570 Anthology

Height 25cm; width 16cm
British Library, London, Add. 16551
Persia (Shirvan), Turkman period, 15th century

This Anthology was copied by Sharaf al-Din Husayn al-Suli (the royal scribe) at Shirwan in 1468. The works included poems by Ḥafiz, Anis Ḳasrawi, Ḳirūtbī, Ḳarīfī, Jāmī and Tūsī and this illustration (fols 62v) accompanies a poem by Nafīr Buhārī (died about 1370) and represents the Tūrbs in flood at Baghdad. Other poems are also illustrated and there are seven single miniatures and one double-page painting in all. The text is written in nasta’līq on tinted glazed and gold-sprinkled paper with an illuminated frontispiece. No mention is made in the colophon of the patron of this manuscript, but he may have been the Shirwānshīb, Farrukh Yāsīr (1460–1501), an independent ruler but subservient to the Aq-Qoyunlu. The manuscript which is of fine quality is one of the few northern provincial Persian works of which the place and date of execution is known. Shirwan on the west coast of the Caspian Sea was under Turkman hegemony and the early stage of the Turkman style is evident in the large turbaned, round heads and short figures which appear in these miniatures.

Published: Rinsi (1881), II, pp. 120–5; Robinson (1907b, no. 109); Stichoukine (1934, p. 60, n.1.)

571 Anthology of Persian poetry

Height 34cm; width 23.5cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no. 60.634.213 of John Coolidge
Persia (Tabriz), Turkman period, about 1480

This is a page from a manuscript formerly in the Bektāshī Tālū, Iṣṭanbul, and now in the Turkish and Islamic Museum, Istanbul.

Published: Martin (1912, p. 65–68; 1913, pp. 307–31)

572 Khamsa, Five Poems, by Anis Ḳasrawi

Height 16.5cm; width 16cm
Library of Sīpah-Salar Mādūrān, Tabrīz, no. 91
Persia (Tabriz), Turkman period, 15th century

This manuscript with 455 folios was finished in 1480–1 for Ḫansar Aq-Qoyunlu, the Turkman ruler, who, however, died in 1478 before its completion. It may have been finished for his son Ya’qūb (died 1491), presumably in Tabrīz. The manuscript has a finely illuminated frontispiece shown here and one miniature added for ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the Shaybānī ruler of Buhārā (1349–59).

Published: Meredith-Owens (1969–70, pp. 120–5)

573 Anthology of Persian poetry

Height 20.5cm; width 8cm
British Library, London, Or. 13193
Persia, Turkman period, about 1470–80

This anthology is in the tradition of the exquisite small manuscripts which were produced in Shirwan during the 15th century. It contains verses by twenty Persian poets, most of whom lived in the 15th century. The small nasta’līq script is sometimes written in gold and each folio has decorations and gold or ornamented borders as well as figures of angels, men, dragons or birds. The polished paper is tinted pink, black or blue on some folios while others are of marbled paper in the Turkman style as well as finely illuminated headings in colours and gold with titles on four of them in thurced kufic script. There are two inscriptions written in gold letters on a silver ground (folios 8r and 39r) dedicated to ʿAbbās al-ʿīr Yāmīn al-Dīn Yūnuf (died 1490), one of the five sons of ʿAbbās Ḵān the ruler of Persia of the Aq Qoyunlu (White Sheep) confederation of Turkman tribes. The manuscript has a red leather binding decorated with gold tooling. The pages shown here (fols 14v, 17r) are decorated with angels and two seated men, one holding a mace and the other playing a harp.

Published: Meredith-Owens (1969–70, pp. 120–5)
57a-b Two miniatures from Khowaristan, 'The Adventures of Ali b. Abi Talib', by Abu Mansur
Height 40cm, width 32cm
Museum of Decorative Arts, Tehran, nos. 452/547 and 452/539
Persia (Shiraz), Turfan period, 15th century

This manuscript consists of 645 folios, originally 683, with 135 miniatures of which 115 still remain in the manuscript. The remainder are to be found in collections all over the world. The colophon states that the manuscript was copied in 1450 which makes it the earliest known copy of the work, contemporary with the life of the poet, but illustrated later. On some of the miniatures are found the signature Farhad and the date 1476–86. There is a committed, passionate quality about this unique illustration of the Shi'a work which suggests that it drew upon popular traditions as its source of inspiration. Although the style of the miniatures is characteristic of the school of Shiraz, the principal figures are more expressive and there is a folk-like disregard for the ordinary conventions of scale and perspective. Miniature a represents Ali looking over the hill towards mounted horsemen on board a ship arriving ashore. Miniature b depicts Ali taking a meal on a carpet out of doors.

Published: Gray (1961, pp. 104–71); Robinson (1985, pl. 83 and 1997, no. 125)

57b Binding of Thubāt al-Ifjāl, 'The Certainty of Reason', by Abu Bakr al-Ghamarī
Height 17.6cm, width 14cm
Staatliche Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, Berlin, Or. Quart 84
Egypt, Mamluk period, 15th century

This binding is of one piece of leather with hand tooled lines and dots arranged in a geometrical interface pattern and with a stylised floral repeat border from stamps.

