Arab and Persian Painting
Arab and Persian Painting
in the Fogg Art Museum

by Marianna Shreve Simpson
with an introduction by Stuart Cary Welch

Fogg Art Museum Handbooks, Vol. II
Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts 1960
Arab and Persian Painting, the second volume of the Handbook series, focuses on the Fogg Museum’s outstanding collection of Arab and Persian miniatures. In 1942 Eric Schroeder, the Fogg’s first curator of Islamic art, thoroughly discussed thirty of these works in his Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art. Since that time the collection has grown to over one hundred and thirty manuscript illustrations, album leaves, and drawings—a remarkable expansion fostered by the late Eric Schroeder and actively continued by Stuart Cary Welch, the present curator.

Arab and Persian Painting marks the first publication in almost forty years devoted exclusively to this rich and impressive part of the Fogg’s holdings. In scope and format it serves both as a revision of Schroeder’s still invaluable but long out of print publication, and as a survey of the present collection. Except for Stuart Cary Welch’s illuminating introduction, the Handbook was written by Marjorie B. Cohn and the staff of the Conservation Laboratory, and co-authored by Professor Martin Dickson of Princeton University.

Professor Oleg Grabar’s guidance has been equally important throughout the project. Assistant Director Suzannah Dorringer supervised the 1976-1977 internship program and enthusiastically supported the subsequent application to the National Endowment for the Arts for additional funds to publish the Handbook. Marjorie B. Cohn and the staff of the Paper Conservation laboratory helped with the technical examination of all the Persian and Arab miniatures. Peter Walsh judiciously edited the manuscript and Dr. Michel de Angelis made many pertinent suggestions on Iranian literature and history and on the transliteration and translation of names and inscriptions. Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and to its director, Dr. Thomas Lawson, for kindly allowing me complete use of the Freer’s facilities while I prepared the manuscript.

The Handbook is the culmination of a cataloguing project undertaken in the 1976-1977 academic year with a museum internship from the National Endowment for the Arts. During the course of my research I have benefited greatly from the advice and encouragement of Stuart Cary Welch, curator of Islamic Art, Fogg Art Museum; I would especially like to thank Mr. Welch for his assistance with the Safavid material and his generous loan of a manuscript copy of the major forthcoming study on the Houghton Shahname, co-authored by Professor Martin Dickson of Princeton University.

This Handbook is designed for use by general and specialized audiences alike. The forty-three entries and the five historical essays are intended to introduce the public to the traditions of Islamic miniature painting in general and to the Fogg’s rich holdings in particular.

This publication follows the format established for the first volume in the Fogg Handbook series. The entries are arranged chronologically in separate sections for Arab painting and Persian painting. The entries are further divided into four dynastic periods: Mongol, Timurid, Safavid, and Post-Safavid. Each entry begins with the work’s descriptive title. Each manuscript illustration is followed by the title of the literary text which it illustrates, and, in the case of an album painting or drawing, by a description of the medium and mounting. All works are on paper. The attribution information consists of artists’ signatures or reliable inscriptions, place of origin and date. In all measurements, height precedes width. Measurements designated by the term “sheet size” differ from those labeled “written surface.” Such entries are given the provenance, or list of previous owners, insofar as it is known. The bibliographical references include only major publications and exhibition catalogues in which the painting is described. They follow the “short form” used in the first volume of the Handbook series. For those works published in Eric Schroeder’s Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art (Cambridge, 1942), no previous sources are cited since Schroeder’s bibliographies are quite comprehensive.

The initial mention of any specific date, whether in the entry headings or in the text, is given in two forms. The first date is that of the Islamic calendar, known as the Hija’ra era (Anno Hegirae). This lunar system is reckoned from the Hijira, or emigration, of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in 622 A.D. The A.H. date is followed by its corresponding year in the Gregorian, or common era, calendar (A.D.), based on the solar year. The Islamic months appear as listed in the American Heritage Dictionary.

Names of cities, provinces, and other geographical sites, as well as dynastic names and official titles, are given in their common English usage. Proper names, literary titles, and certain other terms are transliterated (without diacritical marks) into English from their original languages (Arabic, Persian, and some Turkish) according to the system set forth in the International Journal of Middle East Studies. Because of technical difficulties, it has not been possible to insert the diacritical marks.

The use of Arabic and Persian technical terms has been deliberately minimized for the convenience of the general reader. In certain cases, however, there is no single-word equivalent in English. These terms, plus two literary titles that appear frequently, are defined in the following short glossary:

**Khamse** Often translated as “Quintet,” a collection of five poems, each written in a different meter. Nizami of Ganja, a 12th century poet, composed the best-known Khamsa in Persian literature.

**Nastaliq** A very elegant cursive script, known as the “hanging one.” Its form was perfected in Iran during the 16th century.

**Sarzín** A four-page frontispiece in a manuscript, decorated either with an illustration or with illumination.
Introduction

The lands where these lively pictures were created are largely desert, and the paintings, with their icy blues and burning reds, brought respite from fiercely hot days and chilling nights. The books and albums from which most of the folios here were plucked can be likened to gardens, paradises on earth for Muslims. Bindings were garden walls, protecting shade and fruit trees, and the miniatures were flower beds, planted with clusters of varied blossoms. To fully enjoy these painted boxes, we should approach them as Muslim gardens, in which the seeds were planted not in groups of the same species, but haphazardly, within neatly ordered frameworks. Thus, we must explore each miniature painstakingly, to find and delight in each painted bloom, whether it be magnified in the center of the composition, or sprouted in some surprising, secret corner.

The Arab and Iranian miniatures and drawings assembled here date from the 13th through 19th centuries. All are from the Islamic world, all are in opaque watercolor or ink on paper, and all are small in scale. Intended to edify and delight, they stem from elevated cultural levels, though they are nourished by lower, even folkish, strains. Many are the work of renowned artists in the empathy of imaginative patrons, most of whom were royal. Although most are now mounted as separate folios, originally they were preserved in books or albums, the bindings of which were in themselves works of art.

Islam owes its origin as a religion to the divine revelation of the prophet Muhammad of Arabia (d. 632 A.D.). According to Muslim belief, the proof of this revelation is the holy Koran, the sacred scripture of Islam. In the Koran, Jews and Christians (along with Muslims) are "people of the Book" because they possess divine revelations granted their communities through prophet-legislators (messengers). The high esteem granted the art of calligraphy and the book production in Islamic culture no doubt stems from this focus on the written word. In the Islamic world, most paintings and drawings were either very large or very small, murals or miniatures; there were virtually no equivalents to modern easel paintings. Although the same artists illustrated books and adorned walls, their most precious works were on a small scale, partly, perhaps, because artists and patrons alike realized that wall paintings would be short-lived due to the impermanence of building materials and political fortunes. Libraries could be moved on camels, either for pleasure, while on hunting, trading, or military expeditions, or for safety in precarious times. The image of the cultivated Muslim reader and loitering beneath a shade tree in a garden by a gurgling stream, with a few musicians, sweetmeats, and shefeles to enhance his pleasure, is as truthful as it is romantic.

At the time of their creation, these sparkling jewels of brilliant color and gold, in surroundings of mostly tan and grays, must have seemed even more dazzling than in modern settings. Artists could delight the eye with the bluest of blues (ultramarine or lapis lazuli), the most vivid of reds (vermilion), and gold, if their patrons could afford the great cost of such work. Their basically simple technique, comparable to gouache, nonetheless abounded in subtleties, many of which were fanniy or trade secrets, not yet fully analyzed. Various binding media were employed, including gums and gum arabic. As part of his apprenticeship, each painter learned the niceties of technique. He could make his own brushes by setting hairs of squirrels or kittens into bird quills; and he learned to grind gold, silver, and copper leaf in salt or glue, which was then washed out, leaving metallic pigments employable in many hues. After being brushed on, such surfaces could be cooled with a stylus to add glitter. Most pigments required several steps in their preparation—paintstaking selection, grinding, and sometimes dangerous and foul-smelling cooking. A few, such as cuprous green, were poisonous and corrosive. To protect the paper from being eaten through, special varnishes had to be applied first.
Portraits of artists at work show them seated on the ground, usually on a folded carpet, with a drawing board, to which the miniature or drawing was attached, propped against a raised knee. Nearby, small shells of pigments, waterpots, and bowls of brushes or other tools were conveniently arranged. Although they did not manufacture papers themselves, artists were connoisseurs of the various sorts, including some imported from as far away as China. Before the actual drawing or painting began, the artist or his assistant smoothed the paper by burnishing; and often specialists in illumination marked in and colored the marginal rulings, establishing the areas for text and pictures. Usually, an artist began by sketching in the composition with faint lines, applied either with a brush or red pen. Gradually, these lines were refined, in darker strokes. Mistakes could be corrected by covering them over with white pigment, reburnishing, and redrawing. Although the more inventive artists usually drew free-hand, and sometimes sketched from nature, lesser ones (or apprentices) often relied upon tracings from earlier examples preserved in the workshop or the patron’s library. Transparent gauzy skins were employed for this process. After indicating the motif on the skin, its outlines were pricked, and black pigment was rubbed through the pin-holes onto the work in progress.

After the completion of the underdrawing, colors were applied, layer by layer. Some, however, such as lapis lazuli, were brushed on in one thick coating, with just enough binder to attach the tiny granules of mineral without clouding their brilliance. Gold highlights seem to have been added last, often in the form of arabesques rhythmically brushed over rich areas of color. A final step, before the painting was approved by the patron and sent to the binder, was burnishing, a process that lent the miniature a uniformly even surface and was accomplished with a smooth crystal or agate.

