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DARYĀ
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(OPers. *drayah-*, Mid. Pers. *drayā*, Av. *zrayah-*; sea, river) in Iranian culture. The role of the sea in Iranian culture evolved through a clearly discernible series of historical phases. In this article an attempt has been made to extrapolate those phases from basic information published in articles on the Black Sea, the Caspian, and the Persian Gulf.

Phase 1. Iranian culture emerged in a continental region, where the only knowledge of the sea was a vague notion (probably pre-Aryan and certainly pre-Iranian) of an external ocean (rather than of an intercontinental sea) encircling the earth, the *zrayah vourukaša* (*Vd.* 19.3 et passim; cf. Herzfeld, 1947, pp. 630-31). Direct acquaintance with the sea doubtless evolved only with the expansion of the Achaemenid empire, which permitted the transformation of old mythic notions into scientific themes. It is perhaps thus that the legend of Fraŋrasyan and Haosravah (*Yt*. 19.56-64, 19.82) came to contain allusions to three great gulfs (*vari*) of the external ocean, possibly the Caspian, the Black Sea, and the Persian Gulf (Herzfeld, 1947, p. 633). A little later precise knowledge of tidal areas, including, it seems, those of the Persian Gulf, began to develop (*Yt.* 8.46; cf. Herzfeld, 1947, pp. 636-37; *Bundahišn*, TD2, 82 ff.; cf. Herzfeld, 1947, pp. 639-42).

Phase 2. From the moment that direct acquaintance with the sea was achieved a genuine Iranian maritime policy began to develop. This development was nevertheless quite uneven, reflecting the axes of imperial expansion. The Caspian remained practically unknown; knowledge of the Black Sea was very limited, and sources are also almost totally absent. On the other hand, Persian

activity in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and even the Indian Ocean, along with the conquest of Egypt and attempts to cut through the isthmus of Suez, reinforced the orientation to those areas.

The initiators and principal instruments of Achaemenid maritime policy were at first foreigners, especially Phoenicians and Carians (OPers. *karkā*; DNa 30; Herzfeld, 1947, II, p. 658; idem, 1968, p. 281); the most celebrated were Scylax of Caryanda, admiral under Cambyses and Darius I, who left a periplus in which primarily the Mediterranean and the Black Sea but also the southern coast of Persia as far as the Indus and the Indian Ocean are described (Herodotus, 4.44). But in those southern seas and the Persian Gulf, which was to remain almost exclusively under Persian domination for more than a millennium until the Islamic conquest (as is clear from the name Persian Gulf, in use from the 1st century B.C.E.; Strabo, 2.5.18), it is possible to recognize the emergence of a genuine and original Persian maritime culture. One obvious concrete indication is the very large number of Persian words that passed into the Arabic maritime vocabulary during that long period (Ferrand, 1924) and came to constitute an essential component of it. Already in the pre-Islamic period there was a great sea trade that originated in the Persian Gulf and extended as far as China (Hourani, pp. 38, 46-50). Persians played a considerable role in maritime relations with the Far East (see CHINESE-IRANIAN RELATIONS i-ii, vii), a role that evolved still further in the ʿAbbasid period; the main shipping ports along the Persian coast were successively Sīrāf in the 9th-10th centuries and the island of Qays/Kīš after the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. Even the legendary adventures of Sinbad the Sailor, whose name, if not originally Persian, was certainly Persianized, reflect the preponderance of the Persian element in those distant eastern waters. It still predominated in the eastern trade at the beginning of the 16th century, when the first European navigators arrived in the thalassocracy of Hormoz (Aubin, 1973, p. 140). If it is accepted that there had been no interruption of maritime commerce between the Persian Gulf and India from the 11th to the 14th century, then it is very probable that it was Persian maritime traditions that underlay the Arab pilots' knowledge of the southern seas in that period (Aubin, 1964).

Phase 3. A new phase had already begun, however. From soon after the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century Persian rulers turned progressively away from the sea and abdicated all interest in maritime activity, with sporadic exceptions. Beginning in the 14th century there were frequent

references in the texts to the unsuitability of Persians for the sea (Curzon, *Persian Question* II, pp. 389-90). At the same time Persian activity on the Caspian, which had been important in the 8th-13th centuries, gradually gave way to Genoese enterprise; with the arrival of the first Russian traders in the 16th century it approached total extinction. In later centuries Persian rulers increasingly lost interest in the Persian Gulf and the southern seas. The last Persian efforts in the area involved little more than timely attempts to establish shipping ports to serve the interior of the country: at Bandar-e ʿAbbās in the 17th-18th centuries, then at Būšehr in the 18th-19th centuries. The shahs also occasionally sought to establish political contacts by sea (e.g., the Persian embassy to Siam in 1685; *Safīna-ye solaymānī*, apud Lescot), though they remained more or less ephemeral. The sea itself, however, was almost totally abandoned to European navigators and Arab pirates. The last manifestations of an expiring power were apparent in the efforts, at once grandiose and absurd, of Nāder Shah (1148-60/1736-47) to revive a Persian fleet, on the Caspian in 1155/1742 and at Būšehr after 1147/1734; in the latter instance he went so far as to have wood for shipbuilding brought, at great expense, from Māzandarān. In the 19th century Persian maritime fortunes reached their lowest point, after the sultan of Muscat established control over part of the Persian coast, including Bandar-e ʿAbbās, in 1207/1793; his hold was broken only in 1285/1868. Persian pilgrims to the Muslim holy places at that period traveled only with the greatest reluctance on seas that seemed to harbor every danger. Many made long detours in order to avoid the perilous passage; those who resigned themselves to it, like the Bāb in 1260-61/1844-45, reported severe sufferings (Nicolas, pp. 206-07).

