One further branch of Ottoman art remains to be considered—the painting. Once again scholars of the past have tended to regard this art as a poor reflection of the Persian, but although painters were brought from Persia by many of the sultans and though a good deal of work was done in Turkey in imitation of the Persian, with its search for a sort of idyllic dream-world, a great deal was also done in a style which was wholly Ottoman. In the fifteenth century it was characterized by a forcefulness and realism which was totally absent in Persian art of the same time, as can be seen in the striking illustrations that fill the so-called 'Album of the Conqueror' in the Topkapi Library in Istanbul. Two artists of great ability worked on this book; one, Ahmed Musa, was responsible for a series of Koranic scenes of great originality and daring, in that he truly depicted the Prophet's features; the other, Mehemet Siyah Kalem, executed some truly remarkable figures of men and animals in a style that owed much to China, but which was also essentially personal (ill. 214). His work represents some of the most accomplished in all Islamic painting. Later the heritage of these styles is to be seen in the delightful illustrations of particular events which are to be found in the so-called Hiinernama, 'Lives of the Sultans', or Surname, 'Books of Festivals', where daily scenes are shown in a naïve yet most expressive manner. In one of these books, the Surname of Murad III, the various trades are depicted parading in the Hippodrome at Constantinople before the sultan (ill. 213). In another, done as late as the eighteenth century, dancers and comedians are shown before Ahmed III (1703-10) (ill. 215). In others battle scenes, firework displays, and sports are shown. This art, essentially Turkish in character, is far removed from that of the enchanting dream-world of Persia. It is a virile, male art, full of life and action, in which love and romance have little part to play. It is only thanks to the publication of material in the Saray at Istanbul in very recent years that we have got to know something of it, but what we now know serves finally to dispel the old ideas of Turkish ineptitude in the visual arts.

One can hardly leave Turkey without a word as to the last phase of art at Istanbul, the Turkish baroque. It is perhaps not a great style, nor can it be termed a truly Islamic one, but it has great charm, and the decorative paintings that adorn some of the rooms of the Harem or a few of the old wooden houses that survive on the banks of the Bosphorus deserve to be rescued from the neglect which they have fallen into during the last century.
Persian Art: the Later Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth centuries

Just as the great quattrocento was in many ways the most outstanding and certainly the most Italian age in the story of Renaissance art in the West, so was the period between about 1370 and 1500 the most outstanding in Persia, even though its beginning was marked by a phase of conquest under Tamerlane which was little less violent than that of the first Mongol eruption under Hulagu. But if there were destructions, they were less widespread than in the thirteenth century, and Tamerlane was almost as outstanding as a patron of architecture and the arts as he was as a conqueror. The example he set was followed by his successors, nearly all of whom were active and enlightened patrons. The superb Gawhar Shad at Meshad thus dates from between 1405 and 1418 and most of the buildings at Herat belong to the first quarter of the fifteenth century. Work was also done at Balkh, Shiraz and in numerous others places.

It was, however, primarily in his beloved Turkestan that Tamerlane’s own patronage was most active, and it is there that some of the finest mosques of the age around 1400 are to be found; it was there, too, at Samarkand, that he was buried. His mausoleum, the Gur Emir (ill. 215), finished in 1434, is one of the world’s most perfect buildings, and there are a series of other mosques and mausolea there which are little less superb. Most of them are distinguished, as are other buildings of the age like the mosque at Herat, by a new type of dome, lobed and slightly bulbous, but of great beauty. The use of tile-work on the exteriors was also greatly extended, so that whole façades, even the domes themselves, came to be decorated. It would seem that these tiles were all made locally, close to the buildings for

215 The mausoleum of Tamerlane, the Gur Emir, at Samarkand. 1434. Tamerlane the Mongol may have been the scourge of much of the Islamic world, but he was also a great patron of art and his beloved Samarkand benefited considerably by his hand
This vast bronze cauldron weighing about two tons was made for Tamerlane in the early fifteenth century in Samarkand. No larger or finer piece of Islamic metalwork exists which they were intended, and that craftsmen were brought to the various places for the purpose; in this way the close similarity of work in places very far apart from one another is to be explained.

