ṣafā*, tr. by E. Rehatsek, ed. F. F. Arbuthnot (Oriental Translation Fund, New Series I), Part I., Vol. II., pp. 360–362, London (1892).

<sup>4</sup> The daughter of Vasudeva, of the dynasty of the Mahārājas Adhirāja of Magādhā and Kanawj.

<sup>5</sup> Ṭabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I., p. 868.

<sup>6</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, footnote 2, p. 426, London (1876).

<sup>7</sup> F. D. J. Paruck, *Sāsānian Coins*, p. 98, Bombay (1924).



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years past. Once on a time he came to this island of Taprobane (Ceylon) on business, and as it chanced a vessel from Persia put into port at the same time with himself. So the men from Adulis with whom Sopatrus was, went ashore, as did likewise the people of Persia, with whom came a person of venerable age and appearance. Then, as the way there was, the chief men of the place and the custom-house officers received them and brought them to the King<sup>1</sup>."

Now Cosmas wrote his *Christian Topography*, from which this account is taken, in 547 A.D.<sup>2</sup>, and as Sopatrus had made the voyage to Ceylon thirty-five years before this date, the earliest notice of Persian trade with Ceylon falls in the year 512 A.D.

Kubād was reigning in Persia at this time, and Chosroes Nūshirwān, who came to the throne of Persia in 531 A.D., proved one of the most illustrious sovereigns of the Sāsānian line. On the north his authority extended to Lazica on the Black Sea, and in the south to Yemen, and if we may believe Ṭabarī<sup>3</sup>, Ḥamza<sup>4</sup>, and ath-

<sup>1</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, Bk. XI, p. 368, J. W. McCrindle, London (1897).

Similarly, according to Cosmas (Bk. III, p. 118), there was a Persian bishop in Calliana (the modern Kalyān, on the mainland near Bombay) and in the Isle of Dioscoris (Socotra). "There are clergy there also, ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and a multitude of Christians."

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, introduction, p. x. Tennent in his *Ceylon* (Vol. I, p. 542, n. 2) says : "Cosmas wrote between A.D. 545 and A.D. 550."

<sup>3</sup> Ṭabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I, p. 965 :

فلما دانت لكسري بلاد اليمن وجه الى سرنديب من بلاد الهند و هي ارض الجواهر قائدا  
من قواده في جند كثيف فقاتل ملكها فقتله و استولى عليها و حمل الى كسرى منها  
اموالا عظيمة و جوهرا كثيرا

And after the land of Yemen obeyed Kistrā, he sent one of his commanders with a mighty army to Sarandīb, which is a land of jewels, and a dependency of India. The Persian general fought with the King of Sarandīb, and killed him, and ruled over the island. And from there he carried to Kistrā great wealth and many jewels.

<sup>4</sup> Ḥamza of Isfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 58 :

و من الفتوح الكبار التي جرت علي يد كسري انوشيروان فتح مدينة سرانديب  
و فتح مدينة قسطنطينية و فتح كور اليمن



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Tha'ālībī<sup>1</sup>, even to Sarandīb, or the island of Ceylon. M. Reinaud in his *Géographie d'Aboulféda*<sup>2</sup> and again in his *Mémoire sur l'Inde*<sup>3</sup> believes that Ceylon was conquered by a Persian fleet, and Sir James Tennent in his *Ceylon* is of precisely the same opinion<sup>4</sup>:

"Early in the sixth century the Persians under Chosroes Nouschirvan held a distinguished position in the East, their ships frequented the harbours of India, and their fleet was successful in an expedition against Ceylon to redress the wrongs done to some of their fellow-countrymen who had settled there for purposes of trade."

Prof. Rawlinson questions the validity of this conquest and even doubts whether Nūshīrwān made an expedition towards India<sup>5</sup>, or held any Indian dominion<sup>6</sup>:

"In the division of the empire ascribed to Chosrōes, the most eastern of his provinces appear to have been Khorasan, Seistan, and Kirman. Gibbon adds to these 'Cabul and Zavlestan,' but without much reason."

But according to a contemporary eye-witness—Cosmas Indicopleustes—"the river Indus, that is the Phison, which discharges into the Persian Gulf forms the boundary between Persia and India<sup>7</sup>"; and it seems to me extraordinary that Rawlinson should

Of the great conquests which happened at the hand of Kisrā Anūshīrwān is the conquest of the city of Sarandīb, that of the city of Constantine, and the conquest of the province of Yemen.

Constantinople, however, was never conquered by Nūshīrwān.

<sup>1</sup> Ath-Tha'ālībī, *Histoire des Rois des Perses*, ed. H. Zotenberg, p. 615, Paris (1900):

و بلغ ملکه قشمبر و سونديب

His (Nūshīrwān's) rule extended to Kashmīr and Sarandīb.

<sup>2</sup> M. Reinaud, *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, Intr. CCCLXXXIII, Vol. I., Paris (1848):

"Arab and Persian historians inform us that Nūshīrwān...sent a fleet to Ceylon, where, apparently, Persian merchants had suffered some injustice."

<sup>3</sup> M. Reinaud, *Mémoire sur l'Inde*, p. 125, Paris (1849).

<sup>4</sup> J. E. Tennent, *Ceylon*, Vol. I., p. 580, London (1860).

<sup>5</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 426, London (1876).

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, note, p. 427.

<sup>7</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, Bk. XI., p. 337, Eng. tr. p. 366, ed. McCrindle.



have overlooked this point altogether, for he has freely consulted *The Christian Topography*.

But though it is certain that the empire of Nūshīrwān reached the Indus, it is doubtful whether it ever extended to Ceylon. Tabarī, Hamza, and ath-Tha'ālībī have apparently converted an economic conquest into a naval victory, for what is the evidence of Cosmas Indicopleustes and of Procopius of Caesarea? Says the former<sup>1</sup>:

"The island (Ceylon) has also a church of Persian Christians who have settled there, and a Presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a Deacon and a complete ecclesiastical ritual....The island, being as it is in a central position, is much frequented by ships from all parts of India, and from Persia, and Ethiopia, and it likewise sends out many of its own. And from the remotest countries<sup>2</sup>, I mean Tzinista and other trading places, it receives silk, aloes, cloves, sandalwood and other products, and these again are passed on to marts on this side, such as Māle, where pepper grows, and to Calliana which exports copper and sesame-logs and cloth for making dresses, for it also is a great place of business. And to Sindu<sup>3</sup> also where musk and castor is produced and androstachys (a kind of spikenard), and to Persia and the Homerite country, and to Adulis. And the island receives imports from all these marts which we have mentioned and passes them on to the remoter ports, while at the same time, exporting its own produce in both directions."

The other authority for Persian trade in the Indian Ocean is Procopius of Caesarea, "known to posterity as the historian of Justinian (527-565 A.D.) and the chronicler of the great deeds of Belisarius." According to his own statement, "he was especially competent to write the history of these events, if for no other reason, because it fell to his lot, when appointed adviser to the general Belisarius, to be an eye-witness of practically all the events to be described. It was his conviction that while cleverness is appropriate to rhetoric, and inventiveness to poetry, truth alone is appropriate to history<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, Bk. XL, p. 337, Eng. tr. pp. 365-366, ed. McCrindle.

<sup>2</sup> "The countries inside of Cape Comorin, that is, to the east of it."

<sup>3</sup> "Probably Diul-Sind at the mouth of the Indus."

<sup>4</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, I, 3-4, tr. by H. B. Dewing, p. 5, London and New York (1914).



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Proceeding now to the actual evidence of Procopius,

“when Hellesthaïos was reigning over the Ethiopians,” says he, “and Esimiphaeus over the Homeritae, the Emperor Justinian sent an ambassador, Julianus, demanding that both nations on account of their community of religion should make common cause with the Romans in the war against the Persians; for he purposed that the Ethiopians, by purchasing silk from India and selling it among the Romans, might themselves gain much money, while causing the Romans to profit in only one way, namely, that they be no longer compelled to pay over their money to their enemy. (This is the silk of which they are accustomed to make the garments which of old the Greeks called Medic, but which at the present time they name ‘seric’<sup>1</sup>.) As for the Homeritae, it was desired that they should establish Caïsus, the fugitive, as captain over the Maddeni, and with a great army of their own people and of the Maddene Saracens make an invasion into the land of the Persians....So each king, promising to put this demand into effect, dismissed the ambassador, but neither one of them did the things agreed upon by them. For it was impossible for the Ethiopians to buy silk from the Indians, for the Persian merchants always locate themselves at the very harbour where the Indian ships first put in, (since they inhabit the adjoining country,) and are accustomed to buy the whole cargoes; and it seemed to the Homeritae a difficult thing to cross a country which was a desert and which extended so far that a long time was required for the journey across it, and then to go against a people much more warlike than themselves<sup>2</sup>.”

Procopius does not mention the harbours of India but his omission is supplied by Cosmas.

“The most notable places of trade in India are these: Sindu, Orrhotha<sup>3</sup>, Calliana, Sibor<sup>4</sup>, and then the five marts of Mále which export pepper: Parti,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., coming from the Chinese, or Seres. “China has been distinguished as the terminus of a southern sea-route, or as that of a northern land-route. In the former aspect the name applied has been SIN, CHIN, SINÆ, CHINA; in the latter point of view, the land of the SERES, known in the middle ages as the land of CATHAY.” Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I., p. 1, London (1915).

<sup>2</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, Bk. I., xx., 9-12, tr. by H. B. Dewing, pp. 193-194, London and New York (1914).

<sup>3</sup> An unidentified place on the western coast of the peninsula of Gujarāt.

<sup>4</sup> “Chaul or Chenwal, a seaport 23 miles to the south of Bombay.”



Mangarouth, Salopatana, Nalopatana, Poudopatana<sup>1</sup>. Then out in the ocean, at the distance of about five days and nights from the continent, lies Sielediba, that is Taprobane. And then again on the continent is Marallo, a mart exporting chank shells, then Caber<sup>2</sup> which exports alabandenum, and then farther away is the clove country, then Tzinista<sup>3</sup> which produces the silk<sup>4</sup>."

During the reign of Nūshīrwān, then, the Persians had succeeded in placing an embargo on the export of silk to the Roman empire. The control of the overland route had passed from the Parthians to the Persians, and the Turks in Western Asia, who were the carriers of silk<sup>5</sup> and other articles of commerce, tried to evade the Persian monopoly by establishing a direct communication with the merchants of Constantinople. "Maniach, who was chief of the people of Sogdia, took the opportunity of suggesting to Dizabulus (a great Khan of the Turks), that it would be more for the interests of the Turks to cultivate the friendship of the Romans, and to transfer the sale of silk to them, seeing also that they consumed more largely than any other people. And Maniach added that he was quite ready to accompany a party of Turkish ambassadors, in order to promote the establishment of friendly relations between the Turks and the Romans<sup>6</sup>." But the negotiations proved barren, and it was only the effort of two Nestorian monks, who brought from China the eggs of the silkworm concealed in a hollow cane, that led

<sup>1</sup> "Mangarouth is Mangalor ; and Salopatana, Nalopatana, Poudopatana are situated between Mangalor and Calicut. Patana means town." McCrindle.

<sup>2</sup> "Situated a little to the north of Tranquebar, at the mouth of the Podu-kaveri (New Kaveri)." McCrindle.

<sup>3</sup> Same as SIN, or China as known by sea.

<sup>4</sup> Cosmas Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, Bk. XI., Eng. tr. p. 337.

<sup>5</sup> "It is most probable that the Persians attended to the actual purchase of the goods in China itself (there is important testimony on this point in Hirth, *Ms. Sin. Berlin* 1, with documents granting foreign merchants permission to import certain goods into Chinese markets) and that they employed Turks as carriers." Martin Hartmann, article on China, *Encyc. of Islām*, p. 839.

<sup>6</sup> Menander Protector, *Fragments*, tr. by Yule, and given in his *Cathay*, Vol. I., p. 207, London (1915). Menander flourished about the end of the 6th century A.D.



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to the establishment of silk-culture in the Roman territory<sup>1</sup>. But this only relieved the Persian hold on silk, while the other precious commodities, indispensable to the luxurious empire of Rome<sup>2</sup>, had yet to come from the East, and from the East through Persian hands. For the ports of India had already been captured and Yemen was now to become territorially a Persian colony.

The decline of the Himyarites, which began soon after the commencement of the fifth century of the Christian era, reached its climax in 523 A.D. when Dhū Nuwās, King of Yemen, embraced Judaism, and by massacring some twenty thousand Christians of Najrān, compelled the Christian ruler of Abyssinia to intervene on behalf of his co-religionists. A large army was sent over, Dhū Nuwās was destroyed, and Yemen annexed. But the exchange of masters proved oppressive, and as one Abyssinian despot succeeded another, the Himyarites turned in despair to Saif, the son of Dhū Yazan, and gave him *carte blanche* to procure help from either the Byzantine empire or the Persian. Byzantium, however, offered nothing, whilst Madā'in made only a personal present of a robe of honour and ten thousand dirhams. Dhū Yazan cast the gold in handfuls amongst the retainers of the King, and when recalled for an explanation, "what else should I do with it," answered he, "the mountains of my land whence I come consist only of gold and silver." And the cupidity of Nūshirwān was aroused, and he

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Gothico*, tr. by Yule, and given in his *Cathay*, Vol. I., pp. 203-204, London (1915).

<sup>2</sup> "There commeth not so much Incense of one whole years increase in Saba, as the Emperor Nero spent in one day, when he burnt the corps of his wife, *Poppea*....And surely our pleasures, our delights, and our women together, are so costly unto us, that there is not a yeare goeth over our heads, but what in pearles, perfumes, and filkes, India, the Seres, and that demy-Island of Arabia, stands us at the least in an hundred millions of Sesterces, and so much fetch they from us in good money, within the compass of our Empire. But of all this masse of Spice and Odors, how much (I pray you) commeth to the service of the coelestiall gods, in comparison of that which is burnt at funerals, to the spirits infernale." Pliny, *Natural History* (77 A.D.), Bk. XII., Ch. XVIII., tr. P. Holland, pp. 371-372, London (1601).



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detained the envoy, and reconsidered the matter. Then said one of his counsellors, "O King, in thy prison are men whom thou hast cast into fetters to put them to death; canst thou not give him these? If they perish, then is thy purpose fulfilled; but if they take the country, then is thy lordship increased."

"This ingenious plan," says Prof. Browne, "for combining Imperial expansion with domestic economy was enthusiastically approved, and an examination of the prisons produced eight hundred condemned felons, who were forthwith placed under the command of a superannuated general, named Wahriz, so old that, as the story runs, his eyelids drooped over his eyes, and must needs be bound or held up when he wished to shoot<sup>1</sup>." When Saif, the son of Dhū Yazan, saw the strength of the expeditionary force, "what can these few avail against the many Abyssinians?" said he. And the King said, "A little fire is enough to burn a great deal of firewood<sup>2</sup>." And Dhū Yazan, who had talked of mountains of silver and gold in his land, wisely refrained from further argument.

Oriental history is not unanimous on the strength of the expeditionary force: Ṭabarī's eight hundred men<sup>3</sup> are raised by Ḥamza to eight hundred and nine<sup>4</sup>, and by the *Nihāyatu 'l-Irab* to three thousand six hundred<sup>5</sup>. Nevertheless, all authorities are agreed that the journey was not made by land but by sea. "There were eight ships," says Ṭabarī, "and in each ship a hundred men. And they put out to sea. Of the eight ships two were wrecked; the other six sailed safely and appeared at the shore of Ḥaḍramawt<sup>6</sup>." Similarly, Ḥamza says that "they sailed in eight ships, of which

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I., pp. 179-180, London (1908).

<sup>2</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 59, Leipsic (1844).

<sup>3</sup> Ṭabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I., p. 953 (1879-1881).

<sup>4</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 59, Leipsic (1844).

<sup>5</sup> E. G. Browne's article on the *Nihāyatu 'l-Irab*, *J.R.A.S.* (1900), p. 229.

<sup>6</sup> Ṭabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I., p. 953 :

و امرا بحملهم في سفائن في كل سفينة مائة رجل فركبوا البحر فغرقت من الثماني  
السفن سفيتان و سلمت ست فخرجوا بساھل حَضْرَمَوْت



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two suffered shipwreck and six reached the coast<sup>1</sup>;" and he adds that "the majority of the prisoners were descendants of Sāsān, and Bahman; and Ibn Isfandiyār<sup>2</sup>." The *Nihāyatu 'l-Irab* says that there were seven ships<sup>3</sup>, while, according to *Ath-Tha'libī*, "Wahriz accompanied by Saif, the son of *Dhū* Yazan, embarked at Ubullah for Yemen, and sailed on a boisterous sea till he reached the coast of Ḥaḍramawt<sup>4</sup>."

It will be seen that the historians, though agreeing on the main issue, differ slightly in detail, and these petty differences are valuable, because, out of them, a coherent narrative can be constructed. If there were altogether eight ships and eight hundred men, and a hundred men to a ship, as Ṭabarī states, then of necessity the ships must have been manned by the convicts themselves; and since, according to Ḥamza, the majority of the convicts were Persians, it follows that the ships were largely manned by a Persian crew. *Ath-Tha'libī* gives Ubullah as the port of embarkation, and this seems natural, for Ubullah was the nearest sea-port to Ctesiphon, the Sāsānian capital. The port of landing is not specified, but it could hardly have been any other than Ocelis<sup>5</sup>, for Pliny states on the authority of Onesicritus that Ocelis was the most convenient port for those coming from India<sup>6</sup>, and the *Periplus* declares that Ocelis was "the first landing for those sailing into the Gulf," that is, the Gulf of Aden.

But to proceed with the narrative, it appears that on landing

<sup>1</sup> Ḥamza of Isfahān, *Annals*, ed. Gottwaldt, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>3</sup> E. G. Browne's article on the *Nihāyatu 'l-Irab*, *J.R.A.S.* (1900), p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> *Ath-Tha'libī*, *Histoire des Rois des Perses*, ed. Zotenberg, p. 617, Paris (1900):

و هرز تلقاء اليمن و معه سيف بن ذي يزن فركب من الابلّة البحر و لجم فيه حتى  
خرج في ساحل حضرموت

<sup>5</sup> "Ocelis is identified by Glaser with a bay on the northern side of the promontory of Sheikh Said (12° 48' N., 43° 28' E.)." *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, ed. Schoff, p. 115.

<sup>6</sup> Pliny, *Natural History*, Bk. vi., p. 104.



Wahriz was joined by a large reinforcement of the Yemenite Arabs. Two of his ships had gone down on the voyage with all hands on board, and the remaining six were now burnt and the stores cast into the sea. "You've laid hands on our food," said the troops, "and given it to the fishes." "If you live," retorted Wahriz, "you'll eat the fishes; and if you don't live you won't bother about the loss of food."

And so having "literally burnt his boats," Wahriz proceeded to give battle. The Abyssinian King, Masrūq, had come out with his hosts, and was rendered conspicuous by an immense ruby which blazed on his forehead. Wahriz took aim, and drew a good long bow, and shot an arrow, and on the instant the ruby burst, and the ruby-drops rushed out and stood on the forehead of the Abyssinian King. And this was the beginning of Persian rule in Yemen.

No definite date has yet been assigned to the conquest of Yemen, but as it occurred in the reign of Nūshīrwān<sup>1</sup> it must have been before 579 A.D., the date of Nūshīrwān's death; and since it occurred also in the reign of Masrūq, it must have been after 570 A.D., when the Prophet Muḥammad was born, and when Abraha, the father of Masrūq, was miraculously slain with his hosts before the walls of Mecca. Between Abraha and Masrūq there intervenes the reign of Yaqsūm so that, as Prof. Browne says, it must have been shortly before the death of Nūshīrwān that Yemen was conquered.

Yemen remained with Persia till 628 A.D. "In that year Bādhān, the Persian governor, received instructions from Khusraw Parwiz to obtain information regarding the Prophet of Arabia. But before this could be done Parwiz had fallen and Bādhān was now free to choose a protectorate more congenial to his people. He therefore gladly recognized the rising fortunes of Islām, and signified his adhesion to the Prophet<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Mr G. P. Badger states in his introduction (p. 11) to the *Imāms and Seyyids of 'Omān* that "Chosroes Parwiz sent a large army into Yemen under Wahriz, who subdued that country" !

<sup>2</sup> W. Muir, *Life of Mohammad*, p. 371, Edinburgh (1923).



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Both Muir and Browne agree in regarding Bādhān as the last Persian governor of Yemen.

"Yaman became a Persian province," says Prof. Browne, "governed first by its conqueror, Wahriz (and for a part of his lifetime by Sayf), then by his son, grandson, and great-grandson, and lastly, in the time of Muḥammad by a Persian named Bādhān of another family. Even in early Muhammadan days we hear much of the *Banū 'l-Aḥrār*, or 'Sons of the Noble,' as the Persian settlers in Yaman were called by the Arabs<sup>1</sup>."

A slightly different version is given by Ḥamza.

"The kingdom of Yemen," says he, "passed after the death of Saif son of Dhū Yazan to Wahriz; then to Walisjān وليسجان; then to Ḥarzādān Shahr حرزادان شهر; then to Alnūshjān النوشجان; then to Marwzān مروزان; then to his son Khurra Khusraw خر خسرو; then to Bādhān باذان, the son of Sāsān Aljarūn ساسان الجرون, who administered Yemen in the name of Khusraw Parwiz.... After Bādhān, Dādūya دادويه, the son of Hurmuz the son of Fīrūz, ruled Yemen.... These eight Persians governed Yemen after it was taken away from Ḥimyar; the first was Wahriz, the last was Dādūya—and the Quraish took over the kingdom of Yemen from Dādūya. The offspring of these eight Persians remain in the districts and provinces of Yemen till today<sup>2</sup>."

This is all the relevant information about Yemen. Judged by the length of the voyage, the composition of the crew, the smallness of the fleet, the age and enterprise of the admiral, and the resources and the strength of the enemy, the conquest of Yemen is the most laudable achievement of the Sāsānian empire in the Indian Ocean. Eight hundred convicts and a superannuated general were sent to their death on the open sea, and they conquered a land which had been the residence of navigators in all ages<sup>3</sup>, and which a Roman army sent by a resolute emperor<sup>4</sup> had not been able to subdue. And the Persians had not merely raided Yemen but conquered it

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. I, p. 181, London (1908).

<sup>2</sup> Ḥamza of Isfahān, *Annals*, p. 139, ed. Gottwaldt.

<sup>3</sup> W. Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Vol. II, p. 63, London (1807).

<sup>4</sup> Strabo: "The Emperor Augustus was determined either to make the Ethiopians and the Arabs his allies or to subdue them." *Vide* A. Sprenger, *The Campaign of Ælius Gallus in Arabia*, *J.R.A.S.* (1872), pp. 121-122.



permanently, so that they retained it as a colony till the fall of their empire.

And since the Horn of Africa had been, by its geographical position, a Himyarite principality, and since, moreover, the Sāsānian navigator was essentially a merchant, the inducement for the Persian governor of Yemen to extend his influence over the African coast must have been almost irresistible. "There can be little doubt," says Major Pearce, "that the Persians or *Shīrāzīs*, who arrived on the east coast of Africa at a very early date—Prof. Stuhlmann, for instance, says towards the close of the sixth century—introduced the art of building in stone, the production of lime and cement, wood-carving, and the weaving of cotton<sup>1</sup>." But, be that as it may, the establishment of a Persian government in Yemen could have had but one consequence—the transfer of the immemorial traffic between India and Egypt into the hands of Persia.

It is necessary to recall the fact that the Sāsānian Government had similarly annihilated Arabian commerce in the Gulf of Persia. *Shāpūr Dhū 'l-aktāf*, indeed, had not merely avenged himself on the Arabs of the southern shore of the Persian Gulf but had made Bahrain and the adjacent territory an integral part of the Sāsānian empire. The Arabs were expatriated<sup>2</sup> and replaced by Persian colonists<sup>3</sup> and the conquered lands placed under the administration of *marzubāns* or "Wardens of the Marches." There is the evidence of al-Balādhurī who died in 892 A.D., that at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad the province of Bahrain belonged to the kingdom of Persia<sup>4</sup>, and that the inhabitants thereof, comprising Magians, Jews, Christians<sup>5</sup>, and the Arabs of 'Abdu'l-Qais, Bakr b. Wā'il, and Tamīm, were under the dual control of al-Mundhir bin

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, p. 351, London (1920).

<sup>2</sup> Tabarī, *Annals*, ed. de Goeje, I, p. 839.

<sup>3</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Kitābu futūḥi 'l-buldān*, ed. de Goeje, pp. 78, 79, 80, 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 78 :

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, p. 78 :

قالوا وكانت ارض البحرين من مملكة الفرس

اهل الارض من المجوس واليهود والنصارى



Sāwī and ‘Abdu’llāh bin Zaid, *marzubāns* of the Sāsānian king<sup>1</sup>. And even in the eighth year A.H. Hajar or the district of Baḥrain was under a Persian *marzubān*, Sībukht by name<sup>2</sup>, whilst another Persian *marzubān*, Fīrūz the son of Jushaish, held out in Zāra as late as the caliphate of ‘Umar<sup>3</sup>. Nor was ‘Umān devoid of a Persian population, for, according to al-Balādhurī, the Prophet ordered Abū Zaid to take alms from the Muslims and the poll-tax from the Magians<sup>4</sup>. Towards the close of the sixth century, therefore, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea were exclusively Persian, and the trade-routes, both on sea and land, which connected the Eastern and the Western worlds could only pass through the territories of the Great King.

So far the written evidence of history. But the written record is not the only source of history and there is the evidence of philology that Sāsānian navigation extended far beyond Ceylon and the limits of Himyarite enterprise to Sumatra and the ports of China. And the assiduity of M. Gabriel Ferrand has made this evidence complete, precise, and conclusive.

“The part played by the Arabs,” says he, “in the establishment and development of maritime relations between the Persian Gulf ports and the Far East has, I think, been greatly exaggerated. It seems most likely that they simply followed the route opened by the Persians, from whom they borrowed the significant word *ناخدا* *nākhudhā*<sup>5</sup>, ship’s captain, which passed into Arabic in the same orthography and the same sense. *Baghbūr* *بغبور*, according to Ibn Khurdādhbih<sup>6</sup>, or *Faghfūr* *فغفور*, according to Mas‘ūdī<sup>7</sup> and Abū’lfidā, which

<sup>1</sup> al-Balādhurī, *Kitābu futūḥi ‘l-buldān*, ed. de Goeje, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 78 :

سِيْبُكْت مَرْزَبَان مَجَر

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 85 :

قالوا و تحصن المكنعير الفارسي صاحب كسري..... واسمه فيروز بن جشيش بالزارة

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 77 :

رسول الله صلعم قال لابي زيد اخذ الصدقة من المسلمين و الجزية من المجوس

<sup>5</sup> خدا (master) + ناو or ناوه (ship).

<sup>6</sup> Ibn Khurdādhbih, tr. de Goeje, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> Mas‘ūdī, *Murūju ‘dh-Dhahab* (*Les Prairies d’Or*), ed. B. de Meynard, Vol. I., p. 306, Paris (1864).



describes the emperor of China, is nothing less than the Arabian form of the Persian *Baghpūr*, son of God, a translation of the Chinese expression *T'ien-tseu*, son of Heaven. The following list of toponyms used in Arabic texts—*ديجات* *Dībajāt*, the general term for the Laccadives and the Maldives<sup>1</sup>; *خشنامي* *Khushnāmī*, the name of a mountain in the Andaman archipelago<sup>2</sup>; *صندر فولات* *Ṣundur-fūlāt*, Poulo Condore<sup>3</sup>,—all come from Persian toponymy.

