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THE REFLECTION OF CHESS PLAYING TERMS IN KHAGHANI POEMS

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ABSTRACT

Chess is a board game of strategic skill for two players, played on a checkered board. Each player begins the game with sixteen pieces that are moved and used to capture opposing pieces according to precise rules. The game is played on a squared checkered board divided into 64 small equaled squares in alternate black and white colors. Chess playing has a long story in Iran. Thus, from the beginning of development of Persian language, the terms and expressions of chess entered to Persian poetry and prose. Persian authors and poets used them in different original, symbolic, mystical and allegorical meanings and forms to decorate their language and create literary arrays and figures as well as colorful fantasy images. Most of the great Persian poets have considered chess playing as a mirror of learning which shows the destinies of opssossors. Some of the chess playing terms are included as: knight, queen, pawn, bishob, rook, king, checkmate, stalemate, preparation. The prepared research aims to consider the chess playing terms, codes, ironies and allegories in Khaghani poems and the ways this great poet applied them in his work.

Keywords: Chess, Game, Symbol, Allegory, Khaghani

INTRODUCTION

In previous centuries, Iran was the only territory in geography of the orient giving most priority to exercise in teaching and learning system. Since the beginning, Iranians found the importance of health and vigor of body as well as soul as one of the key factors to create a brave and victorious army. Games such as horseback riding, archery, shooting, polo, swimming, chess, and backgammon were common in Iran.

The word “Shatranj” is the Arabic form of Persian word “Shatrang” (čatrang in Pahlavi Language) which some people consider it as a Sanskrit root (chaturanga) meaning four edge / level or four columns (since the Indian Army was consisted of four columns or bases, i.e. elephants, littered, horses and infantry, some people consider this territory as the origin place where the game appeared for the first time). The author of Bahar-e-Ajam writes that “Shatranj” is the Arabic form of “Satrang” as a Persian word meaning a root on human face and therefore it is called “Mardom gia” as well. The game is named “Satrang” because most of the chess pieces have human nicknames (Anosheh, 2002).

Chess is a board game of strategic skill for two players, played on a checkered board. Each player begins the game with sixteen pieces that are moved and used to capture opposing pieces according to precise rules. The game is played on a squared checkered board divided into 64 small equaled squares in alternate black and white colors. The 16 chess pieces of each opponent consists of: eight cavalry chess pieces (a king, a queen, two bishops, two knights, two pooks) and eight pawns (soldier). The object is to put the opponent's king under a direct attack from which escape is impossible (checkmate). The game is played through moving the chess pieces and the move of each pieces means to transfer it from its square to another one in accordance with specific rules (Haman: 873). Chess playing has a long story in Iran. Thus, from the beginning of development of Persian language, the terms and expressions of chess entered to Persian poetry and prose. Persian authors and poets used them in their different original, symbolic, mystical and allegorical meanings and forms to decorate their language and create literary arrays and figures as well as colorful fantasy images. Most of the great Persian poets like Moezzi, Sanayi, Khayyam, Attar, Owhadi, Khaghani, Onori, Saadi and Hafiz have considered chess playing as a mirror of learning which shows the destinies of opssossors. Some the chess playing terms, expressions, compounds, and adages are included as: king, queen, bishop, rook, knight, pawn, checkmate, stalemate, preparation, under

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pressure, square, Shah Qam, Shah Angiz, Shah Shah, moving the knight and queen, capture, Shah rokh, moving the bishop.

The History of Chess Playing

There are lots of ideas about the origin territory in which chess playing appeared for the first time and its invention is attributed to Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, Scythians, Egyptians, Jews, Persians, Chinese, Indians, Arabs and even legendary figures. But most of the researchers believe that the game has come from India and China for the first time in the sixth century AD, or before it. According to a Mythical story, there was a young king ruling over the Indian territory at the beginning of the fifth century AD who was influenced by some of his servile and deceitful companions as he was young and inexperienced and finally inclined to evil actions and perversity way. He was unable to organize the country affairs, so the situation became more chaotic. Scientists and scholars sought to solve the problem. Among them, a thinker named Saseh / Saseh bin Daher / Baher invented chess playing to guide the young king into the right way and offered the game to him. When the king learned the game, he returned back the bad deeds of the past and stepped in good ways. According to another mythical story, Ravana, the king of Lanka as Srandyb environs in 3800 BC was interested in battles and his wife, Mandadari tried to make a kinder of game showing the two army status during the war in order to reduce his attachment to the wars. Her objective was to entertain the king and it is mentioned that she appointed some scientists to make game of chess and called it as (Shakeran Jay) (Shakeran= enemy, Jay=victory over). In some sources it is mentioned that:

