



The Magic of the Pen

Select Miniatures from
the Khamsa of Nizami Ganjavi

VOLUME I

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2021



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Select Miniatures from the Khamsa of Nizami Ganjavi

VOLUME I

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Nizami Ganjavi International Center

The Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC) is an institution based in Azerbaijan, that celebrates the legacy of the great Azerbaijani poet and sage, Nizami Ganjavi, and that promotes the participation of high-level eminent figures in the study of possible solutions for the great problems of our time, with a view to promoting knowledge, tolerance, dialogue and understanding between peoples, cultures and nations.

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The Nizami Ganjavi International Center proudly dedicates this book to the 880th anniversary of the great Azerbaijani poet and philosopher Nizami Ganjavi.



This book is bp’s gift to the 880th jubilee celebrations of the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi – one of the world’s most illustrious poets, a genius of word and thought. The book is also produced in commemoration of “The Year of Nizami” announced by President Ilham Aliyev.

This is a further contribution by bp to research into and promote Azerbaijan’s rich and ancient history, its enduring traditional moral values, fascinating cultural heritage and magnificent literary and poetic treasury.

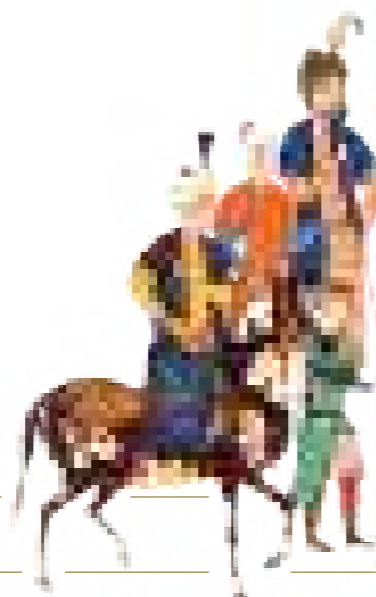


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*Shirin visits Farhad on Mount Bisitun.
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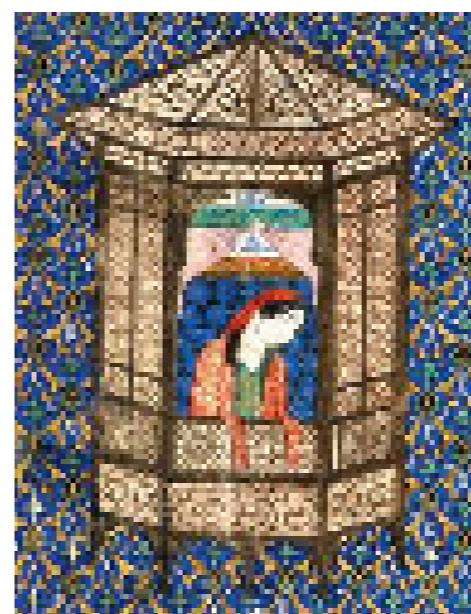
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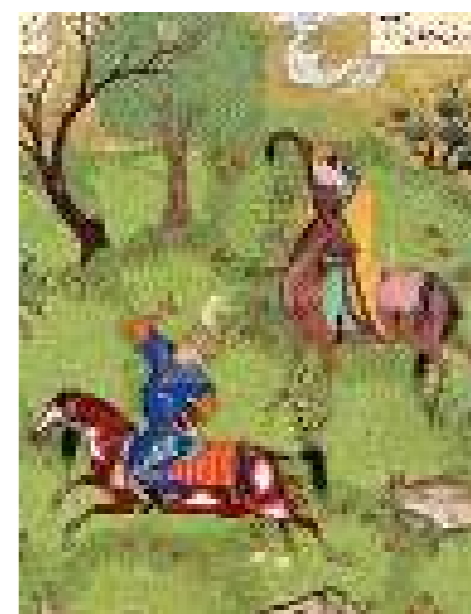
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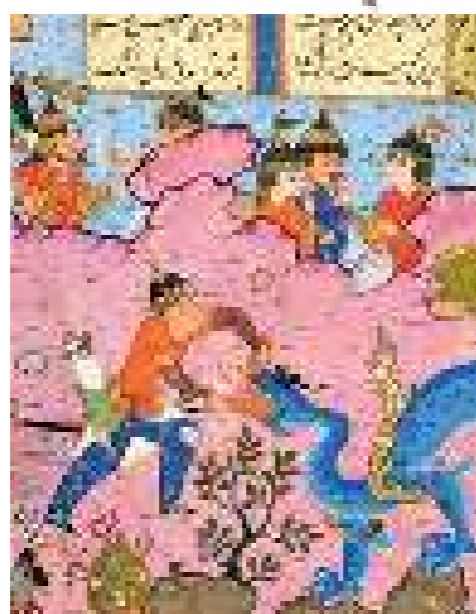
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Preface

It is indeed an honor to present this magnificent book to a global audience. It is the story of the splendid illustrations that can be found in the historical Manuscripts of the Khamsa of Nizami. The illustrations of these “oriental manuscripts”, illustrations that have become recognized as a unique art form of great value.

The book succeeds in braiding together many types of magic: From reminders of the magic of the original poems of Nizami’s Khamsa, who have continued to inspire authors and artists for centuries, along with the magical beauty of the illustrations that illuminated manuscripts of the Khamsa which were produced in different periods and in different locations.

The illustrations highlight the different periods and the different artistic schools that dominated the works of the producers of the manuscripts that are taken as a base for the production of this collective work. These artistic schools are associated with the locations where they flourished. The locations are names that evoke the magic and splendor of eastern civilizations such as Herat, Tabriz, and Shiraz, not to mention the fabled Isfahan. The authors discuss the schools that evolved in these great magical centers of oriental art and culture: along with the thread of the evolving dominant dynasties Timurid, Safavid, Mughal, Ottoman, and others as well as their interactions with the rising European powers.

Indeed, the glory of Safavid power under the long reign of Shah Abbas (1588-1629), and later his grandson Abbas II, brought a golden age to Persian civilization, and supported culture, architecture and the arts in his capital Isfahan. Manuscripts from Isfahan dating from that golden age reproduced the ever-popular classical works of the Shahnamah of Ferdowsi and the Khamsa of Nizami.

The authors not only discuss the great schools of calligraphy and illustration, but also they mention some of the great practitioners of these arts, from Riza Abbassi to Mu’in. They note, for example how the latter, can be regarded as the last major representative of the traditional style of Safavid painting, as he remained imperious to the many foreign influences that shaped 17th century painting in the hands of Muhammad Zaman, Ali Quli Jabbar and others. They point out that the European influence can be seen in the introduction of modelling and shading in pictorial representation, in what may be described as the second phase of the “Isfahan” school of painting.

But the work in this great book carries us forward into the Mughal Period, noting how Indian and Safavid characteristics began to coexist in the art of the illustrated manuscript in this period. Indeed the artists who produced work in the Mughal period included many Hindus in addition to some Muslims. There is a discussion of the unique “Khamsa of Nizami” manuscript made for the Emperor Akbar himself, which – appropriately – is one of the most finely-produced of all Mughal manuscripts. The authors also note that Akbar’s personal interest in European art encouraged Hindu artists to adopt perspective and modelling, whereby they introduced the third dimension, in the rendering of figures and landscapes.

And there is much more. In chapters devoted to the Khamsa of Nizami in the 18th and 19th Centuries, the authors carry forward the story of the illustrated manuscripts into the post-Safavid era, shedding light on some less studied areas, including for example the Afsharid Era (1736–1747). They also point out that in 1765, during the Zand Period (1751–1794), Shiraz





became the new capital of the state, and a distinctively Shiraz-style painting emerged with themes reflecting Shiraz's reputation as the cradle of classical Persian and Persian language poetry. And beyond that, the Qajar Period (1789–1925) brings the narrative and the analysis to the twentieth century. This last part brings us closer to the era of the rise of the European powers in the world, and bring us closer to the present time.

The interaction between the Ottomans and Safavids included both war and cultural exchanges. Persian luxury manuscripts were valued by the Ottoman elites and book collectors, but new manuscripts of the works of the Persian classical authors like Ferdowsi, Nizami, Sa'di, Jami, or Hafiz, do not seem to have been produced in Istanbul.

The Book is rounded out by special chapters on the manuscripts of the Khamsa of Nizami in the collections of the great libraries, including the Topkapi Palace Library (Chapter 8), the National Library of Russia (Chapter 9) and in the Institute of Manuscripts of Azerbaijan (Chapter 10).

Chapter 11 is a fascinating discussion of the efforts to revive the “Contemporary Miniature Painting of Azerbaijan” which includes dramatic modern work by contemporary artists as well as the spectacular murals in the Nizami Metro station in Baku. The penultimate Chapter 12 provides an overview of the life and works of Nizami Ganjavi, while the concluding Chapter 13 covers the “Poetic Imitations” namely those poets who tried to produce their own Khamsa (quintets) inspired by the master works of Nizami. All in all a magnificent analytical survey.

To the innate magic of the materials studied and reproduced in this book, we must also commend the magic

produced by the quality of the selections of the illustrations in this excellent book. Our thanks to all the scholars, translators and editors and all those who worked tirelessly on getting the permissions for reproducing these materials and setting the page layouts of this beautiful book. Also thanks to those who have been willing to co-sponsor the production of this book, including BP. And those who have supported the NGIC through the many long months of the production, especially Mr. Hikmat Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and members of the Secretariat of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center.

Specifically, very special thanks are due to the authors: Jamila Hasanzade, Nasib Goyushov, Olga Vasilyeva and Olga Yastrebova. Also to Prof. Chingiz Qajar (who wrote the Foreword to this work, titled: “A few words about this book”) and to Akbar Najaf who joined Nasib Goyushov in writing the “Introduction” to this massive work. And a very special appreciation to Arzu Tabrizli, the project Director, who worked tirelessly to keep this big project on track, and whose determination and commitment saw the project to completion..

Vaira Vike-Freiberga
Co-Chair, Nizami Ganjavi International Center
President of Latvia 1999-2007

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A Few Words About This Book

The prominent poet and philosopher Nizami Ganjavi lived and worked through the latter half of the 12th century, almost a hundred years after the Seljuk Turks had replaced Abbasid Caliphate rule in Azerbaijan. An outstanding representative of both oriental and global Renaissance, Nizami gained fame around the world as the creator of a new approach to the *dastan* (tale, story).

By Nizami's time, the Arabic language had declined in use in favour of the Persian taken up by the Seljuks as their official language following their move from their Central Asian origins. Thus, the northern part of Azerbaijan – on the edge of both Muslim world and Seljuk Empire – became a breeding ground for an unusually versatile, abundant and structurally robust Persian-language school of poetry which, when led by the “King of Poets” Nizami Ganjavi, became immensely popular throughout the Orient.

This school was represented by such poets as Qatran Tabrizi, Khagani Shirvani, Mahsati Ganjavi, Abu-l'-Ala Ganjavi, Iza ad-Din Shirvani, Falaki Shirvani, Mujir ad-Din Beylagani, among others. Each one of these poets, let alone this whole array of talent, could have brought fame to this small country. For modern researchers into Azerbaijan's culture a further exciting feature of these authors is their creation of books of profound philosophy and academic knowledge with extremely sophisticated terminology, as well as texts full of parables and allegories that resonated with a broad community of readers and excited huge interest.

People copied and memorized their works; their themes spread across the Muslim Orient at a rate hitherto unseen, and several became almost indistinguishable from traditional folk art.

Replacing the Arabs in the 11th century, the Seljuks were a religiously tolerant people with traditional Turkic nomadic democracy. Their social system gave rise to the further development of knowledge accumulated in the northern part of Azerbaijan during the rule of three Abbasid caliphs (Caliph al-Mansur, Harun al-Rashid and Caliph al-Ma'mun) and, eventually, to the founding of a new school of poetry led by the great Nizami.

A celebrated poet and humanitarian, the author of the *Khamsa* became popular far beyond the Orient. Apart from his masterpiece, Nizami left us a rich lyrical legacy of *gasidas* and *ghazals*. His works have been translated into many of the world's languages and are studied by individual academics and whole research teams. His heritage inspired, and still inspires, writers, playwrights, composers and artists, especially across the Orient.

As medieval European artists drew their plots from the Bible, their counterparts in the Muslim Orient dwelt on Nizami's *Khamsa*. Drawings with plots from Nizami's works would decorate books, carpets, palace walls and residences, weapons and tableware. The world's top museums preserve miniatures and ornamental artworks based on motifs from the *Khamsa* by the most illustrious artists of Baghdad, Tabriz, Herat, Qazvin, Shamakhi, Bukhara, Nakhchivan, Delhi, Cairo etc. Over 900 brightly decorated manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa* are kept in libraries and museums throughout the world.

The book before you is an in-depth historical study of Islamic miniature painting based on manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*. I would like to share my impressions about it without further ado.

At first glance, I was genuinely impressed by the

geographical coverage: the work covers illustrations from museums and libraries from three continents, as well as virtually all the capital cities of Europe, Asia and North America.

It is the first time that special attention has been given in Azerbaijan to the Topkapı Palace Library's collection in Istanbul, in particular to the manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*, 69 of which are illustrated.

This book presents multiple vivid miniatures with exceptional plots, previously unknown to the wider community and accessible only to the closed circle of Nizami scholars. It provides an illustration of manuscripts in contexts both geographical and chronological, presenting them in a timely view of the classical period.

This is the first time that many European collections (save those in the UK) have put their manuscripts on display.

This book covers virtually all the miniature schools that existed in the period under review: Tabriz, Herat, Shiraz, Qazvin, Isfahan, Mughal, Ottoman, Qajar etc.

Chapter IX, “The *Khamsa* of Nizami: Manuscripts in the National Library of Russia” is a very valuable contribution to the book. O. M. Yastrebova and O. V. Vasilyeva, well-known specialists at the National Library of Russia, have provided a professionally exhaustive and richly illustrated overview of those *Khamsas*.

For me, it is especially interesting to discuss a comparative analysis of copies of the *Khamsa* created concurrently: the Tabriz copy of the Aghqoyunlu period (1481) and the Herat one (1494–1495). This offers a clear insight into the particularities and differences between the two largest schools of the 15th century.

The author discusses significant illustrated *Khamsa* manuscripts: three of Tabriz (1405–1410, 1481, and 1539–1543) and one of Herat origin (1494–1495). Information about each one has been quite thoroughly selected. Outstanding among them is the manuscript created for the Safavid Shah Tahmasp I in 1543 in Tabriz at the workshop of the palace library established by Shah Ismayil I, based in turn on the library of Uzun Hasan Aghqoyunlu. This manuscript was illustrated by top-class artists of the Azerbaijani school of calligraphy and miniature: Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, *ustad* Sultan Muhammad, Agha Mirak, Mir Musawwir, Mir Sayyid Ali and Muzaffar Ali. It is in the British Library collection and is considered a masterpiece of book art.

Of the highest artistic value is the 1636 manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* held in the ANAS Institute of Manuscripts collection in Baku. Of course, it also serves as a valuable historical and cultural artefact.

I believe that the book's structure, division and sequence fully serves its purpose.

Its unique quality is that it offers a multi-faceted approach that reflects generally on concepts philological, philosophical, historical and theosophical, as well as those of fine art.

An overview of almost a century has been compiled using the works of Western researchers, among them: I. Stchoukine, B. W. Robinson, E. Grube and S. C. Welch.

Since F. R. Martin (1912), miniatures illustrating many of Nizami's works have been referenced and reproduced in works published by Western academics. Emerging in the West, this trend has encompassed many oriental study centres around the globe. One can also learn about western, Nizami-related art studies

from works created by other prominent researchers, including: O. Grabar, B. Grey, R. Ettinghausen, N. Titley, L. Uluc, S. Canby, D. Thompson, E. E. Sims, B. I. Marshak, T. Lentz, G. Lory etc. While it was impossible to note all the references that went into this book, there was certainly knowledge of the majority of classical works on the topic under review.

Herein is a reflection of multiple studies that have resulted in monographs and articles written by Russian and Soviet academics and researchers on Nizami's works: O. F. Akimushkin, T. P. Kaptereva, G. A. Pugachenkova, O. V. Vasilyeva, O. I. Galerkina, L. N. Dodkhudoyeva, M. Ashrafi etc.

The work also embodies developments achieved by our Uzbek colleagues, K. Suleymanov and F. Suleymanov, E. Polyakova and Z. Rahimova, as well as R. S. Fathullayev. There is also reference to Tajik researchers: the profound and shrewd scientist L. Ayni and the celebrated scholar M. Ashrafi. Their works are noted frequently in the list of references.

Art studies in Azerbaijan are represented by the eminent scholars A. Gaziyeu and K. Karimov. The latter published the deluxe edition *Nizami. Khamsa. Miniatures* in 1983; a new edition was published under the same title in 2013 by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

The insights into the text of the *Khamsa* are, without doubt, another great plus for this book. Not only do we review the general narrative, but in many instances, we delve deeply into its interpretation and philosophy, by way of works by Y. E. Berthels and A. Hajiyev.

The author has touched upon a significant issue of the interpretation of classical miniature painting for the current stage of Azerbaijani art. The chapter

“Contemporary Miniature Painting of Azerbaijani” gives an insight into such personalities as its founder and front-runner E. Aslanov, his colleague S. Gurbanov and a generation of young but acclaimed artists including N. Sultanova, P. Askarova etc.

It is a clear testimony to the many prominent Azerbaijani artists that are engaged today with the classical miniature, themselves in turn providing an abundant source of creative search.

Another significant and distinctive feature of this book is that its numerous illustrations are not copies from foreign publications but high-resolution images of the original works.

To conclude, I extend my warmest congratulations to the Nizami Ganjavi International Center on completing this breathtaking project; to the author, for such hugely successful work; and to readers, who can now benefit from a unique opportunity to review a fascinating publication, which is written for the limited circle of experts as well as for the wider community interested in the works of the great Nizami. It is my genuine hope that this book will be a further milestone in both our culture and science.

Prof. Chingiz Qajar
Doctor of Physics and Mathematics
Academician, Azerbaijan
National Academy of Sciences
13 December 2018
Baku

Author's Note

It has always been a great honour to study and put down one's thoughts on the works of the poet and philosopher Nizami; an extremely challenging and responsible exercise, but ultimately a comfort for the heart:

* *it is an honour*, because one learns and grows from the endless realm of thought and ideas conceived by the great man;

* *a challenging and responsible exercise*, because of the difficulty of fully understanding the vast depths of Nizami's spiritual world. It requires particular skill and perseverance. It seems equally difficult to perceive, embrace and interpret the unseen domain of a thinker who integrated into his works knowledge and thoughts developing in global culture from time immemorial, and in a magical language;

* *it comforts the heart*, because our love and respect for Nizami's world make one forget all the effort made to investigate it, leaving only delight and happiness.

People across the Orient have always held Nizami's works in high regard. The influence and authority of his heritage are evidenced by the numerous imitations of his poems, in so many languages, by aspirants to literary status; setting his works as their benchmark and eager to match his art and fame. Here, they focused principally on comprehending, by reference to original sources, the science, wisdom, morals and spiritual values behind the poet's heritage. This was the only possible way to engage with the aesthetic pleasure - by drawing from the content born of the poetic talent of a thinker with encyclopaedic knowledge. Similarly, much valuable work has been done to interpret the poet's heritage in the context of classical tradition.

Over the last two centuries, both oriental and Russian researchers studying the poet's heritage have issued numerous commentaries on his poems, highlighting the extent and depth of his thinking, the beauty and richness of his language, the subtleties of his philosophical and moral views, the realities of his historical and cultural environment. They have published scientific and critical reviews

in Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia of ancient and exquisite manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamsa*; likewise, philological and poetic translations of these poems have appeared in Azerbaijani, Russian English and other languages.

It is an established fact that in the Middle Ages, poetry was an important aesthetic source for oral lore as well as for painting and book art; it was also closely involved in the development of miniature. Thus, the attraction of handwritten copies of many an oriental classic lay not only in the text, but also in their highly artistic design. Only a few works of global classical literature have contributed their topics and plots to the diversity and development of art, presenting wider opportunities for the rise of miniature art. In the Muslim Orient, only three works have managed both a lengthy historical presence in book art, artistic design and miniature painting, and popularity across a vast region. They are *Shahnameh*, the *Khamsa*, and *Kalila and Dimna*.

A large number of *Khamsa*-based miniatures have recently been analysed from artistic and cultural standpoints. Important projects have been undertaken in Europe, Russia, Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Even in the 1950s, Azerbaijani experts in the fine arts, such as Adil Gaziyeu and Karim Karimov, commenced in-depth studies of *Khamsa* miniatures. Luxury editions with best-quality images came off the press.

But only geniuses with the apperception of a Goethe could take in the magnitude of Nizami's grandeur. The great composer Puccini based his opera *Turandot* on the tales of the Red Dome from *The Seven Beauties*; a number of other masterpieces were created in the same fashion. In fact, the oriental world influenced western culture largely by its art.

We need to highlight the considerable number of scientific works and albums with drawings from the *Khamsa* manuscripts. In studying the numerous illustrated copies of the poet's works in the world's libraries and museums, one can only conclude that just a tiny portion of this enormous legacy has been presented to readers. A question arises here:



What can be offered to an experienced reader following the volume of scientific research, academic publications, albums and other works? The answer is evident – a new approach, new copies of the manuscripts, examples of the paintings and last but not least, a broader and more comprehensive presentation.

I believe that the publication we proudly introduce to our readers will provide a better insight into Nizami and his place in medieval book and miniature art. It is in this publication that we have, for the first time, translated into the English language and presented to an international audience an abridged version of the studies on Nizami Ganjavi's life and works conducted by the outstanding Azerbaijani orientalist Rustam Aliyev.

The illustrated copies of the *Khamsa* under review are a clear display of miniatures of the works of the great poet and thinker Nizami that encompass all the oriental art schools and cultural centres, from Asia Minor to India. One may therefore study the historical development of oriental miniature art in the period between the 14th and 18th centuries CE and explore the stylistic similarities and differences, and the characteristics thereof, through the 'looking glass' of paintings on the manuscripts of Nizami Ganjavi's *Khamsa*.

This book features the restoration of three exquisite *Khamsa* manuscripts of the Tabriz school of miniature; extensive analysis of two *Khamsa* manuscripts from the Herat school; and the first ever presentation of a large number of previously unpublished miniatures on the *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Istanbul.

Significant research is necessary for any in-depth study of these manuscripts. All these manuscripts, apart from four or five copies, are new to both reader and specialist.

This book set out to prove once again the magnificence and unique qualities of several of the *Khamsa* manuscripts, certainly works of great historical, cultural and artistic value. We therefore decided to display the beautifully decorated pages of text, frontispieces, head-

ings, endings and seals from them; the vast majority of manuscripts (including their covers) have been provided in full or slightly abridged.

This edition also provides a broad interpretation and explanation of top-class schools of miniature throughout the history of oriental culture, the unique art they produced, its characteristics and levels of artistry, as well as the correlations and interactions between the different schools and styles.

In writing this book, we have drawn upon a vast range of academic literary sources, both domestic and international - catalogues, monographs and studies; further sources tapped included studies by world-renowned art critics.

As a significant new contribution to studies of Nizami and his works, this publication represents irrefutable proof of the vast and inexhaustible heritage of the great poet.

We like to believe that this publication will expand our knowledge and understanding of the poet and his abundant legacy. For his intellectual, spiritual and artistic treasury is one of the most spectacular accomplishments of Azerbaijani, oriental and global culture. This inexhaustible legacy yet inspires thinkers, philosophers, writers and artists.

Prof. Jamila Hasanzade
Doctor of Art History



Acknowledgments

Educational stories such as *The Tale of the Brickman*, *The Tale of Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman*, *The Tale of Nushirvan and his Vizier* and *The Tale of Kheir and Shar* in Nizami's *Khamsa* are taught in literature classes in secondary school to instil moral and spiritual values in the youth of Azerbaijan.

As an ordinary Azerbaijani youth, my first acquaintance with Nizami's works was back in my school days, when we began memorizing Nizami's *ghazals* and selected poems from the *Khamsa*; later on, we would even stage them in the school theatre. So, I was introduced at a very early age to the five poems of the *Khamsa* and the brilliant Nizami's world of profound thoughts and deep spirituality.

Fortunately, my class teacher in high school taught Azerbaijani language and literature. And so, supported by my father's abundant library, and with the profound knowledge imparted by my teacher Aybeniz Mirzaliyeva, my great interest and true love for Azerbaijani literature gradually developed. I believe that a nation's literature is an irreplaceable source from which every young person can draw and embrace their national identity, cultural and spiritual past, leading to an appreciation of their people's history, traditions and tangible and spiritual heritage.

Years later, in 2012, I had the opportunity to take an active part in the foundation of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center. The cornerstones of this organisation have become tolerance, mutual understanding and dialogue between nations, states, international in-

stitutions and communities, based on the principles of science, justice and humanity. I have been a member of the NGIC family for almost nine years now. The Center works enthusiastically in the international arena to raise the names of both the great Nizami and Azerbaijan to the level they truly merit. Our current idea of Nizami is, undoubtedly, quite different from the one we had in our school years. The poet and thinker's abundant world has now extended beyond the borders of Azerbaijan and other oriental realms, enlightening all humanity.

Back in the early days, Rovshan Muradov, NGIC's Secretary General, launched an initiative to collect for the Center's library digital copies of the *Khamsa* manuscripts preserved in museums and libraries around the world. He was strongly backed in this initiative by Dr. Ismayil Serageldin, NGIC Co-Chair.

The digital copies of the manuscripts acquired for the NGIC's library would leave no-one unimpressed; one day, while reviewing them with journalist Ulviyya Heydarova and Deputy Chairman of the Azerbaijani Writers Union, Ilgar Fahmi, they asked, "Why don't you publish these paintings in a separate book?" In fact, by then, the NGIC had already held small-scale exhibitions of paintings as part of various events, but the idea of publishing them as a separate book had never been raised.

It was late in 2016 that we embarked on that mission and began the search for an author to write the book and a publishing house to publish a high-quality edition. Not long afterwards, we met Dr. Jamila Hasanzade, a scholar of art history. A skilled connoisseur who has devoted more than forty-five years to the study of oriental





miniature painting, she has published a number of valuable books in this field. The main reason we invited her but no other to author the book was, however, her great love for Nizami's works and her substantial academic studies of paintings illustrating the *Khamsa*. Lengthy discussions produced a storyline and working plan for the book, and the hard work began. We searched for the best publishing option and found Boyut Yayın Grubu, an Istanbul-based company and long-term specialists in publishing collector's editions.

First of all, we decided to increase the number of illustrations for the book and, with a list provided by Dr. Hasanzade, established close cooperation with a number of museums and libraries, including the Aga Khan Museum, the Berlin State Library, the National Library of France, the University of Oxford's Bodleian Library, the University of Manchester's John Rylands Library, the Eton College Library, Bristol City Council, the University of Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum, the Smithsonian Institution Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, the Harvard Art Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Museum of Scotland, the British Library, the Hermitage Museum, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the National Library of Russia, the Suleymaniye Library and the Topkapı Palace Museum Library. I would also like to specifically mention the Institute of Manuscripts of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the Azerbaijan State Art Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, the Dallas Museum of Art's Keir Collection of

Islamic Art, the Walters Art Museum, and the Austrian National Library, who allowed us free use of their miniatures for the project.

Working on each chapter, Dr. Hasanzade drew on extensive sources, catalogues and academic literature; she referred to the in-depth research of world-famous art historians, including those specializing in the oriental miniature. She analysed the subject matter and presented her thoughts and judgement for the reader. Working on manuscripts is all about great patience; thorough knowledge of the rich scientific, cultural and historical heritage of the past; extensive reading and individual research on the part of the researcher. Of course, it was necessary sometimes to revisit core issues for clarification and to reference a multitude of sources.

A great deal of work and devotion, effort and love has been dedicated to make this project a reality. On behalf of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, I acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to everyone who contributed their knowledge and expertise, and who provided assistance and support in the creation of this book: to bp Azerbaijan for their sponsorship of this publication; to the late Academician, Prof. Chingiz Qajar, for his comments and meticulous review of the book's contents; to Academician Nabi Avci, former Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey (2016–2017), who facilitated our study of the *Khamsa* manuscripts in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library; to Aysun Arslan, official representative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey; to Ayshe



Erdođdu, former director of the Topkapı Palace Museum; to Zeynep Atbaş, Merve Çakır, Ramazan Aktemur and Esra Müyesserođlu, esteemed experts at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, as well as to Hüseyin Avni Zehir, Barış Bilgili and Hilal Eren; to Olga V. Vasilyeva, Head of the Oriental Funds Section of the Manuscripts Department of the National Library of Russia, and Dr. Olga M. Yastrebova, researcher in the Oriental Funds Section, for their continuous support during the research conducted by NGIC in the National Library of Russia, as well as for the interesting articles and catalogues they contributed to the book; to Academician Teymur Karimli, Director of the Institute of Manuscripts of ANAS, who kindly provided digital copies of the *Khamsa* manuscripts kept at the Institute; to Leyla Imanova, former director of the ANAS Central Scientific Library, who granted us access to valuable books in the library; to Aygun Safarova, Head of the Library Service Department; to Academician Tofiq Naghiyev, who provided materials from the ANAS Scientific Centre's Azerbaijan National Encyclopaedia; to Mr. Zaur Huseynov, Chairman of Baku Metro CJSC, for his kind assistance with photographing the *Khamsa* mosaics on the walls of Nizami metro station; to Elnur Huseynov, former Director (2012–2016) of the Azerbaijan State Art Gallery, and Naila Ismayilova, Head Custodian of the Fund, for their assistance with photographing paintings in the Gallery;

to the late Elchin Aslanov, Honoured Artist of Azerbaijan, who kindly permitted use of his monograph on miniature art in contemporary Azerbaijan; to Prof. Nasib Goyushov, an oriental scholar, who exercised great care and attention in helping to decipher a number of important seals, colophons, and notes in *Khamsa* manuscripts procured by NGIC, to identify miniatures with rare plots, to translate examples from Nizami's original texts, and to edit the Azerbaijani version of the book; to artists Naila Sultanova, Parinisa Asgarova and Rasim Nazirov, who kindly allowed use of photographs of their works in the book; to the late artist Sanan Gurbanov's family, who kindly provided photographs of his paintings; to Adila Aghabeyova and Inam Asadov, who translated the book's materials into Azerbaijani and English; to VERO and their professional team, notably their professional leadership: Elnur Huseynov, Ali Ahmadov, Inji Gasimova, Aleksey Seytlin and their valuable team, represented by Farida Aliyeva, Aynur Aghalarova, Rauf Mammadli, Gunel Taghizadeh, and Alishir Yusifov, who did a great job translating the book's materials from Russian and Azerbaijani into the Azerbaijani and English languages; to Ian Peart for proofreading and editing the English version of the book; to Aynur Aliqizi for proofreading the Azerbaijani version; to photographer Mammad Rahimov, for the photoshoot organized by NGIC for the book project; to the management of Boyut Yayın Grubu, for





their preparation and publishing such a finely designed book, notably Bülent Özukan, Murat Öneş, İbrahim Yılmaz and Ümit Vurgun; and to Anjelika Akbar, a great artist and person.

Dear reader. The book before you is the result of the hard work and contributions of the people mentioned above. It was our primary objective to bring together exquisite medieval oriental paintings from the *Khamsa* manuscripts and to introduce these beautiful works of art to you. Behind every miniature and pattern in the book stand the richness of theme and expression of content in the language of art that flow from the perennial spring of Nizami's genius. We hope the book will be well received by our readers, as it offers valuable insights into the impact that Nizami's poems had on the fine arts.

I would like to conclude with one more, final point. In developing the project, we have used studies and sources in English, French, Russian, Turkish, Persian and other languages; toponyms, the titles of works and books and, specifically, people's names, are transliterated differently in different languages. While Russian, Turkish and British researchers use special marks to transliterate native Arabic letters in their academic publications, there is no such procedure in place in Azerbaijan yet. It is also technically difficult to include these marks in the printed text. Further, various foreign publications offer different versions of the same oriental

proper names, which means there is no one specific standard or principle in place. Since this is a rather technical issue, the publishing houses take it for granted. As this book is based on references from multiple sources, some apparent inconsistencies may appear here as well. As the numerous written sources and materials used in this book represent diverse views and approaches, we have striven, as best as we could, to present materials in regular fashion, providing notes and explanations where needed. Please let us know if you identify inaccuracy or omission, in this or any other respect.

Arzu S. Tabrizli
Project Director
11 July 2020
Baku

Introduction

The word “miniature” originated in the Middle Ages, derived from the Latin “minium” (red lead). In fact, etymologically, the root of the word is from Hebrew. The word “miniature” was formed by the addition of the Latin “tura” to the word “mini; it refers to the red pigment used in book decoration.

This “mini” was sacred to the Jews as it represented the colour of the sacrifice. The Jews were saved by painting their doors with the blood of sacrificed lambs following Moses’ warning about the disasters to come in ancient Egypt. That is, “mini-red” meant the colour of difference, selection and salvation.

However, the word was later confused with “mignon”, mistakenly suggesting that miniature meant “small drawings”. In the Middle Ages, miniatures referred to the decoration of the first letter of European manuscripts with gold-orange minium.

After a while, this art form came to be known as miniature. However, it is incorrect for researchers to confuse this word with the words “minor” and “mignon” to mean “small painting” (Kluge Friedrich, “Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache”, Berlin. New York, 1975, 2002, p. 480 (1112 p.).

From an academic viewpoint, miniature is a form of fine art used to make patterns on manuscripts to facilitate understanding of the topics of the text and has a number of unique technical features (Behzad, Huseyin Tahirzade, “Minyatürün Tekniği” (Miniature Technique), Ankara University Theology Faculty Magazine, volume 2, issue

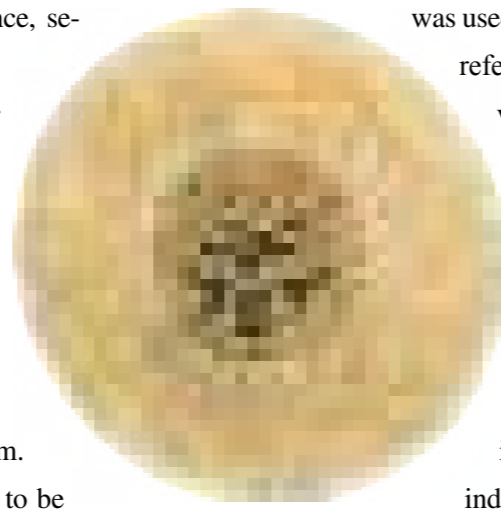
1, 1953, p.30.). The reason for the confusion is that in the Christian Western world, miniature art is limited to manuscripts. However, in the East, miniatures were also used other than on manuscripts. For example, large miniature paintings were found on the walls of Kucha, the centre of the ancient Uyghur khaganate, and in palaces prepared by Mani for the Sassanids.

The miniature was distinct from the type of fine art that was widespread in the East. In Muslim Eastern culture, that art was known as patterning. Those who practised it were also called painters or illustrators. From the Safavid period, the word *nigarkari*

was used in a broad sense for this art. Nigar refers to the Sufi “love of truth” (“divine love”), with further meanings including “pattern, motif”. A *nigarkar* was the artist who depicted this divine love.

It is clear that the word miniature has religious-mystical significance in both Hebrew-Latin and Eastern thought. It is also an indication of the essence of miniature.

In the Jewish-Christian tradition, the miniature symbolized salvation and represented lightning, the colour of creation in Eastern beliefs. In a mystical sense, it represented the power that a miniature illuminated. The fact that the miniature has no shadow or perspective also stemmed from the nature of lightning as a divine creative force. In this sense, the purpose of the miniature was not to describe nature or this world, but the celestial order or metaphysical world. This mythical element explained the confinement of the art to the palace. The object of the miniature was



the concept of the pre-world, the metaphysical world as the initial and infinite stage of creation. There was no place for nature, or games with light and shadow; the point was to express the other side of the world in a philosophical sense. Thus, it is theoretically problematic for modern researchers to analyse and explain miniatures in the context of contemporary art.

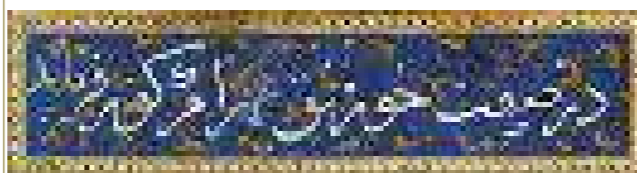
Modern researchers point to miniatures as the starting point for the first coloured depictions of ancient Egypt, especially those found in the *Book of the Dead*. The subject of the miniatures described in the *Book of the Dead* confirms the analysis given above.

Although Turkish miniatures had their origins in China, plot lines coincide with concepts in Turkish beliefs. Ancient Chinese culture was cosmopolitan, so it should not be understood as a monoculture. Ancient China, which called itself the “Khan”, was considered “the middle of the world”. The Chinese, Turkic, Manchu and Tibetan dynasties that ruled in ancient China were held to be “of divine origin.” The idea that the ruler was the incarnation of God on earth was inevitable in all ancient states. It was this concept that began to be reflected in the miniature. Mani (216–276), the founder of divine teaching, gave new meaning to the art. For this, Mani has for centuries, even in the Muslim world, been referred to as “the master of painters.”

Mani, who called himself a “prophet” and created a new belief system from the integrity of religions including shamanism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism and Buddhism, painted highly descriptive works. Mentioned in Eastern literature as the creator of pattern and painting, Mani is also referred to as *Naqqash-i Mani* (Painter Mani) in Nizami’s works

and his richly illustrated work “Arzhang” (a holy book of Manichaeism) is particularly mentioned.

From a Scythian-Parthian aristocratic family, Mani grew up under the influence of the Gnostic teachings of Elkesai, a Jewish-Christian sect, and declared himself a “prophet” at the age of 24. (Rudolph K.,



“Gnosis: The Nature and History of an Ancient Religion”, transl. R. McL. Wilson, Edinburgh 1983, pp. 326-342.).

Based on the concept of “mystery”, Mani conveyed his teachings to the people during the Sassanid period. Travelling to China and Turkic-speaking countries, Mani formed his religious ideas from a syncretism of different faiths. After his death, his followers became known as Manichaeans and spread the ideas of his teachings to Europe.

In many of his books, Mani expressed ideas based on dualism. Another feature of his works was the inclusion of illustrations. Perfecting his painting in China, he influenced all subsequent Gnostic beliefs. He wrote in the Assyrian and Pahlavi languages, including the *Mahzan ul-Asrar*, the *Living (Great) Gospel*, the *Treasure of Life*, the *Shapuragan*, the *Pragmateia*, the *Book of Giants*, the *Fundamental Epistle (Letter of Foundation)*, and the *Manichaean Hymnody*. Mani’s works were translated into Turkish (Uyghur) from the 9th century, and Manichaeism was first declared a state religion by the Uyghur Kha-

ganate (744–840) (Cameron R., Dewey A.J. (Trans.), “The Cologne Mani Codex”, transl. Missoula, Mont. Scholars Press, 1979; Asmussen JP., *Manichean Literature*, New York 1977.).

In Manichaeism, which is based on the struggle of opposing forces in the form of light and darkness, or good and evil, man is described as the bearer of the divine “I” rooted in the truth. The divine incarnations in man - love, faith, devotion, kindness and wisdom - were the same as the five elements of light in nature: air, wind, water, fire and light. The world of light was represented by the “tree of eternal life”, and the dark world by the “dragon”, the ruler of evil. The dark world also had its own elements: fog, earth, bitter water and night.

Manichaeism in various forms influenced Christian and Muslim mystics, especially in the formation of “outward-inward” thought in Sufism. This integral concept of the dual world and the metaphysical world is also reflected in the fine art attributed to Mani. Manichaeism had a strong influence on the emergence of Eastern miniature thought in the theoretical and practical sense (Runciman Steven, “The Medieval Manichee”. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955.).

Mani’s ideas and descriptions reached their peak in Uyghur literature and art. From the many Uyghur works and art found in Turfan, it is clear that the concept of miniature was well established in Turkic life. The Seljuk Turks spread the concept later to the whole Muslim Eastern world (Manichaean Uyghur miniatures, figures and murals were discovered in 1923 by the German scientist Albert August von Le Coq in the ruins of Kucha, the capital of the Uyghur khaganate, and those works were seen to be prototypes of Seljuk period miniatures).

That is, Turkish miniature art originated from the Uyghurs and spread throughout the Muslim Eastern world during the Seljuk Turk period. The first miniature example of the Seljuk period was painted for Ayyuqi's *Varga and Gulsha*. There are 71 small miniatures in this work. The calligrapher and artist was Abd al Momin Muhammad al-Khoyi. The calligrapher and artist was Abd al Momin Muhammad al-Khoy, who was also the founder of the Konya Miniature School, having fled his country during the Mongol invasion to Anatolia, to live and work in Konya.

The Uyghur-Mani tradition is clearly reflected in Khoyi's miniatures. Moon-shaped faces, radiant figures on people's heads, gold bracelets, Turkish weapons and equipment, shields held above the shoulders of cavalry, many images of animals (rabbits, foxes, cats, dogs, roosters, chickens, locusts, hawks, ducks) shows the influence of Mani-Uyghur during the emergence of Turkish miniature art.

In modern European fine arts, miniatures are classified according to country and nationality, which is also incorrect - a modern concept. It is difficult to separate Islamic miniature art into "Iranian miniature", "Turkish miniature" or "Arab miniature". It is impossible to determine on what grounds the miniatures are distinguished. It is surely more expedient to classify the miniature art of the Muslim East according to the following periods:

- Miniatures of the Seljuk period (11th-13th centuries)
- Miniatures of the Ilkhanid period (Ilkhanid, Jalayirid, Inju, Muzaffari periods, 13th- early 15th centuries)
- Miniatures of the Timurid period (14th-15th centuries)

- Miniatures of Qaraqoyunlu-Aghqoyunlu period (15th century)
- Miniatures of the Safavid period (16th- early 18th centuries)
- Miniatures of the Ottoman period (15th-19th centuries)
- Miniatures of the Great Mughal period (16th-mid-19th centuries)
- Miniatures of the post-Safavid period (Afshar, Zand, Gajar periods, 18th-19th centuries) (Mahur F. Banu, "Miniature", *DIA (Diyanet Islamic Encyclopedia)*, volume 30, pp. 118-123).

These are the most appropriate divisions to cover all the miniature schools of the Muslim East (Azerbaijan, Central Asia, Iran and Anatolia). "Azerbaijani miniature art" independently includes all these periods.

Islamic miniature experienced its greatest stage of development during the Ilkhanid period.



Emerging as a branch of the Mongol nation, the Ilkhanids (1256–1359) covered almost the whole Middle East, with Azerbaijan as the main political and cultural centre. The Ilkhanids declared Maragha and Tabriz their capitals and established large schools and centres of science and art in those cities. Their subsequent conversion to Islam allowed the Ilkhanids to continue their traditional Turkic-Mongol way of life and understanding of art. This is reflected in the development of miniature art. During this period, especially with Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's establishment of both observatory and scientific centre in Maragha and the Rub-i Rashidi cultural centre's founding in Tabriz by Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din Fazlullah, the way was opened for the development of miniature art.

The Ilkhanid period miniature school lasted for many centuries. Even the miniature arts of the Jalayirid, Inju and Muzaffari periods were in a way a continuation of the Ilkhanid miniature. We note that this period lasted until the emergence of the Timurid miniature school.

The main feature of this miniature school is the clear reflection of the human figure and body parts, the depiction of many plants and animals, the liveliness of reception and banquet scenes, and the visual representation of women. The artists of the period also tried to establish sources for miniatures, and for this purpose they created works under the name *Manafi al-hayawan* (The Benefits of Animals).

Azerbaijan was at the centre of the Ilkhanid state and the Ilkhanid miniature school is presented as an Azerbaijani school. The schools of Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan and Baghdad operating during this period are generally considered to be branches of the Ilkhanid

school. Heroic scenes were depicted in miniatures of that period, mainly in the *Shahnameh*, the *Jami al-tawarikh* and in Nizami's works. Ahmad Musa Tabrizi was the best-known artist of the period.

Ilkhanid miniature art was developed further during the Jalayirid state (1341–1431). At that time, Shams al-Din, a student of Ahmad Musa, headed the Tabriz miniature school. He served in the palace of Jalayirid ruler Sheikh Uwais and continued the *Shahnameh* tradition.

Of Naqqash Shams al-Din's palace albums, 7 large miniatures have survived. The most important of them are:

- *Kavus's battle with the king of Mazandaran*
- *Rustam's fight with Juya, a wrestler of the Mazandaran army*
- *Manuchohr stabs Tur in the back and kills him in the Iran-Turan war*
- *Isfandiyar killed a dragon in the third stop on the way to Turan on the way to seven flats.*

The main feature of the Jalayirid period miniature school is the richness of the scene, the presence of more than one element in the image. The mixed scenes in Shamsaddin's paintings are highly attractive. The battle scenes were especially vivid, and the stress of battle was highlighted in dark red.

Along with the Tabriz miniature school of the Jalayirid period, there were also miniature centres of the Inju and Muzaffarid period in Iraqi-Ajam. Both schools were established by practitioners of Tabriz miniature art. In particular, the founder of the Muzaffarid state, Mubarizaddin Tabriz, assembled artists and moved them to Shiraz, to establish a school there. Modern researchers call this school the "Iranian

Miniature School". Among the miniatures of the Jalayirid period, Nizami's works were referred to; the scene, *The Battle of Bahram Gur and the Dragon* was especially widely described.

During the Timurid period (1370–1508) Samarkand and its successor Herat school were established based on Tabriz craftsmanship. These schools were established during the Jalayirid period by Amir Timur's relocation of Tabriz artists to Samarkand. However, the Timurid miniature school produced brilliant works due to the synthesis of factors peculiar to the Chagatai people (a state descended from the Mongol ruler Chingiz Khan and named after Chagatai Khan).

During the 43-year reign of Teymur's son Shahrukh (1404–1447), the Herat miniature school became the largest art centre in the East. By Shahrukh's order, large workshops and art centres were established there.

Unlike the Samarkand school, the Herat school was closer to the miniatures of Tabriz, and the artists gave a lot of space to illustrations in the book *Jami al-tawarikh* ("The Compendium of Chronicles"). A miniature collection of Hafizi Abru's *History* was also prepared and presented to Mirza Shahrukh. The Herat school was mainly characterized by prominent historical themes.

The next stage in miniature art is known as the Qaraqoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu period. The Tabriz miniature school, continuing with the support of Jahanshah Mirza (1435–1467), turned to the

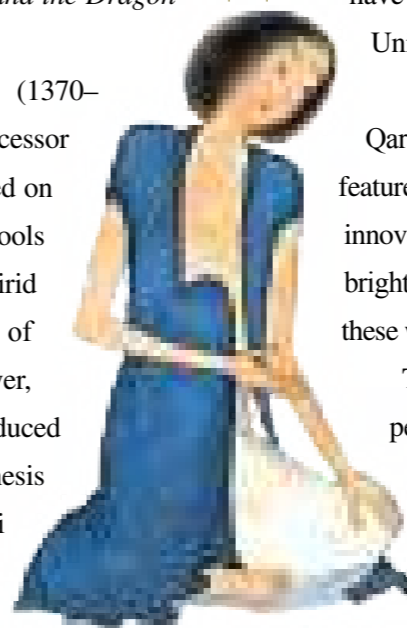
works of Nizami Ganjavi, Khosrow Dehlavi and Ferdowsi. Many of the miniatures on Nizami's works have survived to the present day (Princeton University Library).

Although the miniatures of the Qaraqoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu period reflect features of the Timurid school, they differ in their innovations in form and mould. The abundance of bright colours, simple descriptions and figures in these works brought a new style to miniature art.

The most important work of the Aghqoyunlu period is the *Khavarannameh* (1426). The miniatures in the work were by Farhad, a painter who lived in Azerbaijan. These miniatures consist of 145 illustrations in Muhammad Ibn Hisam's book on the activities of Imam Ali, written in the style of the *Shahnameh*. 130 of the paintings are held in the Tehran Museum of Decorative Arts in Iran, and 45 in museums in the West.

The *Palace Album* of Sultan Yagub Bey (1478–1490) of the Aghqoyunlu period may also be considered a valuable treasure. This album reflects the emergence of a new Chinese-style of painting called *Qelemlisiyah* (black pen). These miniatures, painted in a simple, inked and decorated style, were established in the 14th century by Amir Dowlatyar, Abd al-Hayy al-Baghdadi and Sultan Ahmad Jalayiri and developed during the Aghqoyunlu period.

Developed in China during the Tang and Song dynasties and advanced under the influence of Uyghur and Sogdian painting, this art of the "black pen" is also considered to represent the golden age of Chinese painting. Yan Liben (died 672), Wu



Daozi (680–759), Zhang Xuan (713–755), Han Gan (715–781), Zhou Fang (730–800), and Yuchi Yiseng (8th century) the Tang-Song School of Art, represented by great artists, took on a new style, content and form under the influence of Manichaean elements and wall art (painting) in the depiction of people from the Middle East and Central Asia. The Tang-Song school influenced art in Central Asia, Khorasan and Azerbaijan from the Ilkhanid period onwards and this led to the emergence of the “black pen” tradition, which was founded during the Jalayirid period and reached its peak during Aghqoyunlu rule.

Unlike miniatures, *Qelemi-siyah* (black pen) drawings are remembered for their clearer faces, images, colours and vivid elements. This style, which also influenced Western schools of art, attracted attention for its rich nature and, especially, animal images.

The “black pen” style also influenced the development of landscape painting, and from the Herat school onwards, natural landscapes became the main theme of the miniature. However, “black pen” painting also focused on concepts of the metaphysical world apparent in miniature.

The last, brilliant period of miniature coincides with the Safavid period. The Safavid miniature style, which also influenced and shaped the Ottoman miniature school, was more realistic and dynamic. In particular, the more mobile form of the creatures’ bodies depicted in them (human and animal) became a key feature of this painting.

Although the Safavid miniature school had a ‘*shahnameh*’ tradition, new compositions also emerged, in which images of nature were multiplied; plants and rocks were reflected in different forms, bright colours

were used more often and, most importantly, strong rhythms and contrasts were created. Shah Gulu, a pupil of the Safavid school, took the style to the Ottomans and founded a miniature school there.

From a philosophical point of view, the art of miniature was strongly influenced by Manichaeism. For example, the non-uniform distribution of two-dimensional space in miniature symbolizes the existence of a two-dimensional surface and the stages of cognition.

The main feature of Turkish miniature was that, unlike the Chinese Ying-Yang or Manichaean paradox of good and evil, it did not create contrasts, but created a unity (harmony) based on universality. It was this concept that led to the adoption of miniatures in the lands of Islamic beliefs. That is, in the Turkish concept of belief, the world was formed from the integrity of two opposing forces. Therefore, in Uyghur and later Seljuk miniatures, spaces merged to form a homogeneous space and gave impetus to the development of the art. However, there is no three-dimensional space in the miniature. That is, at a time when miniature art was at its peak, there were no perspective paintings. Thus, Safavid painting, which later came under the influence of Renaissance art, began to decline (Nasr S.H., “Islamic Art and Spirituality”, State University of New York Press Albany, 1987, p. 178).

Most of the real miniatures, far from perspective, express not the profane world, but the middle world – *Alam al-Malakut* (where angels dwell) - which stands above the material world and is the door to the higher layer of the universe – *Alam al-Jabarut*. Such paintings are not only a traditional example of art reflecting the middle world, but they also bring to life the joy and beauty of paradise, which is typical of the world on a positive spiritual level.





Called the “world” in miniature, which completes its plane of thought with the harmony of Islamic thought, this world has time, space and motion, as well as form and colour. On the negative side, this world is a veil that separates humanity from God, but in a positive sense it represents a paradise that gives us joy with its pleasant shape, colour, taste and smell. The space of the miniature is a repetition of that space, and its shape and colour are a copy of this world. Shades of colour, especially gold and dark blue, are not only a subjective embodiment of artistic taste, but also a manifestation of reality in the imaginary world. Space or place is described in such a way that the eye moves from one plane to another, moving between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space, but does not allow the miniature eye to fall into the third dimension. Otherwise, this painting would not be a description of the world of the angels, but simply a copy or reflection of the material world. This explains the lack of perspective and three-dimensional space in miniature art.

The pen is the active pole of God’s creation, all the forms of the universe are engraved in letters and words on the tablet before God, and whatever is possible in the universe, their divine archetypes are secreted in the “Invisible Treasure”. And all this is manifested through the pen. The pen wielded by man is a symbol of God’s pen; the writing on paper and leather is regarded as a description of all existing beings reflected in the cosmic book. Hence, the description of things inherent in the material world, that is, the universe including the Earth, expresses their celestial origin (Nasr S.H. p. 21). It follows that the real painter is God, who created the universe: The Earth, the

sky and everything that exists in it, that his creations are original, that the archetypes of the originals are in the cosmic book, and that the artist’s works are copies of that original. Therefore, again, the origin of these works is divine.

Nizami Ganjavi had a great interest in, and sympathy for, almost all types of art typical of the Middle Ages and in his works he touched upon the artistic traditions of his time; the arts of speech, architecture, music and painting. The poet-thinker, as mentioned above, imagines God, the Creator and Ruler of the universe, as a great and flawless painter (Nizami Ganjavi. “Iqbalname. Correction and commentary”: Behruz Sarvatiyan. Tehran: Moassese-entesharate-Amir Kabir. 1391. p. 25):

برارندهٔ سقف این بارگاه
نگارندهٔ نقش این کارگاه

The constructor of the dome of this palace
(universe)

The artist of this universe’s (world’s) patterns.

It is impossible to imagine this beautifully decorated world without the artist (Nizami, Iqbalname. p.121).

از این بیش گفتن نباشد پسند
که نقش جهان نیست بی نقش بند

It cannot be said more than this,

The world’s patterns do not exist without the artist.

In the poem “Khosrow and Shirin”, the poet considers that there is no heart and soul in the

human-made drawings (Nizami, “Khosrow and Shirin. Correction and commentary”: Behruz Sarvatiyan.

Tehran: Moassese-entesharate-Amir Kabir. 1392. p.174):

هر آنصورت که صورتگر نگارد
نشان دارد ولیکن جان ندارد
مرا صورت گری آموختستند
قبای جان دگر جا دوختستند

Every copy that the human draws,
Has the sign but not the heart.
They taught me to draw copies,
But left the heart (soul) somewhere else.

In Eastern mysticism, the arts generally have moral, spiritual and magical aspects, and the earthly and celestial poles are a whole. Islamic thought directed this Eastern concept to a single Creator. According to this concept, God, the Creator of the universe and the material world — man, nature, the heavens, the Earth and the celestial bodies — was the perfect painter. God is both Creator and the artist who produces the image and shape of His creation. The best and most beautiful being He created is the human, in which both the earthly and heavenly elements are concentrated, so humanity is considered to be God’s caliph on earth.

The main criteria for beauty are proportion and perfection. All beings are subject to perfect divine harmony, and their unity is established by the world of imagination. Attention, on the other hand, is directed from the outside to the inside, from the multitude to the unitary, from the earthly to the heavenly and divine poles, and from the finite to the infinite. The aesthetic pole of Islamic art is not confined to the proportions of individual beings, but is directed towards sublime and inaccessible harmony.

Poetry, fine arts, miniature, book art, architecture, even carpets and other household items are inter-related in both aesthetic sense and spiritual direction. The art of the book has a special position here. Calligraphy is accompanied by more geometric lines, also with elements of flora and fauna; the floral elements dominate because they have strong moral and spiritual meaning.

Miniature art was originally created and developed alongside manuscript books as an independent art. That is why miniature is generally regarded as an independent and complete work of art. This art brought the beauty and elegance of a magical world created from the imagination of great masters for current and future generations.

Miniature paintings are a combination of styles of calligraphy, illumination and artistic binding that emerged with manuscript book art. Calligraphy plays a unique role here, and there is no other calligraphy in world culture that has such a rich aesthetic meaning as Arabic writing. The art of calligraphy has an extraordinary role in all aspects of Islamic culture, as Arabic letters are the shared legacy of all Islamic societies and the Divine World can be preserved through them (Schimmel A.N. "Calligraphy and Islamic Culture". I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers. London. 1990. p. 1). Interestingly, the line and the text are symbols of holiness in Islamic culture. From primary sources, Franz Rosenthal shows that even if the writing is on a carpet, it is a sin to step on it. "The line represents not only the word of Allah but also the words of the prophets and the saints, so it is considered sacred and respected" (Роузентал. Ф. "Функциональное значение арабской графики. «Арабская средневековая культура и литература». Сб. статей зарубежных ученых". Москва. «Наука». 1978. ss. 151–153). The second most important aspect of the line is that it acts as an artistic element (ibid. p.154). Thus, the line combines two important meanings and functions: moral-spiritual and artistic-aesthetic. That is why calligraphic patterns are



used not only on the mosque and sacred places, but also on other architectural monuments, and even in households.

Examples of beautiful linear handwriting in manuscripts constitute a harmony with the patterns and drawings there; they do not just enhance the aesthetic beauty of the book but also increase its moral value. Naturally, illustrated manuscripts are more valuable, and the examples of fine lines, white paint, illumination, patterned headings worked in gold and blue, titles, inscriptions, elegant patterned on the pages, geometric and floral elements, text in colourful tables and frames, flowers, bushes and zoomorphic paintings, and medallions and rosettes along with the miniature drawings appear as magnificent and complete works of art. The value of such a manuscript is unique. To imagine their value, one must remember that in the past, great statesmen, historians, political and cultural figures kept books and treasures of artistic designs in their libraries

and treasuries; gifts for kings and other rulers included not only jewellery but also rare manuscripts books. Illustrated manuscripts are superior to gold and jewellery.

Moreover, if we take account of the lengthy work done by dozens of artisans on the decoration and preparation of these manuscripts, we can understand how much the art was valued in the East. No matter how wealthy and mighty they were, no European king or emperor could afford to fund such book workshops. Many colours were produced from precious stones; gilding was widely used in the design of pages that were painted with saffron mixed with musk and rose water added to the ink. Huge amounts of money

went into the work of calligraphers and artisans, who received great attention. They worked for two hours each day to keep eyes and hands fresh. The writing of every letter and word in those large centres, especially in the Tabriz *kitabkhaneh*, was a work of calligraphy and every such example was an exquisite piece of art.

The shah's treasury allocated the most precious stones to the artistic manuscript, which was prepared in a single copy, and the value of such a book was higher than any object made of gold, diamond, ruby, emerald or other precious stone. That's why these delicate books were counted among the most valuable possessions of the Ilkhanids, Timurids and Safavids.

The socio-historical life, science and culture, literature and art of the peoples of the Middle East in the Middle Ages were formed and evolved on the basis of a number of common religious-metaphysical, intellectual-ideological, moral behaviour and artistic-aesthetic values. In all of these, along with local ethnic and cultural elements, a common moral spirit prevailed, and the unifying spirit was more pronounced, despite individual and different features. In the Middle Ages, the culture and art of the peoples of the East were not completely syncretic, but in their formation, different traditions came into contact with each other. Therefore, when studying the works of culture and art of that period, it is necessary to distinguish the elements of different regions or nationalities, as well as to identify the points that connect and harmonize them with each other. The unifying factor is the mystical view, the common concepts on the spiritual, moral level.

On the other hand, in the Middle Ages, poets and writers, philosophers and scholars, sheikhs and saints, and artists rarely lived together, many of them contin-

ued their lives and work in different regions, cities, and cultural centres. During that period, there were many migrations and displacements for various reasons. As a result, the traditions of science, literature and art passed from one region to another, from one city to another and from one centre to another, and interaction and contact was ensured between them. In addition to individual stylistic features, there are features that harmonize and bring together many traditions.

It is important to take these points into account when evaluating miniature art. Manuscripts, calligraphy and miniature art are spread across a wide Islamic geography from India and Central Asia to Anatolia, Africa and Spain, as well as in Tabriz, Herat, Kashmir, Samarkand, Shiraz, Isfahan, Qazvin, Baghdad, Istanbul and other cultural centres and schools. Close



ties existed, and the exchange of art traditions became widespread. Each centre and school has its own characteristics, intertwined with local elements, as well as the common moral, artistic and aesthetic spirit between them.