*ديجات* *Dībajāt* = *dība*, < Skr. *dvīpa*, Pāli *dīpa*, island + the Persian plural suffix *-jāt*, signifies, literally, the islands. *خشنامي* *Khushnāmī* is an ethnic term from the Persian compound *خوش* *khush*, agreeable, and *نامه* *nāma*, name; literally (the mountain) of the agreeable name, or the name of good omen. *Fūlāt* *فولات* is a compound from *فول* *fūl*, < Malay *پولو* *pūlo* or *pūlaw*, island + the plural Persian suffix *ات* *āt*. *Ṣundur-fūlāt* *صندر فولات* means the islands of the pumpkin, but the Arabs not knowing the sense of *فولات* *fūlāt*, or else having lost the original meaning, call the islands in question *jazīra-i-ṣundur-fūlāt* *جزیره صندر فولات*, literally, *the island (called) the islands of the pumpkin*.

Cinnamon is called in Arabic *dār šīnī* *دار صيني*; *dār* *دار* is a Persian word meaning wood; it is therefore Chinese wood, or the wood coming from China. The Persian *جوز* *jūz*, nut, occurs in the list of several fruits of the Far East and India, described by Arabic writers—such as *جوز بوا* *jūz buwā*, the nutmeg. According to Diogo de Couto, the nutmeg is commonly called *جوزبندا* *jūzibandā*, = *جوز بندا* *jūz-i-Bandā*, literally, the nut of Bandā. Similarly, *جوز الهند* *jūzu 'l-Hind* is, literally, the nut of India and signifies the cocoanut. In Chinese dynastic histories covering the period from the end of the fourth to the beginning of the seventh centuries, all the products of Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia, and the east coast of Africa, were called 'products of Po-se,' that is to say, of Persia, which was the country of origin of most of the importers of these products into China<sup>4</sup>. The name by which the Arabs call

<sup>1</sup> Sulaimān, *Silsilatu 't-Tawārīkh* (سلسلة التواريخ), published by M. Reinaud in his *Relation des Voyages*, Vol. II., p. 7, Paris (1845):

و [سوندیب] راس هذه الجزایر كلها و هم يدعونها الديجات

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 11 :

و انما دلّ عليها جبل منها يقال له الخشنامي

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 20 :

فاذا استعذبوا منها خطفوا الي موضع يقال له صندر فولات

<sup>4</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua, his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, translated and annotated, pp. 7-8, St Petersburg (1911).





East Africa and the negroes who live there is زنج or زنجي<sup>1</sup> (anc. pron. *zang*, *zangī*; mod. pron. *zanj*, *zanjī*) and is borrowed from the Persian زنگی, زنگ *zang*, *zangī*. Finally, the Chinese know the Arabs under the name *Ta-shi* which is nothing more than the Persian تازی *Tāzī* or تاجیک *Tājik*; it was therefore the Persians who made the Arabs known in China under the same name by which in earlier times they had called the Arabs themselves<sup>2</sup>....

We do not possess for this particular period any evidence proving that Arab ships sailed in those days to China. There is every reason to believe, therefore, that voyages made before the ninth century were made solely by Persian sailors, and that the Persians were the initiators of the Arabs in trade with the Far East<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, not one of the Persian accounts dealing with these voyages has come down to us<sup>4</sup>.

To this exhaustive information a single word has to be added: the Arabic *būṣ* بوس or *būṣī* بوسی is the Persian *būzī* بوزی or ship. Says the dictionary *Tāju 'l-'Arūs*:

"*Būṣī* is a kind of ship, and is an Arabicised word. Jawhari has used this word, and has cited the following verse of A'shā in support:

'Like the water of the Euphrates which overthrows, when it is boisterous, the *ship* and the swimmer.'

And some one has said<sup>5</sup>:

'Like the stern of a *ship* in motion on the Tigris.'

<sup>1</sup> Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, *Silsilatu 't-Tawārīkh*, published by M. Reinaud in his *Relation des Voyages*, Vol. II., p. 131, Paris (1845).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I., p. 88, London (1915):

"The Arabs were known by the Chinese as the *Tazi* or *Ta shi* (*Ta shi* is but a transcription of the Persian *Tāzī* تازی or *Tājik* تاجیک); the Arabs were, therefore, made known to the Chinese by the Persians; this fact seems to prove the priority of the travels of the Persians."

But not necessarily the priority of Persian travel by sea.

<sup>3</sup> "According to an interesting text of the Tjams of Cambodia (Delaporte, *Voyage au Cambodge*, Paris (1880), p. 417 *et seq.*), Nao Savan (Nūshīrwān), the divine inao (youth), the first king of the Tjams, was the inventor of the alphabet which is still used in profane books."

<sup>4</sup> Gabriel Ferrand, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques, Arabes, Persans et Turks, relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient, du VIII au XVIII siècles*, Introduction, Vol. I., pp. 1-3, Paris (1913).

<sup>5</sup> i.e., the poet Ṭarafah, in the *Sab'al-Mu'allaqāt*.



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Abū 'Ubaid has used *būṣī* in the sense of a boat; but Ibn Sidah condemns this use of the word as incorrect. Some have declared that *būṣī* means a sailor; and have attributed this meaning to the (above-mentioned) couplet of A'shā. Abū 'Amr (ibnu 'l-'Alā) says that *būṣī* means a boat, and not a sailor. In Persian, the word is *būzī* بوزي.<sup>1</sup>

The value of the word, however, does not lie merely in its origin. Its use by Tarafah, who died before the rise of Islām in 564 A.D.<sup>2</sup>, indicates the existence of pre-Muḥammadan Persian ships; and its use by Tarafah, who was not a sailor, indicates, in addition, the reputation of these ships. Consequently, like the *Tāju 'l-'Arūs*, the *al-Mu'arrab min Kalāmi 'l-'Ajam* of Jawāliqī defines *būṣī*, not as a *zawraq* or boat, but as a *safīnah* or ship:

"*Būṣī* is a kind of ship, and in Persian it is called *būzī*; the Arabs have used this word in olden times<sup>3</sup>...."

But to proceed. With the exception of the word *Ta shī*<sup>4</sup>, the

<sup>1</sup> The *Tāju 'l-'Arūs*, under *Būṣ*:

و البوصى بالضم ضرب من السفن معرب [ نقله الجوهري و ائشد للاعشى  
مثل القراتي اذا ما طما يقذف بالبوصي و الماهر  
و قال غيره  
كسكان بوصي بدجله مصعد

و عبر أبو عبيد عنه بالزورق قال ابن سيده و هو خطأ و قيل البوصى الملاح و هو  
أحد القولين في قول الأعشى و قال أبو عمر و البوصى الزورق و ليس بالملاح و هو  
بالفارسيه [بوزي]

<sup>2</sup> Vide *Shu'arā' u 'n-Naṣrānīyah*, p. 307.

<sup>3</sup> Written early in the 6th century A.H., ed. Sachau, Leipsic (1867), p. 23:

و البوصى ضرب من السفن و هو بالفارسية بوزي تكلموا به قديماً

<sup>4</sup> "The Western Iranians, or Persians proper, are everywhere throughout Central Asia known exclusively as Tajiks, and in West Irania as Tats, possibly a contracted form of the same word." A. H. Keane, *Asia*, Vol. II., p. 490, London (1909).

"*Tājīk* is the Middle Persian form of the Aramaic *ṭaiyāyē*, properly 'Arab of the tribe of Ṭai.' The change in meaning is explained by the fact that once the Muḥammadan Ṭai Arabs were regarded by one body of Persians as representatives of the Arab world, their name was extended to all Arabs and thus came to mean 'Arab' or Muslim....

D'Ollone draws conclusions from the mention of the *ta-shī* 'Arabs' = Muslims under the T'ang and of the *Hui-ho* under the Liao and Chin dynasties; but



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linguistic material presented by M. Ferrand has not been impeached, but his acceptance of the conclusion of Hirth and Rockhill, that "from the end of the fourth to the beginning of the seventh centuries, all the products of Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia, and the east coast of Africa, were called 'products of *Po-se*,' that is to say, of *Persia*," has met with destructive criticism from Mr Berthold Laufer, who points out that besides the Īrānian *Po-se* the Chinese were also acquainted with a Malayan *Po-se*, and that for several reasons *Po-se* cannot be here rendered by *Persia*. Firstly, because the *Kwan čou ki* (written under the Tsin dynasty, A.D. 265–419), as quoted in the *Čen lei pen ts'ao*, states that alum with gold threads is produced in the country *Po-se*<sup>1</sup>, and secondly because the *Ku kin ču* (written by Ts'ui Pao in the fourth century A.D.), as quoted in the *Pen ts'ao kan mu*, states that ebony is conveyed to China on *Po-se* ships<sup>2</sup>. Obviously, *Po-se* cannot here be *Persia*, for, on the one hand, neither alum nor ebony is produced in *Persia*, and, on the other, the Chinese themselves had no knowledge of an Īrānian *Po-se* before 461 A.D., the date of the arrival of the first Persian embassy to China, that is, to the court of the Wei. Similarly, the *Yu yan tsa tsu* states that the lac tree is produced in Camboja and in *Po-se*, and that the *Po-se* envoys agreed with the Camboja envoys in pronouncing K'un-lun lac as superior to that of *Po-se*<sup>3</sup>. Now Mr Laufer argues from the non-existence of the lac insect in *Persia*, and from the conjoint arrival of the *Po-se* and Camboja envoys, and the opposition of *Po-se* to the Malayan K'un-lun, that the *Po-se* here intended cannot be the Persian *Po-se*. Similarly, Mr Laufer contends that the camphor ascribed to *Po-se* by the *Yu yan tsa tsu* and interpreted by Hirth as being conveyed to China by Persian ships<sup>4</sup>, the aloes described by Li Sün of the T'ang period as growing in the country *Po-se* and mentioned by Su Sün of the

this only points to a knowledge of the Muslims of the West and is no proof of Muslim immigration." Martin Hartmann, article on China, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islām*. See also, Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*.

<sup>1</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 475, Chicago (1919).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 485.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, pp. 476–477.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, pp. 478–479.



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Sung period as being shipped to Canton<sup>1</sup>, the wild walnuts mentioned in the *Pei hu lu* (written about 875 A.D. by Twan Kun-lu) as gathered and eaten by the *Po-se*<sup>2</sup>, and finally, the drug identified with *Psoralea corylifolia*, the dye of the tree *Semecarpus anacardium*, the *Po-se* pepper recorded by Su Kuñ of the T'ang<sup>3</sup>, and the *Po-se* myrrh mentioned in the *Nan čou ki* of Sü Piao (written before the fifth century A.D.)<sup>4</sup>—all of these have reference to the Malayan *Po-se* exclusively. Therefore, "I disagree entirely," says Mr Laufer, "with the conclusion of Hirth and Rockhill.... This is a rather grotesque generalisation inspired by a misconception of the term *Po-se* and the *Po-se* texts of the *Wei šu* and *Sui šu*. The latter do not speak at all of any importation of Persian goods to China, but merely give a descriptive list of the articles to be found in Persia."

On the other hand, the reasoning of Mr Laufer himself is not entirely faultless. Firstly, because Hirth and Rockhill are themselves aware of the ambiguity of the word *Po-se* (*Chau Ju-kua*, p. 280):

"*Po-ssī*, Persia, the Persians; *Po-ssī*, a country or tribe of Negritos, possibly in Sumatra."

Secondly, because the *Kwan čou ki* and the *Ku kin ču* have been written *before* the end of the fourth century A.D., and are therefore covered by the reservation of Hirth and Rockhill (*Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 7-8):

"In (Chinese) dynastic histories covering the period *from* the end of the fourth to the beginning of the seventh centuries, we find all the products of Indo-China, Ceylon, India, Arabia, and the east coast of Africa classed as products of Persia (*Po-ssī*), the country of the majority of the traders who brought these goods to China."

And finally, because a little lower down Hirth and Rockhill have modified their own conclusion as follows (*Chau Ju-kua*, n. 1, p. 16):

"The *Wei-shu*, 102, the history of the period between 385 and 556, and written prior to 572, mentions among the products of *Po-ssī* (Persia),—by which it

<sup>1</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, pp. 480, Chicago (1919).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 479.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 479.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 460.



seems probable should be understood products brought or made known to China by Persians—coral, amber, cornelians, pearls, glass, both transparent and opaque, rock-crystal, diamonds (?kin-k'ang), steel, cinnabar, quicksilver, frankincense, turmeric, storax, patchuk, damasks, brocaded muslins, black pepper, long peppers, dates, aconite, gall nuts and galangal. The *Sui-shu*, 83, which relates the events of the period extending from 581 to 617, and which was certainly written before 650, reproduces substantially the above list of Persian products, to which it adds gold, silver, *tush*, lead, sandalwood, various tissues, sugar, and indigo. Most of the products came, of course, from India or from countries of south-eastern Asia, only a few being products of Arabia or of countries bordering on the Persian Gulf."

Therefore, in their contrary zeal, Mr Berthold Laufer and M. Gabriel Ferrand have alike overlooked the difference between the certainty:

"products of Persia (Po-ssī), the country of the majority of the traders who brought these goods to China,"

and the probability:

"products of Po-ssī (Persia),—by which it seems probable should be understood products brought or made known to China by Persians."

But to return to the evidence of philology. In a recent article, contributed to the *Journal Asiatique*<sup>1</sup>, M. Gabriel Ferrand has shown that the Persian element in the Arabian compass is quite considerable. The word قطب الجاه in جاه, or the North, is the Persian گاه; the word مطلع التير in تير, or E.S.E., and in مغيب التير or W.S.W., is the Persian تير (the fourth month of the Persian solar year, the planet Mercury etc.); the word مطلع السليار in سليار, or S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S.E., and in مغيب السليار or S.  $\frac{1}{4}$  S.W., is the Persian سربار or load carried on the head, and a synonym for the Arabic وزن or *a Centauri*. The Persian سربار has become the Arabic سليار even as the Persian چرباره or the cymbal has become the Arabic جلياره. Moreover the word طائر, in مطلع الطائر or the East, and in مغيب الطائر or the West, is also called الهيران which, according to Prof. J. J. Hess, should be

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Ferrand, L'Élément Persan dans les Textes Nautiques Arabes, *Journal Asiatique*, pp. 193-257, Avril-Juin, 1924.



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read as *هيزان* derived from the Persian *هيزان*. Finally the Arabic *دُخَن*, i.e. a point of the compass, is an abbreviation of the Persian *خانه*, even as a long *a* is shortened in several words in modern Persian.

"These terms," says M. Ferrand<sup>1</sup>, "are not interesting solely to lexicographers. They have a wider meaning and should be remembered by the historian.... The use of three Persian points, namely, *تير*, *گاه*, *سلبار*, *tīr*, *gāh*, *salbār*, among Arab names for the compass can hardly be explained otherwise than by borrowing from the Persian compass. That these names of Persian points are the only ones preserved may be better explained in my opinion by the fact that the Arabs modified the names of a Persian compass, than by the existence of a compass with a set of Arab names into which some Persian names of points were introduced. The second conjecture is far less probable than the first. Furthermore, the etymology of the nautical Arab *دُخَن*, a point of the compass, which corresponds to the Persian *خانه* or house, is not less conclusive....

The majority of these borrowings have a common character. Geographical or diplomatic terms like *zang* and *baghbūr* were adopted by the Arabs, because they were already in use at the time when, following the Persians, the Arabs reached the east coast of Africa and the Far East. It is not because the Arabic language, which is extremely rich, is ignorant of these terms and does not possess equivalents.... *دُخَن* *khann* could have been translated as *بيت* *bait*; *قطب الجاه* *qutbu 'l-jāh* also has the Arabic name *قطب الشمالي* *qutbu 'sh-shimālī*; and names of certain (other) points of the compass might equally well have been Arabic, not Persian<sup>2</sup>."

After having made out such a strong case on the basis of solid facts there was no need for M. Ferrand to resort to negative reasoning of questionable value. On the basis of Ibn *Khaldūn*'s statement that "most of the learned men who distinguished themselves amongst the Muslims were foreigners, and that the Muslims of the early centuries were totally ignorant of science and art because their simple and rude civilization had developed in the desert<sup>3</sup>" the inference is drawn that "the people of a simple and

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Ferrand, *L'Élément Persan dans les Textes Nautiques Arabes*, *Journal Asiatique*, pp. 234-235, Avril-Juin, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> Ibn *Khaldūn*, *Prolegomena*, tr. de Slane, Vol. III, pp. 296-297 (1868).





rude civilization were not in a condition to apply astronomy to navigation or to undertake long voyages to China and the Malaya Peninsula<sup>1</sup>." There was an essential difference, however, in pre-Islamic times between the Arab of the desert and the Arab of the coast<sup>2</sup>—the former was a brigand and a wanderer of the waste; the latter, a born sailor and the heir to a great and ancient civilization. And it would be a grave error to estimate Sāsānian navigation without acknowledging the share of the Arab merchant who had made the Indian Ocean safe and familiar by climbing upon the climbing wave annually for a thousand years. Why this voyage terminated abruptly at Ceylon and why it was left to the Sāsānians to push ahead to China has not yet been investigated, but the reason given by M. Ferrand is clearly inadmissible. For the Sabaeen Arab was neither rude nor simple, and his kingdom was the envy alike of the Ptolemies and the Romans.

Meanwhile the power of Persia had also increased on land, and in the year 540 A.D. Nūshīrwān sacked Antioch and bathed in the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Shortly after this, in the winter of 540–541 A.D., envoys came from Lazica<sup>3</sup>, a province on the Black Sea, and solicited the aid of Nūshīrwān against the exactions of the Romans. "To the realm of Persia you will add a most ancient kingdom," said they, "and as a result of this you will have the power of your sway extended, and it will come about that you will have a part in the sea of the Romans through our land, and after thou hast built ships in this sea, O King, it will be possible for thee with no trouble to set foot in the palace in Byzantium. And one might add that the plundering of the land of the Romans every year by the barbarians along the boundary will be under our control. For surely you also are acquainted with the fact that till now the land of the Lazi has been a bulwark against the Caucasus

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Ferrand, *L'Élément Persan dans les Textes Nautiques Arabes*, *Journal Asiatique*, p. 247, Avril–Juin, 1924.

<sup>2</sup> William Vincent, *The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean*, Vol. II., p. 480.

<sup>3</sup> "The ancient Colchis, or the modern Mingrelia and Imeritia."



mountains<sup>1</sup>." Nūshīrwān acceded to the request of the envoys—and Lazica became Persian territory.

Within a few years, however, Nūshīrwān began to feel that the removal of the Lazi and the Lazic King was a *sine qua non* for a permanent annexation. And "most of all he hoped that the subjugation of Lazica would afford this advantage to the Persians, that starting from there they might overrun with no trouble both by land and sea the Euxine Sea as it is called, and thus win over the Cappadocians, and the Galatians, and Bithynians who adjoin them, and capture Byzantium by a sudden assault with no one opposing them. For these reasons, then, Chosroes was anxious to gain possession of Lazica<sup>2</sup>."

And as Nūshīrwān hoped so he acted.

"His first move against Lazica was as follows. He sent into the country a great amount of lumber, suitable for the construction of ships, explaining to no one what his purpose was in so doing but ostensibly he was sending it in order to set up engines of war on the fortifications of Petra. Next he chose out three hundred able warriors of the Persians, and sent them there under the command of Phabrizus, ordering him to make away with Goubazes (the Lazic King) as secretly as possible; as for the rest he himself would take care. Now when this lumber had been conveyed to Lazica it happened that it was struck suddenly by lightning and reduced to ashes<sup>3</sup>."

Phabrizus, moreover, failed completely, and the Lazi accepted Roman protection once again as the lesser evil, and Nūshīrwān, after fighting incessantly for nine years (549–557 A.D.), was compelled to make a truce, and even to waive his claims to Lazica, in return for an annual subsidy of thirty thousand pieces of gold. And so ended the Lazic war in 562 A.D.

The failure of Nūshīrwān to construct a naval station at the mouth of the Phasis and to command the shipping of the Black Sea made the expansion of Sāsānian Persia in Europe for ever impossible. Egypt was conquered by Shahr-Barz in 616 A.D. and

<sup>1</sup> Procopius, *De Bello Persico*, Bk. II., xv., 27–30, tr. H. B. Dewing, p. 395.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, Bk. II., xxviii., 23, tr. p. 521.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, Bk. II., xxix., 1–2, tr. p. 529.





Chalcedon fell before Shāhīn in 617 A.D. but the loss of Lazica remained irreparable. For the Romans, though cabined, cribbed, confined, had yet the command of the sea; and the Persians, though they retained Chalcedon for a decade, could not, because of the absence of shipping, resist the naval preparations, which were going on before their eyes, to ravage the Persian territory. In 622 A.D. Heraclius sailed from Byzantium and crossed the Aegean Sea and landed at Issus, and in 623 A.D. he sailed from Byzantium and crossed the Black Sea and landed in Lazica, and both voyages were unmolested, and the result of either voyage, the defeat and dispersal of a Persian army. And while Khusraw Parwīz maintained his hold on Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor, Heraclius plundered with impunity the Persian territory, from Urumia to Cilicia (624–625 A.D.).

“Khusraw Parviz was now driven to despair and formed an alliance with the Khan of the Avars and begged them to attack the imperial city. But though the Avars invested Byzantium the Persians still remained at Chalcedon. The narrow channel which flowed between Chalcedon and the Golden Horn proved an insurmountable barrier; the Persians had no ships, and the canoes of the Slavonians were quite unable to contend with the powerful galleys of the Byzantines, so that the transport of a body of Persian troops from Asia to Europe by their aid proved impracticable. Shahr-Barz had the annoyance of witnessing the efforts and defeat of his allies, without having it in his power to take any active steps towards assisting the one or hindering the other<sup>1</sup>.”

And so the record of Sāsānian navigation in the Mediterranean Sea is limited to one solitary attempt to cross the Bosphorus in the year 626 A.D. The only place ever held by the Sāsānians in Europe was the island of Rhodes, and Rhodes had made a voluntary submission in 620 A.D. through dread of the military exploits of Shāhīn and Shahr-Barz<sup>2</sup>. How very different had been the history of Achaemenian Persia, and how completely had the sea-power of the Great King receded from Europe to Asia.

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, p. 519, London (1876).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 506.



Before leaving this chapter on Sāsānian navigation it is necessary to give the interesting pictorial evidence which comes from Ajanta. It appears from Ṭabarī that in the year 625–626 A.D. Khusraw Parwiz had received an embassy from the Indian King Pulakēśin II<sup>1</sup>, and though there is no literary record of a return embassy a pictorial record has survived in a mutilated form in Cave I at Ajanta.

"A pale-skinned Rājā," says Burgess, "sits in Darbār on a cushion placed on a dais, higher than usual, with a semicircle of green over the middle of the back of it, behind his head, and having a gilt border with little vidyādhara figures on each side of it, and makara's mouths at the corners of the back. From the right three fair bearded men in Iranian costume, with peaked caps and completely clothed, approach him in crouching attitude; the first bearing a string of pearls; the second a jug or bottle (of wine perhaps); and the third a large tray filled with presents. Behind the third stands another figure near the door in white clothing, perhaps the porter, with a stick in his hand and a dagger in his belt, apparently speaking to another Iranian in the doorway, bringing in some present. Behind the porter is another foreigner in full white clothing, with stockings, curled hair, and peaked cap, holding a vessel in his hands, and with a long straight sword at his back....Outside the palace to the right, an Iranian, like the one seen in the door, appears speaking to a green man with

<sup>1</sup> Ṭabarī, *Annals*, I, p. 1052, ed. de Goeje:

وجدنا فرميشا ملك الهند كتب إلينا في سنة ست و ثلثين من ملكنا وقد أوفدهم إلينا  
فكتب في أمور شتى و أهدي لنا ولكم معشر ابنائنا هدايا

"We found that PHRMISHA, king of India, wrote to us in the 36th year of our reign and he had sent an embassy to us and wrote about various matters and sent presents to us and all our sons."

*À propos* PHRMISHA, Prof. Nöldeke says:

"As the Arabs use *Ph* for the Persian *P* and *I* for the Persian *E* we must write the name PRMESHĀ. At the same time as *R* and *L* are written with the same sign in Pehlvi, so is *R* to be taken as a false mode of expressing *L*. As *M* may be substituted for *K* (*Q*) in the Arabic, or in the Pehlvi, it follows that the name may be correctly represented in Pehlvi by PLKSA and read as Pulikēs'a." Footnote 1, p. 92, Burgess, *Notes on the Baudddha Rock-Temples of Ajanta*, Bombay (1879), No. 9, Archaeological Survey of Western India.

The thirty-sixth year of the reign of Chosroes (Parwiz) corresponds with 18 June 625 to 17 June 626 A.D. Chosroes was dethroned on the 25th February 628 A.D. and put to death a few days later. (Nöldeke.)



Numerous burial-urns and bricks with cuneiform characters have been found here, and also engraved stones and vestiges of ancient buildings. Ouseley says that "the peasants when digging frequently expose to view remains of canals, aqueducts and ancient wells, larger in size and in construction far better than those of ordinary make<sup>1</sup>"; and that "out of the plain near Būshahr many vases have been taken, formed of ill-baked clay, and filled with seeds of the plant *tulah* or mallows, which soon decay, when affected by the fresh air<sup>2</sup>." Altogether, the evidence of Rīshahr's prosperity is unquestionable: "the town may date back," says Mr Streck, "to the period of Babylon's prosperity<sup>3</sup>."

Our concern, however, is not with the antiquity of Rīshahr but its modernity: not how far the town can date back but how far it can be made to go forward. Now, according to the *Kārnāma*, Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān, on founding Firūzābād, dug for the city a large tank whence water was conveyed by means of four canals<sup>4</sup>; and, a little lower down, the *Kārnāma* adds that even the course of a river was deflected into the city through subterranean canals<sup>5</sup>. Similarly, according to Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān irrigated with canals the city of Batn Ardashīr<sup>6</sup> founded by him in the island of Bahrain. It appears, therefore, that the canals of Rīshahr, mentioned by Ouseley, are also to be ascribed to Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān, the founder or rather the restorer of Rīshahr<sup>7</sup>. Lord Curzon, moreover, supposes that the burial-urns found in Rīshahr contain the remains of Zoroastrians after the body had perished by exposure<sup>8</sup>; and finally tradition ascribes the *tulah* seeds to the Fire-worshippers who kept these seeds in their houses,

<sup>1</sup> William Ouseley, *Travels in the East*, Vol. I., p. 214, London (1819).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* article on Būshīr, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, p. 802 b.

<sup>4</sup> *Kārnāma-i-Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān*, Ch. iv., 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, Ch. iv., 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ḥamza of Iṣfahān, *Annals*, p. 49, Gottwaldt's edition.

<sup>7</sup> *Idem*, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> G. Curzon, *Persia*, Vol. II., p. 225, London (1892).



because the *tulah* plant follows the sun's diurnal course and so turns like a Zoroastrian, as Ouseley supposes, in adoration towards the sun. Therefore though the prosperity of Rīshahr may not have been initiated by Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān it was certainly maintained and even revived by him, and it follows *ipso facto* that Rīshahr was one of the principal ports of the Sāsānian Empire.

There remains now the town of Hurmuz. Situated at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, in the district bearing the significant name of Mughistān, that is, the land of the Mughhs, Fire-worshippers, it was a port of call for sea-going vessels to Ceylon and the pepper-country, and for coasting vessels to Daibul and Gujarāt. "The district of Hurmuz was very rich in agricultural products (wine, wheat, barley, rice, and indigo), and in minerals (gold, silver, copper, iron, cinnabar, and salt), but its resources were not fully developed till mediaeval times."

And so from these ports of Ubullah, Rīshahr, and Hurmuz the stately ships went on to their haven under the hill—to "Sindu, Orrhotha, Calliana, Sibor, and the five marts of Māle which export pepper—Parti, Mangarouth, Salopatana, Nalopatana, Poudopatana. And then out in the ocean, at the distance of five days and nights from the continent, lies Sielediba, that is, Taprobane<sup>1</sup>." And since, according to Procopius, the Persian trader came essentially in search of silk<sup>2</sup>, and since Barbaricum, at the mouth of the Indus, exported silk-yarn<sup>3</sup>, whilst Barygaza (Broach)<sup>4</sup> and the Malabār ports of Muziris, Neleynda, and Bacare exported silk-cloth<sup>5</sup>, it is obvious that only a coastal voyage from Hurmuz to Ceylon could have enabled the Persians to monopolize the silk-trade of India, and to dictate terms to the Roman consumer<sup>6</sup>, for whom silk was not a luxury but a necessity. In other words, the adoption of the

<sup>1</sup> Cosmos Indicopleustes, *The Christian Topography*, Bk. XI., Eng. tr. pp. 366–367, ed. McCrindle, London (1897).

