milk, and his choice wins approval, as symbolizing that his community will be guided into the paths of righteousness.'

The type which commonly found acceptance with later Muhammadan painters was that of the sphinx, though in accordance with the accepted traditional descriptions of Būrqāq the body had to be approximated to that of a mule rather than to that of a lion. As already indicated, the representation of the sphinx has a long artistic history in Western Asia, but for the present purpose it is not necessary to go back to some very remote period, as there appears to be little doubt that the common representation of Būrqāq can be most closely linked on to the winged sphinxes that occur on the pottery of Rayy; 2 as this city was plundered and burnt by the Mongols in 1220 and never recovered its former prosperity, we thus have a date not far removed from the earlier pictures of Būrqāq that have survived to us. Just a little later are the sphinxes that in a stately procession march round the central medallion on the platter 3 made for the Zangid Atābeg of Mosul, Bādir ad-Dīn Lulu' (1233-1249) (see Plate L 5 b).

There were abundant opportunities for the painters to draw pictures of Būrqāq when once this primeval beast had been taken into Muslim religious art. The literature on the subject of the Prophet's ascension to heaven was enormous; 4 every life of the Prophet had a chapter on the subject, and every commentary devoted special attention to so stupendous an event; there were also special treatises devoted to it, and the mystical writers gave it interpretations of their own. But it was particularly in illustrated copies of the works of the Persian poets that pictures of Būrqāq most commonly made their appearance. It was a frequent practice for the poets, especially Nizāmī, whose writings were such favourite subjects for pictorial representation, to include in the preface, in which they offered praises to God and to His Prophet, a lyrical outburst on the theme of Muhammad's ascension. There was no event in the Prophet's life that had so triumphantly indicated his claim to be 'the Apostle of God and the seal of the Prophets' (Qur'ān, xxxiii. 40), and despite his protestations to his followers that he was only a man such as they were themselves (Qur'ān, xviii. 110; xli. 5), his ascension had raised him to a level such as no ordinary mortal had attained; he had gazed upon the face of God Himself and had beheld secrets that had been revealed to none other. Since he had then interceded with God for his people, he could assuredly

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1 Ibn Hisām, op. cit., p. 263 ad fin.
2 See British Museum (Ceramics Dept. 1927-9). (Plate LV a.) A number of examples are shown in the sale catalogue, Objets d'art anciens de la Perse, Collection de M. J. M. . . . de Tihonari (Paris, 5-6 Mai 1922).
3 In the Museum für Volkerkunde, Munich.
be their mediator in the future, and the advantages of being counted among
the number of his faithful followers were thus obvious; consequently he
became transfigured in their eyes, and the exalted position thereby attained
goes far to explain the frequent occurrence of the pictures of Burāq; for no
incident in the religious history of Islam is more commonly represented in
Muslim art than this of the ascension of the Prophet.

Perhaps nowhere has this incident received nobler treatment than in the
manuscript of Nizāmī's Khamsah, which is one of the treasures of the British
Museum (Or. 2265, fol. 195). Across the great space of the heaven densely
covered with masses of white cloud, through the interstices of which a
brilliant dark blue sky shines out, Muhammad passes majestically on his way,
seated at his ease on his human-headed steed and undeterred by the measure-
less depths that yawn beneath him. In the far distance the globe of the earth
that he has left behind shines out surrounded by a white haze. In front of
him goes Gabriel, a dignified winged figure, leading the way; between the
archangel and the Prophet an angel bears, suspended from a long rod, a
great censer sending out flames of gold. Another angel below the Prophet
keeps along side by side with him, holding high a chafing dish full of burning
perfume. Over the Prophet's head angels empty out dishes of pearls and
rubies, which can be seen falling down in a glittering shower. A host of
other angels swoop down towards him from the skies, bearing various gifts—
one carries the Qur'an, another the famous green robe (which is still said
to be preserved among the relics of the Prophet in Constantinople), another
brings a crown, others present dishes of fruit and various kinds of food. The
conception of the whole picture is most impressive, filled with a great sense
of movement, which is emphasized by the fluttering of so many brightly
coloured wings in the great company of attendant angels.