A king became deprived of horse riding as an unknown reason. One day he said to his wise people and advisors: “try to think how to match against the ranks of enemy without horse riding, arms support and conflict”. A wise man named Lojaj (360 AH) who was famous in playing chess went to his home and brought the playthings with him and teacher the king how to play the chess. The king was pleased and spent the rest of his life happily with the joy of chess playing. As Ferdowsi narrates in Shahnameh, the Indian Ray sends the chess to Khosro Anoshirvan who asked him for “ransom and tribute”, giving this message that if the Iranian scientists could report about it, we will accept you as the imperial and give you ransom and tribute. Men and priests were unable to talk and report about the game until Bozorgmehr finally found how to play the game and created backgammon in return. Anooshirvan sends him with backgammon to the Ghanooj city to visit the Indian Ray. The Indian scientists did not understand how to play the game and Ray inevitably forced to pay ransom and tribute. By the way, it seems that chess playing has originated from India and came to Iran from the mentioned territory. According to the Iranian stories, chess playing came to the country by a physician named Borzouyeh at the time of Khosrow Anoushiravan reign. The Arabs learned the game from Iranian and the Europeans also became familiar with it by Arabs (Muslims).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

The reflection of chess playing terms and expressions in Khaghani poems are considered in this chapter:

Chess Playing Terms and Expressions in Khaghani Poems

Chess

Haven't you seen that a master craftsman makes the bishop and king from the ivory (teeth) of elephant? (Khaghani, 1995).

The game of destiny is the same as chess playing in which it is expected to win at the end, but the victory would not be obtained (Haman: 96).

King

King is the biggest chess pieces among all other pieces in the game of chess. In fact, the objective of game is to checkmate the opponent's king. King cannot be captured, even it can move in any direction, including straight, diagonal, right, left, up, down, to any adjacent square that is not attacked by an opponent pieces. In the case that the opponent chess piece does not have any power to defend itself, king can capture it and move to another place. King is the symbol of power, leadership, poise and caution.

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We are the same as the chess pawns which our king is remained unmoved and death (date of death) are aware of the situation (Haman: 75).

The rook is like the status and the queen is the same as queen and the king is like the king and the bishop and knight are like moving stars and sky and time passes quickly (Haman: 935).

Farzin/ Queen

Farzin is a Pahlavi term meaning wise, intellectual and advisor. It is the most powerful chess piece that each player has, able to move any number of unobstructed squares in any direction along a rank, file, or diagonal on which it stands.

The sky destroyed my wishes which were like a checkered board, thus, there is no remaining king and queen, Alas! (Haman: 780).

The rook is like the status and the queen is the same as queen and the king is like the king and the bishop and knight are like moving stars and sky and time passes quickly (Haman: 935).

Rook

Each player starts the game with two rooks at opposite ends of the first rank. At the beginning of chess invention, it was typically with its top in the shape of a battlement. By the way, it can move in any direction along a rank or file on which it stands, provided that no other pieces are placed on his way. When there is any piece on the way and it is the same color, rook can move just until the square that piece is located on. If the piece is belonged to the opponent, rook can capture it (expel it from the checkered board and move to the mentioned square. Except this, rook has another move in which it can change its square with king which the situation is called “moving the king into castle”.

The rook is like the status and the queen is the same as queen and the king is like the king and the bishop and knight are like moving stars and sky and time passes quickly (Haman: 935).

Knight

Each opponent has two knights located on the horizontal row or the first rank between the bishop and rook. Knight moves different from other pieces. Thus, knight moves two squares along the vertical column and then if there is no barrier, it is placed on the first right or left square, or moves two squares along the horizontal line and placed on a first square above or below of the line if there is no obstacle again.

Forsake the knight and move the rook, since the opponents have become weak and astonished in front of the king (Haman: 348).

When there is no knight and bishop, I become sad and grieved (Haman: 935).

Bishop

A chess piece, typically with its top shaped like a miter, that each player starts the game with two bishops placed on the third square from the side. It means that a bishop is located between a knight and king and the other is placed between a knight and queen. One of the bishops moves on white squares and the other on black ones along a diagonal on which it stands and the restriction of movement is the same as rook.

