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Great Shahnameh, an Evidence for Ilkhanid's Persianism Discourse

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Abstract

According to many researchers writing of the great shahnameh was supported by ilkhanids to legitimize their dynasty by making relations between Ilkhanid kings and mythical Iranian kings.

• Purpose

The current study aims to shed light on the significant role of Shahnameh in legitimation and Persianism of Mongols.

• Method

This article has been written by the use of discourse and library method and analysis of important paintings and is based on Foucault's genealogy theory.

• Statement of the Problem

In this article, Persianism means the process that Mongols went through in order to replace their own culture with Iranian culture and legitimize themselves.

• Conclusion

It can be inferred from the results that contrary to the initial discourse¹ which was based on Ghenghis's yasa² that Ilkhanid dynasty is divided into 3 stages:

1. the first one is known for Ghenghis's invasion and victories in wars and represents terror and fear.
2. this stage is called power and domination discourse because of Ilkhanid's attacks that led to conquest of Iran.
3. at the last stage Ilkhanid rulers converted to Islam and became adapted to Iranian culture. This situation caused the establishment of basics of Persianization.

Shahnameh was used by Mongols in order to replace themselves with mythical kings of Iran. They selectively chose some illustrations of Shahnameh that could be helpful in emphasizing the similarities of the mythical kings and Mongol rulers so that they could be more acceptable for Iranian people. This shows the significant role of Shahnameh on their way to Persianism and legitimation.

Keywords

Great Mongol Shahnameh, Iranian nationalism Mongols, Iranian painting, Legitimation, Ilkhanid art.

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Introduction

As we know Mongols used to be tent dwellers but after their tacking over the great civilizations of their era, they gradually changed their lifestyle and started to inhabit cities. having no experience in living in cities Mongols had no choice but to rely on the invaded lands' social life. So Ilkhanids decided to get adapted to Iranian culture and accept their religion. So, the Mongols turned to the Iranian manifestations of the civilization, culture and religion of the Chinese culture and the Iranian Ilkhans. after Ghenghiz and Holaku (1221 – 1264AD), they presented their authority in the veil of legitimacy based on Iranian beliefs. When they became Muslims they stopped to use violence against people, while their former king, yasa, who legislated and enforced violent laws. at the time when Ghazan khan (1271 – 1294AD) was on the throne a great argument took place between Mongol tribes which led to the destroyment of their tribal system. "The dispute over the succession of the Qubi Li Qaan³, cut the political bondage of the Ilkhans towards China. therefore, the Ilkhans should adopt a way that the Iranians do not look at them with a humiliating view."(Jawzjani, 1984: 164) In this regard, the Ilkhan government has changed a lot, changing the administrative system, changing the way of governance and efforts to develop trade and strengthen Iran's manufacturing centers, development of overseas policy and trade with Europe, the establishment of Venetian business centers in Tabriz and the support of Iranian artists and industry, who had previously been refugees to Egypt Mamlukhs and finally The peace commitment between the Ilkhans and the Egyptian Mamlukhs should be assessed in the light of these changes. But a major change in the Mongols was in their cultural policies towards Iranian culture. Support for Iranian culture from the religious point of view, attention to social traditions and thought of legitimacy from the perspective of Iranians and trying to support the owners of art at the end of the Ilkhan rule, led to the emergence of a brilliant cultural age that today is known as the "Ilkhani Art". This decision led to make

a golden era of art by the end of Ilkhanid kingdom. most improvements were made in paintings, architecture and handicraft.

