Arts of the Islamic Book

THE COLLECTION OF
PRINCE SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN

Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch

The collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan contains some of the world's finest examples of painting and calligraphy and is perhaps the most important private Muslim collection of Islamic art. This volume, richly illustrated with 24 color plates and 101 black-and-white photographs, provides a brief history of the collection and offers a generous selection of paintings, manuscripts, calligraphies, bindings, and drawings that span the geographic range of Islamic art from North Africa to India. Detailed discussions of each illustration introduce readers to the major patrons and artists in the development of the arts of the precious book.

Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch have selected the most magnificent pages from the prince's collection for this volume. Included are portraits of the great Mughal rulers of India, paintings from the pages of a sixteenth-century Shihabuddin (Book of Kings) of Iran, and stunning examples of calligraphy. Among the Muslim manuscripts represented are Qurans from North Africa, Ottoman Turkey, Iran, and India; historical works such as the Ottoman illustrated manuscript of the Tuhfa al-lidqal, philosophical treatises such as the Ethics of Nasir al-Din Tusi of India, and literary works such as the late-sixteenth-century Aynu-i Sabahi, commissioned and probably illustrated by the leading Safavid Iranian painter Sadig Bek.

Focusing on an art for which Islam is widely recognized, this volume reveals the full splendor of the Islamic book.

Anthony Welch, professor of Islamic art at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, is the author of Shah Abbas and the Arts of Islam, Artists for the Shah: Late Sixteenth-Century Painting at the Imperial Court of Iran, and Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World. Stuart Cary Welch is senior lecturer in fine arts at Harvard University and special consultant in charge of the department of Islamic art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His other books include The Art of Mughal India. A Flower from Every Meadow: Indian Paintings from American Collections; Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches, Persian Paintings: Five Rare Safavid Manuscripts of the Sixteenth Century, Imperial Mughal Painting, and The Houghton Shahmanis.

PUBLISHED FOR
THE ASIA SOCIETY

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This book and exhibition owe their existence to Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, who combines a connoisseur's eye, a scholar's knowledge, and a profound love for Islamic culture. The small sampling presented here of his great collection focuses on the precious manuscript and the album. Here the painter's brush and the calligrapher's pen produced what may be Islam's most personal arts—those in which we can most sharply discern the aspirations and aesthetics of their patrons.

The authors, Anthony Welch and Stuart Cary Welch, are not related, though the coincidence of surname has occasioned some confusion in scholarly circles. It was Cary Welch, at Harvard fifteen years ago, who turned Anthony Welch's eyes toward Islamic art, and who not only oversaw much of Anthony Welch's training as an art historian but also suggested that he embark on the project of publishing Prince Sadruddin's collection. Thus this present association is actually one of long standing and part of a process of collecting, teaching, and scholarship that has been under way for many years.

Authors' initials appear after each entry, but Anthony Welch wishes to note that Cary Welch's role is far more substantial than these identifications indicate. In discussion over many years, in planning and selecting the exhibition, and in intense examination of individual objects, he has been a guiding force. His well-known scholarly generosity and integrity have led him to initial only those entries that he wrote in whole or in considerable part, but to those who know his work, his greater contribution should be obvious.

Both authors are happily indebted to Prof. Dr. Annemarie Schimmel, who traveled to Geneva to see many of these selected objects and who generously shared her profound knowledge in identifying texts, naming scribes, and translating difficult passages in several languages. She also read the entire book in manuscript form, caught errors large and small, and offered many wise suggestions and improvements; without her assistance and her many contributions this would have been a different and far less worthy book.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To other scholars our debt is substantial as well, and we hope that our citation of their works in footnotes and bibliographic references will be a fitting statement of our thanks.

Through a generous 1985 study leave, the University of Victoria and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada have made it possible for Anthony Welch to work on this book as well as to pursue other research, and he gratefully acknowledges the assistance of both institutions.

Allen Wardwell, Director of Asia Society Gallery, and Sarah Bradley, Assistant Director, have nurtured this project from its inception and have supported it at every stage with dedication, exemplary attention to detail, and unflagging patience. It is a scholar’s joy to work with them.

This collection, exhibition, and book are a testimony to a great art of a great world culture. It is fitting that this book should acknowledge a scholar who has contributed so profoundly to that culture and who has immeasurably broadened our awareness of it. In friendship and with respect the authors dedicate their work here to Annemarie Schimmel.

Anthony Welch
University of Victoria

Stuart Cary Welch
Harvard University

Foreword

Anyone who has followed the Gallery program of The Asia Society over the past decade will recognize the name of Sadruddin Aga Khan as a frequent lender of important works to our temporary exhibitions. He has generously shared paintings and manuscripts with us on four recent occasions. They appeared, interestingly enough, in two exhibitions that were organized by Anthony Welch (Shah Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan, 1973, and Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World, 1979) and two exhibitions that were organized by Stuart Cary Welch (Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches, 1976, and Room for Wonder: Indian Painting during the British Period, 1978).

What we present here, therefore, builds on a well-established pattern of successful collaboration between a great private collector, two knowledgeable and talented guest curators, and an institution. It was only natural to think of organizing a whole exhibition around this one collection and to ask the Welmches (who are unrelated except for their common interests and intimate knowledge of the collection) to choose the material and write about it for us.

This is not to suggest that what is shown here is simply a reassembly of previous loans, although a few works are making a return visit. The majority of these paintings and manuscripts have not been publicly exhibited. Furthermore, although a substantial part of the collection was presented in a four-volume, limited-edition catalogue that appeared between 1972 and 1978 (additional volumes are forthcoming), a good proportion of the objects in this exhibition and catalogue have not been previously published. None of the Mughal paintings were included in the earlier catalogue nor do acquisitions made by Prince Sadruddin after 1976 appear in these volumes, and it is fair to say that some of the most noteworthy objects have been in the collection in the intervening years. Even in 1971, however, Stuart Cary Welch wrote that the collection was "one of the most important in private hands." With the refinements and acquisitions that have been made in the last decade, it has grown to even greater stature, and we are pleased to present a good measure of its overall scope and quality here. In seeking to give focus to this selection, we decided to concentrate on the
collection's greatest strength, the arts of the Islamic book, as represented by both the written word and the painted album leaf.

We are, of course, indebted to Prince Sadruddin for sharing these treasures with us and for all of the assistance we have received from him and his staff in the assembly, documentation, photography, and sharing of information that have been required. Both authors have cooperated fully to meet a tight schedule, and we thank Edmund Pillsbury and Emily Sano of the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, and Ralph T. Coe and Marc Wilson of the Nelson Gallery—Atkins Museum, Kansas City, for their cooperation in bringing the exhibition to their institutions. Naomi Noble Richard provided expert editorial assistance, and my own staff has performed the various tasks of editing, registrarial work, and general administration with their characteristic cheerful professionalism.

ALLEN WARDELL
Director
Asia Society Gallery

Introduction

Few collections are as appropriate to their owners as this remarkable group of manuscripts, miniatures, and calligraphies—a comprehensive gathering devoted to the Islamic book. They are the treasured possessions of a distinguished Muslim, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, whose forebears played an active role in the creation of many of these works of art.

Muslim collectors of Muslim art are few, and most of the known collections are highly specialized. Although Prince Sadruddin enjoys all art, that of Islam has long been his principal interest, and unlike most recent collectors in this field, he has not limited himself to any single medium. A visit to Prince Sadruddin's house at Bellerive reveals that the owner is a true collector, in whom discernment and enthusiasm are finely mixed. The house contains a lively assemblage of pictures, objects, and furniture of all sorts, each item related to the others because of the collector's personal and very visceral approach to art. Most of the furniture is of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the moods range from the austere to the highly dramatic. African, Eskimo, and Tibetan objects, paintings and prints by De Chirico and Munch exist harmoniously as part of a house and collection that reflect the energy and interests of their owner.

Although Prince Sadruddin and his family are well known, many who read this may be unaware of their religious and historical background. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan is the younger son of the late Sultan Sir Mohammad Shah, who was the forty-eighth imam, or religious leader, of some twelve million Isma'ili Shi'a Muslims, a religious community that extends from the Great Wall of China to the southern tip of Africa. Shi'a Muslims trace the lineage of their imam to 'Ali, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet. The Isma'ili, now led by Prince Sadruddin's nephew, Prince Karim Aga Khan, separated from other Shi'a in the eighth century over a question of succession. They accepted Isma'il, eldest son of the sixth imam, as seventh imam, and were also known as the Seveners. Other Shi'a Muslims, subsequently called the Twelvers, acknowledged a younger son and his successors.

In his memoirs Prince Sadruddin's father summarized the history of the
In a tribute to his father at the centenary of his birth, Prince Sadruddin wrote for the London Times: “My father was first and foremost a deeply religious man who had no difficulty in integrating an active political and social life and everything it entailed in terms of formality and obligations in the post-Victorian era, with the close communion with God which is the aspiration of every practicing Muslim” (The Times, 5 November 1977).

The family tradition of leadership and public service is clearly evident in Prince Sadruddin’s own life. Inasmuch as his father presided over the League of Nations, it seems appropriate that he has served the United Nations for many years. He became a UNESCO Consultant for Afro-Asian Projects in 1948, four years after he had taken his degree in government at Harvard University and done graduate work at Harvard’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies. The following year he was appointed Head of Mission and Adviser to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, a post he held for two years. In 1950 he served as Special Consultant to the Director-General and as Executive Secretary to the UNESCO International Action Committee for the Preservation of Nubian Monuments. From 1962 until 1965 he was U.N. Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, and from 1965 until 1977 he served as High Commissioner for Refugees. Since then he has been a Special Consultant and Chargé de Mission to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and recently he was very nearly elected U.N. Secretary-General.

Prince Sadruddin has been awarded many decorations and distinctions, including the U.N. Human Rights Award and the Dag Hammarskjöld Honorary Medal. He serves as president of the Council on Islamic Affairs in New York City, and he is the founder of the Bellrieve Foundation as well as founder and president of the Groupe de Bellrieve, an organization bringing together physicists, philosophers, university professors, jurists, politicians, and churchmen who address themselves periodically to problems related to science and society. To date their work has focussed essentially on nuclear technology and the proliferation of armaments. For many years Prince Sadruddin has also been publisher of The Paris Review. It is not, however, the honors and achievements of his public life that concern us here; it is his private avocation. The collection of Islamic art begun modestly when he was a student at Harvard and enlarged by careful additions and deletions over the past thirty years is now one of the most important in private hands.

Happily the early 1950s were auspicious years for collectors of Islamic art. In New York City several art dealers possessed inherited collections of outstanding miniatures, calligraphies, ceramics, and other objects. A visit to Adrienne Minasiian’s showroom in a warehouse on 57th Street was always a rich and rewarding experience. Two large steel cabinets contained stacks of black portfolios, each bursting with Timurid, Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal drawings and miniatures, while as many others contained
which encouraged connoisseurship. Such dealers as Miss Minassian and Mr. and Mrs. Nasli Heeramanek were fully aware of levels of quality, but Mr. Monif chose to ignore such factors. Accordingly, Prince Sadruddin and several other collectors of the early 1950s made productive forays into the always changing stock of the Monif store. When the rumor of a shipment spread abroad, collectors vied with one another for the first look. The better objects were not likely to linger in Mr. Monif’s hands for more than a few hours. A number of the prince’s visits there resulted in the purchase of miniature animals and fourteenth-century bronze candlesticks; other occasions were “educational.” The dealer loved to reminisce about the troubled days in Iran that his father and he had seen. The old general had watched magnificent textiles burned to melt out the gold threads. And Khan Monif himself told of the day in Paris when he had been offered the great Il-Khanid Shihabunnah, now known as the “Demotte Shihabunnah,” after the dealer who eventually acquired it and sold its pages separately. But at that time Khan Monif had turned the masterpiece down, feeling that its quality did not warrant its “excessive” price (a price that was, in fact, a fraction of what a single page would bring today).

One of this dealer’s most helpful contributions to his visitors’ artistic enlightenment was his knowledge of forgeries and retouching. Restorations of pottery objects, as well as repainted faces in miniatures, were always pointed out scrupulously, sometimes to the accompaniment of tales, recounted with ominous glee, of rival specialists’ shortcomings in this respect. Of particular interest was the story of the opium addict in Paris who was able to separate verses and recto of a single folio by masturbatory tearing. He could also repaint damaged pictures or create outright forgeries with a skill that could dupe all but the keenest experts.

After graduate school Prince Sadruddin spent more time in Europe. He also traveled more extensively; and whenever the opportunity presented itself, he gave up as much time as he could from his work for the United Nations to visit and study other collections and to add to his own. With increasing eagerness he bought from the dealers in London, Paris, and Switzerland, as well as from the auction houses. As he gained in experience, so did the collection gain in quality; and as time passed, opportunities for acquisition multiplied. Worldwide interest in Islamic art had quickened. There were more and better auctions. Sales catalogues, formerly skimpy, ill researched, and ungenerously illustrated, fattened; and before long they contained not only a plethora of black-and-white illustrations but color plates as well. Specialized dealerships mushroomed in Paris, London, and New York, and august establishments on Bond Street, long noted for their Old Master and Impressionist pictures, soon developed expertise in the mysteries of the East. The fascinating clutter of antiquarians’ storage rooms, where collectors enjoyed the adventure of sifting

follows from Qur’ans and other manuscripts in every sort of script, from Kufic to Shikastah. Magnificent pages from albums assembled and illuminated for Shah Jahan were cheek by jowl with Qajar firmanS and Safavid miniatures. Other cabinets were devoted to pottery and metalwork. Timurid, Safavid, and Ottoman dishes glazed in deep greens and blues were stacked in such quantity that it required several hours of hard looking—usually while standing high on a chair—to see them. Beneath a large Jacobean refectory table, architectural fragments, including a beautiful bit of stucco from the Alhambra, added a further rich note to the scene, which we always recall with delight: a collector’s dream, along with an admixture of Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe.

During his years as an undergraduate and graduate student at Harvard, Prince Sadruddin made frequent excursions to New York, and on those occasions visits to Miss Minassian were unscheduled but regular events. Although we never accompanied the prince, we envision busy, rather dusty (and in winter very cold) scenes in which he educated his eye by rummaging through the wonders of Miss Minassian’s 55th Street treasure house. One such visit was rewarded by one of the most splendid pages from the 1354 Autobiograph manuscript (cat. no. 3), in which large areas of tarnished silver and gold draw one’s eye to the intricacies of a Mamluk medical fantasy. We had long enjoyed other powerful pictures from this book in the Islamic galleries of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and it was a still greater pleasure to study a superb page that belonged to a friend. Another quarry from these early days of hunting is a lively, early fifteenth-century drawing, probably from Tabriz, showing a lion threatening two monkeys, who in turn taunt him maddeningly (cat. no. 16). Very likely it originally came from one of the albums, now in Istanbul and Berlin, that must once have belonged to the great royal library of Tabriz, a library that passed successively from Mongol to Jalal’ud, Timurid, Turcoman, and Safavid rulers. This spirited drawing, along with another of slightly later date depicting a hero killing a dragon in a fervidly animated wood (cat. no. 14), is one of the few removed from the royal albums. And it seems especially fortunate that these two important and beautiful pictures, which must have been studied and appreciated by a long line of Iranian and Turkish princes and artists, should have found their home in a Muslim collection.

Another productive source of Islamic objects in New York was H. Khan Monif, the son of an Iranian general. He had come to New York by way of Paris in the 1930s and had brought with him a generous sampling of Iranian art: Luristan and Islamic bronzes, glass, pottery, and miniatures. A merchant of the old school, he priced objects according to their cost to him, adding invariably the same margin of profit. As a result, objects of aesthetic merit cost no more than those of mere historical interest, a circumstance
through accumulations of good, bad, and indifferent material, gave way to immaculate galleries, where a few spotlighted miniatures or objects were shown far more enticingly. Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe had been replaced by stage sets. And of course this sophisticated ambience brought with it a more urbane and suave cast of characters. It also unearthed many works of art. Grand old collections, formed in the days of the Turkish Corner and lovingly protected by their inheritors as styles changed from art nouveau to deco to Bauhaus and eventually—full circle—back to oriental exoticism, emerged from their repositories. Louis J. Cartier's splendid miniatures and manuscripts were sold in the 1950s. Other troves followed. A culmination of these artistic changes of hand took place on Old Bond Street in April 1926, when miniatures and manuscripts brought together by generations of Rothschilds, together with more recently gathered material from Edwin Binney, 3rd, were sold through Colnaghi's. Museum curators and private collectors the world over seized this opportunity to acquire superb works of art of a sort—and in a quantity—not likely to be offered again. On this occasion Prince Sadruddin acquired a number of magnificent pictures, including several folios from Shah Isma'il II's Shahnameh, often thought to be the last "great" Safavid version of the epic (cat. no. 29). At this time he also bought remarkable Indian miniatures: the Genealogy of Emperor Jahangir (cat. no. 70), An Aged Pilgrim by Abu'l-Hasan, Jahangir's favorite painter (cat. no. 68), Bishandar's Portrait of Shah 'Abbas I (cat. no. 67), and Muhammad 'Ali's Noble Hunt (cat. no. 65). Further brilliant acquisitions were made when another ex-Rothschild manuscript was dismantled and a number of its miniatures sold. The Houghton Shahnameh, commissioned by Shah Tahmam Safavi, now named after Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., its last owner, was the source of Prince Sadruddin's The Story of Hafiz and the Worm, signed by Master Dust Muhammad, and of Aaz Murak's Firdausi Encounters the Court Poet of Ghausa, which contains a portrait of the youthful patron himself (cat. no. 22(A)).

One could cite extraordinary miniatures and calligraphies from Prince Sadruddin's collection endlessly; but it is far more instructive and pleasurable to turn to the material itself, as represented here. For this sampling of the collection is certain to delight and instruct. It also provides insights into the personality of the collector, particularly his deep concern for people of all sorts and ages—a characteristic also expressed in his devotion to the cause of refugees. Although Prince Sadruddin's collection has been secondary to his humanitarianism, the gusto, sympathy, and joyous sense of humor so evident in the pictures are the very qualities that have made his many years of public service so effective.

Stuart Cary Welch
The Arab Lands

The revelation of the Holy Qur’an to the Prophet Muhammad between A.D. 610 and 632 transformed Arabia into the heartland of a great world faith. It was also the impetus for the subsequent rapid expansion of the Arab people. They took with them Islam, the Qur’an, the Arabic language, and the Arabic script, all essential to the creation of Islamic culture. Due to the preeminence of the Qur’an in Muslim life, calligraphy has always been considered the highest form of art. The qalam, or reed pen, is said to have been the first of God’s creations, and the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law ’Ali the first calligrapher. In most periods the scribe therefore occupied a more exalted position than the painter, whose figural art, due to orthodox strictures against “graven images,” was almost entirely restricted to expressions of secular culture. It was the scribe who could perform the most pious of arts, the copying of God’s words.

The earliest known illustrated Arabic manuscript is an astronomical text dating to A.D. 900. Although classics of Arabic literature, such as the Kalila wa Dimna animal fables and the Maqamat of Hariri, were widely copied and illustrated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Mesopotamia and Egypt, the illustration of scientific and quasi-scientific texts, such as al-Jazari’s Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices, continued to be a major function of Arab painters.

Techniques developed in this period remained basic for most later Islamic painting. Gouache on paper, widely used in Islam after the middle of the ninth century, was the general medium, and the brush, usually made from the hair of a cat or a squirrel, was the instrument of application. Paintings, like calligraphies, were almost always parts of larger works, either manuscripts of literary works or precious albums in which specimens of script, illumination, and figurative paintings were brought together in a harmonious whole. The production of a Muslim manuscript or album was a collective effort, involving other artists besides calligraphers and painters: paper-makers, gliders, illuminators, and binders were essential to the production of a book. Thus a royal library was not simply a repository.
of books but was also often a workshop where diverse talents under one direction collaborated in the creation of one of Islam's most refined arts.

1 / Page from a Qur'an
North Africa, late 8th or early 10th century
H. 28.6 cm., W. 35 cm.

This page comes from a Qur'an that was one of the most sumptuous creations of medieval Islam. Written in a gold Kufic style of script on blue vellum, its oblong horizontal format is characteristic of early Qur'ans, as is the lack of diacritical marks, and though their absence might diminish legibility, it enhances grace. The page's fifteen lines accentuate this book's shape; verticality is limited, and repeated words and letters can both be of varying lengths—some very compact, others vastly extended—to emphasize textual importance and to set up a tightly controlled composition based not on legibility but on aesthetic structure. Thus, many words are broken, with an initial letter at the end of one line and the remainder on the next. The blue and gold color scheme is apparently unique, and though the Arabic script moves from right to left, the pages of this Qur'an—unlike almost all others—were turned from left to right, the left-hand page preceding the right.¹

The text comes from surah al-Baqara, 2:148-50:

... [so vie with one another] in good works. Wheresoever ye may be, Allah will bring you all together. Lo! Allah is Able to do all things.

And whencesoe'er thou comest forth (for prayer, O Muhammad) turn thy face toward the Inviolable Place of Worship. Lo! it is the Truth from thy Lord. Allah is not unaware of what ye do.

Whencesoe'er thou comest forth turn thy face toward the Inviolable Place of Worship; and wheresoe'er ye may be (O Muslims) turn your faces toward it (when ye pray) so that men may have no argument against you, save such as are as do injustice—fear them not, but fear Me—and so that I may complete My grace upon you, and that ye may be guided.²

Its sumptuousness and rarity make it unlikely that this manuscript of Islam's central scripture was anything other than a royal production, made either for a caliph or as a caliphal donation to a major religious center. Although there is some scholarly debate about the manuscript's origins,³ it seems most likely that it was produced on caliphal order in Kairouan—the great religious, social, and cultural center of medieval North Africa—for the Great Mosque there.

A.W.
1. The original manuscript in almost complete condition is in the Museum of Islamic Art, National Institute of Archaeology and Arts, Tunis. In publishing two folios from it, Martin Lings and Yusuf H. Sallie (The Qur'an [London, 1975], p. 25 [no. 11]) mention this "reverse" pagination. Other pages from this manuscript are in the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Mezzett of Fine Arts, Boston; and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

2. Two opposing arguments have been offered to explain the book's provenance. The first is based on a statement of Frederick R. Martin, who makes the earliest reference to a text in Western scholarly literature to the manuscript: "I have recently acquired leaves from the Koran which was written on blue vellum by order of the caliph al-Ma'mun for the tomb of his father, Harun al-Rashid, at Madinah..." (The Minature Painters and Painters of Persia, India, and Turkey [London, 1912], p. 141). Martin cites no evidence for this attribution, which seems to form the basis for a more recent argument that the book was produced in Baghdad (Christie's catalogue, London, 9 November 1977). The second argument has been put forward by Lings and Sallie, who mention no colophon for the manuscript and who provide substantial evidence that this book, like a great many other early Kufic Qur'ans, was produced in Kairouan. (See also Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Islamic World [Austin and London, 1979], pp. 48-49) Stylistic similarity between the script in this Qur'an and contemporary calligraphy from the region of Baghdad, the 'Abbasid capital, is not a determinative point, since court styles in art were widely disseminated throughout the caliphate.

Published: Alexandra Roesner, Islamische Schrift (Zürich: Rietberg Museum, 1979), fig. 3.

Page from a Qur'an
North Africa; 13th-14th century
H. 25.4 cm., W. 17.8 cm.

Maghrabi script style was limited to North Africa and Spain, and scribes from Egypt eastward viewed it as uncanonical, for its principal formative module was the whole word rather than the component letters. Its horizontal emphasis and its idiosyncratic tendencies derive from an earlier Kufic mode, but its major trait is the swooping, irregularly rounded arcs, balanced by other elements that bend and curve and double back to give a weighty stateliness to the text. 1

On each side of this light brown parchment page are nine lines written in gold in Maghribi. Red and blue diacritical marks aid the reader, and gold roundels, with the word qura (verse) written in white on blue inside them, mark the end of each verse.

The text comes from the Qur'an's surah Bani Israil (Children of Israel) 17:75-79:

... [the] hadst there found no helper against Us.
And they indeed wish to scare thee from the land that they might drive thee forth from thence, and then they would have stayed (there) but a little after thee.
(Such was Our) method in the case of those whom We sent before thee (to mankind), and thou wilt not find for Our method aught of power to change.

Establish worship at the going down of the sun until the dark of night, and (the recital of) the Qur'an at dawn. Lo! (the recital of) the Qur'an at dawn is ever witnessed.

And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee (to a praised estate).

The preceding four verses of the surah are on the other side.

A. W.

1. For additional information on the Maghribi style, see Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World* (Austin and London, 1979), pp. 70–71.

Published in: Kassandra Rasmussen, *Islamische Schrift* (Zürich: Rüegsberg Museum, 1979), fig. 19. Anthony Welch, *Collection of Islamic Art: Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan*, 4 vols. (Geneva, 1972–78), vol. 2, Cat. 3. All four volumes of this work are referred to hereafter as *Collective*.

3 / A Blood-Measuring Device

Egypt; February–March 1354

From a manuscript of al-Jazari’s *Automata*

Page: H. 39.1 cm., W. 27.4 cm.

About 1206 the inventor and scholar Badi al-Zaman ibn al-Kazzaz al-Jazari completed an Arabic treatise entitled *Kitāb fi Ma‘rifat al-Ḥiyal al-Handasīya*, or Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices. The book, more generally known as al-Jazari’s *Automata*, was designed to satisfy the interest of the Artuqid sultan of Diyarbakir (in modern Turkey) in mechanical gadgetry. The fifty devices that al-Jazari invented, explicated, and had illustrated for Sultan Nasir al-Din Muhammad (r. 1201–1232) may have been constructable, even constructed, or they may have been wholly imaginary; there is, unfortunately, no extant example of one of his automata. In any case, his work reflects a fascination with elaborate machinery that was characteristic of medieval culture in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Al-Jazari’s book was popular and widely copied. The Egyptian manuscript of 1354 from which this illustrated page comes was written not for the reigning Mamluk sultan Hasan but for one of his prominent amirs, Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulak al-Hasani al-Malik al-Salih. The text and fourteen original illustrations from this finest of extant *Automata* manuscripts are preserved in Istanbul; the rest of the original illustrations are widely dispersed. The scribe, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Izmiri, was a competent practitioner of *naskh* and *thuluth*, and the inscription at the top of this page reads: “This is a device in the shape of a basin. It is a basin, and a cubus, and cylinders.”
The book is divided into six parts, and this painting illustrates chapter 7 of part 3, which was devoted to machines to assist in blood-letting and ablutions. The instrument was designed to operate with wonderful redundancy. As the liquid was collected in the basin, the several weights and pulleys manipulated the three figures seated on the platform: the small man at the left noted on his scale each dirham of fluid; the man at the right indicated the same number of dirhams with his pointer on a circle laid out horizontally in front of him; in front of the large middle figure is a disk to which are attached ten hands, each in a distinct gesture, and at every tenth dirham the disk rotated to indicate the new fluid level. Obviously this was not a purely utilitarian design, and the element of humor in all these models may well have been intentional.

Like much Mamluk painting, this work is stylistically closely related to earlier art from Syria and Iraq. Much of the artistic talent of the Middle East had emigrated to Mamluk Egypt after the Mongol conquest, and Mamluk sultans and amirs were justly celebrated as lavish patrons of the arts of architecture, metalwork, and the precious manuscript.

A. W.

1. For further bibliography and discussion of al-Jazari’s Automata, see Donald Hill, The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices (Dordrecht and Boston, 1974); and Erin Alli, Art of the Arab World (Washington, D.C., 1975), pp. 192-11. Hill’s entry no. 12 deals specifically with the 1354 Mamluk manuscript. The first extant manuscript of the Automata was copied from al-Jazari’s holograph text and was completed in 1206; it contains sixty illustrations, presumably also based on al-Jazari’s own work.

2. Fourteen copies are extant (see Alli, Art of the Arab World, p. 192, n. 12). Their illustrations are ultimately based on the 1206 manuscript; faithful copying of illustrations is characteristic of medieval Muslim scientific treatises.

3. Süleymaniye Library (Aya Sofya, no. 3606). The colophon, fortunately preserved, recounts the creation of the manuscript.

PUBLISHED: Emil Boehnert, Mamluke Painting (London, 1989), pl. 36; Anthony Welch, Collectors, vol. 1, A. M. J.

Ottoman Turkey

Although Turkish-speaking peoples had progressively settled the Anatolian peninsula from the eleventh century, the key event for the Turkish art of the book was the rise of the Ottoman state and its conquest of Constantinople in 1453. This marked the beginning of the most active and creative period of Ottoman patronage, when the vast resources of an immense and diverse empire could be turned to architecture and the arts. Ottoman sultans could attract talent from all over the Muslim world, particularly Iran, but Ottoman art rapidly developed its own distinctive aesthetics and dynamic. Some of Islam’s finest calligraphers worked under Ottoman patronage and founded schools and styles that endured for many generations. The illustration of epic poetry and the Ottomans’ own epic history became major tasks for court painters, and a brilliant art of portraiture developed that serves as a dynastic record of the rulers and their key officials. The Ottomans were equally fascinated with the content of their vast state—its geography, history, structure, peoples, and social strata, and as in Mughal India, painters delineated the expansion of the empire and the forms of its myriad elements with an exactitude that delights historians of society as well as art.

A Manuscript of the Qur’an
Turkey; ca. 1500–1510
H. 38.8 cm., W. 26.3 cm.

Calligraphers, like painters, prided themselves on their artistic descent, and the great early Ottoman scribe, Shaykh Hamdallah ibn Mustafa, claimed descent from the line of Yaqut, the mid-thirteenth-century master who had developed the six traditional styles of writing to what was widely
regarded as perfection. Calligraphers measured their art against Yaqt's standards. Shaykh Hamdallah was born in the eastern Turkish city of Amasya in 1439 or 1440, and there gained such a reputation that he instructed the Ottoman prince Bayazid, who was governor of Amasya until 1481. When Bayazid became sultan, Shaykh Hamdallah moved with him to Istanbul, where he was honored with the same lofty epithet that Yaqt had enjoyed, "qiblah of the calligraphers," and where he must have been director of the imperial library. He enjoyed enormous favor and high salary and during the next three decades is said to have completed forty-six entire Qur'ans and a thousand sections of the scripture. He was also an active and apparently gifted teacher, training not only his own close relations but also many well-known scribes who perpetuated his styles as he had perpetuated Yaqt's. The high point of his career coincides with the reign of Sultan Bayazid II (1481-1512), and he remained an intimate companion of that often beleaguered ruler throughout his reign. He lived on until 1519, and despite his close association with Bayazid, he probably also served under his fractious son and successor, Selim the Grim (r. 1512-1520).

This magnificent Qur'an's colophon unfortunately provides neither date nor name of patron, but it does identify the copyist as "Shaykh Hamdallah ibn Mustafa, the perfect hajji and the head of the scribes." Most of the book's 278 pages are written in 13 lines of superbly measured naskh enclosed in simple gold-and-blue borders, but surah headings indicate that a master illuminator was Shaykh Hamdallah's collaborator. Their finest joint achievement is, appropriately, the book's opening pages (illustrated) presenting the Qur'an's initial surah and the first verses of its second. Since the manuscript is of the highest quality and its colophon identifies the calligrapher as "head of the scribes," it is an altogether reasonable assumption that this Qur'an, one of a very few extant early Ottoman royal Qur'ans, was made for Bayazid, probably in the last decade of his turbulent reign. Plagued by feuding sons and many wars, the aging sultan must have found a measure of calm in the harmony and clarity of the illuminator's ordered relationships and in the balance and restrained elegance of Shaykh Hamdallah's naskh.

A. W.

1. Qiblah is a term identifying the direction of Mecca and, hence, the prayer wall of a mosque. The "qiblah of calligraphers" would have been the acknowledged master, one whose work was looked on as a model by all other scribes.

2. A hajj is a Muslim who has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina.

Young Falconer
Attrib. to Wali Jan
Turkey; second half 16th century
Page: H. 11.9 cm., W. 5.9 cm.
Miniature: H. 10.2 cm., W. 3.2 cm.

The simurgh (a phoenix-like mythical bird) trailing long feathers in the sky is usually a symbol of mystical awareness. Here, however, the myth’s other side is shown, and the giant bird is at least rapacious, if not actually malevolent. The small birds are more frightened of it than they are of the falcon nonchalantly perched on the young man’s hand. The youth seems no heavier than the falcon: he balances weightlessly on the tip of one boot as the tree curves around his courtly form and caressingly supports him. The elegant falcon hunt in a springtime setting is a common theme in Islamic art,¹ and the idling, beautiful youth is an even more common image in sixteenth-century Iranian culture.

