

KHOKAND COPY OF ALİ ŞİR NAVAYÎ'S KHAMSA

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Article Information	Abstract
<i>Research Article</i> <i>Received:</i> July 13, 2025 <i>Accepted:</i> August 9, 2025 <i>Published:</i> August 25, 2025 <i>Keywords:</i> Ali Shir Navayî, Khamse, Khokand	The subject of this research is Ali Shir Navayî's Khamse Masnavi, prepared by Khokand-based artists. This copy, completed in Khokand between 1824 and 1825, is the most illustrated work of the poet among his extant works. The work is currently preserved in the The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inventory. No. 23. In the Majmuai Shâirân of Fazlî, the court tazkira poet of the period, it is pointed out that this copy was prepared at the request of Omar Khan. Although the Khokand school of painting created the work, it bears the characteristics of the Kashmiri painting style. As a result of the research, information was given about the formation and content of the painting program of the Khamse copy, which has the common features of the Khokand-Kashmir painting style. Thus, it is aimed to introduce the copy, which has not been sufficiently studied, and it is envisaged to contribute to the literature.
Makale Bilgisi	Özet
<i>Araştırma Makalesi</i> <i>Gönderilme:</i> 13 Temmuz 2025 <i>Kabul:</i> 9 Ağustos 2025 <i>Yayın:</i> 25 Ağustos 2025 <i>Anahtar kelimeler:</i> Ali Şir Nevaî, Hamse, Hokand	Bu araştırmanın konusu, Hokand merkezli sanatçılar tarafından hazırlanan Ali Şir Nevaî'nin Hamse mesnevisidir. 1824-1825 yılları arasında Hokand'da tamamlanan nüsha, şairin günümüze ulaşan eserleri arasında en çok resimlenmiş olanıdır. Eser günümüzde Özbekistan Bilimler Akademisi Ali Şir Nevai Devlet Edebiyat Müzesi, Envanter No. 23'te muhafaza edilmektedir. Dönemin saray tezkire şairi Fazlî'nin Mecnûa-i Şâirân'da nüshanın Ömer Han'ın isteği üzerine hazırlandığına işaret edilmektedir. Eser, Hokand resim okulu tarafından hazırlanmış olmakla birlikte, Keşmir resim üslubunun özelliklerini taşımaktadır. Araştırma sonucunda Hokand-Keşmir resim üslubunun ortak özelliklerini taşıyan Hamse nüshasının resim programının oluşumu ve içeriği hakkında bilgi verilmiştir. Böylece, üzerinde yeterince çalışılmamış olan nüshanın tanıtılması amaçlanmış ve literatüre katkı sağlanması öngörülmüştür.

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INTRODUCTION

The Khanate of Khokand, located in the southwest of the Fergana valley, ruled between 1710 and 1876 (Konukçu, 1998, p. 215). It is known as one of the three khanates that ruled Central Asia. In 1710, the Khanate separated from the Bukhara Khanate and began strengthening and developing politically, commercially and culturally. The strengthening of the political authority of the Khokand Khanate was realized during the reign of Alim Khan (r. 1799-1809). Alim Khan, who was known for his insufficient reforms, indulgence in pleasure and hasty decisions during his rule, was removed from power in 1809 by a coup d'état carried out by statesmen. The Khan's brother Omar Khan was the main supporter of his brother in wars and expansion of the state borders. Omar Khan soon turned the city of Khokand into the main centre of science, wisdom, literature and art. Omar Khan was proclaimed khan following the assassination of his older brother in 1810. Adopting a peaceful state concept, Omar Khan's first act as the new Khan of Khokand was to remove the statesmen who carried out the coup from the administration (Şen, 2020, pp. 115-118). Paujol states that the city of Khokand was one of the major art centers of the Uzbek Ming dynasty from the mid-18th century (1998, p. 214).

Omar Khan, who used the pseudonym 'Emiri' and wrote poems in Chagatai Turkish and Persian, transformed the city of Khokand into the main center of literature and art during his short reign (Varol, 2023, p. 505). Known for his Sufi poetry, Omar Khan modelled himself after Navayî and remained faithful to this tradition. It has been observed that the ruler admired the literary works of Ali Shir Navayî and adopted his sufi thoughts in his 'Divân-ı Emirî' (Tagaev, 2017, p. 240).

