

The creation of a museum dedicated to the presentation of Muslim arts and culture – in all their historic, cultural and geographical diversity – is a key project of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, one of whose aims is to contribute to education in the fields of arts and culture. The developing political crises of the last few years have revealed – often dramatically – the considerable lack of knowledge of the Muslim world in many Western societies. This ignorance spans all aspects of Islam: its pluralism, the diversity of interpretations within the Qur’anic faith, the chronological and geographical extent of its history and culture, as well as the ethnic, linguistic and social diversity of its peoples.

For this reason, the idea of creating a museum of Muslim arts and culture in Toronto as an eminently educational institution, with the aim of informing the North American public of the diversity and significance of Muslim civilisations naturally arose. While waiting for the museum to be built, a glimpse of the future institution’s collections is offered to the European public.



THE AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE



Spirit & Life

MASTERPIECES OF ISLAMIC ART FROM THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

Spirit & Life

Masterpieces of Islamic Art
from the Aga Khan Museum Collection



'I have been involved in the field of development for nearly four decades. This engagement has been grounded in my responsibilities as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Community, and Islam's message of the fundamental unity of "din and dunya", of spirit and life.'

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN
at the Annual Meeting of the EBRD
Tashkent, 5 May 2003

Spirit and Life is the title of an exhibition of over 160 masterpieces of Islamic art from the Aga Khan Museum which will open in Toronto, Canada in 2009. This catalogue illustrates all the miniature paintings, manuscripts, jewellery, ceramics, wood panels and beams, stone carvings, metal objects and other art works in the exhibition, which spans over a thousand years of history and gives a fascinating overview of Islamic art and culture.



Spirit & Life

دین و دنیا
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

MASTERPIECES OF ISLAMIC ART
FROM THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM COLLECTION



THE AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Published to accompany the exhibitions

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Cat. no. 56

Foreword

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

This exhibition of masterpieces from the Islamic world underlines that the arts, particularly when they are spiritually inspired, can become a medium of discourse that transcends the barriers of our day-to-day experiences and preoccupations. Many questions are currently being raised in the West about the Muslim world, with countless misconceptions and misunderstandings occurring between our contemporary societies. I thus hope that this exhibition will hold a special significance at a time which calls for enlightened encounters amongst faiths and cultures.

The hundred and seventy miniatures, manuscripts, ceramics and other art works on display offer no more than a fleeting glance of the breadth of the arts in Muslim cultures in their various forms. They are part of a larger collection that will be housed in a museum being specifically built to receive them in Toronto, Canada. The aim of the Aga Khan Museum will be to offer unique insights and new perspectives into Islamic civilisations and the cultural threads that weave through history binding us all together. My hope is that the Museum will also be a centre of education and of learning, and that it will act as a catalyst for mutual understanding and tolerance.

The arts have always had a special significance for my family. More than a thousand years ago my ancestors, the Fatimid Imams, encouraged patronage of the arts and fostered the creation of collections of outstanding works of arts and libraries of rare and significant manuscripts. Many of my family members are art lovers and collectors. In particular my late uncle, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, was a great connoisseur of manuscripts and miniatures, and many of the works on paper and parchment presented in this exhibition come from his collection. I have been adding to these holdings myself for a number of years to create a complementary collection of Islamic works of art. I believe that these works all contribute to an understanding of some of the aesthetic values which underpin Muslim arts and the humanistic traditions of Islam.

This exhibition illustrates how the Qur'an-e-Sharif, rich in parable and allegory, metaphor and symbol, is a fundamental source of inspiration, lending itself to a wide spectrum of interpretations. This freedom of interpretation is a generosity which the Qur'an confers upon all believers. It guides and illuminates the thought and conduct of Muslims belonging to different communities of spiritual affiliation, from century to century, in diverse cultural environments. It extends its pluralistic outlook to adherents of other faiths too, affirming that each has a direction and a path, and should strive to perform good works.

A wide range of Muslim expressions in the arts, across time and space, are represented here. The Qur'an has inspired works in both art and architecture, and shaped attitudes and norms that have guided the

development of Muslim artistic traditions. Scientific pursuits, philosophic inquiry and artistic endeavour alike are seen, within Islam, as a response to the Qur'an's recurring call to ponder creation as a way to understand God's benevolent majesty.

Faith challenges the artist, as much as the mystic, to go beyond the physical – the outward – to unveil that which lies at the centre and gives life to the periphery. Masterpieces are like the ecstasy of the mystic: a gesture of the spirit, a stirring of the soul that attempts to capture that which is ineffable and beyond being.

This exhibition is to be shown in Parma and in London and, thereafter, hopefully in Portugal and Germany. The public at each of these venues will be very different, reflecting at times a more specifically European cultural background and at others more diverse cultural roots. The works of Muslim arts and culture this exhibition contains will, I hope, encourage dialogue with the arts and cultural achievements of each of the Exhibition's host venues, this interaction leading to an appreciation of the shared legacies of our civilisations and an increasing respect between peoples and cultures.

The objects in this exhibition span over a thousand years of history. At times, the Muslim and Western worlds opposed each other in antagonism and conflict; at others, they cooperated constructively and in harmony. It was during the latter that the greatest scientific, social and economic developments occurred, to the benefit of all. It is my deepest wish that this be the path of the future.



From left to right: His Highness the Aga Khan, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Governor-General of Canada and the architect Fumihiko Maki

Towards the Aga Khan Museum

Luis Monreal, General Manager AKTC

This exhibition presents a selection of artworks from the permanent collection of the Aga Khan Museum, which will open in Toronto, Canada, in 2010. Surrounded by a large landscaped park, the museum will be housed in a 10,000 square-metre building designed by the well-known Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki.

Responding to the need to contribute to the social development of Muslim communities, His Highness the Aga Khan created the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), an institution operating in over 30 countries and undertaking programmes, projects and investments in a variety of fields – from healthcare and education to income-generating activities that create employment and help to stimulate economic environments.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) is the cultural agency of AKDN, using cultural heritage as a means of supporting and catalysing development – a strategy seldom employed by international agencies. AKTC programmes are aimed at revitalising historic cities in the Islamic world both culturally and socio-economically. Over the last decade, this approach has demonstrated its unique potential, through projects which rehabilitate monuments and public spaces and generally enhance the urban environment, for example in historic areas of Cairo, Kabul, Herat, Aleppo, Delhi, Zanzibar, Mostar, Timbuktu and Mopti. Coupled with socio-economic initiatives (microcredit programmes, vocational training, healthcare, early child development, etc.), this approach produces measurable results which have a direct impact on social opportunities and the quality of life in what are often contexts of extreme poverty.

AKTC's programmes also encompass a wide series of activities aimed at the preservation and promotion of various elements of the material and spiritual heritage of Muslim societies. In this context one can mention, for example, the initiative for the preservation of the musical heritage of Central Asia, which both supports master interpreters and music tradition bearers, as well as carrying out the recording and publication of musical anthologies of the various ethnic groups in that region. AKTC also supports the Muslim arts and architecture departments of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as ArchNet, a major online resource on Islamic architecture. Finally, AKTC includes the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, established thirty years ago and created to draw attention to and recompense outstanding examples of architectural excellence as well as projects which provide solutions for the most acute social needs which exist in Muslim societies.

What are the aims of this exhibition and of the Aga Khan Museum? The creation of a museum dedicated to the presentation of Muslim arts and culture – in all their historic, cultural and geographical diversity – is a key project of the AKTC, one of whose aims is to contribute to education in the fields of arts and culture. The developing political crises of the last few years, and the large numbers of Muslims emigrating to the West, have revealed – often dramatically – the considerable lack of knowledge of the Muslim world

in many Western societies. This ignorance spans all aspects of Islam: its pluralism, the diversity of interpretations within the Qur'anic faith, the chronological and geographical extent of its history and culture, as well as the ethnic, linguistic and social diversity of its peoples. The supposed 'clash of civilisations' is in reality nothing more than a manifestation of mutual ignorance. For this reason, the idea of creating a museum of Muslim culture as an eminently educational institution, with the aim of informing the North American public of the diversity and significance of Muslim civilisation, naturally arose.

The nascent Aga Khan Museum in Toronto and its permanent collections cannot be as comprehensive as those of major institutions which have built their holdings up over many decades. However, thanks to the commitment of His Highness the Aga Khan and the collections already constituted by members of his family, the extent and quality of the future AKM's holdings clearly justified launching a first, anthological exhibition before the collection is permanently housed in Canada. The selection of over 160 objects presented was effected to give substance to two main themes: one is the Word of God, including devotional practices and mystical encounters, and the other is the Power of the Sovereign, which includes a presentation of some of the major historical courts of the Islamic world and a section on the classical Prince's path, from education to exercise of power. Dr Sheila Canby, curator of Islamic collections in the Department of



A perspective of the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, January 2007: Maki & Associates

the Middle East at the British Museum kindly accepted to write the main catalogue texts. Nearly all the catalogue entries were prepared by Dr Aimée Froom, former curator of Islamic art at the Brooklyn Museum, New York, and a few by Sheila Canby, Alnoor Merchant, and Afsaneh Firouz in Geneva. It must be stressed that the entries are the result of initial research, which will have to be pursued and deepened in the framework of the ongoing museum collections management. The whole project has been conducted by Benoît Junod, from the museum support unit of AKTC in Geneva, with assistance from Alnoor Merchant of the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London.

Through the presentation of objects, documents and artworks, museums and exhibitions talk the language of reality. They communicate with the public without intermediation, through the authenticity of their contents appealing to the sensitivity and emotional intelligence of their visitors. They catalyse understanding of the world that created them, going beyond labels in display cases. Hopefully, this exhibition will be for many visitors an enlightening experience of the richness and variety of Islamic culture.



Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan's 'Salon Persan' in Bellerive Castle, Geneva, Switzerland. Princess Catherine has generously donated the contents of this room to the future museum, where it will be reconstituted as above.



Cat. no. 14 (detail)

The Historical Context

Azim Nanji, Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London

The last in the line of the Abrahamic family of revealed traditions, Islam emerged in the early decades of the seventh century. Its message, addressed in perpetuity, calls upon people to seek in their daily life, in the very diversity of humankind, signs that point to the Creator and Sustainer of all creation. Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, Islam’s influence spread rapidly, bringing within its fold, within just over a century of its birth, the inhabitants of the lands stretching from the central regions of Asia to the Iberian peninsula in Europe.

A major world religion, Islam today counts a quarter of the globe’s population among its followers. All Muslims affirm the absolute unity and transcendence of God (*tawhid*) as the first and foremost article of the faith, followed by that of Divine guidance through God’s chosen messengers, of whom the Prophet Muhammad was the last. This affirmation constitutes the *shahada*, the profession of faith, and is the basic creed of all Muslims. In its essence, Islam refers to the inner struggle of the individual, waged singly and in consonance with fellow believers, to engage in earthly life, while rising above its trappings in search of the Divine. This quest is only meaningful in tandem with the effort to do good for one’s kin, for orphans, the needy, the vulnerable; to be just, honest, humble, tolerant and forgiving.

SHIA ISLAM: HISTORICAL ORIGINS

Within its fundamental unity, Islam has evoked, over the ages, varying responses to its primal message calling upon man to surrender himself to God. Historically, these responses have been expressed as two main perspectives within Islam: the Shia and the Sunni. Each encompasses a rich diversity of spiritual temperaments, juridical preferences, social and psychological dispositions, political entities and cultures. Ismailism is one such response from within the overall Shia perspective which seeks to comprehend the true meaning of the Islamic message.

During his lifetime, Prophet Muhammad was both the recipient and the expounder of Divine revelation. His death marked the conclusion of the line of prophecy, and the beginning of the critical debate on the question of the rightful leadership to continue his mission for the future generations. In essence, the position of the group that eventually coalesced into the majority, the Sunni branch, which comprises several different juridical schools, was that the Prophet had not nominated a successor, as the revelation contained in the Qur’an was sufficient guidance for the community. There developed a tacit recognition that spiritual-moral authority was to be exercised by the *ulama*, a group of specialists in matters of religious law, or *shariah*. The role of the caliph, theoretically elected by the community, was to maintain a realm in which the principles and practices of Islam were safeguarded and propagated.

The Shi'at 'Ali or the 'party' of 'Ali, already in existence during the lifetime of the Prophet, maintained that while the revelation ceased at the Prophet's death, the need for spiritual and moral guidance of the community, through an ongoing interpretation of the Islamic message, continued. For them, the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad could only be entrusted to a member of his own family, in whom the Prophet had invested his authority through designation. That person was 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin, and the husband of his daughter and only surviving child, Fatima. 'Ali was also the Prophet's first supporter who devoutly championed the cause of Islam. Just as it was the prerogative of the Prophet to designate his successor, each Imam thereafter has the absolute right to designate his successor from among his male progeny. Hence, according to Shia doctrine, the Imamatus continues by descent from the Prophet through 'Ali and Fatima.

In time, the Shia were sub-divided. The Ismailis and what eventually came to be known as the Ithna'ashari or Twelver Shia parted ways over the succession to Ja'far al-Sadiq, the great great grandson of 'Ali and Fatima. The Ithna'asharis transferred their allegiance to al-Sadiq's youngest son Musa al-Kazim and after him, in lineal descent, to Muhammad al-Mahdi, their twelfth Imam who, they believe, is in occultation and will reappear to dispense perfect order and justice. Today, the Ithna'asharis are the largest Shia Muslim community, and constitute the majority of the population in Iran. The Ismailis gave their allegiance to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq's eldest son Ismail, from whom they derive their name. They trace the line of Imamatus in hereditary succession from Ismail to His Highness the Aga Khan, who is currently the forty-ninth Imam in direct lineal descent from Prophet Muhammad through 'Ali and Fatima. The Ismailis are the second largest Shia Muslim community, and are settled in over 25 countries, mostly in the developing world, but now also with a substantial presence in the industrialised nations.

THE ISMAILI IMAMAT FROM THE TIME OF THE DIVISION IN THE SHIA COMMUNITY: AN OVERVIEW

The foundation of the Ismaili Fatimid caliphate in North Africa in the year 909 was the culmination of a long and sustained commitment of the descendants of Imam Ismail to promote the Islamic ideal of social justice and equity.

Centred in Egypt, the Fatimid caliphate at its peak extended westward to North Africa, Sicily and other Mediterranean islands, and eastward to the Red Sea coast of Africa, Palestine, Syria, the Yemen and Arabia. The Fatimids encouraged intellectual and philosophical inquiry, and attracted the finest minds of the age to its court, whatever their religious persuasions. Al-Azhar, the Cairo mosque built by Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz in 972, was a great centre of learning, and the *Dar al-'Ilm*, the House of Knowledge, established in 1005, was the first medieval institution of learning, a precursor of the modern university combining in its programme a full range of major academic disciplines, from the study of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions through jurisprudence, philology and grammar, to medicine, logic, mathematics and astronomy. In the same spirit, the Ismaili view of history, which accorded due respect to the great monotheistic religions of the Abrahamic tradition, provided the intellectual framework for the participation of the followers of different faiths in the affairs of the Fatimid state. Christians and Jews, as much as Muslims of either branch, were able to rise to the highest echelons of state office on grounds of competence alone. The Fatimids' policies reflected a plurality of pious ways rather than a monolithic interpretation of the faith.



Cat. no. 20

In the last decade of the eleventh century, the Ismaili community suffered a schism over the succession to Imam-caliph al-Mustansir billah. One part of the community followed his youngest son al-Musta'li. The other gave its allegiance to his eldest son Imam Nizar from whom the Aga Khan, the present Imam of the Ismailis, traces his descent. The seat of the Ismaili Imamatus then moved to Alamut, in northern Iran, where the Ismailis had succeeded in establishing a state comprising a defensive network of fortified settlements. These fortresses housed impressive libraries and study rooms whose collections ranged from books on religion and philosophy to scientific instruments, and the Ismailis did not abandon their liberal policy of patronage to men of learning of Muslim as well as non-Muslim backgrounds. However, the invasions by the Mongol hordes led to the destruction of the Ismaili state in 1256. After this, the Ismailis lived in dispersed communities and, under the direction of each succeeding Imam, centres of activity were established in the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, the mountainous regions of the Hindu Kush, Central Asia and parts of China over the course of several centuries.

The modern phase of Ismaili history began when the forty-sixth Imam, Aga Hasan 'Ali Shah, emigrated from Iran to India in the 1840s. He was the first Imam to bear the title of Aga Khan, bestowed by the Persian emperor, Fath 'Ali Shah. He established his headquarters in Mumbai (Bombay), and this marked the beginning of an era of regular contacts between the Imam and his widely dispersed followers. Aga Khan I



Taken just over fifty years ago, this photograph shows Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III, with (behind, left to right) his two sons, Prince Sadruddin and Prince Aly, and the latter's two sons, Prince Karim – the present Aga Khan – and Prince Ayn

was succeeded by his eldest son Aga 'Ali Shah, who assumed the title of Aga Khan II, and was honoured with the courtesy of His Highness, first granted to his father by the British government. Building on the initiatives of his father, Aga Khan II set about the long-term task of social development of the community, with emphasis on education. He passed away in 1885, and the institution of the Imamate then devolved upon his son Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, who was eight years old at the time of his accession. His life marks a remarkable era of momentous significance. From every platform, the third Aga Khan advocated free, universal, practically oriented primary education; improved secondary schools for Muslims, and a generous provision of government and private scholarships to enable talented Muslim students to study in Britain, Europe, and America. It was in pursuit of his educational vision that Aga Khan III successfully transformed the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, India, into a leading university.

Aga Khan III's abiding concern, throughout his seventy-two years as Imam – the longest in history – was the welfare of the Ismaili community. This period was a critical one in the modern history of the Ismaili community, and it was his inspiring leadership as much as its enthusiastic response to his guidance that enabled the community to enter a period of remarkable progress in the areas of health, education, housing, commerce and industry, leading to the establishment of a network of health clinics, hospitals, schools, hostels, cooperative societies, investment trusts, and insurance companies.

THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III passed away on 11 July 1957, having designated his grandson, Prince Karim – twenty years old at the time of his accession – to succeed him as the forty-ninth hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Under the leadership of Aga Khan IV, the institutions and activities of the Imamate have expanded far beyond their original scope. The Aga Khan has explained many times that the impulse that underpins these activities and shapes the social conscience of his community remains the unchanging Muslim ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

To give an operational structure to his humanitarian activities, the Aga Khan created the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in specific regions of the developing world. The Network's organisations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and the promotion of private-sector enterprises. Together they collaborate in working towards a common goal – to build institutions and programmes that can sustainably respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change. The Aga Khan Foundation, Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan Health Services, Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Aga Khan University, and the University of Central Asia operate in the field of social development. Economic activities are the province of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance with their affiliates in tourism, ecotourism, promotion of industry and financial services. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) implements cultural initiatives aimed at revitalising the heritage of communities in the Islamic world. One of the newest undertakings of AKTC is the project, set up in 2003, to establish an Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.

Overleaf: Cat. no. 101a



Cat. no. 57
Overleaf: Cat. no. 101b

Introduction

Sheila Canby, Curator of Islamic Collections, British Museum, London

Works of art like those in this exhibition have made up the visual landscape of the Islamic world for 1,400 years. The scope and diversity of these objects, religious and secular, mirrors that of the societies in which they were produced. Although the exhibition which this catalogue accompanies has – for practical reasons – been organised in two parts, ‘The Word of God’, consisting of sacred texts and related objects, and ‘The Power of the Sovereign’, including works connected with or portraying figures from the many Muslim courts, the sacred and profane were never strictly separate in the Islamic lands. In fact, from at least as early as the eleventh century, some Muslim sultans incorporated the phrase ‘*wa-l-dunya wa-l-din*’ in their titles, meaning that they were princes of ‘the world (or state) and of the faith (religious domain)’. Various dynasties considered themselves protectors of the faith as well as temporal leaders.

How did these dual roles manifest themselves in art? The earliest artefacts in Muslim history are found in the mosque and in the Qur’anic texts written in the Arabic alphabet. The codification of the text occurred during the reign of the third Rightly Guided Caliph, ‘Uthman (r. 644–55) in connection with his move to have a canonical text of the Qur’an produced in written form. Revealed to Muhammad by God between the first decade of the seventh century and Muhammad’s death in 632, the Qur’an, consisting of one hundred and fourteen chapters or *suras*, is the holy scripture of Islam. ‘Uthman’s efforts ensured that the Qur’an was not corrupted by textual variants of any sort. The copying of Qur’ans from the outset was considered an act of piety. To attain the most beautiful outcome, calligraphers manipulated Arabic letter forms in artistic ways. Although some scholars have suggested that the elongation or bunching of letters in early Qur’ans is the visual analogue of the spoken word, scribes were more likely concerned with the visual rhythms and balance of words on a page.

Muslims fulfil several obligations: to accept one God; to say the formal ritual prayers facing in the direction of the Ka’ba in Mecca; to share their wealth; to fast during the month of Ramadan; and to perform the *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. Most practising Muslim families today possess a copy of the Qur’an, but in early Islamic times this was probably not the case and memorization of the Qur’an was not unusual. Figural imagery is absent from mosques and other religious buildings and the Qur’an is never illustrated. Nonetheless, a religious iconography of Islamic art exists, centred on the Arabic script, geometry and vegetal designs, including the vine scroll known as the arabesque. While depictions of the human form are also absent from prayer books and collections of *Hadith* (the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad), narratives on religious and important personalities of Islam composed from the thirteenth to nineteenth centuries include illustrations.

The Shia and Sunni communities in Islam differ on the question of the succession to the leadership of the Muslim world after the death of the Prophet. The Shia accept ‘Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as the designated Imam, while the Sunnis accept him as the fourth Rightly Guided Caliph. Thus

the notion of the Imam, a divinely inspired guide for the faithful, is a key tenet of Shiism. Although the Shiite followers of 'Ali and the Imams who followed him held no political power in the early period of Muslim history, their religious movement survived and in the tenth century the Shia Fatimids founded a caliphate in Tunisia and Egypt.

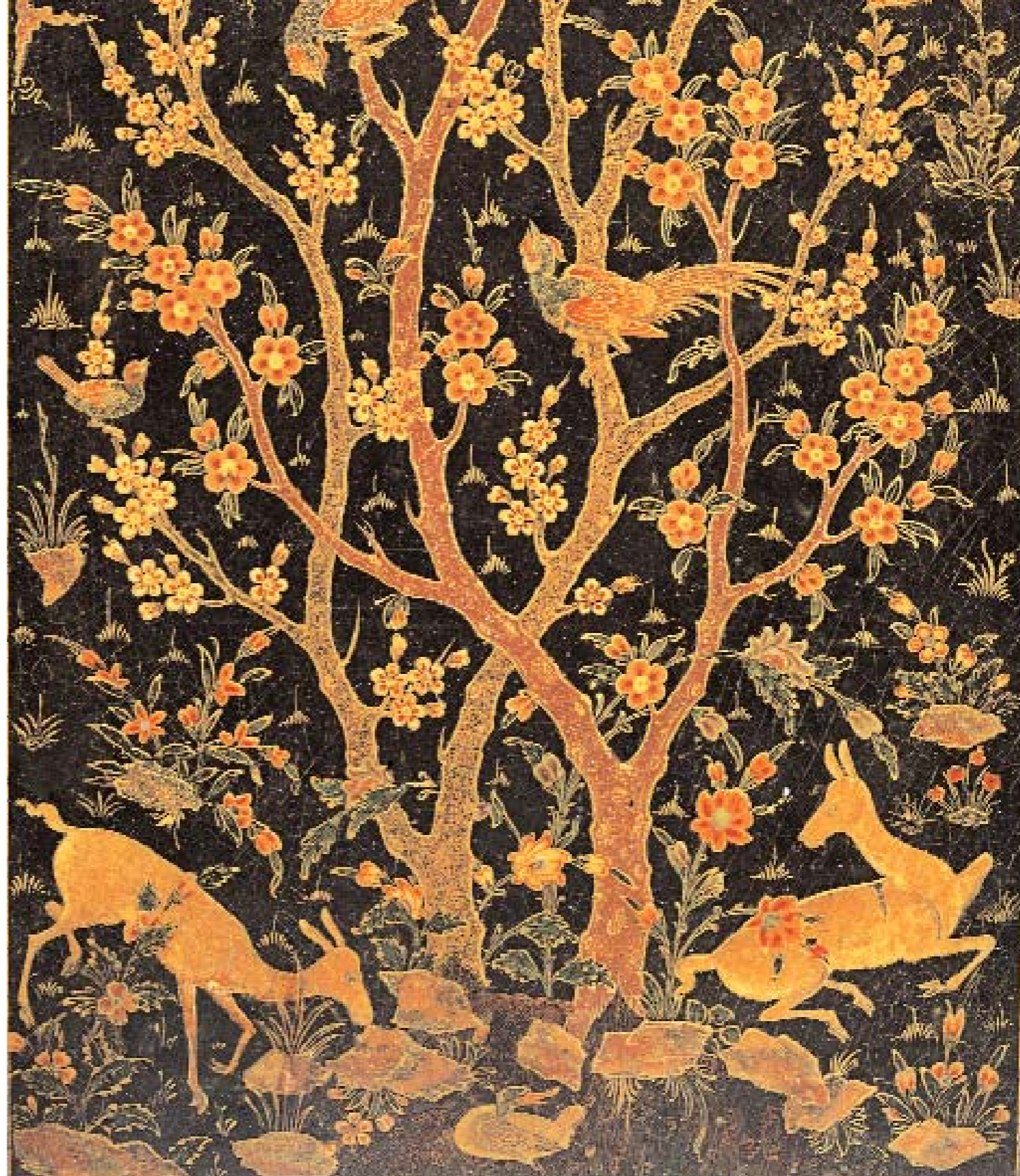
One tradition common to all forms of Islam was mysticism. Groups of mystical devotees, or dervishes, gathered around spiritual masters, or *pirs*, who acted as guides to achieving mystical states and ultimately oneness with God. To accommodate the large crowds of disciples who clustered around their spiritual leaders, dervish lodges were constructed in which the faithful could pray and enact their rituals as well as be housed and fed. When a *pir* died, he would be buried within the precinct of his dervish lodge. While his followers would continue to impart his teachings, the *pir's* grave became a place of veneration in its own right. As a result, large cemeteries grew up around the tombs of *pirs*.

Many paintings from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries depict dervishes and holy men. While certain dervish practices such as whirling in order to induce a heightened spiritual state are dynamic subjects for manuscript illustrations, a great number of Persian and Mughal paintings portray princes consulting their spiritual masters. The importance of such figures in the lives of great rulers such as Timur (Tamerlane) (r. 1370–1405) and Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) is attested not only by historical texts but also by their building shrines and mosques to honour these spiritual guides.

The Qur'an contains many graphic descriptions of Paradise as a verdant land, intersected by rivers of water, milk, wine and honey, planted with fruit trees and flowers and filled with celestial beings of great beauty. Such a vision of Paradise not only is a desirable contrast to the arid desert of Arabia, where the Qur'an was revealed, but also reflects ideas inherited from Zoroastrian and biblical sources. The need for water for irrigation as well as drinking and bathing has consistently informed the construction of gardens and buildings in much of the Islamic world. Gardens in the Islamic world, with fruit trees and shade trees, roses and watercourses, are often equated with Paradise.

The Qur'an encourages a reverence for nature and the humane treatment of animals, both of which are reflected in the pictorial arts of the Islamic world. The artists of some periods and regions, such as Ottoman potters from Iznik, concentrated on incorporating flowers or graceful plants in their designs. Others, particularly from Iran and India, preferred to depict animals in landscapes or make objects of daily use in the form of animals. The artists' powers of observation and understanding of animal and plant life animate their depictions and often inject an element of humour into otherwise humble objects. At its best, Islamic art communicates the balance of the natural world. Its gardens can be likened to Paradise and its pleasures can echo those enjoyed in the afterlife, but the physical world in an Islamic context is the illusion and the spiritual world the reality.

Studying the political history of Islam, one might be forgiven for believing that caliphs and kings concentrated on the realities of the material world such as dominion and conquest rather than on their roles as leaders of the faithful. Even within the Abbasid Caliphate, which ruled from 750 until the Mongol conquest of Baghdad in 1258, local dynasties exercised considerable power and in some cases operated independently of the Abbasids. Although the plethora of dynastic names and complex feudal interrelationships can be confusing, stylistic differences across the various media of Islamic art often reflect regional modes that developed under the patronage of local dynastic potentates. Works from a variety of courts included in the exhibition range from precious gold and rock crystal pieces produced for the Fatimids in the tenth to



Cat. no. 43 (detail)

twelfth centuries, to portraits of Ottoman sultans and Qajar shahs made two hundred years ago. Through coins and objects inscribed with the names and titles of the king or caliph, rulers ensured their public presence in their realms. Luxury items produced for kings and their courtiers, by contrast, existed within the rarified world of the court, simply for the pleasure of their owners.

'Spirit and Life' contains many works of art that represent the preoccupations of medieval and early modern Islamic courts. Because of the paramount importance of the written word in Islam, princes and 'men of the pen' were trained to read and write. Writing beautifully was a skill that required training, and historical texts describe the education of princes by leading calligraphers. As a result, not only were examples of calligraphy produced and collected by princes, but also richly decorated pen cases, inkwells, knives for cutting pen nibs and other accoutrements of the scribe's studio were created for wealthy calligraphers.

While theology was studied by all educated Muslims, ethics, science and mathematics were also important subjects which were encouraged at the most enlightened courts. Arab and Persian mathematicians not only translated treatises on their subject from Greek and Latin, but they were also responsible for extremely important advances of their own, especially during the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Likewise, Muslim scientists translated Greek and Latin scientific texts on medicine, botany, and astronomy and significantly added to the literature on these subjects well into the fifteenth century. With the introduction and spread of the use of paper, the production of books of all sorts increased enormously from the eleventh century onwards. Poetry, books of fables, collected biographies, histories, and cosmographies filled the libraries of princes and scholars. Another aspect of life within the palace walls was the enjoyment of music. In Iran, from the sixteenth century on, rooms were constructed with specially shaped niches on the walls to provide improved acoustics. Here concerts of singers accompanied by stringed instruments would entertain the master of the house and his coterie.

In addition to reading, writing, and statesmanship, princes at Islamic courts were expected to be accomplished horsemen and hunters. These skills are celebrated in manuscript illustrations, pottery and metalwork. Finely ornamented arms and armour would have been used for sport as well as battle. Polo enjoyed popularity in Iran and Central Asia, while falconry was practised across the Islamic world. Proficiency at riding horses was necessary not just for the sporting pleasure of the prince; it was crucial so that he could lead his armies in battle. Although kings did not enter the fray every time they went to war against their enemies, their presence could be intimidating and make the difference between victory and defeat.

In times of peace and prosperity rulers in the Islamic world used their wealth to commission monuments such as mosques, mausoleums, palaces, religious colleges, and hospitals. They also amassed collections of luxurious items including gold objects, silks, carpets, Chinese porcelains, and rare and precious substances such as the *bezoar* stone, extracted from the stomachs of goats and antelopes and thought to be an antidote to poison. Lavish gifts were exchanged between courts and later rulers corresponded with one another about gems and cures. They encouraged their agents to look out for rare substances on behalf of their royal allies. Unfortunately, political turbulence led to the dispersal or destruction of royal collections. Gold and silver objects were melted down, delicate textiles disintegrated, ceramics and glass shattered. Yet, as this exhibition demonstrates, enough of the rarities of Islamic art remain to validate the historical descriptions of the magnificence of, for example, the Abbasid, Fatimid, Safavid and Mughal courts. While the medieval and early modern courts of the Islamic world are remote from the present day in many ways, their treasures can still inspire wonder and fascination, much as they would have done when they were first produced.

Cat. no. 110

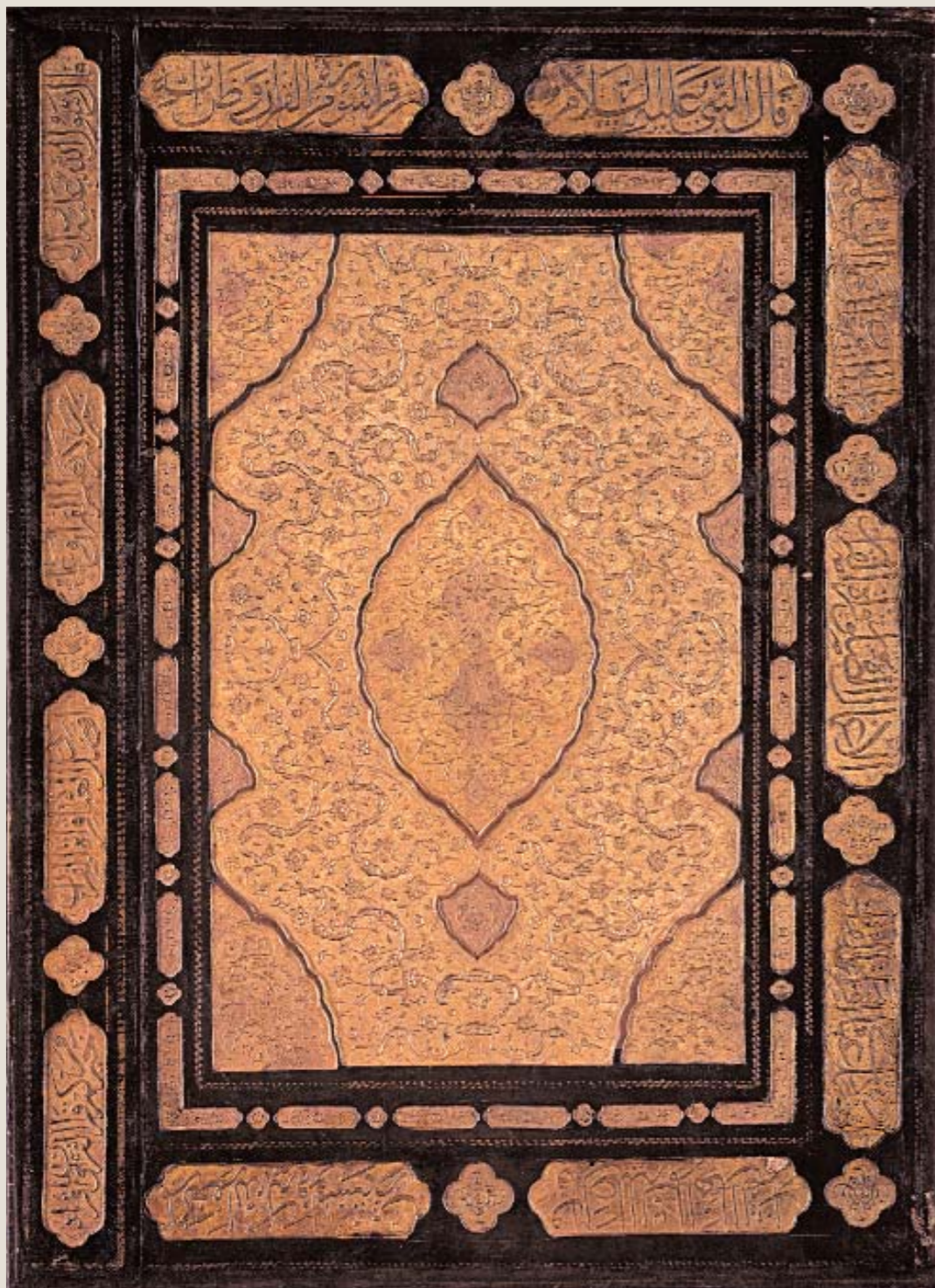




THE CATALOGUE: PART ONE

The Word of God





Cat. no. 12

The Qur'an

Because of the centrality of the Qur'an to the religion of Islam, copying all or some of its verses in any medium is considered a pious act. Over time a wide variety of styles of writing Arabic script developed, but not all of these were considered appropriate for copying Qur'ans. Qur'an manuscripts from the first two centuries of Islam were written on parchment in an angular style called *kufic* after the Iraqi city of Kufa, an early Muslim capital. Recent research suggests that the horizontal-format kufic Qur'ans (cat. nos 1–3) were used for recitation in mosques, most likely in Iraq, while large vertical-format kufic Qur'ans would have been placed in cradles (*kursis*) and displayed in mosques, possibly in the Hijaz, the area around Mecca in Arabia.

In the tenth century variants of the early squared letter forms began to appear in Qur'an manuscripts from the Maghrib, the western edge of the Islamic world, as well as in Iran. Rounded script was not new but the application of this style to Qur'ans seems to have begun in Iran and marks a major innovation. Thanks to a secretary in the administration of the Abbasid government called Ibn Muqla, a system of proportions based on the rhombic dot was devised. Ibn Muqla is also credited with the invention of six cursive scripts, *thuluth*, *naskh*, *rihan*, *muhaqqaq*, *tauqi* and *riqa*, which range from the monumental to the small in scale and fulfilled different calligraphic purposes. Regional styles of writing also developed. When pages of Qur'ans from different centuries and production centres are exhibited together, the remarkable stylistic variety of Arabic writing becomes evident.