Sixteenth-century Ottoman drawings, of which this is a superb example, are far less well known than historical miniatures. The present example invites an attribution to Shah Quli, a Tabriz contemporary of the great Safavid master Sultan Muhammad. He went to Rum (Turkey) in the early sixteenth century and in time became the director of the “House of Painting” of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566). A drawing of a playful dragon is in the album made for Bahram Mirza in the Topkapi Palace Museum, and it bears an attribution to him in the knowledgeable hand of Master Dust Muhammad, who prepared the album for Shah Tahmasp’s brother.² Unfortunately the dragon’s spirited, bold line differs considerably from the finer, harder, and less spontaneous handling of the present work, which more closely resembles signed and inscribed pictures by Shah Quli’s follower, Wali Jan, to whom we must tentatively assign it.³

S. C. W. and A. W.

1. See cat. no. 56.
3. For two closely related drawings, see P. W. Schulz, Die persisch-türkischen Miniaturen (Leipzig, 1914), vol. 2, pl. 146 (middle and left).

Published: Anthony Welch, Collection, vol. 5, tr. M. 66.
6 / Portrait of Sultan Selim II
By Ra’is Haydar
Turkey, Istanbul; ca. 1570
Page: H. 44.1 cm., W. 31.2 cm.
Miniature: H. 37.4 cm., W. 24.5 cm.

The long reign of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566) had seen the Ottoman empire reach the apogee of its power and prestige in Europe and the Muslim world, and his successor, Selim II (r. 1566–1574), inherited at the age of forty-two a state possessed of enormous wealth and a superb administrative apparatus. There was relative peace in Europe and Asia, and though the Ottomans were briefly set back by the naval defeat at Lepanto, their domination of the Mediterranean continued. Selim II was neither a ghazi (fighter for Islam) nor an administrator, and he left details of governance to his capable naṣir Mehmet Sokullu. The sultan’s inordinate fondness for wine earned him the epithet Selim the Sot, but he was a competent poet and a discerning patron. Under his aegis the crowning achievement of Ottoman architecture—the Selimiye Mosque in Edirne—was built by the empire’s greatest architect, Sinan, and his architecture, music, calligraphy, and the other arts flourished at the court in Istanbul.

About midway in his eight-year reign the sultan posed for this portrait in the Topkapı Palace. An attendant wearing a green outer garment and a brilliant red hat stands behind him, and a servant, also in green, is barely visible in the arched doorway at the far left. Justifying his nickname, the corpulent sultan holds a cup of wine in his left hand, and his expression indicates that he has already been drinking. His brilliant scarlet coat is striped with short, wavy, dark red lines. In the upper left niche in the painting is written a talismanic formula against bookworms: ”Ya kahkāch.” It was probably added in the late sixteenth century, when the portrait was bound in an album.1

In the Islamic empires of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, princes and high officials and officers were commonly amateur artists as well as patrons. The best-known painter under Selim II, particularly famed for his portraiture, was a former naval captain, Ra’is Haydar, known as Nigar, who had become director of the imperial shipyards in Istanbul.2 He executed a powerful portrait of the great admiral Khayr al-Din Barbarossa, wearing a similar striped red garment, before the commander’s death in 1546.3 On stylistic grounds this painting of Selim II is firmly attributable to him and must be ranked as one of the superb achievements of Ottoman portraiture.4

A. W.
The Ottoman Army Marches on Tunis
By 'Ali
Turkey, Istanbul: 1581
From the Shahnamah-i Selim Khan, folio 65a
Page: H. 32.9 cm., W. 21.9 cm.
Miniature: H. 26.9 cm., W. 18.8 cm.

Ottoman rulers were keenly interested in detailed histories of their reigns, and as in sixteenth-century Mughal India, the illustration of historical works was a major occupation for court painters. Loqman was the most highly regarded of Ottoman historians and had already written a number of royal historical works when he was commissioned by Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–1574) to compose a chronicle of his reign. Completed in 1581 during the reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595), the Shahnamah-i Selim Khan was modeled on the verse of Firdau’s epic Shahnamah. The book’s introduction contains valuable information on Ottoman historiography as well as on the strict superintendence hedging the author: despite his established reputation, Loqman had to submit samples of his writing and his prospectus for the text to Sultan Selim and to the chief Ottoman religious authority, and the scribe and painters had to obtain similar royal approval before the project could begin.

The largest part of the Shahnamah-i Selim Khan is preserved in Istanbul, but a number of pages are dispersed in several public and private collections. This page was originally folio 65a of the manuscript. A great strategic and commercial center for North Africa, Tunis had first come under direct Ottoman suzerainty in 1534 but had been only briefly held, for the Ottomans’ western rival, Hapsburg Spain, gained effective control of the city in the following year. In 1569 a powerful Ottoman army under General ‘Ubaj ‘Ali marched west and retook the city, and it is this march toward Tunis that is illustrated here. Two master painters provided the miniatures. The senior of them, Osman, can be considered the finest and most innovative of Ottoman histor-
ical painters, working with him was his brother-in-law 'Ali, who painted in a closely similar style and was responsible for this page. In general, Ottoman painting centered on histories, portraits, and scenes of official life and, as a result, early developed a penchant for historical and geographic accuracy and a predilection for factual reporting and straightforward, uncomplicated naturalism.

A. W.

1. Selim II is portrayed in cat. no. 6.
2. Though unfortunately no longer complete, the Şahname-i Selim Khan is preserved in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Ms. III A 1547. For an analysis of the manuscript and its place in the history of Ottoman art, see Filiz Çıçitmen-Cağman, "Selim-i Sesli Han ve Minaatîrârî." Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı, no. 5, Istanbul, 1975, pp. 413-42; and Nurhan Atasoy and Filiz Çıçitmen, Turkish Miniature Painting (Istanbul, 1975), pp. 34-36. I am indebted to Nurhan Atasoy for identifying this page as folio 69a of the Selim Khan manuscript.


8 / An Ottoman Official
Turkey; ca. 1560
Page: H. 29 cm., W. 17 9 cm.
Miniature: H. 22.3 cm., W. 13 cm.

This is a person of substance. His brown robe is lined with white fur, and his lavender turban is huge. His feet are barely visible beneath his voluminous robes, and the book in his left arm indicates that he is a man of learning. Though he is unidentified on the miniature, he must have been an official of importance, for he stands under a golden arch, and everything about him indicates wealth and position.

This portrait was once mounted in an album. On its reverse is a page from Sa'di’s Gulistan. Although most of the text is badly effaced, a few lines of legible poetry identify it as story 31 from part 2:

A man, being tormented by a contrary wind in his belly and not having the power to restrain it, unwittingly allowed it to escape. He said: "Friends, I had no option in what I did, the fault of it is not to be ascribed to me and peace has resulted to my internal parts. Kindly excuse me."

The belly is a prison of wind, O wise man.
No sage retains wind in captivity.
If wind twists thy belly let it out,
Because wind in the belly is a burden to the heart.

8 /
The witty story presumably had no bearing on the individual portrayed here.

A. W.


9 / A Manuscript of the *Tuhfat ul-Leta'if*

Turkey: 1593–1594

H. 34.5 cm., W. 21.9 cm.

The twenty-one-year reign of Sultan Murad III (1574–1595) was a period of high achievement in Ottoman culture, particularly in the art of manuscript painting, of which the king was an enthusiastic and cultivated patron. Manuscripts made in the imperial studio in the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul ranged widely in subject: official histories of sultans and their accomplishments; portraits of the sultans; accounts of royal festivals; books on astrology and prophecy; religious history; and works of literature. Lütfi 'Abdullah was the director of the palace studio, and among his chief painters were Osman and 'Ali.

The *Tuhfat ul-Leta'if* is a collection of tales composed by 'Ali ibn Naskib Hamza during the reign of Sultan Murad II (1421–1451). They center on the romance of Shah Ramin, son of the king of Ghazni, and Mah Parvin, daughter of the king's vizier Shahruz. The names of all the chief characters in the stories are Iranian, and it is likely that the author gathered together a number of episodes that were popular in fifteenth-century Turkey and Iran. Nothing is known of the author save his name, and this manuscript is apparently the only extant copy of his work, which in itself gives it great literary and bibliographic significance. It is also one of the finest illustrated manuscripts from the sixteenth-century Ottoman Empire, and therefore a work of major importance for the history of Ottoman and Islamic art. The text is written in a simple, popular prose with occasional passages of poetry. Although the colophon does not name the scribe, who copied the book in a very firm, clear, large naskh, it states in a versified chronogram that the manuscript was produced in the palace studio of Murad III and finished in the year 1593–1594 (A.H. 1002). The book comprises three hundred pages and is illustrated with eight double-page and sixty-one single-page paintings. None of the pictures is signed, but their high quality makes it likely that artists of the stature of Lütfi 'Abdullah and Osman were among the illustrators. The volume was bound by a master binder. The following pages are illustrated here:
9 / folios 228b–237a: Saruye Shah summons the demons to aid him against Shah Ramin

9 / folios 252b–253a: Kayter Khan receives Shah Ramin in his pavilion
10 / Musical Gathering

Turkey, Istanbul; early 18th century
Page: H. 38.2 cm., W. 24.4 cm.
Miniature: H. 26.4 cm., W. 17 cm.

Instrumental music is frequently depicted in Islamic painting, with the musicians shown either as figures in larger gatherings or alone. Here we see two players—a young man with tambourine and a young woman with an éktar—but since two of the three standing women look toward the left, this picture may have been the right half of a double-page frontispiece whose left side would have revealed the audience, either a small court party or two princely lovers. The two cypresses and the flowering trees (their blossoms looking like sugar wafers) are standard love-metaphors in Islamic painting, and the dense, allower blanket of grass and plants is typical of later Ottoman work.

Earlier Ottoman painting focused on naturalistic accounts of military campaigns, natural settings, court ceremonies, and officials and sultans. This factual and mundane emphasis was altered during the reign of Sultan Ahmad III (1703–1730), who maintained a sophisticated atelier dominated by his refined taste, which tended toward themes more akin to those in seventeenth-century Iranian painting. During the so-called Tulip Period (1728–1730), themes of worldly elegance, courtly amusements, and idle beauty predominate, in striking contrast with the largely heroic and official content of earlier Ottoman painting.

A. W.

1. See cat. no. 37.
2. See cat. no. 27.
By the end of the ninth century—some two hundred and fifty years after the Muslim conquest—Iran had become one of the major creative centers of Islamic culture. Ceramics provide us with almost all our knowledge about Iranian painting before the end of the thirteenth century, but abundant extant calligraphies establish the Seljuk period (ca. 1055–1258) as one of the great creative eras for the arts of the pen as well. The Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century devastated Iran; not for decades did the land recover. Reigning under the dynastic name of Il-Khans, the descendants of the Mongols became some of Iran’s great patrons of the arts of the book, and the sixteenth-century painter Dost Muhammad looked back at the Il-Khanid age as the formative period of Iranian figural painting. Under Timurid kings and princes of the fifteenth century an ideal of royal patronage was established that remained fundamentally important for later painting in Iran and India. Of the many urban centers throughout Iran where painting flourished, the most important were Tabriz and Herat, at the end of the century the home of Bihzad, the most renowned of Islamic painters. Under the rule of the Safavi dynasty after 1501, Iran became a Shi’a Muslim state. The Prophet’s son-in-law Ali was now regarded as the first painter, as well as first calligrapher, and under several Safavid patrons the status of painting and painters approached that of calligraphy and calligraphers. Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576) is unquestionably the Safavids’ great patron of painting, and for the first twenty years of his reign he carefully assembled a brilliant atelier and directed its various traditions toward a creative synthesis of styles. The process can be read in his greatest achievement, the Houghton Shahnameh—the most sumptuous manuscript of the Shahnameh ever produced and one of the greatest treasures of world art. When in mid-reign the shah lost interest in these arts, a number of court artists emigrated to the Ottoman and Mughal empires, where they were instrumental in the creation of new styles for new patrons. Others sought alternative patronage within Iran, particularly at the court of Tahmasp’s brilliant nephew Ibrahim. During the brief reign of Tahmasp’s successor Isma’il II (1576–1577) the
tradition of the royal Shahnameh continued, but later Safavid painting under Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) and his successors was marked by increasing diversity of patronage, with the king's personal aesthetic no longer exercising as dominant a role. Shahs, princes, aristocrats, merchants, soldiers, officials, professionals, and artists numbered among late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century patrons, and they largely turned their support from lengthy illustrated manuscripts to less time-consuming and less expensive single-page paintings and drawings, intended to be bound in albums. This development of individual, self-contained pictures as works of art was also underway in contemporary India. In both states these transformations in patronage and format were accompanied by a heightened sense of artistic self-awareness, expressed through more signed or ascribed work and through an increase in the number of art-historical chronicles. Europe, and to a lesser extent India, affected Iranian painting style in the seventeenth century, but Europeanizing became most pronounced under the nineteenth-century Qajar dynasty. It was then, too, that the widespread adoption of printing eroded the traditional art and patronage of calligraphy, painting, and the precious book.

A. W.

11 / Page from a Qur'an
Iran; late 11th century
Page: H. 30.7 cm., W. 22.7 cm.
Calligraphy: H. 21.7 cm., W. 14.5 cm.

What is loosely called Kufic—the heavy, angular, and monumental style of Arabic script that was used in all Qur'ans until the eleventh century—had many variants, all written according to careful canons of proportion and rhythm. The unfortunately dispersed manuscript from which this page comes was one of the great achievements of Qur'anic calligraphy and Iranian culture. Light blue tendrils form a dense but delicately drawn background that opens up into lush blossoms. Across this image of natural beauty, its balanced composition perhaps intended to reflect divine order, moves the measured elegance of the text. The verses illustrated here, from the Qur'an's surah al-Ma'ida (5:44–45), deal with Allah's earlier revelation of the Torah. The text on the two sides of this page begins on the reverse and continues on the side illustrated:

(reverse) . . . as they were hidden to observe, and thereunto were they witnesses.
So fear not mankind, but fear Me.
And harken not My revelations for a little gain. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed:
The text is written on paper, and the script style resembles the Kufic on Samanid pottery bowls of the same period. It is probably correct to assume that this manuscript was also produced in northeastern Iran, perhaps in Mashhad, where at least one other Qur'an in a closely allied style was written. The Kufic here is composed of steep, strong, and mostly straight verticals, with compacted horizontals that hug their base line. Those letters that descend below the line do so almost invariably with an incisive cut. The whole effect is one of discipline, control, and stately self-assurance. It is an aesthetic entirely suited to the scripture that formed the basis of Islamic societies.

A. W.

2. For a recent discussion of these bowls, see Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1979), nos. 9, 10.
3. For another page from this Qur'an and a discussion of the related Mashhad Qur'an, see Welch, Calligraphy, no. 13, where other pages dispersed among many private and public collections are listed.

12 / Fragment of a Qur'an
Iraq or Iran; 12th century
Page: H. 25.4 cm., W. 19.5 cm.

This double page begins the thirtieth and final juz' (section) of the Qur'an. It commences with the initial verses from the surah al-Naba' (Tidings), 78:1–5, which warns disbelievers of the pains awaiting them in the hereafter:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Whereof do they question one another?
(If it is) of the awful tidings,
Concerning which they are in disagreement.
Nay, but they will come to know!
Nay, again, but they will come to know!
Portait of Sultan Selim II. Cat. no. 6

Mah Parvin and Ruzbin receive pearls from human-headed sea monster. Cat, no. 9, folio 177b
Fragment of a Qur'an. Cat. no. 12

Lovers in a Storm. Cat. no. 21
A manuscript of the Qur'an. Cat. no. 26
Thirty-four additional pages, most of them nonsequential, are bound in a simple leather binding of the late eighteenth or nineteenth century. They include two other illuminated pages and ten illuminated sarah (chapter) headings. No other pages from this great medieval Qur'an are known, but the surviving thirty-six pages give ample indication that it was one of the finest achievements of Qur'anic calligraphy and illumination.

To the unknown scribe, aesthetic criteria were more significant than easy legibility; for these letters particularly difficult to read he supplied, directly above or below, a small light blue equivalent in naskh style, legibly written in its independent form. Vowels and diacritical marks are added in bright red, providing a lively counterpart of color to the somber black Kufic. The curvilinear naskh had long emerged from clerical use into acceptability as a formal script style, but the monumental Kufic was still preferred for stone epigraphs or for lapidary elegance on light brown paper Qur'ans. Here, against a muted and discreet repetitive background of tiny arabesques, the script moves with sonorous stasis, confining itself within its right-hand, upper, and lower borders but asserting preeminence by overrunning the illuminated margins on the left. Elongated horizontals, emphatic diagonals, and deliberately aligned verticals create a compelling sequence of stark beauty.

Although the script is uniformly impressive throughout the surviving pages of this great Qur'an, the opening of the thirtieth juz' (and, presumably, of the twenty-nine sections that have not survived) required illumination, and the illuminator was an artist of the highest caliber. The two halves are mirror-images, rendered with impressive exactitude. In the far right- and left-hand margins are three annas (roundels): the two central medallions identify the juz', and the other four are filled with carefully balanced vegetal arabesques. The upper border, directly over the written portion of each page, is bounded by intertwined gold “chains” and contains two blue circles flanking a central blue oval. Within the oval, in the interstices of extremely complex interlace, is written the basic identification of the sarah. In these margin illuminations, intricate gold interlacing and a restrained use of blue, white, and red create complex patterns of total harmony that suggest the medieval fascination with mathematics as a distant revelation of divine order.

A. W.


After 1335 Il-Khan domination of Iran and adjacent areas rapidly disintegrated. The several smaller powers that succeeded it were not strong enough to repel the 1391–1392 invasions and conquest of Iran by Timur (Tamerlane). Subsequent resistance to Timurid rule in western Iran and Iraq was largely led by a gifted strategist and patron of Il-Khan descent, Sultan Ahmed Jala’ir, who struggled with Timur for control of Baghdad and Tabriz and the lands between the two cities. Like his opponent, Timur was a connoisseur of the arts and established a tradition of princely Timurid patronage that was to pass ultimately to the Mughals of India.

This tumultuous pen-and-ink drawing includes no written information about patron, artist, place of origin, or date. In the illuminated margins six panels contain inscriptions in well-composed ta’lq script—verses from a fine poem in matnani meter that has, however, nothing whatever to do with the drawing’s subject matter and could not have been composed before the end of the fifteenth century. The drawing was produced either as a single page for an admiring connoisseur or as a leaf for a munqiq (album) of paintings, drawings, and calligraphies; the borders were pasted on at a later date.

Idyllic calm is the prevailing atmosphere in fifteenth-century illustrations of literary manuscripts. But this drawing offers only a few instances of relief from a scene of compounded desperation: the two ducks in the lower center appear quite unperturbed by the turmoil around them, while the simurgh above them gazes fixedly off into the distance. At the left a lion savages a deer, whose mate screams helplessly. Two monkeys chatter and gesticulate. At the right a lone, bearded man, armed only with a short knife, clutches a dragon’s throat, and a pair of ducks swoops through a stormy sky. The thick vegetation is equally threatening and equally charged with energy.

This masterful drawing, perhaps illustrating an oral tale never recorded and now lost, stands near the beginning of the great Iranian tradition of draftsmanship and can be compared with other contemporary drawings. It was most likely executed in northwestern Iran in the early fifteenth century. Sultan Giyath al-Din Ahmed Jala’ir, who died in 1409, may have been the patron, but there were probably other cultured Jala’irids who could have commissioned such a work.

A. W.
1. Two groups of albums in Istanbul and Berlin contain drawings in similar style. See M. S. Ispirglu, Sonya Allen: Dzietsche Kulturhutte aus den Berliner Sammlungen (Wiesbaden, 1948), and idem, Painting and Culture of the Mongols (New York, 1969).

2. See cat. no. 55 and the well-known margins of the seven-page Drum in the Freer Gallery of Art made for Sultan Ahmed Jalal ur (see Frederick R. Martin, Miniatures from the Period of Timur in 14 th c. of the Paints of Sultan Ahmad Jalal (Vienna, 1960); and Benoist Gray, Persian Painting (Geneva, 1963), p. 149).


25 / Monkeys Taunting a Lion
Iran; early 15th century
Page: H. 28.1 cm., W. 20.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 24.1 cm., W. 15.6 cm.

Two bemused monkeys reach out of a tree and tease an outraged lion by shaking leaves in his face. Although the animals dominate the composition, their humorous antics gain from the enchanted landscape with its vibrant patterns of tall grass, two furry trees, and rocks containing gentle grotesques. As in the last, less restrained, drawing which may have been commissioned by the same Jalal urd patron, the theme may derive from such moralizing animal fables as those of the Kalila wa Dimna, which were popular throughout the Islamic world and were among the earliest illustrated Muslim books.

The popularity of this drawing is attested by a later copy, preserved in one of the great albums in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library in Istanbul. Two other drawings from this source, one of a leopard, the other of a tiger, can be ascribed to the same spirited hand. Stylistically, they belong to the school centered in Tabriz, in northwestern Iran, the western wing of Persian painting which was to blend with that of the east, centered at Herat, in the new artistic synthesis under the Safavid dynasty.

S. C. W. and A. W.

1. Album H. 2152, 15/10.

16 / A Manuscript of Firdausi’s *Shahnamah*

Iran, Shiraz; 1457

H. 33.5 cm., W. 24.5 cm.

This well-known copy of Firdausi’s epic is also well traveled. According to its colophon, the text was completed on the first day of the month of Rabi’ al-Awwal 861 (27 January 1457) by the scribe Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Jamali, and the manuscript’s fifty-three illustrations clearly establish that scribe and painters were working in the southern Iranian cultural center of Shiraz, probably under the patronage of the Turcoman governor Pir Budaq. Although Shiraz enjoyed a somewhat less turbulent history than Iran’s capital cities, it still suffered periods of unrest during which this *Shahnamah* might have been appropriated or its owner might have spirited it away. It turned up in India, and we next hear of it in about 1775, being given to John Shore, Baron Teignmouth (1751–1854), by his instructor in Indian languages. It may have been used to teach the baron Persian. Sailing on the Ganges, Teignmouth’s boat capsized, and the book was dunked: most of its margins are water-stained as a result. The rescued manuscript returned to Britain with its owner, who in old age lent it to the nineteenth-century Orientalist Sir William Ouseley. In 1952 the Teignmouth *Shahnamah* moved to New York as part of the Kovekian collection, and in 1965 it entered Prince Sadraddin’s collection.

The manuscript’s 554 pages are mostly written in four columns of twenty-five lines to a page in a crisply distinguished nasta’liq. All that is known about Mahmud ibn Muhammad, the scribe, is that he copied two other manuscripts, dated to 1453 and 1463.²

The anonymous illuminator was perhaps the most talented of the artists who worked on this *Shahnamah*. His illuminated double page beginning the text (illustrated) is a masterfully balanced creation in the Timurid tradition. The two dominant tones—dark blue and gold—are equal in emphasis, and the horizontal and vertical design patterns are intricatedly interlocked. In the outer margins a restrained orange and green alternate in tempered company, and the multicolored arabesque is small and strong. The two pages are nearly mirror images, but there are subtle and intriguing differences between them.

A single painter, appropriately dubbed the Teignmouth Painter by Basil W. Robinson, was responsible for fifty of the manuscript’s illustrations. Despite some damage to the page, his miniature of the simurgh rescuing the abandoned infant Zal (fol. 33a, illustrated) indicates that he was an innovative master working within the continuing Timurid traditions of mid-fifteenth-century Shiraz. His dominant role in this manuscript, as well as his contributions to several other Shiraz manuscripts,³ demonstrates that he was one of the city’s major painters. Two other masters, working in
what Robinson has termed the 'Turkman' style, made less extensive additions to the book (the double-page frontispiece and two other miniatures). The Teignmouth Shahnamah is not only one of the earliest books produced for a Turcoman patron in Shiraz, it is also the major opus of the Teignmouth Painter and one of the few manuscripts that contain pictures in both the traditional Shiraz and the new 'Turkman' styles.

A. W.

1. The scholarly significance of this manuscript has been established by Basil W. Robinson in several publications: Persian Paintings (London, 1951); Persian Drawings (New York, 1961), pp. 26–28; and Persian Miniature Painting (London, 1967), pp. 91–92.


17 / Golandam and a Man Who Loves Her

Iran; 1477

From a manuscript of Ibn Husam's Khamsa

Page: H. 40 cm., W. 26 cm.

Miniature: H. 20.5 cm., W. 28.4 cm.

Sitting in a stream flowing past a cypress and a flowering tree is a half-clothed man, his outer garments and his turban neatly laid on the ground behind him. The foliage is dense and diverse in kind—broad-leaved plants of various sorts with scattered orange blossoms, all of them flat and rather two-dimensional. From the tent at the left comes a woman in blue who is partially concealing her face. Tents and figures are likewise rendered with little sense of depth or volume. The text is written in a good nastaliq.

The illustration originally belonged to a copy of the Khamsa of Ibn Husam, an epic life of 'Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law and one of the central saints and heroes of Shi'a Islam. It is composed in the same meter as Firdausi's Shahnamah. It is probable that the manuscript was copied and illustrated in a Sufi center near Herat in present-day Afghanistan. Its illustrations reflect one of several styles of painting current in late fifteenth-century Iran that had a formative influence on the development of Safavid painting.

A. W.
Two pages from a *Shahnamah* for Sultan Mirza 'Ali

(A) Zawarah in the Hunting Ground of Siyavush
(B) Rustam Falls Ashkabus

Page: H. 34.6 cm., W. 24.5 cm.
Miniature: H. 23.4 cm., W. 15.2 cm.

There was an impressive diversity of art and patronage in late fifteenth-century Iran. The Timurids in their capital of Herat in the east supported the logical and brilliantly naturalistic painting of Behzad, while the Aq Qoyunlu Turcomans in Tabriz in the west encouraged less cerebral and more evocative art. Provincial areas, without long traditions of independent politics or art, were active too; among them was Gilan, on the southern shores of the Caspian. In 1499 a *Shahnamah* of enormous size, originally containing about 350 illustrations in 2 volumes, was completed for Sultan Mirza 'Ali, who included on the colophon his name and that of the scribe, Sāfī ʿAm Saʿīd, a competent though not outstanding master. Many painters provided the illustrations: the sultan obviously supported a large and vigorous atelier.

From this atelier, by two unidentified artists, come the two paintings illustrated here. Master A was clearly more interested in a complex landscape than in spatial logic: the horse at the left has no legs; the central soldier hovers above the ground; while the horse at the right has become hopelessly entangled as it floats through the branches.

Master B seeks to avoid spatial problems altogether. He presents an essentially empty plain, made remarkable by a pattern of coursing arrows from Rustam’s Iranians on the right and Ashkabus’s Turanians at the left. But as our eyes move up and off the “ladder” of arrows, our attention is held by intricate rocks in the background: these are filled with animal and human faces endowed with far more individuality and vitality than those of the fighting warriors. The product of a century-old Iranian tradition, these face-enlivened rocks continue as an important element in Iranian painting well into the sixteenth century.

A.W.
1. The two volumes of the manuscript are now divided between the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (Ms. no. 1973) and the University Library (Ms. no. 2954), both in Istanbul. A large number of illustrations were removed from the Shahnameh about sixty years ago. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Martin B. Dickson and Stuart C. Welch, The Houghton Shahnameh (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), 1:27, 239 n. 2.

Published: Anthony Welch, Collectors, vol. 3, tr. M. 60 and tr. M. 60/a.

19 / Two Lynx and Two Antelope

By Bihzad

Iran, Herat; ca. 1495
Page: H. 9.5 cm., W. 13.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 6.7 cm., W. 12 cm.

Apparently salvaged from a larger drawing, this small work was subsequently mounted in an album, almost certainly the royal maraqqa compiled on the order of Shah Tahmasp’s brother Bahram Mirza by the painter and calligrapher Dust Muhammad in 1546. It was probably then that this fragment was supplied with the information at the top: “A picture by the humble Bihzad after the work of Maulana Wali.” Bihzad is traditionally regarded as the greatest of Iranian painters. He dominated Timurid and Safavid court ateliers in Herat and Tabriz for more than forty years and is the subject of generally approving comment in many sixteenth-century sources. Although his contemporary, Maulana Wali, is seldom mentioned, Bihzad himself obviously regarded him as a talent worth copying. The most significant reference to him is by the Mughal emperor Babur’s cousin, Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat: “Master Shaykh Ahmad, brother of Baba Haji, and Maulana Junayd and Master Husam al-Din the poignard maker, and Maulana Wali—all these are skilled masters and no one of them is superior to the other.”

The pose of the two deer suggests that Bihzad addressed his admiration to Maulana Wali’s illustration of “Bahram Gur’s Master Shot,” one of the more spectacular hunting episodes in Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh. Neither rock nor tree conforms to usual notices of Bihzad’s art but instead reflects more conventional Timurid types: Maulana Wali must have been a more traditional artist.

On the reverse are four lines of poetry, followed by an illuminated heading and a portion of a colophon. The colophon does not identify the text but does mention the scribe, Sultan Muhammad Khandan, one of the eminent early Safavid calligraphers, and gives a date equivalent to March–April 1302.

A. W. and S. C. W.
20 / Portrait of Hafiz

By Bihzad

Iran: 1511–1521

Page: H. 11.8 cm., W. 7.7 cm.
Miniature: H. 9.4 cm., W. 6 cm.

"A portrait of Maulana 'Abdullah Hafiz. The work of Master Bihzad."

This inscription above and below the painting was written about 1546 by the Safavid painter-calligrapher Dast Muhammad, who chose to include this tiny portrait in the great album he put together for Bahram Mirza, the brother of Shah Tahmasp. It supplies crucial information, and there seems no reason to doubt its authenticity.

Hafiz was the son of the sister of Jami, the mystical poet who enjoyed the patronage of Sultan Husayn Bayqara in late fifteenth-century Herat. Though less famed than his uncle, Hafiz enjoyed a considerable reputation. He was the author of a Tariqnameh (an epic celebrating the exploits of Tamerlane), which he tactfully composed for his Timurid patron, Sultan Husayn, and also of several other long poems on traditional themes. A Shi'a Muslim, Hafiz was visited in 1511 by the first Safavid shah, Ismail, who had conquered Herat and the province of Khorasan. On that occasion the poet recited a thousand-line panegyric on his new king, and it is likely that the present portrait commemorates the event. The turban he wears in this portrait includes the characteristic baton of the Safavids, presumably donned by the poet to proclaim his allegiance.

Bihzad was probably born about the middle of the fifteenth century in or near Herat, and his talent was recognized early. His initial patron appears to have been Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i, the great poet and qādīr of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, but by 1485 he was receiving commissions from the sultan himself. He continued in Timurid service until 1507, when Herat was conquered by the Uzbeks, for whose leader, Shaysun Khan, he presumably worked until the city fell to the Safavids in 1510. The future Shah Tahmasp was appointed nominal governor of the city in 1516, when he was not quite two years old; he returned to the Safavid capital at Tabriz in 1522 accom-
panned by Bihzad, who was subsequently appointed director of the royal library. He clearly had a hand in training Tahmasp as a painter, and he exercised enormous influence over the development of Safavid painting. He died in 1536.

Bihzad was a masterful observer of hands, and Hāfiz’s gesture in this portrait conveys a gentle self-assurance and composure appropriate to a man who had known years of high favor. His face is lined; his eyes are tired; and his beard is rendered in a meticulous blend of tones, characteristic of Bihzad’s precision.

S. C. W. and A. W.

1. On the reverse is a fragment of superb illumination, datable to about 1540. This miniature is discussed at length in Martin B. Dickeon and Stuart C. Welch, The Ilkhānate (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 134, 145, 240 n. 12.

21 / Lovers in a Storm
Attrib. to Shaykh Zadah
Iran, Tabriz; ca. 1525
From a manuscript of the Divan of Sana’i
Page: H. 20.3 cm., W. 19.5 cm.
Miniature: H. 18 cm., W. 11.2 cm.