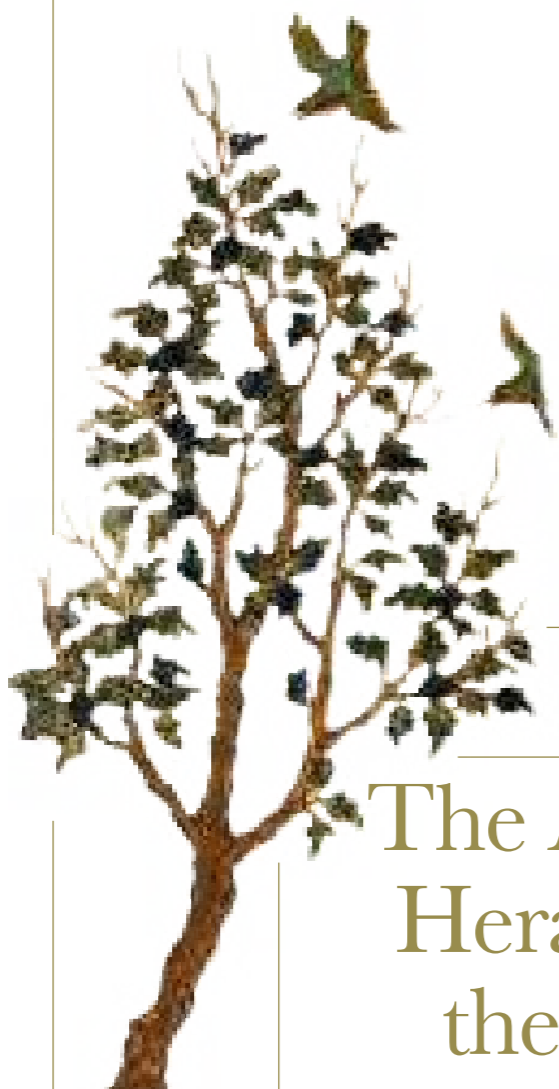
On the other hand, there are serious problems in modern miniature research. Miniature art does not have its own language, vocabulary, and the main researchers in this field are Europeans. This leads to serious terminological problems. There are a number of problems, especially in the field of classification. For example, European researchers classify miniature art as “Iranian-Turkic-Arab” because of their ethnicity, which is also problematic. Or the term “Persian miniature” is used in a number of European publications, which is derived from Greek sources. Russians sometimes use the same expressions, quoting Europeans. However, miniature art is generally a product of Eastern thought.

Further, the name “Persia” used by European researchers is ambiguous. These expressions are used as ethnic, geographical and cultural terms, as well as a reflection of Turkic-Arab affiliation. Modern Eastern researchers replace Persia / Persian names with “Iran”, which is due to the modern approach taken. For this reason, the presentation of Nizami Ganjavi’s work as part of “Iranian culture” is generally incorrect and raises various questions.

The Nizami Ganjavi International Center is about to complete a vast project dedicated to select miniatures from Nizami’s *Khamisa* manuscripts. This beautiful and rare book, distinguished by its artistic and palaeographic quality, contains many interesting materials. The implementation of this project has tak-

en four years, and this is no surprise. The influence of the great Nizami’s creativity on the development of oriental miniature art is of great importance, not only for Azerbaijan but for the whole Islamic world. It constitutes a supreme peak of world heritage. Most of the masterpieces prepared in the East’s miniature and artistic book centres are drawn from Nizami’s *Khamisa*. At the same time, there is no cultural or book art centre, or school of miniature, in the Islamic world that did not produce miniatures on themes from the *Khamisa*. This was only natural, because the themes that Nizami addressed were rich, full and comprehensive, not only for their artistry and philosophy, but also as sources for fine art.

Akbar Najaf
Nasib Goyushov



Chapter I

The *Khamisa* of Nizami: Herat Manuscripts of the Timurid Period

24

The Timurids and their vision of imperial rule left a legacy that resonated throughout the eastern Muslim world for almost four hundred years.

The early realization that there was a direct relationship between cultural and political prestige enabled the Timurids to develop one of the most sophisticated courts in the history of the Muslim world. Technically refined and visually arresting, the artefacts made for the dynasty's elite are among the most sumptuous and brilliant works of art ever created.

Timur (1336–1405), his sons and successors left their stamp on the world they conquered. The role of ruling patronage, the Timurids' artistic vision, the changes in taste and focus that developed in Herat and elsewhere in their world through the second half of the 15th century drove the creation of those masterworks of culture and heritage.

Timur's most significant contribution to the dynasty's cultural development, however, was to lay the foundations for the Timurid *kitabkhana* (royal library

or workshop). *Kitabkhanas* were responsible for the production of books and other luxurious artefacts. The institution's central role in the evolution of later Islamic art was rooted in the centrality of books to Muslim culture. From their earliest periods, Muslim authorities have melded political activity and an interest in books. Accordingly, the artisans of the *kitabkhana*, painters and calligraphers in particular, were charged with visualizing their ruler's aspirations and affirming his legitimacy and power.

Timur was keenly aware of books' importance in legitimizing his rule. They were key to positioning himself as rightful successor to previous rulers of the Islamic world.

By incorporating the already abundant artistic and literary traditions of the Muslim Orient, he established the conditions for a new visual language that was to crystallize under the patronage of his descendants.

Timur died in 1405, before he was able to witness the full blossoming of the new artistic directions developing at his court.

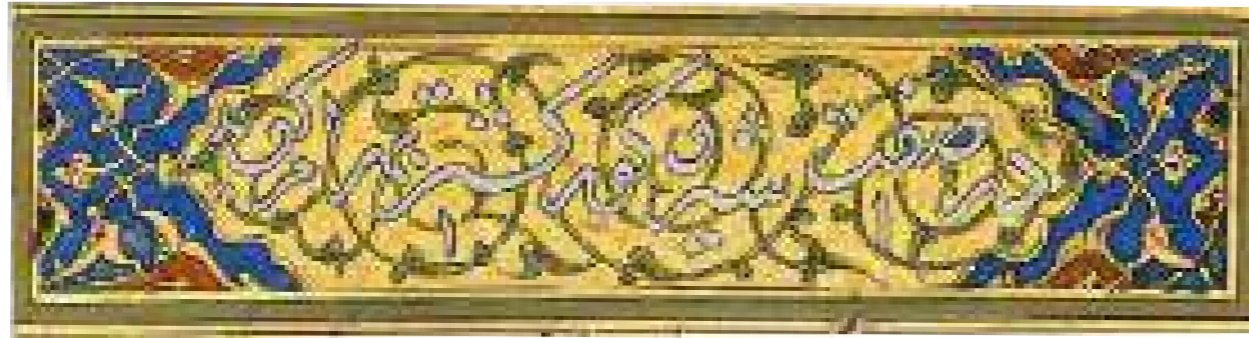




f. 4b.

The Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad.

H.774. The Khamsa of Nizami.
Topkapı Palace Library.
There are 51 miniatures in this
manuscript attributed
to the Timurid period.
Date: AH Sha'ban 844/1440 CE.



The history of the Timurid dynasty includes its arts: artistic production was so closely intertwined with political, social and economic activity that they must be discussed together. The changes in circumstances and orientation of the dynasty after Timur's death gave a direct impetus to an accelerated cultural programme.

Shahrukh (1377–1447), a son of Timur who made Herat his capital, acceded to the rule of Khorasan following his father's death, and reigned for forty-two years.

In the early years of that lengthy reign, the transfer of the capital from Samarkand to Herat helped to confirm the dynasty's new orientation.

Shahrukh and his talented son Baysunghur attracted and patronized men of learning, poets, philosophers, painters and other artists, in the tradition of the dynasty's founder. Herat enjoyed a period of reconstruction and became an important focus of art and literature. Baysunghur, who assembled there all the most famous calligraphers, illuminators, painters and other artists, established a royal atelier-library (*kitabkhana*) for the production of manuscripts that may be considered some of the

finest in history. More than eighty master artists, including the calligrapher Jafar Tabrizi (head of the atelier-library) and painters like Amir Khalil, Khwaja Ghiyas al-Din and Mahmud, are recorded in a report by Jafar to his patron around AH 833/1429 CE (Kemal Ozergin; 1971 Thackston 1989). If we add to that number the other artists and craftsmen needed for the production of books, decoration of palaces and design and execution of other artefacts, the atelier's total workforce could well have exceeded two hundred.

The Timurids' fondness for splendid architecture and fine art can be explained by two considerations: first, the tendency prevalent then for rulers to enhance their majesty by making their courts centres of culture and second, the legacy of Timur, who had deported architects, artists, craftsmen, scholars and poets from conquered cities to Central Asia and set them to work there, mainly in his capital Samarkand. He had done so to glorify himself rather than from any personal aesthetic taste. Some of his descendants may have had the same motive. This was not the case, however, in Herat, under Shahrukh.

Shahrukh's appointment of princes, mainly his sons, as governors of cities across the realm may have encouraged political independence in the absence of Timur's personal authority, but it also triggered a cultural decentralization and efflorescence. Rather than following the founder's practice of concentrating patronage in his capital, the dynasty now saw the princes' courts blossom as artistic centres, vying with each other for the artists and poets who could bring them pleasure, honour and prestige.

Six very different regal personalities, for whom there are varying degrees of biographical information and attributable works of art, helped shape this new Timurid programme: Shahrukh, Gawhar Shad and Baysunghur (1397–1433) at Herat; Iskandar Sultan (1384–1415) and Ibrahim Sultan (1394–1435) in Fars; and Ulugh Beg at Samarkand (1394–1449).





A prince's own cultural abilities were of great significance. Although Persian was not their native tongue, its literary tradition, dictated the direction of most rulers' literary and artistic projects. Poetry was employed in correspondence between Ibrahim Sultan in Shiraz, Baysunghur in Herat and Ulugh Beg in Samarkand, often in debates about cultural concerns. Dawlatshah once recorded, "Prince Baysunghur preferred Amir Khosrow's *Khamsa* ("quintet" in Persian, a collection of five long poems) to Nizami's, while his late highness Ulugh Beg Kuragan (son-in-law) did not agree and was a proponent of Sheikh Nizami. Between these two learned princes there was on occasion heated debate over these conflicting claims, and they compared the two *Khamsas* line by line".

In their desire to create a world anew for the dynasty, princes commissioned works from the *kitabkhana* that included illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, paintings, drawings, textiles, carpets and objects in metal, wood, and hardstone.

Books were an integral element of the new cultural agenda and are perhaps the most sophisticated embodiments of the Timurids' intentions and capabilities.

There was a time when Baysunghur's workshop in Herat was producing illustrated manuscripts of classical Persian and Persian-language texts to standards, and in styles, that would remain a benchmark in the Muslim East for nearly two centuries, while in the same city his father Shahrukh was commissioning an illustrated and illuminated copy of Nizami's *Khamsa*. Different in every aspect from

the large illustrated history manuscripts he usually commissioned, Shahrukh's *Khamsa* exemplifies the classicism of Baysunghuri development, whose manipulation of classical elements produced an extraordinary transformation.

When we turn to the Nizami *Khamsa* of 1431 (in the State Hermitage in Saint-Petersburg) the only surviving illustrated manuscript of poetry made for Shahrukh, we see at once the difference in aesthetic conception between a manuscript of history and one of poetry in 15th century Herat, even though both were produced by order of the same ruler. Considering the *Khamsa* miniatures as a stylistic entity - which they are not, anyway - it would be hard to describe them as being predominantly influenced by the Jalayirid paintings of Tabriz and Baghdad, the Shiraz paintings of the previous half-century, or by Central Asian paintings of the same period. Virtually all the components that so distinguish the styles of these earlier schools of painting have been subordinated to a newer style which, by this date, was already so well integrated that its distinctive canon is recognizable even to the untrained eye.

A Nizami *Khamsa* copied by Mahmud for Shahrukh ibn Timur in Herat, dated AH Rabi' II 835/December 1431 CE in 502 folios with 38 illustrations is now in the State Hermitage, Saint-Petersburg (VR-1000).

The view of Shahrukh solely as a patron of sober, archaized historical art is contradicted by this lively and richly decorated volume of Nizami's work. While its large illustrative layout lacks the consistent precision and uniform finish of those ex-





f. 100a.

Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.

Acc. no VR-1000.
The Khamsa of Nizami.
The State Hermitage Museum.
 Date: completed 10 Rabi' II 835
 (16 December 1431) Place: Herat.
 Copied by Mahmud for Sultan Shahrukh.

ecuted for Baysunghur, the best paintings clearly reveal the influence of the poetic art produced for the son. A further similarity in illumination indicates a likely sharing of artists and materials between father and son. The two, in fact, shared more interests than generally recognized. Baysunghur commissioned numerous manuscripts on history and even added an inscription to one of his father's copies of the *Jami' al-tawarikh* (by Rashid al-Din Hamadani). An interesting feature of the Saint-Petersburg *Khamsa*, one that further betrays Shahrukh's carefully contrived public image of devout piety, is the inclusion of an erotic scene on folio 135a.

Baysunghur Giat-Al-Din ibn Shahrukh ibn Timur (1397–1434), also known as Sultan Baysunghur Bahadur Khan, was an outstanding representative of Islamic culture, whose value and distinction have only in recent decades received adequate appreciation within modern scholarship.

He had a major role in the administration of the Timurid Empire and fought in campaigns against its most dangerous enemies.

Baysunghur's contribution to the rise of Herat as a cultural centre within the Timurid Empire was recognized as long ago as 1912 by F. R. Martin (quoted in Browne, *Lit. Hist. Persia* III, pp. 395f.), who noted that the prince was not only a great bibliophile but also the sponsor of works of art in a specifically Herati style and of such high quality that few if any of the contemporary princes in Europe could vie with him as a Maecenas-style patron of the arts. Since the reigning Shahrukh surely also contributed to the rise of the Herati school, the importance of Baysunghur's role is difficult to appraise.



f. 143b.
Decorative composition.

Book illustration was intimately bound up with manuscript production. Herat became the centre of calligraphic art with Baysunghur's return from a campaign against the Qaraqoyunlu in AH 823/1420 CE bringing from Tabriz the leading master of *nasta'liq* calligraphy, Mawlana Jafar Tabrizi, later also called Jafar Baysunghuri, as well as other experts. Nevertheless, Shiraz continued for some time to be the centre of miniature painting, under the patronage of Baysunghur's brother Ibrahim, followed briefly by Isfahan. Eventually, however, Shahrukh's success in accumulating power into his own hands at Herat, and his and Baysunghur's interest in the arts drew so many practitioners to Herat that other formerly important centres lost prestige and were reduced to provincial level, even though still occasionally producing high-class work. M. M. Ashrafi considers that: "Masters from different places, like Tabriz, Baghdad and Shiraz worked for a while in the usual manner of this or that art school. Then, in viewing each other's methods, they worked to develop a new style. So, in this process of synthesis, the lineaments of a new style were formed, a new art school was born".

The Herati school which thus arose under Shahrukh and Baysunghur functioned as a kind of academy, with a staff of about forty artists and scholars. Herati saw the evolution of a new style of book illustration and indeed of the book craft as a

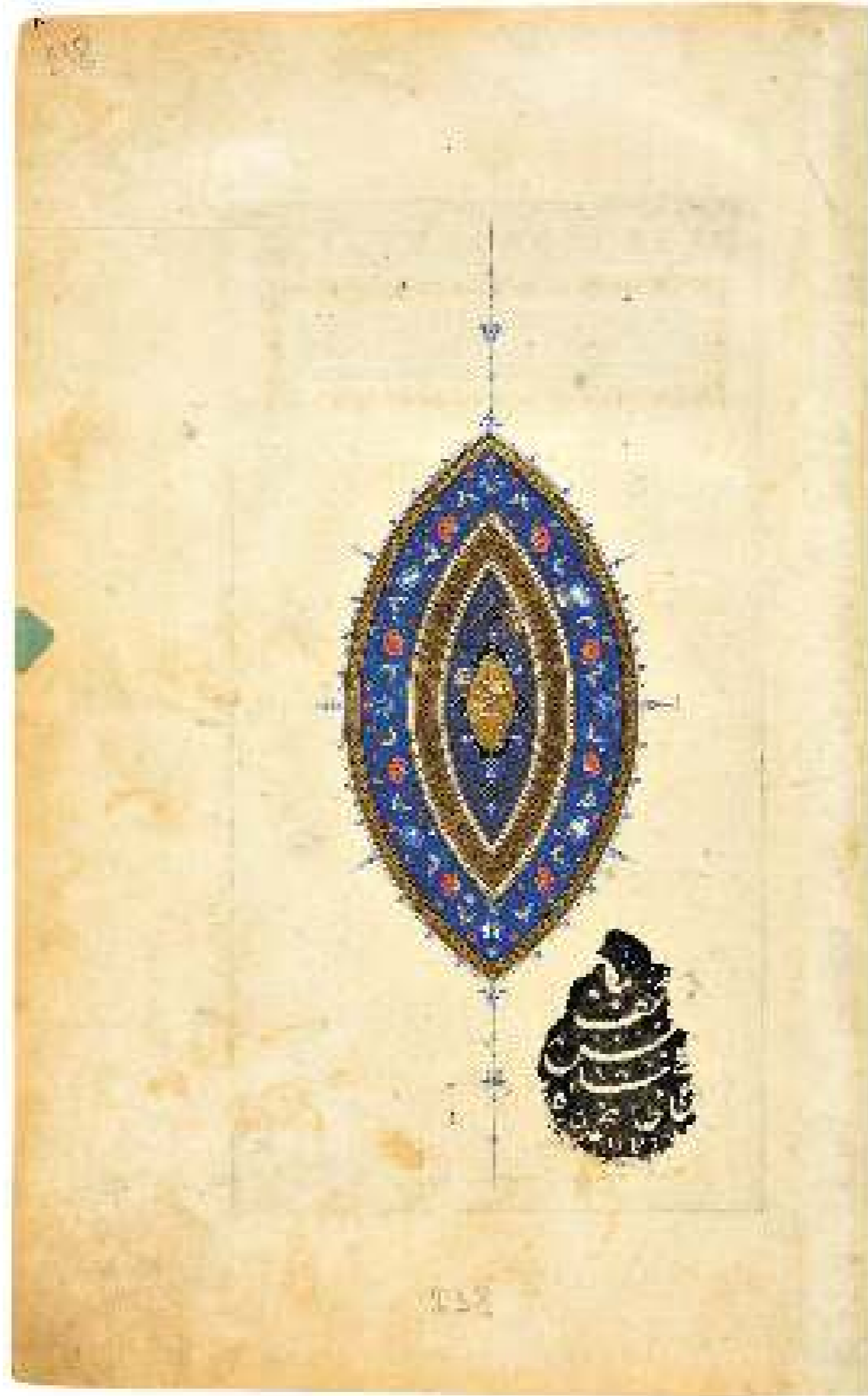


f. 175a.
Majnun at the door of the Ka'ba.

whole, including calligraphy, illumination and binding. Although traces of other styles that reflect some artists' provincial origins are sometimes perceptible, the Herati style has a distinct character of its own. According to Ernst J. Grube: "The multi-compositeness and perfection of what can be defined as the "I Herat style" of painting did not appear suddenly, without predecessors. On the contrary, Herat painting of this time is an end result, rather than an original creation. It does not break with the existing tradition in order to establish new artistic values".

One of the style's features is the presence of Far Eastern elements, probably introduced as a result of the exchange of embassies with China. Herati artists are known to have been attached to diplomatic missions to and from Beijing; one of them, Giat-Al-Din Naqqash, was selected by Baysunghur and afterwards wrote an account of the journey that was incorporated into Hafiz-i Abru's history.

Baysunghur was also a patron of historiography. He should not be regarded as the sole sponsor of the Herati school, as Shahrukh did much to promote its development. In B. Gray's opinion, Baysunghur was more interested in the production and illustration of history books than manuscripts of pure poetry. In any case, he must have exerted a strong and lasting influence, as the Herati school continued to flourish after his death until Shahrukh passed away in AH 850/1447 CE.



f. 238a.

*A Shamsa rosette medallion bearing the name of the poem Haft Paykar:
(Seal belonging to Shah Najaf Qutb ad-Din Sultan Muhammad)*

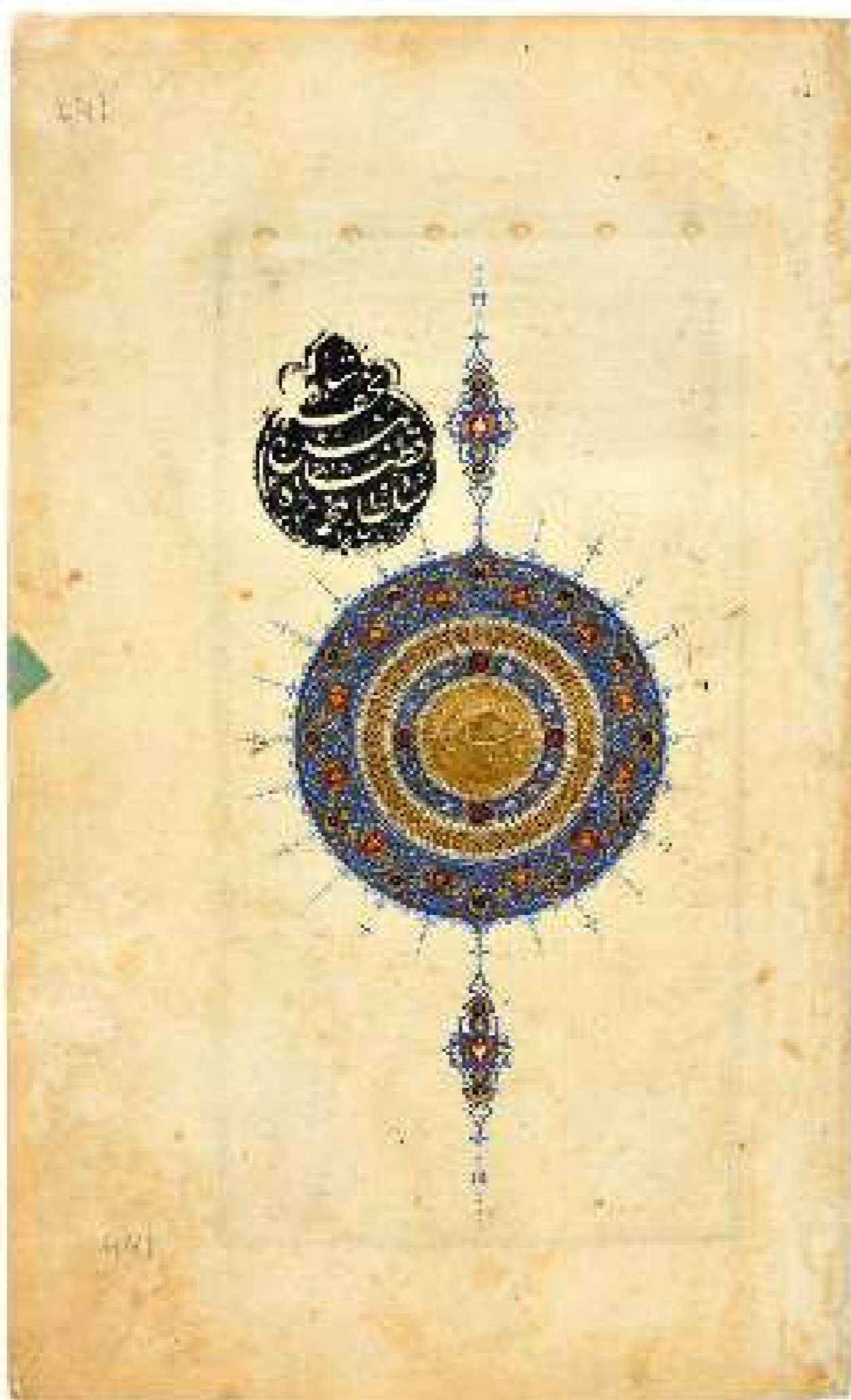


f. 251a.

The people in wonder at Khawarnaq Castle.



f. 393a.
Iskandar and a hermit.



f. 441a.

*A Shamsa rosette bearing the name of the poem Iqbalnameh.
(Seal belonging to Shah Najaf Qutb ad-Din Sultan Muhammad)*



Haft Paykar by Nizami.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Place: Herat, present-day Afghanistan.
Period: Timurid (1370–1507), ca. 1430.
Calligrapher: Maulana Azhar.
Date of miniatures: ca. 1475–1476.

A copy of Nizami's *Haft Paykar* by Azkhar in Herat, c.1425–1450, has 66 folios with 5 illustrations. It is now stored in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, as a gift from Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913.

f. 10r.
Bahram Gur hunting.



f. 17v.
Bahram Gur's skill with the bow.



f. 23v.

Bahram Gur and the Indian Princess in the Black Dome on Saturday.



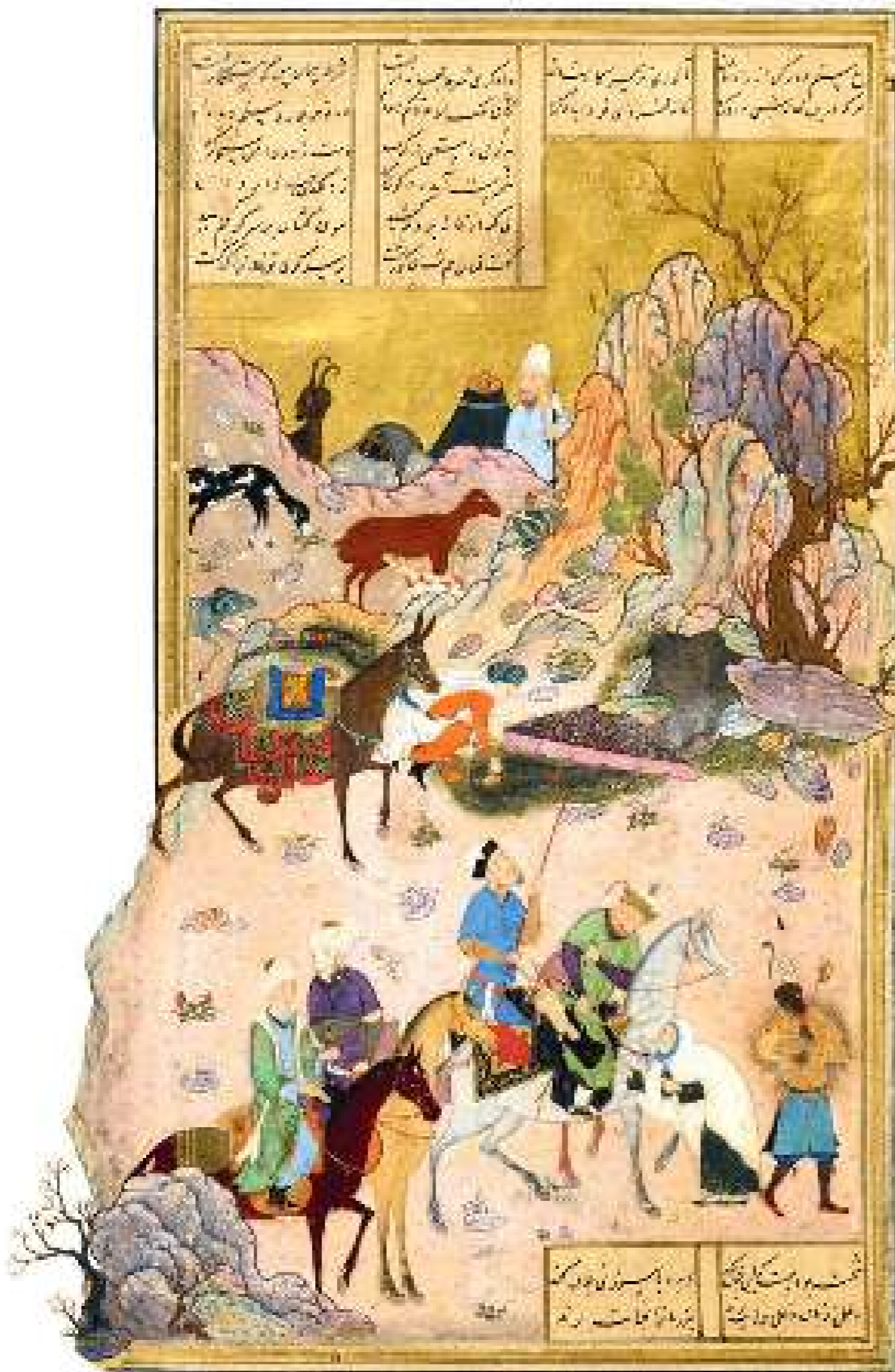
f. 33v

Bishr searching for the body of his drowned companion Malikha in a well.

This long-controversial manuscript has in the past frequently been attributed to Baysunghur's *kitabkhana*, although stylistic, codicological and palaeographic considerations now tend to preclude that possibility. In all likelihood, a 15th century work imitating a now-lost Baysunghuri original, the manuscript was presented to the Mughal emperor Akbar in the late 16th century; it also has the seal of his grandson Shah Jahan. Its provenance is further complicated by the minute signature of Behzad, a late 15th century Timurid artist, on each of the illustrations, additions perhaps designed to exploit Mughal interest in their ancestor's artistic legacy. A nearly exact duplicate of this composition is found in the 1445–1446 *Khamsa* copied for Ismat al-Dunya at Herat.



f. 47r.
The garden's owner discovers maidens bathing in his pool.



f. 18r:
The Seljuk Sultan Sanjar petitioned by an old woman.

*Add. MS. 25900. The Khamsa of Nizami.
British Library.
Date: 1442-1443.
Period: Herat late Timurid style and Tabriz/
Safavid style c. 1535-1540.*

A Nizami *Khamsa*, Herat, dated AH 846/1442 CE in 316 folios with 19 paintings, 19 x 12cm is now London, The British Library, Add.25900.

The manuscript is twice dated to AH 846/1442 CE (in the colophons on f.30r and 316r). It is written in a small, fine *nasta'liq* (*khafi*) script and has some superb illuminations. Remargined throughout and with a modern European binding, it contains nineteen illustrations with only one (f.41v) considered consistent with that date. Fourteen others can be attributed to the late 15th century, while four are of Safavid origin and can be dated to the 1530s. One of the fourteen late Timurid paintings (f.77b) contains an inscription dated AH Rajab 898 (April 1493 CE), suggesting an approximate date for the remainder of the group. Behzad's name appears on three of the illustrated folios, including "Bahram Gur and The Dragon" (f.161a). "The Battle of Iskandar and Darius" (f.231) signed by Behzad, although painted in Herat style, could be attributed to the early Safavid period. Another unsigned illustration (f.114a), is also generally accepted as being by Behzad.



f. 44v.
Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing.



f. 70.

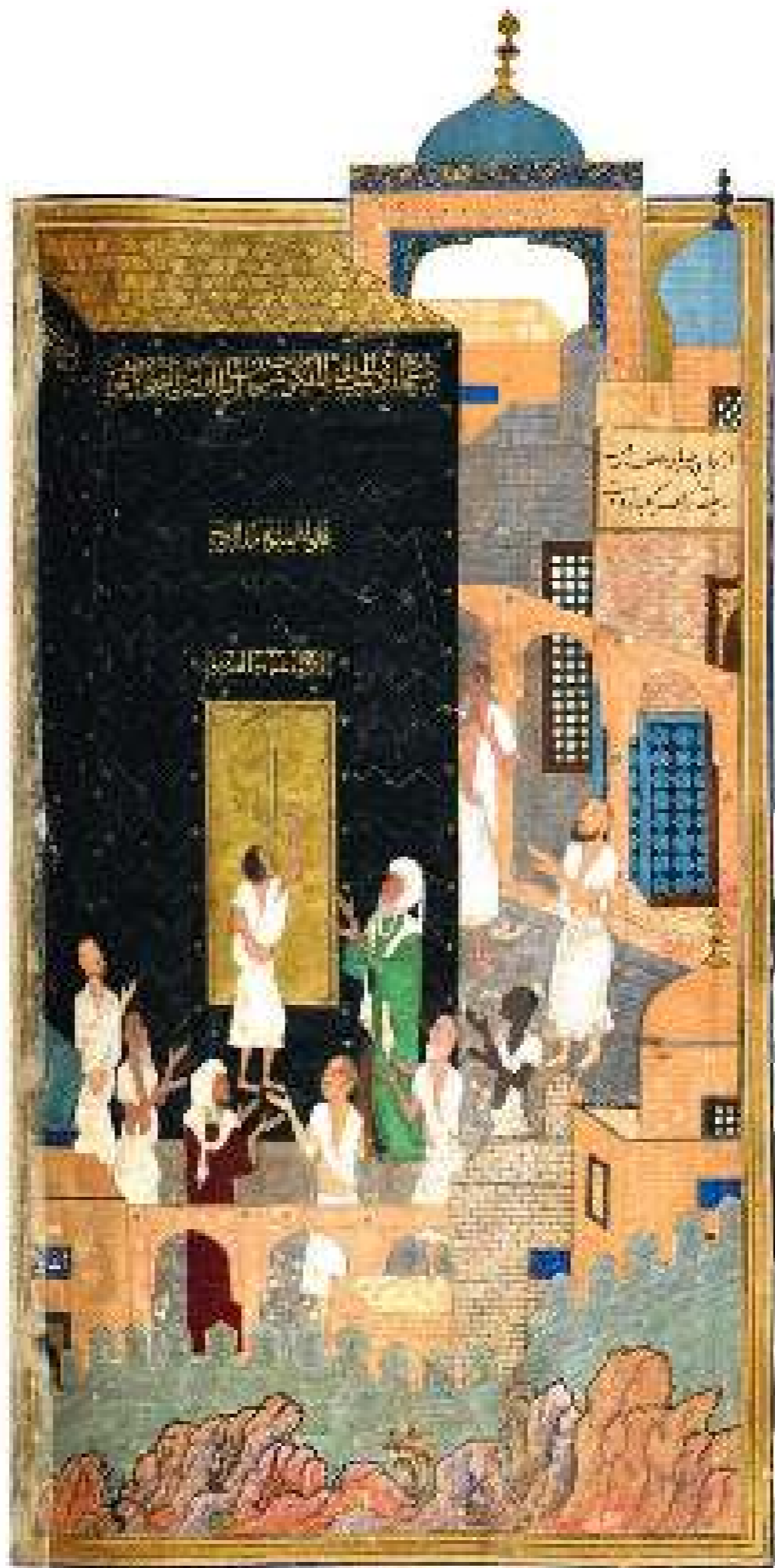
Farhad carrying Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.



f. 77v.

Khosrow before Shirin's castle.

(The inscription includes the date Rajab 898 AH/1492–1493 CE and a quatrain)



f. 114v:
Majnun at the Ka'ba with his father and other pilgrims.
(Inscription above the door: Hasten to prayer before food)
(Inscription above: Qur'anic Ayah)



f. 121v.
Battle of the tribes watched by Majnun.
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 188r.

Mahan, confronted by demons, finds his horse transformed into a seven-headed dragon.
 (Story told by the Princess of Khwarazm)



f. 234v:
Iskandar comforts the dying Dara.



f. 245v:
Nushaba recognizes Iskandar from his portrait.
(Inscription: *The gate of the afflicted ones through which God enters*)

On 28 June 1458, Jahan Shah Qaraqoyunlu, a prince and former vassal of Shahrukh, rode triumphantly into Herat. Although his occupation of the city lasted less than a year, it reflected the profound changes in the Timurid world since Shahrukh's death in AH 850/1447 CE. It signalled the rising power of the Qaraqoyunlu and Agh-qoyunlu dynasties in the west.

After Shahrukh, Herat was ruled by different Timurid princes, each for a short period, until Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara (1438–1506) ascended the throne in 1469. This brave and brilliant ruler reigned for thirty-eight years, and during his peaceful rule Herat enjoyed further advances in prosperity and culture.

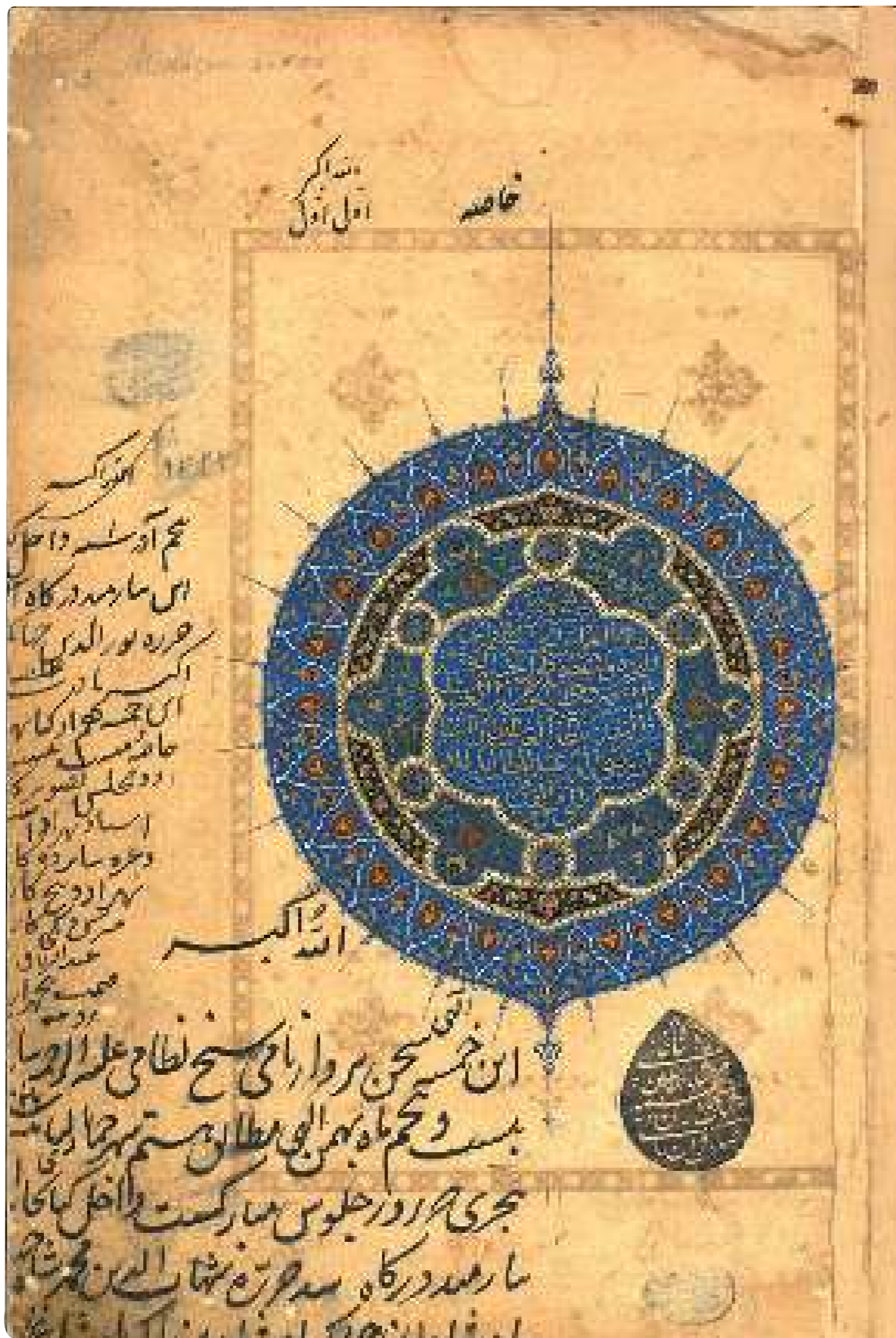
The study of Herati painting from 1450 to 1506 falls into two distinct periods: the first from 1450 until the coming to power of Sultan Husayn Bayqara in 1469, and the second corresponding to the period of his rule, from 1470 until his death in 1506. The great names that spring to mind, such as the patron and man of letters Alisher Navoi, the painter Behzad, the calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi and the poet Jami, are all associated with the second period. It is universally recognized that the reign of Sultan Husayn Mirza, patron par excellence in his family's tradition, oversaw the last great flowering of Timurid art.

The changes observable in Herati painting in the last decades of the 15th century are

generally characterized by a new naturalism, an opening up of space and a more harmonious relationship of figurative, architectural and landscape elements in the compositional space. A greater individualism and more realistic treatment is apparent in the form and gesture of the human figure, and pose and movement in animals.

Many manuscripts testify to the turmoil of these years that implies the fate that must have befallen many works of art.





f. 3r.
A Shamsa rosette.

Or. 6810.
The Khamsa of Nizami.
British Library.

A Nizami *Khamsa*, British Library, Or.6810, 303 folios, 25 x 17cm. This fine manuscript with twenty-two illustrations and superb illuminations was produced for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas, an officer under Sultan Husayn Mirza at Herat.

Although the manuscript lacks an informative colophon, one of the paintings has an inscription identifying its patron as Amir Ali Farsi Barlas (f.62b), and another (f.214r) is clearly dated AH 900/1494–1495 CE, which may be considered the date of the whole manuscript.

A number of the manuscript's paintings are ascribed to Behzad, Qasim ibn Ali, Mirak, and Abd al-Razzaq, but the accuracy of these attributions is questionable. Some, for instance, contain inscriptions to more than one artist (f.106 b, for example, has marginal and intercolumnar notations to Mirak, Behzad and Qasim Ali). Three of the paintings, including "Iskandar visiting the Hermit" (f.273a), portray the great warrior in the guise of a contemporary Timurid ruler (presumably Sultan Husayn). While this undoubtedly reflects late 15th century interest in holy men, it may also be an allusion to Hatifi's *Timurnama* (History of Timur), which casts Timur - and by extension his descendants - in the same guise.

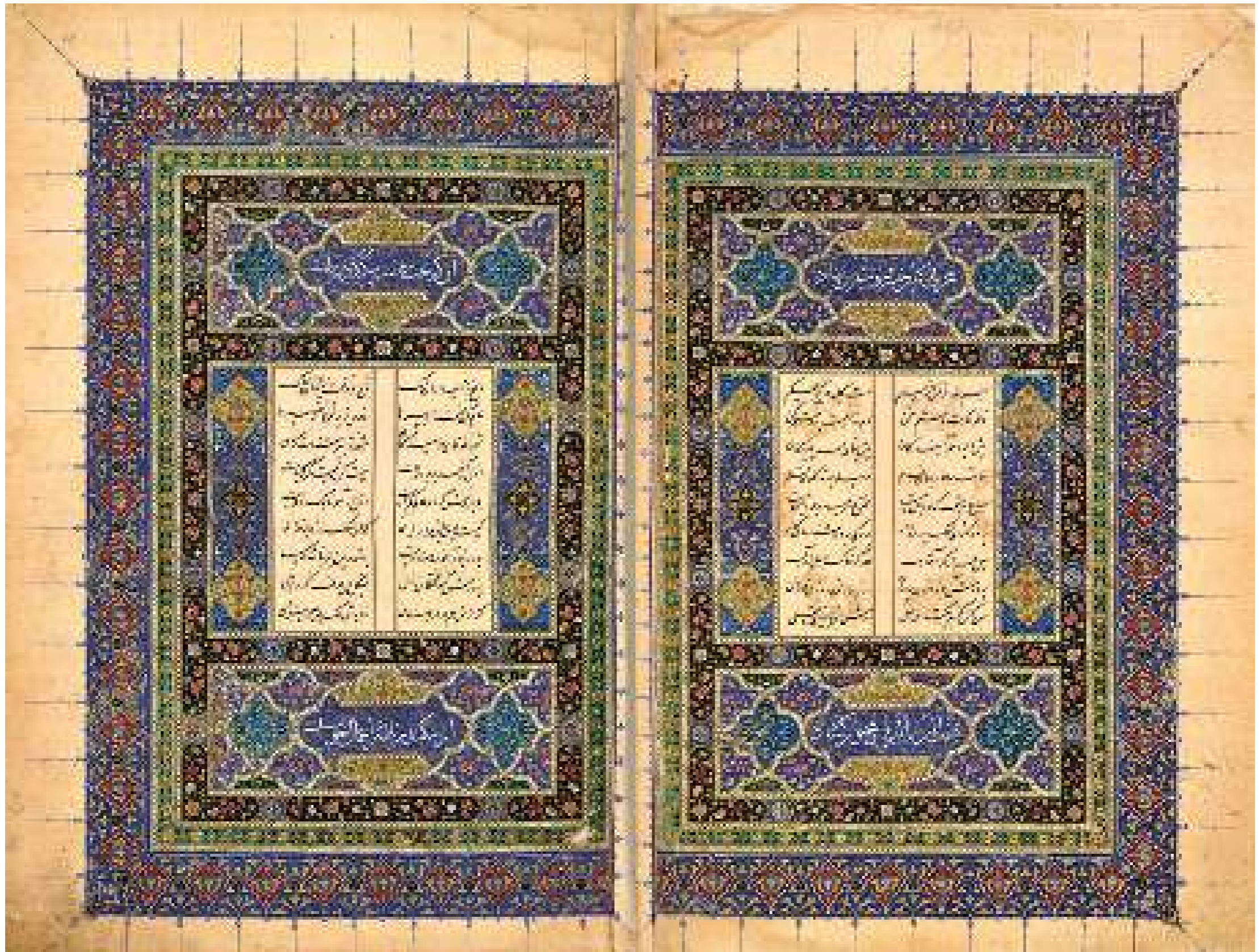
This manuscript was in India by the beginning of the 17th century and its miniatures have been studied by many scholars over a long period, beginning with the Mughal emperor Jahangir, who had it in his library. In fact, the entries on the fly-leaves indicated that it was first presented by one Khuda Quli Taleqani in Agra in the year AH 972/1564 CE, presumably to Munim Khan, an official at the Mughal court, who then presented it to the emperor, valuing it at one thousand rupees. Jahangir wrote in the manuscript (in AH 1014/1605 CE): “Twenty-two illustrations are by master Behzad and others: sixteen by Behzad, five by Mirak and one by Abd al-Razzaq; valued at five thousand rupees”. Another entry, dated AH 1037/1628 CE, indicates that the manuscript was passed on to Jahangir’s son Shah Jahan. And an entry in the eleventh year of his reign, AH 1048/1638 CE, entrusting it to the librarian Khwaja Soheil, again values it at five thousand rupees.



f. 2r.
Left side of a Diptych.



f. Iv.
Right side of a Diptych.
A manuscript possibly being presented to Sultan Mirza Barlas, ruler of Samarkand. The patron holds a piece of paper which appears to have the name
Ali Farsi on it - in addition to further inscriptions which have not yet been deciphered.
(Ascribed to Mirak Khorasani)



ff. 4r-3v.
Illuminated double-pages of frontispiece.



f. 5v

The Prophet Muhammad, mounted on Buraq and escorted by angels, passing over the Ka'ba.





f. 27v.
Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.
(Ascribed to Mirak and Behzad)



f. 37v.

*The Elders pleading before Hormuzd on behalf of the young Khosrow.
(Ascribed to Behzad)*



f. 39v.

*Shirin being shown the portrait of Khosrow by one of her handmaidens.
(Ascribed to Mirak)*



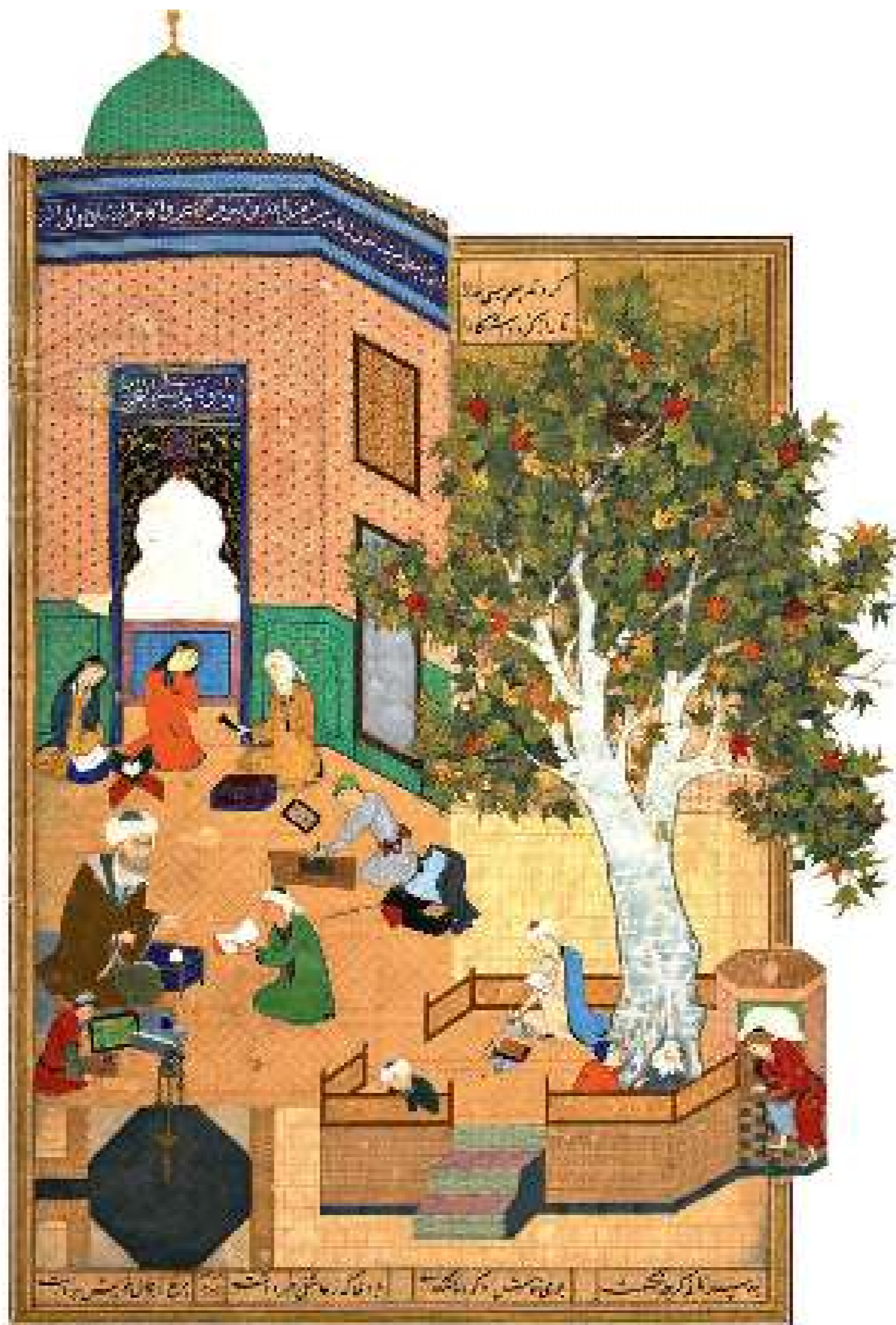
f. 72v.

The suicide of Farhad on Mount Bisitun.

(Ascribed to Mirak and Behzad)



f. 93r:
Shiruya murders Khosrow asleep in bed.
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 106v.

Leyli and Majnun at school.

(Inscription over the doorway has Qur'anic texts)

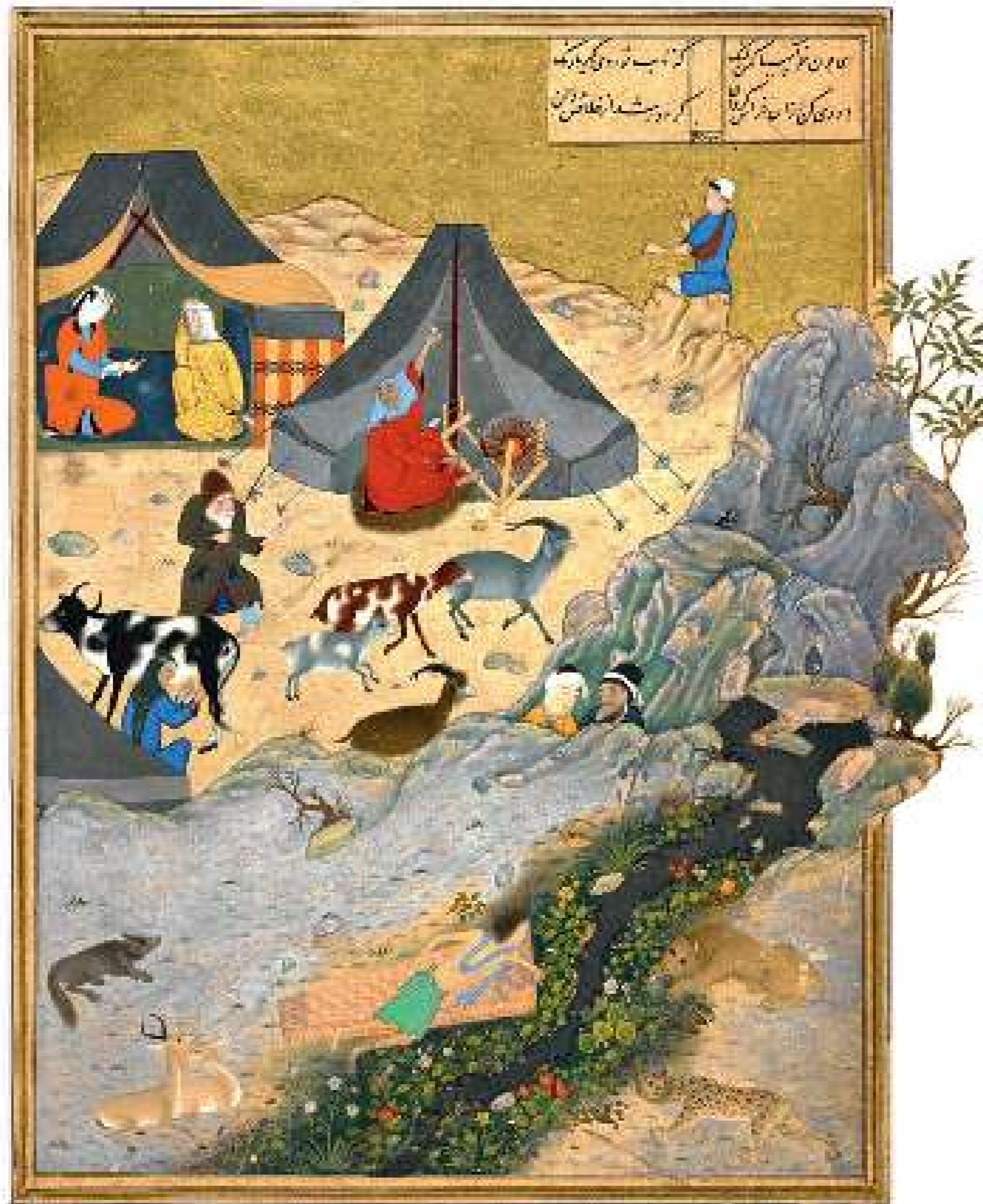
(Ascribed to Mirak and Behzad, but to Qasim Ali in the text panel)



f. 128v.
Majnun visited by Salim in the desert.
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 135v.
Mourning the death of Leyli's husband, Ibn Salam.
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 144v.
The death of Majnun on Leyli's grave.
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 154v.

The building of the Khawarnaq Castle for Nu'man, the king of Yemen and mentor of the young Bahram Gur.

(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 157r.

Bahram Gur killing the dragon.

(Ascribed to Behzad. An artist's name has been erased from the text panel)



f. 175r:

Bishr searching for the body of his drowned companion Malikha in a well.

(Story told by the Turkestan Princess)

(Ascribed to Behzad below, but to Qasim Ali in the text panel)



f. 190r.

The garden's owner discovers maidens bathing in his pool.

(Story told by the Greek Princess)

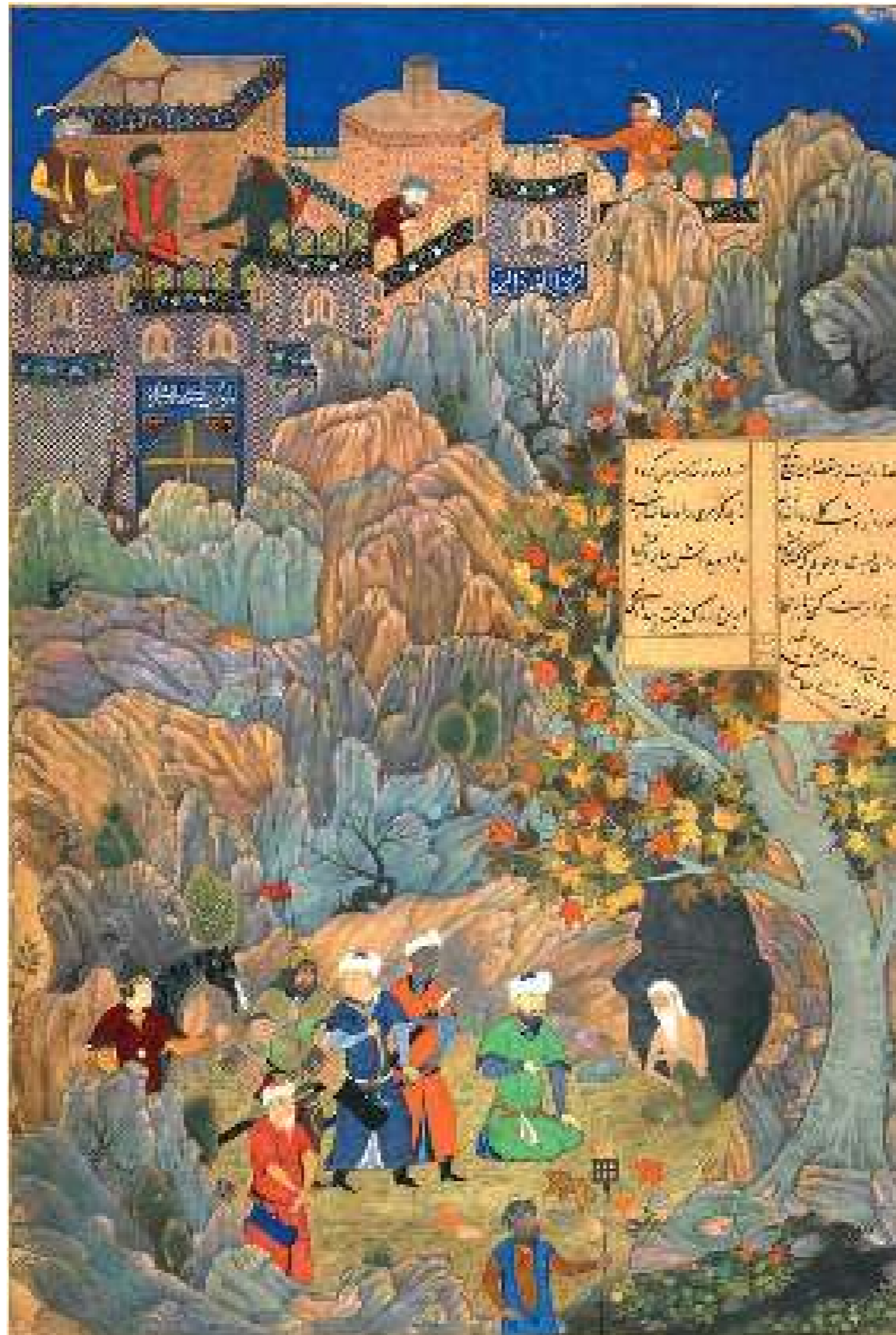
(Ascribed to Behzad)



f. 225v.

*Iskandar on the island near the Lion's Mouth whirlpool beating the wolf skin drum of the bronze talisman in order to still the waters.
(One of the figures in the boat is depicted in the likeness of Husayn Bayqara)*





f. 273r.

Iskandar (in the likeness of Husayn Bayqara) visiting the wise man in a cave.

(Ascribed to Behzad below, but to Qasim Ali in the text panel)



ff. 304r-303v.
Colophon and page with seals.

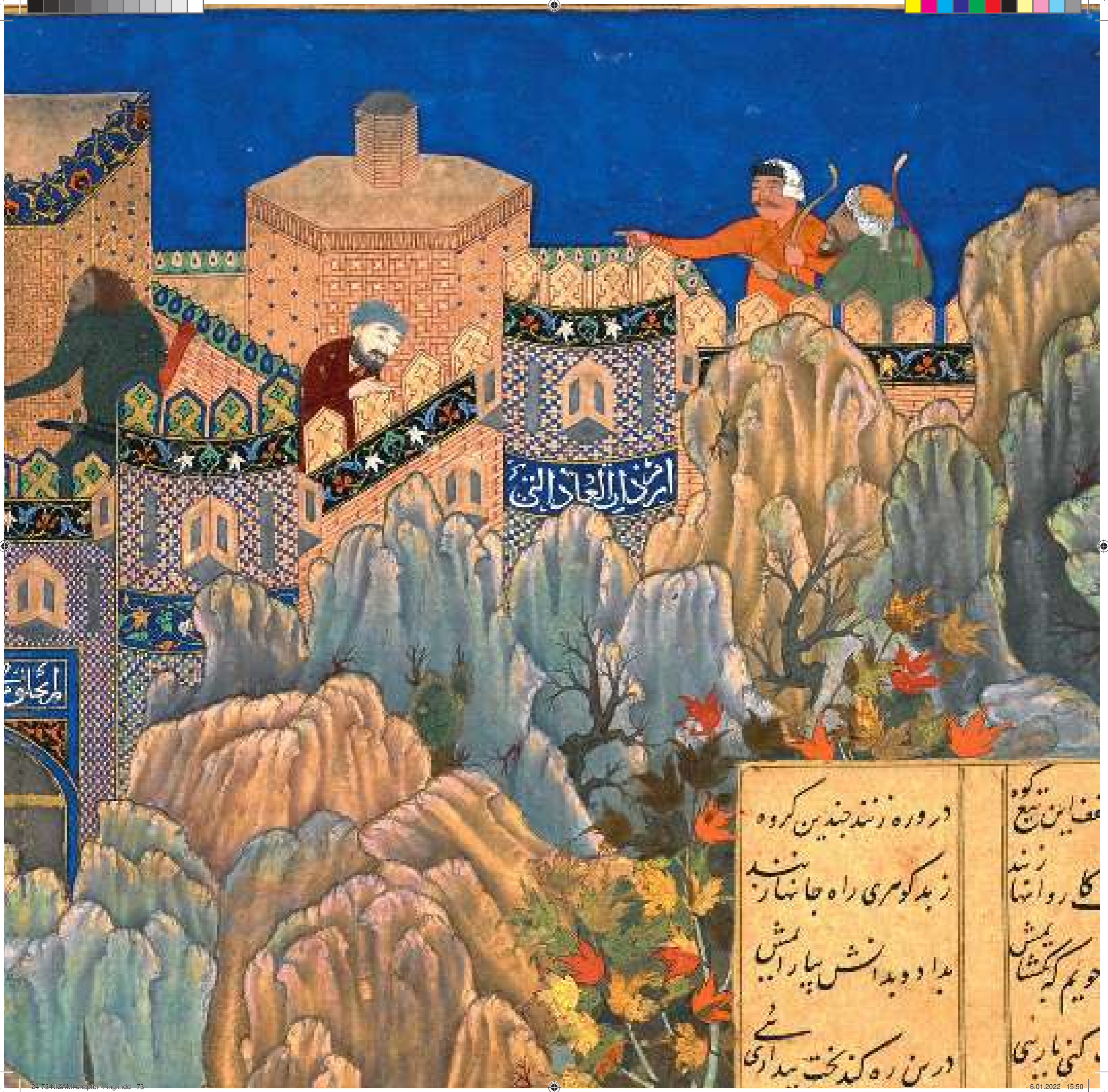
The illustrious period of Sultan Husayn came to a close with his death in AH 912/5 May 1506 CE and the capture of Herat by Shaybak Khan (or Muhammad Shaybani Khan) who ruled there until 1510. Few works of note seem to have been produced during Shaybak's rule. But after his death at the hands of the conquering Shah Ismayil Safavi there followed an artistic revival in Herat, particularly after the shah appointed Behzad head of all the artists in the land in about 1522. His son Prince Tahmasp governed Herat from AH 920/1514 CE to AH 928/1522 CE with help from his *laleh* (mentor) Qazi-i Jahan. As will be argued later, contrary to the earlier belief of modern scholars, Herat's artistic prowess continued after Tahmasp ascended to the throne and appointed his brother Prince Sam Mirza to the governorship. But in 1529, when the city was once again captured by the Uzbeks under Ubaydallah Khan, Behzad and most of the other artists in the *kitabkhana* moved to Tabriz and continued their work there.

