130 (left) Brocaded taffeta fragment, mid-17th century, silk, 40.5 x 23.7 cm, Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 5.158, acquired by George Hewig Myers in 1950. Although the background has faded from bright pink to beige, the pleasing colour harmonies and elegant design of the brocaded flowers remain intact.

131 (opposite) Ewer, mid-17th century, beaten brass, engraved, h. 27 cm, diam. of base 7.6 cm, British Museum, OA 78.12.50.736, Henderson Bequest. The decoration of this ewer includes inscriptions, flowers and peacocks, whereas one ceramic counterpart is covered with an opaque monochrome glaze and is otherwise without ornament.
130 (left) Brocaded taffeta fragment, mid-17th century, silk, 40.3 x 25.7 cm, Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 51.18, acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1930. Although the background has faded from bright pink to beige, the pleasing colour harmonies and elegant design of the brocaded flowers remain intact.

131 (opposite) Ewer, mid-17th century, beaten brass, engraved, h. 27 cm, diam. of base 7.6 cm, British Museum, ox. 78.12-50.756, Henderson Bequest. The decoration of this ewer includes inscriptions, flowers and peacocks, whereas one ceramic counterpart is covered with an opaque monochrome glaze and is otherwise without ornament.

signed brocaded silk on metal ground in the shrine of Imam 'Ali at Najaf includes "Abassi" after Shafi, implying its manufacture after 1052/1642. The design of the cover consists of a lattice of ogives formed of wide bands of gold brocade punctuated by rosettes where the bands touch and on the diagonal. The motif within the ogive is comprised of a spear-shaped floral element on a stalk that springs from a cloud form and is set in the middle of a flowering qival vine. The design is complex and elegant without being at all fussy. None the less, it is stiffer than Shafi's Abbasi's flower drawings and one wonders to what degree the textile specialist, the nayshband, needed to adapt Shafi's Abbasi's design. It is possible that Shafi's Abbasi also supplied designs to court silversmiths because, as Allan has pointed out, the lattice ornament on the silver door facings at the Ardabil shrine is closely related to textile designs of the 1560s and 1640s. Although silk kilims provide some of the closest analogues to the silver door facings, Allan notes that curtains would have covered the doorways and may have been designed to correspond to the actual doors they covered. In this context, tomb covers such as the one from Najaf would have formed another element of a complete design ensemble, made possible through the periodic refurbishment of the Shi'ite shrines commissioned by the shahs.9

The striped, patterned leggings of Afzal al-Husayni's 'Lady Watching her Dog Drink Wine' are typical of the fashion for embroidered silk or cotton lady's trousers that began in the Safavid period and survived into the nineteenth century. Her flowered knickers with a drawstring, on the other hand, are not seen so often in paintings and are not the sort of textile of which extant examples have been widely published. The material was presumably printed cotton or possibly silk. Large quantities of cotton were imported from India from the 1620s on, but simple patterns such as that in the painting are difficult to assign to either Iran or India with any confidence.

If a footed tinmed copper bowl dated 1053/1645-4 in the Victoria and Albert Museum26 can be considered representative of the period, established shapes of objects evolved slightly while decoration became more fragmentary in this period. The standard inscription band below the rim is now separated from the ornament on the lower sides of the bowl by a plain rib plus a scroll. The decoration of the lower sides consists of pairs of figures with animals in compartments. While resembling the red and white silk of the 1620s or 1650s with its compartments, on a round metal bowl the sections interrupt the circularity of the bowl. An undated ewer (fig. 131) displays a breaking up of the decoration to a far greater degree than the bowl of 1053/1645-4. Although its dating to the period of Shah 'Abbas II is by no means assured, a ewer of the same shape is carried by a servant girl in an illustration to a Khamsheh of Nizami dated 1060/1650.28

