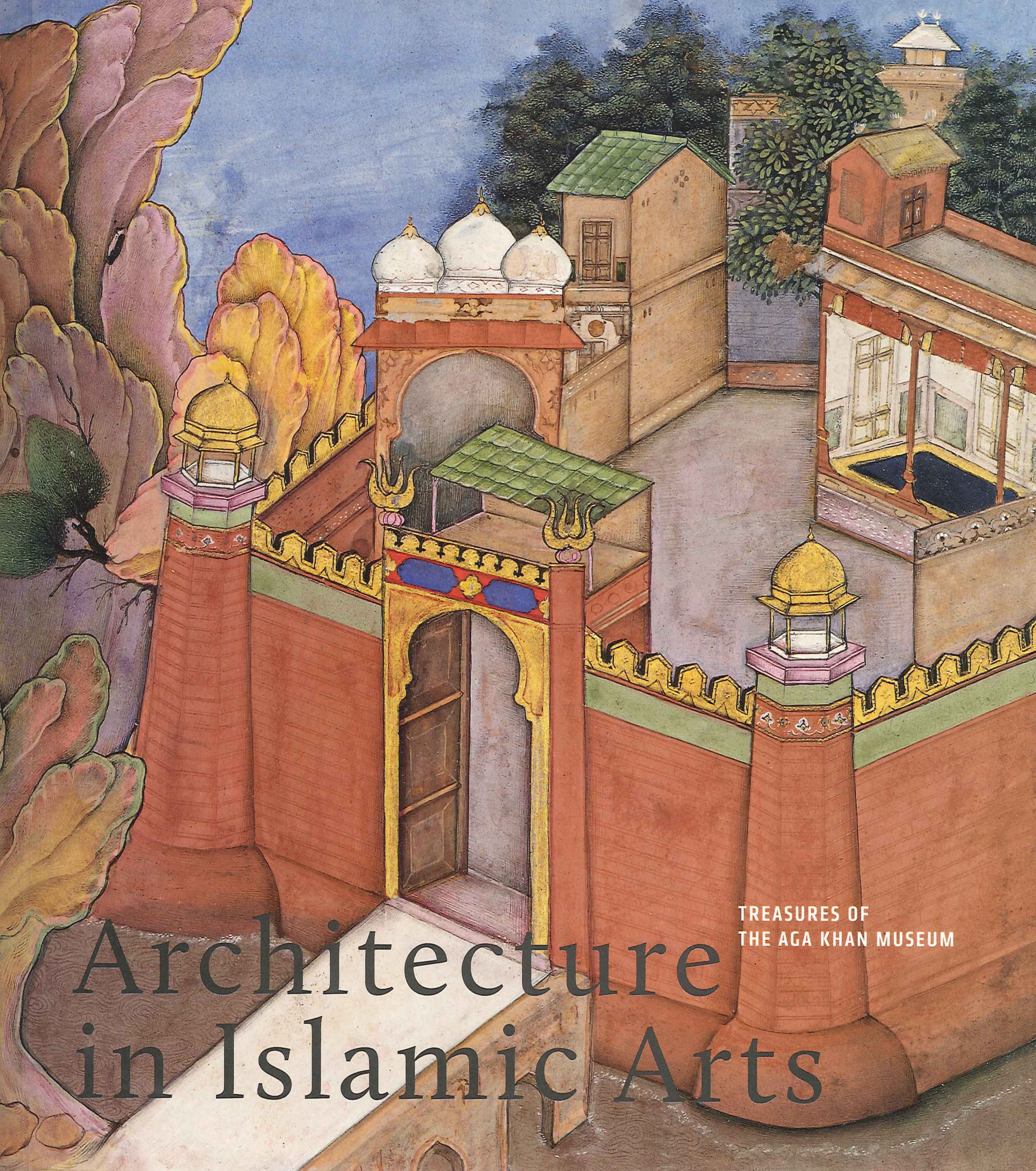

TREASURES OF
THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM

Architecture in Islamic Arts

Aga Khan Trust for Culture

TREASURES OF
THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM

Architecture in Islamic Arts

State Hermitage Museum
St. Petersburg, Russia
8 DECEMBER 2011 — 26 FEBRUARY 2012

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
7 APRIL — 29 JUNE 2012

Asian Civilisations Museum
Singapore
19 JULY — 19 OCTOBER 2012

Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum
Architecture in Islamic arts

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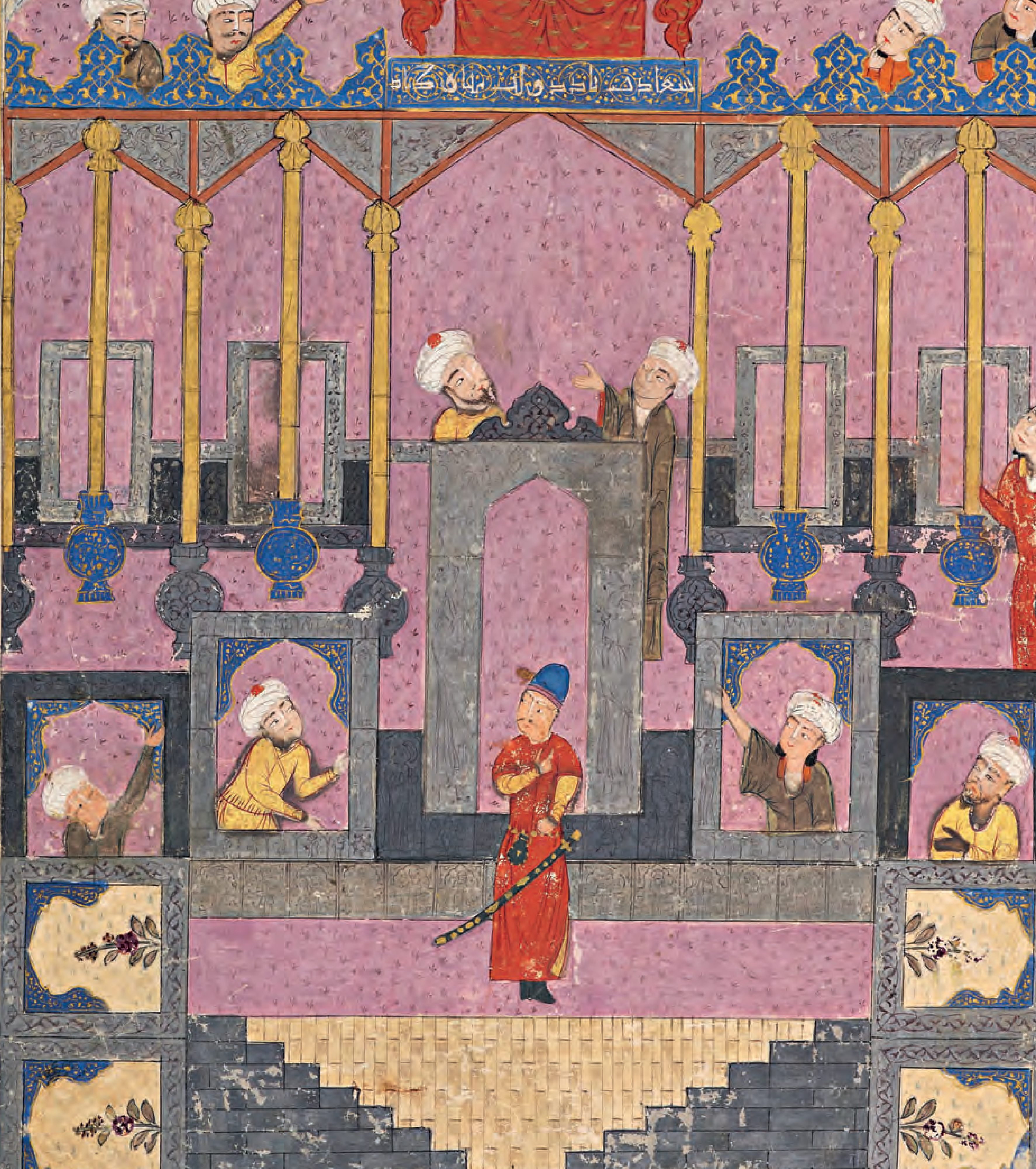
Aga Khan Trust for Culture

ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ
ЭРМИТАЖ
The State Hermitage Museum

ISLAMIC ARTS
MUSEUM MALAYSIA

asian
civilisations
museum



Acknowledgements & Contributing Authors

The entries in this catalogue build on the research undertaken by all the scholars who have worked on the collection previously, and my debt to all of these – including Anthony Welch, Stuart Cary Welch, Sheila Canby, Moya Carey and the many scholars who have contributed to the catalogues created for the travelling exhibitions of the collection from 2007 onwards – is here recorded with the sincerest of thanks. Benoît and I extend our further thanks to all of the contributing authors, without whose insightful and illuminating texts this catalogue would have been so much the poorer.

We would also like to record our debt of gratitude for all the help and support we have received from our colleagues at the host museums of the exhibition. At the State Hermitage Museum: Natalia Koslova, Anton Pritula and Mariam Dandamaeva. At the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia: Rekha Verma and her predecessor Lucien de Guise, Adline Abdul Ghani, Assim Zuhair Mahmood Qisho, Zulkifli Ishak, Mohamed Razali Mohamed Zain, Md Rezad Adnan and Noor Nizreen Osman. At the Asian Civilisations Museum: Pedro Moura Carvalho, Lawrence Tio, Clement Onn, Henry Yeo, Karen Chin, Cherry Thian and Raaj Kannu. Within the Aga Khan Development Network, we thank our colleagues Nazir Sunderji, who supervised the printing of the catalogue, and Sam Pickens for his role in press and communications. Finally, it was Massumeh Farhad at the Freer and Sackler Galleries who first suggested revisiting the theme of architecture in Islamic art – the subject of an exhibition held at the Fogg Museum in 1982 – and we are particularly grateful to her for starting us on this fascinating path.

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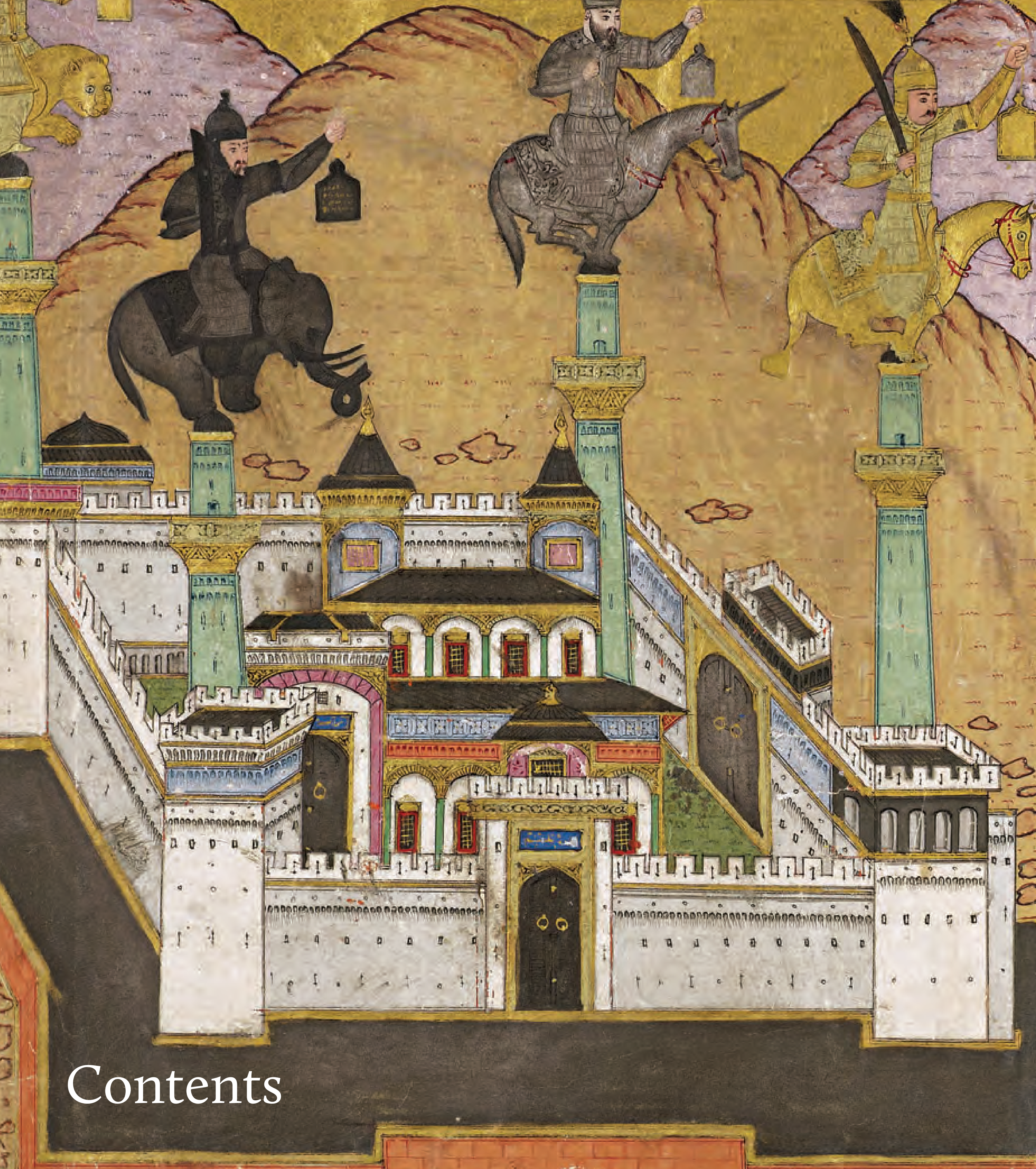

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ALL CATALOGUE ENTRIES BY MARGARET S. GRAVES

منعرض جواب هيچ آفريده نخواهم شد نظم به پري رسيديم در اقصاي يونا
بدو گفتم اي انكه با عقل و هوشي زمردم جه بهتر بهر حال گفتا خموشي خموشي خموشي خم
ايشان چوبي بياوردند و سنگ پشت ميان آن محكم بدندان گرفت و بطان د
دوجانب برداشته او را ميبردند چون به اوج هوا رسيدند گذر ايشان بر بالاي
دهي افتاد مردم ديه خبردار شده ازحال

Preface

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

For much of my life, particularly since 1957, I have been interested in architecture and the built environment, especially in the context of the Islamic world and its artistic heritage. I am therefore sincerely pleased that *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Architecture in Islamic Arts* has been chosen as the subject for an exhibition that will be shown at the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, and at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore.

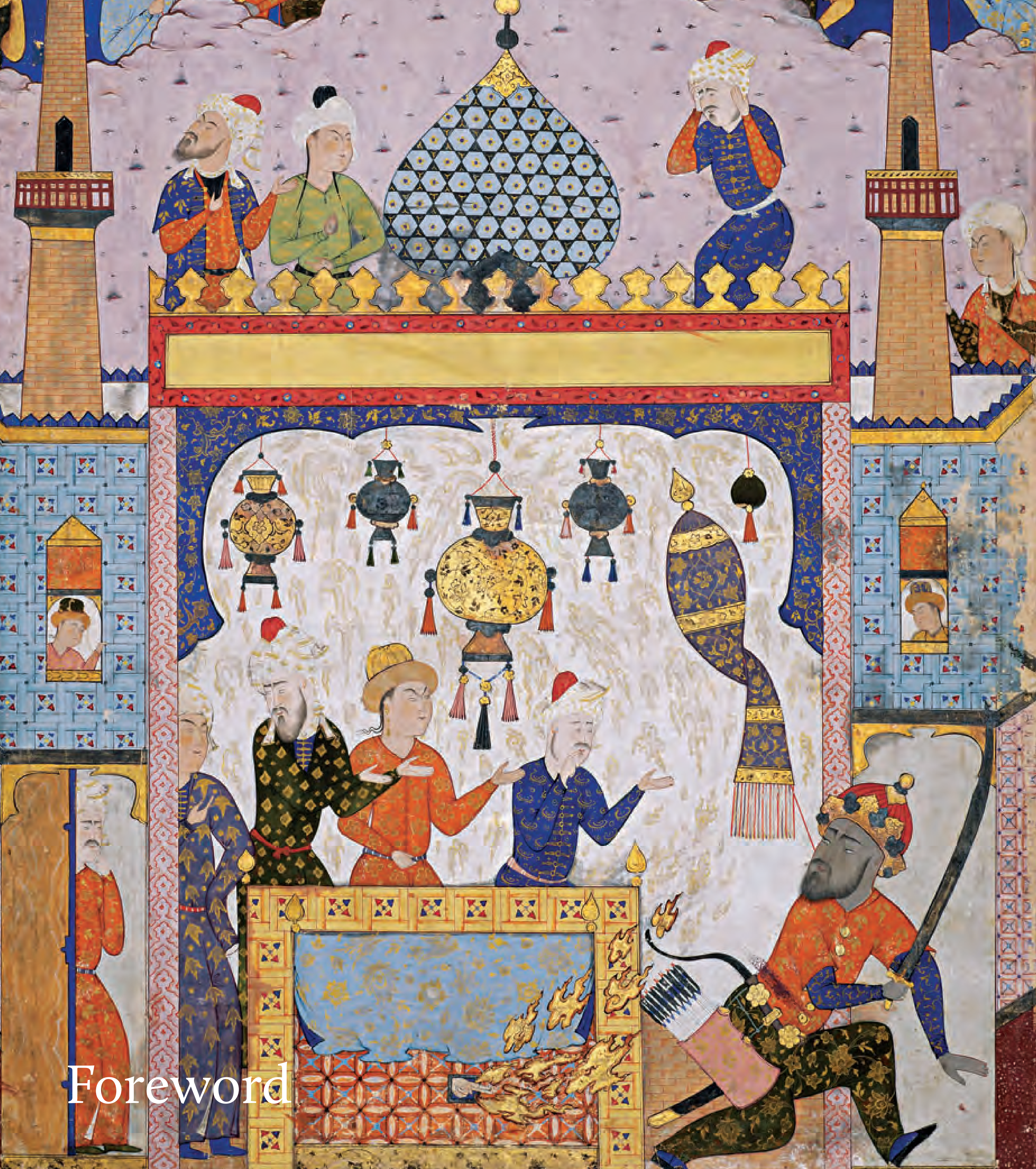
At the height of Islamic civilisations came a magnificent flowering of the arts and architecture: the buildings created by the great Islamic dynasties rank among the finest monuments of world culture. To focus one's attention on material details of these creations and on their representation in the pictorial arts of the time makes one understand better how they reflect the all-encompassing unity of man and nature, central to Muslim belief. The aesthetics of the environment we build and of the arts we create are the reflections of our spiritual life, and there has always been a very definite ethos guiding the best Islamic architecture and artistic creation.

Buildings can do more than simply house people and programmes. They can also reflect our deepest values; great architecture, like great art, captures esoteric thought in physical form. In Islamic thought, beauty and mystery are not separated from the intellect – in fact, the reverse is true. As we use our intellect to gain new knowledge about Creation, we come to see even more profoundly the depth and breadth of its mysteries. This exhibition showcases examples of this beauty and mystery.

For too long, there has been little public debate about the art and architecture of Muslim societies. The consequences for the Muslim world have been a one-way flow of scholarship and popular culture from the West, which, in turn, receives all too little that is creative and interpretative, scholarly and artistic, from the Muslim world. The cultures of Islamic civilisations have more than 1400 years of intellectual and artistic history; sadly today, this history and its contributions to our shared global heritage are still little known.

To address this condition, the Aga Khan Museum is being established in Canada's great multicultural city of Toronto, and it will open its doors in 2013. The Museum has a range of objects and miniature paintings in its collection that will allow it to establish a highly creative intellectual context for the research and presentation of the arts of Islamic civilisations and therefore make a major contribution to this relatively unexplored subject. As the collection grows and develops, it will focus further on the complementary nature of architecture and other visual arts. The Museum's building itself, designed by Fumihiko Maki – one of the great architects of our time – will be an architecturally inspiring setting for the collection.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the growing Aga Khan Museum team under the leadership of Dr. Michael Brand, and express my sincere gratitude for all of their support and wisdom to Dr. Mikhail Piotrovsky at the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Syed Mohamad Albukhary, Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, and Dr. Alan Chong, Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore.



Foreword

MICHAEL BRAND Aga Khan Museum

As a new institution with a mission to collect, research, and exhibit the visual arts of Islamic civilisations, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto is pleased to be able to share works of art from its growing collection with sister institutions in Europe and Asia as we await the opening of our new building in 2013. We are especially happy to be able to send the exhibition *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Architecture in Islamic Arts* to the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur, and the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore on a unique tour stretching from Peter the Great's European capital to the multicultural heart of Southeast Asia.

His Highness the Aga Khan has long considered that museums can play a key role in promoting a better and broader understanding of different societies and their artistic and intellectual accomplishments. His Highness often refers to the potential of such institutions to help overcome the 'clash of ignorances' that has occasionally been used to foster misunderstanding between the Muslim world and other societies. This is one of the main reasons why His Highness launched, over ten years ago, a project to create an art museum dedicated to the visual arts of Islamic civilisations. Toronto will be a worthy home for this new museum, both because of its vibrant cultural life and for the way it represents so clearly the tolerant and pluralist society for which Canada is justifiably so highly regarded.

The Aga Khan Museum is fortunate to sit within the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of agencies with mandates that include the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private-sector enterprise, and the revitalisation of historic cities. It works primarily in developing countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, and is dedicated to improving living conditions and opportunities for citizens in at least twenty-five different countries without regard to their faith, ethnic origin, or gender. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), the cultural agency of the AKDN, focuses on the physical, social, cultural, and economic revitalisation of communities in the Muslim world. Its programmes such as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme, and the Aga Khan Music Initiative are natural partners for the Aga Khan Museum.

The Aga Khan Museum's building in Toronto has been designed by the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, and is set in a 6.8 hectare park designed by the Beirut-based landscape architect Vladimir Djurovic alongside a new Ismaili Centre designed by the Indian architect Charles Correa. Construction of the 10,500 m^2 building started in 2010 and the Museum is expected to open in late 2013. Through its permanent collection and temporary exhibition galleries, and its related public programmes, the Museum aims to build bridges between cultures. Over the years, His Highness has acquired a significant number of major works of art for the Museum, including a large group from the collection of his late uncle, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. Today the collection is comprised of around a thousand works of art and continues to grow steadily. Its temporary exhibitions programme will cover a wide range of subjects from the visual arts (including contemporary art) to architecture and the role of science in Islamic culture. The Museum will also include a 350-seat auditorium as the focus for an ambitious performing arts programme, a research library, and a range of educational facilities.

While designs for the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto were being defined, AKTC's Museums and Exhibitions Unit in Geneva was entrusted with the task of preparing a series of temporary exhibitions with masterpieces from the Museum's collection. The first of these was shown at the Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma and the Ismaili Centre in London in 2007, closely followed by another at the Louvre in Paris. Subsequent venues have been the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon, the Real Fundación de Toledo, the CaixaForum in Madrid and Barcelona, the Martin-Gropius Bau in Berlin and, most recently, the Sakıp Sabancı Museum in Istanbul. Each exhibition was accompanied by a substantial illustrated catalogue, a lecture series, and an education programme. Close to 800,000 visitors have seen the exhibitions.

The great works of Islamic architecture combine with extraordinary effect the beauty of geometry and ornamental design and the play of light and abstract forms as well as the underlying technology required to pursue these visions of civic splendour. This search for beauty and traces of the divine at all levels, from objects of daily use to palaces, gardens, and religious structures can be seen as an attempt to highlight the magnificence of creation, an idea central to Muslim belief. The theme of *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Architecture in Islamic Arts* is particularly fitting in view of the fact that His Highness has always had a keen interest in both architecture and the visual arts, and in the fundamental links between them in the Muslim world.

I am deeply grateful to His Highness for making available catalogue number 59, and also to Princess Catherine Aga Khan for making available catalogue numbers 24b and 105 from her collection. I would also like to express my gratitude to Luis Monreal, General Manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, for his continuing support and sound advice during the gestation of the Aga Khan Museum.

Because the Aga Khan Museum will pay particular attention to the urban and architectural context in which Islamic art was produced and consumed, it is truly fortunate to be able to work closely with the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and other related AKTC programmes. The catalogue for this exhibition is a fine example of these growing relationships, with important essays contributed by Harvard and MIT professors Nasser Rabbat, David Roxburgh, and James L. Wescoat, Jr., and another by Renata Holod, the first convener of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. We are equally grateful to the two other scholars who joined the project team and contributed their expertise to this volume, Sussan Babaie and Kishwar Rizvi. Benoît Junod, who leads AKTC's Museums and Exhibitions Unit in Geneva, and Margaret Graves, newly appointed to Indiana University at Bloomington, have provided great creative leadership as the co-curators of this exhibition and co-editors of the catalogue; the latter is also the sole author of all the catalogue entries. I thank them both for their untiring and inspiring efforts.

I would finally like to express my deep gratitude to the directors of the three museums that will be displaying this exhibition – Dr. Mikhail Piotrovsky at the State Hermitage Museum, Syed Mohamad Albukhary at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, and Dr. Alan Chong at the Asian Civilisations Museum – for ensuring the success of this project. It has been a great pleasure to collaborate with these institutions, and it is hoped that this exhibition will help strengthen the relationship the citizens of St. Petersburg, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore forge with their own local architecture, their own art museums, and the visual and intellectual pleasures of Islamic art.

What Is Islamic Architecture?

Nasser Rabbat

It is a truism that the study of the architecture of the Islamic world was a post-Enlightenment European project. It started with architects, artists, and draftsmen who travelled to the ‘Orient’ in the wake of the first European interventions there in search of adventure, employment, and the thrill of fantasy associated with that mysterious land. They visited cities and sites – primarily in Spain, Turkey, the Holy Land, Egypt, and India – where they measured and illustrated buildings and ruins and published impressive catalogues that began to introduce to Europe that rich architectural heritage which was hitherto almost totally unknown (fig. 1).[1] But having no model to understand and situate the architecture they were studying, they toyed with various Eurocentric, open-ended, and casually prejudiced terms such as ‘Saracenic’, ‘Mohammedan’, ‘Moorish’, and, of course, ‘Oriental’, before settling on ‘Islamic architecture’ as the most appropriate term sometime around the end of the nineteenth century. Thus was the stage set for the development of an architectural historical discipline that cast Islamic architecture essentially as a direct, formal expression of Islam, which was itself not so homogeneously defined. This was to become the first contentious issue in the self-definition of the field of Islamic architecture.[2] It still forms the background of every major debate within the field, or in the larger discipline of art history as it tries to accommodate its structure and epistemological contours to the age of post-colonial criticism and globalisation.[3]

The second contentious issue in defining Islamic architecture is its time frame.[4] Until a generation ago, scholars viewed Islamic architecture as a tradition of the past that had ceased to be a creative force with the onset of colonialism and its two concomitant phenomena, Westernisation and modernisation, in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They all somehow accepted a degree of incongruity between Islamic architecture and modernism so that when modern architecture (and by this I mean the architecture of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) arrived it immediately eclipsed Islamic architecture and took its place. Consequently, the architecture built under colonialism and after independence was not considered ‘Islamic’; it was seen as either modern or culturally hybrid. Studying it was the domain

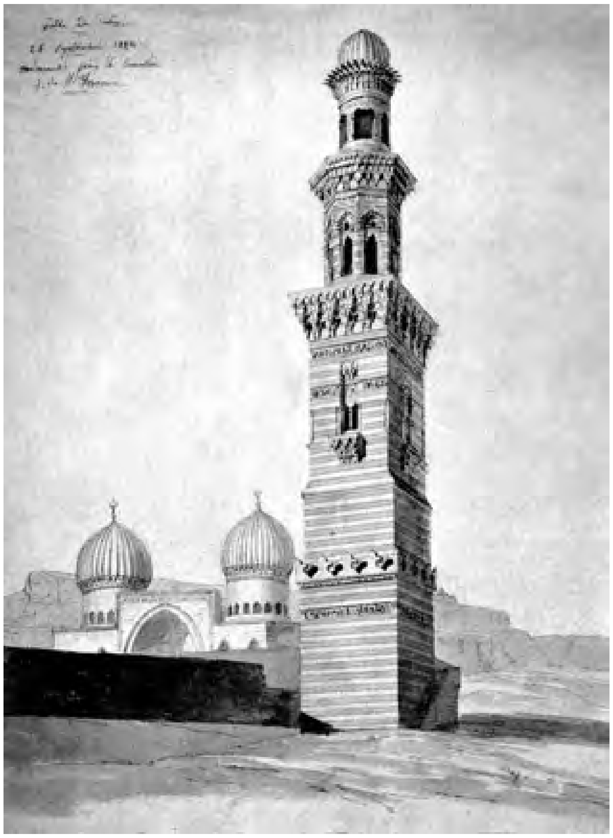


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Figure 1. The Minaret of Qawsun, illustration from Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1839).

of the modernist or the area specialist.[5] The modernist and the area specialist concurred. But neither one of them was particularly interested in the contemporary or near contemporary architecture built in the various countries of the Islamic World: the modernist because he, and very rarely she, considered that architecture to be too derivative to warrant scholarly attention; the area specialist because the built environment was only the static background upon which the more important events that were worthy of study were played out.

So it was that Islamic architecture became the architecture of a vast territory encompassing about forty countries today where a majority of Muslims live or lived in the past, and spanning the periods of Islamic ascendance and dominance – roughly the late seventh to the early eighteenth centuries. But these were only the geographic and historical contours of Islamic architecture. Scholars still needed to develop a set of intrinsic architectural criteria that distinguished Islamic architecture and made it recognisable as such. Those scholars, by and large, looked for common formal qualities. Some, like Georges Marçais, stayed at the impressionistic level, arguing that Islamic art and architecture ought to be readily identifiable by visual means alone.[6] To prove his point he suggested that an educated person sifting through a large number of photos of buildings from around the world could easily identify the Islamic examples among them. Others, like Ernst Grube in a short but influential essay, aimed at defining Islamic architecture as that which displays a set of architectural and spatial features, such as introspection, that are 'inherent in Islam as a cultural phenomenon'.[7] Still others, trying to navigate the contentious terrain of definitions and counter-definitions within the very small field of specialists, opted for a definition that can only be termed operational, or, more precisely, statistical. Although he experimented with a culturalist definition of Islamic architecture all his life, Oleg Grabar was perhaps the most eloquent of these pragmatists, for he argued in more than one place that Islamic architecture is the architecture built by Muslims, for Muslims, or in an Islamic country, or in places where Muslims have an opportunity to express their cultural independence in architecture.[8] This of course allowed the study of Islamic architecture to claim vast terrains, artistic traditions, styles, and periods, including the modern and contemporary, and sometimes to transcend religious and cultural divisions to acquire an ecumenical patina.

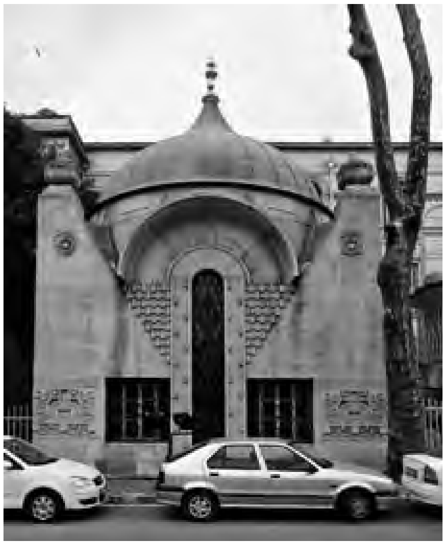
But this all-inclusive definition was decidedly not religious, despite its acceptance of the designation 'Islamic architecture'. It actually shunned religion as an ontological category or a classificatory measure and instead sought unity in culturally shared approaches to aesthetics and spatial sensitivities (which may or may not have their origins in religious injunctions) that crossed all denominational, ethnic, and national boundaries within the greater Islamic world and resulted in similar architectural expressions. This became the dominant understanding of Islamic architecture in Western academia, underscoring the rationalist, secular humanist roots of the two disciplines of Orientalism and art history, from whose margins sprang the field of Islamic art and architecture.[9] It worked well for the students of the history of Islamic architecture whose attraction to the field was fundamentally intellectual or based on connoisseurship, i.e. those for whom Islamic architecture was an object to think with or one to aesthetically appreciate or contemplate. But it could not satisfy those for whom Islamic architecture is an object to identify with or to build upon, i.e. a living tradition with culturally distinct roots. This inability of the definition to really address the 'Islamic' in Islamic architecture did not become an urgent issue until the 1970s, when two interrelated quests arose almost simultaneously in two separate domains. The first was that of the increasing number of students from the Islamic world studying the history of Islamic architecture in Western institutions, who saw Islamic architecture as their living heritage, uninterrupted and still operative to this day.[10] The second was that of architects practising in the Islamic world, many but not all of whom were Muslims, who rediscovered historical and vernacular Islamic architecture and sought to reinsert it into their design repertoire as a foundational body of knowledge, rather than as an occasional formal or decorative reference.[11]

Of course, there were students of Islamic architecture in the Islamic world before 1970. In fact a sizeable number of them flourished in Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, the Soviet Islamic Republics, and, to a lesser degree, India, from as early as the 1940s. Many studied in Western institutions, mostly in the European colonial capitals London and Paris but also in Berlin, Vienna, and Moscow and Leningrad. Others studied with Western scholars who were living and working in an Islamic country, such as the cases of K.A.C. Creswell in Cairo, Jean Sauvaget in Damascus, and Ernst Diez in Istanbul, each of whom had local students and collaborators (and many of these did not receive the credit they deserved).[12] Unlike their Western teachers, the local scholars saw Islamic architecture, or regional variations thereof, as their heritage, and felt proud of it. But they tended to concur with the dominant opinion that it was no longer a living heritage. Thus their work did not differ much from the work of their Western teachers and colleagues in the conceptualisation of its domain as strictly historical. Their main contribution was a closer examination of the primary sources in a search for local flavours in the Islamic architecture of their own country or of their ethnic group, which paved the way for paradoxical definitions of regional and national Islamic architecture. The examples are numerous, but the most glaringly and unmistakably nationalistic histories can be seen in the studies of Persian or Turkish architecture produced mostly in Iran and Turkey by local historians or by Westerners sponsored by national authorities.[13] The regionalist trend was weak, though, in the overall output of the field. It was still obscured by the preponderance of studies that treated Islamic architecture as a unified domain stretching across the Islamic world irrespective of political or national boundaries.

Different worldviews motivated a group of mystically inclined Western and Western-educated Muslim scholars in the 1960s and 1970s who were searching for an understanding of Islamic art and architecture from within the Islamic Sufi tradition. They adopted an all-encompassing, universalistic, and pan-Islamic stance, which was very fashionable in the 1970s. Foremost among them were the Iranian philosopher Sayyed Hussein Nasr and the Swiss Muslim scholar Titus Burckhardt, who published an assortment of books that introduced Islamic art and architecture as a symbolic manifestation of a transcendental and rather monolithic and suprahistorical Islam.[14] Their ideas were applied to the history of Islamic architecture by several scholars/architects, most notable among them being Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, whose book*, The Sense of Unity: the Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture,* was very influential among the generation of Muslim architects studying in the West in the 1980s.[15] These universalists, however, did not eschew the particularistic framework that conventional Islamic architectural history inherited from its Western progenitors. On the contrary, they actually reinforced it by essentialising and 'transcendentalising' it in a way that made it impervious to historical contextualisation or criticism.

Islamic Architecture in Modern Practice

The scene was slightly different in the world of practice. The second half of the nineteenth century brought the first Western architects to various imperial Islamic capitals such as Istanbul, Cairo, Delhi, and Tehran, and a little later to smaller capitals such as Rabat, Damascus, and Bukhara.[16] These architects worked mostly for local rulers or for the rising international mercantile class, which operated under the aegis of colonial powers. Some of them introduced the new styles prevalent in Europe such as the Neoclassical, Neo-Baroque, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, and even Modernist styles into their designs, probably to assert their own and – more importantly – their patrons' modernity and up-to-dateness (fig. 2). Others tried to reference historical architecture in their designs as a way to relate to the culture and history of the place. To that end, they borrowed architectural and decorative elements from a number of historic architectural traditions, some pre-Islamic and some Islamic, and incorporated them in a host of neo-styles: neo-Mamluk, neo-Moorish, and neo-Saracenic (or Indo-Saracenic), but also neo-Pharaonic, neo-Assyrian, and neo-Sasanian. But those architects, like the scholars with whom they had some contact, saw these architectural traditions, including Islamic architecture, as traditions of the past, which somehow did not make the leap to modern times. They thus needed to be documented, dissected, and categorised before any of their formal or spatial elements could be incorporated into new stylistic repertoires. This process of architectural analysis followed established Western norms, primarily those of the Beaux-Arts *envois* from Rome and Greece. The resulting 'revivalist' styles were practically indistinguishable from the work of revivalist Western architects except in their 'Islamic' references. This observation applies both to the work of the revivalist Western architects working in the Islamic world and to that of the first generation of local architects who were trained in European schools of architecture and laboured along the same lines established by their teachers and predecessors (fig. 3).[17]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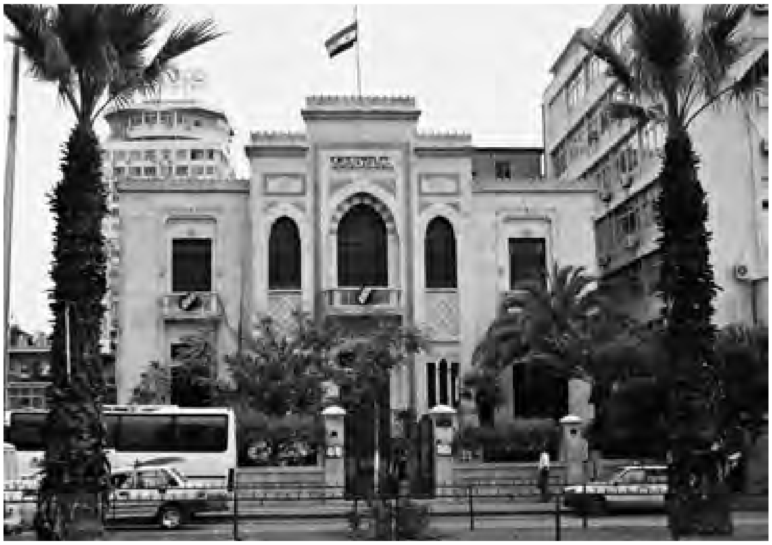
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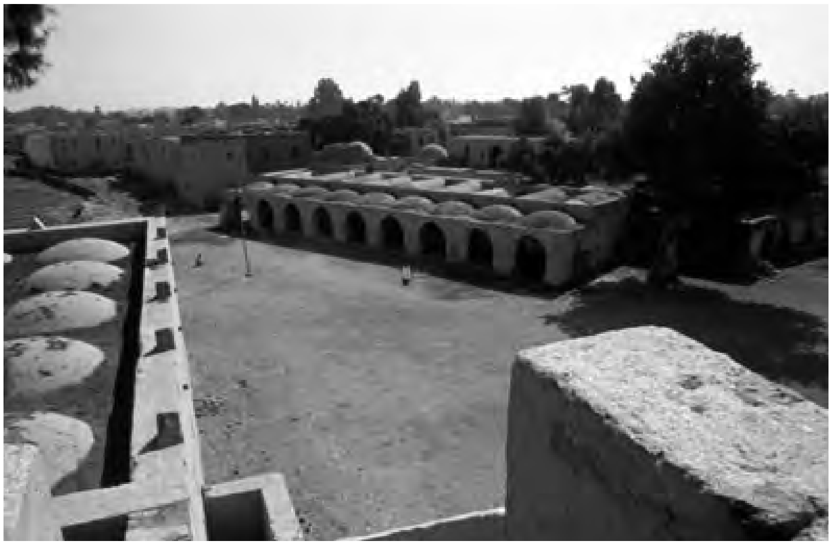
Figure 2. Raimondo Tommaso D'Aronco, tomb of Sheikh Zafir, Istanbul, 1905–1906. Photograph by the author.

Figure 3. ʿAbd al-Razzaq Malas, headquarters of the Fijeh water company, Damascus, 1937–1942. Photograph by the author.

Some local architects were dissatisfied with borrowing and imitation. They sought to develop an architecture all their own, an architecture that represented their culture, reinvigorated after decades, and in some cases centuries, of exclusion under colonial rule. Their search came at the height of, and was linked to, their countries' struggles to gain independence from European colonisers and to claim their places among modern nations. The emerging discourse on a living and breathing Islamic architecture, along with the discourses on vernacular and regional architecture, offered these architects both an affirmation of an active, pre-colonial traditional architecture that never really withered away, and a foundation for a postcolonial national architecture that would spring out of its fertile soil.[18] Especially valuable were architectural elements commonly attributed to Islamic architecture, such as the courtyard, the wind-catcher, and the pointed dome, which could embody cultural and social specificity and formal continuity. They were recovered from their historical or vernacular retreat in order to be inducted into the service of new architectural expressions of cultural identity and national unity after decolonisation and independence.

Perhaps the first to consciously and thoughtfully 'go native' was the Egyptian visionary architect Hassan Fathy (1900–1989).[19] His adoption of the vernacular had its ideological roots in the struggle against British colonial rule in the 1920s and 1930s and the rise of an Egyptian national identity. He presented his first experiments in the 1940s in a few resort houses for members of the Egyptian intelligentsia, and then in his project for the village of New Gourna as the embodiment of an authentic Egyptian architecture, albeit of an unlikely mix of Mamluk Cairene style and Nubian construction techniques that he admired (fig. 4). The design principles he proposed were interpreted as novel expressions of indigenously developed architecture with clear environmental underpinnings and rootedness in place. But the cultural and historical references in Fathy's architecture expanded, and even shifted over time. They went from nationalist to pan-Arabist and finally to Islamic supra-nationalist following the changing cultural identity of Egypt itself after its independence and espousal of pan-Arabism under Gamal Abdel Nasser and then the rise of populist Islamism under Anwar al-Sadat and later.[20]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Fathy himself modified the interpretation of his architecture in his writing from a manifestation of a primeval Egyptian model to an essentially Arabic and later an Arab-Islamic one with vague universal applicability. He identified the 'ubiquitous' Arab courtyard house with its architectural adaptation to the harsh desert environment as the model for his own architecture. A few years later, the model became the Arab-Islamic house, and ultimately an all-encompassing Islamic concept of domestic space. References to notions of the serene and protected family life as gleaned from the analogy between the terms *sakina* ('serenity') and the triconsonantal root *sakan* ('abode'), and *harim* (womenfolk, or segregated section of the house) and the root

Figure 4. Hassan Fathy, New Gourna village, Egypt, 1945–1948. Photograph: Chant Avedissian/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

haram (protected or forbidden), in addition to a more symbolic index dealing with the perception of the unique God and the images of His promised paradise, were subsequently added to the normative paradigms of Fathy's architectural model.

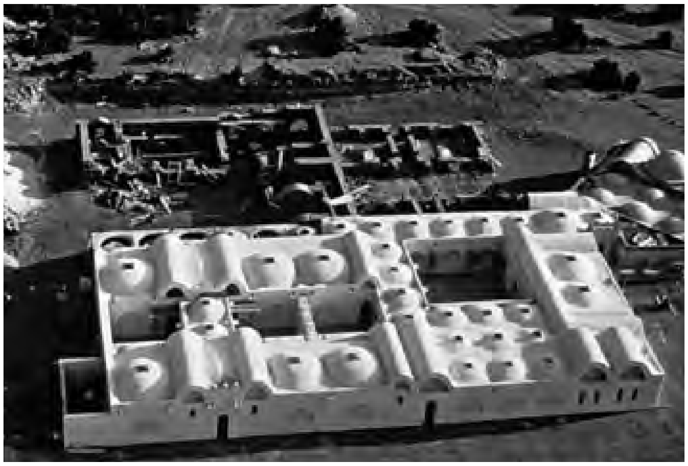

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Figure 5. Hassan Fathy, Dar al-Islam Community Centre, Abiquiu, New Mexico, USA, 1981–1986. Photograph: Saïd Zulficar/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

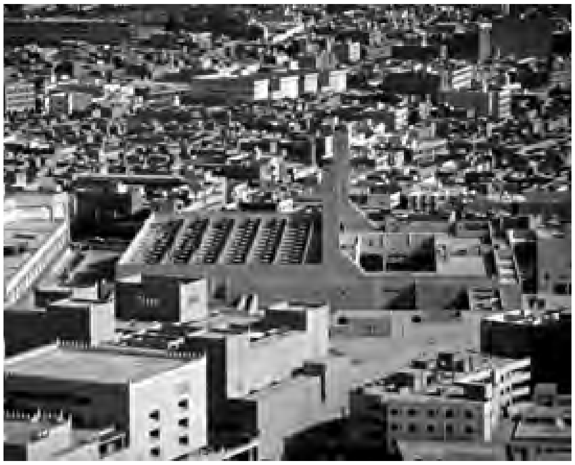
Fathy's romantic, neo-traditionalist model, which incorporated Islamic and vernacular elements, received ample praise in international architectural circles as an ingenious adaptation of indigenously developed architecture. In fact, Fathy became one of the most famous architects hailing from the Islamic world, especially after the publication of his *Architecture for the Poor* by Chicago University Press in 1973.[21] He was the first recipient of the Chairman's Award of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980, and the first Arab architect to build in the U.S. with his Dar al-Islam Community Centre, Abiquiu, New Mexico (1981–1986), a utopian project that mixed new-age Islamic philosophy with Fathy's familiar domical forms in the desert of New Mexico for a community of American converts to Islam (fig. 5). Fathy's numerous disciples continued to use the formal language he devised, but did not build on its socioeconomic and environmental underpinnings. Instead they focused on its cultural and pan-Islamic appeal and brandished it as a kind of native response to both the blandness of modernism and the eurocentrism of the nascent postmodernism, and in some cases exported it as an expressive and historicising Islamic style.

Islamic Architecture and Postmodernism

The next significant historical shift was the articulation of an ideology that saw 'Islam' as identity. This badly understood and still-evolving process has been promoted by at least two economically, historically, and politically dissimilar, though ultimately mutually reinforcing, phenomena. First was the re-emergence in the 1970s of various Islamic political movements in most Islamic countries after an apparent dormancy of some thirty years. Coming on the heels of the victorious Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 and perceived as a response to the failure of the nation states to face up to foreign interference and moral decadence, Islamic political movements sought a return to more authentic foundations to govern the Islamic nation. Yet despite their relentless and violent attacks on what they saw as the depravity of all Western cultural imports, these political movements showed surprisingly little interest in the conceptual contours of architecture, including the religious structures being built in the name of Islamic architecture.[22]

By contrast, the second group to wield a vision of Islam as a framer of identity, the ruling and religious elite of the many recently formed states of the Gulf region, has had a tremendous impact on the trajectory of architecture in the Islamic World in recent decades. Having lain impoverished on the edge of the desert for so long, and, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Oman, not having achieved independence until the 1960s and even 1970s, these countries had no role in the early developments of modern architecture in the Islamic world. But things slowly began to change in the wake of oil discovery in the 1940s and, more spectacularly, after the 1970s oil price surge. With this massive cash flow and its concomitant socioeconomic empowerment came the desire to expand and modernise cities and upgrade their infrastructures to serve the growing population of natives and expatriates, and to satisfy their socio-cultural needs and newly acquired tastes. The wealth of the Gulf patrons, their deeply religious and conservative outlook, and their fervent quest for a distinct political and cultural identity in the sea of competing ideologies around them, combined to create a demand for a contemporary yet visually recognisable Islamic architecture. Sincerely at times, but opportunistically at many others, architects responded by incorporating within their designs various historical elements dubbed 'traditional', 'Arabic' or 'Islamic', which they often used as basic diagrams for their plans or splashed on surfaces as ornament.[23]

Thus, the 1980s became the decade of readily identifiable Islamicised postmodern architecture everywhere in the Islamic world. There were the post-traditionalists who, like Hassan Fathy before them, looked for inspiration in the vernacular architecture of the region. The Egyptian Kamal al-Kafrawi for instance deployed the *badgir*, or wind-catcher, both as a visual referent and an environmental device in his University of Qatar complex (1985). Similarly, in the Great Mosque of Riyadh (1984–1992), the Palestinian-Jordanian Rasem Badran used a rationalising approach to reference the local Najdi architecture (fig. 6). There were also the free, and often arbitrary, mélanges of diverse historical forms and patterns from a wide range of Islamic styles. This is seen for instance in the high-quality sculptural work of the Egyptian 'Abd al-Wahid al-Wakil, particularly in the series of mosques he built in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia in the late 1980s. A bit more colourful is the work of the Iraqi Basil al-Bayati, who dips into the exuberance of postmodernism to produce loud formalist compositions, such as his al-Nakheel Mosque in Riyadh (1985) and his castle-like Great Mosque in Edinburgh (1988–1998). This trend culminated with grand structures by large international firms working in the Gulf. They re-interpreted visual symbols and historical motifs and used them in otherwise ultra-sleek designs, such as the gigantic Hajj Terminal in Jeddah by SOM (1982), inspired by the Bedouin tent (fig. 7); or



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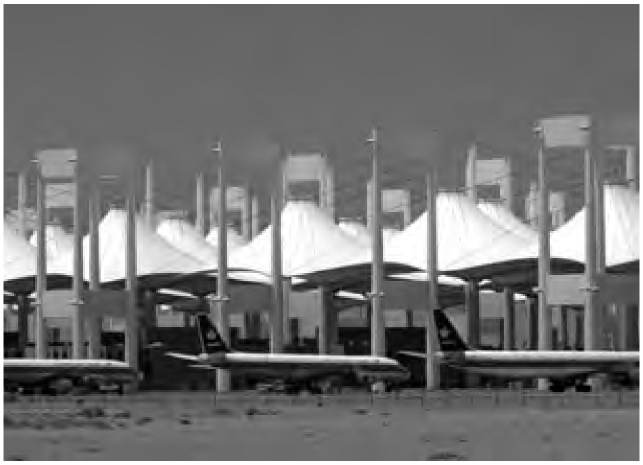

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Figure 6. Rasem Badran, the Great Mosque of Riyadh and Old City Centre Redevelopment, Saudi Arabia, 1984–1992. Photograph: Mehmet Karakurt/ Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

Figure 7. Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM), the Hajj Terminal, Jeddah, 1982. Photograph: Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

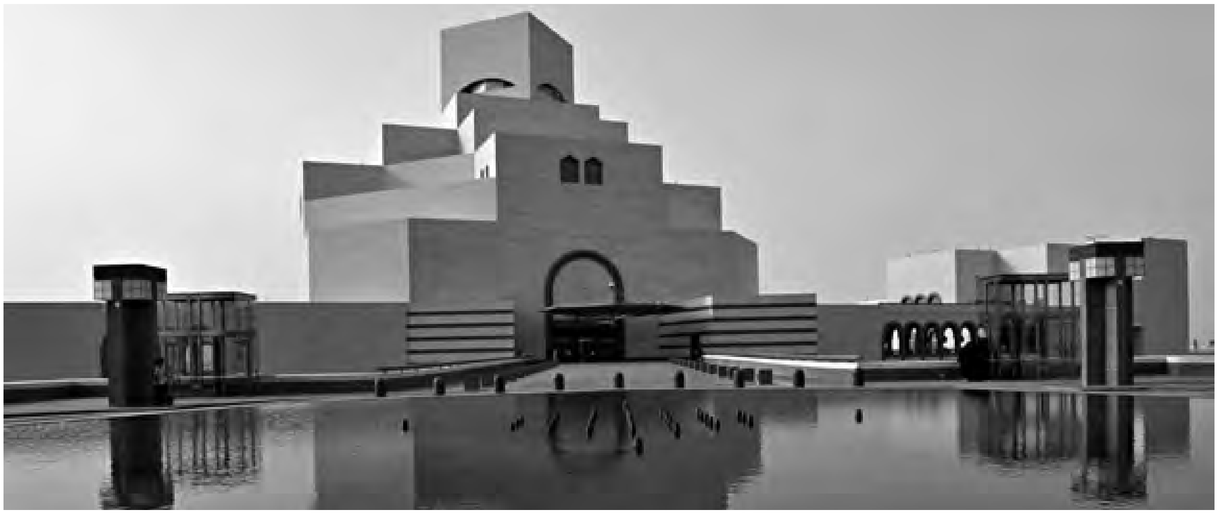

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Figure 8. I.M. Pei, the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar, 2009. Photograph ©Anne de Henning/Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh by Henning Larsen (1982–1984), which employs both the notions of covered *suq* and courtyard; or the Kuwait National Assembly Complex by Jørn Utzon (1982), which evokes the sail of the traditional *dhow* in a gesture not too different from Utzon's earlier iconic project in Sydney, Australia. More recently, the Qatar Islamic Museum by I.M. Pei (2009) claims an inspiration from the bold and simple domed fountain of the Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo as the basis of its cubic design (fig. 8).

Islamic Architecture and Academia

The two quests, the scholarly and the design-oriented, though aware of each other, did not come together in an academically articulated way until the founding of the Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture (AKAA) in 1977, which was shortly followed by the establishment of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1978. AKAA had a straightforward mission: to identify, evaluate, and award outstanding architecture in the Islamic world. But since identifying contemporary 'Islamic' architecture, let alone judging it, was a controversial issue at best, AKAA had to set up and continuously revise and modify the criteria for definition and evaluation in a conciliatory way that accommodated the various trends of thought about Islamic architecture. This meant that, for the last thirty years, AKAA has been a key promoter of a syncretic and expansive 'Islamic architecture' that was not limited only to traditionally recognised Islamic building types, but included urban and landscape design, environmentally and socioeconomically sensitive projects, and conservation and rehabilitation interventions.[24]

AKPIA, on the other hand, is an academic and research endeavour. Designed to promote, sustain, and increase the teaching of Islamic architecture, it has become an experiment in architectural education that seeks to move from the particular to the general while maintaining its disciplinary identity. Not only was AKPIA the first academic programme exclusively devoted to the study of Islamic architecture, it was also housed in two of the most prestigious institutions of architectural education in the world, with established cultures and pedagogical methods.[25] The location of AKPIA at MIT's Department of Architecture in particular was a novel and intellectually challenging decision. The siting itself was implicitly intended to negate the polarising dichotomy and to normalise the continuity between the discipline of architecture (derived from Western architectural history and praxis) and Islamic architecture, which is routinely relegated to area/cultural studies within art history departments.[26]

The foremost academic to lead the effort to historicise, theorise, and ultimately legitimise Islamic architecture both as a field of historical inquiry and of contemporary creativity, was Oleg Grabar (1929–2011), the first Aga Khan Professor at Harvard University and the last recipient of the Chairman's Award of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2010. His influential book, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (1973, 2nd ed. 1987) was a conceptual study *par excellence*.[27] It investigated the ways in which an Islamic artistic and architectural tradition acquired and disseminated distinct forms and meanings primarily in conjunction with its cultural, social, and ideological contexts. This strongly historicising framework underscores the book's originality and palpable sense of purpose. It also endows it with a remarkable coherence despite the otherwise selective character of its content, which focuses on the problems of the emergence of Islamic art and architecture in the first three centuries Hegira and their relationship to the art of Byzantium and Persia. But the book's importance does not, ultimately, lie in answering concrete questions about the circumstances surrounding the formation of Islamic art, which it actually avoids doing. It lies rather in its setting the tone for a whole generation of historians of Islamic art and architecture to begin to reassess the geographic, historical, religious, and cultural boundaries of their discipline and to develop its methods and theoretical contours. As such, *The Formation of Islamic Art* became the foundation upon which most historical interpretations in the field have depended until now.

But the limitations imposed by the burdensome and politically biased scholarly lineage of Islamic architecture were not seriously challenged until the 1980s. Empowered by developments in critical and post-colonial studies, especially after the publication of Edward Saïd's seminal book *Orientalism* in 1978, students of Islamic architecture began to question their received methods and conceptual structures and to extend their domain of inquiry back in time to points of convergence between Islamic architecture and the architecture of other cultures, and forward to the modern and contemporary scenes of revivalist efforts and inventive continuities. The notions of uniformity, introversion, and cultural and religious particularism that had long dominated the study of Islamic architecture began to be truly challenged as more and more scholars turned to cultural theories in their inquiry.[28] Some began to pry open the intracultural spaces – that is, zones within a given society at a given time that are shared by its diverse constituent cultural groups – to critical inquiry. Thus, the contributions of the various Islamic fringe sects and esoteric religious orders, Christian and Jewish denominations, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Hindus, and others have started to be analysed as both instrumental components of a shared architectural language and as distinct expressions that link Islamic architecture to other traditions. Others focused on the intercultural development of Islamic architecture with its substantial connections to the Late Antique, South Arabian, Mediterranean, Iranian, and Hindu-Buddhist cultures in the early periods, and European, Asian, and African cultures in recent times, although the bulk of studies is of course concentrated on the links to Western architecture.[29]

The relationship with Western architecture is indeed the main problem that Islamic architecture has still to resolve in order to acquire its rightful place as an active and contributive component of world architecture.[30] Until at least the 1980s, the chronology of Western architecture from its presumed Classical origins to its triumphant culmination in modern times constituted the living core of architectural discourse and relegated the architecture of other cultures to marginal places in its prescribed hierarchy.[31]

Furthermore, because of its venerable legacy and institutional power, the authoritative historiography of Western architecture (usually called Architecture *tout court*) promoted, and even required, the study of other architectural traditions to be confined within clearly proscribed and exclusive times, spaces, and cultures. Islamic architecture, like many other non-Western architectural traditions (and the term itself amply illustrates the classificatory predicament of these traditions)[32] was thus cast as the opposite of Western architecture: conservative where Western architecture is progressive; its formal categories static, as compared to the self-evolving ones of Western architecture; and reflecting cultural imperatives rather than the creative individual subjectivity ascribed to Western architecture. But, first and foremost, Islamic architecture was seen as a tradition whose agency was collective and creativity in design rarely assigned, except for the few celebrated cases such as the great Ottoman master architect Sinan (d. 1588).[33] It was therefore an architecture that was difficult to study along the conceptual lines of Western architecture, yet no other methodological perspective was developed enough to accommodate its particular trajectory or internal cohesiveness while accounting for its regional, ethnic, or national diversity.

Where Are We Now?

So where do we stand today? And is there an agreement on what Islamic architecture is? Of course the answer is no. In fact, although the number of students of Islamic architecture has multiplied many times over, and many more universities in the West and the Islamic world have added chairs for the study of Islamic architecture, and although the majority of new major projects in various countries of the Islamic world require their designers to respect or adapt the principles of Islamic architecture, questions still abound in academe and in the world of practice about whether there is an Islamic architecture or not in the first place. Some of those who doubt the validity of the term Islamic architecture raise the following rhetorical challenge: what is Christian about European architecture? And the ready – and correct – answer is usually, 'very little, except for the architecture of churches'. The parallel conclusion for Islamic architecture thus becomes, 'Islamic architecture is mosque architecture'.

But if we change the tense in the first question and ask, 'what was Christian about European architecture?' the answer is bound to be, 'a lot'. Medieval Christianity indeed shaped not only faith and rituals but also various patterns of life in Europe: gender relations and family hierarchy, private and public behaviour of individuals and groups, and relationships between religious and profane authorities in the rule of country and city. These, and other cultural, social, and political attributes, were predicated on religion, just like the Islamic world. They also found architectural manifestation in the form and function of church, convent, house, palace, and city, again like the Islamic world. Things began to change first with the Renaissance but especially with the rise of Enlightenment values, not because European architecture rejected the burdensome influence of religion, but because European polity and European mores and even European epistemology broke away from Christianity.[34] Architecture predictably absorbed these cultural transformations and began to reflect the new secularism, first by consciously returning to Classical, pre-Christian forms, and later by responding to the aesthetic and civic values of the Enlightenment and then the Industrial Revolution, with its standardisation and accelerated technological progress.

The Islamic world, on the other hand, never experienced a total break with religion, nor did it undergo an Industrial Revolution. Its experience of the secular modernism it imported from Europe in the late nineteenth century was resisted by, then moderated by and even filtered through the prism of religion. Islam remains a major force not only in dictating the ethics and beliefs of Muslims today, but also in shaping their social relations, their individual behaviour, and their collective polity and imaginary. Religious motives and inhibitions transpire in many aspects of their modern life that have gone totally secular in the West, to the point where their enactment often causes puzzlement and misunderstanding among Western observers and commentators.[35] This is not a value judgment; it is simply a historical fact. To understand and explain the mixed, and perhaps paradoxical, but definitely dynamic character of the cultures of the Islamic world today, it is thus necessary to take into account how religion interacts with and modifies the effect of Western, secular modernism on those cultures. This is also how we can understand the role of the modifier 'Islamic' in framing the term Islamic architecture.[36] It is not necessarily the formal or stylistic attributes that it produces; it is rather the persistence of religion in playing a role in defining many aspects of life in the Islamic world, either in competition or harmony with modernity and other major socio-cultural contemporary forces.

To me then, Islamic architecture is the architecture of those cultures, regions, or societies that have directly or via some intermediary processes accepted Islam as an integral and formative component of their socio-cultural makeup.[37] It is still a valid designation for architecture being built today simply because Islam has never ceased being that constitutive component even though the ways in which it expresses itself have changed over time and space. The actual architectural forms which that expression takes are tangential. It is the presence – spiritual, symbolic, social, political, functional, behavioural, and yes formal – of Islam in the architecture as seen and practised by the people that gives that architecture its Islamic designation, even though it always had to contend with other powerful universal phenomena, such as competing world religions and more advanced cultures in its formative stages, and modern secularism and globally networked tastes and techniques of representation today.

1 The most remarkable among these early studies are Pascal-Xavier Coste, *Architecture Arabe ou Monuments du Kaire mésurés et dessinés de 1818 à 1826* (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1839); Girault de Prangey, *Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra: monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade, dessinés et mesurés en 1832 et 1833* (Paris: Veith et Hauser, 1837); *idem, Essai sur l'architecture des Arabes et des Mores, en Espagne, en Sicile, et en Barbarie* (Paris: A. Hauser, 1841); Owen Jones and Jules Goury, *Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra from Drawings taken on the Spot in 1834 & 1837* (London: published by Owen Jones, 1852); Prisse d'Avennes, *L'art arabe d'aprés les monuments du Kaire depuis le VIIe siècle jusqu'á la fin du XVIIIe* (Paris: A. Morel, 1877).

2 A pioneering study to articulate the contours of this thesis is Louis Massignon, 'Les méthodes de réalisation artistique des peuples de l'Islam', *Syria*, 2 (1921), pp. 47–53, 149–160. See also Jean-Charles Depaule, 'Improbables detachements: l'architecture et les arts dans la culture islamique', *Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, 39 (1992), pp. 26–41; and Robert Hillenbrand, 'Studying Islamic Architecture: Challenges and Perspectives', *Architectural History*, 46 (2003), pp. 1–18.

3 See Zeynep Çelik, 'Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon', *The Art Bulletin*, 78/2 (1996), pp. 202–205.

4 Nasser Rabbat, 'Islamic Architecture as a Field of Historical Inquiry', *AD Architectural Design* (special issue *Islam+Architecture*), 74/6 (2004), pp. 18–23.

5 Finbarr Barry Flood, 'From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the end of Islamic Art', in Elizabeth Mansfield (ed.), *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 31–53.

6 Georges Marçais, *L'art de l'Islam* (Paris: Larousse, 1946), p. 5.

7 Ernest J. Grube, 'What is Islamic Architecture?' in George Michell (ed.), *Architecture of the Islamic World: Its History and Social Meaning* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1978), pp. 10–14.

8 Grabar refined both culturalist and statistical definitions of Islamic art and architecture for over four decades. See for instance, Oleg Grabar, 'Teaching of Islamic Architecture', *The Yale Architectural Magazine*, 1 (1963), pp. 14–18; *idem*, 'What Makes Islamic Art Islamic?' *AARP*, 9 (1976), pp. 1–3; *idem*, 'Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art', *Muqarnas*, 1 (1983), pp. 1–14; *idem*, 'What Should One Know about Islamic Art?' *RES*, 43 (2003), pp. 5–11.

9 Two recent surveys of the field make this clear: see Stephen Vernoit, 'Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850–c. 1950', in *idem* (ed.), *Discovering Islamic art: scholars, collectors and collections 1850–1950* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 1–61; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin*, 85/1 (2003), pp. 152–184.

10 The cleansing of national culture of all possible Western, and therefore colonial, contamination, and its paradoxical psychological and epistemological consequences, have been insightfully analysed by Franz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth,* trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 'On National Culture', pp. 167–199. For a discussion of the relationship between culture and ideology see Clifford Geertz, 'Ideology as a Cultural System', *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 193–229. For a brief analysis of the role of culture in architectural education see Samer Akkach, 'The Burden of Difference: Rethinking the Role of Culture in Architectural Education', *Architectural Theory Review*, 5/1 (2000), pp. 61–64.

11 Gwendolyn Wright, 'Tradition in the Service of Modernity: Architecture and Urbanism in French Colonial Policy, 1900–1930', *Journal of Modern History*, 59/2 (1987), pp. 291–316; Jane M. Jacobs, 'Tradition is (not) Modern: Deterritorializing Globalization', in Nezar AlSayyad (ed.), *The End of Tradition?* (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 29–44.

12 Oktay Aslanapa worked with Ernst Diez and translated his book on Turkish architecture before going his own way to become one of the foremost historians of architecture in Turkey: see Oya Pancaroğlu, 'Formalism and the Academic Foundation of Turkish Art in the Early Twentieth Century', *Muqarnas*, 24 (2007), pp. 67–78, esp. p. 75. Farid Shafiʿi worked with Creswell on his *Muslim Architecture of Egypt* and went on to publish several books on the Islamic architecture in Egypt, in some of which he challenged the interpretations of his erstwhile teacher: see Farid Shafiʿi, 'The Mashhad al-Juyushi (Archeological Notes and Studies)', in C.L. Geddes *et al*. (eds), *Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture in Honour of Professor K.A.C. Creswell* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 1965), pp. 237–252. Khaled Moaz, who was one of the most accomplished students of the Syrian built environment, worked with Jean Sauvaget, but, in the words of André Raymond, remained 'in his shadow': see André Raymond, 'The Traditional Arab City', in Youssef M. Choueiri (ed.), *A Companion to the History of the Middle East* (Oxford/Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 207–225, esp. p. 211.

13 In Iran, the trend started with the ultra-exclusive series by Arthur Upham Pope and Phyllis Ackerman (eds), *A survey of Persian art, from prehistoric times to the present* (5 vols) (first ed. London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1938–1939). Other examples include Mohssen Foroughi, *Masterpieces of Iranian Architecture* (Tehran: Society of Iranian Architects, 1980); Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran, an Iconographic Study* (Lexington, KY: Mazda, 1986); Donald N. Wilber, *The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Ilkhanid Period* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969). Turkish examples include Celâl Esad Arseven, *L'art Turc: Depuis Son Origine Jusqu'à Nos Jours* (Istanbul: Devlet basimevi, 1939); Behçet Ünsal, *Turkish Islamic Architecture in Seljuk and Ottoman Times, 1071–1923* (London: A. Tiranti, 1959); Oktay Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971); Ekrem Akurgal (ed.), *The Art and Architecture of Turkey* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980).

14 Cf. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987) and Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: language and meaning* (London: World of Islam Festival, 1976).

15 Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar, *The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

16 The best studied case is that of Turkey: see Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoglu, 'The Birth of an Aesthetic Discourse in Ottoman Architecture', *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture*, 8/2 (1988), pp. 115–122; Ali Uzay Peker, 'Western Influences on the Ottoman Empire and Occidentalism in the Architecture of Istanbul', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26/3 (2002), pp. 139–163; Sibel Bozdoğan, 'Turkish Architecture between Ottomanism and Modernism, 1873–1931', in Anna Frangoudaki and Çağlar Keyder (eds), *Ways to Modernity in Greece and Turkey: Encounters with Europe, 1850–1950* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 113–132.

17 Mercedes Volait, *Architectes et Architectures de l'Égypte Moderne (1830-1950): Genèse et essor d'une expertise locale* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005), pp. 21–79, for a review of the transformation of architecture in modern Egypt.

18 Anthony D. King, 'Internationalism, Imperialism, Postcolonialism, Globalization: Frameworks for Vernacular Architecture', *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 13/2 (2006/2007), pp. 64–75; Dennis Alan Mann, 'Between Traditionalism and Modernism: Approaches to a Vernacular Architecture', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 39/2 (1985), pp. 10–16; Panayiota Pyla, 'Hassan Fathy Revisited: Postwar Discourses on Science, Development, and Vernacular Architecture', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 60/3 (2007), pp. 28–39.

19 For the development of Fathy's ideas, see: Hassan Fathy, *Gourna; a tale of two villages* (Cairo: Ministry of Culture, 1969); *idem*, *Architec-*

ture for the Poor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); *idem*, *Qisat mashrabiyah: masrahiyah dhat arbʿat fusul* (Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbuʿat lil-Tawzi wa-al-Nashir, 1991); *idem*, *Yutubia* (Beirut: Sharikat al-Matbuʿat lil-Tawzi wa-al-Nashir, 1991); Hassan Fathy, Walter Shearer and ʿAbd al-Rahman Sultan, *Natural energy and vernacular architecture: principles and examples with reference to hot arid climates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Hasan-Uddin Khan (ed.), *Hassan Fathy* (Singapore: Concept Media, 1985); James Steele, *The Hassan Fathy Collection: A Catalogue of Visual Documents at The Aga Khan Award for Architecture* (Geneva: Aga Khan Trust for Culture, 1989); *idem*, *An Architecture for the People: The Complete Works of Hassan Fathy* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1997).

20 See Nasser Rabbat, 'Hassan Fathy and the Identity Debate', in Gilane Tawadros and Sarah Campbell (eds), *Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art and Shifting Landscapes* (London: Institute of International Visual Art, 2003), pp. 196–203. For a more critical analysis of Fathy's classist politics see Timothy Mitchell, 'Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt', in Nezar AlSayyad (ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 212–239, esp. 213–222.

21 Hassan Fathy first published the report on vernacular architecture and his work at Gourna in Arabic as *Gourna: Qisat Qaryatayn* (Cairo: Ministry of Culture, 1969). It was then translated and published in French as *Construire avec le peuple, histoire d'un village d'Egypte: Gourna. Texte definitif revu par l'auteur* (Paris: J. Martineau, 1970), and then in English as *Architecture for the Poor*. Fathy also published a more general book on vernacular Arabic architecture, *Al-ʿImara al-ʿArabiyya al-hadariyya bi-al-Sharq al-Aswat* (Beirut: Arab University of Beirut, 1971).

22 Only a few 'Islamicist' historians of Islamic architecture can be identified: Taha al-Wali, *Al-Masajid fi al-Islam* (Beirut: Dar al- ʿIlm lil-Malayin, 1988); ʿAbd al-Baqi Ibrahim, *Al-Manzur al-Islami lil-Nazariyya al-Mimariyya* (Cairo: Markaz al-Dirasat al-Takhtitiyya wa-al-Mimariyya, 1986); ʿAbd al-Baqi Ibrahim and Hazim Muhammad Ibrahim, *Al-Manzur al-Tarikhi lil-Imara fi-al Mashriq al- ʿArabi* (Cairo: Markaz al-Dirasat al-Takhtitiyya wa-al-Mimariyya, 1993); Hayyan Sidawi, *Al-Islam wa-Fiawiyyat tatawwur al-ʿImara al-ʿArabiyya* (Paris/Beirut: Dar al-Mutanabbi, 1992).

23 Sharon Nagy, 'Dressing Up Downtown: urban development and government public image in Qatar', *City & Society*, 12/1 (2000), pp. 125–147; Khaled Adham, 'Cairo's Urban *déjà-vu*: Globalization and Colonial Fantasies', in Yasser Elsheshtawy (ed.), *Planning Middle Eastern Cities: An Urban Kaleidoscope in a Globalizing World* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 134–168; *idem*, 'Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to Spectacle', in Yasser Elsheshtawy (ed.), *The evolving Arab city: tradition, modernity, and urban development* (London/New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 218–257; Hassan-Uddin Khan, 'Identity, Globalization, and the Contemporary Islamic City', in Renata Holod, Attilio Petruccioli and André Raymond (eds), *The City in the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 1035–1062; Yasser Elsheshtawy, 'Redrawing Boundaries: Dubai, the Emergence of a Global City', in *idem* (ed.), *Planning Middle Eastern Cities*, pp. 169–199.

24 Sibel Bozdoğan, 'The Aga Khan Award for Architecture: A Philosophy of Reconciliation', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 45/3 (1992), pp. 182–188.

25 Spiro Kostof, Christian Norberg-Schulz and Mohammed Arkoun, 'Approaches to Education', in Ahmet Evin (ed.), *Architecture Education in the Islamic World* (Singapore: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1986), pp. 1–21.

26 Garth Fowden, in *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: University Press, 1993), picked up on the same point by asserting that 'There are roads out of antiquity that do not lead to the Renaissance' (p. 9). His book offers a historical reconceptualisation of the Antiquity to Islam continuum that challenges previous frameworks.

27 Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973, second ed. 1987).

28 Cf. the special issue of the journal *RES,* vol. 43 (2003), subtitled *Islamic Arts* (in the plural).

29 The list is becoming quite long. For a selection of the variety of approaches and areas, see: R.A. Jairazbhoy, 'The Taj Mahal in the Context of East and West: Study in the Comparative Method', *Journal of the Warburg Courtauld Institute*, 24 (1961), pp. 59–88; Patrick Connor, *Oriental Architecture in the West* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1979); Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Suleyman the Magnificent and the representation of power in the context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-papal rivalry', *Art Bulletin*, 71/3 (1989), pp. 401–427; Sibel Bozdoğan, 'Journey to the East: Ways of Looking at the Orient and the Question of Representation', *Journal of Architectural Education*, 41/4 (1988), pp. 38–45.

30 This was the conceptual framework advocated by Marshall Hodgson, the author of the magisterial *The Venture of Islam,* when he wrote 'We must leave behind the Westward pattern of history and the "East and West" dichotomy in studying the development of the oikoumenic configuration; and we must free our theorizing of the turns of thought which arise from assuming the Westward pattern'. See *Rethinking World History: Essays on Europe, Islam, and World History,* ed. Edmund Burke III (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), p. 292.

31 Gülsüm Baydar, 'Toward Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher's "History of Architecture"', *Assemblage*, 35 (1998), pp. 6–17; Erika Naginski, 'Riegl, Archaeology, and the Periodization of Culture', *RES*, 40 (2001), pp. 115–132. For a specific example of how Islamic architecture was confined to a premodern status in Dutch scholarship, see the discussion in Eric Roose, *The Architectural Representation of Islam: Muslim-Commissioned Mosque Design in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: University Press, 2009), pp. 9–11 and notes.

32 A recent challenge to this division is Dana Arnold, 'Beyond a Boundary: Towards an Architectural History of the Non-East', in Dana Arnold, Elvan Altan Ergut and Belgin Turan Özkaya (eds), *Rethinking Architectural Historiography* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 229–245.

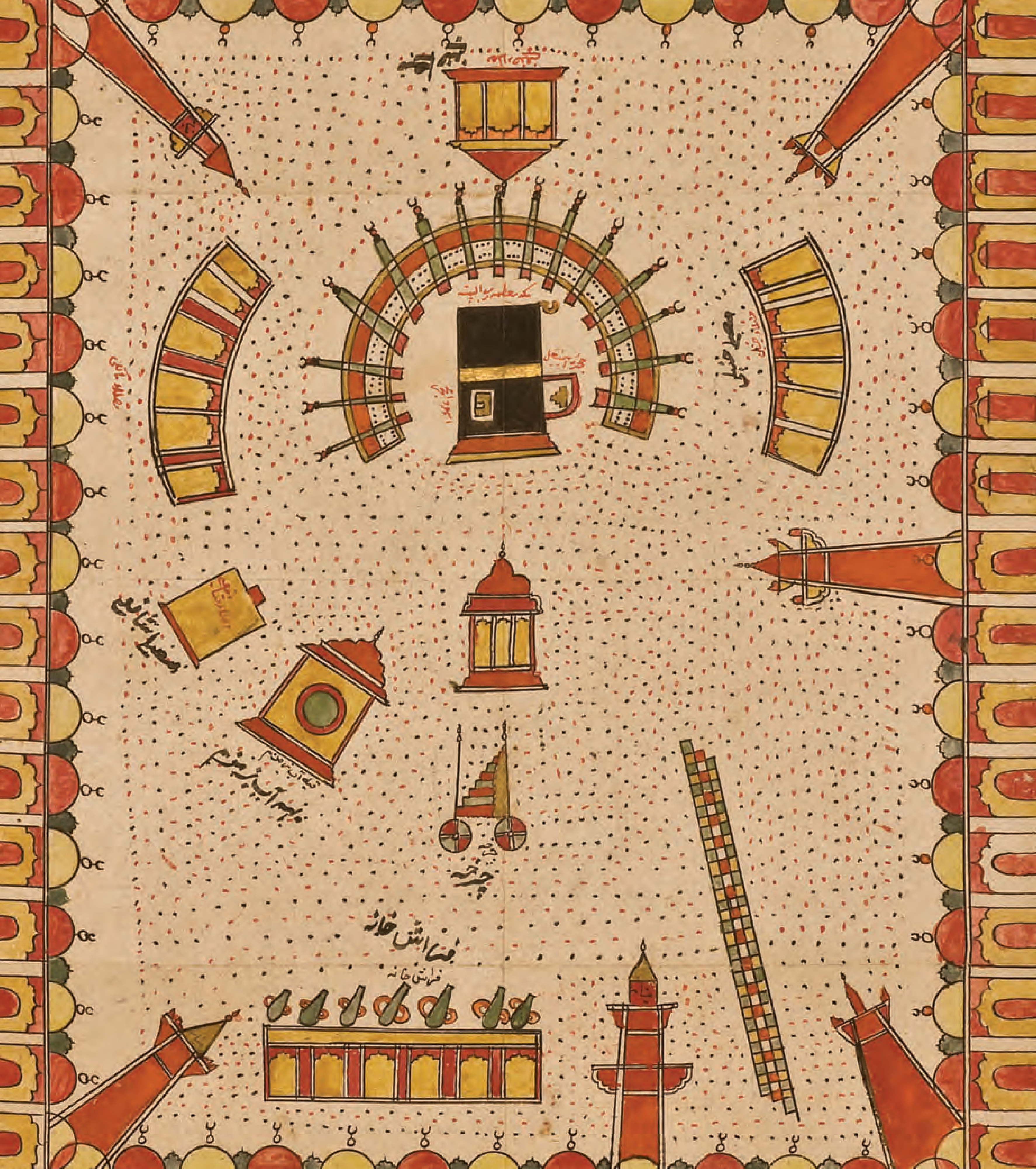
33 See Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: University Press, 2005), pp. 127–152.

34 This epistemological shift affected even the way we study history so that religion role is conceptually diminished even when it was still palpable and effective, see Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 'Making History: Problems of Method and Meaning', pp. 19–55.

35 I am reminded here of the confusion caused by the common phrase, *tawakkaltu ʿala Allah* ('I put my trust in God') repeated on the recorder that was recovered from the wreckage of EgyptAir's fatal Flight 990. See Christopher S. Wren, 'The Crash of Egyptair: The Statement; Arabic Speakers Dispute Inquiry's Interpretation of Pilot's Words', *The New York Times* (18 November 1999).

36 Mohammed Arkoun, 'Muslim Character: The Essential and the Changeable', in *A Rising Edifice: Contributions Towards a Better Understanding of Architectural Excellence in the Muslim World* (Geneva: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1989), pp. 208–212.

37 This is what a historian of religion such as Juan Eduardo Campo, *The Other Sides of Paradise: Explorations into the Religious Meanings of Domestic Space in Islam* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), tried to do, even though he focused on the religious and did not pay much attention to the syncretic product of the religion's interaction with other cultural forces.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I

SACRED TOPOGRAPHIES

Visualising the sites and monuments of Islamic pilgrimage

David J. Roxburgh

> The first House of God to be set up for men was at Bakkah [Mecca] the blessed,
> a guidance for the people of the world.
> It contains clear signs, and the spot where Abraham had stood.
> And anyone who enters it will find security.
> And whosoever can afford should visit the House on a pilgrimage as duty to God.
>
> (Qur'an 3:96–97).[1]

The greatest share of visual representations of holy sites in the Islamic lands is accorded to Mecca.[2] As Islam's sacred direction, Mecca is the focal point and required physical orientation (*qibla*) of canonical prayer (*salat*), of buildings of worship, of the deceased who lie buried in their graves, and the destination of obligatory pilgrimage (Hajj and ʿ*umra*).[3] Medina – the burial place of the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) – and Jerusalem – *qibla* from 610–623, but charged with many other historical and cultural meanings – are close followers in frequency of visual depiction: the three cities are often configured, in various permutations, to provide visualisations, optical *aides-memoires* of places visited, or perhaps of things never seen. While Medina was important for its historical role as the cradle of Islam, first home to a nascent Muslim community (*umma*) after the 'flight' (*hijra*) from Mecca in 622, its status was enhanced through the burials of the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and the first two caliphs Abu Bakr and ʿUmar in the tomb of the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad. Their burials vouchsafed the future of the mosque as a locus of visitation and veneration. Jerusalem, by contrast, was closer to Mecca in cosmological and eschatological significance: both cities carried associations spanning the arc of time from the very moment of God's Creation until the end of days and Last Judgment.[4] Each of the three cities, Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, figures prominently amid a corpus of visual representations that was made in a variety of two-dimensional formats, pictorial modes, and media. Despite stylistic or formal differences of different scales, a consistent means of representation was developed and applied to the depiction of Islam's holiest places, rendering these sites an iconic immediacy and making 'the centre out there' present to the viewer, wherever, or however distant, he or she might be.[5]

The practice of representing sacred topographies was not limited to Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. From the early medieval period, architecture marking the burial sites of descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, religious leaders, or saintly persons (whose conduct in life offered the living suitable exemplars and hence a means of shaping and improving personal moral conduct), began to populate the urban and extra-urban landscapes of the Islamic lands, while other structures commemorated the occurrence of events associated with those persons, their deeds or miracles (*karamat*), or the simple fact of their now distant historical presence at the place.[6] Such sites, termed 'place of witnessing' (*mashhad*) – as perpetual memorials marking permanent physical presence through bodily remains or evanescent presences and actions – became loci for the expression of forms of piety outside the strictest orthopraxy of Sunni Islam, and engendered a form of pilgrimage termed 'visitation' (*ziyara*).[7] The content of one scroll, signed by Sayyid Muhammad Chishti and dated 1787–88, reflects the personal piety and beliefs of its recipient by including not only images of Mecca but also of Medina, Jerusalem, and Najaf among other places (cat. no. 11). Najaf is the location of the shrine of ʿAli ibn Abi Talib (d. 661), one of the most important centres for Shiʿi pilgrims. The scroll may thus be seen to document a group of shrines visited in *ziyara*, non-obligatory visits to Medina and Jerusalem – which were often combined with the obligatory pilgrimage (Hajj) – as well as the Hajj itself to Mecca. Another scroll dated 1522, lacking any images, is an attestation of visitation (*ziyaratnama*) to Mashhad, location of the shrine of the eighth Shiʿi imam, ʿAli Riza (d. 818), visited by Shiʿis and other Muslims alike (cat. no. 4).[8] Though later in date, these works on paper reflect a process that had been in the making since the medieval period: that is, the steady and ineluctable expansion of holy sites across the Islamic lands that made local landscapes share some of the sacred attributes of Islam's most holy cities.

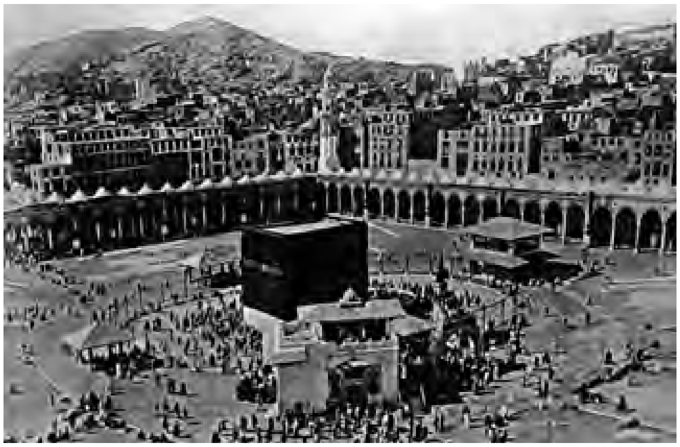
The paper scroll was one of the most common portable artefacts of pilgrimage and a large number include either hand-drawn, or block-printed, and coloured images of Mecca, Medina, and, less frequently, Jerusalem. The practice is known through material evidence datable to the late eleventh century but it continued into the early modern era.[9] Texts written on the scrolls indicate that many examples were made as legal evidence of pilgrimage by proxy, where an individual who had already performed pilgrimage to fulfil their personal religious obligation would undertake the pilgrimage on behalf of a living or deceased person, commissioned to do so by either the individual or a family member. The majority of intact scrolls present images of the sacred topographies of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem oriented vertically down the length of the scroll so that each image would be legible as an expansive column from a single vantage point (as distinct from each site being represented perpendicular to the unfolding horizontal expanse of the scroll to form a series of adjacent picture cells). Less commonly, scrolls depict pilgrim itineraries in more expansive terms – of the sort frequently narrated in written sources – and include the multiple sites visited en route to Mecca and on the journey home (cat. no. 11).[10]

Though post-medieval scrolls often register physical changes to the built environment of Mecca, its sacred precinct (*al-Masjid al-Haram*), and environs (Mount Arafat, Muzdalifa, and Mina), the visual conventions of their images can be traced to the corpus of medieval examples with which they share several tendencies. The schematic nature of these diagrams conjures a dense matrix of information through line drawing and flat fields of opaque watercolour or washes of pigment. The information includes the relative size and spatial interrelation of three-dimensional architectural structures or site markers built low to the ground, function, and points of entry and exit. Plan views are combined with elevations in seamless harmonies that make sense as totalities – as unified images – but that equally implicate the beholder in a series of cognitive movements by which he or she adopts various perspectives in relation to what is shown through the image. The diagram actually permits multiple points of imaginary entrance and internal movement that would be constrained in other visual modes, such as the perspectival view or the bird's eye topographic view.

In one scroll, dated 3 March 1778, Mecca's *Masjid al-Haram* is configured as a bounded space, a perimeter constructed as a rectangle of porticoes of alternating red and black archways surmounted by domes and opened through nineteen doors, each one labelled with its name (e.g. *Bab al-salam*, *Bab al-nabi*; see cat. no. 7). The doors project outward from the line of the porticoes, the number of their openings ranging from one to five. Each portico is represented as one would see it from its respective approach, the four porticoes folded inward toward the central space. Here we see the seven minarets, which encircle the perimeter wall, also flattened onto the central field but shown in such a manner as to convey multiple perspectives of vision. The Kaʿba stands slightly off-axis as a black cube in the centre field, its black stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*), door (*bab al-Kaʿba*), water spout (*mizab al-rahma*), and black textile covering (*kiswa*) with its embroidered gold band (*hizam*) clearly demarcated. As in other images, the Kaʿba is visualised through its northeast façade as one would see it entering the *haram* from the *Bab al-salam*, also named *Bab al-Shayba*, the most common point of entry to the 'space of circumambulation' (*mataf*) (fig. 4). A nearly completed circle encloses the Kaʿba to mark the *mataf*, denoting the space and practice of circumambulation, while a small semi-circle (*al-hatim*) immediately adjacent to the Kaʿba marks the burial site (*al-hijr*) of Hajar and Ismaʿil.[11] (Many other prophets are believed to have been buried in the vicinity of the Kaʿba.) Spreading out beyond this constellation of buildings and site markers is a series of covered, freestanding structures (*maqam*) identified with Abraham and the schools of Islamic law, the 'Well of Zamzam' (*biʾr Zamzam*), a moveable wooden staircase (*madraj*) used to access the elevated door of the Kaʿba, and an outdoor pulpit (*minbar*).[12] The *maqam Ibrahim* was believed to protect a stone where Abraham had stood – leaving the traces of his footprints (*qadam*) behind him – during the construction of the Kaʿba.

A second image of Mecca's *Masjid al-Haram*, possibly a fragment from a once longer pilgrimage scroll (the lower section depicts the 'trotting space' [*masʿa*] between the hillocks of al-Safa and al-Marwa, making it comparable to medieval examples), highlights the shared visual conventions used by artists in the eighteenth century (cat. no. 8).[13] It differs from the 1778 scroll by its overall attempt to enhance the visual order of the sacred precinct: here the minarets occupy their correct positions in relation to the perimeter wall (now shown as three layers of arcades folded inward), but are arranged parallel to it. This de-clutters the central field in which the Kaʿba, while not exactly central, has been moved towards the intersection of imaginary horizontal and vertical axes and is framed by a complete circular *mataf* rendered in grey pigment and linked to a network of pathways that radiate outward. Other elements of the 1778 scroll are found in the same positions here. By suggesting a more evident geometric model for organising the components of the *Masjid al-Haram*, cat. no. 8 invokes the longstanding manuscript tradition of the *qibla* chart and map.[14] One of the functions of these images, which appear in manuscripts from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onward, was to demonstrate the Kaʿba's privileged position within a sacred geography as *axis mundi*, its walls related to sectors of the inhabited earth, its corners (*arkan*) roughly oriented toward the points of the compass and one axis aligned with the rising of Canopus, and the terrestrial point where a vertical axis extended to the heavens and the Kaʿba's heavenly parallel, 'The Frequented House' (*Bayt al-maʿmur*), which was set below God's throne (*ʿarsh*).[15]

In their original form scrolls cat. nos 7 and 8 might have included depictions of other sites near Mecca or those in Medina and Jerusalem. Whether or not that is the case, another form of object – the underglaze-painted ceramic tile – testifies to the autonomy of the *Masjid al-Haram* as a stand-alone image that could be fashioned as a multiple, portable object (cat. no. 9). Many examples are extant today in religious buildings, where they are set into the walls marking *qibla*, or are assumed to have come from such contexts.[16] Placed in such a position, the Meccan image offered a tangible representation of the distant sacred centre as *qibla*. The tiles present polychrome maps of the *Masjid al-Haram*, identifying the Kaʿba and key commemorative sites in its immediate proximity through image and text in the form of labels deftly rendered in *naskh* script that secure the correct identification of their visual adjuncts. In cat. no. 9, the holy image is set beneath a text composed of two verses from the Qur'an, 3:96–97 – lacking the final line of verse ninety-seven – which describe the Kaʿba as the 'first house' (*awwal bayt*) set up on earth, a place of 'clear signs' (*fihi ayat bayyinat*), and the 'spot' where Abraham stood (*maqam Ibrahim*). Though the verses infer the origin of the first 'House of God' in the time of Adam, Abraham's role as rebuilder of the Kaʿba is introduced by reference to the 'spot' where he stood. This also infers a forward temporal connection to the Prophet Muhammad who, like Abraham before him, restored the primordial monotheism of the Kaʿba by removing traces of polytheism.



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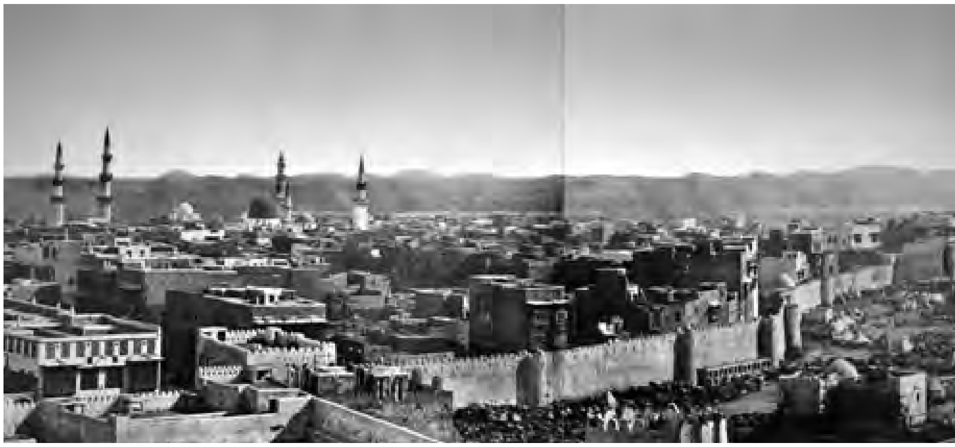

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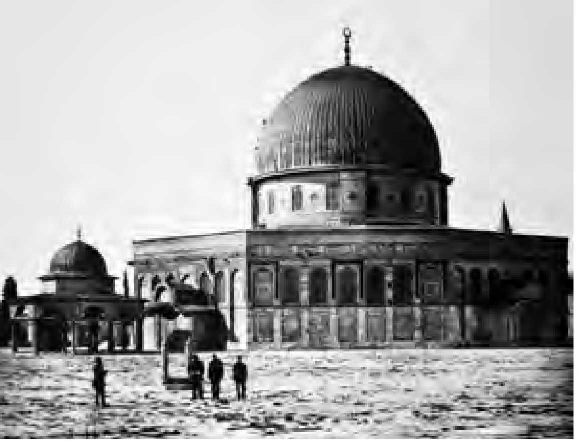
Figure 1. Mecca: view of the *Masjid al-haram* and surroundings, early twentieth century. Courtesy of Documentation Centre, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Figure 2. Medina: view of the *Masjid al-Nabawi* (Mosque of the Prophet) and pilgrims' tents outside the walls. Photograph by Muhammad Sadiq, c. 1890. Courtesy of Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

The Qur'anic verses merely secure a reading of the ceramic tile that obtains to all other related diagrammatic representations of Mecca, regardless of their medium of execution. The site is a constellation of 'signs' (*ayat*) that can also be understood as marks, wonders, or miracles, an ontological status that extends equally to the 'verses' (*ayat*) of the Qur'an. Regardless of their specific materiality or historicity – for they were changed and replaced over time, a fact frequently acknowledged in descriptions of Mecca – the architectural elements and other objects of the *haram* marked events from a prophetic history that culminated in the actions and mission of the Prophet Muhammad and whose significance was secured in the rites of pilgrimage he established in the 'Farewell Pilgrimage' of 632.[17] The images place emphasis on the host of markers to form a visual catalogue of the holy that one might visit in the itinerary of either a physical or mental pilgrimage.

A key dimension of these images relates to their temporal implications, especially when one considers the history of changes made to the physical environments of Mecca and Medina and dramatised through the new technology of photography in the nineteenth century and after (figs 1–5). Images of the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca created between the medieval and early modern periods often register changes made to the site through expansion and new construction, but these are minimal, and mostly peripheral, in comparison to continuities of position and morphology that stress an eternal temporal order. The importance of the architectural elements of the Kaʿba, and the *Masjid al-Haram* in its totality, did not lie in their historical fabric, their historical materiality, but in their capacity to mark and commemorate sacred loci associated with events in the timetable of creation, across the history of prophecy from Adam to Muhammad.

The same function is reflected in images of the *Masjid al-Haram*: their intended purpose was not a factual presentation of everything one might see, though this aspect may have been developed and pronounced in special cases and shaped by political desires.[18] Rather, the images stress morphological continuity in their pictorial renditions of the Kaʿba – comprising a cubic form articulated by an elevated doorway, water spout, black stone, and textile covering – as well as the *mataf*, *al-hijr*, *al-hatim*, the 'Well of Zamzam', *maqam Ibrahim*, and other structures. Each element had a chronological anchor, whether in the time of Abraham (and Hajar and Ismaʿil), or the Prophet Muhammad. While the black stone was intimately linked to Adam, Abraham and Muhammad, for example, the doorway and its textile covering – a curtain (*sitara*) – were particularly resonant of the history of the Kaʿba from the Prophet Muhammad's time onward. The locations of these elements were preserved over time despite being adapted or substituted. In reality, the black stone was the most constant element of the Kaʿba, there since the inception of the 'House of God' – God sent the stone to Adam – preserved in Mount Abu Qubays east of Mecca at the time of the flood, restored to its place at the time of Abraham and Ismaʿil's rebuilding, and later reinstalled by the Prophet Muhammad.[19] Other elements such as the *kiswa*, *mizab*, and *sitara* were frequently replaced, often annually, and were given as gifts to the shrine (cat. no. 6), though the Kaʿba is always depicted veiled in its black *kiswa* (fig. 5).[20] Once these furnishings had served their purpose, the objects were maintained as relics and sometimes cut apart and distributed.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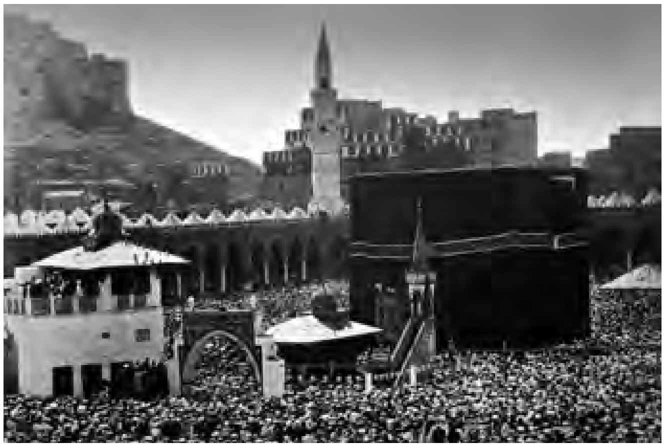
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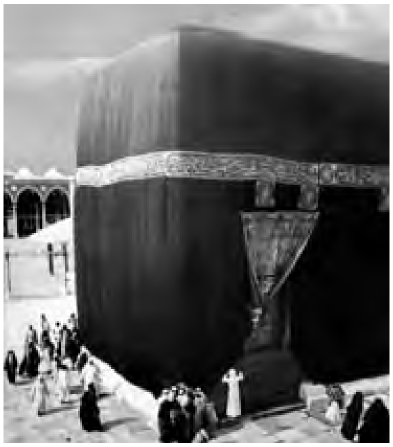
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Figure 3. Jerusalem: the Dome of the Rock and the Dome of the Chain. Photograph by M.J. Diness, 1859 or 1860. Courtesy of Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Figure 4. Mecca: view of the Kaʿba and the court of the Great Mosque during prayer from the *Bab al-salam.* Photograph by Muhammad Sadiq, 1880 or 1881. Courtesy of Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

Figure 5. The Kaʿba, c. 1910. G. Eric and Ruth Matson Photograph Collection, negative no. 12961-13944. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division; image in the public domain.

Images of Islam's holy cities appeared in other contexts, particularly books of various topics related, or unrelated, to pilgrimage. The Kaʿba appears as a setting in a number of poetic works and histories (cat. no. 5). One of the most frequently illustrated manuscripts was the *Futuh al-haramayn* ('Description of the

[two] holy sanctuaries') by Muhyi Lari (d. 1526 or 1527), completed in 1506, a Persian-verse guide for pilgrims making the Hajj, that included instructions on the places to visit, prayers to be made, and other rituals to be performed. Illustrations to the *Futuh al-haramayn* include the sites in Mecca and its hinterland as well as Medina. Dedicated to the ruler of Gujarat, Muzaffar ibn Mahmud Shah, Muhyi Lari's text proliferated from the late sixteenth century onward.[21] While images in the *Futuh al-haramayn* are closely related to the pictorial modes and models found in pilgrimage certificates, new ways of representing Mecca and Medina appeared in another widely copied and disseminated book, the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat* ('Ways of edification'), by Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli. Completed before his death in 1465, al-Jazuli's book presents prayers, a host of devotional materials related to the Prophet Muhammad, and a description of his tomb in Medina.

The most frequent practice of illustrating the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat* consisted of a double-page image pairing the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina with the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca (cat. nos 1-3). Various modes of representation were employed to portray the two holy sites and these coexisted over time. In one mode, Mecca's *Masjid al-Haram* and Medina's Mosque of the Prophet Muhammad are shown in a schematic form reminiscent of the pilgrimage scrolls, with architecture shown in simultaneous plan and elevation views to produce a unified field, but subject to a level of abstraction that dispenses with relative scale (cat. no. 2). The tomb, marked by three cenotaphs, is wildly out of proportion to the covered mosque space adjacent to it, and for reasons that are obvious enough. The entire surface of the page is covered to form a brightly coloured and patterned surface, another form of abstraction intended, presumably, to connote sacrality by a literal form of illumination. In another mode, the holy cities are shown in bird's eye views, topographic images that position the sacred sites in relation to a wider urban environment and the landscapes beyond (cat. no. 1).[22] Each image strikes a balance between a shorthand rendition of the monument and the articulation of its unique and important elements. In effect, these images are more closely related to portraits in the form of visualisation that they offer to beholders.

Despite the fact that little is known at present about the specific function, or contemporary reception, of images of Islam's holy sites, some deductions can be made from their visual forms. Context helps to elucidate cultural meanings and possible uses for images found in books or tiles marking *qibla*, suggesting their role as devotional tools. For the pilgrimage scrolls, examples from the Ayyubid, Seljuq, and Mamluk periods are predominantly records of pilgrimages by proxy and served an evidentiary role that the religious obligation of pilgrimage had been met. Other scrolls were presumably acquired by pilgrims in Mecca at the conclusion of their pilgrimage and kept as personal mementos or tokens.[23] Whether the scrolls were inherently private objects or had a display aspect cannot be ascertained. Despite their important differences, however, the effect of images of Mecca, Medina and other holy sites is to transform geography into religious topography, to present pilgrimage spaces through their symbolic structures, and, in effect, to authenticate a set of religious practices and beliefs. Such images possessed the double function of serving as adjuncts to lived experiences – activating memories of the mind and movements of the body – and enabling imaginary journeys. They are the visual constructions of sacred spaces that employ a number of techniques – aggregations of boundaries, thresholds, markers, and coordinates – to orient their beholder in the perpetual time and space of the holy.

1 Trans. Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qurʾan: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton: University Press, 1984), p. 61.

2 A useful presentation of the varied contexts in which representations of the Kaʿba appear is Richard Ettinghausen, 'Die bildliche Darstellung der Kaʿba im islamischen Kulturkreis', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 12 (1933), pp. 111–137.

3 *Hajj* and *ʿumra* are generally differentiated as 'major' and 'minor' pilgrimages, respectively. While *ʿumra* could take place at any time in the Islamic calendar, the Hajj occurred between 8 and 13 Dhu'l-Hijja. For the rites associated with each, see Richard C. Martin, 'Muslim Pilgrimage', in Mircea Eliade (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (16 vols) (New York: Macmillan, 1987), vol. 11, pp. 338–346. Orientation to *qibla* defines several other aspects of ritual life. See Arnet Jan Wensinck, 'Kibla: Ritual and Legal Aspects', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second ed., vol. 5 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), pp. 82–83.

4 On the relation between Jerusalem and Mecca, and their frequent symmetries, see Heribert Busse, 'The Sanctity of Jerusalem in Islam', *Judaism*, 17/4 (1968), pp. 149–182. The construction of Jerusalem's sanctity picked up pace in the Crusader era as an impetus to enjoin Muslims in a counter-Crusade. See Emmanuel Sivan, 'Le caractère de Jerusalem dans l'Islam aux XIIe-XIIIe siècles', *Studia Islamica*, 27 (1967), pp. 149–182; and Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), p. 15. Traditions linking Jerusalem to Mecca are summarised in David J. Roxburgh, 'Pilgrimage City', in Salma K. Jayyusi (ed.), *The City in the Islamic World* (2 vols) (Leiden: Brill, 2008), vol. 2, pp. 753–774, especially p. 756.

5 See Victor Turner, 'The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal', *History of Religions*, 12/1 (1972), pp. 191–230.

6 Among many examples one can mention the Shrine of the Footprint of ʿAli northwest of Kashan, Iran. A lustre tile dated 1311–12 records and visualises a dream of Sayyid Fakhr al-Din Hasan al-Tabari. In the dream, the *sayyid* met ʿAli ibn Abi Talib and was instructed to build a shrine as a pilgrimage site. The tile depicts the footprints of a horse and camel, which stood outside the entrance of a tent where the *sayyid* met ʿAli. Many other examples – portable objects of ceramic and paper – visualize footprints, the traces of real presences (also see cat. no. 12), while several shrines contain the physical imprints of footprints. For the tile, see Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (eds), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York/New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2002), cat. nos 119–120.

7 Types of *mashhad* are often distinguished as sites of burial and/or martyrdom and sites that are by nature a virtual 'visual memorial' (*mashhad ruʾya*). The single term *ziyara* belies a complex and variegated historical and religious phenomenon. Some recent studies that give welcome texture to this complexity include Christopher S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyara and the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Late Medieval Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Josef M. Meri, *The Cult of Saints among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford: University Press, 2002); and Daniella Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria: Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyubids (1146-1260)* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). Taylor's book carefully explores debates between religious leaders on the legitimacy of *ziyara* and the key concept of human intercession between God and the individual Muslim.

8 For a history of the shrine at Mashhad, see May Farhat, *Displaying Piety: The Shrine of Imam ʿAli al-Rida in Mashhad under the Safavids*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2002.

9 The pilgrimage scrolls are discussed in Janine Sourdel-Thomine and Dominique Sourdel, 'Nouveaux documents sur l'histoire religieuse et sociale de Damas au moyen age', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 33 (1964), pp. 1–25; *idem*, 'Une collection médiévale de certificats de pèlerinage à la Mekke conserves à Istanbul: Les actes de la période seljoukide et bouride (jusqu'à 549/1194)', in Janine Sourdel-Thomine (ed.), *Etudes médiévales et patrimoine turc* (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1983), pp. 167–273; Şule Aksoy and Rachel Milstein, 'A Collection of Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates', in Irvin Cemil Schick (ed.), *M. Uğur Derman: 65 Yaş Armağan* (Istanbul: Sabanci Üniversitesi, 2000), pp. 101–134; and Roxburgh, 'Pilgrimage City'.

10 The most comprehensive recollection of pilgrimages made to Islamic (and Christian and Jewish) sacred sites is the *Kitab al-isharat ila maʿrifat al-ziyarat* by ʿAli ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi (d. 1215). For translation and commentary, see Josef W. Meri, *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage: ʿAli ibn Abi Bakr al-Harawi's Kitab al-Isharat ila Maʿrifat al-Ziyarat* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 2004).

11 After being abandoned in Mecca by Abraham, Hajar attempted to find water for her infant son Ismaʿil by running between the hillocks of al-Safa and al-Marwa, recollected in the *masʿa* of the pilgrimage rites, while Ismaʿil himself uncovered the 'Well of Zamzam'. At a later time, Ismaʿil helped his father Abraham to build the Kaʿba. See Rudi Paret, 'Ismaʿil', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second ed, vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 184.

12 Three *maqam*s are identified with the Hanbali, Maliki, and Hanafi schools of law. The Shafiʿis used the Zamzam building.

13 Medieval certificates regularly include images of the Meccan *Masjid al-Haram*, the *masʿa* between al-Safa and al-Marwa, Mount Arafat, Muzdalifa, and Mina, as well as the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina, and the *Haram al-sharif* in Jerusalem. For reproductions and line drawings, see Aksoy and Milstein, 'Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Hajj Certificates'; and Roxburgh, 'Pilgrimage City'.

14 See David A. King and Richard P. Lorch, 'Qibla Charts, Qibla Maps, and Related Instruments', in J. B. Harley and David Woodward (eds), *The History of Cartography*, vol. 2, book 1, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 189–205.

15 This and many other aspects of the Kaʿba, as well as stories related to it, are developed in the *qisas al-anbiyaʾ* ('stories of the prophets') genre. For example, see Abu Ishaq Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Thaʿlabi, *ʿAraʾis al-Majalis fi Qisas al-Anbiyaʾ or "Lives of the Prophets"*, trans. and annotated by William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), esp. pp. 27, 60, 99, 139–141, 143–144, and 145–154. Al-Thaʿlabi died in 1035.

16 See the closely related examples in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (Tim Stanley, *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Middle East* [London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 2004], p. 6, cat. no. 427-1900), and the al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait (Marilyn Jenkins [ed.], *Islamic Art in the Kuwait National Museum: The Al-Sabah Collection* [London: Sotheby, 1983], p. 122).

17 Al-Harawi's description of the *Masjid al-Haram* and the Kaʿba notes successive rebuilding in the early historical period and often hazards the presentation of quantitative data such as the dimensions of key architectural elements. For example, see Meri, *Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*, p. 238.

18 Such an example is an attestation of pilgrimage by proxy (*hac vekaletnamesi*) commissioned by the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman for his deceased son Şehzade Mehmed. The scroll, dated 1544–45, includes a comprehensive set of depictions of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem reflecting Mamluk and Ottoman renovations and additions to the architecture. See Emel Esin, 'Un manuscrit illustré representante les sanctuaires de la Mecque et Medine et le dome du mi-radj à l'époque des sultans turcs Selim et Suleyman 1er (H. 982–74/1516–66)', in *Les provinces arabes et leurs sources documentaires à l'époque ottomane,*

Comité international d'études pré-ottomanes et ottomanes, acts of the 5th symposium (Tunis: U.G.I.T., 1984), pp. 175–190.

19 For this history, see al-Thaʿlabi, *ʿAraʾis al-Majalis*, pp. 148–149. For a complete history of the Kaʿba, drawing on diverse primary sources, see A.J. Wensinck, 'Kaʿba', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second ed., vol. 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), p. 317.

20 For the *kiswa*, see M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 'Le voile de la Kaʿba', *Studia Islamica*, 2 (1954), pp. 5–21. On the history of the *mahmal* – the pilgrim caravan instituted by the Mamluks that included the *kiswa* – see Jacques Jomier, *Le mahmal et la caravane égyptienne des pèlerins de la Mecque, XIIIe-XXe siècles* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1953).

21 A discussion of the illustrated manuscripts is presented by Rachel Milstein, 'Futuh-i Haramayn: Sixteenth-Century Illustrations of the Hajj Route', in David J. Wasserstein and Ami Ayalon (eds), *Mamluks and Ottomans: Studies in Honour of Michael Winter* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 166–194.

22 A history of topographic views and their possible sources is presented by J.M. Rogers, 'Itineraries and Town Views in Ottoman Histories', in Harley and Woodward (eds), *The History of Cartography*, pp. 228–251.

23 In Mecca in 1853, Richard Burton witnessed Indian artists making images for pilgrims. See Richard Francis Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (2 vols) (London: Tylston and Edwards, 1893), vol. 1, p. 341. Another kind of image-bearing object included printed sheets of paper. A metal plaque in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (cat. 54.51), dated to the eighteenth century, is engraved with Qur'anic verses, prayers, and invocations to God and the Prophet Muhammad set around two images of *al-Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca and the Mosque of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina. The content of the texts suggests a talismanic function for the printed image.

I

DOUBLE-PAGE COMPOSITION SHOWING MECCA AND MEDINA

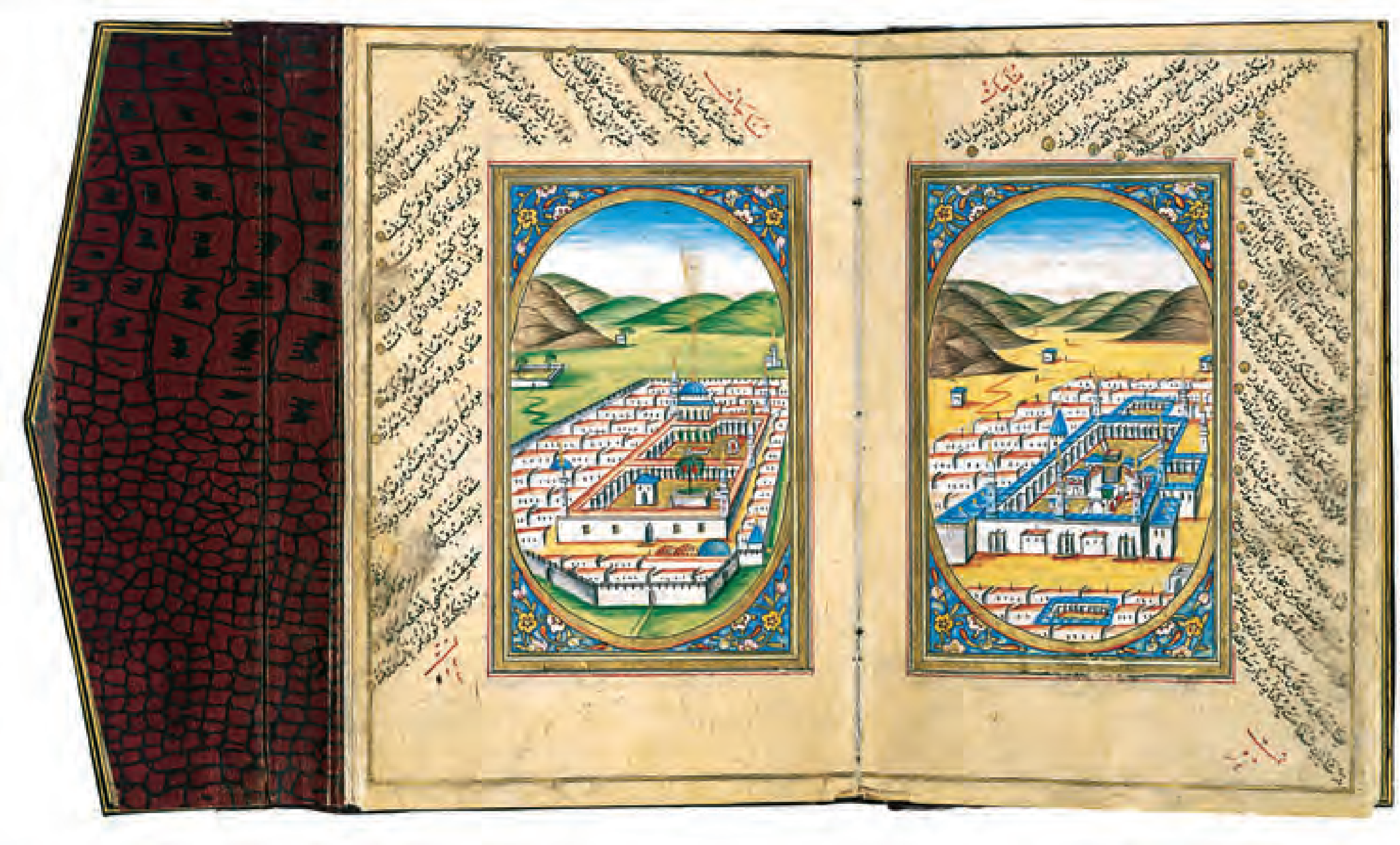
Folios 13v–14r from a manuscript of the *Dalā ʾ il al-khayrāt*
('Guidelines to Blessings') of Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī
Turkey; dated 25 Jumada ʾ l-Ula 1207/8 January 1793
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Manuscript: 15.4 x 10.7 x 1.7 cm
AKM 382

Publ: A. Welch 1978b, p. 136; AKTC 2007a, p. 53 (no. 26); AKTC 2007b, p. 58 (no. 26); AKTC 2009a, pp. 60–61 (no. 28); AKTC 2009b, pp. 60–61 (no. 28); AKTC 2010a, p. 63 (no. 29)

The text of this manuscript, fully titled *Dalaʾil al-khayrat wa-shawariq al-anwar fi dhikr al-salat ʿalaʿl-nabi al-mukhtar* ('Guidelines to the Blessings and the Shining of Lights, Giving the Saying of the Blessing Prayer over the Chosen Prophet') is a compendium, in Arabic, of prayers and other devotional materials for the Prophet Muhammad, including the noble names (*al-asmaʾ al-sharifa*) and epithets of the Prophet and a description of his tomb in Medina. Although the fifteenth-century author al-Jazuli originally came from a Berber tribe in southern Morocco, he is believed to have spent some years in Mecca and Medina, eventually returning to North Africa where he studied in the Qarawiyyin library in Fez and gained renown as a Sufi spiritual leader. The fruit of his studies was this hugely popular text, essentially a manual for devotion to the Prophet, written in the years before his death in or around 1465. The devotional text has maintained its popularity down the centuries, and, although not explicitly connected with pilgrimage, became associated with the Hajj (pilgrimage to the Kaʿba at Mecca), particularly during the later Ottoman period in Turkey – from which date both this example and cat. no. 2. The text was also popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century North Africa (Wright 2009, pp. 43, 164; see cat. no. 3).

Like many manuscripts of this text, the volume is provided with two illustrations only, showing the sacred topographies of the *Masjid al-Haram* (the sanctuary surrounding the Kaʿba at Mecca), and the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina. Other types of Ottoman prayer manual might contain many more illustrations, including various symbols of the Prophet and images of sacred relics (see Gruber 2009b for an example), but the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat* commonly contained only these two architectural compositions. The style of depiction employed in the present illustrations is typical of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Ottoman topographical paintings, with its linear perspective and blocking in of the surrounding city: a very similar image of the Mosque at Medina can be seen in a manuscript of the Qur'an dated 1824 and held in Cairo (El-Basha 1988–89, p. 240), and a comparable pair of images can be seen in a manuscript of the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat* dated 1739 and held in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Ghabban 2010, p. 571).

In the present manuscript, the Medina image shows the complex as it was before the renovations of Sultan ʿAbd al-Majid in the mid-nineteenth century, with the prominent Noble Dome over the tomb of Muhammad rendered in blue (in 1837 it was redecorated in green, which colour it retains today), and the palm tree of Fatima and the *khazinat al-nabi* (Treasury of the Prophet) standing in the centre of the courtyard (the former was moved in the nineteenth century, the latter destroyed). The golden light shown here emanating upwards from the Noble Dome is a widely recognised symbol of sanctity in images of the Mosque of the Prophet, some of which show the Noble Dome with a halo of flame (El-Basha 1988–89, p. 229).



2

DOUBLE-PAGE COMPOSITION SHOWING MECCA AND MEDINA

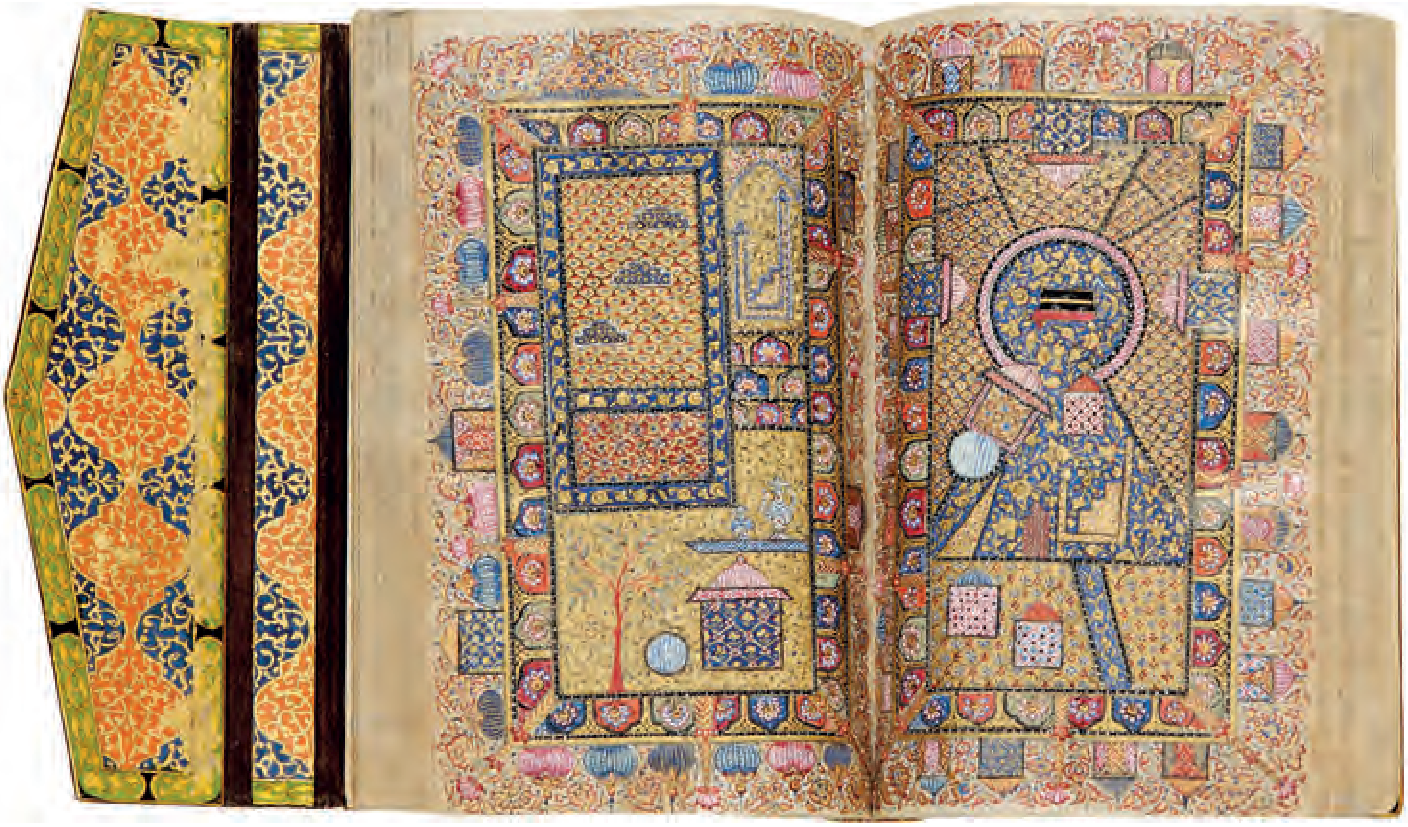
Folios 110v–111r from a manuscript of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt*
(‘Guidelines to Blessings’) of Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī
Probably Turkey; dated Muharram 1233/November 1818
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; bound in lacquer with gilding
Manuscript: 13.7 x 8.5 x 2.6 cm
AKM 278

Publ: A. Welch 1978b, pp. 137–143; Falk 1985, p. 139 (no. 113); AKTC 2008a, pp. 82–83 (no. 21)

As with cat. no. 1, the only illustrations contained in this early nineteenth-century manuscript of the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat* are a double-page pair of images of the sacred precincts of Mecca and Medina, although the present manuscript also has several pages of beautiful illumination. In some versions of this influential book the image of the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina was inserted into the text alone, following the description of the burial place of Muhammad and his two companions, but in illustrated manuscripts of the text from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards – particularly in Ottoman Turkey – the twinned images of Mecca and Medina came to be the standard imagery. Mecca is not, in fact, discussed in the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat*, although as the most important site in Islam its presence in these double-page compositions is hardly surprising (Witkam 2007, pp. 73–74; *idem* 2009, p. 30).

Although this manuscript, which was apparently executed for a patron called Muhammad ʿAdeni, was created later than cat. no. 1, the manner in which the images of Mecca and Medina have been constructed, using both plan and elevation simultaneously, harks back to an earlier, more schematic tradition of illustration that can be seen in countless Ottoman pilgrimage certificates (cat. nos 7 and 8), manuscript illustrations and ceramics (cat. no. 9) from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This representational technique tends to give the effect of a decorative ‘flattening’ of the image against the page. Although they map out the two holy sites, these views are not intended for orientation in direct travel, but they allow the viewer to visualise and evoke these places in his or her mind’s eye. Identifiable structures and features are shown from his or her most characteristic angles: in the Medina image on the left hand side, the three tombs of the Prophet and his companions, the Noble Dome above them, the minbar (an elevated platform for preaching, shown here as a right-angled triangle with pillars) and the Treasury of the Prophet are all depicted in clear elevation, while in the Mecca image the Kaʿba is clearly identifiable in the centre of the *Masjid al-Haram*.

Taken overall however, the images in this double-page composition dissolve into a series of highly decorative and brightly coloured fields in a manner that is quite different from much Ottoman Turkish imagery, and seems to be related to manuscript illustration and illumination from Islamic India. While the rest of the manuscript is of a style and quality that could be attributed to Turkey, the markedly different character of these paintings may have arrived via the Ottoman Hijaz (the western part of present-day Saudi Arabia), where Indian painters were involved in the manufacture of Hajj imagery (see cat. no. 7). This practice was attested by Richard Burton, who saw Indian artists at Mecca in 1853 who supported themselves by creating images of the sacred precinct for pilgrims (Burton 1893, vol. I, p. 341). In this pair of images, minarets have been multiplied and turned into floral sprays; elaborate domes in pinks and blues grow like fantastic blooms on the encircling arcades, which have in turn become decorative frames for the architectural images; and the date-palm of Fatima has become an elegant, small-leafed tree. Two comparable pairs of images in manuscripts of the same text are illustrated in Vernoit 1997, p. 32 (attributed to Kashmir), and Witkam 2009, p. 32 (attributed to Kashmir or Gujarat).



3

DOUBLE-PAGE COMPOSITION SHOWING MECCA AND MEDINA

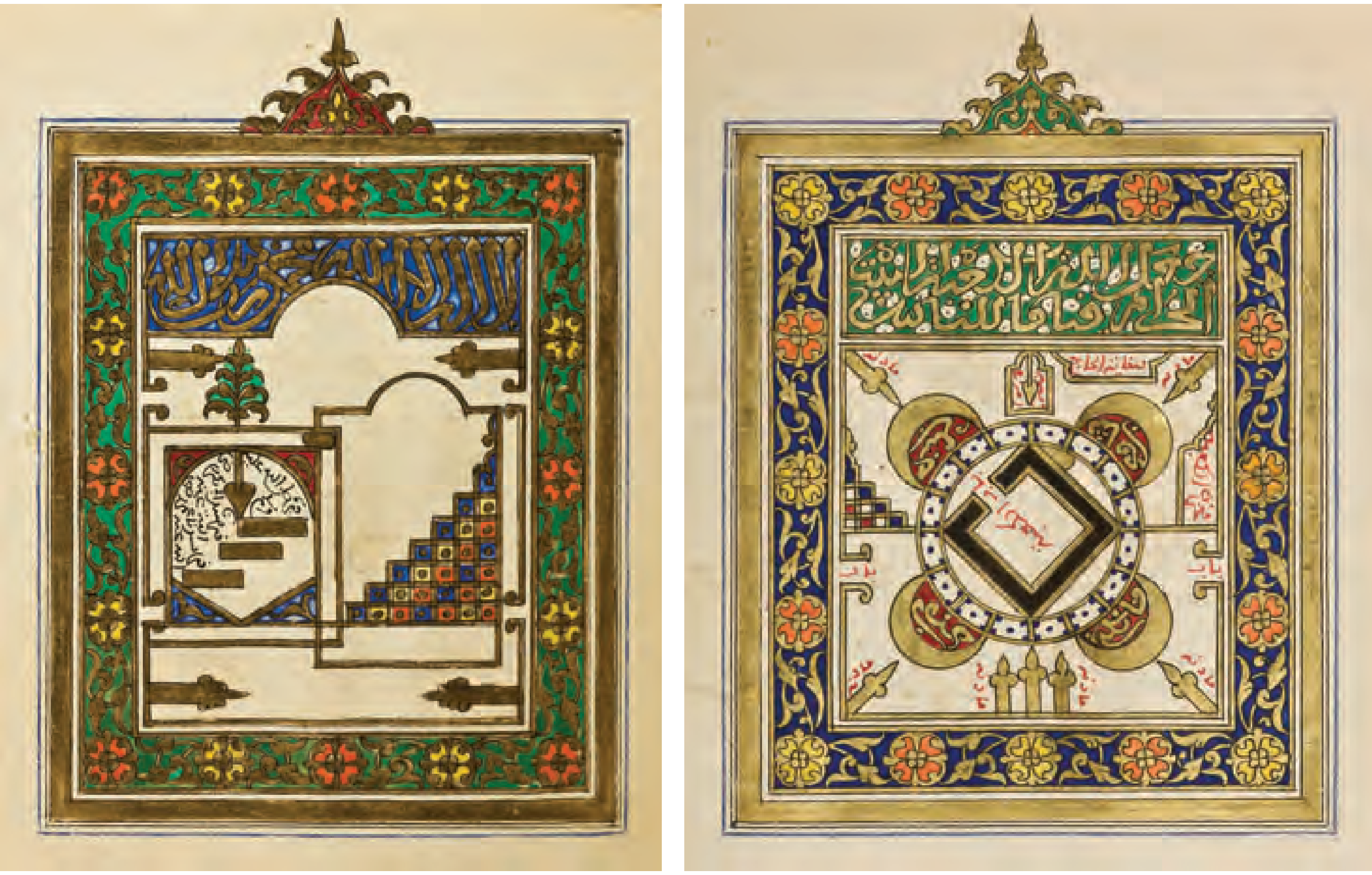
Folios 16v and 17r from a manuscript of the *Dalāʾil al-khayrāt*
(‘Guidelines to Blessings’) of Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūlī
North Africa; probably nineteenth century
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 14.5 x 13 x 5.9 cm
AKM 535
Unpublished

Like cat. nos 1 and 2, this North African manuscript of the *Dalaʾil al-Khayrat* contains a double-page illustration of the holy sanctuaries at Mecca and Medina, but the representational style is markedly different from many of the topographical images associated with Ottoman manuscripts. The schematic rendering of the sites evident in so many images of the *Masjid al-Haram* at Mecca and other sites of pilgrimage has here been taken much further, with the architectural complexes of both Mecca and Medina pared down to only their most significant elements. The resulting reduction of structure and space to a minimalist, almost abstract visual language moves these pages closer to manuscript illumination than pictorial representation.

