



BUKHARA VI. BUKHARAN SCHOOL OF MINIATURE PAINTING

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vi. The Bukharan School of Miniature Painting

As far as is known, illustrated manuscripts were produced in Bukhara only under the Shaibanid (905-1007/1500-98) and Janid (also known as Tughay-Timurid; 1007-1199/1599-1785) dynasties.

The Shaibanids. Partly as a result of frequent raids on Herat by 'Obayd-Allāh Khan (918-46/1512-39) Persian manuscripts, artists, and calligraphers were brought to Bukhara, and the influence of Herat painting remained paramount there until the second quarter of the 11th/17th century. Contemporary chroniclers like Wāṣefī, Ḥasan Neṭārī, and Mirzā Ḥaydar Dūḡlāt wrote glowingly of the flowering of the arts at Bukhara under 'Obayd-Allāh Khan (Ashrafi-Aini, pp. 262-64), but no illustrated manuscript dedicated to this monarch is known. Although early 10th/16th-century miniatures emulating the mid-15th-century Timurid court style of Herat have been documented from Samarkand and Tashkent (Ashrafi-Aini, pp. 250, 260-62), no such paintings seem to have been produced at Bukhara. Instead, two successive waves of later influence from Herat can be discerned. The first originated in



the Timurid style characteristic of the court of Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā (875-912/1470-1506). In one well-known manuscript of ‘Aṣṣār Tabrīzī’s *Mehr o Moštārī* of 929/1523 copied in Bukhara (The Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., ms. no. 32) the architecture, the landscapes, and even the costumes and headgear are indistinguishable from those in Herat painting in the latter part of Ḥosayn Bāyqarā’s reign (Ashrafi-Aini, pls. LXXI-LXXII, figs. 151-52). This archaistic style continued to exert a strong influence on Bukhara work until the mid-10th/16th century. Perhaps the most remarkable manuscript from the period is a copy of Sa’dī’s *Golestān* in the M. Bodmer Foundation, Geneva (Ashrafi-Aini, pls. LXXVI-LXXVII); according to the colophon it was copied by Solṭān-‘Alī in Herat in 906/1500 but illustrated for ‘Obayd-Allāh Khan’s successor, ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz-Solṭān (946-57/1539-50) in Bukhara in 954/1547. Both the composition and style of the paintings are derived from those in a *Golestān* made for Sultan Ḥosayn Bāyqarā in 891/1486 (now in the A. Soudavar collection; Robinson, 1963; Grube, pls. 36.1-3). Some illustrated manuscripts from these years were copied by calligraphers like Solṭān-‘Alī of Mašhad, who never lived in Bukhara; several others with paintings in the Bukhara style were copied by Mīr-Alī of Herat before his arrival in the city in 935/1528-29 (Qāzī Aḥmad, tr. Minorsky, p. 130; Robinson, 1963, p. 231). The illustrations of these texts were thus often added later, and the retardataire style of the painting makes them even more difficult to date correctly.

A second group of Bukharan manuscripts, copied in the 940s/1530s and 950s/1540s, can be firmly connected with the patronage of ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz-Solṭān, who was one of the great post-Timurid bibliophiles of Central Asia. Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch have convincingly argued (pp. 36-39) that the style of painting in these manuscripts was derived from the Safavid court style of about 931/1525, which was apparently transported to Bukhara by Šayḳzāda, who had been a pupil of Behzād. They propose that the Herat style of Behzād and his pupils went out of fashion at the Safavid court after the accession of Shah Ṭahmāsb (r. 930-84/1524-76), superseded by the “Tabrīz style” of the painter Solṭān-Moḥammad and his followers. Šayḳzāda then sought a new source of patronage among the Shaibanids. A flattening of architectural space and elaborate ornamental patterning characterize a mosque scene signed by him in a *Dīvān* of Ḥāfezā produced for Shah Ṭahmāsb’s brother Sām Mīrzā in ca. 933/1527 (Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; S. C. Welch, pl. 16). A second Safavid miniature attributable to him, “Shaikh ṣan‘ān before the balcony of a Christian woman,” which illustrates a poem by Mīr ‘Alī-Šīr Navā’ī in a manuscript copied at Herat in 933/1526-27, reveals a distinctive flat, broad



