but most often the surfaces of provincial paintings lack its resonance and richness. When the kings and princes of Iran wished to patronise the visual arts, they could and did command the most talented artists and craftsmen, who in turn were provisioned with the finest paper, most brilliant pigments and subtlest brushes imaginable.

The Ilkhanids

The Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century changed life in Iran radically and permanently. Of the two waves of invasions, the first, led by Chinghiz Khan (Genghiz Khan) in the 1220s, destroyed lives and property in north-eastern Iran on a grand scale. The second, under Hulegu Khan in the 1250s, completed the conquest of Iran and advanced as far as Palestine, where the Mongols were finally defeated by the Mamluks of Egypt at ‘Ayn Jalt in 1260. Having sacked Baghdad and executed the ‘Abbasid caliph, Hulegu consolidated his control over Iraq, Iran and much of Anatolia. With his capital at Maragha in north-western Iran, he founded the Ilkhanid kingdom, nominally subject to the Great Khan, Qubilai, ruler of China and Mongolia.

Curiously, despite the extensive physical destruction wrought by the invasions and despite the succession of non-Muslim Mongol rulers, the administrative structure of Iran remained largely unchanged. Ministers and clerics continued to be drawn from the native population. However, their job security (and lives) depended on their willingness to carry out the policies of the Mongols, including several excessively burdensome forms of taxation. By 1295, when Ghazan Khan became Ilkhan, the Iranian economy was in a state of collapse.

Having converted to Islam before becoming Ilkhan, Ghazan
Khan set out to reform the government and revitalise the economy. Taxation was regulated and reduced for those who took up cultivation of new or unused land. Soldiers were paid with the income from land granted to them for farming. The government attempted to improve the postal system, coinage, weights and measures, and the safety of roads. By the time of his death in 1304, Ghazan Khan had curbed the worst excesses of the first seventy years of Mongol rule in Iran. His extremely able minister, Rashid al-Din, who helped spearhead these reforms, continued in office after his death and attempted to maintain the order he had established. Perhaps as a result of the relative calm under Ghazan Khan, Mongol patronage of arts and letters finally took root. As will be discussed further, Rashid al-Din endowed a whole quarter of the Mongol capital, Tabriz, and supported a library and artists’ workshop which produced illustrated histories and other texts in the first fifteen years of the fourteenth century.

The reign of Uljaytu (1324–16), Ghazan Khan’s successor and younger brother, is less well documented. Apparently he maintained but did not strengthen the administrative infrastructure of Iran. Thus, following his death in 1336, his eleven-year-old successor, Abu Sa‘id, failed to suppress a power struggle between ministers in which Rashid al-Din met his death and his library and estates were pillaged. Until 1327, when Abu Sa‘id finally took full responsibility for ruling the Ilkhanid lands, two Mongol factions, the Chapanids and the Jalayirids, struggled for power. The final eight years of Abu Sa‘id’s tenure, 1327–35, mark a return to relative stability and good government under the vizierate of Ghiyath al-Din, one of the many sons of Rashid al-Din and, like him, a patron of the arts. Unfortunately, Abu Sa‘id left no direct heir. The factionalism that had characterised other periods of weakness in Ilkhanid history reared its head again, but this time no man or group possessed enough strength to seize control of the whole Ilkhanate. As a result, the Jalayirids, Injun and then Muzaffarids dominated the west and south (Iraq, Azerbaijan and Fars), while Sarbadars and Karts prevailed in the north and east (Khurasan) from the 1330s until the invasion of Timur (Tamerlane) in the late fourteenth century. Although the Mongols were indubitably the major political force in Iran in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, a distinctly Mongol style of painting began to emerge only at the end of the thirteenth century. Possibly the Mongols’ enduring nomadism, their status as non-Islamic rulers of a Muslim people or simply their...
smash-and-grab barbarism delayed the development of a fully integrated Mongol style. The manuscript illustrations surviving from the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries suggest disparate traditions and influences—Persian, Arab and Chinese—at best loosely united in a single school. Ultimately, these artistic threads were woven more tightly into a recognisable style, which reached maturity on the eve of the demise of the Ilkhanate. Yet, concurrently, provincial schools of painting existed which relied to a greater or lesser extent on the court style of the Mongols.