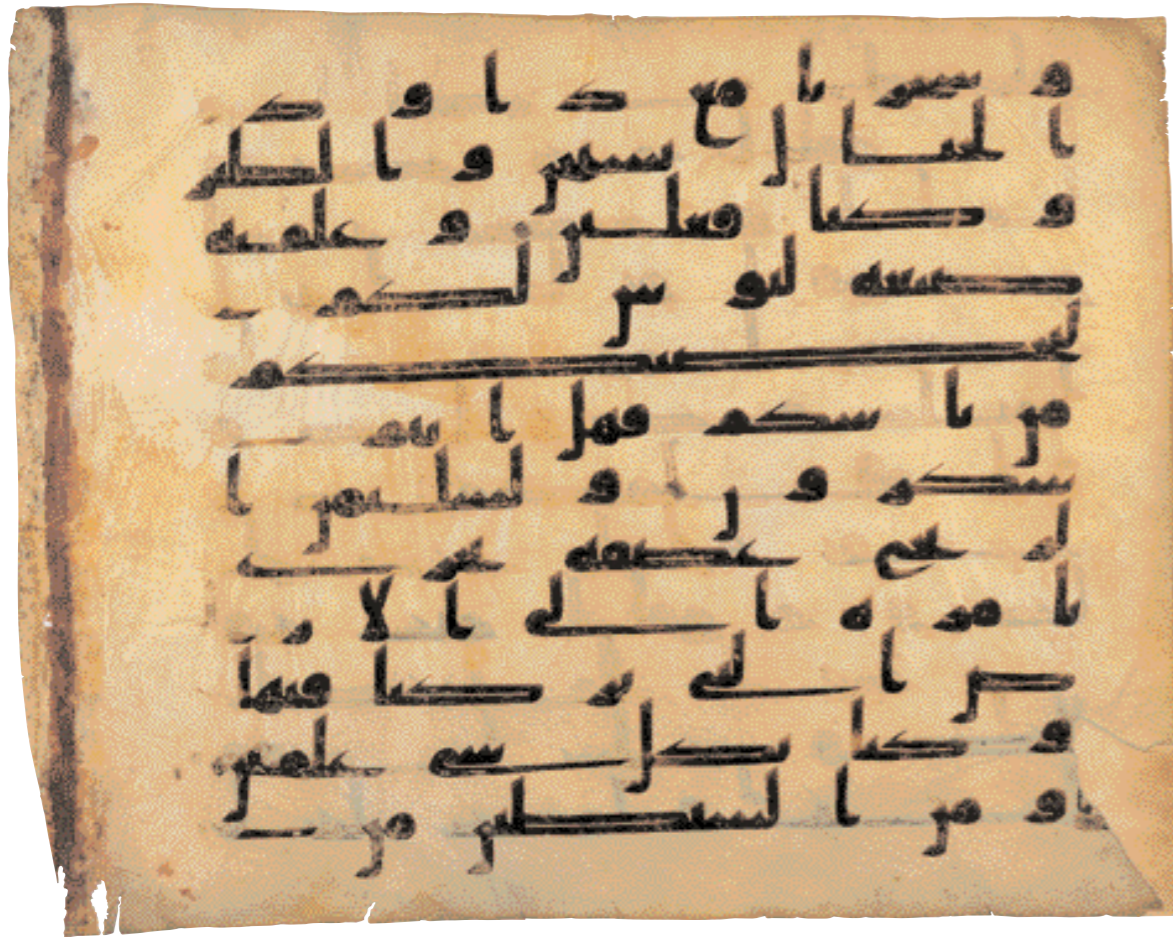
Because of the survival of Qur'ans from the last six hundred years, we can understand the range of purposes for which these manuscripts were produced. The fragment of a very large fifteenth-century Qur'an (cat. no. 6) would have come from a manuscript intended for display in a royal Timurid mosque. By contrast, the nineteenth-century scroll (cat. no. 11) could have easily been carried by a traveller and the miniature Qur'an case (cat. no. 18) would have been worn as a pendant. More conventionally shaped Qur'ans may have been for personal use in a domestic setting.

One of the striking features of Qur'ans of all periods is the decorative illumination that appears at the beginning of the manuscript, around chapter (*sura*) headings, and to mark the fifth and tenth verses within the chapters. Consisting of foliate, floral and geometric motifs, illuminated ornaments also varied by period and region. Although gold decoration appears often in early horizontal-format Qur'ans, lapis lazuli blue was combined with gold by the beginning of the eleventh century. In Mamluk Egypt and Syria, Ottoman Turkey, and Timurid and Safavid Iran, lavishly illuminated Qur'ans, sometimes in thirty volumes, were compiled for the rulers and their mosques and *madrasas*. Qur'ans were also copied on tinted paper, from the ninth or tenth century onward (cat. nos. 3 and 7).

In architecture Qur'anic inscriptions were carved into stone panels in the form of bands running around the interior or exterior of mosques and other religious edifices. Tile panels and walls of glazed and unglazed bricks also feature Qur'anic verses. The analysis of the choice of Qur'anic verses on specific buildings can lead to a better understanding of the patron's religious or political preoccupations. The large number of tiles from the Il-Khanid period in Iran (thirteenth–fourteenth centuries), the result of

refurbishment and new building after the destruction of the Mongol invasions, indicate a new taste for inscriptions in relief used for *mihirabs* (prayer niches), tomb markers and wall decoration.

Finally, the power of the Qur'an is so great that its verses are considered capable of protecting people from evil. Amulets and undershirts were often inscribed with Qur'anic verses to save the wearer from harm. The word of God was lovingly written even on humble surfaces, such as a shell (cat. no. 17) or a leaf (cat. no. 20), an enduring act of devotion and artistic virtuosity. As if to remind Muslims that God is ubiquitous and all-powerful, the Qur'an in all its forms is a constant presence throughout the Islamic world.



I Qur'an folio in kufic script *opposite*

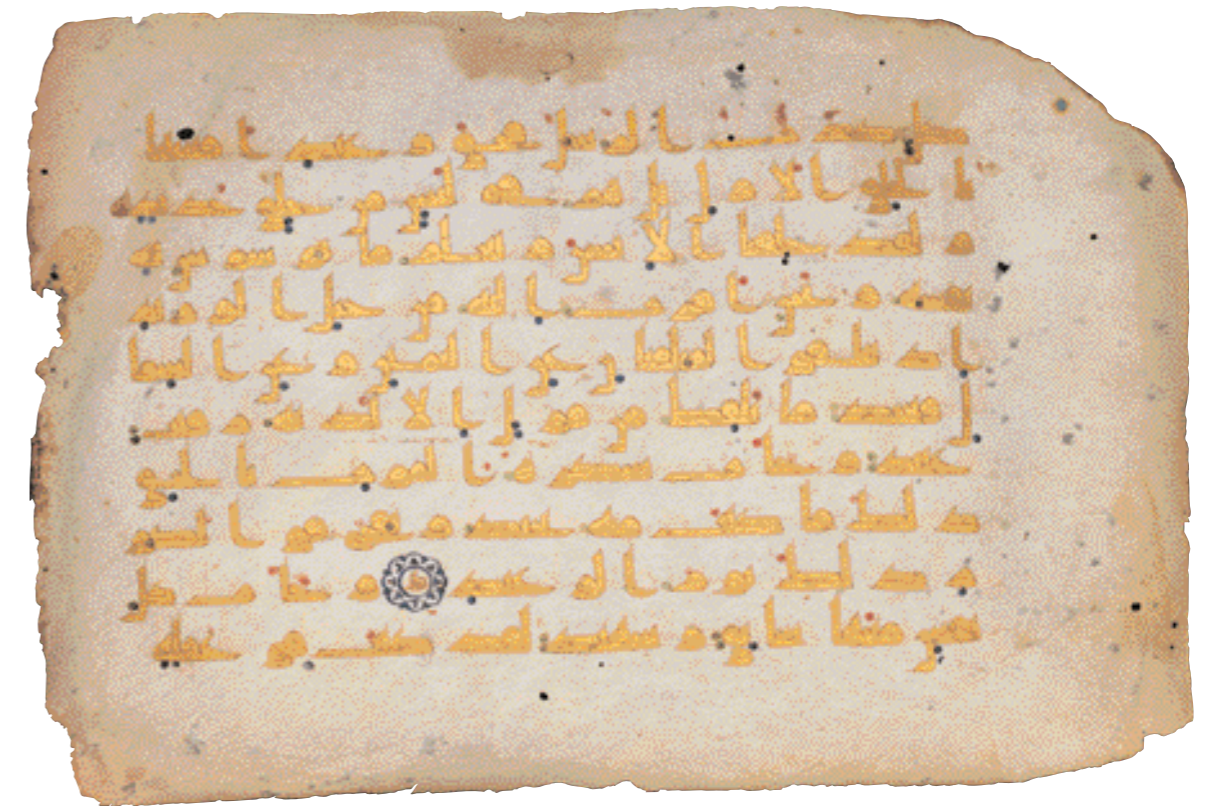
North Africa, 8th century
Ink on parchment; 55 x 70 cm

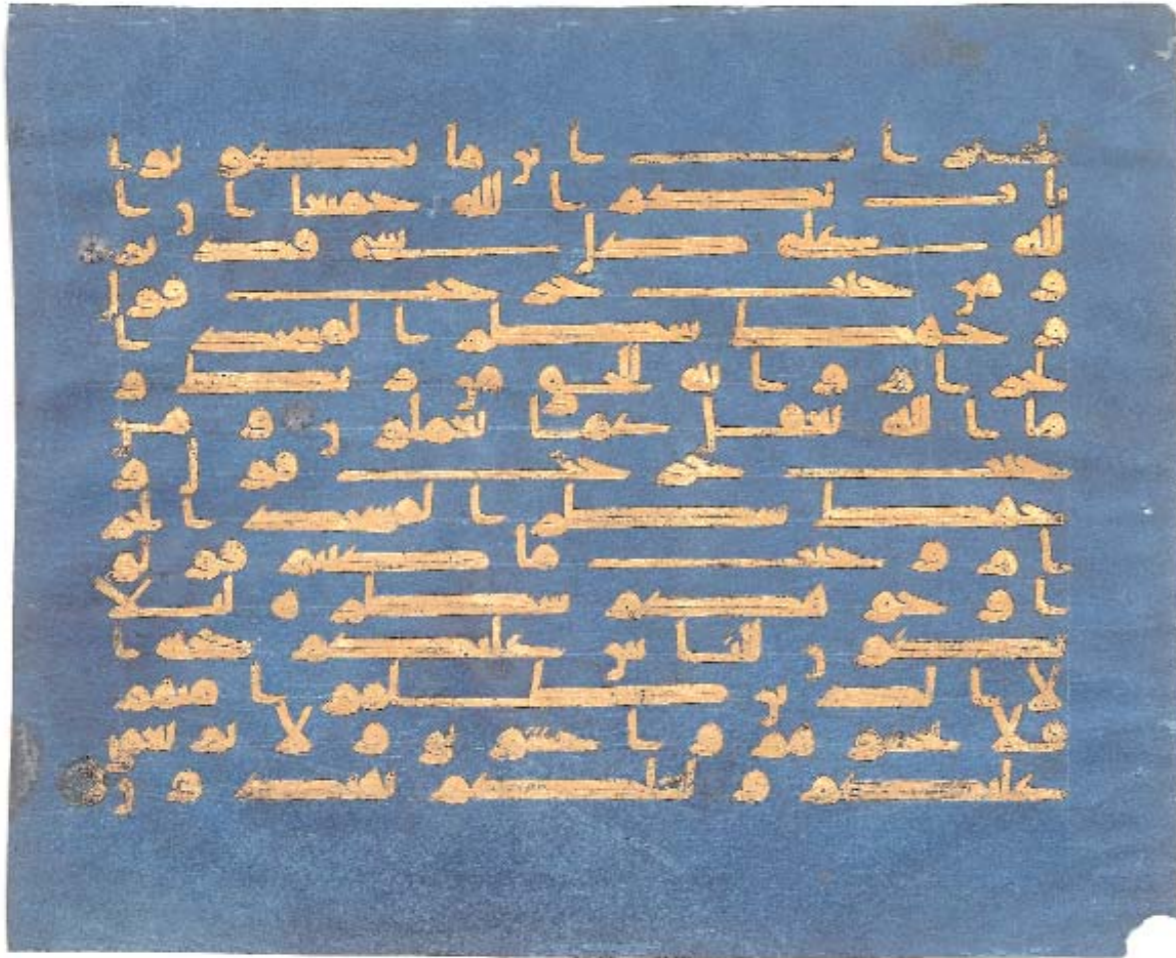
The earliest Qur'ans are usually written on parchment in kufic script. They are usually small and horizontal in format. It is very rare to find such a large early Qur'an leaf, and the monumentality of this one is matched by the calligrapher's well-formed and generously spaced script, making it an exceptional early Qur'an page. Other folios from this manuscript are in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, (Guesdon and Vernay-Nouri 2001, p. 37) and the Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek, Gotha (Déroche and von Gladiss 1999, p. 20). An early eighth-century date is suggested for pages from this Qur'an due to the absence of gold and diacritical marks. Part of the original Qur'an manuscript from which these pages are taken is in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Déroche has noted that manuscripts such as this were brought along the Silk Road via an undetermined itinerary. This Qur'an was in St Petersburg in the late nineteenth century, and it would appear that this page, along with others, was separated from the manuscript at this time.
Text: *Surat al-'Anbiya*, (The Prophets), 21: 76–82.

2 Qur'an folio in gold kufic script

North Africa, 9th–10th century
Ink and gold on parchment; 17.9 x 26 cm

Early Qur'an manuscripts completed in gold kufic are rare. The famous 'Blue Qur'an' is another example (see cat. no. 3). Writing kufic script in gold involved a lengthy and expensive technique, chrysography (for this technique, see Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2005, p. 30). In this case the letters were written in a 'liquid glue', filled in with a careful application of ground gold suspended in a solution, and outlined with pale brown ink using a thin nibbed stylus. The compact and well-proportioned letters of this leaf are brilliantly executed in gold and the text is enlivened by a vocalisation of red, blue and green dots. Two other leaves from this Qur'an manuscript are in the National Library, Tunis.
Text: *Sura Qaf*, 50: 6–22.





3 Qur'an folio in gold kufic script on blue parchment

North Africa, 9th–10th century
 Ink, gold, and silver (now oxidised) on blue-dyed parchment; 28.6 x 35 cm
 Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 20–22 (no. 1)

This folio of gold kufic script on indigo-dyed parchment is from the Blue Qur'an, one of the most extraordinary Qur'an manuscripts ever created. The regal effect of the gold text against a deep blue ground is deepened by the way the kufic script is compacted and stretched horizontally, a stately manner typical of the best early Qur'ans. Great attention to detail was lavished upon every aspect of the manuscript. In addition to the complex and costly technique of chrysography (see cat. no. 2), the text was also embellished with silver decoration (now oxidised) to indicate verse divisions. Although the exact origins of the manuscript remain unclear and theories abound, persuasive palaeographical and historical evidence presented by Jonathan Bloom indicates that it was created for Fatimid imam-caliphs ruling North Africa from Qayrawan during the first half of the tenth century (Bloom 1986, pp. 59–65; Bloom 1989, pp. 95–99). There is a section of the manuscript in the National Institute of Art and Archaeology in Tunis and detached leaves or fragments are in the National Library, Tunis and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, as well as other public and private collections.
 Text: *Surat al-Baqara*, (The Cow), 2: 148–50

4 Qur'an folio in kufic script

North Africa or Near East, 10th century
 Ink on parchment; 23.8 x 33.1 cm

At three lines of elegant, well-balanced script per page, the Qur'an to which this folio originally belonged must have been a luxury commission produced at enormous expense. The present Qur'an folio is related to folios from three dispersed Qur'an manuscripts located in public and private collections including the National Library, Tunis, Museum of Islamic Arts, Qayrawan, and the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. The characteristic features shared by all of the folios include a script notable for its dominant verticals such as the *lam-alif* combination, countered by an exaggerated width in the strokes of some letters. For instance, in the terminal *nun* letters, the calligrapher has changed the angle of his nib at the mid-point of the round letter, creating an aesthetically pleasing, symmetrical *nun* which maximises the width of the stroke. It is difficult to date and identify the geographical origins of kufic-script Qur'ans. A three-line Qur'an text folio very similar to this one has been attributed to the first half of the tenth century somewhere between Qayrawan and Damascus (see Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, pp. 52–57; Déroche 1992, pp. 42, 109).
 Text: *Surat al-Rahman* (The Most Gracious), 55: 52–56





5 Qur'an folio in cursive script *opposite*

Iran, mid 12th century
 Ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper; page: 31 x 20.8 cm; text: 21.4 x 14.2 cm
 2005.1.256 (CAL 098)
 Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 46–48 (no. 11)

This folio is from a dispersed copy of the so-called 'Qarmathian Qur'an', one of the most elaborate large Qur'an manuscripts produced between the eleventh and early thirteenth centuries. Each page contains four lines of broken cursive script, characterised by towering verticals anchored to a strict horizontal baseline with dramatic modulation between thin and thick strokes. The decoration of each folio is appropriately extravagant. The script is complemented by a detailed background of stylized palmette scrolls in reserve white on a ground of blue curls. These motifs recall contemporary ceramics and metalwork. Lavish gold braid borders frame the text and two half medallions project into the right margin. The faded gold text panel on the right may have indicated the number of verses in the *sura* or where it was revealed, according to Sheila Blair, who also remarks that decorating each Qur'an page so extensively for an estimated total of 4,500 pages must have been an extraordinarily time-consuming enterprise (Blair 2006, p. 198).
 Text: *Surat al-Maidah* (The Table Spread), 5: 44–45

6 Two lines from a folio of a monumental Qur'an manuscript

Central Asia, c.1400
 Ink on paper; 47.3 x 98.5 cm
 Inscribed in lower right corner: 'For . . . the reviver of religion . . . Sultan . . . Husayn ibn Sultan. . . in the year . . . 23'

Combining monumentality and dynamic rhythm, the two lines of this fragment demonstrate why *muhaqqaq* was the preferred script for large-scale Qur'ans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The bold script, which cuts a sharp outline in dark brown ink across the buff paper, was previously thought to be by the hand of the Timurid Prince Baysunghur, a noted calligrapher and bibliophile. Recent studies suggest, however, that the manuscript was created under the patronage of his grandfather Timur and that it may have rested on an unusually large marble Qur'an stand commissioned for it by another grandson, Ulugh Beg, in the main chamber of Timur's congregational mosque in Samarkand (Lentz and Lowry 1989, pp. 16, 329; Soudavar 1992, pp. 59–62). Pages from the manuscript were widely dispersed as early as the sixteenth century, and now reside in various places including the Metropolitan Museum, Shrine of Imam Reza Museum (Mashhad), Khalili (London) and Art and History Trust (USA) collections. It is noteworthy that the lower right corner of this fragment includes an inscription in a *ta'liq* script stylistically comparable to that of a sixteenth-century chancery calligrapher. Although worn and not entirely legible, the wording of the inscription indicates that it was offered as a charitable donation or *waqf*, to a mosque, *madrasa* or other religious institution by a person of some importance, possibly Sultan Husayn Bayqara if the year refers to a regnal, not a calendar year.
 Text: *Surat al-Saba*, 34: 44–45



7 Folio from an Andalusian Qur'an

Spain, early 13th century
Ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper; 32.6 x 25.6 cm
2005.1.258 (CAL101)
Published: Falk 1985, p. 39 (no. 7)

In the Islamic west, a distinct round style of script with generous, sweeping curves of descending letters had developed by the mid tenth century (Déroche 1999, pp. 239–41; Blair 2006, p. 223). Known as *maghribi*, this script was employed in Islamic Spain and the Maghrib, modern-day Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. *Maghribi*-script Qur'ans are usually written in brown or black ink with elaborate illumination in gold. Some, like this one, are on tinted peach-pink paper believed to have been produced in Jativa, site of the earliest documented paper mill in Spain (Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, p. 64). The systems used for vocalisation, pointing and orthography are also peculiar to *maghribi* script. This Qur'an folio is an elegant example of how the script had evolved by the early thirteenth century.

Text: *Sura Yumus* (Jonah), 10: 27–28



8 Folio from a Mamluk Qur'an

Egypt, 14th century
Ink, gold, silver and opaque watercolour on paper; 45 x 31.6 cm
2005.1.226 (CAL 004A)

The Mamluks ruled Egypt, Syria and the Hijaz from 1250 to 1517. 'Mamluk' means slave in Arabic, and the elected rulers of this dynasty were Turks of Central Asian and Circassian origin who were taught Arabic and the arts of politics and warfare. Generous patrons of architecture and the arts, the Mamluks endowed numerous charitable foundations (*waqfs*) in Cairo and elsewhere that required Qur'an manuscripts and furnishings. This Qur'an folio is written in the majestic *muhaggaq* script, which became the primary rectilinear script used by the Mamluks for Qur'an manuscripts. The earliest Qur'ans in *muhaggaq* are from the 1320s during the third reign of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad (r. 1293–1341, with interruptions) (Blair 2006, p. 319). In the present folio, gold rosettes mark the verses and the titles are written in angular kufic script, as was customary for manuscripts of this period.

Text: *Surat al-Waqi'a* (The Event), 56: 88–96 and *Surat al-Hadid* (The Iron), 57: 1



9 Qur'an folio in bihari script

India, 15th century
Ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper; 36.8 x 27.8 cm
2005.1.252 (CAL 091)
Published: Falk 1985, p. 142 (no.115)

Qur'ans produced under the Delhi sultans in northern India (1206–1555) were written in *bihari* script, a peculiar version of *nashk* script used exclusively in India. The origins of *bihari* are unclear but the earliest extant manuscripts in this script are from the late fourteenth century. This Qur'an folio from a dispersed manuscript is a typical example, with several lines of black, red and gold *bihari* script per page, with interlinear Persian translation in red *nasta'liq* and plain gold roundels as verse markers. There are marginal Persian notes in black *nasta'liq* script. As part of the vigorous Indian Ocean trade, Indian Qur'an manuscripts in *bihari* script were exported from India to southern Arabia and the Yemen, where they influenced the development of Yemeni Qur'anic calligraphy (Blair 2006, pp. 387–89).

Text: *Surat al-Isra'* (The Night Journey), 17: 75–85.

IO Manuscript of a Qur'an from Malaysia see page 205

Malaysia, 18th century
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; 34,5 x 21,5 cm

Islam came east across the Indian Ocean to the Malay peninsula and Indonesia with merchants and missionaries during the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, yet the earliest extant Islamic manuscripts date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sheila Blair has suggested this may be due to the damaging effects of the region's hot, damp climate (Blair 2006, p. 559). The illumination of manuscripts in South-east Asia is very locale-specific and quite variable from place to place; comparison to illumination in official court documents and letters can help to attribute Qur'an manuscripts stylistically. The present example is written in typical black *naskh* script on cream paper within wide yellow margins. This manuscript is enlivened by green and red marginal commentary written diagonally, and the bifolia at the beginning and end have bold, reserved white *thuluth* in black cartouches. The marginal colophon at the end of this Qur'an manuscript suggests that it was copied by Ibn Hamid Isma'il for his daughter, Sumayah.

II Qur'an scroll with selected verses and pious phrases below

Iran, dated 1236 H/1847
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 575 x 12,5 cm

Written in minute *ghubari* script on finely burnished paper, this Qajar Qur'an extends to about 5,75 metres in length. *Ghubari* comes from *ghubar*, or dust, in Arabic, and indeed words written in this script appear as fine as dust on a page. Originally used for texts where space was at a premium, such as pigeon post, the script was also used to demonstrate the virtuoso skills of a calligrapher in the preparation of Qur'ans, scrolls, as well as talismanic and magical compositions (Safwat and Zakariya 1996, pp. 184–85). This lavishly decorated scroll, which was probably prepared for a traveller, is by the calligrapher Zayn al-'Abidin, a master of *naskh* and a private scribe to Fath 'Ali Shah. The text has been laid out to form patterns of alternating geometric and floral cartouches with pious phrases and selected verses of the Qur'an, including the famous 'Light Verse' from *Surat al-Nur* in reserve.



I2 Binding from a Qur'an manuscript from binding shown on page 28

Safavid Iran, mid 16th century
Leather with filigree; 50.5 x 36.7 cm
8003
Published: Welch 1979, pp. 134–35 (no. 53)

A beautifully written Qur'an was complemented by a beautiful binding. Safavid leather binding production reached a high point in the sixteenth century, partly as a response to the demand for deluxe royal and commercial manuscripts and bindings. This Safavid doublure, the inner side of the book cover, has an elaborate pattern of filigree ornament in cartouches over a polychrome painted ground. Characteristic of Safavid covers from the mid sixteenth century onward, the roots of this style belong with the fifteenth-century Timurid and Turkmen period bookbinders of Shiraz (Tanındı in Thompson and Canby, 2003, ch. 6). The eleven cartouches on the outer side of the book cover are inscribed in *thuluth* script with two *hadith* of the Prophet that discuss the importance of reading the Qur'an.



I3 Illuminated album page with Surat al-Fatiha

Iran or Bukhara, c.1507–1515
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 32.2 x 21.4 cm

I4 Illuminated album page with Surat al-Fatiha see also page 12

Iran, late 16th century
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 37.9 x 27 cm

The *Surat al-Fatiha* is the opening chapter of the Qur'an. Often composed as a double-page frontispiece with lavish use of gold and lapis lazuli, the *Surat al-Fatiha* was among the most elaborately decorated pages in a Qur'an manuscript and provided a showcase for the calligrapher and illuminator to demonstrate their talents. These precious pages were often preserved apart or even created separately from the Qur'an manuscript and pasted onto album pages, as may be the case here. Both are written in *nasta'liq* script, the favoured script of Persian calligraphers in the sixteenth century for writing poetry and prose, but an uncommon choice for copying Arabic verses from the Qur'an. Cat. no. 13 was copied by Ishaq al-Shahabi directly from an example by Mir 'Ali, according to the text in the lower corners. Ishaq (or Mahmud) al-Shahabi was a star pupil of the celebrated master calligrapher Mir 'Ali. To copy a master's hand so directly was a great achievement and one which frustrates study of well-known calligraphers (Soucek in Thompson and Canby, 2003, p. 50). Cat. no. 14 was written by the renowned sixteenth-century calligrapher Muhammad Murad.



15 Manuscript of an Ottoman Qur'an

Copied by Shaykh Hamdallah b. Mustafa
Turkey, c.1500
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 39.2 x 26.5 cm
2005.1.263 (MS 05)
Published: Welch 1979, pp. 92–93 (no. 29); Welch and Welch 1982,
pp. 27–29 (no. 4); Falk 1985, p. 133 (no. 105)

This manuscript is one of the greatest early Ottoman Qur'ans. The colophon in Ottoman Turkish on folio 278r identifies the scribe as Shaykh Hamdallah ibn Mustafa. The patron of the manuscript is not named, but may have been Sultan Bayezid II. Shaykh Hamdallah (1436–1520) was one of the most celebrated Ottoman calligraphers; he revised the six canonical scripts of Yaqut and influenced generations of Ottoman calligraphers. Nearly fifty manuscripts of the Qur'an, numerous books of prayers and single sheets of religious texts are credited to his hand. A native of Amasya, Shaykh Hamdallah taught the future Ottoman sultan Bayezid II calligraphy while the latter was governor there. Thus began a lifelong relationship that continued throughout the entire reign of Sultan Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512). This elaborate double frontispiece includes *Surat al-Fatiha* (The Opening) 1:1–7 and *Surat al-Baqara* (The Cow) 2:1–4, written in *naskh* script, a specialty of Shaykh Hamdallah and a standard script for Ottoman Qur'ans. The elongated letter *sin* (in the *basmala*) and the far-reaching *nun* which wraps under the gold roundel verse markers add rhythm to the calligraphy and are hallmarks of Shaykh Hamdallah's style.



16 Dish

China, 17th century
Porcelain, painted in overglaze green and black enamels on opaque white glaze;
diameter: 35.1 cm

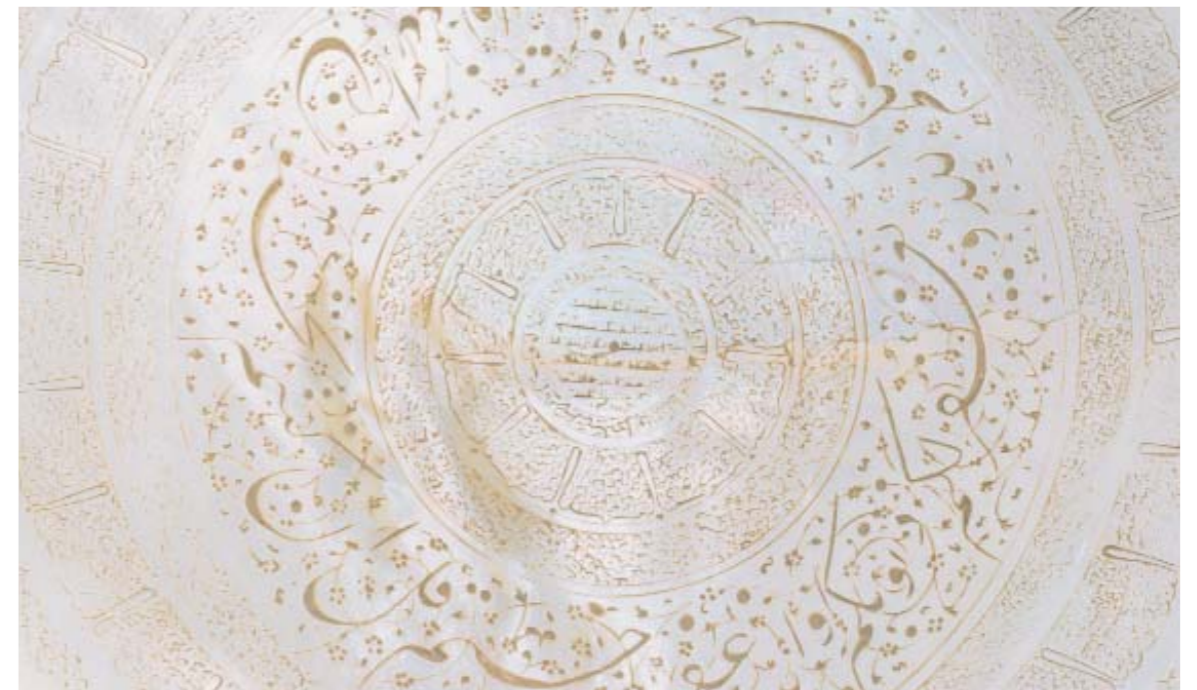
Coarsely potted and covered with a thick, crackled glaze, this dish belongs to a distinct group of porcelain, the so-called 'Swatow wares'. Swatow is a Dutch mistranslation of Shantou, the port from which such ceramics were supposedly exported, although this port was actually not used until the Qing dynasty. Recent archaeological research by Chinese scholars has established that Swatow wares were produced in Zhangzhou prefecture between the mid sixteenth and mid seventeenth centuries for export to Europe, Japan and South east Asia. Dishes similar to this one appeared in Indonesia and are believed to have been commissioned by the powerful seventeenth-century Shia sultans of Aceh in northwest Sumatra, including Sultan Iskander Muda (1607–36) (Canepa 2006, no. 40). The inscriptions on this dish include invocations to Allah, verses from the Qur'an, including *Surat al-Baqara*, *Surat al-Ikhlās* and *Surat al-Nas*, the *Nad-e Ali* prayer and the word Allah which is repeated along the cavetto of the dish. The inscriptions are talismanic, seeking protection and assistance for the owner.



17 Mother-of-pearl shell

India or Turkey, 18th century
Mother-of-pearl; diameter: 14.5 cm

Using the natural shape of this shell and its lustrous mother-of-pearl lining, the artist has created a pleasing decorative programme of eight concentric circles engraved with verses from the Qur'an. The delicate floral vinescrolls in the widest circle recall Deccani painting as well as the spiral scrollwork backgrounds of Ottoman sultans' *tughras* (monograms) and the cobalt blue decoration of early sixteenth-century Ottoman ceramics. The style of *nasta'liq* script, however, would suggest an Indian or Iranian hand. Gujarat was a major centre of manufacture of mother-of-pearl and perhaps this object was made for export to Turkey. In any case, the humble shell has been carefully inscribed with Qur'anic verses and transformed into an object of beauty.





18 Miniature gold Qur'an case and amulet

Iran, 19th century
Gold; diameter of case: 5.3 cm; length of amulet: 8.5 cm

The nineteenth-century Qajar miniature gold Qur'an case and amulet are both inscribed with portions of one of the best-known verses from *Surat al-Baqara* (The Cow, 2: 255) (see below). This *sura* features the main themes of the Prophet Muhammad's revelation. The amulet may have contained rolled pieces of paper with the *Surat al-Baqara* or an entire miniature Qur'an scroll written in tiny *ghubari* (dust) script (cat. no. 11). The octagonal Qur'an case is likely to have housed a miniature Qur'an of the same shape. An Arabic quatrain and parts of *Surat al-Qalam* (The Pen, 68:51) are also inscribed on the case. The amulet includes the names of the Prophet Muhammad, 'Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Husayn, the Shia *Ahl al-Bayt*, or 'people of the house.' Both objects were intended to be worn and the amulet contains three loops for suspension from a belt. These inscribed gold cases and their contents invoke the power of God to protect and preserve the wearer.

Surat al-Baqara (The Cow), 2, 255:
'God, there is no god but He, the Living, the Everlasting, / Slumber seizes Him not, neither sleep; to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. / Who is thee that shall intercede with Him save by His leave? / He knows what lies before them and what is after them, and they comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills. / His Throne comprises the heavens and earth; the preserving of them oppresses Him not; He is the All-high, the All-glorious.' (A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*, London, 1955, p. 65)



19 Ruby-mounted agate talismanic pendant see also page 49

Iran, 19th century
Agate and rubies in silver-gilt mount; length: 12.1 cm

This oval-shaped pendant has been embellished by floral bands and a frame of rubies. Three loops were added for suspension. Densely inscribed with verses from the Qur'an, prayers and attributes of God, this pendant is talismanic in nature, worn to keep the wearer from harm.

20 Calligraphic composition on a sweet chestnut leaf see page 15

Ottoman Turkey, 19th century
Sweet chestnut leaf; 28 x 13.5 cm

Qur'an verses were applied to objects using an astonishingly wide variety of techniques. One of the most beautiful and unusual examples is the gilded leaf, popular in nineteenth-century Ottoman Turkey. This example features a verse from *Surat al-Isra'* (The Night Journey, 17:80) 'And say, "Lord grant me a good entrance and a goodly exit, and sustain me with Your power."' The calligrapher has made masterful use of his elegant *thuluth murakkab* script to create a calligraphic composition resembling a boat filled with a crew, their long oars dipping into the water that is the skeleton of the leaf. Related visually to Ottoman cut-out work or *découpage*, the technique for leaf gilding was actually quite distinct. The inscription was either written or stencilled and sealed on both sides with a wax barrier. The leaf would be soaked in an alkaline solution long enough to yield only its skeleton and the inscription. The virtuosity of the present example is further highlighted since its foundation is a sweet, or Spanish, chestnut leaf (*Castanea sativa*), a leaf more fragile than many of those employed for such compositions.

21 Two calligraphic lustre pottery tiles

Iran, Kashan, 13th–14th century
Stonepaste, painted in lustre, blue, brown and turquoise on an opaque white glaze; 18.6 x 43 cm and 17.5 x 38.1 cm
Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 172–73; Falk 1985, p. 235 (no. 237)

A brilliant blue *naskhi* inscription stands in moulded relief against a busy brown ground of swirling leaves and split leaf vinescrolls. The subtle touches of turquoise to the vinescroll further enhance the beauty of the tiles which exemplify the best tilework (*kashi* in Persian) from Kashan in the early thirteenth century. Kashan is identified as the centre of production for tilework and wares based on inscribed examples and literary evidence. These tiles would have been part of a larger frieze on the walls and tombs of a Shia shrine. All three inscription bands contain verses from the Qur'an, but the tiles are not quite contiguous. The central inscription is from *Surat al-Tur* (The Mountain), 62: 8.





22 Stair Riser

Egypt, 10th–12th century
Sandstone; height: 27 cm; length: 51 cm

Although this oblong stone slab has been identified as a lintel, it is inscribed on only two of its long sides and they are perpendicular to one another. This suggests that it was a stair riser and not a lintel. The inscription in simplified floriated kufic on the wide side reads 'and felicity' and on the narrow side 'this God everlasting'. The words do not appear to be sequential but if the slab was one of two stones flanking a step, the inscription may have read across the step.



