THE DUFFERIN AND AYA SHAHNAMA

Firdausi. Shahnama (with preface), illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with fifty-eight contemporary miniatures, copied by the scribe Jahangir, Persia, Shiraz, dated A.H.839/ A.D.1436-7

555 leaves, 23 lines per page written in four columns of neat nasy-a script on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, section headings written in gold, double ruling within ruled panels, decorated with scrolling gold arabesques and blue dots, margins ruled in blue and gold, catchwords in black, colophons written within ruled triangular panels surrounded by fine floral decoration in colours and gold, one double page and two headpieces superbly illuminated in colours and gold, 58 finely painted miniatures in the Timurid Shiraz style, black shagreen with stamped central medallion of scrolling floral motif on green ground, rebound, 264 by 172mm.

This manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnama is one of the finest examples of early Timurid manuscript production and typifies the high quality work of the Timurid artists of Shiraz under the patronage of Ibrahim Sultan and his court. It is one of the last great Timurid manuscripts available on the market and with fifty-eight miniatures of the highest quality untouched by later "restoration" its reappearance is a rare treat for scholars and collectors alike.

PROVENANCE
1. On folio 577v is a colophon stating that the first half of this Shahnama was completed towards the end (valad) of the month of Shawwal 839 (May 1436).
2. On folio 555v is a colophon stating that the manuscript was completed by the scribe Jahangir towards the middle of Jamada al-Awali 841 (November 1437).

continued
3. In the replaced lower margin of folio 55a is a seal impression of Kesik telokashi (a title of Turkish origin, meaning ‘Chief of the Watchmen’) with the number 83 which is probably the last two digits of the date 983 or 1082/1575 or 1672.

4. On folio 56a (1st leaf) is a six-line inscription which records that the manuscript was given as a gift by Mirza Muhammad Khan to Nasrallah Khan, dated Shamsi 1245/1829. On the same page is a quatrain which repeats the name of Darwish Muhammad three times, dated Juma 1292/1876.

5. On the 8th leaf at the beginning are verses of poetry in shahastri script, probably nineteenth century. On folio 1a are more verses in shahastri, and the signature ‘Sir John A Churchill’, who was Clerk to Sir Robert Murdoch Smith in the Tehran Telegraph Office during the 1880’s, and collected a number of manuscripts for the British and South Kensington (now Victoria and Albert) Museums, and for himself (Robinson, 1896).

6. The 1st Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, Viceroy of India, 1884-88. The manuscript remained in the family’s possession at Clarendon, Northern Ireland until its sale by Messrs Christie, Manson & Woods on 19th June 1968, lot 8.

7. Sale in these rooms, 11th October 1982, lot 214.

TEXT AND SCRIPE

The text of this manuscript is the version as standardised by Baysungur which he completed by 1428. However, the preface is neither the standard ‘old’ preface nor the version introduced by Baysungur with its standardisation of the main text.

The scribe Jahanqir is also known by a small unillustrated manuscript of the Barzanai in the Library of King’s College, Cambridge which is dated 1425 and a copy of Nizami’s Khamsa dated 1449 previously in the Kevorkian collection, sold in these rooms on 7th December 1979, lot 196 and again 22nd October 1993, lot 151. By this date he had added the epithet al-Sultani to his name implying an established position with a royal patron. He may also have been the unnamed scribe of the Bodleian Library’s copy of the Shahanasa made for Ibrahim Sultan around 1432-3 (Ouseley Add.176).

DECORATION

The fifty-eight miniatures in this manuscript are fine examples of the Timurid Shiraz style produced by the court of Ibrahim Sultan. Although Ibrahim Sultan had died in 1435, the artist of this manuscript had probably worked in his atelier. In contrast to the crowded compositions of the contemporary Herat style of Ibrahim’s brother Ruyanghur, this style is typified by powerfully simple compositions of relatively reduced subject matter which concentrate on the action illustrated. Rich in colour, vigorous and imaginative in execution, they illustrate all the favourite subjects in the epic narrative, as well as one or two others of which representations are seldom found.