One of the earliest manuscripts that can be attributed to artists working in the Mongol court is a Bestiary (Manafi al-Hayawan) of Ibn Bakhtishu, produced in 1297 or 1299 at Maragha, one of the principal Mongol cities in north-west Iran. This manuscript is based on a translation into Persian made at the behest of Ghazan Khan. The work of several hands, including some nineteenth-century tamperers, the manuscript’s ninety-four illustrations combine elements of thirteenth-century Arab book painting, Persian ceramic art and the new influence of Chinese brush painting. In ‘A mare followed by a stallion’ the artist has painted the tree trunk with expressionistic strokes, washes and blots of ink, akin to

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13 Chinese painting of the Southern Sung period (1127–1279). The dappled mare, on the other hand, recalls thirteenth-century Arab renderings of animals whose rumps and bellies are painted in gold in contrast to the rest of their bodies. Twelfth- and thirteenth-century makers of Persian lustreware ceramics also favoured decorative spots on animals of all sorts. While the mélange of styles evident in the Bestiary points to a formative stage in the Mongol school of painting, the large size, generous number of illustrations, rich palette and sympathetic portrayal of animals all underscore the high, presumably royal, level of the patronage of this book.
Concurrently with the production of manuscripts overseen by the Ilkhan's own libraries, books continued to be illustrated in Mongol provincial centres and for non-royal patrons in major Mongol cities. A group of three small illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnameh* exemplifies the difficulties of assigning Ilkhanid painting to a specific city or date. These have variously been attributed to Shiraz, Isfahan, western India and Baghdad and dated from 1300 to 1340. The painting shown here, 'Ifrisayyeh unhorses Gurgisar', reveals far less Chinese influence than the Maragha *Bestiary*, and its tiny scale might suggest that it was not a royal commission. However, the emphasis on action, with the protagonist and his soldiers bounding on horseback across the minimal landscape, is characteristically Mongol. Despite archaic elements, such as the gold sky and floating vegetation, the extension of banners and horses' hooves into the margins anticipates the high Mongol style of the 1330s. While round saddle flaps and rich gold brocaded textiles are found in Mongol miniatures well into the fourteenth century, the distinctive round ear-flaps of the helmets seem to be more specifically of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Although the small *Shahnameh* may prove to have had little influence on the Mongol court style of the period 1300–40, they rank high in importance for several other reasons. First, some scholars consider them to be the earliest known *Shahnameh* to have been illustrated, over 200 years after Ferdowsi composed the epic. Given the large quantity of *Shahnameh* verses and the recurrence of certain illustrations on thirteenth-century Iranian ceramics, it is safe to say that the epic was illustrated in some, if not all, media before 1300. The inclusion of illustrations may suggest that the patron did not know the book by heart or was not easily able to attend *Shahnameh* recitations. Possibly he led the type of nomadic life associated with the Ilkhan, who moved between encampments almost constantly. The small size and portability of the manuscripts would have suited such a patron. Second, despite their minute size, the facial features and other details are delineated with extreme care. The willingness to miniaturise the illustrations and to depict faces, clothing and animals in careful detail anticipates the great Jalayirid school of painting at Baghdad of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but has little to do stylistically with late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century Baghdad painting. In a period which has left few manuscripts with securely known dates and places of production, the small *Shahnameh* still tantalise, but their dramatic illustrations of battles and domestic scenes also provide an intimate vision of life in late Ilkhanid times.

The understanding of Mongol and Ilkhanid history has been immeasurably enhanced by the work of Rashid al-Din. A physician by training, Rashid al-Din was commissioned by Ghazan Khan to write a continuation of Juvayni's history of the Mongol tribes and conquests. This history was completed in 1307, three years after Ghazan’s death. His successor Uljaytu ordered Rashid al-Din to prepare a history of the world, known as the *Jami’ al-Tavarikh*, or *Collection of Chronicles*. In the suburb he built in Tabriz, the Rab‘-i Rashidi, Rashid al-Din employed an international collection of scholars, scribes, bookbinders and painters to compile the four volumes of his history. Each year the workshop was expected to complete one Arab and one Persian copy of the manuscript, which were then to be sent to the major cities of the Ilkhanid empire. Although over twenty illustrated copies of the *Jami’ al-Tavarikh* must have been produced during the lifetimes of Rashid al-Din and Uljaytu, only two fragments remain. One, in the Edinburgh University Library, dates from 1306–7; the other, in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection, London, is datable to 1314.