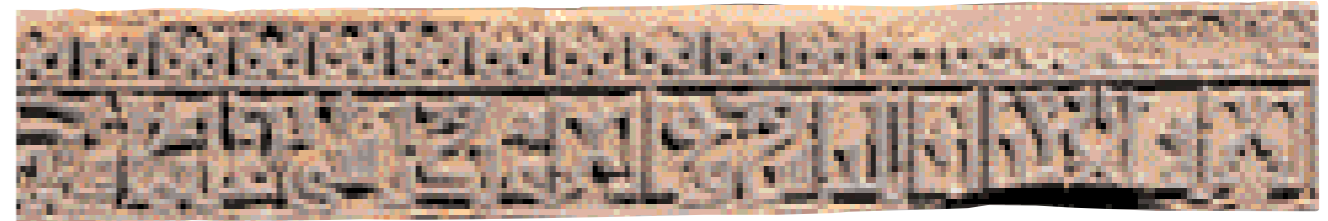
23 Carved wooden beam

Umayyad Spain, 10th–11th century
Wood; 427 x 16.7 cm

A rare, intact survival from the Umayyad period in Spain (756–1031), this long carved wooden beam is a work of austere beauty. The angular form of foliate kufic script it carries is related to contemporary Andalusian ivories. The foliated motifs do not seem to grow organically from the letters as they do in Fatimid objects; rather they act as added decoration. There are some exuberant moments, however. The word 'Allah' is treated with special decorative significance the three times it is repeated in the inscription. The wooden beam, which would most likely have been fitted in a mosque, is inscribed with parts of the 'Light verse' from the Qur'an (*Surat al-Nur*, 24: 35–36):

'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth; the likeness of His Light is as a niche wherein is a lamp, the lamp in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star kindled from a Blessed Tree, an olive that is neither of the East nor of the West whose oil wellnigh would shine, even if no fire touched it; Light upon Light; God guides to His Light whom He will. And God strikes similitudes for men, and God has knowledge of everything. In houses God has allowed to be raised up and His name to be commemorated therein.'

This famous verse from the Qur'an is often inscribed on mosque lamps, which thus become symbols of divine light. One can imagine the present wooden beam in a mosque, its monumental kufic inscription softly illuminated by a nearby hanging lamp, both objects symbolising the presence of God.



Cat. no. C Qur'an on cloth *see also pages 26–27*

Mughal India, dated 1130–32 H/1718–20
Ink on green painted cloth (cotton); 241.4 x 111.8 cm

This unusual Qur'an represents the fusion of Persian and Indian art that flourished in eighteenth-century Mughal India. The text of the Qur'an is written in minute black *naskh* while red and black roundels indicate the start of each verse. In addition to *sura* headings written in red *thuluth*, five large roundels contain the *basmalah* composed in black on gold and decorated with gold and polychrome illumination. According to the colophon, the scribe, Munshi 'Abd Khani al-Qaderi, began this Qur'an on 3 Ramadan 1130 H/31 July 1718 and completed it on 5 Ramadan 1132 H/11 July 1720. The challenges involved in writing on a painted cloth perhaps explain the amount of time it took to make. This Qur'an was presented to the governor of Allahabad, Amir 'Abdallah. Although the Mughal emperor Akbar designated Allahabad one of his capitals in 1583, its importance in the eighteenth century derived from its strategic location at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna rivers rather than from its former imperial status.



Opposite: Cat no. 19 (detail)



Cat. no. 34

Devotional & Mystical Worlds

Pilgrimage to Mecca, the *hajj*, plays an important role in Islam. The first two weeks of the Muslim calendar month of Dhu'l Hijja are devoted to it. In the modern world the *hajj* is organised with great precision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which sets quotas for pilgrims according to their country of origin. Before the age of modern transport, the *hajj* was expensive, arduous and time-consuming, especially for Muslims travelling from the fringes of the Islamic world, Spain and the Maghrib in the West and Central Asia and India in the East. Often *hajjis*, the pilgrims, performed the *hajj* in old age and many of them did not survive the journey. However, dying while performing the *hajj* was thought to ensure that the *hajji* would go to heaven.

Because of changing political situations in the Islamic world, Muslims often did not have the freedom of movement or the required documents to ensure safe passage to Mecca. While some of these were supplied by clerics at the point of departure, others – in the form of diagrammatic pictures of the Ka'ba and the Great Mosque at Mecca (cat. no. 24) – were produced in the Hijaz to verify that pilgrims had performed the *hajj*. The desire to demonstrate that one had performed the *hajj* resulted in pilgrims returning from Mecca with plans of the Great Mosque (cat. no. 31) and other key sites visited, produced and sold in or near Mecca and in the production of Iznik tiles depicting the Ka'ba and the stations of the *hajj*. In Egypt to this day pilgrims paint scenes from the *hajj* on the exterior of their houses. Although Shia do perform the *hajj* to Mecca, they also travel to other shrine cities which are central to their beliefs. As a result the shrine of Imam 'Ali at Najaf and the shrine of Imam Husayn at Karbala, both in Iraq, draw Shia communities from all parts of the world. In Iran, the Safavid shahs promoted the shrines of Fatimeh Ma'sumeh at Qum and Imam Riza at Mashhad as alternatives to Mecca in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when their Ottoman enemies controlled Mecca, Madina, and Jerusalem, the three holiest cities in the Muslim world.

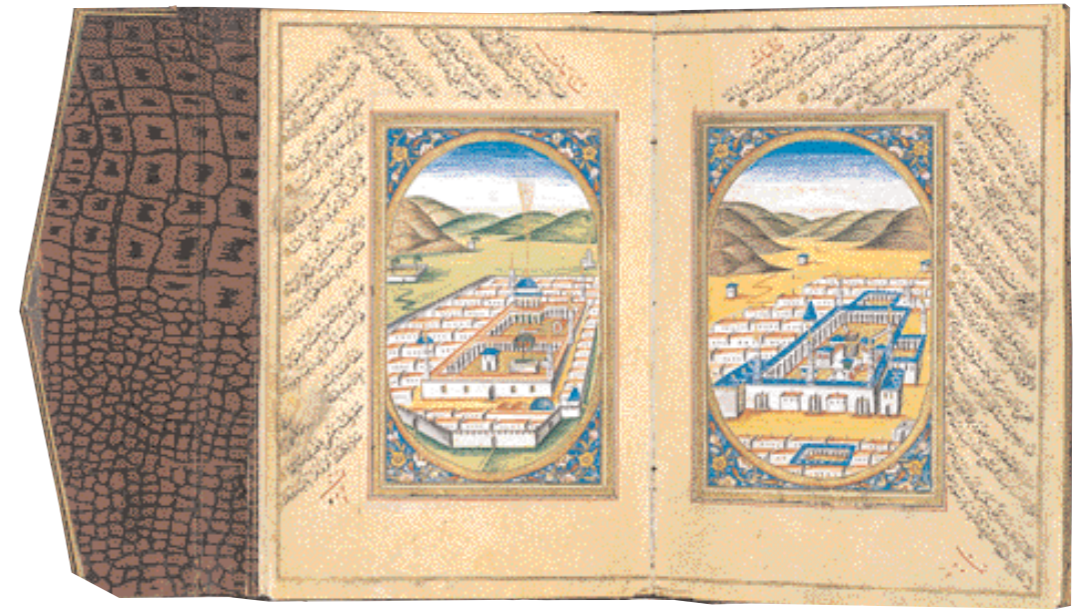
Mysticism has played an important role in the Islamic world, in both Shia and Sunni contexts. Mystics, known as Sufis or dervishes, have sought to achieve oneness with God through prayer and specific exercises, such as *dhikr*, the repetition of sacred words or phrases. While some mystical thinkers, for example al-Hallaj in the ninth and tenth centuries, were considered heretical, many others led lives as wandering mendicants, seeking the company of other dervishes or settling in dervish lodges in the presence of their spiritual advisors, or *pirs*. In India, with its long tradition of Hindu *sadhus*, or holy men, Mughal paintings depict them meeting their Muslim counterparts. The Mughal emperors and many Iranian and Central Asian rulers before them employed religious advisors and are portrayed in spiritual or philosophical discussion with the sages of their day (cat. no. 35). Even when political leaders did not sanction particular Sufi orders, the ideas that they espoused were spread by the faithful through pilgrimage to shrines and other holy sites. In the same way, the *hajj* enabled Muslims from throughout the Dar al-Islam, or Muslim world, to meet and exchange ideas, thus cementing a unity that depended on a shared faith and the communal understanding of the Arabic language.



24 Pilgrimage certificate with illustrations of the Ka'ba

Probably the Hijaz (present-day Saudi Arabia), dated 1192 H/1778–79
Opaque watercolour, silver and ink on paper; 85 x 44.5 cm

Completion of the pilgrimage (*hajj*) was a source of great pride and often marked by an illustrated certificate. This example depicts a schematic view of the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, with the Ka'ba in the centre, draped with the black curtain (*kiswa*). The Persian text below the large illustration reveals that this certificate belonged to one Bibi Khanum, who required the services of a certain Sayyid 'Ali Wali to perform the pilgrimage. The certificate is dated at the bottom of the text and includes the seal of Sayyid 'Ali, guaranteeing the performance of the *hajj* rites. The painting's exact provenance remains a mystery, but similar works with fanciful onion-shaped domes and texts in Persian, the former literary language of many Indian Muslims, have been attributed to Indian draughtsman working 'on site' in the Hijaz (Rogers et al 1999, 80–83).



26 Manuscript of al-Jazuli's *Dala'il al-khayrat*

Ottoman, dated 1207–08 H/1793
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 15.2 x 10.5 cm
Ms 028a

Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli, who died in 869 H/1465, was a member of the Berber tribe of Jazula in southern Morocco. He wrote the *Dala'il al-khayrat* with the help of books from the library of al-Qarawiyyin, the celebrated mosque and university at Fas (modern day Fez) in Morocco; the library was created in 750 H/1349 by the Marinid sultan Abu 'Inan Faris. The *Dala'il al-khayrat* is a collection of prayers for the Prophet, including a description of his tomb, his names and honorary epithets, and a host of other devotional material. The *Dala'il* became the centre of a popular religious brotherhood, the Ashab al-Dalil, whose essential function revolved around the recitation of this book of religious piety. This manuscript is an eighteenth-century Ottoman copy of al-Jazuli's work.

27 Book of prayers

Mesopotamia, early 13th century
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 17.4 x 12.9 cm

Devotion to the Prophet and the *Ahl al-Bayt* is an important feature of Shia piety and the Sufi tradition. The title of this Arabic manuscript which is written in *naskhi* script is *Da'wat qunut mawalina al-a'imma* ('Prayers of piety of our Lord the Imams'). It is part of a small group of manuscripts containing a selection of prayers and traditions of the Shia Imams.



25 Polychrome Qibla tile

Turkey, 17th century
Stonepaste body with polychrome underglaze painting; 52 x 32 cm
Inscribed: 'The first House established for the people was that at Bakka [Mecca], a holy place and a guidance to all beings. Therein are clear signs – the Station of Abraham and whosoever enters it is in safety. It is the duty of all men towards God to make a pilgrimage to the House if they are able.' (*Surat Al-e-Imran*, 3:96–97)
Published: Falk 1985, p. 238 (no. 240)

This tile depicts the black-shrouded Ka'ba within the Great Mosque of Mecca (Masjid al-Haram), the site of the annual Muslim pilgrimage (*hajj*). The artist uses multipoint perspective – both plan and elevation – to give a sense of the overall form of the site. As in pilgrimage guides, which were produced throughout the Islamic world, essential locations are labelled here for further clarity. Decorated with the characteristic Ottoman ceramic palette of turquoise, cobalt blue, green and red on a white ground, tiles like this one were produced in the seventeenth century. They were often placed in an architectural setting such as a mosque's south-facing wall to indicate the geographical direction of Mecca and one's prayers. This plaque reflects the Ottoman interest in topography and the long-standing Islamic tradition of depicting the holy shrine of Mecca in various artistic media.



28 Manuscript of prayers see also pages 56–7

Iran, dated 1130 H/1717–18
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 20.7 x 13 cm

Arranged in four sections, this manuscript is a book of prayers which includes supplications to be recited after the daily prayers, as well as during different days of the week. The colophon suggests that the manuscript was copied by Ahmad al-Nayrizi, one of the most important and prolific calligraphers of the late Safavid period.



29 *Chao jin tu ji*, by Ma Fuchu opposite

China, 1861
Woodblock on rice paper; 15 x 26.5 cm

Ma Fuchu (Ma Dexin, 1794–1863) was considered among the most eminent Hui Chinese scholars of Islam and Sino-Muslim philosophy during the rule of the Qing dynasty. The author of more than thirty-five works ranging from metaphysics to history written in Chinese and Arabic, Ma Fuchu is also well-known for his five-volume translation of the Qur'an into Chinese. The *Chao jin tu ji* is a travelogue which provides an account of his journey from China to Mecca. Ma Fuchu left China with a group of Muslim merchants, travelling overland and by riverboat to Rangoon, where he boarded a steamship to take him to the Arabian Peninsula. After performing the pilgrimage, he spent two years in Cairo, where he studied at Al-Azhar University, and thereafter travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire before returning to Yunnan.



كَلِمَاتٍ مِنْ لَدُنِّكَ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُطَبَّقٍ
مُتَّبِعِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَنِي فَشَكَرْتُ وَعَصَى

فَعَصَرَ وَمَلَكَ فَقَدَرَ فَأَمَاتَ وَأَقْبَرَهُ

إِذَا شَاءَ أَنْشُرَ لِأَشْرِيكَ لَهُ وَلَا وَرِيكَ

وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْنَا

عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ بَابِينَ وَلِقَاءِ نَصِيكَ مُؤْتَمِنِينَ

وَعَلَى صَبَاطِكَ حَافِظِينَ وَبِالْقَضَاءِ دَائِمِينَ

وَأَحْسِنَ يَوْمَ تَأْتِي السَّمَاءُ بِدُخَانٍ مُطَبَّقٍ
مُتَّبِعِينَ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ جِبَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ عَلَامِ الْغُيُوبِ

مُنْزِلِ الْبَرَكَاتِ كَثِيرِ الْخَيْرَاتِ رَحِيمِ وَدُؤْمِ

اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلِ الْعِلْمَ قَلْبِي وَالنُّورَ قُرْبِي

وَالجَنَّةَ مَأْوِيَّ وَالْجَهَنَّمَ شَأْبِي وَالْبَيْتَ

حِشْبِي يَا رَحِيمَ الرَّحِيمِينَ وَيَا أَرْحَمَ

الرَّاحِمِينَ يَا أَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِينَ

30 Prayer amulet with lead case

Egypt, c.11th century
Paper amulet: 7.2 x 5.5 cm; lead case: 2.7 x 1.3 cm

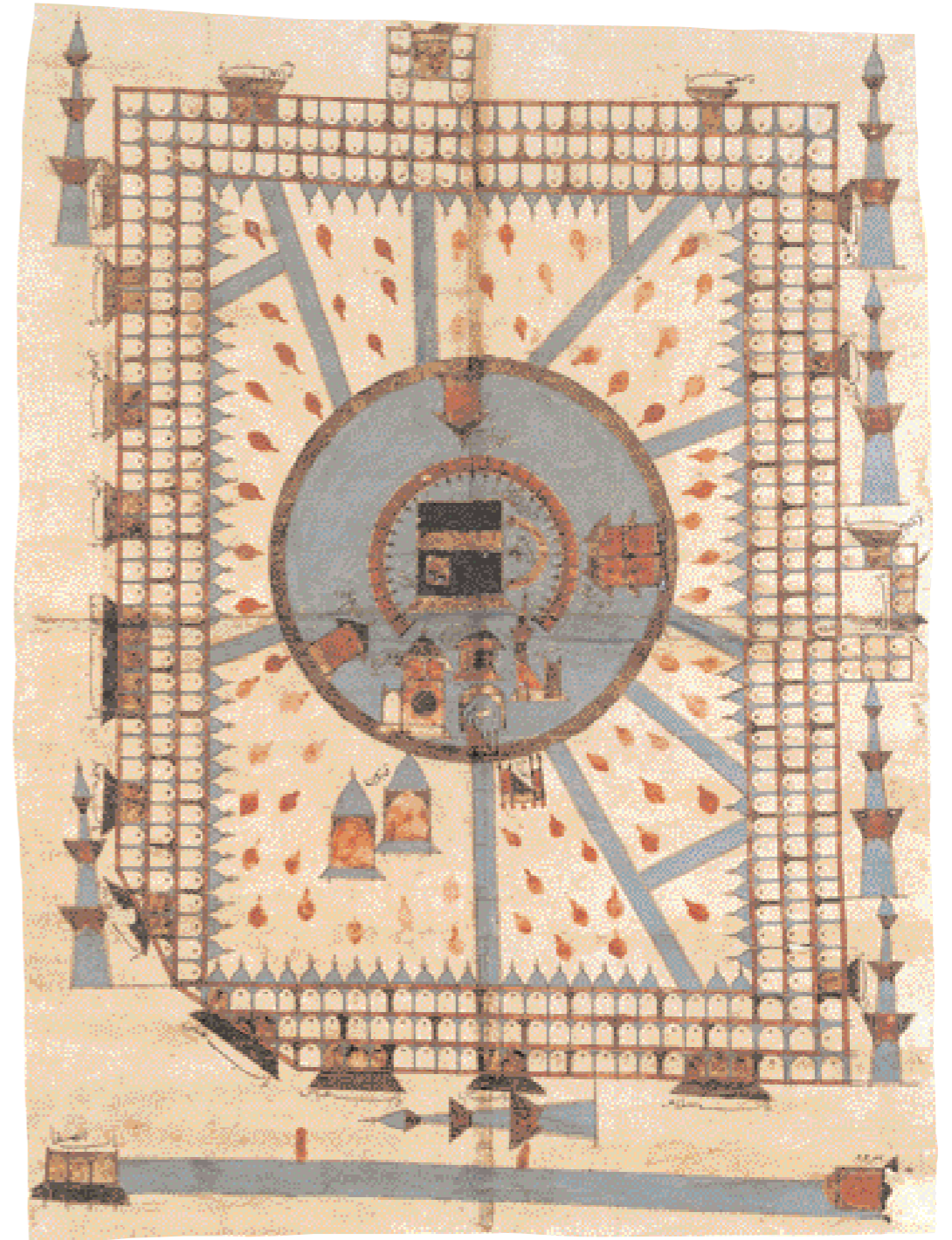
This prayer amulet is a rare example of an early Arabic printing technique known as *tash*. The paper contains eighteen lines of kufic text and further lines on the reverse, which may have been offset from the recto when the paper was folded inside its lead case, also a very rare survival. The style of the kufic characters in the present example would indicate a Fatimid origin and no later since this script was no longer used for manuscripts after the Fatimid period. The printing technique probably involved metal plates or woodblocks. The history of early printed amulets has yet to be written. What is known about them is based on the small group of extant printed amulets and literary sources. Bulliett cites poetry verses from tenth- and fourteenth-century authors referring to printed amulets from wooden blocks and cast tin plates (Bulliett 1987).



31 Chart of the Masjid al-Haram *opposite*

Probably the Hijaz (Arabia), 18th century
Opaque watercolour, silver and ink on paper; 85 x 61.5 cm

This chart of the Great Mosque of Mecca (*Masjid al-Haram*) is part of the literary tradition surrounding the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*), including books of prayers, practical guides with schematic depictions, and pilgrimage certificates (cat. no. 24). Important locations within the precinct of the mosque are written in Arabic in black *naskh* script. Similar charts are thought to have been produced for Indian pilgrims in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by draughtsmen working in the Hijaz.



32 Engraved brass boat-shaped *kashkul*

Iran, second half of the 16th century

Brass; 61 cm

Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 3–112 (especially pp. 35–37, p. 69 note 172; figs. 60–63, pp. 97–98)

Snarling dragon heads project from either end of this boat-shaped *kashkul* or dervish's begging bowl, which contains a wide band of elegant *nasta'liq* inscriptions engraved in cartouches, and several bands of floral interlace decoration. This engraved brass *kashkul* is one of five important Safavid examples from the end of the sixteenth century. The others are in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul; Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar (ex-Khosrovani coll.); in a private collection (offered at Christie's, Islamic Art and Manuscripts, 27 April 2004, lot 97); and one formerly in the Rothschild and Edwin Binney III Collections (A. U. Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, London and Oxford, 1938, pl. 1386A; Welch, 1973, fig. 42, pp. 470–71). A. S. Melikian-Chirvani presented this group in an article which demonstrates how the dervish's begging bowl developed from the ancient, pre-Islamic royal wine-boat shape. He notes that '... the idea [is] embodied in the shape: the crescent-moon out of which wine, seen as liquid sunlight, is poured.' (Melikian-Chirvani 1991, p. 21). The inscriptions on this vessel have been read in full by Melikian-Chirvani, who comments that this *kashkul* once belonged to the head of a *khanqah* or Sufi hermitage.

Persian verses, Side 1:

The prince of the two worlds, the seal of messengers
 Came last: he became the pride of the very first
 To the throne and the seat, not to the sky, he made his ascent
 The prophets and friends of God were in need of him
 His existence was spent in guarding the two worlds
 The whole surface of the earth became his mosque
 The lord of the two worlds, the leader of mankind:
 The moon was split by the tip of his finger

Persian verses, Side 2 (in a different metre):

The one had for him the friend of the Beloved
 While the other was the leader of the Pious bands
 (The servant of the Shah of Najaf, Shams al-Din)
 ... For this reason did they become friends of God
 The one was a fount of moral gentleness and spiritual modesty in the world
 While the other was 'The Gate of the City of Knowledge'
 That envoy of Truth/God that was the best among humans
 His immaculate uncle was Hamza son of 'Abbas.

(Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 35–36)



33 Manuscript of the *Mathnawi* of Rumi

Iran, Shiraz, dated 1011 H/1602

Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; 29.5 x 16.3 cm

MS E-2

While a bearded man kneels to pray, two youths standing under a canopy gesture toward a bird perched in a tree. The lavender ground, pale blue prayer rug with a darker blue arabesque pattern and the odd placement of a cupola on the canopy all point to Shiraz as the source of this manuscript. Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–73) is the most famous of Persian mystical poets and the originator and ultimate *pir* or spiritual master of the Mevlevi dervish order. His poetry is rarely accompanied by illustrations perhaps because it is more philosophical and abstract than narrative and episodic.



34 Young aristocrat and dervish at a flowering tree *see page 50*

Iran, Khurasan style, c.1590

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page 31.7 x 20.2 cm; image 19.6 x 12.5 cm

2005.1.74 (I.R.M. 33)

Published: Canby 1998, p. 69 (no. 41)

A young man dressed in fine robes and a gold-edged turban gazes at a *safina*, the small oblong book in his hands. His seat is the trunk of a blossoming tree, whose curving branches gently surround him. The tripartite division of the landscape into a gilded sky full of scrolling clouds, a lilac mountain background and a flower-filled dark grassy ground is typical of the Khurasan style at the end of the sixteenth century. Opposite the youth is a fresh-faced young dervish with a shaven head, accessorised by a white leopard skin, *kashkul* or begging bowl, purse and knife. He holds out something, perhaps a cup, which has been effaced. Some dervish groups may have incited trouble, but late sixteenth-century Persian sources also laud the personal qualities of dervishes, calling them self-effacing, noble-minded and kindly. In this vein, Sheila Canby has proposed that the young dervish here may not represent an actual dervish but a metaphor for the admired ideals of a dervish. Although this painting is currently mounted on an album page, its composition – that of a youth in conversation with a dervish – was seen often on colophon pages of manuscripts.

35 Portrait of a young prince with mystics

Mughal India, c.1635

Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 42.7 x 28.2 cm; image: 22 x 13.1 cm

Provenance: Bequeathed to the Norwegian artist J. C. Dahl (1788–1857) in 1844 by his pupil the Prince of Java, Ben Jaggia Rader Saleh (1801–1880) and thence by descent. On loan to the National Art Museum in Oslo until 2005

The Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh (1615–1659), the eldest and favourite son of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, was profoundly interested in mysticism and his writings centre on Sufi topics and poetry. A noted patron of the arts and calligraphy, the prince presented his wife with an album of paintings and calligraphy now known as the Dara Shikoh album and held in the British Library. The present portrait is compositionally and stylistically very similar to paintings in the album by an artist identified by Toby Falk and Mildred Archer as 'Artist B' (Falk and Archer 1981, pp. 73, 383). It has been suggested that 'Artist B' was influenced by the work of Govardhan, the celebrated Mughal painter whose paintings of sages and ascetics are full of life, psychological depth, a subdued palette and perspective. All of these elements are present in this extraordinary portrait. On the reverse of the album leaf is a calligraphy specimen by the famous Akbari calligrapher, Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir, known as 'Golden Pen' (*Zarin Qalam*).



Cat. no 35 (detail)

36 An aged pilgrim see page 64

Mughal India, c.1618–20

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 36.7 x 24.5 cm; image: 11.5 x 6.5 cm

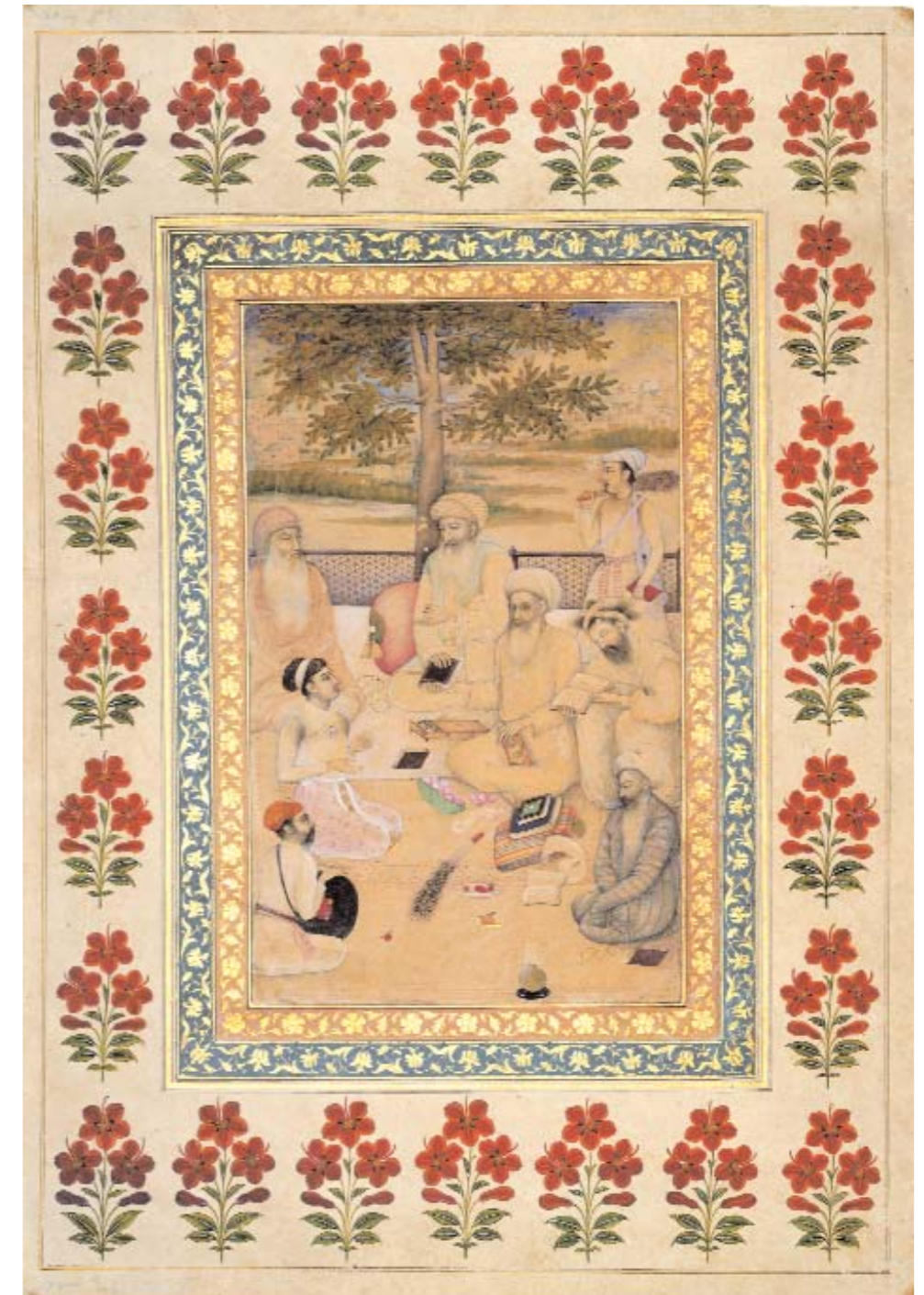
Inscribed: 'The work of Nadir al-Zaman' (Abu'l Hasan)

2005.1.152 (M 179)

Provenance: Rothschild Collection

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 140–41 (no. 104)

A pilgrim, who is bent with age but spiritually enlightened, inspires a beautiful pink blossom, a sign of renewal, to turn toward him and his inner light. This painting of great sensitivity was completed by Abu'l Hasan, one of the most important painters in the service of Jahangir (r. 1605–27). Abu'l Hasan, called *Nadir al-Zaman* (Rarity of the Age) was part of the younger generation of Jahangir's artists, men who developed a new, naturalistic style of painting which incorporated European techniques of shading and volume. His technical precision, coupled with his ability to capture the essence of his subject made his portraits and manuscript paintings unique and extraordinary. Jahangir was profoundly interested in ascetics and flowers, as demonstrated by his writings and albums; this portrait would have pleased him.





Cat. no. 36



37 A gathering of dervishes *see also back cover*

Iran, Khurasan, late 16th century
Ink and watercolour on paper, page: 38.8 x 28.5 cm
2005.1.104 (Ir. M. 070)
Published: Welch 1978a, pp. 98–99

In the second half of the sixteenth century drawings intended for inclusion in albums became increasingly popular. Less expensive to produce than paintings or illustrated manuscripts, drawings could be afforded by a broader market than simply the court. As a result, artists expanded their choice of subject matter to include dervishes, nomads and working people. This scene depicts six dervishes in varying states of dizziness and collapse after whirling to induce a mystical state. Two bearded figures stand with the aid of young novices, while two others are seated on the ground. At the lower left a youth holds a book, perhaps of poetry, while at the right another beats his tambourine.

The technique of drawing with the addition of touches of colour was practised in this period by Muhammadi of Herat, an artist with wide influence in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Although this work cannot be attributed to him, the jackdaws in the tree, the subject of dervishes and the technique all derive from his works. The empty rectangles at the upper right and lower left imply that this was an illustration to a text, though it is more likely that these were added long after the drawing had been completed.

38 Manuscript of the *Tadhkira* of Shaykh Safi al-Din

Tadhkira (biographical accounts) of Shaykh Safi al-Din
Iran, Shiraz, dated Sha'ban 990 H/1582
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper, page: 35.2 x 22 cm
2005.1.264 (MS06, fol. 280r)
Published: Welch 1972b, p. 48 and p. 57

Shaykh Safi dances in ecstasy to the esoteric words of the Sufi Shamsa al-Din Tuti in the colourfully tiled assembly room of a Sufi lodge (*khanqah*). Musicians play, veiled women watch and other Sufis join in the dance in this page from a manuscript of the *Tadhkira* ('biographical accounts') of Shaykh Safi al-Din (d. 1334), dated Sha'ban 990H/ September 1582. Shaykh Safi was a Sufi saint and founder of the Safavid dynasty in Iran.





39 Group of sages in discussion *opposite*

Attributed to 'Ali Quli Jabbadar
Iran, Isfahan, c.1650
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper, pasted on card mount; page: 33.4 x 21; image: 15.8 x 11.8 cm
2005.1.186 (M 256)
Published: Falk 1985, 127 (no. 99)

The theme of sages in discussion enjoyed enduring popularity in Persian painting, stretching back to the fourteenth century. This tinted drawing may be attributed to 'Ali Quli Jabbadar, whose style demonstrates the influence of European prints and Indian painting, particularly in the sensitively shaded faces and careful attention to the leafy trees that surround the scene.

40 Coco-de-mer kashkul

Iran, 19th century
Carved nut shell, with a later chain; length: 24 cm

This beggar's bowl (*kashkul*) made from half a coco-de-mer would have been carried by a dervish who had renounced all worldly possessions, subsisting only on almsgiving from devout Muslims. Beggar's bowls were often highly decorated and this one is no exception: intricate floral motifs, Arabic prayers and Persian verses cover the entire surface of the shell. The upper band of inscription is the famous *Nad-e 'Ali*, the devotional prayer to 'Ali. This prayer also appears on the Sufi hat (cat. no. 41) and the octagonal Qur'an case (cat. no. 18). The spout of the *kashkul* is inscribed with the signature of a certain Sufi and the date 1028 H/1618–1619 but this is probably optimistic, since the script and decoration are characteristic of the Qajar period.



41 Sufi hat

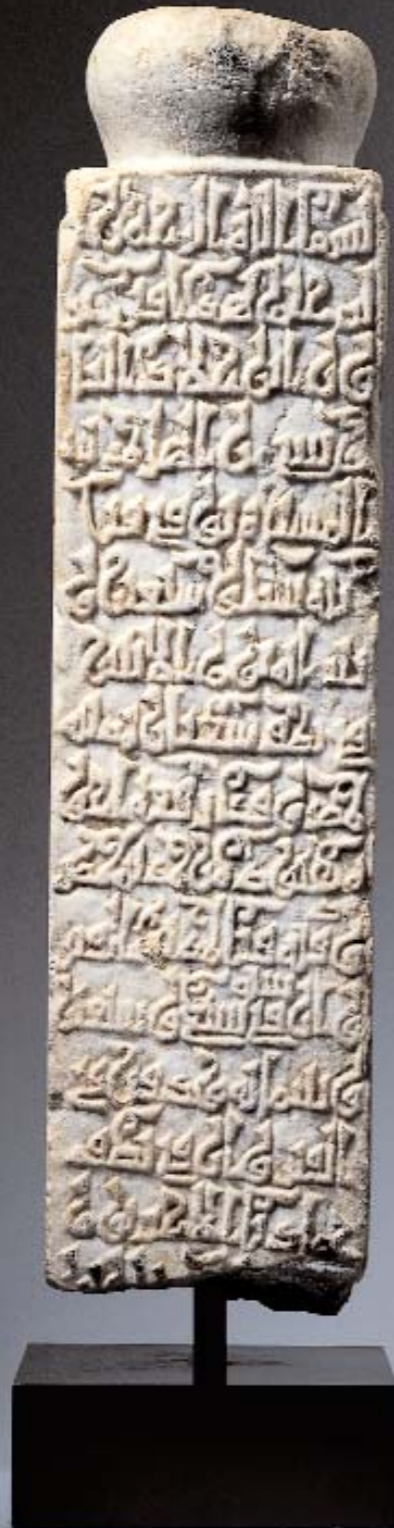
Iran, 20th century
Felt embroidered with black silk; height: 26 cm

A felt hat and cloak are part of dervish's costume. Whether beautifully tailored or patched together from rough pieces of fabric, the hat and cloak symbolise the presence of a Sufi. The present hat is embroidered with the call to 'Ali (*Nad-e 'Ali*) prayer in black on a cream ground. The embroidered text is contained in interlocking crenellated motifs which form a graceful pattern. Although the form of the hat is well-known from paintings from the Safavid period onward, examples with embroidery do not appear in Safavid, Zand or Qajar painting. Given the late date, this may represent an evolution in the style of dervish hats. Alternatively, it could be part of a later trend to produce helmets, demon-headed maces and other objects which harked back to glorious periods of Iran's past and were used for special events.



A Witness of Changing Times

The single item shown in this section symbolises the re-use of precious materials by craftsmen from all backgrounds and civilisations. This practice is not unusual in Islamic art.



42 Marble funerary stele

North Africa, dated 377 H/987
Marble; height: 59.7 cm

There is a long tradition of inscribed marble funerary steles in the Islamic world. This stele is a dignified example of North African production, typically Tunisian, during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The fifteen-line kufic inscription includes the name of a leather merchant, the date of his death and the collection of his body from Cairo in Sha'ban 373 H/January 984 by his brother as well as the date of his burial, Jumada II 377 H/October 987. Large scrolling acanthus leaves carved in deep relief decorate the verso of this re-used Roman architectural fragment and evoke the gardens of Paradise.





The Garden as Paradise

Much of the Qur'an is concerned with man leading a righteous life in order to prepare for the Day of Judgement, when he will enter Heaven or Hell. Heaven is given in the Qur'an as *jannat*, a word also translated as 'garden'. Thus, the connection between Paradise and cool, green gardens with running water and fruit trees runs through the whole history of Islam. The earliest mosques outside of Arabia, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, are decorated with mosaics including trees and rivers, an apparent reference to Heaven. In both secular and sacred contexts flowers, fruits and trees were considered acceptable forms of ornament. Even in cemeteries where the tombstones are inscribed with the name of the deceased and prayers, the surroundings were planted as gardens with grass and trees. Paintings from Iran and India depict figures enjoying picnics, concerts and colloquies in garden settings (cat. no. 46), while flowers, birds and animals enliven pottery and metalwork of the medieval and early modern periods across the Islamic world.