The ewer with its high, wide neck, bulbous body, tall curving spout, conical lid and outward curving handle is decorated with bands of low relief ornament and inscriptions separated by plain, narrow borders. Thuluth inscriptions appear in interlocking cartouches along the rim, in two bands on the neck, at the shoulder and at the widest point of the body as well as in one band on the lid. On the lid quatrefoils containing blossoms appear between
inscription cartouches on a ground of crosshatching, while above and below are bands containing simple floral scrolls. Lappets run to the point of the lid topped by a floral knob. On the side and base of the spout are lobed medallions containing floral ornament similar to that on the lid. The decoration of the neck and body displays a variety of motifs in addition to inscription bands. These include a band of overlapping split-palmette arabesques, two bands of interlocking cartouches with arabesques and cloud bands, and narrow bands of scrolls in oblong segments. On the bulbous body inscription cartouches interlock with lobed ogives containing confronted peacocks. This motif appears as early as the 918/1512 façade of the Harun-i Vilayat in Isfahan and figures again, among other instances, in the pendants of the so-called Behague Sanguszko carpet, attributed to the period of Shah ‘Abbas I. The switchback split-palmette leaf arabesque that fills the area between the cartouches, ogives and half-ogives at the shoulder and foot also recall carpet designs, as does the association of cartouches and lobed ogives. It is possible that, as with earlier Safavid metalwork and carpets, the basic motifs and the notion of what combinations were suitable originated with bookbinders or illuminators. Although the thuluth script may indicate a North Indian provenance, the use of the Y-fret motif above and below the lobed medallions resembles that found on a metal bowl inscribed in Armenian and assigned to western Iran in the seventeenth century.

A handful of dated examples contributes to our understanding of ceramics in the reign of Shah ‘Abbas II. As before, wares decorated in underglaze blue and black on a white stonepaste body abound. Two dated tomb tiles are decorated in these glazes; one made for Fatima bint Nur Allah of Darband is dated 1055/1645, and the other, inscribed with the name of Malik ibn Husayn and dated Dhul Hijja 1052/February 1643, is decorated with images of a Qur’an stand, a turban, spectacles, a penbox, penknife and other implements of a ‘man of the pen’. Although interesting in their own right, these tomb tiles shed little light on the stylistic development of blue and white ceramics in the 1640s. By contrast, a large dish with a floral spray incised in the centre under a clear greenish glaze and an inscription in white on a black ground in cartouches in the cavetto with the date 1057/1647 indicates a new taste for inscriptions or ornamental bands scratched through a black ground. While this revives a technique found in late fifteenth-century wares from north-west Iran, it is also a characteristic of a group of wares attributed to Kirman. On dishes and bowls the black band appears in the cavetto, whereas on objects of other shapes the band is placed near the top or near the bottom or both. The motif has a life of at least fifty years, as later examples will demonstrate. In addition, a vogue for combining passages of unpainted incised decoration with ornament rendered in underglaze blue or black like that found on the 1057/1647 dish can be assigned to the mid-seventeenth century.

The technique of incising through the underglaze was not limited to inscription and decorative bands on blue and white ceramics from Kirman. Based on a qalyan dated 1068/1658–9, a group of monochrome wares with decoration either carved through the underglaze or applied in slips contrasting in colour with the ground can be assigned to the mid- to late seventeenth century. While the dated qalyan is decorated in white and yellow ochre with a spray of dianthus and storks and clouds, most of the ornament on pieces of this type is vegetal. The decoration ranges from simple sprays of spiky flowers and loose split palmette elements, identical to those on the rim of the 1057/1647 dish and found on a
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The decorative style of the slip-painted or carved monochrome wares relates closely to that of one of the largest Kirman groups, the polychrome wares. Along with similar arabesque and spiky floral designs, this group includes a broad range of figurine vignettes (fig. 134), and pieces that combine Chinese-style blue and white landscape elements with arabesque medallions. In addition to blue, the underglaze palette includes coral red and green. Like the Kirman wares with white inscriptions on black grounds, this style of ceramics maintained its popularity into the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The great number of such pieces that survives suggests that this class of Kirman wares was produced in large quantities to satisfy markets that suffered as a result of the so-called Transitional Period when Chinese exports all but ceased from the end of the Ming dynasty (1644) until the end of the seventeenth century. Although blue and white ceramics were certainly the dominant substitute for Chinese blue and white, other groups such as the Kirman polychrome wares must have been deemed acceptable as well by the Dutch and English trading from Bandar 'Abbas. In addition, the size of objects such as the qalyam is very uniform in matters of the glaze type, suggesting that kilns turned out large quantities of blanks to be glazed and decorated by various potters.