Despite the seven-year difference between the two surviving sections of the *Jami’ al-Tavarikh*, the illustrations reveal a unity of style which characterised Mongol court painting under the patronage of Rashid al-Din and Uljaytu. Except for the portraits of Chinese emperors, the format of the illustrations is consistently horizontal, either reaching across the full width of the written page or placed in the centre of the page with text on either side. As in the *Bestiary*, the sky in most of the *Jami’* pages is unpainted; hillocks or mountains are drawn sketchily and given definition by feathery green strokes denoting blades of grass. The palette of the *Jami’* is distinctive. In addition to the predominant warm earth colour of the paper itself, the artists have used silver liberally for highlights of drapery and faces. Originally, this silver must have shimered quite effectively, but it has tarnished over the centuries and is much darker now than was intended. Otherwise, the colours in the *Jami’* paintings are quite subdued. Green, orange, blue and red prevail, but saturated colours are used sparingly for garment linings or other accents. Typically, horses and men are long-legged with proportionally small heads.

In the best *Jami’* illustrations the setting, either landscape or architecture, echoes the figures’ poses and accentuates the dramatic content of the scene. Thus, in 'Shakjamuni (Buddha) offers fruit to the Devil', the two trees at the left curve expressively to contain the sycophantic devil with his overlarge outstretched hands. Likewise, Sakyamuni’s head fits neatly between the branches of two trees. Scholars have often noted the strong Chinese influence in the *Jami’*
al-Tawarikh paintings; the horizontal format recalls Chinese handscrolls, the muted palette and painterly brushstrokes resemble those of Chinese ink painting, and the expressive treatment of natural forms relates to Chinese landscape painting. However, the large scale of the figures and their placement close to the picture plane have far more in common with native Persian painting than with any foreign influence. While the artists of Rashid al-Din’s scriptorium were certainly familiar with Chinese, Central Asian, European and Arab works, they forged a style that drew on foreign sources but remained distinct from them. Although the style did not prevail for long, the Jam‘ al-Tawarikh manuscripts of 1326–7 and 1314 do represent a conscious effort to produce a new genre. This paved the way for the final glorious Ilkhānid synthesis and the subsequent development of the classical style of Persian painting.

Although it is one of the passages most often quoted with reference to Persian painting, Dust Muhammad’s preface to the album of paintings and calligraphy that he compiled in 1344 for the Persian prince Bahram Mirza (1517–49) nonetheless bears repeating here. Having noted the excellence of portraiture in China and Europe, Dust Muhammad went on to state that, in the reign of the Ilkhānid Abu Sa‘id, ‘Master Ahmad Musa, who was his father’s pupil, lifted the veil from the face of depiction, and the (style of) depiction that is now current was invented by him’ (Thackston, p. 345). Of the manuscripts attributed by Dust Muhammad to Ahmad Musa, a Kitāb wa Dinmah and a Ma‘rjānameh have been identified by some scholars with two that remain in fragmentary form in albums in Istanbul. Although Dust Muhammad also mentioned a Shāhnameh, he maintained that it was square in format and produced by one of Ahmad Musa’s students, Shamsuddin, not for the Mongols but for the Jalayirid ruler Shaykh Uways (r. 1336–74). It would be convenient to identify the Shamsuddin manuscript with the best-known Mongol manuscript the ‘Demotte’ Shāhnameh (so-called after the art dealer who dismantled the manuscript and sold its miniatures individually). However, the style and content of the Demotte Shāhnameh strongly suggest that it is earlier in date. Despite the fact that Dust Muhammad does not refer to this manuscript, it is thought to have remained in the Persian royal library until its acquisition by Demotte.

