

The Maritime Culture in the *Kitāb ʿAjāʾib al-Hind* (The Book of the Marvels of India) by Buzurg Ibn Shahriyār (d.399/1009).

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Abstract

Scholars have conducted many literary and historical studies on medieval Arabic literary sources, studying aspects such as myths and legends, superstitions, faith/religious beliefs, spirituality, medieval Islamic culture, trade and travel, pilgrimage, and so on and so forth. There is however, a dearth of information dealing with medieval Arabian-Persian-Indian seafaring in the Indian Ocean. Little focus has been placed on the language; in particular, the language of material culture or more specifically, nautical and maritime culture. The study attempts to understand medieval Arabic maritime terminology, the etymology, and the continuity of its use from the classical period to modern times.

Arabic literary sources: historical, encyclopaedic, geographical works, mariners' travelogues and manuals are often our main sources for understanding maritime material-cultural terminology as Classical and Medieval Arabic Lexica are often void of definitions of material-cultural terminology. Hence, the study of maritime terminology in this dissertation is based mainly on the Classical and Medieval Arabic collection of mariners' tales *Kitāb ʿAjāʾib al-Hind* (The Book of the Marvels of India) by Buzurg Ibn Shahriyār (d.399/1009). The study also compares the use of the terminology in this text to that used by contemporaries of Buzurg, namely the maritime travelogue/manual *Akḥbār al-Šīn wa l-Hind* (News of China and India) (c.235/850), part of the work entitled *Silsilat al-tawārīkh*; al-Muqaddasī (d. 378/ 988-9) in *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī māʿrifat al-aqālīm* (The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions), and also the “Seven Voyages of Sindbād the Sailor” from the *Alf layla wa-layla* (Thousand and One Nights) of an unknown provenance and year.

The study focuses on the above mentioned texts alongside Classical and Medieval Arabic lexica including Ibn Durayd's (d. 321/ 933) *Jamharat al-lughā* (Collection of Language), Ibn Manẓūr's (d.1311-2) *Lisān al-ʿArab* (The Language of the Arabs) and al-Zabīdī's (d.1791) *Taj al-ʿarūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs* (The Crown of the Bride from the Precious Stones of the Ocean) as it determines which of the two resources is of more value in the study of medieval Arabian-Persian-Indian maritime culture and medieval Arabic material-cultural terminology.

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