

A Study of the Influence of Persian & Indian Moghul Painting on Central Asian Painting Traditions During 16th & 17th centuries AD /10th & 11th AH

Abstract

During the 16th/10th century, an entirely original art style developed in Central Asia and its cultural capital of the time i.e. Bukhara which encompassed a large number of local masters. Initially, several cultural brokers of Herat were invited or dispatched there, where their collaboration with local masters led to the advent of a novel art tradition which, during 16th/10th century, brought Bukhara's art fame.

Bukhara's surviving exquisite manuscripts created in the middle of the 16th / 10th century contain useful information about the painting tradition of the period.

Two different trends have affected the creation of these works of art. The first one was associated with the painters of Herat and those of their followers who had gone to Bukhara and the second, reflected Bukhara's emerging independent style.

Seventeenth/ eleventh century painting of the region is the continuation of Central Asia's painting tradition and the Herat school of the 15th and 16th/ 9th and 10th centuries, but there are also new developments such as emergence of signature and chronology on the works. Moreover, we can see artistic exchanges between Central Asian and Indian paintings and similarities between the works of the regional artists with the Indian Moghul paintings.

Sixteenth / tenth century painting of Transoxiana was the reflection and simple continuation of the illustration school of Herat in the late fifteenth / ninth and early sixteenth / tenth century. The local progress of Transoxiana's painting school finally led to the emergence of a new style of painting in twentieth and thirtieth years of the sixteenth / tenth century, which, in comparison to Herat's works was simpler and more limited in composition with lighter paints. Nevertheless, towards the end of the sixtieth year of the same century, the school gradually and noticeably declines due to its monotonous and stagnant composition as well as the failing of professional skills. It should be noted that the number of surviving manuscripts of Transoxiana containing sample paintings of sixteenth / tenth century, has decreased significantly in the last trimester of this century as compared to the first and second ones.

These manuscripts mainly contained large images which, perhaps, might have been due to their poor artistic quality. Most artists of this era maintained copying the Herat school's composition and figures and rarely went beyond its boundaries. As the artists abandoned personal quests for exploring new forms of composition and expression, thus uninspiring, spiritless works were created.

Yet the most brilliant master painters didn't take in the traditions of Herat school thoughtlessly and their contribution led to the formation of a distinctive painting style during this period. In general, we can say that sixteenth / tenth century Central Asian painting is the continuation and development of Herat art school.

Despite the appearance of some Hindu features in Bukhara miniature school during the seventeenth /eleventh century, its former quality was preserved, because Bukharan miniatures follow firm artistic disciplines with one of the major ones being color. Light, very bright and pure colors and uncommon combination of sapphire, pale goldenrod and yellow tones in the paintings of this age led to the formation of a notable color tradition of painting specific to the Central Asia.

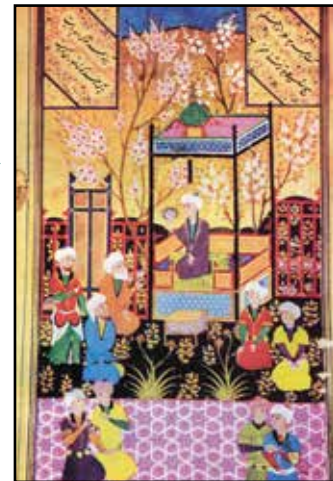
But we can say that the Indian miniature painting of this period enriched the visual art of Central Asia and offered the achievements of Iran's different schools of miniature painting gained in the During the sixteenth / tenth century, Iran had gained many achievements in different schools of miniature; however, due to the cessation of direct diplomatic ties with Central Asia due to religious and political differences, the exchange of such accomplishments was impossible.

Yet, the Indian miniature of the era, played bridge for the transfer of such achievements and thus, enriched the visual art

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traditions of this region.

This paper intends to study the developments and factors influencing the miniature painting of the 16th and 17th/10th and 11th century Central Asia, get acquainted with some prominent regional miniature painters of the era and the works available to them.

Through employing a historical, descriptive and analytic approach to examine a number of outstanding examples selected from among the available foreign and local sources, this research seeks to answer these questions that how the miniature painting tradition of the 16th and 17th/10th and 11th centuries Central Asia has developed and evolved, what are its specific features and which works were available to the artists of the region?

It seems that during this period, three major trends may be found in the Islamic miniature works of Central Asia: first, the impressions of Herat School; second, independent Bukharan style that evolved gradually and third, impressions of the Indian Mughol miniature painting style. Also, apparently, since the 11th century AH, the tradition of signing the artworks and registering their chronology has been initiated in the Central Asian Islamic painting.

Keywords: Miniature Painting, Bukharan School, Indian Mughals, Central Asia (16th & 17th centuries AD / 10th & 11th AH)

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