The Demotte Shāhnameh has received almost universal acclaim for the emotional intensity, eclectic style, artistic mastery and
grandeur of its illustrations. The lack of a date and artist's or patron's name to associate with such an important manuscript has led to enduring scholarly debate about its place in history. Nonetheless, it is most likely to have been commissioned at the end of the reign of Abu Sa'id (1317–35). Very possibly, the moving force behind the project was Abu Sa'id's minister Ghiyath al-Din, who revived many of the scholarly and artistic activities of the Rashidiyya quarter of Tabriz in the 1330s. In the Demotte 

Shabnameh the unusual choice of scenes, in which scheming women figure, imperial legitimacy is emphasized and people are shown in mourning, has suggested a desire on the part of the patron to connect episodes in the Shabnameh with current events in the Ilkhanid realm. Certainly the grandeur of the miniatures and the pathos they express reflects the moment of the Ilkhanids' greatest self-awareness and imminent collapse.

Stylistically 'The dying Rustam slaying Shaghad' demonstrates the increased complexity of book illustration from the time of the Jam' al-Tavarikh until the 1330s. Where the artist of the earlier painting (fig. 16) left the sky and a large section of the ground bare, here the whole surface has been painted. As in the earlier painting, the curve of the great tree in the foreground encloses the protagonist, in this case Rustam. It also echoes the body of the dying horse, Rakshsh, who lies impaled in a pit of spikes at the left. Despite the many flowering plants in the landscape, the dark tree is devoid of foliage, a gloomy metaphor for the triple murder depicted here. Perhaps to accentuate the sombre mood of this episode, the artist has used a subdued palette. However, many of the other Demotte Shabnameh pages contain rich reds, blues, greens and gold. Unlike the Jam' al-Tavarikh paintings and some archaising Demotte pages, the figures here are muscular and substantial. Chinese influence is still evident in the Demotte Shabnameh, mostly in the rendering of trees and mountains, but it is nowhere as pervasive as in the Jam' al-Tavarikh. Produced on the verge of a chaotic period of Iranian history, the Demotte Shabnameh nonetheless contains in embryonic form the characteristic elements of Persian painting of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries: highly organised, complicated compositions; brilliant colours; mastery of line and sharp contours; and the ability to convey human emotion through gesture, glance and pose.

The Injus

Oftentimes in medieval Iranian history regional governors, appointed by whichever sultan dominated the country, consolidated their power locally to the extent of forming their own semi-autonomous
free use of pen and brush, and the outsized, unnatural flowers filling most available spaces. Despite being roughly contemporary with the Demotte Shabnameh, this manuscript owes very little to the Mongol court style. Chinese influence is entirely absent; compositions are far from complex; and nature in no way reflects or augments the narrative content of the illustrations. In addition to the rather slapdash rendering of plants, animals, people and architecture, the paint itself, especially the red, appears to have been of sub-royal quality. Possibly the source of the red was a fugitive vegetable pigment rather than the more permanent and expensive vermilion.

The differences between a Shabnameh of 1341, commissioned by Qwam al-Dawla wa’l-Din, a vizier of the Inju ruler, and the earlier Kalilah wa Dinnah may have less to do with stylistic development than with subject-matter. As ‘Rustam shooting Ashkabas and his horse’ reveals, the same careless brushwork prevails here. However, at least the hilltop on which the horse writhes and the trees that rise from it indicate a desire to define the landscape. The faces and poses express movement and emotion, though possibly those in the Kalilah wa Dinnah would, too, if they had not been rubbed out by iconoclasts. The fairly liberal use of gold hardly achieves the same effect as in the Demotte Shabnameh, again because the artist appears not to have known the royal recipe and certainly had not

19 “The carpenter of Sarandib, his unfaithful wife and her lover”, from a Kalilah wa Dinnah of Nasr Allah. Shiraz, 1333. Page 291 x 18.5 cm. The unfaithful wife spied her husband’s foot under the bed and cleverly convinced him of her innocence.
submitted to the rigours of training in the royal atelier. Despite the provincial quality of the Kalila wa Dimnah and the 1345 Shabnameh, they show the independence and vitality of the artists of Shiraz and introduce a school of painting which survived the vicissitudes of Iranian patronage up to the seventeenth century. Much as the Chinese produced ceramics of one style and level of quality for imperial use and of another style and quality for export, so in Iran royal manuscripts were produced at court while Shiraz artists illustrated books for less exalted local clients and for export to India and Turkey. The influence of Shiraz painting in these countries in most cases outweighs its intrinsic merit, but demonstrates the power of novelty and the persuasiveness of Persian style at all levels.