Although Chardin's line, 'When this gentleman [Shah 'Abbas I] ceased to breathe, Iran ceased to live' has been used repeatedly to demarcate the point at which Iran began to decline, the state of Iran was probably more prosperous and stable at the end of the reign of Shah 'Abbas II than in 1058/1629. New artistic ideas were welcomed at the highest level as the Europeanizing paintings in the Chihil Sutun demonstrate. While the presence of European artists in Iran and the wealth and internationalism of the Armenian population contributed to awareness of European art, trade with Europe and India galvanized the textile and ceramic industries. The demand for imitations of Chinese ceramics translated into the continuation of production of blue and white wares, which were probably made in the largest numbers in Kirman, with Mashhad another major centre. Shah 'Abbas II's tolerance for dervishes may have resulted in an upsurge of popularity for kashtis, or begging bowls, made in metal or ceramic, their boat shape following a long tradition rooted in ancient wine bowls. At the time of Shah 'Abbas II's death Iran was a strong link in the world economy, and was maintaining its own vibrant and distinctive culture in the visual arts. As always, the seeds of decline were already sown, but the man on the street in Isfahan in 1077/1666 would have probably had fewer complaints than his grandfather.

A New Focus 143

132 (opposite, above) Dish, Kirman, mid-17th century, stoneware, moulded, opaque blue glaze, diam. 47 cm. British Museum, OA 1970.2-7.1. Bequest of Lily Nora Ziegler. The use of white slip to produce a design on a blue ground appears in at least one Chinese dish in the Araftal shrine, suggesting a Chinese inspiration for the technique of this Persian dish, if not its floral decoration.

133 (opposite, below) Vase, Kirman, mid-17th century, stoneware, white slip decoration, green underglaze, transparent glaze, cut-down neck, h. 25.8 cm, British Museum, OA 96.0.26-5, Franks Collection. This vase has an acacia design on one side and a medallion containing an arabesque on the other.
The Patrimony Squandered

Shah Sulayman (Safi II)

1666–1694

_When the Emperor marches out with his Women, and all the Seraglio, it is forbidden the Day before by a Publick Cryer, for any Man on pain of Death to invade his Walks . . . The King like a Dunghil Cock, struts at the Head of the Aramian Army._

The oldest son of Shah ‘Abbas II, named Safi Mirza, was born to a Circassian mother in late 1057/December 1647–January 1648. Like his father and grandfather, he was reared in the harem without the benefit of any training in statecraft. Although he had received some form of education from his eunuch tutor, he was entirely unprepared to become the next Safavid shah. Nevertheless, the advisers to Shah ‘Abbas II preferred Safi Mirza to his seven-year-old brother and he was crowned Shah Safi II on 50 Rabi’ I 1077/50 September 1666. Like his namesake, Safi I, the nineteen-year-old shah’s first inclination was to indulge in a prolonged celebration involving extravagant gifts, granting of fiefs and filling all vacant administrative posts at great cost to the royal treasury. The damage thus inflicted on the economy was aggravated by earthquakes in Shirvan and Tabriz, followed by disease, drought and famine. Furthermore, ever mindful of the potential loss of central control at the time of a change of shah, the Uzbeks and a newer threat, the Cossacks, wasted no time in raiding Khurasan and Mazandaran. Clearly something had to be done to arrest the slide into chaos. The court astrologers obliged by blaming all the recent misfortunes on a miscalculation of the most auspicious time for Shah Safi II’s enthronement ceremony. As a result, a new horoscope was drawn up, indicating 24 Ramazan 1077/20 March 1667 as the day for a new coronation.

To give himself every opportunity for a clean slate, the shah even changed his name, becoming Shah Sulayman. He also seems to have undergone a complete change of heart, if not personality. As John Fryer, who arrived in Iran in 1677, described him:

_In the beginning of his Reign, like another Nero, he gave good Specimens of his Inclinations, not unworthy of the Heroes that were his Ancestors; but when he began to Hearken to Flatterers, and give himself over to Idleness, he left off to Govern, and lifted himself in the service of Cruelty, Drunkenness, Gluttony, Lasciviousness, and abominable Extortion, where he perpetrated things not only uncomely to be seen, but even offensive to the Ears._

Where he had erred on the side of extravagant generosity, he now veered into miserliness and cruelty. The number of troops in the royal army declined drastically, as did appointments to government...
Squandered

Safi II)

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my declined drastically, as did appointments to government
posts, while new and higher taxes were imposed. The combination of higher taxation and business failures led in the 1670s to social unrest and poverty. In spite of the general decline in the standard of living in Iran, pomp and opulence abounded at Shah Sulayman’s court.

