

Influence of lithographic printing industry on the structural transformations of nastaliq script in Qajar era (with the emphasis on two remarkable works by Mohammad Reza Kalhor and Mohammad Hossein Shirazi)

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Abstract

Nastaliq script has gradually fluctuated from the beginning until the middle of Qajar era. Simultaneously with the prevalence of lithographic printing in cities of Iran, some changes were made in shape of letters thanks to limitations of this emerging industry for writing Persian texts. While majority of calligraphers persisted to use their traditional writing style, a few number of artists such as Kalhor, however, developed a new method which resulted in creation of a special style appeared in the third period of Qajar era. The present study, analyzing library sources and also applying field research techniques, has endeavored to compare the shape and structure of letters and words of Nastaliq script in lithographic print of *SafarName –ye- Khorasan* (book of voyage to Khorasan) and manuscript of *SafarName –ye- Qom* (book of voyage to Qom) in comparative-descriptive method. The findings show that Kalhor's transcription of *SafarName –ye- Khorasan*, which has been written with the pen angle of 64°, includes more lines per page and the beginnings of lines and also proper names have been indicated in it by some marks. The readability of the script has been considered in the process of writing the mentioned work and the features of writing style in third period of Qajar are obviously manifested in it. Moreover, the shrinking form of letters and words, which has been of Kalhor's innovations reflecting the impacts of new method of lithography, is also found in the manuscript of *SafarName –ye- Qom*. These and other similar reforms attributed to Kalhor or created by the effects of lithographic printing, are found in other contemporary calligraphers' works as well and have been a prelude to dominating writing style of the third period of Qajar era.

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Aims:

1. Comparatively studying the structure and form of letters and words of Nastaliq script in works by Mohammad Reza Kalhor and Mohammad Hossein Shirazi.
2. Impacts of printing industry on calligraphy method in Qajar era.

Questions:

What are the structural differences between lithography edition of "Khorasan Travelogue" and the manuscript of "Qom travelogue" in case of writing?

1. How lithography has influenced Nastaliq script and its writing style?

Keywords:

Qajar era, Nastaliq script, lithographic printing, Mohammad Reza Kalhor, Mohammad Hossein Shirazi.

Introduction

Since its inception, the Nastaliq script partakes a significant role in Iran with many various schools and ideologies; in which since its popularity till the contemporary age, most written manuscripts and printed books in Persian were prepared using the Nastaliq script. The stylistic and technical developments of the Nastaliq script from its emergence during the midst Qajar era continued with many ups and downs; however, during the mid-nineteenth century contemporary with the emergence and prevalence of lithography in many cities of Iran and the capabilities and limitations of this emerging industry for writing Persian texts, changes in regard to the form of letters of this script occurred.

Investigating the transformations of the Nastaliq script in terms of form and structure after the introduction and prevalence of lithography and its influence on the script is the main topic of this research which is carried out by comparing the form and structure of letters and words in Mohammad Reza Shirazi's selections with Mohammad Reza Kalhar's works. In order to achieve the purpose of the research, it is necessary to answer these questions: firstly, what are the differentiations between the compositions of the lithographed version of "Khorasan Travelogue" and the resin ink manuscript of "Qom

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Travelogue". And secondly, how has lithography affected the style of writing and the rules of the Nastaliq script?

According to the searches in the theoretical literature, no consistent research examining the impact of the lithography printing industry on the style of Nastaliq script was found; most studies on lithographic printing approaches focused on book illustrations in the printing industry. For this intention, among all the conducted researches, articles and dissertations that bestow a similar outlook to the subject of this article are selected and discussed.

From the articles written in this field can be the article "Formal and Structural Study of Nastaliq Inscriptions in the Qajar Mosques of Isfahan and Comparison with Similar Safavid Samples" by Ahmad Salehi Kakhaki and Farhad Khosravi Bijayem (2016), Thematic Review of Selected Lithography printed Books Available at Tabriz Central Library "By Mahnaz Shayestefar & Maryam Azadfeker Azad (1390)" Review of Qajar period lithography printed books "by Abdol Majid Hosseini Rad and Zahra Khan Salar (2005), Thesis of Mansour Chehraazi Abolhassani (1998) A Study of the Historical-Artistic Trend of the Resurrection Line in Iran from the Timurid Age to the Nasserian Age " Rezvan Lotfi Khazaei's (2013) senior essay referring to the "Position of the Nastaliq line in the Qajar era".

