

The examination of Persian calligraphy in publications of Qajar period

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Abstract

This survey is a descriptive-analytic research that its data has been collected with applied and Retrospective methods and it examines the usage of Nastaliq calligraphy in publications of Qajar period. These publications include those starts by the publication of first Iranian newspaper, named “Kaghaz Akhbar” in Persian language that started to publish in 1252 Hegira and its publication continued until the end of Qajar period in 1344. These publications generally were published in Tehran in two printing ways - lithography and typography.

In this research, it is distinguished that 30% of Qajar newspapers published by lithography, that 65% of them (equals to 19.5% of total Qajar newspapers) were with Nastaliq script and their quality were average or good. In addition, 46% of total names of these newspapers were with Nastaliq and 42% with Naskh script. These statistics shows that Nastaliq script was used in names and texts of lithography and typography in Qajar period rather than Naskh script.

Approximately 18% of Qajari newspapers titles were in Nastaliq script. Among some of typographic newspapers that have titles in Naskh script, some of the important titles were in Nastaliq. so, by considering the percentages that mentioned above, it can be seen that Nastaliq calligraphy was the most useful script in the published Qajari newspapers.

Research method: 325 Qajar newspapers have been examined in this research. Not only gathering the picture of the front pages of newspaper, but also other stuff like date and the place of publish, the type of print (lithography or typography), type of the text script and the name of the newspapers and also the size of newspaper and other visual features has been examined.

Keywords: Publications of Qajar period - Calligraphy - Lithography - Typography – Visual elements.

Introduction

The word “khoshnevisi” equals to English word, “calligraphy” that is the combination of the two Greek words, “graphien” that means writing and “kallos” that means beautiful.

After the evolution of Arabic script, the calligraphy of Arabic scripts was going to develop. After Islam, the Muslims try to write Holy Quran by calligraphy to keep its dignity. This effort leded “calligraphy to be the most important sample of Islam among the other arts” (Shimel, 1381: 11). From the beginning of the Islam, the prophet Muhammad emphasized on learning script and Imam Ali tried to expand it. (Harati, 1376:16)

The Muslim’s respect and interest to calligraphy of holy Quran caused the appearance of various scripts and development of Islamic and Iranian calligraphy. Nastaliq calligraphy that called “the bride of the Islamic scripts” is the combination of Naskh and Taliq. It was created by the Iranian artists in 7 and 8 Hegira centuries. This script has been codified in Timurid Period. Nastaliq is the national and official script of Iran and it has been developed by great calligraphers like Miremad **Al-Hassani**, Mirza Reza **Kalhor**, Gholamreza **Esfehani** and Emad Al-Ketab. This script has been used with Naskh script in writing. After the entrance of lithography to Iran, it was used in published books and Persian newspapers.

Calligraphy in Qajar period

Calligraphy is one of the considerable arts that were developed after Islam. It has different types like ‘Koufi’ and sextuplet items “Ebn Moqleh” and it was developed by other scripts such as Taliq, Nastaliq and Shekaste Nastaliq.” Undoubtedly, Nastaliq or the bride of the Islamic scripts is the ideal script to write poem texts that is one of the greatest achievements of Muslim artists” (Shimel, 1381: 60).

“Mir Ali **Tabrizi**” is known as a founder of Nastaliq, but it should be considered that like other scripts Nastaliq didn’t found suddenly and it has a gradual development. Some historian believed that Nastaliq has been established by Mir Ali **Tabrizi** in 800 Hegira but there are some Nastaliq scripts that are older than it (Etemad Moqadam, 1383: 256). After Tabrizi, “Soltan Ali **Mashahdi**” developed the script and “Mir Ali **Heravi**” enacted some laws for it.

Calligraphy had a notable development during the Qajar period and the calligraphers had high social status.