Even the Kaʿba has been transformed from a solid black rectangle – as it appears in most images – to a perfectly square black frame outlined in gold and open halfway along one side. This square is oriented on the diagonal axis and forms the centre of a near-symmetrical design, with the four sides of the Kaʿba closely contained within a circle (presumably representing the outer edge of the *mataf*, or pavement around the Kaʿba), beyond which lie four evenly spaced segmental cartouches containing the names of the four main schools of orthodox Sunni Islam – Hanafi, Maliki, Shafiʿi and Hanbali – written in gold and cradled within four gold crescents. The seven minarets of the *Masjid al-Haram* have been reduced to small gold stalks arranged symmetrically around the edge of the central field, and the minbar that figures so consistently in images of the sacred enclosure has been almost subsumed into the illumination framing the page: only a small design of coloured squares in the middle of the left-hand side indicates its presence.

The image of the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina, on the left, has also undergone a process of severe schematisation. Little is left of the standard imagery beyond the minbar of the Prophet – as in the Mecca image, this is reduced to a grid of coloured squares framed in gold – and the tombs of Muhammad, Abu Bakr and ʿUmar. The plain gold frames drawn around the two distinct iconographic units of the minbar and the three tombs, to indicate that they are contained within separate structures, can also be seen on a much earlier North African copy of the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat*, dated 1638–39 and now held in the Chester Beatty library, Dublin (Wright 2009, p. 165). The protruding semi-circle at the top of the Medina image field, which represents the mihrab of the Prophet, also appears in the Chester Beatty manuscript. A final commonality between that earlier example and the present manuscript is the inclusion of an elaborately illuminated image of the Prophet’s sandal in each.

It seems likely that the artist of the present pages was working from a much earlier model of North African pilgrimage imagery, within a tradition that was so long-established that many of its component parts had become almost abstracted over time. The earliest illustrated pilgrimage scrolls, dating from the late twelfth century, show an intensely schematic but also sometimes rather densely informative approach to the rendering of holy places and stations of the Hajj, eventually becoming codified in the bound pilgrimage manuals that were produced in the early modern period, notably in Ottoman Turkey. However, the present manuscript stands as an important reminder that the imagery of the sacred sites underwent a variety of transformations in different parts of the Islamic world, with the sacred topographies of Mecca and Medina subject to many different visual re-interpretations across time and space.



4

ATTESTATION OF PILGRIMAGE TO THE SHRINE OF IMĀM ʿALĪ RIZĀ AT MASHHAD

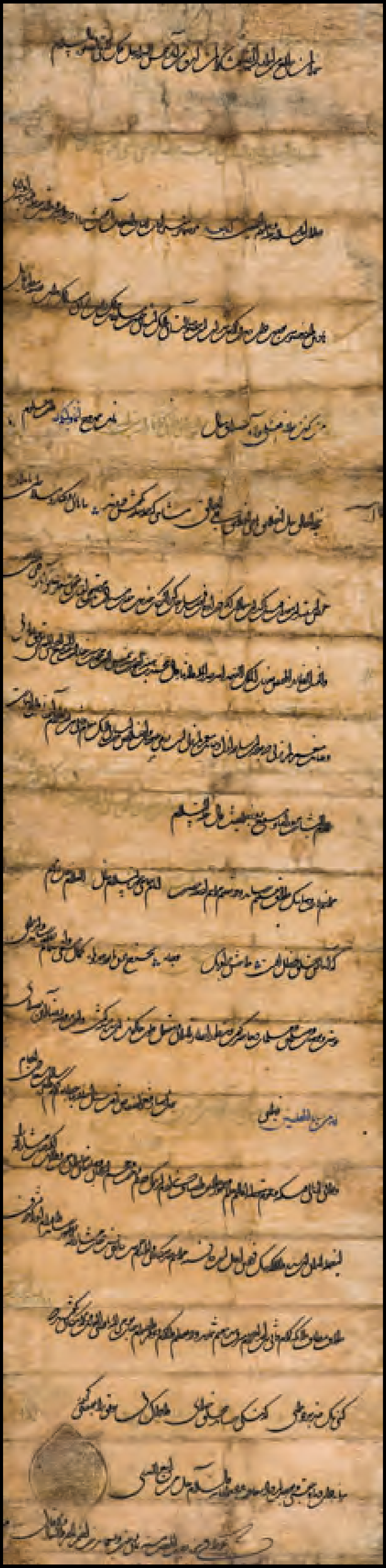
Mashhad, Iran; dated Rajab 928/May 1522
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper
90 x 23 cm
AKM 899
Unpublished

Although pilgrimage to Mecca for the Hajj is a canonical requirement for Muslims, pious visitations (*ziyarat*) to other holy sites have also formed a vital aspect of religious life in various Islamic cultures, and a means of earning *baraka* (blessing or grace). The tombs of saints (*awliyaʾ*) and prophets, as well as sites associated with sacred events, became centres of pilgrimage; some medieval travellers seem to have journeyed extraordinarily widely in their quest to visit these sites (Meri 2004). In particular, Shiʿi Islam has traditionally placed a strong emphasis on *ziyarat* to the tombs of the Prophet's family and the other Shiʿi imams.

A very important figure in the history of the Iranian Shiʿa is ʿAli ibn Musa ibn Jaʿfar, also known as Imam ʿAli Riza, the eighth imam of the Twelver Shiʿa, who is buried at Mashhad in northeastern Iran. During the period of Safavid rule in Iran (1501–1722) the shrine of Imam ʿAli Riza became a particularly important focus of veneration. As a Shiʿi dynasty, the Safavids were vigorous in their promotion of the state religion, and pilgrimage to the shrine of the Imam ʿAli Riza was endorsed by the Safavid sultans. Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–1576) and Shah ʿAbbas (r. 1587–1627) both demonstrated their piety through imperial pilgrimages, aligning the Safavid state with Shiʿi practice ever more clearly. In 1601 Shah ʿAbbas even made the long pilgrimage from Isfahan to Mashhad on foot to emphasise his personal piety and humility. *Ziyarat* to the tombs of the imams could be an important supplement to, and sometimes substitute for, the Hajj to Mecca itself, something that is attested in this certificate of pilgrimage by the naming of Mashhad as 'the second house of God' (*ibid*., pp. 140–141).

For the Shiʿa, the imams hold intercessional powers that can be supplicated most meaningfully at the burial place of the imam. Accordingly, a ten-stage sequence of rituals was to be undertaken at the shrine by believers who wished pray to Imam Riza, and these were recorded in the *Jamiʿ-i ʿAbbasi* of Shaykh Bahaʾi (1547–1621). After performing ritual washing, putting on clean clothes and entering the shrine barefoot, the believer was to stand at the foot of the tomb, then sit at the head of the tomb and perform the gestures of supplication, return to the foot of the tomb to curse the imam's murderers, prostrate himself at the head of the tomb and finally leave the shrine without turning his back on the tomb, uttering specific prayers at each stage of the process (Canby 2009, pp. 91–92).

The present document certifies that a man, whose name has been read as Amir Sadr al-Milla wa'l-Dunya wa'l-Din Muhammad ibn Sayyid Ahmad ibn Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Sayyid Ghiyath al-Din ʿAbd al-Sami al-Husayn al-Misri, performed the pilgrimage to the shrine of the Imam Riza at Mashhad in May 1522, and the official seal of the shrine has been stamped at the bottom. One other certificate of pilgrimage to Mashhad is known from the early Safavid era. Although it is incomplete and, being dated 14 Dhu'l-Hijja 937/29 July 1531, is slightly later than this example, the seal of the shrine appears to be the same on both certificates, and the calligraphic style is closely comparable across the two documents: the same exaggerated flourish on the word *fi* ('in') can be seen in the final lines of both pieces (Blair 2008, p. 429). Certificates of this type would have functioned as important documentation of pious undertakings and blessings earned for pilgrims, and as such also appear to have been regarded as useful in warding off misfortune.



5

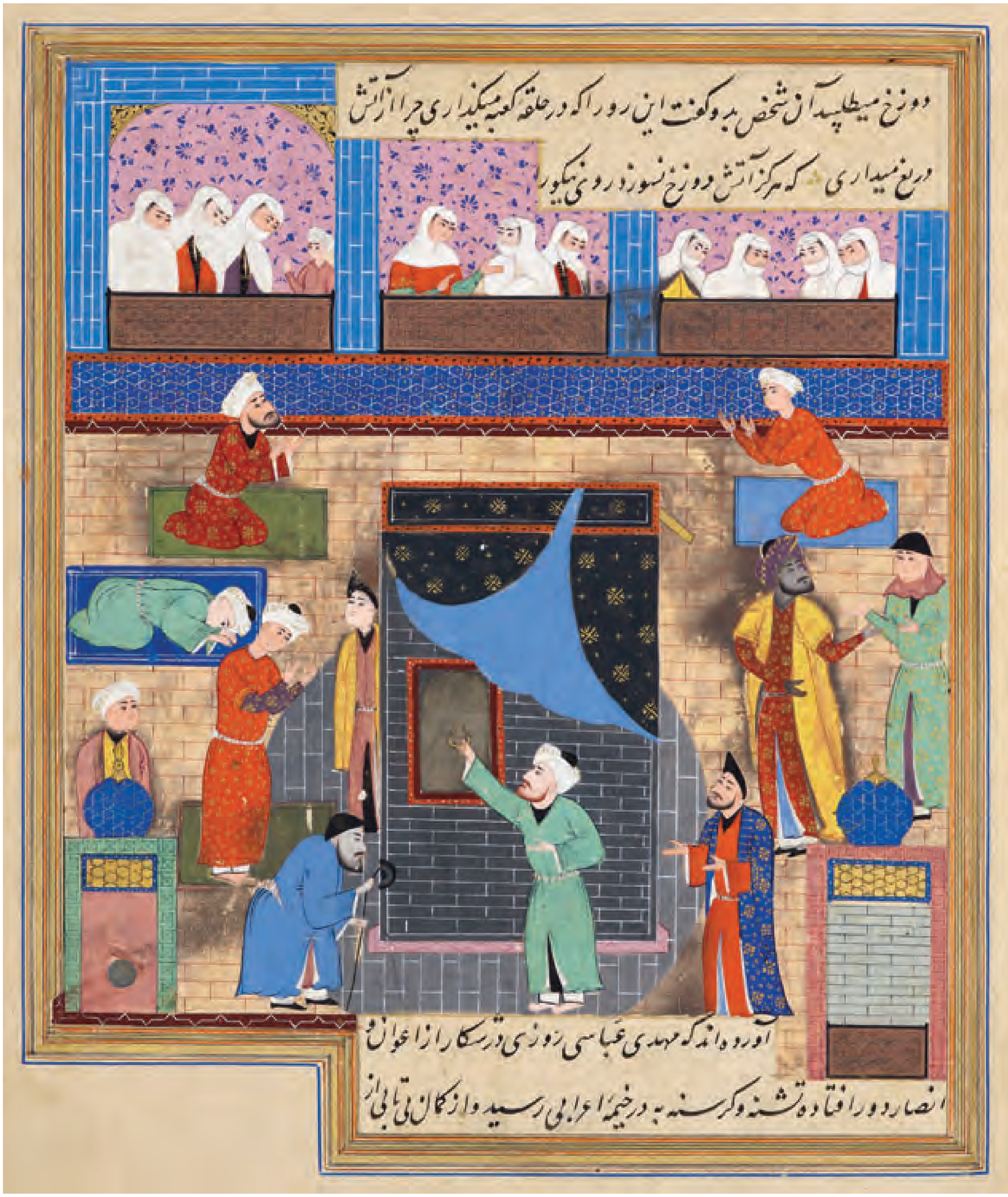
PILGRIMS AT THE KAʿBA

Folio 31r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Nigāristān* of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ghaffārī
Shiraz, Iran; dated 980 H/1573 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 38.7 x 24.9 x 6.4 cm
AKM 272
Publ: A. Welch 1978b, p. 78 (not ill.); AKTC 2010b, p. 303 (no. 131; binding only)

The *Nigaristan*, a collection of anecdotes concerning key figures from the early history of Islam, was completed by the sometime *Qadi* (judge) of Qazwin, Ghaffari, in 959 H/1552 CE – only some twenty years before this copy was made. The text was originally dedicated to the second Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1524–1576). In addition to historical events, the *Nigaristan* is also concerned with the relation of genealogies: the text traces the lineage of the Safavid dynasty back through Musa Kazim, the seventh imam of the Twelver Shiʿa (Newman 2006, p. 30). In the tradition of Islamic kingship that connects political legitimacy with Messianic claims this was an important line of descent for the ruling power. The same lineage also appears in other Safavid histories, including Ghaffari's own *Nusakh-i jahan-ara*, and enabled the Safavid rulers to claim legitimacy as *sayyids*, or descendents of the Prophet. As an important dynastic text for the Safavid rulers, there are a number of other Safavid manuscripts of the *Nigaristan* in existence; however, illustrated versions are less common and the forty-four high-quality miniatures in this example (see also cat. no. 16) make it a very important copy of this manuscript.

The present image of a man beating on the door of the Kaʿba is indebted to a pre-existing iconography of Kaʿba scenes in miniature paintings found in earlier texts, including well-known and often-repeated narrative images from the *Khamsa* of Nizami and the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, and certain depictions of the ascension (*miʿraj*) of the Prophet (see Simpson 2010). Although this painting is distinct from many of those earlier prototypes in its close focus on the Kaʿba and lack of surrounding topography, there is an attention to detail that grounds it in reality. The grey stone from which the Kaʿba is built, the elevated position of the door (in current reality about two metres off the ground, and with two ring knockers rather than one), the presence of the black cloth covering of the Kaʿba (known as the *kiswa*), missing its inscription band (see cat. no. 6) but embroidered in gold and lifted to reveal the door, and the circular pavement around the Kaʿba, known as the *mataf*, all bespeak close familiarity with visual and textual sources, or perhaps even an artist who had performed the Hajj himself. By this period, the topography of the Kaʿba was extremely well known, and had circulated widely in different formats. A depiction fairly similar to this one can be seen in a *miʿraj* image from a Shiraz manuscript produced c. 1585–90 (Uluç 2000, p. 84).

If the image was intended to represent the Hajj, one would also have expected to see shaved heads and the white ritual garment of the pilgrim, indicating the sacred state of *Ihram*, and it can be assumed that this is not what was intended. However, various aspects of the practice of ritual prayer have been considered: several pilgrims have bare feet, indicating their ritual purity, while some pray on prayer rugs and veiled women look on from a separate area.



دوزخ میطلبید آن شخص برو گفت این روز را که در حلقهٔ کعبه میگذاری چرا از آتش

دریغ نمیداری ❁ که هرگز آتش دوزخ نسوزد روی نیکو ر

آورده اند که مهدی عباسی روزی در شکار از اعوان و

انصار دور افتاده تشنه و گرسنه به در خیمهٔ اعرابی رسید و از گمان بی تابی از

6

EMBROIDERED PANEL FROM THE ḤIZĀM OF THE KAʿBA

Cairo, late nineteenth or early twentieth century
Black, gold and red silk embroidered with gold and silver thread over padding
850 x 91 cm
AKM 823
Unpublished

The Kaʿba, the cuboidal structure at the centre of the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca, is fully draped every year in a ritual covering called the *kiswa* ('garment'), made up of eight panels of black silk. This is traditionally adorned with the *hizam* ('belt'), which consists of eight horizontal panels embroidered with verses from the Qur'an, with two sections adorning each side of the Kaʿba and the whole forming a continuous band around it, positioned about two thirds of the way up the height of the Kaʿba. The *hizam* thus constitutes the most important and visible decoration of the Kaʿba. Additional decoration of the *kiswa* comes in the form of the curtain for the door of the Kaʿba (the *burqaʿ*, 'married woman's veil'), which is embroidered with metal threads and tassels, and the interior *kiswa* which 'dresses' the inside of the Kaʿba in coloured satin. It has been observed that during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the present piece of the *hizam* is thought to have been made, various sources refer to the Kaʿba itself as a 'bride', a conception that is perhaps borne out by the names of the various parts of its covering (Young 1993).

From the Mamluk period onwards textiles for the Kaʿba were sent annually from Cairo to Mecca: these included the *kiswa*, as well as the *hizam*, and the *burqaʿ* for the door. Covers for the tomb of the Prophet and graves of the companions of the Prophet at Medina were also sent under imperial escort with the Hajj caravan from Cairo. The black *kiswa* that covered the cuboidal form of the Kaʿba was thus replaced every year, and the fabrics of the previous *kiswa* were traditionally distributed between the ruler of Mecca, the gatekeepers of the Kaʿba and other important Meccan figures, who cut the textiles into fragments and sold them to rich pilgrims as souvenirs of the Hajj. By this means a large number of fragments of these fabrics now exist in museums and private collections, although during the Ottoman period some *kiswa* fabrics and other covers for important structures were returned to the Ottoman treasury after use, meaning that the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul retains a collection of over six hundred of these textiles (Ipek 2006, p. 290).

It is thought that the Ottoman tradition of sending textile covers to the sanctuaries at Mecca and Medina began during the reign of Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566), as the earliest extant door curtain and band for the Kaʿba bear the name of that sultan. The practice continued until the Ottoman Empire lost control of the Hijaz region in the early twentieth century. Records from the first years of the twentieth century state that the *kiswa* and the *mahmal* (a ceremonial palanquin also sent to Mecca each year) were brought out for display in Cairo every year on 26 Shawwal, before being taken to the railway station for transport to the Hijaz via Suez (Young 1993, p. 289). The old *kiswa* was removed on 25 Dhu'l-Qaʿda, and after fifteen days during which the Kaʿba was left uncovered, the new covering would be inaugurated on 10 Dhu'l-Hijja (Vernoit 1997, pp. 27, 31).

بسم الله الرحمن
الله

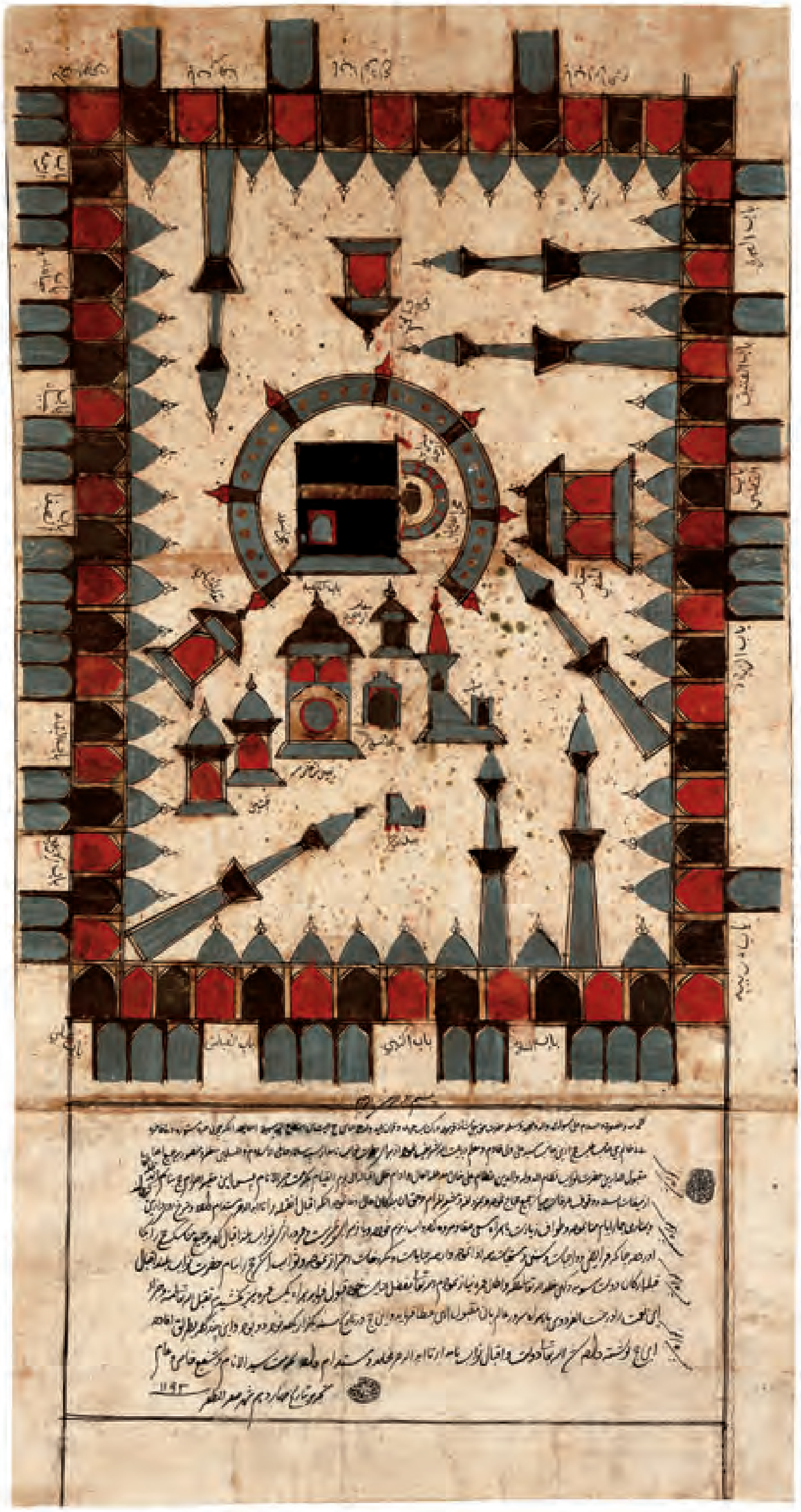
7

HAJJ CERTIFICATE WITH IMAGE OF THE *MASJID AL-ḤARĀM* AT MECCA

Probably Hijaz; dated 14 Safar 1193/3 March 1778
Ink, opaque watercolour and silver on laid paper
44.5 x 85 cm
AKM 528
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 56 (no. 24); AKTC 2007b, p. 52 (no. 24); Makariou 2007, pp. 204–205 (no. 74); AKTC 2008a, pp. 78–79 (no. 19)

Every Muslim is bound to undertake the Hajj – the pilgrimage to Mecca to perform the prescribed schedule of rites during Dhu'l-Hijja, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar – once in his or her lifetime, provided they have the means to do so. However, if one is incapable of performing the Hajj for reasons of illness or other incapacity, it is possible to designate a representative, who has previously performed the Hajj for himself, to undertake the Hajj on one's behalf. The accomplishment of this surrogate pilgrimage was recorded in a certificate to be brought back to the incapacitated person, providing them with authentication of their fulfilment of the Hajj by proxy. The rather sprawling Persian inscription on this certificate states that the Hajj was undertaken by a man called Sayyid ʿAli Vali on behalf of a woman called Bibi Khanumji, and was commissioned by one Nizam ʿAli Khan. The seal of Sayyid ʿAli Vali is given as guarantee of his fulfilment of the Hajj rites, in a state of ritual purity, in the year 1192 H/December 1777, which is some months earlier than the date the certificate was signed (Makariou 2007, p. 204).

The representation of the sacred precinct at Mecca shown on this certificate shares its visual conventions with many similar images from the paraphernalia of pilgrimage. The tradition of using informative topographical imagery of pilgrimage sites to accompany attestations of pilgrimage to Mecca had existed from the late twelfth century, with schematic images of the holy stations visited along the journey inserted between the lines of text. The present image is typical of the illustrative style that was fully codified by the sixteenth century and widely used in pilgrimage manuals such as the Persian *Futuh al-haramayn* ('Description of the [two] holy sanctuaries') by Muhyi Lari, completed in 1506 (Milstein 2006). Almost all of the individual elements are shown in elevation, albeit without a consistent ground-line, but the image is arranged as a plan. The surrounding *riwaq*s (arcades) are represented as a rectangular frame of domed arches around the whole area, oriented towards the Kaʿba and coloured alternately in red and black, and the manner in which the repeated domes have been depicted has led to the suggestion that many of these images were produced by Indian artists working in Mecca (see Rogers 2007, p. 203, and cat. no. 2). The multiple entrances to the sacred precinct, shown projecting outwards from the rectangular enclosure, are labelled with their names, as are all the key structures; the seven minarets are here depicted as identical in appearance (which they would not have been) and shown in elevation, leaning into the centre of the sacred space. The Kaʿba itself, draped in the *kiswa* and bounded to the right by the low semicircular wall of white marble known as *al-hatim*, forms the centre towards which all other elements are oriented.



8

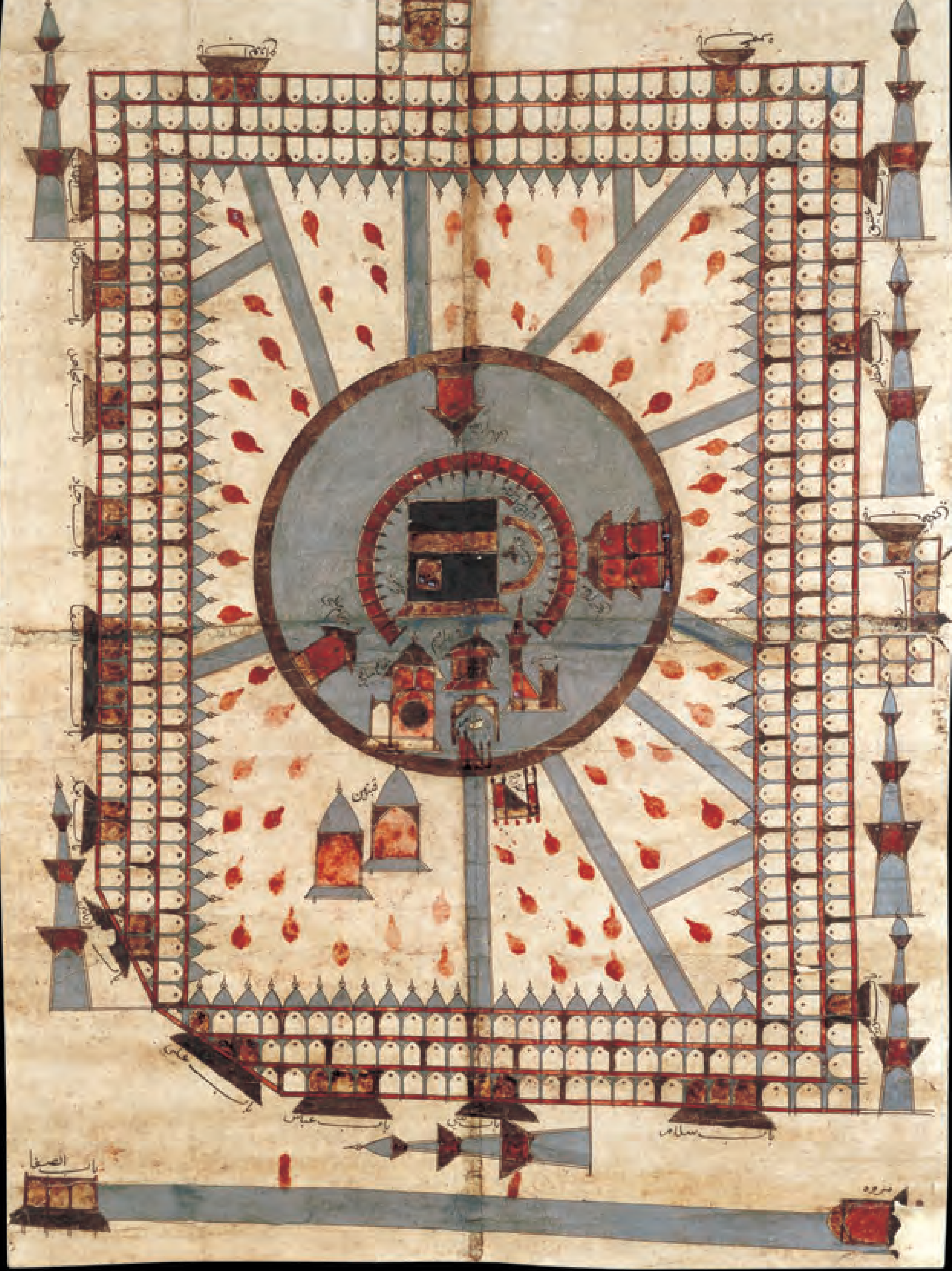
HAJJ CERTIFICATE WITH IMAGE OF THE *MASJID AL-ḤARĀM* AT MECCA

Probably Hijaz; eighteenth century
Ink and watercolour on laid paper
61.5 x 85 cm
AKM 529
Publ: AKTC 2007a, pp. 62–63 (no. 31); AKTC 2007b, pp. 58–59 (no. 31); AKTC 2009a, pp. 58–59 (no. 26); AKTC 2009b, pp. 58–59 (no. 26); AKTC 2010a, p. 61 (no. 27)

Like cat. no. 7, this image is thought to come from a Hajj certificate of the eighteenth century, presumably executed as a souvenir to commemorate the completion of pilgrimage to Mecca. Surviving illustrated pilgrimage certificates from the Islamic world date from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries onwards, although early examples are now rare (see Aksoy – Milstein 2000; Roxburgh 2008). Again, the style of draughtsmanship seen in this piece has been read as suggestive of an Indian artist, although regardless of nationality that artist was most likely working in or near Mecca, providing an important service for proud pilgrims.

The topographical elements common to all such images are present and carefully labelled in this painting, which may well originally have formed part of a larger scroll. The Kaʿba is covered in the ornamented cloth known as the *kiswa*, with the location of the Black Stone (*al-hajar al-aswad*) in the eastern corner (from which circumambulation starts) written at the lower left hand side, and the waterspout (*mizab al-rahma*) shown protruding from the upper right-hand corner. Directly below the Kaʿba is the small domed structure known as the *maqam Ibrahim* (containing the footprints of Abraham), and to the right of this is the minbar. To the left of the *maqam Ibrahim* and the gate which lies directly below it is the Zamzam well, with the well itself shown as a circle in the lower part of the structure (see Hawting 1980). The three other little structures, which project into the blue central circle with their bases attached to its outer edge, housed the religious leaders of three of the main schools of Sunni Islam; the fourth, the Shafiʿi, used the Zamzam well building. Although the *maqam Ibrahim* is still there today (if somewhat smaller now than it was in the eighteenth century), access to the Zamzam well has been moved underground, and the buildings for the four schools no longer exist (Wensinck 1978, p. 317).

In spite of its conformity to type, this image of Mecca is perhaps unusual in the emphasis that has been placed on the large grey-blue circle that completely encloses both the Kaʿba and the surrounding structures: this imagery recalls early Islamic maps that show the Kaʿba at the very centre of the world, and underscores the figurative place of the Kaʿba at the heart of Islam (King – Lorch 1992, pp. 189–200).


باب علی
باب عباس
باب النبی
باب سلام
باب الصفا
مروه

9

TILE WITH IMAGE OF THE *MASJID AL-ḤARĀM* AT MECCA

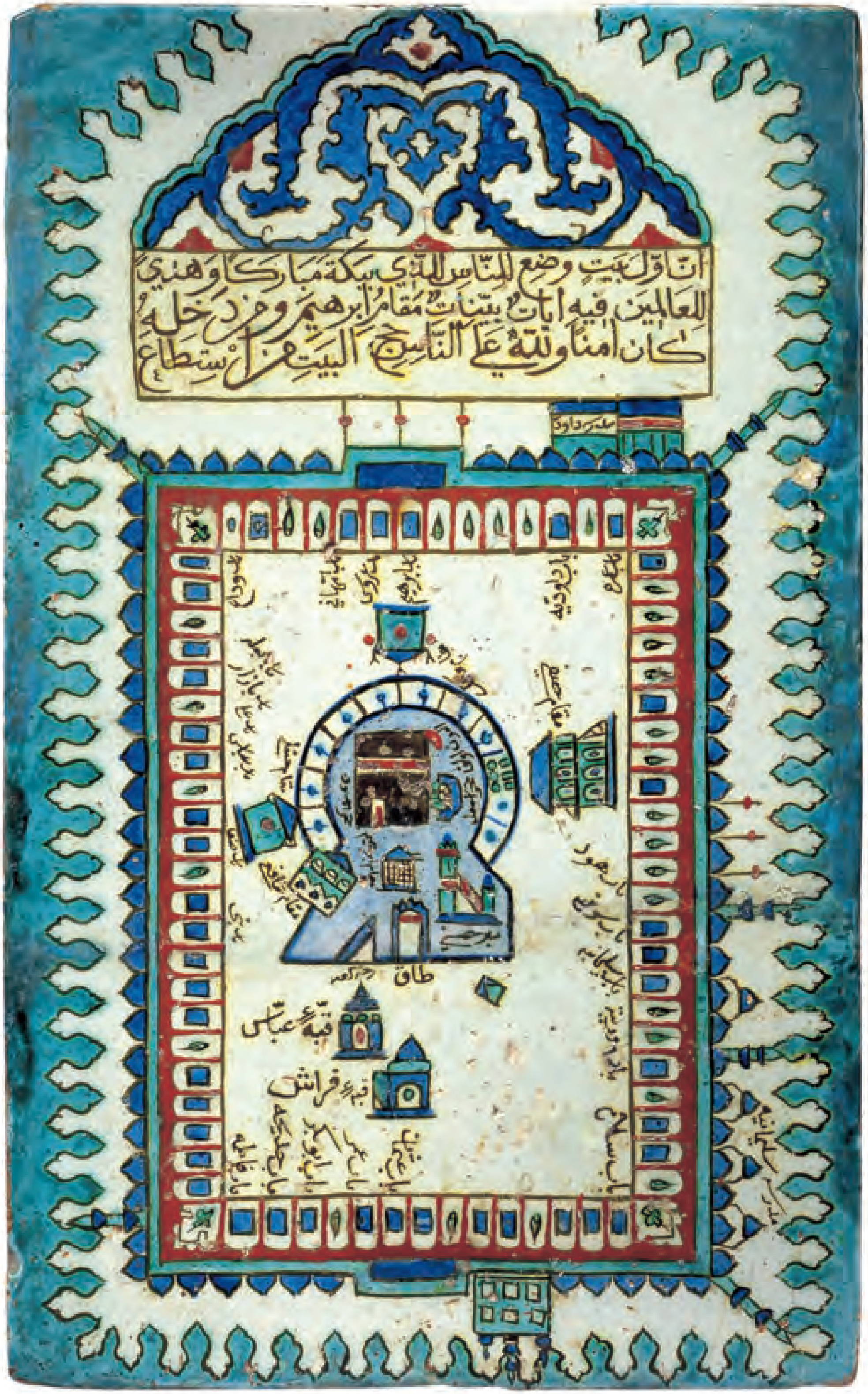
Iznik, Turkey; seventeenth century
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
52 x 32 cm
Inscription: Sura 3 (*Āl ʿImrān*), verses 96–97
AKM 587

Publ: Erdmann 1959, fig. A.1 and p. 194; Geneva 1981 (no. 109); Falk 1985, p. 238 (no. 230); Mouliérac 1999, p. 33; AKTC 2007a, p. 57 (no. 25); AKTC 2007b, p. 52 (no. 25); Makariou 2007, p. 202 (no. 73); AKTC 2008a, p. 80 (no. 20); AKTC 2008b, p. 2; AKTC 2009a, p. 62 (no. 30); AKTC 2009b, p. 62 (no. 30); AKTC 2010a, p. 66 (no. 31)

The Ottoman interest in topographical depictions of sacred sites was not restricted to representations on paper. Tiles such as this one are commonly referred to as '*qibla* tiles' because they are sometimes found in or around the mihrab (an arcuated niche giving the direction of prayer) on the orientational *qibla* wall of religious buildings: the image of the sacred precinct at Mecca thus acts as a direct symbol of the orientation of all Muslim prayer towards the Kaʿba. Single tiles and tile panels of this type were produced in significant numbers at the Iznik potteries in Ottoman Turkey until the mid-seventeenth century, and probably later at Kutahya (Porter 1995, p. 111). It has been suggested that such pieces may have been produced as luxurious Hajj commemorations for rich individuals in Ottoman Turkey (Witkam 2009, p. 27), or for donation to religious establishments (Porter 1995, p. 111). The instantly recognisable image of the *Masjid al-Haram*, when used in the context of the mihrab to give orientation towards Mecca, allows even those who have not performed the Hajj to align their prayers towards an imagined *Masjid al-Haram* that has been visualised from related images.

In spite of the typically bright Iznik colours of this tile, a close relationship to the imagery of pilgrimage scrolls (cat. nos 7 and 8) is obvious: the keyhole shape of the *mataf* is emphasised, and the various objects of significance within the sacred precinct are shown in elevation and oriented towards the Kaʿba. The Kaʿba itself is presented, as in most other images, in its northeastern elevation (the side that contains the door), as it would appear to one who approaches through the *Banu Shayba* or *Bab al-salam*, the arched gateway (in blue on this tile) marking the traditional entrance to the *mataf*. The Qur'anic inscription at the top of the tile refers, appropriately enough, to Mecca and the importance of pilgrimage: 'The first temple ever built for mankind was that at Bakka [Mecca], a blessed site, a beacon for the nations. In it there are veritable signs and the spot where Abraham stood. Whoever enters it is safe. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty to God for all who can make the journey'.

Amongst several examples of such *qibla* tiles that remain in situ, a famous (damaged) example of the type, made up of eight tiles and bearing an inscription dating it to 1642, remains on the wall to the right of the mihrab in the Hagia Sophia, Istanbul (Erdmann 1959, p. 194). Although larger than the present piece, the Hagia Sophia tile panel is closely related to this example in both colouring and design. A further example very similar in design to this piece but different in colouration, and bearing a slightly longer inscription from the same passage of the Qur'an, is held in the al-Sabah collection, Kuwait (Jenkins 1983, p. 122).


ان اول بيت وضع للناس للذي بكة مباركا وهدى
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كان امنا ولله على الناس حج البيت من استطاع
طاق
قبة عباس
قبة فراش

10

ILLUSTRATION OF THE *MASJID AL-ḤARĀM* AT MECCA

Illustration from a manuscript of the *Chao Jin Tu Ji* ('Record of the Pilgrimage Journey')
by Ma Fuchu (Ma Dexin)
China; dated 1861
Woodblock print on ricepaper
Manuscript: 26.3 x 15.2 x 0.3 cm
AKM 681

Publ: AKTC 2007b, pp. 54–55 (no. 29); AKTC 2008a, pp. 84–85 (no. 22); AKTC 2008b, no. 26; AKTC 2009a, p. 62 (no. 29); AKTC 2009b, p. 62 (no. 29); AKTC 2010a, p. 64 (no. 30)

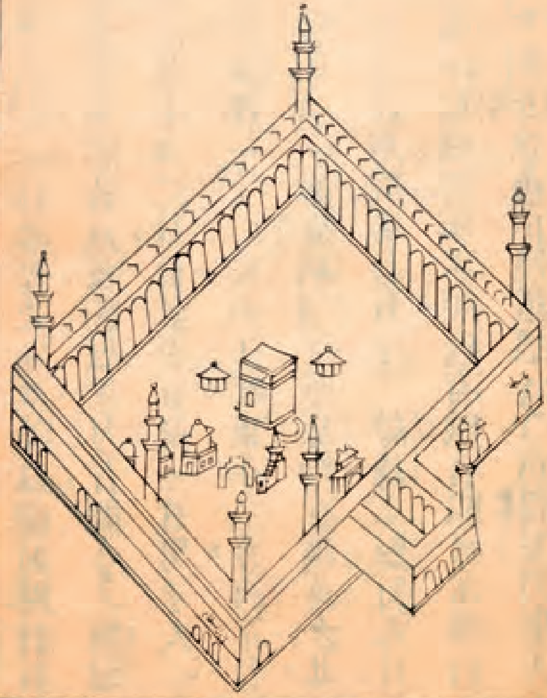
Ma Fuchu (1794–1874), also known as Ma Dexin, is one of the most highly regarded Chinese Hui (Muslim) scholars of Sino-Muslim philosophy of the late Qing period (1644–1911). His many works achieved a synthesis of Islam with neo-Confucionism and are judged to have gone some way towards aiding understanding between Chinese Muslims and Han Chinese. Born in Dali, Yunnan province, in southwestern China, Ma Fuchu eventually travelled to the Arabian Peninsula, where he performed the Hajj, also travelling to Egypt and through the Ottoman Empire before returning to China. He is perhaps best known for being the first scholar to translate the Qur'an into Chinese: he reportedly translated the entire text, but only five volumes of it were saved from a fire, eventually to be published as *Baoming zhenjing zhijie* ('A Direct Explanation of the Treasure of the Mandate of the True Scripture') in 1927 (Spira 2005, p. 19).

The present text is a pilgrimage narrative of his journey from China to Mecca, originally written in Arabic and later translated into Chinese. The Arabic inscription above the image reads 'Likeness of the *Masjid al-Haram* and the Kaʿba', and the image itself uses the graphic style of the woodblock print together with linear perspective and an elevated viewpoint to create a very clear, volumetric illustration, quite different from the other representational traditions presented in this section.

Unlike some other pilgrimage images of the *Masjid al-Haram* at Mecca (cat. nos 7 and 8), only three of the visible doors and none of the smaller structures have been labelled in this image, but care has been taken to arrange the various elements in the correct placing as they would be seen from a fixed, elevated viewpoint. Interestingly, the Zamzam well, the *Bab al-salam* and the minbar are arranged in front of the Kaʿba in roughly comparable positions to those seen on the earlier pilgrimage certificates, but the *maqam Ibrahim* (containing the footprints of Abraham) seems to be absent, as does the encircling fence that almost surrounds the Kaʿba in the earlier depictions. The fence and the *maqam Ibrahim* are both clearly visible in the photographs of the *Masjid al-Haram* taken by Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje in 1885 (Pesce 1986, pp. 25–27), so rather than being absent from the site, they have possibly been omitted to ensure legibility of the image.

凱爾白圖式

شكل المسجد الحرام والكعبة



11

HAJJ SCROLL INSCRIBED ‘SAYYID MUḤAMMAD CHISHTĪ’

Hjiaz or possibly India; dated 1202 H/1787–88 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper, mounted on cloth backing
918 x 45.5 cm
AKM 917
Unpublished

At over nine metres long, this scroll was certainly designed to be viewed in sections, with the successive topographies of the various stages of the Hajj and other sites of pious visitation (*ziyarat*) being revealed over time as the viewer(s) moved from one section to the next. The piece appears to have some later additions in the form of a talismanic table and symbols, and a calligram of a man made up of the names of Muhammad, ʿAli and Allah, all of which appear at one end. At the other end, an inscription cartouche in cream reserved on black – the appearance of which indicates that the artist, like those of many other pilgrimage certificates and manuals, was not a terribly accomplished scribe – gives the date 1202 H and the name ‘Sayyid Muhammad Chishti’. The same cartouche also contains the *Shahada* (the Muslim profession of faith), and states that this is a chart or diagram of Mecca, Medina, Najaf and Karbala.

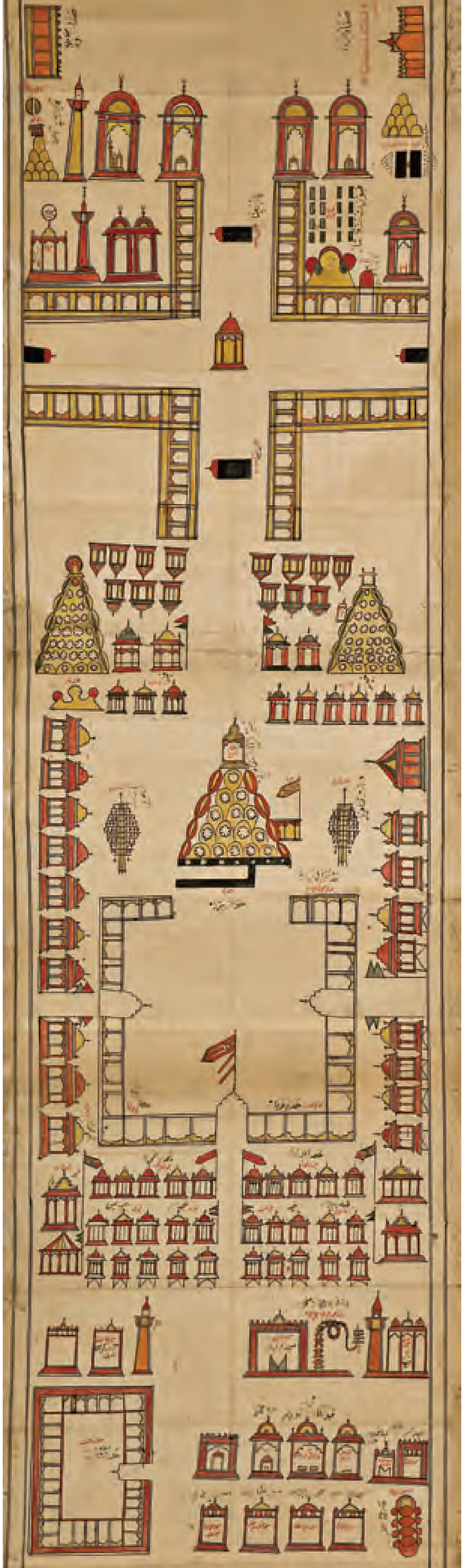
As this would suggest, the scroll goes beyond the canonical pilgrimage to Mecca to include sites of particular Shiʿi veneration, such as the tomb of Imam Husayn at Karbala and the tomb of ʿAli at Najaf. In keeping with this Shiʿi interest, the legendary double-pronged sword of ʿAli, the *dhu'l-faqar*, appears in several places: it is shown within the tomb of ʿAli, but it is also depicted on two flags in the Mount Arafat image (probably reflecting its use on certain Ottoman flags), and appears in a further guise as one of a series of non-topographical symbols framed within arched niches, where it is placed next to the image of a Shiʿi ʿ*alam* (a metal standard mounted on a pole for use in religious processions) in the shape of a stylised hand. The scroll is probably the work of an Indian artist, and must have been executed for a Shiʿi market.

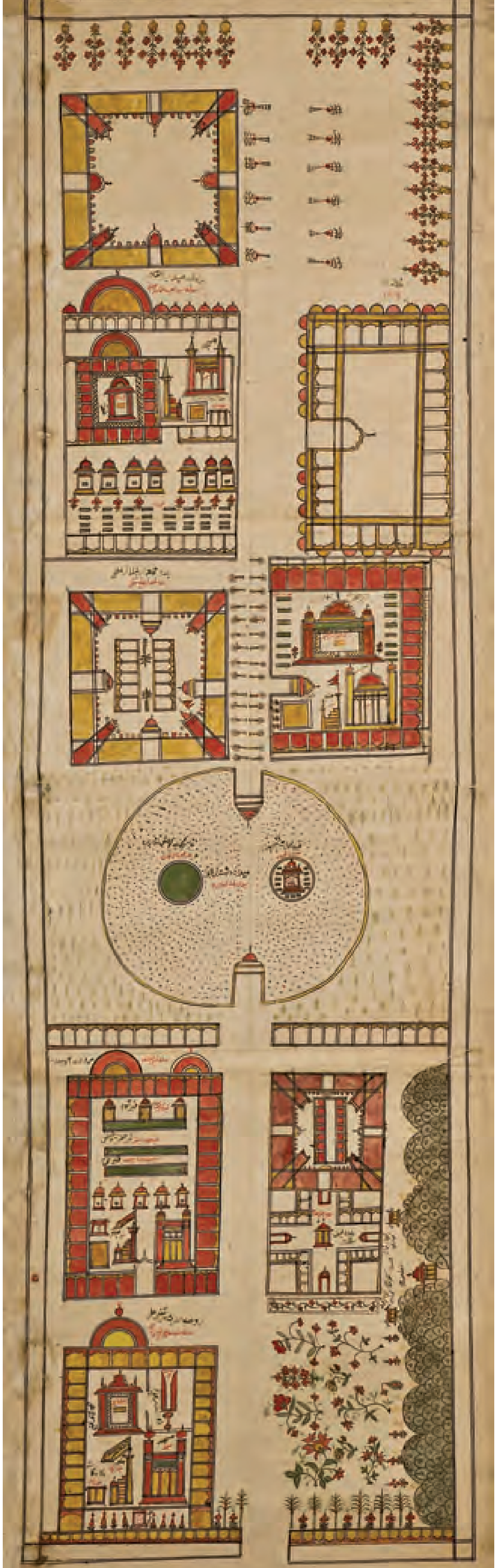
Although illustrated Hajj certificates had been in existence for many centuries, the imagery and sequence of this scroll seems to owe much to the tradition of illustrated pilgrimage manuals as they had developed from the sixteenth century onwards. The best known of these is the Persian text *Futuh al-haramayn*, completed in 911 H/1505–6 CE by Muhyi al-Din Lari, which formed the locus of an illustrative tradition fuelled by the Hajj industry of commemorative images sold as souvenirs for pilgrims or as records of the successful completion of the Hajj by proxy (see cat. no. 7). The initial sequence of topographical images on the scroll follows roughly the itinerary laid out in the *Futuh al-haramayn* and related texts, and many of the key structures have been labelled (see also Milstein 2001).

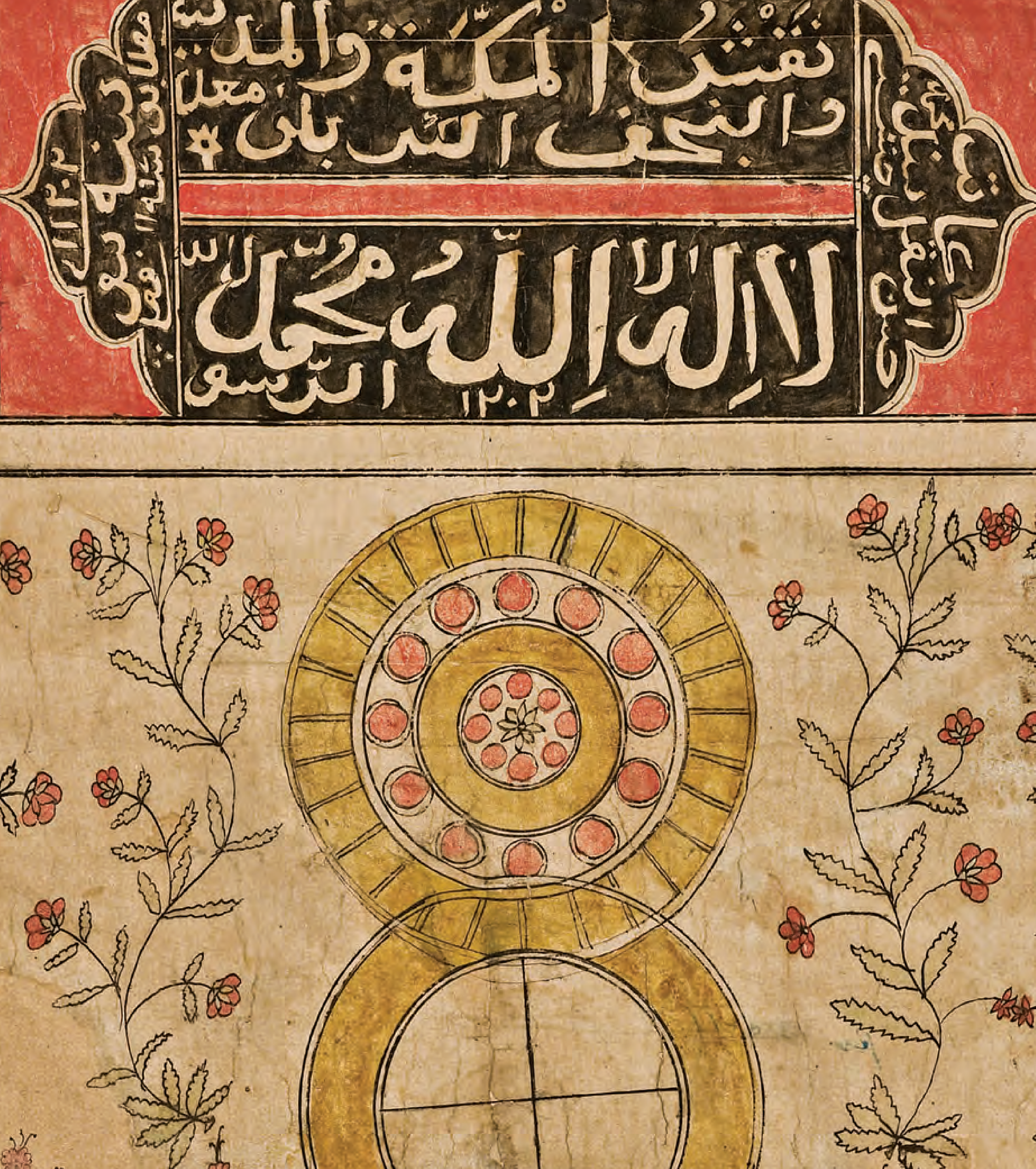
Starting from the inscriptive cartouche, the viewer is led through a garden and arrives at the Arabian port of Jedda, where triple-masted ships are at anchor. Continuing past the fortified citadel at Jedda and an elaborate round structure containing a well, the virtual pilgrim arrives at the *Masjid al-Haram* in Mecca, where the Kaʿba and its attendant structures are labelled. The image includes six minarets, although a seventh had been built by Sultan Süleyman in 1565–66, and it is possible that the artist may have been working from a much earlier model (Milstein 2006, p. 173). Leaving the *Masjid al-Haram*, the route eventually reaches the pilgrimage encampment at Mount Arafat, and then travels on to the Mosque of the Prophet at Medina. This was not part of the Hajj, but as the second holiest site in Islam many of the faithful chose to visit Medina during their pilgrimage to Mecca. This also marks the point at which the scroll shifts from a sequential description of sites related to the Hajj to a wider spectrum of pilgrimage sites and religious imagery.

Directly below the Medina image comes a representation of the third holiest Muslim sanctuary, the *Haram al-Sharif* (Noble Sanctuary) in Jerusalem. Interestingly, the artist has chosen to depict the Dome of the Rock, the spectacular octagonal building that dominates that site, as a domed niche almost undifferentiated from those around it save for the inclusion of a circular rock bearing an image of a footprint. This suggests that not only was the artist unfamiliar with the site itself, but in this instance he also was not using any of the many pre-existing pilgrimage images that depict the building as a large polygonal structure.

The next section is unexpectedly otherworldly: an image in the same style as the topographical images seems to show the 'straight path' (*al-sirat al-mustaqim*) of the good Muslim, on one side of which are the eight entrances to Paradise, while on the other are seven hells. Below this are more pilgrimage sites, including the tomb of Abdullah ibn ʿAbbas, a companion of the Prophet buried at Taʿif, near Mecca, while the last topographical sections of the scroll show the shrines at Karbala and Najaf. The whole construction represents an astonishingly rich record of pilgrimage practice and Shiʿi devotional imagery in the late eighteenth century, and will certainly reward further study.






نقش المكة والمدينة
لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
۱۳۰۲

II

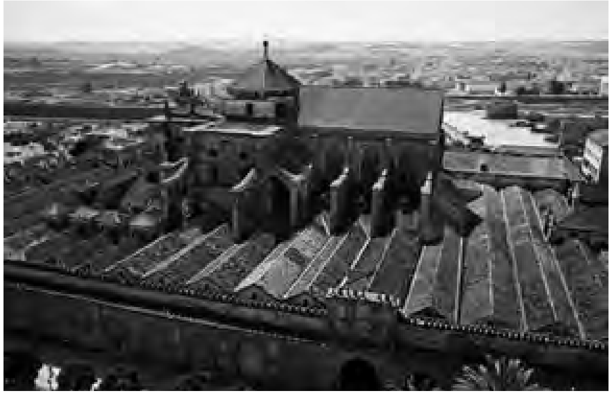
RELIGIOUS AND FUNERARY ARCHITECTURE

Mosques and commemorative shrines: Piety, patronage and performativity in religious architecture

Kishwar Rizvi

The practice of Islam does not require architectural inhabitation. A Muslim may pray in her home or out on a patch of grass under the sky; she may memorialise her loved ones through charitable giving or through rituals of devotion. Nonetheless, people have always turned to architecture to monumentalise their religion and to commemorate their dead, and Islam is no different. Buildings as geographically and historically different as the Great Mosque in Córdoba and the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran are nonetheless linked by the manner in which they express the ideologies of their builders, the social contexts of their construction, and the enactment of the beliefs that they physically manifest (figs 1 and 2).[1]

Islam does give attention to the individual human being and his or her place in society. The primary figure for emulation is the Prophet Muhammad, known in mystical discourse as the *insan-i kamil*, or the 'perfect man'.[2] As the messenger of God, Muhammad is given a high status; yet as an 'unlettered prophet' Muhammad is represented in the Qur'an as a simple man, one whose life and behaviour were worthy of praise. Thus his *sunna*, or exemplary model, was recorded by early Muslims and continues to be central to modern debates about Islam and the expectations related to its practice.[3] When considering the built environment, then, it is important to be aware of the relationship between the individual – as patron, devotee, builder – and the construction of religious sites.



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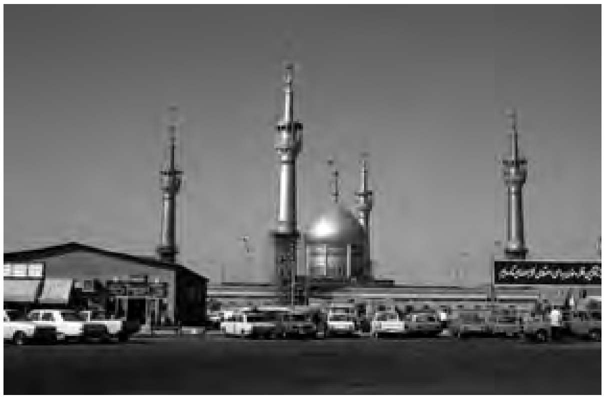


2

Figure 1. Córdoba, Great Mosque. Spanish Umayyad structure with later intervention, ninth–tenth and sixteenth centuries. Photograph by Mohammad al-Asad, 1986, courtesy of the MIT libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive.

Figure 2. Tehran, Tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini. Designed by Mohammad Tehrani, construction begun 1989. Photograph by the author, 1994, courtesy of the MIT libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive.

The Kaʿba in Mecca, the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem are buildings that serve as architectural archetypes because of their relationship, either direct or indirect, with the life of the Prophet Muhammad. As important links to the history of Islam, they are models for the construction of Muslim religious buildings throughout the world. The Kaʿba, believed by Muslims to have been built by the Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) and his son Ismaʿil, is the destination for pilgrims commemorating the annual Hajj pilgrimage, a duty incumbent on all Muslims. It is also the focus for devotees hundreds of thousands of miles away from Mecca, who turn in its direction to perform their daily prayers. The Prophet's mosque in

Medina, initially his residence, is the key source for understanding the conceptual foundations of Islam, in particular the emphasis on community and devotion, both of which are exemplified in its design and function. The Dome of Rock, built in 691 by the Umayyad caliph ʿAbd al-Malik, is also an important pilgrimage destination for Muslims and its location in Jerusalem situates Islam firmly within the Abrahamic traditions of Judaism and Christianity. For Muslims, it is associated with the Prophet Muhammad's night journey (the *israʾ* and *miʿraj*) and marks the site from which he ascended to the seven heavens. Subsequent religious structures would be influenced in varying degrees by these three early archetypes of Islamic architecture. The aim of this essay is to introduce general themes that pertain to mosque and shrine architecture, while linking them to some of the works of art gathered in this exhibition catalogue. The early modern period is chosen here as one in which some of the most vibrant examples of religious architecture were built, and a period which is well-represented through visual documents, extant objects, and buildings.

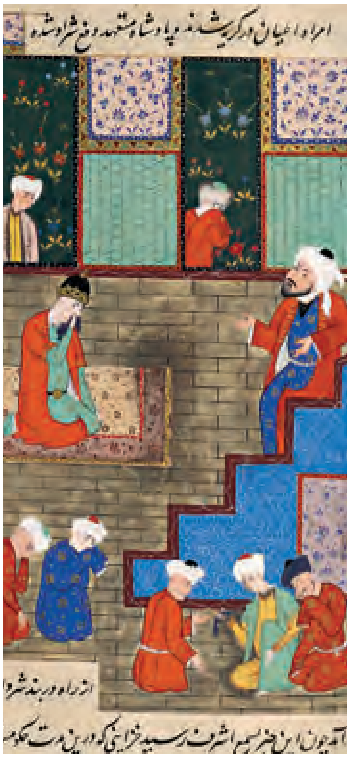
The sixteenth century has been understood by modern historians as the age of the great empires of the Middle East and South Asia. Three powerful dynasties ruled the majority of the Islamic world at this time, namely, the Ottomans in Turkey (1299–1923), the Safavids in Iran (1501–1722), and the Mughals in India (1526–1858). Often in combat over territory or political legitimacy, the rulers of these empires also forged important connections amongst themselves, gifting books and precious wares, exchanging embassies, and entering into marriage alliances. Their relationships with each other were finely balanced, as the dynasties at once attempted to find common ground and to distinguish themselves. The arts, in particular literature and poetry, shared many common ideals derived from older Persianate and Islamic traditions.[4] Architectural forms, too, would find commonalities through the particularities of use and function; references were brought in from distant locations and the historical past in sophisticated ways that helped actualise the identities of the rulers and their subjects. For example, the sixteenth-century tomb of Sultan Süleyman in Istanbul referenced the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and Mughal mosques in India were indebted to their central Asian predecessors. Nonetheless, as a discipline deeply rooted in its geographical location, many features of the architecture commissioned by the Ottomans, Safavids and Mughals were unique to the regions in which they were built (for example, the Ottoman tile revetments produced at Iznik: see cat. nos 34 and 61).

The Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal courts were distinguished by their ideological differences and imperial ceremonials.[5] In the sixteenth century, the Ottomans ruled over the Muslim holy sites in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, and presented themselves as the 'rightly guided' caliphs. Their neighbours, the Safavids, originated as a fourteenth-century Sufi order and professed genealogical links to the Prophet Muhammad through the seventh Shiʿi imam, Musa Kazim. The Indian Mughals were the descendants of Chengiz Khan and Timur Lang (Tamerlane), whose dynasties ruled Iran in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and were the cultural progenitors of all three great empires. Despite the shared legacies and religious ties between them, the courts chose to distinguish themselves through political rhetoric and public institutions. For example, the Ottoman sultans constructed monumental mosques in their capital cities as a sign of their power and legitimacy to lead the Muslim community. As descendants of the Prophet and pious Shiʿi devotees, the Safavids repaired and augmented the shrines of their ancestors, and placed emphasis on pilgrimage to these holy sites. The Mughals ruled over a diverse and populous empire, forging their regal authority through Indic and Muslim symbols. Their fortress-palaces were the sites of imperial splendour, where the king presided as a semi-divine godhead. Architecture was a fundamental means of distinguishing the great empires from each other. The mosques and shrines constructed by those dynastic rulers served simultaneously to monumentalise their faith and to augment their authority. Architectural representations, in deluxe manuscripts and encomiastic poetry written in praise of the ruler, were equally powerful modes of propagating the imperial message, and provide important clues for understanding their significance.

The Mosque

The primary goal of the mosque is to provide a communal gathering space for Muslims to pray together, following the example of the Prophet and his house/mosque discussed above. The mosque is understood by Muslims to be the 'House of God' where His divine aura may be felt, and where prayer is performed in God's presence. Thus devotion connects the believer to divinity, while enabling her to re-enact the rituals institutionalised by Muhammad many centuries earlier. The five daily prayers that are incumbent on each Muslim may be performed anywhere, but the Friday afternoon prayers are a communal obligation. There is no prescribed liturgy, *per se*; nonetheless, many Muslims gather for the Friday midday prayers at the main congregational mosques in their neighbourhoods and cities. The congregational mosque, or *jamiʿ masjid*, is the site in which the Friday sermon is read: traditionally, this was the time when the name of the ruler was announced by the leading cleric, or imam (fig. 3). This ritual made the mosque a desirable object of patronage for the ruling elite, augmenting their political authority as well as fulfilling their pious obligations.

Architecturally, the only requirement for the builder of the mosque is to orient the building in such a way that the direction towards Mecca, or the *qibla*, is clear. A further marker is provided by the mihrab, an empty niche often placed at the centre of the *qibla* wall.[6] The niche is sometimes the most highly decorated element in the mosque, and sometimes remains enigmatically abstract, a simple dent in the planar surface of the wall. Decorative motifs, such as mosque lamps and flowering vases, symbolise God's divine light and the Paradisal rewards awaiting the faithful believer (fig. 4). A minbar (pulpit) for the imam (see fig. 3) and, later, a *maqsura* (imperial enclosure) were additional architectural features that would come to characterise the interior of a congregational mosque.[7] From the exterior, a mosque could often be identified by a tall minaret, used in the early days of Islam as a platform for the call to prayer. The minaret also symbolised the Muslim presence in a city and was an urban marker which oriented citizens and travellers alike.



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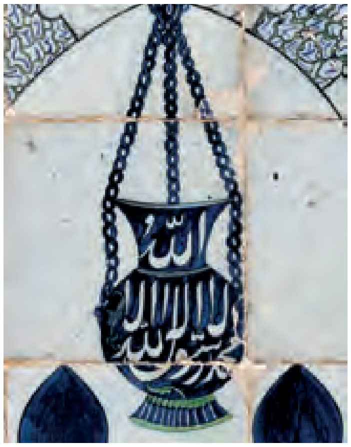

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Figure 3. Cat. no. 16, a prince hearing a sermon in a mosque (detail showing minbar). Folio 245r from an illustrated manuscript of the Nigaristan of Ghaffari; Shiraz, Iran, dated 980 H/1573 CE.

Figure 4. Cat. no. 12, ceramic tile panel with depiction of mihrab (detail showing hanging lamp inscribed with part of the *Shahada*). Damascus, Syria, c. 1574–1580.

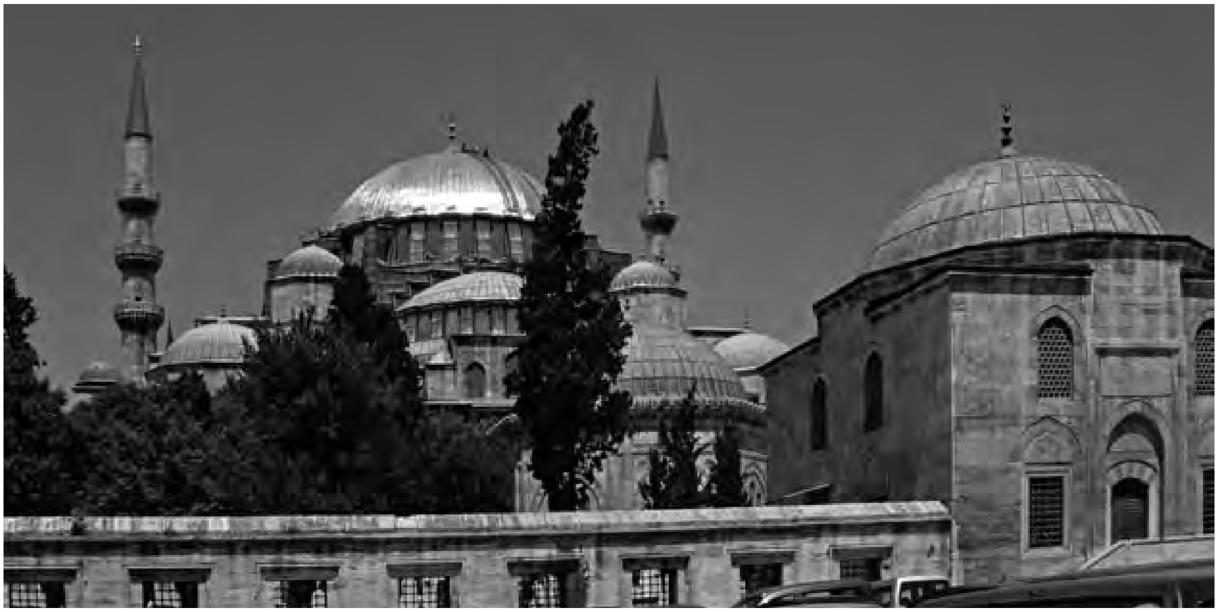

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Figure 5. Istanbul, Süleymaniye complex. Ottoman period, completed 1559. Photograph by the author.

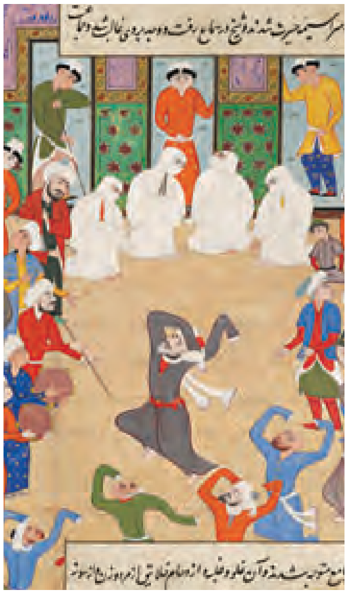
Ottoman mosques built after the conquest of Istanbul in 1453 by Mehmet Fatih ('the Victorious') emulated the form of the city's Hagia Sophia Church, constructed in 537 by the Byzantine ruler, Justinian. The church's large centrally domed hall was supported by ancillary galleries and heavy buttresses, and its east-west axial direction cohered well with the orientational requirements of a mosque. Henceforth, the Ottoman mosque would be inspired by this Christian type, and would itself serve as a model for religious institutions from the early modern to the contemporary period. The Ottoman architect Sinan (d. 1588) was among the greatest designers of the early modern period, and has left us with a vast corpus of architectural and engineering projects. He is most well known for his imperial mosques, notably the Süleymaniye complex in Istanbul and the Selimiye in Edirne (completed 1574) (fig. 5).[8] Commenting on the latter, Sinan noted that his goal was to surpass the Hagia Sophia and build a monument that would honour the Muslims.[9]

The Ottoman mosque was thus also a symbol of Islamic authority over a diverse and multi-confessional society, similar that ruled by the Mughals in India. The Ottoman sultans built congregational mosques to mark their legitimacy to rule over their vast dominions. An architectural iconography was developed, inasmuch as the patronage of mosques could be understood through their formal composition and location. An eponymous mosque would be built by the ruling sultan in the capital city from funds accrued through conquest. Only the major mosques of the ruling sultan could have four minarets – while princes, viziers, and queen mothers could have two or one depending on their status – and the number of balconies employed would be dependent on the ruler's dynastic rank.[10] The ruler would ultimately be buried in the mosque complex, or *külliye*, which also consisted of ancillary social institutions such as theological colleges (*madrasas*), hospitals, and Sufi convents. These complexes were funded by sultans as well as other wealthy patrons through pious endowment, or *waqf*, and they served multiple functions that went well beyond daily prayer services. The mosque was a sanctuary, whose doors were open to all Muslims, regardless of social status. They were often located in or close to commercial centres, or bazaars, the shops of which sometimes contributed to the financial upkeep of the institution. As such, mosques were integral to the cities in which they were built, and their architectural forms and decoration reflected the prosperity of their patrons. Imperial mosques were thus important palimpsests of society, representative of the community they served.

The Commemorative Shrine

Like the mosque, shrines are a common architectural type, found throughout the Muslim world. Built to commemorate a person or sometimes an event, they are often sites of pilgrimage, with differing rituals and conventions. In general, the shrines of Sufi shaykhs, theologians and, in particular cases, the Shiʿi imams, are repositories of the charisma associated with the person buried within. Like mosques, shrines are sacred precincts, where a devotee must enter in a state of spiritual and physical purity. They are similarly places where people pray, make vows and gift generous endowments for the upkeep of the building. The holy figure buried within a shrine is venerated as an intercessor between the pilgrims and the divine, their piety and esoteric knowledge giving them a status higher than that of ordinary people.

In the early modern period, shrines were popular sites for the dissemination of political allegiance and provided a means for publically showing a patron's religiosity. For the Safavid rulers of Iran, shrines were important sites for the performance of their authority and charismatic power. Unlike the neighbouring Ottoman rulers who built grand congregational mosques, the Safavids favoured the renovation and construction of shrines. The Safavid shahs were descendants of the eponymous founder of the dynasty, Shaykh Safi al-Din Ishaq (d. 1334), a Sufi mystic whose order was based in Ardabil, in northwestern Iran (fig. 6). As the order flourished and gained wealth through the generous gifts of a wide segment of society, its power localised on the tomb and sanctuary of the shaykh (fig. 7). By 1501 the leader of the order, Ismaʿil, was able to conquer the



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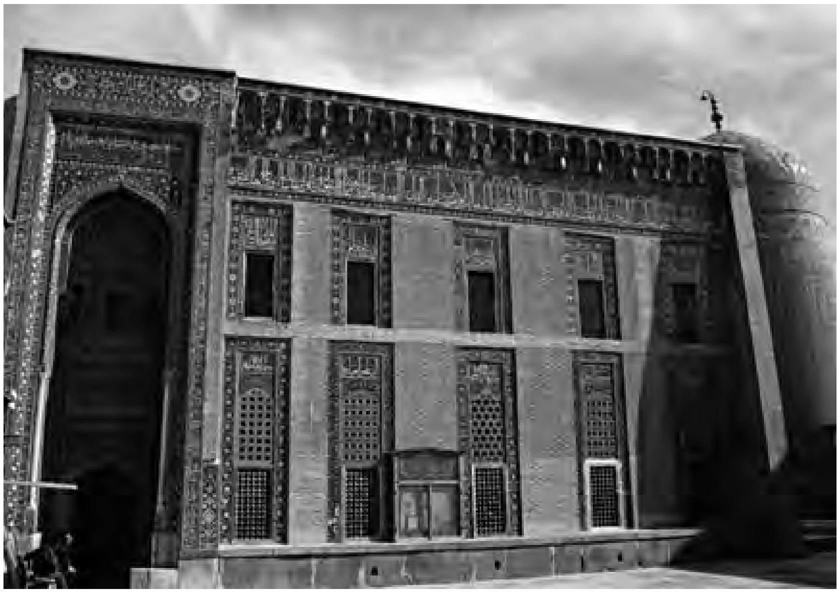

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Figure 6. Cat. no. 31, Shaykh Safi dancing in the *khanqa* (detail). Folio 280r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tazkira* of Shaykh Safi; Shiraz, Iran, dated 990 H/1582 CE.

Figure 7. Ardabil, Shrine of Shaykh Safi: view of the *Dar al-Huffaz* with the tomb tower of Shaykh Safi visible at right. Timurid period, fourteenth century (other parts of the complex completed later). Photograph by the author.

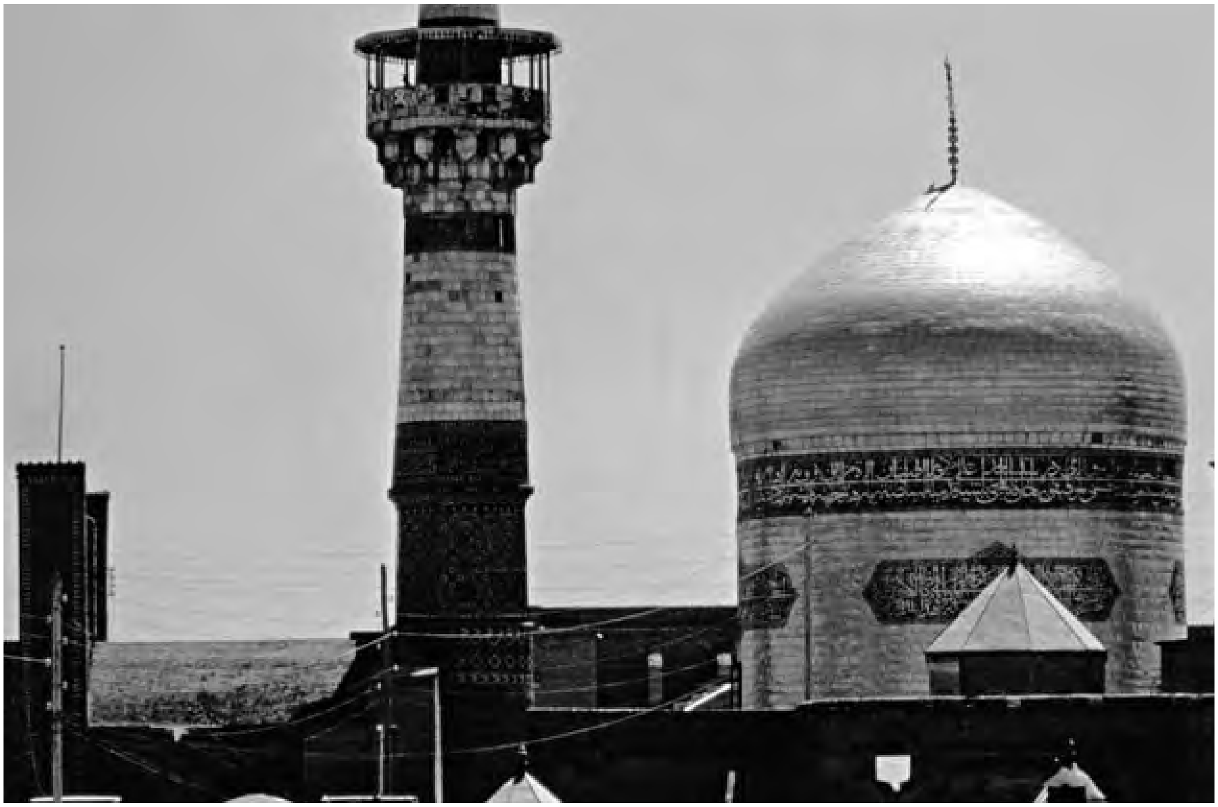

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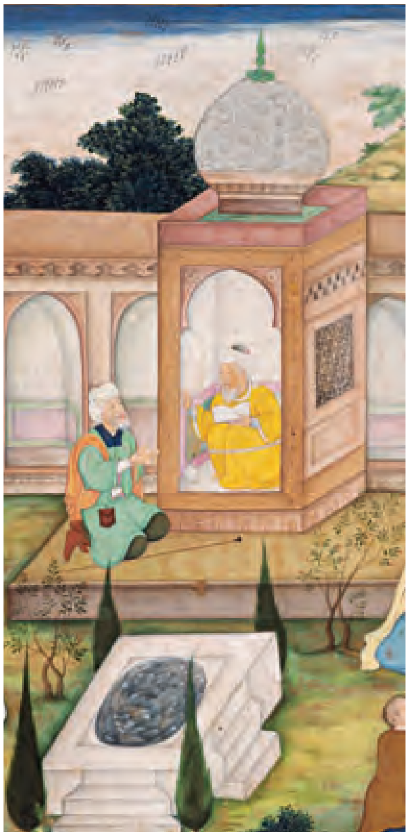
Figure 8. Mashhad, Imam Riza shrine complex. Timurid and Safavid periods, and later. Photograph by Baroness Marie-Therese Ullens de Schooten, Courtesy of Special Collections, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University.

capital, Tabriz, and declare himself ruler. At his advent, he established Shiʿism as the religion of his empire, bringing Shiʿi clerics to help convert the populace which had been primarily Sunni. His descendants expanded the shrine complex and transformed it into a majestic institution monumentalising the Safavid dynasty.[11]

The Safavids focused their attention on the shrine of their ancestor, as well on those shrines associated with their Sufi and Shiʿi genealogy. As professed descendants of Muhammad they patronised the tombs of his descendants, the imams.[12] The most prominent shrine in Iran was that of the eighth imam, ʿAli Riza, in Mashhad, which was the locus of Safavid attention throughout the sixteenth century (fig. 8). The great Safavid ruler Shah ʿAbbas (d. 1629) was renowned for his barefoot pilgrimages to the shrine and his gifts of precious manuscripts and objects from his personal collection to the shrines in Ardabil and Mashhad.[13] He portrayed himself as a humble supplicant and devotee of the imam, despite being among the most successful and powerful monarchs of the early modern period. In 1601 Shah ʿAbbas ordered that the dome above the tomb of Imam Riza, the *haram*, be re-gilded. In subsequent years, he also ordered that the shrine precincts be expanded and channels of water be constructed in the newly broadened roadways.[14]

The shrine of the Imam Riza was a singular structure, yet it shared many architectural features with commemorative buildings in the region. In this model, the centre of the complex was the tomb of the holy person, often under an ornate, domed structure. In some cases, the grave was constructed within an enclosure open to the sky, in compliance with orthodox interpretations that forbade the covering of graves or the ostentatious displays suggested by monumental tombs (fig. 9). A shrine's prominence was thus displayed architecturally, but also in less obvious ways. Endowments to the shrine would stipulate not only the upkeep of the building, but would also provide money for the feeding of pilgrims and indigents, as well as supporting and housing the Sufi initiates. Large spaces for rituals were often part of the shrine complex, as were individual meditation cells. The resulting architectural ensembles were often aggregates, built over time, and thus often quite unique. Nonetheless, shrines in the early modern period were built for the enactment of rituals of piety as well as the display of sovereignty and power. They were places of asylum and devotion where diverse segments of society came together, men and women, Shiʿi, Sunni, and sometimes, non-Muslims as well.

The mosque and commemorative shrine are two primary examples of religious architecture in the Islamic world. A broader study might look more closely at other institutions such as *madrasa*s and Sufi lodges, in addition to exploring the profound differences between regional types and their historical developments. Indeed, the boundaries between what is religious architecture and what is not were often blurred purposefully. For example, a room in a domestic residence could serve as an *imambarga* commemorating Shiʿi history, just as any clean floor surface could serve as a *sajjada* (place of prostration). Rulers such as the Ottoman sultan Süleyman would build their own tombs as part of their mosque complexes, in order to receive the blessings of those who prayed there (fig. 10). Similarly, palaces of the Safavid shahs were viewed as sacred precincts, where visitors would kiss the thresholds and give pious donations. The sacrality of a building was thus constructed less through bricks and mortar, and more through the rituals and customary practices of those who patronised the spaces of devotion.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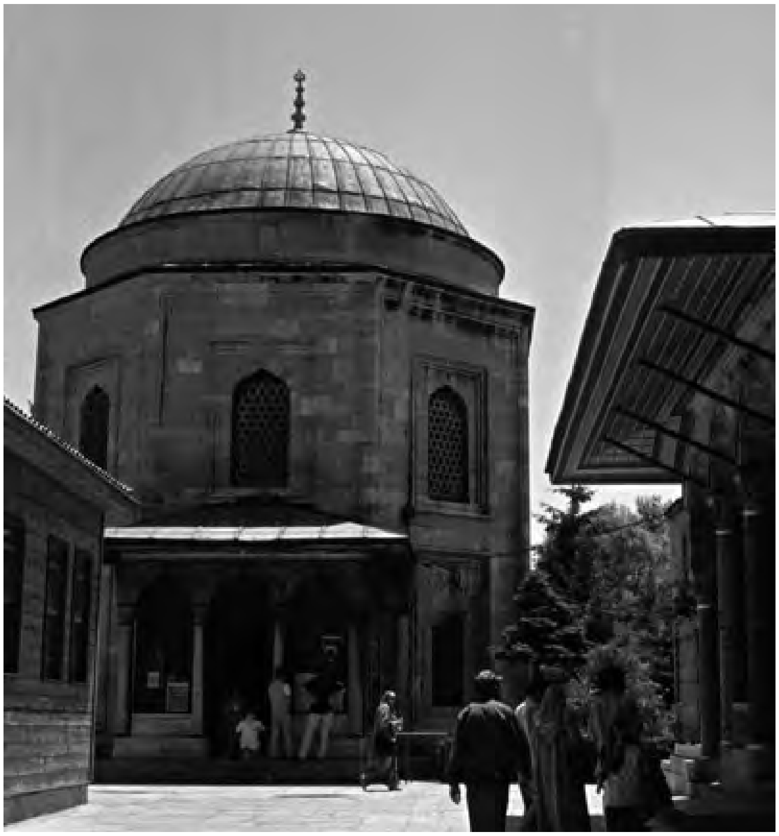
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Figure 9. Cat. no. 30, a sage in a courtyard (detail). Folio 129v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyat* of Saʿdi; India, c. 1604.

Figure 10. Istanbul, tomb of Roxelana with tomb of Süleyman visible at right. Ottoman period, sixteenth century. Photograph by the author.

1 See Jerrilynn D. Dodds, 'The Great Mosque of Cordoba', in *eadem* (ed.), *Al-Andalus: The Art of Islamic Spain* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1992), pp. 10–25; Kishwar Rizvi, 'Religious Icon and National Symbol: The Tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran', *Muqarnas*, 20 (2003), pp. 209–224.

2 R. Arnaldez, 'al-Insanal-Kamil', in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second ed., vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1971), p. 1239.

3 The designation 'Sunni' thus marks an affiliation used by the majority of Muslims who see themselves as following the example of Muhammad.

4 In particular see, David Roxburgh (ed.), *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* (London: Royal Academy, 2005); Thomas Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Court Arts of Timurid Iran* (Los Angeles/Washington D.C.: LACMA/Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1989).

5 Recent art historical studies have focused on the comparative dimensions of Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal art and architecture. See, for example, Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Qur'anic Inscriptions on Sinan's Imperial Mosques: A Comparison with their Safavid and Mughal Counterparts', in Fahmida Suleman (ed.), *Word Of God – Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions* (Oxford: University Press, 2007), pp. 69–104.

6 On the significance of the mihrab, see Nuha Khoury, 'The Mihrab Image: Commemorative Themes in Medieval Islamic Architecture', *Muqarnas*, 9 (1992), pp. 11–28.

7 For general discussions as well as specific case studies, see Martin Frishman (ed.), *The Mosque: History, Architectural Development & Regional Diversity* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002); Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, *The Mosque and the Modern World: Architects, Patrons and Designs since the 1950s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1997).

8 Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion, 2005).

9 'Sinan: On building the Selimiyye Mosque', in D. Fairchild Ruggles (ed.), *Islamic Art and Visual Culture: An Anthology of Sources* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 143.

10 See Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Dynastic Imprints on the Cityscape: The Collective Message of Funerary Imperial Mosque Complexes in Istanbul', in Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont (ed.), *Colloque Internationale: Cimetières et traditions funéraires dans le monde islamique* (Paris: C.N.R.S, 1996), pp. 23–36. For these orthodox Sunni rulers, the 'body' of the mosque was seen as representing the prophet Muhammad, and the four minarets as his successors, the caliphs, Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthman, and ʿAli.

11 Kishwar Rizvi, *The Safavid Dynastic Shrine: Architecture, Religion and Power in Early Modern Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

12 The Safavids venerated the descendants of Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, and son-in-law, ʿAli, whose descendants were known as the imams. For a general history of the Safavids, see Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006).

13 Sheila Canby, *Shah ʿAbbas: The Remaking of Iran* (London: British Museum, 2009).

14 Eskandar Beg Munshi, *The History of Shah ʿAbbas the Great: Tārīkh-i ʿālamāra-yi ʿAbbāssi*, trans. and ed. Roger M. Savory (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1986), p. 535.

12

CERAMIC TILE PANEL WITH MIHRAB DESIGN

Damascus, Syria; Ottoman period, c. 1574–1580
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
123 x 62 cm
AKM 585

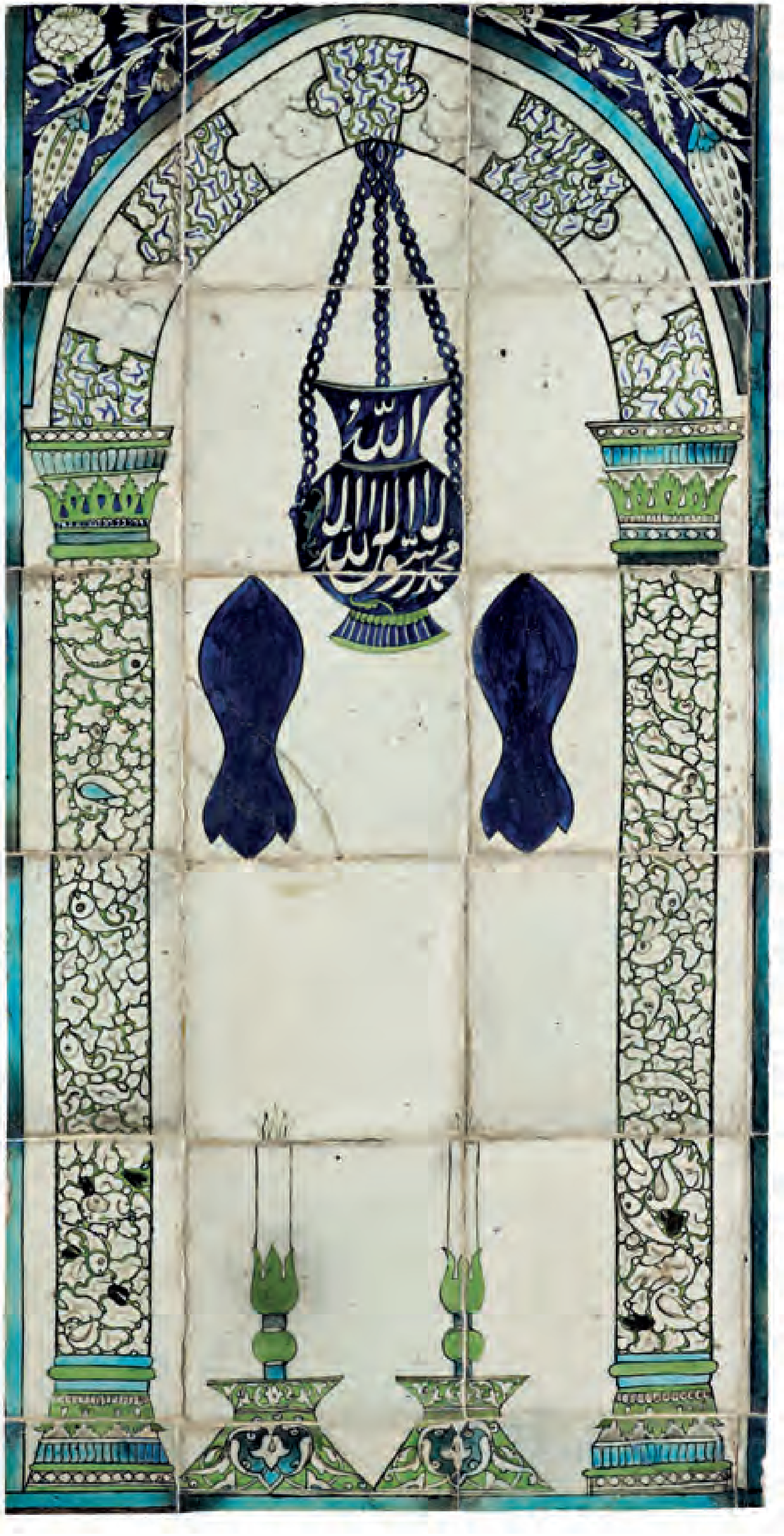
Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 200–201 (no. 72); AKTC 2008a, pp. 76–77 (no. 18); AKTC 2009a, pp. 68–69 (no. 35); AKTC 2009b, pp. 68–69 (no. 35); AKTC 2010a, pp. 70–71 (no. 36)

While the mihrab – the arched niche on the *qibla* wall that indicates the direction of prayer in virtually every mosque – is in essence a very simple architectural feature, the motif quickly came to have such profound sacred significance in Islam that an elaborate iconography developed around it. Images of single arch-shaped niches appear in a variety of religious contexts, sometimes with additional elements that came to have further meanings of their own.

This panel of eighteen tiles is extremely closely related to a pair of similar tile friezes found in the late sixteenth-century mosque commissioned by the Ottoman governor Darwish Pasha in Damascus. The Darwish Pasha panels are located in the courtyard of the mosque, on the wall that contains the entrance to the prayer hall. Like this piece, both of them bear images of a hanging lamp suspended by chains from the apex of a marble arch, with the image of the sandals of the Prophet below, and one panel also depicts a pair of lighted candles in candlesticks of a similar appearance to those seen here. In addition to the items contained within the arches, similarities in the architectural detailing of the arches themselves on both the Darwish Pasha panels and this piece – joggled voussoirs in alternating colours, slender columns of dappled marble, and ornate acanthus capitals – strongly suggest that all three pieces came from the same workshop. A further tile panel of a different but related type in the Darwish Pasha mosque has an inscription dating it to 1574–75, and a similar date can probably be assumed for this frieze (Carswell 1987, p. 205).

The Noble Footprints (*Qadam sharif*) and Noble Sandals (*Na*ʿ*layn sharif*) of the Prophet came to be the focus of a special reverence, particularly from the sixteenth century in the Ottoman Empire but also in India and the Safavid world (Hasan 1993). The shape (*mithal*) of a pair of stylised sandals like those seen on this panel can be found in sacred and apotropaic contexts from Iran (cat. no. 15) to Ottoman North Africa (Jones 1978, p. 16). Damascus had its own relic of the Prophet in the form of a sandal that was transferred to the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul in the nineteenth century, so the image may have held particular resonance in that city (Gruber 2009b, pp. 136–137). The hanging lamp, meanwhile, had been associated with the mihrab image since the twelfth century or earlier, and the ensemble of lamp and niche is often implicitly associated with Qur'an 24:35, the so-called *Ayat al-nur* ('Light Verse'), which begins 'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light may be compared to a niche that enshrines a lamp…' The inscription depicted on the lamp of the present panel is not the Light Verse but a section of the *Shahada*, the Muslim profession of faith: 'There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God'. This inscription is relatively unusual on true lamps, but the same formula appears on one of the lamps depicted in the Darwish Pasha tile panels.

The two candlesticks, like the hanging lamp above them, carry spiritual significance – through the metaphor of illumination – when placed in the mihrab image (see cat. no. 14). In this instance one horizontal line of tiles may have been lost, affecting the appearance of the upper parts of the candles: a comparison with one of the Darwish Pasha panels suggests that the candles may originally have been taller, with more fully defined flames (Makariou 2007, p. 200). Perhaps most interesting of all, though, are the little images that have been included within the 'marble' of the depicted columns. Close examination reveals hidden fish, ducks and unidentifiable animals painted into the fictive marble itself, as if petrified within the stone. The painted 'marble' borders of some tile panels in the Darwish Pasha mosque contain similar hidden creatures, and one can only guess at the artist's motivation for incorporating images of living creatures into tiles specifically designed for a mosque, where such imagery would normally be forbidden. An ancient conception of marble as a 'frozen sea' may have informed these designs, as fish predominate here; alternatively, the intention may be to suggest an actual fossiliferous marble (see Barry 2007, pp. 627–631, and Milwright 2007). In either case, the painter of these tiles has shown a surprisingly playful take on a serious subject.



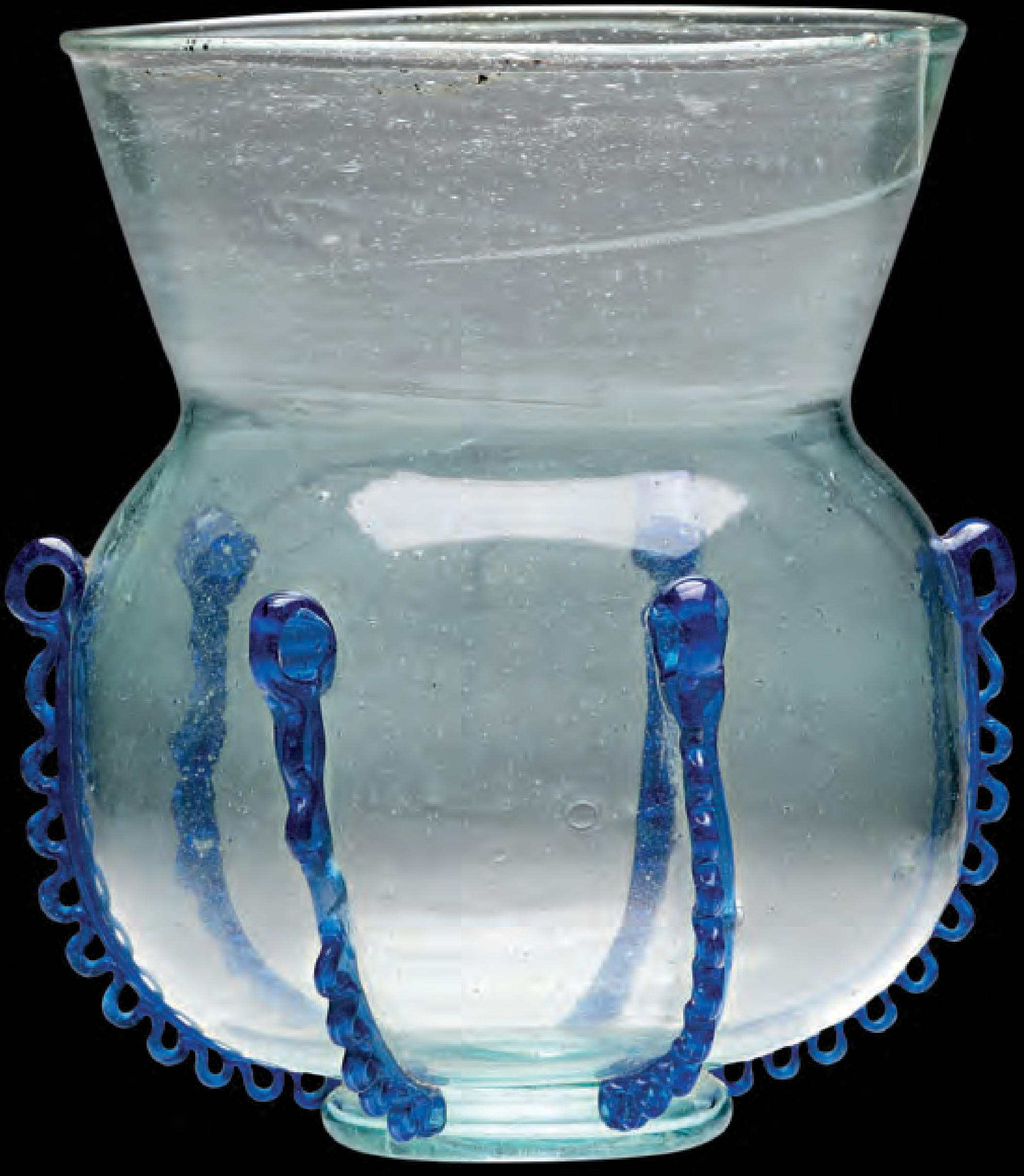
13

VASE-SHAPED LAMP WITH SHORT FOOTRING

Possibly Iran; tenth–twelfth century (?)
Light blue blown glass with cobalt trailed glass bands
Height: 14.7 cm
AKM 645
Unpublished

Although early representations of round-bottomed hanging lamps, hung in arcades, are known from the famous architectural frontispieces of the Sanʿaʾ Qur'an (Grabar 1992, pl. 16, 17), the history of the flat-bottomed vase-shaped lamp with a spherical body and flaring conical neck, exemplified by this piece, is not easy to reconstruct from material remains. A fragmentary example was excavated at Nishapur (Kröger 1995, p. 179), while other pieces (most often without scientific excavation records) are generally attributed to tenth- or eleventh-century Iran: for example, lamps in the Glass and Ceramics Museum, Tehran (no. 846), and the David Collection (14/1962), are both of similar dimensions to this example, with trailed glass handles (the latter is illustrated in von Folsach 2001, p. 215). Larger, pierced metal examples of the vase-shaped form are known from eleventh-century North Africa and thirteenth-century Anatolia (Rice 1955, pp. 207–217), as well as a famous depiction of a vase-shaped hanging lamp painted on the interior wall of an eleventh-century Seljuq tomb tower at Kharraqan (Grabar 1992, fig. 163). There is of course a spiritual dimension to the imagery of the lamp: the iconographic unit of the lamp hung in a mihrab appears in architectural contexts from the twelfth century onwards (see cat. no. 12, and Khoury 1992), and has often been associated with textual sources such as the famous 'Light Verse' of the Qur'an (24:35) and the mystical *Mishkat al-Anwar* ('Niche of Lights') of al-Ghazali (d. 1111).

Lamps of vase-shaped form are often referred to as 'mosque lamps'. The association between this form of hanging lamp and sacred space was well established by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A useful visual reference to this practice is provided by the surviving thirteenth- and fourteenth-century illustrated manuscripts of the *Maqamat* of al-Hariri, a text which details the exploits of a smooth-talking rogue across much of the Arab world, and gave artists an unprecedented opportunity for the inventive depiction of medieval Islamic society and its environments. Several of the narrative episodes described within the *Maqamat* take place inside mosques, and in the less finely-executed copies of the text the schematic rendering of architectural space leaves multiple vase-shaped hanging lamps as the only consistent sign in many episodes that the setting is to be understood as a religious environment (for example Paris BNF Arabe 6094, fol. 49v).



14

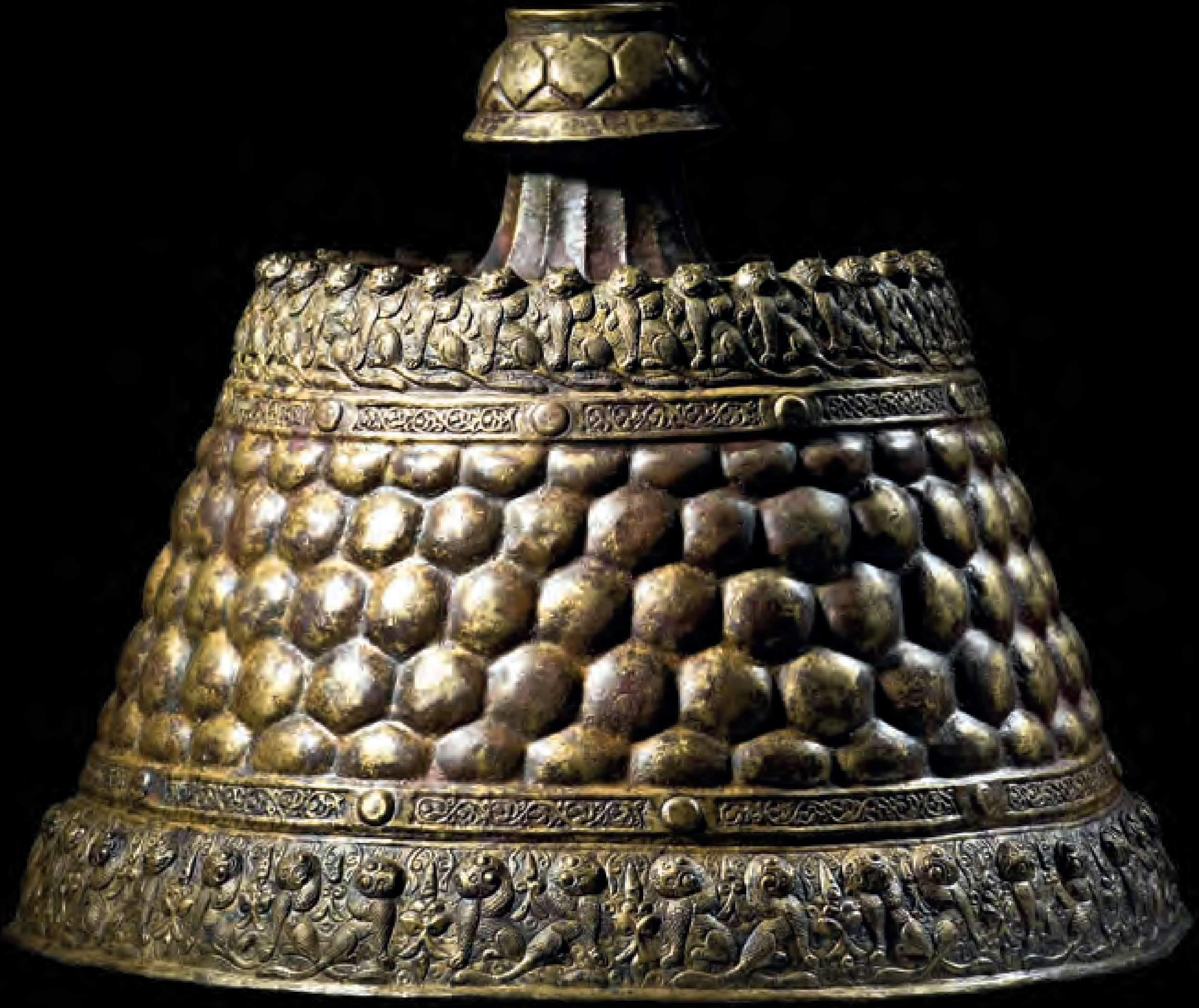
CANDLESTICK WITH REPOUSSÉ DESIGNS

Khurasan (northeastern Iran/Afghanistan), possibly Herat;
late twelfth or thirteenth century
Chased and beaten brass
Height: 35 cm; diameter: 46.5 cm
AKM 884
Unpublished

This piece is one of a small group of repoussé candlesticks thought to come from late twelfth- or thirteenth-century Khurasan (an area roughly comprising northeastern Iran and Afghanistan), and quite possibly linked to production at Herat. The repoussé technique involves beating shapes into sheet metal from the reverse side, and is normally practiced in conjunction with chasing, by which the design is refined on the front side with further beating and engraving, using punches and sharp tools. Through such means the artist has here exploited the plasticity of brass, creating a complex design of lions in high relief at top and bottom, with a central frieze of plain hexagonal bosses belted in by two thin bands of scrolling vegetal arabesque panels and round studded knobs. The lions' heads project boldly from the candlestick, while their bodies are in much lower relief, sitting up in tight formation around the object. The refinement of the repoussé technique was one of the singular artistic achievements of the period, and in the right hands it could elevate brass to the status of a luxury medium. A repoussé and inlay ewer in the Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi – one of a group of fine vessels of this type – bears an inscription that names Herat as the site of its production, and it is possible that the present candlestick may also be of Herat manufacture (Ward 1993, pp. 76–77).

There are a handful of other brass candlesticks that share this design of repoussé animals and hexagonal bosses: several of those are somewhat more elaborate than the present example, inasmuch as they are inlaid with silver, and often bear inscriptive panels and pyramidal bosses that decorate the socket (see Freer Gallery, ill. Hattstein – Delius 2004, p. 345; Hermitage Museum, ill. Piotrovsky – Pritula 2006, p. 27; Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, ill. O'Kane 2006, p. 265; Linden Museum, Stuttgart, ill. Forkl 1993, p. 85; al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait, ill. Jenkins 1983, p. 71; a piece that is missing the shaft and socket in the Victoria and Albert Museum, ill. Melikian-Chirvani 1982, pp. 111–113; Louvre, acc. no. OA6315; and a piece advertised by the Mahboubian Gallery, London, in *Apollo*, April 1976, p. 97). A further example in the David Collection, without inlay, may be more closely compared with this piece, although like the inlaid examples it also has chased decoration on each of the hexagonal bosses, distinguishing it from the present example (see von Folsach 2001, p. 305). Another related example, without any repoussé animals, was photographed in the Pars Museum, Shiraz (Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 143). The Aga Khan Museum's candlestick has a slightly more flared outline than the other known examples of this form.

The enormous religious significance of light meant that commissioning light fittings, including candlesticks, for mosques, tombs and shrines was a sacred act in the medieval period and indeed later (see cat. nos 12 and 13). The mystical dimensions of the candle as a pious object are exemplified in a poem in the twelfth-century *Diwan* of Khaqani, composed on the occasion of a princess' return from pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina: 'Your eye like a candle shed the tears of necessity/ And from so much light in it/ the Prophet's mausoleum turned into a candlestick' (Melikian-Chirvani 1987, p. 120). It is also possible that the presence of lions – an ancient symbol of the sun – on these repoussé candlesticks is intended to add a further layer of light symbolism to the light fitting (see Hartner – Ettinghausen 1964).



15

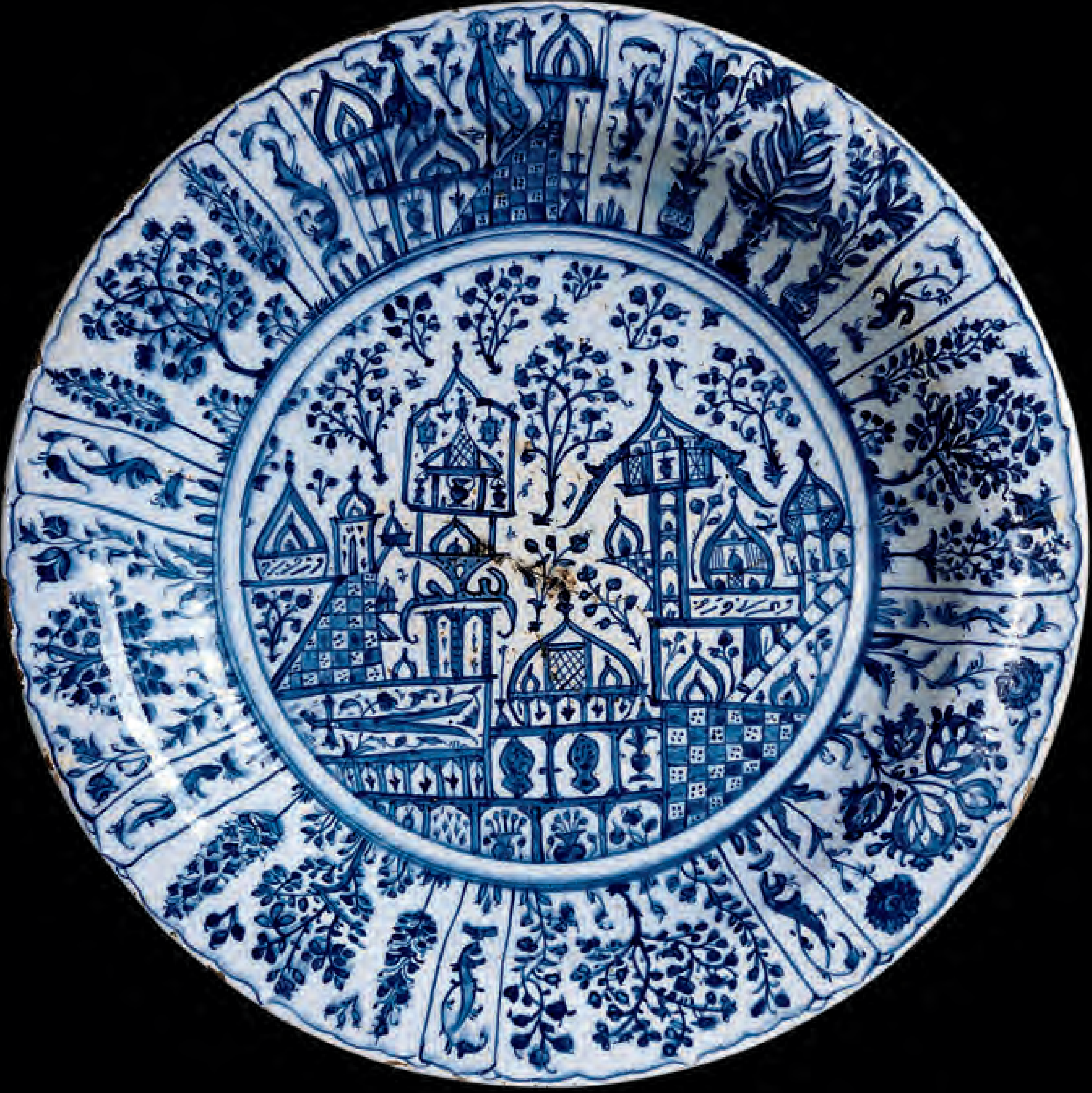
BLUE-AND-WHITE PLATE WITH ARCHITECTURAL IMAGERY

Probably Iran; seventeenth century
Glazed fritware with blue underglaze painting against white
Diameter: 42 cm
AKM 589
Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 52–53 (no. 15); AKTC 2008a, pp. 152–153 (no. 55); Farhad 2009, pp. 146–147 (no. 35)

Farhad has suggested that the highly unusual imagery in the central area of this blue-and-white dish should be understood as a schematic representation of a shrine complex, and, by extension, that the piece was created to commemorate an act of pilgrimage (Farhad 2009, p. 146). The central space has been divided with thick blue double-lines into a series of different architectural elements and areas, with structures stacked up disconcertingly in the awkward round space of the dish, conveying a sense of progression through space.

There are several indicators that this is sacred space, both in generic architectural signs – bulbous domes, hanging lamps and a tall thin structure that could represent a minaret – and more particular religious symbols. The sandals (*Naʿlayn sharif*) of the Prophet, or more properly their image (*mithal*), here enshrined in niches underneath the bulbous dome at centre foreground, represent one focus of veneration (see cat. no. 11). To the right of the sandals is the image of the legendary double-pronged sword of ʿAli, the *Dhuʿl-fiqar*, a particularly potent symbol for Shiʿi Muslims as it is inseparably linked with the deeds of ʿAli, the son-in-law of the Prophet and the first Shiʿi imam. In addition to these there is an image of a minbar (the stepped structure used to address the crowds in a mosque) immediately above the sword of ʿAli, complete with a domed cupola on top like those seen on many extant large wooden minbars. A second minbar, along with domes, banners, hanging lamps and what may be a candle in a candlestick, occupies the top central panel of the outer ornament, providing the only architectural decoration on the rim. What may be a third minbar is depicted on the right-hand side of the central field.

Most of the rim is decorated with arched or scalloped panels copied directly from the designs used in the Chinese export porcelain known in the seventeenth century as ‘Kraak’ ware. Chinese export porcelain was extremely popular and influential in Safavid Iran, where local potters were swift to respond to the competition by creating similar fritware objects with derivative designs. The ornamental plants and trees, growing from the ground around the rim or, in one panel, from pots, show some borrowings from Chinese ceramics (particularly evident in the scrolling vegetal designs in the narrow panels) but also relate to Iranian and Indian painting traditions, and possibly even to carpet designs (Makariou 2007, p. 52). The design of the dish as a whole is perhaps unique in its marriage of different stylistic elements, fitting an illustrative style apparently derived in part from topographical representations in pilgrimage records and manuals into an overall composition borrowed from Chinese ceramics.



16

A PRINCE HEARS A SERMON IN A MOSQUE

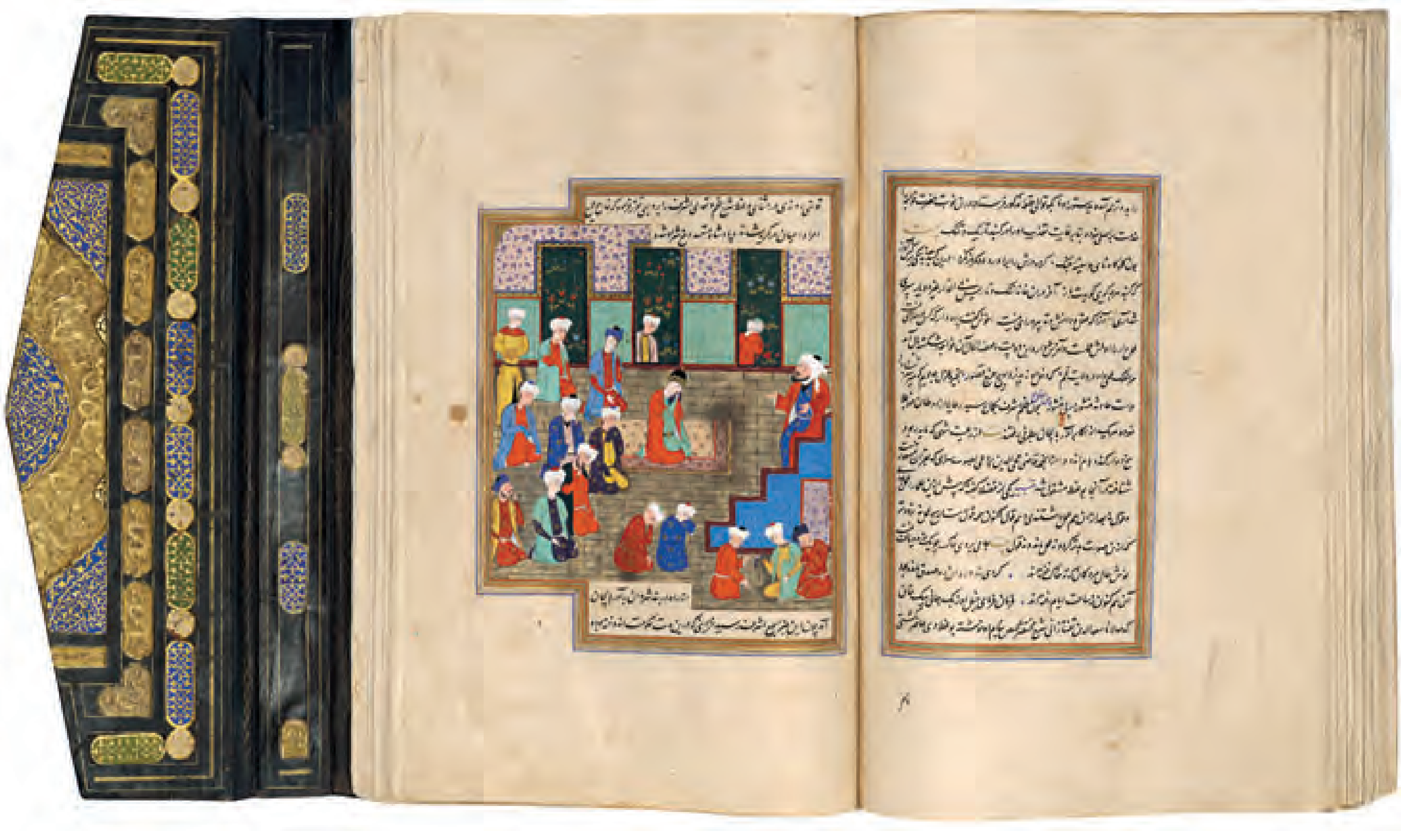
Folio 245r from an illustrated manuscript of the Nigāristān of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ghaffārī
Shiraz, Iran; dated 980 H/1573 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 38.7 x 24.9 x 6.4 cm
AKM 272

Publ: A. Welch 1978b, p. 79 (not ill.); AKTC 2010b, p. 303 (binding only; no. 131)

The present volume of the *Nigaristan* – a collection of stories about figures from the early history of Islam – is remarkable for both the quantity and the quality of its forty-four miniatures (see also cat. no. 5) and fine illuminations. Other Safavid illustrated versions of the text are known (Christies, 16 October, lot 71) but the present text, with its beautiful original lacquer binding with leather doublures, stands as an exemplar of luxury illustrated manuscript production in Shiraz. This tradition of book-making reached something of a peak in the 1580s: a large body of top-level work was produced in imitation of courtly models, much of which found its way into royal circles, and this book represents an art in the ascendant (Uluç 2000).

The relatively unusual setting of a mosque interior is depicted here largely without specific architectural signifiers, with the obvious exception of the minbar, on which the holy man sits to deliver his message to the crowd. The young prince seated at centre stage on his prayer rug, and the assembled courtiers in rich robes – some of them wearing the red *qizilbash* in their turbans as proclamations of their Safavid Shiʿi identity – cover their mouths with their sleeves out of respect, to avoid polluting the sacred space with their breath. The minbar, seat of spiritual authority and community leadership from the early Islamic period onwards following a precedent set by the Prophet Muhammad, is normally positioned against the *qibla* wall to the right of the mihrab. If one were to follow the logic of the image's spatial arrangement, this would suggest the mihrab to be located directly in front of the prince, hidden from our view by the minbar.

While minbars are most commonly made from wood, the bright blue patterning of this example suggests either a fantastic interpretation of the form, or, more likely, the representation of a tiled minbar. A small number of extant tiled *minbar*s from Iran are known, and one of the most spectacular is that of the *Masjid-i maydan* in Kashan. Dated by Bernard O'Kane to c. 1468 – approximately one century before this painting was created – the Kashan tiled minbar is decorated on its sides with a star-and-polygon pattern, and has an arch-shaped void in the lower bottom section (O'Kane 1986, pl. XLI). The presence of the framed floral panel, like a small door, in the same position on the minbar in this painting suggests that the artist may have had a similar model in mind. However, a closer parallel for the simple geometric tiling of this painted image of a minbar can be seen in the later tiled minbar of the *Masjid-i jami* in Kuhpaya, Iran, dated 1528–1529 (*ibid*., pl. XLII).



17

IMĀM ʿALĪ SLAYS MURRA IBN QAYS

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Fālnāma* ('Book of Divinations')
Qazwin, Iran; mid 1550s – early 1560s
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 59.5 x 45 cm
AKM 96

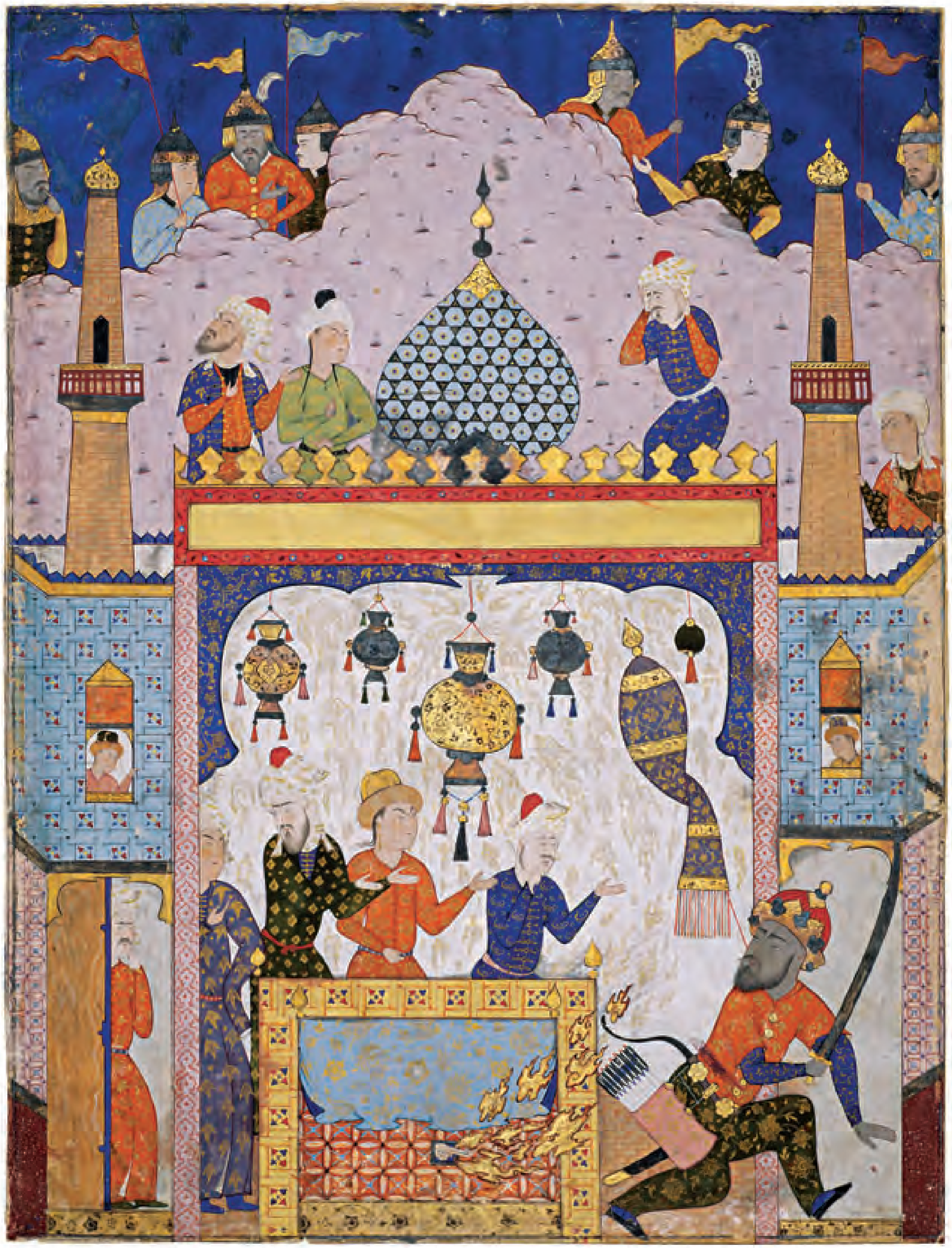
Publ: A. Welch 1978a, pp. 67–71; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 79–81 (no. 25); Canby 1998, pp. 54–55 (no. 31); Tokatlian 2007, no. 7; AKTC 2007a, p. 184 (no. 161); AKTC 2007b, pp. 178 and 187 (no. 161); Farhad 2009, pp. 128–131 (no. 27)

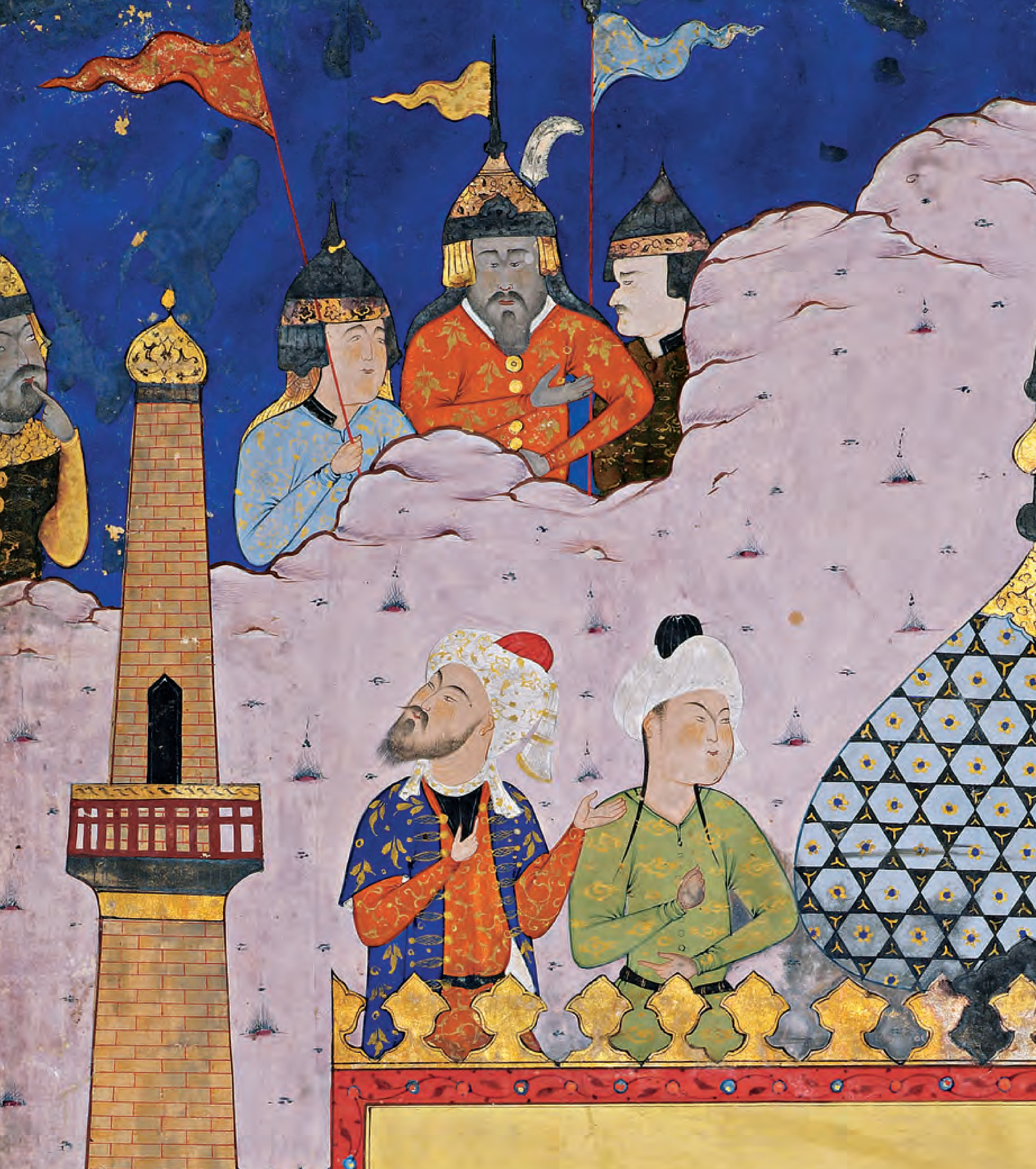
This monumental image comes from a dispersed outsize manuscript of the *Falnama* that is thought to have been commissioned by Shah Tahmasp in the early 1550s, during a period when the Safavid ruler was becoming increasingly conservative in his religious outlook and being visited in dreams by holy figures. The *Falnama*, or 'Book of Divinations', was a popular text in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iran and Turkey and was used to predict the future, or to enable the seeker to decide how to proceed on a difficult decision. To use the text, the seeker would perform ritual ablutions and prayer before opening the manuscript to a random page, where the resultant verses would provide an omen that had to be interpreted with the help of the accompanying image. While such practices may seem at first glance hard to square with religious conviction, the *Falnama* in fact contains important lessons in religion and morality, with a focus on the deeds of prophets and holy men. The accompanying text for this image, found on the back of the following folio (now held in the Freer Gallery, Washington D.C.) explains the iconography of this painting of a dark-skinned man trying to leave a majestic mausoleum, as a hand emerges from the grilled cenotaph and shoots flames towards him, to the horror of the other visitors to the tomb:

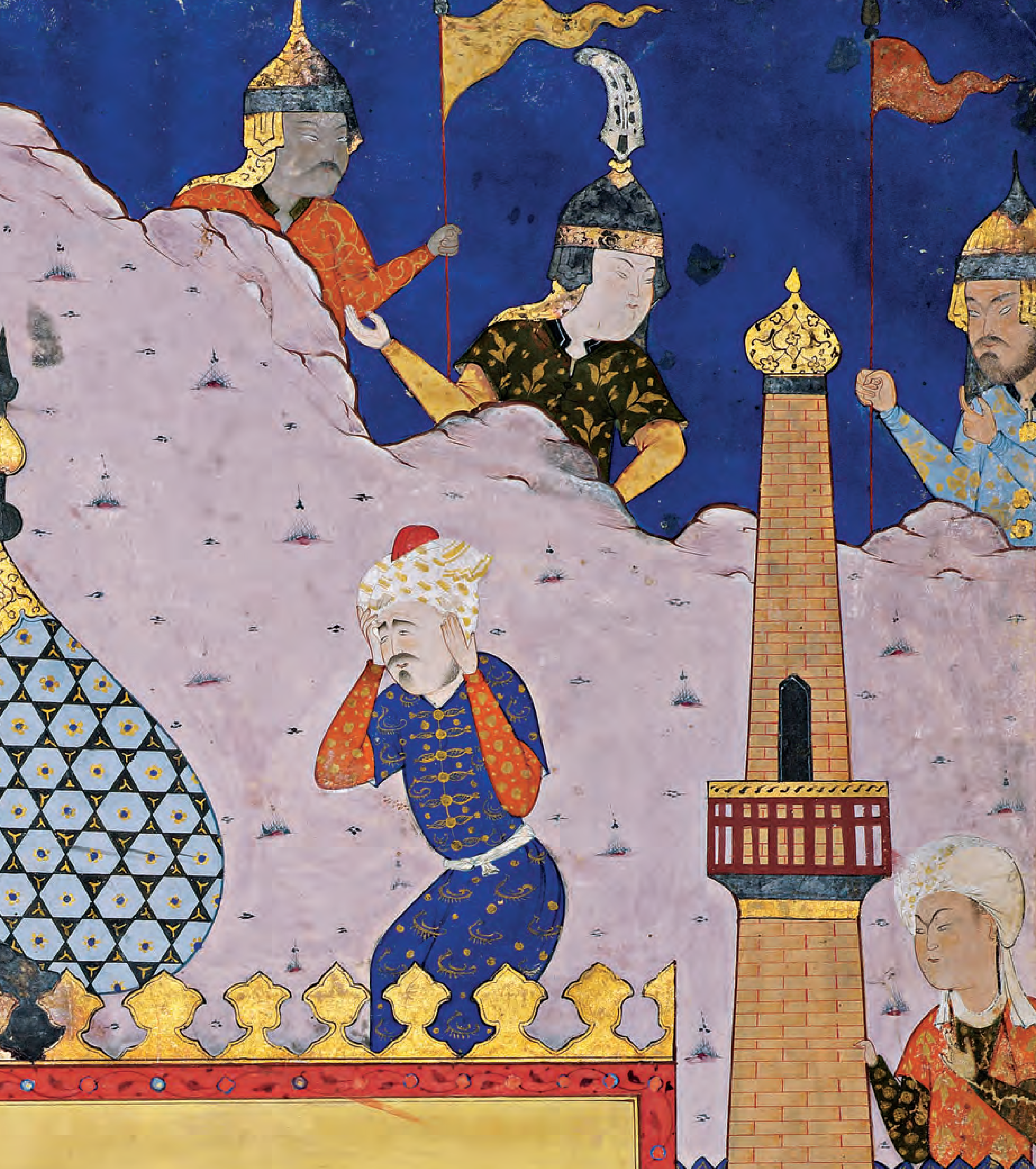
> 'O augury user, know that in your augury has appeared the sign of the miracle-manifesting, Khaybar-conquering two fingers of His Majesty the Lion of God, the Conqueror ʿAli ibn Abu Talib – upon him be mercy and peace – which appeared from the blessed grave of His Majesty and struck in two the accursed Murra ibn Qays' (Farhad 2009, p. 129)

The identity of the wicked Murra ibn Qays remains unclear, although it has been suggested that he defiled of the tomb of ʿAli, the first Shiʿi imam, and was cleaved in half by the two fingers of ʿAli: the hand of the imam thus parallels his famous twin-pronged sword, the *Dhu l-fiqar* (Farhad 2009, n. 24; see also cat. no. 15). A separate copy of the *Falnama* (Topkapi H. 1702) confirms the tomb of ʿAli in Najaf as the location of the narrative.