For all of his apathy and lack of sustained interest in governing, Shah Sulayman, most likely with the good advice of a succession of grand viziers, managed to keep Iran out of wars with its neighbours. In the 1680s opportunities arose for him to assume control of Mesopotamia, which had been formally ceded to the Ottomans in 1649/1659. Yet he adhered to the established treaty. Likewise, the Gossack raids on the northern provinces of Iran did not escalate, as they might have done with a different shah on the throne. Matthee’s recent assessment of Shah Sulayman’s policy towards the various rapacious bands on his borders suggests that his inaction was the result of the need to husband his resources and to concentrate on keeping the Uzbeks and Baluch tribesmen in the east at bay. Although the raids did not stop, the Safavids and the khan of Bukhara enjoyed good relations in this period and territorial boundaries remained intact.

Shah Sulayman spent increasing amounts of time in the harem, disregarding his ministers and the structures that existed to ensure the smooth running of the government. Instead of the appointed government ministers, a de facto council of eunuchs, astrologers and the queen mother effectively controlled the government. The weakening of the country that ensued led to new incursions on Iran’s eastern borders and rebellion in Georgia and Kurdistan. Although Shah Sulayman had enjoyed the service of an honest grand vizier for the last two-thirds of his twenty-eight-year rule, the sensible reforms put forward by the vizier were not as effective as they might have been because of the shah’s lack of sustained support. One area of decline noticed by all was the debasement of the currency, in part due to the scarcity of silver which was being exported illegally along with gold to India. Yet ironically the shah and his court continued to feast on gold platters and drink from gold jewel-studded goblets. Although the religious hierarchy, the ‘ulama, did not exert much control over the shah, they did not approve of his degenerate activities. Shah Sulayman appears to have been as apathetic towards questions of religion as he was towards government, which also displeased the ‘ulama but spared religious minorities from persecution. Nevertheless, Sufism was increasingly frowned upon by the ‘ulama and the court as potentially heretical and politically threatening, a development that played a more decisive role in the reign of Shah Sulayman’s successor, Shah Sultan Husayn.

On 6 Dhu’l Hijja 1105/29 July 1694 Shah Sulayman died at the age of forty-seven. Although he was considerably older than his own father at the time of his death, he had accomplished far less. As addicted to alcohol, drugs and sex as his father, Shah Sulayman did not have the redeeming qualities that were needed to keep Safavid society in balance and prosperity and well protected against external enemies. His love of splendour benefited the arts and architecture, at least at the royal level, and foreign visitors during his reign still marvelled at the beauties of Isfahan. Yet the same visitors—Chardin, Kaempfer, Tavernier, to name a few—all realized how little attention the shah paid to matters of state, and they more than anyone have left a valuable record of the mood of the era.

136 Haush Bihush, Isfahan, 1077-80/1666-9, north façade, from Pascal Coste, Monuments modernes de la Perse (Paris, 1867), pl. xxxvi. This 19th-century view of the Haush Bihush palace not only illustrates how the indoors is brought outdoors through the high, open porch but also how the arches on two levels served as screened windows before they were blocked with concrete.
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The major expression of Shah Sulayman's architectural patron-
age is the Hasht Bihisht, a palace set near the north-east end of the
Chahar Bagh beside the Garden of the Nightingale [fig. 156]. The
name, meaning 'Eight Paradises', may have been borrowed from
the famous palace of the Aqqoyunlu Turks at Tabriz, but the
plan, an irregular octagon, essentially a square with truncated
corners, is found in a late fifteenth-century khaneqah (devotional lodge)
in Isfahan and another khaneqah of about the same date in
Bandarabad. While no connection can be established with the
Timurid buildings, such a ground plan, at least, was not a novelty
in late seventeenth-century Isfahan. Moreover, one of Shah Tahmasp's pavilions at Qazvin was also an irregular octagon. Other-
wise, the eleven and the division of the spaces of the building exem-
plify the continuing originality of Safavid architects. In the centre
of the north, east and south sides of the building are talars with
ditched roofs extending from the top of the upper storey of the
building, while the south side has an arched iwan which is now
closed to the outside but was originally open. Of these openings the
north talar is the widest, the east and west are of the same dimen-
sions and the south iwan is half the width of the northern talar. On
the ground floor the central octagonal hall with a pool and fountain
in the middle of it rises the full height of the two-storey building
to a dome faced with muqarnas decoration and topped by a domed
lantern. In the four corners of the central hall are rooms on two
storeys, thus totalling 'eight paradises', along with galleries and
other rooms that look out on the exterior of the palace. Here again
the architect sought variety by constructing four octagonal cham-
bers around the dome on the ground floor, but the rooms directly
above them are square.

