Haft i Timurname, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper with twelve miniatures, copied by Shahramir Shirazi, Persia, Shiraz, c.1570

174 leaves, 12 lines or less to the page written horizontally and diagonally in two columns of nastaliq script on gold-sprinkled paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, headings written in gold nastaliq, numerous pages with small triangular panels of illumination amongst text, margins ruled in colours and gold, opening page with illuminated headpiece and interlinear gilt, text-block loose in binding, nineteenth century Indian gilt-stamped red morocco decorated with floral sprays, doublures of black shagreen, 246 by 166mm.

The miniatures are as follows:
1. The prophet ascended on Buraq accompanied by angels.
2. Timur enthroned.
3. A marriage consummated in a palace chamber.
4. An army besieging a fortress.
5. Timur hunting with companions.
6. Two mounted warriors in combat, supporters and musicians looking on from the horizon.
7. A mounted warrior lifts another from his saddle.
8. Mounted warriors in battle with demons.
9. Pilgrims and angels at the Ka’ba.
10. Decapitated heads piled up after a battle.
11. Timur seated outside a tent, his soldiers around.
12. Timur and Bayezid (?) enthroned.

£2,500-3,500

Firdausi. Shahnama, illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with eleven miniatures, Persia, late sixteenth century

404 leaves, 23 lines to the page written in four columns of nastaliq script on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, headings in blue in ruled panels with gold arabesques, margins ruled in colours and gold, 11 double pages with border decoration of scrolling gold floral motifs, one finely illuminated headpiece with title ‘Firdawsi Namasteh’ in white thuluth, 11 contemporary miniatures in gouache and gold, most with some retouching to faces, text incomplete, several leaves at beginning later replacements, some leaves with corners or lower edges repaired, modern half calf with purple boards, text area 202 by 103mm., page 277 by 178mm.

On the final page is an invocation ‘Ya Kabikaj, Ya Kabikaj’. According to F. Stein, the king of cockroaches and is frequently inscribed on the back page of a book, under the superstition belief that, out of respect for the name of their king, the cockroaches will spare it’ (F. Stein, Persica-English Dictionary, London, 1971, p.1015). In this case it seems to have worked, for, although the manuscript is incomplete, the surviving leaves are remarkably free of worn-holes or other insect damage.

The miniatures are as follows:
1. Afrasiab in Battle.
2. Lahmaz enthroned.
3. Gushasp and Rustam riding through a landscape.
4. Rustam and Isfandiyar locked in combat.
5. Iskandar comforting the dying Dara.
7. Bahram Gur entertained at a picnic.
8. Anushirvan in battle.
10. Khusrau Parviz and Bahram Chubin in battle.
11. Bahram Chubin killing the dragon.

£1,500-2,000
Jami, Haft Avarang, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript on paper, copied by Ahmad bin Mohammd bin Yusuf alJami, Persia, probably Herat, dated A.H.899/A.D.1494, with twenty miniatures by Tabriz artists c.1530-40

256 leaves, 25 lines to the page written in neat nastaliq script on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold throughout, headings in red, blue and gold in ruled panels, folio illuminated shamsa containing titles written in white nastaliq within gold rounded borders decorated with small flowers, illuminated flowers extending above and below, opening double page of text finely illuminated in colours and gold, folio with finely illuminated panels at end of introduction, eight finely illuminated headpieces in colours and gold, twenty miniatures, eight of them full page with tender illumination in colours and gold, very fine nineteenth century gilt floral lacquer binding and doublures, 308 by 210mm.

This copy of Jami's Haft Avarang was written and illuminated in March-May 1540, only eighteen months after the death of the author. It was not, at that stage, intended to be an illustrated copy. Fifty or so years later, artists working in the Tabriz style exploited the eighteen blank pages between the end of one story and the beginning of the next and illustrated them with double-page miniatures. They also illustrated two of the colophon pages of individual sections. The manuscript thus presents an interesting synthesis of high quality illumination from the end of the Timurid period and high quality miniature painting of the Safavid style. Other than patches of slight deterioration of pigments on some of the miniatures the manuscript is in good condition, and the binding, although later, is a very fine example of lacquer painting.