Although heavily schematised, the tiled dome and two slender minarets with balconies seen in this painting are quite closely matched in photos of the tomb at Najaf taken in the 1930s, prior to its more recent renovations (Matson Photographic Collection, www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc). However, the architectural similarities between this image and a *Falnama* painting in the David Collection, showing the tomb of Imam Husayn, suggest that this architectural arrangement was a standard model for representations of Shiʿi shrine structures (von Folsach 2001, p. 76). As such, the artist may not have been concerned with topographical reality and instead was working to a standardised type. In addition to the external signs of sacred architecture – the dome and the minarets – the interior of the tomb in this painting is also hung with elaborate vase-shaped lamps decorated with tassels. The mystic smoke that fills the tomb appears to be emanating from the flames of ʿAli's hand and the central hanging lamp simultaneously. Hanging lamps are prominent in other images of sacred tombs, both in the *Falnama* manuscripts and elsewhere, and countless images from pilgrimage manuals (see Witkam 2002). As such, the lamp must be understood as an important indicator of sacred space in funerary architecture and its representations.







18

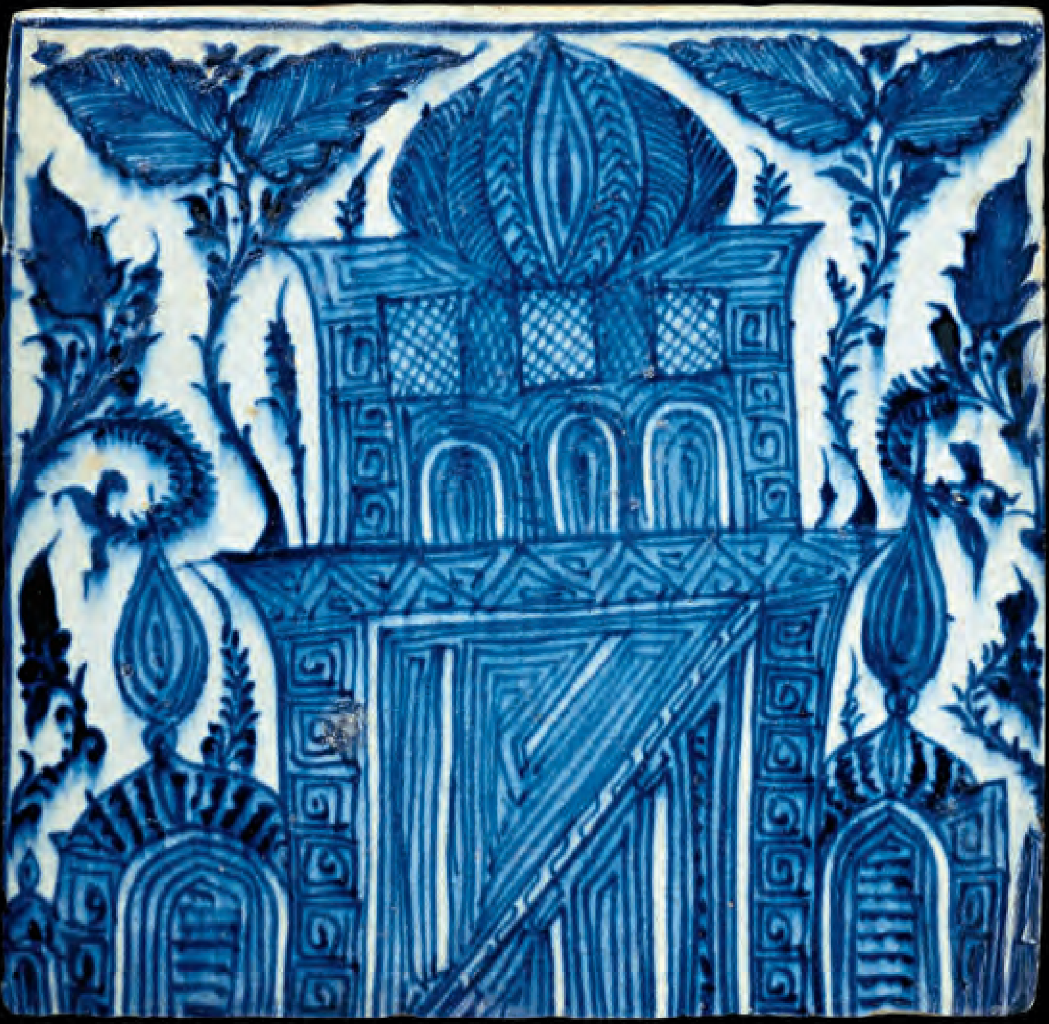
TILE WITH ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE

Syria or Egypt; fifteenth century
Glazed fritware with cobalt underglaze painting against white
20 x 20 cm
AKM 570
Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 88, 92–93 (no. 29); AKTC 2009a, p. 130 (no. 89); AKTC 2009b, p. 130 (no. 89); AKTC 2010a, p. 130 (no. 91)

The architectural model represented on this spectacular tile is somewhat enigmatic. The domical structure could easily be interpreted as a fantastic or even paradisal pavilion, surrounded by otherworldly blooms. On the other hand, Juvin has pointed out a formal similarity between the pointed shapes of the two smaller flanking structures and certain tombstones (Makariou 2007, p. 92), and the tapering shapes of their finials might additionally refer to cypress trees, an evergreen associated in the Mediterranean world with funerary and spiritual contexts since ancient times, and sometimes also found in Mamluk prayer rugs (Brend 1991, p. 121). Such a reading would subsequently suggest the self-contained central building – with its large lobed dome and window grilles – as a tomb, one of the archetypal uses of the domed cube in Islamic architecture (see cat. no. 17).

A small number of tiles bearing closely related images of buildings surrounded by plant sprays, in blue on white, are attributed to late Mamluk Syria or Egypt. Of two of these held in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, one has been cut to a hexagonal shape, but the other is remarkably close to this example in both dimensions and imagery, down to the diagonal division of space seen in the lower level of the structure, possibly an abstract representation of a staircase (Carswell 1972, pp. 119, 122). A further tile of this type, photographed by Carswell, is embedded in the wall of the late fifteenth-century minaret of the Mosque of al-Qalʿi, Damascus, and that example appears to be an explicit depiction of a mosque, with a minaret and a dome surmounted by a crescent finial (Carswell 1987, p. 211).

Extremely finely executed and yet freely drawn, this tile would appear to owe a considerable debt to Chinese blue-and-white ceramics both technically and stylistically, and Ming-era ceramics have indeed been found in Syria (Carswell 1972, p. 102). However, unidirectional plant sprays, like those shown here surrounding the building, have been suggested by Golombek to have arrived in fifteenth-century Syria tilework via the intermediary of Timurid painting, rather than through direct contact with Chinese ceramics. She has proposed that a large group of motifs found on the Syrian blue-and-white tiles of the fifteenth century, of which further examples are illustrated in cat. no. 57, can be traced stylistically to frescoes of trees and plants painted in the mausoleums of Timurid noblewomen, and that such designs were circulated through Timur's habit of collecting artists from the lands he conquered, and the subsequent release of those artists from Timurid Samarqand following his death in 1405 (Golombek 1993). The Timurid *paysage* frescoes, often including images of wavy trees flanked by cypresses, can be interpreted from their largely funerary contexts as evocations of paradise, and perhaps this reading should also be applied here.



19

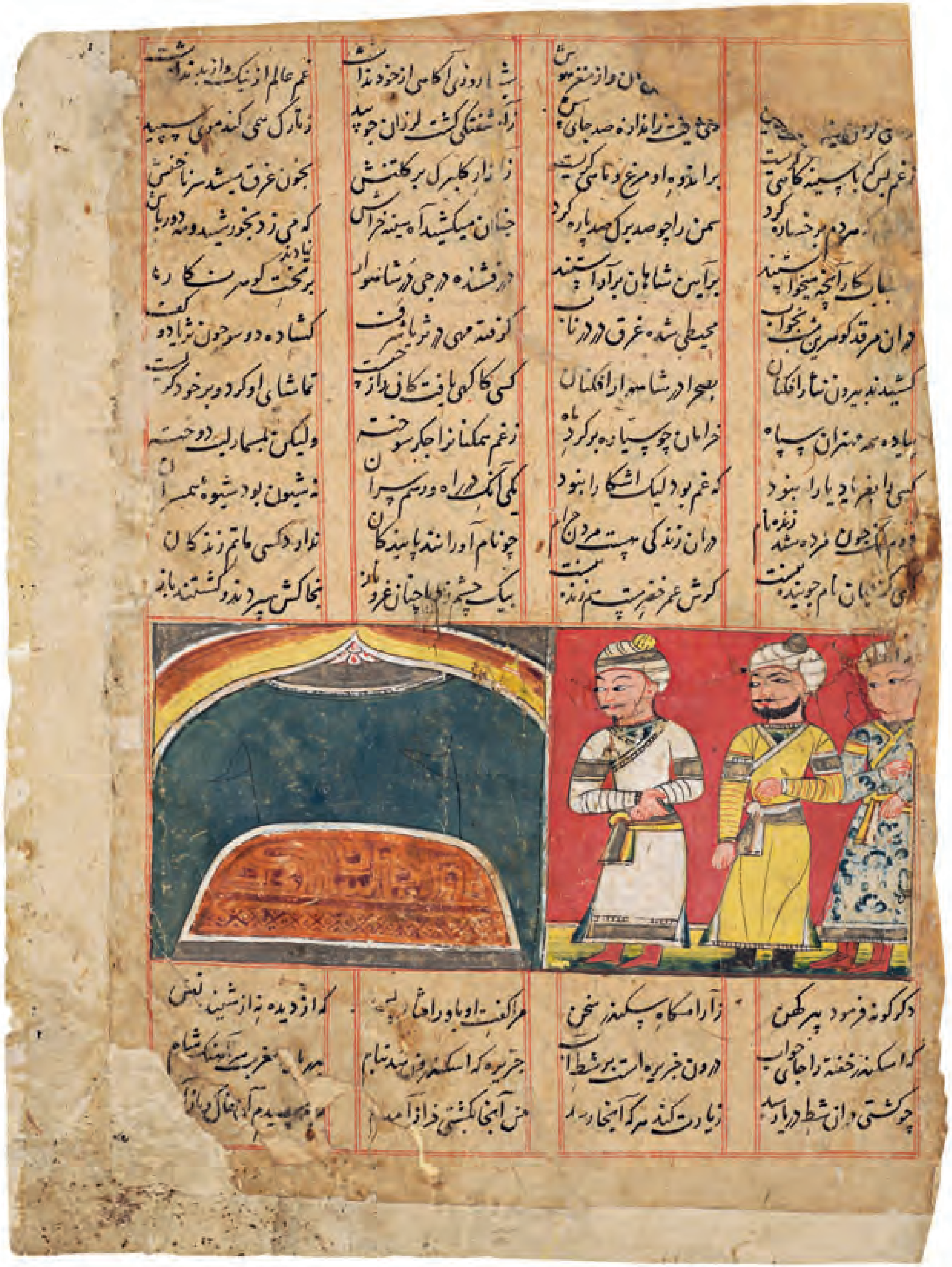
THE TOMB OF ISKANDAR (ALEXANDER THE GREAT)

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī
Sultanate India; first half of the fifteenth century
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
Page: 34.1 x 25.2 cm
AKM 15
Unpublished

Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (1253–1325), the 'Parrot of India', was perhaps the greatest medieval Indian poet to work in Persian, and his compositions remain a rich source of information on the concerns and ideals of the wealthy educated classes in medieval Indo-Muslim society. In the *Khamsa* ('Quintet'), written between 1298 and 1301, Amir Khusraw demonstrated the mastery of the poetic arts that allowed him to skilfully emulate the earlier five-poem *Khamsa* of Nizami (completed by the beginning of the thirteenth century).

From the fourth poem of Amir Khusraw's *Khamsa*, the *A'ina-i Iskandari* or 'Mirror of Alexander', comes this image of the final resting place of the great warrior king. While the origins of this manuscript were at one point much debated, most scholars now agree that it is definitely Indian in origin and can probably be dated to the first half of the fifteenth century, and possibly ascribed to Gujarat (Brac de la Perriere 2001, pp. 40–41). In the unique milieu of Sultanate India the influence of earlier styles of Persianate painting mingled with the traditions of Jain arts to create manuscript paintings that were both colourful and unique; however, very little book art has survived from pre-Mughal India, making the reconstruction of artistic developments during this period rather difficult. The brilliant pigments used in the illustrations in this manuscript include orpiment yellow, indigo, azurite, lapis lazuli and minium or 'red lead' (Beach 1981, pp. 43–44).

Within this striking painting, the central division of the picture space into two equal squares creates a simple but powerful contrast between the darkened, domed interior housing the draped sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, and the lighter exterior space in which three men approach the tomb across a green and yellow groundline against a red background. The bulbous dome of the tomb building, outlined in bands of bright colour (see also the treatment of the sky in the left-hand corner of cat. no. 95), contains within its pointed apex a partial florette that appears to sit within a green disc. This can be compared with the central lotus disc found inside the domes of Gandharan Buddhist structures and subsequently adapted for use in the medieval sacred architecture of north India (Soper 1947, pp. 228–229; Sahni 1915–16, pp. 52, 54). The placement of the lotus flower at the centre of the dome in certain locations has also been understood as a reference to the *gunbad-i nilufari* or 'blue lotus dome' of Persian poetry, a metaphor for the sky (Melikian-Chirvani 1986, p. 75). The ancient connection between architectural domes and the dome of heaven may well have significance for this simple yet arresting image of a funerary building.



20

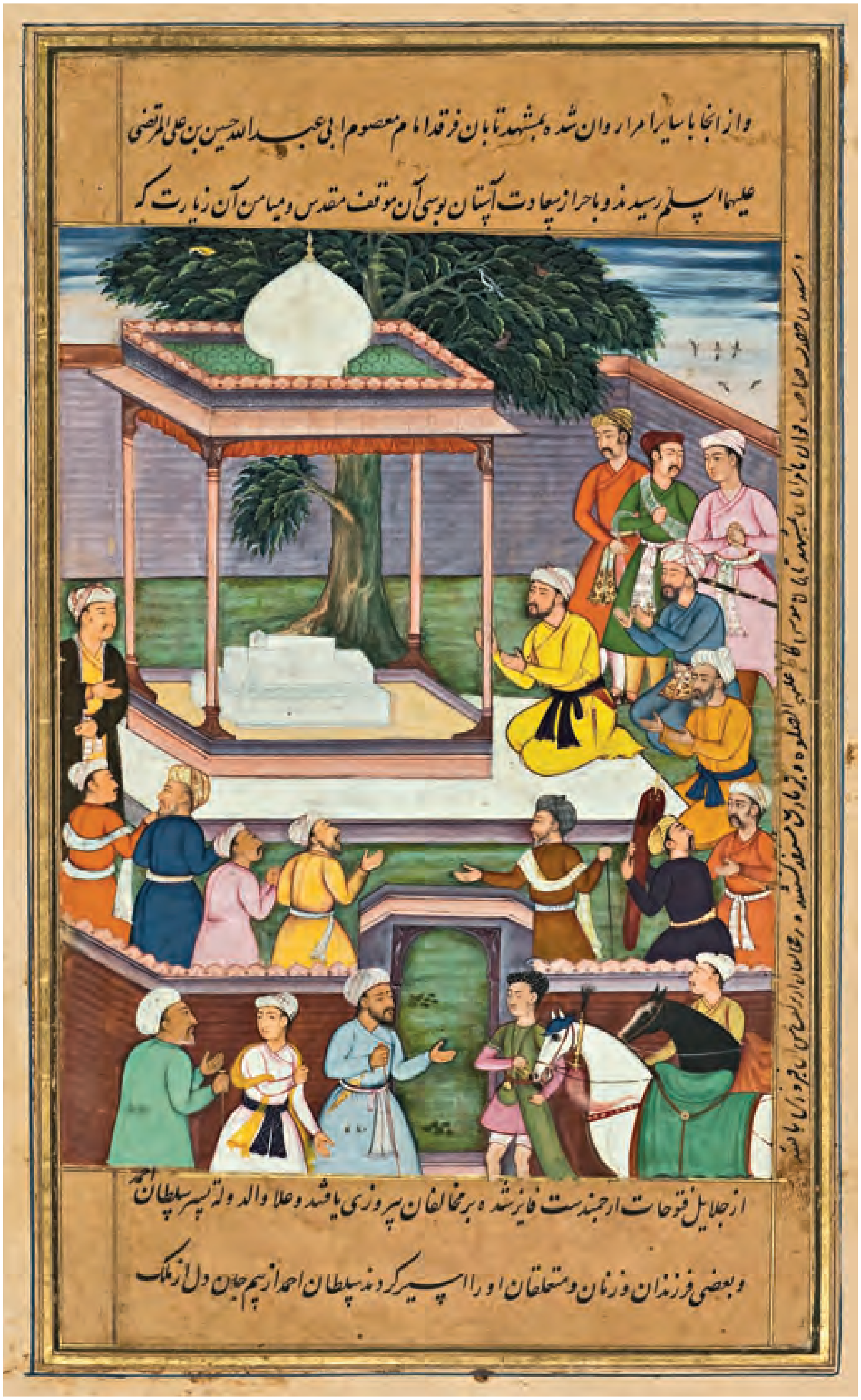
PRAYERS AT THE TOMB OF IMĀM ḤUSAYN

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Ẓafarnāma* ('Book of Conquest')
of Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī
Mughal India; c. 1595–1600
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 28.1 x 20 cm
AKM 900
Unpublished

The *Zafarnama* of Sharaf al-Din ʿAli Yazdi, probably completed in 1424–25, details the achievements of Timur (also known in the West as Tamerlane), eponymous founder of the dynasty which ruled Central Asia and Iran from c. 1370 to 1507. The text of the *Zafarnama* is largely concerned with the conquests of the Timurid progenitor, including his invasion of India in 1397–1399, and it appears to have formed the basis of the passages on Timur's reign that are included in Abu'l-Fazl's *Akbarnama* (see cat. no. 41). The Mughal dynasty of India was founded by Babur (1482–1530), a great-great-great grandson of Timur, while Timur himself claimed to be descended from Genghis Khan: the very name 'Mughal' – which is not how the dynasty referred to itself but a name given to it by outsiders – is a reference to the Mongol heritage of Babur's lineage.

The direct line of descent from Timur to the Mughals makes the production of an illustrated version of the *Zafarnama* for the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1564–1605) a natural undertaking, particularly as several other imperial illustrated dynastic texts were also produced for Mughal patrons in the 1590s (Losty 1982, nos 62, 63, 70, 71). The early development of the imperial illustrated book in Mughal India saw the assimilation and adaptation of Persianate modes of painting: Akbar's father Humayun had attracted painters from Safavid Iran to his court in Delhi in the mid-sixteenth century, but it was not until the period of Akbar's prolific patronage of the illustrated book that the synthesis of a new Mughal style got truly underway.

This painting illustrates the visit of a prince of the Jochid Mongols, Ibaj Oglan, to pray at the tomb of Imam Husayn – the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad and one of the most important figures in Shiʿi Islam – in Karbala, Iraq. The revered tomb of Imam Husayn has been one of the major sites of Shiʿi pilgrimage since the first centuries of Islam, and the shrine around the tomb had been destroyed and rebuilt several times by the medieval period (Sindawi 2006, pp. 235–237). By the time this manuscript was created the tomb was contained within a large complex with a magnificent dome and two minarets (see the *Falnama* painting of the tomb of Husayn, from Iran, c. 1550, in von Folsach 2001, p. 76). Here, it is here depicted as a simple white stone cenotaph under a domed canopy, mounted on a larger plinth of white marble within a walled garden. This appears to be a standard model for the depiction of tombs in Mughal painting, rather than any attempted historicist recreation of Husayn's resting place as it might have appeared at the time of Ibaj Oglan's visit: similar tomb types, albeit without honorific canopies, are used to show the graves of Majnun's father and Layla in the *Khamsa* of Nizami painted for Akbar in 1595 (Brend 1995, pp. 30, 32).



و از انجا با سایر امرا روان شده بمشهد تابان فرقد امام معصوم ابی عبد الله حسین بن علی المرتضی

علیهما السلم رسیدند و باحراز سعادت آستان بوسی آن موقف مقدس و میامن آن زیارت که

از جلایل فتوحات ارجمند است فایز شده بر مخالفان پیروزی یافتند و علاء الدوله پسر سلطان احمد

و بعضی فرزندان و زنان و متعلقان او را اسیر کردند سلطان احمد از بیم جان دل از ملک

21

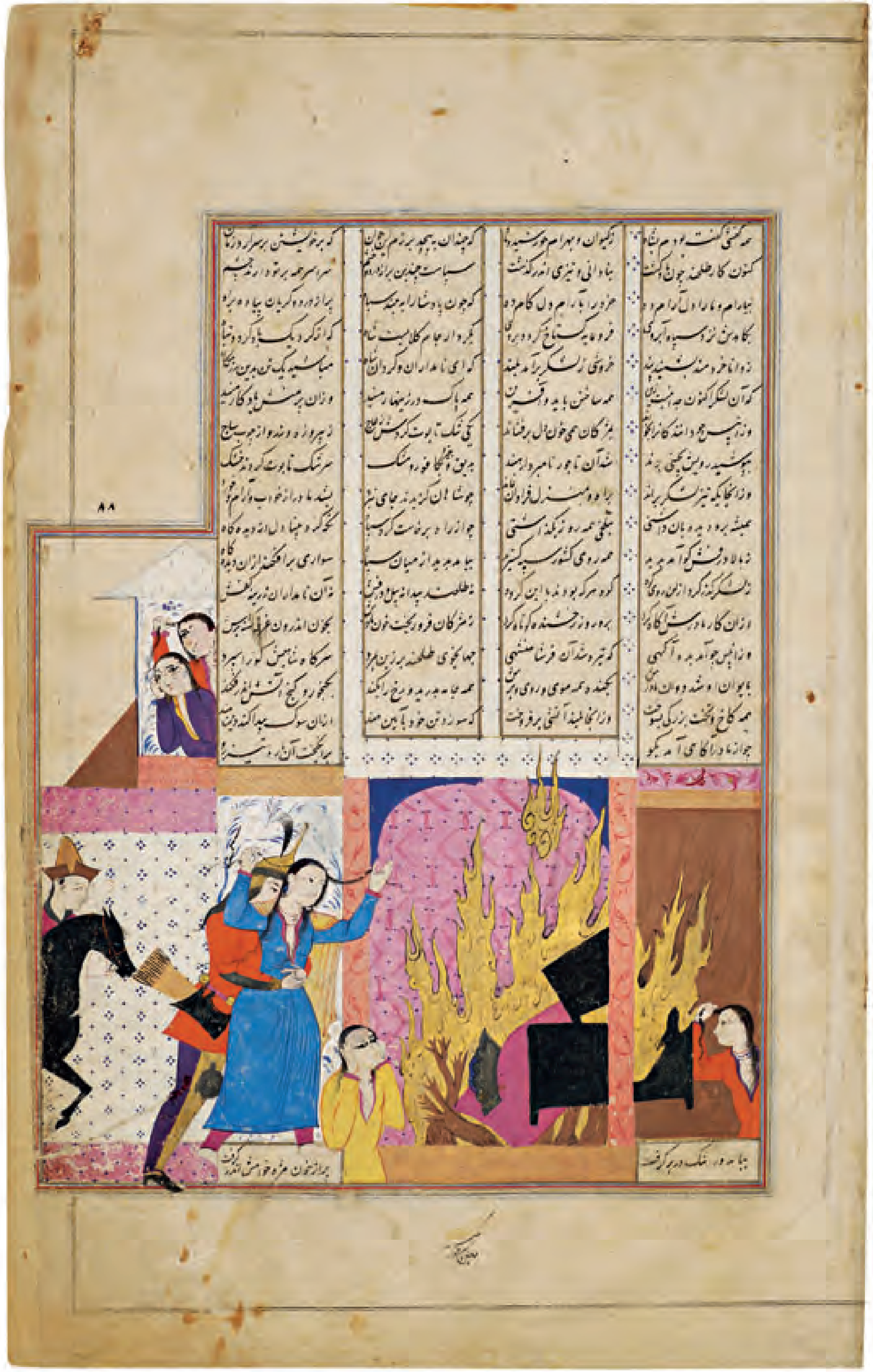
THE CREMATION OF ṬALḤAND AND THE GRIEF OF HIS MOTHER

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī;
this illustration signed in lower margin by Muʿīn Muṣavvir
Isfahan, Iran; believed to date to 1077 H/1666–67 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 35.9 x 22.6 cm
AKM 448
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 203 (not ill.)

In the early eleventh century the poet Abu'l-Qasim Firdawsi completed his epic poem narrating the legends of the pre-Islamic kings and heroes of the Iranian plateau, from the creation of the world to the coming of Islam. This monumental literary work, entitled the *Shahnama* or 'Book of Kings', was written in New Persian, and remains the most important achievement of what has been described as a 'renaissance' of Persian language and culture in the medieval period. Among the countless episodes of the Iranian national epic are stories that recount the genesis of various landmarks and traditions.

The present scene comes from the story of two warring half-brothers from al-Hind (India), Gav and Talhand: after long and bitter fighting, Talhand was accidentally slain in battle by Gav. Mourning his brother, Gav created a coffin of ivory and precious materials for Talhand, but when their mother learned of her son's death at the hands of her other son she ran to the palace of Talhand in a frenzy, setting it on fire and also raising a pyre upon which to annihilate herself. Her self-immolation was stopped at the last moment by Gav, who invented the game of chess to explain the tragic events of the battle to his distraught mother.

Like cat. no. 109, this painting comes from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* that is thought to have been illustrated by the prolific painter Muʿin Musavvir, a student of the famous Safavid court painter Riza ʿAbbasi, in 1666–67 (Farhad 1990, n. 10). In this dramatic image, which has suffered somewhat from deliberate damage to the faces of the figures, Talhand's coffin, cloak and crown are consumed within the pyre while Gav restrains his frantic mother. The architecture of the palace is constructed in a manner similar to that of other, more cheerful scenes in the same manuscript (see cat. no. 109), with the division of space ordered by the text blocks, and patterned panels indicating a luxurious environment. However, while the setting may have been rendered in a fashion somewhat stereotypical of Persianate miniature painting, the story of the burning coffin and the funeral pyre reflect an early interest amongst Iranian audiences in the burial customs of the Hindus, particularly the practice of *sati* or the self-immolation of a recently-widowed woman on her husband's funeral pyre (Flood 2009, pp. 78–79; see also Farhad 2001 on a seventeenth-century Safavid poem dealing with this subject). For a further example of Muslim interest in Hindu subject matter see cat. no. 29.

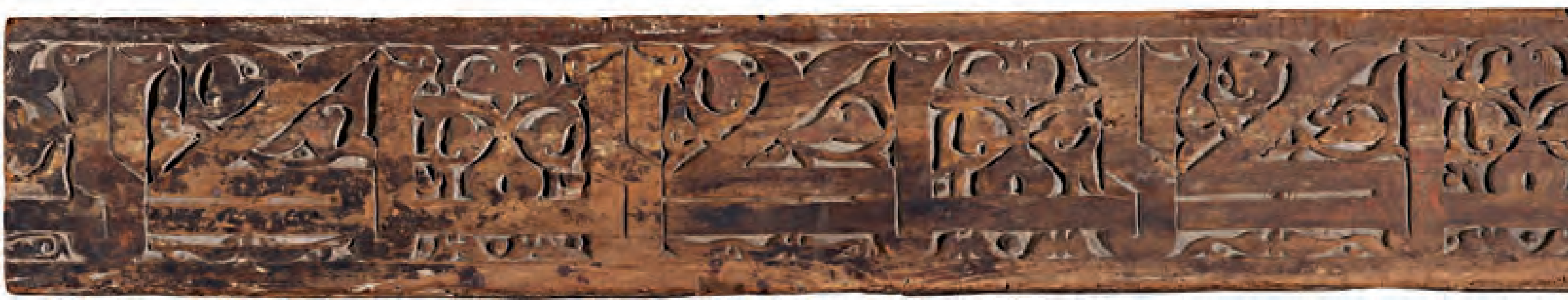


22

BEAM INSCRIBED *AL-MULK*

Probably Iran; fourteenth century
Carved wood with traces of original paintwork
20.8 x 239 cm
Inscription: *al-mulk* [*li'llah*] ('Sovereignty [belongs to God]')
AKM 630

Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 189 (cat. F); AKTC 2007b, p. 191 (cat. F); AKTC 2008b, no. 14; AKTC 2009a, p. 174 (no. 128); AKTC 2009b, p. 174 (no. 128); AKTC 2010a, pp. 175 (no. 130)



The inscription on this beam is executed in a form of Kufic so close to that found on the lower part of the wooden corner posts also published here (cat. no. 23) that it has been conjectured that all three pieces may have originally come from the same structure, quite possibly a cenotaph (Christie's 5 October 2010, lot 119). The inscription appears to be a repetition of the word *al-mulk*: the interlaced verticals at the start of each unit are confusing, but probably represent a decorative elaboration of the definite article *alif-lam* (transliterated as 'al'), rather than an actual *lam-alif* ('la'). *Al-mulk* is a very common expression found on all media of the medieval Islamic world, and is a contracted form of the extremely widely used pious phrase *al-mulk li'llah*, 'Sovereignty belongs to God' (see cat. no. 26).

The simplicity of the textual content is here matched by the relative plainness of the inscriptive style, a short and rather blunt Kufic script with some foliation of the letter shafts, against a background of simple vegetal decoration with little bevelling or detailing. Given the relative modesty of this piece, particularly when compared with the much more ornate carving found on the upper parts of the corner posts, it is possible that this may have represented the lower side strut of a cenotaph, while the upper strut would have carried a more complex inscriptive programme (see also a fourteenth-century cenotaph at Qaydar, northwestern Iran, in Curatola 1987, p. 107).

Unlike a sarcophagus, a cenotaph – a box-like structure – does not actually contain the body. Muslim burial practice normally requires the body to be interred below ground, so the cenotaph is in effect an empty signifier of the dead person. Although the Qur'an gives little instruction regarding burial *per se*, early legal texts (*fiqh*) and passages in the Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet) stipulate rapid burial in the ground, and condemn the marking of the grave in any significant way. As several scholars have noted, burial is an area where theory and practice diverge, and from the early Islamic period graves have in fact frequently been marked by structures of various types (Blair n.d.). The use of cenotaphs as grave-markers appears to have been a reasonably widespread practice in the early and medieval Islamic world: in addition to the material remains, a fragment of an early unidentified manuscript shows two stepped brick or stone cenotaphs, and the same form functioned as a near-universal symbol for a burial place in subsequent book painting (Rice 1959, pp. 210–213; see the image of the tombs at Medina in cat. no. 2). Cenotaphs of wood were naturally used only in tomb interiors; even so, few examples from the early and medieval periods have survived, even in fragment form.

23

INSCRIBED WOODEN CORNER POSTS

Probably Iran; fourteenth century
Carved wood
Height: 123.8 cm
AKM 831
Unpublished

On the basis of similarities in script style, apparent textual content (*al-mulk*, 'Sovereignty [belongs to God]') and arabesque decoration that can be drawn between the lower sections (not shown here) of these two posts and the beam presented in cat. no. 22, it is plausible to suggest that these corner posts and the beam all come from the same workshop, perhaps even the same structure; however, further testing will be needed to confirm this.

While the beam alone could have taken any one of a number of architectural roles, the corner posts are certainly suggestive of a cenotaph (see cat. no. 22). The early fourteenth-century cenotaph or *sanduq* ('chest') of the Imamzada Qasim, at Qaraqush in northwestern Iran, bears corner posts that display a different but closely related form of deeply carved interlace decoration to that seen on the middle section of these posts, integrated within a dense decorative programme of interlace panels and an attractive Kufic inscription giving a Qur'anic text on the cenotaph's upper edges. The Qaraqush cenotaph perhaps represents the best published example with which to compare the Aga Khan Museum's fragments (Curatola 1987, p. 107). An interesting feature of the present pieces is that they come from an object where inscriptions clearly continue over the corner posts, with a complex cursive inscription running around the top edge (illustrated) and a simpler Kufic inscription below. This wrapping of the text around the corner posts, suggestive of a more holistic decorative conception of the finished object, is seen on later cenotaphs such as that of Taj al-Mulk Abu l-Qasim, from Mazandaran in northern Iran and dated 1473 (Lentz – Lowry 1989, p. 207). However, the paucity of surviving dated examples of medieval Iranian woodwork makes the reconstruction of this art extremely difficult, and much work remains to be done in this area.

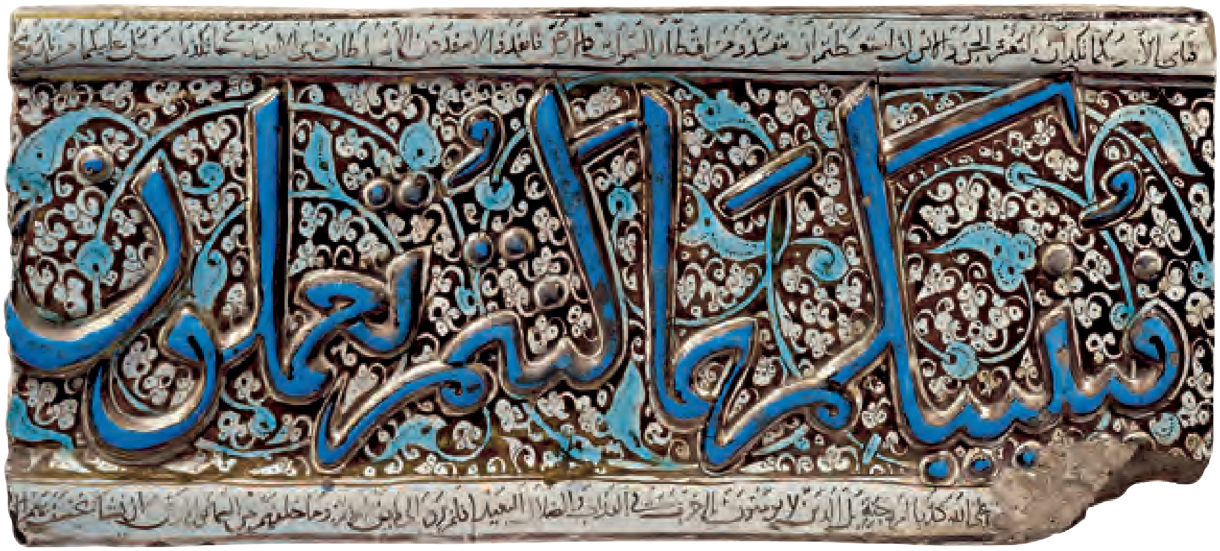
24

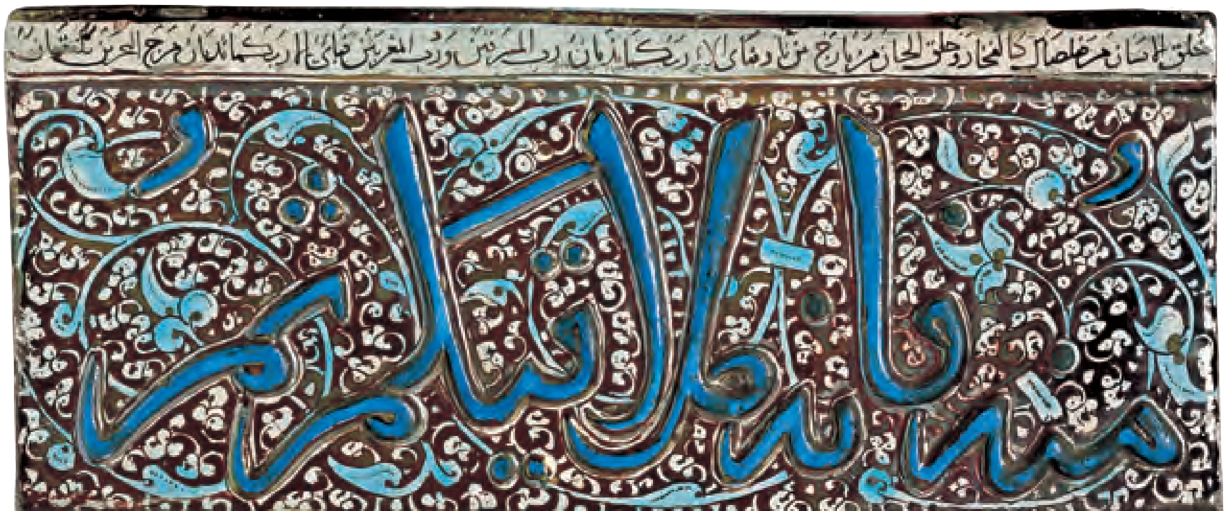
MOULDED CERAMIC TILES WITH QUR'ANIC INSCRIPTIONS

Iran, possibly Kashan; early fourteenth century
Glazed fritware with cobalt and turquoise underglaze painting against white and lustre overglaze decoration
AKM 565, 796
565: 18.6 x 43 cm; 796: 17.5 x 38.1 cm
Text: 565 central band: Qur'an 62:8; upper: 55:32–35; lower: 34: 7–9
796 central band: Qur'an 62:8; upper: 55:14–19; lower: 34: 2–3
Publ: 565 only: AKTC 2010b, p. 86 (no. 37). 796 only: A. Welch 1978b, pp. 172–173 (no. P.70); Geneva 1981, no. 90; Falk 1985, p. 235 (no. 237). Both together: AKTC 2007a, pp. 51–52 (no. 21); AKTC 2007b, p. 21 (no. 21); Makariou 2007, pp, 120–121 (nos 40a–b); AKTC 2009a, p. 50 (nos 19–20); AKTC 2009b, p. 50 (nos 19–20); AKTC 2010a, p. 52 (nos 20–21)

Both of these architectural tiles are decorated with moulded central inscriptions in a fluid and well-balanced *thuluth* script, in cobalt blue, which manages to hold its own against the busy background of tiny plant designs in white reserved against lustre and scrolling turquoise vegetal sprays. Each one also carries smaller, densely and quickly executed inscriptions that have been painted in golden-brown lustre in a *naskh*-type cursive script onto the narrow projecting bands at top and bottom of the main inscription. The two tiles appear to be part of the same frieze, although not quite contiguous, and their inscriptive content is closely related: both bear in their central panels sections of Qur'an 62:8, while their upper and lower sections carry inscriptions from the fifty-fifth and thirty-fourth Suras respectively. The overall effect is a visual polyphony of sacred texts, and yet it remains harmoniously dominated by the elegant cobalt *thuluth* script.

Tiles of this type would originally have formed part of a long calligraphic frieze of Qur'anic inscriptions, ornamenting the inner wall of a tomb or shrine, framing a mihrab panel, or possibly decorating a cenotaph. Several very closely related examples are held in other collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the group as a whole is believed to have come from the tomb of the Sufi master ʿAbd al-Samad at Natanz in Iran, where it may have formed part of a wall frieze that was completed around 1308 and stripped out and sold to collectors in the nineteenth century, or may possibly have covered the cenotaph (Masuya 2000, p. 41). Similar tiles with inscriptive borders, making up a quotation from the sixty-second Sura of the Qur'an, were reportedly taken from Natanz, as well as a mihrab panel now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 09.87 (Blair 1986, pp. 64–65). The lustre tilework that was so popular in Ilkhanid Iran would have gained an extra dimension when viewed in lamp or candlelight, which would have caused the surface to glitter, while flickering light would at the same time have created a play of light and shade upon the raised central inscription.





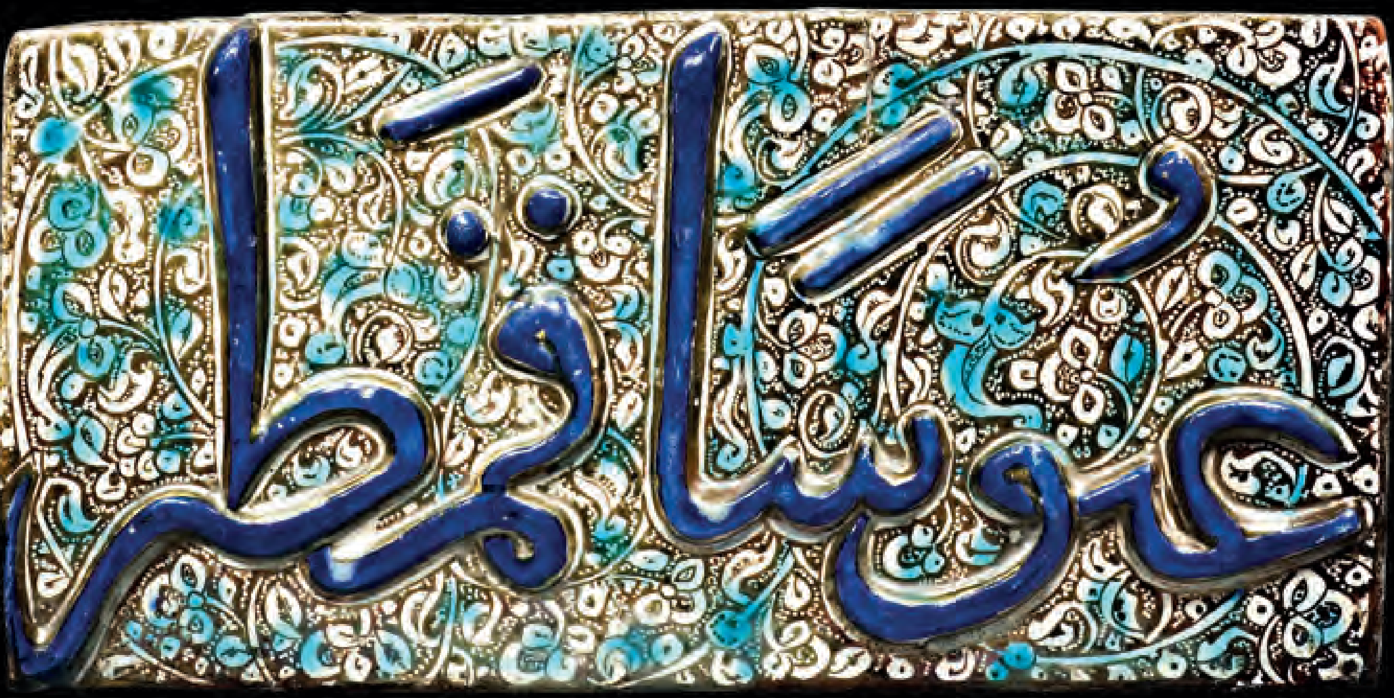
25

MOULDED CERAMIC TILE

Iran, possibly Kashan; late thirteenth or early fourteenth century
Glazed fritware with cobalt and turquoise underglaze painting against white and lustre overglaze decoration
19.5 x 40.8 cm
AKM 859
Unpublished

Like cat. no. 24, this large inscriptive tile would have been part of an architectural frieze, created in Iran during the period of Mongol rule (c. 1256–1353). Tilework production in Iran, well established by the end of the twelfth century, was disrupted by the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century and the subsequent establishment of the Ilkhanid dynasty of Mongol rulers in Iran and the surrounding area. The ceramics industry at Kashan (near Isfahan) was particularly highly regarded in the medieval period, and is most famous for its high-quality lustre wares: such was its fame, it is thought that the Persian word for tile, *kashi* or *kashani*, is derived from the name of the town (Watson 1973–75, p. 3). This has led to the attribution of most medieval Iranian lustre ware to Kashan, although some scholars have argued that the volume of lustre objects and fragments apparently found at sites all over Iran indicates that there must have been other, less well-documented centres of production (Redford – Blackman 1997, p. 235). At any rate, production at Kashan appears to have virtually ceased for some forty years during the crisis of the Mongol invasions, only to start again around 1260 with a reinvigorated style, of which this piece is a good later example: the density of the background patterning and the combination of golden lustre, turquoise and cobalt blue is absolutely typical of Ilkhanid ceramic tiles (Watson 2004, p. 373).

Borderless tiles of similar type to this example but of slightly narrower dimensions, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, are proposed to have functioned as a frame around a large ceramic mihrab in the shrine of ʿAbd al-Samad at Natanz in Iran (see cat. no. 24). Blair has hypothesised that tiles of this type bearing popular Qur'anic inscriptions may have been kept in stock by lustre potters, to be worked into frames for ceramic mihrab panels, dadoes and possibly cenotaphs, although such inscriptions would need to fit the space exactly, which would suggest standardised dimensions. The expense of lustre tiles meant that they were used for interior decoration only, while glazed tiles in solid/void or mosaic patterns were used for exteriors (Blair 1986, pp. 40–41, 63–65).



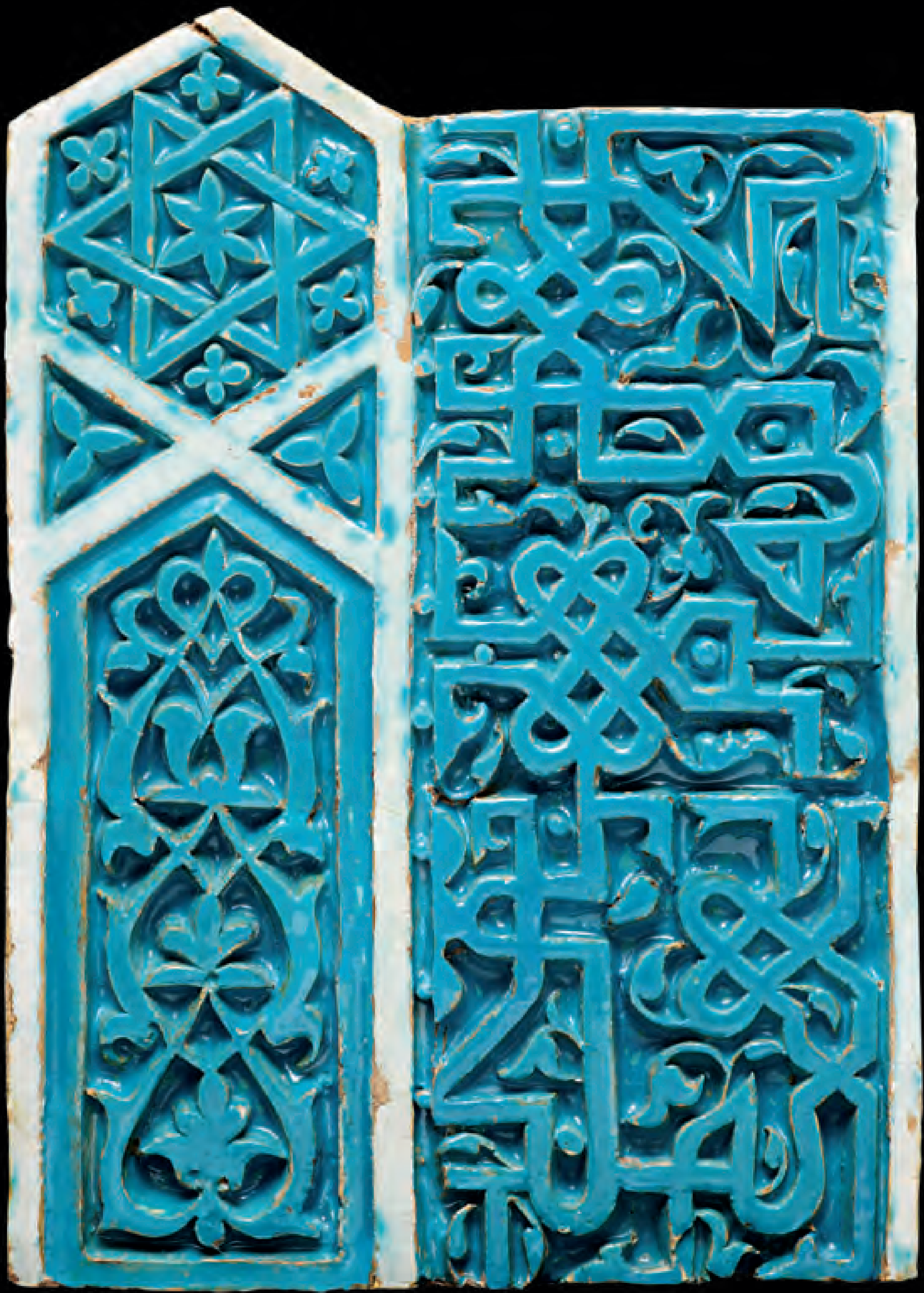
26

INCISED GLAZED TILE WITH INSCRIPTION

Western Central Asia, possibly Samarqand; late fourteenth century
Carved and moulded earthenware with opaque turquoise glaze
51.8 x 37.5 x 6.4 cm
Inscription: *al-mulk* [*li'llah*] ('Sovereignty [belongs to God]')
AKM 827
Publ: AKTC 2010b, pp. 54–55 (no. 26)

Glazed tile, already established as a sophisticated and expensive form of wallcovering in Iran under the Ilkhanids (c. 1256–1353; see cat. nos 24 and 25), underwent rapid developments in technique and aesthetic under the Timurids (c. 1370–1507) and emerged as the medium of some of the Islamic world's most breathtaking architectural decoration. The extraordinary Timurid predilection for turquoise and lapis lazuli blues, often highlighted with white, is apparent in both the extant tilework revetments found at sites such as the funerary complex of Shah-i Zinda (Samarqand, c. 1370–1425), and in tile panels that are now dispersed in museums around the world.

The technique of carving precise and intricate motifs in high relief into thick earthenware to create designs which, although largely monochromatic, make a great play of light and shade, was perfected in western Central Asia in the fourteenth century and seems to have been largely abandoned in favour of newer methods in the fifteenth century. This example boasts both a panel of the finely carved interlace palmettes that are a hallmark of the genre (see cat. no. 28, and Pancaroğlu 2007, pp. 151–152), and a more unusual plaited Kufic inscription of remarkable complexity that forms part of the common pious phrase 'Sovereignty belongs to God'. Elaborate and dominating inscriptions are a notable feature of imperial Timurid architectural decoration, and this tile would have been part of a larger frieze, itself possibly only one element amongst a larger programme. Carved, turquoise-glazed tiles with comparable inscriptions in plaited Kufic are held in the Metropolitan Museum (no. 2006.274) and the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (illustrated in Kalter – Pavaloi 1997, p. 90).



27

INCISED GLAZED TILE WITH ARCH MOTIF

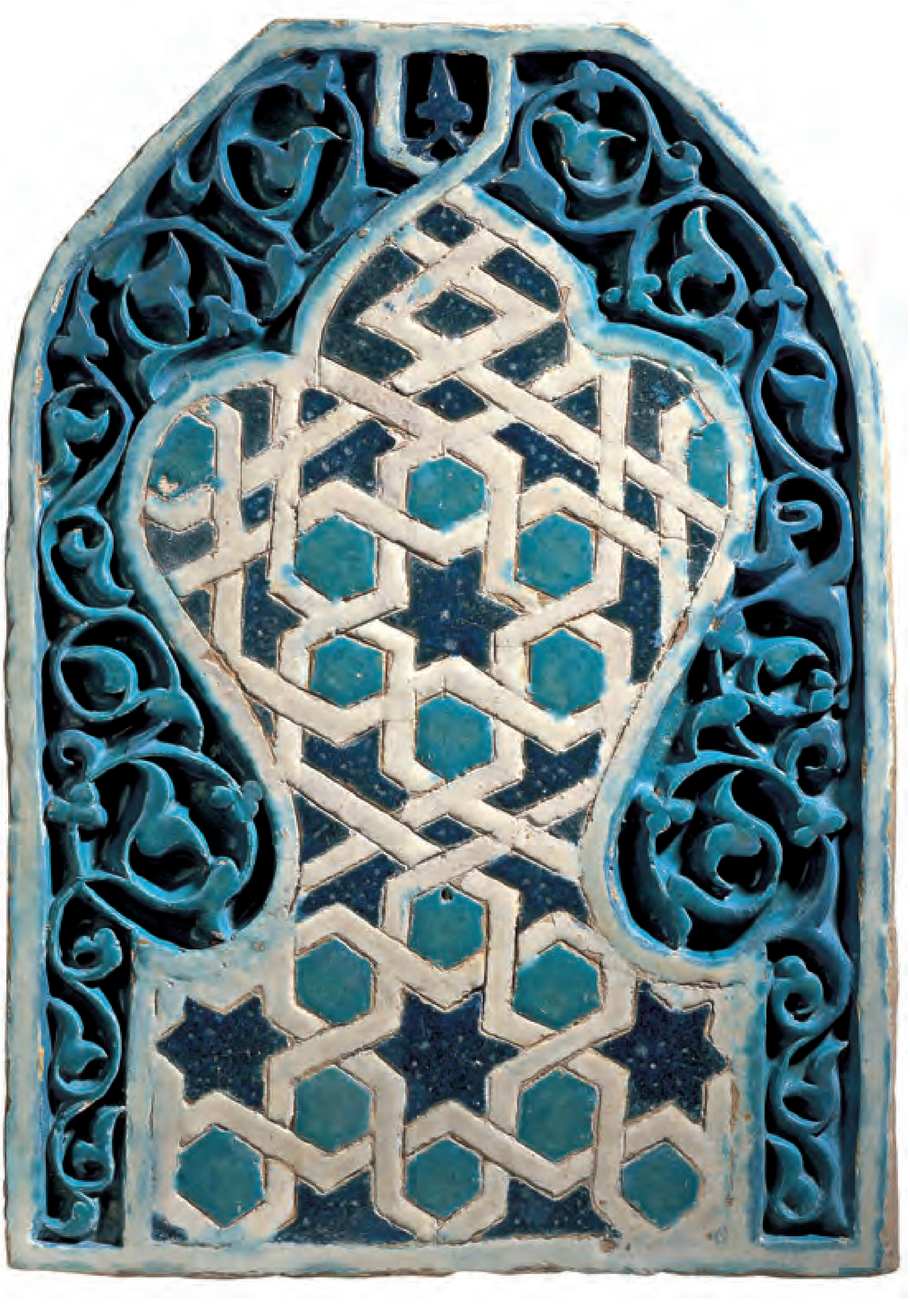
Western Central Asia, possibly Samarqand;
late fourteenth or early fifteenth century
Carved and moulded earthenware with opaque blue, turquoise and white glaze
56 x 39 cm
AKM 572

Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 176 (no. 152a); AKTC 2007b, p. 176 (no. 152a); AKTC 2008a, pp. 278–279 (no. 110); AKTC 2009a, p. 185 (no. 140); AKTC 2009b, p. 185 (no. 140); AKTC 2010a, p. 185 (no. 145)

Like cat. nos 26 and 28, this ceramic tile is a product of the early part of the Timurid era (c. 1370–1507) in Iran and Central Asia, when glazed tilework, particularly in shades of turquoise and blue, became the supreme medium of elite architectural decoration. This individual tile is of particular interest as it demonstrates two different styles and techniques in one object. In the field surrounding the arch, high-relief scrolling vegetal ornament with split-palmettes and trefoils has been finished with a turquoise glaze, similar to that which can be seen in cat. no. 28. However, the field of the arch is decorated in a completely different fashion, with a lightly incised strapwork design based around a common star-and-honeycomb pattern that can be seen in various media across the Islamic world from the twelfth century onwards (an early example is visible on a Fatimid wooden mihrab; O'Kane 2006, p. 59). In an attempt to keep the colours from bleeding into each other the geometric design appears to have been executed in something akin to the *cuerda seca* ('dry cord') technique developed in Central Asia in the second half of the fourteenth century, whereby the design was drawn onto the surface of the tile with a greasy substance which kept individual colour fields from mingling during firing (see cat. no. 85).

Tiles bearing arches of very similar outline, but decorated with carved vegetal interlace rather than the geometric strapwork design seen here, are held in the Louvre (OA 6440) and the Plotnick Collection (Pancaroğlu 2007, p. 152); those examples are in turn very similar to tiles that are still in situ on the tomb of Shad-i Mulk Aqa (d. 1371) at Shah-i Zinda, near Samarqand, and on other monuments of the same Timurid funerary complex (Lentz – Lowry 1989, p. 41).

The funerary monuments of Shah-i Zinda – most of them variants on the architectural model of the domed cube and built for various nobles and relatives of Timur – exemplify the extensive use of glazed tile in the Timurid period which came to function as 'a veil between a building and the person looking at it' (Hillenbrand 1979, p. 547). Monuments were draped in shimmering colour through the use of glazed brick (*banna'i*), incised and glazed earthenware, mosaic, *cuerda seca* and underglaze painted tiles. However, one result of this increased focus on tilework was a decreased interest in structure, leading to a certain poverty of ideas in Timurid architectural design. Simultaneously, the use of non-structural architectural forms as ornament – a recurring feature in Islamic architecture of many different cultures – came to particular prominence in Timurid architectural decoration. The form taken by the ornamental arch on this tile is divorced from architectural function and could not work as a true load-bearing arch, just as the glazed ceramic capitals illustrated in cat. no. 28 are similarly non-functional.



28

INCISED GLAZED ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Western Central Asia, possibly Samarqand;
late fourteenth or fifteenth century
Carved and moulded earthenware with opaque turquoise glaze
Dimensions: 573: height 31.5 cm; 574: height 30 cm; 575: diameter 26 cm;
576: diameter 26.5 cm
AKM 573, 574, 575, 576

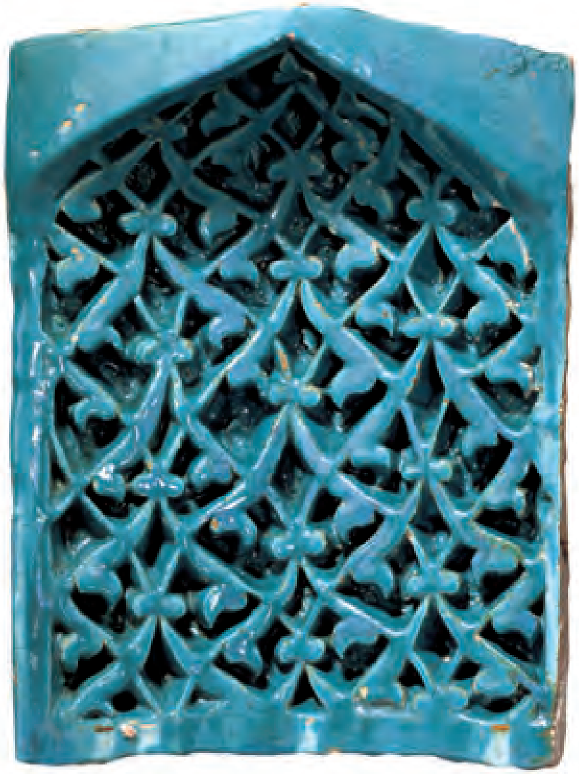
Publ: AKTC 2007a, pp. 176–177 (no. 152); AKTC 2007b, pp. 176–177 (no. 152); Makariou 2007, p. 96 (no. 31); AKTC 2009a, p. 185 (nos 141, 142); AKTC 2009b, p. 185 (nos 141, 142); AKTC 2010a, p. 184 (nos 146, 147)

Muqarnas is a uniquely Islamic architectural form found across the Islamic world. A decorative system of connected 'honeycombed' cells often used to articulate the transition from one plane to another, *muqarnas* can be constructed from diverse media, including wood (see cat. no. 67), stone, stucco and, as here, glazed earthenware. These two glazed ceramic *muqarnas* pieces were probably used to break up a zone of transition such as the hood over an arched portal (like that of the fourteenth-century tomb thought to be for Qutlugh Aqa at Shah-i Zinda, Samarqand) or the underside of a projecting lintel or drum.

The two *muqarnas* elements in this group display different styles of high-relief interlace in their central panels, and even if such cells were only used with others of the same type, the overall effect must have been powerful. The receding and projecting curved facets making up the *muqarnas* would have been further enhanced by the carved high-relief decoration and the subsequent play of light and shade that such forms are designed to manipulate. The decoration of one *muqarnas* element shown here is considerably more complex than that of the other. The more elaborate example is arranged around a vertical symmetrical axis and composed of coiled interlace with a central design that refers to Chinese images of lotus flowers with curling leaves, a form of decoration that arrived in the Persianate world with the advent of the Mongol Empire (Crowe 1992, p. 176). The other *muqarnas* cell, decorated with a simpler repeating pattern of split-palmette stems and little buds, can be compared with a glazed *muqarnas* element of similar dimensions, said to come from Samarqand and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (20.120.189). That piece bears a comparably repetitive design based on interlacing circles and small pairs of buds like those seen on the AKM piece.

The two glazed earthenware capitals, meanwhile, would probably have originally been placed above engaged pilasters of brick, as their material and scale would prevent them from acting as true supporting elements in any monumental architectural construction. Thus they form another example of the fictive tendency in Islamic architectural decoration: presenting the appearance of a structural element, the capitals are in fact a simulation, contributing to the impression of monumentality while providing yet another surface for ornament.

Although it has been suggested that these pieces were created using moulds, it is very hard to see how such high relief and fine lines could have been successfully produced on a rigid mould. Pickett makes the more plausible argument, based on an examination of pieces that combine glazed and unglazed areas, that Timurid incised tilework was carved with a knife when the clay was soft, then air-dried, smoothed off and sharpened up prior to glazing and firing (Pickett 1997, pp. 138–139).



29

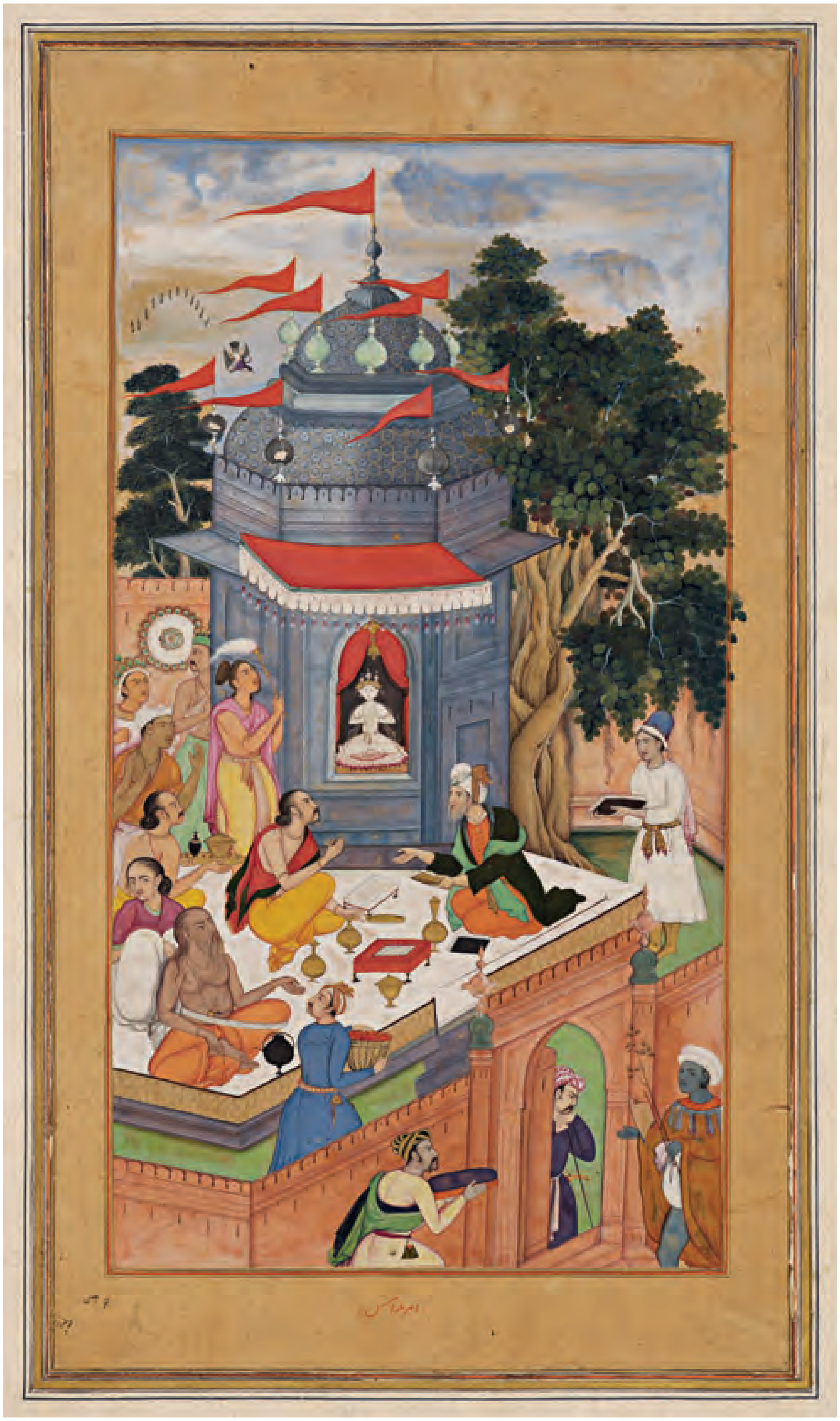
SAʿDĪ AND THE IDOL OF SOMNĀTH

Folio 68v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt* ('Collected Works') of Saʿdī, inscribed 'Dharm Dās' in lower margin
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 41.7 x 26.4 cm
AKM 284

Publ: Welch – Welch 1982, p. 194 (no. 64); Falk 1985, p. 158 (no. 134); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 180–181 (no. 88)

Like cat. nos 30, 45, 52, 73, 78 and 82, this painting comes from the *Kulliyat* of Saʿdi. Claiming to have travelled extensively throughout the Islamic world and beyond, Saʿdi records in his long poem the *Bustan* ('Garden of Fragrance') an encounter that allegedly took place between himself and the Brahmin priests of the famous Hindu temple at Somnath, in Gujarat. Entering into a religious discussion with the Brahmin priest, Saʿdi waxed lyrical in praise of Islam. In response, the Brahmin capped his arguments by telling him that the statue in the Somnath temple miraculously gestured in response to the prayers of Hindu believers. Initially confounded, Saʿdi became suspicious and returned at night to inspect the statue, only to discover that its arms were operated by a mechanical device (Hart Edwards 1911, pp. 106–109).

While the story may be dismissive of Hinduism, the accompanying painting betrays a deep fascination with India's most populous religion – an interest that was very much in keeping with the personal passions of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, and to a certain extent also maintained by his son Jahangir. Prior to his death in 1605 Akbar had spent many years cultivating a syncretistic vision of India and conversing with holy men of all faiths, and was actively engaged in a patronage of arts that would reflect this breadth of cultural awareness (Bailey 1998, p. 24). As Goswamy and Fischer have noted of this image, the point of the story is in fact somewhat undermined by the painting, which was perhaps the intention of the painter: rather than establishing a superiority of Muslim over Hindu, the painting presents an exchange between equals, both of them earnest and sincere, while the finely-drawn observers at the temple appear neither gullible nor gross. The idol itself is appealingly represented, but it is the architecture of the temple that really takes centre stage. The polygonal form of the building may be familiar from other, more standard images of pavilions in the same manuscript (cat. no. 82), but the artist has added a spectacular double dome and fluttering red pennants with bulbous masts to anchor the image within Hindu architectural practice.



30

A SAGE IN A COURTYARD

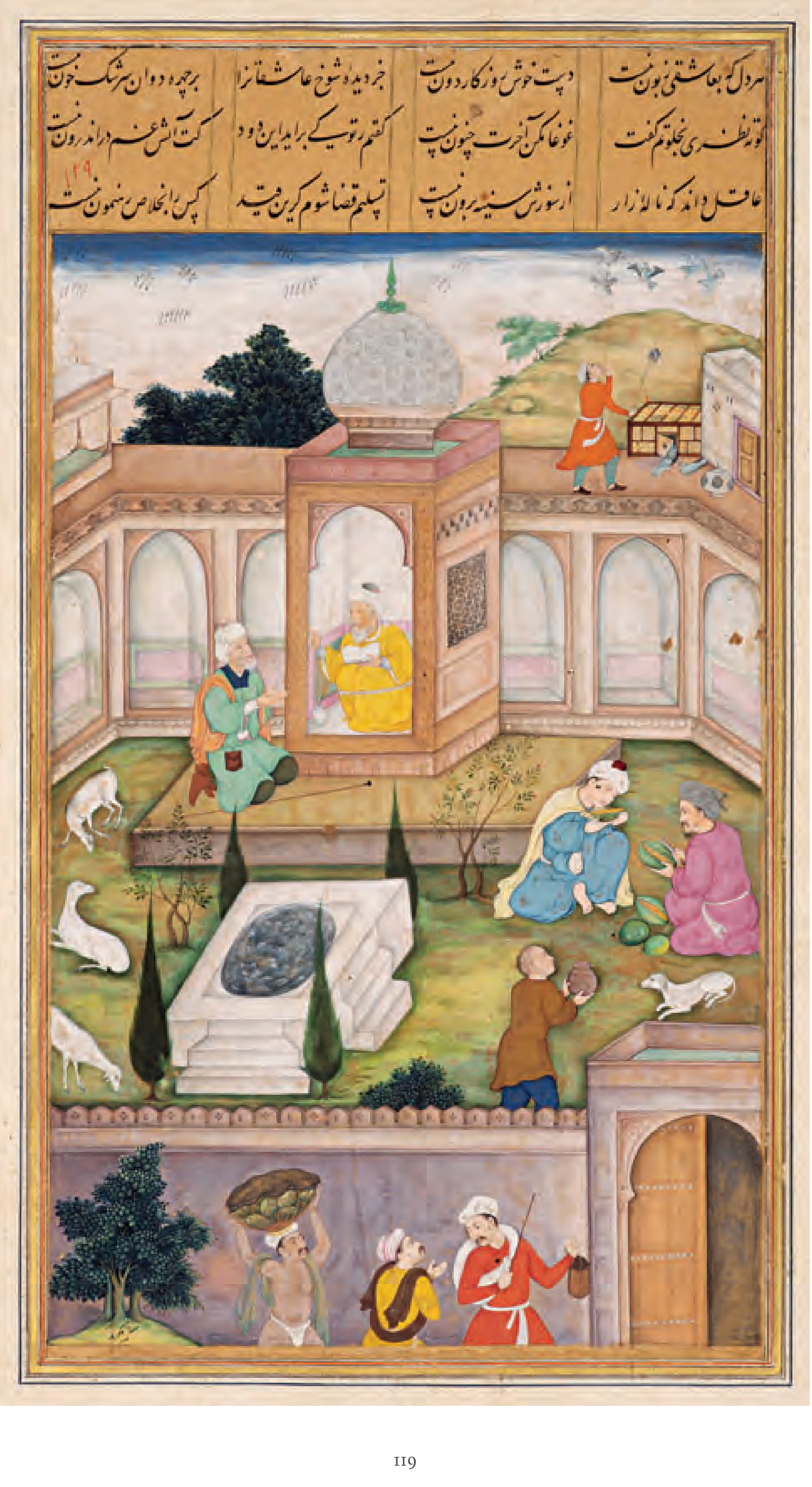
Folio 129v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt* ('Collected Works') of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 41.8 x 26.2 cm
AKM 284
Unpublished

Shaykh Saʿdi (d. 1292), one of the most celebrated poets in Persian literary history, was the author of the famous *Bustan* ('Garden of Fragrance'), completed c. 1257, and the *Gulistan* ('Garden of Flowers'), completed shortly afterwards. Those two long poems are here collected together with Saʿdi's other writings, including his celebrated *ghazals* (elegiac poems), into a single-volume *Kulliyat* or 'Collected Works' (see also cat. nos 29, 45, 52, 73, 78 and 82). This manuscript also presents some other works which are not always included in modern editions of the *Kulliyat*, including the poem illustrated here which is of the type known as a *tarjiʿ-band*.

The great length of the *Kulliyat* meant that lavishly illustrated manuscripts of the complete text were rarely commissioned, and this appears to be the only imperial Mughal version now in existence, although several related illustrated manuscripts of the *Bustan* and the *Gulistan* made for Akbar and Jahangir date from around the same time (Welch – Welch 1982, p. 191). The page dimensions of the Aga Khan Museum's *Kulliyat* are larger than most illustrated books of the period and it contains twenty-three full-page paintings, now detached from the binding, as well as five illuminated title pages, making it a very important manuscript for the study of the development of book arts in Islamic India. The seal of emperor Shah Jahan on folio 1r suggests that the book was held in the Mughal royal libraries, but the colophon unfortunately does not name the patron or the artists, nor give the date or place of production. It does however name the copyist as ʿAbd al-Rahim al-Haravi, a scribe also known as ʿAnbarin Qalam ('Amber Pen').

The illustrations of the *Kulliyat* are closely comparable with those seen in other manuscripts created around the time of Akbar's death in 1605, and mark the aesthetic transition between the ateliers of Akbar and his son Jahangir. The re-injection of Persianate styles that came from Jahangir's atelier, under the influence of the master-painter Aqa Riza Jahangiri, was absorbed into the pre-existing Akbari school of painting, which merged Persianate, Indian and European styles into an intensely focused, highly colourful painterly idiom (Canby 1998, p. 105). The representation of architecture is a prominent aspect of the paintings of these early Mughal manuscripts: spatial construction was no longer enacted through the patterned panels of Persianate miniature painting, and images of buildings began to have more heft and solidity as a greater interest in modelling and linear perspective developed.

The mystic-romantic themes of much classical Persian poetry are sometimes illustrated in a rather elliptical manner, as has been the case with this image. The lines of the poem that are included on the illustration refer to the pain and servitude the lover is forced to undergo, suggesting that this is an ennobling experience, and the 'wise man' referred to in the poem, who knows that 'the sigh of lamentation is nothing but a burning heart', has been embodied here as a sage in what seems to be the courtyard of a shrine or an institution of learning (trans. Will Kwiatkowski). Great attention to the details of everyday life can be seen throughout this manuscript: here, the careful depiction of the dovecot next to the boy on the roof catching pigeons, the men carrying melons and drink to the enclosure, and the acolyte who eats the cut melons, build up a picture of everyday activity around the central figure of the sage in the domed pavilion, as he dispenses advice.



31

SHAYKH ṢAFĪ DANCING TO THE WORDS OF SHAMS AL-DĪN TŪTĪ

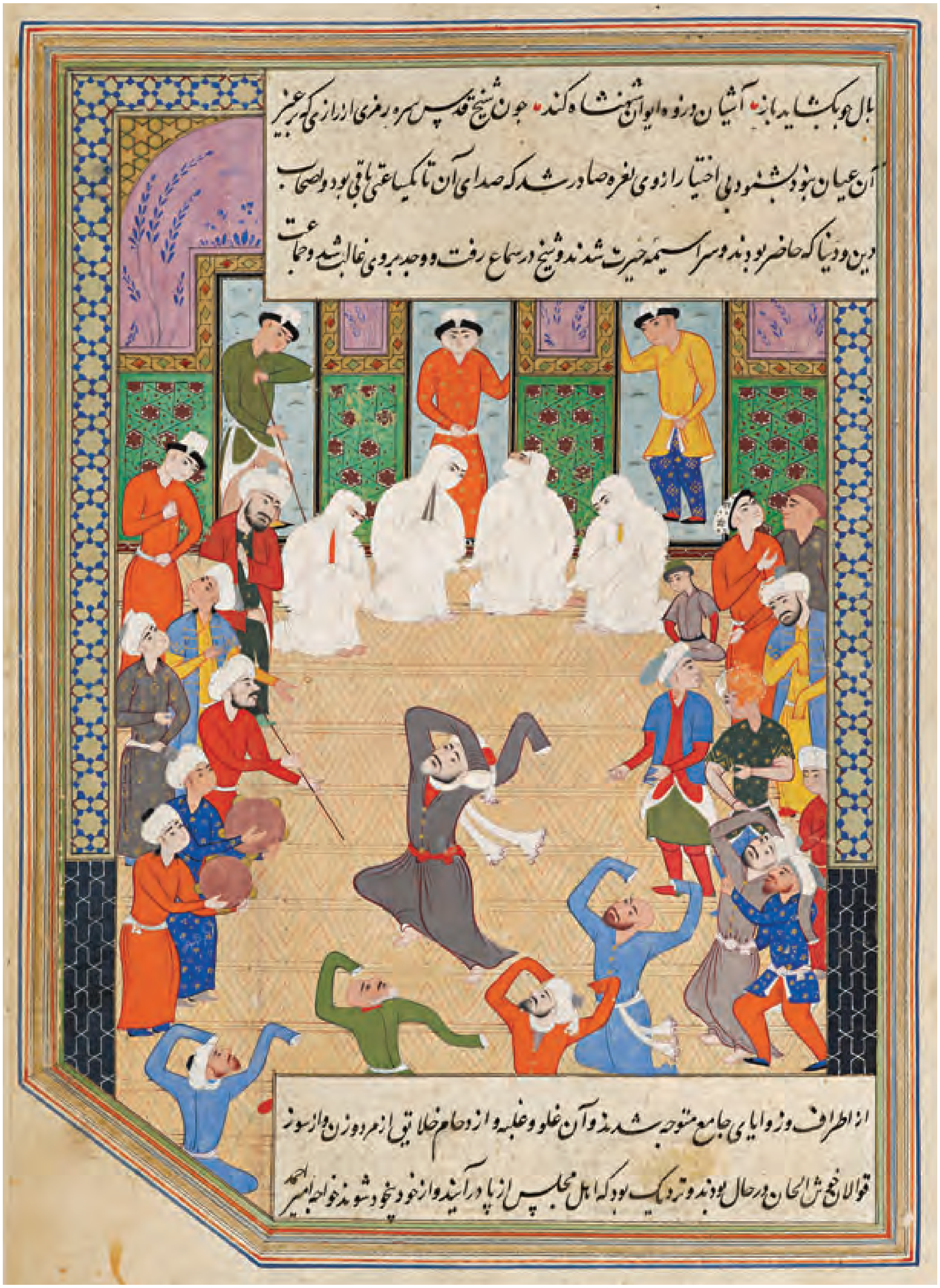
Folio 280r of an illustrated manuscript of the *Tazkirā* [Biographical Accounts] of Shaykh ṣafī al-Dīn Ishāq Ardabīlī
Shiraz, Iran; dated Shaʿban 990 H/August – September 1582 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 35.4 x 22.7 x 7.5 cm
AKM 264

Publ: A. Welch 1972b, pp. 48 and 57; AKTC 2007a, p. 69 (no. 38); AKTC 2007b, p. 65 (no. 38); Canby 2009, pp. 130–131; Rizvi 2011, p. 40

The text of the *Tazkira* records the life and miracles of Shaykh Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252/3–1334), the founder of the Safavid order of Sufis and ultimately of the Iranian dynasty of the same name, which ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722. As Canby notes, by the time this manuscript was created the Safavids had been in power for more than seventy years and the legends of Shaykh Safi would presumably have been established as part of the education of the Safavid elite (Canby 2009, p. 130). Given his pivotal status for the Safavid ruling house, and the existence of various other texts concerned with the life of Shaykh Safi (such as the *Safwat al-safa*), it is perhaps surprising that there are not more illustrated versions of the life of the dynasty's founder: to date, this is the only illustrated manuscript of the *Tazkira* in the scholarly realm. The manuscript contains fourteen miniatures, one of which is illustrated elsewhere in this catalogue (cat. no. 48), and the cycle also includes a unique painting fusing eschatological and ascension imagery (fol. 115v) as well as more standard battle scenes and palace interiors.

In this textual episode, Shaykh Safi and other disciples met in the *khanqa* (a lodge and space of worship and instruction for members of Sufi orders) to listen to the Sufi master Shams al-Din Tuti. The master's words became so esoteric that none save Shaykh Safi could understand them; the latter was moved to ecstasy and began to dance frenziedly. Safi's ecstatic removal to a spiritual plane illustrates central tenets of Sufi practice, known as *dhikr* (the act of reminding oneself of God through repetition) and *sama*ʿ ('hearing' or 'listening'), the practice of dancing and listening to music to induce an ecstatic state.

In the painting the Shaykh's abandon to the state of proximity to God is shown in the wild oscillating motion of his body, exaggerated by the long trailing sleeves of his robe, while his dark outfit makes an intentionally sharp contrast with the pale floor. The geometric patterning of the floor, also seen elsewhere in the same manuscript (see the upper storey illustrated in cat. no. 48), is rather different from the repeating tiles often used to represent floors in Safavid miniature paintings of palaces, and it may be intended to depict rush matting or some other type of simple floor covering. Images of *khanqa*s are extremely unusual, and, as Canby has observed, this painting provides a rare insight into life in the Sufi orders of Safavid Iran. The presence of the four seated veiled women, prominently arranged at the back of the hall, suggests female participation (albeit of a restrained kind) in the Safaviyya order and their practices. An earlier but comparable image of Sufis dancing ecstatically before a shaykh, from a copy of the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi dated 890 H/1485 CE, is held in the Chester Beatty library (Wright 2009, p. 222).



بال همت بگشاید باز • آشیان در ذروه ایوان شهنشاه کند • چون شیخ قدس سره رمزی از رازی که بر عزیز
آن عیان بود بشنود بی اختیار از وی نعره صادر شد که صدای آن تا یکساعتی باقی بود و اصحاب
دین و دنیا که حاضر بودند و سراسیمه حیرت شدند و شیخ در سماع رفت و وجد بر وی غالب شد و جماعت

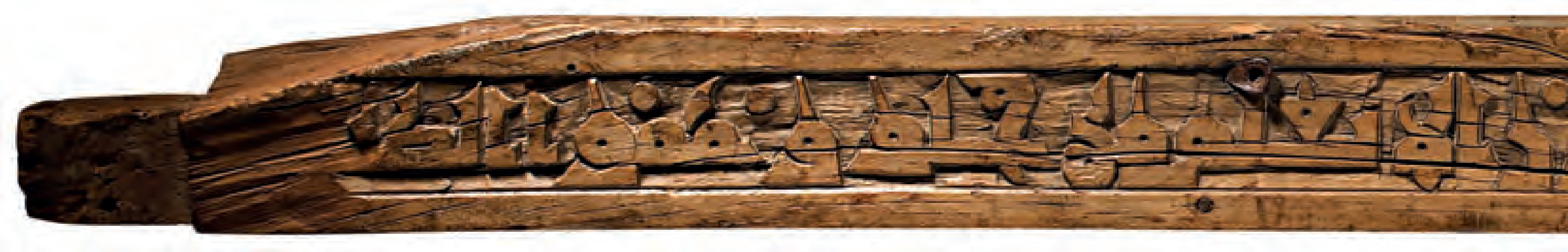
از اطراف و زوایای جامع متوجه شدند و آن غلو و غلبه و ازدحام خلایق از مرد و زن و از سوز
قوالان خوش الحان در حال بودند و نزدیک بود که اهل مجلس از پا درآیند و از خود بیخود شوند خواجه امیر احمد

32

WOODEN BEAM WITH KUFIC INSCRIPTION

Egypt; ninth or tenth century
Carved wood, possibly sycamore or pine
Length: 120 cm
Inscription: Sura 67 (*al-Mulk*), verses 13–14
AKM 701

Publ: AKTC 2009a, pp. 114–115 (no. 64); AKTC 2009b, pp. 114–115 (no. 64); AKTC 2010a, pp. 116–117 (no. 65); AKTC 2010b, pp. 28–29 (no. 5)



Woodwork from the early and medieval Islamic periods is very rare today because of its perishable nature. While more early fragments of carved wood have survived in Egypt than elsewhere, knowledge of the subject is still nowhere near complete. This wooden beam is one of only a scarce handful of surviving inscribed wooden elements thought to have been produced under the Tulunids (868–905), the first independent dynasty in Egypt to wrest control from the ʿAbbasid caliphate. The best-known example of the inscribed woodwork that became popular under the Tulunid dynasty is an extremely long Qur'anic inscription running around the interior arcade of the Ibn Tulun Mosque in Cairo (built 876–879). A few fragments from that enormous frieze are now held in museums; a piece in the Louvre shows a related but more sombre and widely spaced script than the present example (Anglade 1988, p. 21). The script on this beam has rather prominent exaggerated peaks, almost like horns, on many letters, signalling perhaps an embryonic development towards the more ornamental foliated Kufic script, and it may be slightly later than the inscription in the Ibn Tulun Mosque.

The Qur'anic inscription on this piece contains verses 13–14 from Sura 67: 'And whether ye hide your word or publish it, He certainly has [full] knowledge, of the secrets of [all] hearts. Should He not know, He that created? And He is the One that understands the finest mysteries [and] is well-acquainted [with them]'. The beam may have been originally intended to form part of a mosque furnishing, rather than functioning as an architectural element, although the line between architecture and furniture becomes rather blurred in the case of such monumental constructions as minbars, Qur'an stands, and ornamented mihrabs. The strong baseline and gravity of the angular Kufic script made it eminently suitable for the communication of the Qur'anic message, and in time the script itself seemed to acquire something of an aura of sanctity through association with the sacred text. The use of a Kufic script for the Qur'anic inscription that decorates this beam demonstrates the broad application of that script type in sacred contexts above and beyond the manuscript tradition, and recalls the early development of Kufic as an epigraphic and architectural script: the first dated appearance of fully-refined Kufic was made in the mosaic decoration of the earliest extant monument of Islam, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

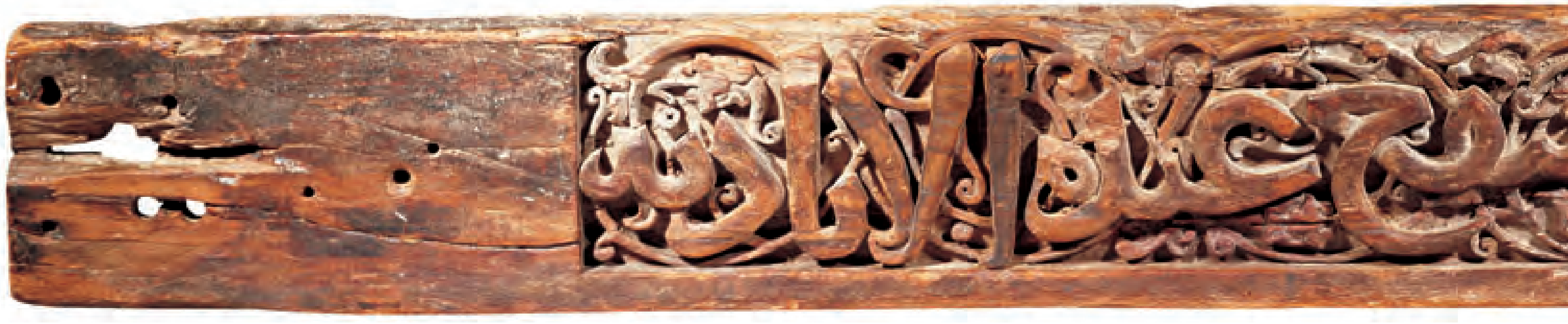
33

WOODEN BEAM WITH CURSIVE INSCRIPTION

Syria; late twelfth or early thirteenth century
Carved wood
11.2 x 122 x 7 cm
Inscription: Sura 2 (*al-Baqara*), verse 255
AKM 632

Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 118–119 (no. 39); AKTC 2008a, p. 73 (no. 17); AKTC 2009a, pp. 110–111 (no. 62); AKTC 2009b, pp. 110–111 (no. 62); AKTC 2010a, pp. 112–113 (no. 63); AKTC 2010b, pp. 84–85 (no. 35)

The inscription on this beam is a section of the famous 'Throne Verse' (verse 255) from the second and longest Sura of the Qur'an, *al-Baqara* ('The Cow'): '[His is what is in the heavens and what is in] the earth! Who can intercede with Him save by His permission?' It can be assumed that the piece originally formed part of a larger arrangement of similarly carved beams, together making up the entire Throne Verse. This is one of the passages of the Qur'an most often used in a funerary context, although it has a much wider architectural application as well; it appears in the Dome of the Rock, and is frequently used in inscriptions found on mihrabs.



Juvin has suggested that this beam may originally have formed part of the short end of a cenotaph, as a very similar piece – most likely from a cenotaph – was discovered in the mausoleum of Imam al-Shafiʿi in Cairo, and a near-identical style of inscriptive frieze appears on the fragmented cenotaph of Fakhr al-Din Ismaʿil, dated 1216 and now in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Makariou 2007, p. 118; ill. Anglade 1988, p. 51). The Ayyubid period (late twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries) in Syria saw something of a vogue for the commissioning of expensive wooden furnishings and architectural fittings for mosques and tombs: mihrabs, minbars, cenotaphs, lintels, doors, screens, beams and brackets have survived, often carved with lengthy inscriptions in an attractive cursive script similar to that of this example. As well as verses from the Qur'an, the names of patrons and rulers were also recorded, complete with honorific titles *ad infinitum*. The visibility of the written word when displayed in places of public veneration has always ensured that such architecture and its fittings will be treated as appropriate surfaces for textual inscription, both religious and political.

34

IZNIK TILES WITH VEGETAL DESIGN

Iznik, Turkey; c. 1561
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
c. 25 x 24.5 cm each
AKM 583, 584, 862
Publ: Makariou 2007, p. 98 (no. 32; 584 only)

The Iznik potteries of Ottoman Turkey produced a vast quantity of high-quality ceramics in the sixteenth century, from vessels to tile friezes of repeating designs (cat. no. 61). Initially most of the ceramics produced at Iznik were vessels, but from the middle of the sixteenth century tile production for the Ottoman empire began in earnest as the demand for wall decoration was accelerated by the initiation of large-scale construction projects by Süleyman the Magnificent and his ministers in Istanbul and throughout the empire. While the vogue for tilework in Ottoman imperial mosques and other buildings generally took the form of intense but focused tile friezes used to direct the eye to specific areas, such as the mihrab, a few buildings have interiors that are almost completely covered in tilework. Chief amongst these is the Istanbul mosque of Rüstem Pasha (d. 1561), the chief vizier of Süleyman the Magnificent and notable patron of architecture.

Completed not long after its patron's death, the mosque of Rüstem Pasha is one of the works of the great architect Sinan, and the interior decoration combines panels of different repeating tile friezes to dazzling effect. The project was probably pushed to completion by Rüstem Pasha's widow Mihrimah Sultan, the daughter of Süleyman the Magnificent and also one of Sinan's major royal patrons. The three tiles in the AKM collection are identical with a group mounted on the back wall of the Rüstem Pasha Mosque, allowing a fairly secure date of c. 1561 to be ascribed, although Denny notes that this design may have elicited later copies (Denny 1977, pp. 55–56). However, it seems most likely that these tiles are 'overruns' left over from the original Ottoman project, as the practice of producing extra tiles was not uncommon; other tiles from this group are now in the Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon (Denny 2004, pp. 208–210), the David Collection, Copenhagen (von Folsach 2001, p. 193), the Sadberk Hanim Museum, Istanbul (Soustiel 2000, p. 70), the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and elsewhere.

When viewed *en masse* on the wall of the mosque, the centrifugal design of the intertwining leaf sprays of these tiles is almost hypnotic and makes an extremely effective repeating pattern. The palette of dark blue and turquoise on a clean, bright white background is characteristic of earlier Ottoman tastes, apparently stemming in part from an interest in Chinese porcelain (Porter 1995, p. 104). A highly distinctive innovation of this period is the bright red colour that stands slightly proud of the surface, here used sparingly as a highlight on the central veins of the leaves and calyxes of the flowers, but later to play a greater role in the palette of Iznik ceramics (see cat. no. 61).

35

ARCHED PANEL OF CERAMIC TILES

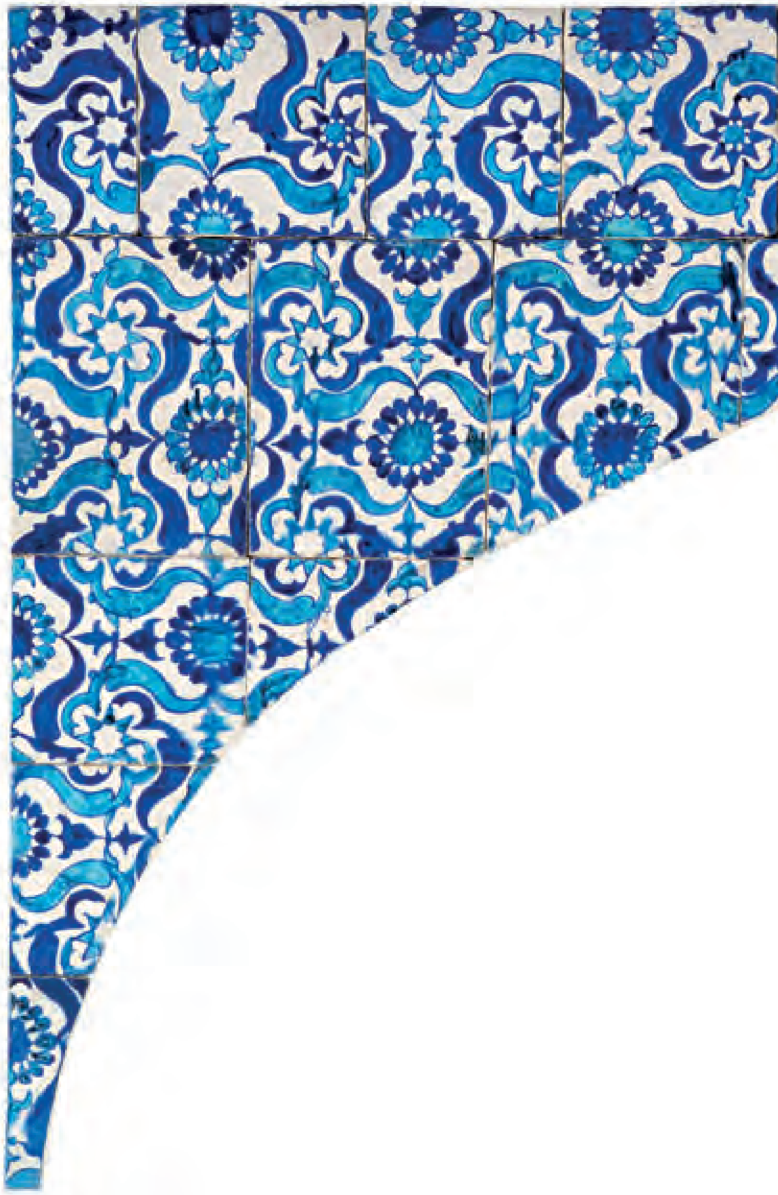
Pakistan, possibly Multan; sixteenth century or later
Panel of twenty-eight tiles, glazed earthenware with underglaze painting in cobalt and turquoise against white
124 x 226 cm
AKM 582

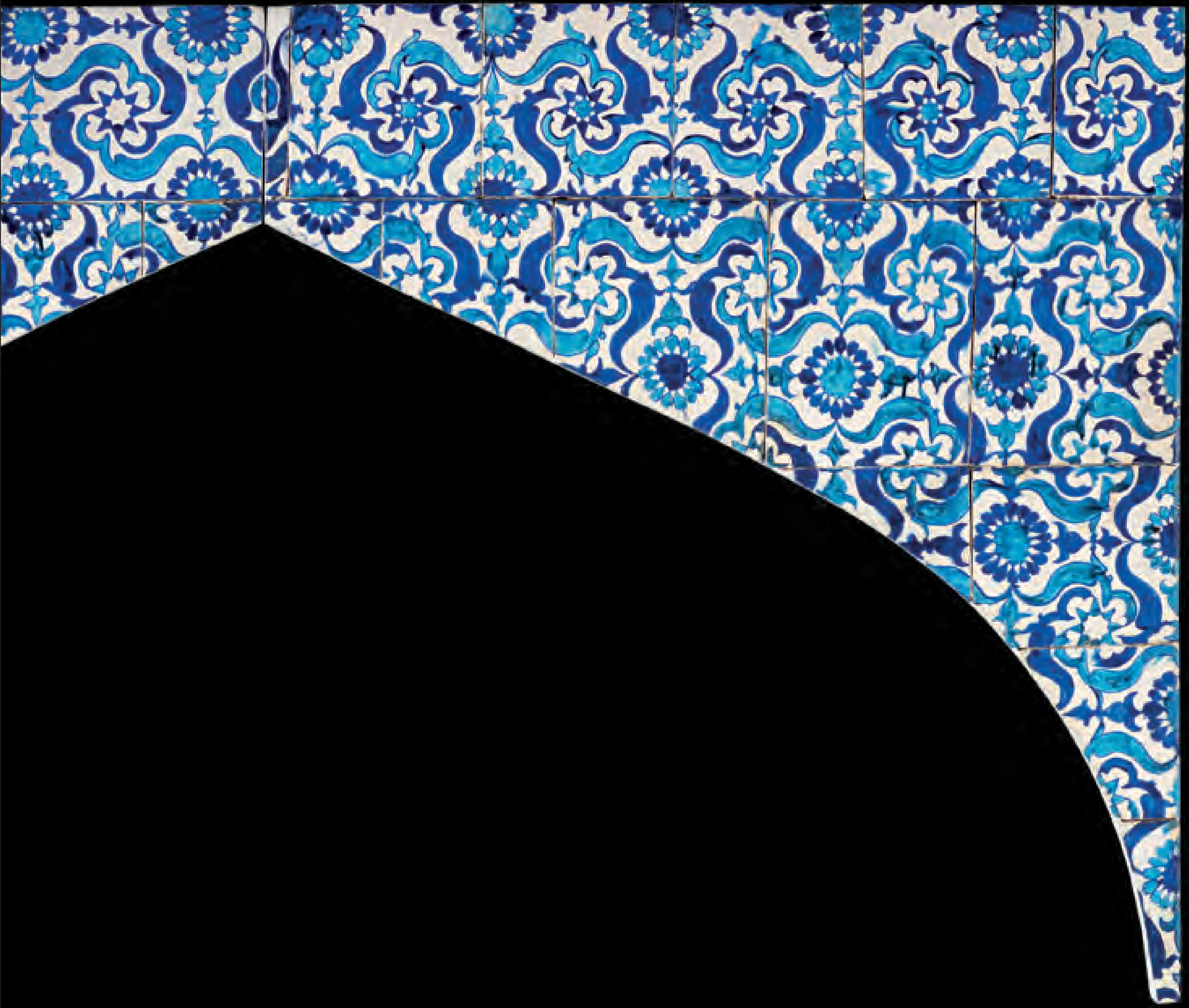
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 185 (cat. A); AKTC 2007b, p. 190 (cat. A); AKTC 2008a, p. 254 (no. 190); AKTC 2008b, p. 254 (p, 190); AKTC 2010a, pp. 270–271 (no. 208)

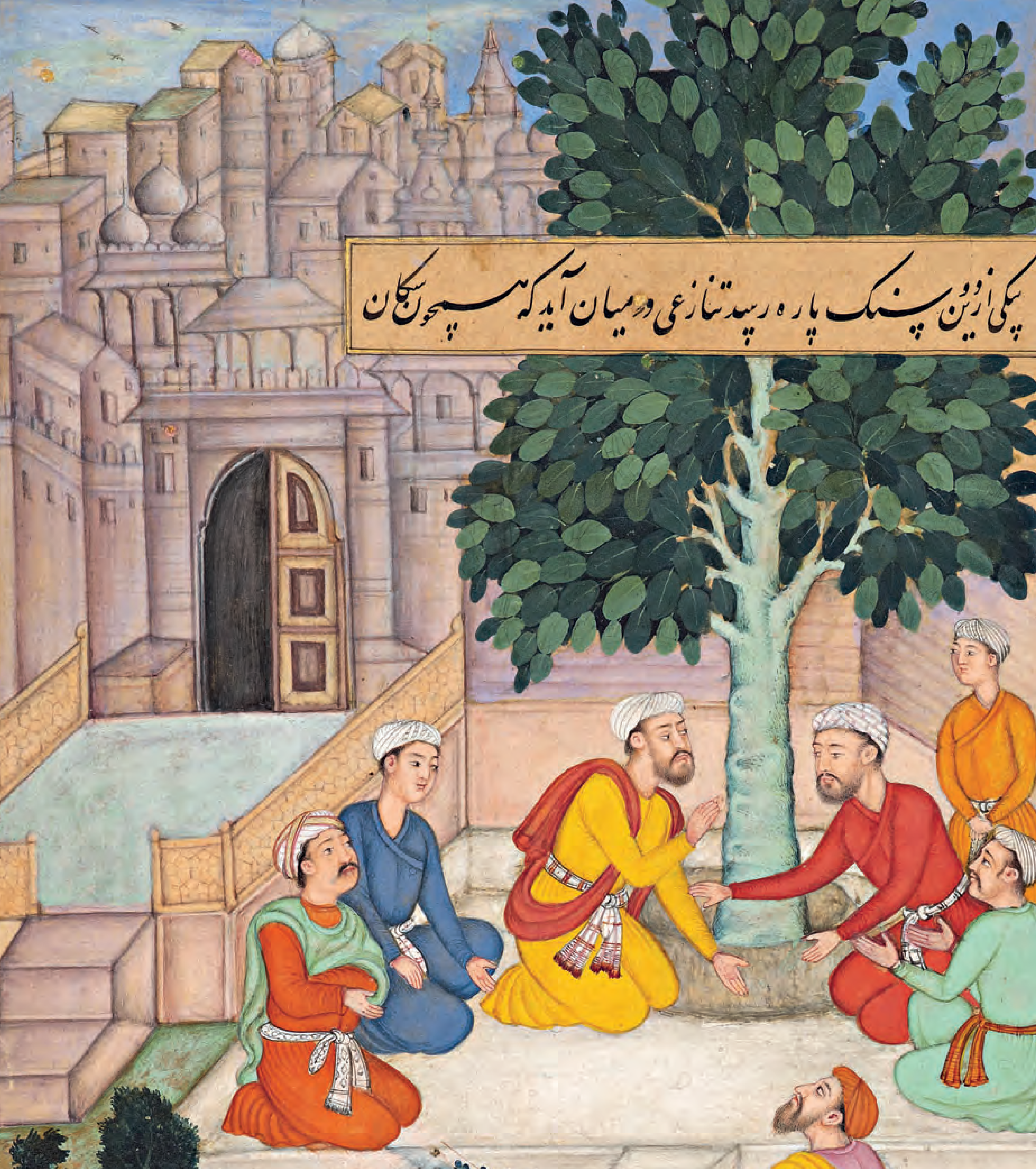
Fourteen individual ceramic tiles make up each half of this panel, which would have once been mounted on the spandrels above an arched doorway, window or recessed niche. The tile panel is thought to have come from Multan in Pakistan. The city was one of the first Muslim capitals in the area after the Arab invasion in the eighth century, and continued to operate for many centuries as an important site in the flexible frontier between Indic and Persianate territories. The melding of artistic tastes and practices from the Iranian and Indian cultural spheres makes the small group of Sufi tombs that survive at Multan and the surrounding areas a fascinating case study in Islamic architecture and architectural decoration.

Early medieval connections with Iran and Afghanistan are evident in the best-known of the mausolea at Multan, that of Rukn-i ʿAlam (fourteenth century), which can be related in its overall form to tomb architecture of eleventh- and twelfth-century Iran and Afghanistan. The extraordinary thirty-five metre-high tomb of Rukn-i ʿAlam is octagonal in plan, with corner buttresses, an eight-sided drum and an enormous hemispherical dome. The octagonal ground plan was widely imitated throughout the region in later periods, and several closely related tombs were built at Multan and nearby Uchchh Sharif. Tombs of square or rectangular footprint also existed and were also extensively decorated with tilework; however, the structure of the octagonal tomb-type provides a series of facets, each with its own arched opening, giving excellent scope for the inventive use of glazed earthenware tile which characterises both the Rukn-i ʿAlam monument and its later imitators.

In particular, these eight-sided tombs commonly have spandrel revetments of ceramic tile, like this example, above arched doors and windows on each of their eight sides, at each level. Many of these have been replaced at various points over the centuries, but the blue and white palette that continues to dominate the tilework of these tombs has been linked to Central Asian tastes (Hillenbrand 1992b, pp. 166–167). The present example, with its tightly drawn pattern of angular rosettes and eight-pointed stars bound in scrolling curvilinear forms, is rather more complex in design than many of the spandrels that survive on the monuments, although comparable tiles can be seen in the David Collection (von Folsach 2001, p. 197).






یکی ازین پشنگ پاره رسید تنازعی در میان آید که همچون سگان

III

THE FORTRESS AND THE CITY

Forts and towns

Renata Holod

The Image of Fort and Town

The walled settlement enclosed behind its battlements is an image that pervades all representations of towns in the traditions of painting represented in this exhibition, Persian, Ottoman and Mughal. The town that appears on the horizon (cat. nos 41 and 45) is defined by its walls and its gates, and a bird's eye view into the interior spaces. Or the walls have been rolled away to afford glimpses of buildings within them, their domes, minarets, pavilions, and shop stalls (cat. no. 53). This painted image for the fort and fortified town was created in the imagination and practice of the painter, and continued in the imagination of the beholder; through this image, past realities of territory and landscape are also reflected.

Measured Enclosures

Man-made features of the irrigated landscape delimited and separated every plot, with boundaries, ditches, or walls raised simply out of the very earth of the plot. Rammed earth would also have been the first material used for surrounding villages, or fortified farmsteads, such as those within the oases of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and the Near East. The fortified farmstead stood within its irrigated territory as a place of control, defence and repose. Built of mud brick, baked brick or stone according to region, the farmstead, village, or villa provided at least minimal defences. In contradistinction to the open grasslands of the steppe zones, where territory was identified by landmarks and control of pastures, territory in settled areas where irrigation was the norm was measured out and utilised as a series of enclosures, one within the other from enclosed field and garden to enclosed house, palace and town. While some towns grew out of weekly market locations, the military encampments and new foundations of the eighth to tenth centuries were envisioned as bounded spaces, contained within their walls and gates.[1] Towers, semi-circular or square, were spaced as buttresses at regular intervals along the circumference of curtain walls. Gates (*darvaza* or *bab*) served not only as controls for entry and exit but also were in many cases elaborated into gatehouses above the actual entries, with upper halls where receptions took place, and courts meted out justice.

Citadels and Fort Networks

In the continuum of defensive enclosure-making, the fort, citadel or keep (*qalaʿa*, *arg*, *hisar*, *hisn*) was built to provide a power base, to extend control over a surrounding territory, to withstand assault and siege, and to mete out attacks. To house the power base a residence or palace structure could be inserted into the building program of such fortified redoubts, although these areas were placed away from the walls and separated from the purely military zones. Specialised ramparts, reinforced walls, moats and complex access ramps, passages, and bridges distinguish these enclosures as places of military and political importance.[2] From the tenth century onward, towers with strategically placed arrow slits and locations for catapults or mangonels provided formidable offensive, or better, responsive force. The remains of tens of citadels, strongholds and fortresses are found in the lands of Syria, northern Iraq, Palestine and southern Anatolia, and are witness to the upward spiral of militarisation in these territories throughout the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Whether this militarisation was solely the response to Crusader incursions or to the arrival of Turks as a military force in the area, or as much to local conflicts, is still debated. Nonetheless, by the thirteenth century, siege-resistant design in fortresses of the eastern Mediterranean, while no doubt based on older, even Roman, building practices, had been developed to a highly effective degree (fig. 1). The citadels of Aleppo, Karak and Masyaf, the best studied of the area, display bossed stonework, machicolations, brattices and portcullises, in addition to the famous gates and glacis.[3]

Likewise, the Iranian landscape was dotted with numerous forts, citadels and fortresses, all built up during the same period, from the mid-eleventh to the thirteenth century, although few are well preserved and well studied.[4] Of these, notable are the more than sixty Isma'ili castles and forts of the Alamut valley and Rudbar in northern Iran, and about eighty in Khurasan, including those at Maymundiz, Girdkuh and Qa'in. All the major fortresses were well built, with cisterns fed by springs or rainwater, and well stocked with provisions stored in vast underground chambers. The density of this network assured local control over specific territory for supplies, taxation and perhaps manpower.

Citadels within highly urbanised districts, such as those of Merv, Herat and Rayy, or Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo, were located at the edge of the contiguous urban settlement, in order not to become entirely surrounded by the city. In this location, they thus extended control over – yet ensured a safe distance from – the urban masses. In the event of an attack from a much larger army, the citadel could still be held, even if the city walls were breached. Equally, such spatial segregation often mirrored the ethnic divisions between rulers and ruled.[5]

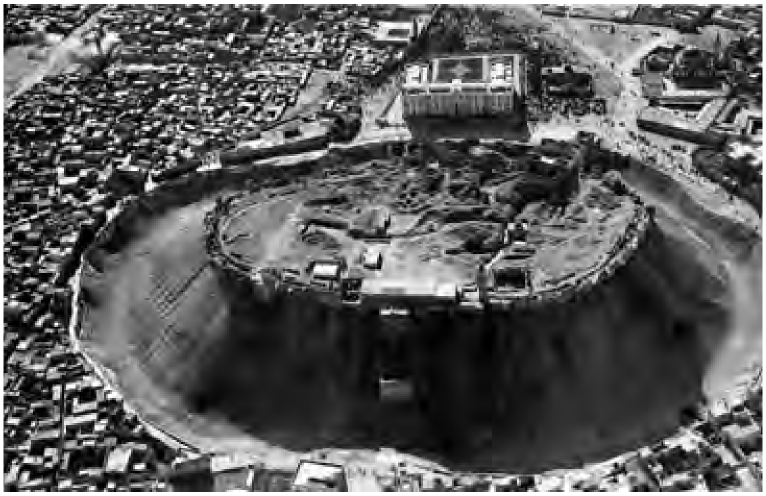

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Figure 1. Aleppo citadel, aerial view. Tenth to fifteenth centuries. Photograph © Ecochard Collection/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Control of Trade and Travel

Fortifications, lookouts or forts were located at strategic points in passes or valleys. Redoubts (*ribat*) were originally built for pious volunteers (*ghazi*) as a protective base out of which to launch raids across the dynamic frontiers of the Islamic realms. The *ribat* at Sousse in Tunisia functioned as a launch for sea-going raids, while protecting the settlement behind it. Rebuilt in its present form in 821 CE, it is a solidly built, two-storey masonry building, with small rooms surrounding a central court; it clearly broadcasts its military character with its tall walls, towers, single fortified gate and lookouts.[6] Many such redoubts lined frontiers in the west, on the North African coast, and the Andalusian frontier. In the northeast, on the Amu-Darya River in today's Turkmenistan, there are toponyms with the name *ribat* still marking the path of the Islamic frontier where it stood for several decades before being pushed across the river by the mid-eighth century. So too can such bases mark the progress of other frontiers, east, north and south. These redoubts, large or small, were eventually turned to more peaceful uses, namely the control of, and provision of security for, passing traffic; or they could serve as models for urban warehouses or even colleges of law (*madrasa*), where there was a necessity to provide secure housing for numbers of people.

The most continuously renewed examples are the fortified caravansaries along the Hajj routes: from the Darb Zubayda running from Kufa to Mecca, built by the wife of Harun al-Rashid, Zubayda, to the high road (*darb*) through the Sinai from Egypt, to the Ottoman forts along the Damascus–Mecca road.[7] To develop trade in newly conquered or pacified areas, secured roads were the first necessary. Thus, in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the Great Seljuqs built their monumental brick caravanserais along the Khurasan roads, such as Ribat-i Malik, or Ribat-i Sharaf.[8] Not to be outdone, the Seljuqs of Anatolia diverted trade away from the Aegean coast and inland through their realms from northern Syria to Sinope with the well-constructed chain of stone hostels called the Sultan Han(s).[9] In the late sixteenth century, the Safavid chain of caravanserais renewed and expanded the older routes stretching north from the Arabian Sea to attract European and Indian traders to their capital, Isfahan, in the flush of mercantile activity (fig. 2).[10]

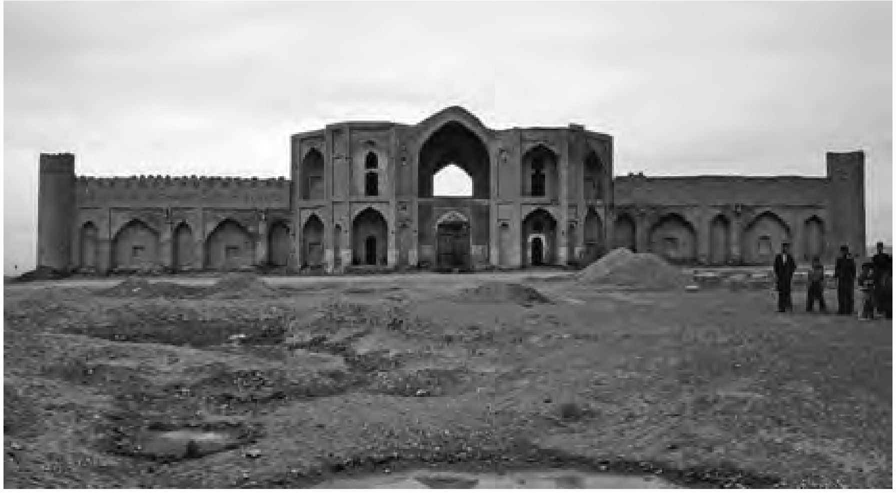

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Figure 2. Caravanserai near Kuhpaya, Iran. Safavid period. Photograph © Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom.

With the introduction of cannons, forts in strategic locations – on promontories, straits, passes, and entrances to ports and bays – became even more effective controllers of traffic, both military and economic, and major presences on the frontiers. The two great fortresses on the Bosphorus, Rumeli and Anadulu Hissar built by Mehmet II, were raised there as much to control and impede as to secure passage for Italian traders to and from the Black Sea and the trading posts of the Crimea. Likewise, the guns of the fortresses flanking the Dardanelles ensured Ottoman control of the passage.[11] To withstand field cannons or armed navy vessels, older fortress walls were further strengthened with additional rings of walls, barbicans, and angled towers to better deflect the shots. Thus, the older Norman fortress at Humt al-Suq on the island of Jerba was further updated as Burj al-Ghazi Mustafa, once the Ottomans conquered the island in the 1560.[12]

The Fortified Palace

The country villas and estates built by the first Islamic dynasties, the Umayyads and ʿAbbasids, all had a fortified look: surrounding curtain walls were buttressed by regular but filled towers with prominent gates framed with further towers (fig. 3). None would withstand siege-war attack, however. While the fortified look was likely taken over from Roman castrum plans, the earlier tradition of Persian reception halls found favour among the builders of such urban palaces as Amman or country retreats as Mshatta (in today's Jordan). A domed throne room, fronted by a long vaulted room (*iwan* or *taq*) is accessed from a central interior court, while side areas can be further divided into attendant spaces. The now-disappeared palatial spaces of ʿAbbasid Baghdad were most likely composed of similar spaces, and are echoed in the miles-long ruins of the ninth-century palace city of Samarra upriver on the bank of the Tigris. There, in just one palace complex, a monumental stairway led from a river landing into a gateway complex which in turn opened to a vast court at the end of which stood the reception complex of vaults and domes (fig. 4). Palace after palace with accompanying supporting zones and barracks, grand mosque spaces, racecourses and gardens repeated in open defile along long avenues, open to the countryside.

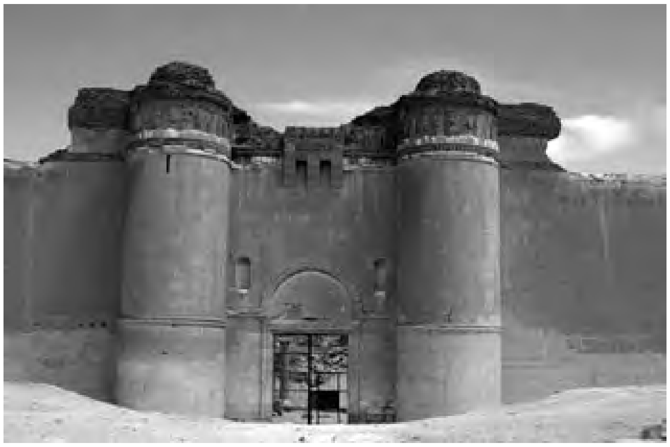

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Figure 3. Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, Syria, western façade. Original construction 728–29, with later additions. Photograph © Jim Gordon, 2006, artwork in the public domain; image published here under Creative Commons sharealike 2.0.

Begun in the early years of the ninth century, this palace city lay abandoned by the tenth.[13] Yet, stories about its marvels, coupled with the myth of the great round and enclosed city of Baghdad, found ready imitators further west. The dyad of Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahraʾ, then that of Fustat and Cairo, reproduced the

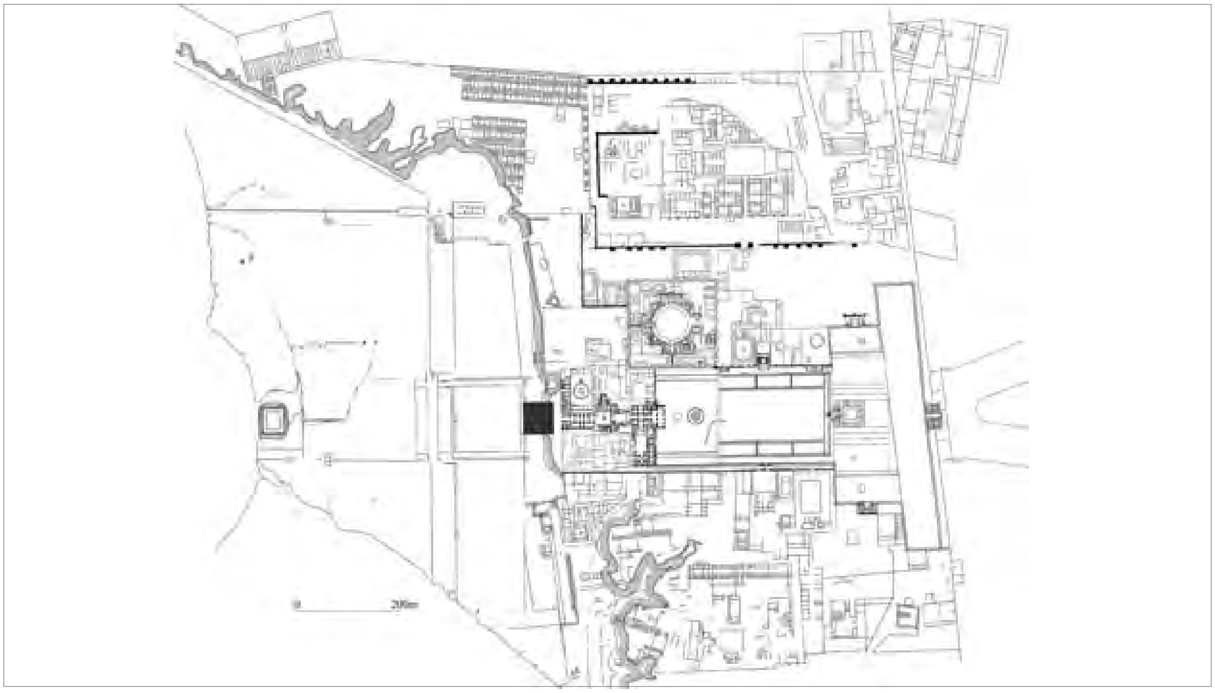

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Figure 4. General plan of Jawsaq al-Khaqani palace, Samarra, Iraq. Abbasid period, ninth century. Image by kind permission of Alastair Northedge.

pattern. In the first, it was the palace city of Madinat al-Zahraʾ that was abandoned; in the second case the palace city of Cairo became the nucleus of the medieval and post-medieval city. Laid out by the Fatimids as a fortified enclosure with internal palaces and residential areas, and a major bisecting parade avenue in the tenth century, by the end of the eleventh century Cairo had joined in the spiral of fortifications seen in Syrian towns, receiving new monumental gates and reinforced masonry walls. With the burning of Fustat in the face of Crusader attack, urban life moved more and more into the fortified space, while by the twelfth century a fully updated citadel was developed by Salah al-Din (Saladin) and the Ayyubids on the flank of the tenth-century foundation. It is this citadel that became the locus for the fortified palace space of the succeeding Mamluk rulers. Nonetheless, the image of the fortified city remained with the Fatimid palace city. Its monumental gates of fine ashlar masonry, especially the Bab al-Futuh and the Bab al-Nasr, were both built in an Anatolian fashion at the behest of the general Badr al-Jamali in 1087–1092. These have come to represent the image of medieval Cairo, rich and dynamic, fortified and at constant risk of attack.

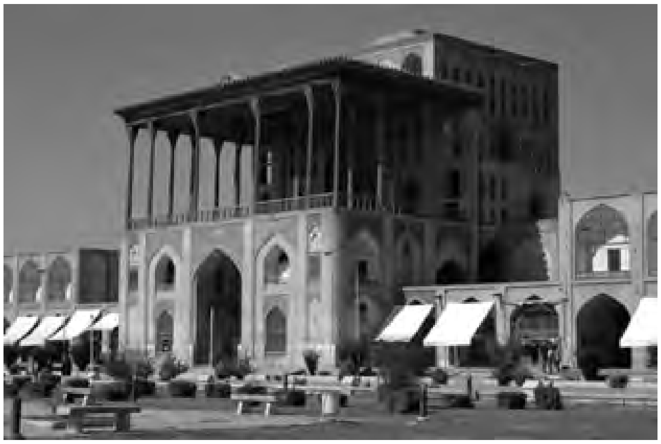
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Figure 5. Isfahan, ʿAli Qapu palace, seen from Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan. Safavid period, late-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries. © MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive, 1999, photograph by Khosrow Bozorgi.

The gatehouse pavilion of Isfahan, the ʿAli Qapu, guards the enclosure of the administrative and residential parts of the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century Safavid palace complex (fig. 5). While the enclosure could be considered a precinct, it is by no means fortified with anything more than a thin wall. The gatehouse comprises three structures, one atop the other, the lowest being the access doorway to the precinct. The two upper and later ones boast a two-storeyed reception hall fronted by the great porch (*talar*), which shaded the Safavid shahs and their companions as they reviewed the activities unfolding on the great maydan (Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan) below, be they parades, sporting events, executions or fireworks displays. On the very top of the ʿAli Qapu is a more private set of rooms. While the location of the ʿAli Qapu harkens back to older gatehouses, its elaborated and delicate structure in no way conveys a fortified effect. The entire tower of the building partakes much more of the typology and aesthetic of the garden palaces and pavilions so popular in Isfahan at this time.

Expanding out into the suburban environs of the Zayanda River valley, the Safavids chose to break out of the constraints of the palace-in-citadel model, engaging completely in the spatiality of the garden and garden palace. Open-porched pavilions faced onto larger and larger gardens where largesse and entertainment was the order of the day. The mobile Safavid court, moving constantly with the shah throughout the territory of the realm, established control through physical presence (and accompanying horsemen and muskets!), more than through a networks of forts, fortifications and urban citadels. This system of control through suasion and charisma lasted for more than a century, bolstered by the development of Shiʿi ideology.[14] It was destroyed by a force invading from Afghanistan, which employed the old-fashioned but effective strategy of siege warfare, one that the 'modern' open city and palaces of Isfahan were no longer capable of countering in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

In contrast, the Ottomans stuck with the walled, fortified palace much longer, until the mid-nineteenth century. In place of the older, fortified Byzantine palace, the Topkapi palace stood visible on the horizon, arranged around three courtyards. Its promontory and its walls and gates protected it, as did the guns of the controlling fortresses and of the Ottoman navy. Indeed, there were also delicate pavilions, ornamented with lustrously colourful tiles, which provided expansive views of the Bosphorus on whose waters the trade and traffic of the realm passed in controlled order. These pavilions located at the tip of the peninsula were, however, reserved for the innermost circles, while the business of empire, embassies, appointments and exchange was transacted in the two forecourts and their attendant spaces, before a screen behind which sat the sultan, seeing but unseen.[15]

Likewise, the Mughals, whether in Agra or elsewhere, and their contemporary Islamic Shiʿi principalities in the Deccan, preferred still to develop complex palatial spaces within the walls of fortresses, controlling their territory by oversight and cannons, but removed and protected from the people they ruled. Only in Fatehpur Sikri was a different experiment attempted. Inserted between the shrine-hermitage of Salim Chishti and the existing town, a series of great courtyards outlining a variety of palace spaces was built in the fourteen years from 1573 onward.[16] Unusual pavilion structures, like the five-storey Panj Mahal, or the Diwan-i Khass, housing a throne atop a bracketed column, intermingled with supporting units: kitchens, stables, caravansaries, schools and a long bazaar. Appearance windows (*jharoka*) for the ruler to see and be seen were lined up along a longitudinal axis. The expanse of courts and pavilions was complete only when bedecked with elaborate tentage and furnishing displays. An eleven-kilometre wall surrounded this 'great camping ground' fronting on a lake. Whether it was because the lake dried up rather soon, or for other reasons, Akbar and his successors left this new capital to return to Delhi and to Agra, where the extensive palaces within the Red Fort continued to provide spaces for life, ceremony, piety and the transactions of power for Akbar and his entire dynasty of successors.[17]

The Enclosed Shrines

Finally, the outward appearance of an enclosure, with its walls, buttressing towers and gates, is a crucial aspect of the most memorable image of all: that of the two shrines, Mecca and Medina (catalogue group 1). Map, diagram and image, these bounded spaces are recognisable to any Muslim today. Early images of the shrines have been preserved from the eleventh century. Found on Hajj certificate scrolls (*darj*), these were painted on paper and could have been then dispersed throughout the Muslim world (some fifty were found in Damascus alone). The earliest seem more like diagrams than the views that rose in popularity after the fifteenth century. These early representations of the shrines were careful to map all aspects of the Hajj experience, while framing them within an enclosed space that would live in the memory of the returning pilgrim.[18]

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11 Lucienne Thys-Şenocak, *Ottoman Women Builders: The Architectural Patronage of Hadice Turhan Sultan* (Aldershot/Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006); Peacock, *Frontiers*.

