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THE ROLE AND POSITION OF ISKANDAR MIRZA IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF PERSIAN TERRITORIES DURING THE TIMURID PERIOD

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ABSTRACT: This article examines the political, cultural, and administrative role of Iskandar Mirza in governing Persian territories during the Timurid era. As a grandson of Timur, Iskandar Mirza played a significant role in stabilizing Fars, Isfahan, and neighboring regions after Timur's death. The study analyzes his political ambitions, governance methods, relations with other Timurid princes, and his contributions to Persian cultural development. Special attention is given to his patronage of science, literature, and manuscript production. The article concludes that despite his short reign, Iskandar Mirza became an influential figure in strengthening Timurid political and cultural authority in Persia.

KEYWORDS: Iskandar Mirza, Timurid dynasty, Persian territories, Shah Rukh, Isfahan, Fars, Timurid culture, governance

INTRODUCTION. The political history of the Timurid Empire after the death of Timur was characterized by dynastic conflicts, regional fragmentation, and struggles for authority over strategically important Persian territories. In this unstable political environment, Iskandar Mirza emerged as one of the most ambitious Timurid princes who attempted to establish independent control over Fars, Isfahan, Yazd, and neighboring regions. As the grandson of Timur and the son of Umar Shaikh Mirza, Iskandar belonged to the senior branch of the Timurid dynasty and possessed both political legitimacy and military capability. His rise to power reflected broader processes within the Timurid state, where provincial rulers increasingly acted autonomously while maintaining nominal allegiance to the central authority under Shah Rukh.

Iskandar Mirza's administration became notable not only for military and political activities but also for significant contributions to Persian cultural development. During his rule, Shiraz and Isfahan evolved into important intellectual centers where scholars, poets, theologians, and artists received active patronage. His support for manuscript production, architecture, and scientific studies demonstrated the Timurid tradition of combining political authority with cultural prestige. Although his conflict with Shah Rukh ultimately resulted in military defeat and execution in 1415, Iskandar Mirza left a considerable legacy in the administrative and cultural history of Timurid Persia. Therefore, the study of his governance provides valuable insight into the political structure and cultural transformation of Persian territories during the early fifteenth century.

LITERATURE REVIEW. The political and cultural activities of Iskandar Mirza have attracted scholarly attention from historians studying Timurid Iran and Persian administrative

history. Barthold examined the fragmentation of the Timurid Empire after Timur's death and emphasized the rivalry among Timurid princes for regional authority [1]. His analysis provides important context for understanding Iskandar Mirza's political ambitions in Persia. Manz explored the relationship between political legitimacy, religion, and dynastic authority in Timurid Iran, arguing that regional rulers relied on both military strength and cultural patronage to maintain power [2]. This interpretation is highly relevant to Iskandar Mirza's governance in Fars and Isfahan. Soucek focused specifically on Iskandar Sultan's intellectual and artistic patronage, especially his support for manuscript workshops and Persian literary culture in Shiraz [3]. Woods analyzed internal Timurid dynastic relations and described the political conflicts between Iskandar Mirza and Shah Rukh [4]. Ferrier investigated Persian artistic traditions under Timurid rule and highlighted the importance of Shiraz as a cultural center during Iskandar's reign [5]. Jackson discussed the broader transformation of Mongol and Timurid political traditions in Central Asia and Iran [6]. Together, these studies demonstrate that Iskandar Mirza played an important role not only in regional administration but also in the preservation and development of Persian cultural and intellectual traditions during the Timurid era.

METHODS. This research employs historical-comparative and analytical methods to examine the political and cultural role of Iskandar Mirza in the administration of Persian territories during the Timurid period. Primary attention was given to historical narratives describing the political events that occurred after the death of Timur in 1405, particularly the struggle for authority among Timurid princes in Fars, Isfahan, Yazd, and neighboring regions. The study systematically evaluates the chronology of Iskandar Mirza's political activities, including his military campaigns, territorial expansion, relations with local elites, and conflict with Shah Rukh.

Secondary academic literature concerning Timurid Iran, Persian cultural history, and manuscript traditions was comparatively analyzed to identify scholarly interpretations regarding Iskandar Mirza's governance. Particular focus was placed on his patronage of scholars, poets, theologians, and manuscript workshops in Shiraz and Isfahan. The research also applies historiographical analysis to compare differing academic views on the political independence of regional Timurid rulers. Through synthesis of political, cultural, and administrative evidence, the article evaluates Iskandar Mirza's contribution to the development of Persian territories within the broader structure of the Timurid Empire.

