

**ARTISTIC FEATURES OF MUSLIM MINIATURE PAINTING AND EASTERN  
CLASSICAL LITERATURE**

*Nadirkhanova Nilufar Alisherovna*

*"Teacher of the Department of Music and Fine Arts",*

*Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute, Republic of Uzbekistan.*

**Annotation:** This article focuses on the significance and role of medieval miniature painting and classical literature from the Muslim East within the context of global artistic culture. It examines the importance of miniature painting from the Middle and Near East, as well as Central Asia, in the realm of professional pedagogical education. The author highlights that between the 11th and 19th centuries, various artistic centers for miniatures emerged and evolved across a broad region that encompasses modern-day Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Arabian Peninsula, Northern India, and more. This development was marked by interaction and mutual influence, which shaped the similarities in their artistic techniques and compositional approaches.

**Keywords:** Central Asian miniature, artistic culture, harmony, genre, classical literature of the East, calligraphy, medieval treatise, "master, mentor, teacher."

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматривается значимость и роль средневековой миниатюрной живописи и классической литературы мусульманского Востока в контексте глобальной художественной культуры. Анализируется важность миниатюрной живописи Ближнего и Среднего Востока, а также Центральной Азии в сфере профессионального педагогического образования. Автор подчеркивает, что в период с 11 по 19 века в различных художественных центрах миниатюр возникли и развивались традиции по всему обширному региону, охватывающему современные Иран, Ирак, Сирию, Афганистан, Азербайджан, Турцию, Узбекистан, Таджикистан, Аравийский полуостров, Северную Индию и другие страны. Это развитие сопровождалось взаимодействием и взаимным влиянием, что сформировало сходства в их художественных техниках и композиционных подходах.

**Ключевые слова:** Центральноазиатская миниатюра, художественная культура, гармония, жанр, классическая литература Востока, каллиграфия, средневековый трактат, "мастер, наставник, учитель."

**Аннотация:** Ушбу мақолада ўрта аср миниатюра расмлари ва мусулмон Шарқи классик адабиётининг глобал санъат маданияти контекстидаги аҳамияти ва роли кўриб чиқилади. Шарқий ва Ўрта Шарқ миниатюра расмларининг аҳамияти, шунингдек, Марказий Осиёдаги профессионал педагогик таълим соҳасидаги ўрни таҳлил қилинади. Муаллиф 11-19 асрларда турли санъат марказларида миниатюра анъаналарининг пайдо бўлиши ва ривожланиши билан замонавий Эрон, Ироқ, Сурия, Афғонистон, Озарбайжон, Туркия, Ўзбекистон, Тожикистон, Арабистон ярим ороли, Шимолий Ҳиндистон ва бошқа мамлакатларни қамраб олган кенг минтақада юз берганини таъкидлайди. Бу ривожланиш

Ўзаро алоқа ва таъсир билан бирга келди, бу эса уларнинг санъат техникаси ва композицион ёндашувларида ўхшашликларни шакллантирди.

**Калит сўзлар:** Марказий Осиё миниатюраси, санъат маданияти, гармония, жанр, Шарқ классик адабиёти, каллиграфия, ўрта аср трактати, "устоз, мураббий, ўқитувчи."

Miniature painting, as a unique phenomenon in the history of world artistic culture, possesses significant potential for shaping the spiritual culture of the individual, its aesthetic education, and artistic harmony. It must be noted that this distinctive genre of Eastern painting, with its centuries-old history, is still in the stage of study from both historical and cultural, as well as art-critical perspectives.

Indeed, the uniqueness of the artistic-imagery language of Eastern miniatures requires an extraordinary approach to the study of this form of visual art, which means that an unconventional approach is also necessary for addressing the issues of creating the history, theory, and methodology of this unique branch of world painting. Therefore, A.A. Khakimov's words about the manifestation of a new aesthetics, including in the sphere of culture and art, appear relevant and timely.

Without researchers' knowledge of the history and theory of visual art—specifically miniatures in the countries of the Near and Middle East, and Central Asia (ancient times, early and late medieval periods, periods of cultural and artistic flourishing and decline, etc.)—it is impossible to form a complete picture of the evolution of miniature painting in the Muslim East, particularly in Central Asian countries. This fully applies to the tasks of revealing the rich traditions of the brilliant schools of painting in Herat during the 15th-16th centuries, Tabriz during the 15th-16th centuries, Bukhara and Samarkand in the 15th century, as well as the best achievements of the Mughal school of painting in Delhi and Agra during the 16th-17th centuries, among many others.

