

The Concept of Justice in the Miniature of the Poet's Praise of the Robber-Chief

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Introduction

According to the political thought of Iran Shahri, achieving justice in the social system was one of the main issues of the Middle Ages in Islamic Iran. In this political thought, justice was designed as a means of aligning social order with the sacred order of the cosmos. During this period, as a result of Iranians' confrontation with Turkish and Mongolian traditions, special aspects of various dimensions of the concept of justice were formed in Iranian culture, society, and artistic works. Based on tribal traditions, the power that was based on the sword was one of the most important components of the formation of the courts of Turkish and Mongolian rulers. One of the results of this approach was disorder and political instability at the level of the court and society. In the Timurid period, political changes resulted in the significance of the position of *divan-salar* and the emergence of competition between Timurid emirs and Iranian ministers to gain *divan* positions. These competitions were among the factors creating instability and disorder at the court. One of the measures taken to deal with such tensions was the use of miniature art in the context of political admonition tradition.

Research Method

The research method is descriptive-analytical and historical in terms of fundamental goals and nature. The data collection method is documentary and library-based. In this research, a miniature with the title of "The Poet's Praise of the Robber-Chief" was analyzed as a case study. The sample selection method was purposive, and the data analysis was done qualitatively. First, based on library documents and sources, the political necessities of the formation of this miniature from a manuscript from Sa'di's *Gulistan* during Shahrokh's reign were examined. Based on the identified political necessities during Shahrokh's era and the political advisory qualities of Sa'di's work, from Shahri's outlook, a qualitative analysis of this miniature was undertaken in relation to the political advisory tradition and the concept of justice.

Research Findings

Given the entry of emirs into bureaucratic affairs, the illustrating of the "The Poet's Praise of the Robber-Chief" by Iranian artists from the Baysunghur library was a significant action. The subject of this miniature was based on the tenth story of the fourth chapter of Sa'di's *Gulistan*, entitled "On the Benefits of Silence." In this story, Sa'di briefly portrayed how through the presence of a deceitful ruler, the disruption of the righteous social order and the disturbance in the system of epistemology

occur. From Iran Shahri's perspective, when foreign rulers are falsely placed in the position of sovereignty, the court becomes a source of oppression, and the order of all affairs becomes disrupted by lies. Accordingly, Sa'di, by presenting two attributes of the "praiser" for the poet and the "thief" for the military commander, portrayed a situation of disorder of meanings and a disruption of the function of individuals emerged as a result of the oppression of the rulers. Through creating an interaction between the praising poet and the robber-chief, Sa'di emphasized the role of the deceitful rulers and highlighted the astonishing consequences of the contemporary oppression by referring to the nudity of the poet, wild dogs, and frozen stones.

In the examined miniature, considering the similarity between the robber-chief depiction and the Timurid emirs' portrayal, this miniature gave a tangible representation of the past in proportion to their contemporary time and created a contemporary admonition. The drawing of facial features, clothing, sword, boots, and turban depicted for the robber-chief had a noticeable similarity to how these elements had been depicted in other miniatures of this period reflecting the characteristics of Timurid emirs. Attention to the decorations and details of the luxurious clothing for Dezdadan also added to the necessity for the reflection on this miniature. Based on this, in this miniature, thieves were depicted with clothing and faces similar to those belonged to Timurid emirs. By observing this miniature, it could be imagined that a poet, before what was depicted by painters, went to the palace of the holy city with the intention of praising the ruler living there; however, instead of receiving a reward, his clothes were stolen by the robber-chief, who falsely took his place in the palace. As a result, with the presence of deceitful emirs, this holy palace also lost its authority in order and righteousness and became a place for the residence of oppressors. Based on this, it can be concluded that in addition to the defined elements of military commanders, equating him with Timurid emirs, the depicted location for his presence in this miniature was not a ruin or a room in a remote village suitable for thieves, but a place equivalent to the government palace and court.

Conclusion

The miniature of the poet's praise of the robber-chief is an example of political advisory art that emphasizes the importance of establishing order in the court and justice in governance. Iranian artists from the Baysunghur library created this miniature based on Saa'di's political advisory poem, representing contemporary political realities and confronting Turkish and Mongolian traditions present in Shahrokh's court. The artists depicted the disorder of the times and the transformation of roles and functions through the portrayal of astonishing elements such as stones, dogs, praising poets, and the clothing and the palace of the robber-chief. The miniature also highlights the role of Timurid emirs in the court and their similarity to Dezdadan. Through the continuation of Sa'di's role in political admonition, the artists also criticize the inappropriate behavior of praising poets in the court. The entry of Timurid emirs into bureaucratic affairs during Shahrokh's reign was considered a factor in disrupting the court's order from Iran Shahri's view. Therefore, depicting thieves with clothing and faces similar to Timurid emirs in this miniature can be seen as a critique of their behavior. Finally, this process highlights the role of artists from the Baysunghur library in reinterpreting and presenting Iran Shahri's political thought principles through political advisory art.

Keywords: miniature, Herat school, political advice, justice, *Gulistan*.