On the reverse of this miniature is a poem describing a journey, from the Divan of Sana’i, a Persian mystical poet who died in 1331. This painting was presumably once part of an illustrated manuscript of Sana’i’s Divan made for the young Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576), who commissioned sumptuous editions of many classics of Iranian literature during the first two decades of his reign. 1 It can be attributed on grounds of style to Shaykh Zadah, a major court artist who was the most faithful follower of Bihzad. 2 Both came into Tahmasp’s service in Tabriz in 1522, and Shaykh Zadah contributed a large number of paintings to the manuscripts produced under Tahmasp’s aegis until the latter 1529, when he left Tabriz in order to join the Uzbek at Bukhara.

Two comically monstrous demons create a storm of wind and rain to assail a ship carrying a pair of lovers, four other passengers, and a crew of three. The landscape is sparse and ambiguous, though rendered with total clarity; spatial relationships and emotional conditions are expressively defined. The figures so closely resemble those in a painting ascribed to Shaykh Zadah in a Divan of the poet Hāfiz, copied about 1527, that this unsigned picture could only be by Shaykh Zadah. This copy of Sana’i’s
Dinum must have been produced during the years when Shaykh Zadah was at the high point of his career.

S. C. W. and A. W.


2. See cat. no. 20.


22 / Two Pages from a Shahnamah for Shah Tahmasp

(A) Firdausi Encounters the Court Poets of Ghazna

(folio 7a)

Attrib. to Aqa Mirak
Iran, Tabriz; ca. 1532
Miniature: H. 26.7 cm., W. 23.5 cm.

(B) Rustam Pursues Akvan the Onager-Div (folio 294a)

Attrib. to Muzaffar 'Ali
Iran, Tabriz; ca. 1530-1535
Miniature: H. 26.8 cm., W. 17.3 cm.

These miniatures were among the 258 commissioned for a splendid copy of the poet Firdausi's epic, the Shahnamah (Book of Kings), at Tabriz between about 1522 and 1540. Probably initiated by Shah Isma'il (r. 1501-1524), founder of the Salavid state, the project was carried on and completed for his son and successor Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576). Although he was for years an enthusiastic painter as well as a deeply creative patron, Shah Tahmasp eventually forsook the art to concentrate upon piety and statecraft. In 1568 he presented this manuscript to the Ottoman Sultan Selim II. By 1903 it had left the Ottoman royal library and belonged to Baron Edmond de Rothschild, one of whose descendants sold it in 1939 to Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., after whom it is now known as the Houghton Shahnamah.

In the first painting, Firdausi is seen encountering the court poets of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, whose royal patronage he sought in order to complete the great Iranian epic. At first rude and suspicious, the picnicking poets challenged their visitor to cap a particularly difficult verse, a feat he accomplished so brilliantly that they reluctantly accepted him. Later, he met the sultan, impressed him, and was granted his patronage. The Shahnamah was finished in A.D. 1010.
22A / Firdausi encounters the court poets of Ghazna (also in color)

22B / Rustam pursues Alvran the monster-div (also in color)
Crisp, bright, and boldly composed as a handful of jewels scattered across the page, this miniature provides a lyrical yet majestic fanfare for the shah's grandest manuscript, to which it is the first illustration. Although such major artists as Aqa Mirak often employed assistants to color their designs or carry out lesser passages, this painting is entirely his work, a true masterpiece down to the last tuft of grass. It contains a portrait of the shah as a beardless young man, standing behind the poet at the right side of the composition. Inasmuch as Aqa Mirak, to whom we ascribe the picture on grounds of style, was on terms of friendship as well as service with his patron and was also a noted portrait painter, it is not surprising that he was honored with this prestigious assignment. Happily, Aqa Mirak was retained in the royal ateliers during the years of Shah Tahmasp's disinclination for painting. For a large miniature for a Fathnamah designed and partly carried out by him, see catalogue number 25.

In a second miniature from this Shahnama we see the illustrious Iranian hero Rustam bearing down upon the wicked and wily Akvan, a drak (demon) who had taken on the form of an onager, or wild ass, and was attacking the herds of the Iranian shah Kay Khusraw. Akvan turned, snake-like, and sighted his pursuer, and just as Rustam's lasso touched him, he vanished.

Muzaffar 'Ali, to whom we assign this miniature, was of the second generation in the Safavid ateliers. Admired as a spiritual luminary, calligrapher, and chess player as well as artist, he united all his talents in this miniature. Its soaring buoyancy of design not only reveals a chess player's artistic planning but transcends the mere illustration of a spritely episode. Seeing it raises our spirits, and no small measure of the artist's accomplishment stems from his mastery of calligraphy's graceful curves, tripping runs, and snappy rhythms.

The artist's grasp of animal psychology, as well as movement, can be seen in the hatefully clever look of Akvan in contrast with the blithe innocence of the horses.

S. C. W.


23 / A Manuscript of the Khamsah of Nizami

Isan, Shiraz, 1527

H. 35.5 cm., W. 20.2 cm.

Shiraz was a major center of Iranian calligraphy and book illustration in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and it continued to preserve its
regional identity well into the sixteenth century. This impressive manu-
script of 404 pages has a black leather binding, contemporary with the
book, on whose spine are verses extolling Nizami’s poetry. According
to the book’s colophon, the nasta’liq text was written by Pir Husayn ibn Pir
Hasan al-Kitab al-Shirazi. The book’s illumination is of very high quality,
and it contains, as well, twenty-seven miniatures, all by the same painter
who signed the manuscript’s final illustration (fol. 383a) “Chiyath
Mudahlahih” (The Glide).2

As the Battle between Khosru and Bahram Chubinah indicates (fol. 66a,
illustrated), he was an artist still relatively untouched by the new painting
style evolving in the capital city, Tabriz, under the aegis of Shah Tahmasp.
The manuscript’s patron is not named. No Safavid prince was then resi-
dent in Shiraz, and the book was presumably produced for a highly placed
aristocrat or for the city’s governor.

A. W.

1. This scribe may possibly be identified with the copyist of a Shirvani
manuscript dated 1407 (a.h. 940) in Shiraz (see Noel W. Motteux, A Descriptive

2. Ibid., p. 132, cites an illuminator by the name of Ghayath al-Din Muhammad al-Shirazi in a
Gallery and Notes of South dated to 1537 (a.h. 945). He may also be the master discussed by
the late sixteenth-century chronicler Qadi Ahmad (Calligraphers and Painters, trans. Vladimir
Mudahlahi of Mashhad, the inventor of gold stippling, was unrivalled in painting and
(ornamental) gilding. He was the contemporary of the late Mauduna Sultan ‘Ali Mashadi. He
died on the last day of Jamadi I 942 (26 November 1535) in Holy Mashhad and was buried
beside Mauduna Sultan ‘Ali.”

PUBLISHER: Anthony Welch, Collection, vol. 4, Ms. 15.

24 / A Love Poem
By Shah Mahmud Nishapuri (1487–1564/65)
Iran, Tabriz or Mashhad; ca. 1540–1550
Page: H. 26.6 cm., W. 16.7 cm.
Calligraphy: H. 17.4 cm., W. 6.7 cm.

This elegant work was originally designed either as a single page or for
inclusion in a murqWar (album). It can be equally praised for its blue mar-
bleized and gold-flecked margins, its delicate floral corner illuminations,
and its nasta’liq style of script, identified in the lower left as the work of
Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, one of the foremost Safavid calligraphers and,
like many of his colleagues, a poet of reputed ability. One assumes that this
particular mediocre poem does not number among the efforts that earned
him a literary reputation:
O you, longing for whose face overwhelms my heart,  
May your face never be absent from my eyes.  
Since my soul’s eye becomes radiant from your face,  
How could my heart not covet union with you?  
Happy that moment, when fortune became my friend,  
And I see myself for a moment as a companion of your days.

The quality of calligraphy indicates why the late-sixteenth-century chronicler of the arts, Qādi Ahmad, felt justified in including Shah Mahmud (who had earned from Shah Tahmasp the honorific title Zarīn Qalam, or Golden Pen) with Sultan ‘Ali and Mir ‘Ali as one of the three great masters of early Safavid script.\(^2\) Evoking the world’s gentler motions, like falling leaves or ripples in a stream, maqā‘īṣ was in the sixteenth century the favored style of script for most of Iran’s great poetical manuscripts, as well as for its lesser and smaller works of lyric poetry.

Qādi Ahmad is our chief source of knowledge for the scribe, since he studied with Shah Mahmud on and off during the last eight years of the calligrapher’s life. Shah Mahmud was born in 1487 (A.H. 902) in Nishapur and studied the art of writing under his uncle Maulana ‘Abdī, who later attained high position at the court of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576). Through his talent and training and his uncle’s connections Shah Mahmud also got a post at the king’s court in Tabriz in the late 1520s, when the shah was devoting much of his time to the supervision of the arts. Qādi Ahmad specifically cites Shah Mahmud as the scribe of a copy of Nizāmi’s Khamsah, illustrated by the famed painter Bihzād, a later copy of the Khamsah, dated to 1539–1543 and adorned with works by the greatest painters of the Safavid court, bears his name on the colophon. He was a pious man: while in the king’s employ, he lived in a Tabriz madrasa (theological seminary), and after the shah lost interest in painting and calligraphy about 1545, the scribe moved to the great Shi‘a holy city of Mashhad, where he again inhabited a madrasa. He never married but preferred a reclusive life and in Mashhad supported himself by teaching and selling specimens of his art (of which this page may have been one) until his death in 1564–1565 (A.H. 1172).

A. W.

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1. We are indebted to Annemarie Schimmel for identifying and translating this poem.


References: Phyllis Ackerman, Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art (New York: The Iranian Institute, 1949).

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25 / A King Chased from the Tomb of a Saint  
By Aqā Mirāk  
Iran; mid-16th century  
From a manuscript of the Fātūn nāmah  
Page and miniature: H. 59.5 cm., W. 45 cm.

This dynamic giant miniature is from a copy of the Fātimnāmah (Book of Divination), traditionally ascribed, along with a number of other popular works on divination, magic, and alchemy, to the Shi‘a imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq. The text consists of omens and predictions arranged under the names of twenty-five prophets. Though princely patrons more often selected works of history or literary classics for illustration in their ateliers, numerous royal copies of texts with popular and even folkloristic appeal can be cited.\(^3\) In this instance, the patron must have been Shah Tahmasp himself, for the designer, project supervisor, and actual painter of many of the miniatures can be identified on grounds of style as Aqā Mirāk, one of the shah’s major masters and his closest friend among them.\(^4\) Although Shah Tahmasp’s disaffection from painting began in the mid-1540s, after the completion of his glorious Shāhnāmah and Khamsah of Nizāmi, it was not until his Edict of Sincere Repentance in 1556 that he foreswore most painting projects in favor of piety and statesmanship. It is not surprising, therefore, that the increasingly religious shah should have wanted a copy of the Fātimnāmah illustrated by Aqā Mirāk, his artist-friend, who was spared the general withdrawal of patronage.\(^5\)

Aqā Mirāk’s pictures for this unusually large manuscript are among his boldest compositions, although they lack the subtlety of finish and naturalistic observation of his most sustained pictures for the Shāhnāmah and Khamsah.\(^6\) Throughout his career Aqā Mirāk, following the practice of other Safavid masters, worked in two modes, one less detailed and less time-consuming than the other. Aqā Mirāk’s simplified idiom is seen here as well as in the majority of his contributions to Shah Tahmasp’s Shāhnāmah and in his two miniatures for the Haft Avarj of Jam‘ī, done in 1556–1565 and now in the Freer Gallery of Art.\(^7\) It depends for its appeal upon crisply defined areas of immaculate color—delicate and original combinations of off-grays, pinks, rose-violets, and tans, against which he silhouetted intense accents. Perhaps the most inventive designer in the history of Safavid painting, Aqā Mirāk enjoyed resolving seemingly impossible compositional challenges. At times it seems as though he began his pictures by casting forms helter-skelter onto the page. Here, however, he began calculatedly, with a symmetrical architectural structure into which he tossed a chaos of dynamic figures, windswept lamps, and the licks of flame from the saint’s hand which frighten the royal visitor from the tomb.
The unnerving subject of this remarkable picture must have conformed to the mood of Shah Tahmasp during the 1550s, when he suffered disturbing dreams and intense religiosity. A banner to the right of the spiraling composition is inscribed with an invocation to ‘All, proof of Shi’a allegiance. The text on the reverse of the miniature relates to the preceding miniature and to prophecy, exemplifying the nature of the volume. It begins with two couplets:

When the Prophet Moses threw his stick,  
It became a serpent and devoured the magicians.  
Due to this miracle, he became glorious and great;  
The Caucasian was pleased with him, and he made the people happy.

The remaining nine lines of text, written in an excellent, clear ta’liq, are a rather distant commentary on the couplets.  

Shah Tahmasp’s and Aga Mirak’s illustrations to the Fathnamah can be considered influential in the development of Islamic painting. A later version of almost the same size was made at the Ottoman court in a style echoing the spirit and numerous details of the Safavid prototype. One wonders, moreover, if the equally gigantic illustrations on cloth to the Mughal emperor Akbar’s Dastan-i-Amir Hamza were not inspired by Shah Tahmasp’s Fathnamah, particularly as production of the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza was directed by two former members of Tahmasp’s atelier who had gone to the Mughal court during the earlier years of the shah’s distaste for painting.  

S. C. W. and A. W.

1. For instance, the several manuscripts of the Masnavi of Hariri produced in various centers in the Near East in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the similarly outsized Fathnamah commissioned by the Mughal emperor Akbar early in his reign.
3. See Shah Tahmasp’s changing views toward painting, see Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh, 119.
5. The artist’s miniatures for the Poor Jami of 1555–1559 are illustrated in Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh, vol. I, figs. 163, 164.
6. Translation in Anthony Welch, Calligraphy, vol. 3, pt. M, 63. For other paintings from the same manuscript, see Ernst Grube, Muslim Miniature Painting (Venice, 1960), nos. 8–8 (wrongly ascribed to a series of illustrations to al-Nahshabani’s Lives of the Prophets). Edwin Binney, 3rd, Islamic Art from the Collection of Edmon Binney, 3rd (Washington, D.C., 1980), no. 41; and The Arts of Islam (exhib. cat., London: Hayward Gallery, 1978), no. 62, 2, b. It would be possible to reassemble at least a dozen paintings from this fascinating manuscript, which is represented in several public and private collections cited in the publications listed above.
8. There is a vast literature on this major Mughal set of paintings. See especially Heinrich Gluck, Die bedeutenden Miniaturen der Gemain-Khwa (Vienna, 1975); Gerhard Feiger, Historisches Nama (Graz, 1974); and Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh.
26 / A Manuscript of the Qur'an

Iran, ca. 1550–1570
H. 36.9 cm., W. 24.3 cm.

This manuscript, one of the most splendid of extant Safavid Qur'ans, unfortunately lacks a colophon identifying patron, date, or scribe. But its 328 pages are of such sustained excellence as to imply some princely patron—either Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576) or a connoisseur who, like the shah's nephew Ibrahim Mirza, had access to artists of the highest caliber.

The double-page frontispiece presents verses chosen from the Qur'an for their direct references to the uniqueness of the scripture. In gold cartouches at the top and bottom of each page is written in white thuluth four verses from surah al-Waqi'ah 56:77–80:

That this is indeed a noble Qur'an
In a Book kept hidden
Which none save the purified,
A revelation from the Lord of the Worlds.

The gold cartouches are enclosed in dark blue oblongs glittering with thin gold arabesques and small white, red, and yellow flowers; the corners of the oblongs contain crisp white and red arabesques of astonishing beauty.

On each page a central large light blue square, enlivened with thin yellow arabesques and red and white flowers, encloses a complex eight-lobed medallion also detailed with arabesques and various flowers. In the center of this sunburst of design is a bold circle inscribed in white naskhi with a single verse from surah Bani Israil' 17:86:

Verily, though mankind and the jinn
should assemble to produce the like
of this Qur'an, they could not produce
the like thereof though they were helpers
one of another.

It is not a standard frontispiece, and the verses must have been selected by a learned theologian.

Overleaf is a second double page, with the complete first surah written against a dark blue background filled with arabesques and structured by vertically undulating broad gold bands. Located in the center of each page is the text itself, inscribed in a thin naskhi:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent,
the Merciful.
Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds,
The Beneficent, the Merciful.
Owner of the Day of Judgment,
Thee (alone) we worship; Thee (alone) we ask for help.
Show us the straight path,
The path of those whom Thou hast favored;
not the (path) of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray.

There are 15 additional full-page illuminations, similarly colored but all highly individual in design, and a smaller illumination around the title of each of the 109 surats. These surah headings are inscribed in white naskh style script. The text itself on the less adorned pages is written in an excellent naskh, with twelve lines to the page. The patron for whom the book was made was evidently not a confident Arabist, for beneath the black naskh Arabic is an interlinear Persian translation, written in a much smaller red naskh-iq.

The manuscript presents a dazzling display of illumination and an equally impressive command of five different script styles.

A. W.


27 / A Brace of Elegants
Attrib. to Mirza 'Ali
Iran; ca. 1570–1574
(A) Young Man Reading a Book
Page and Miniature: H. 14.3 cm., W. 8.1 cm.
(B) Youth Playing an &al
Page: H. 34.4 cm., W. 23.7 cm.
Miniature: H. 21.7 cm., W. 11.3 cm.

Mirza 'Ali, to whom these romantically precious miniatures can be attributed, was one of the major Safavid artists of the second generation, whose career can be traced from the 1520s to his death in the mid-1570s, a year or so before the death of Shah Tahmasp. Throughout his career certain favorite characterizations were repeated in his pictures. One was a fox-faced bearded man, another a plump youth, and the third the youthful, somewhat epicene dandy found in these two idealized portraits. This young fop is always immaculately dressed and shod, in skin-tight robe and sole, pointed vermilion or buff shoes. His changes of appearance provide a history of Safavid thought and taste, for Mirza 'Ali's earlier versions are comparatively earthy, even stolid, as in the miniatures for Shah Tahmasp's
Shahnamah, painted in the 1520s and 1530s. During the more classical years represented by the British Library Shahnamah (Quintet) of Nizami, dated to 1535–1543, this lean young man became more credible, with true-to-life proportions and portrait-like features. Nevertheless, his appearances in the Quintet's elevated fashionable court scenes reveal manneristic tendencies. His neck begins to resemble a cone, his face and torso are feline, with a sinuous litheness that brings to mind Pontormo's Italian equivalents.

These suggestive characteristics become more extreme with the passage of time. When, following the shah's Edict of Sincere Repentance in 1556, Mirza 'Ali began working for the shah's nephew and son-in-law, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, the vogue for expressive distortion of form took hold, whipped along by the extravagant young patron's radical tastes. As time passed, the near-classicism admired by Shah Tahmasp gave way to wildness; this progression can be seen in the miniatures of the Freer Gallery's 1556–1565 Haft Awrang of Jami if we compare those painted in the 1530s with others created when the project neared its end.

In 1565 Shah Tahmasp turned against his erstwhile young favorite, son-in-law, and nephew, whose keen patronage of painting had given him vicarious pleasure. Sultan Ibrahim was exiled to Qazvin, a small oasis in Kuhistan, where he was nominally governor, under merely reduced circumstances. Later he was sent to Sabzvar, where he remained from 1567 to 1574. A few painters, fortunately, continued to serve him; and in 1565 much of his time was spent at Herat where, indeed, the colophon of "Layla and Majnun" (one of the seven books of the Haft Awrang) was written. Nevertheless, the deprived Sultan Ibrahim is said to have consoled himself with pious acts; and the works of two particularly devoted artists who continued to serve him betray moods of nostalgic longing. Along with the more aggressive Shaykh Muhammad, who served his saddened master as a virtual artistic alter ego, Mirza 'Ali provided consolation during these bleak times.

Mirza 'Ali's Young Man Reading a Book must have brought moments of pleasure, even at Sabzvar. The courtly young man sits trim, limber, and erect, yet seems as sweetly vulnerable as the poppy drooping under its own weight in his turban. As always, however, Mirza 'Ali's figure is anatomically convincing, with each bone, sinew, and muscle logically portrayed and, in this instance, lending flexibility and implying stamina. Inasmuch as Sultan Ibrahim Mirza survived his exile and returned to the shah's favor at Qazvin, where he was appointed to high office in 1574, one might consider Mirza 'Ali's characterization significant of good times ahead. In the meantime, too, the lad's spirits seem to have been buoyed by the reading of love verses.

The same artist's Young Man Playing an Ektar, however, stresses the
lonesomeness of exile. As he bows the strings in a bleak, rocky landscape, one senses the piercing music in which he is lost. The bleak mood is intensified when we know that soon after Shah Tahmasp died in 1579 Sultan Ibrahim Mirza was murdered.

Were these mysterious youths painted as actual portraits? Or do they represent flower-like metaphors for divine love? Both interpretations, we suspect, were intended.

S. C. W.


2. The ‘Emir Hafiz’ Amid of Jami is discussed at length in Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh, where Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s life, character, and patronage are fully documented and illustrated.

Published: Anthony Welch, Galerieh, vol. 3, Ir. M. 74; Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh, vol. 1, fig. 208.

28 / Young Man in a Gold Hat

Iran, Qazvin; ca. 1587
Page: H. 36 cm., W. 23 cm.
Miniature: H. 13.7 cm., W. 8.7 cm.

A young man kneels on his right knee and rests his hands on his left thigh while he looks into the distance. Four long tresses of hair trail down his arms; his gold hat is elegantly turned up at the sides. His collar and buttons are gold too, and his belt and hanging sash are tinted light blue and red. His garment falls in graceful swirls over his right leg, and the extra long, tight sleeves are softly gathered above his wrists. In the upper left is an owner’s seal: ‘Abbas, the servant of the King of Holiness.’ It is the standard seal of Shah ‘Abbas I (r. 1587–1629), and the drawing probably entered the royal library about 1587. The drawing is bordered by a number of inscriptions that do not refer to patron or artist but may refer obliquely to subject.

The two vertical lines at the right are a Safavid poem:

A man who becomes acquainted with desire
Eventually falls into poverty.

Under the youth’s feet are two lines of Chaghatai Turkish from the works of Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa’i, the poet and nāẓir at the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara in late fifteenth-century Herat. At the bottom of the page are two lines from the works of the Persian poet Sa’di:
A wise and artful man must have
Two lives in this world . . .

On the reverse are verses from Firdausi's Shahnamah, presumably appended when the drawing became part of a royal album.
The drawing is strikingly similar to a dated work by the young master Riza, who became the leading painter at the court of Shah 'Abbas.1

A. W.

1. The title "King of Holiness" refers to 'Ali, the great saintly figure of Shi'a Islam.
2. The lines are completed as follows: "So that with one he can gather experiences / And with the other bring those experiences into action."


29 / Two Pages from a Shahnamah for Shah Isma'il II
Iran, Qazvin: 1576–1577

(A) Rustam Kills a Dragon
By Sadiqi
Page: H. 43 cm., W. 31 cm.

(B) Isfandiyar Kills the Samurgh
By Siyavush
Page: H. 40.5 cm., W. 29.7 cm.

Like his father, Shah Tahmasp, whom he succeeded in 1576, Shah Isma'il II (r. 1576–1577) commissioned a Shahnamah of substantial size and quality on his accession. The reign of this mentally unstable monarch lasted less than two years, and the manuscript was left uncompleted. Its pages, now dispersed, are in many collections.1 Despite the brevity of his reign, Isma'il II managed to assemble in Qazvin a fine atelier comprising third-generation Safavid painters, many of them undoubtedly trained by masters like Mirza 'Ali and Muzaffar 'Ali. Most of the surviving illustrated pages are inscribed with painters' names: these ascriptions are all in the same hand, presumably that of the shah’s librarian or perhaps the director of the Shahnamah project. Two painters, Sadiqi Bek and Siyavush, were evidently more esteemed than their colleagues, for together they were responsible for a large majority of the illustrations.

In a lively miniature by Sadiqi, a gold and black dragon has burst out of a mass of rocks, some of them transformed into small faces upturned in astonishment, but Rustam has not been taken by surprise. While his horse bites into the dragon’s spine, the hero chops off its head with a mighty
blow. Below a singing bird at the left appears the artist's name. Although the iconography of the scene is traditional, the painter has rendered it with impressive energy and dramatic color.

About Sadqi much is known, for he was a prolific writer as well as painter. Besides his many poems, he left two lengthy literary works of fundamental importance to Safavid art history. His Tazkirah-i Majma' al-Khamsah (An Account of an Assembly of Worthies) is a frequently acrimonious account of the patrons, poets, painters, and miscellaneous men of culture he knew during his long and often embattled career. The Qumur al-Suwar (Canons of Art) is a poetic treatise on the techniques of traditional Persian painting. Together, the two books provide enough information about Sadqi's personal life so that a plausible biography can be constructed. Born about 1533, he initially took up the military career traditional in his family, then abandoned it to become a painter and man of letters. About 1568, after three years' study of calligraphy, he became a student of painting under Muzaffar 'Ali, one of the most eminent contemporary painters, and by 1576 he was awarded his important role in the Shahnamah project for the new king. Some time after Shah 'Abbas I took the throne in 1587, Sadqi was appointed director of the royal library, in which post he so prospered that by 1597 he could commission his own precious manuscript, an Ansar-i Suhayli lavishly and imaginatively illustrated by himself. During this period he also oversaw the production of a great Shahnamah for the new monarch, but this manuscript, like Shah Isma'il II's, was never finished, perhaps because Sadqi's overbearing personality and high-handed dealings (he stole from the royal library and subsequently sold one of Bihzad's masterpieces) finally led to his dismissal in 1596–1597. During his remaining years Sadqi continued active, executing a few fine drawings and completing his various literary works.

Not all simurghs were benevolent birds; one of the more evil sort is confronted in another miniature from the Shahnamah by the Iranian hero Isfandiyar in a chariot armed with projecting spikes. Defending its nest and two chicks in the massive tree at the left, the simurgh impales itself on Isfandiyar's vehicle. The hero's white horse ignores the frenzied death above it, while Isfandiyar and his warriors look on unmoved.

Brilliant in composition and color, this picture is Siyavush's finest work of art and is one of the great paintings of late-sixteenth-century Iran. The master's name is written at the lower left. Siyavush served as a page to Shah Tahmasp in the late 1530s, and it was Tahmasp's perception of his talent that led him to study painting, eventually becoming, like Sadqi, a student of Muzaffar 'Ali. Like his colleague, Siyavush only emerged as a master in his own right with the Shahnamah commissioned by Isma'il II in 1576–1577, for which he provided at least thirteen illustrations, more than any other painter. After the death of Isma'il II he worked for various pa-
tross and enjoyed the support of 'Abbas I, for whom he seems only to have provided drawings. He retired to Shiraz in the last years of the sixteenth century and died some time between 1600 and 1616.\(^7\)

A. W.

1. The unfinished manuscript was apparently dismembered by the dealer Demitte some time after 1912. A total of eight pages (with nine miniatures) are in Prince Sadruddin's collection (Ir. M. 24-25A, Ir. M. 64-65D); and they bear the names of six masters: Sadiq, Siyavush, Nasqi, Burji, Mithba, and Morad. Three other painters are known to have worked on this Shelvanat: Ali Agha (the father of Riza), Zayan al-'Abidin, and 'Abdallah Shoxazi. For further discussion of the Shelvanat made for Isma'il II, see Basil W. Robinson, "Isma'il II's Copy of the Shahanama," *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 14 (1979): 1-8; and Anthony Welch, *Artists for the Shah* (New Haven and London, 1996).


4. See ref. no. 32.


6. For further biographical and bibliographic information concerning Sadiq, see Dickson and Welch, *The Illuminated Shahnamah*; Welch, *Artists for the Shah*; and Gardner, "Notes on the Life and Work of Sadiq: A Poet and Painter of Safavid Times."

7. For Siyavush's life and career, see Welch, *Artists for the Shah*.

**30 / A Manuscript of the Divan of Ibrahim Mirza**

Iran; 1582

H. 24.7 cm., W. 17.1 cm.

Born in 1543–1544, Ibrahim Mirza was the son of Bahram Mirza, brother of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576). Both father and uncle set models of connoisseurship and artistic patronage for the young prince, who became while still very young one of the most appealing and fascinating figures in the history of Safavid art. Like all Safavid princes, he was given training in calligraphy and painting, but he also proved adept in other endeavors, so that Qadi Ahmad, who served under him, praised him twenty years after his death for his abilities in music, the sciences, poetry, cooking, sports,
and crafts. Bahram Mirza had died when Ibrahim was only six, and the orphaned prince grew up under the aegis of his uncle the shah. In 1555–1556 (A.H. 963) this poet-artist-scholar was married to the shah’s daughter, Gauhar-sultan, and appointed to the prestigious governorship of Mashhad in eastern Iran. His relationship with his suspicious and unpredictable uncle was often difficult, but Ibrahim assembled in Mashhad a brilliant court to which he attracted many of Iran’s finest artistic talents who had been left masterless when Tahmasp foreswared the arts. The single most important surviving achievement of those years was the great 1556–1565 *Haft Awrang* of Jam (Jami), copied by five of Iran’s leading scribes and illustrated by six of its greatest painters, masters who had previously painted for Shah Tahmasp. A great *murqar* (album) that Qadi Ahmad describes may have been equally splendid: “In Holy Mashhad [Ibrahim Mirza] put together an album of the writings of masters and paintings of Maulana Behzad [Bihzad] and others. It was completed with the help of rare masters, skillful craftsmen, incomparable experts in writing, and peerless calligraphers. Indeed, such an arrangement was made and such an album showed its face, that every page of it was worthy of a hundred praises…”

In 1574 Ibrahim Mirza returned to Qazvin, where he remained for the last few years of his life. When the old shah died in 1576, Ibrahim was serving him as grand master of ceremonies and was presumably still active as a patron. His library numbered over three thousand volumes, and his own poetry, written under the pen-name Jahi (the Glorious), included some five thousand verses in Turkish and Persian. He had also become a practitioner of calligraphy and connoisseur of Mir ‘Ali al-Katib’s nasta’i style of script and had collected several albums of his work.

Shah Tahmasp’s unstable son, Isma’il II, became shah in 1576 after a bitter and bloody struggle within the royal house. He ruled for only a year and a half, during which he succeeded in executing most of the Safavid family. Although Ibrahim Mirza had kept his distance from the feud and had tried to avoid antagonizing his cousin, he was murdered on 24 February 1577. In her grief his wife washed clean the pages of her husband’s marvellous *murqar* so that it could not be appropriated by Isma’il II; she died soon afterward. Their daughter, Gauhar-shad, arranged that her parents be buried in Mashhad, and in tribute to his beloved master Qadi Ahmad collected three thousand of the prince’s verses and wrote a preface for them. His edition seems not to have survived, and until now Ibrahim’s poetry has been known only through the few passages quoted by Qadi Ahmad in his treatise on painters and calligraphers.

According to the preface to this manuscript of Ibrahim’s *Diwan*, it was compiled by Ibrahim’s daughter—presumably Gauhar-shad—who gave the piou duty of copying and illustrating it to the finest calligraphers and painters of her day. It is not as extensive as Qadi Ahmad’s reported edition, for the book contains only eighty-eight pages, with nine lines or less of text to the page. It is bound in a handsome gold-stamped late sixteenth-century binding; the margins of each page are illuminated in gold, and there are several handsome *tanans* (chapter-title illuminations) as well as a brilliantly decorated double-page frontispiece. The prince’s Persian poetry occupies the first sixty-eight pages, and his Turkish poems fill the last twenty. Though he was a competent poet, Ibrahim’s poetry does not perhaps deserve the elaborate praise that Qadi Ahmad lavished on it. The princess knew her father’s penchant for Mir ‘Ali’s calligraphy, and she commissioned a scribe, unfortunately not identified, who was a follower of that great master’s style.

The book’s six single-page and one double-page illuminations were painted by several different masters who had either been trained by or known the work of Mirza ‘Ali, one of the prince’s favorite painters. Only one of them, however, is identified: in the lower left of folio 23a is a rock, minutely inscribed: “On this stone the painter has written that this humble world lacks constancy. Therefore be happy. Work of ‘Abd Allah al-Muhammadib in the year 990.”

Qadi Ahmad was well acquainted with the life and work of ‘Abd Allah al-Muhammadib (the Gilder). Maulana ‘Abd Allah Muhammadib, who was a native of Shiraz, was highly skilled in ornamental gilding and in drawing frontispieces and shurmas. None worked better than he in preparing oil colors. For twenty years he was employed in the *kitabkhane* [library] of Prince Abu’l-Fath Sultan Ibrahim Mirza; he was a courtier and drew a salary. After the demise of that exalted Highness, he left the court service and having settled down in Holy Mashhad, took up the duties of a carpet spreader at the sanctuary and attendant at the grave of the above-mentioned Prince.

