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SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2019 Issue: 02 Volume: 70

Published: 21.02.2019 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



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HISTORICAL REALITY AND LEGENDARY-ROMANTIC INTERPRETATION IN “THE HISTORY OF IRANIAN KINGS”

Abstract: *The historical reality and legendary romantic interpretation issue in the work “The history of Iranian kings” of Alisher Navai are researched in this article. Also, historical information, and legends filling each other, scientific conclusions about that the legendary-romantic interpretation of the historical events approaches the work to the artistic prose, are given in this article.*

Key words: *prose, interpretation, mythology, historical reality, elements of artistry.*

Language: *English*

Citation: Ergashev, O. O. (2019). Historical reality and legendary-romantic interpretation in “The history of Iranian kings”. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 02 (70), 167-170.

Soi: <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-02-70-15> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2019.02.70.15>

Introduction

Navai intended to create a great historical work called “Zubdat ut-tavorix”, but he could carry out only some parts of his plan.

In the second section of “Zubdat ut-tavorix”, Navai wrote about the history of Iran till Islam, and this section is now well-known as the separate work with the name “The history of Iranian kings”. The kings who ruled in those periods and related to the Peshdodiys, Kayoniys, Ashkoniys, Sassanids dynasties are mentioned in this work.

Materials and Methods

Also we can see that the historical phenomena are mixed with legends, along with historical facts, the information which are hard to believe and can not be trusted, are given in the “The history of Iranian kings”. For example, when Navai narrated about Faridun who was one of the kings of ancient Ajam, he wrote: “And Faridun’s reign lasted five hundred years”. He showed that the reign period of Kaykubod who belonged to the Kayaniys dynasty - the second stratum of the Ajam kings’, was 120 years. He wrote the following words about the death of Hushang who belonged to the Peshdadiys dynasty: “There are the images in Zubdat ut-tavorix, the giants have found him at the time of worship and smashed his head with stone and killed him”, then he recited that Hushang’s son killed the giants in order to revenge his father and built a city there and named the city as

Balh. He especially gave the legendary-romantic interpretation when he wrote about the kings of Kayaniys such as Kaykovus, Kayxisrav. He gave the legends about Siyovush and Rustam as the historical information.

In this case the question arises: Did Navai believed himself in those words? How did he approach the legendary words like the fairytales which were given in this work? The answer to this question can be found the following poem which wrote in connection with the disagreement on sources of Navai in the previous chapter of the book “Zubdat ut-Tavorix”:

Tarix ahlining ixtilofi ko’ptur,
“Shohnoma”ning andoqki, lofi ko’ptur,
Ba’zi mutaassib el gazofi ko’ptur,
Sen yozgali ham nuqtayi vofi ko’ptur.
(The conflicts of the people of history is many,
The exaggeration of “Shahname” is much,
The fake boast of some fanatical people are many,
Even things which you wrote have many exaggerations.)

It is seen that Navai had critical attitude to the sources and did not accept all the statements which were written in it, as the reality. He knew very well that “exaggeration and fake boast” which were added by fanatical people, were very much, and also there were different conflicting ideas in the sources. But,

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in spite of this, he illustrated these “exaggeration and fake boast” which were difficult to believe, in his work. What is the reason for this?

We also hear the comment of the author on this subject: “I have not this capability, but it will be edited as the the people of the history write”. Navai writes: “I can not change and correct the facts which are written by historian scholars,” he referred that it is impossible to fill and change the above mentioned legends and the “exaggeration and fake boast” with genuine historical information and facts. Therefore, the writer works and acts as “to be content with what have got”, he completely gave information which were written in the history books or arrived to us via other sources as the form legends and historical facts, to the reader. In addition, Navai understood well that legends and narrates were great importance for history, and knew well that the ancient history of all nations connected with legends. The modern history science does not deny that mythology, narrates has valuable importance as a unique source for learning the history.

Together with this, “The history of Iranian kings” does not consist of the myths and legends. It contains many real historical events and information. The author also writes about the wars which happened in different periods, the struggles of the kings for the reign, the desolation of the dynasties, the arrival of the new dynasties to the state, the state of the people, and he draws the general environment of the historical process. When he wrote about Iskandar, Navai emphasized information about legendary views which were spread in the Orient about this historic person - as if he lived 1600 years, ruled 500 years, and some people considered him as Dorob and others as Bozur binni Alboj ogli, and also wrote confirmed information specific to the historical reality, including his father was Philip (Navai called him Faylakus), he lived thirty-six (with today’s counting is thirty-three – the author) years, and that he ruled for 13 years. The events and facts which were described in the work of Navai, such as spreading the doctrine of Mazdak in the reign period of Kubod and Nushiravon in Ajam, the rise of the sect of Mazdakiys, the suppression of this sect during the era of Noshiravon, the execution of Mazdak by Noshiravon, have complete historical base.