43 Lacquer book covers *opposite, see also page 23*

Iran, late 16th century
Lacquer with gold and mother-of-pearl; 27.7 x 16.7 cm

Deer gather around a duck-filled pond, while peacocks, birds and flying ducks call to one another in and amongst the flower-filled branches of two intertwining trees in this magnificent pair of book covers. No detail is too small for the artist's attention in this mirror-like composition which has been colourfully painted, outlined in gold and heightened with crushed mother-of-pearl and gold flakes to create a scintillating effect under a clear, protective varnish. Sixteenth-century Safavid lacquer bookbindings such as this one grew out of the fifteenth-century tradition developed in Timurid Herat which, argues Tim Stanley, was in turn dependent on Chinese models (Stanley 2003, p. 185). The red, orange, gold and black colours of the present binding are visually similar to Chinese *tianqi* ('filled-in lacquer,' see Stanley 2003, pp. 186, 193) wares which are built up with small blocks of colour outlined in gold. Islamic lacquer bindings are technically different from the Chinese lacquer objects which are made with sap from the 'lacquer tree' (*Rhus verniciflua*). The Islamic bindings are covered by a varnish, called *rawghan-i kaman*, or 'bow gloss' in the literature from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (see cat. no. 110). Related lacquer bindings of the mid sixteenth century are found in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Mss. Or. Suppl. Pers. 1962 and 1171 and 129; see Stanley 2003, pp. 190–91; Richard 1997, pp. 169, 179, and Bernus-Taylor 1989, pp. 165–66) and in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Haldane 1983, no. 94).



Cat. no. 44

44 and 45 Two dishes

Turkey, Iznik, c.1575–80
 Stonepaste body, polychrome underglaze painting on opaque white glaze; diameters: 31 cm and 28.5 cm
 Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 200–01 and 202–03

Flowers were a beloved part of the popular and court culture of many Islamic dynasties. They can also be seen as symbols of the heavenly garden. Ottoman court designers developed an enduring floral decorative style in the sixteenth century that became the state style for all Ottoman arts, from architectural tilework and ceramics to textiles, metalwork and arts of the book. Based on a floral repertoire of tulips, carnations, rosebuds, hyacinth and palmettes with serrated *saz* leaves, this style reached its height in ceramic production at Iznik during the second half of the sixteenth century (see cat. no. 67). The addition to the classic palette



Cat. no. 45

(blue, turquoise, emerald green) of a brilliant red which stands in raised relief is a result of technical advances in the mid sixteenth century and characterises the best Ottoman ceramics from the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The wave scroll border and scalloped rim on cat. no. 45 are derived from Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, which was collected in great quantities by the Ottoman sultans and is on display at the Topkapı Sarayı. Rather than creating literal copies of the Chinese models (see cat. no. 71), the Ottoman ceramicists incorporated Chinese motifs and patterns into their own, distinctively Ottoman creations.

46 Double finispiece from the *Diwan* of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza

Double-page finispiece; fol. 23b signed by 'Abdullah al-Muzahhib; illumination signed by 'Abdullah Shirazi [also known as 'Abdullah al-Muzahhib]
Iran, Qazvin, 1582
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 23.8 x 16.6 cm; image: 17.3 x 10.9 cm (fol. 86v), 17 x 11 cm (fol. 87r); both folios are glued to another sheet
2005.1.282 (M.S. 33, fols. 86v–87r)
Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 94–98 (no. 30); Canby 1998, pp. 63–64 (no. 38)



This courtly party may be seen as an earthly paradise which evokes heaven. In a verdant, flower-filled garden with tall cypress trees extending beyond a gold sky, courtiers serve refreshments; one can imagine the melodious sounds of poetry recitation and music. Courtly garden parties were often represented on manuscript frontis- or finispieces as well as album pages. The figure seated in the hexagonal pavilion has been identified as Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (b. 1543–44), son of Bahram Mirza (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 94). Ibrahim Mirza, who was raised mainly by his uncle Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76), became a great patron of the arts and connoisseur of music, calligraphy, painting and poetry from an early age. He was said to have written five thousand verses in Persian and Turkish (Qadi Ahmad in Minorsky 1959, p. 157). According to the preface this manuscript was commissioned by his daughter after his death.

47 Bowl

Iran, Kashan, early 13th century
Stonepaste body, decoration painted in black under a turquoise glaze; diameter: 21.9 cm

This bowl has a pronounced aquatic theme: undulating leaves and stems fill the sides and fish swim over its base, all under a 'sea' of transparent turquoise alkaline glaze. Water is an important symbol in Islam and gardens with axial pools filled with fish were seen as metaphors for the heavenly garden. The so-called 'water-weed' design on this bowl was a popular theme in Persian underglaze ceramics from the early thirteenth century. The design was applied with a brush, which allowed for more fluidity and spontaneity than previously possible in the earlier, slip-carved 'silhouette wares'. The painter of this bowl seems to revel in the new-found freedom of brushwork in the underglaze technique, adding decorative flourishes to the leaves.



48 Vase see opposite

Central Iran, 13th century
Stonepaste body, decorated with a turquoise glaze; 71 cm

This monumental vase demonstrates the technical expertise of Iranian potters and belongs to a small group of comparable pieces, all distinguished by their great size, plain opaque turquoise glaze and combination of moulded and incised decoration. The decoration of the vase is organised into horizontal registers and includes benedictory wishes in a moulded band of *naskh* around the neck and a moulded frieze of running animals on a vinescroll ground around the shoulder. Incised bands of bevelled motifs and scale-like motifs complete the exterior decoration.



49 Cranes and Ducks

India, Deccan, c. 1700
Opaque watercolour and silver on paper
Page: 31.5 x 22 cm; image 28 x 18.2 cm
2005.1.148
Published: Falk 1985, p. 174 (no. 155)

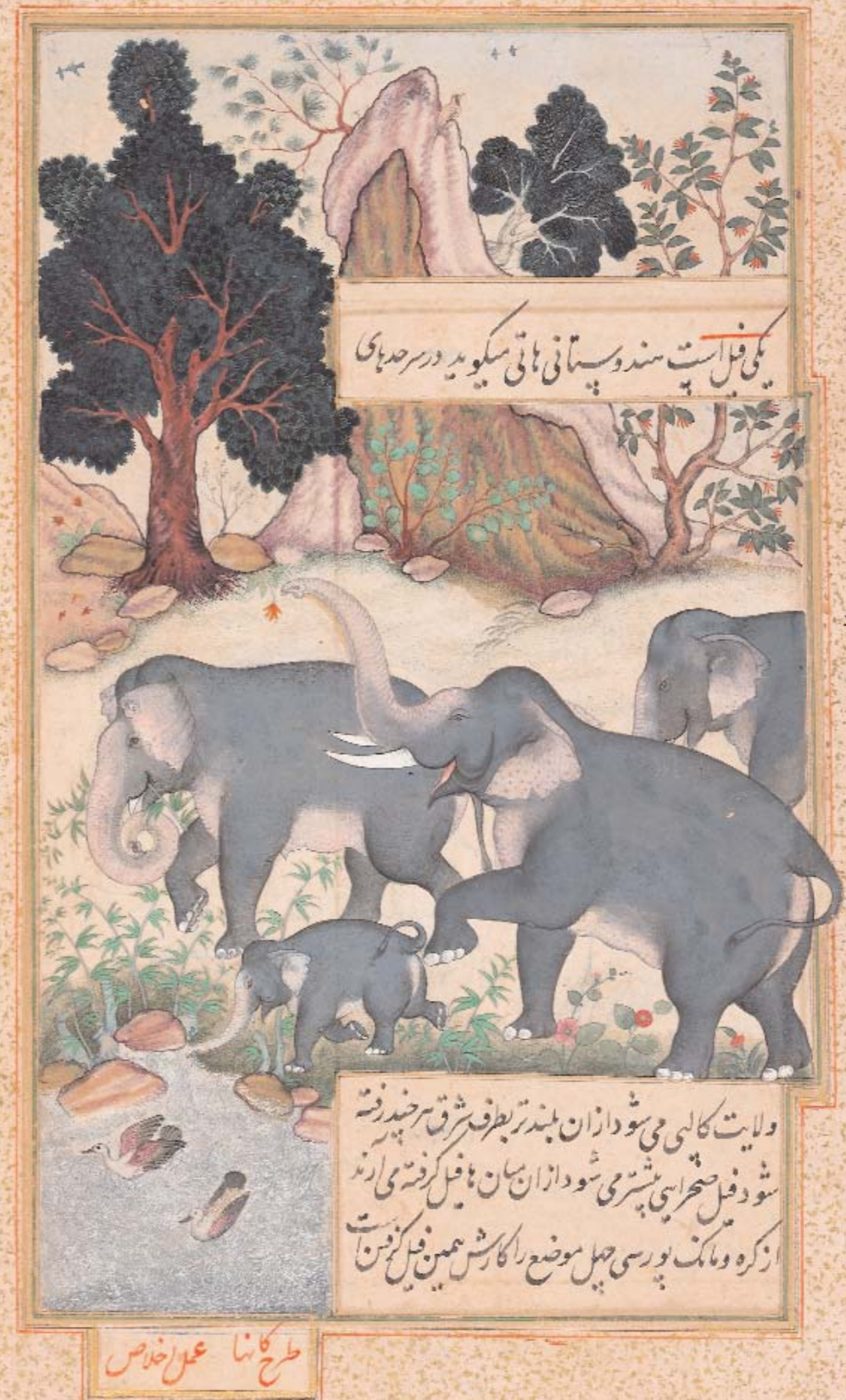
White ducks swim in a silvery-coloured stream flanked by four sarus red-headed cranes. The sarus crane (*Grus antigone*), the only resident breeding crane in India and southeast Asia, is also the world's tallest flying bird. Perhaps the graceful creatures seen here flapping their wings and stretching their spindly long legs are Indian males, who can reach over six feet tall. Accurate depiction of the natural world was a beloved theme of the Mughals. The lyrical quality of the cranes' movements, however, may suggest Deccani influence.



50 A family of elephants *opposite*

Inscribed: 'design of Kanha, work of Ikhlās'
India, Mughal, c. 1589
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper
Page: 34 x 22.5 cm; image: 22.5 x 13.7 cm
2005.1.183
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 116–17 (no. 84)

Elephants frolic and feed in a serene verdant landscape inhabited only by ducks and birds. The Mughal emperor Babur was deeply impressed by the extraordinary creatures he found in his newly conquered lands and wrote about them in his memoirs (*Baburnama*). In a section entitled 'Animals that are Peculiar to Hindustan: Beasts', Babur describes the elephant as follows: 'One of the beasts is the elephant, which the Hindustanis call *hathi*. They are found on the borderlands of Kalpi. The farther east one goes from there, the more wild elephants there are. Elephants are captured and brought from those regions' (quoted in Canby 1998, p. 116). Kanha, the painting's talented designer, was responsible for several other illustrations from this section of the c. 1589 *Baburnama*, and a number of animal paintings from other manuscripts produced between 1580 and 1590 are also ascribed to him.



51 Bowl

Syria, 12th century
Stonepaste body painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze;
diameter: 24.3 cm

Cat. no. 51



52 Bowl

North Africa, c.11th–12th century
Stonepaste, painted and glazed; diameter 23.8 cm
Published: Fehérvári 2000, p. 75

The peacock is associated with Paradise and royalty; it is depicted on a wide range of Islamic objects, from ceramic bowls to textiles, metalwork and arts of the book. Some believe that the peacock was ejected from Paradise with Adam and Eve, which is why its cries sound so mournful. The peacock is a very popular motif for the decoration of ceramic bowls throughout the Islamic world, from North Africa to Central Asia, over a long span of time. The bird's shape fits neatly within the cavetto and the tail feathers are often curved back toward its head (see also cat. no. 106). In cat. no. 51 the tail feathers appear as a wide band elaborately decorated with foliated kufic and scrolling motifs. The decorative motifs, technique and palette of the second bowl (cat. no. 52) are typical of North African ceramic production: a large bird with incised details is painted in green, yellow and manganese against a dark yellow ground.



Cat. no. 52

53 Congregation of birds

India, Mughal, 17th century
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; page: 28.5 x 38.2 cm; image: 14.2 x 20.2 cm
Inscribed: (top right, between tree branches) 'raqamahu Mani'; (left) '2' (in Arabic numerals)
2005.1.213 (M 318)

A variety of large and small birds, including peacocks, turkeys, mallard ducks, ostriches, parrots, pheasants, partridges, blackcaps, ringed plovers, hoopoes, avocets and a flamingo stand together, some as pairs, in this tinted drawing which has been mounted on a cream-coloured album folio. A lightly drawn landscape with hills and small buildings along a high horizon does little to distract from the focus of this work: the detailed, almost scientific representation of birds. The Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27) was known for his keen interest in the natural depiction of flora and fauna. His memoirs and albums attest to this passion. Several Mughal artists became specialist painters of flowers, animals or birds, such as Mansur, whom Jahangir called *Nadir al-'Asr*, 'Rarity of the Age' (see verso of cat. no. 143).



54 Incense burner in the form of a peacock *opposite*

Iran, 11th century
Bronze, inlaid with copper; height: 28 cm

55 Bird incense burner

Islamic Mediterranean, 11th–12th century?
Bronze; height: 17 cm; length: 22.5 cm

Incense was used in the Islamic world to scent people and air alike with a fragrant mix of aloes (wood), frankincense and ambergris. Guests of the ninth-century caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813–33) were offered an incense burner to perfume themselves before meeting with him, according to the historian al-Mas'udi (Bloom and Blair 2003, p. 120). Metalwork incense burners were made in a variety of shapes including animal forms such as lions and birds, and the fragrant smoke was emitted through the pierce-work decoration of their bodies. Birds were associated with paradise and good fortune and cat. no. 54 has turquoise bead eyes, thought to protect the owner from the evil eye and misfortune. This Khurasan-style bronze incense burner appears to be in the shape of a peacock with an interesting second bird head on its tail. It has an innovative design for an incense cup, a hemispherical bowl suspended under the belly, allowing the bowl to be filled but remaining concealed when the bird is set upright again. In cat. no. 55, in contrast, the head and neck are hinged to facilitate the placement of the incense. Cat. no. 55 is a masterpiece of medieval bronze casting. It is close in shape to contemporary Khurasan-style bird incense burners, but the casting is heavier and more sculptural and the colour and patination are different. The pierce-work holes are also larger. It has been suggested that this bird incense burner may have been produced in Sicily in the late eleventh or early twelfth century under its Arab and Norman governors, although research may yet indicate a different source.





THE CATALOGUE: PART TWO

The Power of the Sovereign



Cat. no. 61

Great Historical Courts

The Fatimids

By the late ninth century, the hegemony of the Abbasid Caliphate had weakened. Regional governors in Egypt and Iran exercised near-total control of their territories, paying lip-service to the caliph through the mention of his name in the Friday sermon (*khutba*) and in coinage and *tiraz* textiles produced at official manufactories. Some Islamic dynasties, such as the Umayyads of Spain, operated entirely outside the caliphate, while local leaders in parts of Syria and Arabia espoused Shiism. In 267 H/909 a new Shia leader, 'Abd Allah al-Mahdi, conquered Tunisia and founded a new capital at Mahdiyya. He followed the Ismaili doctrine of Shiism which claimed a new era of history would be heralded by the arrival of the Mahdi (the messiah), who would be descended from 'Ali and Fatima through Isma'il ibn Ja'far al-Sadiq. 'Abd Allah and his successors, the Fatimids, set themselves up as rivals to the Abbasids and within seven years of Imam al-Mahdi's conquest of Tunisia they had established a governor in Sicily. In 969 an exceptional general, Jawhar, occupied Egypt, and in 973 the fourth Fatimid Imam-caliph, al-Mu'izz, relocated the Fatimid capital to Cairo (al-Qahira, the Victorious), the new town he built on the Nile next to the pre-existing city of al-Fustat.

Although the Fatimids maintained their capital at Cairo, they taught their vision of Islam by proselytising through a broad regional organisation, the *da'wa*. At the height of their power in the late tenth century the Fatimids controlled Mecca and Madina, Yemen and parts of Palestine and Syria. Supported by an army of North African, Turkish and Sudanese soldiers, the Fatimids eventually suffered from internal dissensions that took both ideological and political forms. Exacerbating the power struggles within the military, drought led to economic woes in the 1060's and the inability of the Fatimid caliph to pay his army. In 1067, during the reign of al-Mustansir, the soldiers ransacked the Fatimid treasury. While this was a disaster for the Fatimid ruler, it has proved to be a boon for historians of Fatimid art because of the descriptions by the historians, Ibn al-Zubayr and Makrizi, of the objects dispersed from the treasury. While the Fatimid dynasty survived until 1171, its territories in Sicily, Syria and Palestine fell to its rivals and finally Saladin delivered the *coup de grâce* with his conquest of Egypt.

The historical descriptions of the Fatimid treasury corroborate the tangible evidence of the luxury and refinement of this court. Carved rock crystal vessels designed to contain precious substances such as attar (cat. no. 59), gossamer-thin textiles inscribed with the name and titles of the caliphs (cat. no. 62), and jewellery made of the finest filigree and enamel (cat. nos 63–66) reflect the Fatimid court's opulence. Fatimid art shows a loose influence of Abbasid and Byzantine prototypes. While some elements of Fatimid lustreware pottery derive from Abbasid lustrewares, the iconography of large hares (cat. no. 57), figures engaged in sports such as cock-fighting, and the combination of foliated epigraphy and geometric ornament (cat. no. 56) are more typical of the Fatimids than the Abbasids. The descriptions of the Fatimid treasury call attention to how much was lost, but the few items that remain are witness to a period of great cultural wealth.

56 Jar *see page 6*

Egypt, 10th–11th century
Earthenware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze; height: 29 cm
Published: Riyadh 1985, pp. 134–35

This intact Fatimid lustre jar is both rare and beautifully decorated: two horizontal registers of bold foliated kufic inscriptions, interlacing strapwork and fine scrollwork in reserve on a copper lustre background. The inscriptions in the roundels on the body include the words, 'blessing', 'perfect' and 'complete'. The inscription around the base reads, 'perfect blessing, complete, complete, complete, complete, perfect, complete'. Foliated kufic script in a similar style is also seen in *tiraz* textiles and marble inscriptions. No lustre jars with related calligraphic decoration survive, although there are comparable fragments in the Benaki Museum, Athens, and the Museum of Arab Art, Cairo. A late tenth- or early eleventh-century date has been suggested for the jar based on similarities of decoration, colour and size to jar fragments excavated at Bahnasa in Egypt by Dr Géza Fehérvári in 1986–87. The excavated fragments were found in a Fatimid house along with a jar that contained gold dinars bearing the names of the Fatimid Imam-caliphs al-'Aziz (r. 975–96) and his successor, al-Hakim (r. 996–1021) (see Fehérvári 1987). For examples of such gold dinars see cat. no. 58.

57 Bowl *see page 20*

Egypt, 11th century
Earthenware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze; diameter: 19.5 cm
Published: Falk 1985, p. 213 (no. 203)

Fatimid lustrewares are known for the lively naturalism of their decoration and the delightful hare on this bowl is no exception. Bold brushstrokes and a few interior details in reserve are enough to give this hare character: he lives large in the centre of this bowl, surrounded by exuberant foliate scrolls. Such decoration is typical of Fatimid lustreware. Widely popular throughout the Islamic world and especially during the Fatimid period in Egypt and Syria, hares appear on a number of artistic media, including ceramics, glass, textiles and wood. Hares were lauded in medieval Islamic sources for their agility and speed. Their depiction was also thought to bring beneficial powers such as prosperity, intelligence and longevity to the owner of the object.

58 Coins of the Fatimid period *opposite*

North Africa and Egypt, 10th–11th century
Gold; various dimensions

Manufactured in state-run mints, the coins of the Fatimids were a means of visual communication to a vast public, and a vehicle for enhancing the way people viewed the caliphate's power and prestige. Their high gold content and purity – sustained throughout the Fatimid period – testified to the economic and monetary wealth of the state. Inscribed with the names and titles of the Fatimid imam-caliphs, the coins are also usually dated. They serve as important historical documents, while the mint and place-names they bear illustrate the geographical extent of Fatimid rule. These coins are known for their fine, elegant epigraphy, and the myriad stylistic variations of their design. One example of this is the unusual and distinctive design that appears on coins produced in Palermo, Sicily. The central inscriptions on the reverse and obverse are arranged within segments so as to divide the surface into a star-like pattern.

The coins of the following Fatimid imam-caliphs are presented:

'Abd Allah al-Mahdi bi'llah (r. 909–934)	al-'Aziz bi'llah (r. 975–996)
al-Qa'im bi-Amr Allah (r. 934–946)	al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (r. 996–1021)
al-Mansur bi'llah (r. 946–953)	al-Zahir li-'Azaz Din Allah (r. 1021–1036)
al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (r. 953–975)	al-Mustansir bi'llah (r. 1036–1094)



59 Rock crystal bottle

Egypt, 10th–11th century
Rock crystal; height: 6 cm

60 Rock crystal dish

Egypt, 10th–11th century
Rock crystal; length: 9.3 cm

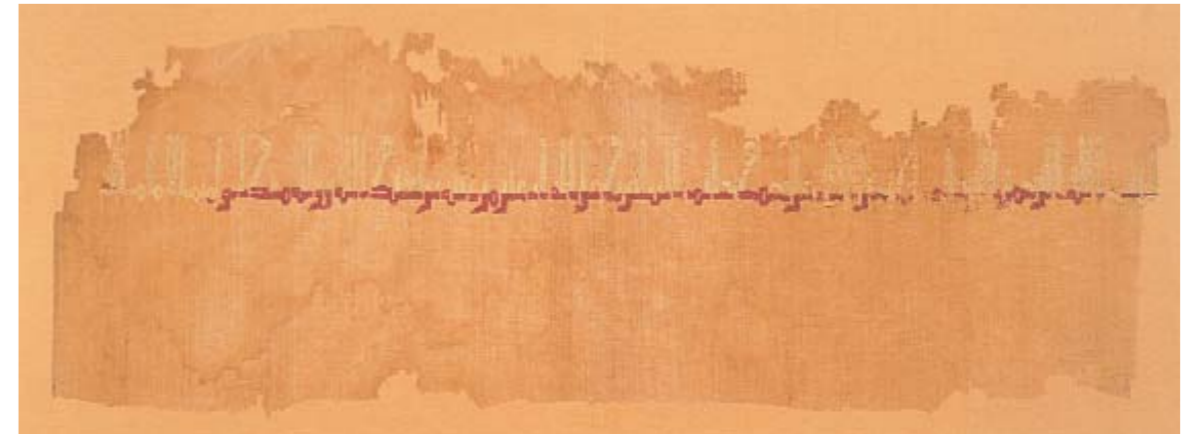
Precious objects fashioned from rock crystal were highly prized in Egypt. They may be linked to Fatimid Egypt as they are often mentioned in Fatimid treasury accounts, and there are extant objects inscribed with the names of Fatimid caliphs and officials. Valued throughout the centuries, Fatimid rock crystal objects are found today in European royal and church treasuries to which they were brought by Crusaders and travellers to the Holy Land. An extraordinary ewer in the San Marco church treasury, Venice, features an inscription with the name of the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-'Aziz (r. 975–96). The tubular-shaped bottle has as its sole decoration a kufic script inscription in Arabic which translates as 'Glory and prosperity to its owner'. The rectangular dish contains two circular compartments and is decorated with palmettes and scrolls in the familiar 'bevelled' style, which ultimately originates in the stucco decoration of Abbasid Samarra (Iraq). The vessel's shape is unusual and seemingly without parallel in rock crystal from this time. It may have been used as a cosmetics dish or double inkwell, though there are no extant contemporary rock crystal inkwells in single or double format.



61 Bottle see page 86

Egypt or Syria, 11th–12th century
Glass, mould blown; height: 28 cm

This unusual honey-yellow mould-blown glass bottle has two main panels of decoration featuring addorsed C-motifs, palmettes and concentric heart or chevron-shaped forms. There are two small applied loop handles on the shoulder. Mould-blowing was a Roman technique which was later adapted by glassmakers across the medieval Islamic world. The steps involved in the production of mould-blown glass begin with the creation of a mould (in bronze, terracotta or clay) with the final object's decoration in reverse on the interior of the mould. Next, the glassmaker introduces a glass gob (parison) on the blowpipe into the mould and inflates the glass until it reaches the recesses of the mould's pattern. Once taken from the mould, the object is re-blown (so-called optic blowing), manipulated, transferred to the pontil and finished. Thus, although mould-blowing has been described as a cost-effective, simple procedure in comparison to cut decoration, it was actually an involved process that required skill and creativity (see Carboni 2001, p. 197 for complete discussion of technique).



62 Tiraz textile

Egypt, 10th century
Linen, tapestry woven silk; 151 x 51 cm

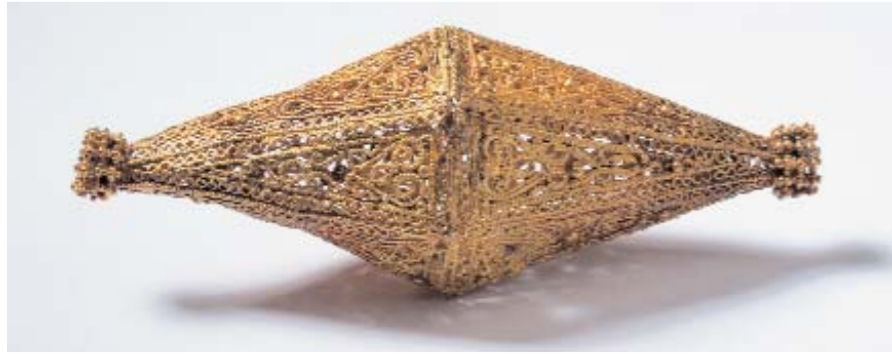
Tiraz refers to inscribed textiles, such as the robes of honour distributed by a ruler. It may also refer to the band of inscription on the textiles as well as the state workshops where they were produced (*dar al-tiraz*). The importance of clothing in Fatimid ceremonies created a constant demand for complete new wardrobes. The caliph regularly outfitted his entire court with lavish new clothing for religious, civil and military ceremonies. Egyptian weavers were kept busy making *tiraz* for both Fatimid and Abbasid caliphs at the same time. Few complete inscribed garments survive and the fragmentary nature of extant *tiraz* like this one make it difficult to identify their context or function. The foliated kufic inscription of this textile fragment includes blessings to the Prophet Muhammad and the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah (r. 952–75). The inscription may be translated as follows: 'In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful; and Allah's blessing upon Muhammad, Seal of the Prophets, and his progeny . . . from Allah . . . upon the servant of Allah and His Friend, Ma'add Abu Tamim, the Imam al-Mu[izz].'

63 Three enamelled gold jewellery elements

Egypt or Syria, 10th–11th century
Gold and cloisonné enamel; dimensions: 3.2 cm; 2.9 cm; 2.6 cm, respectively

These pendants reflect the superb craftsmanship of goldsmiths working in Egypt and Syria during the Fatimid period (969–1171), especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries (see cat. nos 64–66). The crescent (*hila*) shape was particularly popular. Semiprecious stones or pearls may have been suspended from the loops on each pendant, which was made of typical Fatimid box construction featuring filigree and gold strips embellished with granulation. The colourful cloisonné-enamel plaques pose a separate issue. The scarce evidence for medieval Islamic enamelled objects and the bountiful contemporary descriptions of Byzantine enamelled jewellery in the Islamic world such as those in the Cairo Geniza (see cat. nos 64–66), have led scholars to wonder if the cloisonné-enamel plaques in Fatimid jewellery were actually ready-made Byzantine enamel plaques imported into Egypt and Syria. A pendant in the Metropolitan Museum, stylistically similar to the present crescents, is presented as further support for this thesis by Marilyn Jenkins-Madina. The enamel plaque in the MMA pendant was not secured to the object's structure; rather, the pendant was constructed first and the plaque was adhered to the surface afterward via adhesive, a curious technical oversight for a talented craftsman, unless the plaque was bought separately. Not surprisingly, another Fatimid gold pendant in the MMA is missing its enamelled plaque (Jenkins-Madina 1997, pp. 420–21).





64 Biconical gold bead

Egypt or Syria, 11th century
Gold; height: 2.9 cm; length: 7.2 cm, weight: 18 grams

65 Three gold filigree rings

Egypt, 10th–11th century
Gold; height: 2.5 cm; 3.4 cm; 3.1 cm, respectively

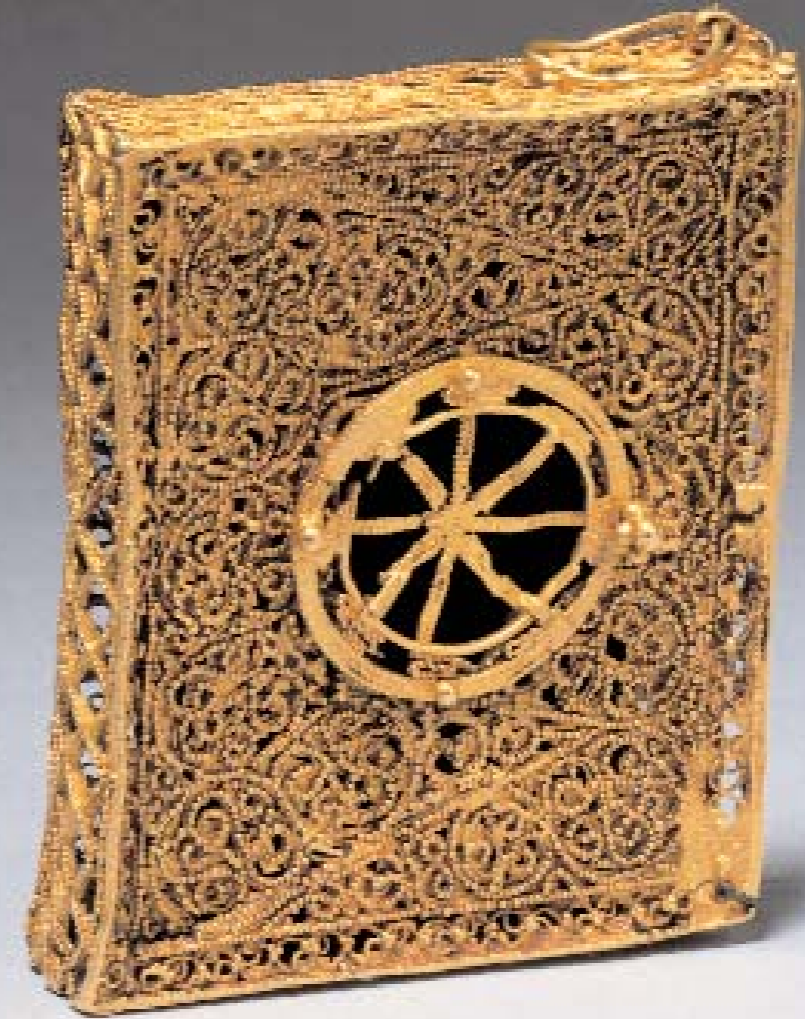


66 Gold filigree miniature Qur'an case *opposite*

Egypt, 11th century
Gold; length: 4.7 cm

Fatimid goldsmiths were renowned for their high-quality workmanship. Precious objects such as this miniature Qur'an case and jewellery, including necklaces of bi-conical (cat. no. 64) and spherical beads, pendants (cat. no. 63), and a variety of rings (cat. no. 65), all made from gold filigree work and embellished with gold granulation were produced in eleventh-century Fatimid Egypt and Greater Syria. The rings and bi-conical bead exhibit the typical Fatimid filigree arabesques and S shapes with granulation. This filigree work was called *mushhabbak* (latticework) in twelfth-century trousseau lists from the Cairo Geniza documents, which are an important source for the study of medieval Mediterranean history (Jenkins-Madina 1997, pp. 419–20, quoting Goitein 1967–83, vol. 4, pp. 211–12).

The miniature Qur'an case is a beautiful example of Fatimid-style granulated filigree decoration, exposing the goldsmith's skill with different patterns on each side. The front has dense foliate scrollwork formed into a programme of circles and triangles around a central panel (with missing inset), while the reverse exhibits a geometric lattice based on interlocking hexagons. The case would have contained a miniature Qur'an and hung around the wearer's neck, suspended by two loops (one is missing here). The influence of the Fatimid goldsmiths' work extended far and wide; the goldsmiths' decorative vocabulary was adapted later by the Mamluks (r. 1250–1517) and in Spain by the Nasrids (r. 1232–1492).





Cat. no. 68

The Ottomans

The works in this section mostly date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the period of large, powerful empires which dominated the Middle East, North Africa, and India. Known as the Gunpowder Empires, the Ottomans (r. 1299–1924), Safavids (r. 1501–1722), and the Mughals (r. 1526–1858) ruled in an age of increasing global trade, not only between Europe and Asia but also with Africa and the Americas. With the wealth gleaned from trade and conquest, the sultans and shahs of these dynasties were directly involved in forging distinct artistic styles of architecture, ornament and painting through which they broadcast their imperial message.

In the sixteenth century, following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the sultans supported the formation of an imperial Ottoman style in the arts. In textiles and ceramics a penchant for non-figurative decoration manifested itself in designs based on floral and vegetal forms. Unlike Iran, where poetic and epic texts were most often chosen for illustration, the Ottomans preferred to illustrate historical manuscripts either chronicling their own history or that of the prophets. Foreign trade and the extent of the Ottoman empire, which included Arabia, the Levant, parts of Eastern Europe and Egypt, led to stylistic changes in painting, architecture and ceramics. Nonetheless, in all the lands under Ottoman control distinct artistic and architectural forms reinforced their presence.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Ottomans extended their version of 'branding' to portraiture. Ottoman portraits (cat. nos 68 and 69) depict the sultan dominating his surroundings and accompanied by attributes specific to himself. Series of portraits of the Ottoman sultans were produced for albums where their sheer numbers placed them in marked contrast to the Safavids, Mongols and Uzbeks, all dynasties that came to power in the sixteenth century. Although distinct artistic styles developed at different Muslim courts, the aim of using art to present the ruler as regal, cultured and powerful was common to all of them.

67 Dish detail, see also page 206

Turkey, Iznik, second half of the 16th century
Stoneware body, polychrome underglaze painting on opaque white glaze; diameter: 34.3 cm
Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 204–05; Falk 1985, pp. 244–45 (no. 248)

Just as books of genealogical portraits served to reinforce the sultans' dynastic legitimacy and power, the imperial decorative style developed by the Ottoman court design atelier (*nakka hane*) during the golden age of artistic patronage in the mid sixteenth century broadcast the power and breadth of the empire through a unified and recognisable style. The *nakka hane*'s decorative vocabulary of tulips, carnations, palmettes and serrated *saz* leaves was applied to a range of artistic media, effectively stamping the Ottoman 'logo' on everything from architectural tilework to ceramics, textiles and metalwork objects. Iznik tiles and ceramic wares represent some of the most magnificent expressions of this Ottoman style (see also cat. nos 44 and 45). Tulips and flowers in full bloom spring forth from a single tuft of grass in this dish decorated in the classic four-colour palette of turquoise, blue, emerald green and outstanding relief red. The organic yet organised floral symmetry seen in this dish and in cat. no. 45 is typical of the greatest wares produced during the reign of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95). Atasoy and Raby date Iznik wares in this style to the reign of this great patron of the arts based on stylistic and technical similarities with contemporary datable architectural tiles (Atasoy and Raby 1989, pp. 246–49).



