

The investigation of a few lexicons of comestibles in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* (The Book of Kings)

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Abstract: The purpose of investigation of several terms of comestibles in *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi is to extract them according to printing and editing of an absolute writer and based on the appropriate couplet, and in some parts sometimes it has been necessary to cite the evidences due to changing of the meaning of the term in *Shahnama*. Different glossaries were used to do this study such as Abdul-ḥussayn Nūshīnī and 'Alī Ravāqī's and so on and so forth. The numbers quoted in the following of each couplet are to determine the volume and page of the couplet.

Key words: *Shahnama* (The Book of Kings); Ferdowsi; Citron; Stew; Comestibles; Bread

1. Introduction

Ferdowsi was born in a small town of *Pazh* in *Tabaran* of *Tūs*. He was one of the epic composers and world's greatest national poet. He was born in 329, and his name became illustrious in the world. His father was a farmer of wealth and prosperity. Ferdowsi spent a period of his childhood and youth times in education and seeking knowledge, and he has also been aware of Arabic literature and Islamic sciences in addition to Persian literature and history. The date of his death was in 411 at the age of 82. *Daqīqī* had been started writing a book like that before Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*, but he had not been able to complete it due to his untimely death in 365 or a little later he was killed. Ferdowsi was aware of his unfinished work and decided to complete it. *Daqīqī*'s book (was reputed as *Shahnama* of Abu *Manšūr*) had been compiled by the command of Abu *Manšūr* son of Abdul-*razzāq* the ruler of Khorasan.

A friend of Iran who was interested in the history of Iranians gave a copy of the book to Ferdowsi. The great poet began his great masterpiece from 365 to 370 years, and he benefited from the writings of others and took advantage of the narrator's speech in addition to the very *Shahnama* of Abu *Manšūr*. He is a unique and exceptional character among the Persian poets, and his manner and poetic thoughts has been different with other poets. This book has covered precise and important national issues very eloquently and distinctly like an encyclopedia that it can be called as the greatest source of history, legend, term, wisdom and morality, epic, Iranian

culture and most precious works of art and national of Iran. Really how many masters of Dari poetry do also have the same high position and a sublime background aside from the few master poets? It must be said that Ferdowsi and his work *Shahnama* has values that make him different in every respect. It was the greatest national work of Iranians and praised and preferred for everybody during a millennium. Ferdowsi's deep outlook and lofty wisdom throughout *Shahnama* will not be perceived by the manifestation of supremacy of basic message of *Shahnama* without knowing the set of spirit of coherent narratives. Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* can be called as a great allegory. It is a great allegory that Iranians' collective unconscious mind has created during millenniums and centuries.

Masterpieces are always related to the society cultural profundity whether the time they come to existence or the time they continue their exuberant life. The most obvious signs of this exuberance are when individuals have the feeling of needing for it. There has not been seen a great man like Ferdowsi, and a book like the gloriousness of *Shahnama*, and a city like the greatness of *Tūs* across the Persian literature and the history of Iranian nation; moreover Ferdowsi is now ruling across the Persian language and O' what am I saying on the wide region of the Iranian heart more than a thousand years; blessed is a land whose lucky ruler is the wise and famous man of *Tūs* and its regulations is the best in fame, then Iran should be pleased and satisfied of living more than a thousand years in the light of ((the epic of just)) and lying down in the shadow-like ((of a shady cypress)) that the free-spirited farmer has formed wholeheartedly its *Tūs* and watered while suffering great anguish and sorrow.

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2. The importance of the subject

Nationally and ethnically speaking *Shahnama* is very significant in Iran. Protecting a sense of racial, and national pride, and Iran's past sources of pride is its features. The importance of checking a few words of comestibles in *Shahnama* is an opportunity to show that Ferdowsi has poured his poetic work into the most rhythmic and most artistic framework. Meanwhile the couplets of *Shahnama* and these lexicons not only has added to the magic and beauty of this precious work that is a treasury of rare similes, beautiful metaphors and figures of speech, but also it shows that what kinds of food the Iranian people have used, how they have eaten, and how often they have uses some of them and very interesting tips in which hidden that their reflection has been explained in the best form of art and in various types. Ferdowsi's carefulness about this matter and this language and the usage of these lexicons indicates the expression mixed with action and conscious planning of the poet that would be very enjoyable for readers in case of being careful with these terms and their different semantic reflections in each couplet.

