Taqi's high-handed ways had worn thin even with the twelve-year-old 'Abbas II. As had happened so often before in Safavid politics, the shah made his displeasure known, in this case to Jani Khan, one of Saru Taqi's arch-enemies, and the next day this man and a group of Qizilbash of the Shamlu tribe and their friends assassinated Saru Taqi. Jani Khan's ascendancy lasted only four days until he, too, was murdered along with his co-conspirators and various noblemen and their retainers, ostensibly because they were plotting the murder of the shah's grandmother, an ally of Saru Taqi. It is more likely that Shah 'Abbas II wished to take the reins of power into his own hands and took advantage of the assassination of Saru Taqi by eliminating both his murderers and other grandees who may have had nothing to do with the deed. The result was that the shah's new appointees retained a level of respect or fear of the shah that kept them from trying to overthrow him but did nothing to stop their own jockeying for position.

Unlike all his predecessors Shah 'Abbas II did not have to contend with invasions or serious threats of war from the Ottomans. The peace treaty of 1049/1639 held in part because he chose to ignore opportunities to become embroiled in local rebellions against them. Instead the two empires exchanged embassies and maintained peaceful relations. With the Uzbek inter-family quarrels led to the Persians acting as intermediaries but they avoided armed conflict with their old enemies. Such was not the case with the Mughals, however, whose sultan, Shah Jahan, was planning to invade Transoxiana rather than coming to the aid of the Uzbek khan of Turkestan who had been ousted by his son. In order to counter the Mughal incursion in Transoxiana, the Persians revived a plan, shelved at the time of Shah Safi's death, to retake Qandahar. In the autumn of 1058/1648 Safavid troops stormed the city and took it in early 1649 before Prince Aurangzeb could reach it. His efforts to counter-attack failed, as did those of his father, Shah Jahan, who besieged Qandahar for two and a half months in 1060/1650. A subsequent attempt to take the city was led by Dara Shukuh, the Mughal crown prince, in 1063/1653, but he could not unseat the Persians. Although Aurangzeb overthrew his father in 1068/1658 and executed Dara Shukuh the following year, Shah 'Abbas II recognized his right to the throne and exchanged embassies with the new emperor. However, Aurangzeb maintained his claim to Qandahar, which led to hostility between India and Iran increasing to such a degree that Shah 'Abbas was planning an invasion of India at the time of his death in 1077/1666.

Following the arrival of English traders at Jask in the Persian Gulf in 1616 and their crucial assistance to the Persians in ousting the Portuguese from Hormuz, the English received concessions such as a customs franchise in Bandar ' Abbas, the port developed to replace Hormuz, the right to trade freely throughout Iran and a promise of considerable supplies of silk. By the 1650s the Armenian control of the overland silk trade, the high price and unreliable quality of raw silk, not to mention political upheaval in England, led to a decline in Anglo-Persian trade. However, until the first Anglo-Dutch War in 1652 English shipping between Surat in India and Persia and Basra remained healthy and benefited from the dropping-off in overland trade in the 1640s and 1650s between Iran and India at the time of the Qandahar hostilities. Meanwhile, the Dutch East India Company enjoyed strong support from the Dutch government and actively traded spices, sugar and textiles from Southeast Asia in exchange for silk and other Persian textiles.

While the Dutch were the dominant European sea traders in Iran after 1652, the Armenians and Indians also controlled a segment of this trade. The Armenians wished to extend their monopoly in the silk trade whereas the Indians were simply expanding in an area where they had traded for centuries. Not only were Indian merchants and moneychangers, mostly from Gujarat, established in most of the major Persian cities, but also in the 1650s and 1640s shipments from India increased noticeably. These brought cotton cloth, indigo and trans-shipped goods from the Far East, including Chinese ceramics. In addition to ships that came into the main ports of Bandar 'Abbas and Kung, Indian dhows avoided taxes by putting in to smaller ports. Although the Mughals embargoed Indian ships at Surat during the Qandahar hostilities in 1058/1648–9, the sea trade seems to have benefited as a result of roads blocked intermittently at Qandahar. None the less, Qandahar remained the most important point on the land routes from Khurasan to India, especially the Deccan.