rendering of women's faces (S. C. Welch, pl. 11). Both traits appear in the illustrations in a manuscript of 'Abd-Allāh Hātefī's *Haft manzāar* of 944/1538 copied in Bukhara (Freer Gallery, ms. no. 56.14; Ashrafi-Aini, pl. LXXIII); a dedication in Šaykzāda's name appears next to one of the miniatures (Dickson and Welch, p. 40, fig. 41). The same stylistic features can be observed in later Bukharan work produced for 'Abd-al-'Azīz-Solṭān. Perhaps the finest manuscript made for this patron is a copy of three *matnawīs*, usually called *Rawzat al-moḥebbīn* after one of its sections, in the Sālār Jung Museum, Hyderabad (ms. no. A1611), illustrated in 956/1549. It contains paintings signed by 'Abd-Allāh Bokārī, Maḥmūd Moḍahheb, and Šaykam b. Mollā Yūsof Heravī, who belonged to a second generation of Bukhara painters (Ashraf, pp. 7-23; Randhawa). 'Abd-Allāh and Maḥmūd were mentioned by the contemporary Turkish chronicler 'Alī Effendi, the first as a student of Šaykzāda and the second as a pupil of the calligrapher Mīr-'Alī Heravī, "but [Maḥmūd] was a better illuminator than calligrapher" (Binyon et al., pp. 106-07). In addition to compositions derivative from Šaykzāda's work there are miniatures containing only one or two large figures, possibly an innovation by these younger painters. One of 'Abd-Allāh's miniatures (Ashrafi, p. 20, no. 10) is stylistically similar to a painting of two lovers in the Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C. (S.86.0301; Lowry, p. 190, no. 63), includes a dedication to 'Abd-Allāh and was probably executed at this time.

'Abd-al-'Azīz's successor, Yār-Moḥammad Khan (957-963/1550-56), continued to sponsor court production of fine illustrated books. Several volumes of the poetry of Navā'ī in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, are the chief works surviving from his reign (Suleiman, ed., pls. 12-20, 26-32). They contain series of paintings, probably executed by 'Abd-Allāh, of Bahrām V Gōr and the seven princesses, as well as work attributable to Maḥmūd Moḍahheb and other painters.

A copy of Ferdowsī's *Šāh-nāma* made in 972/1564 for the last Shaibanid ruler of Bukhara, 'Abd-Allāh Khan (964-1007/1557-99), contains the largest cycle of illustrations known in a royal Bukharan manuscript (Topkapé Sarayé Library, Hazine 1488; Inal), but a marked decline in quality is noticeable in many of these paintings. Often a stereotyped background, usually of low hills, divides the page horizontally, and the composition includes only one, two, or three large figures. Pigments are more thinly applied. Other manuscripts of the third quarter of the 10th/16th century contain only one or two illustrations. Jāmī's *Toḥfat al-aḥrār* was an especially popular text; in addition to a copy made in



‘Abd-Allāh Khan’s library in 971/1563-64 (A. Welch, pp. 63-71) five others are known (Robinson, 1958, pp. 134-35). Usually identical episodes are illustrated with similar compositions, suggesting routine production and an absence of originality. A number of Bukharan miniatures from this period bear attributions to or “signatures” of Maḥmūd Moḍahheb, but many are copies of the master’s work by less gifted members of his atelier (Schmitz, 1989, mss. II. 13-14).

It was also in this period that several artists trained in the royal *ketāb-kāna* (library) left the Shaibanid capital—possibly because of a decline in royal patronage—and went to India. The painter Šayḡam (in some modern transcriptions Šaḡm), whose work for Sultan ‘Abd-al-‘Azīz has been noted above, was employed at the Mughal court: Four miniatures signed by him appear in a copy of Sa’dī’s *Golestān* dated 947/1567 (British Library, London, ms. no. Or. 5302). The name of the Mughal ruler Akbar I (r. 963-1014/1556-1605) appears in a building inscription on one of the folios (fol. 30a, Titley, p. 147, no. 349, pl. 38), and it has sometimes been argued that the volume was presented to him by ‘Abd-Allāh Khan (Robinson, 1967, no. 165, pp. 108-09; idem, 1958, p. 127; A. Welch, p. 64). As all the costumes are Mughal and the cycle of illustrations was completed only after Akbar’s death, however, it probably was not a gift to him. A less accomplished anonymous Bukhara painter produced a copy of Hātefī’s *Ḳosrow o Šīrīn* for Ebrāhīm Qoṭbšāh of Golconda in 948/1568 (Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna); in its illustrations the Bukhara figure style is combined with Deccani landscapes (Khandalavala and Doshi, p. 44, pl. 6; Skelton, 1973, pp. 182-95).