As a rule the only personages in the picture are the angel Gabriel and
Muhammad; sometimes the Ka'bah and the sacred enclosure of the Haram
in Mecca are brought into the picture, and in such a work as the Miṣrī
Nāmah, in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Supplément turc 193), which is
entirely devoted to the story of the heavenly journey of the Prophet, Muham-
mad remains seated on Burāq in the presence of the various prophets and
angels he visits.

During the decline in Muhammadan painting in the seventeenth and
eighteenth centuries, the representation of Burāq tended to become vulgar-
ized, and her appearance was certainly not improved by the addition of an

1 This picture has now been made accessible to all by being included in the series of coloured
reproductions published by the British Museum (B. 31). (Plate I.VIII.)
ill-shaped, heavy crown, such as that worn by the later Shahs of Persia, or by the substitution of an upstanding peacock’s tail for that of an ordinary mule.

The common occurrence of pictures of Muḥammad upon Burāq affords a remarkable example of the persistence of an earlier artistic convention and of its intrusion into a religion of a later date. By theory, and in accordance with orthodox theological teaching, no such representation should have appeared in the art of Islam at all, but like many other survivals it refused to be killed, and insisted on finding for itself a place in the art of a religion which ought never to have admitted it, but was not strong enough to keep out an artistic tradition of such great antiquity. Even to the present day, crude pictures of Burāq, without her rider, are popular in Egyptian villages, and flimsy representations of this strange beast are often carried in the Muharram processions in India.

VIII

PORTRAITURE

PORTRAITURE, in any form whatsoever, naturally came under the ban of the theological condemnation of the pictorial representation of living beings discussed in Chapter I. It is strange therefore to find it exemplified in the very earliest expression of artistic activity that has come down to us from the beginning of the Muhammadan era. On coins of the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, between the years 685 and 695, we find a standing figure wearing a long robe reaching to the ankles, and carrying a broad sheathed sword slung across the body from right to left. There are several examples of coins bearing this device preserved in various museums in Europe; and the standing figure has sometimes been supposed to represent Muhammad the Prophet himself. But such an identification is untenable for many reasons, nor indeed is it likely that more than a symbolic representation of the reigning Caliph, ʿAbd al-Malik (685–705), is here intended. The presence on these coins of any figure at all can easily be explained by a political necessity that has imposed itself on the fiscal system of more than one conqueror or founder of a dynasty. When the Arabs in the seventh century had become masters of the civilized and wealthy provinces of the Roman empire, Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, accustomed to an organized system of government and old-established methods of trade and commerce, the new rulers wisely continued, for some years at least, to permit the current use of the coinage to which the inhabitants of these provinces had been accustomed under the old régime, just as they at first kept in office the bureaucracy and the tax-collectors of the Roman empire. For the same reason, the first coins the Arabs struck in Syria imitated those of the former rulers, in bearing the effigy of the Byzantine emperor, holding a cross and having a cross upon his diadem. As the Arab government became more firmly established, the Muslim creed was gradually introduced into the new coinage, and in place of the figure of the Christian emperor bearing the symbols of his faith, we find the Muslim Caliph, bare-headed, gripping in his right hand the handle of his sheathed sword. But this was not so much an attempt at actual portraiture as a modification of the earlier design in accordance with the new creed; it represents such a transitional concession to the popular conception of current coinage as is exhibited by the coins struck by Christian sovereigns in northern Europe, with Arabic

1 Mu’awiya (661–680) had a dinar struck with a figure on it, girt with a sword (MAQĀRĪ al-Naqd al-islāmīyya, p. 5, Constantinople, 1905); but no example of this coin appears to be extant.
1 J. G. Adler, Monnaies Càphètes Byzantines, Parts I, p. 171 (CIX. B) (Hafniae, 1792).
inscription, in some cases even the creed of Islam, ‘There is no god save Allah; Muhammad is the apostle of Allah’—not that such an inscription conveyed any meaning to the unlettered European, but it was familiar to him through the many Muhammadan coins that had become current in various parts of northern Europe through trade with the dominions of the Caliphate. Similarly, the British in India continued to strike coins up to 1832 in the name of Shah ‘Alam, though this emperor died in 1806. About 696 ‘Abd al-Malik purged the coignage of the impurity of such pictorial representation, and his coins henceforth bore Arabic inscriptions only, according to the fashion adopted by the majority of successive Muhammadan rulers in every age and country.