68 Portrait of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) see page 94

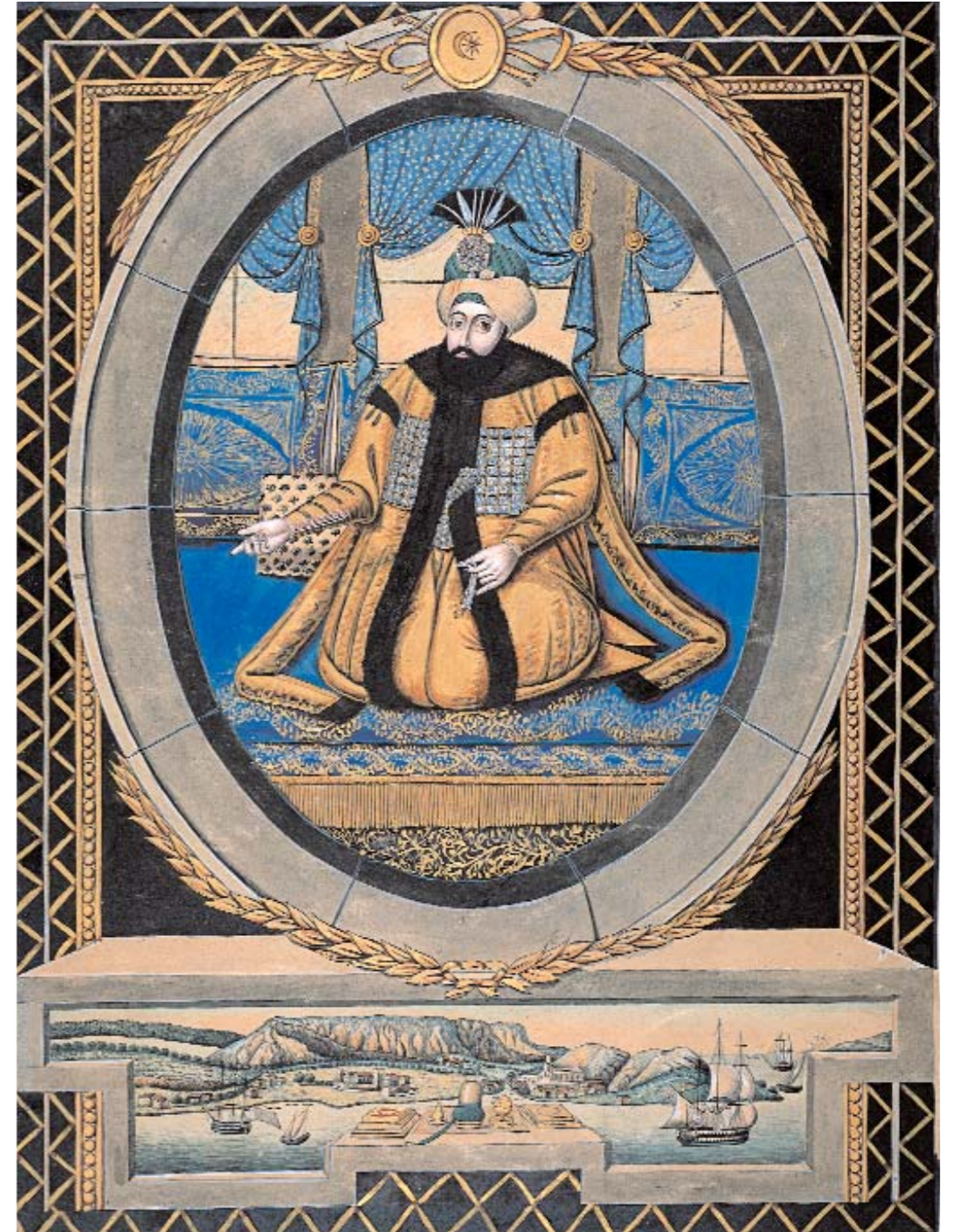
Attributed to Haydar Reis, called Nigari
Turkey, Istanbul, c.1570
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 44.2 x 31.2 cm; image: 37.3 x 27.4 cm
Later inscription in window panes: 'sultan' (right); 'Iya kabikach' (left) (an invocation against bookworms)
2005.1.219 (TM 5)
Published: Carboni 2006, pp. 142, 297; Canby 1998, pp. 97–99 (no. 70)

This large album portrait of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) reveals much about his reign. It was Selim's father, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1522–66), who solidified the geographical borders of the Ottoman Empire and refined the central administration of his government, allowing his son and successor to pursue more sedentary pleasures such as literature, art and wine-drinking. Nicknamed 'Selim the Sor' for his affection for wine, the sultan was nonetheless a great bibliophile and patron of architecture, music and the arts of the book. The painter, poet and naval commander Haydar Reis depicted Selim II as larger than life; the robust sultan in his luxurious fur-lined and brocaded gold garment dwarfs both the page boy and the interior in which he sits in a cross-legged position on a carpet. This composition was one of a number of conventions for Ottoman royal portraiture developed in 1570s and is similar to portraits in Loqman's *Kiyafetü'l-Insaniye fi Semailü'l-Osmaniye*, a study to record the physiognomy of the Ottoman sultans. See also cat. no. 69.

69 Portrait of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) opposite

Turkey, Istanbul, c.1805
Opaque watercolour and gold on thick paper; page: 54.1 x 40.5 cm
2005.1.220 (TM 6)
Published: Canby, 1998, p. 103 (no. 75)

Royal portrait series bound into albums provided an important way for Ottoman sultans to record their lineage and statecraft. The portraits of Selim II (cat. no. 68) and Selim III (r. 1789–1807) are examples of this venerable tradition. This image of Selim III represents a different format for Ottoman royal portraiture. It demonstrates the profound effect of European painting, particularly French, on Ottoman art by the nineteenth century. Of note are the attention to shading and a grisaille, blue and gold palette, as well as the painting's presentation as an oval window set on an allegory of the Sultan's reign, framed on a black ground highlighted with gold details. Sheila Canby suggests that the buildings in the distance may be the new army barracks built by Selim III at Haydarpasha in Istanbul or restorations of Mevlevi complexes. In either case, this depiction reflects the Ottoman interest in topographical representations and maps (cat. no. 25). Continuing this story of cross-cultural influence, the series to which this portrait belongs subsequently provided the inspiration for a London printed version of Ottoman Sultan portraits published in 1815 by John Young, *A Series of Portraits of the Emperors of Turkey*: Engraved from Pictures Painted at Constantinople.



The Safavids

The Safavid shahs of Iran were not only the first native Iranian dynasty to unite the country for nearly a millennium, but also they introduced Shia Islam as the state religion. The impact of this institutionalised faith was wide-reaching. It instilled Iranians with an intensified sense of religious and national identity that set them apart from their Sunni rivals, the Ottomans and Uzbeks. While Safavid painters of the early sixteenth century synthesised the styles they had inherited from the Turkman court at Tabriz and the Timurids at Herat, the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a new emphasis on single-page paintings made for inclusion in albums. New styles in metalwork included openwork steel plaques and small objects, while Safavid potters relied on Chinese prototypes for their inspiration.

Foreign influences also had an impact on the arts of the Islamic world in this period. In Mamluk Syria, Chinese blue and white porcelains inspired new floral patterns on tiles, while the medicinal jars called *albarelli* (cat. no. 101), presumably made for export, were decorated with European coats of arms. An interest in portraiture intensified in the seventeenth century in Turkey, Iran and India, in part reflecting the increased importation of European prints including portraits of kings and other notable people. Different conventions for royal portraiture developed at different courts. The Safavid shahs of Iran were portrayed at official gatherings greeting foreign diplomats in works on paper (cat. no. 72) and on the walls of the Chihil Sutun, a royal palace built in the 1640s in Isfahan. These scenes emphasise the shah's supremacy and magnanimity.



Cat. no. 70 (detail)

70 Shah 'Abbas I of Iran attended by a page opposite and page 98 (detail)

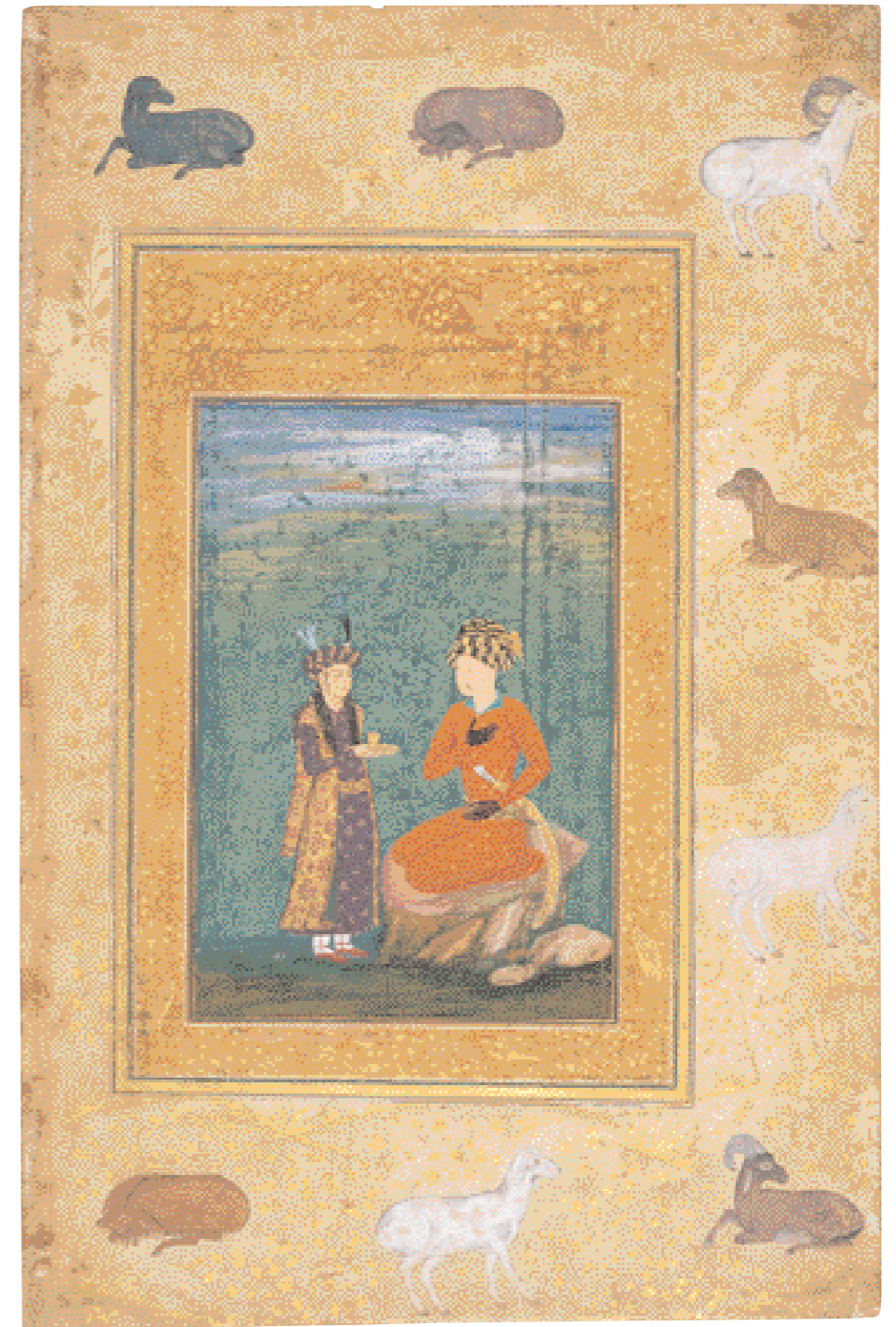
Mughal India, mid 18th century
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 39.2 x 25.3 cm; image: 18.1 x 12.3 cm
2005.1.139 (M 145)

Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) kneels on a rock and is attended by a young page wearing a fur-lined gold coat with embroidered decoration, a purple robe and an elaborate turban with aigrette feathers. He holds out a tray with a cup to Shah 'Abbas. This is a Mughal portrait of the Safavid ruler which highlights Shah 'Abbas's small stature by placing him in a kneeling position at eye level with his opulently dressed page. They are set low and small within an undefined space. There is a similarly unflattering portrait of Shah 'Abbas in the British Museum (Canby 2005, pp. 36–37) attributed to the Mughal artist Bishn Das, who was in Iran to record the meeting between Shah 'Abbas I and Khan 'Alam, the Mughal ambassador. The present portrait of Shah 'Abbas has been mounted onto an album page with wide margins decorated with sheep. The sheep recall another biased Mughal depiction of the Safavid ruler, in which Shah 'Abbas is standing on a lamb, locked in an embrace with the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27; Freer Gallery of Art, 42.16). In that imaginary meeting, painted by Abu'l Hasan (c.1618–42), Jahangir is clearly in the dominant position: he stands on a lion, a symbol of kingship, and towers over the smaller Safavid ruler whose stance on a lamb symbolises peace but also weakness in comparison to Jahangir's lion. The reverse of this page contains verses by Hafiz written in diagonal lines of elegant *nasta'liq* by 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi 'Anbarin Qalam'.

71 Dish

Iran, 17th century
Stonepaste body, with blue underglaze painting;
diameter: 46.6 cm

This Safavid dish is a superb and faithful interpretation of an early fifteenth-century Chinese lotus bouquet-style dish. From the gentle sway of the floral composition, tied with a ribbon in the form of a cloud band, to the wave scroll pattern on the foliated rim, the elegance and lyricism of the Chinese model shines through in this Safavid version. Chinese porcelain examples dating from the Ming dynasty, Xuande reign (1426–1535), are in the shrine of Shaykh Safi al-Din at Ardabil and in the Topkapı Saray Museum in Istanbul. The Safavids and Ottomans greatly admired fine Chinese porcelain and both courts possessed vast collections which in turn served as inspiration for local production. While Ottoman potters tended to adapt Chinese motifs to the distinctive Ottoman decorative grammar (cat. nos 45 and 67), Safavid potters often demonstrated their prowess by following the Chinese models closely. The present dish even includes a pseudo-Chinese reign mark on its base. Iranian production of these wares increased greatly in the seventeenth century when exports from China were curtailed, during the transition from the Ming to the Qing (c. 1630–1670).



72 Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) and the Mughal ambassador *see also pages 84–5*

Iran, Isfahan, c.1663
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, pasted on blue cardboard; page: 24.2 x 33.2 cm; image: 20 x 31.4 cm
2005.1.110 (Ir.M. 93)
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 80–81 (no. 53); Diba 1998, pp. 148–49

Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) sits centre stage in this elegant reception which overflows with sumptuously dressed courtiers in striped turbans (some wrapped around a red *kula*) bearing strings of pearls and turban-ornaments with tufts of black feathers. Musicians play their instruments and servants bring gold-covered dishes and gold cups on trays. Shah 'Abbas appears in regal splendour wearing a jewelled dagger and sword at his waist, and on his head an elaborate striped turban adorned with jewels, curling white feathers and tuft of black feathers. He is identified by a *thuluth* inscription on the building behind him: 'The Lord of the Court, the Lord of the Two Conjunctions, the Victorious, Shah 'Abbas, may God make his rule eternal.' This painting, with its masterful use of European-style techniques including shading and tonal perspective, has generated much scholarly debate over its attribution (for a summary, see Canby 1998, pp. 80–81). Diba recently published this painting as a historical portrait by the Zand artist Abu'l Hasan Ghaffari Mustawfi Kashani (fl.1781–94) who had trained as a Zand historian and was known for historical portraits of Safavid and Turkman rulers, in addition to paintings of his own family and that of Karim Khan Zand. She makes a stylistic comparison to his 'lively composition, broad-shouldered figures, stiff turbans, and placid faces of the youths' which look back to early eighteenth century style, and supports her attribution by citing similar epigraphic panels in *thuluth* script found in arched bays in two other paintings by the artist (Diba 1998, pp. 148–49; 1989, p. 156). The painting is called *Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) and the Mughal Ambassador*, although the identity of the 'Ambassador' – a small bearded man in white wearing a red turban and an Indian *qatar* at his belt, gesturing with upturned hand toward the Shah – remains unresolved. The arguments are summarised by Canby who suggests another alternative for the identity of the ambassador: the Indian rulers of Deccani Bijapur and Golconda, who sought Safavid help against the Mughals in the second half of the seventeenth century (Canby 1998, pp. 80–81).



73 Shah Safi (r. 1629–42) at a picnic with ambassadors *opposite*

India, 19th century
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 28.5 x 17.7 cm
M 276

The scene of a Safavid ruler entertaining a foreign ambassador with music and refreshments in an opulent court setting was a popular one as it reinforced the power and grandeur of the ruler (see cat. no. 72). The painting is likely a copy after a lost original, based on a type of seventeenth-century composition known from the time of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666), such as the painting depicting the audience of the Mughal ambassador Tarbiyat Khan and Shah 'Abbas II ascribed to Shaykh 'Abbasi and dated 1074 H/1663–34 (Welch 1973, p. 100, no. 62). The ambassador in the present painting may be a European, as suggested by his hat. The unusual feather headdresses on some of the figures could be a misplaced reference to the Mongols. The painting's lavish use of gold and bright palette of contrasting colours may suggest an attribution in the Deccan.



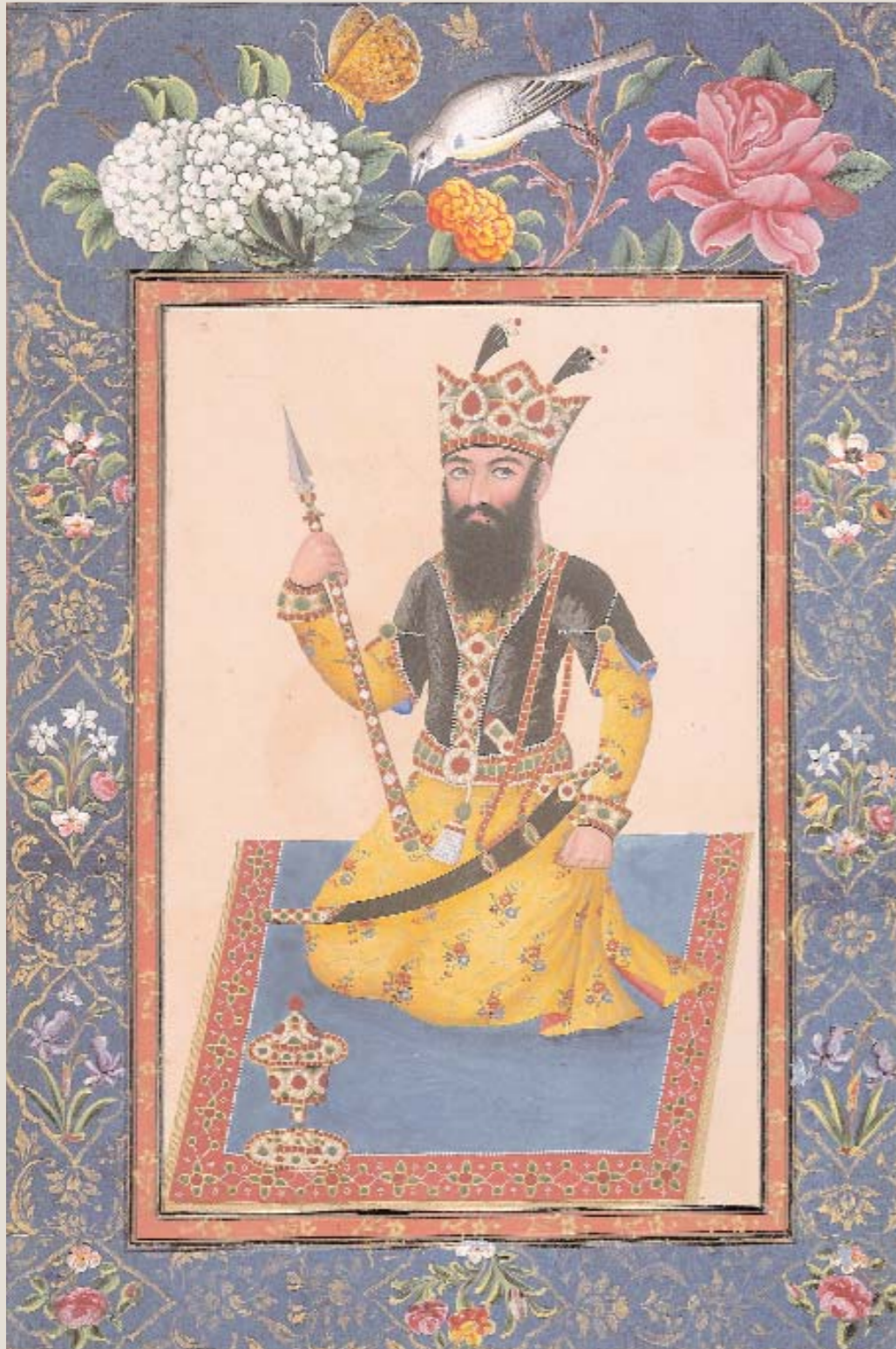
The Qajars

The Qajar dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1779 to 1925, was descended from a Turkman tribe that rose to prominence under the Safavids (r. 1501–1722). In the second half of the eighteenth century Karim Khan Zand and his heirs controlled Fars province in southern Iran but could not bring the rest of the country to heel for any extended period of time. In this period the Qajar heir, Agha Muhammad, was kept under house arrest at the Zand court where he was castrated. A desire for revenge fuelled Agha Muhammad's eventual rebellion against the Zands and his consolidation of power. Upon his death in 1797, his nephew Fath 'Ali Khan, acceded to the throne.

Fath 'Ali Shah began his reign on shaky political ground and did not experience unqualified military success. Yet he masterminded the promotion of his imperial image to a far greater extent than earlier kings of Iran had done. His long black beard and narrow waist emphasised his manliness and made his image instantly recognisable. In addition, Fath 'Ali devised a new Kaianian crown which stressed his royal connection with the ancient Achaemenid emperors of Iran. Numerous portraits of Fath 'Ali Shah were produced for wide dissemination; at the same time, court artists produced lifesize portraits of him in oil on canvas for installation in palatial dwellings.

While Fath 'Ali Shah looked to the past to validate his reign, Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96) embraced new artists and technological ideas from Europe. The shah developed an interest in photography, taking pictures himself of members of his household. Painting styles changed to reflect this new preoccupation. The Qajar period was also the heyday of Persian lacquerware, which had been used for pen boxes, book covers and caskets increasingly since the late fifteenth century. Bird and flower motifs were especially popular on Qajar lacquers, though portraits and vignettes after European print sources also found their way onto them.

Politically the Qajars could not withstand the pressure to open markets to European countries; this monopolised lucrative industries and weakened the shahs' economic control of the country. Culturally, the Qajars encouraged traditional arts such as calligraphy while showing a curiosity about the outside world. This sometimes contradictory combination resulted in an immediately recognisable artistic style that frequently served the shahs' political purposes.

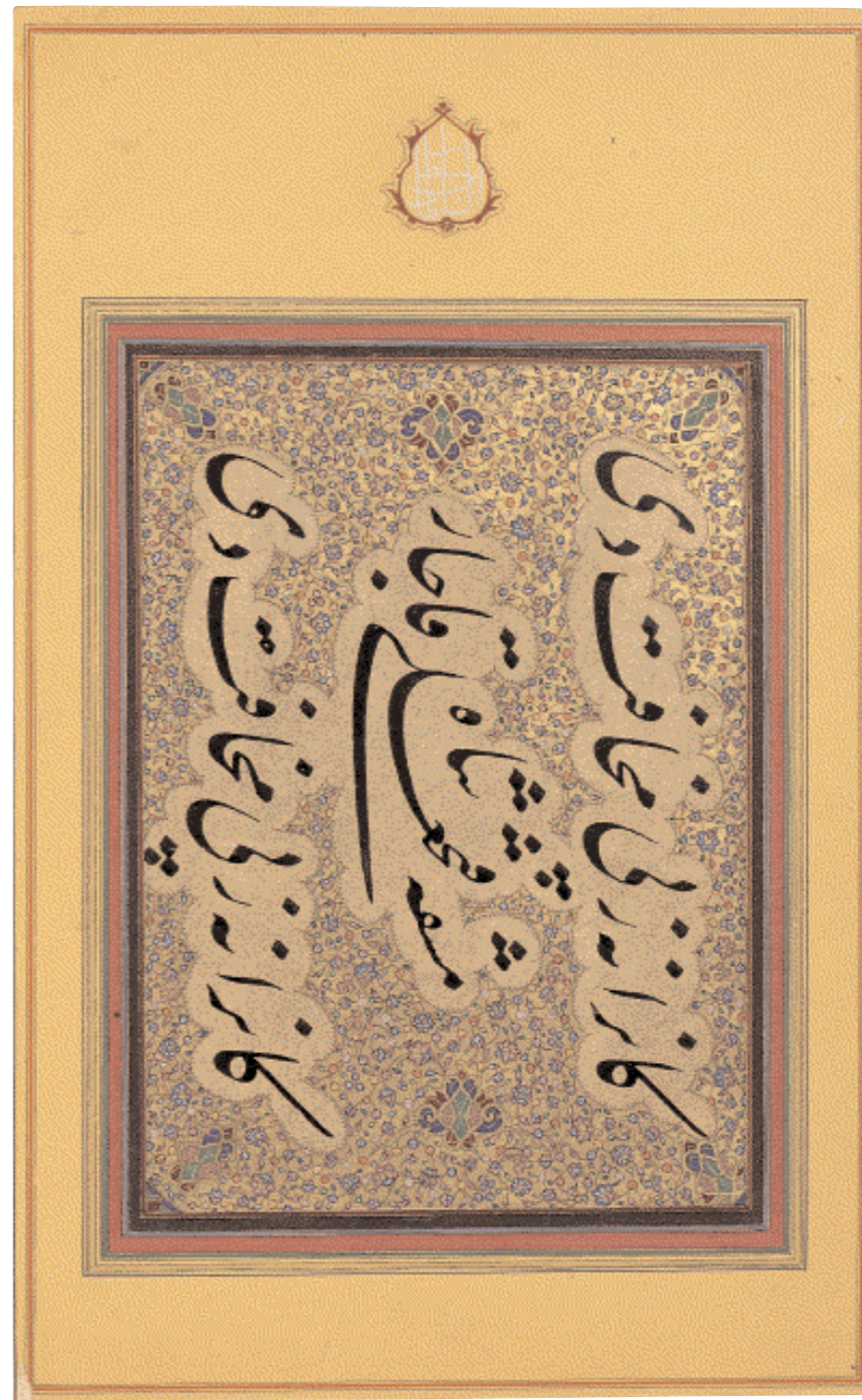
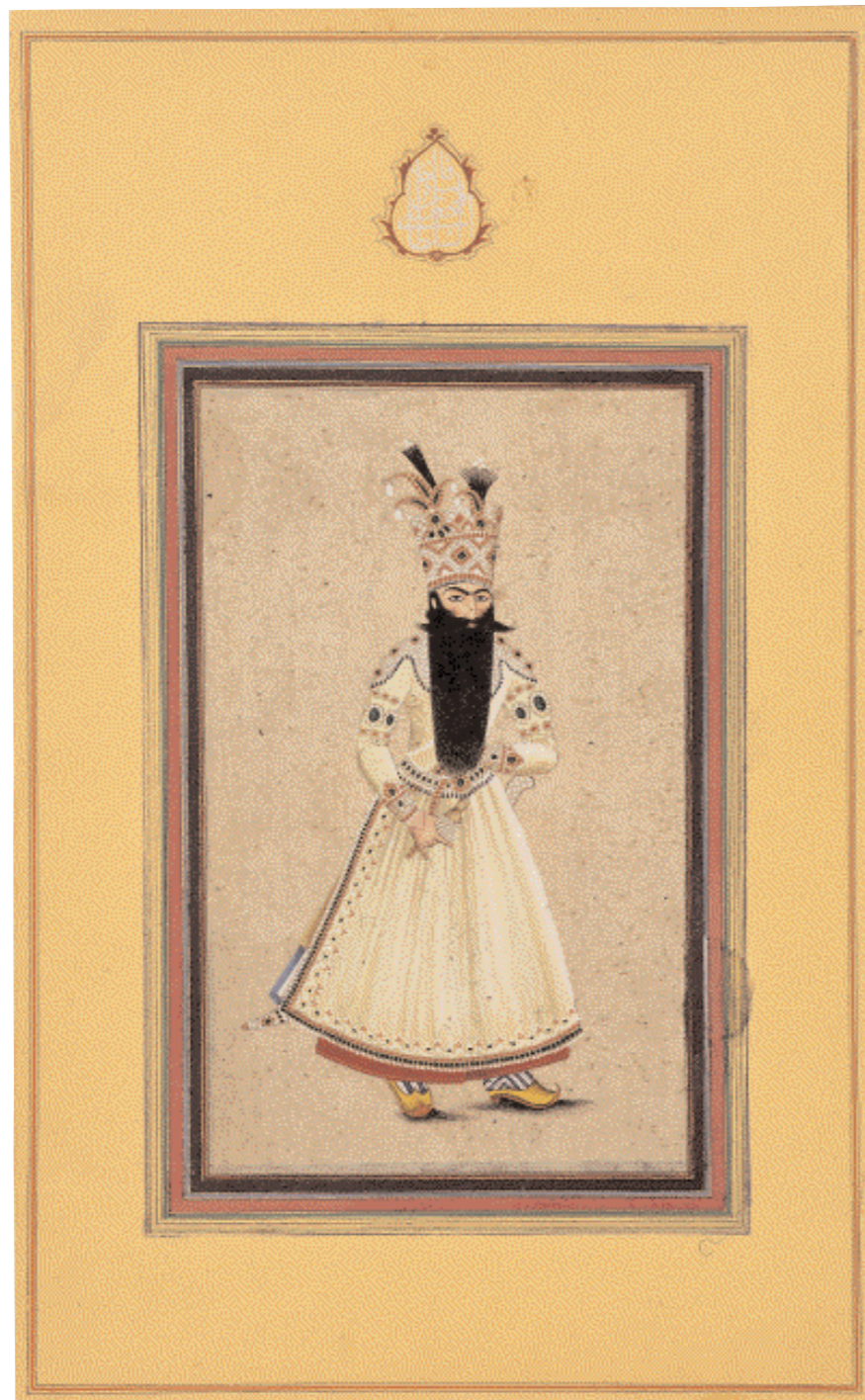


Cat. no. 76 (detail)

74 Double album page

Iran, early 19th century
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 33.3 x 20.5 cm

This double-page opening features a portrait of the Qajar ruler Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) and a calligraphic exercise signed by him. Even in miniature, this portrait of Fath 'Ali Shah with his full beard and formal regalia manages to convey the same monumentality and power as life-size imperial enthronement scenes of the ruler (for comparison, see the Hermitage portrait, VR-1107; Diba 1998, p. 183). Perhaps the present double-page once belonged to an album like the early nineteenth-century one with calligraphies and portraits of rulers, including one of Fath 'Ali Shah on the Sun Throne (cat. no. 76).



75 The Court of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) with foreign ambassadors and envoys

Iran, Tehran, c.1815
Opaque water and gold on paper. Left panel: 32 x 125,5 cm; central panel: 34,3 x 52,3 cm; right panel: 31,8 x 129,5 cm

Fath 'Ali Shah appears in opulent regal splendour, the pomp and glory of his reign resonating even in miniature in this brilliant triptych. The power of the monarch is enhanced by his impressive retinue: his own sons alongside retainers and ambassadors from France, Great Britain, Russia, the Ottoman Empire and the kingdoms of Sind and Arabia are all depicted in meticulous detail. Fath 'Ali Shah's reign (r. 1798–1834) brought stability to Qajar Iran and he was keen to transmit his image of kingship through elaborate court etiquette and portraits of himself. The present painting is a copy of life-size wall paintings prepared in 1812–13 for the reception hall of Negarestan Palace outside Tehran. The wall paintings, which were also reproduced in oil and as engravings, represented an imaginary New Year's reception, though foreign ambassadors did actually visit the Qajar court on different occasions (Diba, 1998, pp. 174–76). If these copies were for diplomatic distribution, as seems likely, they were part of Fath 'Ali Shah's propaganda and show of grandeur.



Detail of above



76 *Muraqqa'* (album) of portraits and calligraphies *see also pages 104 and 196*

Iran, Tehran, early 18th – early 19th century
 16 hinged folios, opaque watercolour, gold leaf, and ink on paper, in a contemporary lacquer binding; 29.2 x 19.5 cm
 2005.1.275 (MS 23)
 Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 98–119; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 132–34 (no. 45); Diba 1998, pp. 176–78

This album (*muraqqa'*) opens in concertina-style format to reveal twelve Persian ruler-portraits and eighteen calligraphy specimens mounted onto decorated pages. The calligraphy pages are written in *shikasteh*, *thuluth*, *naskh* and *nasta'liq* script, set within finely illuminated floral borders. Amongst the twelve portraits, there are three of the most important Kings of the *Shahnama*,

Jamshid, Kai Khusrau and Kai Kavus. There are also portraits of Timur and Genghis Khan, and of Safavid, Zand and Qajar rulers. A painting of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) in opulent imperial finery on the Sun Throne on fol. 3v contains a medallion inscribed with his name and the date 1234 H/1819. The album may have been commissioned by Fath 'Ali Shah or presented to him by an attentive courtier. According to B. W. Robinson, the album is perhaps a 'portable' version of the large oil paintings commissioned by Fath 'Ali Shah from Mir 'Ali for the 'Imarat-i Naw palace in Isfahan (Ekhtiar in Diba 1998, p. 176). Like the life-size portraits of past and contemporary rulers, this album represents another way the Qajars used the visual arts to convey imperial power and dynastic legitimacy.

77 Enamelled gold compendium

Iran, 19th century
Enamelled gold; 9 cm

Every surface of this rare and beautiful enamelled gold compendium has been decorated and finished to a high level of craftsmanship. The design is European and includes a universal equinoctial dial. It reflects the Qajar court taste for personal luxury objects and an interest in scientific knowledge and in trade with Europe.



78 Lacquer pen box

Iran, dated 1282 H/1865
Papier-mâché, painted and lacquered; length: 26.8 cm
Signed: Isma'il (Muhammad Isma'il)
Published: Robinson 1989, figs. 1, 10; Karimzadeh Tabrizi 1990, Col. 1, p. 457

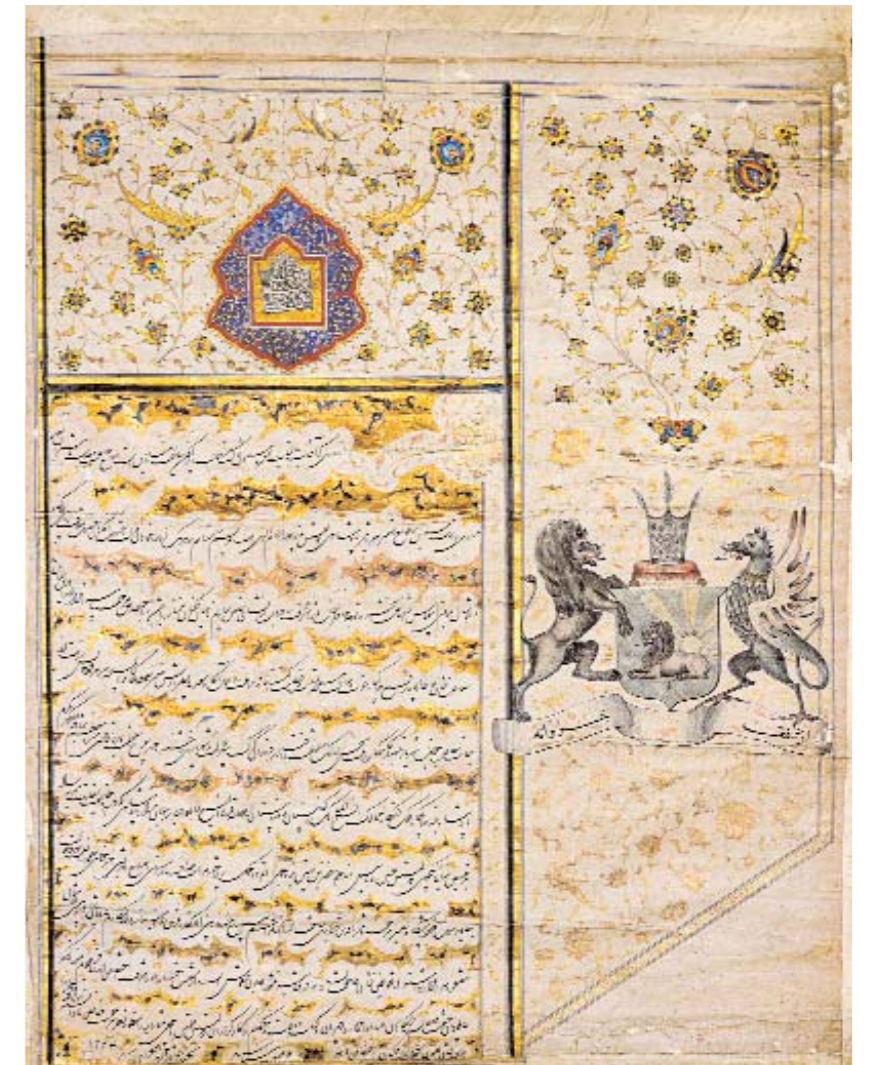
The visual arts flourished under Qajar patronage in the nineteenth century and lacquer painting was a particular speciality (see cat. nos 43, 81 and 110 for examples of bookbinding and a bow). The scribe's humble pen box was often transformed into a work of beauty and this box is no exception: it is highly decorated with images of familiar political, legendary, literary and mystical themes. The Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah holds court in a central cartouche; legendary kings are crowned; poems of Sa'di and Nizami are illustrated; and there are six portraits of Sufi dervishes. This important pen box is signed by the Qajar painter laureate (*naqqash bashi*), Muhammad Isma'il, who was active in the mid nineteenth century and famous for his lacquer paintings. On the inside of the drawer, it contains a miniature self-portrait of the artist wearing an Astrakhan hat, paintbrush in hand, in an oval cartouche. A couplet above and below identifies the artist's name, Isma'il.