Omar Khan conducted intensive cultural and reconstruction activities during his rule within the Khanates. Religious architectural monuments, educational institutions and water canals to meet the city's water needs were built in various parts of the town during his reign (Argunşah, 2024; Tagaev, 2017).

The *Khamisa* Masnavi of Ali Shir Navayî, one of the pioneers of classical Chagatai literature, which is analyzed in this study, was copied in 1824-1825 in the city of Khokand. Analyzing Fazlî's *Majmuai Shâirân* tazkir, Hakimov and Boltabayev reports that the copy was prepared at the request of Emir Omar Khan, the Khan of Khokand (Boltabayev 2021, p. 110; 1983, p. 143) Fazlî mentions the support of his patron Omar Khan in writing this work and includes the names and poems of 63 poets in the work (Kayumov, 1961, p. 8). According to Fazlî's statement, the *Khamisa*, which is thought to have been written for Omar Khan, includes Navayî's *Lisan al-Tayr* (f.1v-61v), *Farhad va Shirin* (f.62r-159v), *Layla and Majnun* (f.160v-224r), *Sab' ai Sayyar* (f.224v-311r) and *Sadd-i Iskandari* (f.311v-429r) (Kambarova, 1973, s. 241). Among the usual five masnavis, *Lisan al-Tayr* was added instead of *Hayrat al-abrar*. The manuscript is currently preserved at the The Alisher Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. No. 23 (Pugachenkova et al. 2001, pp. 148-153).

CODICOLOGICAL REVIEW

The size of the work is 305 mm and 180 mm, the written area is 225 mm, the width is 105 mm, the number of lines is 30 and it consists of 429 leaves. The text is written in black in large Nestalik (Alparslan, 2007, pp. 11-15; Blair, 2008, pp.277-288) script on cream-colored Khokand paper and the titles are written in red ink. From the examination of the work, it is understood that the large Nastaliq script used in the capital Kokand was used in Central Asia in the early 19th century. The text is written in two columns, and the

text is also included in the marginal glosses. The text in the marginal gloss is surrounded by two rows of red and gold borders. A floral ornament is placed in the triangular area in the centre of the text. There is a continuous floral ornamentation in a border between the text and the marginal gloss. The Khokand copy has a total of forty-six illustrations (Figure 1). In the text, chapter-head illumination is not encountered at the beginning of each masnavi (Hakimov, 1983, p 144).

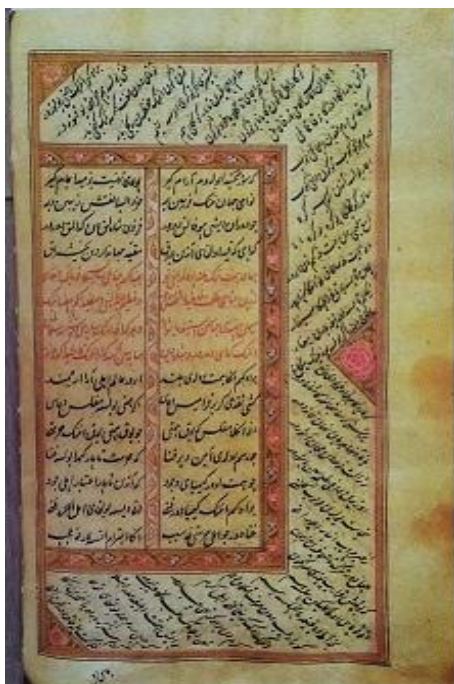


Figure 1. A page with a design. Khokand 1824-1825, *Khamsa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23 (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 263).

Calligrapher

Hakimov states that the *Sadd-i Iskandari masnavi* ends on f. 428v and gives the name of the calligrapher and the date of printing on this page based on the note '*Mullakh Ruzi Katib Sana 1240*' (1973, p. 242; Kambarova, 1983, p. 143; Pugachenkova., at all. 2001, p. 148). Kambarova supports Hakimov's assessment. Mullakh Ruzi states that the calligrapher was one of the those who served at the court during the reign of Amir Omar Khan and his son Muhammad Ali Khan (1973, p. 242). There is insufficient information about calligraphy. No findings have been made in written sources from the period.

