

## MEDITERRANEAN FEATURES AND WONDERS IN THE PERSIAN LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

This paper describes the mythological, symbolic and other peculiarity aspects of the Mediterranean in Persian literature. We find various kinds of myths in this literature, for example Mediterranean myth, Greek myth, Arabic myth and etc. These words allude to Mediterranean in Persian poem and prose: daryāyemeditarāne, daryāye Maqreb, daryāye rum, daryāyeshām, daryāyeabyaz, daryāye tennis, bahre rum and bahreabyaz. These early Persian books include description about Mediterranean: Mojmal-o-tavārix, zin-al-axbār, kašf-al-asrār, garšāspnāme, ajāyeb-al-maxluqāt, Hodud-al-ālam, safarnāme, noxbat-o-dahr and etc. We find some imaginary peculiarities of the Mediterranean in Persian literature: Its strangeness, Mediterranean greenery in the fall, density of Mediterranean's water that ship can't arrive at there, limitless of Mediterranean, its red fish that has human face and another fish that has bestial voice, its glassy fish, its flying fish and its stone that solaces lovers and so on.

**KEYWORDS:** Mediterranean, Wonders, Persian Literature

### INTRODUCTION

Persian literature is the oldest and richest literature in world. It is Full of myths, stories and wonders of nations. There are special books entitled ajayeb and Ghrayb about places, people and mythological or real history of nations. In these books we find referring to the wonders of seven climates. Mediterranean countries and its surrounding nations have many effects in Persian literature.

Iranian poets and writers have always attended to the Mediterranean Sea and surrounding countries and this attention continues now. Myths and stories of Greece and Rome had a great influence on Persian literature. Iran was one of the seven climates which correlated the East and West. Mediterranean countries and all surrounding cities were described in Persian literature.

Since Mitrayism time many Iranian cultural and religious topics have gone to the Mediterranean area and as well as many of the common thinking around the Mediterranean have been transferred to Iran which can be pointed to the myths of ancient Greece and Rome.

Literature is one of the best places which can record the myths and wonders. In former times, Persian literature or poetry had performed the role of the language of science and culture and history. Literary topics were mixed with historical and geographical content. Books on science, history and geography were written on literary language, and many of the myths and historical events have been recorded in Persian literature.

### METHODOLOGY

The author has used a descriptive-analytical methodology in this study. All the investigations were done by conducting desk and library research as well as by analyzing and classifying those investigations. All of these investigations are divided into distinct categories.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

About the Mediterranean and its features in Persian literature, the article has not been written yet. So this is a new article in this subject.

This subject is discussed in the three parts:

- The names and titles of the Mediterranean in Persian language.
- Persian Books that have paid to the Mediterranean and its surrounding countries.
- Wonders of the ancient Mediterranean and its myths in Persian language and literature.

### The Names and Titles of the Mediterranean in Persian Language

Mediterranean is mentioned in Persian literature with these titles: daryāyemeditarāne, daryāye Maqreb, daryāye rum, daryāyeshām, daryāyeabyaz, daryāye tennis, bahre rum and bahreabyaz. White Sea, AqDekyz, Roman Sea, Mediterranean Sea Abyaz, West Sea, Bahre sham, Tangier, Bahr al motavaset. It is worth mentioning that Bahr Abyaz is wrong in translation of the Mediterranean and this sea locates in north of Russia. Bahr o rum (Sea Greeks) is the other name of Mediterranean that had been referred to the east of Mediterranean from ancient periods. Later these names were applied on all over the Mediterranean. Bahr o Rum is still common for this sea which is also called Albahr o shami or Bahr olmaghreb. Mediterranean description begins respectively from the west and is going through the south and east coast. Mediterranean has always been considered the main sea.

There were seven seas in world: Bahreaxzar or eastern Pacific, western Pacific, the Great Sea or Indian Ocean, Bahr o rum, Caspian Sea, Black Sea and Aral Sea.

Different parts of Mediterranean had different names like Bahretiran (Razi) and Albnadeqiyan or Banadeqi Gulf or Gulf of Veniz which in fact includes all of the Adriatic sea. On the other hand, Constantinople Gulf and (aspects of Black Sea) Black Sea were called Nitas. Mediterranean was known to AqDenyz or Bahre Abyaz at Ottoman period and Persian term of White Sea or bahresefid implied for this name. Constantinople or Istanbul is highly known in Persian language and literature. Its religious and historical places have been pointed in Persian literature. Mosques and libraries in Istanbul are very important in Iran. Beauty and elegance of Istanbul Seas and climate of Istanbul are the envy of the world.