Most of the pictures reproduced here owe their existence to more than one mind. Artists and patrons collaborated very closely, sharing ideas on all levels and at many stages. Such art-minded princes as Bayazehgar and Shah Tahmasp should receive credit for their devoted creativity, without which Iranian art might have followed different courses. Moreover, master artists (designated as designers or outlines) frequently supplied compositions to be colored by assistants (known as painters or colorers) under their supervision. The proudest works by major artists, however, were untouched by lesser hands.

The status of the artist varied considerably. On the highest levels, painting was considered a suitable activity. Shah Tahmasp, the major Safavid patron, painted miniatures (examples can be seen in Istanbul) as well as murals, and they reveal professional standards of talent and skill. Several of his artists were noble courtiers; and virtually all of them must have been highly educated personalities, known for their poetry, musicianship, and wit as well as artistry. Even when their careers had begun far from the royal court, their training would have instilled metropolitan polish.

Most artists were professionals, trained from childhood in their craft. Some belonged to families in which several generations had practiced the same trade. The ultimate mark of success was usually to serve in the royal workshop. Families sometimes retained such august posts for several generations, and instances are known of fathers, sons, nephews, and cousins contributing to the same royal projects. Less prestigious was service in the usually smaller workshops of members of the royal family, though in some instances princes were greater patrons of painting than shahs; and still less so were positions at the courts of governors or other nobles. The majority of the painters, however, were attached to commercial ateliers in the bazaars, where they illustrated more modest manuscripts intended for sale. As one might suppose, these were usually less fine in every respect, the work of less admired painters using inferior materials. A particularly busy center of such commercial works was Shiraz, where Isfandiyar’s Third Stage: He Battles the Dragon (no. 27) was painted in about 1565. Although this is an unusually appealing example of such Shiraz work, it suffers by comparison with a masterpiece from a royal court, such as the fragmentary Graybeard with a Lion (no. 21), which was probably painted for Shah Tahmasp’s nephew, Sultan Ismail Mirza, when he was governor of Mazandaran and the leading patron of Safavid painting. Intriguingly, this “heart” from an unusually large painting can be attributed on stylistic grounds to Muzaffar-Ali, a royal artist who took to the brush through sheer enthusiasm for painting rather than as a result of family background. The commercial ateliers of such cities as Shiraz, however, trained several artists who later moved to more distinguished posts, even to the royal court. Even after reaching such heights, artists seem to have earned extra money by taking on commissions through commercial channels. In some periods, such as the 17th century in Iran, artists catered to the rising middle class as well as to the nobility. Virtuoso draughtsmen like Riza (see nos. 29-31) made numerous sketches, both from life and after earlier works of art, for sale to an increasing market of connoisseurs. In all likelihood, drawings gained in popularity at this time to satisfy a new audience that could not afford such costly materials as lapis lazuli and gold.

In general, the lot of the artist tended to be more secure, and probably happier, than that of the prince. For within the Islamic world, with its network of international trade routes to pass the news, there was usually a demand for talented artists. If patronage waned at Tabriz, for instance, employment probably could be found elsewhere, although it might be necessary to move to Turkey or India. Artists usually outlived shahs, who were beset by the dangers of intrigue, warfare, the hunting field, or the yet deadlier risks of high living.

The Fogg miniatures and drawings shown here encompass most of the subjects usually found in Muslim painting and drawing. During the early phase of book illustration for the Arab patrons of centers like Baghdad, practical topics were the norm, as, for instance, the folios from a copy of Dioscorides’ De Matona Medica. These broadly treated pictures depict people and plants with few forbearers, as unmistakably as possible (nos. 1 and 2). A Female Cup Bearer from the Automata of Al-Jazari, on the other hand, takes us to a more imaginative level, somewhat reminiscent of Rube Goldberg’s world of eccentric inventions (no. 3).

All of our other illustrations are from Iran, where artistically-minded patrons seldom assigned such matter-of-fact subjects as herbal or other scientific works to their more talented artists, though many such volumes were produced for extensive libraries. As can be seen by skimming the Handbook, the most frequently illustrated text was the Shahnama [Book of Kings], the great Persian epic composed from earlier sources by Firdawsi of Tus in the early 11th century A.D. A lengthy work, its innumerable episodes provided inspiration for countless thousands of surviving miniatures. Although most copies of the volume contained fewer than 50 illustrations, a few included more than 200. Other Persian classics, which provide the next largest category of miniatures, were less liberally illustrated, though royal libraries must have contained almost as many copies of the works of poets like Nizami, Hafiz, and Sa’di as of Firdawsi. Histories, such as the Zafarnama of Sharaf al-Din Ali (no. 10) were also frequently illustrated, occasionally by the leading court painters. Religious works, on the other hand, were less frequently illustrated, although they often contained diagrammatic representations of such holy places as Mecca. An exception is the Kahravannama of Muhammad ibn Husain, a Shi’ite popular hagiography, from which the Fogg possesses one of the many stray folios (no. 11).
More religious in spirit than most such outwardly religious works are certain miniatures and drawings of highly personal character which appear to be inspired by genuinely mystical fervor. Mystical Journey, a spiritually emancipated composition of swirling birds, animals, fish, and Sufis (mystics) is one of the most extraordinary drawings from the Muslim world (no. 37).

Mystical Journey, which may have been inspired by the technique of marbelizing frequently used to enhance manuscripts, once adorned an album, the setting for which most Iranian miniatures and drawings were made when not intended to illustrate texts. Presumably, such albums were born of necessity, to protect folios taken from scattered manuscripts and to house folios of calligraphy, unfinished miniatures, or working drawings. Conceivably, the artists rather than the patrons first made use of albums, in order to store inherited motifs for their workshops. Whatever their origin, albums were eagerly assembled by the early sixteenth century. One of the most renowned is in the Topkapı Saray Library in Istanbul (no. H 2154). It was assembled by Dust-Muhammad, the illustrious artist, man of letters, traveler, and connoisseur for Prince Bahram Mirza, the favorite brother of Shah Tahmasp and the father of another major patron, Sultan Ismail Mirza. Even in its somewhat fragmentary state, this album is a supremely rich collection of miniatures, drawings, calligraphies, and illuminations of the late Timurid and early Safavid periods. In all likelihood, the unfinished portrait of Sultan Husayn Mirza (no. 26) is from this source, for the identifications of both the sitter and artist, the great Bihzad, are in precisely the same format and in the same hand (Master Dust’s) as are those of this Istanbul album.

As can be seen from this unfinished but powerful and dignified likeness of one of the major patrons of Iranian art, portraiture was a significant subject in Iranian painting. An outstanding earlier example, depicting another major Timurid patron, Prince Baysungur (no. 9), is also in the Pogg collection. It can be assigned to the same artist as a finished miniature showing Baysungur hunting, one of the finest pictures in his Shahnama of 1430, now in the Gulistan Library, Tehran. Many Iranian portraits are far less reverent than these. Indeed, many probe the sitter’s character with biting humor, as in the portrayal of Nasr al-din al-Ashraf, by Riza (no. 32).

Genre subjects were also favored in Iran, as well as in the Arab centers of painting. Warrior and Physician with the Plant Keshshon (no. 1), with its earthy characterizations of the figures, qualifies as a genre painting, and many Iranian examples from the 14th and 15th centuries could be cited in other collections. A small sketch of two humorously observed men, the younger of whom appears to be tempting and tantalizing his elder by withholding wine from his grasp, is almost certainly the work of the great Timurid artist Bihzad (no. 13). Strikingly similar in style to Bihzad’s greatest miniatures in the Cairo Bustan of Sadi, dated 1488, the figures in this drawing could have stepped from its pages. The gestures and the treatment of hands, feet, and faces conform precisely to Bihzad’s masterful, sensitively humanistic idiom. An historically interesting is this brilliant sketch’s role as precursor to such later drawings as A Partly Courtier (no. 16) and Riza’s superb Daydreaming Youth (no. 30). The taut, almost wry, but finely calligraphic line of Two Cavaliers (no. 23), attributable to Muhammad of Herat, also harks back in homage to such works of Bihzad, whose good-humored observation of mankind contributed so much to Iranian genre subjects.

Primarily concerned with people, Iranian artists extended their fascination for personality to birds, animals, and monsters. We could cite numerous lively horses in the present selection of pictures; but Riza’s stubborn, almost angry ram (no. 31) demands our attention. Not only did the artist vividly bring to life the beast and his determined but cautious human antagonist, but he also captured the waves of irritation between the two.

Puru landscape and still life subjects are rare in Muslim art, though when they occur they are all the more rewarding, perhaps because the artists painted them in defiance of tradition. Often, however, one finds marvelous passages of still life in miniatures of the usual kinds. One of the best, showing armour, weapons, and a candlestick, can be admired behind the hero in Tahmim comes to Rustam’s Chamber (no. 8).

In keeping with the Iranian preoccupation with people, animals, and monsters, the trees and rocks of Graybeard with a Lion (no. 21) are typically alive with such hidden creatures. As one might expect, traditional approaches to nature gave way with Western contact, especially during the 19th century under the Qajar dynasty. But even then, a European-inspired flower picture Nightingale and Rose (no. 41) imbued with purely Iranian mysteriousness. Ghosts and demons seem to lurk in the petals.

