

Reflection of Written Dastans in Maverannahr Miniature (Xiv – Xvii Centuries)

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Annotation. The works devoted to mythological scenes from textual dastans (epics) in Maverannahr miniature art of XIV – XVII centuries were assembled and scientifically summarized for the first time in present article. Along with systematizing local miniature works by their genres and concepts, there was an afford to apprise their distinction.

Research tasks. Maverannahr miniature art which is based on mytho-epic realm; problems of systematic study; methods of expression; traditions; schools; its role in building creative perception of the nation and defining its theoretical importance in art history.

Keywords: Maverannahr, miniature art, textual dastans (epics), myths, epos, legend, cult, composition, problems of systematic analysis.

Introduction. The term “Maverannahr” originates from Arabic, meaning “*beyond the river*”, included the territories between the Amu Darya and Sir Darya (*Oxus and Jaxartes*) rivers, the eastern part of modern Kazakhstan¹ with the exception of Turkmenistan. In XIV – XVII centuries Heart, Samarkand, Bukhara and Shokhrukhiya schools of miniature were established in Maverannahr². Each of the school created masterpieces with unique

sublime³. High proficiency was achieved in artistic decorations of the books. Mythological scenes from the textual dastans and aesthetics of Islam were mainly implemented. Miniatures created on the dastans from “Shahnameh” by Ferdowsi, versions of “Khamsa” by Nezami Ganjavi, Khusrow Dehlavī and Alisher Navai, “Gulistan” (*The Rose Garden*) and “Bustan” (*The Orchard*) by Saadi Shirazi, “Yusuf and Zulaikha” by Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī are found especially transcendent. Only works built on religious, cult and mytho-epic themes were mentioned in this research.

Major research materials. High results may be achieved by systematization of miniatures in different criteria for getting an accurate expression of textual dastans in Maverannahr miniature works of XIV-XVII centuries. In this case we offer to investigate the artworks using the following scheme.

1. **Legends about the decent governor⁴** built peculiar series of miniatures. Artists created numerous pieces of fair and merciful rulers mentioned in the textual dastans, portraying their good actions. The image of fair governor was created on the legends about Iskandar Zulkarnain⁵ (Dhul-

¹ National Encyclopaedia of Uzbekistan. Volume-6. T., 2003. P 35-36.

² Gyul E. Dialogue of culture and frt of uzbekistan: Ancient and the Middle Ages.-T.:Print-2005. P 207.

³ Rahmatullaeva D. Tradition Heritage in Theatral Art of Uzbekistan. International journal of Research. September 2018. ISSN:2348-6848. P 495-499.

⁴ James Hall. Diktionery of subjects and simbols in art.-USHA.:1996, P , -65-78.

⁵ Mifs peopls World.- Encyclopaedia. Editor-in-chief S.A.Tokarev.,M.:1991.P 443-543.

Qarnayn) (“Sadd-i-Iskandari (Alexander's Wall)” by Alisher Navai and this theme can be seen in a miniature work about “Sultan, who has gone from throne to poverty in front of Iskandar” by Kamaliddin Behzad which was built on a Tasawwuf ideology (Herat, 1495. Bodleian library, Elliot 339, B.776). According to legend, Iskandar defeated the tyrant and instead of him, Iskandar wants to entrust a righteous ruler. Herein scholars introduce to Iskandar an eremite who preferred asceticism to wealth and poverty. The dervish (eremite) who appeared in an indigent outwears in front of the governor and refused Iskandar's offer⁶. The miniatures “Iskandar with Seven Sages of Greece” and “Iskandar in Mountains in Presence of an Eremite” created in 1495th for Nezami Ganjavi's “Khamsa” which depict the dastan about Iskandar's forty days fight against 300 000 robbers for rewarding the Darband fortress. Iskandar comes to an eremite for blessings before the fight. On top left of the miniature fortress, its minarets and buildings can be observed. The walls and gates of the fortress are richly decorated. On the lower right side there is a scene illustrating Iskandar with his courtier in front of eremite. The artist portrayed Iskandar with facial features of his contemporary - Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara⁷. The third work illustrates “Battle Between Iskandar and Darius' Armies”. The miniature created by Behzad in Heart is preserved at The British Museum (Add. 25900,B,231 6).