Navai gave two years information about the period of Noshiravon’s reign: according to one of them, he ruled for forty years, and according to the other information, he ruled for the throne forty-seven years and seven months. It is clear from the works of current historian scholars that the second information between them is true, namely, Noshiravon ruled forty-seven years. The statements about the reign periods of kings which were written about Sassanids Bakhrom binni Hurmus (historian scholars call him Varaxran I), Bakhrom binni Bakhrom (Varaxran II), Bakhrom binni Bakhrom binni Bakhrom (Varaxran

III), Narsi binni Bakhrom in the “The history of Iranian kings”, are based on the historical real events and facts. The appearance of Moniy in the period of Bakhrom binni Hurmus, spreading the Moniyahs as a doctrine, and Bakhrom’s struggle against him are one of such kind of events.

Numerous factual information which were presented in the works of Navai is suitable with or incompatible with the findings and information which were identified in the result of researchers of modern history science. This can be seen when the information which were given in the “The history of Iranian kings” about the ruling period of a number of kings of the Sassanids dynasty, compare with the information in modern historical researches.

In Navai					
Bakhrom binni Hurmus	-	3	years		
Varaxran I - 274-277 (3 years)					
Bakhrom binni Bakhrom	-	20	years		
Varaxran II - 277-294 (16 years)					
Bakhrom b. Bakhrom					
b. Bakhrom	-	4	months		
Varaxran III - 294 years					
Shopuri zul Aktof	-	70	years		
Shopur II - 309-379 (70 years)					
Shopur binni Shopur	-	5	years		
Shopur III - 383-388 (5 years)					
Bakhrom binni Shopur	-	12	years		
Varaxran IV - 389-399 (10 years)					
Yazdijird binni Bakhrom	-	20	years		
Yazdigard I - 399-421 (22 years)					

The images such as the difficult situation in the last Sassanids period, the weakening of the central government, and the widespread dispersal in the country are clearly described on the basis of such real facts in this work.

Navai wrote about the political instability in that period, frequent exchanges of kings, and the weakening of the country, as follows: “When the property of Akosira reached in this step, the history was not reliable, because there were many perplexities... The Kisro (the king) was Mekhrijis Akhvoz at that time. He was the son of Ardasher Bobak. The statesmen of Akosira found him and they enthroned him. He ruled for a few days, but he could not do this great work and he was weak to do this task. They just abolished him. Because the state could not be without the king, they found the man of Parviz with the name Xirod Xisrav from the Nasibin area, he escaped when the relatives of Sheruya were killed, and hid himself, they found him and they enthroned him. He could not ruled the country. They dethroned him and let him go anywhere which he wanted. Because he was the son of Parviz, he was not killed. And again ... They found Firuz Mekhron who was the generation of Noshiravon, and his mother was Mahondost. But he was a madly man...

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They also dethroned him. They wanted another person, then they found Farrukhzod, he was the generation of Parviz. He ruled the throne for six months and then he was killed. After him they were desperate..." [1, 234-235].

"The history of Iranian kings" is also considered significant with its many aspects. In particular, it reflects the social and political views of Navai, his approach to the history as a statesman. As the literary critic S.Ganieva has rightly pointed out that "Navai used his ideal great idea which he propagated in his whole creative works and activity, in this work. As he spoke about every king, he showed their useful activity for the people and the country. This moment determines the social essence of the work" [7, 23].

Indeed, when Navai talked about the rulers, evaluated their activities, he based on the principles of social justice, which he imagined. It is known the following things from the work that the social justice in the imagination of Navai, the first of all, consists of ensuring the welfare of the people, the peaceful work of the people and enjoying the results of their labor.

A ruler who does not succeed in this task is not worthy to rule the country. The country under the authority of such king is like property which has not the owner. We can give the following words of Navai about Yazdi jurd binni Bakhrom who was from the Sassanids rulers, for example of this: Yazdi jurd binni Bahrom chun mamlakat egasi bo'ldi, go'yoki mulk egasiz qoldikim, u zolim va nodon kishi edi. Ardasher Bobokondin beri sostoniy najod salotindin xaloyiqqa har kecha shafqat va adolat yetti ul barchaning evazi taaddi va bedod yetkurdi va mamolikka har necha ma'murlik va orastalik yuzlandi, ul barchaning podshosini buzuqliq va parishonlik bila haddin oshurdi" [1, 217-218].