Compared to the reigns of the previous Safavid shahs, Shah 'Abbas II presided over a period of peace and prosperity. He was genuinely interested in the administration of justice and the eradi-
to Qandahr, which led to hostility between India and Persia to such a degree that Shah 'Abbas was planning an of India at the time of his death in 1077/1666.

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cation of abuses visited upon his subjects by unscrupulous public officials. Although he loved hunting and polo as much as any Safavid shah, he attended to state business regularly every week and paid as much attention to the safety of his subjects as to economic and military questions. Perhaps as a logical development of Shah 'Abbas I's promotion of orthodox Shiites and his own interest in theology, he enjoyed good relations with Shiite clerics, but unlike his great-grandfather he supported dervishes. While he was very tolerant of Christians, and some major Armenian churches were constructed during his reign, his vizir, Muhammad Beg, convinced him to force the Jewish population of the whole country to convert to Islam. Like the blinding of his four brothers and killing of his nephews, this reveals the cruelty that Shah 'Abbas II could display. When he contracted a deadly disease, probably syphilis, about 1075/1662, his behaviour became more erratic and his punishments more severe, but even then his reputation as a just king was not damaged. He died in the autumn of 1077/1666 at the age of thirty-three and was buried in Qum next to his father.

As mentioned above, Shah 'Abbas II's early interest in architecture may have been encouraged by his grand vizier, Saru Taqi. From the time of his appointment by Shah Safi in 1045/1635 until his death in 1055/1645, Saru Taqi completely renovated a palace for himself in Isfahan and built a bazaar, a caravansarai, a coffeehouse, one or more mosques and several baths. He must also have been instrumental in the alterations to the 'Ali Qapu that provided an expanded reception area through the addition of the talar, the open porch with tall wooden columns and a painted ceiling from which the Shah and his retinue could view the maidan. The increasing formality and attention to hierarchy at court functions must have necessitated additional space to accommodate the served ranks of dignitaries. The use of wooden columns, perhaps an imported idea from Mazandaran, lends lightness to the structure while providing a roofed space in which large numbers of people could sit or stand.

In one of Shah 'Abbas II's major monuments, the Chihil Sutun palace in Isfahan, the talar resting on wooden columns reappears, used to marvellous effect [fig. 119].

The palace, to the north-west of the 'Ali Qapu complex, is set before a long rectangular pool in which it is reflected. The centre of the third bay of the talar contains a pool into which four lion fountains discharge water from the four corners. This is echoed by a smaller pool on the same axis in the centre of the large three-sided porch that precedes a smaller iwan. This, in turn, leads into a large horizontal audience hall. Two long halls flank the three-sided porch and smaller rooms can be found next to the long sides of the audience hall. The equivalent of the interior iwan lies on the same axis but opens onto the exterior, as do the verandas at either end of the audience hall. Although the three distinct sections of the building led scholars to believe it had been constructed in three different periods, recent research has demonstrated that the Chihil Sutun dates from 1056-7/1647.

Aside from the unusual plan of the Chihil Sutun and its ingenuous transition from open to closed spaces, it is most remarkable for the programme of wall paintings to be found on both the exterior and interior of the building. In addition to six large murals on the upper walls of the audience hall, the dado level of the audience hall, the smaller rooms, the verandas and the back iwan all contain small panels of figures feasting and hunting very similar to those found in the upper rooms of the 'Ali Qapu. The niches that form the upper walls of the small rooms flanking the audience hall contain scenes of feasts or literary narratives, recalling in type, but
not in style, the paintings from the house in Na'in. The walls of the
verandas are decorated with men and women in European dress
[fig. 120]. Whereas the figures in the small interior panels adhere
stylistically to the work of the 1650s and 1640s of Riza and his
school, the large historical murals and the paintings of Europeans
are rendered in a style that borrows ideas of shading, modelling and
perspective from European painting. While Persian interest in
European painting had manifested itself as early as the late
sixteenth century, the Europeanizing fashion was strongly endorsed
during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas II and coexisted with more tradi-
tional Safavid painting until the end of the century when the
traditional style faded away.