Published: Weissweiler (1962, no. 12, p. 31)

57c Binding of Al-Kawākib al-Tharīyya fi madhī Bayrūtī, 'The Pleasures of the Garden of Creation', by Sa'īd al-Ishārī
Height 40.5cm, width 31.2cm
Staatliche Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, Berlin, Or. Ffd. 1621
Egypt (Cairo), Mamluk period, 15th century

This manuscript was written for Sultan Qaytbay who gave it to 1476 as a donation to the library of the madrasa he had erected in al-Sahra. The manuscript must have been copied between 1406–78. The leather binding is decorated with a central medallion of gilt and blue lattice work on a background of green silk. The corner pieces are gilt, the edges are stamped gilt with lines painted blue. The flaps are similar.

Published: Weissweiler (1962, no. 6, pl. 26, no. 54, b)

57d Binding of Al-Illīh al-Makhlihī wa Gharā'ib al-Mawjudāt, 'Wonders of Creation and the Rarities of Things', by Zakaryā ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī
Height 34cm, width 27cm
British Library, London, Or. 4791
Egypt, Mamluk period, late 15th century

This undated Arabic manuscript consists of two parts concerned with the heavens and with the earth. It begins with the sun, moon, constellations, and other heavenly bodies, continues with the inhabitants of the heavens, and then goes on to sections on geography and natural history with a final chapter on man. Qazwini used a Persian work of the same title which had been compiled a century earlier and Qazwini's work in turn was translated from Arabic into Persian and other languages. It was a popular book for illustration and some manuscripts have more than four hundred small drawings accompanying the various sections. This manuscript has no colophon and is illustrated with numerous diagrams in the sections devoted to the heavens, occurs, animals, birds, insects and monsters. This double-page miniature (folios 37v, 38r) depicts the angels, man, lion, eagle and cow – which bear God's throne to the right, and the angel al-Riḥā to the left.

Published: Rais (1944, no. 1287, p. 839)

57e Two pairs of leaves detached from a Koran
Height 35.4cm, width 27.3cm
Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, M. 21, M. 27
Turkey, Ottoman period, 15th century

These leaves come from a richly illuminated Koran written for Sultan Bayezid II (ruled 1481–1512). The first double opening has a frame of naskh script in white superimposed on an arabesque ground with a twelve-panelled central rosette and double border of interlace and lobed medallions. It contains the opening Koran Sura in thuluth script with interliner Persian glosses set in a floral arabesque ground, with rich illuminated panels above and below, and with borders of more arabesque motifs, thumb pieces and miniature in the outer margins. These leaves are exceptionally fine examples of Ottoman illumination and may be compared with architectural decoration at Bursa and Edirne, earlier in the 15th century.

Published: Marzi (1975, p. 103); pl. 164–71; Pope and Ackerman (1958, p. 1962); Lisbon (1985, no. 115)

Khairun (Herat), Timurid period, 15th century

These volumes are dated 1485 in Herat and have been bound separately. Volume 2 consists of the Hayyan al-Abbār, The Perplexity of the Poems, and consists of 57 folios, 4 miniatures, a double illuminated frontispiece and a rossette containing a dedication to the prince Ḥādī al-Zamīn, son of Sultan Husayn Bayqara. These four manuscripts, formed a Khamas with the Layla wa Majnun manuscript now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester (Turk. MS. 3). The miniatures are the work of several painters and the text is written in Chaghatay Turkish. A shows the double illuminated frontispiece which is finely executed. Volume 2 in 178 folios with one miniature and illuminated heading. This volume contains the Farhad wa Shirin and miniature b (fols 60v) shows the bringing of news to Farhad of the death of Shirin.

580 A Double-page miniature from Marzaq-e-Gulshān, The Rose-Garden Album. Height 31 cm, width 26 cm. Imperial Library, Teheran, no. 167.

Khouran (Herat), Timurid period, 15th century

This album was collected and mounted by the master at Jalalīnī’s court in India. This double-page miniature depicts a young prince in a garden seated among his harem surrounded by musicians, servants and dancers. An inscription on a book on the right-hand page reads: ‘portrait of Sultan Husayn Mirza, the work of Bihālī. This miniature has been accepted as partly the work of Bihālī by Fidde-Wilson and Stchoukhine, but both believe that it was completed by pupils of the master. Grey places it not earlier than 1460, perhaps later in spite of the age at which Sultan Husayn (born 1430) is represented. The rayed sun might be later but a similar image appears on folio 279b of the manuscript in the British Library (Or. 6810) which is accepted as by Bihālī by Fidde-Wilson and, alternatively, by Stchoukhine, as by a pupil. This double-page must have been executed as frontispiece to a manuscript for Sultan Husayn himself. The figures are all posed with masterly skill, and the scene is informal.

