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- Kitapta Yer alan metinler, fotoğraf, resim, şekil ve çizimler, alıntı ile kaynakça sorumlulukları yazarlarına aittir.
Illustrations of historical chronicles and portraits of dedication to customers of manuscripts represent rich material for the study of the contemporary life of creators of miniatures.

It should be noted that, by choosing this theme, we would like to see the Tabriz miniature as a document illustrating the characters and images, many of the important events of the past, giving an idea of how the Tabriz masters lived, what they believed in and how they understood the world order, creating their works at this time.

The historical genre, which has strategic and ideological significance, in the 15th century, acquires particular importance. These historical chronicles of the 14th-15th centuries and their illustrations are on the threshold of the highest rise of the historical genre in the Tabriz Safavid art of the 16th century. Their rich material gives not only a big picture of historical events and the ruling elite, but also a wide panorama of society and covers almost all segments of the population.

Annals glorifying the great deeds of customers were by far the most popular genre in the literature of the East. Illustrated chronicles in which real events were interspersed with myths and legends, the historical genre took a special place in the creative experiments of artists of the Tabriz kitabkhana.

Keywords: The historical genre, chronicles, Tabriz kitabkhana, descriptions of the life and deeds.

INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness and originality of the Tabriz school of miniature painting sets it apart from other schools of oriental miniature. This is one of the two leading schools of the medieval East, along with Herat, but the existence of the latter is limited only to one century - the 15th century. The evolution and development of the Tabriz school in the 14th-16th centuries covers the whole classic period of the fine arts of a vast region, including Iran, Azerbaijan, Ottoman Turkey, Mogul India and Central Asia. Consequently, the Tabriz school of miniature painting is not only the longest in time, but also the most powerful in the degree of impact on other cultures.

Illustrations of historical chronicles and portraits of dedication to customers of manuscripts represent rich material for the study of the modern life of creators of miniatures. Besides, historical figures are imprinted in the images of characters of classical poetry such as Iskandar, Bahram Gur and other legendary heroes. Thus, we have two lines in art, which allow us to restore the realities of those times.

The large number of Tabriz illustrated manuscripts allows us to single out a set of historical subjects. Their high artistic qualities make it possible to trace the evolution of the historical genre in its entirety, which is the immediate task of this article, and the development of the style of Tabriz miniatures.

It should be noted that, by choosing this theme, we would like to see the Tabriz miniature as a document illustrating, be it in a system of special characters and images, many of the important events of the past, giving an idea of how the Tabriz masters lived, what they believed in and how they understood the world order, creating their works at the terrible time of the Middle Ages, the time of the establishment and destruction of the most powerful empires of the East.

Artists of the Tabriz school in the 14th century not only raised the miniature from illustrations to independent art but also created a language and the basics of composition and developed the colors of works of this genre. The origin and formation of the Tabriz miniature as a historical genre usually dating back to the 14th-16th centuries fell to the breakup of the colossal empire founded by the Mongols. An especially powerful state belonged to the Hulaguids – a family founded by the elder grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu.

One of the most talented representatives of the Hulaguid dynasty was Ilkhan Ghazan Khan (1271-1304), a brave military chief and prudent ruler. It was during his rule that in the then outskirts of the capital – Tabriz, the world's first scientific and cultural center, Shamb-i Ghazan, was built. The real inspirer behind the creation of a scientific center near Tabriz was the chief vizier and historian of Ilkhans, Fazlallah Rashid al-Din. It is with his efforts and care that masters were brought together in the kitabkhana (workshop for manuscript production) and conditions for their art was created.

The battle scenes of medieval Tabrizi book painting veer from depictions of the up-to-date military methods used by the Mongols to pictures of the heroic single combats described in the Shahnama. Firdowsi’s text recounts the sonorous challenge and counter-challenges which so unfailingly evoke the atmosphere of a medieval tourney.

When Ilkhanid painters tackled a battle scene they betrayed the traumatic impact which the Mongol invasions had had on the Islamic countries. The Muslims had been quite unprepared for the novel methods of siege warfare which the Mongols, fresh from Chinese tutelage, had employed. Battering rams, catapults, distractions of irrigation systems, and, perhaps worst of all, the sight of their own compatriots being herded into the front line by the Mongols - all contributed to the speedy fall of one city after another. The Rashid ad-Din codices illustrate many of these instruments of war. This technical expertise was backed up by a fearsome discipline which may be reflected in some of the massed cavalry charges depicted in 14th century painting. The Mongol army was arranged on the net decimal system and the chain of command was crystal clear. Cowardice was punished by death.