The style of painting and general composition of the miniatures compares very closely with a Tabriz manuscript of Amir Khusrav Dihlavī's Divān dated 1596-7 in the Austrian National Library, Vienna (Ms.556) illustrated in Dorothea Buda, Die illuminierten Handschriften der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, Islamische Handschriften I - Tufila, Vienna, 1983, Abb.153-160) and R. Hillesbrand;

Imperial Images in Persian Painting, catalogue of an exhibition at the Scottish Arts Council, Edinburgh, 1977, no. 75, pp.3949 and a manuscript of Shīr's Bustan dated 1530, formerly in the collection of Hugon Kewkian and sold in these rooms 7th December 1970 for 194.

The miniatures and illumination are as follows:
1.7a Illuminated shamsa with titles.
1.7b-2a A prince enthroned on a palace terrace is entertained by musicians while bearers bring food.
1.7b-3a Opening double page of illumination.
1.8a Illuminated panels at beginning of Shīr's Bustan I.
1.9b-9a Mounted warriors practice archery while a game of polo is played.
1.10b Illuminated headpiece to Shīr's Bustan II.
1.11b Learned men discussing books in a palace chamber.
1.12b-11a A prince enthroned in a garden pavilion with courtiers and entertainers.
1.13b Illuminated headpiece for Shīr's Bustan III.
1.14b-7a A princess is brought before a king enthroned in his palace; a prince and princess taking refreshments in a garden pavilion.
1.15b Illuminated headpiece for Shāhānshāh va Abul.
1.16b-9a A prince and courtiers hunting and hunting.
1.17b Illuminated headpiece for Tūfīf al-Abūr.
1.18b-11a A prince with companions at his lessons.
1.19b-14a Yusuf and Zuleikha enthroned with courtiers and attendants offering refreshments.
1.19b-15a Illuminated headpiece for Yusuf va Zuleikha.
1.20b-15a Majmūn brought in chains before Layla's tent; Majmūn with the animals in the wilderness.
1.21b Illuminated headpiece for Layla va Majmūn.
1.22b-25a Scribes at work in a chamber.
1.23b-25a Iskandar riding past a pool where two men bathe (Iskandar at the water of life); Iskandar sailing near the island of the Lion's mouth whirlpool where the tazlumans bears the drum.
1.25b Illuminated headpiece to the Iskandarnameh.

£40,000-60,000
This is a remarkable manuscript containing three of the greatest works of Persian literature running simultaneously side-by-side throughout the manuscript and all ending on the same page: - an extraordinary feat of scribe skill. The sheer volume of decoration, both in the form of illumination and illustrations, is rare, and the thirty unfinished marginal illuminations between folios 209v-204 hint that more decoration was planned.

The miniatures are the work of at least two artists. One seems to be a native Quswī painter and the manuscript as a whole is in the Quswī style. The second artist may have been trained in the Shiraz style, but have moved to Quswī, where his style took on some of the characteristics of that school.

The miniatures are as follows:

f.1v/2v: Solomon enrobed with the Queen of Sheba (double page).
f.7r: Ascension of the Prophet Muhammed.
f.20v: Sultan Sanjar petitioned by the old woman.
f.62r: Hormuz, rebukes Khusrav.
f.71v: Khusrav spits Shirin bathing.
f.85v: Khusrav and Shirin meet while out hunting.
f.101r: Shapur, acting as the envoy of Khusrav, visits Shirin.
f.11r: Shirin is offered a cup of milk by Farhad who has contrived to make a conduit which brings fresh milk from the pastures to her remote castle.
Behistun.