Consideration of Qajar kings to literature and art make a way for artists. “Fathali Shah respected poets and he composed poems sometimes and even he established literary meetings named Anjoman Khaqan” (Farzam, 1384:192). There are some outstanding artists in Qajar period like “Abdollah **Ashur Esfehani**” who has many compilations. “Zein Al-Abedin **Esfehani**” who was called Ashraf Al-Malek was one of the calligraphers of Naskh and one of the writers of Naseri court.

“Mohammad Shafi **Vesal Shirazi**” is another famous calligrapher who was master in Naskh, Nastaliq and Shekaste scripts. His elder son, “Mirza Ahmad **Vaqar Shirazi**”, also was one of the great calligraphers of Qajar period.

Other popular calligraphers are Abd Al-Ali, Mohammad Baqer **Esfehani**, Mohammad Mehdi **Malek Al-Ketab**, Mirza Alinaqi **Shirazi**, Haj Mirza Abd Al-vahhab **Neshat**, Mirza Abbas **Nouri** and Mohammad Hassan **Shirazi** (Kateb Al-Soltan), abd Al-Rahim **Afsar Esfehani**, Mirza Zein Al-Abedin **Sharifi Qazvini** (Malek Al-Khatatin), Ali **Manzouri**, Mirza Hossein Khan **Kateb Al-Khaqan**(Kateb Al-Soltan).

Among the names than mentioned above there are three names those are more important: “Mirza Gholam Reza **Esfehani**”, “Mirza Mohammad Reza **Kalhor**”, “Mohammad hossein **Seifi**” (Emad Al-kateb) those have a valuable works in calligraphy.

“Mirza Qolam Reza **Esfehani**” was born in 1246 in Esfahan. He learned Nastaliq from Mirza Ali **Hakkak Tehrani** and was affected by his teacher until he went to Qajar court.

Mohammadi Bayani has written about Gholam Reza: “Mirza Gholamreza is one of the masters in calligraphy and he has been popular before be an adult. Some day Mohammad Shah saw his hand-writing and called him. After getting him a grant, appointed him to teach princes” (Bayani, 1363: 551).”Indeed the best inscription on Mosques and holy places is the work of Mirza Gholamreza Esfehene. the most famous one is the inscription of Motahari mosque (former Sepahsalar School)” (Golkarzadeh, 1380: 27). he signed his works with the names Qolam Reza, Gholam Reza Ya Ali Mada and Ya Ali Madad and sometime Tarbiat Yafteh Hazrat Zel Elahi.

besides his copy slips and scrapbooks, there a copy of Tohfat Al-Vozara in royal library that has been wtiren Do Dang Khosh pen in 1259 Hegira (Hanafi, 1389: 75). Although Mirza Gholam Reza was a great calligrapher, there are two reasons that he didn’t get the acclaim that he should get: first, his script didn’t have the grace enough; second, he was contemporary with Mirza Mohammad Reza Kalhor(Etemad Moqadam, 1383: 274)). After the death of Mohammad Shah, Naser Al-Din shah has considered Mirza Gholam Reza, but after some time he was accused to be Babi and Naser Al-Din Shah order to kill him, but by intervention of some princes he survived. He died in 1304 Hegira. “Mirza Ebrahim **Tehrani**” was one of his famous students.

“Mirza Mohammad Reza **Kalhor**” was the child of Mohammad Rahim and born in 1245 Hegira in Kalhor tribe of Kermanshah. He learned calligraphy from Mirza Mohammad **Khansari** and exercised from “mir Emad”’s works. He was strong but he lost the hearing of one of his ears when he was young. Mirza Mohammad Reza **Kalhor** used the new ways in his exercises.By trying so hard he could invent a new way for calligraphy. Although his work didn’t have the delicacy of Mir Emad’s, it was unique in beauty. Naser Al-Din Shah has called him to court and suggested him to work in publishing office. Mirza Mohammad had done the calligraphy under the “Etemad Al-altaneh”’s consideration. He was along with Naser Al-Din Shah in Khorasan trip. In that trip they had published “Vaghaye Orduye Homayouni” newspaper by using some

facilities that Kalhor had written in it. He tried to change the way of his writing consciously.” There is a point in the Kalhor’s method that he wrote each single or simplex word with one قلم. For example the letter “y” (ی) has three different movements, but connected. Although the Kalhor’s method followed by his students, no one could write like him” (Bayani, 1348: 732).

