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Analysis of the Biography and Works of Fathollah Shirazi

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Abstract

The present research objective, is to introduce "Fathollah Shirazi" as one of the most influential artists in field of lacquer painting. In order to recognize its life and his artistic characteristics, his existing works in the domestic and foreign museums, written references in terms of style, design, implementation, and the paintings' subject were studied. This article seeks answers to the questions of that who was Fathollah Shirazi? And what features in his works are distinguished him from his counterparts? Fathollah Shirazi was the master painter of lacquer works in the era of Naser-Al-Din Shah Qajar. He has also the honor to receive the title of "Naqashbashi". In addition to painting, this artist had profession in the field of calligraphy and implementation of delicate Halkari technique, which is implementing motifs with gold. Two manuscripts have been written by him that was found in course of the study. In the explanation of his works, he has composed good poems. From his way followers can be named as Farajollah, his son, and Mustafa, the painter of his era. This study was carried out based on the descriptive and analytical method and the research principles gathering was in terms of library method.

Keywords: Fathollah Painting, Lacquer, Qajar Period, Poem, Analytical Method.

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1. Introduction

The Qajar period should be regarded as one of the brightest Iran history cultural eras that during this period, Iran has faced with the change of international relations the rise of the intelligentsia category, the variation of political, cultural and artistic nature. The Qajar kings like centuries ago, have entered the artists into their durbar, and among these artists, the durbar painters had a special place and in this workshops creates the works. During this period, although the painters in the royal painting house, have also performed the wealth supporters order, but most of the paintings had largely market orientation (Abbas, 2000). The market painting products, were includes of religion manuscripts with paintings, lacquer paintings, penner, hookah head, canvas painting, watercolor and enamel paintings, wood paintings and wall paintings. The photography art promotion had a significant impact on the painting art of this period. The common style of painting at the time of Fathali Shah was durbariconography that has also reflected in lacquer works. In this school, the representation of the human body has fundamental importance. The periods of Mohammad Shah, Fathali Shah Successor, in terms of artistic, was more consolidation period than evolution period. In Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar era, was not conducted still the definitive selection in the field of painting. The painters (Including the durbar and non-durbar) less or more shows the loyalty to traditions and past measures. On the other hand, in a sensitive transitional phase, they found the solution in dual contact. Among the common techniques in the Qajar paintings, lacquer works have the special status. The lacquer paintings whether in terms of content and in terms of executive techniques have been significant growth in this era and the prominent artists in this branch of art have created the works. One of the prominent and influential artists in this field is Fathollah Shirazi, the painter of Nasser era (Tabrizi, 1990). The remaining major works of this artist is lacquer work which often has been built based on the order or for a gift to the king, nobles, nobility. His title was known as Naqashbashi Shirazi and some of his works have signature with this expression. The features that distinguishes him from his counterpart artists, is expertise and his skills in the application of new issues and motifs powerful implementation. This Shiraz's teacher has left memorial unique and distinctive works in black and white way on the fawn yellow canvas from himself, which is considered as one of the hallmarks of his works (Nasser, 2007).

2. The Biography and Works of Fathollah Shirazi

According to the conducted studies, a significant information was not found from life of this painter of Nasser era. The most complete biography can be found in the book of life and works of old painters of Iran (Zadeh, 2002).

Naqashbashi was from Shiraz and he had powerful hands in flower decoration and watercolors and black and white practices and the oily works. The major work of this master was pen- box making and oily works which was carried out by ordering of the king and other dignitaries. He was proficient stimulator. This master was made the birds design very similar and nature and he is done himself his works arrangement. This artist makes the field often beige and fawn yellow and his works had somewhat monopolistic. He was made natural the flowers as like Lotfali Shirazi. He was also aware in the field of stimulations and portrait, with Iranian and foreign style. On the whole, he wrote the lines well, especially Nasta'liq line, and he was composed his poetry himself. The oldest work which in its following, the title of Naqashbashi has inserted, is the label in the writer collection that has been implemented since 1289 and to be done by personal order as name of Aghareza Khajebashi (Chekoslovoki, 2002). Fathollah had a talent children as name of Farajollah which he also made penner and book cover and was the follower of his father ways (Naeini, 1997).