79 Royal Order of Fath 'Ali Shah

Iran, dated Muharram 1224 H/March 1809
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; 61.2 x 47.4 cm
Published: Raby 1999, pp. 24–25 (no. 101)

This official document (*firman*) written in *shikasteh*, the primary chancery script of the Qajars, declares that Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834) honours Sir Harford Jones, the British envoy to Iran in 1809–11, with an order which is depicted at the right. The British had simultaneously sent Sir Harford Jones from London and Brigadier-General John Malcolm from India to repair relations with the Qajars after the latter had concluded a treaty with the French in 1807 upon receiving no assistance from the British to repel the Russians in the Caucasus. This royal letter, dated Muharram 1224 H/March 1809, was likely prepared for Sir Harford Jones's arrival. The order combines a British-style lion and dragon rampant with the Qajar lion couchant and sun, with the Qajar Kaianian crown (*taj-i kaiyani*) above. Royal orders were a coveted honour and Jones was evidently so pleased with his order that after he returned to Britain he had it incorporated into his coat of arms, even including the Persian legend under the crest, '*az shafaqat khusravani*' (By royal favour) (for an illustration, see Wright 1977, pp. 60–61).





80 Official letter from Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza to Napoleon I

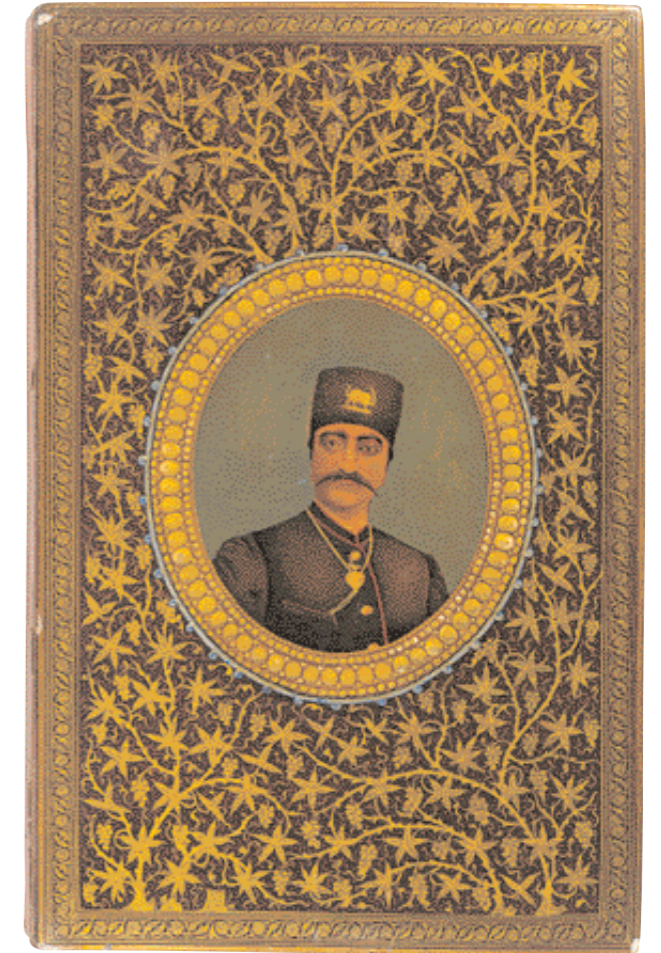
Iran, dated 1808
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 120 x 58 cm
2005.1.251 (CAL 088)
Published: Falk 1985, pp. 193–94 (no. 182)

Diplomatic relations between the Qajars and the West began to open up again during the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834). The period between 1805, when Napoleon inaugurated exchange with the Qajars and the date of this letter (1808) saw a number of intense diplomatic exchanges and treaties between the Qajars and the French and British, as loyalties shifted in the context of the Perso–Russian wars (see also cat. nos 79 and 82). Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza (1789–1833), son and heir apparent of Fath 'Ali Shah, was governor of Azerbaijan and based at Tabriz, where he organised military campaigns – with the latest French military technology and training – for the control of Georgia and Azerbaijan. This letter, which arrived in Paris on 17 February 1809 according to an inscription on its reverse ('Lettre du Prince Abbas Mirza à S. M. Impériale, écrite à la fin de l'année 1808, et arrivée à Paris le 17 février 1809') was written by nineteen-year-old Prince 'Abbas Mirza to the French emperor Napoleon I. The Prince remarks upon the Emperor's two-year silence, describes how the Russians have been breaking their treaty, and asks Napoleon what he plans to do about it, since the Prince's troops are ready for battle (see Layla Diba in Falk 1985, pp. 193–94, with further references). It was a British envoy, Sir John Kinneir Macdonald, who helped arrange the final treaty of Turkmanchai with Russia in 1828 and financially supported Prince 'Abbas Mirza after the loss of Tabriz to the Russians (see cat. no. 82).

81 Manuscript of *Gulshan-i Raz* of Shabistari

By Shaykh Sa'd al-Din Mahmud
Iran, Tehran, dated Shawwal-Dhu'l-Qa'da 1310 H/1893
Painting and varnish on pasteboard
Binding: 18.5 x 12 x 2.2 cm; page: 18.2 x 11.4 cm; text: 13.6 x 7 cm
2005.1.276 (MS 24)
Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 120–23

The Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96) appears in a central portrait medallion on this lacquer binding decorated with scrolling vine-plants in gold. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the increasing influence of European powers and Nasir al-Din Shah responded with a combination of conservatism and modernity. The *Dar al-Funun*, Iran's first polytechnic (1851), was modelled on western institutions. This lacquer binding likewise combines modernity with conservatism: a European-style portrait medallion of Nasir al-Din Shah is set within a more traditional vegetal composition in gold on a dark ground. The roots of Qajar lacquer bookbinding are much deeper and are found within the Timurid traditions of fifteenth century Herat (see cat. no. 43). The *Gulshan-i Raz* (Secret Rose Garden) is a Sufi poem composed in 1311 by Shaykh Sa'd al-Din Mahmud b. 'Abd al-Karim b. Yahya al-Shabistari (d. 1320–21), arranged in a format of fifteen rhetorical questions posed by Amir Husayni of Khurasan, with lengthy answers by the author.



82 Qajar Order of the Lion and Sun

France, c.1840
Gold, enamel, gemstone and paste; diameter: 7.4 cm

Diamonds and rubies encircle an enamelled lion and sun above three large green paste stones in this early Qajar Order of the Lion and the Sun, which is further ornamented by a radiating six-pointed star pattern of garnets, pastes and red enamel set in gold. The Qajars developed a series of orders inspired by Western examples and comprising stars, plaques and collars. Worn by rulers themselves and bestowed upon high-ranking civil officials, nobles and foreign diplomats for their distinguished service, the order was a highly coveted honour (see cat. nos 78 and 79). This elaborate order follows in date the First Class Set of the Order dated 1242 H/1828 which may have been awarded to Sir John Kinneir Macdonald (1782–1830), the East India Company envoy who helped arrange the final treaty of Turkmanchai with Russia in 1828 (Diba 1998, p. 204) (see cat. no. 80).



The Mughals



Cat. no. 85 (detail)

The first Mughal emperor of India, Babur, was born in Central Asia, the descendant of Timur (Tamerlane) and Chinghiz (Genghis) Khan. Despite his pedigree, he failed to realise his ambition of conquering Samarkand and from 1514 until 1526 he turned his energies to Afghanistan and then to India. In 1526 Babur defeated the Lodi Sultan of Delhi at the Battle of Panipat and thus began to rule northern India. Following Babur's death in 1530, his son and heir, Humayun, struggled to hold onto power in India. After a period of exile in Iran and delay in Afghanistan, however, he regained Delhi and Agra in 1555. Humayun brought artists with him from the Safavid court of Iran, whom he had invited to work in his library. His untimely death in 1556 meant that his son, Akbar, benefited from these émigrés far more than his father did. Chosen because of their more naturalistic painting style, the Persian artists at the court of Akbar worked on numerous, ambitious illustrated manuscripts alongside native Hindu and Muslim painters as well as some from Central Asia.

Akbar's policy of engaging with all the populations of India and welcoming Europeans at his court resulted in an emphasis on realism and the adoption of illusionistic techniques in painting. This tendency was heightened during the reign of Jahangir (r. 1605–1627). Portraiture gained in importance while paintings of the flora and fauna of India were produced, a subject of profound interest to Jahangir. Like his father, Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) commissioned many portraits of members of the Mughal dynasty and lavish illustrations to the history of his reign, the *Padshahnama*. One of Shah Jahan's sons, Dara Shikoh, demonstrated a broadminded interest in art and mysticism. However, his brother, Aurangzeb, proved to be militarily more powerful and not only had Dara Shikoh murdered but also deposed Shah Jahan. In his very long reign, from 1658 to 1707, Aurangzeb pushed the Mughal conquest of India southward but abandoned the tolerant attitudes of his predecessors. The wars and rigid attitudes of Aurangzeb ultimately weakened the Mughal empire so that the eighteenth century saw a long decline and a nostalgia for the heyday of the dynasty under Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan.

83 Pictorial genealogy of the descendants of Jahangir

India, Agra, c. 1623–1627
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 36.2 x 24.2 cm
 2005.1.151 (M 177)
 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 145–147 (no. 108)

Genealogical portraits and histories were used by the Islamic dynasties particularly the Mughals and Ottomans, to reinforce their legitimacy and power (see cat nos. 68, 69). In this album page, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27) is located at the top of his 'family tree.' He is linked by lines to four of his sons (from left, Khusrāu, Jahandar, Shahriyar and Sultan Parviz) and their sons. His Timurid ancestors are pictured beneath him, in a reversal of genealogical order. The genealogies were rearranged and recomposed at some point. This is not unusual considering Jahangir's other refurbishments of historical paintings such as the *Princes of the House of Timur* (British Museum), which was probably a painting of a garden party of Mughal Emperor Humayun (r. 1530–56, with interruption) and his friends before Jahangir's artists refashioned it into a Timurid-Mughal dynastic portrait.



84 Akbar and a dervish

Mughal India, c. 1586–87
 Ink, opaque watercolour and silver on paper; page: 39.1 x 25.4 cm; image: 23.2 x 16.1 cm
 Inscribed at right side: 'Portrait of Shah Akbar. Work of 'Abd al-Samad, Sweet Pen.' Inscribed on rock: 'Aval' (first)
 2005.1.141 (M 147)
 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 110–11 (no. 80)

The depiction of Mughal princes and emperors seeking the advice of sages and mystics was common in Mughal painting, especially under Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and Jahangir (r. 1605–27). This choice of image reinforces the ruler's dynastic hegemony by showing his preference for the spiritual life over worldly power. The drawing is inscribed, 'Portrait of Shah Akbar. Work of 'Abd al-Samad, Sweet Pen.' 'Abd al-Samad, one of the two Persian artists that Akbar's father Humayun (r. 1530–56, with interruption) invited to India from the court of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp of Iran, taught Akbar painting and later became head of his royal studio. He oversaw major manuscript projects including the completion of the *Hamzanama*, which included 1,400 illustrations. The emphasis on naturalism in the modelling of the figures and animals and the use of spatial recession in the landscape reflect Akbar's directive to 'Abd al-Samad to prioritise naturalism over Persian-style two-dimensionality, as noted by Akbar's royal biographer Abu'l Fazl (Skelton 1994, p. 37). Canby and Welch and Welch have noted that the treatment of the landscape represents a departure for 'Abd al-Samad and that the expressive dervish and sensitively drawn animals may indicate the assistance of Basawan. The drawing is mounted on a cream album-folio with seventeenth-century border-paintings (not shown here) of different birds, cattle, and a cheetah stalking some antelope. The verso of this page contains calligraphy by 'Abd al-Rahim (*Anbarin Qalam*) dated 1618, with border-paintings of gold-outlined flowering plants and curling Chinese-style clouds by the 'Master of the Borders', from about 1640.



85 Portrait of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–1657) and his three sons *also see detail page 116*

Mughal India, c.1628 or later

Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 35.8 x 24.2 cm; image: 24.8 x 14.7 cm

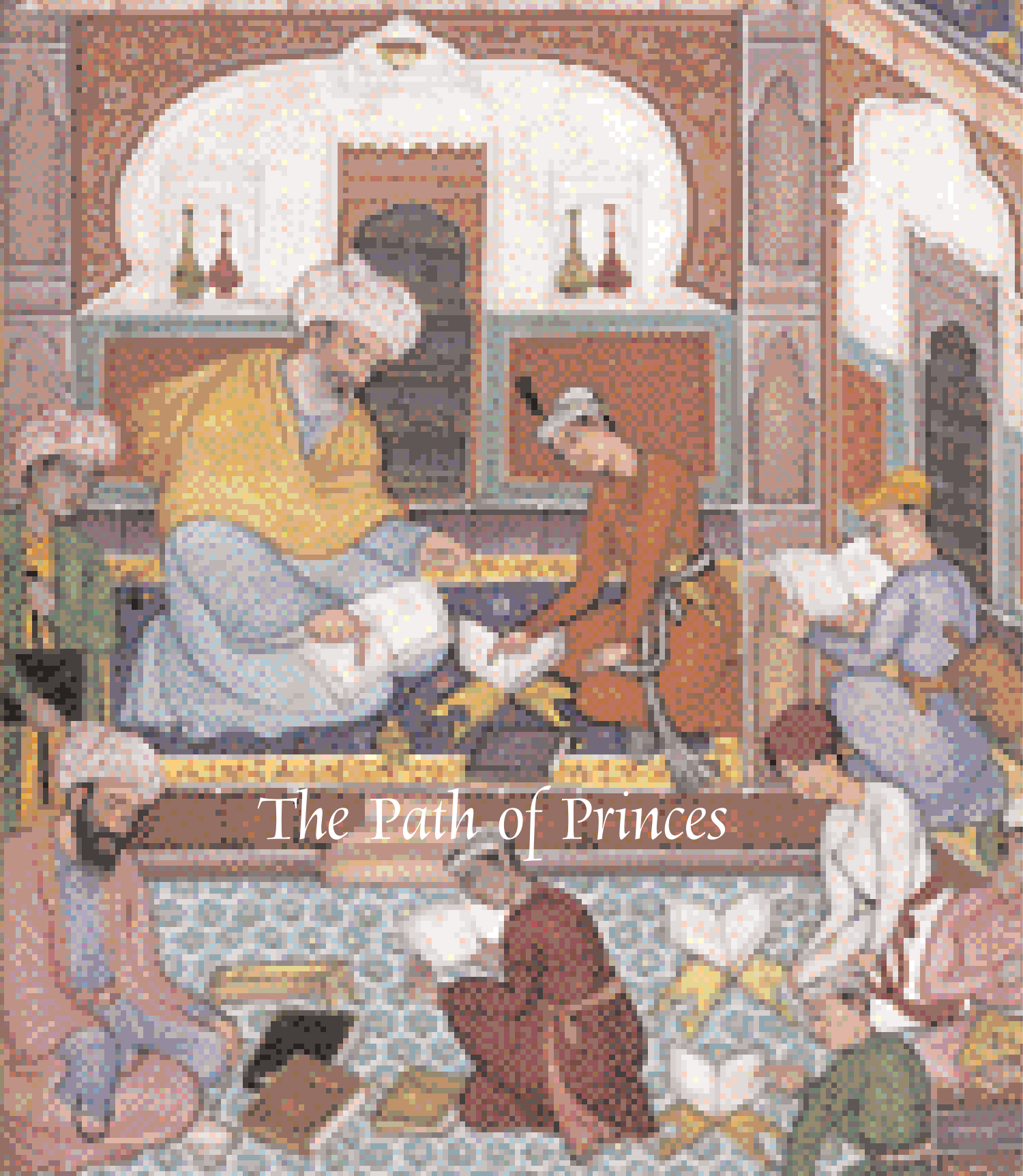
Inscribed: 'Work of the most humble of the house born, Manohar'. Inscribed: 'Portrait of Nur al-Din Jahangir and his sons'

2005.1.124 (M 81)

Published: Canby 1998, pp. 147–48 (no. 109)



The emperor sits in haloed profile upon a gold-footed throne under a high white canopy flanked by his three young princes, who stand on the left. All are resplendent with opulently bejewelled turbans, necklaces, *qatar* daggers, and sashes (*patkas*) against a rounded backdrop of turquoise, perhaps suggesting a globe, as golden light appears on the right. The inscription on this Mughal painting identifies it as a portrait of Emperor Jahangir and his three sons, but what we see today are the faces of Shah Jahan (r. 1628–57) and his three eldest sons – Dara Shikoh (1615–59), Shah Shuja' (1616–59) and Aurangzeb (1618–1707) – and their maternal grandfather, Asaf Khan on the right. It was not unusual for the Mughals to refurbish earlier works (see cat. no. 83) for propaganda reasons. The inscription at bottom left reads, 'work of the most humble of the house born, Manohar.' Sheila Canby notes that the painting is characteristic of Manohar's style from about 1615 except for the refurbished faces, and that the composition follows the conventions of intimate royal portraits from Akbar's reign which developed under Jahangir and Shah Jahan in the 1610s to 1620s to include a more psychological focus.



The Path of Princes



Cat. no. 96 (detail)

Education & Learning

Muslim courts large and small attracted the learned who taught the children of the royal household and brought lustre to the ruler. The instruction of a royal child would centre on reading and writing, learning the Qur'an, and the basics of statesmanship. Mathematics, science, poetry and philosophy also featured in the traditional academic curriculum. Because of its connection to the Qur'an, and inspired by the example of 'Ali, Rightly-Guided Caliph and first Shia Imam, writing beautifully was considered the highest art. Inkwells, pen cases and the other implements of the calligrapher were created from durable and precious materials with loving attention to detail. The royal *kitabkhane* combined the functions of a library and a scriptorium in which all elements of the book were produced by a team of specialists.

A high level of achievement in mathematics, astronomy and medicine was a hallmark of the Abbasid and subsequent Muslim courts of the eighth to twelfth centuries. While a certain amount of very significant information entered the Arabic and Persian body of knowledge through translations of ancient Greek, Latin and Syriac texts, mathematicians in Baghdad and elsewhere made new discoveries, such as the zero, that remain fundamental to this day. Thanks to the expanded use of paper from the eleventh century onwards, books were published in large numbers and widely distributed. With Arabic as the common language, scholars from Cordoba to Bukhara had access to the findings of their colleagues and thus knowledge spread across the Muslim world.

86 Group of scribal implements

Turkey, 18th–19th century
Various materials and dimensions

Beautiful writing (calligraphy) is the highest form of Islamic art and is thought to bring one closer to God. Although the primary criteria for a calligrapher's tools are quality and usefulness, it was felt that beautiful tools contributed to the creation of beautiful writing. Throughout the centuries Islamic artisans have produced exquisite scribal implements and other related objects, including scribe's boxes, penboxes and inkwells (see also cat. nos 78, 90, 91 and 93). Lavishly decorated with precious metal inlays or painted designs under varnish, these tools are beautiful objects in their own right. This group of Ottoman scribal implements is no exception. It includes three pairs of steel scissors and a steel rule all inlaid with gold; a silver and gilt penbox and inkwell; two pen rests, one in ivory and the other of gold inlaid steel; a gold inlaid steel pen; a cylindrical implement holder painted with floral sprays; two further inkwells, one in brass and the other in silver with a turquoise stud; and a lobed silver and gilt pot. The handles on one pair of scissors have been appropriately formed in an openwork inscription which reads as an invocation to God, 'O the Opener!'



Two folios from the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* of Tusi

Lahore, c.1595
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 23.9 x 14.1 cm

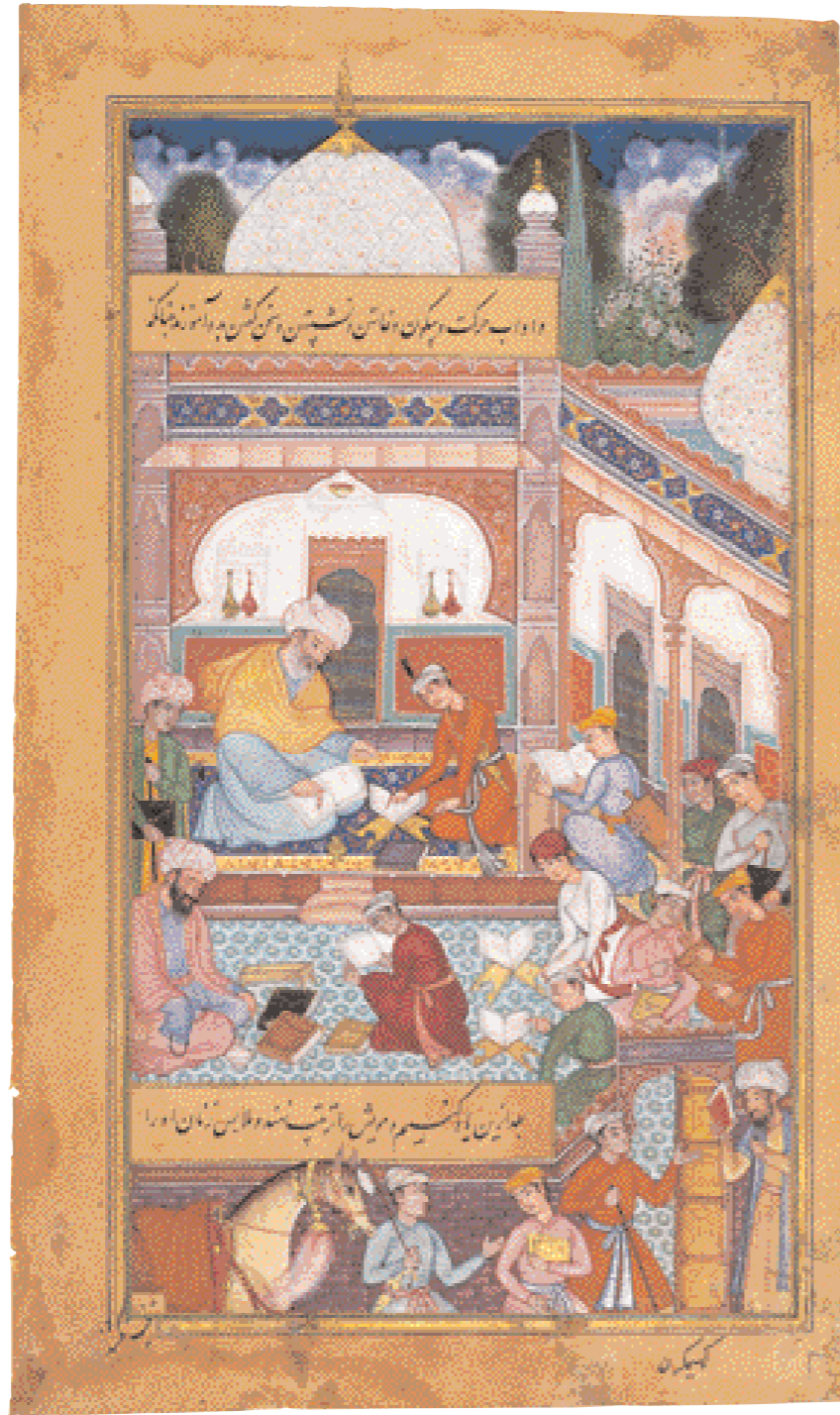
87 School courtyard with boys reading and writing see also page 121

Ascribed in the lower margin to Khem Karan
2005.1.288 (MS 39, fol. 149v)

88 The *kitabkhana* (artists' workshop) see opposite

Ascribed in the lower margin to Sajnu (or Sahu)
2005.1.288 (MS 39, fol. 195r)
Published: Folio 195r: Canby 1998, pp. 124–27 (no. 93)

These paintings come from one of the favourite manuscripts of Akbar (r. 1556–1605), the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* ('Ethics of Nasir'), a philosophical treatise on ethics, social justice and politics by the thirteenth-century medieval Persian philosopher and scientist, Nasir al-Din Tusi. For a discussion of this copy of the manuscript prepared for Akbar c.1590–95, see cat. no. 141. The *kitabkhana* (artists' atelier) painting (fol. 195r) illustrates a section of the text that discusses forms of authority, according to

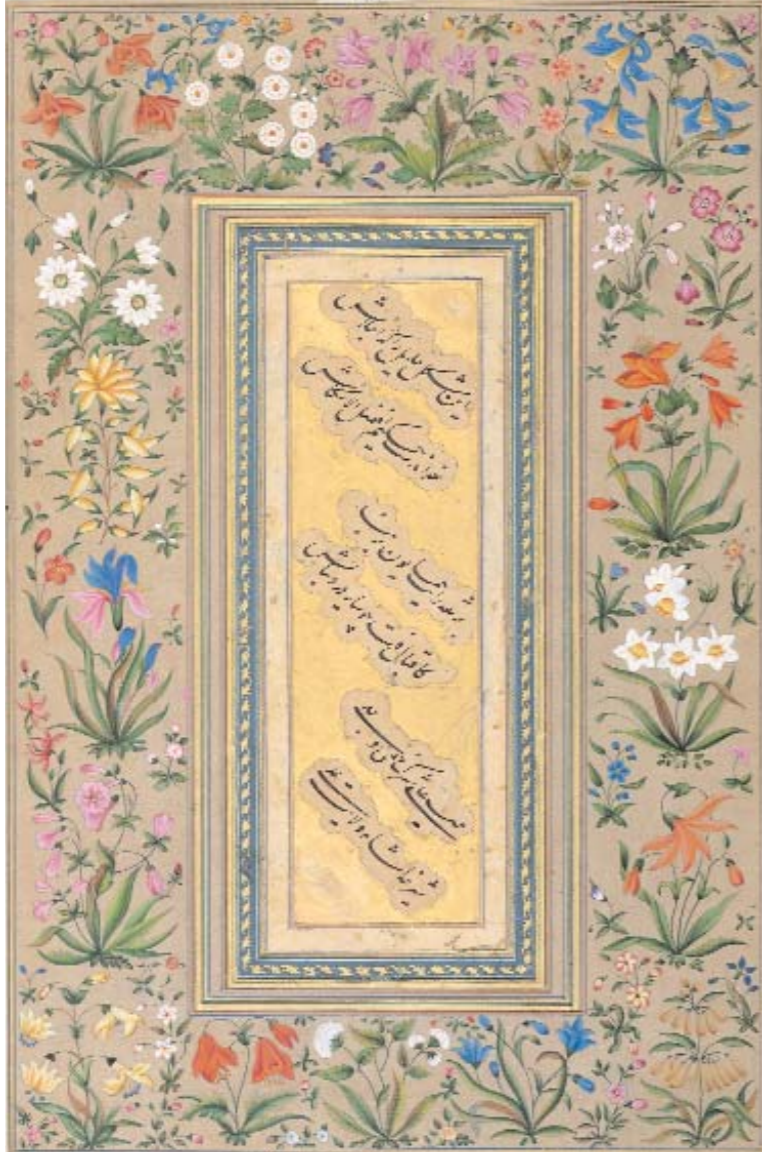


Goswamy and Fischer (Goswamy and Fischer 1987, p. 120). The young calligrapher in a sumptuous gold robe being fanned by a servant is likely a prince (see cat. no. 89), but in this context he is a student without authority before his master. The *kitabkhana* was a hierarchical organisation; older, more accomplished scribes worked independently and with some authority. Scribes and servants spill into an opulent garden complete with flowering plants and water-courses. The lowly but essential task of the paper burnisher is performed within this idyllic garden setting. *School courtyard with boys reading and writing* (fol. 149r) may demonstrate the importance of knowledge as a form of authority although as mentioned in cat. no. 141, the text does not lend itself easily to artistic interpretation. On a raised, carpeted platform the master works with a young student, while other boys read independently or with tutors in the school courtyard. According to Verma, Khem Karan was 'among the leading painters of Akbar's court', where he was active between 1582–1604, while Sahu worked as a painter-designer on the 1584 Bankipore *Timurnama* (Som Prakash Verma, *Mughal Painters and their work*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 216–219). Both paintings are rich in detail for the documentation of Mughal workshop and educational practices.

89 Album page of calligraphy

India, Burhanpur, dated 1041 H/1631–32
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 42.3 x 28.8 cm; text: 21.9 x 6.3 cm
2005.1.249 (CAL 082)
Published: Falk 1985, p. 167 (no. 145)

Calligraphy was an important part of a young prince's education. The Persian verses on this page were written by the Mughal prince Muhammad Dara Shikoh (b. 1615 – d. 1659), the preferred son of Shah Jahan (see cat. no. 35), and dated 1041 H at Burhanpur in the Deccan, where the Mughals were on campaign. The calligraphy was later mounted into an eighteenth-century album page decorated with numerous varieties of flowering plants in the margins. The British Museum owns another page copied in Burhanpur in 1631 and presumably from this album.



90 Gold and silver-inlaid brass pen box

North-west Persia or Anatolia, c.1300
Brass, inlaid with gold and silver; length: 19.4 cm; width: 4.5 cm

91 Inkwell

Iran, Khurasan, c.1200
Bronze, inlaid with silver and copper; diameter: 10.4 cm

Elaborately decorated metalwork pen boxes and inkwells are among the finest objects associated with writing in the medieval Islamic world. Pen boxes held both practical and symbolic functions at Islamic courts. They served as compact and often beautifully decorated containers for scribes' tools, but they could also represent a specific court office or the power of kingship more generally. Profusely decorated with precious gold and silver inlay and engraved geometric, floral and vegetal designs, this luxury pen box would have been carried by a high-ranking individual, perhaps even a ruler. The decorative programme of the cylindrical-shaped inkwell and cover is mainly epigraphic. The inscription reads, 'There is no favour except that which is eternal, there is no accomplishment except that which will remain for ever.' Further benedictory inscriptions cover most of its surface in horizontal registers including, 'Glory and prosperity and wealth and happiness and health and well-being and grace (of God) and generosity and long life to its owner.'



92 *Muraqqa'* (Album of calligraphy)

Iran, Qajar, c.1800–1850
Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper mounted on cardboard; dimensions: 29.7 x 19.5 x 3.5 cm
CAL 79

A *muraqqa'* is an album in which connoisseurs and collectors mounted their favourite pieces of calligraphy and painting within a handsome binding. This example is a compilation of nineteenth-century specimens in *shikasteh* (broken) script. *Shikasteh*, or *shikasteh-i nasta'liq*, was developed in Iran in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as a response to the increased need to write documents more quickly. Unauthorised connections between letters allow the calligrapher of *shikasteh* to complete a word in a single pen stroke and to write much faster. These unauthorised connections, along with other devices to increase speed such as elongated letters and smoothed out letters, give *shikasteh* its characteristic 'broken' appearance (Blair 2006, pp. 441–46).



93 Wooden scribe's cabinet *see opposite*

Spain, Nasrid period, 15th century
Walnut wood inlaid with bone, metal, wood and mother-of-pearl; dimensions: 22 x 49 x 33 cm

The scribe's wooden cabinet is a rare survival and an extraordinary example of luxury woodworking production in Spain under the Nasrids (r. 1232–1492). The tradition of inlaying walnut dates back to the Umayyad period in Spain (r. 756–1031), and may be seen in extant mosque *minbars* (pulpits), doors and a variety of objects. The hallmarks of Nasrid-era woodworking include elaborate inlays of ivory, bone, metal, wood and mother-of-pearl. The decorative programme of this cabinet includes large eight-pointed stars formed from interlocking squares; these motifs appear on many of the extant Nasrid wooden pieces in Granada museums and at the Alhambra. The cabinet contains a lidded interior compartment which probably contained writing implements.





94 Bearded man with a book see also pages 192–3

Iran, Isfahan, c. 1640
 Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper
 Page: 8.9 x 17.1 cm; image: 6.1 x 16.2 cm
 2005.1.77
 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 76–78 (no. 49)

In the centre of the drawing, an old bearded man, leaning back and holding a staff in his left hand, is reading from a book nestled in his lap. He is wearing a long robe richly-decorated with a floral pattern in gold and blue, a gold turban, and has a shawl over his left shoulder. The landscape consists of a small tree, some sprouting plants, and a fern. Canby has noted that this portrait was adapted from a similar one of a bearded sage by the Safavid artist Riza-yi 'Abbasi, dated 1622. Works of celebrated artists such as Riza often were copied by contemporary artists. The prodigious use of gold for the figure's robe and turban as well as the gilded landscape represent a departure from Riza's portrait of a simple sage in the wilderness and suggest instead a more opulent version of the theme.



95 Manuscript of the Tashrih of Mansur

Iran, mid 17th century
 Ink and opaque watercolour on watermarked paper;
 28.8 x 19.5 cm

Mansur's Anatomy (*Tashrih-i Mansuri*) is the name often used to refer to the fourteenth-century treatise on the anatomy of the human body (*Tashrih-i badan-i insan*) by Mansur ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Yusuf ibn Ilyas, who came from a family of scholars and physicians in Shiraz. This treatise was probably completed by the end of the fourteenth century for Pir Muhammad, ruler of Fars (1393–1409) and a grandson of Timur. It is organised into five chapters on the systems of the body (skeleton, nervous system, muscles, veins and arteries). The manuscript lacks a colophon but there is a note on the final page containing a date in the latter part of the seventeenth century.



96 Manuscript of the Qanun fi'l-tibb of Ibn Sina, vol. 5 see detail page 122

Iran or Mesopotamia?, dated 444 H/1052
 Ink on paper; 21.2 x 16.4 cm

Ibn Sina's *Qanun fi'l-tibb* (Canon of Medicine) is the most important encyclopaedic corpus of medieval medical knowledge in the Islamic world. With the transfer of knowledge to the Latin West in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it became the most used of all medieval references in the medical schools of Europe, almost until the beginning of modern times. The *Qanun* is organised into five books. The present manuscript is a copy of the fifth book, on compound drugs and pharmacopoeia. Copied only fifteen years after the death of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest manuscript of this work. The other books cover topics including anatomy, the humours, the temperament, the effects of environment on health and disease, *materia medica*, specific pathology and diseases of various parts of the body, general pathology, fevers, leprosy, surgery, dislocations and fractures. Born near Bukhara in 980 to a Samanid government official, Ibn Sina received a proper education and was, at eighteen, a talented physician who had mastered all the sciences and made a great number of medical discoveries and observations that remain relevant today.



97 The Constellations Virgo, Libra, Scorpio and Leo see detail page 132

From a manuscript of Qazwini's *Aja'ib al-Makhlūqat* (Wonders of Creation)
 Probably Yemen, 17th century
 Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; 29 x 20.7 cm
 A. M. 5

The suggested date and provenance of this leaf was arrived at from a note on the mount of another folio of the same manuscript. The style of the miniatures is related to medieval Arab book painting of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but more provincially rendered. The three adjacent crescents in the watermark of the paper were used by the Ottomans from the end of the sixteenth century, and Yemen was part of the Ottoman Empire at the time.



98 Manuscript of the *Taqwim al-sihha* of Ibn Butlan see detail page 210

Scribe: Ibrahim ibn 'Abd Allah ibn Sharq
Near East?, dated 745 H/1344
Ink on paper; 30.1 x 20.5 cm

Ibn Butlan was an eleventh-century philosopher-physician and a Nestorian Christian who wrote treatises on aspects of medicine and Christianity. He lived most of his life in Baghdad, which he left in 1049 to travel to Syria, Egypt and Constantinople; he became a monk in Antioch and died there in a monastery in 1066. This manuscript is a dated copy (745 H/1344) of his important work on medicine and diet, referred to as the *Taqwim al-sihhah* (Almanac of Health). A medical regimen in tabular form, *Taqwim al-sihhah* identifies the foods, drinks, environments and activities (including breathing, exercise and rest) necessary for a healthy life. The treatise was translated into Latin in the late thirteenth century under the title *Tacuinum Sanitatis* and later became well-known in Europe.



99 Manuscript of the Judgements of the Greek philosophers: Illustration of Socrates and Aristophanes

Style of Baghdad or Damascus, 13th–14th century, with 19th-century additions
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 20.6 x 15 cm
2005.1.283 (MS 34)

The two turbaned figures are labelled 'saqrat' and 'aristajanis' in this folio from an Arabic manuscript based on judgements of Greek philosophers. The figures may be identified as the Greek philosopher Socrates (469–399 BCE) and the contemporary Greek playwright Aristophanes (±450–±386 BCE). Their depiction is similar to what one finds in illustrations of Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica* and other Greek manuscripts produced under the medieval Baghdad or Damascus schools of painting.

