

Styles of Writing Arabic Script in the Manuscript Book and Jewelry of the Kazan Tatars: Problems of Genesis¹

*Firdaus G. Vagapova*², *Adelya Sattarova*³, *Larisa N. Donina*⁴, *Inna I. Sokolova*⁵, & *Rafael M. Valeev*⁶

Abstract

In the modern world, the appeal of researchers to the study of the genesis of national cultures is one of the conditions for solving the problem of preserving monuments of spiritual and material culture. In the article, for the first time, an attempt was made to identify and substantiate the handwriting styles of the Arabic script, which were developed in the traditional culture of the Kazan Tatars. The penetration of Arabic graphics into the territory of the Middle Volga region was carried out from the middle of the 8th century thanks to diplomatic and trade relations: Kufic dirhams and ceramics and toreutics with epigraphic ornamentation entered the caravan route to the territory of the Bulgarian state. In the article can be traced the process of learning a stranger and developing his own culture of calligraphy in connection with Islamic art, developed on the territory of Transcaucasia, the Black Sea region, Khorezm, Iran, Asia Minor, the Middle East.

Keywords: Calligraphy; Handwritten Book; Arabographic Writing; Artistic Metal; Epigraphic Ornament; Jewelry Art.

1. Introduction

Calligraphy, in the culture of Muslim people, is an integral part of spiritual culture. Based on the Arabic alphabet, it characterizes the culture of all countries that have adopted the Muslim religion. It has gained a certain social role in Islam, because it personified its power and has acquired the status of its distinctive innovative and imaginative function (Dodhudoeva, 1998). Calligraphy, like the art of beautiful

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² Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia; vagap.art@mail.ru

³ Institute of History named Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, Kazan, Russia; lis.art@mail.ru

⁴ Institute of History named Sh. Mardzhani AN RT, Kazan, Russia; ihanipova@mail.ru

⁵ Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia; inna.academ@yandex.ru

⁶ Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia; valeev_rm@inbox.ru

writing, is the expression of beauty, which, from the point of view of Muslim aesthetics, has an effect on a person not only by external, objective forms, but also by inner content, by semantic expression. There have been appreciated not only literacy of writing the text but its artistic merits and readability. The high level of the calligraphy art in the countries of the Muslim East is evidenced by the existence of a large number of varieties of handwriting styles.

There are two main varieties of Arabic writing. The first - known as "kufi", it is recognized as an official style. The letters of this style of writing, thanks to their straightforward and clear outlines with small elements of curves, create the impression of solemnity. The second type - "naskhi" - is distinguished by curvilinear letters and italic; as a result, it was used in cursive writing (Kazakov, 1971).

In the Arab countries, a kufic writing before the X century was used in epigraphy and paleography, but since the XI century it was used mainly for epigraphic purposes: decoration of architectural structures, coins, ornamentation of everyday objects. The style of "naskhi" from the first half of the XII century became a daily form of writing. The curvilinear writing "naskhi" became the basis for the creation by calligraphers, as a result of processing and improvement, new handwriting styles, known as the classical "six" (Kazakov, 1971; Kafka, 1928). It included such handwritings as: "muhaggag", "rehani", "suls", "naskh", "toughi", "rikhya", originated in different countries and at different times.

The art of beautiful writing began to develop in the culture of the Tatars of the Middle Volga region from the X century. Since the X-XIV century, the handwriting of "Kufi" was used on coins, household items, ornaments. From the middle of the XIV century it was typical to use the sulce style in the office work, and from the end of the XV century it was a "divani" with "rika" elements. In the epigraphic ornament of the elements of architecture and gravestones of this period, the handwriting "sulce" and "kufi" was used. In the XVII - XVIII centuries, in manuscript calligraphy, the styles of "naskh" and "nastaglig" were used. In the XIX - early XX centuries, styles developed in the art of jewelry: in chased products - "sul", "nash", "nastaglig", in the gliptic - "sulce", "nash", "nastaaglik", "kufi". In the handwritten calligraphy - "naskh", "nastaglig", "shikaste", "suls", "muhaggag".

2. Methodological Framework

2.1. Theoretical and Methodological Basis of the Study

The article is written at the intercrossing of such sciences as art history, cultural studies, archeology, ethnography, and also the auxiliary historical discipline of paleography. The article is based on a holistic system approach to the problem of identifying the features of applying different styles of writing the Arabic alphabet in manuscript calligraphy and the material culture of the Tatars of the Middle Volga region. The use of the classical comparative-historical method, including

synchronous and diachronic analysis, is a priority in the article. The methodology of art criticism analysis is complex in nature and includes a formal stylistic approach to the processing of empirical material, cultural historical analysis, comparative-descriptive method. The article also uses general scientific and culturological methods and approaches: genetic, allowing to make a diachronic cut and trace of the calligraphy art process in the Middle Volga region.

