

# Characteristics and Function of the Ideal Prince in Farabi and Ferdowsi's Thought

Yusef Bina<sup>1</sup>  
Abdollah Radmard<sup>2</sup>  
Mohammad Jafar Yahaghi<sup>3</sup>  
Mahdi Najafzadeh<sup>4</sup>

## Extended abstract

### 1. Introduction

A large part of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh is about the kings of ancient Iran, and its central idea can also be clearly considered political. If we compare Ferdowsi's political philosophy in Shahnameh with that of Iranian thinkers, Farabi will be the best one. Because of his philosophy about Utopia, Farabi is a pioneer. Formulating his theory, he had been influenced by Plato and Aristotle's philosophy, Islamic and Shiite theories, as well as the political thoughts of ancient Iran. However, what Farabi wrote about politics is "political philosophy" and what we found about politics in Shahnameh is "political thought" and as the word "thought" contains philosophy and beliefs, in this paper, the expression "political thought" also includes Farabi's political philosophy as well as Shahnameh's political views. It is because the political discussions talked more about the "king" and what attributes he should have and how he should govern in the ancient texts.

- 
1. PhD candidate, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University Of Mashhad (FUM), Mashhad ,Iran.  
Email: [Usefbina@yahoo.com](mailto:Usefbina@yahoo.com)
  2. Associate Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University Of Mashhad (FUM), Mashhad ,Iran.  
Email: [Radmard@ferdowsi.um.ac.ir](mailto:Radmard@ferdowsi.um.ac.ir)
  3. Professor, Department of Persian Language and Literature, Ferdowsi University Of Mashhad (FUM), Mashhad, Iran.  
Email: [Mgyahaghi@yahoo.com](mailto:Mgyahaghi@yahoo.com)
  4. Associate Professor, Department of of Law and Political Science, Ferdowsi University Of Mashhad (FUM), Mashhad ,Iran.  
Email: [M.najafzadeh@um.ac.ir](mailto:M.najafzadeh@um.ac.ir)
- Received: September 11, 2020                      Accepted: January 18, 2021

## **2. Theoretical Framework and Method**

This paper uses a comparative approach that discusses literature, including philosophy, in relation to other fields in the arts and humanities. With this method, in a specific subject, the similarities and differences between the two texts can be shown and explained, without proving to be a direct influence on one another. The utopia of Farabi and Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* are two historical products, and the study of political thinking in them will recreate a portion of the history of Iranian thought and complete our interpretation of it.

The periods in which Farabi (259 / 259-339 AH) and Ferdowsi (329-411 / 416 AH) were living coincided with the ruling over Iran by Tazi and Turkish aliens. The starting point for theorizing on politics by them was to observe political crises. Farabi and Ferdowsi's strategic thinking were both formulated by witnessing the government's problem and attempting to offer a solution to it. The questions will be answered in this article: what are the qualities of an ideal ruler in the utopia of Farabi and Ferdowsi *Shahnameh*, and how does he govern?

To address these questions, the characteristics and functions of the first ruler of the Farabi's utopia (*madine-ye fazele*) are first taken from the works comprising his political thought and then the characteristics and functions of *Shah Armani* in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* are drawn from the tales of the Iranian national epics and Ferdowsi's speeches, articulated and ultimately compared with each other, and their similarities and differences are historically studied and analyzed.

## **3. Review of Literature**

There is no case that has comparatively studied the characteristics and performance of the first president in the utopia of Farabi and *Shah Armani* in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, among the studies that have been performed so far and are somehow relevant to the subject of this article; however, several studies have been undertaken whose authors have separately analyzed Farabi's political thought and Ferdowsi. Moreover, there are other studies in *Shahnameh* that are somewhere dedicated to political concepts and issues or have discussed this subject. On the other hand, only three scholars have already made brief remarks in comparing the political theory of Farabi and Ferdowsi including Tabatabai (1367, 1383, 1395, 1397) and Rashed Mohsal (1387) and Asil (1381). The methodology of these two studies is similar to

our approach in this article; Mojtabaei (1352) has tried to compare Plato's utopia with the Achaemenid Empire in Iran and Jokar (2006) has compared the utopia of Farabi in general with Saadi's utopia in Bustan.

#### **4. Conclusions and Discussion**

There are several contradictions between the thoughts of Farabi and the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi on the ideal prince: in a certain case, Farabi approved the rule of a council of elites, but the Shahnameh stresses the need for the Shah to be one. In Shahnameh, being Iranian requires being a ruler, but this issue has no place in Farabi's mind. In the structure of the utopia, Farabi did not consider a position for a minister or counsellor, but advisers have a very vital role in Shahnameh.

