



Medieval Azerbaijani Manuscripts as a Non-Archaical Art and Intellectual Occasion

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Humanity has passed million years from the Alphabet in pictures to the one in the voice. Alphabets lead to the creation of the books – on stones, leather, manuscripts, stone-printed, published ones. Abu Reyhan Biruni (973-1048) who was one of the thinking of the medieval centuries and author of more than 150 precious works was very grateful to alphabet and book: "Written knowledge is such a kind of the information that prevails over others. If there were not eternal monuments of a pen, we had have no place that we could learn the legend of the nations"

Book was always a sign of art and civilization. A book prepared with a high quality and delight can also be considered as a sample of an art, that is why Azerbaijani manuscripts are among the most interesting pages of the World Art History. Taking into consideration the fact that first Azerbaijani book was published with fonts in 1818 in Tabriz city, the whole books of the previous times during a thousand years were spreading only by manuscripts.

A book was accepted as a precious gift during the Middle Ages when Arabic was the language of science and Persian – language of poetry in the Islamic East. Except the books in the Palaces, the manuscripts at the treasure were protected carefully. Among the presents from one king to another, from one palace to another, were manuscripts of well-known scientists and poets. Not all works of our writers were preserved for our times. One of the reasons of this is that their works were just in several copies and they disappeared due to some conditions. An arrangement of a qualitative manuscript that required good cover, paper, type was not an easy and cheap job so not all of our writer could afford it to themselves. They themselves could copy only two or three copies. For a copy to be more than that needed additional financial costs and because of this the books that attracted the Palace were of good luck. They were not only arranged in many copies but also were spread to different cities and countries, and in these places the manuscripts of these books were copying without author's knowledge.

In Near and Middle East, as well as in Azerbaijan a manuscript was prepared by the joint work of several people. In the production of one manuscript different persons from different fields like khattat (calligrapher), mujalled (a person who prepared covers), nakkash (a person who made ornaments), zarkub (a person who worked with gold), and musavvir (an artist) worked altogether. In other words, the book art covered essentially four fields: calligraphy, miniature,

ornament and bindery. But of course, typing was priority – each book begins with writing. There is Prophet Muhammad's saying: "Al khatt nisf ul-ilm". ("Writing is half of science"). And this one is by Khalifa Ali: "The beauty of writing is one of the keys of existence".

A well-known Azerbaijani artist of XV century Dust Muhammad says: "It was Ali ibn Abu Talib who decorated the beauty of writing with ornament and goldy water". Such respect to the writing was apparently one of the motivators of the development of this field. Beautiful writing was in the nurture system in the Medieval times and it was necessary not only people having it as a profession but also for ordinary ones. One of the famous calligrapher's of XV-XVI centuries Sultan Ali Mashad's following words are like proofs to this: "Writing is for being read clearly. It is not for suffering while reading it. The beauty of writing rejoices our eyes the ugliness makes them sad".

The profession called "mirza" (clerk) that appeared in medievales was not only for the ignorant people to go and ask him to write a letter or other things. Sometimes the people having bad writing considered it disrespectful towards the person they were eager to send the letter and asked these clerks to write it more beautiful. But there were differences between clerks and those who were engaged with arranging manuscripts. Because calligraphy was not just copying anything, but was a profession.

Arabs after invading territories brought their alphabet with them and time passed, arábians left these places but their alphabet continued its reign in these places. The joint used languages – arabian and persian was very useful in these places and the only alphabet of these two languages made it easy for those whose profession was writing, it lead them in one direction.

During the beginning of Islam there were four typing forms in Arabians: "khatt-i Makki" (Makka style of writing), "khatt-i Madina" (Madina style of writing), "khatt-i Basri" (Basra style of writing), "khatt-i Kufi" (Kufi style of writing). As Islam developed two types of writing – kufi and naskhi developed among Arabs and the places they were in force spreading, the second was most-used one.

The founder of Naskh style writing was Ibn Mugla. But the development of calligraphy led to different 6 writings from Naskh: naskh, suls, muhaggag, reyhani, tougi and rega. They are called sitta (six) altogether.

Members of other nations who were creating in Arabic language were making the language richer as well as the calligraphers of the nations that used Arabic alphabet and created new writings.

In XIV century in Iran new type of writing – “taliq” was formed in the result of the joint use of tougi and rega. Azerbaijani calligrapher Mir Ali Tabrizi during the end of the mentioned century created most popular type of writing among the Persian calligraphers – nastalig – that was the foundation of “naskh” and “taliq”.

The foundation of wide-spread and fast-action writing type – “shikasta” is also connected to Azerbaijani calligraphers. It was created by Murteza Gulu Khan Shamlu in XVII century.

