Factors and Grounds of Formation of Hillah Literary Movement and its Effects and Results

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ABSTRACT: Mazyadids was a Shiite tribe in Forat Al-Awsat (Middle Euphrates), which rose to power in mid-1000’s (late ⁴ᵗʰ Hijri century) with approval and support from Buwayhids (932–1055). As politicians who were either literary men or literature lovers, in addition to their military activities to stabilize foundations of their rule, they also gave priority to cultural measures in their policies, allowing poets and literary men in their court. As they favored and cared the poem and literature, their court was frequented by poets and literary men. So, after Sayf al-Dawla (1086-1107) rose to power, a famous Emir in this dynasty, and foundation of city of Hillah by him, this city soon became a scientific-literary centers of the time, and attracted such famous poets as MahyarDeylami, IbnHabariah, etc., and nurtured prominent literary men, and rhetoricians. Among fruitful results of this literary movement was formation Shiite literary movement, founded by Banu Al-Mazyad, which gave birth to such poets as Ibn Al-AwdiNili, IbnHamdunKateb, and its fruitful results appeared in next period. Simultaneously with scientific boom of Hillah, and presence of scholars and jurists in this city, Shiite literature also received attention. In this period, poets emerged, whose poems did not eulogize rulers and powers, and rather, they were most typically characterized by defense of Ahl al-Bayt (family of Prophet Muhammad), and commemoration of their virtues and merits, and expression of Shiite beliefs in form of poetry. This paper aims fist to study grounds and factors behind formation of Hillah literary movement using a historical method and on the basis of available reference and researches, and then to analyze its results and results.

Keywords: Hillah, Poetry and literature, literary movement, Mazyadids

INTRODUCTION

Mazyadids was a Shiite tribe in Forat Al-Awsat (Middle Euphrates), which rose to power in period when Buwayhids were powerful, and their rise to power was with and approval and support from Buyyids. Ali Bin Mazyad, known as Sana’ Al-Dawla, founder of this Emirate (died. 1018), having suppressed invader tribes and established peace in riegeon, gained so much fame. After him, Nur-al-dawla, known as Dubays I (died .1082) succeeded him. He also well overcame difficulties despite internal and external problems and obstacles and took control. After him, his son, Baha’ Al-Dawla (died.1086) took over the Emirate. After his death, his son, Sayf Al-Dawla (died.1107) took over power. Sayf Al-Dawla was among the most famous and the most competent Emirs in this dynasty, so that Banu Al-Mazyad became one of the most important powers in the region under him. He succeeded to expand his geographical realm by conducting some military actions. Also, to fulfill wishes of his dynasty to form an independent and powerful emirate, he founded city of Hillah. This city was geographically located in a very fertile region of healthy climate. Besides, its strategic location kept it harmless from invader. In addition to these factors, attention of Emir Sayf Al-Dawla to science, culture and literature soon turned this city into one of scientific and literary centers of Iraq, so that scholars and poets from different points went to this city, leading to formation of an important cultural movement, effects and results of which increasingly appeared in the next centuries.

In the meantime, special attention of Sayf Al-Dawla to poetry and literature prepared ground for formation of a firm literary movement in city of Hillah. Important of this cultural event is evidenced by enormity of poets and
literary men in this period, whose names and biographies are abundantly found in biographical and chronicle books.

This literary movement became so widespread that in addition to attracting famous poets of the time, it nurtured other great poets as well, so that that migration of some of them to other points in Islamic countries lead to transfer of Hillah's literature to those regions.

One of the important results of Hillah literary movement was formation of Shiite literature, which was planted during Banu Al-Mazyad period, and bore fruit in next centuries. Fruits of this literary movement so much spread among residents of Hillah that these fruits survived despite decline of Banu Al-Mazyad government.

Despite magnificence of Hillah's religious school, and enormity of scholars, jurists, and their products in the field of Shiite science, literary place of this city has been left ignored. Therefore, to obtain knowledge of this part of cultural dimension of Hillah, it becomes necessary to address this issue. In this text, the author describes factors and grounds of emergence of Hillah literary movement as well highlighting the role of Banu Al-Mazyad government and their Shiite approach in emergence of this movement. However, effect of other factors such as geography of Hillah, religious fabric of this city, etc. have also been considered. At the same time, introducing some figures of this movement, the results of effects of this movement, which played an important role in introduction and propagation of Shiite religion, have been studied.