The miniatures in this manuscript are attributable to three distinct hands. Painter ‘A’ who executed the miniatures on folios 57a, 65a, and 72a, is distinguished by vigorous figures and finely executed rocks. He had probably been employed on the illumination of Sultan Ibrahim’s Shahansa (Bodleian Library, Oxford fos.61-) and the Zafarnama dated 1436 (now dispersed except for the bulk of the volume which was previously in the Kevorkian collection, sold in these rooms on the 7th April 1975, lot 187, where it was purchased by the British Rail Pension Fund, subsequently re-sold, their sale in these rooms, 23rd April 1996, lot 16). Painter ‘B’ responsible for thirty-one of the miniatures is probably the same person as the Cleveland Painter (see The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, UNESCO 1979, p.216). His style is characterized by rocky horizons, clouds, and slightly oblique eyes. Painter ‘C’ is perhaps less of an individualist than the other two. His figures are sometimes inclined to stiffness, and groups of couriers and warriors are often arranged in serried ranks. This latter characteristic is found in a number of fifteenth century miniatures which now tend to be attributed to western India. Painter ‘C’ possibly migrated to India with his personal style, or he might even have been an Indian working in Shiraz (see B.W. Robinson, Persian Epic Illustration: A ‘Book of Kings’ of 1436-37, Apollo, September 1982).
The chief manuscripts for comparison are the aforementioned Zafarnama of 1456, the Bodleian Shahnama of c.1432-3 (Ouseley Add.176, Robinson, 1958, pp.16-22, pls.IV) and a Shahnama in the Art and History Trust Collection (Soudavar, no.27).

The subjects of the miniatures are as follows:

f.10 Illuminated headpiece.
f.68-7a Illuminated double page.
f.24 Firuzihs before Sultan Mahmud.
f.30 Gauharsh and his four-crul couriers.
f.72b Nizalab. She is adorned.
f.22b The murder of Fajr by his brothers Tur and Satr.
f.28a Tur slain in battle by Minuchehr.
f.28b Salim slain in battle by Minuchehr.
f.37a Rustab, on her balcony, sets her hair down to Zal below.

f.47h Wedding procession of Zal and Razabah.
f.18b The birth of Rustam.

f.50a Rustam slays the mad elephant.

f.51b Battle between Barman and Qubad.

f.57b Khuzarwan slain in battle by Zal.

f.62b The enthronement of Kay Qubad.

f.55b Kay Qubad tempted by the demon minstrel to invade Mazanderan.

f.65a Rustam, Rakhsh, and the lion (first stage of the lion). (7)

f.70a Rustam, Rakhsh, and the dragon (third stage).

f.76b Rustam and the witch (fourth stage).

f.72a Rustam and the demon Arzhang (the sixth stage).

f.73a Rustam slays the White Demon (the seventh and last stage).

f.92b Rustam and his son Surhab about to engage in combat.

f.94a Surhab about to kill Rustam.

f.95a Rustam laments the dying Surhab.

f.92a The murder of Sivaswudi.

f.92a Rustam lifting Piskam from the saddle on his spear.

f.146a Rustam attacking Afrasiab, King of Turan.

f.141b Kay Khusrav enlazoned.

f.155b Defeat of the Persians by the Turanian.

f.174a Rustam shoots Ashhabus the Turanian champion.

f.176a Rustam binding Kamus after defeating him.

f.177a Rustam seizes the charger of Chingish by the tail.

f.181a Rustam unhorsing Shangul with his spear.

f.194b Rustam passes and chases the demon Aksaw.

f.197a Barham killing the bears, watched by Gishtam.

f.210b Rustam and Bishan defeating Afrasiab.

f.234b Piran slain on the mountain by Gudzar.

f.237b Gustahm killing Lahab and Faishward.

f.247a Combat of Kay Khusrav and Shida, son of Afrasiab.

f.248a Shida slain by Kay Khusrav.

