

boldt, assumes that the ancients were much like the moderns, generally right as to facts of personal observation, but often wrong in their inferences, and not always careful to distinguish between the two, or between information acquired first hand, and that quoted from others. If we adopt the second attitude, it is impossible to reconcile the ancient accounts with the facts, unless we accept the hypothesis that in the days of Herodotus and Alexander, over twenty-two hundred years ago, the Caspian Sea stood nearly a hundred and fifty feet higher than now, and almost coalesced with the Sea of Aral. Three or four centuries later, at the beginning of the Christian era, the water had apparently fallen to a level a hundred feet or less above that of to-day, the sea being still much larger than at present.

It is not possible as yet to connect any physiographic evidence directly with the high stand of the Caspian Sea which we have inferred from the data of history. Nevertheless, as many writers have noted, and as I saw in 1903 when traveling with Professor Davis, the sea is bordered by abandoned strands lying at various heights up to six hundred feet above the present water-level. The state of preservation of the lower strands, and of some of the upper ones, such as that six hundred feet above the sea at Baku, shows that they are of very recent origin, though no one has yet succeeded in correlating them with any events of human history. Their weak development shows that, as a rule, the sea did not stand at any one level for a long time. Other features, as Professor Davis has pointed out, suggest that the strands were formed by a lake which alternately rose and fell, as would happen during alternate fluvial and inter-fluvial epochs. At Jebel