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An Illustrated Ma'navi-i Ma'navî

B.W. Robinson

QAJAR PAINTING FOUND ITS MOST PRESTIGIOUS outlets in oil painting, lacquer, and enamel; the Timurid and Safavid tradition of the manuscript de luxe had faded in the 18th century and was almost extinct. Apart from some fine Korans, one can only recall the Divân of Khuğân (Fath 'Ali Shâh) in the Royal Library at Windsor, 1 three presentation copies of Fath 'Ali Khân Şâhî's Shâh-bahlâniyât, 2 the Vişâl or Dâvârî Shâhâniyât, 3 and, of course, the monumental “Arabian nights” in the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran. 4 So when a good Qajar illustrated manuscript turns up, it is worth recording, even if it does not quite aspire to “royal” quality. Such a manuscript is the subject of this article, which is intended simply to introduce and record it. 5 It is a copy of the Ma'navi-i ma'navî of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, and was acquired some twenty-five years ago by the late Mr. Massoudi from a member of the family of Mas'ûd Mirzâ Zîlî al-Sultân (1266–1336/1850–1918), the eldest son of Nâşr al-Dîn Shâh (r. 1264–1313/1848–96). This prince was appointed governor of Fars in 1279/1863, and of Işlâmîân in 1283/1867, 6 and became notorious for cutting down the magnificent trees along the Châhîr Bâgh to sell, and for destroying or dismantling several of the surviving Safavid

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1 Holmes 1893, no. 152; Robinson 1967, 78–9.
2 They are (1) Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Elliot 327, presented by Fath 'Ali Shâh to Sir Gore Ouseley (Robinson 1952, 175–9); (2) London, India Office Library, Eihô 901, presented by Fath 'Ali Shâh to the East India Company (Robinson 1976, 244–9); (3) Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Flügel 639, presented by Fath 'Ali Shâh to the Emperor Franz I (Duda 1983, 13–5). There is also a very similar copy in the Majlis Library, Tehran, MS 1522 (see Yusuf Shîrîzî 1939–42/3, 482–3).
3 An heirloom in the Vişâl family of Shîrûz till it was purchased by the Rüspînî Paraî; it is now housed in Mûdîhî's Ihsân Şâhî, Tehran, MS 599. Sixty-eight miniatures, the great majority by the celebrated Shîrûz painter Lutf' Ali, are housed by Fâvârî and Fâhîngh, sons of the poet Vişâl; they are dated between 1270/1853–4 and 1280/1863–4; see Sharâfîzâd 1991, 247–60, Nîrîn Vişâl 1991, and Sharâfîzâd 1993.
4 MS 556. See Âsîîbî 1976, in which 80 of the miniatures are reproduced in color.
5 Mr. Karim'zâdah Tabûrizî has briefly described three of the paintings of this manuscript in the third volume of his monumental work which, I am happy to acknowledge, is an invaluable companion to the study of Persian painting; see Karim'zâdah Tabûrizî 1985–6: 1–3; 147. It should also be noted here that this manuscript was sold at Christie's on 24 April 1990.
palaces. Unlike many private collectors, Mr. Massoudi was always anxious that his treasures should be shared and enjoyed as widely as possible, and I am indebted to his daughter Maryam for permission to publish and for giving me every facility for studying and photographing it. She thus carries on her father’s generous and enlightened practice of making his collection readily available to all lovers of Persian art. His house and collections were plundered by a mob during the 1979 Revolution, but a number of items were recovered by his daughter after his death.

Jalal al-Din Rumi in the considered opinion of the late Professor Edward G. Browne “is without doubt the most eminent Sufi poet whom Persia has produced, while the mystical Mathnawi deserves to rank amongst the greatest poems of all time.” The Mathnawi, a poem of 26,660 couplets, is confidently described by its author as “the roots of the roots of the roots of the religion, and the discovery of the mysteries of reunion and sure knowledge” (with a good deal more in the same vein). Browne is rather more specific and slightly less flattering: “It contains a great number of rambling anecdotes of the most various character, some sublime and dignified, others grotesque and even (to our ideas) disgusting, interspersed with mystical and theosophical digressions, often of a most abstruse character, in sharp contrast with the narrative portions which, though presenting some peculiarities of diction, are as a rule couched in very simple and plain language.”

