



Islamic Manuscripts



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AeR

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With Contributions by Dr Aïda El Khiari



FOREWORD

Researching manuscripts from the Islamic world is a fascinating but demanding task. Many of these manuscripts are centuries old. They have often been altered over time, repaired, or left incomplete. They don't always have title pages, and the colophons – notes at the end – rarely offer much detail. Understanding these codices takes patience, dedication and a certain 'feel' for the field.

Language adds another layer of complexity. Classical Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish are well represented in this catalogue and are complimented by texts in Azerbaijani, Chagatai, Urdu, Latin and a smattering of Armenian and Hebrew. We have been fortunate to study a few of these languages as university students in Paris and Cambridge. The real challenge is not just knowing the languages, however – it is being able to read them in the complexity of handwritten forms. Colophons, prefaces, marginal notes, ownership marks and seal impressions written in flowing, cursive or sometimes angular and stylized scripts require careful and patient study to decipher – the extremely stylized titles copied in 'New Style' of the Ilkhanid manual on the Arabic language are such an example (cat. 19). Yet this is where the joy lies – cracking inscriptions that are hundreds of years old and very challenging to decipher.

This catalogue of 29 manuscripts is the result of eight years of collecting and several months of research. Among the highlights is a large and remarkably complete Mamluk Qur'an attributed to Ahmad al-Mutabbib, dating to the reign of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad (cat. 1). It was used specifically for *tajwid*, the art of Qur'anic recitation, and is a rare medieval example of such a manuscript surviving nearly intact with its original illumination.

Another exquisite manuscript, in two volumes, is an Imperial Mughal album made for Emperor Akbar or Prince Salim (cat. 16). It was dispersed before the 1720s but later reassembled in three individual portions, now held in the Royal Collections at Windsor, the Islamic Arts Museum in Doha, and here. Reconstructing the original order of its folios – based on catchwords written in the lower border of the pages – has been a rewarding challenge.

One of the more unexpected discoveries has been the story of the Christian saint Arethas of Najran and his *Address to his People* of southern Arabia – the Banu Harith (cat. 20). Learning about this text concerning the Christians of the Arabian Peninsula, copied at the end of a Mamluk compilation of texts on divination and history, has been as surprising as it has been enriching.

These manuscripts offer a window into the complex and interconnected histories of the regions stretching from China to the Mediterranean. They reflect the movement of ideas, scientific knowledge, religious beliefs and literature across cultures and geographies. As physical objects, they are often beautifully written and carefully illuminated, cherished by their owners and preserved through generations. They are cultural treasures, repositories of human creativity and knowledge, and we are delighted to share them with you through this catalogue.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Dr Aïda El Khiari, whose academic expertise and intellectual rigour have consistently challenged us to do better. Her contributions to this catalogue are of the highest scholarly standard, and we feel



especially fortunate to have collaborated with her on this project. We are also grateful to Will Kwiatkowski, who always manages to decipher seemingly illegible inscriptions and uncover references to authors and historical figures previously unknown to us. Dr Michael Erdman at the British Library provided invaluable guidance in our research on Fuzuli's *Layla and Majnun* (cat. 15). Our warm thanks go to our friend Aydin Azizzadeh, whose vast knowledge of Islamic calligraphy, cheerful spirit and unwavering availability – even in the middle of the night – have been a tremendous support throughout the writing of this catalogue.

Finally, we would like to thank our two young sons, who have mostly shown great patience while we sat behind our books and our computer screens instead of going to the park or playing with cars.

ROMAIN PINGANNAUD AND ANDREW BUTLER-WHEELHOUSE
Autumn 2025







THE QUR'AN
AND RELIGION

Large Qur'an for *Tajwid* (Recitation)

Attributable to Ahmad al-Mutatabbib

Mamluk Egypt, Reign of al-Nasir Muhammad,
c. 1320–40

Arabic manuscript on paper, 331 folios and two flyleaves, written in 13 lines of black Muhaqqaq, sura headings in gold Thuluth, richly illuminated double frontispiece, illuminated double page with the opening of the text, double illuminated final folios, numerous illuminated verse and text division markers, the folios trimmed, in an Ottoman 19th-century purple leather binding with polychrome and gilt decoration, preserved in its original protective slip case

Folio 34.5 × 24 cm; text area 28 × 16 cm

PROVENANCE

London family collection, acquired on the UK market
in 2016

Thence by descent to a private collector, London, 2023

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَرْمَلُ
قُمْ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
يُضْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا
أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

*O thou enwrapped in thy robes, keep vigil the
night [...] and chant the Koran very distinctly*

Sura al-Muzammil (73: 1-4)

This hitherto unpublished Qur'an manuscript constitutes a remarkable witness to the refinement of Mamluk Qur'an production in Cairo during the second quarter of the fourteenth century. It combines a sophisticated decorative programme with an unusually complex system of vocalization and recitational notation. Its features resonate strongly with the corpus of Ahmad al-Mutatabbib, a calligrapher active in Cairo in the 1320s and 1330s, whose signed Qur'ans and unique scribal appendices provide unparalleled documentation for the intellectual and religious culture of this period.

The manuscript opens with a striking double illuminated frontispiece. Each folio is structured around a tall rectangular panel framed on three sides by wide borders filled with gold vegetal scrolls, enlivened with touches of brownish grey and punctuated by blue floral medallions. Behind the gold foliage, fine hatching in grey produces a subtle relief effect, often described as grisaille shading. Within the central field, itself enclosed by a thick gilt braid, unfolds a refined geometric structure composed of interlaced star polygons, a hallmark of early fourteenth-century Cairo illumination associated with the atelier of Sandal and his pupils, whose influence extended across the city's production in these decades.¹ Above and below the panel, horizontal bands in monumental square Kufic are inscribed in gold against blue grounds. They contain a passage frequently used to introduce luxury Qur'ans, verses 77–80 of sura *al-Waqi'a* (Q.56), which speak of the sacred status of the Qur'an. This particular combination, a geometric double frontispiece with Kufic inscriptions immediately preceding the textual incipit, was not exclusive to this manuscript but belonged to a broader Cairene idiom c. 1300–30, as attested by numerous Mamluk luxury Qur'ans. One of the earliest and most spectacular examples is the Qur'an prepared for al-Nasir Muhammad in 713 H/1313, illuminated by Aygdolu b. 'Abdallah al-Badri, a pupil of Sandal, and is held today in Istanbul (TIEM 450).²

The following bifolio, richly illuminated, introduces the Qur'anic text with sura *al-Fatiha* and the opening verses of *al-Baqara*. On each page, the text is inscribed in gold script, five lines per page, against a background of grey hatching filled with gold vegetal scrolls touched with blue and brown. The text is set within a framed panel; sura headings are written in white Thuluth on gold cloud-shaped reserves in the upper bands, flanked by illuminated roundels echoing the vegetal scrolls of the frontispiece. The lower bands contain counts of the words of each sura. This exact composition is repeated at the end of the manuscript, where the final suras are written on similarly decorated bifolia. Such architectural mirroring of front and end spreads was a hallmark of Cairo luxury Qur'ans of this period, as seen for instance in the Qur'an of al-Nasir Muhammad (TIEM 450) and in Mutatabbib's own dated copies.

The text of the manuscript is written in black Muhaqqaq, in thirteen lines per page, with a careful ductus and numerous illuminated ornaments marking textual divisions. Each verse is separated by a gold octagonal rosette; teardrop devices inscribed with *khamis* mark five-verse intervals; circular rosettes inscribed with *ashr* indicate ten-verse intervals; half-*hizb* are signalled in the margins in golden Thuluth. In addition, *tabula ansata* frames identify sajda verses, while rectangular panels, decorated with vegetal scrolls on red-hatched





grounds, announce numerous divisions of the text in gold Thuluth on cloud-shaped reserves. All of these features are characteristic of early 14th-century Cairo Qur'ans, their systematization reflecting the ateliers' concern to codify recitational aids into visual form.

Beyond its visual refinement, however, the manuscript is remarkable for the extraordinary sophistication of its vocalization and reading system. This complex apparatus can be related to the system used by a Cairene calligrapher known from several signed Qur'ans, Ahmad al-Mutabbib.³ More extraordinary still, the system is explicitly described by Mutabbib himself in three appendices appended to Qur'ans he copied, one of them completed in Cairo in Sha'ban 734 H/1334 (Dar al-Kutub, Rashid 81).⁴ These appendices are the earliest recorded Mamluk examples of their kind and constitute an exceptional source for the technical culture of Mamluk Qur'an production.

The manuscript consistently marks the *hamzat al-wasl* with green dots, placed above the alif when read with *fatha*, below for *kasra*, and midline for *dhamma*. This system is described verbatim by Mutabbib in his 1334 appendix: "The sign of *ibtida'* with the *alif al-wasl* is a dot in green, on top of the *alif* if it starts with a, underneath if it starts with i, and halfway if it starts with u. This (way of marking) is practiced by the people of the West but not by the people of the East."⁵ The adoption of this Maghribi system into a Cairene Qur'an was an innovation, and its presence in the present manuscript constitutes a strong argument for attribution.

The manuscript also employs a sophisticated colour system for the sign of gemination (*shadda*).⁶ Ordinary doubling of a consonant is marked in black, while assimilation accompanied by nasalization is highlighted in red. When a word ends with a consonant and the following word begins with the same consonant, a case known in Arabic as *idgham al-mithlayn*, the *shadda* is then written in yellow to indicate their assimilation in recitation.

The manuscript further innovates by marking in red the *tanwin* that should be partially assimilated, in order to prevent confusion with cases where it is pronounced clearly. Mutabbib explicitly claimed this device as his own invention, and its consistent use here provides one of the strongest convergences with his corpus.⁷ Finally, the interlinear spaces are occupied by red letters (*kaf*, *ayn*, among others) serving as pause markers, indicating where the reciter may or should stop, alongside marginal notes related to recitation. Together, these signs form a reading apparatus of exceptional complexity, rare even among Mamluk luxury Qur'ans.

The affinities with Mutabbib's corpus are considerable. Four signed manuscripts by his hand are securely known: two large Qur'ans in Cairo, completed in 732 H/1332, and 734 H/1334, the latter including a long appendix; a medium-format Qur'an in Washington, dated 744 H/1343; and a copy of Ibn Sina's *Qanun fi'l-tibb* in Milan.⁸ To these, scholars have added two Qur'ans attributed on stylistic grounds, today held in Dublin and Cairo.⁹ Three folios in the Khalili Collection have also been linked to him, although their attribution has been questioned.¹⁰ Two Qur'ans sold in London (Sotheby's, 19 October 2016, lot 103 and 27 October 2020, lot 407) display the same distinctive features, and a closer study of this manuscript might allow





us to consider its attribution to the same calligrapher. Taken together, this corpus establishes al-Mutatabbib as one of the most prolific and distinctive Qur'an copyists of the early 14th century.

The present manuscript shares with this corpus not only its architectural programme, the sequence of frontispiece, opening bifolio and finispiece, but above all the full complexity of the colour-coded vocalization system described in the appendix. While certain elements, such as the green marking of *alif al-wasl*, also appear in two other Qur'ans copied in 701 H/1302 and 729 H/1329 by Muhammad b. Ibrahim al-Maydumi,¹¹ and even in later Qur'ans of the later 14th century,¹² the internal consistency of the apparatus in the present copy makes the connection to al-Mutatabbib's circle unmistakable. Al-Maydumi, a slightly older calligrapher and traditionist, may have been al-Mutatabbib's teacher, and the overlap of technical devices indicates a scholarly milieu in Cairo in which these conventions circulated.

Dating the manuscript to the 1320s to 1340s is supported by both decorative and palaeographic evidence. The most compelling evidence, however, remains the internal consistency of the vocalization system, which belongs unmistakably to the same intellectual project as Mutatabbib's signed works.

Although unsigned, the manuscript can therefore be attributed with confidence to Ahmad al-Mutatabbib. It exemplifies the same synthesis of artistic refinement and philological precision that characterizes his signed Qur'ans. More broadly, it attests to the convergence in early fourteenth-century Cairo of the arts of the book and the sciences of recitation, producing Qur'ans that were at once works of devotion, objects of visual magnificence, and manuals of *tajwid*.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين
والصلاة والسلام على
سيدنا محمد وآله الطيبين
الطاهرين

وآلهم أجمعين

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله رب العالمين
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الطاهرين

وآلهم أجمعين

An Ayyubid Manuscript on Qur’anic Philology

Abu al-Baqa’ ‘Abdullah b. al-Husayn al-Ukbari al-Baghdadi (d. 616 H/1219): *Kitab al-tibyan fi i’rab al-qur’an fi ‘ilm al-nahw wa al-i’rab wa al-tafsir*
Signed ‘Abdallah b. Ahmad b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Barnisi (?) al-Shafi’i
Dated Safar 600 H/October–November 1203

Arabic manuscript on thick cream laid paper, 198 folios plus one modern flyleaf, each page with 23 lines of strong black cursive to the page, titles in larger black script, with catchwords, colophon signed and dated, apocryphal *sama'a* (hearing) note on the final folio, occasional marginal repairs, in Ottoman marbled paper binding with flap
Folio 25,5 × 17,5 cm
INSCRIPTIONS
Sulayman Fayzi 1301 (1883–84) (seal impression)
In Arabic: *This was compared with the original that was dictated by the author and it was agreed upon and authenticated on 1 Rajab 600 H/5 March 1204.* (marginal note on the final folio, see image below)

Kitab al-tibyan fi i’rab al-qur’an (Clarification in the syntax of the Qur’an), is considered one of the most important works dealing with Qur’anic grammar, *qira’at* (recitations) and interpretation, and the present work is one of the earliest known copies. The text is a philological commentary on the semantic grammar of the Qur’an. It discusses the relationship between syntax and meaning with the aim to clarify the intended meanings of words, phrases and structures within the sacred text. It is considered a crucial field of religious science as it seeks to ensure the accurate interpretation of the divine message.

This manuscript was copied during the lifetime of its author, Abu al-Baqa’ ‘Abdullah b. al-Husayn al-Ukbari, making this example possibly the earliest surviving copy of the text. Originally from Ukbara, a city on the bank of the river Tigris, the author was born in 1143 and died in Baghdad in 1219. Sources mention that smallpox caused him to go blind in childhood but, despite his disability, al-Ukbari was a successful author and major contributor to the field of Arabic grammar, Qur’anic studies and the narration of Hadith. Al-Ukbari is also the author of various commentaries on celebrated authors such as al-Mutanabbi, but is mostly known for his commentary on al-Hariri’s *Maqamat*.

Kitab al-tibyan fi i’rab al-qur’an is recorded in Brockelman’s *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* and in Hajj Khalifa’s *Kashf al-zunun*.² Two early copies are in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (undated but catalogued as 13th century) and in Cairo (dated 703 H/1303-04). Several other copies are listed in Brockelmann,³ most of which are later.

كتاب التبيان في إعراب القرآن



A Visual Genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad

al-Tuhfa al-sharifa wa al-turfat al-munifa
Signed Hasan b. ‘Ali al-Ghazali
Probably Ottoman Egypt, dated 995 H/1586–87

Arabic manuscript on cream-coloured paper, 20 folios plus two flyleaves, written in 24 lines of black Naskh, within red and blue rules, with catchwords, full-page illuminated title frontispiece, final colophon signed and dated, in a 17th-century Ottoman brown morocco binding, stamped and gilt with a central mandorla and pendants adorned with arabesques, water staining throughout and later restorations
Folio 34 × 25 cm, text panel 27 × 16 cm
PROVENANCE
A French diplomat, posted in the Middle-East, c. 1920–40
Thence by descent until 2024

This manuscript, titled *al-Tuhfat al-sharifa wa al-turfat al-munifa* (The honorable treasure and the exalted rarity), belongs to a corpus of works devoted to the Prophet Muhammad and his lineage. It opens with an illuminated title page the style of which continues the traditions of Mamluk manuscript production of the 14th and 15th centuries. A rectangular panel encloses an *‘unwan* inscribed with the title of the work, while below a polylobed rosette (*shamsa*), written in alternating lines of red and black Naskh, describes the content. The surrounding spandrels are filled with trilobed motifs resembling cotton flowers, a hallmark of Mamluk illumination. Executed in gold, blue, red and black, this frontispiece reflects the endurance of book workshops into the 16th century, even after the Ottoman conquest of 1517.

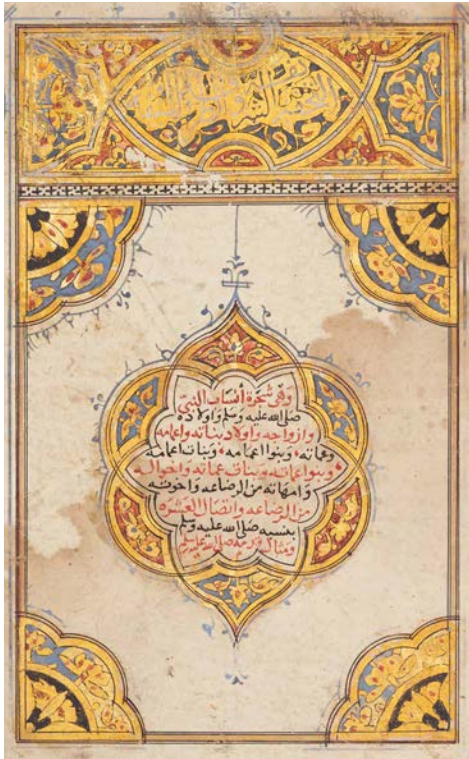
Following the frontispiece, a remarkable double-page composition unfolds, presenting one of the most visually inventive layouts in the manuscript. It combines different orientations of the text, the use of red, green, blue, and black inks, and a variety of scripts including Thuluth, Naskh, and Muhaqqaq. The recto of this opening spread is particularly striking: it contains the complete *nisba* of the Prophet Muhammad, arranged in concentric rectangles, beginning in the lower right corner with the words “al-Qasim Muhammad b. ‘Abd Allah”. This first section of the text consists of genealogical trees tracing the Prophet’s lineage, from his wives, aunts, daughters, sons, etc. The striking interplay of scripts in these pages demonstrates a deliberate exploration of the graphic potential of writing, where text operates simultaneously as image. This inventiveness recalls the diversity of graphic forms documented in the treatise of al-Tayyibi.¹ The section concludes with a full-page drawing of the Prophet’s sandal (*na’l al-nabi*), a devotional motif imbued with talismanic value. The second section begins with a circular *shamsa* containing a ten-line description in red, green and black Naskh, and continues with accounts of the Prophet’s victories, miracles, possessions, animals and weapons.

The manuscript situates itself within a broader devotional current that flourished under the Mamluks. The Mamluk period witnessed an efflorescence of literature centred on the Prophet Muhammad. This cultural phenomenon was inseparable from the political role of the Mamluk sultans, who presented themselves as defenders of Islam and custodians of the holy places. Within this context, devotional texts, panegyrics and visual representations of the Prophet’s life proliferated. Foremost among these works was al-Busiri’s *Qasidat al-Burda* (Poem of the mantle), which attained immense popularity from the 13th century onward and became one of the most frequently copied, recited and illuminated Arabic poems in the Mamluk sultanate.²

Within this devotional landscape, genealogical texts assumed a prominent role. By inscribing the Prophet into visualized lineages, these works affirmed the sacrality of his descent and the legitimacy of his descendants. They also offered readers and viewers a tangible means of contemplating the Prophet’s place within sacred history. The *Tuhfat al-sharifa* thus belongs to a flourishing Mamluk-era corpus that emphasized proximity to the Prophet through word, image and genealogy.

Although genealogies in prose were common from the early Islamic centuries, the visual representation of genealogy into tree form (*mushajjar*) emerged

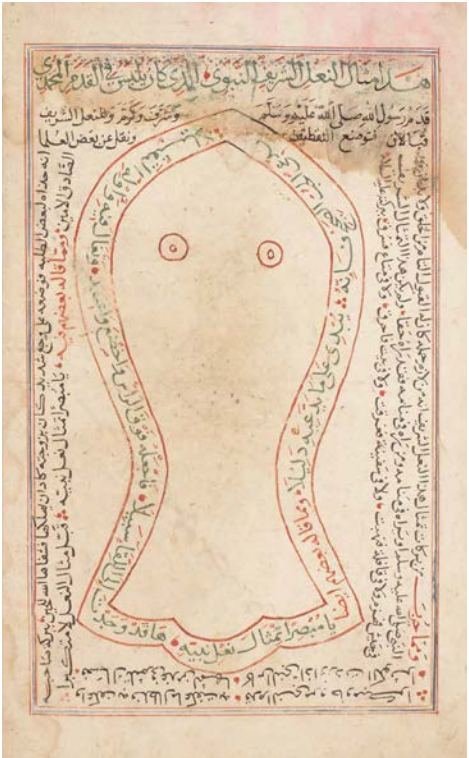




relatively late in Islamic historiography, around the 13th century.³ By the Mamluk period, genealogical diagrams became a distinct visual and intellectual genre as evidenced by dated documented witnesses of genealogical trees of the Prophet.⁴ A copy preserved in Istanbul, titled *Shajarat al-nasab*, formerly belonging to the library of the Mamluk Sultan al-Ghawri, presents the Prophet's genealogy through circular medallions connected by lines, a scheme that would enjoy enduring success in the Ottoman world.⁵ Another closely related manuscript, now in Berlin, was copied in 900 H/1495⁶. Together with five other identified manuscripts copied by or for high Mamluk emirs, these works reveal the Mamluk fascination with visually charting prophetic lineage. The Topkapı and Berlin copies of the *Shajarat al-nasab* represent one branch of the tradition, focusing on the Prophet's ascendants.

The present manuscript diverges from these models by emphasizing not only the Prophet's ascendants but also his descendants. Instead of medallions linked by lines, the manuscript employs a visual device where a word, usually *al-nabi*, is elongated to fill the entire page from where stems the other names related to it. A spectacular example of this experimentation is the genealogical scroll of Shaykh Sayf al-Din al-Rajihī ibn Sabiq, copied in Damascus in 894 H/1489 by 'Alī ibn Yusuf al-Qudsi, which demonstrates the growing appeal of lineage representation⁷.

This appeal extended into the Ottoman period, as demonstrated by the present manuscript, together with another copy that was sold in Paris, by the same calligrapher, Hasan b. 'Alī al-Ghazālī⁸ dated 997 H/1589 or another one held in the Asian Civilisations Museum, in Singapore.⁹ The persistence of these manuscripts into the Ottoman period reflects a broader phenomenon – the sacralization of calligraphy and genealogy as means of representing the Prophet. In these works, text becomes image, and beauty of form becomes a reflection of the Prophet's own beauty.





An Early Safavid Qur'an

Herat or Tabriz, 925 H/1519–20

Signed 'Ali b. Haydar b. Amir Jan al-Hafiz

Arabic manuscript on paper, 315 folios plus one flyleaf, written in 15 lines of text, within gold and polychrome rules, gold roundel verse markers, sura headings in gold within illuminated panels, gold and blue illuminated marginal medallions, the opening bifolio richly illuminated, preceded by an illuminated *shamsa*, colophon signed and dated, in a contemporaneous gilt-stamped morocco binding with calligraphic borders, gilt and painted découpé doublures.

Folio 36 × 25 cm, text panel 23.5 × 15 cm

This Qur'an, dated 925 H/1519–20 and signed by 'Ali b. Haydar b. Amir Jan al-Hafiz, is a luxurious copy that exemplifies the refinement of early 16th-century Safavid manuscript production.

The manuscript opens on a richly illuminated circular *shamsa* inscribed with the second half of verse 17:88 of the Qur'an, stating the inimitability of the sacred text. This textual motif occurs very frequently in Qur'anic *shamsas* of the 16th century, as for example in the famous Ruzbihan Qur'an (Chester Beatty, Is 1558) or in a sumptuous Qur'an copied in 1006 H/1598 preserved at the Smithsonian (F1932.66).¹ The inaugural *shamsa* is followed by a sumptuous double frontispiece inscribed with six lines of gold Muhaqqaq reserved in cloud-bands against a dense blue ground, framed within multiple nested borders richly decorated with floral scrolls and cartouches.

The Qur'anic text then proceeds with an intricate interplay of scripts and colours: the upper and lower lines are written in a bold blue Muhaqqaq, framing two panels of six lines in black Naskh separated by a single line of red Thuluth. This type of composition was already used in Iran during the 15th century, as seen in the thirty-*juz* Qur'an copied in 888 H/1483 by Zayn al-Abidin b. Muhammad al-Katib, probably in Tabriz,² and later enjoyed great success in manuscripts produced in Iran during the 16th century.³

This manuscript retains a beautiful binding, seemingly contemporaneous and custom-made. The outer cover carries inscriptions running along the outer frame, in a bold cursive script, which include the entirety of sura 93, while the spine bears two famous verses from sura *al-Waqi'a* (56:79–80). The central field is decorated with an ogival polylobed medallion and corner-pieces filled with rosettes and split leaves, while the doublures employ gilt filigree leather cutwork over a polychrome ground, a technique characteristic of Safavid luxury bindings.⁴

The manuscript was produced during a period marked by profound political and cultural upheavals in Iran and its neighbouring regions. In 1501 Shah Isma'il I (r. 1501–24) established the Safavid dynasty in Tabriz, imposing Shi'ism as the state religion. Meanwhile, to the east, the Shaybanid Uzbeks captured Samarqand, Bukhara, and finally Herat in 1507, thus extinguishing the last Timurid court and dispersing the artistic milieu fostered under Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506).⁵ Many painters and calligraphers were forced to migrate: some relocated to Bukhara, contributing to the formation of a post-Herat style under Shaybanid patronage, while others moved westward to Safavid Tabriz, where Isma'il built a royal atelier.⁶ After Isma'il's victory at Merv in 1510, Khorasan and Herat were reincorporated into the Safavid realm. On the western border, the confrontation with the Ottomans at Chaldiran in 1514 brought a brief Ottoman occupation of Tabriz and the deportation of numerous artisans to Istanbul, enriching the ateliers of the palace. This volatile period thus witnessed the fragmentation and recomposition of artistic networks, with the dispersal of Timurid-trained masters generating both the emergence of a Safavid imperial idiom in Tabriz, the provincialization of Herat and the formation of new artistic centres under Shaybanid, and Ottoman patronage.

This Qur'an, dated only a few years after Chaldiran, thus belongs to a moment of intense mobility of craftsmen and stylistic exchanges. Attributing





Qur'an manuscripts of this period to a specific city remains notoriously difficult. As David James has noted, very few early 16th-century Qur'ans provide explicit colophons naming their place of production, and the stylistic vocabulary was widely shared across centres.⁷ The present manuscript exhibits features closely associated with Herat – the nested frontispiece structure with cartouches and geometric *unwan*, the dominance of gold and blue with restrained touches of colour, particularly in the floral decorations, and the use of red *jadwal* and black floral borders in the double frontispiece.⁸ Such decoration on black ground recalls Timurid precedents, as seen in the *Bustan* of Sa'di copied in Herat in 1488,⁹ or in the Khalili Qur'an (QUR 323), also produced in Herat c. 1490–1510.¹⁰ Indeed, the use of black-ruled borders is often regarded as a hallmark of Herat, and appears consistently in documented Herati production, such as in a Qur'an dated 967 H/1557 preserved in Istanbul.¹¹

Certain features, such as the restrained palette largely limited to gold and blue, with minimal use of red and green, distinguish this manuscript from slightly later Tabrizi and Shirazi Qur'ans, which expanded the chromatic range. For instance, a Qur'an in Hamburg (MKG 1893.250), copied in Tabriz in 971 H/1564, preserves the same structure of the frontispiece and presents the same gold-on-blue text panels with cloud reserves but makes prominent use of pink, green and other hues in the decoration.¹²

Among the closest parallels with our manuscript is a magnificent Qur'an of identical size sold at Sotheby's, whose opening bifolio shares the same blue-and-gold palette, cloud-band layout and black-ground floral scrolls.¹³ While the Sotheby's Qur'an is undated and without a colophon, its overall vocabulary of ornament and palette suggests a common Herat-derived model for such luxury Qur'ans in the early Safavid period, making the comparison particularly instructive.

The colophon of the present Qur'an records the name of the scribe as 'Ali b. Haydar b. Amir Jan al-Hafiz, a calligrapher otherwise unknown. His name is absent from the standard biographical dictionaries, and no other manuscripts can be securely attributed to him. While several individuals named 'Ali or Haydar are mentioned in contemporary sources, none seems to correspond with this hand. This silence of the record underscores both the anonymity of many practitioners and the fragmentary state of our knowledge of early Safavid book production.

The present manuscript, signed and dated 925 H/1519–20, is a remarkable witness to the luxury production of manuscripts at the dawn of the Safavid era. Its scale, refined illumination, and sophisticated binding situate it firmly within the elite milieu of early 16th-century Iran, at the crossroads of Herati traditions and Safavid patronage. While its exact place of production cannot be determined, the manuscript embodies the shared visual language and artistic exchanges between Herat and Tabriz at this time. It thus encapsulates the artistic hybridity of a moment shaped by political upheavals, migrations of craftsmen and the recomposition of artistic networks between Herat, Tabriz and other centres within the nascent Safavid state.