The styles represented in this small volume range widely, from broad, simple directness to delicately modulating nuances, each offering reliable and tangible insights to society’s changing ways as well as to those of patrons and artists. Our earliest pictures from an Arab manuscript of Dioscorides (nos. 1 and 2) evoke a hearty ambiance, populated by good-humored folk such as the ruggedly silhouetted warrior and physician.

Iranian examples stem from an ancient tradition that usually portrayed powerful forms in techniques of the utmost refinement, as in the familiar Achaemenid reliefs at Persepolis. Like most art styles, those of Iran can be interpreted according to phases of growth, as unique, ripe, and over-ripe, or going to seed. A late moment of the first phase is superbly represented by one of the Fogg’s greatest treasures, Bahram Gur Fights the Karg (or monster-wolf) (no. 6). Dramatically effective as an illustration, powerfully, youthful musculature, with convincing anatomical distortions, making it an authority in its handling of line, mass, and color, it compels empathetic response. Although the Chinese influence is strong, the artist has transformed the harmonious and subtle exotic motifs, imbuing them with earthy gusto. One senses that the artist was still struggling, devising inventive solutions to artistic challenges, not working within the confines of an already codified tradition. Assault on a Castle (no. 14), an unfinished miniature attributable to Bihzad, is also of excellent quality, and can be seen as the work of a great and innovative master during a ripe or classical period. The turbulently rhythmic freedom seen in no. 6 has now calmed, and forms have crystallized. Like a sensitive mathematician, Bihzad composed his picture geometrically, pinning it securely to the stiffly-placed whirring of a shield near its center. Elegant warriors and graceful horses are now cerebrally analyzed as well as felt, and recorded with subtler characterization in a fully refined and minute technique.

Later in spirit, as well as chronologically, are two portraits attributable to Mirza-Alí, Seated Princess with a Spray of Flowers (no. 19) and Youth with a Golden Pillow (no. 26). They represent two phases in the career of one of Shah Tahmasp’s major artists, classical ripeness and post-classical overripeness. The personality analyst pair excellence among the Shah’s artists. Mirza-Alí, not only recorded the outer forms of his sitters with remarkable understanding of anatomical engineering but also delved into their characters. Realistically proportioned, outwardly aloof, restrained, and aristocratic, the sumptuously dressed Princess’s pose and facial expression nonetheless reveal inner passions. The flirtatious youth, far less restrained in his comportment, marks a trend at the Safavid court of the Shah’s nephew. Sultan Ismail Mirza, towards anti-classical emotional release. Although the artist’s unique understanding of bony structure, musculature, and flesh is apparent still,
he has emphasized censuous physically by unrealistic but compelling exaggerations of proportion, which lend the youth the character of a panther. In effect, this languorous figure belongs to the autumnal stage, when art has begun to go to seed, and evokes the same degree of empathy we sensed in the eminently muscular Bahram Gur Rides the Karg (no. 6). To fully enjoy Iranian painting, we must appreciate the beauty of all its seasons.

The origin of the Fogg collection of Arab and Iranian miniatures combined sadness and good fortune. In 1919, Harvey Wezel, a promising young art historian trained at the Fogg, died in France just after the First World War, in which he had served as an ambulance driver. As a student, he had held as his mentor the extraordinary Professor Denman Ross, a theoretician of the arts, painter, and voracious collector of Oriental materials, often acquired while travelling in the East. Remembering the Fogg and Denman Ross, Harvey Wezel bequeathed to Harvard several of his finest works of art, including a superb Chinese bronze water buffalo of the Chou Dynasty, and the first Arab and Iranian miniatures, one of which is from the exciting 14th-century Demotte Shahnama, ironically named after the French dealer who dismantled it. The collection could not have begun more auspiciously, and it continued in the same spirit. Denman Ross added to the collection, as did his nephew Thorvald Ross. Miniatures from the Demotte manuscript were also admired by the director of the Fogg, Edward W. Forbes, who lent and later gave them to the Fogg. His friend Richard Westland presented him with another folio, Rustam Shoots Isbandiyar in the Eyes (no. 7), and this in turn also came to the Fogg, thanks to the ever generous Mr. Forbes. Harvard's spectacular group of miniatures from this seminal manuscript was crowned in 1960 when Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, whose collection had been admired by Mr. Forbes, left the Fogg one of its most exciting pages, Bahram Gur Rides the Karg (no. 6). Paul J. Sachs, co-director of the Museum with Mr. Forbes, also appreciated such paintings, and presented several to the collection. To him, perhaps, we should ascribe the policy of concentrating upon pictures of high quality rather than "study material." "Only the greatest masterpieces," he quipped, "are capable of opening the eyes of students!"

Young Man in a Blue Cloak (no. 29), one of the Fogg's outstanding 16th-century miniatures, was inherited as part of the collection of Mrs. Sara C. Sears, a Bostonian with a taste for Muslim painting. During the early decades of this century, Boston had become a center in this field. Actively encouraged by Bernard Berenson, Denman Ross, Edward Forbes, and Ananda Coomaraswamy; the Museum of Fine Arts, Isabella Stuart Gardner, and other private collectors gathered such miniatures. Grenville Winthrop, who bequeathed his comprehensive collections of Chinese and European art to the Fogg, also left Harvard several excellent miniatures.

Following the depression the market in Arab and Iranian pictures was slack. Wonders were available through dealers in New York, Paris, and London, and they were astonishingly cheap. The Fogg was fortunate in having a scholarly connoisseur to acquire some of these neglected gems, Eric Schneider, English by birth and education, art historian, archaeologist, poet, painter, and astrologer, had excavated and measured monuments in the East prior to coming to this country as a teacher at the Milton School. While there, he met, fell in love with, and married Margaret Forbes, through whom he met her uncle, Edward, who shared his enthusiasm for Islamic art. Very soon, Eric was instrumental in finding, and in several instances donating, outstanding Iranian miniatures to the Fogg. One is the delightful Tahmina Comus to Rustem's Chamber (no. 8), the collector's finest early Timurid miniature. By 1940, Edward Forbes realized that the Fogg miniatures should be published. Eric was assigned the task; his Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art, one of the most elegantly written and insightful studies of the subject, was published by the Harvard University Press in 1942.

In the meantime, Eric, who had served as assistant to Ananda Coomaraswamy in the Museum of Fine Arts, was appointed Keeper of Islamic Art at the Fogg, an honorary post he held with devotion and distinction until his death in 1971. During his years as keeper, the collection expanded gloriously, and many small but influential exhibitions were held. Although Eric never taught on a formal basis at Harvard, collectors such as Philip Hofer, who has recently presented a major Uzbek manuscript to the Fogg, welcomed his appreciative and stimulating comments upon their discoveries. Movingly, John Doliver MacDowell, who was also encouraged by Eric, gave the Fogg a lively and beautiful 16th-century Ottoman drawing in his memory.

During Eric's curatorship, the Fogg purchased many excellent miniatures and drawings and received the splendid Rockefeller bequest, which confirmed the Fogg's international importance in the Iranian and Arab field. John Goeltz's munificent gifts further raised the Museum's position, particularly in the Safavid area, for he presented en bloc a large portion of one of the richest troves of Safavid painting ever assembled, the collection of the Persian jeweller and designer, Louis J. Carter. This included such masterpieces as the manuscript of Ali's Gyz a Chegaran (no. 15), Mirza Ali's Seated Princess (no. 19), and two stunning miniatures separated from the famed Khamsa of Nizami, dating from 1529 to 1543, now in the British Library, Iskandar Encampment (no. 17) and Night-time in a Palace (no. 18). Although only the first is inscribed with the artist's name, both can be attributed to one of the most inventive designers and meticulous craftsmen of the Safavid school, Mir Sayyid 'Ali, who was also one of the founders of the Moghul school in India. These pictures, therefore, are not only among the marvels of the Fogg's Iranian collection, but are also crucial in relation to the Fogg's Moghul paintings, which John Goeltz has also enriched.

This handbook, except for my brief introduction, was written by Marianne S. Simpson, who selected the material, catalogued it, and contributed the informative essays defining each period. Dr. Simpson's Handbook is a valuable successor to Eric Schneider's long-out-of-print, and by now extremely incomplete, Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art, and we are exceedingly pleased with her systematic, detailed, and lively approach. Inevitably, a few small differences of opinion which emerge in the Introduction could not be avoided. The world (and our department) would be far less enjoyable without such variances.

Stuart Cary Welch
Arab Painting

During the late 12th and early 13th centuries, the Islamic world of the Levant and Iraq experienced an unprecedented flourishing of representational manuscript painting. Artists had been practicing the art of book-making, including calligraphy and illumination, since at least the eighth century. The addition to books of illustrations containing human figures, animals, and natural scenes was not an isolated development, however; for it coincided with a great proliferation of images in other media, particularly in ceramics and metalwork. This phenomenon seems to have resulted from the urbanization of medieval Muslim society, the growth of a prosperous and literate middle class, and the extension of artistic patronage from princely courts to the urban bourgeoisie.

The basic sources for the imagery and style current in this formative period of Arab book painting can be traced to Sassanian Iran and to the Mediterranean Christian world, especially the Byzantine Empire, two vastly rich civilizations which the Muslims encountered during their swift conquest of the Near East in the seventh century. Yet neither the content nor the form of these early Islamic miniatures derived exclusively from older artistic traditions. Combined with the iconographic themes and formal modes inherited from Byzantine and Sassanian art was a new interest in depicting the settings, personages, and activities of the contemporary Islamic world. This concern affected even the Arab illustrations to texts whose pictorial cycles had been well-established in late classical art, and injected a refreshing realism into the art of manuscript illustration. By incorporating elements often not dictated by the text, like anecdotal vignettes, picturesque details, and lively gestures into his painting repertoire, the medieval Arab illustrator created a dynamic art form which reflected the vitality and vigor of the times.