It would seem that he produced only one illustration for Ibrahim’s *Diwan*, and it is his only signed painting, but it is reasonable to assume that, as a famous gilder and illuminator, he decorated the book’s margins and provided its sumptuous frontispiece and *tanans*. Although Qadi Ahmad speaks of the painter’s loyal retirement to a humble post in 1577, he apparently first worked briefly for Ibrahim’s murderer, Isma’il II, for a second chronicler, Iskandar Munshi, wrote in 1616: “Maulana ‘Abd Allah Shirazi was also an accomplished worker in gold; after the murder of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, Isma’il Mirza gave him an appointment in the library.”

Even after Isma’il’s death, ‘Abd Allah’s retirement was not complete, for in 1582 he was working for Gauhar-shad to produce this manuscript honoring her father. Stylistically, the book’s script, illumination, and illustration are all derived from the 1558–1565 *Haft Awrang*, the great achievement
of Ibrahim's patronage. His daughter evidently intended that this copy of his Diwan should not only preserve her father's poetry but should also remain a testimony to his taste.

A. W.


2. For an identification of these painters, see Welch, Persian Painting, and Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnamah.

3. Qadi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, p. 135.

4. Qadi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, p. 137n.

5. For Mirza 'Ali, see cii. no. 27.

6. Qadi Ahmad, Calligraphers and Painters, pp. 189-90.


31 / Attacked by a Dragon
Attrib. to Sadiqî Bek
Iran, Qazvin; ca. 1550-1555
Page: H. 31.7 cm., W. 21.1 cm.
Miniature: H. 17.6 cm., W. 12.3 cm.

Dragon attacks are a common subject in Islamic art, though the reason for their popularity and the possible underlying significance of the theme are not yet known. They appear frequently in illustrated manuscripts of the Shahnama, the Divan, and similar epics, and are not uncommon among 17th-century single-page drawings of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.

Thus the scene of a ravening dragon rushing down from a rocky height to attack a man on horseback has a well-established iconography. But for all its thematic familiarity, this drawing is unusual in its sparseness of detail: it offers just enough information to establish the basic composition and theme and is characterized by a kind of pictorial parsimony. Whereas dragons usually rush down from craggy heights, we have here only two faint stones under the beast's left hind foot and no indication of the ground on which it stands. Horse and rider, likewise, are set in a mere nondescript hint of landscape: a large and a small rock and a tangle of leaves. At the far right, a faintly sketched camel's head may imply that the horseman is leading a caravan. The reactions depicted are equally unexpected: the plump horse looks slightly anxious but is not shying away from
what is presumably a sudden and dangerous assault; the equally portly rider has not drawn knife or sword but is regarding the dragon’s tail with the equanimity of a rather bored naturalist. This, therefore, is not a simple drawing of a familiar subject but one filled with interesting innuendo.

Although this understated and subtly humorous drawing is not signed, it can confidently be attributed to Sadiqi Bek, one of the master draftsmen and painters of late sixteenth-century Iran. When he completed this drawing, he must have been about sixty years old, and his art at this time is characterized by lengthy, knife-sharp calligraphic strokes, running gradually from thick to thin and avoiding shading lest it weaken the purity of the stroke or evoke too much sense of body or of warmth. He tends toward the abstract and cerebral rather than the sensual, and as this fine drawing indicates, he can treat a shopworn theme with iconoclastic freshness.

A. W.

1. For a Safavid rendering of a dragon attack, see the page from the Houghton Shahnameh illustrated in Stuart C. Welch, Persian Painting (New York, 1976), pl. 9. For a Mughal miniature of a dragon swallowing an unfortunate monarch, see a page from a Mughal Darwshmah illustrated in idem, Imperial Mughal Painting (New York, 1982), pl. 18.


32 / A Manuscript of the Anvar-i Suhayli

Iran, Qazvin; 1593
H. 30 cm., W. 21 cm.

The Sanskrit Tales of Bīḍārī were moralizing animal fables first translated into Pahlavi, then into Arabic (under the title Kalīla wa Dimna), and subsequently into Persian. The Anvar-i Suhayli (Lights of Canopus) is a version composed in verbosely and florid Persian prose by Husayn Wa‘iz-i Kashti at the late fifteenth-century court of the Timurid ruler in Herat, Sultan Husayn Bayqara. The book continued popular in Safavid Iran, and must have been a favorite of the poet, painter, chronicler, and courtier Sadiqi Bek, who took the unprecedented step of commissioning a manuscript of it for himself. Sadiqi’s appointment as kitabdar (director of the royal library) by Shah Abbas I about 1587 had made him virtual head of the Safavi artistic hierarchy and must have brought him significant income as well as stature and authority. In his numerous writings Sadiqi reveals himself as proud, opinionated, and generally disagreeable, and he was apparently neither an

32 / folio 22a: Bazindah and the sudden storm (also in color)
32 / folio 139b: The pigeons snared

32 / folio 138a: The apes' revenge
the foot of a mountain, but he had scarcely enjoyed its beauties when a sudden storm swept down on him. Sadiqi also illustrated subsequent tribulations of the hapless bird, but this miniature is one of the most powerful renderings of wind, storm, and lightning in Iranian art.

The first story of Book 3 is a tale of guidance offered and rejected. A flock of hungry pigeons ignores the wise warning of its leader, and on folio 1390b (The Pigeons Snared) Sadiqi illustrates their capture by a Fowler. Warfare and righteous victory are the subject of the eleventh story of Book 4, in which a band of apes, earlier attacked and plundered by an army of bears, is avenged by its 1427 Maimun, who poses as a traitor and lures the bears into a fiery desert where they, along with Maimun, are destroyed. Sadiqi’s illustration, fol. 168a (The Ages’ Revenge), shows the heroic Maimun at the right and the five bears to the left, all dying in the heat of the desert.

A. W.

1. For further information on Sadiqi, see Anthony Welch, Artists for the Shah (New Haven and London, 1976), pp. 41-49. I am profoundly grateful to Martin B. Dickson of Princeton University, who first pointed out to me the existence and importance of Sadiqi’s literary works. Dickson’s translation of Sadiqi’s treatise Qarah al-dawr has been published in Martin B. Dickson and Stuart C. Welch, The Houghton Shahnameh (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

2. See cat. no. 29.

3. For other works by Sadiqi, see cat. nos. 29, 31, and 33.


33 / A Seated Youth
Attrib. to Sadiqi Bek
Iran, Qazvin or Isfahan, ca. 1550-1600
Page: H. 35.7 cm., W. 23.2 cm.
Miniature: H. 18.6 cm., W. 12.4 cm.

The subject is one of the most common in later Safavid art: a well-fed and elegantly dressed youth gazing at a point beyond our own perceptions. From the dragon-like clouds to the broad-leaved plants and plump fruits, the landscape is filled with predictable conventions. It was the manipulation of these almost iconic elements that tested the ability of an artist, and those who excelled in their use during the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1577-1629) were Sadiqi and Riza, the former a senior and well-established master, the latter a gifted prodigy whose art shaped the style and direction of
of much subsequent Safavid painting and drawing. Despite Sadiq’s greater age and experience, his later work, of which this brilliantly rendered stereotype of ideal beauty is an excellent example, owes much to Riza’s predilection for calligraphic line and winsome elegance. Though it does not bear Sadiq’s name, this drawing has a linear incisiveness, a predilection for sharp edges, a certain chilly distance in the slightly pudgy face, that mark it as his work. Like many objects of this sort in Islamic art, its beauty was necessary to its function, for the couplet at the top indicates that it was intended to secure a blessing on its owner:

O, you branch of spring, how nicely you sway.
May the torment of time (and wind) never upset you.

The springtime setting and the youth in the spring of his years are changeless and eternal.

A. W.

2. I am grateful to Arnumarie Schimmel for this translation.

34 / Page Boy with Bottle and Cup
By Riza-yi ‘Abbasi
Iran, Isfahan; 1625
Page: H. 30.8 cm., W. 20.1 cm.
Miniature: H. 18.9 cm., W. 9.2 cm.

Although the prevailing heroic and literary subject matter of Iranian painting from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries did not entirely disappear in the seventeenth century, Safavid painting from about 1600 to 1722 was dominated by different images. Among the most important of these was the solitary youth, usually male and invariably elegant, affluent, and beautiful, at least in seventeenth-century Iranian terms. They are posed in languid inaction, their attention not inwardly focused but wildly wandering toward an unspecified distant point. This masterful painting perfectly expresses the type. Its maker, Riza-yi ‘Abbasi, clearly owed much to earlier artists like Mirza ‘Ali and Shaykh Muhammad, but he developed the image with such fluency and to such a pitch of grace that it became a kind of icon in seventeenth-century painting in Iran.

The young man looks absently to the left. Against his green shirt he holds a gold bottle, and a small ceramic cup hangs limply from his
delicate left hand. Gold trims his purple coat and broad blue sash, and his brilliant yellow trousers are decorated with green and gold birds, lavender clouds, and green plants. His blue hat is trimmed with brown fur, and, like his whole attire, must have been in the latest mode.

Much is known about the artist, Riza. He came to the court of Shah 'Abbas I soon after that ruler’s accession in 1577 and flourished there as an illustrator of manuscripts and a painter and draftsman of album pages until about 1605, when, according to reliable literary sources, he experienced a sudden metamorphosis, largely gave up his profession, and took to spending his time with wrestlers and persons of ill repute. For the period from 1605 to 1615 we have few pictures that can be reliably attributed to Riza, and this lack supports the disapproving accounts of his chroniclers. But from 1615 until his death in 1635 Riza returned to his former profession with renewed vigor, probably revived by his long leave of absence and certainly filled with new observations and experiences, for his later drawings show an artist whose subject matter goes beyond stereotyped court images to record many other social strata.

This courtly picture was most probably made for the royal patron, Shah 'Abbas, who deeply admired Riza’s work and had tolerance put up with the artist’s decade-long truancy. The inscription at the lower left informs us that the drawing was completed in the month of nabi’ al-aswali in the year 1034 (December 1624–January 1625) by the most humble Riza-yi 'Abassi.

In the last two decades of his life after his return to painting, Riza was also a brilliant teacher, and he so developed the talents of his finest students that they emerged as distinctly individual artists. Some, like Muhammad Qasim and Muhammad Yusuf, tended to follow the courtly vein in Riza’s later art. Riza’s son Shafi‘ 'Abassi, however, turned toward sensitive studies of flora and fauna and became a gifted designer of textiles. Mu'in Musavvir, surely Riza’s greatest student, moved from court images to witty or documentary scenes of daily life with equal ease and talent. It testifies to Riza’s genius that he could foster the genius in others and in doing so establish himself as the guiding spirit of seventeenth-century figurative art in Iran.

A. W.

2. For a selection of Riza’s works and an examination of his career, see Anthony Welch, Shah ‘Abbas and the Arts of Ilkhahan (New York, 1973), nos. 6–12, 50, 51, and p. 149. For Mu’in’s sensitive portrait of Riza, see ibid., no. 76.
3. See cat. no. 35.
4. See Welch, Shah ‘Abbas and the Arts of Ilkhahan, no. 28.
5. See cat. no. 39.
A Display of Verse
By Muhammad Qasim Musavi
Iran, Isfahan, ca. 1650
Page: H. 33.4 cm., W. 23.5 cm.
Miniature: H. 19.9 cm., W. 13.1 cm.

The long white sheet of paper with four diagonal lines of poetry in nasta'liq script is the focus of attention:

May the world fulfill your wishes
from three lips—
The lips of the beloved, the lips of
a stream, and the lips of a cup.
May you remain in this world so long
That you pray on the grave of the firmament.

The final, horizontal line gives the name of the calligrapher and the painter of the whole picture: "The humblest of the worshipful slaves, Muhammad Qasim Musavi." Since the sheet's upper right contains the single word "He," referring to God, the artist's obeisance is probably being offered both to Allah and to his royal patron, Shah Abbas II (r. 1642–1666).

The conceit of the "three lips" is not uncommon in Iranian poetry: it equates various kinds of love (for the earthly and the divine beloved, for natural beauty, and for wine); and though the wine cup, so often shown in later Safavid paintings, is omitted here, the stream and the human beloved are present and bring this painting closer to most seventeenth-century album pages to traditional literary illustration.

Isfahan painting under the aegis of Shah Abbas II and (presumably) other highly placed patrons was diverse, but most of its main currents had been introduced in Riza's work, and it was his students and followers who dominated the figural arts. Muhammad Qasim was among the most gifted of these, and some of his finest pictures portray this well-established type—the idle, ideal beauty in a stance of affluent grace.

On the reverse of this album page is fine calligraphy in the ta'liq style of script. Six lines present one of the Hadith (Traditional Sayings) of the Prophet; the remaining three state that it was written in Qazvin in 1563–1564 (A.H. 973) by the artist 'Ali al-Mashhadi on the order of Nur al-Din Mashhadi. The scribe cannot be identified with the great master Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi who died in 1520 (A.H. 926).

A. W.

36 / Marks of Love
By Afzal al-Husayni
Iran, Isfahan; 1646
Page: H. 21.2 cm., W. 30.5 cm.
Miniature: H. 13.1 cm., W. 19.9 cm.

In 1599 the king of Iran, Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629), dispatched to the courts of Europe a large and impressive embassy whose first secretary was a prominent nobleman, Ulugh Bek. After traveling through Russia, northern and central Europe, and Italy, they arrived in Spain near the end of 1601. To the ambassador’s embarrassment, three members of his retinue had abandoned Islam and become Catholics during their stay in Rome; in Spain he was further humiliated by the apostasy of three more leading members of his staff and their conversion to Catholicism. Ulugh Bek was one of the new Christians, and he took the name of Don Juan of Persia. When the ambassador returned to Iran, Don Juan remained in Spain, where he was apparently supported by court funds until his death in a brawl in 1605. His life would be a mere historical anecdote, were it not for the journal he kept from the time he left Iran until his conversion to Catholicism. Without this lively and fascinating document we would be hard pressed to understand what is going on in this painting, but Ulugh Bek—Don Juan provides a vivid elucidation:

A Persian youth who wishes to pose as a faithful lover must behave in a very extraordinary way; indeed, so strangely that it were impossible for its very extravagance to pass the matter over in silence. The lover who would prove that his love is sincere must painfully burn himself in various parts of his person with a slow match made of linen stuff, that in effect acts exactly like the caustic which, with us in Spain, the surgeons apply for operating issues such as may be needful in the legs and arms. Then the lover displays himself in the sight of his lady, he being a very Lazarus for the number of his sores: whereupon she will send him cloths, napkins and bandages of silk or holland, with which to bind his wounds, and these he wears until they are cured. Later, he who can show most signs of these cauterizations is the one most beloved of the fair dames, and he most promptly will come to marriage.  

The young man in this painting must be a prime matrimonial candidate. He is a model of ideal late Safavid beauty: smooth, slightly puffy, round face; softly curving arms, legs, and torso that disavow all implication of muscle; almond-shaped eyes; curving eyebrows that meet over a straight but not too prominent nose; reddish-Cupid’s-bow lips; a hint of double chin; and a listless sensuous posture. His lady is slimmer but no less soft and languorous, and both equally are fashion plates in dress. That they are lovers in some degree is made clear by their pose and confirmed by the
courtly birds embroidered on the pillow between them. Wine is a vehicle of transcendence and a metaphor of love, and the golden flask and cup in the lower right are stock motifs in Safavid painting.

The young man placidly endures a variant on Don Juan’s trial of love, for his beloved holds the glowing roll of cloth and has already inflicted three marks on his right arm. With his left hand he seems to be asking for more. Other paintings of the Safavid period depict similarly marked young men, and since some of them are dervishes instead of courtly dandies, this proof of love may have been offered to both earthly and divine beloveds.1

The inscription at the lower right informs us that the painting was completed in the year 1046 (A.H. 1636) by Afzal al-Husayni, either a student or a close follower of Riza. The large body of work bearing his name is also dated by inscription between 1642 and 1648, indicating a short but productive career. He must have been one of the most favored and prolific traditional painters working in Isfahan, almost surely under the patronage of Shah ‘Abbas II (r. 1642–1666), an enthusiastic painting connoisseur of educated and intelligently eclectic taste.4

On the reverse are six samples of calligraphy in naskh and nastalīq styles: the only one that offers historical information gives the date 1648 (A.H. 1058) and the name ‘Abdullah Hamidullah, an otherwise unknown scribe.

The page once belonged to a muqarnā, perhaps even the well-known Clive Album, which was compiled during this period. In the Clive Album, in addition to paintings by Riza and his most prominent students, is another painting of the same amorous couple made in the same year by Afzal al-Husayni.5

A. W.

2. Ibid., pp. 54–77.
3. See Frederick R. Martin, The Miniature Paintings and Miniatures of Persia, India, and Turkey (London, 1913), vol. 2, pl. 120. For an example from Mughal painting, see Stuart C. Welch and Mile C. Beach, Gods, Thrones and Princely Gifts (New York, 1965), no. 8. For a full description of the same custom among the Khakai dervishes, see Richard Cramlish, Schicksale Orientis oriental (Wiesbaden, 1951). Our thanks to Annemarie Schimmel for this reference.

Shah ‘Abbas II and the Mughal Ambassador
Attrib. to Muhammad Zaman
Iran: ca. 1663
Page and miniature: H. 20.3 cm., W. 31.8 cm.

The carpets, the two groups of courtiers and attendants in echelon, and the central figure of the king all direct our attention back toward the palace eygoun (arched niche), where a white Qu’ran inscription on a blue background reads: “The Lord of the Court, the Lord of Two Centuries, the Victorious, Shah ‘Abbas II Bahadur Khan. May God make his rule eternal.” Over the entrance to a mosque or tomb it might have been a dedicatory identification of donor, but here it serves to explicate the painting, and the ruler’s name is divided into its two parts (Shah ‘Abbas II and Bahadur Khan) by the portrait of his head. The shah, in a resplendent turban, his right hand resting on his bejewelled dagger, stares fixedly and coldly at the viewer with a directness rare in Iranian portraiture. The ambassador from the Mughal emperor Avarangzeb (r. 1658–1707) is properly deferential, with his left hand on his katar (dagger) and his right extended in dignified obeisance. Musicians in the lower left play etar, ud, and tambourine; servants in the upper right carry in trays of food; and eminent onlookers (presumably princes, soldiers, and scribes) flank the principals in the scene.

Royal receptions of this sort do figure in earlier Iranian painting, but almost always as illustrations to works of literature.1

Certain details of the painting bespeak European influence—the distant trees, the modelling of some of the faces, the all-too-obvious perspective, and the technique of stippling—but the concept and composition come from Mughal India, where the imperial darab (court reception) had been a well-established genre since the reign of Jahangir (1605–1627) and had been one of the most important subjects of painting under Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1658) and during the early reign of his successor Avarangzeb. The darab as a recording of an actual event does not appear in Iran before the seventeenth century. This careful rendering of shah and ambassador recalls Jahangir’s charge to Bishandas to record faithfully the appearance of the Iranian ruler Shah ‘Abbas I and suggests that ‘Abbas II may have shared Jahangir’s penchant for naturalistic representations of the world around him.4

One of the leading Europeanizing masters in seventeenth-century Iran was Muhammad Zaman, who was well acquainted with Indian painting and may have spent time in India.5 Although this painting is unsigned, its similarities to later work by Muhammad Zaman make an attribution to that master highly plausible. A second depiction of a Mughal ambassador’s meeting with the shah was painted by Muhammad Zaman’s colleague.
Shaykh 'Abbasi (who was also influenced by both European and Indian painting), and is dated to 1663–1664. It is probable that the two group portraits were painted at approximately the same time.9

A. W.

1. See the "Feast of Id" from the ca. 1572 manuscript of the Divan of Hafiz (Stuart C. Welch, A King's Book of Kings [New York, 1972], fig. 12).


3. For further discussion of Muhammad Zaman, see ibid., nos. 65, 71, 72, and p. 128. See ibid., no. 62.

4. Another instance of dual representation of a similar scene can be examined in cat. no. 43.


38 / Volume One of a Shahnamah for Shah ‘Abbasi II

Iran, Isfahan; 1654

H. 35.3 cm., W. 24 cm.

Shah ‘Abbasi II (r. 1642–1666) was the most effective and active ruler and patron among the later Safavids, and though other patrons were more numerous than in earlier times and undoubtedly were significant in shaping the arts, he played a large role in determining Isfahan's architecture and wider visual culture. As a patron of painting, he was both innovative and eclectic, favoring a number of artists, like Muhammad Zaman, who were influenced by European and Indian art, and encouraging masters like Mu'in who, particularly in his drawings, was exploring new subject matter. But the shah was also a traditionalist and, like his predecessors Tahmasp, Isma'il II, and ‘Abbasi I, is known to have commissioned a great Shahnamah.

As its director and chief painter he selected Mu'in Musavvir.

Mu'in's huge talent was already fully developed, and of the fifty-one paintings in this great Shahnamah, now divided into two volumes, all but two bear Mu'in's signature.1 It was an enormous undertaking and a signal honor. Mu'in was only thirty-seven years old when the unidentified scribe finished the book, written in an excellent naskh handwriting in four columns of twenty-five lines to the page. The colophon also fails to mention place of production and patron, but since no other city than Isfahan is mentioned in the many inscriptions on Mu'in's works, we can safely assume it was done in the capital. The lavishness of the project and the fact that Mu'in was Riza's most celebrated student make it also likely that the book was produced for the monarch.

Volume 1 of this Shahnamah contains a double-page frontispiece and
twenty-nine other illustrations. All but two of them are signed by Mu‘in. Of the two unsigned pages one is unquestionably his work, which he presumably forgot to sign; the second was apparently added to the volume in the early nineteenth century when the book was rebound in India. The frontispiece is dated to 1636–1637 (A.H. 1047) and appears to have been the last work the painter did on the book; three other illustrations are dated to 1654–1655 (A.H. 1065), and a single painting in the second volume, in the Beatty Library, Dublin, bears the date 1655–1656 (A.H. 1066). Like most manuscript illustrators, Mu‘in did not produce his paintings in textual sequence. His signature on all but one of his illustrations is ample indication of Mu‘in’s high sense of self and of his patron’s pride in his artist. The pictures display a consistent style unsurprising in a coherent project accomplished over some three years, and while amply indicating his indebtedness to Riza’s training, they also show Mu‘in’s own flowing line and daring color harmonies within the context of a traditional iconography.

A. W.


PUBLISHED: Anthony Welch, Shams ‘Alīsh and the Arts of Isfahan (New York, 1975), no. 57; idem, Collectors, vol. 4, Ms. 22.

39 / An Isfahan Dandy

By Mu‘in Musavvir

Iran, Isfahan; ca. 1660

Page: H. 37 cm., W. 24.2 cm.

Miniature: H. 13.2 cm., W. 4.9 cm.

This self-complacent young man poses in what must have been the latest and highest fashion. A bright yellow flower and a black feather stick jauntily in his pink turban; his violet overcoat, lined with flowered silk, hangs open over his brown undergarment and yellow trousers. Sleek, affluent, empty-headed, and distinctly unheroic, he and his like were the beau ideals of Safavid society and the subjects of many hundreds of Safavid pictures.

No one records these feckless youths (the living embodiments of the ideal beloved in Iranian poetry) better than two masters, Riza’ and his star pupil Mu‘in, who signed this portrait in his unmistakable hand. Trained by Riza in the last years of that artist’s life, Mu‘in Musavvir had an extraordinarily long career; dated works bearing his name span the years from 1635 to 1707. He was also enormously productive, in fact the most prolific (as well as one of the most gifted) of all Iranian painters, and his single-
page drawings and paintings, as well as his many manuscript illustrations, provide us with an abundance of material for understanding the career and personality of one of the most remarkable figures in Iranian art history. Faithful to his training, he preserved his Safavid heritage and refrained from any significant Europeanizing, despite the vogue for European art at the royal court. He was in the employ of four successive monarchs but seems to have been free to work for others as well, since many patrons are cited in the often lengthy inscriptions he provided on his pictures: such is the wealth and diversity of his epigraphic information that one suspects him either of a secret longing to write history or of a profound sympathy with the needs of future historians. His prominent signature on so many paintings testifies not to an overpowering ego but to a simple desire to keep facts straight. His versatility is exceptional, and his range of subject matter extends from traditional epics like the Shāhnāma to contemporary dandies like this one and to topical documentary drawings of daily life. It is through his eyes that we may see seventeenth-century Isfahan. 

A. W.

1. For a version of the same theme by Riza, see cat. no. 34.
2. For Mu'in’s great Shāhnāma illustrations, see cat. no. 38.
3. Additional works and further information on Mu'in can be found in Anthony Welch, Shāh ʿAbbās and the Arts of Isfahan (New York, 1975), nos. 50, 57, 76, 77, 78, 79, 85, and pp. 147–48.

Portrait: Anthony Welch, Collection, vol. 1, Ir. M. 44.

40 / European Youth with an Iranian Pot
by Mu'in Musavi
Iran, Isfahan; August–September 1673
Miniature: H. 19.3 cm., W. 9.2 cm.

Mu'in Musavi appreciated strong colors, and this fascinating portrait uses a predominantly warm palette—orange socks, pink pantaloons, a burgundy coat, and a brown hat. They are set off by the youth’s green shirt and the large white pot, decorated with a pale blue crane, that he carries in both hands. Despite his clothing, which conforms to Western European fashion of the 1670s, the young man’s slightly wistful face and his curving posture are seventeenth-century Iranian; it is unlikely that this is a portrait of a specific European visitor.

Mu'in often paid fealty to his revered teacher, Riza-ye’ Abbasi, by making copies or adaptations of his master’s works. This picture is one of them, but the evidence is a bit indirect. In March–April 1655, Mu’in completed initial work on a portrait of Riza; the older painter died the following
month. The famous portrait shows Riza seated at work on a picture of a European youth holding a large ceramic pot; since Riza’s painting was still in progress, the pot was still undecorated and lacked a top. In other respects the picture in Riza’s hands is identical with this 1673 painting by Mu’in.

Riza still had a month to live at the time Mu’in did his initial work on the portrait in 1635, and he presumably finished the picture of the European youth. Mu’in did not complete his portrait of Riza. Perhaps too affected by grief at his master’s death, he did not turn to it again until his own son requested him to, and as he carefully notes, he finally finished the portrait of Riza on 24 December 1673, a few months after he had painted his own version of Riza’s European youth with an Iranian pot. Mu’in either owned Riza’s original or had it in his possession long enough to make his version of it. That original is apparently no longer extant but is doubly recorded for us through Mu’in’s portrait of Riza at work and through his version of Riza’s picture.

A. W.

1. See cat. no. 41.

41 / The Royal Physician, Hakim Shafa’i
By Mu’in Munawir
Iran, Isfahan; 21 April 1674
Page: H. 30.5 cm, W. 21.1 cm.
Miniature: H. 18.5 cm, W. 9.8 cm.

Physicians occupied an honored place in Safavid society, and medical doctors at the royal court sometimes held important offices of state as well. High position held its risks, of course. Not only could intrigues or unsuccessful policies undermine the physician-as-politician, but the physician’s medical standing depended upon the health of the shah, and most of the Safavids were notorious for health-impairing addictions and overindulgences in wine or drugs. The vicissitudes of one of the physicians to Shah ’Abbās I (r. 1587–1629) were probably typical for many of his colleagues. Hakim Rukna was descended from a long line of physicians who had served at court, and he added talents as a poet and calligrapher to his medical skills. Some time during the 1590s ’Abbās sickened, and though the king recovered, he did not credit Hakim Rukna with the cure but instead fired him and ordered him to pay back all his previous salary. After losing everything he owned, the doctor left the capital city with his family,
practiced medicine elsewhere, failed to regain the royal favor, and like so many other skilled Iranians in the Safavid period, left Iran for India. There his fortunes recovered, as physician to the Mughal emperor Jahangir he soon became a rich man.  

The inscription at the top of this page identifies it as a "portrait of the Plato of the Age, Hakim Shafa'i." This hakim (doctor), a more fortunate contemporary of the misused Hakim Rukna, also served as physician-in-attendance to Shah Abbas I, but he was not accused of malpractice, outlived his patient, and continued as royal doctor under Shah Safi I (c. 1629–1642). A second inscription, under the physician's legs, dates the painting to the fifteenth day of the holy month of Muharram in the year 1085 (21 April 1675) and states that it was done by Mu'in Musavvir. The words in the lower left add that this portrait was based on an earlier picture painted by Riza-yi 'Abbasi in 1654–1655 (A.H. 1044), the last year of Riza's life. These last two inscriptions, in Mu'in's hand, typify his penchant for historical data. 

Riza's earlier portrait has fortunately been preserved. Although the sitter wears different-colored clothing, he adopts the same pose and is unquestionably the same individual. An inscription on the painting reads, "Portrait of Hakim Shafa'i by the humble Riza Musavvir." Forty years later, either on his own initiative or on commission, Mu'in produced his version of the portrait; the identifying inscription at the top of the page, however, was supplied by someone else.  

The high status of successful royal doctors accounts for the very formal nature of this fine portrait. Mu'in's hakim wears clothing subdued in tone: a light brown overgarment, a lavender undergarment, and light blue leggings. His purple, yellow, and white sash is laced with gold, as is his multicolored (blue, white, and red) turban. The landscape setting accenuates the sitter, for it is spare, with few gold clouds, leaves, and stones, and the only other color is in the objects in front of Shafa'i that signify his learned profession: two books (one surely must be the works of Avicenna, the chief source of medical information in Safavid Iran), scissors, a white inkpot, and a pen-box. The doctor appears about fifty years old, and his wrinkled brow, raised left eyebrow, and barely suppressed grin give him a slightly bemused appearance.  

A. W.

2. "Plato of the Age" was an honorific frequently awarded to physicians.

42 / Two Shepherds in a Bucolic Landscape

By 'Ali Quli Jabbadar

Iran; ca. 1675

Page and miniature: H. 12.1 cm., W. 16.9 cm.

Contoured ground of this sort is not part of the Iranian landscape tradition, and the trees seem more suited to European than to Iranian art. Though the dreamy youth seated at the right is conventional in seventeenth-century painting in Iran, his bare legs are not, and the awkwardly posed flutist is foreign in clothes and occupation. Despite its two bulbous domes, the cluster of presumably wooden brown buildings in the background is, like the blue-streaked sky, closer to Europe than Iran. European prints were traded and admired in Iran as well as in India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but this small painting seems to be an original work and not a copy. An inscription at the left gives the name of the painter, 'Ali Quli Jabbadar. He came to Iran from an unspecified European country and seems to have worked primarily for provincial nobles rather than for the royal house. He was obviously not a European painter of the first rank, but his foreign origin and techniques gained him prominence outside his own cultural tradition.

A. W.

1. A Mughal copy of this painting is in the Musée Guimet, Paris. Either the picture was at one time in India, or both paintings are based upon a common print.
2. A celebrated album now in Leiden contains several pages of his work. An inscription on one miniature states that it was completed in 1674 in Quanzhi, at that time an important provincial city but not the capital; two other miniatures bear inscriptions in Georgian, and it is reasonable to conclude that 'Ali Quli was in the service of one of the Georgian nobles who were prominent supporters of the Safavid royal house.

PUBLISHERS Anthony Welch, Collection, vol. 1, Ir. M. 42; A. Welch, Shah 'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan, no. 73.
Page Boy with Bottle and Cup. Cat. no. 34

Marks of Love. Cat. no. 36
Fath 'Ali Shah. Cat. no. 44, folio 3b

Binding for a manuscript of Muhammad Baqir’s Zad al-Ma'ad. Cat. no. 46
A Family of Cheetahs. Cat. no. 50

Flight of a Simurgh. Cat. no. 57
A prince and a hermit. Cat. no. 59(A)

A Noble Hunt. Cat. no. 65
Jahangir at the Jharoka Window: Cat. no. 69

Tulips and an Iris: Cat. no. 72
A Love Poem. Cat. no. 73

A Floral Fantasy. Cat. no. 75
Portraits of a Notable Russian

(A) By 'Ali Quli Jahabdar
Page: H. 31 cm., W. 20.8 cm.
Miniature: H. 16.8 cm., W. 12.1 cm.

