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The Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies

The Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan
The Scientific Research Institute of Fine Arts

With participation of the Center «Muzavvi» and Association «Khunaramand»
Preface

The volume has completed the joint scientific project of the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent Fine Arts Institute on publication of the catalogues presenting the illuminated manuscripts of the 14th—20th cc. mostly from the collection of the Beruni Institute. Volume III includes also descriptions of a number of illuminated manuscripts of the late 19th c. from the Alisher Navoi Museum of Literature and the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan and the State Museum of Arts of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs of Uzbekistan, as well as the works of modern miniaturists from the collection of «Musavir» Centre and some other collections.

In the 19th—20th cc. the miniature painting had been on the decline in all regions of Middle East where in the previous period it blossomed. In many ways, it was caused by political, economic and social processes, which negatively affected development of culture and art. The decline of economy in the eastern countries and western colonization expedited sharp decrease of social and cultural significance of traditional arts, including the miniature painting. Wide spreading of the European painting traditions in the eastern countries became an important factor exerting influence on development of this art. The same processes took place in the miniature art of Central Asia, especially after Russian colonization.

The miniatures of that period expose some traces of inegale style, its reminiscence with methods of folk primitive art with its naive and schematic style. These miniatures are far from exquisite traditions of court miniature of the previous centuries; though in some extent continue traditions of laconic and strict by style of Bukhara school of the miniature painting of the 17th—18th cc. The miniatures of that period are important not only as art phenomenon — they reflect particular features of world vision of artists which lived in that period and interpreted events and subjects of historical and literary content. In a way, the illuminated manuscripts have historiographic value describing the attributes of the epoch (architectural structures, clothes, interior, furniture, handicraft products, etc.). Unfortunately, except a few cases, we cannot know names of miniaturists created the illustrations to these manuscripts, but analogical methods give evidence for the fact that in that period some original canonic tradition of the latest style existed.
Besides of these general conclusions, the miniature of the 19th – 20th cc. has not become yet a subject of all-round scientific study, therefore bringing the little-known illuminated manuscripts from the collections of Uzbekistan’s institutes, archives and museums into wide scientific use became an important event in research of this cultural phenomenon.

In this catalogue, it was logic to retrace development of the miniature painting in the 20th century since its revival and active role in modern art process presents a significant fact of the national culture.

This subject is surveyed in the article devoted to revival and development of the miniature painting traditions in Uzbekistan in the 20th c., which was prepared by Doctor of Arts Elmira Gyal and one of the enthusiasts and organizers of the programs on revival of the miniature traditions, Dr. Shohail Shoyaqubov. The article reveals the role of the oriental miniature in formation and development of the national school of painting art in Uzbekistan in the last century and its revival as independent art fact at the end of the 20th century. Reproductions of the painting works by Uzbekistan masters, which turned in their art to traditions of the oriental miniature as well as reproductions of the works by modern miniaturists using various materials – papier-mâché, leather, calabash, etc. illustrate this article.

In general, three volumes of the Catalogue will give information about 113 manuscripts containing over three thousand illustrations, which had been created for seven centuries in Central Asia and neighboring countries. Publication of this Catalogue can be considered as an important stage in the study of the history of oriental miniature painting and art decoration of the manuscripts.

Authors of the project with gratitude keep in memory the name of prof. Khamid Soleyman, prof. Sabohat Azimonova and prof. Muzaffar Khairulliev, who made great contribution in creation of collections and organization of studies of the medieval manuscripts and miniatures.

We hope that all three volumes of the catalogue «Oriental Miniatures» published by joint efforts of the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent Fine Arts Scientific Research Institute and Center «Masaviq» with the financial support of UNESCO will become a good example of scientific cooperation and will draw interest of the both experts and wide audience.

We do believe that the catalogue will prove to be an important source for further researches in the field of the oriental miniature.

INTRODUCTION

A. A. Madraitov

This Volume III presents the miniatures of the 19th – early 20th centuries (Oriental miniatures. Volume II. 19th-20th cc.), which assumed to be included in Volume II. In the main, the miniatures were created at the cultural centers of Central Asia and neighboring countries. Traditionally collective character of the creating of miniatures caused that most of them do not contain signatures of the artists. These miniatures bear traces of close cultural contacts of the peoples of Central Asia and India. The Indian elements and influence can be noticed in interpretation of both traditional personages, especially the female ones, and architectural structures, landscape, clothes and other attributes.

In this period, primarily favourite literary and poetic works, such as «Yusuf and Zulaikha» by Abdurahman Jamali and «Divan» by Hazif Shirazi, were illustrated. Numerous miniatures, mainly, in a style of Kashmir masters of the early 19th century illuminated manuscripts of that period. Temporale solution of a background having several views and accenting of heroes or key personages in magnificent clothes with numerous adornments are the features of this style. The pictures of architectural structures also expose traces or influence of the Indian school of miniature.

The manuscript «Divan» by Alisher Navoi (Inv. No. 2223/1) has very original illumination — each two folios form the integral composition giving a picture of solar circle. Inside there is a text and ornamental decoration.

Popular, probably, were the illuminated manuscripts of poetic anthologies — «Bayazes» (Inv. No. 6973; 5523; 3949; 7011), which included the works by several poets. The illustrations to such manuscripts are free of any subject and perform exclusively decorative function.

In this period, the miniaturists were greatly interested in unusual subjects, animals and legends. It can be clearly seen in the illustrations to the manuscript «Ajayib al-makhlupat» (Inv. No. 3477), which differs from the other illuminated manuscripts by a big number of miniatures (over 200) and great variety of pictures exposing people, animals, birds and wonders.
The miniatures included in Volume III are acquainting the readers with the transition period in development of the classic miniature painting. In the second half of the 19th century, the peoples of Central Asia had survived the political events, which negatively influenced the development of traditional art crafts. By the beginning of the 20th century, the production of decorated and illuminated manuscripts had given place to lithographic and then to printed book.

Dr. E. Ismailova and Dr. A. Madrainsov have done most part of descriptions for this catalogue. Dr. A. Madrainsov described the miniatures and illuminations to the manuscripts (Inv. No. 1973, 2223; 298 – Fund H. S.; Inv. No. 159 and Z10 – Museum of Literature) and separate miniatures. Dr. Sh. Musaev took part in selection of illustrations. Volumes I and II have presented rich bibliography and it was decided to exclude its duplication here.

The miniatures of the 19th – early 20th cc. represent a final period in development of the art of illuminated Oriental manuscripts, becoming a unique phenomenon in the world art. Under the pressure of new forms of European culture in Turkestan it had being survived its last days, but already in the second half of the 20th century the art of the Oriental miniature had got a new impulse and revived in the art of remarkable miniaturists of Uzbekistan.

All-round and deep study of the illuminated manuscripts from the collections of Uzbekistan presented in three volumes of this Cantaloupe is yet to come. We hope to publication of its polychromic variant, what will give the opportunity to estimate better a value of the miniatures as pieces of true art and unique phenomenon of the world culture. The fact that in 2000 the miniature painting was included in the UNESCO's register «Memory of the World» has proved significance of the miniatures in world cultural heritage.

The compilers would have an honour to express sincere gratitude to Director of the Museum of Literature, Prof. S. Hasanov, Director of the Museum of Arts N. Ibrahimova, Director of the Museum of History of the Temurids, Dr. N. Habibullaev and Director of the Academic Theatre named after Alisher Navo, B. Yaqubov as well as to the researchers from the scientific institutes and museums: M. Hasan, B. Qasimkhanov, M. Usmanov, J. Juriev, M. Salikhova, H. Alimova, B. Abdullaeva and H. Nazirov.