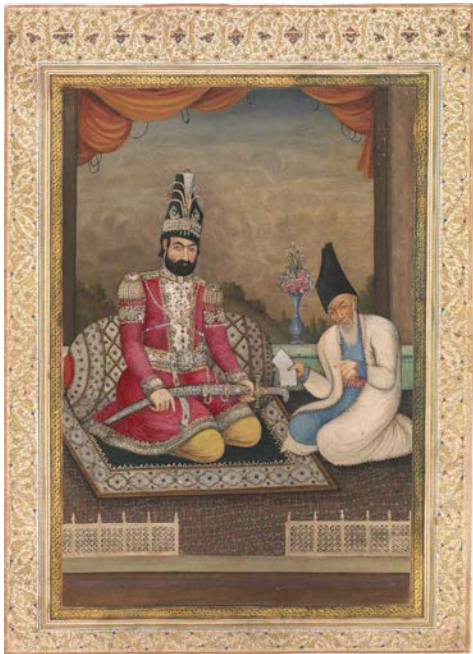
Qur'an with Prayers in the Hand of Muhammad Shah Qajar
and his Vizier Hajj Mirza Aqasi

Farashband or perhaps Shiraz, Iran
Dated Thursday 7 Shawwal 1163 H/9 September
1750
Copied by Ibn Safar Muhammad Zaman

Arabic manuscript on laid paper, 364 folios plus three flyleaves, 15 lines of neat black Naskh per page, with interlinear Persian translation in small red Nasta'liq verging on Shikasteh, small gold and polychrome roundel verse markers, sura headings in red Thuluth within a gold-illuminated cartouche, text within gold and polychrome *jadwal*, with copious Persian marginal glosses in black Nasta'liq, catchwords, opening bifolio finely illuminated in gold and polychrome, the inserted protective leaf delicately illuminated and inscribed, colophon signed and dated, followed by prayers in Arabic, the final three folios with a religious commentary in the hand of Muhammad Shah Qajar, including three lines attributed to Hajji Mirza Aqasi, both bearing later attributions within illuminated marginal medallions, in Qajar lacquer binding decorated with floral medallions on red ground

Folio 32.5 × 20.3 cm, text panel 24.6 × 13 cm

PROVENANCE
Private collection, Los Angeles, 1970s
Christie's, London, 6 October 2011, lot 269
Private collection, London, until 2025



Portrait of Muhammad Shah and his Vizier Hajj Mirza Aqasi, second quarter 19th century, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, (inv. no. 2014.739)

This Qur'an opens with an exquisitely illuminated frontispiece. Gold and polychrome decoration fills the page around the beginning of the Qur'anic text, itself copied in cloud-shaped reserves on a gold ground. The text is crowned by magnificent headpieces and framed with intricate scrollwork filled with blossoming flowers, gold palmettes and calligraphy. The reigns of the last Safavid shahs, Shah Sulayman (r. 1666–94) and Shah Sultan Husayn (r. 1694–1722), saw a renewed interest in the production of Qur'ans. This explains the emergence of splendid manuscripts that incorporated interlinear translations and marginal glosses in Persian, as is the case here.¹ Manuscripts of the period follow the style developed in late 17th-century Isfahan, which remained popular throughout the 18th century. Three Qur'ans dated 1689–90, c. 1700 and 1787–88 in the Khalili Collections, London, display a similar overall layout and construction.² Among these, the manuscript dated 1787–88 – although copied three decades after the present Qur'an – is decorated with a remarkably similar frontispiece. That Qur'an was tentatively attributed to Shiraz on the basis of its scribe, Muhsin al-Shirazi (of Shiraz).

Ibn Safar Muhammad Zaman completed this Qur'an on Thursday 7 Shawwal 1163 H/9 September 1750. In the colophon, Ibn Safar notes that he was a teacher (*mu'allim*) as well as a resident (*sakin*) of Farashband, a city located about a hundred miles south of Shiraz, the capital of Fars. Despite the great political instability of the 1740s and 1750s, expensive manuscripts were still being produced, and Shiraz remained an important artistic centre, particularly under the Zand dynasty and the rule of Karim Khan (d. 1779). In 1750, when this manuscript was copied, Karim Khan Zand had just proclaimed himself regent (*vakil*) of Isma'il III in Isfahan, a figurehead king and grandson of the last Safavid shah.

Ibn Safar chose a bold Naskh style to copy this Qur'an. The black script is carefully aligned along the horizontal axis, with minimal lower tails, short upstrokes and occasional ligatures. This follows in the tradition of Ahmad Nayrizi, a prolific and celebrated master of calligraphy from Isfahan active in the first half of the 18th century. His style became closely associated with Persian Qur'ans of the period.³

Three folios at the end of the manuscript contain Arabic prayers in the minute handwriting of Muhammad Shah Qajar (r. 1834–48), Fath 'Ali's grandson and the second ruler of the Qajar dynasty. Also included are three lines purportedly in the hand of his Grand Vizier, Hajji Mirza Aqasi: the attribution to the Vizier is made in a marginal illuminated medallion.

Hajji Mirza Aqasi was Muhammad Shah's tutor from a young age and later served as Grand Vizier from 1835 to 1848. Born in 1783 in north-west Iran, he was a Sufi who was appointed tutor to the sons of Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza, including Muhammad Mirza, the future Muhammad Shah. Aqasi retained an overarching influence over the Shah throughout his reign, serving as his Prime Minister for most of his fourteen-year rule. A double portrait of the Shah and his vizier is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 2014.739). It is tempting to suggest that the Qur'an once belonged to the Shah himself or formed part of his library, or that perhaps a devoted courtier incorporated these folios into the Qur'an. The Shah's papers may have conferred a royal aura upon this manuscript of the Holy Qur'an, turning it into a particularly precious document.



Devotional Poetry in Praise of *Ahl al-Bayt*

Mughal India, 16th or 17th century;
the illuminated borders 1560–64

Persian manuscript on gold sprinkled paper, 27 folios plus four flyleaves, eight lines of elegant black Nasta'liq to the page, each double-page with protective parchment, text within gold and polychrome *jadwal*, text panels set within associated gold-speckled blue, dark blue, cream and yellow card borders, each illuminated in gold and polychrome with cusped medallions, some inscribed in Thuluth, with the name and titles of Mun'im Khan, the frontispiece with text later decorated with ultramarine floral painted ground, several seal impressions and librarian marks, in 19th-century gilt leather binding

Folio 35.1 × 22.5 cm, text panel 21.4 × 11.3 cm

INSCRIPTIONS
In Persian: *hazrat-i nawwab-i gardun iqtidar / khan-i khanan mun'im-i 'alam-madar / zat-i pakash bad bar uj-i baqa / mihr-u mah ra ta buwad nur-u ziya* (His Excellence, the vicegerent who is powerful as the heavens, The Khan of Khans Mun'im, the axis of the world, May his pure self be at the apex of longevity, For as long as the sun and the moon have light and luminescence) (around the borders)

Muntazim al-Mulk Muhsin al-Dawla Faridun Jah Sayyid Mansur 'Ali Khan Bahadur Nusrat Jang (undated seal impression)

Nawab Malika Zamani Begum 1272 (1855–56; seal impression)

az ketab-khaneh-ye sarkar-e fayz athar 'enayat be-navvab malika zamanih beygum sahiba sana 1276 (From the Library of the one who has vestiges of grace, [it was given] to Nawab Malika Zamani Baygum Sahiba, the year 1276 (1859–60) (f. 1 and f. 27))

In English: *Haft Band, a beautiful Caligraphy written for Khan Khanan Monim Khan Sobadar of Bengal in 1574 A.D.* (label pasted on the front cover and on f.1)

PROVENANCE
Mansur 'Ali Faridun Jah, Nawab of Bengal (d. 1884)
Gifted to his second wife the Nawab Malika Zamani Begum Sahib (d. 1884) in 1276 H/1859–60
Private collection, Calcutta, before 1944
Thence by descent to a private American collector until 2025



This large and illuminated manuscript holds two revered devotional poems in praise of *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the house) – the family of the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate descendants from his daughter Fatima (d. 632) and his son-in-law 'Ali (d. 661). The two poems are by two Persian authors, Mullah Hasan al-Kashi (d. first half of the 14th century) and Kamal al-Din Muhtasham Kashani (d. 1587 or 1591). The poetry is executed in the form of *tarkib band*, a type of Persian poetry combining stanzas and couplets. Both texts were penned in a single hand by an accomplished calligrapher in flowing Nasta'liq.

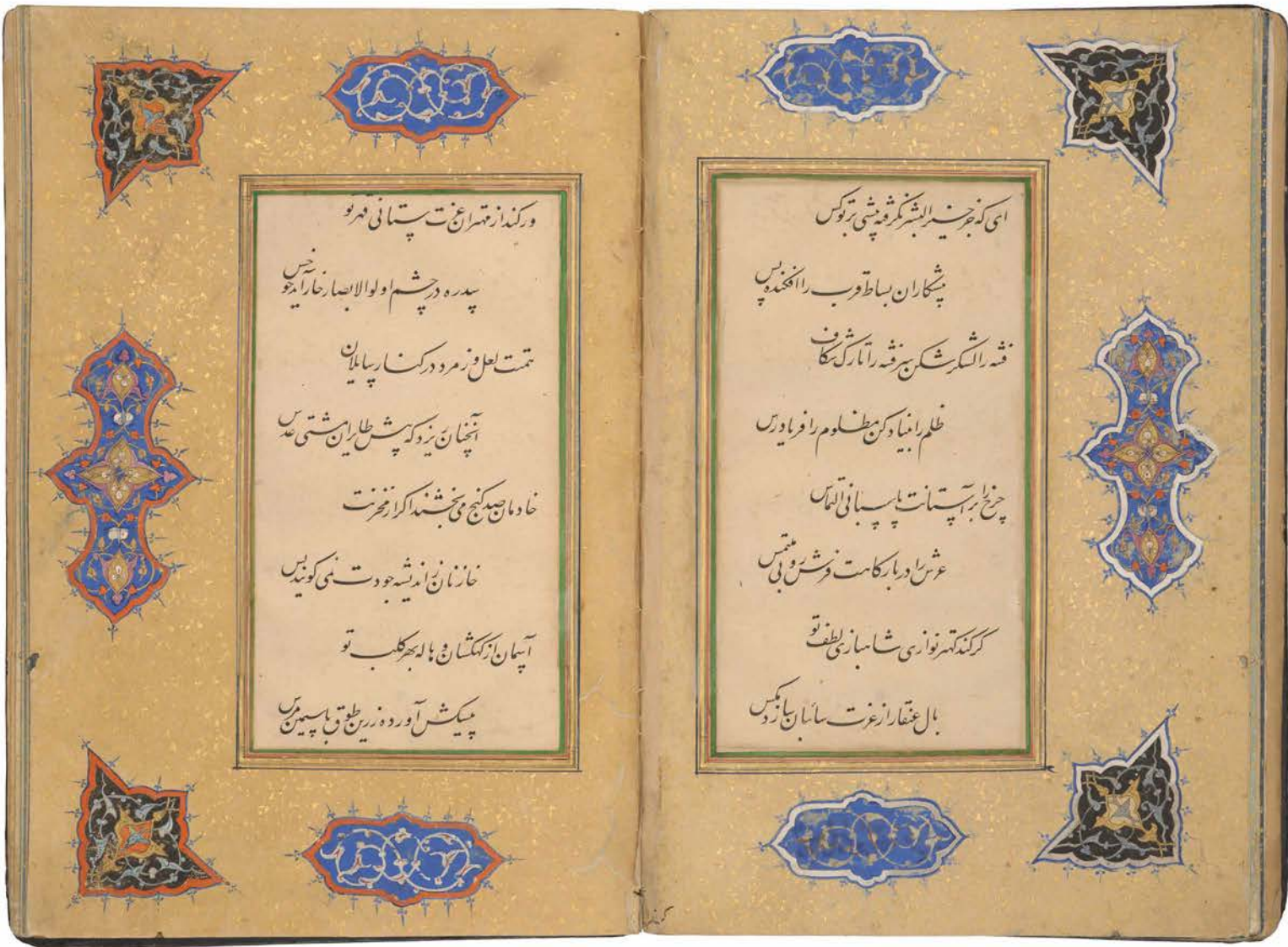
It opens with Muhtasham's verses (ff. 1-12), of which this manuscript must be one of the earliest recorded copies, possibly contemporaneous with the author. It contains the first eleven strophes of Muhtasham's famous ode mourning the martyrdom of Imam Husayn.¹

The second text is the *Haft Band* (Seven strophs) of Mullah Hasan Kashi, a celebrated Shi'i poet and mystic of the 13th and first half of the 14th century.² Kashi's poetry is mostly devoted to Ahl al-Bayt, but this *Haft Band* is in praise of Imam 'Ali.³

The polychrome borders are entirely decorated with gold flecks and painted with illuminated cartouches and medallions in the Central Asian Bukhara style.⁴ They are particularly interesting as they give the name and titles of Mun'im Khan (1494–1575), a Chagatai noble and governor of Kabul, whom Akbar appointed as *vakil* (deputy) with the title *Khan-i khanan* (Khan of khans) from 1560 until 1564.⁵ Mun'im held the highest office, supposedly controlling financial, military and administrative affairs of the state. Less skilled than his predecessor and having hostile opponents at court, he is mostly remembered for his conquest of Bengal in 1574. He died from the plague a year later in 1575. Mun'im is the subject of at least two paintings in the 'Second' *Akbarnama*, now in the Freer Gallery of Art and the Chester Beatty Library.⁶

These borders were probably re-employed to make this fine poetry compilation, as indicated by the reworked *jadwals* around the text panels and the sequence of marginal praises to Mun'im Khan that is now disturbed. Nevertheless, they are exquisite examples of the Mughal art of the book and rare evidence of Mun'im Khan's interest in luxury manuscripts. He was certainly a bibliophile and presented a copy of Nizami's *Haft Paykar* to Akbar. This gift was intended to ensure continued favour from the emperor. J. Seyller notes that "such a desire is evident, for example, in Mun'im Khan's effusive dedication to Akbar on the *shamsa*" of the manuscript now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁷ Seyller also identified a manuscript of Sa'di's *Gulistan* in the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Varanasi, copied by Muhammad Baqir, son of Mir 'Ali, for Mun'im Khan in Surat in 972 H/1564–65.⁸

An inscription on the flyleaf records the cataloguing, repairs and subsequent rebinding of the manuscript on "26th of the month of May of the Christian year of 1895". The note is signed by the "Superintendent of the Library of the Exalted Authority, Sayyid 'Ali Riza".



A Compilation of Devotional Poems Dedicated to Imam ‘Ali

Lucknow, India, dated Shawwal 1177 H/April 1764

Persian manuscript on paper, 692 folios as numbered, copied in black Nasta'liq, the text mainly arranged in two columns but also in a variety of layouts with text often copied diagonally, set in a brown leather binding, the spine with gold tooled decoration and with old repairs, yellow paper flyleaves at beginning and end with matching doublures, small areas of worm holing, dated on folio 86v. 22 Shawwal 1177 H/24 April 1764 in the 5th year of the reign of Shah Alam II (r. 1760-1806)

Folio 23 × 13.5 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

In English: *Collection (by various poets) Mazmua Kasaed ‘Hazrat Ali’. Coll Bahar Jabil 1177 Hijri. Present by Nawab Asafadula Lucknow, one of the ministers of King of Oudh. Shiah* (in pencil on first flyleaf)

In Persian: *Collection of odes and poems [in bahr-i tawil meter] in praise of Hazrat ‘Ali, may [God] be pleased [with him] and the Twelve Imams, peace be upon them. It was arranged on the order of Nawwab Asaf al-Dawla in the year 1177 of the Hijra of the Prophet, God bless him and grant him peace (f. 1).*

PROVENANCE

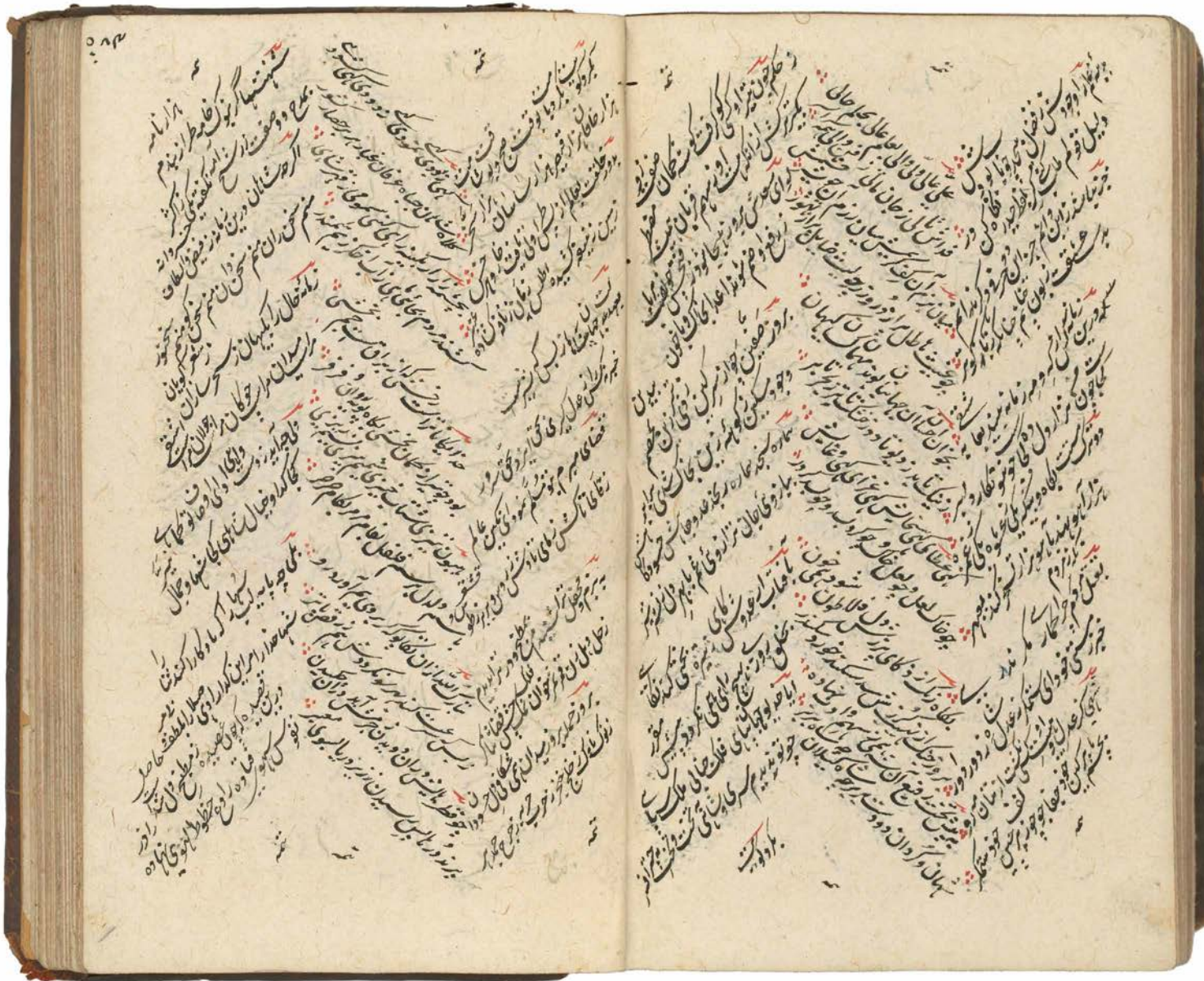
‘Ali Ashraf Beg Haydari, according to his seal impression. It refers to the 6th regnal year of Mughal Emperor ‘Alam Shah II, which equates with the year 1765. Haydar Beg Khan was appointed by Asaf al-Dawla as the assistant to the first chief minister of Awadh.¹ Arthur Probsthain (est. 1905)

This manuscript with a compilation of texts dedicated to ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib is a remarkable collection of Persian literature with a particular focus on poets that composed works in the so-called ‘*sabk-i hindi*’ style. The royal dedication from Asaf al-Dawla Nawab of Awadh (1748–1797) gives an indication of the literary preferences at the court of Awadh, that in the second half of the 18th century was experiencing a golden age. Asaf al-Dawla wanted Awadh to become a great centre of culture. The Mughal capital at Dehli was in decline and many poets and artisans were seeking new patrons in what had previously been viewed as unimportant regional courts such as Lucknow, Arcot, Bhopal, Hyderabad and Murshidabad.² Asaf al-Dawla and his father Shuja‘ al-Dawla (r. 1754–75) were of Iranian origin and they sought to promote the Shi’a identity of Awadh. This compilation was put together when Asaf al-Dawla had not yet succeeded his father as the ruler of Awadh. It was produced in a period after the victory over the Maratha Empire at the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 and before the defeat against the East India Company that took place later in October of 1764.

This compilation features works by Abdul Qadir Bedil Dehlavi (1642–1730), ‘Abd al-Qadir Bedil Dihlavi Mirza Jalal al-Muhammad Asir al-Isfahani (c. 1620–48) and Sa’ib Tabrizi (c. 1592–1676). These poets were all recognized as masters of the ‘new’ style of Persian poetry that is often called ‘*sabk-i hindi*’ after the popularity it gained in India. Works by these poets inspired the new generation of Urdu poetry that were formed around the tradition of *ghazals*, which as a literary tradition was originally based in Delhi and later towards the end of the 18th century moved to Lucknow.



Asaf al-Dawla, Nawab of Awadh, listening at night to the maulvi reading of the scriptures during the Muharram festival, c. 1795 (British Library)



Qur’an Copied Entirely on Gold Paper

Mughal India, late 17th or early 18th century
Copied by Yaqut Raqam Khan Muhammad ‘Arif

Arabic manuscript on heavily gilded paper, 492 folios and one flyleaf, 12 lines of strong black Naskh to the page, with gold roundel verse markers, sura headings in red Thuluth, text within gold and polychrome jadwals, marginal markers in red Thuluth outlined in gold, catchwords, finely illuminated double-page frontispiece, heading to Qur’an 2 (al-baqara) illuminated and with floral marginal decoration, colophon with verses on Yaqut, seal impressions and librarian inscriptions, in 19th-century gilt leather binding

Folio 179 × 9.8 cm, text panel 12.7 × 6.7 cm

INSCRIPTIONS
Kalam Allah sharif bi-khatt yaqut raqam khan (The holy word of God copied by Yaqut Raqam Khan) (f.1)
Kalam Allah-e majid wa furqan-e hamid az kutub khaneh-ye ghulam-e ‘ali-ye vali sayyid mansur ‘ali ‘urf faridun jah ‘enayat beh kuniz fatima malika zamanih begum sana 1275 hijri (The Word of God and the Praised Qur’an, of the library of the servant of ‘Ali, the Friend [of God], Sayyid Mansur ‘Ali known as Faridun Jah [was given] to the Noble Servant Malika Zamanih year 1275 of the hijra.)

PROVENANCE
Mansur ‘Ali Faridun Jah, Nawab of Bengal (d. 1884)
Gifted to his wife the Nawab Malika Zamani Begum Sahib (d. 1884), 1275 H/1858–59
Private collection, Calcutta, before 1944
Thence by descent to a private American collection, until 2025

The magnificence of this manuscript, written entirely on gold ground, indicates that it was a princely, if not royal, commission. Indeed, it comes from the former collection of the Nawabs of Murshidabad. The inscription in fine Shikasteh on the final folio notes that this Qur’an was once in the House of Books (*kitabkhana*) of Sayyid Mansur ‘Ali Faridun Jah (r. 1838–80), the last Nawab of Bengal. It records its gift by the Nawab to Fatima Malika-i Zamani Begum, one of his wives, in 1275 H/1858–59, attesting to the manuscript’s value and precious character. Numerous impressions of her seal, dated 1272 H/1855–56, appear throughout the pages. The Nawab seems to have made several such gifts to family members, as recorded in inscriptions on other manuscripts formerly in the *kitabkhana*.¹ He is described as “prone to pleasure and extravagance, [and having] fallen deeply into debt [he] was obliged to dispose of much of his family jewels, property and patrimony”.² He was eventually compelled to renounce all his rights in return for the liquidation of his debts and a generous annual pension of £10,000. He left Murshidabad for England in February 1869 and remained there until his return to India at the very end of his life.

The manuscript is the work of the celebrated Mughal calligrapher Yaqut Raqam Khan, active in the second half of the 17th and early 18th centuries. The first folio bears an inscription in Nasta’liq attributing the Qur’an to him; this is corroborated by the final verses penned at the end of the Qur’anic text, which play on the word *yaqut* (ruby), part of the scribe’s honorific title. Muhammad ‘Arif al-Harawi (of Herat) was bestowed the title ‘Yaqut Raqam Khan’ by Shah ‘Alam Bahadur Shah (r. 1707–12). He is sometimes referred to as ‘the Second Yaqut’ in reference to the great 13th-century master Yaqut al-Musta’simi. Muhammad ‘Arif was considered the most talented pupil in India of ‘Abd al-Baqi, known as ‘Haddad’, a Persian scribe who emigrated to India and was awarded the title Yaqut Raqam by Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707). Muhammad ‘Arif was also instructor to the sons of Aurangzeb, who are said to have produced excellent copies of the Qur’an in his style of Naskh.³

Five of his many pupils are named in the 19th-century history of calligraphers by Ghulam Muhammad Dihlavi, the *Tadhkirah-i Khwushnavisan* (Memoirs of calligraphers).⁴ His style of Naskh became particularly popular in India, where most scribes were otherwise known for their skills in Nasta’liq.⁵ One of his early works, dated 1080 H/1669–70, is a Qur’an in the Delhi Museum of Archaeology, while another, dated 1711, was sold at Christie’s in 2011.⁶ A further Qur’an, also copied entirely on gold by Yaqut Raqam Khan, was sold at Sotheby’s in 2024.⁷ Of slightly smaller format (14.5 × 9.1 cm), it is written in an identical style and signed by the calligrapher, visibly in the same accomplished hand, leaving little doubt that the present manuscript is also his work.



Qur'an Section

China, 18th–19th century

Arabic manuscript on paper, 59 folios, written in five lines of black Sini, within a red-ruled *jadwal*, with catchwords, double illuminated frontispiece and finispiece, sura heading in gold, trilobed golden rosettes, the original contemporaneous binding in dark green cloth, the upper cover decorated with a paper inlay cut in the form of a rose inscribed *wa qala alladhina*, the first words of the volume

Folio 30 × 21 cm, text panel 18 × 12 cm

PROVENANCE
The collection of an Islamic art academic, acquired before 2006, thence by inheritance
London art market, 2023

This manuscript constitutes the nineteenth volume of a thirty-part Qur'an set, the format most characteristic of Chinese production from the fourteenth century onwards. It opens with a richly illuminated double-page frontispiece in which three lines of text are framed within dense gold ornament of interlace and vegetal scrolls. A matching bifolium closes the codex, creating visual symmetry at the beginning and end. The text is copied on a paper characteristic of Chinese Qur'ans – laminated sheets of several thin layers, here partly delaminated at the edges.¹ The margins preserve two *sajda* indications accompanied by vegetal motifs, and one folio bears a floral paper-cut ornament overlaid with gold, an insertion that reflects the transfer of local decorative practices into Qur'anic manuscripts.

The main text is written in a bold Sini hand, a Chinese adaptation of Muhaqqaq distinguished by exaggerated horizontal extensions below the line and the sharp letter endings. Set out in five lines per page, this monumental ductus is a constant feature of Chinese Qur'ans, already visible in the Beijing Qur'an dated 1401 (Khalili Collection, QUR 974)² and recurring throughout the following centuries. The continuity of this layout and script underlines the conservatism of Chinese Qur'anic production, which retained a highly recognizable codicological profile over time.

Muslims have been present in China from the late 7th century, arriving through maritime and overland trade.³ Qur'anic inscriptions survive from the 12th century in Quanzhou, especially on gravestones where verse 28:88, “Everything is perishing except for His face”, was a recurring epitaph. The oldest surviving dated Qur'an manuscript, from 1318, is preserved in the Dongsì Mosque, Beijing while another 14th-century copy is displayed in the Jiezi Mosque, Qinghai.

From the Ming period onwards, Qur'ans divided into thirty volumes became the prevailing format, designed for sequential recitation and widely produced for Chinese muslim (Hui) communities.⁴

The persistence of both the thirty-part format and the monumental Sini script, with its few lines per page and full vocalization, was likely not merely aesthetic. In mosque schools (*jingtang jiaoyu*), Qur'anic instruction often took place collectively, with pupils of different ages and levels reading aloud in unison under the guidance of a teacher.⁵ In such contexts, especially within communities where Arabic was not the vernacular, the use of large script, explicit diacritics and wide spacing would have greatly facilitated recitation and memorization. The monumental Sini hand and careful punctuation of the present volume may thus be understood as codicological strategies shaped by the pedagogical needs of Hui religious life.



LITERATURE AND POETRY



An Important Manuscript of Nizami’s *Khamasa* copied during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas

Nizami (d. 1209): *Khamasa*

Safavid Iran, Isfahan, dated Rabi’ II 1034 and Jumada I 1035 H/January 1625 to January 1626

Copied by ‘Ali Riza al-Katib al-Isfahani

Persian manuscript on paper, 327 folios plus two flyleaves, 22 lines of fine black Nasta’liq to the page, arranged in four columns within gold and polychrome *jadwals*, with 30 original illustrations in two hands, six illuminated chapter headings, re-margined in the 19th century, old Persian numbering in the lower text panel starting on chapter 3 (*Layla wa Majnun*), flyleaf inscribed in pencil in French, in good 19th-century Persian lacquer binding (some flakes to the varnish), printed labels in English identifying the illustrations, all cut out from a catalogue of Dulau & Co., 32 Old Bond Street. Very occasional retouching on a handful of illustrations, generally very clean throughout.