<sup>2</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *De Bello Persico*, Bk. I., xx., 9–12.

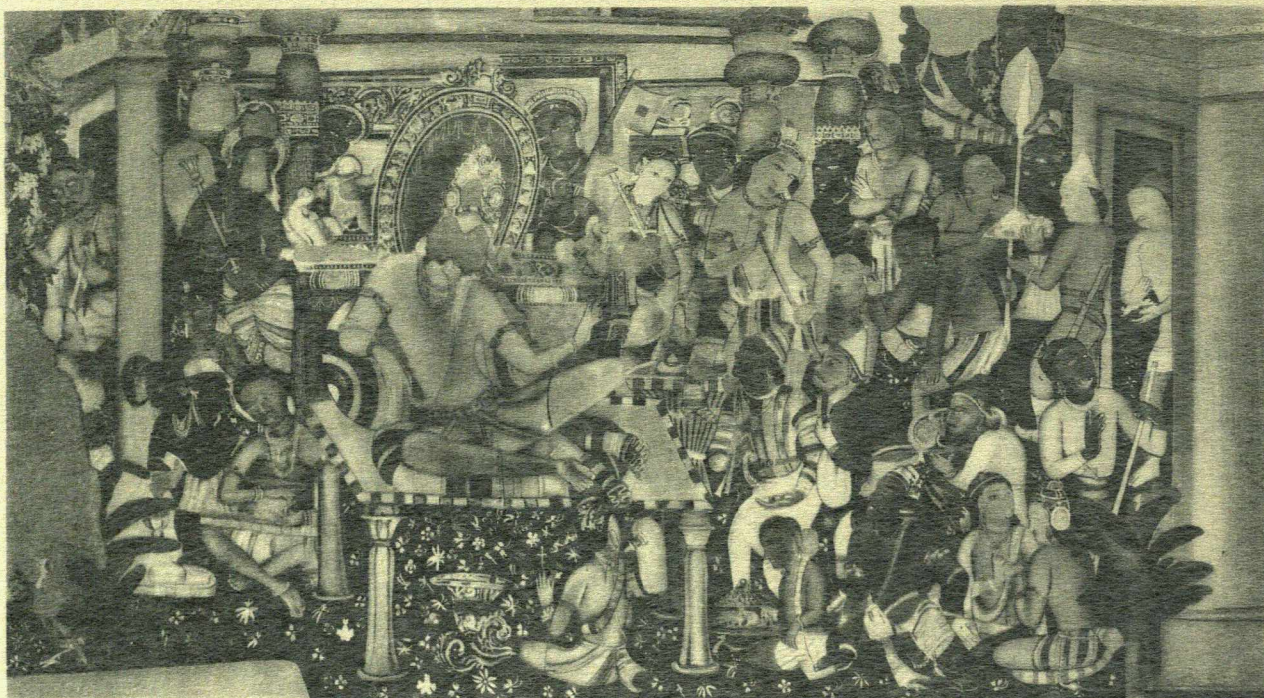
<sup>3</sup> *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, 49.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, 56.

<sup>6</sup> Procopius of Caesarea, *De Bello Persico*, Bk. I., xx., 9.





PERSIAN AMBASSADORS AT THE COURT OF PULAKĒŚIN II, AJANTA



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a stick in his hand. Behind are two horses, and in front of them a sipahi or soldier with a sword<sup>1</sup>."

If, as is almost certain, the Indian King represented is Pulakēśin II<sup>2</sup>, the sovereign of the Deccan, an embassy of Persians to him can have come only from Khusraw Parwiz<sup>3</sup> who was put to death in A.D. 628. And this embassy, moreover, can have come only by sea, for geographically, the shortest route from Persia to the Deccan was by sea, and politically, the overland route, which lay through the empire of Harsha, was barred, as Harsha had coveted the kingdom of Pulakēśin II and had failed to obtain it by open warfare in 620 A.D.<sup>4</sup> The fresco painting, therefore, though it contains no reference to the sea, is essentially a record of Persian maritime intercourse with Southern India, during the reign of Khusraw Parwiz.

But there is a sequel to this embassy-picture. Mr Schoff says that "in the cave-paintings at Ajanta, commemorative of the visit of a Persian embassy in the early 7th century, a ship is shown which, if not a junk, is manifestly influenced by that type of vessel<sup>5</sup>." Elsewhere he calls this ship a Persian ship<sup>6</sup> but his view is not supported by the description of Burgess<sup>7</sup>:

"Between the first and second cell-doors, below, is represented with a conventionalism worthy of the Chinese, a river (perhaps the Gangā) with many fish and shells in it. A boat with three masts, a jib-sail, and an oar behind, and filled towards the stern with ten *matkas* or earthenware jars, carries a man in it with long hair who is praying. In the heaven behind, Chandra—the Moon, a

<sup>1</sup> J. Burgess, *Notes on the Bauddha Rock-Temples of Ajanta*, pp. 22–23, Bombay (1879), No. 9, Archaeological Survey of Western India.

<sup>2</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 290, Oxford (1911).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>4</sup> Vincent A. Smith, *The Early History of India*, p. 340, Oxford (1914).

<sup>5</sup> Schoff, in his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Notes, pp. 247–248 (1912).

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, p. 244.

<sup>7</sup> J. Burgess, *Notes on the Bauddha Rock-Temples of Ajanta*, p. 38, Bombay (1879), No. 9, Archaeological Survey of Western India.



figure with a crescent behind him—is represented as coming to him, followed by another figure. A Nāga Rāja and his wife in the water seem to draw the boat back ; and below is represented another similar figure with a human head and long tail in the water. On the left, to which the boat is going, is Buddha on the shore, and a figure worshipping him. On the shores, rocks are conventionally painted.”

C. Torr calls the ship at Ajanta by the vague name of a merchant-ship<sup>1</sup>, and gives a scattered description, which may be presented collectively as follows :

“The ship is fully rigged and has three masts—a main mast with a yard and a square sail, a foremast or bowsprit with a yard and square sail, and a mizen with perhaps a similar yard and sail<sup>2</sup>. On each bow there is a huge eye, a relic of the sentiment that a ship is a living thing and must see her way ; but in course of time they probably were turned to account as hawse-holes for the anchor-cables. The anchors used to be suspended from the catheads a little way abaft of these hawse-holes<sup>3</sup>.

There is a pair of very large oars at the stern, one on either side<sup>4</sup>, and the steering-oars are fastened to the sides of the ship, just below the gunwale, by tying the loom of the oar between a pair of pegs<sup>5</sup>. The steering-oars could thus be worked like oars for rowing ; and while the rowers drove the ship ahead and astern by pulling their oars forward or pushing them aft, the steerer drove her to port and starboard by pulling his oar inboard or pushing it outboard, if he steered with one, and moving the other in the same direction, if he steered with two<sup>6</sup>.”

All the available information about the Ajanta ship has now been given and though it is doubtful whether this ship is Persian it is almost certain that it belongs to the same class as the merchant-ships of Sāsānian Persia. This type of shipping, indeed, was fairly common in late Sāsānian times in the Indian Ocean, and Schoff gives an illustration of “an Andhra coin, showing a two-masted ship presenting details like those of the Gujarati ship at Boroboedor, and the Persian ship at Ajanta<sup>7</sup>.”

With the external evidence of the fresco paintings there must

<sup>1</sup> C. Torr, *Ancient Ships*, p. 139, Cambridge (1894).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, p. 75.

<sup>6</sup> *Idem*, p. 76.

<sup>7</sup> Schoff, in his edition of *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, p. 244 (1912).





also be mentioned the internal evidence of the *Boar Hunt* of Khusraw Parwiz, supplied by a bas-relief at Tāq-i-Bustān, and described in detail by Prof. Rawlinson.

“Elephants, twelve in number, drive the game into an enclosure without exit. Within this space nearly a hundred boars and pigs may be counted. The ground being marshy, the monarch occupies a boat in the centre, and from this transfixes the game with his arrows. No one else takes part in the sport, unless it be the riders on a troop of five elephants, represented in the lower middle portion of the tablet. When the pigs fall they are carried into a second enclosure, that on the right, where they are upturned, disembowelled, and placed across the backs of elephants, which convey them to the abode of the monarch. The scene is enlivened by music. Two bands of harpers occupy boats on either side of that which carries the king, while another harper sits with him in the boat from which he delivers his arrows. In the water about the boats are seen reeds, ducks, and numerous fishes. The oars by which the boats are propelled have a singular resemblance to those which are represented in some of the earliest Assyrian sculptures. Near the top of the tablet towards the left, five figures standing in a boat seem to be clapping their hands in order to drive the pigs towards the monarch; while in the right centre of the picture there is another boat, more highly ornamented than the rest, in which we seem to have a second representation of the king, differing from the first only in the fact that his arrow has flown, and that he is in the act of taking another arrow from an attendant. In this second representation the king's head is surrounded by a nimbus or glory<sup>1</sup>.”

The *Boar Hunt*, then, is essentially a scene of fresh-water navigation, containing in all five round boats, which correspond closely with Assyrian boats and with the *kufas* in use upon the Tigris and Euphrates at the present day<sup>2</sup>. One of the boats in the *Boar Hunt* carries seven men, with a rower at the stem and another at the stern, and either rower facing in the same direction. Two other boats have only one rower each, but the total number of men in one is six, and in the other five. The remaining two boats are royal boats, and carry five men each, inclusive of the two rowers in

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*, pp. 615–616, London (1876).

<sup>2</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient World*, Vol. II., p. 172, London (1864).





## SĀSĀNĪAN NAVIGATION

each boat who face in opposite directions. This unusual mode of rowing recalls the fresh-water navigation of early Assyrian times, which involved a pulling at the stem with a simultaneous pushing at the stern<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, all the oars are short poles terminating in a head shaped like a small axe or hammer, and resemble early Assyrian oars, as Prof. Rawlinson has pointed out. The nautical element in the *Boar Hunt*, therefore, is largely, if not exclusively, Assyrian.

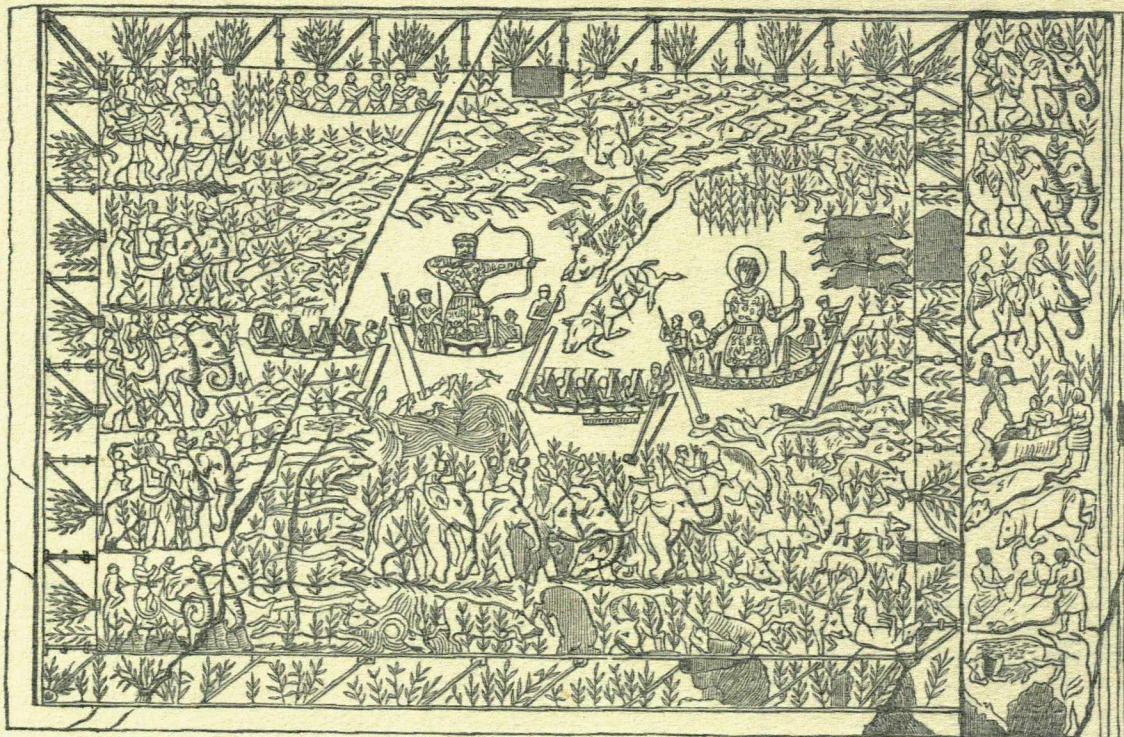
This correspondence is more than a mere coincidence. Why should a nation which had opened the sea-route to China and supplanted the Arab and the Hindu and the Roman trader in the Indian Ocean have continued the use of Assyrian boats on inland streams and marshes, and pulled and pushed them with the primitive axe-headed poles of Assyria? The evidence of Persian art is obviously irreconcilable with the written evidence of history, and it follows, therefore, that either the artist had never had an intimate knowledge of the sea, or else he has deliberately sacrificed truth to convention.

"There are plenty of pictures of ships," says C. Torr, "on painted vases and in frescoes and mosaics...for they were constantly in favour with the artists of antiquity. But these works of art must all be taken at a discount. In dealing with so large a subject as a ship, an ancient artist would seize upon some characteristic, and give prominence to this by suppressing other features; and then would modify the whole design to suit the space at his disposal. Moreover, the treatment would vary with the form of art, painters and sculptors seeing things from different points of view; and it would vary also with the period, as art went through its phases. So, works of art may easily be taken to imply a difference in the ships themselves, when the difference is only in the mode of representing them<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> G. Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient World*, Vol. II, p. 172, London (1864).

<sup>2</sup> C. Torr, *Ancient Ships*, Preface, viii, Cambridge (1894).





THE BOAR HUNT OF KHUSRAW PARWIZ  
From G. Rawlinson's *Seventh Great Oriental Monarchy*





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PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN EARLY  
MUHAMMADAN TIMES



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN EARLY MUHAMMADAN TIMES

“Islām,” says Martin Hartmann, “has as a rule been afraid of the sea; from the very beginning it was impressed with a sense of the supremacy of the unbelievers on the ocean and made practically no efforts to dispute their dominion. When we do find Muḥammadans undertaking naval expeditions, they were almost always disastrous: all attacks on Byzantium, for example, from the sea failed<sup>1</sup>.” Similarly, when ‘Alā’, the governor of Baḥrain, crossed the Gulf and landed his men on the Persian coast and tried to advance upon Persepolis (16 A.H. = 637 A.D.), he found himself cut off from the sea, and so harassed by the Persians that he had to abandon his ships and turn as a last resort towards Baṣra. But that line of communication had also been intercepted, and it was only a relief-force from Baṣra, consisting of twelve thousand men sent by the Caliph ‘Umar, which enabled the beleaguered army to retire on ‘Irāq. But the success of the retreat by land did not make the Caliph ‘Umar forget the failure of the advance by sea—not that he contemplated retrieving the naval disaster but that he was going to ban the sea and forbid naval operations for ever.

“Muavia,” says Muir, “had long keenly missed the support of a fleet, and in fact had sought permission from Omar to embark his soldiery in ships. ‘The isles of the Levant,’ he wrote, ‘are close to the Syrian shore; you might almost hear the barking of the dogs and cackling of the hens; give me leave to attack them.’ But Omar dreaded the sea, and wrote to consult Amru, who answered thus:— ‘The sea is a boundless expanse, whereon great ships look like tiny specks; nought but the heavens above and the waters beneath; when calm, the sailor’s heart is broken; when tempestuous, his senses reel. Trust it little, fear it much. Man at sea is an insect on a splinter, now engulfed, now scared to death.’ On receipt of this alarming account, Omar forbade Muavia to have anything to do with ships;—‘The Syrian sea, they tell me, is longer and broader than the dry land, and is instant with the Lord, night and day, seeking to swallow it up. How should I trust my people on its accursed bosom? Remember ‘Alā’. Nay,

<sup>1</sup> Martin Hartmann, article on China, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, p. 844 a.



my friend, the safety of my people is dearer to me than all the treasures of Greece !' Nothing, therefore, was attempted by sea in the reign of Omar. But on his death, Muavia reiterated the petition, and Othman at last relaxed the ban, on condition that maritime service should be voluntary<sup>1</sup>."

Now this Muslim aversion to the sea does not arise from either the *Qur'ān* or the Prophet's traditions. "There was nothing against seafaring in the teaching of Muḥammad; on the contrary, the almost reverent mention of the ships which God causes to sail upon the sea might rather have encouraged it<sup>2</sup>." The maritime passivity of Islām, therefore, is to be sought in the conditions of life governing pre-Islamic Arabia. As has been previously stated, the hinterland Arab had been from time immemorial a predatory nomad, even as the coastal Arab had been a sailor and a trader. Now Islām, whilst it was addressed to the entire peninsula of Arabia, was meant essentially for the Beduin; and it is the conversion of the Beduin to the leadership of an empire extending from Spain to the walls of China which is the supreme achievement of Islām. Therefore, since the leaders of the Islamic Empire were the Arabs of the interior, and since these Arabs were not compelled by Islām to renounce their traditional dislike to the sea, a fundamental difference arose in Islām according as it came by water and as it came by land. "When it came by water it remained on the coast and when it came by land it remained in the interior<sup>3</sup>." And it remained in the interior, because it was brought there by the Arab of the interior, the enthusiastic soldier of the Prophet; and it remained on the coast, because it was conveyed there by the coastal Arab, who, though professedly a Muslim, was essentially an

<sup>1</sup> W. Muir, *The Caliphate, its Rise, Decline, and Fall*, p. 212 (1892).

<sup>2</sup> *Vide Qur'ān*, x., 22 :

"He it is who makes you travel by land and sea ; until when you are in the ships, and they sail on with them in a pleasant breeze, and they rejoice at it, a violent wind overtakes them and the billows surge in on them from all sides, and they become certain that they are compassed about, they pray to Allāh, being sincere to Him in obedience: If Thou dost deliver us from this, we will most certainly be of the grateful ones."

<sup>3</sup> Martin Hartmann, article on China, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, pp. 843 b-844 a.



## EARLY MUHAMMADAN TIMES

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old Himyarite trader with the peace-loving instinct of a thousand years of civilization. In a sense, therefore, the difference in Islām as it came by land and as it came by water is a measure of the difference in religious zeal between the Beduin and the Himyarite.

This difference reaches its supreme expression in the history of the Arab conquest of Sāsānian Persia. For though the Empire ended with the fall of Yazdigird during the orthodox caliphate of 'Uthmān, the sea-trade of Persia was still alive in the Far East during the 'Abbāsīd caliphate of Al-Mutawakkil (847-861 A.D.). And in support of the survival of this trade in Muḥammadan times the evidence is abundant, reliable, and conclusive.

"I, I-tsing," says I-tsing, "was in the Western Capital (Ch'ang-an) in the first year of the Hsien-hêng period (670 A.D.), studying and hearing lectures....In the second year of the Hsien-hêng period (671 A.D.) I kept the summer retreat in Yang-fu<sup>1</sup>. In the beginning of autumn I met unexpectedly an imperial envoy, Fêng Hsiao-ch'ian of Kong-chou<sup>2</sup>; by the help of him I came to the town of Kwang-tung, where I fixed the date of meeting with the owner of a Persian ship to embark for the south....At last I embarked from the coast of Kwang-chou (Canton), in the eleventh month in the second year of the Hsien-hêng period (671 A.D.) and sailed for the Southern Sea<sup>3</sup>....At this time the first monsoon began to blow, when our ship proceeded towards the Red South<sup>4</sup>, with the ropes a hundred cubits long, suspended from above, two by two. In the beginning of the season, in which we separate from the constellation Chi, the pair of sails, each in five lengths, flew away, leaving the sombre north behind. Cutting through the immense abyss, the great swells of water lie like a mountain on the sea. Joining sideways with a vast gulf-stream, the massive waves like clouds dash against the sky. Before sailing twenty days the ship reached Bhoga, where I landed and stayed six months, gradually learning the Sabdavidyā (Sanskrit grammar)<sup>5</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> "Yang-chou (= Yangju of Marco Polo) in Kiang-su."

<sup>2</sup> "Old name for the S.E. part of Kwang-si."

<sup>3</sup> *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, sent home from the Southern Sea by I-tsing, tr. by J. Takakusu, p. 211, Oxford (1896).

<sup>4</sup> "The colour assigned to the south is red, and that to the north is sombre."

<sup>5</sup> The *Ta-t'ang-si-yu-ku-fa-kao-sêng-Ch'uan*, tr. by J. Takakusu, and given in his edition of I-tsing's *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, pp. xxvii-xxx, Oxford (1896).





## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN

From I-tsing's *Record and Memoirs*, therefore, is obtained the important information that navigation between Canton and Bhoga (Palembang)—the capital of Sumatra, on the River Bhoga, and in the south-east of the island—was conducted by a Persian merchant, and the distance between the two ports was about twenty days by a favourable wind. Sometimes, when the weather was less favourable, the distance was covered in a month<sup>1</sup>.

Equally interesting is the evidence of the *Tcheng yüan sin ting che kiao mou lou*, compiled by Yüan-tchao in the beginning of the ninth century A.D. About the year 717 A.D.,

“Vajrabodhi arrived at the island of Ceylon....Thirty-five Persian ships were found there, come to trade in precious stones. As soon as the Persian merchants saw Vajrabodhi they followed him with one accord. After a month's stay in Ceylon, Vajrabodhi obtained royal permission to depart and sailed with the faithful Persian merchants. A month's sailing brought them to Fo-che (= Cheli-fo-che) or Palembang. The end of the voyage was disastrous; all the ships of the merchants were scattered by tempest, and only the ship in which Vajrabodhi was sailing reached port<sup>2</sup>.”

Eventually, “Vajrabodhi arrived at Canton in the year 720 A.D.”<sup>3</sup>

After the rise of Islām, therefore, Persian navigation was not merely isolated between China and Sumatra, but extended to Ceylon, and, as will be shown presently, to the ports of the Persian Gulf. Nor was this navigation unaccompanied by colonization, for the Chinese priest Kan shin (Kien chen) from Yang chou in 748 A.D. mentions the existence of a very large Persian village in the island of Hainan<sup>4</sup>. Nor again was the colonization merely insular, for the

<sup>1</sup> “Wu-hing came to Sribhoga (Sumatra) after a month's sail.” See J. Takakusu, I-tsing's *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, p. xlvi, Oxford (1896).

<sup>2</sup> G. Ferrand, *Voyage de Vajrabodhi*, given in his *Relations de Voyages et Textes Géographiques, relatifs à l'Extrême-Orient*, Vol. II., p. 637, Paris (1914).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>4</sup> J. Takakusu in *Premier Congrès int. des Études d'Ext.-Orient*, p. 58, Hanoi (1903), quoted by Yule in his *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I., n. 2, p. 100.



*History of the T'ang* (Chap. 258<sup>b</sup>, Article *Po ssu*) states that "the *Ta-shi* (Arabs) and *Po-sse* (Persians) together, A.D. 758, sacked and burnt the city of Kwang chou (Canton) and went back by sea<sup>1</sup>." "This appears to me," says Dr Bretschneider, "to be the last time that the Persians are mentioned under the name of *Po ssu* (*Po-se*, or *Po-sse*) in Chinese history<sup>2</sup>."

Here, as elsewhere, the word for Persia in Chinese records is *Po-se* but whilst Persia is undoubtedly *Po-se*, *Po-se* is not necessarily Persia. For, according to the *Man šu* (p. 43) of Fan Čo, written about 860 A.D., "the country P'iao (Burma) is situated seventy-five days' journey (or two thousand *li*) south of the city of Yuñ-č'añ.... It borders on Po-se and P'o-lo-men (Brāhmaṇa); in the west, however, on the city Še-li." "It is clearly expressed in this document," says Mr Laufer, "that Po-se, as known under the T'ang, was a locality somewhere conterminous with Burma, and on the mainland of Asia<sup>3</sup>."

Similarly, in another passage of the *Man šu* (p. 29) it is stated that the people of the country P'o-lo-men (Brāhmaṇa), Po-se, Še-p'o (Java), P'o-ni (Borneo), and K'un-lun flock together for barter at Ta-yin-k'un<sup>4</sup> where is both gold and musk and where many precious stones are found. And, according to Mr Laufer, the Malayan Po-se is again to be understood here, and not Persia, as has been proposed by Prof. P. Pelliot<sup>5</sup>.

Confronted with the existence of the Malayan Po-se, Dr Bretschneider has advanced a theory that the Po-se of the Archipelago, alleged to have been on Sumatra, owes its origin to the fact that "the Persians carried on a great trade with Sumatra and probably

<sup>1</sup> See E. Bretschneider, *On the Knowledge possessed by the Ancient Chinese of the Arabs and Arabian colonies and other Western Countries*, p. 10, London (1871), where the Chinese text is quoted.

<sup>2</sup> E. Bretschneider, *Notes and Queries on China and Japan*, IV., p. 57, quoted by Yule in his *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I., n. 2, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 468.

<sup>4</sup> Its site is undetermined: "probably situated on the Gulf of Siam."

<sup>5</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 469.



had colonies there<sup>1</sup>." On meagre linguistic material<sup>2</sup> this theory has been condemned by Mr Laufer as an "unfounded speculation which has been justly rejected by G. E. Gerini<sup>3</sup>."

But G. E. Gerini has said far less than he has been made to say, for these are his exact words<sup>4</sup>:

"As regards *Po-sz*, it might just as well refer to the Basīsi (or Basīsik بسیسک) tribe in the more southern parts of that coast. In *circa* 1240 Chao Ju-kua mentions a place identically called *Po-sz* or *Po-ssu*, of which Dr Hirth remarks: 'here probably not Persia, but some other country, which I have not been able to identify' (see *J.R.A.S.*, 1896, p. 479). (Elsewhere) we have seen the same name applied, according to Dr Bretschneider, to part of the west coast of North Sumatra, from the fact of the Persians carrying on a large trade with that country, and probably having colonies there. I shall revert to this point later on and show that the term *Po-sz* in the region in question has no connection whatever with Persians, although I fully admit the possibility of their having settled there in a certain number, as they did at many other trading centres in Further India. I-tsing in the seventh century tells us of their frequent navigations between East Sumatra and Canton; Kan-shin three-quarters of a century later (748-749 A.D.) finds an extensive Persian settlement in South Hainan (see Takakusu in the *Proceedings of the Premier Congrès int. des Études d'Extrême-Orient*, Hanoi, 1903, pp. 58-59); Muhallabi (*circa* 1000 A.D.), quoted by Abū-l-Fedā, mentions Persians living in the city of the island of *Kalah*, and so forth. According to Dr Bretschneider's theory, then, all these places should have become known to the Chinese as *Po-sz*, which was by no means the case; hence the untenability of the theory itself and its self-condemnation on its own showing."

Gerini, therefore, both agrees and disagrees with Bretschneider: he denies Bretschneider's attempt to identify Po-se always with Persia on the theory of an extensive colonization of Sumatra by

<sup>1</sup> E. Bretschneider, *On the Knowledge possessed by the Ancient Chinese of the Arabs and Arabian colonies and other Western Countries*, n. 1, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, p. 473, where two Po-se words, *hei-nan* and *pai-nan*, meaning originally black and white and used to designate rhinoceros-horn and ivory respectively, are cited from the *Yu yan tsa tsu* and shown to be of Malayan and not of Persian origin.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>4</sup> G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, n. 2, p. 471, London (1909).