From an equally foreign source were derived the six well-known portraits at Qasayr ‘Amra; these are likewise of a purely imaginary type, representing the six great potentates of the world, whose power had shrunken before the victorious advance of the Arab armies. The identification of them is not altogether easy, but from the inscriptions and other indications it would appear that they are intended to represent the Emperor of Constantinople, clad in his imperial robes, with a tiara on his head—the King of Persia, in rich garments, with a purple cloak over his shoulders, purple shoes on his feet, and a costly crown of a Sasanian type on his head—the beardless figure next to him must have been intended for the last of the Sasanian house, Yazdagird III, who met his death as a fugitive in 652—Roderic, the last king of the Visigoths of Spain, who was slain in battle with the Arabs in 711; his figure once stood behind the Caesar and the Khusrav, as the Arabic and Greek inscriptions clearly show, though nothing now remains on the wall but the top of his helmet—the Negus of Abyssinia, robed like a priest of the Monophysite Church, in a white garment and a purple stole, with a turban on his head; the two other figures are uncertain, but it has been suggested that one may stand for the Khaqan of the Turks of Transoxiana, against whom Qutaybah was fighting in 712, and the other for one of the Indian Rajas defeated by Muhammad ibn al-Qasim about the same period. Though none of these pictures on the west wall of the main hall of the building can be regarded as portraits, yet they were intended to represent actual personages, and were probably, in the first two instances at least, modelled on coins or similar representations of the monarchs of the Roman and Persian empires.


XLIV. A group of Indian ascetics
But in the case of the figure seated in a niche of the wall opposite the entrance to the main hall of the building, we probably have what was really meant for a portrait of the ruler for whom this bath-house was erected—Walid I (705–715). Unfortunately this picture is in a very damaged condition, but it presents a majestic figure, like that of God Almighty, in the apse of a Byzantine basilica, seated on a golden throne, flanked by two spiral pillars supporting a canopy; behind the head of the figure is a round halo, and in such a building, at such a date, it can only be taken to represent the reigning Caliph (Plate LVII(b)).

There is a long interval of time between the painting of the Qusayr ‘Amra frescoes and the striking of the coins which give us the next attempts at historic portraiture in the Muslim period. The first of these is a medal bearing on one side the effigy of the Caliph Mutawakkil (847–861), and on the other a man leading a camel. Mutawakkil is chiefly known to history as a persecutor, not only of Christians and Jews but of such of his co-religionists as he regarded as heretics, while he outraged the feelings of the Shiites by destroying the tomb of the martyr Hūsain and forbidding pilgrimages to the site; but his religious zeal did not prevent him from being addicted to wine and keeping four thousand concubines, and he employed Greek painters to decorate his palace at Sāmarrā with pictures, among them one of a church with monks in it, and some fragments of these decorations have been recovered from the ruins of this building by Professor Herzfeld. This coin represents him with a long, two-pointed beard, wearing a richly decorated robe and a low cap, with two streamers, somewhat of a Sassanian type, hanging down on either side of his face; on the obverse is a man leading a camel.

The subserviency of the Caliphs to their Praetorian guard of Turks had already begun in the reign of Mutawakkil, and it was by some of these Turks that he was assassinated in 861. A similar fate befell his great-grandson Muqtadir (908–932), in whose reign the Caliphate sank to a low ebb; this indolent ruler wasted his time among slave-girls and musicians, and was entirely under the influence of the women of his palace and squandered on them the treasures that his predecessors had accumulated. On the medal which he had struck, the Caliph is represented wearing a tight-fitting robe of state, strewed with pearls and decorated with a lozenge pattern; he is sitting cross-legged, with a cup of wine in his right hand and some kind of a weapon