Other works of moral or philosophical character interspersed with anecdotes, such as the Bastān and Gulistan of Sa’di and the Makhtab al-asrār of Nizāmī, are frequently encountered in illustrated copies, but the Mathnawi hardly ever, though there are two in the British Library (Add. 272639 and Or. 76933,1) one with only two miniatures in the National Museum, New Delhi, and one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The present copy is, therefore, of no little interest, as it contains 56 miniatures. It is dated 1279–80/1862–4, and the fact that four of the miniatures are signed by Yahyā, son of the celebrated Ṣāḥib al-Mulk, sets the seal on its importance.

The manuscript measures 27 x 17 cm., written surface 18 x 10.5 cm. The binding, of red leather with sunk medallions, is impressed with a stamp giving the binder’s name as Hasan ibn Muḥammad al-Husayni with the date 1278/1861–2. The text, in a small neat nastaliq, is in four columns of 21 lines to the page, and the pages are numbered as pages not folios, starting afresh with each of the six parts (mujallad). Marginal annotations appear throughout. Each part begins with an illuminated heading of fine quality. The total number of pages is 704, i.e., 352 folios. The colophons give the dates 1279/1862–3 and 1280/1863–4, but no copyist’s name.

The following list of the miniatures gives the number, the page range in the manuscript and the reference in the excellent Tehran lithographed edition of 1307/1890, prefixed by T. The miniatures do not spread into the side margins, and are thus all 10.5 cm. wide; their slightly varying height is given in lines of text, each line corresponding approximately to 0.95 cm.

   The caliph, wearing a Qajar crown, questioning Laylá and Majnūn. Carpet of rich scrollwork design.
2. Bk. I, p. 28; T. p. 24; 10 lines deep.
   The lion in philosophic discussion with other animals.
   The merchant and the parrots.
   The merchant, his family, and the dead parrot.
   A village feels a lion in the darkness, thinking it was an ox; the dead ox lies beside him.
6. Bk. II, p. 65; T. p. 157; 9 lines deep. (Fig. 1).
   A drunken youth interrogated by two night watchmen in the street.
   The caliph Muḥammad, who had forgotten prayer time, visited in bed by the Devil (Iblīs), represented as an old man wearing a pointed and tasseled cap.
   The Prophet and his wife Ayīshah discussing repentance.
   Majnūn caressing a dog that lived in Laylá’s village.
   The jackal of unusual color appears as a peacock among the other jackals.
   Imnān lying with the mother of Moses (who becomes pregnant) under the bed on which her husband is asleep.