It is known that miniature painting reached its peak—the Renaissance—during a time of rapid development of classical literature. Figures such as Abdurahman Jami, Alisher Navoi, and others flourished during this period from the 14th to the 17th centuries. In this context, examining recognized world centers of miniature painting, such as the Herat school, Tabriz school, and others alongside the classical literature from these centers is justified and provides a more complete picture of this unique phenomenon in painting.

For instance, one notable admirer of fine arts was the great humanist of the East, the founder of Uzbek language and literature, Nizamedin Mir-Alisher Navoi. In his poem "The Turmoil of the Righteous" from the cycle "Khamsa" (The Quintet), in chapter 100 titled "The Nineteenth Conversation on the Unparalleled Khorasan and the Beautiful City of Herat," Alisher Navoi describes the capital of Khorasan, Herat, with enthusiasm. Among other things, he writes:

"In the halls that captivate the gaze,

The artists adorned Herat.

On the walls, the paintings - silks of the court.

In that painting, the hand of Mani is visible."

In the poem "Farhad and Shirin," the poet endows his hero with the art of sculpting and painting. While decorating the palace, Farhad learns from the artist Mani:

"Mani paints on the walls, and Farhad

Now finds no other delight...

Mani creates a picture on the wall, -

The prince will replicate it on his mind.

...He became skilled in stonemasonry,

And he became a talented painter."

At the beginning of the poem "Seven Planets," Alisher Navoi uniquely depicts the emergence of life on Earth:

"Long before the beginning of existence,

When the Earth knew not existence,

The pure notebook of future life

The artist wished to decorate."

"Below, he created dust, dressed in a forest,

Above, he depicted seven heavens.

One of them he filled with blueness

And placed it above our heads."

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the remarkable poet, historian, calligrapher, and translator Sher-Muhammed Avazbay, better known by the pseudonym Munis Khorezmi, created his works. His couplets, dedicated to the teacher who taught Munis the art of calligraphy, are especially poetic. His odes include "On Writing," "On Scripts," and "On the Pen." For example, in the couplets "About the Teacher Who Taught Me the Art of Writing," Khorezmi writes about his mentor:

"The beauty of his letters eclipses everything.

The lines and dots have an exquisite appearance.

He teaches different styles of writing.

Seven different scripts are accessible to him."

It is important to note that many poetic couplets—beits—had a didactic and educational nature. For instance, a well-known treatise by Sultan Ali Meshhedi, written in 1514, titled "Sirat as-Satur" (Rules of Writing), is also dedicated to the work of the calligrapher.

The source that provides information about calligraphy—and what is especially important for us—about writing materials, their preparation methods, and most importantly, the moral and ethical qualities of the artist, is the treatise by the remarkable calligrapher of the 15th to early 16th centuries, Sultan Ali Meshhedi. A contemporary and associate of the great Alisher Navoi and the genius Behzod, he bore the title "Sultan of Calligraphers." In a poetic and prose form, the author offers a series of methodological advice on teaching writing and preparing materials and tools. His advice is quite relevant from the perspective of modern pedagogy and methodology. For example, in teaching writing rules, Sultan Ali places great importance on verbal explanations:

"...Until the teacher explains it to you verbally,

You will not be able to write it easily."

"The explanation of how to comprehend this, both in great and small matters, is through 'Kalyami' (practical demonstration) as well as 'zabani' (oral explanation). However, you should consider 'zabani' more important so that everything difficult becomes easy for you.

It is evident that both teaching methods are employed, with an emphasis on the oral method.

A treatise containing the most interesting information about the works of calligraphers and artists of the medieval East is rightly considered to be the work of Dust Muhammad ibn Suleiman from Herat, titled 'Treatise on Calligraphers and Artists' (1444-1445).

The origins of painting and the legitimacy of depicting living beings are also substantiated in his 'Treatise on Calligraphers and Artists' (Gulistane Khunar) by Qazi Ahmed—a historian, calligrapher, and artist. He places the art of painting on par with the recognized art of calligraphy.