The known group of 12th- and 13th-century illustrated manuscripts includes copies of a variety of literary and technical texts. To the category of belles lettres belong the Kitab al-Aghani, or Book of Songs, a compilation of Arabic poetry written many centuries earlier; an amusing group of animal fabies, the Kitab wa Dimma, actually intended as a guide to proper princiely behavior; and an anthology of anecdotal adventures entitled the Maqamat by al-Hariri, who is celebrated for his brilliant command of the Arabic language.

Illustrated copies of scientific works have survived which deal with subjects as diverse as astronomy, medicine, anatomy, pharmacology, the care of animals, and the construction of automatic devices. The most frequently illustrated scientific text was the Khawanis al-Asyhar, a version of De Materna Medica, by the 1st century Greek physician, Pedanious Dioscorides. It was translated into Arabic by Hunayn ibn Ishaq (808–873) and was one of many similar Greek and Latin works translated, often through intermediate copies in Syriac, around this time. The Arabic versions were ultimately retranslated for the monastic libraries of medieval Europe, where copies of the originals no longer existed.

De Materna Medica consists of detailed descriptions of several hundred medicinal plants, grouped into five main categories. Each entry lists the plant’s various names, describes its common habitats and the maladies it cures, and prescribes methods for its preparation. In many instances, Dioscorides included small drawings of the plants; these were repeated in later Byzantine copies. As has been frequently acknowledged, this valuable manual was the foundation of medieval Islamic pharmacology.

The most original illustrated volume of the Arabic De Materna Medica was copied, and probably also painted, by the scribe Abdullah ibn al-Fadil in Rajab 621 / June 1224. The manuscript is housed today in the Suleymaniye Library in Istanbul (Aya Sofya, no. 3707), except for some thirty illustrated pages (nos. 1, 2, and 44) which made their way into Western collections. Although the colophon does not give the place of origin, the manuscript has been convincingly traced to Baghdad.

The metropolis of Baghdad on the banks of the Tigris in southern Mesopotamia (Iraq) fostered one of the most important schools of medieval Arab painting during the reigns of the last four Abbasid caliphs (1190–1258). The illustrations for scientific manuscripts executed in Baghdad, like those for the 1224 De Materna Medica, were strongly influenced by their classical prototypes. Nevertheless, it is in those works that the concise diagrams typical of Hellenistic and Byzantine models begin to change into narrative images with landscapes settings, ancillary figures, and genre details. The tendency of Arab artists to expand their compositions beyond the dictates of the text (even inserting images for the sake of images) culminated in the vivid series of pictures in two famous copies of al-Hariri’s Maqamat of the third and fourth decades of the 13th century (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. arab. 5847, and Leningrad, Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences, ms. S 23).

After the fall of the Abbasid dynasty to the Mongols in 1258, active patronage of Arab art and literature transferred to the Bahri Mamluks, rulers of Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1370. The court painters continued to illustrate many of the same scientific and literary texts popular in Baghdad and other Mesopotamian artistic centers like Mosul and added texts on military subjects. The Fogg’s collection of Arab miniatures includes three pages from a Mamluk copy of a famous technical treatise, the Kitab al-manâthîr al-hayâl al-mansûhîya, or Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices. Commonly called the Automata, this text was written in the early 13th century by Badi’ al-Zaman ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari, an imaginative engineer who served the Arba’udj court at Diyarbakir (now in Turkey). Like Dioscorides‘ De Materna Medica, the Automata is in part a “how-to” manual, but it deals with the construction of fifty mechanical contrivances like hydraulic clocks, wine-serving vessels, water-lifting devices, and basins for handwashing and blood-letting. To clarify the construction and function of his automated devices—many of which are more like sophisticated toys than machines—al-Jazari supplemented his text with many explanatory diagrams and illustrations.

The Fogg’s Automata folios (nos. 3, 45, and 46) come from a manuscript which, like the 1224 Dioscorides volume, belongs to the Suleymaniye Library (Aya Sofya no. 3906). The book was copied by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Jamiri for the treasury of the Amir Nasir al-Din Muhammad, a high court official. The scribe, who, once again, was very likely the illustrator, completed his task in Safar 755 / February 1354. He is believed to have worked in Cairo.

Although technically proficient, the Mamluk artists did not match the originality of their predecessors in Mesopotamia, and their painting style can be best be described as a calcified version of the earlier tradition, with some Central Asian and Far Eastern elements. Mamluk illustrations, even in narrative texts, tend to be static; their simplified settings are populated with immobile figures. These features, plus the strong primary colors and bright gold, the stylized drapery patterns, and the overall geometric and arabesque designs, suggest that the Mamluks particularly admired decorative and monumental effects.

Lacking any innovative infusion, Arab painting declined to the level of folk painting in the post-Mamluk period; but the tradition of text illustration continued up to the modern era, as is evidenced by a folio in the Fogg from a 17th-century copy of a standard cosmological text (no. 47).
The fourth book of the De Materia Medica classifies and describes the medicinal properties of almost two hundred different kinds of herbs and roots, beginning with the plant Kestron (Betonica alpinae). Depending on the method of preparation, the thin roots and jagged leaves of the Kestron help alleviate convulsions, rickets, snakebites, epilepsy, and indigestion, among other afflictions.

Dioscorides’ text describes the general form of the Kestron, but not its colors. In this illustration from the 1224 manuscript, the leaves and stalk are yellowish green with dark green veins and edges; and the roots and seed pods at the top of the stalk are purple, highlighted with white.

The flanking personages also go unmentioned in the text, but they appear in a number of other pictures in this book and add a lively, narrative element to the scientific text. The dark-skinned figure on the right probably represents a physician. He wears a deep violet, tapering robe which flares out at the ankles, and a blue and yellow hooded cloak. Motioning towards the plant with his left hand, the doctor points at his mouth with his right index finger, now partially faked away. This gesture, a common device in early Islamic painting, signifies contemplation, and here refers to the doctor’s thoughts on the beneficial properties of the Kestron.

The physician’s companion has been identified as a prince or a warrior because of his high-peaked fur hat and long spear. These attributes do distinguish him from the turbaned attendants with short sticks or swords in other 1224 Dioscorides illustrations, but, whatever his exact status, he wears the same type of short tunic and tall boots. His orange-red robe is woven with a rinceaux pattern of a lighter orange tone and lined on the inside with blue and green. The upper sleeves are decorated with gold braz bands, similar to those on the garments worn by the doctor.

Gold halos surround the heads of both figures. Although they are probably related to the halos in contemporary Christian manuscripts, the halos do not imply sanctity. They are traditionally used in Islamic art of all media to set off the head from the background or to single out persons of high rank like the doctors and attendants in this manuscript.

Provenance: F. R. Martin, Duveen (?). Bibliography: Sarre and Martin, 1912, i, pl. 4; Martin, 1912, ii, pl. 6a; Köhnel, 1922, pl. 6; Arnold, 1924, pl. 14; Lory, 1933, p. 7, fig. 10, p. 12; Buchholz, 1942, p. 21, fig. 4; Meyerhof, 1942, p. 2972; Meyerhof, 1944, p. 1960; Hijoian, 1949, pl. XVII; Grube, 1955, p. 173, no. 2; Schroeder, 1961, p. 72, fig. 3. Bequest — Estate of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960.193
The simplicity and balance of this picture are typical of the many botanical illustrations in the 1224 Dioscorides manuscript which continues the diagrammatic tradition of Byzantine scientific illustration. The plants are painted between the lines of text directly on the plain paper without background or frame. Leaves and blossoms grow stiffly and symmetrically from their stalks and show their broadest surface, an arrangement which reads more like an ornamental pattern than an image of nature. The two small plants, placed on each side of the larger one, increase the symmetrical effect, as do the birds on the leaves of the central plant. Although this image lacks human figures like those who enliven the Fogg's other Dioscorides illustration (no. 1), the dancing birds add a touch of charm and spirit.

Like the composition, the pigments used to color these plants seem to have been chosen for clarity, not out of a desire to reproduce the variations and gradations of nature. Here the leaves and stalks are rendered in a uniform green, the outlines and large veins in a darker green, and the secondary veins in yellow. The fuzzy blossoms and long roots of the central plant are red. The bulbous roots of the flanking plants are painted with alternating bands of purple.

The passage that these plants accompany (Book IV, chap. 104) concerns three varieties of Verbascum or Phlomis. Although it is difficult to make an exact correlation between the text and the images, the central plant probably represents the wild type of Verbascum, described by Dioscorides as "bearing high rods and treelike," with leaves similar to those of the sage. The two flanking plants can be identified as the white and black mullein (Verbascum plicatum and Verbascum amatum). Mixed with wine, water or honey, Verbascum roots help relieve coughs, toothaches, eye inflammations and ulcers.

The verso side of this page bears a representation of the multibranched Aethiops (Book IV, chap. 105).

Many of the mechanical devices in the Automata were specifically designed by the engineer al-Jazari for the amusement of Nasir al-Din Muhammad, the Ayyubid ruler to whom he dedicated his treatise. In Chapter 10 of Category 2, al-Jazari describes a mechanical slave girl who automatically emerges from a cupboard at regular intervals during the king’s drinking sessions.