Folio 29.8 × 18.5 cm, text panel 19.5 × 10.5 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

In English: No 71606. *The Khamasa of Nizami XVI cent.* [...] 30 min. (flyleaf)

The Khamasa of the poet Nizami. Persian Manuscript with 30 miniatures and 6 illuminated headings. Dated 1035 (A.H.) = 1626 A.D. £180 (loose printed label)

In French: 30 miniatures, 6 têtes de chapitre 39 000 (f. 1)

PROVENANCE

Possibly Dulau and Company, Ltd, Booksellers, Printsellers, Etc. 32, Old Bond Street, London, W1, 1920s or 1930s
Dr Alma Latifi,* CIE, OBE, probably acquired from the above in the 1930s
Private collection, London, since 2020

* Dr Alma Latifi (1879–1959), a prominent civil servant known amongst other achievements for his involvement in the organization of the 1911 Durbar of George V, amassed a collection of Indian art and manuscripts from the 1930s to the 1950s. Several paintings from his collection were loaned to the Royal Academy’s *Exhibition of Art from India and Pakistan* in London in 1947–48.¹

OPPOSITE
Shapur shows Shirin a portrait of Khusrau (f. 39r)

OVERLEAF
Bahram Gur in the in Red Pavilion (f. 179v)

This is an important manuscript of the *Khamasa* or ‘Quintet’ of Nizami (d. 1209). It has retained the full cycle of its original illustrations executed by masters of the Isfahan school in the final years of the reign of Shah ‘Abbas (r. 1588–1629). The exquisite paintings, which are not signed, show the style developed by the famous Iranian artist Reza ‘Abbasi (d. 1635). A driving force of the new aesthetic born during Shah ‘Abbas’s reign, Reza had a powerful, if not indelible, influence on Persian painting. The two painters who worked on this manuscript clearly trained in his style – their best paintings have an undeniable lyrical quality.

The *Khamasa* comprises five romantic epics, assembled after Nizami’s death, dealing with earthly desire as metaphor for divine love. Together they form a major work of Persian literature, greatly influential, and which inspired generations of poets.² The first of the epics, *Makhzan al-Asrar* (Storehouse of mysteries), which opens the book, is a *masnavi* poem containing moral, didactic and philosophical discourses. It includes characters such as the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar (d. 1157), King Nushirvan and his minister Buzurjmihr. Khusraw and Shirin chronicles the passionate and tragic union of the Armenian princess Shirin and the Sassanian shah Khusraw II (d. 628). The story of Layla and Majnun is perhaps the *Khamasa*’s most famous chapter. It immortalizes unrequited love, where Majnun’s madness becomes a metaphor for divine ecstasy. *Haft Paykar* (Seven portraits) follows Bahram Gur through seven pavilions, each revealing celestial tales told by brides in jewel-toned chambers. Finally, *Iskandarnama*, divided into two chapters – *Sharafnama* and *Iqbalnama* – transforms Alexander into a philosopher-king, questing through earthly conquests toward eternal truths.

The thirty illustrations vividly depict the romantic epics. Artist A is responsible for the first three books whilst Artist B completed the *Haft Paykar* and the *Iskandarnama*’s two chapters. The paintings are executed in the style in favour in Isfahan after 1610. It is indebted to Reza’s creative output, which remained relatively uniform in the second part of his career and until his death in 1635. In paintings of the period, he reflected the prevailing fashion for large almond-shaped eyes, bee-stung red lips, melon-shaped thighs and ornate textiles (see ff. 49r, 68r and 81v, for instance). This period of his career is dominated by the illustration of manuscripts and several examples, dated between 1612 and 1634, are kept in private and public libraries.³ One of these examples, Picnic with a Nobleman, is a double-page painting executed in 1612, which takes place in a rocky landscape under swaying trees, with figures extending into the margins and above a diagonal stream: it serves as an obvious precedent for several paintings in this manuscript.⁴

At least two compositions that Reza devised for another *Khamasa* dated 1631–32 are used in this manuscript, only with minor alterations – Khusraw Spying Shirin bathing (f.43v) and Farhad Lifts Shirin and her Horse (f. 68r).⁵ The images evidently follow well-established tropes as they have been depicted countless times in earlier manuscripts, but direct parallels can be drawn between Reza’s *Khamasa* of 1631–32 and Artist A’s paintings – the positioning of the figures and their proportion within the landscape, the outline and direction of the landscape, the position of Shirin’s body or that of Farhad. In this case, it was not uncommon for artists to work together and a master might have devised the



سوختن در خانه نهانی تو
 چون که بستم در درون
 چون که در دلم بمانی
 زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند
 چون که در دلم بمانی
 زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند

رفت جانم رهبری تو
 زخم و در کز خشم نهانی
 در جرم جان ما کیان
 زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند

روز بهرام زنگ به
 دلی بستم در درون
 شاد و مایه در دلم
 آن یک کس با طبع
 خواست چای زنگ
 فرمود چای زنگ

کتاب سنج و سنج

زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند
 زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند
 زنجی از زنجی دلی اگر کش
 کش تا او بر تو کاه چمن
 از جود دلی بماند



LEFT TO RIGHT
Scene in a Hamam (f. 27r)
Khusrau and Shirin passing on horseback (f. 49r)
The two love making [Khusrau and Shirin] (f. 51v)
Farhad cutting a channel in the rocks while two
men amuse themselves (f. 64r)



LIST OF THE 30 ILLUSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| f. 11r. 30 miniatures, 6 têtes de chapitre (in French) | f. 112r. Laila and Majnun seated in conversation | f. 203v. Illuminated heading (<i>Iskandarnama</i> I – <i>Sharafnama</i>) |
| f. 1v. Illuminated heading (<i>Makhzan al-asrar</i>) | f. 125v. (no label) Majnun meets his father in the wilderness | f. 220r. Sikandar and a captured Ethiopian |
| f. 12. Anushirvan being taught a lesson by his wise minister Buzurjmihr from the chattering of two birds | f. 137v. Laila and Majnun swoon after meeting | f. 230v. Sikandar's army and Russians fighting |
| f. 17. Sultan Sanjar goes hunting carrying a hawk | f. 144r. End of <i>Kitab Layla wa Majnun</i> , colophon removed | f. 239r. Sikandar in a love scene |
| f. 27. Scene in a Hamam | f. 145v. Illuminated heading (<i>Haft Paykar</i>) | f. 245r. Queen Nushabah shows Sikandar the portrait by which she recognizes him |
| f. 29r. Colophon dated Saturday 5 Safar | f. 155r. Bahram Gur goes hunting | f. 261v. Sikandar receiving the daughter of Dara |
| f. 29v. Illuminated heading (<i>Khusraw wa Shirin</i>) | f. 159r. Bahram Gur saves his crown by killing a lion and lioness | f. 269v. Sikandar slicing off the head of a horsed warrior |
| f. 39. Shapur shows Shirin a portrait of Khusrau | f. 173v. Bahram Gur with various princesses in six different places. In Yellow Pavilion | f. 281r. Sikandar in the Land of Darkness |
| f. 43v. Khusrau catches his first sight of Shirin after bathing | f. 176r. Bahram Gur in the Green Pavilion | f. 283r. End of <i>Iskandarnama</i> vol. I beginning (ghurat), 4 of Rabi' I 1035 H with signature of 'Ali Rize al-Katib al-Isfahani |
| f. 49r. Khusrau and Shirin passing on horseback | f. 179v. Bahram Gur in the in Red Pavilion | f. 283v. Illuminated heading (<i>Iskandarnama</i> II – <i>Iqbalnama</i>) |
| f. 51v. The two love making [Khusrau and Shirin] | f. 183r. Bahram Gur in the in Blue Pavilion | f. 296r. Sikandar consulting the wise men |
| f. 64r. Farhad cutting a channel in the rocks while two men amuse themselves | f. 188v. Bahram Gur in the in Golden Pavilion | f. 317v. Sikandar welcomed on his return from the East |
| f. 68r. Farhad carries Shirin and her horse to see his sculptures | f. 192v. Bahram Gur in the in White Pavilion | f. 327r. Colophon, dated end of Jumada I 1035 H |
| f. 81v. Khusrau and Shirin united | f. 203r. End of <i>Haft Paykar</i> , colophon dated Tuesday 20 Dhu al-Hijja [10]34 | |
| f. 93r. Colophon dated Friday end of Rabi' II 1034 H | | |
| f. 94v. Illuminated heading (<i>Layla wa Majnun</i>) | | |

OPPOSITE Khusrau catches his first sight of Shirin after bathing (f. 43v)

composition for the pupil to paint and complete. This is the case for a scene of Dancing Dervishes and Preparations for a Feast, dating to c. 1615, for which the authorship has been divided between Reza and his pupil Afzal.⁶ It is tempting to think that Reza might have designed the compositions of this manuscript. A majority of the paintings are indeed very successfully arranged.

The illuminated headings (*sarlowhs*) are typical of the early 17th-century style but executed with great finesse that differentiates them from commercial productions. A frontispiece for 'Attar's *Mantiq al-Tayr* in the Metropolitan Museum (inv. 63.210.1), dated c. 1600, and executed in Isfahan, set this particular illumination style. The leafy palmettes painted in the triangular pieces above each chapter heading derive from that luxurious example.

This manuscript was most likely created for a courtly patron and in the sphere of the royal ateliers. The ateliers of Shah 'Abbas's that were included within his Royal Library, were headed by 'Ali Reza al-Tabrizi, the Shah's favourite calligrapher. 'Ali Reza was responsible for a workshop of painters, calligraphers, bookbinders and illuminators, and all involved in producing manuscripts such as this one. This is most probably where our painters and our scribe 'Ali Reza al-Isfahani were trained. As several other calligraphers using the name 'Ali Reza are recorded in the early 17th century, it has not been possible to identify him precisely. However, his hand in Nasta'liq script suggests that he was trained at the highest level and his *nisba* (*al-katib al-isfahani* – the scribe from Isfahan) confirms that he was indeed from the capital city.⁷

Isfahan flourished under Shah 'Abbas in the early 17th century: new monuments were built and luxury goods and manuscripts proclaimed the wealth and refinement of the Shah and his court. Princes collected pleasing books, institutions maintained *kitabkhanas* to care for manuscripts, and great prestige was associated with the ownership, use and display of such refined artworks.⁸ It is in this context that this manuscript of the *Khamsa* must be regarded and understood.

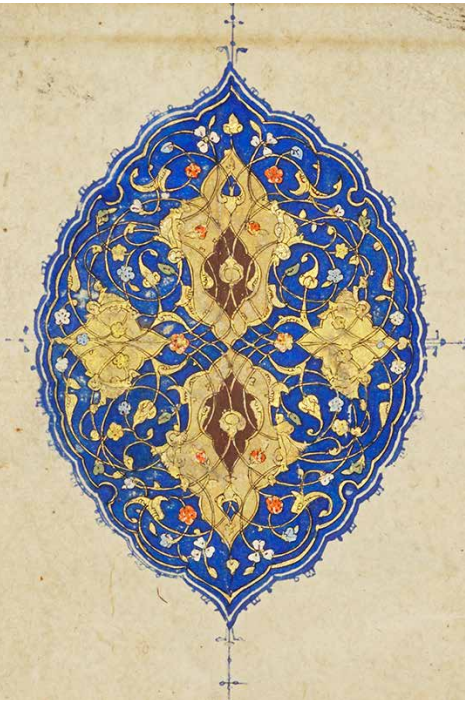
An Early Copy of the Poetry of ‘Ali Shir Nava’i

Mir ‘Ali Shir Nava’i (d. 1501): *Diwan*

Herat or Tabriz, c. 1520–50

A courtly copy of this Chagatay manuscript on cream and light brown paper, 68 folios, each with 14 lines of black Nasta’liq arranged in two columns, with double gold intercolumnar division, titles alternatively in gold and blue, with finely illuminated opening *shamsa* in gold and polychrome, the first folio with finely illuminated headpiece in gold and polychrome, poem headings marked by finely illuminated cartouches, the final folio and chapter ends decorated with cartouches painted with gold clouds on arabesque ground, with three original illustrations, catchwords, followed by two folios of poetry penned in Shikasteh, in marbled paper binding Folio 20.5 × 13 cm, text panel 13.6 × 7.8 cm

PROVENANCE
The Honar Collection of Islamic Art, Mahmoud Khayami (d. 2020), acquired at auction in the 1980s or 1990s



Mir ‘Ali Shir, known by his pen-name Nava’i (melody-maker) was one of the greatest authors to write in Chaghatay, the classical eastern Turkic language that was the forerunner of modern Uzbek. From boyhood he was a friend of the Timurid ruler Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1468–1506), for whom he served as adviser at his court in Herat. Mir ‘Ali Shir studied in Mashhad, Samarqand and in Herat, where he died and was buried in 1501.

This *Diwan* of ‘Ali Shir’s poetry, copied in the first half of the 16th century, is an early copy of the text. The diwan is composed of *ghazals* or long lyric poems. It is followed by other poems in different meters, each headed by an illuminated cartouche – *Mustazad* (where a line is added to a quatrain), *Mukhammis* (pentastichs), *Musaddas* (sestains), *Saqinama* (Book of the Cupbearer) and *Rub’ayat* (quatrains).

His poetry is renowned for blending courtly love poetry with mystical spiritual themes. In his *Saqinama*, the poet addresses the *saqi* (cupbearer), who is called upon to bring wine in order to alleviate the speaker’s private suffering. He addresses him as he would a beloved, a well-known trope in Persian poetry, popularized by Nizami (d. 1209).¹ It is penned here in an exquisite small Nasta’liq. The poems are divided by gold and blue titles penned in *Tawqif*. The illuminated *shamsa* and frontispiece are of the finest quality and testament to a luxury production. The complex layout and division of the text in two columns accommodate the poetry composed in pairs of hemistiches. Three original paintings illustrate the work – a game of polo and two illustrations of a prince entertained with music in the outdoors, executed in the new Safavid style developed under the patronage of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1522–76).

Tahmasp, as a young prince, served as Governor of Herat from 1516. Herat, the last capital of the Timurids and home to Sultan Husayn Bayqara’s House of Books (*kitabkhana*), had fallen to the Uzbeks in 1507 but was mostly under Safavid control after 1510. The Uzbeks had deported leading calligraphers and artists to their capital, Bukhara, but others had remained in Herat. Shaykhzada for instance, Bihzad’s most talented student, was still living in the city. Tahmasp remained in Herat until his return to Tabriz in 1522. His half-brother Sam, also a bibliophile, succeeded him, and had artists sent from Tabriz to Herat to work on manuscripts.² This cross-pollination and royal patronage produced the artistic monument of the period, a copy of the *Shahnama* prepared for Shah Tahmasp between 1524 and 1543. Together with the *Khamasa* of 1539–43 (British Library Or. 2265), they synthesize the styles of the Turkmen court of Tabriz and the Timurid court of Herat into the new Safavid idiom.

The delicate *shamsa* of this *Diwan* recalls the style of a frontispiece with calligraphy by Sultan ‘Ali Mashhadi in the Harvard Art Museums, copied in Herat in the early 16th century (inv. 1958.182).³ The large trefoil device painted as a facing pair is a variation of the same device in the Harvard frontispiece – mirrored palmettes forming a large trefoil with a red, or brown, coloured heart in its centre. This reddish brown pigment fits within a colour scheme found on other manuscripts copied in Tabriz and Herat, such as *Khamasa* of Amir Khusraw dated 1530–40 (Smithsonian Institution, inv. S1986.67.1-2).⁴ Parallels can also be drawn with the style of Shaykhzada, who worked in Tabriz and later in Bukhara.⁵



Maktabi (d. c. 1510–11): *Layla Wa Majnun*

Copied by Mir, *al-shahir bi* [... illegible]
Shiraz, Safavid Iran, dated Jumada II 1040 H/
January–February 1631

Persian manuscript on gold-speckled paper, 94 folios plus two flyleaves, each folio with 12 lines of elegant black Nasta'liq arranged in two columns, the text within gold and polychrome *jadwal*, titles in gold, white or polychrome inks within gold illuminated cartouches, opening folio with finely illuminated *sarlowh*, the frontispiece remargined in the 19th century, with two original illustrations, colophon signed *Mir, al-shahir bi* [... illegible] (known as [...]) and dated Jumada II 1040 H/January 1630, three Iranian export marks dated 1340 Sh/1961, in associated luxurious Ottoman leather binding, finely stamped in two-colour gold with medallions and spandrels, the doublures and flap with blue and black *découpé* decoration

Folio 22.4 × 12.4 cm, text panel 14.8 × 6.7 cm

ILLUSTRATIONS
Majnun at the Ka'ba (f. 32r)
Majnun in the wilderness visited by his father (f. 62v)

INSCRIPTIONS
Purchase inscription in Persian Shikasteh in the name of an anonymous “servant of the Throne of the Army” and “*toshmalbashi*” (Chief of the royal bedchamber) dated 1136 H/1723–24
Iranian export seal impressions (three) dated 1340 Sh/1961

PROVENANCE
Private French collection, until 2023



The *Romance of Layla and Majnun* is Maktabi’s famous epic poem, which he is said to have composed in 895 H/1489–90.¹ Maktabi was a poet from Shiraz of the late 15th and early 16th centuries who is only known through his pen name *Maktabi*, said to derive from his profession as a schoolteacher (*maktab*). He is also recorded as having travelled to Khorasan, India and Arabia, and is buried in Shiraz, where he died in c. 1510–11.

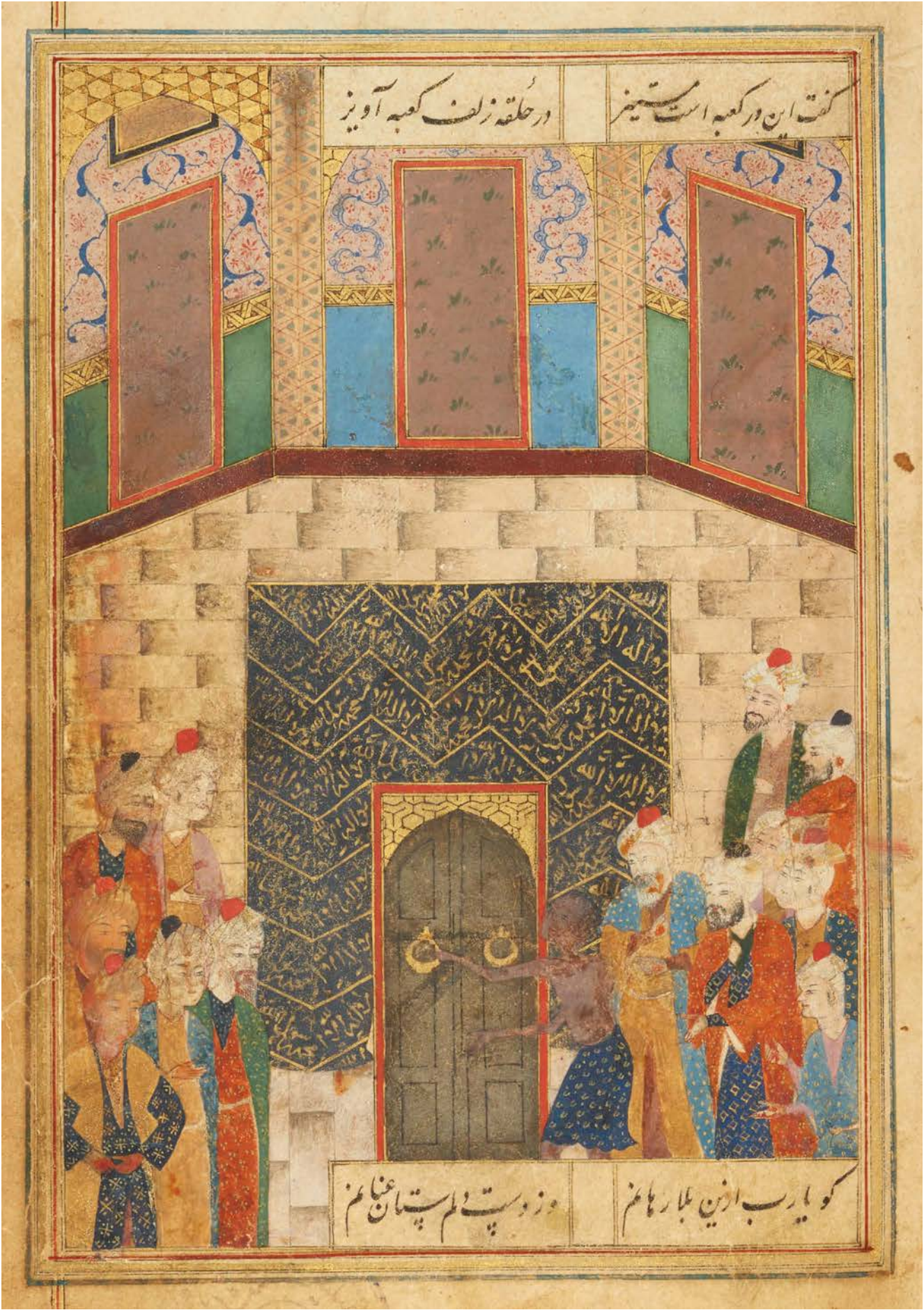
This classic masterpiece also stands as the most celebrated rendition of Nizami’s *Layla wa Majnun*, the 12th-century narrative poem and monument of Persian literature. The story itself stems from Arab sources and describes the tragic love story of the 7th-century poet Qays and the girl Layla, promised to another man. Qays’s obsessive efforts to win Layla’s heart caused people to call him *majnun* – ‘mad’ or ‘possessed’.

The first of the two original paintings in this manuscript depicts Majnun in Mecca. In order to cure the love-stricken Majnun, his father takes him on Hajj, where he hopes that his son will ask to be saved from his passion. Instead, Majnun grasps the door knocker of the Ka’ba and cries, “O Lord, I pray to You, let me not be cured of love, but let my passion grow! Make my love a hundred times as great as it is this very day!” The second illustration shows Majnun, having retreated again into the desert wilderness to live as a recluse, visited by his father who had returned home from Mecca. Here, the father pleads with him to return to his former life and family.

The style of the paintings is typical of the Shirazi school of the 16th century. It is wonderfully detailed, with a great use of colours. The depiction of the Ka’ba, for instance, shows the black cloth (*kiswa*) covering the sanctuary entirely inscribed with the profession of faith (*shahada*) penned in minute gold Naskh. Shiraz was famous for its production of luxurious manuscripts in the 16th century, but it went into decline, in terms of volume, format and quality, after around 1595. Whilst a new idiom developed in the Safavid capital in Isfahan in the early 17th century, Shiraz remained faithful to its long-established stylistic conventions, of which this manuscript is a classic example.²

The exquisite bookbinding is the work of an Istanbul workshop of the late 18th or early 19th century. The covers are made of fine dark brown leather over pasteboards. They have a border of gold fillets around a block-stamped decoration gilded in two different gold colours. The central medallion is scalloped, with radiating painted flecks and with decorative motifs along the axis. The masterfully executed interior is of light brown leather and of similar design. However, the central medallion and corner pieces have delicate black leather filigree work over an ultramarine paper ground. The flap follows the same decoration.

Ottoman bindings were influenced greatly by Persian styles of decoration. This was the case up to the 17th century, when a more specific Ottoman style developed. Whilst these bindings follow the classic bookcovers type with a central medallion and corner pieces, some decorative motifs are more typically Ottoman; this is the case here, with the sickle-form palmettes forming symmetric compositions and the painted gold flecks outlining the medallions. This binding is a late but exquisite example of this classic Ottoman style, away from the European influence that permeates Turkish bindings of the late 18th and 19th centuries.³



Poetic Panegyric for Sultan Süleyman

Ottoman Syria, early Muharram 1017 H/
April–May 1608
Signed Mir ‘Ali b. Mir Hasan

Persian and Ottoman Turkish manuscript on a fine silhouetted paper, 12 folios, written in 10 lines of Nasta’liq script, framed by polychrome and gilt rulings, titles in gold Nasta’liq, richly illuminated double frontispiece and finispiece, colophon dated early Muharram 1017 H/April–May 1608, signed by Mir ‘Ali b. Mir Hasan, who identifies himself as *al-gharib fi wilayat al-Sham* (the stranger in the province of Syria), in an reconstructed Ottoman binding, in brown morocco, stamped and gilt with a central mandorla featuring delicate Chinese cloud motifs, the first folio bearing several illegible seals, one ownership inscription dated 1107 AH/1695–96 in the name of Mustafa Agha, the *za’im* (holder of a cavalry land-grant) of Kubaği (?), along with several partially erased marks
Folio 17 × 10.5 cm, text panel 11 × 5 cm

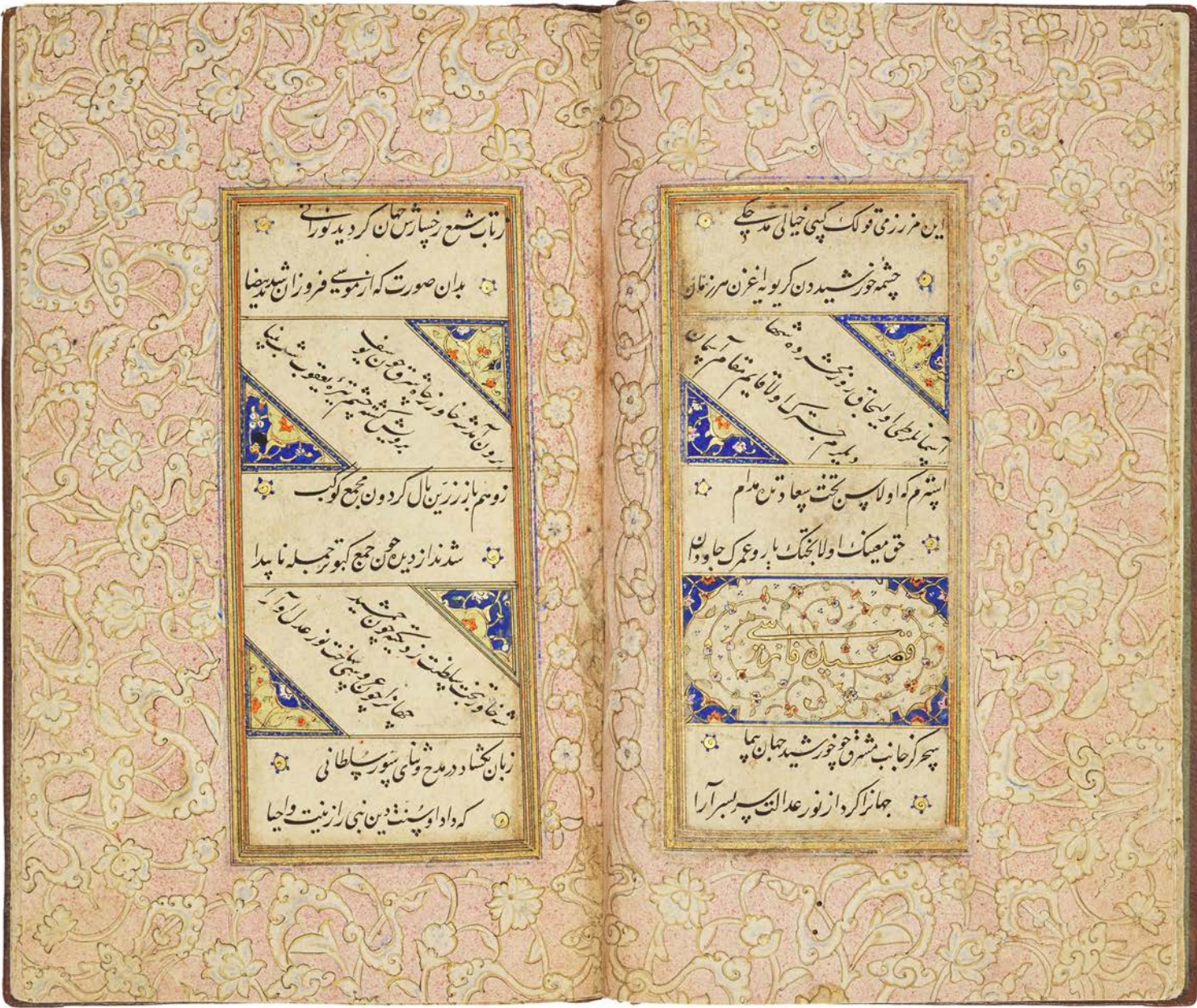


This small-format manuscript is remarkable for the refinement and the delicacy of its decoration. Copied in the beginning of Muharram 1017 H/April–May 1608 by a certain Mir ‘Ali b. Mir Hasan, who describes himself in the colophon as “the stranger in the province of Syria”, it represents a sophisticated production from Ottoman Syria, where the courtly aesthetics of Istanbul were reinterpreted with striking finesse.

Written in an elegant Nasta’liq script, the manuscript opens with a illuminated double-page frontispiece in gold and blue, the upper panel inscribed in small white Kufic and the text itself set within cloud-shaped reserves on a gold ground. The text is framed with polychrome and gilt rulings, alternating horizontal panels with diagonally arranged couplets, adorned with cornerpieces of blue and gold half-palmettes over scrolling floral motifs. Particularly distinctive is the use of silhouette paper: the margins are filled with dense Chinese-style clouds and lotus scrolls in reserve, outlined in black and gold and delicately washed with green, blue, and red, each opening alternating between pink and ochre grounds. This type of stencilled decoration, rooted in Persian prototypes such as *safina* manuscripts, became popular in the Ottoman world from the 16th century onward.¹ Early dated Ottoman examples include the papers in the *Album amicorum* of Michael von Saurau (1567), the earliest known decorated papers of this type.² Few Ottoman examples, however, rival the intricacy of the present example, the fine floral reserves of which attest to a high level of sophistication within the tradition of silhouette paper.

The text preserves a short *diwan* of Ottoman Turkish and Persian poetry dedicated to Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66), whose name, repeatedly picked out in gold, appears in epithets such as *Sulayman-i zaman* (Solomon of the age). It begins with a Turkish *qasida*, followed by another in Persian, while the remainder consists of Turkish *ghazals* and a single Persian *qir’a*. The bilingual alternation in the poems reflects the cultural codes of Süleyman’s court, where Persian retained its prestige as the language of classical panegyric while Ottoman Turkish asserted the idiom of contemporary imperial celebration.