Although his remaining works, which contains the signature of Naqashbashi, indicates of this issue that he was durbar painter, but unfortunately in none of itinerary and related biography with Nasser Al-Din Shah Qajar period and Fars region celebrities has not been implied a name of him in group of Nasser durbar painters. Despite the considerable works that he has made for gifts to the chiefs and princes, to ignore his name in history, is very surprising. In book Maaser-Al-Asar, Etemad Alsaltane has implied from the two person, as durbar Naqashbashi of Nasser Al-Din Shah Qajar; one of these persons is Mirza Abulhasan Kashani (Sani-olmolk) and another person as Mirza Mohammadkhan Kashani. In the painting books and Qajar era painters, from more people as a court painter has been mentioned as follow:

"In Iran, the nineteenth century, there were at least 12 painters. Other painters, had such a title, but they were not among the royal painters; because this title in other cases was only indicated of the Crown Prince painter. This title was also awarded in the military. The famous painters were as follow: Mirzababa (Until 1225/1880), Abdollah khan (In the years of 1227-28/1812-13), Mirza Ahmad son of Mirza Hassan (Apparently in 1234/1819), Ismail (In the year of 1252/1836-37), Abdollah khan Memar (In the year of 1255/1839-40), Mehr Ali Esfahani (In the years of 1258-59/1842-43), Mohammad Ebrahim (In the year of 1265 /1848- 49), Kazeroni

Saheb(After the year 1266-1850) Abolhassan Ghaffari Sani Ol Molk (In the year of 1277/1860-61), Mohammad Ismail(Until1288/1871), Mirza Ali Akbar Mozayan al doleh (In the year of 1288/1871) and Mirza Mohammad Ghaffari Kamal Ol Molk (In the year of 1300/1882-83). "

According to the above issues, the painters who were contemporary with Fathollah Shirazi are as follow: Abul Hasan Ghaffari (Sani-ol-Molk), Mohammad Ismail, Mirza Ali Akbar Mozayan-Al-Doleh and Mirza Mohammad Ghaffari (Kamal-ol-Molk). Among the works of Fethollah, we are faced with a very beautifull box which is kept in Golestan Palace (Figure 1). On the edge of this box door with, that is the artist's own Nstliq line, was written a poem which informs this work is being awarded to the crown prince at that time, Mozafar-Al-Din Shah (Chekoslovoki, 2002).



Figure 1: The box with subject of flower, birds and portraits, the work of fathollahshirazi, Golestan palace, 1296.

According to these poetry and the painting book description and the painters of the Qajar period, this is likely that he was Naqashbashi of crown prince; For this reason, his name has not mentioned among the painters of Nazareth court. In Dehkhoda dictionary, is stated that Mozafar-Al-Din Shah in 1274 in five years ago was reached to the successor status (Dehkhoda, 1998, 21080). In the book of Life And Works Of Old Painters Of Iran, the oldest work which contains Naqashbashi signature, its tag has been introduced in 1289, so that during this time Mozafar-Al-Din Shah had about twenty years ago. Only in a biography entitled of Hadighat Al- Adab, which describes the history and genealogy of the Qajar dynasty philosophers and painter, in a part, the author has paid to describe the life and genealogy of Nemat Fasaie. In this Shirazi family has been called with the name of Fathollah Mirza which also he had a child with the name of Farajollah.

Unfortunately, on the page related to the life biography of Fethullah Mirza and Farajollah Shirazi, both of them, any information was not included. Place of birth, and as well as having a child named Farajollah, this assumption strengthens which the mentioned Fathollah is the same painter Fathollah Shirazi; but after examining the genealogy, it was determined that his life time does not comply with Fathollah Naqashbashi and so this assumption is violated, thus certainly he is isolated from Fathollah Naqashbashi (www.metmuseum.com).