During the late 15th century, the dynasty's cultural life was also affected by several other trends that had implications for the visual arts. Among the most important of these were a conscious affirmation of Timurid charisma by overt references to the founder of the dynasty, a resurgence of interest in Turkic values and literature, a taste for the intricate, a heightened awareness of the individual artist, an

almost compulsive tendency to borrow from past compositions, an emphasis on portraying everyday activities, and a fascination with Sufism.

To understand the relationship between Timurid art and its political and historical context, key historical texts have yet to be thoroughly examined, and more research is needed into certain periods. Knowledge of the arts under the Timurids remains cursory. The brief information given in this chapter is presented to encourage more precise examination of this remarkable dynasty and its extraordinary artistic achievements.





امیر خدای العالی

امیر خدای

در دوره زند بنام گروه	تغ این بیج
ز بد کوهی راه جانبار	کل روانها
بیا دو بدانش سپار	جویم که کشا
در سن ره کندخت بیداری	کنی باری



Chapter II

The *Khamasa* of Nizami: Tabriz Manuscripts

Having evolved over centuries while absorbing the traditions of the various oriental schools of figurative arts (e.g., the pre-Islamic Turkic and other cultures developing along the Great Silk Road: the ancient Indian cultures, branches of Buddhism, Chinese art schools, Manichean traditions, the Christian Nestorian and Jacobite teachings etc.) the Tabriz school flourished as a distinct trend in Islamic miniature painting.

The Tabriz school was founded in the 14th century (before Shiraz and Herat), building upon the Mongol Hulaguid traditions of the Ilkhanate, the ancient cultural traditions of Uighur artists, and the phenomenon of the *kitabkhana* that emerged at that time in Tabriz.

Further on, this school assimilated and transformed the achievements of 15th century Herat and the Tabriz-Baghdad Jalayirid era of the 16th century; the resulting Islamic style of miniature, unique and clearly distinguishable, became an established tradition.

There is no exaggeration in declaring that ideas generated by Tabriz *khitabkhanas* were disseminated throughout the Orient, with an influence and scale comparable to that of Renaissance artists in Europe.

The artistic legacy left by the Tabriz masters is without doubt of colossal significance, as is their contribution to global culture, which demands serious time and effort from those who study it.

Tabriz miniature art has proved to be the longest lasting and most influential of all the Orient's medieval schools that practised the art.

The enormous empires created by the Turkic and Mongol tribes collapsed around the time Tabriz miniatures were in their heyday, usually dated from the 14th–16th centuries. Genghis Khan's numerous descendants were consumed by distrust of each other and sought to consolidate their divisive individual authority by engaging the local nobility and drawing on the earlier achievements of science and culture, as well as the unifying role of Islam.

Particularly powerful was the state of the Ilkhanids, a dynasty founded by Hulagu, a grandson of Genghis Khan. The Ilkhanate included the whole of Central Asia. After adopting the title of Ilkhans (“rulers of nations”), these ‘savages’, as they were called by a Europe that feared them, managed to create an efficient multi-layered administration and tax system capable of maintaining a society of hugely diverse associations. They accumulated inconceivable volumes of wealth and contributed to the flourishing of art, literature and architecture.

One of the most talented members of the Hulaguid dynasty was Ilkhan Ghazan Khan (1271–1304), a brave commander and prudent ruler. Not only did he successfully wage wars and deal with rebellions against his authority, but also did much to strengthen the state and develop arts and crafts. It was during his reign that the world's first scientific and cultural centre, the *Rab-i Rashidi* complex, was built in the suburbs of the then capital Tabriz.

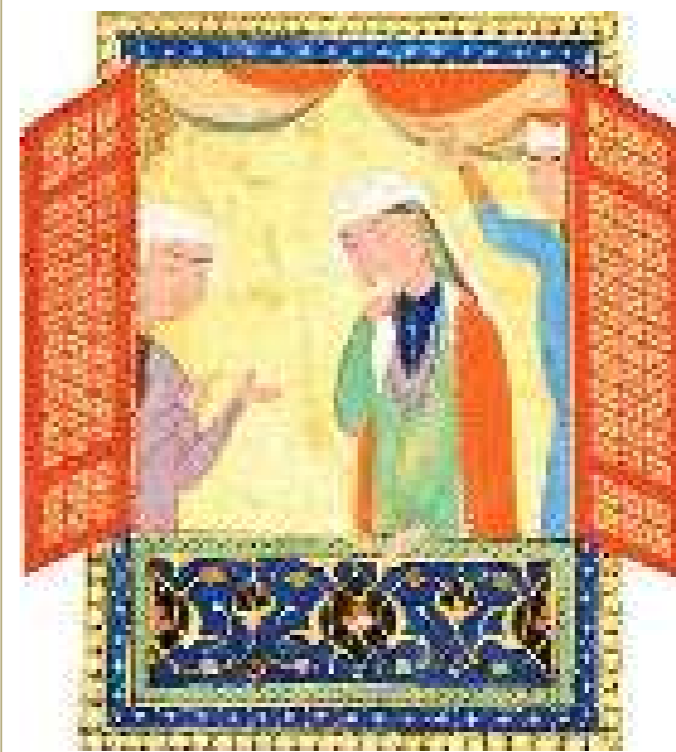
Its centre was a magnificent mausoleum *Shamb-i Ghazan*, which Ghazan Khan ordered for himself and was surrounded, among gardens and fountains, by a mosque, two madrasas, a hospital, a home for the elderly, two dozen caravanserais, workshops, a mill, a library, a document archive, an observatory and a *kitabkhana*.

Ghazan Khan's Grand Vizier Rashid al-Din wrote to his son: “We have established a street of scholars, in

which we freely housed 400 scholars, theologians and lawyers, as well as almost 1,000 students. We have invited scholars and physicians from every part of the world: India, China, Egypt, and Sham (Syria).”

Rashid al-Din Fadlullah's great work *Jami al-Tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) had an enormous influence on the development of studies of history. Originally conceived as a history of Turkic and Mongol tribes, the manuscript was subsequently supplemented by two more volumes, representing a general history and a geography of the world, respectively.

As we know from history, the vizier of three Hulaguids (Ghazan Khan, Oljaitu and Abu Said) Rashid al-Din Fadlullah, a generous philanthropist and patron of the arts and sciences, was accused by his detractors of poisoning Ilkhan Oljaitu. He was executed in 1318 and his property confiscated. But in 1327, convinced that the government was unable to control the situation in the state, the ruling Ilkhan Abu Said installed Rashid al-Din's son, Ghiyas al-Din, as vizier and charged him with ruling the state.





The new vizier, who inherited his father's brilliant talents and was a man of great culture and education, managed to quell his enemies by rejecting vengeance. A great supporter of the arts, he began to assemble scholars, philosophers and clergy around him, thereby restoring its erstwhile lustre to the *Rab-i Rashidi* scientific centre.

The 14th century Tabriz miniatures represent a phenomenon of trans-Turkic significance; they were created when the city was the centre for many a Turkic state. We can also trace the process by which this Turkic art was Islamized, pagan elements rejected, and new Islamic graphics developed. Its significance extends beyond state borders and represents the brightest example of Turkic fine arts. Representing a Turkic contribution to the history of Islam, it was the starting point for all oriental miniature painting.

The school's whole duration is imbued with an overpowering Turkic vision. The terms "Ilkhanate", "Timurid", or "Safavid" period do not alter the products of those three hundred years; the works of art speak for themselves and allude to the powerful Turkic factor that persisted until the end of the Classical period, that is, the mid-16th century.

We use chronicles to recreate the evolutionary path of a style that was forcibly relocated to other cities. Analysing the artistic life of Baghdad, Shiraz and Herat both before and after the appearance of Tabriz masters in these cities, we may conclude that the arts in the time they were active there represent a logical extension and development of the Tabriz school. Their works still represent the main principles of Tabriz style.

However, following the death of Abu Said, who had appreciated and protected Ghiyas al-Din, a familiar struggle for the throne ensued. Ghiyas al-Din was defamed and later executed in 1336, just as his father was; Rashid al-Din's beloved creation, the scientific complex *Rab-i Rashidi*, was again destroyed. And although the buildings in that Tabriz suburb existed for many more years and many travellers admired the splendour of their

architecture, it was now nothing more than a shell, beautiful yet empty. Ghiyas al-Din's death brought an end to the complex's 'golden age'.

Having lost its patron and leader, the Tabriz *kitabkhana* fell on hard times in the 14th century. The Ilkhanid dynasty was replaced later by the Jalayirids, who claimed descent from Jochi, eldest son of Genghis Khan. The change of rule, as was often the case in those challenging times, was accompanied by conspiracies, feuds and riots. Amazingly, however, the artists and calligraphers continued to work. Those working in the Tabriz workshop embodied such great creative potential that even a tiny 'warming' of the economic situation proved sufficient for them to bestow new creations upon the world.

The style was on the rise and reached its culmination from 1360–1370, during the reign of Shaykh Uvays and in the time of Shamsaddin, another Tabrizi artistic genius and author of miniatures for Istanbul albums.

Shaykh Uvays's son, Sultan Ahmed I Jalayir, who claimed the throne in 1382, was an unsuccessful politician but a brilliant intellectual and benefactor. During his reign, the Tabriz *kitabkhana* enjoyed a short but energetic period of renaissance. Distinguished by his excessive cruelty and treachery, Sultan Ahmed still managed to produce fine poetry. He appreciated the arts and took sincere pleasure in discussions with scientists and philosophers, offering help and protection to many intellectuals who had fled Timur's hordes. Among his friends were Abd al-Qadir al-Maraghi, a musician and music theorist, and the artist Abd al-Hayy, a student of the outstanding Tabriz master Shamsaddin. Sultan Ahmed respectfully referred to Abd al-Hayy as "teacher".

Davlatshah pointed out in his book *Tazkirat al-Shuara* ("A Memorial of Poets"): "The Sultan wrote poetry in Arabic and Farsi; his poems in Azerbaijani are also known. He used six different calligraphic styles and could engrave writings on stamps. He was well versed in music and composed tunes to be performed by mu-

sicians until the 1550s, i.e., for almost half a century afterwards. He was also a good artist”. It is therefore quite logical that the Sultan was fascinated by the idea of creating new illustrated manuscripts. Their high quality confirms the expert touch and energy of a superb organizer that this talented representative of the Jalayirids had inherited.

Some manuscripts produced at that time begin with the *Khamsa*, which signalled the beginning of a new, passionate, emotional and lyrical direction in miniature art, with the main stream being the poetry of Nizami Ganjavi. At the same time, other works were illustrated: poetry anthologies, *Kalila and Dimna* (a collection of didactic stories from the ancient Indian book *Panchatantra*, translated by Ibn al-Muqaffa), and Khwaju Kirmani’s poems *Humai and Humayun*, *Kamal-nama* (“Book of Perfection”) and *Rawzat al-Anwar* (“The Garden of Light”). But, unfortunately, very few of these masterpieces have reached our times, and all we have to help us understand the full extent of this loss to humanity are the recollections of contemporaries.

Tabriz style in the late Jalayirid era presents problems to a researcher. Presenting the terminal period of 14th century, Tabriz-style development, indicates a phase of consolidation of all preceding research. The school’s significance, however, was not simply about consolidation.

Artists of that time created works of an expressive capability that greatly surpassed everything produced before or after. A closer look at the historical processes within which Tabriz miniature painting recognises uninterrupted development, such achievements seem next to impossible. Tabriz masters of the late Jalayirid period deserve credit for setting the standard and giving momentum to the foundation of such later artistic centres as Timur’s palace workshops in Samarkand, Baysunghur’s academy in Herat, and Sultan Iskandar’s *kitabkhana* in Shiraz.

We do not have much information about late 14th century Tabriz, which is not at all surprising. The city was taken in 1384 by Timur, who relocated the local artists to his new capital, Samarkand (we can only imagine the magnificent paintings in Timur’s palaces as described by Ahmad ibn Arabshah), and thus laid low the cultural life of the Jalayirid capital.

The outflow of artists was practically constant; in its turn, it boosted an expansion of the style and its influence on their counterparts in Samarkand, Herat, and Shiraz.



The Khosrow and Shirin Manuscript of 1405–1410

Just as Nizami's *Khamsa* blazed the trail for an untold number of literary imitations, so the Sultan Ahmad Jalayir era marked the first illustrations of Nizami's work. This was a trend that persisted throughout the lifespan of miniature art. Since Nizami's *Khamsa* was, along with the *Shahnameh*, the work most often illustrated in the Muslim Orient, the miniatures in different productions of the *Khamsa* provide a detailed track of all stages of this fine art's evolution.

The *Khosrow and Shirin* miniatures held in the Freer Gallery (Washington, D.C.) are among the three most important copies of the *Khamsa* in the history of the Tabriz style; in fact, they are the most important. This manuscript dated 1405–1410 is followed by one dated to the late 15th or early 16th century, the so-called Yaqub Bey Aghqoyunlu *Khamsa*. And third is the most magnificent manuscript of the Safavid period (1539–1543) in the British Library (London).

The second work represents the evolution of the late 15th century school which resumed after a long pause prompted by the fall of the Jalayirid dynasty; the third work represents its peak of development during the Safavid period. The first work, however, is important for its absorption of much artistic research in the school's most complex and discordant period, and its striving for a new art of a time to come.

From a stylistic standpoint, the Washington manuscript is nothing like the miniatures in the 1386–1388 *Khamsa* (Or.13297, British Library) created in Baghdad, but there is no doubt at all that the selection of plots and

iconography for its illustrations was already complete by 1386. At a later stage, it was mandatory to illustrate plots including *Nushirvan and the vizier listening to the owls in the ruined village*; *Sultan Sanjar and the old woman*; *Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing*; *Khosrow before Shirin's castle*; *Khosrow killing a lion with his fist outside Shirin's tent* etc.

First published by Mehmet (Muhammad) Ağa oğlu in 1937, the miniatures in the Freer Gallery manuscript have not been dated exactly, but their prominent stylistic features leave no doubt that they were created in Tabriz in the first decade of the 15th century.

Sultan Ahmad Jalayir (1382–1410) more than once lost and regained his two capitals, Tabriz and Baghdad. Researchers have suggested that he ordered the manuscript during his last stay in Tabriz, not long before he was assassinated. This hypothesis has persisted over decades and has never been disproved.

It was suggested back in 1933, before this manuscript was known, that the Tabriz workshops might have worked during the last years (1405–1410) of Sultan Ahmad's reign; the style practised in Baghdad must also have been current in Tabriz.



f. 32.
The sculptor Farhad brought before Shirin.

Acc. no F1931.
Khosrow and Shirin by Nizami.
Smithsonian Institution.
The Freer Gallery of Art.
Calligrapher: Ali ibn Hasan al-Sultani.
Date: Jalayirid dynasty, ca. 1400.
Place: Tabriz.

The calligrapher's name, Mir Ali ibn Hasan al-Sultani, indicates his affiliation to Sultan Ahmad's *kitabkhana*. The artist Junaid Naqqash as-Sultani (illustrator of Kirmani's works) and the copyist of the 1386–1388 *Khamsa*, Mahmoud ibn Muhammad as-Sultani, had a similar *nisba* (the last part of a name indicating the person's origin or affiliation). After a close comparison of the script in Washington of *Khosrow and Shirin* with that of the outstanding calligrapher Mir Ali ibn Ilyas al-Tabrizi, a copyist of Kirmani's poems (Add.MS.18113., *Kulliyate Khwaju Kirmani*. 1396.) and credited with inventing the *nasta'liq* script, M. Ağa oğlu suggested that they were by the same person.

The manuscript is decorated with five miniatures, each representing a sample of pre-formed iconographic tradition and a particular outcome of stylistic evolution. This is proof of an uninterrupted artistic tradition and the maintenance of a continuously high standard of mastery. Assessing the role and place of the Freer Gallery *Khosrow and Shirin* miniatures, secure in the context of their era, M. Ağa oğlu rightly concluded: "... it will be of importance in showing the existence of a style of painting in Tabriz that constitutes an advance in some respects over the existing works of the Shiraz and Baghdad schools of the late fourteenth century and a direct anticipation of the school of Herat of the first half of the fifteenth century. This fact has been suggested by various authorities, but it has never been demonstrated by a definite example."

The finder was backed, a long time later, by Ivan Stchoukine. Hailing the miniatures as “the first brilliant piece of the 15th century”, Stchoukine compared them with the rather more average products of late Jalayirid Baghdad workshops and concluded that “despite a similarity of types and individual images, both landscape- and architecture-wise, as well as types of compositional uniformity, the Tabriz miniatures differ in enjoying a higher technical completion... The drawing is now finer, the lines more elegant and features more exquisite. Architectural decorations retain features of the past, but add details like the extravaganza of colours that buildings had so badly lacked... The artists had learned to group their characters with greater mastery...”

Some researchers identify two or even three artists in the miniatures, and separate them into groups. Although, in fact, artists would traditionally draw miniatures as a team, as can be understood from the 1427 report by Jafar Tabrizi, head of Baysunghur’s *kitabkhana* (Istanbul, TPL, H.2152., f. 98a).

There is great interest in reviewing the volumetric and spatial composition of a work, as well as its figurative and colour solution; it is also worth examining the work of the *tarrakh*, the producer of a preliminary sketch or compositional design (known as *tarkh*). The volumetric and figurative solutions in at least four of the five miniatures (save the hunting scene), although different in terms of both iconography and plot, still display a uniformity of spatial and compositional methods. Most importantly, this may



f. 34.

Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing.



f. 35.

Shirin visits the sculptor Farhad on Mount Bisitun.

be seen as a logical succession of long processes and a true evolution, style-wise, achieved by the Tabriz *kitabkhana*. It is in this very period that the best compositional schemes and artistic techniques developed back in the Ilkhanid and Jalayirid workshops assume their final shape and inviolability of canon.

The first miniature in the manuscript is *Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing*. Here we see, in all its brilliance, a new type of landscape; being so important to Tabriz-style reconstruction of a verbal image, this time it is neither heroic, as in Demotte's *Shahnameh*, nor surgically precise, as in Kirmani's. It is completely new, lyrical and gentle. Another discovery in this same miniature is the use of colour to mould shape and create perspective.

All five miniatures in the manuscript illustrate the plots that subsequently became the most widely produced scenes from the poem, but this particular episode boasts the largest number of illustrations.

The second miniature is *Khosrow and Shirin hunting*. This theme was also repeated extensively.

The third miniature is *Shapur introduces Farhad to Shirin*.

While in the previous miniature the artist used landscape features to resolve spatial problems, here he achieved a successful resolution with an interior palace setting.

That landscape was one of the Tabriz artist's main tools in the creation of a picture is self-evident. This is confirmed in the miniature *Shirin visits Farhad in the mountains*.



Just like the preceding miniatures, the fifth and the last one, *Khosrow before Shirin's castle*, draws upon solid iconographic traditions. We can consider the miniature *Humay arrives at the gate of Humayun's castle* (Add. MS.18113., British Library. *Kulliyate Khwaju Kirmani*. 1396) to be its direct predecessor, but they both create a perception of an earlier, solid iconographic framework.

Our attention is drawn to an interesting element on the left of the composition: projecting sideways to the marginal space, a young tree is depicted to the left of the castle and against the background of a bright daytime sky. This is the first known example of two different times of day being combined in a single scene. It was subsequently applied, with success, in two early 16th century Tabriz paintings, *Khosrow before Shirin's castle* and *Shirin commits suicide*. Both miniatures are in the Keir Collection (Dallas Museum of Art).

We have taken the liberty of comparing miniatures that represent different plots; in doing so, we dwell on compositional similarity, as certain compositional schemes would migrate freely from one manuscript to another with only a change of title. This is not the only miniature to undergo such a transformation: *Sultan Sanjar and the old woman* becomes “*Malik Shah and the old woman*”, *Shapur shows Khosrow's portrait to Shirin* becomes *Queen Nushaba recognizes Iskandar from his portrait*. Not to mention the large-scale battles and fights of *Shahnameh* heroes like Faridun, Rostam, Bahram Gur, Isfandiyar and Iskandar.

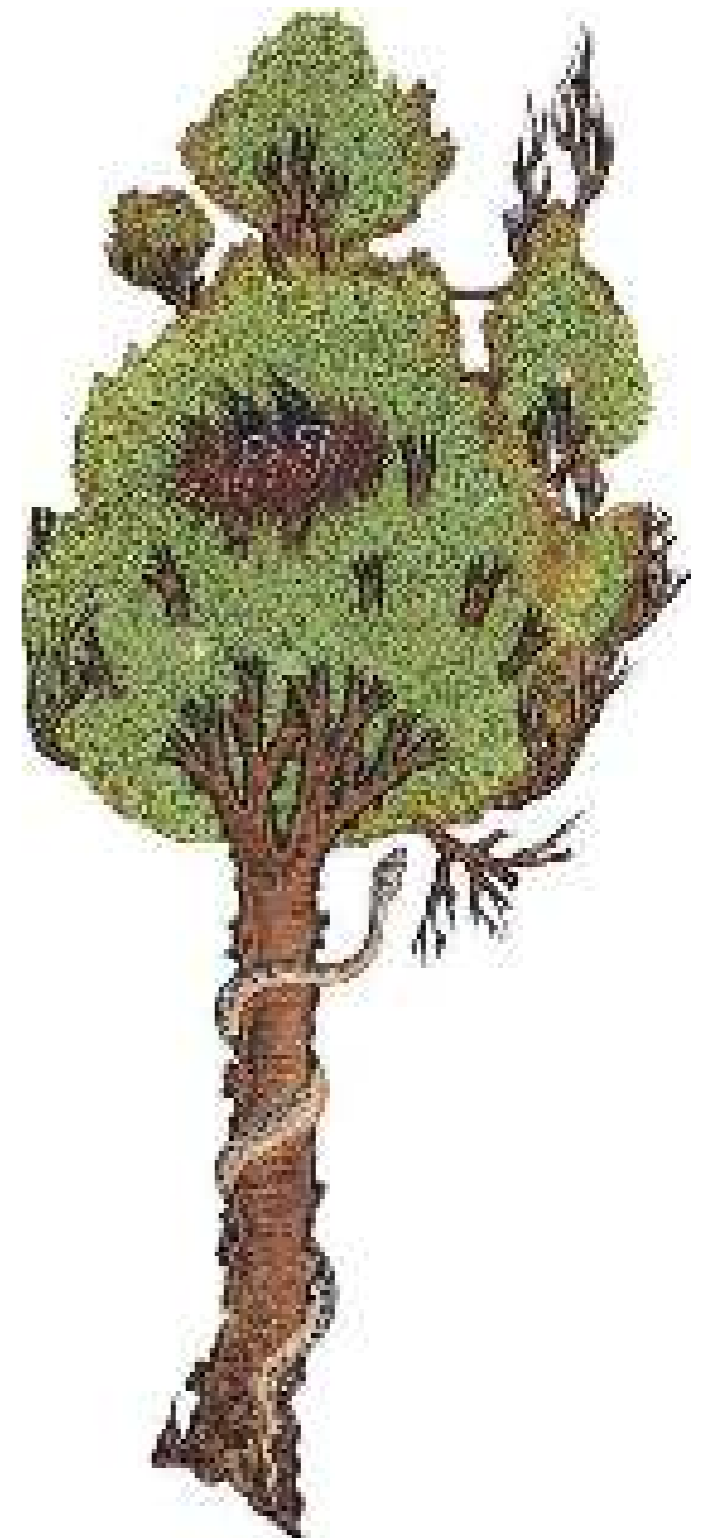
Summarizing many an achievement of the previous century, the miniatures in *Khosrow and Shirin* (1405–1410) paved the way to the new trend. Taking the lead in the 15th century, the manuscript encompassed lyrical miniatures, full of human passion and emotion, and had already established the primacy of Nizami's poems.

It was in the year 1410 that the Tabriz school was halted in its tracks: the death of Sultan Ahmed resulted in craftsmen leaving for the vast reaches of the Timurid empire, moving from one city to another... However,

when the Qaraqoyunlu dynasty came to power, Tabriz once more became the capital of a powerful state. Local workshops immediately resumed their work and new masterpieces appeared, representing both the continuation and development of Tabriz school traditions.

In 1414, after the execution of the Timurid Iskandar Sultan, craftsmen from Sultan Ahmad Jalayir's workshop ran to seek the protection of his relative Baysunghur Mirza, governor of Herat. Together with other artists who were relocated by Baysunghur from Tabriz after his invasion of the city in 1420, these artisans enabled him to establish his own school that was thereafter known as “Baysunghur's Academy”.

After Shahrukh's death in 1447, the artists were subjects of his son Ulugh Beg, but his protection died with him in 1449. Jahan Shah Qaraqoyunlu, who held Herat for several months, and then Uzun Hasan Aghqoyunlu returned (in 1458 and 1470, respectively) many Tabriz artists to their home. Herat fell once again into the hands of Sultan Husayn Bayqara around that time and this led to a parting of the ways for the Herat and Tabriz schools.





f. 36.
Khosrow before Shirin's castle.

The Yaqub Bey Aghqoyunlu *Khamsa* Manuscript

It is a quite surprising fact that writings on the history of miniature art provide no account of works created during the rule of the Qaraqoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu dynasties. The most powerful state rulers in the interval from the death of Shahrukh to the rise of the Safavids were, however, from those tribes. Some of them, especially Pir Budaq and Yaqub bey, were known to literary sources as patrons of literature and art.

Following a long interruption, due to the forced relocation of Tabriz masters to the Timurid capital Herat, Tabriz revived by the end of the 15th century as a centre of art under Sultan Yaqub Aghqoyunlu. This coincided with the creation of the celebrated Nizami *Khamsa* manuscript (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, H.762) of the last decades of the 15th century. This is abundantly illustrated with scenes featuring numerous details of everyday life, among them miniatures depicting Bahram Gur's visits to the domes of the Seven Beauties. Particularly appealing are those picturing Bahram Gur in the Red, Yellow, Green and Sandalwood Domes, in which magnificent palaces adorned with ceramic





ff. 82r-81v.

The Great Hunting Party of Uzun Hasan Aghqoyunlu.
Double-page painting on facing folios, pasted onto a manuscript.

Dorn 434. Silsilat al-Zahhab.
Abd ar-Rahman Jami.
National Library of Russia.
Place: Tabriz.
Date: between 1467 and 1473.

tiling, carpets and other luxuries rise against a backdrop of gorgeous scenery.

Less famous than its Herat and Shiraz counterparts, the 15th century Tabriz school also experienced an upsurge in artistry. This is clearly evidenced by the H.762 *Khamsa* manuscript miniatures completed in Tabriz in AH 886/1481 CE. These illustrations are of particular interest to us as they provide a better, though still incomplete, idea of the arts during the reign of Sultan Yaqub Aghqoyunlu, a famed patron of such works. They offer rare evidence of the origins of a new Safavid school in Tabriz, as the later illustrations were produced in the 1510s for Shah Ismayil I.

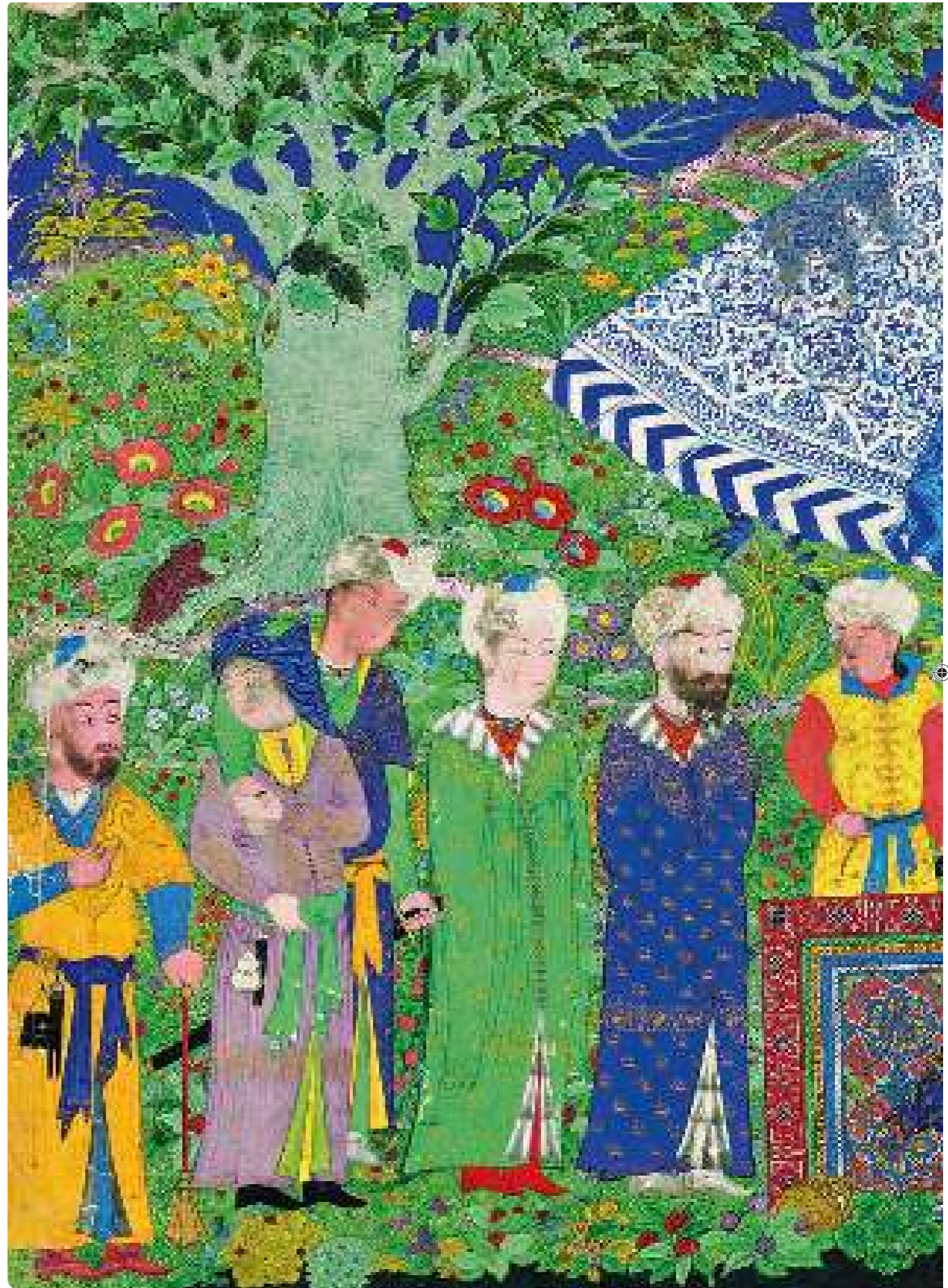
The *Khamsa* paintings and illuminations demonstrate the close relationship between Qaraqoyunlu, Aghqoyunlu and Timurid artistic expression. The movement of artists between the east and west of the state during this time further entrenched the Timurid aesthetic with the Qaraqoyunlu and Aghqoyunlu Turkomans, creating a situation in which artists like the great calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi could work on both Timurid and Turkoman manuscripts.

The 1481 *Khamsa* manuscript represents the pinnacle of Aghqoyunlu palace style. It far surpasses the manuscripts produced in the final decade of Aghqoyunlu rule.

The miniatures of the Yaqub Bey period can be attributed (style-wise) to Shaykhi and Darwish Muhammad, although there are very few details that point to a Chinese trend. These miniatures are elaborate and richly colourful, and the extravagant and lush landscape is typical of 'Yaqub Bey style', as seen in the images in several miniatures depicting Bahram Gur's visits to the domes of the seven beauties.

This is particularly so in the miniature *Bahram Gur visiting the Green Dome*, in which the young man is leaning over books and a calligrapher's tools; one of his handmaidens is reading verses aloud while another massages his legs.

The miniatures of Yaqub Bey's *Khamsa* appear as a fabulous revival of the best Tabriz artefacts of the late 14th century, as if almost a century's interruption, decades of instability and a multitude of patrons of varying aesthetic tastes had not intervened. Inherited memory can indeed work miracles. Nearly all the miniatures in these manuscripts, both the late 15th century and the later, Safavid-era ones, are a hymn to a nature that relegates plot to the sidelines. Thus, the cycle in which Bahram visits the seven beauties' domes is transformed from monotonous interiors into page-wide scenes with enchanting and panoramic landscapes. The same can be said of other miniatures, including *Farhad carries Shirin and her horse, Iskandar and the shepherd* etc.





H.2153.
*Fatih's Album of Drawings/
Sultan Ya'qub Aghqoyunlu's Album.
Topkapı Palace Museum Library.*

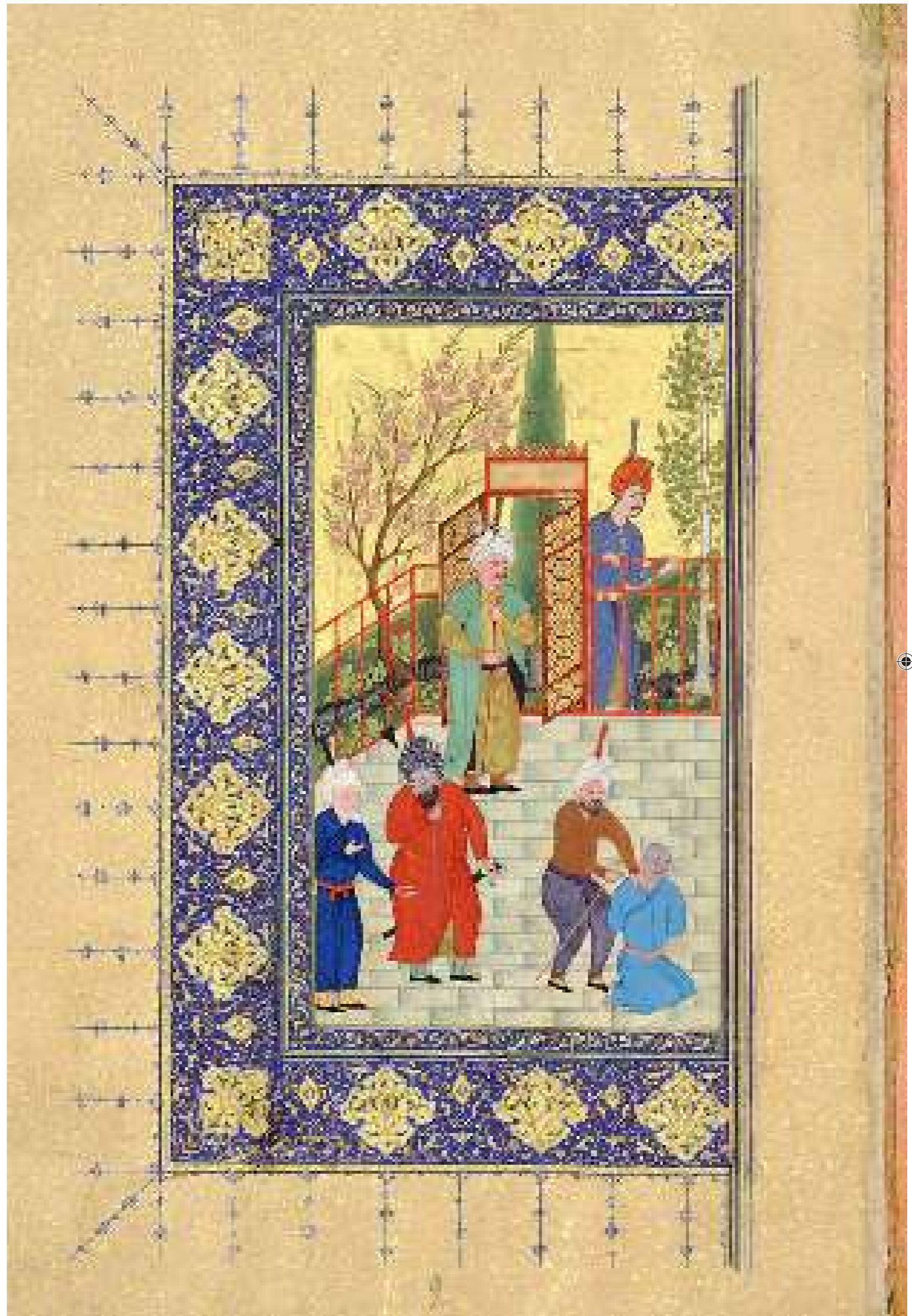
ff. 91a-90b.
Ya'qub bey Aghqoyunlu with his courtiers.

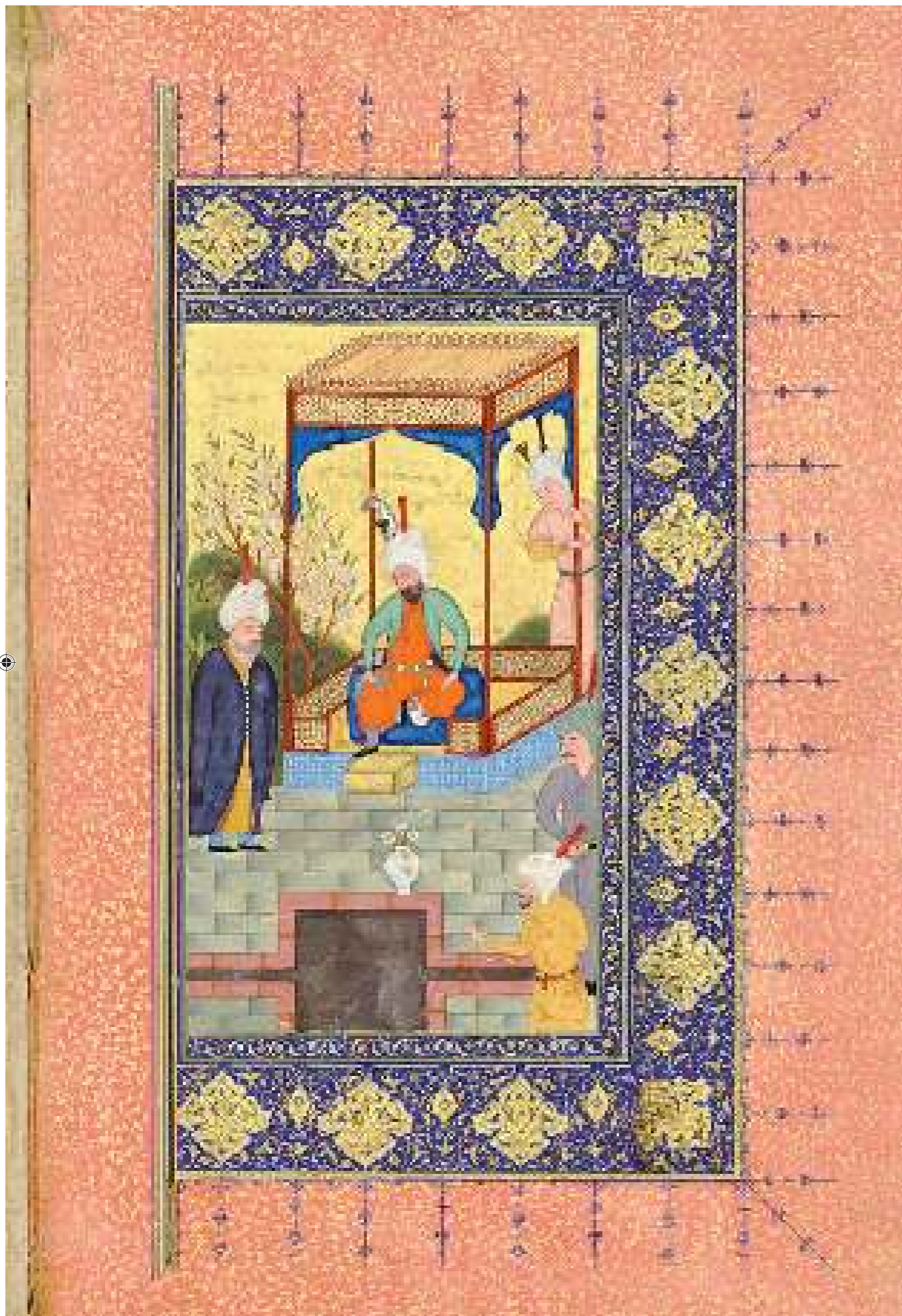


Folio 316 is a colophon and folios 316b-317 contain a richly decorated 'Afterword' added early in the reign of Shah Ismayil I and relating the story of the creation of this luxurious *Khamsa*. It is written in fulsome and eulogising style. Reducing it to its basic content, we learn the following: Babur Mirza ibn Baysunghur ibn Shahrukh ibn Timur once said that he wanted to obtain a copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami. He ordered the work from the famous calligrapher Mawlana Azkhar (Zahir ad-Din Azkhar Tabrizi, d. AH 880/1475–1476 CE), but he died (AH 861/1456–1457 CE) before the book was completed.

Later, the book fell into the hands of Budak Mirza (Pir Budak ibn Jahan Shah) Qaraqoyunlu, who wanted it completed, but he too soon perished (executed by his father in 1465).

Later still, the manuscript aroused the interest of Sultan Khalil ibn Sultan Hasan (son of Uzun Hasan). He had the famous calligrapher Mawlana Anisi (the penname of Abdul-Rahim al-Khorazmi) complete it. Illustration was contracted to the 'second Mani', *Ustad Shaykhi*, as well as to *Ustad Darwish Muhammad*. Sultan Khalil, however, also failed to live to see the book's completion; being assassinated six months into his reign, in AH 882/1478 CE by henchmen of his brother Yaqub, who thereby inherited the throne and ruled in Tabriz between AH 883 and 896/1478–1490 CE. Yaqub set about work on the book with great enthusiasm, but he too expired before its completion. And it was only during the reign of Shah Ismayil I, 'the Shadow of Allah', 'Abode of the Universe', that this vast project was finally completed to his personal request. (Some of the miniatures, however, remained incomplete).





*Dorn 441. Guy u Chawgan.
Mahmud Arifi.
National Library of Russia.*

*ff. 2r-1v.
The trial of a failed nobleman.
The right page of a diptych: Portrait of Shah Ismayil on his throne.
A manuscript copied by the young Shah Tahmasp in the Tabriz kitabkhana
ca.1524–1525 AD.
Artist: Sultan Muhammad.*



*H.762. The Yaqub Bey Aghqoyunlu Khamsa.
Topkapi Palace Museum Library.*

As a child, Shah Ismayil had survived an assassination attempt and he spent the rest of his youth under the protection of various supporters in and around Gilan.

One of the most notable of these supporters was the local lord of Lahijan, Karkiya Ali Mirza, and another was Amir Najm, a jeweller from Rasht. The fact that two important illustrated books from the late 15th and early 16th centuries were completed while Shah Ismayil was under the protection of these two individuals suggests that they cultivated his appreciation of art.

The name Ali Mirza is mentioned in an inscription within an illuminated medallion at the beginning of a copy of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* dated 899/1494, the two volumes of which are in different libraries in Istanbul. The dedication commences with the words, "This book (was produced for him) by order of the treasury of Sultan Ali Mirza". The name Karkiya does not appear in this inscription. The miniatures in this manuscript have not all been published, nor studied in detail, but researchers attribute them to the Aghqoyunlu tradition, and assert that the Ali Mirza mentioned here is Karkiya Ali Mirza, ruler of Gilan.



Front cover, interior.



ff. 6r-5v.
Illuminated double-pages.

*The Yaqub Bey
Aghqoyunlu Khamsa.
Dallas Art Museum,
Keir Collection.*



*f. 737.
Mi'raj.*

A miraculous journey that Prophet Muhammad took in one night from Mecca to Jerusalem and then his ascension to the heavens.



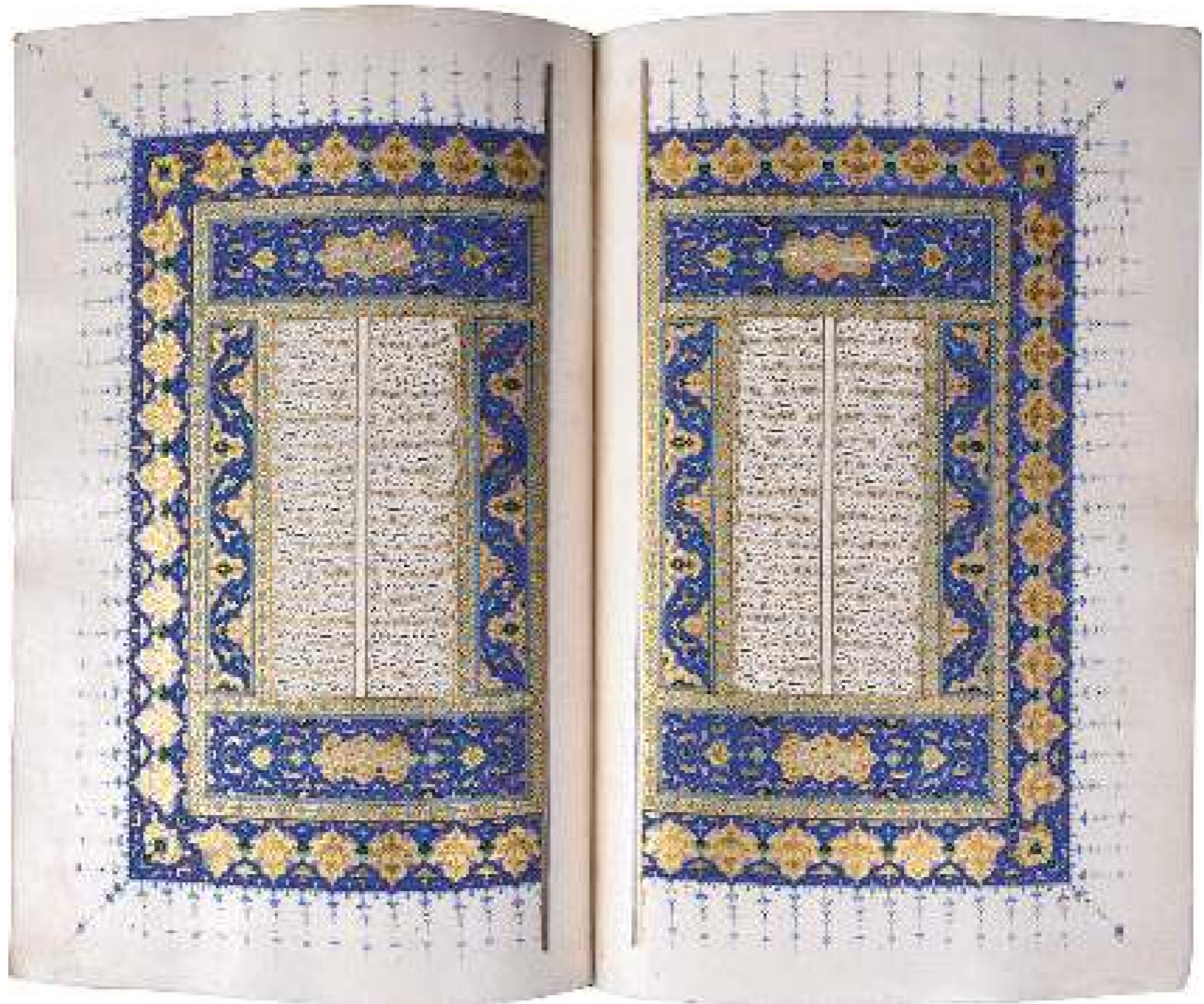
f. 15.
Sultan Sanjar and the old woman.

H.762. The Yaqub Bey Aghqoyunlu Khamsa.
Topkapı Palace Museum Library.

Another miniature-illustrated copy of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* was produced in AH 900–901/1495–1496 CE for Karkiya Sultan Ahmad, suggesting that the Karkiya family had an interest in decorated books and possessed a significant library.

Amir Najm al-Din Mas'ud Zargar Rashti is the other person thought to have influenced Shah Ismayil's taste in the arts of the book. A man of noble birth, he worked as a jeweller in the city of Rasht and took a close interest in Shah Ismayil when he was living in the city in 1494. From 1500–1501 he accompanied Shah Ismayil on his successful campaign to conquer Shirvan, and 1508 was appointed his chief minister with the title *Amir al-Umara'* or *Amir al-qabir*. A document at the end of an exquisite copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami (H.762) and inscriptions on the binding suggest that Amir Najm al-Din was a patron of the book arts.

The central medallion of H.762's frontal flap contains an inscription reading, "Najm al-Din banda-i dargahi-i shahi" ("Najm al-Din, servant at the gate of the Shah") and a third medallion contains an inscription in praise of the poet Nizami: "Name-Nizami be suhan taze bad!" ("By this poem, the name of Nizami will be renewed" - from his poem *Treasury of Secrets*). The words *Amir al-qabir*, *najm* and *mas'ud* in the Arabic inscription, and the name *Najm al-Din* in the Persian inscription suggest that the person referred to is Najm al-Din Mas'ud Zargar Rashti, Shah Ismayil's minister. The gilding on the binding is of such beautiful craftsmanship that there can be no doubt it is the work of a goldsmith; and this goldsmith must be Najm al-Din of Rasht. In that case, we may conclude that the manuscript was renovated between 1505 and 1508 in Tabriz under the patronage of Shah Ismayil's *amir* Najm al-Din, and that the binding was completed from 1508–1510, the years when he held the post of *Amir al-Umara'*.



ff. 30r-29v.
Illuminated double-pages.



f. 43.

Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing.

The bookbinding is of black Morocco leather with cover strips of embossed leather; animals, trees and small figures of hunters wearing Qizilbash turbans are depicted against a golden background. Inner parts of the binding are a mosaic in blue and black leather.

Apart from the ‘Afterword’, some information can be retrieved from the manuscript itself. Its history is as follows: the manuscript was copied by Abdul-Rahim al-Khorazmi al-Sultani al-Yaqubi (f.148 & f.316), the final part of the name signifying that the calligrapher served Yaqub Bey ibn Uzun Hasan, ruler of Tabriz. The text was mainly copied (but not completely illustrated) during Aghqoyunlu rule.

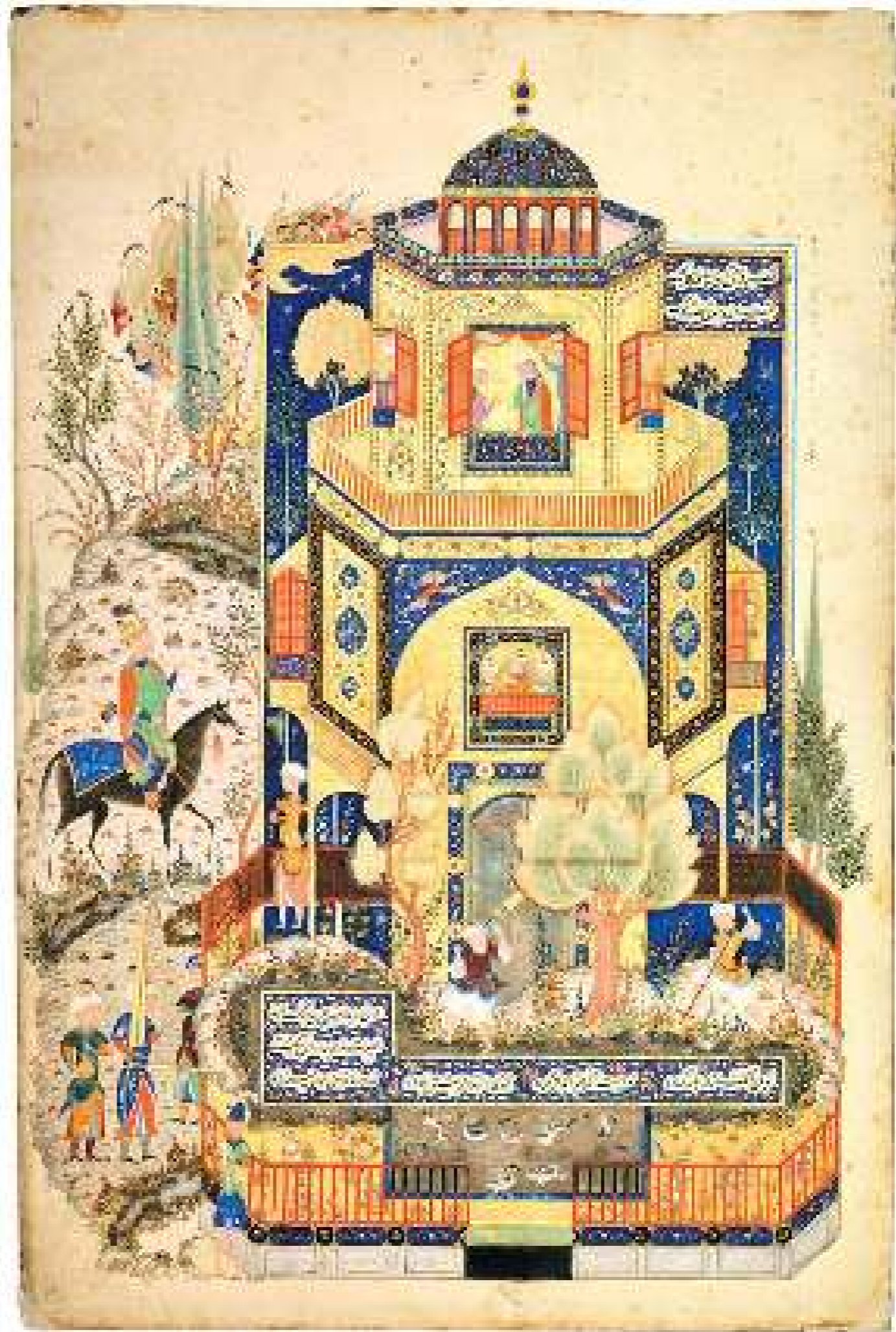
We find no information about the manuscript’s artists in its colophons (f.316 & f.148), but the calligrapher’s name is there. The ‘Afterword’, however, does say (f.316b & f.317) that Sultan Khalil ibn Uzun Hasan had Shaykhi and Darwish Muhammad illustrate the book. The first of these, a native of Kerman, was mentioned by Sam Mirza, and the second, a student of Mansur, taught art to Haydar Mirza. No works signed by them are available today.

Folio 1 bears the *waqf* seal of Sultan Selim Khan. The manuscript has unusually rich and exquisite ornamental decoration. There are decorative double pages on folios: 1b-2, 25b-26, 149b-150; and six richly decorated *unvans* (headings). Of particular interest is the *unvan* on folio 100b with branches capped with human and animal heads (the “Wag Wag” tree motif), which frame the title of the poem *Leyli and Majnun*.

In taking over Tabriz, Shah Ismayil also acquired its library, with newly arriving masters joining the incumbent workforce. Nine more miniatures were added to the existing ten, but still the illustration process was not complete. This can be inferred from the lack of miniatures to the poem *Leyli and Majnun* and two sketch illustrations on folios 69 and 82b. Many a researcher attributes the best early 16th century miniatures to the young Sultan Muhammad, thereby evidencing his almost fifty-year evolution into artist greatness.

Analysing the miniatures in H.762, we should note that not all of them are contemporaries of the text. They were drafted over several decades; only 10 of them (folios: 51b, 69, 82b, 163b, 167, 171b, 177b, 180b, 183, 187) can be dated back to the late 15th century when the Aghqoyunlu ruled. The rest (folios: 12, 38b, 46, 89b, 192, 196, 233, 285) were added early in the 16th century, just after the Safavid dynasty's accession to power. This is evidenced by both the style of illustration and headwear; Qizilbash turbans were introduced in AH 907/1501–1502 CE. They were created by Shah Ismayil's father, Shaykh Haydar, and Aghqoyunlu rulers banned them. When Shah Ismayil took power, his subjects rushed to wear the *Taj-e Haydari* as a pledge of loyalty to the new ruler. They were quite popular throughout the first half of the 16th century, before gradually falling out of fashion. We can therefore date the illustrations back to the first decade of the 16th century.

Apart from the differences seen in different periods of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, there are stylistic variations within each individual group. Thus, miniatures depicting Bahram visiting the black (f.171b), red (f. 183b), and blue (f.187) domes differ from the other seven in the first group. They are inferior in skill, exhibiting awkward construction and less harmony in the palette.



f.738.

Khosrow before Shirin's castle.



H.762. The Yaqub Bey Aghqoyunlu Khamsa.
Topkapı Palace Museum Library.

f. 50.
Khosrow killing a lion with his fist.



f. 57.

The battle between Khosrow and Bahram Chubineh.



f. 74.

Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.

The second group is also not stylistically uniform. The first group includes *Sultan Sanjar and the old woman* (f.12), *Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing* (f.38b), *Khosrow killing a lion with his fist* (f.46), *The wedding of Khosrow and Shirin* (f.89), *The dying Darius* (f.233), i.e., five miniatures. But the second subgroup consists of four miniatures: *Bahram in the Sandalwood Dome* (f.192), *Bahram in the White Dome* (f.196), *Nushaba recognizes Iskandar* (f.244), and *Iskandar talks to the shepherd* (f.286). The main difference is in the compositional structure of each subgroup. In the first five miniatures, their plot develops within the text columns, which represent the key structural element. This results in their composition being constrained by those columns and thus extending into the margins. In the other four, the images are strictly constrained within frames. These frames withstand the pressure of the abundant compositional detail and prevent the image from extending into the margins. Here the text has a supporting role.

Thus, we may suggest that the manuscript was illustrated by four different artists, although this contradicts the assertion in the 'Afterword' that illustration was the work of only two artists, Shaykhi and Darwish Muhammad. These two possibilities are, in fact, not necessarily mutually exclusive, as it was quite usual for students of leading artists to be involved. Still, it is difficult to attribute these miniatures, as the master artists left no signed works. On the other hand, we may attribute the first group (of seven miniatures) to Shaykhi's hand and the other three to his assistant. In the second group, five miniatures can be attributed to Darwish Muhammad and the other four to his assistant.

The earlier miniatures were apparently completed by Shaykhi, the elder of the two, and the later (more innovative) ones by Darwish Muhammad.

Art history literature has much less to say about the other three miniatures in this *Khamsa* manuscript. These are in the Keir Collection (Dallas Museum of Art): *Khosrow before Shirin's castle* (late 15th century), *Shirin commits suicide* (1st decade of the 16th century), and *Mi'raj* (1st decade of the 16th century).

They are yet further confirmation of the best of Tabriz painting being retained by the Tabriz *kitabkhana* until almost the mid-16th century (1548). This fact is indisputably proved by Safavid era works. The late 15th century miniature *Khosrow before Shirin's castle* is largely inspired by its namesake, the early 15th century miniature in the Washington manuscript. This can be derived from the typically Tabriz depiction of two different times of day in a single composition and the broad use of empty space in the margins. It is not our specific task to review those masterpieces, so they await their researchers.

We see how drastically these miniatures differ from other more worldly artefacts from Behzad's school. These latter display mathematically precise proportions in their buildings; their heroes remain nonplussed in the strangest situations; the pictures are drawn in smooth enamel colours, producing a tranquil harmony. But even the strong school in Behzad's workshop could not deprive the Tabriz miniature of its uniqueness, influence its style, or have a significant impact on its future. Even Behzad's physical presence (from 1522 onwards) in the workshops of Shah Ismayil I and then Shah Tahmasp I, could not divert the current of development, as proved by the miniatures in the Houghton *Shahnameh*. Signifying the end of classical minia-



f. 90.

Unfinished miniature painting.



