

Original Research Article**Historical Analysis of Afghan Painting from Prehistoric Times to the Beginning of Amani Reforms**Reza Rafiei Rad¹, Alireza Akrami Hassankiadeh^{2*}

1. Ph.D. Student in Islamic Arts, Faculty of Islamic crafts, Tabriz Islamic Art University, Tabriz, Iran.

2. Instructor of Painting, Faculty of Architecture and Art, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran.

Received; 24/10/2022

accepted; 15/11/2022

available online; 01/01/2023

Abstract

Afghanistan is a country in the Islamic world, as well as Iran's civilization domain, which is of special importance both politically and culturally. Historical texts and ancient excavations from the reign of Shah Amanullah Khan and then in different regions of Afghanistan have provided much evidence of the existence of paintings from the prehistoric era as well as the historic era scattered all around Afghanistan. This study attempts to shed light on the historical Afghan painting from prehistoric times to Afghanistan's independence and analyze it. The current research was carried out using the library and archival sources with a descriptive-analytical method and through scrutinizing historical texts and reviewing archeological documents. The findings of the research show that the works of the Old and Middle Paleolithic eras have no motifs, and the works of the New Paleolithic era have zigzag line drawings. In the Bronze Age, there were geometrical designs and drawings on pottery, including geometrical shapes such as rhombuses, squares, and parallel lines, and the design of love flowers and animals such as goats was done by observing real proportions and in a linear manner. In the works of the Neolithic era, which include realistic or symbolic designs of animals and plants, as well as abstract geometric motifs in the Greco-Bactrian style, the Cybele tablet can be seen as a painted relief. Paintings in the Kushan era can be seen on ivory and glass with condensed figures, also in the painting of Buddha. reflect his life in the two schools of Gandhara and Mathura. The wall paintings of the Ghaznavid era in palaces, towers, and ramparts also benefit from the region's special aesthetics. In the Timurid era, with the emergence of masters like Behzad, we witness a high point in terms of the aesthetics of form and content, which gradually declined and there is no sign of painters of the later era. However, from the time of the Durrani Shahs to the Amani reforms, painters such as Mohammad Azim Abkam, Mir Hessamuddin, Mohammad Reza Naqash, Mohammad Heydar, and Ali Ahmad appeared who were the pioneers of Afghan painting traditions until the arrival of western academic painting aesthetics.

Keywords: *Afghan painting, History of painting, Paintings of Bamiyan caves, Iranian painting.*

* +989123460254, alireza_akrami12@yahoo.com

Introduction

Afghanistan, politically, is located in an important geostrategic place that connects East Asia, South Asia, West Asia, and Central Asia (Griffin, 2002, 110). It has special importance in cultural and civilizational aspects, and in ancient times, it was one of the focal points on the Silk Road and the path for migration (Kehzad, 1976, 317; Baxter, 1997, 125). From the artistic aspect, this country has a brilliant history in the field of art from the prehistoric era until now, among which the Gandhara and Mathura art schools, the Greco-Bactrian art, and the Herat painting school can be mentioned. Archaeological excavations from the reign of Shah Amanullah Khan, led by Louis Dupree in 1970, 1996, and 1974, the Kyoto University Board in 1959-1967, Carlton Ken in 1954, S.M. Poglyzzi in 1963, Jean-Marie Casal (1961) and other archaeological groups has provided many pieces of evidence of the existence of paintings from prehistoric times and historical times in all parts of Afghanistan in a scattered manner. Also, historical written documents, such as those written by Hsien-Tsang, a Chinese pilgrim in 623 AD, have reported wall paintings in different colors from different scenes of Buddha's life. In the post-Islam era, you can also see paintings in the form of paintings or wall paintings. This historical course of painting continued until the emergence of masters such as Mohammad Azim Abkam in the court of Durrani kings. Now the question is, how is the historical formation of Afghan painting explained and analyzed from prehistoric times to the independence of Afghanistan (1919 AD)?

Research Methodology

The current research was carried out in a descriptive-analytical way based on the findings of archeology groups in Afghanistan from the years of Amanullah Shah's reign until now and also using the library and archival sources. In this research, it was attempted to base the criteria of investigations on archaeological findings in the form of tangible objects, and written historical documents were used minimally.