The poet identifies himself with the *makhlas* Rezmi. Although no 16th-century poet of this name is securely known, a single *ghazal* attributed to a certain Rezmi appears in Edirneli Nazmi’s (d. 1555) celebrated anthology *Majmu‘a al-Naza’ir*, as well as in a manuscript of *Majmu‘a* of Pervane Bey, completed in 968 H/1560–61.³ An internal clue in the present manuscript points to a courtly milieu: towards the end of the Persian *qasida*, the author describes himself as the “helpless Rezmi, a slave from the slaves of his [i.e. Süleyman’s] threshold”. This formula of humility is characteristic of palace poetry and resonates with the codes of devotion surrounding the sultan. Most likely composed within Süleyman’s immediate entourage, the manuscript thus preserves a unique and hitherto unknown poetic homage to the Magnificent. Beyond its rarity as a literary witness, its refined bilingual panegyric and delicate decoration make it a striking testament to the cosmopolitan culture of the Ottoman court and to its sophisticated provincial expressions at the turn of the 17th century.



Diwan of Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–20)

Ottoman Turkey, perhaps Istanbul,
mid-16th century

Persian manuscript on paper, 52 folios and a flyleaf, written in 13 or 14 lines of black Nasta'liq, the text arranged in two columns, within gold-ruled borders, with catchwords, illuminated *sarlawh*, in fine 17th-century Ottoman leather binding with stamped and gilded medallions, the first and last folios and the final flyleaf filled with additional Turkish and Persian verses in different hands, some attributed to the poets Nahîfî Efendi, Nizâmî and Sa'dî

Folio 17:5 × 10 cm, Text panel 12 × 6 cm

This small-format manuscript of the *Diwan-i Selim* opens with a delicate illuminated *sarlawh* in blue and gold. The volume is undated, and neither the copyist nor the place of production is identified. As with most surviving copies of Selim's poetry, it contains a selection rather than the entirety of his oeuvre, reflecting the fluid manuscript tradition of the *Diwan*.

Poetry was a cultivated practice among Ottoman rulers: Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) left a body of verse, and Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520–66) composed a celebrated diwan.¹ Selim's case is distinctive, however, for his consistent use of Persian at a time when Ottoman Turkish was emerging as the dominant literary language. This unusual choice can be read both as an assertion of learned authority within the Timurid tradition and as a political gesture during the Ottoman-Safavid conflict, presenting the sultan simultaneously as conqueror and cultivated sovereign.²

Like all extant copies, this manuscript preserves only a portion of Selim's poetry. The *Diwan* is traditionally described as comprising nearly six hundred poems, mostly *ghazals* on the theme of love, with a smaller number devoted to wine or martial valour. Yet no surviving manuscript contains the complete corpus, and the witnesses differ considerably in scope and content.

The transmission of Selim's poetry is indeed quite complex.³ No autograph is known, and even the earliest copy (Istanbul University, Rare Books Library, FY 1330), prepared for Selim during his lifetime and illustrated, contains only about half of his oeuvre.⁴ Other manuscripts, such as the five copies produced by the imperial calligrapher 'Abd al-Wahid Mashhadi under Sultan Süleyman, likewise transmit divergent selections. These divergences suggest that many additional manuscripts once circulated, and that the *Diwan* never existed in a fixed codified form but was transmitted through fluid and shifting anthologies.

Although lacking a colophon, the present copy can be tentatively placed in the mid 16th century. Its small dimensions, elegant Nasta'liq script, and blue-and-gold decoration parallel a similar copy of the *Diwan* preserved in Istanbul (Süleymaniye Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 3422).⁵ That copy, also undated, combines Selim's poems with the diwans of several Timurid poets, a deliberate arrangement that situates the Ottoman sultan within the Persian literary tradition. Both manuscripts thus point to a context of production within the broader Ottoman-Safavid cultural sphere around 1550–1600, when Selim's verse circulated widely in courtly and literary milieus.

The present manuscript thus belongs to this multifaceted tradition and joins the small group of surviving witnesses of Selim's poetry. It offers valuable insight into the literary persona of the conqueror-sultan and stands as a rare testimony to the prestige of Persian verse at the Ottoman court in the 16th century.



Muhammad b. Sulayman Fuzuli (d. 1556): *Layla wa Majnun*

Azerbaijan or north-western Iran, second half 17th or 18th century

Azerbaijani manuscript on paper, 152 folios plus three flyleaves, each folio with 12 lines of diagonal black Nasta'liq arranged in two columns between gold divisions, text panel within blue and gold frame, titles in red, with 32 original illustrations captioned in Persian, catchwords, in black leather binding with floral decoration, two seal impressions (partly legible as Muhammad Sayfi, the other illegible)

Text panel 16.8 × 10 cm, folio 23 × 14 cm

INSCRIPTIONS
In Armenian: Library reference (in pencil on the doublure)
In French: 32 miniatures *Leila – mejnoun* (in pencil on the doublure)
PROVENANCE
By repute Hrnt Samuelian (d. 1977), Librairie orientale, Paris
French art market, 2022

This profusely illustrated manuscript is an Azerbaijani language interpretation of Nizami’s Persian love poem *Layla wa Majnun*. This is Muhammad b. Sulayman Fuzuli’s (1483–1566) own rendition of the classical tale and one of his most famous works – a text greatly praised for its melodic and sensitive quality. Born in Baghdad in 1483 under Aq Qoyunlu rule, Fuzuli wrote for several patrons – Aq Qoyunlus, Ottomans and Safavids, as the land where he lived changed hands. He is said never to have left Iraq but wrote in Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish and most notably in Azerbaijani, a Turkic language closely related to Ottoman Turkish that is now spoken in the Caucasus and north-western Iran (sometimes also referred to as Azeri Turki). In the preface to his *Diwan*, Fuzuli quotes a friend who said: “Among the Arabs and Persians the turn of chieftainship in the Realm of Speech has gradually become thine, whereas among the Turks there are many single men with perfections but no one like thee possessing all the languages”.¹ Fuzuli is considered a champion of Azerbaijani and his compositions played a major and influential role in the Turkic cultural landscape.

Manuscripts in Azerbaijani are rare. The British Library, for example, holds just seven manuscripts containing texts in Azerbaijani.² Like the present manuscript, most are in an Arabic alphabet that mirrors Ottoman Turkish quite closely but is adapted to the specificities of the language. One of these seven manuscripts is an illustrated copy of *Layla wa Majnun* of Fuzuli (Or 405) dating to the 16th century. In his introduction, the author admits to having translated the Persian tale at the instigation of his friends in Istanbul, thus confirming the existence of Azerbaijani as a literary medium independently of Ottoman Turkish.³

The 32 illustrations in this manuscript are particularly colourful, with unusually bright palettes and with doubling generously highlighted in silver and, less frequently, gold. The palette is perhaps best characterized by the vivid orange and yellow pigments used to paint garments and tree foliage. Landscapes and other backgrounds often show contrasting colours – bright pink with green, yellow with blue, etc. The illustrations, though not in a courtly style, show great informality and spontaneity. The style seems to be a combination of Ottoman painting of the late 16th and 17th century together with strong Persian elements, mainly in the clothing. Manuscripts such as a *Hümayunnama* copied in Baghdad and dated 1007 H/1598–99 (R 843) and a *Shahnama* dated to the middle of the 17th century (H 1505), both in Topkapı Palace collection, offer prototypes for the style.⁴

Layla, Majnun and the other figures in this manuscript are dressed in a particular fashion that follows Isfahani taste. The mid 17th-century frescoes of Chehel Sutun in Isfahan provide a magnificent repertoire of the different types of dress, both male and female, of the period. The figures in this manuscript provide a distant but colourful and charming echo of court fashion. Two oil paintings, now in the Islamic Arts Museum in Doha, ‘A European Gentleman in Turkish Dress’ and an ‘Armenian Lady,’ show us in great detail what Layla and Majnun are wearing in the manuscript (inv. PA.2.1997 and PA.66.1998). The resemblance is particularly noticeable for the male figures, many of whom wear large, ribbed and flattened turbans, and fur-trimmed metal-thread silk





OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Majnun takes away the portrait of Layla and puts his own face in its place (f. 108r)
Majnun's father giving alms to the poor in his quest to have a child (f. 23v)
Layla descends from her camel and catches a glimpse of the surprised Majnun (f. 127r)
The secret tryst between Layla and Majnun while a monkey holds the reins of Layla's camel (f. 134r)

coats, often with floral patterns. Women wear a type of elaborate veil covering the upper body down to the breasts at the front, with no opening but for the face, and which extends to knee-length at the back. It is secured on the head by a headband, made of fabric or metal. This is worn over a full caftan, worn in turn over *pajayma* trousers. This type of veil for upper-class women is depicted as early as the 1620s and 1630s.⁵
Little is known about manuscript workshops outside of the main urban centres of Iran and Turkey. This manuscript, with its unconventional style, stands as a fascinating example of a costly production (signalled by the generous use of silver and gold), away from the courts of Isfahan and Istanbul. It was probably copied in the eastern Caucasus or in north-west Iran, where Azerbaijani is the vernacular language. As seen with manuscripts illustrated elsewhere in the Caucasus, artists played with styles, blending the ‘iranizing’ with the local to produce manuscripts for the elite.⁶

- LIST OF THE 32 ILLUSTRATIONS
- f. 23v. Majnun's father giving alms to the poor in his quest to have a child
 - f. 27r. Majnun is put in school, the girls on one side and the boys on the other side
 - f. 28r. Layla answers her mother's questions about her day at school
 - f. 32v. Layla and Majnun cross paths in a garden
 - f. 34v. Layla is reprimanded by her mother after the discovery of her meeting with Majnun
 - f. 38v. Majnun's long wait for the absent Layla at school
 - f. 43v. Majnun goes to the forest
 - f. 50r. Majnun is given counsel by his mother and father which he doesn't accept
 - f. 51v. Majnun's mother comes to give him advice in captivity
 - f. 54v. The chaining of Majnun due to his madness
 - f. 57r. The visit of a doctor to Majnun who is unable to provide him with respite from his madness
 - f. 64r. Majnun comes out of his stupor to save a deer from a huntsman

- f. 66r. Majnun gives his bazuband to a hunter to save a pigeon
- f. 70r. Majnun assembles all of the wild animals
- f. 80r. The battle between Nawfal with Ibn Salam and Majnun is stabbed by his own army
- f. 84r. Ibn Salam asks Layla's father for her hand in marriage
- f. 91r. Majnun sends Layla a letter after hearing the news of her engagement
- f. 96r. Layla writes a letter to Majnun at night which she sends to him with the help of Zayd
- f. 100r. Majnun's father finds him in the foothills of the mountains in deep sorrow
- f. 105v. Majnun crying at the grave of his father
- f. 108r. Majnun takes away the portrait of Layla and puts his own face in its place
- f. 114r. Majnun in the mountains rejoices at the arrival of Zayd
- f. 120r. Layla's grief for Majnun causes her to leave the house of Ibn Salam and to come to the house of her father
- f. 124r. Layla seated in a palanquin in a camel train in the desert
- f. 127r. Layla descends from her camel and catches a glimpse of the surprised Majnun
- f. 134r. The secret tryst between Layla and Majnun while a monkey holds the reins of Layla's camel
- f. 135r. A rival discovers the lovers and Layla is made to sit back in the palanquin and departs with the others
- f. 140r. Layla's sickness and the expression of her will to her mother to achieve her purification
- f. 142r. Layla goes to a garden and asks for her own death
- f. 143r. Layla hears of the death of Majnun and of his burial
- f. 145r. The death of Layla and the gathering of the women around her in grief
- f. 146r. Zayd informs Majnun of the death of Layla and Majnun passes away



Two Volumes from an Album of Calligraphy Prepared for Akbar or Prince Salim

Lahore or Agra, calligraphy specimens dated from 974 to 1002 H/1566–1593, assembled c. 1595–1605

19 folios and 10 folios, comprising calligraphic specimens of the finest quality in Persian and Arabic, mainly penned in black Nasta'liq script, and in white Nasta'liq in one occasion, on coloured, cream or marbled paper finely speckled or sprinkled in gold or fully illuminated, including a frontispiece removed from a 16th-century manuscript, probably from Herat, within broad gold and polychrome *jadwals*, mounted within exquisitely illuminated borders painted in gold, the borders on cream, light blue, pink or buff paper, a large number of the specimens signed, some dated, one indicating Lahore as the place of copy, two systems of Persian folio numbering, catchwords, bound in 17th- (vol. I) and 18th-century (vol. II) Indian leather bindings

Folio 37 × 23.8 cm

PROVENANCE
Private collection, England, 1980s
Private collection, London, 1980s–2020
Sotheby's, London, 27 October 2020, lot 425
Private collection, London, acquired from the above

These two volumes of nineteen and ten folios were once part of a larger album commissioned for a member of the Imperial Mughal family, probably Akbar (r. 1556–1605) or his son Salim (r. 1556–1605). Twenty-three folios are in the collection of H.M. The King at the Royal Library at Windsor,¹ which were acquired before 1728. Another volume of 37 folios was in Europe in the 1960s before entering the Honar Collection in 1994 and is now in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha.² That volume is bound in a Persian binding, suggesting that it was in Iran at some point. These were in a private collection in England in the 1980s, and may have entered the collection long before that. The Windsor folios had reached England before the sack of the Mughal Treasury in 1739, indicating that the album was dispersed early in its history, possibly forming part of a diplomatic gift. This early dispersal is confirmed by the different numberings of the three groups of leaves, handwritten on the borders. A small number of loose folios have also appeared on the London market, so that 95 folios are known in total.³ The present volumes represent the second largest ensemble from this masterpiece from the Arts of the Book.

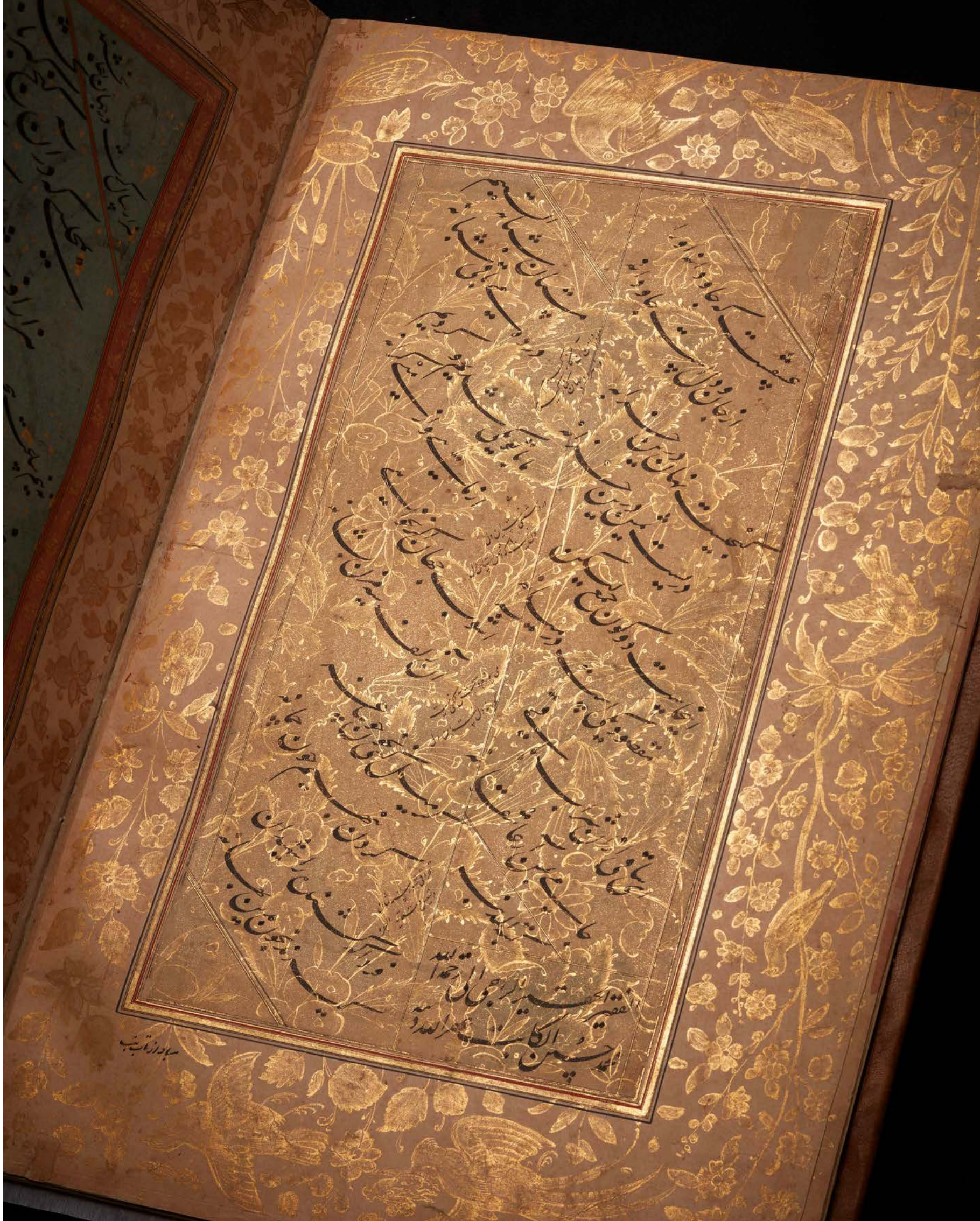
Muraqqa ‘is the Arabic word for ‘patched’ or ‘patchwork’. The name was used interchangeably in the Persianate world to describe the patchwork robes of wandering ascetics as well as the lavishly illuminated albums of pictures and specimens of calligraphy. The practice of collecting calligraphy was a deliberate exercise in connoisseurship: the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (d. 1576) had a famous collection, now in Istanbul.⁴ By the time of Akbar in the late 16th century, this practice of collecting was long established.⁵ *Muraqqa*’s were more than scrapbooks; they could exhibit a patron’s taste to the most exquisite degree.

This album is a collection of Persian poetry penned in the most accomplished Nasta’liq script by the greatest masters of the 16th century – Persian, Central Asian and Mughal alike. Persian was the social, cultural, intellectual and administrative language of the Mughals, and this collection contains excerpts from the greatest authors – Hafiz, Jami, Nizami, Anwari, Amir Khusrav, Baba Fighani Shirazi, Khaqani, Rumi and others. Because Akbar, like his great ancestor Timur, was illiterate, Persian literature was read out to him by professional reciters.⁶ He was, nevertheless, a remarkable patron of the arts of the book, and his support left an indelible mark on Indian and Islamic art.

THE MUGHALS AND THE ARTS OF THE BOOK

The love of the Mughal royal family for Persian manuscripts started with Babur (d. 1530), the founder of the dynasty.⁷ His successor Humayun brought artists to India back from his exile to Persia in 1555. Upon his accession to the throne in 1556, Akbar expanded the royal atelier, drawing in artists from all over India, as well as Central Asia and Iran, whilst the direction of the studio was given to Iranian artists. This *Kitabhana*, or House of Books, was the institution where manuscripts were stored as well as created and where calligraphers and painters, bookbinders and gilders were employed.

Abu’l Fazl, Akbar’s chronicler, has left us with a detailed account of the imperial atelier and the artists that were employed there. Calligraphers held the highest social standing as the art of writing was considered more important than painting.⁸ A letter when properly written symbolized for the Mughals





“a divine form containing magical power”.⁹ Calligraphy thus represented the abstract power of the word, “a rough sketch from the realm of ideas [...] a black cloud pregnant with knowledge; the wand of treasure of insight; speaking though dumb; stationary, yet travelling; stretched on the sheet, and yet soaring upward”.¹⁰ Akbar seems to have been particularly fond of Nasta’liq, a style developed by Mir ‘Ali al-Tabrizi in the early 15th century and so well represented in this album.¹¹

Mughal arts of the book all developed from earlier Iranian models. It is in the Indian subcontinent, however, that some of the most beautiful Persian manuscripts were produced. This is such an example.

THE CALLIGRAPHERS

Examples of calligraphy by masters of the past were always collected and often assembled in lavishly illuminated albums such as this one, passed down from one emperor to another.¹²

This album contains specimens by a number of masters such as Mahmud b. Ishaq, Sultan ‘Ali, Sultan Muhammad Nur, ‘Abdullah al-Husayni, Ahmad al-Husayni, Sultan Muhammad Khandan and, of course, Mir ‘Ali, one of the most celebrated calligraphers and famed for his mastery of Nasta’liq. Born in Timurid Herat, he was exiled to Bukhara, where he died in 1544. He was greatly admired by the Mughal emperors, with specimens appearing in the most luxurious imperial albums.¹³

The majority of the specimens, however, are in the hand of Muhammad Husayn Kashmiri (d. 1611–12). In the ‘Ain-i Akbari,¹⁴ Abu’l Fazl describes him: “The artist who, in the shadow of the throne of His Majesty, has become a master of calligraphy is Muhammad Husain of Kashmir. He has been honoured with the title *Zarrin Qalam*, the gold pen. He surpassed his master *mawлана* Abdul-Aziz [...] art critics consider him equal to Mulla Mir Ali.” His recorded works are dated between 988 H/1580–81 and 1017 H/1608–09.¹⁵ Praised by contemporaries as the modern equivalent of Mir ‘Ali their works were often brought together in album pages. Like Mir’ Ali, he excelled at Nasta’liq. On folio 8 of volume 2, Kashmiri even refers to Mir ‘Ali as *ustadhi*, meaning ‘my teacher’.

Muhammad Husayn penned some of the most lavish manuscripts commissioned by Akbar, such as the *Gulistan* of Sa’di of 1581 (Royal Asiatic Society Persian MS.258) and Jami’s *Baharistan* of 1595 (Bodleian Library, MS. Elliot 254). His portrait is painted on the colophon page of the *Gulistan*, perhaps proof of the emperor’s high consideration. He continued to work at the court of Jahangir and was admired by generations of Mughals.¹⁶ Despite his fame, he signs in this album with a combination of self-deprecating adjectives – *al-faqir* (the poor), *al-mudhnib* (the sinful), *al-haqir* (the incapable), *aqall al-‘abbad* (least of the slaves), *bandah* (slave) or simple *Kashmiri*. This was a common practice among calligraphers.

The second most represented calligrapher in the album is ‘Abd al-Rahim, who was given the title *Anbarin Qalam* (ambergris pen). He is the scribe of one of the most well-known Mughal manuscripts, the ‘Dyson-Perrins’ *Khamisa* of Nizami of 1595 (British Library Or. 12208), which contains his portrait by Dawlat on the colophon page, and Jami’s *Nafahat al-Uns* of 1604 (mostly in the British Library, MS.OR.1362).

Together with the imperial atelier, they followed Akbar and the court and sometimes recorded the place of copy of their work at the various Mughal capitals – Fatehpur Sikri (*Gulistan* of 1581), Lahore, the capital from 1584 to 1598 (this album, vol. 2, f. 8) and Agra, where the court moved after 1598.

THE ILLUMINATION

The extravagantly illuminated borders are of superb quality. Decorated borders first appeared in Iran in the early 15th century. By the 16th century, gold-painted borders are commonly found on luxury Persian manuscripts and in Bukhara especially where manuscripts’ facing pages are often of different coloured paper, as is the case here.¹⁷ In this album, the use of marbled paper, or *ebru*, meaning ‘clouded’, is more typically Indian, however. It gives a magnificent effect on the page when paired with the gold flecks, as if the words were floating on the glittering page.

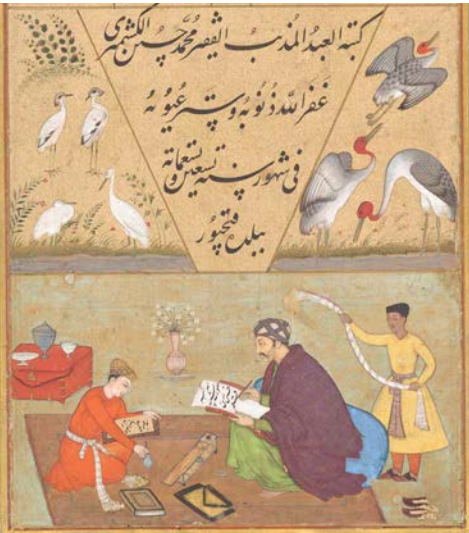
In the finest manuscripts of the period, penned by Muhammad Husayn and ‘Abd al-Rahim, the margins are painted with landscape, figural and floral designs in gold as they appear here: the ‘Dyson Perrins’ *Khamsa* of 1595, the *Baharistan* of 1595 and the Amir Khusraw of 1597–98 (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, W.624). As J.P. Losty suggested in his discussion of the borders, this kind of treatment is borrowed from Iran but often degenerated into stereotyped designs applied with stencils. In this album, however, the margins are individually painted. Losty suggests that this type of work may have been done by artists at the beginning of their careers.¹⁸

The illuminators responsible for the decoration of this album show an extreme fondness for floral arabesque, lions, deer, birds and mythical beasts such as *simurgh*, dragons and *qilins*, often shown harassing each other. These closely relate to those on the extraordinary ‘Gulshan Album’ made for Salim, Akbar’s son and later Emperor Jahangir, after 1599.¹⁹ Some of the finest gold illumination here can be seen not on the borders but under the calligraphy, painted directly onto the paper used for the poetry. Blossoming trees, fantastic leafy scrolls recalling Ottoman *saz* leaves, as well as birds in foliage catching butterflies, display a sublime and playful dialogue between subtly coloured paper, black ink and glittering gold.

AN ALBUM MADE FOR PRINCE SALIM?

This album is possibly one of the earliest Mughal albums preserved. There is no doubt that such a lavish manuscript could only be commissioned by the emperor or his direct entourage. The dated specimens and the illumination show that it was assembled c. 1595–1605. It is contemporary with two early Mughal albums – the Gulshan album mentioned previously and the Salim Album, both prepared c. 1600 for Prince Salim before his accession to the throne in 1605. Salim’s albums are at once the earliest and greatest *muraqqa*’s to have survived.

Two folios in the present volumes are illuminated with cartouches, medallions and geometric forms painted in gold and surrounded by plain ground (vol. 1, f. 4 and f. 15). This distinctive style is characteristic of the Salim Album, a loose group of thirty folios of relatively small dimension commissioned c. 1600–05. Several other folios illuminated in this style are present in the Doha volume of this album. In her discussion of those folios, Elaine Wright notes that “the distinctive borders are [...] one of the defining characteristics of the [Salim] album, but also the dating of the album rests in part on the specific type of motifs with which they are decorated”.²⁰ Both ensembles show cruciform motifs and twisted six-pointed stars, of which more elaborate versions are found slightly earlier on the *Baharistan* of 1595 made for Akbar in Lahore (f. 7a)²¹ and on the Walters *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw of 1597–98 (f.17b). This suggests that Akbar’s artists also worked on this album. It was prepared in the same imperial atelier in Lahore or Agra, or by these artists at Salim’s capital in Allahabad. Beach even suggests that work on the Salim Album was underway before the prince’s rebellion.²² Unlike other calligraphers, it is not known



Portrait of the calligrapher Muhammad Husayn Zarrin Qalam, 1582–83 (Royal Asiatic Society, London, Persian 258, f. 131r)



whether Muhammad Husayn accompanied Salim to Allahabad, but these specimens could have been part of the prince’s collection and mounted together at a slightly later date.

THE PAINTING OF THREE DERVISHES

The Windsor volume contains numerous illustrations, most of which are treated in the *nim qalam* style (meaning ‘half-pen’), line drawings which are minimally coloured. Paintings in the album seem to date from the period when the court was based in Lahore (until 1598) — one of the calligraphy specimens even records Lahore at its place of copy (vol. 2, f. 8). The paintings are attributable to the most celebrated painters of Akbar’s atelier, such as Basawan, Daswanth, Dhanraj, Kesu, La’l and Bhagwati.

The study of three dervishes in a landscape in this album on f. 2 of the second volume is ascribed to the artist Shankar. Shankar was a member of the royal atelier during the second half of Akbar’s reign and perhaps the early years of Jahangir’s. His career began around 1582, and he contributed to many of the great royal manuscripts of the 1580s and 1590s, including the *Timurnama*, *Darabnama*, *Razmnama*, *Ramayana*, two manuscripts of the *Baburnama*, the first and second *Akbarnama* manuscripts, and the *Iyar-i Danish*.²³

There exists a relationship between the painting and the texts surrounding it. Here, the three men are identified as dervishes by their unmatted hair, rough woollen robes, one carrying a walking staff and all wandering barefoot. Two of them are much older than the third, who is depicted kneeling at their feet, his young face showing no trace of facial hair. One of the men gazes at the young man. The page contains two texts – a *ghazal* by Hafiz (d. 1390) and an excerpt from Jami’s (d. 1492) *Lawa’ih*, a text on Sufism.

Hafiz’s verses translate as:

The curve of thy tress is the snare of infidelity and of faith [...] Thy beauty is the miracle of beauty. But the tale of Thy glance is clear magic. How can one take one’s life from Thy bold eye that ever is in ambushade with the bow? [...]

Like in the Salim Album and in the Windsor folios, poetry on this folio relates to the scene depicted, showing a thoughtful, and often playful, pairing. Paintings were not made in order to accompany poetry but verses were definitely selected to accompany and resonate with the illustrations.

CONCLUSION

This album is among the earliest surviving Mughal albums. It stands out from others as it focuses principally on calligraphy, which the Mughals revered as the noblest form of visual art. This imperial commission carries the mark of the emperor, or perhaps of his son Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir. Together, they commissioned some of the most lavish manuscripts produced in the Islamic world. Calligraphy is perhaps the quintessential form of Islamic art, and this album is one of its most sublime expressions.