According to the mentioned date in the figured works of Fathollah the range work of this artist can be found. In the book of Life and Works of Old Painters of Iran, the oldest history of his work has been listed in 1275 (AH). In addition to, in the book of Lacquer Works, his activity extent has been listed from the late 1850s until the late 1880s. After examining the present figured works in this study, the oldest image of this artist's work has been found, was related to the penner belonged to Mahfouzi Museum in dated 1262 (AH) and his latest work was related to the present single leaf painting in New York Metropolitan Museum in dated 1959 (AH). The peak activity of this artist according to the present works, can be mentioned in dated 1295 (AH) (Mohammadtaghi, 2003).

The works which have been found at the museum of Tehran, virtual base of foreign museums, written sources and private collections, are total 43 works which about 31 works are attributed to this artist, have the figure and 12 works are lack of figure that according to features derived from his work practice, the validity of these assignments were assessed in this study. The gathered works includes of penner, cover, label, mirror frame, stationery box, single painting and the written manuscript (Wilson, 1987).

3. The Activity Fields and Features the Works of Fathollah Shirazi

One of the significant points in his work, which its distinctive is considered with other prominent artists in this field, is the use of unusual animals and birds in design. The animals and birds that he has used in his works are includes of: Rabbits, stag, dog, deer, camel, cock, partridge, chicken, lapwing, duck, crow and swan which have seen less in the works of other artists.

The variety canvas is another features of Fathollah Shirazi. He has used of fawn yellow, zarak, zarafshan, marqsh canvas, simple and gold canvas; but beige and Zorak canvas are the most specific and is considered as his numerous works component (Fig. (2) Is a unique example of the implementation of black and white on the fawn yellow canvas). In his works album, along with the works which have been made very subtle and elaborate, the works are

seen that they were made quicker and professional and all of them indicates the skill and power of his pen (Wilson, 1987).



Figure 2: The lacquer mirror frames, back and front of mirror frame with the theme of flowers and birds, Fathollah Shirazi works, available in Metropolitan museum.

(www.metmuseum.org)

After gathering the present poetry in his works and review them, with regard to these poems in description of the works have often the status and dignity of author, it was concluded that the poet has been Fathollah Shirazi.



Figure 3: The coffin penner with subjects of portraits, landscapes and flowers and birds, the works of Fathollah Shirazi, front and back of penner, personal

According to the above mentioned issues based on Fathollah Shirazi's ability in implementing delicate and artistic Halkari by researchers and as well as review and adaptation of his works, by this assumption that he has been performer of these designs, must be prove. Plating was done the Zand style; that is simpler, with less use of decorative

elements and the use of thinner gold. The present calligraphy in the works is also the artist own pen. The use of various lines of Nastaliq, Roghae, Solse line is indicating his skill in this field.(Fig.(3)) shows the coffin penner which it is the most important works of Fathollah Shirazi. In this work, a collection of various canvases, different topics and unique calligraphy are visible.



Figure 4: The bottom of coffin penner with the figure of rooster

In the leading research path, two manuscripts were found that their scribes was named Fathollah Shirazi. The life time of this writer as corresponded with Fathollah painter. In order to answer to this two question whether the available calligraphy in the works of Fathollah Shirazi is written by him or someone else who was calligrapher, and whether the writing of found two manuscripts was discussed by Fathollah Shirazi or not; An interview which was conducted by Professor Iraj Naeimaei, calligraphy expert and calligrapher master, after analyzing and comparing the present calligraphic in lacquer works and found manuscripts, he has stated: "In each lacquer work, painter signature line has corresponded with other lines in terms of the structural characteristics. In addition to, his pen is also the same; it means that with the same pen which the text is written, has signed with the same pen; therefore, the calligraphy and painting works was done by Fathollah Shirazi. In comparing the manuscript line with lacquer works, must be said that the circles circulation, the letters are repeated in the text, rotation and thrust the pen, ascent and descent layout, spacing letters and even point in all lines are almost the same, and as a result, Fathollah Shirazi in addition to powerful painting, has also been formidable scribe (Rooyeen, 2007).