Research Background

The research conducted in the field of Afghan painting

focuses more on contemporary painting, but in some of them, brief references to the history of painting in this country can be seen. The research of Abdul Wase Rahro Omarzad in 2018 with the title "Afghanistan art in the last century", as well as another article in 2017 by Reza Rafiei Rad et al. titled "The function of the figure in two decades of Afghanistan's painting" both divide the historical course of Afghan painting into four periods with a stylistic approach. The former divides it into "pre-Islam", "post-Islam", "Realism period" and "after civil wars" (Rafiei Rad & Tomyris, 2017, 19-20). The latter's division goes as "pre-Islam", "First Golden Period (Herat School)", "Second Golden Period (Amani's reign)", and "Modernization (last two decades)" (Omarzad, 2017, 16). Other articles by Reza Rafiei Rad and Mehdi Mohammadzadeh entitled "Strategies of Female Afghan Painters in Recreating and Reviving the Heritage of Pictorial Painting in the Contemporary Painting of Afghanistan" in 2019, and an article entitled "Comparison of the methods of applying pictorial painting traditions in the works of contemporary female painters in Iran and Afghanistan" in 2020, also made brief references to the history of Afghan painting (Rafiei Rad & Mohammadzadeh, 2020, 4-5), and while introducing the works of contemporary female painters of this country, they analyzed their form and content (Rafiei Rad & Mohammadzadeh, 2021, 31-35). Also, the article titled "Thematic Analysis of Contemporary Afghan Painting" by these two authors and Mohammad Reza Moridi was done through the thematic analysis method and while introducing several contemporary Afghan painters, the themes of their paintings are categorized and then analyzed. In the field of Afghan painting, the article entitled "Adaptation of the representation of the image of women in the contemporary painting of Afghanistan and Tajikistan" in 2021, by Rafiei Rad and others also has brief references to the history of painting in these two countries (Rafiei Rad & Amirpour, 2021, 26). Another article by Abdul Qadir Sarwari entitled "A Study of the Art of Painting in

Kabul” introduces several contemporary painters in Kabul such as “Ghulam Mohammad Mimangi” and “Abdul Ghafoor Breshna” and their works (Sarwary, 2020, 17-20).

History of Afghan painting

One of the characteristics of Afghanistan’s historical periods is the familiarity with the most historical civilizations of the world, as it has traded with both the civilizations of the Mediterranean coast and with India and China. Since 1923 AD, archaeological excavations in this country show that early humans lived on this land by the rivers, from about 100 to 120 thousand years ago (Lhuillier & Bendezu-Sarmiento, 2018, 342). In the following, the historical course of painting in different eras of this country will be examined.

• Prehistoric times

Archeological discoveries of the Old Paleolithic era took place in the Navar plain of Ghazni by Louis Dupree in 1974. The Middle Paleolithic period discoveries happened in Morde Gosfand Cave in 1970 and in Kur Valley in 1996 both by Dupree. The Kyoto University delegation in Hezar Sam Semangan from 1959 to 1967, Carlton Ken in the Qara Kemer area in 1954, and S.M. Poglyzzi in the Kalan Valley in 1963 were also among the Middle Paleolithic period discoveries. The New Paleolithic period discoveries were done by Louis Dupree in 1966 in the Agh Kaprak area, which only included functionless carvings, statue heads and zigzag decorations.

• Historical period (Neolithic-Bronze)

The discoveries of Casal (1961) related to the Bronze Age in Seyed Qala and Mandigak included pottery vessels with geometrical designs, as well as love flowers and animals such as goats that were made based on real proportions and in a linear manner (Fig. 1).

The discoveries of the Neolithic Age in the Sistan area were made by the French team led by Ghirshman in 1936, as well as the Afghan-Soviet archaeological team led by Viktor Sarianidi in 1973, in Sorkhdak and Sefidak in Sistan, and also by Italian group led by Tosi in 1967. The people of this land, who belong to the Bronze Age,

had access to handicrafts and techniques such as cloth weaving, pottery, metalwork, making stone objects, basket weaving, and architecture.

The discoveries of Dr. Abdul Rauf Wardak, in 1966 in the Flaul area, included containers next to a corpse belonging to this era, which has vegetal shapes, animals such as wild bulls, wild boars, a bird between two snakes, and geometric motifs carved in them (Fig. 3). The works obtained from the Achaemenid era in Afghanistan can be seen mostly in the form of architecture in areas such as Delbarzhin, Tashqarghan, Kohne Qala, and Bala Hesar (Rafiei Rad, 2022, 15).