1 Yaṣṣūr, Maʿjam al-buldān, Vol. IV, p. 44.
2 Die Malerien von Samarra, Tafeln I-LVI, LX-LXXXVIII.
in his left. On the obverse is a musician, also sitting cross-legged, playing a lute, in a robe like that of the Caliph, but having broad pendent sleeves; the pose of this figure and several details of the design, noticeably the broad sleeve, as well as the shape of the lute, correspond with those of the picture of the planet Venus in the MS. of Qazwini (Cod. Arab. 464, fol. 14) in the Staatsbibliothek, Munich. There are similar examples of representations of the planets on some of the coins of the Urtuqids of Diyar Bakr, e.g. Mars (id., fol. 16) on a coin of Yüluq Arslân, dated a.H. 996 ( = A.D. 1590-1592), and the Sun (id., fol. 14 b) on a coin of Mas'ud I, the Zangi Atabeg of Mosul (a.H. 585 = A.D. 1189). In the reign of Muqtadir's son, Râdi (A.D. 914-940), there is a record of a medal having been struck, apparently in jest, by Bajkam, one of his Turkish mercenaries; this powerful soldier completely dominated the unfortunate Caliph, who complained that on this medal he was represented in an attitude of humiliation with his head hanging down, while on the obverse was the aggressive figure of Bajkam in full armour.

The reign of Mu'tâb (946-974) exhibits the lowest depth to which the Abbasid dynasty sank in Baghdad before its final extinction by the Mongols in 1258; during this Caliph's long reign of twenty-eight years, he was practically a pensioner on the grudging bounty of the Buwayhid, who had deprived him of all the characteristics of sovereignty except the empty title, and at last compelled him to abdicate. Like Mutawakkil and Muqtadir, he struck a medal bearing his portrait; the Caliph is seated cross-legged, holding a wine-cup in his right hand, with an attendant on either side of him, one holding a musical instrument, the other a cloth with which to drive away flies; on the obverse is a musician playing a five-stringed lute.

To a later period, the reign of the Caliph Nâsr (A.D. 1180-1225), who attempted with some slight measure of success to restore the fallen dignity of the Abbasid Caliphate, belongs that impressive monument, the so-called Talisman Gate, still standing in Baghdad, which he restored and embellished in 1221. Above the arch is the seated figure of a man grasping the tongues of two winged dragons, whose long involuted tails are coiled down the spandrels of the arch on either side. It has been suggested that we have here

2. Fritz Saxl, 'Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Phacetendarstellungen im Orient und im Osten', (Dok Islam, Vol. III (1912), Tafel 1, Abb. 6). (Plate LXIX c.)
3. Id., Tafel 4, Abb. 3.
5. Id., Vol. III, no. 529.
7. This coin is unique, and is reproduced here from a cast made in the Coins Department of the British Museum; there is no record of its present ownership. (Plate LXIX a.)

1. a portrait of the Caliph himself, represented as triumphing over his enemies; but such an identification would imply so violent and public a breach with the accepted attitude of Muslim orthodoxy towards the art of sculpture, that the popular appellation of the gate seems to indicate a more likely interpretation, viz. that it was intended merely to serve as a talisman and protect the city.

In less cultured times, when the rise of younger nationalities had broken up the great Arab empire, and various Turkish dynasties had established themselves in territories that had previously recognized the sway of the Caliph of Baghdad, we find on the coinage of the Urtuqids of Diyar-Bakr a curious succession of designs. These barbarians, apparently wishing to make their coins intelligible to the Christians with whom they traded, copied the devices they found on any coins that came in their way, and while they put their titles on one side, on the other we find rough imitations of the heads of Roman emperors and Seleucid or Sasanian monarchs, and even the figure of Christ enthroned, copied from the coin of a Byzantine emperor. The Saljuqs of Asia Minor also struck coins with human figures on them, but in no case do they appear to be portraits of the monarchs whose names and titles they bear.

It is not impossible that those princes of the Abbasid house who had their effigies put upon their coins also employed painters to paint their portraits; but no evidence can be quoted in support of such a supposition. The art of portraiture, however, must have received some encouragement even in the Abbasid period, since in the reign of Mahommed of Ghazni (998-1030) it appears to have attained such proficiency that it could be used for detective purposes, according to the story of the means which this inexorable monarch adopted in order to discover the whereabouts of Avicenna. This famous philosopher and physician was unwilling to accept the invitation of Mahommed to enter his service and fled into Gurgân; so Mahommed ordered Abû Nasr ibn 'Arrâq, who was a painter as well as a celebrated mathematician and astronomer, to draw the portrait of Avicenna on paper, and then ordered other artists to make forty copies of it, and dispatched these to the courts of neighbouring rulers, bidding them send him the man, whom they would recognize by this portrait. According to this story Mahommed must have had a number of expert painters at his court.