⁶ Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamalbddin Behzod.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 176.

⁷ . Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamalbddin Behzod.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 35.

This miniature narrates Iskandar's victory in a severe fight against Darius near Mosul. The scene of war illustrated not only by the warriors' clothing but also by the scenes of battle. The battle is shown on its culmination in this work⁸.

Another miniature on “Shahnameh” created by Muhammad Murod Samarkandiy – “Bewailing the Loss of Iskandar” is based on the horizontal composition. Black land and black clothes characterize the spirit of the ceremony⁹. “Iskandar's Funeral” is a composition with multiple figures, the lamentation of Iskandar where crying people astonished by the fact that the Great conqueror leaving this World empty handed was emphasized¹⁰. Another miniature work created for Alisher Navai's “Sadd-i-Iskandari” named “Iskandar and the dying Darius”. The work illustrates despot Darius deliberately killed by his viziers (viceroys) and the scene of his death demonstrated as a lesson to others. In the middle of the circular composition, there is a scene precisely depicting two conquerors looking at each other for the last time¹¹. Nonetheless, the miniature work “Iskandar Hunting” created in 1648 for Nezami Ganjavi's “Khamsa” assembled of four figured composition. Strong dynamism, accurately created details, contrast between the colors of mountains and the sky, riders replaced in one line, the scenes of murdering the

⁸ . Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamalbddin Behzod.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 376.

⁹ Ioliakova E, Rakhimova Z. Miniature and literature east. T.:1987. P-90.

¹⁰ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 132.

¹¹ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979.. P 130.

predators – each image set harmonically creating solidness¹². Furthermore, there are miniatures devoted to such rulers as Keyumars and Jamshid, accentuating their personalities¹³.

Image of Bahram Shah. The stories devoted to Bahram Gur are assembled in Nezami Ganjavi's epic "Haft Peykar" (Seven Beauties). The epic is written in "story within a story" style, and may observe the elements of folk tales¹⁴. Another piece "Bahram Gur Kills the Dragon" is preserved at the British Museum in London (ИНВ Or 6810.В, 154 а). Bahram Gur's image is frequently interpreted as a brave, efficient and courageous hunter¹⁵. For this reason, scenes where Bahram is fighting against the dragon, which is guarding a treasure in the cave, are depicted in this miniature.

The treasure nearby the mountains has a symbolic meaning. This points to the human's soul. In order to achieve a divine power hidden inside the heart, one should defeat the dragon – nafs (*the ego, lower self*).

Behzad increases the meaning of this theme illustrated in Bahram's image which is relatively exaggerated. The artist emphasized the ruler's braveness and courage by this effort¹⁶. "Bahram Gur in the Turquoise Palace on Wednesday" depicts Bahram's visit to a pavilion of

Azargūn Maghrib Princess. The heroes of dastan dressed in blue are placed in the middle of the composition, which is divided into four¹⁷. The work "Painter Mani Presenting Bahram Gur his drawing" was created in Shohruhiya for Alisher Navai's "Khamsa". It illustrates the legend which was popular in Middle Ages narrating Bahram Gur seeing a portrait of beauty of China painted by famous Moni and falling in love with her. The colors chosen, artistic methods, and stylistic originality in landscape shows elements of Shohruhiya miniature school¹⁸. "Mahan in the enchanted garden" is a piece depicting the story told by the Maghrib princess about merchant Mahan and his adventures¹⁹. "Bahram in the blue palace" another miniature work devoted to Bahram Gur, illustrates conversation under the dome decorated with stars in a poetically romantic way, where the blue pavilion is the only building in the middle of desert²⁰.

A piece "Council of the wise men" created by Kamaliddin Behzad in 1485 for Alisher Navai's "Sab'ai Sayyor" is preserved in Bodleian Library in Oxford (Elliot 317 ,B.216). Shah Bahram suffers from love to beautiful Dilorom. In order to find a cure for Bahram scholars convene a council.

The story line developing on a complicated vertical composition was common only for late 15th century Heart

¹² Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979.P 180.