This illustration from the 1354 copy of al-Jazari’s text explains the design and operation of the mechanism. To start the process, wine is poured into a domed reservoir, made of copper and lined with tin, at the top of the cupboard. From this holding tank, the liquid drips into a tipping bucket and then down a pipe into a wine cup in the automaton’s right hand. As the glass fills, its increased weight lifts a rod securing the slave to a bar on the back wall. As the cupbearer rolls on casters down the pitched floor, she forces the cupboard door open with her left hand, which holds a towel. When she reaches the king, he removes the cup and quaffs its contents. Then, if he wishes, he can wipe his mouth with the towel. To reset the automaton, the king replaces the cup, gently pushes his servant back into the cupboard and rehooks the axle to its bar. The process repeats every seven or eight minutes until, as al-Jazari says, the company breaks up, presumably leaving behind a rather inebriated host.

Two earlier illustrations of this same passage are known, one in an Automata manuscript copied from the author’s own autograph in 1208 and another in a Mamluk manuscript dated 1315, probably executed in Syria. Although the Pogg’s version shows the technical workings of the automaton as clearly as its prototypes, the 1354 slave girl has lost some of her former grace and verisimilitude. Both hands are inaccurately drawn; the right one in particular seems incapable of holding the cup. And instead of leaning forward in anticipation of her impending departure, this cupbearer seems to resist on her back foot, causing the front roller to lift off the floor.

As Eric Schneiders has pointed out (Schneiders, 1942, p. 23), these discrepancies suggest that the artist was not artistically competent. But other differences between the 1354 illustration and the earlier ones reflect stylistic changes which occurred in later Mamluk painting. Unlike many of the automata in this manuscript, the slave’s dark brown robe has an overall pattern of large scrolls which flattens her body into a two-dimensional form; the face and hands are painted in a solid flesh tone without any shading or internal contours. Despite the dryness and schematization typical of late 14th-century Mamluk painting, the image complements the narrative here, reminding us that the female cupbearer is, in reality, a robot.

Although the painting arts were certainly practiced in Iran during the 12th and 13th centuries (contemporary with the schools of Arab painting in Syria and Mesopotamia), only fragmentary and isolated examples of medieval Persian painting survive today. Thus the history of Persian book-painting essentially starts in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, when the Mongol dynasty of the Il-Khans (1256–1330) ruled Iran. The significance of Il-Khanid period painting was already recognized in the 16th century by the court artist and biographer Dust-Muhammad. He wrote in his Account of Past and Present Painters that the 14th-century master Ahmad Musa had "unveiled the face of painting and invented the kind of painting that is current at the present time." (Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, 1933, p. 184). Thus, the artistic achievements of the Mongol dynasty seem to have marked the beginning traditions of painting continued by Dust-Muhammad and his colleagues.

Several Mongol rulers, notably Ghazan, Uljaytu, and Abu-Sa'id (successive reigns from 1295 to 1336), figured prominently as sponsors of the burgeoning Iranian book arts and of other cultural activities. Another influential patron was Rashid al-Din, an Iranian statesman and scholar who served the Il-Khans for many years as vizier, or prime minister. Among the oldest dated Iranian manuscripts extant are two volumes of Rashid al-Din's massive historical encyclopedia, the Jami' al-Tawarikh [Compendium of histories], richly illustrated in the painting atelier the vizier had established outside the Il-Khanid capital of Tabriz. Under this courtly patronage the art of painting in Mongol Iran was expanded and enriched in at least two significant areas: first, in the range of illustrated texts, and second, in the styles or modes of painting.

A third of the illustrated manuscripts of this period consists of scientific treatises and fables, like the Manafi' al-Hayawan (nos. 48 and 49) and the Kalila va Dimna, which had a previous tradition of illustration in the Near East. But most illustrated manuscripts are copies of historical and epic texts expressly written for or deliberately revived by the Mongols. Among these, the most frequently copied and illustrated was the great Persian poem, the Shahnama, or Book-of-Kings. Compiled around the year 1010 by the poet Firdawsi and long valued as the Iranian national epic, the Shahnama recounts the stioves of all the kings and heroes of Iran, from the rise of the legendary Persian dynasty to the fall of the historical Sassanian dynasty. The continuing impact of the Shahnama derives in large measure from the many epic themes which the poet developed throughout his 60,000-verse narrative. The key themes—which include the struggle between good and evil, the preservation of Iran's glory through its legitimate monarchy, and the inevitability of man's fate—are all based on aristocratic ideals of Sassanian and medieval Islamic origin. Together, these themes unify the individual heroic cycles of this literary classic and constitute the poem's overall ideology.

A mixture of fact and fantasy, the heroic adventures narrated by Firdawsi lend themselves well to pictorial representation. Nine illustrated volumes of the epic dated in or generally attributed to the Il-Khanid period have survived today, a remarkable figure considering that the total number of manuscripts of Mongol provenance is only about thirty. By the 12th and 13th centuries, heroic and epic images similar to certain Shahnama tales already decorated many ceramic and metal objects. However, these pre-Mongol representations, which vary a good deal iconographically, were not necessarily inspired by Firdawsi's written version of the Shahnama (Simpson, 1979, chap. 3). Instead, the earlier images seem to have derived from oral accounts of the same stories which Firdawsi set down in verse. Thus these Shahnama-like illustrations probably developed independently of any written text. The nine Il-Khanid Shahnamas take on added value as the earliest known copies of the epic that became the most popular vehicle for illustration in Persian painting.
Mihras, the Envoy of Caesar, Offers Nushirvan the Treasure of Rum

Miniature from the Second Small Shahnameh
Baghdad, ca. 1300. Opaque watercolor. 16.5 x 12.7 cm (written surface) 5 x 12.1 cm (design area).

One of the most traditional images in both Arab and Iranian art is the enthronement of a royal personage. Here the great Sassanian monarch Nushirvan sits on a high-backed throne and receives three ambassadors sent by the Byzantine emperor. The envoys, one young, one middle-aged, and one elderly, have brought precious offerings for the Iranian ruler, which lie wrapped in packets at the envoys' feet. Three turbanned youths, standing behind and to the right of the envoys, accompany the visitors. The other figures form part of Nushirvan's retinue: a white-bearded courtier seated opposite the envoys and four armed bodyguards.

The basic symmetry of the composition, which places the king exactly in the center, is modified by the staggered arrangement of the flanking personages. Nushirvan himself breaks the formal hierarchy by turning sideways toward the ambassadors. Mihras, the senior envoy, gesticulates to emphasize a point, while his dark-bearded companion presses his raised left foot against the platform as if preparing to lean forward and join in the conversation. Other enlivening details include the bows and arrows held by the two soldiers at the left and the silver vessels and fruit stand, now blackened from oxidation, that fill the center foreground.

Although little information is presently available on the clothing of Iranian monarchs and their courts, Nushirvan, his courtiers, and his attendants are probably not dressed in the style of their own Sassanian era, but in the styles prevalent during the Mongol period when the miniature was painted. The long "coat-robcs," which cross the torso from the left shoulder and fasten on the right side, and the tall boots with white seams worn by the Iranian court appear throughout Il-Khanid painting. Those robes are often decorated, as here, with elaborate chest squares and shoulder patches, found in Chinese paintings of even earlier date which represent Tartar -- or Mongol -- horsemen. The bodyguards' feathered caps are more unusual, but they also figure in several other 13th-13th-century Persian manuscripts. Their hairloops and double-bangs correspond to descriptions by the famous Italian traveler, Giovanni di Polo-Carpini, of 13th-century Mongol hairstyles.

The careful attention to detail which typifies this miniature, and all other miniatures from the Second Small Shahnameh, is particularly apparent in the rendering of the textiles of many of the Iranians' robes. The intricately painted patterns represent in minute detail the densely woven or brocaded floral designs. Gold paint emphasizes the delicacy of all these patterns and also colors the king's crown, the throne frame, and the pilas of fruit. The background of the scene was also solidly painted in gold so that the entire surface of the illustration would flash brightly when the page was turned.

The Fogg acquired this folio with another, unillustrated page (1960.06a) from a later section of the same manuscript. The original borders of both sheets had been cut off and replaced by modern paper mounts.

Iskandar’s Iron Cavalry Battles the Fur of Hind

Miniature from the Demotte Shahnama
Tabriz, ca. 1320–1340. Opaque watercolor. 40.6 x 29.5 cm (written surface) 27.5 x 29.5 cm (design area).

In addition to stories of traditional Iranian kings and heroes, the Shahnama contains a lengthy cycle based on the life of Alexander the Great, known in Iran as Iskandar. According to Ferdowsi, author of the Shahnama, Iskandar was the son of the Persian ruler Darius (Darius II), who had married the daughter of the Greek king Philip of Macedon. The poet explains the invasion of Iran, which the historical Alexander undertook in 330 B.C., as necessary to establish this “Persian prince’s” right to the crown of Iran. After ascending the Iranian throne, Iskandar set off on a series of fabulous adventures, including a trip to the end of the world where a talking tree foretold his early death.

This painting from the celebrated Demotte Shahnama depicts Iskandar in combat with an Indian king called the Fur of Hind. To augment the strength of his army, Iskandar commissioned a unique corps of horsemen and horsemen constructed entirely out of metal and filled with inflammable naptha. After igniting this “Iron Cavalry,” Iskandar’s Iranian troops rolled their mechanical counterparts, with lances fixed, down the hillside. The Indian army, terrified by such fearsome opponents, turned tail and fled from the battlefield. According to the text, Iskandar himself directed this ingenious military operation; perhaps he is the rider in the upper right of the picture looking back over his shoulder as if checking on the position of the next detachment of warriors.