Published: London (1951, no. 534A, D); Arnold (1911, p. 27, pl. 32); Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, nos. 59-80); Robinson (1954a, pp. 269-70 and 1958a, no. 60-61); Binyon and Gray (1972, nos. 17-20, p. 11); Stchoukhine (1954, pp. 69-70); Grey (1951, pp. 113-21).

581 Rustām by So‘rū. Height 30.5 cm, width 21.5 cm. National Library, Cairo, Addab f. 480. Khorasan (Herat), Timurid period, 15th century

This manuscript with double frontispiece and four miniatures was copied by Sulṭān ‘Alī al-Khātib in 1488 for the Sultan Husayn Mirzâ. One page at the end of the manuscript was added later in 1541. A seal at the end of the manuscript is of Yarbūledjghūnī-eh Shīb with the date 1543. There is also an owner’s seal of Shīb ‘Abbās I. The binding is later. The importance of this miniature and the others in the manuscript lies in the authenticity of the signatures of Bihālī which permits a study of the Herat school of painting in the work of its greatest master under Sultan Husayn Bayqara. This illustration depicts Yūsuf fleeing from the importunities of Zulaykha who has led him into the innermost room through seven doors which she had locked behind. At his prayer they fly open and he escapes. Signed on the arch by ‘the humble’ Bihālī with a date equivalent to 1488. This is five years after the composition of the most famous poem on the theme of Yūsuf and Zulaykha by Jāmī when Herat must have known much of it by heart. The illustration here conforms to the version of Jāmī except that no wall-paintings are shown which Zulaykha had prepared and in which she had herself represented in the arms of Yūsuf. A Bakhshāb version of this miniature with an attribution to Bihālī is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Marsh 517) attributed there to Šīrāz 1315-20. See Robinson (1958a, no. 688).

Published: Martin (1912, p. 44); Schulte (1924, p. 132); London (1931, no. 534B); Wilkinson (1931, pp. 61-71); Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pp. 59, no. 80); Stchoukhine (1953, no. 2, p. 146); de Lory (1958, pp. 25-44); Murādi (1959, pl. 41); Cairo (1960, pp. 21-7, no. 8); Golembek (1972, pp. 28-9).

582 see colour plate, page 56
58a Khamus, 'Five Poems', of Nizami
Height 12cm, width 12cm
British Library, London, Add. 29825
Khamus (Heraclius), Timurid period, late 15th century

This manuscript was dedicated to the amir 'All Firdawsi. It contains 22 miniatures and fine illuminations and lacks a colophon, but the date 1494–5 and dedication appear in an inscription within a miniature. The attributions to artists in the lower margins of the miniatures were probably added when the manuscript belonged to the library of the Mughal emperor Jahangir. 'All Firdawsi was probably an amir of the Sultan Husayn Bayqara who ruled at Herat from 1494 until his death in 1506 and who maintained a brilliant academy employing the finest artists headed by Bihzad. This miniature (folio 12v) maintains the large composition with lines of verse set in a frame within the painting, similar to that seen a century earlier. It depicts the owner of a garden discovering maidens bathing in the pool, and is probably by Bihzad. This story of the discovery was told to Babur by the Greek princess in the white pavilion on Friday. It comes from the fourth of the five poems which make up the Khamus, namely the Haft Paykar, "Seven Pastimes."

Published: Martin (1951, I, fig. 240); Stuckkache (1954, pp. 75–8, pls. 77–82); Gris (1951, p. 122); Robinson (1978, no. 24).

58b Binding
Height: 23 cm, width: 18 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, no. 5935.1939
Persia or Turkey, about 1500

This outside of this binding is of black moulded leather gilt and decorated with floral motifs. The centres of the moulded flowers are painted blue. The interior is of brown leather decorated with a medallion and cornerpieces of black and gilt lattice work on a blue background. Unpublished.

58c Khamus by Niẓāmi
Height 25cm, width 17cm
British Library, London, Or. 6810
Khamus (Heraclius), Timurid period, late 15th century

This manuscript is dated 1494–5 but of the nineteen miniatures five contain only one is of the same date as the manuscript. The scribe of the minuscule and exquisite nastaliq script is unknown. Fourteen of the miniatures are later Herat work and three bear the signature of Bihzad between the lines of the text. The date of these later Herat miniatures is undoubtedly the same as that given in the inscription of folio 77v, that is 1490–5. The remaining four miniatures are in the Tabriz style of about 1355. The illumination of the title pages, frontispieces and headings as well as that within the miniatures is very fine. The exhibited miniature (folio 11v) depicts a madrasa and bears geometric and arabesque designs. It is an interesting study of a mosque with the minbar on the left.

Published: Martin (1951, I, fig. 239); Stuckkache (1954, pp. 75–8, pls. 77–82); Gris (1951, p. 122); Robinson (1978, no. 24).

