

Bouran and Azarmidokht in Historical Sources and Qajar Art

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ABSTRACT

Bōrān and Āzarmīgduxt have an important place among the women of the Sassanid period. They are the only women who reached the kingship in ancient Iran. Bōrān and Āzarmīgduxt are mentioned in the Coins and historical sources. During the Qajar period, there were changes in historiography and representation of historical figures in art. Some historians and artists turned to archaism. The examination of works of art shows this issue. The aim of the current research is to investigate the views of historians about Bōrān and Āzarmīgduxt and their representation in Qajar arts. The present research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach in both fieldwork and bibliographical studies. This research will attempt to answer these questions: what is the view of Qajar period historical sources about Sasanian queens? What is the difference between their representation and the representation of Sassanid kings in Qajar art? Has their gender influenced the attitude of historians and artists? This representation is evident in which Qajar art? Representation of their image in the arts of the Qajar period is related to the imitation of Nameh Khosravan and Asar al-ajam and Asar Al-Ajm. The image of both is seen alone or among the motifs of Iranian kings in carpets and tiles, regardless of gender and due to their position among the famous kings of Iran. The Qajar historians did not know the coins of these two queens and they did not have access to the research of European historians.

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1. Introduction

Since the early Sasanian period, the royal women have been depicted in inscriptions, reliefs, coins, and seals. Bouran and Azarmidokht are distinguished among the ladies of this dynasty. Due to their position as monarchs following their father and their decision to mint coins in their own name. They are the sole women to have achieved royal status in ancient Iran. Some historians adopted a novel perspective on the ancient Iranian era during the Qajar period (late 18th–19th century). This shift in perspective was significantly influenced by contemporary Western research and archaeological excavations in Iran. However, archaism was also present in the production of artworks during the Qajar period. The attitude of artists has been significantly influenced by the use of historical literature. We must now investigate the patriarchal Qajar society's perspective on female kings. The objective of this investigation is to investigate the perspectives of Qajar historians regarding the Bouran and Azarmidokht. The research also aims to investigate the role of this attitude in the creation of art. The objective of this research is to address the following inquiries: What is the perspective of historical sources from the Qajar period on Sasanian queens? What distinguishes their portrayal from that of Sassanid kings in Qajar art? Has the attitude of historians and artists been influenced by their gender? Which Qajar art demonstrates this representation? The Bouran and Azarmidokht have been disregarded in studies of the historiography of the Qajar period. Tanavoli (1989), Hekmatnejad (2002), Sakhai (2004), and Arefpour (2011) have each published an image of a carpet featuring the Bouran and Azarmidokht motifs. Images of tiles featuring the motif of these two women have been exhibited by Riazi (2010) and Mirazizi & Firouzabad (2016). Therefore, no investigation has been conducted, with the exception of a few images.

2. Methodology

The objective of this research is to investigate the perspectives of historians regarding Bouran and Azarmidokht and their depiction in Qajar art through a descriptive-analytical methodology. Due to the fact that archaism was prevalent in the arts of the Qajar period, including tile work, buildings from a variety of locations, including Tehran, Kermanshah, Birjand, and Rasht, were chosen for examination. The author visited a number of buildings. Furthermore, research was conducted in libraries regarding Qajar wall painting and tiling. Efforts were made to evaluate numerous buildings that featured tile work using both methodologies. Subsequently, numerous structures were eliminated due to their absence of the intended wall painting or tiles. Textile and carpet production is a significant art form of the Qajar period, characterized by archaism. Consequently, a variety of institutions were visited to examine samples. The characters under investigation were identified through the examination of historical sources and archaeological evidence. Despite the fact that archaeological evidence was examined. The portraits of Bouran and Azarmidokht were only identified on a few tiles and carpets.

3. Results

Iranians acquired an understanding of European historiography and new educational institutions during the Qajar period, which resulted in developments in historiography. In the book, the printing of images of kings and the emphasis on ancient Iranian history were among the changes. A few motifs of kings have been reproduced from the coins, and the painter has made some modifications to accommodate their preferences. The volumes *Nameh Khosrowan* and *Athar al-Ajam* published the fictional image of Bouran and Azarmidokht. The books of

Qajar historians, such as Kermani, reflect the traditional perspective of previous historians and the belief that women are weak. The tiles of certain structures, such as palaces, tekye, caravanserais, and private residences, feature the motifs of Bouran and Azarmidokht. The tiles of the Tekye Mo'aven-ol- Molk, Kababi e Safa, Golestan palace, the coffee shop of the National Museum of Iran, and the homes of A'lam al-Saltaneh, Imam Juma'eh, and Fazel Araqi all feature their motifs.

The motifs of Bouran and Azarmidokht are comparable in terms of their style, type of clothing, jewelry, and half-crown. Artists were unfamiliar with the coins of these women; consequently, they depicted them in fictitious themes.

The weaving of portraits of mythical and historical monarchs on carpets, either individually or in groups, became prevalent during the Qajar period. Some of the carpets were woven with Azarmidokht and Bouran motifs. The names woven on the margins of the carpets and a comparison of their motifs with the tiles and designs of the Nameh Khosrowan and Asar al Ajam clearly indicate the identity of these women. Portraits of 109 kings are encircled by portraits of 54 world celebrants on a carpet that was woven in Kerman during the reign of Ahmad Shah. The Sassanid queen is also depicted in the portraits of these kings and celebrities. The motifs of Bouran and Azarmidokht are interwoven with mythical and historical monarchs in three additional carpets. Ahmad Shah's reign was marked by the weaving of all three carpets in Kerman and Kashan. The motifs of Ahmad Shah or Persepolis are also present at the top and bottom of certain carpets. A portrait of Bouran is interwoven with blossoms and leaves in a Shiraz-woven carpet. The motifs of Bouran and Azarmidokht suggest that they were on par with the mythological and historical monarchs of Iran during a period that was significantly different from their reign and time. This issue is derived from the archaism of Qajar artists and writers like Jalal al-Din Mirza.

4. Conclusion

The results of this investigation indicate that the imitation of Nameh Khosrowan and Asar al-ajam is a factor in the representation of their motif in the arts of the Qajar period. In carpets and tiles, the motif of both is observed either alone or in conjunction with the motifs of Iranian monarchs, irrespective of gender and in recognition of their status among the renowned kings of Iran. These two monarchs' coins were unknown to the Qajar historians, and they were unable to access the research of European historians. As a result, a fictitious portrait of Bouran and Azarmidokht was produced in books, followed by tiles and carpets.

5. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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