To obtain the desired result, 9 pages of 44 pages of lithographic print edition of "Khorasan travelogue" written by Mohammad Reza Kalhor in the Majlis library and 9 pages of 23 pages of manuscript "Qom travelogue" written by Mohammad Hossein Shirazi in Astan Quds Razavi Library are studied; moreover, pages are randomly chosen from the beginning, middle and end pages of the two copies; considering it as the sample population of this fundamental research. A comparative and analytic methodology is carried out in this research and data is gathered via library research, written historic resources and close observation of the remaining artworks.

Conclusion

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Cultural changes of late Qajar era and the introduction of printing industry in Iran created the necessity of adaptation of new printing technology to cultural and artistic elements in the society. Simultaneously with the entrance of the new technology, many calligraphers continued and upgraded their previous customs in calligraphy with the new equipment within a traditional structure and a limited number of them, including Mohammad Reza Kalhor synchronized with new technology. Despite following Miremhad's style due to limitations in printing, such as inappropriate and dense ink, as well as barriers that failed to deliver precise strengths and weaknesses in the formation of the Nastaliq pen, Kalhor made changes to the style of his pen. From static and intermediate to intermediate inclined towards static and by creating an incision on the pen and putting a hair within caused the thickening of letters and words and increasing their breadth and succession, stronger execution of the crisscrosses and messages; and also adding speed to calligraphy inscribing and creating a barrier between parts of letters. However, the collapse of letters and words in Kalhor's prints was not due to his association with the printing industry, and this is also seen in the works of Mohammad Hossein Shirazi and others, which caused glitches with printing in more lines (often more than 15 lines) while handwritten manuscripts are often written in 12 lines. Given the objective of the industry in making the books more accessible, quick and easy to read, there is more use of punctuation to indicate the opening and start of sentences and on specific names, as well as greater attention to the whole page and format; furthermore, there is the less use of the full stop and the dotting of a word and the use of not connecting the letters "d" and "r" to the letter "e".

Kalhor and Mohammad Hossein Shirazi, as contemporaries of the Qajar era, initially wrote on a set of principles and rules in regard to the Nastaaliq pen, nevertheless, with the entry of the printing industry into Iran, they elected two diverse features in literature and transcription. Consequently, the characteristics of the Nastaliq's script before the emergence of lithography was investigated by Mohammad Hossein Shirazi's as a traditional calligrapher via the use of ink printing; and after the lithographic printing commercialized, it was further deliberated upon in Mohammad Reza Kalhor's book. This calligrapher made changes to his pen because of his association with the new industry, creating a third period style or a Kalhor style. Among the calligraphic compositions of the calligraphy can be angled in 64 degrees, angular, smaller and more staggered

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performances such as "D and R", execution of draws with slope, height and less elongation (nine points and less), running an alphabet with the same thickness as the letter "K", the circular letters become larger, more closed, resembling the real circle and higher than the end of the circle, with thick and short bumps, mounting letters and words. To create thicker skeleton in the row, less circularity and higher circularity than the seat line were noted.

Mohammad Hossein Shirazi as a calligrapher of the first period style, which is essentially a return to the style of Miremud and the balance of the two later styles in the Qajar era, carried out traditional calligraphy and did not enter the field of modern printing. Among the differences in the combinations applied by the artist the following can be mentioned: 60 ° stylus angle, non-angular singularity, larger and with greater distance, sloping, height and elongation (with 11-point elongation), elongation and rebellion in "K" letters of varying thickness (more thicker in parts of the letter), circuit-wide, sloping, oblique elliptical, planar, and dot-shaped, equal to the end of the circle, serrated, clear and counted, thin with less thickness and thinner and finer intersections.

Finally, more research is required to study the works of Mohammad Hossein Shirazi. Investigating the works of other calligraphers in conjunction with Mohammad Reza Kalhor and observing the structural features attributed to the Qajar period can provide a basis for future research.

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Figure References:

- Figure 1. A sample of Nastaliq manuscript, authored by Mohammadhossein Shirazi, *Qom Travel Memoir* (1882), Astan Ghods Razavi Library, Registration No.: 10429.
- Figure 2. A sample of Lithograph Printing, written by Mohammadreza Kalhor, *Khorasan Travel Memoir* (1888), T

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