In Egypt also such scanty notices as have been preserved suggest that the
art of portraiture was practised, for among the treasures of the unfortunate Fatimid Caliph, Mustansir (1035–1094), who was plundered by his unruly Turkish soldiery, were curtains of silk brocade, worked with gold, having on them pictures of the kings and famous personages of various dynasties, with the name of each written above his portrait, together with an account of his achievements. The grandson of this Caliph, Amir (1101–1150), had the portraits of contemporary poets painted in a turret-room which he had caused to be erected for his own use; each poet was invited to contribute some verses of his own composition; these were inscribed by the side of his portrait, together with the name and birthplace of the poet, and by each picture was an elegant cornice. When the Caliph came to inspect the room and had read the poems, he was so pleased that he ordered a sealed purse containing fifty pieces of gold to be put on each one of the cornices, and the poets were then admitted and each took the reward assigned to him.

A similar form of appreciation of poetic talent is recorded of the last Saljuq Sultan of Irak and Kurdistân, Tughril ibn Arslân, who in the year 1184 had a collection of poems copied out by a celebrated calligraphist named Zayn ad-Din, and the portrait of each one of the poets whose compositions were included in the volume was painted by Jamâl Naqqâsh Isfahânì. Of this painter nothing whatever is known beyond this casual reference.

The Mongol conquerors, in spite of their acceptance of the religion of their Muhammadan subjects, similarly refused to submit to the restrictions imposed by the theologians in the matter of portraits, and they continued to follow the practice of their heathen ancestors, who used to have their portraits painted by their court painters, probably Chinese or artists of some one of the nationalities that went to make up the varied population of the country between the ancestral home of the Mongols and the eastern border of Persiâ. The MS. of Rashid ad-Din’s History in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Supplément persan, 1113) contains grim paintings of Chingiz Khân and his descendants, executed towards the end of the fourteenth century, but copied from others of an earlier date.

After the Mongol conquest of Persia, portrait painting became increasingly common. There are several portraits of Timur (1369–1404), though most of those that have survived were painted by artists of later generations. Jahângîr, in his Memoirs, describes a picture by a painter named Khalîl

XLIX. Angels ministering to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham
Mîrzâ, which had once been in the library of the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shâh Ismâ’îl (1502–1524); it represented one of the battles of Timür, in which this ruthless conqueror was depicted with his children and the chief officers of his army, and contained as many as 240 figures, each with his name written so that the personages concerned could be identified.

In the fifteenth century portraiture appears to have been considered by more than one Muhammadan potentate as a legitimate means of perpetuating his memory and greatness. Dr. Martin has pointed out how Sultan Hûsâyn Mîrzâ (1473–1506) had his own features portrayed in the illustrations of his manuscripts, when his court painters depicted the exploits of Alexander, whom (it must be remembered) the orthodox opinion of that age regarded as an inspired Prophet of God and as a devout Muslim, leading his armies against the enemies of the Lord and carrying the true faith into the lands of the unbelievers. Thus, in the MS. of Nizâmi’s Epic of Sikander in the British Museum (Or. 6810), where Bihzâd represents (fol. 273) Alexander visiting a hermit dwelling in a cave, the painter’s patron, Sultan Hûsâyn Mîrzâ, is the real hero of the scene, and has lent his features for the occasion. An early portrait of this enlightened patron of art, and another taken later in life, are both ascribed to Bihzâd.¹

Similarly, portraits of Shâh Ṭâhmâsp (1524–1576), the Safavid prince who himself dabbled in painting and patronized such great artists as Sultan Muhammad and Mîrzâ, are common. He appears, too, in the pictures which adorn the pages of his superb manuscripts, e.g. in the Khamsâh of Nizâmi (British Museum, Or. 2263) it is Ṭâhmâsp who gallops across the field, under the guise of Bahrâm Gûr hunting the wild ass.²