Statement of the Problem

Mongols needed to get close to Iranian culture in order to legitimize themselves and make people accept them. also they had to have a reach culture to have something to say against Abbasids who had been defeated by them. "so they tried to make connections between themselves and mythical kings of Iranin Shahnameh."(Hasanzadeh, 2000: 435) in this case, one of the instruments aimed at legitimizing by the Mongols was the writings of the great mankind's Shahnameh According to some researchers such as: Abu al-ala Soudavar, Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Sheila Kenby, Marianna Shreve Simpson, in order to obtain legitimacy through the establishment of the link between the Iranian idolaters and the mythological kings of Iran. The point is that they didn't change what had been written in it , but they added paintings to it. with this action they not only helped Iranian paintings reach a good shape but also made advancements in their legitimization proces. it was during sultan Abu Saeed's reign ,the last Ikhanid king, that the first school Tabriz, which is a combination of Iranian and Chinese painting, was created." In the era of Sultan Abu Sa'id (1316 – 1335AD), the last ruler of Ilkhan, a new way of Iranian paintings titled: first Tabriz School, It was a combination of Iranian painting and Chinese painting"(Damnnd, 1957: 51). "The most important work of this period was the great mankind's great Shahnameh, Under the direction of Ahmed Moses and his disciples, was painted"(Khazae, 2008: 17). As we will say later, beyond the aspects of art, the choice of this work for writing and illustrating can not be considered as lacking in political goals, because many Previous researchers believe that This Shahname has contributed to the legitimacy of the Mongols and their placement in Iranian culture. But with few references to some of the features of the Paintings, Less researcher have sought to adapt the

legitimacy system of the Mughals, the concepts that the Mongols sought to convey, and features of the images after selecting the theme, Scene, the signs inside it, and its link with the needs of the Mongols, and the concepts they were trying to instill.

Research History

Soudavar believes that these paintings have an unusual theme and back ground, they also don't follow any specific order. so Mongols could use them as a mean of their legitimation (soudavar, 1992: 34). Hillerbrand's opinion is that the subject of these paintings refer to justice, patriotism and victories and failures in wars and also admire the kings (Hillerbrand, 2002: 61). "The paintings have been selected in accordance with the unrestrained political conditions and with emphasis on subjects such as the promotion of crimes and the like, to redeem a ruined state of life and related to Iran's historic greatness" (Blair and Bloom, 2002: 62). Sheila Kenby also believes that the quality of Shahnameh's pictures and the sustainability impact they put, it reflects the deep self-confidence of the Mongols at the time of their early collapse (Kenby, 2003: 36). Simpson also points out the variety of styles used in the writing of this great Shrine: this work, like a personal thought and a political message about one of Mongolian imaginations, is from the Monghol identity and the special events of Monghol history (Simpson, 2009: 27).

Theoretical Fundamentals

In this research we used Foucault's genealogy theory to find the relations between Ilkhanid discourse and ideal king discourse in Iranian culture. In this study, the foundations that the Ilkhans used in the field of legitimacy will be analyzed. These foundations include aristocratic discourses and in the form of two national and religious components and the ruler of Ilkhan will consider them as legitimate means will also be considered. The present study explains that the ruler of Ilkhan, like other governments, is trying to preserve his domination and authority through legitimacy. They legitimized, in various fields, their

legitimacy for their political system. The legitimacy concern and the ways in which it was institutionalized forced the Ilkhans to use historians and artists to prove their legitimacy. In the discursive analysis, the components that will bring us closer to the episteme⁴ Contains: the goals in which the ruler of the landlord tried to find his status as a mythologist of Shahnameh in addition to legitimizing an identity transformation. This research focuses on the use of discourse and its use as a means of exercising power and looking at the images of the great Shahnameh, he tries to explain the dialectic mechanism of the Ilkhanites in order to gain legitimacy through the identification of the Iranian identity.

Research Method

Discourse analysis is the method that we used in this article. so in the beginning we used library sources to introduce power discourse and legitimation and their relation with Iranian people's beliefs. then we got help from other articles related to our subject and analyzed some specific paintings to show the relation between legitimation discourse and Shahnameh during the Ilkhanid kingdom and finally came to a conclusion.