The artist of this remarkable picture cannot be securely identified, although Eric Schroeder has written persuasively in favor of Shams Al-Din, pupil of the master Ahmad Musa, who was “father” of the traditional style of Persian painting according to Dust-Muhammad (Schroeder, 1942, p. 47; Schroeder, 1956, p. 56). Certainly the bold and dramatic composition reveals the hand of an imaginative artist. The sharp slope of the hillside provides the perfect setting for the inexorable descent of the iron cavalry. The fixed formation and stiff poses of the mechanical troops accentuate the vigor and variety of the real cavalry which galloped forward in staggered rows. The artist shows only the front halves of the living troops and thus heightens their eager rush onto the field. He has used the same technique in reverse, so to speak, to depict the Indian’s frantic escape, the thrusting hindlegs and flying tail of the white horse behind the hill epitomize their plight. The area of open ground behind the Indian soldiers and the horrified expressions on their dark faces further suggest that they intend to put as much distance as possible between themselves and their pursuers.

The drama of the event receives its most brilliant expression in the golden flames, tipped with red, which spew from the nostrils of the iron horses and the mouths of the iron riders and swirl around the tips of their iron lances. The white clouds above echo the golden flames so that both the antifaces of man and the antifices of nature seem united in the frenzy of battle.

Bahram Gur Fights the Karg
Verso

6

Miniature from the Demotte Shahnama
Tabriz, ca. 1330–40. Opaque watercolor. 41.5 x 30 cm (sheet size) 21.1 x 29.9 cm (design area).

Of all the surviving paintings from the great Mongol Shahnama, perhaps none is a more powerful evocation of heroic triumph than this image of the Sassanian king, Bahram Gur, killing a single-homed wolf, or karg. Probably painted by the same artist responsible for Iskandar’s Iron Cavalry (no. 5), the scene seems a literal rendition of the story. Yet the composition involves a complex arrangement of man, beast, and landscape. It is further distinguished by a high degree of psychological expression, a careful attention to natural detail, and a masterful treatment of curving forms.

The Shahnama story of Bahram Gur’s struggle with the ferocious karg relates that the king:

... grasped his royal bow and, having drawn
Some puffed arrows from his quiver, poured
His shafts like hail till by that token anguish
O’ercame the wolf. On seeing the beast’s end nigh,
Bahram, exclaiming bow for a sword, smote off
Its head, exclaiming: “In the name of God,
Who hath not taste nor peer and gave to me
Such Grace and might! By His command the sun
Is bright in heaven.” (Warner and Warner, 1965–75, VII: 12)

In this representation the artist has visualized an immediate aftermath to the conflict which Firdawsi does not describe. Fully armed with bow, arrows, a sword, and a heavy mace, the crowned king pauses to gaze off into the forest as if reflecting on the difficult challenge he has just met. Apparently less confident than his master, Bahram Gur’s horse paws tentatively at the karg’s belly to make sure that the beast is really dead. His caution is well justified, for the monster does aim one last clawed blow at the victor. The karg’s severed head serves as a gory symbol of Bahram Gur’s prowess. The karg’s head roots in the center foreground and thus also functions as a compositional device leading the eye into the complex setting. The multiple planes of the forested landscape seem to recede towards the background, producing an illusion of depth and a naturalistic environment rare in Persian painting. Each plane is marked by a gnarled tree with black contours, rough bark, knotholes and hollows rendered in a way often compared to the calligraphic style of Chinese landscapes. These trees are active parts of the design; they frame the protagonists and set up a series of balanced curves which add structure to the composition. The bend of Bahram Gur’s torso, for instance, is echoed by the overhanging limb of the tree to his right. The arch of the horse’s neck similarly complements the angle of the karg’s horn, and the animals’ raised forelegs lock in an angular circle. The rhythms created by these curved forms add energy to the composition and contribute to its vitality. At the same time they act as a foil for Bahram Gur’s serene and noble demeanor and emphasize his triumph.

Provenance: Demotte. Bibliography: Dimand, 1933, fig. 10; Lorey, 1935, p. 35; Brian, 1936, no. 59, fig. 26; Stichtikhe, 1958, pp. 87, 88 (group III), fig. 3; Schroeder, 1961, fig. 1; Grube, 1966, p. 61, fig. 27; Travis, 1968, fig. 8. Bequest — Estate of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960, 190.
A well-known tale in the Shahnama relates the confrontation between two Iranian heroes: the 600-year-old warrior Rustam and the valorous crown prince Isfandiyar. Despite Rustam’s extraordinary record as defender of Iran’s legitimate kings, Shah Gushtasp became convinced that the fabulously aged champion had not rendered sufficient homage to him and sent his son Isfandiyar to bring him back to court. Insulted by the pugnacious attitude of the young prince, who had once been his friend, Rustam refused the Shah’s demands and challenged Isfandiyar to fight. Severely wounded in the first battle, Rustam was healed by the Simurgh, a mythical, phoenix-like bird which protects Iranian nobility. Speaking in conciliatory tones, Rustam tried to dissuade Isfandiyar from further dishonor and bloodshed, but the prince retorted that only war or feuds could settle the conflict. Left with no recourse, Rustam fitted his bow with a double-headed arrow the Simurgh had given him and shot Isfandiyar in the eye.

The tragic story of Rustam and Isfandiyar, with its underlying theme that fate alone determines man’s destiny, has attracted many Iranian artists. In this early version, Rustam, dressed in his customary tiger-skin robes and mounted on his dappled steed, Raksh, has just shot the fatal arrow.

The impact of the direct hit causes Isfandiyar to pitch forward and drop his bow. With blood pouring from both eyes, he clutches his horse’s mane in a desperate attempt to hang on to life.

Executed by a different hand from the other two Demotte illustrations discussed here (nos. 5 and 6), this painting subtly evokes the pathos of the episode and accurately depicts the poetic narrative. A low, twisted bush separates the two warriors; while blossoms continue to flower on its right bough while those on the left, broken limb have already withered, symbolizing the respective fates of the two rivals. The strict symmetry of the picture, its central axis marked by a leafy tree in the background, has a long tradition in Islamic painting (See nos. 1 and 2) and appears rather archaic compared with other more complex Demotte paintings. Yet the formal balance serves to heighten the physical prominence and thus the symbolic significance of the contorted bush.

In the upper left corner of the scene, four gazelles lift their heads towards the stormy sky and seem to sense the impending crisis. Perhaps they also listen in horror to Isfandiyar’s death cry, “This wrong hath come upon me from Gushtasp.”

The great Mongol dynasty of the Il-Khansids, during which the art of Persian painting had developed such rich and varied forms, finally collapsed in 1353 following a period of internal strife and bitter feuds among several rival leaders. In its place emerged a number of local dynasties which, in the second half of the 14th century, divided up the lands of the former Il-Khanid empire and plunged Iran into a state of political chaos. Meanwhile, a strong family of Turkish-speaking warlords, claiming descent from Genghis Khan, was consolidating its forces beyond the Oxus River. Led by the infamous conqueror, Timur, known in the West as Tamerlane (Timur the Lame), this new power swept across the steppes of Transoxiana and Khwarazm and into the eastern Iranian province of Khurasan during the early 1370s and 1380s. Within two decades, Timur had gained control of all of Iran and Iraq, as well as much of Central Asia and India. He was enroute to new conquests in China when he died in 1405 at the age of 71. His Timurid dynasty ruled in Iran and Transoxiana until 1506.

This tumultuous period in Iranian history coincided with a tremendously creative period in the visual arts, particularly in miniature painting. According to Dust-Muhammad’s Account of Past and Present Painters, it was the Jalayirids (1386–1432), founding one of the dominant Mongol successor-states, who laid the groundwork for the Il-Khanid’s active patronage of the book arts. Although the Jalayirids’ cultural achievements were fragmented by repeated Timurid invasions, several discriminating art patrons, notably S细菌 Uways and his son Sultan Ahmad, fostered a painting style which was set to be the standard for Iranian painting in the 15th century and for all traditional Iranian manuscript illumination.

The Jalayirid style, as exemplified by the beautiful illustrations of Junayd in the 1396 Divan of Khwaju Kimani (British Library, Add. 18, 113), contrasts strikingly with the “grand” tradition of Il-Khanid painting. Instead of monumentality and drama, serenity and romance fill compositions which expand well beyond the borders of the text areas. The high-horizon landscape introduced in this period serves as a perfect foil for slender, idealized human figures (considerably reduced in scale compared with the heroic Il-Khanid images), for fanciful gardens painted with an incredible variety of flowers and blossoming trees, and for elaborately architectural settings. Other characteristics of the Jalayirid style include bright, pure colors, intricate details, and, above all, subtle brushwork and delicate line. The Jalayirid pictures are not merely representations of the real world, but symbolic or conceptual structures with constituent parts — landscapes, buildings, and figures — controlled in balanced and harmonious designs.

The artistic changes that occurred in the late 14th and 15th century can also be measured by the types of literary texts selected for illustration. Although histories and epics remained popular, painters and patrons increasingly favored more lyrical works, especially the Khamsa or Quintet of Nizami, whose melodic poetry corresponds in mood to the new stylistic painting style. During the course of his conquests of Iran and Iraq, Timur carried off many Jalayirid artists to Samangan and Bukhara, his Central Asian capitals. Unfortunately, no illustrated books have survived which can definitely be attributed to Timur’s patronage, but the continuation of the classical Jalayirid mode can be clearly traced in works sponsored by Timurid descendants.