Binding of the Book

The binding is a brown leather-bound cardboard cover with embossed and painted decorations (Pugachenkova., at all. 2001, p. 148). The *mikleb* binding measures 318 mm and 180 mm. When the binding is examined, it is observed that it was prepared in engraving and printing techniques. The binding preserves its originality. It reflects the same period in which the manuscript was copied. The front and back covers of the binding have an oval *Shamsa* in the centre. The inside of the oval *Shamsa* is decorated with ornaments resembling the shape of a Rumi leaves. Salbeks emerging from each side of the *Shamsa* is decorated with floral ornamentation in the shape of a water drop surrounded by two rows of gold frames. The binding cover is composed of three borders, with flowers Rumi and passionflower motifs in the second border from the inside out between two straight borders. The oval ornament on the inner third border is decorated with printing

technique, while the floral ornament is painted in gold and red colors. The first and last blank pages of the book have a decorated page called *ebru* (Kambarova, 1973, p. 242). In the upper corners of f.290v there is a seal with an illegible text decoration (Pugachenkova., at all. 2001, p. 148).



Figure 2. The binding, Khokand 1824-1825, *Khamsa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23 (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 260).

Repairs On *Khamsa*

The copy is generally in good condition. Kambarova states that Baqî Nasriddinov obtained the manuscript in 1950 during his research in the Fergana region, and that the work has been repaired once until today, and its pages have been renumbered in this process (1973, p. 242). It is detected that the bookbinding was renewed. It is also observed that the scattered pages of the book were rebound during this process. Except for yellow stains caused by moisture on some pages, the copy is not significantly damaged.

Naqqash

No name of a naqqash or a note about him can be found on the paintings. Suleiman ve Sulimanova mentions the name '*dar fazlî Muhammad Emin Kosonî*' on page 472 of Fazlî's *Majmuai Shâirân* and states that the Naqqash was as skilled as Mani and Bihzad in the art of depiction and was renowned in calligraphy. This information supports the idea that the paintings are from the pen of Muhammad Kosonî (Munshi) (1982, p. 16). Although there is not much information about the artist, it is known that he was born in Koson district of Namangan city of Uzbekistan. Kambarova, who states that the Naqqash used the pseudonym Munshi in his poems, also says that the Naqqash was one of the known calligraphers of the period and supports Suleiman's findings (1973, p. 242).

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE PAINTINGS PREPARED FOR *KHAMSÂ*

There are forty-seven paintings in the *Khamsa*, including *Lisan al-Tayr* (f. 4v, 23v, 30r, 36v, 39v, 42v, 48r and 52v), *Farhad and Shirin* (f. 111r, 115r, 115v, 121r, 125r, 150v, 152v, 153v and 159r), *Layla and Majnun* (f. 178r, 188r, 196r, 204r, 211v, 216r,

218b and 223v), *Sab'ai Sayyar* (f. 241v, 243v, 247r, 249v, 253v, 266v, 273r, 281v, 289r and 294r) and *Sadd-i Iskandari* (f. 348v, 354v, 359r, 370r, 375r, 380v, 386r, 390r, 393r, 400r, 404r, 409r and 411v) (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, p. 16; Kambarova, 1973, p. 242; Pugachenkova., at all. 2001, pp. 148-153). In Ali Shir Navayî's copy of *Khamisa*, a painting program that has not been encountered before is observed.

There is no portrait of the Prophet Muhammad in the painting on leaf 4b, which depicts the Prophet Muhammad ascending to heaven with Buraq. There is a move away from the usual composition. In the composition, Buraq is surrounded by four angels, two of them holding torches, while one of the other two angels is depicted with his hands outstretched in prayer. The sun rising behind the mountains and the white cloud behind the angel indicate that the event took place in the sky full of stars. Intensive use of gilding and red color is observed (figure 3). *The Asension of the Prophet Muhammad with Buraq* in miniatures covering the subjects of Jami's *Yusuf and Zulaikha* (Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbek Academy of Sciences, No. 791, f. 30v), Hafiz Shirazi's *Divan* (Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbek Academy of Sciences, No. 10042, f. 24r) copied in India in the 18th century. The last two episodes are the most typical (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, p 17). In both miniatures, Solomon's throne is born by white, black, red and brown divs, followed by two nymphs fanning the Prophet.