The poet point of view is manifested in the most artistic form in the conduits of these words that the usage of the terms in his work has also joined in myths in addition to their independent form in the framework of culture, manners, history and epic any of these words can be a combination of several aspects in different fields hidden in that word or combination that shows the artistry of Ferdowsi and his own interest and devotion to Iran and Iranians. All topics of Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* at the beginning of the second millennium after *Shahnama* now we are in it is worthy of life to know Ferdowsi and *Shahnama* anew, and this re-identifying should recoup the past like a light for the future which is now ahead. Anyone who reads *Shahnama* should know what a gem they have along and by what king of the aware heart they are telling secrets after many years and centuries of. The one who reads *Shahnama* should know that *Shahnama* is neither a legendary history nor even an epic story that is a masterpiece of reflection, art, culture, manner, and religion of a nation as large as Iran from the age of legends to the present era, and in other words it is one of the huge capitals of the human thought, and Ferdowsi as a wise orator has been able to seat such a masterpiece in the world as vast as Persian culture and thought during more than a span of a thousand years. The one who reads *Shahnama* today has to forget all his previous of what he knows that has gained through maniacal myth-mongering and amorous loveliness of predecessors and probably via affection to *Shahnama* and respect to Ferdowsi, and he should try to find new recognition of him based on fresh-ritual findings obtained better and further than Ferdowsi's his own words; and then at that time he should open *Shahnama* and start in the name of God of life and wisdom. Congratulations Ferdowsi on his words were begun by ((life and wisdom)) and ended

by ((intelligence, counsel and religion)). Anyone who today does not congratulate Ferdowsi on his great work after this ending and do not send peace to his shining spirit as if they have said goodbye earlier to ((intelligence, counsel and religion)).

3. The end of the subject

By checking a few lexicons of comestibles in *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi, the above article is an attempt to strengthen the literary understanding and recognition of Ferdowsi and his intellectual mission and promoting the idea of Iranians. The purpose of the research on these words indicates that we should find out that the great poet Ferdowsi has done his best to recreate words beautifully and excellently and point them out differently during his speech, and in parallel, they are clarified world-perspective of an Iranian poet in the field of Iranians culture and their ancient history that each of these terms makes a stature in order to perceive their authenticity and engross the reader in various aspects of awareness. It can be perceived that Ferdowsi has included the short literature with the great contents and various themes in the short literature and along with these terms, combinations and words, he has paved the way for careful thoughts of philosophic, ethic, history, culture and the Iranian epic; as such, he is the creator of eternal masterpiece of Persian literature. Having studied in these terms, their effectiveness and expressing their different meanings in *Shahnama* the formation of their concepts can be realized. This paper aim is to explore some verses about the lexicons of comestibles and their direct meanings or the rays of other meanings of them and their old usages and their current ones during different eras, and then for each lexicon and the combinations of lines is brought up evidences after checking their different meanings. A lot of important points can be achieved by researching on various fields of *Shahnama*. *Shahnama* was emerged from *Tūs*. *Tūs* became the beating heart of Khorasan after *Shahnama*, and the building of this high-rise palace was started being constructed at the night that seemed dark and in other words the very night tomorrow that the dawn of history and Iranian identity was blowing and promised the pride of a nation that the terrible waves of a storm had made forays into it from all directions and it was about to eradicate all of its life. All of the heart-glowing night that had upset the sleep of our young composer happened within the years of the fourth century or shortly after, and its outcome was the pleasant story of *Bižan* and *Maniža* that has had a special prominence in the series of stories and legendary and historical accounts of ancient Iran. Doubtlessly *Shahnama* is the oldest book in verse and as the ancestor of Persian literary works. There has been nothing left of poetic works of before Ferdowsi but a thousand couplets of *Daqīqī's* that thanks to the sea-like heart of Ferdowsi they are remained in the wide-open chest of *Shahnama*. Eleven centuries is not a few for the life of a great

and unrivaled poet, and *Shahnama* in many respects is still unique and peerless not only in the arena of Persian language but also in many of other languages without any doubt and indecision. Therefore the honor of fatherhood of the set of Persian words will be monopolized by this book; God may grant Ferdowsi, the great, special and particular pride, dignity, and nobility in the eyes and hearts of all Persian language speakers. All books and writings left from Ferdowsi, all these honors that the history and nobility of Iran on the one hand and the language and Persian firm culture on the other hand has been achieved through Ferdowsi's work, all depends on this very work and that is the creation of *Shahnama*.