Constantinople or Istanbul has been much attention historically, geographically and religiously in view of Iranians and other Muslims. Poets like Khaghani, Nizami Ganjavi, Rumi has emphasized on this sea and its wonders. Rumi became known to the Romans because he came to Turkey and Konya. Turkey was the focus of Iranian poets and writers in the seventh century A.H.

The general lines of the world civilization are around several geographical and some historical position. Contrary to previous thought, the Domain of the world, from China to Gibraltar is not large even for a camel caravan.

When the people around the columns of Hercules (Gibraltar) do not remain the code portion of the Chinese silk handkerchief. Chinese civilization is thought that he would be leading with the Andalusia.

Two or three thousand years of world civilization runs round the Mediterranean and moved from city to city and it rotated in the Athens Olympiad, the pillars of Baalbek, lantern Alexandria, Carthage gates, Constantinople qarnozahab, Rome Capitol and the columns of Hercules.

Major events have usually occurred around the Silk Road or around Road pepper (spices road) and both these

roads were finally leading to the Mediterranean. All the great wars of Central Asia and the Middle East made to dominate of the major centers of the Silk Road or the way spices. Throughout the history, all empires were trying to find a foothold in the Mediterranean, while the Mediterranean empires were prevented. In other words for thousands years ago in every century, Mediterranean coast has shown its superiority over the world.

It was said that the nations and great empires always searched foothold in the Mediterranean. The reason is that, this seemingly small sea connects the three continents of the world. The effects of civilization in Asia, Africa and Europe passed from the coast line and Mediterranean waters and went to other parts of the world.

### **Persian Books that have Paid to the Mediterranean and its Surrounding Countries**

In the medicine, geography, history and travel Books and Persian poetry or prose has been much attention to the Mediterranean and its surrounding countries. These early Persian books include description about Mediterranean:

Mojmal-o-tavārix, zin-al-axbār, kašf-al-asrār, garšāspnāme, ajāyeb-al-maxluqāt, Hodud-al-ālam, safarnāme, noxbat-o-dahr and etc.

Nizami Ganjavi in his eskandrnām noted very aspects of the Mediterranean Sea and its cities. Mavlana Jalaleddin Rumi described white face of Romans and their architecture and compared them with the Chinese.

Naserkhosrav was an Iranian tourist. He traveled to all countries around the Mediterranean. His trip report was very accurate and valuable. He gathered them in a travel book (safari name). This book is considered as a permanent historical and literary document.

Hodudol Alam is a valid book about the geography. All the known land of world had been introduced in this book until the third century AH. The Mediterranean and surrounding countries had been described in this book. (The Region of The world: 95).

Aboureyhanbirooni was the great Iranian astronomer and pharmacologist, the Mediterranean and its wonders have been introduced in his books.

Saadi has described Mediterranean in his Golestan. Salman Savji said: Mediterranean Sea is a strange and wonderful. Hakim Nizami Ganjavi in his eskandarnām points to different Aspects of this sea and its surrounding areas. It was the Habits of Inhabitants of the Mediterranean which adopted the ornament and joy at Festivals day and brought great food and they had lively and expansion attemptingsuch as the Mediterranean Sea, Antioch, Istanbul, Constantinople, Bazeath, Byzantium, Rome, Greece, Alexandria and so on.

### **Wonders of the Ancient Mediterranean and its Myths in Persian Language and Literature**

Mediterranean is known as center of strange plants, animals and wonderful herbal medicines and various stones. People in ancient Greece and Rome had a legend about the creation of the Mediterranean. They said: "When God created the earth some stones remained in his hand. He threw down the stones From behind his shoulder. The stones fell in the Mediterranean Sea. Those stones were the 1500 pieces and formed the Islands of Aegean Sea. 166 islands of them were residential.

The lack of tide and retreating of beaches were in Mediterranean interesting features. Mediterranean Sea is Green in the fall. Ships can not enter it because of the water concentration. (Naser Khosraw: 72)

About Mediterranean Sea, Abdullah bAmr said: There are turtles, crabs and toads in this sea.