f.255b Rustam and the Persians attacking Gang Bihist.

f.256b Kay Khusrav defeats the King of Makran.

f.262b Kay Khusrav, crossing the sea, observes the sea-monsters.

f.268b Execution of Afrasiab and Garsiwaz before Kay Khusrav.

f.278b Illuminated headpiece.

f.284b Gustahsp killing the dragon.

f.297a bya slain by Gustahsp in single combat.

f.301a Luhrasp slain in battle with Khurram, son of Arjasp.

f.306a Isfandiyar kills the wolves (first of his seven stages).

f.310a Isfandiyar in his armoured car kills the dragon (third stage).

f.311b Isfandiyar in his armoured car kills the Sinwarg (fifth stage).

f.316b The head of Arjasp flung from the Brazen Hold.

f.338a Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes.

f.345a Death of Rustam and Rakhsh in the pit of spears.

f.358b Ishandar hanging the murderers of Dara.

f.40a Bahram Gur hunting with his mistress Arada.

f.44a Nusharwan enthroned with his courtiers.

f.457a Execution of Zaran and the Jew by Nusharwan.

f.49b Saba Shah slain by Bahram Chubina.

f.512b King Hurmord hanged with a bowstring by Bandwi and Gustaham.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

E. Gube, Muslim Miniature Painting, Venice, 1962, pp.44-46, and pls.22-33.


£120,000-140,000

48

Hafiz. Diwan, illuminated Persian manuscript on paper with coloured and decorated borders, copied by Muhammad Qasim ibn Mir Ali, Persia, probably Khurasan, dated A.H.898/A.D.1581.

156 leaves, 14 lines or less per page written in fine nasta’liq script in black on cream paper, double intercolumnar rules in gold, text interspersed with numerous panels decorated with gold cartouches, margins ruled in colours and gold, wide borders of cream, yellow, blue, green and pink paper with stencilled designs of vegetation, animals, birds and geometric patterns in various colours, opening double page of fine illumination in colours and gold, one illuminated headpiece at beginning of poetry, later lacquer binding with central cartouches and cornerpieces of gilt floral designs on black grounds, the main field with birds amongst scrolling foliage in black and gold on amber grounds, brown morocco doublures, 350 by 181 mm.

Although it is difficult to discern the scribe of this manuscript from others of similar title in the 16th century, he must surely have been son of the great Mir Ali.

£10,000-13,000
PERSIAN MINIATURES AND PAINTINGS

The following six leaves come from an album of miniatures and calligraphy assembled in Persia in the seventeenth or eighteenth century and formerly in the collection of Hagop Kevoidian. They were sold in these rooms, 27th April 1981 along with the European binding in which they were kept. A similar group of four miniatures from a related album were sold at Drouot-Richelieu, Paris, 22nd March 1996, lots 101 A-D.

497
Portait of a kneeling youth wearing a green robe, striped waistbands and an elaborate turban and holding a gold cup and a pear, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with calligraphy by Ahmad al-Husaini, Persia, late sixteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, the pink background painted with clouds and vegetation in gold, inner border of nasta`lik verses alternating with floral sprays in gold, outer border of stout brown paper painted in gold with animals and mythical beasts amongst vegetation; verso with four lines of nasta`lik calligraphy written diagonally on cream paper decorated with flowering tendrils in colours and gold, calligraphy signed by Ahmad al-Husaini, inner borders of nasta`lik verses, outer border of stout pink paper decorated in gold with animals and vegetation, miniature 161 by 90mm., text area 168 by 93mm., leaf 376 by 245mm.

Provenance:
Hagop Kevoidian.
Sale in these rooms, 27th April 1981, lot 33.


£2,500-3,500

511
Portait of an archer kneeling holding his shield, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with calligraphy in thuluth and naskhi, Persia, fifteenth/sixteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background painted with rocks and flowers in gold, inner border with two horizontal lines of large nasta`lik and four complete lines written vertically, surrounded by coloured paper decorated with silver leaves, outer border of stout green paper decorated with large scrolling floral tendrils; verso with three lines of large thuluth script and two lines of smaller naskhi script surrounded by blue floral motifs on a ground of brown cross-hatching, borders of stout pink paper with large gold floral scrolls, miniature 124 by 74mm., text area 153 by 251mm., leaf 376 by 246mm.