2.2. Research Base

The factual base of the research was the collections of manuscript calligraphy, including records of office work (khan labels), books of religious, scientific and literary and artistic content, quatrains in the collections of the Department of Handwritten and Rare Books of the Nikolai Lobachevsky Scientific Library Kazan Federal University, Center for Written and Musical Heritage of the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language, Literature and Art, Tatarstan Academy of Sciences (CWMH ILLA named after Ibragimov, TAS), the Department of Manuscripts and Rare Books of National Library of the Republic of Tatarstan, the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (NM RT), the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (NA RT), The Graphics Department of the State Museum of Fine Arts of the Republic of Tatarstan (GP SMFA RT) and private collections; collection of jewelry from the collection of the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (NM RT), museums of St. Petersburg (the Hermitage), Moscow (SAM).

3. Results

The Arabic script began to penetrate actively into the Volgo-Kama in connection with the official acceptance of Islam by the Volga Bulgaria in 922 and its recognition as a political ally of the Abbasid caliphate. Together with the Muslim religion the Bulgars adopted Arabic graphics, which replaced the runic letter that used to exist earlier (Shamsutova, 2003; Weimar, 2002). The dissemination of handwritten calligraphy among the Bulgars is indicated by clay and bronze inkpots found in pre-Mongolian archaeological materials. However, for the reason that the monuments of the manuscript heritage of this period have not been preserved, we can not restore the history of the use of handwriting styles in handwritten calligraphy.

Muslim culture penetrated into Volga Bulgaria, primarily due to trade relations with Central Asia, and this process was not associated with religious propaganda (Bartold, 1965; Borisov & Lukonin, 1963). Clearly dated numismatic materials confirm the reports of written sources about the early penetration and distribution of Arabic graphics in Volga Bulgaria (Dodhudoeva, 1998; Gosmanov, 1984).

The products of arts and crafts introduced into scientific circulation, unfortunately, were not so numerous and, basically, they were the subjects of import.

For the pre-Mongol period isolated inscriptions in Arabic were known, for example, on the bronze castle from Bilyar (NM RT), made by the local master Abu Bakr, the son of Ahmed in 1146 (Kazakov, 1985); the inscription was engraved with a good handwriting of "Kufi".

The richest world of the Bulgaro-Tatar epigraphy is made up of tombstones. In XIII - the first half of the XIV centuries in Bulgar there was a large workshop for the production of epitaphs. The Bulgaro-Tatar stone epigraphy is not only an important historical source, but also represents a phenomenon of artistic culture that has arisen on the basis of the synthesis of arts: architecture, stone carving and calligraphy (Chervonnaya, 1987; Vorobyov, 1953). Ornamental decoration of the tombstones of this period indicated a high level of art culture of the stone. CM. Chervonnaya noted that, in fact, synchronously, in the XIII - XIV centuries, in Bulgarian art of carving along the stone, there were two styles in parallel: the first - more magnificent, with the epitaph in handwritten "sulce" - a convex, smooth Arabic script; the second is strict, with a short text, usually embedded in the depths of the stone with the authorized handwriting of "Kufi" - archaic and geometrized.

The next stage in the development of the art of manuscript calligraphy began in the middle of the XIX century. The formation of capitalist relations that influenced the formation of the national self-consciousness of the Tatar people was reflected in its spiritual culture. The opening of the Kazan Gymnasium (1758), Kazan Imperial University (1804) contributed to the possibility of secular Muslims receiving secular education. In the last quarter of the XIX century, the modernization of Tatar society was manifested in progressive transformations in all spheres of the spiritual and material life of society. The movement "Jadidism" took a wide scale (Fakhrutdinov, 2015). The ideas of reformism, which proclaimed the freedom of utterances - *ijtihad*, along with the restriction of traditions, as well as the proclamation of "innovations", helped to revive the handwritten calligraphy, which manifested its characteristic features in book art and *shamails*. The production of *shamailas* was becoming the business of professional calligraphers.

Analysis of the epigraphic ornament showed that the tracing of letters cannot be tied to a particular style. With a great deal of convention, we can say that this is a "sulce" with elements of "naskh". The circle shape dictate and a small area, probably, determined the use of the style "nastalig", used in the hand-written calligraphy, where the next letter is above the previous one. Characteristically, that taken in the classical calligraphy techniques of writing vertical letters in the "Suls" with the inclination to the right and writing of vertical letters in the "naskh" without inclination are violated. Perhaps the jeweler was accustomed to writing in Cyrillic, or he was not familiar with the rigid canons of an Arabographic writing, so he did not pay attention to it. In some calligraphic compositions, there is a pseudoepigraphy where some "letters", in fact, are only an artistic technique - a repeating element of the ornament that determines the rhythm. Thus, unfortunately, it is impossible to speak about the established

school, specially designed sketches of epigraphic ornaments for jewelry. Mass material, and round metal plates were such ones, leaves the impression of replicating copies from copies of long-lost prototypes.