58d Binding
Height: 23 cm, width: 18 cm
British Library, London, Add. 24983
Khamus (Heraclius), Timurid period, early 16th century

This manuscript is a fine example of the style of illumination connected with Herat under the patronage of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (died 1505–6). This frontispiece is painted in two tones of gold against a background of lapis lazuli with an arabesque design in colours covering the entire surface. The binding, written in white kufic script against a gold background, is surrounded on all four sides by arabesques on blue to form a rectangle enclosed within borders of intricate geometrical designs. The wider of the two main borders is of a 'plaited' design in gold and that on the outer edge is a 'braided' design in pale blue. Above the rectangle the predominant colour is blue covered with similar arabesque scroll work and enclosed in a gold border with exaggerated arabesque tendrils and leaves and with a small medallion painted in red and blue. In spite of the dedication the dates given in the colophon are 1531–2, six years after the death of Sultan Husayn.

Unpublished.

58e Khamus, 'Five Poems', by Amir Khusraw
Height 27cm, width 18cm
British Library, London, Add. 24983
Khamus (Heraclius), Timurid period, early 16th century

This manuscript is a fine example of the style of illumination connected with Herat under the patronage of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (died 1505–6). This frontispiece is painted in two tones of gold against a background of lapis lazuli with an arabesque design in colours covering the entire surface. The binding, written in white kufic script against a gold background, is surrounded on all four sides by arabesques on blue to form a rectangle enclosed within borders of intricate geometrical designs. The wider of the two main borders is of a 'plaited' design in gold and that on the outer edge is a 'braided' design in pale blue. Above the rectangle the predominant colour is blue covered with similar arabesque scroll work and enclosed in a gold border with exaggerated arabesque tendrils and leaves and with a small medallion painted in red and blue. In spite of the dedication the dates given in the colophon are 1531–2, six years after the death of Sultan Husayn.

Unpublished.
587. Khamsa, 'Five Poems' by Jami
Height 34.2cm, width 23.5cm
Imperial Library, Tehran, no. 709
Central Asia (Bukhara), Shaybanid period, early 16th century

This manuscript of 205 folios was copied, the first poem for Sultan Husayn Bayqara in 1541, the remainder by 'Ali al-Husayni al-Husayni in 1532. Each poem has a double-page frontispiece miniature within an illuminated border. The second frontispiece depicts dancing devirsheh and is attributed to Haydar 'Ali, son of the sister of Bihzad. The style points to its having been executed in Bukhara.

Published: London (1951, no. 546b); Momeny (1961, pp. 71-2); Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, no. 176); Bahrami (1949, no. 68).

588. Rustam by Sa'di
Height 23.4cm, width 14.6cm
Imperial Library, Tehran, no. 3197
Central Asia (Bukhara), Shaybanid period, 16th century

This manuscript was copied by Mir Husayn al-Husayni al-Kartib al-Saltanat in 1554 at Bukhara. It has an illuminated frontispiece and four miniatures, of which the third carries a dedication to 'Abdulhadi Munsili, the head of the royal library, evidently of the Uzbek ruler Yar Muhammad of Bukhara (1550-7). It depicts the reception of two devirsheh by Malik Shah, the Ayyubid ruler of Damascus. This scene is also represented in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Bessire (Supp. Pers. 1787) of the following year. See Blochet (1929, pl. CXVII). This manuscript was later in the Mughal imperial library and carries an autograph of Jahangir dated 1605.

Published: Bahrami (1949, no. 81); Grey (1951, p. 151).

589. Illuminated frontispiece from an unknown manuscript
Height 31.5cm, width 21.5cm
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, no. 57, 658-7
Bukhara, Uzbek, Shaybanid period, 16th century

In the early 16th century, first at Herat then afterwards at Bukhara and Shiraz, there grew up the practice of adorning manuscripts with double frontispieces which combined traditional illumination with figures of angels (paras), generally in flight. This example is from the school of Bukhara probably belongs to the period 1573-40. It may be compared to another from Shiraz dated 1579 now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (P 196) and one from Herat dated 1573. See Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pl. LXXVIIIib).

The Bukhara school of painting excelled in complex arabesque patterns while preserving the figurative style from Herat.

Unpublished.

590. Miniature from a Shahnama, by Firdawsi
Height 31.8cm, width 20.8cm
British Museum, London, 1948

This manuscript is from the school of Bukhara probably belongs to the period 1573-40. It may be compared to another from Shiraz dated 1579 now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (P 196) and one from Herat dated 1523. See Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pl. LXXVIIIib).

The Bukhara school of painting excelled in complex arabesque patterns while preserving the figurative style from Herat.

Unpublished.

591. Rustam-e Jamali wa Jalal, 'Story of Jamali and Jalal', by Muhammad Ansafi
Height 30.6cm, width 20cm
University Library, Uppsala, O Norra 2 Persia (Tabriz), Safavid period, early 16th century

Apart from the miniatures in this important manuscript there are few others which can be attributed without question to the period of the first Safavid ruler, Ismail I. This manuscript is distinguished as being the earliest known from the Safavid period and is dated in the colophon to 1505. Two of the miniatures are dated 1503 and 1504. This miniature (folio 50) depicts Dindir giving advice to Jalal. It shows a continuation of the Turkman court style in Tabriz and is probably painted by the same hand as are the other miniatures from this manuscript, though they are all unsigned.