RESULTS. The study reveals that Iskandar Mirza became one of the most influential regional rulers in Persia during the early fifteenth century. After consolidating authority in Shiraz, he successfully expanded his control over Yazd, Isfahan, Qom, and Saveh, thereby strengthening Timurid influence in western and central Persian territories. His administration demonstrated both military effectiveness and political independence, especially through the issuance of coins in his own name and the establishment of autonomous governance structures.

The research also confirms that Iskandar Mirza played an important cultural role in Timurid Persia. He actively supported scholars, religious leaders, astronomers, poets, and artists at his court. Manuscript production and Persian literary activity significantly increased during his reign, particularly in Shiraz, which developed into a major intellectual center. Furthermore, architectural and artistic projects initiated under his patronage contributed to the continuation of Persian cultural traditions within the Timurid state. Despite his later defeat by Shah Rukh, Iskandar Mirza's

political and cultural legacy remained influential in subsequent Timurid administrative and artistic development.

ANALYSIS. The political activities of Iskandar Mirza illustrate the decentralized nature of the Timurid Empire after Timur's death. Although regional rulers formally recognized the authority of Shah Rukh, many princes governed their territories independently and attempted to strengthen personal political influence. Iskandar Mirza represented this tendency through territorial expansion, military campaigns, and symbolic acts of sovereignty such as minting coins under his own name. His conflict with Shah Rukh reflected the broader dynastic instability that characterized the Timurid political system during the early fifteenth century.

At the same time, Iskandar Mirza's administration demonstrated the importance of cultural legitimacy in Timurid governance. His patronage of Persian literature, manuscript workshops, theology, and science strengthened the prestige of his court and increased intellectual activity in Shiraz and Isfahan. These cultural policies were not merely artistic interests but also instruments of political authority. The transfer of artistic traditions from Shiraz to Herat after his death contributed significantly to the emergence of Herat as the leading Timurid cultural center. Consequently, Iskandar Mirza's reign reveals the close relationship between political power and cultural patronage in Persian territories during the Timurid era.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION. Iskandar Mirza occupies a significant position in the political and cultural history of Timurid Persia. Despite ruling during a period of severe dynastic conflict and political fragmentation, he managed to establish relatively stable authority across several important Persian territories. His governance reflected the ambitions of regional Timurid princes who sought independent power while simultaneously preserving Timurid dynastic legitimacy. Through military expansion and administrative consolidation, Iskandar Mirza strengthened political control in Fars and central Persia.

Equally important were his contributions to Persian intellectual and artistic development. His patronage of scholars, poets, manuscript production, and architecture transformed Shiraz into an influential cultural center of the Timurid world. Although his rebellion against Shah Rukh ended with military defeat and execution in 1415, his cultural initiatives continued to influence later Timurid artistic traditions, particularly in Herat. Therefore, Iskandar Mirza should be considered not only as a political figure within the Timurid dynasty but also as an important promo ter of Persian administrative, literary, and artistic heritage during the fifteenth century.

CONCLUSION. The governance of Iskandar Mirza in Persian territories during the Timurid period demonstrates the complex relationship between political authority, regional autonomy, and cultural development in the early fifteenth century. Following the death of Timur, the Timurid Empire experienced internal instability, creating opportunities for ambitious princes to establish independent regional power. Within this political environment, Iskandar Mirza emerged as one of the most influential Timurid rulers in Persia, successfully controlling important cities such as Shiraz, Isfahan, Yazd, Qom, and Saveh. His military and administrative activities strengthened Timurid authority in western Persia despite continuous dynastic conflicts.

In addition to his political achievements, Iskandar Mirza made an important contribution to Persian cultural and intellectual life. His court became a center for scholars, poets, theologians, and

artists, while manuscript production and architectural projects flourished under his patronage. These activities significantly contributed to the preservation and expansion of Persian literary and artistic traditions within the Timurid state. Although his ambitions eventually led to conflict with Shah Rukh and resulted in his defeat and execution in 1415, his cultural legacy continued to influence later Timurid artistic centers, especially Herat. Therefore, Iskandar Mirza should be regarded as both an important political administrator and a major cultural patron in the history of Timurid Persia.

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