100 Two folios from *De Materia Medica* (Khawass al-ashjar)

Iraq, c.1200
Opaque watercolours and ink on paper; page: 24 x 16.8 cm; page: 24.8 x 17.2 cm
2005.1.1 (AM 001 R&V); 2005.1.2 (AM 001A R&V)
Published: Welch 1972a, p. 21; Falk 1985, p. 40 (2005.1.1, formerly AM fol. 001)

One of the earliest scientific manuscripts to be translated from Greek to Arabic was Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*, as it is called in Latin. Pedanius Dioscorides, a Greek physician, wrote his treatise on medicinal plants in the first century. The manuscript was initially translated into Syriac, and then into Arabic in Baghdad in the ninth century (Guesdon and Nouri 2001, p. 118). It became the foundation for Islamic pharmacology and was copied widely. These Arabic manuscript illustrations follow the Greek model closely. Although the paintings do not lack artistic sensibility, for accuracy, each specimen is depicted in its entirety from tip to root against the plain paper ground. The single-stemmed plant with red spiky blossoms (2005.1.1v) was used in the treatment of skin disorders including pustules, itching and ulcers. The recto side of this page depicts, 'the thorny plant which grows in the mountains.' The second illustrated page, recto side, features a spikenard plant ('naradin') with five leafy branches, bare green roots and red flowerbuds on the branches. The underground stems (rhizomes) of the spikenard plant were crushed and distilled to extract an aromatic oil used to treat a number of ailments. The verso includes the inscription, 'here is a species of the darwanj' beside the lower plant which has broad leaves and one brown stalk of small flowers.



IOI Three albarelli see page between pages 17 and 20

Syria, late 14th – early 15th century

Stonepaste body, underglaze painting in blue and black; height: 30.7 cm; 30.7 cm; 31.7 cm (calligraphic)

Serving as storage vessels in the Islamic world, *albarelli* were also exported to Europe where they may have been prized as luxury objects as well as for the medicinal and pharmaceutical substances they transported. The three *albarelli* here exhibit the characteristic palette, decoration and form of Mamluk Syrian examples; two were produced for the European market, as evidenced by the armorial shield which is an azure on argent variant of the arms of the city of Florence.



Fables & Myths

A time-honoured method of preparing princes to rule was the genre of literature known as ‘mirrors for princes’. These books contain fables with amusing, moralising tales in which animals are the protagonists. Thought to have been introduced to the Muslim world from India, the fables were collected and illustrated in *Kalila wa Dimna* manuscripts from the thirteenth century onward in the Arab lands and from the fourteenth century in Iran. Versions such as *Anwar-i Suhayli*, or *The Lights of Canopus*, enjoyed popularity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iran and Mughal India.

While tales of fantastic beasts are deeply rooted in the pre-Islamic past of Iran, Central Asia and India, their depiction in metalwork, pottery and manuscript illustration became frequent only from the twelfth century onwards. Dragons in Persian painting, ceramics and metalwork acquired their common attributes – a sinuous body, four feet, a horned head, and flaming shoulders after the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century. Likewise, the simurgh, the magical bird of the *Shahnama* (the Persian national epic) inherited its streaming tail feathers and long neck from Chinese phoenixes introduced to Islamic art by the Mongols. These fantastic beasts and the stories in which they occur attest to the abiding interest in tales of wonder that continued well into the seventeenth century, long after people had ceased expecting actually to encounter such fantastic beasts.



IO2 Page from a manuscript of the *Kalila wa Dimna*: The fable of the lion, the fox and the donkey

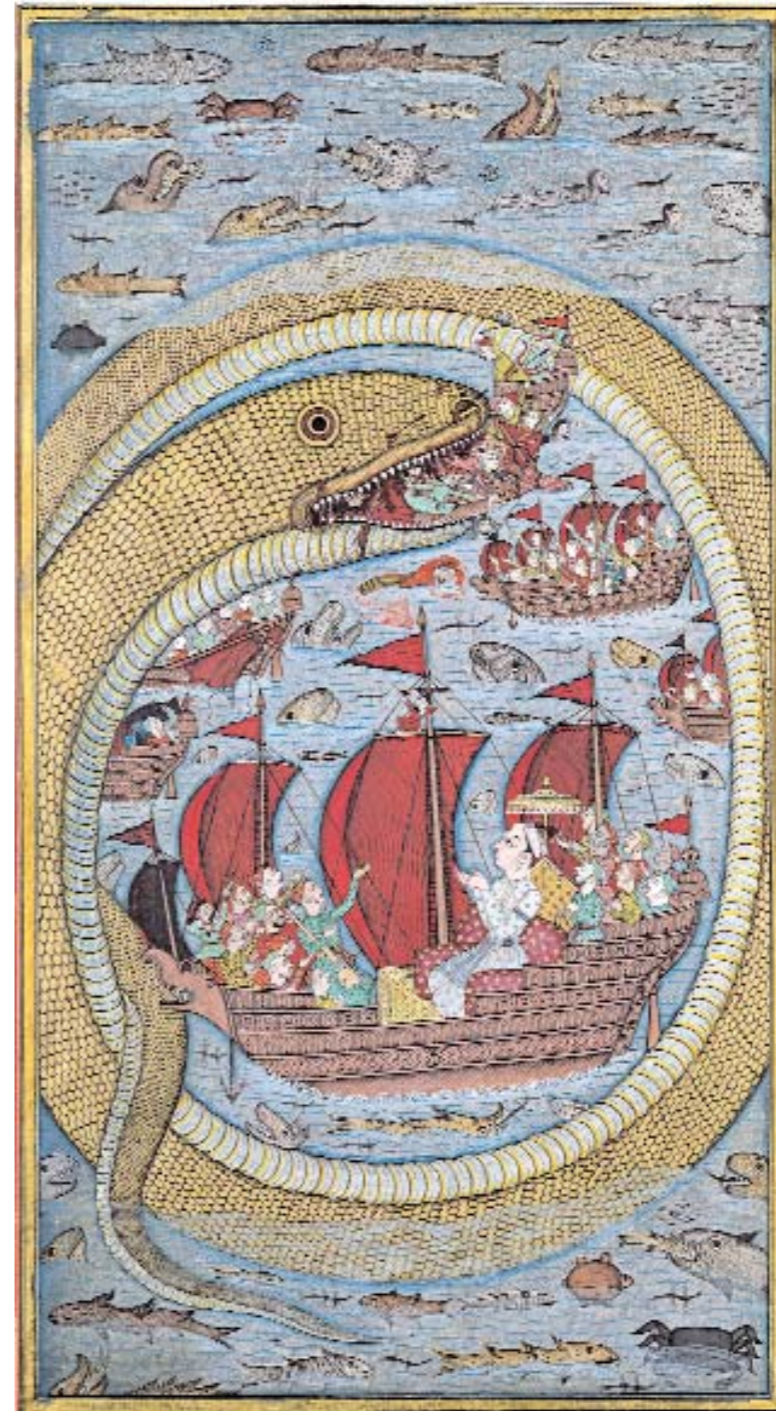
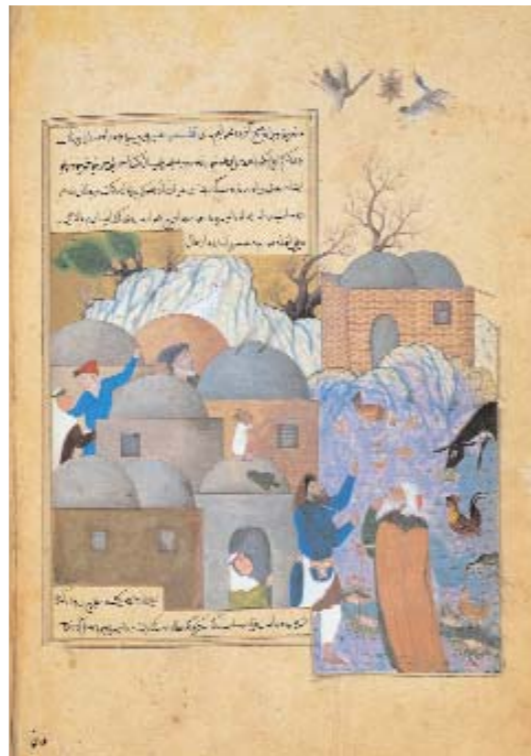
Iran, 1333
 Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; 28 x 18.5 cm
 Published: Falk 1985, p. 53 (no. 19)

This page comes from a manuscript of *Kalila wa Dimna*, one of the most beloved and well-illustrated fables of all time. Ultimately derived from the Indian *Panchatantra* and *Mahabharata* written in Sanskrit around the year 200, the fables were adapted and translated into numerous languages including Persian and Arabic. They address the moral education of princes through two jackals, Kalila and Dimna, and a host of animal protagonists, but they are more than just a mirror for princes. They illustrate universal human strengths and weaknesses, as well as aspirations for justice and truth. In this particular episode, the ailing lion sought a cure from the heart and ears of a donkey. The donkey was tricked by the lion's wily courtier, the fox, who proceeded to take its heart and ears for himself while the lion washed before his meal. The fourteenth-century Persian painting with its uneven, thinly applied colour provides a direct and vivid illustration to the tale. The enormous, many-leaved plant acts as a figural axis to ground the pictorial composition and contributes to the dynamism of the painting.

IO3 Illustration from the *Anwar-i Suhayli* of Kashifi: Ducks carry a tortoise over the village

Anwar-i Suhayli of Husayn Wa'iz al-Kashifi
 Scribe: Na'im Muhammad al-Husayni al-Tabrizi; Artist: Sadiqi Beg
 Iran, Qazvin, dated 13 Safar 1002 H / 8 November 1593
 Opaque watercolour and ink on paper; page: 30.1 x 20.3 cm; image: 19.1 x 16.8 cm
 2005.1.289 (MS 40, fol. 89b)
 Provenance: Marquess of Bute; Published: Canby 1998, pp. 70–72 (no. 43)

In this painting two flying geese transport a tortoise who hangs on to a stick with his teeth while villagers look up in wonder and disbelief. The story goes that the three friends were moving to a better marsh and the geese told the tortoise to keep his mouth shut so that their flying stick idea would work. What this painting does not depict is the moment when the tortoise ceased to heed the advice of his geese friends: he opened his mouth at the jeers of the villagers and therefore dropped to his death. This story is from the *Anwar-i Suhayli* (Lights of Canopus), a group of fifteenth-century fables based on a twelfth-century version of the venerable *Kalila wa Dimna* collection (see cat. no. 102). This 1593 version of the *Anwar-i Suhayli* is notable for the originality and abundance of its illustrations. Its colophon contains fascinating details about the manuscript's creation. The Safavid artist Sadiqi Beg apparently commissioned and illustrated the entire manuscript (107 illustrations) for and by himself. A boastful sentence in the colophon reads, 'It is written as it is ordered by the rare man of the time, the second Mani and the Bihzad of the age, Sadiqi Musavvir' (Canby 1998, p. 70 citing Welch 1976, p. 126). Sadiqi Beg was still head of Shah 'Abbas's royal library in 1593; the access this position afforded him combined with contemporary writings which portray him as an irritable, proud man make this theory plausible.



IO4 A sea-serpent swallows the Royal fleet

Page from a Deccani Urdu epic written in *naskh*
 India, Deccan, c.1670
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 39 x 23.5 cm;
 image: 26.8 x 14.3 cm
 2005.1.167
 Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 229–231 (no. 77); Falk 1985, p. 174 (no. 154)

A giant sea serpent constricts its gold coils around a royal fleet, its full mouth leaving no doubt as to its intentions toward the remaining vessels. As if the carnivorous serpent were not enough, the alternative is a scary sea filled with demon-headed fish, giant crabs and turtles, as well as a mermaid and merman. Most of the sailors appear to pray with upturned hands for deliverance from this nightmare. The painting has been identified as an illustration from the *Gulshan-i 'Ishq* ('Rose garden of love') a heroic epic written in Deccani Urdu by the court poet Nusrati for Sultan 'Ali II ibn Muhammad 'Adil Shahi (r. 1656–72) (Falk 1985, p. 174). The 'Adil-Shahis were great patrons of the arts and ruled Deccani Bijapur as an independent Shia kingdom from 1489 until it became part of the Mughal empire in 1689. It has been suggested that this painting was produced for an aristocrat at the end of Sultan 'Ali's reign or during the reign of his successor, Sikandar 'Ali Shah (r. 1672–86) (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 229). The theme of disaster at sea in this painting may be compared with similar episodes in the *Hamzanama* as part of the picaresque genre of adventure-romances, featuring heroes who travel through strange lands and meet with danger on land and sea (see also cat. 109).

105 Bowl

Iran, late 12th – early 13th century
Stonepaste body, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze; diameter: 15,2 cm

Medieval Kashan lustre ceramics often feature a single monumental animal or figure in reserve on a lustre ground filled with floral vinescrolls. Representations of birds, horses and leopards are more common; the elephant-bird seen here seems to be unique. Perhaps this fantastic creature with the head of an elephant and body of a bird is inspired by the mythological bird (roc) of *A Thousand and One Nights*. The roc may have been derived from the enormous elephant bird, a now extinct flightless bird of the family *Aepyornithidae* which was native to Madagascar.



106 Bowl see also front cover

Eastern Iranian world, c.10th century
Earthenware, polychrome slip decoration under a transparent glaze; diameter: 28 cm

The fabulous bird on this bowl may be a peacock, well-known from Islamic literature for its connotations of Paradise (see cat. nos. 51, 52), or a mythical bird called the simurgh. It is represented in many media, including ceramics, textiles and metalwork. The potter has taken artistic license with the bird's tail and extended it to form an elaborate frame for an interlace pattern in white. An abstract pattern of white dots fills the interstices of the bowl's interior and an inscription in white runs along the interior rim. This bowl is related to the epigraphic wares (see cat. nos 147 to 150) from Samanid (r. 819–1005) Central Asia. A similar polychrome palette, interlacing strapwork and a desire to fill the bowl's surface with colour and patterns that add texture relate this bowl particularly to cat. no. 147.



IO7 Isfandiyar kills the simurgh

Artist: Siyavush
Shahnama for Shah Isma'il II (r. 1576–77)
 Iran, Qazvin, 1576–77
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 41.1 x 30.4 cm;
 image: 38.5 x 28.4 cm
 2005.1.103
 Provenance: Qajar Royal Library; Demotte collection; dispersed after 1912
 Published: Falk 1985, p. 108 (no. 74)

An angry simurgh (see also cat. nos 106 and 109) swoops down to attack Isfandiyar, its colourful long tail-feathers wrapping around the magnificent tree that cradles the nest of the bird's young chicks. Isfandiyar, a hero of the *Shahnama*, remains in his horse-drawn chariot as the simurgh impales itself on the chariot's spiky projections. Isfandiyar's horse and a group of onlookers appear unperturbed at this horrific scene. The artist's emphasis instead is on the use of brilliant colours to organise the painting compositionally and to highlight virtuoso details such as the tree with its technicolour leaves. This painting belongs to a manuscript of the *Shahnama* commissioned by Shah Isma'il II (r. 1576–77) upon his accession and left unfinished at the time of his death in 1577, according to B. W. Robinson who cites as evidence the artists' names, as well as the style and deluxe quality of the manuscript in addition to the lack of illustrations from later episodes in the manuscript (Robinson 1976). The name Siyavush appears in the lower left corner of this painting. A young slave at the court of Shah Tahmasp, his artistic talents were noted by the ruler and he was sent to train under Muzaffar 'Ali. Siyavush became one of the most important sixteenth-century Iranian painters and contributed several paintings to this manuscript.



IO8 Bahram Gur kills the rhinoceros *opposite*

From a dispersed *Shahnama*, Turkman commercial style
 Scribe: 'Abd al-Dha'if Sultan 'Ali Shirazi
 Iran, Shiraz, 1494
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 32.6 x 23.3 cm; image: 14.5 x 14.8 cm
 2005.1.54 (Ir.M. 015C)

This folio depicts the Sassanian King Bahram V (r. 420–438), known as Bahram Gur, killing a rhinoceros while three of his companions watch from the hills. Although the historical King Bahram V fought two wars, one with Rome in 422 and other with Huns in 427, he is portrayed in the *Shahnama* as an exceptional hunter and just ruler. This painting depicts one hunting exploit, when the Indian king Shangal asked Bahram Gur to rid his land of a huge and terrifying rhinoceros. True to form, Bahram Gur showered the beast with arrows and then delivered the *coup de grâce* by cutting off its head. Painted in the Turkman style of Shiraz, the illustration contains only the essentials of the story which takes place in a landscape enlivened by clumps of blossoming flowers. The text on this page refers to the rhinoceros as a *karkadan*, a word translated as 'rhinoceros' and 'unicorn', while in other versions of the *Shahnama* the beast is called *karg* which is translated as either 'rhinoceros' or 'wolf'. Perhaps because of this confusion the scene was far less often illustrated between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, than the other hunting feats of Bahram Gur.



109 Young man carried off by a Simurgh

Attributed to Basawan
Lahore, c.1590
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 38.6 x 25.1 cm; image: 32.3 x 21.1 cm
2005.1.140 (M 146)
Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 167–71 (and in colour)

A young man grips the feet of an enormous technicolour simurgh (see cat. nos 106 and 107) flying above choppy waters filled with giant turtles, fish and a crocodile which looks like a *makana*, the mythical sea creature with magic powers. This painting may depict the story by Bahram Gur's Indian princess wife in the *Hafī Paykar* of the Persian poet, Nizami. King Bahram Gur had seven wives who told him tales from their separate, coloured pavilions each day of the week. In the Indian princess's story, the hero is dramatically rescued by holding onto the feet of a simurgh who brings him to a paradise-like land. Anthony Welch notes that the two figures in the beak of the simurgh may be the artist's personal addition to the story (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 170). In any case the theme fits the Indian interest in adventure-romances featuring heroes who travel through (or above) strange lands and seas, as in Akbar's *Hamzanama* (see also cat. no. 104). The painting has been attributed to Basawan, Akbar's outstanding painter known for his sensitive observations, lush landscapes and use of perspective (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 170). In about 1635 the painting was mounted onto an album page decorated with magnificent gold-outlined flower paintings by the anonymous 'Master of the Borders' and bound in an album for Shah Jahan, Akbar's grandson. The reverse of this page contains an Arabic prayer with Qur'anic expressions in black *nasta'liq* script signed by Muhammad Husayn (d. 1020 H/1611–1612), the master calligrapher who was honoured by Akbar (r. 1556–1605) with the title, '*Zarīn Qalam*' (Golden Pen). There is a portrait of Muhammad Husayn as a teacher painted by Basawan's son, the luminary Mughal painter Manohar. It must be one of Manohar's earliest portraits since the artist included himself as a pupil in the composition and he looks to be no more than fifteen years old (Royal Asiatic Society; see Welch 1979, p. 179).





Riding & Hunting

The importance of horsemanship equalled that of reading and writing in the education of a prince. As a preparation for leading armies into war, future rulers needed to be confident in the saddle from an early age. Mamluk *Furusiyya* manuscripts described the training of both horse and rider, but one must assume that instructors taught horseback riding through practice rather than texts.

Hunting and games such as polo reinforced riding skills but also served as metaphors for war. The imagery of kings hunting is deeply embedded in the art of the Middle East, from Assyrian reliefs depicting lion hunts to Sasanian bowls with kings pursuing wild boar. Until the introduction of firearms in the sixteenth century, hunters used bows and arrows, swords and spears to kill their prey. Additionally, hunters portrayed on ceramics, metalwork, enamelled glass and in manuscripts employed dogs, falcons and cheetahs. The highly developed sport of hawking involved falcons of various sizes and skills, some for flying high and attacking other birds, and some for flying low and killing mammals. Images of princely falconers on horseback include drums, gauntlets worn on the hand on which the bird perched, as well as a pouch containing food for the bird. Royal falcons were hooded with leather and held by gold chains to their keepers, to stop them from flying off unexpectedly.

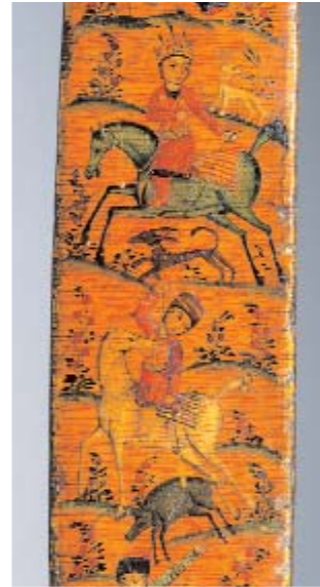
In spite of the traditional importance of the hunt in Islamic art, the development of new types of weapons was necessary if armies wished to defend themselves against their enemies. One result of such progress was the transfer of techniques to peaceful uses. Thus, lacquer was first used for smoothing, strengthening and decorating the surface of bows, but in the late fifteenth century it began to be applied to the production of book covers and boxes. Following the Ottoman rout of the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514, the royal Safavid metalworkers were forcibly relocated to Istanbul. In the short term this destroyed the Safavid luxury metalwork industry, but in the longer term it stimulated the development of a highly sophisticated steel industry which manufactured sword and knife blades as well as openwork steel plaques. Despite the transition to cannon and other firearms from the sixteenth century onwards, traditional weapons remained popular for the hunt in Iran into the nineteenth century, but less so in India.



II0 Lacquer bow *see also page 25*

Iran, Zand or Qajar, late 18th century
Wood, painted and varnished; length: 92 cm

The archer's bow was a symbol of kingship as well as a tool of the hunt. This elaborate lacquer bow has been painted and covered by a clear sandarac-based varnish which protects the painting and imparts luminescence. Persian literary sources from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries refer to the varnish as *rawghan-i kaman*, or bow gloss. This reference coupled with the fascinating fact that the Timurid Sultan Husayn's keeper of books (*kitabdar*) and manager of manuscript production Mirak Naqqash (d. after 1507) produced bows and came from a family of Herati bow-makers, has led Tim Stanley to suggest that the earliest lacquer book covers may have been produced by him using bow gloss (Stanley in Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 189). For lacquer bookbinding see cat. nos 43 and 81.



III Steel dagger and scabbard

India, Deccani or Mughal, 17th century
Steel inlaid with gold and set with rubies; length: 38.2 cm

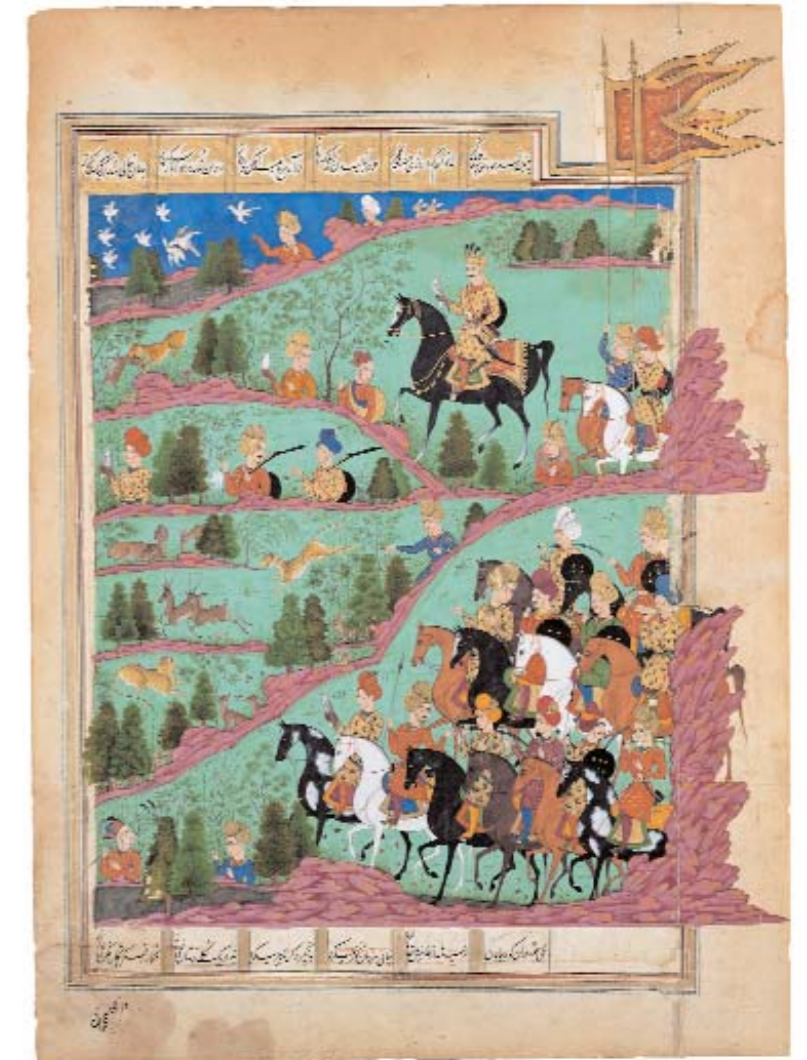
The animal combat scenes worked in *kofrigari* (steel inlaid with gold) on the forte of this steel dagger recall the bravery and skill required for warfare as well as the princely pastime of hunting. The horse-head hilt with precious ruby inlay suggests the dagger had a ceremonial function.



II2 Khusrau hunting

From a dispersed *Khamsa*
India, Deccan, Hyderabad, c.1720–40
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 43.8 x 31.2 cm; image: 35 x 24.5 cm
2005.1.199 (M 295)
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 161–62 (no. 120)

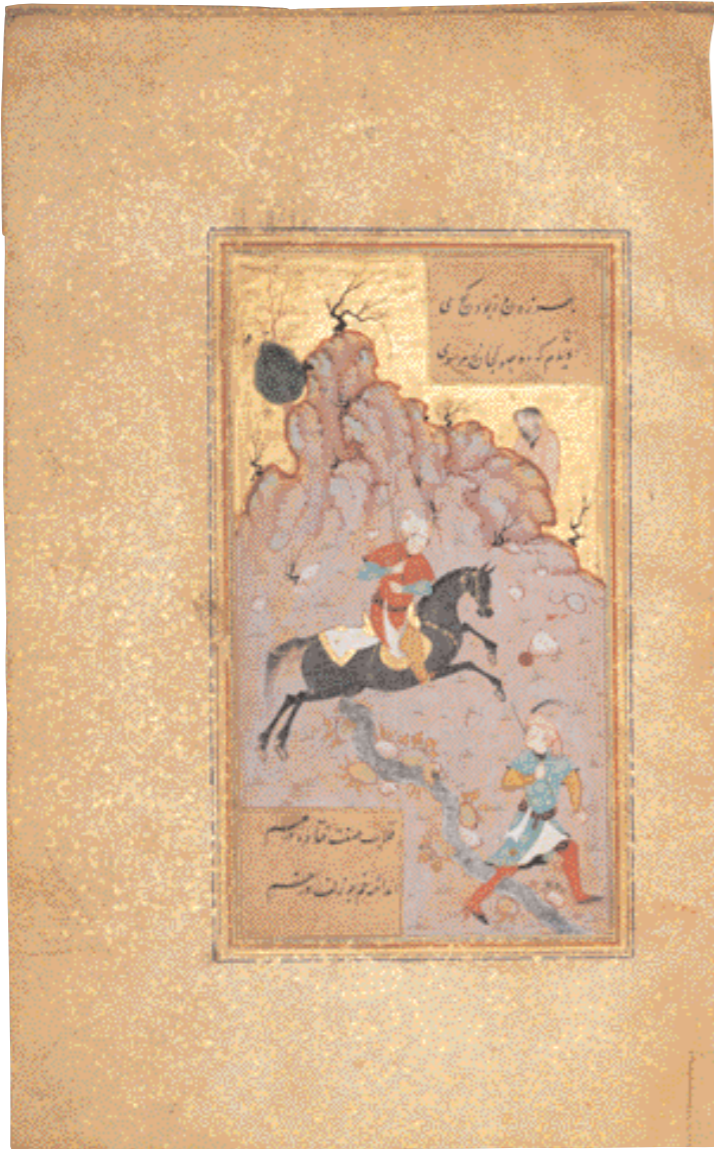
Hyderabad, the capital of Golconda, was a thriving centre for the arts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when a confluence of international patrons and painters worked together to create manuscripts of Hindu, Mughal and Persian subjects, often illustrated in a flamboyantly eclectic style. 'Khusrau hunting' represents this style well. The subject is the ever-popular one of a princely or kingly hunt as a demonstration of the power and control over conquered lands. The source of the illustration is taken from the *Khamsa* (Quintet) of Nizami, the famous twelfth-century Persian poet. In this version, Khusrau and his men exhibit a fascinating combination of Safavid attributes in a flamboyant Hyderabad painting style. The ruler's men all wear late Safavid turbans and some, including Khusrau, sport moustaches, à la Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) and Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–66), but the colourful, eclectic palette of the painting – note the mint-green landscape divided by mauve rock formations and lavish use of gold – reflects Hyderabad style.



II3 Manuscript of the *Guy o Chowgan* or *Halnama* (Book of Ecstasy) of 'Arifi: Illustration of a polo player

Iran, c.1580
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 21.3 x 13.1 x 1.5 cm

This mystical poem by 'Arifi (d. c.1449) uses the conceit of the polo ball and mallet as a metaphor for yearning for and being spurned by the beloved. In the painting a dervish on the edge of a rocky horizon observes a princely polo player who is accompanied by an attendant carrying a mallet. The illustration is stylistically close to the work of 'Ali Asghar who worked at Qazvin in the 1570s and 1580s and joined the *kitabkhana* of Shah 'Abbas I upon his accession in 1587. 'Ali Asghar illustrated two manuscripts of *Guy o Chowgan* and one of *Shah o Darvish* of Hilali that all include polo-playing scenes (Robinson 1988, p. 126). The jutting rocks, sharply bent elbows and treatment of the hair of the dervish recall these equally small-scale works by 'Ali Asghar.



II4 Frontispiece from the *Sulwan al-muta' fi 'udwan al-atba'* of Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli: Illustration of three young hunters

Frontispiece from a *Sulwan al-muta' fi 'udwan al-atba'*
Author: Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli (d. 1170)
Mosul, c.1330
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 24.7 x 16.9; image: 13.7 x 11.2 cm
2005.1.12 (AM 004)
Published: Falk 1985, p. 41 (no. 11)

Three young men dressed in sumptuous garments embellished with gold *tiraz* bands (see cat. no. 62) on their arms and turbans are ready for a hunt. One has a bow in a brown case and arrows (left); the central figure carries a brown and white hawk; and the figure on the right holds a blue long-necked bird. This painting is the right side of a double frontispiece from a manuscript of the *Sulwan al-muta' fi 'udwan al-atba'* ('Comfort of Rulers when faced with the hostility of their followers'). The work uses Qur'anic verses, sayings of the Prophet (*hadith*), animal fables (see cat. no. 102) and princely characters from ancient Persian history to advise princes on conduct and the preservation of power and leadership. A. S. Melikian-Chirvani's facsimile publication and discussion of the manuscript demonstrates its value as a sharp commentary on 'injustice, social exploitation and political oppression,' as well as the manuscript's importance for the history of Arab painting (Melikian-Chirvani 1985, p. x). The text was composed in 1159 by Ibn Zafar al-Siqilli ('The Sicilian', d. 1170), an Arab philosopher and prolific author who travelled extensively and was born probably in Norman-ruled Sicily in 1104. The frontispiece belongs to a copy of the manuscript in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.



II5 and II6 Bowl and jug

Iran, c.1170–1200
Stonepaste body, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze
Bowl diameter: 17 cm; jug height 10.3 cm

The time-honoured theme of princely horsemanship is depicted in this Iranian lustreware bowl and jug. Riders and horses appear to gallop between checker board trees in the cavetto of the bowl and around the exterior of the jug. The ornately dressed riders, the arrangement of trees and plants with dotted stems are characteristic of the miniature style of Kashan lustreware, according to Oliver Watson (Watson 2004, p. 353). This style, with its attention to small details and direct painting on a white background, finds close parallels in manuscript illustration and has been related to the contemporary *Warqa and Gulsha* manuscript in the Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul (Melikian-Chirvani 1970). Bands of decorated kufic inscriptions are found along the uppermost interior and exterior registers, respectively, of the bowl and jug.



II7 Pottery bottle

Iran, 12th century
Stonepaste body, moulded under a white glaze with streaks of blue; height: 35.5 cm

This elegant long-necked bottle features a frieze of riders on horseback attacking lions and other animals; and a multi-lobed mouth adorned with faces. The decoration was achieved through the use of a mould, a two-piece matrix containing the negative image of the bottle's relief decoration. The fine stonepaste body is well suited to the technique, translating with accuracy the details contained in the mould. This bottle is a successful application of this method: the riders seem to pop out in sharp, detailed relief from its bulbous middle. The bottle's shape corresponds to similar Seljuq examples with bulbous bodies, tapering necks and lobed mouths. The physiognomy of the riders and faces, with their high cheekbones, square chins and small mouths, is related to that seen in Seljuq stucco sculpture and painting.



II8 Silver bowl

Iran, 7th – early 8th century?
Silver; diameter: 24 cm

A helmeted guinea-fowl surrounded by a pheasant, fox, jackal and collared saluki gazelle-hound are the central focus of the bowl's decorative programme, which recalls a prosperous hunt in a wooded bower. Interconnected symmetrical vinescrolls radiate outward from the bowl's centre, with pine cones, ivy, grapes, bird-like flowers and blossoms showcasing the skill of the silversmith. The bowl's shape, technique and decorative motifs (animals, birds and vinescrolls) recall Sasanian silverware; a close parallel to this bowl is found in a Sasanian elliptical bowl in the Miho Museum, Japan.

The Sasanian dynasty ended in 651, but artistic forms and techniques persisted well into the early Islamic period and beyond: Sasanian style vinescrolls, pearl borders and floating ribbons, for example, became part of the Islamic decorative vocabulary still in use centuries later across a wide range of artistic media.

II9 Horse and groom

Ascribed to Sanwala
Mughal India, c.1590
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; image: 11.8 x 16.7 cm
2005.1.107 (M. 310)
Provenance: Collection Duffeut, Paris, 1894
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 118–19 (no. 86)

The tender relationship between a groom and his horse is conveyed here as the groom wipes the foam and sweat off his steed. Man and beast seem utterly synchronised with one another in dynamic but controlled motion: the dappled grey stallion's prancing movements elicit a fast-footed response from the young groom and the upturned cooling blanket is matched by the revealed lining of the groom's skirt. This painting is part of the venerable tradition of horse and groom pictures in Islamic art, especially that of Mughal India, where the horse and groom always appear at the ready for the appearance of their master. This painting is a rare example of a single-page work produced by the artist Sanwala, whose career as a painter in the court of Akbar can be traced from manuscripts produced between 1580 and 1604.



II0 Jahangir's lion hunt *see also page 146*

Inscribed in Hindi on verso
India, Mughal, c. 1615
Opaque watercolour, and gold on paper
Page: 29.7 x 19.9 cm; image: 26.3 x 17.2 cm
2005.1.161
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 136–37 (no. 101)

Emperor Jahangir leans forward on his elephant and bravely spears a lion while his son Sultan Parviz assists on horseback. Hunting is a universal kingly theme and of vital importance to the Mughal rulers. In this case, ruler and son demonstrate kingly virtues while simultaneously rescuing from the lion's clutches one of their subjects, a hunter whose attempts to fight off the lion with his push dagger appear futile. Depictions of Jahangir and other Mughals rescuing people attacked by wild animals often refer to actual incidents. Although there is another version of this scene in the collection, the two works appear to derive from a c. 1580 drawing and not an actual incident. A falconer and his bird with prey in the left foreground of the painting depict another form of hunting favoured by the Mughals.