Later Shâhs of the Safavid dynasty also encouraged the art of portraiture, and the features of Shâh ʿAbbâs (1587–1629) appear in more than one picture. His grandson and successor, Shâh Ṣâfî (1629–1642), is seen surrounded by the generals and nobles of his court, in a diptych described by the present writer in the Journal of Indian Art (Vol. XVII, No. 135). Twenty-one out of the thirty-four figures in this picture bear the name or title of the person indicated—a practice which was common also in contemporary Indian art, and indicates the deliberate intention of representing personality, in consequence of which the art of portraiture from this period onwards constitutes one of the most prominent forms of artistic activity both in Persia and India, as later in Turkey also.

It is not only the sovereign who has himself so immortalized, but the

fashion spread also to his subjects. In Persia this popularizing of the art of portraiture may in some degree have been a result of the break-up of the royal atelier, when the increasing cost of Shāh ‘Abbās’s campaigns forced him to cut down expenses, and accordingly he withdrew his allowance to the court painters, and thus compelled them to seek the patronage of commoners. To this circumstance is probably due the increase in the number of the separate portraits of Persians other than those of members of the royal family—such as nobles, military officers, physicians, scholars, &c.—and the facile brush of Rizā ‘Abbāsī was fortunately ready to supply the demand.

The Timūrids in India were even more enthusiastic patrons of the portrait painter than the Safavids of Persia. Akbar often sat for his portrait and also ordered the portraits of the grandees of his court to be taken. Apart from separate pictures, the illustrators of the MSS. especially prepared for this emperor’s library provide a whole picture-gallery of portraits of the great personages of his court, e.g. in such a work as the Akbar Namāb—the annals of his reign compiled by his prime minister and devoted personal friend Abu’l-Fazl. Here we find them playing their part in the various incidents of their master’s career, his campaigns, the sieges of hostile fortresses, his hunting expeditions and convivial gatherings. Though such importance is not attached to individual characterization as is implied in separate portraiture, still the distinctive features of each make the various members of the court of whom there is any historic record easily recognizable, and they do not form indistinguishable members of a crowd, as in some earlier representations of the courts of Muhammadan monarchs, or in such a picture as hangs in the palace of the Nawāb of Rāmpūr, in which one of his ancestors is seen seated among the ladies of his harem, each one of which is an exact facsimile of her neighbour—the painter probably never having set eyes on any one of them. Such colourless presentations of individuals are, of course, common also in Western art, e.g. in Giotto’s picture in the Upper Church at Assisi of St. Francis before Pope Innocent III, where the attendant cardinals have features wholly indistinguishable from one another.

Akbar’s successor, Jahāngīr (1605–1628), seems to have been even more fond of portraits than his father. Not only did he have himself and his nobles frequently painted, but he even sent a painter named Bishān Dīs, who was said to be unrivalled as a portrait painter, to accompany the Indian ambassador to the court of Persia, and there take the portraits of the Shāh and the chief personages of his court.1

1 See pp. 145–4, 147–7. 2 The finest example is the MS. in the possession of Mr. A. Chester Beatty. 3 Memoirs of Jahāngīr, Vol. II, p. 116.
Portraiture

Jahângîr was the only one of the rulers of the Mughal dynasty who struck coins engraved with his own portrait; sometimes even holding a wine-cup in his hand 1 (Plate LIX c).

Further notice of this vast picture-gallery of portraits is unnecessary here, as so many recent publications have provided abundant materials for the study of it.

As court patronage declined in India, and in the reign of Aurângzîb (1659–1707) ceased for a time altogether, the Indian painters, like their contemporaries in Persia, had to look elsewhere for patrons, and the number of portraits of private individuals increases and the degree of artistic attainment tends proportionately to decline.