10 Browne 1902–24 (1928. 2:315.
11 Jalal al-Din al-Rūmī 1881, pref., i.
12 Browne 1902–24 (1928. 2:520.
13 Rieu 1879; 2:584–6; Tiley 1977, 68, no. 201.
14 Meredith-Owen 1968, 68.
15 Author’s notes.
16 Smith Cochran 1914, 95–98.
12. Bk. III, p. 28; T p. 216; 8 lines deep. Women arriving at the house of Imran to see Moses.
13. Bk. III, p. 42; T p. 232; 9 lines deep. (Fig. 2). School scene: pupils with their master, whom they had deceived by a trick. The instruments of the bastinado lie ready. Signed, "raqi'im-i Yahy'd." 
15. Bk. III, p. 61; T p. 249; 10 lines deep. Daqiqi leading his seven followers in prayer on the sea-shore. Two ships in the sea have not been painted in.
16. Bk. III, p. 78; T p. 277; 8 lines deep. The hare, the elephant, and the moon’s reflection (the story as in Kalilah va Dimnah).
17. Bk. III, p. 91; T p. 277; 8 lines deep. Youth riding a camel, in converse with four men. The story is of a merchant who falsely accuses the young man of killing his servant.
18. Bk. III, p. 106; T p. 291; 8 lines deep. (Fig. 5). The Blessed Virgin Mary, anestep by a stream, approached by the archangel Gabriel. She is represented in dishabille, whilst he is dressed like a Qajar prince, with wings.
20. Bk. III, p. 127; T p. 315; 8 lines deep. Šadr-i Jahān falls fainting before a youth from Bukhārā, riding a white horse.
21. Bk. III, p. 129; T p. 316; 7 lines deep. Šadr-i Jahān comforted by the young prince, who changes his foolishness into good sense.
22. Bk. III, p. 130; T p. 317; 7 lines deep. Šadr-i Jahān and the young prince in converse by a throne.
23. Bk. IV, p. 2; T p. 324; 9 lines deep. A young lover fleeing from the night-watch. Signed, "Yahy'd."
24. Bk. IV, p. 3; T p. 324; 9 lines deep. (Fig. 4). The young lover finds his beloved by a stream in a garden. Signed, "raqi'im-i Yahy'd."
25. Bk. IV, p. 5; T p. 326; 8 lines deep. (Fig. 5). Lovers embracing in a garden.
26. Bk. IV, p. 11; T p. 331; 7 lines deep. The lover apologizing to his beloved for his sin of deception.
27. Bk. IV, p. 18; T p. 338; 9 lines deep. Solomon receiving presents sent by Bilqis, Queen of Sheba. Weapons displayed on tables, and loaded males in the background.
28. Bk. IV, p. 201; T p. 340; 8 lines deep. The perfume-seller and his customer.
29. Bk. IV, p. 27; T p. 347; 9 lines deep. Solomon and Bilqis enthroned, attended by three demons.
30. Bk. IV, p. 30; T p. 349; 8 lines deep. Muhammad’s nurse Ḥalimah with an old man, watching idols falling from their pedestal.
32. Bk. IV, p. 69; T p. 386; 9 lines deep. Moses before Pharaoh, defying his magic.
33. Bk. IV, p. 76; T p. 393; 9 lines deep. Pharaoh enthroned with his wife Aṣiyah, who educated Moses.
34. Bk. IV, p. 95; T p. 411; 8 lines deep. Āzīz and his sons in a landscape.
35. Bk. IV, p. 103; T p. 419; 9 lines deep. Young couple copulating in a garden, watched by the husband in a tree.
36. Bk. IV, p. 109; T p. 424; 8 lines deep. The archangel Gabriel, with multiple wings, appearing to the Prophet.
40. Bk. V, p. 48; T p. 474; 8 lines deep. The angel Azrael humbling himself in the dust.
41. Bk. V, p. 53; T p. 479; 8 lines deep. Ayâq removing his fur coat from a chest.
42. Bk. V, p. 58; T p. 484; 7 lines deep. A youth and a girl meeting on a terrace. Signed, "Yahy'd."
43. Bk. V, p. 59; T p. 485; 8 lines deep. Two men in the house of Ayâq, one of them lifting the fur coat from the chest (cf. no. 41).
44. Bk. V, p. 66; T p. 491; 8 lines deep. Women in a bath-house; one of them has fainted.
45. Bk. V, p. 69; T p. 494; 7 lines deep. (Fig. 6). The lion and the fox in the forest, the latter informing the former about the ass.
46. Bk. V, p. 73; T p. 499; 8 lines deep. Bearded man performing sodomy on a youth who holds a dagger.
47. Bk. V, p. 95; T p. 521; 8 lines deep. Majnun visited by three relatives in the desert.
48. Bk. V, p. 108; T p. 533; 8 lines deep. A father giving his daughter advice, both seated on a carpeted terrace.
The painter Yahiya was the youngest of the three sons of Abū al-Hasan Khān Ghaffārī Ṣan‘ī al-Mulk; all three sons became painters, the other two being Abū Aṣād Allāh Khān and Sayf Allāh. Yahiya apparently bore a striking resemblance to his father, and at the instance of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh he was awarded the name of Abū al-Hasan III (Ṣan‘ī al-Mulk was actually Abū al-Hasan II). Influenced no doubt by his family environment, he soon took up oil-painting of the old Arg Square (Meydān-i Arg), showing the pool and the Pearl Cannon (Tāp-i Marvārī), a European (Farangi) couple, two veiled women with a veiled little girl, and several horse-drawn carriages; this picture is signed, “raqam-i khānūzād Mīrzā Abū al-Hasan Khān pisar-i Ṣan‘ī al-Mulk fi sanā‘ah 1303”\(^\text{18}\); (2) another well-known work, an oil-painting of the private salon of the Shāh (uṭqā-i mubārákah-i Birīyān), signed “ḥabsh al-amr-i Ṣā‘īnī 1348”\(^\text{19}\).