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14 Sussan Babiae, *Isfahan and its Palaces: Statecraft, Shiʿism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2008).

15 Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapi Palace In the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1991).

16 Attilio Petruccioli, *Fatehpur Sikri* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1992).

17 Catherine Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526-1858)* (Munich: Prestel, 1991).

18 David Roxburgh, 'Pilgrimage City' in *The City in the Islamic World*, ed. Salma Jayyusi *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 753–774.

36

MĀLIKA FALLS IN LOVE WITH SHĀH SHĀPŪR AS HE BESIEGES THE FORTRESS OF ṬĀʾIR IN YEMEN

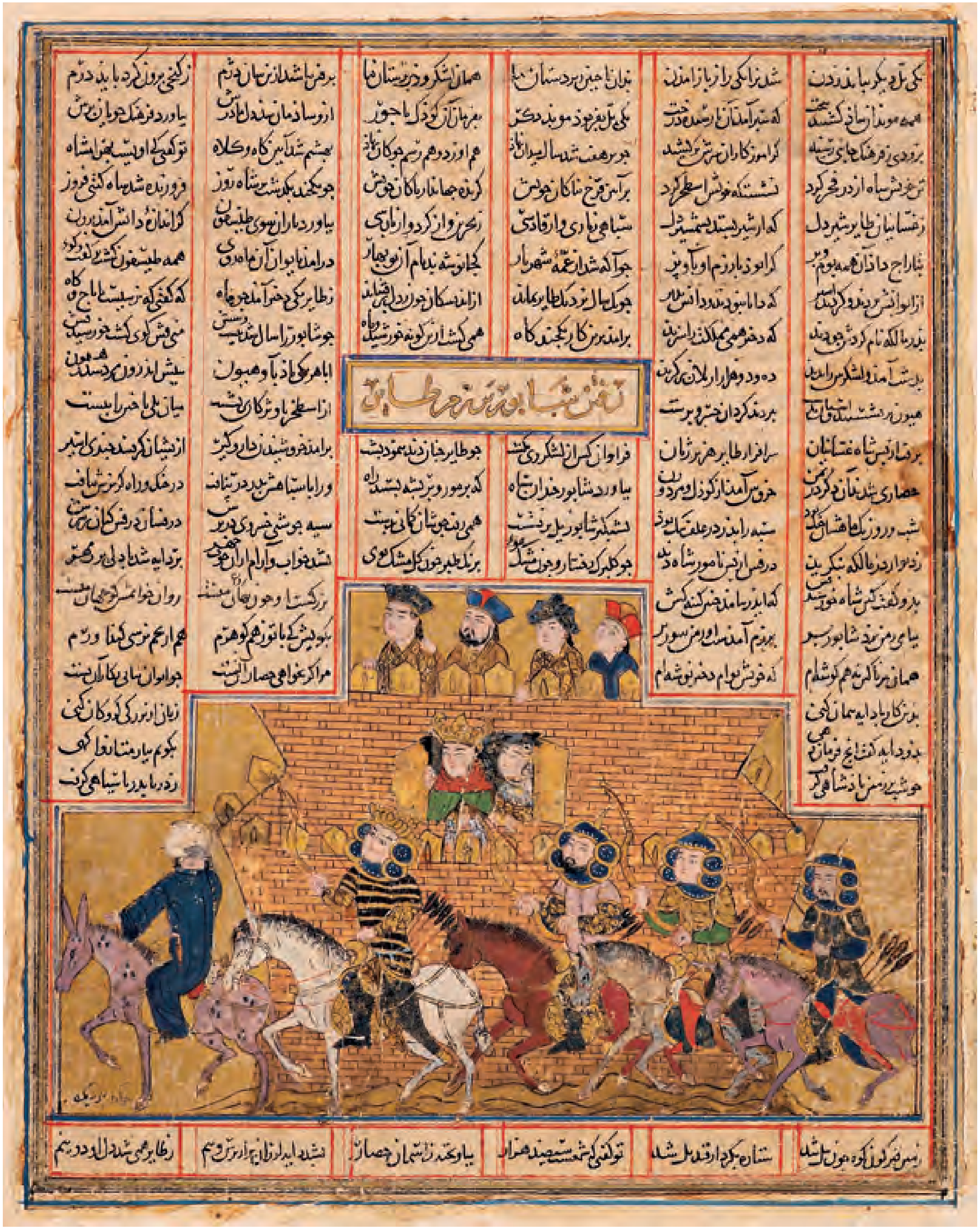
Two folios from the dispersed 'Second Small *Shāhnāma*'
Western Iran; c. 1300
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: approx 26 x 19 cm
AKM 17

Publ: Welch 1972a, pp. 44, 49; Simpson 1979, p. 380 (fig. 98); Canby 1998, pp. 22–23 (no. 2); AKTC 2010a, p. 205 (no. 157)

Legends of the pre-Islamic kings of the Iranian cultural area were retained in the Islamic period through oral traditions, and in the medieval period these were written into the Iranian national epic, the *Shahnama* or 'Book of Kings', completed c. 1010 by Abu'l-Qasim Firdawsi. Although the Iranian plateau had been under Arab occupation since the early Islamic period, and the Arabic script had been universally adopted for writing new Persian, in both metre and vocabulary – to say nothing of subject matter – the text of the *Shahnama* owes little to Arabic. The subject of the poem is the continuous history of the Iranian world from Creation to the downfall of the Sasanian shahs and the coming of Islam, as shown through the personal histories and exploits of a sequence of rulers. Like cat. no. 47, this image comes from one of the earliest known illustrated manuscripts of the text, the so-called 'Small *Shahnamas*'. Executed in the Ilkhanid period (c. 1256–1353), when Iran was under Mongol rule, these early illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* seem to spring from the Mongols' intense interest in the lands they had conquered, and the new regime's desire to be seen as a legitimate ruling force in the Iranian plateau by patronising luxurious copies of this hugely important Persian text.

The text of the *Shahnama* provided painters with an unprecedented quantity of narrative content. In this episode, the story tells of how the Iranian hero Shah Shapur led his troops to the stronghold of the Arab chieftain Taʾir in Yemen, while Arab courtiers watched him anxiously from the roof of the fortress. From a window below, Taʾir's beautiful daughter, princess Malika, gazed in a more admiring fashion on the young Shapur. Malika's mother was Shapur's aunt, abducted by Taʾir, and the princess is depicted here with a winged Sasanian crown to indicate her descent from Iranian royalty. Falling in love with her cousin Shapur from first sight, she was eventually moved to betray her father.

The fortress, which had been under siege for some time by this point in the story, is represented as a straightforward piece of defensive architecture with pointed crenellations, its brick structure admitting only one point of entry in the window that frames Malika and her nurse. While many of the painted images of the Small *Shahnamas* present a simple oblong format which functions like a window in the page (see cat. no. 47), others, such as this example, exploit the grid created by the text columns to more dramatic effect. The stepped format of this image, enhancing the height and grandeur of the brick fortress and creating a sense of recession into space, is matched by that of the slightly more populous version of this scene from the 'First Small *Shahnama*' in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Simpson 1979, fig. 97).



37

BAHRĀM GŪR AT THE FORTRESS OF MUNZIR IN YEMEN

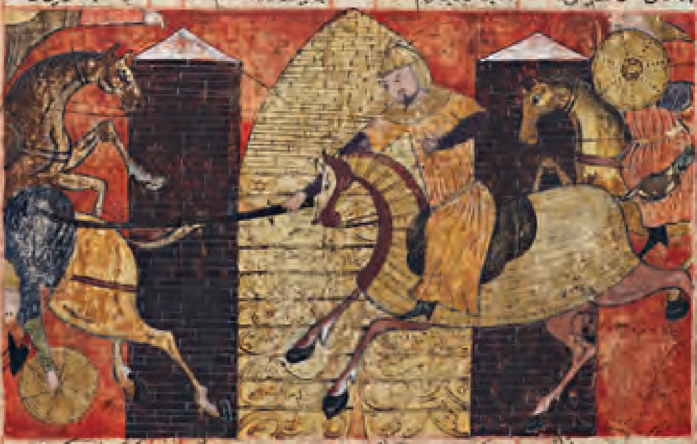
Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī
Probably Shiraz, Iran; mid-fourteenth century
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
Page: 37 x 30.4 cm
AKM 27
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, pp. 67, 69

When a son was born to the Iranian Shah Yazdagird his court advisors and ministers persuaded the king to send the infant prince away to the court of the Arab ruler Munzir, ostensibly to learn the princely arts, but also to remove him from the influence of Yazdagird's nasty temper and thus increase his chances of becoming a just and righteous ruler in time. At Munzir's court in Yemen the young Bahram Gur prospered, and this painting shows him as a mounted warrior, spearing a knight. Bahram Gur is also the hero of the *Haft Paykar*, a historical romance by the twelfth-century poet Nizami, where this period of his youth is also recounted, albeit with some minor differences from the story in the *Shahnama* (see cat. no. 38).

The fortress of Munzir is represented as a sand-coloured building with a brick dome and two towers of black brick, each topped with a low pointed white roof. Even more emphatically sealed than the fortress of Taʾir in cat. no. 36, Munzir's stronghold has no visible points of entry and provides a rather forbidding theatrical backdrop for the princely jousting that takes place directly in front of it. The small scale of the picture space forces the building to fill the frame from top to bottom, and its symmetrical monumentality is a reminder of the relationship between the tradition of wall painting and that of book illustration (Simpson 1979, pp. 242–243).

This painting has been attributed to a group of illustrated *Shahnama*s created in the city of Shiraz, in Fars Province, Iran, during the second quarter of the fourteenth century, when the city was under the governorship of the Inju dynasty (c. 1325–1357). Four dated Inju *Shahnama* manuscripts are known, created in 1330 (Topkapi Palace Library, Istanbul), 1333 (National Library of Russia, St Petersburg), 1341 (dispersed, with several leaves in this collection: see cat. nos 54 and 94) and 1352–53 or possibly earlier (Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., and elsewhere). The present folio is related to the larger body of Inju illustrated manuscripts through the division of the page into six text columns, outlined in bright red, the use of thin colour washes and a bright red background in the painting itself, and through its dimensions, which parallel those of the 1341 Inju *Shahnama*. However, the draughtsmanship of this piece is considerably tighter than that of more typical Inju paintings, the paint more evenly applied, and the rather ornate, even spindly, forms of the horses are quite distinct from the sturdier steeds of the 1333 and 1341 Inju manuscripts.

کارها که [illegible] بهرام گور در [illegible] کرد



38

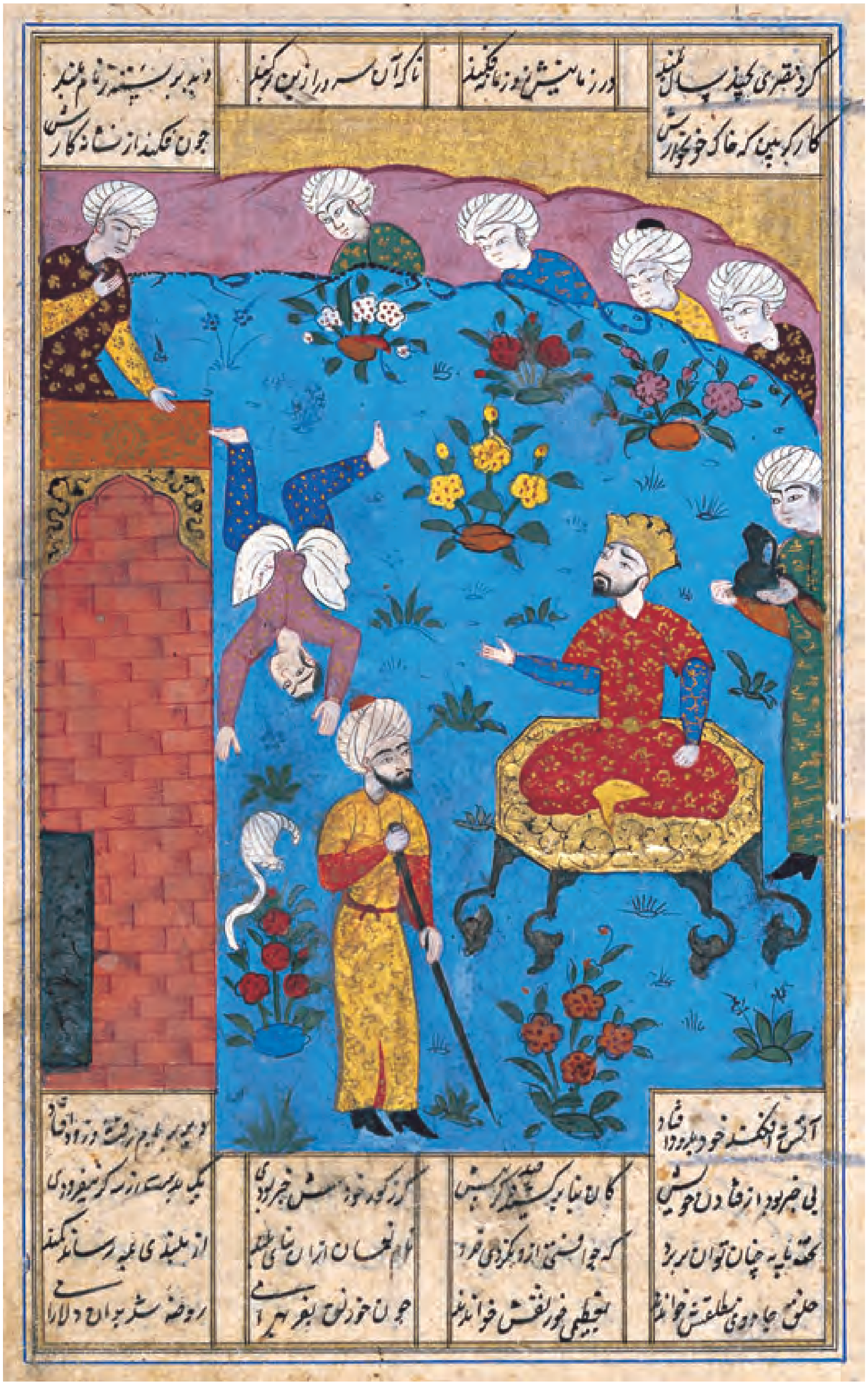
NUʿMĀN HAS THE ARCHITECT SIMNĀR THROWN FROM THE PARAPET OF CASTLE KHAWARNAQ

Illustrated folio from an unidentified dispersed manuscript, probably the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Iran; first half of the seventeenth century
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 23.2 x 15.6 cm
AKM 429

Publ: AKTC 2007a, pp. 170 and 176 (no. 151); AKTC 2007b, p. 176 (no. 151); AKTC 2008a, pp. 276–277 (no. 109)

The *Haft Paykar*, originally completed in 1197 and the fourth poem in the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Nizami, tells the life story of the Sasanian king Bahram Gur. When Bahram's horoscope predicted that he would one day be ruler of the world, his father Yazdigird was persuaded to send the young prince away from Iran to the court of the Arab king Nuʿman, in order to learn the princely arts. This episode was earlier described in the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, where Nuʿman's son, Munzir, was cast as the Arab king (see cat. no. 37). Fearful for Bahram Gur's constitution in the arid Arabian climate, Nuʿman commissioned the Byzantine architect Simnar to build for the Iranian prince a 'lofty nurturing place whose head from earth to sky is raised' (Meisami 1995, p. 36). In five years a magnificent castle had been built and the architect was richly rewarded. Finding the king's largesse to be even more than he had hoped for, Simnar unwisely boasted that if he'd known how well he was going to be paid, he would have built something even better. Irritated and alarmed to hear that Simnar might build an even greater castle for the highest bidder, Nuʿman had the vainglorious architect thrown from the walls of Castle Khawarnaq. The moral of the tale is one of pride going before a (literal) fall: 'See how the bloodthirsty earth cast down/ the builder from his high design/ Long years he raised a palace; in a moment fortune threw him down' (*ibid*., p. 40).

Castle Khawarnaq is frequently singled out for illustration in manuscripts of the *Khamsa* (see for example Adamova 1996, pp. 138–139), as it provides artists with an opportunity to create a spectacular architectural composition. In this instance, however, the representation of the palace has little to distinguish it as the magnificent Castle Khawarnaq. In the poem, the castle is described in typically hyperbolic fashion as having a tower 'rising to the moon' and a spectacular dome, neither of which are evident here. However, the inclusion of gold on the spandrels of the blind brick arch, decorated with an undulating 'cloud-band' decoration inherited from Chinese art, may be a reference to the 'palace richly decked in gold' of the poetic description (Meisami 1995, p. 38). The use of *chinoiserie* motifs in both art and architecture had been a widespread practice amongst Iranian craftsmen since the Ilkhanid period, and had been established for centuries as connotative of luxury and good taste.



39

SHĀH RĀMĪN AND HIS COMPANIONS BEFORE THE MARVELLOUS CITY OF DĀR ÜL-BEKĀM (‘THE PLACE OF FULFILLED DESIRE’)

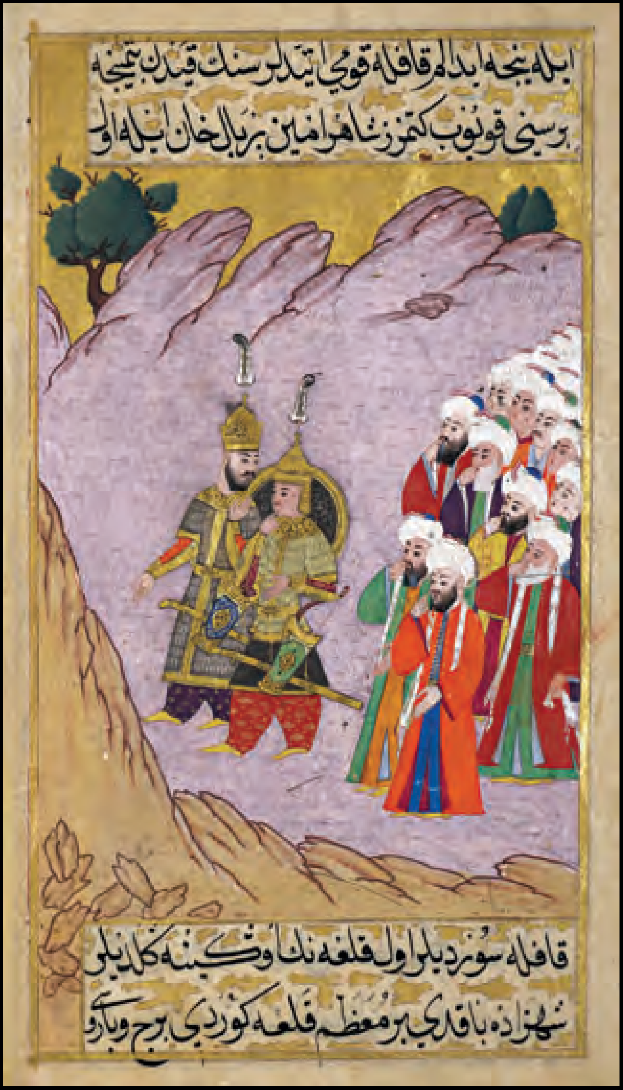
Folios 144v–145r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leṭā’if*
(‘Gifts of Curiosities’ or ‘Curious and Witty Gifts’) of ʿAlī ibn Naqīb
Ḥamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murād III
Istanbul; dated 1002 H/1593–94 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 35.1 x 21 cm
AKM 280

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Binney 1979, pp. 78–79; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 38–42 (no. 9, fols 177v, 226v–227r and 252v–253r); Falk 1985, p. 136 (no. 109; fols 279v–280r and 275v–276r); Canby 1998, pp. 99–100 (nos 71–72; fols 296r and 297r); Leane 2002, pls 18.2, 18.6 (fol. 27); AKTC 2010b, pp. 297–299 (no. 128)

The *Tuhfet ül-leta’if* tells of the adventures of a young prince named Shah Ramin and his beloved Mah-Pervin across land and sea as they overcome various monsters and villains. The title would suggest that it is a composite of various pre-existing romance tales, although it has also been proposed that it may be a free adaptation of a lost Persian or Turkish original (Meredith-Owens 1988, p. 577). The text was composed in Turkish by ʿAli ibn Naqib Hamza, who also refers to himself in the text as Naqiboghlu, during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Murad II (r. 1421–1451). Nothing is known about this author beyond what he tells of himself within the *Tuhfet ül-leta’if*, and this is the only known copy of his composition. The manuscript was copied and illustrated for Murad III (r. 1574–1595) in 1593–94 CE, and the quality of both the calligraphy and the paintings, as well as its unique text, make it an exceptionally important manuscript for the history of both Ottoman painting and imperial Turkish literary history. The disbound manuscript in the Aga Khan Museum collection contains fifty-six single-page and nine double-page illustrations (see also cat. nos 56, 62, 79 and 91). Although it is nearly complete there are some lacunae: Meredith-Owens has identified a double-page image, now held in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, as belonging to this same manuscript (Binney 1979).

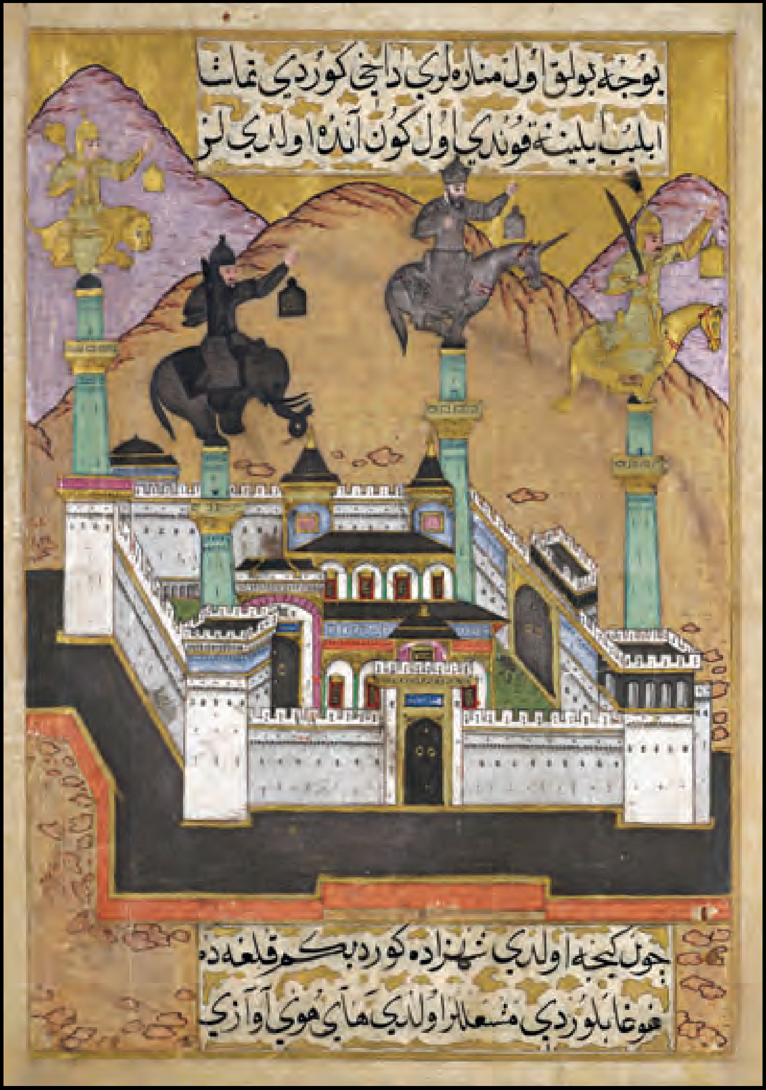
Unlike contemporary Iranian manuscript painting, which regularly repeated and amended pictorial compositions from earlier versions of the same text, Ottoman painting often engaged with entirely new subjects and new texts for illustration, as in the case of this manuscript. This unique painting comes from the beginning of an episode relating the adventures Shah Ramin and his companions in the fantastical city built by Shedid ibn ʿAd, one member of the long-vanished tribe of the ʿAd which is mentioned in the Qur’an. Shah Ramin, having heard of a city seven miles in circumference that contained an abandoned citadel, set out to find it. The scene shows the moment Shah Ramin, his paladin Parr u bal and a crowd of companions first laid eyes on the magical stronghold: they raise their fingers to their lips in the gesture of astonishment. The citadel was guarded by four immense towers – here looking very much like the thin, balconied minarets of an Ottoman imperial mosque – each carrying a talismanic figure in the form of a mounted warrior wielding a weapon. In the painting all four of the metal knights face rather menacingly towards Shah Ramin, and when the hero finally opened the gate of the citadel in the story, using a key kept in the hand of yet another talismanic sculpture, the mouths of the four warriors emitted a flood of water that threatened to drown the young prince and his companions, before it all eventually drained away into the moat (Meredith-Owens 1988, pp. 581–582).

The painted image of the fortified city is naturally dominated by the fantastic figures of the metal warriors, who are mounted on four different types of steed – lion, elephant, unicorn and horse. These mounts must have some significance, possibly symbolising the four directions of the compass or realms of the earth. The description and image of the four metal warriors brings to mind historic references to the four fabled metal figures that were mounted on the four domes of the audience hall of the ʿAbbasid caliph al-Mansur (r. 754–775), as well as the related figure of a horseman on the summit of the dome of al-Mansur’s palace which was reputed to turn to face the direction from which the ʿAbbasids’ enemies would next approach (Salmon 1904, pp. 87–90; Le Strange 1924, p. 31). The supposed antiquity of the citadel featured in this episode of the *Tuhfet ül-leta’if* may have suggested descriptions of the ʿAbbasid construction as a model.



ایله نیجه ابدالم قافله قومی ایدرلر سنک قیدن نیجه
وسنی قویوب کتمز ناهر امین بربال خان ایله او

قافله سوردیلر اول قلعه نک اوکینه کلدیلر
شهزاده باقدی بر معظم قلعه کوردی برج و بارو



بوجه بولوق اول مناره لری دانجی کوردی تماشا
ایلب بیلینه قوندی اول کون آنده اولدیلر

چون کیجه اولدی شهزاده کوردیکم قلعه ده
هوغا بلوردی مشعلار اولدی هابی هوی آوازی

40

EMPEROR JAHĀNGĪR AT THE *JHAROKĀ* WINDOW OF THE RED FORT AT AGRA

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Jahāngīrnāma*
('Book of Jahāngīr'), painting ascribed to Nādir al-Zamān (Abū'l Ḥasan)
Agra, India; c. 1620
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 56 x 35.2 cm
AKM 136

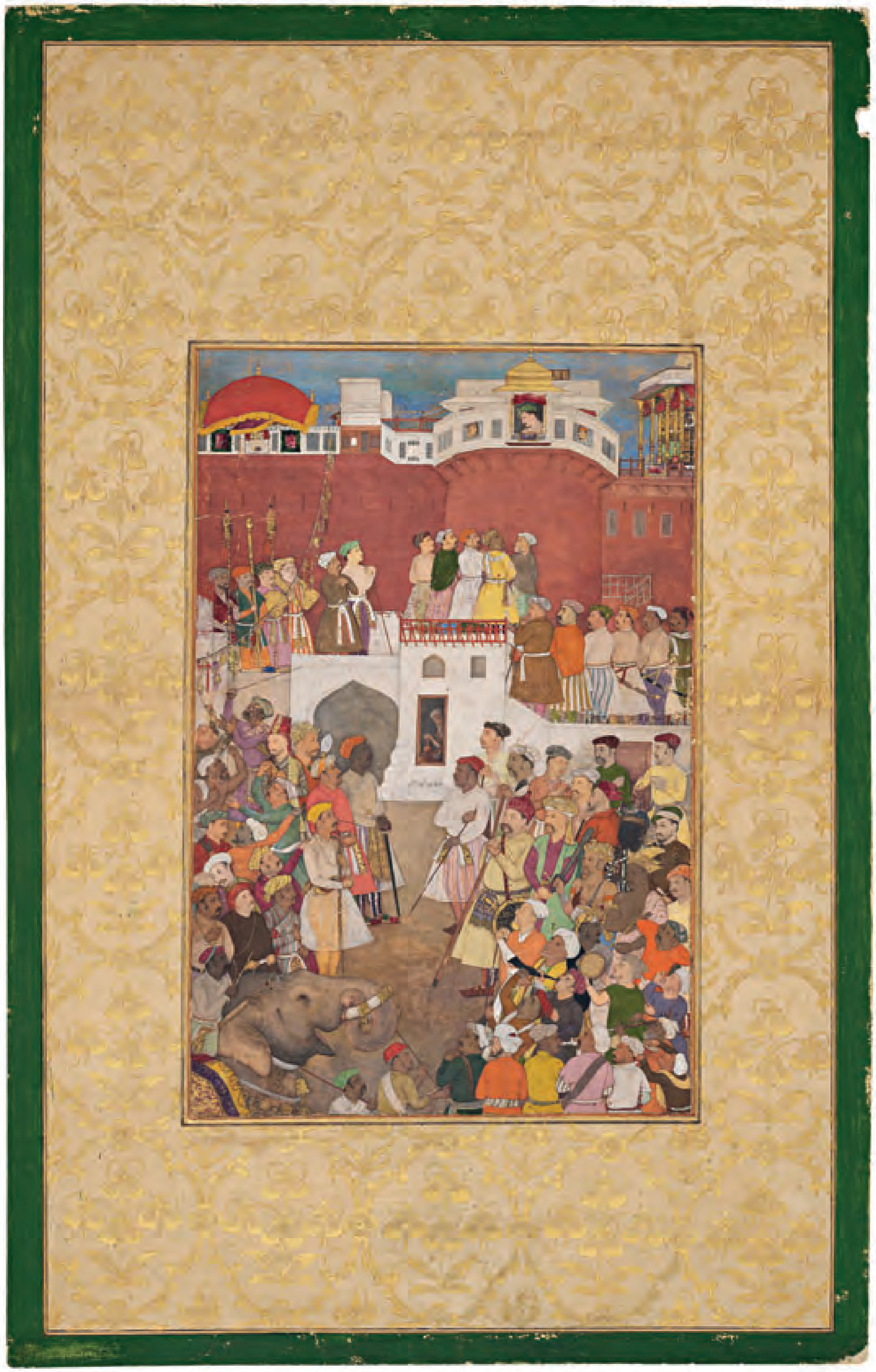
Publ: Delhi 1911, p. 92 (no. C.508, pl. XXVIII [a]); Martin 1912, vol. 2, pl. 216 left; Beach 1978, pp. 64, 91 (not ill.); Welch – Welch 1982, p. 228 (no. 69); S.C. Welch 1985, pp. 185–186 (no. 116); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 86–87 (no. 37); Brand 1995, p. 132 (no. 91); Canby 1998, pp. 141–142 (no. 105); AKTC 2009a, pp. 238–239 (no. 177); AKTC 2009b, pp. 238–239 (no. 177); AKTC 2010a, pp. 254–255 (no. 194)

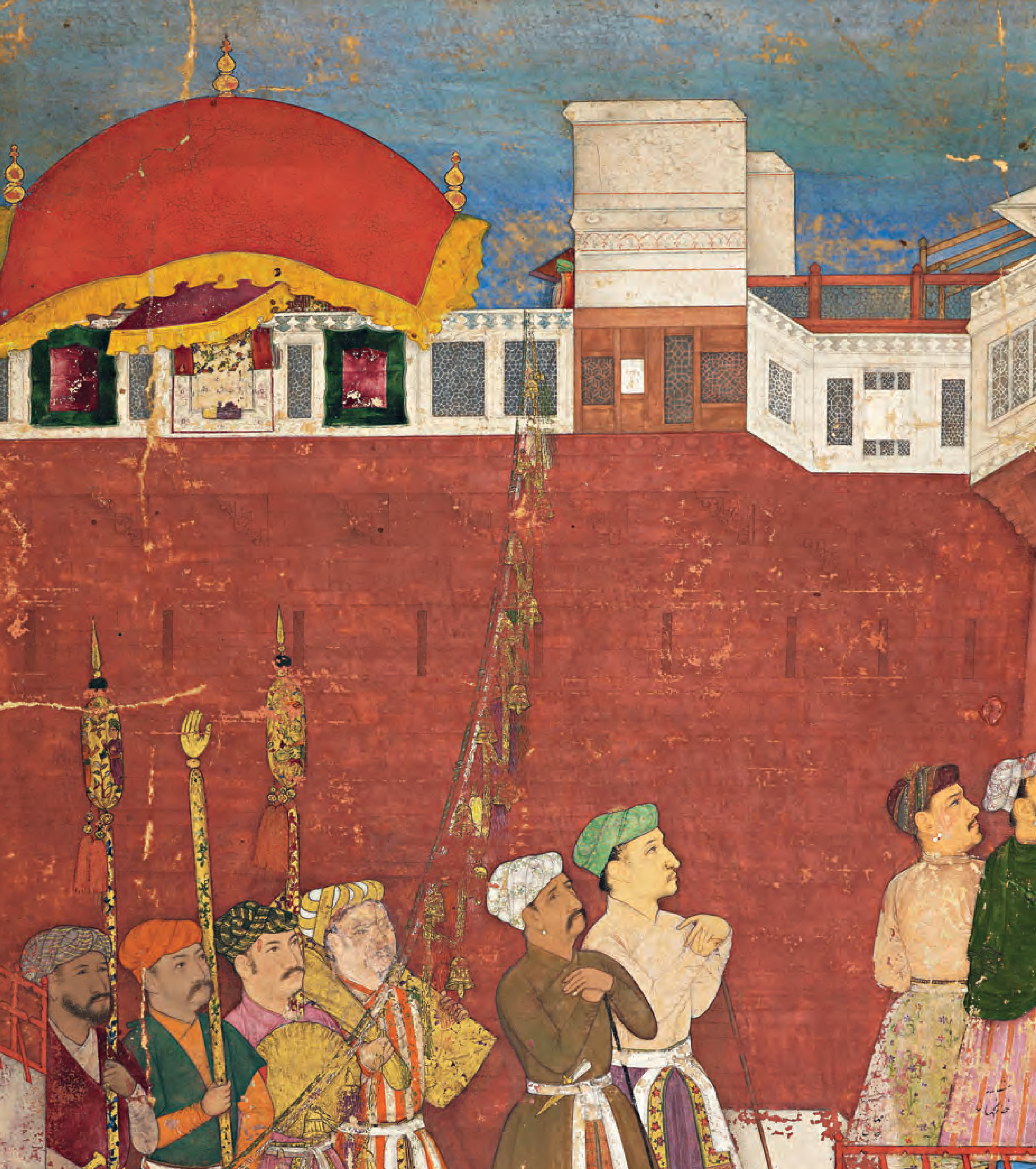
The imperial tradition known as *darshan* required the Mughal emperor to appear daily before his subjects in order to maintain common faith in his person and his capacity to rule, and it appears to have been inherited from the Rajput princes. In this painting from an illustrated version of the *Jahangirnama* – the memoirs of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) – created during the emperor's own lifetime, Jahangir appears in a balcony window known by its Hindi name as a *jharoka*. The massive red sandstone structure from which the *jharoka* projects is readily identifiable as the Red Fort at Agra, a huge fortified complex and a palace-city in itself. The Mughal incarnation of the Red Fort was begun by Jahangir's father Akbar in the mid 1560s.

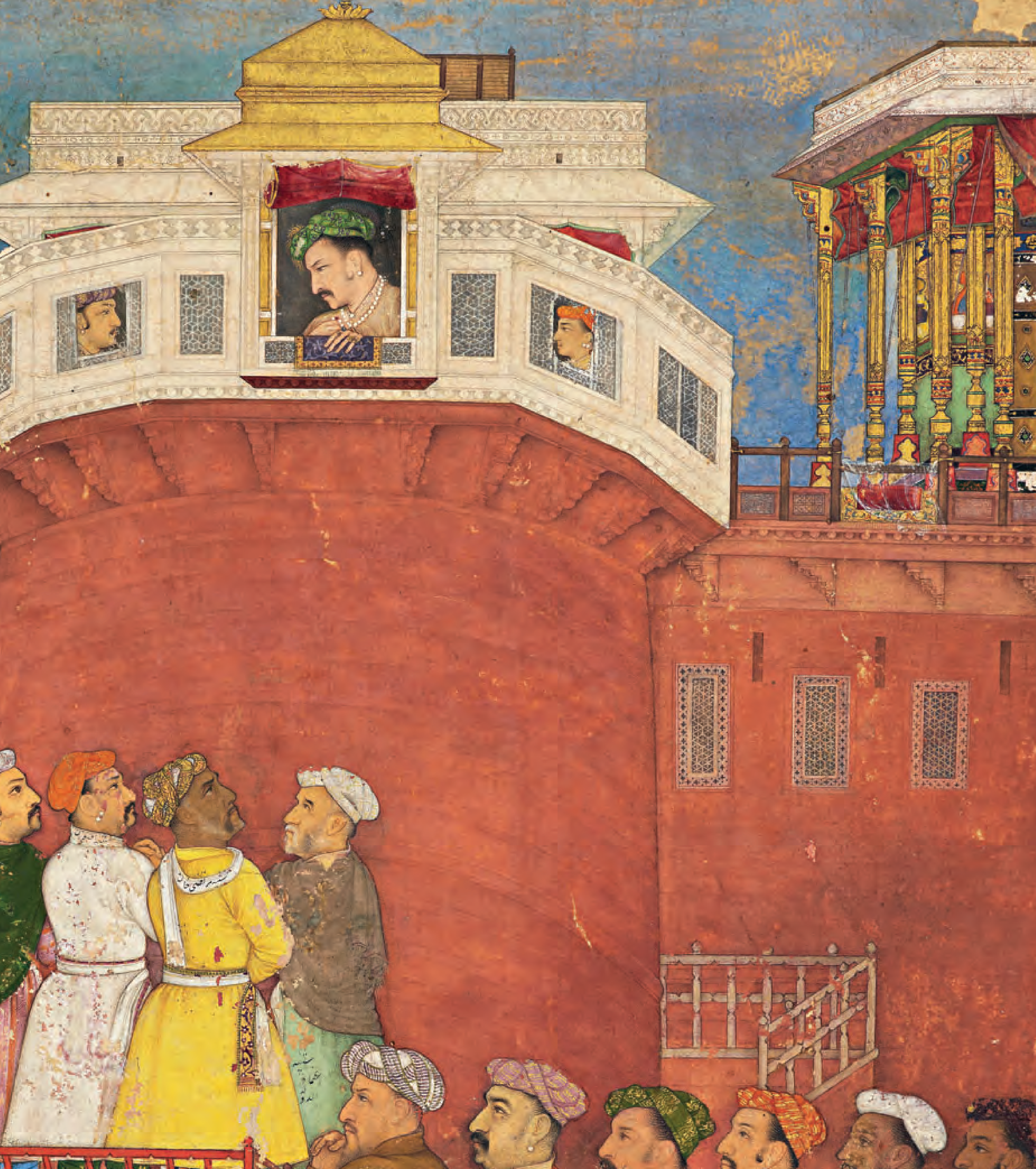
In the painting, Jahangir's face is framed in a marble window high above the top-ranking Mughal courtiers who stand on the marble terrace below, many of them labelled with their names, while more courtiers, and some less exalted onlookers, gather in the courtyard below that for a glimpse of the royal profile. Mughal court ceremonial is here entirely commingled with its architectural setting: the portrait of the emperor is set off by his spectacular, and formidable, stone surroundings, while the arrangement of the figures below clearly indicates court hierarchy through the architectural elevation of the foremost players. In the left of the image can be seen a chain of bells, known as the 'Chain of Justice' and described by Jahangir in his memoir (legend has attributed the original innovation to the Sasanian king Nushirvan; see Clinton 1976, p. 158). It was fastened between the Agra Fort and a post by the riverbank. In theory, anyone who felt he had been the victim of oppressive or unjust treatment could pull it to attract the attention of the emperor, although it has been noted by several authors that this noble principle seems to be undermined by the men with sticks apparently beating away those who try to ring the bells in this image.

As Brand has observed, the close interest in the person of the emperor that was manifest in *darshan* probably contributed to the development of true portraiture, a notable artistic innovation of Mughal India that is showcased in the varied features of the Mughal courtiers depicted in this painting. The emperor's presentation as a profile bust, flanked by two profiles of princes framed in smaller square windows, is very similar to the framed portrait miniatures of the Mughal rulers that are found in album pages (an example in the Aga Khan Museum collection is AKM 135, pub. Canby 1998, p. 106, and a similar idea can be seen in cat. no. 103).

Two closely comparable paintings of Jahangir's successor Shah Jahan looking down from the *jharoka* window of the Red Fort at Agra are also known (Leach 1998, pp. 110–115). The present painting bears an inscription attributing it to the painter Nadir al-Zaman, a great favourite of Jahangir: this is written on the step before the door of the marble terrace in which sits an enigmatic bearded figure. However, this ascription may be later than the image itself.







41

HUMĀYŪN DEFEATS HIS BROTHER KĀMRĀN AT KABUL

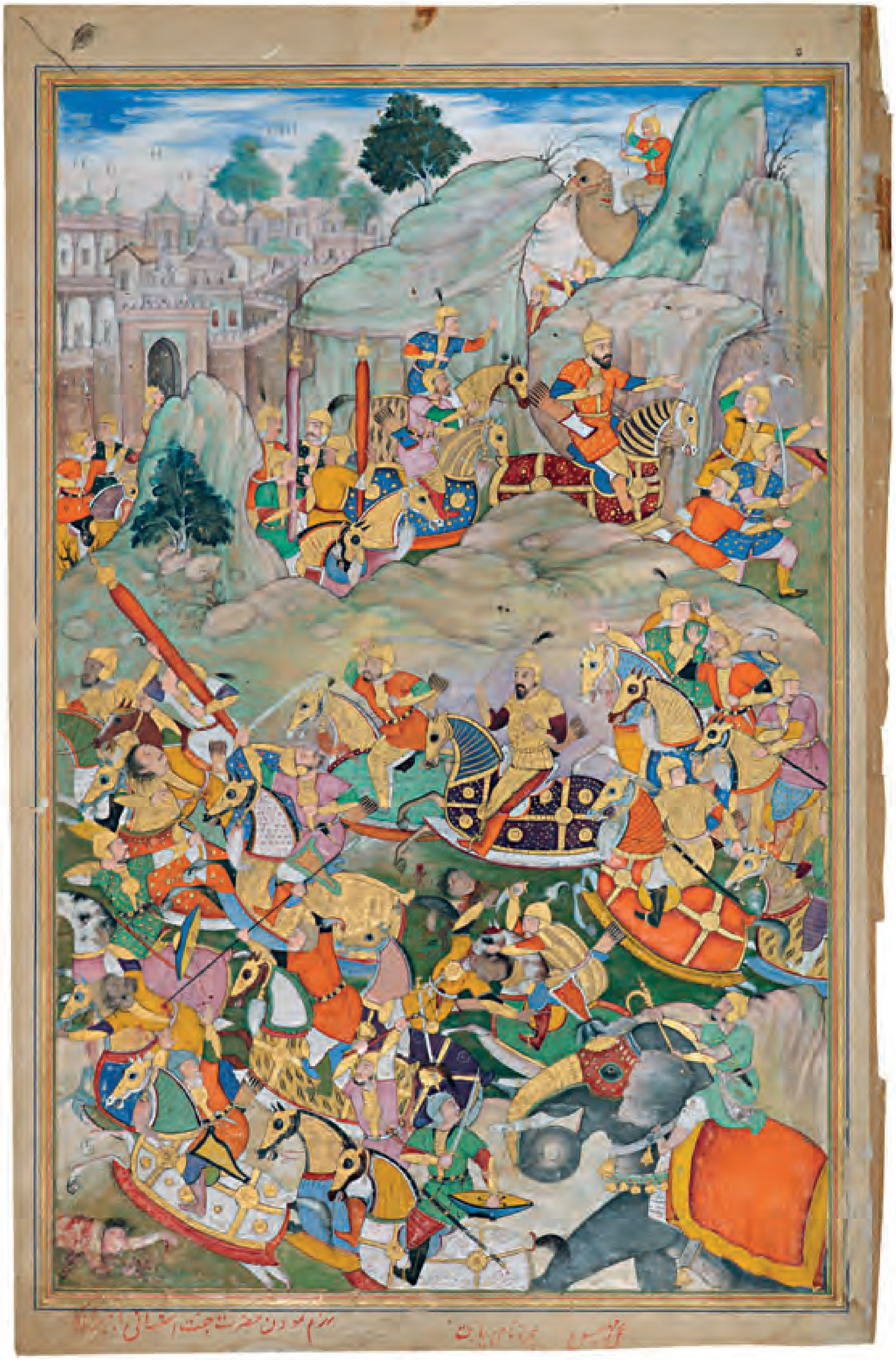
Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Akbarnāma* ('Book of Akbar'),
inscribed 'Painting by Mahish, principal faces by Padarath'
Agra, India; c. 1590–1596
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Page: 37 x 25.2 cm
AKM 133

Publ: S.C. Welch 1959, no. 7; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 153–155 (no. 52); Falk 1985, p. 154 (no. 129); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 116–117 (no. 53); AKTC 2009a, p. 236 (no. 176); AKTC 2009b, p. 236 (no. 176); AKTC 2010a, pp. 252–253 (no. 193)

The *Akbarnama* was a biography of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1564–1605); it was commissioned in or around 1590 by the emperor himself from his spiritual advisor and friend Abu'l-Fazl. The text is a history of Akbar and his ancestors in three *daftar*s (books), and the third of these, the famous *A'in-i Akbari*, remains the premier source for information on many aspects of life in India during Akbar's rule.

At least two illustrated manuscripts of the *Akbarnama* were created during Akbar's reign: 116 dismounted paintings from the first of these are held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, with other detached leaves from the same manuscript held in various collections, while the second is divided between the Chester Beatty Library, the British Library and other collections. In scale and style the present painting can be attributed to the first of these two manuscripts. There is some debate about the dating of that work: most scholars have placed it in the last decade of the sixteenth century, but Seyller has suggested that the paintings were in fact reused from an earlier manuscript that predates the composition of the *Akbarnama*, and should be dated to c. 1586–87 (Seyller 1990).

The present painting must come from the first section of the *Akbarnama*, concerned with the actions of Akbar's forefathers and in particular the achievements of Babur and Humayun, Akbar's grandfather and father respectively. After a period of hardship and disappointment, and the loss of his Indian territories, Humayun's military fortunes changed and he began to advance back towards India. However, rivalries between the young heir of Babur and his own half-brothers had to be settled. The lower section of the painting shows Humayun – in gold mail and mounted on a magnificent horse – with his army routing some of his half-brother's troops, while above him Kamran is seen fleeing the city of Kabul (now in Afghanistan). Kabul is portrayed as a walled city with a magnificent arched gateway, crenellated walls, and ornate buildings with domes, peaked roofs and arcades, all depicted in a style that owes much to European landscape paintings, and rendered in lightened colours to create an atmospheric effect of distance and haze. Seyller notes that the closing off of the distant background with an architectural assemblage is a common trait in certain early Mughal paintings (*ibid.*, p. 384), but this need not be interpreted as an arbitrary convention; here, the rather ethereal presence of the city is an important reminder of the stakes for which Humayun was fighting.


رزم نمودن حضرت جنت آشیانی
عمل مسکین

42

ARCHED SURROUND FOR A FIREPLACE

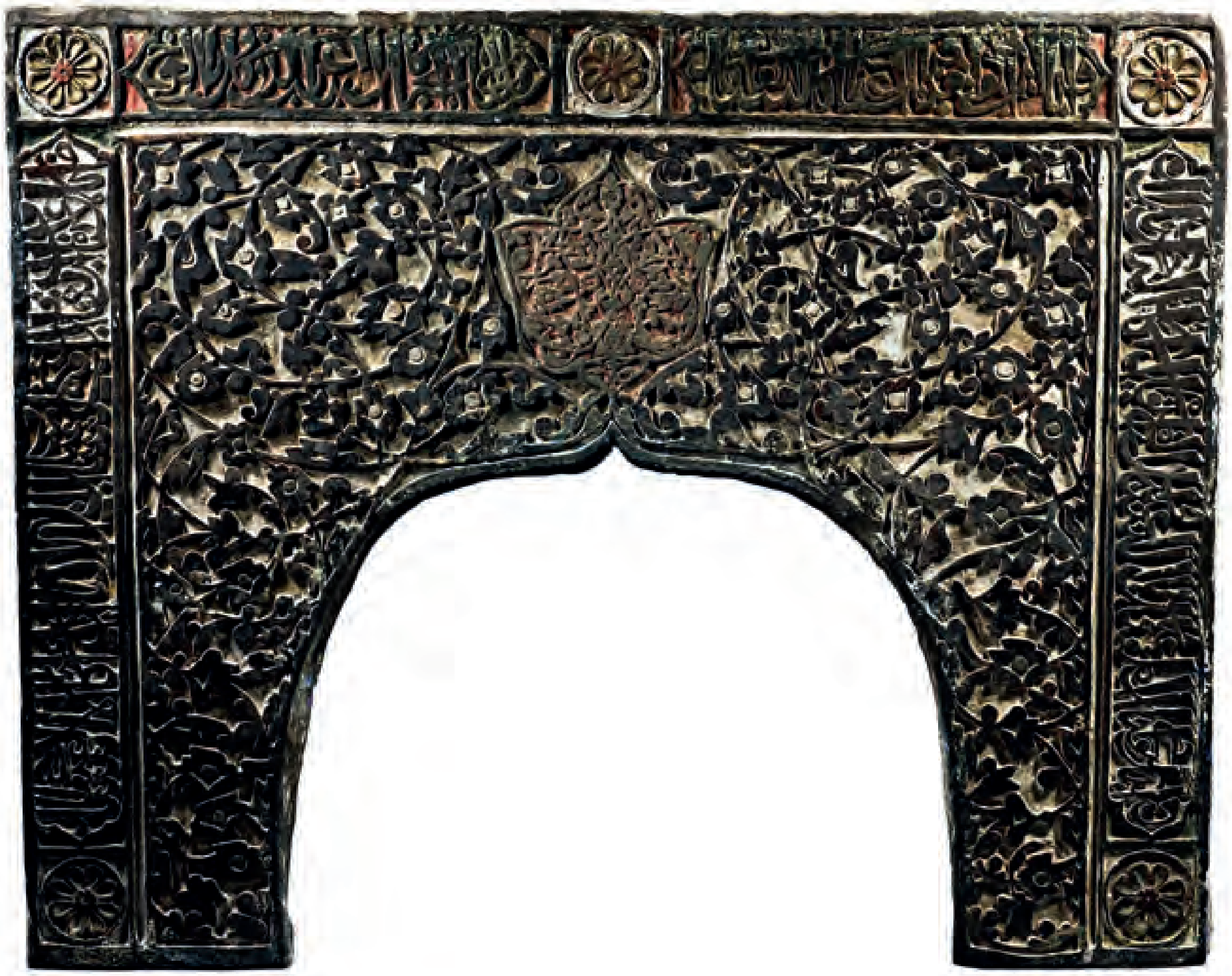
Daghestan, probably Kubachi; nineteenth century
Carved stone (argillite?) with traces of pigment
79 x 92 cm
AKM 894
Unpublished

This arch is one of a number of such pieces that have appeared on the art market during the last decade. Several aspects of their appearance might initially suggest an early date, and possibly an Afghan or even north Indian source: the form of the arch, for example, is similar to many seen in the architectural traditions of Muslim India, and can even be loosely compared with that seen on the sixteenth-century representation of the city gateway of Kabul in cat. no. 41. However, a recent book of folk arts from the republic of Daghestan in the northern Caucasus includes an image of an arch almost identical to this one, photographed in situ over a kitchen fireplace in the village of Kubachi, and dated to the nineteenth century (Chenciner 2006, p. 57).

The varied political circumstances and cultural influences that have held sway over Daghestan through the centuries have given rise to an extraordinarily rich artistic tradition that is not always fully incorporated into the story of Islamic art, although the village of Kubachi has been the subject of much attention from Russian and Central Asian scholars. A highly distinctive stonecarving tradition, manifest in both tombstones and architectural fragments, has existed in the area since the fourteenth century. However, that early tradition, which typically comprises low-relief carving of thick interlace motifs and striking images of warriors and animals, is quite distinct from the style of carving exhibited on the present arch (see Piotrovksy – Pritula 2006, no. 53).

Rather, this and related pieces appear to represent a nineteenth-century revival of a different historical style of decoration, one that bears some formal similarity to designs of the Timurid or Safavid periods: this is particularly evident in the vegetal decoration that can be seen filling the spandrels of the present example. However, the original source of the designs, and the reasons for their popularity at this late date, remain unclear. While a seventeenth-century tombstone from Daghestan displays an inscription of similar script type, also contained in cartouches, a closer parallel for the inscription cartouches of the present piece can be seen in early twentieth-century tombstones (Debirov 2001, pp. 243, 246). An eight-petalled floret with indented petals, very similar to those that occupy the four corners and top centre of the present arch, is visible on a tombstone dated 1832 (*ibid.*, p. 243). Above all, the vegetal interlace of the arch, with its very fine, wiry scrolling stems and thickly crowded floral designs including a distinctive poppy-shaped, rather square flower form, can be seen in both stone and woodcarving of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from Kubachi and the surrounding area (Chirkov 1971, pp. 169, 171, 179; Debirov 1966, p. 205).

It has been claimed of the village of Kubachi in Daghestan that every inhabitant is a craftsman of some form: the name ‘Kubachi’ means a maker of chain-mail, and the village has become famous for its aforementioned fourteenth- and fifteenth-century carved stones, and bronze cauldrons, as well as its more recent decorated weapons (Piotrovsky – Pritula 2006, p. 61). Kubachi also has an intriguing position in the annals of Islamic ceramic history, as it was the source of a large group of late fifteenth- to early seventeenth-century Iranian ceramic dishes. These had been decorating the homes of many villagers for an unknown period of time before they were ‘discovered’ and purchased by collectors and dealers from the 1870s onwards. Many of them eventually ended up in museum collections, where their original provenance has long been puzzled over (Golombek 1999, p. 407). The route by which this group of Iranian ceramics, presumably originally the collection of one individual, ended up in the mountain homes of the residents of Kubachi remains something of a mystery. One wonders if the story of the so-called ‘Kubachi wares’ is in any way connected with the nineteenth-century appearance of carved forms of cartouche and vegetal interlace that seem to indicate a taste for earlier Iranian styles of decoration.



43

COMPOSITE CAPITAL

Islamic Spain; c. 950–970
Carved marble
Height: 28 cm; length 28 cm
AKM 663
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 177 (no. 153); AKTC 2007b, p. 177 (no. 153); Makariou 2007, pp. 90–91 (no. 23); AKTC 2009a, p. 93 (no. 44); AKTC 2009b, p. 93 (no. 44); AKTC 2010a, p. 95 (no. 45); AKTC 2010b, p. 184 (no. 83)

Capitals, the crowning feature of a column or pilaster, create an area of transition between the top of the shafts upon which they rest and the element that they support above them. Thus, they are first and foremost structural components, but they are also used to visually articulate the passage from one architectural element to another, refining the transition from the upright column to the horizontal lintel or architrave, or curved arch, that the column supports. To this end a complex typology of sculptural decoration evolved upon the capitals of monumental architecture from ancient Greece and Rome, and capital decoration became an important attribute of the Classical architectural orders of Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and so forth. Capitals of the Corinthian order are characterised by two curving rows of acanthus leaf decoration, almost as if the capital was turning into a plant and growing upwards, and related Composite capital forms bear pronounced vegetal volutes that curve outwards from the four corners at the top of the capital.

The Classical heritage is strongly evident in much early Islamic architecture, and the basic form of the Composite capital, which can be found in many Roman ruins in Spain to this day, still holds firm in this capital. However, the dissolution of the surface into a lacy network of deeply carved vegetal interlace shifts the aesthetic into a new realm and demonstrates a new conception of the decorative potential of marble. Here, the monumentality of the Classical capital has given way to a penetrable surface, a characteristic that this piece shares with other capitals from Islamic Spain and North Africa. The evolution of a distinctly 'Islamic' style of capital out of Classical models, of which this is one example, has been studied in depth alongside the use of spolia (material recycled from Classical buildings) in the context of the mosques of Islamic Spain and North Africa (see Ewert – Wisshak 1981).

As Makariou has observed, this piece is very similar to some of the Composite capitals made for the reception room of the great Spanish Umayyad ruler and first caliph of al-Andalus (the Islamic Iberian peninsula), ʿAbd al-Rahman III (r. 912–961), in the royal palace-city at Madinat al-Zahraʾ, near Cordoba. The capitals at Madinat al-Zahraʾ are dated in their inscriptions to 342 to 345 H (952–53 to 956–57 CE), and many of them have been dispersed into museum collections. However, Makariou also notes that the present example appears to have been carved from a cubic piece of marble, 28 cm on each side, while the Madinat al-Zahraʾ capitals are not cubic; she argues that the present piece can instead be related to a capital of the same dimensions from Segovia, dated 349 H (960–961 CE) (Makariou 2007, pp. 90–91).

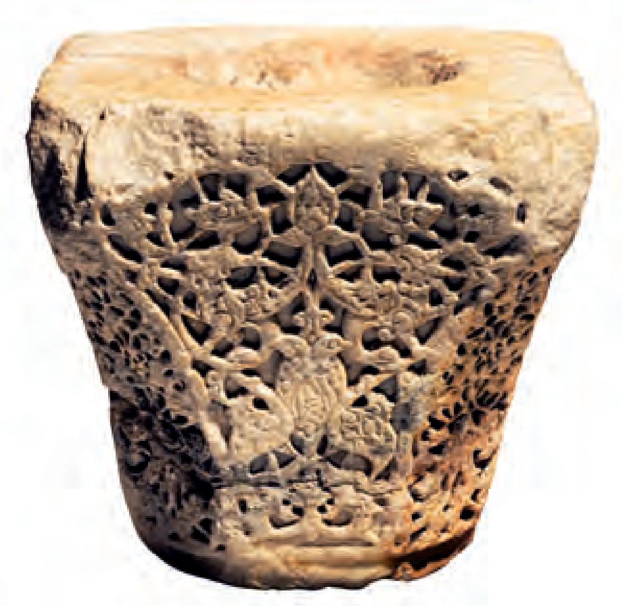
44

CAPITAL WITH ANIMALS

Eastern Syria or Iraq; first half of the thirteenth century
Carved marble
Height: 33 cm
AKM 731
Publ: AKTC 2009a, pp. 110–111 (no. 63); AKTC 2009b, pp. 110–111 (no. 63); AKTC 2010a, pp. 112–113 (no. 64)

Although this piece and the earlier column capital illustrated in cat. no. 43 fulfil the same structural function, they differ greatly in appearance. Where the Andalusian example is fully three-dimensional in its ornament, with curvilinear projections, stepped levels, volutes and deeply carved vegetal decoration combining to almost dissolve the appearance of the marble block, the present piece remains uncompromisingly solid. It has been cut to a bevelled form with an octagonal base flaring out to a square top, while finely carved and inventive shallow-relief ornamentation, almost like drawing, has been inscribed over all of its surfaces.

As an architectural element it owes little to the Classical orders and instead derives its decorative interest from the tightly coiled vegetal scrolls, pairs of addorsed griffins (mythological creatures with the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle), birds and other animals that cover the surface. An attribution to the Ayyubid period (c. 1169–1260) in Syria or Iraq has been based in part on the resemblance of these forms of decoration – pairs of highly ornamental addorsed or affronted animals set into vegetal interlace – to those seen in Ayyubid arts of other media, such as inlaid metalwork, cast brass or carved wood. See, for example, the sphinxes on the Freer canteen (mid-thirteenth century; Atil 1985, pp. 124–136), or the fine vegetal interlace on a carved wooden chest in the David Collection (Iraq, c. 1240; von Folsach 2001, p. 266).



45

MOSES REGRETS HIS GENEROSITY TOWARDS THE INTEMPERATE MAN

Folio 93v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*
('Collected Works') of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 41.7 x 26.4 cm; image: 28.2 x 15.6 cm
AKM 284

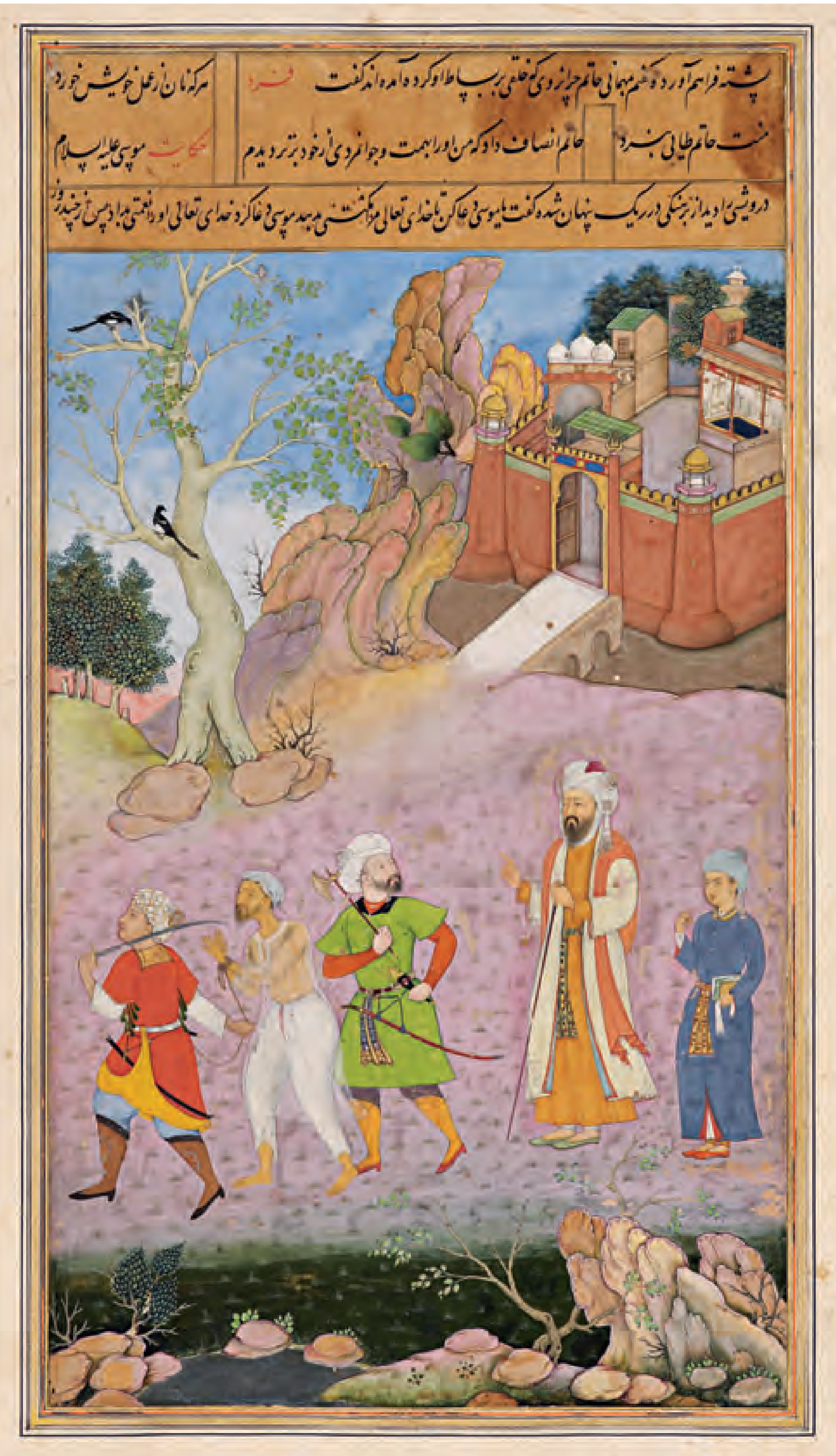
Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 200–201 (no. 99)

The enclosed palace-city was not always a backdrop to war and earthly struggle in miniature painting. This scene provides a straightforward illustration, in the foreground, of a moralising tale from the collected works of Saʿdi (see also cat. nos 29, 30, 52, 73, 78 and 82) while in the background an extraordinary and enigmatic architectural structure, not featured in the story, appears almost as a vision or a mirage.

In the text, which comes from the section of the *Gulistan* ('Flower Garden') concerned with the virtues of contentment and moderation, the Prophet Moses saw a man who was so poor he had been unable to clothe himself, and had buried himself in the sand to cover his nakedness. At the man's request, Moses prayed to God to provide some means of subsistence for the wretched individual. Some time later, Moses saw the same man bound and led by a guard, followed by an angry mob. Asking what had happened, Moses was told that the man had come into wealth but, being unable to control himself, had become drunk and committed murder, and was now being led to his own execution (Ross 1890, pp. 176–179). The painting shows the moment in which Moses realised he should not have presumed to pray for one who was undeserving.

It is unclear whether we are to understand the luxurious but deserted architectural complex in the top right of the painting as a symbol of the transience of worldly wealth and comforts, or even a reference to some spiritual realm accessible only to the enlightened. Certainly its separation from the narrative space of the foreground is emphasised by the presence of the moat, the glowing rocks that crowd around it, and the patch of luminescence that colours the ground next to the bridge, creating a rather strange transitional passage between the upper and lower sections of the painting. The architectural structure itself is exquisitely rendered in bright colours and gold, and the high viewpoint imagined by the artist permits a detailed depiction of the interior structures in much the same manner that later Indian painters would exploit in topographical paintings of real buildings (see cat. no. 71).

In both placement and structural detailing, the complex is very similar to a walled palace-city seen in a painting in the 1603–4 manuscript of the *Raj Kunwar* of Qutban created for prince Salim (later emperor Jahangir) at Allahabad (Leach 1995, vol. 1, fig. 2.54). Yet the total desertion of the complex in the present painting, with its prominent, solid gateway and otherworldly colouring, suggests a deeper meaning than mere compositional ballast. There is perhaps an intentional reference to a story located earlier in the *Kulliyat*, which tells of the fort of Qazal Arsalan (from the *Bustan*: see Hart Edwards 1911, p. 32). When Qazal boasted of the strength of his fortress, a wise traveller pointed out that while splendid, the fort did not confer much strength, for others had once owned it and yet they too had passed away, as all things will in time.



پشته فراهم آورده گفتم بمهمانی حاتم چرا نروی که خلقی بر بساط او گرد آمده اند گفت

فرد

هر که نان از عمل خویش خورد

منت حاتم طایی نبرد

حاتم انصاف داد که من او را بهمت و جوانمردی از خود برتر دیدم

حکایت

موسی علیه السلام

درویشی را دید از برهنگی در ریگ پنهان شده گفت یا موسی دعا کن تا خدای تعالی مرا کفافی دهد موسی دعا کرد خدای تعالی او را نعمتی داد پس از چند روز

46

DISCOURSE UPON FRIENDSHIP

Folio 236r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*
('Ethics of Nāṣir') of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī
Mughal India; c. 1590–1595
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: 23.7 x 14.3 cm
AKM 288

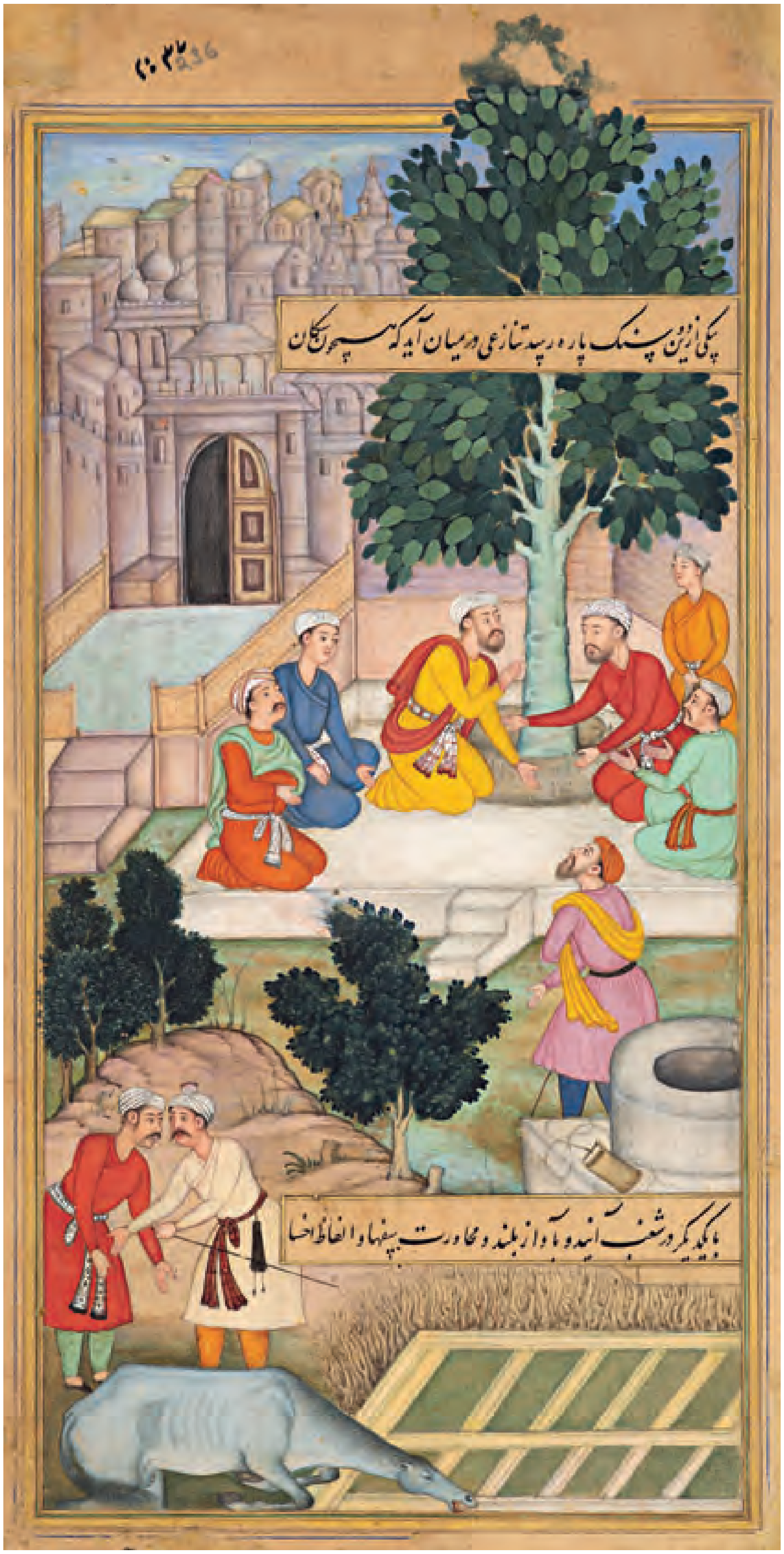
Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 171–175 (no. 58); Brand – Lowry 1985, p. 58; Falk 1985, p. 153 (no. 127); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 42–43, 46, 60–61, 120–127; Canby 1998, pp. 124–127 (nos 92, 93); Ziad 2002, pp. x, 146; AKTC 2007a, pp. 122–123, 168 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2007b, pp. 124–125, 167 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2008a, pp. 184–185 (no. 67); AKTC 2010b, pp. 144–145 (no. 65)

The seventeen full-page paintings from this manuscript of 254 folios (see also cat. nos 64, 65 and 90) have been detached and their places in the manuscript marked with plain sheets in order to allow them to be displayed, but the codex itself has not been dispersed. The complex ethical and philosophical discourses that make up the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* were completed around 1235 by the great medieval Shiʿi scientist, philosopher and theologian, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, and were originally written for an Ismaʿili patron in Iran, the governor Muhtasham Nasir al-Din. The text, although complex and written in a rather florid prose style, was a favourite of Akbar, the Mughal ruler of India from 1564 to 1605. While he was a great patron of the illustrated book, Akbar was not, apparently, a reader: there is some debate about whether he was entirely illiterate or just partially so. At any rate, his contemporaries record that many of the books of which he commissioned copies (including the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*) were read aloud to him, and he enjoyed repeated readings of the literary classics of Persian court culture, as well as histories and scientific texts (Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 171–174).

The *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* presented a considerable challenge to the artists of Akbar's atelier tasked with illustrating this manuscript. Unlike other kinds of texts, such as the historical descriptions of battles in the *Akbarnama* or the narrative episodes of Saʿdi's *Kulliyat* (see cat. nos 41 and 45), the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* does not really contain events that lend themselves to illustration. Faced with a lack of narrative content, the artists drew out some of the scattered allusions to concrete things and activities that are found in al-Tusi's philosophical treatise, and with these they created compositions that elaborate on the ethical themes of the work.

The two lines of text included on this painting come from the sixth section of the third discourse ('On the Virtue of Friendship and the Manner of Intercourse with Friends'), and describe how, when gold and silver get in the way of friendship, men will fall to quarrelling like dogs (Wickens 1964, p. 246). In a fairly straightforward illustration of the text, the two men in the foreground argue over an expiring horse that is presumably a source of financial strife for one or the other of them. However, the painting also seems to allude to specific elements found slightly later in the text in order to create an image that explores man's duty to actively maintain friendships and provide help for friends in need. The expiring horse may also refer to one of al-Tusi's allegories for the disastrous effects of negligence upon a friendship (*ibid*., p. 249). Behind this vignette a man seems to have tried to draw water from a dry well, providing another symbol of need, whilst an animated discussion, perhaps again about money, takes place in the middle ground. Additionally, the city gate in the background may also refer to one of the author's more opaque metaphors for unjustly neglected friendships: he likens the effects of ignoring a friend in need to 'the shape of a gateway and wall [that] inclines to disturbance and ruin from negligence in care for them' (Wickens 1964, p. 249).

The concerns of urban life are interwoven into the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*, and there are repeated references throughout the text to city life as the proper condition of man, hence perhaps the interest in urban fabric that is seen here and in some of the other paintings in the manuscript. The section from which this image has been drawn begins with the statement that 'men are naturally city-dwellers, with the completion of their felicity lying among their friends and their other associates' (*ibid*., p. 242). A complex reading of the city as civic body and metaphor for mankind is more fully laid out elsewhere in the text, with the 'Virtuous City' contrasted with its three wicked counterparts, the 'Ignorant City', the 'Impious City' and the 'Errant City' (*ibid*., p. 211).


یکی از زین پشنگ پاره رسید تا نزاعی درمیان آید که سپهر نگان
با یکدیگر در شغب آمدند و به آواز بلند و محاورت به سفها و الفاظ خنا

47

BAHRĀM GŪR AT THE HOUSE OF MĀHIYĀR THE JEWELLER

Two folios from the dispersed 'Second Small *Shāhnāma*'
Western Iran; c. 1300
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: approx 24.5 x 19 cm
AKM 16

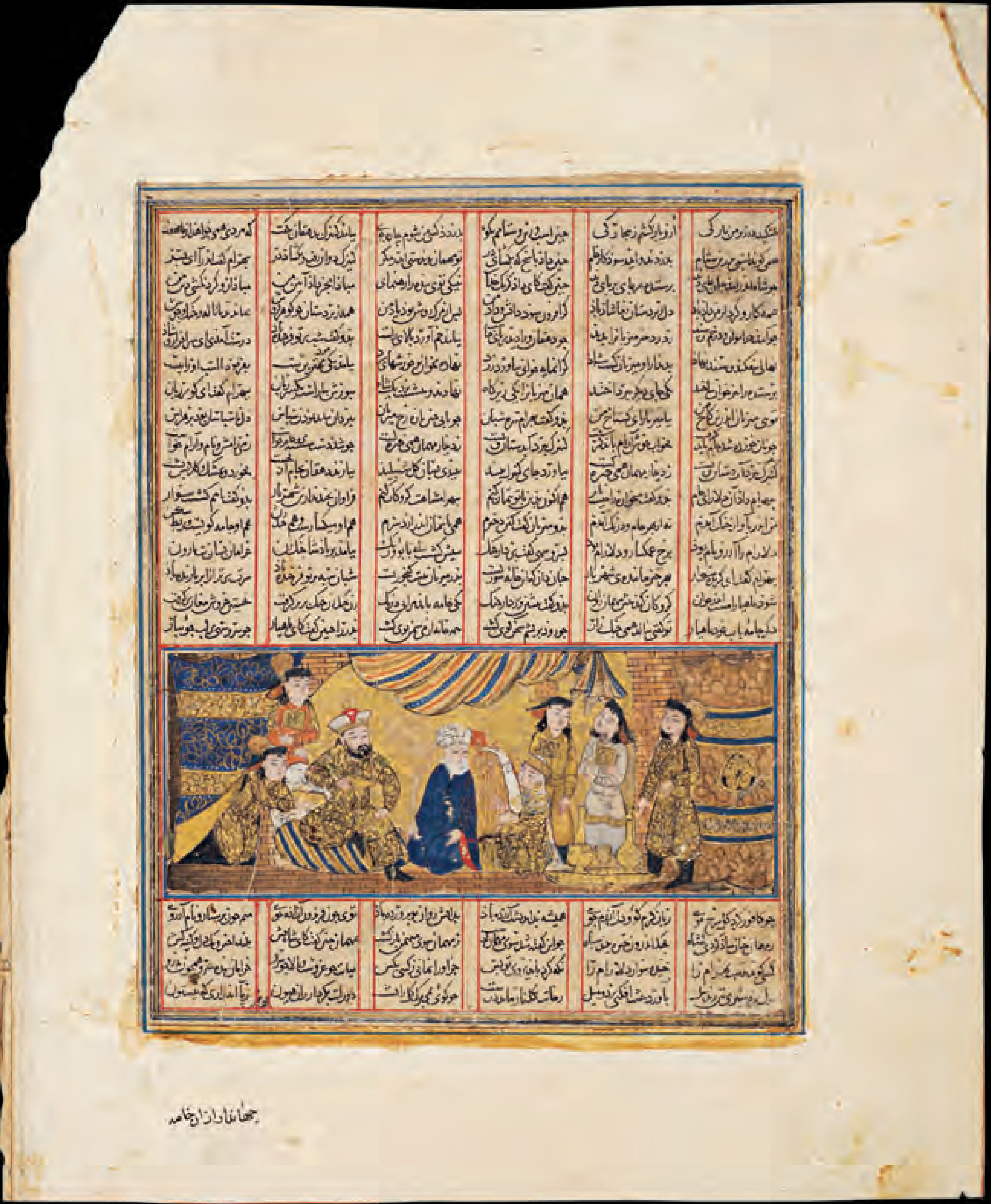
Publ: Pope 1945, pl. 121; Welch 1972a, pp. 43–45; Simpson 1979, fig. 51; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 51–52 (no. 13); Falk 1985, p. 47 (no. 17); AKTC 2010b, p. 273 (no. 108)

The group of four so-called 'Small *Shahnama*' manuscripts represent the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama*. Both this painting and cat. no. 36 come from the same manuscript, as reconstructed by Simpson (1979). All of the 'Small *Shahnama*' manuscripts are clearly very closely related and must have been produced in the same centre around the same time, although scholars are not in full agreement about whether that centre was in western Iran – possibly Tabriz – or, as seems more likely, in Baghdad.

From the reconstruction of the dispersed manuscripts it has been shown that each of the Small *Shahnama* manuscripts probably originally had a painted illustration every two or three pages. The apparent lack of an established tradition of *Shahnama* manuscript illustration prior to the beginning of the fourteenth century, coupled with the decision to create a dense illustrative cycle within each of the manuscripts, must have presented a considerable challenge to the painters, and makes their resourcefulness all the more remarkable. Each page is laid out with six text columns framed with red lines, and the conventions of painting at this time tend to anchor all people, buildings and things to the lower edge of the picture space, with little use of a staggered ground. This arrangement makes long horizontal images necessary to portray all but the simplest of events, and for this reason the majority of images in the small *Shahnama*s are oblong, and four or six columns wide. There were undoubtedly earlier images of episodes from the *Shahnama* depicted in other media than book painting, and the illustrative style of the figures in this painting bears a close relation to ceramic decoration of the period. However, the medium of manuscript illustration, by affording new scope for richness of colour, fineness of line and complexity of composition, opened up unparalleled opportunities for the depiction of architectural settings.

Bahram Gur, one of the great hero-kings of the Iranian national epic, and a notable heartbreaker, stayed incognito at the house of a jeweller. Unaware of his guest's true identity, the jeweller refreshed the well-dressed stranger with a glass of wine and called for his daughter Arzu to play her harp for him. Bahram Gur's beauty and noble bearing caused the girl to fall hopelessly in love with him, and in her song she compared the stranger favourably with Shah Bahram Gur, to his great secret delight.

While the simple brick construction of the interior depicted here is unremarkable, the painter has taken an obvious enjoyment in the depiction of the rich textiles that decorate the jeweller's house. Hanging panels at left and right, shown with realistic sags between each tack that holds them up, serve as doors or room dividers as demonstrated by the figure emerging from behind the left-hand panel, while a larger piece of striped cloth has been tied up in a swag at the top of the picture frame. Another image from the same manuscript, depicting Bahram Gur in the house of a peasant (Simpson 1979, fig. 43), does not show any hanging textiles and we can judge the presence of richly patterned cloth in this painting as an intentional indicator of the jeweller's relative wealth.



48

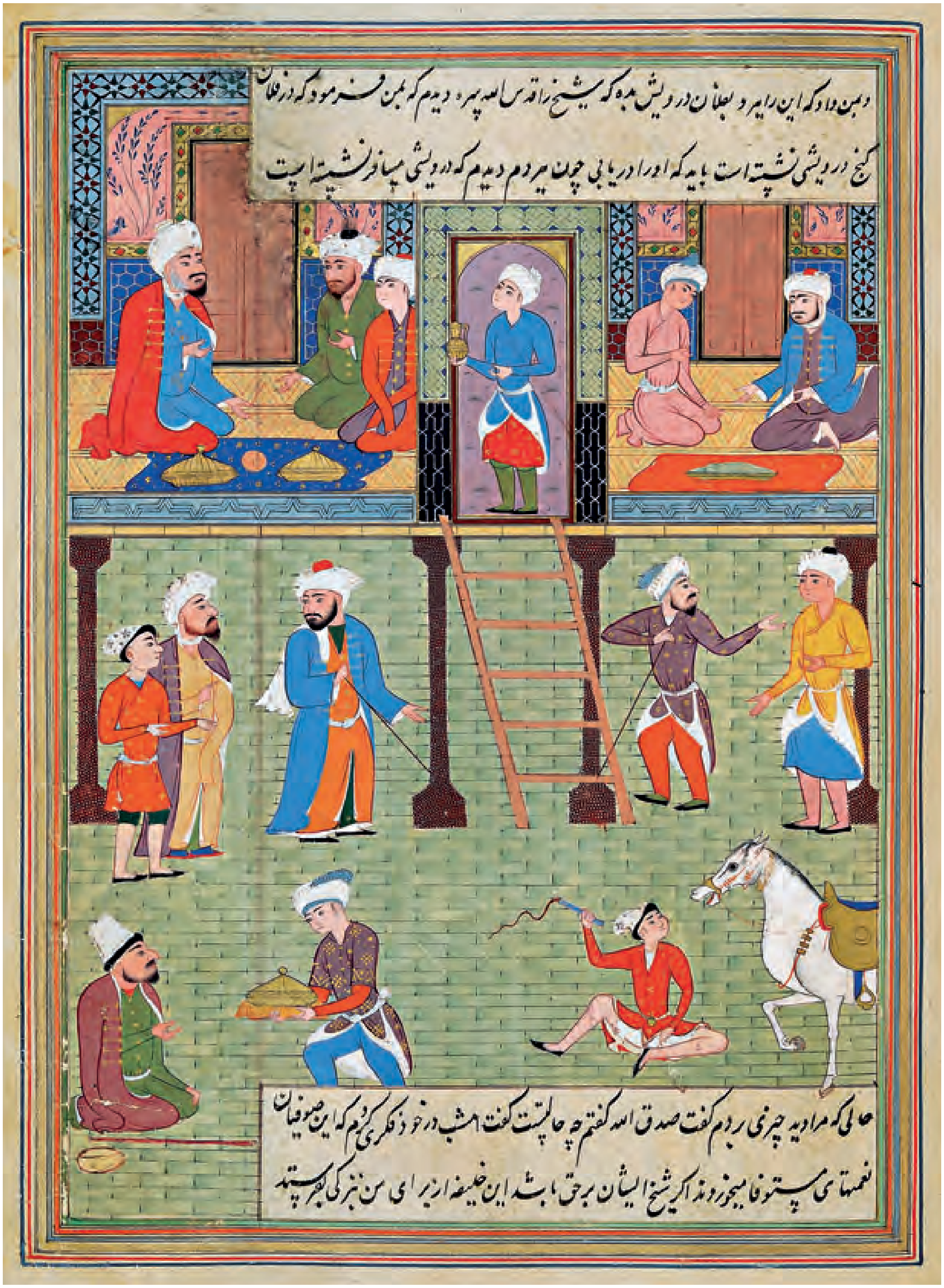
SHAYKH ṢAFĪ BRINGS FOOD TO A DERVISH BELOW, WHILE ḤAMZA NAṢR ĀBĀDĪ DINES ABOVE

Folio 373r of an illustrated manuscript of the *Tazkirā*
[Biographical Accounts] of Shaykh ṣafī al-Dīn Ishāq Ardabīlī
Shiraz, Iran; dated Sha ʿ ban 990/August–September 1582
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 35.4 x 22.7 x 7.5 cm
AKM 264
Publ: A. Welch 1972b, p. 49 (not ill.)

Like cat. no. 31, this image from the *Tazkira* (Biographical Accounts) of Shaykh Safi al-Din illustrates an episode from the life of the eponymous progenitor of the Safavid dynasty. Although Shaykh Safi died in the fourteenth century, his importance as the exalted ancestor of the dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722 meant that various accounts of his life were circulated in the Safavid period. The apparent absence of any other surviving illustrated versions of this text means we cannot know if there was a pre-existing cycle of illustrations associated with Shaykh Safi's life. It seems likely that the artist of this manuscript drew on other types of illustrated manuscript as the inspiration for some of his compositions, although the spatial structure of this piece, with the upper floor elevated on carefully depicted columns, and connected to the lower space by a ladder, is relatively unusual. Indeed, the mechanisms of connection between architectural spaces, such as stairs, ladders and passageways, are often ignored in Persianate miniature painting unless they serve some important narrative or symbolic function.

Here, the narrative is a simple tale demonstrating Shaykh Safi's miraculous intuition: Hamza Nasr Abadi, dining with companions, told Mawlana Shams al-Din to take some of the food and give it to a deserving dervish. Upon leaving with the dish, Shams al-Din promptly met Shaykh Safi, who directed him to a specific spot where he said a hungry dervish would be waiting. Arriving at that spot Shams al-Din was indeed greeted by a seated dervish, who informed him with great surprise that he, a lone traveller, was certainly very hungry, and had just been thinking 'If the head of the dervishes here has great power, he will hear my wish for food'.

The story has been visually compressed in such a way that Shaykh Safi, who stands left of the ladder and wears the *qizilbash* (a turban with the red baton of the Safaviyya order), is too close to the hungry dervish – seated lower left – for the miraculous aspect of the tale to be apparent in this painting. However, the artist has pointedly picked out the architectural construction of social difference for illustration: the privileged space of eating and comfort in the upper storey, with its painted walls and tile dadoes, is opened to the viewer but emphatically separated from the paved courtyard below, where horses and men come and go while the hungry dervish sits alone.



و بمن داد که این را ببر و بطلان درویش بده که پیش شیخ را قدس اسه پیره دیدم که بمن فرمود که در فلان
کنج درویشی نشسته است باید که او را دریابی چون بردم دیدم که درویشی پیاده نشسته است

حالی که مرا دید چیزی بردم گفت صدق الله گفتم چه حالتست گفت امشب در خود فکری کردم که این صوفیان
نعمتهای بیستوفا میخورند اگر شیخ ایشان برحق باشد این خلیفه از برای من چیزی بفرستد

49

MUDÉJAR WOODEN CORBELS AND CARVED DECORATED ENDS OF CORBELS

AKM 719
Six carved decorated ends of wooden corbels
Toledo, Spain; fourteenth century
Carved oak
Max length: 42 cm
Publ: AKTC 2009a, p. 96 (no. 48); AKTC 2009b, p. 96 (no. 48); AKTC 2010a, p. 99 (no. 49)

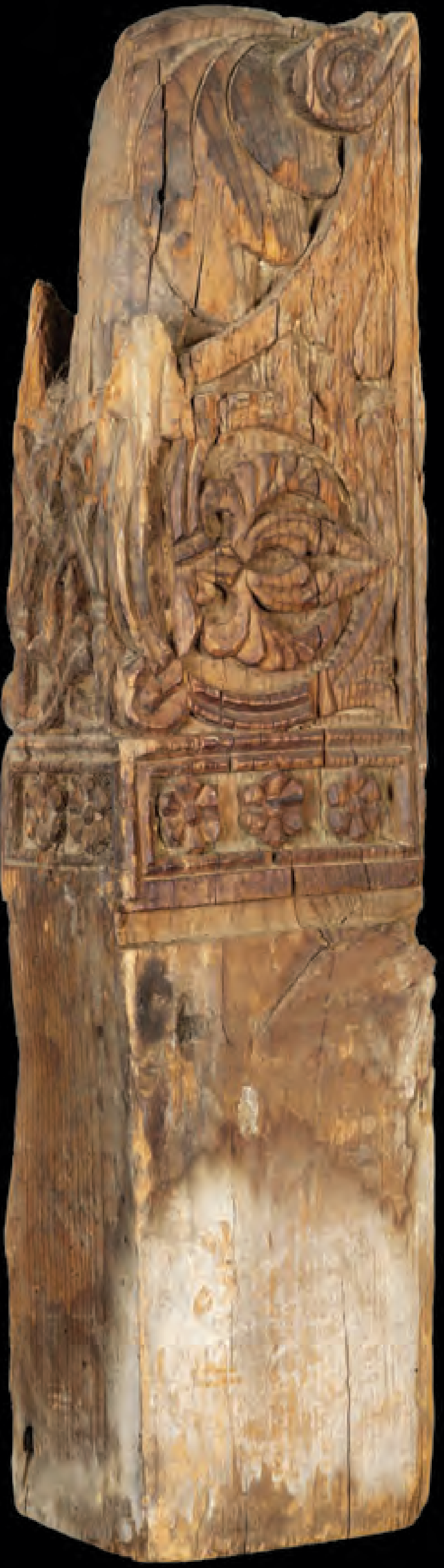
AKM 720
Three carved wooden corbels
Toledo, Spain; fourteenth century
Carved oak
Length: 72 cm
Publ: AKTC 2009a, pp. 96–97 (no. 49); AKTC 2009b, pp. 96–97 (no. 49); AKTC 2010a, p. 98 (no. 50)

A corbel is a supporting architectural element: corbels would be installed during building, so that the wall was constructed around them. With the undecorated ends of the corbels built into the wall, the projecting, decorated parts would have created a series of deeply anchored platforms used to support the horizontal weight of the overhanging roof. While three of the corbels included here retain their structural parts, the larger group of six pieces are in fact only the decorated ends of corbels: they have been cut away from their 'wall ends'. Based on extant examples Ecker has suggested that such corbels probably supported the roof of a portico around an internal courtyard, and would have been placed fairly close together all the way around the courtyard (Ecker 2004, pp. 147–148).

While these two groups of corbels are clearly very closely related in size, style and motifs, there are some differences in carving, with the group of three whole pieces displaying a finer, more intricate manipulation of the surface than the group of six decorated ends. On both groups the dramatic, shell-like volutes projecting from a curved vinescroll that sweeps back from the front of each corbel – 'like the prow of a ship' – act to transform these blocks of wood from simple architectural supports into graceful ornaments, and help to give them the appearance of something which lifts rather than supports. The combination of the frontal volutes with the coiled vinescrolls and multi-lobed rosettes displayed on the sides of each piece has been taken as indicative of an origin in Toledo rather than Granada (*ibid*., p. 147).

The Spanish term 'Mudéjar' refers to the social status of Muslim peoples who no longer live under Islamic law. Generally, it is used to mean a Muslim who continued to live in a territory of Spain after it came under Christian rule, and by extension it has come to be a label for the art and architecture of an Islamic appearance that was produced in those societies, although not necessarily made by or for Muslims. As Toledo came under Christian rule in the late eleventh century, the label is appropriate to these fourteenth-century pieces from that city.

The so-called Mudéjar arts are famous for highly skilled architectural decoration that reflects the mix of motifs and techniques in circulation in the multicultural medieval Iberian peninsula, where Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities lived and worked in close proximity, and Mudéjar carpenters worked for patrons of all faiths. Much of the Mudéjar woodwork created for elite interiors was originally decorated with plaster, paint and gilding, and traces of polychrome decoration on some of these corbels indicate that they may well have been brightly painted at one point. It is surprisingly easy to forget that things which are now preserved as museum pieces may once have looked very different.

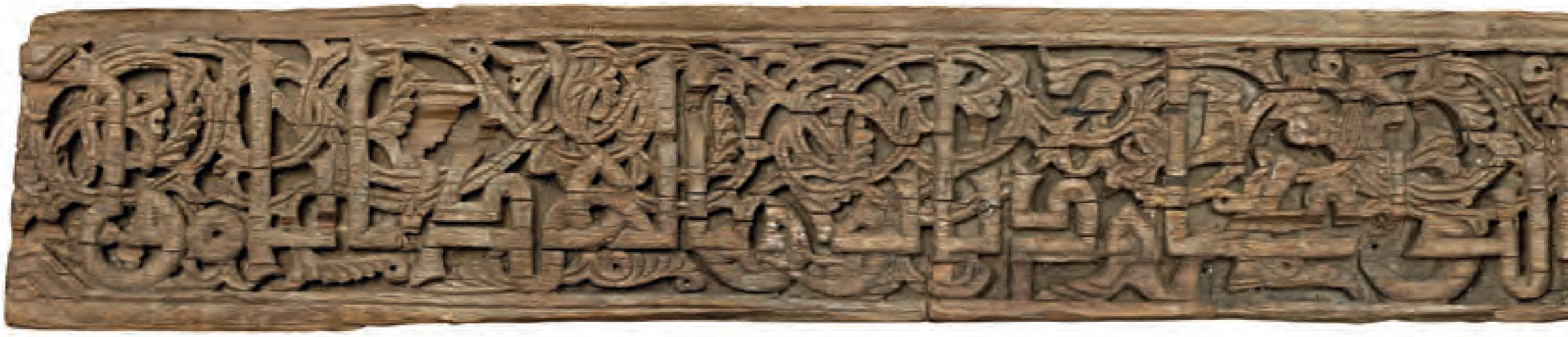


50

WOODEN BEAM WITH INSCRIPTION

Probably Nasrid Spain; fourteenth century
Carved wood
248 x 30 x 17 cm
AKM 725
Publ: AKTC 2009a, pp. 100–101 (no. 53); AKTC 2009b, pp. 100–101 (no. 53); AKTC 2010a, pp. 102–103 (no. 54); AKTC 2010b, pp. 52–53 (no. 25)

The integration of inscriptions into architecture was a mainstay of Islamic architectural decoration from the early Islamic period onwards, leading to a sometimes overwhelming volume of text in richly decorated interiors. The inscription on this beam, written in an elegant form of the angular script Kufic, has thus far resisted decipherment; the text is intertwined with, and almost subsumed by, a spiralling ground of vinescroll forms ending in split palmettes. Vegetal and epigraphic ornament here only just manage to retain their separate identities through the addition of inner lines carved into the foliate pattern, which then contrasts with the smooth bevelled surface of the inscription, the latter appearing almost tube-like and standing a little proud of the vegetal ground. A fragment of a fourteenth-century Spanish or Moroccan architectural frieze now in the David Collection presents a closely comparable carved wooden inscription on a vegetal ground, as well as interlace similar to that seen at the right end of the present panel, and a comparable date is surmised for this example. The David Collection beam still bears traces of blue and green paint, and it is possible that the present piece was originally painted in such a way that the text stood out more clearly (von Folsach 2001, p. 270).



51

THE DUCKS CARRY THE TORTOISE OVER A VILLAGE

Folio 89v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Anwār-i Suhaylī*
(‘Lights of Canopus’) of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Wāʿiẓ al-Kāshifī;
copied by Naʿīm Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Tabrīzī for Ṣādiqī Beg;
illustrations attributed to Ṣādiqī Beg
Qazwin, Iran; dated 13 Safar 1002/8 November 1593
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 30.1 x 20.3 x 8 cm
AKM 289

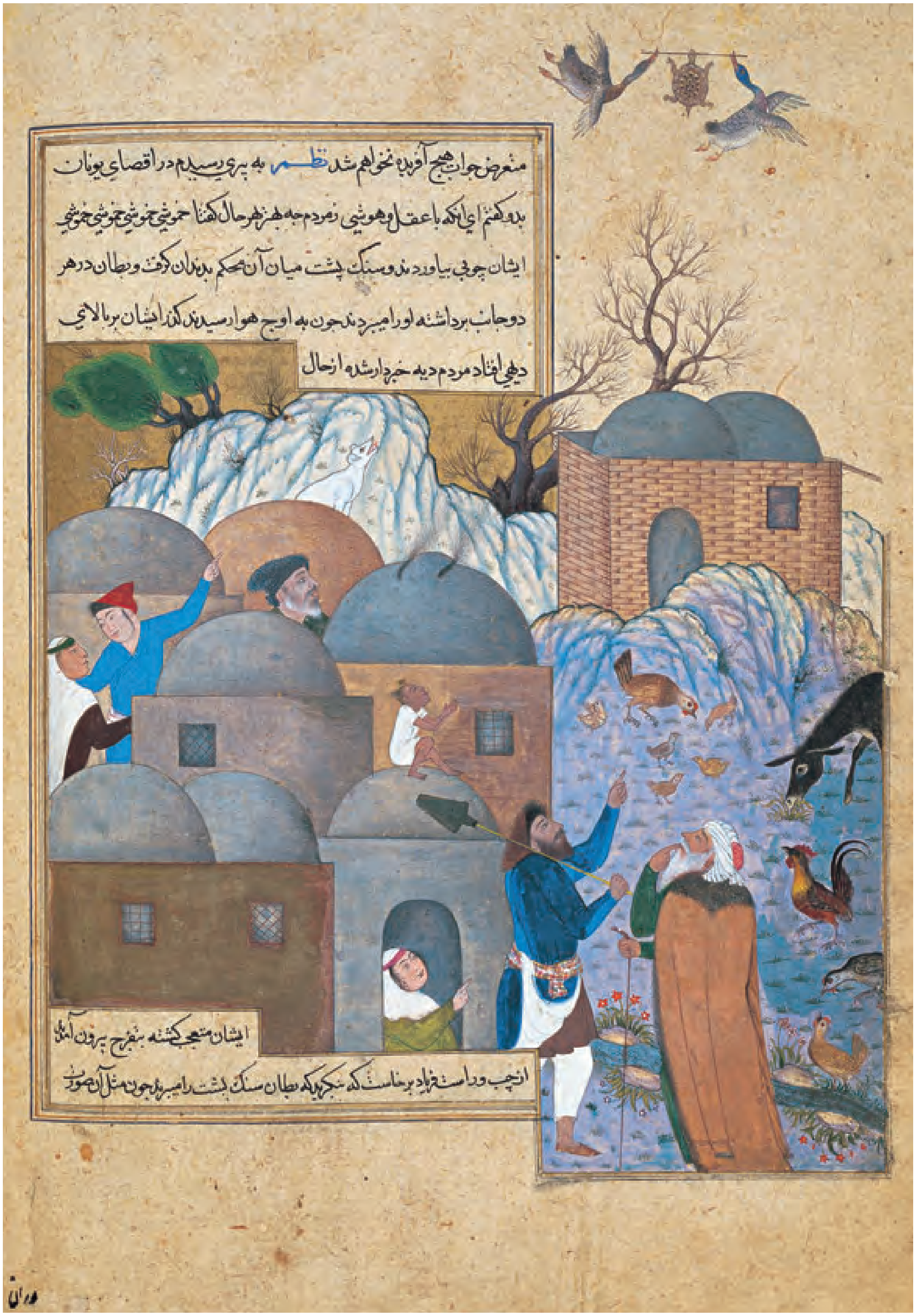
Publ: Robinson 1972, p. 52; A. Welch 1976, p. 141; Canby 1998, pp. 70–72 (no. 43); Sims 2002, p. 184; AKTC 2007a, p. 136 (no. 103); AKTC 2007b, p. 138 (no. 103); AKTC 2010b, p. 251. Other folios from the same manuscript: Jones – Michell 1976, no. 621; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 100–105; Falk 1985, p. 113 (no. 80); Grube 2000, p. 112 (fig. 4); Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 446–447 (no. 180); AKTC 2008a, pp. 208–211 (no. 79); AKTC 2009a, p. 196 (no. 149); AKTC 2009b, p. 196 (no. 149); AKTC 2010a, pp. 196–197 (no. 154); AKTC 2010b, p. 296 (no. 127)

Uniquely, this manuscript is thought to have been both commissioned and illustrated by the Safavid court painter Sadiqi Beg (d. 1612). Appointed as director of the royal library by Shah ʿAbbas I around 1587, Sadiqi still held the position in 1593, when this manuscript was illustrated. The colophon of the book contains an informative and rather boastful statement of patronage, after detailing the date and the name of the copyist: ‘It is written as it was ordered by the rare man of the time, the second Mani and the Bihzad of the age, Sadiqi Musavvir’ (Welch – Welch 1982, p. 104). Sadiqi’s implicit approval of this hyperbolic comparison of himself with the great painter from mythology, Mani, as well as the famous miniature painter Bihzad, accords with his own surviving writings and the reports of his contemporaries which suggest a proud and irascible character, as well as a good and committed artist (A. Welch 1978a, p. 79).

The 107 paintings in this manuscript of 365 folios (a further painting is illustrated in cat. no. 98) depict various fables from the *Anwar-i Suhayli* (‘Lights of Canopus’) by al-Kashifi (d. 1504). *Suhayli* was the name of a minister of the Timurid ruler Sultan Husayn Mirza in Herat, whom Kashifi wished to honour, but it is also an Arabic name for the star known in European traditions as Canopus, and so the whole title is a delicate pun. The text is a Persian recension of didactic animal fables drawn from the tradition of the *Kalila wa Dimna* (‘Kalila and Dimna’) stories. The origins of this group of tales lies in the oral traditions of India; the cycle was first recorded in writing around 300 CE as the *Panchatantra*, ‘Five Books’ or ‘Five Occasions of Good Sense’, with recensions into Pahlavi, Syriac and Arabic as well as Persian following through the centuries (De Blois 1991, pp. 12–13).

This painting, an unusual genre scene and surely a new venture on the part of the artist, yet remarkably confident in its composition and execution, tells the moralising tale of the ducks and the tortoise. Following a drought, the pond that all three inhabited was drying up, and the two ducks agreed to help their friend the tortoise to join them in a migration to a new pond. The ducks warned the tortoise that he would have to do exactly as instructed if he wanted to reach the new pond safely. Accordingly, the tortoise kept his mouth clamped around a stick that the ducks lifted from each end, flying him through the air as he held on tightly with his mouth. When they flew over a village however, the villagers ran out of their houses to see this bizarre spectacle, shouting and pointing. This was too much for the self-important tortoise, who opened his mouth and began yelling at the villagers. Before he could finish what he was saying he had fallen to his death, demonstrating that there are times in life when it really is wiser to keep your mouth shut.

Representations of non-palatial dwellings are unusual in the elite art of manuscript painting, and the clustered, domed huts of this image, with their small windows set against a bare landscape and smoke rising from the domed roof of one house, take the viewer unexpectedly close to everyday rural life.



متعرض جواب هیچ آفریده نخواهم شد نظم به پری رسیدیم در اقصای یونان

بدو گفتم ای آنکه با عقل و هوشی ز مردم چه بهتر بهر حال گفتا خموشی خموشی خموشی خموشی

ایشان چوبی بیاوردند و سنگ پشت میان آن محکم بدندان گرفت و بطان در هر

دو جانب برداشته او را میبردند چون به اوج هوا رسیدند گذر ایشان بر بالای

دیهی افتاد مردم دیه خبردار شده از حال

ایشان متعجب گشته بتفرج بیرون آمدند

از چپ و راست فریاد برخاست که بنگرید که بطان سنگ پشت را میبرند چون مثل آن صورت

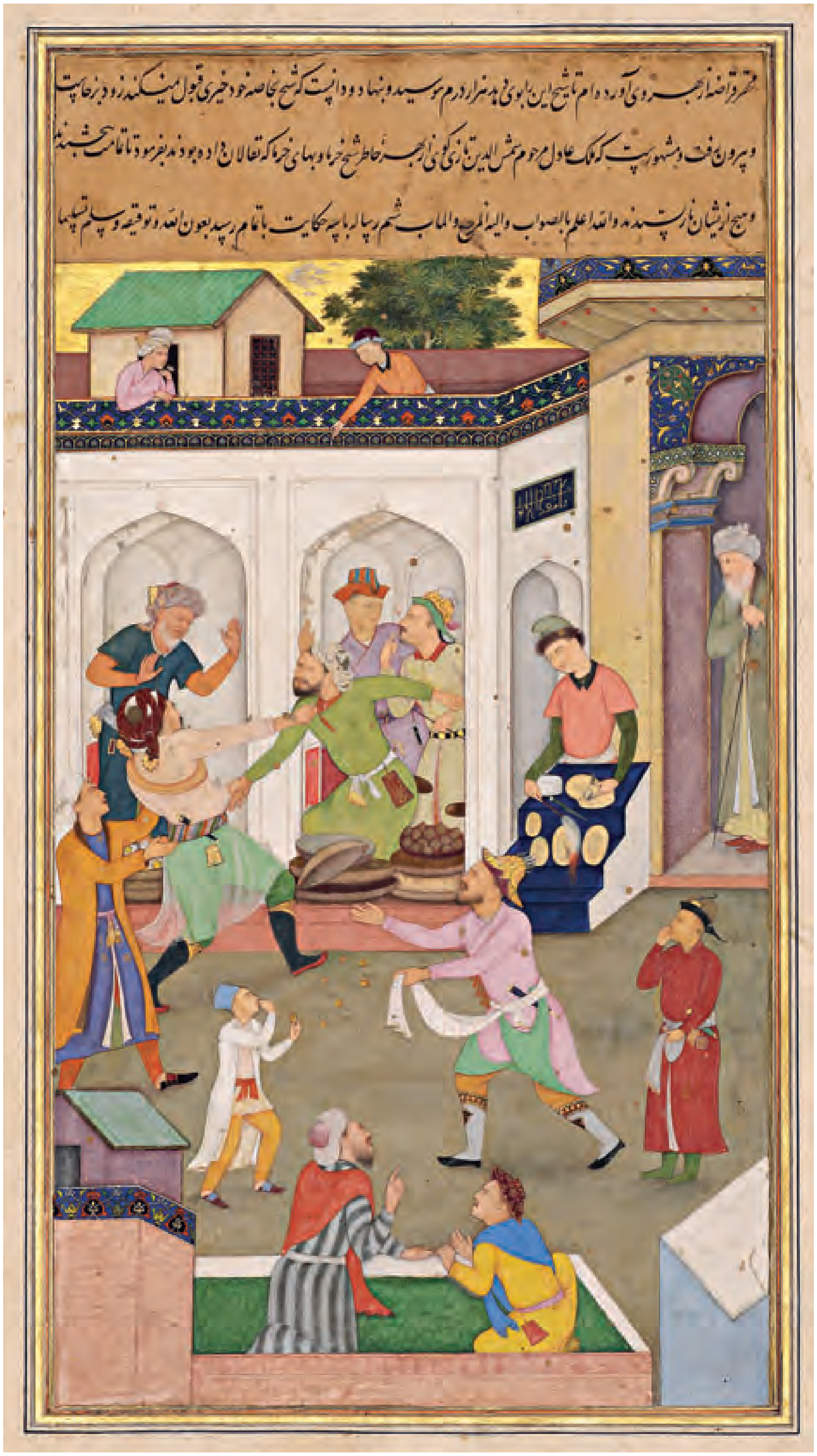
52

A FIGHT IN THE MARKETPLACE

Folio 18v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*
(‘Collected Works’) of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 42 x 26.5 cm
AKM 284
Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 131–132 (no. 61)

This dynamic painting of an altercation in a public square comes from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyat* (‘Collected Works’) of Saʿdi, other paintings from which can be seen in cat. nos 29, 30, 45, 73, 78 and 82. The text that accompanies the present image is located in the first passages of the *Bustan* (‘Garden of Fragrance’), in a section discussing justice, commerce and the correct administration of government. The overarching concern of the textual passages – the role of every individual from merchant to king in the maintenance of a just and fair society – is rather dramatically illustrated in this image of a fight between an elegantly dressed man and a fruitseller. An upset bowl in front of the fruitseller seems to have sent little apricots or peaches flying to the ground, whilst almost every figure in the scene rushes to become involved in the confrontation. An older man to the left pleads for calm and two other men run towards the protagonists, while several others look on in surprise or make comments amongst themselves. Only the baker, calmly tending his stand to the right of the debacle, has continued with his work as if nothing had happened. An impassive older man, possibly Saʿdi himself, or perhaps one of the wise sages of Saʿdi’s anecdotes, watches the events from an elaborately decorated monumental doorway.

The image of the doorway, a recurring symbol in writings of a Sufi stamp for the passageway to enlightenment, may here represent the entrance to a space of wisdom and humility that has not yet been attained by the other characters in this scene. At the same time, the decorated spandrels and carefully observed volutes of the doorway’s capitals show almost as great a concern on the part of the artist with the representation of recognisable architectural forms, as with the highly skilled depiction of different human types and expressions. Above all, the striking volumetric spaces of the whitewashed arcades occupied by the vendors, complete with diamond-shaped facets representing squinch-net vaulting (an innovation from Timurid architecture brought to India by Mughal craftsmen) visible on the interior upper surfaces, show that the artist was drawing on his own experience of contemporary architectural forms to add a sense of immediacy to his composition.



53

HAFTVĀD'S DAUGHTER AND THE WORM

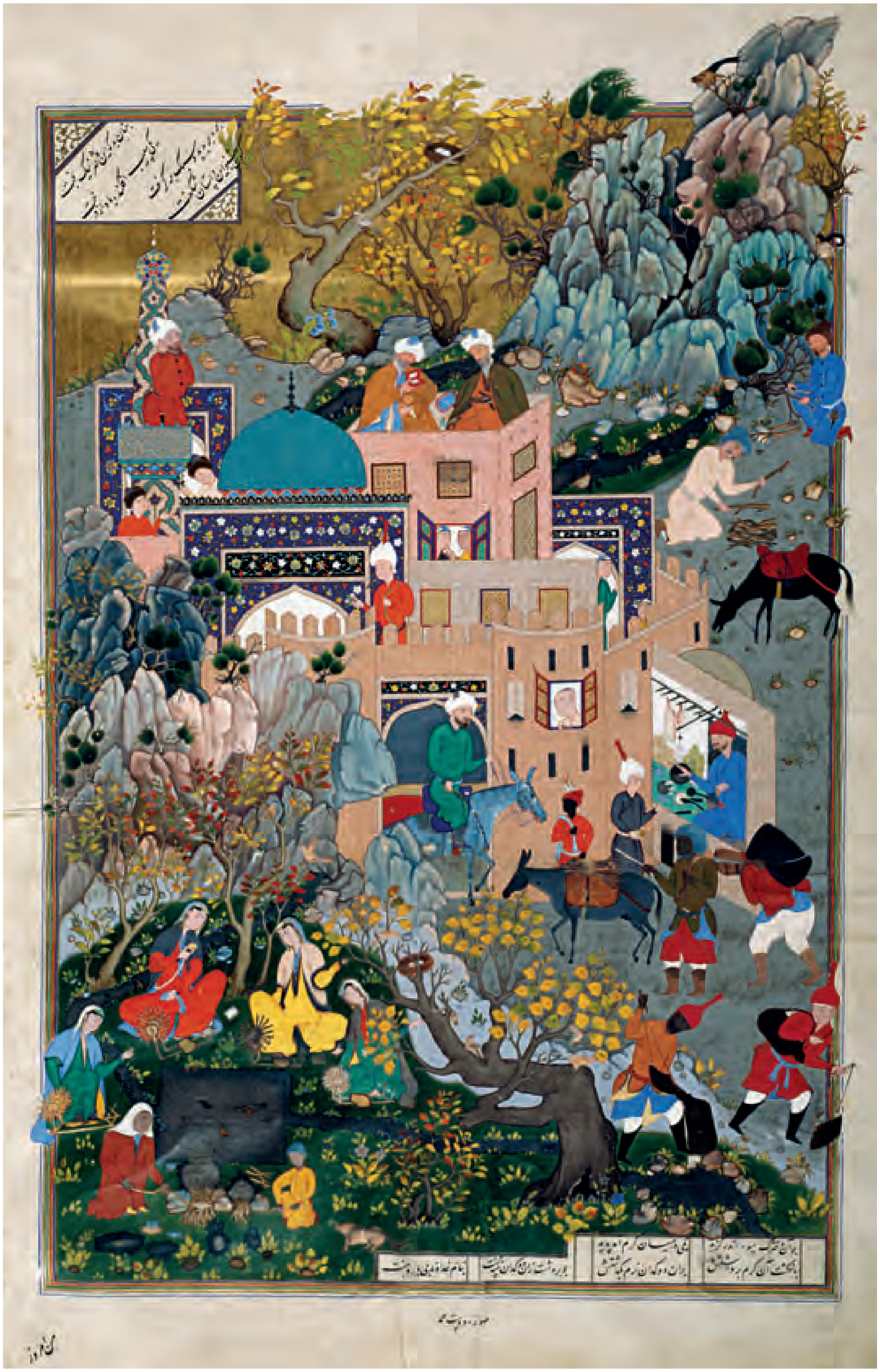
Folio 521v from the dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī created for Shāh Ṭahmāsp; inscribed *savvarahū Dūst Muḥammad*
('Dūst Muḥammad painted it')
Tabriz, Iran; c. 1540
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 47 x 31.8 cm
AKM 164

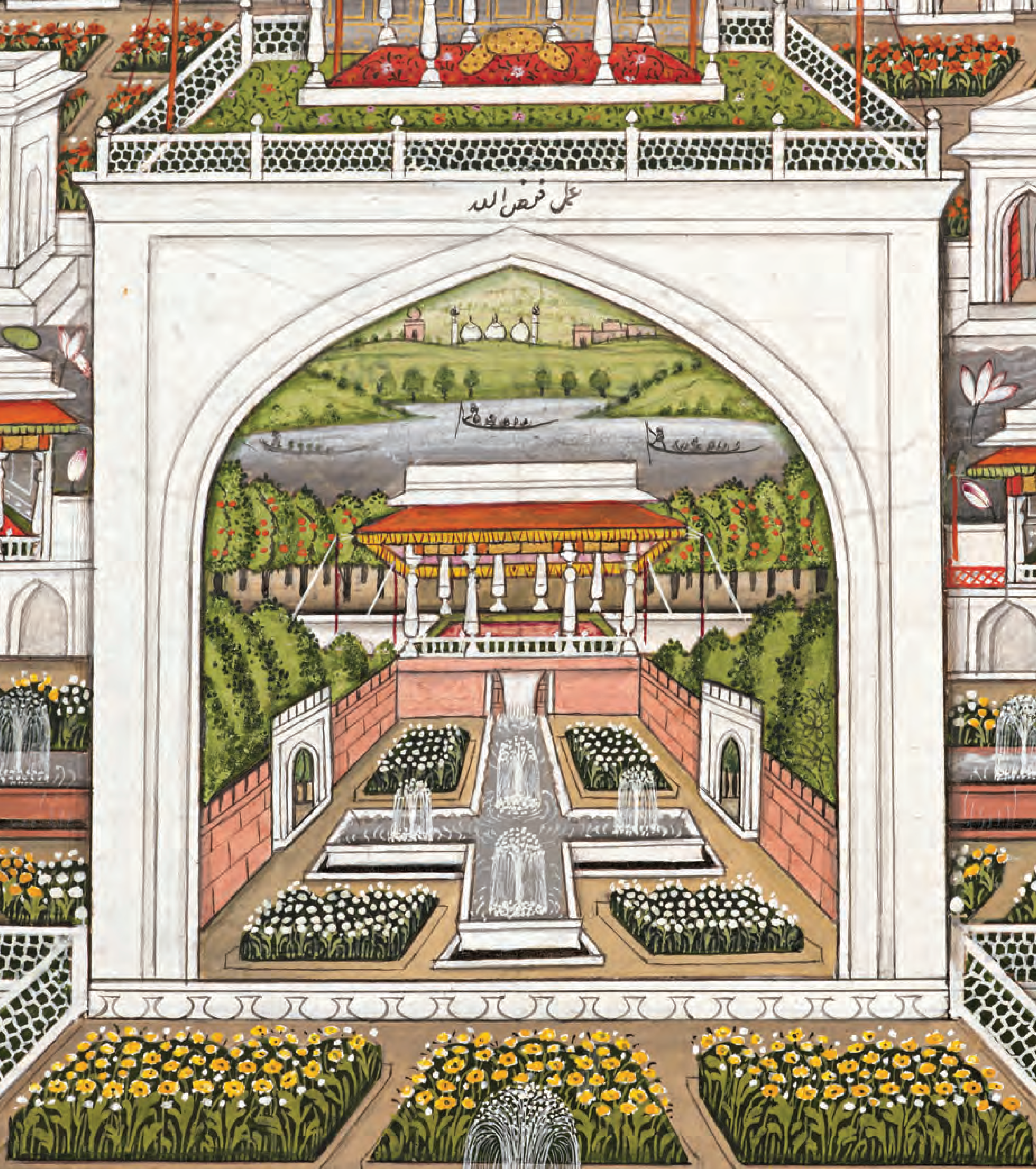
Publ: S.C. Welch 1972, pp. 172–175; S.C. Welch 1979, pp. 98–101; Dickson – Welch 1981, Vol. 1, col. pl. 14, pp. 120–121, vol. 2, no. 218; Adle 1993, pp. 269–271; Canby 1998, pp. 52–54 (no. 29); Canby 1999, p. 52; Grabar – Natif 2001, p. 186; Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 238–239 (no. 49); AKTC 2010a, pp. 220–221 (no. 166)

The story of Haftvad and the worm, a relatively long episode of the *Shahnama*, details the changing fortunes of a poor man after his daughter found a magical worm in her apple whilst she was spinning cotton. She kept the worm in her spindle-case, feeding it with apples, and in return it granted her the ability to spin ever greater quantities of cotton. Eventually she told her parents of the marvellous creature, and the whole family's fortunes improved as they looked after the worm, building larger and larger enclosures for it as it grew to an enormous size. Haftvad and his seven sons quickly increased their power and wealth locally, and eventually threatened the ruler Ardashir, who retained his sovereignty by killing the worm. In disguise, he and his men poured boiling bronze down the creature's throat, destroying the worm and Haftvad's good fortune with it. The tale can be construed as a warning against the usurpation of divinely sanctioned kingship by a commoner, but it also has a religious message: after killing the worm and Haftvad, Ardashir razed the fortress in which the worm had been housed and built a fire temple in its place, reinstating the state religion of Zoroastrianism in place of what had become a local cult of the worm (Márkus-Takeshita 2001).

This painting is one of the most accomplished images in a spectacular manuscript, and the term 'masterpiece' can for once be used without hyperbole. It was one of the last and largest paintings to be included in the illustrated manuscript of the *Shahnama* that was executed to the highest degree of luxury for the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp. In its entirety this world-beating manuscript contained 759 pages and 258 miniatures, and its production occupied most of the resources of the royal atelier at Tabriz from approximately 1522 to 1540; two other paintings from this manuscript can be seen in cat. no. 63 and cat. no. 92.

In addition to the skill of execution and ingenuity of composition, this painting is remarkable within this most rarified of manuscripts for its interest in the activities of everyday life. The daughter of Haftvad and her companions, whose spinning is not a genteel pastime but a means of earning their keep, work outdoors at bottom left: Haftvad's daughter (in red) holds up the apple from which the story will grow. Behind, a walled town, tiny but containing all the elements of urban life and decorated in jewel-like splendour, appears to grow before our eyes. Food is sold in a shop; men gather wood and bring it to the town for sale; sages read and write in a tower; women converse inside a room, and a muezzin performs the call to prayer. The architectural aggregate clusters together a massive dome, *pishtaq*s (arched portals) with tile revetments, a minaret, a city gate with towers, windows with *mashrabiyya* (latticed screens), and walls of plain and patterned brickwork. The disconcerting two-dimensionality of the structural elements, a common feature of Persianate miniature painting that is seen most clearly here in the shop-front that projects from the right of the town wall, contributes to a sense of impermanence that is in this case quite appropriate, for the town and its prosperity will not last.




عمل فیض الله

IV

THE PALACE

Palaces

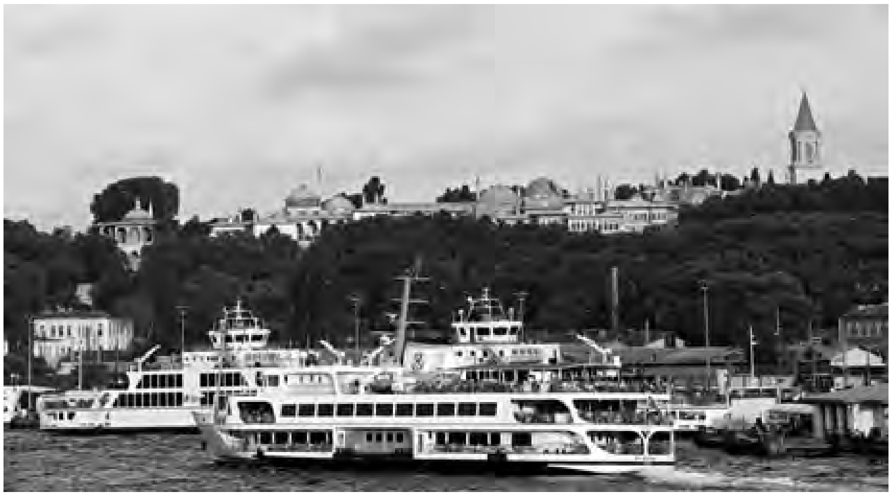
Sussan Babaie

In pre-modern times, palaces were the heart of political and cultural life. In lands where the civilisational arts of Islam dominated, the palace unfolded its parts across a vast area subdivided into two general sections: an inner sanctum (a harem, from the Arabic *harim* for sanctity) that was demarcated for the life of the family; and an outer zone dedicated to the business of governance, the social life of the court, and to production and storage centres for the luxury goods destined for court consumption as well as for the royal kitchens that served the court and donated to the poor among the citizenry.[1] A library (*kitabkhana*), a bathhouse (*hammam*), a mosque, a treasury, royal stables, gardens and cisterns were fixtures of most palaces in the Islamic lands. From Spain and Morocco to Iran and India, from the seventh century through to modern times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Muslim ruling elites employed local talent as well as imported materials and skilful artists and architects, to create – through the arts of building, landscaping and decorating – palaces that exude the aura of kingship in their plenitude of riches and astonishing creativity of design and excellence of workmanship.[2] Impressive edifices range from pleasure pavilions to formal audience halls and chancelleries, ever-in-bloom gardens with tree-lined walks, ornamental pools and water channels, surfaces carved in stone, wood or stucco, painted and gilded with epigraphic bands and exuberant abstract patterns of plants, tiled in colourful glazes, faced with complex geometric designs in wood marquetry with mother-of-pearl, or covered in rich textiles: the artistic and architectural ingenuity of local traditions characterises the palaces of Muslim rulers.

The palace was as much an artistic and architectural phenomenon for the accommodation of royal life and its conduct of governance, as it was a man-made evocation of a divine order and its embodiment of the institution of kingship. In Islam that institution hinges on the ideal of justice and its maintenance by the king.[3] A seemingly trivial representation such as that of the musical entertainment shown in a page from a late sixteenth-century Indian manuscript (cat. no. 64) may in fact be read on those two levels: a glimpse into the architectural, decorative and functional components of a palace; and a window onto the concepts of authority and ideals of justice that it signifies. The artist in this case has faithfully rendered the royal setting, a pavilion that is refreshing in its openness and its ornamental water features, and is clearly well appointed, with its tiled floor, rich carpets and shelving system of a *chini-khana* (cut-out shapes where precious vessels, especially of Chinese porcelain, are kept on display).[4] The 'design' team, including the scribe, has conceived the musical soirée as a visual cue underscoring the significance of justice, the noblest of virtues and one that is the prerequisite for a king in Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's mirrors-for-princes treatise. Indeed, the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* ('Ethics of Nasir') is among the most important manuals of kingship in much of western, central and southern Asia, where Persian was the language of high culture. It is to some of those Persianate cultures of Islam that we turn in this essay for a glimpse into the world of palaces of the early and pre-modern periods (the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries).[5]

The palaces of the imperial entities that dominated a vast region from Tunis to Delhi, over the period from the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries through to the early part of the twentieth century, represent the synthesis of a great many social practices, political and religious inclinations and architectural and decorative-landscaping strategies. In each case, the relationships between the ruler and the ruled are articulated through rituals of kingship and activated through the architectural and landscaping features of the palace itself.

The Ottomans (1299–1923) began as a small principality in Anatolia and reached the zenith of imperial domination after the conquest of Constantinople (later Istanbul) in 1453.[6] Over the abandoned ruins of the Byzantine acropolis, Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–46 and 1451–81) ordered the construction of a new palace (popularly known as the Topkapi) (fig. 1).[7] The fortified enclosure sits atop the promontory on the intersection of the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn, with a commanding view over the two continents of Asia and Europe at its feet. The palace was built, expanded and remodelled for centuries, until it was abandoned in the nineteenth century for the European-style Dolmabahçe Palace. The Topkapi was laid out along a ceremonial path, an architectural mapping of an imperial order that prescribed with surgical precision the movement of the court and government elites and foreign envoys through three courtyards in the palace, while reserving a fourth – together with its hanging gardens and the harem apartments – exclusively for the sultan, his family and their attendants.



1

Figure 1. Istanbul, Topkapi Palace, view from the mouth of the Golden Horn. On the right is the Tower of Justice from the second court; other structures are pavilions and apartments of the Harem and the fourth court. Ottoman period. Photograph © Walter Denny.

Each section of the Topkapi palace was provided with a monumental portal, beginning with the Royal Gate or *Bab-i Humayun* near the Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia (converted into a mosque after the conquest). In addition to its function as a monumental imperial threshold, and a symbolic omniscient 'eye' of the sultan, this gate also housed the treasury and the imperial registers. Storehouses for court provisions and workshops were located in the first, semi-public court of the palace. Beyond the second gate (known as the Middle Gate), with flanking towers and elaborately decorated doorway, lay the sequence of courtyards that became increasingly smaller in area and more restricted in terms of access. The most important administrative zone of the palace was the second courtyard of the complex. The kitchens are on the east side of this courtyard, with tall chimneys announcing their presence as a marker of royal generosity, as the court also distributed food among the poor. On its west side, access to the harem apartments – a maze of dark corridors and chambers with richly glazed tiles (see cat. no. 61) and gilded and painted decoration on the walls – was located beyond the royal stables. The most impressive component of the second court is the ensemble of the Council Chamber and the Tower of Justice, the latter offering the denizens of the city the only visible aspect of the palace besides the crenellated and formidable walls of the fortified royal enclave. Here, the paired functions of governance and justice are brought into the heart of the court, signifying their coeval role as pillars of imperial authority. The second court is also noteworthy for its row of modular vaulted spaces forming, together with a march of slender stone columns, an arcade on two sides of the third gate, the elegant Gate of Felicity, itself an awning structure supported by four slender columns.

