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WHAT DID JUAN VAN HALEN WRITE ABOUT SHEKI KHAN PALACE? CAN WE BELIEVE THAT THE SMALL SIZED MINIATURES WERE PAINTED BY AN ITALIAN?

Abstract. Sheki khan palace, a historical and architectural monument of world importance was included into the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019. Both the facade and the interior of Sheki khan palace that the construction dates back to the XVIII century were decorated with the various shaped, plot, geometrical, plant, miniature and allegorical paintings. The miniature hunting and battle scenes which were painted on the second floor of the palace as attracts attention either for their size, placement, or the topic were investigated by the local and foreign scholars, art critics and researchers and transformed into the topic of the various articles, books and scientific works. But 142 miniatures which were painted in the main hall of the first floor, in divankhana room of the palace both for their small sizes and being painted within the stalactites which are at the intersection of the walls and the ceiling overlooked. But in fact the investigation of these paintings is one of the important problems for Azerbaijani art. But unfortunately as the mentioned drawings have not been scientifically studied till now some of the experts believe that the author of these paintings is not a person who drew other images, but a completely different, alien person, in short, a European. The reason for this conclusion is a sentence written by Juan Van Halen in his memories.

In this article Juan Van Halen's memories about Sheki khan palace will be analyzed. Will be analyzed extent of rightness of the claims that the author of the white and blue paintings or small sized miniatures depicted in the palace is a European.

Key words: Sheki khan palace, Juan Van Halen, miniatures, an italian, drawing with Chinese manner.

Introduction. Juan Van Halen (1788-1864) who was deported from his native homeland Spain in 1818 served in the Tsar's army for 18 months (1819-1820) and was directly involved in the unification of the Caucasus with Tsarist Russia. The original Spanish manuscript of Don Juan's work that he had written during the exile, edited by the author of "DON ESTEBAN" and "SANDOVAL" and printed by J. and J. Harper under the title of "Narrative of Don Juan Van Halen's imprisonment in the Dungeons of the Inquisition at Madrid, and his escape in 1817 and 1818 ;to which are added, his journey to Russia, his campaign with the army of the Caucasus, and his return to Spain in 1821", in English, in 1828, in New York. According to the book, Don Juan's views on the Sheki khan's palace are presented:

"Narrative of Don Juan Van Halen's imprisonment in the Dungeons of the Inquisition at Madrid, and his escape in 1817 and 1818 ;to which are added, his journey to Russia, his campaign with the army of the Caucasus, and his return to Spain in 1821" [pp. 315-317].

"We entered Nougha at ten o'clock in the morning, and alighted at the palace of the late Khan, where apartments had been prepared for us. As the Khan of this province died without issue, in 1819, it fell under the immediate government of Russia, and General Yermolow appointed to the administration. (Z.R.: The person who was mentioned that died without issue was Ismayil khan the last khan of Sheki khanate.)...The palace of the Khan was built at various times, and by different architects*. The principal part of this building, which was occupied by Prince Madatoff, and covered with carpets and tapestry, offered nothing very remarkable. The apartments of the commandant of the province were in the most modern part of the edifice, and consisted of a suite of rooms, adjoining a gallery, the walls and ceilings of which were ornamented with looking-glasses, bordered by a tasteful foliage, painted and varnished in the Chinese manner, by an Italian who had been employed by the late Khan ten years ago**. This gallery looked into a garden, in which there were several cascades, formed by the waters of the fountains by which this gallery was adorned and refreshed. Between the major's and the general's apartments is another garden larger than the former, and opposite to an interior staircase of the harem there is a basin of white marble, ten feet in diameter; which reminded me of that which is seen in one of the Moorish palaces in Granada, where the Abencerages were beheaded. Indeed the climate, the pure sky, and even the situation of Nougha, bear a great resemblance to that part of Spain, although none of the Khang, notwithstanding the wealth they amassed when

they arbitrarily disposed of the fate of the merchants and proprietors of the country, has left any monument that can be compared in taste or magnificence with those raised by the Moors in the two principal capitals of the south of Spain... During our dinner two very ugly Tartar women, who had been dancers in the harem of the late Khan, performed various dances and feats for our entertainment, with which, however, we could very well have dispensed. But my principal source of amusement was in the pictures which adorned the saloon, and which represented the extravagant exploits of Runstad (Z.R.: Most likely he meant Rustam), an imaginary hero of antiquity, the Orlando of the Persians, the drawing and painting of which were as imperfect as the verses of the ballad that commemorate his valorous deeds are outrageously bombastic***... We left Nougha, on the morning of the 24th of May...”