Different discourses during Ilkhanid kingdom

Discourses during Ilkhanid (1256 – 1349AD) dynasty can be divided into 3 periods. first one starts from Genghiz's attack and lasts until Holaku's⁵ reign which is known because of its poor cultural situation. the second period was also in a bad cultural and religious situation which started from Holaku's attacks to neutral lands and lasted until Baydo's (1294AD) reign. the third period, which started from Ghazan khan's reign until the end of Ilkhanid kingdom (1316 – 1335 AD), was the time when islamic and Iranian culture and art showed its greatness and high potential. "this gradual, overwhelming process began with the domination of the Mongols over the civilized countries of China and Iran, settling down in the city and changing the Mongolian customs and imitating the appearances of

the rule of the dominated areas and eventually led to their defeat and the abandonment of their ancestors' beliefs and rituals. the ministers and lords of the Chinese and Iranian art took control of their revenge and imposed on them the language and religion and the principles of their rule"(Iqbal, 2001: 81). This process was not unpleasant because:" They could use this tradition for the sake of legitimacy and obedience to the people"(Abville,1992: 9). They "presented themselves in the form of the legends of the legendary kings, mythological patrons and the heroic heroes of the Persians and linked Iran's epic stories with Mongol history"(Adamova and Gyozaian, 2004: 12). Part of this process should be as an strategy internal and external, in contrast to the "Abbasid defeat caliphs by the hands of Hulako in 1258AD refugee to Mamluky and rejection of the Great Qaan of China" (Bastworth, 2002: 481). Therefore, "Ghazan Khan's presidency was the beginning of Iran's revival and independence"(Mortazavi, 2006: 11). and "The acceptance of the tradition of power in Islamic civilization instead of the common Mughal tradition set new strategies for Ghazan Khan. there was also a gap between the Mughal rulers and the people and the legitimacy of the government was provided"(Russell,1992: 109). "Ol-Ja'ito extended the name of Ilkhan to be equal to Qa'an"(Rashid al-Din,1, 1983: 243). " and in turning the Ilkhani to the center of the world empire, Rashid al-Din denounced Minister Ilkhan as the legitimate heir to the Islamic Empire and denied the dominance of other Mongolian dynasties on Iranian Ilkhans. Ol-Jayatou was called "Al-Sultan Al-A'zam", and the attempt to show this made it easier for the Mongol project to be implemented in Shahnameh"» (Soudavar, 1996: 27). it can be inferred that showing interest in art , religion and culture and improving people's life is a great way of increasing popularity and Shahnameh was the best option to utilize these ways.

Discourse analysis of great Shahnameh

"Iranian people believed that the kings should have had a great holly power that gave them wisdom,

made them undefeatable and a power that made them able to do whatever they wanted" (Doostkhoah, 2010: 290). "Farreh is the language of wisdom and courage, the kingdom of various climates, asylum to Iranians, and the need to speak and practice it in the way of religion. Farreh, which belonged only to the king of Iran (meaning the world) needed race, originality, dynamism, idealist education, familiarity with hunting and riding, piety, liberty and bravery, authority, asceticism, justice, truthfulness and wisdom and given the link between religion and politics, the Iranians did not take an alternative to this system"(Zamani, 2007: 125 – 134). Therefore, the Ilkhani discourse should use it and offer it in their form. some of these are clearly seen at the heart of the Shahnameh of Ilkhani, replacing Mughal faces instead of Iranian faces that emphasize racial bondage between Mongols and Iranians and in the genealogy of the Mongols, the emphasis on the glory of the court, the scenes of hunting and war should be part of this strategy. but the other thing lies in choosing the scenes and their elements. the choice of Alexander as the dominant kingdom that was legitimized among Iranians and the balance between him and the Mughal people should be a strategy for the alignment of legitimacy and other scenes are the link between the Ilkhans with historical or mythological events aimed at forming a link between the Mughal and Iranian people and the replacement of the Mongols in the form of the ideals of the kings of Iran. We can see the result of discourse analysis in Table 1.

Discussion

According to the analysis of the above paintings, It is possible to discuss the dialectic of the Ilkhan government in the above-mentioned images in order to obtain legitimacy as follows:

One of the important issues in the selection of pictures is the theme of the painting. in all cases, the themes and, in some cases, the titles of the graphs are chosen, to show the meaning of the events of the Ilkhani regime and their mythological history, and to

Table 1. Discourse Analysis of the Illuminati’s Great Shahnameh Drawings. Source: authors.