On only a few public holidays the sultan sat enthroned under the majestic shade of the Gate of Felicity (fig. 2). Otherwise, royal audiences were given to envoys and other important visitors in the Chamber of Petitions, a square structure encircled by a walkway, shaded over with wide overhangs, and perforated with grilled windows. Access to this audience chamber was through a narrow and shallow tunnel located directly behind the Gate of Felicity.

Again, it was the decorative richness of the interior walls, the extravagant textile hangings, the elaborate throne, the glittering jewels, opulent costumes and ceremonial movements of bodies in space that lent the Chamber of Petitions its awe-inspiring picture of imperial might. This building, together with the treasury-bath complex, the Privy Chamber, the harem and the arcaded palace school, constituted the inner court, the private realm of the sultan and his family where the young slave elite of pages and concubines were also trained and educated to serve the imperial machine. The ensemble of buildings that constitutes the Ottoman palace relied for its visual effect on the way it was used during royal ceremonials. Courtiers and janissaries (Christian converts who served the imperial household as high-ranking officials and corps of the military and the guards), clad in elaborate costumes, lined up with fully bedecked horses along a ceremonial path for the guests of the court, parading in pomp amidst a riot of colourfully costumed and bejewelled crowds standing in absolute silence in deference to the quasi-divine status claimed for the sultan and performed by his seclusion and distance.[8]

2

In contrast to the gravitas of architectural forms and ceremonial performances at the Ottoman palace, the Safavid dynasty (1501–1722) in Iran deployed a strategy of ceremonial access and physical proximity to the king.[9] Their model of kingship required lighter, more open palaces for feasting and festive rituals where the shah acted as the host, and as a substitute for the family of the Prophet Muhammad. The Safavids had adopted Twelver Shiʿism as the religion of the empire. This is the branch of Islam that believes the historical unfolding of the caliphate as defined by Sunnis was a usurpation of the right to succession of the family of the Prophet, beginning with his cousin and son-in-law ʿAli and subsequently passing along his male descendents down to the twelfth imam; hence, Twelver or Imami Shiʿism. To the Safavids, the shah represented the intermediary, on behalf of the absent Twelfth Imam (the expected *Mahdi* or Messiah), between the Prophet and his devotees. The shah's role was as a master to those disciples and as such he too could assume a semi-divine

Figure 2. Istanbul, Topkapi Palace, The Gate of Felicity. Ottoman period, restored eighteenth century. Photograph ©Walter Denny.

status. While the Ottomans appealed to a synthesis of Sunni-Caliphal and Byzantine heritages of kingship, the Safavids tapped, additionally, into the deep store of cultural memories of the ancient Persian lineage of kings. Those memories were preserved and re-enacted through illustrated manuscript copies of such literary monuments as the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, of which one of the most famous was produced in the first half of the sixteenth century at the royal workshops of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (cat. no. 63).[10]

As was the case with the Ottomans who moved their capital from Bursa to Edirne and finally to Istanbul, the Safavid capital had moved twice, from Tabriz to Qazvin before it settled in 1598 in Isfahan in central Iran, a major city during the medieval period. There, Shah ʿAbbas the Great (r. 1587–1629) had ordered in 1590–91 the construction of a new palace complex, alongside the founding of a new city adjacent to the old one. The royal precinct, known as the *Dawlatkhana* ('Abode of Felicity' or Rule), was laid out over a vast area in sequences of gardens and building complexes between two major public spaces of the new city. Construction within the precinct continued through the seventeenth century with each succeeding shah developing new palaces or adding workshops and gardens. Most unusually, the palace precinct was neither fortified with high walls nor restricted to a single entrance gateway. On the eastern side of the precinct, the royal domain was demarcated from the public square – the famous Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan (the 'image of the world square') – by a shared wall of the double-storey shopping arcade that opened onto the square. Four public and semi-public gates gave access to the interior of the precinct on this side: one led to an inner square where the chancellery was located, another opened onto the royal kitchens, a third gave way into the harem zone, while the fourth and the most important was the ʿAli Qapu (the Lofty Gate), a palace as well as a gateway (fig. 3). On the western side of the *Dawlatkhana* precinct, gardens aligned with the public, tree-lined Chahar Bagh Promenade formed the boundary.[11]

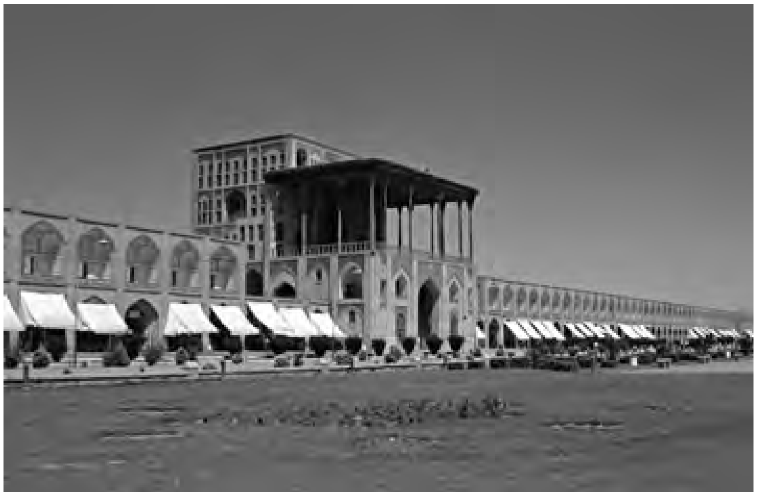

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Figure 3. Isfahan, Maydan-i Naqsh-i Jahan shopping arcade and a view of the ʿAli Qapu Palace-Gateway. Safavid period: the five-storey tower from 1590/91–c. 1615; the *talar* fore-structure from 1644. © MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive, photograph by Khosrow Bozorgi.

The interior of the Safavid complex is, as in all palaces, subdivided into private and public zones of life, the Persian *andarun* and *birun*. On its eastern section were the public functions of the court: the chancellery, the royal workshops and storehouses, the royal kitchens with their own gateway for the distribution of food outside the palace – a gate shared with the court workshops for jewellers and clockmakers, who included a few European craftsmen. An unusual aspect of the Safavid ensemble is the placement of two religious foundations in relation to the palace: a dervish retreat inside the precinct, next to the ʿAli Qapu palace gateway, and the royal chapel-mosque, known as the Shaykh Lutf-Allah Mosque, outside the precinct directly across from the ʿAli Qapu on the eastern side of the public square. Given that a massive congregational mosque occupied the south side of the Maydan, the 'outing' of the space and place of royal private devotion to Imami Shiʿism, and its pendant of a dervish lodge on the inside, is an extraordinary gesture of confidence. The significance of this gesture is further underscored by the fact that the ʿAli Qapu is almost a complete palace, stacked upward, and that it sits on the threshold between the royal precinct and the city's new main public square.

The five-storey tower of the ʿAli Qapu served as a ceremonial gateway into the palace precinct; it housed in its first two floors the offices of the judiciary and the special guards, and it was used as a waiting area for foreign guests before they attended an audience inside the precinct. Above those offices that dispensed justice, the building rises to a large, two-storey audience hall with a mezzanine for the women of the court to watch official events, and to a fifth floor reserved for private harem entertainment. The ʿAli Qapu is also significant for its architectural and decorative novelties. In plan, each floor becomes lighter as it rises. The first two are based on a *hasht bihisht* ('eight-paradises') plan of a modified octagon with eight units of alternating rooms and solid piers surrounding a vaulted central space that rises the height of the two stories. This type was used widely across the Persianate side of Asia, starting with Timurid garden pavilions and reverberating in the palace and garden ensembles of Mughal India and Safavid Persia since the sixteenth century (cat. nos 66 and 82). Yet, the design had never been so successfully adapted to the new building typology of a multi-storey tower. In the next level, the main audience hall builds on the centrally-planned *hasht bihisht* but adopts a ceremonial orientation along a rectangular axis, thus allowing for a throne space which faces toward an *iwan* (arched opening) that overlooks the public square and that was used to watch polo games and festivals in the Maydan. The innovative forked vaulting of the audience hall is sheathed in a textile-like low-relief mural of painted and gilded, densely patterned motifs of tendrils, blooms, leaves and birds. These motifs, also found in manuscript illuminations and textiles, are based on Persianised *chinoiserie* (cat. no. 66). The building culminates in an assembly of rooms arranged around a cross-shaped central space where a lightly built lantern structure of elongated forked arches provides a flood of modulated light onto the surfaces of painted, gilded and carved stucco *muqarnas* niches (cat. no. 67) making this room an evocation of a *chini-khana* (cat. no. 64; fig. 4). Built between 1590–91 and c. 1615 as a tower, the ʿAli Qapu eventually lost its primacy as the court's principal ceremonial space to the newly-devised *talar* palaces of Isfahan.[12] The *talar* is a light and airy wooden pillared hall with a coffered and painted wooden ceiling open on three sides, and housing an ornamental pool in its centre. In 1644, the ʿAli Qapu was updated with the addition of an elevated *talar* structure that served as an expanded open reception area, a viewing stage with a commanding view over the Maydan for the feasting ceremonies of the Safavid court.

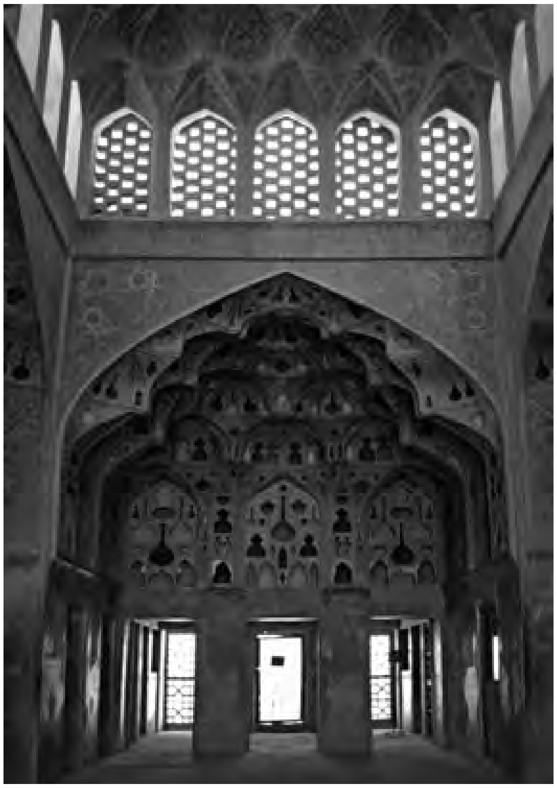

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Figure 4. Isfahan, the ʿAli Qapu Palace-Gateway interior: music room. © MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive, photograph by Khosrow Bozorgi.

Constructed during the reigns of Shah Safi (1629–1642) and Shah ʿAbbas II (1642–1666), *talar* palaces, with their vast areas for large gatherings and sequential arrangement of spaces – open pillared *talar*, throne *iwan*, indoor audience hall – were ideally suited, indeed were purposefully designed to accommodate banqueting events and audiences of hundreds of people where the shah presided as the host (fig. 5). The Talar-i Tavila and the Chihil Sutun palaces served as audience halls for the Nawruz (Persian New Year) celebrations, and for coronations, gifting and feasting ceremonies (cat. no. 63). The latter was reintroduced in seventeenth-century Safavid Isfahan as the most elaborate and frequently performed ceremony to be held almost exclusively at the *talar* palaces. Royal feasting was a feature of ancient Persian practices of kingship, the memory of which was preserved in the literary concept of *razm u bazm* ('fighting and feasting'; see cat. no. 56) and especially in the *Shahnama* where the poet recounts the lives of the kings, as much in their heroics as in their follies (cat. no. 55). As interdependent attributes of kings, generosity and prowess became tropes that in the Safavid period assumed a new currency. Here, the shah resided at the ceremonials of conviviality as the master of a mystical order among his devotees, as the deputy of the Shiʿi imam among his followers, and as the king of kings in his ancient Iranian guise. With no less a claim to divine right to rule than that of the Ottoman Sultans or the Mughal emperors, Safavid palaces and their ceremonies of feasting staged and enacted the charisma of kingship by relying on proximity and visibility rather than distance and seclusion.

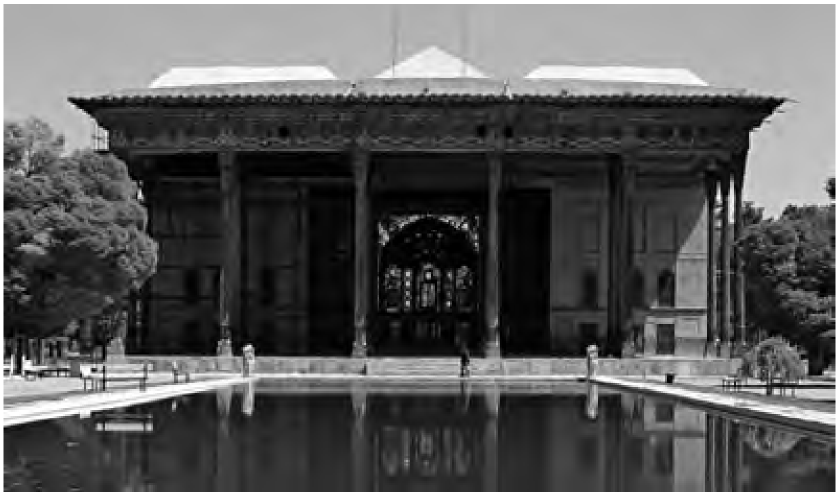
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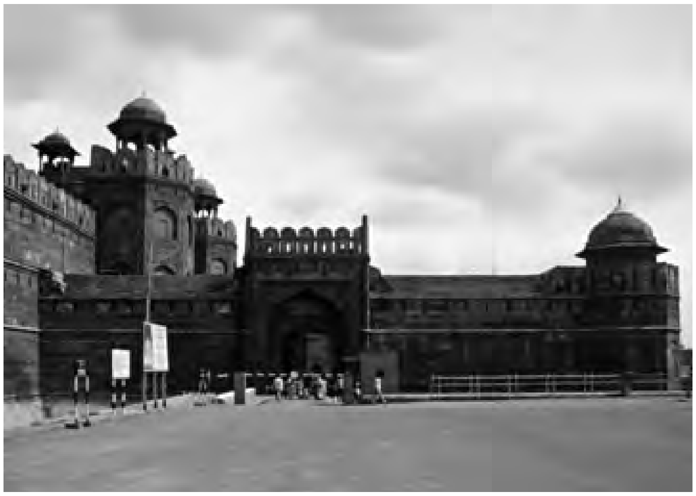
Figure 5. Isfahan, Chihil Sutun Palace, view toward the pillared *talar* and the mirrored throne *iwan*. Safavid period, 1647–1650s. © Kamran Adle/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

For the Mughals (1526–1858), a Sunni dynasty ruling over a majority Hindu population and other non-Muslim communities in India, authority had to be legitimised through a complex negotiation of social, religious, political and economic alliances. They traced their origins to the house of Timur and assumed a decidedly Persian cultural posture. Yet, the Mughal synthesis of Indian and Persianate traditions intermixed with a creative assimilation of European artistic technologies to represent one of the richest, most original examples of artistic transculturation in the early modern period. Accordingly, Mughal palaces developed out of a synthesis of diverse architectural and artistic traditions.[13] Indian building technologies integrated with Persianate ideals of form and design to create an extraordinary harmony among seemingly disparate methods and materials: Gujarati red sandstone, carved and stacked in trabeated (post-and-lintel) halls, intermingles with Persianate arch profiles and vaults inspired by Timurid and Safavid architecture; surfaces are covered in inlaid marble panels, a technique learned from the Italian *pietra dura* style (*parchin kari*, in the Indo-Persian technical terminology of South Asia) of colourful stone set into white marble.

The short-lived royal city of Fatihabad, better known as Fatehpur Sikri near Agra, was begun in 1570 by Akbar (1542–1605) in honour of the Sufi saint Shaykh Salim Chishti.[14] Built entirely in red sandstone, the palace, placed atop a hill, incorporated indigenous Indian and especially Gujarati architectural forms while also prefiguring in its general layout and building types the plan of the subsequent Mughal forts. Fatehpur Sikri was abandoned soon after its completion due to shortages in water supply. The Red Forts in Agra, Delhi and Lahore, on the other hand, enjoyed proximity to rivers and were more closely integrated into their urban fabric – albeit behind defensive walls – as was the case with the Ottoman palace in Istanbul. In the case of the Mughals, the emperors came into possession of the earlier forts of Agra and Lahore and built successive parts of the internal ensembles (cat. no. 40). The Delhi Fort, however, was the brainchild of Shah Jahan (1592–1666) and the result of a single building campaign, integral to the founding in 1638 of his new urban development of Shahjahanabad (fig. 6).[15]

Perched on the bank of the Yamuna River in Delhi, the Fort was linked through the principal road of the city to its main urban features. The city of Shah Jahan was in part inspired by the new urban plan of Safavid Isfahan. Access to the royal precinct was through two gates, each of which led to a major internal artery that bisected and superimposed a bilaterally symmetrical plan onto the whole complex. The Lahore Gate was the principal multi-layered gate into the heavy fortifications; it led to an internal bazaar lane for the inner court and then to the *naqqarrakhana* ('kettledrum house'). This route opened onto the main imperial courtyard of the fort and faced the majestic Diwan-i ʿAmm, the audience hall of Shah Jahan (fig. 7). The Diwan-i ʿAmm is a pillared hall of oblong rectangular shape raised on a low-rise platform. A vast hypostyle, the structure of this hall appears to be freestanding with a solid back wall along which march three aisles of pillars, bisected by nine naves along the shorter side. The scalloped profile of the pointed arches gives this red-sandstone building its distinctive external appearance, while its internal focus turns to the magnificently composed freestanding marble throne *jharoka* at the centre of the hall, with its baroque detailing in the carving of vegetal motifs and its *pietra dura* inlaid panels depicting the Orpheus theme.[16] The Delhi Fort's Diwan-i ʿAmm belonged to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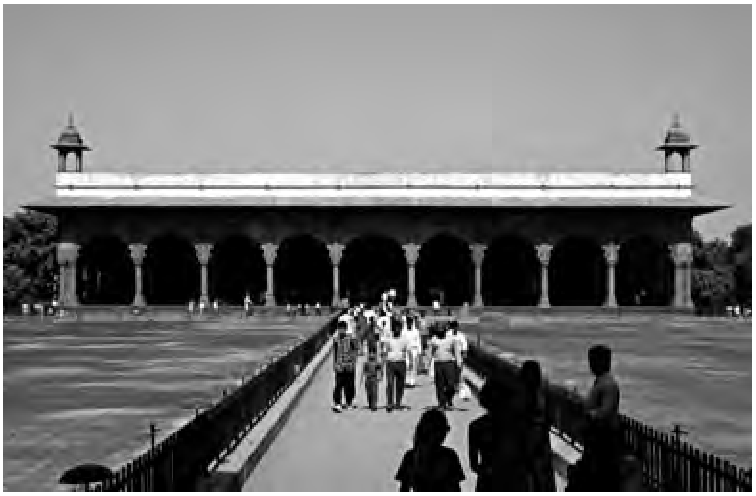
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Figure 6. Delhi, Red Fort, exterior view of the main Lahore Gate. Mughal (Shah Jahan) period, 1630s–1640s. © Alfred De Costa, 1988, Courtesy of the MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive.

Figure 7. Delhi, Red Fort, Diwan-i ʿAmm audience hall. Mughal (Shah Jahan) period, 1630s. © Gauvin Bailey, 1992, Courtesy of the MIT Libraries, Aga Khan Visual Archive.

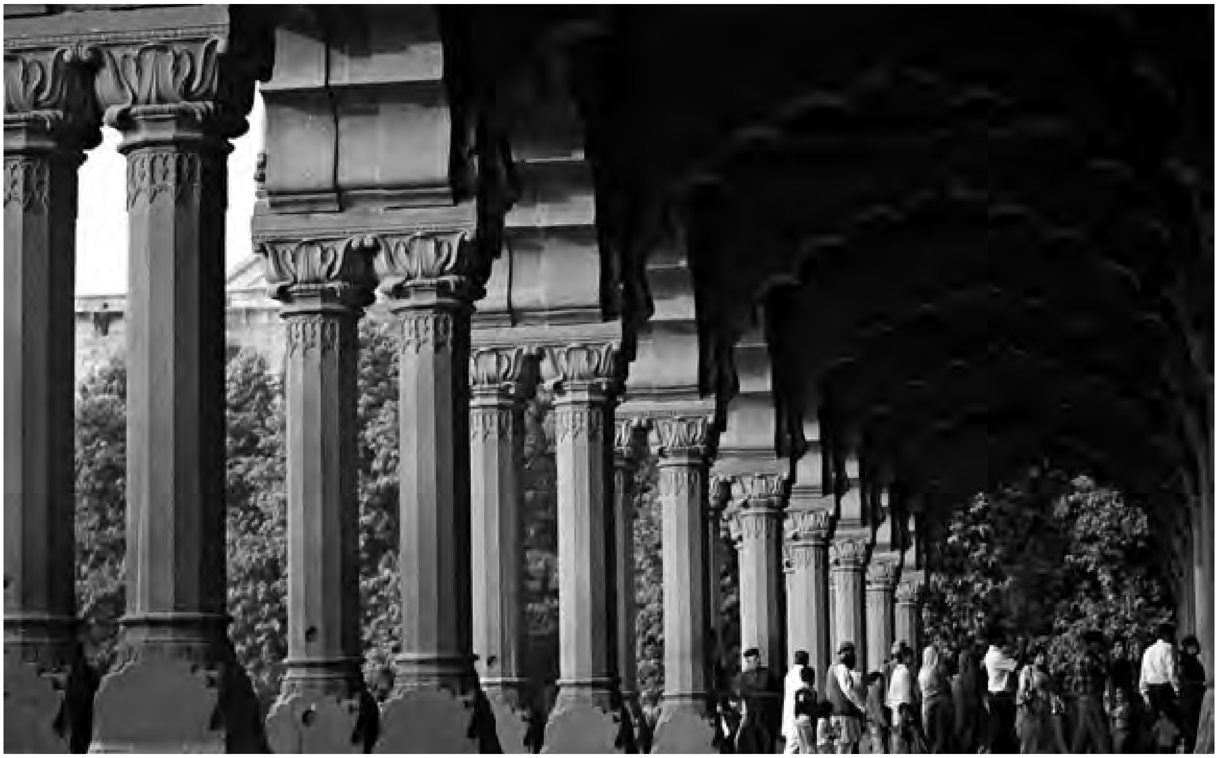

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Figure 8. Delhi, Red Fort, stone pillars of the Diwan-i ʿAmm audience hall. Photograph by Deivis (David Gill), 2007, artwork in the public domain; image published here under Creative Commons sharealike 2.0.

an important initiative by Shah Jahan to retool his palaces with an iconography of forms and functions that clearly enunciated the legitimacy and structure of imperial authority.[17]

In the 1630s Shah Jahan had ordered the construction of a new stone pillared audience hall for each of the forts, to replace the older wooden versions (fig. 8). These *chihil sutun*s, with the exact count of forty columns (hence the name), conformed to a strict interpretation of the multi-pillared Apadana hall of the ancient Persian Achaemenid palace (fifth century BCE) at Persepolis. Just as the Apadana was the seat of a world empire, these Diwan-i ʿAmm/*chihil sutun* audience halls of Shah Jahan anchored the imperial ambitions of the Mughal 'king of the world' and articulated in both symbolic and architectural language their shared Persianate lineage of kingship.

Subsequent palatine developments in Turkey, Iran and India represent equally complex trans-cultural dialogues and architectural negotiations with established traditions and novel trends. The extravagantly carved stone decoration and crystal chandeliered Dolmabahçe palace in Istanbul competes with the equally lavish Gulistan palace and its pavilion 'tributaries' in Tehran, with its mirror-covered halls and fashionable large-scale oil-on-canvas paintings (cat. no. 59). Late and post-Mughal palaces and their decorations are no less awe-inspiring (cat. no. 69) especially in their scale and complexity as the post-British-occupation palaces in Delhi and Lucknow (cat. no. 71) may exemplify. These palaces, however, present us with a paradoxical phenomenon: the nineteenth-century fascination, as evident in the Islamic world as anywhere else, with the glamour of European-style buildings and decoration is entirely obvious, while at the same time a firm rootedness is maintained in their locally meaningful aesthetics of artistic wonderment.

1 For a general introduction to the architecture of palaces in the Islamic world, see Gülru Necipoğlu, 'An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World', *Ars Orientalis*, 23 (1993), pp. 3–24. See also Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 377ff.

2 Specialized studies on palaces across the lands dominated by the civilisation of Islam are numerous to cite in this space. Nevertheless, some important essays can be found in the special volume of *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993), edited by Gülru Necipoğlu.

3 Aziz al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian and Pagan Polities* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997) is a difficult read yet it remains the most sophisticated analysis of the conceptual and symbolic appropriations and representations of kingship in Islam.

4 For references to the *chini-khana* in this painting, see cat. no. 64. For a translation of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's treatise, see *The Nasirean Ethics*, translated by G.M. Wickens (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1964).

5 For a good introduction to the principal Muslim empires in the early modern period, see the following in *The Great Empires of Asia*, edited by Jim Masselos (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010); Gábor Ágoston, 'Asia Minor and Beyond: The Ottomans 1281–1922', pp. 104–135; Sussan Babaie, 'Persia: The Safavids 1501–1722', pp. 136–165; and Catherine Asher, 'India: The Mughals 1526–1858', pp. 166–191.

6 The seminal work on the Ottoman palace in Istanbul is Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapi Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

7 The urban development of Istanbul after the conquest is most recently and expertly analysed by Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, *Constantinopolis/Istanbul: Cultural Encounter, Imperial Vision, and the Construction of the Ottoman Capital* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2010).

8 Necipoğlu further isolates the practice of seclusion and its meanings in the Ottoman imperial ceremonial in a comparative study: Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces', *Ars Orientalis*, 23 (1993), pp. 303–342. See also below, footnote 9, for a different view on the Safavid side of the argument and footnote 17 on the Mughal practices.

9 Sussan Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shiʿism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2008); especially chapter one for an introduction to the differing practices of the Safavids and the emphasis on ceremonial conviviality and personal access to the king.

10 The *Shahnama* has been the subject of numerous exhibitions and symposia during its millennial celebrations in 2010–11. For a focused study of the manuscript produced for the Safavid Shah Tahmasp, see Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Iconography of the *Shah-nama-yi Shahi*', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 53–78. See also Martin Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch (eds), *The Houghton Shahname* (2 vols) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

11 The literature on Isfahan's urban development is substantial: see Masashi Haneda, 'The Character of the Urbanization of Isfahan in the Later Safavid Period' in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 1996), pp. 369–388. For a recent discussion and revised analyses of the sequence and nature of the city's revitalisation, see Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, chapter three, pp. 65–112.

12 The *talar* is an architectonically distinct feature in Safavid palaces. It was developed from a vernacular form in the architecture of the Caspian Sea area and incorporated into a new palace design to meet ceremonial needs. For a full discussion of this subject and a comparison of the *talar* palaces and the earlier *hasht bihisht* type of pavilions, see Babaie, *Isfahan and its Palaces*, pp. 157–294.

13 A good general account of Mughal forts and palaces is found in Catherine B. Asher, *The New Cambridge History of India Part 1, Vol. 4: Architecture of Mughal India*, reprint ed. (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially pp. 47–67, 111–116, and 178–200.

14 For Fatehpur Sikri, see Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985).

15 Shahjahanabad remains woefully understudied. For an introduction, see Stephen P. Blake, *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India 1639–1739* (Cambridge: University Press, 1991).

16 Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus* (Graz: Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt, 1988).

17 The principal work on the Persepolitian iconography of Shah Jahan's Diwan-i ʿAmm 'invention' and on the mosque-audience hall scheme at the Red Forts is Ebba Koch, 'Diwan-i ʿAmm and Chihil Sutun: The Audience Halls of Shah Jahan', *Muqarnas*, 11 (1994), pp. 143–165.

54

THE THIRD BANQUET OF SHĀH NŪSHĪRVĀN FOR HIS VIZIER BUZURGMIHR

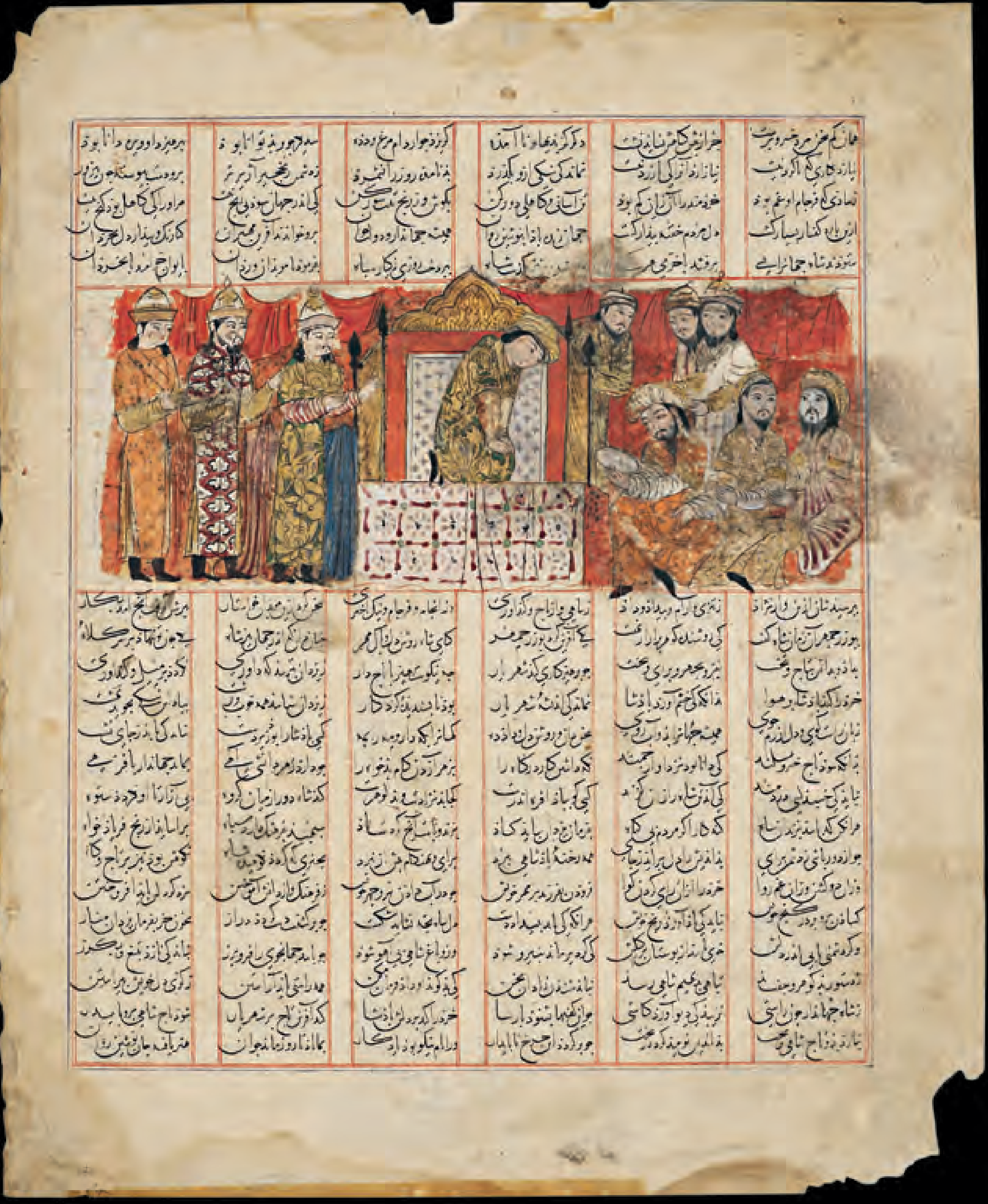
Folio 256v from a dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī;
copied by the scribe Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿ Alī Ḥusaynī al-Mawṣilī,
for the Inju vizier of Fars Ḥājjī Qawām al-Dawla wa'l-Dīn Ḥasan
Shiraz, Iran; other folios from the same manuscript dated Ramadan 741/ February 1341
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper

Page: 36.5 x 29.8 cm
AKM 36
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, pp. 74, 81, 83; Simpson 2000, p. 245 (not ill.)

The stories related in the *Shahnama* concerning the vizier Buzurgmihr, wise counsel of Shah Nushirvan, fall within a tradition of wisdom literature drawn from the oral narratives of pre-Islamic Iran. After the young Buzurgmihr correctly interpreted a dream for the king he became a trusted member of court, and Firdawsi's text details seven feasts given in his honour by Nushirvan, one after the other. At each of these Buzurgmihr was guest of honour and principal speaker, enlightening king and courtiers alike with his answers to questions of morality and prudence.

These episodes furnish much fine speech but very little in the way of action, making them a challenge for the artists who were developing an illustrative cycle of *Shahnama* paintings that would come to be largely based on narrative drama and visual spectacle. The painter of this image has plumped for a composition that largely follows standard enthronement scenes, like those seen in earlier Islamic and Sasanian art, with a central, enthroned ruler flanked by standing and seated courtiers. In this case, however, the ruler does not sit frontally, gazing straight out of the picture, but instead squats on his haunches on the throne and turns his whole body to listen to Buzurgmihr's high-flown words. The setting of the palace is indicated by the backdrop of a red cloth, falling in folds behind king and courtiers, as well as a more potent status symbol, the high-backed, gilded throne. While the image is mainly self-contained, the very peak of the throne and the pointed shoes of Buzurgmihr project beyond the picture space; elsewhere in the same manuscript more dramatic spatial innovations take place, with flags breaking out of the picture-frame and fluttering free in the margins of the page.

This painting and cat. no. 94 belong to a dispersed manuscript of the *Shahnama* dated 741 H/1341 CE and created in the Iranian province of Fars, undoubtedly in the city of Shiraz. Although the manuscript was dismembered by an art dealer in the early twentieth century and individual folios were sold to collectors and museums all over the world, a painstaking study by Simpson (2000) has reconstructed the order of the surviving folios – including the 105 original illustrations that are currently known – and estimates that the manuscript may once have contained as many as 140 paintings. Remarkably, both the prefatory dedication pages (Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C., S1986.110v and S1986.111r) and the colophon on the final folio (AKM 37) have survived and are well-known to scholars: from these we have the information that the book was copied by the scribe Hasan ibn Muhammad ibn ʿAli Husayni al-Mawsili, for the Inju vizier of Fars Hajji Qawam al-Dawla wa'l-Din Hasan, and was commissioned at the end of Ramadan, 741 H.



55

KAY KĀVŪS TRIES TO FLY TO THE HEAVENS

Folio 82r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī;
manuscript copied by Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Jamālī
Shiraz, Iran; dated 1 Rabiʿ al-Awwal 861/27 January 1457
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 38.2 x 28.4 x 10.7 cm
AKM 268

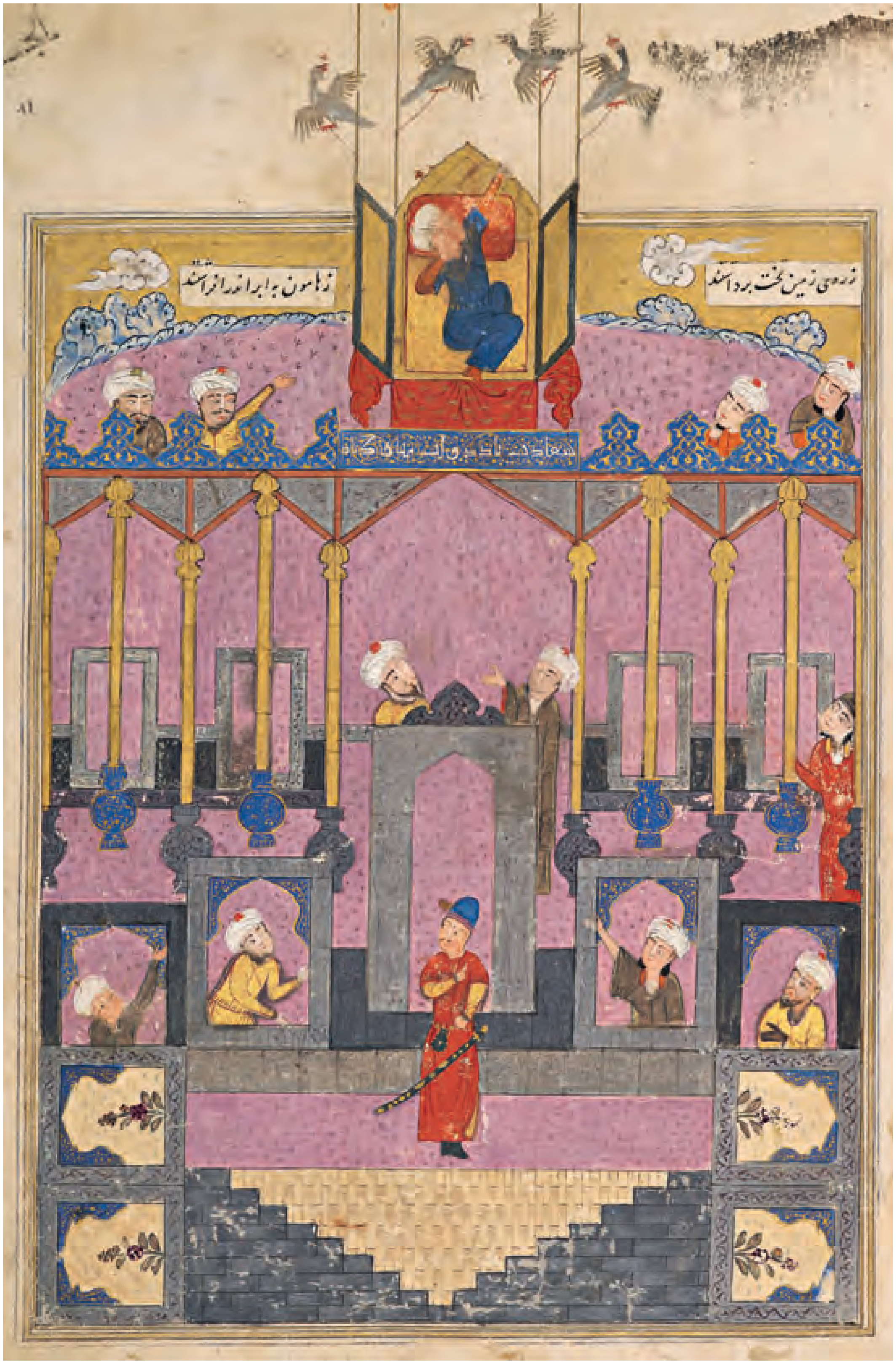
Publ: A. Welch 1978b, pp. 12–22; Robinson 1991, pp. 16–17 (not ill.). Other folios from the same manuscript: Robinson c. 1953, p. 8 (no. 15; not ill.); Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 57–60

The fifty-three illustrations in this manuscript of the *Shahnama* represent a transitional phase in the painting styles practised in Shiraz. The fall of the city to the Turkman dynasty in 1452 led to the development of a new commercial painting style in the city, and this manuscript contains examples of both the last breath of Timurid Shirazi painting, and the new so-called 'Turkman Commercial' style (Robinson 1991, p. 26). Two other paintings from the same volume are also illustrated in this catalogue: see cat. nos 96 and 97.

The present image is a remarkable and striking composition: Robinson believes the artist of this piece was also responsible for inventive compositions such as 'The court of the fairy queen' from a *Khamsa* of Nizami illustrated c. 1460 and now in the Topkapi Museum Library, Istanbul (*ibid*., p. 28). The moral of the relevant episode of the *Shahnama* is one of pride going before a fall. Encouraged by a devil who had managed to convince the Iranian ruler that it was time he conquered the heavens as well as the earth, Kay Kavus hatched a wild scheme to raise himself to heavenly domination. Eagle chicks were taken from their nests and hand-reared to adulthood, while the foolish king had an elaborate throne made from precious wood and gold. Four of the eagles (here looking rather more like ducks) were then attached to the four corners of this throne with lengths of rope, and raw meat was suspended just above them so that as the birds strove to reach the food, they flapped their wings and carried the throne and its occupant high into the air. While the plan was initially successful, exhaustion inevitably overtook the birds and the whole contraption came down miles from the court, bringing Kay Kavus with it. Eventually the great hero Rustam and his paladins had to be despatched to retrieve the embarrassed and uncomfortable king.

The fantastic palace that rather overwhelms the action of this painting has little to do with the episode as described in the text, and many other paintings of the same scene do not show an architectural setting at all but instead locate the event in the countryside (such as the relevant image from the much later *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, ill. Dickson – Welch 1981, no. 95). In placing so much emphasis on an elaborate palace setting, with golden columns mounted on ornate vase-shaped bases, peaked blue merlons ornamented with gold, and a variety of arches framed in carved grey stone, the artist may be referring to the immediately preceding passages of the *Shahnama*. Those lines tell how Kay Kavus ordered the construction of two mansions of hardstone, as well as a pleasure-house of crystal studded with emeralds, two armouries of silver and a golden palace decorated with turquoise and precious stones.

References to fabulous buildings made of precious materials are part of a Persian poetic tradition of hyperbolic architectural description (see also cat. no. 38), which finds its visual counterpart in Persianate miniature painting. As the building is reduced in the poetic text to a series of improbably grandiose individual elements, with the more prosaic aspects of the structure dropped entirely from the description, so the architecture of the painted page is often created from a structurally disjointed sequence of individual components, each arranged to be seen from its most characteristic or attractive angle rather than forming an objective depiction of a plausible architectural space.


ز روی زمین تخت برداشتند
ز هامون به ابر اندر افراشتند

56

SHĀH RĀMĪN AND MĀH-PERVĪN ENTHRONED ON THE ISLAND OF KHURREMĀBĀD

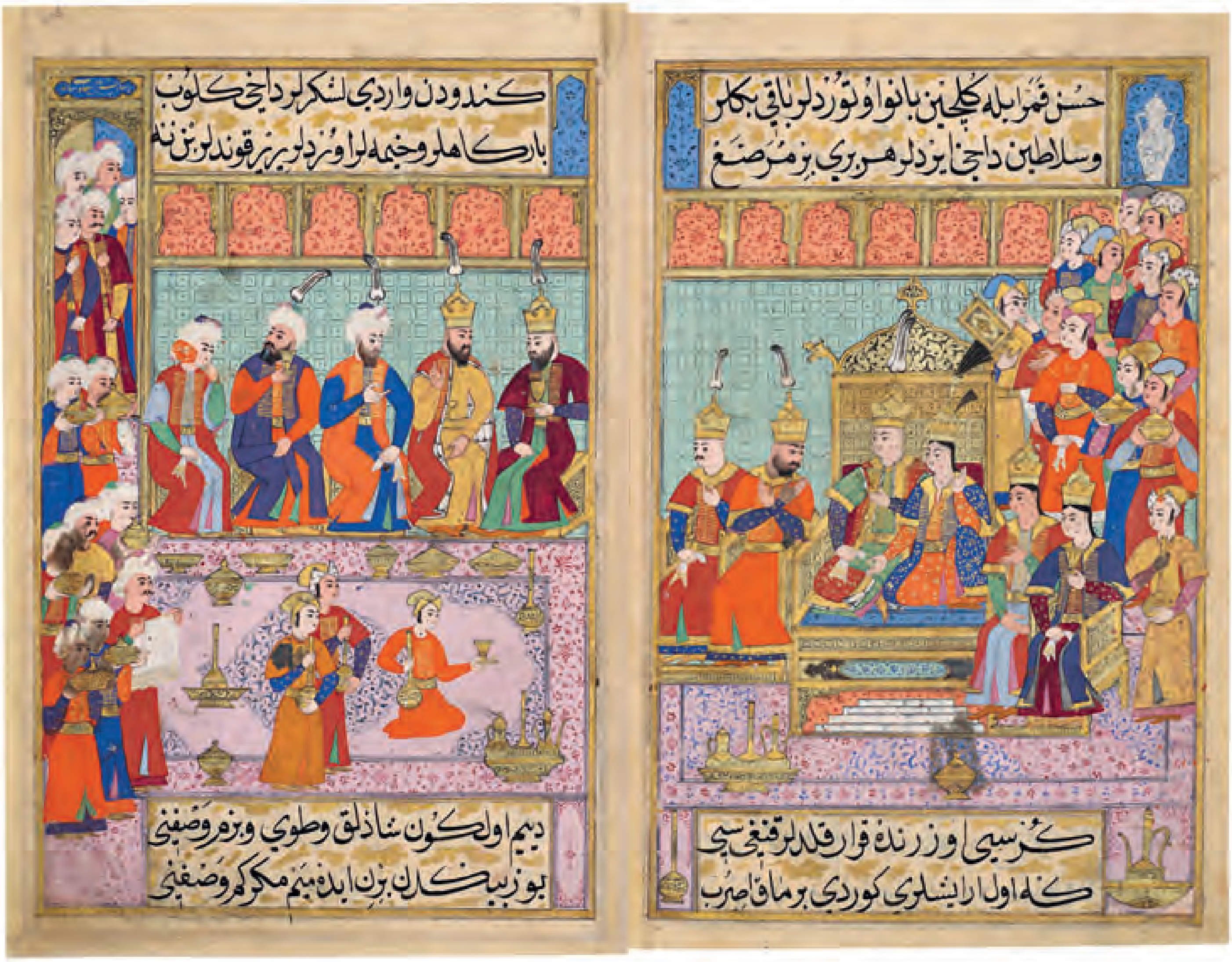
Folios 204v–205r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leṭāʾif*
(‘Gifts of Curiosities’ or ‘Curious and Witty Gifts’) of ʿAlī ibn Naqīb
Ḥamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murād III
Istanbul; dated 1002 H/1593–94 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 35.1 x 21 cm
AKM 280

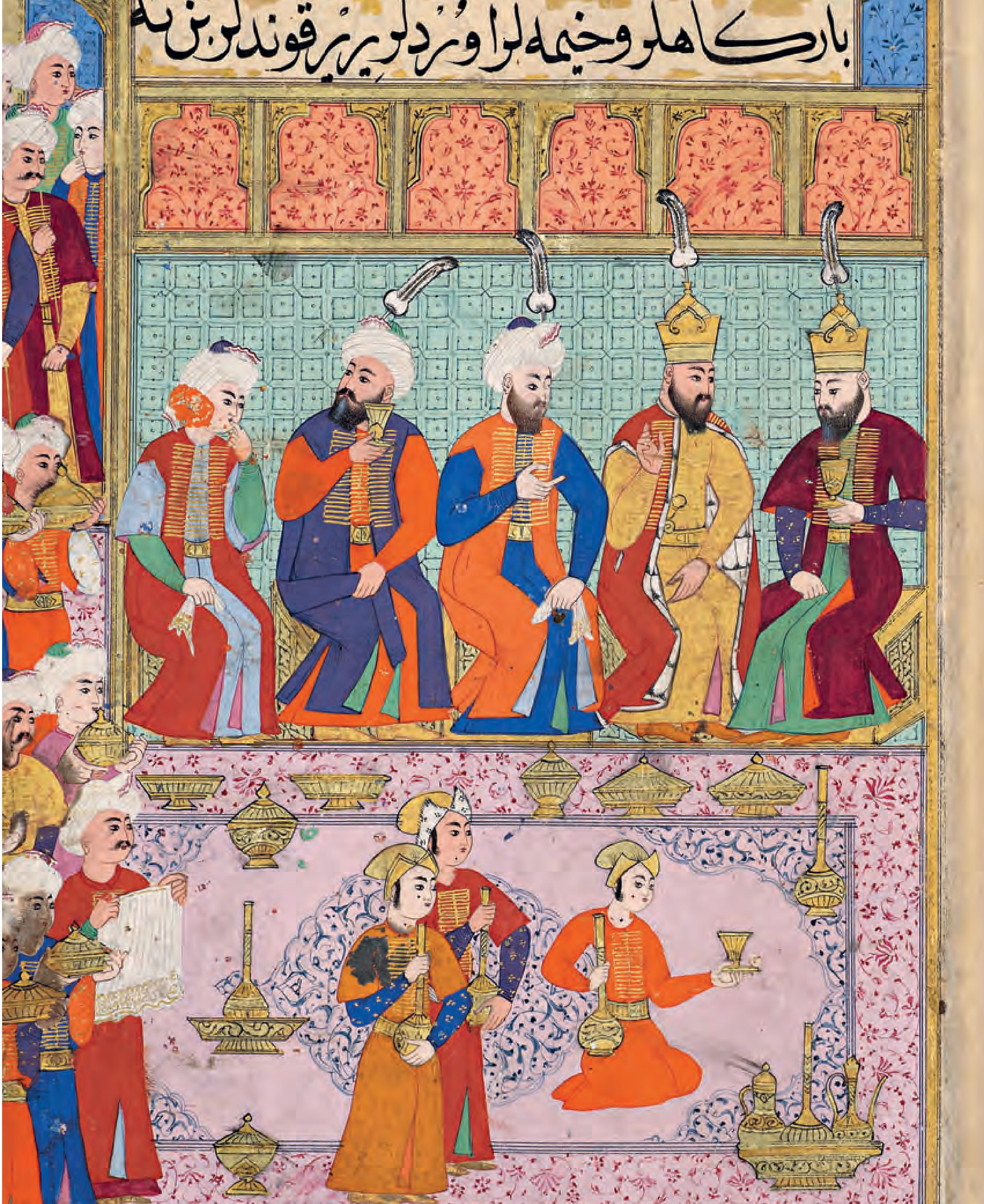
Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Binney 1979, pp. 78–79; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 38–42 (no. 9, fols 177v, 226v–227r and 252v–253r); Falk 1985, p. 136 (no. 109; fols 279v–280r and 275v–276r); Canby 1998, pp. 99–100 (nos 71–72; fols 296r and 297r); Leane 2002, pls 18.2, 18.6 (fol. 27); AKTC 2010b, pp. 297–299 (no. 128)

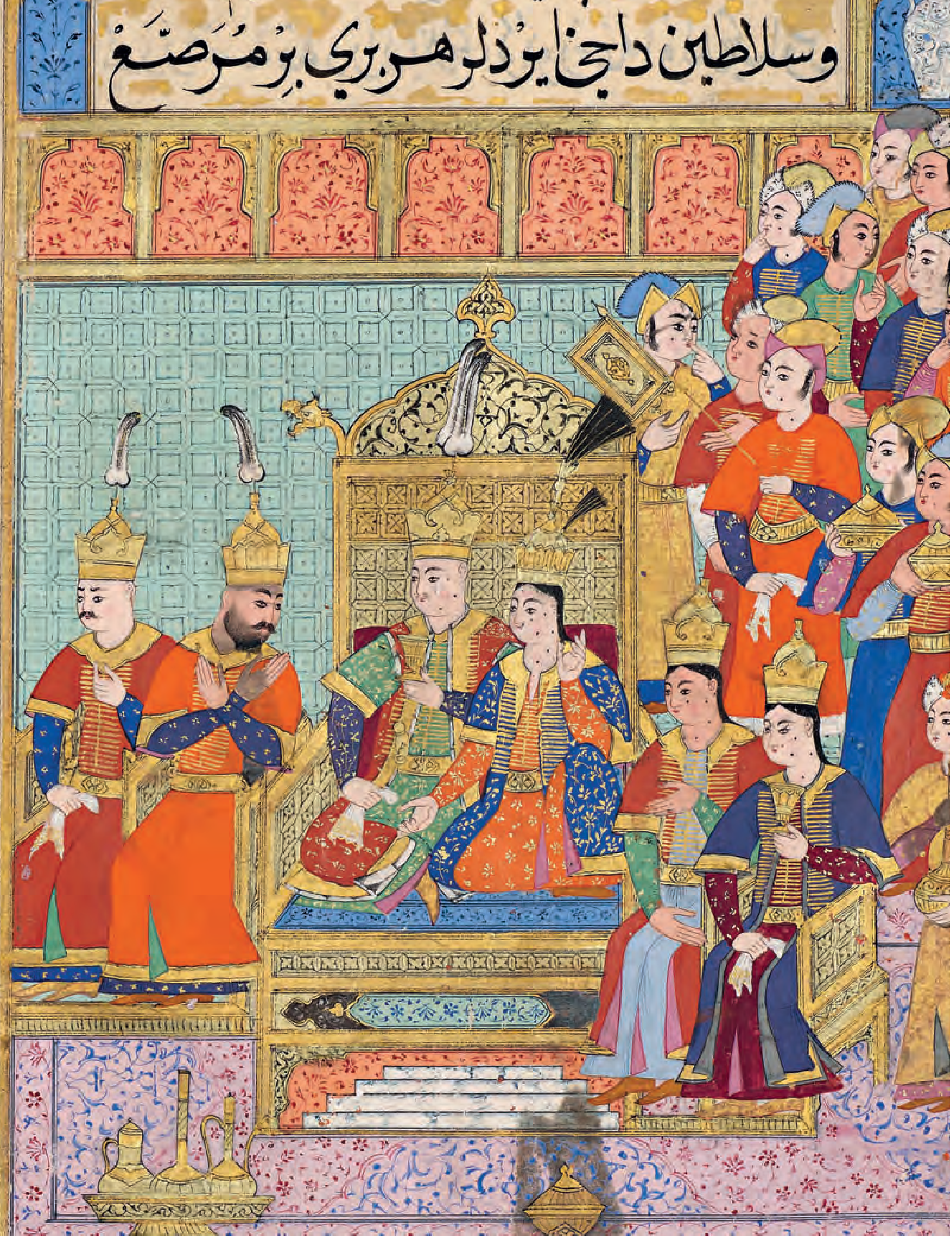
This magnificent double-page enthronement scene, from the unique illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* created for the bibliophile Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–1595), is notable for the continuation of a single architectural space across both pages, emphasised by the extension of both the dwarf arcade and the green square tile pattern across the back wall. While this arrangement is not unique within Ottoman painting (see Bağci 2010, p. 223), discontinuous architectural compositions are certainly more common in double-page illustrations.

The scene is a joyful one: although they will face more adventures before the story is finished, this is a moment of rapturous reunion for the hero and heroine of the adventure, Shah Ramin and Mah-Pervin, as well as their friends. After battling their way through innumerable hardships and repeated separations, the lovers and their faithful companions were reunited (with the help of magical forces) on the island of Khurremabad, where Shah Ramin and Mah-Pervin with their friends sat in state on ‘decorated thrones; those who saw the decorations bit their fingers [in astonishment] and were amazed’. The eight lines of text on this double-page image also describe how soldiers came and set up tents for the occasion, ‘and there was feasting and celebration that day, and hundreds of men enjoyed themselves’ (translation by Lale Uluç; see also Meredith-Owens 1988, p. 583).

The courtly themes of *razm u bazm* (‘fighting and feasting’), so widely celebrated in Persian poetry and painting, combine images of battle and the hunt with interior scenes like this one, showing enthroned rulers enjoying food, drink and music in rich surroundings. Together these themes resulted in a standard cycle of images celebrating the privileges of royal life, which could be manipulated in sophisticated ways by talented artists. As such imagery formed the very backbone of Persianate miniature painting, these formulae were carried over into the other traditions of book painting that developed out of that model, including Ottoman book arts. While the entire manuscript is undeniably imbued with the Ottoman court aesthetic and contains a great number of unique images (see also cat. nos 39, 62, 79 and 91), the composition of this courtly enthronement certainly owes something to earlier images from Persianate painting. In the midst of a manuscript that is dominated by scenes of adventure this enthronement image provides a moment of respite from fantastic monsters and battle sequences, and the artist has evidently enjoyed creating a lively palace interior, with the assembled guests, servants and courtiers jostling in their brightly coloured robes against the pastel shades of the architectural decoration. In addition to the golden dishes that litter the room, note the solitary Chinese blue-and-white lidded jar placed in a niche in the upper-right corner, reminiscent of much larger ceramics displays attested to by Iranian and Indian miniatures and known as *chini-khana*s (see cat. no. 64).


کندودن واردی لشکرلر داخی کلوب
بارکاهلر وخیمه لر اوردلر بر بر قوندلر بنه
حسن قمر ایله کلچین بانوا اوتوردلر باقی بکلر
وسلاطین داخی یزدلر هر بری بر مرصع
دیم اول کون شاذلق وطوی وبزم وصفنی
بو زیبا کلك برن ایدهمیم مکر کم وصفنی
کرسیی اوزرنده قرار قلدلر تقنجی سی
که اول ارایشلری کوردی برماق اصرب


بارکاهلر وخیمه لر اوردلر یریر قوندلر نه


وسلاطين داخي ايردلر هر بري بر مرصّع

57

FIVE HEXAGONAL TILES WITH FLORAL DESIGNS

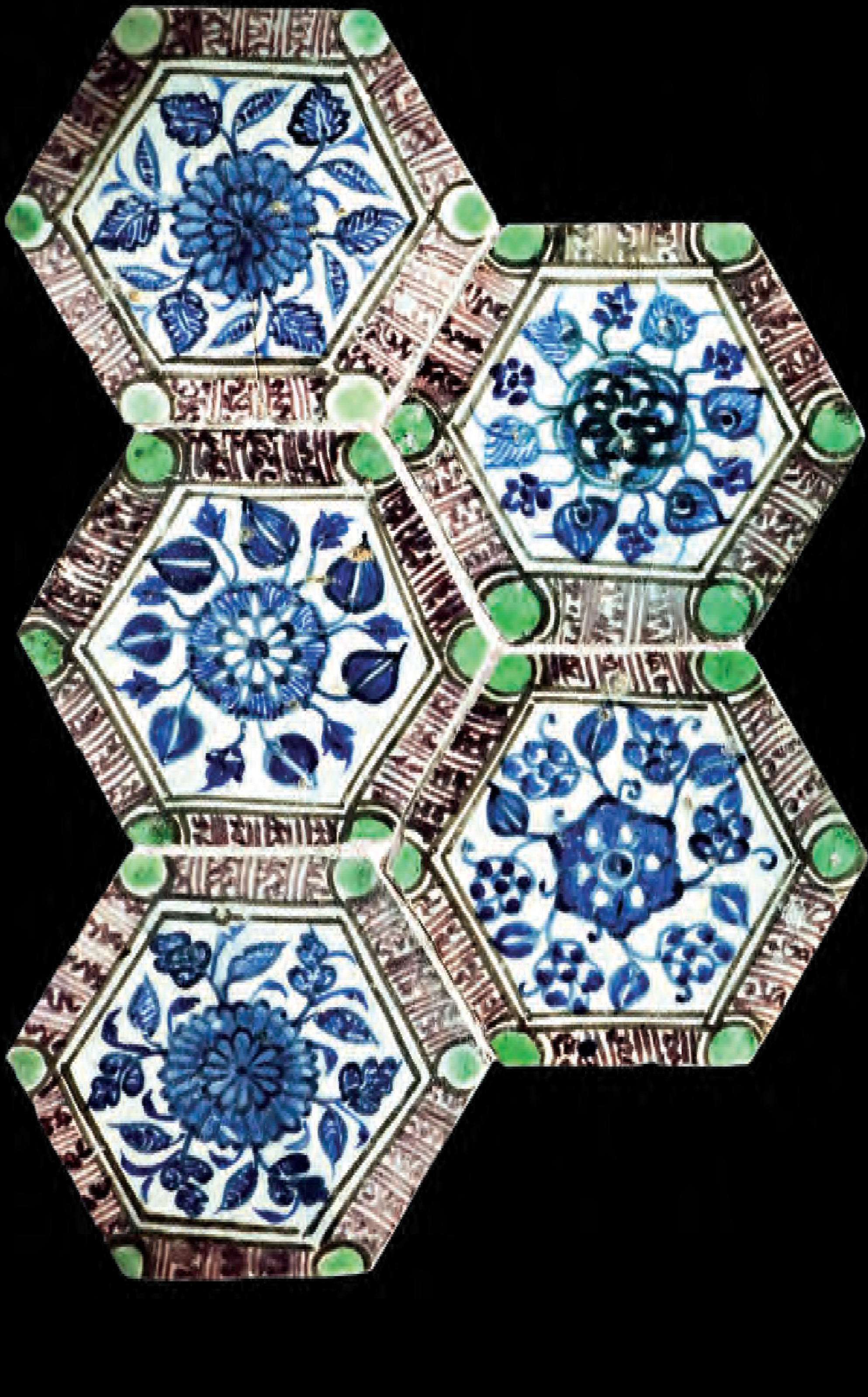
Egypt or Syria; fifteenth century
Glazed fritware with blue, green and manganese underglaze painting on white
Diameter of each tile: 18.5 cm
AKM 874
Unpublished

Hexagonal tiles can be used to create a simple repeating pattern on their own (see the lower back wall of the pavilion illustrated in cat. no. 66), or may be used in conjunction with triangular tiles, or six-pointed stars, to create more complex design combinations (see the blue panels on the back wall of the palace illustrated in cat. no. 63). The present set of five tiles is one of a number of groups of hexagonal tiles of comparable dimensions bearing blue-and-white motifs, all of which are generally attributed to Egypt or Syria, possibly Damascus, of the fifteenth century. Large numbers survive in situ at the mausoleum of Murad II in Edirne, Turkey (built 1435–36), and at that of Ghars al-Din al-Khalil al-Tawrizi (d. 1430) in Damascus, while others are held in various museums (see Carswell 1972; Golombek 1993, pp. 241–242; Porter 1995, pp. 95–97; Fehérvári 2000, pp. 249–251; von Folsach 2001, p. 165).

The entire corpus of these blue-and-white hexagonal tiles has been stylistically related to the Chinese blue-and-white porcelains that were imported into fifteenth-century Syria. However, Golombek has suggested that those examples with a central rosette, like the tiles in this group, may indeed derive from Yuan porcelain but via the mediation of pattern-books or local traditions which had already partially assimilated Chinese sources, rather than being straight copies from motifs on Chinese wares (Golombek 1993, p. 241; see also cat. no. 18).

The blue-and-white floral motifs in the centre of each of the present group of tiles can be closely compared with similar rosette designs seen amongst the other groups of these kind of tiles, although the designs on this group of five are on the whole less whirling, and painted in a slightly softer blue, than many other examples, giving them a slightly more sedate appearance. Furthermore, the very strong emphasis placed on the borders of the present group is unusual, and the use of an apple green colour, alongside the standard cobalt blue and the slightly less common manganese, is even more so. The heavily outlined green circles occupying the points of intersection between each pair of sides are also a rare feature, and are rather reminiscent of the false ‘nail-heads’ sometimes imitated in ceramic on glazed fritware objects from medieval Iran (see an example in Graves 2008, p. 235).

However, the dark manganese-purple border motif of triple bars alternating with quickly-executed scrolling designs that are in places little more than dots – not pseudo-Kufic, as has been suggested elsewhere – is seen on many of the other hexagonal tiles of this type from fifteenth-century Syria. The distinctive design appears in cobalt blue, in the interstitial zones between the points of a six-pointed star and the tile edge, on tiles found in the tomb of Ghars al-Din al-Khalil al-Tawrizi (Carswell 1972, pp. 114–115), on two tiles from the Madina Collection (Golombek 1993, p. 242; now in Los Angeles County Museum of Art), and on examples now in the British Museum (Porter 1995, p. 95).



58

STAR-SHAPED TILE WITH TWO MALE FIGURES

Iran, possibly Kashan; late thirteenth or early fourteenth century
Glazed fritware with cobalt and turquoise underpainting on white and lustre overglaze decoration
Diameter: 21.2 cm
AKM 860
Unpublished

Lustre-decorated tiles in the form of eight-pointed stars were produced in great quantities during the Ilkhanid period of Mongol rule in Iran (c. 1256–1353). These were often decorated with figures and animals, and were alternated with pointed cross-shaped tiles to create large panels of continuous tilework: a monochrome example of this configuration is illustrated in the turquoise floor tiles depicted in Sam's palace in cat. no. 63. Archaeological evidence shows that monochrome tiles arranged in the star-and-cross pattern were indeed used for floor tiles: an instance of this was found in the southern octagonal kiosk at the Takht-i Sulayman palace in northwestern Iran (built c. 1270; see Naumann 1969, p. 41). However, fine lustre tiles like the present example would have been used as revetments for internal walls (see also cat. nos 24 and 25) in palatial buildings such as Takht-i Sulayman as well as religious monuments like the tomb of ʿAbd al-Samad at Natanz in Iran, both of which sites once bore wall panels of star-and-cross lustre tiles (see Masuya 2000, and Pickett 1997, p. 45). Figural motifs were used in both sacred and secular contexts in Ilkhanid lustre tilework.

While a great number of the lustre star tiles produced in Ilkhanid Iran are decorated with inscriptive borders – for which Persian poetry was used extensively – many of the earlier examples are executed in rapidly written cursive script created with a single line of lustre. Inscriptions reserved in white on a blue ground with lustre outlining, as seen on this example, appear to date from slightly later than many of the lustre-only examples. Two comparable pieces with reserve inscriptions, held in the David Collection, are dated 689 H/1290 CE (von Folsach 2001, p. 168), and a similar date can be ascribed to the present tile.

A further comparable example is held in the Museum of Islamic Ceramics in Cairo: as well as bearing a similar form of border inscription, the Cairo tile also depicts two men in peaked Mongol hats picked out in turquoise and cobalt, wearing robes patterned with little lustre coils and circles and ornamented with spots of cobalt, facing each other across a floral ground, and as such it is a very close comparator for the present tile (see O'Kane 2006, p. 277). The Aga Khan Museum's example has, however, been painted with more skill than has the Cairo piece. The characteristic moon-faces of the figures, and their poses – one seated on a stool and the other kneeling before him – are here more clearly and concisely indicated. In particular, the large six-petalled floral design that fills the ground between the heads of the two men on both the present tile and the Cairo piece is so similar that both must have been drawn from the same model, and yet the Cairo version of that flower appears lopsided when compared with this example.

59

STILL LIFE IN A PALACE

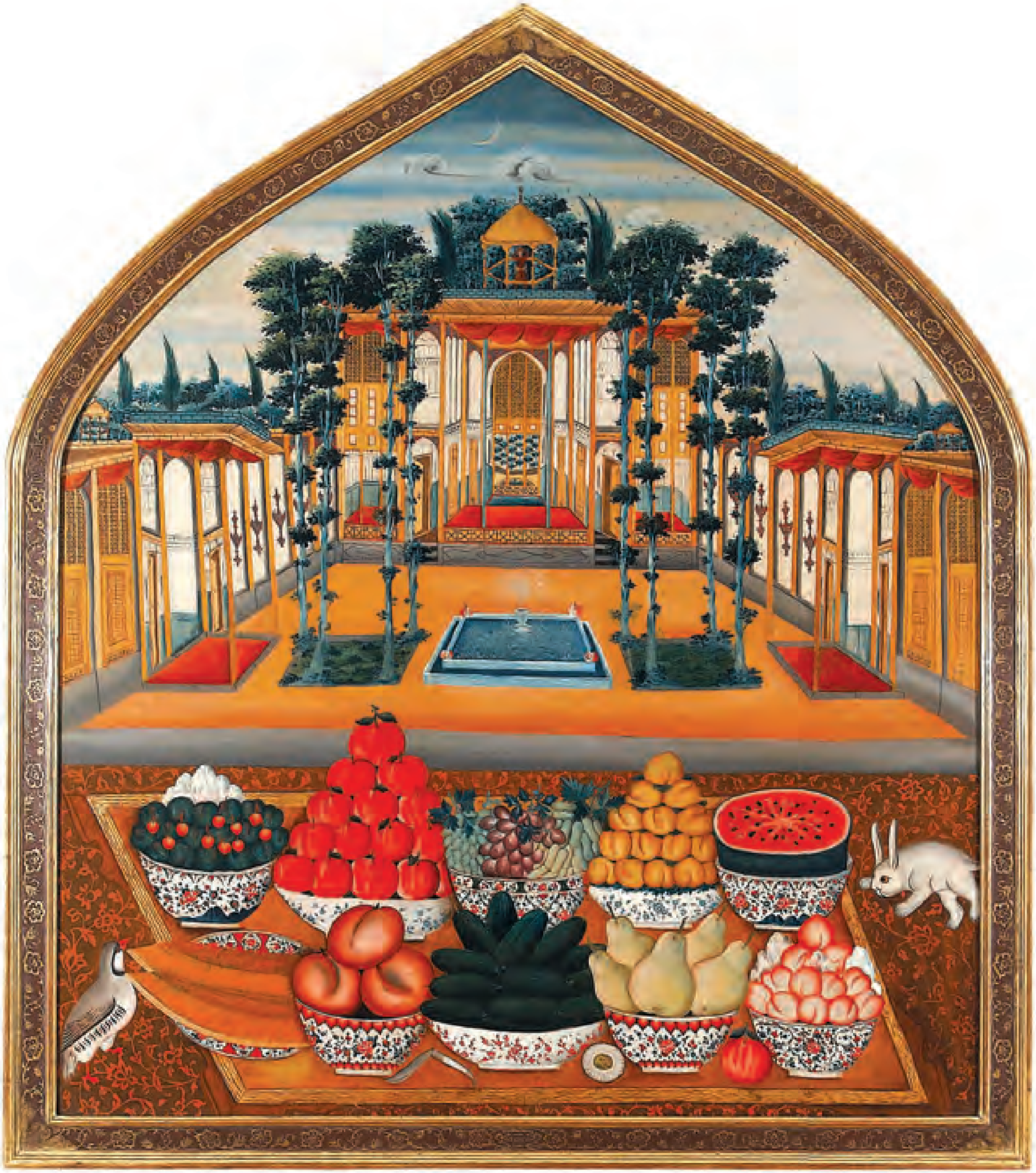
Qajar Iran; first half of the nineteenth century
Oil on canvas
152.5 x 134 cm
AKM 505
Publ: Diba – Ekhtiar 1998, pp. 214–216 (no. 64b)

This painting combines luxurious still life and architectural showpiece. Fruits in fine dishes are carefully laid out in the foreground, watched by a rabbit and a pheasant, while behind them lies a meticulously constructed architectural setting culminating in a tower in the central far distance that seems to be occupied by a muezzin performing the call to prayer. The presence of the muezzin, the new crescent moon and the feast at dusk may be intended to portray the ʿId celebration, at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, as the subject.

The still-life genre was developed in Iran by the court painter Mirza Baba, active c. 1785–1810; a painting created by that artist in 1793–94, showing fruit and flowers in ceramic dishes laid out on a stepped plain surface in front of an architectural setting with a polygonal pavilion and blind arcade, is closely comparable with this painting (Falk 1972, pl. 3). However, the architectural setting of the present image goes far beyond that of Mirza Baba's painting. Here, the built structure is no longer a distant backdrop but has been incorporated into the scene, with the still life presented as if it is laid out on a terrace, almost but not quite subordinate to the formal garden and grand pavilion lying beyond. As Diba has noted, the close observation of architectural detail, with the painted woodwork and plaster, carved screens, slender pilasters and arched niches of contemporary Iranian architecture all minutely depicted, places this painting at the forefront of the genre (Diba – Ekhtiar 1998, p. 216). The presence of the muezzin does not mean that this should be taken as a painting of a mosque, for the structure itself, with its courtyard garden and pavilion, is clearly residential.

The painting was once one of a pair, its partner showing a closely related but distinct scene including an inquisitive cat beside covered dishes, bread and sherbet in front of a slightly larger formal garden with a central pavilion (*ibid*., p. 214). The partner piece shows a daytime scene rather than one set at dusk, but both paintings are identical in outline, each taking the form of a broad pointed arch. This suggests that they were originally intended to be set into an architectural framework, possibly surrounded by painted fresco decoration and mirrors. A nineteenth-century photograph of the pavilion of the royal garden at Fin, near Kashan, shows an arch-shaped painting of very similar subject matter forming one part of the complex fresco decoration of the pavilion (*ibid*., p. 215). Traces of these large landscape/still-life panels can still be seen in the Bagh-i Fin pavilion today, in spite of much restoration work. It is clear that paintings of this type formed an important part of the architectural decoration of the Qajar elite: a manuscript painting by Mirza Baba, from a copy of the *Diwan-i Khaqan* dated 1216 H/1802 CE, shows Aga Muhammad Khan seated in front of a wall decorated with an arch-shaped figural painting set between two mirrors and framed with thin panels of floral and vegetal ornament in many colours (Raby 1999, p. 43).

Furthermore, some surviving Qajar still life panels play with the formulae of *trompe l'oeil*, echoes of which are seen in both the still life and the fantastic architectural vista of the present painting. Another pair of arch-shaped Qajar oil paintings shows parrots stealing fruit from dishes, in front of windows that frame landscape settings (Falk 1972, pls 10, 11). The similarities with Dutch still lifes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries showing flowers, fruits and other food on windowsills suggest that the Qajar painters were very familiar with such images (for example see Bryson 1990, p. 49). Here, the lovingly depicted high-quality ceramics are Chinese bowls in the *famille rose* style that came to popularity in eighteenth-century China, as well as blue-and-white Chinese export porcelain or local imitations, all of them indicative of wealth and high status and again recalling the meticulously observed luxury products portrayed in earlier Dutch still lifes (Diba – Ekhtiar 1998, p. 216).



60

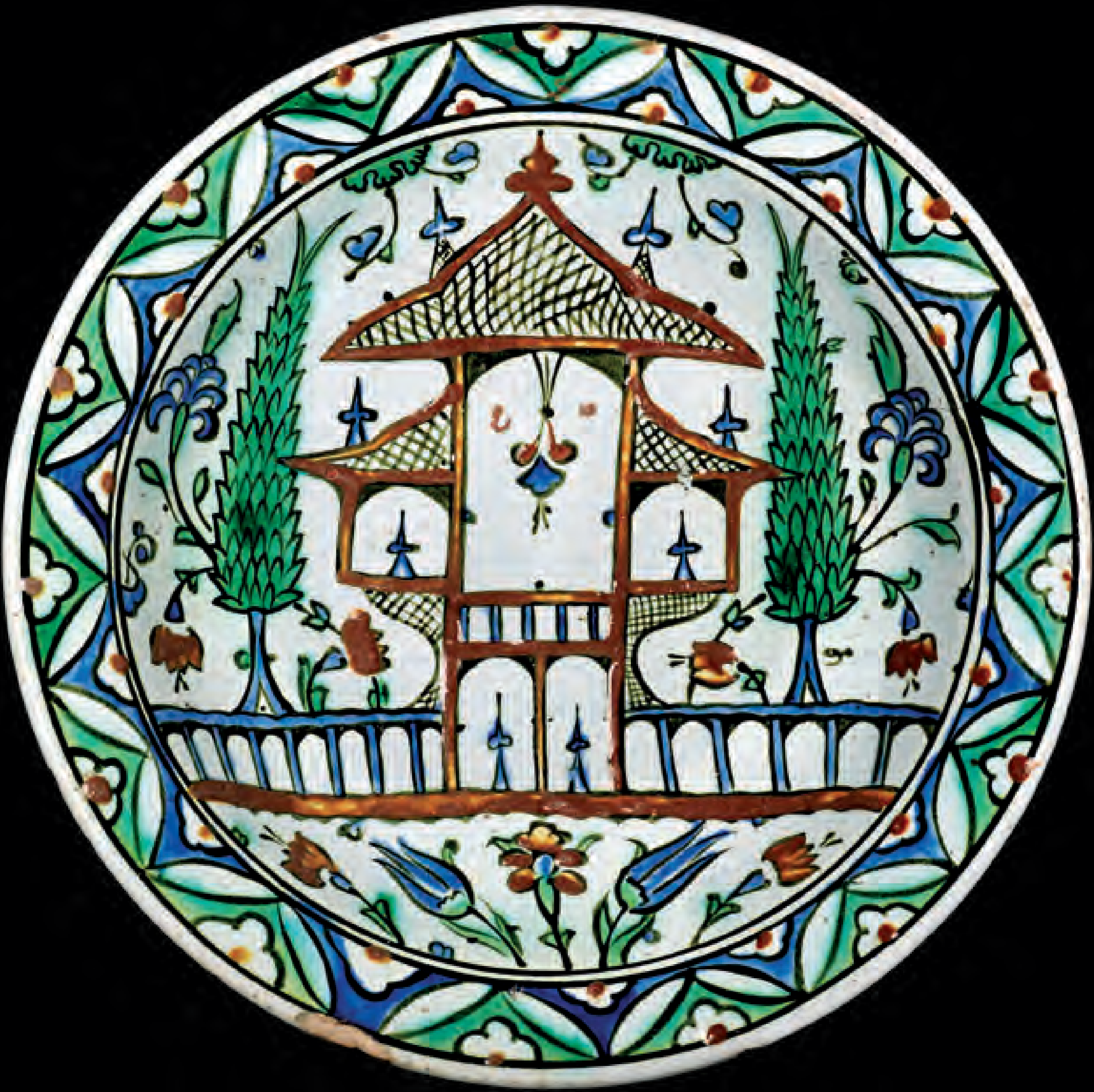
CERAMIC DISH WITH ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

Iznik, Turkey; mid-seventeenth century
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
Diameter: 29.8 cm
AKM 737
Publ: Welch 1978b, pp. 208–209 (no. P. 88); Geneva 1981, p. 68; Atasoy – Raby 1989, pp. 282–283 (no. 663); AKTC 2009a, p. 143 (no. 102); AKTC 2009b, p. 143 (no. 102); AKTC 2010a, pp. 144–145 (no. 105)

Although a small but refined ceramic workshop has been proposed for sixteenth-century Ottoman Istanbul (Necipoğlu 1990), the pre-eminence of the town of Iznik in the history of Ottoman ceramics is unquestioned. As the location of imperial ceramic workshops, Iznik produced countless tiles and vessels from the late fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, reaching a peak in clarity of colour and ingenuity of design during the second half of the sixteenth century (see cat. nos 34 and 61). From the late sixteenth century the quality of Iznik ceramics began to decline, with the highly diversified designs of earlier periods being repeated with decreasing skill. This duress was caused in part by the Ottoman court adherence to fixed prices at a time of high inflation, which bankrupted the Iznik potters (Binney 1979, p. 219). However, intriguing pieces were still being produced, for an ever-wider client base, with a significant interest in the depiction of architecture becoming evident. In addition to the tiles and tile panels showing the *Masjid al-Haram* at Mecca that were produced during the period (cat. no. 9), this dish is one of a small group of late Iznik pieces showing images of fanciful architectural structures set in gardens with trees and oversized flowers.

A closely comparable piece, albeit with a more muted colour scheme and, most remarkably, a Greek inscription around the edge of the dish giving the date 25 May 1666, is held in the British Museum (Denny 2004, p. 202), and a similar piece, also with a Greek inscription dating it to May 1666, is now in the Benaki Museum (Soustiel 1985, p. 343). The British Museum and Benaki dishes both show pavilions with similar peaked roofs to that of the present example, with ornamental suspensions also occupying the central interior spaces. However, while all three structures are elevated, only the British Museum example has ladders leading to the first and second floors. A fourth piece that can be included in this group is an example decorated with a single-story pavilion, in the Erasmus Barlow Collection, London (Atasoy – Raby 1989, no. 658). Two further related pieces, both showing a different type of architecture – a tall building with a closed door, pointed roof and four towers or minarets – were sold at auction (Christies 26 April 2005, lots 2 and 3), and two more examples of that type are held in the Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul (Soustiel 2000, p. 95), and the Musée national de Céramique-Sèvres (Sutton 1971, p. 271).

The meaning of the imagery on these dishes is not clear, although the cypress trees could, as with cat. no. 18, be argued to suggest funerary or even paradisal significance. However, the Greek inscription on the British Museum dish seems to militate against specifically Islamic interpretations. The existence of a further example depicting an entirely different type of structure – a Greek church with three domes topped with crosses – and carrying a Greek inscription, further complicates the picture (Atasoy – Raby 1989, no. 654). Carswell has even suggested that the pavilion on the dated example in the British Museum may be intended to represent a *skite* or monastic dwelling on Mount Athos (Carswell 1998, p. 109), although it is perhaps unnecessary to surmise a specific meaning for what seems to have been part of a general group of designs. The outer edge of the present example is decorated with a simple motif of leaf forms and halved florettes found on several other wares from this late period, including two with figurative representations of a crude vivacity (*ibid*., nos 667–668).



61

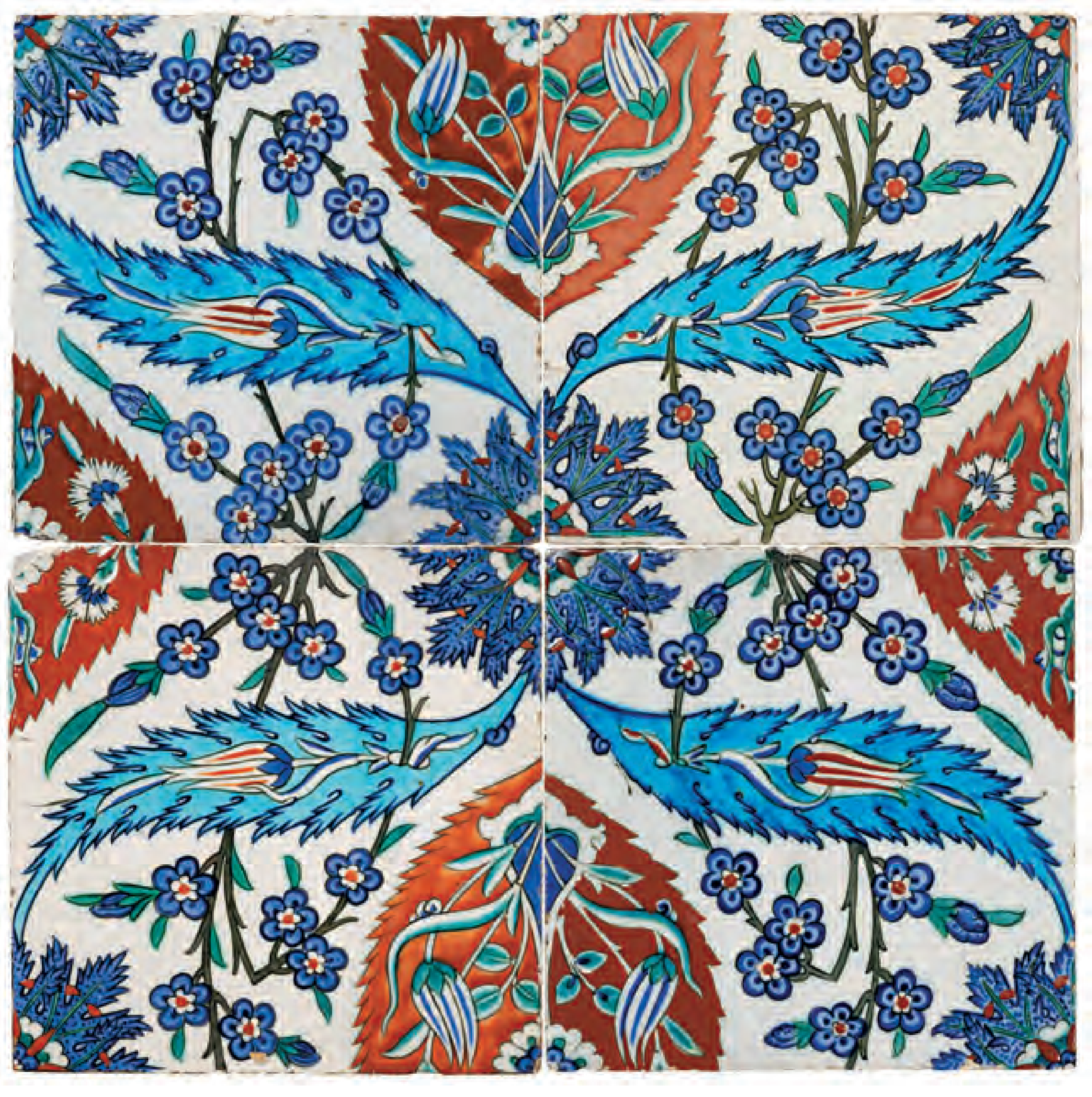
PANEL OF FOUR IZNIK TILES

Iznik, Turkey; c. 1580
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
Each tile: 24 x 24 cm
AKM 878
Unpublished

The overall design of this panel of four tiles contains a complete repeating composition that would originally have been extended over an entire wall. A panel of twenty-four tiles of the same design is held in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (acc. no. 401-1900), and others are now in the Musée du Louvre and the David Collection, Copenhagen as well as various other collections (Binney 1979, pp. 216–217). The V&A panel was brought to London from the baths at the shrine complex of Abu Ayyub al-Ansari (known in Turkish as Eyüp Ensari), one of the companions of the Prophet (Ayers 1983, pp. 120–121). His final resting place, just outside the city walls of Istanbul, was the site of construction of an Ottoman mosque in 1458, subsequently enlarged in 1591, and an important pilgrimage destination. Earthquake damage to the complex in the early nineteenth century led to extensive reconstruction, and many tile panels of this design appeared on the European art market shortly thereafter. Huge wall panels made up of many tiles of the same design as these can be seen in situ at the complex, where they decorate the courtyard and frame an opening through which the tomb itself can be viewed. The tiles in the Aga Khan Museum collection have almost certainly come from the complex, although Walter Denny has also shown that the Iznik potteries sometimes overproduced tiles for imperial building projects, leading to excess tiles that also found their way onto the art market (Denny 2004, pp. 208–210).

While these pieces were originally made for a religious institution, the Ottoman imperial style that was developed at the Iznik potteries was not confined to the architectural patronage of religious sites. Similar tile designs were employed in the decoration of Ottoman palaces and other public buildings, most famously the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, where the best remaining tilework is concentrated in the Harem. The decorative repertoire exemplified by the present tiles – repeating designs based around exaggerated floral forms, long tapered serrated leaves known in Turkish as *hançerî* (also often referred to as ‘*saz* leaves’, possibly from the drawing style *saz qalami* meaning ‘reed pen’: see Denny 1983) and a staggered pattern of ogival fields containing heavily stylised bouquets – was common to both tilework and textiles produced in the imperial Ottoman workshops. The close relationship between the Ottoman arts of ceramic painting and textile design is evident when one compares this frieze with contemporary brocades (see Carboni 2007, p. 184).

The proximity of much architectural decoration of the Islamic world to textiles has been remarked upon by Golombek, who proposes a ‘textile mentality’ evident in many forms of all-over surface decoration; in their original locations these large tile friezes do indeed appear rather like petrified textile wallcoverings (Golombek 1988; see also Necipoğlu 1992). The all-important role of hanging textiles and soft furnishings in the decoration and spatial division of Islamic architecture through the ages is often forgotten, in part because textiles are not very durable, but in the enduring materials of stone, brick and tile we can sometimes garner the reflections of this ‘draped universe’.



62

JĀRŪS PULLS THE CHEST CONTAINING MĀH-PERVĪN FROM THE SEA

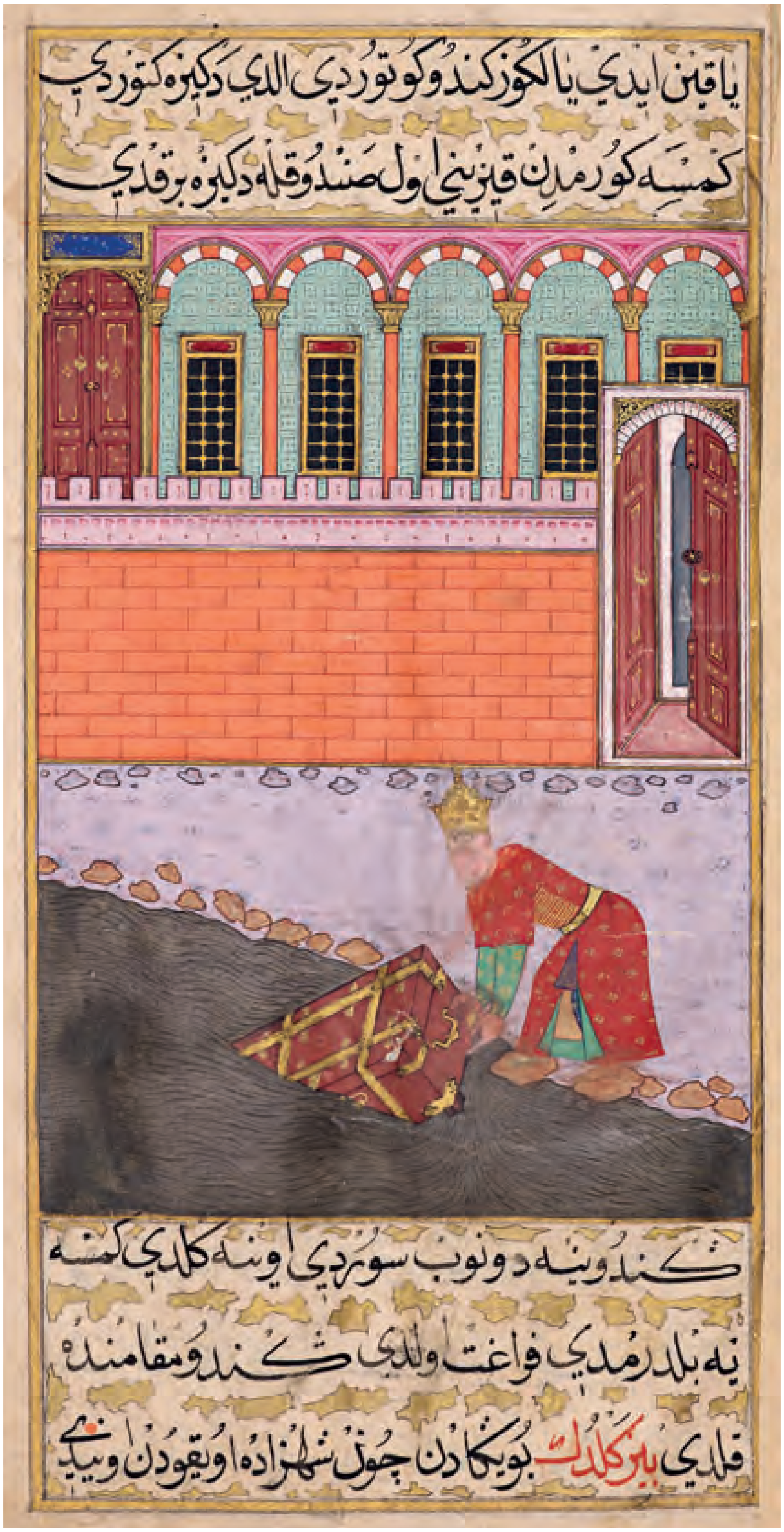
Folio 10r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leṭāʾif*
(‘Gifts of Curiosities’ or ‘Curious and Witty Gifts’) of ʿAlī ibn Naqīb
Ḥamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murād III
Istanbul; dated 1002 H/1593–94 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 35.1 x 21 cm
AKM 280

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Binney 1979, pp. 78–79; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 38–42 (no. 9, fols 177v, 226v–227r and 252v–253r); Falk 1985, p. 136 (no. 109; fols 279v–280r and 275v–276r); Canby 1998, pp. 99–100 (nos 71–72; fols 296r and 297r); Leane 2002, pls 18.2, 18.6 (fol. 27); AKTC 2010b, pp. 297–299 (no. 128)

This unique manuscript, the only known copy of the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif*, was created for that notable patron of the illustrated book, the Ottoman ruler Murad III (r. 1574–1595); other pages are illustrated in cat. nos 39, 56, 79 and 91. The bibliophilic passions of Murad III ranged far beyond those of earlier Ottoman sultans, and his interests encompassed all manner of books concerned with divination, the occult, marvels from strange lands and a range of unfamiliar prose stories, along with the standard historical texts. The *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* is essentially a romance, although it is unclear if it is a collection of tales from various sources, or a recension of an earlier Persian or Turkish text (Bağci 2010, p. 210). The principal characters of the tale are the young hero, Shah Ramin, and the equally spirited object of his devotion, Mah-Pervin.

Shah Ramin was the son and rightful heir of King Ardashir of Ghazni (now part of Afghanistan), while Mah-Pervin was the daughter of Ardashir's vizier. Upon discovering his daughter's love for the son of the king, the wicked vizier shut Mah-Pervin into a chest and hurled her into the sea, before throwing Shah Ramin into prison and poisoning his father the king. These dramatic events set the adventure story in motion and the text details the subsequent exploits of the ill-treated couple as they searched for each other across land and sea. At this early stage in the story, Mah-Pervin prayed to God from inside the chest and her prayers were answered: rather than being consigned to a watery grave (which would have rather curtailed the story), she was saved when the chest was washed up on the shore of an island. Her rescuer Jarus, the guardian of a castle, quickly became infatuated with the young woman and she was forced to flee his advances by rendering him insensible with wine and escaping in a boat. However, he was later to redeem himself by selflessly aiding Shah Ramin in his search for the missing woman (Meredith-Owens 1988, p. 578).

The image of the castle behind Jarus is little more than a backdrop to the action that takes place between the silver sea (now oxidised) and the lilac shore, and yet it dominates the composition. Occupying slightly more than half of the picture space, the imposing architectural façade of an arcade, windows with *mashrabiyya* screens, doors (both open and closed) and a bright orange brick wall topped with crenellations bears some relation to real Ottoman architecture, but has been rendered in such vivid and fantastic colours that it has a rather hallucinatory quality, befitting the fantastic subject matter of the text. The alternating colours of the *voussoirs* in the arches, for example, reflect the Ottoman architectural practice of using masonry of contrasting colours (a practice known as *ablaq*) for arches, but where real-world architecture would most commonly see the white stone alternated with black, here it is punctuated with near-luminous orange.



یاقین ایدی یا الکوز کندو کوتوردی الدی دکیزه کتوردی
کمسه کورمدن قیزینی اول صندوقله دکیزه برقدی

کندونیه دونوب سوردی اوسنه کلدی کمسه
نه بلدرمدی فراغت ولدی کندو مقامنده
قلدی بر کلدک بو یکادن چون شهزاده اویقودن ویکی

63

SINDUKHT BRINGS GIFTS TO THE COURT OF SĀM

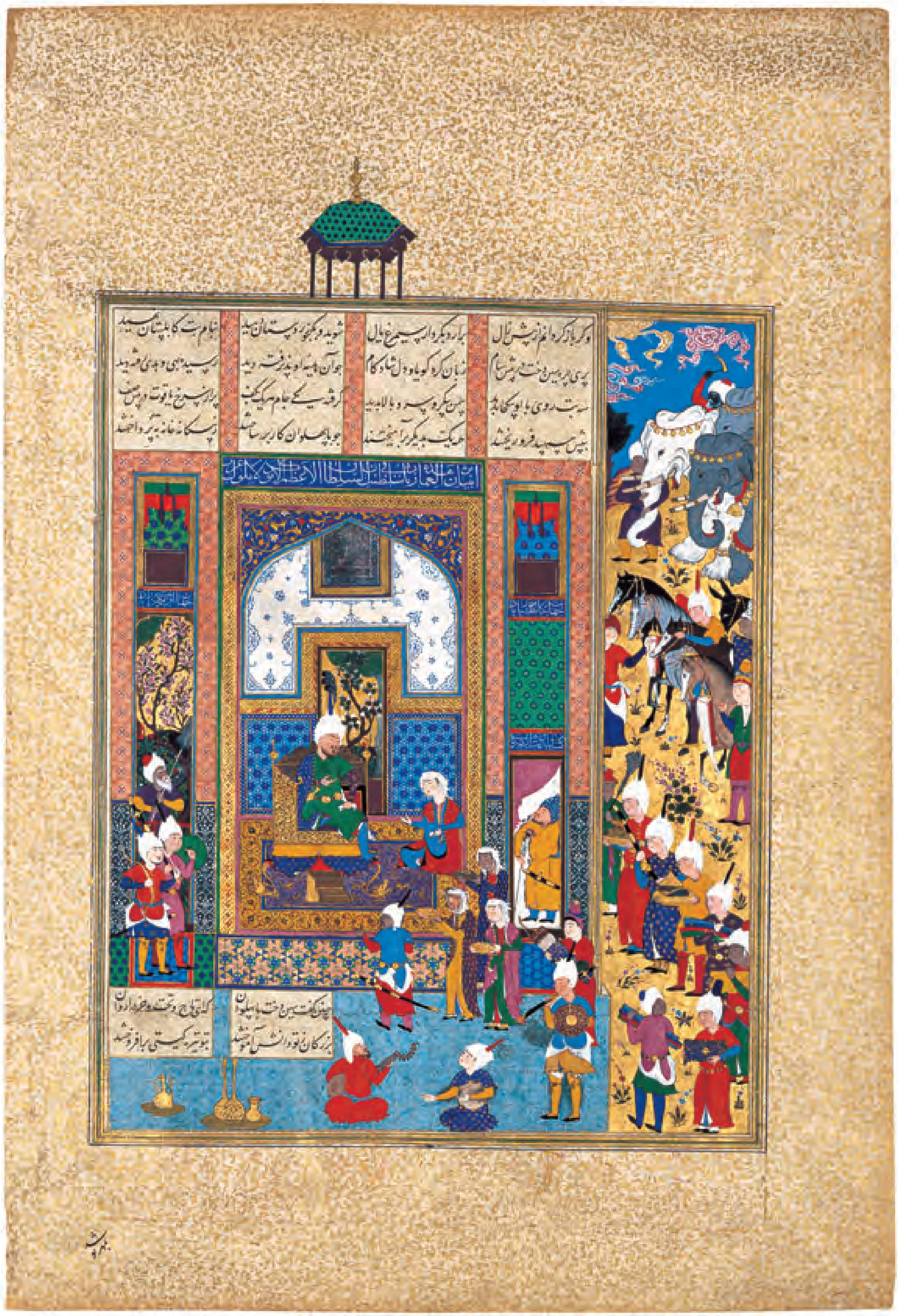
Folio 84v from the dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī created for Shāh Ṭahmāsp
Tabriz, Iran; c. 1522–1535
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 47 x 31.7 cm
AKM 496

Publ: Dickson – Welch 1981, vol. 2, no. 70; Makariou 2007, pp. 78–79 (no. 24); AKTC 2010b, p. 290 (no. 122)

The illustrated *Shahnama* initiated by Shah Ismaʿil and completed for Shah Tahmasp, the second Safavid ruler of Iran (r. 1524–1576), is widely regarded as one of the greatest illustrated manuscripts ever created. Two other pages from that dispersed manuscript are also illustrated in this catalogue, cat. nos 53 and 92. In the cycle to which this painting belongs, Zal, the white-haired son of the important Iranian paladin Sam, had fallen deeply in love with Rudaba, the daughter of the vassal king of Kabul. However, there was serious political opposition to this romantic match: Rudaba, although a pure and virtuous woman, was a descendent of the diabolical king Zahhak, the historic enemy of the Iranian kings, and as such she was tainted in the eyes of the Iranian king Manuchihr, upon whom Zal and his father Sam depended for favour. Through long episodes of frustration and anxiety, the young couple eventually found an unexpected ally in Rudaba's mother, Sindukht.

After settling her husband's fears and convincing him that no ill could come of the match, Sindukht set out for the Iranian court to win over Zal's father to the marriage and convince him to intercede with Manuchihr on Zal and Rudaba's behalf. Adorning herself with gems and gold brocade, Sindukht emptied the royal treasury of Kabul and left for Zabul determined to put on a good show. Elephants, horses, camels and mules were laden with precious objects and she arrived at Sam's palace with a train of gifts that stretched far beyond the palace gates. As negotiations progressed and she sensed that Sam was going to accept the tribute and, by implication, her daughter's hand for his son, the overjoyed Sindukht ordered maidservants to pour out dishes of rubies and offer them to Sam, an act that is shown taking place to the bottom right of the throne.

The palace of this painting is of a fairly standard tripartite layout, with two narrow side panels flanking a large, arched central space where Sindukht kneels before the seated Sam, while beyond the palace wall Sindukht's gifts crowd in from the edge of the picture space. The flat and frontal presentation of the individual surfaces of the palace structure has allowed the painter to create a veritable pattern-book of architectural ornament, much of it descended from earlier traditions, particularly Ilkhanid and Timurid tilework. Star-and-cross tiles (see cat. no. 58) decorate the turquoise floor; tile panels of star-and-honeycomb pattern (see cat. no. 27) appear behind the throne of Sam and in the polychrome panel in front of the throne platform, and hexagonal tiles appear in a number of locations (see cat. no. 57). A painted fresco of blue curvilinear motifs on white (related to motifs found in bookbinding; see cat. no. 100) and spandrels of polychrome vegetal decoration, possibly representing cut-tile work, delineate the great *iwan* (arched chamber), while a rich carpet with a border of cartouche designs containing flowers and scrollwork decorates the throne dais. Finally, framing sections of repeating arabesque designs, calligraphic tiles in white on blue (see the Ottoman interpretation of this idea in cat. no. 105), knotwork motifs and patterned brickwork complete the secondary surfaces.



64

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

Folio 71r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*
('Ethics of Nāṣir') of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī
Mughal India; c. 1590–1595
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: 23.7 x 14.3 cm
AKM 288

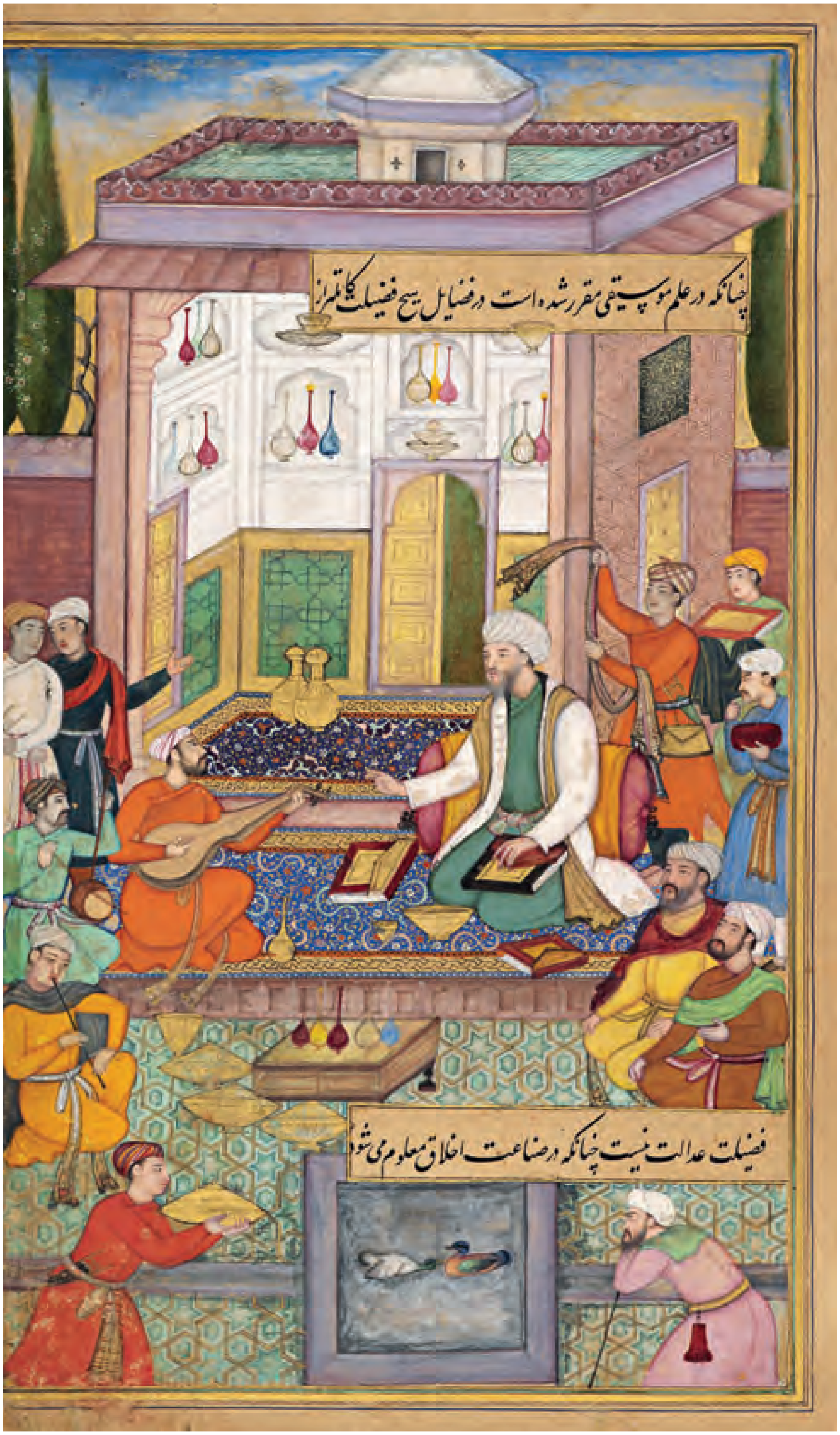
Publ: Canby 1998, pp. 124–127 (no. 92); AKTC 2007a, p. 168 (no. 141); AKTC 2007b, p. 167 (no. 141). Other folios from the same manuscript: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 171–175 (no. 58); Brand – Lowry 1985, p. 58; Falk 1985, p. 153 (no. 127); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 42–43, 46, 60–61, 120–127; Ziad 2002, pp. x, 146; AKTC 2008a, pp. 184–185 (no. 67); AKTC 2010b, pp. 144–145 (no. 65)

Like some of the other sixteen paintings in this manuscript (three of which are illustrated elsewhere in this catalogue: see cat. nos 46, 65 and 90), the present image appears at first glance to portray a standard scene such as might be found in any tale of courtly life. However, the usual image of a pleasure-party, with musicians, flasks, wine bowls, covered dishes, attendants and an ostentatious architectural setting, is rendered slightly unusual here by the main figure. Surrounded by books, with a further volume being brought by a young attendant, his austere expression and rhetorical gesture towards the musicians who play before him (note the smaller size of the musicians, indicating their lesser significance) suggest a man of greater learning and thoughtfulness than is normally met with in such images.

As with many other paintings in the manuscript, this scene takes as its starting point a fairly minor detail of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's complex ethical treatise, using the freedom from narrative constraints that has been granted by the non-linear, discursive nature of the text to build up an evocative image that borrows from the pre-existing conventions of miniature painting in Mughal India. The painting accompanies the seventh section of the first discourse, which is titled 'Showing the Superiority of Justice to other Virtues, and an Exposition of its States and Divisions'. After establishing that nearness to God is the noblest condition of all, the text states that '[t]his being so, no relationship is nobler than that of equivalence, as has been established in the Science of Music; and, among virtues, none is more perfect than the virtue of Justice' (Wickens 1964, p. 95). A verbose discussion of social equilibrium and the nature of justice follows.

In architectural terms, this painting is of great interest in its careful depiction of an open-fronted *chini-khana*. The *chini-khana* is a pavilion with specially shaped niches for the display of one's collection of fine ceramics (and in this case possibly also coloured glassware) built into framed sections in the upper walls, often set with complex, arched vaulting: a rather less elaborate version of the same idea can also be seen in cat. no. 65. Exhibiting one's porcelain collection was an indicator of cultural prestige and connoisseurial discernment, displaying both wealth and taste to visitors. Surviving seventeenth-century examples of this spectacularly luxurious architectural form can be seen at the ʿAli Qapu palace in Isfahan and the shrine of Shakyh Safi at Ardabil; the latter was created, following a pious donation by Shah ʿAbbas, to house the 1,162 pieces of Chinese porcelain and other precious vessels that the Safavid ruler gifted to the shrine in 1607–8 (Canby 2009, p. 121).

In the ʿAli Qapu palace a related type of niche appears in the 'Music Room', and their presence in a musical setting in this painting suggests that they may have been employed for an acoustic effect. This particularly ostentatious form of architectural display seems to have been an Iranian invention, but the *chini-khana* must have also suited the Persianised tastes of Mughal India during the seventeenth century, as is evident from this image and a number of comparable paintings (see for example Leach 1995, pp. 201, 213, 254–5). Two-dimensional ornament aping the arched niches of the *chini-khana* and closely resembling the forms represented here, complete with representations of long-necked bottles and bowls, decorates the gateway to the tomb of Ghiyath Beg, the Iranian father-in-law of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, in the city of Agra, completed in 1628.


چنانکه در علم موسیقی مقرر شده است در فضایل هیچ فضیلت کاملتر از
فضیلت عدالت نیست چنانکه در صناعت اخلاق معلوم می شود

65

THE MAN WHO STRAYS FROM HIS COURSE

Folio 182r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*
('Ethics of Nāṣir') of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī; inscribed 'Pahim Gujaratī'
Mughal India; c. 1590–1595
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: 23.7 x 14.3 cm
AKM 288

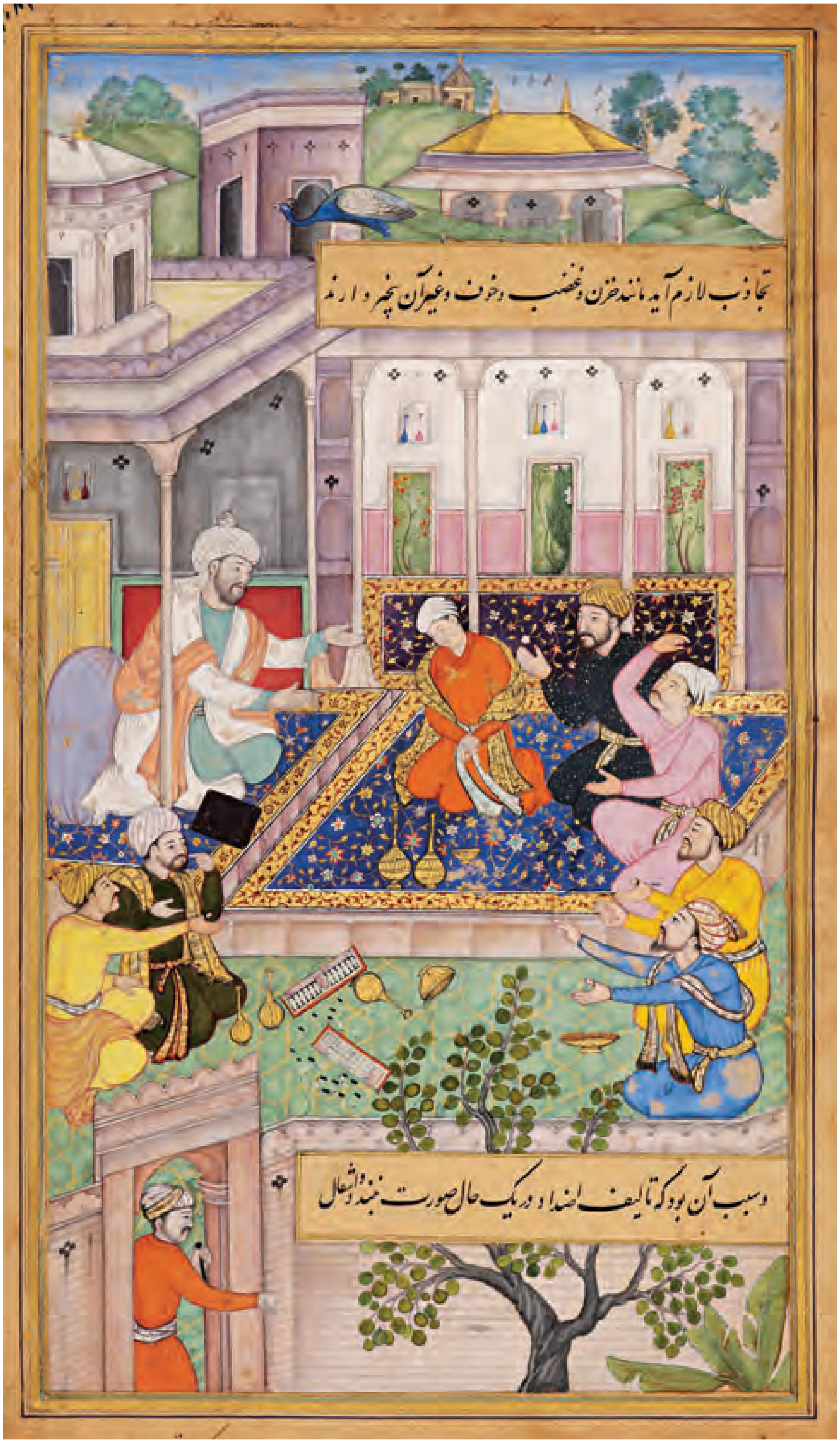
Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 124–125. Other folios from the same manuscript: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 171–175 (no. 58); Brand – Lowry 1985, p. 58; Falk 1985, p. 153 (no. 127); Canby 1998, pp. 124–127 (nos 92, 93); Ziad 2002, pp. x, 146; AKTC 2007a, pp. 122–123, 168 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2007b, pp. 124–125, 167 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2008a, pp. 184–185 (no. 67); AKTC 2010b, pp. 144–145 (no. 65)

In spite of initial appearances, this painting shows neither a dispute brought before a ruler, nor a master chiding his pupil, but a representation of the 'evil man' who has strayed from the true path (Goswamy – Fischer 1987). Located in the second part of the third discourse of al-Tusi's ethical treatise – a section titled 'On the Virtue of Love, by which the Connection of Societies is Effected, and the Divisions Thereof' – the relevant passage represents the danger of succumbing to a 'love of idleness and sloth'. This perversion of the correct love that should be felt for God and for good is represented in al-Tusi's text as leading the evil man to a relentless quest for distraction, as he constantly seeks out trifling pleasures in order to avoid having to confront the disorder of his own soul.

Thus, the gaming pieces and boards, and the goblets and wine bowls that lie scattered on the ground, are a direct reference to the 'games and the means of accidental pleasures' that al-Tusi recognises as a symptom of this corruption. Not only this, but the evil man will also seek out others like himself, shown here in the gesticulating figures who surround the young man at the centre of the image, apparently urging him on: 'by mixing and consorting with his likes, and by applying and devoting himself to games, his imagination is diverted from sensing [his own vexed condition], so that he instantly perceives an escape from that vexation and grows heedless of the punishment and the torment ultimately to follow' (Wickens 1964, pp. 205–206).

As Goswamy and Fischer have noted, the fact that the central figure, who is presumably the 'evil man' described in the text, appears to be a prince – his gold shawl and central position on the dais correspond with other images of young princes in this manuscript – is highly suggestive, siting this image and by extension the manuscript as a whole within a tradition of moralising instructional tales for future rulers, or so-called 'Mirrors for Princes'. The psychological aspects of the picture as represented through expression and gesture are hard to read. Is the older man who sits to the left engaged in remonstrating with the prince, urging him to change his ways? Does the bowed head of the young man indicate a sense of shame at his debasement, a moral character that may yet be redeemed?

The architectural setting of the scene, from the guarded outer door to the colonnaded interior with magnificent carpets and niches for delicate flasks of coloured ceramic or glass, is unstintingly luxurious and very much a palace setting: note the similarities to the setting of the musical entertainments illustrated in cat. no. 64. The peacock that struts along the floating text panel on the roof may refer to the bird's ancient Iranian role as a symbol of royalty, or the long history of peacock symbolism within Hindu and Buddhist visual traditions. Behind it a scene of elegant rooftops and distant trees suggests a pleasure garden.


تجاذب لازم آید مانند حزن و غضب و خوف و غیر آن پنجر دارند
و سبب آن بود که تألیف اضداد در یک حال صورت نبندد و اشتعال

66

PRINCE AND COURTIERS IN A PAVILION

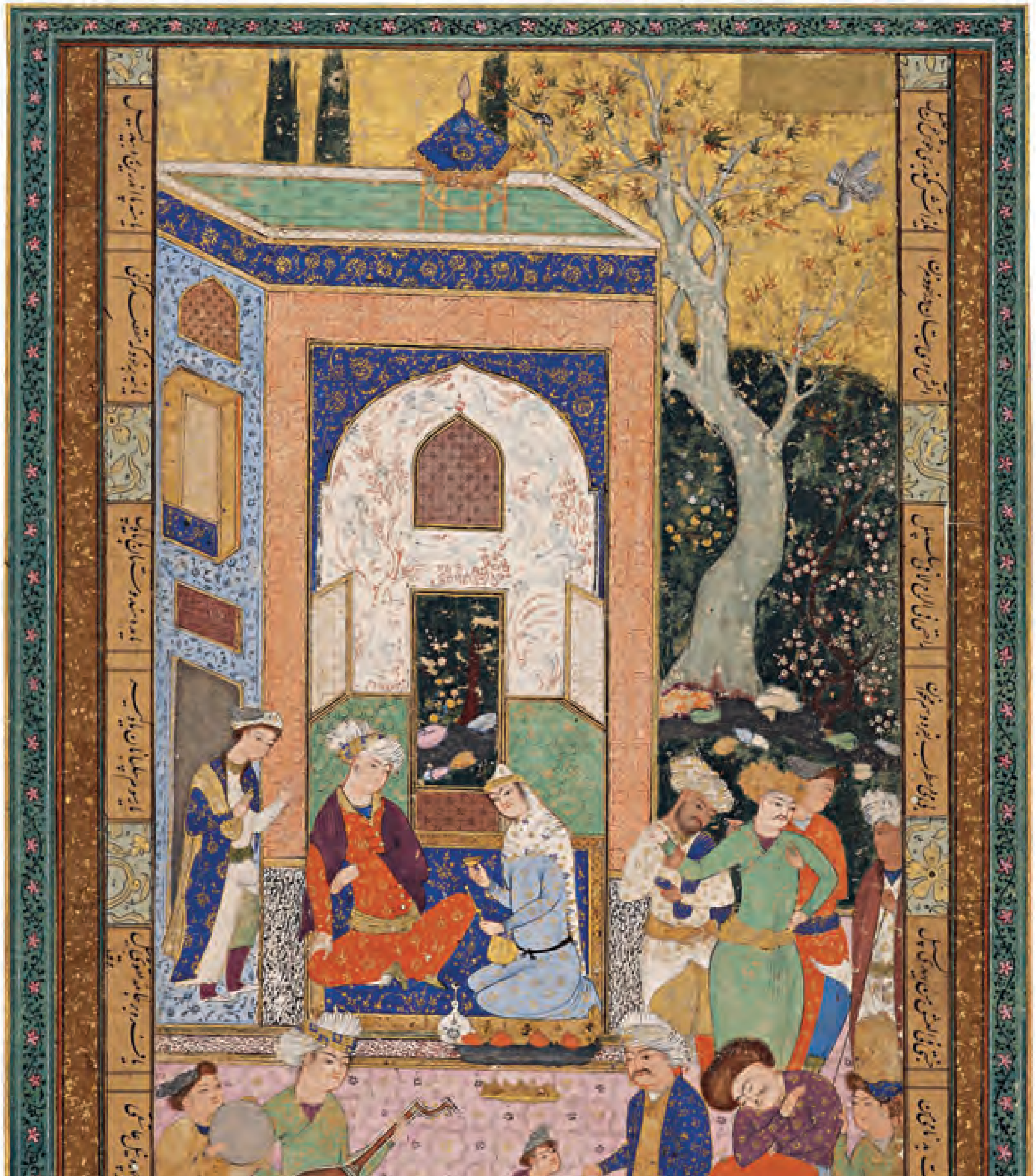
Painting from an unidentified manuscript, mounted onto an album page
with fragments of calligraphy and border painting
Iran, possibly Isfahan; c. 1600–1615
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 32.8 x 23 cm
AKM 430
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 184 (not ill.)

A rather hedonistic party in a refined setting is the subject of this image. While a young prince and his female companion drink and enjoy the music of an oud and a tambourine, a tipsy reveller is led away to the right and two more men slump with their eyes closed in the foreground. Like the palatial structure seen in cat. no. 64, this scene includes an open-fronted, four-sided structure that appears to be situated at one side of a tiled courtyard, with a garden visible behind. However, where the interior of the pavilion in the Mughal image is decorated with niches painted plain white in order to emphasise the precious vessels they hold, the back wall of the *iwan* in the present painting is ornamented in a quite different manner.

The fresco painting that decorates this luxurious chamber depicts a wild landscape, inhabited by a rabbit, crane, simurgh (a mythical Iranian bird, here resembling a Chinese phoenix), lion, fox or dog, and ibexes, all executed in blue on white, while around them flowers, trees and clouds have been painted in red. The whole mural has been executed with a distinctly calligraphic line, strongly reminiscent of Chinese ink-and-wash painting and its imitations in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Iran, and the forms of some of the creatures, in particular the simurgh, lion and crane, as well as the cloud-scroll motifs, show their origins in Chinese art very clearly. The lyrical theme of this landscape scene also echoes the subtle gold paintings found in the blank paper margins of contemporary manuscript paintings and album-folios (see cat. no. 110).

The art of fresco painting had developed in new directions apparently influenced by East Asian art during the Timurid period in Iran (c. 1370–1507), following the influx of Chinese motifs and styles into Iranian art during the period of Mongol Ilkhan rule (c. 1256–1353). Medieval texts record the existence of fresco paintings full of images of historical figures engaged in battles and sieges, hunting, royal receptions and feasts (Diba 2001, pp. 11–12), and a miniature in a late fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami shows a painter and his assistant creating frescoes of a fantastic hunt scene on the wall of Castle Khawarnaq (Soudavar 1992, p. 138). The evidence of the miniature painting show here would also suggest that less dramatic fresco painting, centred on landscape imagery both with and without fantastic creatures, was also in widespread use. In the idiom of the painted illustration, these appear to have been commonly painted in blue on white (see also cat. nos 21, 96, 97 and 109), while examples that incorporate red background motifs like this one are less common (see another example from Tabriz, c. 1530–1540, in Richard 1997, p. 152). Cartouche designs also appear in painted frescoes (see cat. no. 63).

It is true, as Lentz has pointed out, that it is dangerous to use miniature painting as a guide to real-life architectural decoration. In the case of fresco images like this one, such designs have clearly evolved from Chinese manuscript and ceramic paintings, and may have come into existence within painted images of wall frescoes because that was a convenient means of working these *chinoiserie* themes into the narrative imagery of Persianate book painting, rather than an accurate reflection of contemporary architectural practice (Lentz 1993, pp. 253–256). However, some examples of architectural frescoes with landscape images in blue on white can be seen in late fourteenth-century Timurid funerary monuments at Shah-i Zinda, Samarqand, while the restored ceiling paintings at the ʿAli Qapu palace in Isfahan (early seventeenth century) show willowy trees, birds, flowers and cartouches on a cream ground. While it is quite possible that the *chinoiserie* fresco painting forming the focus of the architectural decoration in this scene is a product of the miniature painter's art rather than the architect's, it may equally have its roots in real architectural practice.



67

MUQARNAS ELEMENT

Islamic Spain; late fifteenth or sixteenth century
Carved wood
Height: 86 cm; width: 73.5 cm
AKM 892
Unpublished

There is probably no form of decoration more immediately and exclusively associated with Islamic architecture than *muqarnas*. This system of small, tiered 'honeycomb' vaulting has been used on squinches, capitals, niche hoods, cornices and other architectural surfaces from the twelfth century onwards, and its use appears to have spread across the Islamic world within a relatively short space of time. The precise origins of *muqarnas* have been much debated, but the salient decorative features are its 'fragmentation and seemingly unsupported projection' (Tabbaa n.d.), creating dramatic passages from one plane to another, refining and articulating architectural zones of transition, or, in its most complex forms, building out interior ceiling or hood spaces until they seem to be hung with stalactites. *Muqarnas* can be executed in stone, stucco, wood or ceramic (see cat. no. 28). Although the present example was probably created for a palatial context, *muqarnas* elements have been very widely present in religious architecture from their first use, and a great number of the examples that survive in situ are found on religious buildings.

Spectacular marquetry ceilings were created during the Islamic period in the Iberian peninsula using a combination of techniques including marquetry, coffering and *muqarnas* elements, and the taste for such ceilings continued for a long time in the hybrid artistic cultures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Earlier examples are largely limited to royal structures, such as a complete thirteenth- or fourteenth-century ceiling that was taken from the Torre de las Damas in the Alhambra to the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin. It comprises geometric designs, a *muqarnas* frieze from which a strapwork cupola springs, and *muqarnas* coffers in the four corners of the outer square (Dodds 1992, pp. 368–369). *Muqarnas* coffers – the inverse of this form, and rather like little domes hung inside with stalactites when viewed from below – were apparently the main use of *muqarnas* mouldings in the elaborate wooden ceilings of that time.

The fashion for interiors in this style continued into the late sixteenth century, with craftsmen creating elite interior decoration to order. An octagonal *muqarnas* boss similar to the present example, although somewhat squatter, is held in the collection of the Hispanic Society of America; the use of such bosses as the centrepiece of wooden ceilings does not appear to have been general practice before the late fifteenth century (Hispanic Society 1928, pp. 9–10, no. D72). The Hispanic Society boss clearly shows traces of plaster and gilding, and although no such decoration is evident on this piece, it is quite possible that it was once plastered and painted as well. If it were also originally used as a centrepiece, *muqarnas* of this form would probably have formed the central boss of a luxury ceiling: a complete example of a late fifteenth-century ceiling with a central *muqarnas* boss is held in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Rosser-Owen 2010, p. 86).

68

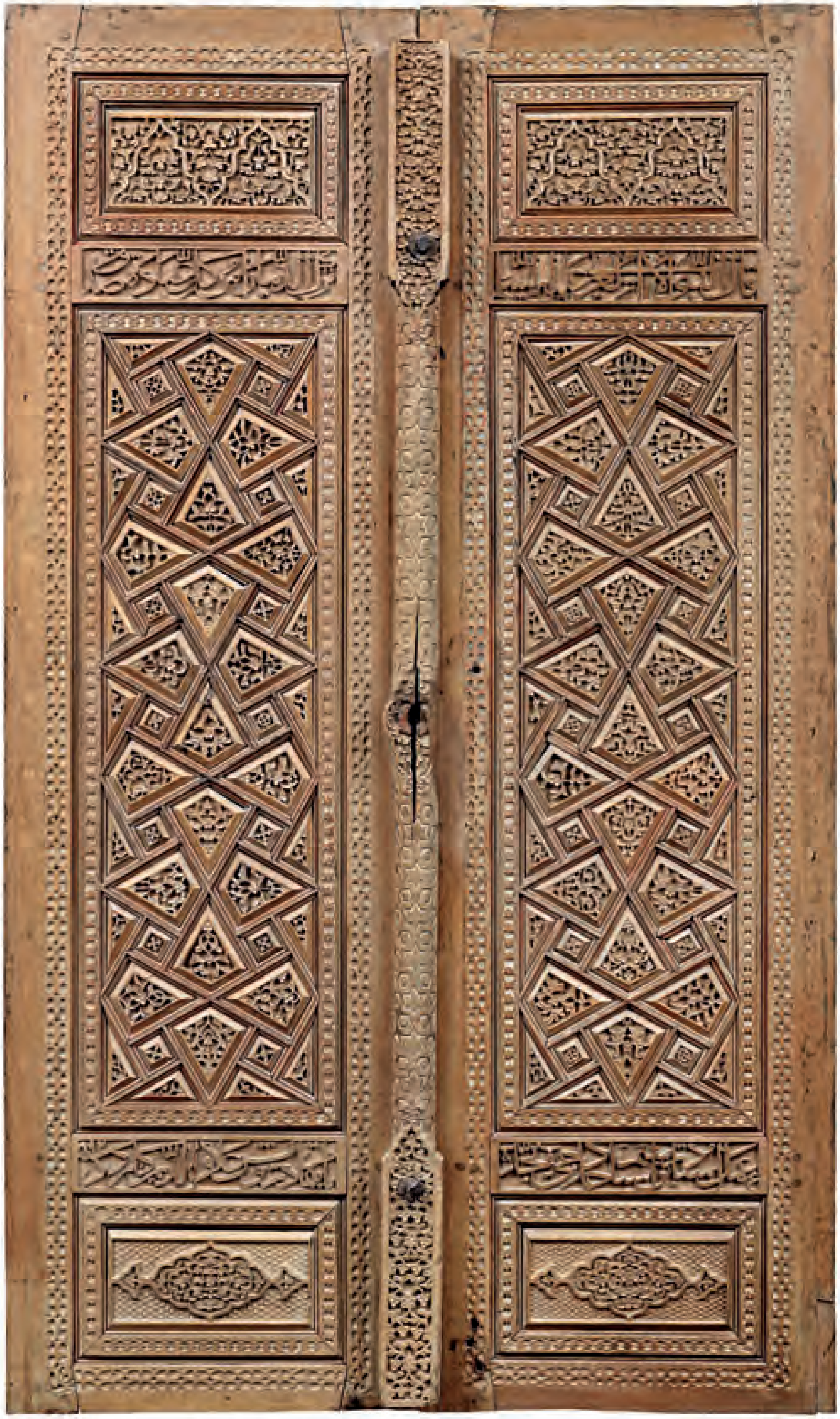
PAIR OF WOODEN DOORS

Iran; dated 892 H/1487 CE
Carved wood with traces of paint
189 x 106 cm
Inscription (lower panels): 'The work of Ustād ibn … Ustād Ḥājjī the carpenter [al-Najjār] with the … of Darvīsh Alā ' ūddin, work [completed] in the year 892'
AKM 707

Publ: AKTC 2008b, no. 16; AKTC 2009a, p. 188 (no. 144); AKTC 2009b, p. 188 (no. 144); AKTC 2010a, pp. 188–189 (no. 149); AKTC 2010b, p. 185 (no. 84)

The image of the closed or half-open door may have become a rather well-worn trope in the architectural spaces of miniature painting, but the real-world architecture of medieval and early modern Iran and India also placed great emphasis on the door as a site of decoration and one of the artistic focal points of a room or building. Several examples of fine carved wooden doors survive from Timurid Iran, and the majority conform to the composition that has been employed here, with one large central panel per leaf and smaller panels above and below. The main panels of this pair are decorated with a discontiguous but symmetrical strapwork pattern of kite shapes bounded by smaller squares and triangles, each component of the pattern deeply carved with curvilinear vegetal motifs and sent in a framework of raised wooden mouldings.