From nastalig and shikasta developed different types like siyagat, ijazat, divani, girma, etc with their advantages. But in everyday life shikasta-nastalig was the most used type. Though shikasta was the fastest type of writing, it was very difficult in reading. Shikasta-nastalig was joining the speed of shikasta and the readability of nastalig.

The development of bookish art led to the creation of new decorative type forms: larza (vibrating), tavusi, muine (thin like a bristle), bahar, gulzar, hilali (like a partial moon), sunbuli, zulf-arus (curl of a bride), mudavar (round hand), aftabi (solar) and so on.

The progress of typing and book art spread the profession of a clerk first of all. The holders of this profession the literal meaning of which was “writing” were dealing with copying. There were a lot of ordinary clerks among the ones with beautiful hand typing, education and ability who were much above the ordinary ones. They were also engaged in the copying of manuscripts and books. But the clerks who were lack of not only ability but also education and responsibility were the reason of the uncovered mistakes for future. In order to increase the number of the pages such clerks mixed the poems of other poets to the one that they were copying, sometimes were changing some words, hemistich, couplet, parts in a short time. Those with a slight ability of composing a poem could even edit any poem according to their own taste. That is why one can hardly find two copies of the same manuscript in the libraries of different world countries that were alike in everything. There are always differences or distortions in copies. Regarding this there is a field of science called – textual institution that is dealing with the analyse and comparison of the copies of the Eastern Classic works and hundreds of scientist are facing many issues in their activity.

There is only one book among many that was written in Arabic alphabet, has different copies with no differences – Quran. The main reason of this was fear from God in the hearts and brains of the clerks. The people who were the founders of Islam frightened the clerks with the Hell sufferings in case any mistakes. And this warning has its force on the clerks. It is very important to state the role of religion in the development of calligraphy as an art. This role was not in its direct meaning. Even though it sounds weird some prohibitions of Islam helped some fields of art to develop. Having a rival like paganism, a young religion Islam could not finish its mission only by destroying the idols. New idols were to form and anyone would shelter in his own home and pray to his own God. In order to prevent

any danger monotheist Islam prohibited to make monuments and painting body. This insurmountable hurdle that was formed before Painting forced the painters to find new ways of creative thinking. These searches helped ornamentalism, calligraphy to develop. As painting was affordable by Christianity the churches were decorated with the wonderful paintings of medieval times whereas the Muslim mosques were rich with the design and texts. Architects, mosaics and calligraphers were creating such beautiful art pieces resembling to a painting, design rather than a text. Painting a human was forbidden. Writing “Allah” was a good deed. Those who found a way out of the religion wrote “Allah” in a way that it resembled human’s face. No one could say that the painter had a sin; on the contrary he gained good deed by writing “Allah” for several times. This piece of art is being protected in Topkapi palace-museum in Turkey.

The respect and love to the alphabet, typing and writing led to the foundation of Hurufism whose theory originated from saint meanings of the letters in the Arabic alphabet. The main proof of the calligraphy as a prominent profession was that the people like poets, artists, musicians and so on dealing with this field were protected by the palace.

The last main member of the calligraphers during Medievals in Azerbaijan Gulamhuseyn Darabadi mentioned his job not making beautiful letters, but much more in his book published in 1951 and this book is considered as a first calligraphy book in Azerbaijan: “As Azerbaijani and Russian letters were formed in correct line due to the size and form, it is very easy to connect them right and beautifully within a line. As Arabic letters have different shapes, it is very difficult to collect them in one line. ...Depending on the order of the writer the letters and words should be written in proper places in lines. To be true the writer should follow the rules of painting-composing”.

A well-known Azerbaijani specialist on calligraphy and a researcher of our Medieval Book Art Adil Gazizada in his book called “Figurative instruction of Azerbaijani manuscripts in XII-XVII centuries” proofs that Azerbaijani calligraphy and decorative typing habit began from “ustadan-i sitta” (Mubarakshah Zarrinkalam Tabrizi - our outstanding master who entered the great union of six masters and who lived in XIII and I part of XIV century). Zarrinkalam brought up many calligraphers who served a lot for Azerbaijani and Eastern art of calligraphy, the one of which is Badraddin Mahammad Bandgir Tabrizi who lived during the 2nd part of XIV century. When Tamerlane found out his talent, invited him to his palace and asked him to copy his state orders that were more than 100. Bandgir was also a poet and his poems had still survived till our times.