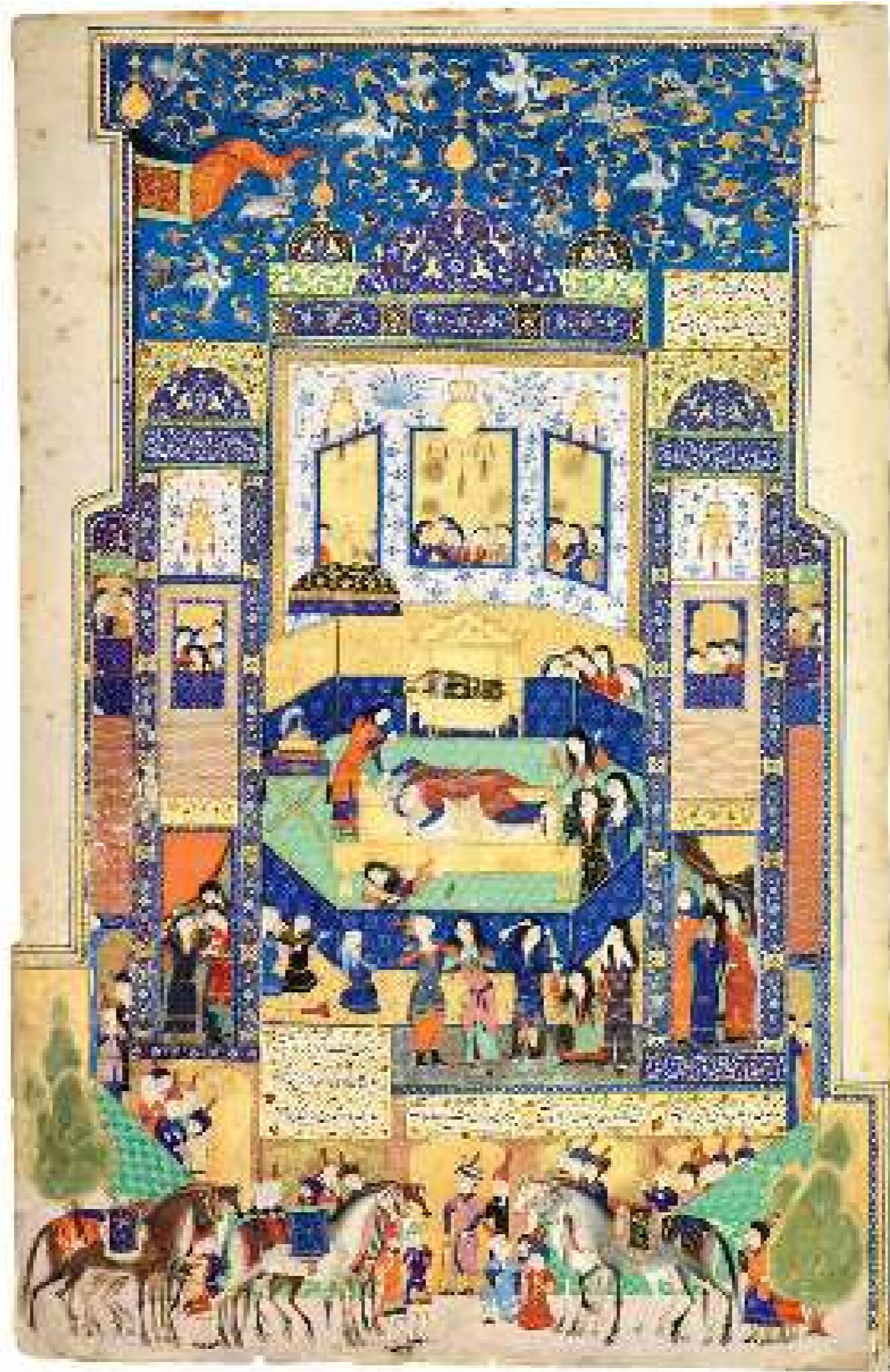
f. 97.

Khosrow and Shirin in their bridal chamber.

ture painting, this final peak for Tabriz fine arts in the first half of the 16th century produced works as beautiful as any from early 14th century Tabriz, at the origins of classical Middle Eastern miniature. Profoundly unique and stylistically integral, these two periods represent a consistent artistic phenomenon lasting from the 14th century to the mid-16th century, by a twist of fate marking the beginning and the end of the outstanding oriental art of miniature painting.

Tabriz masters under Shah Ismayil I and Shah Tahmasp would bring the Safavid school to a pinnacle of development, a peak it would never reach again. In truth, they were somewhat influenced by Behzad and his students, with their work melded into local traditions from 1520s. The miniatures in Yaqub Bey's *Khamsa*, however, completely disprove the view that Behzad was a governing factor; they are clear evidence of a stylish, yet ancient, tradition that followed the principles of a school formed early in the 14th century. This unique work demonstrates the artistic succession from Aghqoyunlu to Safavid.

“But we should not play down the importance of the foundation,” writes Stchoukine, “which is one hundred percent local (native). The numerous Safavid miniatures, combined in the manuscript with those from the Aghqoyunlu period, enable us to draw a correct idea of art in the Shah's Tabriz *kitabkhana* before the arrival of the Herati artist - a unique and original style”, he concluded from his study of the manuscript.



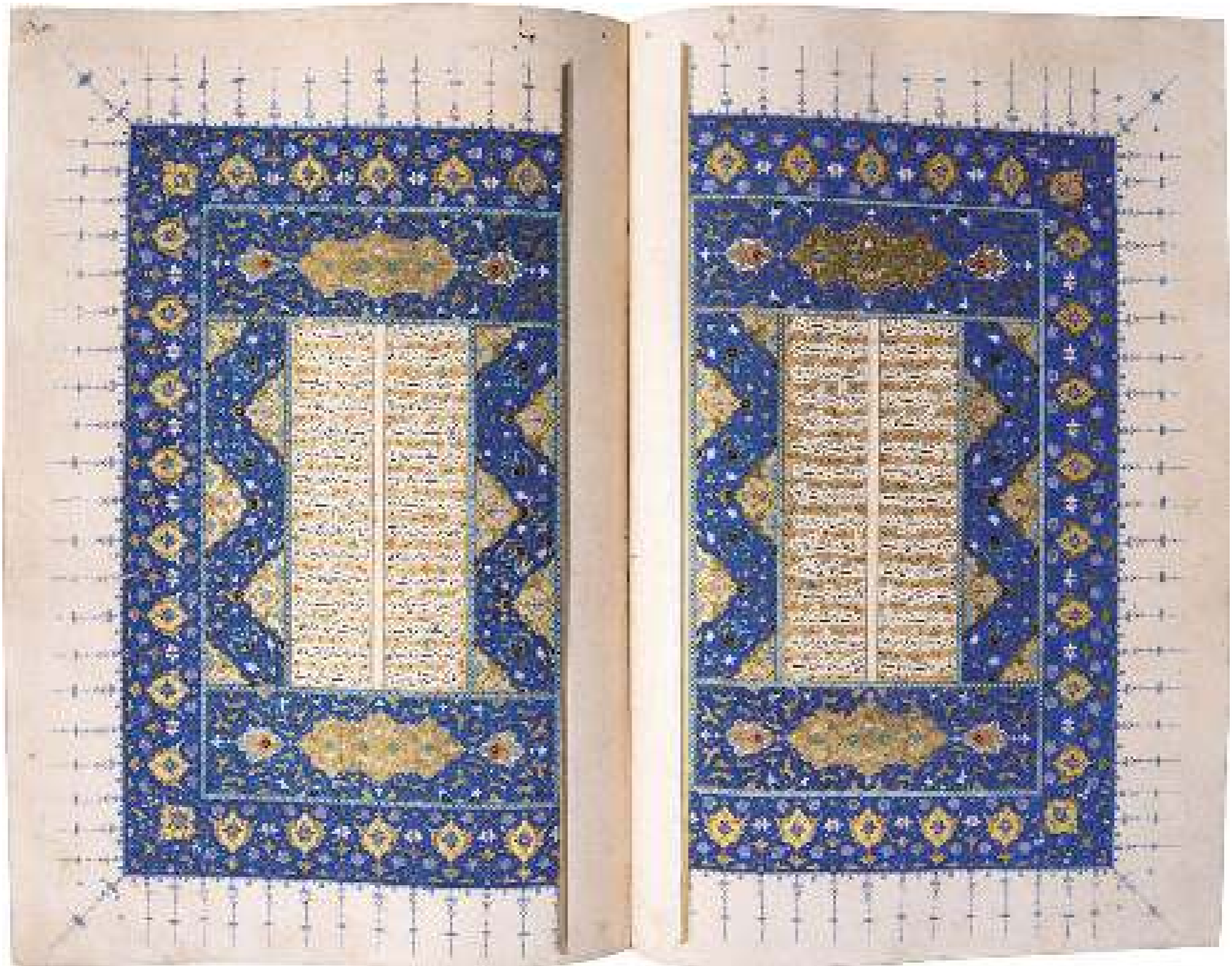
f. 739.

Shirin commits suicide.



f. 108.

Heading of the poem Leyli and Majnun.



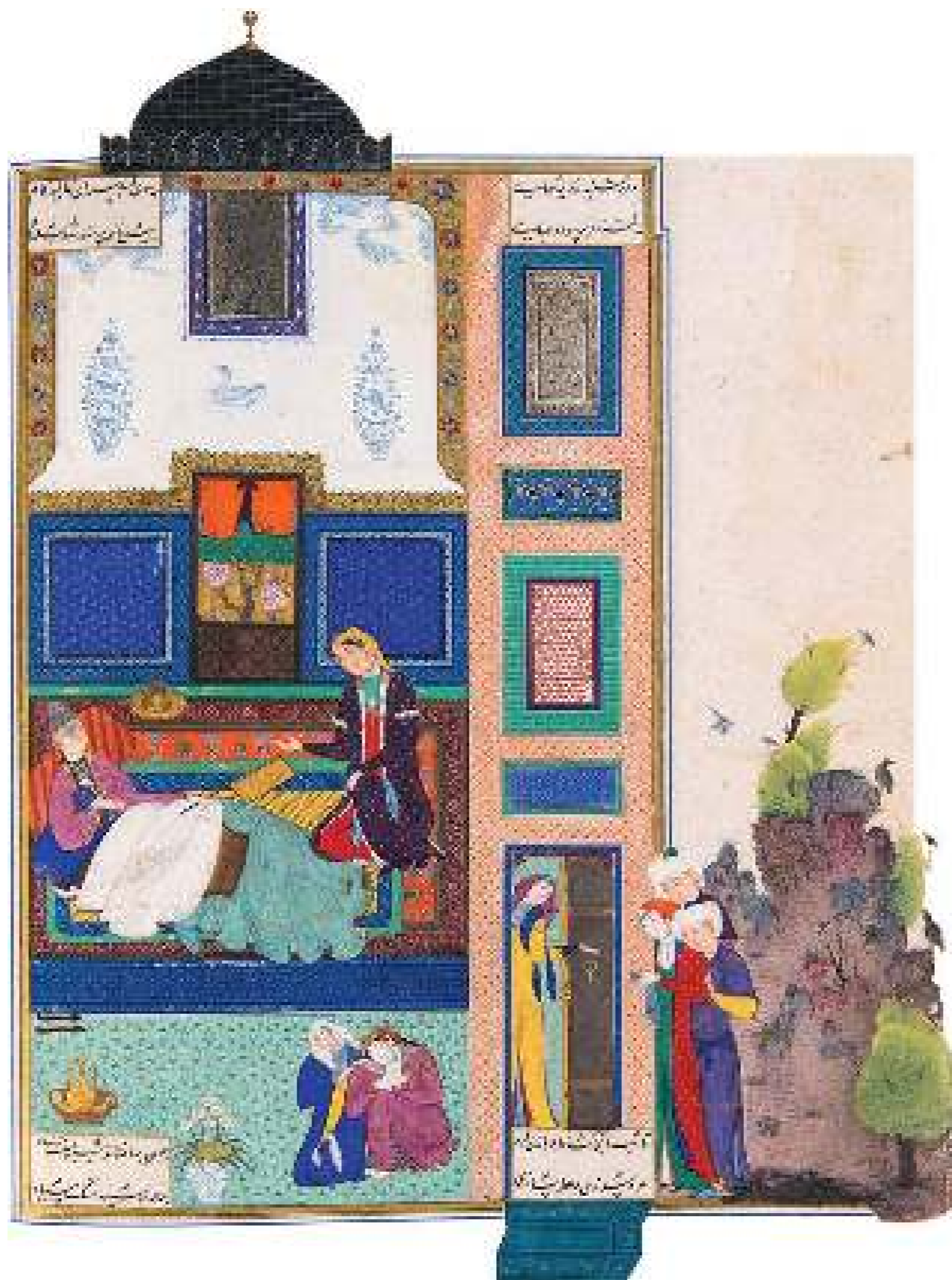
ff. 158r-157v.
Illuminated double-pages.



f. 171.
Bahram Gur on his throne.



f. 174.
Fitnah carrying the calf upstairs to Bahram Gur.



f. 179.
Bahram Gur visiting the Black Dome.



f. 185.

Bahram Gur visiting the Yellow Dome.





f. 191.
Bahram Gur visiting the Red Dome.



f. 194.

Bahram Gur visiting the Turquoise Dome.



f. 199.

Bahram Gur visiting the Sandalwood Dome.



f. 203.

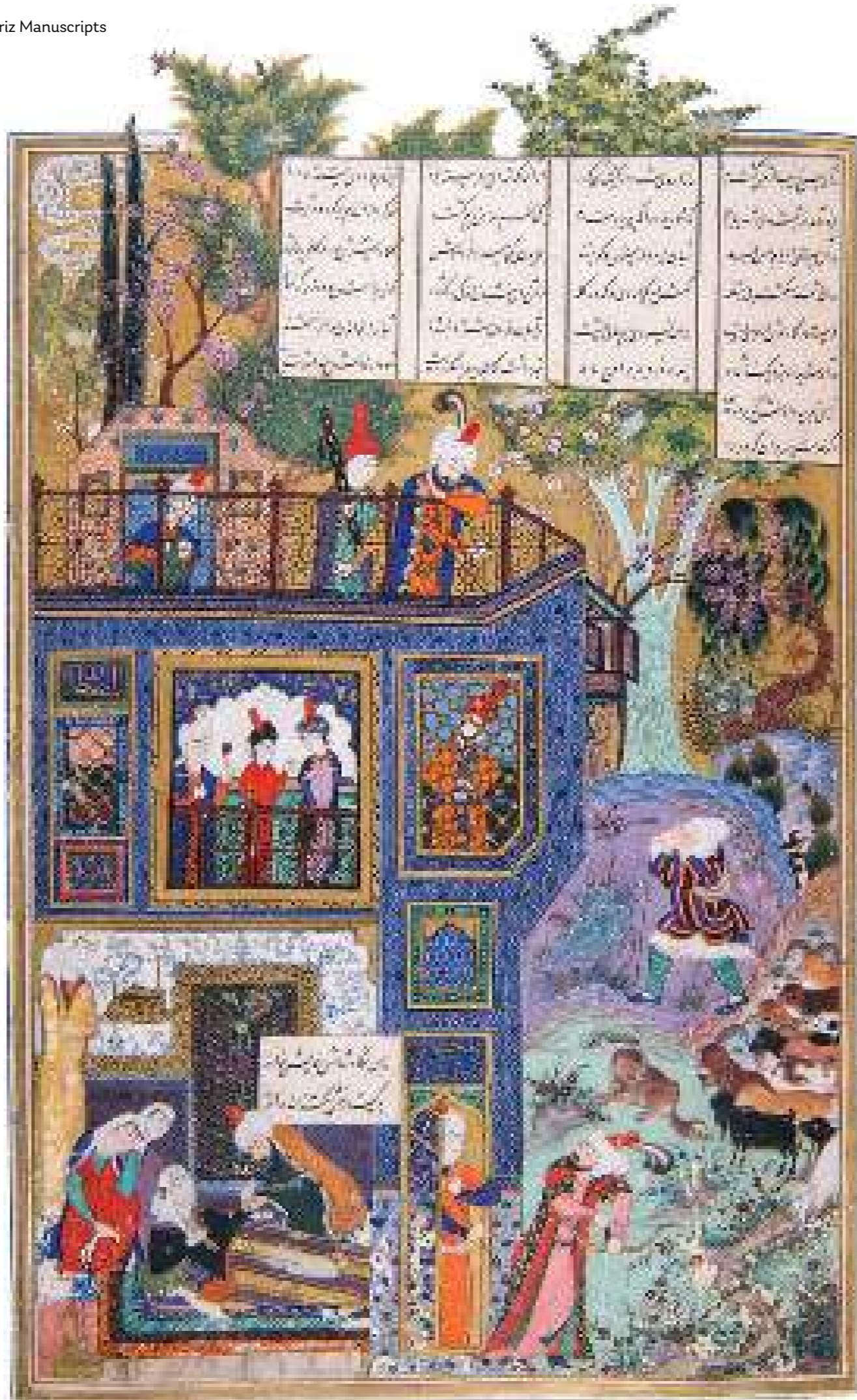
Bahram Gur visiting the White Dome.





f. 241.
Iskandar and the dying Darius.





f. 292.
Iskandar talks to the shepherd.



Back cover with flap, interior.



Back cover with flap, exterior.

Early 16th Century Safavid Painting (1501–1524)

In the summer of 1501, a youth of fourteen years named Ismayil entered the Aghqoyunlu capital Tabriz, ascended the throne and took the title of Shah. Ismayil was descended from a 14th century Sufi sheikh who, in about 1300, had founded a religious order in Ardabil (an ancient Azerbaijani town, now in north-west Iran) where his family had lived for generations.

One of Shah Ismayil's first edicts was to impose Shi'a Islam upon the state.

Young at his accession to power and exceptionally charismatic in personality, Ismayil surely made Shi'ism the state religion of his newly acquired kingdom out of religious conviction, rather than from political expediency.

Of the many forms of Shi'ism current in the early sixteenth century, Ismayil favoured the Twelver Shi'a. This group accepts the existence of twelve legitimate successors to Ali, the Twelfth and last Imam who, the Shi'a believe, did not die in July 874 but was miraculously carried away, to return at the end of time.

Shah Ismayil redesigned the Safavid turban, the so-called *Taj-e Haydari*, or "crown of Haydar". This Haydar was Shah Ismayil's father, but the word also means "lion" in Arabic, and was an epithet bestowed by Shi'ites upon Ali. The new turban's design (attributed by some to Haydar rather than his son, hence its name) is not without relevance to Safavid figurative painting. It consists of a turban, or *kulah*, shaped in twelve gores from which a baton rises, around which a red turban-cloth could be wrapped twelve times, in commemoration of the twelve Shi'a

imams: the silhouette is unique. The *Taj-e Haydari* is an unmistakable feature of Safavid painting of the 16th century, and it sometimes provides an important clue to the date, or even the provenance, of a picture, for it was not worn in lands that were not subject to Safavid rule, such as Bukhara.

When Ismayil took power in Tabriz, he must also have taken possession of the Aghqoyunlu library and its workshop. Whether he actually cared for ornamented books or had simply and astutely recognized the Timurid practice of using fine illustrated manuscripts as instruments of dynastic propaganda, is not clear. A number of illustrated Safavid manuscripts were produced in the first quarter of the century (Ismayil died in 1524) but they are generally not of especially high quality. Exceptions are the early Safavid paintings in the Nizami *Khamsa* begun before 1457 but only completed for Shah Ismayil; one truly remarkable picture in it is dated 1505. Given the family connection between the Aghqoyunlu and the Safavids (Ismayil was the son of a sister of Ya'qub Bey Aghqoyunlu, his nephew as well as son-in-law) this manuscript must have been a principal conduit for the transmission to the Safavid manuscript workshops of elements of Aghqoyunlu painting usually attributed to the painter Sultan Muhammad.

Ismayil made several significant contributions to Safavid book arts and in general to their figurative painting.

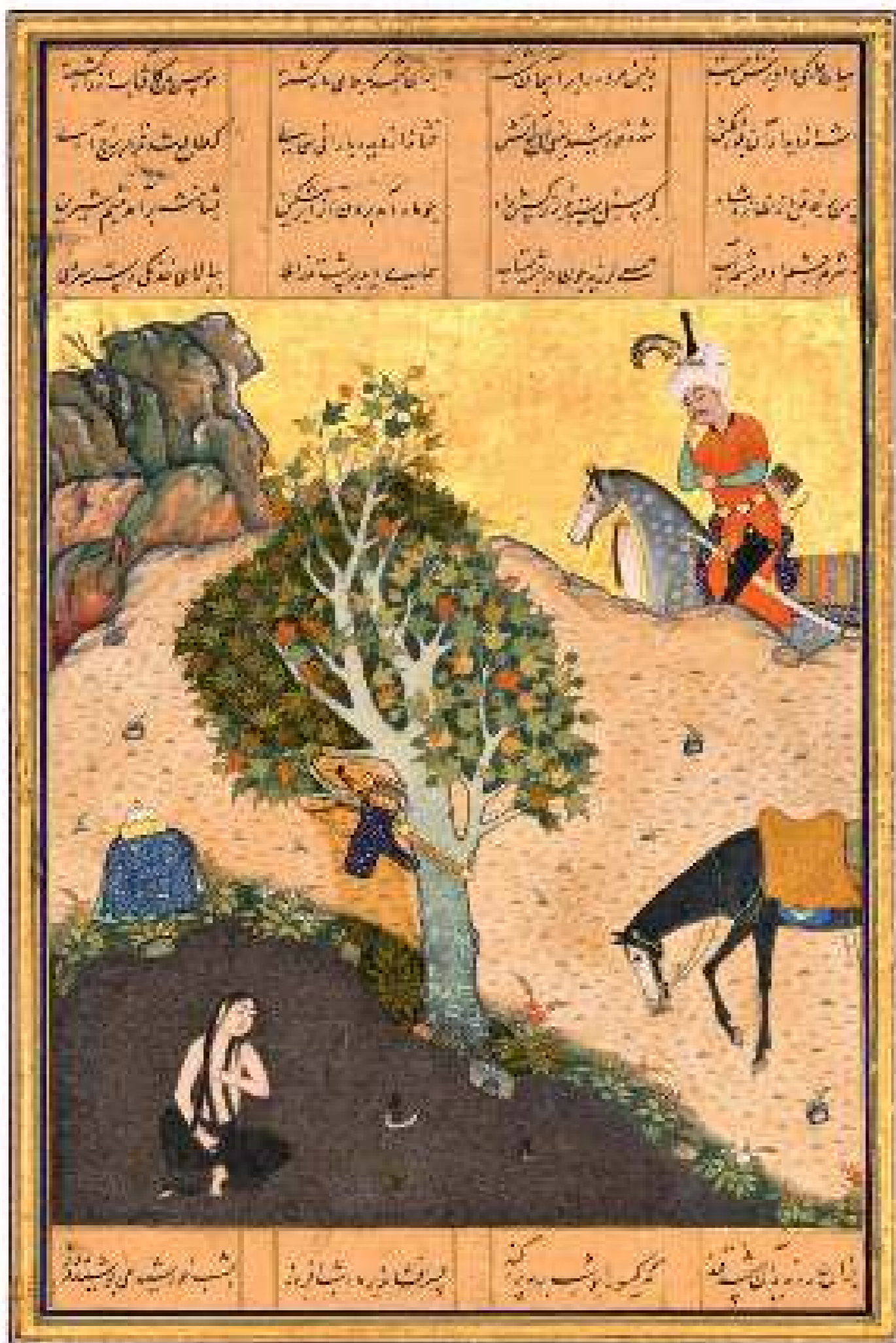
In 1510, after Shah Ismayil had added Khorasan and the cultural capital, Herat, to the Safavid realm, he brought the "second Mani" to his western capital: a document dated the equivalent of 24 April 1522

conveys the Shah's invitation to Kamal al-Din Behzad to come to Tabriz and appoints him Director of the Royal Library.

Published in recent years, works of miniature art from the first quarter of the 16th century (Shah Ismayil reigned 1501–1524), open an important page in the study of medieval Tabriz miniatures. The lack of materials from that period resulted in many scholars believing - until recently - that miniature art had flourished mainly during the reign of Shah Ismayil's son and successor Tahmasp I.

However, historical facts and information published relatively recently about the early 16th century Tabriz miniature, indicate a high level of production and originality in this art.

Despite their scarcity, works created during Shah Ismayil's reign offer us valuable information; it would not otherwise be possible to explain the rise and dissemination of this style throughout the Middle East.



Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a spring.

The *Khamsa* of 1524–1525

“The Nizami *Khamsa* manuscript that is now in the collection of the Islamic Department of the Metropolitan Museum, is a splendid example of the high level of book-making achieved in early sixteenth-century Safavid Iran. The calligraphy, illumination, even the paper and binding, express a people’s reverence and delight in books, and the unity and perfection of design that their artisans sought.

Because bookmaking in the Islamic world centred on copying the Qur’an, calligraphy developed as an act of piety as well as an art form. The educated appreciated the physical beauty of calligraphy; connoisseurs prided themselves on their ability to identify the script of well-known calligraphers, and collectors paid large sums of money for their work. It became customary for rulers to employ famous calligraphers to copy their official correspondences and royal decrees.

The colophon of the Metropolitan Museum’s *Khamsa* states that the calligrapher was Sultan Muhammad ibn Nur Allah. Sultan Muhammad Nur was born in about 1472 in Herat and studied with Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi, the leading calligrapher at the court of Husayn Bayqara, the last Timurid ruler of Persia. He specialized in a fine and graceful script, known as *Khafi*, which can be seen in the opening lines of the *Khamsa* and in several of the illustrations in which text and image are combined. Sultan Muhammad Nur may have been the illuminator of this manuscript, as in the colophons of other works he calls himself *modhahheb*, or illuminator.



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The most important of the artisans of the late Timurid period were the calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi and the painter Behzad, who worked in Herat during the reign of Husayn Bayqara (1469–1506). A copy of the *Bustan* by Sa’di, dated 1488, is signed by both of them and provides an example of the high level of their joint achievement. Behzad’s paintings exhibit two clear characteristics: human figures are presented in a natural, life-like manner and are differentiated by posture and gesture with less concern for the detail of their costumes, while

every pattern of the tile work, inlaid woodwork and wickerwork of the buildings is rendered meticulously. Behzad balances the realism of individual figures with the formalism of palaces and pavilions by careful distribution of groups of figures within the spaces created by the architectural setting. These groupings often reflect the highly developed sense of protocol that characterized the Timurid dynasty. The dialogue between realism and formalism became a mark of the Herat style; some painters preferred to emphasize movement and space while others concentrated on that meticulous rendering of detail.

The identity of the illustrator of the Metropolitan Museum’s *Khamsa* is not certain, but the miniatures in the manuscript clearly follow the Herat tradition. Although some of the pictures are closely related to an episode in the text, others seem more intent on depicting the life and customs, and perhaps even the personalities, of the Safavid court of the time. The colophon establishes this as AH 931 or between October 1524 and October 1525 CE; one of the paintings is dated AH Rajab 931 or April/May 1525 CE.

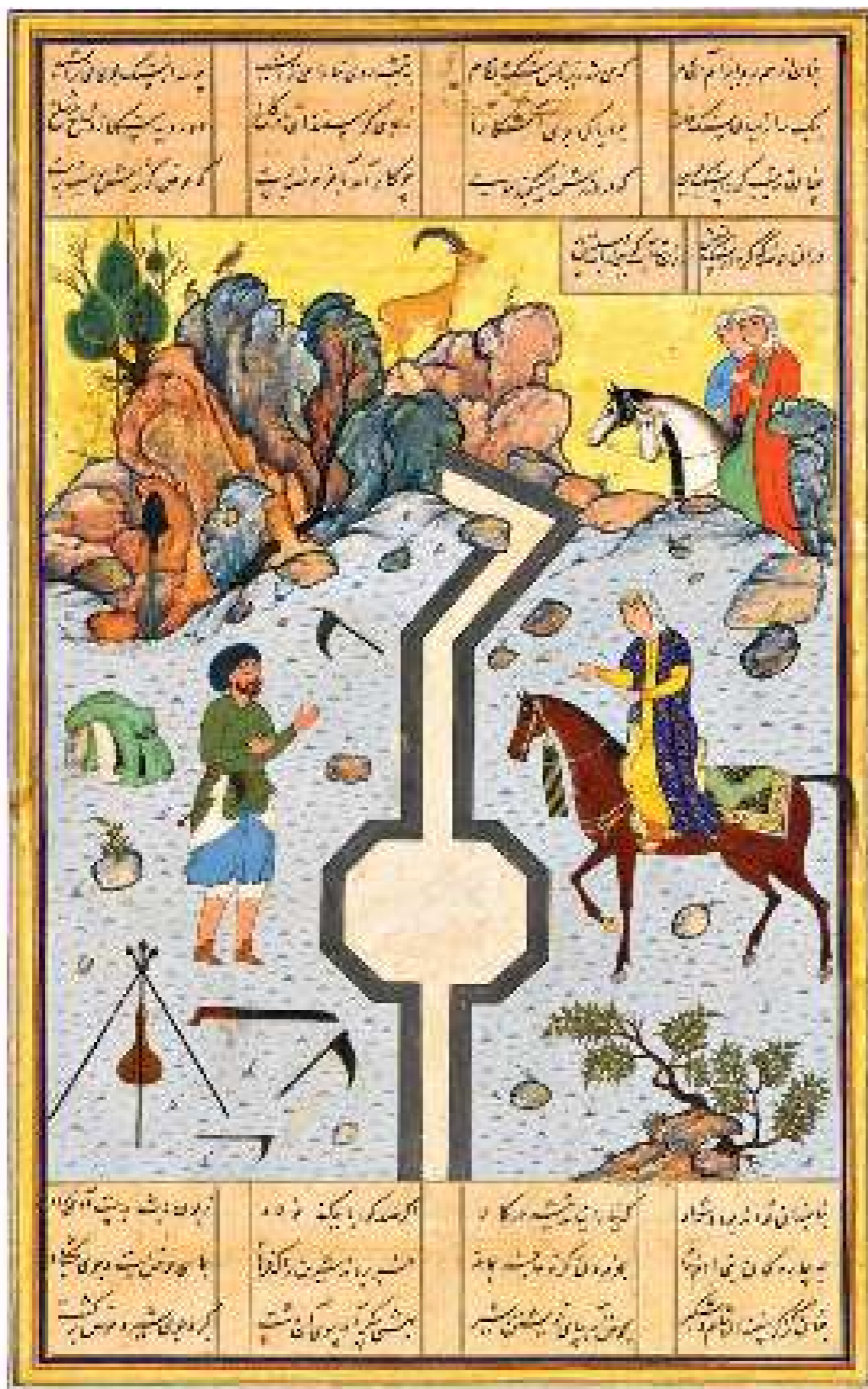
An illustration’s dimensions were usually determined by the space left for it by the calligrapher when copying the text. In this manuscript, most of the miniatures occupy an entire page, but the painter sometimes had to incorporate sections of the text within his paintings.

The illustrator also follows the conventions of the period in his use of colour.

Among the most delightful of the miniatures in the Metropolitan Museum’s *Khamsa* are those illustrating the story of *Khosrow and Shirin*. The series opens with Khosrow’s discovery of Shirin bathing in a wilderness pool.

The second picture in the series is of Khosrow’s reinstatement on Iran’s throne after driving away his rival, Bahram Chubineh. The event, of great significance in the life of the historical Khosrow Parviz, is barely mentioned by Nizami, who was more interested in Khosrow’s longing for Shirin than in his military triumph.

The Khamsa of Nizami.
Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Date: AH 931/1524-1525 CE.
Calligraphers: Sultan Muhammad Nur
(ca.1472 - ca.1536) and Mahmud Muzahhib.
Paintings by Shaikh Zada.



Farhad carves a milk channel for Shirin.

More than an illustration for Nizami's poem, this miniature is a diagram of the contemporary Safavid court. It is possible that most of the people attending the ruler are portraits of officials known to the artist. Some scholars have suggested that Khosrow was intended to represent the Safavid ruler Shah Ismayil I. That, however, is unlikely, as Ismayil had been dead for more than a year when this manuscript was completed; nor could it have been a likeness of his son and successor, as he was only eleven years old at the time. The figure portrayed as Khosrow was more probably the governor of Herat, Durmish Khan Shamlu. Although this cannot be proved with certainty, it is possible that the patron of the manuscript was the keeper of the seal, and that he commissioned it as a gift to Durmish Khan Shamlu.

Some of the paintings in the Metropolitan Museum's *Khamsa* reflect the tone and substance of Nizami's poetry, while others relate more closely to the time and place in which they were created. They provide a link between the style of painting popular in 15th century Herat and that used by 16th century painters working for the Safavids."

This author hereby brings to readers' attention her notes on some points covered in the 1975 research article quoted above, written on the topic of the *Khamsa* of 1524–25 by Prof. Priscilla P. Soucek (Department of the History of Art, University of Michigan) for the book *Mirror of the Invisible World. Tales of the Khamsa of Nizami*: As Ivan Stchoukine points out, the Nizami *Khamsa* of 1524–25 provides 13 miniatures created by the artist Shaikh Zada, a student of Behzad; these are the last samples of the 'Timurid' stage in the incipient phase of the Tabriz school's development. The only features that point to the new era are the *Taj-e Haydari* and the date AH 931. The composition lacks the scale and exquisiteness that would later distinguish the Tabriz school. The miniature *Battle between Alexander and Darius* has a compositional structure typical of Behzad. Skilfully arranged here are horsemen that point to the centre from different sides and form a ring

around the central group, which includes a knight fighting dismounted warriors. Although an in-depth study of the miniature reveals a rigorous concept, it still appears as an episode from an actual battle (Stchoukine 1959, p.169).

After the miniatures from the Nizami *Khamsa* (AH 931/1524–25 CE) were admitted to the Metropolitan Museum collection, they were subjected to evaluation and confirmed as belonging to the Tabriz school by experts including S. C. Welch, the outstanding specialist in Safavid arts. A contrary opinion exists that these miniatures were produced in a purely Herati style. Only one single miniature, *Alexander conversing with the Khagan* is surely created in Tabriz style.

This begs a logical question: how could the artist Shaikh Zada, who produced the illustrations to this manuscript, work simultaneously in Herat and Tabriz? It is well known that Shaikh Zada was Behzad's best-loved student and moved with the latter and some other artisans from Herat to Tabriz in 1522. It would not be logical to assume that Shaikh Zada left Herat for Bukhara without valid reason.

Welch believes that it was both Shaikh Zada's conservative manner of work, reproducing Herati works of the late 15th century, and it was the progress in style that made him move from Tabriz to Bukhara. Here, there was great reverence for Behzad and his school. Those works that Shaikh Zada created in Tabriz are evidence of the master's reluctance or inability to join the Tabriz school's innovative research in the second quarter of the 16th century.

Welch writes on this theme: "The 1525 *Khamsa* is dominated by Shaikh Zada's interpretation of Behzad's mode. His miniatures, with their stiff, formal characterizations, extreme two-dimensional quality, and hard-edged line, acknowledge no debt to the idiom of Tabriz..." (Welch 1972, p.56).

"By 1527 the Royal Safavid school was excluding painters who could not progress beyond the mode that had prevailed at Shah Ismayil's court, and those like Shaikh Zada who persisted in repeating



Khosrow on his throne.



Marriage of Khosrow and Shirin.

the Herati formulas of a generation before. Shaikh Zada's work is not found in the Houghton manuscript or in any other volume known to us that was illustrated for the Safavids later than the Fogg Art Museum *Divan*. We find him next in a *Haft Manzar* by Hatifi, copied by Mir Ali in Bukhara in 1538 for Sultan Abd al-Aziz, ruler of the Uzbeks from 1530 to 40. One of his miniatures for this manuscript, which is in the Freer Gallery of Art, is inscribed: "This was painted by the most insignificant of the sultanic servants, Shaikh Zada". Its style harks back to the 1525 *Khamsa*, though it is even more archaic. At Bukhara Shaikh Zada's rather dry interpretation of the Behzadian style was to be the mode for years to come" (Welch 1972, p.56.).

Comparing other of Shaikh Zada's Tabriz works, Welch writes: "Shaikh Zada's miniatures in the *Anthology* (1526–1527, the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris) are more open in design and considerably more inventive than his work for the *Khamsa* a year or so earlier. He now avoids the symmetrical frontality of architecture that makes his series of pavilions in the *Khamsa* rather monotonous. Furthermore, he has made a greater effort to bring his characterizations to life. He uses the same formulas as before for profiles, gestures, and other details, but he has attempted to portray human interaction, albeit with no great success".

Exploring the miniature on the *Divan* of Hafiz manuscript in the Fogg Art Museum, Welch maintains: "Still another, *Episode in a mosque*, is signed by Shaikh Zada and can be considered his masterpiece. Unlike the work of his master, Behzad, Shaikh Zada's painting reveals little feeling for humanity, in which respect his character is also the opposite of Sultan Muhammad's... Unable, it would seem, to associate himself with his players, he cannot make us feel their moods, and so we tour the surface of his paintings, enjoying their dazzling intricacies. Granted, his every line is correct, his every twist of arabesque superb...".

“Shaikh Zada’s *Episode in a mosque*, painted for the *Divan* in about 1527, shows that he had by now changed his style somewhat to conform to the more psychologically oriented idiom admired at the Safavid court... We have noted his attempts to achieve the humanism of Sultan Muhammad. These were insufficient. His star was waning. The proportion of his pictures to those of others was changing...” (Welch 1972, p.60).

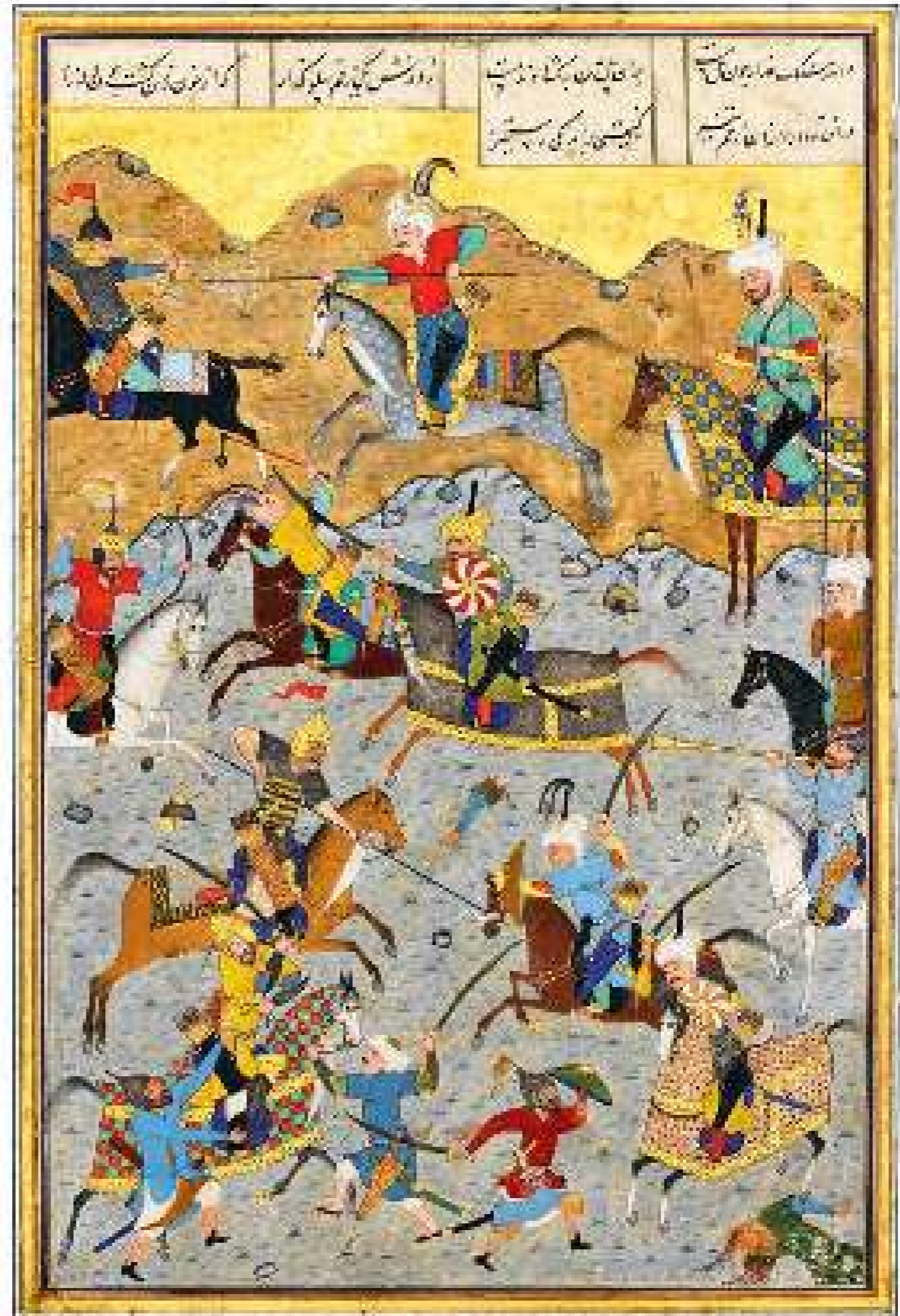
Having regard to the above arguments, we therefore make a point of the Tabriz origin of the Nizami *Khamsa* (1524–1525), as well as of the two other manuscripts kept in the Fogg Art Museum and in the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, respectively.

We are pleased to provide extracts from the article *Behzad and the Timurid Zafar-Nameh of AH 935/1528–1529 AD* by Giti Norouzian, that provide valuable insight into the influence Behzad and his students exerted on Tabriz miniature art upon their arrival in Tabriz in the first half of the 16th century.

“Behzad accompanied the court to Tabriz and on AH 27 Jumada I 928/ 24 April 1522 CE was appointed Director of the Royal Library by the express order of Shah Ismayil I (founder of the Safavid dynasty).

Behzad’s influence is evident in many ways in Safavid painting, especially in the overall Timurid sense of composition and balance that will re-emerge in slightly later painting produced for Tahmasp I. Some scholars, such as David Roxburgh, believe Behzad’s assignment in the Royal Library was mostly administrative. The decree notes that Behzad would be chief of the employees of the Royal Library; yet it quite clearly implies a sort of bureaucratic role for Behzad, for nowhere is there a specific reference to his direct involvement in aesthetic decisions.

The ‘Library’ in those centuries was also a workshop called a *kitabkhana*, it was a gathering



Battle between Iskandar and Darius.



Iskandar at a banquet.

place of skilled practitioners in the arts of the book. Its directors functioned as intermediaries between patrons and practitioners, ensuring that progress was made on stipulated commissions and overseeing production quality. It is possible that these supervisors also placed certain controls on the aesthetic direction of projects under their care. This would mean that in a workshop made up of specialized and hierarchically-organized craftsmen, the master's role was to oversee production and to execute the most complex parts of the painting. Marianna Simpson believes that Behzad's participation, even in projects like the *Shahnameh* of Shah Tahmasp I, is improbable. She says that if we recall that this *Shah-nama*, with nearly 760 folios and 258 paintings, was by far the hugest product of the Tabriz atelier, we would then expect that had Behzad had a specific role in the project, his name would have been mentioned in at least one of the numerous Safavid historical sources, such as the preface of the album composed by Dust Muhammad. He was a 16th century critic, historian and librarian of the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza, Tahmasp's brother; he particularly singled out Sultan Muhammad by name for the two paintings he executed for the *Shah-nama*, and also for work on the Shah Tahmasp Nizami *Khamsa*. Thus, whether the notion of Behzad's participation in an enormous production like the *Shahnameh* is accepted or still remains hypothetical, is it logical to believe that the head of the Royal *Kitabhana* in Tabriz would have been directly involved in a less ambitious project like the *Gulistan Zafar-Nama*?

There is also evidence that, already at a much earlier age, Behzad entrusted much of his work to assistants and pupils. On the other hand, a letter, composed by Behzad and addressed to Shah Tahmasp I, requests funds for a project, a History of

Hazrat-i Shahi (*Tarikh-i Hazrat-i Shahi*); in it he apologizes to the Shah for not being able to attend his Majesty because of weakness and being unwell. These words testify to the state of his health: in AH 935/AD 1528–1529, he would have been at least 75 years of age. Thus, he is not likely to have begun, let alone finished, an illustrative program of 24 large and complex paintings.

Discussion about Behzad's style of painting is usually based on an examination of those in three manuscripts: the later illustrations added to a *Khamsa* (dated AH 84/AD 1442), the *Khamsa* of Amir Farsi Barlas (dated AH 900/AD 1494), and the *Bustan* by Sa'di, (AH 894–895/AD 1488–1489) the only manuscript whose paintings with the signatures of Behzad are definitely accepted by modern scholars...

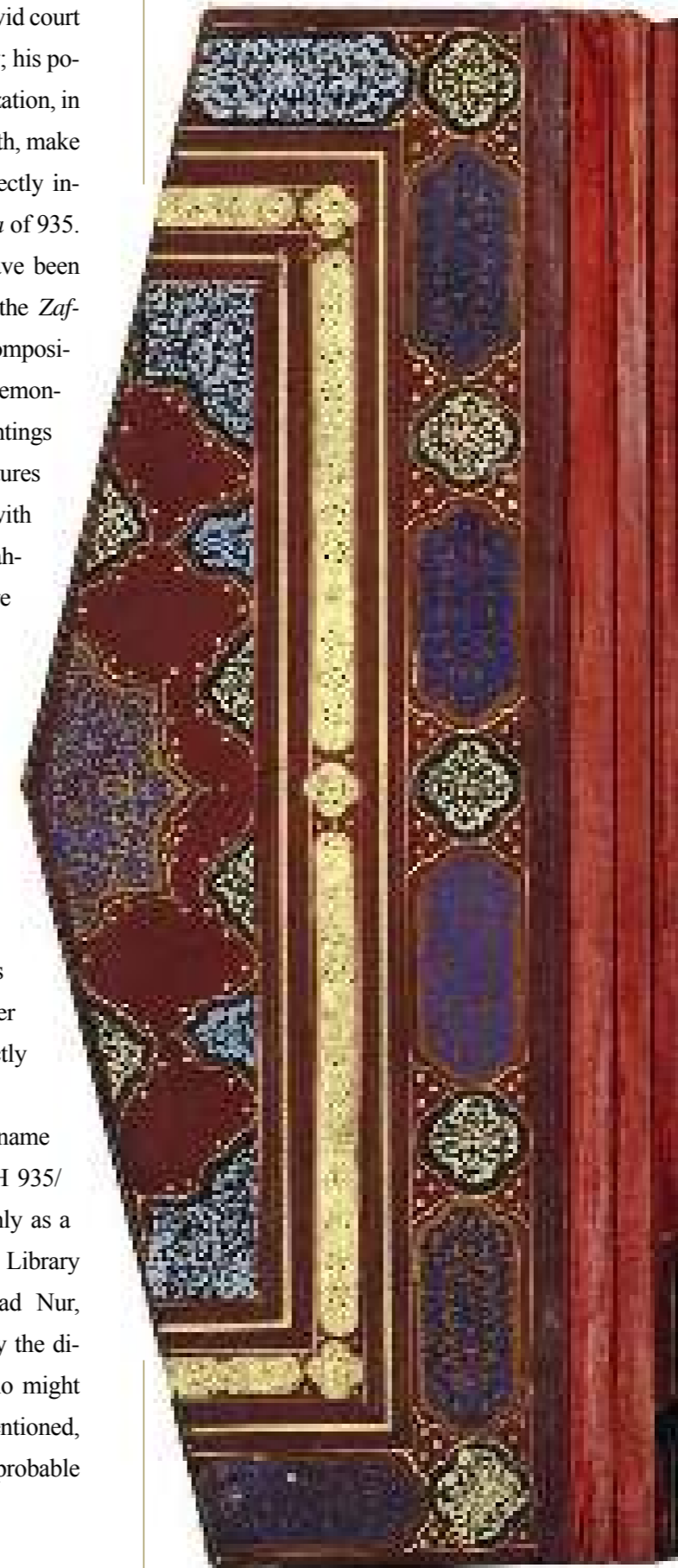
...Behzad's influence, however, is evident in Safavid painting in many ways, especially in the overall Timurid sense of composition and balance that characterizes painting actually made for Tahmasp himself. Perhaps, then, we might say that while many Behzadian features underlie some of the more striking paintings of the *Zafar-Nama*, his direct execution of any of them - as has been demonstrated above - is surely impossible...

...The primary question is whether Behzad was indeed involved in illustrating this manuscript; my reply is that Behzad's name in the colophon does not in the slightest degree mean that he created the 24 paintings of this manuscript. To arrive at this conclusion, the problem has been examined from four different points of view: The dissimilarity among the 24 paintings of the *Zafar-Nama* of 935; it implies that all 24 illustrations cannot be the works of a single hand, which means that more than one painter must have been part of a team of illustrators for this manuscript, even if just one name is mentioned in

the colophon. Behzad's position in the Safavid court as the head of *kitabkhana*, or Royal Library; his position as the director of an enormous organization, in addition to his advanced age and weak health, make it improbable that he could have been directly involved in the illustrating of the *Zafar-Nama* of 935. Some of Behzad's unquestioned works have been compared with some of the paintings in the *Zafar-Nama*, which share subject matter or compositional structure. No real similarity can be demonstrated between Behzad's style and the paintings of the *Zafar-Nama* of 935. Some of the pictures in the *Zafar-Nama* of 935 were compared with two pictures in the *Shahnameh* of Shah Tahmasp. The architectural and overall structure of these compositions, especially some details, show that more such similarities exist between the Safavid paintings and some of the painting in the *Zafar-Nama* of 935.

From this analysis and careful examination of the paintings themselves and in the absence of any external documentation, we could propose one logical explanation: that the *Zafar-Nama* of 935 was produced in the Safavid court but only under supervision by Behzad, although not directly by his own hand.

In conclusion, I suggest that Behzad's name on the colophon of the *Zafar-Nama* of AH 935/AD 1528–1529 proves his involvement only as a director of different projects in the Royal Library of Tabriz. The scribe, Sultan Muhammad Nur, who copied this manuscript, mentions only the director's name, and not all the painters who might have worked on it. For all the reasons mentioned, Behzad's direct participation is not only improbable but also impossible."



Dorn 302.
National Library of Russia.



f. 46v.

Young Shah Tahmasp on a horseback watches a fisherman fishing in the river.

Safavid Painting in the Reign of Shah Tahmasp I (1524–1576)

Shah Tahmasp ibn Ismayil (1514–1576) ruled as Shah of Safavid Empire for over half a century, and the figurative arts of the period are indelibly marked by his passions - first by his patronage and, later, by its absence. For the painters, his long reign had three distinct phases. The first, from 1524 to about 1545, saw his taste, position and means create a bibliophile's paradise, during which two manuscripts were created that may truly be called 'wonders of the age'. Indeed, some would say that the finest of all Safavid painting was achieved in this period. The second phase, from 1545 to almost the end of his life, was one of what is usually described as puritanism, which provoked a loathing for painting as well as for the other worldly pleasures he had previously indulged. In about 1574, or so it has been conjectured, his recovery from an illness brought about a change of heart and a return, albeit brief, to his passionate earlier interest in painting. It also caused him to recall from exile the family member who most shared this passion, Ibrahim Mirza ibn Bahram Mirza.

Tahmasp, in the Timurid pattern, was sent to another city in the realm – Herat – to govern in his father's name, albeit at the age of two.

He is supposed to have been taught painting by Behzad himself, and he was also trained to appreciate fine calligraphy by learning to practise it.

Acc. no. MS 373. *The Khamasa of Nizami*.
 Fitzwilliam Museum,
 University of Cambridge.
 Calligrapher: Muhammad Muhsin of Tabriz.
 Date: AH 949\ 1542–1543 CE.
 Period: Safavid, Tabriz style.

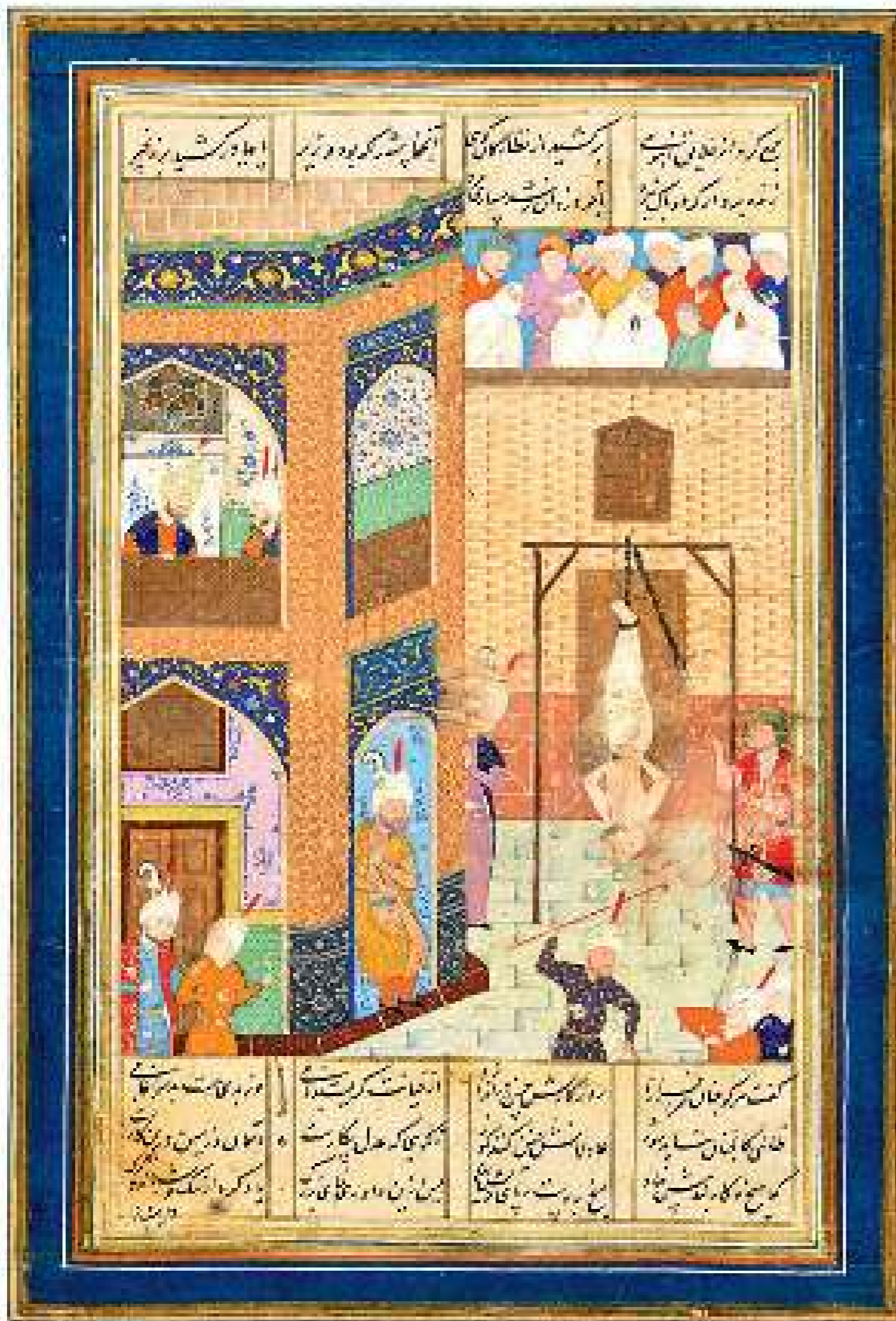
Shah Tahmasp's attitude towards painting came from an immature boy's admiration for the style of Behzad, to which he was exposed in Herat. Upon returning to Tabriz, the still very impressionable prince was made aware of the quite different school patronized by his father. The two strands met, synthesized and emerged as the style that culminated in the later masterpieces for the *Shahnameh* and the *Khamasa*. Shah Tahmasp came to admire art that was technically fully accomplished, intellectual, subtle and increasingly resistant to new ideas - an art that tended, in short, towards the academic. Painting, to which the boy and youth had been so devoted, once represented his personal search for fulfilment. While young, he had had a compulsive need for the art; as a man he was under no further obligation to be its loving patron. His emotions required other outlets. While Sultan Muhammad achieved true satisfaction through his creativity in painting, the shah did not. Before maturity he had been able to pour his feelings into the moulding of a school of art, but his painful, thwarted struggle for maturity failed to bring complete happiness.

Tahmasp was the prime bibliophile in a family of great bibliophiles: his brothers, children and his favourite nephew, are all known to have taken a particular interest in those refined objects that satisfied both intellectual and aesthetic needs.



f. 24b.

The old woman petitioning Sultan Sanjar.



f. 148b.
Bahram Gur executes the unjust vizier.

Succeeding his father in 1524, he must then have set the whole atelier to a more demanding task: the production of a copy of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* that was to be lavishly illustrated. It was a majestic document of his accession.

Tahmasp's younger brother, Sam Mirza Safavi, was also educated in Herat as a youth. Calligrapher, patron of calligraphers and author, in 1550 he compiled an anthology of poets, painters, illuminators and calligraphers called the *Tuhfa-yi Sami*.

Tahmasp's second and favourite brother, Bahram Mirza, contributed as much to the history of Safavid painting as Tahmasp himself, if not more so. Sam Mirza speaks of Bahram Mirza as being skilled in calligraphy, especially the *nasta'liq* script, and drawing, *tarrahi*.

Bahram Mirza passed these passionate interests on to at least one member of the next generation of Safavid princes, his son Ibrahim Mirza, born in 1540. A profound love of the book arts was both inherited and nurtured by this prince, a connoisseur and practitioner of those arts fully equal to Tahmasp himself.



f. 183.

The servant of the King of Merv is thrown to angry dogs.

The story of a young courtier at the palace of the King of Merv. The king kept a pack of ferocious dogs and it was his way, whenever anyone displeased him, to throw that person to the dogs to be devoured. When the youth heard the dogs' barking and the victim's cries and moans, he resolved to befriend the keeper of the dogs, and went on to win the friendship of the dogs themselves. One day, the courtier aroused the anger of the king, who ordered him to be thrown to the dogs. But the dogs would not harm the youth, for he was their friend. Seeing this, the king tamed the beast in his own soul.



f. 261.

Iskandar's battle with the Zangis.



f. 289.

Iskandar entertained by the Khagan of China.

The Tahmasp's *Khamsa* Manuscript (1539–1543)



Tahmasp's second major pictorial commission from his court workshop was a Nizami *Khamsa* (British Library. Or.2265). It was copied in Tabriz by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, a celebrated scribe of the period, and the paintings were executed between 1539 and 1543. The manuscript contains richly gorgeous illumination and is further enhanced by wide margins, ornamented with gold drawings of animals cavorting in windblown landscapes and still further embellished with touches of silver. Not so large in its folio size as the *Shahnameh*, its pictorial content is also far smaller: today it contains fourteen illustrations contemporary with the date of copying and three that are later, while at least four others have been removed. Overall, it is aesthetically more coherent and more uniformly high in quality of conception, execution and finish of the illustrations. Inscriptions on the pictures attribute them to five Tabriz painters of the highest stature: Sultan Muhammad, his son Mirza Ali, Agha Mirak, Muzaffar Ali and Mir Sayyid Ali. The name (partly effaced) of the latter's father, Mir Musawwir, also appears as a signature on another painting. Three of these artists are named by Dust Muhammad among the "portraitists and painters of the royal library": Sultan Muhammad, Agha Mirak and Mir Musawwir.

Like the *Shahnameh*, however, there are still many questions raised about this princely commission. The paintings appear to have been executed separately and pasted onto the text-block in spaces left for them, but the manuscript must have remained unfinished: three pictures in the *Haft Paykar* were painted later by Muhammad Zaman, who signed them in AH 1086, equivalent to 1675 CE, in Mazandaran.