“Not surprisingly, memories of the reign of terror which the Mongol military machine had inflicted on Near East grew less keen as the, 14th century advanced. A strong sense of discipline pervades many battle scenes of Shiraz and Herat painting from the 1420’s onwards, but these pictures have lost the immediacy of the early 14th century Tabriz school. By the Safavid period it was common to depict a battle as a melee.
Major changes can also be detected in types of costume and armour in this period of some two hundred years. In early 14th century manuscripts the Mongol cavalry are shown wearing leather armour in overlapping folds; their horses were similarly accoutred. This same armour then appears on soldiers in battles which took place before the Mongol invasion; this miniature (Sabuktegin's sons), however, shows a war elephant, which was a standard feature of the Ghaznavid armies but was never used by the Mongols).

In Safavid battle scenes the figures unaccountably wear much less armor and despite the gory action a certain blitheness, perhaps the result of the tiny gesticulating figures and bright colours, pervades the field of War.” (1, p. 60-61.)

The most important stage in the history of Tabriz miniatures are illustrations of the historical work "Jami al-Tawarikh" ("Universal History"). Their significance is much greater than the strict frames of the history of miniatures. This monument concentrates a large range of issues, and as if in focus, reflects the entire variegated panorama of Tabriz political and cultural life in the 14th century.

The volume of Jami al-Tawarikh (Compendium of Histories") and its companion in the collection of the N.D. Khalili together comprise the major surviving monument of early Tabrizi painting. Both are incomplete portions of the Jami’ al-Tawarikh ("Compendium of Chronicles" or, more loosely, "World History") written by the Ilkhani vizier Rashid al-Din. The world-wide scope of the text is symptomatic of the Ilkhani outlook. Both codices were illustrated in Tabriz, which in the early decades of the 14th century was one of the great metropoles of Asia. Here thronged Chinese scholars and Italian merchants, Byzantines and Arabs, Uighurs and Indians. This cosmopolitan setting helps to explain the Byzantine, Far Eastern and other foreign elements in these paintings.

The painting “Fighting between the sons of Sebuktigin” (Tabriz, 706/1306-7, Edinburgh, University Library, Or. Ms. 20, f.119a) depicts the succession struggle between Mahmud and Isma'il, the sons of the Turkish general Sebuktigin who founded the Ghaznavid dynasty in the late 10th century. The use of Mongol armor, pennants, accoutrements, ponies and ethnic types is something of an anachronism in a battle which occurred c. 997 A.D. But the artist does show an accurate historical sense in depicting elephants, for while the Mongols do not seem to have used elephants, the Ghaznavids maintained them in elephant parks in Central and Western Asia. Mahmud must have learned much of the military uses of elephants in his seventeen campaigns in India. It seems likely, however, that the artist had no first-hand knowledge of that animal, as its reduced size, hirsute hide, corrugated trunk and blunted paws reveal. Even worse travesties of the elephant are known in Islamic art.

"In them, the movement often goes beyond the composition and is broken by the frame. Although these clouds are of secondary importance, their artistic effect is strong enough.

Serpentine dust clouds swirl around this terrifyingly alien beast and are a clear signal of Chinese influence. So too is the convention whereby the opposing cavalry squads are cut off by the margin, a technique which presumably derives from a manuscript in roll form. The device lends a fierce immediacy to the action. Sharp opposing diagonals of lances and banners conjure up the cut and thrust of battle" (2, pp. 61-62.).
The miniature on folio 165v of the "Jami al-Tawarikh" ("Universal History") (Istanbul, Topkapi, H.1653). depicts the battle of Badr of the Prophet Muhammad, in which the Muslim army attacks a Meccan caravan and defeats the Quraisites. The picture represents two army groups cut off by the frame at either end, indicating an open composition. The movement in the picture extends from one motif to the other. Greater space is given to the victorious army, represented with fewer figures. Since there is little space for the figures of the escaping army, they are squeezed between the frame and the last figure of the pursuing army.

"The cloudy background is a device to convey the dynamism of the battle. Although the clouds have a decorative character as they turn into spirals, the repetition of the curves of the clouds in the horses' legs creates a vital movement. A head, an arm, and a broken lance on the ground and the distorted body of the escaping horseman indicate the horror of the battle. The remarkable point of this representation is that the miniaturist seems to be familiar with the atmosphere of battle and wants to visualize it with pictorial devices he knows. The main characteristics of a battle are horror and dynamism, so the artist tries to bring them out by intensifying the movement and distorting his figures.

In these battle scenes as in the throne scenes the miniaturist follows a pattern for his composition. This pattern is an open composition with dynamic movement extending throughout the picture and going beyond the frame. The axis is usually shifted to one side giving the impression that the event continues beyond the picture" (3, pp.123-124).

The two battles scenes, "Battle of the Pandavas and Kauravas" and "Ravana, King of Lanka, lying dead", owe little, if anything, to Indian tradition, but resemble the Ghaznavid battles in the earlier section (4, pp.73-74).