The Muzaffarids
While the mature Ilkhanid style of the Demotte Shabnameh continued and developed after the collapse of the Mongols, the Inju style disappeared with the fall of the dynasty to the Muzaffarids in 1333. Led by Mubarak al-Din Muhammad ibn Muzaffar, the Muzaffarids also took Isfahan (1326) and briefly held Tabriz in 1339. Although their sojourn in Tabriz may have resulted in manuscripts or artists who had once worked for the Ilkhanids coming to the attention of Mubarak al-Din, the Muzaffarid style of painting owes a greater debt to the contemporary style of Jalayirid painting. Unfortunately, the earliest known Muzaffarid manuscripts date from the 1370s, so one cannot be certain how the style developed in the 1350s and 1360s.

A painting of 'Khusrau watching Shirin bathing' reveals several characteristics of the Muzaffarid style, despite areas of damage and repainting. First, it displays the high horizons and rounded hillocks before a brilliant deep blue sky consistently favoured by Muzaffarid artists. Often, as in this painting, rocks are indicated at the horizon line by parallel strokes of gold or grey in contrast to the ground colour. The distinctive Muzaffarid turban, somewhat rubbed in this painting, consists of a large kula, or central cap, and a bulge of cloth on one side of the head with a narrow trailing fringe spilling out from the folds. Horses often have small heads in proportion to their bodies, whereas human heads are disproportionately large. The faces in Muzaffarid paintings tend to be perfectly ovoid in shape with tiny mouths, small bright eyes and spiky horizontal moustaches, but such moustaches had apparently gone out of style by the 1390s. Unlike Shiraz painting of the 1310s and 1340s, Muzaffarid illustrations contain much natural detail. Tufts of grass, flowers and trees inhabited by birds abound. The best
paintings of the school reveal a remarkable use of sinuous line and the decorative abstraction of natural forms, which set these works apart not only from the earlier Injū paintings, but also from the contemporary Jalayirid school.

The Jalayirids

When the Ilkhānid Abu Sa‘īd died in 1335 without a direct heir, various viziers and regional governors put forth their chosen candidates to succeed him. Inevitably the factions fought amongst themselves for primacy, but no one pretender was strong enough to gain control of all the Ilkhānid lands. Thus, like the Injūs and the Muẓaffārids their successors, the Jalayirids, who governed Anatolia (Rum) for the Ilkhānids, capitalised on the confusion to consolidate their power. By 1339 the Jalayirid leader Ḥasan-i Būzurg had secured control of Baghdad and tried unsuccessfully to seize Tabrīz. Upon Ḥasan-i Būzurg’s death in 1356, his son, Uways, succeeded him, and by 1360 he was master of Tabrīz.

What happened to the artists of Tabrīz in the two tumultuous decades between the death of Abu Sa‘īd and the advent of Uways has long puzzled scholars. The sixteenth-century writer Dūst Muḥammad stressed the chain of tutelage from Ahmad Musa, artist at the court of Abu Sa‘īd, to Shamsuddin, ‘trained in the time of Sultan Uways’ (Thackston, p. 345). No mention is made of artists working for Ḥasan-i Būzurg, or for any of the claimants to the Ilkhānid throne. Either Shamsuddin worked in Baghdad or he began to work for Uways only after 1360 when the Jalayirids took Tabrīz. Although very few, if any, works can be safely attributed to Tabrīz in the period between 1336 and 1356, a limited number of detached paintings mounted in albums now in Istanbul and Berlin can tentatively be placed in the 1360s and 1370s. The style of these miniatures depends to a large extent on the high Ilkhānid idiom of the Damotte Shāhnameh. However, the interior scenes reveal a more developed sense of spatial recession, reinforced by the slightly smaller scale of the figures in relation to their surroundings. Furthermore, the palette has become even richer and is used to heighten the contrast between adjacent areas of pattern. Although these paintings lack the emotional pitch of the Damotte Shāhnameh, nature continues to play a sympathetic role, echoing the mood of outdoor scenes. In one remarkable manuscript of the third quarter of the fourteenth century, the Istanbul University Library Kālidāb wa Dinnah, the artist has extended the illustrations into the margins, defining these as a corollary space to the site of the main action. By the mid-1370s, when Uways died, the canon of Persian manuscript painting for the next two centuries was set. Refine-
ments and variations continued, but artists and their patrons had found the balance between abstraction and naturalism, colour and line, nature and man that best represented the Iranian psyche. Despite invasions, conquests and changes of capital, this classical Persian idiom played on like a melody to which all improvisations and variations ultimately referred.