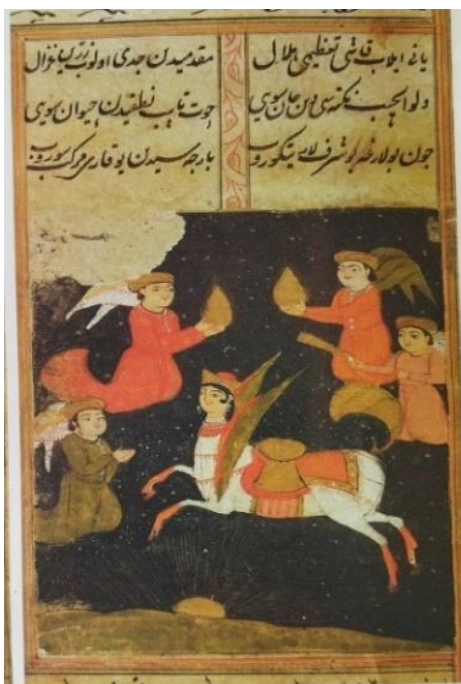


Figure 3. The Asension of the Prophet Muhammad with Buraq, *Khamisa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23, f. 4v.

(Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 265).

The painting subject of the work titled *Sheikh San'an in Rum next to the Christian beauty* (f.23v) differs from the other six paintings prepared for *Lisan al-Tayr*. In the centre of the painting titled *The Story of Sheikh Said Abul'l-khayr* (f.30r), the sheikh holding a prayer beads, his four disciples, and a figure with a human head and bird wings are depicted around them. In the painting entitled *Flight of the Prophet Solomon to India*, the Prophet Solomon is depicted on a throne, carried by white, black, orange and brown-colored genies (y. 36b). Behind the Prophet, an angel is trying to cool Solomon with a fan. The subject content, which is described in two columns and three lines of text, is

completed in a simpler form. Among the figures depicted on the clouds, Solomon and the angel holding a fan are dressed in intense red. The appearance of fire on the Prophet's turban and the use of gilding on the angel's wings and crown are observed. The contrasting colors used in the depiction of the djinns gave mobility to the composition (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, p. 16).

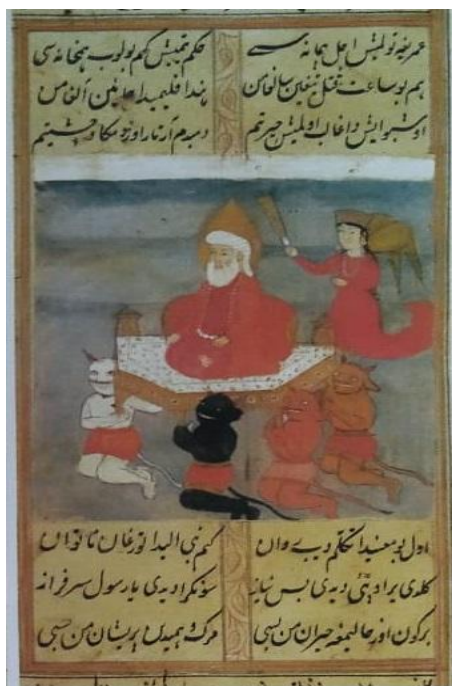


Figure 4. The Flight of the Prophet Solomon to India, *Khamsa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23, f. 36v.

(Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 267).

In the *Khamsa*, the main feature of the paintings titled *Sheikh Porso responds to a question from one of the representatives of justice* (f. 39v), *Shah Balkha and his son* (42v), *Sufi in the valley of astonishment* (f. 48r), *Sheikh Ebul Abbas in the Valley of Fana* (f. 52v) is that they were completed by drawing on separate sheets of paper, which were then pasted onto the pages of the manuscript. Religious and mystical motifs are reflected in the miniatures.