(B) By Muhammad Zaman
Page: H. 31 cm., W. 18.9 cm.
Miniature: H. 16.5 cm., W. 8.6 cm.

Although idealized images of beautiful youths abounded in Safavid art, realistic portraiture was also an important genre, particularly in the seventeenth century. Not only were Iranians of various social classes and professions represented but pictures of foreigners were commissioned, sometimes on royal command. In the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul is an album containing facing-page portraits of two Russian dignitaries, perhaps merchants or diplomats, both pages bearing the seal of Shah 'Abbás I. If that early seventeenth-century munâqqa' was still in Safavid royal possession a hundred years later, it may have served as inspiration for the two portraits shown here, which may also have faced each other in an album made for the last ruling Safavid shah, Sultan Husayn (r. 1694–1722). Both are inscribed and dated. Number 43(A) is simply annotated in the upper left with the name of the painter, 'Ali Quli, and the date A.H. 1129 (1716–1717). Number 43(B) bears more extensive notes: it was done in the same year by Muhammad Zaman on the orders of the shah. In neither portrait is the sitter identified.

Three different Russian embassies were sent by Peter the Great to the court of Shah Sultan Husayn at Isfahan in 1697, 1708, and 1717, and presumably there were Russians among the many merchants who did business in Isfahan during that period. Whoever he was, this particular Russian aroused special interest in the otherwise lackadaisical monarch, for he evidently ordered his two most experienced Europeanizing masters to portray him.²

A. W.

1. Topkapı Palace Museum, H. 2135, fols. 198b and 200a. Though neither is signed, one can be attributed to Riza and the other, tentatively, to Sadig Bek.
2. For 'Ali Quli, see cat. no. 42; for Muhammad Zaman, see cat. no. 37. It is possible that these portraits were not made from life but were instead based upon an earlier painting that the shah admired and wished to have reproduced in his album. A. A. Ivanov, T. B. Grek, and D. Akezaykov, Album muftashkhi i persiyskikh miniatur XVI–XVIII v. (Album of Indian and Persian Miniatures, Sixteenth–Eighteenth Centuries) (Moscow, 1962), publish an invaluable discussion of Muhammad Zaman and 'Ali Quli, as well as a number of paintings by them.

43A / Portrait of a notable Russian

43B / Portrait of a notable Russian
Most albums are bound as books, but the sixteen pages of this early nineteenth-century Qajar *murqqa’* are hinged together so they fold out, presenting a series of portraits and calligraphies of high quality. The portraits have a single theme—Iranian kingship, and twelve historical or legendary rulers are represented. This demonstration of royal succession was presumably intended to bolster the Qajar dynasty’s sense of legitimacy: Fath ‘Ali Shah, whose portrait is the album’s first, was only the second king of this line. Some of the monarchs are identified by inscription, and our identification of the remaining shahs is based upon their resemblance to other portraits. The portraits are not organized chronologically:

- **Fol. 3b**: Fath ‘Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834). The portrait (illustrated) bears his name and is dated to 1819 (A.H. 1234); the throne is inscribed with a panegyric verse.
- **Fol. 4a**: Aga Muhammad Shah (r. 1779–1797), identified by name.
- **Fol. 5b**: Probably Shah ‘Abbas I (r. 1587–1629).
- **Fol. 6a**: Probably Shah ‘Abbas II (r. 1642–1666).
- **Fol. 7b**: Probably Jamshid, one of the greatest rulers and culture heroes in Ferdowsi’s *Shahnama*.
- **Fol. 14a**: Kay Ka’us, another monarch from the *Shahnamah*, identified by name.
- **Fol. 9b**: Probably Isma’il I (r. 1501–1524), founder of the Safavid dynasty.
- **Fol. 10a**: Nadir Shah (r. 1736–1747). There is no inscription, but the portrait is very similar to other, contemporary portraits.
- **Fol. 11b**: Genghis Khan (1167–1227), identified by name.
- **Fol. 12a**: A Central Asian ruler, almost certainly Timur (1336–1405).
- **Fol. 13b**: Karim Khan Zand (1750–1797).
- **Fol. 14b**: Kay Ka’us, another monarch from the *Shahnamah*, identified by name.

Each of the pro-Qajar rulers is associated with a period of particular Iranian strength and prestige, and it seems reasonable to assume that Fath ‘Ali Shah was being favorably compared with them.

The album’s other pages are devoted to calligraphy and demonstrate the various styles of script that were in use in early Qajar Iran: they include fine examples of *kufic*, *thuluth*, *naskh*, and *nasta’liq*. Five of the twenty calligraphies are signed or dated or both:

- **Fol. 1b**: a page of *naskh*, dated to 1813 (A.H. 1220).
- **Fol. 2a**: a page of *naskh*, dated to 1813 (A.H. 1220) and signed by Abú’l-Qasim Shírází.
Fath 'Ali Shah was an accomplished calligrapher, though his own work is not included here. And although most albums contained samples of the writing of celebrated past masters like Mir 'Ali or Mir 'Imad, this muraqqa' is restricted to the art of contemporary or recent masters of the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

In one sense the album is a careful pictorial panegyric of kingship; in another it is an exercise in "modernism" that may have been dictated by Fath 'Ali Shah's personal taste. Almost certainly, the muraqqa' was commissioned by him or was offered to him by a close associate or hopeful courtier.

A. W.

1. Bevil W. Robinson has pointed out to me in a letter that Fath 'Ali Shah commissioned his court painter Mîhr 'Ali to paint a number of historical portraits for the walls of the Imamî Naqshpalace in Isfahan, and it is possible that the royal portraits in this album were based upon them.

3. Ibid., pp. 59-60.
4. Ibid., pp. 67-73.
5. For an example of his calligraphy, see Anthony Welch, Collectanea, vol. 3, Col. 12; and idem, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1979), no. 67.

PUBLISHER: Anthony Welch, Collectanea, vol. 4, Ms. 23.

45 / Elephant Attacked by Wolves
Iran; ca. 1860
Page: H. 40.5 cm., W. 26.4 cm.
Miniature: H. 27.5 cm., W. 19 cm.

Under an illuminated arch (added later to the page), a domesticated elephant fights off attack by ten wolves, many of whom it has already disabled. Though an Indian subject, this ink drawing was produced in Qajar Iran. Neither patron nor artist is identified. Arabic and Persian verses above and below the drawing are also later additions: they are love poems, unrelated to the subject of the picture, that were appended when the drawing was attached to its present mount, either for inclusion in an album or for sale by a dealer.

A. W.
Although widespread before the sixteenth century, Twelver Shi‘ism became Iran’s official state religion only with the advent of the Safavid dynasty in 1501, and the faith’s expansion throughout the country was an essential part of the Safavid consolidation of power. Theologically, this early period was less important than the late seventeenth century, when the Safavid state itself was in decline but its religious thinkers were extremely active. Muhammad Baqir (1627–1669), son of a leading theologian, held the high offices of Shaykh al-Islam under Shah Sulayman (r. 1666–1664) and Mulla Bashi under Shah Sultan Husayn (r. 1694–1722). Until his death he was one of the dominant figures in government and encouraged persecution of religious minorities like the Sunni Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. His religious politics contributed materially to the collapse of the Safavid state in 1722.

Of longer lasting significance were his theological works, which are still influential in present-day Iran. The twenty-five-volume Bahir al-Anwar (Ocean of Lights) is an Arabic compilation of Shi‘a Hadith (traditional religious sayings of the Prophet) and was perhaps his most important contribution. The Zad al-Ma‘ad (Provisions for the Resurrection) is a one-volume abridgment of it, made expressly for those too busy to consult the massive original treatise. It comprises Arabic prayers for each day of the year with titles and explanatory introductions to each prayer written in Persian.

This particularly fine manuscript of the Zad al-Ma‘ad has twelve lines of text on most of its 120 pages. It is written in a clear naskh style by a fine, though unidentified, scribe. The dark brown lacquer binding is illuminated with gold birds and flowers on the exterior (illustrated) and a single gold iris on the interior, where there is also an inscription stating that the illumination was the work of the head glider, Mahmud Shirazi, on the order of his “glorious and august majesty,” in the year 1695–1696 (A.H. 1333). Shah Nasr al-Din Qajar was assassinated in that year, and the inscription could refer either to him or to his son and successor, Muzaffar al-Din.

A. W.

1. Twelver Shi‘ism accepts the succession of twelve imams after the death of the Prophet Muhammad; Isma‘ili’s accept seven imams.

Published: Anthony Welch, Collection, vol. 4, Ms. 25.
India

In 711, Arab Muslim armies conquered Sindh (present-day southern Pakistan), and Muslim merchants settled in various commercial centers in western and southern India. By the beginning of the tenth century there was an important Isma'ili community in Multan (modern central Pakistan). Muslim armies from Afghanistan raided northern India in the tenth and eleventh centuries, but it is with the establishment of the Delhi sultanate in 1191 that Islam arrived in India to stay. From its base in Delhi the sultanate expanded steadily in northern and central India, using a combination of military operations and energetic proselytizing. In its early decades the sultanate depended heavily upon imported talent for its administration and its culture, but by the second half of the thirteenth century a distinctive Indian Islamic culture is discernible. Great poets like Amir Khusraw Dehlavi were writing in Persian; in the fourteenth century architects and builders under the aegis of the Tughluq dynasty (1320–1358) were creating the sultanate’s most impressive architectural style, while calligraphers were developing definably Indo-Muslim styles of writing.

But it was under the Mughals (1526–1546, 1555–1858) that Islamic culture in India acquired the stamp of distinctive personalities. Contemporary histories, biographies, and travelers’ accounts allow us to see in detail the Mughals’ India, while the memoirs, autobiographies, and personal letters left by nearly every Mughal ruler give us intimate glimpses of their characters, aspirations, and aesthetics. India’s fabled wealth attracted the first Mughal, Babur, to leave his Timurid patrimony in Central Asia and conquer Delhi in 1526, and his vivid Memoirs, based on notes and composed during his four short years of rule from 1526 to 1530, established a model of royal memoir for his successors. His son Humayun’s rule was checkered by setbacks and misfortunes, and he was briefly in exile in Shah Tahmasp’s Iran, where he met and subsequently enticed to India Safavid masters who were instrumental in creating Mughal painting.

It was under Humayun’s astonishing son Akbar (r. 1556–1605) that the Mughal state and Mughal art took definitive form. Nearly annual military campaigns expanded the empire to include two-thirds of India. His admin-
istrative genius created an efficient centralized bureaucratic government that sustained his successors for more than a hundred years. A passionate builder, he transformed the architectural face of India with a profusion of brilliantly designed cities, forts, caravansaries, mosques, and palaces, and though himself illiterate, he was a dynamic patron of literature and the arts of the precious book. His patronage of histories, literary classics, and Persian translations of Hindu sacred texts reflected his roots in Islamic tradition, and his taste in art was similarly energetic and eclectic. Throughout his long reign he supported a huge atelier of painters, calligraphers, and other manuscript artisans and oversaw the emergence of a Mughal synthesis of Iranian, indigenous Indian, and European styles in painting. The Mughals were patrons in the Timurid tradition, and from its inception Mughal painting was dynasty-oriented and inclined to realism and truthful observation of the natural world.

Akbar’s questing intellect even led him for some time to separate himself apparently from strict Muslim orthodoxy by creating at his court a small elite group intended to adhere to the noblest principles of all the religions he admired. This course his son and successor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) considered deviant. More orthodox and less ambitious, Jahangir was a consolidator, who relegated much of his authority to subordinates. Less interested in architecture, he was a brilliant patron of the portable arts, particularly painting and calligraphy. But he reduced the size of the imperial atelier and emphasized quality over quantity and single-page paintings over lengthy manuscripts. Akbar had been fascinated with the depiction of action; Jahangir focused more on forms and their inner essence, and the production of his atelier tended to portraits—highly personal studies of people, animals, or plants that reflect the emperor’s refined taste and his eager fascination with the forms of life around him.

Under Shah Jahan (r. 1627–1658) the inner warmth and vitality of earlier Mughal painting seems more restrained, replaced by crystalline formality. Like the immaculate beauty of the Taj Mahal with its jeweled inlays, pictorial arts took on a lapidary aspect, immobile, set, and the people depicted seem to move with increasingly courtly dignity. The Mughal empire was at its richest, and the emperor devoted himself to the rituals of office with painstaking assiduity.

Bitter rivalries for power had seen both Jahangir and Shah Jahan rebel against their fathers, and brutal civil wars at the end of Shah Jahan’s reign ended with the victory of Aurangzeb (r. 1657–1707). Although a discerning and enthusiastic patron of art during the early years of his reign, Aurangzeb turned increasingly to statecraft and piety. He briefly brought almost the entire subcontinent under Mughal rule but broke his empire in so doing. First in the Deccan and then in northern India, Muslim states separated from central rule, until the Mughal empire was a truncated and emaciated remnant of its seventeenth-century glory. European powers had coveted India’s wealth for generations, and after the collapse of Mughal power in the eighteenth century the Muslim and Hindu states of India were methodically brought under British domination. Even in this period of decline and foreign rule India’s pictorial tradition remained vital, preserving past achievement and absorbing and transforming the new.

A. W.
48 / The Night of Power

India; ca. 1350–1350
From a manuscript of the Khamshah of Amir Khusraw Dehlevi
Page: H. 34.3 cm., W. 25.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 8 cm., W. 20.1 cm.

This page originally belonged to a manuscript of the Khamshah (Quintet) of Amir Khusraw Dehlevi, one of the most celebrated Indian poets writing in Persian. His long life (1253–1325) spanned the period in which Islam established itself as the governing authority in northern India, and he himself belonged to the Turkish military aristocracy that provided the ruling elite. Amir Khusraw served under a number of Turkish Muslim nobles in northwestern and northern India until 1290, when he entered the Delhi sultan’s service, and he enjoyed the patronage of kings of the Khalji and Tughluq dynasties. A prominent disciple of the great Chishti Sufi Nizam al-Din Awliya, the poet was buried next to the saint in the Nizamuddin dargah (Sufi center) in Delhi. Among his many works the Khamshah, written between 1290–1299 and 1301–1302, is probably best known.

The miniature illustrates the tale of a saint who attempted (and failed) to stay awake until the Night of Power (layla al-qadar), the twenty-seventh day of Ramadan. The central image of surah 97 of the Qur’an, the Night of Power refers to the evening on which Muhammad was first called to his mission, when the first verses of the Qur’an were revealed.

If this copy of the Khamshah had a colophon, it was lost when the manuscript was broken up, and the dating of this key Sultanate work remains in dispute, with evidence and arguments ranging from mid-fourteenth- to mid-fifteenth-century northern India and from royal to nonroyal patrons.1

A. W.

1. Richard Ettinghausen, Paintings of the Sultans and Emperors of India (Delhi, 1961), noted the Khamshah’s stylistic affinities with both Mamluk Egyptian and southern Iranian painting of the second half of the fourteenth century, but on the basis of the manuscript’s calligraphic style, admittedly rather unimpressive, dated it to the second half of the fifteenth century. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, "L’oeuvre de Shizu et les origines de la miniature mystique," in Paintings from Islamic Lands, ed. Ralph Pinder-Wilson (Oxford, 1976), has suggested an earlier date for both text and illustrations. A close stylistic comparison in painting is found in a late fifteenth-century Shomshain produced in northern India (see Moti Chandra, Studies in Early Indian Painting (Bombay, 1950), p. 9). Karl Khundalavada and Moti Chandra, New Documents of
Indian Painting—A Ragini (Bombay, 1966), dates the Khushali to the second quarter of the fifteenth century and suggests that it was not done for a royal patron. Most recently Milo C. Beach, The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court (Washington, D.C., 1988), pp. 42–46, has leaned toward a dating in the second half of the fourteenth century. This view seems the most plausible, and it would suggest that the patron may have been the Sultan Firuz Shah (r. 1351–1388), whose uncle, Sultan Ghayath al-Din (r. 1320–1348), had established the Tarhun dynasty in Delhi. Ghayath al-Din was the last notable patron of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi, who wrote a Taghhuqua'in in his praise.

49 / Portrait of Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali

By Dust Muhammad

India; ca. 1556–1560

Page: H. 33.7 cm., W. 24.6 cm.

Miniature: H. 17.5 cm., W. 14.5 cm.

A young man sits writing, his right hand holding a tiny red pen and his left hand supporting the paper propped on his right knee. Like a turtle poking out of his shell, his slender neck and round head emerge from his clothes (a pale yellow coat open over a pale blue garment), topped by a turban of a style fashionable during the reign of Akbar’s father, Humayun. There is no background. The back’s too perfect (and too shell-like) curve and the oddly projecting shoulder look unnatural, and the smooth, intent face seems tight and troubled. Neither paper nor person are quite balanced.

On the sheet is written: “God is Great, Jannat Ashiani.” This portrait is the likeness of Shah Abu’l-Ma’ali of Kashgar, whom his Majesty keeps close to him in royal service. The work of Master Dust Musavvir.” The words Jannat Ashiani refer to someone already dead, and were used as a posthumous title for Humayun. The picture was therefore made after Humayun’s death in 1556 and was probably commissioned by the sitter, who enjoyed far less favor under Akbar.

Shah Abu’l-Ma’ali had been one of Humayun’s closest friends; the second Mughal ruler had even adopted him as his son. But to Akbar and to almost everyone associated with him Abu’l-Ma’ali was overbearing, untrustworthy, and disloyal, “a repository of strife and sedition” and a “brainless and ill-fated youth” whose “brain had been ruined by the worship of his own beauty.” He was also a murderer. Abu’l-Fazl wrote of him with dislike and contempt:

Shah Abu’l-Ma’ali traced his descent from the sayids of Termiz. His personal beauty made the good and right-thinking look for goodness of nature, and his forwardness was tolerated on account of his courage. Conse-
quently he became a favorite of His Majesty Jahanburi [Humayun]. Some of his insolencies and extravagancies will be related in their proper place.\textsuperscript{4}

Since the final years of his turbulent life were spent in sedition and rebellion, this portrait must have been completed in the first three or four years of Akbar's reign, when Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali still enjoyed royal favor.

The painter, Master Dust Musavvir, was also known as Dust-i Divana and Dust Muhammad.\textsuperscript{3} He grew up in Herat in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, studied with the celebrated painter Bilhzad, and probably accompanied him to the Salavud court in Tabriz in 1522. An accomplished calligrapher as well as painter, he remained with Shah Tahmasp until mid-century, when he took up Humayun's earlier invitation and left for Mughal territory. He worked first for Humayun's brother Kamran in Kabul and, after Kamran's death in 1550, for Humayun. The use here of the title Jarut [Ashkan] suggests that he also served under Akbar, though since Abu'l-Fazl does not see fit to mention him among the Iranian painters at court, it could not have been for long. His influence on Mughal painting is indiscernible, and this portrait must number among his very last Indian pictures.

The portrait is mounted on an eighteenth-century album leaf. On the reverse are four lines of poetry, penned in nasta'liq style by Muhammad Riza.\textsuperscript{6}

You have become afflicted by that coquette. 
You have become a friend of sorrows and pains. 
You have the bowl of your eye in your hand, 
Saying: "I have become a beggar from seeing you." 

A. W.

\textsuperscript{1} Meaning "Nestled in Paradise."

\textsuperscript{2} A portrait drawn above an abductive couplet and attributed to Mir Sayyid 'Ali has been recognized as a somewhat earlier likeness of Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali (see Stuart C. Welch, Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches [New York, 1976], fig. 3).

\textsuperscript{3} Abu'l-Fazl, The Aithbars, trans. H. Blochmann (Calcutta, 1907), 2:153, 308. 27.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 1:380.

\textsuperscript{5} For a full account of this extraordinary artist, calligrapher, and man of letters, see Martin B. Dickson and Stuart C. Welch, The Islamic Revival (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), especially pp. 116-38. This volume includes discussion of Shah Abu'l-Ma'ali, his career, critics, and portraits.

\textsuperscript{6} The name is not uncommon among calligraphers, but the scribe here may be the same master who designed some of the inscriptions in the Royal Mosque of Isfahan and in the Shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad (see Anthony Welch, Shah-i 'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan [New York, 1973], no. 53). We are indebted to Annemarie Schimmel for the translation.

\textsuperscript{1} In the possession of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; pages from the manuscript are reproduced in most studies of Mughal painting, including Douglas Barrett and Basil Gray, Painting of India (London, 1949), repr. ed. New York, 1976, p. 80; and Stuart C. Welch, Imperial Mughal Painting (New York, 1978), pl. 4.

\textsuperscript{2} This attribution is the suggestion of Stuart C. Welch. For his monograph on Rosanw, see "The Paintings of Rosanw," Jaffa Rate (1941), for the Cow and Calf, see idem, Imperial
Meghal Painting, fig. 5, in the same work pls. 8, 12, and 13 reproduce other paintings by Basawan.

2. Abu’l-Fazl knew Basawan’s work well and discusses him in the Akbarnama: “In backgrounding, drawing of features, distribution of colors, portrait painting, and several other branches, he is most excellent.”

51 / Babur Racing with Qasim Beg and Qambar ‘Ali
Attrib. to Mitra
India; ca. 1590
From a manuscript of the Baburnama
Dye: H. 26.6 cm., W. 15.7 cm.
Miniature: H. 21.6 cm., W. 13.5 cm.

Shortly after the transfer of his capital from Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore in 1586, Akbar began commissioning splendidly illustrated manuscripts of Islamic histories and of the memoirs of his dynastic predecessors. Among the very first of these books was the Baburnama (the Memoirs of his grandfather, Babur, the first Mughal emperor), translated from its original Chaghatay Turkish into Persian by Akbar’s learned general, the Khan Khanan ‘Abd al-Rahim ibn Bairam Khan. Akbar’s own copy was completed in 1589 (a.h. 998), and several others were finished about the same time. The Baburnama is one of the great memoirs in world literature. Keenly ambitious but with a refreshing sense of objectivity about himself, Babur suffered multiple setbacks in his ultimately unsuccessful struggle with the Uzbek for control of Samarkand and his perceived Central Asian patrimony; but from his base in the city of Kabul he led a coalition of forces against the Lodi sultans of Delhi in 1526 and with a series of victories laid the basis for the Mughal empire. Neither privation nor success altered his fundamentally resilient character and his open-eyed sense of wonder and appreciation for the world around him. Written near the end of his life from notes composed in earlier years, his Memoirs served as a kind of dynastic standard for his descendants on the Mughal throne.

This page probably comes from a dispersed manuscript of the Baburnama. On the reverse are eleven lines of text that describe Babur’s departure from Samarkand after surrendering it to the Uzbek leader Shaybani Khan in 1501. Despite the bitter loss of the city and the imminent danger surrounding him and his mere one hundred followers, his natural ebullience took over the next day, and he impetuously raced two of his friends:

From the north slope of Qara-bugh we hurried on past the foot of Juduk village and dropped down into ‘Yian-utti. On the road I raced with Qasim Beg and Qambar ‘Ali (the Skinner); my horse was leading when I, thinking to look at theirs behind, twisted myself round; the girth may have
slackened, for my saddle turned and I was thrown on my head to the ground. Although I at once got up and remounted, my brain did not steady till the evening; till then this world and what went on appeared to me like things felt and seen in a dream or fancy.

In the illustration, Babur, dressed in orange and mounted on a blue horse, is shown just as he turns in his saddle to estimate his lead and as his friends and various followers, apparently spotting the loose girth, gesture to him. Though the text mentions a village, the painting shows a distant walled city.

Commencing with the Bahararnamah, it became general practice in the Mughal atelier to add the painter’s name in the lower part of his painting. In the lower right is a pair red ascription to the artist Mifta, who is not mentioned in the A'in-i Akbari.

A. W.

1. The first Persian translation of the Bahararnamah was apparently prepared during Babur’s lifetime by his religious official and poet Shāykh Zayn al-Dīn Khwārezmī. Perhaps due to the ornate style of this translation, a second one in a plainer style was completed some years later for one of Akbar’s military officers, Nowrang Khan, who considered it incumbent on every Mughal adherent to know the book. The third translation, by the Khan Khānna, has remained the most widely known and read.

2. Akbar’s 1548 copy of the Bahararnamah is in the British Museum, Add. 24,416. Other copies are in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; the Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow; and the National Museum of India, New Delhi.

3. It cannot come from either the Moscow or New Delhi manuscripts, since in both of them the same scene a moment later is illustrated, showing Babur already tumbling off his horse. Another page from the dispersed Bahararnamah is also in the Safedilad Aga Khan Collection and shows the successful attack of Babur’s troops on the inhabitants of Bishār.


52 / Humayun Defeats Kamran at Kabul
India; ca. 1555–1600
From a manuscript of the Akbararnamah
Page: H. 36.9 cm., W. 25.2 cm.
Miniature: H. 32.8 cm., W. 21.1 cm.

Two of our major sources of information about the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) were written by his boon companion and adviser Abu'l-Fazl. The A'in-i Akbari provides encyclopedic information about late sixteenth-century India and Mughal administration; the Akbararnamah is directly concerned with Akbar’s life and career. The Akbararnamah also deals with Akbar’s father, Humayun, who was overcome by Sher Shah in 1540 and subsequently driven out of India to a brief exile in Iran. He did not regain the Mughal throne until 1555. Humayun’s brother, Mirza Kamran,
entrusted with the important governorship of Kabul, consistently betrayed Humayun. Often indecisive and for many years unwilling to punish Kamran, Humayun finally defeated him in 1550 outside Kabul and a few days later ordered him to be blinded.

Akbar commissioned at least two copies of the Akbarnamah. One volume of the earlier and larger manuscript is in the Victoria and Albert Museum; produced between 1555 and 1600 by the major artists in Akbar’s employ, it is the finest of his historical manuscripts. A number of detached leaves that originally belonged to this Akbarnamah are in other collections; in size, style, and marginal notations Humayun Defeats Kaman is obviously one of these. It would originally have illustrated chapter 48.

An inscription in the lower left of this page identifies the battle. Kabul is shown in the upper left. From the upper right the Mughal army winds around rocky formations to the center, where Humayun in golden armor on a brilliantly caparisoned horse leads the troops pursuing Kamran’s defeated forces. The painting’s dramatic perspective is derived from European prints, but the bloody realism and sense of terror in the fleeing soldiers is akin to the style of the earlier Hamzanamah, one of the first books produced by Akbar’s atelier. A second red inscription at the bottom of the page ascribes the picture mostly to Mahesh, who also painted several other illustrations in this Akbarnamah, but states that certain faces were rendered by Padarath.

A. W.

1. The volume in the Victoria and Albert Museum contains 217 paintings. The second Akbarnamah, produced between 1605 and 1610, is divided between the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, the British Library, and numerous other collections. See cat. no. 64 for further references. Akbar also commissioned royal manuscripts of the memoirs of his grandfather Buzur and his ancestor Timur.

2. Other pages are in the India Office Library, London; the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Cleveland Museum of Art; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd.

3. Mahesh is cited by Abu’l-Fadl in chap. 34 of the Al-i Akbari as a major contemporary painter. Padarath is known to have worked on the Beatty Akbarnamah.


53 / The Munificence of Ja’far al-Baramaki to ‘Abd al-Malik
India; ca. 1595
From a manuscript of the Akbär-i Barmağiyan
Page: H. 25.7 cm., W. 19.7 cm.
Miniature: H. 22 cm., W. 17.7 cm.

Akbar’s interest in instructive histories was responsible for an illustrated copy of the Akbär-i Barmağiyan (Traditions of the Barmecids), made either
on his orders or as a gift for him by another patron. The text is less a formal history than a compilation of anecdotes demonstrating generosity in high places. The original ninth-century Arabic text had been translated into Persian in the fourteenth century by the Muslim Indian scholar Ziya al-Din Barani, who served under the Tughluq sultans Muhammad (r. 1325–1351) and Firuz Shah (r. 1351–1388).3 As its guiding principle is didactic, it may be included in that class of Persian literature known as “mirrors for princes,” which had been written since the tenth century to instruct rulers in proper princely behavior.4 If the patron of this manuscript was not royal, he may have hoped that the book’s message would elicit a favorable royal response.5

The two protagonists in this illustration are well-known figures in ninth-century ‘Abbasid history. A distant cousin of the caliph Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809), ‘Abd al-Malik al-Hashimi was imprisoned in 803 after having served as governor in Medina and in Egypt. Ja’far al-Baramaki, younger son of the brilliant vizir Yahya ibn Khalid al-Baramaki, was celebrated for his elegant diction and his knowledge of Islamic law. As a great favorite of Harun al-Rashid, he was given positions of distinction, being at various times governor, director of the mint, and tutor to Prince al-Ma’mun. Eventually the Barmaquis’ vast wealth and power aroused the caliph’s distrust, and in 803 Ja’far was executed and the caliph moved into his former friend’s palace in Baghdad.

In this painting Ja’far sits at the left listening to ‘Abd al-Malik, who not only owes him money but is requesting further funds for his son, Ahmad, engaged to the caliph’s daughter. Ja’far prudently forgives him the debt and promises him the loan he needs. Its thin colors and straightforward, unadorned style make it unlikely that this page was painted by major artists in Akbar’s atelier. If there were once any attributions below the picture, they have been lost in later trimming and remounting, for at some point the manuscript was dismembered and this leaf put in an album.6 Its reverse now displays seven nasta’liq lines from a moralizing poem, perhaps Sa’di’s BUSTAN.

A. W.

1. Barani is best known for his important history of the Delhi sultanes between the years 1266 and 1357 (Tarikh i Firuz Shah), which was similarly didactic in purpose.
3. Edwin Binney, 3rd, Indian Miniature Painting, The Moghul and Deccan Schools (Portland, Ore., 1975), p. 39, has published two pages from this manuscript. He concludes that it was "prepared for a non-royal patron."
4. A second page from this manuscript is in Prince Sadruddin’s collection and will be published in a forthcoming volume of the catalogue.
As he expanded his state militarily and consolidated it administratively, Akbar employed artists to produce impressive copies of dynastically relevant books. Among them were not only the predictable Mughal dynastic memoirs, such as the Bahurnamah and the Akbarnamah, but also more purely historical works, such as the Jam'i al-Tawarikh (World History). This was composed by the Il-Khan (Mongol) vazir of Iran, Rashid al-Din, in Tabriz early in the fourteenth century. Though the World History presented human history from Creation through the Mongol conquest of the Near East, Akbar commissioned only the last sections, dealing with the history of the Mongols in Iran. The Timurids, the great Muslim dynastic clan to which the Mughals belonged, claimed descent from the Mongols, and the emperor's interest in Mongol history therefore conforms to the Mughal interest in genealogies and histories that supported their royal descent and resultant right to rule.

The second Il-Khan monarch, Abuqa (r. 1265–1282), strengthened and organized the state he had inherited from his father, Hulagu. A Buddhist, and tolerant of Christians, Abuqa pursued policies in some ways parallel to those of Akbar, who may therefore have found Abuqa's portion of the History especially interesting. In a setting resembling sixteenth-century Mughal architecture, Abuqa is mourned by Muslims and Mongols with a fervor that seems to derive pictorially from fourteenth-century Iranian painting.

The copying of the text was completed on 25 May 1596, and the miniatures were added over the ensuing several years. Although a number of pages have entered private collections in recent years, the largest part of the manuscript is in the Gulistan Library, Tehran, part of the booty brought back by Nadir Shah after his sack of Delhi in 1739. It was a product of Akbar's atelier of the time when the classic Mughal style had come to fruition and when dozens of artists were employed producing manuscripts ranging from the delicate sensitivity of the Diwan of Shahi (see cat. no. 99) to more quickly rendered and visually simpler works like the Jam'i al-Tawarikh. Below the illustration is recorded precise librarian's information about its production: "Drawn by Makund and painted by Bhanwari the elder," well-known artists somewhat below the stature of Basawan, La'il, and Mansur, who also contributed illustrations to the manuscript.
On the reverse are seventeen horizontal and ten diagonal lines of text in a good nastaʿliq hand.

A. W.

1. This is apparently the text referred to by Abul-Fadl as the Chinghiznameh (see Abul-Fadl), The ‘Arūn-i Akbar, trns. H. Blochmann, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, 1927), p. 114.

2. E.g., the “Mounting for Ireland” from the Demotte Shahnameh, reproduced in Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, Epic Images and Contemporary History (Chicago, 1983), p. 102.


