



## About the Attention of the Timurid Rulers to the Creation of Manufactured Works

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i4.2562>

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### **Abstract**

In the cultural aura of the XV century, the Timurid princes, who were the rulers of that time, occupied a place in a number of historical and literary sources of both literary figures and literary personalities. An artistic manuscript in the epoch of Timurides, as well as the other genres of that period, developed on the basis of creative assimilation of the best traditions of masters who had worked in the previous centuries. It is emphasized that this manuscript is a kind of a rare example of calligraphy and artistic design of a Timurid book.

**Keywords:** *Timurides; Divan; Kitabat (Book Compilation); Text; Calligraphy*

### **Introduction**

The fact that the Timurid rulers themselves are also related to literature, art, and education is a fact that does not require proof. In the cultural aura of the XV century, the Timurid princes, who were the rulers of that time, occupied a place in a number of historical and literary sources of both literary figures and literary personalities. In the works of oriental authors such as Mir Ali Tebrizi, Sultan Ali Meshkhedi, Kazi Akhmad ibn Mir Munshi-al-Khusein and others one finds rich biographical material concerning the lives and creative work of certain artists, also some statements about the theory of miniature painting, calligraphy, but concrete works of miniature painting and samples of artistic manuscripts did not receive the most serious study.

As is generally known, an artistic manuscript is a synthesis of creation of various masters — khattat (a calligrapher), nakkash (an ornament list), muzzakhib (a gilder), rassom (an artist) and sakhab (a bookbinder).

The category of artistic manuscripts in the epoch of Timurides includes not only manuscripts decorated with miniatures, but also (and these are most numerous) manuscripts created only by calligraphers and designed by ornament lists.

An artistic manuscript in the epoch of Timurides, as well as the other genres of that period, developed on the basis of creative assimilation of the best traditions of masters who had worked in the

previous centuries. There were certainly numerous artistically designed and illustrated records of «Shakhname» by Firdausi, «Jam-at-tava-rikh» by Rashid-ad-din, «Khamasa» by Nizami as well as other unique records re-copied in the XIII—XIV centuries under the rule of mongols, that were kept in public and private libraries of ancient Samarkand, Herat, Bukhara, Tebriz and Shiraz of the XIV and XV centuries. They could not but exert their influence on the further development and formation of the new style in designing manuscripts in the age of Timurides [Sulaymon, 1969]

### ***Discussion***

In the existing scientific literature dealing with artistic manuscripts the main subject of research is an oriental miniature. That took interest in oriental artistic manuscripts, dealt mainly with the study of miniature painting as an independent genre, thus isolating it from the whole complex of artistic manuscripts.

The presence or absence of miniatures cannot serve as the only criterion in defining the artistic merits of a manuscript. Quite often one may come across manuscripts with poor miniatures, whose artistic qualities are nevertheless much lower than those that have no miniatures at all.

Historical documents prove that valuable artistic manuscripts were indeed created at the orders of well-to-do people and owners of court libraries: Shakhrukh Mirza (1377-1447), Ulugbek Mirza (1394-1449), Baisunkur Mirza (1397-1433), Sultan Khusein Mirza (1437-1506); and those were the people that acquired them for great sums of money. But the client could never pre-determine the artistic solution of the design or its aesthetical norms, etc. The client could only appreciate the artistic merits of the finished work and reward the artist according to his deserts.

The idea of designing manuscripts had originated and was forming in the workshops of artists in close creative contact with masters of all other genres in the art of book publishing.

The craftsmanship of calligraphers, gilders, ornament lists, miniature-painters and book-binders of the age of Timurides and the skilful synthesis of their art created unsurpassed samples of artistic manuscripts which the whole world admires up to the present time.

When the authors of artistic manuscripts started to create a new record, the style, the type of design and even the size of the artistic manuscript to be was primarily determined by its contents and purpose.

Illustrating by means of miniatures was common practice with fiction and historical works. It is no coincidence that the artistically designed and illustrated unique manuscripts that are now kept in all the large manuscript funds of the world mainly consist of records of «Shakhname» by Firdausi, of Jami, Navoi, «Jam-at-tavarikh» by Rashid-ad-din-al-Yazdi and others. In contrast to miniatures, whose sphere of use was rather limited, the use of ornaments knew no limits. Beginning with Koran, ornaments were used in all types of theological and secular literature. Even small calligraphic fragments (kit'a) by Sultan Ali Meshkedi, Mir Ali Khiravi, Mir Imad and others were luxuriously designed by artists-ornament lists, and were appreciated no less than excellent miniatures.