Generally, more typing master of medievals had a lot of abilities along with their occupation. If Bandgir was a calligrapher-poet, Mir Ali ibn Ilyas Tabrizi (1330-1405) was calligrapher, poet, “Hafiz” (who new “Quran” by heart) and an educated person. Till his last days Mir Ali never left his pen aside and there are a lot of books with his writing. But his most prominent legacy was his invention – “nastalig” style of writing. “Naskh” and “taliq” types of writing were known and Mir Ali made one unknown from two knowns. For typing in this style he also suggested new method of sharpening of a pencil. It was not a joint method but brand new one. His

contemporaries evaluated this invention as a divine miracle and depicted it as Imam Ali himself gave this to him as a gift in his dream. Being such a talented master, he always signed his writings as "Humble Mir Ali". His student Mir Abdulla Tabrizi who lived in XVI century and was known for his pennames "Shakkarinkalam" or "Mahzun" also composing poems and was called "mehinustad" (the greatest master) for his abilities in calligraphy. He was the founder of "herati" type of writing. Miniaturist and calligrapher Jafar Tabrizi was famous with his "Shahnavaz" penname. He was living in Shah Abbas's palace, was a prominent poet, artist, designer, etc.

While investigating the calligraphers of medieval centuries it was clear that all of them had students or followers along with their activities. They were very strict towards their students and themselves as was stated in Mir Ali Heravi's book that was living in XVI century: "I have dedicated 40 years of my life to calligraphy. It was not so easy to get into details of this profession. If one quits training his writing habits, then it would fade away as a color".

Another important detail was calligraphers place, status and social position in Eastern and Western life. Calligraphy was very respectful profession in the East; the owners of this profession were in the center of Muslim culture even in the rurals.

Which levels have the medieval manuscripts passed till the finish?

In order to begin to write there should have been paper. In Middle East paper was first done in Samarkand. Then the number of paper producing countries and cities increased, but paper was also imported from China, India, Syria and so on. Calligraphers were widely using the paper kinds imported from China, Samarkand, India, etc. Other types of paper were also spread widely.

A practised calligrapher was always choosing the paper due to the character of his writing. No any writing could be written on any paper. For a master, purchased paper was a raw material and he had an operation for making it normal for use. Sometimes they even were to change the color, shade of the paper or increase its brightness. There were 4 types of cane pens: vasiti (Vasit was a city between Kufa and Basra where these canes were growing), amuyi (cane type growing near Amu Darya river), misri and mazandarani (these were cane types growing in Egypt and Mazandaran city of Iran).

Little special knives or board made of bones were used for sharpening the pens. Each pen should be sharpened due to the type of writing. One of the important means was ink. There were a lot of receipts of making an ink, some calligraphers were not even revealing their methods of making the ink. The making of ink of different colors and liquid gold was a science but their use and storage were totally another practice. For the ink not to destroy the paper or not to dry it, some drops of buffalo bile were put into it. There were a lot of instructions on the production of ink, pen and paper during the Middle Ages.

A clerk should have a lot of knowledge along with the tools for writing like paper, pen, ink holder and such a clerk was like a scientist.

But in which time had a clerk with such professionalism finished copying of one manuscript?

There were clerks who were only for conducting fast copying. There was one prominent calligrapher called Sultan Muhammad ibn Nurulla (death year 1533/34) was able to copy up to 600 couplets in a day. But in total, copy of a manuscript was not so easy and fast. It demanded patience, attention, time like painting of any portrait. Regarding this if a calligrapher respecting his profession more than everything, in case of fast copy noted it in the edge of the paper and it was like his apologize for the speedy typing and any mistake.

A writer Muhammad Yusif al-Munshi is writing in his book "Tarikh-i Mukim Khan" that one day Abdulaziz Haphis, the Khan of Bukhara city asked his calligrapher in the palace – Haji Yadigar who began copying his Divan: "Haji, how many of such text can you write in a day?" his clerk answered: "If I do my best, I can 10 couplets". The Khan: "I heard that in Far East they make 1 porcelain plate in 40 years, but in Baghdad – 100 pieces in a day. I hope you can understand the difference in their costs. Your art is also so. You are our calligrapher and we asked you to copy this book. If you copy 10 couplets a day, there hardly could be any weakness. If you are patient enough, write maximum one or two couplets a day". And Haji Yadigar finished this copy in 7 years.

The historian of medievals Dowlatshah Samarkandi informs us that famous calligrapher Jafar Baygushi was able to copy 1000 couplets – 2000 lines a day. In sources it is mentioned that there were calligraphers who could copy more than that.

In any case there is no doubt that a beautiful and qualitative manuscript could not be copied in a short time. That is why we should not forget the efforts and labor of the calligraphers who spent long time for the copies that we read in several days, hours or minutes. Calligraphy became such a respectful profession that there appeared special behavior, condition, ethics in this field.