The meaning: After Yazdi jurd binni Bakhrom was the ruler, as if the country had not the owner. Because he was cruel and ignorant person. He so much oppressed and violated the people how many the kings who were the Sassanids dynasty, were merciful and righteous for the people since then Ardasher Bobokon.

It can be seen that the social views of author which was reflected in "The history of Iranian kings", first of all, is primarily based on humanism and caring for the people. It is known from the information and facts in "The history of Iranian kings", there were kings who sought to ease the situation of the people and even extinguished taxes, in some cases completely abolished. Navai separately emphasized their names and works which they did. Not only just that. It is also clear from the work that social protection of the population and giving social help and support by the state to its some layers existed in the eastern state from ancient times. Navai wrote about it in the description of Feruz binni

Yazdi jurd who was one of the kings of Ajam: "he gave the salary to the poor for the needy from his treasure." [1, 221].

It should be noted that the special attention of Navai to these issues is not just explained with his philanthropy and his humanism. In this case, it is seen that the author gave attention to this issue as the experienced statesman.

The author points out two of the above-mentioned issues in many places, when he emphasized the negative factors causing the weakness of the state, destroying the country: the first of them, the taxes which were taken from the people, and the second of them, non-compliance with the fairness criteria for the punishment of the accusers. According to his opinion, disrupting the most acceptable and suitable measures in these two issues, would lead to the collapse of the state. Therefore, the ruler should not immensely increase the taxes, and embarrassed the people. On the second hand, the punishment for punishing the accusers will be according to their sin, giving the hard, cruel punishment for little sin, a little fault, will be caused the result dissatisfaction of the people and loss of confidence in justice in the people. Navai wrote that such situation caused the destroy of the state of Hurmuz binni Anushirvon: "the people were dissatisfied his policy for giving hard punishment for little sin... He increased the taxes for the people and if they could not pay the taxes, he ordered to kill them. The people completely became despaired and they escaped to the state of the enemies: the stubborn from the Rome, Abbas ul Akhvol from the Arabic, Amr ul-Azrakh from the west and Khononi Chin from the Turkestan" [1, 227].

Like other contemporaries of his time, Navai gives a broad meaning to the conception of prose. He referred that regardless of the prosaic work belongs to which field, regardless of what the subject is in it, it does not lose the elements of artistry, and the reader must take knowledge and artistic pleasure from it. Giving narrates, myth, and legends together with the historical information in "The history of Iranian kings" become it to closer artistic prose. The author creates beautiful views in many parts of the work, and also uses poetic fragments. All of them provide that "The history of Iranian kings" becomes the attractive work which can be read with great interest. There are such places in the work that they give impression to the reader as if it is artistic work. For example, it can be seen such situation in the parts written about Ardasher Bobak. The parts which were told about Ardasher's youth periods, the images that the King Arduvon threaten to his life, bondwoman of Arduvon loved Ardasher and her announcement to Ardasher about Arduvon's intentions, Ardasher and bondwoman escaped together, remind us the adventure works.

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After escaping with his beloved woman and going to Istahr city, Ardasher found many supporters and rebelled against Arduvon. He killed Arduvon, and occupied the throne. There were four sons of killed king. Two of them were killed, and two of them escaped. Ardasher married the daughter of Arduvon. The girl's escaped brothers talked to their sister and persuaded her to kill Ardasher with poison. One day, Ardasher came back from the hunt and asked juice from his wife. Arduvon's daughter gave him poisoned juice. Ardasher did not take the juice immediately for some reason, the frightened girl trembled her hands and poured half of juice in her hand, so Ardasher had doubts and he sliced and put bread to the other half of the juice, and gave it to dog. Dog ate bread and died right now. After knowing the whole story, Ardasher wanted to kill the girl and handed him to the minister in order to kill her. The girl told the minister that she was pregnant from Ardasher. The minister did not kill her and after birthing the baby, he secretly educated the baby.

One day, the minister came to Ardasher and saw him in a sad state and asked for the reason of

this. The king said that my life is ending, I have not son, and if I die, I will have to leave my reign to another person. Then the minister replied, "Do not worry my ruler, you have such a son that no king has ever had such a son," said the secret to Ardasher. He informed the ruler that the ruler had a son, his son is ten years old now, and his son's name is Shohpur. Ardasher rejoiced and thanked the minister very much and appointed Shohpur as his successor to the throne.

Such kind of images which on the one hand, are like the adventure works, on the other hand, like folklore fairytales, can be seen in the work.

Conclusion

In general, historical information and myths complement with each other in "The history of Iranian kings" and determine its significance as the historical work, the legendary-romantic interpretation of historical events becomes the work closer to the artistic prose and increases its value as the specific kind of prose.

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