The character of the design was to some extent influenced by the size of the book to be. If a number of writings of the «Kulliyat» (collection) type or a few poems of the «Khamasa» type by Nizami, or poems by Navoi, or «Khafth avrang» by Jami were to be bound in one volume, then the design was to be of a larger type, but if the book consisted of few little divans (collections of verses) or treatises, smaller design was usually chosen.

Peculiarities of genre and the number of writings included into the manuscript to be stipulated not only the size of the manuscript, but also the character of its artistic design. The handwriting (large, medium or small), placing the text in two or four columns, the quantity and type of frontispieces, headpieces at the beginning of every new work or chapter, the design of the margins, the theme, subject and quantity of miniatures and even the character of book-binding was decided by a group of artists and masters who worked at the creation of every single artistic manuscript.

The harmonious combination of the creation of all these masters which finally resulted in a single artistic synthesis answering the aesthetic demands of the age of Timurides was the constant care of every creator of artistic manuscripts. The development of the art of artistic manuscript and calligraphy as well as of the other spheres of life in the age of Timurides reached its culmination mainly in the second half of the XV century, when such people as Alisher Navoi (1441-1501), Kamal-ad-din Bekhzad (1455-1536), Sultan Ali Meshkhedi, Mirak Nakkosh, Mavlyano Yari and others stood at the head of court «Kitobkhana» (library) in Herat. At that time political power was concentrated in the hands of timuride Sultan Khusein.

The great protector of science, literature and arts was Alisher Navoi.

In the XV century, in the age of Timurides, there existed Samarkand, Tebriz and Shiraz schools in the art of artistic manuscripts, and among these Herat school distinguished itself by realistic trends, by the variety of genres and by extreme skillfulness of its masters.

In S.Peterburg, in State Public Library named after Saltikov-Schedrin, there is a manuscript of an early divan (a collection of verses) by Alisher Navoi which was recopied in the year of 870/1465-1466 in Herat by the famous king of calligraphers Sultan Ali Meshkhedi (Dorn, 564). This manuscript is the earliest record of Navoi's writing and the very first manuscript by Sultan Ali Meshkhedi known to the scientific world. The size is 23x34 centimeters, (a place where information about the author of the copy and the copy itself is given is named colophon) [Sulaymon, 1968]

At the beginning of the manuscript (p. p. 1b—2a) there is a luxurious extensive frontispiece painted in liquid gold and colours, one «gazel» (type of a poem), consisting of seven «beits» (two-line verses) is skillfully placed in the centre of both type-pages of the frontispiece. The text is written in two columns in large classic «nastalik» (type of calligraphic handwriting). All the «gazels» are framed by golden and multi-coloured lines on thin, sycoloured, siik paper then glued to the centre of the type page cut out of more solid paper which forms the margins of the manuscript. The margins of all the papers are decorated with geometrical ornaments and pictures of animals. According to the tradition that existed at that time the names of gilders and ornament lists, with few exeptions, were never mentioned. One shall not find the name of the author of ornaments in this manuscript too. There is every indication that this manuscript was created in the workshops of the court library of Baisankur Mirza, which are known to continue their activities both under Abul Kasim Mirza Babur (1422-1457) and Sultan Abu Said (1424-1469). As a result of research carried out on the text we could ascertain that the above said manuscript belonged to the private library of Alisher Navoi.

The originality of the ornamental composition of the frontispiece and particularly of the painting and coloring indicates the appearance of a new style in the art of book- publishing in Herat of the XV century. Also important is the fact that the above mentioned manuscript indicates the beginning of creative contacts between two great artistic geniuses of Herat — Alisher Navoi and Sultan Ali Meshkhedi, who then co-operated for nearly 40 years and maintained good friendly contacts.

In the second half of the XV century calligraphy and the art of book-publishing flourished unprecedentedly in the court library of Sultan Khusein.