Babaie’s analysis of the iconography of the wall paintings in the
Chihil Sutun reveals the political preoccupations of Shah ‘Abbas II
in the first decade of his reign. Excluding two paintings facing one
another in the central bay painted in the nineteenth century, the
others in the audience hall depict Shah Isma’il in battle with the
Uzbeks, Shah Tahmasp holding a reception for Humayun, Shah
‘Abbas I and Vati Muhammad Khan, the Uzbek khan of Turkestan,
and Shah ‘Abbas II and Nadir Muhammad Khan, the ousted Uzbek
khan. With the exception of Shah Isma’il victorious over the
Uzbeks, the theme of the paintings is the magnanimity of the
Safavid shahs towards their counterparts from the east. Against a
The walls of the house in Na‘in were decorated with men and women in European dress. The figures in the small interior panels adhere to the work of the 1650s and 1640s of Riza and his large historical murals and the paintings of Europeans in a style that borrows ideas of shading, modelling and colour from European painting. While Persian interest in painting had manifested itself as early as the late 17th century, the Europeanizing fashion was strongly endorsed by the reign of Shah `Abbas II and coexisted with more traditionally Persian painting until the end of the century when the style faded away.

The August 1990 analysis of the iconography of the wall paintings in the inn reveals the political preoccupations of Shah `Abbas II in the 17th century, in the audience hall depict Shah Isma’il in battle with the Shah Tahmasp holding a reception for Humayun, Shah and Vali Muhammad Khan, the Uzbek khan of Turkestan, and `Abbas II and Nadir Muhammad Khan, the ousted Uzbek leader. The exception of Shah Isma’il victorious over the theme of the paintings is the magnanimity of the shahs towards their counterparts from the east. Against a backdrop of growing tensions with the Mughals, these paintings stress the role of the Safavid house as a safe haven for the rulers of neighbouring lands.

In the small rooms on the long sides of the audience hall, the paintings of literary themes follow the established programme of scenes from Yusuf and Zulaykha and other perennial favourites, except for one composition depicting the ‘Hindu Princess Preparing to Immolate Herself’. While this relates to the early 17th-century Mughal poem about sultana, Saz o Gudaz, which gained popularity in Iran in the mid-17th century, it also ties in with an event in the 1640s that was considered to be confirmation of the Safavid right to Qandahar. Shortly after the Persian siege of the city, one of the Mughal empresses officials died and his wife chose to immolate herself with her corpse. As she was dying, she was asked whether the Indians would deliver Qandahar and she answered that the Persians would be victorious. Even if most of the rest of the paintings in the Chihil Sutun were finished in time for its completion in 1656–7/1647, this scene would have been added no earlier than 1659/1649 after Qandahar had fallen to the Safavids. As for the paintings of Europeans in the verandas, they may have been intended to convey to visitors the internationalism of the Safavid court. In addition, if these paintings were conceived as portraits, they could collectively represent a gallery of familiar characters of mid-17th-century Isfahan.

The same ingenuity and awareness of the person within the monument as well as the view of the structure from the outside apply to the Khwaju bridge, erected in 1660/1650 on Turkmen foundations and spanning the Zayandeh-Rud in Isfahan [fig. 121]. Unlike the Allahverdi Khan bridge, the Khwaju bridge is shorter and punctuated in the centre by an octagonal pavilion and a half-octagon at either end. On the upper level a road runs down the middle of the structure while on the side walkways extend the length of the bridge from which one can enter the arched niches to enjoy the view. The pavilion has inner and outer rooms on the upper level and balconies facing the river for royal viewing. The lower level is built on a stone platform with elements that join to break the river’s flow upstream and steps down to the water and sluices on the downstream side. Within the stone platform are wooden gates that can be closed to raise the level of the river. The bridge was placed on an axis with the mausoleum, a now disappeared bazaar on the north side of the river and the Zoroastrian quarter to the south, and it was also a favourite meeting place, with its discreet niches on the upper level and cool arches on the lower level, some of which are now converted into coffee houses. Although it was probably commissioned by Hasan Beg, a general, it is an inspired piece of royal architecture.