Provenance:
Hagop Kevoidian.
Sale in these rooms, 27th April 1981, lot 31.

The calligraphy on the verso bears a dedicatory inscription to Haji al-Hurramain Amir Abul-Hayy.

£2,000-3,000

511
Portait of a kneeling youth holding a gold flask and cup, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with calligraphy by Muhammad Husain al-Tahrizi, Persia, late sixteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background painted with landscape details in gold, inner border of blue and pink paper decorated with silver leaves and panels of nasta`lik verses, outer border of buff paper painted with bold floral scrolls in silver and gold, verso with two complete nasta`lik on grey paper decorated with gold flowers signed by Muhammad Husain al-Tahrizi, borders of pink, blue and buff paper decorated with floral and foliate scrolls in silver and gold, miniature 123 by 75mm., text area 167 by 81mm., leaf 376 by 247mm.

Provenance:
Hagop Kevoidian.
Sale in these rooms, 27th April 1981, lot 35.


Another example of his hand is part of lot 40 in this sale.

£2,500-3,500
552 Portrait of an archer aiming his arrow at a bird perched in a tree, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with illuminated calligraphy by Husain al-Fakhir al-Shirazi, Persia, dated AH 1655/AD 1655

Gouache with gold on paper, inner border of pink paper decorated with silver leaves and panels containing verses in nastaliq, outer borders of silver blue paper with bold floral scrolls in gold and cloud-scrolls in silver; verso with one line of large thuluth script and ten lines of smaller naskh script signed by Husain al-Fakhir al-Shirazi and dated 965, borders of pink paper with bold floral and foliate scrolls in silver and gold, miniature 168 by 94mm., text area 139 by 231mm., leaf 374 by 247mm.

Provenance: Hagop Kevorkian. Sale in these rooms 27th April 1981, lot 30. £2,000-3,000
(See illustration on previous page)

553 Portrait of a youth reclining against a cushion, holding a gold cup, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with illuminated calligraphy in nastaliq script, Persia, seventeenth century

Gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background painted with clouds and vegetation in gold, inner border of brown paper decorated with gold and silver lines and panels of nastaliq verses, outer border of stout pink paper painted in gold with animals and birds amidst foliage; verso with four lines of brown nastaliq, inner calligraphic border, outer border of buff paper painted in gold with animals and mythical birds amidst vegetation; miniature 145 by 94mm., text area 131 by 89mm., leaf 374 by 247mm.

Provenance: Hagop Kevorkian. Sale in these rooms 27th April 1981, lot 27. £2,500-3,500
(See illustration on previous page)

554 Portrait of a maiden counting on her fingers, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with illuminated calligraphy in muhaqqaq and naskh, Persia, circa seventeenth century

Gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background painted with vegetation and clouds in gold, inner border of yellow paper decorated with silver leaves and panels of nastaliq verses, outer border of stout brown paper painted in gold with animals and birds amidst foliage and clouds; verso with three lines of bold muhaqqaq and four lines of smaller naskh script, inner calligraphic border on pink paper decorated with silver and gold leaves, outer border of buff paper painted in gold with animals amidst vegetation; miniature 155 by 89mm., text area 135 by 90mm., leaf 374 by 247mm.


£2,000-3,000
(See illustration on previous page)

555 Portrait of an old man leaning on a stick, Persia, Isfahan, c.1600; verso with illuminated calligraphy, Persia, c.1600

Gouache on paper, the blue background painted with gold flowers and rocks, inner border of pink paper sprinkled with gold and set with panels of nastaliq verses, outer border of buff paper decorated with flowers in silver and gold; verso with a single line of large thuluth calligraphy in orange and a line of smaller naskh calligraphy, trimmed, miniature 168 by 93mm., text area 136 by 248mm., leaf 264 by 182mm.