Comparable carved doors often have less complex star-and-polygon patterns in the central panel, executed a similar manner to that seen in this pair: see an example, dated 1442, in the Iran Bastan Museum, Tehran (ill. Jones – Michell 1976, p. 292). A pair of doors now in New York, dated 1466, carries three equally sized panels of more simple geometric design on each leaf (Dimand 1936, p. 79). The small, densely carved inscriptive panels on plain backgrounds that appear on the present piece are very similar to those on the doors in New York, while the cartouches in the bottom panels, set on a fish-scale ground, are closely comparable with a carved panel from the side of a cenotaph, dated 1496 (Pourjavady 2001, vol. 3, pp. 218–219). The central design of such panels, a cusped cartouche with pendants at each end, would appear to have its roots in bookbinding decoration, where it would be turned through ninety degrees (see cat. no. 100). The same cartouche later came to appear as the principal design on carved doors from Iran and Central Asia (see an example dated 1594–1595 in A. Welch 1979, pp. 138–139). The transfer of decorative motifs and styles across media is not uncommon in Timurid arts, and the upper panels of this door, with their finely worked design of interlocking ornate arches filled with deep floral decoration, can be compared with some of the best Timurid tilework from the Shah-i Zinda near Samarqand (Jones – Michell 1976, p. 260).



69

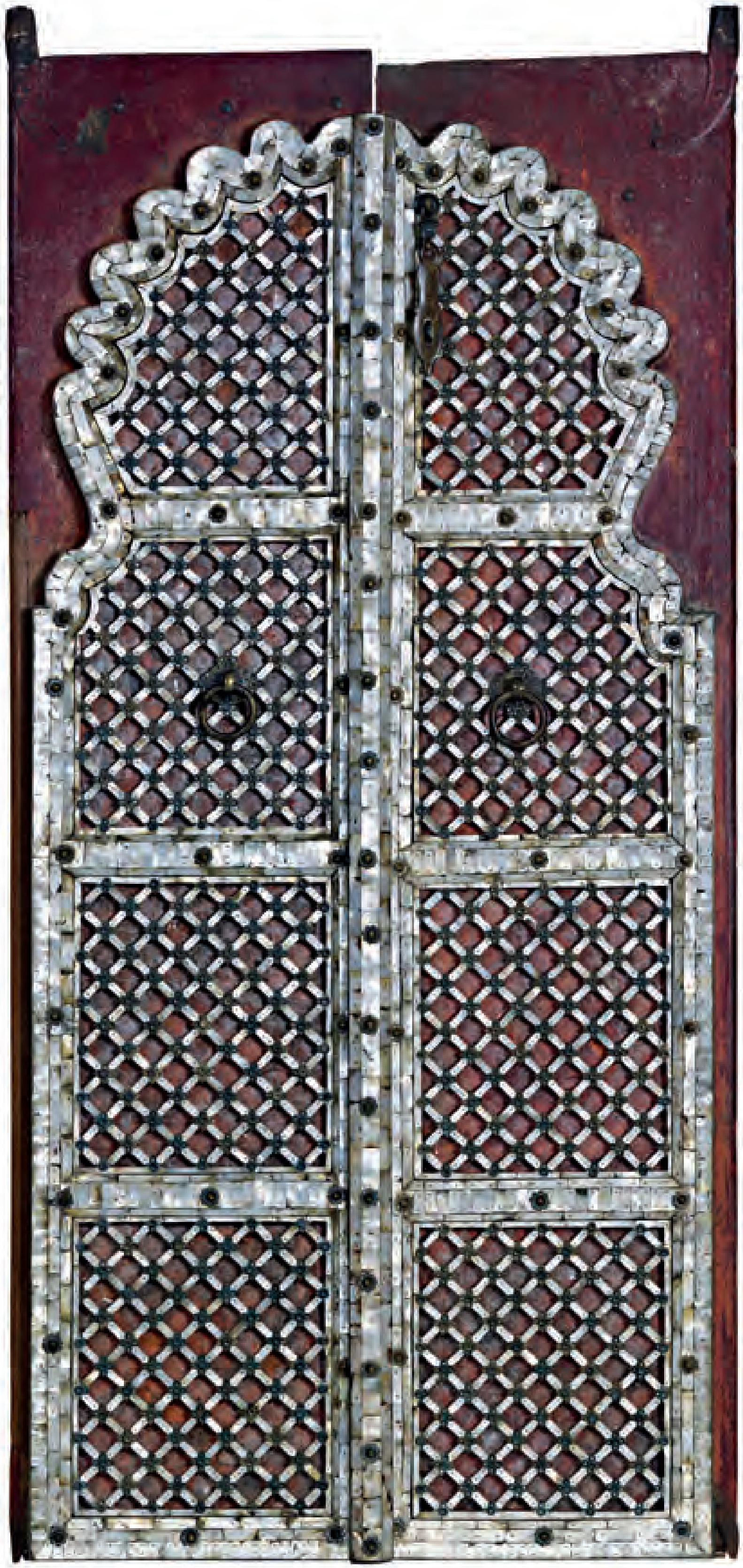
PAIR OF WOODEN DOORS INLAID WITH MOTHER-OF-PEARL

Gujarat, India; eighteenth century
Wood with mother-of-pearl and metal fittings
187 x 49.5 cm
AKM 705
Publ: AKTC 2009a, p. 246 (no. 182); AKTC 2009b, p. 246 (no. 182); AKTC 2010a, p. 261 (no. 199); AKTC 2010b, pp. 188–189 (no. 87)

An elaborate cusped arch with reverse-curved shoulders forms the key design feature of this pair of doors made from a reticulated mother-of-pearl framework mounted on plain wooden panels. The shape of the arch is almost perfectly matched by that of a pair of doors in the David Collection, said to come from eighteenth-century Mewar, northwest India, and also a further pair of mother-of-pearl doors recently sold at auction (Sotheby's 6 Oct 2010, lot 237). The David Collection doors are composed not of mother-of-pearl but of carved wooden pieces featuring fine floral and figural decoration and arranged to form a wooden grille, nailed onto plain wooden panels; nonetheless, the similarity to this pair and the Sotheby's pair in outline and proportions is striking (von Folsach 2001, p. 279).

In all three cases, the application of delicate non-structural arches to a substantial pair of wooden doors is a reminder of the fictive nature of much architectural decoration in the Indo-Islamic tradition: the arch is in effect an image that has been superimposed onto a less glamorous, but functional, fitting. Applied non-structural arches, often with comparable cusped outlines, are readily apparent in much late Mughal architecture. The seventeenth-century Moti Masjid ('Pearl Mosque') in the Red Fort at Delhi, although earlier, employs ornamental arches of a related type as carved stone wall decoration (Alfieri 2000, p. 264), and the image of an arch of very similar outline to the one on this door appears all over the island palace complex of Maharana Ari Singh of Mewar in a painting of 1767 (Sreenivasan 2009, pp. 112–113).

While the original site of the present pair of doors is unknown, a Gujarati provenance is conjectured from the skill of the mother-of-pearl work. The area of Gujarat was recognised as the centre of this craft from the early sixteenth century, with its mother-of-pearl products both large and small gaining international fame. There are two main types of mother-of-pearl work: one method uses small pieces set in a dark mastic, normally for making decorative boxes and so forth, while the second, of which this is an example, uses larger pieces of mother-of-pearl as an overlay held on with brass pins. Both types may well have been produced in the same place, and Abu'l Fazl's *A'in-i Akbari* (c. 1595) mentions the province of Ahmedabad (i.e. Gujarat) as a centre of production: 'Designers, wood inlayers and countless other craftsmen so set mother-of-pearl that it appears a fine line, and make pen-boxes and coffers and the like of these' (Jaffer 2002, p. 24). The doors in the David Collection are thought to have come from a palace, and the present doors may also have adorned a wealthy home or possibly a public structure such as a temple or a tomb. Mother-of-pearl decoration survives in other sacred architectural contexts, for example the early seventeenth-century tomb canopy of Shah ʿAlam at Rasulabad, near Ahmedabad (*ibid*.).



70

DĀRĀ SHIKŌH AND A YOUNG WOMAN ON A TERRACE AT NIGHT

Folio from the dispersed ‘Muḥammad Bāqir’ album;
painting attributed to Balchand, margin paintings to Muḥammad Bāqir
Painting: India, c. 1645; margin paintings: Iran, eighteenth century
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Page: 33.5 x 21 cm
AKM 189

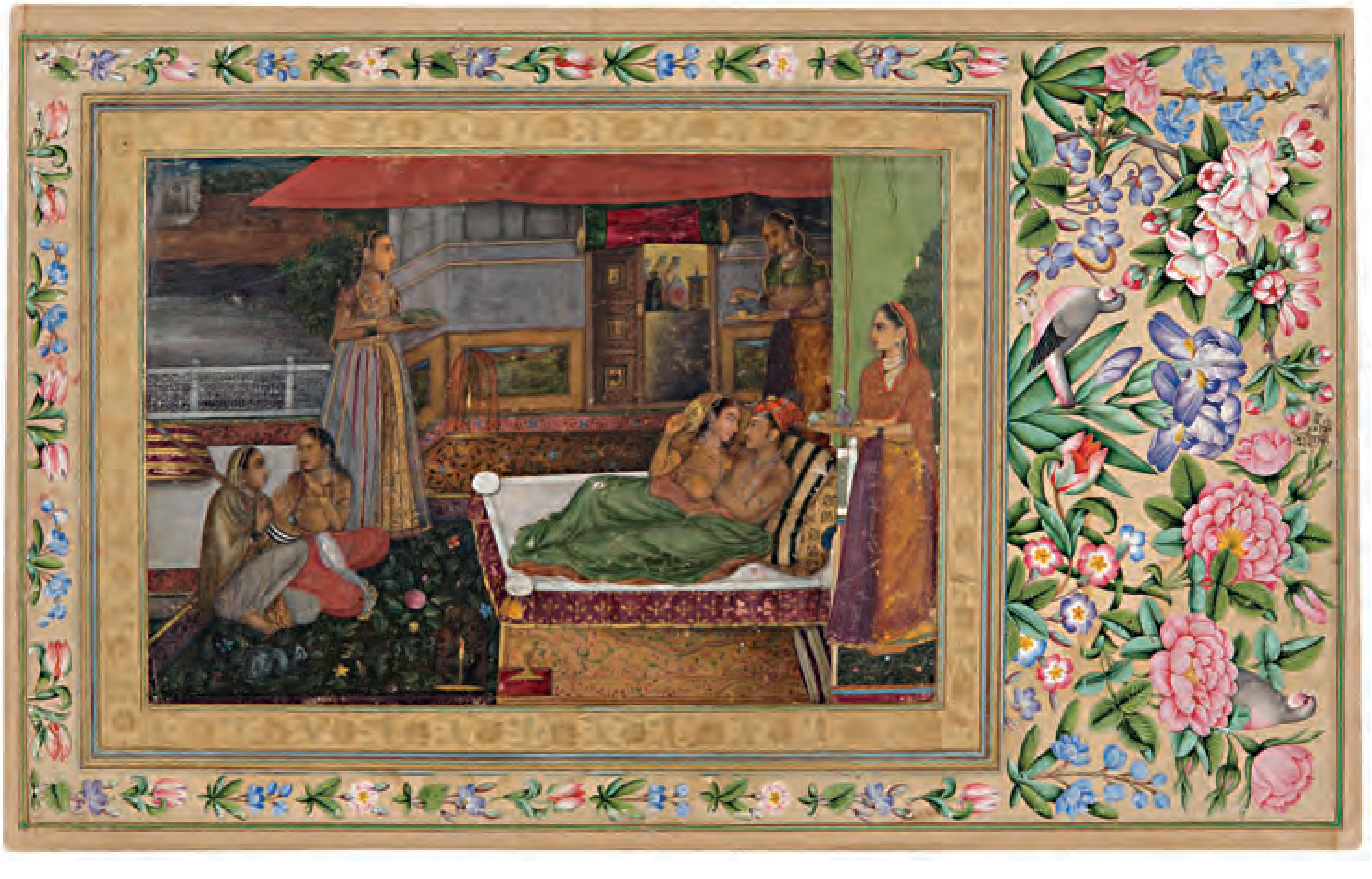
Publ: Canby 1998, pp. 149–150 (no. 111); AKTC 2008a, pp. 244–245 (no. 95)

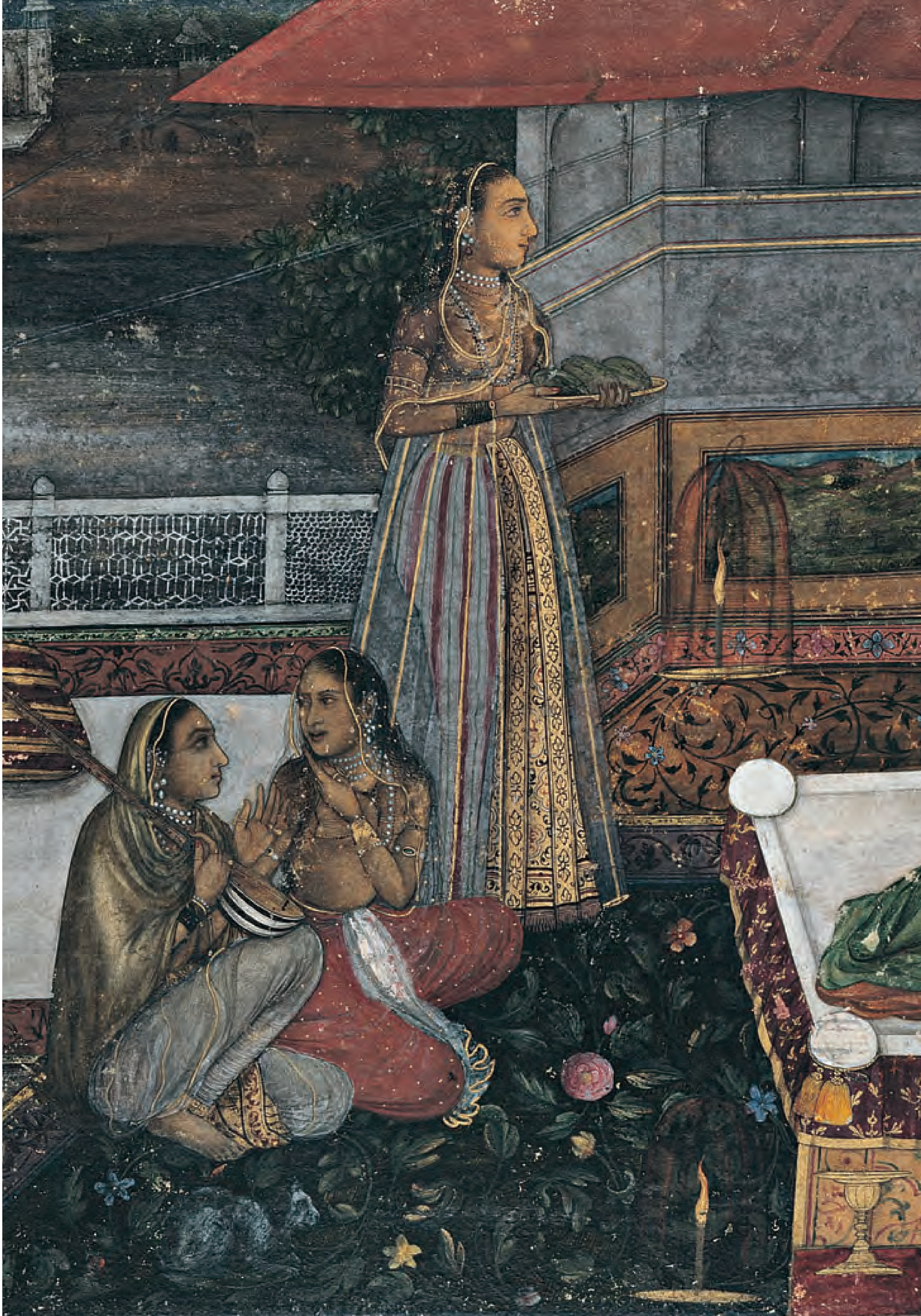
The ‘Muhammad Baqir’ album, already incomplete prior to its final dismemberment for sale in 1982, contained a number of seventeenth-century Iranian and Indian paintings, as well as copies of European paintings and margin illustrations of flowers and plants. The best of the margin paintings was signed by the eighteenth-century painter Muhammad Baqir, from whom the album has taken its unofficial name (Diba 1989, p. 154), and the present image was one of the pages sold in 1982.

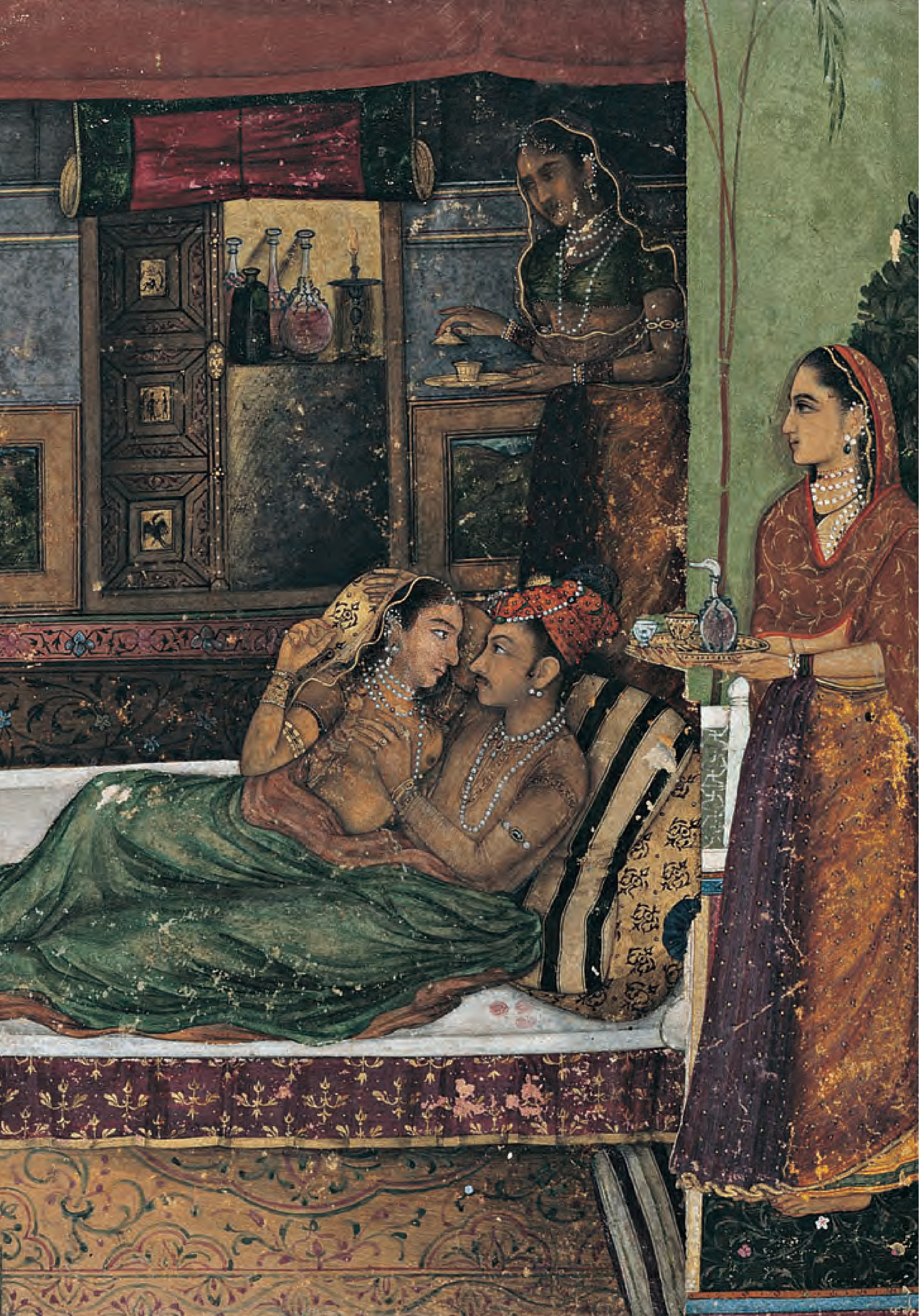
The candid intimacy of this painting of a prince, thought to be Dara Shikoh (d. 1659), and his companion as they lie on a dark terrace apparently oblivious to the five female attendants closely surrounding them, marks the piece as a product of the seventeenth century. It was most likely created during the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1657). During this period the informal royal portraiture that had gained popularity under Jahangir in the earlier part of the seventeenth century was further developed into an art of luxurious and sometimes startling intimacy, with scenes set in some of the most secluded corners of palace life. The closed nature of the architectural setting of this image, as well as the intense, locked gaze of the lovers, forces the viewer into the position of a voyeur, while the female attendants quietly waiting on the couple stand as a reminder that few aspects of palace life can have been truly private for a Mughal prince.

Deep shadows and *chiaroscuro* have been used to create this tender night scene. Two covered candles at the end of the bed and in the corner of the room, and a further candle in the partially open cupboard containing wine goblets, have been used to set up warm directional light within the scene and to render the subjects luminous within a darkened palette. The close attention paid to the details of the domestic setting extends not only to the careful rendering of objects, such as the duck-headed bottle brought by one of the attendants, but also to an important depiction of landscape painting as architectural decoration, seen in the lower panels of the far wall. Textual evidence shows that wall-paintings illustrating hunting, battle and garden scenes were executed at Fatehpur Sikri (1579 CE), alongside religious imagery, for the emperor Akbar, and the remains of paintings executed for Jahangir were found in the tower of Lahore fort (Flood 2006, p. 589). However, the unusual depiction in this image of what appear to be wall panels painted with unpopulated hilly landscapes provides evidence of a less dramatic form of wall painting that must also have existed during the Mughal period.

As Canby has intimated, while this painting has been attributed to the court artist Balchand, the painterly interest in the atmospheric possibilities of twilight and cast light might equally suggest his brother Payag as the artist. Payag’s work is known for artistic experimentation with shadow and modelling of form, often cited as evidence of a close interest in European painting, particularly Dutch still lifes (Canby 1998; Leach 1995, vol. 2, pp. 1115–16). Furthermore, in compositional terms, two other night-scenes by Payag represent the closest comparison pieces for this image (Dye 1991, pp. 132–133). A further painting showing the union of Khusraw and Shirin, in a *Khamsa* manuscript of c. 1640–1645 created for the future Mughal emperor Awrangzib (r. 1659–1707), is also closely comparable (Leach 1998, p. 84).







71

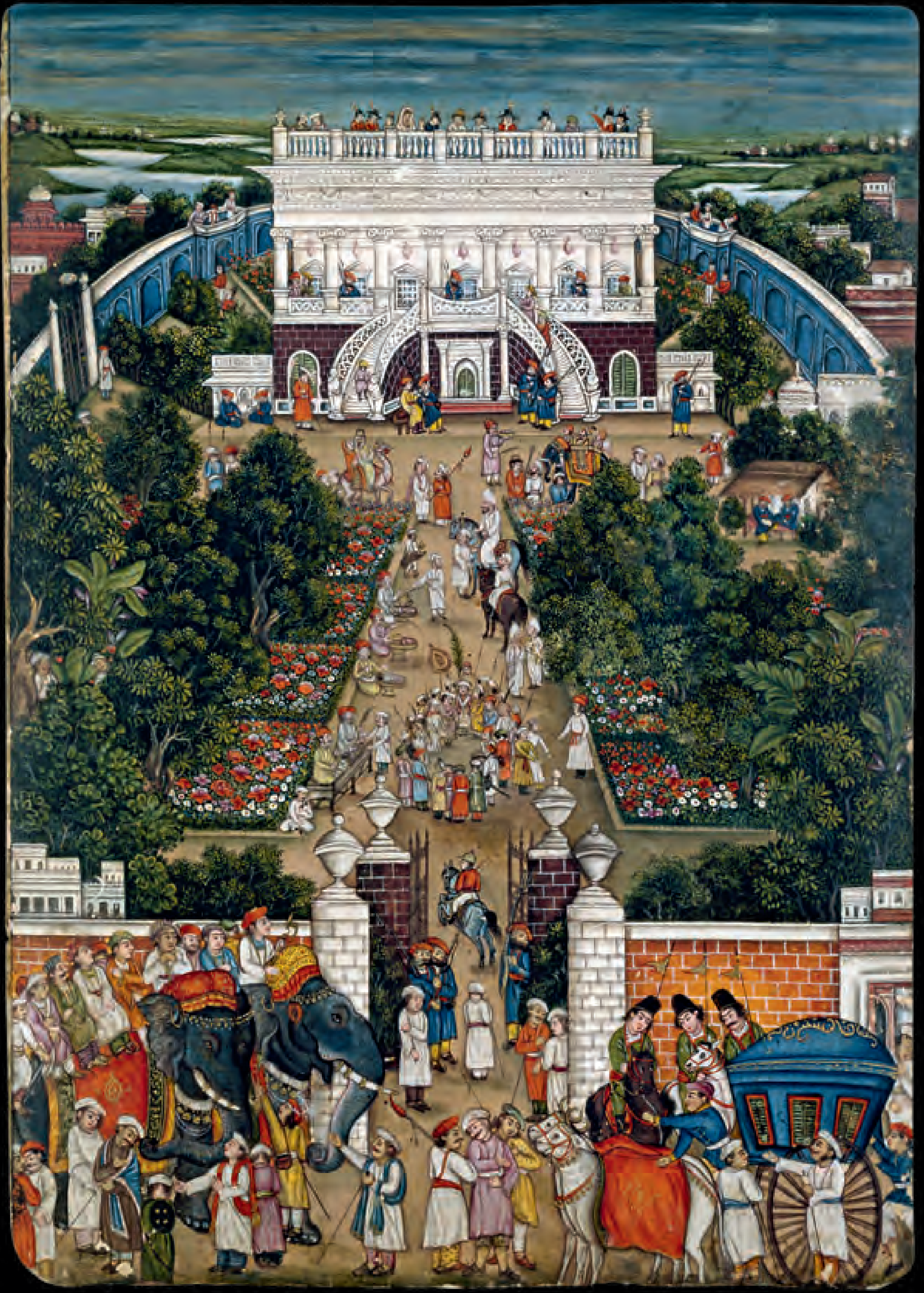
THE PALACE OF BEGUM SAMRU IN DELHI

Delhi; c. 1820–1830
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
29.3 x 21 cm
AKM 464
Publ: AKTC 2009a, p. 252 (no. 189); AKTC 2009b, p. 252 (no. 189); AKTC 2010a, pp. 268–269 (no. 207)

In contrast to the previous image, this painting shows palatial architecture at its most determinedly public. Postdating the advent of formal British occupation in Delhi in 1803, this image portrays a building and grounds that are already crawling with people, even as more seem to be arriving at the gates. The palace that is so carefully constructed as the focal point of this image, with its distinctive Europeanising architecture in white marble and red stone, belonged to a remarkable woman known as Begum Samru. A former dancing girl, survivor of two European husbands, convert to Catholicism, the ruler of Sardhana (a collection of villages northeast of Delhi) and an important political player in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Delhi, the Begum (an honorific title) was a woman of substantial property and power when she died in 1836, at the age of 85 (Leach 1995, p. 791). Her Delhi palace was later severely damaged in the fight against the British in 1857. The structure as it appears in this image is clearly identifiable from watercolour paintings made of the north and south views of the building (this is the south view), preserved by Sir Thomas Metcalfe in his album *Reminiscences of Imperial Delhi*, dated 1843 and now held in the British Library.

'Company Painting' is the name often given to a style of watercolour painting that fused existing Indian traditions with European tastes, created by Indian painters working for European patrons, although the style also gained popularity amongst the Indian elite. The name is a reference to the British East India Company, the foreign trading monopoly in eighteenth-century India and ultimately the forerunner of formal British rule in Southeast Asia. While much Company Painting in Delhi centred on images of Mughal monuments to be sold as mementos to British residents and tourists, wealthy patrons also commissioned paintings depicting themselves and their houses, horses and servants. Begum Samru is supposed to have decorated her palace with twenty-five oil paintings of herself and members of her household, many of them by the artist Jiwan Ram who was also a favourite portrait painter of various East India Company employees (Archer 1955, pp. 67–68). One of several surviving paintings executed for the Begum shows her, surrounded by about eighty courtiers, seated on the terrace of her palace – which is immediately identifiable by its pedimented white marble doors, also clearly visible in this painting (ill. Leach 1995, pp. 788–789). Thus, if the present piece was executed for the Begum, it was perhaps intended as a boastful portrait of her palace, and by extension a self-aggrandising image of her wealth and success. Alternatively, it may simply be a souvenir image of a distinctive and grand building painted for a tourist.

The use of a raised viewpoint, exaggerated diagonals and strong symmetry became very fashionable in topographical images painted in late eighteenth-century India (*ibid*., p. 694). Such techniques enabled the artist to fit an intense level of detailed, descriptive information into the representation of a building or complex, even on a relatively small scale such as this, and this rather ostentatious mode of depiction suited those who wished to have their property recorded for posterity. The palace itself, including as it does classicising columns, a garlanded pediment, roof balustrade and a great double staircase with carved busts at the base, bears the clear imprint of the Classical revival styles such as Palladianism that were fashionable in eighteenth-century Britain. Pattern-books of Classicising architecture were present in India in the late eighteenth century, and the resulting buildings can probably best be termed a form of Anglo-Palladianism.



72

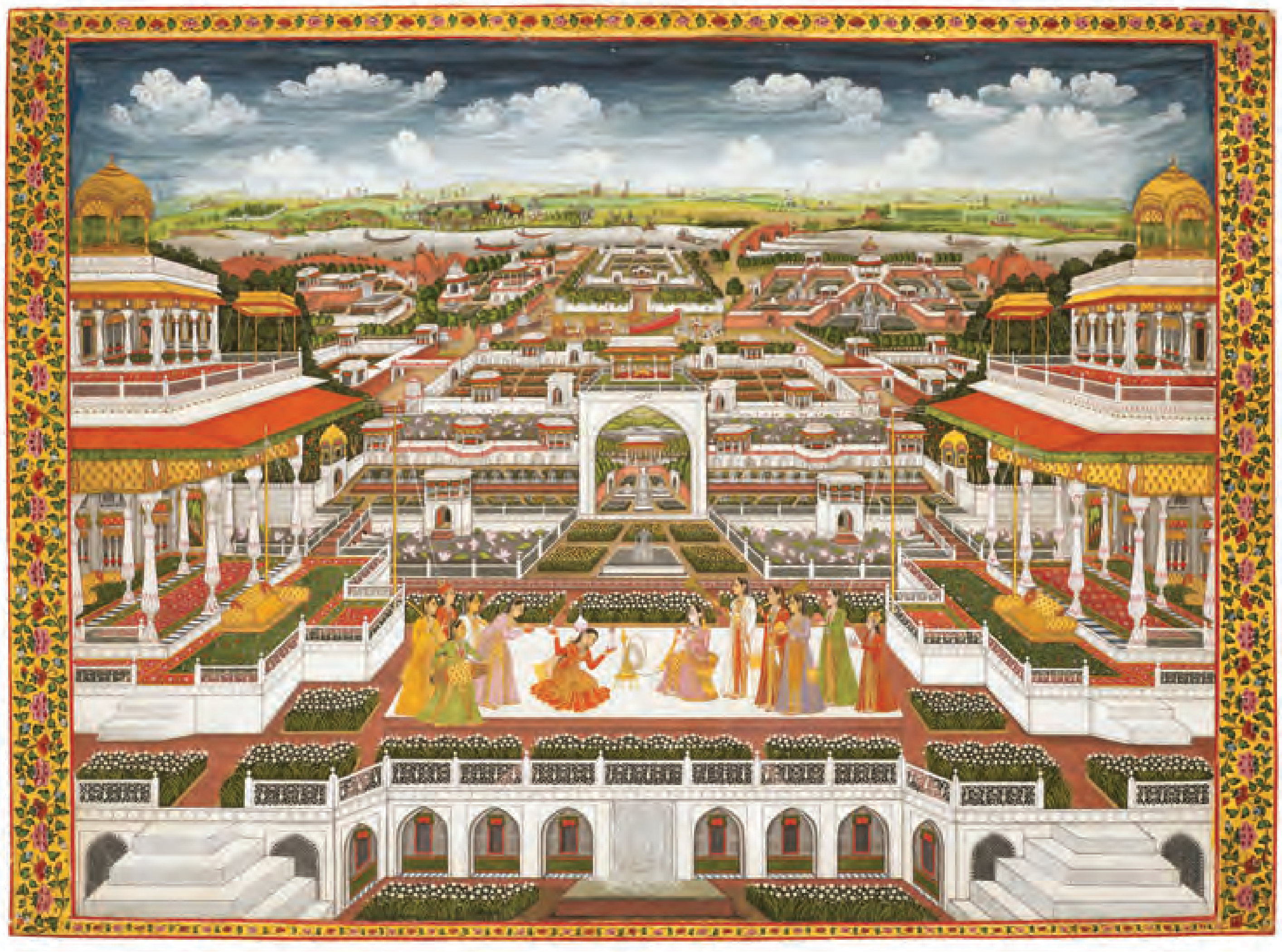
ENTERTAINMENT IN A PALACE

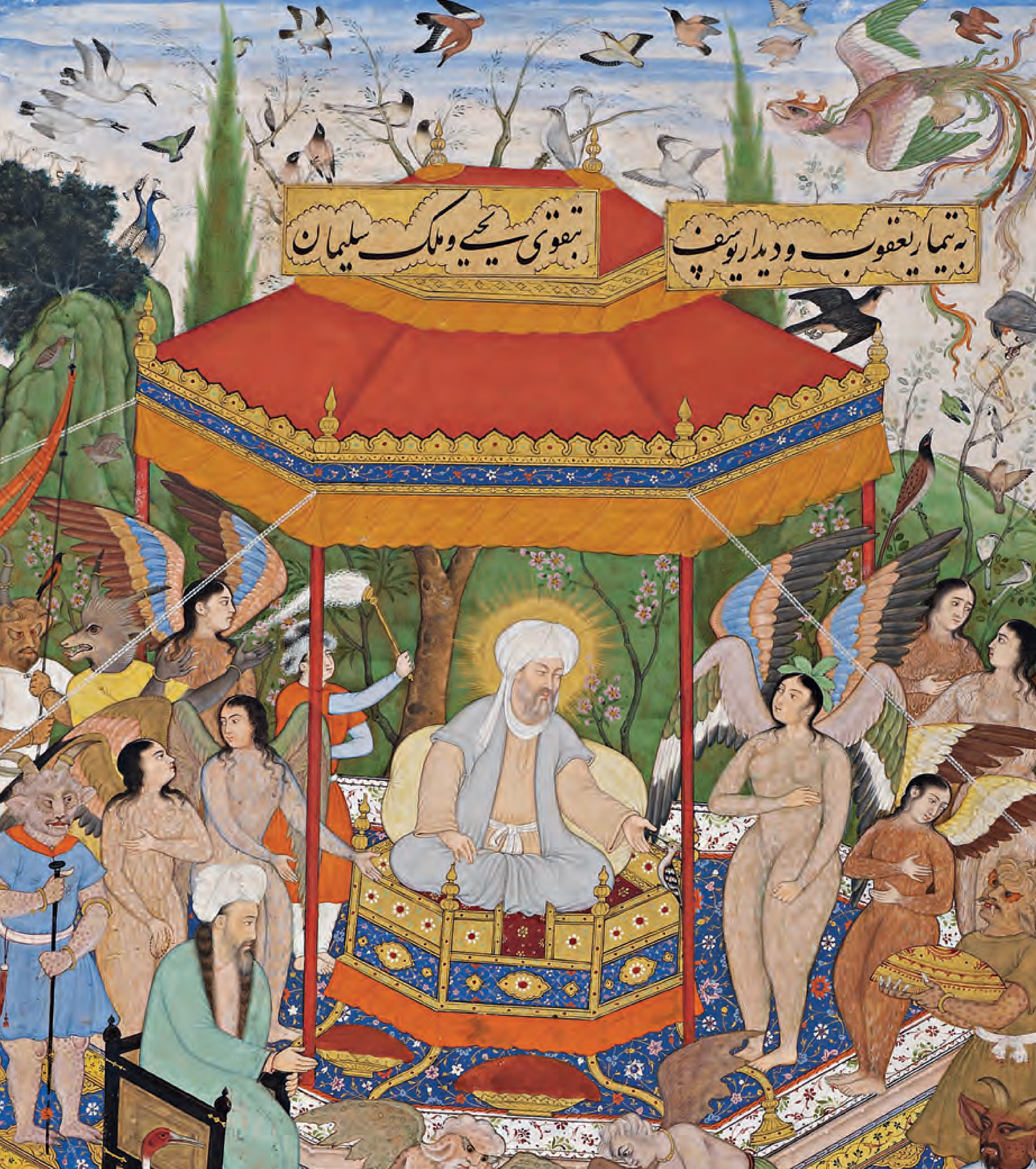
Faizabad, India; c. 1765–1770
Signed ‘Faizullah’
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Page: 50.2 x 69 cm
AKM 921
Publ: Welch 1978, pp. 82–83 (no. 33); Paitnak 1985, pp. 69–71 (no. 14)

The Nawwab viziers, a family of Iranian Shiʿi origin who rose to power in Awadh in northern India, gained increasing political significance and independence as the power of the Mughal dynasty (1526–1858) waned in the eighteenth century. Their capitals, at Faizabad and subsequently at Lucknow, hosted glittering courts in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and they were eventually accorded a royal title – the kings of Awadh – by the British in 1819, as the British East India Company sought by all means to gain political and military control of the area. Awadh was finally annexed by the East India Company in 1856.

This eighteenth-century example of the grand topographical style of north Indian painting is thought to have been executed during the reign of Shujaʿ al-Dawla (r. 1754–1775), a ruler who both enlarged the realm of Awadh and made real efforts to protect his state from British predation. His courtiers patronised the visual and literary arts at the first Nawwab capital in Faizabad, and this painting projects a court culture of confidence and luxury. The imagined elevated viewpoint that is also employed in cat. no. 71 is here taken to an extreme, with a dizzying panoptical view presenting multiple vanishing points – a favourite device of north Indian painters during this period. The scale of the painting makes this a truly disorienting feat, and gives the scene an overloaded quality that invites the viewer to peer ever more closely. Very similar paintings, in portrait format rather than landscape, are held in the Chester Beatty Library (Leach 1995, pp. 694–695) and the David Collection (von Folsach 2001, p. 107) and are attributed to the same painter. As has been noted elsewhere, the evident impact of European perspectival models on Indian painting in the eighteenth century should not cause us to overlook the many aspects of this painting style that are descended from other sources, such as Mughal painting (Markel 2010, p. 77).

While the foreground of the scene is dominated by the set-piece of courtly women watching a dancer who balances a flask on her head, closer inspection of the architectural surroundings, and the world that lies beyond the distant river, reveals a series of vignettes and surprises. In the far background hunters on elephants advance towards tigers cornered in a pen; further mounted riders rush to the aid of one of their number who is being attacked by a giant crocodile in the river; meanwhile, to the right of this a quiet agricultural scene takes place. Within the palace complex, covered carriages and various figures converge outside the gates of a garden in the middle ground, but the rest of the area is free from human activity apart from the women in the foreground, and instead presents a wealth of architectural and horticultural detail. Elaborate baluster columns to left and right are decorated with pink-tipped lotus-like forms, echoed in the flowers that fill the pools in the central area of the image, while the watercourses that run through the walled gardens and around the pavilions culminate in a waterfall running over a textured slab into a pool in the immediate foreground. The disorienting power of multiple vanishing points is exemplified in the centrepiece of this painting: an arch (signed by the artist) in the middle of the garden holds a tiny, condensed image of the whole scene from the river to the walled gardens and fountains, as if refracted in a prism, although it may possibly be intended to signify a wall painting.




به تیمار یعقوب و دیدار یوسف
بتقوی یحیی و ملک سلیمان

V

GARDENS, PAVILIONS AND TENTS

Gardens, pavilions and tents: The arts of shelter

James L. Wescoat Jr.

In the history of things, gardens come first and last. The Garden of Eden at the beginning of the creation, and the Garden of Paradise at the end of time for those who have had faith and done good works.[1] These garden bookends promise shelter, sustenance, and satisfaction beyond human comprehension. In the meantime, as this exhibition exuberantly reveals, gardens have inspired artistic imagination and genius.

Gardens of the Mughal period, in South Asian history and culture of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, are the ones I know best. Those of Kashmir, in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent, have epitomised the imagination of paradise on earth, and they still do in some respects. Royal gardens such as Shalimar bagh and Nishat bagh (fig. 1) at Srinagar in Kashmir cascade down the hillslopes surrounding Lake Dal, their chilly water channels and fountain sprays redirecting the partially tamed mountain streams. Today, oriental plane trees line terraces that host hundreds of family picnics, busloads of schoolchildren, and an occasional garden historian. Notwithstanding severe environmental pressures, these paradise-like garden landscapes extend out onto the waters in floating lotus leaves and buds, and vegetable market gardens are built upon mats of twigs and nutrient-rich organic matter (fig. 2).

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If we proceed from gardens to tents and pavilions, does that follow the course of architectural history from early to later forms of expression, or does it swim against the current of time, moving from later to earlier art form? Did tents precede pavilions as transportable modes of shelter for hunters, gatherers, shepherds, and military bands? Or did the natural, partly open, yet fixed-in-place pavilion-like shelters of caves and tree canopies precede the textile arts of tents, not to mention the wood and stone forms they took in later courtly pavilions? Perhaps a more interesting topic is how those art forms interacted with one another in different cultural contexts.

We have already noted that gardens came first and last, and so it seems apt to begin with propositions about gardens as the context of human shelter, and to close with some thoughts about the garden arts that encompassed tents, pavilions and settlements, as well as museum exhibitions and catalogues.

Figure 1. Nishat bagh, Srinagar (Kashmir), overlooking Dal Lake. Photograph by the author, 2009.

Figure 2. Floating gardens on Dal Lake. Photograph by the author, 2009.

Two Questions about Islamic Gardens

Of the many questions asked about Islamic gardens, two broad approaches adapted from Greek philosophy into later Islamic thought stand out. Those who follow a Platonic tradition, consciously or not, ask: 'What is an Islamic garden?' What are the necessary features that make it a garden and that make a place Islamic? What specific connotations and meanings does an Islamic garden have, as compared with other garden traditions? And ultimately, what is the 'form' of an Islamic garden? Those who follow the more Aristotelian tradition in Islamic philosophy might ask a different set of questions. 'What do Islamic gardens do?' How have they been built, used, and experienced in different places and times? Conversely, how have these places transformed the people and places where they were built?

It is stimulating to discuss these philosophical questions in the abstract. They invite fascinating comparisons among marvellous surviving historical gardens from Morocco to Indonesia – not to mention comparisons with the contemporary gardens of St. Petersburg, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, and elsewhere. Such comparisons can help us imagine the possible futures of garden design.

In the meantime, this exhibition can help us to imagine and think about the gardens in paintings and other objects, like the image of a sinner's plea to God from the Mughal *Kulliyat* of Saʿdi (cat. no. 73), which provides a wonderful focus for sustained reflection on gardens. What are the 'gardens' in this painting? Presumably the walled enclosure in the distance, though we see only its treetops. How about the small, cultivated plots of land surrounding it, the tree platform in the middle ground, and the spiritual riverfront spaces in the foreground? What about the entire landscape, with its exquisite composition from mountains to rivers, and from dense urban settlement to the open terrain of the wandering mendicant? It, too, embodies many of the denotations and connotations of garden, leading us toward an ever-expanding definition of Islamic gardens.

Islamic gardens are often imagined as enclosed, rectilinear, bilaterally symmetrical spaces sometimes referred to as *chahar bagh*s ('fourfold gardens'), defined by paved walks and water channels, which served to guide the ways in which each person and plant understood their path and place. While Islamic gardens often did take this powerful form, scholars are increasingly questioning the overuse of the term *chahar bagh*, in both the interpretation and conservation of historical gardens.[2] Indeed, the language of garden arts and science is extraordinarily rich in Muslim cultures. The most detailed extant horticultural dictionaries are from medieval al-Andalus (Islamic Spain).[3] They provided detailed guidance on cropping calendars, cultivation practices, and plant maintenance. Recently, an Ottoman garden dictionary was created by Professors Nurhan Atasoy, Deniz Çaliş, Yücel Dağlı and colleagues on the Middle East Garden Traditions website, sponsored by the Dumbarton Oaks program in garden and landscape history.[4] At last count it had 12,137 dictionary entries, drawn from over one hundred sources of Ottoman scholarship!

Paintings like the finispiece of the *Diwan* of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza, showing Ibrahim Mirza and companions in a garden (cat. no. 76), remind us that gardens often had irregular changing forms that delighted gardeners and revellers then as now. While the architecture of Islamic gardens was often geometrically regular, their planting designs were far more likely to have irregular, asymmetrical patterns. Consider the painting of the young man and his beloved in the Mughal *Kulliyat* of Saʿdi (cat. no. 78). At first glance, its two banana trees appear to flank and reinforce its symmetrical garden waterworks. A closer look reveals that the two trees are placed at different distances from the water channel; groundcover plantings differ in each panel of the garden; the central kiosk has shrubs on one side but not the other; and a forest of mixed fruit and jungle trees wraps around the garden wall. These delightful variations in the pattern of planting were the norm, not the exception, in Islamic garden design.

Turning to the second question, concerning the dynamics of human and environmental processes in Islamic gardens, one wonders about what happened, historically, in each of these spaces. How were they shaped by the actions of the people, plants, and other creatures 'who form communities'[5] like us? And who better to help us consider this question than King Solomon (cat. no. 89)? Solomon reportedly understood the languages of birds and other animals. He sits enthroned, not within an enclosed urban palace, but instead within a wide-open kiosk tent set within a gardenesque landscape.

How did these landscapes shape the lives, livelihoods, and aspirations of their builders? How did the seasonal qualities of gardens, from their rebirth in spring to the senescence of winter, inspire the poets, philosophers, and people of Muslim societies? The *Kulliyat* image of the sinner's plea to God (cat. no. 73) and the painting of King Solomon enthroned (cat. no. 89) suggest possible answers to these landscape questions, as do items in all of the sections in the exhibition from the theme of sacred topographies to those of cities, palaces, and books – many of which feature the architecture of pavilions and tents.

Pavilions and Tents

One can think about pavilions and tents separately or together. Separately, they invite distinctions between the courts and camps of stately and nomadic cultures, respectively. Taken together, these two types of landscape architecture (i.e., architecture in the landscape) overlap and interact with one another across different regions and times.

Following the magisterial two-volume study by Peter Alford Andrews on *Felt Tents and Pavilions: the Nomadic Tradition and its Interaction with Princely Tentage*, I choose to consider the two forms of shelter together. Andrews traces their histories and typologies across the vast sweep of Turkic and Mongol territories, culminating in the tents and tentage of Timurid Central Asia and Mughal South Asia of the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries.[6]

'Tentage' may seem an awkward word, but it captures the exquisite flexibility of textile architecture, including its transportability across the plains, steppes and deserts by animals, carts, and even boats. Tentage encompasses complex spatial forms and social relationships, beginning with the multiple layers of textile walls and gates which established the outermost limits of guarded encampments, to the intimately ornamented reception areas of private elite and harem tent spaces.

The nomadic tents of small clans from the Middle Eastern deserts to the Central Asian steppes, by comparison, often had a common shape, sturdily formed on wooden frames, and wrapped with warm felts in natural colours. They provided simple, effective shelter from the frigid winters and torrid summers of the steppes of the continental interior, not to mention the uncertainties of human encounters. When disaster strikes today, tents are among the first types of material aid to be marshalled and distributed in camps, along with food, water, and medical assistance, to provide for the basic needs of displaced communities. Recently, however, there has been a shift away from the pre-sewn fixed forms of emergency canvas tents that may or may not fit family spatial needs or hold up through inclement weather. Instead, aid agencies are returning to the distribution of 'tentage', in the form of rolls of materials that can be configured by those in need to fit their changing shelter requirements, as in earlier times.

Even in precarious environments, space existed for manifold artistic expressions through architectural textiles. The early nineteenth-century plan of a military encampment (cat. no. 93) provides a virtual encyclopaedia of tent forms and colours. Most are single-level structures, though some of the most elaborate tents have two or three levels of canopies and awnings that would have directed breezes, daylight, and shade. Wooden frames supported tent fabrics with forms that varied from cones to pyramidal, trellis, and bell shapes. Some trellis tents had dramatic domed forms that imitated masonry domes, draped with elaborate vegetal and fantastic ornament akin to that of glazed tile. The painting of Khusraw killing a lion outside Shirin's tent (cat. no. 84) features a trellis-framed tent with domed roof – with Persian text running at an angle across the awning-like panel above, a spatial device that can also be seen on some of the folios in group six, such as cat. no. 108.

When opened up on one or more sides, tents provided shelter from sun and rain, while inviting breezes, creating views, and accommodating gatherings in their immediate environs. Recently, there has been a revival of luxury tent accommodations that feature these amenities, located at heritage sites in Rajasthan and elsewhere. In addition to an entry space for receiving visitors, they may have a dining or writing space (though not with the fine metal inkwells of earlier times displayed in this exhibition, cat. no. 87), a bedroom with side-tables, lamps, and chairs, and a fully equipped bathroom. When supplied with a simple raised water bucket for the bath, a guest's water use is reduced to a small fraction of modern hotel water use and approximates the average water use of urban households in India today.

Simpler structures employed guyed canopies that were erected on wooden poles and secured by ropes anchored with wooden pegs or stones, open on all sides. These awnings and canopies took innumerable forms. Some created temporary kiosks or *baldacini* set within a favoured landscape. Other awnings created complex two-dimensional planar geometries, such as those depicted in paintings like that showing Shah Ramin preparing to defeat the monstrous Half-Men (cat. no. 91), which features conical tents with a raised ornamental awning flap directing one's vision toward the main subject. The very smallest awnings took the form of portable parasols that shaded only the person beneath, but with many of the ornamental details of larger canopies.

Sometimes awnings were incorporated into permanent pavilions constructed of wood or stone. The transition from tent to pavilion is relatively smooth. As soon as tent supports were made freestanding, anchored on column bases, and joined by a ring beam above, they became pavilions – of the sort depicted in the painting of the young man and his beloved in the early seventeenth-century *Kulliyat* (cat. no. 78). Stone pavilions often had awnings to shade their interiors or extend their space beyond the building. Some pavilions had a combination of stone and textile *chajjas* (eves) that blocked sunlight and rain.

Palace-garden courtyards often combined many of the elements of tents and pavilions, defying simple classification, as in the illustration of complaints brought before a prince in the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* ('Ethics of Nasir') of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (cat. no. 90). A textile canopy tent is raised above the prince, without visible architectural support. Behind him stands a columnar trellis tent with a lavishly decorated textile dome, and behind that a delicate pavilion or colonnade, perhaps of stone or wood.

In addition to these delicate hybrid architectures, there were monumental pavilions set on high plinths whose columns soared tens of metres above the throne, focusing one's view on a *jharoka* window (a type of balcony window; see cat. no. 40) or *mirador* (a viewing platform or belvedere) meant for state occasions. D. Fairchild Ruggles has made a strong case for the 'optic power' of these overlooks, which commanded a panoramic view of the domain and focused the views from the subjects below.[7] Similarly, the pavilion-fronted halls of public audience (*diwan-i ʿamm*) of Mughal fortresses and the *chihil sutun* (forty-columned) audience halls of Safavid palaces were perhaps the grandest expressions of pavilion architecture.[8] Other multi-storeyed masonry pavilions in the Persianate realm were set within vast rectangular water tanks, approachable via a masonry bridge from one side of the tank, which had domed *chhatri* pavilions on each of their four corner towers. The tanks drew wildlife and provided evaporative cooling in hot summers. In one case a tank was converted into a tomb for Nadira Begum, wife of the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh, in mid-seventeenth-century Lahore. Even more commonly, Mughal rulers and their nobles built waterfront gardens, in which pavilions figured most prominently along the river terraces, traces of which still remain, especially in the city of Agra, India.[9]

Pavilions also figure prominently in Islamic literature. The *Haft Paykar* ('Seven Portraits' or 'Seven Beauties') of Nizami Ganjavi (d. 1209) is named for the seven brides of the pre-Islamic Persian king Bahram Gur, hailing from the seven climates. In Persian geography, a climate could refer to a region of the world as well as a latitudinal belt. Each of the princesses had a 'dome' built for her, and offered the king a marvellous story in turn, one for each night of the week (see cat. nos 102 and 108). The Indian poet Amir Khusraw Dihlawi (d. 1325) emulated this masterpiece with his poem *Hasht Bihisht* ('Eight Paradises'), in which each of eight princesses had a different coloured pavilion in which she told her story.[10]

The monumental pavilions in Islamic architecture often looked out upon a flat open space, known as a *maydan*, that sometimes had waterworks and walks as part of its overall design. It does not seem too far a stretch to regard these open spaces, which often hosted assemblies of nobles, officers, and public figures, dressed in brightly patterned garments which rivalled the designs of surrounding tents and pavilions, as metaphorical gardens; that is to say, as gardens of society and state, with all of their order, dynamics, colour, and drama projected on a vast social and spatial scale.

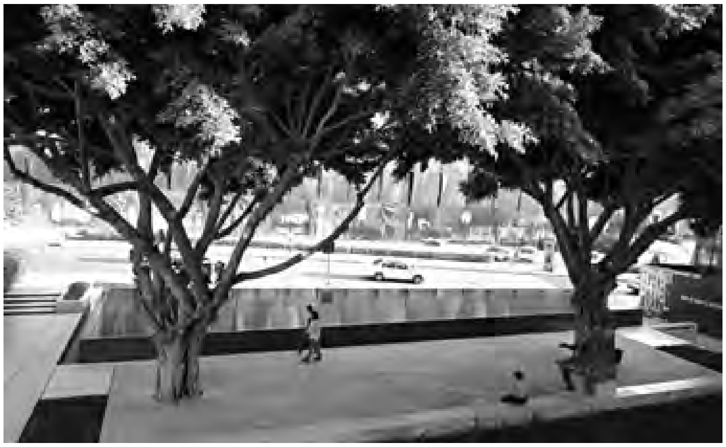
A Third Question about Islamic Gardens

In addition to the two philosophical questions concerning Islamic gardens that we began with, and the insights gained from garden art and architecture in this exhibition, a third question arises. Indeed, whenever two questions, two ideas, or two approaches are presented, one often is led to seek a third.

In this case, the third question is projective, looking out into the future, and asking 'whither Islamic gardens?' Where is this field of landscape history, theory, design, and practice going? What should it aim for in the twenty-first century? The answers to this question are at once sobering, exciting, manifold, and uncertain.

It is sobering to consider that there are precious few schools and designers of landscape architecture in much of the Islamic world. For example, South Asian universities graduate only a small number of students each year for a region of over a billion inhabitants. There are some areas of professional expansion in India, Iran, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, to name but a few – but the need and potential for creative garden design, broadly conceived, are enormous.

At the same time, exemplary new contemporary garden and pavilion design projects are increasing across the Islamic world, as evidenced in the triennial cycles of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.[11] At the urban scale, the Samir Kassir Square pool (fig. 3) provides an oasis-like gathering space, shaded by two grand trees, elegantly set within wood decking in downtown urban Beirut. A rural primary school in Gando, Burkino Faso (fig. 4), has a pavilion-like quality that admits daylight and breezes while insulating against intense radiant energy. At a larger regional scale, the Wadi Hanifah project in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia (fig. 5), transforms a neglected space into a beautifully coordinated sequence of parks, cultivated fields, and water treatment facilities.



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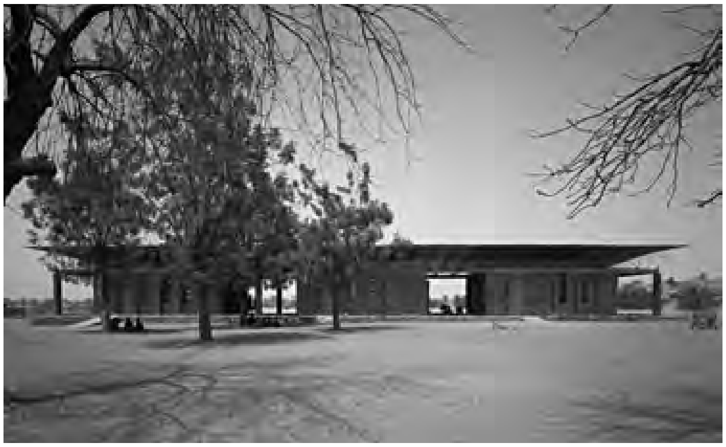

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Figure 3. West view of Samir Kassir Square, Beirut. Photograph ©Roger Moukarzel/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

Figure 4. Gando school, Burkino Faso. Photograph © Siméon Duchoud/Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture's own garden design and conservation projects, such as Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, Egypt, and the conservation and design projects for Humayun's Tomb-Garden and Sundar Nursery in the Nizamuddin area of New Delhi, India, are expanding the meanings and functions of modern gardens. Thankfully, there are an increasing number of exemplary landscape design and conservation projects to inspire future students, faculty, practitioners, and patrons.

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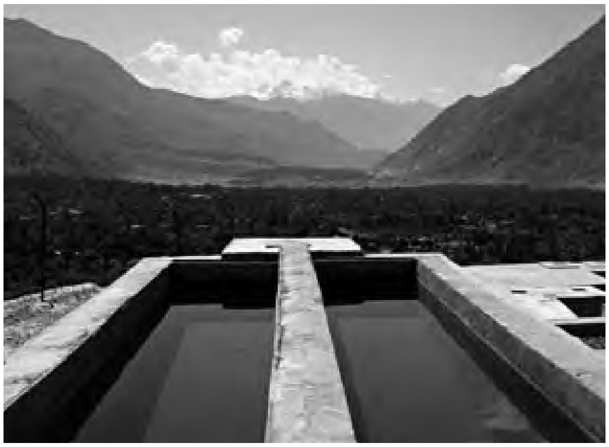

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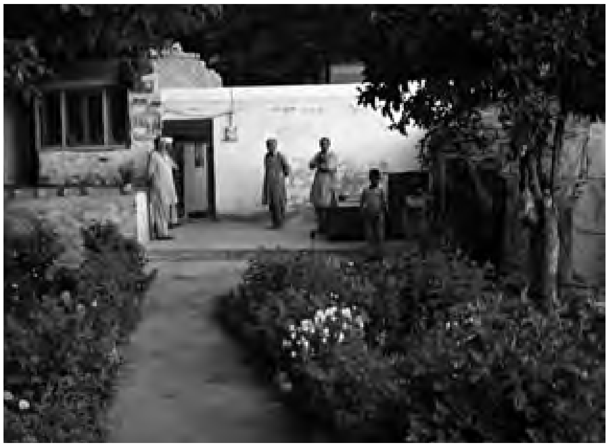

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Perhaps even more important for future environments and cultures of the twenty-first century will be the extensive vernacular garden traditions that endure around the world. Just as gardening is said to be the largest hobby in the Western world, it has under-recognised significance across the Islamic world. It includes kitchen gardens, household gardens, community gardens, market gardens, local parks, common meadows, pastures, springs, and waterways – sometimes graced with pavilions and tented textile awnings for shelter.

Some inspiring recent examples include household and community gardens in villages of the Gilgit and Hunza valleys in northern Pakistan. A community water filtration tank rivals the infinity pools of contemporary designers (fig. 6). Courtyard gardens grace homes that have been retrofitted with seismic reinforcement, ventilation, insulation, safe water, and sanitation (fig. 7). These design advances build upon Islamic landscape heritage and help its communities move boldly and purposely into the twenty-first century.

Figure 5. Wadi Hanifa wetlands, Saudi Arabia. Photograph © Aga Khan Award for Architecture/ Arriyadh Development Authority.

Figure 6. Water filtration plant, Oshkandass village, northern Pakistan. Photograph by the author, 2010.

Figure 7. Courtyard garden, Gilgit River valley, northern Pakistan. Photograph by the author, 2010.

1 Qur'an, 55:46–78 and many other passages. See James L. Wescoat Jr, 'From the gardens of the *Qur'an* to the "gardens" of Lahore', *Landscape Research*, 20 (1995), pp. 19–29.

2 Laura Parodi, 'The Islamic Paradise Garden: Myths and Realities', paper delivered as part of lecture series for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT, 14 March 2011.

3 Karl Butzer, 'The Islamic traditions of agroecology: Cross-cultural experience, ideas, and innovation', *Ecumene: A Journal of Environment, Culture, Meaning*, 1 (1994), pp. 7–50; D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Gardens, Landscape, and Vision in the Palaces of Islamic Spain* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

4 http://www.middleeastgarden.com/garden/english/.

5 Qur'an 6:38.

6 Peter Alford Andrews, *Felt Tents and Pavilions: The Nomadic Tradition and its Interaction with Princely Tentage* (2 vols) (London: Melisende, 1999).

7 D. Fairchild Ruggles, 'The Mirador in ʿAbbasid and Hispano-Umayyad Garden Typology', *Muqarnas*, 4 (1996), pp. 73–82.

8 Ebba Koch, 'Diwan-i ʿAmm and Chihil Sutun: The Audience Halls of Shah Jahan (1526–1648)', *Muqarnas*, 11 (1994), pp. 143–165. Reprinted in *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 229–254.

9 Ebba Koch, 'The Mughal Waterfront Garden', in Attilio Petruccioli (ed.), *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires* (Leiden/New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 140–160. Reprinted in *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*, pp. 183–202.

10 For a translation of the 'Tale of the Tatar Princess Gulnari in the Red Pavilion' see Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusraw: The Poet of Sufis and Sultans* (London: Oneworld, 2005).

11 http://www.akdn.org/architecture/.

73

A SINNER'S PLEA TO GOD

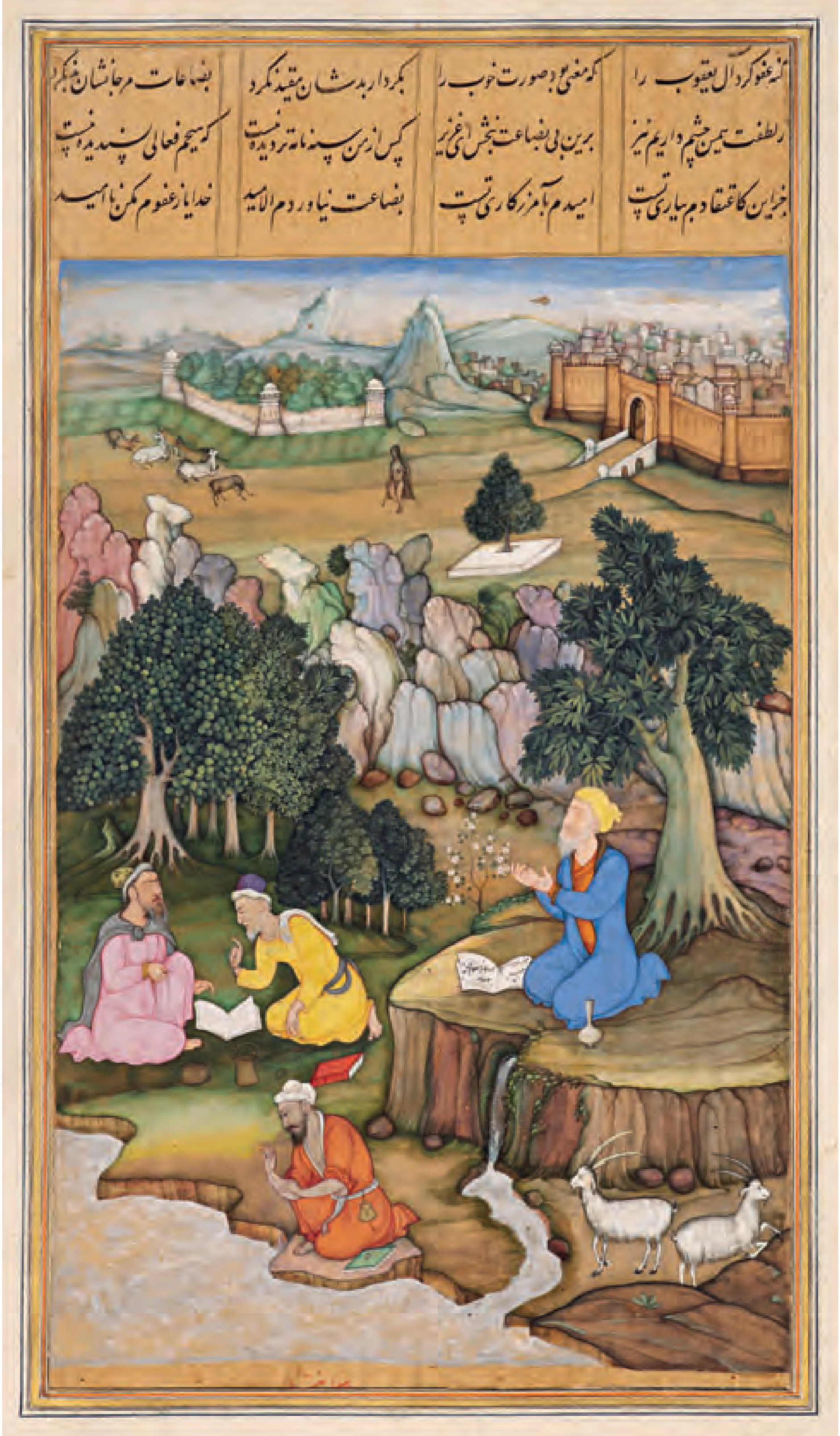
Folio 75v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*
('Collected Works') of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 41.7 x 26.4 cm
AKM 284

Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 158–159 (no. 77); Brand 1995, pp. 116–117 (no. 78b)

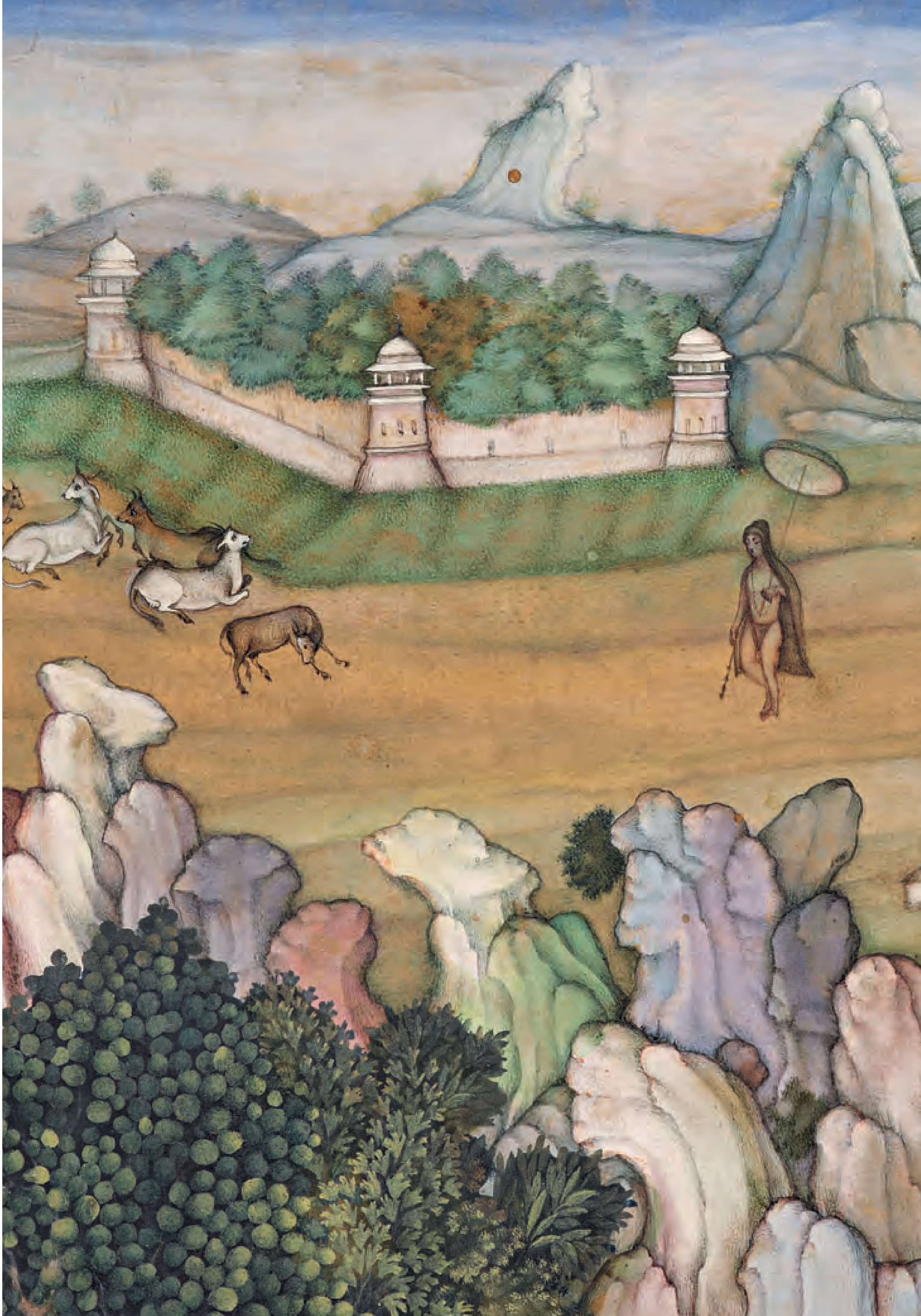
The painters who worked on this illustrated version of the *Kulliyat* ('Collected Works') of Saʿdi (other paintings from this manuscript can be seen in cat. nos 29, 30, 45, 52, 78 and 82) created some images that depart from literal interpretations of the text. In this instance the painter has completely changed the setting of the textual episode, which comes from the last section of the *Bustan* of Saʿdi, a passage on prayer. The text describes a man who had become intoxicated, then ran into a mosque and cried out 'Oh Lord! Take me to the loftiest Paradise!' When the *muezzin* laid hands on him and tried to evict him from the mosque for his unworthy behaviour, the drunkard burst into tears and eloquently called upon God to remember His promise that the door of repentance is always open. The text at the top of this illustration represents the final words of the penitent drunk: 'Oh Mighty One! Forgive this wareless one; none's to be seen with a record blacker than mine, for I have no acceptable deeds to offer: merely my trust in Your support, my hope in Your forgiveness; no wares have I brought but hope: Oh God! Let me not cease to hope for pardon!' (Goswamy – Fischer 1987, p. 158).

Here, the mosque has been exchanged for a remote outdoor location by a stream, far from the city, and the 'sinner' now appears as the most prominent of a group of four sages, his weakness for drink only referenced obliquely by the pouring vessel at his side. The transformation of both setting and characters is so extreme it is perhaps to be understood as an allegorical illustration of the universality of repentance. More likely, however, the image's placement at the end of the *Bustan*, one of the main books of the *Kulliyat*, means that we should read the painting as a finispiece, referring in its imagery to the poet and his peers: it is after all Saʿdi himself who speaks through the voice of the drunkard, and the central figure may well be intended to represent the poet himself.

In the background stands a walled city, containing many block-like buildings represented in a style that seems to be drawn from the conventions of earlier Italian and Northern Renaissance paintings and book illustration. To the right of the city is an intriguing and unusual representation of an enclosed garden seen from outside, with high walls and corner towers: a similar structure is visible in the painting of Sanjar and the Old Woman in the 1595 *Khamsa* made for Akbar (Brend 1995, p. 6). Walled gardens located outside the city were a prerogative of the extremely wealthy in earlier Middle Eastern societies and were also constructed by the Mughals during their settlement of India (Koch 1997, p. 143). Meanwhile, a more understated type of landscape cultivation is shown in the lone tree that grows out of a square white platform in the middle-ground of the painting.



گنه عفو کرد آل یعقوب را که معنی بود صورت خوب را بکردار بدشان مقید نکرد بضاعات مزجاتشان رد نکرد
ز لطفت همین چشم داریم نیز برین بی بضاعت ببخش ای عزیز کس از من سیه نامه تر دیده نیست که هیچم فعالی پسندیده نیست
جز این کاعتمادم بیاری تست امیدم بآمرزگاری تست بضاعت نیاوردم الا امید خدایا ز عفوم مکن ناامید



74

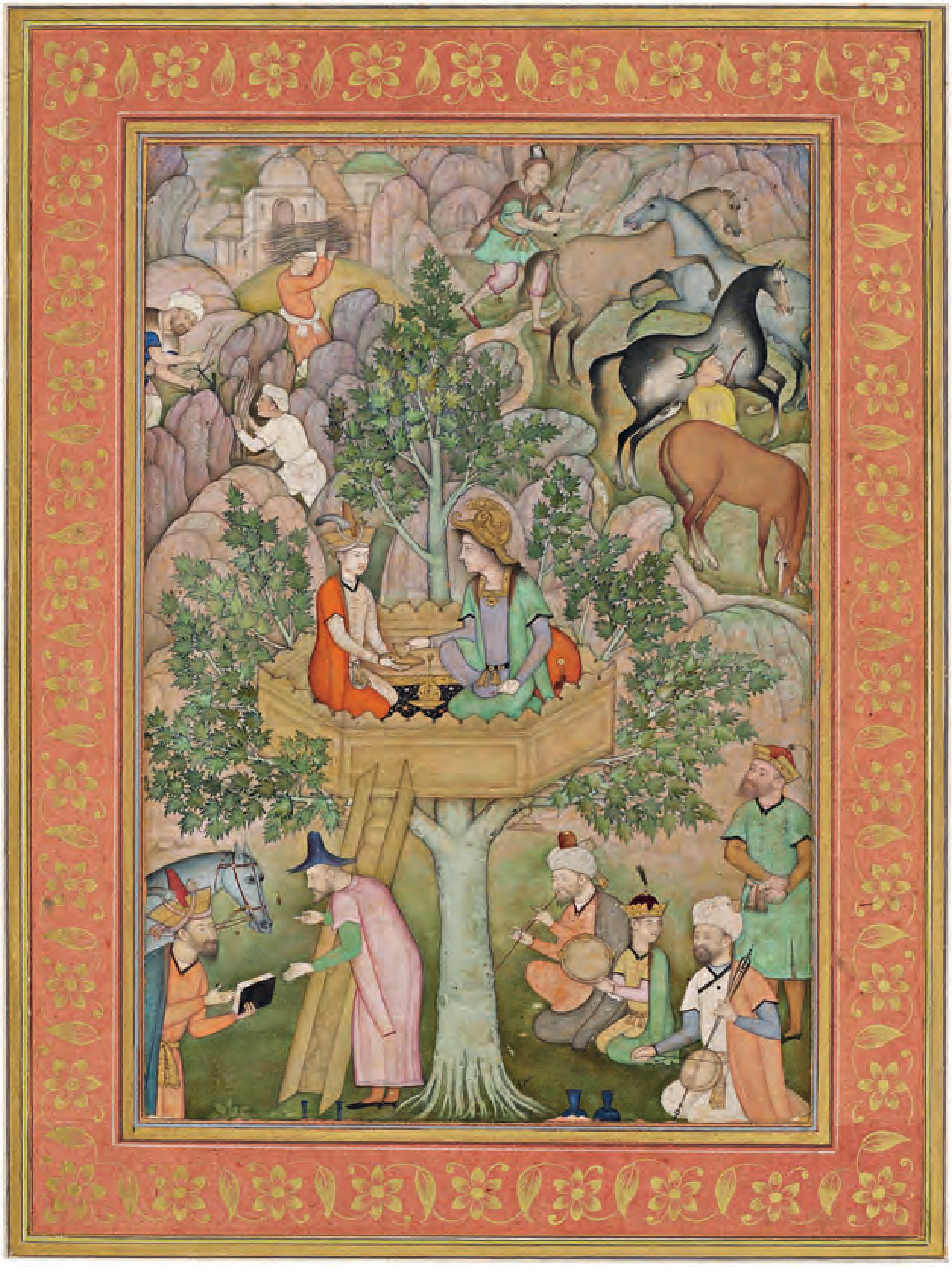
ISKANDAR (ALEXANDER THE GREAT) IN A TREE PAVILION

Folio from a dispersed manuscript, probably the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Mughal India; c. 1610–1620
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Page: 43.8 x 28.8 cm
AKM 147
Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 107–108 (no. 49)

The stories that developed around Alexander the Great, 'a hero claimed by both East and West', placed him in Persian literature as the hero of the Iskandar cycles of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi and the *Khamsa* of Nizami. While the Alexander of earlier miniature paintings executed in Iran and India was depicted as a native of those lands (see cat. no. 83), this painting and another from the same manuscript, as well as a c. 1615 portrait bust of the conqueror, all show him with markedly European features, wearing the striking gold helmet of Classical form and tunic with a square neckline that can be seen here. Leach has proposed that the source of these three profile images may have been an as yet unidentified print, based on a portrait medal, which would in its turn have been based on Greek and Roman coins (Leach 1998, p. 90). Print imagery from Europe that circulated within the Mughal court was the source of various identifiable images and motifs in Mughal painting, and this image represents yet another example of the unique fusion of distinct artistic styles that was such a feature of paintings executed during the reign of Jahangir (r. 1605–1627).

While Alexander is associated with the 'talking tree' at the ends of the earth, from which he heard the prophecy of his own death, the plane tree of this image seems completely unrelated to that mystical trope. The image of the Mughal emperor Humayun (d. 1556) in a tree pavilion with a younger companion (often identified as Humayun's heir, the future emperor Akbar), who presents him with a painting, is known from a number of Indian miniature paintings of the second half of the sixteenth century including a famous image by ʿAbd al-Samad datable to c. 1549–1555 (Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 436–437). While that earlier image shows Humayun and his companion seated in a tree platform that is linked to the upper floor of an elaborate two-storeyed pavilion via a walkway, and thus sites the tree platform as a whimsical addition to the luxurious architecture of the palace garden, the simpler construction shown in the present painting appears to be located in the countryside and presents the almost surreal spectacle of two men having climbed into a tree-house to have a drink. Given the ephemeral nature of this kind of structure, it is difficult to know if this image corresponds to any real tree pavilions created in Mughal architectural practice. The anachronistic turbans of the young man in the pavilion with Alexander and the man who offers the book at bottom left have been drawn from the fashions of Humayun's time, strongly suggesting that this image has indeed been adapted from the earlier images of Humayun in a tree-pavilion, with Alexander substituted for Humayun and a self-conscious historicisation at work (Goswamy – Fischer 1987).

The other painting of Alexander that is thought to come from the same manuscript as this one shows the conqueror – again wearing the characteristic Classical helmet – perched somewhat precariously in the fork of a plane tree, with a bird of prey on his wrist, while a sage seated on the ground below offers him a book (Binney 1973, p. 75). In that image, as in the present painting, the central plane tree containing the hero divides the background into various semi-independent vignettes of men performing tasks and herding animals, and the similarities between the two are certainly sufficient to suggest that one composition is an adaptation of the other.



75

A GARDEN SCENE

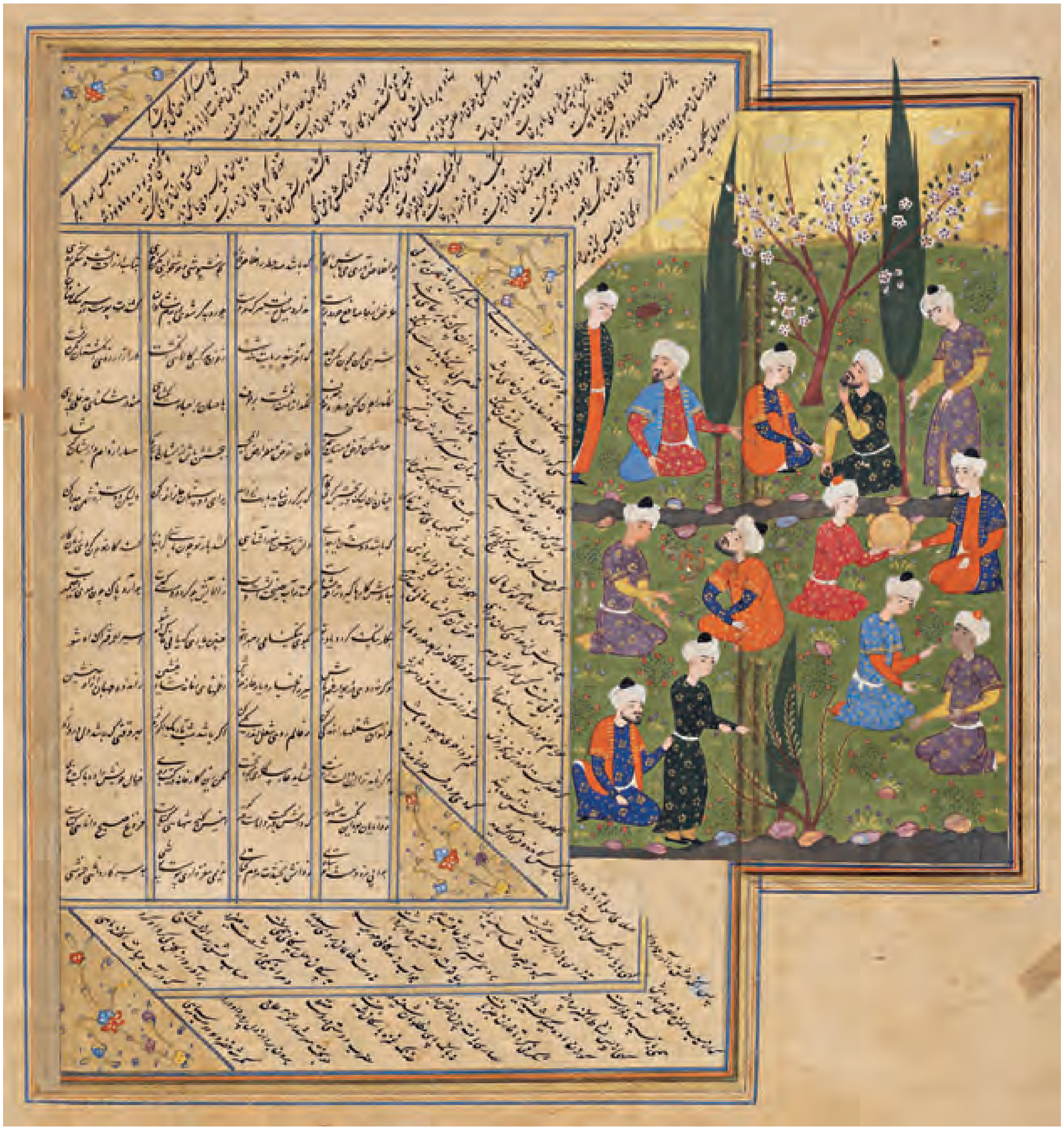
Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Shiraz, Iran; manuscript dated 948 H/1576 CE (?)
Opaque watercolour, ink, silver and gold on paper
Page: 26.5 x 30.2 cm
AKM 68
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 164 (not ill.); AKTC 2010b, p. 293 (no. 125)

This folio is one of four pages from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami now held in the collection of the Aga Khan Museum. Anthony Welch gives the work a date of 948 H/1576 CE, although he does not say where on the manuscript this date is to be found. The precise scene has not yet been identified, although Welch suggests it probably comes from the *Haft Paykar* ('Seven Portraits'), the fourth poem of Nizami's literary masterwork, as does another page from this manuscript illustrated in cat. no. 108.

The *Khamsa*, originally completed in the early thirteenth century, is a collection of five long poems. The first of these is a didactic poem composed of short moral fables, and the last is a historical epic detailing the life and exploits of Iskandar, or Alexander the Great. The three most popular poems, however, are the historical romances that lie in between: *Khusraw wa Shirin* tells the story of the last great Sasanian ruler of Iran, Khusraw II, and his beloved Shirin; *Layla wa Majnun* relates the desert tragedy of a love-crazed poet and a young tribeswoman; and the fourth poem, the *Haft Paykar*, is the most intricate of all five works in the *Khamsa*. A love story of seven parts, the *Haft Paykar* follows the pre-Islamic Iranian hero Bahram Gur as he visits seven princesses in seven pavilions on seven consecutive nights, each of them telling him a story. The emphasis placed on the good life in the *Haft Paykar* means that this pleasant garden scene, showing beautifully dressed men arranged in a pleasing composition and talking earnestly while one of them plays a tambourine, would not be out of place in that poem. That said, the image is quite a standardised type.

Stylistically the painting can be attributed to late sixteenth-century Shiraz, where artists imitated fashionable styles of court painting for a market of wealthy members of the public who aspired to own luxury manuscripts. The manuscript from which this page comes was almost certainly created for open sale rather than being commissioned by a patron, as the rather formulaic nature of the illustrations suggest commercial production. The scene has been painted in a manner that follows sixteenth-century court painting styles; one of the criticisms made at the time about Shirazi illustrated books is the sameness of their designs and uniformity of their appearance (Soudavar 1992, p. 242). The long slender figures of this image are predominantly very young men, although some are bearded, with various skin tones possibly indicating different ethnic types.

An interesting feature of this folio and others from the same manuscript is the elaboration of the text block into a spatial element that both impinges on and interacts with the space of the illustration. The figure in the top left of the image, who is partially cropped by the central text block, appears to be entering the garden from a space behind the text, an effect that is enhanced by the slanting edge of the text panel above him giving the upper edge of the block the appearance of an awning. The corresponding panel below, meanwhile, leads from the far left of the page into the picture space like a path.



76

IBRĀHĪM MĪRZĀ AND COMPANIONS IN A GARDEN

Detached double finispiece, folios 86v–87r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Dīwān* of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Mīrzā;
Illustration on folio 23r signed by ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib,
frontispiece illumination signed by ʿAbdullāh Shīrāzī, also known as ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib
Qazwin or Mashhad, Iran; dated 990 H/1582–83 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 23.9 x 16.8 cm
AKM 282

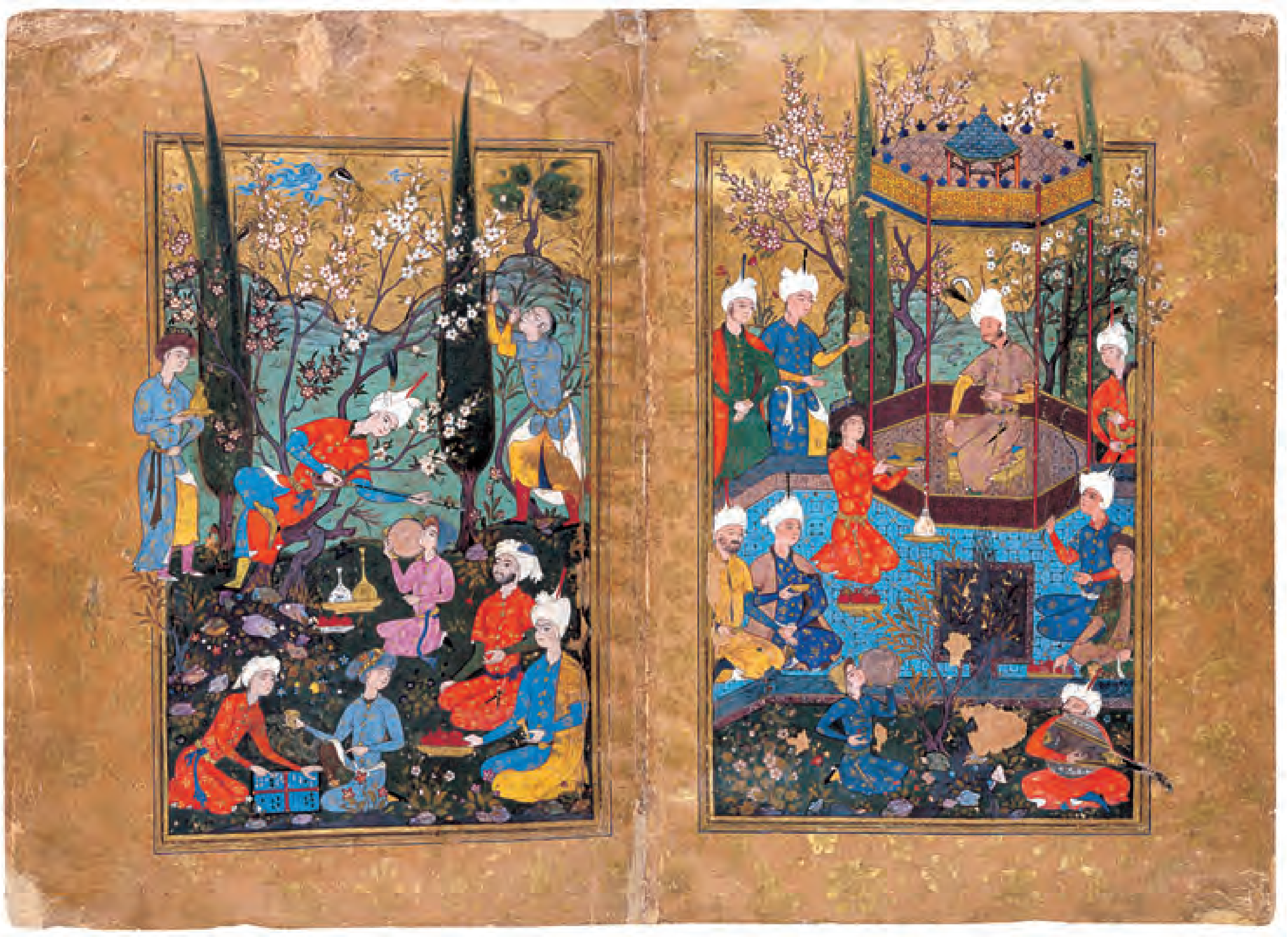
Publ: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 94–98 (no. 30); Canby 1998, pp. 63–64 (no. 38); Canby 1999, p. 87; Newby 2004, p. 170; AKTC 2007a, p. 77 (no. 46); AKTC 2007b, pp. 74–75 (no. 46). Other folios from the same manuscript: Marteau – Vever 1913, pp. 122, 124; Falk 1985, p. 111 (no. 77); Simpson 1997, p. 301; AKTC 2008a, pp. 110–111 (no. 35)

The preface to this manuscript of the Persian and Turkish poetry of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza states that the text was compiled and the manuscript commissioned by his daughter Gawhar-Shad, and the high quality of the calligraphy, painting and illumination make this a touching tribute to the memory of a great patron of the arts. Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (b. 1543–44, d. 1577) was the nephew of the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp; being the son of Bahram Mirza, Tahmasp's only full brother, he married the shah's daughter Gawhar-Sultan, and was appointed governor of Mashhad in northeastern Iran. Prior to his murder in Qazwin at the command of his tyrannical cousin Shah Ismaʿil II, Ibrahim Mirza had assembled a great atelier of artists and craftsmen at his court in Mashhad, and he commissioned a famous manuscript of the *Haft Awrang* of Jami, completed in 1565 (Simpson 1997).

As Anthony Welch has noted, Ibrahim Mirza's own poetry may not have quite deserved the praise heaped upon it by his former clerk Qadi Ahmad, but the present manuscript is nonetheless an important record of the writings of a connoisseur of the arts, as well as a work of art in itself (Welch – Welch 1982; Minorsky 1959, pp. 155–165, 183–184). It contains eighty-seven folios (a mistake in the numbering of the pages led earlier authors to state that there are eighty-eight) with six single-page illustrations (see also cat. no. 110) in addition to this double-page finispiece. A further illustrated copy of the *Diwan*, dated 989 H/1581–82 CE, is held in the Gulestan Library, Tehran (Simpson 1997, p. 300).

The image of a ruler seated in a pleasant garden, surrounded by servants and courtiers in richly patterned robes who serve drinks and food and make music, is a recurring theme in Persianate miniature painting from the Timurid period onwards. Such images have been seen as illustrative of the nomadic heritage of various Iranian dynasties and the descent of their models of kingship from nomadic customs (O'Kane 1993). Paintings like this double-page image are essentially variations on the standard enthronement type: although the garden setting permits a greater informality than is often to be seen in palace scenes, the arrangement of the figures around the canopied structure leaves the viewer in no doubt as to who is the most important person in the composition.

Even in the garden, architecture serves to elevate: in addition to his golden seat, the honorific canopy above the enthroned person – a Middle Eastern and South Asian tradition of solar symbolism that predates Islam – also plays a significant role in the iconography of kingship (see Malecka 1999, pp. 27–28). This six-sided canopied structure is part of a larger body of polygonal garden structures that lie somewhere between permanent and impermanent architecture; the lack of surviving premodern garden architecture means that miniature paintings are the primary source of our knowledge of such forms. The seated prince, identified by Anthony Welch as Sultan Ibrahim Mirza himself, is shown enjoying all the trappings of court life, while some of the younger members of his retinue amuse themselves by playing backgammon (*nard* in Persian, a game traditionally associated with the royal court) and shooting at a bird through a reed pipe on the facing page.



77

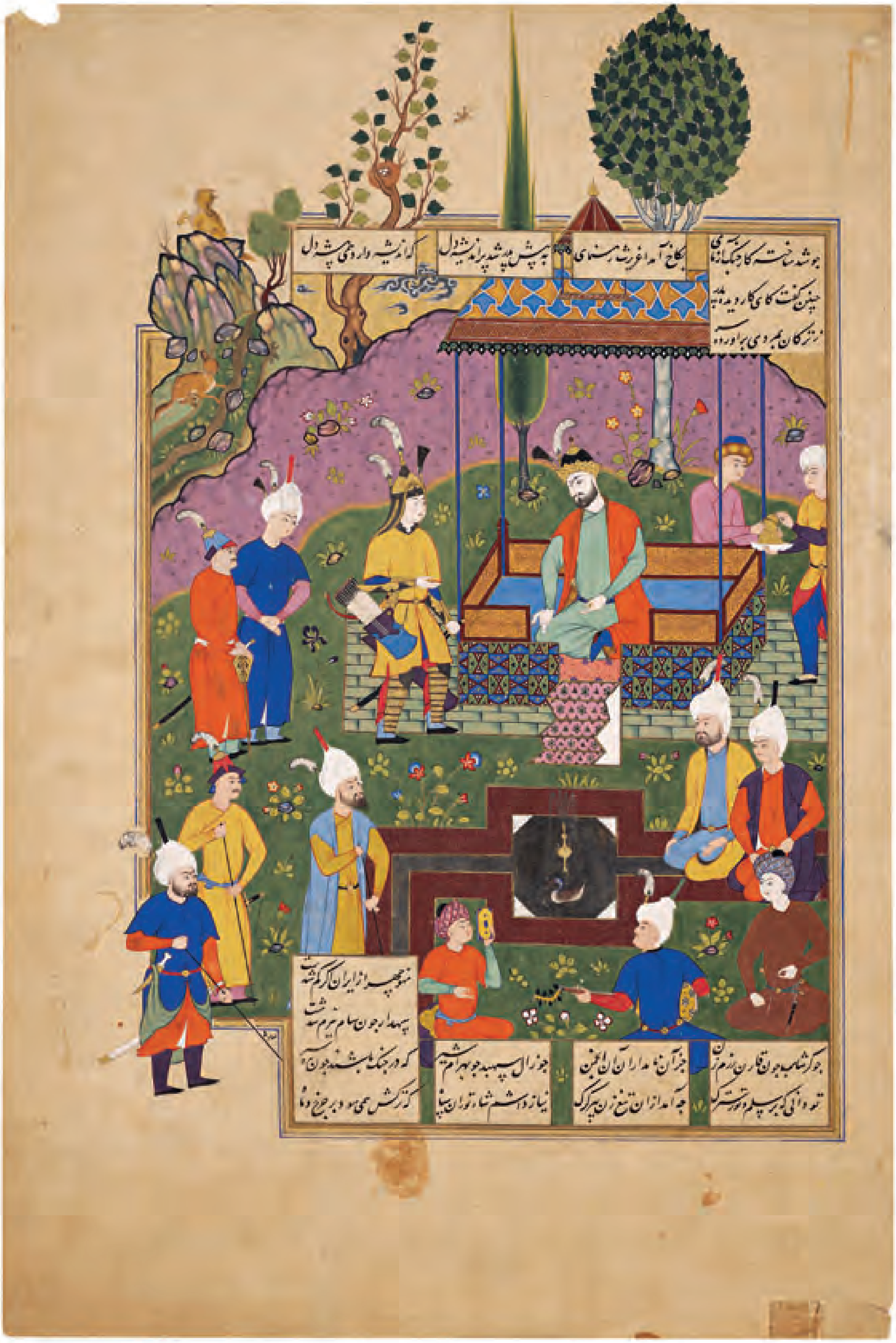
AFRĀSIYĀB TALKING WITH HIS FATHER PASHANG

Folio from a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī, thought to have been completed during the reign of Shāh Ismāʿīl II; painting attributed to 'Ṣādiqī' at bottom left
Qazwin, Iran; c. 1576–77
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Page: 45.6 x 30.5 cm
AKM 72
Publ: Ackerman 1940 (frontispiece); A. Welch 1972a, pp. 169–178

This painting of the Turanian (Central Asian) ruler Pashang and his son comes from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* believed to have been completed for the fratricidal Safavid ruler, Ismaʿil II (b. 1533–34, d. 1577). With his mind disordered by his twenty-year imprisonment at the hands of his father Shah Tahmasp, Ismaʿil's ascension to the Iranian throne in August 1576 was followed by the systematic assassination or blinding of almost every prince of the royal blood, including five of his own brothers. His regime of terror was short-lived, however: officers of the court conspired to poison his opium and he died in November 1577. Given the chaos of the reign of Ismaʿil II, it is thought that this manuscript was probably initiated under the previous ruler, Shah Tahmasp.

The manuscript was still intact when exhibited in Paris in 1912; however, it was subsequently dismembered for sale by the dealer Georges-Joseph Demotte and its leaves are now scattered all over the world (Robinson 1976, p. 62). Many of the miniatures from this imperial *Shahnama* bear attributions written in a contemporary hand, presumably that of a royal librarian: these inscriptions name some of the most important artists of the Safavid royal atelier. The ascription to 'Sadiqi' on this painting means that it can be attributed to Sadiqi Beg, future director of the royal library and also thought to be the painter of the illustrations in the Aga Khan Museum's remarkable manuscript of the *Anwar-i Suhayli* (see cat. nos 51 and 98).

Afrasiyab, dressed in a yellow robe with armoured plates and a plumed helmet, approaches his father Pashang to discuss the invasion of Iran by the Turanian troops. There is no particular need for the scene to be located outdoors, but the garden setting is probably a reference to the nomadic heritage of the Turanians, who are often equated with various Turkic tribes of Central Asia. Like countless other miniature paintings in illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama*, the composition is centred around an enthronement image, with an emphasis on the pleasurable aspects of courtly life. While Pashang and his people might be nomads, the elaborate canopy of his tiled and screened dais, as well as the chamfered pool with a fountain and lined channels that lies in front of his seat, do not suggest a rough-and-ready encampment but instead reflect the preoccupation with luxurious courtly gardens seen in Timurid and Safavid miniature painting. The Iranian royal garden as site of court ceremony, a practice attested by historical texts, miniature paintings and architectural remains from the Mongol period (c. 1256–1353) onwards, can be understood as a reflection of the nomadic heritage of the Mongol and Timurid rulers who were so important in the formation of Persianate miniature painting (O'Kane 1993).



78

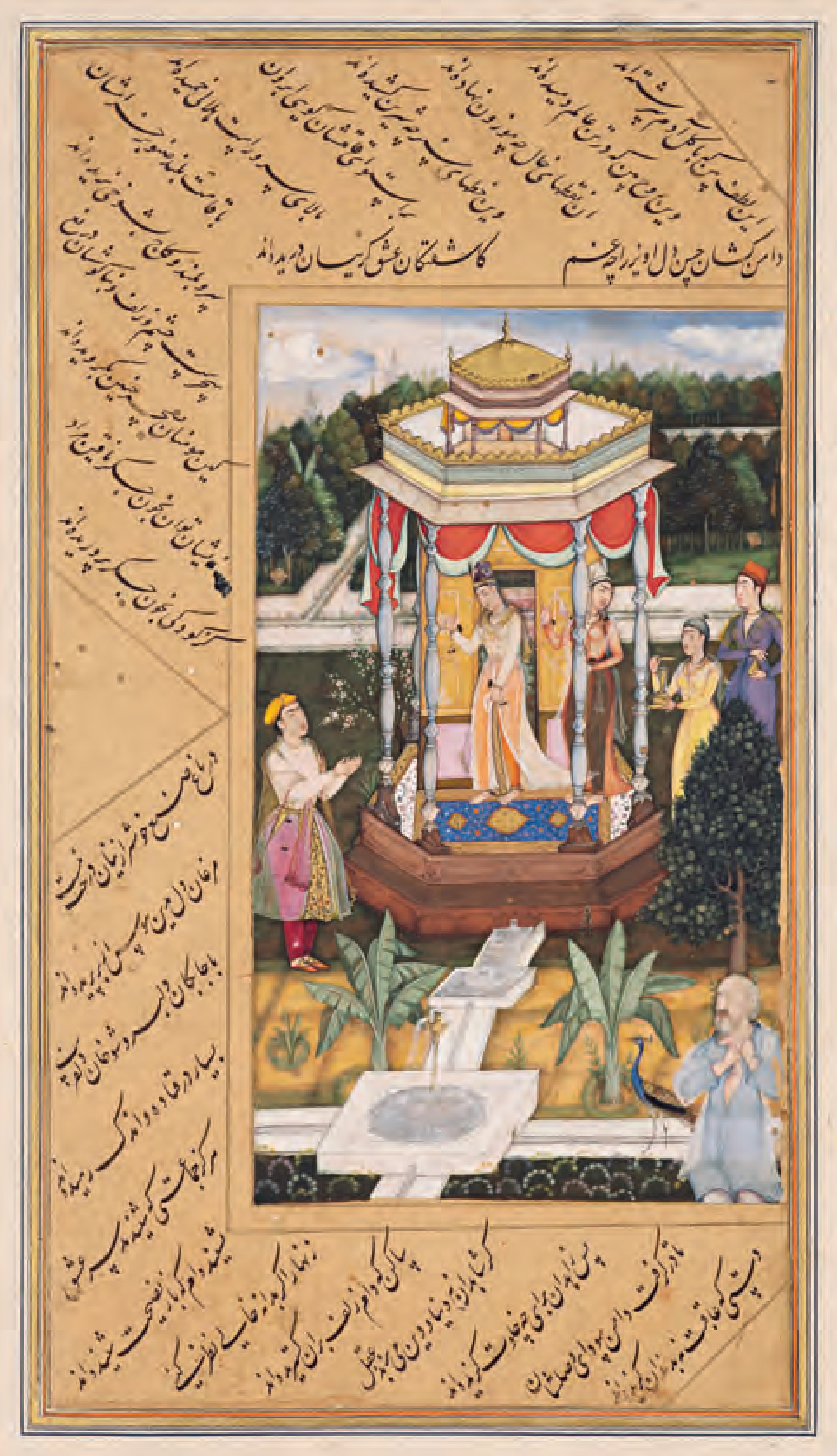
THE YOUNG MAN AND HIS BELOVED

Folio 137r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*
('Collected Works') of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 41.8 x 26.5 cm; image and text within borders: 26.3 x 14.4 cm
AKM 284
Publ: Canby 1998, pp. 131–132 (no. 98)

Unlike many of the other paintings in this illustrated *Kulliyat* of Saʿdi (see cat. nos 29, 30, 45, 52, 73 and 82), the scene depicted here gives a visual evocation of the love poem that is inscribed around it, rather than a narrative illustration of a particular event in the text. The artist – suggested by Canby (1998, p. 132) to be Hiranand, a painter from the atelier of the Mughal Emperor Akbar – has used the freedom from narrative requirements to create a fantastic architectural structure, placing it in a manicured garden that reflects real-world Mughal landscape-gardening practice. The pavilion is constructed with ornate constricted columns, each having the appearance of three rather spindly baluster columns mounted on top of each other. The Mughal baluster column has been shown by Koch to be a conscious adaptation of a European motif as well as a development from pre-Islamic Hindu and Buddhist architectural forms, and as such is something of a *leitmotif* in Mughal architecture (Koch 1982, pp. 252–255). In this instance, the artist's fancy has also included anthropomorphic heads at the base of each column.

In both the background and immediate foreground of the image, the cultivated ground has been divided into squares framed by paths down which water-channels run, a technique commonly associated with the *chahar bagh* (Persian: 'fourfold garden'). The *chahar bagh* typically comprises a four-square plan with axial walkways (*khiyaban*s) intersecting at the centre, frequently with a pavilion located at the intersection, and, although the arrangement is most famously associated with the gardens of Islamic Iran and India, it may have had its roots in much earlier gardens of the Middle East and Classical West (Ruggles 2008, pp. 41–43).

Famous Mughal examples of the *chahar bagh* survive in situ, such as the *Anghuri Bagh* ('Garden of the Grapes') at the Red Fort near Agra, and the image of this garden type lives on in manuscript illustrations: two well known late sixteenth-century double-page illustrations from dispersed *Baburnama* manuscripts show *chahar bagh*s being created under the supervision of Babur, the first Mughal emperor of India (ill. in Goswamy – Fischer 1987, p. 83, and Ruggles 2008, plate 14). The interplay of water with the landscape was all-important for aesthetic reasons as well as irrigation, and in the present painting water flows from the base of the pavilion down an angled panel into one pool after another, while a fountain jets merrily in the scalloped well of the frontal pool.



79

SHĀH RĀMĪN SEATED IN A PALACE GARDEN

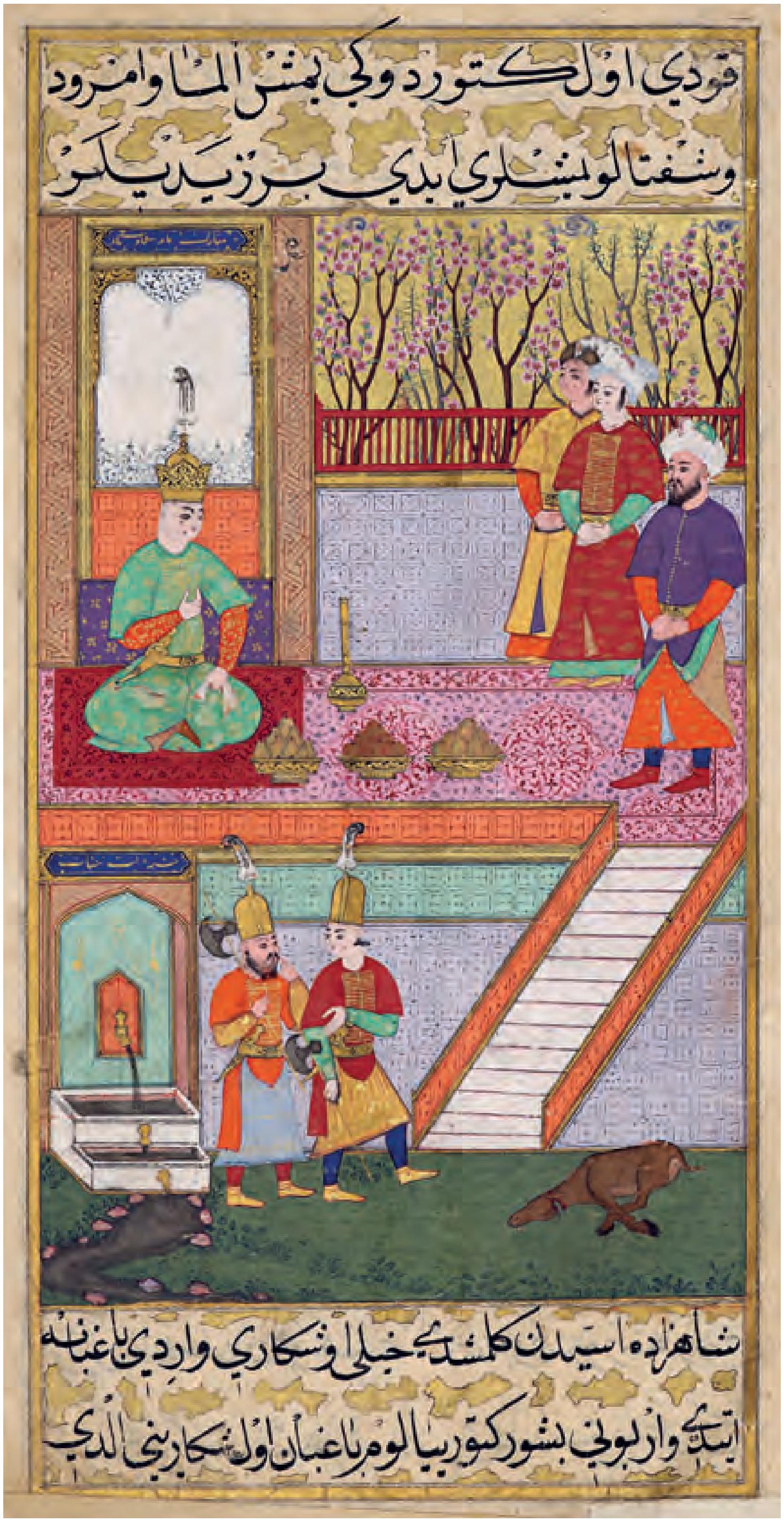
Folio 4v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leṭāʾif*
(‘Gifts of Curiosities’ or ‘Curious and Witty Gifts’) of ʿ Alī ibn Naqīb
Ḥamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murād III
Istanbul; dated 1002 H/1593–94 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 35.1 x 21 cm
AKM 280

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Binney 1979, pp. 78–79; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 38–42 (no. 9, fols 177v, 226v–227r and 252v–253r); Falk 1985, p. 136 (no. 109; fols 279v–280r and 275v–276r); Canby 1998, pp. 99–100 (nos 71–72; fols 296r and 297r); Leane 2002, pls 18.2, 18.6 (fol. 27); AKTC 2010b, pp. 297–299 (no. 128)

Other pages from this unique manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* of ʿAli ibn Naqib Hamza are illustrated in cat. nos 39, 56, 62 and 91. The present image, showing the young prince Shah Ramin seated in a tranquil garden structure while attended by courtiers, is located very near the beginning of the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* and it may be intended as dramatic irony when juxtaposed with the many episodes of hardship the prince is about to undergo in the text. The four lines of the text contained in the boxes above and below the image describe the ‘cooked apples, pears and peaches’ brought before the prince as he commands the gardener to cook the deer he has brought back from the hunt; the scene is one of the utmost courtly luxury (translation by Lale Uluç).

The beardless prince, whose face is marked with the black ‘beauty spots’ that appear on many of the important characters illustrated in this and other Ottoman romance manuscripts of the late sixteenth century, wears the green robe and plumed helmet in which he will appear in many subsequent images. The flattened panels of tile frieze that are presented perpendicular to the picture plane, as if flattened, are rather abruptly contrasted by the linear perspective that has been employed within the depictions of the staircase and the fountain. The latter is a particularly striking and unusual device, with careful observation shown in the level of detail, such as the gold spouts projecting at each level, and the whole fountain looks as if it has possibly been drawn from a real model.

Bağci *et al* have proposed that the miniature paintings of this manuscript could be the work of the Ottoman court painter Nakkash Hasan (d. 1622?) and his assistants, suggesting that similarities in dimensions, layout, script type, artistic style, colour scheme and compositional ingenuity relate the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* with the monumental, six-volume ‘Life of the Prophet’ or *Siyer ül-Nebi* created for Murad III and partially illustrated by Nakkash Hasan (Bağci 2010, pp. 164, 210). Both the present illustration and a related image also from this manuscript (fol. 115v; see essay by Margaret Graves, fig. 8) include marble staircases shown at oblique angles and bordered with low upright panels: these can be directly compared with the same device as it appears in an illustration from another manuscript thought to have been illustrated by Nakkash Hasan and his workshop, the romance tale *Destan-i Ferruh u Huma*, dated 1010 H/1601–2 CE (*ibid*., p. 211). The distinctive depiction of the veining of the marble, and the flattened treatment of the individual steps of the staircases, as well as very close similarities in the design and colour of the tilework panels that can be seen in images from the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif* and the *Destan-i Ferruh u Huma*, and also in the *Siyer ül-Nebi* miniatures, would also suggest these images as the work of the same individual(s).


قودي اول كتوردوكي بمش المٰا وامرود
وشفتالو بنشلوي ابدي بر زيد يلكو
شاهزاده اسيدن كلمشدي خيلي اوشكاري واردي باغبانه
ابتدكي وار بولي بشور كوريا الوم باغبان اول شكاربني الدي

80

KILGA (JAR STAND)

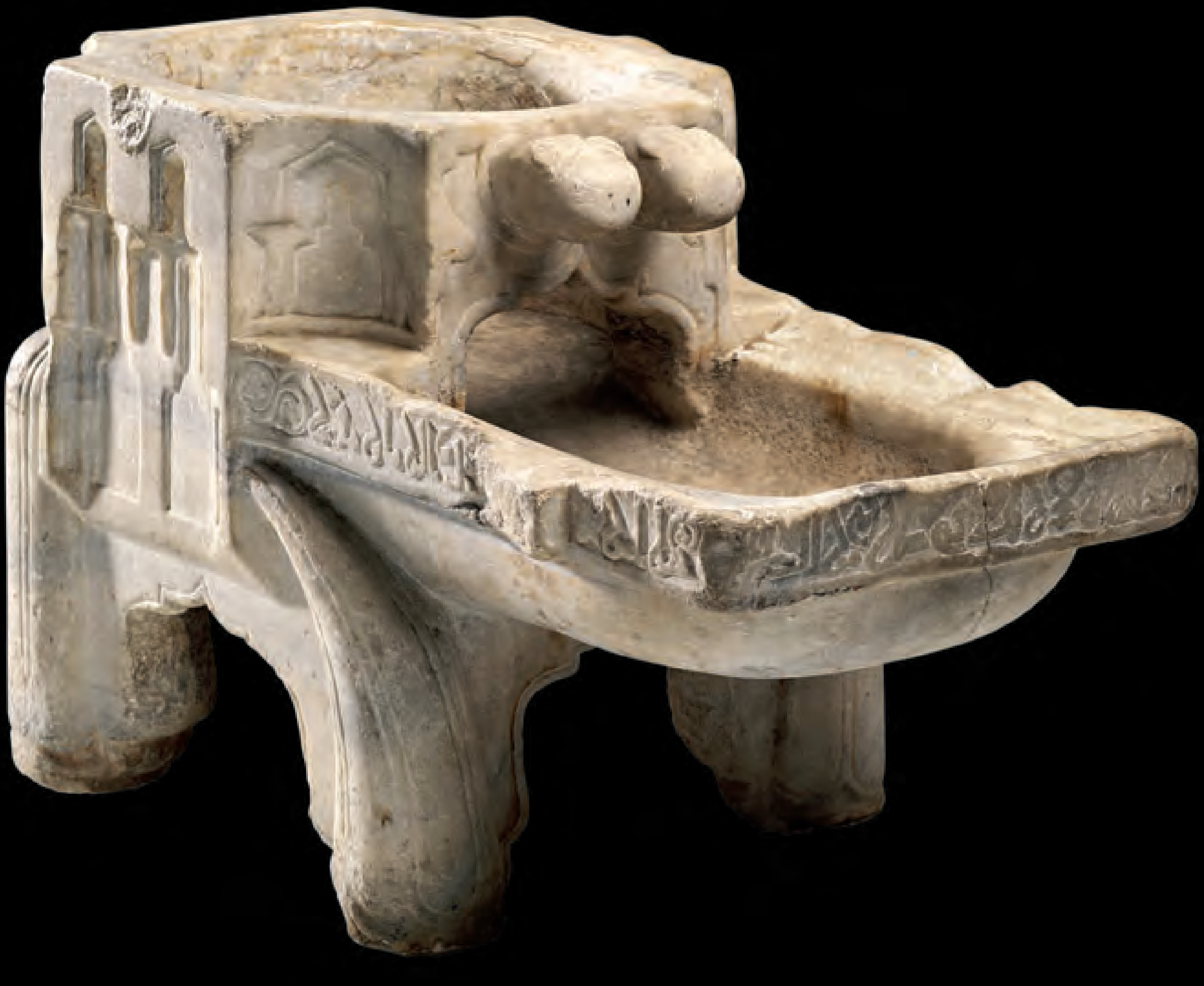
Egypt, probably Cairo; possibly twelfth century
Carved marble
60 x 39 cm
AKM 817
Unpublished

The carved marble jar stands that are now known as *kilga*s appear to be unique to the Nile basin, and are quite possibly unique to Cairo. These objects are conjectured to have functioned as stands for large water jars made from unglazed earthenware (Knauer 1979). The jars would have been set on the upright trunk section at the back of the kilgas, where the water that filtered through the porous body of the jar would drip into the back cavity, before trickling down through the arched opening and collecting in the frontal trough. Filtration practices, including filtering water by secretion through unglazed earthenware vessels as well as animal skins, are recorded in the eleventh-century writings of a Cairene doctor called Ibn Ridwan, who argued that the filtering of Nile water was essential for the maintenance of a healthy society in Cairo (Dols 1984, pp. 135–136).

It is not known at present if the *kilga*s, of which there are over seventy documented examples in museums around the world, and probably a great many more, were originally created for use in private homes, mosques or other public buildings (Graves 2010, p. 157 and cat. nos 3.1–3.69). Certainly several examples were recorded as being in use in Mamluk and Ottoman mosques in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but it is likely that at least some of the *kilga*s significantly predate those institutions, and the presence of figural ornament on a number of examples also argues against their having been created exclusively for mosques. A number of further examples are decorated with crosses, suggesting an ecclesiastical or more broadly Christian context, and it can be surmised that the kilgas must have been in use across all sectors of medieval Cairene society.

Only one published example has so far been shown to bear a date: an elaborately decorated example in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo bears a damaged inscription ending in *…in wa khamsamiʾa*, i.e. a number ending in '… and five hundred'. This would date it to 520–590 H (1125–26 to 1193–94 CE) (see Ibrahim 1978, pp. 2–3 and Graves 2010, p. 165). Most other examples bearing legible inscriptions have been inscribed with generic good wishes for health and long life, often with elisions and mistakes, and as such are fairly uninformative (Elisséeff 1947, pp. 35–36). The inscriptions on the present *kilga*, which also appear to be general benedictory expressions, have been executed in a good Kufic script that shows the beginnings of foliation; together with the generally high quality of the carved ornament, this marks this *kilga* out as one of the finer examples of the type.

The monumental form that is necessary to their function as supports for extremely heavy water jars requires that each *kilga* be carved from a single block of stone. Ibrahim has suggested spolia as the source of this marble, as their dimensions would accord with broken sections of Classical columns (Ibrahim 1978, p. 1). But it is not only their material that connects the *kilga*s with architecture. The group as a whole represents a sustained and complex play on architectural forms, particularly the assemblage known as a *salsabil*. In its most advanced form this water-feature is an ensemble of a lion-headed waterspout, an inclined stone slab, channels, pools and sometimes a *muqarnas* grotto (see Tabbaa 1985 and 1987). These elements are reflected in truncated and miniaturised forms on the body of the *kilga*: the inclined area down which the water passes from trunk to trough is, in the most elaborate examples, carved in imitation of the zig-zag design found on the inclined panels of full-size fountains; the frontal trough is commonly chamfered to resemble a domestic or palatial pool of the type excavated at Fustat (medieval Cairo); the projections above the archway can be seen to bear feline faces on many examples; and the presence of *muqarnas* on the side panels may be a rather dramatically reconfigured reference to the *muqarnas* grotto from which the full-size *salsabil* springs (Graves 2010, chapter 3).



81

PANEL OF THREE ARCHES

Egypt; possibly fifteenth century
Polished marble and coloured stone inlaid into plaster
Length: 223.5 cm
AKM 571
Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 94–95 (no. 30); AKTC 2009a, p. 133 (no. 92); AKTC 2009b, p. 133 (no. 92); AKTC 2010a, pp. 134–135 (no. 94)

Mosaics of cut and polished stone became popular in the Mamluk period in Egypt, and were often used as surrounds for fountains or as wall decoration, as well as floor pavements. Some of the earliest examples of this type of decoration can be seen in the mausoleum of Qalawun in Cairo (built 1285): those early versions of the technique are very finely cut and incorporate mother-of-pearl elements alongside different colours of cut stone, giving a rich and glittering appearance. Within the mausoleum of Qalawun stone mosaic panels of miniature arches enclosing fields of geometric ornament appear below the vine frieze (Flood 1997, pp. 62–63). A similar panel of four arches, now held in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, is thought to have been taken from the mausoleum of al-Ashraf Barsbay (dated 1432), where more panels of this type remain in situ (O'Kane 2006, p. 176; Behrens-Abouseif 2007, p. 256). Although less imposing in scale and non-structural in nature, those funerary panels of mosaic arches are comparable to the present arches in their use of contrasting colours (*ablaq*) within the arch, and six-pointed star motifs within the spandrels.

As Juvin (in Makariou 2007) has pointed out, attempts to date this set of arches stylistically through analysis of individual motifs are somewhat fruitless, as the six-pointed stars, hexagonal repeating patterns and knotted corner motifs employed on the panels are met with very widely in Egyptian stone mosaic. Mamluk parallels for the knotted motifs, for example, could be cited in the courtyard floor of the complex of Sultan Hasan (1356–1363) or in a panel above a doorway in the mosque of Amir Altinbugha al-Maridani (1339–1340), both in Cairo. Further comparisons could also be made with domestic pavements and fountain decorations in palace reception rooms. Stone inlay of this style continued in popularity right through to the Ottoman period, from which various examples survive such as the decoration of the *qaʿa* (reception room) of the seventeenth-century house of al-Suhaymi, with arched recesses on the walls facing onto a sunken, scalloped basin in the centre of the courtyard, all faced with polychrome cut and polished stone. Evidently the forms of decoration which had once been high fashion for the funerary monuments of the Mamluk sultans had a long afterlife in domestic settings in Cairo.

It has been proposed that this panel and a fountain decoration sold in 1993 both came from a palace dating to the time of the Mamluk sultan Qaytbay (r. 1468–1496), and as Juvin observes, the triple-arch design can be seen in some fifteenth-century Mamluk reception rooms, making this a possible point of origin. In reception rooms the running water of the fountain would lower the air temperature and create a soothing sound, while the cool polychrome marble surfaces would be pleasing to sight and touch. Running water holds a longstanding position of importance in the architecture of Middle Eastern elites both for practical and aesthetic reasons, and architectural features using running water, such as fountains, pools and channels, continue to represent luxurious status symbols for the very wealthy.

82

SAʿDĪ AND HIS DEDICATEE SAʿD IBN ABĪ BAKR IBN SAʿD

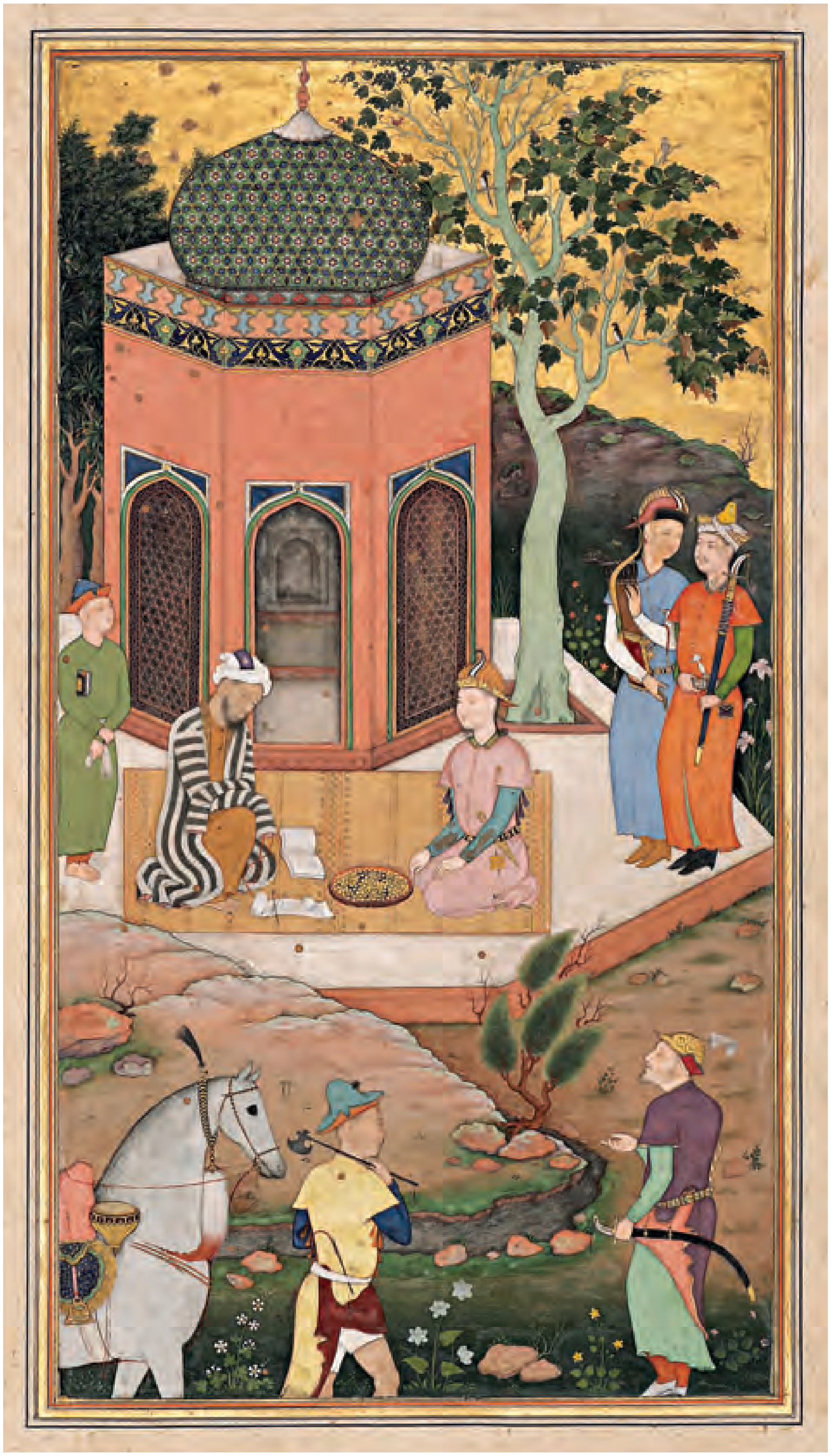
Folio 76r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyāt*
(‘Collected Works’) of Saʿdī
Mughal India; c. 1604
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: approx. 41.8 x 26.2 cm
AKM 284

Publ: Welch – Welch 1982, p. 195 (no. 64); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 44–45 (no. 12); Brand 1995, pp. 114–115 (no. 78a)

The illustrated manuscript of the *Kulliyat* (‘Collected Works’) of Saʿdi in the collection of the Aga Khan Museum, represented in this catalogue by five further paintings in addition to this one (see cat. nos 29, 30, 45, 52, 73 and 78) contains twenty-three illustrations in total, the first nineteen of which appear in the two long poems that comprise the bulk of the text. Fifteen paintings illustrate the *Bustan* (‘Garden of Fragrance’), followed by four in the *Gulistan* (‘Flower Garden’). The present image comes from the preface to the *Gulistan*, which contains a dedication to Saʿd ibn Abu Bakr ibn Saʿd, a short-reigned Salghurid ruler and the son of the patron of the *Bustan*.

The young vassal of the Mongols – not yet a ruler at the time of the poem’s composition – has been depicted with distinctly Central Asian features. With a serious expression, he gazes at the poet seated opposite him within the privileged space of the rug, while Saʿdi’s eyes are cast down towards the work he has just completed. The paraphernalia of the writer – book, scroll, scissors, inkpot and pen – lie before him, but in his hand he holds a rosary (*tasbih*) like those carried by dervishes, pilgrims and ordinary believers to the present day, for the recitation of the ninety-nine names of God. Between the two men lies a dish filled with gold coins. The introduction to the *Bustan*, in common with other poems of this type, begins with a long invocation of thanks and praise to God, followed by a panegyric in praise of the earthly ruler whose sponsorship enabled the poet to write the text, making delicate reference to the ‘bounty of the great’, i.e. financial reward for the poem (Ross 1890, p. 73). Thus this image brings together on one rug all the elements necessary for the creation of the poem: the will of God, the whim of the patron, the talent of the poet and, at the centre of it all, hard currency.