Portrait of the calligrapher 'Abd al-Rahim 'Anbarin
Qalam, 1593–95 (British Library, London, Or. MS.
12208, f. 325v)



Nizami (d. 1209): *Khamisa*

Mughal India, dated 1025 H/1616–17
Copied by Ibn Muhammad Mirak al-Yazdi

Persian manuscript on paper, 500 folios plus four flyleaves, each with 19 lines of minute black Nasta'liq arranged in two columns, the text continuing around the border, where it is copied diagonally, within gold and polychrome *jadvāls*, titles in blue or red, six finely illuminated headpieces, the colophon signed and dated, complete, in 17th- or 18th-century Mughal binding with flap, stamped and gilt decoration, in 20th century fitted case marked "Arabian manuscript"

Folio 18.2 × 9.5 cm

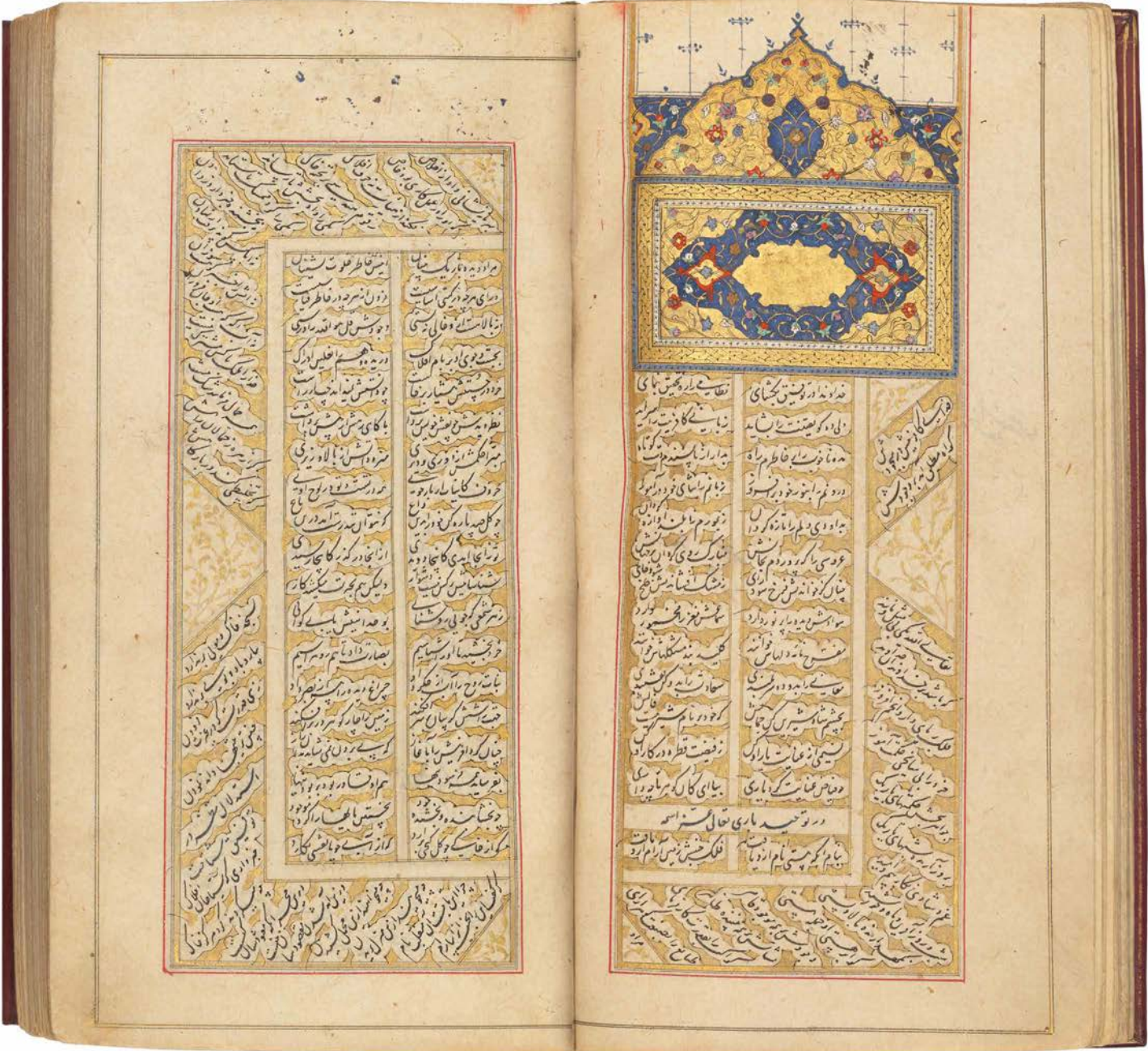
INSCRIPTIONS
On the flyleaf, in an old hand in pencil: *Seventeenth century Arabian MS in contemporary Binding*



Nizami, who lived in the Caucasus during the Seljuq period, composed the *Khamisa* (Quintet) over the course of forty years, from the 1160s to the 1190s. He dedicated the first of these poems, *Makhzan al-asrar*, to Fakhr al-Din Bahramshah, the ruler of Erzinjan in eastern Anatolia. *Makhzan al-asrar* is followed by *Khusraw wa Shirin*, *Layla wa Majnun*, *Haft Paykar* and the two parts of the *Iskandarnama*, *Sharafnama* and *Khiraadnama*. The five poems were composed independently and are a posthumous assemblage as a quintet. However, Nizami's *Khamisa* constitutes the author's most famous work and undoubtedly one of the most well-known and celebrated works of Persian literature.

The romances of Layla and Majnun, Khusraw and Shirin and the story of Bahram Gur and the princesses, are central to Nizami's text but also found in earlier Persian and Arabic literature. They have a place in the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi (d. 1020), the great Persian epic. They became hugely popular and a source of inspiration for several authors across the Islamic world, and notably in south Asia with authors such as Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (d. 1325) and Faizi (d. 1595).¹

The scribe Ibn Muhammad Mirak, who copied this manuscript, signed using the *nisba* 'al-yazdi', indicating that he was originally from the city of Yazd in central Iran. Large numbers of Persian calligraphers found employment in India in the 16th and 17th centuries, either at the Mughal court or in the Sultanates of the Deccan. The illumination in this manuscript, showing warm orange and a greyish-blue pigments, is typically Indian although clearly in the overall style of Persian illumination. This manuscript of Nizami's *Khamisa* speaks of the flourishing of the Persianate culture in India and the subcontinent's love for Persian literature. Akbar's own copy of the *Khamisa*, prepared by the imperial atelier in the early 1590s, is perhaps one of the most luxurious illustrated manuscripts ever produced in India (British Library, London, Or. 12208).



The Lights Of Canopus, a Persian version of the fables of *Kalila wa Dimna*

Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi (d. 1504/05): *Anwar-i suhayli*

Probably Hyderabad, Central India, first half 19th century

Persian manuscript on European paper embossed with a small bust portrait of a woman inside a raised lozenge, 199 folios (as numbered) plus two flyleaves, each page with 17 lines of black Nasta'liq, important words and titles in red, the opening flyleaf with an ownership inscription and date, an ex-libris stamp of R. C. Stewart and a bookplate label, the end flyleaf with a further ex-libris bookplate, folio ends gilded, European-style leather binding with navy blue plates with a border of gold rules and minor vegetal scroll borders, the leather covering on the spine mostly lost with some areas remaining including part of the title in gold lettering

INSCRIPTIONS

55 Hall un.- 2V. 2 vols. E5-5-o. *Anwar-i Suhayli* Manuscript (in pencil, doubleure)

Richard [or poss. Rob. C.] Stewart *Anwar-i* [...], Hyderabad. June 1847 (or 1867, in pen, first flyleaf)

PROVENANCE

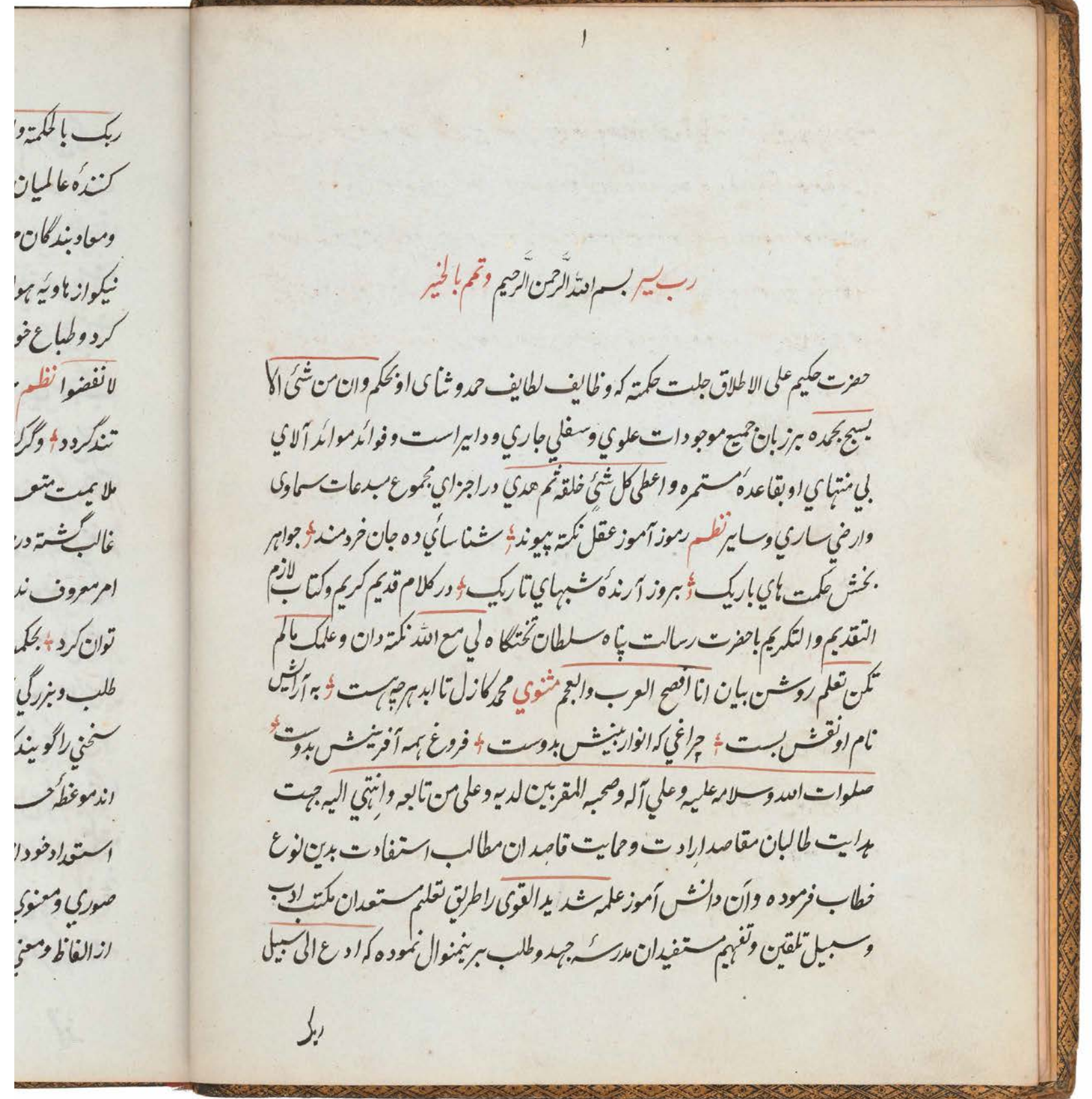
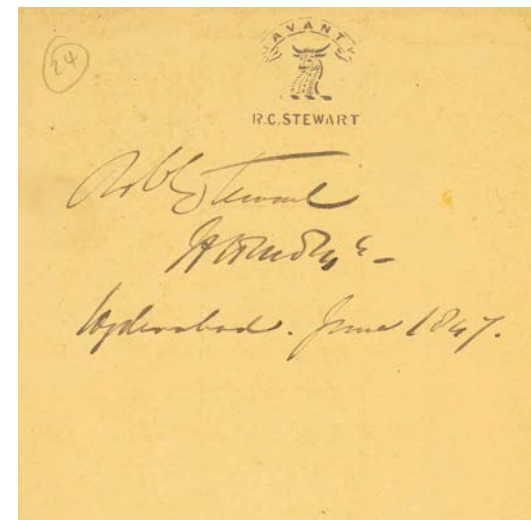
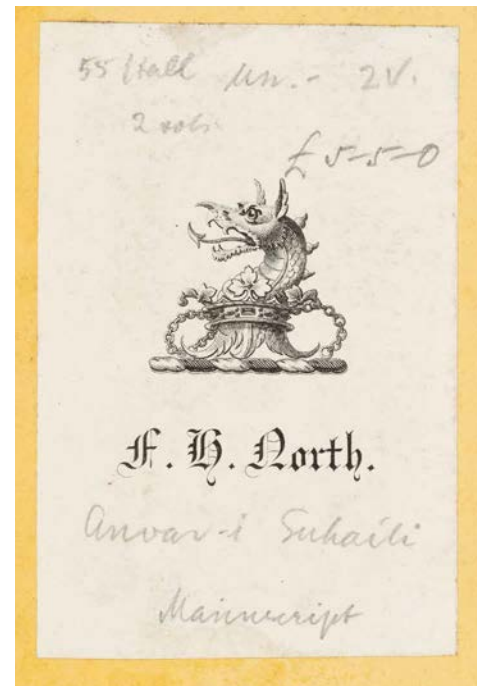
F. H. North (ex libris)

R. C. Stewart 'AVANT' (ex libris)

Arthur Probsthain (est. 1905)

The *Anwar-i suhayli*, often translated as the 'Lights of Canopus', is a didactic text based in the tradition of educating ruling elites in the manners of effective and just governance. The text was composed by Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi (d. 1504/05) probably towards the end of his life. Kashifi based his text on the celebrated collection of fables known in Arabic as the Fables of Bidpai, or *Kalila wa Dimna*, the name of the two jackals who are the narrators and protagonists of the story. The Arabic text was probably based on an earlier Middle-Persian or Pahlavi translation of a collection of fables in Sanskrit known as the *Pançatantra*. The original Pahlavi and Sanskrit texts are now lost. Though numerous modifications were made with each translation, the central theme and didactic nature of the text remained constant. Kashifi dedicated his version to Amir Nizam al-Din Shaykh Ahmad Suhayli (d. c. 1503), who was the vizier at the court of Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506) in Herat. *Anwar-i Suhayli*, or 'The Lights of Suhayli', is a play on the word Suhayli, the Vizier's name and the Arabic name for Canopus, the second brightest star in the night sky.

This manuscript copy of the *Anwar-i suhayli* contains four sections (*bab*) of a total of fourteen sections as described in the introduction to the text. The study of the *Anwar-i suhayli* was considered essential for the mastery of Persian, it was considered "an excellent tool for practicing the Persian language, and it is a well-known fact that it was on the program for the Persian examination in the Indian Civil Service".¹ This manuscript, according to the ex libris stamp, belonged to Captain Richard C. Stewart, the second son of William Stewart of Horn Head and Elizabeth Maxwell (d. 1860). The Stewarts were a military family of Scottish ancestry who had relocated to Ireland after the Battle of the Boyne and owned land in Donegal.² It was very common for second sons of the landed gentry to take up positions with the East India Company to seek their fortune in India. The ownership inscription confirms that this manuscript must have been with Captain Stewart in Hyderabad in 1847.



LEARNING AND
KNOWLEDGE



An Unrecorded Ilkhanid Abridgment on the Arabic Language

Transoxiana, Khurasan or Afghanistan, dated Jumada I to Rajab 665 H/February to April 1267
Copied by ‘Umar b. Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Ghaznawi and Muhammad b. Muhammad b. ‘Uthman al-Khardawani (donkey-racer)

Arabic and Persian manuscript on buff paper, 165 folios and two flyleaves, unusually copied and bound in *safina* format, 11 or 12 lines of black cursive per page, important words highlighted in red, titles in black New Style with red highlights, occasional marginal notes, copious contemporaneous inscriptions in Arabic and Persian, two colophons dated, in modern leather binding, some folios with modern repairs
Folio 14.5 × 12.5 cm, text area 10 × 9 cm

The mid 13th century saw the establishment of Mongol rule across most of Central Asia, Iran, Iraq and China. Baghdad fell to Hülegü in 1258 and Hangzhou to Bayan in 1276. Despite the upheavals of the conquests, libraries reopened almost immediately, and Islamic book culture soon flourished again.¹ This unique manual on the Arabic language, copied in 1267, is an example of such literary culture at a time of great change.

As the Mongols established themselves in their newly conquered lands, texts such as this, on the technicalities of the Arabic language, may have proved useful to the new elite, who were in the process of converting to Islam yet remained unfamiliar with the language of the Qur’an. The manuscript’s relatively small, ‘pocket-sized’ format suggests that it was intended to be carried by its owner, making it practical and easy to use.

The manual comprises three texts dealing with particles and words, grammar, and morphology of the Arabic language. They are abridgements of slightly earlier works, perhaps compiled by a single author, and copied for one particular patron. The first text is titled *al-Adawat al-maydani* (Maydani’s particles), opening on f. 1r. This is derived from *Kitab al-hadi li al-shadi* (Guide for the cultivated) of Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Maydani (d. 1124). It is dedicated in the preface to al-Imam al-Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Mansur b. Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Sa’id (f. 3v). The work is in Arabic and Persian and arranged in three sections – on nouns (12 chapters), on verbs (four chapters) and on letters (ten chapters). The colophon is dated to the end of Jumada I, Tuesday 665 H, and signed by Umar b. Muhammad b. ‘Umar al-Ghaznawi (from Ghazni), known as Fakhr Shihab (f. 86r).

The second text is *al-Nahw al-habibi* (al-Habib’s grammar), opening on f. 87r. It is derived from a work by Abu al-Qasim Muhammad b. Habib al-Nishapuri (d. 1016). The title page contains a *khutba ‘id al-adha* (Sermon for Eid al-Adha), a prayer in Arabic. A poem of ten verses, quoting Abu al-Qasim Isma’il b. Abbad – possibly the Andalusian ruler (d. 1042) – is also inscribed around the title. The first verses may be a charge against the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwan al-Safa): “they are all wolves in plain clothes”. The colophon of *al-Nahw al-habibi* is signed by Muhammad b. Muhammad b. ‘Uthman al-Khardawani (Donkey-rider) *known as* Iftikhar Fakhr (f. 97r). A note added to the colophon records a prophetic hadith dictated by Mawlana Kamal al-Din al-Mu‘izzi, on the authority of al-Bukhari, concerning the spiritual benefits of reciting prayers. The Persian quatrain beneath the heading in New Style is by a little-known poet called Mawlana Badr al-Din Damraji.

The third and last text is *al-Sarf al-isma‘ili* (al-Isma‘ili’s morphology), beginning on f. 97r. It is derived from a work by al-Imam Abu al-Qasim Isma’il b. Muhammad al-Salihi. The colophon on f. 164v is dated to the end of Rajab 665 H and also signed by ‘Umar b. Muhammad b. Umar al-Ghaznawi (from Ghazni). The final folio is inscribed with instructions for drawing prognostications (*fal*) from the Qur’an.

The titles and headings in the manuscript, written in bold and angular script, are typical of the New Style developed in the eastern Islamic world, later found from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan.² However, by comparing this manuscript with material published in A. Karame’s seminal study on Qur’ans from the eastern Iranian world in the 11th and 12th centuries, it becomes clear that it was produced in Khurasan, Transoxiana or Afghanistan.³



Saint Arethas of Najran’s Address to his People, and Other Works

A Mamluk *Majmu’* comprising manuals on divination, history and a book of advice
Probably Syria, late 15th century

Arabic manuscript on paper, 29 folios plus two modern flyleaves, each folio with 15 lines of clear black elongated Naskh, titles and important phrases and words picked out in red, including two large diagrams of the right and left palms, 19 marginal diagrams of shoulder bones, colophon in a slightly different hand dated Jumada I 893 H/April–March 1488, occasional notes throughout, final folio with text in Ottoman Turkish dealing with a cure to the plague, modern tentative author attributions on the first folio, in Ottoman marbled paper cover binding

Folio 24.4 × 15.5 cm

INSCRIPTIONS
On the final folio, a short text in Ottoman Turkish on the explanation of the cure for the afflictions of leprosy (the two terms *baras* and *judham* are used)

This is a fascinating manuscript which contains a rare text attributed to Saint Arethas of Najran, therefore a testament to the Christian and pre-Islamic history of the Arabian Peninsula. The manuscript is the work of a single copyist, written in a fine and controlled Naskh throughout. It comprises other rare texts in their abridged versions – three works on divination and a concise almanac spanning the 12th to the mid-14th century. The reason why these texts are gathered in a single codex copied by a single scribe, visibly at the same time, remains a mystery. It was most probably copied by the copyist for his own use. The manuscript opens with three manuals on divination (ff. 1–14):

- Book on the Description of the Palm and the Science of [reading] Good and Evil (*Kitab fihi sifat al-kaff wa al-raha wa ‘ilm ma fiha min al-khayr wa al-shirr*). It describes a variety of signs visible in the palm of the hand such as pregnancy, incoming death or bad luck. It is accompanied by two large annotated diagrams of the right and left hands.
- Book of Alexander Describing Scapulimancy (*Kitab wada’ahu al-Iskandar fi ‘ilm al-akatf*). This deals with divination in animal shoulder blades. It gives clues to help predict a variety of subjects such as the advent of war, the outcome of an illness, to know about a distant traveller, discover the character of a woman or tell about female illnesses.
- Second Manual on the Science of the Turks (*al-maqala al-thaniya fi ‘ilm al-atrak*), also dealing with the reading and prediction of the future in burnt animal shoulder blades, sheep in this instance. This can help predict rain and drought, epidemics or know the outcome of a distant sea voyage. It is accompanied with 19 marginal diagrams of shoulder bones with different markings indicated, operating as a manual for divination.

This treatise refers to scapulimancy as *‘ilm al-atrak* (literally, ‘science of the Turks’), suggesting that the practice was popular among Turkic peoples and more broadly with nomadic people from Central Asia. William of Rubruck (c. 1215–c. 1295), a Belgian Franciscan friar, present in the Mongol Khan Möngke’s camp in 1253 observed an attendant carrying charred shoulder-blade bones of sheep out of the khan’s tent. He later learned that the Khan “did nothing in the world without first consulting these bones”.

It is followed by Histories of Kings and Sultans (ff. 14–20). This is most probably an abridged version of Amir Badr al-Din Baktash al-Fakhiri’s (d. 745 H/1344) noted History, *Nuzhat al-an’am fi mukhtasar tarikh al-muluk wa salatin bilad al-sham*. It records one major event per calendar year, with some gaps, focusing on Greater Syria (*bilad al-sham*). It opens with Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi gaining control over Egypt (as Grand Vizier) in 564 H/1169 and ends with the death of al-Malik al-Nasir [Ibn Qala’un] in Muharram 742 H/June–July 1341, an earthquake on 16 Sha’ban 744 H/2 January 1344 and a lunar eclipse recorded on 14 Dhu al-Qa’da 745 H/19 March 1345. This last event is posterior by six months to Al-Fakhiri’s recorded date of death in Jumada II 745 H/beginning of November 1344. It may have been added by a later author.

The Address of Arethas of Najran to His People (*Wasiya al-harith b. ka’b li-awladih*) is the final text in this compilation (ff. 20–29). The address contains the final words attributed to al-Harith b. Ka’b, known as Arethas of Najran,



the Christian martyr, saint and ‘priest-king’ of Banu Harith in Najran, in the southern part of present-day Saudi Arabia. The legend of his martyrdom at the hand of Dhu Nuwas, the Jewish king of Himyar (Yemen), in 523 is well-known through Syriac and Ethiopian sources. However, surviving material describing the event is particularly scant.¹ A two-leaf fragment in the University of Birmingham, describing the martyrdom, dating to around 1300, tells his story and that of the 4,250 men, women and children martyred with him.² Other manuscripts are held at St Catherine’s Monastery and in the British Museum.³

In the present text, al-Harith addresses his people as he is about to be martyred: “when death appeared to al-Harith, he gathered his children between his hands and he said to them” (f. 20). The text takes the form of a tribal charge or *wasiya*, traditionally delivered by a leader before his expected death or departure. It is arranged as a series of short pieces of advice directed either to his people (*banu*) or to his children, and in particular his eldest child (“*anta akbar awladi*”).

A version of this extremely rare text was published in Beirut by Ahmad Safwat.⁴ There are important discrepancies in the use of synonyms whilst keeping the general meaning, with several omissions and additions, this text being noticeably longer. Here Arethas states that he is a 120 years old, whilst in the published text, he is much older – 160 years old.

Another version of his *wasiya* is included in the works attributed to the Abbasid poet Di‘bil b. ‘Ali (d. 765), titled *Wasaya al-Muluk* (Addresses of kings), itself a very rare text.⁵

نظر

فيه مع مرفقه صفحة اليمنى والى اعلا يمينه فاما الجناح
الذي فيه فهو الذي فيه العين والعين الحرف القام في وسط
واما يمينه فما السبع من جانب العين وشماله ما ضاق من جانبه الاخرى
اعلاه والعصوف وهو مارق من صلابة العظم واسفله مقبضة فان
كان النظر في امر النظر فوجد في جانب العين عرفان لاسفان بالعين
وجدا في صفحتي الكنف نقط فهو يدل على كثرة الامطار في تلك السنة يكون
برد في السنة وان كان المصير في الافات فان كان في الكنف ثلثة وعشرون
نقط فهو مطر في تلك السنة شيئا من الافات ه فان كان الجناح
الايمن من الكنف وسط يحبر مع اسورة ارجاسه الايمن ووسط صفحته
دل على كثرة الامطار في تلك السنة وخوف الناس من الموت في الخريف ه
وان كان الكنف فوق الجانبيين منقط الجحنيين فانه يدل على فلة المطر
في تلك السنة فان كان منه شيئا فاما يكون من عارض السرد في تلك السنة
فافهم ذلك ه وان كان النظر لملك في علم عدد ايام ملكه وطول
بقائه ومن ايقظ ارملة يقتوته وان كان الجناح الايمن مع صفحت
اليمن نقش الجناح الايسر مع وسطه فان لفينا صفحت الايمن تدل



تقصر ايامه وجمرة الجناح الايسر تدل على الحرب والقتال وهو امر وود
الحرب ايضا تدل على كون رجل من بلاد الاعاجير ملك مكانه وان كان النظر
القارى والغالب والغلوب وكانت اليمنى من الكنف حمرا واليسرى ذات
نقط سود فان جمرة صفحتي اليمنى تدل على معرفة الدم والحرب الشديد و
كثرة النقط السود تدل على اهلاك ناس كثير من بلاد الاعاجير والظفرهم وان
كان النظر في امر التزوج وكان في وسط الكنف من جانب الايمن هبة الدائرة
والجناح الايسر اسود لاسفله الى الطول فان الدارة للحبر التي في وسطه في
الجانب الايمن والسواد الذي في جناحه الايسر مع الحطة للحبر التي في وسطه
تدل على اللين والبركة في التزويج والبطا في كونه وان كان النظر في الخروج
الى مدينته او غير ذلك وكانت الصفحة اليمنى من جانب الايمن ملساء فانه
مع احمراره جناحه الايسر وما في وسطه يلحق العين من الجمرة فانها تدل
على الثوم في تخرج اخ او ولدان هو اخيه معه واحمر او جناحه الاسود
يدل على امن الطاعة والسلامة على الخاف وان كان النظر في ثبات امر
او طبع عمل من الاعمال وكانت صفحة الكنف من جانب الايمن ملساء غير
في وسطه حطة حمرا والصفحة اليسرى حمرة فان ملساء صفحة اليمنى



Five medical works of al-Samarqandi copied in Mecca

Najib al-Din Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Samarqandi (d. 619 H/1222): *al-Khamsa al-najibiyya*

Copied by Muhammad b. ‘Ali al-Qalbi (?) al-Azhari, Mecca

Dated 9 and 18 Ramadan 974 H/March 1567

Arabic manuscript on paper, 100 folios, each folio with 21 lines of tight black cursive, titles and important words in red, the title pages for *risala* 1 and 5 in large Thuluth script, that of *risala* 5 with red and silver highlights, colophon of *risala* 2 dated, signed and indicating Mecca as the place of copy (f. 58), first *risala* with occasional marginal commentary, catchwords, old pagination in the top left corner, in possibly original restored fine ottoman 16th- or 17th-century Morocco with stamped floral medallion

Folio 24.5 × 14.8 cm

This manual of pharmacology and diets was compiled for a patron from texts composed in the early 13th century by Najib al-Din al-Samarqandi. It is labelled *Rasa’il khamsa najibiyya* (Five treatises of al-Najib) and was copied in Mecca, most probably for a member of the Meccan elite. It is likely that the patron selected five of al-Samarqandi’s works to be gathered in this codex according to their health and medical requirements.