The lines from the treatise given in the chapter about ornamental artists are interesting: '...like Mani, Chinese and European magicians sat on the throne of the land of talent...'. In a poetic narrative about artists and the origins of painting, Qazi Ahmed writes:

I have heard that Chinese artists

First, as they became painters,

Mixed paint with the blood of their hearts

And sketched likenesses of roses and tulips...

Qazi Ahmed fully pays tribute to Behzad, speaking of him in prose: 'the rarity of the era, the most wondrous painter of ages, Master Behzad, he is from Herat,' and in verse:

The master of time, his brightness Behzad,

He fully expressed the gift of talent...

Speaking of his works, the master writes:

His charcoal drawing in the art of execution

Is better than the works of Mani's brush..."

The treatise by Iskander Munshi (late 16th century) contains information about medieval artists, their biographies, and characteristics of their work. Alongside the life story of the Shah and details about his lineage, the author provides insights into the creativity of court painters such as Abbas, Behzad, Sultan Muhammad, Agha-Mirak, and Muzaffar-Ali, who brought life to the beautiful forms created through the combination of colors.

Interestingly, Iskander Munshi includes among the prominent Tabriz masters of miniature painting Sadiq-bek Afshar, a poet and artist who authored one of the first treatises on the theory and practice of visual arts in the Muslim East. The treatise by Sadiq-bek Afshar (circa 1597) consists of 206 couplets presented as pedagogical advice and methodological guidelines on painting techniques, ornamental art, and their teaching methods. This treatise is entirely dedicated to the theory and practice of visual and ornamental arts. Translated into Russian by A. Yu. Kaziev in 1963, the book allows for a better understanding of the complex art of miniatures, as well as the diversity of materials and technologies used in Eastern painting.

In terms of ideas and methodological principles, the theoretical and methodological positions outlined in "Ghanun os-Sovar" resonate significantly with contemporary requirements for artist training. The author's views on nature as an object of study and a better teacher in learning art are progressive, as well as the role of the mentor and instructor in visual arts education, emphasizing the study and use of traditions from miniature painting in training artists. The treatise also contains a wealth of material on painting technology, including compositions and recipes for grounds, varnishes, paints, and methods of their preparation. The aesthetic views of this medieval scholar-educator are also highly valuable, reflecting a desire for a realistic portrayal of the surrounding reality through drawing and painting. Sadiq-bek Afshar calls for an honest reflection, especially of human beings and their individual states, "in accordance with the original."

As A. Yu. Kaziev rightly points out, the study of "Ghanun os-Sovar" is valuable not only for characterizing the creative methods and techniques of past masters of art but also for identifying positions that resonate with the demands of today, such as the perfection and completeness of

works of visual art, proper methodological guidance in education, adherence to traditions, and the acquisition of one's own methods, techniques, and style based on this foundation.

In the "Canon of Images," the author repeatedly emphasizes the role of the teacher and mentor in visual arts, stating:

"As the wise man said - without a teacher, (any task) is difficult."

With the lines "Although my heart was familiar with the art of depiction, (it) was powerless to achieve meaning independently," the artist-poet leads us to understand that without a system of education, it is impossible to attain "meaning," i.e., the unity of form and content.

"If you cannot find such a teacher, do not turn away from 'Ghanun os-Sovar'... (it will serve as) a teacher for you, requiring neither reward nor favor," advises Sadiq-bek Afshar to the reader.

Thus, the role and significance of miniature painting from the Middle and Near East, as well as Central Asia, in professional pedagogical education are immense. From the 11th to the 19th centuries, there was a formation and development of artistic centers of miniatures across a vast territory that includes present-day Iran, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, countries of the Arabian Peninsula, Northern India, and others. Their development occurred through interaction and mutual influence, which predetermined the overall close proximity of their visual means and compositional thinking.

Based on the techniques and visual means developed, the masters of brushwork in medieval East created a unique style characterized by the synthesis of the conventional and the real, perfectly aligned with the poetics and prose of classical literature and historical chronicles of the East. This created conditions for the emergence of a whole layer of brilliant artists who allowed for the identification of medieval miniature painting as classical, likening it to the era of the High Renaissance.

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