Ilkhanid discourse for making epistme of power	Epistme and the ingrained knowledge of iranians	Imagine	
<p>in Persian culture trees are regarded as sources of supernatural knowledge. Relation between Xerxes I and a tree and decorating that, was a part of Mongols legitimization and Persianism.</p>	<p>Alexandre's being informed of his death made GHazan revisit the tree near which he had some supernatural experiences. he later ordered to decorate that tree. In Mongol traditions trees are regarded as ways to the skies and decorating them is equal to making them a holly place. (Pelliot,1963: 348)</p>	 <p>wikipedia.org,1396/01/12</p>	<p>Alexandre and the talking tree</p>
<p>securing Muslims from a corrupt tribe was replaced by Iranians who were attacked by Mongols themselves.</p>	<p>The Gogh and Maghaj wall was built by the order of Alexandre to separete muslims from a corrupt tribe called Gogh and Maghaj. This action was considered as a gift from god. This painting points to the Olgaito's visit from buildings in Enkor Elong with two of his off springs. (Soudavar,1996:30)</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 163</p>	<p>building an iron wall by the order of Alexandre</p>
<p>Mongols' discourse was based on owning more lands and make defyers obey them.</p>	<p>soldiers got dissatisfied because of being ordered to move to a rough passageway but this problem was solved by king's wisdom .he ordered his soldiers to wear metal armor and carry fire with them. It was replaced by Olgaito and his soldiers' attack to Gilan while carrying saws and flints.(kashani, 1969: 59 – 63)</p>	 <p>Grabar & Blair, 1980, 15</p>	<p>Alexandre's fight with Hindi's Foor</p>
<p>emphasises on the courage of Ilkhanids and the belief that god helped them by a sandstorm which destroyed their enemies.</p>	<p>Alexandre and foor fought with bare hands and used no weapon. Foor was defeated because of a sandstorm helped Alexandre.(ferdoosi, 2005: 388) this story was replaced by the riot that Amir Ingin started and Abu Saeed himself dealt with it in the battle ground.in both stories a sand storm was the cause of the victory.</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 40</p>	<p>Alexandre killing foor</p>
<p>ancient Iranians especially Sasanids had always been intrested in depicting kings' hunt and horse riding skills.</p>	<p>Bahram's skill in hunting zebras was the reason for him to be replaced with Gazan who was a great hunter and horse rider from a very young age (Rashid al-Din, No. 1,1983: 844).</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 156</p>	<p>hunting zebras by Bahram</p>
<p>mentions the consequences of having second thoughts about king's justice.</p>	<p>Azadeh, bahram's lover, was sentenced to be trampled under feet of camels because of having an offensive attitude towards the king and calling him a devil. It was replaced by konjak⁶, Ingin's wife, and her cooperation with her husband in starting a riot against Abu Saeed and she was sentenced to be trampled under feet of horses. (Soudavar, 1966:38)</p>	 <p>harvardmuseum.org,2016/10/09</p>	<p>Bahram and Azadeh</p>
<p>this painting includes both Persian and Islamic legitimization.</p>	<p>Unlike the secret burial of the Ilkhans, by changing religion, they created the Iranian Muslim rulers. Esfandiar's funeral, The image of the funeral was equivalent to the mourning of people along the way. (Rashid al-Din, No. 1,1983: 963). The two Iranian drafts of Shahnameh, about the horse's tail and tail, and the reversal of the saddle, It can be seen in this image.</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 107</p>	<p>Carrying Esfandiar's casket</p>
<p>illustrating a Mongol but not an Ilkhanid(Rostam) means he is not included in kings's discourse and is only related to heroes, which shows their opposition against Mongols of china.</p>	<p>Killing brother traitor by Rostam, Prior to his death, he was depicted with a similar curtain in the copies of the Ming Period (Soudavar, 1993: 395) , and the reminder of "ghobylla and Eri-buka" is his younger brother, He threw him into the well to die (khuandemir, 1974: 64).</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 165</p>	<p>Rostam killing Sheghnd</p>