They may be compared to the earlier miniatures of the great Rothschild-Houshmand Shahnama which are in a similar rich style with great tufts of vegetation. It seems that some painter of Tabriz, trained at the Aq-Qoyumlu court, may have been working on these miniatures as early as 1510. See Martin (1913, p. 125).

Published: London (1951, no. 715); Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, no. 179, pp. 138); Zetterstrom and Lamm (1987); Welsh (1972, pp. 272, 273).
512  Kulliyat, by Sa'di
Height 33.8cm, width 14.5cm
Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS.
Prer 23
Persia (Shiraz), Safavid period,
early 16th century

This manuscript is the first volume of
this three volume work and consists of
177 folios with double frontispiece
and contemporary leather binding.
It was copied at the foundation of
Hādīr ʿAbdulwllāh Ṣadī al-Dīn
Ibrāhīm al-Shirāzī in about 851/1449.
This illuminated title page is signed
Rūzbihān who was among the
leading calligraphers in Shirāz. That
he was also an illuminator is not
unusual.

Published: Robinson (1958a, no. 695);
Schouten (1971, no. 96, p. 103);
Sadat-Ahmad (1973, p. 67); Robinson and
Gray (1975, no. 30, p. 13).

532 Chinoiserie scrollwork
drawing
Height 13.2cm, width 18.5cm
Page Art Museum, Harvard
University, Cambridge,
no. TL 21022.12, Anonymous Loan
Persia, Safavid period, early 16th
century

This manuscript with contemporary
binding is dated 852/1449. The double
page illumination is signed by
ʿAbd al-Lājīf

Unpublished

514 Selected works of ʿNāqīmī
Height 19.5cm, width 15.5cm
Victoria and Albert Museum,
London, no. 618.1796
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript was copied by
Ṣafīd ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥammad Nūr
in 855/1453 with 14 miniatures and
temporary moulded and gilt binding.
The scribe was an and pupil of Ṣafīd ʿAlī
Ḥusaynī. It is generally accepted as an
authentic work of Ṣafīd and is dated
to about 1453. It is indeed a simplified
and arrested version of the
composition that appears here in a
manuscript of the next generation.

Published: Jackson and Johansen (1944, pp. 20-67); Martin (1976); Robinson
(1952); Gray (1961, pp. 127-9); Cancr (1986a, no. 64).

515a-b Two miniatures from a
Khamsh, 'Five Poems', by
ʿNāqīmī
Height 17.3cm, width 12.1cm
Metropolitan Museum of Art,
New York, no. 5.12.257
Persia (Tabriz), Safavid period,
16th century

This manuscript was copied by
Ṣafīd ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Muḥammad Nūr
in 855/1453 with 14 miniatures and
temporary moulded and gilt binding.
The scribe was an and pupil of Ṣafīd ʿAlī
Ḥusaynī. It is generally accepted as an
authentic work of Ṣafīd and is dated
to about 1453. It is indeed a simplified
and arrested version of the
composition that appears here in a
manuscript of the next generation.

Published: Jackson and Johansen (1944, pp. 20-67); Martin (1976); Robinson
(1952); Gray (1961, pp. 127-9); Cancr (1986a, no. 64).
This two-volume manuscript was copied by 'Ali Husayn at Herat in 1527 and was later in the Indian Mughal library. Volume 1 consists of 469 folios with 8 miniatures by unknown artists (attributed by Stschoukeine to Shaykh Zada). The miniatures (folios 350-359) from volume 1 depict Bahram Gur on horseback hunting eagares. Blocker attributes this painting to Bihzad. This manuscript is one of the major products of the early period of Shah Tahmasp. Although copied in Herat it must have been decorated with miniatures in the royal library at Tabriz under the direction of Sultan Muhammad to whom Welsh attributes this miniature. Others may be by his son Mirza 'Ali and one miniature repeats the same subject as in no. 355 which is ultimately derived from Bihzad. Such borrowings of successful compositions in this period, first at Herat and then later at Tabriz and Bukhara, are commonly found.

Published: Blottcher (1926, p. 95, pls. XLVII-LI and 1949, pl. CXXIV-V); Sakhiyan (1949, pls. 111-115, 144-45); Baynon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pp. 111-113); Stschoukeine (1939, p. 56, no. 3); Gray (1961, p. 131); Paris (1973, no. 266).

590a-b Two miniatures from a Divan, by Haji Height 25.5 cm, width 17.3 cm Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, no. TL.17.442.3-4, anonymous loan, formerly in the L. Carter Collection Persia (Tabriz), Safavid period, about 1533

This manuscript with five miniatures was executed in honour of Sultan Mirza 'Ali by his son Mirza 'Ali and one miniature repeats the same subject as in no. 355 which is ultimately derived from Bihzad. Such borrowings of successful compositions in this period, first at Herat and then later at Tabriz and Bukhara, are commonly found.

Published: Blottcher (1926, p. 95, pls. XLVII-LI and 1949, pl. CXXIV-V); Sakhiyan (1949, pls. 111-115, 144-45); Baynon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pp. 111-113); Stschoukeine (1939, p. 56, no. 3); Gray (1961, p. 131); Paris (1973, no. 266).