The six-sided garden pavilion that dominates the background bears no particular relation to the events of the text, but has presumably been included as an indicator of the refined, palace-garden setting of the courtly scene. Similar domed polygonal garden kiosks with equally exquisite decoration appear in earlier manuscript paintings from Greater Iran (e.g. Lentz – Lowry 1989, p. 260), but the interest in a more naturalistic depiction of architectural mass, most clear in the arch-shaped niche just visible within the interior, marks this out as a distinctly Mughal depiction. The close relationship between tents and pavilions, both of them functioning in elite contexts as a means of further enjoying the pleasant surroundings of the garden, is particularly obvious in this small polygonal, domed structure if one compares it with the rounded trellis tents or polygonal tents visible in countless miniature paintings (see cat. no. 83). The lack of a clear distinction between permanent and impermanent architecture was an important feature of certain court cultures of the medieval Middle East, particularly in Iran and India, and it is sometimes hard to draw a line between tents and pavilions when looking at the garden structures represented in miniature paintings.



83

ISKANDAR (ALEXANDER THE GREAT) IN A WHITE TENT

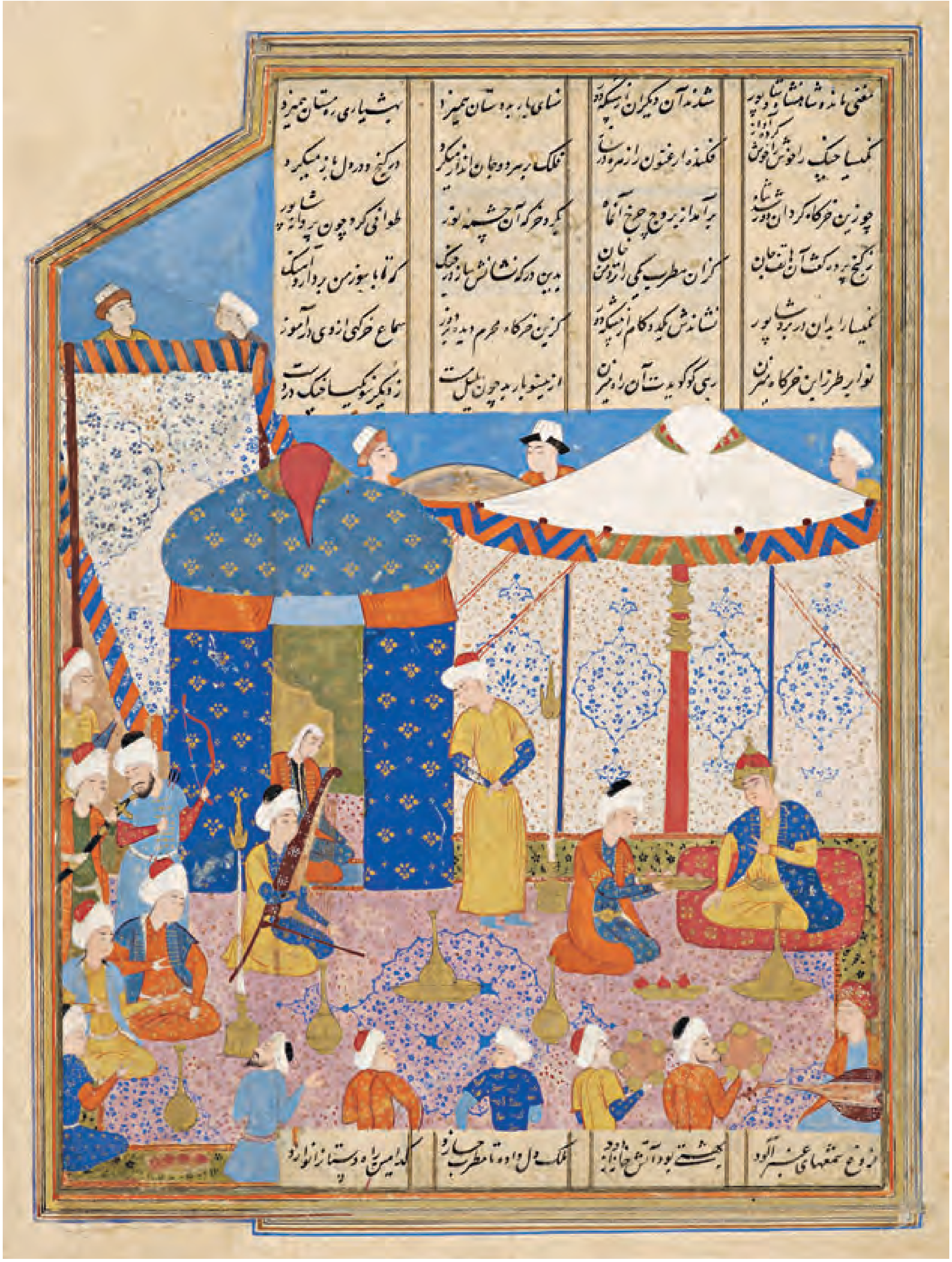
Folio from a dispersed manuscript, probably the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Shiraz, Iran; c. 1560
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 29.9 x 20.9 cm
AKM 414
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 157 (not ill.)

The representation of different types of princely tents, created from brightly coloured and richly patterned fabrics, was a staple of Persianate miniature painting, from the grandest compositions of the 'classical' period under the Timurid princes to the luxury commercial production of sixteenth-century Safavid Shiraz. This painting (which has been retouched in places) is a good example of the latter style, and the manuscript from which it came was most likely produced for open sale to a wealthy but non-courtly market.

Three different types of tented structure can be seen in this painting: a cylindrical trellis tent with a cloth covering in shades of blue; a white canopy mounted on a central pole and held in place with guy ropes, which is coupled with a back panel of cloth screens behind the seated figure of Iskandar; and to the far left, an awning of ornamented white cloth with striped edges, supported by poles. Imperial tents of similar form to those portrayed in this painting were earlier described by Ruy Gonzáles de Clavijo, the Spanish ambassador to the court of Timur in 1404, who describes an awning made of 'white linen stuff overset and let into with coloured embroidery [...] the awning had wooden poles at the back which supported it by means of cords holding it taut' (Le Strange 1928, p. 237). As has been stated elsewhere, it would be risky to interpret miniature paintings as literal representations of architectural truths. However, this description would suggest that we should probably understand the blue and red designs painted onto the white surfaces of the awning and cloth screens as depictions of a type of embroidery.

Elsewhere in his record of the embassy to Timur's court Clavijo describes an imperial trellis tent, constructed from a cylindrical frame of latticed wooden sides with a domed top, covered with heavy felt (*ibid*., p. 240). Trellis tents – which are commonly (and incorrectly) known in English as 'yurts' – appear very frequently in miniature paintings, like the blue example seen in this image. They are generally represented as being rather taller and slimmer than such tents tend to be in nomadic practice, although some of the royal trellis tents of the Timurid period do seem to have been very tall (Andrews 1978, p. 149–151; see also cat. no. 84). Such structures are different from velum tents, where the cloth shell is held in place with guy ropes making the cloth itself a structural element. Trellis tents and other types of frame tent have a structural frame, normally of light wooden poles and curved or bent struts joining at a 'roof wheel', which forms the smaller bump on the very top of the dome. The whole frame supports a covering cloth shell, often of woollen felt, making trellis tents both durable and portable (Andrews 1997, pp. 25–29).

While such tents originated from nomadic traditions, their re-interpretation and increasing elaboration in the court ceremonial of the Mongol and Timurid periods led to the highly refined models attested in the many book-paintings that show imperial life conducted in spectacular tent complexes (O'Kane 1993). This ostentatious self-definition as tent-enthroned monarchs in the nomadic tradition, evident in Timurid painting but also attested by textual accounts and scant material remains, was also to exert a powerful influence on the image of kingship followed by the Safavid and Mughal rulers (Andrews 1978, p. 143).



84

KHUSRAW KILLING A LION OUTSIDE SHĪRĪN'S TENT

Painting intended for a *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Tabriz, Iran; c. 1525; text panels possibly added in India
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Page: 25.4 x 21.2 cm
AKM 93

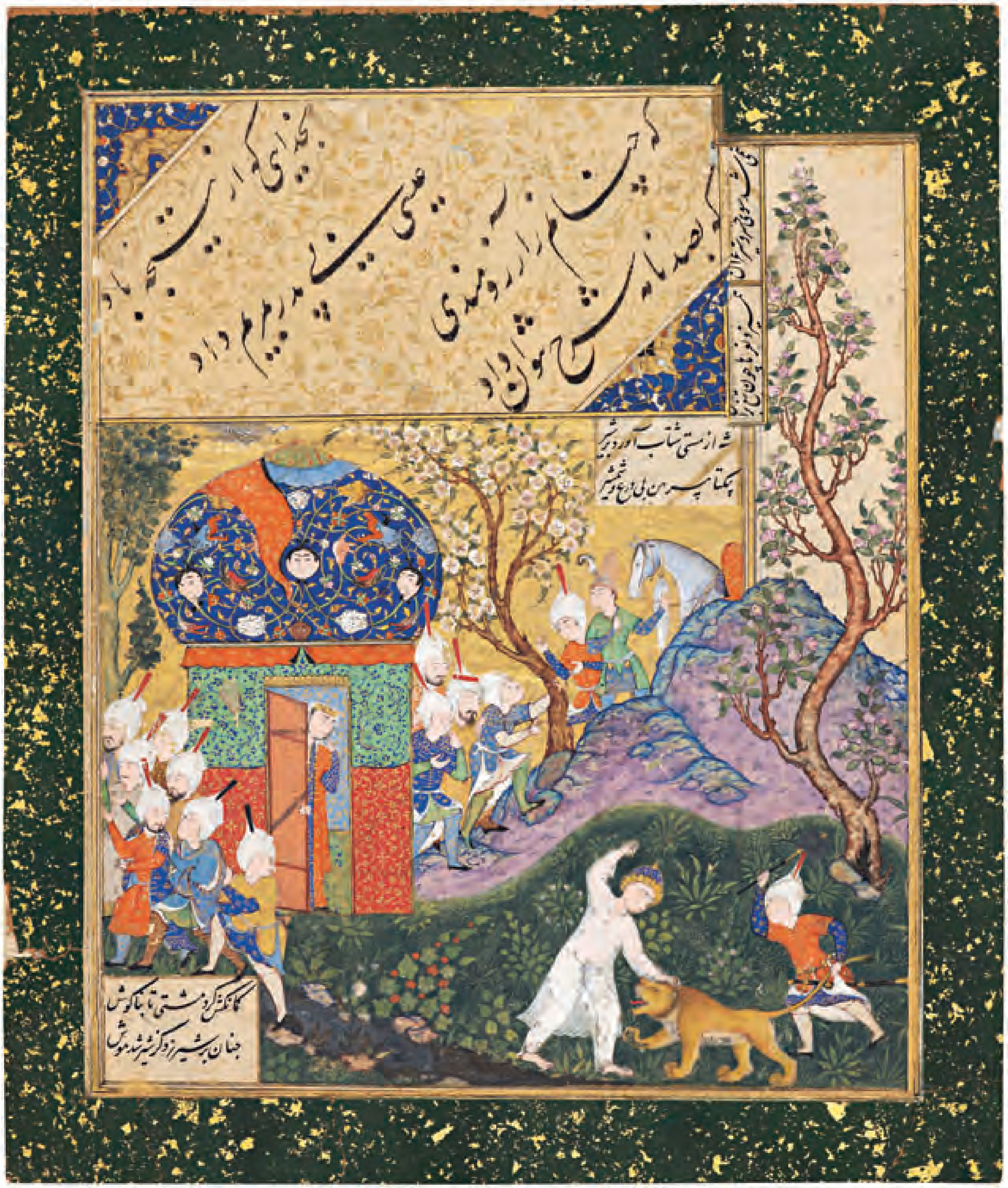
Publ: Sakisian 1929, fig. 118; A. Welch 1978a, pp. 60–61; Falk 1985, p. 66 (no. 38); Canby 1998, pp. 46–47 (no. 23)

This pivotal scene from the romance of Khusraw and Shirin, one of the five poems that make up the *Khamsa* of Nizami, shows Khusraw, the pre-Islamic Iranian prince and hero, demonstrating his strength and bravery by killing a lion with his bare hands outside the tent of his adored Shirin, an Armenian princess. The image of Khusraw in his nightclothes, fist raised to deliver the death-blow, is familiar from earlier versions of the scene which lay out the same composition employed here, with Shirin peering out from her tent to the left, the finger of astonishment at her lips (see Adamova 1996, p. 103). The very fine painting and lively and inventive arrangement of the figures in the landscape, as well as the *qizilbash* turbans of many figures (identifiable by their red finials), place this image as the work of a court painter of the earlier part of the Safavid period (1501–1722).

The textual component of the page is somewhat confusing, for the very large panel above the painting is inscribed not with lines from Nizami's romance but with an unrelated love poem. The smaller panels of text that have been incorporated into the page give a poetic description of the scene in a style of Persian poetry that suggests an Indian or Afghan source. Anthony Welch has provided an explanation for this puzzle: he proposes that the painting was created in Shah Tahmasp's atelier for a luxurious copy of the *Khamsa* that was never realised, the page eventually making its way to India where the blocks for the text, which had been left blank, were filled in with 'a mediocre love poem' and a brief explanation of the image.

In spite of the dramatic action that takes place in the lower right corner, the image is dominated by the spectacular domed tent of Shirin. Of trellis form, with a cylindrical body hung with finely patterned cloth, the tent is almost overwhelmed by its bulbous dome. The trellis tent or *khargah* may have had its roots in nomadic tradition, but it appears to have had greater prestige than guyed tents amongst the elite, and by the Timurid period was certainly regarded as a dwelling fit for nobility (Andrews 1978, p. 148). The domical structure of trellis tents gave scope for tent-makers and artists alike to create elaborate confections that often played with the heavenly imagery also met with in masonry domes, an analogy between the architectural dome and the dome of heaven naturally presenting itself.

Here, however, the elaborate decoration of the tent dome has been compared with images of the fabled *waq-waq* tree. This mythical plant was reputed to grow at the edges of the earth, bearing human and animal heads (or, in some versions, beautiful young women) instead of fruit. It appears in the *Iskandar-nama*, the final poem in Nizami's *Khamsa*, where it informs Iskandar (Alexander the Great) of his own approaching death. However, the name *waq-waq* has come to be applied rather superficially to any ornament that shows human and animal heads connected to a vegetal design, a trope that also appears in medieval Iranian metalwork (Baer 1983, p. 180–187). In the present instance, human heads jostle with leopards or cheetahs, dragons and what appears to be a smiling monkey directly above the door of the tent, while a flap of bright orange cloth drapes down over the dome, revealing the 'smoke-hole' or opening for ventilation in the crown of the dome. A comparable earlier image of a magnificent domed tent with *waq-waq* decoration provides the backdrop for the enthroned ruler Timur in a double-page illustration from a *Zafar-nama* manuscript dated 872 H/1467–68 CE (Lentz – Lowry 1989, pp. 264–265).



85

TWO TILES DEPICTING IRISES

Iran or India; seventeenth century
Earthenware with white glaze, overpainted with polychrome glaze and black outlining
47.8 x 24 cm
AKM 590

Publ: Makariou 2007, pp. 42–43 (no. 10); AKTC 2009a, p. 208 (no. 157); AKTC 2009b, p. 208 (no. 157); AKTC 2010a, p. 225 (no. 169)

Given the very close relationship between the two traditions it is difficult to separate Iranian and Indian *cuerda seca* tilework of the seventeenth century. Although the technique of *cuerda seca*, meaning 'dry cord', had been used earlier in various regions, it became something of a speciality of seventeenth-century Iranian tilemakers during the period of Safavid rule (1501–1722), and its popularity in Iran led to its adoption in northern India under the Mughal dynasty. In this technique the earthenware tile is covered with an opaque white slip upon which the design is drawn with a dark waxy or greasy material. The drawn design is then filled in with coloured glazes that resist the drawn lines, giving a thick dark outline to all parts of the design, preventing the different colours from bleeding into each other and making the technique particularly suitable for architectural decoration where clarity of design aids comprehension from a distance.

Cuerda seca tilework rose to popularity during the ambitious building programme instigated by Shah ʿAbbas (r. 1642–1666) at his new capital of Isfahan: because the tiles are fired at a preset temperature rather than receiving different firings for the separate colours, *cuerda seca* is faster and cheaper to produce than tile mosaic, which it came to replace as the tilework method of choice in seventeenth-century Safavid Isfahan (Kana'an 2008). The firing technique means that the palette of *cuerda seca* tilework is necessarily limited to those chemicals that melt at a fairly similar temperature range. In Safavid *cuerda seca* the typical background colour is a bright chrome yellow, dark cobalt blue, or white; all three colours can be seen on these tiles (once part of a larger panel), but the ochre background seen here is unusual in Safavid *cuerda seca* and may suggest an Indian origin for the piece. An orange-ochre background can be seen on a group of *cuerda seca* tiles now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, acquired in Kashmir and Lahore and thought to come from the mid-seventeenth-century refurbishment of the tomb of Madani and the tomb of Asaf Khan (d. 1641) respectively.

The close observation of the natural world that was so prized in Mughal art certainly could have informed the present image of irises: the draughtsman has skilfully combined the schematisation necessary for effective design with close observation of the forms of each individual petal to create a beautifully rendered image. However, irises also appear in a number of Iranian *cuerda seca* tile panels (von Folsach 2001, p. 183; Burlington House 1931, p. 66). Complex floral motifs can be seen in many of the large Iranian *cuerda seca* tile panels of the seventeenth century, where they often form part of a fantastic garden setting occupied by beautiful young men and women in large-scale versions of the luxurious garden scenes so often met with in miniature paintings of the period.

86

CERAMIC STAND ('TABOURET')

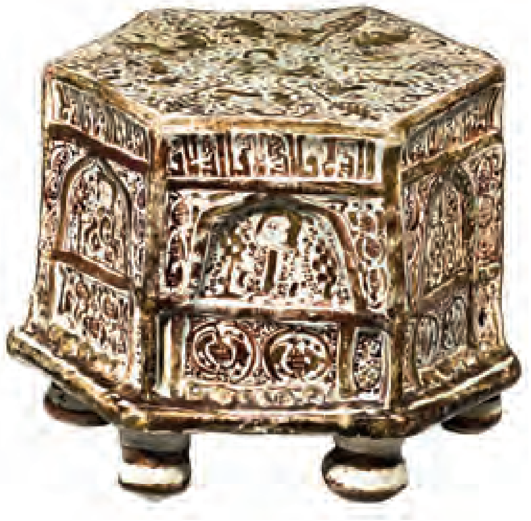
Iran, possibly Kashan; c. 1170–1200
Fritware with an opaque white glaze and lustre overpainting
Height: 16 cm; diameter: 22 cm
AKM 854
Unpublished

The diminutive, six-sided ceramic stands often referred to by the name 'tabouret' are most probably imitations of what was once a more widespread form of furniture created in wood. The perishable nature of that medium has rendered medieval wooden furniture extremely rare: a six-sided stand of mulberry and poplar wood, thought to be from twelfth-century Afghanistan and now in the David Collection, represents an exceptional survival (von Folsach 2003, pp. 79–82). The turned ball-shaped feet of that wooden stand and its six-sided form are recreated in ceramic on the present example and others like it, strongly suggesting a similar form of wooden furniture as the prototype for such pieces.

At least twenty-nine examples of six-sided ceramic stands have survived from the medieval Islamic world: some, like this piece, appear to hail from the ceramic traditions of the twelfth- to thirteenth-century Iranian world, while a separate group are connected with the Syrian ceramic production of a similar date at Raqqa (Graves 2010, chapter 2). The Syrian examples generally exhibit more obvious affinities with woodcarving, while those in the 'Iranian' styles, particularly the examples glazed in monochrome turquoise, tend to present an appearance more closely linked to architectural schema, with some of them taking the unmistakable form of a polygonal garden pavilion. While is has been proposed that these little objects might have functioned as stools, their dimensions and the relative fragility of their material make this extremely unlikely. A few of the examples of Raqqa type have central holes in the upper surface, presumably to take round-bottomed bowls or pointed vessels, while those with flat tops are most likely to have functioned as stands for trays or dishes.

In the present instance the architectural aspects of the piece may be rather opaque, but the allusions are there in the arches in which the painted figures are seated on each face, the low row of pierced circles creating a balustrade at the base of each side, and the six-sided form which is echoed in many later miniature paintings of garden pavilions (see cat. no. 82). The polygonal form of the stands, which represents one of the simplest ways to create a relatively stable structure from straight pieces of wood or slabs of fritware, probably served as the initial stimulus for the craftsmen to begin playing with architectural forms as decoration.

Two other lustre-painted tabourets are known. The most famous of these is in the Philadelphia Museum of Art: at thirty centimetres high it is considerably larger than the present example and has exceptionally fine, dense painting depicting drinking figures seated within arches on the 'upper storey', while below waterbirds are painted within what appear to be representations of circular ponds. At the top of the piece a continuous band of *naskhi* inscription has been painted in reserve (Watson 1985, pp. 106–107). A lustre-painted example in the Hermitage Museum is much closer to the present piece in the quality of its painting, although it is also somewhat larger (Adamova 2007, pp. 51, 102). The rapid painting in brownish lustre on white, without any reserve decoration, and the characteristic 'chequerboard' trees place both this piece and the Hermitage example within the so-called 'miniature' style of Iranian lustre wares. Dates from 575 H/1179 CE to 595 H/1198 CE have been recorded on pieces painted in the miniature style, making a date in the last decades of the twelfth century likely for this piece (Watson 2004, p. 347).



87

TWO INKWELLS

Khurasan (northeastern Iran and Afghanistan); twelfth or thirteenth century
Cast copper alloy with engraved decoration, and silver and copper inlay (887 only)
Height: 12 cm (887); 14.5 cm (888)
AKM 887, 888
Unpublished

Along with the reed pen, the inkwell, called *dawat* or sometimes *mihbara*, is the quintessential attribute of the scribe and calligrapher. There is a Hadith that tells that the first thing God created was the pen, while the second thing was the *nun*, or inkwell (Taragan 2005, p. 32). Various medieval authors prohibited the use of precious metals for inkwells because of this holy association, and the tenth-century poet al-Kashajim criticised the men of his time for being too proud of their gold- and silver-decorated inkwells (Baer 1972, p. 916). However, the practice of creating luxurious inkwells inlaid with precious metal was certainly in vogue in greater Khurasan during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries: large numbers of such inkwells have survived from the region, and several examples are known which have been signed by craftsmen whose names indicate that they are from Herat (now in Afghanistan), and Nishapur in Iran (Ettinghausen 1943, p. 196; Aga-Oglu 1946; Dimand 1949, p. 139).

The standard form for inkwells of the Khurasan type is cylindrical, with a close-fitting lid capped with a central lobed dome with a short finial, and their dimensions are typically very small: these two represent fairly large examples of the form, although still within the standard range. Not all of them are of the highest of category of workmanship, and there is a lack of dedicatory inscriptions on the group as a whole, most of them bearing Arabic expressions of generic good wishes as well as the occasional name of the craftsman. It has been suggested that the more luxurious examples were emblems of state and were created for scribes and learned men working in the upper levels of government (Melikian-Chirvani 1986). Around the body of each of these inkwells there are three evenly spaced little loop handles on hinges, which line up with three loops on the lid: these were designed to take cords which held the body and lid together when the inkwell was not in use, and enabled it to be hung from the belt of the scribe.

There is some debate as to whether the form of this type of inkwell owes anything to architecture and architectural decoration: Melikian-Chirvani believes that these pieces should be classed as 'tower-shaped inkwells' and are designed to resemble a miniature domed monument, a conclusion with which Grabar and Ettinghausen concurred, but other authors have refrained from following this reading (*ibid*., p. 73; Grabar 1992, p. 191; Ettinghausen 1969, p. 298). Perhaps it is most useful to understand them as objects that sometimes evoke the forms of architecture, rather than a literal representation of any type of building. Their cylindrical form and domical lids can, at times, appear to allude to domed monuments or, perhaps more likely, to tents: an image of a tent painted on a lustre ceramic plaque dated 1312 is a shows a comparable ogival dome with finial atop a cylindrical body with a pronounced slope (Adle 1982). The play with architecture is most pronounced in those examples that, like AKM 888, employ motifs from architecture as part of their applied decoration, most commonly in the form of arch motifs like those seen here.

Meanwhile, the imagery of AKM 887, showing roundels containing figures within thrones decorated with dragons' heads, while smaller seated figures grasp parts of the interlace roundels in which they are enmeshed, appears to be related to astrological designs. Similar seated figures on dragon-headed thrones have been suggested in other examples of inlaid metalwork to be personifications of the pseudo-planet Jawzahr, or descendents of the 'fire-maker' imagery found on Sasanian seals from pre-Islamic Iran (Baer 1983, pp. 260–262; Wenzel 2005).

88

LAMP HOLDER

Andalusia, Spain; tenth century
Cast bronze with openwork and engraved decoration
Height: 53 cm
AKM 593
Publ: AKTC 2008b, p. 2; AKTC 2009a, p. 45 (no. 47); AKTC 2009b, p. 45 (no. 47), AKTC 2010a, p. 97 (no. 48); AKTC 2010b, pp. 128–129 (no. 52)

The Umayyads, the first dynastic rulers of the Islamic world, made their capital at Damascus in Syria but the borders of their rapidly expanding empire stretched far and wide. Much of Spain came under their control during the early Islamic period. Following the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty by the ʿAbbasids in 750, the last surviving member of the Umayyad imperial house fled to the Iberian peninsula and there established himself as the de facto Umayyad ruler of Islamic Spain (al-Andalus). The creation of the Spanish Umayyad caliphate in 929 positioned the Spanish Umayyads as rivals to the political authority of the ʿAbbasid state, and fomented the already pitched issues surrounding political and religious sovereignty in the tenth-century Islamic world.

The Byzantine culture that had preceded Umayyad rule in Syria had proved highly significant in the shaping of Umayyad arts prior to the dynasty's collapse at Damascus, and in al-Andalus Umayyad Syrian forms were blended with the pre-existing artistic practices of Visigothic Spain, and eventually with later developments from elsewhere in the Islamic world. This lamp holder, which combines architectural and animal forms with engraved vegetal and inscriptive decoration, has a remarkably similar counterpart in the David Collection (von Folsach 2001, p. 296). The two lamps are clearly very closely related and represent the most complete examples of a type that is also known from more fragmentary remains. The architectural section of the David Collection example has six sides where this piece has four, but both are centred around an architectonic form like that of a domed baldachin or canopy mounted on slim columns, with two levels of punched and openwork decoration extending below the 'canopy'. In addition, both bear protruding bird forms, and both are mounted on vase-shaped pedestals with globular mid-sections decorated with the repeated Arabic word *baraka* ('blessing') in a thickly drawn Kufic script. Thought to date from the tenth century, this lamp holder seems to bear reference in its forms to earlier Christian models of liturgical metalwork: for example, a Coptic incense burner of related form, thought to date from the fourth to sixth centuries CE, is now held in the Louvre (Bénazeth 1988, fig. 11).

89

THE COURT OF KING SOLOMON

Folio from an unidentified manuscript, possibly a *Dīwān* of Ḥāfiẓ;
painting attributed to Mādhu Khānazād
Mughal India, c. 1600
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper
Page: 34.6 x 22.8 cm; image: 27.4 x 15.4 cm
AKM 128

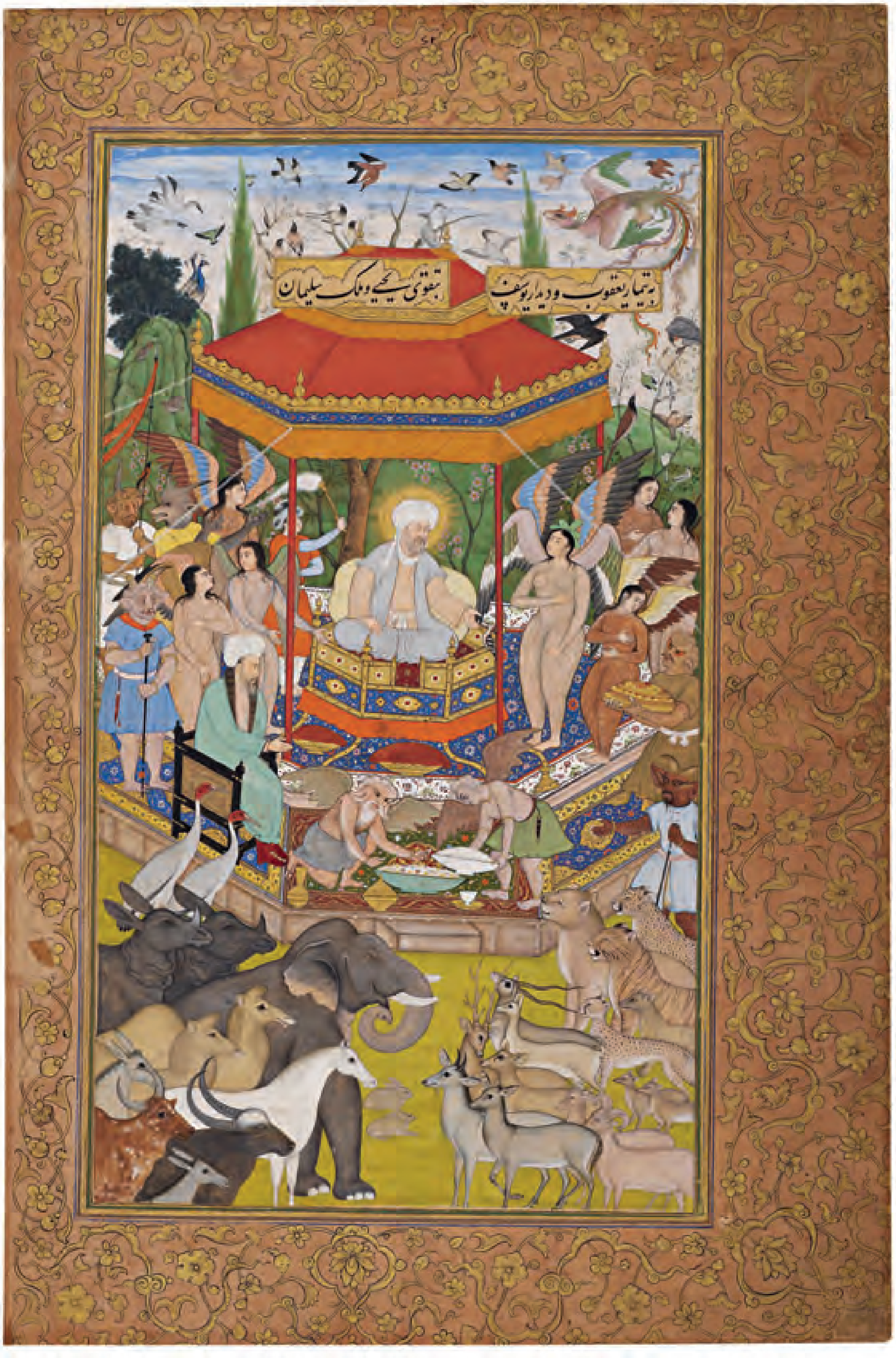
Publ: Grousset 1930, no. 218; Strzygowski 1933, no. 216; S.C. Welch 1959, no. 11; S.C. Welch – Beach 1965, no. 6; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 188–190 (no. 63); Falk 1985, p. 156 (no. 131); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 66–67 (no. 25); Brand 1995, p. 111 (no. 75); Vaughan 1999, fig. 4; Ritschard 2000, no. 232; Koch 2001, p. 108

As the Muslim paradigm of a just and wise ruler, the image of the prophet Sulayman (the biblical King Solomon) appears frequently in Islamic art. In this painting the two lines of text compare an unidentified man to four Old and New Testament figures: 'In sympathy [he was like] Jacob; in beauty [like] Joseph; in piety [like] John; in sovereignty [like] Solomon' (Welch – Welch 1982, p. 188).

While his appearance in earlier miniature painting is generally limited to those episodes in which his deeds are narrated, from the late fifteenth century onwards in Shiraz the image of Solomon enthroned and surrounded by animals began to appear as a double-page frontispiece in a variety of commercial manuscripts (Bağci 1995). Those images, like this one, depict the just ruler surrounded by humans, *jinn*s (genies) with feathered bodies and wings, *div*s (devils), and real and fabulous beasts, demonstrating Solomon's mastery and control of all creatures through his great wisdom and understanding. The image of the awe-inspiring Solomonic throne as symbol of divinely ordained kingship is partnered in popular culture by religious and folkloric descriptions of the peace that Solomon's rule brought to the beasts of the world (Koch 2001, pp. 104–126). Seated in front of the fabled throne of Solomon in the present painting is his vizier Asaf ibn Barakhya, a similarly exemplary character and protector of the people. A boy attendant with a flywhisk is the only other human, but the approach of Solomon's wife Bilqis, the legendary Queen of Sheba, is heralded by the hoopoe who sits perched on the throne, to Solomon's left.

The image of a peaceable kingdom of natural and supernatural creatures gathered around a spectacular throne must have appealed to painters as a showcase for their versatility and skill in both depiction and composition, as well as providing much visual novelty. However, the iconography of Solomon enthroned undoubtedly had deeper resonances with the courtly patrons of luxury manuscripts. As Koch has shown, the identification of the Mughal emperor with Solomon was an important aspect of Mughal ideology, and she argues that the ceremonial throne of the emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1657), completed in 1648, is an elaborate realisation of the legendary throne of Solomon. Solomon's throne is described in medieval sources as being made from precious metals and stones, and variously embellished with terrifying and wonderful mechanical creatures and jewelled trees of silver and gold.

Intriguingly close parallels can be drawn between the enthronement section of this image and certain paintings of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) that are included in the *Akbarnama* manuscript now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, created c. 1590–1596. Magnificent six-sided tents, elaborate stepped and carpeted platforms, and cross-legged enthroned rulers can all be seen in both this image and the *Akbarnama* enthronement scenes: such parallels seem clearly intended to draw the image of the charismatic Mughal ruler of a vast and heterogenous empire ever closer to that of the wise and just Solomon.


بتیمار یعقوب و دیدار یوسف
بتقوی یحیی و ملک سلیمان

90

COMPLAINTS BROUGHT BEFORE A PRINCE

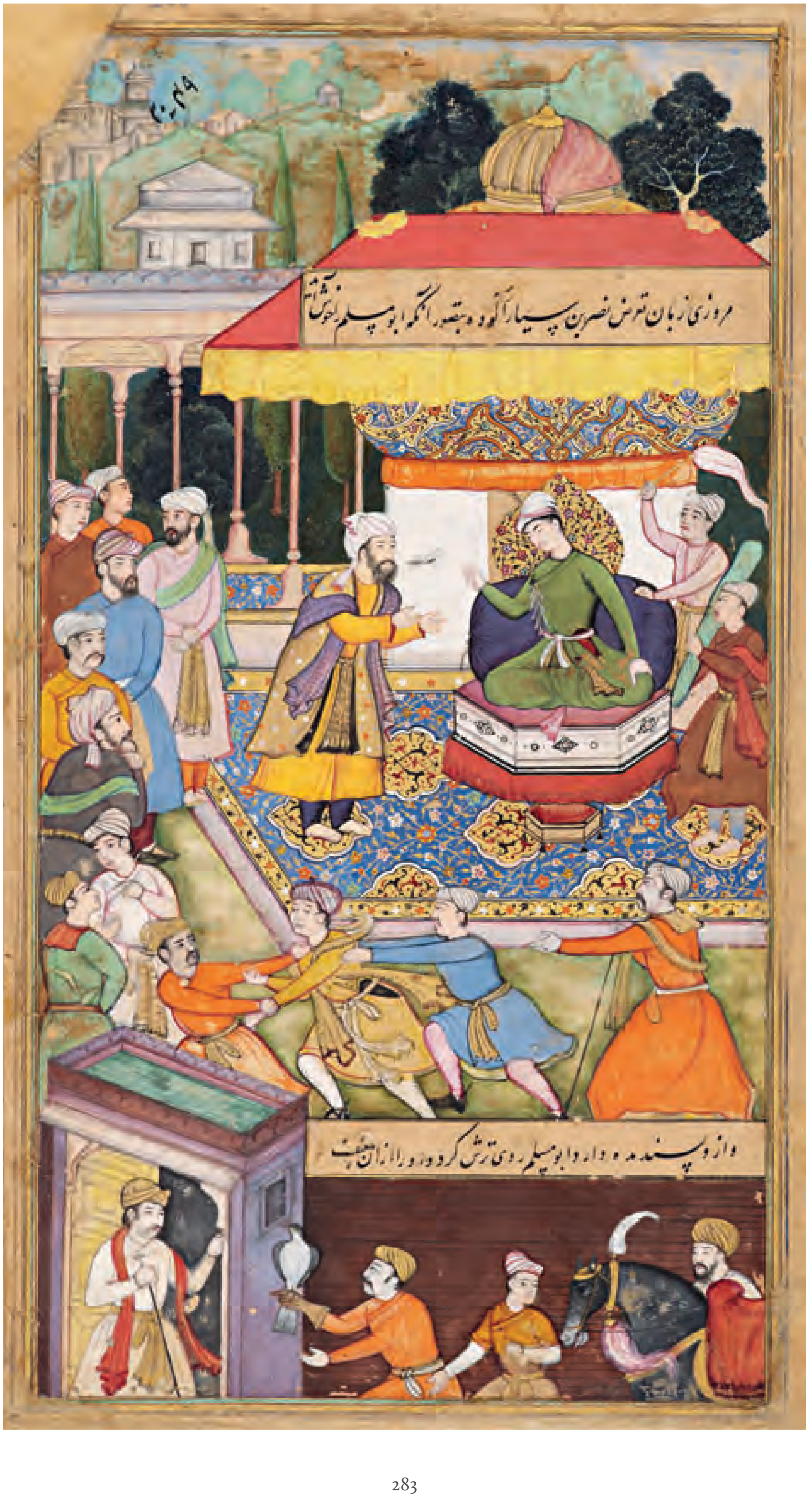
Folio 248r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*
('Ethics of Nāṣir') of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī
Mughal India; c. 1590–1595
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Pages: 23.7 x 14.3 cm
AKM 288

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 171–175 (no. 58); Brand – Lowry 1985, p. 58; Falk 1985, p. 153 (no. 127); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 42–43, 46, 60–61, 120–127; Canby 1998, pp. 124–127 (nos 92, 93); Ziad 2002, pp. x, 146; AKTC 2007a, pp. 122–123, 168 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2007b, pp. 124–125, 167 (nos 87, 88, 141); AKTC 2008a, pp. 184–185 (no. 67); AKTC 2010b, pp. 144–145 (no. 65)

The atelier of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1564–1605) employed a large number of painters, as well as a considerable team of the scribes, gilders, illuminators, line-drawers, paper-makers and bookbinders necessary to the large-scale production of luxury books. Some painters from Iran were employed in Mughal court circles, particularly after Shah Tahmasp I, the ruler of Safavid Iran (r. 1524–1576), increasingly withdrew his patronage of artists and poets in the latter part of his reign, leading many to seek new courtly patrons in India. However, many painters with Indian names are also recorded in contemporary texts and on the paintings themselves: for example, one of the other paintings in this manuscript bears an ascription to Pahim Gujarati (see cat. no. 65); another is inscribed 'Kanak Singh' (fol. 138r). The synthesis of Persianate miniature painting traditions with Indian styles of representation, resulting in a new Mughal idiom that gathered pace from the late sixteenth century, was the result of ambitious patronage and the commingling of local and foreign artists in the royal *kitabkhana* ('book house'; a library which was also the site of book production), where they were surrounded by precious manuscripts from various locations.

This image comes from the seventh section of the third discourse of Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's ethical treatise, concerned with social status and personal relationships. The two lines of text on the illustrations refer to an anecdote told about the eighth-century ʿAbbasid governor Abu Muslim. When someone seeking to impress Abu Muslim smeared the name of one of Abu Muslim's enemies, he was met with scorn. Abu Muslim admonished him by saying that it would be one thing to kill this enemy, but why pollute one's tongue by abusing him? (Wickens 1964, p. 255). The present image may be a literal representation of this scene, but it may more likely illustrate the preceding passage, which enjoins readers to remember that in cases of dispute 'complaints regarding enemies should be clearly brought to the ears of princes' (*ibid*., p. 254).

Like their Timurid forebears in Central Asia, the Mughal rulers of India incorporated imagery that referred to their nomadic ancestry (Timur himself claimed to be descended from Genghis Khan) within the royal iconography of their miniature painting. In this image the young prince is seated in a palatial setting, the architectural parameters marked by a colonnaded roofed pathway behind and an external wall with a guarded gateway in front, while an ornate carpet covers the central floor and delineates a more privileged space within this highly regulated environment. Contained within the permanent architectural setting, and very much dominating it, is a round, richly ornamented trellis tent, partly masked by a canopy beneath which the prince sits enthroned. This composition creates a direct reference to nomadic tents, and illustrates the conflation of permanent and impermanent structures – tents and palaces – that was such a characteristic of court ceremonial and self-definition amongst the Timurid and early Mughal rulers. Note also how neatly the floating text panels have been incorporated within the architectural structures of wall and canopy.


مروزی زبان ترش نصر بن سیار آلوده بقصد او اگر ابو مسلم را خوش آمد
وازو پسندیده داد و ابو مسلم روی ترش کرد و ورا از آن بخفت

91

SHĀH RĀMĪN PREPARES TO DEFEAT THE MONSTROUS HALF-MEN

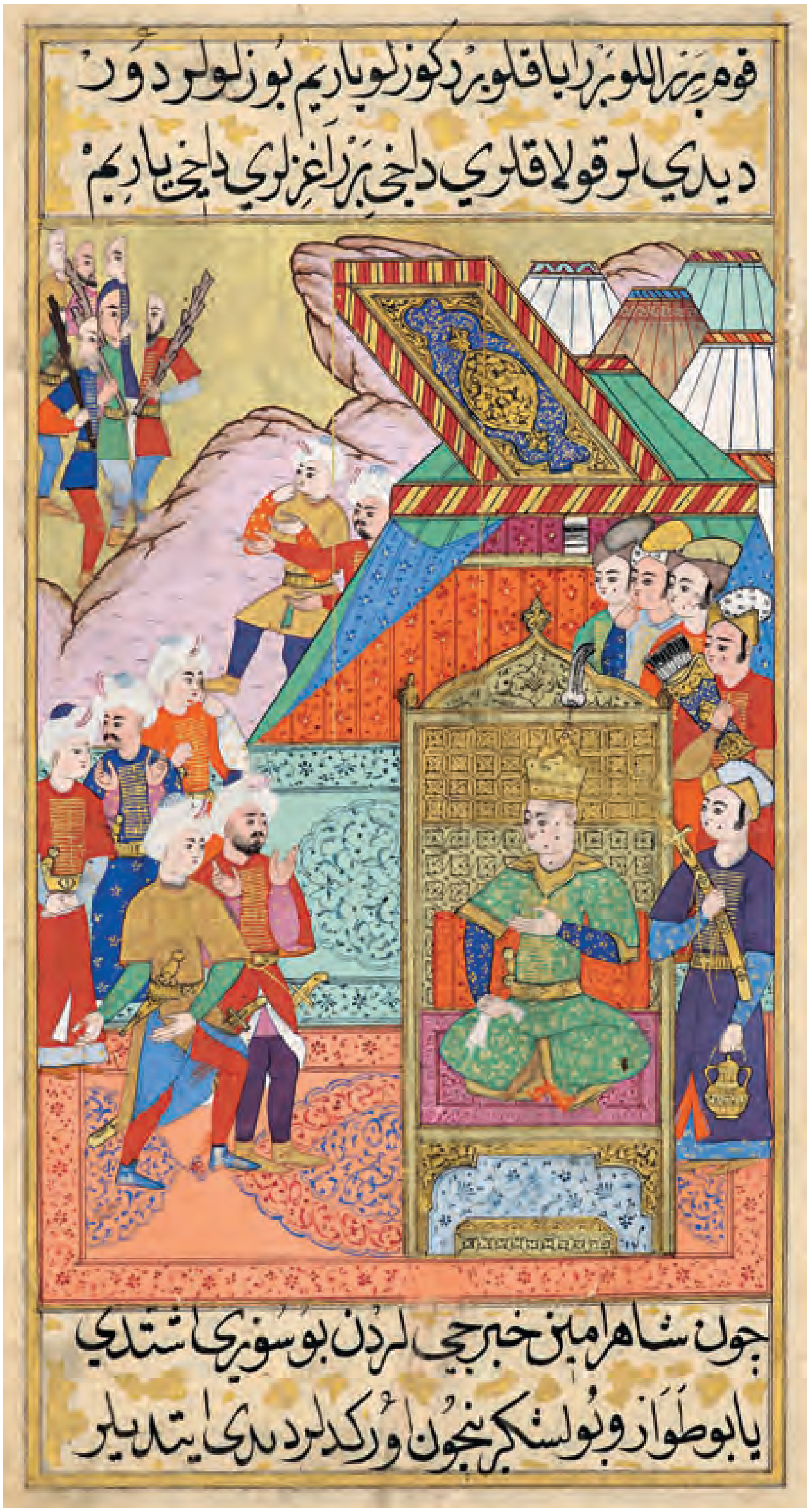
Folio 189r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leṭāʾif*
(‘Gifts of Curiosities’ or ‘Curious and Witty Gifts’) of ʿAlī ibn Naqīb
Ḥamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murād III
Istanbul; dated 1002 H/1593–94 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 35.1 x 21 cm
AKM 280

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Binney 1979, pp. 78–79; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 38–42 (no. 9, fols 177v, 226v–227r and 252v–253r); Falk 1985, p. 136 (no. 109; fols 279v–280r and 275v–276r); Canby 1998, pp. 99–100 (nos 71–72; fols 296r and 297r); Leane 2002, pls 18.2, 18.6 (fol. 27); AKTC 2010b, pp. 297–299 (no. 128)

While searching for his beloved Mah-Pervin, the young hero of the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif*, prince Shah Ramin, fell under the control of a sorcerer who held him captive. One night, however, the prophet Ilyas (Elijah) appeared to him in a dream and taught him a prayer which would, when recited, keep him safe from harm; Ilyas also freed him from the sorcerer’s bonds and Shah Ramin was also able to kill his capturer and continue with his quest. With his new powers Shah Ramin was able to vanquish the many monstrous beings he then encountered, including the Half-Men, of whom the text says with relish ‘they even have a single ear and half a mouth’. Shah Ramin appears to be exhorting his men to stand their ground against this horrible army as it appears on the horizon, and his reported speech in the lower text box asks them why they have become frightened (translation by Lale Uluç; see also Meredith-Owens 1988, p. 583).

This illustrated manuscript (see also cat. nos 39, 56, 62 and 79) is the only known surviving copy of the romance tale *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif*, and its fifty-six single-page and nine double-page illustrations represent an important addition to the story of book painting under the Ottoman sultan Murad III (r. 1574–1595). The broad literary tastes of this sultan, shared by his son Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603), ran to a striking interest in prose stories of all kinds, including romances and tales of the strange and marvellous, and during their reigns a number of such works were translated into Ottoman Turkish or composed anew in Ottoman Turkish or Persian, and recorded in luxurious illustrated manuscripts. The innovative approach to miniature painting that was necessitated by the patronage of such varied works, many of them without any pre-existing cycle of illustrations, is shown in the inventiveness of composition that characterises this and other manuscripts of the same group, including the *Şehname-i Selim Han* dated 988 H/1581 CE (Fetvaci 2009), the *Siyar-i Nabi* of 1594–95 (Fisher 1984), the *Destan-i Ferruh u Huma*, dated 1010 H/1601–2 CE, and various other romances (Bağci 2010, pp. 210–211).

The image of a royal encampment occurs several times within the *Tuhfet ül-letaʾif*, in both single page images like this one, and more complex double-page images where the camp scene is the counterpart to a battle scene or an image of massed troops. Related images of royal military and diplomatic missions set in encampments can also be seen in other manuscripts of the period (e.g. Fetvaci 2009, figs 30–32, and Bağci 2010, pp. 169, 173), and it is clear from the material and textual evidence that military encampments of the Ottoman period were of such a scale that they were practically akin to nomadic cities: two entire corps of the Ottoman court were dedicated to imperial tent pitchers and tentmakers (Atasoy 2000, pp. 22–42). The use of a bold striped edging on both round tents and projecting awnings, seen in so many Ottoman miniature paintings of royal encampments, is a reflection of real-world practice: striped edgings can be seen on tents and canopies surviving from the late seventeenth to nineteenth centuries (*ibid*., pp. 162, 58).



قوم بزه اللو برابا قلو بر دکوزلو یاریم بوزلولر دور
دیدی لوقولا قلوی داخی برآغزلوی داخی یاریم

چون شاه امین خبرجیلردن بو سوزی اشتدی
یا بو طواز و بو لشکر نیچون ورکدلر دیدی ایتدیلر

92

SALM AND TŪR RECEIVE THE REPLY OF FARĪDŪN AND MANŪCHIHR

Folio 53v from the dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī
created for Shāh Ṭahmāsp
Tabriz, Iran; c. 1522–1535
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Page: 47.1 x 32 cm
AKM 495

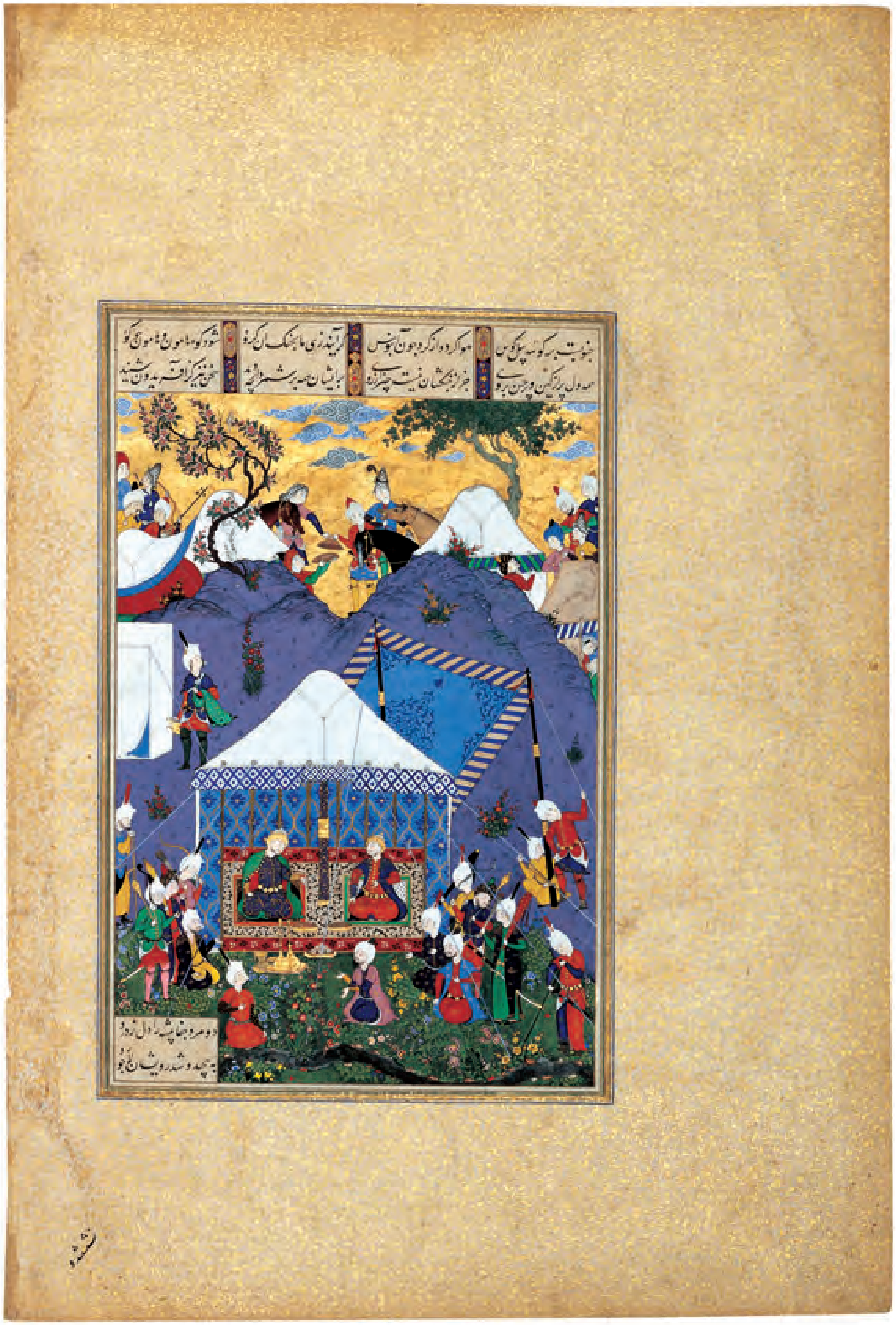
Publ: Dickson – Welch 1981, vol. 2, no. 40; Falk 1985, p. 79 (no. 47); Makariou 2007, p. 76 (no. 23); AKTC 2010b, p. 287 (no. 120)

The *Shahnama* created for Shah Tahmasp in the first half of the sixteenth century is generally acknowledged to be one of the greatest illustrated manuscripts ever made (see also cat. nos 53 and 63). In 1568, less than fifty years after it was begun, the manuscript was given by Shah Tahmasp to the Ottoman Sultan Selim II as part of an astonishingly lavish accession gift: presumably the Safavids judged this to be a high price worth paying for the maintenance of peace with their powerful neighbours.

This painting is one of a long series of images in that manuscript that present various stages in the story of the brothers Salm and Tur, and the war they waged against their father Faridun. Having been sent by their father to rule the distant realms of Rum (the Roman west) and Chin (China, i.e. the east), Salm and Tur conspired most foully to murder their blameless brother Iraj, Faridun's most favoured son; having done so, they sent his severed head back to their father along with a cruel note. After a period of dark mourning, Faridun gathered his forces and raised Iraj's grandson Manuchihr to power, preparing to take vengeance on his fratricidal sons. An envoy sent by Salm and Tur with gifts to appease their father did not soothe his wrath, and this scene depicts the return of the envoy to Salm and Tur's camp, bearing a blood-curdling message from Faridun: 'we will drench with blood, both fruit and leaf, the tree sprung out of vengeance for Iraj' (Warner vol. 1, p. 211).

The present image thus represents the last in a sequence of scenes set in tents as the key characters threaten each other from afar. After this image the action of the text changes and it is followed by several energetic paintings of battles as Manuchihr wages bloody war against Salm and Tur, a sequence that ends with Manuchihr's enthronement as Shah of Iran. Salm and Tur's distance (both physical and moral) from civilised Iranian society means that they are shown throughout this section of the *Shahnama* in remote military encampments, while Faridun is also frequently shown in tents but of a far more luxurious type.

The artist has taken considerable care in this image over the depiction of different types of tent, most of them plain white instead of the spectacular patterned examples seen in kingly enthronements, and here complete with all the guy ropes that are sometimes omitted in other paintings. White – believed to be auspicious – was the traditional colour for nomadic tents made from woollen felt from the Mongol period or even earlier, but these are not trellis tents and would not have been made from felt (Andrews 1997, p. 30). The striped edge of the projecting awning behind Salm and Tur's tent is very similar to those seen in depictions of imperial military encampments in Ottoman manuscripts (see cat. no. 91) and represents a real form of decoration used on imperial tents of the sixteenth century in Ottoman Turkey, and presumably also Safavid Iran. The painter has also exploited the theme to create a mirrored composition, arranging the evil brothers in their tent symmetrically, with twinned mountains and tents behind them (Makariou 2007).



93

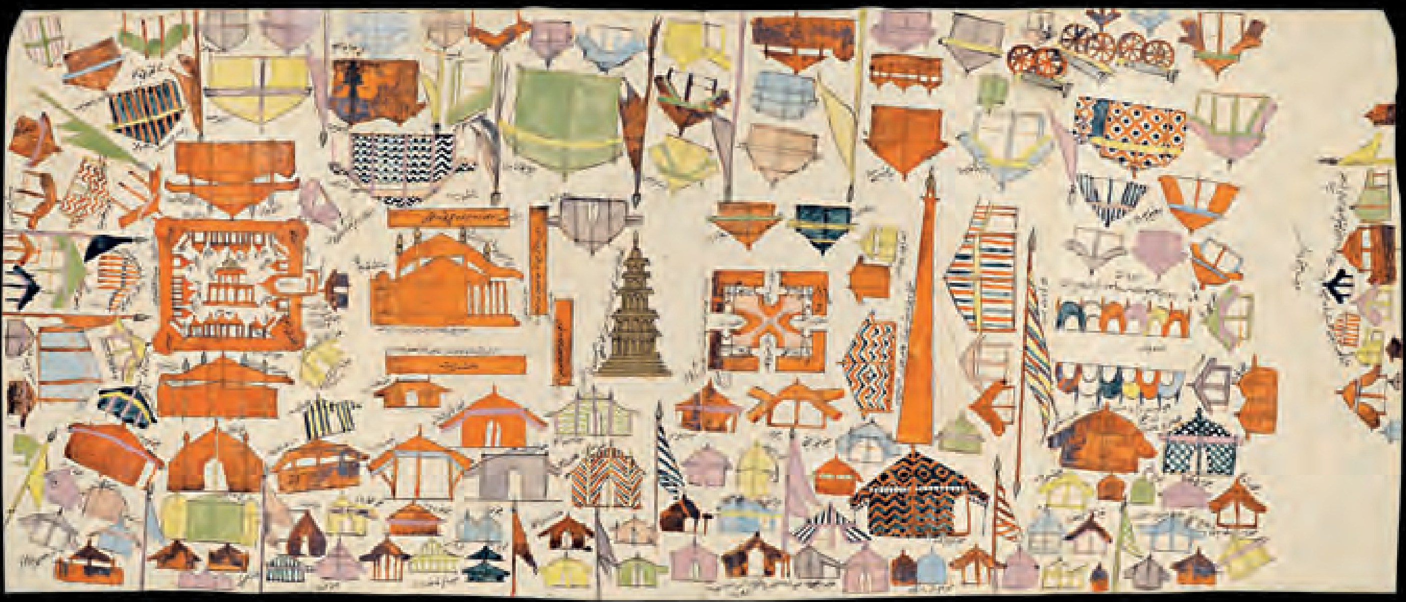
PLAN OF AN ENCAMPMENT

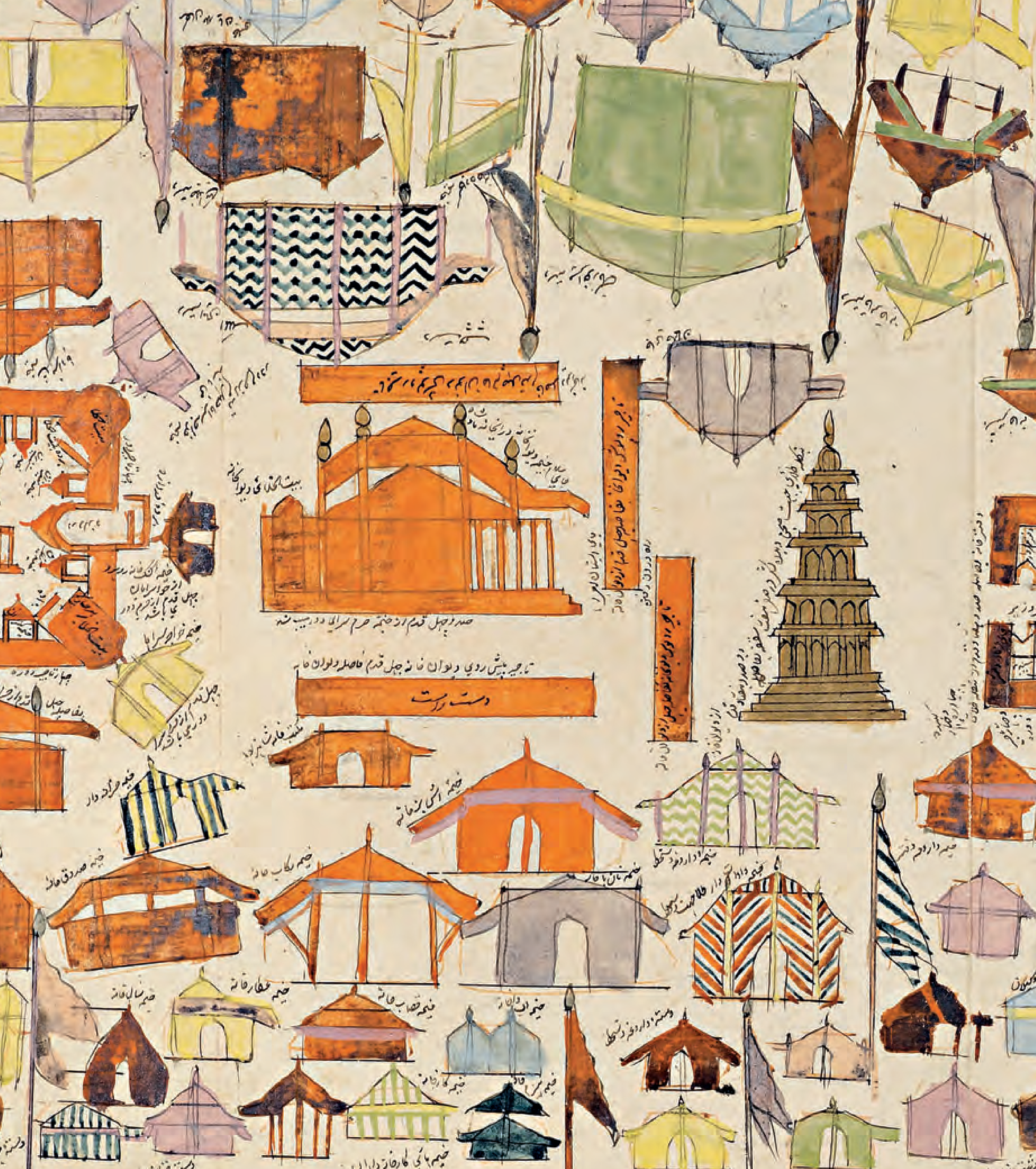
Probably Afghanistan; c. 1800
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
27.9 x 66 cm
AKM 708
Publ: AKTC 2008a, no. 22

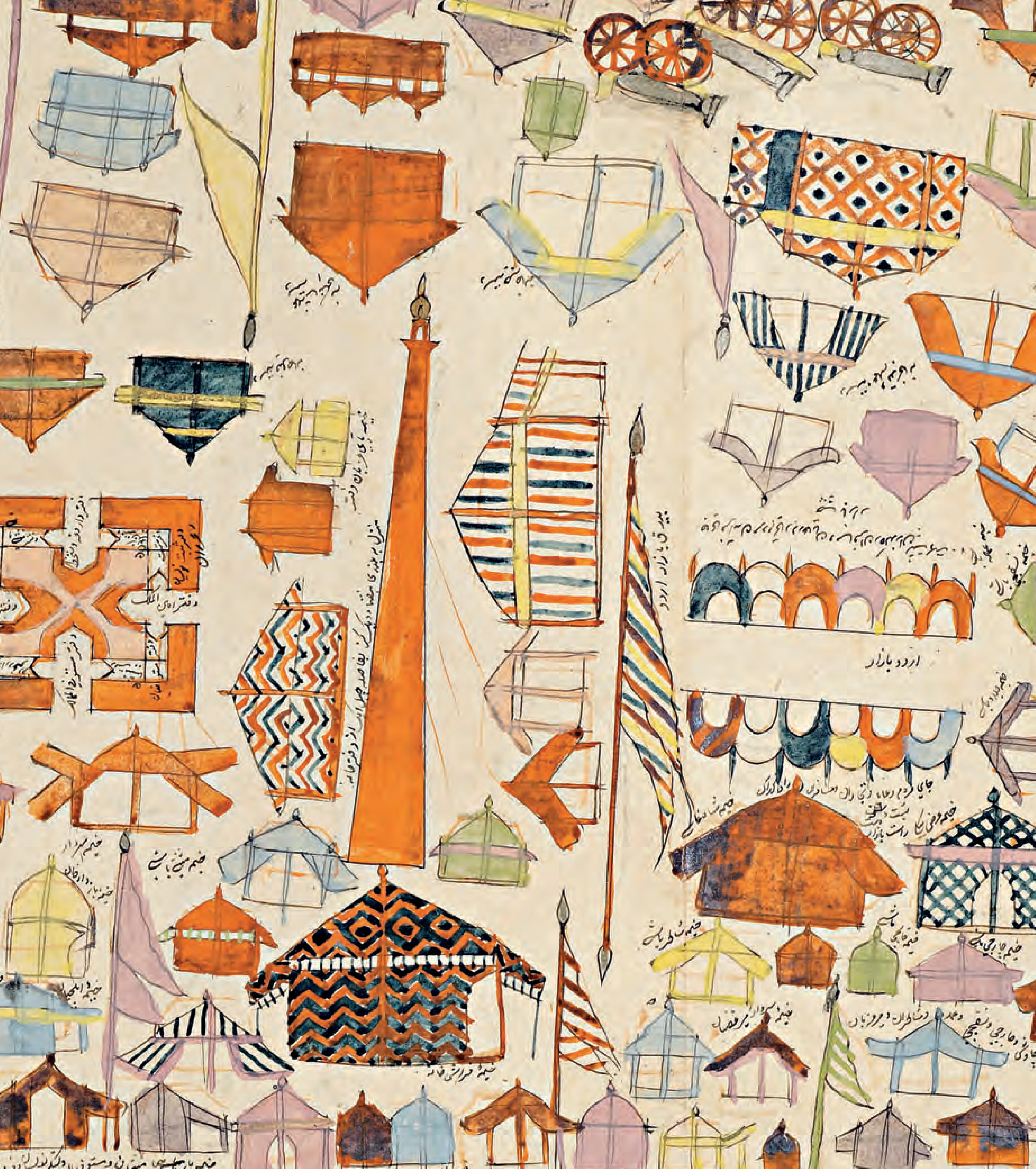
Thought to have been formerly in the possession of William Pitt Amherst (1773–1857), governor general of Bengal, this drawing appears to be a diagram of a royal encampment. Many of the individual tents and structures are labelled, and in one corner the title 'Wafadar Khan Sadozai' is inscribed, meaning that this document is almost certainly a product of the period when the Sadozai clan ruled in Afghanistan (1747–1842). Wafadar Khan Sadozai was the name of a minister of Shah Zaman Sadozai, ruler from 1793 to 1800, and it is certainly possible that this is the same Wafadar Khan Sadozai named in the inscription (Noelle 1997, pp. 4–5). The care that has been taken to include diagrammatic images of each tent and pavilion in the encampment, differentiated through their colour and patterning as well as scale and details, and some of them even labelled with their sizes and the distance between them and other structures, implies that this was intended as a serious record and represents a working diagram. Presumably this was a plan to be followed when the camp was set up in a new location.

The image overall presents, as has been observed by James Wescoat in his essay in this catalogue, a veritable 'encyclopaedia' of tent types. The entire schema is pivoted around the remarkable central structure, which is labelled 'seven-storey gold *bangala* for the army's lookout'. Note how each tent is shown in elevation and the smaller tents are oriented towards the larger central structures, a representational mode that can also be seen in some of the images of Mecca (for example cat. nos 2 or 9), and one which provides a means of packing a great deal of information onto the page concerning individual structures and their relationship to each other.

Unlike many of the miniature paintings in this section, cylindrical trellis tents of the nomadic type do not appear to be particularly well represented here, and most of the tents have been depicted with a prominent central pole and conical roofs. The remarkable Central Asian practice of creating tents that mimic the forms of masonry architecture, as represented in the more elaborate structures of this image, was already attested in Clavijo's report from the camp of Timur at Samarqand, written in 1404. The Spaniard reported with wonder that he saw walls of cloth surrounding the main pavilions, complete with crenellations along the top such as 'might be otherwise the wall of a town or castle', as well as a large arched gateway with double doors which could be barred and locked, and a tower with battlements, all of them made from fabric (Le Strange 1928, pp. 239–240). The entire camp at Samarqand, comprised of tents packed closely together with 'no more than the width of a street' between them, and decorated with quasi-architectural elements made from stiffened fabric, must have very strongly recalled for its inhabitants the secure stronghold of a city, and the same could perhaps be said of the late eighteenth-century camp visualised in this document (Andrews 1978, p. 146).




صدر چل قدم از خیمه حرم سرای در جیب شه
تا خیمه پیش روی دیوان خانه چل قدم فاصله دیوان خانه
دست راست
خیمه آش پزخانه
خیمه رکاب خانه
خیمه صندوق خانه


اردو بازار

VI

ARCHITECTURE AND THE WRITTEN WORD

Inside and outside, picture and page:
The architectural spaces of miniature painting

Margaret S. Graves

Readers of this catalogue will be struck by the number of painted images of architecture from the Islamic world that do not follow the axonometric projection and linear perspective that have become widely accepted – following the Italian Renaissance – as standard models for the artistic portrayal of a building. Nor do these paintings look like technical drawings. While many of the depictions of Mecca and other sites of pilgrimage shown in group I combine the conventions of 'plan' and 'elevation' to maximum effect for the conveyance of important information, they do so without rigidly following a technical schema. In a different pictorial mode, many of the more elaborate book illustrations of architecture that are shown here merge multiple simultaneous viewpoints within a single painted image, juxtaposing complex elements, planes and panels of decorative pattern on the surface of the page to form structures that seem at times ready to slide apart before the viewer's eyes. This capacity to create images of architectural space that have been refracted through the prism of the senses – and indeed the imagination – is a unique and remarkable aspect of the book illustrations created in the Islamic world, and one that frequently interacts in a highly sophisticated manner with the parameters of the page itself.

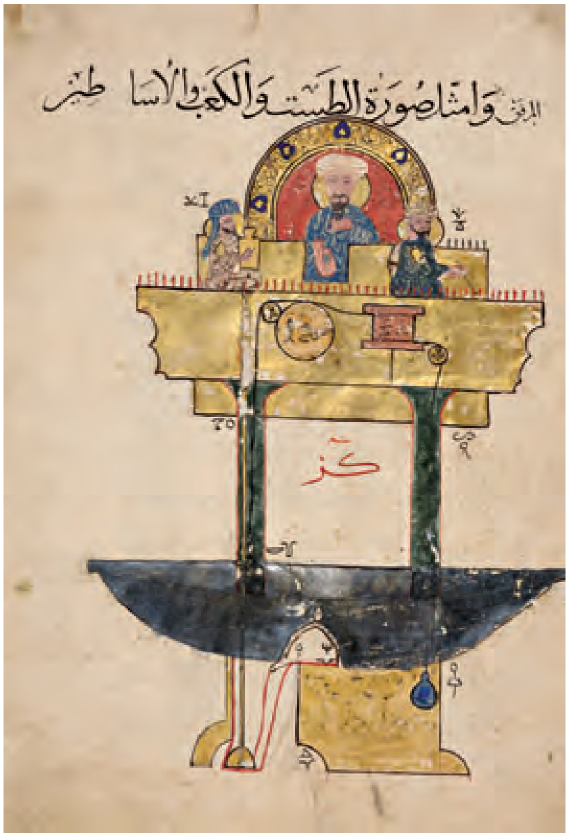
Architecture as Frame in Early Illustrated Manuscripts

As has often been noted, the illustrated book, that most exclusive of painted surfaces, underwent a dramatic series of developments in Iran and the surrounding lands during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries. This explosion of artistic activity codified an utterly unique painterly idiom that was to have a lasting resonance within the representational arts of India and Turkey as well as Greater Iran: the miniature painting. No single precise spark can be isolated to explain this florescence of the illustrated book as an artistic medium – and as a vehicle for the rarefied display of wealth, status and even political and religious legitimacy. The accelerated spread of improved paper-making technologies in the Middle East from the ninth/tenth centuries apparently acted as one spur,[1] and the late thirteenth-century stimulus received from the Chinese arts that were carried westwards following the Mongol conquest of Central Asia and the Iranian plateau can certainly be identified as another.[2] However, historical accounts also testify to the widespread existence of major libraries and the circulation of illustrated books of various kinds throughout the Middle East prior to the Mongol invasions, and we must ultimately accept that the surviving manuscripts tell only part of the story.

Painted illustrations had long accompanied certain types of text in the Arabic-speaking world, with the manuscripts produced at Baghdad and Mosul in the first half of the thirteenth century generally regarded as the apex of this particular genre of book art. This painting tradition, which continued to appear in certain contexts throughout the following centuries, is often strikingly different from what was to come in Greater

Iran in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[3] Many of the illustrated Arabic works concerned are scientific texts, with single-figure illustrations perhaps best described as diagrams (fig. 1). More complex compositions involving figures in architectural settings are also found in some manuscripts of this group: within these, architecture is generally conceived of as a square or rectangular box which orders the content of the image along a single plane and more or less coincides with the edges of the picture space. Such architectural images frequently follow a simple tripartite structure with two smaller cells flanking a larger central area, the composition floating on the page between lines of text.[4] Normally such images contain no indication of recessional space, and the whole – figures, props and architectural framework – will be frontally oriented and painted on a blank background, forming a self-contained two-dimensional unit that exists entirely on the single plane of the page surface, without suggestion of depth or hidden space.[5]

A similar conception of interior space is evident in many of the paintings found in the illustrated copies of the *Maqamat* ('Assemblies') of al-Hariri that survive from thirteenth-century Mesopotamia. This episodic picaresque tale, while replete with puns, verbal ingenuity and theatrical opportunities for those who read the texts aloud, might not at first glance appear to offer much to the artist. The painters of the *Maqamat* manuscripts met that challenge by exploiting the multi-locational nature of the tales to create a rich procession of scenes and settings from the known world of their time, journeying through mosques, marketplaces, caravanserais, libraries, courtrooms, encampments, schools, ships, palaces and hovels. Within this rich urban milieu, varied exterior views of architectural types emerge, including some spectacular façades.[6] However, the architectural outline of the interior scenes more often than not adheres to the tripartite 'frame' structure already established in the scientific texts, underscoring a notable distinction between occupied architectural space as visualised from the inside, and the 'portrait' of a building as viewed from the outside.[7] Populated architecture is principally present in the Maqamat manuscripts as a two-dimensional device for framing and ordering human activity, with figures painted onto a largely blank background and filling from top to bottom spaces that are delineated by arches, columns or mere double lines.[8] While this notion of architecture as a box for the containment of figures on a blank background may also be met with on occasion in the Persianate miniature painting tradition, the unusual example of this phenomenon in figure 2 (which presents a remarkable *chinoiserie* arch) frames a historical personage rather than forming part of a narrative event, and in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Persianate book illustration such images are very much the exception rather than the rule.[9]


وأما صورة الطست والكعب والأسا طير
كز

1

Figure 1. A blood-measuring device. From a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the *Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Devices* copied for Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulak al-Hasani al-Malik al-Salihi; Cairo, codex dated 755 H/1354 CE (AKM 11).

A very significant refinement seen in some *Maqamat* illustrations of the thirteenth century is the simultaneous presentation of internal and external space, with figures framed within a fairly standard tripartite interior space while a brick wall containing a closed doorway, viewed from the outside, is presented to the immediate right or left.[10] While the internal and external aspects of the architecture have not often been truly integrated in such scenes, and merely stand next to each other, the closed door – viewed from the exterior – reminds the viewer that the interior it accompanies is open to their eyes only because the illustrator has wished to show them something within. This early exploration of painting's capacity to show architecture not as it appears from a fixed standpoint, but as it is experienced temporally – as the audience makes the imagined transition from outside to inside – is a critical development in the architectural world of miniature painting, and the same principle can be seen at work in countless later manuscripts of the Persianate tradition. The device was notably to come into its own in fifteenth-century representations of hierarchically stratified spaces, where exclusion was repeatedly used to delineate social difference.[11]

Persianate Miniature Painting and the Construction of Architectural Space

Whatever the reasons may have been for the apparent boom in illustrated books produced in fourteenth-century Greater Iran, surviving illustrated manuscripts and fragments from the Mongol period, such as the 'Small' *Shahnamas* of c. 1300 (cat. nos 36 and 47), al-Biruni's *Chronology of Ancient Nations* (copied 1307–8),[12] the extant sections of Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles* (copied c. 1310–1315),[13] and the so-called Great Mongol *Shahnama* (copied c. 1335),[14] testify to the luxurious extent of Mongol court patronage. Their stylistic maturity may also indicate the pre-existence of earlier painting traditions otherwise unknown. These manuscripts, and others created for various vassals and successors of the Mongols such as the Injus of Shiraz (cat. nos 37, 54 and 94), exemplify the exuberance of the artists at work during the formative period of Iranian miniature painting. Many of the key texts were written in Persian, which is significant in itself. The earlier resurgence of literary Persian and the proliferation of historical writing in Persian during the Mongol period in Iran appears to have provided some additional impetus towards an illustrated manuscript tradition in Greater Iran, most obviously in the numerous illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi.[15]

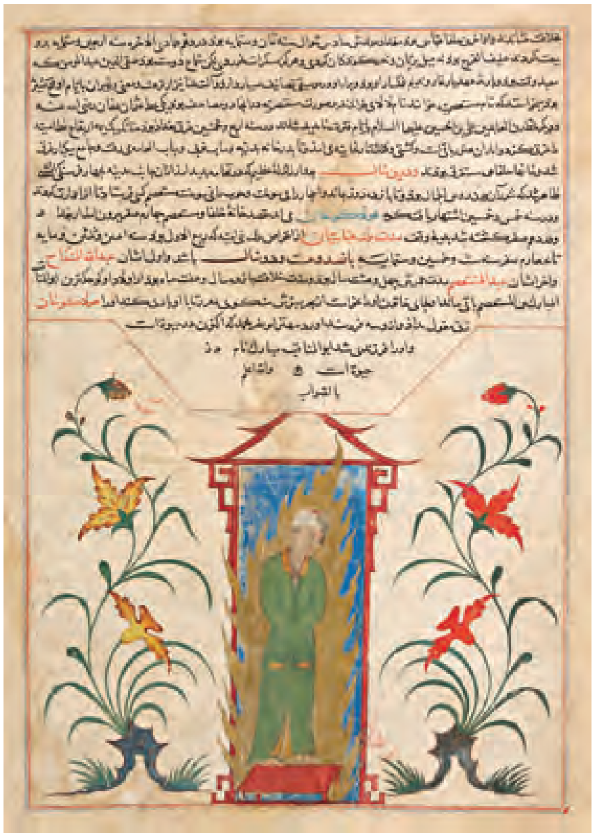


Figure 2. The last ʿAbbasid caliph, al-Muʿtasim. From a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the *Majmaʿ al-Tawarikh* of Hafiz-i Abru; attributed to Herat, Shah Rukh period, c. 1425 (AKM 89).

A critical development in the illustration of architecture within book painting stems from the changing relationship in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries between the painted image and the text with which it shares the page. Where the illustrations of many of the thirteenth-century Arabic prose works had 'floated' on the page between lines of text that traversed almost the entire width of the leaf, the earliest surviving illustrated Persian text – a copy of the romance poem *Warqa wa Gulshah* thought to have been produced in early thirteenth-century Anatolia – frames its horizontal strip images within a bordered text block composed of two columns.[16] Subsequent to this development, the illustrated manuscripts of the Mongol and Timurid periods in Greater Iran were most commonly arranged in text columns of an even breadth, four or six of them to a page in the case of many poetic texts, with each column and the outer edges of the entire text panel being carefully bordered with inked, ruled lines (for just one example, see cat. no. 94). Even when the text was not arranged in columns, the entire text block was normally bordered (fig. 2). By inserting an image into what was essentially a text grid, the artist had to work within a framed picture space, a technical convention with major implications for the conception of the image itself. The picture space of Persianate miniature painting thus came to operate as a window set within the text, through which the viewer could see the narrative events that were displayed for his benefit. This sense of a world beyond the page, rapidly capitalised upon by artists in the fourteenth century through the use of cropping (see cat. no. 37) and figures who enter from 'stage right' and 'stage left' (fig. 3), was matched by an exploratory interest in the possibilities of the gridded page for creating dramatic emphasis through the shaping of the picture space (see cat. no. 36) and the imagined extension of the grid to order pictorial composition (cat. no. 97).

The move to a framed window within the text grid was immensely significant for the depictions of architecture that grew up in this illustrated world. Freed by the advent of the framed picture space from the necessity of functioning as a frame itself, the architectural image was eventually at liberty to develop in new directions. That said, early fourteenth-century painting most commonly continued to show exterior views of architectural structures as frontal depictions, anchored to the horizontal baseline of the picture space. While the painters of the time were apparently interested in architecture as a narrative element, and willing to allow architecture a central position in those paintings that required it (cat. no. 36), architectural presence is frequently limited to a kind of stage backdrop, while the setting of interior scenes is sometimes rendered in a form of shorthand. The frequent inclusion in Inju paintings of a backdrop of hanging textiles to indicate that the whole scene is set in an interior is one example of this (see cat. no. 54), while the more refined paintings of Mongol patronage might indicate the brick architecture behind the hanging cloth, but without clearly elaborating the interior space (fig. 3).

As the medium matured, so too did the representational conventions used in the depiction of architecture. The gradual shift that took place towards the end of the fourteenth century from a horizontal to a vertical picture format allowed horizons to be raised, freeing both figures and buildings to move away from the baseline of the frame and into the picture space. Depth could be explored as never before. While a great many different schools and styles of miniature painting flourished under Timurid patronage and elsewhere in Greater Iran during the fifteenth century, certain principles of

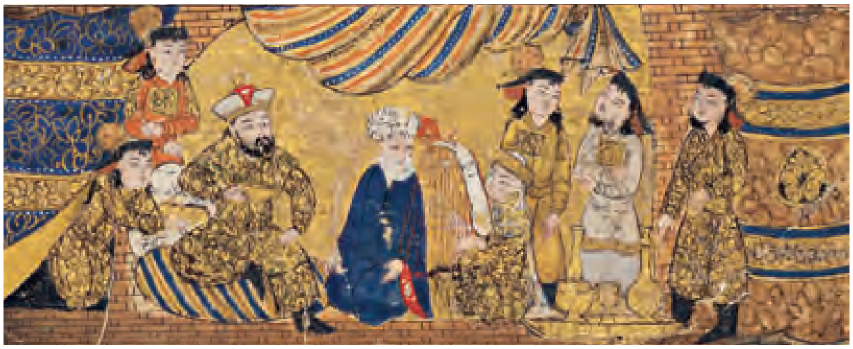

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Figure 3. Cat. no. 47, Bahram Gur at the house of Mahiyar the jeweller (detail). Folio from the dispersed 'Second Small *Shahnama*'; western Iran, c. 1300.

architectural representation can be regarded as more or less shared characteristics across the genre at this time.[17] Chiefly, a longstanding interest in depicting different types of building (mosque, palace, fortress and so forth) was complemented by a movement towards multiple simultaneous viewpoints, oblique perspectives in combination with frontally oriented passages, and an increasingly complex vision of structural space built from decorated planar surfaces. The expanding and opening out of architectural space in this manner allowed the built environment to become an integral part of the human story within miniature painting, eventually going far above and beyond the narrative requirements of the episode being illustrated.[18] Architecture thus conceived was also capable of representing temporal duration (a point already raised with regard to the simultaneous representation of interior and exterior space), with the viewer moving their gaze from one aspect of the building to another through time as well as space, just as the dramatic action taking place within the painted structure would also, sometimes, elapse through time.[19]

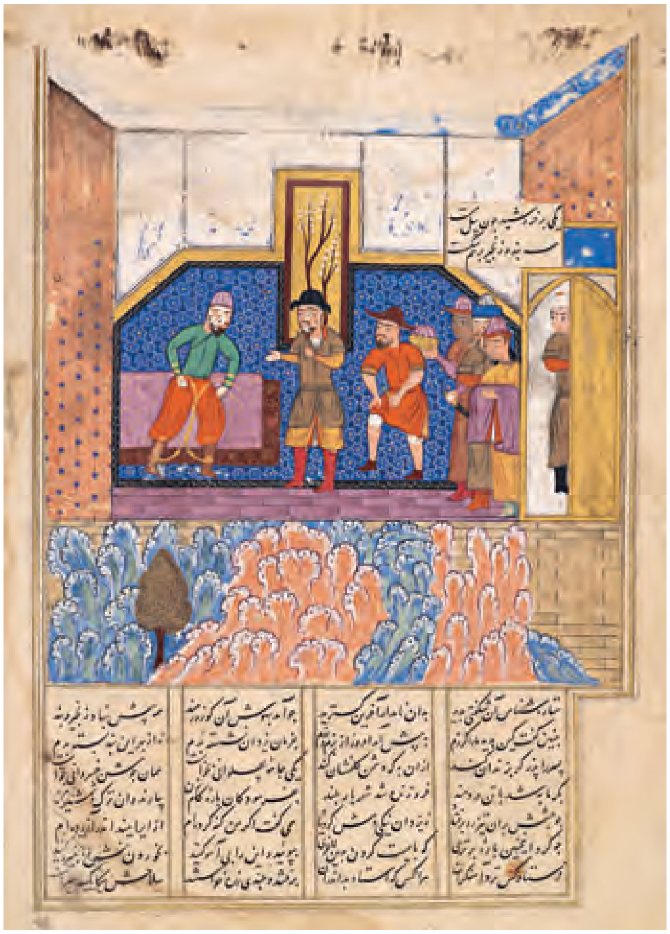
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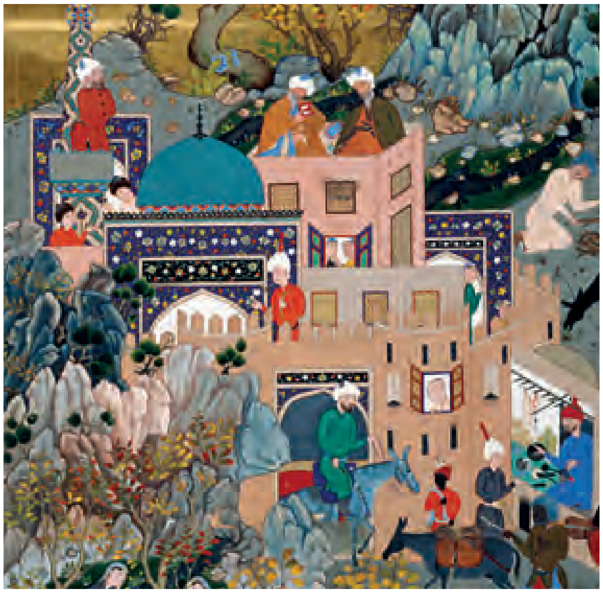
Figure 4. Jamasp visits Isfandiyar in prison. Folio 292v from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, copied by Mahmud ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Jamali; Shiraz, dated 861 H/1457 CE (AKM 268).

Above all, the Persianate painting tradition of the fifteenth century articulated an architecture of the mind and the senses: that is, a visual 'description' of the built world as it was experienced and imagined through time and space, rather than an objective snapshot. Often, and particularly in the manuscripts commissioned by the elite, this generated an architecture of effect and spectacle, forming a visual counterweight to the hyperbolic descriptions of buildings found in Persian poetic texts.[20] But the flexibility of the architectural image was no less pushed to its limits in manuscripts created for minor patrons or the open market, such as the mid-fifteenth-century 'Teignmouth' *Shahnama*. The full-page palatial structure that dominates the image of Kay Khusraw's abortive apotheosis in that manuscript is startlingly audacious in its portrayal of architectural space (cat. no. 55), and even the less dramatic interpretations of architectural settings, such as the prison scene shown in figure 4 or the further pages illustrated in cat. nos 96 and 97, suggest a creative mind tussling with the problem of representing three-dimensional space upon the two-dimensional page. The extension of floor into wall, as seen in figure 4 in the blue tiled surface which is both punctuated by a central window and covered by Isfandiyar's rugs, is a common enough trope in miniature painting of the fifteenth century and later. But in this case the paradoxical blue surface combines with the oblique angles of the wall panels above, and those of the *repoussoir* outer surfaces of the building, to give the whole space a disconcerting concertinaed effect. Is this a frontal elevation of a panelled wall, or a receding space? At the same time, a sophisticated but playful relationship between the structure of the image and the structure of the text block is a further notable aspect of the Persianate miniature painting of the fifteenth century. Thus, in the text of the *Shahnama* the prison of Isfandiyar is located upon a mountaintop, a setting that is indicated here by the rocks that grow out of the text block below.

The Sixteenth Century: New Divergences in Architectural Representation

The transition to a vertical image format opened the way for the creation of spectacular full-page compositions in imperial manuscripts, a trend that arguably reached its zenith in Iran on some of the pages of the Shah Tahmasp *Shahnama*, such as the famous painting of the village of Haftvad (cat. no. 53). Here, the only remnants of the text block are tiny floating banners in the upper left and lower right corners of the page, while between these grows a multifaceted architectural assemblage that encompasses all of urban life (fig. 5). But although almost the entire surface is given over to illustration, the picture is not loose on the page; rather, through the maintenance of the picture frame a complex and knowing relationship has been formed with the blank page. Margin invasion – the partial extension of pictorial elements beyond the picture frame – is one of the most intriguing features of Persianate miniature painting, and from the first tentative forays beyond the picture frame in the *Warqa wa Gulshah* illustrations this often witty and always striking device was in wide use.[21] It is as if this particular painterly idiom required the imposed discipline of the picture frame in order to flaunt that very restriction, allowing painters to demonstrate their mastery of the spatial ambiguities of picture and page. And naturally, within this refined milieu the relationship between the structures of the painted world and the structures of the page was subject to manipulation in other ways. Even when text was a relatively minor component of the illustrated page it could still play an architectonic role, as can be seen in the comic detail of seven men clambering onto a small text panel for safety from the rampaging lion behind them (fig. 6). In some other, less luxuriously executed contexts the text block occupies a far larger proportion of the page but remains in dialogue with the architectural structures of the painting, through obliquely angled text panels that form walls and canopies (cat. no. 108),[22] sections of text that have been sandwiched horizontally between painted domes and chambers, forming pavilions of poetry (cat. no. 102), or later compositions that construct architectural chambers within the text block itself (cat. no. 109).

Figure 5. Cat. no. 53, Haftvad's daughter and the worm (detail). Folio 521v from the dispersed *Shahnama* of Firdawsi created for Shah Tahmasp; Tabriz, Iran, c. 1540.



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During the sixteenth century the huge popularity of the illustrated book at Islamic courts far beyond those of Greater Iran led the depiction of architecture in new directions. While the illustrated manuscripts of Sultanate India had incorporated traits seen earlier in Persianate painting, such as the horizontal strip format (cat. no. 95), the painting style that came into vogue during the Mughal rule of the late sixteenth century in India was markedly different in appearance. The Persianate tastes that had been carried to the new empire by the Mughals themselves (descendents of the Timurid house), and by the painters from Greater Iran who sought employment at the Mughal courts, were gradually yoked with both pre-existing Indian models of representation and techniques such as linear perspective and shaded modelling that were circulating through European prints and drawings.[23] This representational model brought a greater sense of spatial continuity to the depiction of architecture, with buildings gaining heft, solidity and logical depth. Paintings for the Mughal elite tended to be more or less full-page, with a less fanciful relationship with the text block than was sometimes to be seen in Safavid painting. A very common compositional arrangement of late sixteenth-century Mughal painting is that of a courtyard viewed from an elevated perspective, with a gated wall in the foreground (social exclusion continuing to be an important trope of the elite arts), the narrative content of the episode expressed through figures arranged in the middle ground, and an architectural structure of some kind in the background.[24] Although the architectural settings of such images most often seem to have been recessional and enclosing in nature (see cat. no. 65), the architectural façade also makes an appearance from time to time, as in figure 7. Shades of the Persianate model of architectural representation can be seen in this palatial image, constructed from many different types of surface. Rather than starting from a structural model, the artist has arranged passages of brick, tile, carpet, painted and carved decoration, balustrades, niches, arches and columns into a glittering, symmetrical architectural edifice.

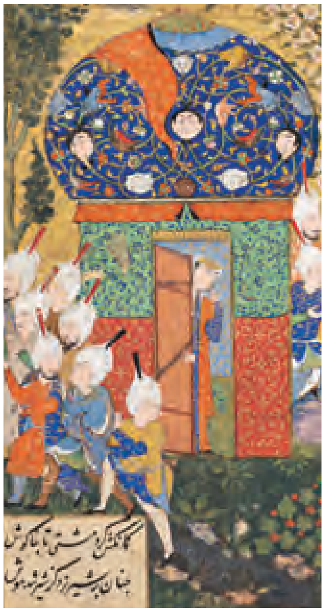
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Figure 6. Cat. no. 84, Khusraw killing a lion outside Shirin's tent (detail). Painting probably intended for a *Khamsa* of Nizami; Tabriz, Iran, c. 1525.

Persianate book painting was also instrumental in the formation of an illustrated manuscript tradition at the Ottoman court in Istanbul. By the second half of the sixteenth century Ottoman painters had fully synthesised Persianate styles with other traditions of depiction to create their own model for miniature painting, directed towards their own purposes. Illustrated dynastic histories were extremely popular at the Ottoman court, as were romance narratives amongst some patrons, leading to the creation of a range of new imagery depicting historical battles and the cities of the Ottoman world as well as more whimsical and fantastical scenes (cat. no. 91).[25] The wider imperial appetite for depictions of identifiable buildings and places, particularly as a means of expressing the Ottoman domination of territory through ambitious building programmes, is undoubtedly at work in the spectacular full-page images of real structures that can be found in some later sixteenth-century Ottoman manuscripts.[26] Something of this topographical strain can even be identified in certain representations of fantastical structures, such as the mythical city of Dar ül-Bekam in cat. no. 39, where one has the sense of viewing a complete, more-or-less spatially logical structure from an elevated external viewpoint – a model of architectural representation that has little to do with fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Persianate painting.[27]

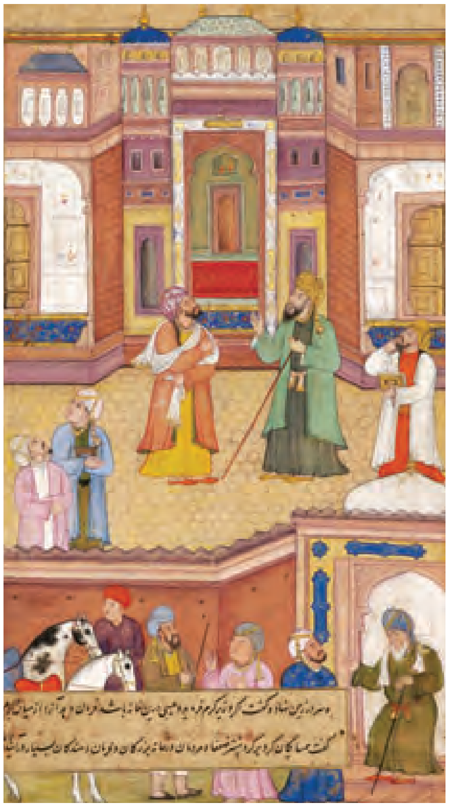

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Figure 7. Yahya and Ja'far al-Baramaki in the courtyard of a palace. Folio from a dispersed illustrated manuscript of the Akhbar-i Barmakiyan, mounted as album page; India, c. 1595 (AKM 127).

But at the same time, a quite different model of architectural space is also apparent in many Ottoman depictions of internal space. Although closely related to Persianate painting through the simultaneous presentation of multiple perspectives, and spatial construction from ornamented panels, such images have less of the intricate play of projection and recession that typified the finely decorated surfaces of Timurid and early Safavid painting – perhaps as a result of the large scale and very high rate of illustration seen in many imperial Ottoman illustrated manuscripts. The interior architectural settings that are employed in Ottoman narrative paintings often appear rather flatter and more simply composed than those of the Persianate tradition, with a brighter palette including many pastel shades, and they frequently give the impression – enhanced by the common use of large groups of overlapping figures of almost uniform appearance – of being arranged on the surface of the page, rather than receding into a space beyond. Even where a form of spatial recession is explicitly indicated, as in the device of the three stairways seen in figure 8, the effect is contradicted by the discontiguous gridded arrangement of the various panels of repeating decoration that make up the rest of the architectural setting: the perceptual impression of a pattern upon the page seems to overwhelm that of a constructed space.

Finally, the great emphasis placed on architectural decoration and surface within the constructed spaces of miniature painting is in some circumstances an artificially heightened refraction of real-world structures, rather than pure invention. A certain dissolution of structure into decorated surfaces was also enacted in the true architecture of the periods in which the paintings were made: think of the tile and brick patterns that articulate the fourteenth-century tomb towers of Iran, transmuting solid surfaces through the play of colour, cast shadow and reflected light, or the shimmering, textile-like tile revetments of Ottoman imperial mosques and palaces. The world of miniature painting also alerts us to the fictive nature of many architectural conceits within those real structures – applied arch forms that could have been translated into weight-bearing structures, engaged columns and capitals that support nothing. The architecture of miniature painting uses an artistic idiom that was fashioned from these conceptualisations of architecture and ornament in order to negotiate, continually and ingeniously, the spatial dialectics of inside and outside, page and picture, surface and depth.

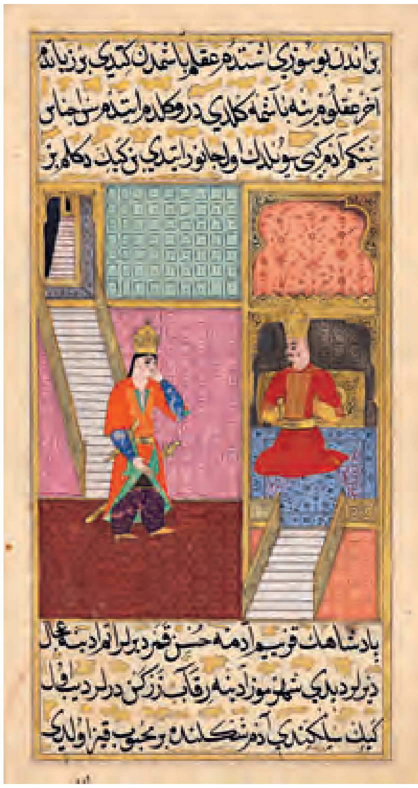

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Figure 8. Mah Pervin finds prince Ruzbih behind the witch's cave. Folio 115v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tuhfet ül-leta'if* of 'Ali ibn Naqib Hamza, created for the Ottoman emperor Murad III; Istanbul, dated 1002 H/1593–4 CE (AKM 280).

1 Jonathan M. Bloom, *Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 61–66.

2 The scholarship on this subject is vast: for just one recent example, see Yuka Kadoi, *Islamic Chinoiserie: The Art of Mongol Iran* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2009).

3 On the problems associated with 'Arab painting', the term often used to categorise this group, and ethnographic biases in studies of Islamic painting see Oleg Grabar, 'What does "Arab Painting" Mean?' in Anna Contadini (ed.), *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), pp. 17–22.

4 For examples see Hugo Buchtal, 'Early Islamic Miniatures from Baghdad', *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 5 (1942), p. 25; and George Saliba and Linda Komaroff, 'Illustrated Books may be Hazardous to your Health: A New Reading of the Arabic Reception and Rendition of the *Materia Medica* of Dioscorides', *Ars Orientalis*, 35 (2008), pp. 6–65, figs 5, 10 and the later image in fig. 15.

5 Several authors have observed that these illustrations bear some resemblance to designs from the shadow-theatre – a popular form of entertainment in many parts of the medieval Islamic world – although there are certainly many other factors to be considered, such as thirteenth-century Gospel illustrations and the aforementioned scientific illustrations: see Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (New York: Skira, second ed. 1977), pp. 81–83; Alain George, 'The Illustrations of the *Maqamat* and the Shadow Play', *Muqarnas* 29 (forthcoming).

6 See the palace on fol. 120 of BN Arabe 5847, illustrated in Marianne Barrucand, 'Les représentations d'architectures dans la miniature islamique en Orient du début du XIIIe au début du XIVe siècle', *Cahiers Archéologiques*, 34 (1986), pp. 119–141, fig. 4.

7 Asma Serajuddin, 'The Representation of Architecture in the Manuscript Painting of the Abbasid Period', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, 20/3 (1975), pp. 31–40; Marianne Barrucand, 'Architecture et espaces architectures dans les illustrations des *Maqāmāt* d'al-Hariri du xiii siècle', in Robert Hillenbrand (ed.), *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1994), pp. 79–88.

8 There are of course some exceptions to this rule: for example, a more complex rendering of internal space can be seen in one of the mosque scenes from the St Petersburg manuscript (p. 41), illustrated in Barrucand, 'Architecture et espaces architectures', fig. 78.

9 Sheila Canby has proposed a different reading of this image: see *Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan* (London: British Museum, 1998), p. 31.

10 For example, the painting from the fifteenth *maqama*, illustrated in O.G. Bolshakov, 'The St Petersburg Manuscript of the *Maqamat* by al-Hariri and its Place in the History of Arab Painting', *Manuscripta Orientalia*, 3/4 (1997), pp. 59–66, fig. 3a. The formula is repeated in other manuscripts of the *Maqamat,* for example, Barrucand, 'Architecture et espaces architectures', fig. 79.

11 Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Uses of Space in Timurid Painting', in Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (eds), *Timurid Art and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 76–102, esp. p. 87.

12 See Teresa Kirk, 'The Edinburgh al-Biruni Manuscript: A Holistic Study of its Design and Images', *Persica*, 20 (2004–5), pp. 39–81.

13 David Talbot Rice and Basil Gray, *The Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid al-Din* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1976); Basil Gray, *The World History of Rashid al-Din: A Study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978); and Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World* (London: Nour Foundation, 1995).

14 See Oleg Grabar and Sheila S. Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), and the various colour illustrations in Glenn D. Lowry and Susan Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye: Islamic Arts of the Book from the Vever Collection* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian, 1988), nos 7–14.

15 Sheila S. Blair, 'The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran', *Muqarnas*, 10 (1993), pp. 269–270.

16 Now held in the Topkapi Saray Museum, H. 841; illustrated in Eleanor Sims, Boris Marshak and Ernst J. Grube, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2002), cat. nos 4, 57, 140, 166.

17 See also Michele A. De Angelis and Thomas W. Lentz, *Architecture in Islamic Painting: Permanent and Impermanent Worlds* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum/AKPIA, 1982), pp. 10–11.

18 Hillenbrand, 'The Uses of Space', pp. 77–81.

19 On temporal duration in miniature painting see Hillenbrand, 'The Uses of Space', pp. 77–78; and David Roxburgh, 'Micrographia: Towards a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting', *RES*, 43 (2003), pp. 12–30, esp. pp. 26–27. On the separate but relevant subject of conflated narrative events within single images that illustrate legends described in the *Shahnama*, as depicted on ceramics and metalwork in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Marianne Shreve Simpson, 'Narrative Allusion and Metaphor in the Decoration of Medieval Islamic Objects', in Herbert L. Kessler and Marianne Shreve Simpson (eds), *Studies in the History of Art Vol. 16: Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1985), pp. 131–149, esp. pp. 133–138.

20 See Julie Scott-Meisami, 'Palaces and Paradises: Palace Description in Medieval Persian Poetry', in Oleg Grabar and Cynthia Robinson (eds), *Islamic Art and Literature* (Princeton: Markus Weiner, 2001), pp. 21–54.

21 Hillenbrand, 'The Uses of Space', pp. 84–92; Barbara Brend, 'Beyond the Pale: Meaning in the Margins', in Robert Hillenbrand (ed.), *Persian Painting: From the Mongols to the Qajars* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), pp. 39–53.

22 An early example of this device can be seen in a leaf from a *Khamsa* of Nizami from Shiraz, dated 813 H/1410–11 CE (illustrated in Robert Hillenbrand, *Imperial Images in Persian Painting* [Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1977], p. 47).

23 For just one text amongst many on this subject, see Gauvin Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1998).

24 See Canby, *Princes, Poets and Paladins*, pp. 120–121, on this compositional type.

25 On topographical images in Ottoman histories see J.M. Rogers, 'Itineraries and Town Views in Ottoman Histories', in J.B. Hartley and David Woodward (eds), *The History of Cartography, Volume Two, Book One: Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 228–255. On the narrative imagery of romance and prose stories during this period see Serpil Bağci *et al.*, *Ottoman Painting* (Istanbul: Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2010), pp. 186–211).

26 See for example a painting of the Süleymaniye Mosque, dated 987 H/1579 CE (illustrated in Elaine C. Wright, *Islam: Faith, Art, Culture* [London: Scala, 2009], p. 149), and the illustrations of the Selimiye Mosque and Hagia Sophia in the *Şehname-i Selim Han* completed under Murad III in 1581 (Topkapi MS A. 3595; illustrated in Emine Fetvaci, 'The Production of the *Şehname-i Selim Han*', *Muqarnas*, 26 [2009], pp. 263–315, figs. 17 and 41).

27 Although the four metal horsemen make the image unique, the overall depiction of the Dar ül-Bekam citadel may certainly owe something to various topographical images of towns and fortresses seen in Ottoman histories: for examples see Rogers, 'Itineraries and Town Views', figs 12.17–12.19, and Bağci *et al*., *Ottoman Painting*, pp. 156, 177.

94

MANŪCHIHR INFORMED OF THE ROMANCE BETWEEN ZĀL AND RUDĀBA

Folio 26r from a dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī;
copied by the scribe Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Ḥusaynī al-Mawṣilī,
for the Inju vizier of Fars Ḥājjī Qawām al-Dawla wa'l-Dīn Ḥasan
Shiraz, Iran; manuscript dated Ramadan 741/February 1341
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
Page: 37.1 x 29.9 cm
AKM 29
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 68; Simpson 2000, p. 236 (not ill.)

Within the early passages of the *Shahnama*, Manuchihr, the ruler of Iran, heard of the love of Zal, the son of his favoured paladin Sam, for a young princess called Rudaba who was a descendent of the evil king Zahhak. Manuchihr, here holding an animal-headed mace, was predictably displeased by this news. Calling his viziers around him, he held forth on the dangers that this alliance might represent to the stability of the throne of Iran: what if the young couple were to have a son who, as the seed of Zahhak, might grow up to bring strife and misery to the country and threaten its very rule? Eventually Manuchihr asked for Sam to be summoned back from war to discuss his son's dangerous romance, and, although many more events and negotiations took place before the marriage was approved, love did eventually win the day. Zal and Rudaba were married and Rudaba bore a son, Rustam, who went on to become the principal hero of the Iranian national epic.

Like cat. no. 54, this illustrated page comes from a now-dispersed manuscript of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi commissioned in 1341 CE by a vizier of Fars during the period of Inju rule (c. 1325–1357), and thus represents a relatively early stage in the history of the illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama*. A reconstruction of the manuscript has been undertaken by Simpson, who estimates that there may have been as many as 140 paintings in the codex before it was dismembered in the early twentieth century (Simpson 2000).

The illustrations of the four known dated Inju *Shahnama* manuscripts are, like those of the so-called 'Small *Shahnama*' manuscripts of the early fourteenth century (see cat. nos 36 and 47), often of an oblong horizontal format set into the text block and covering the entire width of the written area of the page. However, more complex stepped formats are also met with frequently amongst these manuscripts, and in all of these the division of the page by the text columns is used as a means of creating a grid. At times the elaboration of the image space can be used to echo aspects of the narrative. In another page from the same 1341 Inju *Shahnama*, showing the abandoned infant Zal rediscovered in the nest of the Simurgh (the fabulous bird of Iranian mythology) by his father Sam, the picture space takes a step down with each column, from left to right, and thus echoes Zal's descent as he steps down from the lofty eyrie of the Simurgh to his father's arms below (Jenkins 1983, p. 98). Elsewhere in the same manuscript, secondary illustrated panels are lowered partway into the text columns below the main pictorial space, to depict wells and sunken pits that constitute important sites for the narrative (Simpson 2000, pp. 226–228).

The use of symmetrically stepped compositions for enthronement scenes like that seen here, meanwhile, is a characteristic shared by the Inju *Shahnama* manuscripts, the Small *Shahnama* manuscripts and the Great Mongol *Shahnama* thought to have been created at Tabriz, Iran, c. 1335 (Sims 2006, pp. 275–276). The stepped frame of such images enables a greater compositional emphasis to be built up towards the centrally positioned enthroned ruler; additionally, the peak of Manuchihr's throne in this image breaks through the upper edge of the picture frame, calling even greater attention to the young ruler's crowned head.

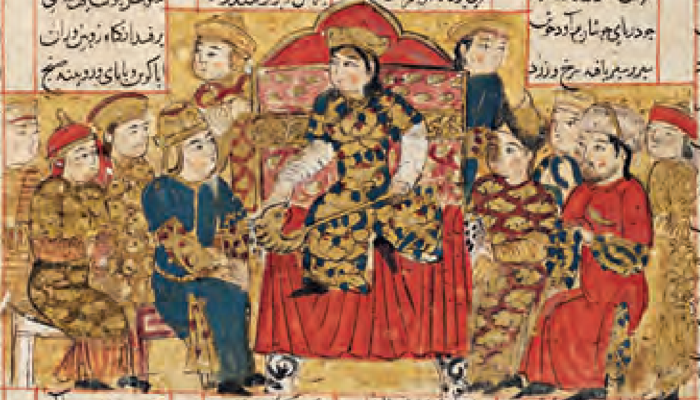
[illegible]

خبر یافتن منوچهر شاه از کار زال و رودابه

[illegible]

فریدون ز ضحاک گیتی بشست
بترسم که آید از آن تخم رست

[illegible]



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95

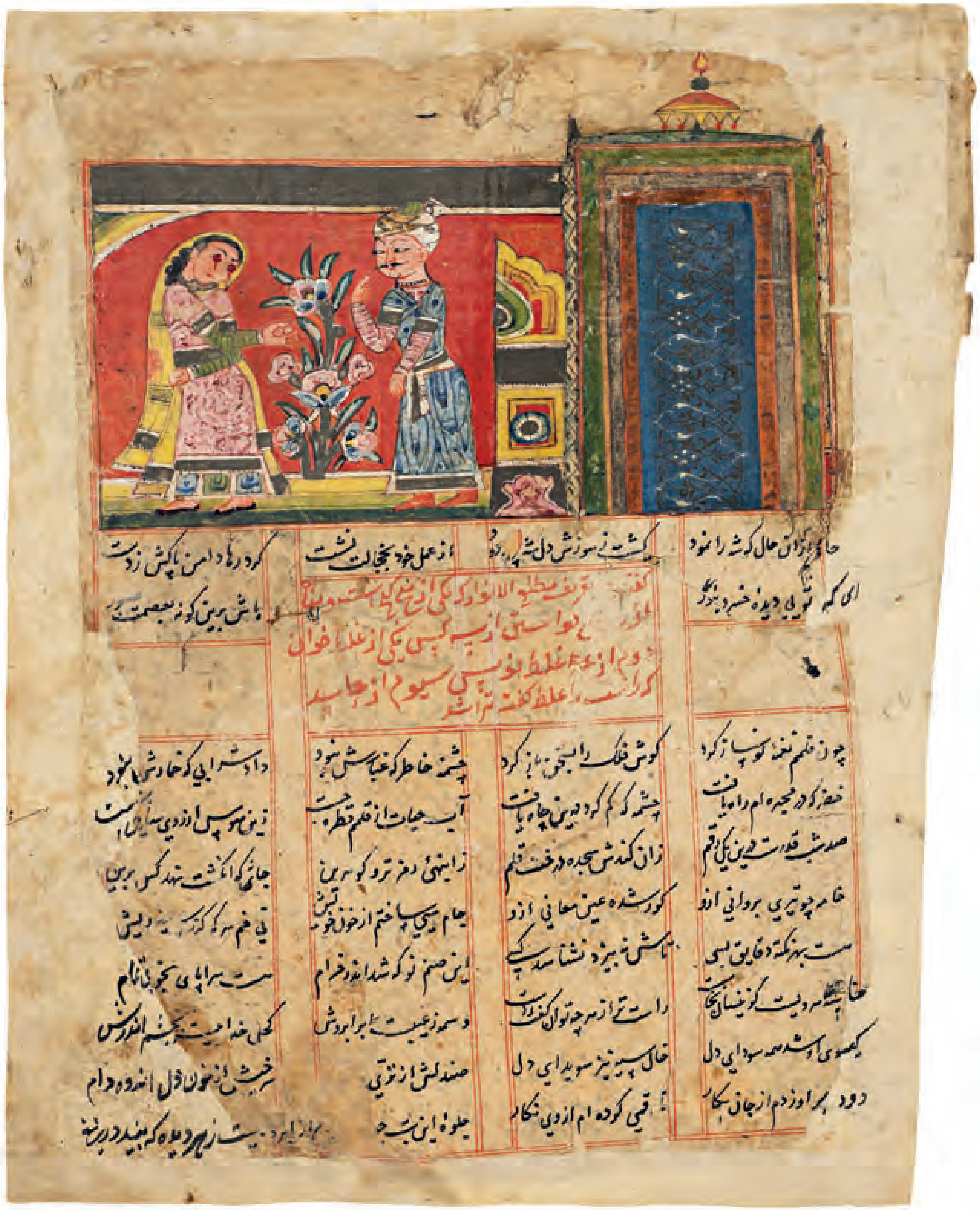
THE CHASTE WIFE DELIVERS HER EYES TO THE KING'S MESSENGER

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Amīr Khusraw Dihlavī
Sultanate India; first half of the fifteenth century
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
Page: 34.2 x 26.4 cm
AKM 14
Publ: Goswamy – Fischer 1987, p. 28 (no. 2); Brac de la Perriere 2001, p. 26

The jewel-like colours, elegant clothes and decorative architectural details of this painting belie the rather gruesome subject matter of the story. Of the thirty-four known illustrations from this manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Dihlavi, this painting is one of six extant images that belong to the first poem in the quintet, the *Matlaʿ al-anwar* ('The Ascent of Lights'; see cat. no. 19 for an image from a different poem in the same manuscript). The painting on the present folio shows a beautiful woman who was desired by a king. A messenger was sent to fetch her, and the woman – correctly understanding the king's intentions to be less than honourable – asked the messenger what the king wanted of her. When he replied 'your eyes', the chaste woman promptly plucked out her own eyes and gave them to the messenger. Shocked by the messenger's story, the king repented of his impure advances, and the virtues of chastity are expounded in the poem.

The page has been patched at some point in its history, with strips from other leaves pasted in to repair it, and missing sections of text have been re-written. The king's castle at the right hand side, now presenting what seems to be an emphatically closed door to the viewer, would originally have appeared rather different. The blue central panel decorated with a tessellated pattern of interlocking arches has been pasted on, and it appears to be a remnant from a page of illumination taken from elsewhere in the codex prior to its dispersal: the same design is visible on an illuminated page from the same manuscript, the frontispiece to the *Aʾina-i Iskandari* or 'Mirror of Alexander' (Brac de la Perriere 2001, p. 32). Another leaf from this manuscript, in the Freer Gallery, Washington D.C., shows a large door of the same appearance, presumably also pasted in (*ibid*., p. 29).

Because of these alterations – which are sadly not uncommon in manuscripts that were dismembered for sale on the art market in the earlier part of the twentieth century – it is hard to know what the original appearance of the architectural component of the scene would have been. The figures occupy an outdoor space, with a large flowering plant between them and a graded green and yellow ground suggestive of a garden, while the architectural block on the right dominates the scene and protrudes loftily out of the picture space and into the surrounding page. That the messenger has just emerged from the building is indicated by the ornate half-door, certainly a part of the original composition, that has opened out towards the viewer. The separation of distinct spaces with prominent, frontal images of doorways both half-open and closed is a device met with very frequently in Persianate miniature painting, where it is often employed to underscore the distinction between the closed spaces of the privileged few and the outside world, and a similar device can be seen in other examples of Sultanate painting (see the *Candayana* manuscript from the first half of the sixteenth century in Leach 1998, p. 15).



96

QUEEN HUMĀY EMBRACES HER SON DĀRĀB

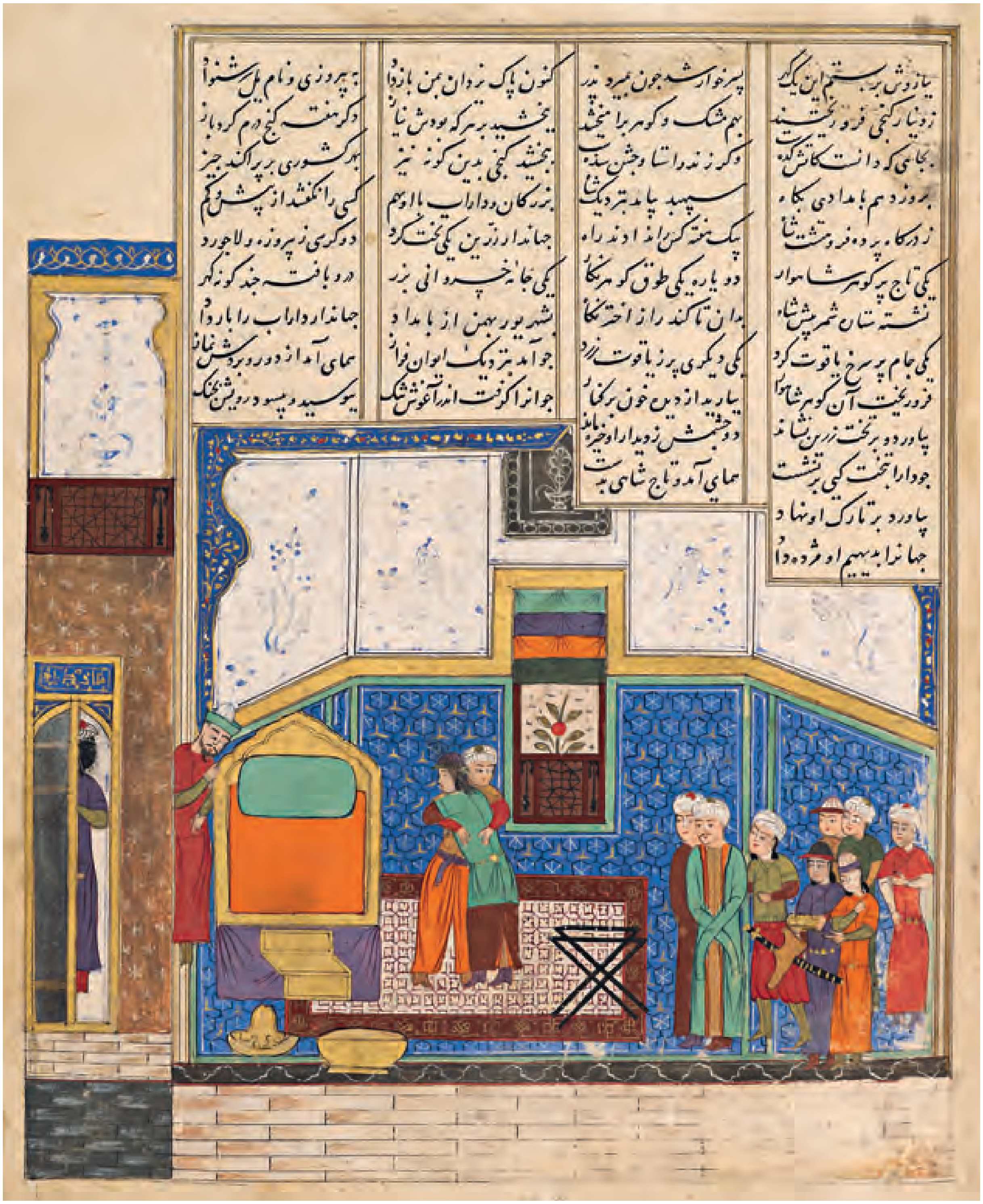
Folio 334r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī; manuscript copied by Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Jamālī
Shiraz, Iran; dated 1 Rabiʿ al-Awwal 861/27 January 1457
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 38.2 x 28.4 x 10.7 cm
AKM 268

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Robinson c. 1953, p. 8 (no. 15; no ill.); A. Welch 1978b, pp. 12–22; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 57–60; Robinson 1991, pp. 16–17 (not ill.)

Often referred to as the ‘Teignmouth *Shahnama*’ after the former owner who took it to Britain, this manuscript contains fifty-three illustrations in a volume that totals 556 folios (two more of these paintings are illustrated in cat. nos 55 and 97). Although not executed for a royal patron, the manuscript must have been highly regarded, for it has survived complete and in good condition. We know nothing concrete about the artists, and little more about the scribe than his name, although he was apparently responsible for the copying of two other manuscripts, dated 1453 and 1463 (Welch – Welch 1982, p. 57). His clear and balanced *nastaʿliq* script can be seen in the four text columns that hang above the architectural space of the present image. While fifty-three paintings is a sizeable illustrative programme by any measure, it is by no means unusual for illustrated manuscripts of the *Shahnama* to contain vast numbers of paintings: the earliest known illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts are thought to have had a picture every two or three pages (see cat. no. 47, and Sims 1992, p. 44).

The story of Humay and Darab is one of motherhood renounced and ultimately regained. In order to secure rule for herself, Humay, the widow (and daughter) of King Bahman cast away her own infant son Darab in a wooden chest on the Euphrates, accompanied by a distinctive jewel, and pretended that he had died. A childless launderer and his wife discovered the child and adopted him. The boy’s noble bearing was apparent from an early age and he eventually joined the Iranian army, receiving many honours for his great bravery in the war against the army of Rum (Anatolia). Upon hearing the singular story of Darab’s discovery as a baby, an army general who thought highly of the young soldier sent Queen Humay a letter describing the tale of Darab’s adoption by the launderer, accompanying his letter with the ruby which Humay had placed in the chest with Darab when he was set adrift so many years before. Humay, upon seeing this jewel, broke down and wept, realising that the heroic young soldier she had observed some days before whilst surveying her troops was none other than her own son. Finally, mother and son were reunited in the privacy of a closed court without public audience. After emotionally embracing him and showering him with jewels, she placed her son on a specially constructed throne and renounced the crown in his favour.

In spite of the audience of courtiers and advisors that watch from the right-hand side, the closeted intimacy of Humay’s reunion with her son is emphasised by the half-closed door in the margin space to the left, from behind which a further figure quietly observes the scene. The stepping of the text block adds compositional interest as well as dynamism to the painting: unusually, rather than allowing the lines of the text columns to absolutely dictate architectural form, the partially receded space of the palace hall is constructed using planes that do not quite fall in line with the text columns. A similar treatment of architectural planes in relation to the text block can be seen in the 1440 *Shahnama* of Muhammad Juki (Hillenbrand 1992, p. 77).

