

ألف ليلة و ليلة - تاريخ الممالك ساسان

Thousand and One Nights – A History of the Sassanid Kingdoms



Here is the Arabic introduction to the Tale of Sherazad, cover story of a famous collection which gained worldwide fame as the “Thousand and One Nights“:

حِكْمِي و اللّٰه اعلم انّهُ كان فيما مضى من قديم الزمان و سالف العصر و الأوان ملك من ملوك ساسان بجزر الهند و الصين صاحب جند و أعوان و حدم و حشم لهُ ولدان أحدهما كبير و الاخر صغير و كانا فارسين بطلين و كان الكبير أفرّس من الصغير و قد ملك البلاد و حكم بالعدل بين العباد و أحبّه أهل بلاده و مملكته و كان اسمه الملك شهريار و كان أخوه الصغير اسمه الملك شاهزمان و كان ملك سمرقند العجم. و لم يرل الأمر مُستقيماً في بلادهما و كلُّ و احد منهما في مملكته حاكم عادل في رعيته مُدّة عشرين سنة و هم في غاية البسط و الإنشراح

“ It is recounted—and God alone knows the truth—that in times long past, in the days of yore and ages gone by, there lived a king of the Sassanid dynasty who reigned over the islands of India and China. He commanded vast armies, hosts of auxiliaries, and a multitude of servants and retainers. He had two sons: one elder and the other younger. Both were valiant knights and heroes, though the elder was the more accomplished horseman of the two. He ruled over the land and governed his subjects with justice; consequently, he was beloved by the people of his realm and kingdom. His name was King Shahryar, while his younger brother—who reigned as the King of Samarkand in Persia—was named King Shahzaman. Affairs remained in perfect order throughout their respective domains, and for twenty years, each brother ruled his kingdom with absolute justice toward his subjects, living all the while in a state of supreme contentment and felicity ... “

... Now, it was King Shahzaman who came into a depressive mood when he learned that his wife was cheating on him. He immediately took out his sword and killed, both, his wife and her lover, a black slave. He told Shahryar what had happened, and his elder brother wanted to check out with his own eyes what Shazaman had already learned about rotten morals at his court. After having confirmed his brother's delicate report, Shahryar came to the conclusion to kill any wife, he might need to marry in the future, immediately after their night of marriage to spare him from any similar bad experience.

That decision is what finally brought him in contact with Sherazad, the only virgin left in his kingdom that was, both, suiting an imperial marriage and willing to marry him. The rest of the story has become an intriguing entertainment for generations of readers ...



فَقَالَ الْمَلِكُ شَهْرِيَّارَ فِي نَفْسِهِ: وَاللَّهِ لَا أَقْتُلُهَا حَتَّى أَسْمَعَ بَقِيَّةَ حَدِيثِهَا

And King Shahryar spoke to himself: “ By God, I will not kill her before I have heard the end of her story ! “

The Giant Arch That Still Refuses to Fall - Even after 1,400 years, somewhere in the quiet desert of modern-day Iraq, there is a structure that looks like it belongs in a dream or a warning from another world. It is called **Taq Kasra**, the last standing arch of the **ancient Sasanian capital Ctesiphon**. Built nearly **1,400 years ago**, most historians believe it was constructed during the reign of the powerful **Persian king Khosrow I**. What remains today is only a single monumental vault... yet it is enough to silence anyone who stands before it. This is no ordinary ruin. **It holds the record for the largest single-span brick arch ever built in human history**, constructed without steel, without modern machines, only ancient engineering genius and sheer ambition. Once, it was **part of a grand royal palace**, decorated with shining blue tiles and golden designs that announced the power of the Sassanid Empire.



What is even more important than an early rise of the Sassanid Empire: Changing dynasties in Central Asia continued the tradition of cultural development at the highest level.

During the 14th century, a poet named **Hafez al-Shirazi** (1325-1390) created 'The Divan of Hafez', a collection of poetry that became known as one of the highest pinnacles of Persian literature. He created **lyric poems or Ghazals** like the following one.

The Times are Out of Joint

Again the times are out of joint; and again
For wine and the loved one's languid glance I am fain.
The wheel of fortune's sphere is a marvellous thing:
What next proud head to the lowly dust will it bring ?
Or if my Magian elder kindle the light,
Whose lantern, pray, will blaze aflame and be bright ?
'Tis a famous tale, the deceitfulness of earth;
The night is pregnant: What will dawn bring to birth ?
Tumult and bloody battle rage in the plain:
Bring blood-red wine, and fill the goblet again !



Scene of fighting in Persia at 1500 CE.



Persian painting from the 16th century and traditional tapestry weaving in modern Iran.

Composed by Wolfgang Wiesner ' Ulysses ' for his blog blueprinteditor.blogspot.com
Arabic text & translation provided by author