The library characteristics of two manuscript is described as follows:

1- Soltani presentations / presentations and rhymes / Farsi [1], Ghajar, Amirsoleiman Khan (...14 AH) 191863. (Tehran, Mohtashami, Masoud, No. 4) / in a introduction/ Nastaliq/ 1314 / [publication: 5672].

2- "The history of conquests Ibn Asm Kofi (Translation), translated of Futuh, Kofi Ahmad History / Islam History/ Farsi [22], Mostofi Heravi, Mohammad ibn Ahmed, Futuh, Kofi ibn Ahmad (314) 48233. (Tehran, literature, Hekmat), part of the history of Abu Bakr / Nastaliq/ Fathollah Shirazi/ 1321 / [F: 2: 7].

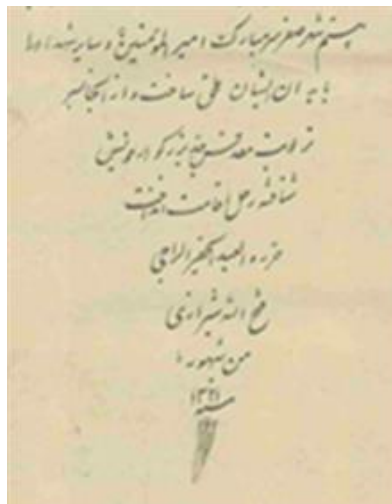


Figure 5: The part of the end page book of Ibn Asm Kofi history, with Nastaliq line, author: Fathollah Shirazi, the year 1321 AH. (Department of Manuscripts Library of Tehran University)

Due to this issue that Mr. Karimzadeh Tabrizi in the book of Life and Works of Iran old painters, Nezamieh building painting have introduced from Fathollah Shirazi works, also in Wall Painting book in Iran, the author in section related to Fathollah Shirazi has been mentioned that:

"In addition to numerous works such as penners, in some of building walls well-known as a military adjacent to Sani-ol-Molk works, the masterful images of him was attracted their attention" (Zaki, 2001).

In this regard, for achieving to the graffiti images, the only present panel in Nezamieh building or Leghanteh Cafe, which were implemented by hands of Sani-ol-Molk and his students and in Golestan Palace Museum Ganjineh to be kept, were found. After the destruction of Nezamieh building, all of its graffiti have removed and nothing has remained of it. So, there is any resource to investigate this issue whether these designs were implemented by hands of Fathollah Shirazi or not (Shahsavari, 2005).

4. The Teachers of Fathollah Shirazi

The most of authority's professionals in the field of lacquer painting, are regarded Fathollah Shirazi, as the followers of Lotfali Shirazi, so that Naser khalili in the book of Lacquer Works, he introduces him as the student of Lotfali Shirazi and his way follower:

"The blooming era of Fathollah Shirazi was started from the late 1850s and continued until the late 1880s. Some of the employed designs by him, clearly are derived from the collection flower and bird designs of Shirazi painters including of Lotfali Khan and other designs have European resources including European lacquered objects. Based on these designs, he was established such a style which has involved value and validity between his contemporaries. The mentioned citations on his works, demonstrates that made penners of this artist, has been as a gift to high-ranking officials and even on behalf of the King, he was honored to receive the title of "Naqashbashi" (Machiyani, 2002).

Lotfali Shirazi is a painter and skilled painting and famous of Qajar era early. He was a likeness teacher in the field of flowers and birds design, naturalism and portraits. From his very valuable works, is Shahnameh Davari painting which many of his paintings is attributed to Lotfali works. As Lotfali is unique master in the field of flowers and birds, he is also considered remarkable master in the field of portraits. He has verified in visualization of manuscripts, pen-painting, wall- painting and lacquered pages painting. According to Forsat writing, his death has been occurred in Shiraz in 1288 AH (Askarchya, 2006). The most prominent feature of Fathollah work, which is influenced by Lotfali, is the bird's design. Lotfali Shirazi has been used of different colors in the implementation of the bird's design. These colors are included: Red, blue, and green spectrum which exactly the same way can be seen in Fathollah works. The use of the different color on the bird's neck collar, overhead and the shadow of the eye end in Fathollah bird's works is based on Lotfali Shirazi style.