1.14v: Khosrau, mounted, approaches the castle of Shirin, bearing a gift for her.
1.15v: A court scene in which Khosrau and Shirin listen to music. Barbad playing the harp.
1.16v: The Death of Khosrau at the hands of his son Shemshahw, who has fallen in love with Shirin.
1.18v: Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad.
1.19v: Layla and Majnun in the classroom.
1.20v: Majnun and his father at the Ka'bah.
1.22v: Majnoun, faints before Layla.
1.25r: The old woman leads Majnun to the tent of Layla.
1.26v: Layla and Majnun overcome with emotion at the sight of one another.
1.31v: Babram Gur and his Indian princess in the black pavilion.
1.32v: Babram Gur and his Chinese princess in the yellow pavilion.
1.33v: Babram Gur and his Tartar princess in the red pavilion.
1.34v: Babram Gur and his Maghribi princess in the blue pavilion.
1.35v: Babram Gur and the Greek princess in the sandalwood pavilion.
1.41v: Victory of Iskandar over the Zangis.
1.43v: Iskandar comforting the dying Dara.
1.45r: Iskandar goes to the court of Nushaba, queen of Barda, disguised as his own envoy.
1.47v: Iskandar holds an entertainment to celebrate the arrival of treasure from Kair, king of India.
1.50r: Iskandar lasowing the Russian champion.
1.54v: Placing the animals with music.
1.58r: Death of Iskandar.
1.59v: The court scene (double page).
1.63v: The six double pages with the illuminated headpieces and medallion illustrations occur as follows: ff.38v-39r; ff.38v-39r; ff.188v-189r; ff.275v-276v; ff.382v-383r; ff.528v-529r. The colophon miniatures precede the last five illuminated chapter headings.
1.67v: The style of the miniatures can be compared with the following.
1.69v: A Diary of Hafiz, dated January 1593 (the same month as the present manuscript) in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ms. Elliot 163), see B.W. Robinson, Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1958, nos.1074-1069, pls.XXIII-XLV. XXXV.
1.84v: 160,000-20,000

Firdausi. Shahnama, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript on paper with thirteen miniatures, Persia, Shiraz, dated A.H.957/A.D.1550

562 leaves, 25 lines to the page written horizontally and diagonally in four columns of nasta‘i script on cream paper, numerous pages with sworborder rules in gold, double intercalary rules in gold and green throughout, headings in white nasta‘i on illuminated panels, margins ruled in coders and gold, catchwords in black, opening double-page of fine illumination in colours and gold, three double pages with finely illuminated headpiece, interliner gilflorid decoration and gold gilflorid border decoration, four further double pages with interliner and border decoration of gilt floral motifs, final page of text surrounded by gilt-floral decoration, nineteen contemporary miniatures executed in gouache and gold including two double-page miniatures with border illumination, first and last four leaves with some margins split and some repairs to paper, contemporary gilt-stamped brown manuscripts binding decorated with panels of cloud-scrolls and floral motifs, doublures with central medallions and cornerpieces of gilt figures on green and blue grounds surrounded by gilt-stamped panels of cloud-scrolls and floral motifs, worn, repaired, 355 by 230mm.

The colophon gives the date of completion of the text as A.H.957 (A.D.1550), but the style of the miniatures is more consistent with the second half of the sixteenth century.

The miniatures and illumination arc:

1-2. Opening double-page of illumination.
3. Illuminated headpiece with beginning of introduction.
4.5. Battle scene (double page).
6. Illuminated headpiece with beginning of Shahnama text.
7. Zal seated in his palace with attendants.
8. Rustam girded-side (after killing Shahrb).
9. Tus in battle.
10. Piran and Human in battle against the Persians.
11. Illuminated headpiece with title "Laharpurna".
12. The battle between the Iranians and the Turanians.
13. Iskandar and the seven sages.
15. Tallhand fighting the army of Rum.
16. Khosrau and Babram Chubin in combat.
17-18. A prince enthroned with courtiers and attendants (double page).

