

THE PROCESS OF CREATING ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR SCHOLARLY VALUE

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Abstract: This article provides a scholarly analysis of the arts as an important aesthetic, cultural, and educational manifestation of the development of society and nature. Art is considered an integral product of human thinking and spiritual life, playing a significant role in shaping cultural dialogue, strengthening national pride, and fostering aesthetic education within social life. In particular, visual and graphic arts represent a unique source that embodies the historical memory, artistic taste, and creative thinking of society.

Keywords: types of art, manuscript bookmaking, miniature art, calligraphy, illumination (muzahhiblik), book decoration, traditional paper-making, aesthetic education, cultural heritage, Timurid period, visual arts, national culture, artistic thinking, composition, cultural dialogue

In the territory of Central Asia, visual arts - especially mural painting and miniature traditions - have passed through various stages under the influence of historical and political processes. Although certain interruptions occurred during the Arab invasions, art was revived with new content and artistic forms during the reign of Amir Timur and the Timurid dynasty. During this period, the art of manuscript book production reached a high level of development, and miniatures became an inseparable part of book decoration. Initially regarded merely as ornamental elements, miniatures later evolved into independent means of artistic expression.

According to historical sources, the origins of miniature art date back to the Sassanian period. Persian miniature painting developed primarily in the form of book illustration and evolved in close connection with manuscript culture over the centuries. In this process, the art of calligraphy played a particularly important role, serving as one of the key factors ensuring the aesthetic and technical perfection of manuscript literature. In the fifteenth century, the development of script styles such as naskh, kufic, thuluth, and nasta'liq, along with the establishment of specialized bookmaking workshops, significantly contributed to the advancement of manuscript art. In the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, manuscript bookmaking has a long historical tradition that continued until the second half of the twentieth century. Manuscripts created by miniature painters, book artisans, calligraphers, and bookbinders are still highly valued today as outstanding examples of artistic taste and craftsmanship. Manuscript books are also notable for being the result of collaboration among various artisans, including papermakers, calligraphers, illuminators, and bookbinders, rather than the work of a single author.

Over time, the loss and neglect of certain technological processes led to a decline in the production of manuscript books. Nevertheless, devoted artists undertook creative efforts to revive these traditions. Processes such as traditional paper-making, the preparation of natural pigments, and the creation of miniatures were restored, resulting in the production of unique manuscript works. These experiences demonstrate that manuscript art is not only a historical heritage but also an important source for contemporary artistic creativity. Paper preparation is

considered the most crucial stage in manuscript book production. Paper made from natural raw materials such as silk, mulberry bark, and flax was distinguished by its durability and long-term preservation qualities. Technological elements such as *obor* and *mubra* ensured the smoothness of the paper surface and the brightness of colors. Coloring paper with natural plant-based dyes further enhanced the aesthetic value of manuscripts.

Calligraphy, illumination, and miniature painting constitute the main artistic disciplines that ensure the visual integrity of manuscript books. In particular, the nasta'liq script became the most preferred writing style for literary works. In miniatures, composition, color harmony, and semantic clarity were prioritized, with natural pigments and binding agents based on egg white commonly used. Decorative book covers further enhanced the external appearance and artistic appeal of manuscripts. During the Timurid period, along with the flourishing of literature and art, attention to and patronage of artists intensified. Court workshops and gatherings of poets and artists made a significant contribution to the development of the cultural environment. Figures such as Alisher Navoi, Lutfiy, Sakkokiy, and Babur expanded the worldly and artistic scope of Uzbek literature. During this era, the regions of Movarounnahr and Khorasan emerged as a unified literary and cultural space.

In conclusion, this article highlights the historical development, technological processes, and cultural significance of art, particularly manuscript bookmaking and miniature painting. The analysis of the literary and artistic environment of the Timurid period, along with scholarly research based on rare sources, creates broad opportunities for in-depth study of this field. Manuscript heritage is reaffirmed not only as a monument of the past but also as a priceless source that enriches contemporary national culture and aesthetic thought.

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