One of the famous encyclopaedists of Azerbaijan in XIV century Muhammad ibn Hindushah Nakhchivani mentioned that it was not good to take something to a calligrapher when he is sick, hungry, with fever, etc. He noted: "The place for copying manuscripts should not be hot or cold, dark or narrow. It should be separated from other places. Calligrapher should not seat in draught, should not be engaged in his profession next to the old people, it was disrespect towards them. He should not seat in such a place that he could give a place for the elders and older people during their visit. In this case his attention may be destroyed by the thought that some one could enter".

As the calligrapher finished his work with copying, new work for decorator, designer and painter who decorated the book according to its theme of the book began. On the papers that were left blank by the calligraphers, the painters began their work. They were preparing bases for the miniatures on the papers. Sketches related to the theme of the book were decorating the blank pages of the manuscript. There were also such books that were decorating not only by one but by many painters. Firdovsi wrote his "Shahnama" during 1330-1340 and the copy that is preserved in Paris has the joint decorating work of several painters living in Tabriz.

Book decorating was living his real fame in Azerbaijan during XVI century. In the 1st half of this century in Tabriz painters like Sultan Muhammad, Heydar Ali Turbati, Mir Musavvir, Mirza Ali Tabrizi, Mir Seyid Ali, their students Mir Zeynalabdin Tabrizi, Sadig bekh Afshar, Master Valijan, Kamal Tabrizi and others got high importance during a short time. The art of manuscript painting was a shelter for the painters during medievals. As Islam was supporting manuscripts, painters developed themselves in this field. The miniatures painted in the manuscripts were not only pieces of art but also piece of history as they were created hand in hand with the real events occurring around.

After the painters the manuscript was going into the hands of "lavvahir" (designer). He was putting ornaments on the pages of the book beginning from the first. Sometimes they had a person for support called "cadvəlkeş" who were drawing colorful lines on the edges of the pages.

The covers of the manuscript were also of great importance. The person who made cartoon covers was called "sahhaf", the one who was preparing leather covers – "mucallid".

What was the expense of one manuscript?

The more calligrapher and miniature master were efficient, the more expensive were the manuscripts. The manuscripts in the medievals were very expensive and any family with a low budget or poor people could not afford them. Only rich people were able to buy them. When estimating the cost of one manuscript each cost – cost for paper, cover, miniature, ornament, typig, ink, gold, etc were calculating altogether. If the calligrapher, painter and other masters were famous then the cost of the manuscript was also high due to the reputation of the masters.

Swiss diplomat and scientist F.Martin who published the investigation "Miniature and painters of VIII-XVIII centuries in Iran, India and Turkey" in 1912 mention that Great Moghol khan Jahangir (1605-1627) paid 3000 rupi for one manuscript, it was equal to 10000 pounds and was evaluated as 20000 pounds in Paris. By this he stated that manuscript and calligraphy was much more expensive in East than in Europe.

What is the number of Azerbaijani manuscripts?

No one knows the answer to this question as some part of our legacy is destroyed. No one was able to make a list of the manuscripts that were preserved in private libraries, palaces, private collections, museums or preservations.

During the first decade of XX century when oil boomed in Azerbaijan a lot of manuscripts were exported abroad along with carpets, jewellery and other pieces of art. For example, Azerbaijani poet Zulfugar Shirvani's three or four poems were preserved in Azerbaijan whereas in London there is a manuscript of his Divan that was copied in 1345 and which was kept in secret until 1934 when an English investigator Edward Edwards published the faxed copy of it. Or Nizami's school-mate, Azerbaijani writer of XII century Abu Bakr Khosrov ibn al-Ustad's book "Munisnama". There was not any information about his works in Azerbaijan. Only in the 70s years of XX century investigator G.Meredith found out it during his visit

to British museum among the poems called "Alif leyli" (Stories of 1000 nights) that were selling by an Armenian who emigrated from Baku. And huge amount of such manuscripts wait for us to found them out.

But during 20-30s years of XX centuries a lot of rare Azerbaijani manuscripts in Arabic were destroyed totally by Russian chauvinism. In 1950 year State Found of Manuscripts was formed under the Azerbaijan State Academy of Sciences, then this center grewed into an Institution. During first two decades of its existence a hard labour was wasted on the collecting manuscripts to this center. Each of them have priceless information about Azerbaijani and Eastern history and many of our scientists used them as a source for dozens of new books. All of them are unique pieces of art. Nizami's, Khagani's, Tusi's, Nasimi's, Khatai's, Fuzuli's books besides of being poetical legacy, they were also a monument of art with its calligraphy, ornaments, design, decorations, miniatures and so on.

In our legacy of manuscripts the oldest one is 1100 years old – it is a verse of "Quran" written with kufi typing on leather.