• Greco- Bactrian period

In 1965, the French archaeological team of DAFa

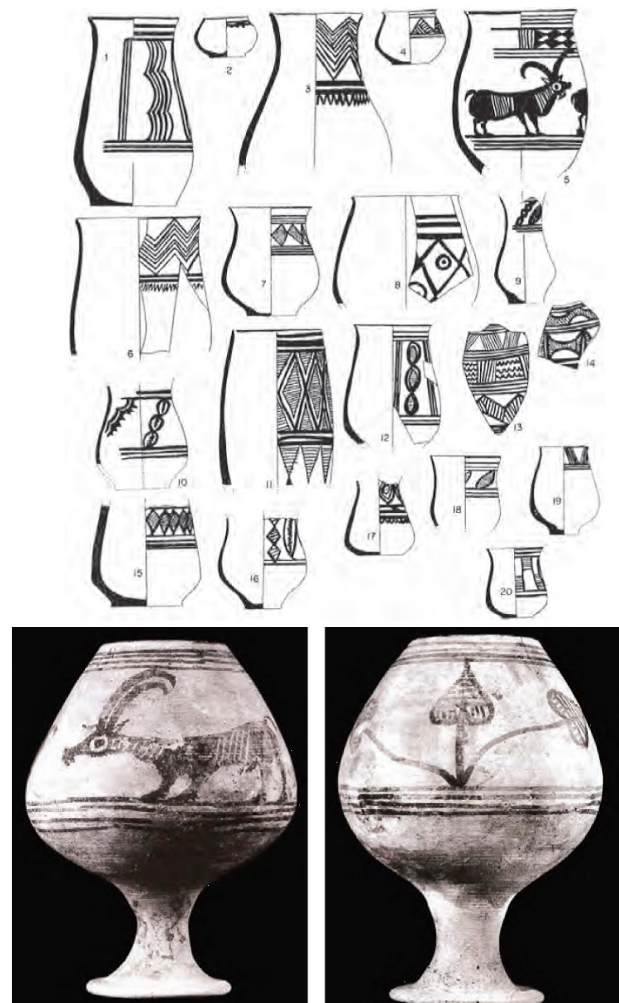


Fig. 1. Mandigak ancient site in the Bronze Age, right: drawing on pottery, 3rd millennium BC, left: goat drawing and geometric design on clay cups and a vase. Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018, 76- 77.



Fig. 2. Stone seal, discovered in Takhar province, Shurtoqi region.
Source: Frankforth, 1989, 51.

(Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan) began its excavations under the supervision of Paul Bernard in the Ai Khanum area, and the works found in this area were designed and executed in the classical Greek style (Figs. 4 to 6).

From Ai Khanum, a 25cm diameter silver and gilded circular tablet named Cybele tablet (Greek goddess of nature) was obtained, which is created in Greco-Bactrian style.

• The era of the Kushan and Kidari empires (1st to 4th centuries AD)

The Kushan era is a great civil, religious, artistic, and literary period in the history of Afghanistan, which includes prominent works such as paintings, coins, temple and stupa architecture, sculptures, and inscriptions from this period that are left in areas such as Gandhara, Kapisa, Bagram, Bamiyan, Sorkh Kotel, and other spots.

Excavations of the Bagram area have been carried out by various people such as Jean Casal, Jacques Monier, Rie Haken, and Roman Ghirshman from 1936 to 1948. From 1937 to 1939, Bagram's treasury was discovered in two sealed and varnished rooms, which were full of valuable works made of Indian ivory, glass works, brass objects, and plaster symbols (of Greek origin) (Figs. 8

& 9). Among other Kushan paintings discovered in Afghanistan, we can mention the paintings on glass in this treasure (Figs. 10 & 11).

Among other works related to the Kushan era, it is located 40 kilometers northwest of Balkh in the area called Delbarzhin, which was excavated by the joint Afghan-Soviet team. There are wall paintings that were obtained from this area (Figs. 12 & 13).

Another area discovered during the Kushan era of Afghanistan by the Afghan-Japanese delegation, under Mizuno's supervision in 1966, is the Shotor Hede Tepe in Nangarhar province. In the 4th century AD, the Kushan areas along with Gandhara were captured by the Sassanids. The oldest document that mentions the name Gandhara for the first time is the Rigveda. But the first historical document is the inscription of Darius I in Biston (Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018, 148). During Buddha's lifetime, drawing and depicting Buddha was forbidden, and then in Gandhara and Mathura, it was first worshiped in the form of a symbol. These two art schools, i.e., Gandhara and Mathura, were created and active at the same time during the Kushan empire.

Bamiyan, which Herdot considers to be the crossroads of cultures, was one of the most important areas under the influence of the Kushans, and during the excavation, unique paintings were discovered from its caves (Figs. 14 & 15). Also, the statue of two big Buddhas has been left there since the first century AD. The feet of the Great Buddha were destroyed by Aurangzeb in 1647 AD.

Hüen-Tsang visited Bamiyan in 623 AD and reported on wall motifs as different colors from different scenes of Buddha's life. Figs. 16 & 17 shows the ceiling painting of the Big Buddha portico.

Mes Eynak area is an ancient area from the Bronze, Iron, Kushan-Sassanid, and Islamic eras of Afghanistan, which has been excavated several times in 1962, 1977, and 1980 by DAFA. The wall paintings, paintings on metal and vessels, and the paintings that were obtained from Mes Eynak Logar, which is one of the important areas in the Gandhara area, are divided into two groups of pictorial paintings (expressive) and abstract (Bavari, 2019, 15).