The common features and roles suggested to the ruler of Armanshahr by Farabi and Ferdowsi include 1. The development and governance of Armanshahr by an individual who is superior and more complete than others with the goal of fulfilling needs and achieving prosperity and happiness. 2. The ruler's place in utopia is like God's place in the world. 3. The ideal prince must have comprehension and knowledge and be able to know the truth of God. 4. He is selected and motivated by God, the forerunner and the guide to happiness for human beings and knows the mysteries. 5. Eloquence, strength, fitness, piety, integrity, ambition, righteousness, bravery, and understanding the proper rite of governance are his other characteristics. 6. Owing to the virtue and specialization of people, this monarch organizes a special social structure and is vigilant not to disrupt it. 7. He aims through community engagement and civic collaboration to eradicate evils and accomplish the goodness.

The picture of a desirable government, which is articulated in the language of philosophy as well the language of literature in the form of the national epic of Iran, is portrayed by these characteristics and functions and is a response to the crisis of rule in Farabi and Ferdowsi. In Farabi's ideology, the Islamic community (ummah) is the target society and the world is the idealistic version of it, and cultural Iran in the Persian language is the target society in Ferdowsi's political thought.

It is therefore not unlikely that the parallels between the two hypotheses emerge from Iranshahri's political thought and the contradictions between the two arise from the differences in other sources, given the sources of these two

concepts. But the Iranian component of both hypotheses appears to triumph over the other elements, as the correlations overshadow the differences. It may also be said that the sum of the views of Farabi and Ferdowsi on the ideal ruler is the same as the ideal of government in Iranian history, which Iranian thinkers have considered in different texts from the fourth century AH to the modern period. This is a formulation of the desired imperial perfection in texts that can somehow be considered as political thought in Iran.

**Keywords:** Utopia, Shahnameh, Farabi, Ferdowsi, First ruler, Shah-i Armani.

### references

- Aidenloo, S. (2011) دفتر خسروان [Khosravan's notebook (selected from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh)], Tehran, Sokhan,.
- Eddie, S. K. (2002). آیین شهریاری در شرق. [Shahriari religion in the East], translated by Fereydoun Badrahai, Tehran, Cultural Science, 2002.
- Spriggens, T. (2019), فهم نظریه‌های سیاسی, [Understanding Political Theories], Translated by Farhang Rajaei, Tehran, Agah.
- Strauss, A. and Carbin, J. (2019), مبانی پژوهش کیفی؛ فنون و مراحل تولید نظریه زمینه‌ای, [Fundamentals of Qualitative Research; Techniques and stages of producing background theory], translated by Ebrahim Afshar, Tehran, Ney Publishing.
- Islami, R. and Bahrami, V. (2015). «پدیدارشناسی سیاسی فره در اوستا و شاهنامه». [Farreh's Political Phenomenology in Avesta and Shahnameh], Journal of Political Science, Year 10, Issue 4, pp. 7-40.
- Islami, R. and Bahrami, V. (2017). «فره‌مندی در شاهنامه فردوسی و بحران جانشینی». [Farrehmandi in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh and the Crisis of Succession], Journal of Political Science, Year 13, Issue 1, pp. 45-72.
- Asil, H. (2002). آرمانشهر در اندیشه ایرانی, [Armanshahr in Iranian Thought], Second Edition, Tehran, Ney Publishing.
- Etemad Moghaddam, A.(1967). پادشاهی و پادشاهان از دیدة ایرانیان بر بنیاد شاهنامه فردوسی, [Kingdom and Kings from the Perspective of Iranians Based on Ferdowsi Shahnameh], Tehran, Ministry of Culture and Arts Publications, Department of Public Culture.