This decline in Persian maritime interest poses an immense problem in cultural history, one that is still insufficiently explored and for which the reasons remain largely enigmatic. It is obvious that the expansion of the much more powerfully equipped European navies, Portuguese, Dutch, then British in the Persian Gulf and Russian on the Caspian, was an essential element. It was certainly not the only one, however. The period of modern European naval power has also witnessed the flourishing of indigenous maritime cultures, for example, those of the Turkmen on the Caspian and the Arabs in the Persian Gulf. It is thus necessary to seek reasons intrinsic to Persian civilization itself. From the medieval invasions through the reign of the Qajars the domination, except for brief intervals, of dynasties of Turkish and Mongol origin and the massive irruption onto the Persian plateau of populations from the Central Asian land mass no doubt played an equally significant role. Other

aspects remaining to be explored include the progressive onset, after the advent of Safavid Shiʿism, of a rigid religious outlook, in which maritime enterprises, judged incompatible with a life of piety, were viewed with scorn and suspicion.

Whatever the explanation, at the end of the 19th century the Persian navy comprised only three ships. One of them was stationed on the Anzalī lagoon of the Caspian, “a small dilapidated paddle-wheel steamer bearing the proud title of ‘Shahinshah Nasr-ed-Din,’” a yacht especially constructed for the shah’s first voyage to Europe; despite this splendor, upon its arrival in Baku the captain hastily lowered the flag in response to the firing of a warning salvo, which led George Curzon to remark with irony “Such is the majesty of the King of Kings on the Caspian” (*Persian Question* II, p. 394). On the Persian Gulf there was the *Persepolis*, “a screw steamship of 600 tons, of 450 horse-power,” armed with four Krupp 7.5 cm cannons and launched from the shipyards of Bremerhaven in 1885. It was commanded by German officers. On the upper Kārūn river, between Ahvāz and Šūštar, there was a small steamboat of 36 tons and slightly less than 30 horsepower, the *Susa* (Curzon, *Persian Question* II, pp. 394-96).

Phase 4. Progress continued to be very slow for the next half-century. On the eve of World War II the Persian navy still did not comprise more than two sloops of 1,050 tons each (both destroyed by the British on 2 Šahrīvar 1320 Š./24 August 1941), five patrol boats, seven hovercraft, and several harbor and auxiliary craft, most constructed in Italy, where the first Persian naval cadets had been sent for training in 1305 Š./1926 and from where the first crews had been recruited in 1932 (*Persia*, pp. 398-99). Only after the war did the building of a genuine Persian naval force (*nīrū-ye daryāʾī*) begin (Gehrke and Mehner, pp. 266-70). Great Britain offered to Persia two frigates (of 2,000 and 1,050 tons respectively) to replace the two units destroyed during the war. In 1343 Š./1964 and 1348 Š./1969 four sloops of 1,000 tons each were delivered to Persia under the American aid program. At the same time Persia was systematically purchasing warships; the first order, placed in 1345 Š./1966, was for four frigates of 1,200 tons each, built in Great Britain and delivered in 1350-51 Š./1971-72. In 1349 Š./1970 a destroyer of 2,300 tons was purchased, also from Great Britain, and in 1351 Š./1972 two 2,200-ton destroyers from the United States. Beginning in 1349-50 Š./1970-71 a substantial fleet of hovercraft was developed (reaching a total of fourteen in the late 1970s). The shah expressly declared his intentions in a speech delivered on 14 Ābān 1351 Š./5 November

1972: not only to ensure the defense of Persian coasts but also to provide a "circle of security" for the country (*ḥarīm-e amnīyat-e Īrān*), of indeterminate radius but extending as far as the Indian Ocean. In 1352 Š./1973 there was a new flurry of orders for ships (eight destroyers, four frigates, twelve gunboats, and fourteen hovercraft). At the same time the number of naval bases was increased. To the already-existing base at Ḵorramšahr were added Bandar-e ʿAbbās (in 1344 Š./1965; from 1352 Š./1973 the general naval headquarters), Ḵārg island (base for hovercraft since 1352 Š./1973), Būšehr, the island of Kīš, Jāsk, and especially Čāh Bahār (q.v.) on the coast of Baluchistan, which permitted Persian control of navigation on the sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean. It is noteworthy that almost nothing was done on the Caspian, where Persia operated only a few patrol boats based at Anzalī and Behšahr, without actual combat units. The rebirth of the Persian navy, exclusively an expression of political will, was deliberately oriented toward the region where the government perceived some necessity for it, while at the same time recognizing an arena of potential expansion of influence, which was totally excluded in the Caspian. This strategic vision was confirmed by the war with Iraq in the 1980s. It is still too soon to know, however, whether this cultural graft will take root.

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