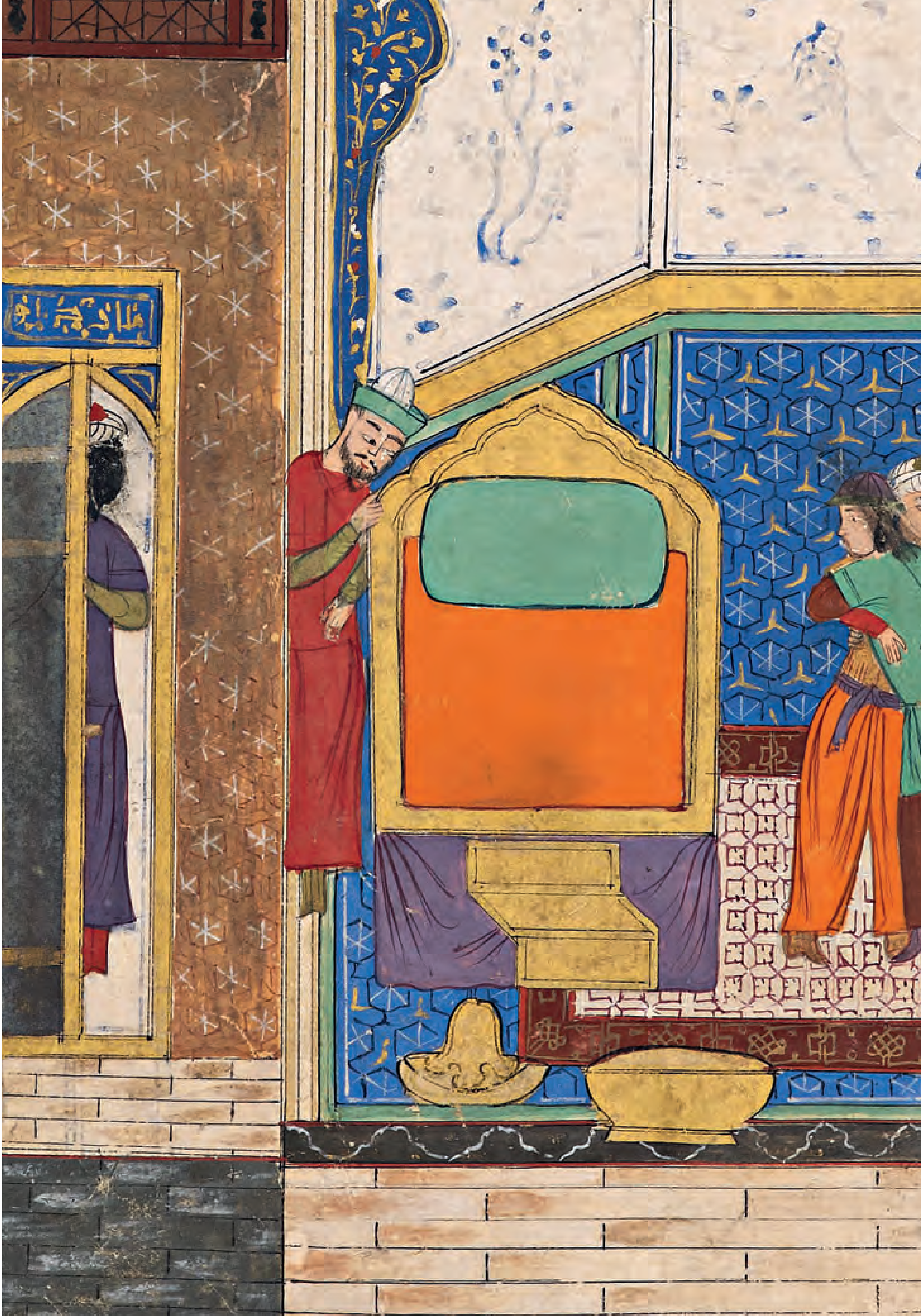


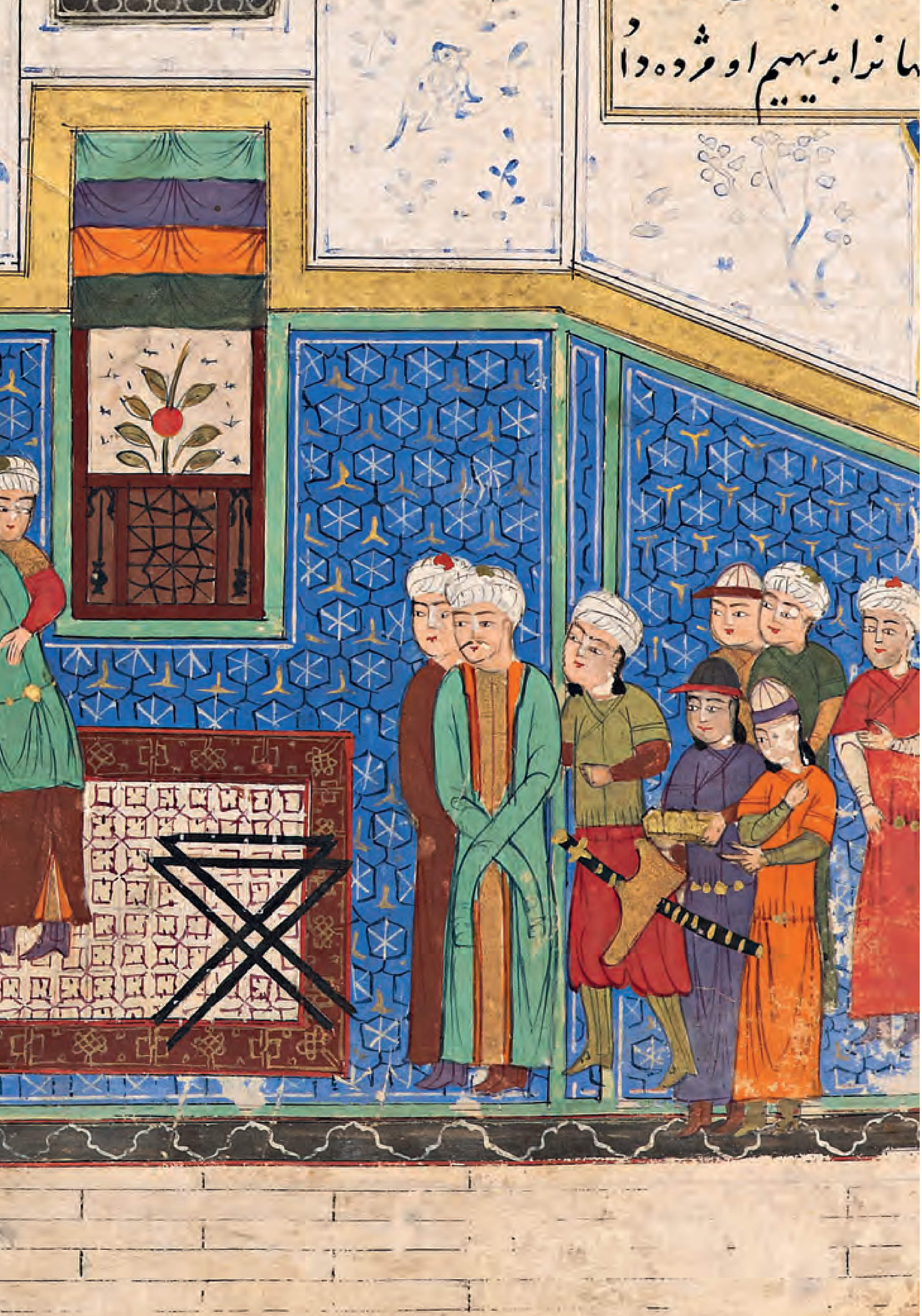
بیازوش بر بستم این گهر
ز دینار گنجی فرو ریختند
بجای که دانست کانش کند
بروز دهم بامدادی بگاه
ز درگاه پرده فرو هشت شاه
یکی تاج پرگوهر شاهوار
نشسته ستان شمر پیش شاه
یکی جام پر سرخ یاقوت کرد
فرو ریخت آن گوهر شاهوار
بیاورد و بر تخت زرین نشاند
چو دارا بتخت کیی بر نشست
بیاورد بر تارک او نهاد
جهان را بدیهیم او مژده داد

پسر خوار شد چون نبیره بدر
همه مشک و گوهر برافشاندند
دگر زند و استا و جشن سده
سپهبد بیامد بنزدیک شاه
بیک هفته کش راند اندر راه
دو یاره یکی طوق گوهر نگار
بدان تا کند راز از آشکار
یکی دیگری پر ز یاقوت زرد
بیاورد از دین خون بر کنار
دو چشمش ز دیدار او خیره ماند
همای آمد و تاج شاهی بدست

کنون پاک یزدان بمن بازداد
ببخشید بر سر که بودش نیاز
ببخشید گنجی بدین گونه نیز
بزرگان و داراب با او بهم
جهاندار زرین یکی تخت کرد
یکی جامه خسروانی بزرد
بشد پور بهمن از بامداد
جوان آمد نزدیک ایوان فراز
جوان را گرفت اندر آغوش تنگ

به پیروزی و نام یل شنود
دگر هفت گنج درم کرد باز
بهر کشوری برپراکند چیز
کسی را نکند از پیش کم
دو کرسی ز پیروزه و لاجورد
درو بافته چند گونه گهر
جهاندار داراب را بار داد
همای آمد از دور و بردش نماز
ببوسید و بسود رویش بچنگ




ما نرا بدیهیم او مژده داد

97

TAHMĪNA ENTERING RUSTAM'S CHAMBER

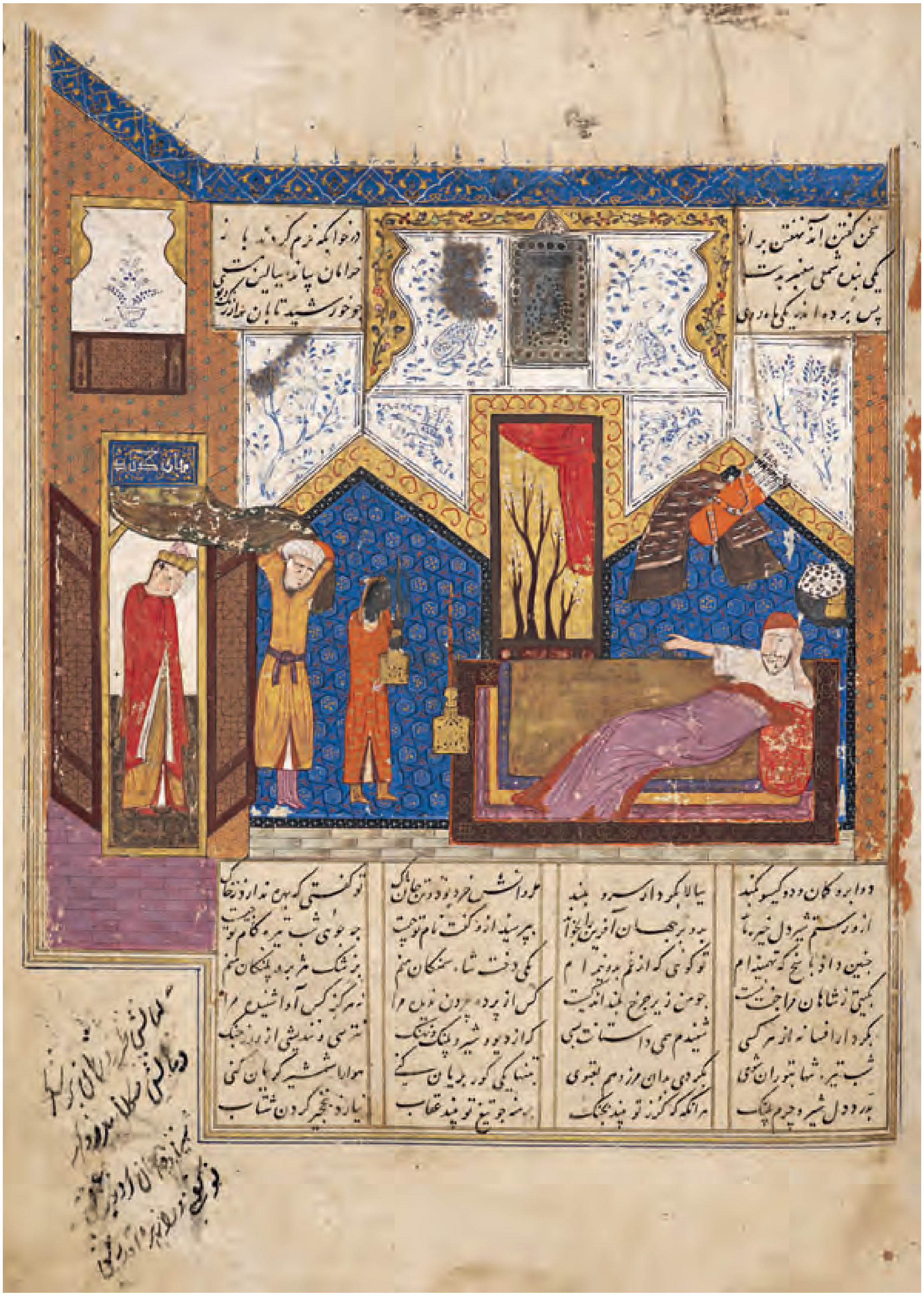
Folio 86r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī;
manuscript copied by Maḥmūd ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Jamālī
Shiraz, Iran; dated 1 Rabiʿ al-Awwal 861/27 January 1457
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 38.2 x 28.4 x 10.7 cm
AKM 268

Publ: Soucek 2000, p. 272. Other folios from the same manuscript: Robinson c. 1953, p. 8 (no. 15; no ill.); A. Welch 1978b, pp. 12–22; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 57–60; Robinson 1991, pp. 16–17 (not ill.)

Other paintings from this manuscript are shown in cat. nos 55 and 96. The fifty-three painted illustrations of the manuscript, as well as its double-page illumination (fols 8v–9r), owe much to the traditions of book painting in Shiraz as they had evolved under the patronage of the Timurid prince Ibrahim-Sultan, who was governor of the city from 1414 until his death in 1435. However, the manuscript was created after the city had passed into possession of the Turkman dynasty and a new style of painting had begun to emerge. This new style was termed the 'Turkman Commercial' style by Robinson, because many of the manuscripts produced in this tradition seem to have been created for sale on the open market. Robinson further classes this specific manuscript as a 'mixed style' production, i.e. one that merges Timurid Shiraz and Turkman Commercial traits (Robinson 1991, p. 26).

The sole romantic episode granted to the hero Rustam in an otherwise eventful life that spanned several hundred years, Tahmina's visit to Rustam's chamber was a perennially popular episode of the *Shahnama* for illustration and the present composition has been repeated many times. Tahmina was the daughter of a king who had provided Rustam with shelter and comfort when he lost his trusty horse Rakhsh while out hunting. In the night her longing for the heroic warrior overcame her and she came in secret to his bedchamber, with a slave carrying a taper, to offer herself to him. The couple were quickly married and Tahmina bore Rustam a son, called Suhrab. Rustam is depicted here at the moment of waking from his slumbers to spy Tahmina standing in the doorway, as her servants light the room.

While the decoration of the chamber employs many of the standard tropes of palace architecture as depicted in miniature paintings – the central window opening onto a blossoming tree on a gold ground, blue-and-white fresco paintings of trees and animals, repeating tilework of various patterns and colours, and the simultaneous frontal presentation of walls and floors – other aspects of the room are more unusual. The pointed panels of blue tile topped by a dado, which seem to merge floor into wall, are unusual in their shape. The use of rather spatially confusing pointed arch shapes in the painting immediately preceding this one (see cat. no. 55) suggests that the artist was experimenting with angled forms as a means of indicting depth within the two-dimensional medium of the painted page. Although the two blue peaked panels that dominate Rustam's chamber might initially seem to represent panels of wall tile arranged in an unusual shape, it is more likely that we should view these as depictions of the far corners of the floor: the scattering of Rustam's quiver of arrows and trademark tigerskin coat on the point of one of these arches is comprehensible only if these are to be understood as lying on the floor in a corner, rather than floating halfway up a wall. The play of spatial recession is continued in the projecting column containing the entranceway in which Tahmina stands hesitantly in the margins of the text, while Rustam reaches out with a gesture that will secure her role in the Iranian national epic.



98

THE MOUSE DISCOVERS THE FARMER’S GRAIN STORE

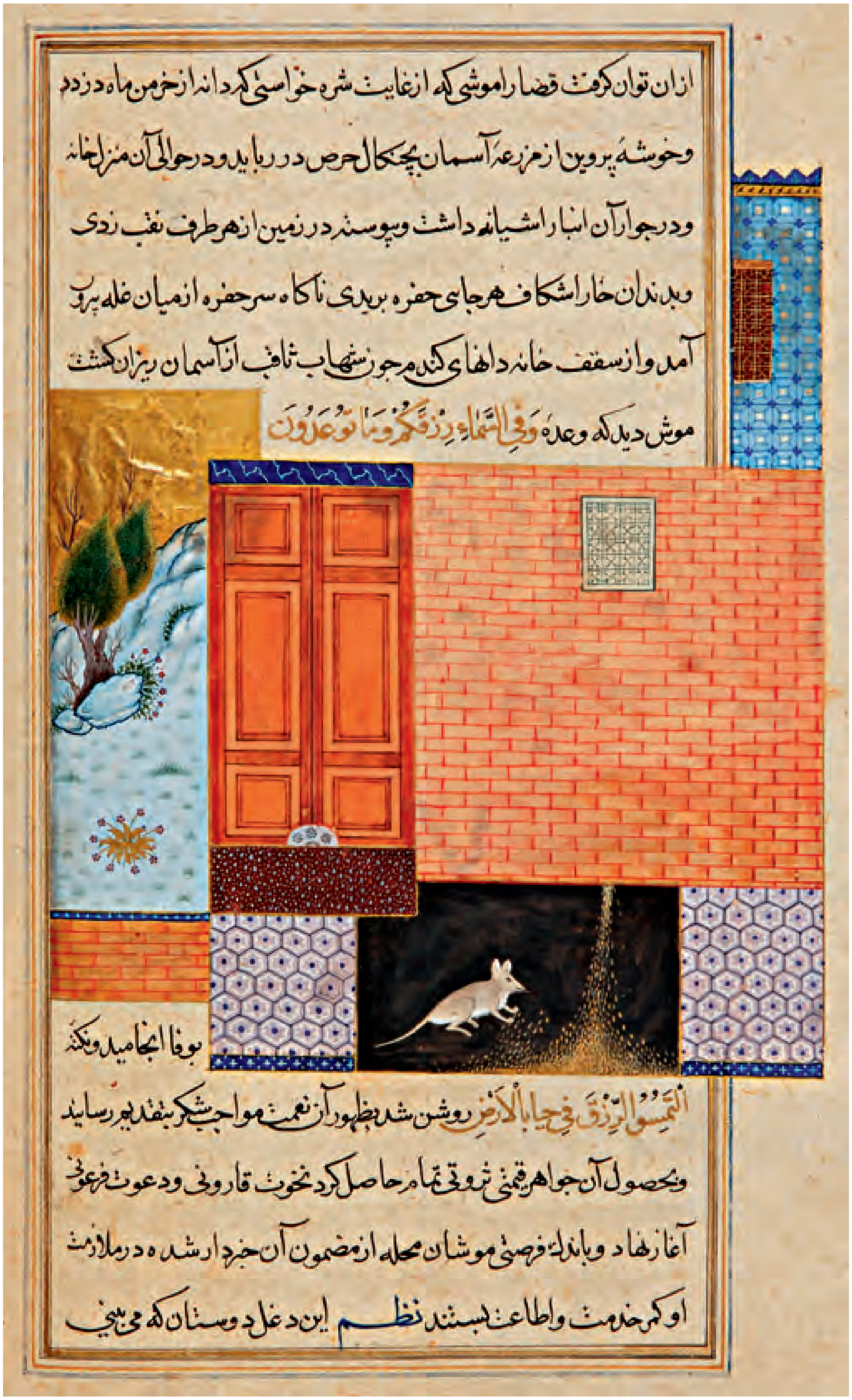
Folio 41v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Anwār-i Suhaylī*
(‘Lights of Canopus’) of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Wāʿiẓ al-Kāshifī;
copied by Naʿīm Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Tabrīzī for Ṣādiqī Beg;
illustrations attributed to Ṣādiqī Beg
Qazwin, Iran; dated 13 Safar 1002/8 November 1593
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 30.1 x 20.3 x 8 cm
AKM 289

Publ: AKTC 2009a, p. 196 (no. 149); AKTC 2009b, p. 196 (no. 149); AKTC 2010a, pp. 196–197 (no. 154); AKTC 2010b, p. 296 (no. 127). Other folios from the same manuscript: Robinson 1972, pp. 50–56; A. Welch 1976, pp. 125–145; Jones – Michell 1976, no. 621; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 100–105; Falk 1985, p. 113 (no. 80); Canby 1998, pp. 70–72 (no. 43); Grube 2000, p. 112 (fig. 4); Sims 2002, p. 184; Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 446–447 (no. 180); AKTC 2007a, p. 136 (no. 103); AKTC 2007b, p. 138 (no. 103); AKTC 2008a, pp. 208–211 (no. 79); AKTC 2010b, p. 251

Like cat. no. 51, this painting is one of 107 in an illustrated manuscript of the *Anwar-i Suhayli* or ‘Lights of Canopus’. The manuscript was commissioned by the well-documented Safavid court painter Sadiqi Beg, and the illustrations are also thought to have been painted by him. The stories in the text are drawn from an ancient tradition of animal fables first recorded in India and translated and rewritten at various points in their history, with additional stories from a variety of sources added in along the way. Kashifi (d. 1504), the author of the *Anwar-i Suhayli*, stated that he wished to beautify the existing versions of the animal fables and make them more compatible with the tastes of his own day, although his Persian version of the tales is in fact rather complex in structure (Brockelmann 1978). The textual framework for the stories is provided by an Indian king who consults his court philosopher about the proper conduct of rule in a variety of situations; the philosopher responds to each question with a moralising fable featuring animal protagonists, each fable in turn framing other stories and sub-stories.

In this remarkable and innovative image a mouse, who is ultimately to pay the price for his largesse, has caught his first sight of the unparalleled riches of which he would eventually boast far and wide: a stream of grain falls like a beam of light through the floorboards of a farmer’s barn into the dark space beneath. Having discovered this treasure-trove of food, the mouse unwisely accepted the flattery of other mice, who came from far and wide to eat the grain he had discovered. Eventually a famine broke out, the farmer found his corn store was depleted and moved its contents elsewhere, and the other mice all fled. The foolish mouse awoke from sleep to find himself friendless and without food, and dashed his own brains out in despair.

Like other stories in this text, the morals of the tale are straightforward: avoid the company of flatterers, and spend only in proportion to your income. However, the painted image of the grain store is extraordinary, and probably without parallel in images of architecture from any artistic tradition. The unique idiom of Persianate miniature painting, which constructs architecture from flat panels of colour and decoration, has been taken to an extreme, almost abstract in its evocation of architectural space. The frontal presentation of flat external surfaces, including the locked door, has enabled the artist to create a powerfully non-naturalistic illustration of a closed building, penetrated only by the mouse under the floorboards, and the artist has exploited the conventions of this unique representational style to reveal both internal and external space simultaneously. Meanwhile, the narrative component is maintained as the immediate focus of the picture through the strong colour contrast between the black background of the subterranean space, the light grey mouse and the fine golden hail of the falling grain.



ازان توان گرفت قضا را موشی که از غایت شره خواست که دانه از خرمن ماه دزدد
و خوشهٔ پروین از مزرعهٔ آسمان بچنگال حرص در رباید و در حوالی آن منزل خانه
و در جوار آن انبار آشیانه داشت و پیوسته در زمین از هر طرف نقب زدی
و بدندان خاراشکاف هر جای حفره بریدی ناگاه سر حفره از میان غله برون
آمد و از سقف خانه دانهای گندم چون شهاب ثاقب از آسمان ریزان گشت
موش دید که وعدهٔ وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ
بوفا انجامید و نکتهٔ
اِلْتَمِسُوا الرِّزْقَ فِي خَبَايَا الْأَرْضِ روشن شد بظهور آن نعمت مواجب شکر بتقدیم رسانید
و بحصول آن جواهر قیمتی ثروتی تمام حاصل کرد نخوت قارونی و دعوت فرعونی
آغاز نهاد و باندک فرصتی موشان محله از مضمون آن خبردار شده در ملازمت
او کمر خدمت و اطاعت ببستند نظم این دغل دوستان که می‌بینی

99

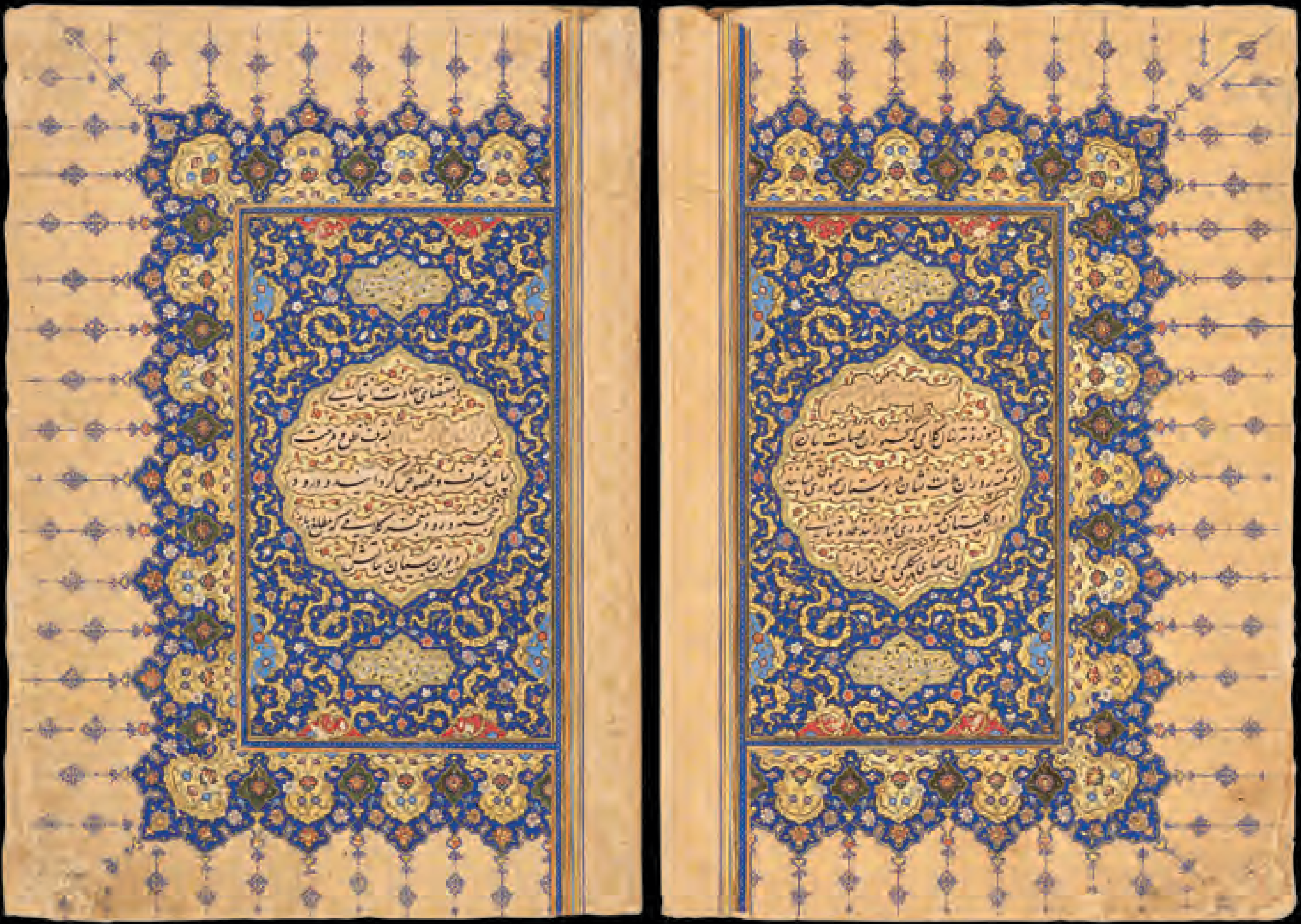
ILLUMINATED DOUBLE-PAGE FRONTISPIECE

Detached folios 1v–2r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Dīwān* of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Mīrzā; illustration on folio 23r signed by ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib, frontispiece illumination signed by ʿAbdullāh Shīrāzī, also known as ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib
Qazwin or Mashhad, Iran; dated 990 H/1582–83 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 23.9 x 16.8 cm
AKM 282

Publ: Simpson 1997, p. 301. Other folios from the same manuscript: Marteau – Vever 1913, pp. 122, 124; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 94–98 (no. 30); Falk 1985, p. 111 (no. 77); Canby 1998, pp. 63–64 (no. 38); Canby 1999, p. 87; Newby 2004, p. 170; AKTC 2007a, p. 77 (no. 46); AKTC 2007b, pp. 74–75 (no. 46); AKTC 2008a, pp. 110–111 (no. 35)

The signature of the illuminator ʿAbdullah Shirazi is written in two equal parts across the two pages of this illuminated frontispiece: it is contained in tiny script within the framing bands that surround the main panels. ʿAbdullah Shirazi was employed in the *kitabkhana* (book-production atelier) of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza for twenty years, presumably up to Ibrahim Mirza's murder in 1577, and he was characterised by the chroniclers of his time as a witty man who was close to his employer. ʿAbdullah Shirazi's work on this posthumous collection of the poetry of Ibrahim Mirza, which must have been undertaken at the behest of the volume's patron, Ibrahim Mirza's daughter Gawhar-Shad, certainly suggests a continued attachment to Ibrahim Mirza even after the Safavid prince's death at the hands of his cousin Shah Ismaʿil II (r. 1576–77; see also cat. nos 76 and 110). Qadi Ahmad, onetime clerk of Ibrahim Mirza, reported that ʿAbdullah Shirazi retired and served as a carpet-spreader at Mashhad after his employer's death, although if this is true he must have come out of retirement at least once to work on this project (Simpson 1997, pp. 300–301).

Full pages of complex, non-pictorial illumination are often referred to in studies of luxury manuscripts as 'carpet pages', because of their resemblance to textile coverings. Here, the use of compositions which are symmetrical along horizontal and vertical axes, and arranged around a large central cartouche with smaller pendant panels at top and bottom, framed within borders of scrolling vegetal designs, connects illuminations such as this double frontispiece with the so-called 'medallion carpets' that came to particular popularity in Safavid Iran and Ottoman Turkey (see cat. no. 101). The general similarity to textiles seems in this case to be enhanced by the outer frame of repeating cusped forms in gold and blue, from which fine lines decorated with small geometric pendants project into the blank space of the margin like a fringe. A formal connection between book illumination and carpet designs is evident in both the overall compositions of the central medallion type in both media, and in individual motifs such as the scrolling 'cloud-band' designs borrowed from Chinese art – arranged around the central inscription cartouches of this image – which appear in comparable positions in carpet design (for example see a Turkish carpet, c. 1600, in Spuhler 1987, p. 208). The comparison can also be extended to include the medallion designs of leather bookbindings, first created in Egypt and Syria of the Mamluk period, which had by the sixteenth century gained such universal popularity in the Islamic world (see cat. no. 100).



100

BOOKBINDING

Turkey; late sixteenth or seventeenth century
Red morocco leather with gilt tooling
57.7 cm x 29.8 cm
AKM 389
Unpublished

The art of Islamic bookbinding is generally agreed to have developed initially from Coptic traditions in Egypt. Books of the early Islamic period tended to be horizontal in format, with bookbindings made from wood encased in leather: these had flaps that covered the edges of the book, as if containing it within a box. As the vertical codex format took hold of manuscript production from the eleventh century onwards, bookbinding evolved into a standard form with a flat spine and a single fore-edge flap (called a *lisan*), which wrapped around the front edge and under the front board when the book was closed and stored flat. This remained the norm until the modern period, when bookbinders began to imitate European bindings. Bindings of the type with a fore-edge flap are lighter than the early box-like forms, and were normally made from pasteboard (several sheets of paper glued together) covered with leather, which was then decorated by carving and indenting with pointed tools, stamped designs and gilding.

By the time the first Ottoman imperial bindery was established, during the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512), a fairly standardised design for bookbinding decoration had been established across the Islamic world. This was based around a central medallion, normally ovoid and often with pendant motifs at top and bottom, bordered within a rectangular frame and accompanied by four corner quadrants. Forerunners of this design can be seen in some bindings from fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Syria or Egypt (Haldane 1983, p. 51), but the composition really took hold in Iran in the fifteenth century, and had become a near-universal form for the decoration of Islamic bookbindings by the end of the sixteenth century.

The rather elegantly restrained design of the present binding, with its gilded centre medallion containing a horizontally symmetrical design of fine scrolling vegetal ornament in reserve, and its corner quadrants like gilded brackets, is typical of Ottoman bookbinding styles of the later sixteenth century and is rather calmer than many of the earlier Iranian interpretations of the same composition (see Aritan 2008, p. 81, and Aga-Oglu 1935, p. 14). The relationship between book illumination and the design of bookbindings has been noted by various authors (Ettinghausen 1969, p. 297; see also cat. no. 99). At the same time, this particular composition, so widespread in bookbinding, can also be compared with one of the best-known forms of carpet design in the Middle East (see cat. no. 101).

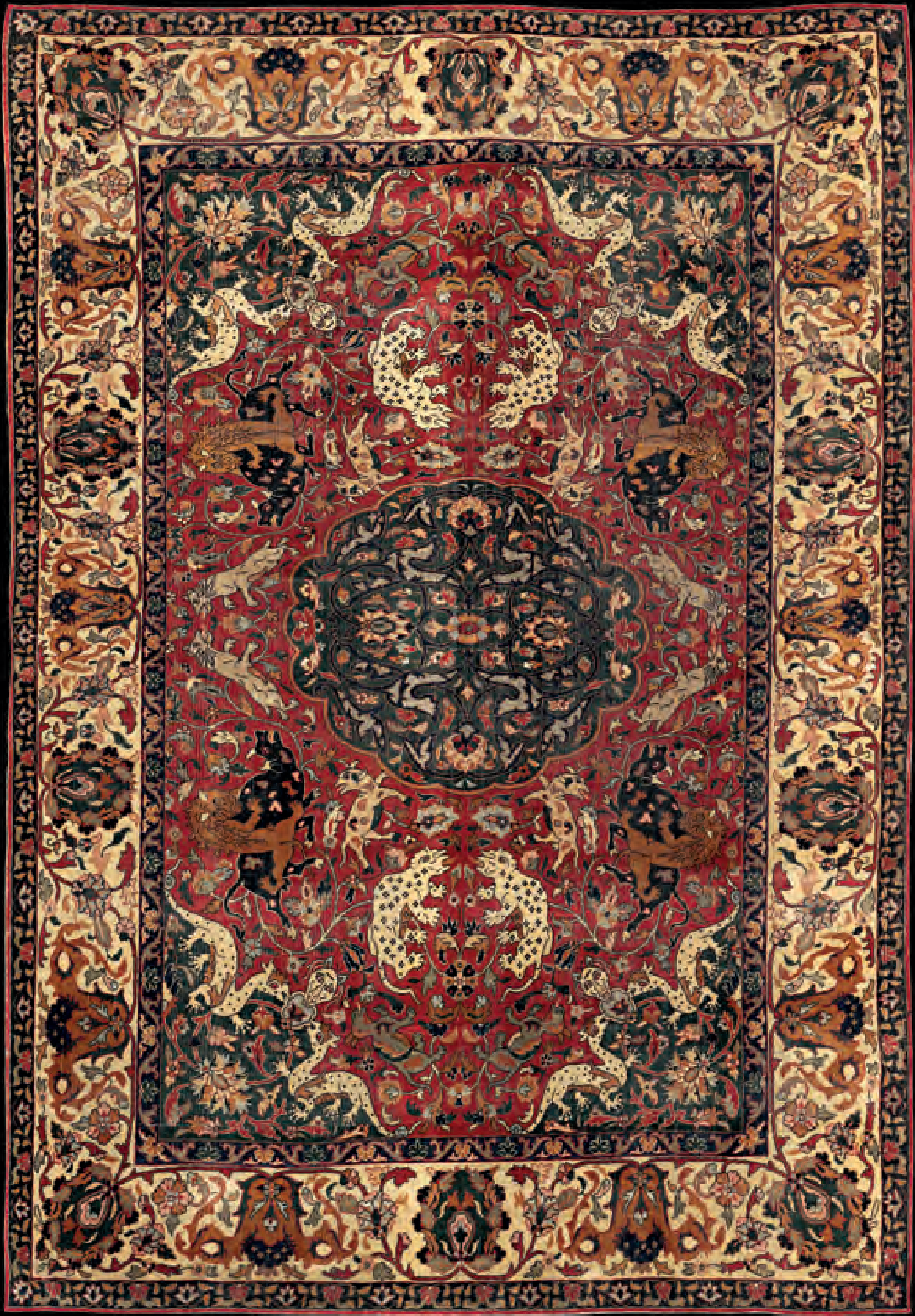
101

CARPET

Iran; probably early seventeenth century
Silk warp and weft with z-spun wool knotting (asymmetric open to the left)
Approx. 213 x 152 cm
AKM 820
Publ: AKTC 2010b, p. 305 (no. 133)

This carpet, which is one of a pair (its partner is in a private collection in North America), belongs to a category known as 'hunting' carpets because such pieces include depictions of animals in combat, and sometimes – although not in this case – also show mounted figures of hunters. Here the figural elements are restricted to the main field of the rug, surrounding the central lobed medallion in arrangements that are symmetrical across both axes, and they include lions bringing down bulls, further bulls possibly lying prone, and affronted pairs of leopards and mythical beasts. Less common in the context of Iranian hunting carpets is the inclusion of the pairs of dragons that delineate the corner quadrants of the central panel, holding between them in their mouths some form of animal mask: a related design can be seen on the central axis of an early sixteenth-century hunting carpet in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Stanley 2004, pp. 54–55). The rather large eyes and stumpy feet of the dragons are a world away from the terrifying serpents borrowed from Chinese art, possibly a result of the complications involved in transposing an intricate design from a painted to a woven format. The imagery of the hunt is an all-pervading subject in imperial Iranian art, most often represented through the depiction of beautifully dressed mounted riders evenly arranged through a fantastic field of plants, with at least one hunter depicted at the point of bringing down his prey. Here the emphasis lies entirely on the animals themselves, but the image of the lion bringing down the bull is itself a very ancient symbol of kingship in the Middle East (Hartner – Ettinghausen 1964, pp. 164–170).

As has already been mentioned in cat. nos 99 and 100, a comparison can be drawn, based on the underlying composition of a central medallion and four corner quadrants contained within a rectangular frame, between various examples of book illumination, bookbinding decoration and carpet design in the late medieval/early modern Islamic world, particularly in Timurid and Safavid Iran, and Ottoman Turkey. While the design of the present carpet is perhaps dominated by the pictorial animal motifs, the underlying composition can nonetheless be connected with the common 'central medallion' design of bookbinding, and indeed bookbindings decorated with animals are known from the Timurid period onwards. A similar form of ovoid central medallion with pendants can also be seen in Timurid woodcarving (see cat. no. 68), and Allan has noted the similarities between the medallion designs of Safavid doors and those of Safavid carpets and bookbindings, adding yet another medium into the very wide application that was given to this general design (Allan 1995, pp. 127–129). While compositions of this type are obviously much too general and widespread to suggest any direct relationship between these particular examples, the repetition and adaptation of the general pattern across several media may hint at the close proximity of some forms of elite artistic production, with craftsmen in one medium perhaps periodically looking over the shoulders of those in another.



102

BAHRĀM GŪR IN THE RED PAVILION

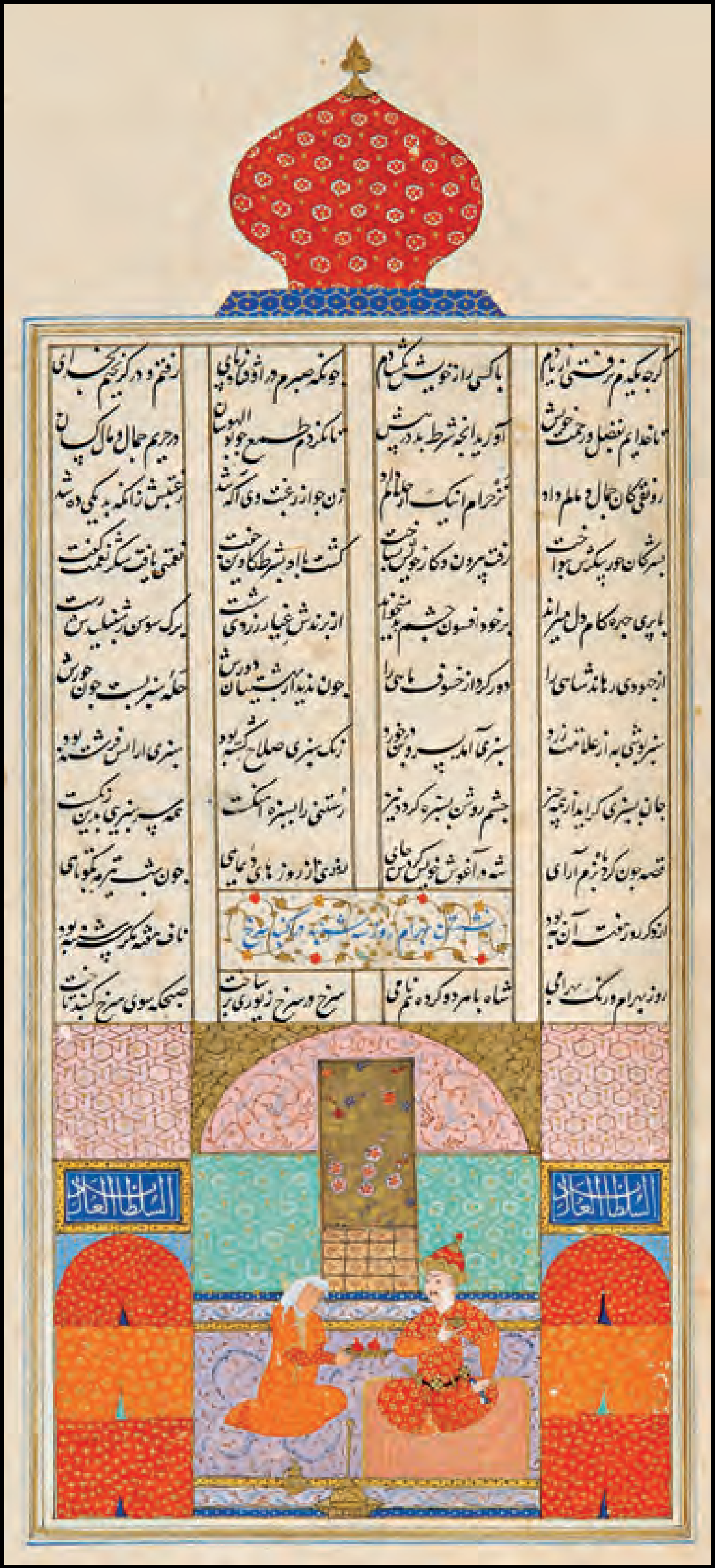
Folio 227r from an illustrated manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī; copied by Pīr Ḥusayn ibn Pīr Ḥasan al-Kātib al-Shīrāzī, illustrated by Ghiyāth Muzahhib
Shiraz, Iran; dated 20–30 Rabiʿ al-Awwal 934/14–24 December 1527
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Manuscript: 33.4 x 21.5 x 5.5
AKM 270

Publ: A. Welch 1978b, pp. 47–59 (not ill.). Other folios from the same manuscript: Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 74–76; AKTC 2009a, pp. 194–195 (no. 148); AKTC 2009b, pp. 194–195 (no. 148); AKTC 2010a, pp. 194–195 (no. 153); AKTC 2010b, p. 289 (no. 119)

The *Haft Paykar* ('Seven Portraits'), fourth piece in Nizami's *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of five long poems, and one of the greatest literary works of medieval Persian, is a frame story containing tales nested within each other. The pre-Islamic hero Bahram Gur visited seven princesses on seven consecutive nights, each of them telling him a story. The seven princesses, hailing from the seven earthly climes, are each characterised by the different colours of their pavilions, and the whole construct is a complex series of metaphors for the seven planets of Islamic cosmology, the seven days of the week, the seven stages of life and the path towards enlightenment, as well as a glittering series of love stories. From the time of its completion around the turn of the thirteenth century, the five-poem *Khamsa* has remained one of the most popular works ever written in Persian, and the sheer number of illustrated versions of the text that survive from the fourteenth century onwards attests to the composition's continued popularity with artists (see Dodkhudoeva 1985 and Graves 2002).

Among the poems of the *Khamsa* it is the *Haft Paykar* that has generated one of the most instantly recognisable cycles of images in Persianate miniature painting. The repeated compositions that show Bahram Gur visiting each of the colour-coded pavilions in turn have proved a source of delight for book-painters from the earliest illustrated manuscripts of the text onwards (see also cat. no. 108). The standard model for these scenes is a palace interior in which Bahram Gur and the princess sit or recline on a dais, very often with a dome above them, while greater or lesser numbers of attendants wait on them. However, the great appeal of these images lies in their colour theming. Turning the pages of a manuscript containing illustrations of all seven pavilions reveals a sequence of architectural variations upon the single theme of luxurious pleasure, each differentiated from the others through the dominance of one colour (a complete cycle can be seen in Adamova 1996, pp. 142–153).

Repetition in such instances was by no means regarded as a sign of artistic poverty: the repetition of compositions between one manuscript and another was an important element of Persianate miniature painting, with painters refining and elaborating pre-existing compositions as a demonstration of both painterly skill and their understanding and aesthetic judgement of the traditions of the medium (Adamova 1992, pp. 73–74). Here, as in so many other pages from illustrated manuscripts, the artist has used the grid created by the columns of the text block to order the symmetrical composition of the interior scene, which is made up of discrete panels of tilework and patterned textile in sparkling colours, dominated by rich reds. The integration of the architectural setting and the text block is completed by the capping of the text columns with a dome, complete with a golden finial, turning the rather long and narrow passage of illustration and text block into a continuous, towering pavilion.



نشستن بهرام روز دوشنبه در گنبد سبز

السلطان العادل
السلطان العادل

103

MUGHAL PICTORIAL GENEALOGY

Paintings and illuminated panels mounted onto an album page
Agra, India; c. 1628
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 36.2 x 24.2 cm
AKM 151

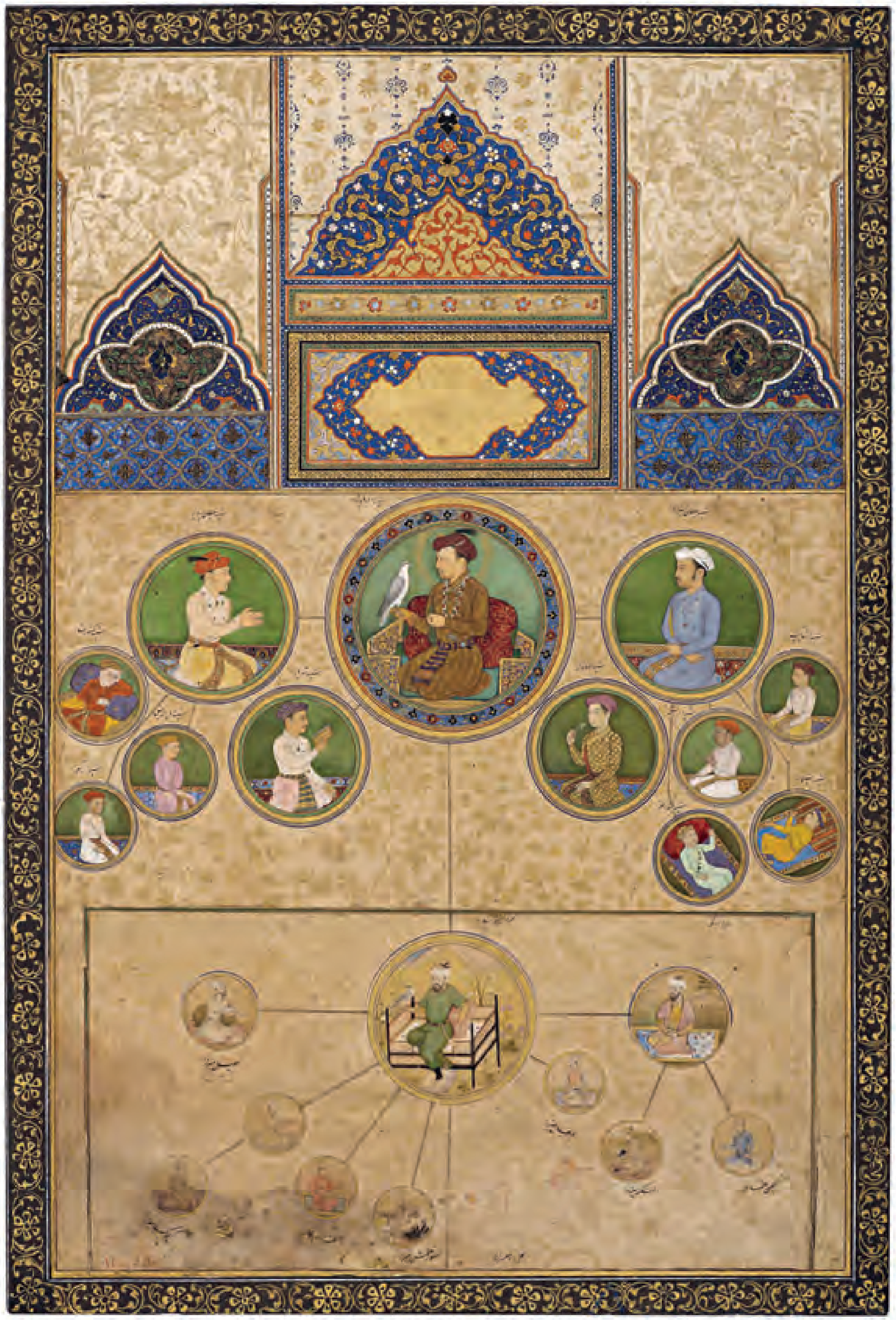
Publ: Stchoukine 1935, pp. 192–197 (no. 1); Colnaghi 1976, no. 90; Das 1978, pp. 139–140, pl. 33; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 212–215 (no. 70); Goswamy – Fischer 1987, pp. 92–93 (no. 41); Okada 1992, fig. 34; Canby 1998, pp. 145–147 (no. 108); AKTC 2007a, p. 117 (no. 83); AKTC 2007b, p. 118 (no. 83); AKTC 2009a, p. 232 (no. 173); AKTC 2009b, p. 232 (no. 173); AKTC 2010a, p. 248 (no. 190)

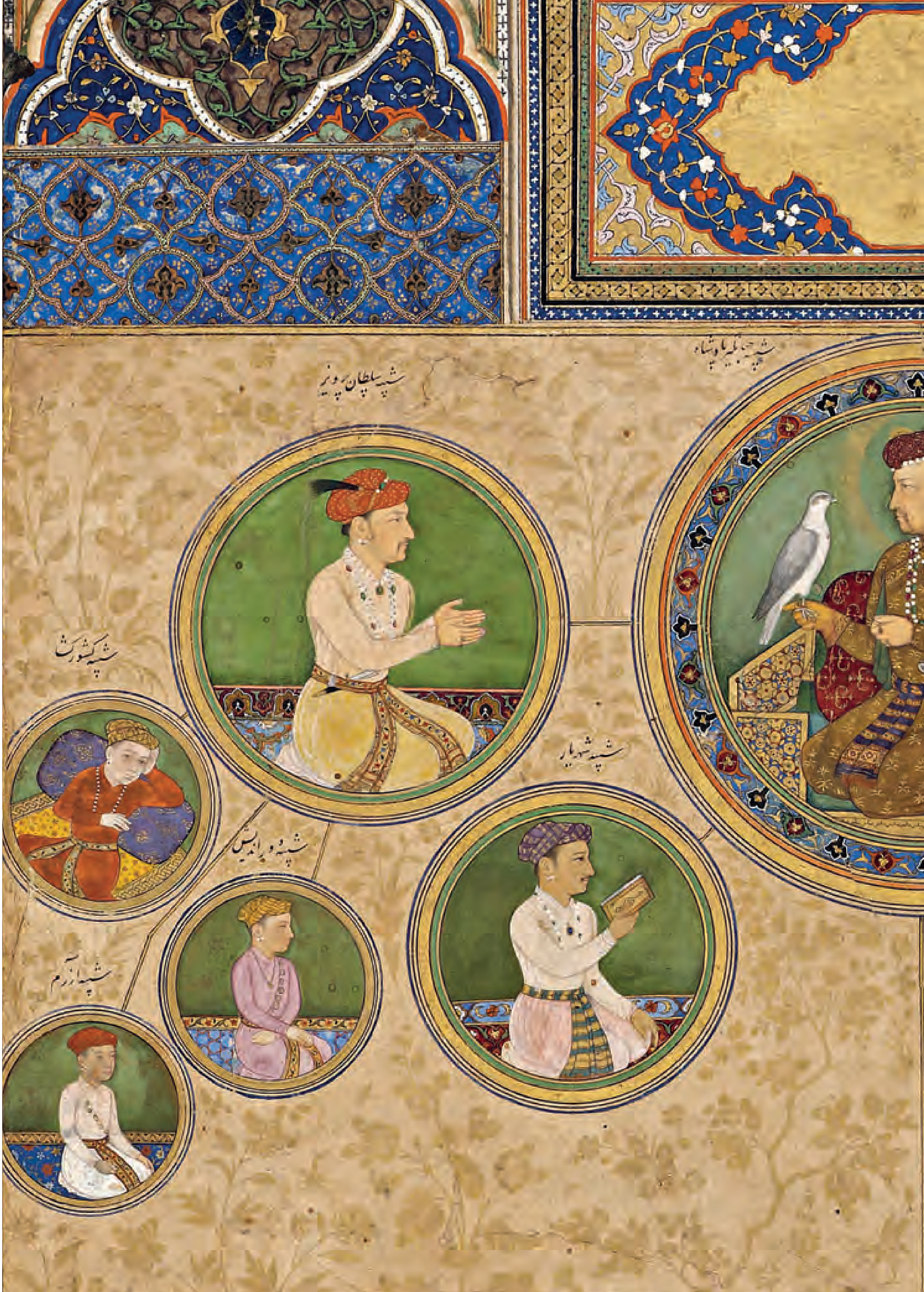
Although scholars are not in complete agreement about the precise dating of this Mughal family tree, it is generally accepted that the two genealogical sections in the middle and bottom of the page were once part of a larger genealogical composition and now come out of order, while the upper section is composed of three vertical sections of illumination taken from different sources. The richly coloured, jewel-like roundel portraits that appear in the central section of the page – and hence take compositional precedence – show Jahangir, the fourth Mughal emperor of India (r. 1605–1627), and his sons and grandsons, some of them mere toddlers. In the bottom section, which would presumably once have been located somewhere above Jahangir and his male line, the central roundel shows Miran Shah (1367–1408), one of the sons of Timur himself, with his sons and grandsons arranged around him.

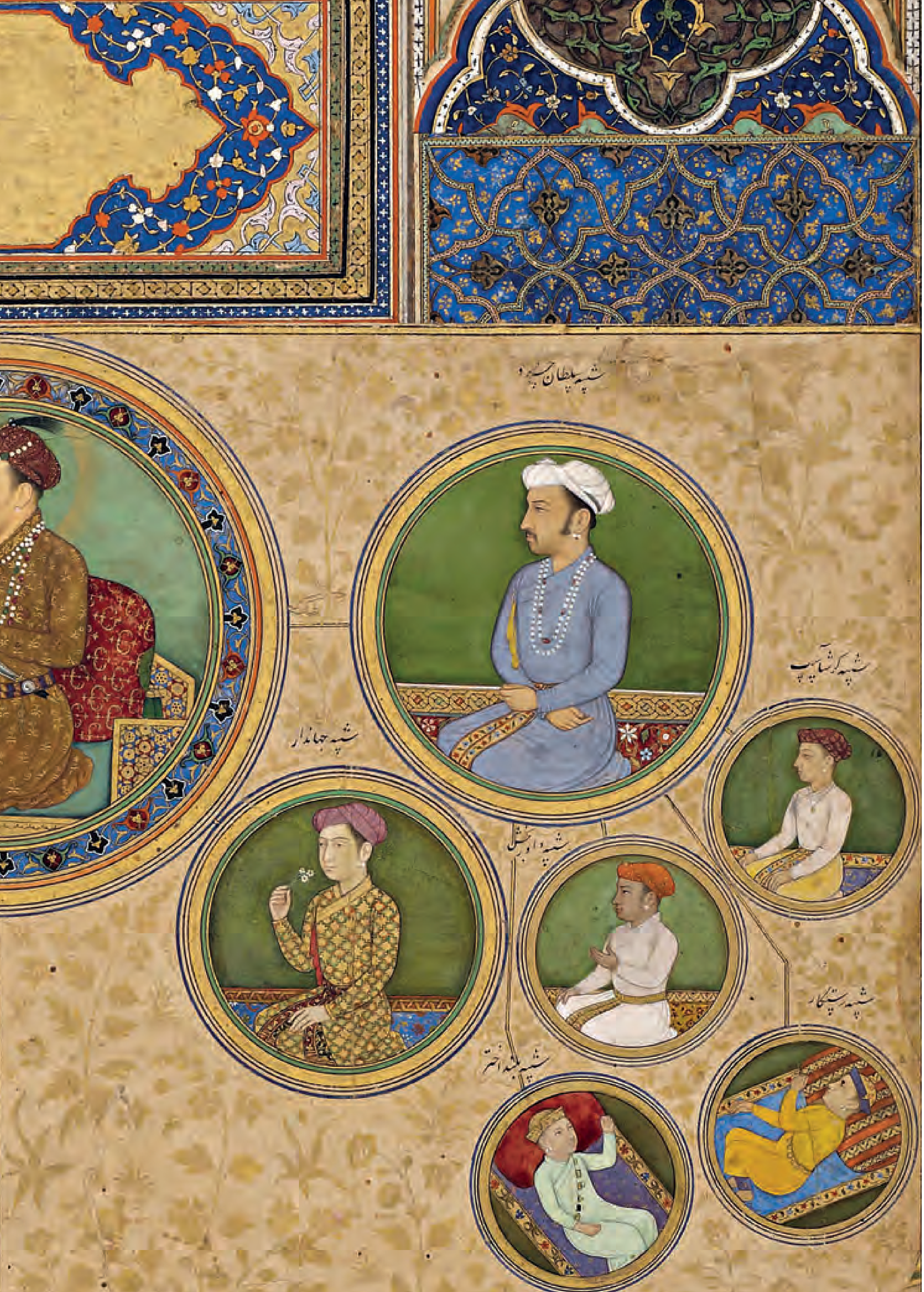
As Miran Shah was in fact the great-great-great-great-great-grandfather of Jahangir, these genealogical snapshots may once have been part of a much larger scroll showing the descent of the Mughal emperors of India from the great warlord Timur, via the relevant line of the Timurid dynasty (the Central Asian forefathers of the Mughal dynasty). The Miran Shah section exhibits an earlier style of painting than that of the Jahangir section. While it is quite possible that the Miran Shah paintings purposefully historicise their fourteenth- and fifteenth-century subjects, a tiny inscription on this section names the painter Dhanraj, who was active in the Mughal workshops up to about 1610. Thus, the Miran Shah panel apparently predates the Jahangir section, and the whole piece as it appears now can be understood as an adaptation and continuation of an earlier genealogical tree (Canby 1998).

Judging from the two remaining genealogical sections, the visual depiction of the royal lineage was fairly simply worked out in this context. The monarch who succeeded to the throne would occupy the central roundel in each section, with the other male descendants arranged to the right and left of the all-important central line of inheritance. Presumably the line that extends downwards from Jahangir and now connects with Miran Shah would originally have ended in a roundel containing the image of Jahangir's son and heir Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1657); if so, this would make Goswamy and Fischer's dating of the piece to c. 1630 quite probable, although, as Canby has pointed out, there are also certain factors that could be used to infer a date prior to Jahangir's death.

The adaptation that has resulted in the Jahangir section taking centre stage in something that is now the size of an album page, with the Miran Shah panel appearing as a sort of pendant of prehistory, has also housed the whole genealogical structure within a quasi-architectonic frame. The upper section of the page, where Jahangir's immediate forebears were presumably once located, has been ornamented with a central cartouche and two slightly smaller flanking panels of illumination; A. Welch attributes these on stylistic grounds to manuscripts from c. 1580 Qazwin and fifteenth-century Herat respectively. As he also points out, the tripartite arrangement of these panels of illumination emphasises the vertical structure of the pictorial genealogies presented below. However, it also seems possible that whoever arranged the illumination at the head of the page had an architectural model in mind: the image of a large central dome mounted on a drum and flanked by smaller domes comes to mind, and the arrangement marks out the 'house of Jahangir' as just that – a house.




شبیه جهانگیر پادشاه
شبیه سلطان پرویز
شبیه کشورش
شبیه شهریار
شبیه دوراندیش
شبیه ارزم


شبیه سلطان پرویز
شبیه گرشاسپ
شبیه جهاندار
شبیه داور بخش
شبیه بلند اختر

104

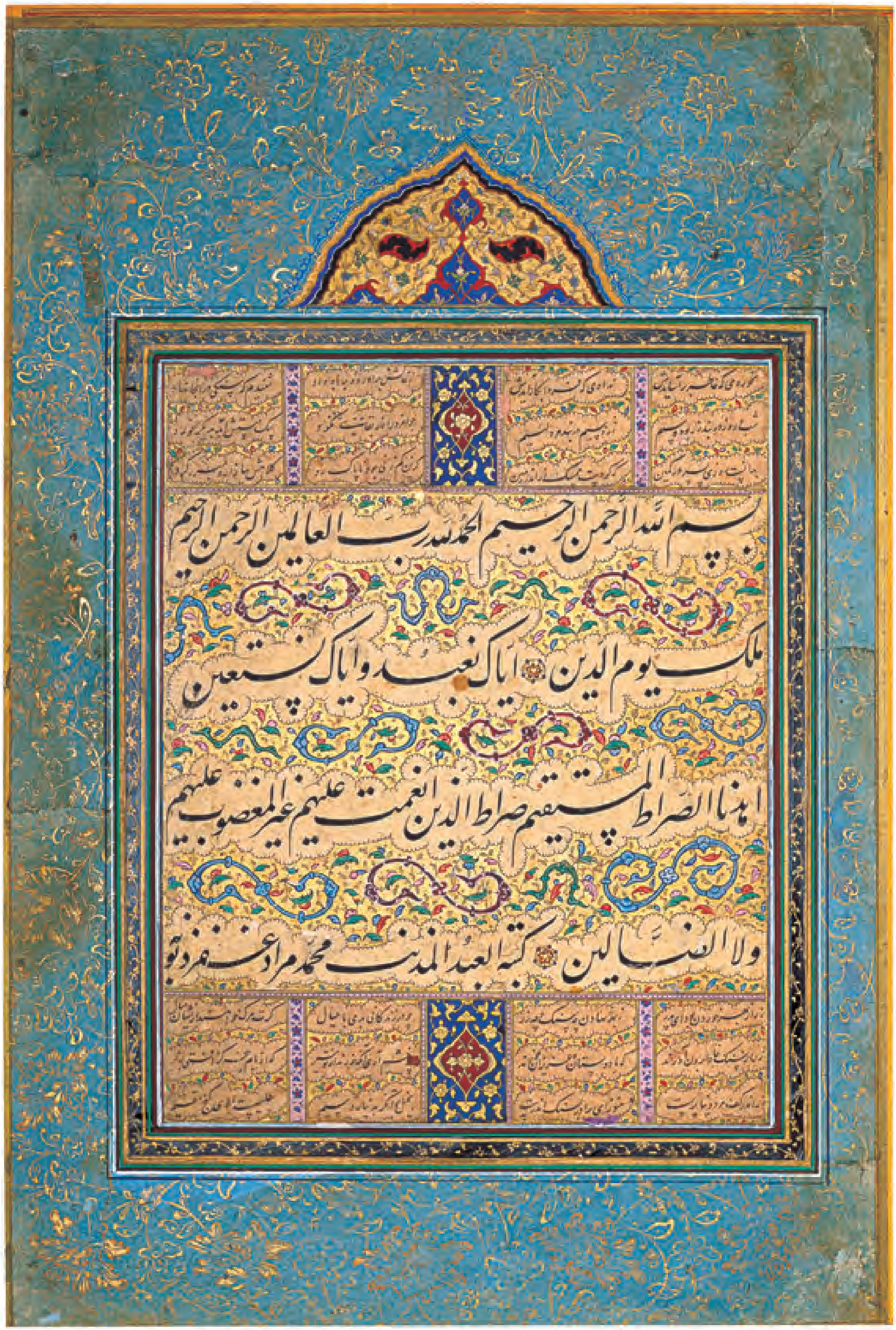
ALBUM PAGE WITH *SŪRAT AL-FĀTIḤA*

Calligraphy and illumination mounted onto album page
Iran or possibly India; central section late sixteenth century
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
37.9 x 27 cm
AKM 486
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 44 (no. 14); AKTC 2007b, p. 41 (no. 14)

The first Sura of the Qur'an, *Surat al-Fatiha*, is very short, and in luxurious Qur'an manuscripts it is often the subject of a stand-alone illuminated composition across a double-page. This may also reflect the very frequent usage of *Surat al-Fatiha* as a spoken prayer. Signalling the start of the sacred text with rich gilding, vegetal ornament and elaborate calligraphy, such illuminated pages were sometimes collected in albums, or were even made especially for album pages in the first place. This page has been attributed to Iran, but there is also a possibility that parts of it may have been produced in India, by an Iranian calligrapher working in the atelier of the Mughal emperor Akbar. Calligraphic samples from Iran and Central Asia were certainly collected by the Mughals, but in addition to this a number of artists from the Safavid court made their way to the Mughal lands after Shah Tahmasp began to withdraw his patronage of the arts in the latter part of his fifty-two year reign (1524–1576). Furthermore, it has also been proposed that ʿAbdullah Khan of Bukhara (r. 1583–1598) sent artists to Akbar's court at Lahore, providing yet another avenue by which the Iranian, Central Asian and Indian traditions mixed in the Mughal imperial arts (Foltz 1998, pp. 78–79).

The text of this Sura has been written in *nastaʿliq* script, a 'hanging' form of cursive script in common use in Safavid Iran and Mughal India for the copying of Persian literary texts and poetry, but less frequently encountered in Qur'an manuscripts. The scalloped edges given to the reserve fields around the lines of *nastaʿliq* can also be seen on an earlier calligraphic album page with a section of *Surat al-Fatiha* also in the Aga Khan Museum collection (AKM 484): that piece was copied by Ishaq al-Shahabi directly from a sample by the great calligraphic master Mir ʿAli Harawi (c. 1476–1544), whose work was assiduously collected by bibliophiles. The calligraphic traditions developed by Mir ʿAli during his court career at Herat and subsequently Bukhara set the tone for succeeding generations of calligraphers and were particularly influential in India (Blair 2008, p. 432).

As well as the script itself, aspects of the illumination of this piece can be linked with earlier traditions in Iran and the surrounding areas: the scrolling cloud-bands (themselves a borrowing from Chinese art) in blue and mauve that lie on the vegetal ground between the reserve fields in the main calligraphic panel are similar to the cloud-bands that decorate a calligraphic sample of c. 1534 by Mir ʿAli (*ibid*., p. 431). However, an even closer parallel can be seen in the pink and blue cloud-bands that decorate the large cartouches of a page of illumination from a Qur'an manuscript completed for Akbar at Lahore in 981 H/1573–74 CE (*ibid*., p. 542). The cartouche that decorates the top of the framed panel of calligraphy on the present example, which has been taken from an earlier source, gives the whole composition the sombre appearance of a domed monument – one of the most widespread forms of funerary architecture in the late medieval Islamic world – although it may be that this effect is unintentional.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم الحمد لله رب العالمین الرحمن الرحیم
ملک یوم الدین ایاک نعبد و ایاک نستعین
اهدنا الصراط المستقیم صراط الذین انعمت علیهم غیر المغضوب علیهم
و لا الضالین کتبه العبد المذنب محمد مراد غفر ذنوبه

105

INSCRIPTIVE TILE FRIEZE IN THREE PARTS

Iznik, Turkey; 1570s
Glazed fritware with polychrome underglaze painting against white
15.5 x 75 x 1 cm
Inscription: Sura 12 (*Yusuf*), verse 64
AKM 698

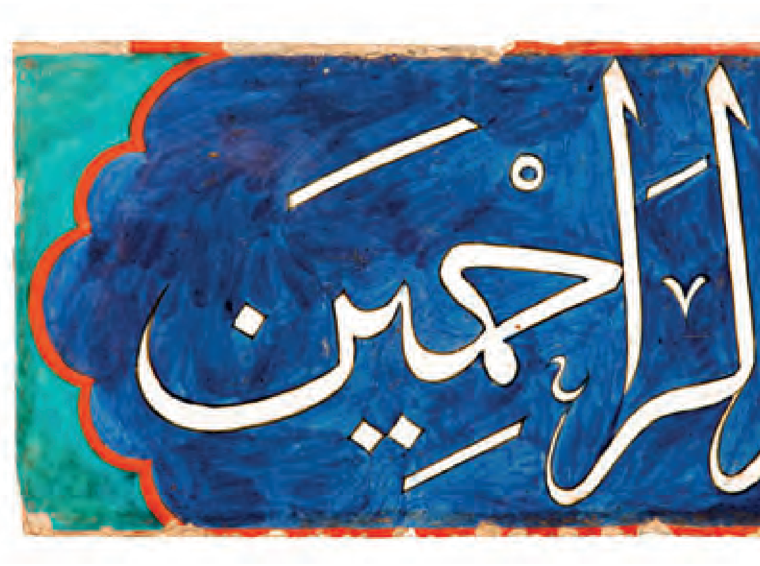
Publ: AKTC 2008a, p. 72 (no. 16); AKTC 2009a, p. 53 (no. 23); AKTC 2009b, p. 53 (no. 23); AKTC 2010a, p. 55 (no. 24); AKTC 2010b, p. 87 (no. 38)

The art of beautiful writing was certainly not limited to the page: on many occasions the building became the surface of inscription, adding another dimension to the relationship between architecture and the written word. The sacred text of the Qur'an lies at the heart of Muslim religious belief and practice, and it is natural that Qur'anic inscriptions should have formed such an important visual expression of cultural identities across the Islamic world.

The inscription of Qur'anic texts on buildings can take a number of forms, such as carving in stone or wood, or mosaic inlay, but tile panels with painted inscriptions allow a particularly close interaction with calligraphic practice. Tile production of this type rose to prominence in Ottoman Turkey. The association between luxury ceramic production and Ottoman imperial patronage, which centred on the famous ceramic manufactures at Iznik, east of Istanbul, was most clearly realised in the production of colourful tile revetments for the mosques, palaces, bathhouses and so forth that were commissioned by successive Ottoman rulers and high-ranking officials, creating an unmistakable visual identity for the state all across the Ottoman Empire. Iznik tiles were often decorated with elaborate and fantastic floral motifs, and made much use of brilliant blue, turquoise, and, after the 1550s, a highly distinctive tomato-red that stands slightly proud of the surface of the tile (see cat. nos 34 and 61).

The present frieze, although brightly coloured, is more sombre in execution than some other Ottoman tile panels, as befits its sacred message, and is without adornment beyond the red outline of the inscriptive cartouche and lobed turquoise spandrels at each end. The bright white of the inscription stands out vividly against the rich cobalt blue of the background, aiding legibility from a distance – a requirement for architectural inscriptions if they are to proclaim their message widely. It may well have formed part of the decoration of a mosque or some other religious institution, such as a madrasa, and quite possibly was once part of a larger series of inscriptive friezes. The Arabic inscription, written in a graceful cursive script, reads 'God is the best guardian and He is the most merciful of the merciful'.

The scalloped ends of the cartouche in which the inscription is contained can be directly compared with the inscriptions seen on a lunette tile panel in the Darwish Pasha Mosque in Damascus, datable to 1574 (Carswell 1998, p. 113). However, the colouring and the elegant *thuluth* script of the present tile frieze are more closely matched in another lunette inscription panel, the white-on-cobalt inscription by Mulla Hasan in the Selimiye mosque at Edirne, 1572; thus a date in the 1570s also seems likely for the Aga Khan Museum's panel (Denny 2004, p. 17).



فالله خير حافظا وهو ارحم

106

WOODEN PANEL WITH VERSES BY ḤĀFIẒ

Iran; fifteenth or early sixteenth century
Carved plane-tree wood
138 x 52 cm
AKM 635
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 159 (no. 129); AKTC 2007b, p. 160 (no. 129); Makariou 2007, pp. 194–195 (no. 71); AKTC 2008a, pp. 250–251 (no. 98); AKTC 2009a, pp. 186–187 (no. 143); AKTC 2009b, pp. 186–187 (no. 143); AKTC 2010a, pp. 186–187 (no. 148)

First register:
In the eyes and brows of my beloved I confided heart and soul
Come, come contemplate the arch and the window!
Say to the guardian of Paradise: the dust of this meeting place […]
Second register:
[…] do not falter in your task, pour the wine into the cup!
Beyond your hedonism, your love for moon-faced beings,
Amongst the tasks that you accomplish, recite the poem of Hafiz!

In both textual content and graphic skill this wooden panel of fine *thuluth* script on a plain ground is very closely related to the calligraphic arts of the book. The panel, sold on the London market in 1995 alongside a partner panel of the same dimensions (current location unknown), contains verses from a *ghazal* (a romantic poem, normally of between five and twelve short verses) by Hafiz, perhaps the greatest Persian master of the *ghazal* genre. Like the other panel sold in 1995, each register of this piece contains one full *bayt* ('verse' or distich) and one half-*bayt* of the *ghazal*, with each half-*bayt* contained within a plain rectangular frame. The first verse of the *ghazal* was contained on the partner panel, while the present panel carries the final line of the poem in its second register: the whole poem was presumably written out as a frieze of calligraphic panels of uniform size and shape, possibly extending horizontally around a room (Makariou 2007, p. 194).

The style of the calligraphy is reminiscent of that seen on wooden elements from Mazandaran, an area of northern Iran located on the coast of the Caspian sea and famous for its sweet wood (see cat. no. 68). An inscription comparable with this one can be seen on a panel from a wooden door thought to date from 1468, but unlike this piece, the inscription of the door panel is set against a ground of twining palmettes (A. Welch 1979, pp. 130–131). A wooden panel now in the Louvre bears a religious inscription in a similar, if rather more simply arranged, form of *thuluth* on a plain ground; that piece has been attributed to late-fifteenth or sixteenth-century Iran on the basis of script style, and a similar date can be ascribed here (Anglade 1988, pp. 152–153).

By the time of Hafiz's death in 1389 or 1390 his fame had already spread throughout Iran and beyond, and several manuscript copies of his greatest work, the *Diwan*, survive from the fifteenth century. Thematically, Hafiz's works explore the major tropes of Persian mystical poetry, chief among them being love and wine-drinking, and the sensuality of these verses would make them more fitting for a secular setting than a religious one. Verses by Persian poets appear within tomb architecture of the Timurid and Safavid periods, but these have normally been chosen for their direct relevance to the themes of death and worldly impermanence (O'Kane 2009, pp. 119–134), while the present poem describes a nocturnal meeting between the poet and his beloved, by the light of the moon (de Fouchécour 2006, pp. 971–972). If we extend Ettinghausen's argument that the decoration of a room may directly reflect the activities that took place there, architectural decoration made up of verses like those of the present panels might suggest an intimate salon or pavilion for entertainments featuring poetry and drinking (Ettinghausen 1972, p. 35; Brookshaw 2003, p. 201). Just as panels of poetry were integrated into images of architecture in illustrated manuscripts, so architecture itself could be a surface for the inscription of poetic texts, and therefore the means of enjoying poetry.

107

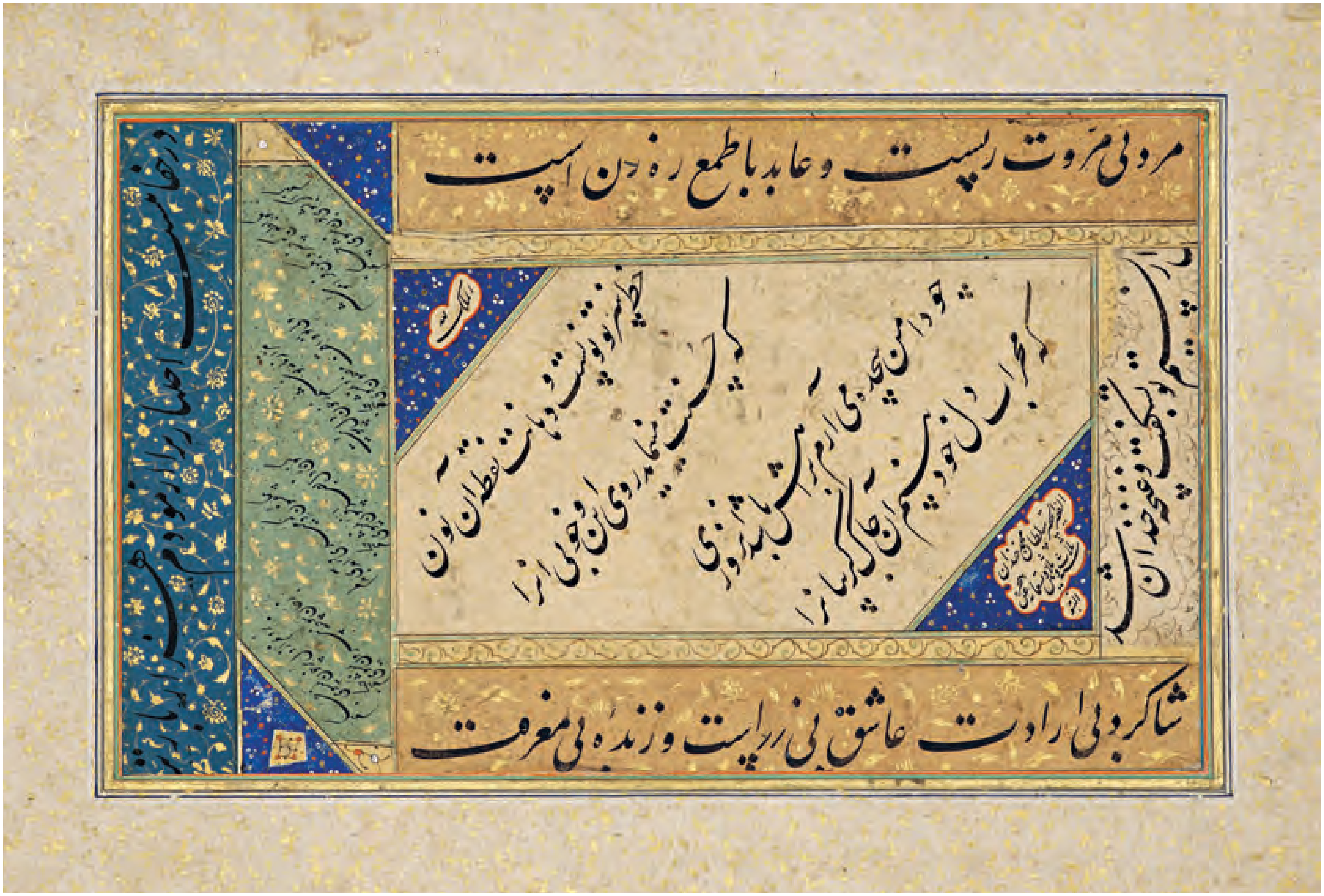
ALBUM PAGE OF CALLIGRAPHY AND ILLUMINATION

Iran; main panel of calligraphy dated 933 H/1526–27 CE
Signed Sulṭān Muḥammad Khandān
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on papers
Page: 30 x 19.4 cm
AKM 326
Unpublished

Dust Muhammad – a Safavid calligrapher and author of the famous 951 H/1544–45 CE preface to the Bahram Mirza album, in which he lists and describes some of the greatest artists, calligraphers and illuminators associated with the Iranian court – cited the calligrapher Sultan Muhammad Khandan as one of the masters of *nastaʿliq* script. The central panel of *nastaʿliq* on this album page has been signed and dated by Sultan Muhammad Khandan, who was, according to Dust Muhammad, a gentle and pleasant character, who wrote solidly (*mustahkam*) and 'with [an] essential quality' (*bi-kayfiyat nivishtand*; Roxburgh 2001, pp. 152–153). As Roxburgh has observed, parallels are frequently drawn between the calligrapher's personality and his artistic skills, placing good writing as 'a testimony to the calligrapher's patient training, perfected skill and character', and hence the quality of Muhammad Khandan's *nastaʿliq* script could be read by contemporary audiences as a reflection of personal qualities beyond mere technical ability (Roxburgh 2005, p. 279).

The increasingly celebrated role of calligraphers and painters at the Iranian and Central Asian courts was mirrored in the rise of the album (*muraqqaʿ*), a phenomenon that seems to have started amongst the imperial courts of Iran from the first decades of the 1400s, and later spread to India, Turkey and Central Asia. These bound manuscripts initially contained samples of painting, calligraphy and illumination cut from existing manuscripts and pasted into new assemblages on album pages. Eventually the vogue for album-making led to a new category of artistic production in the form of calligraphic samples and single-leaf paintings created specifically for the context of the album, giving rise during the Safavid period to an open art market that encompassed wealthy merchants, administrative officials and other members of the richer 'bourgeoisie' amongst its clientele, rather than being limited to court patronage as most luxury manuscript production had been. The work of acknowledged masters such as Sultan Muhammad Khandan was thus assiduously collected and displayed in these albums as a sign of status and good taste, as well as buying power.

Nastaʿliq, a script type said to have been 'invented' by Mir ʿAli Tabrizi in the late fourteenth century, is described by Shah Quli Khalifa as 'the most tender, sweet-smelling herb in the garden of calligraphy' (*ibid*., p. 189). It is one of the so-called 'hanging' scripts best suited to the calligraphic requirements of written Persian: the hanging nature of the script lends it a pronounced slant that was exaggerated into writing on the diagonal by various calligraphers, notably Mir ʿAli al-Harawi (d. 1544), and sixteenth-century assemblages that use both slanted and straight panels of *nastaʿliq* are widespread. The form is particularly associated with the *qitʿa*, a calligraphic sample giving a short fragment of poetry or prose, written in diagonal lines of *nastaʿliq* within a vertical composition. In this instance, the slanted panels that lend a structural, almost three-dimensional quality to the calligraphic assemblage are reminiscent of the painted panels used to construct architecture within Persianate miniature paintings, or of the interplay between the text block and the architectural image evident in certain manuscripts (see cat. no. 108).



108

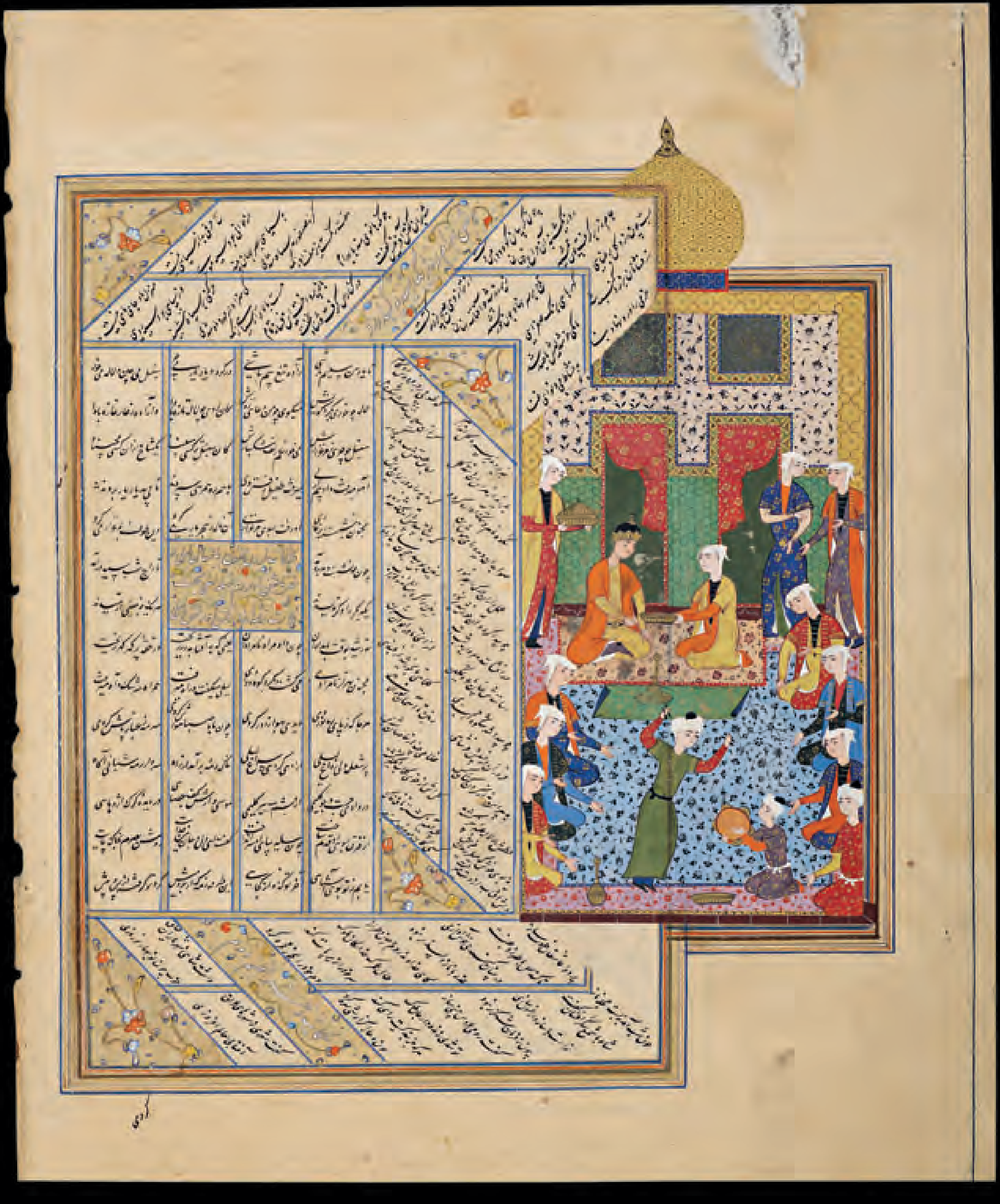
BAHRĀM GŪR IN THE SANDALWOOD PAVILION

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khamsa* ('Quintet') of Niẓāmī
Shiraz, Iran; manuscript dated 948 H/1576 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, silver and gold on paper
Page: 26.5 x 30.2 cm
AKM 67
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 168 (not ill.)

Like cat. no. 75 and two other detached leaves in the Aga Khan Museum collection, this painting comes from a dispersed Shirazi manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami which has been dated by A. Welch to 948 H/1576 CE. One of the other pages from this manuscript (AKM 66) also comes from the *Haft Paykar*, the fourth poem in Nizami's five-poem masterpiece, and it depicts Bahram Gur in the black pavilion of the Indian princess on very similar terms to those used in the present image of the Chinese princess in the sandalwood pavilion.

The seven pavilions, containing seven princesses from the seven climes of the earth, were visited in turn by Bahram Gur over the seven nights of a week, and the princess of each pavilion told Bahram Gur a story that in its turn contained other stories. That complex fantasy has here been turned into a repeated image of two figures conversing in a domed architectural space while being waited upon by attendants, but the repetition of a standard composition across several or even all seven of the colour-coded pavilions of the *Haft Paykar* is all part of the fun of this highly codified tradition of book painting, with the reader meeting the same figures and the same structures over and over again, each time with slight variations in composition and a different colour scheme.

In this image, the muted yellow of the sandalwood pavilion that houses the Chinese princess is most obvious in the dome extending into the margin space and the frame of the upper part of the painting, but the colour is picked up in the clothes of the principal figures and some attendants. The image of the black pavilion from the same manuscript follows the same formula, with the identifying colour also largely limited to the dome and the robes of Bahram Gur and the princess. As in other illustrations from this *Khamsa* manuscript, the painter of the present scene has played with a complex construction of angled panels within the text block to enhance the feeling of an architectural space that emerges from behind the text. The upper panel of the text block forms a 'canopy' that partially extends over the open space of the pavilion, and the cropping of the attendants on the left with the text block contributes to the sense of a space that lies beyond what we are being shown. While versions of the 'seven pavilions' composition seen in other manuscripts use the dome of the pavilion to cap the text block and rein it into the illustration (see cat. no. 102), in this instance the angled upper panel of the text partially obscures the dome, leading to the sensation that the text is almost engulfing the architectural space of the painting.



109

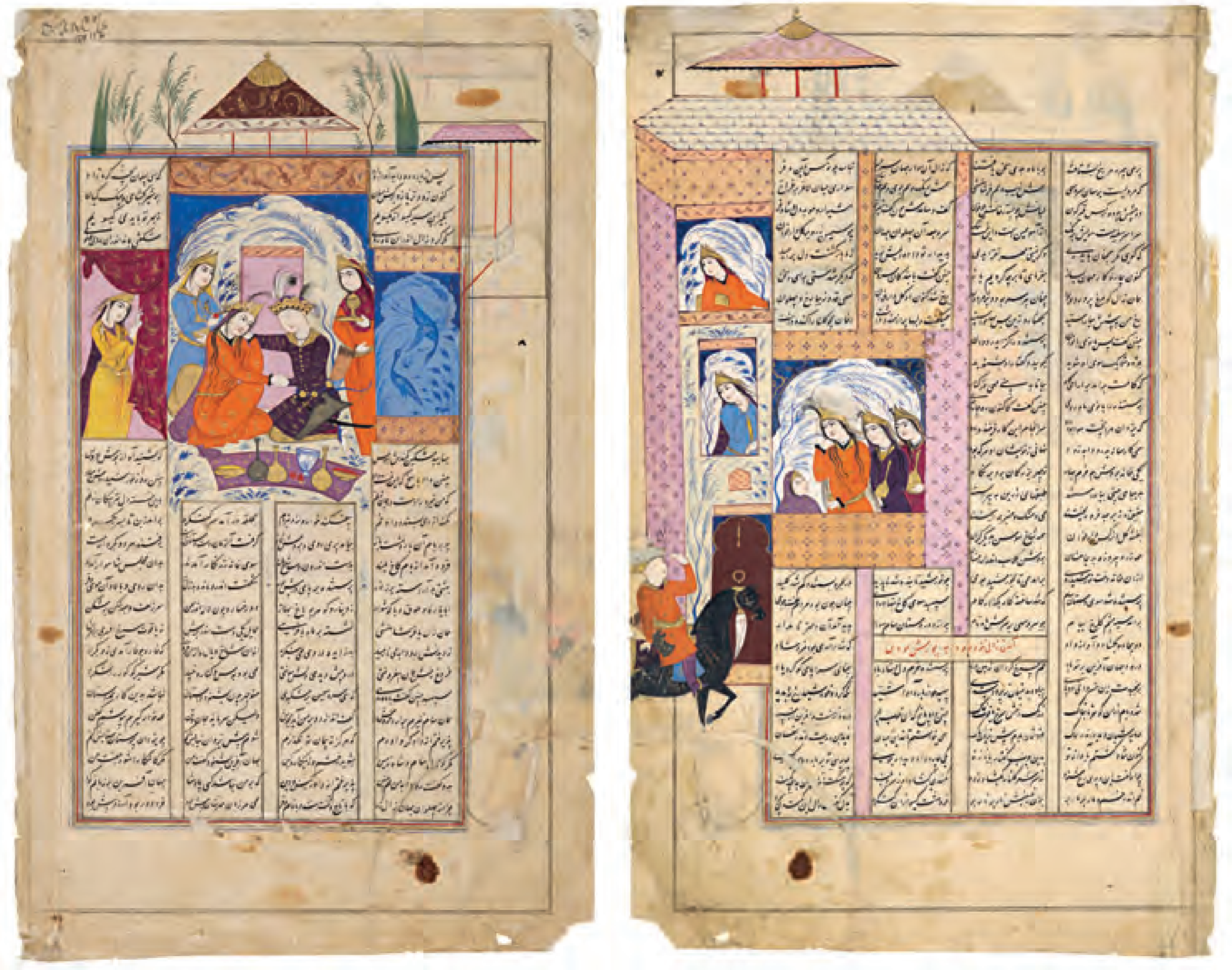
ZĀL APPROACHING RUDĀBA'S PALACE; ZĀL INSIDE RUDĀBA'S PALACE

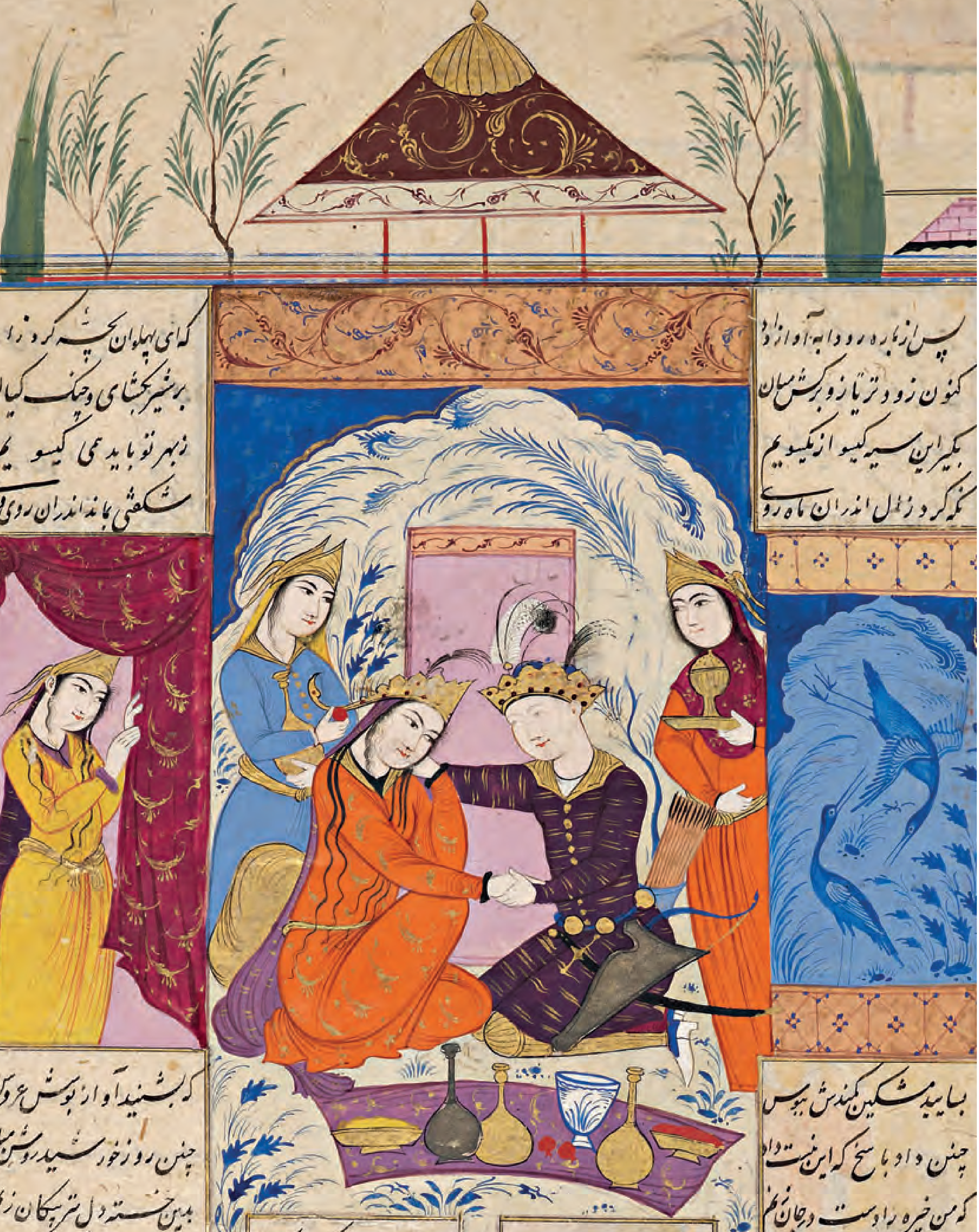
Recto and verso of a folio from a dispersed manuscript of the *Shāhnāma*
of Firdawsī, with illustrations attributed to Muʿīn Muṣavvir
Isfahan, Iran; 1666–67
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 36.2 x 22.2 cm
AKM 442
Publ: A. Welch 1972a, p. 208 (not ill.)

Thought to be from one of a number of *Shahnama* manuscripts illustrated by Muʿin Musavvir in the mid-seventeenth century (Farhad 1990, n. 10), this single page with illustrations on each side exemplifies the interrelationship formed between the architectural image and the written page in Persianate miniature painting. Hailing from the rival nations Iran and Turan, Zal and Rudaba had heard from afar of each other's beauty. These long-distance descriptions inflamed them both so much that Zal approached Rudaba's castle at dusk one night, encouraged by Rudaba's maidservants, with the express intention of looking upon her face. Rudaba, watching from the roof of the palace, called out to Zal as he approached and let down her hair for him to climb up; but after kissing her hair, he used a lasso to scale the wall and enter her pavilion, where slave girls attended them as he and Rudaba finally embraced.

Although their love met with much initial discouragement on both sides, their subsequent marriage resulted in the birth of Rustam, a principal figure of the *Shahnama* and the national hero of Iran: thus, these images show the romantic beginnings of one of the most important events in the Iranian national epic. The textual description of Rudaba's palace is somewhat overshadowed by the descriptions of the principal figures, particularly Rudaba herself, who is compared with gardens, flowers and precious stones. The wall paintings of willowy trees in Rudaba's chambers in both of these images may refer to the paradisal garden that she embodies in the written text, as well as possibly reflecting a real type of fresco decoration also depicted in other *Shahnama* manuscripts illustrated by Musavvir (see AKTC 2010b, p. 302).

The opposition of inside and outside which forms such an important aspect of Timurid and later miniature painting, and the role of the text-block in helping create a distinction between internal and external space, is particularly clearly drawn in this pair of paintings. At Zal's approach, the castle is a beguiling but locked space: Zal's position in the margins of the text, and the closed door and external wall that project towards him, underscore his separation from Rudaba. Turning the page, however, the tenderness of Zal's first encounter with Rudaba is shown not just through the poses and proximity of the figures as they gaze at one another, but also in the shift to an internal view: the palace, with Zal and Rudaba contained within it, is now a hollowed-out space, its internality and enclosure within the text block underlined by the internal doorway of a hanging curtain in the left panel. As Zal and Rudaba have come to occupy the same story within the text, so they share the same space upon the page.





پس از باره رودابه آواز داد
که ای پهلوان بچهٔ گرد زا

کنون زود تر یاز و برکش میان
بر شیر بگشای و چنگ کیا

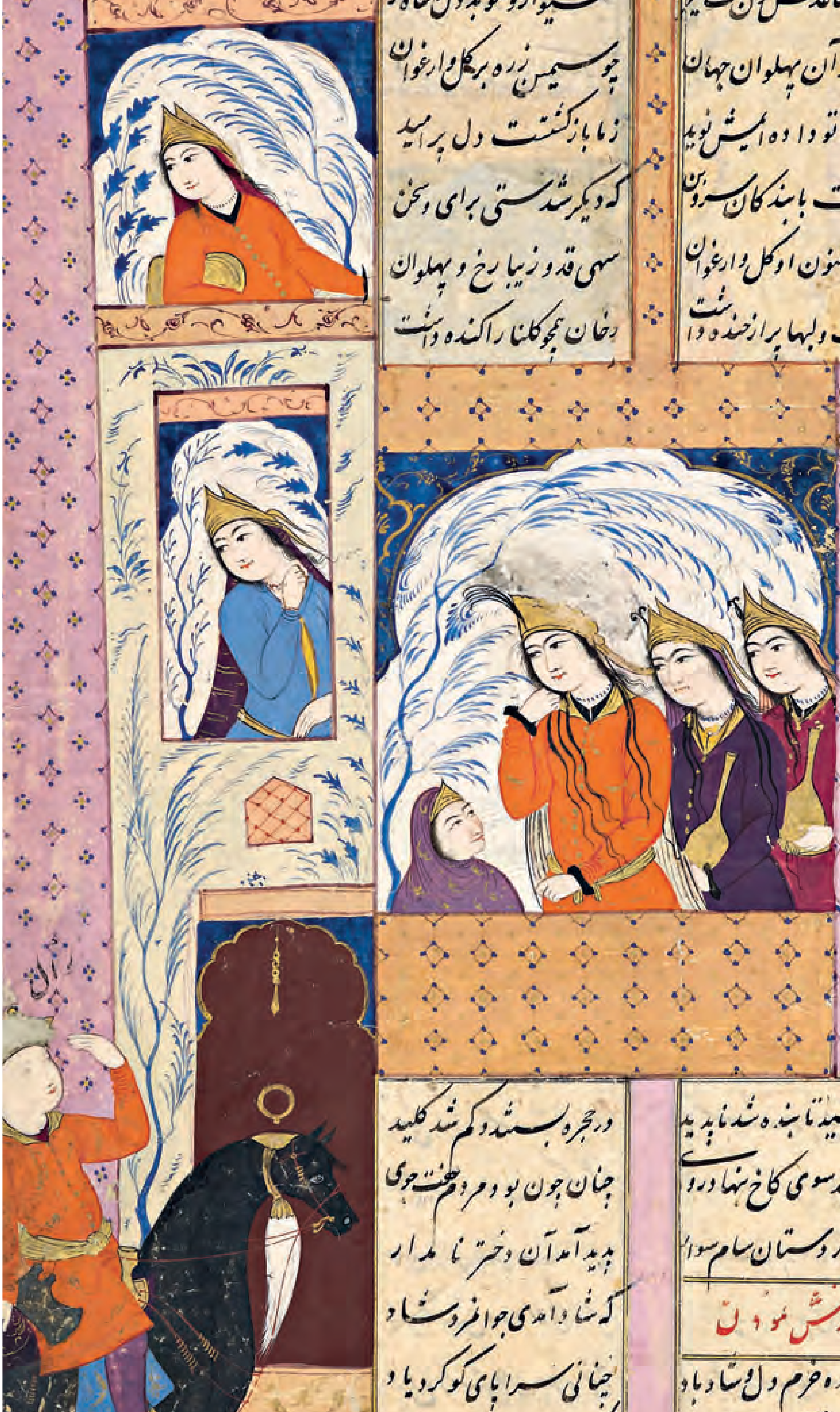
بگیر این سیه گیسو از یکسویم
ز بهر تو باید همی گیسو

نگه کرد زال اندران ماه روی
شگفتی بماند اندران روی

بباید مشکین کمندش ببوس
که بشنید آواز بوسش عرو

چنین داد پاسخ که این نیست داد
چنین روز خورشید روشن

که من خیره را دست در جان زنم
بدین خسته دل تیر پیکان ز



پوسته رخانش
ن است واین نک
ـر نغز آیدی
ا برچه کردیم با ز
ـر بود و پژمرده بود
زین بس بها خواستید
و راکز ایدر روان
ـا را و بشنوید
ـمنی مهی در کنار
ـت کاکنون ره چاره جوی
این کار فرخنده باد
ـیشان او هر که بود
کان بر و بر نگار
زرین به پیراستند
و عنبر برآمیختند
سوسن بدیگر کران
ـی گلاب اندر او مشان
ـا بخورشید بوی
ـه کار بگذار کام
ـی بر سرش ماه تام

سر و جعد آن پهلوان جهان   چو سیمین زره بر گل ارغوان
پدیدار تو داده ایمش نوید   زما بازگشتست دل پر امید
چنین گفت با بندگان سروبن   که دیگر شدستی برای و سخن
بپخ شد کنون او گل و ارغوان   سهی قد و زیبا رخ و پهلوان
همیگفت و لبها پر از خنده داشت   رخان همچو گلنار آگنده داشت

چو خورشید تابنده شد ناپدید   در حجره بستند و گم شد کلید
سپهبد سوی کاخ بنهاد روی   چنان چون بود مردم جفت جوی
چو از دور دستان سام سوار   پدید آمد آن دختر نامدار

آمدن زال نزد رودابه پرسش نمودن

که شاد آمدی ای جوانمرد شاد
چنانی سراپای کو کرد یاد

رخ گردان زمین بوباد
پرستنده خرم دل و شاد باد

110

A YOUNG PRINCE AND COMPANIONS FEAST AT NIGHT

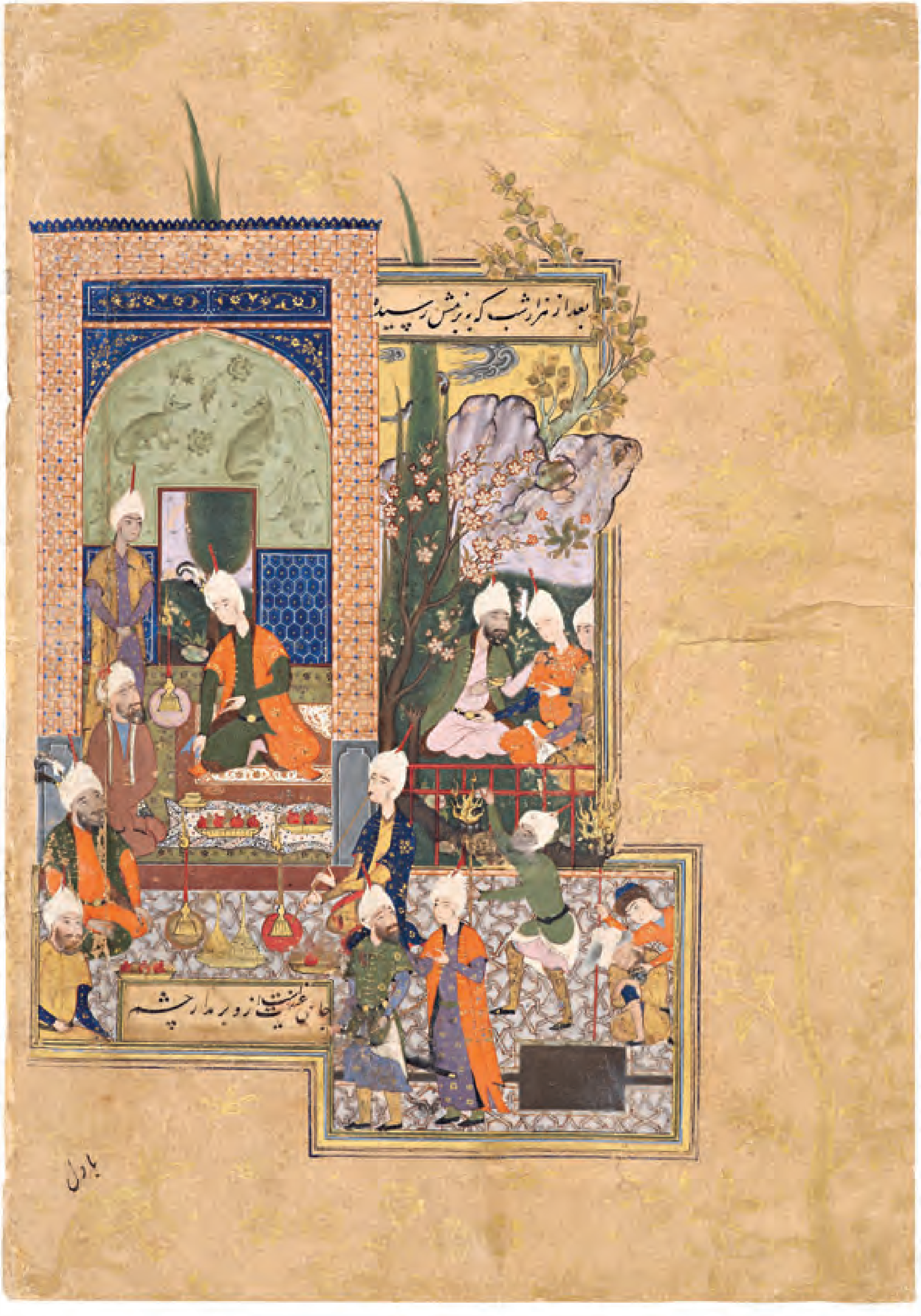
Folio 43v from an illustrated manuscript of the *Dīwān* of Sulṭān Ibrāhīm Mīrzā; illustration on folio 23r signed by ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib, frontispiece illumination signed by ʿAbdullāh Shīrāzī, also known as ʿAbdullāh al-Muzahhib
Qazwin or Mashhad, Iran; dated 990 H/1582–83 CE
Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper
Pages: 23.9 x 16.8 cm
AKM 282

Unpublished. Other folios from the same manuscript: Marteau – Vever 1913, pp. 122, 124; Welch – Welch 1982, pp. 94–98 (no. 30); Falk 1985, p. 111 (no. 77); Simpson 1997, p. 301; Canby 1998, pp. 63–64 (no. 38); Canby 1999, p. 87; Newby 2004, p. 170; AKTC 2007a, p. 77 (no. 46); AKTC 2007b, pp. 74–75 (no. 46); AKTC 2008a, pp. 110–111 (no. 35)

This volume, with its fine illustrations and illumination, was commissioned by the daughter of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza following her father's murder in 1577 and contains poetic verses written by Ibrahim Mirza himself. It is not clear how many artists were responsible for the six single-page paintings and the double-page finispiece (see cat. no. 76) of the manuscript; it is possible that these are the work of several different painters (Welch – Welch 1982, p. 97). However, ʿAbdullah al-Muzahhib (ʿAbdullah 'the gilder'), a painter and illuminator from Shiraz who is mentioned in Qadi Ahmad's records as a long-term employee of Ibrahim Mirza, left a signatory inscription on a rock in the painting on folio 23r (*ibid*.). Furthermore, a micro-inscription in the illuminated double-frontispiece names ʿAbdullah Shirazi as the artist of those two pages (cat. no. 99). ʿAbdullah al-Muzahhib was also known by the name ʿAbdullah Shirazi and there can be little doubt that the two signatures refer to one and the same man, who was also one of the artists of the famous *Haft Awrang* manuscript created for Sultan Ibrahim Mirza at Mashhad in 1556–1565, so it is possible that he is responsible for all the painting in the present manuscript (Simpson 1997, pp. 300–301, 421).

It always pays to examine miniature paintings minutely, and close scrutiny will sometimes reveal the means by which text and image have reached an accord upon the page. In order to accommodate the last letter of the inscription in the upper text panel, the decorative brick edging that frames the outermost edge of the large *iwan* (a large arched chamber open onto a courtyard) in this painting has been broken off for a few millimetres. Although this is probably the result of a minor miscalculation between artist and calligrapher, it has the interesting effect of causing the text panel to appear as if it is located behind the architectural structure, an aspect that is enhanced by the leaves of the tree overlapping the other end of the panel. The lower text panel has also been subtly incorporated within the composition of the painting. Utilising the convention of Persianate miniature painting that commonly portrays dishes in side elevation regardless of their position within the scene, the artist has placed a golden dish of pomegranates right on top of the lower text panel, as if it were a table.

Finally, the dynamic interrelationship between the painted image and the largely blank space of the page around it is another notable characteristic of book painting that is exploited in this folio. Within the extremely fine gold illumination that decorates the borders of this page – typical of Iranian book-paintings from the third quarter of the sixteenth century and quite possibly also executed by the painter al-Muzahhib – a gold fox looks upwards from the lower left-hand corner. Within the painted image, two further foxes of very similar appearance have been smuggled into the palace, where they appear in the fresco painting decorating the back wall of the *iwan*.


بعد از هزار شب که بزیرش رسید
جان غریبت زور بار چشم

III

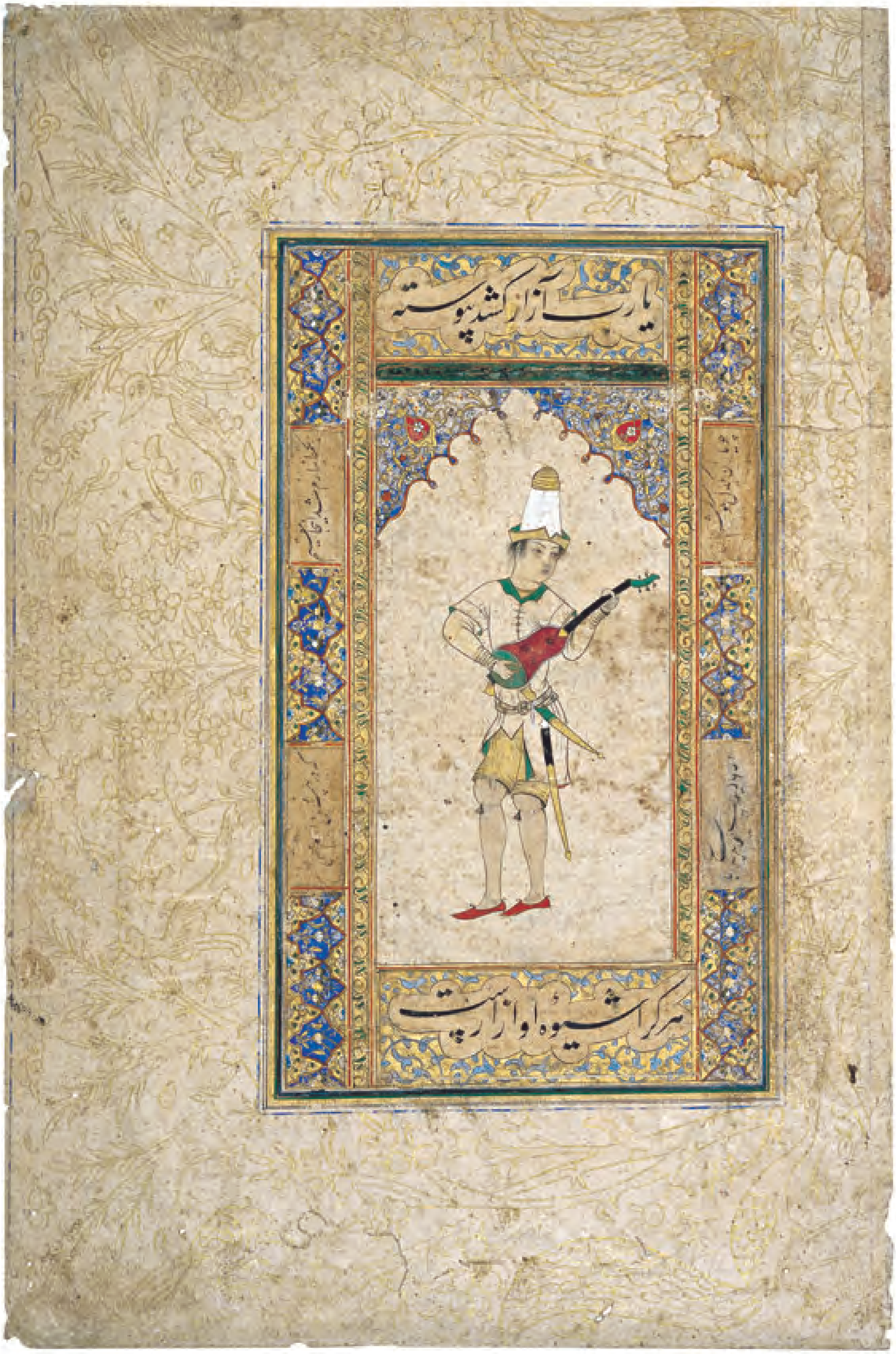
YOUNG MAN PLAYING A *TAR*

Album page with painting, calligraphy and illumination
Iran; painting probably seventeenth century, assemblage later
Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
Page: 34.7 x 23 cm
AKM 423
Publ: AKTC 2007a, p. 166 (no. 139); AKTC 2007b, p. 166 (no. 139)

Like the album page of calligraphic samples seen in cat. no. 107, the practice of mounting paintings, drawings and even preparatory sketches into albums also led to new and sometimes rather startling assemblages. Images were often framed within unrelated samples of calligraphy culled from various manuscript pages, with illuminated sections pasted in to fill spaces or sometimes drawn anew to finish off the composition. The overall effect may sometimes look rather strange to the modern viewer, particularly in the case of pages like this one that are not of the very highest quality, but the phenomenon can be situated within ideas that were current in Safavid Iran concerning the album as a space for gathering and arranging artistic information (Roxburgh 2005, pp. 309–315).

Albums of paintings and calligraphy first came into vogue at the Iranian courts during the early decades of the 1400s, where they were used to represent a story of art history for the enjoyment of the most privileged members of society. This connoisseurial practice spread to India under the Mughals, as well as Central Asia and Ottoman Turkey, and brought with it a market for single-leaf drawings and paintings that could also be included within the pages of the album. Some of the best-known painters of the Safavid era, such as Riza ʿAbbasi (d. 1635) and Muʿin Musavvir (active c. 1635–1697), produced a great number of single-page paintings, many of them genre portraits showing courtly types such as wise sages, young dandies or artists and musicians.

The young man in this painting plays a *tar*, a type of long-necked lute used in Iran and the surrounding areas and played by plucking the strings. It has been suggested that his high conical hat may indicate that he is a dervish (AKTC 2007a); other unusual aspects of his outfit, which the painter has closely observed, include the tasselled garters under his bulbous bare knees. While an interest in the specifics of costume is not unusual in the single-page portraits of the Safavid era, less common is the arch shape that frames the boy's figure. The arch was probably added after the other various elements of the assemblage had been arranged on the page, as a means of balancing up the composition and filling in some of the blank space that had to be left at the top of the main panel to accommodate the young man's lofty hat. It is not a common motif within Safavid album painting, but the image of the arch as a decorative surround for a human figure has a very long and widespread application in Islamic art, and indeed elsewhere. In this instance the arch forms a quasi-architectural frame for the young man that presents him as if mounted in a niche or seen through an arched doorway.


یار بی آزار کشد پیوسته
هر کرا شیوهٔ او آزاریست

112

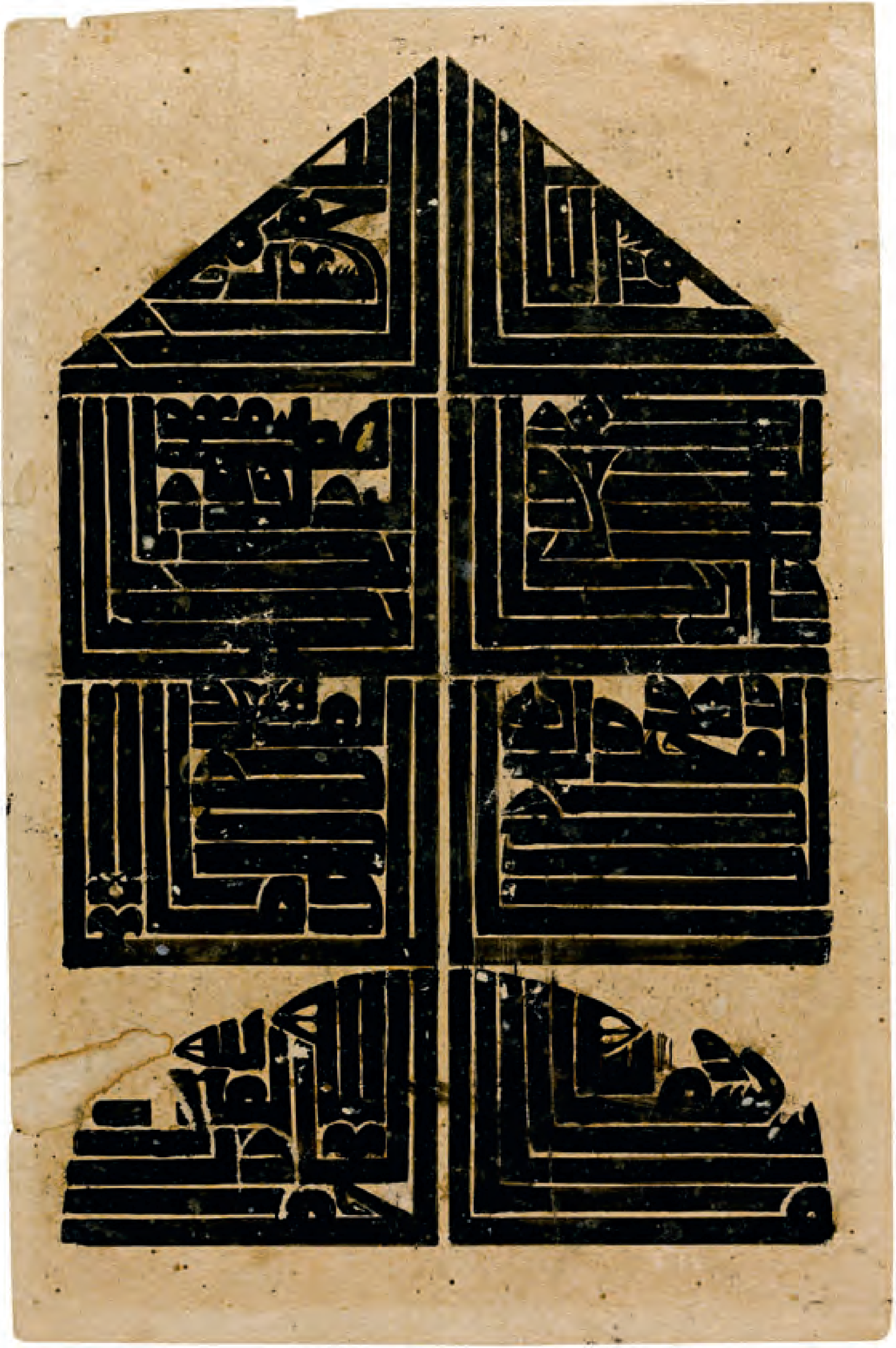
CALLIGRAPHIC PANEL WITH *SŪRAT AL-QALAM*

Southern India; nineteenth century
Ink on paper
20.9 x 13.5 cm
AKM 909
Publ: S.C. Welch 1976, pp. 17, 79 (no. 38)

The arrangement of calligraphed words, phrases or verses to form an image or design – an artistic device sometimes known as a calligram – was a fairly widespread practice in the Islamic world since at least the fifteenth century. In this instance the lines of text which make up the 'image' are the *basmala*, followed by the last lines of the sixty-eighth Sura of the Qur'an, *Surat al-Qalam* ('The Pen'). Thus, the entire panel reads: 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. The unbelievers would almost trip thee up with their eyes when they hear the Message; and they say, "Surely he is possessed!" But it is nothing less than a Message to all the worlds'.

The use of a rather mannered square Kufic script for this composition reflects that script's role as one of the first to be used for the transmission of the Qur'anic message in both manuscripts and architectural inscriptions: over time, Kufic was superseded for most purposes but it retained something of an air of sanctity through its early association with the divine Word, and continued to be used down the ages for Qur'anic inscriptions in certain circumstances. At least four other examples of this particular calligraphic form are known, all of them extremely similar in appearance to this example, and all of them created using the same text. These are held in a private collection (James 1988, pp. 174–175), the Khalili Collection, London (Vernoit 1997, p. 23), the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA (De Angelis – Lentz 1982, p. 18), and the collection of Edwin Binney (A. Welch 1979, pp. 198–199). The last of these is almost but not quite identical with the present example, and A. Welch has suggested that one may be a copy of the other, or the pair may represent a competitive test of skill between two masters.

The arched form given to the composition has been compared to a mihrab, the niche that indicates the direction of prayer in Islamic religious buildings (S.C. Welch 1976, p. 79; see cat. no. 12). However, this may well be the result of a tendency in Western art history to read specifically religious imagery into every possible facet of the arts of the Islamic world, rather than any reflection of the calligrapher's intentions: beyond a pointed arch-shaped upper section there is little to suggest the form of the mihrab, and indeed the humped lower section of the composition would seem to argue against such a reading. The arch is a decorative form with a very wide application, and 'not every niche is a mihrab' (Allen 1995, n.p.). However, the form is certainly rather architectonic, and the proposal that such a striking image may have had an apotropaic function, like an arrow or a marker warding off the evil eye, is certainly plausible. The use of Qur'anic texts as talismans to protect the owner from harm is a very longstanding and widespread practice that can be observed in the arts of many different Islamic cultures.



GENERAL GLOSSARY

ʿAbbasids
Dynasty of Sunni caliphs who took power of the Islamic world in 749 after overthrowing the Umayyad caliphate. They founded the ʿAbbasid caliphal capital at Baghdad in 762 and extended their empire to India. From the tenth century the ʿAbbasid caliphs lost political authority: although the ʿAbbasid ruler continued as caliph in name, in reality political power increasingly lay outside of Baghdad. The ʿAbbasids were finally overthrown by the Mongols in 1258 with the sack of Baghdad.

ablaq
In masonry, a regular alternation of different coloured stones.

arcade
A series of arches carried on columns or piers.

Ayyubids
Of Kurdish origin, this dynasty, divided into several branches, reigned over Egypt, Syria and Yemen from 1169 to 1260. It was founded by Salah al-Din, known in the West as Saladin (r. 1169–1193), who recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1187.

badgir
Often called a 'wind catcher'; a tower used as a ventilation device in vernacular architecture.

bagh
Garden.

baluster
A short pillar or column with a curving outline, normally slender above and swelling below into a pear-shaped bulge.

balustrade
A rail supported by a series of balusters.

barakat
Blessing or grace.

barbican
An outwork, sometimes a watchtower, defending the entrance to a castle, fortress or walled city.

brattices
Temporary parapets put up during a siege.

buttress
A projecting structure (normally of masonry or wood) that gives support to a wall or building.

caliph
The political and spiritual leader of the Islamic community. After the first four 'Rightly-Guided' caliphs, the title was taken by the leaders of the Umayyad and subsequently the ʿAbbasid dynasties, and also by leaders of competing dynasties, notably the Fatimids in North Africa and the Spanish Umayyads in Cordoba.

capital
The uppermost section of a column or pilaster, crowning the shaft and supporting the weight of the element above.

cenotaph
A monument or tomb erected above ground to signify remains that are buried in the ground below or elsewhere.

chadar
Water channel or cascade.

chahar bagh
'Four-fold garden'; foursquare garden plan.

chini-khana
Lit. 'porcelain house'; space with recessed niches designed specifically for the display of precious vessels.

coffering
Type of panelling on a ceiling, in which beams are interspersed with crossbeams, and the spaces formed in between them are the coffers.

corbel
An architectural support that projects outwards from a wall and forms a horizontal surface used to support a weight, normally the beams of a roof, floor or vault.

crenellation
A crenellated wall is one from which portions of the upper part have been cut out at intervals, allowing arrows to be fired out.

dado
The lower portion of an internal wall, when decorated separately from the upper portion.

dais
A raised platform or the raised portion of a hall, normally where persons of importance sit.

Dhu'l-fiqar
The legendary two-pronged sword of ʿAli, the fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph and first Shiʿi imam.

diwan
Anthology of poetry.

drum
The cylindrical wall, sometimes punctuated with openings, which supports a dome.

Fatimids
Shiʿi dynasty that ruled large parts of North Africa and the Middle East from 909 to 1171, and founded the city of Cairo (*al-Qahira*). Fatimid rulers bore the title of caliph and opposed the Sunni ʿAbbasid Caliphate and that of the Umayyads of Cordoba. The Ayyubids brought the dynasty to an end in 1171.

finial
The crowning decoration of a dome.

fritware
A fine, hard silaceous body for ceramic manufacture.

glacis
Artificial slopes built up around a defensive building.

Hadith
Report of the sayings or actions of the Prophet. These reports formed the basis of the Traditions of the Prophet, which were first transmitted orally and then collected into anthologies.

Hajj
Annual pilgrimage to Mecca; one of the five Pillars of Islam.

hammam
Bathhouse.

Hijaz
The birthplace and spiritual centre of Islam. Comprising the northwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, this area contains the two most holy cities of Islam: Mecca and Medina.

hizam
Embroidered calligraphic band used to decorate the kiswa of the Kaʿba.

Ilkhanids
Mongol dynasty established by Hulagu, the grandson of Genghis Khan, in Iran and part of Iraq. Vassals of the Great Mongol Khan of China, the Ilkhanids ended the ʿAbbasid caliphate with the sack of Baghdad in 1258 and ruled the Iranian territories from 1256 to 1353.

imam
In general, a leader of prayers or religious leader; used by the Shiʿa to denote the spiritual leader of the Shiʿi community, chosen by God.

Inju
Vassal dynasty which governed part of Iran, including Shiraz, during the Ilkhanid period, from c. 1303–1357.

iwan
A vaulted hall or chamber, walled on three sides with the fourth side open.

Jazira
(*al-Jazira* = 'the island') Expression designating the northern part of the plateau situated between the Tigris and the Euphrates, which also includes some land lying to the north of the upper Tigris and to the east and west of the two rivers.

jharoka
A ceremonial window at which the Mughal emperor showed himself to his subjects.

Kaʿba
Sanctuary in Mecca, focus of the Hajj and the point towards which all Muslims orient themselves when they pray.

khanqa
Lodge or hospice for Sufis.

khiyaban
Axial walkway in a garden.

kiswa
The cloth covering with which the Kaʿba is draped.

lunette
A half-moon-shaped space formed by the intersection of a wall and a vault, often filled with some form of decoration or sometimes a window.

machicolations
Openings in a defensive wall through which missiles could be dropped on attackers at the base of the wall.

madina
City.

madrasa
College or educational institution, especially for religious studies.

Maghrib
Western part of the Islamic world, including modern Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Mauritania, and sometimes also taken to include Islamic Spain.

maidan/maydan
A large demarcated open space, normally square or rectangular, for ceremonial functions.

Mamluks
The word *mamluk* literally means 'a thing possessed', hence 'slave'. Formed from the personal guard of the Ayyubid sultan, whom they overthrew in 1250, the Mamluks ruled Egypt and Syria through two lineages, the Bahri Mamluks (1250–1382) and the Burji Mamluks (1382–1517). The dynasty fell to the Ottomans in 1516–17.

mashrabiyya
Grille or grate, normally made of carved or turned wood, most often used as a type of screen to cover windows or balconies.

maqsura
'Imperial Box' in the form of a separate section of the mosque traditionally reserved for the sovereign, usually beside the minbar.

masjid
Mosque.

mataf
Circular pavement around the Kaʿba.

merlons
Solid upright projections on the top of a crenellated wall.

mihrab
Niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of prayer (*qibla*). Normally distinguished from the rest of the building by its décor.

minbar
Elevated pulpit in a mosque, from which the imam addresses the faithful during the Friday sermon and announcements are made to the community.

Mudéjar
Name given to Muslims who continued to live in the territories of al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) after they were conquered by Christians, and often used by extension to describe art and architecture of an 'Islamic' appearance produced in those areas, regardless of whether it was made by, or for, Muslims.

Mughals
Founded by Babur, who claimed both Mongol and Timurid ancestry, the Mughal dynasty became established in India in 1526. It reached its peak between 1556 and 1707, and ended in 1858 with the deposition of its last ruler by the British.

muqarnas
Decorative vaulting system composed of tiers of small niche-like elements resembling stalactites or honeycombs, found all over the Islamic world.

musalla
Prayer hall.

Nasrids
Dynasty that ruled southern Spain from 1230 to 1492.

Ottomans
Turkish dynasty that came to power in Anatolia during the early fourteenth century. The greatest extent of the dynasty's power, covering part of the Maghrib, Syro-Egypt, Turkey and the Balkans, took place in the sixteenth century under Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566) and in the seventeenth century. This power gradually declined until the overthrow of the dynasty in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

pier
An upright support for a structure such as an arch or vault, normally square or rectangular in plan.

pilaster
Shallow pier or rectangular column projecting from a wall.

pishtaq
A large portal projecting from the façade of a building, most commonly associated with Iranian architecture.

portico
A porch consisting of a roof supported by columns at regular intervals.

qaʿa
Reception room.

Qajars
The Qajars ruled Iran from 1779 to 1924. Many of their sovereigns formed alliances with European powers. They chose Tehran as their capital instead of Isfahan, and were replaced by the Pahlavis in 1924.

qalʿa
Citadel.

qibla
The relative direction of Muslim prayer towards Mecca.

qizilbash
'Red-head', a term denoting the distinctive red hat or baton visible in the centre of the turbans of the disciples of the Safavid shaykhs in Iran.

redoubt
A defensive site normally placed outside a larger fortress and often relying on earthworks for its defensive role.

revetment
A decorative facing on a wall, often of tile or cut stone.

riwaq
Portico arcade.

Safavids
Dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722 and established Shiʿism as the official state religion.

sahn
Courtyard.

salat
Daily ritual prayer.

salsabil
The name given to a paradisal spring in the Qur'an, and also used to denote a palatial water-feature, found in several Islamic countries around the Mediterranean, that combines a water source, inclined slab, long channels and ornate pools.

Sasanians
The last pre-Islamic rulers of the Iranian plateau, conquered by the Arab forces in the seventh century.

Seljuqs
Sunni Turkic dynasty that ruled parts of Iran and Iraq from 1040 to 1194, as well as Anatolia from 1081 to 1307.

Shahada
The Muslim profession of faith. 'There is no god but God and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God'.

Shahnama **('Book of Kings')**
Vast Iranian national epic in verse. Several versions exist, but the most famous is that which was completed by Firdawsi around the year 1010.

spandrel
The space between the exterior curve of an arch and an enclosing right angle; often the site of decoration.

squinch
Small arch in the upper corner of a chamber that converts a square space to an octagonal area so that it can be covered with a dome.

squinch-net vaulting
A system of architectural decoration which builds up the zone of transition from base to dome (or vault), using a network of squinches or pendentives of various shapes divided by intersecting bands.

stucco
A material traditionally made from lime, sand and water, and used to cover architectural surfaces. It is applied wet and hardens, at which point it can be carved and painted.

suq
Market.

Timurids
Dynasty founded by Timur (known in the West as Tamerlane) that ruled in Central Asia and Afghanistan from 1370 to 1507.

trellis tent
A tent type commonly (and incorrectly) referred to in English as a 'yurt'. The trellis tent is typically of cylindrical form with a domed roof, the wall being made from latticed struts fixed within circular wooden frames, with a 'roof wheel' mounted above and the whole structure covered with felt textiles.

Tulunids
Dynasty that governed Egypt from 868, gaining power against the backdrop of a declining ʿAbbasid caliphate but effectively ended by temporarily revitalised ʿAbbasid forces in 905.

Umayyads
The first hereditary caliphate of Islam, the Umayyads were at the head of the Islamic empire from 661 to 750 and established their capital in Damascus. They were overthrown by the ʿAbbasids; a surviving member of the house eventually settled in Spain where the Spanish Umayyads ruled until 1031, assuming the title of caliph as rivals to the ʿAbbasid caliphate.

velum tent
A tent in which the cloth itself is a structural element, being held taut and in place with guy ropes.

voussoirs
The wedge-shaped stones forming the curved parts of an arch.

ziyarat
Pious visitation (normally referring to pilgrimage to the tombs of holy figures).

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