**Factors and Grounds of Formation of Hillah Literary Movement**

Undoubtedly, one of the important factors of formation of Hillah literary movement was existence of Banu Al-Mazyad emirs and rules, because many of emirs of this dynasty were fond and lover of science and knowledge (Alyasin, 2006) and are known for their inner tendency and propensity toward literature and knowledge; so that many of them, including Baha' Al-Dawla Mansur Bin Dubays was himself a prominent figure in the fields of poetry and literature. He, who was a courageous emir, was considered as a learned literary man and a capable poet. Mansur studied under Ali Bin Borhan in Baghdad so that he made brilliant successes in this art (IbnAthir, 2006). Among his poems are verses he wrote in response to vizier of Tughril Beg, Amid Al-Molkkondori. These verses are quoted in many literary books for their eloquence. Another is Badran Bin Sayf Al-Dawla, who was among the grandees of Banu Al-Mazyad, and among courageous commanders under his father (Amin, 1983). He was also one of prominent poets under dynasty of Banu Al-Mazyad, so that he was admired by Emad Al-Kottab (Emadkatib, 1973). Another poet under this dynasty was prominent poet, Amir Mazyad Bin SafvanHilli. He was a great, highly sensitive, and improviser poet, whose poems combine eloquence and fluency in wording with fineness and delicacy in meaning (KarkushHilli, 2006). He left a divan (collection of poems) which was collected by Aref Tamer (Khafaji, 2007). However, other emirs of this dynasty also enjoyed literary taste. Poems attributed to Dubays Bin Sadaghheh (died, 1134) indicate that he was also a capable poet (IbnKhalkan, 1993). Further, Sayf Al-Dawla is among them, to who Imad Al-Kottab attributed some poems (Emadkatib, 1973).

Besides, study of Banu Al-Mazyad Emirate shows that from the beginning of establishment of that emirate, prominent poets were in contact with them and emirs of this dynasty provided for their presence in their court. Among such poets is MahyarDeylami, who was in contact with Sana’ Al-Dawla. He wrote a Qasida (panegyric) in 52 couplets for the emir (Deylami, 1992). After him, Nur Al-DawlaDubays I also never ceased to care for science and literature, and to attempt to propagate them; he spent so much on doing this. His was so graceful and beneficent that he was admired by historians (IbnAthir, 2006), and he treated poets in a way that they eulogized him after his death more than they eulogized him during his lifetime (IbnKhalidun, 1987). Baha’ Al-Dawla, like his father and great grandfather, was very diligent in this field, and prominent poets, like Esfarayeni were present in his court (Hamawi, 1993). Thus, they made Hillah a refuge for poets and literary men, and by generously and frequently rewardingand welcoming poetwith gold, they attracted poets from different points, who wished to enjoy material and intellectual support from this dynasty. Scientific and cultural activities of this dynasty peaked during Sayf Al-Dawla. Although the period of his emirate had political rise and falls, Sayf Al-Dawla took advantage of such conditions with intelligence and skillfulness, and took widespread military actions, expanding his realm significantly. Such military actions never distracted from science and literature, and he even exploited the good condition provided for Banu Al-Mazyad Emirate for scientific boom. Thus, 22-year period of his emirate became time of freedom and flourishing of literary taste, and golden age of Banu Al-Mazyad was brought about by Sayf Al-Dawla. Sayf Al-Dawla provided scientific and welfare facilities for boom and development of science and knowledge, for example, he established a library containing thousands of books (IbnAthir, 2006). On the other hand, one of strategic policies of Sayf Al-Dawla in his realm was to establish peace and stability, the thing which was lost then due to intensified internal disputes among Seljuk kings and weakness of Abbasid Caliphate, causing stagnation of scientific activities in such centers as Baghdad. He, who was a courageous emir in battle field, and an intelligent and competent emir in governance, provided required peace and stability for emergence of this literary movement.
through his good temper, justice, and good character. To remain immune from attacks by Seljuk kings and primitive tribes as well as creation of a firm and safe place for expansion of knowledge and literature, Sayf Al-Dawla founded a new city, and transferred the center of government to that city. Given military, economic and climatic considerations, Sayf Al-Dawla chose a region near hamlet of Jame'in; the chosen place was appropriate in every respect (Aalami-Haeri, 1992). Among advantages of this region were military and strategic position of it for encountering with attacks by enemies, and establishment of security and peace (Hamawi, 1993).