597 Kulyuqat of Mir 'Ali Shir Naw'at Height 38 cm, width 26 cm Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Manuscrits, Sep. Turc 316 Persia (Tabriz), Safavid period, 16th century

This two-volume manuscript was copied by 'Ali Husayn at Herat in 1527 and was later in the Indian Mughal library. Volume 1 consists of 469 folios with 8 miniatures by unknown artists (attributed by Stschoukeine to Shaykh Zada). The miniatures (folios 350-359) from volume 1 depict Bahram Gur on horseback hunting eagares. Blocker attributes this painting to Bihzad. This manuscript is one of the major products of the early period of Shah Tahmasp. Although copied in Herat it must have been decorated with miniatures in the royal library at Tabriz under the direction of Sultan Muhammad to whom Welsh attributes this miniature. Others may be by his son Mirza 'Ali and one miniature repeats the same subject as in no. 355 which is ultimately derived from Bihzad. Such borrowings of successful compositions in this period, first at Herat and then later at Tabriz and Bukhara, are commonly found.

Published: Blottcher (1926, p. 95, pls. XLVII-LI and 1949, pl. CXXIV-V); Sakhiyan (1949, pls. 111-115, 144-45); Baynon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933, pp. 111-113); Stschoukeine (1939, p. 56, no. 3); Gray (1961, p. 131); Paris (1973, no. 266).

599 Gulistan va Bustan va Sudi Height 29 cm, width 16 cm Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, L.A.180, acquired in 1914 from the family of Colonel J. Sibthury who brought it to England in 1869 Persia (Shiraz), Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript was copied by Mirza 'Ali Este'at al-Shirazi at Shiraz in 1527-8. It contains 13 miniatures and is enclosed within a contemporary leather binding. The illuminated frontispiece is signed by Ghiyath al-Din Mahmud Shirazi who is reported to have been the inventor of gold spotting or margin decoration and unpublished in the art. He died in 1535. See Qadi 'Alid (1935, p. 186).

Published: Lisbon (1969, no. 125).

600 Khamsa, "Five Poems," by Nigāmat Height 77 cm, width 25 cm British Library, London, Or. 225 Persia (Tabriz), Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript was copied for Shah Tahmasp by the scribe Sharif Muhammad Nishapuri known as the Zarīr-Qalīn 'saltimbanco' at Tabriz in 1539-43. The manuscript is in nasta'liq script and contains 14 contemporary miniatures some signed by, or attributed to, the court artists Sultan Muhammad and his contemporaries. This copy of the Khamsa is deservedly one of the most famous Persian manuscripts. The influence of Bihzad is here found and his pupil Mirza was responsible for four of the miniatures of this manuscript.

Published: Martin (1912, no. 130, 523-4); Baynon (1949); Pope and Arkestan (1938-39, pls. 86-90); Stschoukeine (1959, pp. 69-75); Welsh (1973, fig. 11).

601 Binding removed from a manuscript Height 18 cm, width 10 cm Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Manuscrits, Sep. Pers. 2050 (1-20). Morteza Bakhti Persia (Herat), Safavid period, first half 16th century

This binding is tooled and gilt with motifs of four animal heads and two heads of women with long hair surrounded by Chinese dragons and fawns. At both extremities are two verses in Persian; the whole is bordered with scroll-like designs. The interior is decorated with black lattice work on blue ground.

Published: Blocker (1933, pp. 279-80); Paris (1973, no. 238).
603 Binding with lacquer on leather
Height 49cm, width 33cm
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg, no. 1954.77
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

This binding is lacquer-painted including gold and silver and shows a scene of trees, birds, some in flight amidst clouds, and three beasts of prey attacking deer. The earliest lacquer-painted binding from Persia dates from about 1483 made in the Herat library of Sultan Husayn Bayqara. However, pictorial lacquer work only begins to be employed under the Safavids in the first half of the 16th century.

Published: Moushe (1912, pl. 51, pl. 53); Kühnel (1925, p. 86, no. 42); Eitdman (1965, pl. 66)

604 Binding with lacquer on leather of Qusayr al-Asyabih, ‘Biographies of the Prophets’, by Husayn Baysara
Height 28cm, width 16cm
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Manuscrits, Sup. Pers. 775
Persia (Shiraz), Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript consists of 265 folios with 5 miniature and is undated. It was brought back from Egypt by Napoleon in 1801. The painted lacquer binding shows a scene of birds in green and gold and may be dated to about 1520. This type of decorative subject is found on the wall and ceiling paintings in the royal pavilion at Nain, dated to about 1560. See Luscher (1969, pl. 75-6).

Published: Blochard (1910, pl. 4); Schoubine (1925, pl. 41, pl. 110); Paris (1973, no. 236, p. 90)

605 Binding with lacquer on leather of Yusuf wa Zayakhtih, by Jâmil
Height 20.5cm, width 13cm
Bodleian Library, Oxford, M.S. Hak 10
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

The manuscript belongs to the period of Shah Tahmâs, the colophon only gives 94, perhaps 940 (1533 AD). The cover is embossed, gilt and decorated with a central medallion and vegetal motifs. The inside is of red leather and is decorated with modulations of black lacquer work on a gilt background. Molded bindings such as this are more difficult to date closely since elaborate moulds continued to be used over a considerable period.