The first of these great connoisseurs was Timur’s grandson, Iskandar Sultan, who governed Shiraz from 1409 to 1415 and assembled at his court a number of painters formerly employed by the Jalayirid ruler, Sultan Ahmad. The Fogg’s collection contains an exquisite miniature, possibly commissioned by Iskandar, which reveals the charm and grace typical of early Timurid court painting (no. 8). After his deposition in 1415, Iskandar’s pre-eminence as a patron of the art of the book devolved upon his cousin, Prince Baysunghur Mitra (no. 9), son of the ruling Shahrukh. A keen bibliophile, Baysunghur established at the Timurid capital of Herat a library-run painting studio supervised by the renowned calligrapher Ja’far and staffed by many artists, some recruited from the ateliers of the prince’s deceased cousin. Most, obviously, had been trained in the classical canon of the Jalayirid and Iskandar Sultan schools. Under Baysunghur’s patronage, Iranian miniature illustration reached a peak of technical and aesthetic perfection seldom equaled in later periods.

It was in Herat during the 1420s and 1430s that the fantasy world of Persian miniatures, filled with landscape and figural forms of the utmost delicacy, achieved its most refined expression. Compared with the idyllic style nurtured by Prince Baysunghur, the work commissioned by his father Shahrukh (ruled 1405–1447) appears less inspired and even rather old-fashioned. The Shah’s taste in literature ran to historical, rather than poetic, texts; his taste in painting is typified by the illustrations in a dispersed copy of the Majm‘ al-Tawarih (Collection of histories) of Hafiz-i Abru, believed to date from around 1425 and attributed to Herat. Possibly harking back to such early Il-Khanid models as the Jam‘ al-Tawarih, these compositions are simpler in conception and broader in execution than any paintings associated with the Baysunghur school. The figures, too, are larger and bolder (See nos. 59-67). Thus, in the same city of Herat, we encounter two seemingly incongruous styles. This situation is actually typical of the history of 15th-century Islamic painting.

Another energetic art patron of the Timurid line was Ibrahim Sultan, appointed in 1414 by his father Shahrukh to serve as governor of Farz province from the capital city of Shiraz, a post he held until 1435. By this time, the most innovative Shirazi artists had already flocked to his brother Baysunghur’s academy in Herat. The remaining group, which formed the nucleus of Ibrahim’s atelier, was certainly familiar with the so-called “high” style developed under the previous Shiraz governor, Iskandar Sultan. They were perhaps even more thoroughly steeped in the rudimentary classical style initiated under the Muzaffarid dynasty which had controlled Shiraz between 1353 and 1393. This fusion resulted in a simplified but frequently highly original art. The scattered miniatures from a Zafername (Book of victory) dated 1436 and probably executed for Ibrahim’s son, Abdulrah, reveal the vigorous, colorful, and spacious effects achieved in the Shiraz painting studio of Ibrahim Sultan (See no. 10).

Although the entire 15th century is generally known as the Timurid period, the power of the dynasty began to decline steadily following the death of Shahrukh in 1447. The most serious threat to its security came from two rival Turkmen federations, the Qara-Qoyunlu, or Black Sheep Turkmen, in Azerbaijan and Iraq, and the Az-Qoyunlu, or White Sheep Turkmen, in southeastern Anatolia. By the 1460s and 1470s, these clans occupied significant portions of Timur’s empire including cities like Baghdad, Shiraz, and Herat, where the art of the book had flourished under Timurid patronage. Like the Timurid princes, many Turkman leaders were avid painting enthusiasts. Early Turkman pictures reveal the impact of both the “low” and “high” styles of 15th-century painting, but eventually a new style developed with certain distinctive features like equal and heavy figures, landscapes filled either with lush vegetation or with stylized plants against a pale ground, and intense colors. The existence of an impressive number of miniatures with these same characteristics, which B. W. Robinson has called the “commercial Turkmen style” and has traced to Shiraz (Robinson, 1976 p. 14), suggests that Turkman manuscripts were mass-produced for an open market instead of for individual patrons in private painting studios. The style is exemplified by the illustrations in a Khvavanname manuscript, some of which are dated 861/1457 (Tehran, Museum of Decorative Arts) and signed by Farnad, an otherwise unknown artist (See no. 11).
By 1469 Herat was under the control of the last great Timurid statesman and art patron, Sultan-Husayn Bayzad. During his reign (1469–1506) the court attained its highest level of cultural achievement and attracted the most gifted poets, historians, and artists of the realm, including Kamal al-Din Bihzad. The oeuvre of this famous miniature painter has not yet been definitively established, but the illustrations in a Bustan manuscript, executed for Sultan-Husayn in 928/1520 (Cairo, National Library, Adab fns 908) and securely documented as the work of the great master, reveal his brilliant style. Like previous generations of Herat artists, Bihzad adhered faithfully to the classical principles of harmonious balance and decorative design for his compositions. However, into the traditional, and sometimes stereotyped, iconography of Persian painting, Bihzad interjected a refreshing realism, particularly noticeable in the treatment of the people who populate his scenes. Alert and full of life, these figures appear as natural, individual human beings engaged in a wide variety of daily activities. So palpable was Bihzad’s impact on his contemporaries and on later Persian artists, both in Herat, where he worked until the overthrow of the Timurid regime in 1506, and later in Tabriz, capital of the succeeding Safavid dynasty, that it is often difficult to distinguish between the master’s style and that of his admirers (See no. 13). In fact, as a result of his widespread fame, Bihzad’s signature was often affixed to paintings which he probably did not paint (See nos. 14 and 26). However, this practice of “borrowing” Bihzad’s name should not detract from the outstanding quality of Persian painting in the last decades of the Timurid dynasty – a period which may rightly be called the golden age of letters, scholarship, and art in Iran.
One of the mightiest figures in the Shahnama is the paladin Rustam. Born under the protection of the mythical Sirung, Rustam lived for almost six hundred years and served the Iranian monarchy as a fearless warrior and hunter, tracking down dragons, demons, and witches, and making sure only legitimate princes of the realm ascended to the throne. Rustam seems to have had little time for women, preferring instead the fellowship of his horses, Rafsh, and of the troops under his command.

But once, at the end of a full day's hunt, Rustam lay down to rest, leaving Rafsh to graze. As he slept, a band of Turkman brigands rode by and kidnapped Rafsh. Awakening to discover his loss, Rustam trudged in despair and fury to the nearby city of Samangan. The king welcomed him warmly and helped to dispel his gloom with wine and music. In his room that night, as Rustam rested after the reception, he heard mysterious whispers. Suddenly his door was opened by a slave holding a lighted taper. Following the slave was Tahmina, the incomparably beautiful daughter of the Samangan king. She had rejected all suitors hoping the celebrated Iranian warrior would someday appear. In passionate tones, she promised to return Rafsh and then to set the whole kingdom at Rustam's feet if he would have her. Charmed by Tahmina's beauty and intelligence, Rustam asked for her hand in marriage. After a blissful wedding night, Rustam departed for home, where, characteristically, he never bothered to speak of this event.

Many representations of this episode exist in Iranian art and the Fogg miniature surely ranks as the most beautiful. In color and draughtsmanship, setting and figures, no other Rustam and Tahmina can match it. The deep, intense blues and reds effectively convey the gloom of Rustam's richly decorated chamber. Her head slightly tilted, eyes lowered, and mouth partially hidden, moon-faced Tahmina enters from the left and pauses on the threshold: the very embodiment of maidenly modesty. The servant pulls back the red door covering with a dramatic flourish; the bands on his tunic define his generous girth so convincingly that they form an arresting part of the composition.

Schroeder provides a detailed discussion of this painting's origins (Schroeder, 1942, no. VIII). From the damaged inscription over the door, he reconstructs the name of the important patron, Jalal al-Dawla wal-Din Iskandar, Timur's grandson and governor of Shiraz from 1409 to 1415. On this evidence, Schroeder assigns the miniature to the period of Iskandar's governorship, an attribution followed in all works on 15th-century Islamic painting. However, Robert Skelton of the Victoria and Albert Museum has (in correspondence) deciphered the name of Ali al-Dawla in the crucial inscription. This Timurid prince was one of Baysunghur Mirza's sons, and heir, in 1433, to the artists and artisans of his father's famous library and atelier. Although he seems to have spent most of his life fighting his siblings, Ali al-Dawla was also known as a discerning connoisseur of the arts. Thus it is entirely possible he commissioned the manuscript to which the Fogg picture belonged.

Among the connoisseurs and patrons of the Timurid dynasty, Prince Baysungur Mirza certainly ranks as one of the most influential. Fifth son of Shahrukh and his wife Princess Gawar-Shah, Baysungur was born in 1399 and spent most of his life in Herat. Although he held the nominal title of chief judge at his father’s court and led the campaign to capture Tabriz from the Oara-Qoyuni Turksmans in 1420, the prince seems to have participated little in affairs of state. Instead, warned by the royal astrologers that he would not live past forty, Baysungur cultivated himself totally to aesthetic and sensual pleasures and gained a notorious reputation as a bon vivant; killed at thirty-six by a fall from a horse, Baysungur fulfilled the astrologers’ prediction.

All this did not prevent the prince from developing his own talents as a calligrapher, designer, and illuminator and from actively supporting the arts. His interests in literature and the production of fine books is attested to by his library and painting studio at Herat, where forty scribes and numerous artists were engaged in copying and illustrating manuscripts.