In addition to measures by Sayf Al-Dawla, religious fabric of city of Hillah was also effective in establishment of stability and peace; because most people of city as well as its rulers were Shiite, and for this reason, religious conflicts were not seen in this city as were found in other scientific centers like Baghdad between Shiites and Sunnis, which always lead to destroy of scientific centers or setting fire on libraries, and aggression against elites. Especially since blood Imam Hussein (a. s.) was shed in a place near the place where Hillah was founded, seed of Shiism was planted in this reason, so, it has a long history of Shiism (Ibn Battuta, 1995), as evidenced by enormity of graves of Shiite elites in this region (Khansari, 2011). Banu Al-Mazyad Rulers were not ignorant of development of city of Hillah; bridges, dams, magnificent residential buildings constructed in Hillah (Naji, 2009) as well as location of Hillah evidence this claim. Geographically, this city was located in a fertile city (Sabbaah Mahmoud, 1974), which was irrigated by a wide network of rivers branching out of Euphrates (Sohrab, 1995). This resulted in increased crops of this city (Hassani, 1948), so that they supplied the demands of Baghdad and other cities (Ibn Athir, 2006). Besides, this city was located on a commercial corridor connecting southern Iraq, and upper Euphrates areas (Naji, 2009). Also, after interruption of the route of Hajijs caravans through Ibn Habira Palace and Sura Bridge, caravans of Hajijs passed Hillah Bridge (Le Strange, 1985). Ibn Jubair who was passing city of Hillah in 1184 describes this bridge as follows: “it is a bridge made of huge boats which are joined together by iron chains” (Ibn Jubair, 1907). This huge bridge indicates high flow rate and largeness of the river called Sura, which used to pass through the city of Hillah (Lestrange, 1985). Having temperate climate, clean air, clear sky and fresh water, this city was known as Hillah Al-Faiha (healthy climate Hillah) (Hilli, 1989). The collection of these factors resulted in economic prosperity and development of city of Hillah, so that it soon became one of important cities of Iraq (AalamiHaeri, 1992), as evidenced by poems many poets wrote in description of this city (Shushhtari, 1998). The collection of these factors as well as material and intellectual supports by Saif Al-Dawla highly motivated poets to reside in this city, because this Al-Mazyad emir, never letting down any Qasida, gifted poets so much that they became free from want for the rest of their life (Emadkatib, 1973). For example, Imad Katib mentions a poet called Sharif who received 100 dinars, a satin clothing inlaid with jewels, and a number of horse in annuity from Baha’ Al-Dawla. After death of Baha’ Al-Dawla, he went to Sayf Al-Dawla and presented his poems to him. Sayf Al-Dawla ordered his annuity to be doubled, and granted him many gifts (Emadkatib, 1973).

Among cultural activities of Sayf Al-Dawla was holding literary assemblies and ceremonies, which ever more strengthened and boosted science and literature. One important effect of such ceremonies was inciting sense of completion among poets and literary men. One instance of these is the assembly which was held in presence of such famous poets as Matamiri and Sanbasi. First, Sanbasi presented his Qasida, which well received by Sayf Al-Dawla. However, Matamiri wore a annoyed look, and Sayf Al-Dawla who had noticed that asked him “can you write a better poem than this?”. Matamiri answered by yes, and then, wrote his poems. Sayf Al-Dawla so enjoyed hearing these verses that he honored the poet, and placed him among his courtiers (Katbi, 2000). Other famous poets such as; Ibn Wathiq Anbari, Abi Al-Faris Hais Bais and Abi wardi also made presence in this territory and added to literary boost and prosperity of Hillah. It was during this period that Ibn Habariah created his wonderful work titled “al-Sadihwa ‘l-baghim”. Having completed it, he inscribed the book, consisting of versified apologues, in Kalilawa Dimna style, in one thousand couplets, to Sayf Al-Dawla, and Sayf Al-Dawla gifted him one dinar for each couplet (Ibnwardi, 2010). The last poems of this Diwan suggest that he spent ten years writing this versified book (Farukh, 1979). Also, during the same period, Abu Al-Bagha’ Hibah Allah wrote his work titled “Al-Managhib Al-Mazeediyyah fi Akhbar Al-Muluk Asadiyeh”. In this book, he addresses narrated historical events during Sayf Al-Dawla, and at the same time, wrote many poems on virtues of him and his dynasty, and thus, he created the most important source of chronicles of Banu Asad (cf. Al-Managhib Al-Mazeediyyah).

Policy of Banu Mazyad toward expansion of science and literature was such that their Shiite inclinations didn’t prevent presence of poets of other religions in their realm. Therefore, poets of other religions also attended their court to present their poems. Among them are “Hais Bais Shafei” (Ibn Khalkan, 1994), Ibn Talmidh Nasrani (Hamawi, 1994), and Abi Al-Saghr Shafei who frequented Mazyadid’s court (Javad, 1979).

Some poets such as Sanbasi, Bandaniji and Abi Al-Maali Hiti had a strong relation with Banu Al-Mazyad dynasty. Sanbasi was among poets who went to Sayf Al-Dawla before foundation of city of Hillah, and presented his poems to him (Yaghahi, 1951). And having enjoyed respect and gratuity from him, he resided there (Awaz, 2003). He wrote about 400 Qasida about Banu Al-Mazyad emirs, city of Hillah, and in description of political and
social events of period of Banu Al-Mazyad emirate (Amin, 1983).

After death of Sayf Al-Dawla, his son, Dubays bin Sidiq succeeded him, who was an acculturated emir of this dynasty. He was also interested in poem and literature, and like his father, he has been described as being generous and courageous (Amin, 1983). According to IbnTaqtaqi, "he who was considered to be among people of the time, kept open the door of his home to everybody. During his rule, Hillah had become the landing-place for guests, shelter for needy people, residence for homeless people, and refuge for scared expelled people" (IbnTaqtaqi, 1997). He never ceased to be polite, even when he was in prison, a poet came to him and recited a poem to him; Dubays, who was unable to gift the poet then, wrote a letter to the poet containing verses suggesting that he will the pay the poet a prize upon freedom. This poet went to Dubays after he was freed, and asked him for his prize. And Dubays immediately paid him one hundred dinars along with a robe of honor at sight of his manuscript (Safdi, 1981).

Generosity of Dubays in payment of gifts resulted in continuation of scientific and literary movement of city of Hillah (Khaqani, 1993). To approach Dubays, his contemporary elites such as Hariri recited his name and ranks as being generous (Hariri, 1968). Thus, generosity of Dubay had become a by-word such that many poets had noted this feature of him in their Qasida (Khaqani, 1993).

Although there is no doubt that Banu Al-Mazyademir loved science and nurtured scientists, the content of their poems and the way Banu Al-Mazyad treated the poets suggest that they sought other goals by such supports, which include:

a) Establishment of political position: Banu Al-Mazyad government was a small and limited emirate which was created with support from Buwayhids. However, with emergence of a powerful Seljuk emperor in first half of 5th century A.H. (second half of 1100's C.E.), founded on the heritage of Buwayhids, they lost this support, and were then left alone versus Abbasid caliph and powerful Seljuk rule. Caliph, who had actually lost all of his powers due to dominance of Buwayhids, and was looking out for an opportunity to free himself from dominance of Buwayhids, augured well from emergence of Seljuk, seeing it as an opportunity to regain power. Therefore, when Deylamids of Fars were destroyed by Tughril Beg, caliph sent a robe of honor to Tughril, and assigned him as theemir of territories he had captured (IbnKhalidun, 1987), as growing power of Banu Al-Mazyad intensified this hostility. Because Banu Al-Mazyad succeeded in the light of courage and warriorship to become one of the influential powers in the region, and having suppressed rebel tribes such as Khafaja could take other tribes in the region under control (Naji, 2009). Therefore, caliph considered them as rivals, and whenever possible, he accused them of pessimism (KarkushHilli, 2006) and incited people against them (IbnJawzay, 1992). That was because caliph declared it permissible to shed the blood of BanuAsad on the verge of power transition from Buyyids to Seljuks, and issued order of massacre of them (IbnKhalidun, 1987). Such political and military hostilities penetrated into literature as well (Awaz, 2003). Therefore, Banu Al-Mazyad, knowing the high effect of poem on soul and mind of Arabic speakers, used this technique as a means to disseminate their virtues and promote place of their emirate, and expand their influence in the region, and to attract public opinion to city of Hillah as a scientific and literary center versus city of Baghdad (Naji, 2009).

It was for this reason that Abbasid caliph also was not happy with presence of poets in Hillah, and tried to prevent presence of poets in Banu Al-Mazyad courts. As said earlier, Al-Mustarshid(1118-1134) ,Abi Al-Fawaris, known as HaisBais, was blamed for being in Hillah, and he was apparently asked to express regret for this, and Abi Al-Fawaris inevitably inscribed a poem on this to him (Tamimi Baghdad, 1974).

b) Arab Anger; Another factor which played a role in importance of poem and literature with Banu Al-Mazeediyad was their adherence to Arab anger. As said earlier, Banu Al-Mazyad was a branch of Arabs of BanuAsad Tribe (Sam'ani, 2003), who moved to Iraq as a result of evolutions in the history of Islamic and resided there. In spite of change of the lifestyle of them from nomadism to settlement; they preserved some of their primitive characteristics including courage, warriorship, hospitality and generosity, by which their rule was recognized as a purely Arabian government (Javad, 1979). For this reason, they were inherently interested in poem and literature (Yaghubi, 1951), so that they could use it to express their figures and to preserve their historical background and to bring prosperity to ceremonies held in their courts. Therefore, poem was so important to them that they could never dispense with it.

**Effect and Results of Hillah Literary Movement**

Measures and services of Banu Al-Mazyad turned city of Hillah into origin of a huge Islamic-Arabic intellectual and literary movement, such that its result was significant boom of poem and literature as well as emergence of a new generation of poets, writers and elites in Arabic syntax and lexicography, who left writings and compositions, and developed Arabic literature. Historians and biographers prepared a long list of name of poets and literary men who flourished in this city, and presented their scientific and literary works, including:
Ali Bin AflahAbasi: writer of DiwanInsha’ Sayf Al-Dawla (Yaghubi, 1951), a famous poet, who was skilled in writing various poems (IbnNajjar Baghdadi, 1996); IbnHaddabNouriHilli; literary man, lexicographer and poet (Hamawi, 1993); Khuzaimah Bin Muhammad AsadHilli: poet, and first founder of syntax course in Hillah (Suyuti, 2005); ShaminHilli was among prominent poets and literary men with many writings, 40 books of whom have been enumerated by Yaghub (Hamawi, 1993); Muhaazzab Al-Din Muhammad Khaymi, a leading lexicographer, poet and literary man (Suyuti, 2005); and Muhammad Sharaf Al-KitabIbnJiya, poet, and a famous person in correspondence and composition (EmadKatib, 1973).

Some literary men and poets, immigrating to other regions, especially to Damascus, caused Hillah literature to expand in those regions, who include ShamimHilli who first immigrated to Mosul, and then to Damascus. Sharaf Al-Din HabashiHilli, Raje Bin IsmaeilHilli and Safi Al-Din who immigrated to Damascus (Safi, 1981; IbnKhalkan, 1993; Shukani, 1419).

Emergence of a large number of literary men and poets caused city of Hillah to assume leadership of Arab literature in following periods (Hilli, 2010), especially during the reign of Moguls, which was called decline of literature period due to destruction of precious works, and setting fire on libraries and killing poets, literary men and artists. It was Hillah literature as inheritor of Arab literature in Iraq that caused literature to survive through time (Javad, 1979).

On the other hand, formation of such government as Banu Al-Mazyad, which was recognized as a Shiite government in the region, provided a good opportunity for Shiite poets to disseminate their Shiite beliefs and doctrines in form of poem in full freedom in an environment free of religious intolerance and fanaticism with support from Banu Al-Mazyad government, as many emirs of this dynasty themselves wrote poems in praise of Ahl Al-Bayt (a.s.) which are noteworthy (Safdi, 1981).

During this period, famous Shiite poets had firm relation with Banu Al-Mazyad emirate; among them is MahyarDeylami (974 – 1036), Shiite poet who lived in 5th century A.H., who was very famous when political era of Banu Al-Mazyad started. Religious similarity between him and Banu Al-Mazyad emirs caused him to praise them in his poems (Awaz, 2003). Also, IbnHibariah (died,1108), who was mentioned earlier, was in contact with Banu Al-Mazyad emirate, especially with Sayf Al-Dawla. Abu AbdillahKufi, who is of Imam Ali (a.s.) lineage, also wrote poems in praise of them (Awaz, 2003).

Thus, realm of Banu Al-Mazyad became shelter and refuge for Shiite poets so that they wrote in a way conveying intellectual message of theirs in continuation of way of elites such as Farzdagh, Kumayt Bin ZaidAsadi, DaibalKhazaei, etc., and despite their place in poem could provide them with good status, they dedicated their taste and talent on praise of Imams and religious grandees. Among Shiite poets of Hillah were:

Abu Al-Maali Bin Ali, known as Ibn Al-Awdi, whose father was vizier of Sayf Al-Dawla. IbnAwdi was grown in city of Neil and soon became a capable poet and a prominent literary man, and was admired by Imad Al- Kottab (Imad Al- Kottab, 1973). Religious poems of IbnAwdi, including his famous Ghadiriyah, were recited by everyone, so that they were sung in different assemblies with melodically (Amini, 1987).

Saeid Bin Ahmad Makki was grown in city of Hillah. He also was among syntactic scholars and among prominent figures of Shiite literatures and elites of science and literature in 6th century A.H. (Javad, 1979), who applied his taste and skill to commemorate virtues of Ahl Al-Bayt. His love of this family is evident from his poems. Another is IbnHamdunKatib. He was known as a scientist, literary man and lover of Ahl Al-Bayt (Yaghubi, 1951). Due to his courage and perspicuity in defense of Ahl Al-Bayt, he was omitted by some biographers and was considered among ghâliyun of Shiisim (ImadKatib, 1973), therefore, they did not quoted his poems and excluded his biography (AbdSudani, 1980).

Emergence of these poets in Hillah prepared ground for Hillah to become one of the most important intellectual and noetic bases of Shiites in following periods, and provided a wide arena for scientific and intellectual activities of Shiite scholars, and at the same time scientific productions in the fields of Islamic theological fields of studies such as Fiqh, Kalam, philosophy and literature received attention, and Shiite poets of this period could present in form of poet and verse whatever were available in Shiite school, and use this art as a strong tool to propagate Shiite school.

It should be noted that even jurists and great scholars of this city paid special attention to poem and literate alongside their writings on Fiqh, and they have left important poems. Due to proficiency of Islamic sources, especially Quran, and tradition, they highly enriched their poems through these two sources, and thus, defended Ahl Al-Bayt (a.s.).

CONCLUSION

Science and literature significantly grew and flourished duringMazyadidsEmirate. Many Banu Al-
Mazyademirs were fond of science and literature, and even some of them were among famous figures in this area. High interest of this dynasty in this issue on the one hand, and attraction of public opinion to Hillah on the other hand, caused them to provide various encouragement and gift prizes to poets and literary men. These encouragements resulted in stable political peace in city of Hillah as well as bringing economic prosperity to the city, so that many poets and literary men frequent Hillah, and enjoy their gifts in exchange for eulogizing this dynasty. In the light of material and intellectual support from Banu Al-Mazyad, a wide literary movement occurred in their realm. Among consequences of this literary movement was expansion and development of Arab literature and emergence of famous poets in this city. In the meantime, because Banu Al-Mazyad were Shiite, Shiite thoughts expanded in the light of their support, and a valuable opportunity was provided for Shiite poets to express their Shiite ideas and commemorate virtues and merits of Ahl Al-Bayt in form of poetry under protection and support from this dynasty.

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