In 1675–76, well over a hundred years later, when the manuscript had certainly become somewhat the

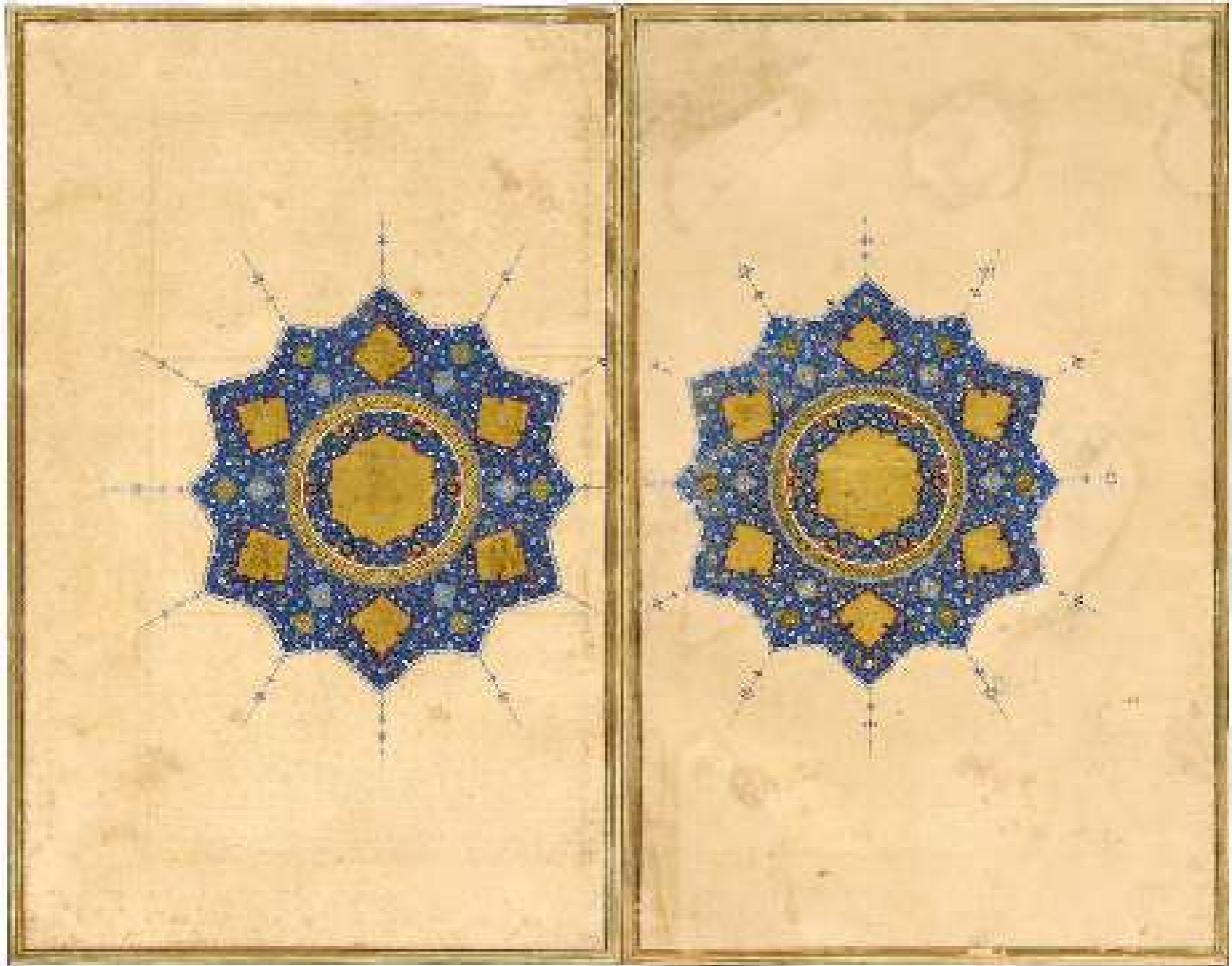
worse for wear, many of its margins were refurbished. At the same time Muhammad Zaman repainted some of the faces in the work of Agha Mirak, he probably removed four of Mir Sayyid Ali's miniatures and completed four miniatures of his own for inclusion in the book. The present painting of *Majnun visited by his father in the wilderness* is one of the four new illustrations, but it was either not added to the book, or was removed at a still later date. To the left is a meticulous inscription: "In the service of the most honourable, it was finished by the humblest of servants Muhammad Zaman in AH 1086 (1675–1676 CE)".

Muhammad Zaman's rendering of this complex subject with its several layers of meaning is one of the most sensitive in the history of Safavid painting and belies the commonly held opinion that 17th century painting in Safavid Iran was devoid of spiritual content.

The ruined buildings on the left, drawn in clear European perspective, echo the common Safavid motif of desolation, as do the brittle and lifeless trees before them. Muhammad Zaman's use of European and, more specifically, Flemish motifs and techniques is always sensitive and never mutely imitative.

Muhammad Zaman 'reconstructed' the faces of most female characters in these works in accordance with the aesthetic tastes of his day and in European style. He resized the miniatures, giving a cruder shape to their frames. It was his fault, however, that some of the miniatures were removed from the manuscript. One of them, the miniature *Battle of Khosrow Parviz and Bahram Chubineh*, attributed to Mir Sayyid Ali, is now in the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. According to many researchers, this work was removed from the manuscript.

*Acc. no. Or:2265. The Khamsa of Nizami.
British Library.
Script: Nasta'liq.
Copied by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri.*



*ff. 2r-1v.
Double-pages with Turunc – rosettes.*



Split in two, two other miniatures from this Nizami *Khamsa* manuscript are held in the Harvard Art Museum. These are Mir Sayyid Ali's miniatures *Reception at Khosrow's palace* ("Nightlife in the palace") and *Majnun's father on a matchmaking visit to Leyli* ("Nomadic Encampment").

One miniature from the *Iskandarnameh* was not included in the manuscript at all. Several miniatures were inserted in the wrong places, most notably *Nushaba shows Iskandar his own portrait*.

Nonetheless, these paintings are the *locus classicus* of the style developed in Tahmasp's Tabriz workshops. They illustrate many of Nizami's best-known stories; consequently, most have compositional antecedents from the period in which the elaborate Safavid picture was constructed.

All the pictures are either set outdoors or with a garden in the background. Palatial terrace or nomad camp, enchanted wilderness pool or barren hunting ground, every picture is a broad, balanced composition conveying a sense of seemingly limitless space, whether the picture has many figures or relatively few.

All the components of earlier Safavid painting merged and matured in these *Khamsa* paintings: the frenetic, expressive landscapes coloured so unusually and peopled by visionaries or otherworldly beings that

emerged from Aghqoyunlu Tabriz; the limpidly still, coolly coloured and perfectly balanced compositional tradition of Behzad's Herat; the 16th century's increasingly naturalistic depiction of human beings engaged in the full range of daily activity; and the contemporary taste for the multiplication of patterns, as textiles and tile panels, tent shapes and architectural forms, pools and fountains and the smaller accoutrements of Safavid

life. But they are now altogether more temperate in feeling and less cramped than either their Timurid or Aghqoyunlu antecedents. They seem instead to be a set of variations on a pictorial aesthetic, with a surprisingly broad range of styles in the manipulation of each picture's elements, from the hands of a number of clearly distinguishable and very fine painters.

Sultan Muhammad, native of Tabriz and outstanding artist, played a

leading role in completing the shape of Tabriz principles of style during the Safavid period. Depicting the Ascension of the Prophet, Sultan Muhammad's miniature *Mi'raj* in the Nizami *Khamsa* manuscript of 1539–1543 is the culmination of the artist's work and one of the most popular religious paintings in the Middle East.

As mentioned above, this manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* presents the best artists of the Tabriz school. Here we see the influence of the brilliant work done by Tahmasp's most favoured artist, Agha Mirak. "It may



f. 1r:
Seal.





ff. 3r-2v.
Illuminated double-paged frontispiece.



f. 15v.

Nushirvan and his vizier listening to the owls in the ruined village.
(Inscribed Agha Mirak the illustrator. Date: AH 946/1539–40 CE)

have occurred to Tahmasp that Sultan Muhammad's strong imagination and sharp humour did not really suit the palatial air and solemnity of this titanic manuscript initiative. We cannot say, however, whether it was Agha Mirak who pressed the point, or it was Tahmasp's personal decision" (Welch, p. 48).

"In any case, as Iskandar Munshi wrote in *Tarikh-i 'alam-ara-yi Abbasi*, "... Agha Mirak was a confidant and close ally of His Majesty"; it must have factored heavily in this very matter" (Robinson, 1982, pp. 13-82).

The protagonists of the two hunting scenes have been described as idealized portraits of Tahmasp, and the court scenes suggest aspects of his own court in Tabriz, sometimes apparently containing a very personal reference. Again, the process seems to have been selective, single pictures being used to convey a particular message, rather than manipulating the whole illustrative programme of the manuscript, as had been done so intensely in the Timurid century.

With the miniatures of the Nizami *Khamasa* of 1539–1543, Safavid-Tabriz painting approaches its apogee. After a swift and brilliant flowering of miniature painting, it was necessary to withdraw to a second plan for the artistic life of the state. So, just a few years after the completion of work on that manuscript, the shah's library was transferred to Qazvin, and many of the best masters soon moved to the new capital. But, in changing cities, they took with them all the traditions and technical skills acquired in Tabriz. So, Qazvin became the heir and continuer of the traditions of Tabriz.

Composition in the Qazvin school basically followed the principles worked out in Tabriz. As in Tabriz, there is still the same thoughtfulness, down to the detail, in the arrangement of characters, and an environment corresponding to the action.

The different elements of the miniature: people, animals, landscape, architecture, everything, were strictly coordinated to create a complete unity of all parts of the composition. And this balancing of all for the sake of a harmonious whole remains, as before, the fundamental principle of a 16th century miniature painting. And yet, over time, certain changes do take place, leading to an evolution of style.

Ivan Stchoukine, a researcher into Safavid miniatures, writes: "Reaching its apogee in the 16th century, Tabriz-Safavid painting spreads throughout the empire and finds favourable conditions and patronage from local rulers in other art centres. The process extends beyond the empire; the Mughal Empire owes Tabriz-Safavid painting for the origins and first steps in its own miniature art. The artists of Tabriz also inspired India's Deccan Muslim rulers. Miniature art in Ottoman Turkey was created by the best artisans from this city. Wherever the Tabriz art of painting was practised, it set a bright example and was an inspiration for local artists. It is seen as one of the most qualitatively brilliant manifestations of global artistic culture" (Stchoukine I. 1959. p. 143).

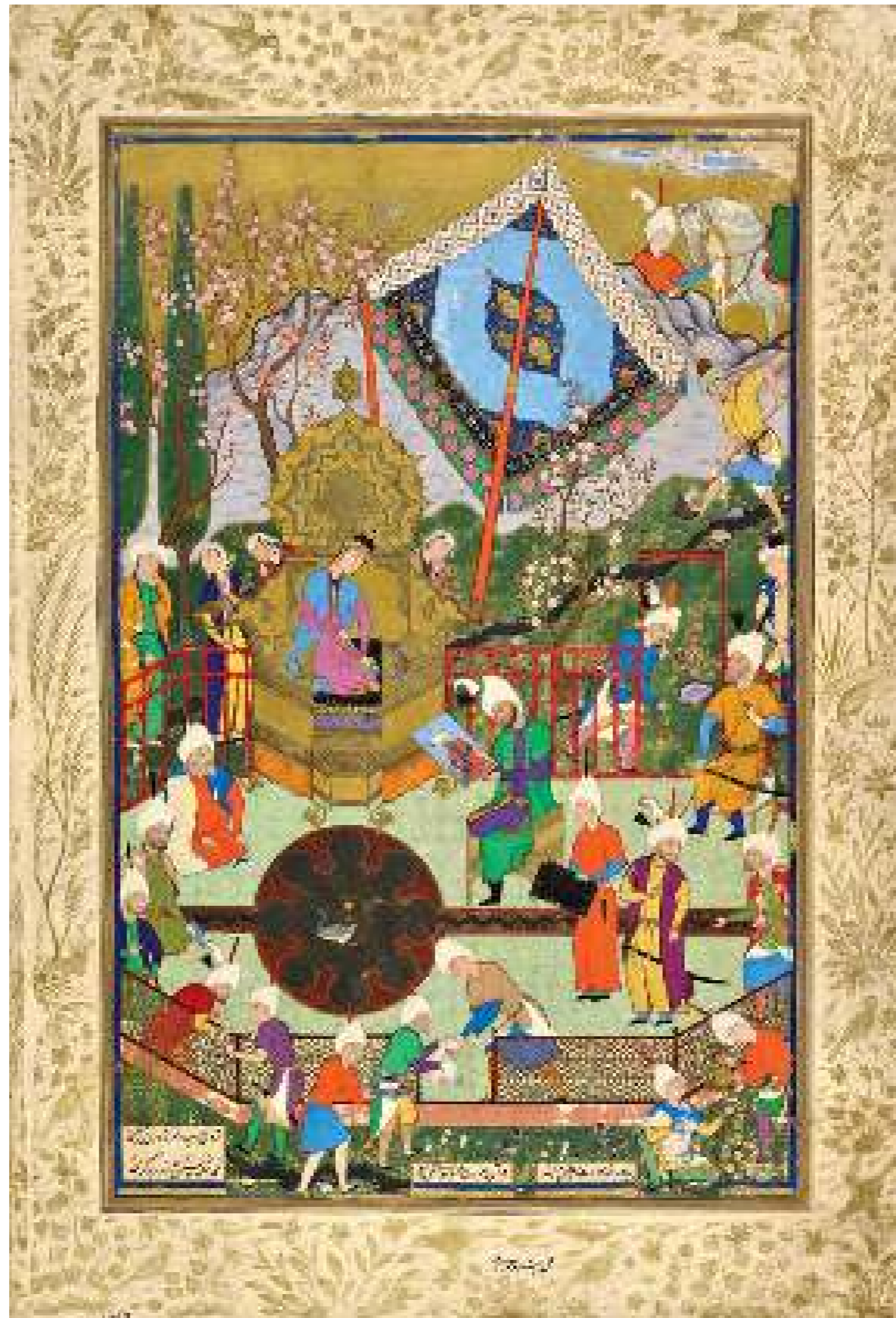


f. 18r.

The old woman petitioning Sultan Sanjar.



f. 26v.
The physicians' duel.



f. 48v.

Shapur shows the portrait of Khosrow to Shirin.

(Probably: Queen Nushaba recognizing Iskandar from his portrait)

(Illustrator: Mirza Ali)



f. 53v.

Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a spring.

(Illustrator: Sultan Muhammad)

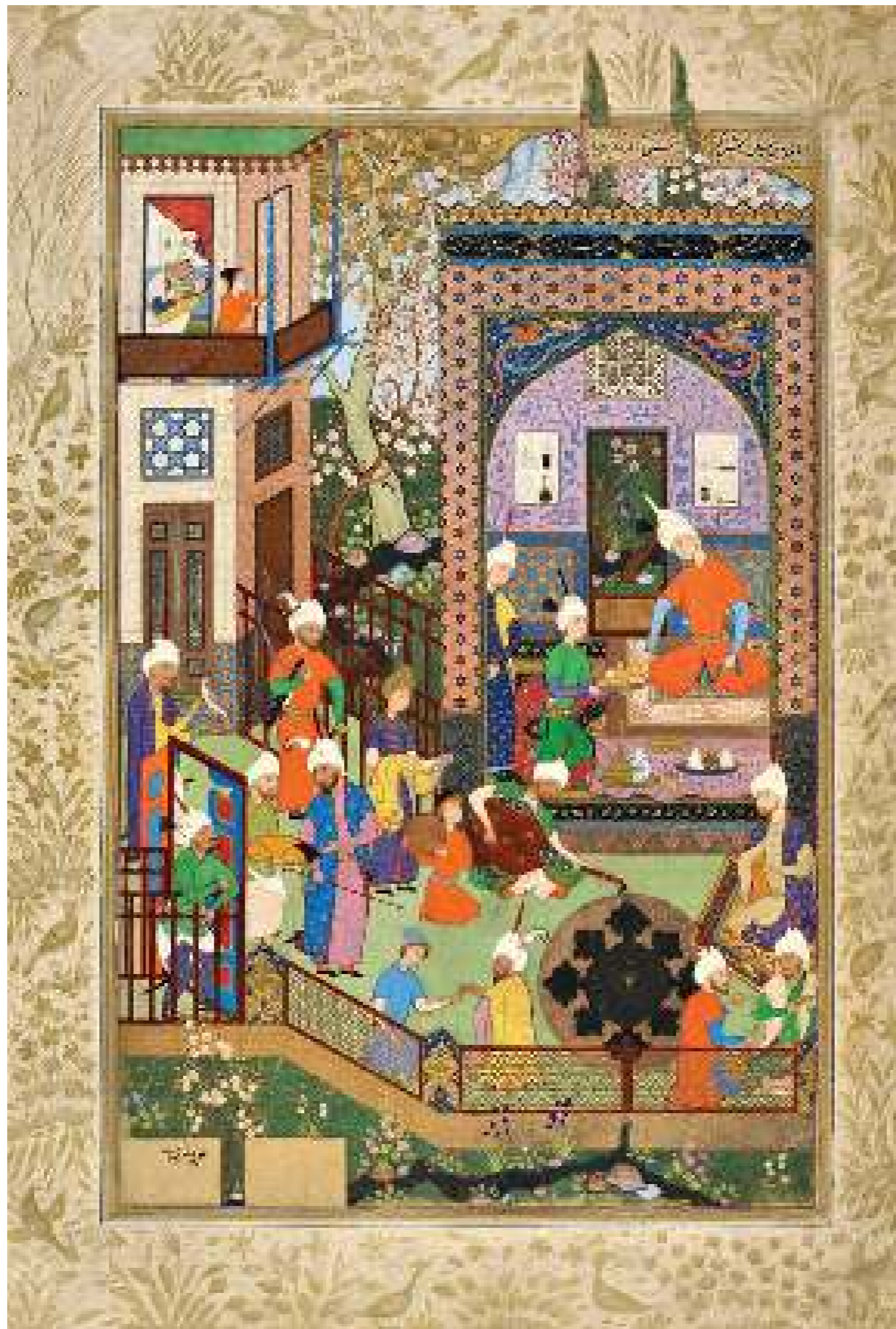


The Khamsa of Nizami.
National Museum of Scotland.
Patron: Shah Tahmasp I.
Date: 1539–1543 CE.
Place: Tabriz.

Khosrow's armies battle with Bahram Chubineh.



Acc. no. Or.2265. The Khamsa of Nizami.
British Library.
Script: Nasta'liq.
Copied by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri.



f. 77v.

Khosrow listens to Barbad playing the lute.

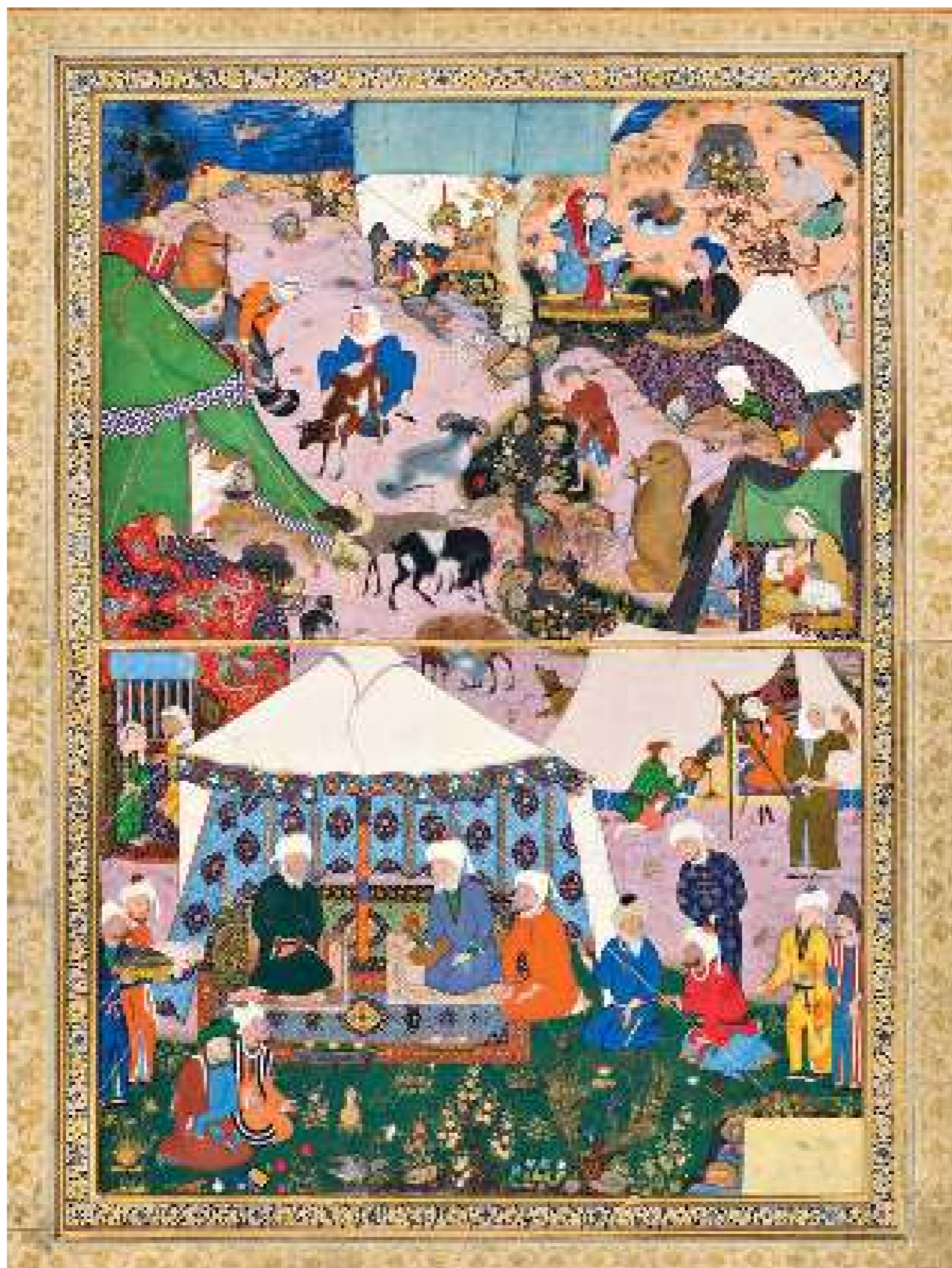
(Illustrator: Mirza Ali)





The Khamsa of Nizami.
Harvard Art Museum.
University of Harvard.
Patron: Shah Tahmasp I.
Date: 1539–1543 CE.
Place: Tabriz.

Nighttime in a Palace (probably: Reception at Khosrow's palace).
(Attributed to Mir Sayyid 'Ali)



*Nomadic Encampment (probably: Majnun's father on a matchmaking visit to Leyli)
(Attributed to Mir Sayyid Ali)*

The *Khamsa* of Nizami: Tabriz Manuscripts

Acc. no. Or.2265. The *Khamsa* of Nizami.
British Library.
Script: Nasta'liq.
Copied by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri.



f. 157v.

Majnun brought in chains by the old woman to Leyli's tent.

(Illustrator: Mir Sayyid 'Ali)





The Khamsa of Nizami.
Smithsonian Institution.
Freer Gallery of Art.
Date: AH 1086/1675–1676 CE.
Place: Ashraf, Mazandaran.

Majnun visited by his father.
(Illustrator: Muhammad Zaman)



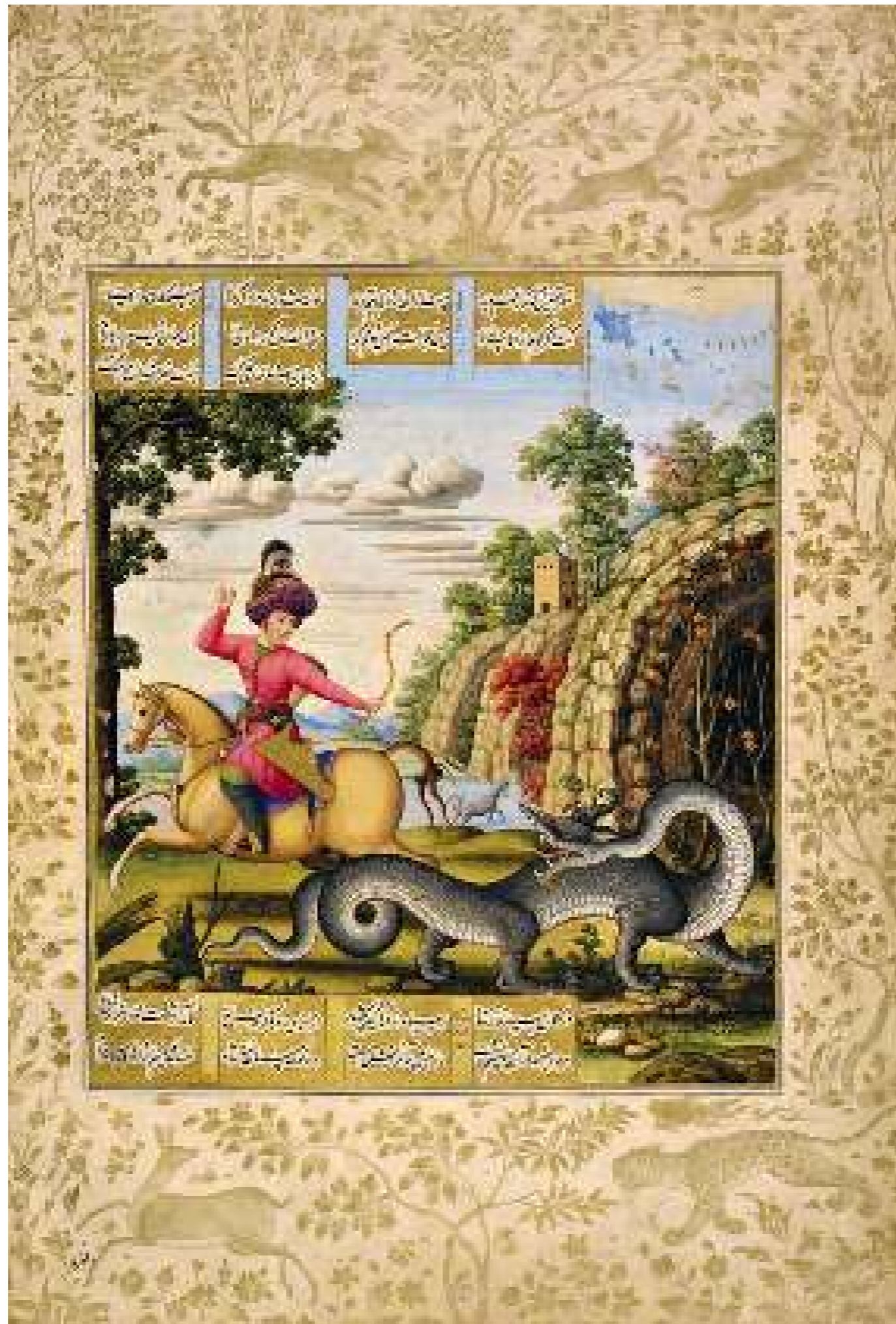
Acc. no. Or.2265. The Khamsa of Nizami.
British Library.
Script: Nasta'liq.
Copied by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri.



f. 195r.

Ascent of the Prophet Muhammad on Buraq to Heaven, guided by Jibra'il and escorted by angels.

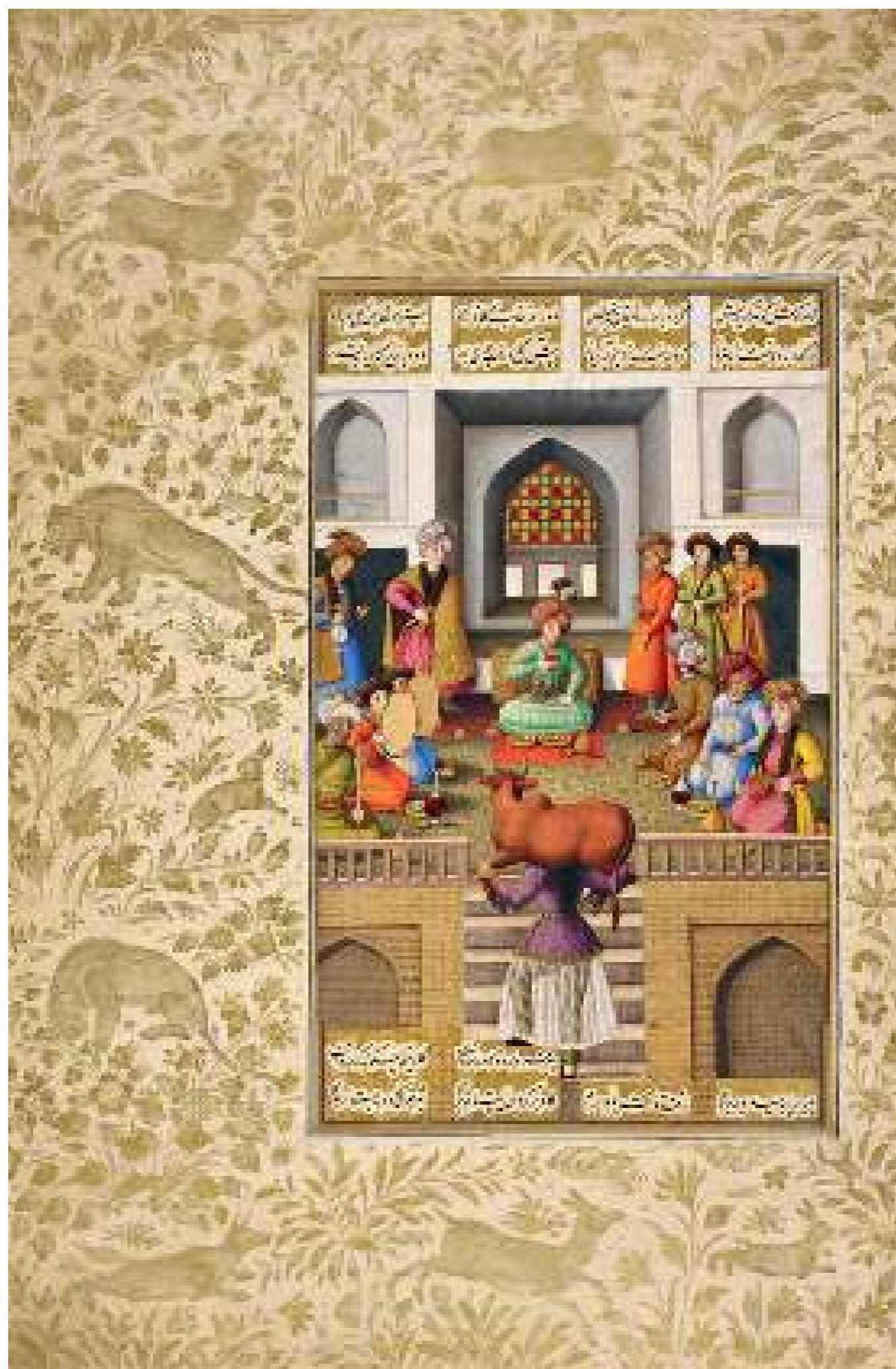
(Illustrator: Sultan Muhammad)



f. 203v.

Bahram Gur kills the dragon.

(Illustrator: Muhammad Zaman, dated AH 1086/1675–1676 CE at Ashraf, Mazandaran)

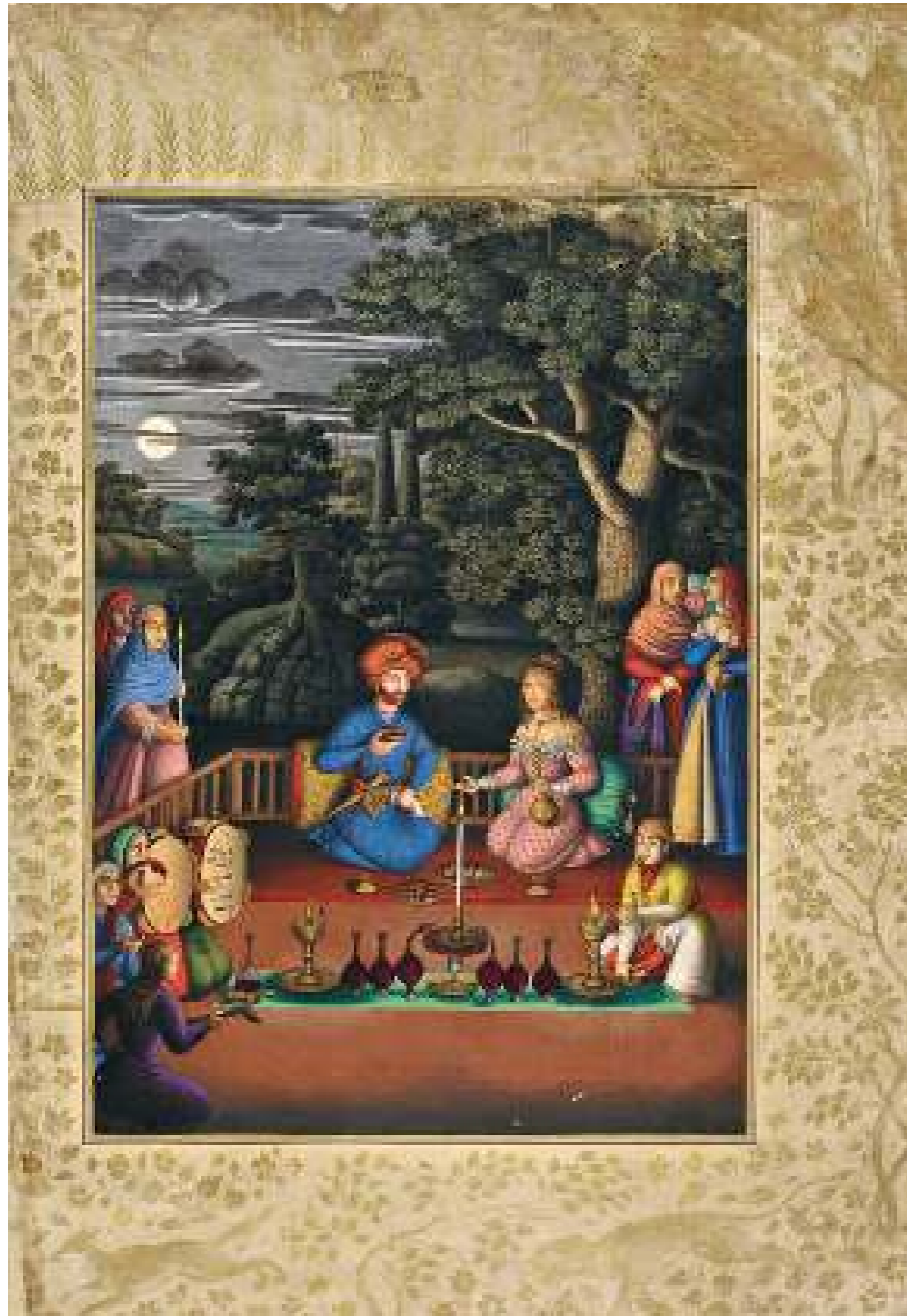


f. 213r:

Fitnah impresses Bahram Gur with her strength by carrying an ox on her shoulders.

(Inscription: In accordance with the mightiest command, time of Sulayman)

(Illustrator: Muhammad Zaman, dated AH 1086/1675–1676 CE at Ashraf, Mazandaran)



f. 221v.

*Episode from the Indian Princess's story: King Turktaz visits the magical garden of Turknaz, Queen of the Faeries.
(Illustrator: Muhammad Zaman, dated AH 1086/1675–1676 CE at Ashraf, Mazandaran)*

اور وایشان کیشده فرستیم و در فونید ما سلطان سلیم خست کریم
و شجسته یاقه باریجا سپیدیم و سلطان ایزید مار خلیلید
کتاب و رت از کمان و روبرو کوسید که گهر ز و اصداد



f. 65r.

Ottoman ambassador at the reception of Shah Tahmasp I.

Dorn 302.
National Library of Russia.
Saint Petersburg.



Chapter III

The *Khamsa* of Nizami: Shiraz Manuscripts

154

The Iraqi-Ajam region, centred on Shiraz, was a province of the Ilkhanids. In the 14th century the region came under Inju rule following the breakup of the Ilkhanate; the Injus later fell to the Muzaffarids and, finally, in 1387 the Timurid emirs took control of the region.

From 1393, the governorship of Shiraz was given to Umar Shaykh (Timur's second son). On his death in 1394, the whole central part of the state was assigned to his sons: the eldest, Pir Muhammad, governed Fars until his death in 1409, after which Iskandar, the youngest, ruled in Shiraz until 1414. The illustrated manuscripts associated with that city in the first period of Timurid hegemony contain stylistically varied paintings, yet all display some combination of material with fundamentally similar characteristics that argue for some depth to the Shiraz book-making tradition, even when overlaid by 'foreign' influences.

We begin with a quick glance at Shiraz miniature painting of the 14th century. Works in the first half of the century are in the Inju style, which was very primitive

and, according to Ernst Grube, had negligible influence on the later development of an overall style. Exerting a much greater influence on the miniature painting produced during the following period of Shiraz Muzaffarid dynasty rule, was the Muzaffarid Shah Shoja whose two short-lived assaults on Tabriz (in 1359 and 1370), resulted in an abrupt change in the development of the Shiraz style of painting.

The history of 15th century painting in the region is, at least for the first half of the century, the history of manuscripts produced in Tabriz, Shiraz and Herat under the patronage of Timur's grandson Iskandar; of Timur's fourth son and successor Shahrukh; and of Shahrukh's sons Baysunghur, Ibrahim, Ulugh Beg and Muhammad Juki.

Shahrukh restored communications with China and India that had been interrupted during Timur's rule: in 1407 he released the ambassadors detained by his father back in 1397 and sent his own envoys. During his reign, Chinese ambassadors visited Herat four times (in 1409, 1412, 1417 and 1419). The artist Qiyas ad-Din Ali and the historian Hafiz-i Abru headed to China and India as

part of Timurid diplomatic missions, thus reinforcing political communications and promoting cultural exchange.

Once Iskandar Sultan had been executed, his successor Ibrahim Sultan sent his nobleman Hasan on an important mission from Shahrukh to the Chinese court. Hasan left Samarkand in March 1420 and spent five months, from December 1420 to May 1421, in Beijing, returning to Herat in August 1422.

These embassies undoubtedly carried many gifts and were accompanied by numerous merchants. The Timurid court's penchant for Chinese drawings and decorative techniques is evident, and the pale-yellow tones of the paintings in the *Anthology* of Iskandar Sultan are supplemented by favourite motifs, including dragons, phoenixes, floating and flying ducks, bamboo, lions tied with ribbons and angels in the clouds. They were tailored to meet oriental tradition, but their origins are clear; marginal decoration appeared later, quite often in gold alone. This was a primary feature of all expensive 16th century Tabriz manuscripts.

But it did not take long for Timurid artisans to realize that Chinese art did not really fit into their concept of space, humanity and landscape; nor did it match their way of thinking. They therefore retained just a few decorative motifs ("chi" clouds, for example) that could fit naturally into the planar structure of miniature painting without disrupting its formula.

Some researchers attempt to present the evolution of Shiraz miniature painting as an integrated artistic phenomenon; in doing so, they forget that throughout the three centuries of its existence, Shiraz altered its principles and style every few decades.

Iskandar Sultan, whose life as a patron of arts was heavily influenced by events in the turbulent world outside was an ardent bibliophile. His enthusiasm is evidenced by a number of exquisite manuscripts produced for him and now preserved in libraries around the world.



*H.796. Topkapı Palace Library.
Place: Yazd.
Date: AH 810/1407 CE.
This Anthology of poetry has 289 folios
with 14 illustrations.*

The profound impact of the Jalayirid tradition on Timurid painting is epitomized by this manuscript executed in the city of Yazd. It not only signals a change in painting associated with Fars province, it also documents the movement of Jalayirid artists to Timurid ateliers. There was an immediate impact on the Timurid attitude towards materials. In addition, there are numerous links with the manuscripts produced later for Iskandar at Shiraz, particularly in terms of the page's format. It has been suggested that this manuscript may also have been executed for Iskandar, who was governor of Yazd from 1405–1406 and was apparently still in control there in 1407 on behalf of his brother Pir-Muhammad.

Timur's young grandson Jalal ad-Din Iskandar Sultan ibn Umar Shaykh (1384–1414) took over from Sultan Ahmad Jalayir as the most outstanding patron of arts in the Muslim world; there is no doubt that the latter's best artisans took service with Iskandar Sultan.

Iskandar was a learned man with deep interests in astronomy, astrology, theology and other branches of learning and the arts in the late medieval period. His magnificent horoscope, which was completed in AH 813/1411 CE, is testimony to his belief in astrology and the occult sciences.



*f. 101b.
Iskandar builds the Wall to block Gog and Magog.*



f. 6r.

The Ascent of the Prophet over the Ka'ba guided by Jibra'il and escorted by angels.

Add. MS.27261.

The Miscellany of Iskandar Sultan.

British Library.

*Date: from AH Jumada I,
813 to Jumada II 814/September 1410–
October 1411 CE.*

His turbulent political career successively covered Shiraz, Yazd and Isfahan. Back in his childhood, a collection of epic poems had been compiled for him; that manuscript is now shared between the Chester Beatty Library (Dublin) and the British Library (London).

It is illuminated in Shiraz Muzaffarid style, with the miniatures displaying Jalayirid patterns and clearly presaging the style of miniatures that were produced for him early in the 15th century. Those two small volumes are clear evidence that he preferred anthologies and pocket-size books. Of the anthologies, the most prominent examples are: the *Anthology* in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (AH 810/1407–08 CE) copied in Yazd (H.796); and the *Anthology* in Lisbon (1411) whose miniatures were damaged due to storage in a flooded room. A small-format edition of the *Anthology* (1410–11), in the British Library (Add. 27261) is another outstanding creation of Iskandar Sultan's artisans; as are the Nizami *Iskandarnameh* and the *Ajaib al-Mahlugat* (Miracles of Creation) by Zakariya Qazvini in the British Library. We might also mention the volume of poetry in Tehran's Malek Library, as well as those in the Marquess of Bute collection and the State Library in Rampur, India, which were created at Iskandar Sultan's request.

During his brief rule of Fars (capital: Shiraz), Iskandar Sultan distinguished himself by establishing an art workshop that produced illustrated manuscripts. The existence of such manuscripts from the late 14th century is evidence of there already being a workshop in Shiraz at that time. And Iskandar Sultan certainly made use of it; following Timur's example, he even expanded it, attracting artists and craftsmen from Baghdad and Tabriz, considered to be the best in those times. We also know that Maw-lana Maruf Khattat Baghdadi, a calligrapher from Baghdad and, according to Qazi Ahmad, the "talent and rarity of centuries", worked there, too.

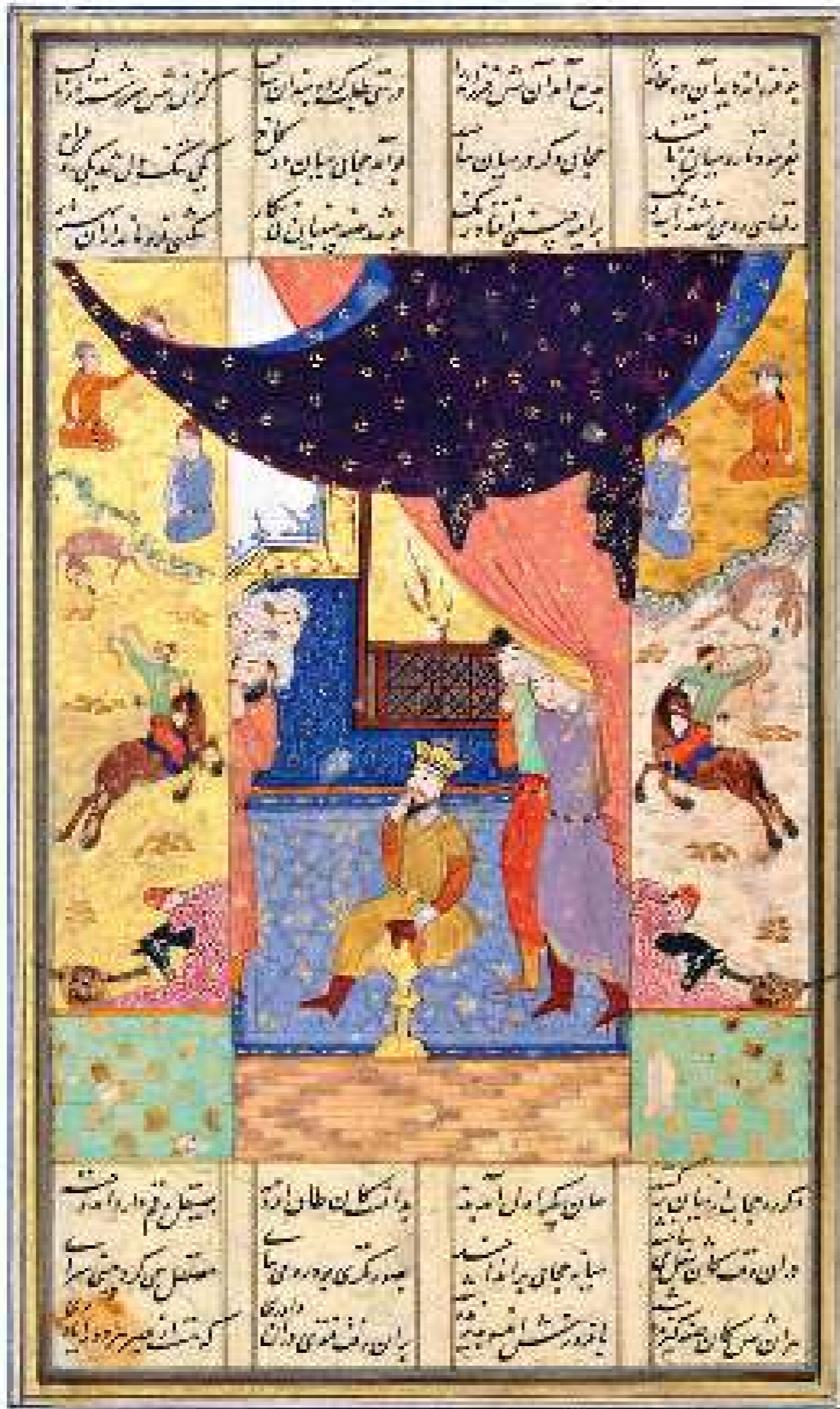
One year after Iskandar Sultan assumed power in 1410–1411, two remarkable illustrated manuscripts, *The Anthology of Poetry*, were created for him. The London (British Library Add.27261) manuscript contains 21 miniatures; it was copied by calligraphers Muhammad al-Khalva'i and Nasir al-Katib. We do not know who was responsible for the illumination and paintings, but some of the latter are probably the work of Pir Ahmad Bagh-shimali, reputedly the greatest artist of the time.

The Lisbon (Inv.L.A.161) manuscript, copied by Mahmud al-Husayni and Hasan al-Hafiz, does not indicate the artists' names, but such a large number of illustrations produced in one year is a clear indication that there was a sizeable pool of them. The Lisbon anthology is in an early Timurid style, with poetic texts in the first volume and prose in the second. It has 38 miniatures and 15 works of illumination, either full-page or half-page. The anthology was a gift from Baron Edmond de Rothschild to Calouste Gulbenkian.



f. 159v.

The Fairy Queen handing the traveller a cup of wine after he was discovered in her garden. Story told to Bahram Gur by the Indian Princess in the Black Pavilion.



f. 322a.

The Byzantine and Chinese painters in a trial of skill.

The Khamsa of Nizami.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
Place: Shiraz.
Date: AH 853\1449–1450 CE.
Timurid period (1370–1507)

The presence of so many first-class artists in the first year of Iskandar's Shiraz governorship may be explained by Sultan Ahmad's death in 1410, following which those he patronised moved to Iskandar Sultan's protection. The creation of two remarkable *Anthology* manuscripts from 1410–11 (that is, in the same year) is an indication that the team remained intact and had a leading role in Iskandar's workshop. After all, it took Baysunghur Mirza years to assemble such a team of like-minded creators and achieve homogeneity of style.

M. Ashrafi points out: "The artistic centre in Shiraz embarks upon a continuous path of development, which can be traced back as early as the mid-14th century. Across those decades, the Shiraz miniature was distinguished by a sustainable stylistic unity; its most distinctive feature was a strict planar system, although from the end of the 14th century it moved some way towards a kind of multi-dimensional imaging (*Shahan Shahnameh* of Ahmad Tabrizi (1397–1398), British Library, London) under the influence of the Baghdad-Tabriz school. Still, these innovations were creatively and naturally blended into the predominant local tradition."

This is yet another confirmation of the generally accepted view that Iskandar Sultan's style was greatly inconsistent with mainstream Shiraz miniature painting; it represented an evolutionary stage of the main palace style that originated in Tabriz, then moved by twists of fate to Baghdad, Shiraz and Herat, returning to Tabriz early in the 16th century.

Acc. no. MS.1-1969. *The Khamsa of Nizami*.
Fitzwilliam Museum. University of Cambridge.

Date: c. 1465–1475.

Place: Probably Shiraz.

Script: Nasta'liq.

Owner: The slave, gilder, sinner Ali al-Husayni.

There are more than 42 miniatures in the Turkman style,
by more than one hand.

Reviewing the period of Iskandar's philanthropy, M. Ashrafi came to the logical conclusion: "Shiraz painting developed not only the principles of composition and spatial imaging that originated in the Baghdad school, but also the presentation of figures, landscape and architecture. The style of those Shiraz masterpieces dated 1410–1411 represents the next step for an artistic style developed late in the 14th century in the Baghdad school. These works are the evidence of great artisans from Baghdad working in the Shiraz centre in 1410–1411 and continuing to develop the style of their school."

During this period, when Iskandar Sultan's anthologies of poetry were created, Nizami's *Khamsa* clearly becomes the oriental poetic work of choice for illustrators, too. In the London *Anthology*, 14 of the 21 miniatures represent illustrations to the poems of Nizami's *Khamsa*; the others reproduce plots from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* and Kirmani's *Humay and Humayun*. In the Lisbon *Anthology*, most of the miniatures are also dedicated to the Nizami *Khamsa*. Among the illustrations in this work, we see miniatures on plots that would be encountered later, regardless of the school, in almost every *Khamsa* manuscript: *Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders*; *Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing*; *Shirin with Khosrow's portrait*; *Battle between the tribes of Leyli and Majnun*; *Majnun among wild animals*; *Iskandar visiting the hermit* etc.



f. 73.

Farhad is brought into Shirin's presence, in her castle.



f. 123.

The poet presenting his book to his patron.

Possibly: Nizami presenting his poems to his youthful patron, Toghrul ibn Arslan, the last sultan of the Great Seljuk Empire.

As we mentioned earlier, Iskandar Sultan preferred small-size manuscripts; his *Anthology* in the British Library is just 182 x 129 mm. They are distinguished from those of Sultan Ahmad by triangular inserts in the margins. Some miniatures in the manuscript *Humay and Humayun* of Kirmani (Add. Ms.18113 *Kulliyati Khwaju Kirmani* AH 798/1396 CE. British Library) had served as a prototype for the London *Anthology*, and they appeared later in manuscripts of the 1420s. Some of the later miniatures in the London *Anthology* are so similar to those in the Kirmani that they must have been kept in the rulers' *kitabkhanas* where artists could copy them. Some of the rulers did not affix their seals, but many of these works bear the seal of Shahrukh.

Iskandar was naturally far too independent to remain obedient to his uncle Shahrukh. He was deposed and blinded in 1414, and Shahrukh's son Ibrahim Mirza, then twenty, succeeded him.

Following Iskandar's execution in 1414, Shahrukh took over his brimming treasury, which had, among other riches, numbers of valuable manuscripts, and he relocated many of the famous artists from Shiraz to Herat. According to Dawlatshah Samarkandi, 40 artists, mostly natives of Tabriz (including Mawlana Farid al-Din Jafar Tabrizi, Sayyidi Ahmad Naqqash, Khwaju Ali Musawwir, Kamawaddin Tabrizi), as well as calligraphers Mawlana Maruf Khattat Baghdadi, Mahmoud al-Hussaini etc. were forcibly moved to Herat.

These artisans still made a significant contribution with their work and development of the traditions. The early 15th century Shiraz miniature was vividly enriched by the achievements of various painting schools; and a common artistic style and language was formed for the miniature... “The miniature painting canon, followed now by the artists, was surely taking shape in this period. The Shiraz manuscripts created under Iskandar Sultan do reflect a synthesis of the spatially-oriented Baghdad-Tabriz school and their planar-oriented Shiraz counterpart, which achieved the purpose of illustrating a flat book sheet without breaching the general conventions of the artistic language. At the same time, a system of standard compositional schemes was formed that stemmed from the selection and canonization of compositions of choice...” writes L. Ayni.

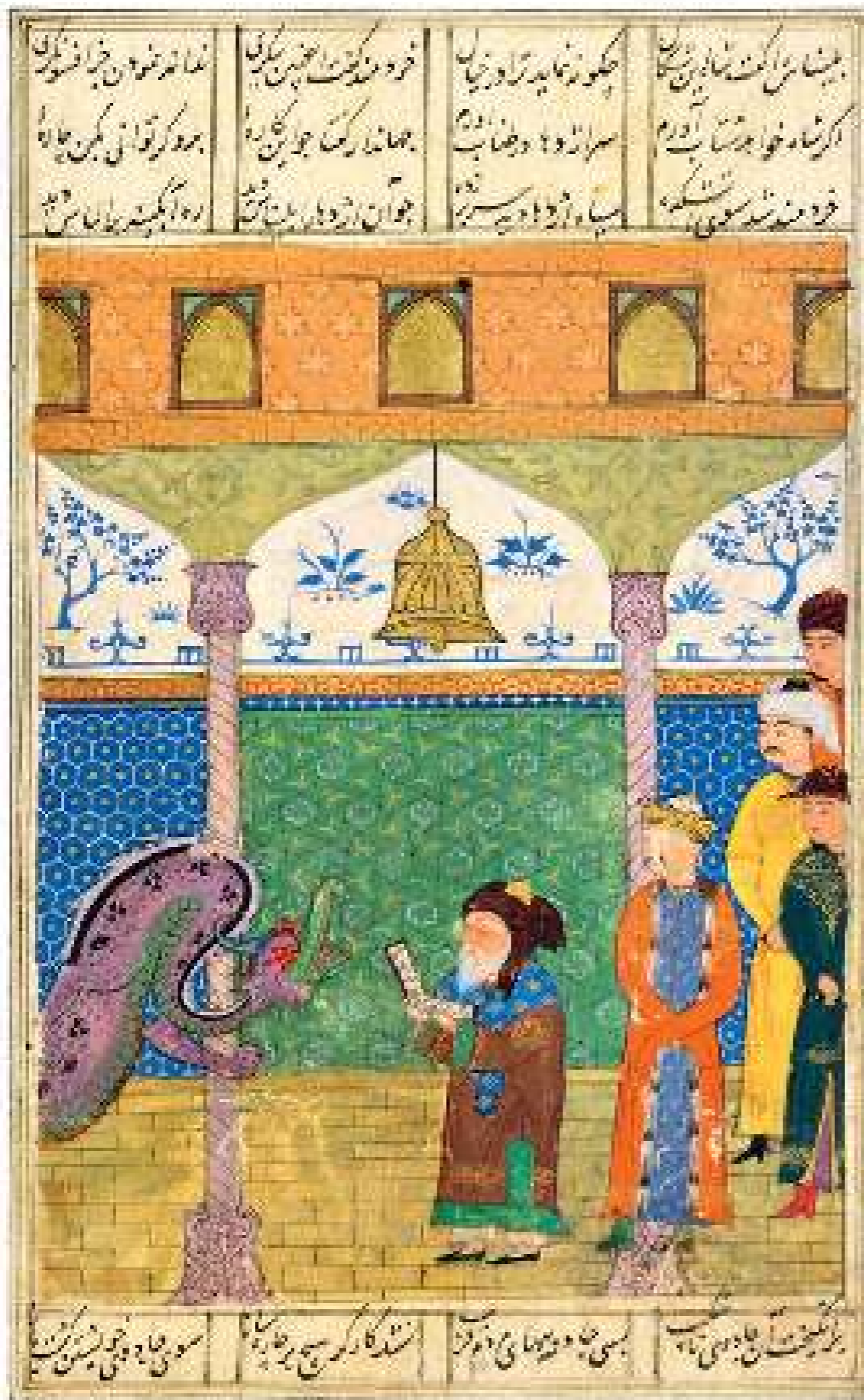
Many of the gilders, binders and scribes who had executed Iskandar’s manuscripts appear to have remained in Shiraz, and Ibrahim made full use of their services in a fascinating series of manuscripts of poetry, illustrated epic and dynastic history.



f. 128.

The Archangel Jibra'il leads Buraq to the Prophet's house.

Two angels in the sky above. Buraq, apparently restive, is held by a rope round his neck, the two angels with their long girdles and silver bowls are the only other figures in the miniature besides Jibra'il. The doors are gold with blue and silver divisions and are surmounted by the inscription 'al-Sultan'. Buraq has a maroon body, blue wing, orange saddle and a green cloth and girth.



f. 368b.

The sage Balinas (Apollonius of Tyana) defeating the fire-temple dragon at Isfahan with a spell.

He annihilates the fire temple of the Magi that was guarded by a sorceress of Rostam's race who became a victim of her own magic and turned into a dragon. Balinas, by sprinkling rue and reading spells, restored it to its former shape as a woman who proved to be so beautiful that Balinas took her as his wife and learned all about her sorcery. The contrast between the raging dragon and the frail lonely figure of Balinas is very impressive in this miniature. A large gold temple bell hangs in the centre.

According to B. Gray: "It is quite obvious that many painters and masters of the book arts could have moved to the Timurid capital. This is confirmed by the revival of a traditional provincial style in Shiraz, which was, of course, more vivid and at the same time less exquisite than those of Baysung-hur and Shahrukh".

The finest example of the stark, dramatic, stripped-down Shiraz style of Timurid painting is in the illustrated copy of Ibrahim's history of Timur, Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi's *Zafarnameh*, the Book of Victory. One copy was enhanced with pictures, more than half in double-page format, whose function was to present Timur and his heirs in the Shahrukh line as heroic kings: victorious in war, courageous in the hunt, generous in feasts after victory, powerful in arranging marriage alliances and favoured by the birth of sons. Ibrahim Sultan did not live to see its completion, and the ornamental illumination in the finished manuscript is sparse, no doubt an indication of a lack of direction and funds, once Ibrahim had "charged the steed of life from the arena of this world".

After Ibrahim's untimely demise in 1435, the Shiraz workshops shifted their focus from ornament to illustration. Shiraz manuscripts would never again display the wondrous and imaginative wealth of illuminated ornamentation that characterizes them from about 1370 to 1455. It was instead, illustration, in the style developed by Ibrahim Sultan's artists, that remained unchanged in Shiraz manuscripts post 1435.

The picture of artistic life in 14th–15th centuries Shiraz (which may be extended to the end of the Classical period in the 16th century) is conclusive evidence of its position as a manuscript production centre per se, not merely as a school.

Ivan Stchoukine gave specific consideration to the possibilities of a style resuming its development even if moved to a different location, as well as to the ambiguity of notions of "style" and "centre" (the fundamental difference between these two is that a city may for a certain time become, by force of circumstances, a centre, i.e. a staging area for artistic capacities, whereas "school" represents an integral artistic phenomenon that takes a long path of development and has its own style). He wrote: "Patrons of art at that time were striving to find artists capable of leading a workshop, and either invited them on favourable terms or relocated them by force, as Amir Timur did. Those relocations between royal



f. 399.

The Byzantine and Chinese painters in a trial of skill in painting a wall decoration.

The masters are hidden from each other. The curtains dividing them are to be removed when they had finished, for the judgement of their paintings. When this was done, to the astonishment of all the onlookers, there was no difference between the two. Balinas was sent for and ordered the curtains to be replaced. When this was done, it became apparent that one wall was adorned by a painting, the other was bare but highly polished. The miniature is divided into six compartments. The upper left-hand section shows two Chinese men polishing the wall's surface with round white stones on sticks while the Byzantine (Rum) men in the right-hand column are busily painting their mural with blue pigment. The upper central section contains the curtains dividing the contenders. The central figure, Iskandar, watches, finger to mouth, astonished. The figure on the left is probably the Chinese Khagan while on the right there are two yellow-robed men.



f. 419b.

Iskandar finds Elias and Khizr at the Well of Life.

They both have flame-haloes of gold and red and are seated on either side of a platter holding a fish. Two more fish swim in the stream.

courts, whether voluntary or forced, could result in artists moving from one palace to another; it even so happened that a school of painting had to move from its home state to a different realm. In such circumstances, it would be difficult to speculate about an artistic tradition tied to a specific locality and its continuous existence within a single artistic workshop without considering the outcomes of alignment and artistic syncretism borne on the whims of the rulers. Even assuming that relocation of artists had to result in the fermentation of concepts and heterogeneous pictorial formulas, we still have to state that works with a distinct style were created in more than one centre.”

Earlier, in his foreword to the catalogue of the Bodleian Library collection in Oxford, B. W. Robinson had also noted that it was not possible to place a school within geographical boundaries, as artists were bound by style rather than by the city they had to live in or by the patron-customer of manuscripts: “Overall, it should be specially emphasized that during the period from 1390 to 1415 it would be wrong to talk of so-called “Herat” and “Shiraz” styles... Manuscripts created in these and others cities contain elements of the generic (universal) style, and the differences between them represent rather individual handwriting on the basis of the general style than differences between individual local schools.



f. 433.

Miryam, the Coptic Syrian maid, consulted by alchemists.

Following her father's death, she had been driven from her dominion. Seeking justice, she went to Iskandar's court and, inspired by Aristotle's wisdom, she gained all kinds of knowledge, especially the art of making gold. When she was restored to her kingdom the whole court became resplendent in gold. A band of dispirited alchemists pleaded for her secret and after she had mystified them, saying her black hair was the principle element in gold making, she held a serious discourse with them. In this miniature, she is standing on her balcony, hands to her braids of hair, looking down at the alchemists below. 'Al-Sultan' is inscribed above the doors.



f. 443.

Iskandar and the seven sages in learned discussion.



f. 452.

Iskandar sails the unknown seas to Morocco with three companions and a boatman in a long black boat with a single mast and sail.

Acc. no. 376 Halet Efendi's Khamsa of Nizami.