The mentioned points were the similar aspects between the works of these two artists; but there are the differences also in their works which are as follow: The design and space composition in Lotfali Shirazi works is full of variation flowers and designs which are filling all of the works surface and the empty space is low; but in Fathollah Shirazi works, the composition is quieter and calmer. The type of lacquer canvas most of Lotfali works was dark marqhash canvas and has little diversity; but the diversity in canvas is seen in Fathollah works.

After comparing and studying the works of these two artists can be argued that Fathollah Shirazi had its way in the implementation and design and unlike Nasser Khalili expression based on the accurate use and objectivity of the works of Lotfali Shirazi, he has individual identity in his works and has been acted completely independent; For this reason, he can be considered only affected by Lotfali. Lotfali Shirazi influences (Portraitist) to Shiraz artists after him, is undeniable. The state of these impacts and introduce the artists who have most affected by him, is required of an separate research (Godar, 2006).

5. The Students and followers of Fathollah Shirazi

One of the other objectives of this research is a study about the students and followers of the way of this artist. Karimzadeh Tabrizi in his book is named from Farajollah Shirazi which he has made the cover and penner and he was the follower of his father's way. Unfortunately, there was not found any work from Farajollah Shirazi. Due to the lack of sufficient information about the life of Fathollah Shirazi, for finding of his students, was paid to study of his contemporary artists works. Among these, the works had observed that were very close to Fathollah Shirazi pen features. These works with the words "Mustafa promised blessings right" or "O' Mustafa" and "Mustafa" have been signed. In the book of the Life and Works of Iran old painters, from the two artists with the above signature have been cited. One of them is Mustafa (Pen maker) which has the word of "Mustafa promised blessings right" and another of them is Mustafa Shirazi, which its works has been signed often with the words of "The lowest figure of Mustafa portal " The least Mostafa Shirazi" After examining images of works that have been triggered with the above phrases, according to the similarity features of design and implementation, this probability that both of mentioned artists are a single person, is proposed (Figures 6-7).

Figure (7):
Details of penner,
available in Malek
museum, having the
figure "Mustafa,
1310"



Figure (6): Details of
Mirror frames, available
in Malek museum, having
the figure "Mustafa
promised blessings rightin
the year 1302"



Karimzadeh Tabrizi in introducing Mustafa (Pen- maker) has been implied to the following point: "The profession of this painter was only pen making and in the simulation and portrait and other ornaments, had pious and sweet pen (Karimzadeh Tabrizi,1990, 1153), the presence of elegant and sweetness mirror frame in Malek museum which has been signed with the phrase "Mustafa promised blessings right", is the violation of this opinion that he was the only pen-maker(Figure(9)).The only reason in this study which Mostafa Shirazi is introduced as Fathollah's student, not his teacher, is to review about the activity time range of these two artists in terms of their dated works. The oldest remained work that has been found so far from Fathollah Shirazi backs dated to 1262 AH; while the oldest work that has Mustafa Shirazi history, quoted from the book of Life And Painter Works, was belonged to1287 AH .

6. The Common Features of Mustafa Shirazi with Fathollah Shirazi

Mustafa Shirazi has made many works based on Fathollah beige canvas method that one of the most important of these works is considered the present mirror frame in Malek museum. As it is observed in the figures, the design generality on the back and over the mirror frame (Figure 9) is as like the decorated cover by Fathollah Shirazi (Figure 8) and only in details the different design can be seen.