Like his predecessors Shah ‘Abbas II did not neglect the Shiite shrines. He restored or added to each of the three major shrines: Ardashir, Qum and Mashhad. In addition to repairs on the Friday mosque of Kashan, Qazvin, Qum and Isfahan made during his reign, the Hakim Mosque [fig. 122] in Isfahan was constructed with money provided by the shah’s erstwhile physician, Muhammad Da’ud Hakim, known as Takarrub Khan, who had emigrated to England. This mosque was completed in 1665, the year of Shah ‘Abbas II’s death. Like the Bigi and Khusraw mosques of the earlier 17th century, the decoration was employed judiciously on this building, while glazed bricks define its vertical and horizontal framework.
India under a cloud. Built on the site of a tenth-century Bayid structure, the building contains several inscriptions ranging in date from 1067/1656–7 to 1073/1662–3. Not only are the tiles signed by Mirza Muhammad the Kashi-paz ('potter'), but also the inscription tiles in the qibla iva'n are signed by Muhammad Riza al-Imami al-Isfahani al-Adhami and dated 1069/1658–9. Muhammad Riza al-Imami was a leading calligrapher in the period of Shah 'Abbās II.

Two other inscriptions in the mosque also contain his name and dates; one with verses from Sura 17 of the Qur'an runs around the mihrab and is dated 1071/1660–1 and the other, also from 1071, is in the interior of the mihrab. A second mihrab is dated 1069/1658–9 and contains the names of the twelve imams, while a third mihrab was added in the late eighteenth century. The most striking contrast between this mosque and those constructed by Shah 'Abbās I on the ma'idan or even the Chihil Sutun Palace is the retreat from surfaces entirely covered with tile revetment or painted decoration. Instead inscription bands, glazed bricks and tile panels add colour to the expanses of warm buff-hued brick. The mosque is built on the standard four-iva'n plan with a two-storey arcade running between the iva'ns. Along with the decorative programme, structural elements have also been simplified, so that maqarnas squinches in the qibla iva'n have been replaced by plain surfaces in the zone of transition. Although this mosque does not signal the end of elaborately decorated monuments, it does represent a departure from the style established by Shah 'Abbās I at Isfahan.

Painting during the reign of Shah 'Abbās II is characterized by its eclecticism. At the conservative end of the spectrum, Mu'in Musavvir evolved a distinctive style out of the late mode of Riza-yi 'Abbasi, who had been his teacher. Although Mu'in illustrated five Shabnamehs [fig. 125] and two copies of Bijan's History of Shah Isma'il and a third version by another author between 1058/1648 and the 1670s, he apparently worked independently of the court atelier. His oeuvre, consisting of manuscripts illustrations, painted single-page portraits and drawings of a variety of subjects, exhibits a remarkable stylistic consistency over the course of more than sixty years from about 1044/1635 to 1109/1697. Whereas Mu'in's drawings are characterized by rapid, lightly drawn strokes of the pen, his paintings feature round-faced figures, slimmer than those in other artists' work in the 1640s and 1650s, and often with their
under a cloud. Built on the site of a tenth-century Bayid, the building contains several inscriptions ranging in date 67/1656-7 to 1075/1662-3. Not only are the tiles signed by Mahmud the Kashi-paz (‘potter’), but also the inscription the gibla ivan are signed by Muhammad Riza al-Imami asli al-Adhami and dated 1069/1658-9. Muhammad Riza was a leading calligrapher in the period of Shah ‘Abbas II.

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123 (opposite) ‘Rustam beside the Dying Sohrab’, from a Shamsunabat of Firuzi, signed by Mu’in Musavvir, Isfahan, dated 1059/1649, opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper, 28.8 x 14.3 cm, British Museum, OA 1922.7-11.02. The hero Rustam had never seen his son, Sohrab, until he mortally wounded him in battle and, upon removing Sohrab’s armour, discovered the amulet he had given the boy’s mother.