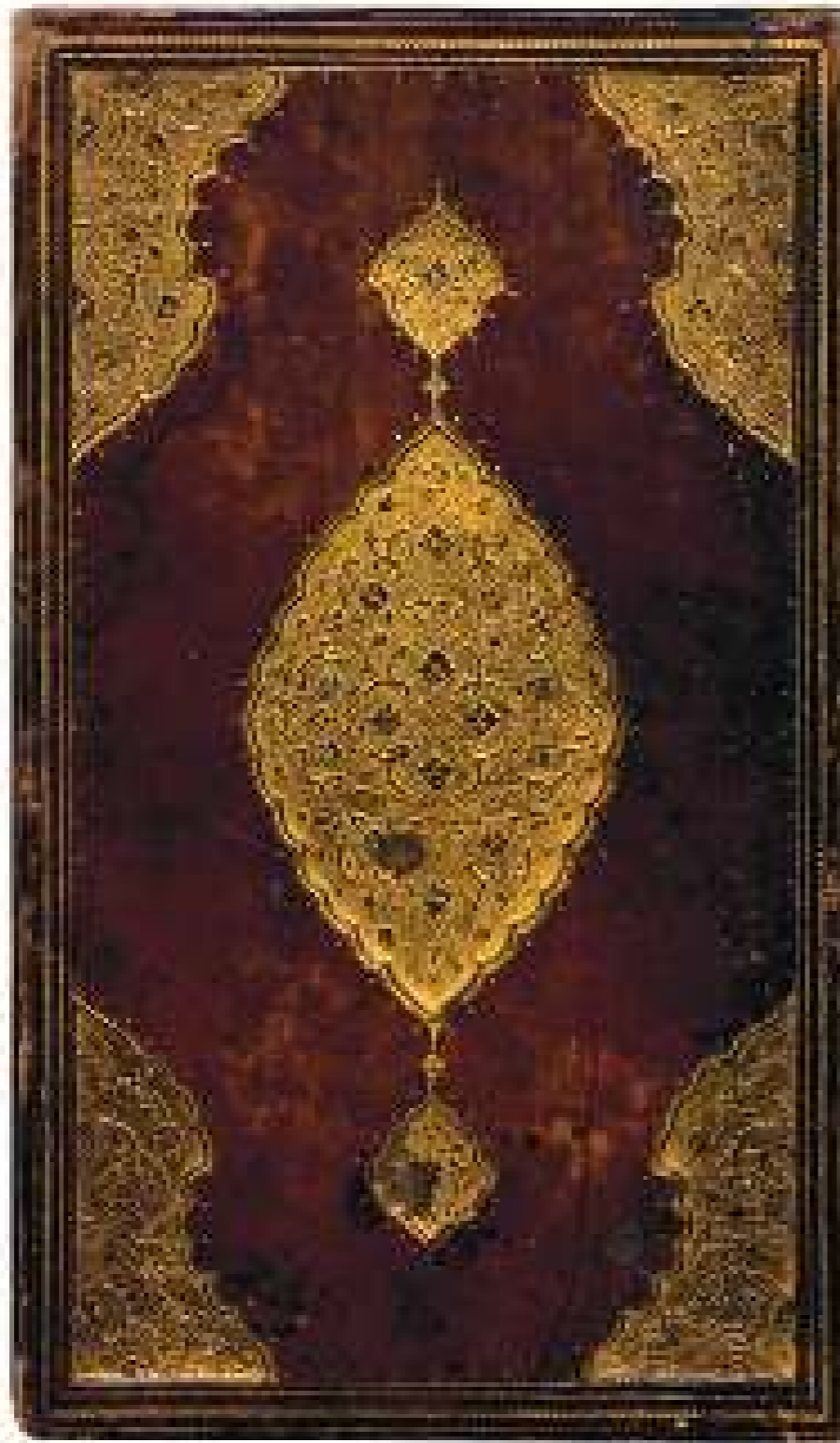
The Suleymaniyye Library.

Date: AH 900 /1495 CE.

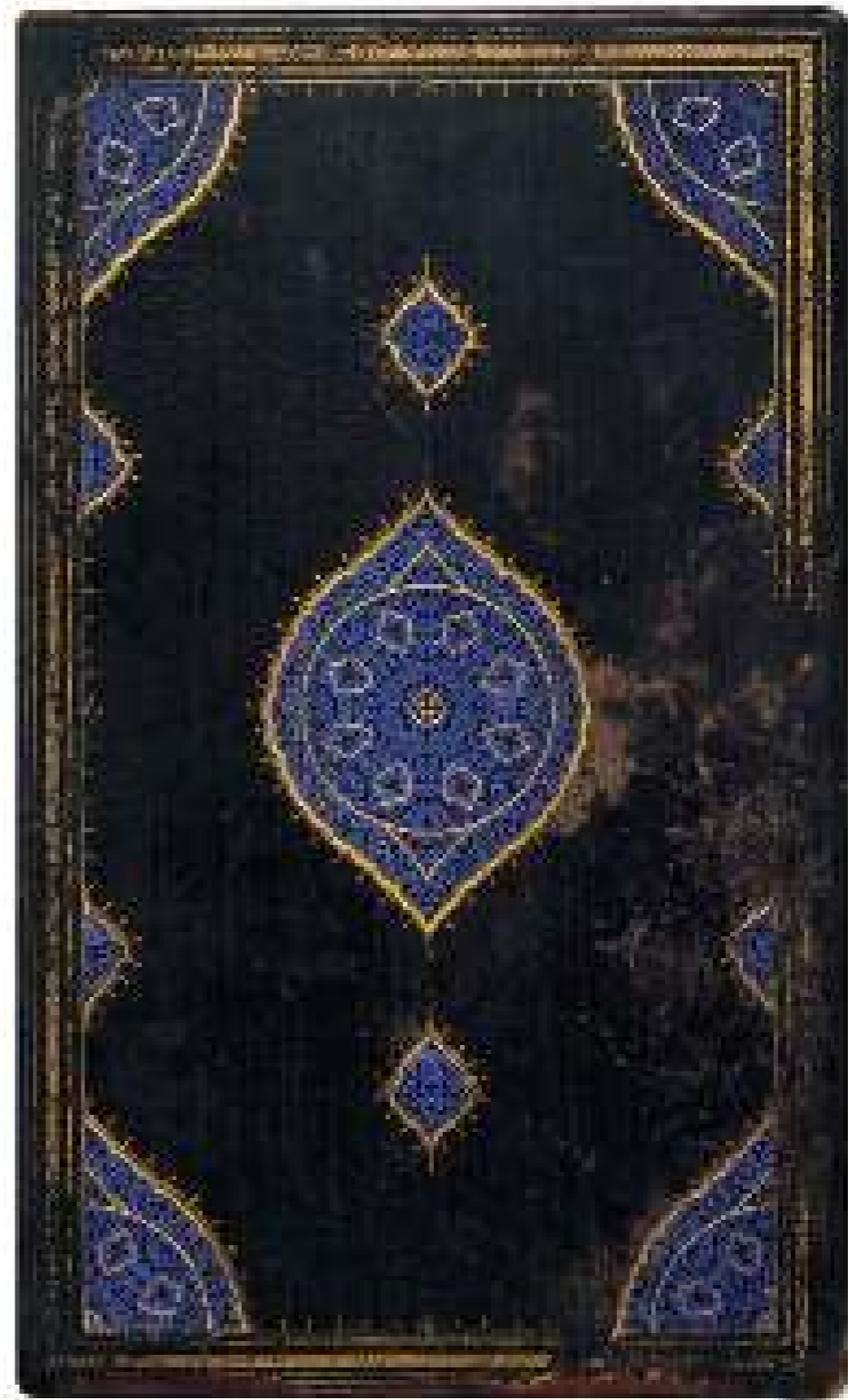
Place: Shiraz.

Calligrapher: Mun'im al-Din al-Evhadi.

In AH 1236 /1820–1821 CE, Halet Efendi presented the manuscript to the Halet Efendi Library, which he had built in the yard of the Galata Mevlevi meeting house (lodge); it was admitted to the Manuscript Section of the Suleymaniyye Library in 1927.



Front cover, outer.



Front cover, inner.



f. 3.

Rosette medallion.

Seal with text: "Fulfil all the efforts and deeds of all the people of faith upon their holy scriptures and provide for their needs".

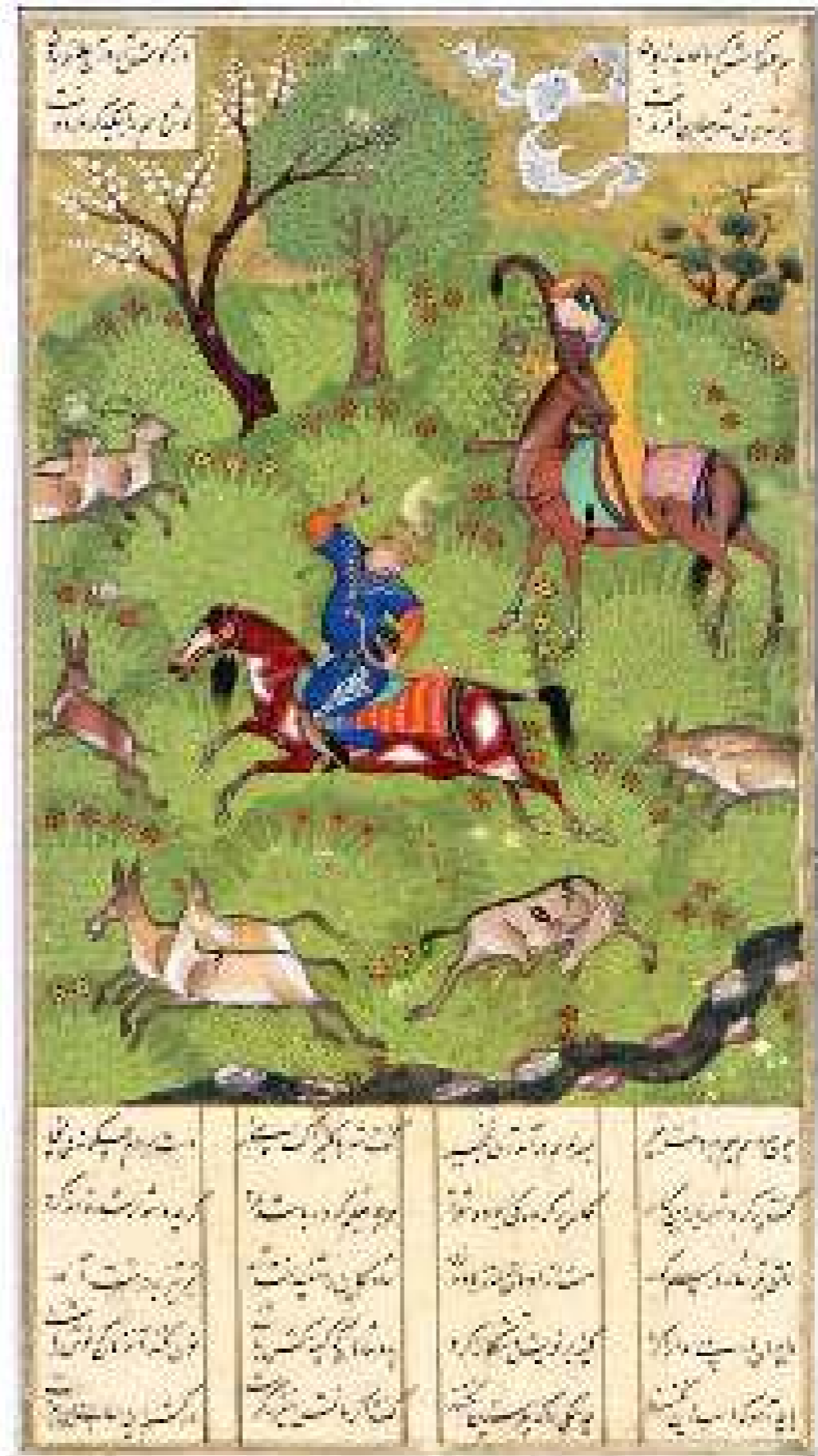


f. 4.

Illuminated right-hand page of the frontispiece.



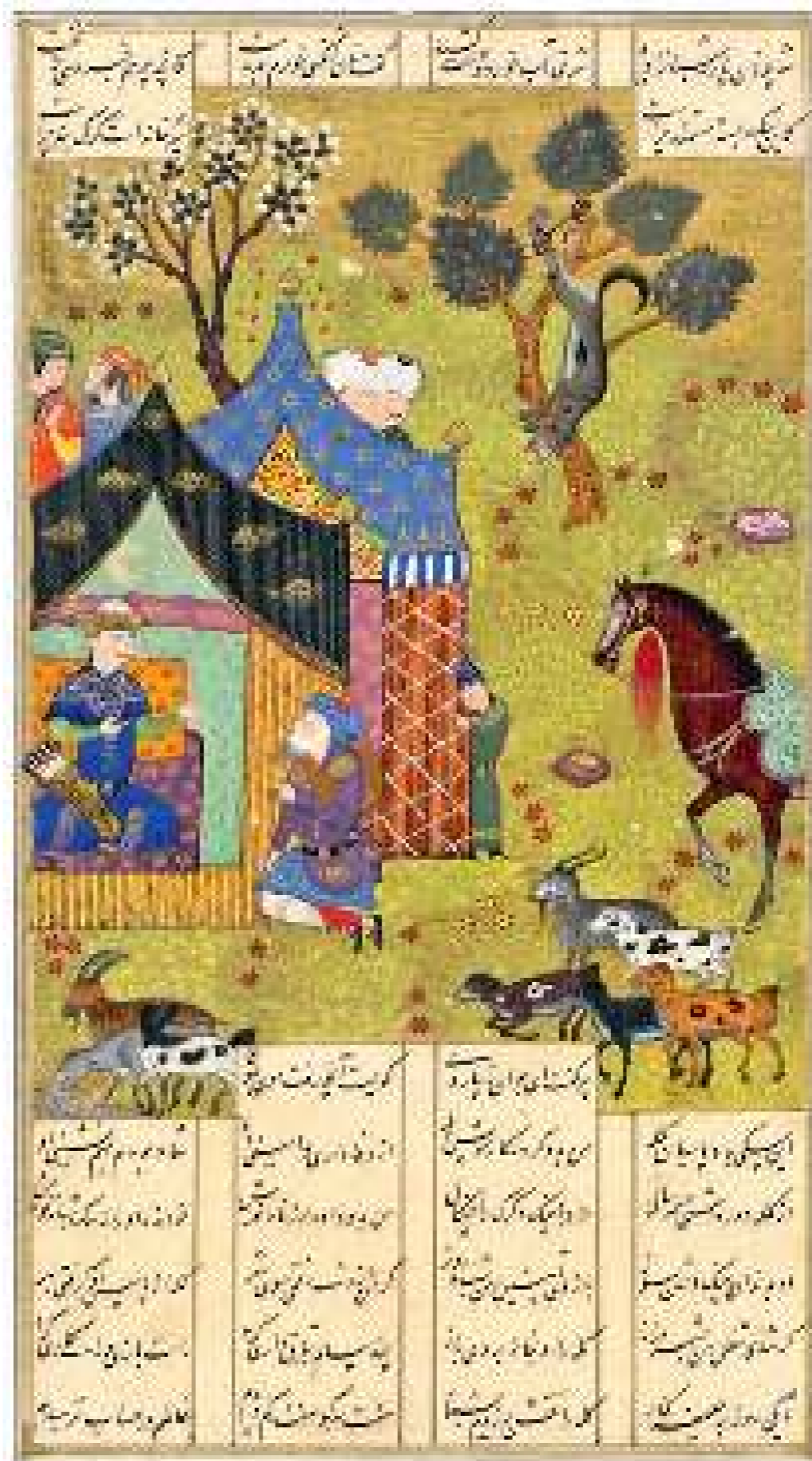
f. 76.
Khosrow and Shirin in their bridal chamber.



f. 156.
Bahram and Fitnah hunting.



f. 158.
Fitnah carries the calf.



f. 195.
Bahram Gur listens to the shepherd's parable of his dog's betrayal.
The shepherd hangs his dog as punishment for allowing a wolf to steal the sheep.

Acc. no. AF 93. The Khamsa of Nizami.

The Austrian National Library.

Date: 1500–1501.

Copyist: Shams ad-Din ibn Giyat ad-Din al-Hafiz al-Kirmani.

Date of illustrations: 1501–1506.

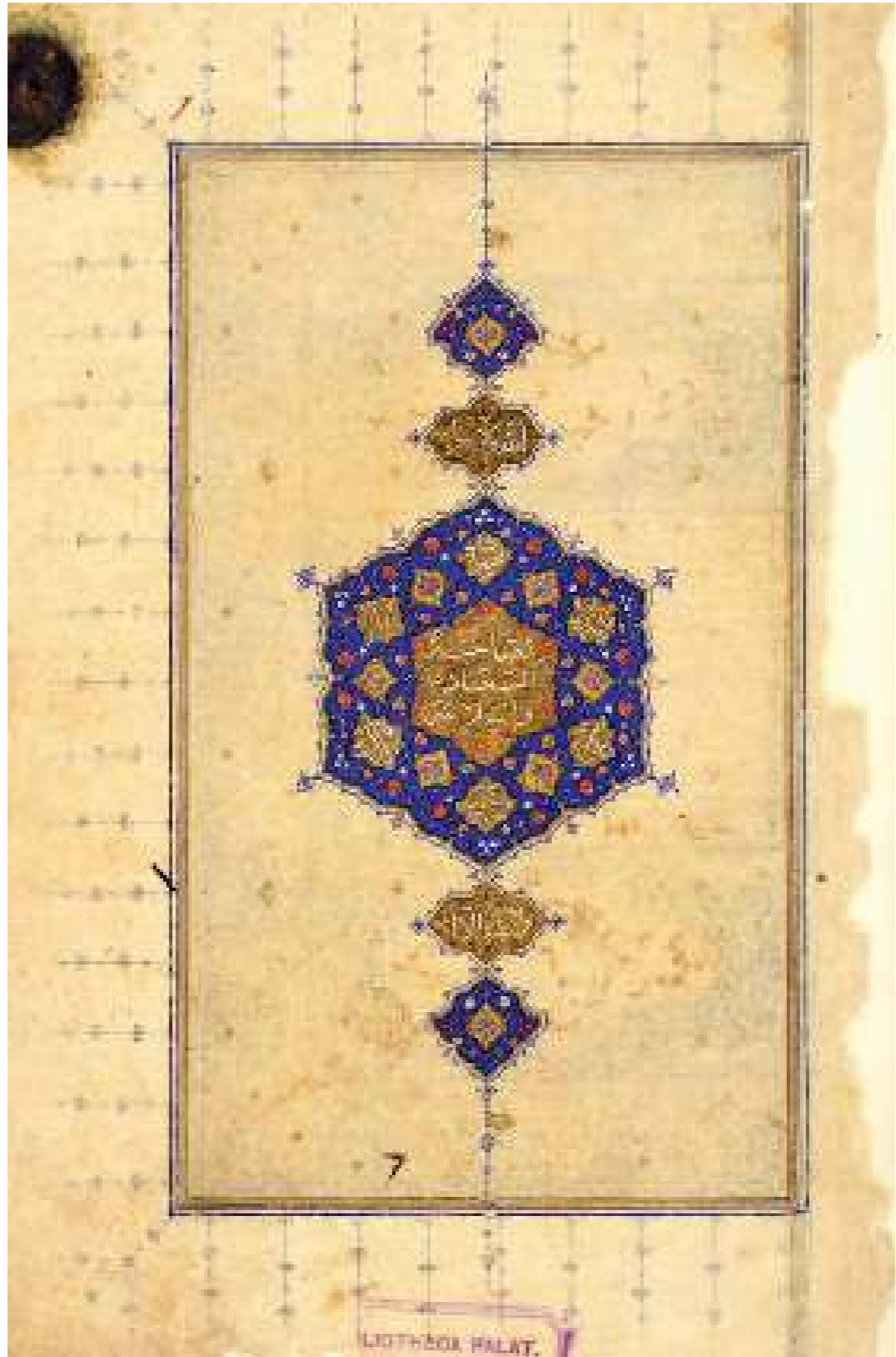
Place: probably Shiraz.

Style: Turkman Commercial Style.

Shiraz: Painting throughout the 16th Century

Illustrated 16th century Shiraz manuscripts constitute an entirely separate chapter in the history of Safavid painting.

The arrival and departure of successive Agh-qoyunlu rulers in the second half of the 15th century, and the presence of Safavid governors throughout the 16th century, did not affect the vigour or productivity of its longstanding manuscript traditions. On the contrary, Shiraz in the early years of the Safavid era maintained its position as a thriving centre for the commercial production of well-calligraphed and finely illuminated manuscripts of all kinds; some of the plain manuscripts, especially the Qur'ans, are exceptionally fine.



f. 1a.
Rosette medallion.



f. 71.
Khosrow and Shirin meet in the lap of nature.



f. 185.
Majnun releases gazelles.



f. 186.
Majnun releases deer.



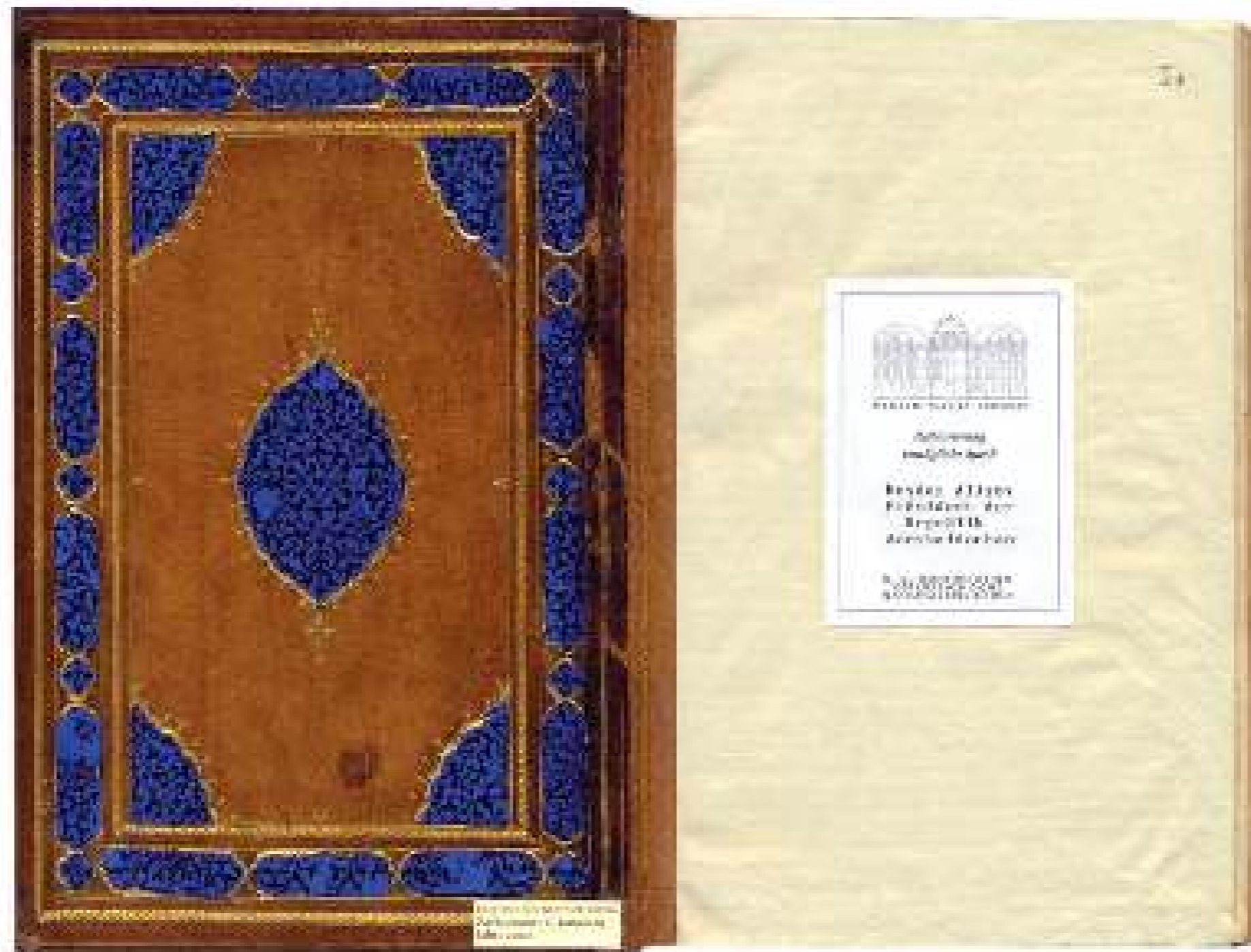
f. 249.
Bahram Gur kills the dragon.



f. 293.
The fairy tale about Mahan.



f. 373.
Iskandar and Roshanak in their bridal chamber.



f. 439.

A note on the last page of the manuscript states that it was restored with the support of H.E. Heydar Aliyev, the late President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.



f. 199r:
Bahram Gur slays the dragon.

Acc. no. AKN 270. *The Khamsa of Nizami.*
The Aga Khan Museum.
Place: Shiraz.
Date: 1527.
Painted by Ghiyath Mudhahhib (d.1537)

The illustrated Shiraz manuscripts of the period can also be of good quality, the best of them having a certain showy grandeur. All 16th century Shiraz manuscripts, illustrated or not, have a particularly distinctive appearance, being produced to a canon of proportion that was the rule through most of the century.

Thus, classical Shiraz paintings of the 16th century are often extremely irregular in outline (which makes them difficult to measure accurately), even when text and picture are both contained within characteristically wide gold and multi-coloured margins.



f. 291v.

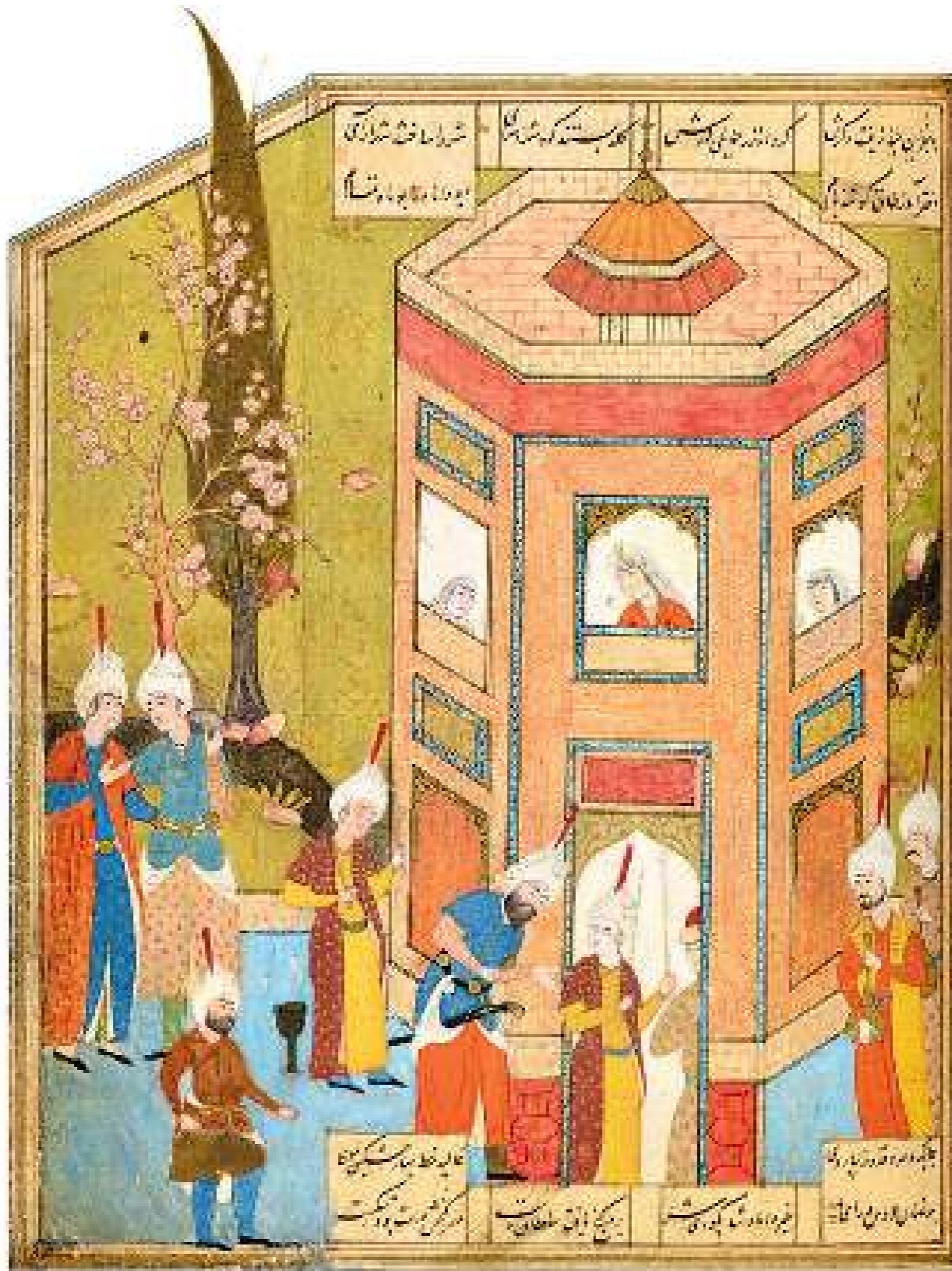
Iskandar comforts the dying Darius.



f. 210b.
Sulayman and Bilqis enthroned.

Acc. no. VR-999. *The Khamsa of Nizami.*
The State Hermitage Museum.
Place: Shiraz.
Date: AH Safar – Sha'ban 948
(May – December 1541 CE)
Copyist: Hasan al-Husayni al-katib al-Shirazi.

Variables such as the overall size of a manuscript, the amount of illumination, number of illustrations and the amount of gold to be used in picture and illumination were, evidently, dependent upon the client's (or patron's) means. The classical shape of a 16th century Shiraz volume, of whatever size, almost certainly derives from the Turkman Commercial manuscripts being made in Shiraz throughout the second half of the 15th century. Their basic shape is narrower and somewhat taller than the classical Timurid volume, and a good Turkman Commercial manuscript can often be recognized as such even before the volume is opened and its paintings examined. Thus, it is probably reasonable to focus on the 15th century commercial Shiraz-Turkman manuscript as a forerunner of the Safavid Shiraz volumes.



f. 228a.

Khayr heals a princess of her sickness.



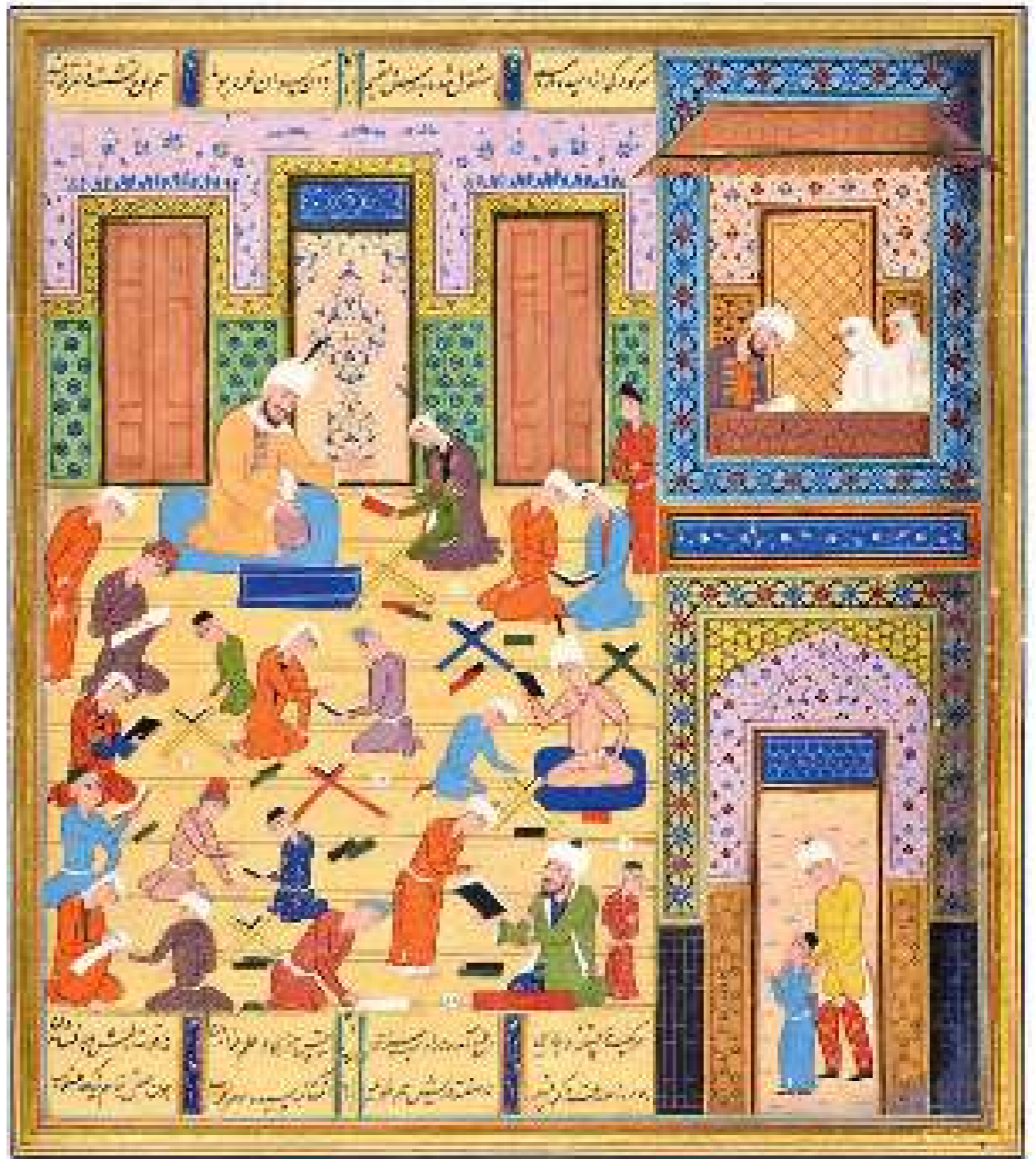
f. 346.

The alchemist Mary the Syrian and sages.

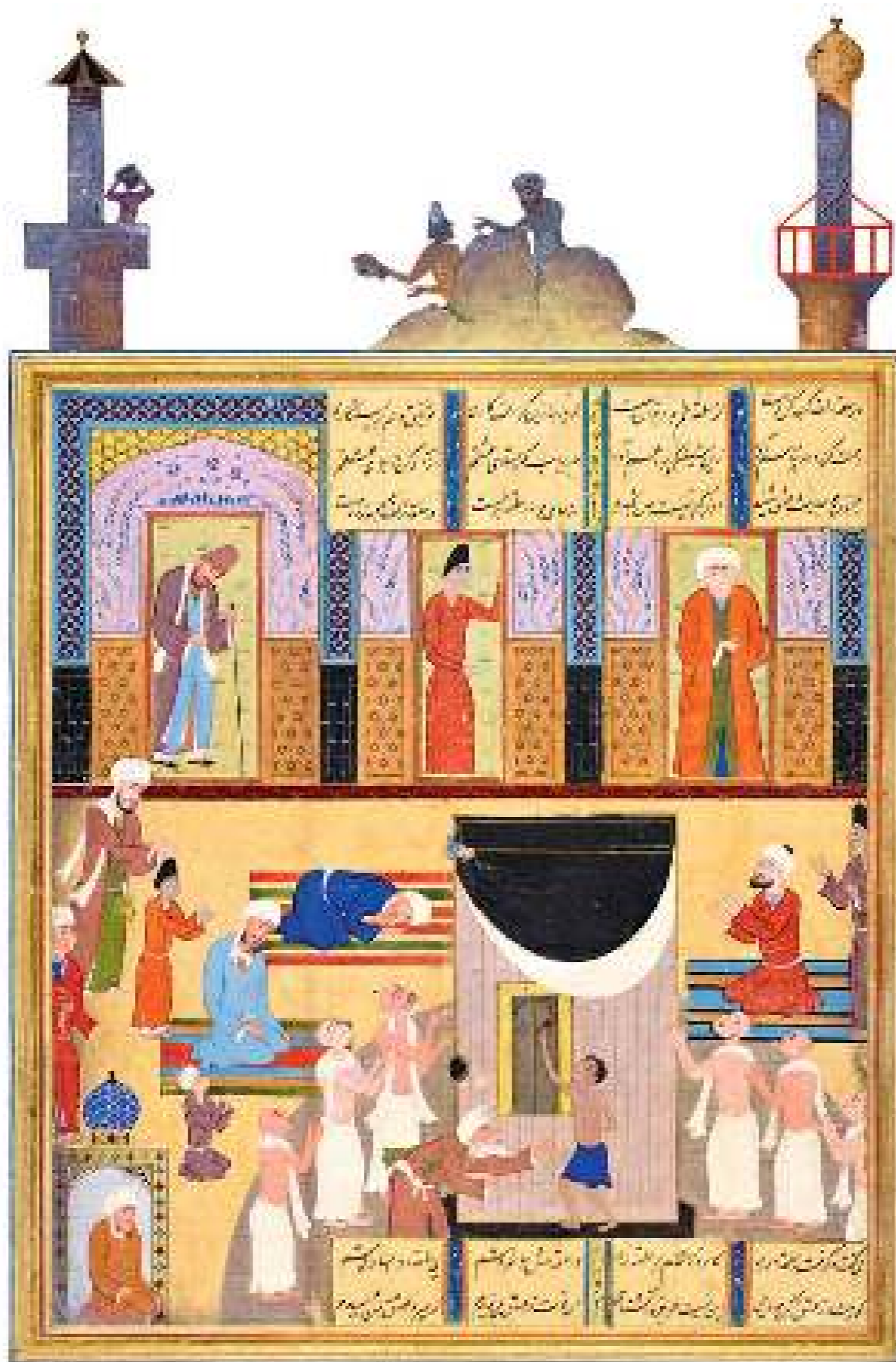
*Acc. no. Persian MS 856.
The Khamsa of Nizami.
John Rylands Library,
University of Manchester.
Date: 16th century.
Place: Shiraz.
Style: Safavid.
Script: Nasta'liq.*

The manuscript currently contains 16 miniatures (there must originally have been about 25) in good condition for the most part and excellent examples of the Shiraz style of ca. 1575. The painter's touch is sure and delicate.

The 16th century Shiraz canon really has its origins in the 1520s, sometimes in pictures with a certain complexity and crowded grandeur. Some of the best examples date from the middle of the century. It is no coincidence that this is when the hand of the 'refugees' from Tahmasp's Tabriz workshops makes its appearance in the illustration of Shiraz manuscripts, as elsewhere in the state. During the course of the century, compositions do seem to open up and exhibit a certain spaciousness, being less densely populated by patterned textiles and architecture; other paintings begin to reflect the smoother, provincial Qazvin style, in which suavity replaces the delicate spikiness of Shiraz landscapes. The absence of the Safavid *kulah* (Taj-e Haydari) turban; with its protruding baton, is also to be noted by about 1570 in Shiraz, as elsewhere. By about 1580, a modified Qazvin idiom was widespread throughout the state, and by the end of the century only the occasional reminder of the classical Shiraz "sideways T" shape argues for a Shiraz origin in the event of an otherwise unidentified painting.



*f. 162.
Leyli and Majnun at school.*



f. 171.
Majnun before the Ka'ba.



f. 485.

Iskandar reaches the Diamond Mountains and tries to take diamonds out with help of the eagles.



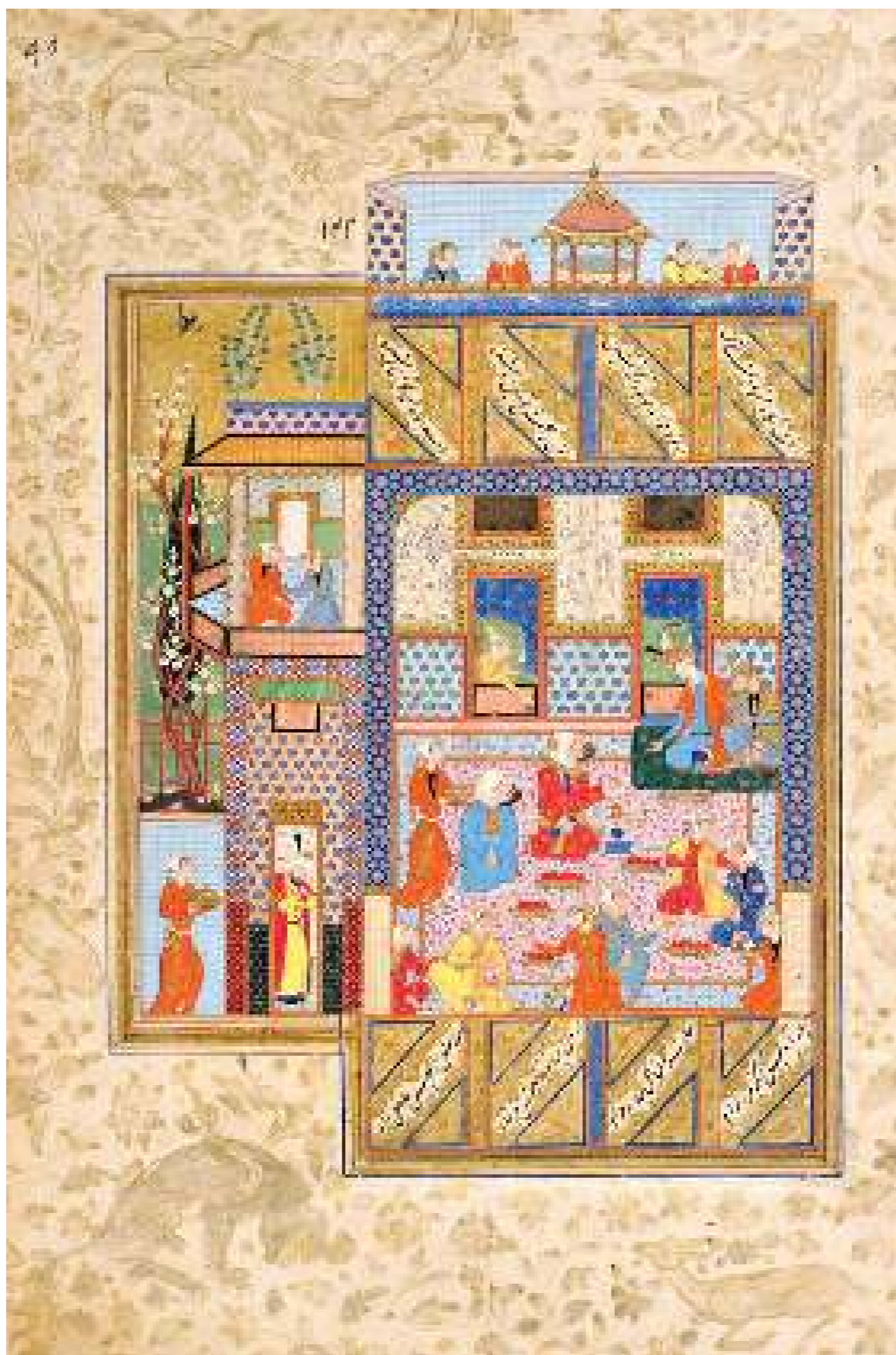
The Prophet Muhammad's Ascent to Heaven.

*The Khamsa of Nizami.
Harvard Art Museum.
Harvard University.
Date: 1584.
Place: Shiraz.
Style: Safavid.*

But although some Shiraz manuscripts, especially in the later part of the century, are of great magnificence, none can be definitely classified as 'royal'. The Shiraz style seems to have maintained its independence well into the 17th century, albeit on a declining scale of production. Once again, the metropolitan style - by now that of Reza Abbasi - is imitated, but the results are, on the whole, less satisfactory than in the previous century, ... it is noticeable that the quality of binding and illumination is higher than that of the miniatures. After the middle of the century Shiraz work is no longer distinguishable, and we may perhaps conclude that after 1600 the organized production there of commercially illustrated manuscripts declined and finally ceased.



Caliph Harun al-Rashid and the barber.



Khosrow and Shirin with courtiers.



Chapter IV

The *Khamasa* of Nizami: Qazvin Manuscripts

By the second quarter of the 16th century, the production of good illustrated manuscripts was widespread throughout literate Safavid society. Patrons tended to be governors, amirs, merchants and others of the upper and middle classes. The texts illustrated were often Persian and Persian-language classics, works from the illustrious as well as those of lesser lustre: Ferdowsi and Nizami, Rumi, Hafiz and Jami; the Herat writers Navai, Hatifi and Asafi; Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Assar, and many other poets.

But towards the middle of that century fine manuscripts, and those who made them, began to move out of Tabriz. This was due to a change in Shah Tahmasp's interests that began in the mid-1530s; it was epitomized by the so-called *Edict of Sincere Repentance*. By 1556, Tahmasp had virtually banned the secular arts from his kingdom.

The effect of this ban was felt across the whole eastern Islamic world. From the land of the Edict, some artists sought employment elsewhere. In Shiraz

the making of good manuscripts had never ceased, and pictorial evidence clarifies the movement of some Safavid court painters from Tabriz to the south, to Shiraz. Some of the finest painters of Tahmasp's erstwhile brilliant establishment found positions in the Mughal courts of northern India, with others going to Ottoman Istanbul. Still others stayed at home and continued to practise their profession by altering their working processes.

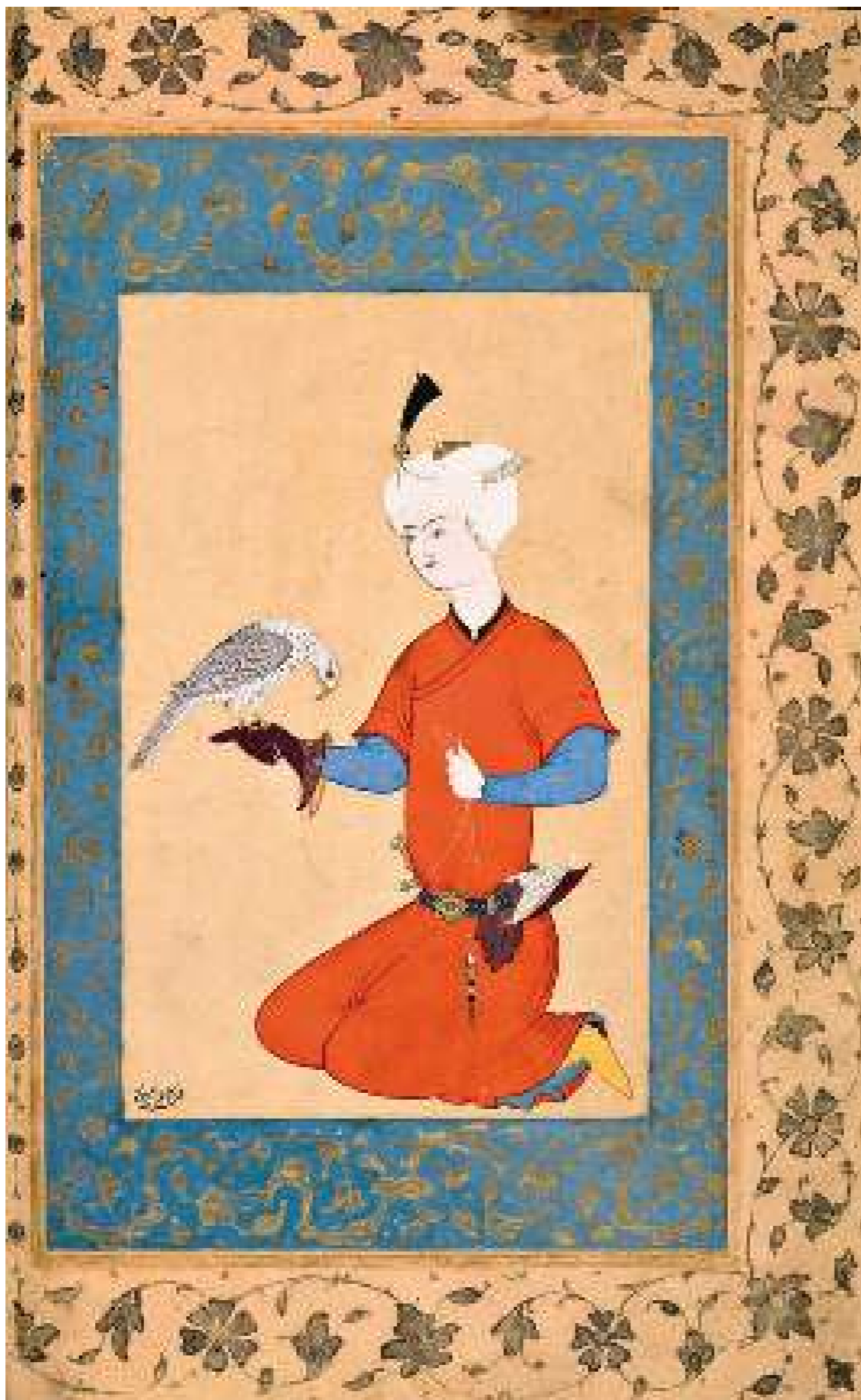
It is likely that one of the reasons for his change of behaviour was Tahmasp's visual impairment, a genetic condition that became aggravated after he suffered a serious illness in 1543. A respective account is given by the annalist Qazi Ahmad. Still another fact that suggests a genetic ophthalmic condition is the mysterious worsening of his son Muhammad Khudabanda's eyesight when he was just 16 or 17; he went blind. From a medical point of view, it is highly unusual for a patient to lose their eyesight at such an early age and it was likely due to a genetic retinal disorder known as "macular degeneration". Tahmasp,

apparently, also suffered from this affliction, although not in a severe form, and his vision did deteriorate.

It was also quite unusual that Tahmasp did not hunt much. Hunting had always been a central activity for nobility of Oghuz Turkic descent, as it helped them develop combat skills. Surprisingly, Tahmasp I did not like hunting, he preferred fishing. Annalists and Tahmasp himself referred to fishing as "fish hunting", thereby promoting his favourite pastime; he fished in mountain rivers using arrows, just as native North Americans did.

The temporary invasion of Azerbaijan and Tabriz by Ottoman troops forced Shah Tahmasp to move his capital inland, to Qazvin (around 1548). The capital relocated to Qazvin with all its officials and the palace library, thus disrupting the artisans' work.

As well as laying off many professional artists, the relocation also served to propagate the principles of the Safavid Tabriz school. The artists who moved to other regions took and spread their own artistic traditions.



f. 60b.
 Prince with a falcon.
 Artist: Kamal of Tabriz.
 Date: ca. 1575.

*MS. Canonici Or. 122.
 Bodleian Library. Oxford University.
 Oriental manuscript dated ca. 1543;
 written in splendid Nasta'liq script and copied
 by Ali al-Katib Sulṭani.*

How complete Tahmasp's indifference to the pictorial arts might actually have been in the years after *Edict of Sincere Repentance* is far from clear. The architecture that appears to have followed the move from Tabriz to Qazvin is one clue to this question.

Tahmasp ordered the building of a palatial precinct, Sa'databad, in the Ja'farabad district to the east of his new capital; its completion eventually came to require the services of craftsmen he had earlier dismissed.

Later on, in the mid-1560s, the aged Shah disbanded the *kitabkhana*. Some artists moved to Mashhad (Muzaffar Ali), others returned to Tabriz.

The celebrated Azerbaijani researchers A. Gaziyev and K. Karimov coined in their articles the notion of a 'Tabriz-Qazvin school', which gave rise to ambiguous interpretations. They proved conclusively that the relocation of a school from one city to another, as happened with Tabriz, does not change the essence; a change of residence has no impact on the style (we may consider the examples of Samarkand, Shiraz and Herat). It is only by the late 16th century that we may refer to an original Qazvin style of miniature painting.

To clarify this issue, let us briefly review the public, historical and cultural events that took place during the period.

The Tabriz School's Role in the Development of Qazvin Miniature Painting

As we know, Qazvin played no significant role in the culture of Middle Eastern art before the Safavid capital moved there from Tabriz in 1548. No references to miniature painting in Qazvin can be found in the scientific literature before this period.

The literature of the 1920–1940s (F. R. Martin, E. Kühnel, B. P. Denike, etc.) does not distinguish Qazvin as a region-wide school at all. Several researchers maintained that the total lack of illustrated manuscripts precluded the very idea of a Qazvin school.

The question of the foundation of a local miniature school in Qazvin in the second half of the 16th century was repeatedly raised in the literature of the 1950s and 1960s, by both foreign (I. S. Stchoukine, B. W. Robinson) and Soviet (B. V. Veynarn, M. Ashrafi, O. F. Akimushkin, and A. A. Ivanov) art historians. However, the school's independence, the identity and originality of a 'Qazvin style', as well as the attribution to it of certain works are proposed by arguments that in our opinion are controversial and flimsy.

On this issue, B. W. Robinson wrote that "this period seems particularly barren of manuscripts whose colophons contain statements of their place



f. 1.
Left part of a Diptych.



f. 3v.
Mi'raj of the Prophet Muhammad.

*Acc. no. Supplément Persan 1956.
 The Khamsa of Nizami.
 The National Library of France.
 Calligrapher:
 Khayr-ollah ibn Huseyn Gulabi Shushtari.
 Date: 1560–1561.
 Place: Qazvin.*

of origin”- which is not to say that there are no illustrated manuscripts from the second half of the 16th century, but rather that they rarely name Qazvin (or any other locale) as their place of production. It is notable that the texts of a wide range of authors were illustrated, and were more varied than was found in Safavid Tabriz, exceptionally so when compared with the output from Shiraz over the whole century. And even more so when, to manuscripts clearly illustrated in Qazvin style, are added a group of contemporary manuscripts with illustrations in a variant style (sometimes resembling the work of Muhammadi Musawwir). Inscriptions in some of these manuscripts refer to smaller centres in Khorasan-Bakharz and Sabzevar. Works by Jami, Ferdowsi and Nizami abound; literature by Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, Hafiz, Sa’di, Hatifi, Hilali, Sana’i and the Timurid historian Mirkhwand, are less frequent.

First of all, we need to review the following question, of great importance in any resolution of the genesis of an Early Qazvin or Tabriz-Qazvin school of miniature. The prevailing opinion in scientific literature is that Shah Tahmasp disbanded the palace library even before the capital was transferred from Tabriz to Qazvin. Focusing on primary sources, some researchers maintain that the library

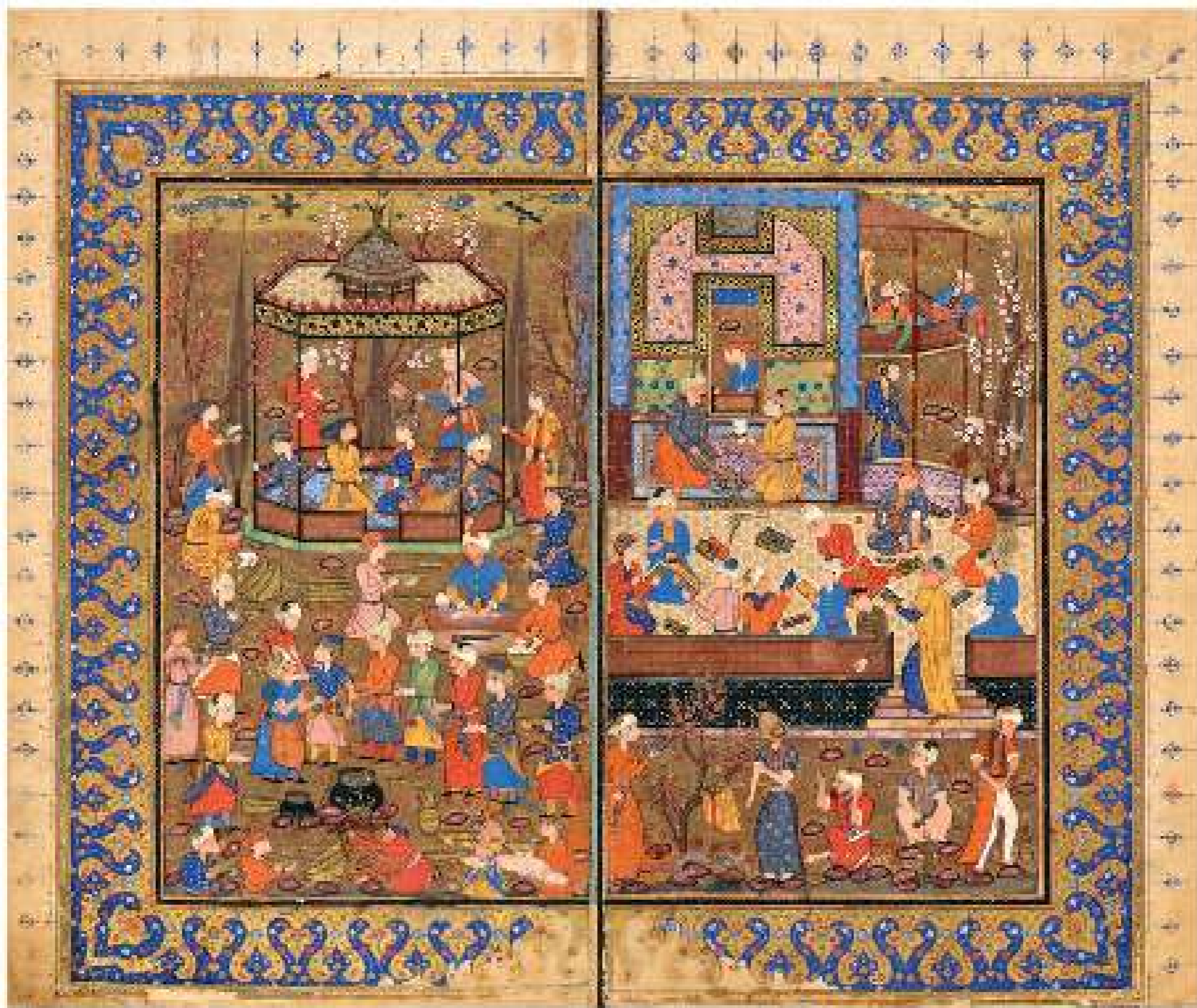
was disbanded because Shah Tahmasp had lost interest in the fine arts. Referring to the biography of the famous calligrapher Shah Mahmud an-Nishapuri, B. Grey maintains this happened around 1545. O. F. Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanov, who compiled the album *Persian Miniatures of the 14th–17th Centuries*, assert that the Tabriz *kitabkhana* was actually disbanded in 1548, and conclude that as a result the Tabriz school ceased to exist.

This being said, the available primary sources that touch on this issue to any extent do not contain any direct reference to Shah Tahmasp disbanding the *kitabkhana*. In the words of Qazi Ahmad, the Shah, “...having wearied of the field of calligraphy and painting, occupied himself with important affairs of state, with the well-being of the country, and the tranquillity of his subjects...”. In his own words, he “washed in the water of repentance”.



f. 10.

Nushirvan and his Vizier listening to the owls in the ruined village.



ff. 23v-24r.
Diptych.

The question is covered in relative detail in the famous work *Tarikh-i Alam Ara-yi Abbasi* (The World-Beautifying History of Abbas) by Iskandar Munshi. Describing the young Shah Tahmasp's passion for art and friendship with some artists and calligraphers (Sultan Muhammad, Agha Mirak etc.) who worked in the palace library, Iskandar Munshi described the end somewhat differently, writing that painters were henceforth "permitted to practise their art by themselves", a euphemism for dismissal, as I. Stchoukine has drily pointed out.

It is easily understood from the citations that this event occurred not around the time the capital was moved to Qazvin in 1548, but much later.

Building upon these statements and Tahmasp's biography, one could not but conclude that the library was disbanded sometime in the final years of his reign. It is no secret that Tahmasp was extremely avaricious and fanatical; the last 14 years of his reign saw no payments made to his army or administration. It might well be that the library was disbanded in just those years when Tahmasp was absorbed in making money.

Yet another source supports the view that the library was not disbanded in Tabriz but was moved to Qazvin together with its personnel. In his work *Tohfe-ye Sami* (completed in 1550), Tahmasp's brother Sam Mirza mentions some artists and writes that "Agha Mirak is now the head of the *kitabkhana* and manages artists at the court of His Majesty Shah Tahmasp".



f. 40.

Khosrow and Shirin hunting.



f. 45v

The battle between Khosrow and Bahram Chubineh.



f. 52v

Farhad carves a milk channel for Shirin.

Apparently, the palace library was still functioning in 1550, where Agha Mirak managed the artisans' work. It is quite likely that not all the artists left Tabriz; O.F. Akimushkin and A.A. Ivanov maintain that some of them could have stayed in the city and continued their work in the palaces of the governor and the feudal nobility. But most artisans, especially the leading ones, would undoubtedly have moved to the new capital with the library and worked there for either the rest of their lives or until the library was disbanded.

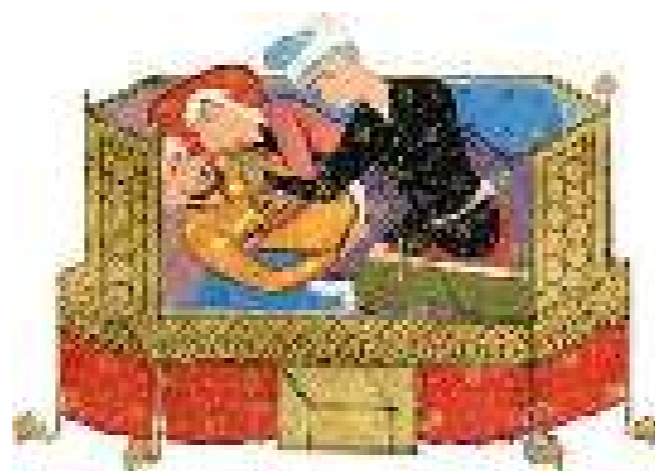
It is clear that Tabriz artists who worked in Qazvin were mature professionals with vast experience. Working in the new capital, artists like Sultan Muhammad, Agha Mirak, Mirza Ali, Muzaffar Ali and others, who had created numerous masterpieces of miniature painting including the *Shahnameh* (1537), and the Nizami *Khamsa* (1539–1543) would surely proceed with the same artistic traditions and stylistic features they had developed back in Tabriz in the 1530s and 1540s, reaching their peak in the miniatures for the famous Nizami *Khamsa* manuscript of 1539–1543 (The British Library, London).