From a series similar to the previous six lots.

Provenance: Hagop Kevorkian. Sale in these rooms 27th April 1981, lot 25. £1,200-1,800
(See illustration on previous page)

556 Bahram Gur in discussion with the shepherd who kept his dog hanging from a tree, ladies spinning in a tent in the foreground and a youth feeding an ass. in the background. Persia, Isfahan, c.1600-60

Manuscript page with an illustration in colours and gold, probably from Husain’s Nagh TPikhar, a freehand attribution to Reza-i Abbasi added on the text, text in 4 columns of nastaliq, mounted on an album page with the marginal extension of the miniature preserved, gold decorated blue border, miniature 2/2 by 140mm. extending to 310 by 175mm., text area 252 by 140mm.

It was not unusual for a signature of Reza-i Abbasi ‘signature’ to be added to a work by his pupil Mu’in. A parallel example, probably of one of the Shahname manuscripts illustrated by Mu’in, was sold in these rooms 9th July 1979, lot 68. £2,000-3,500
(See illustration on previous page)

571 Firadisi and the court poets of Ghazni seated in a garden with their books and peacock-feathers, gardeners working nearby and food being prepared over two fires. Illustrated leaf from a manuscript of the Shahnama, Persia, Shiraz, c.1570

Text written in 25 lines of nastaliq script, contemporary extension in miniature on three sides, some effect of calligraphy onto painted surface, miniature 380 by 248mm., text area 253 by 150mm., page 443 by 273mm.

This page was previously sold at Hotel George V, Paris, 24th March, 1975, lot 140.

From the preface of a manuscript of Fitrawi’s Shahnama in which an early change of plan led to the considerable extension in size of the illustrations. In this case the illustration it appears that the extensions were painted by the same artist as the centre portion. Other pages of this interesting Shahnama were in the Hagop Kevorkian Collection, sold in these rooms 7th April 1975, lot 36, and 12th April 1976, lots 20 and 21, one of which was in the British Rail Pension Fund collection, sold 23rd April 1986, lot 15. The practice of extending manuscripts in this way was apparently not unique to this manuscript: another large Shiraz Shahnama page treated in this way, also from the Kevorkian Collection, was sold 7th December 1979, lot 42. £1,000-1,500
(See illustration on page 57)

583 Three illustrated leaves from a manuscript of Asar-i Mihr va Mudasti, Persia, Qazwin or Mashhad, late sixteenth century

Gouache with gold on paper, fine lines of nastaliq text within picture areas, inverse with nastaliq text written horizontally and diagonally in two columns, double intercolumnial rules in gold, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of gold-striped coloured paper, miniatures 142 by 89mm., and slightly smaller, pages 257 by 170mm.

Sold at Christie’s, London, 19th April 1979, lots 39,41,43. £1,800-2,200

These three miniatures come from a manuscript of Muhammad An’i’s Mihr va Mudasti, which must have been produced either in Qazwin or Mashhad c.1560-80. The hand of two different artists is discernible, one markedly the superior artist and showing traits of the Qazwin style (illustrated above). The other artist seems to have been trained in the Shiraz style.

The subjects are as follows:
1. Bahram telling the distraught Shahpur he will search for Mihr.
2. Bhrizad, nephew of Shapur, interceding on behalf of Mudasti and his servant Badr.
3. A prince, feasting on a hillside, being shown a portrait.

£1,800-2,200
AN IMPORTANT SAFAVID MINIATURE FROM A ROYAL ALBUM

591
Portrait of a dappled blue stallion from a royal stable, with a brilliant red saddle cloth with green lining, hobbled with a green rope and tethered in a small stomp. By Kamal al-Din Husain, son of Hasan the illuminator, Tabriz, mid-sixteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, the background uncoloured, inscribed in Persian (transl: Kamal al-Din Husain maqal hasan mahzabili made on a fine 17th-century album page, two columns of nastaliq calligraphy in black and white and gold in nine panels (slightly discoloured) above the miniature, inner border of gold flour bowls black on blue, outer margin of floral and foliate decoration in lines of gold on pink paper, the verso tinted pink and covered 35 traces of cloth hinges on both sides suggesting the album was originally in concertina form, miniature 167 by 192mm, calligraphy 123 by 193mm, page 602 x 366mm.