142 small miniatures placed among the stalactites of the divan room, on the first floor of the Sheki khan's palace are interesting for their originality and content. The small size of these miniatures and their location in a difficult-to-see place have caused them to be overlooked by researchers. Thus, they moved away and became alienated. Later, based on the above-mentioned source, it was noted that the author of the paintings was a European.

Interpretation of the main material. Based on the memoirs of Juan Van Halen, his sentences will be analyzed to investigate and draw conclusions about the fact that the Italian artist had worked in the Sheki khan's palace.

First of all, it should be noted that sometimes such authors write their memories after returning to their homeland, so sometimes there are mistakes and displacements.

”... The palace of the Khan was built at various times, and by different architects...”

Most likely, the author did not mean a palace here, but separate buildings belonging to the palace complex located inside the castle walls which were built at different times, by different architects. Because in historical sources, in the act drawn up by Major Lisanovich on the condition of the Nukha fortress, and in a letter from the Decembrist A. Kornilovich to his brother, written in Sheki in 1834, it is said that there were about forty buildings inside the fortress walls, separate gardens and several fountains. Even on the plan of the city of Sheki dated on February 26, 1853, found in the Maritime Archives of St. Petersburg, show that the palace of Sheki Khan, which has survived to this day, is part of a large palace complex. So Van Halen was not talking about a concrete building.

“...The apartments of the commandant of the province were in the most modern part of the edifice, and consisted of a suite of rooms, adjoining a gallery, the walls and ceilings of which were ornamented with looking-glasses, bordered by a tasteful foliage, painted and varnished in the Chinese manner, by an Italian who had been employed by the late Khan ten years ago...”

According to Van Halen’s namely this sentence it is claimed that the author of the small miniatures depicted in Sheki khan’s palace is not an Azerbaijani, but a European, a Western, an Italian. Let’s clarify the sentence.

“...The apartments of the commandant of the province were in the most modern part of the edifice...”

Considering that other buildings were also built inside the castle after the Sheki khan’s palace, which has survived to the present day could be mentioned another one.

“... the walls and ceilings of which were ornamented with looking-glasses, bordered by a tasteful foliage...”.

Looking-glasses, mirrors had been used in Sheki khan palace. There are mirrors both on the ceilings of balconies and on the small ceiling of the first floor and also on the sides of the chimneys. But the walls of this palace are not decorated with mirrors. Considering the call of Shekikhanov’s house in the sources “Muzeyyen otag” (“Decorated room”) or “Qurgushunlu otag” (“Leaded room”) and appearance of more and antique mirrors on the ceiling and on walls of the living room in the Shakihanovs’ house, can be said that the conversation is not about the Sheki Khan’s palace, but about the Shakihanovs’ house.

“...by an Italian who had been employed by the late Khan ten years ago...”

When the author means the late khan, he means Ismayil khan. Ismayil khan was in power in 1814-1819. So Ismayil khan’s father Jafargulu khan Khoyski (1806-1814) employed the Italian. This is possible if it is taken into account that the Sheki khanate had trade relations with Italy, and that colored shebeke glass was brought from Venice.

“... painted and varnished in the Chinese manner...”

It is clear that the author does not mention either the name of the Italian or the fact that he is a soldier or an artist. Maybe he just repaired the broken parts. In addition, the miniatures in question are very small and could not be seen by the naked eye with the lighting of the time. If the person who wrote about these small miniatures was a restorer, an artist or an architect,