Cursive writing helped him to write quickly and because he often prepared his works to publish, there were less copy slip. The speed in writing plus چاق نویسی to keep Nastaliq delicacy at the time of printing, is the reason that a number of his published works has remained for us. “ He used common printing writing to make the way of improvement for his followers” (Aqdashlou, 1384: 156)

Keikhosro **Khoroush** had mentioned five important moves of Kalhor in Nastaliq calligraphy:

- “1- Adoption of Mir Emad script principles with choosing circles and small cuts.
- 2- Increase of strength in narrow parts of the words or thick writing
- 3- Change in the combination by usage of raise words and individual letters on each other.
- 4- Avoid writing single letters and words with space.
- 5-decrease the pen pauses in connections” (Khoroush, 1373: 12). In fact providing speed and accuracy in one time is really hard and Mirza Mohammad Reza Kalhor was the only one who succeeds in it (Etemad Al-Saltaneh, 1363: 363).

He usually didn’t sign his published compilations except special ones. Some of his important works are Feiz Al-Domu book, some parts of Sharaf newspaper, Orduye Homayouni, Makhzan Al-Ensha, Montakhab Al-Soltan and Resaleh Qadirieh newspapers, some parts of Naser Al-Din shah’s travel account to Karbala, Nasayeh Al-Moluk and Monajatnameh Khajeh Abd-Allah Ansari. In 1310 Mohammad Reza died of cholera in Tehran.

“Mohammad Hossein **Seifi**” (Emad Al-Ketab) was born in 1285 Hegira in Ghazvin. He spent most of his life to write and teach calligraphy. In 1234 Hegira, he did statements of penalty committee that Ebrahim Khan **Monshizadeh** and Assad Ollah Khan **Abolfath Zadeh** have managed it. After arresting the members of committee he spent some time in jail. He is one of the last calligraphers of Qajar period who was the writing officer at the time of Reza Pahlavi’s monarchy.

He had understood the Mashrouteh completely and before it he was one of the writers in publishing ministry. He also was the writing teacher in Ahmad shah’s court and at the time of first Pahlavi, he taught Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Like Ebn Moqleh beizavi, he combined intention to calligraphy with obligation to social and political movements. **Seifi** was influenced by Kalhor indirectly.

“After the death of Kalhor, he regretted that why he didn’t come to him so he had to refer to Kalhor’s students like Haj Sheikh Morteza **Najm Abadi**, Zein Al-Abedin **Sharif Qazvini** entitled Malek Al-Khatatin and mirza Abolhasan Khan **Forouqi** (Mohammad **Ali Forouqi Zaka Al-Molk**’s brother) to learn the method of Mirza’s writing” (Rahjiri, 1362:138).

Beside calligraphy, he had some books and sometimes composed poem. In addition, the new inscription of the Sepahsalar entrance and a tablet on Ferdosi’s tomb in Tous are other works of him.

Emad Al-Ketab died in 1355 in Tehran.

The entrance of Lithography to Iran

In the mid-1790 a.c. a poor German playwright named “Zetfelder” had been seeking a method to reach a cheaper way to publish his plays, so he invented lithography. This method came over the Europe and United States in 1820 (Turner, 1996: 481-482).

Lithography has been taken from Greek word litho that means writing and works by doing some action on stone. In this method scripts and paintings are written by ink- made by soot, turpentine and oil- on the paper that covered by starch or glycerin. Then the paintings transferred on the stone by pressure.