4. Discussions

The development of Islamic art is reflected in the writings of domestic researchers: Bartold (1965), Akimushkin (1987), in the studies of leading foreign scientists: Kazi Ahmed (1947) Asifa al-Hallab (1999), Alieva (2009), Burkhadt (2010), in which issues of formation and development of styles of calligraphic writing in the culture of Muslim people are studied.

Various aspects of the history of the hand-written calligraphy development in the culture of the Tatars of the Middle Volga region are considered in the studies of Vakhadi (1925), Usmanov (1979), Valeev (2006), where the influence of the Central Asian and Ottoman traditions on the formation of calligraphy in the book art was substantiated.

Works of material culture, including calligraphy as an ornament, were introduced into scientific circulation in the works of archeologists: Fedorov-Davydov (1976, 1987), Kazakov (1971, 1985), Khalikov (1994), Rudenko (2001, 2015); Ethnographers Vorobiev (1953), Suslova (1980); Kondakov and Tolstoy (1897), Valeev (2006, 2002), Khalitov and Almenova-Khalit (2013). Important in the study were the exhibitions catalogs of Muslim artworks: (Treasures, 2000), (Classical, 2013).

In the XX century, the topic under consideration was reflected in the works of Russian art historians: Chervonnoy. (1987), Shamsutova (2003), Doninoy (Donina & Suslova, 2016; Vagapova, 2015; Lebedev et al., 2012; Yanina, 1962), who touched upon the issues of forming styles of calligraphic writing based on Arabic graphics in the culture of the Tatars. Fundamentals of the formation and development of manuscript calligraphy in the culture of the Tatars were studied by Vagapova (2015) and composed a section of her thesis work.

5. Conclusion

The process of formation and development of the Arabic calligraphy art in the culture of the Tatar people consisted of many components and was determined by objective historical conditions. The development of Tatar calligraphy cannot be viewed in isolation from the art of other Muslim countries and above all Central Asia, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, with which the Volga Bulgaria of the pre-Mongol and Golden Horde periods, its successor Kazan Khanate, maintained close diplomatic and trade

The study of Khan labels of the Kazan Khanate period (XV - early XVI centuries) shows that in manuscript calligraphy - in the office work - the styles "sulce", "divani" and "rikyā" were used. And, it is typical to use elements of different

styles of handwriting in writing one word, calligraphers were familiar with different types of handwriting styles and used them in accordance with generally accepted canons. The use of these styles is explained by the fact that the throne of the Kazan khanate was ruled by representatives of the Crimean dynasty, which was under the patronage of Turkey, where the above-mentioned styles of writing were established in the office work.

Since the middle of the XVI century (1552) - the conquest and annexation of the Kazan Khanate to the Russian state –till the XVIII century the process of decline of traditional forms of art in the culture of the Tatars of the Middle Volga region has been observed. As a result, the centers of manuscript calligraphy were destroyed that led to irreversible processes of decline of this art form. For XVII - XVIII centuries, it was typical to use handwriting styles of "naskh" in hand-written calligraphy to rewrite compositions on a religious theme and "nastalig" - scientific and literary - artistic works. The practice of differentiating of handwriting styles has been established in accordance with the genre of the literary work.

A new stage in the development of calligraphy in the culture of the Tatars of the Middle Volga region began in the middle of the XIX century; it was characterized by a wide range of handwriting styles in handwritten calligraphy and epigraphic ornamentation. In the jewelry art, calligraphy, as an important part of the epigraphic ornament, received unexpected interpretations of hand-written styles "sulce", "Kufi", "naskh", "nastalig". The quality of performance was determined by the skill of the jeweler and the purpose of the product. The development of handwritten calligraphy is unambiguously difficult to characterize. In the large cities at the madrassas there were workshops for rewriting books; lessons of beautiful writing were included in the curriculum. The rewriting of books was done by professionals who owned different kinds of handwriting styles. There were known masters calligraphers Sh. Tagirov, A. Makhmudov and others who left unique works of art of calligraphy. At the same time, we are forced to note that in the Middle Volga region, due to objective historical reasons, the school of calligraphic art, both in hand-written calligraphy and in decorative and applied art, have not got to form.

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