Published: Robinson (1983, pp. 696-8); Robinson and Gray (1973, no. 377, p. 98)

606 Binding of lacquer on leather
Height 40cm, width 25cm
British Museum, London, no. 1448
12-11 527-8, Inlaid in by Sir Bernard Eichstein, formerly in the Kunsthistorische Museum, Düsseldorf
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

The outside of the covers shows a feasting scene. The cover has been damaged and a blue ground is partly revealed under the lacquer by flaking. It is to be noted that the white has flaked off more than any other colour. The inside of the covers shows a hunting scene on a gold ground which includes a man kneeling (top left-hand corner) holding a musket. Pictorial lacquer binding was not introduced before the reign of Shîh Tahmâs and stylistically this binding may be attributed to about 1540.

Published: Moushe (1910, nos. 48, pl. 100); Schallek (1910, pl. 156-7); London (1941, no. 1260); Pope and Ackerman (1958-9, p. 148, pl. 1972)
608 Binding in leather
Height 36.5cm, width 27cm
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, no. 8533, acquired in 1896 from the Schaffier Collection
Persia (Qazvin); Safavid period, early 16th century

This binding is moulded and gilt with a design of animals and flying birds. The borders are of ambasques with scroll-like decoration, the outside border has floral ambasques in panels with alternate rosettes. In view of the resemblance between this binding and one in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Sup. Pers. 985), enclosing a Nizārī manuscript copied at Bakhtiar in 1538, this binding too may be assigned to the Uzbek court at Bakhtiar between 1525 and 1540. See Margoli (1937, figs. 60–1).

Published: Paris (1971, no. 305)

609 Binding in leather of a Koran
Height 49.5cm, width 36cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris, no. U 47
Persia, Safavid period, 16th century

The outside of the covers are embossed with several stamps and gilt and are decorated with a central medallion and scroll-like designs. The borders contain hadiths in praise of the Koran, an unusual feature. The inside of the covers are decorated with medallions of gilt filigree work on red, blue, black and green backgrounds. This binding is very similar to one in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (no. 56.222). That example is smaller but jewelled.

Published: Paris (1971, no. 305)

610 Zafernamā, 'Book of Victories', by Shāhrašī Dī 'Ali Yāzdi
Height 33.5cm, width 21cm
British Library, London, Or. 1279
Persia (Shiraz); Safavid period, 16th century

Brown leather binding (interior). The central medallion and the spandrels are decorated with a brown paper filigree of arabesque design against a blue background and are raised on a central panel. This panel has an embossed ribbon-cloud scroll design interspersed with stylised flowers in blue or red. The two pencilland are in gold. The numbex border surrounding the panel has a blue and gold floral design and is outlined in gold with a paneled border decorated with gold filigree paper on blue. The entire design is enclosed in a red-footed meander border in gold and is repeated in part on the flap doublet. These covers appear to be contemporary with the manuscript which is dated 1558, copied by a Shiraz scribe.

Published: London (1935, no. 1488. 1953–4, II, 757); Bury; Wilkinson and Grey (1933, no. 207, p. 144); Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, p. 97); Robinson (1978, no. 1121, 6, p. 145); Robinson and Grey (1972, no. 34)

611 Binding of lacquer on leather enclosing Yūsuf wa Zanlaykhā, by Jāmī
Height 25cm, width 15.5cm
Bodleian Library, Oxford MS. Grooves I, acquired in 1559 from the collection of Dr. Thomas Groves
Persia, Safavid period, 1569

This manuscript consists of 154 folios with a double frontispiece and 6 miniatures. The binding is contemporary. The outside is of dark green lacquer painted in gold and colours and decorated with designs of animals and vegetation. The inside of the cover is of leather decorated with gilt filigree work on a blue and green background.

Published: London (1935, no. 1488. 1953–4; II, 757); Bury; Wilkinson and Grey (1933, no. 207, p. 144); Popo and Ackerman (1958–9, p. 97); Robinson (1978, no. 1121, 6, p. 145); Robinson and Grey (1972, no. 34)
612a-b Two miniatures from an unidentified text of the Fihrista, 'Book of Omens'
Height 35cm, width 44.5cm
Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, Pessac Collection
Persia (Qazvin), Safavid period, 16th century

These two pages are remarkable for their size. These miniatures have been attributed by Grebe to Tabriz in the mid-16th century and by Robinson to Shiraz and later to Qazvin about 1530-60. Miniature a is probably a scene of mourning, apparently taking place in front of a mihbar and, therefore, in a mosque rather than a tomb chamber. Miniature b has been identified as the Ka'ba but this is always represented as a black cube. The dome depicted here should indicate that this is rather a tomb chamber erected above the grave of someone with a cult, which, the miners signify, has subsequently become attached to a mosque. The figures praying must be sulfanis and the teachers in the foreground would then be located in a madrasa attached to the complex. Until the text which these miniatures illustrate can be identified, no closer definition of the subjects is possible. Other miniatures identified as coming from the same manuscript are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (no. 50.231.2), The Frick Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, the Worcester Museum of Art, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (no. 395), and the Musée d'art et d'Histoires, Geneva, Pessac Collection. See Grebe (1962a, no. 61); Robinson (1967b, no. 147 and 1974, no. 36).