Among the descendants of Aurângzîb there appears to have been a revival of court patronage, for portraits of Farrukhsîyar (1713–1719) and of Muhammâd Shâh (1719–1748) are common. About the same period in Persia also, later Shâhs extended their patronage to painters, e.g. there are several portraits of Nâdir Shâh (1732–1747), the most noteworthy of which is that in the India Office. 2 Fath 'Ali Shâh (1797–1834) kept his court painters particularly busy; he was inordinately proud of his long black beard and had his portrait taken on innumerable occasions, either by himself or surrounded by his court or attended by his ladies. In 1822 he presented to the Court of Directors of the East India Company an oil painting of himself in scarlet coat, richly decorated with jewels, and a turban covered with pearls. This portrait, together with another by his court painter, Mîrzâ Bîbî, now hangs in the India Office. In another oil painting of vast size (139 in. × 205 in.) the Shâh is seen hunting with the royal princes and his courtiers, the names of the chief personages being painted in Persian on the canvas. 3 Another of his presents to the Directors of the East India Company is a copy of an epic poem by his poet laureate, Shâbâ, in which an account is given of the various exploits of his master; in this copy the picture of the Shâh appears as many as nine times. 4

In Turkey portraiture appears to have enjoyed the patronage of the Ottoman Sultans from the fifteenth century onwards, and a whole series of the monarchs of this dynasty adorned one of their palaces in Constantinople and has frequently been copied and in modern times been reproduced in various publications. 5

1 S. Lane Poole, Coins of the Mughal Emperors of Hindustan in the British Museum, p. ix xx.
2 In the Military Committee Room.
3 Sir William Foster, Descriptive Catalogue of the Paintings, Statues, &c., in the India Office, nos. 81, 89, 11.
It is thus clear that the art of portraiture has had a long history in the Muhammadan world, and it is probable that the memorials which have survived, abundant as they are, form only a comparatively small part of those that once existed, as is obviously the case with the other artistic products of the activity of Muhammadan painters.

It is, however, important to notice that this love of portraiture, in spite of the abundant artistic activity which it prompted and encouraged, was mainly confined to the court, since the theologians and the general body of the orthodox in no way relaxed their hostile attitude towards such infringements of the sacred law. Even up to the nineteenth century this condemnation of the painter’s art was extended to photography, and in spite of the sophism that attempted to attribute the production of such a method of taking a likeness to divine agency, since it was the sunlight and no human paint-brush that made the picture, the orthodox refused to abate a jot of the severity with which earlier theologians had viewed any representation of living beings.1

LIV. Prototypes of Burāq

L.V. Representations of Burāq
IX
THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION

There is one characteristic of the figure painting of the Muhammadan period which is deserving of special attention, viz. the infrequency of any attempt to give emotive expression to the faces of the living persons represented in these pictures. Such a deficiency can hardly be ascribed to lack of ability, in view of the noteworthy achievements of the Muhammadan artists in other varieties of their creative activity, especially in the delineation of character. Several circumstances belonging to divers categories may have contributed to this result. Since these paintings appertain to a courtly art, the demeanour of the persons depicted is made to correspond with that serenity and dignity of bearing which are so characteristic of the ideal of outward behaviour, cultivated in polite society throughout the greater part of Muhammadan history. This avoidance of any violent manifestation of feeling is not unconnected with the discipline imposed on the believer by the faith of Islam, as manifested in the decorum and solemnity of the ritual of public worship at the five canonical hours, and with the calm, imperturbable acceptance of the vicissitudes of fortune, however unexpected and disastrous, as expressions of the will of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

From the artistic point of view, the fact that much of the illustration of Persian MSS. had its origin in the paintings covering the walls of royal palaces made the expression of emotion subordinate to the demands of mere decoration. Further, as Dr. Laurence Binyon has finely pointed out, 'in the later Persian art, beauty of line for its own sake was pursued to the suppression of interest in character and expression'.

Whatever the reasons may have been—and they were certainly multifarious—the fact remains that, charming as these pictures are in colour, graceful in outline, and successful in their presentation of the story or incident that has to be illustrated, they are for the most part lacking in any attempt at the expression of emotion. The painter seems, in the majority of cases, to have contented himself with the creation of sheer beauty; he exhausts the resources of his palette in a riot of colour, and with that feeling for fine calligraphy which to his contemporaries often stood for the highest expression of beauty of form, draws his graceful undulating lines with an unmixed delight in the creation of pleasing contours. Having set his figures

1 The Court Painters of the Great Moguls, p. 43.