his words would no doubt be quoted. However it is hard to believe on the person's observing these paintings and commenting on them who had been in Sheki very busy and in the parties during his two days visit. It is true that these small miniatures are very different from others. They are very similar to medieval Chinese painting. However, there is not enough evidence to agree with the idea that these paintings were painted by an Italian artist. Because when you study the paintings one by one, it becomes clear that even a painter who is able to paint marvellous paintings without knowing Azerbaijani life, culture and traditions cannot depict these so delicately. When it is talked about Chinese manner Boris Denike's sentence is also quoted: "It is impossible not to see a connection between Chinese art, especially white-and-blue porcelain, in these paintings." However, the white-and-blue porcelain depictions in the palace, which are called Chinese style, are not included only in the mentioned miniatures. On the second floor of the palace there are enough ornamental paintings in the same style. In general, the palace pays more attention to the use of blue colors over the natural white color of gac (CaCO_3) plaster. However, this does not mean that these paintings were painted by a European who is familiar with the rules of Chinese painting. From ancient times, Sheki, located on the Silk Road, had cultural as well as trade relations with China. The motives of Chinese vases and other works of art could not be unlearned by local artists and painters. If it is taken into account that the formation of the Tabriz miniature school was influenced by the Chinese-Uyghur miniatures, then it should not be surprising to see this similarity in the Sheki khan's palace. If 142 small miniatures, women dancers, giants, jugglers, various creatures, etc. investigated a more accurate conclusion can be drawn. It would be more accurate to compare the giants to Sultan Muhammad's black pen method, and to look for the similarity of the other drawings in our miniatures. In addition, instead of varnish, egg whites were painted on the paintings in the Sheki khan's palace in order to protect and brighten them.

"...But my principal source of amusement was in the pictures which adorned the saloon, and which represented the extravagant exploits of Runstad (Z.R.: Most likely he meant Rustam), an imaginary hero of antiquity, the Orlando of the Persians, the drawing and painting of which were as imperfect as the verses of the ballad that commemorate his valorous deeds are outrageously bombastic..." When Van Halen said Runstad in this sentence, he probably meant Rustam Zal. However, there is no image in the Sheki khan's palace

that can be compared to Rustam Zal. It is possible that there was such a description in one of the buildings that have not been preserved to this day. Another consideration may be related to the Sardar Palace in Iravan khanate. Iravan Sardar Palace was very similar to Sheki Khan Palace in terms of style, geography and general appearance. It is known that Mirza Gadim Iravani painted a portrait of Rustam Zal during the restoration of Sardar's palace in the 50s of the XIX century. It is possible that in the original also depicted Rustam Zal in the Sardar Palace. Later it was destroyed, as was the Sardar's palace itself. Although Van Halen did not mention in his memoirs that he had been in Iravan, he only writes about Goycha. Maybe he had visited the Sardar Palace in Iravan and later wrote about it together with what he saw in Nukha because the views were similar...

Conclusion. Almost none of the inscriptions about the Sheki khan's palace contain the fact that these small miniatures were painted by a representative of another nation. Even in the report on the last restoration of the palace by Denkmalpflege Mecklenburg GmbH in 2002-2004 though the restorations made at different times and the condition of the paintings are touched upon, the small miniatures painted on the stalactites are not mentioned as difference.

In conclusion it is not accurate to accept the claims that small miniatures of the Sheki khan's palace were painted by an Italian who settled in Sheki based on the memories of Van Halen at least because there is not enough evidence. Because, as it is clear from the above-mentioned sentences of Van Galen, it is not clear exactly in which building and which paintings the Italian painted. Maybe there really was such a person, he painted in one of the buildings in the way mentioned by Van Galen. But, of course, that building is not the current Sheki khan's palace. The fact that the 142 miniatures depicted in the Sheki Khan's palace were painted in a different style than others does not prove that they were painted by a foreigner, but how talented, innovative and creative Azerbaijani artists and painters were. Sultan Muhammad's paintings were also different. He also painted in a different style than other artists, and he was also Azerbaijani. So the difference is not that the author is a foreigner, but that he has a different worldview, a different approach, a different way of thinking. From this point of view, the identity of the author of the small miniatures mentioned in the article should be sought not in Europe, but in Azerbaijan.