The tile decoration set the keynote against which the other arts were developed. It is one of unusual richness and brilliance. Textiles were woven in numerous centres throughout Persia and most favoured were rich silks and sheerly satins (III. 218), in the manufacture of which gold and silver threads were profusely used. In pottery the Sultanabad wares of the previous century were elaborated, and attempts were made to imitate the brilliance of Chinese blue and white of the early Ming style (from 1368). Again the centres of manufacture were widespread throughout the country, although Varanini was perhaps the most important of them. In glass the same taste for the delicate and exquisite was displayed (III. 217), while in metal some of the work was truly magnificent; no finer example was probably ever made than the great cauldron of Tamerlane from Samarkand, now in the Hermitage (III. 216).
It was, however, in the miniature paintings that the art of this age reached its height. Here a style which was wholly and completely Persian had developed out of the mixed styles of the Ilkhan period, and though work of great quality was done in the second half of the fourteenth century, it was really thanks to the enthusiasm of Tamerlane and his descendants that the most important developments took place. Under Tamerlane himself Samarkand was certainly an important centre, and there are records of garden pavilions adorned with frescoes and of exquisite painted textiles that were admired there. However, no paintings which can actually be assigned to Samarkand survive. It is to other centres like Shiraz and Herat that we must turn for actual examples, while rather later Tabriz again became significant, and there was probably an important school at Isfahan.

The work of Shiraz (III. 219) is to be distinguished by its brilliance of colouring, by a love of gorgeous landscapes, by the frequent inclusion of freely drawn bird and flower motifs in the margins, and by the faces of the figures with their rounded contours, fine lines, narrow eyes, and rather characteristic sideward glances. The system of vertical perspective, where the various figures were shown one above the other and where such things as carpets or ponds appeared flat upon the pages, was adhered to, though a new aid to producing perspective effects seems to have been universally adopted in out-of-door scenes by the time of the origin of the Shiraz school, which took the form of the inclusion of a hill in the background. Thus scenes were frequently staged on what appears to be the edge of a precipice, and the horizon was indicated by a sudden drop in the landscape. Figures in the extreme background look as if they were climbing up the inevitable hill behind, their heads and shoulders appearing over the imaginary horizon. Sometimes again they were shown emerging from behind a little hill which fills one corner of the picture.

The earliest Shiraz manuscript so far known is a Shah-nameh in Istanbul dated to 1370. More impressive and typical, however, are two volumes of epics, dated to 1397, in the British Museum and the Chester Beatty collection. The complete maturity of the school appears in an anthology in the Gulbenkian collection done for 219. Leaf from a manuscript dated 1398 showing a battle between Tamujin and the Emir of Cathay. It is typical of the supremely delicate style that was developed in Persia in the latter part of the fourteenth century (Shiraz School).
220 Leaf from a manuscript written for Iskander Sultan at Shiraz in 1410. The subject, Majnun at Laila's tomb, is part of the famous love story particularly popular in Persia at the time.

221 The Ascension of Muhammad from a copy of the Mira-nama (Life of Muhammad) dated to 1416. It was only in Persia that any attempt was made to depict the story and physiognomy of the Prophet or to illustrate his life with miniatures.
Iskandar Sultan in 1410 (ill. 220). Several different artists certainly worked on this volume, amongst them the calligrapher Muhammad Husayn, whose name we meet again ten years later in an Anthology of the Poets executed for Prince Baysunghur, and now at Berlin. The colour scheme of the miniatures in the Gulbenkian volume is rather cold, yet they are strong and forceful, as well as full of delightful decorative detail. Many of them cover double pages. A copy of Fables of Bidpai, *Kalila wa Dimna*, at Teheran, was also probably done for Iskandar Sultan just before his deposition in 1414.