55 / A Prince and a Hermit
Attrib. to ‘Abd al-Samad
India; ca. 1585–1590
Page: H. 34.6 cm., W. 31.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 34.5 cm., W. 22.8 cm.

Themes resonant in Iranian literature and art have been translated here for an Indian patron, either the Mughal emperor Akbar or his son Prince Salim. The mighty stallion, in Iran a symbol of worldly pomp and power (and, by the same token, of worldly impermanence), dominates the lower half of the page as he dominates the five servants, who hover around the prince’s steed as they would around his master. The prince, however, sits beneath a plane tree, talking with a hermit whose flimsy mantle emphasizes his extreme emaciation. Wild animals are gathered trustingly around him, and what might have been a royal hunt has been transformed into a peaceful kingdom by the holy man’s protective presence. A major theme in Iranian culture, the meeting of high aristocrat and humble dervish (or hermit) presents the fleeting juxtaposition and distant affinity of temporal and spiritual authority, reflected here even in the prince’s eight sleek servants and the hermit’s single wraithlike disciple. The birds in the painting embody the hermit’s goal: they are “souls set free.” The rocks, meanwhile, have been endowed with animal or human features (a heavy-set and bulbous-nosed individual stares perplexed over the hermit’s left shoulder), making of the natural setting an animate world—a conception and a treatment common in Iranian painting since the fourteenth century.

Yet despite its Iranian themes, this is an Indian painting. Its Persian elegance and grace amplified by the figural fullness, naturalism, and sense of depth characteristic of Mughal painting. Indicative of the artistic synthesis created under Akbar’s patronage, the painting can be confidently attributed to ‘Abd al-Samad (perhaps working with a gifted assistant), one of the Safavid Iranian masters who left Shah Tahmasp’s court in Qazvin to work first under Humayun and then under Akbar. A well-known passage
from Abu'l-Fazl’s A’in-i Akbari reveals the effect of Akbar’s patronage on ‘Abd al-Samad’s art:

Khwaja ‘Abd al-Samad, styled Shirinsalam, or Sweet Pen. He comes from Shiraz. Though he had learnt the art before he was made a grandee of the court, his perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look of His Majesty, which caused him to turn from that which is form to that which is spirit.1

Miniatures from the Mughal phase of this artist’s career are well known and support this attribution on stylistic grounds, revealing the same two-tiered composition, rocky formations, and figural types found in this painting.2 Catalogue number 56 in this volume, which is virtually identical in theme and style with the picture under discussion, not only bears the name of ‘Abd al-Samad but also identifies the seated prince as Akbar’s son, Salim. The young aristocrats in the two paintings are similar enough to suggest that the attentive but unnamed Mughal in this present painting may also be Prince Salim, the future emperor Jahangir.

Although the miniature may once have illustrated a poetic manuscript, it was subsequently mounted in an album, and on its reverse is now an unsigned calligraphy: three lines in the thuluth style of script, beginning with the bismillah (the Qur’an’s first words) and continuing in Arabic with a pious warning.

A. W.

1. This attribution has been proposed by Stuart C. Welch. For ‘Abd al-Samad and the formation of the Mughal school of painting, see Martin B. Dickson and Stuart C. Welch, The Houghton Shahnameh (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), especially pp. 192–200, 115–121, 126–91.
3. For paintings by ‘Abd al-Samad, see Dickson and Welch, Houghton Shahnameh.

56 / Prince Salim and a Dervish
By ‘Abd al-Samad
India; ca. 1586–1587
Page: H. 39 cm., W. 25.4 cm.
Miniature: H. 23 cm., W. 16 cm.

Nim qalam (half-pen), the technique of lightly tinting parts of a drawing, is excellently demonstrated in this picture. The meeting of a prince and a dervish is a frequent theme in Islamic literature and art, but the meeting depicted here may well have taken place, for Prince Salim (the future emperor Jahangir) was not only more committed to Islam than his father Akbar but was also interested in Sufis and hermits. As in the two other such encounters depicted in this collection, the elaborate hunt has come to
a halt and the erstwhile prey look on in peace, protected by the holy presence, who may belong to the Khaskan dervish, an order that developed in India. A rocky mound fills the upper right distance; a chinar (plane tree) fills the upper left, and below it on a throne-like mound sits the prince, while the dervish stands, appropriately on a smaller mound. His horn, his kashal (beggar's bowl), and his garb identify him unmistakably as a dervish. At the right is a short inscription of great importance: "The son of the emperor Akbar; the work of 'Abd al-Samad Shirin Qalam."

Both rocks and chinar identify the landscape as Kashmir, which had just been conquered by the Mughals. Born in 1569, the heir to the Mughal throne would have been seventeen or eighteen years old here, and the inscription naming him as "Akbar's son" rather than "Salmun" suggests that the drawing was made for the emperor, not the prince. It is, of course, a very literary portrait, incorporating the young prince into a conceit that any literate Muslim would have understood. This meeting contrasts worldly and other worldly, earthly and spiritual wealth. There is a single dervish but many courtiers; the animals, though protected by the holy man's attendance, still direct their glances at the prince. The goat even kneels. In keeping with Akbar's elevated concept of Mughal kingship, the two do not meet on equal terms: the dervish supplicates, the prince deigns to grant.

'Abd al-Samad, the artist, had been styled Shirin Qalam (Sweet Pen) by Akbar, and Abu'l-Fazl's appreciation of his art is quoted elsewhere. He followed several careers in his long life and flourished in all of them. He had been trained in the Iranian capital of Tabriz under Shah Tahmasp, and one picture in the great Houghton Shahnamah (fol. 742b), produced for that king in the first half of his reign, is attributable to him. In 1548 the Mughal emperor Humayun invited him to follow him east, and in 1549 he did so. He was known for calligraphy as well as painting, and since he gave instruction to both Humayun and Akbar, he may also have taught Prince Salim. An orthodox Muslim, he was apparently a Shi'a, and Akbar's official (and clandestine historian) Badauni, a pious Sunni, did not entirely approve:

(Khwajah 'Abd al-Samad of Shiraz)... is much occupied with ceremonial prayers and fasts, and with supererogatory prayers and outward devotions, and had great faith in the Hajj; he (the Hajj Ibrahim the Traditionalist) used to say, "Khwajah, all these observances will profit you nothing until you give a place in your heart to love for the orthodox successors of the prophet.""

Akbar gave the artist a mansab (honorary command, i.e., a sinecure) of four hundred troops, and in 1578 the emperor placed him in charge of the mint at Fatehpur Sikri, a powerful and lucrative post. Later in his career he was given authority over the city of Multan. Such power granted to an artist (who was celebrated for his pious, not-to-say miraculous, calligraphies on
grains of rice and poppy seeds) is indicative of the often close relationships between Mughal rulers and members of their ateliers.5

In this drawing, executed when 'Abd al-Samad must have been well advanced in years, his Iranian origins are only dimly perceptible. Such passages as the roundly modeled, particularly expressive horses' heads and the lively dogs suggest that he may have been assisted by Basawan, another major Mughal artist. It was during this period that the young prince Salim began to emerge as a sensitive patron of painting and calligraphy, and the inscription at the right may be the artist's acknowledgment of their student-teacher relationship.6

A gold floral inner border was added around the drawing when it was mounted as an album page, probably during the reign of Shah Jahan. The outer margins, replete with flying birds, deer, gazelles, and a hunting cheetah, were added at the same time: they are the work of a follower of the Master of the Borders.7

It is the Master of the Borders himself who is responsible for the superb floral margins on the reverse, where tulips and other flowers sway and bow in the gentlest of winds. Their long, bent leaves and palapable sense of life typify his style. The inner borders—in plain gold, green with gold arabesque, and pale tan with gold arabesque—were all pasted on when the page was composed. The calligraphy on the reverse consists of two parts. The twelve small panels that form the innermost border contain love verses by the late fifteenth-century Iranian poet Jami, whose name is mentioned in one of the final passages. The calligraphy in the large central panel, illuminated with tiny flowers and thin arabesque against a gold background, reads as follows:

From my master Mir 'Ali, may his grave be illuminated.8
From the time that my heart became indelicted with that honey-lipped one,
Neither day nor night is there peace for me.
From night to dawn I weep blood because of her separation,
And every day I ask more than a hundred times for my death.
Written by the sinful poor man, 'Abd al-Rahim
'Anbarin Qalam.

While still a young man, 'Abd al-Rahim left his native city of Herat (where his cited master Mir 'Ali, who could not have trained him, had lived) for India and entered the service of the Khan Khanan, Akbar's highest official. He later worked for Jahangir, who gave him the khālīt (epithet) ‘Anbarin Qalam (Amber Pen). Dated calligraphies by his hand range from 1591 to 1625.9 These include a 1624–1625 copy of the Jalalīnīsāth in the former royal library, Tehran, and the 1595–1596 copy of Nizami’s Khamsah

in the British Museum, in which we find below the final colophon a double portrait of the calligrapher 'Abd al-Rahim and the painter Daluat, dated to 1609.10

A. W.

1. Cat. nos. 55 and 59 deal with this theme. We are indebted to Amnemarie Schimmel for the suggestion that the dervish may belong to the Khakass order.
2. He is identified as Shah Salim in a 1599 viméla drawn during one of his revolts against Akbar (see cat. no. 60).
3. See cat. no. 55.
4. 'Abd al-Rahim, Masalahay-je Guranlik, trans. T. W. Haig (Calcutta, 1890), 519ff. Shahī's ritualy denounced the first three copies as spurious.
5. The above discussion of 'Abd al-Samad is heavily dependent upon the analysis of that artist in Martin B.Dickson and Stuart C. Welch, The Houghton Shāhshāhā (Cambridge, Mass., 1981). The artist's son was also a painter, poet, and calligrapher, whom Bedaoni (Mastabdah, pp. 229–30) praises: "His name is Shahid, and he is the son of Khwaja 'Abd al-Samad, the painter. He is a youth lately come to man's estate, and he is unrivaled in beauty of permanence and in painting. It is well known that his father wrote in full, and in a good and legible hand, on one side of a poppy seed, the Surah al-Bakr, and on the other side of it the argument of the chapter; and they say that his son, Shahid, bored in one poppy seed eight small holes, and passed wires through them, and that he drew, on a grain of rice, a picture of an armed hussar, preceded by an outrider, and bearing all the things proper to a hussar such as a sword, a shield, a pole stick, etc. Shahid has a pleasant nature. He has composed a dinner and the following verses were selected by him from his works and given to me (for insertion in this work)."
6. Stuart C. Welch, whose study of Basawan is cited in cat. no. 75, n. 2, proposed that he assisted the Iranian master in this picture. For the suggestion that Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir) was an eager, influential patron as early as the 1630s, see Amnemarie Schimmel and Stuart C. Welch, A Pocketbook of Rules (New York, forthcoming).
7. See cat. no. 72 for observations upon the Master of the Borders.
8. The reference is presumably to Mir 'Ali al-Haravi, who had learned his art under Sultan 'Ali Mashhadī and who died in Bukhara about 1544. For further information on Mir 'Ali, see Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1979), no. 83.
9. 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi, Anbarin Qalam also wrote cat. no. 64, a closely related small album of Sa'dī, and a number of other manuscripts (probably including cat. no. 59). Mehdi Bayani, Kühn's Calligraphers (Tehran, 1966), 239ff., 91, discusses the scribe and lists thirteen of his signed works.

57 / Flight of a Simurgh
Attrib. to Basawan
India; ca. 1590
Page: H. 35.8 cm., W. 25.2 cm.
Miniature: H. 32.8 cm., W. 21 cm.

A Muslim arriving at Akbar's court from Iran or Central Asia would have recognized this picture immediately: the phoenix-like giant simurgh plays
skilled calligraphists. Nasta’liq has especially received a new impetus. The artist who, in the shadow of the throne of his Majesty, has become a master of calligraphy is Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir. He has been honored with the title of Zarin Qalam, the gold pen. He surpassed his master, Mawlana ‘Abd al-‘Aziz; his muhaddith and daw’ir show everywhere a proper proportion to each other, and art critics consider him equal to Mulla Mir ‘Ali. Like his equally great colleague ‘Abd al-Rahim ‘Anbarin Qalam, Muhammad Husayn copied a number of great Mughal manuscripts; he was also celebrated as a teacher of his art.8

1. For a brief discussion of the simurg, see cat. no. 29 and Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1976), no. 83.
2. In the Sanskrit collection of animal fables, the Katha-Sundara-Segasa [Ocean of the Streams of Story], trans. C. H. Twycross (Calcutta, 1888), there are several tales involving simurghs and human beings that may have influenced the artist’s conception of this scene.
3. Akbar’s 1595–1596 Akbari of Nizami (British Museum Or. 1210) illustrates this incident with greater fidelity to the text. (See Frederic R. Martin, The Miniature Paintings and Painters of Persia, India, and Turkey (London, 1912), p. 186.)
4. For another painting by Basawan and relevant bibliography on the artist, see cat. no. 50.
5. See cat. no. 72 for a discussion of this illuminator. Cat. nos. 56, 66, 67, and 72 also show work by his hand.
7. For works by and discussion of ‘Abd al-Rahim, see cat. nos. 76, 8, 79.
8. A well-known painting portrays Muhammad Husayn instructing Basawan’s son Manohar in calligraphy (reproduced in Welch, Calligraphy, no. 76, where the scribe is also discussed. A more extensive presentation of the calligrapher and his work is to be found in Mehdi Bayani, Khamsah Na’ii (Calligraphers) (Tehran, 1966), 570–4.

58 / A Manuscript of the Akhlaq-i Nasiri
India, Lahore; ca. 1590–1595
H. 23.7 cm., W. 14.3 cm.

Although not a reader, Akbar was a passionate learner with a wide range of interests and a superb memory. He commissioned manuscripts not only because he loved pictures but also because he loved the texts, and Abu’l-Fazl’s A’in-i Akbari gives a vivid impression of the content and process of his continuing education:

Experienced people bring (these books) daily and read them before his Majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end. At whatever page the readers daily stop, his Majesty makes with his own pen a sign, according to the number of pages; and rewards the readers with presents of cash, either in gold or silver, according to the number of leaves read out by them. Among books of renown, there are few that are not read in his Majesty’s assembly hall, and there are no historical facts of the past

His Majesty shows much regard to the art (of calligraphy) and takes a great interest in the different systems of writing; hence the large number of

an important role in the epic and mystical literatures of Arabs, Turks, and Iranians, though it receives here a more “naturalistic” rendering than it would have had from a Safavid or Ottoman artist.1

But if he knew his Persian texts well, our observer might have been puzzled. The Persian poet Nizami’s Haft Paykar is constructed around King Bahram Gur’s seven wives, each of whom comes from a different part of the world, lives in a differently colored pavilion, and tells him a different tale on one day of the week. The Indian princess begins the book, and the hero of her story at one point escapes from bondage and arrives in a paradisical land by clinging to the feet of a simurgh. That is what we see here, except that the text does not mention the simurgh’s meal, apparently added by the artist.2 Whether this superb picture was ever included in a Haft Paykar for Akbar is not known.3 About 1635 it was bound in a suitably royal album for Akbar’s grandson, Shah Jahan.

The painting shows a peninsula or island whose water margins are filled with aquatic creatures. The land itself is lush: soft green grass, blossoms, and dark green trees with a small white temple nestled discreetly among them at the right. A multihued mountain rises into a subtly modulated blue sky at the left, while at the right the simurgh rises in the air. Two hapless men are clutched in its beak; the hero of the tale grapples its feet. At the top of the miniature is the inscription “Basawan;” perhaps Akbar’s greatest painter, the sense of tangible volume, the prevailing softness of figures and receding landscape, and the sensitive and sympathetic observation all corroborate this attribution.4

The page’s floral arabesque border, cruelly trimmed, appears to be the work of Shah Jahan’s great, as-yet-unidentified illuminator, whom we refer to here as the Master of the Borders.5 He is also responsible for the elegant floral border framing the calligraphy on the reverse: its perfect blossoms bend in a stately visual minuet. The margins were prepared about 1635, when the album was produced for Shah Jahan.

The calligraphy on the reverse consists of two parts. Fourteen small panels, comprising an inner border, contain lines from an unidentified heroic epic in the meter of Firdausi’s Shamsamah; they were put in place when the album was constructed. The large inner rectangle presents an Arabic prayer, filled with Qur’anic expressions written in a masterful hand by Muhammad Husayn Zarin Qalam (Golden Pen), one of the greatest Mughal calligraphers, whose name appears in minute script in the lower left. Born, like Akbar, about 1542, Muhammad Husayn flourished at the Mughal court and was greatly admired by Abu’l-Fazl (among others), who discusses him at some length in the A’in-i Akbari.”
ages, or curiosities of science, or interesting points of philosophy, with which his Majesty, a leader of impartial sages, is unacquainted. He does not get tired of hearing a book over again, but listens to the reading of it with more interest. The Akhlaq-i Nasiri, the Galiistan, the Bustan, the Shahanama, the collected manuscripts of Shaykh Nizam, the works of Khusawaw and Maswana Jamri, and several works on history, are constantly read out to his Majesty.\footnote{Abu'l-Fazl takes care to cite the Akhlaq-i Nasiri (The Nasirian Ethics), a philosophical and ethical treatise that Akbar valued highly. The original text was commissioned by Nasir al-Din 'Abd al-Rahim, the Isma'ili governor of Qhistan, and completed about 1235 by Nasir al-Din Tusi (1201-1274), a philosopher, scientist, and man of letters who was one of the great intellects of medieval Iran. He remained in Isma'ili employ until 1247, when he left to serve the invading Mongols under Hulagu. His Akhlaq-i Nasiri is divided into three discourses, dealing with ethics, social rights and regulations, and political theory and practice. This manuscript consists of 244 pages written in an elegant nasta'liq; there is no colophon identifying the scribe, but the hand would appear to be that of 'Abd al-Rahim 'Anbari Qalani, one of Akbar's most celebrated and prolific scribes. The initial page has an illuminated 'serum (title cartouche), and the manuscript is illustrated with seventeen full-page miniatures that stylistically belong to the period from about 1590 to 1595, when Akbar's court atelier at Lahore was extremely active. Though some of the pages have been trimmed and remounted, others still bear notations about the artists, and those named—Kanak Singh, Dhanraj, Tulsi Kahan, Phim Gujrat, Sajnu, Khim Kahan, and Nand—are known to have been in Akbar's employ. Their work here is consistent with their painting in other manuscripts of the period.\footnote{The task of illustrating a philosophical treatise could not have been easy. Lacking episodes, leading figures, or established iconography, the Nasiren Ethics did not provide a ready visual subject matter, and the business of creating suitable pictorial content must have been delegated to an intellectual like Abu'l-Fazl. The inherent difficulty of the task can be seen from the text for folio 137a (illustrated):}

Crafts are of three kinds, noble, base, and intermediate. Noble crafts are those coming within the range of the soul, not that of the body; and they are called the crafts of liberal men and of the polite. The greater part of them come within three classes; that which is dependent on the substance of the intelligence, such as sound opinion, aptitude counsel, and good management—and this is the craft of ministers; that which depends on cultivation and learning, such as writing and rhetoric, astrology and medicine, accounting and surveying—and this is the craft of men of letters and of culture; and that which is dependent on strength and courage, such as horsemanship, military command, the control of frontiers and the repulsion of enemies—and this is the craft of chivalry.\footnote{Only in the final sentence is the picture's content—horsemanship—actually mentioned. This particular scene was chosen, presumably as a generic reference to chivalry, and because its iconography was established in the illustration of epics, romances, and histories. But as clarification of the text, it is all but pointless: the illustration is there for its own sake, as a piece of fine painting. It is signed by Kanak Singh, a painter strongly influenced by Farrukh Chela. Similarly, folio 160a (illustrated) is a representation of an active manuscript atelier: a master supervises a scribe, while two painters, a second scribe, and a paper maker are at work. It "illuminates" a section dealing with social strata and urban organization. Among the several classes are the communications specialists, who bridge the gap between the rulers and the ruled: "Their craft comprises the sciences of Scholastics, Jurisprudence, Eloquence, Rhetoric, Poetry, and Calligraphy." The painting bears the name Sajnu, written in a very rough hand. Most of the manuscript's miniatures deal with crafts, arts, and professions, the kinds of occupations that Abu'l-Fazl was careful to describe in the A'in-i Akbari. As a result, they provide valuable visual information about urban professional society in Akbar's India. The artists chosen to illustrate this unique illustrated Akhlaq-i Nasiri were not Akbar's major artists but rather painters trained by them. A. W. 1. Abu'l-Fazl, A'in-i Akbari, trans. H. Blochmann (Calcutta, 1977), 1:110. 2. For a splendid translation of this text and an excellent introduction to its author, see G. M. Wickens, trans., The Nasiren Ethics, by Nasir al-Din Tusi (London, 1964). 3. For this calligrapher, see cat. no. 59. 4. See cat. no. 59. 5. Tulsi Kahan and Khim Kahan worked on the Victoria and Albert Akhbaranamah (see cat. no. 55). Khim Kahan and Dhanraj provided paintings for the Chester Beatty Akhbaranamah; and Tulsi Kahan and Dhanraj participated in a Khamsat of Nizami, datable to the same period. 6. Wickens, Nasmirs Ethics, p. 158. 7. Kanak Singh worked on the 1595-1596 Khamsat of Nizami (British Museum Or. 1240B) and the Timurnamah in the Bankipar State Library. 8. Wickens, Nasirian Ethics, p. 216.}

\footnote{59 / Two Pages of a Divan of Shahi India, ca. 1595 (A) A Prince and a Hermit Attrib. to Miskin Page: H. 26.7 cm., W. 20.3 cm. Miniature: H. 13.3 cm., W. 9.2 cm.}
(B) A Love-Madden Man in a City Square

Page: H. 32.4 cm., W. 22. cm.
Miniature: H. 12.7 cm., W. 8.1 cm.

Timur’s grandson, Baysunghur Mirza (d. 1433) was one of the most gifted Timurid connoisseurs and bibliophiles, and literature and the arts flourished at his court in Herat. Among the many prominent poets who enjoyed the prince’s patronage was Amir Shahi (d. 1453), and his Divan was popular not only in Timurid Iran but also at the Mughal court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These two miniatures originally belonged to a small, superbly finished copy of Shahi’s Divan, whose miniatures are all characterized by great refinement and delicacy and a grasp of atmosphere and perspective more accomplished than in earlier, larger works done under Mughal patronage. Stylistically this Divan clearly belongs to a group of royal manuscripts of the first rank that was produced in the imperial atelier in Lahore and that includes the 1595 Baharistan of Jami and the 1596 Khamsah of Nizami. For these sumptuous books Akbar’s finest painters worked without the aid of assistants. By 1595 the young prince Salim had become a gifted connoisseur of painting and calligraphy, and this late sixteenth-century group of literary manuscripts, emphasizing high finish and small size, very likely reflects his influence on Akbar’s atelier.

The first miniature illustrated here, attributable to the major artist Mis-kin, takes up a familiar theme. From the nearby city in the upper left a royal hunting party—fourteen attendants and a mustached prince—has come, initially searching for game but now stopping at the cave of a hermit, solitary except for his parrot. The verse reads: “I am the sacred parrot, imprisoned in a cage. Where is the mirror of your face, that I may begin to talk?” While his companions stand politely nearby, the prince, who resembles Akbar’s son Salim and may well be a portrait of him, sits on an elegant carpet and converses with the hermit. The caged parrot is between them, and in the rocks above the hermit’s head can be seen the forms of two animals and a human face. Directly to the left of the hermit’s face is another bearded visage, peering out of stone at the prince.

The painter of the second miniature is so far unidentified, but the illustrative process is the same as in catalogue number 59(A): a single incident from one verse of a poem in the Divan of Shahi has been amplified into an entire scene. A love-madden man holding round objects in both hands rages in a city square and drives people away from him toward the left. Perplexed men stand in a group at upper right, watching the tumult, and in the center several women peer from the shelter of a doorway. The perspective is strikingly uneven: the angry man and the figures in the
upper right are far larger than all the others, and the city's buildings and walls are dwarfed in comparison with the human scale.

The text of the Dhunn appears to have been copied by 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi 'Asbarin Qalaw, the most important calligrapher in the Mughal atelier at that time.7

A. W.

1. For two other miniatures from this manuscript, see Stuart C. Welch, The Art of Mughal India (New York, 1967), nos. 5a and 5b. All of the miniatures have been remounted with unattractive nineteenth-century French borders, presumably supplied for this purpose by the dealer who separated the illustrations from the manuscript.

2. In the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

3. Formerly in the Dyson-Perrins Collection and now in the British Museum.

4. Mentioned by Abu'l-Faraj in the Akbari Alberi, trans. H. Blochmann, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, 1907), 1:114. The painter was responsible for many miniatures in Akbar-period manuscripts. Other masters who contributed to the Dhunn of Shah were Bawanai and Kasaa Dua.

5. Translated by Annemarie Schimmel, who has also pointed out that Shahzad had been a calligrapher at the court of Prince Rasyangur in Herat. His Dhunn was one of the most widely calligraphed texts in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth century.

6. For this observation I am indebted to Dr. Annemarie Schimmel. The same process can be seen in a Dhunn of Anvari in the Fogg Art Museum (Gift of John Godd). Cambridge, Mass. It belongs to the group of small, highly refined manuscripts produced in the latter part of Akbar's reign (see Annemarie Schimmel and Stuart C. Welch, A Pictorial for Akbar, A Dhunn of Anvari cited 5:88 [New York, forthcoming]).

7. See ext. no. 56 for a discussion of this master.

PUBLISHED: (A) Stuart C. Welch "Mughal and Deccani Miniature Paintings from a Private Collection," Ars Orientalis 5 (1965), pp. 221–33, fig. 5. In this article, the attribution to Muskink is argued at length.

60 / Salim and the Captured Cheetah

By Aqa Riza

India; ca. 1562

Page: H. 38.8 cm., W. 27.4 cm.

Miniature: H. 31.1 cm., W. 19.4 cm.

Nim qalam (half-pen) drawings are frequent in Mughal art of the late Akbar and early Jahangir periods, and their partial painting is used to excellent effect here. The startling blue of Prince Salim's outer garment, tied loosely at his waist, draws immediate attention to Akbar's som: it is a nice courtier's touch by the painter in the prince's employ. The gold of his other garments, and his white turban, serve the same function. Painter colors tint the clothing of lesser persons. Dark green tree leaves and the gold, blue, and white sky are the other principal areas of color.

Near the center of the enclosure the prince kneels and holds the cheetah's head as it is lifted onto a heavy cloth for transport to the cage that appears just below it in the picture; from the lower left comes a bullock cart
to take the caged cheetah back to the city of Allahabad in the upper left. On the two small rocks just above the cart is the inscription: “Aqa Riza, the servant of Shah Salim.”

Akbar’s eldest son, Salim (b. 1569), was increasingly at odds with his father in the last decade of Akbar’s rule, and in 1599–1600 (A.H. 1008) he rebelled, declared himself emperor in the city of Allahabad, and set up his own court. Though father and son were later reconciled and Salim succeeded to the Mughal throne in 1605 under the regnal name of Jahangir, the feud was a prelude to the ferocious internecine warfare that dangerously weakened the Mughal state in the seventeenth century. The ambitious prince is shown here at the age of thirty or thirty-one, in one of the many incidents recorded in his Memoirs that reveal his fascination with animals and with hunting.

Speaking in his Memoirs about his favorite painter, Abu’l-Hasan, Jahangir refers briefly and somewhat disparagingly to that artist’s father, Aqa Riza: “His father, Aqa Riza, of Herat, at the time when I was prince, joined my service. There is, however, no comparison between his work and that of his father.” Although not to be identified with Shah ‘Abbas’s court artist of the same name, Jahangir’s Aqa Riza came from a similar stylistic background, and his earliest datable works establish his artistic affinity with Iranian court painting of the 1750s and 1800s (see cat. no. 30). The emperor Akbar had little taste for Safavid painting, as Abu’l-Fazl’s remarks on the development of the painter ‘Abd al-Samad indicate (see cat. no. 53), but the heir-apparent was initially much more open to the qualities of a master like Aqa Riza. It is thus probable that Aqa Riza entered the prince’s service soon after he came from Iran, and he accompanied Salim to Allahabad, where he was the chief painter in the rebellious son’s atelier.

Aqa Riza had two sons who surpassed him as painters, Abu’l-Hasan (b. 1588–1589) and ‘Abd, likely born somewhat later. Presumably both were trained by their father, although Jahangir gives himself much of the credit for Abu’l-Hasan’s eminence. Neither son adopted the father’s Iranizing mode, which Jahangir favored in Allahabad and then ignored after his accession to power (and control over the full imperial atelier) in 1605. But that short-lived style is readily apparent in this drawing: most of the figures show that lack of volume which is one of the characteristics of Safavid painting, and the occasional very bright pigments recall Iranian usage. But some details—like the bullocks, the tree and the monkeys in it, the distant city—are closer to the main currents of Mughal painting, and it has been argued in conversation by Stuart C. Welch that Aqa Riza was assisted in this drawing by his gifted son Abu’l-Hasan, who would have been at least eleven years old at this time (see cat. no. 69 for a drawing attributed to the young Abu’l-Hasan). Aqa Riza’s extant oeuvre is small, and this drawing numbers among the very few works from the period when he was directly under Prince Salim’s patronage in Allahabad. Further, it assists us in un-
understanding the evolution of the future emperor Jahangir’s taste, and it presents us with what may be the earliest known work of Abu’l-Hasan.8

A. W.

1. Akbar had developed the ancient and strategically located city of Allahabad into a major military center after 1576; five years later he established the city as capital of Allahabad Province and began a large fort there. It is presumably this architectural complex that we see in the upper left.


4. For Aqa Riza Jahangiri, see Beach, Grand Mogul, pp. 92–95.

5. See Lawrence Bengui, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, Persian Miniature Painting (London, 1953), pl. CXXV, no. 236. In 1599–1600 (A.H. 908) Aqa Riza also supplied illuminated margins for one of the most important Mughal albums, and the figures in these margins are closely related stylistically to those in this drawing. (See Yvonna A. Godard, “Les Maquereaux du Mazaraki Cilghan,” Athar-i Faw, vol. 1, fasc. 1 [1976], pp. 111–12.)

6. For ‘Abul, see Beach, Grand Mogul, p. 85.


8. The drawing has been remounted; its present borders are of considerably later date. On the reverse is an eighteenth-century design of a tree with pink blossoms and four perched birds.

61 / Dalliance in the Country

Attrib. to Abu’l-Hasan

India; ca. 1601

Page: H. 38.8 cm., W. 28.5 cm.

Miniature: H. 20.5 cm., W. 12.6 cm.

On the raised porch of a square pavilion sit a young man and a young woman, both elegantly dressed. His trousers are tinted rose, as is her long veil, and there are touches of the same color in the flowers and in the fence that encloses the building. A distant landscape, complete with city, forest, and tiny shrine, adds a Mughal cliché to the romantic scene, but it is almost overwhelmed by the bursting foliage of a great tree. Just inside the fence are two bird cages and three stacked bowls, all powerfully but rather awkwardly rendered, and the little boy in the lower center seems visually somewhat related to similar children in Safavid painting. The old woman in the lower left is, however, based on acute observation and is a brilliant, if somewhat rough, study. Clearly this drawing, with its combination of repeated formulae and innovation, is not the work of a long-established master but instead of a greatly talented youthful draftsman just emerging from his apprenticeship and displaying a predictable mixture of dependence and independence.

Certain elements hint at both training and identity. The tree’s explosive vigor recalls the tree in Aqa Riza’s drawing of Prince Salim and the cheetah (cat. no. 60), and the face of the attentive young man is almost identical.
with that of the attendant with the fly whisk standing behind Salim. Since this youth’s face is also comparable with Abu’l-Hasan’s first dated work, a 1500–1501 drawing of St. John after Düer, an attribution of this work to Abu’l-Hasan seems convincing.

Further evidence of the precocious Abu’l-Hasan is apparent if we compare this drawing with one of Mughal art’s more puzzling masterpieces, the famed Bullck Cart in the Sah Collection, Banaras, a brilliant miniature in which Abu’l-Hasan’s signature is worked into the design of the cart itself. In addition, this miniature contains precisely the same moon-shaped lace seen in the present drawing; and as in the present drawing, the overall spirit is more rugged, even raw, than one would have expected in a great painting of the early seventeenth century. Coincidentally, the bullocks and cart in the Banaras picture can be seen as more articulately refined versions of the same passages in catalogue number 60, passages which we assign unhesitatingly to the very young Abu’l-Hasan rather than to his far less gifted but at that time more accomplished father. Dalliance in the Country, therefore, can be regarded as Abu’l-Hasan’s earliest extant work, datable to about 1600. See Salim and the Captured Cheetah, on which the boy collaborated with his father, should be dated slightly later, and the Banaras Bullck Cart to about 1603.