Persian traders; but he does not deny, therefore, the possibility of a Persian colonization of Sumatra on a small scale. Furthermore, it is not on compromise but on reason that this attitude of Gerini is maintained:

"That there were of old both Arab and Persian settlements in the Achèh district and even at other places on either the northern or western coasts of Sumatra is very probable—nay almost certain; for these coasts lie within close proximity to the Nikobārs, which, as is well known, formed one of the capital stations and landmarks on the Arab and Persian sea-route across the Bay of Bengal. Owing to this fact, the north-west seaboard of Sumatra must have been often touched at, especially when the southern drift of the currents in the Bay of Bengal compelled the vessels to pass within sight of it, or hurricanes eventually threw those vessels against that coast and forced them to seek a refuge there. A proof of such views is afforded by the accounts of the Arab travellers themselves, which show that not only Lambri, but Bārūs, were well known to their countrymen, who seem to have carried on a busy traffic at their sea-ports since at least the middle of the tenth century....It cannot, therefore, seem credible that from the mere fact of the Arabs and Persians having had a few petty settlements there, the land could come to be called after them the *Tājika* or *Parsi* country<sup>1</sup>."

The question germane to our subject, however, is not whether *Po-se* is homonymous but whether the *Po-se* of I-tsing and Vajrabodhi and Kien chen is Īrānian or non-Īrānian. And it is precisely here that the argument of Mr Laufer is the weakest. Vajrabodhi, indeed, he does not discuss, but about the other two he says<sup>2</sup>:

"In 742 A.D., a Buddhist priest from Yan-čou on the Yangtse, Kien-čen by name, undertook a voyage to Japan, in the course of which he also touched at Canton in 748 A.D. In the brief abstract of his diary given by the Japanese scholar J. Takakusu, we read, 'Dans la rivière de Canton, il y avait d'innombrables vaisseaux appartenant aux brahmanes, aux Persans, aux gens de Kounloun (tribu malaise).' The text of the work in question is not at my disposal, but there can be no doubt that it contains the triad P'o-lo-men, Po-se, K'un-lun,

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*. pp. 679-680, London (1909).

<sup>2</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, pp. 469-470.



as mentioned in the *Man šu*, and that the question is not of Brahmans, but of the country and people P'o-lo-men on the border of Burma, the Po-se likewise on the border of Burma, and the Malayan K'un-lun. In the first half of the eighth century, accordingly, we find the Malayan Po-se as a seafaring people trading with the Chinese at Canton. Consequently also the alleged 'Persian' settlement on the south coast of Hainan, struck by the traveller, was a Malayan Po-se colony. In view of this situation, the further question may be raised whether the pilgrim Yi Tsiñ (I-tsing) in 671 A.D. sought passage at Canton on a Persian ship. This vessel was bound for Palembang on Sumatra, and sailed the Malayan waters; again, in my opinion, the Malayan Po-se, not the Persians, are here in question."

But, as has already been mentioned, the *History of the T'ang* states that in the year 758 A.D. the *Ta-shi*, together with the *Po-se*, sacked and burnt the city of Canton. And it is obvious from the association of the *Po-se* with the *Ta-shi* (Arabs) that the *Po-se* here concerned are the Persian *Po-se*. Therefore, if the Persians were in Canton in 758 A.D., they must, obviously, have been in Canton also ten years earlier, even as the Buddhist priest Kien chen has recorded. Why should it be impossible then for I-tsing to meet the owner of a Persian ship at Canton in 671 A.D.? Merely because she was to sail the Malayan waters<sup>1</sup>?

Furthermore, Mr Laufer, whilst denying the presence of pre-Muhammadan Persian ships in China<sup>2</sup>, has himself admitted the appearance of "really Persian ships in the Far East" after the rise of Islām<sup>3</sup>. This almost amounts to a contradiction, for all the dates under discussion—758 A.D., 748 A.D., 717 A.D., and 671 A.D.—are dates posterior to the rise of Islām. The argument, however, is not based entirely on circumstantial reasoning—the evidence of Hwi Čao, recovered by Prof. P. Pelliot from a rock-chamber at Tun-huang in 1908 A.D., is so conclusive that Mr Laufer himself has admitted it as

<sup>1</sup> Similarly (*vide* S. Beal, *Life of Hiuen-Tsiang*, p. xxxix, London, 1911) Hiuen-Ta, a priest of Kung-chow, from the district of Kiang Ning, appears to have accompanied an envoy in a Persian ship to the southern seas (Sribhoga).

<sup>2</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, n. 4, p. 470.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, "Only from the Mohammedan period did really Persian ships appear in the far east," n. 4, p. 470.



the best evidence<sup>1</sup> on Persian maritime activity during the eighth century of the Christian era.

"This little work," says Prof. F. Hirth, "which had been lost to later generations and which possibly had never been circulated to any extent among readers in China, is the *Hui-ch'au-wang-wu-t'ien-chau-kuo-chuan*, i.e., 'Account of Hui-ch'au's travels to the countries of the Five Indies.' What we have now is merely a fragment the beginning and end of which are lost; but, such as it is, the fragment is a most valuable contribution towards our knowledge of the Asiatic countries as represented in Chinese literature....In the text itself the traveller says that he came to An-si, the seat of a Chinese resident, at the beginning of the eleventh moon of the 15th year of K'ai-yüan, which date corresponds to the year 727 A.D."<sup>2</sup>

Passing now to the actual evidence of Hwi Čao, there is the following detailed information on Persia:

"From T'u-huo-lo (Tokharestan) you go one month and come to the country of Po-ssī (Persia). The ancestors of these kings had held sway over the Ta-shī (Arabs). The Ta-shī (Arabs) had been camel drivers to the kings of Po-ssī (Persia). Afterwards they had rebelled and then killed the other kings and set themselves up as masters of the country. So it happened that now this country has been by force swallowed up by the Ta-shī (Arabs). Their dress is the old one, namely a wide cotton shirt. They cut beard and hair. As regards food they indulge only in pastry and meat, but they have rice which is also ground into pastry and eaten. The country produces camels, mules, sheep, horses of extraordinary height and donkeys, cotton cloth and precious stones. The dialects spoken in the country differ from each other and from those of the remaining countries. The inhabitants being by nature bent on commerce, they are in the habit of sailing in big craft on the western sea, and they enter the southern sea to the Country of Lions (Ceylon)<sup>3</sup>, where they get precious stones, for which reason it is said of the country that it produces precious stones. They also go to the K'un-lun country<sup>4</sup> to fetch gold. They also sail in big craft to

<sup>1</sup> Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, n. 4, p. 470.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 33 (1913), article by F. Hirth on *The Mystery of Fu-lin*, pp. 202-204.

<sup>3</sup> The island of Ceylon was called *Sarandīb*, an alteration of the native name *Sinhala-dwīpa*, or "the Island of the Lions," i.e. Lion-hearted men.

<sup>4</sup> From the two texts of the *Man šu* above cited, K'un-lun must be a Malayan country. Prof. F. Hirth identifies it with the east coast of Africa, whence came the gold of Sofāla. But Sofāla was not the only place which produced gold; there was also Ta-yin-k'un in Malaya (*supra*, p. 99).



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION IN

the country of Han (China), straight to Canton for silk piece goods and the like ware. The country produces good fine cotton. The inhabitants enjoy the killing of living creatures (cattle); they serve Heaven (Allah) and do not know the law of Buddha<sup>1</sup>."

An analysis of this narrative reveals several facts of extreme importance. Firstly, that the Persians were "by nature bent on commerce"—a conclusion independently established by the evidence of Cosmas and Procopius. Secondly, that the Persians sailed to Ceylon in search of precious stones—information also supplied ten years earlier, *i.e.* in 717 A.D. by the voyage of Vajrabodhi. Thirdly, that the purchase of "silk piece goods and the like ware" made the Persians sail straight to Canton—a conclusion already reached by M. Ferrand on the basis of linguistic material. And fourthly and finally, that the Persians were in the habit of sailing in big craft both on the western and the southern sea—a fact which shows that Persian navigation was at its height in 727 A.D., and therefore that it must have commenced long prior to this date. For these reasons I am inclined to believe that Persian navigation of early Muḥammadan times was merely a continuation of Sāsānian navigation and that, as M. Ferrand has said, the Persians were the initiators of the Arabs in trade with the Far East.

The year 758 A.D., therefore, is of particular importance, both in the history of Persian and of Arabian navigation. It was in 758 A.D. that the Persians in China were in sufficient numbers to burn a sea-port of the size of Canton, and it is in 758 A.D. that the first record is obtained of Arab sea-trade with the Far East<sup>2</sup>. And it appears to me conclusive evidence of Hīmyarite preponderance

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 33 (1913), text and translation given by Prof. F. Hirth in the article on *The Mystery of Fu-lin*, pp. 204–205.

<sup>2</sup> According to the speculation of Messrs Hirth and Rockhill, "the Arabs appear to have had a settlement or colony in Canton as early as A.D. 300" (*Chau Ju-kua*, p. 4). The only fact adduced is as follows: "Kia Tan says, 'From the southern frontier of Po-lo-mön, by way of Mo-lai to Wu-la, all (this) is the eastern shore of the Green Sea' (the Arab name of the ocean). Po-lo-mön meant, therefore, the whole of the west coast of India" (*idem*, n. 6, p. 12).



in this trade, that a hundred and twenty years after his first recorded presence in China the Muslim Arab is still merely a trader, sharing the city of Khānfū (the modern Canton) with the Christian trader, the Zoroastrian, and the Jew. Says the merchant Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, from evidence obtained *in situ*:

“An officer, who was considerable for his employ, though not of the Royal Family, revolted some time ago. This man’s name was Baichu<sup>1</sup>, and he began with hostilities in the country, marching his arms into many places to the great loss of the inhabitants, till winning a party over to him by his liberalities, he got together a multitude of vagabonds and abandoned people, whom he formed into a considerable body of troops. His hands thus strengthened, and himself in a condition to undertake anything, he betrayed his design of subduing the empire to himself, and straight marched to Khānfū, one of the most noted cities in China, and, at that time, the port for all the Arabian merchants. This city stands upon a great river, some days distant from the entrance, so that the water there is fresh; but the citizens shutting their gates against him, he resolved to besiege the place, and the siege lasted a great while. This was transacted in the year of the *Hijra* 264<sup>2</sup> (= 878 A.D.). At last he became master of the city, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. There are persons fully acquainted with the affairs of China, who assure us, that besides the Chinese, who were massacred upon this occasion, there perished one hundred and twenty thousand Muhammadans, Jews, Christians, and Pārsis, who were there on account of traffic<sup>3</sup>. The number of the possessors of these four religions is exactly known, because the Chinese are extremely nice (scrupulous) in the accounts they keep of them. He also cut down the mulberry trees, and almost all the trees of other kinds, but we speak of the mulberry in particular, because the Chinese carefully cultivate it for the sake of its leaf, wherewith they subsist and propagate their silkworms. This devastation is the cause why silk has failed, and that the trade which used to be driven with it, in the countries under the Arabs, is quite stagnated.

<sup>1</sup> Or rather, Bābshū. Vide Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, *Silsilat al-Tawārīkh*, published by M. Reinaud in his *Relation des Voyages*, Vol. II., p. 62, Paris (1845):

نابغاً نبغ فيهم من غير بيت الملك يعرف بباشوا

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 63:

انه قتل من المسلمين واليهود و النصارى و المجوس سوى من قتل من اهل الصين  
ماية و عشرون الف رجل



Having sacked and destroyed Khānfū, he possessed himself of many other cities, which he attacked one after another....He advanced then to the capital called Cumdan; and the Emperor left this, his royal seat, making a confused retreat to the city of Hamdu, on the frontiers towards the province of Tibet. Meanwhile the rebel, puffed up by his great successes and perceiving himself master of the country, fell upon the other cities which he demolished, having first slain most of the inhabitants<sup>1</sup>, with a view in this general butchery to involve all the branches of the royal blood, that no one might survive to dispute the empire with him. We had news of these revolutions and of the total ruin of China which still continues<sup>2</sup>."

And since a little thing may harm a wounded man, the Chinese revolution of 878 A.D. which temporarily paralysed the Arab trade proved fatal to the Zoroastrian merchant who had survived the overthrow of his empire for more than a couple of centuries. And when, on the return of law and order, the East returned to her trade with the Far East<sup>3</sup>, the *Po-se* were gone<sup>4</sup> and the *Ta-shi* were all in all.

The spectacular feats of the professional sailors of Persia must not be allowed to overshadow the amateur performance of the Zoroastrian fugitives who took ship at Hurmuz in the middle of the eighth century A.D. and discovered a permanent home for

<sup>1</sup> "The insurrection took place during the reign of Hsi-Tsung (874-889 A.D.) and, according to Chinese accounts, eight million people lost their lives, and blood flowed for a thousand miles!"

<sup>2</sup> *Ancient Accounts of India and China by Two Mohammedan Travellers*, being an English translation of the narrative of Sulaimān and Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, by E. Renaudot, pp. 41-43, London (1733).

<sup>3</sup> Probably in the eleventh century A.D. For according to the *Murūju 'dh-Dhahab* of Mas'ūdī (written in 336 A.H. = 947 A.D., rewritten 345 A.H. = 956 A.D.; ed. de Meynard, Vol. I., p. 308) ships from Baṣra and China met at Kalah (= Kerah or Kra in Malacca): "in olden times it was otherwise when the Chinese ships sailed to the land of 'Umān, to Sirāf, the coasts of Fārs and Bahraïn, to Ubullah and Baṣra, and ships from these places likewise traded directly with China; it was only after justice could no longer be relied on... that they began to meet at this intermediate point."

<sup>4</sup> I am using *Po-se* here in the restricted sense of Zoroastrian Persians, for Muslim Persians disappeared from active competition only after the discovery of the Cape Route by the Portuguese.



themselves in India. According to the indigenous account of the emigration, given in 1600 A.D., by the *Qiṣṣa-i-Sanjān* of Bahman Kaykubād Hamjiyar Sanjāna, all the laymen and *dastūrs*, who would not embrace Islām, fled to Kūhistān where they found a temporary and apparently an insecure shelter for a hundred years. Safety, therefore, suggested a second flight and coming to the coastal town of Hurmuz<sup>1</sup> they resolved, after a brief stay of fifteen years, to seek a sovereign remedy for religious persecution. "A ship was made ready for the sea, and instantly they hoisted sail, placed the women and children in the vessel, and rowed hard for Hind. When the ship came in sight of land the anchor fell at Div<sup>2</sup>." Even so, the refugees were not at the end of their quest. The small island of Div or Diu, in the Gulf of Cambay, lying to the south of Kathiāwār, did not prove salubrious and it was decided to seek a second and a more congenial home elsewhere. Accordingly, "they set sail towards Gujarāt<sup>3</sup> but when the vessel had made some way into the sea a disastrous storm approached...; but by the blessing of the Fire of the glorious Bahrām, they luckily got over that trouble... and Providence so ordered it that all these people arrived near Sanjān<sup>4</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> The *Qiṣṣa-i-Sanjān*, British Museum MS. Add 27,268, f. 81<sup>b</sup>:

ابا دستور و بهدین یگانه بسوی شهر هرمز شد روانه

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, f. 82<sup>a</sup>:

سوی دریا چو کشتی ساز کرده همانکه بادبان بر پای کرده  
 زن و فرزند در کشتی نشاندند بسوی هند کشتی تند راندند  
 چو کشتی سوی هند آمد یکایک بدیسب افتاد لنگر وار بیشک

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, f. 82<sup>b</sup>:

سوی گجرات کشتی تیز راندند

The translations are by S. H. Hodivala, given in his *Studies in Parsi History*, pp. 100–101, Bombay (1920).

<sup>4</sup> Mr G. K. Narimān suggests that the indigenous version of the Pārsī flight is probably based on al-Balādhuri's reference to the Arab conquest of Kermān:

و هرب كثير من اهل كرمان فركبوا البحر ولحق بعضهم بمكران و اتى بعضهم بسجستان

Many of the people of Kermān fled by sea; some of them came to Makrān, and some to Sijistān. *Kitābu futūhi 'l-buldān*, ed. de Goeje, p. 392.



It is extremely improbable that there was only one isolated emigration to India or that the emigrants were accommodated in a single ship. Henry Lord, indeed, who was preacher at Surat to the East India Company, states on oral evidence, obtained in 1630 A.D., that the ancestors of the Pārsīs in India embarked from Jask in a fleet of seven junks, and that they landed at three different places on the coast of Gujarāt:

“So repairing to Iafques, a place in the Perfian gulph, they obtained a flecte of seauen Iuncks, to conuey them and theirs, as Merchantmen bound for the fhoares of India, in courfe of Trade and Merchandize. It happened that in safety they made to the land of St. Iohns on the fhoares of India, and arriued together, at or neere the Port of Swaley, the vfuall Receptacle of fuch Shippes as arriue there. Treaty was made by fome of them, with a Raiah liuing at Nuncery, publifhing their agreeuances, and the caufe of their comming thither, as alfo their fuite to bee admitted as Sojournors with them, vfing their owne Law and Religion, but yeelding themfelues in fubiectiion to their Gouvernment; vpon payment of homage and tribute, they were admitted to land the Paffengers, contained in five of their Iuncks.

The other two Iuncks remaining, one of them put into the Roade of Swaley, and treated with a Raiah that then refided at Baryaw neere vnto Surrat, who entertained them on like condition to the former; but the Raiah of that place, having warres with a neighbouring Raiah, who got the conqueft, the Perfes that refided with the conquered, were all put to the fword, as adherents to the Enemy.

The laft Iuncke coafted along the fhoares, and arriued at Cambaya, where they were received vpon the prementioned conditions, fo that howfoeuer the people have beene difperfed in India, fince their arriual, it hath beene from fome of thefe places<sup>1</sup>.”

Since then twelve centuries have gone by and the Pārsīs have not merely retained their natural impulse for trade and enterprise but have made themselves the most cultured and the most progressive people of India.

Passing now from the broad facts of Persian navigation to the description of Persian ships, no direct evidence *per se* is available,

<sup>1</sup> H. Lord, *A Display of two forraigne sects in the East Indies*, pp. 3-4, London (1630).



save what is incidentally contained in the account of I-tsing, 671 A.D.:

"At this time the first monsoon began to blow, when our ship proceeded towards the Red South, with the ropes a hundred cubits long, suspended from above, two by two. In the beginning of the season, in which we separate from the constellation Chi, the pair of sails, each in five lengths, flew away, leaving the sombre north behind. Cutting through the immense abyss, the great swells of water lie like a mountain on the sea. Joining sideways with a vast gulf-stream, the massive waves like clouds dash against the sky."

Or of Hwi Čao, 727 A.D.:

"The Persians are in the habit of sailing in big craft to the country of Han, straight to Canton."

Or of Tuan Ch'öng-shī (d. 863 A.D.), given on the authority of Ch'öng Fu-li:

"On the sea-going ships of the Persians many feed pigeons. These pigeons can fly several thousand *li*, and, when let loose, at a single flight they return to their homes, thus serving as a letter of good news<sup>1</sup>."

Consequently, it has to be assumed that the details of Persian shipping are more or less covered by the general description of foreign shipping, supplied by the *T'ang-Kuo-shi-pu* of Li Chan, and the *Silsilatu 't-Tawārikh* of Sulaimān. The plan may appear arbitrary but it is not intrinsically unsound. For Li Chan's description of foreign shipping applies to shipping at Canton during the period 713 to 825 A.D., and, as has repeatedly been stated even to the point of weariness, Persian ships used to sail straight to Canton in 727 A.D., and Persian merchants were even partly responsible in 758 A.D. for the sacking and burning of Canton. Similarly, Sulaimān's account of Muslim shipping at Canton was written in 851 A.D. and, according to Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, Zoroastrian traders were in Canton in 878 A.D. Therefore, though there is no explicit mention of Persian ships anywhere in Li Chan

<sup>1</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua, his work on the Chinese and Arab trade in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, entitled Chu-fan-chi*, n. 1, p. 28, St Petersburg (1911).



and Sulaimān, both the Arab and the Chinese accounts are here given as being approximately true also of Persian shipping in Canton during the eighth and the ninth century.

“On arriving at Canton each ship handed over its cargo to the agents of the Chinese government, and it was stored until the last ship of the season’s fleet arrived, when three-tenths of the merchandise was retained as import duty and the balance handed back to the owners. The principal imports into China were...ivory, frankincense, copper, tortoise-shell, camphor, and rhinoceros-horns<sup>1</sup>.

The ships engaged in this trade and which visited Canton were very large, so high out of the water that ladders several tens of feet in length had to be used to get aboard. The foreign (Fan) captains who commanded them were registered in the office of the Inspector of Maritime Trade (Shi-po-shi). This office (the existence of which, by the way, proves the importance of this trade), before allowing ships to clear, required that the manifests should be submitted to it, and then collected export duty and also the freight charges. The export of ‘precious and rare articles’ was forbidden, and attempts at smuggling were punished with imprisonment<sup>2</sup>.”

But “ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks.” “Accordingly,” says the sailing directory of Kia Tan, written between 785 and 805 A.D., “they have set up ornamented pillars in the Gulf of Persia, and on these pillars they place torches at night, so that people travelling on board ships shall not go astray<sup>3</sup>.” These elementary lighthouses existed till at least the tenth century, for Mas’ūdi says in 947–956 A.D.:

“Landmarks are set in the sea below Ubullah and ‘Abbādān. And people are put in charge to light a fire at night, on three stakes, like chairs, in the middle of the sea, as a precaution for the ships which come from ‘Umān, Sirāf, and elsewhere<sup>4</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill’s ed. of *Chau Ju-kua*, pp. 15–16, St Petersburg (1911).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Mas’ūdi, *Murūju ‘dh-Dhahab*, ed. B. de Meynard, Vol. I., p. 230, Paris (1864).



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And in 985 A.D. Muqaddasī adds in confirmation:

“On the skirts of al-Baṣra, small huts have been erected on palm trunks set in the sea, and people have been stationed thereon to keep a fire lighted at night, as a warning to ships to steer clear of this shallow place<sup>1</sup>.”

Sometimes, however, the shoals were so plentiful that navigation had to be totally suspended by night:

“On this account the passage is only made by day; in which case the ship-master takes his stand on the top and steadily looks into the sea. Two boys are likewise posted on his right and on his left. On espying a rock he at once calls to either of the boys to give notice of this to the helmsman by a loud cry. The latter, on hearing the cry, pulls one or the other of two ropes he holds in his hand to the right or to the left, according to the directions. If these precautions are not taken, the ship stands in danger of being wrecked against the rocks<sup>2</sup>.”

But when the ships had passed out of sight of land, and in the words of ‘Amr there was nought but the heavens above and the waters beneath, the *nākhudā* had to rely on “the regularity of the monsoons and steer solely by the sun, moon, and stars, taking, presumably, soundings as frequently as possible<sup>3</sup>.” Though a knowledge of the polarity of the magnetic needle had been acquired, the use of the mariner’s compass was unknown before the twelfth century<sup>4</sup>, and it was by the help of carrier-pigeons and shore-sighting birds that the ship kept her course or sent messages to land. And from the fifth to the twelfth century this mode of sailing in the Southern Sea was common to all ships, whether belonging to the East or the Far East.

But the risk of these early voyages arose more from piracy than from a primitive nautical technique. “The people of Ko-ko-sōng-chi (Brouwer’s islands),” writes Kia Tan between 785 and 805 A.D., “are cruel pirates and sailors dread them<sup>5</sup>.” And beyond Sumatra,

<sup>1</sup> Ranking’s tr. of Muqaddasī: *Aḥsanu ’t-Taqāsīm fī Ma’rifati ’l-Aqālīm*, p. 17, Calcutta (1897).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill’s ed. of *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 28, St Petersburg (1911).

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, p. 11.



the maritime population of South Siam and Cambodia was so piratical that the entire country came to be known as the country of the *Lestai* or the country of robbers<sup>1</sup>. And nearer at home the ports of Dwarka and Sōmnāth were nests of piratical Jats and Gurjjaras, so that, as Muqaddasī writes in 985 A.D.: "all ships sailing over this part of the sea are constrained to carry for protection a body of fighting men and throwers of naphtha<sup>2</sup>." There is no doubt that some ships were plundered, others bought themselves off by paying toll, others again avoided the dangerous route altogether. But when this was impracticable, as in the straits of Malacca, an iron chain was stretched permanently across the sea to keep off pirates, and it was only for allowing merchant-ships to pass that the chain was ever lowered<sup>3</sup>.

Whatever be the value of the protective measures against piracy, shoals, storms and breakers, the deciding factor in the maintenance of early sea-traffic was the certainty of material advancement. Though the risk was great, the gain was greater; and so they shot over the seething harbour-bar, the old pilots of *Po-se*, and sailed several thousand *li*, to the country of Han, straight to Canton. And to a discussion of the itinerary of this route it is now time to proceed.

It will be recalled that Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān built or re-built several towns on the Persian Gulf, amongst them Ubullah, Rishahr, and Hurmuz. Ubullah lay at the head of the Persian Gulf, on the navigable *Shatta 'l-'Arab*, and being the terminus of the Eastern sea-route, and the junction of the caravan-routes to 'Umān, Egypt, and Syria, was undoubtedly the premier port of the Sāsānian Empire. Next in importance was Rishahr, on the peninsula of Mesambria, and six miles to the south of the modern Būshahr.

<sup>1</sup> G. E. Gerini, *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of Eastern Asia*, p. 156, London (1909).

<sup>2</sup> Ranking's tr. of Muqaddasī: *Aḥsanu 'l-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifati 'l-Aqālīm*, p. 17, Calcutta (1897).

<sup>3</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill's ed. of *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 62, St Petersburg (1911).



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coastal route was an inevitable response to trade-conditions in late Sāsānian times<sup>1</sup>.

But when the Persian trader had exceeded the limits of the Hīmyarite and obtained his silk directly from China, the long coasting voyage had to be replaced, or supplemented, by a direct and open sea-route. For this reason, probably, a gradual recession took place in the headquarters of the trade with India and China. "From Obolla it was transferred to the neighbouring city of Baṣra, built by the Caliph 'Omar on the first conquest of 'Irāq (636 A.D.); from Baṣra it descended to Sīrāf on the northern shore of the Gulf, and from Sīrāf successively to Kīsh and Hormuz<sup>2</sup>." Unfortunately, no indigenous records of the through traffic have survived, but since the earliest Arab account, given in 851 A.D., by the merchant Sulaimān, is based on personal observation, and is at the same time contemporaneous with the last days of the *Po-se* trader to China, it is here set forth *in extenso*.

"Most of the Chinese ships take in their cargo at Sīrāf<sup>3</sup>, where also they ship their goods which come from Baṣra, 'Umān, and other places; and this they do because in the sea of Persia there are frequent storms, and shoals in many places. From Baṣra to Sīrāf is one hundred and twenty leagues, and when ships

<sup>1</sup> "The introduction of silk-culture in Gilān took place towards the end of Sāsānian rule. We know definitely from Chinese annals that silk-culture was introduced into Khutan for the first time in 419 A.D. by a Chinese princess. From Khutan sericulture seems to have spread westward to Yārqand, and from there, further westward, to Farghāna and Gilān." Fr. Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, Vol. I., p. 256, Leipsic (1871).

<sup>2</sup> Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I., pp. 84-85, London (1915).