The last quarter of the 10th/16th century was a period of transition in Bukhara painting. On one hand, the final disintegration of the mid-century style is apparent. Illustrations were added to manuscripts with little or no relationship to the accompanying text; for example, more than 300 miniatures with single figures appear in a copy of Ḥosayn Wā‘ezā Kāšefī’s *Aklāq-e moḥsenī* in the India Office Library (ms. no. 1097; Robinson, 1976, pp. 153-72, nos. 551-880). On the other hand, as a result of the Uzbeks’ conquest of Khorasan from the Safavids in 994/1586 Bukhara was host to a new wave of artistic influences from Mašhad and Herat (Schmitz, 1981, pp. 110-40). Furthermore, between this date and the Safavids’ reconquest of the province in 1007/1599 miniatures painted in Khorasan show youths wearing Uzbek turbans wrapped around distinctive cone-shaped *kolāhs* (lit. “hats”), and it can only be assumed that local artists were working for new Uzbek patrons (Robinson et al., p. 52,



no. 27; Robinson, 1976, p. 187, nos. 919-21).

The Janids. Clear evidence for the impact of the new Khorasan style in Bukhara can be found in a copy of Sa'dī's *Būstān* in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Arberry et al., pp. 66-67, no. 297). A dedication above a doorway in one of the miniatures (Pugachenkova and Galerkina, pl. 57) includes the name Ḥaẓrat-e Hedāyat b. Mīr Mo'īn-al-Dīn-e K̄vāja 'Abd-al-Raḥīm-e K̄vāja Sa'd, referring to the scion of a powerful Bukhara family of Jūybāri Naq̄šbandī shaikhs. The miniature was signed by Moḥammad-Šarīf in 1025/1616. His style blends landscapes and male figure types from late 10th/16th century Khorasan painting (Schmitz, 1981, pp. 110-40) with the rich architectural decoration and female types characteristic of earlier Bukharan art, the whole infused with a new, rude energy (see [Plate xxix](#)). Two other painters, Moḥammad-Darvīš and Morād, also signed paintings in the Dublin *Būstān*. The latter is to be identified with Moḥammad-Morād Samarqandī, whose name is inscribed in the paintings in the border around a picture of a seated princess now in the Sackler Collection (S86.0304; Lowry, pp. 198-99, no. 67). His blunt and sometimes grotesque drawing, enhanced by unusual color combinations, is typical of this school. Moḥammad-Morād frequently added illustrations to earlier dated manuscripts, which has led to confusion among scholars in the past. The work of Moḥammad-Darvīš, on the other hand, is distinguished by figures painted in a style derivative from that of an unknown master who worked with the Herat calligrapher Shah Qāsem (active ca. 998-1034/1590-1625; Schmitz, 1981, pp. 54-67); both had been employed by the eponymous ancestor of the Janids, who was killed in the defense of Herat in 1006/1598. Other miniatures that can be attributed to Moḥammad-Darvīš are found in a copy of *Majāles al-'oššāq* of 1015/1606 (Ismailova, pls. 32-34). A thesis by Moḥammad-Amīn b. Mīrzā Moḥammad-Zamān Boḳārī Sofyānī, entitled *Moḥīt al-tawārīk* and completed in 1109/1697-98, includes the names of calligraphers and artists active at the courts of 'Abd-al-'Azīz Khan (1057-91/1647-80) and Sobḥānqolī Khan (1093-1114/1682-1702; Akimushkin and Ivanov). Four court painters are recorded: Moqīm (or Moḥammad-Moqīm), who was active ca. 1034-69/1625-70; his contemporary Mollā Behzād (b. Manṣūr); 'Aważ-Moḥammad; and Gedā-ye Naqqāš. Three other painters, though not listed, are known from signed miniatures to have worked for royal patrons: Moḥammad-Amīn, Moḥammad-Salīm, and Gol-Moḥammad. The names of Pīr-e Ġolām Manowhar Hendī Kānazād, who worked with Behzād, and Farhād have been noted on works of art not associated with court patronage (Skelton, forthcoming). A copy of Nezāāmī's *Kamsa* completed in



Bukhara in 1081/1671 (Chester Beatty Library; Arberry et al., p. 48, no. 276, pls. 35-37) is the masterpiece of this later painting style. The most advanced of its four painters produced landscapes of Indian type containing figures in both Indian and Central Asian dress; the models may have been works produced in Kashmir by Moḥammad-Nāder Samarqandī (Skelton, forthcoming), a painter whose movements are unclear.

William Moorcroft, a representative of the British government who made a survey of Kashmiri arts and crafts in 1819-23, noted a large export trade in Kashmir manuscripts to Central Asia during the period of Dorrānī suzerainty (1165-1234/1752-1819), and the large number of Kashmiri books in Soviet collections attest to the accuracy of his report (Adamova and Greck). In the 13th/19th century some Kashmir artists migrated to Central Asian cities but continued to work in their native style. From the material now in hand, however, there is no evidence of the production of illustrated books in Bukhara itself after the end of the 11th/17th century.

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