Fig. 3. Flaul Tepe, 1966, a gold dish, a goblet with geometric patterns, a cup with bulls and wild boars. Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018.



Fig. 4. Male face from Gul Khanum, Ai Khanum, Taqch-haye Dandaneh-dar Temple, 2nd century BC, 15x21 cm. National Museum of Afghanistan, Recovered Treasures Album, 2007. Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018



Fig. 5. Limestone female statue, Ai Khanum, temple. Source: Frankforth, 1989, 55.

New excavations in 2012 from the city of Swat, in Gandhara, have yielded fresco paintings (paintings on a wet surface) (Fig. 18). Also, the excavations found Kushan era paintings on pottery and in small sizes in Balkh, which are remarkable (Fig. 19).

From the end of the 4th century to the 8th century AD, the Hephthalites Empire ruled the land of Afghanistan, and then from the 8th to the 11th century AD, they continued their political life under the names of Hindu Shahs, Ratbil Shahs, and Kabul Shahs. In this era, sculpting and coin design were popular.

• Islamic era (Arab invasion until the rise of Ahmad Shah Darrani)

In the first Islamic century, the Ratbilan dynasty ruled over Zabulistan, the Kabul Shahan ruled over Kabul, the Shiran ruled over Bamiyan, the Oykan ruled over Ghazina and Gordiz, the Teginan ruled over northern provinces, and Suriyans ruled over Herat and Ghour. All these families were Kushan and Hephthalites.

• Bani Umayyad and Bani Abbas

The Arabs attacked Iran in 642 AD under the order of Omar. Then until the year 870, all of the current Afghanistan was conquered by the Arabs (Dupree, 1977, 21). Since the first century AD, freedom of belief and worship has been common, but the final change of Afghanistan's religion took place in the Ghaznavid era and around the eleventh century AD (Habibi, 1988, 3-4). Hüen-Tsang has mentioned different types of fabrics such as "Kiaw Shi Yi", "Waztsu Mo", "Kin Po Lo" and "Hulali" (Tseng, 1884, 133). Tabari also mentioned silk cloths such as Marvi, Heravi, and Qohi from Afghanistan in the 8th century AD (Tabari, 1967, 465). Ibn Athir



Fig. 6. Big foot statue made of marble, Ai Khanum, temple.
Source: Frankforth, 1989, 75.



Fig. 7. The Cybele gilded silver plate in Greco-Bactrian style.
Source: Frankforth, 1989, 75.



Fig. 8. Inscribed tablet, Jataka scene, Afghanistan, Bagram, 1st century AD, ivory, 5.8x11cm. National Museum of Afghanistan. Recovered Treasures Album, 2007. Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018.



Fig. 9. Inscribed tablet, Jataka scene, Afghanistan, Bagram, 1st century AD, ivory, 5.8x11cm, National . Source Museum of Afghanistan, Recovered Treasures Album, 2007.Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018.



Fig.10. Painted glass cup, Kushan art, Bagram, Afghanistan, 1st century AD, height 12.6, diameter 8 cm, National Museum of Afghanistan. Recovered Treasures Album, 2007.Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018.



Fig. 11. Painted glass cup, hunting and fishing scene, Kushan art, Bagram, Afghanistan, 1st century AD, height 24.7, diameter 11.7 cm, National Museum of Afghanistan. Recovered Treasures Album, 2007.Source: Sarmiento & Rasouli, 2018.

mentioned the fame of Herat textiles in Egypt, too (Maqrizi, 1941, 417). The paintings of these fabrics were generally images of big elephants, peacocks, and camels, border decorations with animal and vegetal motifs, and calligraphy, which shows its Islamic design (Zaki, 1984, 230). Figure 20, i.e., a silk cloth with a woven painting of a boar's head in rings of pearls and a peacock, was found in the Buddhist caves of Bamiyan and shows the influence of Sassanian art. Also, the image of a goat on the silk cloth in the other image emphasizes its Sassanian style.

• Taherians, Samanians and Ghaznavids

From 821 to 872 AD, the Taheri family established a government in Afghanistan and wanted the independence of Afghanistan alongside the Islamic Caliphate. Many works were also lost during this period. Then Yaqub Leith Safari defeated Kabulshah in 832 AD and Afghanistan was under the rule of Safaris until 910 AD.