124 (right) ‘The Fane of the Fickle Old Man’, from a Haji Auran of Jami, signed by Mu’in Musavvir, false signature of Riza-yi ‘Abbasii, Isfahan, dated 1057/1647-8, opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper, 25 x 16.6 cm, British Museum, OA 1920.9-17.0509. An old hunchback declared his love for a beautiful youth as they stood on a rooftop. The youth pointed to a more handsome young man behind him. When the old man turned to look, the youth pushed him off the roof, to show that it is impossible to have more than one true love.
heads held at an angle to their body [fig. 124]. He shows a fondness for bright pink or mauve grounds, sky painted in a dramatic wash and, in album pages, streaky gold clouds and clumps of vegetation. Some works adhere to compositional norms established in sixteenth century manuscript illustration, but these may reflect the taste of patrons rather than Mu'in’s inclination to reduce the number of figures and place them close to the picture plane.

At the other end of the spectrum from Mu'in Musavvir is the artist Bahram Sofrehkeshi, whose two signed works are dated 1050/1640–41, slightly before the beginning of Shah ‘Abbas II’s reign. Both works depict an Indian woman, either alone [fig. 125] or with a man, and they highlight the Safavid adaptation of Indian as well as European artistic ideas. Nothing is known of the artist except that his name suggests he might have held a position in the royal kitchen. The subject matter, the rows of birds in the sky and the European-style townscape in the background, including buildings with pitched roofs and odd structures resembling haystacks, suggest that the artist had looked at Mughal painting of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The use of heavy shading on the girl’s face and on the sides of her chest and skirt could be an attempt to copy European modelling techniques or Mughal paintings that were influenced by the European use of chiaroscuro. The result of this manner of experimentation is a hybrid, where the Persian artist has not sought to attain the level of naturalism found in Mughal or European painting, but has borrowed the forms and some of the techniques of those schools. Although Bahram Sofrehkesh himself may not have worked for the court, he appears to have taught Shaykh ‘Abbasi, whose title “Abbasi” shows that he was attached to the court atelier of Shah ‘Abbas II. This artist’s earliest known dated work, from 1057/1647, is a drawing of an Indian girl dressed almost identically to the girl in Bahram’s painting but placed in an Indian setting. Later works by the artist incorporate townscales which combine European and Iranian buildings and retain similar shading to that found in the works of Bahram Sofrehkeshi. Despite the fact that his figures are very stiffly posed, Shaykh ‘Abbasi was chosen to depict an Indian embassy to Iran which took place in 1074/1663, presumably because the shah admired his interpretation of Mughal painting.

Another artist, Shafi ‘Abbasi, also appears to have worked in

125 ‘Woman in a Landscape’, signed by Bahram Sofrehkesh, Isfahan, dated 1059/1640–41, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, image 12.2 × 5.8 cm, Aga Khan Trust for Culture.
120 (above, left) 'Violets', attributed to Shafi 'Abbasii, with the stamp seal of Muhammad Shafi', Isfahan, dated 5 Muharram 1092/5 April 1642, ink and watercolour on paper, 16.9 x 9.6 cm, British Museum, OA 1988.4-25.044. This is a rare instance in Safavid painting in which the artist has stamped the work with his seal rather than signing it.

127 (above, right) 'A Lady Watching her Dog Drink Wine from a Bowl', signed by Mir Afsal Tusi [Afsal al-Hassayn], Isfahan, c. 1090/1640, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 11.7 x 15.9 cm, British Museum, OA 1956.4-12.02. All the elements of this picture, from the woman's pose and rolled-up skirts to the dog, suggest sexuality and desire.