Figure 8: The lacquer mirror frames, back and front of mirror frame with the theme of flowers and birds, Mustafa works, available in Malek museum

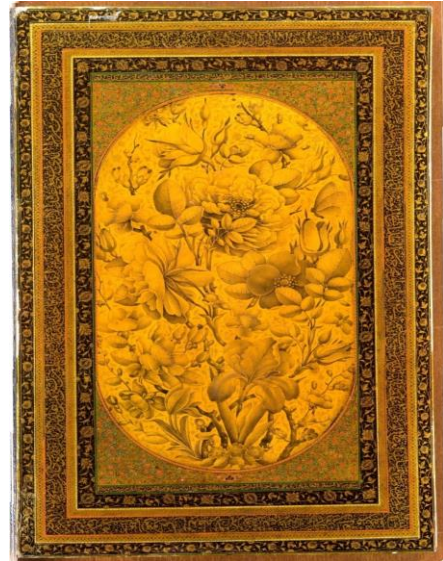


Figure 9: The lacquer quran volume, back and front of it with the theme of flowers and birds, Fathollah works, available in Malek museum

With this difference that the principle of proportionality in Fathollah's design is much more respected (By comparison of how to design bird feet, the distance between the two legs, the proportion of the bird's wing with the bird's body whole in the works of two artists, this point is the most prominent). The holiness designs implementation among the original plan in the field of the work based on etching method, is the other similarities. The flowers and birds designs inside of the mirror frame has been decorated also in terms of Fathollah's style.

The practice of space categorization in Mustafa's penner using of oval frame and its decoration with volumes and foreign flowers and applying flowers and birds designs at the top and bottom of the frame are all derived from Fathollah Shirazi plans. An example of this design is visible in Figure (10).



Figure 10: Lacquer penner, painted with the theme of portraits, landscapes and flowers and birds, Mostafa work, $8/3 \times 7/3 \times 22$ cm, Collection of Khalili. (Lacquer works, 319: 1386).

The significant point is related to the present gazelles in oval frame which copying of decorated gazelles plan by Fathollah is the available box in Golestan Palace Museum. The present penner in Figure (11) can be considered the imitation of Fathollah Shirazi.



Figure 11: *Lacquer penner, with the theme of flowers and birds, Mostafa work, $\frac{1}{3} \times \frac{9}{3} \times \frac{6}{22}$ cm, Collection of Khalili. the year 1290 AH. (Lacquer works,*

In the book of lacquer works, from another artist who was worked in the style of Fathollah Shirazi and had the signature "Husseini Tabatabaei" has been mentioned. From his works, can be implied to lacquer cover with the flowers and plants design (Fig. 12). This lacquer cover is the only registered work of this artist that has been performed in order of Sultan Muhammad Mirza Seyf -Al-Doleh which he is including of Qajar Princes (Askarchy, 2006).



Figure 12: *The lacquer book cover, with subject of flower, works by Hoseyn-Al-Tabatabayi Collection of Khalili. (Lacquer works,*

8. Conclusion

As a result of the conducted studies, Fathollah Shirazi in addition to skilled painting in the field of lacquer painter can be considered as an author fluent in variety of calligraphic lines. He has the powerful hands also in implementation of subtle Halkri. He has composed beautiful poems and his works has decorated with his sweet line and word. His activity scope was (1262(AH) - 1338 (AH)) and its activity peak refers to 1295 (AH).He was known as

durbar painter, according to the sources, his name was not among the durbar painters of Naser-Al-Din Shah and according to the present stationery box in Tehran's Golestan Palace which has been made for a gift to Crown Prince, Mozafar-Al-Din Shah, it is likely that this title is awarded by the Crown Prince is not far-fetched.

Fathollah Shirazi in the design and implementation of birds was affected Lotfali Shirazi School, but in other cases had its own way. From the other features that distinguish his work from its counterparts, is the use of unconventional images of birds and animals, such as dogs, deer, duck, crow, swan and cock. One of the most distinctive of Fathollah Shirazi styles, is the implementation of black and white on fawn yellow canvas. From his students can be named as Farajollah (His son), Mustafa Shirazi, and Hossein Tabatabaei which according to Fathollah Shirazi teacher, have created the work.

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