<p>emphasizing on the king's justice and kindness while dealing with someone against him.</p>	<p>Zahak's imprisonment to the divine duty and in spite of Fereydoun's⁷ will, with the flexibility of Holaku in proposing the submission and exile of Rokn al-Din instead of his death (Bayani, 2002: 248-239) In the form of drawing Zahak with the "White Beard, Ismaili Character" (Daftari, 1991: 468) and Holaku is in the hands of Fereydoun, Which is the king of the world, this nickname was given to him by Khajeh Nasir (Soudava, 1966. 27).</p>	 <p>Grabar & Blair, 1980, 65</p>	<p>Fereydoun imprisoning zahak</p>
<p>Abagha in this painting was depicted like Rostam who defended his home land with bravery.</p>	<p>painting of Rostam and Esfandyar's fight was replaced by Abagha and Noghay (a mongol prince) who died in battle because of an arrow hit his eye (Rashid al-Din, 2, 1983: 744)</p>	 <p>Grabar & Blair, 1980, 13</p>	<p>Rostam killing Esfandyar</p>
<p>The semantic exchange between a Mongolian incident and the Sasanian history is a discourse that is aimed at knowing the Shah from error and attributing it to surrounding people and emphasizing the power discourse within the Mughal.</p>	<p>Anoushirvan's minister ordered the king's servant to poison his offspring's food. the minister was sentenced to death after that. It was replaced by Arghoons death because of drinking water of life. They believe that Toganjun Khatun⁸ cursed the water (Rashid al-Din, 1983: 2/ 821) and killing him in the picture as a corpse woman who is preparing a table for food.</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 226</p>	<p>poisoning Mahbod's offspring's food</p>
<p>calling Ghazan a righteous man because of his justice made him more like an Iranian king.)Soudavar, 1996: 24 the use of the right word in the title of the title shows him with the fervor of the kings of Iran.</p>	<p>In the Persian thought of Khosrow Anoushirvan, the Sassanid king is an example of justice and chivalry and mercy and the Arab and Persian authors quoted a lot of narratives in describing her determination to establish and maintain justice. He was replaced with ghazan who was known for letting his people live in peace.</p>	 <p>wikipedia.org, 2017/01/12</p>	<p>Anoushirvan the righteous</p>
<p>Two copies of the Shahnameh, in short time, belong to the weak kings of this dynasty (the kingdom of Zhu Tahmasb). The attempt to preserve the Mongol rulers in the discourse, and the emphasis on the limited rule of the king's king, should be regarded as an attempt to legitimize other Ilkhans.</p>	<p>Zhu's kingdom was the era of the lack of unity of Iran and famine (Shahidi Mazandarani, 1998: 71). The chaos of Gikhato's period and his excessive affection, ultimately leading to his murder (Mostofi, 1983: 600) he placed him in the form of Zoh Tahmasb, who gives him a wine to Mongolian customs and the only draw is drinking wine by the king in the great Shahnameh.</p>	 <p>Hillenbrand, 2002, 186</p>	<p>the 5 year kingdom of Zu tahmasb</p>
<p>although Mongols had argument over their discourse, they never let it interrupt Shahnameh and all Mongol kings are mentioned in it.</p>	<p>For a few months, Bahram III was the sixth Sassanid king, whose opponents disowned him and gave him a small kingdom in eastern Iran (Zarrin Kob, 1985: 445) The image is in the form of Bidokhan (the term of the reign: eight months) The image is in the form of Bidokhana (the term of the reign: eight months), and this image can be considered as a short-term equilibrium between the short term ruler of Bahram III and the ruler of Ilkhan, Bidokhan.</p>	 <p>Kamaroff & Carboni. 2002, 208</p>	<p>the 4 month kingdom of Bahram</p>
<p>The divine knowledge of the king and the accompaniment of non-existent help with him, as well as his violence towards his relatives, are among the signs of legitimacy and the display of authority in the inner discourse of the Mughal people.</p>	<p>This picture refers to Ardashir's story and his awareness of his husband's plot to poison him. In the title, the word Khatun, which is specific to the women of the Mongol rulers, was first used in Shahnameh and it is related to the attachment of Abu Sa'id to Baghdad Khatun. In 1331AD, he was charged with correspondence with Amir Hassan Jalayer and picked up a plan for the murder of Abu Sa'id (Hafiz Ebro, 1971: 186).</p>	 <p>Grabar & Blair, 1980, 143</p>	<p>Ardashir and the bowl of poison</p>

represent them as the reflection and continuation of the mythological kings of Iran.