£3,000-12,000
Property from the George McMaster Jones Collection

Nizami, Khamsa, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript with twenty-five miniatures, copied by Jamal al-Din Husain al-Shirazi, Persia, Shiraz, dated A.H.987/A.D.1579

354 leaves, 22 lines or less to the page written horizontally and diagonally in four columns of nasta'liq script on gold-sprinkled paper, incipient illumination throughout, several leaves with small triangular panels of illumination amongst text, headings in white nasta'liq on illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, opening double-page of illumination, six further double pages with illuminated headpieces and interlinear gilt floral illumination, 25 miniatures, final page with illuminated shahis and seal impressions, opening flyleaf with bookplate of Philip S. Collins, some splits in margins, five leaves with repairs to edges, later Indian gilt-stamped red morocco decorated with floral scrolly, brown leather doublures, in a felted cloth box, calf spine, gilt, 320 by 205mm.

Provenance:
Copied by the scribe Jamal al-Din Husain al-Shirazi, Shiraz, A.D.1579.

Suleiman Jah (seal impressions on first and last pages dated A.H.1244/A.D.1828)
Two other seal impressions dated A.H.1280/A.D.1864 with illegible names.
Philip S. Collins (bookplate dated 1928 on opening flyleaf).
George McMaster Jones (acquired 1971).

The first two miniatures on the opening double page are of the sub-imperial Mughal school of the early seventeenth century and were evidently added to the manuscript while it was in India in the mid-seventeenth century. The other miniatures are all original to the manuscript.

The miniatures are:
1-2. Princes enlivened enjoying refreshments and entertained by dancers, (Mughal, c.1610-20)
3. Sultan Sanjar and the old woman.
4. A prince enlivened on a palace terrace with courtiers.
5. The two lions tethered before Bahram’s throne.
6. Bahram Gur with the Indian princess in the black pavilion.
7. Bahram Gur with the Moorish princess in the yellow pavilion.
8. Bahram Gur with the Chinese princess in the sandalwood pavilion.

10. Bahram Gur with the Tartar princess in the green pavilion.
11. Bahram Gur with the princess of Khwaram in the blue pavilion.
12. Bahram Gur with the Greek princess in the white pavilion.
13. A prisoner being hung up by his feet.
15. A game of polo.
17. Khwaram and Shirin together in bed.
18. Layla and Majnun at school.
19. Ibo Salam falling from Layla’s bed.
20. Majnun visited in the wilderness.
21. Iskandar enthroned.
22. Iskandar comfort ing the dying Dara.
23. Iskandar and courtiers approach a pavilion in an orchard.
24-25. A prince (Iskandar?) and princess enthroned on a palace terrace with musicians and bearers bringing food. £10,000-15,000

Firdausi. Shahnama, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript on paper with fifty-four miniatures, copied by Sayyd Reza Ibn Mir Abu Talib al-Husaini, Persia, probably Isfahan, dated A.H.1045/A.D.1635

543 leaves, 32 lines to the page written in four columns of nasta'liq script on paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold throughout, headings in red nasta’liq in ruled panels, opening double page with two illuminated shahis, two illuminated headpieces, many pages with small triangular illuminated panels, amongst text, final page with colophon and four rectangular illuminated panels, 54 miniatures, some staining, later gilt-stamped brown morocco with gold-painted animals and birds among trees, with slip, 374 by 241mm.

The inscriptions within the two opening shahans state that the manuscript was completed during the time of Shah Abbas II, who reigned 1042-66. Since the manuscript is dated in the colophon 1045/1635, it is probable that the text was written at that date and the miniatures and illumination completed circa 1640-60. The gold inscriptions on the opening double page are verses from the Shahnama.

£8,000-12,000
45 Illuminated manuscript of Persian poetry in safina form, Persia, late fifteenth century

25 leaves, 7 lines or fewer to the page written diagonally and vertically in three columns in nasta‘īq script, intercolumnar rules in gold, headings in gold naskhi script written over scrolling foliate tendrils within ruled panels, two corners per page filled with coloured scrollwork foliate designs. 23 pages with margins decorated with similar scrollwork designs, opening page with heading written in white ornamental kufic on a finely illuminated panel, border drawings on opening double page and all coloured paintings of humans and animals in corners and margins are later additions, first and last pages with seal impressions. Later red morocco with central cartouche and extending flowers of paper filigree over blue and gold grounds, doublures of buff paper decorated with gold drawings of animals and foliage, 219 by 80mm.