Annals glorifying the great deeds of customers were by far the most popular genre in the literature of the East. Moreover, along with descriptions of the life and deeds of specific individuals as in the case of the Timurid "Zafarnama" ("Book of Victories") or "Timurnama" ("Book of Timur"), or in the 16th century with Ottoman "Selimname" ("Book of Selim"). "Suleymannname" ("Book of Suleyman"), with Mughal "Baburnama" ("Book of Babur") and "Akbarnama" ("Book of Akbar"), it gives origin to really large-scale works like "Jami al-Tawarikh" ("Universal History") created in Tabriz in the early 14th century. With these illustrated chronicles in which real events were interspersed with myths and legends, the historical genre took a special place in the creative experiments of artists of the Tabriz kitabkhana. The impact of the Rashidiyyah style is also apparent in new manuscripts of Rashid al-Din's history prepared for the Timurid court in Herat, such as the copy of the Tarikh-i Guzideh made there circa 1425.

The main strands of miniature painting, like in the 14th century, existed in Tabriz in 1500, the capital of South Azerbaijan, which now belonged to the Safavids and had become a metropolitan city and the center of the enormous Safavid Empire. These main strands include the rich and fantastic Turkoman court style in Tabriz and the academic style of Herat.

The Safavid state was created by the Azerbaijani feudal elite, primarily by the Azerbaijani tribal nobility – emirs in order to serve their class interests. Therefore, it is the Azerbaijani nobility that became the dominant force in the newly formed state the main function of which was to strengthen and expand the power
of Qizilbash emirs over their own tribesmen and the population of the regions they had conquered.

The battle theme in the Safavid period developed within the framework of the work of the Shah's library in Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan. For us, of particular interest is the richly illuminated manuscript: the biography of Shah Ismail “Alam-"arai Shah Ismail Safavi” of the early 17th century (London, British Library, Or 3248, f.53). The manuscript of the early 17th century contains one diptych and 19 miniatures authored by artist Muin Musavvir.

"Ismail entered Tabriz immediately after the Battle of Sharur, which took place in early 907 hijrah (mid-1501). Chroniclers indicate that Ismail spent the winter of 907 hijrah (late 1501 - early 1502) in Tabriz. On this basis, one could argue that the Qizilbashes took Tabriz in the fall of the same year 1501. Immediately after the Sharur victory, Ismail solemnly entered Tabriz and was crowned for the Shah's throne" (5, p. 205.).

After his defeat at Chaldiran in 1514, Shah Ismail resorted to other traditional manifestations of kingship to buttress the legitimacy of his rule, including the establishment in Tabriz of a royal library-workshop for the production of illustrated manuscripts. Although his turbulent early years did not allow for the kind of training in calligraphy or painting that some Timurid and Aq-Qoyunlu princes received, Ismail must have witnessed the patronage of other rulers, for whom the profusely illustrated Shahnameh and Khamseh manuscripts were prepared. Ismail, however, did take a keen interest in the proper education of his sons, and according to the chronicler Budaq-e Qazvini, when the young Tahmasib displayed a talent "for illustration, painting, and calligraphy, painters were brought from distant places, including master Behzad who came from Herat. Budaq also noted that the painter Soltan-Mohammad had already opened the royal library-atelier (kitabkhana) and Shah Tahmasib was already his pupil.

It should be noted that the Turkic Qizilbash ruling elite, which the young shah inherited from his father, was not going to let the power out of their hands, and so pretty soon after Tahmasib ascended the throne, his mentor Qazi Jahan was removed from the capital. Only ten years later, did the matured Shah gain strength and return Qazi Jahan to the court, making him a vizier. It is possible that the manuscript designed for this statesman was simply not completed due to his fall from grace, and the three incomplete miniatures were made after his return to the political arena.

Work on the manuscript could have started in Ismail's lifetime.

We can find the confirmation of the last assumption in the double miniature at the beginning of the manuscript. Its plot is usually defined as “An Audience with the Ruler”. “These miniatures often depict a real living ruler, but the middle-aged man sitting under the awning cannot be Tahmasib. With his features (highly raised and arched eyebrows, bushy beard and mustache, a turban with a plume and brush) he is more like a semi-historical semi-legendary hero Iskander, to whom Tabriz artists often likened Ismail I for various reasons. It is more likely that Shah Ismail is depicted on the throne, and the boy standing behind the throne is Prince Tahmasib. Before the throne, it is quite possible, we see Qazi Jahan to whom Ismail entrusts his son and to whom Tahmasib dedicated his work. The plot of this miniature is identified as the Court of Qazi Jahan, taking into account the scene on the left side of the diptych. It seems to us that the diptych really shows a trial, but
not that of Qazi Jahan but that of Shah Ismail, which took place in reality and reflected any real political events” (6, p.70).
The historical genre, which has strategic and ideological significance, in the 15th century, acquires particular importance. This initiative is immediately picked up by other schools of miniature and becomes one of the leading ones.

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