<sup>3</sup> "Sīrāf was on the Zuhayr coast, to the north-west of Nāband, and prior to the rise of Ḳays island (or Kīsh), the chief emporium of the Persian Gulf in the 4th century. 'Sīrāf,' Iṣṭakhri says, 'nearly equalled Shīrāz in size and splendour; the houses were built of teakwood brought from the Zanj country (Zanzibar) and were several stories high, built to overlook the sea.' This author writes that a merchant of his acquaintance here had spent 30,000 dinars (£15,000) on his house, and the Sīrāf merchants were accounted the richest in all Fārs.... Muḳaddasī speaks of Sīrāf as commercially the rival of Baṣra; its houses were the finest he had ever seen." G. le Strange, *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, pp. 258-259.



have loaded at Sirāf and taken a supply of water, they sail for a place called Masqat, which is in the extremity of the province of 'Umān, about two hundred leagues from Sirāf. On the east coast of this sea, between Sirāf and Masqat, is a place called Saif Banī as-Ṣaffāq, and an island called Ibn Kāwān; and in this sea are rocks called 'Umān, and a strait called Durdawr, through which small vessels do venture but the Chinese ships dare not<sup>1</sup>. There also are two rocks which scarce appear above the water's edge—Kusair and 'Uwair. After clearing these rocks, the ships steer for a place called Sukhār 'Umān, and at Masqat take in water which is drawn out of wells....Then the ships sail to the countries of India and put in first at Kūlam-Mali<sup>2</sup>, a month's voyage from Masqat with the wind aft....Having watered at Kūlam-Mali the ships set sail for the sea of Harqand<sup>3</sup> en route to a place called Langābālūs<sup>4</sup>, where the men wear no

<sup>1</sup> The Chinese ships are used here both in the sense of ships sailing to China, and of ships belonging to China. These ships were of enormous size. Fa-hian left Ceylon (c. 412 A.D.) in a large merchantman, on board of which there were more than 200 men. *Vide* H. A. Giles, *The Travels of Fa-hsien*, p. 76, Cambridge (1923).

<sup>2</sup> i.e., Quilon, and possibly the Māle of Cosmas. The printed edition (Reinaud, Vol. II, p. 16 (1845)) has *كولر ملي* in place of *كولر ملي*. "The copyist himself has taken pains to write in the margin that *كولر ملي* should be read. It is surprising that neither Renaudot nor Langle paid any attention to the marginal note which is in the same hand as the body of the text."

Mr Logan derives Kūlam from the Tamil *Kollam*, an abbreviated form of *Koyilagam*, or Kovilagam, 'King's house.' Bishop Caldwell thinks Kūlam may be best explained as 'Palace' or 'royal residence' from *Kolu*, 'the royal Presence' or Hall of audience. *Vide* *Hobson-Jobson*, under Quilon.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., the Bay of Bengal.

<sup>4</sup> One of the islands of the Nicobar Group. *ليسخ بالوس* (Reinaud, Vol. II, p. 17) corrected to *لنج بالوس* and then to *لنكا بالوس* (M. Ferrand, *Text. Geog.*, Vol. I, p. 27, n. 8). Bālūs is Bārūs or Baros, on the western coast of Sumatra, in the country of Batak, 2° N. lat. (M. Ferrand, *Text. Geog.*, Vol. I, p. 27, n. 5). The group *نك* represents a long nasal + a deep guttural, i.e. *ng* (*idem*, n. 8).

"Comparing the old forms *Lankha* and *Nakkavaram*, and the nakedness constantly attributed to the people, it seems possible that the name may have reference to this (nañgā). According to Mr Man, a possible derivation is from *ngoāt*, 'a ripe nut,' and *ñi-nāu*, 'a half-ripe nut'—the Nicobars having long been famed for the excellence of their cocoanuts." *Hobson-Jobson*, under Nicobar Islands.



clothes and neither understand Arabic, nor any other language in use with the merchants....From Langābālūs the ships sail to a place called Kalah-bār<sup>1</sup>. The word 'bār' serves to indicate both kingdom and coast. Kalah-bār is a dependency of Zābij<sup>2</sup> and Zābij is to the east of India.

From Kalah-bār the ships sail to Tiyyūma<sup>3</sup> and they reach there in ten days' time, and thence they sail to Kundranj<sup>4</sup> and the voyage takes ten days again. From Kundranj to Šanf<sup>5</sup> also takes ten days and when the ships have provided themselves with fresh water at Šanf they sail to Šundur-fūlāt<sup>6</sup>, an island in the sea, and arrive there in ten days' time.

Then the ships sail through the sea of Šankhī<sup>7</sup> and reach the gates of China, which consist of mountains in the sea, with a narrow passage in between, (barely) sufficient for ships to pass. When a ship has got through these gates, she goes into a fresh-water gulf, and drops anchor in the chief port of China, called Khānfū<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Bār* is a suffix; Kalah also called Kalā, Kilā, and Killah, is either Kēdah (= Quedah) or Kērah (= Kra) in Malacca. "The other attempts to locate the position of Kalah—on Ceylon (harbour of Ghālī, Galle, Pointe de Galle, so Reinaud and Dulaurier), Malabār (so Renaudot), Coromandel (so Gildemeister)—should now be definitely rejected as wrong." Article on Kalah, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*. Apparently, it has not been possible to arrange for collaboration amongst the contributors to the *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, for in the article on China, in this very encyclopaedia (p. 841 a), Kalah is called Galla and identified with Pointe de Galle.

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, Java. Vide M. Ferrand, *Text. Geog.*, Vol. I, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, the isle of Tiuman, on the south-east coast of the Malaya peninsula.

<sup>4</sup> The printed edition (Reinaud, Vol. II, p. 19) has كدرنج which should be corrected to كندرنج. Kundranj is on the delta of the Mekong. Vide M. Ferrand, *Text. Geog.*, Vol. I, p. 30, n. 4.

<sup>5</sup> *i.e.*, Cambodia. Vide M. Ferrand, *Text. Geog.*, Vol. I, p. 30, n. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *i.e.*, Poulo Condore.

<sup>7</sup> *i.e.*, the Sea of China.

<sup>8</sup> Khānfū "is undoubtedly Canton." Yule (*Cathay and the Way Thither*, Vol. I, p. 89, n. 3 (1915)) had identified Khānfū with Hang-chou-fu. But "all has been altered by the critical edition of Ibn Khurdādhbih (*Bibl. Geog. Arab.*, VI.). The following points are certain: Khānfū, which is undoubtedly Canton, and Kānsū, in which we recognize the Khansā of Ibn Baṭūta; this latter is clearly Hang-chou (that *hang* formerly appeared as *kān* and later as *khān* is not doubted; for the corruption of *chou* to *šū* (*sā*) we may perhaps compare the *ša* for *chao* in *Chinesisch-Arabische Glossen*, p. 285)." Martin Hartmann, article on China, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, p. 842 a.



It is a month's voyage from Šundur-fūlāt to China, inclusive of the seven days spent in clearing 'the gates'.<sup>1</sup>

The reliability of this narrative is attested by Abū Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf. "I have carefully examined," says he, "the book I have been ordered to read that I might confirm what the author states... I find it was written in the year of the *Hijra* 237 (= 851 A.D.) and that the accounts the author gives concerning the things of the sea were in his time very true and agreeable to what I have heard from merchants who depart from 'Irāq to sail upon those seas<sup>2</sup>."

But whatever be its *prima facie* value this Arab record is not absolutely correct. The voyage from Tiyūma to Khānfū (Canton), for example, is supposed to have taken two months. Now there is the independent and impartial evidence of I-tsing that in 671 A.D. Persian ships sailed from Canton to Palembang (Sumatra), usually in twenty and sometimes in thirty days; or, in other words, Arab sailors of 851 A.D. took twice or even thrice the amount of time required by Persian sailors of 671 A.D.

No doubt the Arabs coasted whilst the Persians sailed in the open sea. But even so, the Arab voyage from Poulo Condore (Šundur-fūlāt) to Canton (Khānfū) was made in a month, whilst the Persian voyage from Palembang to Canton, covering a much longer distance on the same route, took only twenty days or sometimes thirty. Either, therefore, the Persian ships were faster than those of the Arabs, or the evidence of Sulaimān, notwithstanding all its *prima facie* value, is unreliable.

Now according to the *Tcheng yüan sin ting che kiao mou lou*, compiled by Yüan-tchao about the ninth century A.D., Vajrabodhi sailed from Ceylon in 717 A.D. with thirty-five Persian ships and arrived at Palembang in a month. And since I-tsing says that he sailed in 671 A.D. in a Persian ship from Canton to Palembang in

<sup>1</sup> Sulaimān, *Silsilatu 't-Tawārīkh*, Arabic text given in Vol. II, pp. 14-21, of M. Reinaud's *Relation des Voyages*, Paris (1845).

<sup>2</sup> Abu Zaid al-Ḥasan of Sirāf, *Silsilatu 't-Tawārīkh*, Arabic text given in Vol. II, pp. 60-61, of M. Reinaud's *Relation des Voyages*, Paris (1845).



twenty days, it appears that it took one month and twenty days for a Persian ship of the seventh or the eighth century to sail from Ceylon to Canton. On the other hand, the Arab vessels of 851 A.D. took, according to Sulaimān, not less than three months<sup>1</sup> to complete the same distance. It is obvious that a difference of one to two cannot be wholly attributed to the inaccuracy of Sulaimān and the coasting voyage of the early Arabs, and it seems, therefore, extremely probable that Persian navigation in the Southern Sea was not only prior to Arabian but also superior.

It would be more appropriate, however, to compare the Persian sailor, not with the inexperienced Arab who made his first recorded appearance in China in 751 A.D., but with the old Chinese navigator, whose junk was in Malabār in the second century B.C. and even earlier. Now Fa-hian says that "the ordinary time for the voyage from Java to Canton is exactly fifty days<sup>2</sup>." This was about the beginning of the fifth century A.D., before the arrival of the Persians

<sup>1</sup> According to Sulaimān, the voyage from Quilon (Kūlam-Malī) to Canton (Khānfū) took three months and ten days. There is considerable disparity, however, between different Arab writers, for Ibn Khurdādhbih's estimate—

From Ceylon to Langābālūs	10–15 days
From Langābālūs to Kalah	6 days
From Kalah to Māqit	?
From Māqit to Tiyyūma (قيومه ?)	The distance is short; one day according to Idrīsī
From Tiyyūma to Qumār (قمار)	5 days
From Qumār to Šanf	3 days
From Šanf to al-Waqīn (الوقين)	100 farsangs
From al-Waqīn (Luqin) to Khānqū (خانقو)	4 days
From Khānqū to Khānfū (Canton)	8 days

—shortens Sulaimān's timings by one-half, though not, as Sprenger says, (Wir dürfen nur nicht vergessen, dass Ibn Chord. in einem Tage durchschnittlich eine drei mal so grosse Distanz zurücklegt als Solaymān) by two-thirds. *Vide* A. Sprenger, *Post- und Reiserouten des Orients*, pp. 82–83 et 89, Leipsic (1864).

<sup>2</sup> *The Travels of Fa-hsien* (399–414 A.D.), re-translated by Prof. H. A. Giles, p. 79, Cambridge (1923).





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in the Southern Sea. But in 671 A.D. when the navigation between Canton and Sumatra was in the hands of a Persian merchant, the fifty days' voyage had been reduced to thirty days or even to twenty. The saving in time is double or even more than double, and therefore, unless I-tsing is wholly wrong, the Persian sailor appears to have been as far superior to his predecessor, the Chinese sailor, as he was to his successor, the Arabian. At least, such is the evidence furnished by the Arabs and the Chinese themselves, in contemporary records of their own writing.





CSL

**PERSIAN NAVIGATION FROM THE  
10TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH**





## PERSIAN NAVIGATION FROM THE 10TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH

"The advance of Islām by sea was, one might say, an automatic process. As soon as the Muslims had conquered South Babylonia, and the principal towns on the Persian Gulf, they found themselves forced to carry on the seafaring traditions of these lands unless they wished to leave their newly won position unprotected. There was naturally no immediate change in the management and manning of the ships and as a rule they seem to have continued as before. If the experienced old sailors would not adopt the new religion, men to take their place were found from among their countrymen. It must not be imagined that the Arabs had taken up navigation; the 'Arab proper, *i.e.*, the inhabitants of the *Hidjāz* and the Syrian steppe, were quite useless as sailors. The crews of the ships must have been recruited from the peoples of the South Arabian coast and the Persian Gulf. We may perhaps find evidence of the preponderance of the Persian element in the fact that in the older Arabic literature the word for 'captain of a ship' is *nākhodā*<sup>1</sup>."

M. Hartmann's reasoning is largely *à priori* but it is not therefore deceptive: there is the corroborative evidence of Arabic writers that the crews of Muslim ships were actually recruited from the peoples of the South Arabian coast and the Persian Gulf, and that the preponderating element both amongst shipbuilders and seafaring men was undoubtedly Persian. "I myself," says Abū 'Abdu 'llāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, in his geographical work, *Aḥsanu 't-Taqāsīm fi Ma'rifati 'l-Aqālīm*, composed in 985 A.D.,

"I myself have made the circuit of the whole Arabian peninsula from al-Qulzum to 'Abbādān<sup>2</sup>, not taking into account casual visits on shipboards to the islands and depths of this sea. I was thus thrown into the company of men—shipmasters, pilots, agents, and merchants—who, born and bred upon it, possessed the clearest and fullest knowledge of this sea, its anchorages, its winds, and its islands. I plied them with questions concerning its position, physical peculiarities, and

<sup>1</sup> M. Hartmann, article on China, *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, p. 844 a.

<sup>2</sup> al-Qulzum was at the apex of the Red Sea, and 'Abbādān stood on the island formed by the estuaries of the Tigris and the Dujail (Kārūn river).



its limits. I have also seen in their possession charts and sailing directories which they constantly study and follow with implicit confidence. From these sources, therefore, I have drawn, with careful discrimination and close attention, a sufficient account embodying the best information I could acquire, which I afterwards compared with the charts already spoken of<sup>1</sup>."

What then is this information—supplied by a geographer of repute, from material collected *in situ*?

"The two chief ports of the world are Aden and Ṣuḥār. The greater part of the inhabitants of Aden and Jiddah are Persians but the language is Arabic; in Ṣuḥār, however, they speak and call out to each other in Persian<sup>2</sup>. Ṣuḥār is the capital of 'Umān. There is not on the sea of China at the present day a more important town than this. ... It is a city of great wealth and many merchants, and a place abounding in fruits and natural resources. It is greater than Zabīd and Ṣan'ā'; it contains excellent markets and is beautifully laid out along the shore of the sea. Its lofty and splendid houses are built of burned bricks and teakwood. Its mosque is on the seashore at the farther end of the markets, with a beautiful, high minaret. They have wells of brackish but drinkable water, and a canal of fresh water, and supplies of every description abound. Ṣuḥār is the gateway of China, and the emporium of the East and al-'Irāq; it also furnishes al-Yaman with the necessities of life. The Persians are masters in it<sup>3</sup>."

Similarly, in Jiddah, whereof the inhabitants are chiefly merchants and people of wealth—for Jiddah is the granary of Mecca and the emporium of Yemen and Egypt—"the Persians are the ruling class

<sup>1</sup> al-Muqaddasī, ed. M. J. de Goeje (1906), Ar. text, pp. 10–11:

و درت علي الجزيرة كلها من القلزم الي عبّادان سوي ما توهت بنا المراكب الي جزائره  
و لجة و صاحب مشايخ فيه ولدوا ونشوا من ربّانيين و اشاتمة و رياضيين و وكلاء  
و تجار و رايتهم من ابصر الناس به و بمراسيه و ارياحه و جزائره فسألهم عنه و عن  
اسبابه و حدوده و رايت معهم دفاتر في ذلك يتدارسونها و يعولون عليها و يعملون  
بما فيها فعلق من ذلك صداراً صالحاً بعد ما ميّزت و تدبّرت ثم قابلته بالصور التي ذكرت

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 96:

اهل هذا الاقليم لغتهم العربيّة الاّ بصحار فانّ ندامهم و كلامهم بالفارسيّة و اكثر اهل  
عدن و جدّه فرس الاّ ان اللغة عربيّة

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 92:

دهليز الصين و خزانه الشرق و العراق و مغوثة اليمن قد غلب عليها الغرس





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and live in splendid palaces<sup>1</sup>." Such a preponderance of the Persian element in the Arabian sea-trade of the tenth century may appear surprising, but Muqaddasī states definitely that "those who take a journey to Hajar and 'Abbādān must necessarily pass by the seas of Fāris, Kirmān and Tiz-Mukrān, and indeed many people actually call this part of the sea as far as the coast of al-Yaman by the general name of the sea of Fāris; while most of the shipbuilders and seafaring men are Persians<sup>2</sup>." Consequently, if all along the periplus of the Persian Gulf, and the southern littoral of the Arabian peninsula, most of the ships were manned, or owned, or built by Persians, then obviously a considerable proportion of the tribute, which Mas'ūdī pays to the sailors of Sīrāf and 'Umān<sup>3</sup>, whose was the shipping and the harvest of the sea from Kalah<sup>4</sup> to Qulzum and 'Abbādān to Sofāla<sup>5</sup>, must belong to the credit of Persia—especially

<sup>1</sup> al-Muqaddasī, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Ar. text, p. 79:

جُدَّة مدينة علي البحر... أهلة اهل تجارات و يسار خزانة مكة و مطرح اليمن و مصر...  
قد غلب عليها الفرس لهم بها قصور عجيبة

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 18:

ان من سار الي هجر و عبّادان لا بدّ له من بحر فارس و كرمان و تيزمكران أولًا  
تري الي كثير من الناس يسمونه الي حدود اليمن بحر فارس و ان اكثر صنّاع  
المراكب و ملاحها فرس

All the translations are by Ranking, Bib. Ind. Series, Calcutta (1910).

<sup>3</sup> Mas'ūdī, *Murūju 'dh-Dhahab*, ed. B. de Meynard, Paris, 1864, Vol. I., pp. 281-282:

نواخذة بحر الصين والهند والسند والزنج واليمن والقلزم والحشه من السيرافيين  
والعمانيين

The sailors of Sīrāf and 'Umān (navigate) the seas of China, India, Sind, Azania, Arabia, Erythraea, and Abyssinia.

<sup>4</sup> *Idem*, Vol. II., p. 52:

The sailors of Sīrāf and 'Umān voyage regularly to Kalah (Kérah or Kra in Malacca) and Zābij (Java).

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, Vol. III., p. 6:

وهي [سفالة] اقاصي بلاد الزنج و اليها تقصد مراكب العمانيين و السيرافيين و هي غاية  
مقاصدهم

Sofāla is the farthest limit of the country of the Zanj. The ships of the people of 'Umān and Sīrāf go there, and it is the limit of their navigation.



as the majority of ship-captains and sea-traders, quoted by the Persian *nākhudā*, Buzurg b. *Shahriyār* of Rām-Hurmuz, in his curious '*Ajā'ibul-Hind*' (a work of about the middle of the tenth century A.D.), seem also to have been of Persian extraction<sup>1</sup>. And since, according to Muhallabī, as quoted by Abū'l-Fidā, there was a colony of Persian traders in the island or rather the port of Kalah<sup>2</sup>, and since, according to Muqaddasī, the Persian colonists in Ṣuḥār, Aden, and Jiddah had risen to the rank of merchant-princes, no other conclusion seems possible but that even as late as the tenth century A.D. it was Persia which carried the bulk of Muslim commerce both on the Southern and the Western Sea.

A detailed account of this commerce is given by contemporary geographers, but as Aden and Ṣuḥār commanded the maritime trade of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf with Africa and the Far

<sup>1</sup> Namely (i) Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan b. 'Amr b. Ḥammawīya b. Ḥarām b. Ḥammawīya of Najīram, v. d. Lith's edition, Leiden, 1883-1886, p. 2, (ii) Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad b. Bābshād b. Ḥarām b. Ḥammawīya of Sīrāf, p. 5, (iii) Abū'z-Zahr al-Barkhatī, p. 19, (iv) Abū'l Ḥasan 'Alī b. Shādān of Sīrāf, p. 62, (v) Mardānshāh, p. 94, (vi) Yūnus b. Mihrān of Sīrāf, p. 137, (vii) Dārbazīn, p. 144, (viii) 'Abbās b. Māhān of Ṣaimūr, p. 144, and (ix) 'Abdu'l Wāḥid b. 'Abdur-Raḥmān of Fasā, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> *Géographie d'Aboulféda*, ed. M. Reinaud, Paris (1840), Ar. text, p. 375 :

و جزيرة كلة فرضه مابين عمان و الصين و منها يجلب الرصاص المنسوب اليها قال  
المهلبى في العيزي و جزيرة كلة في بحر الهند و فيها مدينة عامرة يسكنها المسلمون  
و الهند و الفرس قال و بها معادن للرصاص و منابت الخيزران و شجر الكافور و بينها  
و بين جزائر المهرج عشرون مجرى

And the island of Kalah is a port between 'Umān and China, and thence is obtained tin, for which it is noted. Says al-Muhallabī in the '*Azīzī*': The island of Kalah is in the Indian Ocean, and contains a flourishing city inhabited by Muslims, Indians, and Persians; and therein are mines of tin, and plantations of cane and the tree of camphor; and the distance between Kalah and the islands of Mahārāj (Sumatra) is twenty leagues.

According to the *Kashfu'z-Zunūn* of Ḥājī Khalifa (ed. G. Fluegel, Vol. 5, London, 1850, p. 512) the *al-Masālik wa'l-Mamālik*, generally known as the '*Azīzī*', was composed by Ḥasan bin Aḥmad Muhallabī in honour of the Fāṭimid king of Egypt, Al-'Azīz Bī'llāh (975-996 A.D.).



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East, and had therefore become the two chief ports of the world, and as, moreover, in this maritime prosperity Persia had undoubtedly a large share, only the exports to these two places need be described.

"To 'Umān the following articles are exported : apothecaries' drugs, all kinds of perfumes (even musk included), saffron, *baqqam*, teakwood, the wood of the *sāsam* tree (the Indian *shīsham*), ivory, pearls, brocade, onyx, rubies, ebony, cocoanut, sugar, sandarach, aloes, iron, lead, canes, earthenware, sandalwood, glass, pepper, and other articles. Aden receives in addition, ambergris, (fine linen cloths called) *shurūb*, leather bucklers, Abyssinian slaves, eunuchs, tiger skins, and other articles....Chinese wares are proverbially famous; witness the common saying here, 'they come to thee as merchant princes'<sup>1</sup>."

Muqaddasī does not state whether the charts and sailing-directories seen by him in the possession of seafaring men were Persian, but this point has been considerably elucidated by the researches of M. Ferrand<sup>2</sup>. The nautical treatise *Kitābu'l-fawā'id fī usūl'il-'ilmī'l-baḥrī wa'l-qawā'id* كتاب الفوائد في اصول العلم البحري و القوائد (Nat. Bibl., Paris, *Arabic MSS.* 2292 et 2559), composed in 895 A.H. (1489–1490 A.D.) by the two Arabs, Ibn Mājid and Sulaimān al-Maḥrī, mentions a work of collaboration by Muḥammad bin Shādhān, Sahl bin Ābān, and Laith bin Kahlān, called *Rahmānī* or *Rahmānāj*—رهماني or رهمانج—whereof a copy dated 580 A.H. (1184–1185 A.D.), transcribed by the grandson of Laith bin Kahlān, had been seen by Ibn Mājid himself<sup>3</sup>. This *Rahmānī* or *Rahmānāj* was a nautical treatise, for, on the one hand, this work is frequently mentioned by the nautical Arab treatise *Kitābu'l-fawā'id fī usūl'il-'ilmī'l-baḥrī wa'l-qawā'id*, and, on the other, the *Tārīkh* 'l-Mus-taṭṭir المستبصر of Ibnu'l-Mujāwir ابن المجاور, composed about

<sup>1</sup> Ranking's tr. of Muqaddasī, p. 148.

<sup>2</sup> G. Ferrand, L'Élément Persan dans les textes Nautiques Arabes des xv<sup>e</sup> et xvi<sup>e</sup> siècles, *Journal Asiatique*, Avril-Juin, 1924, pp. 196–235.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 196:

في ذلك العصر الثلاثة الرجال المشهورين محمد بن شاذان و سهل بن ابان و ليث بن كهلان ما هو ابن كاملان وقد رايت ذلك بخط ولد و لده في رهماني تاريخه خمسماية و ثمانين سنة فاغتنوا بتاليف هذا الرهماني



630 A.H. states *à propos* of the seven sorts of shore-sighting birds that "the author of the book called *Rahmānaj* says: 'when the traveller sails in this sea, seven sorts of birds in the open sea tell him that he is near the island of Socotra<sup>1</sup>.'" The *Rahmānī* or *Rahmānaj*, moreover, was not merely a nautical treatise but a Persian nautical treatise, for the dictionary *Tājū 'l-'Arūs* تاج العروس states explicitly that the etymology of رهمانج "rahmānaj" is the Persian rāh + nāma (راه + نامه), i.e., "the Book of the Road<sup>2</sup>." And finally the Persian nautical treatise *Rahmānaj* was in general use in the twelfth century, for how else could Ibnu 'l-Mujāwir, the author of the *Tārīkhū 'l-Mustabṣir*, who was not a sailor, have known such a specialized work, or have mentioned it without a commentary? Therefore, says M. Ferrand,

"*Rahmānaj* was the title of a collection of naval instructions in Arabic, belonging to the twelfth century. This information is expressly confirmed in the thirteenth century by a passage in the *Tārīkhū 'l-Mustabṣir* of Ibnu 'l-Mujāwir. It is not very probable that Arab sailing masters gave such a title to books of Arabic origin—by that I mean, conceived in Arabic, and written by Arabs, away from all Persian influence. Sailors of the twelfth century, such as those of Southern Arabia, would not have published the bilingual character of books, for the mere glory of being thought to know Persian. In books of this sort, the author ought to be clear and intelligible to a simple captain of moderate education. One can hardly believe that an instruction destined for our own sailing ships would be called 'The Nautical Directory' and would be followed by a French text. The unavoidable explanation seems to be this: The old Persian sailors of the Persian Gulf used instructions by the name of *Rahmānaj*. At some time they were translated into Arabic for the use of Arab sailors, and the original name of these instructions was preserved in the metathesised form. In other words, the Arabic naval instructions of the twelfth century are based on Persian nautical texts<sup>3</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> G. Ferrand, L'Élément Persan dans les textes Nautiques Arabes des xv<sup>e</sup> et xvi<sup>e</sup> siècles, *Journal Asiatique*, Avril-Juin, 1924, p. 213:

ذكر السبعة الطيور قد ذكر مؤلف كتاب الرهماني أنه اذا سافر هذا مسافر في هذا البحر سبعة طيور في لجج البحار يعلم أنه مقابل جزيرة سقطري

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 212:

الراهنامج بسكون الهاء و فتح الميم فارسية استعمالها العرب و اصلها راه نامه و معناها كتاب الطريق

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, pp. 234-235.



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It is not, however, only in Arabic works that the *Rahnāma* is mentioned, for in trying to study the nautical vocabulary of Persian poets, I found this interesting information in the *Iskandar-nāma* of Nizāmī of Ganja<sup>1</sup>:

رفتن اسکندر بهند و چین و دریا  
 سوی ژرف آمد ز دریا کنار  
 جهان میدواندش زهی دست زور  
 جهانور جهان راند در آب شور  
 پدید آمد آن سیل دریا شتاب  
 چو یکچند کشتی روان شد در آب  
 بباز آمدن باز گشتش نبود  
 که سوی محیط آب جنبش نمود  
 هرآسنده گشتند از آن ژرف جایی  
 نواحی شناسان آب آزمایی  
 سوی باز پس گشتن آمد نیاز  
 ز رهنامه چون راه جستند باز  
 درفشنده مانند یکپاره نور  
 جزیره یکی گشت پیدا ز دور  
 ز میل محیطی همه ترس کار  
 گرفتند لختی در آنجا قرار  
 چنین گفت با شاه بسپاردان  
 ز پیران کشتی یکی کاردان  
 بهره‌نامها در پسین منزل است  
 که این مرحله منزلی مشکل است  
 بسوی محیط است جنبش نمایی  
 دلیری مکن کآب این ژرف جایی  
 از آن سوی منزل دگر نگذریم  
 اگر منزلی رخت زآن سو بریم  
 کزین سیل که پیش توان گذشت  
 سکندر چو زین حال آگاه گشت  
 اشارت کنان دستش افراختن  
 طلسمی بفرمود پرداختن  
 از آنسوی دریا کس آگاه نیست  
 کزین پیشتر خلق را راه نیست

How Alexander went to India and China and sailed on the Sea.