Lithography entered to Iran a decade after typography. In 1227 Hegira Abbas Mirza (Fathali Sah’s son) who was the governor of Azarbayjan at that time, established the first printing-house that had mobile leaden letters and the “Fathnameh” book was published by Fahali shah’s people. After one year, another printing-house was established by “Mirza Saleh **Shirazi**” in Tabriz. In 1240 Hegira, “Mirza Jafar Tabrizi” and “Mirza Asadollah **Shirazi**” were sent to Moscow and Saint Petersburg to learn print techniques. The first print devices are the results of their travel. After that, the first lithography print-house has been established in Tabriz. “Holy Quran was published in 1248 as a first printed book and the next book was Zad Al-Emad in 1251. After 1259, the first painted book that published was Maktabi Shirazi’s Leili & Majnoun that had 4 pictures. In that year Mirza Fazlollah’s book, Mojam fi Asar Moluk Al-Ajam also published by lithography method” (Soltanifar, 1382: 83).

After some while the first lithography print-house was established in Tehran and some books like Divan Abd Al-Vahab Neshat Shaer and Ajayeb Al-Makhloughat were published there.

In the late 1268 Hegira, governmental lithography print-house of Dar Al-Fonoun was established that was managed by “Aliqoli Mirza Etezad **Al-saltaneh**” and his assistant,” Reza **qolikhan**”. Textbooks like the principles of algebra, chemistry and definition of Music since ancient era were published in that print-house.

As the time passed, lithography developed more and every work was in lithography; so typography gradually abolished.

“Noushindokht **Nafisi** categorize lithographic book into several groups by their topic: the adventures of Imaginary heroes (like Zarir and Khazay printed in 1266 Hegira, Khosro and Divzad, 1273 and Rostam stories, 1273), ethnical stories (Zahed and Touti printed in 1275 Hegira), humorous stories (for example Jola And Najar, 1275), love stories (like Varqeh and Golshah, 1282) and animals stories” (like Hekayat Roubah printed in 1301 and Gorg and Roubah, without date) (Afshar Mohajer, 1384:71).

The Qajar publications

The entrance of lithography caused the development of newspaper in Iran. The first newspaper was established by Mirza Saleh Shirazi Kazerouni who was ordered by Mohammad Shah Qajar in 1252, that name was Kaghaz Akhbar. That newspaper had two one-sided pages in 24*40 cm and was lithographic. The titles were in Naskh script and the texts in Nastaliq. Amir Kabir published “Vaqaye Etefaqieh “newspaper in 1267 Hegira and after 470 number, the title changed to “dowlat Alaie Iran” and managed by Abu Al-hasan Khan Etemad Al-Saltaneh. In 1283 Hegira Melati newspaper was published monthly by Alinaqi Mirza Etehad Al-Saltaneh. Another newspaper was “Sharaf” by “Mohammad Hasan Khan **Etemad Al-Saltaneh**”. At the time of Mozafar Al-din Shah the Sherafat newspaper was published. After Mashruteh in 1324 Hegira Majles newspaper was published to reveal the events of Majles Shora Meli. After bombarding Majles, the publication of newspaper declined but in the second period of Mashruteh it increased again. “There were some new newspaper in Tehran and other cities and some publications like Habl Al-Matin in Tehran were republished. In that time the size was larger and they had more useful subjects to cover every party and population” (Arianpour, 1354: 107).

“Rooznameh elmieh Dowlat alayhe Iran” was another newspaper in Qajar period that was published in Persian, Arabic and French from 1280 Hegira to 1287 and its subject was science. “Rooznameh Nezami Elmieh va Adabi Iran” was a non-governmental newspaper that was published for a year from 1293 Hegira.” Merikh” and “Elmi” newspaper were published at the time of Sani Al-Doleh who was the chief of publication office in Naseri period. There was other scientific newspaper like “Danesh” that was published in 1299 by” Aliqoli Khan **Mokhber Al-Doleh**” in Dar Al-fonoun until 1300 Hegira.

