

THE FORMATION OF MINIATURE ART DURING THE BABURID ERA

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Abstract

This article presents an analysis of historical sources on the life and creative work of Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur, a prominent representative of Uzbek classical literature, historian, scholar, philosopher, poet, and a significant contributor to the art of miniature painting. It explores the formation of miniature art centers during the Baburid period and offers insights based on scholarly research.

Keywords

independent visual arts, artistic depiction, creativity, artistic education, the study of live imagery, history of the Baburid period, description.

The unique traditions, spirituality, and culture of our people hold a significant place on the global stage. Our national and spiritual wealth, which embodies our cultural heritage, serves as an essential tool for educating the younger generation. The spiritual treasures created by our great ancestors, which have fascinated the world, play a crucial role in fostering a well-rounded new generation. Particularly, the miniature artworks produced during the Baburid era hold exceptional importance in elevating the spiritual consciousness of future generations.

Zahir-ud-Din Muhammad Babur is a renowned figure in the history of Uzbek culture, art, and literature, recognized as a scholar, historian, and poet. He wrote a treatise titled *Mufassal* on the prosodic meter and rhyme. His literary legacy is most prominently represented by *Baburnama*, a work still widely appreciated today. Babur was a charismatic, courageous, resilient, and conscientious individual. During his reign and that of the Baburids, Eastern miniature art flourished. Babur, his children, and his grandchildren took a keen interest in miniature painting and significantly contributed to its development.

Academician I. Muminov noted: "Babur and Akbar Shah, in particular, continued the best traditions of economic and cultural progress that emerged in Central Asia during the Timurid era and later spread to India." Indeed, the

influence of Central Asian art on Indian art yielded remarkable results. Alongside the advancement of science and knowledge, Babur also devoted attention to the arts. His enthusiasm, initiative, versatile creativity, and enlightenment-oriented mindset made him one of the most outstanding historical figures. He gathered numerous artists, painters, scholars, and intellectuals around him, sought their advice, and strived to expand his knowledge in all fields. His contribution to the development of miniature art was particularly significant.

Jawaharlal Nehru highly praised Babur, stating: "Babur was a typical representative of the Renaissance – intelligent, brave, and enterprising. He loved art and literature and found delight in the beauty of life." Despite his short life, Babur left behind an invaluable literary and scholarly legacy. After his passing, his sons and grandsons continued his work. They developed an interest in miniature painting, an exquisite and delicate art form, and played a role in its progress.

When Babur's son, Humayun, was in Tabriz, he was captivated by the works of Kamoliddin Behzod and his disciples. He became acquainted with the famous artists Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abd al-Samad Shirazi, and in 1550, he succeeded in bringing these two great painters with him to India. These artists played a crucial role in connecting the Baburid miniature school with the Timurid and Safavid schools. The Baburid miniature school was founded by Khwaja Abd al-Samad Shirazi and Mir Sayyid Ali Tabrizi, under the initiative of Humayun, who appointed them as its leaders.

Humayun's son, Akbar, also played a significant role in the development of miniature art. Following Akbar's decree, 50 of Behzod's disciples were commissioned to illustrate the *Hamzanama* (Tales of Amir Hamza), creating a collection of 12 volumes adorned with 1,700 miniatures. During Akbar's reign, 145 artists were active at his court. In the depiction of the animal kingdom, Ustad Mansur was considered an unparalleled painter. He illustrated 32 animal species in *Baburnama*, capturing them with extraordinary precision in his miniatures.

The miniatures created for *Baburnama* hold a prominent place not only in Eastern visual art but also in global art history. Akbar invited renowned painters from Bukhara and Samarkand – Muhammad Nazir, Muhammad Murad, Shams Muzahhib, and others – to his court, where he established a school of painting. Under Akbar's patronage, exquisite and refined miniatures were created for masterpieces such as *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Zafarnama*, and *Jami al-Tawarikh*.

Miniatures such as *Badiuzzaman in the Garden of Jahangir*, *Khusrau Shah Declaring His Allegiance to Babur*, *Babur's Entry into Agra*, *Babur Entering the Gates of Andijan Fortress*, *Irrigation in the Garden*, and *A Boat Ride on the Ganges River* demonstrate the artists' mastery, particularly in their skillful use of color and

dynamic composition. The attention to fine details in clothing, figures, animals, and natural landscapes reflects their exceptional craftsmanship. Many of the characters depicted in these works are historical figures, with Babur's image appearing at the center of 46 miniatures.

Another member of the Baburid dynasty, Jahangir, was also passionate about painting and was an avid collector of miniature artworks and albums.

In conclusion, Baburid-era miniature art, with its secular character and unique style, distinctly stands out from earlier painting traditions. The authenticity and charm of Baburid miniatures were largely influenced by Central Asian visual art. The school of Baburid miniatures was defined by its attention to geographic and ethnographic details, historical episodes, and an accurate representation of reality. Even today, these miniatures have retained their artistic significance and allure.

Today, being worthy heirs to the unique heritage created by our great ancestors, preserving it as the apple of our eye, and continuing our traditions demand great responsibility from all of us.

As the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, once said: *"The spirituality of any nation or people cannot be imagined separately from its history, unique customs and traditions, and vital values. In this regard, spiritual heritage, cultural riches, and ancient historical monuments serve as some of the most important factors."* These words clearly illustrate how we should treat our rich heritage and how we must work to enrich it further.

Therefore, it is essential to promote the art of miniature painting among young people and to engage in continuous research and exploration in this field.

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