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Viewpoint\ Editorial

The Legacy of Dari Literature: An Iranian Landscape of the Orient

Welcome to you, eastern weaver of subtleties | Whose lips the Persian speech so well beseems!

We are your intimate friends; tell us your secret | Reveal what you know of IRAN? (Sir M. Iqbal of Lahore)

The 13th anniversary of *JACO* is approaching. During these years, the editorial board of *JACO* as well as its authors made their best efforts to open an Iranian window to the cultural horizon of the Orient based on literary, history and archaeology. Historically, the development of the idea of Iranshahr, the word of Iran, and Iranian historical consciousness/ self-awareness emerged more than two millennia ago. Since the Sassanids, in W. Asia, next to the cultural borders of the Occident, represented by ancient pre-Christian Classical civilizations and then Christian Byzantium, people who considered themselves Iranian have lived and succeeded. Both archaeologically and historically, for instance, from the epitaph of Khordad Pour Ormazdavarid, whose life ended in Byzantine Constantinople (Nyberg, 1968), to the *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* composed by H. Mustawfi of Qazvin, by the end of Ilkhanids, such a fact should be realized that lands between the Euphrates and the Jaxartes and the Caucasian Darband up to the Persian Gulf were inhabited by people who were aware of their Iranian identity. It seems noticeable, many years after the fall of the Sassanids, when Sharaf al-Din Kurd Bidlisi (1860) wrote his book of *Scheref-Nameh* on the history and descent of the Kurdish people by the order of Ottoman Sultan Muhammad III, he mentioned the Sassanid lineage of his fathers. In addition, the Islamic history of Iran verifies the rethinking of Sassanid sage and culture: Hekmat-e Khosrowani conceptualized by Shaykh Shahab al-Din Suhrawardy of Azerbaijan, whose metaphysical works are in Persian (Corbin, 1971). Another instance comes from the Age of Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi: although this Age commenced by the deadly invasion of Khorasan by the Mongols, it evolved to the renaissance movement of Iranian culture during the Age of Khwaja Rashid al-Din. This movement was inspired by the Sassanid Iran. In these times, as Shams Tabrizi asked, “What had happened to the Persian language? It is quite gentle and elegant!” the discourse of Dari was promoted in Iranian civilization. Meanwhile, the Shahnameh tradition and Persian letters were developed in the Ilkhanid court of Tabriz and Rab’-e Rashidi (Ayorloo, 2018). In addition to the poems of Khaghani of Shirvan, inspired by the legacy of Ctesiphon, the Arch of Alishah and the last Mongol Ilkhan who nick-named himself as Anushiravan the Fair, if one mentions the relives of Fath Ali Shah the Qajar beside the bas relives of Sassanid kings in Kermanshah and Ray, all of these should be noted as few samples from plenteous literary, historical and archaeological sources verify the continuous Sassanid idea of Iranshahr. The Ilkhanids should be regarded as the flourishing years of the Persian language, both literary and officially, out of Iran: Ibn Battuta could learn Persian in 14th CE India. He noted that Persian was the language of the Indian court and of merchants who were trading in China and across the Silk Road. Additionally, according to Ibn-Khaldun, another sage from the Age of Khawaja Rashid al-Din, urban and industries were developed in the Orient by the Iranians.

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