The Safari period was the era of the development

and strengthening of the political institution of the government and the expansion of security. Also, Afghanistan's feudalism became stronger from the 7th century AD and was strengthened in the 9th and 10th centuries (Qobar, 1989, 95). Then the Samanid dynasty, which was a dynasty in Balkh and practiced Zoroastrianism, ruled Afghanistan from 892 to 999 AD. The 9th and 10th centuries are known for the science and art of Central Asia, and the cities of Afghanistan and Transoxiana were the reference point for scholars, poets, and artists of other countries. The Samanid court was an encourager and supporter of science and art, and had virtuous and scholarly men and ministers, such as Abul Fazl Muhammad Ibn Abdullah Balami (*ibid.*, 99). Figure 21 shows an example of an imaginary winged and asymmetric lion painting in Afghanistan influenced by Sasanian art during the Samanid period.

The Ghaznavid era in Afghanistan took place from 962 to 1148 AD. This period in the history of Afghanistan is the period of consolidation of the foundations of the country's unity in terms of religion, language, and politics. During this period, handicrafts such as goldsmithing, woodworking, inlaying, carving, and ebony work, as well as painting and music had made great progress. In Lashkari Bazar of Kabul, Qobar mentioned that the paintings were drawn during the Ghaznavid era, and also added that the paintings on Afghan handicrafts belonged to this period (Qobar, 1989, 99-101) (Figs. 22 & 23).

The Ghaznavid kushks and palaces, the product of Afghan architects and painters, included barracks, a treasury, the residence of courtiers, the residence of kings and princes and soldiers (Porfeiz, 2016, 68). These palaces were built according to the specific aesthetic style of the region, based on the needs of the royal family, with high walls in the best location of the city (Jalali, 1972, 104). In the building of some palaces in Lashkari Bazar, on the walls made of mud, clay, and plaster, some paintings showed soldiers and warriors in special clothes (Bosworth, 2005, 107). Sultan Mahmud, apart from being a literary man, had also invited artists to beautify the capital (Bambachi, 1997, 76). Beyhaqi talked about the nude paintings of

men and women in the Adnani Garden's kushk (chateau) that Sultan Masoud ordered to be done, and also from the words of Abdul Malik Naqash, he stated that the cost of building this chateau along with its paintings was seven million dirhams (Bayhaqi, 1985, 149).

• Seljuks and Khwarezmshahs

The Seljuks, who were more primitive and uneducated and got used to civilization very late, ruled in Afghanistan from 1038 to 1153. Feudal wars, separatism and Ash'ari prejudices were prominent features of this period. The Ghorian government ruled in Afghanistan from 1148 to 1214 which were very similar to the Ghaznavids. During this period in the field of literature, Aruzi Samarkandi's Chahar Maghaleh and Naseri's Labab al-albab and Tarikh-e Tabaqat were authored, while also in art and architecture, the Herat Grand Mosque and Jam Minaret were built. In addition, the Brin kushk and Bagh-e Davar were also built during this period, which, along with many other scientific and artistic achievements, were destroyed in the invasion of the Mongols (Qobar, 1989, 136). From 1214 to 1219, the Khwarazmshahs ruled Afghanistan, which was overthrown by the Mongol invasion in the 13th century. The foundations of Afghanistan's cultural decline were laid in the 11th century AD during the three hundred years of wars between reasonable scholars and philosophy and the new Islamic tribes such as Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Khwarazmis. From the time of the Mongol conquest to the invasion of Amirtimur Gurkani in the 14th and 15th centuries, Afghanistan spent a century and a half in absolute material and spiritual darkness.

• Timurid

With all the violence and crises of the Timurid period, Afghan painting reached its peak during this period in the form of the Herat school. With Sultan Husayn Bayqara's reign in Herat and with the help of Amir Ali Shir Nawai, the masters of art from all over Iran rushed to Herat, which was a refuge for writers and artists (Khwandamir, 2010, 3-4). During the rule of Sultan Hossein, Herat reached the peak of evolution and developed as the real center of civility, the art of calligraphy and book design (Mardanov, 2008, 47). The convergence of the painting



Fig.12. Wall painting of one of the chiefs or princes.
Source: Kruglikova, 1979, 12.



Fig. 13. Wall painting and decorations of the north wall.
Source: Kruglikova, 1979, 12.



Fig.14. On the right side of the wall painting of the Great Buddha's portico, the gift giver is holding his gift up in his left hand. Left: Above the Buddha's head on the roof of the portico, it shows a Bodhisattva. Bamiyan, 1st century AD. Source: Hackin, 1933, 12.



Fig. 16. Paintings and decorations of the Great Buddha's portico, Bamiyan. Source: Hackin, 1933, 13.



Fig. 15. Buddha painting, Kekrak Valley, Bamiyan.
Source: Hackin, 1933, 13.



Fig. 17. Buddha wall painting, Kekrak, Kushan era. Source: The fourth series of ICOM Red Lists of Antiquities at Risk, 2004, 5.



Fig. 18. Paintings obtained from Mes Eynak and Swat. Source: Bavari, 2019, 15.