Is it possible to calculate the price to these manuscripts?

The manuscripts that were written with the pen of more than 500 Arabic, Persian, Turkish calligraphers in Azerbaijan and neighbour Eastern countries are unique. Because even one clerk could not copy the same book twice as it was, his imagination always played a role on it. And those miniatures in these manuscripts were the mirrors of Medieval Azerbaijani's painting. It is known that manuscripts were made both in small and in big sizes. A master calligrapher Omar Agta (was also called One Arm) could be able to copy Quran in a size of smallest jewelry that could be placed on the ring for Amir Teymur. Teymur neither accepts this gift nor adored the ability of the master. And Agta takes his pen again and a copy Quran's each sentence in the longest of 1 meter. In this case his labour was awarded. There are manuscripts of all sizes, but following the tradition in medievals the normal size for manuscripts were approximately 12x20 or 20x30.

In XIII-XIX centuries though new types of book printing were inventing, manuscripts and calligraphy did not loose their means. While speaking of Azerbaijani calligraphers we should mention that they played an important role not only in our life but also in the culture of different Eastern countries. In the medievals our masters were not working in Tabriz, Maragha, Shamakhi but also in different cities like Mir Ali Tabrizi in Baghdad, Jafar Tabrizi in Herat, Shah Gulu Naggash, Alijan Tabrizi, Huseyn bekh Tabrizi, Shah Gasim in Turkey, Mir Seyid Ali in India. They were living in these cities, having their own student and in this way their own school. Taking these all into consideration we can easily say that Azerbaijan was one of the centers of book art in the Middle Ages.

Though Early Islam was against painting, Allah was considered as a biggest Painter. In the 24th verse of Quran's Hashr chapter it is mentioned as: "He, who created (everything), made a living being from nothing and gave a face (to everything) - is Allah. The most beautiful name - "Asma yi-husna" – belongs to Him". Beginning

from XIII-XIV centuries miniatures developed and XVI-XVII centuries were the pick of its development. But why in these miniatures the face of a human would resemble a mask, puppet, etc? Was it real that they could not just paint a face? Is it real that they were not master enough in this field? In Firdovsi's "Shahnama" it is mentioned that a boy falls in love with a girl after seeing her face. But they use the word "face" with an indirect word for such description. These kind of indirect words were in Nizami's and Navai's books as well.

What was it?

The word used instead of "face" was an indirect expression with a meaning of face. In Nizami's, Navai's and Firdovsi's poems it meant "Beauty's portrait". Though it was forbidden there were painting portraits. During X century when Miniature was not so popular such rumors about the portrait of a Beauty were spreading around. Sultan Mahmud Gaznavi asked to paint 40 pieces of Abu Ali ibn Sina's portraits and ordered to send them to each district of his country with a message to send the man on the portrait directly to him. If the face in these paintings were not like Abu Ali then the following paintings would also have the same face and the searches would result with nothing. Despite of prohibitions such miniatures helped most people to find out the justice.

In miniatures the clothes were very colorful but the humans were senseless, pale, faded. This was a trick of painters – they stated that they cannot depict a person like Allah did. In his book "Kanun us-suvar" ("Rules of Description") Sadig bekh Afshar (1533-1610) cleared that his painting all faces like the same was more professional than others.

So, though our painters were able to paint a human, due to their religion they were avoiding it. And the people around were aware of this. But why miniatures were famous only in manuscripts and did not develop as a separate and independent type of art? A poem commentator – an-Nava answered this question as: "If the painting was on the things that were used and on the things that did not attract attention, then it was not forbidden". Pay attention: if the painting is a thing in everyday use or not an object of admiration, it was allowed. From this point of view the paintings were the objects of use, not admiration – it has no opportunity to become an idol. Though the religion was against painting but in Quran there was not a strict word "FORBIDDEN!"

But what to do?!

Other fields were developing while painting was silent and obeyed the rules of religion and lived in the pages of manuscripts of XIII century. Maybe there were something before that but the miniatures which our science owes now belong to XIII century's "Vargah vā Gulshah" (Varga and Gulsha) book. Then miniatures were painting for a great poet Fazlullah Rashidaddin's "Jami at-tavariikh" (1308, 1314, 1318) book. Due to the removal of foreign invaders our culture got developed during XIII century. It is a reality that miniature was on trend as of XIII century. The main proof of that was that not only poems or books were decorated with miniatures but also the manuscripts of some sciences like astronomy - "Suvar ul-kitab" ("Descriptions of Stars"). This book was written by Abdulhasan Aburahman ibn Omar Bazi who died in