The court atelier from the time of Shah 'Abbas II's accession. The album with his flower drawings from the reign of Shah Safi also contains drawings of the 1640s and 1670s [fig. 126]. While his delicate drawings of the 1640s may have been designs for textiles, his elegant paintings of birds resting on flowering branches were destined for albums, some of which belonged to the shah.14 These pictures combine European, Persian and possibly Mughal influences. The careful depiction of flowers with blossoms and buds and leaves viewed from both sides derives from European botanical prints, complete with bees and butterflies. Paintings of individual birds, on the other hand, figure in the work of Riza, Shafi's father, and according to an inscription on one of Riza's bird paintings Bihzad had also painted a single bird. Furthermore, the artist Mansur, who worked for the Mughal emperor Jahangir (1014-57/1605-27), specialized in paintings of natural history subjects - birds, animals and plants - and copies of these works may have found their way to Iran. Certainly the treatment of the ground out of which Shafi 'Abbasii's plants grow closely resembles the ridges of grass to be found in Mughal botanical paintings from the 1650s,15 which in turn derive from European treatment of landscape. Although Shafi 'Abbasii's repertoire was limited primarily to completing the unfinished works of his father and to bird and flower paintings and drawings, the patronage of the shah demonstrates that Shafi's ability to filter new foreign influences and produce Persian painting with an exotic inflection was another expression of the new style in evidence in the history paintings of the Chihil Sutun.
Other artists working during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas II used different aspects of Riza’s work as a point of departure. Thus Afzal al-Husayni borrowed the themes of the reclining woman and a dog drinking wine from a bowl from Riza and combined them in a painting of a ‘pin-up girl’ of the 1640s [fig. 127]. The rolled-up dress, flashy knickers, exposed belly and flowers tucked in her undergarment are all signs of this woman’s seductiveness, as most likely are the dog and wine. For all his kingly virtues, Shah ‘Abbas II was a lascivious man and paintings such as that of Afzal al-Husayni capture the new emphasis on sex that existed in some segments of Safavid society. Stylistically, the work of Afzal al-Husayni adheres closely to that of Riza. Not only are trees and plants painted in gold but also a high level of specificity is maintained in the depiction of costume and blue and white ceramics.

Other followers of Riza such as Muhammad Qasim painted erotic pictures, but like Afzal al-Husayni he also illustrated manuscripts and produced single-page paintings for inclusion in albums. Thus in the period 1052-61/1642-51 when Afzal al-Husayni was working on a Shahnameh for presentation to the shah, Muhammad Qasim was working with Malik Husayn Isfahani, his son Muhammad ‘Ali and Muhammad Yusuf on a Shahnameh for the superintendent of the sanctuary of the Mashhad shrine. This manuscript, now in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, was completed in 1058/1648. The paintings attributed to Muhammad Qasim in the Shahnameh as well as his single-page works feature liquid rocks and stippled grass [fig. 128]. His young figures, both male and female, have very round cheeks, slightly smiling mouths and expressive eyebrows. Although some figures in his Shahnameh illustrations verge on the grotesque, the personages in his album paintings rarely display any individuality.

Similarly, in Muhammad ‘Ali’s oeuvre numerous drawings of young men portray the figures as types seated outdoors with fruit and bottles of wine, a formula used repeatedly by the followers of Riza. Muhammad Yusuf’s portraits of young dandies, like the work of Afzal al-Husayni, reveal a greater debt to the work of Riza than do the drawings of Muhammad Qasim and Muhammad ‘Ali. Of the artists working during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas, Muhammad Yusuf took the greatest care to render faithfully the opulent textiles woven with thread of gold and ceramic cups and bottles which in
artists working during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II used aspects of Riza's work as a point of departure. Thus Afzalni borrowed the themes of the reclining woman and a dog wine from a bowl from Riza and combined them in a of a 'pin-up girl' of the 1640s [fig. 127]. The rolled-up shy knickers, exposed belly and flowers tucked in her ment are all signs of this woman's seductiveness, as most : the dog and wine. For all his kingly virtues, Shah 'Abbaspacious and paintings such as that of Afzal al-capture the new emphasis on sex that existed in some of Safavid society. Stylistically, the work of Afzal al-adheres closely to that of Riza. Not only are trees and ined in gold but also a high level of specificity is main-the depiction of costume and blue and white ceramics. lowers of Riza such as Muhammad Qasim painted erotic like Afzal al-Husayni he also illustrated manuscripts used single-page paintings for inclusion in albums. Thus 1656 when Afzal al-Husayni was work-Shtubnameh for presentation to the shah." Muhammad is working with Malik Husayn Isfahani, his son Muham-Muhammad Yusuf on a Shubnameh for the superin-d the sanctuary of the Masjhad shrine. This manuscript, he Royal Library at Windsor Castle, was completed in 8. The paintings attributed to Muhammad Qasim in the eh" as well as his single-page works feature liquid rocks ded grass [fig. 128]. His young figures, both male and hare very round cheeks, slightly smiling mouths and e eyebrows. Although some figures in his Shubnameh illus-converge on the grotesque, the personages in his album rarely display any individuality. ry, in Muhammad 'Ali's oeuvre numerous drawings of in portray the figures as types seated outdoors with fruit as of wine, a formula used repeatedly by the followers of hummad Yusuf's portraits of young dandies, like the work il-Husayni, reveal a greater debt to the work of Riza than swings of Muhammad Qasim and Muhammad 'Ali. Of the raking during the reign of Shah 'Abbas, Muhammad Yusuf greatest care to render faithfully the opulent textiles ith thread of gold and ceramic cups and bottles which in some cases are of types that have not survived [fig. 129]. UnlikeBahman Sofrehkesh, Shayan 'Abbasi and Shafi" 'Abbasi, the artists commissioned to work on important Shubnameh - Afzal al-Husayn, Muhammad 'Ali, Muhammad Qasim and Muhammad Yusuf - were sparing in their use of European and Indian techniques. As at the Chihil Sutun where the traditional and Europeanizing styles coex-isited, the two sets of artists represented the two parallel but separate strains that dominated painting in the period of Shah 'Abbas II.