Kholase Havades was the first Iranian daily newspaper that was published in Mozafar Al-Din Shah’s time from 1316 Hegira to 1321 by publications office. This newspaper was published 5 days a week and its subject was news. There were some other newspapers at that time like Adab, Tolou, Edalat, Meftah Al-Zafar, Chehreh Nama, Shahanshahi, Mavaraye Bahre Khazar, Azad, Omid those were printed ones before Mashruteh. Felahat Mozafari also was the first Iranian publication that its model was like magazine. It should be considered that lithography was the method for publishing the first newspapers and the symbol in publications was the Lion and the sun (the Iranian governmental symbol). Moreover, the first script for texts was Nastaliq and for titles was Naskh; but by the time passed, the usage of Nastaliq extended for writing the texts in newspaper during the Qajar period

Calligraphy in Qajari Publications

Qajari newspapers mean the publications those were published from 1252 Hegira to 1344 in Iran or in other countries in Persian language. This period is the time of emergence of newspapers in Iran. Most of the newspapers had political subjects or news and the others were scientific. After emergence of painted newspapers, comic newspapers were published with illustration by caricature method. Among 325 Qajari publications that were examined, more than half of them (approximately 208) had common visual patterns that the title was in the middle above of page, and in behind its sides were the specification details newspaper and under it was the text in 1 to 5 columns (rarely to 7). There are few newspapers those were published by gelatin printing instead of lithography or typography. Although the typography entered to Iran 10 years sooner than lithography, the early newspapers were published by lithography method. By the time passed, the number of typographical newspapers increased in Tehran and other cities. So 30% of the newspapers of that time were lithographic and 70% typographic. Some of the painted newspapers were typographic but their pictures were lithographic. It is clear that some newspapers changed their method of print and also the scripts of texts, titles and even the name during the publishing time.

The obligation to aesthetics of lithographic newspapers is important. Typographic newspaper had a common pattern for layout like lithographic ones and even the Naskh letters of typographic newspaper was an inspired of Naskh scripts of lithographic newspapers.

There was an effort to write the name of the newspapers by naskh or nastaliq calligraphy. So among 230 typographic newspapers, 83% of their names were calligraphic and 17% were by Naskh. It can be seen that most of the Qajari newspapers that includes 88% of them had a calligraphic name (46% Nastaliq and 42% Naskh). There are some exceptions for example Golestan Saadat newspaper was by Shekaste Nastaliq, Ghoreh was Koufi and Taraghi had an unknown script. There were little creativity in design of the names and mostly the artists wrote the names by Iranian and Arabic calligraphy. In some newspapers, the name word has been written reversed or symmetry on the main word. Certainly, there were some special methods and combinations in some names that had a graphical use as a writing mark.

Paying attention to Nastaliq caused more use of Nastaliq in the texts of lithographic newspapers rather than Naskh. Among 96 newspapers, 64 texts of them were in Nastaliq and others were by Naskh.

In most of the publications, the script for titles and text was similar except 5 publications (Khaghaz Akhbar, Farhang Chap Esfahan, Orvat Al-Vosgha, Zayandeh Rood, Eslah Chap Paris) those their text was nastaliq and the title was Naskh. Moreover, in some typographic newspapers that their title was Naskh Rooznameheei, a number of important titles like "Akhbar Dakheli" were written by Nastaliq. Among all newspapers, 59 titles (18%) were Nastaliq and 32 ones (9/5%) were Naskh. So, besides Mirza Reza Kalhor who wrote the Sharaf and Orduye Homayouni newspaper and some parts of Safarnameh Karbala Naser Al-Din Sha, "Abd ollah"

was the writer of “Baladieh Esfahan” newspaper, “Ali Asqar” who wrote the “Hakim Al-Malek” and “Malek Al-Khatatin **Sharifi**”, the writer of” Zaban Zanan” newspaper.

Conclusion

Considering calligraphy and a trend to aesthetics caused the repeated usage of calligraphy in the publication of that time especially Nastaliq. Using Nastaliq and Naskh for the names and texts in typographic newspapers besides using calligraphy in lithographic newspapers shows that trend until today. Nastaliq was used in different levels from average to perfect and from text scripts to newspapers names. This calligraphy beside layout method and the pictures of published newspapers in Qajar period is a permanent collection that inform the reader about political, social and especially cultural and artistic situations of the special period in history.

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