4. The original text

Stew is one of the common words of comestibles in *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi that among the lines it has the meaning of the very food, dish, nourishment, and something edible all of which have the same concept; the following couplet encompasses the above said content:

*Build the rout of the army of mine of stew
Make elegant well the era of mine
Vol. 4, P. 292, Chapter 1903*

Stew can have the meaning of the gerund of eating not a general noun of comestible or dish; the following couplet is as the witness of this concept:

*They have to plant, knead, and harvest themselves
At the time of eating stew hear no blame
Vol. 1, P. 40, Chapter 25*

Citron is one of the comestibles in *Shahnama*, and flora and fruit, and it is a Persian word. It is an edible fruit almost used abundantly; citron in Persian "تُرُنْجِ" *turanj*" (in rhyme sometimes تُرُنْجِ *turunj*) is the fruit of the tree Citron and the part of citrus fruits yellow. This fruit known for its skin by which a kind of jam made is called *Tafāḥ Māy'ī* in Arabic language. The following lines are the examples of the usages of this edible fruit in *Shahnama*.

*He fetched wine, pomegranate, and quince
One has dispelled the imperial cup
Vol. 3, P. 305, Chapter 17*

*If a hurricane blew from a corner
A green citron would be casted on the ground
Vol. 2, P. 117, Chapter 1*

Another usage of citron according to the couplets of *Shahnama* is as making fragrance. It was used as the fragrance for robes and armpits to remove the smell of sweat fragrant; the following lines show the aforesaid concept:

*He came and sat on the gold seat
Wrathful had an odorous citron in hand*

Vol. 5, P. 344, Chapter 626

*Alexander came with a citron in hand
From the porch of the chieftain of China a half
drunk man*

Vol. 6, P. 108, Chapter 1599

Citron conveys different meanings in the verses of *Shahnama* according to some examples listed above; still it is an edible fruit in overall. According to *Moeen Encyclopedia* citron named citron due to its skin full of wrinkles, but apparently and based on this concept seems unlikely that the reason of this naming is for the sake of this property.

Bread has different meanings in the verses of *Shahnama*. Bread in the following couplets was something edible and made of barley or wheat flour, and it was their staple diet.

*They started working when the bread eaten
frivolously worked somewhere
Vol. 6, P. 309, Chapter 261*

*Being told bring some milk warm
So one soft bread along with
Vol. 6, P. 503, Chapter 1158*

5. Conclusion

Shahnama is the most important boiling spring of Iran. An audiobook of traditions of the people of Iran in any field, and oratorically speaking it has the most beautiful versified words in Persian. Contents and themes of *Shahnama* consist of pleasant and elegant poems to a world full of ups and downs, suffering and joy, ugliness and beautifulness, although they represent different aspects. Each of the couplets of *Shahnama* is not only the personification of eloquence and rhetoric, but also they can also make a world of art, tradition, the history of ancient Iran and their authenticity. For those familiar with the language of the book and they understand it and the softness of its words, there is a poem of any technical to the extent of perfection and beauty. Although the events and incidents in epic are of an extraordinary importance, ultimately the words and beauty of lexicons impress meaningful rays on the listener and reader, and the poet achieves his ultimate goal because this is not hidden for anybody in Ferdowsi's *Shahnama*. Technically and literarily speaking, there is no doubt in stability, solidarity, diversity of lexicons, tuneful and musical coordination of Ferdowsi's poem among those who know poetry despite the fact that this book is of an excellent situation and place, insomuch that it is eminent and worthy in the eyes of those who know the history of Persian language as the one that has the greatest role in maintaining and strengthening the Persian language and has invigorated the flow of our literary works during the history. In *Shahnama*, the history, beliefs, mores and briefly all manifestations of the life of the Iranian people have been brought up

insomuch generally and publically as it is not only desired and delectable but pride-making too at all times and among all Iranians and even non-Iranian Persian-speaking regardless of regional religion and beliefs as a common heritage. Consequently *Shahnama* was one of their best and desirable books of all times and the companion at their blurry night. One reason for the success of *Shahnama*, in addition to its contents that are all lesson, advice, freedom, litigation, religion-study, freethinking, must be known as its composer's pure and good nature, sincerity and interest that with all faith and out of the perfection of purity of the heart of the life he has stepped to order the path of *Shahnama* and dedicated his life and inherited wealth to this work. Ferdowsi personally was a wise-Shi'ite man who created a transcendent wisdom by the combination of reason and religion insomuch that there was not any of perplexities and indecisiveness of pure reason in it, and not biases and superficial observations and self-sidedness cultures and men of surface-oriented religious can prevent it from reflection and speculation.

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