¹³ Ismoilova E. "Ages of Prosperity» of pre-Islamic Ideal Kings, Kayumars and Djamshid, in Two Miniatures.-Санъат., 2002.№4, P-27-30.

¹⁴ National Encyclopaedia of Uzbekistan. Volume-6. T., 2003. P 347-348.

¹⁵ Poliakova E, Rakhimova Z. Miniature and literature east. T.:1987. P-41.

¹⁶ Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamaliddin Behzod.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 33

¹⁷ Adamova A. Gyuzalyan L. "Miniature rukopisi poemi shahname".-L.:Iskusstvo,1985. P 126.

¹⁸ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 96.

¹⁹ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979.P 178.

²⁰ Suleimanov H. Artistically illustrated manuscripts of works by Alisher Navoi.-T.: Publishing house of the communist party of uzbekistan, 1981.. P-7.

school traditions. The wise scholars are intensely disputing in front of an empty throne. The Sultan, who left the hall through the open door, is suffering in the garden thinking of his love to Dilorom. Each detail is built highly accurately in this miniature. Golden backgrounds of the work attract more for observing the landscape²¹.

Image of lionhearted heroes.

Fights between goodness and evil, one by one combat of legendary brave heroes, were depicted symbolically in Maveraunnahr miniature art. In a number of miniatures, Rustam is glorified as a mentor of powerful heroes. In works like “Rustam kicking back the Rock Thrown by Bahman”, “Battle of Rustam and Afrasiab” each image, chosen colors and even each small detail was solved in accordance with the plot of the epic²².

Artist from Bukhara, Muhammad Muqim, devoted a work “Fitna carrying an ox on her shoulders” for Nezami’s “The Seven Beauties”. There are stairs diagonally placed in composition and an image of Fitna who is coming upstairs holding an ox on her shoulders, and old wise man sitting near the stairs, Bahram Gur sitting on a throne and musicians sitting downstairs²³.

Mahmud Muzahhib, from Bukhara, created a miniature “Sultan Sanjar and an old woman” in 1545 for Nezami’s another epic “Makhzan al-Asrar” (The Treasury of Mysteries). The artist illustrated a philosophic didactic

theme, where it narrates the story of Sultan who neglected the important morality of life about being a rightful ruler and perished in consequence of his own mistakes²⁴.

Images of prophets. There were distinctive rules in creating the image of prophets in Maveraunnahr miniature school. It was compulsory reflecting elements of divinity in creating the images of prophets and saints. For this purpose, showing prophets’ as old wise men, wearing white clothes and divine light coming out their heads became a tradition. These rules were followed when creating the image of the final prophet in Islam – Prophet Muhammad. Kamaliddin Behzad created a miniature “Prophet Muhammad and his sahabah (companions)” for Alisher Navai’s “Hayrat-ol-abrar” (Wonders of Good People) in 1485, Herat. In this work (Bodleian Library. Elliot 287, B.7a) the artist tried to create an iconographic image of perfect man through Prophet Muhammad’s figure. Image of Prophet was principal in this artwork, depicting a conversation between Muhammad and his sahabah – his disciples (Umar, Osman, Abu Bakr, Ali) sitting side by side. Muhammad’s young, genuine image is portrayed realistically. Shine of golden aureole delivered him divinity²⁵.

Artwork created in 15th century by Qosim Ali from Heart “Prophet Muhammad ascended to the sky” derived from Nezami’s “Khamsa” and illustrates the scene, where Muhammad is mounted

²¹ Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamaliddin Behzad.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 19.

²² Shukurov Sh. “Shah-name” Firdausi and middle ilyustretion Tradition.-M.:Nauka, 1983. P 175.

²³ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.- M.: Fine art,1979. P 194.

²⁴ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.- M.: Fine art,1979. P 128.

