Muhammad Juki’s Shahnamah of Firdausi
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The Shāhnāmah of Firdausi produced for the Timūrid Muhammad Ḫūḫī (a grandson of Timūr) in the 1440s is one of the finest surviving Persian manuscripts produced between the heyday of Baysunghur’s academy in Herat and the appearance of Bihzad.

It has thirty-one exquisite miniature paintings depicting scenes from the epic tale and fine illumination on two pages. The manuscript was presented to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1834 by Lt. Col. C. J. Doyle who had probably received it as a parting gift from Lord Hastings on leaving India. It had previously been in the Mughal Imperial Library and bears the seals of the Mughal emperors Bābur, Humāyūn, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzehb; there is an autograph note by Shah Jahan and further notes reveal its subsequent history.

This monograph written by Dr Barbara Brend is the first complete study of the manuscript and provides a detailed analysis of the cycle of illustrations; a commentary on the Mughal notes by A. H. Morton which offer telling insights into the practices of the Mughal library.

A. H. Morton was lecturer in Persian at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, from 1979 to 1999 when he retired. He has written on a variety of subjects, including the pre-modern history of Iran, and Islamic numismatics and metrology. His most recent book is an edition of a previously unpublished medieval chronicle, the Saljuqnamah of Zahir al-Din Nishapuri.