The nine paintings prepared for *Farhad and Shirin* masnavi are as follows: *Shirin is with Farhat who pierced the mountains* (f.111r), *Farhad carrying Shirin riding a horse on his shoulder* (f. 115v), *Khosrev watches Shirin bathing* (f.115r), *Khosrev and Buzonik Ummud* (f. 121r), *Shirin viewing a painting of Khosrev* (f. 125r), *The Death of Farhad* (f. 150v), *Shirin in her own mansion* (f. 152v) and *Farhad and Shirin in a coffin* (f. 153v). Among these paintings, the subject that has not been encountered before is *Shirin in her own mansion*. Suleiman examines in detail the connection between the illumination program of the manuscript and the text, noting that the text of the masnavi is completed in f.158r. It has been identified by the researcher that the pictures titled *Khosrev watches Shirin bathing* (f. 119r), *Shirin examining the painting of Khosrev* (f. 125r) and *Shiruya catches Shirin and Khosrev in bed and kills Khosrev* (f. 159r) are not included in Navayî's Masnavi (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, p. 16).



Figure 5. Khosrev watches Shirin bathing, *Khamsa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23, f. 115r.

(Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 275).

A total of seven illustrations were prepared for *Layla and Majnun* masnavi. Suleiman and Sulimanova, describes the painting subjects as follow: The topics named *Layla and Majnun at school* (f. 178r), *Majnun and his father in Mecca* (f. 188r) are embedded in a text describing Majnun among animals in the desert. The relationship between the paintings titled *Nawfal's arrival in the presence of Majnun, who is among the animals* (f.196r), *Nawfal with Majnun's father* (f. 204r), *Layla in the desert, in the presence of Majnun* (f. 216r), *Majnun in front of Layla's tent* (f. 218r) and *Layla and Majnun in front of a grave* (f. 223v, 1982, p. 16) and the text of the masnavi is determined. No deviation from the subject was detected. The image content prepared for other Nevayi works is also included here.

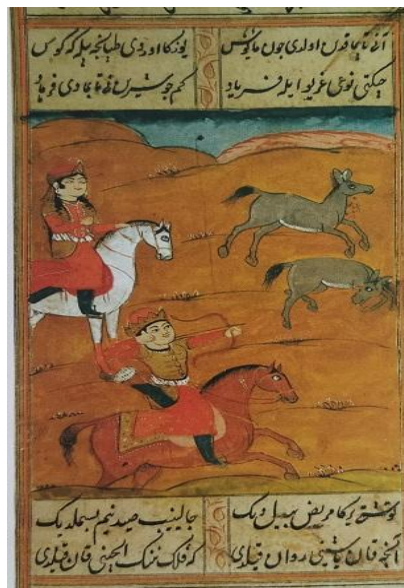


Figure 6. Bahram on the hunt. *Khamsa*, Ali Shir Navayî, The Ali Shir Navayî State Museum of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Inv. N.23, f. 247r.

(Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, figure 279).

It has been determined that there is a departure from the usual subject content in the paintings made for the masnavi *Sab'ai Sayyar*. In the painting titled *Mani in the presence of Bahram* (f. 241v) we do not see the figure of Diloram. In f. 247r, which contains another example of *Bahram on the hunt* (f. 243v), Diloram is depicted on horseback next to Bahram, without a musical instrument. Suleiman mentions that the color of the pavilions depicting Bahram with seven beauties is inconsistent with the text (1982, pp. 16-17). These miniatures differ from the earlier primitive depictions of landscapes, interiors and architecture by the simplicity of the composition and the presence of few people.

Twelve miniatures illustrate in *Sadd-i Iskandari* masnavi. The illustrations titled *Iskandar and the dying Doro* (f. 354v), *Indian sovereign in the presence of Alexander* (f. 380v), *Iskandar and the Princess* (f. 390r) are included in the masnavi. The subjects of *the Judge of Kashmir and his sister Mehrinaz* (f. 370r), *Iskandar and Ravshanak/Doro* (f. 348v and 411v), *The war with Rad* (f. 400r), *Iskandar dragging the arrested giant* (f. 409r) are not found in the illustrated examples of Navayî's *Khamisa* copies. It is seen that the copy has a different painting program than the other hamses and that the painter did not hesitate to add new subjects. No other examples of the illustrated subjects have been found.