²⁵ Ismailova E, Rahimova Z. Kamaliddin Behzad.-T.: Sanat., 2000. P 13 6.

on a winged Burak for being taken to see Allah. Views of Mecca city monuments during the flight, Burak and the prophet placed on horseback pictured here is notably impressive²⁶. Legendary horse – “Burak” (derived from Arabic, meaning lightning) is a name given to a beast which flies and runs very fast, which was mentioned in Islamic legends. Referring to Koran, Prophet Muhammad was taken to a “Night Journey” from Mecca to Jerusalem first, and then ascended to the heavens (Isra and Mi’raj). According to narrations, Burak used to come and go around Mecca and disobeyed. Only after angel Gabriel insisted Burak obeyed. Burak served for other Prophets – Abraham and David as well and sometimes he was portrayed as a horse, sometimes as a mule, with a long white neck and wings on its feet²⁷.

Masters from Bukhara illustrated the Night of Mi’raj in a miniature “Muhammad’s ascension on Burak” in 1598 for Khusrow Dehnavi’s “Story of Khyzr Khan”, “La discussion de Moise avec un heterodoxe”²⁸. Author assimilated Burak’s face to mythical beauty of East. Big eyes under eyebrows reminding bows are very charming. The beauty wearing a golden crown, her dark as night black hair and earrings illustrated distinctively. Burak’s body shown in red, his fleet feet in green and his tail is red, reminding of a peacock’s tail. The horse’s harness is in

black and gold and dignified Muhammad mounting the horse. The Prophet is portrayed rare bearded, good shaped, his white turban especially emitted, his long white shirt pinned with yellow flowers, his feet on stirrups and he is holding the bridle. These types of assimilations capture the attention by its unusual construction.

Image of **Prophet Yusuf (Joseph)** also was mentioned many times in miniature art. In the Koran “Yusuf” is one of the most beautiful and unique Surah. The piece “Yusuf thrown into the well by his brothers” created by artists for dastan “Yusuf and Zulaikha” written by Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī²⁹ (Durbek. Calligrapher: Muhammad-Said ibn Mirza-Muhammad, 1615). The piece created in Bukhara miniature school traditions, depicts where brothers of Yusuf are enraged by the fact that Yusuf is the most beloved, not only by their father but also by other people, is thrown into the well in order to banish him. However, caravan of merchants pull him out of the well. Yusuf portrayed in white clothing. The light coming from Yusuf is pointing at his prophecy. The motion given by the figure looking down the well was not observed in miniature art by this time. Regardless the primitiveness of colors and figures, artist could send the message of tragedy of the story.

Composition of the piece “**Merchants pulling Yusuf out of the well**” (Muhammad-Nodir Samaqandiy, 1616) consists of several parts. In a lower corner the caravan head is talking to a dervish from the road about his journeys, artist pointing out to the leader through

²⁶ Mukaddima Ashrafiy. From Behzoda do Riza-yi Abbosi. development miniature XVI beginning XVII century.-T.: smi-Asia, 2011. P-63.

²⁷ Ismailova E. Prophet and legendary personality Islam in miniature. //social account. Tashkent. 1999. №2.

²⁸ Toliakova E, Rakhimova Z. Miniature and literature east. T.:1987. P-57.

²⁹ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 164.

the caravan coming behind him. In the upper part of the composition there is a well and merchants trying to exempt Yusuf. Brothers of Yusuf standing around the well, delighted with their idea of getting rid of Yusuf. In the upper part of the composition there are figures of merchants listening to an old wise man³⁰.

“**Yusuf arrives in Egypt**” was created on the basis of two stories – Yusuf’s arrival to Egypt and Yusuf being sold to slavery by the merchants (Bukhara, 1523 – 24)³¹. There is a ship full with travelers in the middle of the work, at the same time used as an ornament by the artist. People raising the sails, hand movements of oarsmen gave the dynamic expression to the composition. The lower part of the work was illustrated in a traditional way. Figures standing steady, emphasized the line of the horizon, blossoming plants and the panorama in the water were particularly specified. This estate interconnected the stories.

“Zulaikha tries to keep Yusuf from running away” Bukhara, 1523-24. As well as interpreting the interiors of the palace accurate geometric figures, flat surfaces, used as a background in the artwork. However, the images of Yusuf and Zuleikha portrayed little graceless. Massy, big face, shapes of eyelids lost proportionality. Horizontal and vertical lines dividing the composition, texts included in the ornaments of background vindicate that the piece was built

according to Bukhara miniature school compositions³².