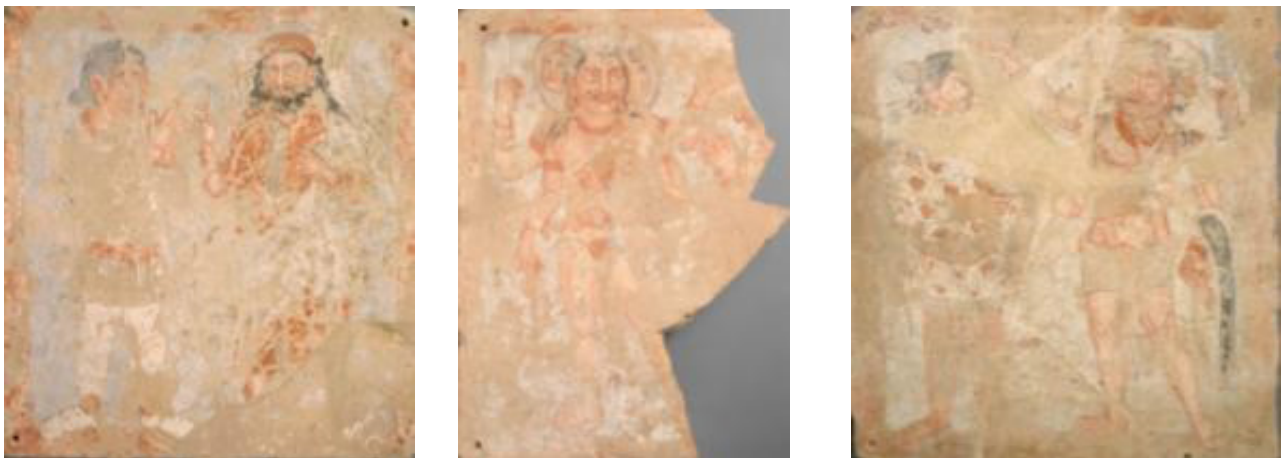


Fig. 19. Three gouache paintings on pottery, Kushan age, Metropolitan Museum; Right: Dimensions 57.2 x 53.3 x 5.7 cm, Accession Number 2000.42.3; Center: Dimensions H. 57.2 cm, W. 41.6 cm, D. 5.7 cm, Accession number 2000.42.4; Left: Dimensions H. 56.8 cm, W. 52.3 cm, D. 5.4 cm, Accession number 2000.42.2. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/327832>.

form with the romantic and mystical content of the poem and the image with the human figure, in delicate and small images with a decorative background and a long horizon and spongy mountains, as well as the depreciation of foreign influence and accompanying national and local characteristics (Sabahat, 2019, 151), liberation from the typical Mongolian style (Rifai, 2007, 41), works with natural color combinations, invention of portraits (Miran,

2016, 124), the beginning of face caricatures, the attempts in showing the inner states of the figure and presenting a realistic view to the society, the abundant use of architecture as a regulator of the structure of the painting and the presence of the characters in the painting (MMohammadzadeh & Mesineh Asl, 2017, 27), and the representation of a stream or water canal with silver color in a spiral shape (Kuhnel, 2020, 52) are among the characteristics of this school of



Fig. 20. Right: Silk cloth, 7th, and 8th century AD, Afghanistan, Metropolitan Museum: Accession number: 2004.260; middle & left: Silk cloth, 8th century AD, Afghanistan, Accession number: 2005.134. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/72582>.



Fig. 21. Painting on a clay bowl, transparent underglaze, Samani era, Afghanistan. Metropolitan Museum, access number: 1980.524. Source: <https://toosfoundation.com/samanid-dynasty>.



Fig. 22. Wall painting, Massoud period, Ghaznavid era, Lashkari Bazar, Afghanistan. Source: Necipoğlu & Bailey, 2006, 74.



Fig. 23. Paper and lacquer painting on a hexagonal table, Ghaznavid era (The David Collection, Inv. no. 33/1997). Source: The David Collection, Inv. no. 33/1997.

of relative internal security and stability was established and handicrafts, including painting, woodwork, carpets, needlework and felt and textiles, especially silk, flourished for forty-five years. The painting also had a special value

painting.

After the partition and division of Afghanistan in the 16th century by the Uzbek governments of Transoxiana, the Safavid of Iran, and the Babari of India, political movements and struggles for freedom and independence in Afghanistan led to the rejection of the Safavid government and the occupation of Iran by the Hotakian Empire (1709-1738) under the leadership of Mirwais (Otfinoski, 2004, 7).

• Ahmad Shah Durrani to Abdul Rahman Khan

Ahmad Shah Durrani became the king in 1747 AD and the revival period of Afghanistan began (Qobar, 1989, 353-356).