Tamerlane’s eldest and most important son, Shah Rukh (1404–47), was, however, established at Herat, and the school which he founded only came to an end with the sack of the town in 1507. Shah Rukh himself was serious and sober in outlook, and was mainly responsible for the production of histories or religious treatises, like a *Miraj-nama* or ‘Life of Muhammad’ done in 1436, which is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale (ill. 221). Especially fine is the scene showing Muhammad on Buraq preceded by Gabriel and surrounded by angels. It is a riot of brilliant gold, red and blue, and Grousset sees in it the same deep religious feeling which is apparent in the West in the work of Fra Angelico. To Western eyes the intense religious feeling is perhaps not very clearly apparent, but the attempt to convey heavenly glory by means of brilliance and richness is obvious in the work of the Eastern and Western painters alike.

Shah Rukh’s gay son Baysunghur Mirza (d. 1433), on the other hand, favoured works in a lighter vein and it was under his patronage that the Herat school reached its fullest development. Its work was characterized by an even greater love of descriptive detail than at Shiraz, the figures were usually rather small, the work was exceptionally delicate and the colouring softer and deeper than that of Shiraz. Very particular shades of orange and red were habitually used. Chinese motifs such as the *lini* or stylized cloud-form were almost invariably present, though there was nothing Chinese in the actual style.

222 Illustration from a manuscript of a *Shah-nama* done for Baysunghur Mirza in 1430, which is an outstanding work of the Herat school. This represents an account being given to Lutfi, the disappearance of Kay Khastraw
One of the most outstanding examples of the school is the Shahnama now in the Gulistan Palace at Teheran, which was done for Bayazeh in 1430 (ill. 222). The scene where Kay Khosrow’s disappearance is related to Luhrasp is wholly characteristic, both in the beauty of its colour and the elaboration of its detail. Another quite enchanting miniature is that of Humay and Humayun in China, now in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs, Paris (ill. 223). The artist shows little intellectual curiosity, but the symbolic decorative basis of Persian painting is here fully apparent and the result is particularly successful. The flowers shine in the brilliance of daylight while the stars are out in the sky; realism is combined with symbolism; the artist is completely unbounded by the practicality of naturalism, yet his approach remains completely comprehensible.

Except for the Shahnama, the books which were most familiar in the Abbasid and Mongol periods were now less popular and various new works came into prominence such as the Khamsa or Poems of Nizami, the Bustan of Sadi, or the "Joseph and Zulaykha" of Jami. In most copies one or two scenes only were selected for illustration, and usually it was the most popular scenes which were chosen, so that we have a great number of examples of certain well-known events like Bahram Gur hunting the wild ass, and many fewer examples of the less popular scenes. Yet there is no monotony in this, for the merit of the painting lay in the rendering, not in the invention of new themes. What may be termed 'the handed down model' was almost as sacred a precept of the arts as in the Buddhist world, and we see something of the same outlook in Byzantium where once more the merit of a painting lay in the artist’s capacity to breathe new life into something hallowed by time. The outlook was thus quite distinct from the energetic inquiring spirit of the West where curiosity and a search for the new dominated the outlook.

In a few very rich volumes nearly all the scenes of each story were illustrated, and there is probably no more sumptuous example than

222 The arrival of Prince Humay and his reception by Princess Humayun in the garden of the Emperor of China. Leaf from a poem by Khawajdu Kirmani done in Herat, 1301–1322, for Bayazeh Mirza

223
a *Shah-nama*, now in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society, London. It contains twenty-three miniatures, and was done for another of Shab Rusti's sons, Muhammad Juki, around 1440. More than one man probably worked on it, and some of the miniatures are more expressive than others; yet all are of really outstanding quality. One of the most moving illustrates the death of the Paladins in the snow (ill. 224). A few faithful followers had accompanied Kay Khusrav to the mountains where he went to end his life; the king warned them that a storm was approaching and told them to return, but before they could leave their master the snow overwhelmed them and they all perished. In the illustration they are shown seated beside a pool, while behind the ominous snow clouds gather in the sky. Binyon writes of this: 'The huddled bewilderment of the doomed Paladins, crouching coldly by the desolate mountain stream, is wonderfully expressed in the illustration.' One might add that the soft heaviness of the snow clouds has probably never been more effecuently rendered and the Oriental acceptance of the inevitability of fate is conveyed with striking success.