Thus, it is quite logical that the general style of miniatures belonging to the Tabriz-Qazvin school of the 1550s and 1560s does not differ much (in composition and execution) from that of Sultan Muhammad and his school. This is evidenced by stylistic features of the illustrations to the manuscripts of Jami: *Lavayih* (The National Library of Russia, (NLR) Dorn 256) and *Subhat al-Abrar* (NLR, Dorn 429), as well as by miniatures on individual folios such as *The hunting scene*, *Resting on the hunting ground*, and *A young man with a book*.



f. 57.

Shirin visits Farhad on Mount Bisitun.



f. 79.
The murder of Khosrow.



f. 94.
Leyli and Majnun at school.

In characterizing a Tabriz-Qazvin school, some researchers indicate that its most typical feature is an increased dynamic of overall composition, individual figures and landscape. In multi-figure scenes, the composition is agitated; landscapes are rocks heaped on top of one another, and trees have inclined crowns. Building on these particularities, I. S. Stchoukine characterized the Tabriz-Qazvin school as “baroque”. It is clear, however, that all these features can also be attributed to the Tabriz school of the 1540s (illustrations of the Nizami *Khamsa*, 1539–1543, for example), which was branded “classicism” by the very same Stchoukine.

We note that the works of the 1550s and 1560s attributed to the Tabriz-Qazvin school display the same poetic imagery as the Tabriz school of the 1540s. Detailed narrative is combined with lush decoration, as is the dynamic of individual figures and landscape motifs with the harmonious balance of overall composition. These are just the features that had some researchers (I. S. Stchoukine, M. Ashrafi) attributing to the Tabriz-Qazvin school one of the Orient’s masterpieces, the magnificent double miniature, *The Shah’s hunt* in the *Jami Silsilat az-Zahab* manuscript (M. Saltykov-Shchedrin Na-



f. 97.
Majnun before the Ka'ba.



f. 101v.
Meeting of Majnun and Nofel.



f. 106.
Majnun speaks to a crow.

tional Library of Russia), which, we believe, was created by either Sultan Muhammad or his senior student in the 1540s. From these stylistic features, one may state that Tabriz artists created the miniatures *The hunting scene* and *Resting on the hunting ground* in the NLR collection. Attempts to attribute and date these miniatures have raised a discussion that continues in the literature. And yet in the first publications, these miniatures were attributed to Sultan Muhammad or artists within his circle and dated back to the 1540s (F. Martin, E. Kühnel). Concurring with this attribution, I. Stchoukine believes they were created in Qazvin sometime around 1560; while O. F. Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanov accept the dating, but attribute the works to the Mashhad school.

The conflict of opinions on works of the 1550s and 1560s attributed to the Tabriz-Qazvin school is due to the fact that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to precisely and convincingly pinpoint the features of the Qazvin school of this period, and establish its unique particularities at the current stage of material research. We therefore believe that the notion of a ‘Qazvin school’ of the 1550s and 1560s should be employed with certain qualifications. Concurring with B. W. Robinson, who uses the term “Qazvin style” in the sense of ‘metropolitan style’, we agree partially with O. F. Akimushkin and A. A. Ivanov, who do not distinguish Qazvin as an independent school, but consider it to have been a local grouping within a larger section dedicated to the Mashhad school. B. W. Robinson, by way of contrast, includes the Mashhad group in the Qazvin school.



f. 109v.

Majnun learns of Leyli's marriage.



f. 124.

Leyli and Majnun faint.



In the second half of the 16th century, the *kitabkhana* artists went their separate ways: some were invited to work at the Mashhad court, in the library of the young Prince Ibrahim Mirza (Muzaffar Ali, for example, spent the last years of his life in the prince's library); some went off to look for work (Sadig Bey Afshar), and some returned to Tabriz where the local school still existed, enjoying a pleiad of young artists and other masters of the book arts. Sources have left us the names of some of the most famous among them: Sadig Bey Afshar, Siyavush Bey, Mir-Zeynalabdin (nephew of Sultan Muhammad), Ali Reza Tabrizi, the gilder and ornamentalist Mir Yahya Tabrizi, the talented calligrapher Muhammad Hussein Tabrizi, Ali Bey, Mirza Hassan etc.





ff. 130v-131r.
Diptych.



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In 1556, Shah Tahmasp I appointed the young Ibrahim Mirza governor of Mashhad. Although this administrative-political function was not of great significance to the state's political life, the young ruler exerted great influence on the development of science and art. Just like the first Safavid rulers, notably Shah Ismayil I, Shah Tahmasp I and Prince Bahram Mirza, who maintained libraries in Tabriz, Qazvin and Herat with renowned artists working in the various arts, Ibrahim Mirza founded in Mashhad a large library with art studios. Abul Fath Sultan Ibrahim accumulated around 3,000 books and manuscripts in Ibrahim Mirza's library there.



1564 began a period of turmoil in Ibrahim Sultan's life. Shah Tahmasp revoked his nephew's governorship of Mashhad (and presumably also the revenue sustaining his myriad activities), and for much of the next decade he moved from place to place in Khorasan until about 1574, when Tahmasp invited him back to the Qazvin court.

This final period of reconciliation and favour would not last long for either the Shah or his nephew. Tahmasp fell seriously ill in the autumn of 1575 and, although in due course he recovered, he was then poisoned and died in the spring of 1576; while in the following year, Ibrahim Mirza was murdered by order of the new Shah, his cousin and brother-in-law Ismayil II.



f. 139v.
Bahram Gur on a lion hunt.



f. 140.
Bahram Gur kills the dragon.



f. 144.
Battle of Bahram Gur with lions guarding the crown.

In the last years of Tahmasp's life, Ibrahim Mirza actively supported Haydar Mirza in his attempt to seize power from Ismayil Mirza. So, after Ismayil Mirza ascended the throne in 1577 CE (AH 984), Ibrahim Mirza, like other supporters of Haydar Mirza, was slain.

Ismayil Mirza or Ismayil II (r. 1576–1577) assumed the throne following the death of Tahmasp; he restored the library and recalled those artists who were still alive. Thus, they had to move back from Tabriz to Qazvin. The most famous of them, including Sadig Bey Afshar, Mir-Zeynalabdin, Siyavush Bey etc. moved to Qazvin in 1576 at Ismayil II's invitation, and others (Mir Yahya, Ali Reza etc.) followed after the events of 1585, that is, according to Qazi Ahmad's evidence, "after the confusion caused by calamitous Rumes and the destruction of the metropolitan city of Tabriz".



f. 146.
Bahram Gur and Fitnah hunting.



f. 147v.

Fitnah carrying the calf upstairs to Bahram Gur.



f. 149.

The Battle of Bahram Gur with the Chinese Khagan's army.

After Ismayil II's death, many of these artists continued working in the Qazvin library, under Muhammad Khudabanda (r. 1578–1587) and Shah Abbas (r. 1587–1628). Muhammad Hussein Tabrizi, Sadig Bey Afshar, and Ali Reza Tabrizi were highly respected among artists and supervised the work of the palace library.

The origins and further development of the new miniature painting style that emerged, distinct from the mid-16th century Tabriz school, were due to the work of these artists.

The talented Azerbaijani artist Muhammadi, son and student of Sultan Muhammad, had a significant influence on the development of the new style, branded as “Qazvin” in the literature. It is not known whether Muhammadi worked in the Qazvin palace, but his bright individuality and original works, unaffected by the court parlours, would predetermine trends in the Qazvin school in the final quarter of the 16th century.



f. 195v.

The Battle of Iskandar with the Zangis.



f. 212v.
Iskandar before the Ka'ba.



f. 228v.
Dressed as an envoy, the Chinese Khagan talks to Iskandar.

The Qazvin miniatures of this period are distinguished by the tall and somewhat elongated figures of figures with long thin necks and small rounded heads. Graceful young men and women are depicted in dainty, slightly ceremonious poses. Artists departed from the traditional formulas of graphic structure that applied especially to portraiture. Exquisitely faceless and idealized images gave way to individual and psychologically expressive portraits. The shapes and other features of costume and headwear also underwent change. For example, the typical Safavid turbans were replaced by a wrap, often made of fancy cloth; belts with large buckles and richly decorated with gems gave way to cloth girdles (scarf) knotted and hanging long down the front. These miniatures also feature a certain simplification of composition, reduced architecture and landscape detail; the drawing is clear and strong, with the greater figurative expression of wavy lines. For their miniatures, especially those on separate folios, the artists were obviously attracted by exquisite linear contours and subtle ink drawing (*siyah kalem*) rather than by colourful decorative spots. The coloration is somewhat cooler; bright, cheerful tones were replaced by calm, sweet ones.



f. 230.

The Chinese Khagan teaches Iskandar a wise lesson by sending troops against him.



f. 239.
Iskandar lassoing the Rus' demon.



f. 245.
Khizr and Ilyas at the Well of Life.

Miniatures of this period differ significantly from those of the Tabriz school of the first half of the 16th century. The breadth of theme was now much broader; traditional plots, even literary ones, were interpreted as genre scenes depicting the daily life of ordinary folk.

The distinctive features of the new style are pronounced in the illustrations of Asadi Tusi's *Garshasp-nameh* (1573) (British Museum, London) and the *Shahnameh* (1576) (The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin) created by Muzaffar Ali, Sadig Bey and Mir-Zeynalabdin, as well as in miniatures by Muhammadi and other artists in the manuscripts of Jami's *Tuhfat al-Ahrrar* (NLR, Dorn 426), the Amir Khosrow Dehlavi *Khamsa* (The Bodleian Library, Oxford University), Jami's *Yusuf and Zulaikha* (ibid.) and Nizami's *Sharafnameh* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) etc.

Apart from Muhammadi, other Azerbaijani artists also had a noticeable influence on the Qazvin school of miniature in this period, especially Sadig Bey Afshar, a remarkable artist, poet and scholar who created a variety of psychologically expressive portraits.



f. 274v.

Iskandar reaches the Promised Land.

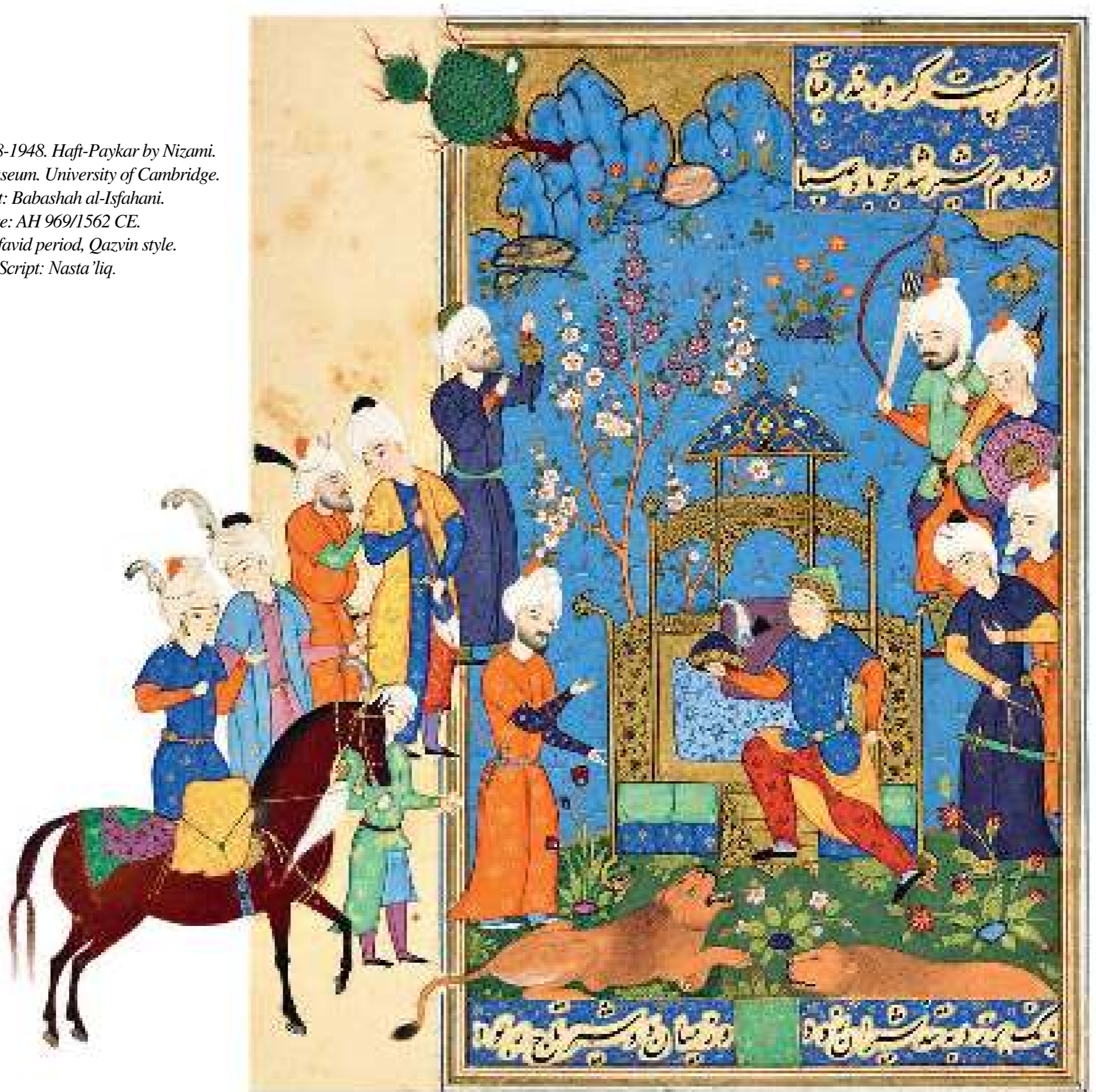


f. 275.
Iskandar builds the Wall to block Gog and Magog.



f. 279.
Iskandar's funeral.

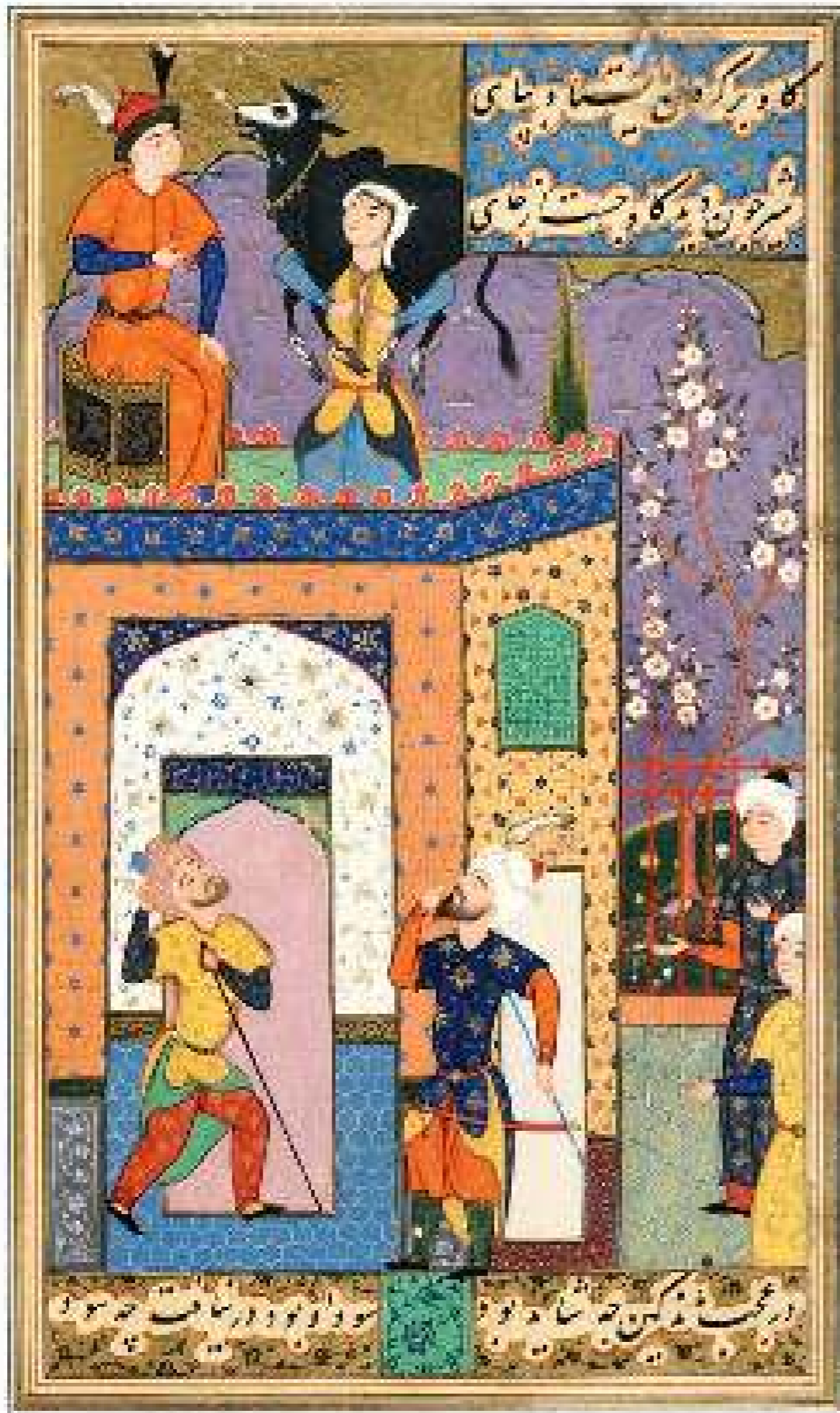
Acc. no. MS.18-1948. *Haft-Paykar* by Nizami.
Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge.
Copyist: Babashah al-Isfahani.
Date: AH 969/1562 CE.
Style: Safavid period, Qazvin style.
Script: Nasta'liq.



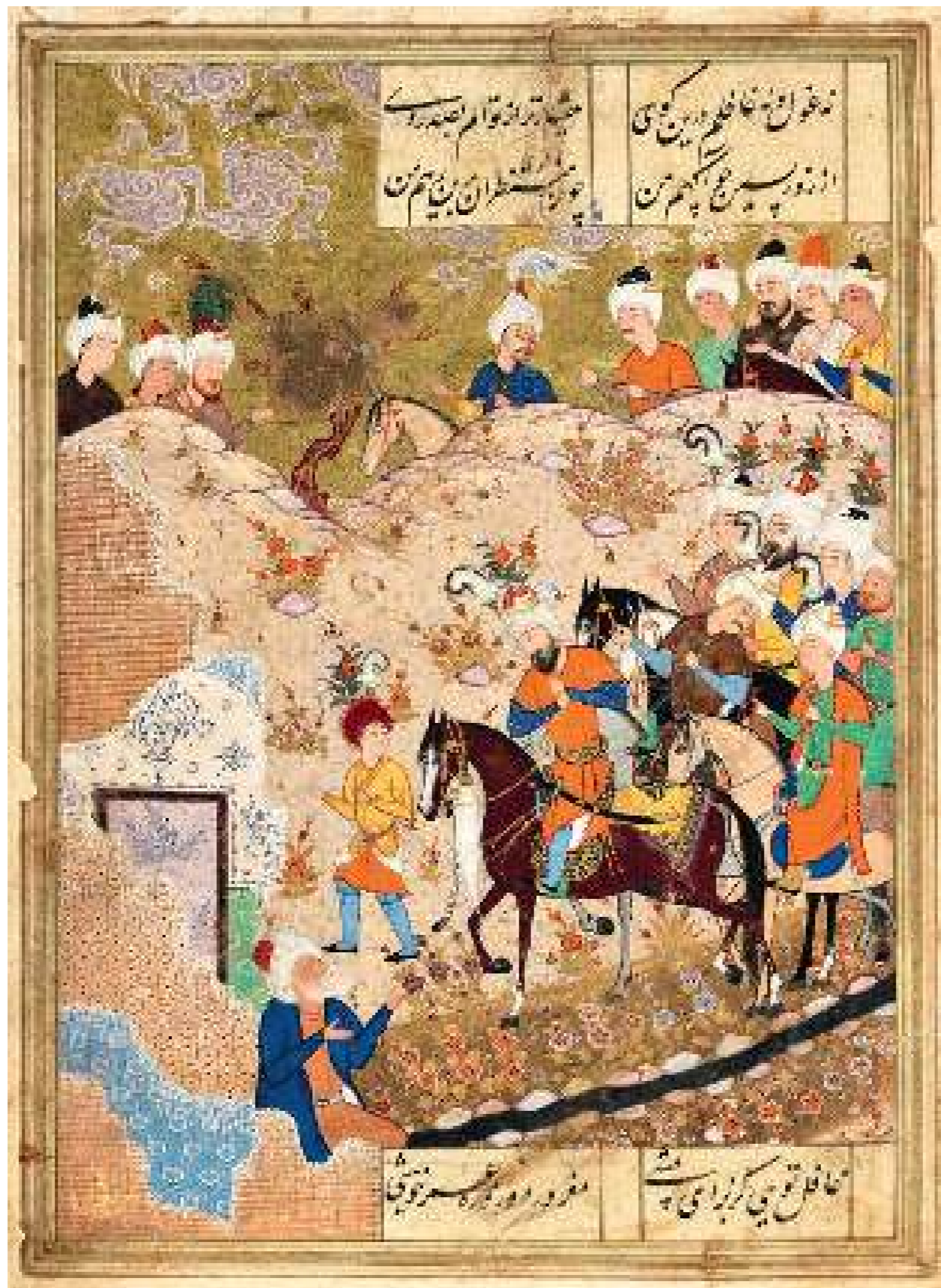
f. 54r:

Bahram Gur about to ascend the throne after his ordeal between two lions, which are seen lying in the foreground of an outdoor court scene.





f. 67v
Finah carrying the calf upstairs to Bahram Gur.



The following additional miniatures were inserted at the beginning and end of the volume:

f. 2r:

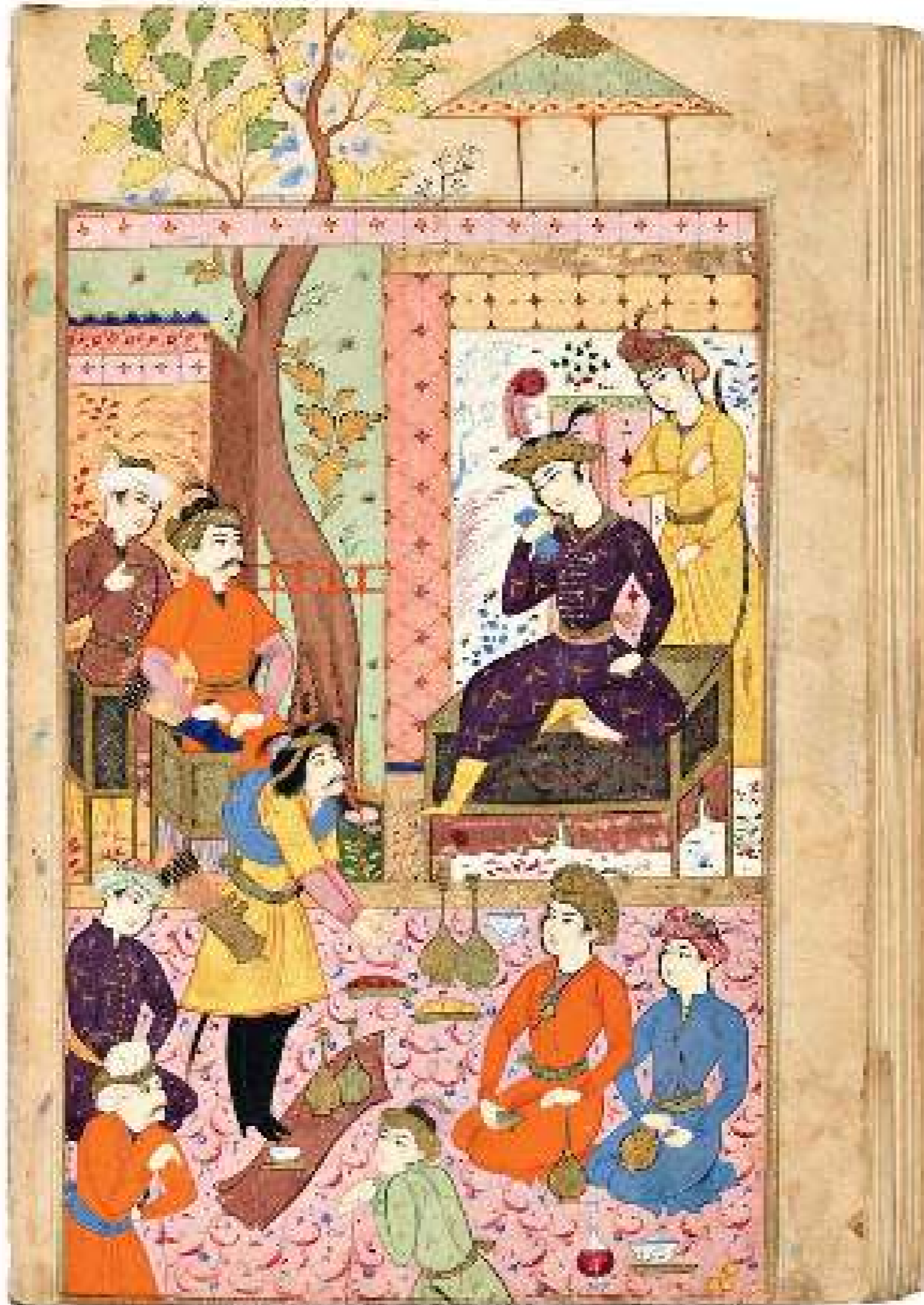
A prince visiting an old man among ruins

Possibly: Iskandar visiting Khizr.





f. 203r.
Shirin visits Farhad on Mount Bisitun.
(Miniature painting of the Isfahan school)



f. 202v.

Ruler accepting a courtier.

(Possibly: A courtier informs Khosrow about Farhad's love for Shirin)

(Miniature painting of the Isfahan school)



Chapter V

The *Khamsa* of Nizami: Isfahan Manuscripts

During the reign of Shah Abbas I, certain social and political conditions, with other factors, prompted the 1598 relocation of the Safavid capital to Isfahan, a city known for its scientific, cultural and social development. There were substantial reasons for the capital's movement from Tabriz to Qazvin and from there to Isfahan. The period was one of dramatic advances in politics, science and culture, including in the world of art.

Muhammad Khudabanda (1578–1588), who succeeded Ismayil II to the throne, was effectively blind and therefore with little interest in books or paintings. Artisans working in the Shah's library had therefore to look for work elsewhere. The shah was so weak that his wife actually ran all state affairs. However, she was strangled in 1579; the Shah's court fell into disarray and intestine strife broke out.

It was only Shah Abbas I's accession that saved the country from collapse. Astonishingly systematic, the young and energetic shah removed anything that stood in his way to unlimited power and development of the country as whole. Shah Abbas I's 41-year reign is referred to as the "golden age" of Safavid history. Although at first, he struggled in foreign affairs, he did his best to restore order to the state and develop the economy. Gaining in strength and strategy, in the early 17th

century he eventually reclaimed all the lands his father had lost to the Ottoman Empire. Shah Abbas I declared Isfahan to be the state's capital and had the city adorned with luxurious new buildings.

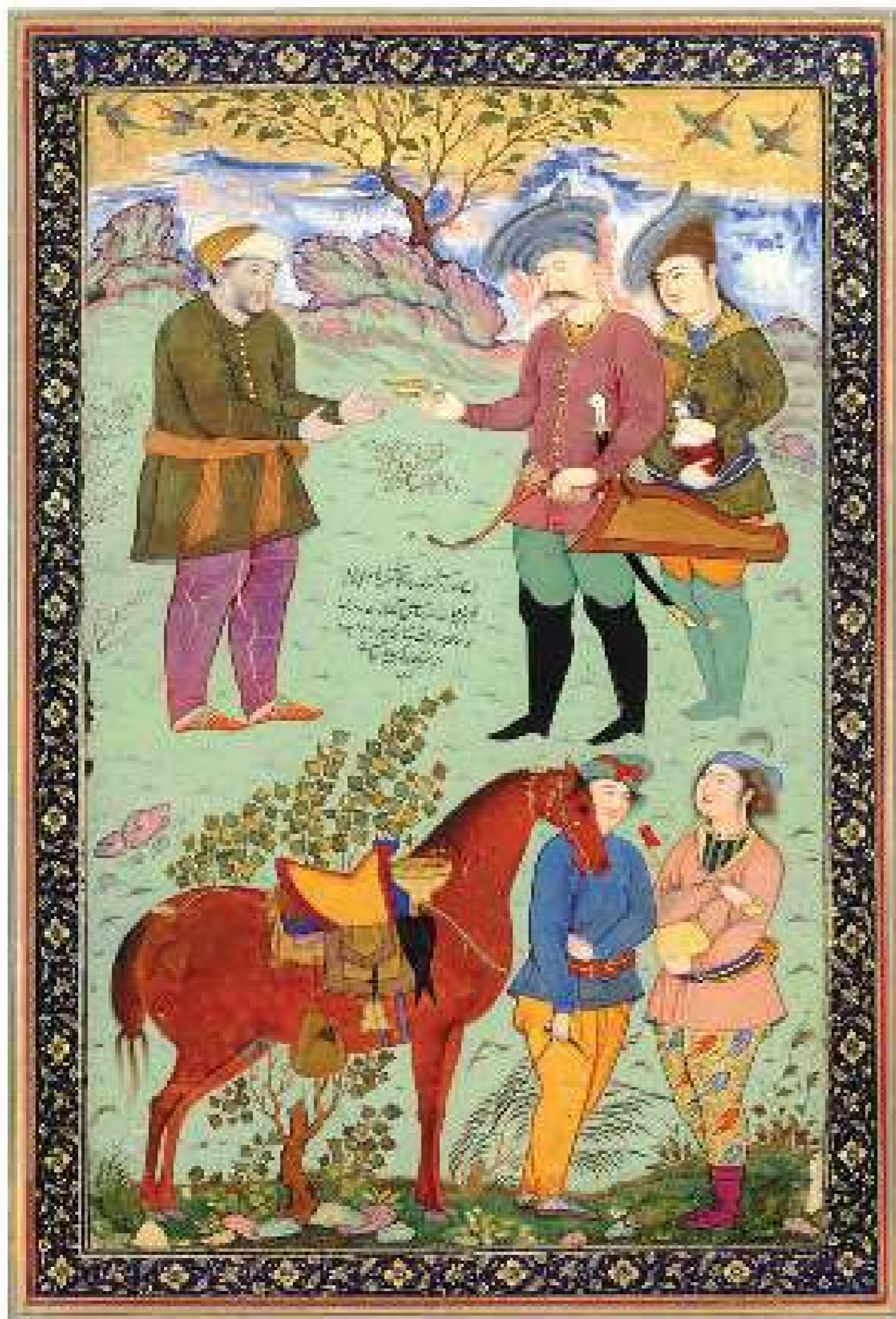
The uniqueness of the fine art created in the new Safavid capital under Shah Abbas I was well noted by miniature schools of subsequent periods.

It might be argued that large-scale mural painting was the primary figurative art under Shah Abbas I's rule, at least at the level of princely patronage, although the numerous single-figure paintings and drawings produced could challenge that argument. During this period, Isfahan attained the pinnacle of Safavid architecture; its artistic architectural creativity and decorative ornamentation was apparent across the city.

But it seems that Abbas's reign and the first half of the 17th century produced few illustrated manuscripts of princely quality.

While princely manuscripts from the period are relatively rare, merely good, or ordinary, manuscripts were produced in some numbers.

Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* was especially popular. This *Shahnameh* manuscript is usually thought to be what remains of one commissioned by Shah Abbas shortly after his accession in 1588. It only survives as twenty-one leaves with an exquisite illuminated head-



*Dorn 489 Muraqqa (Album).
The National Library of Russia.
Saint Petersburg.
Date: AH 7 Rajab 1042 / 28 January 1633 CE.
Artist: Riza-yi Abbasi.*

221

f. 74r.

Shah Abbas and the Mughal Ambassador Khan Alam.



Acc. no. ECOM 21. Eton College Library.
Date: c. 1530 CE.

The Khamsa of Nizami, with 48 miniatures.
According to the 1996 catalogue by M.S.Q. Fraser,
two of these miniatures are contemporary with the
manuscript, one is a 19th century replacement, and
forty-five date from c.1600–1620 CE.

ing and sixteen pictures. Nizami's *Khamsa* was also popular although its pictorial production was never so extensive.

The reign of Abbas I (AH 996–1038/1588–1629 CE) encompasses the second period of Safavid art, during which governmental centralization not only provided the ruler with more power than ever before, but also concentrated other potential patrons in the capital city, Isfahan. While new classes emerged as patrons, empire's provinces lost virtually all their political and cultural autonomy. State workshops for arts of special economic importance imposed further uniformity of style so that the art emanating from Isfahan (or Mashhad) conformed to court style.



f. 39v

Shirin sees Khosrow's portrait.



f. 125r:

Leyli rejects the love of Ibn Salam and slaps his face with such force that he falls to the floor unconscious.



Some officials and lesser aristocrats emerged as minor patrons during this period, in which drawings flourished, perhaps because they were cheaper than manuscripts or paintings, but many of the artistic and intellectual elite emigrated to India, including the calligrapher, Mir Husayn Sahwi, who penned a quatrain which was accompanied by a Sadiqi drawing.

The “Isfahan” school of painting and calligraphy generally refers to works of art associated with the city of Isfahan from about 1597–1598, when the city was chosen as the Safavid capital, until the Afghan invasion of 1722. The term was originally coined in the late 1950s as part of an effort to identify and classify Safavid painting of the first half of the 17th century, especially the works of Riza Abbasi and his followers.

The Safavid artists responsible for so many of the paintings are less anonymous than their Timurid counterparts. This is in part because of the writings, among others, of Dust Muhammad, Sam-Mirza Safavi, Qazi Ahmad, and Iskandar Munshi - their accounts span nearly a century, from 1543 to 1617 - but also because it became more and more usual for Safavid artists to sign their works. For example, Iskandar Munshi commented that excellent artists and painters worked during the reign of Ismayil II (1576–1577) including Muhammadi of Herat. Indeed, the name Muhammadi Musawwir occurs on perhaps a dozen or so tinted drawings from the third quarter of the century. His style is delicate and his themes are pastoral and notably uncrowded; his work is also remarkably non-calligraphic in its draughtsmanship.

The talented Muhammadi, with his individual technique and style, was one of the leading painters of the Tabriz school in the second half of the 16th century, but his works are less studied. A son and talented student of Sultan Muhammad Tabrizi, he was most skilled in the decoration of polished (lacquered) bindings and the depiction of various multi-figured scenes (assemblies). Muhammadi boasted a style that was more original than his contemporaries; his works on separate folios are unique specimens of painting and graphics.



f. 162v.

Bahram Gur before Khawamaq castle.



f. 31v.
Iskandar's journey across the Chinese sea.

The most celebrated painter of the Isfahan school is Riza Abbasi, also known as Agha Riza, who worked intermittently at the court of Shah Abbas I throughout his career. Known for his remarkable use of line and harmony of colour, his style became synonymous with the Isfahan and Safavid artistic efflorescence during the first half of the 17th century. His students and followers emulated his technique and compositions and often added his name to their work to enhance their importance and value.

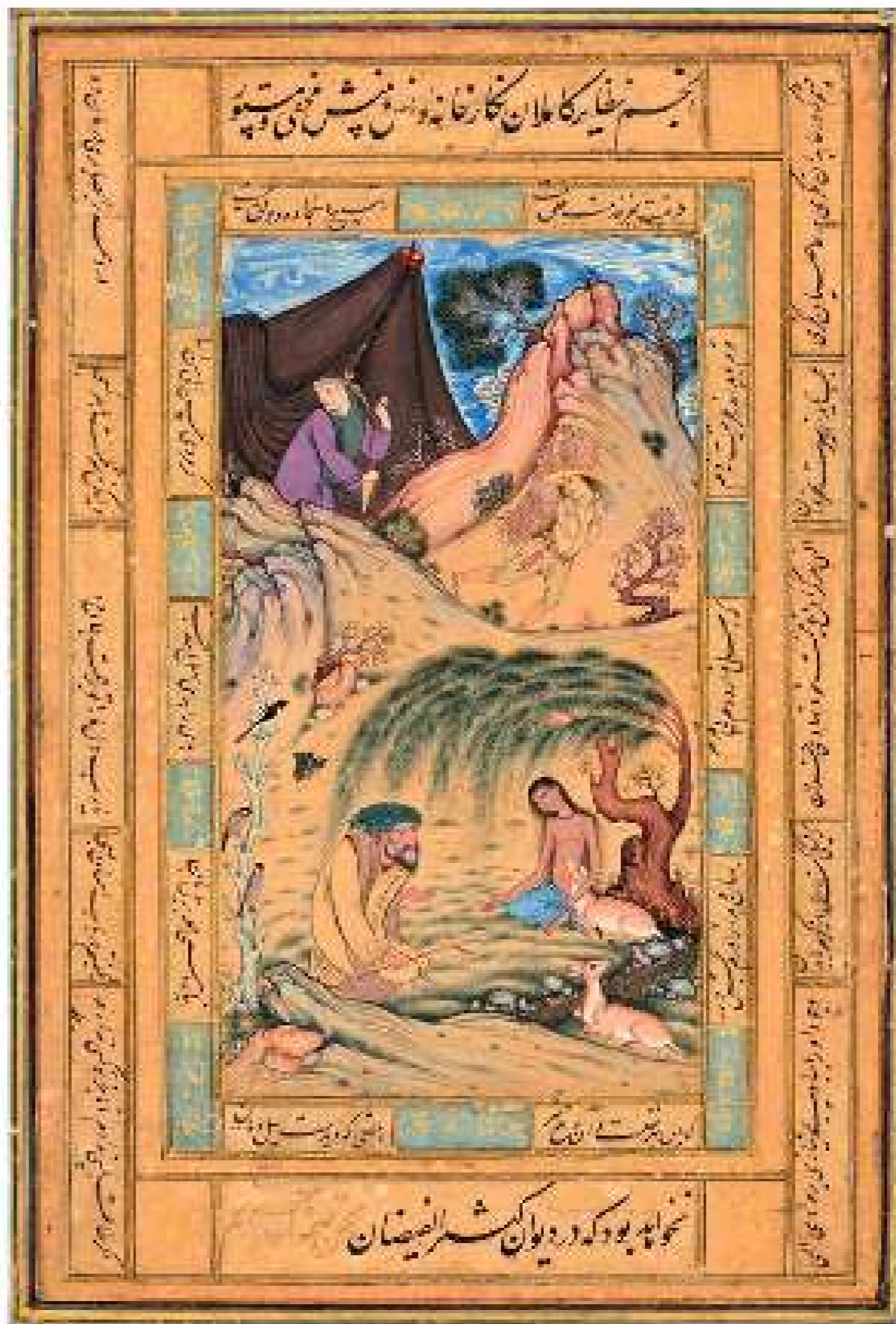
Riza - Agha Reza, was the son of Ali Asghar of Kashan, a painter in the service of Ibrahim Mirza and, later, Ismayil Mirza, Shah Ismayil II. He was probably born in the mid-1560s and entered the library and painting atelier of Abbas I shortly after his accession in 1588. Qazi Ahmad would write: "... in the flower of his youth he brought the elegance of his brushwork, portraiture and likeness to such a level that, if Mani and Behzad were living today, they would praise his hand and brush a hundred times a day".

A large number of drawings and single-figure paintings, some still mounted in albums, and a few manuscript illustrations, all of them signed either "Riza" or "Agha Riza", embody the works mentioned by Qazi Ahmad.

*MS. Ouseley Add. 171 (Ethe 1894).
Bodleian Library, Oxford University.
Date: probably about 1650.
Style: Isfahan.*

For more than half of the 20th century, there was controversy about a related but distinctly different group of images, again mostly single-figure paintings and drawings signed Riza-i Abbasi. Not precisely the same name as Riza but sharing one feature: these pictures bore later dates than Riza's paintings – from about 1603 to about 1635. Because the later paintings were considered to be stylistically coarser and far more mannered than those of Agha Riza, they were thought to be the work of a different painter.

The second famous court painter was Sadiqi (also known as Sadiq Bey or Sadiqi Afshar), an irascible Turkmen who eventually also became Shah Abbas I's court librarian. This task was entrusted later to the famous calligrapher, poet and artist Agha Rza Tabrizi, who was himself favoured by the shah. A generation older than Riza, (Sadiqi was born in 1533–1534) he figures in both Qazi Ahmad's and Iskandar Munshi's accounts of painters and calligraphers in the latter part of the century. The poet and artist Sadiqi bey Afshar learned painting from Muzaffar Ali, a Tabrizi miniaturist painter of the older generation. He subsequently became one of the outstanding artists of his time.



f. 1b

Salim visits Majnun in the desert.

Majnun sits under a feathery tree of the tamarisk type, Salim is before him, while in the background an old woman is spinning in front of a black tent, and a young wood-cutter carries a faggot on his back.

Acc. no. Add. MS 6613. The Khamsa of Nizami.

British Library.

Date: Rabi' II 1076 AH/1665–1666 CE.

Script: Nasta'liq.

41 miniatures all except ff. 3v, 100r and 252r,
are signed by the Turkoman artist Talib Lala.

This manuscript's copyist called himself
Ibn Ibrahim Muhammad Mu'akkhkir al-Mu'allim al-Katib al-Shirazi;
it was for *Taja Mirza Abu al-Hasan*.



f. 19v.

The parable about Jesus and the dead dog.

Passers-by, seeing the corpse of a dog, commented about how disgusting it looked. The prophet Jesus was able to see the beauty of a dead creature, saying that her white teeth were more beautiful than pearls.



f. 92v.

Mi'raj.

A Qur'anic story about the Ascension of the Prophet Muhammad and his night-time voyage through the seven celestial spheres.

Acc. no. Hs. or. 14025. *The Khamsa of Nizami*.
The Berlin State Library.
Illustration date: Muharram AH 1252/18 April –
17 May 1836 CE.
Place: unknown (?)



f. 35r.

Appeal and prayer to Allah for forgiveness.
(Khosrow and Shirin)



f. 55r.

Shapur visiting Madain for the second time to meet Shirin.

reign and finished by about AH 1004/1595 CE. Five of the surviving fourteen illustrations were painted by Riza and number among his finest works. Three were done by Sadiqi, clearly under the influence of his new colleague. Stylistically, these paintings are closely linked to the court style of Tahmasp I and Ismayil II and indicate that the youthful ruler's aesthetic sense followed traditional lines.

While Riza continued to work (within the traditions of transmission from elder to younger practitioner) until 1635 - coincidentally the year of the earliest dated painting by his most famous, and most productive, pupil, Mu'in Musawwir.

Mu'in, curiously, appears in no written biographical sources of the later Safavid period, but numerous works signed "Mu'in Musawwir" establish his long period of activity, from 1635 to 1707. His output includes manuscript illustrations, single-figure paintings and ink drawings.

He remained impervious to the many foreign influences that shaped 17th century painting in the hands of Muhammad Zaman, Shaykh Abbasi, Ali Quli Jabbar and others, and there is no evidence that he ever left Isfahan. In the broadest sense, Mu'in is the last major representative of the traditional style of Safavid painting.

Most artists and calligraphers continued to work under Muhammad Khudabanda and Shah Abbas, who assumed the throne after Ismayil II's short reign. It is clear from works of the late 16th and early 17th centuries that the erstwhile tradition of decorating manuscripts with paintings had come to an end, and miniatures and paintings drawn with reed pens and black ink had become fashionable. In addition, single folio portrait miniatures had become quite important. While mid-16th century miniature portraits on separate folios are only of princes and young people, by the late 16th and early 17th centuries they are images of people from various layers of society: emirs, military leaders, dervishes, shepherds etc. The art of this period is distinguished by a more pronounced realism and 'workbench' features.



f. 85v.

Shirin sends Khosrow a letter of condolence for the loss of Maria.



f. 109r.
Khosrow and Shirin in the garden before the wedding.

Far more modest European images were surely also in circulation in Isfahan from the time the city became the Safavid capital in 1598. Their presence in 17th century Isfahan is attested in several ways. European printed images could be used directly: pasted onto book-bindings and then lacquered, the covers enclosing texts in Persian or Arabic. The foremost practitioner of this ‘Europeanizing’ style, Muhammad Zaman ibn Haji Yusuf, appears to have made such a binding.

He also composed some illustrations in European style, which were added to princely manuscripts of Ferdowsi’s *Shahnameh* and Nizami’s *Khamsa*.

Muhammad Zaman was undoubtedly the most productive, as well as the most influential, of later 17th century Safavid painters in this eclectic style, and while only about two dozen works survive that are incontrovertibly signed by him, their technical quality, and the fact that the finest were produced in a royal milieu, suggests their significance in the wider story of Safavid painting.

Some 16th century Azerbaijani miniature painters worked in the Ottoman Empire and enjoyed high reputations among palace artists. One of Agha Mirak’s most talented students, Shahgulu Tabrizi, worked in Istanbul. He had his own workshop in the palace of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent.



f. 125r.

Glorification of the Prophet.

(Leyli and Majnun)

The celebrated Azerbaijani calligraphers Haji Muhammad Tabrizi and Muhammad Reza Tabrizi, who were forcibly relocated to the Ottoman state, also occupied high and respected positions in Istanbul during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Kamal Tabrizi, a miniature painter and manuscript illuminator, was one of Shahgulu Tabrizi's students and worked in the Ottoman state. One of his most celebrated works is a portrait of a young prince holding a falcon.



f. 213r.

The story told to Bahram Gur by the Indian princess in the Black Dome.



In the second half of the 17th century, many Isfahani artists moved away from Riza Abbasi's style of painting and began experimenting with Europeanized concepts of pictorial representation, e.g., modelling and shading. Their distinct work may be described as the second phase of the "Isfahan" school of painting.



f. 230r:

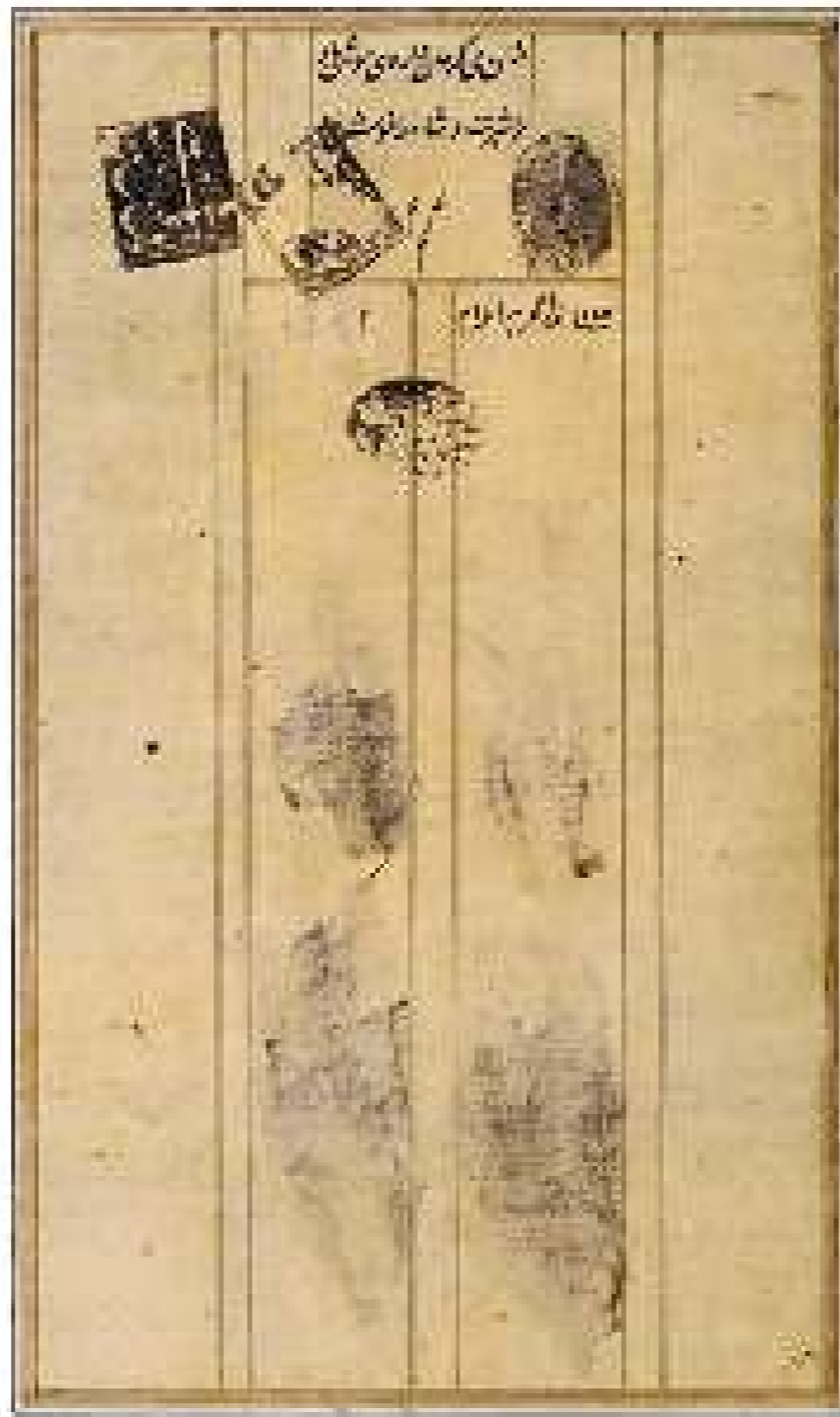
The story told to Bahram Gur by the Maghrib princess in the Turquoise Dome.



f. 253r:
Prayer to Allah.
(Sharafnameh)



f. 312v.
Iskandar's journey to India.



f. 346r.

Date on the page with seals: AH Muharram 1077 /July 1666 CE.

Note: Although reflecting traditional plots, the miniatures in this manuscript are drawn in unconventional style. From patterns on the binding, it may be surmised that the manuscript is of Isfahan origin.



Chapter VI

The *Khamisa* of Nizami: Manuscripts of the Mughal Period



Bristol Museum holds on loan from the Victoria Art Gallery (Bath) 9 pages illustrating Nizami's Iskandarnameh. They have been dated to the 1580s. One is signed by Imam Quli, a couple of others are signed by Dharm Das.

The conquest of northern India in 1526 by Babur, a fifth-generation descendent of Timur, brought Safavid art and culture to the subcontinent. Babur, the founder and first emperor of the Mughal dynasty (1526–1530), was known as a learned philosopher; he travelled widely and loved nature. Like his ancestors, the Timurid princes, he had a great interest in the art of painting and had a large collection of illuminated manuscripts illustrated by famous painters of the Herat school, among them Behzad and his pupils.

In 1540, Babur's son and successor, Humayun (1530–1556), was forced by an Afghan revolt to seek refuge first in Sind and then in Safavid Iran. While there he was Shah Tahmasp I's guest in Tabriz, where he became acquainted with the work of some of the greatest Safavid painters of the 16th century. At Shah Tahmasp's court, Humayun met two young artists, Mir Sayyid Ali of Tabriz and Abdus Samad of Shiraz, and invited them to join his court at Kabul. These two artists might be regarded as the actual founders of the Mughal school of painting. Mir Sayyid Ali was engaged to illustrate the Persian romance *Hamzanameh*, an account of the adventures of the hero Amir Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet

Muhammad. Although the manuscript was begun under Humayun, it was actually completed during the reign of his successor, Emperor Akbar (1556–1605).

Akbar the Great was an extraordinary ruler, who not only consolidated the political power of his empire but also greatly influenced the artistic and cultural life of India. He was tolerant of other races and religions. He favoured marriages between the Mughals and Hindu women, and two of his own wives were Rajput princesses.

The great monument of Akbar's reign was the city of Fatehpur Sikri, which was begun in 1569 and finished fifteen years later. His palaces there were sumptuously decorated with mural paintings. Akbar established an atelier near his palace with workrooms for the arts of painting, gold-work, weaving and the manufacture of arms. The historian Abu'l Fazl Allami, a friend and vizier of the emperor, gives a vivid account of Akbar's great interest in the art of painting in his *Ain-i-Akbari*, or "Administration of Akbar". As a young man he had taken drawing lessons from the painter Abdus Samad, who was given the title *Shirin-qalam*, or "Sweet Pen".

Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad continued as chief painters in Akbar's atelier, where more than a hundred painters of various nationalities were engaged in



Battle of Iskandar's armies with the Rus tribes.



Battle of the armies of Iskandar and Darius.

illustrating manuscripts. Most of the painters were Hindus from Kashmir, Gujarat, and Punjab, and they brought with them the traditions of the local schools. The Hindu influence is already apparent in the earliest works of the Akbar school, such as the illustrations in the *Romance of Amir Hamza*. For the first time here, Safavid and Indian elements existed side by side. The Hindu artists introduced not only Indian landscapes but also a naturalistic style unknown to Safavid art.

Akbar brought to his court artists from the different areas of India. In a special studio, these artists studied miniature art with the masters invited from Tabriz, but the style in which they worked was already a synthesis. And by 1580 the Tabriz influence in Mughal miniature was considerably reduced.

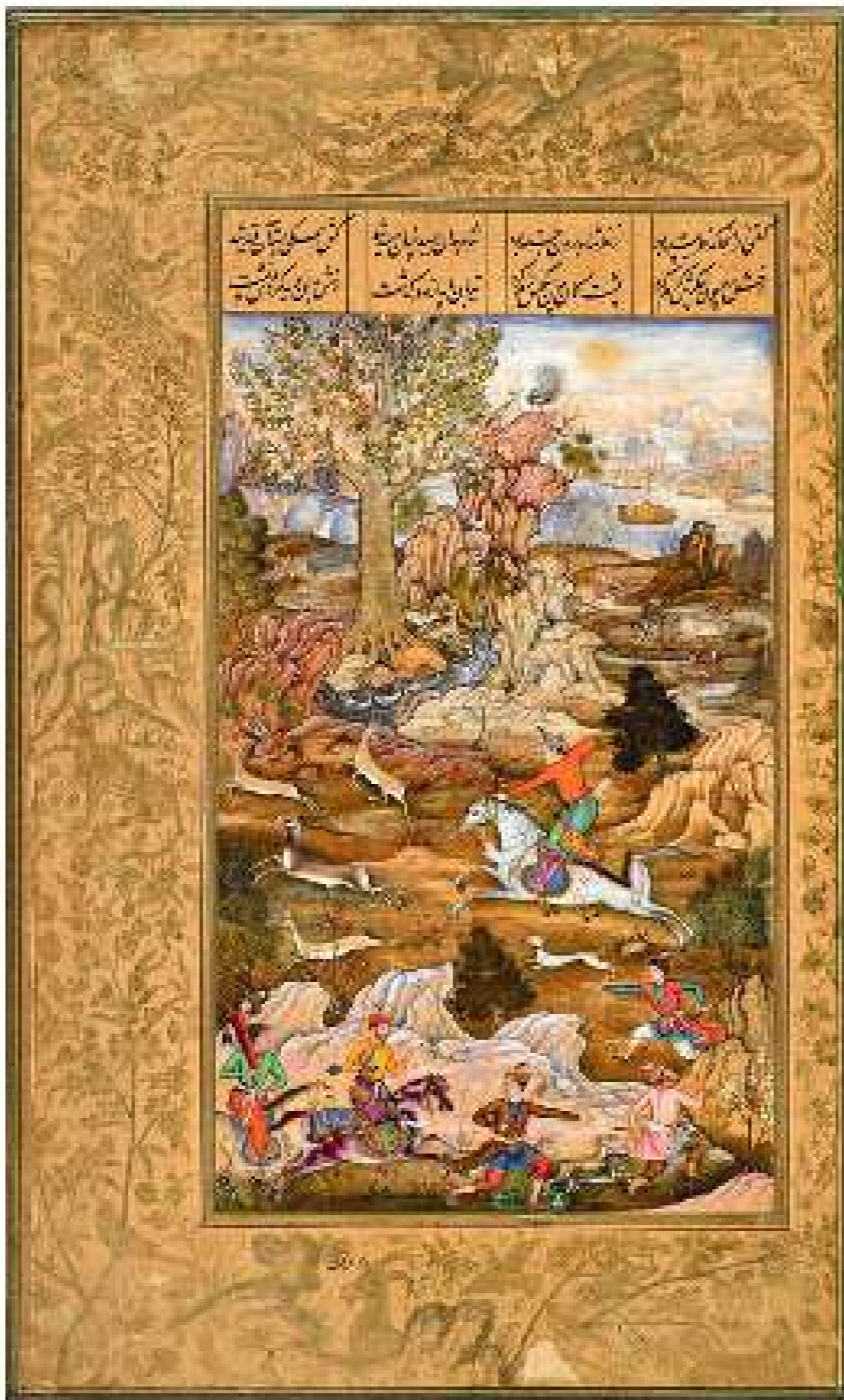


Iskandar executes the murderers of Darius.

The Mughal school style developed within the royal atelier. Knowledge was transmitted primarily through familial relationships and apprenticeship, as well as the system of joint manuscript production which brought multiple artists together on single works. Different styles were used in the art of miniature. In particular, under the Mughal rulers Jalal ad-din Akbar I and Nur al-din Muhammad Salim Jahangir (1605–1627) the style *nim-kalam* (“half-pen”) was popular, in which the drawing was partially painted. This method produced a paler image. Sometimes, for example, in hunting scenes a pale palette was combined with bright colours for the characters’ clothes.



A Chinese servant girl plays a chang for Iskandar.



Or.12208.
The Khamsa of Nizami.
 British Library.

The Emperor Akbar's *Khamsa* Manuscript

The British Library's *Khamsa* of Nizami, Or.12208, made for the Emperor Akbar (now popularly known as the "Dyson Perrins *Khamsa* of Nizami" after its former owner) is one of the most finely-produced of all Mughal manuscripts. The miniatures combine the vigour of Akbar period painting with the polished finish that crept in towards the end of his reign, heralding things to come under his son Jahangir. Dated 1595, the text was written by Akbar's foremost scribe, Abd al-Rahim and, from the contemporary numbering, the volume originally contained 44 miniatures. Today, two of the miniatures are missing and five are with a portion of the manuscript in the Walters Art Museum, MS W.613, Baltimore. The British Library has the bulk of the manuscript, with 37 miniatures. The artists named in the contemporary ascriptions include many of the great names of the period: Dharm Das, Manohar, Abdus Samad, Nanha, Miskina and Farrukh Chela, each apparently striving to produce his masterpiece. All this is contained in contemporary pictorial lacquered covers of unusually fine design.

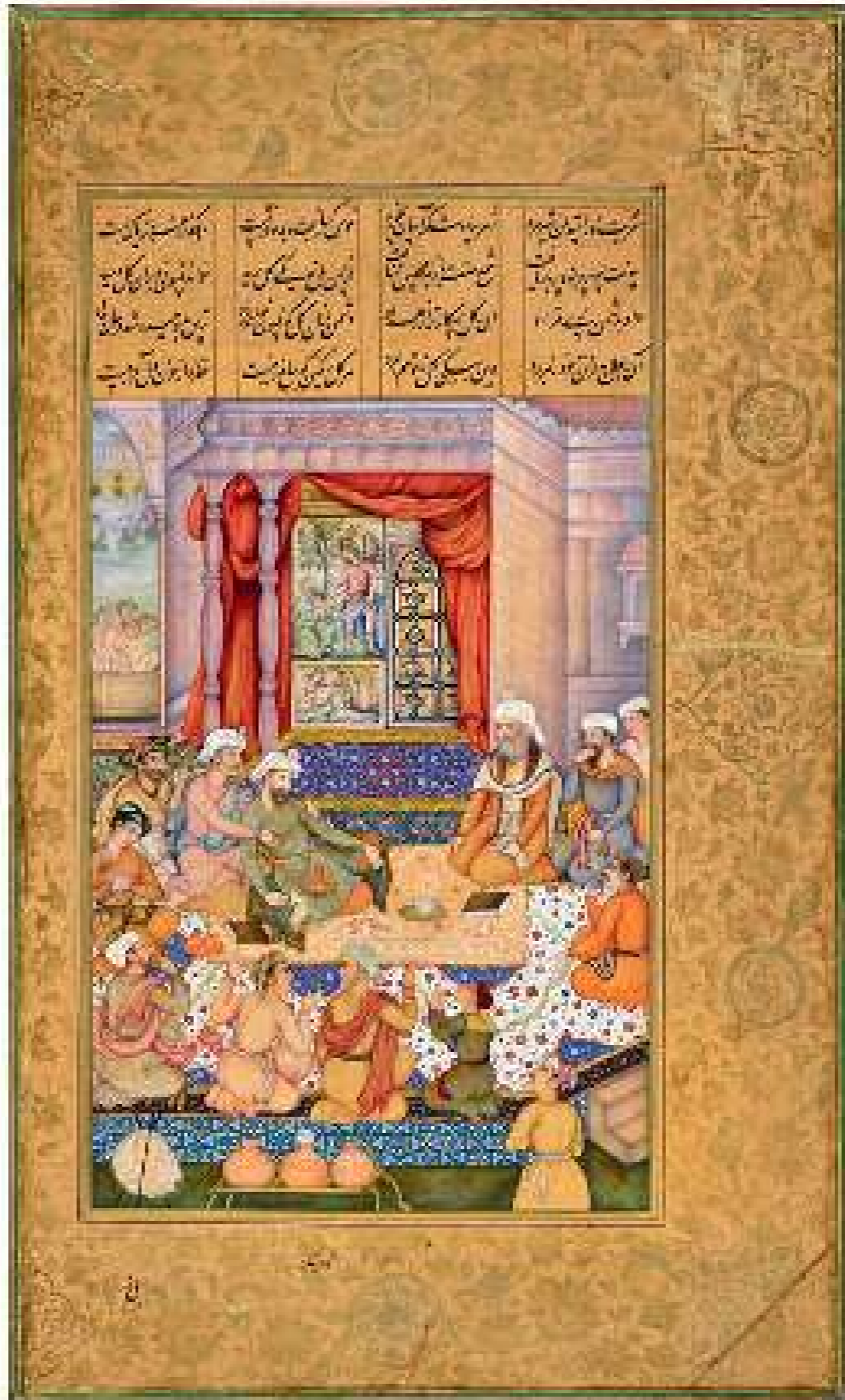
f. 19r.