This remarkable horse portrait is apparently the only known miniature reliably attributed to Shah Tahmasp's court painter Kamal al-Din Husain, who in 1543 was praised by his contemporary, Dast Muhammad, in his treatise on calligraphers and painters in the Bahram Mirza Album (Topkapı Palace Museum, H.2134): 'Another is that unrivalled artist in line (zarnam) Ustad Kamal al-Din Husain' (L.Binyan, J.V.S.Wilkinson and B.Gray, Persian Miniature Painting, London, 1933, p.186-7). The artist is also listed by I.Schoukine, Les Peintures des Manuscrits Safavides, Paris, 1959, p.53, and M.A.Karimzadeh Tabrizi, Lives and Art of Old Painters of Iran, London, 1985-9, p.549). The present miniature confirms Kamal al-Din Husain as an artist of considerable skill, leaving little doubt that he may have been one of the painters employed by Shah Tahmasp on the illustration of his great Shabnama manuscript (now commonly referred to as the 'Houghton Shabnama').

The album page, with its distinctive mounting of miniature and calligraphy on the same face, is probably from the series of royal albums made at Qasrins and Jashans between c.1588 and 1610 for Shah 'Abbās I (1588-1629). Another page of the same album was formerly in the same English collection as this page (both sold at Christie's, 11 July 1974, lots 13 and 18). It is now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and bears as part of its assemblage a drawing of a horseman by Riza-i Abbasi (Sotheby's, London, 8 July 1980, lot 212; S.R.Camus, The Rebellion Reformer. The drawings and paintings of Riza-i Abbasi of Isfahan, London, 1996, cat.16, p.52). Another horse portrait by Riza, mounted similarly and now in the collection of the British Museum, London, was doubles adapted by Riza from the present miniature or another contemporary version. In his version Riza has given the horse a plume and striped saddle-cloth, while adding an attendant groom (F.R.Martin, The Miniature Painting of Persia, India and Turkey, London, 1912, pl.161; Binyan, Wilkinson and Gray, op.cit., no.178).

£40,000 - 60,000
60 Portrait of a seated maiden holding a gold flask, Persia, Isfahan, c.1650

gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background painted with landscape details in gold, mounted on an album page with borders of gold-sprinkled blue paper, inscribed on inner border '穰am Rizvi Abbas', fine slightly flaked, miniature 144 by 87mm., page 277 by 183mm.

£1,000-1,500

61 A prince enjoys a picnic on a hillside while attendants offer refreshments and a dancer performs. Illustrated leaf from a manuscript of Persian poetry, Persia, Shiraz, late sixteenth century

gouache with gold on paper, margins ruled in blue and gold, reverse with 15 lines of neat nastaliq text in one and two columns, intercolumnar rules in gold and four small square panels of illumination, framed, miniature 156 by 81mm.

£1,000-1,200

62 Five dervishes in a landscape representing the ages of man or stages on the Sufi path, attributable to Muhammad Yusuf, Persia, Isfahan, c.1650

ink drawing with colour and gold on paper, inner border of gold-sprinkled blue paper, outer border of blue paper decorated with gold scrolling flowers, framed, miniature 189 by 87mm., page 307 by 198mm.

This drawing is close to the style of Muhammad Yusuf, who, along with Muhammad Qasim and others, represented the leading artists of the first generation after Reza Abbasi at Isfahan. Muhammad Yusuf is also known for his contribution to an illustrated manuscript of the Divan of Hafiz in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (B.W. Robinson, Persian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library, Oxford, 1958, p.161).

£3,000-4,000

622 £6,000-8,000