During the time of Ahmad Shah and Timur Shah, a period

and importance in the court of kings. Mohammad Azim Abkam was a famous painter who had been a court painter since the time of Amir Dost Mohammad Khan and had trained many students. His style is mostly watercolor or opaque watercolor with pencil (Fig. 24). During this period, painters such as Mir Hesamuddin, Mohammad Reza Naqash, Mohammad Heydar, and Ali Ahmad were also working in the courts of Shir Ali Khan to Habibullah Shah. This generation was born between 1808 and 1863, and they all died by 1974.

Conclusion

The present research, by collecting archaeological and historical documents, has achieved results for the historical explanation of Afghan painting until the reforms. Artifacts found from the Old Paleolithic and Middle Paleolithic in Afghanistan do not have motifs, but the artefacts found from the New Paleolithic have zigzag linear designs. The paintings of the historical period of the Bronze Age were done on pottery with a linear design and geometric shapes of love flowers and animals such as goats, with respect for proportion. The works of the Neolithic era also include natural or symbolic designs of animals, plants, and also abstract geometric motifs. Painting on glass in the Kushan era includes stylized figures with respect to body shape, matching the skin color with reality, matching human size and the environment, and the wall paintings of this era are also very similar to Manichaean works. In the two schools of Gandhara and Mathura during the Kushan period, you can see the paintings of Buddha and his life. The wall paintings of the Ghaznavid period, which were painted in palaces, towers, and ramparts, also benefit from the specific aesthetics of the region. Then, in the Timurid era, with the emergence of masters like Behzad, we witness a high point in terms of aesthetics and content in the works, which gradually declined, and this process continued from the time of the Durrani kings until the end of the first phase of the Amani reforms. During this period, painters such as Mohammad Azim Abkam, Mir Hessamuddin, Mohammad Reza Naqash, Mohammad Heyder, and Ali Ahmad emerged, yet there is little information about them and their works.

References list

- Bambachi. (1997). *Art of the Ghaznavid period* (Y. Azhand, Trans.). Tehran: Moli Publications.

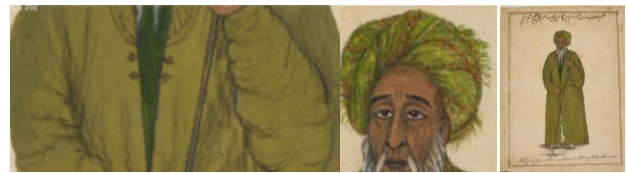


Fig. 24. Seyed Mir Hafiz Ji Sahib's painting, by Mohammad Azim Abkam, 1854, opaque watercolor on cardboard, location: England, British Library. Source: Rafiei Rad, 2022.

- Bavari, R. (2019). New discoveries in the area of ancient Gandhara with an emphasis on the art of painting in Afghanistan. *the conference on the history of painting in Afghanistan, organized by Eco-Kabul Institute*.
- Baxter, C. (1997). *Historical Setting*. Library of Congress Country Studies on Afghanistan, Library of Congress.
- Bayhaqi, Kh. A. (1985). *Tarikh-e Beyhaghi* [History of Bayhaqi], edited by Dr. Ali Akbar Fayaz. Kabul: Matba' E Dolati.
- Bosworth, C. E. (2005). *History of the Ghaznavids* (H. Anousheh, Trans.), vol.2 & 1. Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications.
- Dupree, N. H. (1977). *An Historical Guide to Afghanistan* Afghan Tourist Organization Publication Afghan Tourist Organization. Kabul: Afghan Air Authority, Afghan Tourist Organization.
- Frankforth, P. (1989). *Fouilles de Shortughai recherches sur l'Asie centrale protohistorique*. Paris: Diffusion de Bocard.
- Griffin, L. (2002). *The Pre-Islamic Period, Afghanistan Country Study*. Illinois : Institute of Technology.
- Habibi, A. (1988). *Tarikh-e Iran va Afghanistan baad az eslam* [History of Iran and Afghanistan after Islam]. 3rd edition. Tehran: Duniya Kitab.
- Hackin, J. (1933). *B, L'Oeuvre de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan archéologie bouddhique*. Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise.
- Jalali, Gh. J. (1972). *Ghazne va Ghaznaviyan* [Ghazna and Ghaznavian]. Kabul: D. Beyhaqi Institute Publishing House.
- Kehzad, A. A. (1976). *History of Afghanistan, (from the previous eras of history to the fall of Maurya rule)*. Kabul: Anonymous publisher.
- Khwandamir, Gh. H. (2010). *Tarikh-e Habibol seyrfi akhbar-e afrad va bashar* [Habib al-Sir's book of history in the news of people], introduction by Jalaluddin Humai, under the supervision of Mohammad Debirsiyaghi. Tehran: Khayyam Publications.
- Kruglikova I. T. (1979). *Drevnjaja Baktrija Materialy ovetsko_Afganskoj arkheologicheskoy ekspeditsii*. Vol. 2. Moskva: Eskusstuo.
- Kuhnelt, E. (2020). The importance of the art of painting - miniature (Herat School - Part 1) (S. Ashtari, Trans.). *Religious Art*, (2), 50-57.
- Lhuillier, J. & Bendezu-Sarmiento, J. (2018). Central Asia and the Interaction between the Iranian Plateau and the Steppes in Late First Millennium BC. *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia*, (24), 331-353.
- Maqrizi, T. (1941). *al-Khita' al-Maqriziah, called "Al-*