There was idol statue on Mediterranean beach, it was made of stone. There is the iron in its hand and seem it takes water. The fish tooth was brought from the Mediterranean Sea which was white and yellow. It was founded on the hilt. Amber came over the water in the Mediterranean.

The coral was in the Mediterranean which was not red. This coral was whitey and was called Biraq. Mediterranean was like poplar or pine.

There was a stone in the Mediterranean which was hard as agate in Properties of the stone that gave consolation to lovers and opened and relaxed the mind and memory. Coral was found at three sites of the Mediterranean namely the island of Saqliyh, Cebta and Kherz ports.

In the springs that are located on the Mediterranean islands, there is Realgar of gummy stone like transparent amber. It is coming out and is frozen and closed when strike to sea water. There is a building next to the Mediterranean Sea that seems rectangle in outside but it has eight sides to the inside. There is the spring near Tripoli in the Mediterranean Sea that its water erupts and overcomes on the water and prevents the passing of ships. This spring water is sweet in the salinity of the Mediterranean Sea.

Wonderful animals are in the Mediterranean Sea: Red and large fish size of people that its head is like squash and its face and mouth are like monkeys. (Ansāri: 221)

This fish brings half of its body out side of water and returns its head to the left and right. There is another fish that its face is like human face. It comes to the land Saturday night before sunset and goes down the water on the sunset of Sunday night. There is other fish in the Mediterranean Sea that is called a sea swordsman, it is like warrior which sword in hand and shield in other hand. It set up the helmet on its head. In this sea, there are other animal that its face is like human face and its body is like a fish. When the sea water is high, this fish is thrown to the beach and is preyed. There is other fish in the Mediterranean Sea which is called a quadruped. It has amphibian life. Its voice sound is like quadruped. It screams When fears. There is another fish which is called Moses hut, one side of its body has meat and the other side has not flesh or bone. (Ibid: 222)

Fishermen consider it as a good mark. They do not hunt this fish. It is called Moses and Joshua fish. There is another fish which is like the combat helmet and its body is clear as glass like the moon shines at night. It makes clear it's around in the sea. Its color is indigo and is called sea cresset. When it feels that someone wants to hunt, it scatters a burning poisonous material. There is another fish which is called minaret. It is as tall minaret, it is coming out of the water, When it strikes to ships they are drowned. In this sea, there is white bird which is not on land. This bird informs travelers the coming of enemy. There is another fish that has wings and flies on the water. It has a long tip. There is another fish which is called Sifyas (Ibid: 223), decorative things are made with the back bone of this fish, some fishes would eat this fish, it scatters black ink and they are far away, and then it flees. There are over 400 types of fish and coral in the Mediterranean Sea.

Mediterranean Sea is green during the autumn and it is a symbol of greenery.

Wonders of the world were four things: one of them was the minaret of Alexandria. It is one of the wonders of Mediterranean Shipping not be can there because there are mountains of magnetism rock. Whenever a ship arrives at there, its nails are pulled and the ship will be broken. (Nizami: 604)

Mediterranean located in the West area, its not any sea like the Mediterranean. There were demons in this sea which were within the copper jug and their howl gave heard.

There is a big fish in the Mediterranean which has petrous skin. It can break ships and its body is soft and shallow and is vulnerable point in its body which is hit dies. People use its oil for shipbuilding. This fish is died by amber eating. (Toosi: 334)

In the Mediterranean there is the red mountain well known Jabal-al -rahmah which invulnerable city was made on it and someone can not achieve it.

Horse statue was in Constantinople that the idol seated with its jewel crown on it. Horse feet were on the ground and its right hand in the air and called people to Constantinople, Spell was in its other hand which pushed the enemy from attacking to the city. (Qazvini: 56)

There was the campanile in Constantinople the wind bent it to four direction. People are pottery under it and break walnut there. Greatness mansion and its plurality of inhabitants are famous in literature. Abouryhan says: a large animal is in the Mediterranean Sea, Anyone see it, dies. Mediterranean Sea is symbol of infinity and the point of being the world's border. The world located between this sea and the China Sea.

