

Hafiz's Divan from Indian Illustrators Point of View: Thorough Survey of a Rare 13th Century A.H. Manuscript

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Abstract

This essay tends to analyze a rare illuminated and illustrated manuscript of Hafiz's poem collection (divan). This manuscript is of Indian origin with fine calligraphy in black Nastaliq script and extraordinary illustrations. It's written in a two column formation with framing lines in blue, red, gold and green. The manuscript was completed in 1202 A.H. (1788 A.D.) and is currently located in Walter's Art Museum. It opens with a double-page illuminated incipit with headpiece that introduces the preface (dibacheh), followed by another double-page illuminated incipit with headpiece opening the main text of the Divan.

The major point for this manuscript is that the average of the poem's illustrations (Majlis) is nearly two pages for each ten poem and this quality is rare if not non-existent in other manuscripts. In the composition of these illustrations there are traces of 8th century A.H. (13th century A.D.) Persian style miniature but in a completely distinct style. As such changes are that the composition of the figures is considerably different than the old style Persian miniature. One of the finest qualities of this manuscript is use of gold, silver and other valuable metals as base for colors.

Illustration is the art of creating an image for a text it can be a story or a poem. In Old Persian style illustration, poem illustration is one of the most common uses of this art in that the artist tries to use visual arrays as guidelines to help the reader's mind recreate the event of the poem. Because of the effects eastern philosophy on artist the illustration are much different than Classic style illustrations. The same philosophy has later helped shape the Persian style miniature. In this manuscript the poem illustrations have some commonalities and some discrepancies with other Persian, or Indian style illustrations as such will be discussed thoroughly in the essay itself. One of the distinct points of the manuscript is that some of the illustrations contain poems within them.

Keywords: Poem Illustration, Indian Illustration, Indian Illustrators, Hafiz, Hafiz's Divan, Composition of Poem Illustrations, Color Composition, Illustrative techniques

<http://www.ccluoh.in/international-conference-on-hafiz-programme-schedule/>