The decoration of the palace was totally refurbished in the
nineteenth century, but Jean Chardin's description provides a vivid
impression of the palace interior:

Everywhere is something different and new: in one are
fire places, in others basins with fountains which can be
turned on by pipes let in to the columns. The base up to
10 feet high was covered all round in jasper.

The bannisters are made of gilded wood, the frames
of the walls are of crystal or fine glass of all
colours. The decoration is magnificent, unsurpassed. It is
coloured only in gold or blue. As for the paintings many of
them are full of scenes of enjoyment and nudity, which
have an abundance of astounding beauty and animation,
with crystal mirrors here and there. Little chambers have
mirrors on the walls and in the domes... There were
many plaques on which voluptuous verses or moral sayings
were written. 

137 Hasht Bihisht, Isfahan, spandrel with tile revetment, 1577-80/1666-7.
The decorative programme of the cuerda seca tile spandrels consists of a range
of animal combat, mythical beasts, and hunts which are intended to reflect the
superior might of the patron of the building, Shah Sulayman.

The Patrimony Squandered 147
Even at this date, the mirrors were still imported to Iran and they must have been valued for the way in which they and the pools in and around the building reflected from both above and below. In a more general sense, the mirrors were just one of the means by which the outside world was brought into the inside of the Hasht Behisht, the most obvious being the talar, central pool and windows which originally were not bricked up but had woodwork grilles.

On the exterior, arcades of niches with pointed arches on two storeys run beneath the talar. Above each of these are tile revetments featuring animal combats, hunting scenes, vignettes from literature and mythical and other scenes [fig. 157]. Taken together, these subjects symbolize power and must have been intended to communicate the potency of Shah Sulayman, while the paintings in the interior rooms were designed to set a more intimate mood. The cuerda seca tiles [fig. 158] exemplify the taste for bright yellow glaze combined with bright apple green, turquoise and cobalt blue that became popular in the 1660s and is found in the areas of the Masjd-i Shah decorated under Shah Sulayman as well as in the Armenian Church of the Holy Mother of God in Isfahan. Many of the spandrels contain flowers and insects which closely resemble those found in the album containing drawings by Shafi‘ Abbasi, and the style of the figures follows the traditional mode practised by Mu’in Musawvir, although it seems far-fetched to attribute their drawing to him.

Another palace, the Talar-i Ashraf, was built near the site of the Talar-i Tavileh, the talar of the royal stables to the south-west of the 'Ali Qapu. Despite its name this building had served as one of the private palaces of the shahs and was the setting of extravagant receptions. Probably built about 1101/1690, the Talar-i Ashraf consists of a vaulted central pavilion with a smaller room on each side and three iwans on the façade. This building was saved from ruin in the twentieth century, and some of its fine stucco decoration remains. Like his predecessors, Shah Sulayman repaired various existing buildings, including three madrasas at the Mashhad shrine (Du Dar, Parizad and Balasr, 1088-91/1677-80), but except for the Talar-i Ashraf his architectural patronage appears to have abated well before the end of his reign.