\(^{18}\) See Karim’zādah Tabrizi 1985–, 1:21–2; Sahyī Khvānsarāi, 1976; Zokh’ 1965; and Sā‘īnī 1948.

\(^{19}\) Zokh’ 1970, 28.
APPENDIX A

The following list of Mirzâ Yahyâ’s known works was kindly supplied by Mr. Yahyâ Žokâ of Tehran who has done extensive research on the painter. All the paintings on this list bear Yahyâ’s signature; we have, however, transcribed only those that are relatively elaborate [Ed.]

1. Portrait of Mustawfi al-Mamâlik, not dated, probably around 1290/1873. Initially in the Gulistân Palace (Kâh-k-i Gulistân), this painting was transferred to the Niâyavarân Palace before the 1979 Revolution. Present whereabouts unknown.

2. A water-color painting of two young men, Majd al-Dawlah and Ja’far Quli Khân Jalâl al-Mulk, in the Gulistân Palace (no. 8135), signed “ra‘ì-i khânehâzât Abî al-Hâsan Khân, 1290 [1873–4].”

3. A water-color portrait of an unidentified man in Qajar costume, wearing a sardâr and a cap. In the Gulistân Palace (no. 8036), signed “Khânehâzât Abî al-Hâsan Šâh Ghaffârî, 1291 [1874–5].”

4. An oil canvas depicting a rustic cottage with cows, horses and fowl, in the Gulistân Palace (no. 1732), dated 1293/1876.

5. A portrait of his father Šâh al-Mulk, signed “Yâdgâr-i Abî al-Hâsan Šâh, yâbâr-i markâm Šâh-i Mulk kât. ac râ-i kâr-i ‘âm marbâm kashâh shud, 1293 [1876].”


7. Large oil canvas depicting a coffee house with its crowd of patrons, and servers and entertainers, with a two-storied house within the confines of a garden in the background and bare rocky hills in the distance, in the Gulistân Palace, and signed “Khânehâzât Abî al-Hâsan, sana‘h 1297 [1879–80].”

8. A landscape depicting a summer resort, in the Gulistân Palace, dated 1297 [1879–80].


12. An oil painting showing an orchard and a field of summer vegetables (siltz), signed “bar ‘âsh-i amîr-i qadar qadrât-i a’dhâyat-i Shâhanshâh ruhî va ruh al-‘alâmîn fâdâh, khânehâzât Abî al-Hâsan Šâh Ghaffârî, 1305 [1887–8].” Similar to item no. 1, this painting too was transferred to the Niâyavarân Palace before the 1979 Revolution. Its present whereabouts is also unknown.

23 For a reproduction of this painting, see Sahyâli Khvansârî 1989, 9.
Fig. 1. A drunken youth. By Yabyá, Abú al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862–3. 10.5 x 8.5 cm. Present whereabouts unknown

Fig. 2. School scene. By Yahyá, Abú al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862–3. 10.5 x 8.5 cm. Present whereabouts unknown
Fig. 3. The blessed Virgin Mary. By Yahya, Abu al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862-3. 10.5 x 7.6 cm. Present whereabouts unknown

Fig. 4. Young lovers. By Yahya, Abu al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862-3. 10.5 x 8.5 cm. Present whereabouts unknown
Fig. 5. Lovers embracing in a garden. By Yahyá, Abú al-Ḥasan III. Circa 1279/1862-3. 10.5 x 7.6 cm. Present whereabouts unknown

Fig. 6. The lion and the fox in the forest. By Yahyá, Abú al-Ḥasan III. Circa 1279/1862-3. 10.5 x 6.6 cm. Present whereabouts unknown
Fig. 7. The champion (pahlavân) from Mūsil. By Yahyá, Abú al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862–3. 10.5 x 7.6 cm. Present whereabouts unknown

Fig. 8. Moses as the good shepherd. By Yahyá, Abú al-Hasan III. Circa 1279/1862–3. 10.5 x 7.6 cm. Present whereabouts unknown
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IRAN AND IRANIAN STUDIES

Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar

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EDITOR’S NOTE

For over fifty years, Iraj Afshar has been writing and publishing on Iran. The sheer volume of his output (more than 130 books, 500 articles, and growing) is prodigious and its impact on current and future studies on Iran is indisputable. Sometimes as a bibliographer, sometimes as an editor or a publisher, but always as a resourceful scholar, he has made tremendous contributions in such fields as Persian manuscripts and bibliographies, Timurid, Safavid, and Qajar history, as well as local histories of Iran. He has been the editor of several important periodicals, one of which, Farhang-i Iran zamin, is still active.¹ Most students of Iranian studies are indebted to his informative and illuminating work in one way or another.