From the sea-shore he came to the deep and cast a burden (*i.e.* launched a boat) on the mighty sea.

The Lord of the World (*i.e.* Alexander) drove merrily along the salt sea, and made the boat to leap; bravo, the (skilful) hand of the chief!

When the ship had covered a little distance in the sea there appeared an ocean-current

Which swept the waters towards the circumambient sea, whence all return was impossible.

The old navigators, acquainted with the locality, were frightened by that perilous belt;

<sup>1</sup> The text is from an unnumbered MS. in the Lytton Library, 'Aligarh. See India Office MSS. Ethé 972 f. 408<sup>a</sup> and Ethé 973 f. 357<sup>b</sup>-358<sup>a</sup>.



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And when they consulted the *Rahnāma* again, they found it was imperative for them to return.

There appeared an island at a distance, shining like a blaze of light.

And they stayed there for a while—all (on board) frightened with the circum-ambient sea.

Said an experienced old seaman to the well-informed king :

‘This temporary shelter is precarious, for this is the very last port according to the *Rahnāma*.

Be not adventurous, for the water of this bay is flowing out to the circum-ambient sea.

If we proceed any farther, we shall not find another port.’

And when Alexander came to know that it was impossible to proceed beyond the (ocean-) current

He ordered a magical image to be set, with its hand upraised as a warning :

‘This is the *ne plus ultra* of navigation, and of what lies beyond in the sea no man has knowledge.’

As the *Iskandar-nāma* or the *Romance of Alexander* was written in 587 A.H. (1191 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> it is the earliest book which contains a reference to the *Rahnāma*, for the *Tārīkhu 'l-Mustabṣir* and the *Kitābu'l-fawā'id fī uṣūl'l-'ilmī'l-baḥrī wa'l qawā'id* are chronologically posterior to the *Iskandar-nāma* by forty-three lunar years and three hundred and eight lunar years respectively. Now the *Rahnāma* is supposed to have been written, amongst others, by *Laith* bin *Kahlān*, whose grandson transcribed a copy in 580 A.H. Putting thirty years to a generation, for in the East maturity comes early, *Laith* bin *Kahlān* must have written about 520 A.H. It is impossible that a nautical treatise produced for the first time in about 520 A.H. should become so familiar by 587 A.H. that it should be cited twice in one small stanza by a landsman like the poet *Nizāmī*. Therefore, the book must have existed before the date of its supposed composition, or, in other words, as M. Ferrand has independently concluded, the *Rahnāma* of *Laith* bin *Kahlān* was not an original work but an Arabic translation of a lost Pahlawī work—the *Rahnāma*. And this *Rahnāma*, which contained

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. II., p. 400. The date has been fixed by Bacher on internal evidence.



<p>بروز حسنی نو نده نسل جزو یک نیکو دانه حکایت جهان که دانه نیک بدین ساحل ارام سازند میشد بدینسان درین کج جهاندار فرمود تا یکدیگر نیک خانه علاج را یکتند در ولجستان بدین کج جوان کن شیرین کوشش بران کنی و آواز غنی کشت ملک را جوشد حال ایشان باستان کشتی نیک نداشت خاکه کنی حال دانست کسان کشتی پذیر کشت در آنگشتی دیر مایه کن زندان کجمان میشتی جهان در جهان نایه دلی که پوی جیست کجشتی زر نایه جان با جیست که نشتی در آنگشتی کاین مرده نشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی طیسی نشتی در آنگشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی</p>	<p>شکار اکنان بر پستی نشتی بیان دریا خسته و دانه که دریا کن ریت نشتی نماند پستند دانه نشتی طرب می کنند این کج که نشتی از طرف دریا کن روان کشتی نشتی علم بر کشیدند جیست حکومت نشتی نشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی شدن دوران نشتی در آنگشتی نشتی که نشتی در آنگشتی بیست نشتی نشتی جهان نشتی نشتی جهان نشتی نشتی پوی نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی بر نشتی نشتی از نشتی نشتی اشارت نشتی نشتی از نشتی نشتی که نشتی نشتی</p>	<p>جمل دوزخ نشتی نشتی بران رو شکاه نشتی عدسان ای جیست نشتی درین جیستی پستند نشتی جیست نشتی نشتی جیست نشتی نشتی بران فرط کج نشتی پراگند کج نشتی سایند کج نشتی شکستی نشتی نشتی جیست نشتی نشتی دران آب نشتی نشتی که نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی ازان نشتی نشتی سوی نشتی نشتی جیست نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی نشتی جیست نشتی</p>	<p>نبردند پستند باران نشتی علم با نغم برافراشتند عشرب بران نشتی که در جیستی نشتی پستند نشتی پستند نشتی که نشتی</p>
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information about shore-sighting birds, and ports, and oceanic currents, and which, according to its own title, regarded the sea not as a barrier but as a commercial highway, must have been the final authority on navigation in the Southern Sea, for, apart from being cited by the nautical texts of the Arabs, why should it have been translated into Arabic at all?

But in order, as it were, that the way of a ship in the midst of the sea may remain unknown<sup>1</sup> the Persian originals have been irrecoverably lost, and it is far more difficult therefore to write a history of Persian ships than of Persian shipping. Thirty-six different kinds of boats, for example, are mentioned by Muqaddasī<sup>2</sup>—*safinah*, *jāsūs*, *zawraq*, *raqqīyah* (?), *talawwā*, *irdās*, *ṭayyār*, *zabzab*, *kārawānīyah*, *muthallathah*, *Wāsīṭīyah*, *malqūṭah*, *shankū-līyah*, *burākīyah*, *khaitīyah*, *shamūt*, *musabbahīyah*, *jabatīyah*, *Makkīyah*, *zīrbādīyah*, *barkah*, *sūqīyah*, *ma'bar*, *walajīyah*, *ṭairah*, *bar'ānī*, *shabū*, *markab*, *shadhā*, *burmah*, *qārib*, *dūnīj*, *ḥamāmah*, *shīnī*, *shalandī*, *bīrajah*—and in this list, given at a time when the majority of the shipbuilders along the circuit of the Arabian peninsula were Persians, the very presence of a Persian name appears like an alien intrusion. More material is consequently needed to explain the anomalous situation that a majority of Persian shipbuilders produced an overwhelming majority of Arab boats, and more material is also needed to give the structure and classification of such ships as were genuinely Persian. But this material is not forthcoming and it is not possible to discuss either the anomaly or the certainty.

The maritime activity of Persia, indeed, has never been so well exhibited in dockyards as on the open sea, and, during the tenth century especially, Persia was being driven to the sea even more

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs xxx. 18–19.

<sup>2</sup> De Goeje's ed. of Muqaddasī (1906), pp. 31–32:

سفينة جاسوس زورق رقية تلووي عرداس طيار زبب كاروانية مثلته واسطيه ملقوطة  
شكولية براكية غيطية شموط مسبحية جبلية مكية زيربازية بركة سوقية معبر ولجية طيرة  
برعاني شوق مركب شذا برمة قارب دونيج حمامة شيني شلندي بيرجة



successfully than she had been drawn to it. For whilst the sea-traders of Fārs and Kermān had merely acquired the status of merchant-princes in 'Umān and Yemen, bands of Persian, or rather Shīrāzian, emigrants had risen to the rank of ruling princes in Pemba and Zanzibar, Brava, Mogdishu, and Kilwa. Says the 'History of Kilwa<sup>1</sup>', compiled by Shaykh Muḥīu'd-Dīn of Zanzibar in 1862 A.D. from a lost Arabic history known as the *Sīratu 'l-Kilawīyah* :

Historians say that the first to come to Kilwa was a ship in which were men who reported that they had come from the land of Shīrāz in the country of Persia. It is said that there were seven ships—one went to the land of Mundakha; the second to Shawghu; the third to Yanb'a (Pemba); the fourth to Munfasa (Mombasa); the fifth to the green island (Zanzibar); the sixth to Kilwa; and the seventh to Hinzawān. And they say that all the people of the six ships were brothers, and the master of the ship which went to Hinzawān was their father....And the cause of the departure of these people from their motherland—the land of Shīrāz in the country of Persia—was that their sultān named Ḥasan b. 'Alī was the father of six sons, Ḥasan b. 'Alī himself being the seventh (of the family)....And the sultān said to his sons, 'I suggest emigration from this city to another.'...(And they all agreed) and went by land to one of the ports, and embarked in seven ships, and sailed away with the guidance of God. And He cast them on the land of Sawāhil (the littoral of East Africa), and the ships were separated and came to the countries we have mentioned.

<sup>1</sup> The History of Kilwa, *J.R.A.S.*, 1895, pp. 411-413 :

ذكر اهل التواريخ فيما زعموا ان اول من وصل الي كلوة وصلت سفينة فيها اناس يزعمون انهم من بلاد شيراز من بلاد العجم وقيل انهم كانوا سبعة مراكب فواحد دخل في بلاد مندخه و الثاني دخل في بلاد شوغ و الثالث دخل في بلاد ينبع و الرابع دخل بلاد منفسة و الخامس دخل بلاد الجزيرة الخضراء و السادس دخل بلاد كلوة و السابع دخل بلاد هنزوان فذكروا ان جميع اهل المراكب الستة اخوة و صاحب المركب الذي دخل هنزوان هو ابوهم.....انه كان سبب خروج هؤلاء القوم من بلادهم بلاد شيراز من بلاد الفرس ان سلطانهم المسمى بحسن بن علي و هو ابوهم و كان اولاده ستة و هو السابع.....فقال لهم ابوهم اني اري من راي الانتقال من هذا البلد الي بلد آخر.....فتوجهوا من طريق البر الي بعض البنادر وركبوا في سبع مراكب وسافروا متوجهين الي الله تعالى فرمي الله بهم الي ارض السواحل فتفرقت المراكب ودخل كل مركب في بلاد التي ذكرناها



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It was the sixth ship, containing 'Alī the son of Ḥasan b. 'Alī, which cast anchor at Kilwa, then connected with the continent by a narrow neck of land and owned by a chief of the Almūlī tribe. And in Kilwa there was a mosque and a Muslim family, and with the aid of the patriarch of this family, the newcomer succeeded in negotiating the exchange of Kilwa for coloured cloth, and in protecting the place from attack by deepening the connecting channel. And so began Shīrāzian ascendancy in the Sea of the Zanj in the middle of the third century of the *Hijra*<sup>1</sup>.

'Alī extended his sway to Mombasa and ruled over Kilwa for forty years. Of his five sons, Muḥammad was governor of Mombasa for two years and a half, and Bashat was governor and afterwards king of Mombasa for four years and a half, whilst 'Alī II, the son of Bashat, succeeded his grandfather to the throne of Kilwa. 'Alī II ruled for four years and a half, and was followed by his uncle Dā'ūd, who, after a reign of two years, abdicated in favour of his son 'Alī III, a cousin of 'Alī II.

The subsequent history of Kilwa is, similarly, an enumeration of the kings of Kilwa with the number of years they reigned. It may appear presumptuous for an undated and anonymous record, of which the elusive hero Ḥasan or Ḥusain cannot even be identified, to arrogate to itself the title of history, but that the record is substantially correct is borne out in several ways. Firstly, because all *mitepe*, or the native craft, still fly a white pennant and a red flag in memory of the flag of the Persian sultān, named 'Alī, who lived at Shangaya on the East African coast<sup>2</sup>. And it is not difficult to recognize in this Shangayan 'Alī the traditional founder of Kilwa. Secondly, because the claimants to Shīrāzian descent in Pemba and Zanzibar, namely the Wapemba, the Wahadimu, and the Watumbatu, still retain the tradition of ships having arrived

<sup>1</sup> The History of Kilwa, *J.R.A.S.*, 1895, p. 414:

وذلك في اوساط القرن الثالث

But, according to Major Pearce, Kilwa was founded in 975 A.D. See *Zanzibar*, p. 345.

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, n. 1, p. 29, London (1920).



from Shīrāz at various periods in the distant past. "And in many of these independent accounts by modern natives, who have certainly never heard of the Kilwa chronicles, the same names crop up as in the old records; and it is frequently stated that some of the original immigrants stayed at one place, while others of the party proceeded farther south and founded cities at other points on the coast<sup>1</sup>." Thirdly, because some of the names of the later sultāns, as given by the 'History of Kilwa,' have been identified with those on numerous copper coins, picked up on the sea-shore of Mafia island<sup>2</sup>. Fourthly, because the *Yu yan tsa tsu*, which was written in the ninth century, states of the Berbera coast that "when Po-ssi (Persian) traders wish to enter this country, they form a caravan of several thousand men, and after having made (the natives) a present of strips of cloth, all of them both young and old draw blood by pricking themselves and take an oath, after which they trade their goods<sup>3</sup>." And fifthly and finally, because there are abundant and unmistakable relics of Shīrāzian occupation, both in the Azanian littoral, and the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia.

These relics are of two kinds—movable and immovable. For apart from the carnelian beads of Pemba, Zanzibar, and Eastern Pondoland, which the museum authorities of South Africa believe to be of Persian manufacture, and to date from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, Persian-made pottery with blue glaze and lustre decoration has been discovered in several places in East Africa. In itself the presence of Persian ware does not exclude the possibility of Arabian transport, but there is the debris of Shīrāzian towns on East African soil, with the earth-bound roots of mosques and tombs.

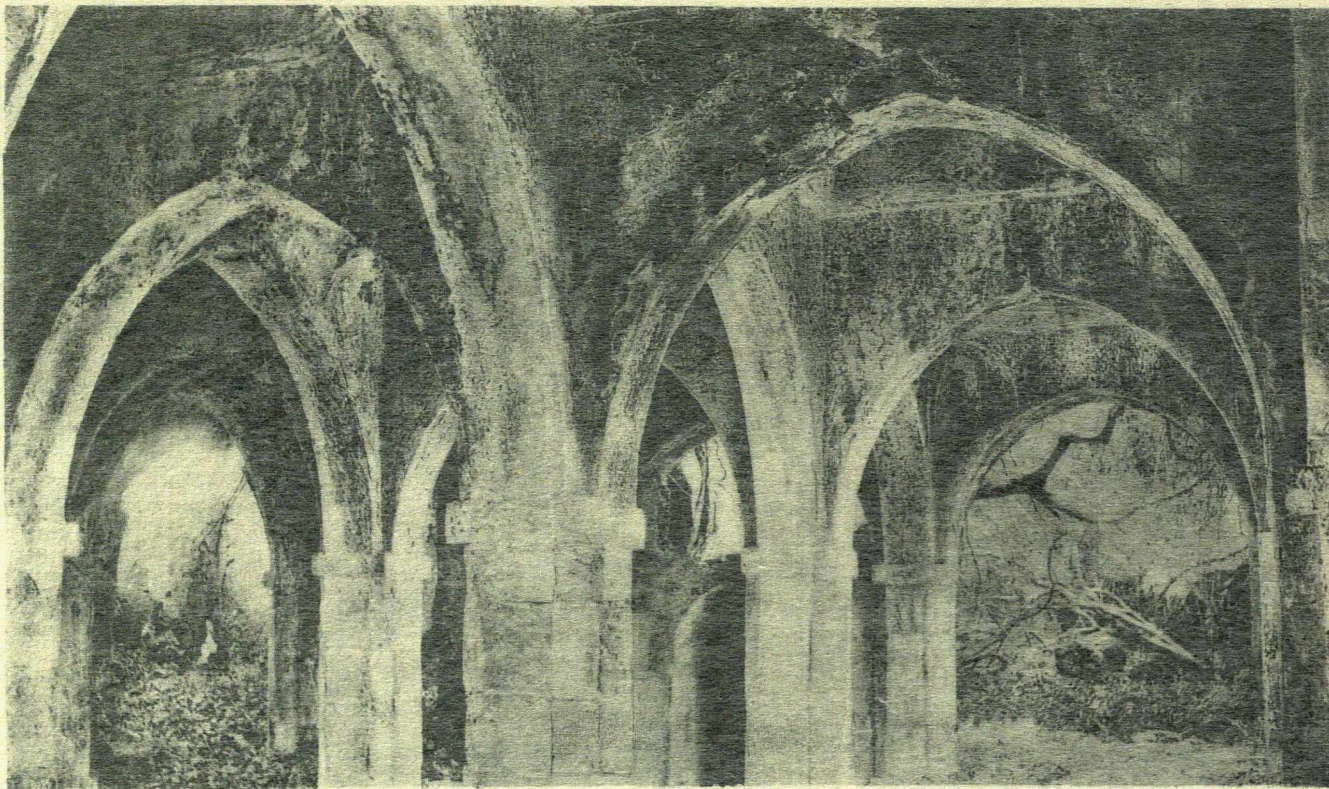
"There can be little doubt," says Major Pearce, "that the Persians, or Shirazis, who arrived on the east coast of Africa at a very early date—Professor Stuhlmann, for instance, says towards the close of the sixth century—introduced the art of building in stone, the production of lime and cement, wood-carving, and

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, n. 1, p. 42, London (1920).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, n. 1, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> F. Hirth and W. W. Rockhill, *Chau Ju-kua*, p. 129, St Petersburg (1911).





RUINED MOSQUE, KILWA





## THE 10TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH 135

the weaving of cotton. During the period from the ninth to the twelfth century they built many mosques, both on the Azanian coast as well as in such islands as Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia, and they reached the height of their fame towards the close of the fourteenth century.

The chief characteristics of their architectural style are the pointed arch, the free employment of dressed limestone for the edgings of pillars and doorways, the utilisation of squared roof and floor beams, the rectangular wall-recess as distinct from the rounded or pointed recesses of the Arabian style, the rectangular window, and the peaked and divided keystone—a very distinctive feature. It may be noted also that the stone courses and mouldings of their doorways and arches are invariably cut at less than a right angle—generally  $85^{\circ}$ . Apart from these typical characteristics, the refinement of design marks the Shirazian work as different from all other styles met with in buildings in East Africa.

In classifying the ruins of Zanzibar and Pemba according to their architectural styles, we find that the oldest are the most artistic, being of Shirazian design; this architectural period was succeeded by what may be called the Arab-Shirazian epoch, which in turn gave way to the cruder Arab-African. It is worthy of note that nearly every ruined town in the Sultanate (of Zanzibar) is built on an island, or on a peninsula which is nearly surrounded by the sea at high tide<sup>1</sup>.

In expressing his opinion, Major Pearce has supplemented a study of Burton, Strandes, and Stuhlmann, with observation *in situ* conducted during his stay in Zanzibar as the British Resident. Consequently his opinion is reliable; but, to err on the safe side, only that type of architecture is here considered which is admittedly Persian. Such, for example, are the pillared tombs of Ndagoni and Tongoni, and the ruined mosques of Tumbatu, Ndagoni, Chwaka, Kilwa, and Kilwa Kisiwani. Says Dr Strandes of a Shirāzian mosque at Kilwa:

“The whole construction consisted of nine cupolas in three rows, supported by pillars and the exterior walls. The central cupola is surrounded by a column of phallic shape. ...The pillars and framework of the wall apertures are constructed of hewn stone, and the whole proportions show a wonderful harmony<sup>2</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, pp. 351–352, London (1920).

<sup>2</sup> Justus Strandes, *Die Portugiesenzeit von Deutsch- und Englisch-Ostafrika*, p. 89, Berlin (1899).



Similarly writes Prof. Stuhlmann:

"During the period from the ninth to the twelfth centuries, the Shirāzīs built many mosques, decorated with artistic pillars and cupolas. In a mosque at Kilwa Kisiwani, there are forty columns arranged in four rows...the columns divide the mosque into squares, each surmounted by a cupola...The characteristics of these buildings are the use of well-hewn sandstone, which was used for the lintels of the doors, the framework of the windows, and the qibla<sup>1</sup>."

And finally the entire argument is summed up by Major Pearce in his description of the ruins on Tumbatu Island:

"The Tumbatu mosque is situated within a few feet of the sea, on the top of a small eminence which rises from the sea-beach. This proximity to the sea is significant, as indicating that the builders belonged to a race who had command of the sea...The chief feature of interest in the mosque is the range of four arched doorways in its eastern wall. These doorways gave access to a side mosque or chapel, which adjoins the main body of the large mosque. The doorways are worthy of attention, as typical of the best characteristics of the Shirazian style of architecture, and in proportion and design they would not disgrace some famous Gothic gateways of Europe<sup>2</sup>."

À propos of the pillared tombs, "each grave is surrounded by a wall from 4 to 6 feet in height, and from the top of this encircling wall rises a remarkable masonry pillar or stele 15 feet in height. Some of the pillars are plain and without embellishment, while others either have Chinese bowls or plates cemented into their surfaces, or are decorated near the summit by rectangular or arched panels incised in the stone<sup>3</sup>." In a pillared tomb at Tongoni, Burton found a Persian glazed tile with a portion of an inscription in Persian characters, which read: Shīd-i-rawshan.....'the resplendent sun'?

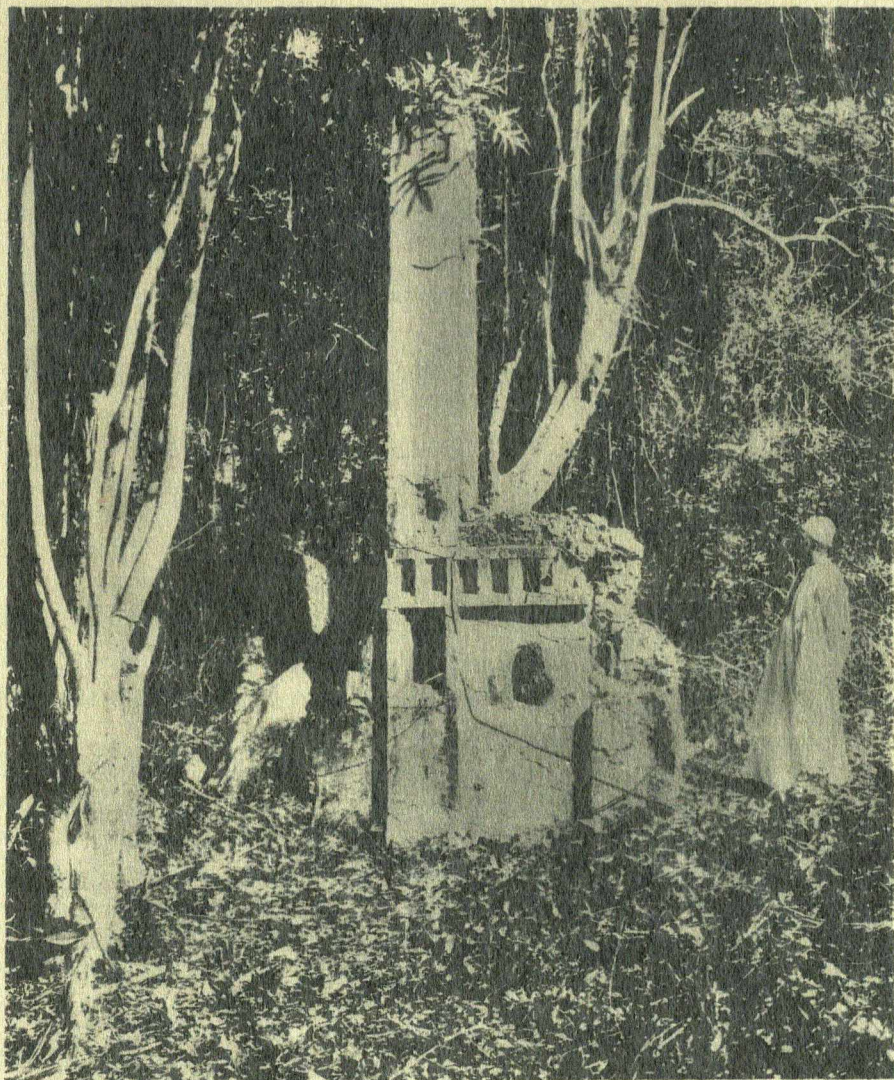
The broad facts of the 'History of Kilwa' are therefore substantiated by archaeological evidence but since the East African littoral has not been systematically explored it is yet too early to strive after chronological precision. For Rigby, in his *Report on the Zanzibar Dominions* (p. 47), gives 924 A.D. and 984 A.D. as the

<sup>1</sup> Franz Stuhlmann, *Handwerk und Industrie in Ostafrika*, p. 97, Hamburg (1910).

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, pp. 399-400, London (1920).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 365.





A PILLARED TOMB AT NDAGONI, PEMBA



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probable dates for the foundation of Mogdishu and Kilwa, whilst the dates adopted by Major Pearce are 908 A.D.<sup>1</sup> and 975 A.D.<sup>2</sup> respectively. Similarly, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

“The sultanate of Kilwa is reputed to have been founded about A.D. 975 by Ali ibn Hasan, a Persian prince from Shiraz, upon the site of the ancient Greek colony of Rhapta<sup>3</sup>.”

But all the three authorities are equally arbitrary, for they have interpreted the Arabic text—

The first man who ruled over the land was the sultān ‘Alī. This was in the middle of the third century of the *Hijra*.

—neither liberally nor literally<sup>4</sup>.

The end of the *Shīrāzian* sultanates is even more indeterminate than the beginning. For after a period of great prosperity during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, when the empire of Kilwa extended to the port of Sofāla and controlled the shipment of gold from the Zimbabwe mines, the Persian element became so attenuated by fusion with the African race, and so inconspicuous by Arab preponderance in the Sea of the Zanj that in the Portuguese accounts of the early years of the sixteenth century it has actually been reduced to zero. Says Duarte Barbosa for example:

“When the King of Portugal discovered this land (Kilwa), the Moors of Sofala, Zuama, Anguox, and Mozambique were all under obedience to the King of Quiloa (Kilwa), who was a great king amongst them. And there is much gold in this town, because all the ships which go to Sofala touch at this island, both on going and coming back. These people are Moors, of a dusky colour, and some of them are black and some white....The speech of these people is Arabic....

There is another very large and beautiful town called Magadoxo (Mogdishu), belonging to the Moors, and it has a king over it, and is a place of great trade in merchandise. Ships come there from the kingdom of Cambay and from Aden with stuffs of all sorts, and with other merchandise of all kinds,

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Pearce, *Zanzibar*, p. 46, London (1920).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, article on Kilwa (Quiloa).

<sup>4</sup> 350 A.H. = 961 A.D.





and with spices. And they carry away from there much gold, ivory, beeswax.... All the people speak Arabic; they are dusky and black and some of them white<sup>1</sup>."

Probably the white Moors were Shirāzian hybrids, but like their modern descendants, the Wapemba and the Wahadimu, they had long ceased to be a factor in the government of the country.

Meanwhile the Gulf of Persia was also becoming like the Sea of the Zanj an arm of the Arabian Sea. Politically, indeed, this had already been effected as early as the caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthmān, but as the coastal Arab was not militant and the Hījāz Arab not essentially a sailor, and as, moreover, the coastal Arab compared to the Persian navigator was 'but young in deed,' the disappearance of the Persian flag, after the rise of Islām, was not accompanied by a simultaneous disappearance of Persian shipping. Therefore, as has already been pointed out, whilst the Persians lost their independence on land, they still retained their independence at sea.

And so matters continued for a while till the caliphate of Al-Mutawakkil (847-861 A.D.). By that time the Arab sailor had substantially lessened the inequality between himself and the Persian, and was only waiting for the removal of the bar on private enterprise, created by the existence of a strong central government, to seize the rich traffic which passed through the Gulf of Persia. The decline of the Caliphate gave this equality of opportunity and gave it freely; and therefore, just at a time when Persia had begun to recover on land the independence she had lost, she had begun to lose at sea the independence she had retained. And but for acute rivalry between the Arabs themselves, manifested by the intermediate reversions of trade from Sirāf to Qais and Qais to Sirāf, and then once again to Qais and back to Sirāf<sup>2</sup>, until the recession

<sup>1</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the 16th century*, tr. by E. Stanley, pp. 11 et 16, London (1866).