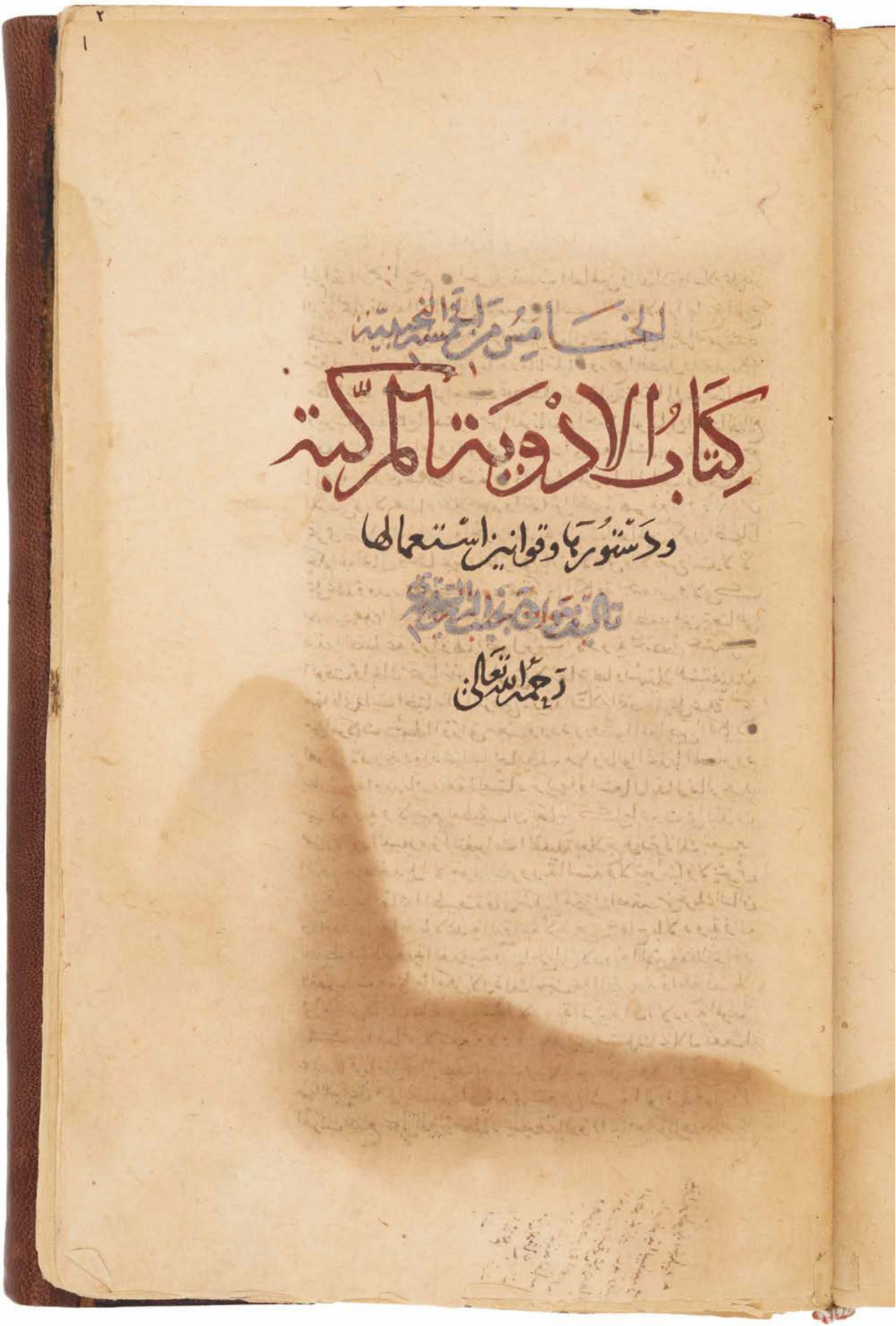
It includes two of his popular works on foods and drinks and on compound drugs, as well as much rarer discussions such as a text on the eye and another on medicines for the heart as well as a manual on purgatives. It is possible that this combination of texts reflected the ailments affecting the patron of this manuscript.

The texts are copied here in their original Arabic version and are important examples of medieval medical knowledge still in use in 1567, the date of the manuscript. In quoting Galen (folio 1), al-Samarqandi reminds us of the importance of medieval authors from the Islamic world in the transmission of ancient knowledge.

Very little is known about Abu Hamid Muhammad b. ‘Ali b. ‘Umar Najib al-Din al-Samarqandi. A native of Samarqand, he would have lived at the time of the Khwarazmshah rule over Central Asia. We know from surviving manuscripts that he had a son, also a physician, named Asil al-Din. The 13th-century author Ibn Abi Usaybi’a (d. 1270), a contemporary of al-Samarqandi, gives a short account of his life stating that he was a contemporary of al-Razi (d. 1209) and that he was killed during the Mongol attack on Herat in 619 H/1222, as well as providing a brief bibliography. More of his works are known today, particularly after A.Z. Iskandar’s 1972 publication *A Study of Al-Samarqandi’s Medical Writings*. He was a prolific writer and author of the well-circulated and popular *vademecum* on therapy *The Causes of Illnesses and their Symptoms and their Treatments*, which he appears to have written for himself. In his introduction to his *Book on Compound Drugs*, al-Samarqandi mentions visiting a hospital in Baghdad hospital, suggesting that he spent time in the city.

The present manuscript holds five of the author’s treatises on pharmacy and diets. Each is labelled as part of five *rasa’il* (sg. *risala*). Iskandar notes that copyists used to transcribe selections of the author’s works together in single codices entitled *al-Najibiyyat* (from the author’s name Najib al-Din), as it seems to be the case here. It includes the following texts:

1. *Kitab al-aghdhīya wa al-ashriba wa ma yattasil bi-hima* (Book on foods and drinks and what relates to them) (ff. 1–44)
2. *Ar’mia al-marda* (Diet for the ill) (ff. 45–58).
3. *Al-Adwiya al-mufrada* (Simple Drugs, or *Materia medica*), followed by a short summary by Abu ‘Ubayd al-Bakri (d. ca 1094) of a text of Ibn al-Baytar dealing with cures to scorpion and snake bites. (ff. 59–67)
4. *Al-Adwiya al-mushila* (Purgative drugs). This is on three folios (ff.68-71), followed by two short texts: *fi qawanin tarkib al-adwiya al-qalbiyya* (Rules for the compounding of drugs for the heart, ff. 70–71) and on f. 71v *risala fi tashrih*



al-‘ayn, an anatomical description of the eye. It included an illustration of the eye on a single folio which is now missing.

5. *Kitab al-adwiya al-murakkiba wa dusturu-ha wa qawanin isti‘maliha* (Book on compound drugs, their principles and rules of their use) (ff. 72–98).
6. An excerpt from the 28th book of *Kitab al-shamil fi al-tibb* (Complete book on medicine) by ‘Ala al-Din Abu al-Hazm al-Qurshi Ibn al-Nafis (d. 1288) (ff. 99–100). This deals specifically with camphor and its medicinal properties arranged in five small sections. This is copied on two folios by another copyist, namely Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Halabi.

The first and second texts in this manuscript are on dietetics. *Kitab al-aghddhiya wa al-ashriba* is a comprehensive medical manual with information on more than 500 different food items, dishes, drinks and fragrances. It can be considered as a major Arabic monograph on dietetics in the medieval Islamic East. The second *risala*, ‘Diet for patients’, is the first text listed in Ibn Abi Usaybi’a’s bibliography. There, al-Samarqandi classifies the diets according to diseases, beginning with the head and proceeding downward.

The third and fifth texts are on pharmacy. *Al-adwiya al-mufrada* is a *materia medica* on simple drugs whilst *al-adwiya al-murakkaba* is a formulary of compounding of drugs. It is the same text that appears in several manuscripts under the title *Usul tarkib al-adwiya*,¹ or its abridged form. It is arranged alphabetically.

The fourth *risala* is the only text in this compilation that deals with specific drugs, purgatives in this case. The text is immediately followed by two short discussions on drugs for the heart and on the anatomy of the eye.

A handful of codices of *al-Najibiyyat al-samarqandiyya* are known, containing a selection of the author’s texts similar to those in this codex but are not identical. There are variations in the choice of subjects. See for instance, Arabe 5109 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (dated 1630–31); MS Tibb 1, with six texts, in Dar al-Kutub, Cairo, and MS Or.5619, with four texts only, in the British Library (formerly in the British Museum).²

الجربيه والاوراد والبثور والورنه وكل مزاج من الامزجه وكل حال من حالات البدن ووقت من اوقات السنه وسن من الاسنان وعند علمه كل عليه كل خلط من الاخلاط وقفنا الله تعالى لما هو اكثر نفعا وعم عابك وانتهى بختنا الي اخلص لبيات وابعامنا الي احسن الاعمال انه هو المسدد والحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة على نبيه محمد وآله اجمعين تمت
الكعبة يوم الخميس المبارك التاسع من رمضان سنة ١٠١٠
محمد علي القلي الاخير رحل عن الدنيا في شهر ربيع الاول
له والدة ولما رحمه وتخلي الملم

رسالة في تشريح العين لشيخ العبد المذنب التميمي
ان العين مركبة من سبع طبقات وثلاث رطوبات اما بيان الطبقات فان العصبية المجوفة اذا انحدرت الي العين مصاحبة بغشائي الدماغ ملبسة اياهما حفظا وصيانة لها ووافقت المحر السعت والتسع الغشائي معها حتى التفت رطوبات العين لقيام راس القمع نصف الكرة فصارت جميعا ثلث طبقات من طبقات العين بعد اختلاط شعب الاورد والشرائين بها وكلت العصبية وغشائيهما كلفة اقماغ مروضه بعضها في بعض ووسها الي قدام واذا لها الي خلف الطبقة الاولى متصلا بالغشاء الغليظ من غشائي الدماغ الماس للتحف والثاني بالغشاء الرقيق الثالث هي راس العصبية المجوفة مما يسلي رطوبات العين فالاولي المماسه لبطن المحر يسمى الطبقة الصلبة لانها ثبتت من الغشاء الصلب الغليظ والثاني يسمى المشيمية لانها ذات عروق وشرائين والثالث المماسه للرطوبة الزجاجية والجلدية تسمى الشبكية ثم يغشا من كل طبقة من هذه الطبقات الخلقة ثلث طبقات اخر الي قدام كلت فيجاءات موضوعه بعضها في بعض ووس جميعها الي ووس تلك الاقماغ متصلة دائره راس كل واحد منها الي دائره راس قمع من تلك الاقماغ وهذه الطبقة الثلثة الغذائية تسمى الاولى منها الثانية من الطبقة الصلبة طبقة قرنية ووسطها حث كاذي الحرقه من قمع مقبب شبيه بشكل الصخر والثانيه الثالثه من الطبقة المشيمية طبقة عنيدية والثالثه الكاشيه من الطبقة الشبكية طبقة عكبيويه وانما جعلت الطبقة العنيدية منقوبه الوسط لتسرع وتضيق في النور والظلمه ليصل اليه من النور ابدا المقدار المعتدل فلا يذو النور الغالب العين ولا يعدم الظلمة الابصار وانما جعلت الجمة الداخلة منها ذات خجل وزيتير لتعلق بها الرطوبة البيضاء وتماسك فلا تنصب الي القعر التي تحذا الجلدية فهذه هي الطبقات الست ومنشأها ووضعي والطبقة السابعة هي البصا المختطة بسواد العين حاطة الاحشاء بالمقلة عند التحقن ويسمى ملتحم ومنشأها خارج التحف من الغشاء المجلل للتحف واما الرطوبات فالاولا من جهة الخلف التي الطبقة الشبكية تسمى زجاجيه وثالثوها الرطوبة الجلدية وقدام الجلدية الرطوبة البيضاء ويتوسطها الطبقة العنكبيويه حايلة بينها اعني

The Lamp, an Important Text on Rhetoric

‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Jurjani (d. 816 H/1414): *al-Misbah fi sharh al-miftah* Constantinople, dated Tuesday 19 Jumada II 860 H/25 May 1456

Arabic manuscript on fine polished paper, with occasional coloured folios, 230 folios plus three flyleaves, each folio with 25 lines of dense black cursive verging on Ta’liq, important words in red or highlighted in red, opening folio with large and fine black *bismallah*, colophon signed, dated and indicating the place of copy as Constantinople, with copious marginal commentaries in various hands, catchwords, opening flyleaves with later owner’s notes and seal impressions, eight folios an 18th- or 19th-century replacement, in very good condition, in fine 16th- or 17th-century Ottoman binding with stamped floral medallions and gilt highlights

Folio 25,5 x 16,3cm.
INSCRIPTIONS
No. 31 (old European hand)

Several notes in various hands, probably added by the marginal commentators, including a note on the author ‘*qad wulida al-sayyid al-sharih [...] fi jurjan min wilayat astarabad fi sana 740 wa tuwufiyya bi balda shiraz fi 6 rabīʾ al-thani sana 816 wa sanafa hadha al-sharh bi balda samarqand fi sana arbaʾa wa thamanamiʾa*’ (The commentator was born in Jurjan in the Astarabad area in 740 and died in Shiraz on 6 Rabi’ II 816 and he composed this commentary in Samarqand in 804).

Tamalluka al-faqir muhammad ibn al-qadi al-asrari al-mudarris bi al-madrasa al-sultaniyya fi erzerum ‘ayn-fa-ha (?) hijriya (Property of Muhammad son of Judge al-Asrari teacher at the sultan’s madrasa in Erzerum in .[abjad date illegible])

Min kutub awwal ‘ibad dhi al-matn muhammad b. hisr shah muhammad b. mustafa b. al-hajj hasan [...] wa amin (From the books of [...] Muhammad b. Hsir? Shah Muhammad b. Mustafa b. al-Hajj Hasan [...] amen)

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. It is known in Arabic as ‘*ilm al-bayan wa al-ma’ani*’ (science of figurative usage and syntax). It deals with various interconnected disciplines such as eloquence (*balagha*), oratory (*khataba*), dialectic (*jadal*) and aspects of literary culture (*adab*). The science emerged in the first centuries of Islam from the translations of Greek works such as Aristotle and Cicero, transformed and adapted to the Islamic context- Islam as a religion and Arabic as a language. The Qur’an itself was viewed as the ultimate rhetorical model, and its *i’jaz* (inimitability) explained and studied through this science.

This treatise, *al-Misbah fi sharh al-miftah* (Lamp on the commentary of the key), is a well-known commentary by ‘Ali b. Muhammad al-Sharif al-Jurjani on al-Sakkaki’s (d. 1229) *Miftah al-‘ulum* (Key to the disciplines). According to the colophon of this manuscript, the text was completed in the middle of Shawwal 803 H/1401. This manuscript, copied 55 years after the composition of the text, is therefore an early copy.

Al-Jurjani was born in Taju in 1339 near Astarabad in Iran and died in 1413 near Herat. A polymath and prodigious author, he studied in Shiraz and arrived at Timur’s court in Samarqand in 1387, when he began immediately to establish a place for himself as an authority on various subjects.¹ In writing the *Lamp*, al-Jurjani thought to simplify the study of Sakaki’s *Miftah*. He claims in the introduction to this text that he was surprised to find students in Transoxiana so badly misled by the poor commentaries available on rhetoric.

... until at the end of my life I endured the travails of travel [in order to reach] Transoxiana. I found there flocks thirsting for substance as they flitted around the book *Miftah al-‘ulum*, and could not find a path to their destination.²

Al-Sakaki based *Miftah al-‘ulum* on two earlier 11th-century works and composed, not only a rhetorical textbook, but also a complete handbook on expression in Arabic. It proved a popular textbook between 1300 and 1500. It attracted not only two commentaries on its complete contents, but 25 on the third section of the *Miftah*, where al-Sakkaki considered rhetorical topics.³ Our text, *al-Misbah*, is amongst those. It itself proved extremely popular and several commentaries were written on it in the 15th and 16th centuries.⁴

This manuscript is a fine copy of the text, written on highly polished paper, using either cream-coloured or pink- or yellow-dyed paper. There are copious marginalia attesting to the popularity of the text. It was copied in Constantinople three years after the city was conquered by the Ottomans. According to a note on the flyleaf, it was later taken to Erzurum in eastern Anatolia where it was perhaps rebound in this exquisite stamped brown morocco.

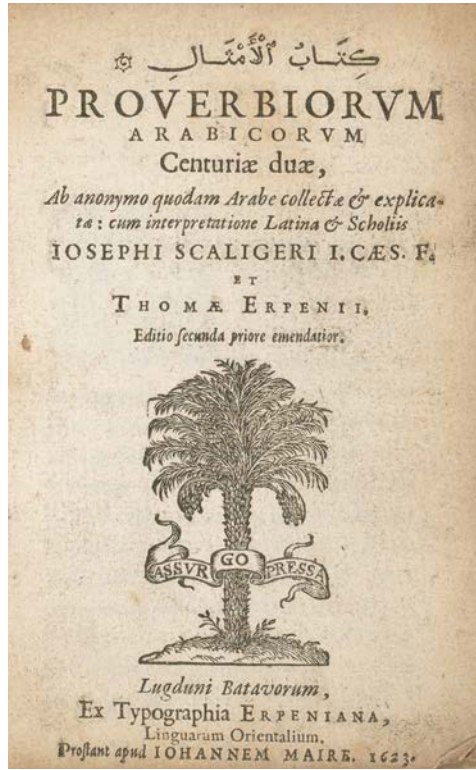


Thomas Erpenius and Joseph Scaliger: *Proverbiorum Arabicorum Centuriae Duae* (‘Kitab al-Amthal’)

Proverbiorum arabicorum centuria duae, ab anonymo quodam arabe collectæ & explicata: cum interpretatione Latina & Scholiis

Leiden: Ex Typographia Erpeniana
Second edition, Joannes Maire Publisher, 1623

Arabic and Latin text with occasional words in Hebrew, printed on watermarked paper, 75 folios plus two flyleaves at the beginning and one at the end, the opening and final folio stamped with a palm tree motif, the inside cover with an ex libris label ‘Arbury Library’, in original limp vellum binding with the title and author inked on the spine
Folio 14.4 × 9.4 cm
PROVENANCE
Arbury Library (ex libris)
Arthur Probsthain (est. 1905)

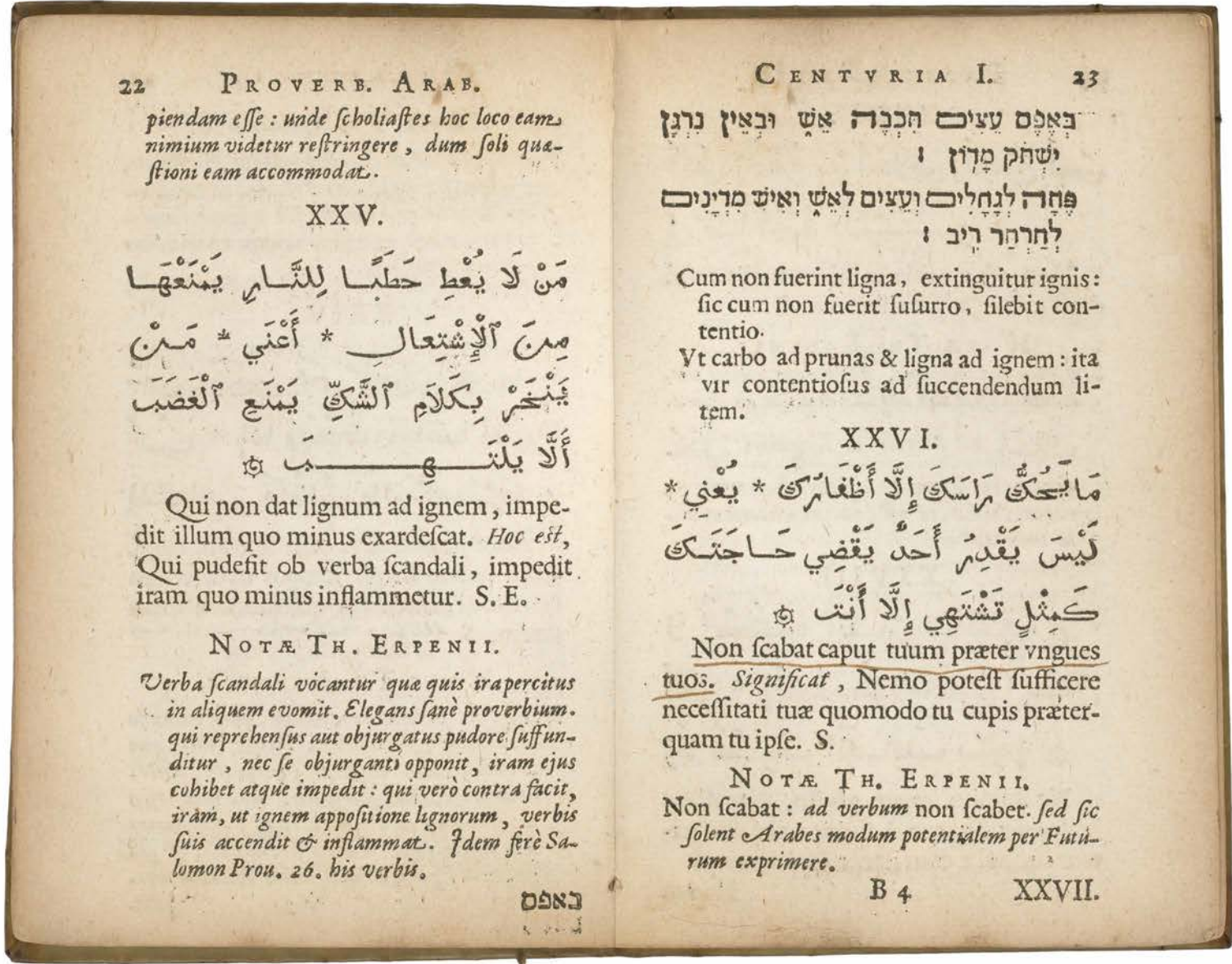


One of the earliest examples of moveable-type printing in Arabic script, this highly important collection of Arabic proverbs translated into Latin is a remarkable work of early European studies in the Arabic language.

It comprises a hundred Arabic proverbs based on the celebrated compilation of proverbs attributed to the early philologist and Qur’anic scholar Abu ‘Ubayd al-Qasim b. Sallam (d. 838). The Arabic source manuscript for this translation was acquired by David Rivault Sieur de Fleurance (1571-1616), who entrusted a Maronite clergyman to translate the text. The translation was refined by Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614), who later passed the work on to his friend and fellow scholar Joseph Scaliger (1540–1609). Scaliger was one of the leading intellectual figures of the age, who finished his career as the professor of Greek and Roman history at Leiden University. He was instrumental in establishing the concept that Near Eastern history—such as that of the Babylonians, Egyptians and the Persians—should be examined with equal interest as classical Greece and Roman civilisations. Scaliger, besides Greek and Latin, taught himself Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac amongst other languages.

Scaliger passed away suddenly at the age of 68 and the task of completing the work on this collection of Arabic proverbs fell to his disciple and well-known Orientalist scholar Thomas van Erpe (1584–1624). Van Erpe, on the advice of Scaliger, studied several Middle Eastern languages. He took lessons in Arabic from an Egyptian Copt, who was found to have limited knowledge of classical Arabic. This was followed by more successful lessons with an Andalusian Morisco, Ahmad b. Qasim al-Hajari, who served as an envoy from the Saadian rulers of Morocco to France and the Dutch Republic.

Thomas van Erpe completed the first edition of this collection of proverbs in 1614 and dedicated the text to Isaac Casaubon, who had initially started the project. This is the second and edited edition that was completed in 1623, shortly before the death of van Erpe. At the time of the second edition, van Erpe’s knowledge of Arabic had improved greatly and he was working on a Latin translation of the Qur’an. The collection of Oriental manuscripts of van Erpe was purchased for Cambridge University and forms the original core of their Oriental manuscript collection.



The Constellations

Safavid Iran, c. 1630–40

16 folios, ink on paper, the Arabic text in black and red Nasta'liq, six folios laid down on paper, others with text including tables on the reverse, of various dimensions

Folio 25.5 × 13 cm (the largest)

PROVENANCE
Possibly from Mr Davidzade, Paris, c. 1934, according to bank letters kept with this set of drawings.
Galerie RG, Paris, (active 1912–21), by repute

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Al-hamal (Aries)
- Al-tinnin (Draco)
- Al-sahm (Sagitta)
- Al-awwa (Bootes)
- Al-asad (Leo)
- Al-rami (Sagittarius)
- Al-dalfin (Delphinus), two views on single folio
- Al-tawamayn (Gemini)
- Leo or Ursa Major (no identification inscription)
- Canis Major or Canis Minor, two views on separate folios
- Birshawus (Perseus) [opposite]
- Al-adhra (Virgo)
- Al-faras al-ʿzam (Pegasus)
- Al-saratan (Cancer), two views on single folio
- Al-dubb al-asghar (Ursa Minor)

These sixteen illustrated folios, though now isolated from their original codex, contain traces of an Arabic text that most probably forms part of the *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* – *Book of the the Fixed Stars* – and reflect the renewed interest in astronomy at the Safavid court.

Composed around 964 by the astronomer al-Sufi, *Book of the the Fixed Stars* was one of the most influential scientific texts of the Islamic world. It described the 48 constellations of Ptolemaic astronomy, integrating them with local star lore, and it circulated widely in illustrated copies. Al-Razi’s constellations were depicted in pairs, each with its mirror image, so that the reader could see them as they appeared in the sky as well as on their celestial globe (see Delphinus in the present set). By the 14th century, it had already been translated into Persian, ensuring its accessibility beyond Arabic-speaking scholarly circles.

In 1630–31, under the patronage of Manuchihr Khan (d. 1636), governor of Mashhad, the astrologer Hasan b. Sa’d al-Qa’ini produced a fresh Persian translation of the text.¹ This initiative exemplified the Safavid integration of scientific learning into the education of elites and reflected the court’s concern to align astronomy with political legitimacy.² The translation gave rise to a remarkable series of illustrated manuscripts executed in Isfahan and Mashhad.³ The most prominent among them are the Spencer manuscript in New York and its close companion in Cairo, both produced in the 1630s.⁴ Their constellation figures, monumental in scale and coloured with a wide palette, reveal the transposition of the visual language associated with Reza ‘Abbasi (d. 1635) into the realm of scientific manuscript production.

The present group of sixteen folios can be situated within this corpus. The folios display figures of the constellations drawn with delicate black lines, only occasionally accented with pigment. Stylistically, the elongated eyes, refined facial features and flowing drapery are consistent with Isfahan draughtsmanship of the 1630s and 1640s. A particularly telling example is the representation of Virgo: her elongated face, delicately arched eyebrows, rounded cheeks faintly touched with red, small mouth and feathery hair are characteristic of 17th-century Iranian painting in the manner of Reza ‘Abbasi.⁵ Although tthis text is in Arabic, the constellation drawings clearly align them with the illustrated Persian translations of the text. Their style situates the folios in the same cultural environment as the Spencer and Cairo manuscripts, reflecting the visual idiom of the Safavid translation project. At the same time, the continued production of Arabic versions of al-Sufi’s work is demonstrated by a sumptuous manuscript copied in the 1630s, today preserved in Tehran, with constellation figures painted in the same Isfahani manner.⁶ These features situate the present folios within the broader Safavid renewal of al-Sufi’s astronomy, preserved in both Arabic and Persian, and reimagined through the courtly style of 17th-century Isfahan.





LEFT TO RIGHT
Al-'adhra (Virgo)
Al-faras al-a'zam (Pegasus)
Al-saratan (Cancer), two views
Al-dubb al-asghar (Ursa Minor)

The Wonders Of Creation and Marvels of Existence

Zakariyya' b. Muhammad al-Qazwini (d. 1283):
'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat wa ghara'ib al-mawjūdāt
Northwest India, c. 1750–1800

Persian manuscript on laid paper, 455 folios, each with 15 lines of black cursive verging on Nasta'liq, titles in red, text within double red and blue *jadwal*, 205 illustrations in opaque watercolour and ink, often heightened with gold, of which 58 are executed on leaves inserted within the manuscript, some diagrams in red and black ink, numerous spaces left blank, occasional marginalia, change of hand at f. 262, with catchwords, paginated in Persian numerals, in later red leather binding stamped with motif of the Lustration of Lakshmi, seal impression dated 1199 H/1784–85

Folio 28 × 19.5 cm, text panel 22.3 × 12.5 cm

INSCRIPTIONS

In English: *Rang* [...] *Lahore* and *Rang Lahore*
(on the flyleaves)

No. 017

In Persian: *Ish* [...] *m* 1199 (1784–85)

The Wonders of Creation and Marvels of Existence, written by Zakariyya' b.

Muhammad al-Qazwini (d. 1283), survives as one of the most popular items for collections of Islamic manuscripts and material culture. Over the course of his career, the distinguished judge and madrasa professor Qazwini compiled various versions of his cosmography in Persian and Arabic, which later artists and copyists over several centuries responded to in manifold ways. From around 1450 to 1850, the Indian subcontinent witnessed one of the largest regional productions of Islamic cosmographies in the world, and this late 18th-century copy deepens our understandings of their circulation.

The present manuscript of the *Wonders of Creation* adapts one of the text's most pervasive programme of paintings. Emerging in 15th-century West Asia (Eastern Anatolia or Iraq/Iran), this cycle of illustrations has largely become associated with a manuscript once belonging to the collector Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945) and now split between the Freer Gallery of Art and New York Public Library.¹ The paintings of this 15th-century manuscript are relatively large and diagrammatic, and they canonized a set of stock cosmographic iconographies. But what makes this 18th-century *Wonders of Creation* most unique is that it is a Persian version of Qazwini's text – not the Arabic text that these paintings most frequently accompanied starting around 1571, nor the Persian translation of Qazwini made in the Deccan in 1547.² Notations on the flyleaves in the manuscript indicate that it was once in a library in Lahore. Given that cosmographies put the entire world in a book, this manuscript offers a unique portal into how 18th-century audiences could imagine the universe around them and continued to marvel at the wonder of God's creation.