The twenty-two essays gathered in this volume represent a sincere acknowledgment of the importance of Iraj Afshar’s body of work, and a mark of respect for a truly remarkable scholar of Iranian studies. As some of the contributions are actually based on, or closely related to, specific projects carried out by Iraj Afshar,² they also attest to the wide-ranging and significant effect of his work. The scope of the essays reflects as diverse a scope as Ustād’s own interests and achievements, and ranges over such general rubrics as Iranian historiography (Melville), local history (de Blois), foreign relations (Piemontese, Matthee, Vahman, Floor, Savory), fine arts and cultural studies (Soucek, de Fouchécour, Estami, Haarmann, Soudavar, Blair, Ghanoonparvar, Robinson, Witkam, Roper), as well as political, literary, and linguistic studies (Afary, Clinton, Lazard, Perry, Sprachman). Mainly because of this varied makeup, I found another form of presentation (one based on a more-or-less chronological order of the subject matters covered) to be more appropriate.

¹ Periodically, he was the editor, co-editor, or managing editor of Mīhr (1331–2 Sh./1942–4), Sāhan (1332–6 Sh./1953–7), Kātibā-yi nāh (1334–40 Sh./1955–61), Rāhnān-e kūsh (1337–57 Sh./1958–78), Nashir-i hā-yi khātī (1339–62 Sh./1960–83), Irānhānā (1349–50 Sh./1970–1), and Azandah (1358–72 Sh./1979–94).
The transliteration system used here for Persian and Arabic words is that of the Library of Congress.\(^3\) Non-Roman place and proper names have in general been transliterated, with very few exceptions (e.g., Tehran for Tibrân; or Iraj Afshar for Iraj Afshâr). Vernacular terms and honorific titles have also been transliterated according to the specific context in which they appear, so the reader will find vezîr, vezir, and vezir appearing where the text refers to Persian, Arabic, and Turkish chief ministers, respectively. Throughout the book, an oblique stroke is used to separate the Hijri date from its Christian equivalent. Where only a Christian date was available or known, corresponding Hijri date(s) was/were supplied following the stroke.

I am deeply grateful to all the authors of the essays for their support and willingness in participating in this project. My thanks go also to Svat Soucek who translated the contributions by C.-H. de Fouchécour and Angelo Piemontese, and to Mark Farrell who made very helpful stylistic suggestions for some of the essays. I would also like to thank Ehsan Yarshater, Heath Lowry, Hossein Modarressi, Bernard O’Kane, Farhad Eslami, Yahyá Zákâ, Mark Becker, and Heshmat Moayyad, whose assistance is acknowledged at appropriate points in the book. I am particularly thankful to Farhad who also compiled a bibliography of Iraj Afshar and was gracious enough to allow me to include only a selection of it here. Karim Emami, Jochna Twelle, and Fred Plank helped me to have access to certain resources, and Maryam Zandi kindly provided the photograph of Iraj Afshar. I am indebted to Jalal Matini who was extremely helpful in answering my questions about two very difficult Persian texts. Finally, for giving so willingly of her expertise to help design the format of the volume, I am very grateful to Marion Carty.

Kambiz Eslami
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\(^3\) For a full description of these schemes, see ALA-LC romanization tables: transliteration schemes for non-Roman scripts, Washington, 1997, pp. 10–9, 171–7. One minor deviation from the LC scheme for Persian transliteration is the interchangeable usage of ā and ā in certain titles and poetic citations.

\(^4\) Considerations of space and balance forced me to limit the bibliography to titles published in book format and in monographic collections of articles, as well as those published in the journal Farhang-i Iran zamin.