A very similar manuscript was sold at Christie’s 17th October 1985, lot 77.

The seal impressions on the first and last pages are of the Timurid prince Shah Rukh. Although unlikely, it would not be impossible for a manuscript of this quality to have been in the library of such an illustrious patron, but it is probable that the seals have been added at the same time as the drawings and coloured miniatures in the margins.

£2,000-4,000

46 Ferdowsi, Shahnama, large illuminated Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper, Persia, sixteenth century

442 leaves, incomplete, 25 lines or less to the page written horizontally and diagonally in four columns of nasta‘īq script on paper, intercolumnar illumination throughout, headings written in white nasta‘īq on illuminated panels, margins ruled in colours and gold, several pages with small triangular panels of floral illumination amongst text, some leaves with repairs to corners, leaves lose in binding, later floral mayper binding with stamped central medallion and corners, 437 by 290mm.

This manuscript would originally have had illustrated pages, which at some stage have been removed.

£1,500-2,000

47 Wahrsh, Farhad u Shirin, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript on paper with six miniatures, Persia, Qajar, c.1820-30

52 leaves, 14 lines to the page written in two columns of nasta‘īq script on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, margins ruled in blue and gold, headings in pink or white kufic on illuminated panels, opening double page with illuminated headpiece, interlinear, intercolumnar and border decoration in colours and gold, six finely painted miniatures in typical Qajar style, original lacquer binding showing scenes from the story, 123 by 76mm.

The miniatures are:
1. Shirin leaving Khusrav’s palace.
2. Shirin meets Farhad.
3. Shirin and her maids rest in a landscape.
4. Farhad carrying Shirin and her horse across the river.
5. Shirin receiving a message from Khusrav’s page.
6. Shirin seeing her image carved on the mountain.

£3,000-4,000
Illuminated album of nasta’liq calligraphy by Abd al-Rashid, Mughal, mid-seventeenth century

9 leaves, 10 lines of fine nasta’liq calligraphy per page, interleaved gold throughout, each page with numerous square panels of illumination bordering text, one illuminated headpiece in colours and gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of silk screen paper decorated with scrolling floral motifs in gold, nineteenth-century black shagreen with central medallions and extending flaxes of gilt-stamped floral motifs, both covers with signature cartouches of lord ‘Sadig Muhammad bin Bajir’, red morocco doublure with central medallions and extending flaxes of polychrome-stamped floral designs, 240 by 149mm.

A letter from the calligrapher Abd al-Rashid, who was court librarian and scribe to the emperor Shah Jahan, is lot 35 in this sale. £3,000-5,000

Abu’l-Fazl, Akhbarname, illuminated and illustrated Persian manuscript with eight miniatures, North India, dated A.H.1500/A.D.1682

219 leaves, 22 lines to the page written in nasta’liq script on brown paper, significant phrases picked out in gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, opening double-page with illuminated headpiece, interlinear gilt and floral margin decoration in colours and gold, some splits to margins, paper rough, 321 by 213mm.

£1,000-1,500

Persian Miniatures

50

Anushirwan and Buzurjmuh resting under a tree, their mounts tethered nearby, Illustrated leaf from a dispersed ‘Small Shahnama’, Shiraz, c.1540

Leaf from a manuscript of the Shahnama of Firdausi, gouache with gold on a gold ground, seven columns of text above and below the miniature, heading at top written in gold thuluth, borders of gold-filled grey and black paper, miniature 50 by 128mm, leaf 172 by 120mm.

£1,000-1,500

This leaf originates from an important manuscript of the Shahnama, almost certainly produced at Shiraz about 1540. Known as the first ‘small Shahnama’, it is now dispersed and leaves from it are in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Freer Gallery, Washington D.C., and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Other leaves from the same manuscript have been sold in these rooms 12th October 1990, lot 156, 7th July 1975, lot 2124, 11th July 1975, lot 45, 1st December 1969, lot 36 and 6th December 1967, lots 15-14.


£6,000-8,000