The third of the four dated Safavid carpets falls within the reign of Shah 'Abbas II. It is a vase carpet dated 1067/1656 and signed 'Ustad Mu'min ibn Qutha al-Din Mahan'. Assuming that the weaver/designer had stayed in the region of Mahan, which is very close to Kirman, this inscription would support evidence for Kirman as one of the main sources for carpets in the vase-carpet technique. While the designs of carpets in this group vary, the technique is quite consistent. The warps are cotton and the first and third wefts are wool, while the second is usually silk or cotton or a silk-cotton ply. The pile is wool and the knotting and overall structure of the warps is tight and sturdy, which may account for their good survival rate. Vase carpets in a range of quality were produced over the course of the seventeenth century. As Beattie has remarked, 'Good drawing itself is not necessarily indicative of an early period as the graceful design of the Sarajevo carpet of 1656 shows, but good draughtsmanship points to Court patronage.' Although the multiple medallions in the Sarajevo carpet do not include animals or figures as some sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century examples do, the design underscores the continuing high quality of vase carpets in the middle of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, the design of the 1656 carpet is not shared with enough others to help date a large group of Persian carpets. Moreover, from the variety of examples, including garden carpets, produced in the vase-carpet technique, one must conclude that Kirman carpet makers served a broad market both within Iran and in India, if not other foreign lands. As for other carpet types, production of Polonaise carpets in silk with silver and gold brocade would have continued in the period of Shah 'Abbas II with Isfahan and Kashan as the centres of production. Unfortunately, the conventionalized depiction of carpets in illustrated manuscripts from this period offers no help in identifying what styles were prevalent.

According to one scholar, 'Persian silk-weaving reached a peak under Shah 'Abbas II.' Magnificent figured velvets continued to be produced in the early years of Shah 'Abbas II's reign, as attested by a coat decorated with swaying drinkers and flowers presented to the Russian czar by Queen Christina of Sweden in 1654/1644. Unlike carpets, textiles that appear in the paintings of Afzal al-Husayn and Muhammad Yusuf give some indication of what was current in the 1640s and 1650s. Interestingly, the drinkers in the textile wear robes decorated with laurel leaves similar to those seen on the jacket of the kneeling youth in the painting by Muhammad Yusuf [see fig. 129]. The pattern of black and white flowers on the gold ground of the kneading youth's trousers also is closely related to an extant fragment of brocaded taffeta [fig. 130].

While a group of figured velvets of pairs of women by a pool bear the inscription 'the work of Shafi', the absence of the name 'Abbasi may indicate a date in the period of Shah Safi whereas a