INFLUENCE OF KASHMIRI STYLE

The 17th and 19th centuries were periods of more vibrant and fruitful cultural relations with Mughal India² and Central Asia. In Khokand and Kashmir, two important centers, artists exchanged styles from time to time. As a result of this process, the influence of Mughal Indian art began to be observed in Central Asian painting. In the 18th and 19th centuries, there are similarities between the subject matter and compositions of the illustrated copies created in Kashmir, the most important painting centre in India, and Bukhara in Central Asia. The city of Kashmir, one of the centres connecting India to Central Asia and the Near East, adopted many styles that came to the region and combined these elements within its own structure.

As a result of the analysis of the paintings in the Khokand copy of the *Khamisa*, which is the subject of our study, the distinctive features of the Kashmiri painting style were identified. It is emphasized that the figures, which are the main features of the Kashmiri painting style, have oval faces, full cheeks, arched noses, full lips, mustaches and beards, curved eyebrows, almond eyes and curly hair. Landscape descriptions lack depth. Architectural description is insufficient in painting compositions. In the present paintings, a rich variety of clothing used by the contemporary society of the period can be observed. It is preferred to depict clothing and ornaments down to the finest details. Intensive use of jewellery is visible on male and female figures. The manuscript is dominated by various shades of intense red and orange colors. In the manuscript, there are various works bearing the stylistic characteristics of this centre. Examples include *Yusuf and Zulaikha* by Abdurrahman Jami, preserved in inventory N. 791 at the Abu Rayhan Berunî Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic

² For additional information, see: Goetz, H. (1969). *Studies in the History and Art of Kashmir and the Indian Himalaya*. Wiesbaden, Germany: Otto Harrassowitz; Goswamy, K. (1998). *Kashmiri Painting: Assimilation and Diffusion; Production and Patronage*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study; Losty, J. (1982). *The Art of the Book in India*. London: British Library.

of Uzbekistan, Ashik's *Divan* prepared between 1806-1807 in inventory N. 1454, and Hafiz Shirazi's *Divan* in inventory N. 10042 in the same collection (Suleiman and Sulimanova, 1982, p. 35). The painting programs of the aforementioned works have similar features to those of the Khokand copy. This recent work reflects the fact that the naqqashas influenced each other.

CONCLUSION

The 19th century is known as the period of the rise of the Khanates in Central Asia. In the cities under the rule of the Khokand Khanate, there was a great interest in book arts and literary works. During the reign of Omar Khan, who was known for his literary/poetical personality, the works of various poets were recopied and thus these works took their place in the treasury library. The Khokand copy that is the subject of this study is of Ali Shir Navayî's *Khamisa*, which is thought to have been prepared at the request of Omar Khan. During the process of reorganizing the scattered pages of the manuscript, it could not be determined whether there was any evidence of a patron. As a result of the analysis and the data obtained, it was decided that the manuscript was a sovereign's copy. Kambarova states that Islamic rules intensified in Khokand in the 19th century and illustrated copies in book arts decreased in this process (1973, p. 243). However, the fact that the Khokand copy has the highest number of illustrations among the illustrated copies of Navayî's *Khamisa* to date somewhat disproves this idea.

Encountering Kashmiri painting style features in the Khokand palace library in the first quarter of the 19th century, indicates that the artists of the two regions were stylistically influenced by each other. One of the main reasons for the insertion of topics irrelevant to the text of the masnavi is that the artist responsible for the manuscript saw no problem in adding his own interpretation. The feature that distinguishes the *Khamisa* masnavi, copies of which were prepared by various painting centers over the centuries, from other copies is that it contains many paintings. In the copy, the stereotypical painting program was modified by the artists in the Khokand copy. It is evident from the clothing and facial expressions of the figures that they adopted the Kashmiri style of painting. The copy is important in terms of bearing the common features of Khokand and Kashmiri painting style.

However, the artistic level of Khokand miniatures was below those made in Samarkand, Herat, Tabriz, Qazvin, Mashhad, Shahrukhiya and Bukhara in the 15th-17th centuries in terms of coloring, variety of landscape sketches, arrangement of human figures and grace. Despite all this, these miniatures are very valuable because they illustrate manuscripts of the works of a great writer and humanist who lived in a period when religious dogma became a general law and reactionary behaviour was violent.

Ethical Issues

No ethical board approval is required for this study.

Contribution Rate of the Researchers

The study was prepared by a single author.

Statement of Conflict of Interest

There are no personal or financial conflicts of interest related to this study.

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