For eight years after Uways' death, from 1372 to 1384, his son, his brother and leaders of the Qaraqoyunlu (Black Sheep) Turkmans fought to lead the Jalayirids. Finally, Uways' brother, Ahmad, prevailed, taking control of Azarbaijan and Iraq, including Tabriz and Baghdad. By 1386 Ahmad's holdings were threatened by Timur (Tamerlane), who seized Tabriz and appointed his son as governor. Although Timur certainly carried off some craftsmen to Samarqand, other gifted artists must have gone to Baghdad with Ahmad Jalayir. There 'Abd al-Hayy, the pupil of Shamsuddin, continued to work for Ahmad until he, too, was abducted by Timur's army of occupation, presumably in 1393, the date of Timur's first seizure of Baghdad. Again Ahmad was forced to flee, this time to the Mamluk courts at Damascus and then Cairo. Following his sojourn with the Mamluks, Ahmad re-established himself in Baghdad in 1394, but in 1401 Timur returned and inflicted severe damage on the city and its inhabitants. As before, Ahmad found safe haven in Egypt. The death of Timur in 1405 enabled Ahmad to make Baghdad his capital for a third time. By 1406 he had regained possession of Tabriz, where he remained until 1410, when he died defending the city against the Qaraqoyunlu Turkmans.

As a patron, Ahmad Jalayir employed the leading artists of his day, and in turn one of them, 'Abd al-Hayy, taught him to draw. The earliest illustrated manuscript from his reign contains two dates, 1386 and 1388. Not only is it the earliest known illustrated version of the *Khamseh* of Nizami, but also, despite being of sub-royal quality, it embodies the style of painting perfected slightly later by the best of Ahmad's artists. In *Khusrau comes to Shirin's castle* the earlier flirtation with extending the illustration into the margin (fig. 15) has progressed to a full-blown marriage of text, illustration and margins. Now the left-hand margin, upper margin and adjacent column of text incorporate Shirin's castle, while the garden is contained between the right-hand margin and text above and below. The Jalayirid artist has maintained the high horizons of his predecessors, but now the figures are more slender and elongated. The Chinese influence on vegetation has given way to regularly placed tufts of grass and flowers, and the dramatically twisting trees have become tame-looking.

Ahmad Jalayir, a poet in his own right, must have encouraged
lyricism, both visual and literary, for only under his guidance did poetical and mystical writings begin to be illustrated. With the *Three Poems* of Khwaju Kirmani the lyrical possibilities of Persian painting attained a new level. According to the colophon, the first half of the manuscript was completed at Baghdad by the scribe Mir 'Ali b. Ilyas of Tabriz in March 1396. Additionally, the painting of 'Humayun enthroned on the day after her wedding' (fol. 45b) contains the signature of the artist Junayd, mentioned by Dust Muhammad as a pupil of Shamsuddin, the leading artist at the court of Uways. Not only is this the earliest recorded signed Persian miniature, but this illustration and the eight others in the manuscript represent a quantum leap in the development of Jalayirid painting. As is evident in fig. 24, the composition and myriad meticulously rendered details serve to reinforce the mood and meaning of the story. From the balcony of an apparently hexagonal tiled tower with elaborate grille-work and wooden openwork window screens, the princess Humayun spies Humayun at the gate. The high, though flimsy-looking, wall outside her garden in no way hinders Humayun from returning the gaze of his beloved. Various other devices, such as the rows of darting birds and Humayun's brilliant red dress draw one's attention to her. The promise of love and beauty is poignantly expressed by the verdant garden, with its abundance of flowering plants and trees, in contrast to the more subdued landscape outside the walls. While symbolism in Persian painting is almost never specific in the way that one would expect of fourteenth-century Italian or Netherlandish art, certainly here nature and architecture are used to reinforce the subject and emphasise its meaning. By using the whole page, reducing the scale of the figures and placing them back from the picture plane, Junayd has produced a complex and intricate *mise en scène*, the prototype for some of the most beloved paintings of the Timurid and Safavid periods.