<sup>2</sup> G. P. Badger's edition of the *Imāms and Seyyids of 'Omān*, Postscript, p. 411, London (1871).



## THE 10TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH 139

of the Eastern terminus to the island of Hurmuz<sup>1</sup>, it would have been impossible for Persia even to retain her unarmed shipping, much less to launch a fleet in the Gulf and participate in open warfare, as late as the thirteenth or even the fourteenth century of the Christian era. Says the geographer, Qazwīnī, *circa* 1268 A.D.:

“Qays is an island in the Persian Sea, four farsangs in circumference. Its town is fair and pleasant to look upon, having a wall and gates, gardens and buildings. It is a haven for Indian and Persian ships, and a market of trade and commerce to the Arabs and Persians<sup>2</sup>. Water there is obtained from wells, but the rich have tanks. All the islands around it belong to the lord of Qays....

The sovereignty of Qays belonged to a people who had inherited it, until a tyrant arose from among them whom they deposed. They then called in the lord of Hormuz, and the al-Hormuzy came and ruled over it; but he turned out to be more tyrannical than the al-Qaysy, so they deposed him also, and applied to the lord of Shiraz, who mustered soldiers, and dispatched them in ships; whereupon the soldiers of the al-Hormuzy went forth in ships to fight them, and during the voyage disembarked on a cliff to rest. While they were on the cliff, the ships of the Persians set fire to the ships of the Hormuzeans, and then pursued their course to al-Qays, which they easily captured. Nevertheless, the Hormuzeans were stronger and more expert in sea warfare than the Persians; but in this instance their energy was not brought into play<sup>3</sup>.”

<sup>1</sup> “In the year 1302 A.D. there came out of Turkestan great hordes of Turks, and conquered many lands in Persia. They attacked the kingdom of Kermon and next that of Harmuz, and wasted it all;...the Harmuzis unable to withstand such troubles, made up their minds to abandon their lands, and so they did.

The isle of Queixome, or Broct, lies along the Persian coast, parted from it by a narrow sound....Ayaz (King of Hurmuz) ordered the Harmuzis to cross into this isle and they obeyed willingly.”

This explanation (*The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, tr. F. Sinclair, London, 1902, pp. 160–161) of the abandonment of the coastal town of Hurmuz and the colonization of the island is unsatisfactory, for the Mongols hardly reached the Persian coast; but the date of the transfer, 1302 A.D., is probably correct.

<sup>2</sup> Zakariyā b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī, *Āthāru 'l-Bilād wa Akhbāru 'l-'Ibād*, F. Wüstenfeld, p. 161, Göttingen (1848):

قيس جزيرة.....وهي مرفأً مراكب الهند و الفرس و منقلب التجارة و متجر العرب و العجم شربها من الایار

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*:

و بعثوا الي صاحب شيراز طلبوه فجهز عسكرياً بعثهم في مراكب و خرج عسكر الهرمزي



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION FROM

Similarly, according to a chronicle composed by Tūrān Shāh, King of Hurmuz<sup>1</sup>, a Persian fleet reappeared in 1314 A.D. to restore the balance of power in the Gulf of Persia:

"The King of Xiras<sup>2</sup> at once got ready his forces and proceeded to the island of Cays, where he prepared many boats, called by them *terradas*; and in these crossed over with his forces to the island of Angam which is two leagues from Ormuz, where the King of Ormuz attacked him, and gave him battle, and defeated him. And having been defeated, though not utterly, he sent a proposal to the King of Ormuz, that he should give up to him his treasures, and those of his predecessors; and that, if he were not willing to do this, he would wage war on him with fire and sword until he had utterly destroyed him. To these words the King of Ormuz replied, asking, how a man of such low origin as he was, who was descended from merchants, dared to propose such a thing to a king who...had nothing to fear from him.

Seeing himself thus affronted, the King of Xiras returned to Cays and reinforced himself afresh with troops, and more ships, and returned with greater force against Ormuz, and not daring to give battle to the king, strove cunningly to come to parley with him, and craftily seized him, and sent him captive to the island of Cays, and he himself proceeded to lay siege to the island of Ormuz....

The siege lasted several months. Then the King of Xiras, seeing that he could not take Ormuz, and that the winter was coming on, and that it would not be safe for him to go by sea, returned to Cays, with the resolve to come back once more against Ormuz the following year.

He returned thence in six months, bringing with him the King of Ormuz whom he had captured. But on the voyage a tempest overtook him, which scattered and destroyed his fleet. And it happened in this dispersal that the *terrada*, in which was the King of Ormuz who had been captured, came to land at Ormuz....

The King of Xiras did not care to tempt Fortune again and departed for his kingdom, abandoning the conquest of Ormuz<sup>3</sup>."

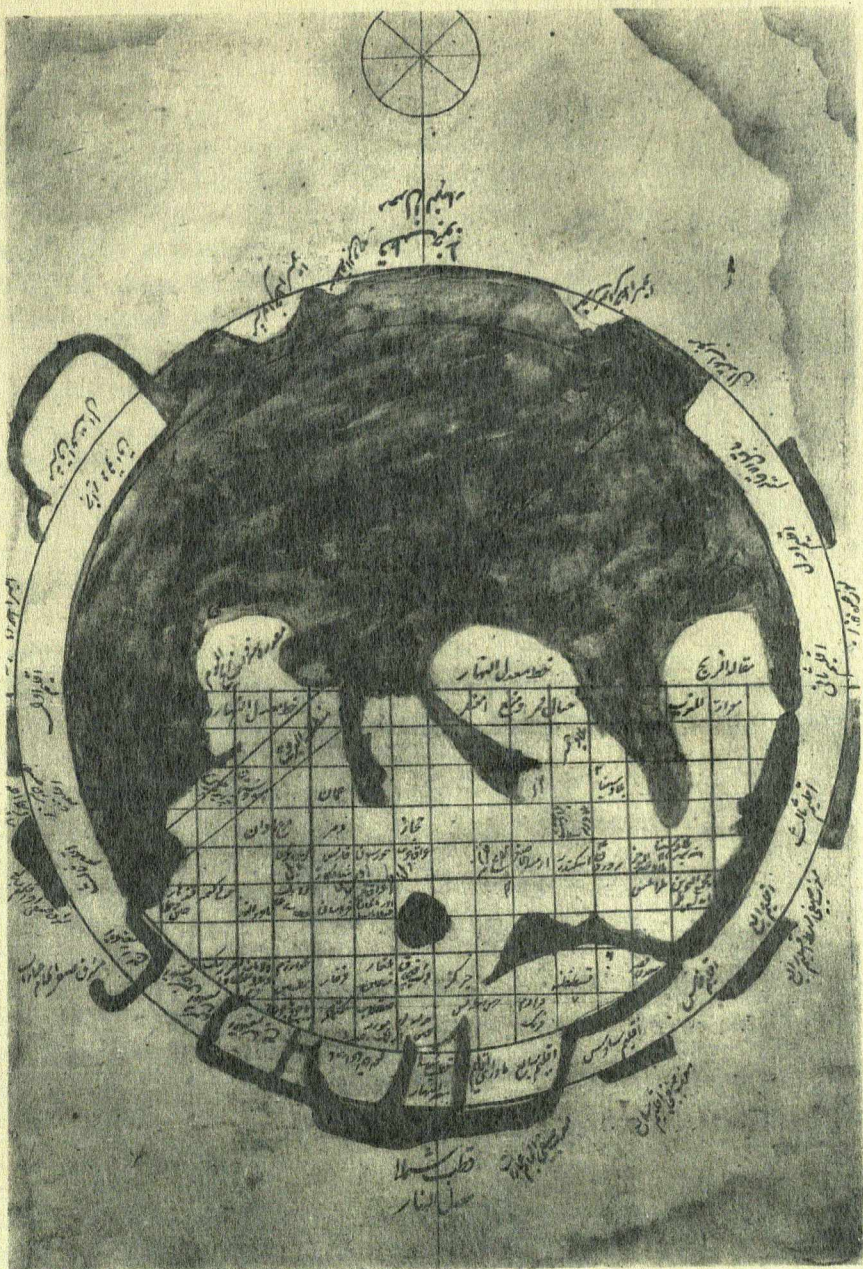
لقتالهم في مراكب فنزلوا في سيرهم علي نشر للاستراحة فوصلت مراكب الفرس و هم علي النشر فاضرموا النار في مراكب الهرامزة و ساروا نحو قيس و ملكوها باسهل طريق و كانت الهرامزة اقوي من الفرس و اعرف بقتال البحر الا ان جدهم قعد بهم

<sup>1</sup> Tūrān Shāh died after a reign of 30 years in the year 1378 A.D. See *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, tr. W. F. Sinclair, p. 188, London (1902).

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the governor of Shīrāz, called, elsewhere, Malek Ayzadin.

<sup>3</sup> *The Chronicle of the Kings of Ormuz*, given in *The Travels of Pedro Teixeira*, tr. W. F. Sinclair, pp. 263-264, London (1902).





THE WORLD ACCORDING TO QAZWINI  
(Nuzhat-ul-Qutub, Br. Mus. MS. Add. 23,544, fol. 225r)



## THE 10TH CENTURY TO THE 16TH 141

And so the Shirāzian alliance with Qais, though it failed in the immediate object of reducing Hurmuz, succeeded eventually in preventing a concentration of Arab forces against the maritime activity of Persia. Chiefly for this reason, and partly because the conciliatory policy of the Atabeks had saved the province of Fārs from the atrocities of Mongol rule<sup>1</sup>, the Persian trader was still flourishing as late as the fifteenth or even the sixteenth century of the Christian era. The Venetian traveller, Nicolò Conti, for example,

"After leaving the island of Ormuz and turning towards India for the space of one hundred miles, arrived at the city of Calacatia, a very noble emporium of the Persians. Here, having remained for some time, he learned the Persian language, of which he afterwards made great use, and also adopted the dress of the country; which he continued to wear during the whole period of his travels. Subsequently he and some Persian merchants freighted a ship, having first taken a solemn oath to be faithful and loyal companions to one another<sup>2</sup>."

After travelling extensively in the Southern Sea, Nicolò Conti returned to Venice in 1444 A.D., and about the same time, between 1442 and 1444 A.D., 'Abdu'r-Razzāq b. Ishāq visited South India as the ambassador of Shāh-rukh to the court of Vijayanagar.

"In the year 845 A.H. (= 1442 A.D.)," writes 'Abdu'r-Razzāq, "I arrived at Hormuz, and the governors sought all kinds of pretexts to detain me; so that the favourable time for departing by sea, that is to say the beginning or the middle of the monsoon, was allowed to pass, and we came to the end of the monsoon, which is the season when tempests and attacks from pirates are to be dreaded. Then they gave me permission to depart. As the men and horses could not be contained in the same vessel, they were distributed among several ships. The sails were hoisted, and we commenced our voyage.

As soon as I caught the smell of the vessel, and all the terrors of the sea presented themselves before me, I fell into so deep a swoon, that for three days respiration alone indicated that life remained within me. When I came a little to myself, the merchants, who were my intimate friends, cried with one voice that the time for navigation was passed, and that everyone who put to sea at

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*, pp. 15-16, Cambridge (1920).

<sup>2</sup> *The Travels of Nicolò Conti in India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society), p. 5, London (1857).



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION FROM

this season was alone responsible for his death, since he voluntarily placed himself in peril. All, with one accord, having sacrificed the sum which they had paid for freight in the ships, abandoned their project, and after some difficulties disembarked at the port of Muscat...Finally (we set sail from Kalahat) and after a voyage of eighteen days and as many nights cast anchor in the port of Calicut<sup>1</sup>."

To his translation of the *Maṭla 'u's-Sa'dain* Mr Major has added a prefatory note:

"The Persians seem to have had an unconquerable aversion to the sea,—a ludicrous example of which we have in the singular instance of the voyage (before us)...The droll pathos with which the ambassador bemoans his sad lot in having to undergo so many hardships, loses nothing from the florid exaggeration of Oriental hyperbole<sup>2</sup>."

Much will be said on this point later on; meanwhile, the description of the voyage is not the only item of interest in 'Abdu'r-Razzāq's narrative. The commercial grandeur of Hurmuz and Calicut, the desire to establish friendly relations with Southern India, the length of the voyage from Kalahat to Calicut—about eighteen days by a favourable wind—and finally, the shipment of horses to India from the port of Hurmuz, a fact emphasized by Marco Polo as early as 1272 A.D.<sup>3</sup>,—all this is stated with the fidelity of personal observation. But as 'Abdu'r-Razzāq was essentially a

<sup>1</sup> The *Maṭla 'u's-Sa'dain*, British Museum MS. Or. 1291, f. 201<sup>a</sup> *et seq.* See *India in the Fifteenth Century* (Hakluyt Society), pp. 7 *et* 13, London (1857).

<sup>2</sup> *India in the Fifteenth Century*, Intr. by R. H. Major, p. iv (Hakluyt Society), London (1857).

<sup>3</sup> *The Travels of Marco Polo*, Ch. xvii.:

"The vessels built at Ormuz are of the worst kind, and dangerous for navigation, exposing the merchants and others who make use of them to great hazards....The vessel has no more than one mast, one helm, and one deck. When she has taken in her lading, it is covered over with hides, and upon these hides they place the horses which they carry to India....The consequence is, that in bad weather (and these seas are very tempestuous), the vessels are frequently driven ashore and lost."

It is likely that the horses brought in the first century A.D. "from distant lands beyond the seas" to Kaviripaddinam (Pukâr or Camara) were Persian horses. *Supra*, p. 53.



landsman it is best perhaps to turn to a sailor, like Duarte Barbosa, for a description of Hurmuz.

“The inhabitants of this island and city are Persians and Arabs, and they speak Arabic and another language which they call Persian. They are very white, and good-looking people, of handsome bodies, both men and women; and there are amongst them black and coloured people also, who are from the country of Arabia. And the Persians, who are very white, are fat and luxurious people, who live very well. They are very voluptuous, and have musicians with various instruments. There are among them very rich merchants, and many ships, because they have a good port; and they trade in many kinds of goods, which are imported there from many parts; and exported thence to other parts of India. They bring there all sorts of spices, drugs, precious stones, and other goods, such as pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, mace, nutmeg, long pepper, aloes-wood, sandalwood, brasil-wood, balsam, tamarinds, Indian saffron, bees-wax, iron, sugar, rice, cocoanuts, rubies, sapphires, giagonzas (zircon), amethysts, topazes, chrysolites, hyacinths, porcelain, benzoin; and upon all these goods much money is made, and many stuffs from the kingdom of Cambay, Chaul, Dabul, and Bengala, which are called Sinabastos, Chautars, Mamonas, Dugasas, Soranatis, which are kinds of stuffs of cotton very much valued amongst them for caps and shirts, which are made use of by the Arabs and Persians, and people of Cairo, Aden and Alexandria. They also bring to this city of Ormuz, quicksilver, vermillion, rose-water, brocade and silk stuffs, scarlet woollens, coarse camelots, and silk. And from China and Catuy they bring to this city by land much fine silk in skeins, and very rare musk and rhubarb; and they bring from Babilonia very fine torquises, and some emeralds, and very fine lapis lazuli from Acar. And from Baharem and Julfar they bring much seed pearl, and large pearls, and many horses from Arabia and Persia, of which they carry away to India every year as many as five or six hundred, and at times a thousand; and the ships which export these horses load much salt, dates, and raisins, and sulphur, and of the other goods which the Indians are pleased with.

These Moors of Ormuz are very well dressed, with very white, long, and fine cotton shirts, and their fine drawers of cotton, and above that, very rich silk clothes and camelots, scarlet cloth, and very rich gauzes, with which they wrap their waists, and they wear in their girdles daggers and knives, ornamented with gold and silver, and some heavy short swords, all adorned with gold and silver, according to the rank of the wearers: and large round shields, richly garnished with silk, and in their hands they carry Turkish bows, painted with gold and very pretty colours, and their cords are of silk. These bows are of stiff wood and of buffaloes' horn; they carry very far, and these people are very good



archers; their arrows are slender and well-worked. Others carry in their hands iron maces, well wrought and elegant; others again, battle-axes of various patterns and of very good temper, and inlaid or enamelled. They are very agreeable and polite people, and very civil in their mutual relations. Their food is of very good meats, very well cooked, wheaten bread, and very good rice, and many other dishes very well prepared, and many kinds of conserves, and preserved fruits, and others fresh: that is to say, apples, pomegranates, peaches, apricots, figs, almonds, melons, radishes, salads, and all the other things which there are in Spain; dates of many kinds, and other eatables and fruits not used in our parts. They drink wine of grapes in secret, because their law forbids it them; and the water which they drink is flavoured with pistachio nuts, and set to cool, for which purpose they employ and seek many methods for cooling and preserving it cool. And all the noblemen and honourable merchants always take, wherever they go, both in the streets and public places, and on the road, a page with a bottle of water, which is covered underneath with silver, or with a silver cup, as much for state and show as for use and comfort. All these people possess gardens and farms, to which they go to enjoy themselves for some months of the year<sup>1</sup>."

The social life of Hurmuz, as described by Barbosa, is so typically Persian that we need not have been expressly told: "the inhabitants of this island and city are Persians and Arabs, and they speak Arabic and another language which they call Persian." But it is time to leave Hurmuz and proceed with Barbosa to the ports of India.

"The Moors of Cambay are white, and of many countries: both Turks, and Mamelukes, Arabs, Persians, Khorasanys, Turkomans, and from the great kingdom of Dily, and others born in the country itself....And these Moors of Cambay speak many languages, that is to say, Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Guzaraty<sup>2</sup>."

Similarly, there were Persian colonists and traders in the port of Calicut:

"There were other foreign Moors in Calicut, whom they call Pardesy. These are Arabs, Persians, Guzarates, Khorasanys, and Decanys: they are great merchants, and possess in this place wives and children, and ships for sailing to

<sup>1</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the 16th century*, tr. E. Stanley, pp. 41-43, London (1866).

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 56.



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all parts with all kinds of goods....And in this manner they prospered until the Portuguese came to India: now there are hardly any of them, and those that there are do not live at liberty<sup>1</sup>."

The maritime activity of Persia, however, was not confined merely to the western coast of the Indian Peninsula: there was an important colony of Persian merchants in Bengala<sup>2</sup>, the homonymous capital of the province of Bengal.

"Many foreigners from various parts live in this city, both Arabs and Persians, Abyssinians and Indians, who congregate here on account of the country being very fertile and of a temperate climate. They are all great merchants and own large ships of the same build as those of Mekkah, and others of the Chinese build which they call jungos, which are very large and carry a very considerable cargo. With these ships they navigate to Chholmender, Malabar, Cambay, Peigu, Tarnasari, Samatra, Ceylon, and Malaca; and they trade in all kinds of goods, from many places to others. There is much cotton in this country: the Arabs and Persians make caps of this stuff, in such great quantities, that every year they fill several ships with them for different places....The Moorish merchants of this city go into the interior of the country and buy many Gentile children of their fathers and mothers, or of others who steal them, and castrate them. Some of them die of it, and those who recover they bring them up very well, and sell them as merchandise for twenty or thirty ducats each to the Persians, who value them much as guards to their wives and houses<sup>3</sup>."

Similarly, according to the Portuguese historian, João de Barros<sup>4</sup> (1496–1570 A.D.), there were wealthy and influential Persians in the town of Malacca:

"The greatness of Malacca induced the kings, who followed Xaquem Darsa (Sikandar Shāh), to throw off their dependency on the kings of Siam, and this

<sup>1</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the 16th century*, tr. E. Stanley, pp. 146–148, London (1866).

<sup>2</sup> "Bengala occupied a position between the Hattia and Sundeep islands situated at the present mouth of the Brahmaputra." See the note "On the site of the ancient city of Bengala" (Intr. cxiv–cxxi) in *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, Hakluyt Society, London (1863).

<sup>3</sup> Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the coasts of East Africa and Malabar in the beginning of the 16th century*, pp. 179–180, London (1866).

<sup>4</sup> He was not an eye-witness, "but placed in charge of the Indian records had the best means of obtaining accurate information."



chiefly, since the time when they were induced by the Persians and Gujarati Moors, who came to Malacca and resided there for the purpose of trade, to become converts from Gentiles to the sect of Muḥammad<sup>1</sup>....

In matters of trade, the Malays are artful and expert, for, in general, they have to deal with such nations as the Javanese, the Siamese, the Peguans, the Bengalis, the Quelijo, Malabaris, Gujaratis, Persians, and Arabians, with many other people, whose residence here has made them very sagacious<sup>2</sup>....

This busy trade lasted until our arrival in India, but the Moorish, Arabian, Persian, and Gujarati ships, fearing our fleets, dared not, in general, now undertake the voyage, and if any ship of theirs did so, it was only by stealth and escaping our ships<sup>3</sup>."

Elsewhere, De Barros and Barbosa do not mention the existence of Persian colonists or even of Persian traders: the stress of Hindu and Arab competition had apparently proved irresistible<sup>4</sup>. But where the Persian merchant could survive, as in the cosmopolitan ports of Hurmuz, Cambay, Calicut, Bengala, and Malacca, he appears to have survived vigorously. For even after Afonso

<sup>1</sup> João de Barros, *Da Asia*, Decade II, Bk. VI, ch. I, pp. 14-15, Lisbon (1777):

"A grandeza da qual deo animo aos Reys que succedêram a este Xáquem Darxá, que pouco, e pouco começaram de levantar a obediencia aos Reys de Sião, principalmente depois que estes de induzidos por os Mouros Parfeos, e Guzarates, (que alli vieram refidir por caufa do commercio), de Gentios os convertêram á secta de Mahamed."

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 26:

"A qual grossura do trato durou mui corrente té a noffa entrada na India, que os Mouros Arabios, Parfeos, e Guzarates temendo noffas Armadas, não oufavam tão geralmente commetter este caminho; e se alguma não fua lá hia ter, era furtada da noffa vitta."

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the statement requires toning down, for between 1504-1507 A.D. Ludovico di Varthema and a Persian trader in jewels are found sailing together from Hurmuz to the delta of the Indus, the maritime provinces of Bijāpūr, Quilon, Colombo, Pulicat (22 miles north of Madras), Banghella (Bengala), Pegu, Malacca, Pider (in the island of Sumatra), Bandan (one of the Bandā group), Monoch (the Moluccas), Borneo and Java, and thence to Malacca, Negapatam, Quilon, and Calicut. See *The Travels of Ludovico di Varthema*, Hakluyt Society, London (1863).



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Dalboquerque had ravaged the entire periplus of the Southern Sea, and led into captivity both the Hidalcão and the King of Hurmuz, the Persian merchants in Cambay were still

“One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
 Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”

“Some merchants from Persia were at court seeking for a remission of customs’ dues, which had been levied from them (amounting to the value of the merchandise) on their last voyage by Malik Tūghān, the son of Malik Ayāz. They pressed Shāh Tāhir to intercede for them, and, though he at first refused, they at length compelled him by their importunities, to visit Malik Tūghān on their behalf. The Malik not only granted the request and returned the 60,000 rupees at once to the merchants, but also added valuable presents, and declared that they should not be asked for customs’ dues on any other voyage<sup>1</sup>.”

This was in the year 1532 A.D., eighteen years after a captain of Shāh Ismā’īl had tamely surrendered twenty terradas to the Portuguese<sup>2</sup>, and seventeen years after the ambassador of Shāh Ismā’īl had received the grim threat from Afonso Dalboquerque: “should merchants from Persia be found in any other district of India save the port of Goa, they should lose their merchandise and be made subject to the greatest penalties which he could inflict<sup>3</sup>.” And, as both the Moors and the Gentiles knew, these penalties were fire and water.

<sup>1</sup> The *Mir ‘āt-i-Sikandarī*, India Office MS. Ethé 438, f. 171<sup>b</sup>-172<sup>a</sup>:

تجار اهل خراسان که به بنادر گجرات آمد و رفت داشتند بشاه تکلیف این معنی نمودند که بملک طوغان ابن ایاز که مولا زاده سلطان و میر بحر بنادر گجرات بود سفارش نماید تا تمغای این بار که مقدار مال کلیه میشود بها معاف نماید.....ملک تشریف قبول ارزانی داشت و گفت بعد ازین نیز تمغای ایشان بدفتر معاف ثبت نموده که هرگاه بتجارت آیند کسی باینها تکلیف این معنی نکند و همدرین مجلس مبلغ کلیه مناسب او...گذراند

The translation is by Edward C. Bayley as given in his *Local Muhammadan Dynasties*, p. 355, London (1886).

<sup>2</sup> *The Commentaries of the great Afonso Dalboquerque*, second viceroy of India, tr. Walter de Gray Birch, p. 115, Vol. iv., London (1875).

<sup>3</sup> *Idem*, p. 177.



## PERSIAN NAVIGATION FROM

There remains the fresh-water navigation of Muḥammadan or rather of Ghaznawid Persia. The evidence is meagre and is restricted to the punitive expedition of Sultān Maḥmūd against the Jats of Bhatiya, and the pleasure-parties of Sultān Mas'ūd on the Hirmand. Says Gardezī<sup>1</sup>:

In the year 418 A.H. (1027–1028 A.D.), Sultān Maḥmūd assembled his troops for the twelfth time and set his face towards Multān, and, on his arrival, ordered 1400 boats to be built; well-armed with iron-spikes, two on the sides and one on the prow. And the spikes were hard and sharp so that they smashed to pieces whatsoever they struck.

And when these 1400 boats were ordered out on the Indus there were twenty men in each boat, armed with naphtha-grenades and naphtha, and bow and arrow and shield. And the Jats heard of the invasion of the Sultān, and removed their women and belongings to a distant island, and came unencumbered to the fight. And they had 4000, or even, as some say, 8000 boats, heavily laden with men and armour.

Then as both the fleets drew near, the Muslim archers and throwers of naphtha rained arrows and (balls of) fire; and the boats of the Sultān rammed the boats of the Jats and smashed them to pieces and wrecked them. And in this way they continued to fight till the boats of the Jats were either rammed, or wrecked, or scattered.

It is this victory, apparently, to which the poet Farrukhī alludes in his *dīwān*<sup>2</sup>, for the sea-fight off Sōmnāth, and the Muslim pursuit<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Gardezī, *Zainu 'l-Akhbār*, King's College (Cambridge) Library MS. No. 213, f. 127<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Farrukhī, *Dīwān*, India Office MS. Ethé 902, f. 36<sup>a</sup>:

من شکار آب مرغابی و ماهی دیده ام تو در آب امسال شیران سیه کردی شکار

I have seen water-sports like fishing and the shooting of water-fowl, but thou hast shot black tigers in the water this year.

<sup>3</sup> Ibnu 'l-Athīr, *Tārīkhū 'l-Kāmil* (completed in 1230–1231 A.D.), Cairo ed., Vol. ix., p. 119:

فبقى منهم القليل فدخلوا البحر الى مركبين لهم لينجوا فيهما فادركهم المسلمون فقتلوا بعضا و غرق بعض

And the survivors amongst them took to the sea in boats to make their escape, but the Musalmāns overtook them, and some were killed and some were drowned.



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blockade<sup>1</sup>, or ambuscade<sup>2</sup>, given in non-contemporary works, finds no place in the *Zainu 'l-Akḥbār* of Gardezī, composed about the year 440 A.D.:

The (Hindu) notables of Sōmnāth fled to their ships and set sail with their wives and belongings, and came to anchor at an island (in the sea). And there they remained so long as the Muslim army was in Sōmnāth<sup>3</sup>.

The pleasure-parties of Sultān Mas'ūd are suggestive of Sāsānian times. Says the *Tārīkh-i-Baihaqī*:

On Monday, the seventh of Šafar, in the year 428 A.H., Sultān Mas'ūd desired to sail and ten boats were accordingly moored to the bank (of the Hirmand). The royal boat was larger than the others and was rigged and carpeted. And the Sultān embarked with two courtiers, two cup-bearers, one attendant to measure out the wine, and an armed slave.