Published: Robinson (1974, no. 35.37; 1975, no. 48).

613 Gharatşâmâna, 'The Explanation of Ghirshāb', by Abū Nā'im ʿAlī ibn ʿAṣmaṣā al-Qazvī, 1540 CE
Height 35cm, width 23.5cm
British Library, London, Or. 1291
Persia (Qazvin), Safavid period (17th century)

This book was written as a complement to the Shāhnama of Firdawsi of whom Asad was a contemporary. This copy contains eight miniatures of which three are signed by artists of whom particulars are given in the Ta'rikh-āh-ʿAṣam ārā-y-e ʿAbbâš, 'The History of ʿAbbâš, the Ornament of the World' by Iskandar Munâshâ who lived during the reign of Shah ʿAbbâš (died 1629). The author praised the painter Mustâfi ʿAlī highly saying he was 'incomparable in his time' and that he was a pupil of Master Bīrâzî and had learned his craft in his service and had made progress to the height of perfection.

This painter worked under the patronage of both Shah Tahmasp and Shah Isâlâh II and died in 1576. This miniature (folio 57r) is by Mustâfi ʿAlī and depicts Firdawsi and the court poets of Ghaznavi. It illustrates a famous anecdote about Firdawsi which is quoted in the preface. The three court poets of Sultan Mahāmār of Ghazni were conversing in a garden when they were approached by a stranger who wished to join them. ʿAnāṣrī, one of the assembled poets, told the stranger that only poets were admitted to their company and that he must prove himself by supplying the fourth line to a verse for which they then composed the first three lines. Firdawsi produced a line which contained iambic quatrains to ancient heroes and ʿAnāṣrī recognizing his knowledge sold Sulṭān Mahāmār that he had arrived a poet competent to continue the Shahnama begun some twenty years before by Daqūq who did not live to complete the work. The manuscript was copied by Mir-ʿIsâd al-Ḥusaynî in 1577 who worked in Qazvin and Tabriz before being employed by Shah ʿAbbâš at Isfahan where he died in 1615. It was said of him that a single line in his handwriting was sold for a gold piece even in his lifetime. This manuscript contains two finely illuminated frontispieces and numerous section headings. The binding which is decorated with gilt paper doublures of intricate patterns probably dates from the 17th century. This manuscript is of special importance because it is securely dated 1577 at Qazvin and contains the signatures of three celebrated painters of the day, the other two being ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Masjidi and Zaʿyīn al-ʿAbbâšī.

Published: Robinson (1967b, no. 48; 1975, no. 48).

614 Yusuf wa Zulaykhâ, by Ǧâmî Height 40cm, width 35cm
British Library, London, Or. 4122
Persia (Mashhad), Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript with illuminated title-pages and borders was copied by Shâh Muḥammad al-Kâthî and contains 15 miniatures painted in the Mashhad style. This miniature (folio 78v) depicts an old woman bidding for ʿYusuf with a yoke of cotton in the slave market. This miniature is characteristic of others in the manuscript and is treated in a lively style as can be seen in braving men and interested spectators around the central action. Zulaykha is secretly watching from the curtained palanquin on her camel on the right whilst the old woman offers her cotton at the price of ʿYusuf who sits beside the merchant. The scribe sometimes referred to as Shâh Mahâmid is known to have worked at Mashhad in about 1570.

Published: Grey (1981, pp. 145-51); Strohmeier (1995, pl. 50, 52).

615 Binding of Divâni, by Hâjjī Height 35cm, width 31cm
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Manuscrits, Sup. Pers. 1, 579
Persia (Shiraz), Safavid period, 16th century

This manuscript consists of 194 folios, 11 miniatures and frontispiece, and is undated. The leather binding is embossed with a hot copper plate and gilt. The inside is unelaborated. It may be dated to about 1570-80.

Published: Böckstiegel (1952, no. 1542); Strohmeier (1995, no. 144, p. 118); Paris (1975, no. 148, p. 90).

616 Binding of Sharāf al-bâb al-ḥāshir, 'The Lucid Explanation of the Sea'
Height 32 cm, width 24 cm
Staatliche Kunstsammlung Großer Kunstkabinett Orientwissenschaft, Berlin, Glaser 193
South Arabia, 16th century

This binding encloses a manuscript dated in the colophon to 1583. The outside of the cover is decorated with stamped motifs of stylized floral units arranged in a star. The inside is similar and is of red leather. The back spine and edges have been renewed.

Published: Weisweiler (1962, no. 70, pl. 19, no. 15).