Different classes of texts have traditionally required different styles of illustration. Thus, while epics such as the *Shahnameh* abounded with battles and enthronement scenes and the poetry of Nizami or Khwaju Kirmani tended to have more static, lyrical miniatures, the illustrations of scientific texts relied on the compositions and diagrams of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Arabic treatises from which the later Persian and Arabic versions ultimately derived. For this reason the illustrations to an astrological manuscript, presumably produced at Baghdad under the Jalayirids around 1400, contrast strikingly with the *Three Poems* of Khwaju Kirmani. Although the manuscript, written in Arabic, may not have been intended for Sultan Ahmad Jalayir himself, the large
flowers, regular tufts of grass and architectural details conform to Jalayirid norms and differ from Arab scientific painting of the same period in which setting is not implied. In the Jalayirid illustration the artist has included the necessary diagrams for lunar stages and houses to the right and below figures of the moon and the old man Saturn. Yet, the mood of the painting is as anecdotal as it is didactic and represents a rare merging of Iranian and Arab taste.

From 1406 to 1410 Ahmad Jalayir enjoyed a final period in Tabriz. Two manuscripts have been assigned to Jalayirid royal patronage at this period. One, a Khamsah of Nizami, relates closely to the Three Poems of Khwaju Kirmani, though its scenes are slightly more intimate than those of the earlier manuscript. The other, the Diwan of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, in some ways ranks as the more remarkable of the two. Eight of the 300-odd folios in this book of poems, composed by Ahmad Jalayir himself, contain marginal drawings of figures in landscape and angels in swirling clouds. In keeping with the mystical bent of Sultan Ahmad’s poems, the drawings have been interpreted as representing the seven stages of attainment of union with God, as described in the poetical treatise The Language of the Birds by Attar (died c.1230). Stylistically, the drawings combine an awareness of Chinese brush-painting technique, already in evidence in early and mid-fourteenth-century miniatures, and a more spontaneous version of the figural types found in Jalayirid painting.

For this period the inclusion of drawings, especially such fresh renderings of scenes of daily, rural life, is exceptional, if not unique. While some scholars have attributed the drawings to Abd al-Hayy, another possibility might be considered. In discussing the artists at the court of Sultan Ahmad, Dust Muhammad mentions that Abd al-Hayy instructed the Sultan, who in turn produced an illustration to an Abu Sa'id nameh in kalameyabi (literally, ‘black pen’, but essentially brush or pen and ink) technique. Would it be too far-fetched to imagine that the marginalia in Sultan Ahmad’s Diwan are the work of the great patron himself? In the end, whoever the artist was, his works flesh out our understanding of the prodigious contribution of the Jalayirid school to Persian painting. With the encouragement of Sultan Ahmad, Jalayirid artists worked in a variety of techniques, created many of the archetypal compositions used by the next five generations of Persian artists, and attained the level of perfection and harmony of colour that set Persian book painting apart from all other styles.

Classicism and Exuberance
THE 15TH CENTURY

Timur and his successors
One hundred and fifty years after the Mongols had first invaded Iran, Timur and his armies swept in from the north-east, sowing terror and devastation in equal measure across the land. By 1400 Timur had conquered all of Iran, parts of Asia Minor, Iraq, India as far as Delhi, and had advanced in Russia to within two hundred miles of Moscow. Even in old age his appetite for conquest was insatiable; when he died in Uttar in 1405 he was on a military expedition with the aim of taking China. In the Middle East, only the lands of the Mamluks, rulers of Egypt and Syria, eluded his grasp.

While Timur modelled many aspects of his military organisation and campaigns on those of the Mongols, his attitude to the arts differed substantially from theirs. Whereas the Mongols began to patronise architecture and the visual arts only after their territorial gains were consolidated, Timur’s ‘artistic policy’ was integral to his political and military aspirations. He would offer the governors of the cities or regions he defeated the opportunity to avoid destruction in exchange for fealty. If the offer was refused, Timur invited his armies to massacre the population, destroy or steal property, and spare only children, the aged and artists and craftsmen. These artisans were then deported to his capital at Samarkand, where they were employed on the massive building projects he commissioned. Additionally, Timur’s sons and grand-