While the makers of this manuscript had the paintings owing to the Sarre copy at hand, they adapted the work afresh.³ They made the book in about half the scale of the other copies (approx. 36 × 26.5 cm). They copied it in Nasta'liq rather than Naskh, the latter being the preferred choice of script for most Arabic versions of Qazwini's work made in India. As common to this group of manuscripts and others, blank spaces left for illustration toward the end of the manuscript attest to the broader design logic of this project: first the text was copied out and ample space was allocated for images, then the images would have been added next. Most of this manuscript's paintings fill blank spaces left by the scribe but several are also executed on loose leaves inserted between the



بر جنوب سماک اغزل و جنوب این کواکب با بحر الاسد خوانند و عرش السماک
نیز گویند بعضی آنرا حمل گویند



کوکبه قیطورس کواکب این سی و هفت است از صورت او دان صورت
صورت که از سر تا کمر گاه صورت آدمی و از کمر گاه تا آخر صورت پشی باشد
که سر باشد روی او بجنب مشرق بود و از راس بجنب مغرب بود
او در شمع باشد و در دست و پیر دست شیر جنوبی گرفته است و در شکم آب
کوبی نیز است از اطین گویند و در دست سگی راست کوبی رویش که از آن
حصه را گویند و در دست چپ کوبی که از آن وزن گویند و این دو کواکب است
که یاد کردیم که اینان مخلقی خوانند

در جنوب

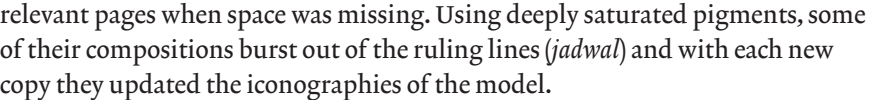
کوکبه سبع کواکب این نوزده از صورت او میفرستند کواکب قیطورس
و قیطورس است این سبع بکفره است و جنوب کواکب قیطورس و کواکب سبع
را شماری گویند که ثانی و بسیاری او را در هر دو سبع کوبی هر دو نیست



کوکبه الحمره جرجی کواکب او هفت است از صورت او و جنوب جرجی شنوده شود
درین کواکب **کوکبه الکلیل الجنبی** سیزده کواکب است از صورت درین
آن دو کواکب که با بهای راجی است بعضی آنرا قبه خوانند از هر آنکه نمک
برآمده است و بعضی آنرا اوجی تمام گویند و بعضی شبانه شتر مرغ را از
برای آنکه بر جنوبی تمامین است و او را در ذکر آن رفت



کوکبه الطول الجنبی کواکب او یازده است از صورت بر جنوب کواکب
دو نیز با بهی بجنب مشرق باشد و در شمال بجنب مغرب و آن کواکب



For example, this manuscript bears a racialized depiction of the planet Saturn (*zuhal*).⁴ The entry reads, “Saturn is the first planet, the astronomers say that he is the biggest sinner, and some say that his distinction is destruction. There is destruction and sadness wherever he goes and distress within him. May God protect us from him. The crimes of Saturn are many on earth. some say that gazing at Saturn brings sadness and at Venus pleasure.” The painting completely interrupts the logic of the page’s frame. Saturn’s grey beard and facial expression can be rooted in his identity as Kronos or the Greek God of time. The representation of his many arms in Islamic manuscripts can be traced back to the book of occult texts, one of which is called the *Fine Points of Truths* (*Daqa’iq al-Haqa’iq*), completed in 13th-century Anatolia. Gradually, this iconography congealed through repetition in Islamic book culture, ceramics, and other plastic arts.⁵ When made in India it gained more intimate referents within the Indic pantheon. His darkness signals his ferocity, but also his creative destruction as he comes to associate with Indic deities such as Kali or Shani (Saturn) himself.

Copies of the *Wonders of Creation* with related cycles of illustrations produced in India are in the Harvard Art Museums (inv. 1972.3; Deccan India, c. 1650–1700) and in the British Library, London (I.O. Islamic 3243; Lahore, 1854).

We are grateful to Dr Vivek Gupta for researching and cataloguing this manuscript.



Khizanat Al-Lughat (Treasury of languages)

Bhopal, Shahjahani Press, 1304 H/1886–87

A hexaglot dictionary, two volumes bound in one codex, lithograph printed on 701 folios and two flyleaves, with vocabulary translated in Urdu, Farsi, Arabic, Sanskrit, English and Ottoman Turkish, printed in Nasta’liq, Naskh, Devanagari and in Latin scripts, with marginal notes in Urdu. The title page of the first volume with a decorative floral border, followed by a double page with a floral headpiece and the text block surrounded by vegetal band, with an introductory text in Urdu containing a dedication to Shahjahan Begum of Bhopal (1838–1901), the end of the first volume dated 27 Safar 1304 H/25 November 1886 and attributing the text to Muhammad ‘Abd al-Haqq al-Dihlawi. The second volume with a title page with a decorative floral border followed by the opening bifolio with floral headpieces on each folio, a preface in English, Urdu, Sanskrit and Arabic to Shahjahan Begum. Within marble paper decorated leather covers. The English preface signed by Navrosji Hormasji B.A. Head Master Suleimani School Bhopal.

Folio 34.5 × 23 cm

PROVENANCE

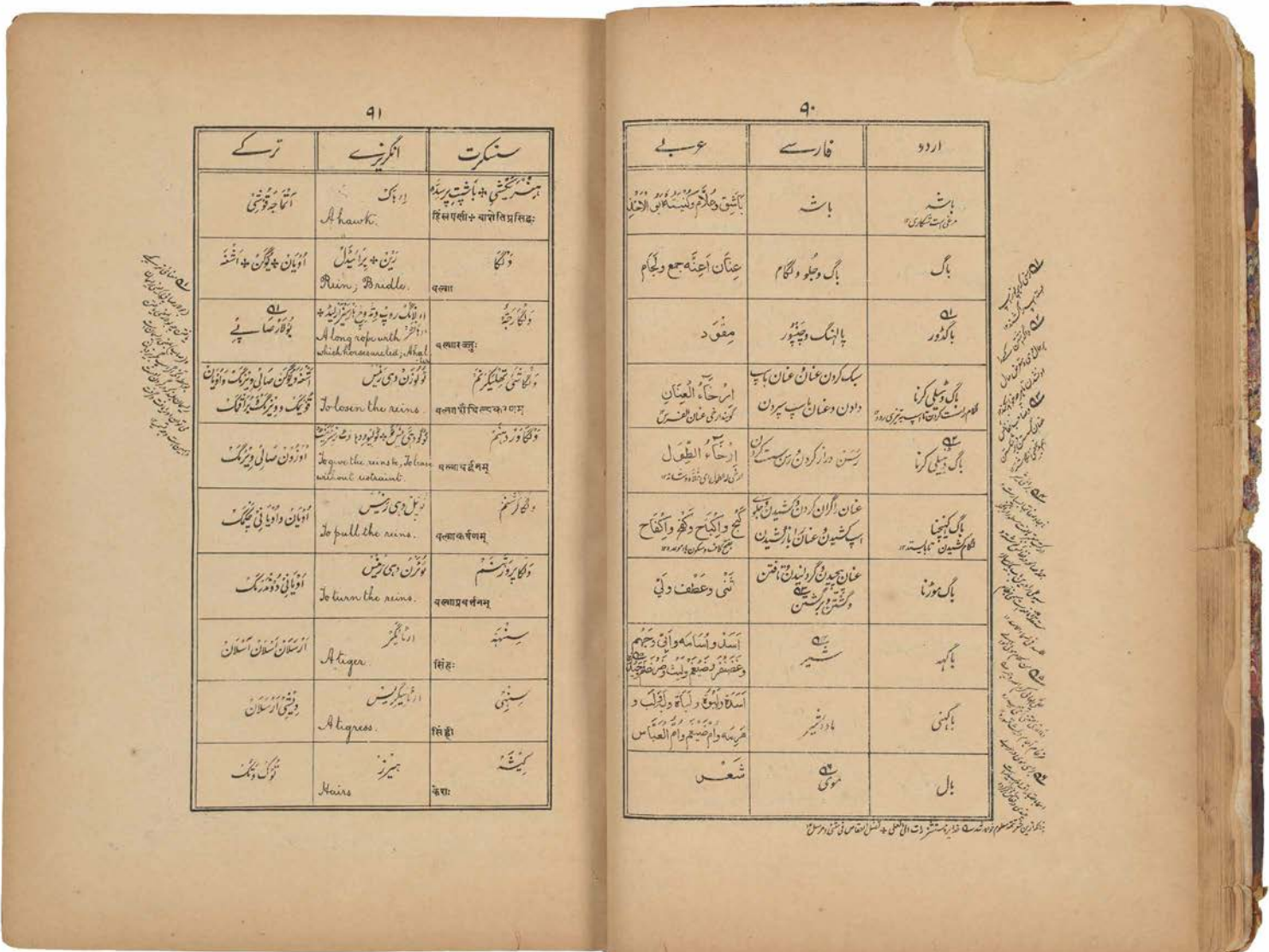
Arthur Probsthain (est. 1905)



The introduction to the book explains that other dictionaries exist that contain Persian, Arabic and Urdu. However, this project was undertaken to widen the possibilities of language learners and knowledge seekers by adding a further three languages to those mentioned above. From this inclusion of a total of six languages came the title ‘Treasury of Languages’. It claims to be the first ‘hexaglot dictionary’, containing six languages, to have been produced in India. Notably, the terms written in Latin and Sanskrit are also glossed phonetically in Nasta’liq Perso-Arabic script, allowing readers without a background in those scripts to be able to sound out words in English and Sanskrit without having to learn those respective scripts.

The dictionary was commissioned and dedicated to Shahjahan Begum (1838–1901), who ruled as the Nawab of Bhopal from 1844 to 1860 and then again from 1868 until her death in 1901. Shahjahan Begum was second in a series of three strong-willed and reformist rulers of Bhopal. She is credited as being a lover of literature and published two collections of poetry in Urdu as well as an encyclopaedia for women. This dictionary was a considerable undertaking. It contains over 76,000 entries and a total of 12,700 Urdu phrases and key words, according to John Perry, who discussed Indo-Persian lexicography in a 1998 essay published in *Iran and Iranian Studies*.¹ The principal source for the Urdu, Persian and Arabic entries, according to Perry, seems to have been the *Nafa’is al-lughat* of Awhad al-din Bilgrami, which was compiled in 1837–38 in manuscript form but only printed after this dictionary in 1897.² The preface in English, authored by Navrosji Hormasji, expresses that the purpose of the dictionary was to offer access to English and Sanskrit vocabulary to those unfamiliar with Latin and Devanagari scripts. Secondly, the dictionary contained a particular focus on “Mohammedan customs and manners which cannot be rendered otherwise than by explaining them”. Hormasji continues that this dictionary should be useful “to mark the resemblance of words and the changes they seem to have undergone in the different languages”. This dictionary also has a specific focus on vocabulary related to women, including such matters as childbirth and terms relating to women’s health. This is probably due to the wishes of the patron Shahjahan Begum, who promoted women’s education as a particular focus of her reign. Perry noted that this was a rare dictionary that only survived in two copies known to him.³

خزانة اللغات



An Illustrated Description of the Planets, Stars and Constellations

Syria or Egypt, 18th century

Arabic manuscript on several types of laid paper including two with watermarks, 40 folios plus two modern flyleaves, 22–36 lines of black cursive to the page in multiple hands, occasionally arranged in two columns, titles in red or black ink, 58 illustrations in four different styles, either executed on the pages or pasted down, with catchwords, f. 39 with colophon stating that it was copied in 743 H/1342–43, paginated, in cloth covered binding

Folio 21 × 15.5 cm

INSCRIPTION

In Arabic: *al-wathiḡ bi'l-malik al-quḡus sayyid zayn ibn 'alawī al-'ayḡrus* (The one who trusts in the Holy King, Sayyid Zayn b. 'Alawī al-'Ayḡarus) (repeated twice on f. 1). There were several people of this name, presumably all descendants of one another, who were the guardians of the shrine of Sayyid Abu Bakr 'Ayḡarus (d. 1508) in Aden.

PROVENANCE

Christie's South Kensington, 9 October 2015, lot 361



This manuscript holds an unusual and curious gathering of texts and illustrations of planets and constellations, assembled from different manuscripts belonging to different pictural traditions. The subject is given on the first folio as “copied from the book of ‘Aja’ib al-makhlūqat [Wonders of Creation], illustrated with illustrations of all the beings, of Abu Rayhan al-Khwarazmi” (*nuḡila min kitāb ‘aja’ib al-makhlūqat musawwar ulugh beg (?) bi-tasawir kull mawjudat ila abu rayhan khwarazmi (li-U)lugh beg (?)*).

There has been a confusion about the authorship. ‘Aja’ib al-makhlūqat is the celebrated 13th-century cosmography *Wonders of Creation* composed by al-Qazwini (d. 1283) (see cat. 25). It is not the work of Abu Rayhan from Khwarazm, that is Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. c. 1050), a prolific author and a great contributor to the field of astronomy. A link is also made in the title with the Timurid ruler, astronomist and bibliophile Ulugh Beg (d. 1449). A famous illustrated copy of ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi’s *Book of Fixed Stars* was prepared for the ruler in 1443.¹ It was of course common practice that scribes used specific manuscripts as ‘master copies’ to produce new copies – an 18th-century manuscript of al-Sufi’s *Book of Fixed Stars* copied from one of Ulugh Beg’s manuscripts dated 820 H/1417 is in the Library of Congress in Washington.² The penultimate folio of our manuscript, however, bears a date of 743 H/1342–43. Although it is added in a hand different to the rest of the page, it shows an attempt to link these folios to a medieval original.

This manuscript opens with a diagram of the celestial spheres and orbits, centred on the Earth. It is followed by ink illustrations of the Moon, Mercury, Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The constellations and zodiacs are then discussed with 48 illustrations in different styles, half of which are hand-coloured.³ Each of the illustrations are accompanied by a description which never gives an author, however, folio 30 quotes a hadith of Sa’id ibn Jubayr (d. 714) reporting Ibn ‘Abbas on the usefulness of astronomy (“*ilm al-nujum ‘ilm nafi*”).

The manuscript presents itself as a curious patchwork, its illustrations drawn from heterogeneous sources and executed by at least three different hands. One source appears closely related to the constellation imagery found in early copies of al-Sufi’s *Kitāb suwar al-kawakib*, such as a manuscript held in Paris dated 665 H/1266–67.⁴ Another source recalls the planets and constellation figures of al-Qazwini’s ‘Aja’ib al-makhlūqat, in particular those codices belonging to the iconographic lineage of the earliest illustrated copy preserved in Munich dated 678 H/1279.⁵ The majority of the images, however, were produced in a style characteristic of a group of Coptic painters who created a significant number of illustrated manuscripts in 18th-century Cairo, especially literary texts such as *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.⁶ Traces of pouncing and the presence of cut-out images reveal that these illustrations were certainly transferred from earlier medieval exemplars. Such evidence suggests that Ottoman-period painters still had access to, and deliberately reused, medieval manuscripts – objects that retained their prestige and authority, as their continued replication across centuries makes clear.



Ibrahim Haqqi (d. 1780): *Ma'rifatnama* (Book of gnosis)

Ottoman Empire, probably Erzerum

Copied by Mustafa b. Mehmet al-Erzerumi in the middle of Sha'ban 1180 AH/January 1767 from the author copy

Illustrated by the author's son, Fahim b. Haqqi

Ottoman Turkish manuscript on watermarked paper, 610 folios plus 21 folios of *fihrist*, written in 25 lines of black Naskh, titles in pink, within gold-ruled borders, with catchwords, with ten full-page colour illustrations of scientific diagrams, two full-page coloured world maps, nine full-page coloured tables, two full-page illustrations of Mekka and Jerusalem, ten coloured half-page diagrams and one coloured half-page table, in a 19th-century purple leather with gilt decoration embossed with a central gilt *tughra*

Folio 29 × 18.5 cm, text panel 21.5 × 11.5 cm

PROVENANCE

Dutch private collection, acquired in the 1990s

Dutch art market, 2024

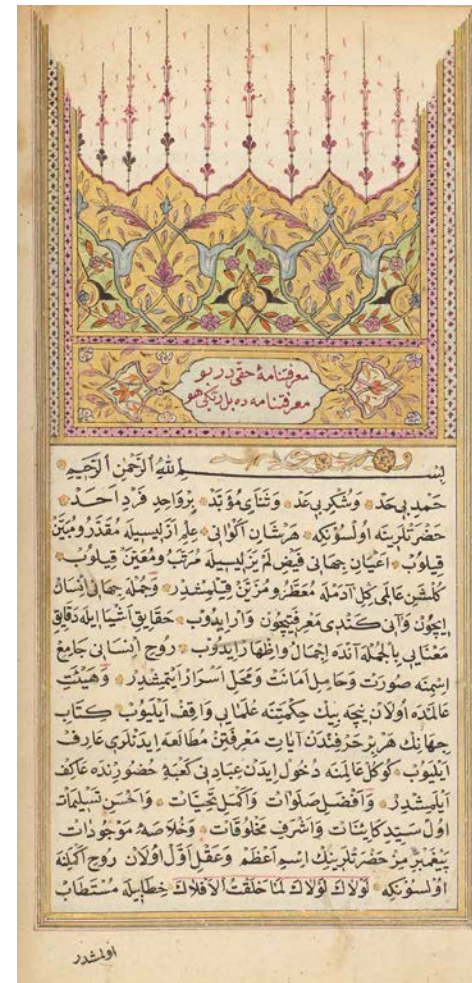
Completed in 1757, the *Ma'rifatnama* is the most ambitious and influential work of Ibrahim Haqqi, a polymath and Sufi scholar from Hasankale in Erzurum province.¹ The work offers an encyclopaedic synthesis of astronomy, cosmology, medicine, philosophy, psychology, religion and Sufi ethics.² Although it incorporates elements of post-Copernican astronomy, the *Ma'rifatnama* is not a scientific treatise in the strict sense but rather a wide-ranging and eclectic compilation, bringing together heterogeneous sources.³ Its scientific sections reflect the broader Ottoman engagement with European astronomical knowledge already underway since the 16th century, as evidenced by the translation of Joan Blaeu's *Atlas Maior*, made by al-Dimashqi for Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–87) or Ibrahim Müteferrika's *Cihannuma*.⁴ Reaching beyond the restricted circles of court astronomers, the *Ma'rifatnama* played a key role in popularizing elements of modern astronomy to a broader audience, including heliocentric models. The work's enduring success is reflected in its printing history: after the first edition at Bulaq in 1251 H/1835, it was reprinted seven times, in Cairo and later in Istanbul from 1867 onward.⁵

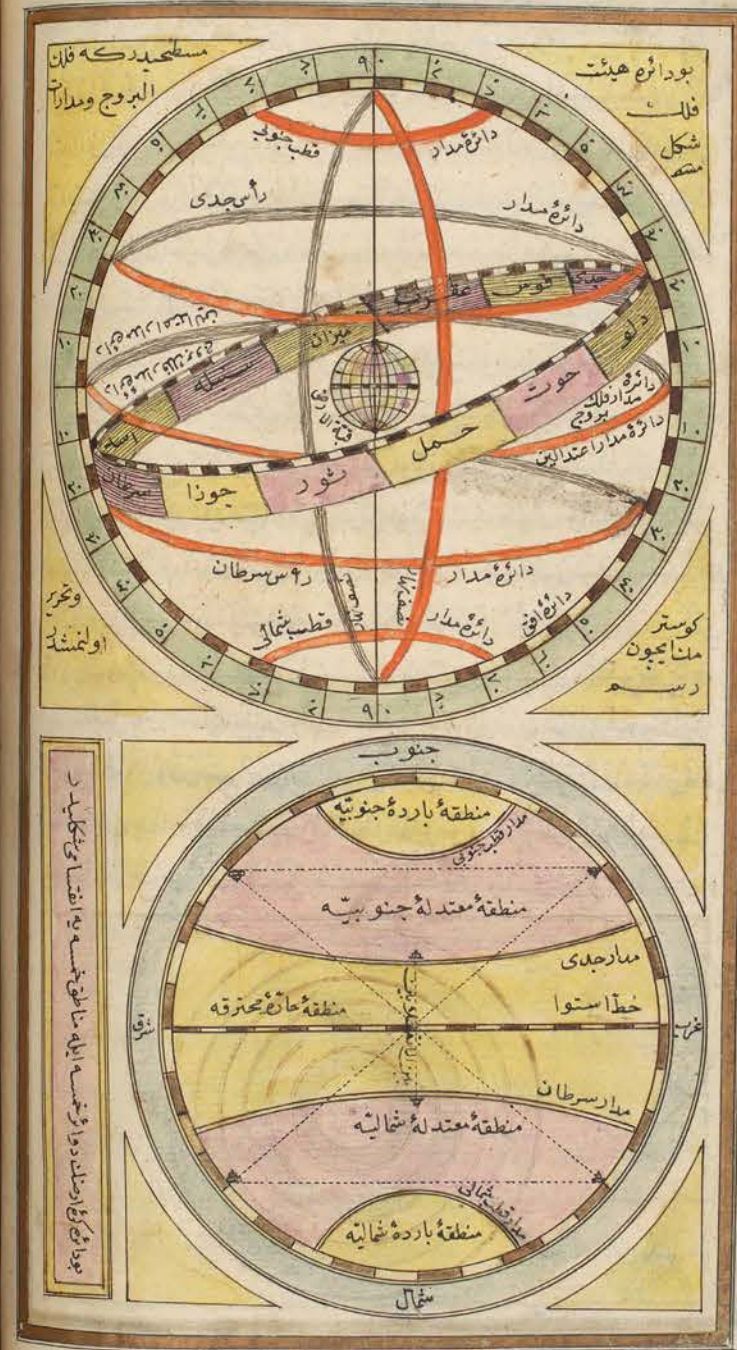
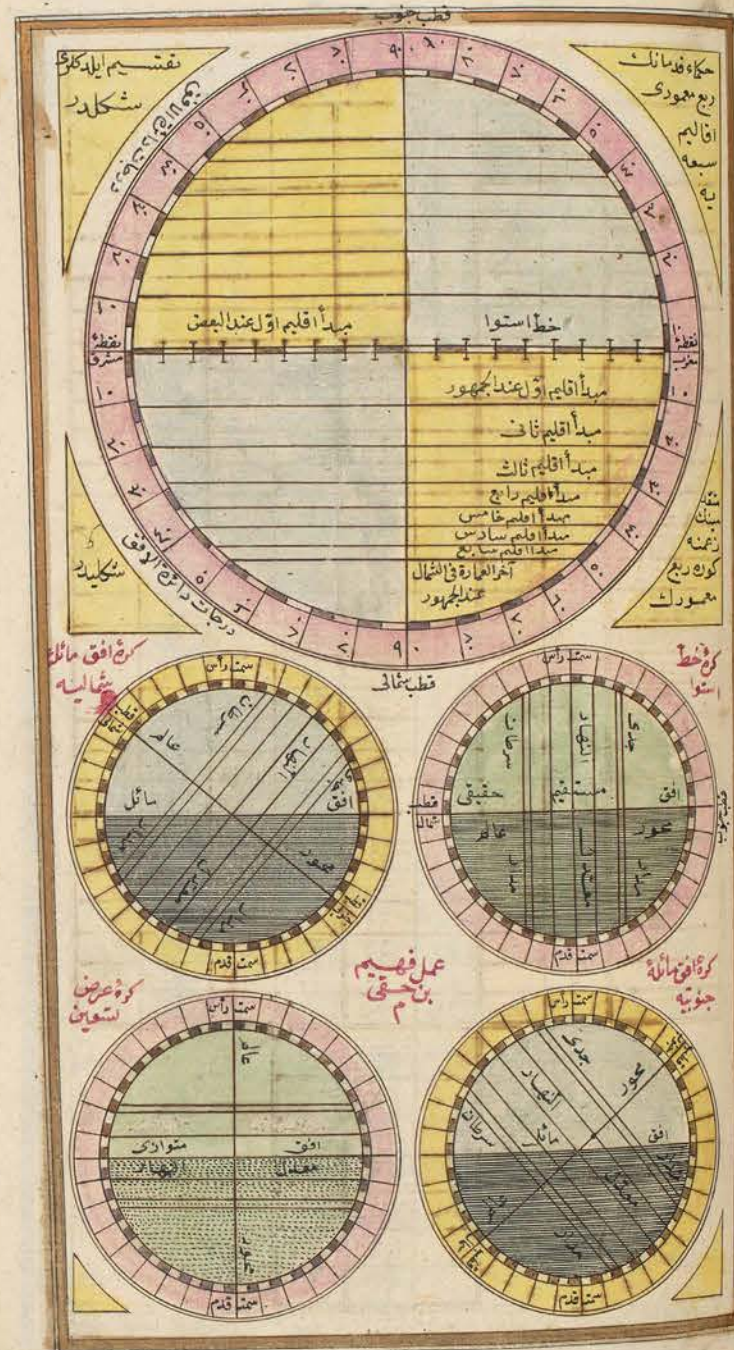
The present manuscript, copied in 1180 AH/1767 during the lifetime of the author Ibrahim Haqqi, is one of the earliest known witnesses to the *Ma'rifatnama*. Its significance lies not only in its proximity to the original composition, completed a decade earlier, but also in the active involvement of the author's son, Fahim Haqqi, who signed four of the most complex scientific illustrations of our codex. The manuscript therefore preserves a rare trace of both early textual and visual transmission, and authorial context of this Ottoman encyclopaedic work.

The manuscript opens with an illuminated *sarlowh* in gold and polychrome floral decor, following a detailed *fihrist* (ff. 1–21). The main text is organized into three principal sections: the first covers the origins of matter, geometry, geography, astrology, astronomy and calendrical systems, the second deals with anatomy, physiology, psychology and physiognomy, while the third is devoted to religious and mystical topics, culminating in eschatology and Sufi ethics. The work concludes with Ibrahim Haqqi 'Letter to the Muslims', which provides a moral and spiritual epilogue.⁶