987. The book has several copies and the most prominent one was taken to Samarkand in 1401 by Tamerlane. This manuscript was decorated with pictures and belonged to Nasraddin Tusi (1201-1274). The owner of Maragha observatory Nasraddin Tusi draw 84 miniatures to this book and this ability showed his knowledge not only in painting but also in astronomy, algebra and other sciences. The main difference of Tusi's miniatures was that they were scientific miniatures. This experience was used by Tusi in his poetry too. By the way, Tusi's own miniature-portrait was preserved till our times. The original is in Iran at Tehran National Library. On the top of the painting the followings are written "Al-movla al-muazzam al-imam al-azam Nasir ul-millat vad-din Muhammad bin Muhammad bin al-Hasan at-Tusi ata-l-allahu bigah" (Great leader, protector of nation and religion, may him live long – Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Hasan Tusi) with kufi typing. Of course this portrait was painting according to the medieval rules and it is not Tusi's real reflection but a sign to him. Due to the medieval rules the person in the painting should not look directly to the viewer, it should look aside in order to avoid any chances of idol worship.

In Heathenism, Buddhism and Christianity the saints are looking directly into the eyes of the viewer like wants to hypnotize or to get inside of him. Exactly because of the mentioned reason the painting of a human face in concrete lines were forbidden by the Islam religion. One of the proofs of a miniature to be a sign or symbol, not a picture, was the description of Prophet Muhammad in miniatures either. The main difference was that his face was closed with a niqab – cloth. It was not to hide his face, but to emphasise this person's being Prophet.

Main differences of talented people were that they were not obedient, hard to control and had their inner freedom. If they had not these qualities then they would not be able to come over the limits of early Islam. There is a portrait kept in Istanbul at Topkapi palace-museum painted in medievals that was looking directly to the eyes of its audience. How was this picture painted? How was that the painter was not murdered? It is a good deed to write Allah's name for many times, but to paint a human like that was prohibited. It was an invention of a genius person who wrote Allah's name for so many times that it resembles human's face when looking aside.

If to separate the development periods of Azerbaijani miniature and book painting, we should state that XII-XIV centuries were first period with the art pieces created in Maragha and Rashidiyya, XV-XVI centuries were second period with the cultural legacy in Tabriz.

24 out of 94 miniatures that were painting for Ibn Bahshuti's "Manafi al-hayavan" book came to our times. The author of these old pieces is unknown. The miniatures "Two Lions", "Adam and Eve", "Tiger", "Elephants" were also included to this book and were a sample source for many great people. The reflection of a China miniature school was very evident in these miniatures. Rashidaddin's "Jami at-tavariikh" was far after the miniatures drawn to Fazlullah "Manafi al-hayavan", but they were also colorful though their methods were quite different. Fazlullah Rashidadin is one of the prominent people of our history. He was Abaga khan's doctor, but with his knowledge became Qazan khan's vizier in 1298. On one hand he used his science for his work; on the other hand it helped the growth of

science, education and culture. On one hand he was organizing ways for the people to get educated, in the other hand did not quit writing during his short times.

According to Rashidaddin's order more than 400 scientists were invited to Bashadiyya city, were settled in the street of Scientists, were asked to write different book about different fields. They had a task to bring up 10 local specialists on their own field. Up to 50 doctors who came from India, China, Egypt, Sham (Syria), Bum (Byzantine) were educating up to 1000 students from Muslim countries. Rashidaddin mentions this in his "Vakfnama" book as well. In 1300 year Rashidaddin began writing "Jami at-tavarikh" on the request of Qazan khan and finished it after 16 years. For making his book prominent Rashidaddin used dozens of historical sources from India, China, Iran, Mongolia, etc. So Rashidaddin collected a big group of calligraphers for decorating his "Jami at-tavarikh" book. It is clear that the book was prepared in several copies and for this many painters were needed. Many painters meant many addresses and many methods and styles. In this way new school of Azerbaijani miniature was growing up. In 1318 Bashidaddin was accused for the attempt of poisoning Qazan khan's brother Oljayto. In 1330 Bashadiyya city and Rashidaddin's library were destroyed. In that library three copies of "Jami at-tavarikh" were perished. One copy of the book prepared in 1307/8 is being kept in the library of Edinburgh University; the other (prepared 1314) is in London at Asia Royal Union. The third one (prepared in 1314) is in Topkapi museum in Istanbul.