The parable of Faridun and the Gazelles.

Faridun, who was hunting gazelles, heard the voices of an arrow and a horse announcing that it was unfair to exterminate animals for fun.

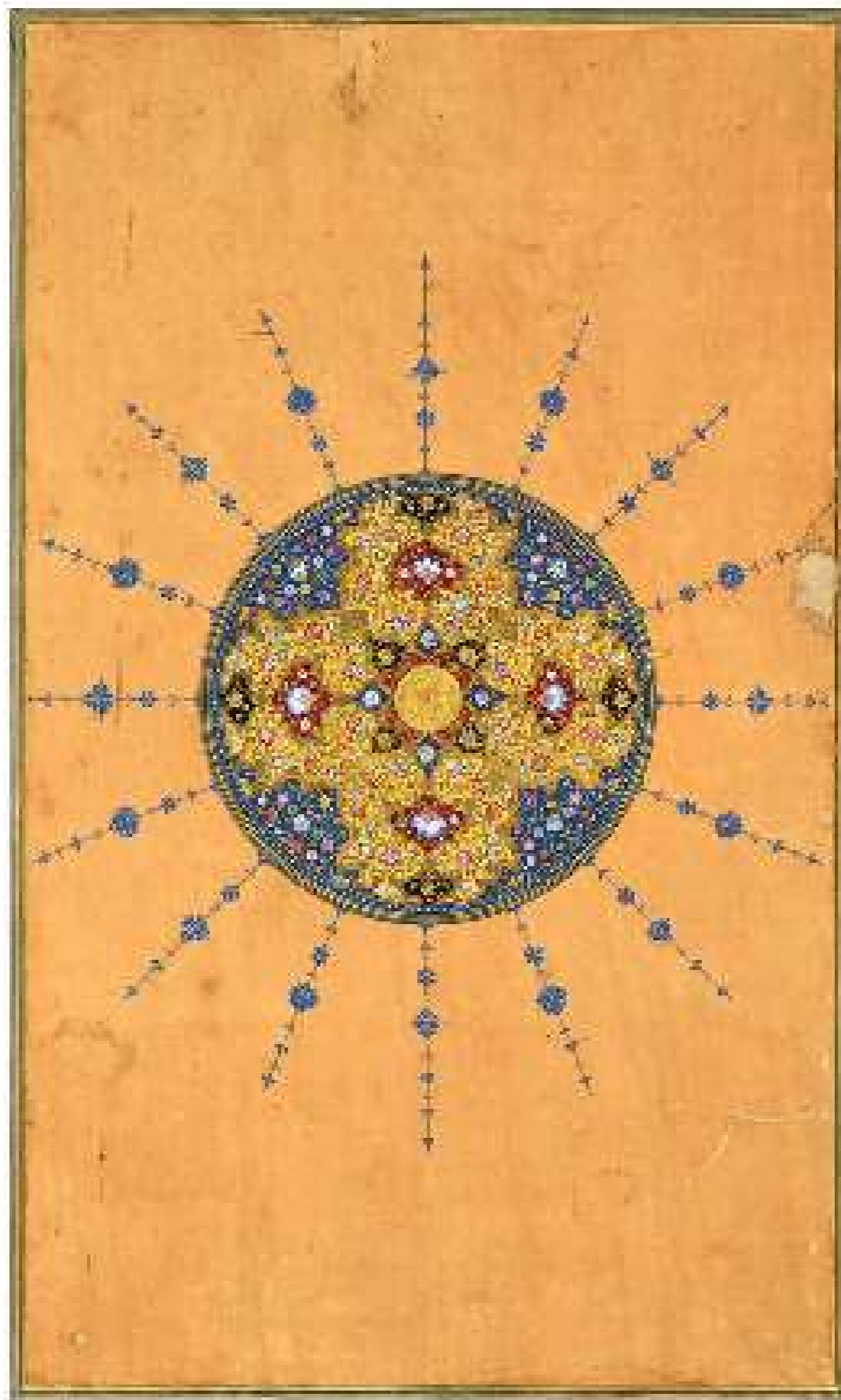
The illuminated manuscript was very probably created in Akbar's new capital of Lahore in North India, now in Pakistan.

The miniatures are attributed in inscriptions to at least twenty artists, most of them apparently Hindus, although the principal artist, Khwaja Abdus Samad, was Muslim. One miniature, *Khosrow hunting*, is the latest known work by Abdus Samad, former head of the imperial workshop and one of the artists Humayun had taken from Safavid Iran some forty-five years earlier, at the beginning of the Mughal tradition. The single scribe was Abd al-Rahim (Ambarin Qalam), a leading calligrapher of the day. Unusually, when the manuscript was inherited by Akbar's son Jahangir, the new emperor ordered that an extra miniature be added: a double portrait showing the scribe at work facing Dawlat, the artist of the new miniature, making a drawing of him. This is dated, with an illegible last digit, between 1611 and 1620. Some miniatures are the work of more than one artist, typically dividing the work between drawing the overall composition, colouring and faces. This had been a common method in the imperial workshop, but was giving way to miniatures being the work of a single artist, as the Mughal style became increasingly concerned with fine detail and realistic depiction.



f. 23v.

The Story of the two contending philosophers.



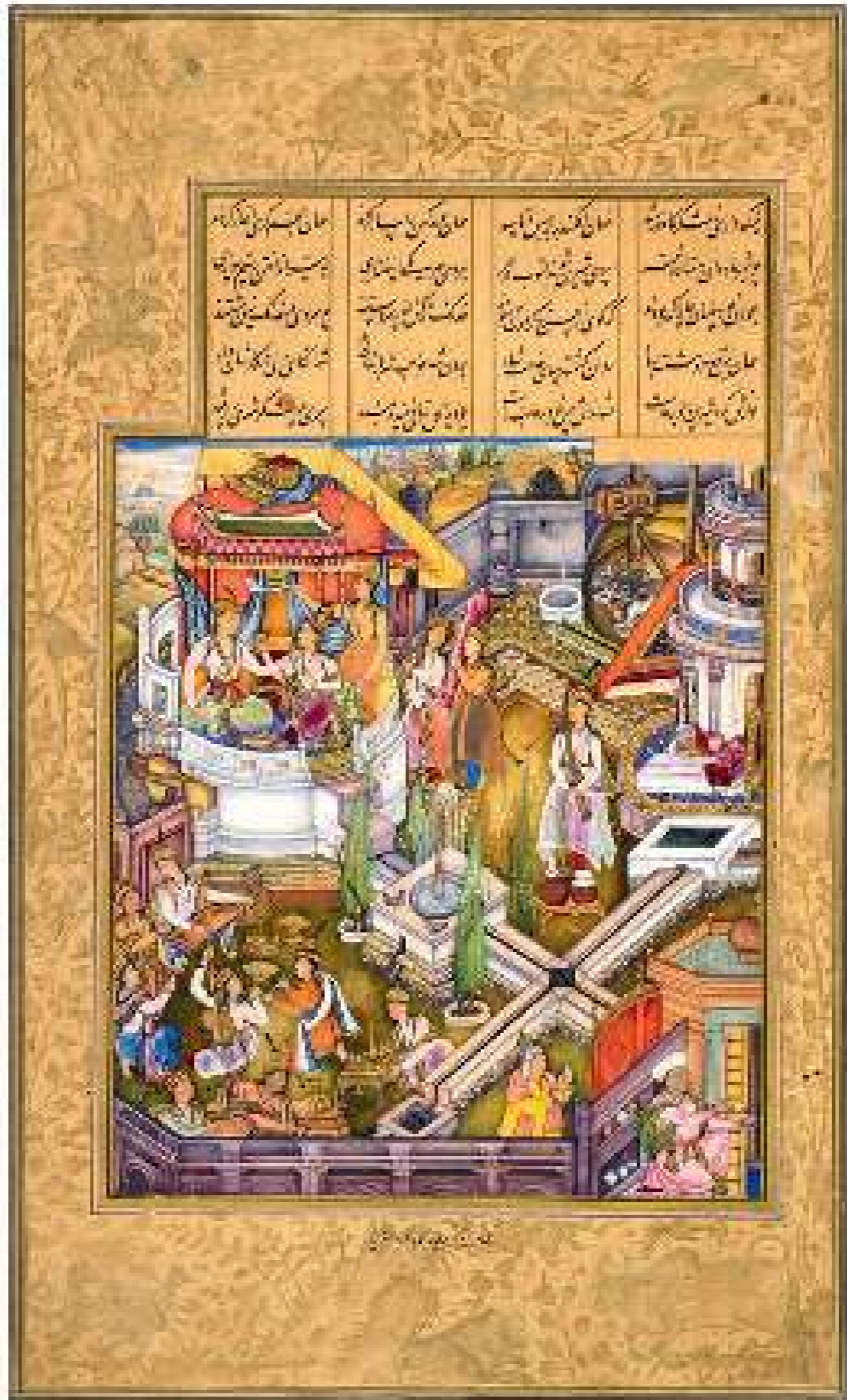
f. 31v.
Shamsa – rosette.



Apart from their principal origin being in the tradition of Safavid miniature painting, the style of these miniatures reflects Indian art and the Western art that was known in Akbar's court from contacts that included material brought by Jesuit missionaries.

While the landscapes often show European influence, and indeed northern European characteristics, the many animals depicted mostly ignore the mythical beasts often seen in Safavid painting, and emphasize species native to India, depicted with considerable naturalism.

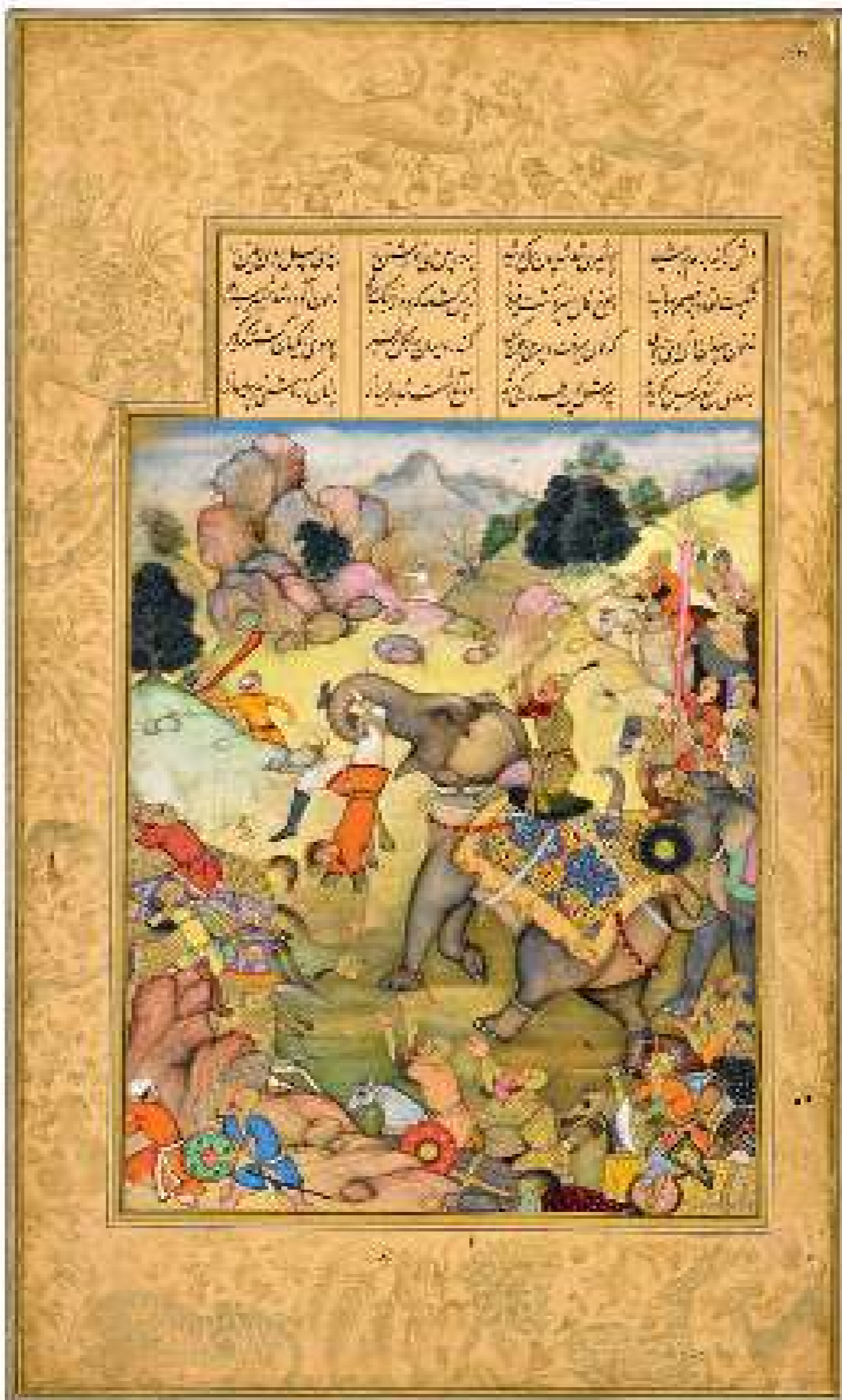




f. 65r.

Mahinbanu gives advice to Shirin.

The history of the manuscript is unknown after its ownership by Jahangir; the Mughal library amounted to some 24,000 manuscripts at its height, although many were taken by the Afsharid Nadir Shah when he overran much of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century. The known history resumes in 1909, when the London section was bought by the collector C. W. Dyson Perrins (of the Worcestershire sauce family), who bequeathed it to the British Museum at his death in 1958. The British Library then inherited the British Museum libraries on its foundation in 1973. The Baltimore leaves had already been separated before 1909. In 2013 pages from the manuscript were exhibited in the British Library's exhibition *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*.



f. 72r.

Khosrow's war-elephant seizing Bahram Chubineh in its trunk during their battle.



Besides the Persian and Persian-language classics, Akbar was greatly interested in the history of the Mongols, the house of Timur and the Mughals. Copies of *Akbarnameh* ("Book of Akbar"), written by Abu'l Fazl, were profusely illustrated for the emperor's own use. Many scholars were engaged in translations from the Sanskrit into Persian.

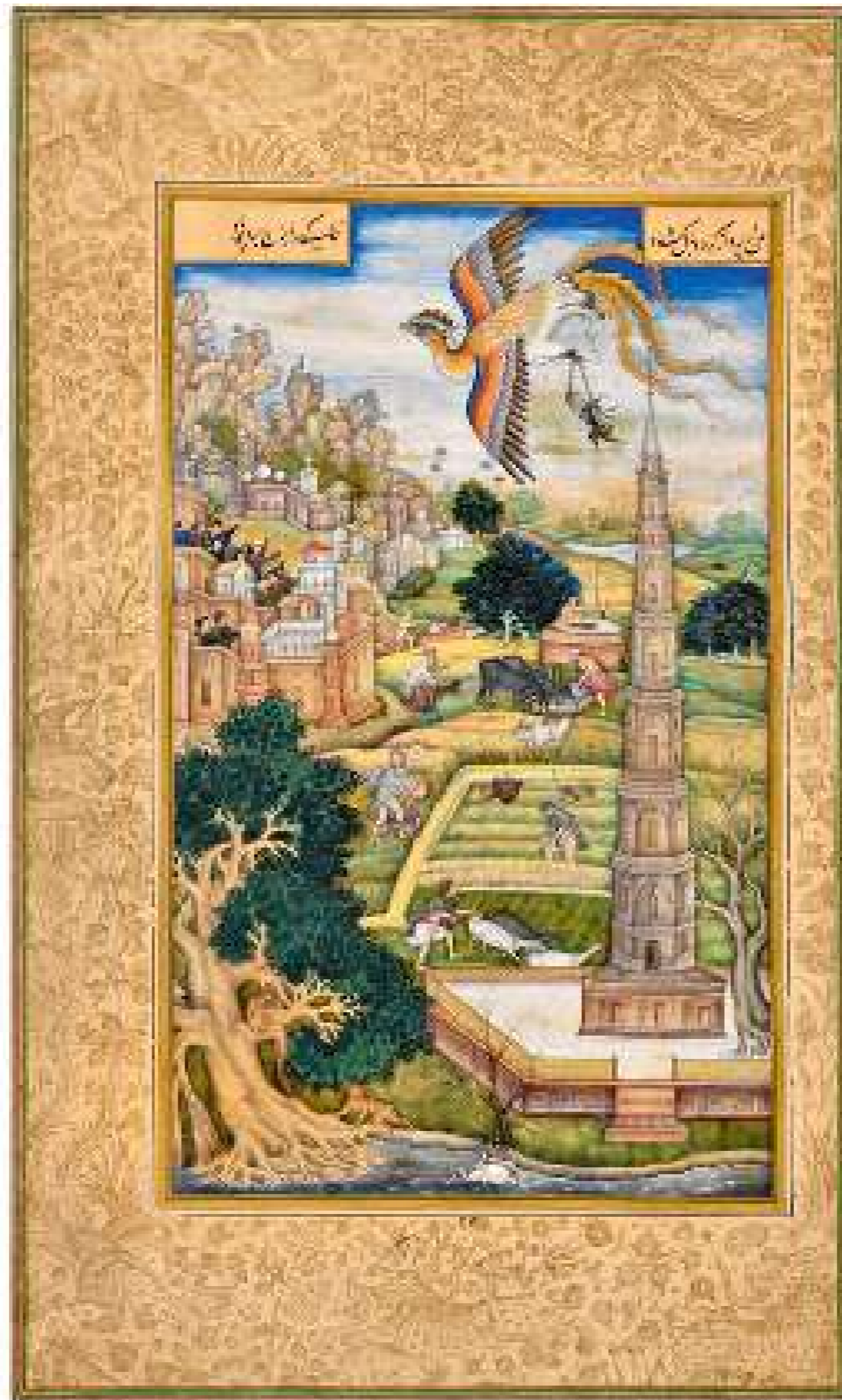


f. 102r:
Shirin's suicide.

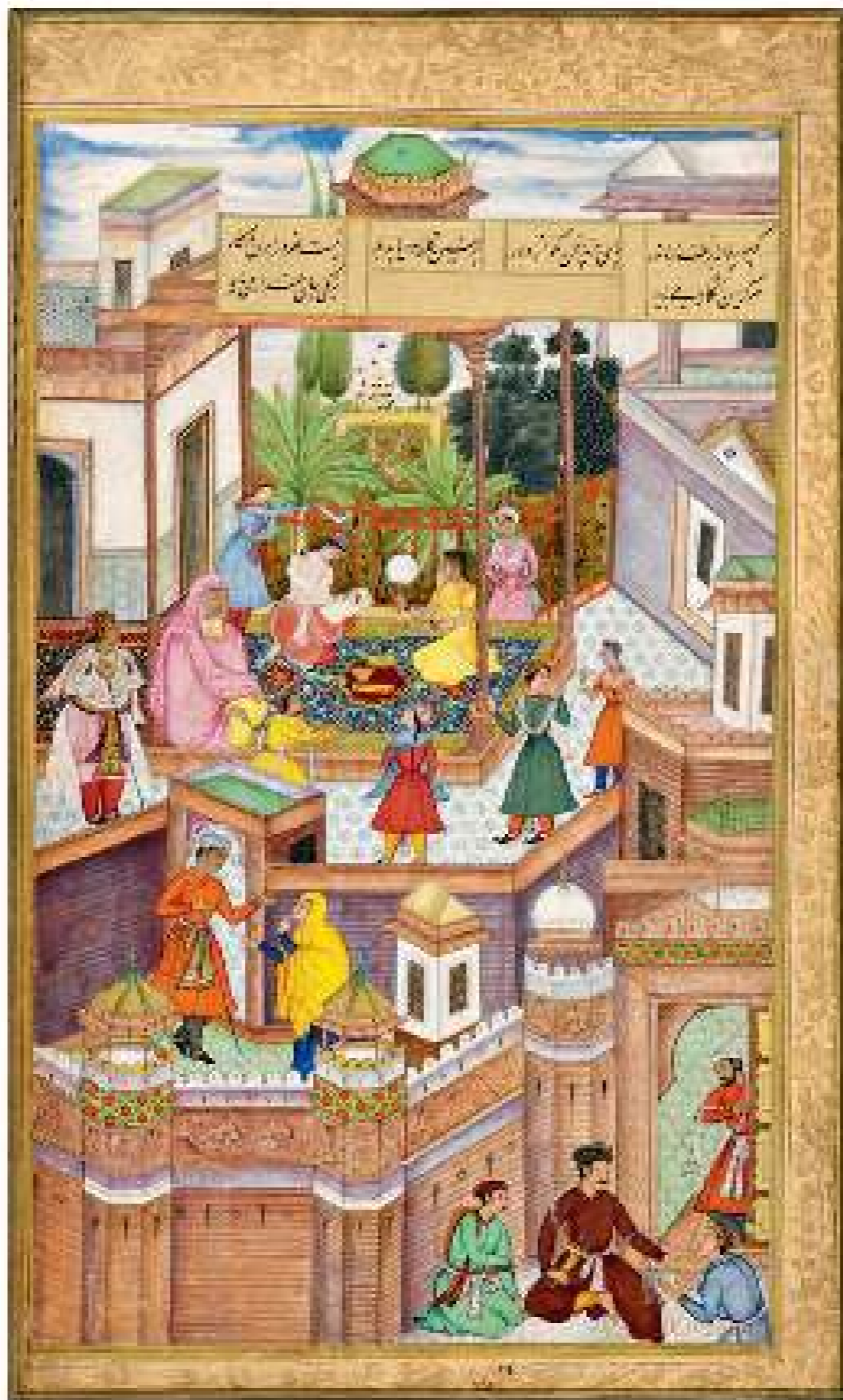


f. 150v.
*Majnun visited in the desert by his Mother and Salim.
 Various animals gathered around them.*

Of great importance to the development of the Mughal style of painting was Akbar's personal interest in European art. From European paintings, the Hindu artists learned about perspective and modelling. They introduced the third dimension, which is apparent in the rendering of figures and landscapes. Some of the distant landscapes seen through an atmospheric haze recall the paintings of Flemish masters and manuscripts of Books of Hours. The Mughal style colour scheme, created by all the artists working for Akbar the Great, was a synthesis of Iranian, Indian and European elements.

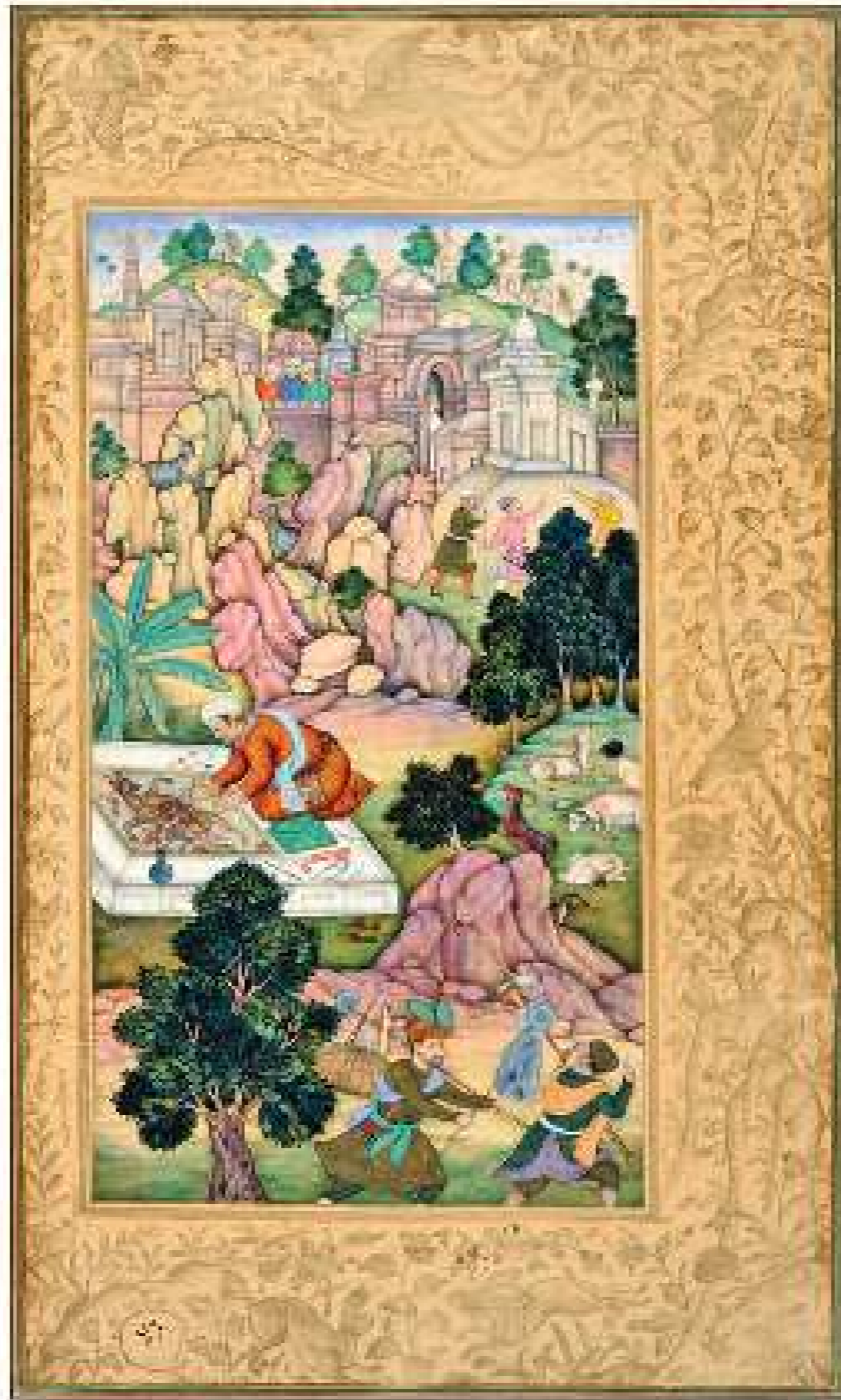


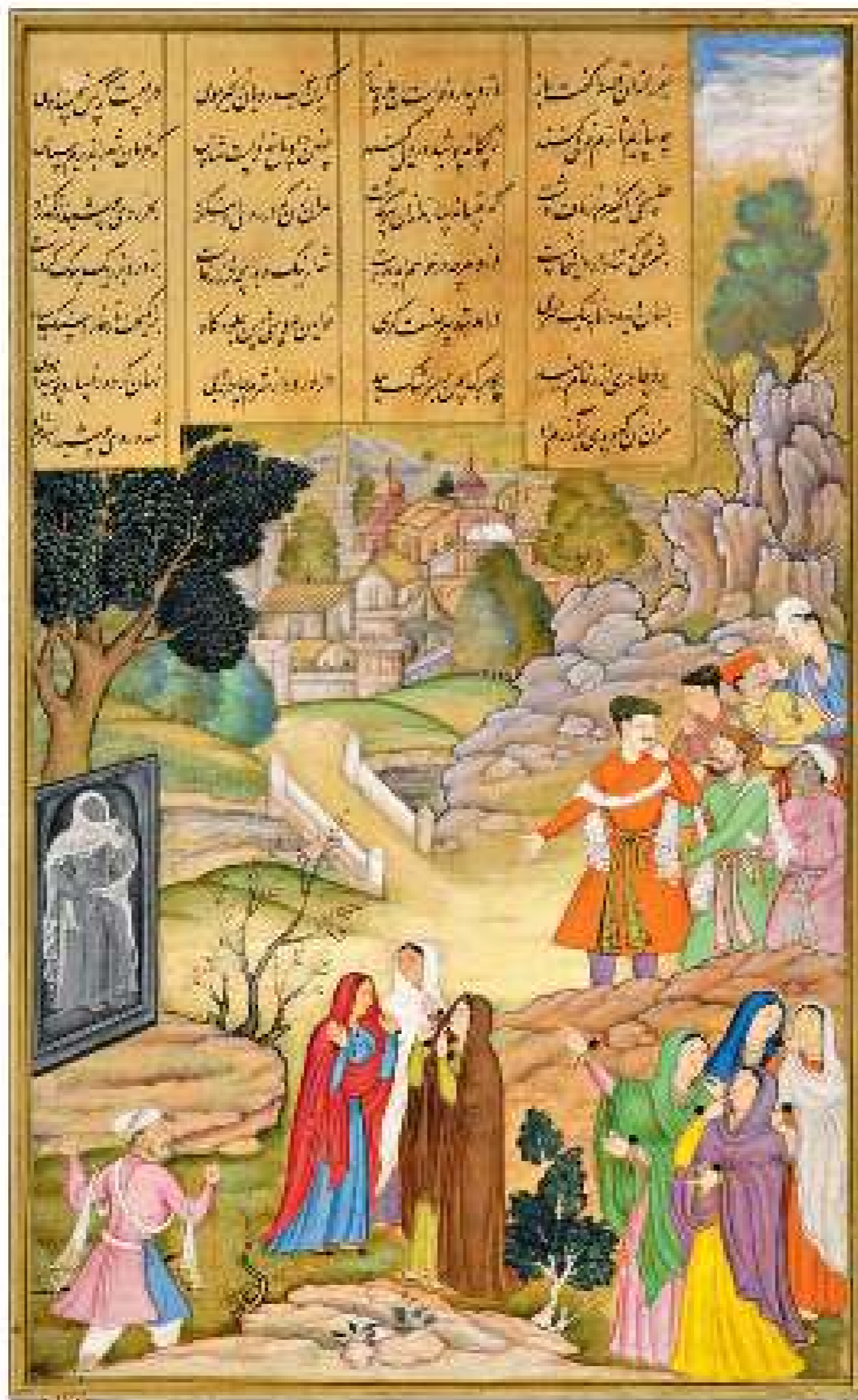
f. 195r:
*The man carried away by the Simurg.
Story told by the Indian Princess.*



f. 206r:

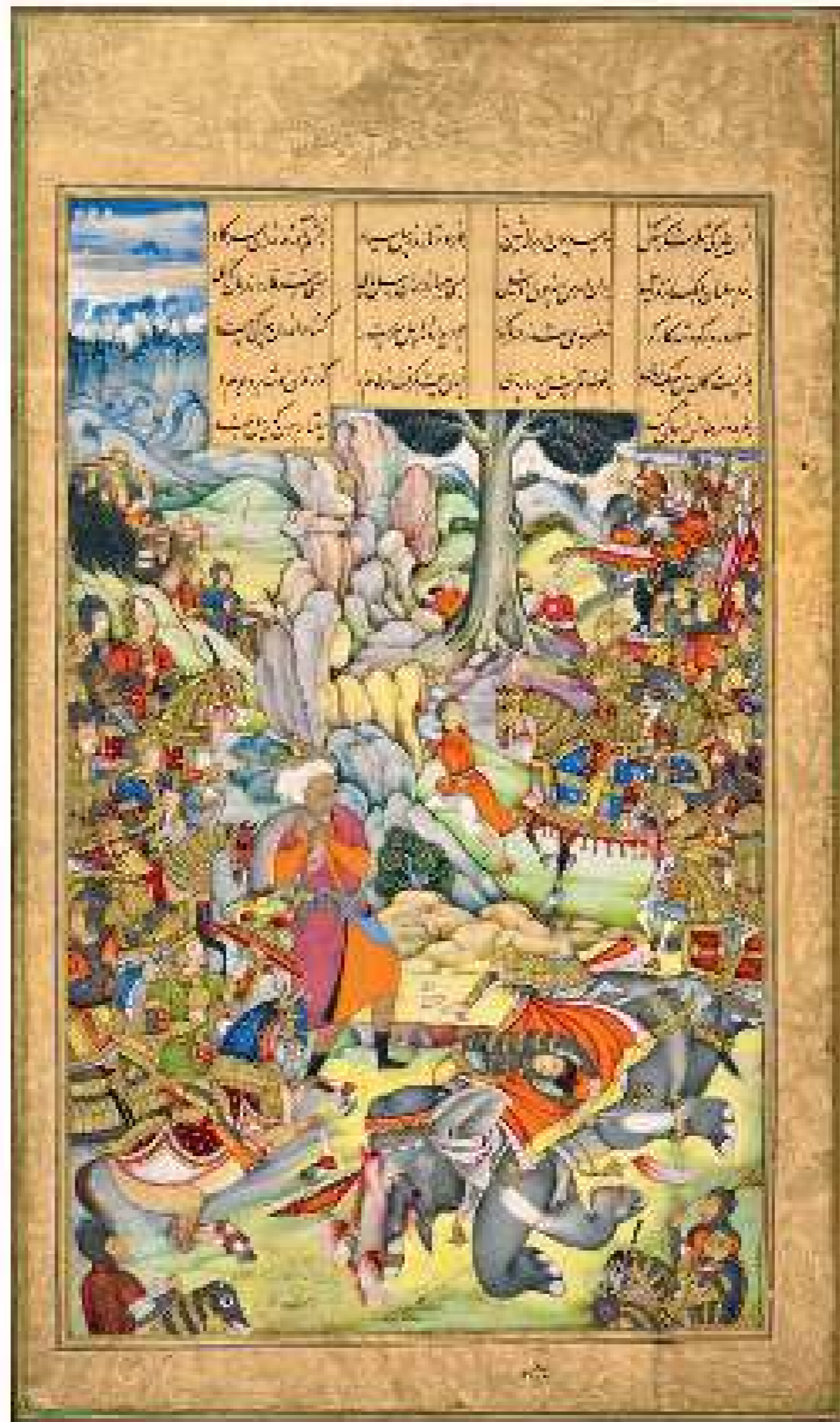
*The princess who painted a self-portrait
Story told by the Slavic Princess.*





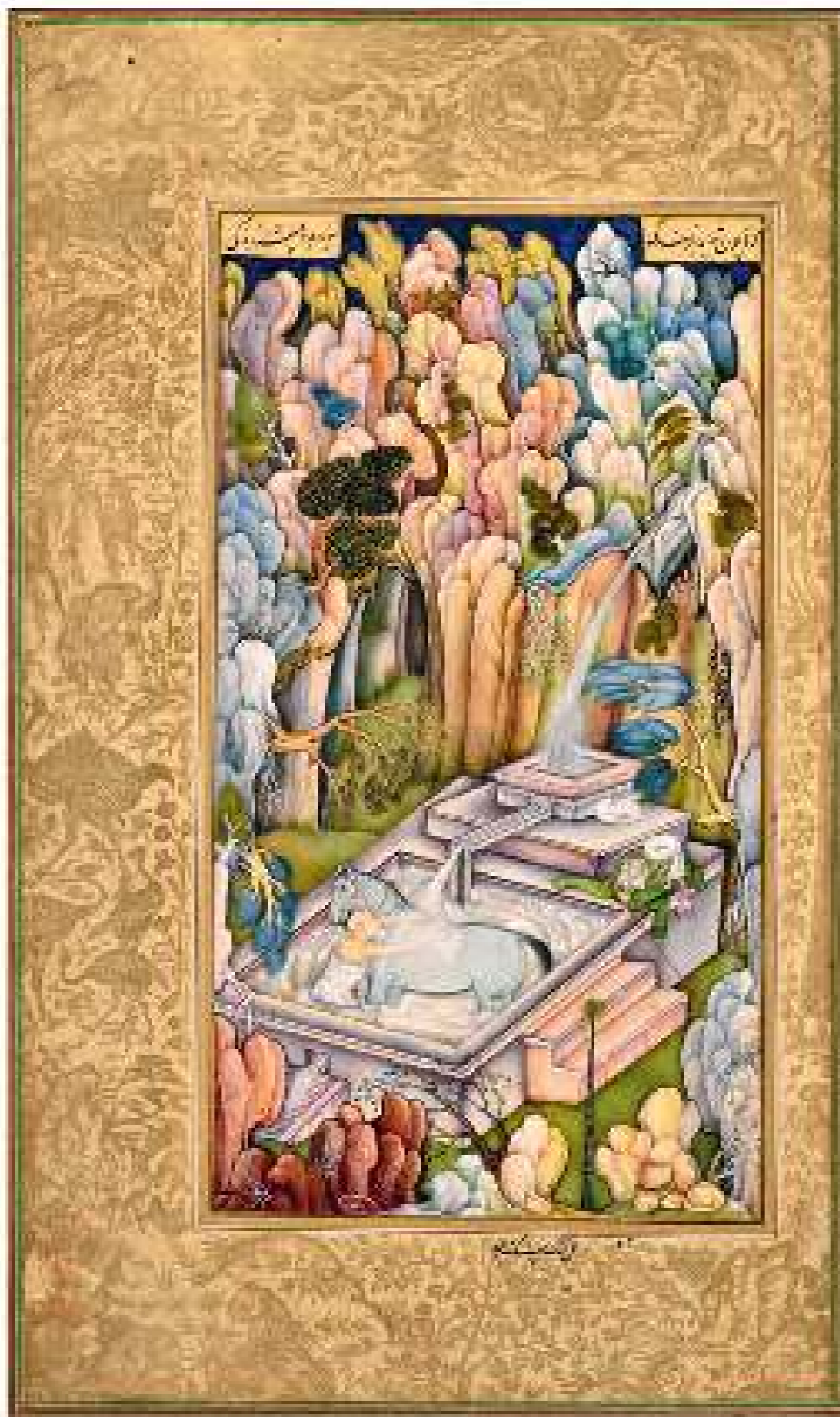
f. 266v

Iskandar trying to persuade the woman of Qipchaq to veil their faces by setting up a carving of a veiled bride.



f. 273r.

The Rus champion holding the trunk of Iskandar's elephant which he tore off in battle.



f. 281r.

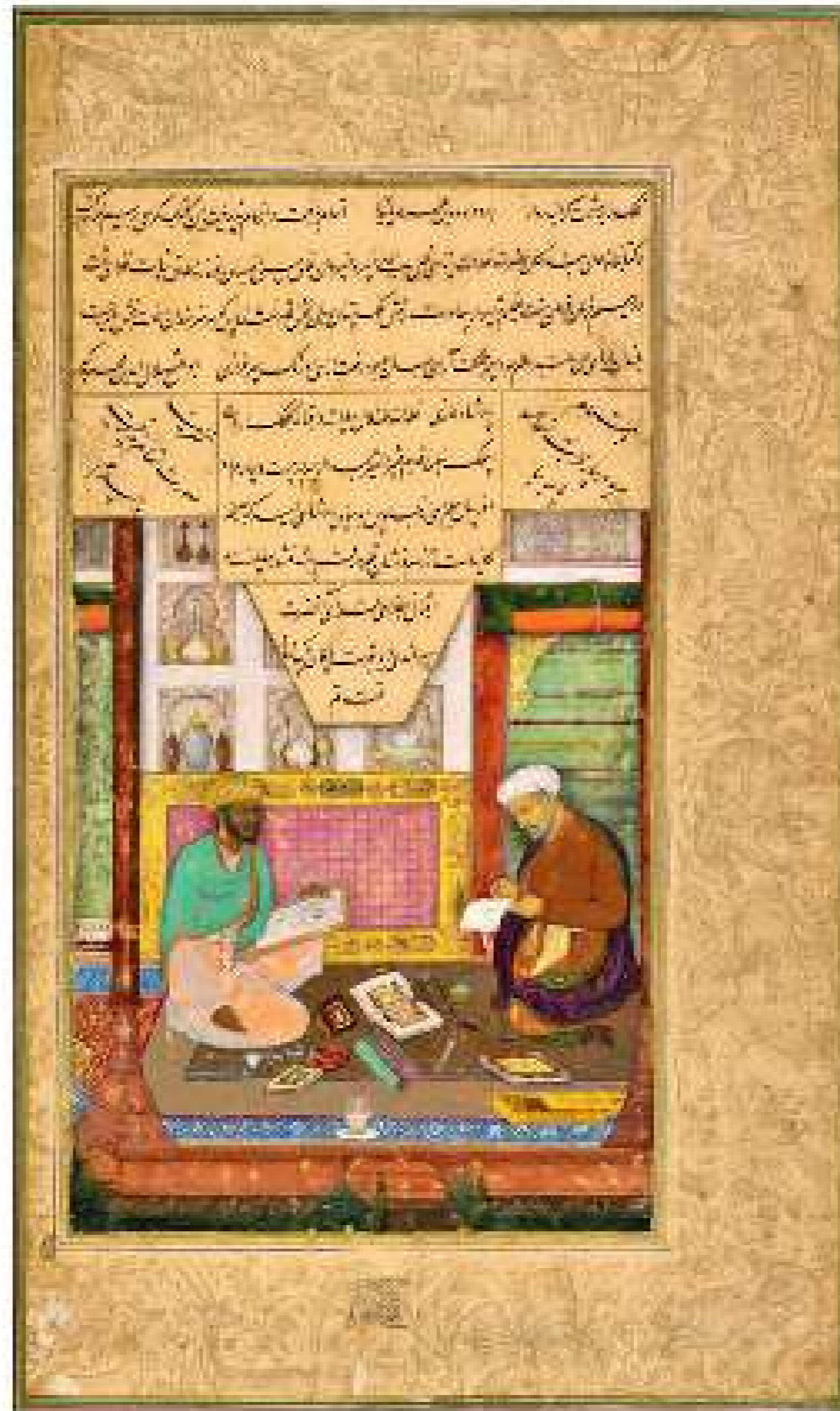
Khizr washing the grey horse given to him by Iskandar in the Water of Life.



f. 298r:
Plato charming wild animals with his music.



f. 318r:
Appeal to save an Idol.



f. 325v.

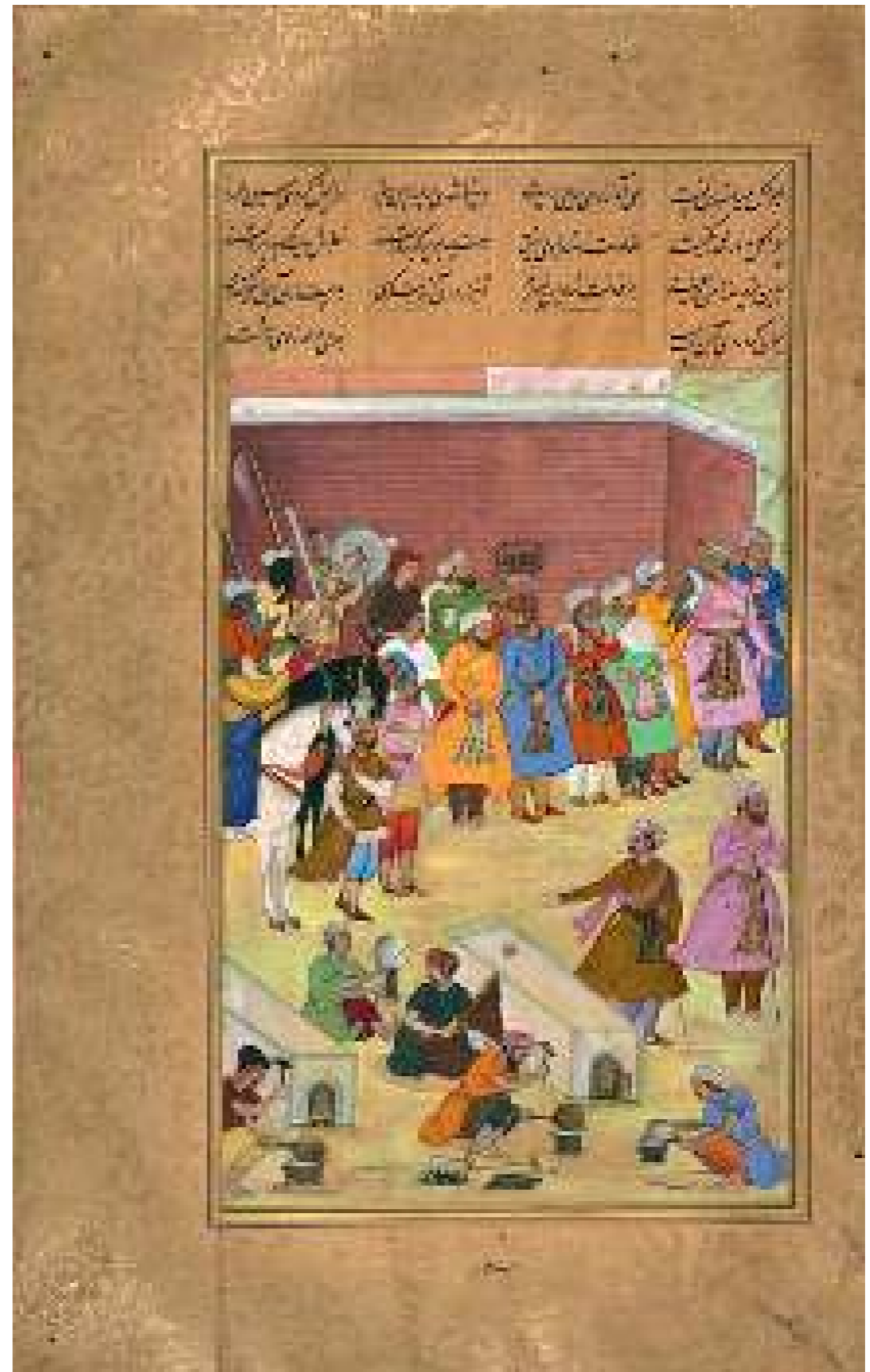
*Abd al-Rahim and Dawlat, together (book inscription).
Another inscription to Jahangir is on the carpet.*



Acc. no. W.613 is a fragment of an illustrated manuscript of Nizami's Khamsa produced for the Mughal emperor Akbar. The Walters Art Museum's (Baltimore) fragment contains five illustrations from Khosrow and Shirin and Iskandarnameh.

f. 5a.

Farhad is brought into Khosrow's presence, in her palace.



ff. 16b-17a.
Invention of the mirror in the presence of Iskandar.



f. 26b.
The death of Darius.



f. 34a.
Iskandar enthroned at Persepolis.

Chapter VII

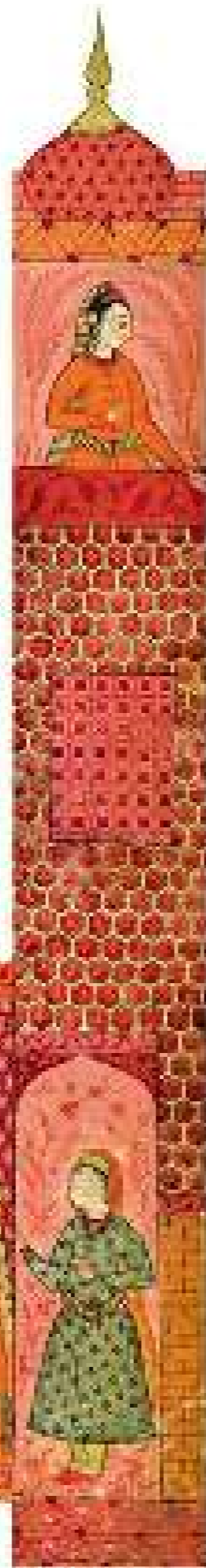
The *Khamisa* of Nizami: Manuscripts of the 18th and 19th Centuries

During the reign of Sultan Husayn (1696–1722), the Safavid state was in rapid decline and in 1722 the Afghan Ghilzai tribes under Mahmud Hotak rebelled, invaded, captured and looted the capital Isfahan. This led to the decline of Isfahan itself from its former glory. Shah Tahmasp II's attempts to rebuild the state were unsuccessful and it collapsed under conflicts between the great Qizilbash tribes. The Safavid dynasty was replaced successively by the Afshars, Zands and Qajars.



f. 320.

Bahram Gur visiting the Princess of the Red Dome.



*Acc. no. W611. The Khamisa of Nizami.
Walters Art Museum. Baltimore.*

Date of manuscript: 1059 AH/1649 CE.

Place: Iran, Qajar era.

Scriber: Shams al-Din Kirmani.

Style: Safavid/Qajar.

*The illustrations are in different styles executed
during the Safavid and Qajar periods.*

The Afsharid Era (1736–1747)

The internal strife and political upheaval that followed the fall of the Safavid Empire to Afghan invaders in 1722 has caused the Afsharid period to be little studied.

Nadir Shah Afshar, a leader of the Qirkhli tribe of Khorasan Province, rose to power during the 1720s and 1730s.

Before he became shah, Nadir Khan was by 1710 commander of a military unit under his father-in-law, Baba Ali Bey, the ruler of Abiward; he was ordered to attack the Uzbeks and drove them out in 1719. He took the fortress of Kalat (*Kalat-e Naderi*) (now in north-east Iran) and established his headquarters there. Nadir Khan subsequently fought many successful battles with the Afghans and captured a number of fortresses; on 22 October 1725, he reclaimed his native city, Mashhad.

The Safavid Empire had effectively disintegrated by the end of Safavid Shah Husayn I's reign (1694–1722). Taking advantage of his weak character and resulting inability to govern, the Afghan Hotak dynasty (1722–1729) took and occupied Isfahan, the Safavid capital, and later on Kashan, Qazvin, Qom and Tehran, maintaining control for seven years.

Withdrawing from the Treaty of Baghdad signed by Tahmasp II and the Ottomans, Nadir Quli Khan demanded that the latter return all the Safavid lands they had held since 1723. When his demand was rejected, he waged a new war on the Ottomans.

From early 1734 until the moment, he was proclaimed shah, Nadir Quli Khan was de facto ruler of the Safavid Empire: he reclaimed the Caucasus from both the Russian Empire and the Ottomans, estab-

lished peace in those lands and strengthened his authority in Khorasan by clearing out the Afghans. He was effectively ruler of the state during the time of Shah Tahmasp II and Shah Abbas III.

Nadir Shah spent at least 37 years of his life in over 120 battles, repelling foreign invaders and internal revolts. He was a very skilled military commander, a master tactician and strategist, as dictated by the situation.

Many of the territories lost to Afghan, Turkish and Russian encroachment after the fall of the Safavids were restored under his brilliant military leadership, but the economic situation declined.

Nadir Shah's ambitions and vision extended well beyond the borders of Iran: by 1739 he had conquered the Mughal Empire and imposed a return to Sunnism, perhaps as part of a grand design to establish an international Islamic empire with himself at its head.

Once Nadir Shah turned his attention to the glorification of his personal achievements and the story of his reign, he had available to him a skeleton staff trained by Safavid masters in the court's workshops. As might be expected, the artistic production of the period was primarily restricted to royal commissions and retained virtually intact the Iranian-European themes and stylistic conventions of the final Safavid period.

Court painters trained in the Iranian-European mode but now isolated from direct contact with cosmopolitan trends apart from the Indian influences following the conquest of Delhi, continued to faithfully reproduce late Safavid compositions with generally diminishing invention and success.

Information on Nadir Shah's architectural projects is scant, and commissions for life-size paintings were few, since he spent most of his energy and the empire's limited resources crisscrossing the country on endless military campaigns. The famed treasures of the Mughal Empire - carted back to Iran on donkeys as spoils of war - had little direct impact on painting, and yet a Mughal influence may be discerned in the enamelwork and textile production of the period.

The *Koh-i-Noor* ("Mountain of Light"), *Daria-i-Noor* ("Sea of Light") and *Orlov* diamonds, as well as the Peacock Throne (*Takht-e Taus*), were taken from the Great Mughal Empire among those spoils. 13,000 chests were also taken and loaded onto 1,000 elephants, 1,000 horses and 10,000 camels. Along with 100 eunuchs, 130 scientists, 200 blacksmiths, 300 masons, 100 stonemasons, 200 carpenters and other craftsmen, all these prizes were delivered to Iran. Although these treasures made little impact on the painters, the Mughals still had a pronounced influence on the jewellery, enamel and textile industries.

The Afsharid period itself was brief and Nadir Shah, largely untutored, evinced little sustained interest in art or culture. The principal documents of his rule postdate his reign and were commissioned by cultured and literate court functionaries.

The range of styles and patronage evidenced in the small corpus of other extant work executed in provincial centres, and the Proto-Safavid style of 18th century Kashmir testify eloquently to the political and economic fragmentation of the period and suggest that Iranian artists emigrated to find new patronage.

The Zand Period (1751–1794)

In 1765 Shiraz became the new capital of the state. Karim Khan Zand, who ruled as regent for Ismayil III, one of the last of the Safavids, returned political stability and economic security to the state. Shiraz was endowed with fortifications, palaces, mosques and other civic amenities, emulating the splendour of Safavid Isfahan, albeit on a smaller scale. Karim Khan invited his kinsmen to establish themselves in Shiraz, and thousands of new residents were added to the capital's population.

Along with the building projects initiated by the ruler and his entourage, the tradition of life-size painting was reinvigorated. By the second half of the 18th century, a distinctively Shiraz-style painting had developed and themes reflecting Shiraz's reputation as the cradle of classical Persian and Persian language poetry emerged.

The themes of Zand painting evolved from the cosmopolitan and imperial inclusions in the late Safavid and Afshar periods of poetic and intimate subjects. Painting was now informed by a sense of lyricism and emotional expression not seen since the heyday of Safavid painting.

Stylistically, although the modelling and dark palette of the Iran-European mode were retained, European features were generally discarded in favour of a return to the local canons of beauty and decorative patterning. Zand painting is characterized by a heavier silhouette, increased stylization of the conventions of Iran-European landscapes and livelier composition.

Zand artists were as versatile as their predecessors. To life-size paintings (both murals and oil on canvas) were added the manuscript illustrations, watercolours, lacquer work and enamels of the previous era, and there was a new medium: wash drawing.

The artistic legacy of the Zand period, however, was for the most part destroyed. Dynastic struggles broke out once more following the regent's death in 1779. In 1794,

Agha Muhammad laid siege to Shiraz and ordered the destruction of the palace residential area. Subsequent earthquakes demolished entire sections of the city.

Nevertheless, the contribution made by Zand painters to the evolution of Persian painting cannot be overstated. Agha Muhammad initially decorated his Tehran audience hall with Zand paintings looted from the Shiraz palace. His reign provided a foundation for the apogee of life-size painting under the Qajar dynasty. Although domestic scenes predominate in extant Zand works, a few rare monumental and historical paintings presage the use of life-size imagery for dynastic declarations during the early Qajar era. Painters honed skills that they would subsequently apply brilliantly to the decoration of Qajar palaces in the 1780s and 1790s. Indeed, the majority of dated, Zand-style paintings were produced during the last decade of the 18th century. Further, that era initiated a return to the two-dimensional depictions seen in early Qajar painting. Finally, the Zand painters' interest in emotional expression and psychological acuity contributed to the final blossoming of later 19th century Iranian painting in the works of Abu'l Hasan Sani al-Mulk and his pupils.

From a Pictorial Cycle of Eight Poetic Subjects.
Brooklyn Museum.
Date: mid-18th century.
Place: Zand.
Oil on canvas, 36 x 35 in. (91.4 x 88.9 cm)
Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Irma B. Wilkinson in memory of her husband, Charles K. Wilkinson, 1997.108.7.





Khosrow discovers Shirin bathing in a pool.

The Qajar Period (1789–1925)

The death of Karim Khan plunged the state into yet another interval of political unrest. For nearly two decades, tribes were roaming the countryside frequently threatening cities and entering brief alliances with rivals, before falling prey to more powerful warlords. From these tribal chiefs emerged Agha Muhammad Khan Qajar (r.1789–1797) founder of the Qajar dynasty, whose quest for power began almost immediately upon Karim Khan's death.

The first ruler of the Qajar Empire, Agha Muhammad Khan founded a great dynasty that secured a justified position among the world's rulers of the 18th century, ruling for one hundred and thirty-six years (1789–1925).

In 1795, with the proclamation of Agha Mohammad Khan as Shah of Mughan, the Qajar state was established.

Like Shah Ismayil, Agha Muhammad Shah Qajar founded a new Turkic dynasty; throughout his reign, the Turkic Afshar, Khalaj, Bayat, Qaragozlu etc. tribes formed the basis of his military and political authority. During his and his successors' reigns (until 1925), Turkic was the main language of palace and army.

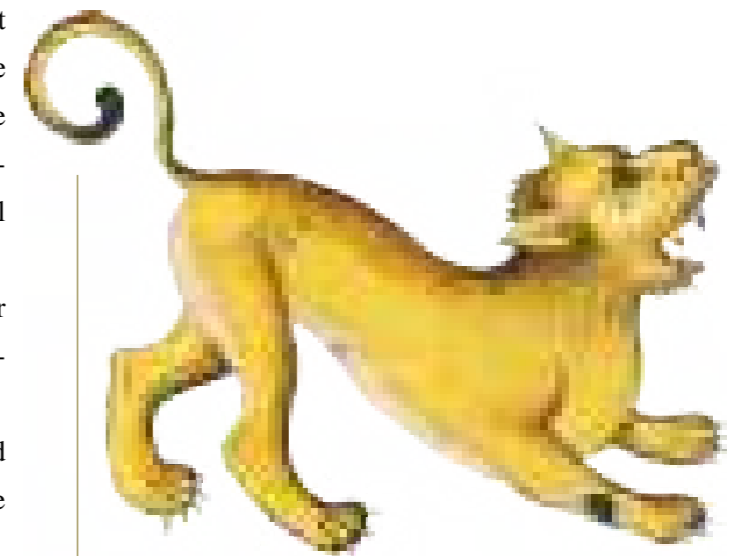
However, with the assassination of Agha Muhammad Shah in Shusha in 1797, the Qajars came under intense pressure from foreign enemies, especially from Russia and Britain. As a result, Russia invaded the South Caucasus and Britain invaded Afghanistan.

With the accession of Fath 'Ali Shah (1798–1834), the Qajar dynasty adopted what might be called a monarchical image. The new shah and his officials were keen to promote a royal presentation that was the opposite of his predecessor and conducive to stability, majesty and elegance.

Fath 'Ali Shah appreciated the refinements of court life rather more than the hardships of the battlefield. He enjoyed hunting, as did all Qajar shahs and princes, the splendour of military reviews and preferred the company of the poets and artists assembled in an informal royal society known as *Anjuman-i Khaqan*.

From a historical perspective, the rise of the Qajar dynasty brought to an end a long period of political instability characteristic of eighteenth-century Iran.

The transitional nature of the Qajar era, as a period poised between the security of traditional values and the





lure of the new, is evident in its ambivalence towards modernity. Like the neighbouring Ottoman Empire, Qajar Iran tried to adjust its political and economic institutions to Western modes of diplomacy, military affairs and commerce.

Qajar painting is a worthy successor to that of the Timurids and Safavids. Despite its Western veneer, it continues to celebrate the traditional themes of classical Iranian painting - royal magnificence, the youthful beauty of both sexes, a love of animal forms, and the exploits of heroes. It also sustains and develops the later Safavid tradition of genre scenes and incidents of everyday life. The Qajar artists surpassed their predecessors in portraiture and floral painting and while Timurid and Safavid art is confined to manuscripts and albums, Qajar painting presents itself in a variety of forms: painted lacquer, glass, painted enamel and the humble lithograph, in addition to the more traditional manuscript illustrations and album pictures.

By the 19th century, the use of figurative imagery had become ingrained in court, popular and religious practices. Life-size imagery peaked in the early Qajar

period, when the manifold uses of imagery at all levels of society mutually reinforced their power.

Early Qajar representations present an artificial image of splendour, unreflective of historical reality. Early Qajar painting and imagery actually constituted a visual “divorce from reality”.

In seeking to understand the function and impact of royal imagery in the early Qajar period, it is imperative to recall its context: that the emotional and psychological power of the images was based on a great visual heritage.

“Qajar art cannot be compared with the highly sophisticated products of Safavid times, but it has a naive charm which is now finding admirers. As a historical record, too, it has value, bringing 19th century Iran to life in vivid and realistic detail” (The World of Islam. Faith, People, Culture. Edited by Bernard Lewis. Thames and Hudson. Reprinted 1997. p.270).

Acc. no. W611. *The Khamsa of Nizami*.
Walters Art Museum. Baltimore.
Date of manuscript: 1059 AH/1649 CE.
Place: Iran, Qajar era.
Scriber: Shams al-Din Kirmani.
Style: Safavid/Qajar.
The illustrations are in different styles executed
during the Safavid and Qajar periods.



f. 29.

Sultan Sanjar and an old woman.

در آن روز که در بهشت
 که شد خروار از آن روز
 خادمانی که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز



در آن روز که در بهشت
 که شد خروار از آن روز
 خادمانی که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز

در آن روز که در بهشت
 که شد خروار از آن روز
 خادمانی که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز
 کوی در بهشت که در آن روز
 و شیرین را که در آن روز

f. 110.

Farhad carries Shirin and her horse on his shoulders.



f. 285.

Bahram Gur kills two lions to claim his crown.



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