“Yusuf in front of Egyptian women” (Bukhara, 1550) this miniature illustrates Zuleikha languishing of her love in a decorated pavilion sitting on a carpet and observing how Yusuf is carrying in a pitcher. Her aim is to show her friends her new slave. Zuleikha’s friends are busy cleaning pomegranates around the pool. Eastern traditions of not speaking out about feelings, not showing love openly, leaving it mysterious also left impact on this miniature. Love burning inside hearts of Egyptian ladies, their surprise was the reason of items falling down and some of them stoned for amusement. In eastern culture, pomegranate usually depicts a suffered, burned heart. The artist pointing out this symbol used the images of ladies with pomegranates. Pomegranate gives reddish juice as soon as cut with a knife. Ladies seeing Yusuf become outrageous, not noticing their cut fingers and do not even feel that their fingers are bleeding. From clear lines it may be seen that this work belongs to Maveraunnahr miniature school³³. In the “Yusuf in Zuleikha’s splendid garden”, a royal palace scene built in composition is divided into radical symmetry. It depicts Yusuf in the middle of the composition, reciting a book he is holding under the tree bushes³⁴.

There were rules of portraying humans in Islam for a long time and these rules always followed in creating artwork.

³⁰ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 166.

³¹ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 76.

³² Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979. P 78.

³³ Pugachenkova G. Galerkina O. Miniature middle Asia.-M.: Fine art,1979.P 126.

³⁴ Poliakova E, Rakhimova Z. Miniature and literature east. T.:1987. P-99.

The artists adapted images of angels, divs - giants, enemies from other countries, mythical animals to their own requirements of art and creativity in myths. By 15th century in Maverannahr and Horasan territories, images of **Dervishes** formed from different angles, which come from Islamic traditions. According to Z. Rakhimova, by the end of 15th century, images of tasavvuf philosophy – sheikhs, Sufis, aliens, dervishes and plots of love were common in Heart miniatures. In a number of miniature works Sufi sheikhs illustrated in a brown, dark green, turquoise or blue colored, open front, wide, simple kaftans. It is also proven by the pieces devoted to “Sheikh Iroqiy’s meeting with the prince” adventures³⁵. Works copied in 1553 in Bukhara for Alisher Navai’s manuscript “Lison ut-tayr” which are preserved in National Library of Paris have the same characteristics. For the name of his “ishq” – true love, Sheikh Sanaan becomes a swineherd and the artist shows the Sheikh feeding swine with a simple and large plan, consequently metaphorical meaning left unnoticeable³⁶. “Sheikh Sanaan at a market”, “Sheikh Sanaan meets beautiful Christian girl”, “Friends surrounding Sheikh hopelessly fallen in love”³⁷, “Sheikh Sanaan breeding the swine”³⁸ and tens of other works prove this idea. Images of Sufis’ in miniatures holding a stick depicted wisdom and at the same

time pointed to a source of force, which may create miracles. Kavush (shoes with high heels and twisted nose) – was the main footwear for Sufis. Khirka – clothing was the main sign of dervish, however on the peak of meditation, dervish could tear his khirka. For this reason khirka was honored, as it meant that the owner of this clothing reached ecstasy³⁹.

As a summary, among miniature works created for textual dastans in XIV – XVIIth centuries in Maverannahr, there was a good number of pieces devoted to mythology. Each miniature school formed during this period created its own artistic image and creative traditions. Unique artworks created by local artists have been worthy estimated and preserved by the biggest museum and galleries worldwide. Nowadays it became required by the time itself to collect, to evaluate and study systematically those artwork. This investigation is a small prologue of the researches which should be fulfilled.

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³⁹ Rahimova Z. Sufistik Concept of Attire in the Costume of Sheikhs and Devishes (Btsed on Late Heart Miniature).- Sanat. 2008. №2. P 4-7.

³⁵ Suleimanov H. Artistically illustrated manuscripts of works by Alisher Navoi.-T.: Publishing house of the communist party of uzbekistan, 1981.. P-31.

³⁶ Shobaratov.P. Miniature.-T.: Tafakkur. 2011. P- 51.

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