Haven't you seen that a master craftsman make the bishop and king from the ivory (teeth) of elephant? (Haman: 15).

Pawn/Beidagh

A chess piece of the smallest size and value which is also called “soldir” and “Payâdag” in Pahlavi language. Each player begins with eight pawns on the second rank. A pawn moves one square forward along its file if unobstructed (or two on the first move), or one square diagonally forward when making a capture. Each opponent can promote a pawn to become any other piece (typically a queen and except the king) if it reaches the opponent's end of the board. Thus, there would be several queens on the checkered board. Paw is the symbol of moving straight on (or sometimes inactivity) (Anosheh, 2002).

It's the time of spring and the ground has become like checkered board. Flower bud has grown and blown out of the soil like a golden pawn of chess playing (Haman: 42).

Being passionate and imaginative in love is pleasant like a pawn that has become pathetic. Every ordinary heart would not tolerate sorrow and grief of the love and may be scarified like the Shah rokh expression in the game of chess (Haman: 684).

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The nine section heavens are like the eight pawns of his chess playing territory. He is the victories king appeared like the shining hand of Moses and his existence is like a miracle (Haman: 935).

Checkerboard Board

A board which is divided into 64 squares and the game is played on it.

It's the time of spring and the ground has become like checkered board. Flower bud has grown and blown out of the soil like a golden pawn of chess playing (Haman: 42).

Qaem/Qayem

A chess playing term which is used when the match is equaled between the opponents. It is also refer to a chess box or bag.

I am a poet who is constantly admired because of strong mind, high intelligence and intensive knowledge, thus I am like an opponent who is equaled to his opponent in the game of chess (Haman: 935).

'Ari, 'Ara

The shelter less part of checkered board which is the battle field for rook to put the king under a direct attack . Furthermore, 'ari is a piece who makes fender between the king and opponent's rook to protect the king. When the king is unmoved on his square, it is said that king is in 'ari situation.

We are the same as the chess pawns which our king is remained unmoved and death (date of death) are aware of the situation (Haman: 79).

Shah Rokh

It is a chess playing term when one of the pieces (most of the time knight) puts the king under a direct attack and simultaneously endangers his rook. In this case, rook is usually scarified for king to protect him. "Most of the time the king is threatened by the other pieces and the rook is placed as fender for the necessity to ward of the direct attack on king, it is called "Shah rokh" (Ravandi, 1921).

Being passionate and imaginative in love is pleasant like a pawn that has become pathetic. Every ordinary heart would not tolerate sorrow and grief of the love and may be scarified like the Shah rokh expression in the game of chess (Haman: 684).

Shah Qam

This term is applied in chess playing when an opponent achieves victory and the defeated king suddenly becomes checkmate. In order to remove checkmate, king moves to other squares and sacrifices several pieces. At this time, the situation is called: Shah qam, meaning that the king has moved and this movement is the extreme amount of defeat. Furthermore, the opponent who is near to defeat, continuously puts the other opponent under direct attack and does not let him moves to another square and remain Shah qam.

When you became the king and the territory was under your ruling, the other kings were defeated and called Shah Qam like the game of chess as they were suddenly checkmated (Haman: 140).

The Chess Playing Arrays and Allegories in Khaghani Poems

Moving the Rook (Showing the Face)

Forsake the knight and move the rook, since the opponent has become weak and astonished in front of the king (Khaghani, 1995).

The Chess of Destiny

Perhaps even the powerful kings who are defeated by him like the term Shah Pil in the game of chess, and the fate and destiny has defeated them like a chess master (Khaghani, 1995).

The chess of destiny: the chess player of fate and destiny

The Chess of Praise

I am like a chess player who can only praise you and do not have any other goal except admiring you as it is like a checkered board.

Conclusion

From the beginning development of Persian language, the terms and expressions of chess entered to Persian poetry and prose. Persian authors and poets used them in their different meanings and considered chess playing as a metaphor of human beings conflict, game of destiny as well as a mirror of learning which shows the destinies of opssossors. As there are connection and discipline among all creatures in the

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universe, the movement of each of chess pieces on checkered board influences the destiny and movement of other pieces in the game of chess. The sixth century poet, Khaghani, has made some compounds of chess terms to describe his goals and objectives. Terms such as: chess, king, queen, rook, knight, bishop, pawn, Qaem, becket, king checkmate, Shah rokh, Shah Qam and arrays as well as compounds like moving the rook, the chess of destiny, the chess of praise are seen in Khaghani poems.

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