People bring a plant from the Mediterranean islands which are fragrant and everyone is stuttering upon eating it, the stuttering goes away. This plant also stopped the bloodshed and conciliated the wounds. A cow is in the Mediterranean Sea which comes out at night and the fire comes out of its nose as everything of plant and chips are before it to be burned.

In Mediterranean coast with rising water there is a fish which comes to help sailors navigate. The sea tide is four times a day and its water is green. (The brief of Histories and Narratives: 472)

Minaret is in Sea Islands that a person is sitting on the right hand side of the sea and he refers to the point. A Sea is near Antakya if you take the wood in its water, the wood is burnt. Hjralthasat was the name of a stone in the Mediterranean Sea, Aristotle said: Wave brings out this stone from the Mediterranean coast that some of it for removing bladder stones was useful.

Alexandria Marine Tower: This tower had been built near the port of Alexandria by the Mediterranean Sea to guide the ships with fire that was shined at the end of it. This tower was built by ordered of Batlimus who was successor of Alexander. The other tower was built on this tower that the lighthouse was irradiation on it. The tower destroyed completely by earthquake and its traces wasted. Lighthouse of Alexandria or the great minaret: Since Ptolemy selected Alexandria his imperial capital for the more dominant on the Mediterranean waters and guided ships in the North Alexandria and East of Farus Island, He built a great lighthouse which in Arabic sources mentioned it as a minaret that has been considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Old World. In order to observe the stars were made a mirror had made by which the ship traffic in the Mediterranean Sea were controlled. But before that the lighthouse is built, the fence of the fortified city of Babylon in the Seven Wonders was recorded. Construction of the lighthouse of Alexandria and the beauty and grandeur of this building and its scholastic and skillful loom removed Babylon fence from the list of Seven Wonders and the Lighthouse of Alexandria was taken place it. Lighthouse of Alexandria like many buildings at that time was built to guide the ships in the day, because Mariners found the port before sunset In order to do not stay on the water in the night. But gradually flourished and prospered in trade and exchange in Alexandria and increased sea traffic it was required to Coming and going of ships to port in the night too. Before construction of the lighthouse of Alexandria was not created such a lighting tower as this and therefore there was no name for such construction. People called this building Farus in order to its location. later the same word became popular with Latin roots in the languages: Latin is" Pharos ", Italian and Spanish is" Faroo ", French is" Phare. We Say it in Persian Fanuse that means lantern.

Alexandria is located by the Mediterranean beach.(The Region of The world: 466)

There is a minaret. Blyans built a mirror on top of the minarets. All ships were seen in Mediterranean and Constantinople Sea. They said Alexander hid his treasures in the minaret. There was broken and made again, but its effect disappeared. The Solomon palace was in there that had built by spooks and reflected of the clouds and sea green can be seen at that palace. Author of *mojmalottavarixvalqesas* explained about the Ashabe Alrqym and Kahf, a great mountain was at the Near of Constantinople that there was grave of Ashabe Alrqym. There was a big burrow in the mountain and thirteen people were sleeping. Iranian historians believed that the grave of Ashabkahf was located in Istanbul. (Maybodi: 90)

Naserkhosrav says: Alexandria located on the Mediterranean beach and the Nile, there was a minaret that burning mirror was built on it which burnt the ships.

## CONCLUSIONS

This paper describes the mythological, symbolic and other peculiarity aspects of the Mediterranean in Persian literature. We find various kinds of myths in this literature, for example Mediterranean myth, Greek myth, Arabic myth and etc. These words allude to Mediterranean in Persian poem and prose: *daryāyemeditarāne*, *daryāye Maqreb*, *daryāye rum*, *daryāyeshām*, *daryāyeabyaz*, *daryāye tennis*, *bahre rum* and *bahreabyaz*. These early Persian books include description about Mediterranean: *Mojmal-o-tavārix*, *zin-al-axbār*, *kašf-al-asrār*, *garšāspnāme*, *ajāyeb-al-maxluqāt*, *Hodud-al-ālam*, *safarnāme*, *noxbat-o-dahr* and etc. We find some imaginary peculiarities of the Mediterranean in Persian literature: Its strangeness, Mediterranean greenery in the fall, density of Mediterranean's Water that ship can't arrive at there, limitless of Mediterranean, its red fish that has human face and another fish that has bestial voice, its glassy fish, its flying fish and its stone that solaces lovers and so on.

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