What is perhaps the most characteristic feature of the second half of the fifteenth century, however, is the fact that then certain painters began to sign their works. One of the first to do so was Ruh-Allah Mirak, who did two rather stiff pages inserted in a later Nizami dated about 1466 and now in the British Museum. Others are known, but the most famous of all was Bihzad, who was born somewhere about 1440 and died not long after 1514. His style was more intense, more dramatic, than that of many of the painters of the age, and he was obviously more interested in individuals and their character and in the affairs of everyday life than were most of his contemporaries, who were content to live in an enchanting dream-like world of their own. From 1468 until 1506 Bihzad was at the head of the Herat Academy and his chief patron, Mir Ali Shir Nevai, was a friend of the Sultan Husain Mirza (1468-1506), who also patronized the work of the artist, as did his successor, the barbarous Muhammad Khan Shaybani. It was at Herat that most of his work was done, though after 1506 he was taken to Tabriz, whether the capital was moved by the new sultan, Shah Ismail, founder of the Safavid dynasty.

224 Illustration from a *Shah-nama* done at Herat about 1440. It contains a large number of illustrations of very high quality. Here a group of Paladins are shown seated by a pool.

There he brought new fame to the old school which had never ceased to function, even if Shiraz and Herat were more important.

The problem of attribution is very complicated in the case of Bihzad, partly because he had numerous pupils who followed him closely, and partly because his style came to be regarded during his lifetime as the very acme of painting, and collectors of the period who wished to show their appreciation of a particular work would write under it 'Worthy of Bihzad' or just 'Bihzad' by way of...
praising it. Or again the collectors of the next half-century would very frequently attribute paintings to Bihzad much as canvases were in the eighteenth century assigned to Raphael, though the scholarly examination of style that can be given today shows that neither attribution can be relied on. Hence the signatures can but seldom be accepted, and it was only in a very few instances that the master himself signed his work. When he did so, the signature was usually put in the most obscure of places. For example, in a miniature showing King Dara with his herdsmen in a copy of Sadi’s *Bustan* at Cairo (1488–9), the miniature is signed in minute letters on the king’s quiver (ill. 225). The signature reads, ‘work of the slave Bihzad’. The theme of this illustration was a popular one; the king had mistaken his herdsmen for an enemy and was about to draw his bow when the man stopped him and reproved him for not knowing his servants by sight. The double frontispiece of this book, which is not actually signed, must also be by the master.

Signatures which can be relied on also appear on miniatures in a *Gulistan* in the Rothschild collection of 1486, and in two *Khamsas* in the British Museum dated 1493 and 1494 (ill. 229). A portrait, in Tebriz, of Sultan Husain in a garden, dated 1495, is also to be assigned to him. Though no signatures are present, a *Zafar-nama* or ‘History of Tamerlane’ in the Garrett collection may also be attributed to Bihzad on stylistic grounds. It contains six large double page miniatures, and was written in 1467 for Sultan Husain Mirza, but the miniatures were probably added around 1490. This was quite a common practice in Islamic painting, for the calligrapher usually left blank pages which were afterwards filled in by the illustrator. The scene showing the construction of the Great Mosque of Samarkand is full of the vivid energy which characterizes Bihzad’s work. Another page (ill. 227), showing an assault on a fortress, is again typical and illustrates the capture of the Christian fortress of the Knights of St John which took place about 1402. Tamerlane is said to be the figure on horseback on the right; his troops are crossing the moat by a temporary bridge.

In addition to the scenes in books Bihzad was also responsible for a number of single studies of individuals or animals, and though his 225 This illustration of King Dara and his herdsmen from Sadi’s *Bustan* is a signed work of the great painter Bihzad. c. 1489

portraits were not as powerful as his other work they are not by any means negligible. One, now in the Freer Gallery, which is signed and usually accepted as by him, depicts a young man painting (ill. 226). It was for long believed that this was copied by Bihzad after an original by Gentile Bellini, who was in Constantinople in 1479 and 1480, but there is little real evidence to support this claim.