- Etemad Moghaddam, A. (1971). آیین شهریاری در ایران بر بنیاد شاهنامه فردوسی. [Shahriari religion in Iran based on Ferdowsi Shahnameh], Tehran, Ministry of Culture and Arts Publications.
- Amini, A. and Goodarzi, A. (2011). «دیالکتیک و عناصر بنیادین اندیشه‌های سیاسی» [Dialectics and Fundamental Elements of Ferdowsi Political Thoughts], Journal of International Relations, Volume 4, Number 14, pp. 9-27.
- Parham, B. (1991). «مبانی و کارکردهای شهریاری در شاهنامه و اهمیت آن در سنجش خرد سیاسی» [Principles and functions of Shahriari in Shahnameh and its importance in measuring political wisdom in Iran], Irannameh, No. 37, pp. 98-121.
- Parham, B. (1998). با نگاه فردوسی؛ مبانی نقد خرد سیاسی در ایران [With Ferdowsi look; Fundamentals of Political Criticism in Iran, Second Edition with Some New Speeches], Tehran, Markaz.
- Bashirieh, H. (2001). آموزش دانش سیاسی (مبانی علم سیاست نظری), [Teaching Political Science (Fundamentals of Theoretical Politics)], Tehran, Negah Moaser Research Institute.
- Pourdaoud, E. (2016). یشت‌ها. [Yashtha], 2 volumes, Tehran, Asatir.
- Pouladi, K. (2017). تاریخ اندیشه سیاسی در ایران و اسلام [History of Political Thought in Iran and Islam], Tehran, Markaz.
- Javanshir, F. M. (1981). حماسه داد؛ بحثی در محتوای سیاسی شاهنامه فردوسی. [Epic gave; Discussion on the political content of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh], Tudeh Party of Iran Publications.
- Jokar, N. (2006). «جامعه آرمانی در نگاه فارابی و سعدی» [The Ideal Society in the View of Farabi and Saadi], Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, Shiraz University, Volume 25, Number 3, 48, pp. 69-84.
- Khatunabadi, A. (2012). کیخسرو آرمانشاه ایرانیان. [Kaykhosrow Armanshah Iranian], Tehran, Jahan Kitab, 2012.
- Khaleghi Motlagh, J. (2014). یادداشت‌های شاهنامه [Shahnameh Notes], 3 volumes, Tehran, Islamic Encyclopedia Center, Iranian and Islamic Research Center.
- Daneshpajoo, Mohammad T. (2012). «اندیشه کشورداری نزد فارابی» [The idea of governance under Farabi], Farabiology (excerpt of articles), by Meysam Karami, Tehran, Hekmat, pp. 93-130

- Davari Ardakani, R. (1967). «بحثی در آثار سیاسی فارابی» [A Discussion on Farabi's Political Works], Journal of Islamic Education (Endowment Organization), No. 4, November, pp. 65-70.
- Davari Ardakani, R (1975). «معنی سیاست در نظر فارابی» [The Meaning of Politics in Farabi's View], Abu Nasr Farabi (Collection of Research Speeches), Tehran, Central Library and Documentation Center of the University of Tehran, pp. 7-13.
- Davari Ardakani, R (1975). فلسفه مدنی فارابی. [Farabi Civil Philosophy], Tehran, Publications of the Supreme Council of Culture and Arts, Center for Cultural Studies and Coordination.
- Davari Ardakani, R (2536 Shahanshahi). فارابی مؤسس فلسفه اسلامی [Farabi, founder of Islamic philosophy], Imperial Society of Iranian Philosophy.
- Davari Ardakani, R (2010). فارابی فیلسوف فرهنگ [Farabi, Philosopher of Culture], Tehran, Sokhan,.
- Dehkhoda, A. K. لغتنامه. [Dictionary].
- Davis, D. (2017) حماسه و نافرمانی [Epic and Disobedience, translated by Sohrab Tavousi], Tehran, Phoenix.
- Rashed Mohsal, M. R. (1989). «فر و فرّه در شاهنامه» [Far and Farh in Shahnameh], Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities of Mashhad, 23rd year, third and fourth issues, pp. 357-386.
- Rashed Mohsal, M. R. (2008). «آرمان رهبری در شرق» [The Ideal of Leadership in the East], Page Quarterly, First Year, Fourth Issue, pp. 117-134.
- Rastegar, N. (2005). «مشروعیت حکومت از دیدگاه فردوسی» [Legitimacy of government from Ferdowsi's point of view], Mirror of Heritage, New Era, Third Year, Second Issue, pp. 9-40.
- Rastegar-fasaei, M. (2009). فرهنگ نام‌های شاهنامه [Shahnameh Dictionary], Tehran, Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- Rosenthal, Ervin Isaacob. (2008). اندیشه سیاسی اسلام در سده‌های میانه [Political Thought of Islam in the Middle Ages], translated by Ali Ardestani, Tehran, Qoms.
- Riahi, M. A. (2003). سرچشمه‌های فردوسی‌شناسی [Sources of Ferdowsi Studies], Tehran, Institute of Humanities and Cultural Studies, 2003.
- Sajjadi, S. J. (1975). «فارابی بین مدینه فاضله افلاطون و نظام اجتماعی اسلام» [Farabi between Plato's utopia and the social system of Islam], Abu Nasr Farabi