Besides "Jami at-tavarikh" in XIII-XIV centuries Demott "Shahnama" or "Great Tabriz "Şahnamə" was very popular for its miniatures. Firdovsi's "Shahnama" though being written in Persian was not only the legacy of Persian culture but also the culture and libraries of different countries. Its miniatures were very famous during XIX-XX centuries as well. According to famous calligrapher Dust Muhammad the miniatures of "Shahnama"s this copy was painted by Ahmad Musa and Master Shamsaddin Tabrizi who lived in Elkhanli khan Abu Said's (1317-1335) palace. But in its preparation Bashidaddin's role is also very important. His son Giyasaddin was Abu Said's vizier and the order of these miniatures were done during his reign. Investigators show the years of 1330-60 as a time of the creation of these miniatures. "Shahnama"s this copy is known with the surname Demott. A collector and merchant Demott bought it in one of Parisian hotels. After it he wanted to sell it to New-York Metropolitan Museum for much money. But the Museum refused stating that the price was too high. In this case Demott separated the miniatures from "Shahnama" and sold one by one. These miniatures travelled beginning from New-York Metropolitan Museum, Dublin Chester Beatty library, Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Cambridge Fogg Museum, London's British museum to Louvre, museums in Detroit, Cliveland, Kansas cities, to several private collections. So, in order to see "Shahnama" as a whole we need to travel USA and Europe for months. And there were investigators who wanted to go for it. Once upon a time New-York Metropolitan museum refused Demott to buy "Shahnama" for being expensive, but know the only miniature in this museum costs more than the manuscript was once. This "Shahnama"s investigator E. Schreder notes: "XIV century was a revolution in Near East culture and Demott's "Shahnama" is its heart". According to investigators

Demott's "Shahnama" was 280 pages before being sold separately and had 120 miniatures. At present places of 58 miniatures are known. Maybe the rest ones are in private collections or were lost.

Demott sold "Shahnama"s miniatures separately and it has a symbolism here. The main point is that these miniatures were so absolutely completed in contrast of other miniatures of XIV century, that one could hardly say that it was a part of a whole. The number of personages, difficulty of the plot, plastics of the description, description technology and masterly conduction of the painting in each of these miniatures made them independent pieces of art. In these miniatures the rules were strongly defended, stereotypes were fought and new ways came out. During the medievales especially in XIV-XVI centuries there were not borders between Arab-persian and Azerbaijani-turkish masters of miniature and they were all accepted as one. Famous art investigator B.Veymarsa differentiated artists living in Tabriz from the other painters living in different places of Iran: "Due to the complexity of its plot in miniatures "Great Tabriz "Shahnama" was higher than the miniatures of the painters living in Shiraz".

During XIII-XIV centuries Azerbaijani miniature was not developed yet and its following success would be in future. In XVI-XVII centuries Azerbaijani miniature was very prominent not as a separate famous masters but as a school. XV century was a period for getting enough power. In XV centuries Azerbaijan was reigned 1st by Qaraqoyunlular (1410-1468), then by Aghqoyunlular (1468-1502) without any invasions from abroad – good condition for a growth. Tabriz was a center of Europe and Asia. But Tabriz was not the only city that was prospering during this period, Baki, Shamakhi, Ardabil, Nakhchivan, Ganja were also growing day by day. Near and Middle Eats had Herat, Bukhara cities as well. Herat was the center of culture – many masters were living and creating in this city. German scientist F.Schultz during his investigation of miniatures in Tabriz, Bukhara, Samarkand, Herat, considered Tabriz above all the rest. He called Tabriz "mother school". He was right as his thought was supported documentally. The head of Baysungur's palace library was Movlana Jafar Tabrizi. All the manuscripts here were prepared under his instructions and there were a lot of his students. Dust Muhammad wrote in his "Halat-i hunarvaran" (1541) book that Baysungur Mirza and his follower Alauddovla Mirza were sending people to Tabriz often to invite masters to their city. According to Herat historian Khandamir (died in 1537) famous artist Kamaladdin Behzad (1450-1535/6) got his talent from Azerbaijani artist Pir Seyid Ahmad Tabrizi. Tabriz was always the center of culture but in XVI century it got more developed.

In 1501 Shah Ismail founded country named Safavis. Tabriz became a capital. A palace library was formed and Tabriz became more than just a capital with dozens of scientists, poets, etc. Safavis diplomat who lived his life in Spain Oruj bekh Bayat – Don Juan Persidski (1560-1605) called Tabriz the "Capital of East" and did not exaggerate. Tabriz gave his gift to the world in the face of priceless artist Sultan Muhammad. His taste, methods, style was a new school of miniature. If not Safavi sultans and their passion towards art and culture, then these fields could hardly grow ever. The conditions that they created attracted all the local masters. Firdovsi's "Shahnama" (1524), Arif's "Kuy o chougan" (1524-1525),