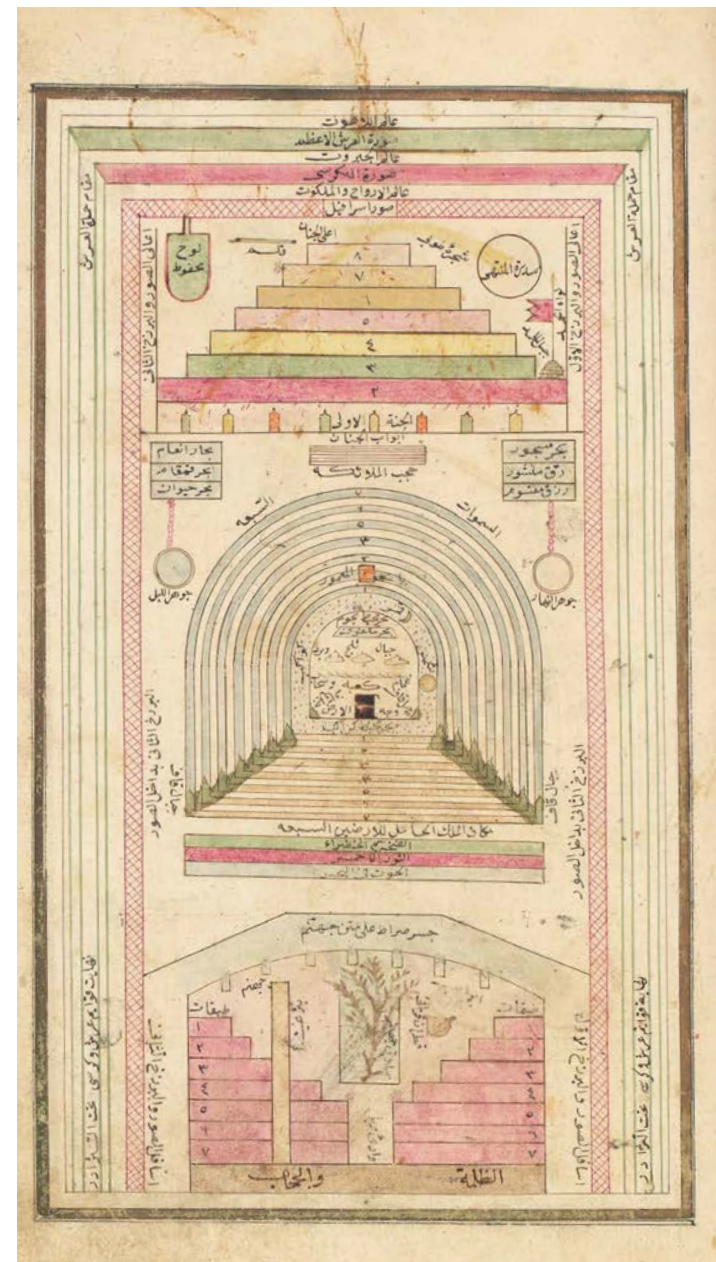
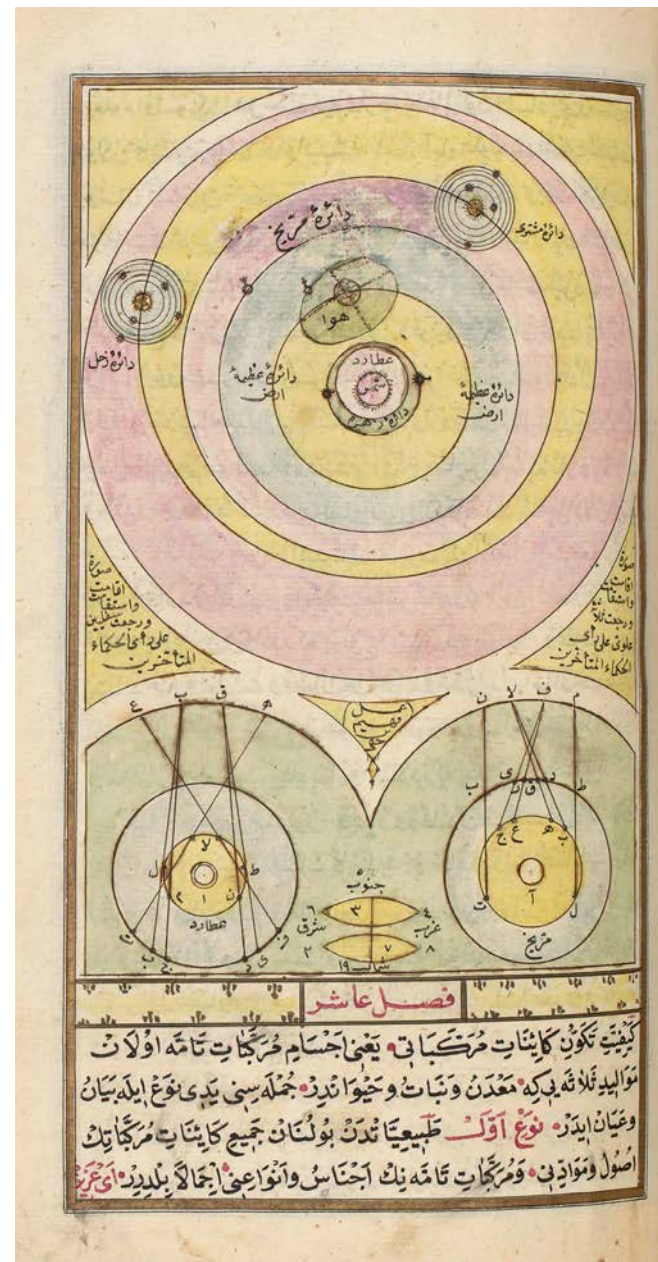
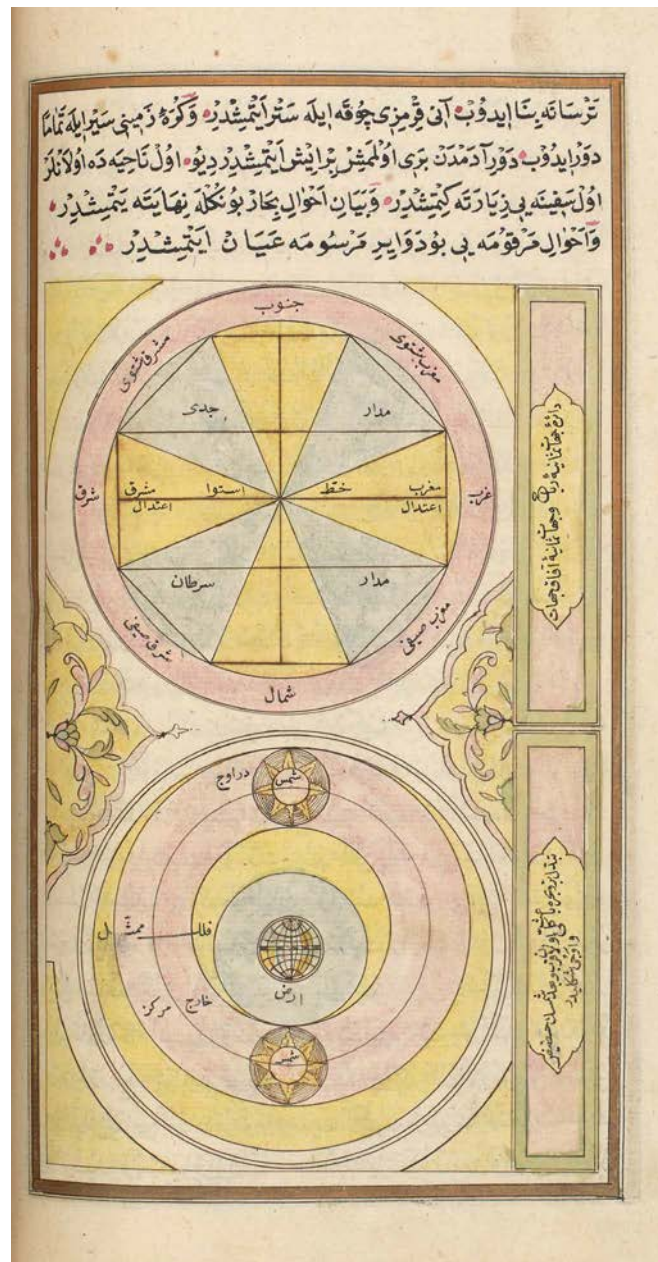
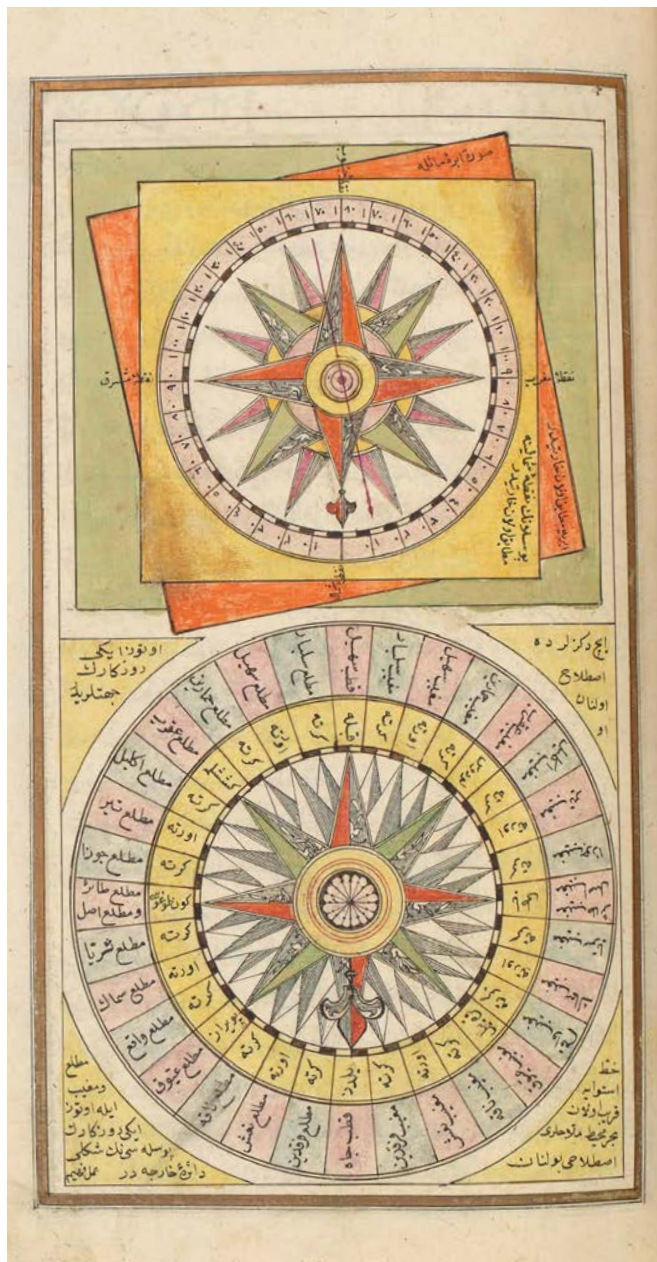
Throughout the manuscript, coloured diagrams, maps and astronomical tables embellish the text, reflecting the author's didactic aims and the encyclopaedic ambition of the work. Among the most notable examples are a cosmological scheme with the Ka'ba at its centre, surrounded by successive rings of knowledge; an eschatological diagram mapping the soul's journey through the scales of divine justice;⁷ diagrams of planetary orbits and astronomical phenomena; and two full-page maps of the world divided into hemispheres, one of the North Pole and one of the South Pole, with continents and countries labelled. The southern hemisphere map includes the hypothetical *Terra Australis Incognita*, a feature inherited from early modern European atlases and integrated into Ottoman cartographic compilations.

One of the most interesting features of this visual programme is that four of the most intricate illustrations are signed by Fahim b. Haqqi, who can be identified without a doubt as Ibrahim Haqqi's son. These four signatures suggest that Fahim took pride in the technical precision required by these





کر خط استوا



images and chose to make his authorship visible. Known information about Fahim confirms that he often worked closely with his father,⁸ and suggests that he was a trained scientific practitioner, as evidenced by one surviving wooden astrolabe quadrant signed by him, dated 1185 H/1771–72 (Bonhams, 18 October 2016, lot 126).

Beyond this attribution, the manuscript is remarkable for its early date, since very few copies appear to predate the 19th century.⁹ To our knowledge, only two securely earlier copies are preserved in Istanbul and Sarajevo,¹⁰ while another early copy, now in Yale,¹¹ was produced in 1204 H/1789–90, about a decade after the author's death. By contrast, the present codex, completed in mid-Sha'ban 1180 H/January 1767, stands out as one of the earliest securely dated examples. Its colophon records that it was copied by Mustafa b. Mehmet al-Erzerumi from

the author's own exemplar ('*ala nuskhati mu'allifihī*), completed in Safar 1172 H/November 1758 in Hasankale. A later copy by the same scribe, dated 20 Sha'ban 1195 H/20 January 1781, is preserved at Vassar College, New York.¹² The recurring presence of the nisba *al-Erzerumi* among the copyists of this text suggests that it enjoyed particular success within Anatolian circles, and it is therefore plausible that the present manuscript was likewise produced in that region. Among the many preserved copies of the *Ma'rifatnama*, the present manuscript is one of the few that allows us to observe how the work was structured, illustrated and materially transmitted during the author's own lifetime.

The Poet Nadim’s Adaptation of the Universal History *Jami‘ al-Duwal*

Nadim (d. 1730): *Saha’if al-akhbar*
Copied by Pir Muhammad al-Qadi
Damascus, dated Sha’ban 1141H /March 1729

Ottoman-Turkish manuscript on a beautifully polished paper, 561 folios plus five folios of *fihrist*, written in 25 lines of black Rika‘, within gold-ruled border, with catchwords, illuminated *sarlowh*, in its original Ottoman brown binding with large central gilt mandorla, with seal impression and ownership inscription in the name of Muhammad Sharif al-Hajj Hamza Hamid Pasha-zada
Folio 29 × 16 cm, text panel 19.5 × 8 cm

PROVENANCE
By repute Hrnt Samuelian (d. 1977), Librairie orientale, Paris
French art market, 2022

Written in Ottoman Damascus, this manuscript contains the *Saha’if al-akhbar* (Pages of the chronicle), the Ottoman-Turkish translation by the court poet Ahmad Nadim Efendi (d. 1730) of the universal history *Jami‘ al-Duwal* by Ahmad b. Lutfullah (d. 1702), known by his office-title Munajjim Bashi (chief astronomer).¹ Written in a clear Rika‘ on beautiful oriental paper, the manuscript opens with a richly decorated polychrome *sarlowh*.

Made at the request of the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa Pasha (d. 1683), the Arabic *Jami‘ al-Duwal* is one of the major universal chronicles of the late 17th century, extending from Adam to events of 1678, and valued for its preservation of otherwise lost historical material, especially for the Caucasus and Transcaucasia.² The Ottoman Turkish version by Nedim was not a literal translation but an abridged and stylistically re-cast adaptation dedicated to Sultan Ahmed III. This undertaking brought the Arabic chronicle into the Ottoman literary sphere and aligned it with the cultural ambitions of the Tulip Era.

The present copy is one of the earliest securely dated copies of Nedim’s Turkish recension. Its colophon of 1141 H/1729 places it within Nedim’s own lifetime and at the height of the Tulip Era. This manuscript, copied in Damascus by a certain Pir Muhammad al-Qadi, demonstrates the rapid dissemination of Nedim’s translation into the Arab provinces. In this respect, the codex documents the provincial life of imperial historiography: it testifies to the demand for Nedim’s adaptation soon after its composition, and to the role of Damascus as an active node in the cultural networks of the early 18th-century Ottoman world.



CAT. 1

- 1 On this, see James 1988, pp. 47–48.
- 2 Istanbul, Türk ve Islam Eserleri Müzesi, Ms. 450. See James 1988, pp. 68–69 and Farhad and Rettig 2016, cat. 37.
- 3 On him, see James 1988, pp. 132–138 and Laclau 2022.
- 4 On these appendices, see Laclau 2022, p. 41. The appendix at the end of Rashid 81 has been edited, translated and studied in Witkam and van Putten 2023.
- 5 Witkam and van Putten 2023, p. 301.
- 6 The present manuscript appears to reflect a slightly simplified version of the complex colour-coding system described by Ahmad al-Mutabbib in the appendix of Rashid 81. Yet only a systematic comparison of the three surviving appendices would allow us to establish whether this apparatus was applied consistently or underwent variations from one copy to another.
- 7 Witkam and van Putten 2023, p. 297.
- 8 Dar al-Kutub, Rashid 184 and Rashid 81; Freer Gallery, F.1999.9; Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A.42 inf. On the Egyptian manuscripts, see, James 1988, cat. 15, 17. On the Milanese one, see Löfgren and Traini 1975, p. 50.
- 9 Chester Beatty Library, CBL 1476 and al-Azhar 182.
- 10 QUR 580. See Laclau 2022.
- 11 Khalili Collection, QUR 317, see James 1992, cat. 41, p. 162–67. Sofia, SS Cyril and Methodius Library, Op. 2707, see Stoivola and Ivanova 1995, pp. 49–50.
- 12 See Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Rashid 10, dated 1372.

CAT. 2

- 1 GAL I, p. 335
- 2 Hajj Khalifa 1992, vol. I, p. 341.
- 3 Brockelmann lists five copies (GAL I, p. 335): Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Arabe 621 (13th century, undated); Alger 331; Cairo 1888, pp. 135–36 (10 copies including printed ones); AS 1886 M73/4; Patna I, 24. Another copy, not listed in GAL, is in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Research Center, Isl. Ms. 452 (c. 14th century, undated).

CAT. 3

- 1 The celebrated *Jami' mahasin kitabat al-kuttab* includes samples of more than nineteen different scripts. See the manuscript held in Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, K 882.
- 2 On this, see Stetkevych 2010.
- 3 On this genre, see Morimoto 2014.
- 4 On a early undated example, see Khalili Collection, MSS 1112.
- 5 Topkapı Palace Library, TSMK A. 2798, see D'Hulster 2021, no. 83, pp. 174–79.
- 6 Staatsbibliothek Ms. or. fol. 3398, see D'Hulster 2021, no. 83, pp. 174–75.
- 7 Sotheby's London, April 26 2023, lot 23.
- 8 Rim Enchères, 10 March 2023, lot 115.
- 9 Acc. no. 2000-03520.

CAT. 4

- 1 The fact that most examples are deployed systematically across a double-page illumination, each *shamsa* receiving the entire verse 17:88, suggests that in our manuscript the facing folio containing the beginning of the verse is missing.
- 2 Several volumes from this Qur'an are now dispersed worldwide, including two at the

Chester Beatty (MSS 1501 and 1502) while the first *juz* is in the Al-Owais collection (see Butler-Wheelhouse *et al.* 2024, pp. 70–71).

- 3 See for instance a Qur'an held in the Khalili Collection (QUR 251), published in James 1992, no. 35, pp. 128–35.
- 4 A comparable binding is published by Froom 2019, no. 14, pp. 79–81.
- 5 On this question, see Lentz and Lowry 1989.
- 6 On this, see Shreve Simpson 1993.
- 7 James 1992, p. 113.
- 8 See the numerous examples given by James 1992, pp. 113–39.
- 9 Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, Adab farsi 22, reproduced in Balafrej 2019, plates VII–VIII, pp. 32–33.
- 10 James 1992, no. 30, pp. 116–17.
- 11 TIEM 135, published in Şahin 2010, cat. 72.
- 12 Published in Farhad and Rettig 2016, p. 260.
- 13 Sotheby's London, 27 October 2021, lot 109. The Sotheby's manuscript, however, is distinguished by the exceptional feature of having the entire body of the text written in gold Naskh, a luxury rarely encountered, whereas in the present manuscript only the opening bifolio employs gold script.

CAT. 5

- 1 Bayani *et al.* 1999, p. 126.
- 2 Bayani *et al.* 1999, cat. 45, pp. 138–41; cat. 47, pp. 148–49; and cat. 56, pp. 168–69.
- 3 See for instance, Library of Congress, Washington, Arabic manuscript, M132.

CAT. 6

- 1 <https://ganjoor.net/mohtasham/divan-moh/tarjeha/sh1>
- 2 See another copy of this poem in the National Museum of Asian Art, Washington, dated c. 1600 (inv. S2014.17.3).
- 3 An edition of the poem was published in Lucknow in 1908. See Kaashi 1908.
- 4 See cat. 16 for a discussion on Mughal book illumination.
- 5 See Khan 1973 for a detailed bibliography.
- 6 Da'ud Receives a Robe of Honor from Mun'im Khan (inv. F1952.31); and Akbar receiving Mirza Sulayman's envoy at a banquet given by Mun'im Khan in 1561 (inv. 03.54), respectively.
- 7 See Seyller 1997, p. 252.
- 8 Seyller 1997, p. 331; Varanasi 3/9935.

CAT. 7

- 1 Chancey 2007, p. 15.
- 2 Alam and Subrahmanyam 2011, p. 187.

CAT. 8

- 1 See a Qur'an donated to one of his sons (Bonhams, London, 2 October 2012, lot 30) and a *Shahnama* donated to another of his wives (Bonhams, London, 8 April 2014, lot 21). Other manuscripts from the Nawab's library sold at Christie's, 1 May 2025, lot 48; Sotheby's, London, 23 October 2024, lot 175 and Bonhams, London, 2 October 2012, lot 30.
- 2 <https://www.royalark.net/India4/murshid13.htm>
- 3 Zafar Hasan 1929, p. 7.
- 4 Dihlavi 1994.
- 5 Bayani *et al.* 1999, p. 176.
- 6 Christie's South Kensington, 7 October 2011, lot 50.
- 7 Sotheby's London, 23 October 2024, lot 101.

CAT. 9

- 1 On these papers, see Humbert and Vernay-Nouri 2006.
- 2 Bayani *et al.* 1999, pp. 10, 13–14, 16–17.
- 3 On this, see Mi and You 2004.
- 4 See Fraser 2022, p. 181.
- 5 On this, see Petersen 2017, pp. 123–56.

CAT. 10

- 1 On Alma Latifi, see Pal 2015, pp. 97–98.
- 2 We discuss in this catalogue the poetry of Maktabi (cat. 12) and Hatifi (cat. 15), both influenced by Nizami.
- 3 See manuscript illustrations in the Hermitage, St Petersburg (inv. VP-740/I and VO-740/XVIII); the Keir Collection, Richmond (no number but published in Canby 1996, cat. 56, p. 188); Topkapı Saray Library (MS. E. H.1641); the Art and History Trust Collection, Houston (no number but published in Canby 1996, cat. 57–65, p. 192); the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. 364-1885); and others. See Canby 1996, cat. 55–93.
- 4 See Canby 1996, cat. 55, pp. 100–01 and in this manuscript: f. 49r, Khusrau and Shirin passing on horseback; f. 112r, Laila and Majnun seated in conversation; f. 125v, Majnun meets his father in the wilderness; f. 159r, Bahram Gur saves his crown by killing a lion and lioness; and others.
- 5 Victoria and Albert Museum, inv. 364–1885, f. 47a and f. 138b; For a discussion on this manuscript and its authorship, see Canby 1996, pp. 122–26.
- 6 Canby 1996, cat. 73, pp. 190–93 and Soudavar 1992, cat. 111c, p. 284.
- 7 See Bayani 1967, no. 659, pp. 64–66.
- 8 See Canby 2009, p. 98.

CAT. 11

- 1 Uluç 2020, p. 161.
- 2 Thompson and Canby 2004, p. 13.
- 3 Ibid., cat. 5.2, pp. 138–39.
- 4 Ibid., cat. 5.5, pp. 146–47.
- 5 For manuscripts in the hand of Shaykhzada, see a *Bustan* of Sa'di dated to 1515 now in the Keir Collection (Robinson *et al.* 1976, p.175, cat. III.215, 22a, b); a *Haft Manzar* of Hatifi dated 944 H/1538 in the Freer Gallery of Art (Shen *et al.* 1986, cat. 49, pp. 136–39); and another *Diwan* of Nava'i in Istanbul, dated 939 H/1532–33 and copied in Tabriz (TSMK r 803, see Uluç 2020, cat. 5, pp. 224–41).

CAT. 12

- 1 See Richard 2013, Suppl. persan 647, p. 851.
- 2 For other early 17th-century Shiraz manuscripts, see Uluç 2006, pp. 446–60.
- 3 Two similar and contemporaneous bindings are in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. See Haldane 1983, cat. 149 (published as inv. 423-1896 but apparently erroneous), pp. 160–61 and pl. 154, p. 166.

CAT. 13

- 1 On silhouetted papers, see Gacek 2009, p. 89–90, and Déroche 2005, pp. 248–49. For Persian and Ottoman examples, compare Ekhtiar *et al.* 2011, pp. 187–88, as well as the manuscript BnF, Suppl. persan 1798.
- 2 A further instance of silhouetted paper is preserved in the *Album amicorum* of Hans Joachim Prack von Asch, signed on 30 November 1591, when the Habsburg ambassador to the Ottoman Empire

Friedrich von Kreckwitz inscribed the album (Getty Research Institute, 2013.M.24, f. 39r).

- 3 On these two references, see Köksal 2013.

CAT. 14

- 1 See Czygan 2024.
- 2 Péri 2021, pp. 19–20.
- 3 The literary production of Sultan Selim I has drawn attention since the early 18th century, but modern scholarship only began with Paul Horn's critical edition in the early 20th century, followed more recently by a revised edition based on a larger corpus of manuscripts. See Péri 2021, pp. 13–18.
- 4 On the manuscript, see Péri 2021, no. 4.5, p. 48. On the illustrations, see Bağcı *et al.* 2010, p. 61.
- 5 Péri 2021, no. 4.15, pp. 52–53.

CAT. 15

- 1 See the description of Fuzuli's *Diwan* CBL 440 in Minorsky 1958, p.71
- 2 Erdman 2021.
- 3 See Erdman 2021.
- 4 For images of this manuscript see And 2021, p. 95 and Stchoukine 1966, pls. XCVI and XCVII.
- 5 See a painting of a Lady with an aigrette in the Large Clive Album at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (IS.133:48/A-1964)
- 6 Giunashvili 2025.

CAT. 16

- 1 RCIN.1005039, 1005042–1005049, 1005050–1005064.
- 2 MIA.2014.84.
- 3 Sotheby's, London: two folios, 18 October 1995, lots 90 and 91 (unsold); Christie's, London, six folios, 17 April 2007, lots 211–15, 218, but lots 212 and 213 had previously appeared at Sotheby's, October 1995, lots 90 and 91, so the group at Christie's contained only four additional folios. Finally, one of these single folios appeared again at Christie's, 26 April 2012, lot 12, but since it had already appeared at auction twice before it did not add to the total number count. There are therefore 95 folios from this album currently known.
- 4 Losty 1982, p. 83.
- 5 Hannam 2018, p. 64.
- 6 Brand and Lowry. 1985, p. 58.
- 7 Losty 1982, pp. 74–75.
- 8 Ain-i Akbari, vol. 1, p. 125.
- 9 Brand *et al.* 1985, p. 60, quoting Abu'l Fazl.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Stronge 2024, p. 39.
- 13 Wright 2008, p. 216.
- 14 Ain-i Akbari, vol. 1, pp. 102–03.
- 15 Bayani 1967, vol. III, pp. 702–04
- 16 Hannam 2018, p. 61.
- 17 Welch *et al.* 1987, p. 45.
- 18 Losty 1982, p. 60.
- 19 This album made for Jahangir after 1599 is kept in the Golestan Palace Library in Tehran (M. 1663). Other folios are scattered in collections around the world, most notably in the Berlin State Library. For an example of borders painted with animals in foliage, see Beach 2013, figs. 4–5.

- 20 Wright 2008, pp. 55–57.
- 21 Wright 2008, fig. 18, p. 50.
- 22 Beach 2013, p. 471.
- 23 Verma 1994, pp.348–352; Leach 1995, vol. II, p.1117.

CAT. 17

- 1 See also cat. 12 for a version of *Layla wa Majnun* by Maktabi Shirazi (d. ca 1510–11) and cat. 15 for another by Hatifi (d. 1521).

CAT. 18

- 1 Van Ruymbekke 2003, p. 574.
- 2 See Stewart in Burke 1879.

CAT. 19

- 1 Biran 2019, p. 472.
- 2 Canby *et al.* 2016, cat. nos. 183 and 186.
- 3 The Qur'an of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din in the Iran Bastan Museum, dated 584 H/1188 (IBM Ms 3496), and a folio in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. 40.164.2) offer close comparable examples of this type of New Style heading. See Karamé 2018, chapter 5, pl. X; chapter 6, pls. XVI, XX.

CAT. 20

- 1 Rosenthal 1973, p. 557.
- 2 Ming. Chr. Arab. 246; Monferrer-Sala 2013, p. 180.
- 3 British Museum, Or. 5019; *ibid.* p. 181.
- 4 Safwat 1993, no. 76, vol. 2, pp. 122–23.
- 5 Abaza 1997, p. 131.

CAT. 21

- 1 Iskandar 1972, p. 463.
- 2 Iskandar 1972, p. 461. See Brockelmann, GAL I. 491 (pp. 646–7) nos. 4, 6 and 7 and S I. p. 895, nos. 28.4, 6–8.

CAT. 22

- 1 Smyth 1992, p. 594.
- 2 Ibid., p. 595.
- 3 Ibid., p. 590.
- 4 GAL II, p. 281 listed under '*Sarh al-qism al-talit min al-miftah*'; and GAL SII, pp. 305–06. There are several other copies in libraries around the world, including two copies in the ISTAC library, Kuala Lumpur (mss Arabic 250, dated 910 H/1504 and mss Arabic 270, 17th century); the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (Arabe 4416, dated 1487); SOAS, London (ms.47274; 15th century); Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS. Marsh 314; 15th century); Princeton University Library (2499 Y; 15th century and later).

CAT. 24

- 1 See Babaie *et al.* 2003, pp. 127–30.
- 2 On this question, see Brentjes 2014.
- 3 Brentjes 2014, p.p 494–501.
- 4 New York, the New York Public Library, Spencer, Pers. 6 and Cairo, Dar al-Kutub, MMF9.
- 5 On this, see Brentjes 2014, p. 491.
- 6 On this manuscript (Tehran, Majlis Library, no. 197), see Brentjes 2014, p. 499.

CAT. 25

- 1 Badiee 1984, pp. 98–113.
- 2 For an exhaustive list of these manuscripts, see Gupta 2020.
- 3 Examples from the corpus of South Asian cosmographies that similarly play with the layout of earlier books include National Library of Medicine, Maryland, P1 (an 18th-century Persian Qazwini manuscript) and Harvard Art Museums 1972.3 (a late 17th-century Arabic Qazwini manuscript). There are several 18th-century copies that have similar opening pages, one of which is NLM P3 (an 18th-century Persian Qazwini

manuscript).

- 4 A full discussion of this 'racialized' iconography appears in Gupta forthcoming.
- 5 See Müller-Wiener 2006.

CAT. 26

- 1 See Perry 1998.
- 2 Ibid., p. 332.
- 3 Ibid.

CAT. 27

- 1 Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Arabe 5036.
- 2 Library of Congress, Washington, Arabic manuscript, SM16.
- 3 The Arabic names of the constellations are listed as follows: al-Qamar, 'Atarid, 'al-Zahra, al-Shams, al-Marrikh, al-Mushtarri, al-Zuhāl; al-Tinnin, Kay Kavus, al-'Awa, al-Faka, al-Jathi, al-Lura, al-Dajaja and Dhat al-kursi (not illustrated); al-Dhira', al-Safina, al-Shuja', al-Batiya, al-Ghurab, Qanturus, al-Siba', al-Iklil al-janubi, al-Hut, al-Jawza, al-Saratan, al-Salib, Qit'at al-fars, al-Fars al-a'zam, al-Sahm, al-Fars al-tam, al-Muthallath, al-Haml, al-Thawr, al-Nahr, al-Arnab, al-Kalb al-akbar, al-Kalb al-thani, Misk al-gha, al-Hawa, al-Dibb al-asghar, al-Dibb al-akbar, al-Kursi wa al-Naqa, Barshawush, Qaytus, al-Sunbula and al-'Adra, al-Mizan (two illustrations), al-'Aqrab, al-Qaws also called al-Rami, al-Jadi, al-Dalli and al-Hut.
- 4 Paris, BnF, département des Manuscrits, Arabe 2489.
- 5 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod.arab. 464. See Berlekamp 2011, pp. 14–15.
- 6 On this family, see the recent article by Vernay-Nouri 2024.

CAT. 28

- 1 On Haqqi's life and career, see Çağrıci 2000 and Michlot 2015, pp. 324–26.
- 2 Its author, Ibrahim Haqqi, born in 1703 in Hasankale (today Pasinler in the province of Erzurum), was educated in Tillo under the Sufi master Isma'il Faqir Allah, and later trained in Arabic and Persian. In 1747, he was granted access to the palace library in Istanbul and received the title of mudarris under Sultan Mahmud I, before retiring to Hasankale to devote himself fully to writing.
- 3 İhsanoğlu 2004, pp. 27–29.
- 4 On these two works, see İhsanoğlu 2004, p. 10–19.
- 5 İhsanoğlu 2004, nbp 48, p. 22.
- 6 For a detailed study of the *Ma'rifatnama*, see Ziaee 2010.
- 7 On this, see Gruber 2014, p.54–55.
- 8 On Isma'il Fahim b. Haqqi, see Çağrıci 2000, p. 306.
- 9 Around thirty manuscripts were recorded in Turkish libraries by Çelebioğlu 1988, to which may be added other copies preserved in European and American collections.
- 10 Istanbul, Edirne Selimiye Kütüphanesi, MS. 4633, dated Safar 1175 H/1761 and Sarajevo, Gazi Husrev-Beg Library, nr. 105, apparently dated 1174 H/1761.
- 11 Beinecke Library, Turkish MSS Suppl. 184.
- 12 Turkish Ms. 1.

CAT. 29

- 1 On him and his work, see Kramers 1993.
- 2 Kramers 1993.



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