<sup>1</sup> Mirkhwand, *Rawḍatu 's-Šafā*, Lucknow ed., Vol. iv., p. 741:

بقية السيف در کشتیا نشسته روی بگیریز آوردند سلطان چند کشتی مرتب ساخته مردم در آنجا بنشاند که راه دریا ضبط نمایند

The survivors took ship and prepared for flight, but the Sultān got together a few ships and sent his men ahead to close the sea-route.

<sup>2</sup> Firishṭa, *Tārīkh*, Lucknow ed., Vol. i., p. 32:

بقية السيف برهمنان و خدمتگاران سومات که قریب چهار هزار میشدند روی بدریای عمان آورده بکشتیا سوار شدند و خواستند که خود را بجزیره سرانديب کشند اما سلطان قبل از آن فکر اینمعنی کرده چند کشتی پر از بهادران بر سر راه ایشان باز داشته بود — آنها بمجرد نمودار شدن کشتیهای کفار بر ایشان حمله آوردند و اکثری را غریق بحر فنا گردانیدند

The survivors amongst the Brahmins and stewards of Sōmnāth, who amounted nearly to 4000 men, turned towards the sea of 'Umān, and took ship in the hope of escaping to Ceylon. But the Sultān had previously stationed a few ships, manned with his warriors, on the line of flight; and so the infidel fleet was boarded at sight and the majority of the crew exterminated.

<sup>3</sup> Gardezī, *Zainu 'l-Akḥbār*, King's College (Cambridge) Library MS. No. 213, f. 126<sup>b</sup>:

و سالاران شهر از شهر بیرون آمد[ند] و اندر کشتی نشستند با عیال و بن خویش و اندر دریا شدند و بر جزیره فرود آمد[ند] و همی بودند تا لشکر اسلام از آن دیار نرفتند ایشان از آن جزیره بیرون نیامدند



In the other boats were courtiers, ministers, stewards, and all sorts of people, but no one was aware of what was happening, until they discovered all of a sudden that the royal boat was flooded—since the current was strong—and that it was just about to capsize. And so they yelled and screamed and shouted, whilst the Sultān stood up, and since luckily the other boats were near, some seven or eight fellows jumped in and saved the king<sup>1</sup>.

It appears from Baihaqī's description that the boats used were rather primitive; and consequently the question re-arises: How is the retention of primitive boats on the Hirmand reconcilable with an advanced type of Persian navigation on the high seas, from Suez to the ports of China? I have no doubt that the answer lies in the interconnection between the scarcity of navigable streams and the feeble development of fresh-water navigation, especially when the only navigable river in Persia is the Kārūn, and when the Kārūn is only navigable as far as Ahwāz.

<sup>1</sup> The *Tārīkh-i-Baihaqī*, Bibl. Ind. Series, Calcutta (1862), pp. 628–629:

تاریخ سنه ثمان و عشرين و اربعمائه - روز دوشنبه هفتم صفر امير شيگر بر نشست  
و کرانه رود هيرمند..... کشتيا پخواست و ناوي ده بياوردند يکی بزرگتر از جهت نشست  
او راست کردند و جامها افگسندند و شرابي بروي کشيدند و وي آنجا رفت با دو  
ندیم و کسی که شراب پیماید از شراب داران و دو ساقی و غلامی سلاح دار و ندیمان  
و مطربان و فراشان و از هر دستي مردم در کشتيا ديگر بودند و کسی را خبر نه ناگاه  
آن دیدند که چون آب نیرو کرده بود و کشتی پر شده نشستن و دریدن گرفت  
آنگاه آگاه شدند که غرق خواست شد بانگ و هراز و غریو خواست امیر بر خاست  
و غیر آن بود که کشتيا ديگر بدو نزديک بودند ایشان در جستند هفت و هشت تن  
و امیر را بگرفتند و بر بودند و بکشتی ديگر رسانيدند





CSL

## THE EVIDENCE OF PERSIAN LITERATURE



## THE EVIDENCE OF PERSIAN LITERATURE

For the literati of Persia, as for the land-loving Arabs of the hinterland, the sea has always been an object of terror. As early as Sāmānīd times the physician Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyā ar-Rāzī had declared that it was incompatible with wisdom to risk the passage of the Oxus, and if the account in the *Chahār-Maqāla* be true, the physician had consequently to be conveyed across the Oxus like a live parcel<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, in 533 A.H. the poet Anwārī was so terror-struck by the sight of the Oxus which barred his way to the court of 'Imādu 'd-Dīn Pirūzshāh at Tirmidh that he nearly lost his senses and but for the display of swimming given by the royal guide would undoubtedly have returned<sup>2</sup>. It is not surprising, therefore, that Sa'dī should have advocated safety on land<sup>3</sup>, or that

<sup>1</sup> *Chahār-Maqāla* of Nizāmī-i-'Arūḍī-i-Samarqandī, ed. Mīrzā Muḥammad, p. 74:

[محمد بن زکریا رازی] چون بکنار جیحون رسید و جیحون بدید گفت من در کشتی نشینم قال الله تعالی وَلَا تَلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ خدای تعالی میگوید که خویشتن را بدست خویشتن در تهلکه میندازید و نیز همانا که از حکمت نباشد در چنین مهلکه نشستن.....خواهش باو در نگرفت دست و پای او ببستند و در کشتی نشاندند و بگذرانیدند و آنکه دست و پای او باز کردند

<sup>2</sup> The *Kulliyāt* of Anwārī, Lucknow ed., p. 357:

چون بجیحون برسیدیم ز من هوش برفت گفت لا حول و لا قوة الا بالله رفت و بر بست ازاری و بجیحون در جست و اندران جست بیکدم بگذشت او بشناه باز باز آمد و گفتا که بدیدی سهل است در نشین خیز و مکن وقت گذشتن بیگاه کشتی آورد و نشستیم درو هر دو بهم چون دو یار او همه یاری ده و من یاری خواه من سر اندر زن و بیرون زن همچون روباه او چو شیر به یکی گوشه کشتی بنشست

Cf. the *Dīwān-i-Mu'izzī*, British Museum MS. Add. 10,588, f. 73<sup>a</sup>:

من بنده گر ز خدمت یکچند دور بودم باز آمدم بخدمت با شعرها زیبا از ترس راه و گوما از بیم آب جیحون بودم قریب یکمه دلتنگ و ناتوانا

<sup>3</sup> Sa'dī, *Gulistan*:

بدریا در منافع بیشمار است اگر گوی سلامت بر کنار است



'Abdu'r-Razzāq should have fainted when he caught the smell of the boat<sup>1</sup>, or that Hāfiz should have abandoned the sea-voyage which was to take him to the court of Maḥmūd Shāh Bahmanī of the Deccan, for

"Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore  
 Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar<sup>2</sup>."

Consequently, in the post-Muḥammadan poetry of Persia, the sea, like the devil in Scripture, has never been mentioned for its own sake, and generally has never been mentioned at all. "The poet (Firdawsī)," says Prof. Nöldeke, "and the whole tradition lies behind him, has no experience whatever of the sea—one might even say, travelling by sea. The few passages, in which sea-voyages occur, are vague and incorrect. He allows an army to travel some thousand farsangs, that is to say, hours of march, across the sea in ships and boats. During Kay Khusraw's journey over the great sea, which he finishes in seven months although it ought to last a year, only once does a storm occur. The enumeration of strange sea-monsters is the chief thing in this journey. The Īrānians come back in seven months without encountering a single storm; indeed, two boats come first, and a thousand ships follow. Afrāsiyāb crossed the same sea as a matter of course<sup>3</sup>."

Firdawsī's account comprises the voyage of Afrāsiyāb and Kay Khusraw and the tendency has been to concentrate on the latter at the expense of the former. Afrāsiyāb, therefore, merely comes

<sup>1</sup> The *Matla' u's-Sa'dain*, British Museum MS. Or. 1291, f. 201<sup>a</sup>:

چون بوی کشتی بمشام این ضعیف رسید و وحشت دریا دید بنوعی بیہوش گردید  
 کہ تا دو روز غیر از آمد شد نفس از هیچ ممر امید حیات نداشت

In the Hakl. Soc. edition the two days' swoon has been extended to three. *Supra*, p. 141.

<sup>2</sup> Hāfiz, *Dīwān*:

دیار یار مردم را مقید میکنند لیکن چه جای پارس کین محنت جهان یکسر نمی آرد  
 بس آسان مینمود اول غم دریا ببوی سود غلط گفتہ کہ یک موجش بصد گوہر نمی آرد  
 برو گنج قناعت جوی و کنج عاقبت بنشین کہ یکدم تنگدل بودن بہ بحر و بر نمی آرد

<sup>3</sup> Th. Nöldeke, *Grundriss der iranischen Philologie*, Vol. I., p. 177.





KAY KHUSRAW CROSSES THE SEA OF ZIRREH  
From the *Shāhnāma*, India Office MS. 741 f. 326.





and goes; whereas Kay Khusraw builds and manns a fleet, and steers and floats and sails. Nor is the reason far to seek. The poet intended his *Shāhnāma* to be a monument of Persia's greatness, and an attempt had to be made to show the nautical superiority of Kay Khusraw over Afrāsiyāb. Winds and waves and rocks are to be found everywhere; why should the poet emphasize them in his description? But sea-monsters in shoals are uncommon. They are therefore introduced into the *Shāhnāma*—not in Afrāsiyāb's account but in Kay Khusraw's—because the fearful sea had been especially created for exhibiting the fearlessness of the Persians who sailed on it.

It is necessary therefore to determine the exact proportion of artistry and ignorance in the composition of the *Shāhnāma*. Prof. Nöldeke has apparently missed the point altogether. His conclusion is based on three lines of reasoning, firstly, on the length of Kay Khusraw's voyage which was completed in seven months instead of twelve, secondly, on the abnormal tranquillity of the great sea where only once did a storm arise, and thirdly, on the enumeration of strange sea-monsters. None of these arguments is admissible, for the last two are obvious effects of artistry, and the first is not an argument at all, for if the outward voyage was performed in seven months why should the return voyage have taken longer, especially when the winds were assistant?

Nevertheless, the conclusion of Prof. Nöldeke stands though his reasons fall. For observe the account of Rustam's voyage to Hāmāwarān<sup>1</sup>. The return route is unspecified and the outward voyage compressed within three couplets; nothing is said about the fleet, not a word mentioned about the crew. If the time-factor determined the choice of the sea-route, why is information about the length of the voyage withheld? Why does Firdawsī, whose claim to greatness rests on the use of detail<sup>2</sup>, avoid detail here? Why does the most loquacious of all the Persians become suddenly mute when the theme changes from land to sea?

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Shibli Nu'mānī, *Shi'ru 'l-'Ajam*, Lucknow ed. of 1335 A.H., Vol. I., pp. 146-149.



## THE EVIDENCE

And as with Firdawsī so also with the other poets of Persia: their hand begins to acquire the nature of the element it paints—firm on the firm-set earth it agitates and trembles over the unstable sea. And even a metaphorical sea may produce this effect as in the “Account of the Ducklings hatched by a domesticated Hen,” given in the *Mathnawī* of Jalālu 'd-Dīn Rūmī:

قصه بط بچگان که مرغ خانگی پرورد شان

تخم بطی گرچه مرغ خانه ات	کرد زیر پر چو دایه تربیت
مادر تو آن بط دریا بد است	دایه ات خاکی بد و خشکی پرست
میل دریا که دل تو اندر است	آن طبیعت جانت را از مادر است
میل خشکی مرتر ازین دایه است	دایه را بگذار کو بد رایه است
دایه را بگذار در خشک و بران	اندر آور بحر معنی چون بطن
گو ترا مادر بترساند ز آب	تو مترس و سوی دریا ران شتاب
تو بطی بر خشک و بر ترزنده	نی چو مرغ خانگی پر کنده
ما همه مرغابیانییم ای غلام	بحر میدانند زبان ما تمام
بس سلیمان بحر آمد ما چو طیر	در سلیمان تا ابد داریم سیر
با سلیمان پای در دریا بنه	تا چو داود آب سازد صد زره

“Although a domestic fowl has fostered you as a nurse, under its feathers, you, O believer, are the egg of a duck.

Your mother was the duck of that sea; your nurse was of the earth and a worshipper of dry land.

The inclination towards the Sea which is in your heart,—that inclination comes to your soul from your mother.

Your inclination towards the dry land is from your nurse; quit the nurse for she is of bad judgment.

Leave your nurse on the dry land and hasten away; enter the Sea of spirituality like the ducks.

If (your) nurse tries to make you fear the Water, do not fear it but hasten quickly into the Sea.

You are a duck and can live on the dry land and in the Water; you are not as the domestic fowl whose wings are clipped.

We are all water-fowl, my son, (and) the Sea knows our voice perfectly.



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Thus Solomon is the Sea, and we are birds; and in (this) Solomon do we move to all eternity.

With the help and guidance of Solomon step into the Sea, in order that the water may, like David, make a hundred coats of chain-mail (for you)<sup>1</sup>."

There are three main elements in this poem before us—God, the human soul, and the reunion of the human soul with God; and of these, the last is the most important for it is the centre of vision of the entire poem. Jalālu 'd-Dīn opens the theme by projecting his thoughts into a series of images, for the spectator to behold with the testimony of his own eyes. And so the skeleton-thought is clothed with the living tissue of a continued simile: God becomes a sea, the human soul a duck's egg hatched by a hen, and the union of the human soul with God a duckling floating on the bosom of the sea.

Such is the argument in a nutshell and how is it conveyed? The first picture which is cast by Jalālu 'd-Dīn is a vast expanse of water stretching as though it can fill the void—an

"illimitable ocean, without bound,  
 Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,  
 And time and place are lost"

—a fit symbol of the infinite power of the Creator. Jalālu 'd-Dīn's sea is not merely infinite but it fills infinity. And the more it does so, the more does it truly become the sea of spirituality.

The human soul has now to intermingle and be accommodated with this vision of the sea, because it is the union of the human soul with God that the seer has essentially to see and the shower to show. But how can space be found for anything at all in this mass of froth and foam and wave which has already filled all space? And so, as we watch and wait, the vast and mighty ocean begins to shrink and shrivel—visibly, palpably, with bewildering celerity.

<sup>1</sup> The translation is by Prof. C. E. Wilson. "The literal sense is that by your stepping into the sea the water will form rings, which are likened here to coats of chain-mail which will serve as a protection to you. About David's miraculous skill as an armourer it is said in the *Qur'ān* that David was taught by God the art of making coats of mail."



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And now the sea has become a lake, a pool, a garden-pond, where a duckling hatched by a domesticated hen is swimming peacefully to the consternation of its foster-mother. The poet's difficulty is conceded: a duck hatched by a hen is perhaps the only appropriate simile for the human soul, itself a component of two opposite elements. But with the poet's difficulty we have nothing to do; for what are we but passive spectators and what do we see but the transformation of an immeasurable ocean into a duckpond which can be measured with a tape?

The source of trouble lies in the impossibility of tearing a picture from its setting or divorcing an image from its associations. If divinity is to be rendered by a sea, that sea must have the dimensions of infinity, and if the human soul is to be rendered by a duckling hatched by a hen, there must be the background of a farmyard with a barbed iron wire around it. Each image blurs the other at once by its size and its associations—for a sea is not merely a vast expanse of water but a vast expanse of water in everlasting motion, and a pond is not merely a miniature sea but a miniature sea devoid of movement—and to visualize the union of the human soul with God, a work which the poet must somehow achieve, it is imperative that the two images should unite. But the images do not unite or interblend; they are superimposed.

When the sea of spirituality, therefore, becomes a duckpond, not merely is size reduced but movement is simultaneously annihilated: action gives place to stillness, surge and foam change to ripple and slime. The displacement indeed is extreme—that of a dynamic picture by a static.

"Step into the Sea," says Jalālu 'd-Dīn, "in order that the water may, like David, make a hundred coats of chain-mail." And "the literal sense," says the commentator, Prof. Wilson, "is that by your stepping into the sea the water will form rings, which are likened here to coats of chain-mail, which will serve as a protection to you." The sea, as it is generally understood, is too full of wave and foam to reveal ring-formation; Jalālu 'd-Dīn's sea, which shows rings by stepping into it, must of necessity be stagnant. And not only





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stagnant, but hard and metallic, for is not the water to form a hundred coats of chain-mail? Jalālu 'd-Dīn's sea, therefore, is doubly abnormal, since it has the limits of a duckpond and the rigidity of steel.

Immobility, however, is a feature not only of the poetry of Jalālu 'd-Dīn Rūmī, but also of the English Wordsworth and the French Baudelaire. As remarked by Ruskin, the children of Wordsworth are as rooted flowers<sup>1</sup>:

"Beneath an old grey oak, as violets, lie,"

whilst in the beach scene at Calais, so dead is the silence that it might almost be felt:

"It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;  
The holy time is quiet as a nun  
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun  
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;  
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea."

Similarly, as pointed out by Mr Middleton Murry<sup>2</sup>, "Baudelaire makes solid everything he can. There is a curious example of this in the *Rêve Parisienne*, where the poet dreams of a symbolic landscape:

'Je savourais dans mon tableau  
L'enivrante monotonie  
Du métal, du marbre et de l'eau.'

Even at the outset only one-third of his universe—the water—has any chance of moving; within half a dozen lines he has (literally) petrified even that third:

'Et des cataractes pesantes  
Comme des rideaux de cristal  
Se suspendaient obéissantes  
À des murailles de métal.'

The beautiful Dorothea is 'belle et froide comme le bronze';—and his very ideal of Beauty is an absolute immobility:

'Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes  
Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.'

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. II., p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> J. Middleton Murry, *Countries of the Mind*, pp. 161–163, London (1922).



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With Wordsworth and Baudelaire, however, this immobility is an artistic creation—the former needed a devotional atmosphere to express

“The universal instinct of repose,  
 The longing for confirmed tranquillity,  
 Inward and outward; humble, yet sublime:—  
 The life where hope and memory are as one;  
 Earth quiet and unchanged; the human soul  
 Consistent in self-rule; and heaven revealed  
 To meditation, in that quietness!<sup>1</sup>”

whilst the latter wanted “a house of metal to serve as a symbol of his own oppression by an adamant and inexorable world....The surface of his vision and the texture of his verse should alike be hard and impenetrable; thus he would render in poetry his sense of the stifling oppressiveness of life. He would meet steel with steel<sup>2</sup>.”

The immobility of Persian verse, on the other hand, is an unconscious production. The Persian poet is not trying to find means to achieve an end, for he is totally unaware of what he is doing—so much so that he even fails to impart movement where movement is needed. The result is Jalālu 'd-Dīn's aqueous coat of chain-mail, or the caravan-avenue of Qā'ānī:

دزختهای بارور چو اشتران باربر      همی زیشت یکدگر کشیده صد قطارها  
 مهارکش شمالشان صاحبها رحالشان      اصول شان عقالشان فرویشان مهارها

The fruit-bearing trees are like burden-bearing camels—stretched out one behind the other in a hundred rows.

Their camel-string is the north wind, their camel-saddle the clouds; their camel-straps are the roots, and the camel-colts their branches,

or the ferric leathery sea of Asadī:

بایرانیان داد کشتی دو شصت      بدو کشتی او با سپه بر نشست  
 ز کشتی شد آن آب ژرف از نهاد      چو دشتی پر از کوه تازان بباد  
 تو گفتی که کی سخت هامون نیل      بجمله بدرد همی ژنده پیل

<sup>1</sup> W. Wordsworth, *Excursion*, Bk. III.

<sup>2</sup> J. Middleton Murry, *Countries of the Mind*, pp. 161–163, London (1922).



یکی دشت هامونش سیماب رنگ      سراسر چو پولاد بزدوده رنگ  
 زمینی نماینده همچون سهر      در او چون در آئینه دیدار چهر  
 بیابان آشفته بی سنگ و خاک      مغاکش گهی کوه و گه که مغاک  
 یکی دشت سیمین چو آتش بجوش      که آسوده از نعره گه با خروش  
 بدیدن چنان کآبکینه ز رنگ      بسودن چو کوبنده بر سنگ سنگ

He gave the Īrānians a hundred and twenty boats and he embarked thereon with his troops.

Because of the boats, the deep sea became as it were a plain full of mountains rolling in the wind.

Thou wouldst say that a wild elephant is tearing to pieces the leather of the blue lake.

It was a *hāmūn*-plain of the colour of quicksilver, altogether like steel with the rust all polished.

The floor resembled the sky in colour, and therein was reflected, as in a mirror, the face of the seer.

A wild desert without sand or stone, with valleys for hills and hills for valleys.

One silver plain, raging like fire ; sometimes quiet and sometimes sonorous.

In appearance and colour like glass, and like pulverized stones in commotion.

This failure to impart movement can be detected even in the conventional simile سرودد, cypress-stature, but it is undoubtedly at its best in marine themes, and is associated with the perennial cry: Profit is at sea, but safety is ashore. The ferric sea of Asadī, therefore, has no genetic connection of any kind with the petrified water of Baudelaire: the latter has been created by an artistic suppression of movement, whilst the former is, as it were, self-existent, being the reflex-effect of maritime passivity on literature.

It occurred to me, therefore, that even as a seafaring race has called a camel 'a ship of the desert' I should find somewhere in Persian literature the quaint description of a ship as a camel of the sea. And the thing was there—in the *Tuhfatu 'l-'Irāqain* of Khāqānī<sup>1</sup>—not identically, but approximately.

<sup>1</sup> Lucknow ed., pp. 87–88. Similarly, 'Abdu'r-Razzāq (British Museum MS. Or. 1291, f. 203<sup>b</sup>) calls a ship بسینه جولان نماید.



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در صفت زورق که بر روی دجله روانست  
 زورق ز برش روان و ساکن      چون صورت رهروان باطن  
 چون کنگره سحاب آبان      بر کوهه آسمان شتابان  
 چون قوس قزح خمیده کردار      اما نه بشکل او نگونسار  
 چون ناقه صالح از بن و سر      ثعبان کلیم زیرش اندر  
 هر بار که حامله بر آید      صد بچه بیک شکر بزیاید  
 زمین سر بخورد هر جانور      پس قی کند آن همه بدان سر

About a (ferry-) boat in motion on the Tigris.

On the Tigris a boat is at rest and in motion, like the aspect of travellers journeying within themselves<sup>1</sup>.

Like the pinnacle of the cloud of Ābān, hurrying on towards the height of heaven.

Bent like the rainbow, but not inverted like it.

Like the she-camel of Ṣāliḥ from head to foot<sup>2</sup>; and underneath there is the serpent of Moses<sup>3</sup>.

Every time she is pregnant she gives birth to a hundred offspring from a single womb.

She swallows every living thing at this end, and brings it all out at the other.

Similarly, the poet Asadī calls a ship 'an elephant driven by the wind on a field of water.'

تو گفתי که کیمخت هامون نیل      بجمله بدرّده می ژنده پیل  
 چو پیلی بمیدان تگ زودتاب      ورا پیلبان باد و میدانش آب

Thou would'st say that a wild elephant is tearing to pieces the leather of the blue plain.

Like an elephant on a race-course, swift of speed; its elephant-driver is the wind, and its race-course is water.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, mystics in deep meditation and with perfect facial repose.

<sup>2</sup> Ṣāliḥ, the prophet sent to the people of Thamūd, produced miraculously from a stone a she-camel in the tenth month of pregnancy, and added a warning that the destruction of the camel or her young would be attended by the destruction of the tribe. The ferry-boat on the Tigris is from head to foot, *i.e.*, stem to stern, like this she-camel of Ṣāliḥ, because it carries passengers and saves them from destruction.

<sup>3</sup> The serpent of Moses is the boisterous sea, which engulfs victims.



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With the elephants and camels of the sea—the armed and unarmed shipping of Persian verse—there should also be mentioned the sea-elephants and the sea-camels of Persian prose—a popular device to convert land-animals to marine by prefixing the word ‘sea’ or ‘water.’ Thus there is a sea-dog *كلاب البحر* and a water-lizard *ضب المائي* in al-Bīrūnī’s *Chronology of the Ancient Nations*, whilst Nāṣiru ’d-Dīn Shāh has sea-foxes *روباه بحري*, sea-lions *شير بحري*, sea-elephants *فيل بحري*, water-horses *اسب آبي*, and even water-rhinoceroses *كرگدن آبي* in his *Safarnāma*. That a walrus or a hippopotamus should be a sea-elephant or a water-rhinoceros is perhaps intelligible, but when a lighthouse becomes a sea-lamp *چراغ بحري*, and a pirate a water-thief *سارقة الماء*, and the word ship increases from *كشتى* to *كشتى بزرگ* and thence to *كشتى جنگى* and finally to *كشتى بزرگ جنگى آهن پوش*, it is time to question the existence of a nautical vocabulary in Persian literature. For place in parallel columns an account of a land-journey of Nāṣiru ’d-Dīn Shāh, and an account of his sea-voyage, and replace the word *كشتى* ‘ship’ by *كالسكه* ‘carriage’ and forthwith the sea-voyage is a land-journey. For *اطاق* is common to both ‘cabin’ and ‘compartment’; *سفر* to a ‘voyage’ and a ‘journey’; *داخل شدن* to ‘enter’ and to ‘embark’; *متاع* to a ‘baggage’ and ‘cargo’; *راندن* to ‘set sail’ and to ‘drive’ and so on. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject any further: the evidence of Persian literature is as completely against a theory of Persian maritime activity as the evidence of history is in favour.

Obviously, therefore, a hard and fast line has to be drawn between the coastal Persian and the Persian of the Persian plateau; the former, like the Sabaean Arab, was a sailor; the latter, like the Beduin, a lover of land. This has led Sir John Malcolm to suppose that the coastal Persian was not a Persian at all but an Arab, for says he<sup>1</sup>:

“The fourth class of the inhabitants of Persia consisted of a number of Arabian tribes, who entirely occupied the level country between the mountains and the Persian Gulf. This tract, which...resembles the peninsula of Arabia more than any of the interior provinces of Persia, had long been abandoned to this race,

<sup>1</sup> J. Malcolm, *History of Persia*, Vol. II, p. 63.





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who from the earliest ages possessed a superiority over the Persians at sea. The latter indeed seem, at all periods of their history, to have at once dreaded and abhorred that element. The Arabs had consequently not only possessed themselves of the islands in the Gulf, but of almost all the harbours along the coast. Their children maintained these possessions, yielding at times a real, and at others a nominal obedience to the government of Persia; but their poverty, the heat of the climate, and the barrenness of the soil, combined with the facilities of embarking in their boats, have at all periods aided the efforts of this race to maintain themselves in a state of rude independence."

As applied to pre-Šafawī times all this is sheer speculation, for apart from the frequent navigation of Darius in the Gulf of Persia, and the naval activity of Ardashīr-i-Pāpakān and Shāpūr the Great, were not the provinces of 'Umān and Yemen under Persian control before the rise of Islām, and is there not the evidence of Muqaddasī that "most of the shipbuilders and seafaring men along the circuit of the Arabian peninsula are Persians<sup>1</sup>"? Nevertheless, though there were Persian sailors along the Gulf, and Persian landsmen in the interior, it appears to me that the difference between the landsman and the sailor was merely of degree, not of kind. For what the sea is to the one, the circumambient sea is to the other, and what Mas'ūdī writes in 965 A.D.:

Sofala is the limit of navigation of the vessels of 'Umān and Sīrāf in the Sea of the Zanj<sup>2</sup>

is repeated almost *verbatim* by Duarte Barbosa in A.D. 1514:

"Neither have the Moors of Arabia, and Persia, or the Indies, ever navigated as far as this (Cape San Sebastian), nor discovered these countries, on account of the strong currents of the sea, which is very stormy."

The dread of the circumambient ocean had not been removed by the establishment of a sea-trade from Africa to China, and the Sea of the Zanj was, for the Arabs and the Persians alike, the butt and very sea-mark of their utmost sail.

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, p. 125.



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