- (collection of research sermons), Tehran, Central Library and Documentation Center of the University of Tehran, pp. 31-37.
- Sungyo, D. (2012). «فيلسوف پیامبر به عنوان زمامدار آرمانی در اندیشه سیاسی ایران میانه» [Philosopher-Prophet as an Ideal Ruler in the Political Thought of Central Iran], Journal of Philosophical-Theological Research, Qom University, Year 13, Issue 3, pp. 123-140.
- Sinaei, Vahid and Khatibi-Qojdi, M. (2014). «مفاهیم، کارگزاران و سامان سیاسی در [Concepts, Agents and Political Order in Ferdowsi Shahnameh], Journal of Political Science, Year 9, Issue 2, pp. 75-100.
- Tabatabai, S. J. (1988). [A Philosophical Introduction to the History of Political Thought in Iran] Tehran, Office of Political and International Studies,.
- Tabatabai, S. J. (2004). [The Decline of Political Thought in Iran], New Edition, Tehran, Kavir,.
- Tabatabai, S. J. (2016). [An Introduction to the History of Political Thought in Iran], Tehran, Kavir.
- Tabatabai, S. J. (2019). [Khwaja Nizam al-Mulk Tusi; Speech in the Cultural Continuity of Iran], Tehran, Minavi Kherad.
- Alam, A. (1994). [Foundations of Political Science], Tehran, Ney Publishing.
- Enayat, H. (2016). [Institutions and Political Thoughts in Iran and Islam], with correction and introduction by Sadegh Zibakalam, Tehran, Rozaneh.
- Farabi, Abu Nasr Mohammad, (1979) [Civil Policy], translation and annotation by Seyyed Jafar Sajjadi, Tehran, Iranian Philosophy Association,.
- Farabi, Abu Nasr Mohammad. (1982). [Thoughts of the utopia], translated and annotated by Seyyed Jafar Sajjadi, Tehran, Tahoori.
- Ferdowsi, A. (2014), شاهنامه [Shahnameh], vol 2, edited by Jalal Khaleghi Motlagh, Tehran, Sokhan.
- Farihi, D. (1999). [Power, Knowledge and Legitimacy in Islam], Tehran, Ney Publishing.

- Ghaemi, F. (2011) «تحلیل انسان‌شناختی اسطوره‌فر و کارکردهای آن در شاهنامه فردوسی و اساطیر ایران» [Anthropological analysis of Far myth and its functions in Ferdowsi Shahnameh and Iranian mythology]. *Literary Essays, Forty-Fourth Year, Third Issue*, pp. 113-148.
- Ghaderi, Hatem, «اندیشه سیاسی در اسلام و ایران» [Political Thoughts in Islam and Iran], Tehran, 2003.
- Corbin, H. (2016). «تاریخ فلسفه اسلامی» [History of Islamic Philosophy], translated by Seyyed Javad Tabatabai, second edition with complete revision in translation and introduction, Tehran, Minavi Kherad.
- Christensen, A. (1951), «کارنامه شاهان در روایات ایران باستان» [The Carnage of Kings in the Traditions of Ancient Iran], Translated by Baqer Amirkhani and Bahman Sarkarati, Tabriz
- Kasraei, M. S. (2007) «اندیشه سیاسی فردوسی» [Ferdowsi Political Thought], *Political Science Quarterly, Fourth Year, Number 7*, pp. 213-234.
- Mojtabaei, F. (1973). «شهر زیبای افلاطون و شاهی آرمانی در ایران باستان» [the beautiful city of Plato and the ideal empire in ancient Iran], Tehran, Ancient Iranian Culture Association.
- Mohaghegh, M. (1975). «اشاره‌ای به تأثیر فارابی در دیگران» [A reference to Farabi's influence on others", Abu Nasr Farabi (collection of research speeches)], Tehran, Central Library and Documentation Center of the University of Tehran, pp. 60-67
- Moskoob, S. (2003). «جهانداری و پادشاهی در شاهنامه» [Jahandari and monarchy in Shahnameh], *Irannameh, 21st year, third issue, 2003*, pp. 217-250.
- Manshadi, M. (2010) «پیوند اسطوره و سیاست در شاهنامه؛ تلاش برای بازتولید هویت ملی ایرانیان» [The connection between myth and politics in Shahnameh; Efforts to Reproduce the National Identity of Iranians], *Quarterly Journal of National Studies, Year 11, Issue 1*, pp. 37-56.
- Manshadi, M. (2012). «بررسی چیستی سیاست و کیستی فرمانروا در شاهنامه» [Study of what politics is and who the ruler is in Shahnameh], *Journal of Political Science, Year 7, Issue 3, Summer 2012*, pp. 115-146.
- Yahaghi, M. J. (2017). «فرهنگ اساطیر و داستان‌واره‌ها در ادبیات فارسی» [The Culture of Myths and Stories in Persian Literature], Tehran, Contemporary Culture, 2007.



- Yahaghi, M. J. and Adineh Kalat, F. (2008). «زمینه‌های اجتماعی فروپاشی حکومت [Social contexts of the collapse of the Sassanid government according to Ferdowsi Shahnameh], Persian Language and Literature (Journal of the Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Kharazmi University), Volume 16, Number 60, pp. 155-176.
- Morrow, J. (2005), History of Western Political Thought, second edition, New York, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN.