

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL ORIENTAL MINIATURES

(from the Fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies of
the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan)

Asalkhon RAKHMATULLAEVA

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

National Institute of Fine Arts and Design named after K. Behzod
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article contains some materials about the history and origin of the fund of manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Also, the focus was on the history of the study of Oriental miniatures of the middle ages. The article examined some of the miniatures of the poems of authors Firdowsi, Nizami Ganjavi, Amir Khusraw Dehlevi, Alisher Navoi.

Key words: manuscript, fund, miniature, book, library, oriental, poem.

INTRODUCTION

The treasure of manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhon Beruni of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan is one of the most famous treasures in the world where ancient manuscripts are stored in terms of their wealth, the diversity and scientific value of the works stored there.

THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The Institute of Oriental studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan was founded in 1943 on the basis of the Eastern department of the State public library (now National Library of Uzbekistan) Alisher Navoi State Library). In 1870, a Library was established in Tashkent, under which the Department of Oriental manuscripts was opened. Until 1950, it was called the Institute for the study of Oriental manuscripts, and in 1950, given the scope of scientific areas, was renamed the Institute of Oriental studies.

But the richness of this fund went very slowly. By 1889, the number of books in the Department of Oriental manuscripts reached 87 volumes. According to the article by N.V.Dmitrovsky devoted to the 25th anniversary of the Tashkent Library (now the State Library named after Alisher Navoi), the number of manuscripts in Eastern Languages was more than 90 volumes.

Initially, the Institute had only one department for the study of Oriental manuscripts. However, the constantly expanding activities of the Institute required

the creation of such departments as primary scientific processing and systematization, scientific description and cataloguing, research and publication of written monuments and documents, as well as the Department for the study of political, economic and cultural life of the countries of the foreign East and their relations with Central Asia.

The scientific activity of the Institute is mainly connected with its manuscript fund. The collection of Oriental manuscripts of the Institute is considered to be one of the richest and most famous repositories of Oriental manuscripts in the world. The oldest works stored in the fund have more than a thousand years of history (for example, a list of the Koran of the IX century, rewritten in Kufi's handwriting), and the latest works are dated to the mid-twentieth century.

The works in the manuscript collection are written in Uzbek, Arabic, Persian, Tadjik, Urdu, Pushtu, Azerbaidjani, Turkish, Tatar, Turkmen, Uighur and other languages of the peoples of the East. These works cover various branches of medieval Sciences: history, literature, philosophy, law, astronomy, physics, chemistry, medicine, pharmacology, linguistics, geography, music, mathematics, minerology, agriculture, fine arts, etc.

Now the manuscript fund of the Institute has about 26,000 volumes. Many of them are collections where several works are bound in one book. A fund of lithographed and printed books of the Institute has about 40,000 volumes. These manuscripts and books are important for the study of the history of Central Asia, as well as the countries of the foreign East – Arab countries, Afghanistan, India, Iran, China, Pakistan, Turkey. In addition, the manuscript fund of the Institute has about 10 thousand historical documents.

The Institute also has a large collection of historical documents that cover a thousand-year period. The oldest document dates back to the Xth century, and the latest – to the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of them are documents relating to Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand khanates. Work is under way to research and publish these documents.

Since 1952, the work on the publication of catalogues of manuscripts of the fund of the Institute was established. To date, 11 volumes of the catalog "Collection of Oriental manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan", thematic catalogs – "History",

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“Natural Sciences”, “Medicine”, “Sufi works” and “Oriental miniatures” have been published. In addition, researchers of the Institute prepared and published catalogs containing descriptions of the works of some prominent representatives of science and culture-Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Amir Khusraw Dehlevi, Abd ar-Rahman Jami, Alisher Navai, etc.

In 2000, the manuscript fund of the Institute was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as one of the richest manuscript repositories in the world.

According to the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan PP-2995 “On measures to further improve the system of storage, research and propagandizing of ancient written sources” dated may 24, 2017, the Institute of Oriental studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan was recognized as the leading scientific-research institution of the Republic for the preservation, study, research on a scientific basis and propaganda of ancient manuscripts, modern written sources of historical and cultural significance.

Such a large and rich manuscript books fund, which exists today in Tashkent, was formed due to the hard work carried out for many years.

Professor Hamid Sulaimon can take full credit for his invaluable contribution to the studies of classical miniature and book-making art, for the publication thereof, as well as for finding priceless manuscripts in the assets of famous museums and libraries of the world. Albums titled “Drawings in Baburnameh” as well as “Illustrations to the works of Alisher Navoi. XV-XIX centuries” and “Illustrations to the works of Amir Khusraw Dehlevi” prepared for publication together with F.K.Sulaimonova were warmly received by the public. These album editions stand out for the high quality of print and content.

The “Illustrations to the works of Alisher Navoi. XV-XIX centuries” album contains ornamental designs and 114 drawings that adorned 35 rare manuscripts of the poet’s works copied during the XV-XVII and XIX centuries. The introductory article gives an assessment of the contribution made by the works of Alisher Navoi to the development of pictorial art (pages 7-36, in three languages). [5]

The illustrations section of the album accommodated 285 covers, miniature paintings and specimens of different ornamental designs from rare manuscripts. Brief information is offered on every manuscript: the title, urban centre where the copy was made, the date, the calligrapher’s name, the place where the manuscript is currently kept, the name of the library, serial number, and dimensions. The list of illustrations at the end contains the names of ornamental designs and painting titles in three languages.

“Illustrations to the works of Amir Khusraw Dehlevi” album was published in 1983. It opens with an article by two authors, followed by 117 illustrations and information about them. The album contains a list of manuscripts and illustrations (pages 128-132) with commentary providing information about the work title,

present location, serial number, manuscript dimensions, and the title of a miniature painting that goes with the manuscript. [6]

The traditional art criticism studies include albums created with the purpose of promotion among wider audiences. This kind of publications includes “Painting of Iran” by B.Deineka, “Art of the Arab countries” by B.Weimarn, “History of Art of Uzbekistan” by L.Rempel, albums prepared by M.Ashrafi, K.Kerimov, E.Polyakova and others.

The study of the oriental manuscripts, a great number of which are in the collection of the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, plays a key role in the assimilation of our rich cultural heritage.

If we look at the literary works stored in the fund of the IOS AS RU, we can see that a lot of works have been created by poets and writers who lived in the territory of Central Asia, India, the Middle East countries. Abu Ali Ibn Sina, Abulqosim Firdawsi, Yusuf Xos Khodjib Bolosoguni, Mahmud Qashgari, Zamakhshari, Nizami Ganjavi, Umar Khayyam, Sa’di, Fariduddin Attar, Jalaliddin Rumi, Rabg’uzi, Amir Khusraw Dehlevi, Hofiz Sherazi, Abdurahman Jami, Alisher Navoi, Fuzuli, Mirzo Abdulqodir Bedil and manuscript divans of hundreds of other poets and writers, “Khamsa” and other works are collected in this fund. [2, 18]

Nizami Ganjavi, Amir Khusraw Dehlevi and Alisher Navoi are among the great “Khamsa” writers of the East. They left an indelible mark in the history of literature with their “Khamsa”. There are several copies of the great poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi’s “Khamsa” in the fund. One of them was decorated with beautiful miniatures and headpieces.

The miniature of “Laili and Qais at school” from the manuscript (Inv.662) kept at the manuscripts’ fund of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Science of Uzbekistan is one of the 27 miniatures illustrated for “Khamsa” by Nizami Ganjavi. It’s dated c.a. 1075/1665.

A group of pupils with a teacher are having a lesson outdoors. In the foreground with an intricate turn of his head Qais is fixing his eyes on Laili sitting to his left. The colouring of the picture is based on a combination of orange, yellow-ochre, blue and dark green. [3, 236]

The fair Laili, when she was only seven years old, already struck with her appearance those who surrounded her. At the age of ten when she is sent by her father to school, the fame of her beauty like a legend is told from mouth to mouth.

All the three miniatures of the copy are remarkable by extremely expressive interpretation of the hilly background in comparison with more static figures of characters. [1, 110]

After Nizami Ganjavi, the great poet and thinker, who created “Khamsa” was Amir Khusraw Dehlevi. He was the author of a number of works on literature and history.

The great poet and thinker Abdurahman Jami wrote about the scientific heritage of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi as follows: "Thus, he classified 99 books. They say that he wrote in some of his works "My poems are less than five hundred thousand and more than four hundred thousand". They said that during his youth he had the opportunity to meet with Sheikh Sa'di".

According to the prominent scientist of tazkira writer of his time, Davlatshakh Samarkandi, well-known Indian historian Muhammad Kasim Hindushakh and a number of other authors, Amir Khusraw Dehlavi created a number of such works as "Khamsa" five Divan, "Qiron as-Sa'dayn" ("The addition of the two blissful planets"), "Duvalroniy and Khizrkhon", "Noah sipehr" ("Nine layers of Sky"), "Manoqibi Khind" ("Indian praise"), "Tarihi Dehli" ("History of Delhi"), "Anis al-qulub" ("Friend of hearts"), "Taj al-futukh" ("Crown of victories"), "Afzal al-fawayid" ("The advantage of benefits"), "E'jozi Khusrawi" ("Miracle of Khusraw"), "Tuglukname", "Hazoyin al-futuh" ("Treasure of victories"), "Bahjat al-asror" ("Secrets of joy"), "Mir'ot as-safa" ("Mirror of purity"), "Bahr as-asror" ("Sea of secrets"), "Miftoh al-futuh" ("Key to victory"), "Javahir al-bahar" ("Sea pearls"), "Taronai Hind" ("Indian melodies").

In the fund of manuscripts of IOS the handwritten copies of works by Amir Khusraw Dehlavi "Khamsa" which includes "Matla' al-anwar", "Shirin and Khusraw", "Majnun and Layli", "Oyinayi Iskandari" ("The mirror of Alexander"), "Hasht behisht" ("Eight behisht"), "Tuhfat as-sighar" ("The gift of Youth"), "Vasat al-khayat" ("Middle of life"), "G'urrat al-kamol" ("The beginning of perfection"), "Baqiyayi naqiya" ("Best of the best"), "Nikhoyat al-kamol" ("The peak of perfection") included collection of poems – Divan, "Qiron as-sa'dayn", "Noah sipehr", "Duvalroniy and Khizrkhon", "Miftoh Al-Futuh" are kept. The Divans by Amir Khusraw Dehlavi kept here have been copied for over 700 years by various calligraphers in India, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Because of this, their size, the number of ghazals, ode, and rubais included in them also varies. The fund has such wonderful copies of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi's works, one of which was copied in the XIVth century and the other was written by the famous lyric poet Hafiz Sherozi. [2, 26]

...The miniatures in the copy Inv. 3317 "Khamsa" by Amir Khusraw Dehlavi could be related to the Shiraz school (often called the Djelairid school) and dated back to the 1480s. This manuscript has a dramatic story. Though the text was fully copied, the decoration was not completed. Some front folios and chapter titles as well as some oblong margins intended for miniatures were left blank by the calligrapher and artist. Only an extraordinary situation could have interrupted the work on the decoration of the manuscript, and most likely this was the seizure of Shiraz by Amir Temur in 1387. The copy of "Khamsa" along with other manuscripts may have been carried to Samarkand in a bag. Centuries later the manuscript under mysterious circumstances was thrown into a well, from where it was retrieved after the

war and transported to the Institute of Oriental Studies (at that time the Institute for the Research of Oriental Manuscripts) of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

The illustrations of "Khamsa" closely resemble the miniatures of the Shiraz school in "Shah-name" (772H/1370-1371), copied in Shiraz (the Library of Topkapu-Saray in Istanbul); "Shah-name" (796H/1393-1394, the National Library, Cairo); "Kalila wa Dimna" (the end of the XIVth c., the National Library, Paris). All of them have identical interpretation of faces, clothes, headdresses, few characters, laconic landscapes, a refinement of lines and clarity of colour composition. One of the miniatures (f. 235v) contains the inscription: "Musalli", that is "comforting", "entertaining". It is presumed to be pen-name (lacab) of the artist – the creator of the miniature. [3, 14]

...Another of the rare works kept in the fund is a copy of "Khamsa" of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi was copied by the famous lyric poet Hofiz Sherozi. It is unknown that any other work written in the pen of Hafiz exists in world treasures. It is the oldest and most ancient of the copies of this work stored in the treasures of the world's manuscripts. Three of five poems of "Khamsa" ("Khusraw and Shirin", "Oyinai Iskandari", "Hasht Behisht") belong to Hafiz. This copy was also decorated with magnificent headpieces. There are also wonderful copies of the divans of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi in the treasure of the manuscripts of Institute.

One of the great representatives of the classical oriental literature was the well-known poet and thinker Abdurahman Jami. Abdurahman Jami's works also occupy a special place in the treasury of the Institute. One of them is the only copy in the world – "Munshaot" ("The album of letters"). The scientists, poets and statesmen who lived in the XVth century wrote letters with different content to the wonderful man of his time, the patron of science, Alisher Navoi. At Navoi's request, all of these letters were grouped together into an album. The letters written with the autograph of Abdurahman Jami are of particular importance. According to experts who studied the total heritage on the basis of manuscript sources, some of the works of the scientist kept in the fund of the Institute were written with his hand.

The "Kulliyat" of Abdurahman Jami was written in a very elegant Naskh letter ten years after the death of the scholar by Muhammad ibn Hasanshah al-Kâtib al-Hirawi, the eminent secretary of Herat. The manuscript consists of 631 pages and it contains many works by Jami. Among them are: "Bakhoriston" ("Country of spring"), "Risolai aruz", ("Treatise on the subject of aruz"), "Risolai musiqa" ("Treatise on music") divans, "Silsilat az-zakhab" ("Golden chain"), "Solomon and Ibsol", "Tukhfat al-ahror" ("The gift of generous"), "Sukhbat al-ahror" ("The talk of generous"), "Yusuf and Zuleiha", "Leyli and Majnun", "Iskandarnoma" and many others. The copy was decorated with beautiful and elegant headpieces. [2, 40]

...The Sefevid miniature art can be seen in the illustrations on the manuscript "Haft awrang" by Djami dated 994H/1587. In type they are close to the miniatures

of the Shiraz school, but belong to one of its provincial branches. The artist located the events of the poem mostly near pavilions with separate ornamentation on a background of blue or lilac hills and a golden sky as if suggesting the intense heat. Probably meeting the requirements of the customer, he stressed features not of urban lifestyle, but of the life of steppe inhabitants...[3,17]

...The miniatures of "Leili and Majnun" are the result of rather unrefined work with its poor draughtsmanship and garish details in the landscape – clouds, flowers in a glade. Such miniatures provide a backdrop that contrasts with and highlights the masterpieces of the Central Asian miniature art, created in the studios of Bukhara, Samarkand and Shahruhia, and also prove the involvement of artists of different abilities in the decoration of the manuscripts. Some of them met the requirements of court life and fine experts, the others worked for the market sales. [3, 21]

It is well known that manuscripts of Alisher Navoi, as well as other works of scholars and poets, have been copied by many calligraphers in Central Asia, the Middle East for more than five centuries.

The divans of Alisher Navoi "Khamsa", "Nawadir al-nihaya" ("The rarity of perfection"), "Gara'ib al-sigar" ("Wonders of childhood"), "Navodir ash-shabob" ("The rarity of youth"), "Bado'i al-vasat" ("The badi'as of middle age") and "Favo'id al-kibor" ("The benefits of old age") are included in "Hazayin al-maaniy" ("The treasuries of ideas"), "Makhtub ul-qulub" ("The prisoner of hearts"), "Lison at-ta'ir" ("Bird's language"), "Majolis an-nafois" ("The meeting of elegant tasted"), "Tarikhi muluki Ajam" ("The history of Ajam kings"), "Meson al-avzon" ("The scales of weights"), "Mukhokamat al-lugatayn" ("Discussion of two languages"), "Tarikhi anbiyo and hukamo" ("History of prophets and sages"), "Nasayim al-muhabbat" ("Love winds"), "Nazm al-javahir" ("The string of pearls"), "Khamsat al-mutahayyirin" ("Five wonders"), "Munshaot" ("The collection of letters") and manuscript copies of other works are preserved. [2, 29]

Among them are manuscripts copied by famous calligraphers in Herat during Alisher Navoi's life...

When it comes to great copies of the works of Navoi, it is worth mentioning that one manuscript copy of the famous "Khamsa" works. In the treasury of the Institute there are several copies of manuscripts of "Khamsa" by Navoi copied in different cities. Among them there is also a copy copied with the letter of Nasta'liq by the famous calligrapher Abduljamil secretary from Kherat, who served in the presence of the poet. It is one of the oldest and most famous copies of Navoi's "Khamsa", which is found in the treasures of the world. The first poem "Hayrat ul-abror" was copied in 889 rabi' al-oxir/1484, in April, the second poem "Layli and Majnun" was copied in zulqa'da/1484 in November, the other poems - "Farhod and Shirin", "Sab'ai sayora", "Saddi Iskandari" were copied in 889/1484, in the presence of Navoi. The artistic headpieces were illustrated at the beginning of each poem. [2, 36]

The numerous miniatures to Navoi's works depict the main themes of the five poems in "Khamsa" ("Confusion of the Righteous", "Farhad and Shirin", "Leili and Mejnun", "The seven Planets" and "The wall of Iskandar"), the philosophical and allegorical poem "Language of the Birds" and a number of ghazelles from Navoi's lyrical poetry. Navoi's humanistic and progressive ideals inspired miniature artists for almost five centuries. Some of the illustrations to Navoi's works were created in Kherat during the life of the poet by his pupil Kamaliddin Behzad, a great artist and the latter's pupils Kasim Ali, Dustmuhammad, Mirak Nakkash, Mahmud Muzahhib...