In the 15th century, artists did not normally paint portraits, as they did later in the 17th century, preferring instead to portray their subjects according to the standards of idealized beauty of the time. However, miniatures in several manuscripts executed for Baysungur feature a royal figure believed to represent the young Timurid prince. He appears in two pictures in an anthology dated 1426–27 (Settignano, Barnard Berenson Collection) and in two in a 1427 copy of Khwajiy Kimnani’s Humay wa Humayun (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, N.F. 383), as well as in the frontispieces to a Kaila wa Dinna manuscript dated 1430 (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, Revan 1022) and a Shahnama of the same year (Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library). Because the royal hunter in the Fogg’s drawing shares certain features, especially the short-clipped moustache and slightly puffy face, with these other representations, B. W. Robinson has identified the horseman as Baysungur and has attributed the work to the Herat academy, circa 1425–30 (Robinson, 1965, pl. 18).

The composition follows a tradition of royal hunting imagery from the Il-Khanid period (See no. 6), which has deep roots in Iranian art. Perhaps Baysungur saw himself in the heroic guise of a great Persian hunter-man like Bahram Gur. Certainly he seems intent on his prey, as he leaps over his horse’s neck to slash at the wolf. The horse, in contrast, rears up in terror as the wolf tries to fend off the prince’s fatal blow.

This subject occurs often in early Timurid art; but pen and ink drawings are not common in this period. This example, cropped on all sides and mounted as an album page with stencilled margins, seems to be neither the under-drawing of an unpainted miniature nor a preliminary sketch. The fine lines that delineate the texture of the wolf’s fur and the horse’s mane indicate that this is a finished drawing, and its sensitive and expressive draughtsmanship mark it as a work in the classical Iranian style.

In the spring of 1398, the great conqueror Timur and an army of 90,000 set out from Samarqand for the plains of India. The purpose of the campaign was "to exterminate robbers, tyrants, and infidels, to put an end to their disorders, and to give peace and tranquility to the people." (Sharaf al-Din: Ali Yazdi, 1723, II, p. 46). Contemporary historians refer to the operation as a jihad, or sacred war to spread the Muslim faith, but the Indian political situation at that time was another compelling incentive. Firuz Shah, sultan of India, had recently died without designating an heir; his young grandson Mahmud had ascended the throne but could not control the seditious Indian nobles. India's consequent vulnerability to outside incursions prompted Timur to attack.

After several months of fighting and pillaging, the Timurid battalions reached Delhi, seat of Sultan Mahmud's court. Despite repeated attacks by the Indians, the invaders prevailed in a single day, forcing Mahmud to flee for his life. On December 18, 1398, Timur entered Delhi in triumph; and, between December 21 and 25, he held an elaborate celebration in honor of the conquest.

One of the main sources of information on the Indian campaign is the Zafarnama, or Book of Victory, written by Sharaf al-Din: Ali of Yazdi at the behest of Ibrahim Sultan, Timur's grandson and the governor of Shiraz, who had already collected all the records of his grandfather's reign, including eyewitness accounts. The Zafarnama was completed in 1425, and the oldest extant illustrated copy of the text dates from 1436. Since Ibrahim Sultan had died the previous year, his son and successor 'Abdullah probably commissioned this volume. Its illustrations continue the simple, forceful style developed by Ibrahim's artists in Shiraz, where the manuscript was undoubtedly executed.

The Fogg's detached miniature from the 1436 Zafarnama depicts Timur's victory festivities in Delhi. Holding a small wine cup and a white napkin, the conqueror sits cross-legged on several carpets spread under a lush apple tree. On the left, a group of generals and courtiers wait attentively, as if in anticipation of the gifts Timur will bestow on them. A servant kneeling by a stream offers Timur a gold platter while, in the lower right, a bearded courtier, drizzled in bright orange, raises a large chalice in a toast. Opposite him, two musicians entertain with harp and tambourine. King and subject alike wear the "uniform" of the Mongol and Timurid periods—a close-fitting robe, fastening under the right arm, and a long-sleeved undergarment.

Of particular note is the pair of blue-and-white wine bottles on a small table precariously balanced by the stream. They reflect the close ties which Shahrukh, ruling monarch when this picture was painted, had established with China. In 1419, the shah's special embassy went to the Ming court and probably returned with many Far Eastern works of art which Iranian painters soon incorporated into scenes like this one.

Miniature from the Khvāraḵma of Mawla Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn
Turkmen, ca. 1470-77. Opaque watercolor. 39.5 x 28.6 cm (sheet size) 29.5 x 21 cm (written surface).

The Khvāraḵma belongs to a distinct group of Persian epic poems that consciously imitate the subject matter and literary style of Ferdowsi’s Shāh-nāma. Written in 1426-27 by Mawla Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn, a farmer from Khurasan said to have composed his verses in the fields, the Khvāraḵma narrates the military exploits of Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophets Muḥammad, and his companions Mālik and Abū Mihīr. Although Ibn Ḥusayn claimed he based his work on an Arab source, the stories he tells relate are completely apocryphal and involve fictitious battles against various infidels, demons, and dragons. The title comes from the name of Ali’s principle adversary Qubāb, king of Khvāraḵ. This type of folk literature, in which the champions of a Muslim faith replace the ancient Persian heroes as the main characters, has traditionally been very popular in Shi’ite Iran. The Shi’a sect of Islam recognizes Ali, the Imam, as the legitimate successor to Muḥammad, the religion’s founder.

The Fogg’s Khvāraḵma illustration comes from a manuscript now in Tehshat (Zoka, 1963). When intact the volume contained several hundred pages (of which the Fogg miniature was number 139), 155 with miniatures and a colophon, possibly spurious, with the date 854/1450. Some of its paintings are signed by an artist named Furrad and dated 861/1457.

The Fogg’s Khvāraḵma depicts Qambar, a freed slave of Ali, delivering a letter from his former master to a famous military commander named Mr. Sayyaf. Ten other men accompanied Qambar on the mission. The exact circumstances surrounding this episode are difficult to determine from the available text, but it seems Mr Sayyaf had recently challenged Ali to war. The letter that Qambar has brought apparently contains Ali’s proud reply that he will defeat Sayyaf and throw him out of his castle. In the verses below the illustration, Qambar echoes Ali’s written message by berating Sayyaf for behaving like a war-monger without provocation.

This benign picture reveals little of the sharp interchange between envoy and commander. The two principals are seated in a comfortable interior niche decorated above with floral and tree motifs and below with a bold white and blue arabesque pattern. On the left, Mr Sayyaf rests cross-legged on a small carpet. An attendant stands behind him. Qambar, represented as dark-skinned, perhaps in reference to his former status as a slave, presents a rolled scroll containing Ali’s message. Also present for this exchange is a mustached courtier, seated on a square rug in the foreground. On the right, three guards, possibly Qambar’s companions, watch from the doorway.

The curious mauve rocks in the foreground indicate that the right side of the building is an exterior facade; similar rocks appear in many other Khvāraḵma miniatures. The stocky, round-headed figure-type is also typical of the Turkmen style. Although the color and draughtsmanship are admirable, especially in the fine lines of the faces, the uneven juncture between the exterior and interior parts of the castle and the unpainted vertical strip at the extreme left suggest that the artist had to take some short cuts in order to complete the complex program of this unusual manuscript.

This miniature depicts an episode in the story of Layla and Majnun, one of five poems that make up the famous Persian literary work, the Khamsa, the classic version of which was written by Nizami of Ganja in 1191. This miniature illustrates a later version of the Khamsa, not the version by Nizami.

While still schoolchildren, Layla and Majnun fell passionately in love. The schoolboy’s devotion to the young maiden Layla was so deep that he lost his senses and was ridiculed as a majnun, or madman. In utter despair because Layla’s family had forbidden him to see his beloved, Majnun wandered aimlessly in the desert, reciting poignant love songs to the wind.

One day a Bedouin prince named Nawfal found Majnun huddled in a cave with a pair of antelope. Lamenting his Majnun’s tragic plight, Nawfal vowed to help him win his heart’s desire. The prince rallied a hundred horsemen, rode to the camp of Layla’s tribe, and threatened war if the maiden were not turned over to him. The tribe refused, and a great battle broke out which cost many lives. Throughout the combat, Majnun remained to one side, as parched by the bloodshed as if he himself had been wounded.

The Fogg picture follows a standard iconography, developed in the 15th century, for representing the battle between Nawfal’s men and Layla’s tribe. Majnun stands at the horizon, holding up a rock he would never throw. His naked torso and disheveled hair reflect his tortured state. On the plain below, the two forces battle each other with spears and swords. Already one tribesman has been brutally cut down. Even the camels lash out at each other with bared teeth.

Although the manuscript to which this page originally belonged has never been located, it can be designated as Turkman-period work on stylistic grounds. The Battle of the Clans shares certain key elements with a number of miniatures executed in the distinctive commercial Turkman style of Shiraz around the end of the 15th century. The sturdy figures with large heads and round faces, the pale ground and rocky horizon outlined with a striated pattern, the full, twisted clouds, and isolated grass tufts and plants, including one with its leaves and blossoms flattened out in a circle, are hallmarks of this painting style. The small scale of the Fogg page is another characteristic attribute; it has been conjectured that the page size of most Turkman manuscripts was kept small so illustrated books could be produced more rapidly.

Bequest — Meta and Paul J. Sachs, 1965.481