Urmia Lake with the names of Shaha-va-Tele and Shah-Tele

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Urmia Lake National Park is a permanent hypersaline lake located in the Northwest of Iran and is one of the most valuable aquatic ecosystems having rich biodiversity including Archaeabacteria and bacteria, microfungus, phytoplankton, plants, animals and several fossils (Asem et al., 2014, 2016). This lake was called in different names over divergent historical periods i.e. Matianus (ماثیانوس), Spauta (اسپوتا), Kabodan (کبودان), Shahi (شاهی) and Tela (تلا) etc (Emadi, 1991).

Recently, we have received a unique manuscript written by Estakhri (d. 951/957 AD, 10th C. in Persian language, Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik (Roads and Kingdoms, المسالك و الممالك), and kept in the British Library (IO Islamic 1026). In this codex, Urmia Lake was named Shaha-va-Tele Sea (دریای شاه‌ها و تل‌ه) in the map of Armenia, Arran and Azerbaijan (Fig. 1). Additionally, it named as Shah-Tele (شاه تل‌ه) in the same map of other transcription of Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik available in the Austrian National Library (for more information see Afshar, 1994, p. 578).

Urmia Lake was written Ormiye (ارومیه) in the body text of reviewed codices of Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik (The British Library, IO Islamic 1026; The National Library of France, No. 355; Central Library of Astan Quds Razavi, No. 5623; Library, Museum and Document Center of Iran Parliament, No. 7152; Iran Bastan Museum, No. 3515; The Bodleian Library, No. 373) with the exception of a manuscript existing in the National Library of France (No. 1570) which was called as Orumiyeh (ارومیه) and Shah-va-Tele (شاه‌ها و تل‌ه) and Shah-Tele (شاه تل‌ه) can be attributed to composition of Shah (شاه) and Tela (تلا), which are two other names of Urmia Lake.

Fig. 1: f49v of al-Masalik wa'l-Mamluk (© The British Library IO Islamic 1026; 13 May 2014). Two lakes in the map, Urmia Lake (the smaller lake, here named Daryâye Shaha-va-Tele) and Lake Van (here named Daryâye Arminiya) are shown near each other (For more information see Galichian, 2007).
In conclusion, based on the information in the maps of Armenia, Arran and Azerbaijan in Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik, existing in the British Library (IO Islamic 1026) and Austrian National Library (No. 344); Shaha-va-Tele (شاهر و تله) and Shah-Tele (شاه و تله) should be added to the ancient names of Urmia Lake.

Acknowledgment
Our thanks goes back to the British Library for giving us permission to use the image of Al-Masalik wa Al-Mamalik (IO Islamic 1026 f51v) in this article.

References
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