During the early years of the seventeenth century, when father and son worked in the studios of the art-loving Prince Salim at Allahabad, Abu’l-Hasan’s youthful energy seems to have drawn him to the dynamic style associated with the Humranah as well as to European prints and his father’s calligraphically elegant, markedly Iranian manner. His genius, however, was already evident; and one finds justification in his juvenilia for the high regard in which he was held by his judicious patron.

S. C. W. and A. W.

2. Reproduced in N. C. Mehrota, Studies in Indian Painting (Bombay, 1946), facing p. 64.
3. This drawing is mounted now as an album page with much later borders. The reverse is blank. On the obverse, about three centimeters above the drawing, is written in Persian in a very rough hand, “The work of Master Black Pen (draftman).” It is not a signature and was presumably added when the drawing was mounted in the album.

62 / An Elephant of Many Parts
India; ca. 1600
Page: H. 39 cm., W. 25 cm.
Miniature: H. 17.4 cm., W. 20 cm.

There is a compelling tradition of composite animals in Islamic art, and this Mughal painting is one of its most complex, vital, and impressive
Walking in front of the elephant and looking back at the royal rider is a guide, painted white except for his pink scarf; his color presumably is associated with the picture's wider meaning. The brilliantly colored elephant and rider are in bright contrast to the nim qalam background. Blowing behind the king's gold crown are flames; his belt is a living snake; and his garment, composed of animal bodies, merges with the composite animals forming the elephant: the rider's feet become part of his mount. From the elephant's neck and belly hang two bells, the first a golden monkey head, the second a golden lion head. The body of the elephant itself partakes of dozens of forms that fall into four groups: (1) predators—lions, tigers, and mythological orange kylins, almost all with some creature in their jaws; (2) prey—cows, deer, and other quadrupeds; (3) birds—neither hunters nor hunted, crammed into the spaces between the other creatures or forming specific elephant parts, like the fat quail that compose the feet or the duck that forms the lower jaw; (4) men—also onlookers rather than actors, with the arms of the foremost man turning into the elephant's tusks, which end in human hands holding feathers. There are puzzles too in this bewildering pachyderm world: the elephant has no visible ear or eye, and a snake drips from the elephant's trunk, although elephants and snakes are natural enemies. And not all is serious: a spotted cow, pressed up against an elephant's head and attacked by a lion, lets out a bellow of complaint.

It is a complex creation but one that gives the sense not of a unique vision but rather of a traditional image rendered with uncommon vitality. The painter is not known, and the picture's meaning is neither obvious nor defined in textual sources. One can suggest that the white guide is a Sufi, leading the royal rider who is very much in control of this human and animal diversity—a metaphor of the Mughals, who aspired to Solomon-like kingship under divine auspices. Thus, like catalogue number 63, the image is a mixture of the worldly and otherworldly, of the possible and impossible. That is perhaps why the many birds—traditional symbols of the human soul in Sufi thought and imagery—are both in the midst of it and beyond it and are, in fact, the feet lifting the immense weight of the world.

A narrow blue-green border with gold arabesques was added around the miniature at a later date. The margins resemble those of catalogue number 56—birds, deer, gazelles, and a hunting chough—and are the work of the same illuminator, a follower of the Master of the Borders. They, like the border, date to about 1640.

The Master of the Borders was responsible for the stately, elegant floral margins of the reverse, which also recall those of catalogue number 56. They enclose a fine calligraphy, written diagonally in Persian and Arabic:
May God honor his face.
From the Sayings of the Leader of the Believers,
Hazrat 'Ali.
Since I knew God, I never rendered thanks to nor
made any complaints about one of His creatures,
Because all that came to me, I saw from Him.
The poor sinner 'Abdullah al-Husayni, may
God forgive his sins and hide his faults.  

'Abdullah al-Husayni is known as a prominent calligrapher at the court of
Shah Jahan, where he was granted the honorary appellation (ikhtib) Misk-
kim Qalam, or Misk Pen. This work, in ta'līq style, probably dates to about
1640–1645, the years when the album was presumably assembled. Obverse
and reverse margins were obviously once part of the same album and may
have been side by side.

A. W.

1. For several examples of composite animals of various sorts, see Anthony Welch, Shah
'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan (New York, 1973), no. 294; idem, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim
World (Austin and London, 1972), no. 77; Stuart C. Welch, Indian Paintings and Painted Books (New
York, 1996), no. 11. The latter image is also a composite elephant and also rendered
close to 1600 by a Mughal master; this elephant, however, is led, ridden, and followed by four
demons, implying that the whole world is controlled by the preternatural. As the author
points out, such composite creatures ultimately derive from ancient and culturally diverse
sources.
2. Translation by Annemarie Schimmel.
work by his hand is dated to 1652–1653 (A.H. 1063) and is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

63 / King Solomon’s Court
Attrib. to Madhu Khanah梓ad
India; ca. 1600
Page: H. 34.5 cm., W. 22.8 cm.
Miniature: H. 27.4 cm., W. 15.5 cm.

In sympathy [he was like] Jacob,
In comeliness [like] Joseph,
In fortitude [like] John,
In sovereignty [like] Solomon.

These laudatory similes are written in a graceful nasta‘līq in the two
panels near the top of the painting; the use of Old and New Testament
figures as exemplars of virtue is common in Islamic literatures. Like the
Mughal emperor Akbar, King Sulayman (Solomon) in darbar (court recep-
tion) sits on a throne, hexagonal like the orange canopy shading him and the carpets and platform beneath. Birds fill the cloud-streaked blue sky or perch in trees, while the ruler wears of the approach of the Queen of Sheba from a hoopoe perched to his left on the throne. Angels stand around him; jinn (genies), brought firmly under Suleyman’s control, either serve or stand in readiness. A page boy behind the king’s right shoulder holds a fly whisk; the only other human present is his vazir, seated on the platform of the throne. Animals too accept the great king’s sovereignty. They gather, mostly in pairs (presumably an indication of fecundity), obediently at the bottom of the miniature. With a single exception, all of the animals are indigenous to India; only the simurgh—a mythical bird in the upper right—is not, but its presence so pervades the literary and mystical traditions of Islam that it is quite at home here.2

To Muslims, Suleyman was the perfect image of the ideal king. He enjoyed the closest divine support and was endowed with superb gifts—including the knowledge of all languages, human and animal—that gave him remarkable understanding of other living things. Presiding over great heterogeneity, he created and preserved harmony, and his control over natural forces, like the wind, and supernatural beings, like the jinn, gave him unparalleled authority.3 The Ottoman sultans found the Suleyman image appealing, and so did the Mughals: both empires were extremely diverse in population, faiths, and languages, and the autocratic ruler was the central element binding society together. This picture, painted for Akbar in the latter part of his reign, when he had created the administrative structures that would preserve the Mughal state for the next century, is an ideal image of Mughal kingship.

Attributed to the hand of Madhu Khanahzad, one of Akbar’s leading painters,4 this miniature may have once belonged to a Divan of Hafiz.5 A. W.

64 / A Manuscript of the Kulliyat of Sa’di

India; ca. 1604
H. 42.5 cm., W. 27.5 cm.

The Bustan (Garden) and Gulistan (Rose Garden) of the thirteenth-century Iranian poet Sa’di were among the most popular and frequently illustrated books in the Islamic world, particularly in Mughal India, where sumptuous copies were made for both Akbar and Jahangir.1 Less often, Sa’di’s oeuvre would be presented in a Kulliyat (Collected Works) that included not only the Bustan and Gulistan but also his many other verse and prose compositions in Arabic and Persian.2 Such a book was a large undertaking, and this manuscript is the only extant lavishly produced Imperial Mughal Kulliyat. Its 195 leaves are larger than those in most royal books of the period; of the 390 pages, 57 are blank but have the same gold margins as the rest of the manuscript. Since the text is complete, these pages were presumably intended for additional illuminations or illustrations.3 On folio 19a is the seal of Shah Jahan, an indication that the book was a treasured royal possession. The colophon on folio 19b identifies the book and the scribe but mentions no date, site, or patron and lists none of the several painters and illuminators who provided the twenty-three miniatures and five illuminated title pages. The calligrapher, ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Harawi, enjoyed the highest reputation and favor under Akbar and Jahangir, who gave him the honorific ‘Anbarin Qalam (Amber Pen).4

Although undated, the Kulliyat undoubtedly was produced about 1604 and belongs to a key group of manuscripts marking the aesthetic transition between the patronage of the two emperors.5 In 1604 Akbar’s studio completed the first half of a large Akbarnamah measuring 42.1 by 25.7 centimeters; the second half was almost certainly finished in the first year of Jahangir’s reign.6 The text was written by Muhammad Husayn al-Kashmiri, whom Akbar called Zarin Qalam (Golden Pen), as highly esteemed a scribe as ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Harawi.7 Its illustrations delineate this transitional period: masters like Basawan and Kesu the Elder, who had been instrumental in developing Mughal painting under Akbar, are absent; others, like Farrukh Chela, Miskin, and Dharm Das, were nearing the end of long, distinguished careers; and younger artists—among them Balchand, Daulat, Dharanaj, and Govardhan, all closely associated with Jahangir—contributed to the second volume, which was probably begun after the future king returned to Agra in 1604 at the end of his five-year rebellion.

Reflecting Jahangir’s taste even more fully is the Amor-i Sahayi in the British Museum, dated to 1604–1610.8 Two of its paintings, both dated to 1604, are by Aqa Riza Jahangiri,9 the Iranian master who flourished under Jahangir’s patronage from 1599 to 1605, when the young emperor inherited
64 / folio 78b: Sa'adi and the idol of Somnath

64 / folio 91a: Sa'adi and his patron Abu Bakr ibn Sa'd ibn Zangi
the royal atelier and apparently soon lost interest in Aqa Riza’s style. It was in that first year of the new reign that a second Sa’di manuscript was created, a 1605–1606 **Bustan**, its colophon recording that it was completed in Agra by ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi ‘Anbarin Qalam. Two of its twenty-two illustrations are clearly the work of Aqa Riza Jahangiri, and other of its miniatures have been attributed to Abu’l-Hasan, Govardhan, Mirza Ghulam, and Sur Das Gujarati. 

Comparison with these three manuscripts reliably establishes the contemporaneity of this **Kulliyat**. In size and stylistic range it is almost identical with the **Akbarnamah** of about 1604, written by Muhammad Husayn, the long-time colleague of ‘Abd al-Rahim. The two calligraphers were thus working at the same time on separate projects of important and magnitude. Completing the **Kulliyat** in the first year of Jahangir’s reign, ‘Abd al-Rahim was immediately assigned the second Sa’di project, the 1605–1606 **Bustan**, and many of the **Kulliyat** painters went with him to the new task, a scaled-down and more portable version of part of the **Kulliyat**. The **Amur-i Subah** of 1604–1610 also spans these years, and Aqa Riza Jahangiri, who apparently disappears from the scene in 1605–1606, provided two paintings for it, as he did for the **Bustan**.

Like the contemporary **Akbarnamah**, the **Kulliyat** of circa 1604 contains paintings by Akbari and Jahangiri masters. In the lower margins of folios 78b (illustrated) and 82b are ascriptions in red ink to Dharim Das and Hiranad respectively; the latter probably also painted folios 58a and 160a. Both came from Akbar’s long-established atelier, as did Farrukh Chela, who must also have contributed to the manuscript. Folio 91a (illustrated), however, is surely the work of Aqa Riza Jahangiri, and it is probable that other artists—like Abu’l-Hasan, Govardhan, Mirza Ghulam, Daulat, and Sur Das Gujarati, who took part in the illustration of the 1605–1606 **Bustan**—were actively involved in the great **Kulliyat**.

Folio 280 (illustrated) is unsigned and illustrates one of the initial tales of the **Bustan**. Separated from his hunting party, the emperor Dara prepares to defend himself against an approaching herdsmen whom he takes to be an enemy. Identifying himself as Dara’s own herdman, the man gently but pointedly upbraids the emperor:

> It’s neither laudable provision nor good judgement
> When the emperor knows not enemy from friend!
> It is in high station a condition of living
> That you should know who each inferior is.

The same artist was also responsible for folios 413b.

Folio 65b (illustrated) is a tour de force illustrating two of the **Bustan**’s moral stories. The first couplets describe the Prince of Khotan’s gift of a silk scarf to an ascetic who did not value worldly treasures, and the remaining five couplets begin the anecdote of the hungry man who was driven away from a feast. The upper portion of the illustration appears to show the prince of Khotan; the lower section illustrates the feast from which the poor man is being repelled in the lower right. Dharm Das illustrates one of the most celebrated stories in the **Bustan** on folio 78b. At one point in his extensive travels Sa’di stopped at the great temple of Somnath in India, where he engaged in religious discussion with Brahmin priests. To his explanation and praise of Islam they responded by demonstrating that the temple’s idol gestured in response to their prayers. Initially confounded, Sa’di inspected the statue at night and discovered a mechanical device that operated the image’s arms. And on the following day he vindicated his own position by confronting the priests with their trickery.

Aqa Riza’s single contribution to the **Kulliyat** is folio 92a, a picture that should probably be considered as illustrating both the **Bustan** and the **Gulistan**, for it depicts the pious Sa’di with his prayer beads, book, pen, and paper, seated with Abu Bakr ibn Sa’d ibn Zangi, the patron who is eulogized at the beginning of both the **Bustan** and the **Gulistan**. Through a skilful combination of tribute and alliance, this ruler of southern Iran had protected Sa’di’s beloved city of Shiraz from the Mongol incursions of the mid-thirteenth century; he had also supported the poet, as the tray of gold coins between them indicates. Though not a Mongol, Abu Bakr wears Mongol headgear that identifies him as an ally of the invaders.

The iconography of **Bustan** illustration was well developed: fifteen of the **Kulliyat**’s miniatures illustrate it. Four miniature paintings are devoted to the **Gulistan**, and four more paintings illustrate the remainder of the **Kulliyat**.

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1. Among them are the following: 1591 **Gulistan** (Royal Asiatic Society, London); ca. 1595–1600 **Gulistan** (dispersed); 1605–1606 **Bustan** (private collection); ca. 1610–1615 **Gulistan** (dispersed); ca. 1626 **Bustan** (Collection of Philip Holter).
2. The **Kulliyat** was sometimes referred to as the **Subah** [Book of Sa’di], the term used in this manuscript’s colophon.
3. The manuscript is paginated as follows: folios 1b–146, preface; 211b–256b, **Bustan**; 91b–113a, **Gulistan**; 133b–152a, **Sa’di’s remaining shorter works**.
4. For ‘Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi ‘Anbarin Qalam, see cat. no. 56.
6. The first portion, probably begun in 1602 and completed in 1604, is in the British Library; the second part, undated but almost certainly completed early in Jahangir’s reign, is in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. Many illustrations are separated and dispersed from both sections. For further discussion and bibliography, see Beach, *Imperial Image*, pp. 102–23. For a page from the first **Akbarnamah**, produced about 1590 for Akbar, see cat. no. 52.
7. For Muhammad Husayn Zarin Qalam, see cat. no. 37.
9. For Aqa Riza, see cat. nos. 60, 61.
10. The bustan is in private possession. I am most grateful to its owner for allowing me to study it, for giving me a set of slides of its illustrations, and for sharing with me many thoughtful insights about the book. The manuscript is discussed at length in Beach, Grand Mogul, idem., Imperial Image; Stuart C. Weck, The Art of Mughal India (New York, 1965), nos. 23, 24; and Ivan Silberschneider, "Un Bustan de Sa'di illustré par des artistes Mughols." Revue des arts asiatiques 11 (1930): 68-74.
13. Attribution by Beach, Imperial Image, p. 216.
14. The dispersed Galleries of ca. 1610-1615 contains paintings by many of the same masters and may have been intended as a companion volume to the 1605-1606 Bustan. See Beach, Grand Mogul, pp. 66-70.
16. Ibid., p. 171.
17. Ibid.
18. This same master of nine qalam also did folio 125a.

Published: Ralph H. Finder-Wilson, Paintings from the Muslim Courts of India (London, 1970), no. 72; Beach, Grand Mogul, pp. 25, 66, 68, 172, 176; and idem., Imperial Image, pp. 107, 111, 115-16, 228.

65 / A Noble Hunt
Attrib. to Muhammad 'Ali
India; ca. 1610-1615
Page: H. 36.6 cm., W. 26 cm.
Miniature: H. 19.2 cm., W. 16.3 cm.

It is the most elegant of hunts, though a hunt by inference only, since we see no prey. The horse and rider are in flawless form, their demeanor exemplifying well-trained grace as they poise (and pose) in a dance of confident assurance in their own perfection. Wearing an orange robe and golden turban, the prince has picked an arrow from his quiver as his stallion—his legs and tail half-hennaed—prepares to gallop: both seem to have just spotted the game. The horse’s gold saddle and saddlections, anklets, and other accoutrements are rich with flowers, as sumptuous as any Mughal illuminated page.1 Either the painter or an assistant was a master of illumination.

The foreground, over which the horse’s hooves hover, is filled with flowers, as precisely rendered as those in an illuminated border. Above the distant grey background rises a purple-streaked gold sky. Four illuminated panels, two above and two below the miniature, contain verses from a less-than-impressive poem; both script and background date to about three decades later than the picture.
So too does the floral margin, attributable, like several other decorated margins in this exhibition, to the unidentified Master of the Borders. Single large flowering plants are placed in delicate oblong frames, and smaller flowers of varied colors fill the spaces between and around them. The jewel-like setting and the placement of the flowers is reminiscent of the inlaid stonework of the Taj Mahal, under construction at this time, and the Master of the Borders may well have been responsible for some of those designs. The borders are from a great album made for Shah Jahan, later broken up, and presumably added here as an elegant setting by the art dealer Demotte.

Though a Mughal painting of a Mughal prince, the miniature shows distinct signs—particularly in the choice and juxtaposition of colors, in the floral foreground, and in a figural grace and elegance closely reminiscent of Safavid Iranian painting—of Deccani influence from the central Indian Muslim courts, where painting owed much to Persian prototypes. Very close similarities to three paintings ascribed to the master Muhammad ‘Ali allow a virtually certain attribution of this miniature to the same artist. Muhammad ‘Ali, like his contemporary Farrukh Beg, must have spent some time at one of the Deccani courts before joining Jahangir’s atelier, where he was surely one of the preeminent figures.

2. See cat. nos. 56, 57, 62, 73, as well as a portrait of Shah Jahan on the Peacock Throne in Basil W. Robinson et al., Persian and Mughal Art (London, 1976), fig. 95. Cat. no. 72 offers a more extensive discussion of this matter.

Published: Ivan SAndreikine, “Portraits moghols IV: La Collection du Baron Maurice de Rothschild,” Revue des arts asiatiques 29 (1935):190-208, pl. 69, and fig. 6; Skelton, “Farrukh Beg,” fig. 9.

66 / Jahangir’s Lion Hunt
By Farrukh-i Khurd-i Chela
India; ca. 1610
Page: H. 28.4 cm., W. 21.8 cm.
Miniature: H. 26.8 cm., W. 20 cm.

This painting is not circumspect. The emperor, at center stage, deals a mortal blow to the lioness mauling one of his officers, who is desperately trying to defend himself with his katar (dagger). The picture’s middle ground is all turmoil: the unnamed officer’s horse dashes away to the left, while Jahangir’s son, Prince Parviz, rushes in from the right and delivers another killing stroke. Suhrab Khan, seated behind Jahangir on the elephant, gestures wildly to keep his balance. In the upper right a lion chases four hunters up a tree, while four others keep cover in the lower right. In comparison, the miniature’s upper and lower left are areas of calm.

For well over two millennia in the ancient Near East and the Islamic world, the royal hunt had been used to demonstrate a monarch’s power and right to rule. Yet despite its iconographic antiquity, this scene seems fresh and vital. It records a real event, one in which Jahangir took great pride, and the painter renders it like a skilled courtier, focusing attention on the emperor’s total concentration, which accomplishes the lion’s death as surely as his spear.

Nasta’liq inscriptions on the reverse identify Jahangir, Parviz, and Suhrab Khan. Prince Parviz, who died in 1625 at the age of thirty-eight, appears to be in his early twenties here, and the emperor, born in 1592, seems about forty. The event and this pictorial record of it must date, therefore, to about 1610.

A second inscription, in what may be Jahangir’s own hand, identifies the painter as Farrukh-i Khurd-i Chela, of whom works dating from about 1580 to about 1620 are known.

1. The artist is also known as Farrukh Beg and Farrukh Chela. For his career, see Robert Skelton, “The Mughal Artist Farrukh Beg,” Ars Orientalis 2 (1957):303-41 (according to this biography, the artist would have been about sixty-four years old in 1603); and Anand Krishna, “A Study of the Akbar Artist—Farrukh Chela,” in Cilind: Ainaul Saharan Omar, 1971, pp. 353-73. There are three other renderings of this subject: (a) in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and published in T. Falk et al., Indian Painting (London, 1978); this version has only minor differences, including slightly paler tone, from the painting shown here; an English inscription on the reverse correctly attributes it to Farrukh Chela; (b) in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce Or. a.1, f. 337r. This painting is discussed in Robert Skelton, “Two Mughal Lion Hunts,” Victoria and Albert Museum, 1960, pp. 33-48; (c) in a private collection; published in T. Falk and S. Digby, Paintings from Mughal India (London, 1963), no. 15.
67 / Portrait of Shah 'Abbas I of Iran
By Bishndas
India; ca. 1618–1620
Page: H. 54.4 cm., W. 22.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 15.8 cm., W. 8 cm.

A plain green background centers our attention on the figure wearing orange boots and a dark blue garment; all three colors are muted in tone and without embellishment. They serve, however, to set off his elaborate belt and turban and focus our attention on the man’s intelligent face. The twisted belt is made of gold, blue, yellow, and white cloth with the elaborately dyed underside turned up at the right, and he thrusts his hands into it with confident nonchalance, alongside a richly jeweled knife, more Mughal than Safavid in appearance. The elegant turban billows like a white cumulus, bound with a gold- and white-striped cloth whose ends are brilliant red and gold. Cool calculation and determination are revealed in the face. Altogether, this portrait presents neither volume nor shading, and in its studied flatness stands apart from most Mughal portraiture of the period. It is a deftly balanced combination of the spare and the extravagant, all directed at presenting a penetrating, almost “psychological,” study.

In the lower left in a small gold cloud is the name Bishndas, one of the leading artists at Jahangir’s court. The words “Likeness of ‘Ali Khan” are written in the lower right. It is a later inscription. Whoever ‘Ali Khan was, he is not shown here, for the person portrayed by Bishndas is the great Safavid Shah of Iran, ‘Abbas I (r. 1587–1629).’

The fifth shah of his dynasty, ‘Abbas was a gifted military leader and skillful administrator, who created in seventeenth-century Iran a state that for several decades rivaled its Ottoman and Mughal neighbors. Territorial ambitions to the west were satisfied by victories against the Ottoman empire; the city of Qandahar was the focus of ‘Abbas’s eastern inclinations, though it was claimed and defended by the Mughals. After an unsuccessful attempt to seize the city in 1607, ‘Abbas tried diplomacy: several Iranian embassies traveled to the Mughal court, and in 1618 Jahangir responded by dispatching a lavishly accoutered mission to Iran’s capital, Isfahan. Accompanying the ambassador, Khan ‘Alam, was the painter Bishndas, whom Jahangir praised in his autobiographical Tuzk-i Jahangiri:

At the time when I sent Khan ‘Alam to Persia, I had sent with him a painter of the name of Bisvan Das, who was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of his state, and bring them. He had drawn the likenesses of most of them, and especially had taken that of my brother the Shah exceedingly well, so that
Cultural ties and mutual influences between the Safavid and Mughal states were many, and it is probably due to the presence and activities of Bishndas that Shah 'Abbas in turn ordered his favorite painter, Riza, to produce portraits of the ambassador, Khan 'Alam. Though competent records of appearance, these Safavid paintings lack the psychological insight of Bishndas's renderings. Both Akbar and Shah Jahan were patrons of portraiture, but neither appears to have shared Jahangir's faith in its power to reveal the inner spirit, character, and intentions of the person portrayed. And Jahangir was keenly interested in a correct perception of 'Abbas, his brother-monarch who kept nibbling away at Jahangir's city of Qandahar. Bishndas's several portraits of 'Abbas served as the basis for the celebrated "political cartoons" produced for Jahangir by Abul Hasan and Bichitr, which effectively used pictorial techniques borrowed from European broadsides. So pleased was Jahangir with Bishndas's performance of his commission that he rewarded him with the gift of an elephant. Politically, however, the portraits, and the insight Jahangir may have gained from them, failed of their purpose: Shah 'Abbas attacked and captured Qandahar in 1622. The Mughals did not recover it until 1638, only to lose it to the Safavids again in 1648.

The outer margins of the page are decorated with gold animal images; these borders originally belonged to a page of the Farhang-i Jahangiri, a dictionary compiled on Jahangir's orders and dismembered in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century by the French art dealer Demotte in order to use its margins around less elegantly bordered miniatures. Just to the left of the blue and gold floral border is a short love poem, written at some unknown time and unrelated to the portrait of 'Abbas or, presumably, to the Farhang-i Jahangiri:

I have an idol as slender as a hair,  
And to my eyes the world has become as dark as you.

A. W.

1. For Shah 'Abbas and his patronage of the arts, see Anthony Welch, Shah 'Abbas and the Arts of Safavid (New York, 1997), and idem, Artists for the Shah (New Haven and London, 1996).
68 / An Aged Pilgrim

By Abu'l-Hasan
India: ca. 1615–1620
Page: H. 36.7 cm., W. 24.5 cm.
Miniature: H. 11.6 cm., W. 6.4 cm.

Fascination with the human condition and the varieties of human appearance characterizes Jahangir's patronage, and although much of his artists' work, predictably, comprises portraits of himself, his family, and the court grandees, it also includes many depictions of humbler souls. Some are shown as minor figures in a large, grander scene such as the great group portrait of Jahangir at the Jharoka window of the Agra Fort (cat. no. 69), but others appear as sensitive single studies of persons or types by whom the emperor was fascinated. The wandering holy man here, telling his beads as he struggles toward Enlightenment, is reminiscent of the mullah or Sufi in the darkened room in Agra Fort (see cat. no. 69), but he was never part of a larger composition. He is an exotic, portrayed alone and for his own sake, like the wondrous flowers, strange animals, and wasted human beings also depicted at Jahangir's command.

The holy man stoops with age and perhaps with the burden of his search, and he leans heavily on his staff, but his eyes, peering intently ahead, are keen. His sinewy body testifies to long journeys and lean diet. The black space behind him merges imperceptibly with the ground he walks on, which is defined and highlighted by a few blades of grass, some small flowers, and a luxuriant, pink-blossoming plant in the lower right. Over the right shoulder of his light blue cloak hangs the strap of his beggar's sack, and on it, faintly written, is the correct attribution, "The work of Nadir al-Zaman." Nadir al-Zaman, meaning Rarity of the World, was a title bestowed on Abu'l-Hasan by the appreciative Jahangir. This brilliant study transforms what must have been a common sight in Jahangir's India into a highly singular image of spiritual dignity. It also illustrates the phenomenal range of Abu'l-Hasan's talent and Jahangir's patronage, from formal compositions on a grand scale to highly personal,
intimate portraits like this one (see cat. nos. 60, 61, 69, and 71 for other works by Abu'l-Hasan).  

A. W.

1. One of the most remarkable and appealing of these family portraits is Abu'l-Hasan's portrait of an infant Mughal prince (see Stuart C. Welch, The Art of Mughal India [New York, 1965], pl. 31).


3. The borders and margins around this miniature were added by the French art dealer Denisette.

Published: Percy Brown, Indian Painting under the Mughals (Oxford, 1924), pl. XVII and fig. 1; Miles C. Beal, The Grand Mogul (Williamstown, Mass., 1978), p. 91.

69  Jahangir at the jharoka Window

By Abu'l-Hasan

India; ca. 1620

Page: H. 55.5 cm., W. 35 cm.

Miniature: H. 31.2 cm., W. 20 cm.

Akbar had been the great organizer of the Mughal empire, and the structures he created were basic to its strength for the century after his death. His son Jahangir inherited an established empire, which he administered with a strong sense of duty and a personal commitment to social stability and justice. Since the Mughal emperor was central to the continuance of the state, it became customary with Jahangir for the ruler to appear each day, either at court receptions (dastar) or, more distantly, at a special palace window (jharoka). In both cases it was incumbent upon resident officials and aristocrats to assemble before the emperor according to their rank. They presented a microcosm of the diversity and order of the Mughal state.

In this painting Jahangir looks down from the jharoka window of the Agra Fort. His aura emphasizes his role as divinely ordained leader of the state. In two smaller windows on either side are the profiles of two princes, who do not look down but instead gaze furtively at their father. Though they are not identified, it is suggested that they are Prince Shahriyar and Prince Jahandar, both born in 1605. ¹ Near the red canopy at the left (later replaced by one of marble) is suspended a golden chain with golden bells; in his Tuzuk-i Jahangiri the emperor speaks of this Chain of Justice, which he installed so that petitioners ignored or rebuffed by royal officials could still attract imperial attention for redress of wrongs. Alas for good intentions! The Chain was guarded, and we see at the left a prospective petitioner being beaten away.
Ranged in front of the Agra Fort is the Mughal hierarchy, rank and power being signified by proximity to the emperor. Many of the figures are identified by inscriptions on their garments: on the raised white wall stand 'Isqad Khan, Khan Jahan, 'Ilmād al-Daulah, Abu'1-Hasan, and Sadiq Khan. They stand stiffly at attention, their faces either in profile or turned in steady obeisance toward the emperor. In the courtyard below the wall the scene is more relaxed, though here too several officials are identified: Qasim 'Ali Kunwāl, Shafi'at Jīlah, and Hasan Khan. Present as well are ambassadors or visitors from other lands, come to offer homage to the emperor; their presence implies the preeminence of the Mughal empire. The Iranian emissary is dressed in green and purple, with a gold turban; he stands in the group at the right, near a black African and an Abyssinian. Guards, musicians, attendants, and other officials bring the number of assembled onlookers to seventy-seven.

The composition mirrors the state. In the upper half, as if created by the emperor’s proximity, all is hierarchical order, propriety, and calm. But the farther from the emperor, the more turbulent and noisy life becomes: guards drive away petitioners; musicians play fanfares announcing the imperial presence; a happy elephant trumpets its approval; men try to talk; and in the lower right one benighted individual blocks his ears while another gives a raucous whistle. Here is another, disorderly, world, controlled more by Jahangir’s soldiers than by his lofty, distant, undirected gaze. In the very center of the painting is a small entrance into the raised marble wall, and within it can be seen either a mullah or a Sufi, probably a portrait of an as-yet-unidentified holy man who enjoyed Jahangir’s favor. Though the inscription below the entrance has been blurred, he must be a very significant personage, for he is squarely at the center of the picture.

The painting is a most impressive group portrait (the painter had obviously seen many such royal appearances and had closely studied the participants), but like many seventeenth-century group portraits in Europe, it is also a political statement. From bottom to top the picture moves from naturalism to symbolism and from real to ideal individuals.

Below the holy man’s door is an inscription crediting the painting to Nadir al-Zaman (Rarity of the World), the honored of Jahangir’s favorite and most honored master, Abu’1-Hasan.7 The artist was then at the height of his creative power and prestige, and this painting displays consummate mastery of portraiture, composition, and the political symbolism of Jahangir’s state.

Originally, the painting belonged to a royal copy of Jahangir’s autobiography, the Jahanīramān (or Tazak-jabangir); with illustrations by almost all the leading artists of Jahangir’s atelier. Its present margins were probably added later, when it was mounted as an album page. On the reverse is a fine calligraphy, four lines of nasta’līq rendering a poem by the
Iranian mystical poet 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani, who was executed in 1131. It is likely the work of the celebrated scribe Muhammad Husayn al-Kashmiri, dubbed Zarîn Qalâm by his admiring patron, Akbar. The mystical love poem reads as follows:

Sometimes I call you Cypress, sometimes
Moon,
And sometimes Muskeet, fallen in the snare.
Now tell me, friend, which one do you prefer?
For out of jealousy, I’ll hide your name!