The miniatures from the manuscript copies of the collection of the Berinu Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan do not represent all the stages of the evolution of this field of fine art in Middle East but nevertheless they give a general idea of the direction of its development. The illustrations from the "Collection of chronicles" by Rashid-ad-din are the earliest ones of those described till now. They may be attributed to the XIVth century that is to the period after the Mongol power. These miniatures stand out among others of the following period for their peculiar style. Their design is distinguished by energetic lines, laconic and monumental composition, accurate outlines of generalized figures and things which were placed on the vacant space without designation of their interrelation. Stylistic peculiarities of fine art of the period of Mongol invasion are represented in clear-cut angular figures of characters. The portrait miniatures of the copy reflected the aspiration of Mongol rulers – consolidation and immortalization of their power. The miniatures of the following periods demonstrate the process of gradual liberation from foreign influence and that of strengthening art methods that met local tastes and aesthetic notions. The compositions of earlier Middle Eastern miniatures (illustrations of "Khamsa" by Amir Khusraw Dehlevi – the XIVth century, and that of "Divan of Youth" by Navoi – the XVth century) are still laconic, with not numerous figures. Rather often dramatic and very much strained miniatures are expressive, their design being generalized and monumental, the figures of persons – enlarged, the landscape – flat; the background plays a subordinate role. The colourful palette is limited and intensive. The miniatures of the included Persian copies of the XV-XVIIth centuries represent evidently increased skill and complicated composition. Lines of the design become softer, getting free from energetic tension and angularity. Eventually the design acquires perfect and certain exactness and noble refinement.

The new interpretation of space provokes striving for lowering and making broader the level and flat background of earlier miniatures by means of including into the limits of the miniature large-scale landscapes and interior which are arranged by stages from the bottom of the folio upwards. The background gradually turns into surroundings that create illusions of spatiality. Human figures are depicted more freely, their relations with each other and with surroundings being natural and unfettered.

Proper correlation of all the elements of the composition is achieved. Palette of colours becomes much richer and noble, growing really refined. The miniature becomes brightly decorative. Some compositional schemes and figures are canonized. The Persian miniature in its mature phase reaches the highest degree of design mastery of magnificent composition, refined harmony and brilliant colouring. At the same time its virtues turn into their opposite: canonization of subjects turns into their monotony; ornamentation – into decorative affectation, colourful brightness becomes psychological impassivity of coloured structure. The miniature comes close to the idea “The art existing for the sake of art”...

...For the Central Asian miniature expressive manly austerity of the design, deep and clear colouring, simplified compositions, laconic and monumental landscape, some genre interpretation of subjects without superfluous detailing was traditional. Though Central Asian miniatures are marked by originality of the style of creation they are represented by various individual creative manners. Some of them have a tendency to elegant decorativeness of classic trend, the others – in different degrees to original manner which combined restraint pathetic of heroic and dramatic subjects, unsophisticated narration, broad depicting of morals and customs and measured course of life. From XVIII-XIXth centuries the Central Asian miniatures as well as the Middle Eastern one starts to change: its subjects and appearance of the heroes become more democratic, the structure of the composition changes together with interpretation of the background and the landscape, art accents change their places. These factors all together change characteristic features and principles of Middle Eastern miniature painting which regenerates into a new kind of illustration...[1, 16-17]

CONCLUSION

Miniature painting of the East of the middle ages has a deep history. Many art critics, historians,

researchers and scientists have studied and published many publications, monographs and album-catalogs. The article presents an analysis of only a few publications. Manuscripts and miniatures in the fund of the manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies are generally reflected in books, scientific articles, catalogs and monographs. The existing literature contains general information about the miniatures, their creation period, size, technique, material, the name of the calligrapher, the name of the miniature artist, the place and period of the miniature, and the general description of the miniatures. But plots and images depicted in miniatures of medieval poets and writers have not been interpreted separately. Art critics, historians, researchers and scientists have a huge task to study the subjects and images of miniatures to the poems of medieval poets of the East, analyzing and comparing them.

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