Painting under Shah Sulayman followed a course determined by the Europeanizing artists at the court of Shah 'Abbás II. While Shafi‘ Abbasi continued to be active during the reign of Shah Sulayman, several new names are associated with court painting. All these artists employed European techniques to a greater or lesser degree and in some cases they may have viewed their European sources through the lens of Mughal paintings which in turn copied or adapted European prototypes. One such artist was 'Ali Quli Jabbadar, whose signature suggests he was the son of a converted Christian servent. In his lifetime royal artists were under the administrative care of the armoursy, hence the title Jabbadar ('armourer'). His earliest work, a painting of Majmun outside an encampment dated 1068/1657-8, is a copy of a work attributed to the Mughal artist Gowardhan, working about 1040/1630. Many of 'Ali Quli's paintings throughout his career until 1128/1716 are outright copies and the majority of them are based on European prints. However, he also painted portraits of Iranians, such as that of a prince and a lady [fig. 159]. Where his copies of European prints exhibit a faithful rendering of drapery and adherence to the composition of the original print, his paintings of Persian subjects, mostly portraits of courtly figures, are characterized by a stiffness and relative two-dimensionality, as if the figures were supported by a carapace rather than the bones within the skin. The selective shading on the face of the prince recalls the work of Shaykh 'Abbasi and raises the question whether 'Ali Quli might not have been trained by the older master. In any event, the discrepancy between 'Ali Quli's copies of European prints
Like his predecessors, Shah Sulayman repaired various sildings, including three madrasas at the Mashhad shrine of Marzad and Ba'alas, 1088–91/1677–80, but except for Ashraf his architectural patronage appears to have ended before the end of his reign.

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Nevertheless, 'Ali Quli Jubbardar's group scenes of the Safavid court mark a significant break with the idealized portraiture of previous eras by individualizing the facial features of the shah and various important grandees so that they are differentiated from one another first by physiognomy and then by posture and attire. By contrast, beardless youths continued to be depicted as types rather than individuals.

The other leading proponent of the Europeanizing style at the court of Shah Sulayman was Muhammad Zaman, son of Haji Yusuf Qumi. The early years of this artist's career are not yet widely understood because his first dated paintings from 1087/1675–6 are those of a mature artist. These include illustrations added to the 1559–63 British Library Khamseh of Nizami and the Chester Beatty Library Shabnamah made for Shah 'Abbás I, the painting 'Majmun Visited in the Wilderness'; and the painting 'Venus and Cupid' based on an engraving by the Flemish artist Raphael Sadeler. The inscriptions on Muhammad Zaman's additions to the Khamseh state that he completed them in Ashraf, the Safavid royal complex near the Caspian Sea, indicating that he was in the employ of Shah Sulayman by this time. The range of subjects from 1086–7/1674–6 indicates the breadth of taste at court level in this period. Muhammad Zaman, unlike 'Ali Quli Jubbardar, rendered these in a consistent manner.

138 (opposite) 'Archer', Isfahan, second half of the 17th century, cuerda seca stoneware tile, h. 18.5 cm, British Museum, OA 1949.115.8, Gift of Mrs Percy Newberry. As at the Hasht Bihisht, tile panels depicting a range of activities, from hunting to feasting, were produced in the cuerda seca technique in which the colours were separated by a waxy line to keep them from running together during firing.

139 (right) 'A Prince and a Lady', signed 'shahmukadd Qadimi 'Ali' ('Ali Quli Jubbardari, Isfahan, c. 1080/1670, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, 25.1 × 15 cm, British Museum, OA 1920.9.17.0925. Aside from the extravagant array of feathers and jewels in the prince's turban and the décolletage of his lady, this picture presents a somewhat odd combination of European landscape elements and modelling, on the one hand, and the very flat treatment of the prince's robe on the other.
style. He was also mindful of a single source of light and the use of cast shadows and modelling as pictorial devices [fig. 140]. Puffy clouds, rows of birds in the sky and leafy trees typify many of his works, and drapery is often rendered with brightly lit folds separated from one another by dark crevasses. Despite Muhammad Zaman’s adoption of various aspects of European painting, his figures are nonetheless stiff and often have unnaturally swollen eyes. Some paintings of Christian subjects from the 1680s may have been commissioned by Armenians, as at least one inscription identifies the patron as ‘Isa, an Arabization of the word ‘Jesus’ and a common name given to Christians living in Iran.” Also, from the 1680s comes a group of flower paintings by Muhammad Zaman. These exquisite works are rendered in rich polychrome, sometimes on a coloured ground; they neither grow out of the earth nor reveal the flowers in bud and blossom like Sufi ‘Abbas’s flower drawings, which appear to have been based on botanical prints.