The king of the calligraphers Sultan Ali Meshkhedi, the founder of Herat school of miniature painting Kamal-ad-dinBekhzad and the famous master of ornamenting books «nakkosh» (ornament list) of mavlyano Yari were great teachers of hundreds of masters who were creating masterpieces in the art of artistic manuscripts. Every artistic manuscript taken separately was in itself a unique work of art.

Thus, Tashkent manuscript «Diwan», even though it has no miniatures in it, can certainly be treated as one of the greatest masterpieces of Timuride [Juraboev, 2020]. Artistic manuscripts, which are classic samples of the new original style of Herat school in the second half of XV century. The splendid ornament, rich colours and unique proportions in combining all the elements of the two above mentioned manuscripts are primarily stipulated by the high intellectual development and aesthetic demands of the age of Timurides in the XV century.

In the manuscript funds of the Institute of Oriental Studies named after Biruni, attached to the Academy of Sciences Republic of Uzbekistan, there are three dated divans of Alisher Navoi copied by Sultan Ali Meshkhedi (No 1995, 790, 3984). These manuscripts are excellent samples of Herat artistic manuscripts without miniatures and they are done by various artists of the last quarter of the XV century. All the three divans copied by Sultan Ali Meshkhedi with large «nastalik» have their own original artistic solution.

As distinct from the previously mentioned manuscripts these three divans have only one extensive frontispiece each, and in the ornaments of these there is a skilful combination of liquid gold and blue, orange and skybluecolours which produces a tranquil coloring and magnificent beauty. The colored margins of the manuscript (No 790) are decorated with vegetable and geometric ornament.

Four more manuscripts of works by Navoi that were copied by the same Sultan Ali Meshkhedi can be treated as belonging to the same category. One of them is a manuscript, copied in 897/1492, also a combined divan by Navoi of the end of the XV century which is in Windsor library and in the Metropolitan Museum in New-York, copied in 906/1500.

The clearness of the graphic patterns, of the ornament Combined with the artistic handwriting, Sultan Ali's «nastalik» and also the extreme brightness of the coloring adds to the unique charm of the above mentioned manuscripts.

Nearly all the outstanding artists worked in the court library of Sultan Khusein Mirza: Kamal-ad-dinBekhzad, Mirak Nakkosh, Kasim Ali, Makhmud Muzakhib, Shakh Muzaffar, Sultan Muhammad, Dost Muhammad, Abdul-al-Razzak; calligraphers: Sultan Ali Meshkhedi, Ali bin Nur, Darvish Muhammad Taki, Muhammad Khandan, Muhammad ibn Azkhar, Sher Ali and others.

There is no doubt that the best artistic manuscripts were created primarily for the treasury of Sultan Khusein himself who was writing gazels under the penname of «Khuseini». Alisher Navoi in nearly all of his writings appreciated Sultan Khusein as a poet and a connoisseur of arts.

Of all the manuscripts with divan by Khuseini that reached our time the most unique and unsurpassable in the way of its artistic design is the manuscript kept in the National Library in Paris (Supp. turc 993).

This manuscript was also copied by Sultan Ali Meshkhedi in excellent small nastalik on polished silk paper in 890/1485. The number of pages is 59 and the size —16X25. Even without the four miniatures that illustrate the divan the manuscript itself is ideal in its artistic design. The manuscript begins with a title-page in the form of an ornamental shams sun like circle. Then the divan opens with a bilateral frontispiece — with the text of the first «gazel» on it.

The margins of the whole manuscript and the title of all the gazels are decorated with geometric and vegetable ornament made in gold color.

### **Conclusion**

The ending of the manuscript is designed perfectly. At the beginning of the book there is an extensive ornamented fly-leaf made in the style of general design, which is repeated at the end of the manuscript.

As well as the previously mentioned manuscripts, Paris record of the divan by Khuseini represents the top stage in the development of Timuride artistic manuscripts of the XV century. Such are few of the samples of Herat artistic manuscripts of the age of Timurides in the second half of the XV century. Similar manuscripts were created in Samarkand, Tebriz, Shiraz, Meshkhed and Bukhara as well.

In short, the Timurid period was undoubtedly one of the most enjoyable periods of excellence in calligraphy, book making and miniature art. The decoration of unique manuscripts and the copying of works of various genres took place mainly under the control and patronage of the Timurid rulers.

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