Nizami's "Khamasa" (1525, 1542, 1539-1543), Hafiz's "Divan" (1535), Abdarrahman Jami's "Silsilat ul-zahab" (1549), "Lavayeh" (1570-1571) were fruits of Sultan Muhammad and his surroundings's labour and mirror of XVI century's Tabriz school of miniature. In the copy of Nizami's "Khamasa" prepared in 1539-1543 years Sultan Muhammad's, Mir Musavvir's, Agha Mirak'a, Mirza Alinin, Müzaffaraddin Ali'a, Mir Seyid Ali's miniatures were collected. Though they were following mutual and joint rules but their own styles were slightly felt. Such group was of good importance in the point that it helped the artist to invent new things at the result of rivalry. Tabriz miniature school was known as "Safavi school" or "Tahmasib school" and mostly "Sultan Muhammad school" that was known as a group of different master artists as well. We had a lot of prominent artists like Sultan Muhamma, Mir Musavvir, Sultan Muhammad's son Mirza Ali, Dust Muhammad, Muzaffaraddin Ali, Sadig bekh Afshar whose miniatures were decorating the poems of great poets like Nizami, Khagani, Falaki, Mahsati, etc.

Shahgulu Tabrizi was one of them as well. He was Agha Mirak's student. As he could not get famous in Tabriz, he went to Istanbul and was in Sultan Suleyman Ganuni's (1520-1566) palace in Turkey, he had his own workshop. Sultan visited him personally in this place.

Valijan Tabrizi came also to Turkey in 80s years of XVI century and became very famous here.

Mir Musavvir's son Mir Seyid Ali in 1549 was invited to Kabil by Moghol khan Humayun, then was taken to Delhi and was a head of a group of artists. And a lot of Tabriz artists got fame outside Tabriz. It should be noted that the reason of this was the number of famous masters. It was terribly difficult for a master to get famous in the city where there were geniuses like Behzad, Sultan Muhammad. Sultan Muhammad was Shah Tahmasib's teacher on painting and when Tehmasib get the crown replaced Behzad with his own master in the palace library. According to scientists Sultan Muhammad's activity was in its high level exactly during this period - 1530-40 years. Sultan Muhammad was painting miniatures to Hafiz's poems, Nizami's "Makhzan ul-asrar" (Treasure of Secrets), "Khosrov va Shirin" (Khosrov and Shirin), "Haft peykar" (Seven beauties) plots, Jami's couplets and they were kept from XVI century till nowadays. They were of very deep theme and rich with Sultan Muhammad's signature. Sultan Muhammad's miniatures were big in size and this lead to painting in two pages. Besides these miniatures, he painted a lot of decorative objects and destroyed the borders painting not only on the paper but also on the silk, velvet, borcade, etc. In Hungary – Budapest Museum of Decorative Arts there are more than 20 pieces of carpets with the decorations, the author of which is Sultan Muhammad. Sultan Muhammad's blood is in Mirza Ali's veins. He was not only the follower of Sultan Muhammad's generation but also his profession and school. In 1539-43 years Mirza Ali was involved in the miniature painting of "Khamasa". Mirza Ali's miniatures are kept in Iran, Russia – St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Dublin. Mirza Ali was Sultan Muhammad's son by blood, but the students of his school and his followers were Sultan Muhammad's spiritual sons.

During Safavis reign two points in development of painting were of great importance. During this period Azerbaijan's relations with

the world grew and a lot of European, especially Italian artist were guesting in Safavi palace and painting by order. During the reign of Safavis the boorder of miniature artists grew wide and they were becoming just independent artists slowly. First, European masters were also influencing the creation of more democratic condition for the culture. Second, painting was helping the preparation of the both historical and theoretical books. One of such books is Sadig bekh Afshar's "Kanun us-suvar" who was also a great calligrapher.

This book is not only rich with the advices for the beginner artists but also teaches its readers how to prepare colors and descriptions.

If think over the history of our miniature, we can easily see the impact of poetry on it. Miniature was always connected with words as Mugham and from this point of view Nizami is the biggest poet who had an impact over this field. At present there are 67 manuscripts kept in Istanbul's Topkapi museum in which 1600 minitures belong to Nizami's poems. Generally, Tajik scientist L.Dokhudoyeva cleared out that there are 2057 miniatures to Nizami's poems in the world miniature catalogues. No need for explanation that Nizami's "Khamasa" does not containe all of the miniatures as many of them are being kept in private and personal collections. But this number is also prominent, i.e. more than 2000 descriptions are decorating Nizami's world with characters and showing us how a word can be connected with a writing, typing, color, painting, etc.

Though Azerbaijani manuscripts were prepared in far Middle Ages, they are contemporary nowadays, are with the person of XXI century, give their best in the connetion and relations of the cultures and nations.

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