Even at the more commercial end of the market, some painters followed the Europeanizing trend. One such practitioner signed his works ‘Jani farangi saz son of Bahram farangi saz’, meaning ‘Jani who works in the European style, son of Bahram who works in the European style’. This artist signed two of the forty paintings in an album compiled for the Dutch physician Engelbert Kaempfer, who spent the years 1684–5 in Isfahan with a Swedish diplomatic mission, followed by two and a half years in Bandar Abbas. The paintings in Kaempfer’s album consist of pictures of pairs of people such as one would find in Isfahan [fig. 141], animals in pairs or in combat or singly, scenes of amusements and one scene from literature. While this album provides a valuable adjunct as a social document to Kaempfer’s account of his stay in Iran, it also shows which aspects of European painting were generally deemed essential for artists working in the European style. Despite the lack of landscape in most of the pictures, the artist has included cast shadows and modelling to indicate folds of drapery. As an array of types the figures in the album exhibit almost no facial differentiation; their individual characteristics are defined through various forms of dress and identifying labels in Persian and German. Although one might argue that the artist tailored his style to suit his European customer, such an album does demonstrate how thoroughly European ideas had infiltrated Persian painting at all levels by the 1680s.
Meanwhile, more traditional artists continued to be employed on illustrating manuscripts. These included two histories of the Safavid dynasty from its origins to 1077/1666, commissioned by Shah Sulayman, and several versions of the anonymous History of Shah Isma'il I. Although the illustrations in these manuscripts include some shading and modelling of faces, the landscapes reveal little or no attempt at one-point perspective or naturalistic atmospheric effects. By the end of Shah Sulayman’s reign the European style had made inroads into manuscript illustration as exemplified by a Shahnameh, copied between 1074/1665 and 1079/1669 and illustrated between 1104/1693 and 1109/1698, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, with traditional paintings signed by Mu’in Musavi, his student Fali ‘Ali and Gholam Pir Beg, and Europeanizing ones by ‘Ali Naqi ibn Shaykh ‘Abbas and an artist whom Robinson has identified as Muhammad Zaman. While the royal encouragement of artists working in the European style during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas II helped establish the style, the continuing favour during the reign of Shah Sulayman led to its broad adoption by commercial as well as court artists.

A significant development in the area of painting during the second half of the seventeenth century was the expanded repertoire of lacquer objects decorated by leading artists. Whereas sixteenth-century court artists were known to paint scenes that often were analogous to double-page frontispieces on lacquer book covers, seventeenth-century Europeanizing painters such as Shafi ‘Abbas, ‘Ali Quli Jabbadar and Muhammad Zaman produced lacquer penboxes and possibly mirror-covers and caskets. In fact, it appears that Muhammad Zaman came to the attention of Shah Sulayman as a lacquer-painter, since a rectangular lacquer penbox that he made for the Shah is dated 1084/1675-4; a few years before most of his first dated paintings. Both the penbox of Muhammad Zaman and an example by Shafi ‘Abbas in the Khalili Collection dated 1061/1650-51 are decorated with a unified theme, a landscape with figures on Muhammad Zaman’s penbox and individual flowers, birds and insects on Shafi ‘Abbas’s. Later individual subjects, such as portrait busts, were combined with arabesque or floral decoration on one surface and unrelated motifs on the sides and interior covers of penboxes.

The one datable carpet from the reign of Shah Sulayman was produced in 1082/1671 for the tomb of Shah ‘Abbas II at Qum. This single silk example with metal thread brocade is consistent with the Polonaise group but does not shed much light on the stylistic development of that type of carpet. Its design consists of a central medallion, a border of two overlapping scrolls, half-cartouches intruding on the field from the sides and palmettes, vases and lanceet leaves, like a compendium of seventeenth-century carpet motifs, decorating the field. A painting of Shah Sulayman with courtiers and musicians from about 1080/1670 depicts the gathering taking place on a veranda covered by a red-ground carpet with palmettes, lanceet leaves and thin tendrils forming arabesques which closely resembles the woollen carpets of the so-called Herat type. Although it is not known whether ‘Herat’ carpets were made in Herat or Isfahan, this type was exported both to Europe and India. While courtiers stand and kneel on the Herat carpet, the shah is seated on a white cotton cloth with a small floral arabesque pattern placed on a gold rug of which the borders are visible. The gold rug is probably from the family of Polonaise carpets, and the cotton cover is of a type described by European travellers used for protecting carpets at feasts and other occasions. Most likely this cloth was imported from India.