A. W.

1. In cat. no. 70 the princes’ names accompany their portraits. Prince Khurram (the future Shah Jahan) does not appear to be represented in this painting of his father at the jamaâa window. Though it was not until 1643 that he rebelled actively against his father, he was not favored by Jahangir’s powerful wife, Nur Jahan, who controlled the government. It is worth noting that the royal officers who are identified by name in this group portrait are all relatives or close associates of Nur Jahan, whom Jahangir’s candidate for the succession was Prince Shahjahan. The eldest son, Khurram, had rebelled in 1646 and had been partially blinded in 1647.


3. For a discussion of the royal copy (or copies) of the Jahangirnama, see Bench, Grand Mogul, pp. 81–84.

4. For Muhammad Husayn, see cat. nos. 57 and 71, as well as Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1970), no. 70. We are grateful to Armenian Schmidt for identifying the poet and the script and for translating the poem.

Penciler: Late Exhibition of Antiquities, Coronation Durbar (Delhi Museum of Archaeology), no. 540, pl. XXXVII, Beach, Grand Mogul, pp. 64–71.

70 / Pictorial Genealogy of Jahangir
India; ca. 1620–1622
Page: H. 36.2 cm., W. 24.5 cm.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries illustrated royal genealogies were produced in Ottoman Turkey and, less commonly, in Mughal India. They reflect the considerable reliance of both dynasties on lineage to legitimate their claims to sovereignty over exceedingly heterogeneous populations. This carefully balanced pictorial representation of royal filiation ranks with the mid-sixteenth-century Mughal painting in the British Museum, Princes of the House of Timur, as an exposition of the Timurid connection that was so vital to the legitimacy of the Mughal house. As it now exists, the painting is a brilliant pastiche, probably put together for Jahangir himself. At the top are three vertical sections of illumination: the predominantly blue left and right panels are nearly identical and are late
fifteenth-century Herat work; the broader panel in the center, with its large areas of gold, must have been produced in Qazvin about 1580. They were taken from other pages and remounted here to emphasize the basic vertical divisions of the groups of paintings below.

Directly below the central illumination is the largest roundel, containing a portrait of the reigning emperor, Jahangir, with the aura of kingship around his head and a falcon perched on his right hand. Thin gold lines link his roundel with those of four sons, the larger circles belonging to the elder sons. To the left is Parviz (1584–1625), who meets the emperor’s gaze and extends his hands toward him; he is obviously the heir-apparent. To the right, appropriately looking at his father’s back, is Khusrav (1587–1622) who had rebelled in 1606, been partially blinded in 1607, and never really forgiven. In the smaller filial roundel on the left is Shahryar (1605–1628), and in the one on the right that touches Jahangir’s is Jahandar (b. 1605). Three of Parviz’s sons are shown near him, in smaller circles still: Keshvar Koshka, Durandash, and Azaram; at the right are Khusrav’s four sons: Garsha, Dwar Baksh, Rastakar, and Buland Akhtar.

A vertical line leads down from Jahangir. Almost certainly it once connected him with the portrait of his third and favorite son, Khurram (1592–1666), who would also have been shown with his sons. This set of images was, however, removed and replaced with the horizontal panel, an earlier genealogy that shows in its largest circle Miran Shah, Timur’s third son, from whom the Mughals themselves were descended. Radiating from him are his six sons and three grandsons. This large panel bears the name of Dhanraj, not one of the Akbar’s most gifted painters but a prolific illustrator of some of the emperor’s many historical manuscripts.

Khusrav died in 1622, so the central portion of the page must have been completed before that date. In 1623 Khurram rebelled, and his grievously disappointed father would then have had his portrait removed from the family genealogy. Thus the picture was probably completed between 1620 and 1622, which tallies with the apparent ages of those portrayed.4

A. W.

1. It has been suggested that the Mughals appropriated the concept of the royal genealogy from the Ottomans, but there is no solid evidence for this supposition.

2. See Ralph H. Pinder-Wilson, Paintings from the Muslim Courts of India (London, 1970), no. 86.

3. There is a considerable number of extant group portraits of Mughal emperors and princes.

4. From left to right, the six sons are: Khilaf Mirza, Sayid Ali, Ahmad Mirza (connected to his son Kishk Mirza), Umar Mirza, Sayyid-i-Mirza, Ayyub Mirza, and Abu Bakr Mirza (connected to two sons, Ayyebshar Mirza and Osman Mirza). A vertical line (directly below Miran Shah presumably led to the rest of the genealogy from which this portion was taken.

5. Stylistically, this earlier genealogy resembles one in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin (reproduced in Ernst Kühlau, Indische Miniaturen aus dem Besitz des Staatlichen Museums zu Berlin (Berlin, 1947)).

6. The painting of Jahangir and his descendants bears no artist’s name. Abu’l Hasan was well known as a masterly painter of small children (see Stuart C. Welch, The Art of Mughal Painting During Jahangir’s Time (Calcutta, 1978), pp. 109–114 and pl. 33.)

71 / Shah Jahan and Jahangir

By Balchand and Abu’l Hasan

India: 1628

Page: H. 15.2 cm., W. 11.5 cm.

Miniature of Shah Jahan (including margins): H. 18.6 cm., W. 14.5 cm.

Miniature of Jahangir (including margins): H. 5.7 cm., W. 4.8 cm.

On a large album page illuminated with repeated floral patterns in light gold, two royal portraits have been mounted. The two portraits were not originally intended for juxtaposition: probably the page was assembled in the eighteenth century. The small size of Jahangir’s square portrait and the oval shape of Shah Jahan’s derive from English miniature portraits, brought first to Jahangir’s attention by Sir Thomas Roe, ambassador from King James I, in 1615. It became fashionable, as well as obviously politic, for a Mughal grandee to wear a small square or oval “jewel” portrait of the emperor.

The sensitive portrait of Jahangir depicts him in the last years of his reign. Balchand, whose name appears on Jahangir’s left shoulder, was one of the finest Mughal portraitists, particularly gifted at conveying character and emotions. Thus, despite the radiant aura (the black within it more intense than the black outside) and the strands of perfect pearls (their pigment raised above the paper surface), the focus is on Jahangir as a human being who has learned wisdom and suffered disappointment. One senses too that Balchand found the emperor a sympathetic portrait subject.

The aura around Shah Jahan does not noticeably alter the pale green background, and the sense of volume in the father’s portrait has been reduced to flatness in the son’s. Clothing, gold, and jewels are more lavish: the figure projects opulent display instead of depth of character, and the outline of the face is knife-sharp, hard, and cold. This portraitist seems to have observed the younger emperor keenly and disliked what he saw.

Four inscriptions on the painting of Shah Jahan provide vital information:

1. On the seal that the emperor holds (its writing, of course, should be mirror-image, but for our convenience it has been written normally): “Abu’l-Muzaffar Muhammad Shihab al-Din Shah Jahan Pashah Ghazi, Second Lord of the (auspicious) Astral Conjunction, (in the) year one.”

2. In the gap between the floral patterns in the left upper corner of the page: “In the year 1134 of the Islamic era.”
It is an accession seal, marking the first year of the new emperor's reign after several years of princely rebellion against his father, and Shah Jahan regards it with calculating satisfaction.

2 In the upper right: "Written in the first year of the fortunate ascension."

3 In the lower right: "Presented to the sight of the most pure."

4 "The work of the humblest of the servants, Nadir al-Zaman."

From this succinct, precise account it is certain that Abu'l-Hasan, called Nadir al-Zaman, completed the portrait during the first year of the new emperor's reign and presented it to him then for his approval.3

Abu'l-Hasan had been Jahangir's favorite painter,4 and it seems plausible that he should have resented Shah Jahan, who inherited the imperial atelier after many years of fighting his father. A controlled dislike of his new patron may account for this portrait's chilly brilliance, so unlike the warmth and vitality of his other works.

On the reverse is a calligraphic panel containing four lines of nasta'liq, probably rendering some of Jami's verses, and signed by Akbar's celebrated scribe Muhammad Husayn.5

A. W.

1. For the painter Bakhsh, see the recent discussion by Milo C. Beach, The Great Mogul (Williamstown, Mass., 1979), pp. 95–102.

2. The title "Second Lord of the Astral Conjunction" explicitly refers to Shah Jahan's venerated and much revered ancestor, Timur, who styled himself "First Lord of the Astral Conjunction" (see Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World [Austin and London, 1979], no. 82).

3. Shah Jahan was thirty-six years old at the time.

4. Jahangir records in his Memoirs the following comments on Abu'l-Hasan's accession portrait for him: "On this day Abu'l-Hasan, the painter, who has been honored with the title Nadir al-Zaman, drew the picture of my ascension as the frontispiece to the Akbarnameh, and brought it to me. As it was worthy of all praise, he received endless favors. His work was perfect, and his picture was one of the choicest works of the age. At the present time he has no rival or equal" (Tazak-i Jahangiri, trans. A. Rogers, ed. H. Beveridge [London, 1909–1914], p. 26).

5. See cat. nos. 57 and 69 for other works by Muhammad Husayn and further information about him.

Published: Beach, Great Mogul, pp. 92, 101.

72 / Tulips and an Iris
Attrib. to the Master of the Borders
India; ca. 1645–1650
Page: H. 32 cm., W. 20.2 cm.
Miniature: H. 26.4 cm., W. 16.1 cm.

This is a picture startling in its simplicity and stirring in its richness. The yellow-tan paper supplies no sky, provides distant background, and sup-
ports only a meager, slightly rising line of moss at the bottom of the page. Towering over this minute landscape is a colossal, a common tulip far too vital and too large for the ground in which it seems to grow. Its erect stalk undulates slightly, and its single leaf of rich and subtly variegated green curves about the stalk and inclines its tip as if in a slow and measured dance around a center. The blossom is in full and perfect bloom: the shades of pink and streaks of yellow rich and luminous, the petals crisply curving and just open enough to reveal the depth of pink along their inner surfaces. The iris, to the right and farther back, is less splendidly dramatic and varicolored, but it is painted with marvelous subtlety, the cupped petals slightly parted to reveal pollen like the softest powder. To the left and seemingly far in the distance, a Western Asiatic tulip (indigenous to Kashmir but not to the rest of India) appears more modest still, with gently drooping leaves and bent head.

This personified analysis is appropriate, for these are highly individual portraits. Other Mughal painters have been keenly observant, but the unnamed master here was more ambitious, bent on capturing the essence of each flower—its tulipness, its irisness. Thus, despite the technical illogic of their setting, they “live” and dominate their environment, which is far vaster than it seems initially, for through a combination of decreasing size and increasing simplicity the iris and the second tulip recede to a great depth. In its very simplicity this recession is a remarkable artistic achievement, transcending the linear and atmospheric perspectives adopted from European art by Mughal painters more than fifty years before.

Mughal patrons had long been fascinated by flowers. Babur’s Memoirs contain his frequent detailed observations on the flowers and vegetation of the lands he passed through. Jahangir too was a keen observer, distinguishing the individual from the general, noting the real while making obeisance to the ideal, and recording (both in his Memoirs and in the art that he commissioned) what struck him as new, exotic, and different. European herbs began to be studied by Mughal artists during his reign, and artists like Manohar and Mansur made flower studies based upon them. In their stark solitude and simplicity, however, the two tulips and iris here are closer to the jewel-and-stone flowers in the walls of the Taj Mahal than they are to other Mughal floral studies. It may well be that the master responsible for this painting had, like Farrukh Beg and Muhammad 'Ali, either come from or spent part of his career in the Deccan. It is also highly probable that he is the anonymous Master of the Borders who created the superb decorated margins for Shah Jahan’s albums. Tulips and an Iris is the only independent painting that can as yet be attributed to this remarkable artist. That he was principally an illuminator may explain his anonymity. It may also explain his strength, for in an area of art often considered secondary he produced great painting and transformed humble decoration into creativity of a high order.
On the reverse are seven seal impressions and accompanying inscriptions which state that this picture was presented to Shah Jahan on three specific occasions: 28 Rabi' al-Awwal [in regnal year] 25 (A.D. 1651), 18 Jumada al-Ula 18 (A.D. 1654), and 4 Rajab 29 (A.D. 1655). The inscriptions indicate that Shah Jahan admired the picture and that, in keeping with his well-developed penchant for administrative regularity and sound record-keeping, there was a definite "royal viewing" procedure.

A. W.

1. For examples, see Ivan Schoole, La Peinture indienne (Paris, 1909), pl. 46.
3. See cat. no. 65. For the attribution of this painting and the borders, as well as the title "Master of the Borders," I am grateful to Stuart C. Welch, who also provided much of the argument.
4. See cat. nos. 56, 57, 62, 65, 73, where his work as an illuminator is analyzed in depth.
5. Tulips are a frequent metaphor in Iranian and Turkish mystical and love poetry, and it is clear that floral motifs, whether in decorated margins, architecture, paintings, textiles, or ceramics, had wider cultural meanings.
6. I am indebted to Annemarie Schimmel for her identification of these seals.

73 / A Love Poem
By Mir 'Ali
India; ca. 1635-1640
Page: H. 37.8 cm., W. 25.6 cm.
Calligraphy: H. 18.2 cm., W. 10 cm.

According to the inscriptions in the upper right and lower left corners, the four diagonal lines of excellent nasta'liq record a poem composed by 'Ali al-Katib and copied here by him. The quality of the script far exceeds the quality of the poem:

A delightful young man robbed my soul through his coquetry,
And he devastated my completely ruined heart.
I have such pain that I cannot describe it to anyone.
My condition is such that I cannot explain it.

The holograph is presumably the work of Mir 'Ali al-Haravi, who flourished in Herat and Bukhara under Timurid, Salavid, and Uzbek patrons until his death about 1544. His nasta'liq was much admired by the Mughals, who collected samples of his art and also commissioned copies by their own scribes. They must have noted as well that Mir 'Ali had once written a poem in praise of the first Mughal emperor, Babur: the scribe appears to have been interested in joining the migration of talent to India. Abu'l-Fazl shared the prevailing Mughal attitude toward the master:
"The illustrious Mawlana Mir 'Ali ... brought his art to perfection by imitating the writing of Sultan 'Ali of Mashhad. The new method, which he established, is a proof of his genius; he has left many masterpieces."

And Abu'l-Fazl's Iranian contemporary, the Safavid official and chronicler Qadi Ahmad, not only accorded him the highest praise but added that "albums, specimens, and writings of the Mir are scattered throughout the inhabited quarter of the world."

This page once belonged to one of the several great albums commissioned by Shah Jahan; originally calligraphies alternated with figural paintings, all arranged so that they formed a harmonious aesthetic entity. The visual cohesion of these albums must have depended as much upon the pages' illuminated borders as upon their relationship one to another. The decorated margin here is clearly the work of the Master of the Borders, who was responsible for the marginal decorations of several other works in this exhibition. The distinctive elements of his style are clear: individual petals, leaves, and stems are bordered with shining gold, like jewels in a precious setting (this illuminator's art must have stirred the lapidary passions of the emperor); an arabesque that seems to swirl with utter natural ease obeys instead a strict geometry and moves with principled precision; deer rest at measured intervals, and some birds perch attentively while others poise about to land or fly. It is a world closely observed in all its natural details but set in an order too obvious and too exact for nature: the world as it should be rather than the world as it is.

It was this kind of visual idealism that so appealed to Shah Jahan and so differentiated him from Jahangir and Akbar. Deer and birds are balanced here in a perfect equilibrium of color, shape, and arabesque, and the margins act as lyrical complement to the measured rhythms of the script. Illustrated borders rank among the highest and most sophisticated works of art created under the emperor's aegis, and though a follower of the Master of the Borders (presumably his student) produced impressive work that entered imperial albums, it was the Master of the Borders who combined the utmost skill with perfect artistic manners: his work is unobtrusive brilliance, not begging to be noticed but, once seen, demanding scrutiny. It is this kind of decoration, on the face of it humble and subservient to figural painting or calligraphy (or architecture, as in the Taj Mahal), that is ultimately the key to comprehending Shah Jahan's aesthetics.

A. W.

74 / Akbar in Old Age

India; ca. 1643
Page: H. 36.8 cm., W. 25.4 cm.
Miniature: H. 21.6 cm., W. 12.7 cm.

Akbar was long dead when this portrait was painted, and it portrays him not as he would have wished to be seen but as his grandson Shah Jahan wanted to remember him. Akbar died in 1605 at the age of sixty-four, and shortly before his death he had commissioned Basawan's son Manohar to paint a group portrait showing the emperor, a courtier, a hunter, and the princes Khusrau and Khurram (the future Shah Jahan). There Akbar is shown pale and exhausted, simply dressed and provided with few of the trappings of power.

The future Shah Jahan, then about twelve years old, was extremely fond of his grandfather, and he remained with him during his dying hours. When this posthumous portrait of Akbar was painted, Shah Jahan himself was in his mid-fifties and may have felt especial empathy for the aged Akbar he had known. In fact, Akbar seems here to be stretching out his hand in welcome to his grandson. But except for this human touch and the accurate likeness of Akbar, it could be any one of the formal imperial portraits to which Shah Jahan was so much addicted. Akbar stands not on a hillock but on the world orb, a common conceit in portraits of Shah Jahan (whose regnal name means Emperor of the World), though the flowers and the insects on some of them (a result of the influence derived from Dutch art) lend a gentler, natural note to the symbol. There is little sense of volume or weight in the figure, whose hand barely rests on his sword, and this kind of flat, weightless immobility is again one of the chief characteristics of Shah Jahan's art. The margins are replete with the equipage of formalized grandeur. Three royal servants at the left bear a shield, a sword, and a royal parasol, while two putti (derived from European prints) hold a protective canopy over the departed emperor and symbolize divine benediction on the Mughal royal house. A posthumous portrait has been turned into an image of the state, and vibrant life has been replaced by

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1. For a brief discussion of Mir 'Ali, see Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1979), nos. 85 and pp. 192-96. I am indebted to Annemarie Schimmel for the above translation.
calculated references. What we see here is Shah Jahan’s temperament expressed in Akbar’s form.

This portrait was originally bound in the *Late Shah Jahan Album*, compiled for the emperor in the last decade of his reign.1

A. W.


2. Beach, *Grand Mogul*, pp. 76–77. The album was apparently dispersed in 1909. Our analysis of this portrait owes much to the article by Stuart C. Welch cited below.


75 / A Floral Fantasy
India; ca. 1650
Page: H. 23.5 cm., W. 16.1 cm.
Miniature: H. 20.5 cm., W. 13.1 cm.

Nature is shown at full perfection in this painting: roses, plum blossoms, violets, and irises are either buds about to open or blossoms in full bloom, and the undulating hillside is swathed in several shades of green. A tiny stream in the lower right waters this lushness, and shell-like clouds in the sunny sky promise rain. Sky merges with landscape behind the hill. Two butterflies, a lady-bug, and a bee fly toward the blossoms, and two doves on the plum branch complete this miniature paradise. The exuberance of this “garden” is almost overdone: by their disproportionate size the enormous roses at the peak of perfection transform it into a lush, romantic vision.

Floral paintings from Safavid Iran are generally more formal and more decorative: Mughal flowers are usually more naturalistic and exacting in their detail, tending toward description rather than romance. This picture was painted in the Deccan, in central India, almost certainly at the Muslim court of Golconda, a Shi’a kingdom and the diamond emporium of India. Golconda supported a vibrant cultural life, attracting artists, scholars, merchants, and travellers from all over the Muslim world. Traditionally Golconda sustained strong cultural ties with Shi’a Safavid Iran, but in 1687 its Qutb-Shahi dynasty succumbed to Mughal forces, and it became part of Aurangzeb’s expanded and short-lived empire.

Neither patron nor artist is identified on this painting, and there is no information on its reverse. But like Golconda itself, it is distinctive and cosmopolitan. The larger blossoms recall Safavid floral paintings like those
of Muhammad Zaman, whose work may have been known in the Deccan, and the almost overwhelming size of the roses recalls the large scale of the tulip in catalogue number 72. The resemblance between the irises in the two paintings is even closer and supports the surmise that the painter of the Mughal Tulips and an Iris may have spent time in the Deccan. But Western prints exerted an influence too: not only is the subject matter based ultimately on European herbals, but the alighting insects are derived from the Dutch, and the soft “spotting” technique in the grassy ground is clearly a translation of print technique. Despite the major influences from Iran, the Mughal empire, and Europe, the painting remains the product of a different sort of vision, less decorative than the Safavid, less naturalistic than the Mughal, less factual and less moralizing than the Dutch.

A. W.

1. See Ernst Greve, Islamic Paintings from the 12th to the 16th Century in the Collection of Hana P. Knox (New York, 1972), pl. 39; Basil W. Robinson et al., Persians and Mughal Art (London, 1976), nos. 64–65, reproduces floral studies by other, later Iranian masters.

76 / Woman in a Landscape
India, Deccan, ca. 1670
Page: H. 24.8 cm, W. 22.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 12 cm, W. 5.7 cm.

The Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan sustained strong cultural ties with Safavid Iran over many years, and a number of Iranian artists traveled to Deccani courts in search of patronage. Among them was the Iranian painter Shaykh 'Abbas, whose most notable Safavid works date to the 1660s and 1670s. His Deccani years gave him material for miniatures done in Isfahan that depict Indian subjects, and he was the natural choice to record for the Safavid shah 'Abbas II the visit of an ambassador from the Mughal court in 1663–1664. His impact on Deccani painting seems to have been considerable.

This miniature also appears to be the work of a master who later returned to Iran. It bears the name Bahram Suttrakash: the last name, meaning “he who spreads out the tablecloth,” presumably refers either to the family profession or to the official sinecure that he held. It is dated to 1640–1641 (A.H. 1050). The painter’s name is otherwise unknown, and on stylistic grounds the date seems about thirty years too early. Indianizing works done for the Safavids show unmistakable Iranian traits, particularly in the landscape. But the foliage and the distant village in this painting are found in many Deccani pictures and do not conform to known Iranian taste. In these respects the picture differs from a second miniature, roughly contemporary, that shows the same female type, if not
the same woman, and that is almost certainly by the same artist, although it is unsigned. Despite an Indian hermit’s cave in the background, the landscape rocks and vegetation in this second miniature are Iranian, and the work was completed after the artist returned from India.  

A. W.

1. Robert Skelton has analyzed this painter’s work and career in depth.

77 / A Sea Serpent Swallows the Royal Fleet

India; ca. 1675–1686

Page: H. 36 cm., W. 23.5 cm.

Miniature: H. 26.8 cm., W. 14.3 cm.

The Deccani city of Bijapur had been taken by Muslim forces in 1294, but it was not until 1489 that it emerged as a separate Shi’a Muslim kingdom under the ‘Adil-Shahi dynasty, whose rule lasted until 1885, when Bijapur was annexed to Aurangzeb’s Mughal empire. The ‘Adil-Shahis were expansive patrons of architecture, literature, and painting and made their court at Bijapur a major center of Islamic culture and a magnet for talent from all over the Muslim world.

This page originally belonged to a copy of a heroic epic, written in impressive Deccani Urdu by an unknown author who, according to the colophon, “lived during the reign of ‘Ali ‘Adil Shahi, under whom [he] grew prosperous.” Although there were two Bijapur sultans by this name, the very high quality Deccani naskh and the painting style indicate that the reference could only be to Ali II ibn Muhammad ‘Adil Shahi, who ruled from 1656 to 1672. This copy of the epic was probably produced near the end of his reign or during the reign of his successor, Sikandar ‘Ali Shah (1672–1686). There is no citation of a patron, royal or otherwise, and this fine manuscript might well have been completed for a prominent aristocrat.

The sea has been transformed into a scene of horror. Turtles, giant crabs, feathered-finied fish of all sizes, and demon-headed phantasmagoria pack the water, and in the upper right a merman and a mermaid paddle unperurbed toward a blank-eyed but very toothy fish. The giant serpent itself is a marvelous creation, revealing the painter’s talent and fine training. Water flows like a silvery veil over some of the monster’s golden scales, and his body is coiled into a perfect oval that traps the fleet of six ships. The artist was evidently not a sailor, and his sailing vessels have been loosely
adapted from European representations. Human reactions are varied: some of the crew are fighting the serpent with axes, bows, and guns, but most of the passengers only lift their hands in prayers for deliverance. Pricked lightly by arrows, the monster contentedly cracks a boat between his teeth.

On the reverse are four lines of text in two columns.

A. W.

1. Quoted in Christie's catalogue, Important Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Miniatures, London, 10 October 1979, lot 189. There is an excellent discussion of this manuscript, as well as an extensive bibliography, in this entry.

78 / A Late Mughal Outing

India, Delhi, ca. 1730-1738
Page: H. 30.7 cm., W. 46.3 cm.
Miniature: H. 19.3 cm., W. 30.3 cm.

The deep blue river recedes between groves of shade trees to distant, bluish mountains. In the middle ground sit four women, enjoying the shade and conversation: the group conforms to similar compositions in many late Mughal paintings. But the six closer women do not; they are strongly influenced, as is the landscape setting itself, by European prints. In the branches at the lower left is inconspicuously written the name Mah-mud, perhaps the painter.

Stylistically, the picture belongs to the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-1748), who gave up his initial efforts to restore the declining Mughal empire in favor of self-indulgence, thus earning the nickname "Pleasure Lover." He was an enthusiastic patron of music, dancing, and painting, but he presided over one of the worst calamities to strike the empire. In 1738-1739 Nadir Shah (r. 1736-1740), who had first aided and then supplanted the Safavid shahs of Iran, invaded northern India and seized and sacked Delhi. His loot included not only the Mughals' Peacock Throne but also some notable treasures from the Imperial Library. This painting must have been among them, for its margins—brilliant gold illuminated with a rich profusion of roses, irises, and smaller flowers—indicate that it was once mounted in a nineteenth-century Qajar album, many of whose borders were decorated by Muhammad Sadq. In the lower center of this painting's border is an inscription in faint red that appears to read "the humblest Muhammad Ba'tir."

On the reverse are three panels of calligraphy. Two are examples of naskh (calligraphic exercise) that were fine enough to preserve. The upper-
most text is a prayer signed by 'Imad al-Husayni (Mir 'Imad), one of the most celebrated Safavid calligraphers. A. W.

1. The three foreground figures reappear in almost identical form in a drawing in the Musée Guimet, Paris (see Stuart C. Welch, The Art of Mughal India [New York, 1962], pl. 79). Presumably the Paris drawing is based on this painting, or the two derive from the same European print. The drawing appears to be slightly later in date than the painting.
2. For Muhammad Shah and his patronage, see Welch, Art of Mughal India, pp. 147-48 and pls. 77-79; and idem, Imperial Mughal Painting (New York, 1978), pl. 19.
3. Muhammad Baqir was known for his floral studies. For an early-nineteenth-century example, see Basil W. Robinson et al., Persian and Moghul Art (London, 1976), no. 67 xixii.
4. For Mir 'Imad, see Anthony Welch, Shah 'Abbas and the Arts of Isfahan (New York, 1973), no. 16; and idem, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (Austin and London, 1979), no. 96. We are grateful to Antoinette Schimmel for examining and identifying these texts.

79 / Colonel Polier's Nautch
By Mihr Chand
India, Oudh, Lucknow, or Faizabad; ca. 1780
Page: H. 28.7 cm., W. 39.1 cm.
Miniature: H. 18.9 cm., W. 28.1 cm.

Antoine Louis Henri Polier (1741-1795) left his native Switzerland when he was sixteen years old to serve in the British East India Company as a military engineer. Dissatisfied with the Company, in 1772 he joined the service of Shuja' al-Daulat, the ambitious Nawab of Oudh, a wealthy and powerful state that inherited some of the status and authority of the Mughal empire in decline. Polier grew quickly rich and assumed many of the roles of a cultured Indian prince: he became a patron of musicians, poets, and painters; collected calligraphies, paintings, and manuscripts; and compiled at least one impressive musa'ap (album). He also sustained lavish entertainments, one of which is recorded here by Mihr Chand, perhaps the foremost Lucknow painter. Other Europeans also came to Oudh to share in its wealth and luxury, until the nawabs were completely supplanted by the British during the reign of Asaf al-Daulat. Polier returned to Europe, married, and was murdered by robbers in 1795.

Off-white gowns, lamps, walls, and terrace accentuate otherwise brilliant color: a gaudy yellow couch, the red and green canopy, the musicians' turbans and the dancers' dresses, and swirls and bursts of red and gold in the background fireworks display. Smoking a hookah while he fixedly watches the nautch (dance), Colonel Polier assumes a pose favored by other Europeans who pictured themselves as Indian princes.1 Humbly written on the floor beneath the couch is the painter's name in Persian: "Mihr Chand, son of Gunga Ram." Mughal-trained and European-influenced,
Mihir Chand was the most significant Indian painter in late eighteenth-century Oudh and was known for his fine copies of European portraits as well as for his sensitive original compositions. Shuja’ al-Daulat moved his capital from Lucknow to Faizabad in 1763: a dated painting by the English artist Tilly Kettle shows Polier in Faizabad in 1772,3 and a group portrait by Johann Zoffany shows Polier and other Oudh Europeans in Lucknow in 1786 or 1787.4 This portrait, of about 1780, might have been painted in either city.

Almost certainly this portrait of Polier as patron was the first folio of an album compiled by the Swiss engineer. On the other side is an illuminated shamsa (turnburet), the standard opening image for a fine album.5 Provided with Europeanizing borders, the maraja contained the traditional combination of images and calligraphies, one of which is dated to 1781 (A.H. 1193).6 Apparently before leaving India in 1789, Polier gave the album to Lady Coote, the widow of Sir Eyre Coote (1726–1788), an officer in the British East India Company who had been notable in the military struggles against the French in India.

A. W.

1. See Stuart C. Welch, Room for Wonder: Indian Painting during the British Period, 1760–1820 (New York, 1999), nos. 36, 37, 46, 53.
2. Ibid., no. 37, a portrait of the Nawab Shuja’ al-Daulat, copied from an original oil by the English artist Tilly Kettle, who came to Faizabad in 1772. The copy was originally included in the Polier album. Before joining the service of Shuja’ al-Daulat, Mihir Chand had worked for the Mughal emperor Shah ‘Alam II (first reign, 1760–1788), whose portrait he had painted.
3. Ibid., no. 38.
4. See Mildred Archer, India and British Portraiture, 1770–1825 (London, 1979). Included in the group are Caspar Morten and John Wombwell.
5. The shamsa here is very similar to a shamsa in Regina Hickmann and Volkmar Enderlein, Indische Albumblätter, Miniaturen und Kalligraphien von der Zeit der Moghul-Kaiser (Leipzig and Weimar, 1976), pl. 60. This second shamsa was also made for Polier.

80 / Story-teller, Dancer, and Musicians

India, Delhi; ca. 1810–1820
Page: H. 30.5 cm., W. 41.6 cm.
Miniature: H. 29.4 cm., W. 40.7 cm.

A number of British patrons of Indian painting were fascinated not only by India’s flora and fauna but also by its natural topography, its indigenous architecture, and its social customs. Storytelling and music-making of the sort shown here were vital parts of Indian culture, and the unidentified
artist who painted this scene offers a keen impression of its drama and color. Against a whitewashed wall and under a white canopy nine musicians either clap rhythm or play instruments while a man dances and a youth recites an accompanying tale. The steps of the platform on which they stand are marked by pale blue and pink washes, and similarly pale yellows, oranges, greens, reds, and blues accent the trousers, belts, and turbans of the players. In high Safavid and Mughal art musicians are also frequently shown in performance, but the musical tradition they represent is wholly classical, in keeping with the princely culture of their patrons. What is shown here is no less vital, though on a different level.

This picture was painted for William Fraser, perhaps the most perceptive of all British patrons in India, who guided his artists with Jahangir-like devotion. Following his wishes, they projected an exact, sharp-eyed view of India and its people. In effect, they strove to be cameras at a time well before the invention of photography. At their best, the more sensitive and subtle of Fraser’s artists carried the Mughal tradition a step further.

S. C. W. and A. W.

1. This page originally belonged to the Fraser album. English and notetly inscriptions on a thin sheet of cover-paper identify the individual performers.
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