In the case of the paintings, they should consider the inner discourse of the Ilkhan government and the

discourse between the government and the people.

Part of the graphic is devoted to the reflection of the triumph of the Ilkhani sultans in the inter-ethnic conflicts and their internal policies and the part that

shows their character in the form of an ideal king. In the paintings, it has been attempted to be in the form of the good and bad kings of the Shahnameh and the good and evil kings. The cleverness of the Ilkhani government in adapting the Ilkhan kings and the evil and evil kings of Shahnameh was a precise strategy to cover the weaknesses of the government and to expel them from the discourse of Armani Shah and to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of Iranian legitimacy.

The visual structure of the images, in addition to the racial segregation of the Ilkhans instead of the Iranian ethnic groups, combines an image that combines the heterogeneous elements of the history of the Ilkish and the mythological history, and also the transformation of background space into the era of the Ilkhani has been trying to convince the discourse to the viewer.

Conclusion

According to what we discussed, all these paintings were created for a unique purpose and it is to show Ilkhanid kings just as powerful, righteous and dominant as ancient mythical kings of Iran. With Ghazan's becoming Muslim, Islam became officially the religion of Iranian people. So the importance of religious legitimization, based on Islam, increased. That also added to the importance of religious discourse. After Ghazan all of the Ilkhanid kings followed his path and kept being independent in religious issues rather than relying on Abbasid caliphs. In order to prove their independence they needed something that could strengthen their national and religious discourse. So they chose Shahnameh and began to change the basis of their establishment and sources of power. It was Shahnameh that helped them get close to Iranian people through their beliefs and culture. The rulers in this transformation of the state regime sought a subtle reversal of the power structure, therefore, the power of constitutionalism overthrew the former relations and took its solid steps by relying on national beliefs and Iranianism and resorting to Shahnameh. Because the glorious mankind's kings and the Sassanid kings in Shahnameh's poetry could transfer these rulers to the roots of these kings in the image of the image. As Foucault said "power used knowledge to create beliefs". Shahnameh pages became a subtle tool to show their legitimacy to different effects and create a new tool for knowledge to within it by creating the legitimacy. To subjugate the people of the community and reduce their distance with Iranian society.

Endnote

1. In this paper, the purpose of the discourse is the same as language production, which has a position and direction.
2. Yasa was a collection of commands and decrees about the Mongolian life organization (Brown, 1948: 137).
3. The death of Qobila in 1292AD AH. And Islam is bringing Ghazan in 695 AH.
4. Of course, it needs to be explained that Michel Foucault (French philosopher and sociologist) in the discussions of "power discourse" to reach the desired episteme. It refers to two categories of discourse and legitimacy. And through "the identification and separation of tools, relations and techniques of power. As well as legitimacy through the exploitation of insight within society. It is in the interest of power discourse and the formation of a new episteme, Power makes public opinion (Foucault, 2012: 98-114). Also in the thought of power and episteme Foucault made power a continuous strategy with two acts of direct or forceful action. And acts through legitimacy. Through discourse with knowledge, and the individual mentality crosses and develops (Zimaran, 1999: 32).
5. Founder of the Ilkhani government of Iran.
6. Ilkhan's daughter, Ahmad Takudar, entered the battle between his wife and Abu Sa'id (Rashid al-Din, 1/1/1362: 91).
7. Suhrawardi, the divine, along with Fereydund, is the source of his victory (Soudavar, 2001: 415).
8. Toghhanajuk was descendants of Hulakou (Banakati, 1969: 412).

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