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Zəminə Rəsulova (Azərbaycan)**XUAN VAN QALEN ŞƏKİ XAN SARAYI HAQQINDA NƏ YAZIB?
KİÇİK ÖLÇÜLÜ MİNİATÜRLƏRİN HANSISA BİR İTALYAN
TƏRƏFİNDƏN ÇƏKİLDİYİNƏ İNANA BİLƏRİKMİ?**

Dünya əhəmiyyətli tarix-memarlıq abidəsi olan Şəki xan sarayı 2019-cu ildə UNESCO nun "Dünya Mədəni İrsi" siyahısına daxil edilib. İnşası XVIII əsrə təsadüf edən Şəki xan sarayının həm fasad hissəsi, həm də interyeri müxtəlif formalı, süjetli, həndəsi, nəbatı, miniatür və alleqorik rəsmlərlə bəzədilib. Sarayın ikinci mərtəbəsində təsvir olunmuş miniatür ov və döyüş səhnələri istər ölçüsü, istər yerləşməsi, istərsə də mövzusunə görə daha çox diqqəti cəlb etdiyindən müxtəlif yerli və xarici alimlər, sənətsünaslar və tədqiqatçılar tərəfindən araşdırılıb, müxtəlif məqalə, kitab və elmi işlərin mövzusunə çevrilib. Ancaq sarayın birinci mərtəbəsinin mərkəzi zalında-divanxana otağında olan 142 ədəd miniatür həm ölçüsünün çox kiçik olması, həm də tavanla divarların kəsişdiyi hissələrdəki stalaktitlərin içərisində təsvir olunması səbəbi ilə diqqətdən kənarda qalıb. Əslində isə Azərbaycan təsviri incəsənəti üçün bu rəsmlərin araşdırılması çox vacib məsələlərdən biridir. Təəssüf ki, bu zamana qədər qeyd edilən rəsmlər elmi-cəhətdən tədqiq olunmadığından bəzi mütəxəssislər hesab edirlər ki, bu rəsmlərin müəllifi digər təsvirləri çəkən şəxs deyil, tamamilə başqa, yad bir adam, bir sözlə avropalıdır. Bu qənaətə gəlmələrinə səbəb isə Xuan Van Qalenin öz xatirələrində yazdığı bir cümlədir.

Bu məqalədə Xuan Van Qalenin(Juan Van Halen) Şəki xan sarayı ilə bağlı xatirələrinin təhlili aparılacaq.Sarayda təsvir olunmuş ağ-göy rəngli rəsmlərin və ya kiçik ölçülü miniatürlərin müəllifinin avropalı olması ilə bağlı iddiaların nə dərəcədə düzgün olduğu araşdırılır.

Açar sözlər: Şəki xan sarayı, Xuan Van Qalen, miniatürlər, italyan, Çin qaydaları ilə rəsm.

Замина Расулова (Азербайджан)

ЧТО ХУАН ВАН ГАЛЕН НАПИСАЛ О ДВОРЦЕ ШЕКИНСКИХ ХАНОВ? МОЖЕМ ЛИ МЫ ПОВЕРИТЬ В ТО, ЧТО МАЛЕНЬКИЕ МИНИАТЮРЫ БЫЛИ НАПИСАНЫ ИТАЛЬЯНЦЕМ?

Дворец Шекинских ханов, всемирно известный историко-архитектурный памятник, включен в Список всемирного культурного наследия ЮНЕСКО в 2019 году. И фасад, и интерьер дворца Шекинских ханов, строительство которого относится к XVIII веку, украшены разнообразными формами, сюжетными, геометрическими, растительными, миниатюрными и аллегорическими росписями. Миниатюрные сцены охоты и сражений, изображенные на втором этаже дворца, которые привлекают больше внимания своими размерами, расположением и тематикой изучались различными местными и зарубежными учеными, искусствоведами и исследователями и стали предметом различных статей, книг и научных работ. Однако 142 миниатюры в центральном зале первого этажа дворца, диванной, не были замечены из-за их небольшого размера и изображения сталактитов на пересечении потолка и стен. На самом деле изучение этих картин является одним из важнейших вопросов для азербайджанского изобразительного искусства. К сожалению, поскольку эти картины пока научно не изучены, некоторые специалисты считают, что автором этих картин является не человек, рисующий другие изображения, а совсем другой, иностранный человек, короче, европеец. Основанием для такого вывода является фраза, написанная Хуаном Ван Галеном в его мемуарах.

В этой статье были проанализированы воспоминания Хуана Ван Халена о дворце Шекинских ханов. Будет проанализирована степень спрavedливости утверждений о том, что автором изображенных во дворце бело-синих картин или малогабаритных миниатюр является европеец.

Ключевые слова: Дворец Шекинских ханов, Хуан Ван Гален, миниатюры, итальянец, рисунок по китайским правилам.