Muawa'at wa'l-I'tibar by mentioning plans and effects. Egypt: Multazema Library.

- Mardanov, Y. A. (2008). Art and culture of books and bookmaking in the Timurid era. *Book of Maah-e Honar*, (117), 46-49.
- Miran, L. (2016). Professor Kamaluddin Behzad, a master miniaturist. *Afghanistan Archeological Review*, (32), 67-87.
- Mohammadzadeh, M. & Mesineh Asl, M. (2017). Architecture in the Paintings of Herat School. *CIAUJ*, 2 (2), 27-45.
- Necipoğlu, G. & Bailey, J. (2006). *An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World, Muqarnas*, Vol.22. Boston: Published By Brill.
- Omarzad, A. (2017). Afghan art in the last century. *Honar-haye-Ziba*, (9), 13-20.
- Otfinoski, S. (2004). *Afghanistan*. USA: Infobase Publishing.
- Porfeiz, A. (2016). The art of architecture in Ghaznavid palaces. *Afghanistan Archeological Review*, (32), 67-87.
- Qobar, M. (1989). *Afghanistan dar masir-e tarikh* [Afghanistan on the path of history]. 4th edition. Kabul: The Enghelab Publishing Center with the cooperation of the Jomhuri.
- Rafiei Rad, R. & Tomyris, T. (2017). The function of the figure in the painting of two decades of Afghanistan, scientific-research journal of fine arts, *Faculty of Fine Arts*, (8), 18-24.
- Rafiei Rad, R. & Mohammadzadeh, M. (2020). The strategies of Afghan women painters in recreating and reviving the miniature visual tradition in contemporary painting. *Journal of Great Khorasan*, 10(39), 16-1.
- Rafiei Rad, R. & Mohammadzadeh, M. (2021). Comparison

of the Methods of Applying the Visual Traditions of Iranian Painting in the Paintings of Contemporary Women Painters in Iran and Afghanistan. *Painting Graphic Research*, 3(5), 13-22.

- Rafiei Rad, R. & Amirpour, E. (2021). A Comparative Representation of the Image of a Woman in Contemporary Afghan and Tajik Painting. *Paykareh*, 10(24), 26-39.
- Rafiei Rad, R. (2022). An Analysis of Architectural Representation in the Paintings of Afghanistan over the Last Four Decades. *Journal of Art and Civilization of the Orient*, 10(35), 13-22.
- Rifai, A. (2007). *History of Art in Islamic Lands* (A. R. Kanawat, Trans.) Third ed. Mashhad: Ferdowsi University Publishing.
- Sabahat, S. (2019). Renaissance of the Timurid of Herat. *Afghanistan Archaeological Review*, (37), 143-162.
- Sarmiento, B. J. & Rasouli, M. N. (2018). *L'archéologie de l'Afghanistan de la Préhistoire au début de l'Islam (RDAFA)*. Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan. Kabul: Shemshad Pub.
- Sarwary, A. Q. (2020). A Study of the Art of Painting in Kabul. *Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science and Humanities*, 8(2), 16-26.
- Tabari, A. (1967). *Tarikh al-Ummum wa al-Muluk*. Beirut: Rawaeol-Tarath al-arabi.
- Tseng, H. (1884). *Siuk Ki, Memoirs of the Eastern Kingdoms* (S. Beale, Trans.). London.
- Wasfi, Z. (1970). *Bada'i al-Waqa'i*. Tehran: Farhang-e Iran Foundation Publications.
- Zaki, M. H. (1984). *Iranian industries after Islam* (M.H. Khalili, Trans.). Tehran: Iqbal.

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author (s), with publication rights granted to the journal of art & civilization of the orient. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Rafiei Rad, R. & Akrami Hassankiadeh, A. (2023). Historical Analysis of Afghan Painting from Prehistoric Times to the Beginning of Amani Reforms. *Journal of Art & Civilization of the Orient*, 10(38), 33-44.

DOI: 10.22034/JACO.2022.367091.1273

URL: http://www.jaco-sj.com/article_163851.html?lang=en