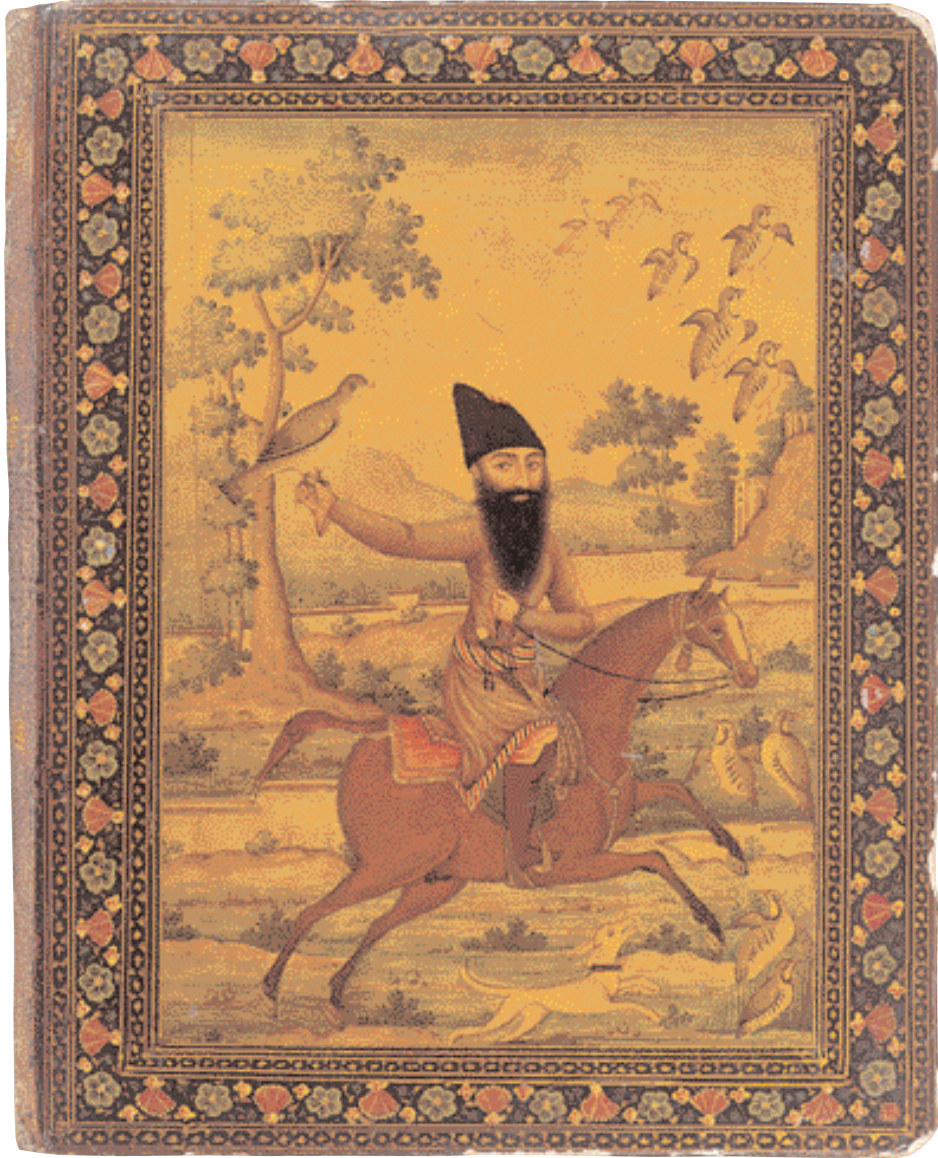


I2I Fath 'Ali Shah hawking

Iran, early 19th century

Painted and varnished pasteboard; 21 x 16.4 cm

In addition to life-size portraits on canvas, Fath 'Ali Shah's image appeared in book illustrations and lacquerware. On this book cover he is depicted hawking while his horse gallops across a plain and a hunting dog runs alongside. The subject of Fath 'Ali Shah hunting was very popular for book-bindings, but unlike most of them, this one shows him alone, perhaps because of limitations of space. Although the rendering is somewhat naïve, the fact that the shah is disproportionately large compared to his horse emphasises his dominance. Moreover, his long black beard and tall hat instantly enable one to identify him, proof that Fath 'Ali Shah thoroughly understood notions of branding and image-making.



Love & Literature

Because of the stylised nature of Ottoman, Persian and, to a lesser extent, Mughal painting, the viewer must infer loving relationships between people on the basis of subtle signs. The inclination of a woman's head toward her lover (cat. no. 123), a glance over a shoulder, or her creation of lover's burn marks on her partner's arm (cat. no. 124), all imply intimacy.

Much but by no means all Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetry concerns love. However, in a common mystical interpretation, physical love is considered a metaphor for man's love of God. In the huge body of Arabic literature a relatively small number of texts were illustrated. These include books of fables, the *Maqamat* of Hariri, and the love story of *Bayad wa Riyad*. Iran possesses a far richer vein of illustrated literature. The *Shahnama* of Firdausi and *Khamsa* of Nizami account for a significant proportion of extant manuscript illustrations. However, numerous other poetical works by Jami, Sa'di, Hafiz, Khwaju Kirmani, Amir Khusrau Dihlavi and 'Attar, to name a few, contain illustrations.

The rulers of Mughal India carried on the Persian tradition of commissioning illustrated manuscripts. In characteristically thorough fashion, Akbar's *kitabkhana* produced historical, poetic and biographical texts in impressive variety. Although the early Mughals spoke and wrote in Eastern Turkish, by the time of Akbar such manuscripts were translated into Persian, the language of the court. By the mid-seventeenth century some Mughal and Deccani princes learned Sanskrit as well as Persian and commissioned the translation of Sanskrit philosophical texts.

To this day many people in the Arabic-, Persian-, and Turkish-speaking world can recite extensive passages of poetry by heart. In the pre-modern world this skill would have been the norm at all levels of society, even if the texts being quoted varied. As the patrons of poets, rulers ensured that their own names would live on, either in panegyrics written specifically for them or in works such as Firdausi's *Shahnama* in which he mentions Mahmud of Ghazna in his efforts to obtain the ruler's patronage.



I22 Manuscript of *Mi'a layal wa layla* (One Hundred and One Nights) and the *Al-Jugrafiya* of al-Zuhri

Copied by 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al-Mawla al-Nujum
Spain, dated 632 H/1235
Ink on paper; 19 x 26.5 cm

This version of the famous stories of the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid, *A Thousand and One Nights*, copied in *maghribi* script, is a very early compilation of the tales which are thought to have been adapted from a Persian source. The manuscript contains the *A Hundred and One Nights*, establishing its antiquity within the larger 'Nights' tradition. The copy of al-Zuhri's *Geography* which is bound into this manuscript is also the earliest extant version of his book, which was written as a companion for a map of the world commissioned by the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun. It provides a description of the world at the time, including important new information about trade routes and commodities traded in the western Islamic lands and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as about the expansion of Islam.



I23 Lovers in the storm with *divs*

From a dispersed *Divan* of Sana'i (d. 1131)
Attributable to Shaykh Zadeh
Herat, c.1525
Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper; page: 29.4 cm x 19.5 cm;
image: 17.9 cm x 11.3 cm
2005.1.94 (Ir.M. 63)
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 45–46 (no. 22)

Two horned *divs* (demons) with big teeth sprinkle a storm on a pair of lovers and their crew as their boat makes its way along a silver river (tarnished black over time). *Divs* are well known characters from Persian mythology. Those in this painting appear either from behind a riverbank or from the sky. The uncertainty of their position is unsettling; at least one crewman covers his eyes in response to the oncoming storm created by the beasts. The text on the reverse of this painting is poetry from the *Divan* of Sana'i (d. 1131) relating a journey but not the one seen here. The painting has been attributed to Shaykh Zadeh, a student of Bihzad who adopted his master's precision-detailed forms. Shaykh Zadeh contributed paintings to several royal-calibre manuscripts commissioned either for Shah Tahmasp or his brother, Sam Mirza, who was governor of Herat from 1522–1529 (see Canby 1998, pp. 44–45).

I24 Lovers in a landscape

Signed, 'the humble Afzal al-Husayni'
Isfahan, dated 1056 H/1646
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 21.3 x 30.5 cm; image: 13.2 x 20 cm
Verso: montage of calligraphy
2005.1.109 (Ir.M. 89)
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 77–78 (no. 50); A. Welch in Hillenbrand 2000, p. 304 and pl. 18

Two lovers, their bodies gently framed by foliage painted in gold, are depicted with a wine cup and bottle at the man's bare feet – all symbols of love – in this classic composition from the Safavid tradition of single-page painting. The artist Afzal al-Husayni's figures, textiles and gold vegetation closely recall the work of Riza-yi 'Abbasi, the most celebrated painter in this style, according to Sheila Canby. She also suggests that Afzal al-Husayni, may have been a student of Riza's, working from the 1620s until about 1650 and that some false attributions to the master may indeed be the work of Afzal al-Husayni. The emphasis on surface decoration – note the pair of birds depicted on the dark blue cushion fabric – and the seemingly disconnected gazes of the lovers belie the raw physicality of their act. The lady is administering burn marks to her lover, as evidenced by the brand, with its rising wisps of smoke in her left hand. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries love burn (*dagh*) marks were a sign of a lover's sincerity, according to Anthony Welch quoting Don Juan of Persia (the former Iranian diplomat Ulugh Beg, who participated in Anthony Sherley's 1599–1604 embassy from Isfahan to Spain. He became a Roman Catholic, adopted the name Don Juan and stayed in Spain; see Welch in Hillenbrand, 2000, p. 304). Burn marks are also visible in contemporary dervish portraits and their presence there implies love for God. *Lovers in a landscape*, however, depicts passionate, physical, heterosexual love.



125 *Shahnama* of Na'im al-Din

Scribe: Na'im al-Din Shirazi b. Sadr al-Din al-Mudhahhib
 Iran, Shiraz, c.1492
 Aqqoyunlu Turkman style
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; 29.2 x 19 x 18.3 cm
 2005.1.269 (MS 12)
 Published: Welch 1978b, pp. 23–31

The *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) is the Persian national epic, composed by the poet Firdausi around the year 1000. It recounts the story of ancient Iran (Persia) up to the Arab-Islamic invasion of the seventh century. Partly legend, partly historical, it is also a manual on kingship, a compendium of heroic tales, and a dissertation on wisdom, love, passion, warfare and magic. It was customary for every king to have a personal illustrated copy of the *Shahnama*, done by the most prestigious artists of the time.

This manuscript of the *Shahnama* is dated 898 H/1492–1493 and was copied by Na'im al-Din Shirazi b. Sadr al-Din Mudhahhib for Sultan Abu'l-Nasr Qasim Khan. The lacquer binding dates from the Qajar period. Fol. 218v, shown here, depicts the climax of the romance of Bizhan and Manizha. The hero Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit where he was imprisoned by his beloved Manizha's father, the Turanian King Afrasiyab.



126 Firdausi and the three court poets of Ghazna

Iran, Shiraz, Inju school, 1341
 Watercolour, gold and ink on paper; text and image 28.7 x 24 cm
 2005.1.88 (Ir. M. 56)
 Published: Welch, 1978a, pp. 44–45; Canby 1998, pp. 23–24 (no. 3)

This painting depicts Firdausi, the author of the great Persian epic the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings, c.1000) seated on the left before three venerable court poets with long beards. Firdausi had to prove his poetic superiority to these established poets on his way to the court of Mahmud of Ghazna (present-day Afghanistan) so as to secure patronage for the *Shahnama*. The illustration belongs to the large Injuid *Shahnama* which is dated and attributed to Shiraz based on the dedicatory inscription to al-Hasan al-Qavam al-Din, chief vizier of Fars province, at the end of Ramadan 741 H/February 1341. Separate from the Ilkhanids, the Injuids (from *inju*, the 'royal estate,' of the Ilkhanids) were a short-lived dynasty (c.1303–57) in southern Iran. A distinct Injuid illustration style developed in Shiraz, borne of three major traditions: Seljuq Iran, Ilkhanid, and native southern Iranian influences. According to Carboni the *Shahnama* appears to have been the most popular manuscript for illustration under the Injuids (four of seven known illustrated manuscripts), perhaps underlining a desire to legitimise their dynasty (Komaroff and Carboni 2002, p. 217).



127 Torch stand with chevrons left

Iran, late 16th century
 Cast brass; height: 43.2 cm
 Provenance: Wildenstein Collection

128 Torch stand right

Iran, late 16th century
 Cast brass; height: 37.9 cm

These Safavid torch stands (*mash'al*, or pillar candlesticks) are profusely decorated with a combination of floral and vegetal motifs and inscriptions. The texts on them are verses of Persian mystical poetry, a motif which appeared earlier in fifteenth-century metalwork under the Timurids and continued to be used under the Safavids. The verses have profound mystical overtones and communicate the desire to be subsumed in the divine nature, like the moth who is so attracted to the candle's flame he burns his wings. There are similar torch stands in major public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, Metropolitan Museum, Musée des arts décoratifs and the Hermitage (see Melikian-Chirvani 1982).



129 Calligraphic wood panel

Iran, 15th century
Carved wood; 138 x 52 cm

This two-tiered wooden panel, divided into six sections, closely resembles carved *thuluth* inscriptions from Mazandaran, a northern province of Iran. Two published examples bear the signatures of two sons of a master carpenter, Ustad Ahmad-e Sari. One is dated 1468 and signed by Husayn son of Ustad Ahmad (Welch 1979, pp. 130–1); the other is dated 1494 and signed by Shams al-Din, son of Ustad Ahmad (Bivar and Yarshater 1978, pl. 65). Even if this panel is not the work of one of these woodcarvers, the examples share the manner in which vertical letters rise and intersect letters above the text line and words within each panel are written on two levels, lower and upper. Unlike the comparative examples, this panel contains verses. Since it is fragmentary and quite long, it may have been part of a frieze that ran around the walls of a room. Despite being poetic and not religious, the inscription may have come from one of the many shrines in Mazandaran with carved wood decoration.



130 Portrait of the poet Hatifi

Ascribed to Bihzad (c.1450–1535/6)
Inscribed: 'Surat-i Maulana 'Abd Allah Hatifi, 'Amal-i Ustad Bihzad' (Portrait of Maulana 'Abd Allah Hatifi, the work of master Bihzad')
Herat, c.1511
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 11.8 x 7.7 cm; image: 9.4 x 6 cm
2005.1.160 (M. 192)
Published: Canby 1998, p. 42 (no. 21); Canby 1999, pl. 22; Sims 2002, pp. 271–72; Canby and Thompson 2003, pp. 76–77

The Shia poet Hatifi, wearing a Safavid turban with a red baton (*taf*), is the subject of this small painting. Gold inscription bands identify Hatifi as the subject and Bihzad as the painter. This small portrait would have been mounted in an album. David Roxburgh proposed that it was once in Dust Muhammad's 1544–45 album for Bahram Mirza, brother of Shah Tahmasp (Roxburgh 1998, pp. 34, 49). Hatifi (d. 1521) was a well-known poet for the Timurid ruler Sultan Husayn Bayqara (d. 1506) in Herat and later for Shah Isma'il (r. 1501–24) after the Safavid conquest. Dickson and Welch suggest that this portrait created by Bihzad is perhaps the one Shah Isma'il requested of the artist to commemorate his meeting with the Shia poet in 1511 outside Herat (Dickson and Welch 1981, vol. I, p. 34 and p. 240, n. 12). Shortly thereafter, Hatifi began the *Isma'ilnama*, his poem celebrating the victorious reign of Shah Isma'il. Stripped of the virtuoso details that made Bihzad famous, the power of this portrait concentrates on the intense gaze of the poet. Bihzad's later paintings exhibit a new interest in expression as either the artist's eyesight or his dexterity began to falter. 'Portrait of Hatifi' epitomizes Bihzad's late style; the plain blue background and Hatifi's unadorned robe further draw the viewer's eye toward the bearded poet's gaze.



131 Quatrain

Calligraphy signed by Mir 'Ali (d. c. 1544–5)
Borders: India, Mughal, c. 1640
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, page 37.9 x 25.6 cm, image 18.3 x 10.1 cm
2005.1.255

The Mughals had a deep appreciation for Persian painting and calligraphy and extraordinary specimens such as this one were often gathered together and bound into luxury albums with sumptuously decorated borders. This quatrain is signed by the celebrated Iranian calligrapher Mir 'Ali (d. c. 1544–5) who was active in Herat, Mashhad, and Bukhara. The four diagonal lines written in black *nasta'liq* script read, 'A delightful young man robbed my soul through his coquetry,/And he devastated my completely ruined heart./I have such pain that I cannot describe it to anyone./My condition is such that I cannot explain it.'





Music

While this section comprises pictures and musical instruments from Turkey, Iran and India, the musical inheritance of other parts of the Islamic world are every bit as rich. Medieval metalwork from Mosul and Damascus decorated with vignettes from the courtly cycle regularly includes musicians and dancers alongside hunters and drinkers. As early as the eighth century there was a mural of dancing women in the Umayyad palace of Qusayr 'Amra, while in the eleventh century popular songs were collected in a book called the *Kitab al-Aghani* (The Book of Songs), with lyrics but no notation. In addition to music played at entertainments, drummers and trumpeters accompanied armies into battle, and tambourinists and musicians playing stringed instruments performed while their princely patrons rode in processions (cat. no. 142).

A genre of Persian and Islamic Indian painting depicts single musicians, often strumming stringed instruments in the countryside. In some cases these are portraits of known individuals who were the star musicians at specific courts. In other examples they are lovelorn young men. A related group of works depict dervishes, alone or in a group, making music. Sufi music consisted of singing love poetry as an allegory for the dervish's love of God or the Prophet Muhammad. Some illustrations portray dancing dervishes alongside musicians playing flutes, tambourines and stringed instruments. This music was intended to induce an ecstatic state. Because some conservative religious schools frowned upon or condemned music, it was performed privately under the protection of courts and wealthy patrons.

Cat. no. 143 (detail)



I32 Rabab

Afghanistan, 19th century
Wood, bone, mother-of-pearl, skin; length 98 cm

A string instrument which probably originated in Afghanistan, the *rabab* was the lute of the ancient royal courts. This is one of only a few short-necked lutes originating in Central Asia and is the main plucked lute instrument of Afghanistan. With the neck and body carved from wood, *rababs* have an odd form perhaps best described as 'boat-like'. The body is usually covered with stretched goatskin while the reverse and neck are often intricately inlaid with mother-of-pearl and bone, decorated with colourful beads and tassels. The *rabab* has three or four strings, made from tied-on gut or nylon, which are attached to flower-shaped pegs set in the pegbox, which is also finely carved. Most *rababs* have a number of sympathetic strings (9 to 12) which are tuned by pegs set along the base of the neck.

I33 Rabab or Rewap *opposite*

Kashgar, China, 20th century
Wood, skin; length 90 cm

Unlike the short-necked *rababs* of Afghanistan, the Uyghur communities in south-west China use a long-neck lute, known as the Kashgar *rabab* or *rewap*. This is an important instrument in the performance of the Uyghur *mukam* (classical suite form). The body and part of the neck are carved from a single piece of mulberry wood, in a half coconut shape, and the front is covered with snake-skin. The pegbox is glued to the neck, and turns backwards in a curve, with two pegs on the right and three pegs on the left. Inlay decoration of black and white horn in fishbone, triangles and stripes covers the instrument.

I34 Two tambourines (Daff or Riqq)

Turkey or Egypt, 20th century
Wood, ivory, mother-of-pearl, metal, skin; various sizes

I35 Three Naqar drums

Turkey, 19th century
Metal, leather, skin; various sizes

The *daff*, also known as the *riqq*, is a percussion instrument of the tambourine family, and is found in varying forms in different parts of the Muslim world. Used in a wide variety of settings – folk and traditional art music, as well as in Sufi ceremonies – the diameter of the *daff* varies between 20 and 60 cm. The round single-headed drum consists of a goatskin membrane stretched over a wooden frame, often richly ornamented and inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

Attached inside the frame are metallic jingles such as pellet bells, rings, small cymbals and slightly convex or flat discs, all of which can be intrinsic to the performance. The three *naqar* drums are small hemispherical vessels of copper or brass over which a membrane is stretched. *Naqars* were originally made from goatskin stretched over the orifice of an abalone shell. These percussion instruments appear in pairs, one larger than the other. Two *naqars* were fixed to a belt (which ran through the loop on the brass frame) and were either looped over the saddle of a horse or carried by the performer. They were used in Turkish janissary bands and are the forerunner of both kettle drums and marching drums.

I36 and I37 Two instruments *opposite*

Ottoman Turkey, 19th and 20th centuries
Wood, mother of pearl, tortoise shell; various sizes

The small string instrument is a Turkish fiddle, known as the *Kamanja Rumi* ('fiddle of Rome'). Decorated with mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell, it has a flat wooden face. The neck, upper section and underside are inlaid with designs of scrolling foliage and floral sprays. The second instrument is a Turkish lute that represents a hybrid between an *oud* and a *tanbur*. The neck is inlaid with bone and it was probably made in Istanbul in the first half of the twentieth century.





I38 Tambura or tampura

India, Rajasthan, c.1800
Teak wood, a calabash, metal and bone; length: 126 cm

The *tambura* is a long-necked four-string plucked drone lute, traditional in both northern and southern India, and is found both in art and in classical music. The example here is certainly a northern instrument, and is comparable to a *sitar*, with a three-part resonator including a gourd or calabash. The *tambura* is used by both women and men, but men's instruments tend to be over 130 cm long. It provides the drone, but can also be plucked in a regular *ostinato* pattern, providing a rhythmic background. The special drone effect comes from the flat bridge or *jawari*.



I39 A youth playing a tar

Iran, Khurasan, late 16th century?
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 34.7 x 23 cm; image: 14.9 x 7.6 cm
IRM 32r

This album folio features a portrait of a youth playing a *tar*, one of the most important classical Persian instruments. A *tar* ('string' in Persian) is a long-necked lute played in Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and Caucasus regions. It has a characteristic double-bowl shape and is usually carved from mulberry wood and covered with a lambskin membrane on top. This *tar* has five strings, although modern ones have six strings. The melodies performed on *tar* were thought to have a calming effect on people. The musician in this portrait may be a dervish, with his tall conical hat, and he may have been part of a wandering troupe of musicians.

I40 Sindukht comes to Sam bearing gifts (detail) see also pages 195 and 200

Attributed to Qadimi and 'Abd al-Vahhab
'Houghton' *Shahnama*, made for Shah Tahmasp, Fol. 84v
Iran, Tabriz, 1522–35
Opaque watercolour, gold, silver and ink on paper, 46.5 x 31.2 cm
Published: Dickson and Welch 1981, vol. I, pp. 201–10, 214–16; vol. II, pl. 70.

Musicians performed at a number of royal occasions, including gift-giving ceremonies like the one depicted in this extraordinary painting from a manuscript of the *Shahnama*. The result of a massive collaboration between the leading painters, calligraphers and illuminators of the first half of the 16th century, this manuscript of the *Shahnama* was produced for the Safavid ruler, Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76), and is universally acknowledged as one of the most remarkable of all Persian manuscripts, and among the greatest works of art in the world. This miniature tells the story of princess Sindukht, who brought the riches of the royal treasury at Kabul to present to Sam, including some 300,000 gold coins, thirty Persian and Arab horses, sumptuous textiles, priceless jewels and a gold throne. While the princess's servants bearing dishes and manuscripts, as well as horses and elephants with their grooms are shown outside, this composition is dominated by the court scene where Sindukht is seated before Sam beneath an *ivan*, with courtiers around them, while two musicians perform in the foreground.



I41 Illustration from the Akhlaq-i Nasiri of Tusi: Musical entertainment at a scholar's house

Lahore, c.1595
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 23.9 x 14.1 cm; image 21 x 12.3 cm
2005.1.288, fol. 71r
Published: Canby, 1998, pp. 124–26 (no. 92)

Musicians play under the watchful eye of a master, who is surrounded by books and servants in this Mughal painting. The music room is an arched niche (*ivan*) just inside the palace walls and framed by cypress trees extending upward into the sky. The carved plaster niches in the walls of the music room are both decorative and functional: they hold brightly coloured bottles and contribute favourably to the acoustics. Similar niches can be seen in Shah 'Abbas's 'Ali Qapu pavilion in Isfahan. This painting comes from one of Akbar's (r. 1556–1605) favourite manuscripts, the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (The Ethics of Nasir; see also cat. nos. 87–88), a philosophical treatise on ethics, social justice and politics by the thirteenth-century medieval Persian philosopher and scientist, Nasir al-Din Tusi. The manuscript does not lend itself to illustration, so the artists picked out key themes from the text and created their own scenes using well-known paradigms. This painting's text is from the first discourse, 'On Ethics' where the author proclaims that 'no relationship is nobler than that of equivalence as has been established in the science of music...' This is, of course, after the author has affirmed that nearness to God is the nobler existence. With this painting, the artist has evoked the beauty and balance of musical compositions to illustrate the philosopher's point.



I42 Nata raga

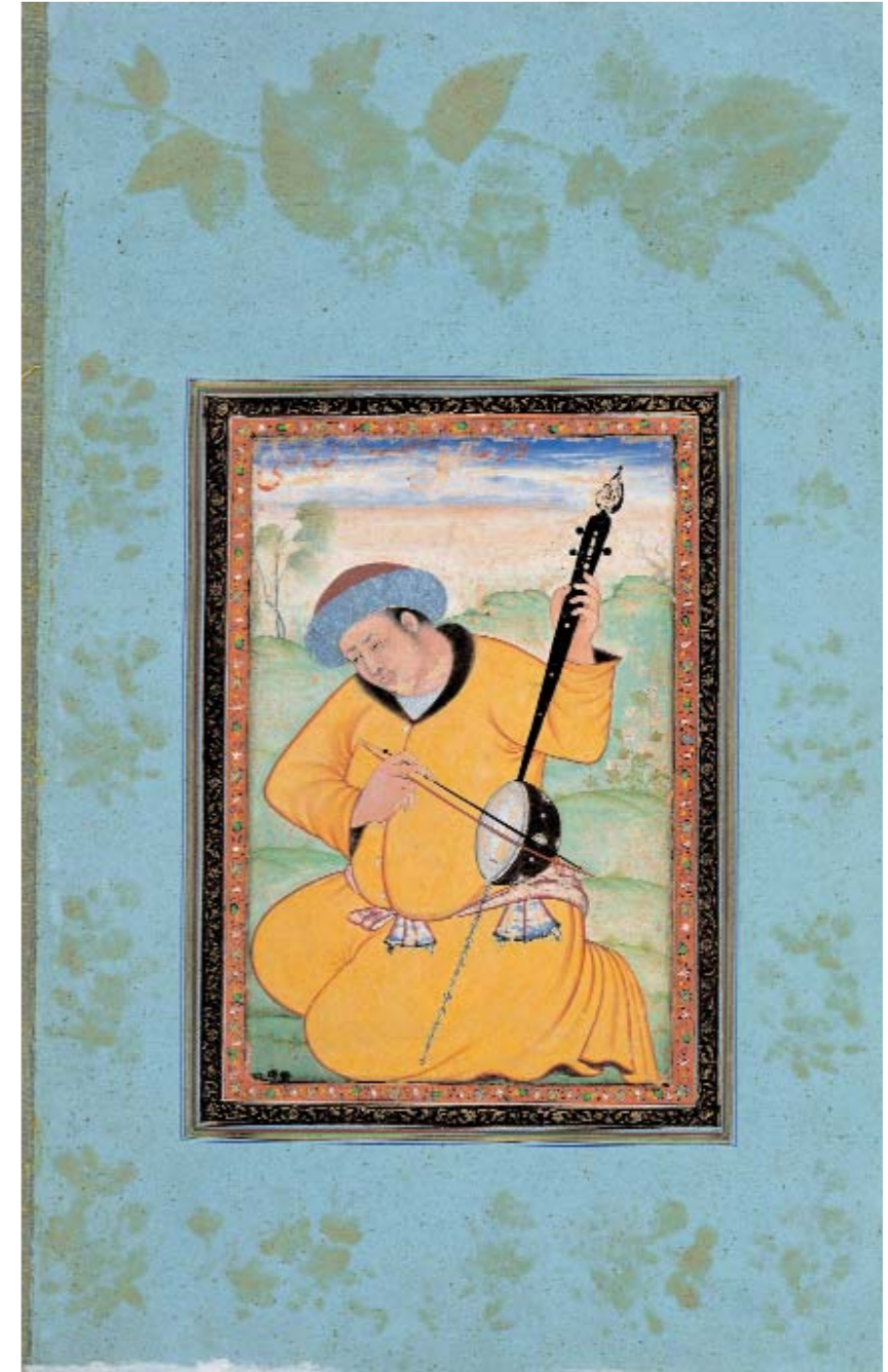
Deccan, c.1690
 Opaque watercolour on paper; page: 35.2 x 23.7 cm;
 image 26.4 x 18.5 cm
 2005.1.176 (M 236)

A young prince sets off on horseback accompanied by four musicians playing the tambourine, drum and *vinas* (stringed instruments). The Muslim courts of India combined indigenous instruments like *vinas* with others common at the Persian court.

I43 The kamancheh player opposite and see also page 162 (detail) and 202

India, Mughal, 17th century
 Opaque watercolour on paper; page: 33.2 x 20.5 cm; image: 14.7 x 9.7 cm
 2005.1.205 (M 307)
 Published: Canby 1998, pp. 148–49 (recto only)

This *kamancheh*, or Persian spike fiddle, appears to be a luxury version of the instrument, with an inlaid wooden soundbox and an elaborately detailed spike to support the instrument while it is being played. The strings are probably made of silk, though modern ones are made of metal. The other side (recto) of this page is a painting of two ducks in a grassy landscape before a pool. Along the upper edge of the painting is an inscription in red, 'These two birds [*murghan*] are [the work] of Mansur.' Known for his sensitive portraits of the natural world, the favoured artist Mansur was commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir to portray at least two types of bird for his series of animal studies, according to the ruler's memoirs. Whether or not this painting is part of the aforementioned commission, it is an outstanding bird study composed of minute brushstrokes. This album folio of two paintings is from a dispersed eighteenth-century Iranian album of Mughal and Persian paintings which was sold in 1982. Although it was not in the sale, the page format and pink paper borders with their paintings of nut tree and eglantine blossoms are identical to two of the album's folios (numbers 17 and 18) by chief court painter Muhammad Baqir. He also compiled a similar album in St Petersburg (Canby 1998, pp. 148–149; Ivanov 1996, pp. 20–32).





Cat.no. 147

Patronage of the Arts

The magnificent mosques, tombs, *madrasas*, and palaces that survive from Spain to India from the eighth to the nineteenth century are testament to the patronage of Muslim rulers and their families. Whereas the hypostyle mosque form is believed to have derived from the shape of the house of Muhammad in Madina, local materials and pre-existing architectural styles have to a large part determined the directions in which regional types of mosques developed thereafter. Perhaps in no other area of Islamic art are the dual inheritances from the Roman and Byzantine worlds on the one hand and the Sasanian on the other more evident than in architecture.

In this exhibition the stone capital from Umayyad Spain (cat. no. 153) recalls Corinthian capitals, but its deeply carved, symmetrical decoration is consistent with the style of the Umayyad Mosque at Cordoba and the palace at Madinat al-Zahra. In Samarkand and Bukhara the Timurids built their monuments of brick and either combined glazed and unglazed bricks to produce epigraphic patterns or reveted their buildings entirely in glazed tilework. Tile mosaic, deeply carved and moulded tiles, and *cuerda seca* polychrome tiles (cat. no. 152) all characterise the decoration of the Shah-i Zinda in Samarkand, the street of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tombs and mosques commissioned by members of the Timurid court.

Textual sources and artefacts alike demonstrate the royal interest in collecting precious objects and curiosities. From at least the beginning of the fifteenth century royal albums of calligraphy dating back to Yaqut, the famous thirteenth-century calligrapher, are attested. By the seventeenth century Mughal albums included poetry copied by famous Persian masters of *nasta'liq* (cat. no. 146) and their emulators. Chinese porcelains, inscribed gemstones and exquisite carpets all formed part of the collections in the royal households of the Safavids and Ottomans. The survival of medieval ceramics decorated in a variety of styles suggests that the general population expressed its preferences by acquiring and treasuring glazed ceramics and metalwork. A courtly interest in locally produced ceramics is more difficult to prove since descriptions and later manuscript illustrations concentrate on objects made of precious metal, imported treasures, and opulent silk textiles. The royal prerogative to collect rarities, however, remained constant from the Umayyads in the eighth century to the Qajars in the nineteenth.



I44 Engraved white bronze bowl

Iran or Mesopotamia, 13th century
Bronze; diameter: 55 cm
Published: Melikian-Chirvani 1982, fig. 45a, p. 139

The entire exterior surface of this large bronze bowl is densely covered with engraved decoration divided into two main registers. The lower register contains twelve roundels of figures representing the zodiac and the upper register features kufic and *thuluth* script inscriptions separated by roundels inscribed with distinct geometric interlace patterns. The artisan's extraordinary skill may be observed in the level of detail given to the kufic inscriptions: the vertical terminals are knotted and many terminate in human heads. As if this did not present enough decorative flourish, the inscription rests on a scrolling vine background. Melikian-Chirvani notes this plaited kufic inscription is a characteristic specific to Western Iranian metalwork in his discussion of Eastern Iranian elements seen in vessels made in Western Iran or even Northern Mesopotamia (Melikian-Chirvani 1982, p. 139).

The inscriptions have been translated as follows:

Around the rim:

Perpetual glory, increasing prosperity, lasting wealth, high complement [?],
lasting good-fortune, high complement [?], lasting wealth, high complement [?]

Around the body in cursive:

Perpetual glory, increasing prosperity, lasting wealth, high complement [?], perfect

Around the body in kufic:

Perpetual glory and healthy life and increasing prosperity

I45 Tankard

Iran, 13th century?
Brass inlaid with silver; height: 24.5 cm

Blessings of glory, prosperity, wealth, happiness, well-being and the intercession of the Prophet are bestowed upon the owner of this tankard according to its inlaid silver inscriptions. Foliate motifs and eight-petalled rosettes further adorn this bulbous-shaped vessel. The modelled bird finial and harpy represent common imagery of the period but may not be original to this tankard.



I46 Album page of calligraphy

Page from an album made for Shah Jahan
Signed by Mir 'Ali
Iran, Herat, c.1520
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper;
page: 36.9 x 25.2 cm; text: 27.2 x 14.1 cm
Published: Falk 1985, p. 65 (no. 36)

Magnificent albums or *muraqqa'* survive from the Safavid, Ottoman and Mughal dynasties. Compiled by and for the rulers and other wealthy patrons, the albums contain paintings, drawings and calligraphy specimens, often surrounded by lavishly decorated borders. This detached page from an album made for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) features Persian poetry penned in *nasta'liq* script by the celebrated sixteenth-century Iranian calligrapher Mir 'Ali (d. c.1544), whose name is found in the lower left triangular space. The unusually large plants in the borders demonstrate a keen interest in botanical accuracy and are similar to other pages in albums made for Shah Jahan.



I47 Dish see page 170

Eastern Iranian world, c.10th century
Earthenware, polychrome slip decoration under a transparent glaze; diameter: 32.8 cm
Inscription: 'Generosity is a disposition of the dwellers of Paradise.'

This stunning dish is related to the other epigraphic wares (cat. nos 148 to 150) from Samanid Iran and Central Asia, but stands apart from them stylistically. The simple, austere beauty of the other epigraphic wares has been replaced by an organised polychrome decorative programme. Colourful abstract motifs are inserted between the vertical letter terminals of the broad-brushed kufic inscription, which relates the same moralising aphorism as cat. no. 149. An unusually accomplished central interlacing strapwork pattern completes the decoration. Epigraphic slipwares have been ascribed to established Samanid period (r. 819–1005) centres of production, including Nishapur and Afrasiyab (old Samarkand), but the exact details of patronage and production remain elusive.

148 Vase

Eastern Iranian world, 10th century
Earthenware, white slip with black slip decoration under a transparent glaze; height: 19.8 cm
Inscription: 'Blessing to its owner'

Using the humblest materials – earthenware and slip-painted decoration – medieval ceramicists transformed simple, functional wares into stunning works of austere beauty. Calligraphy, traditionally thought of as the highest form of Islamic art because of its power to transmit the Word of God, provides the sole decoration for these vessels. Letters have been gracefully elongated vertically and horizontally to fill the cavetto of the dishes and the circumference of the vase, creating pleasing rhythms of positive and negative space. The inscriptions are typically pious aphorisms addressed to the owner and give a glimpse into a genre of Arabic literature that does not survive in manuscript form from this period. The shapes of the wares – especially the conical form of the dish with its thin straight sides and flat foot – may derive from contemporary Iranian silverware. The Samanids (r. 819–1005) ruled autonomously over a great part of the eastern Islamic world and oversaw a wide variety of ceramic production (see also cat. no. 147). Epigraphic slipwares have been ascribed to centres of production, including Nishapur and Afrasiyab (old Samarkand), and were for local consumption: they are not found in excavations west of central Iran or at Rayy.



149 Dish

Eastern Iranian world, 10th century
Earthenware, white slip with black and red slip decoration under a transparent glaze; diameter: 34.9 cm
Inscription: 'Generosity is the disposition of the dwellers of Paradise.'
In red, a repeated word, which possibly reads as, 'may you be rewarded'.



150 Bowl

Eastern Iranian world, 10th century
Earthenware, black slip with white slip decoration under a transparent glaze; diameter: 33.5 cm
Inscription: 'Be aware of the fool, do not associate with him, and do not disregard the bewildered admirer: with blessing.'



I51 The architect Nu'man is thrown from a fortress, from an unidentified manuscript

Iran or India, 16th century or later
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 23.2 x 15.6 cm;
image 12.7 x 9.5 cm

Although this episode does not appear in the most frequently illustrated Persian manuscripts, such as the *Shahnama* of Firdausi or the *Khamsa* of Nizami, the story of an architect being thrown from a parapet to his death in the presence of a king recalls the tale of Timur (Tamerlane) ordering the execution of an architect whose work displeased him. The style of the painting relates to that of the Turkman school, with the oversized clusters of flowers, limited number of figures, and narrow range of facial expressions. However, the palette and matt surface finish may indicate that this painting was either produced or 'improved' in India.

I52 A pottery tile panel and two pottery tiles

Central Asia, late 14th – early 15th century
Carved and glazed terracotta; panel: 56 x 39 cm; tiles: 30 x 18.5 cm; 31.5 x 23.5 cm

Timurid tilework from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is some of the finest Islamic tilework ever created. Timur (r. 1370–1405) and his successors were fierce rulers but also grand patrons of the arts (see cat. no. 6). Monumental buildings demanded extraordinary decoration. The brilliant turquoise domes and elaborately patterned façades of Timurid buildings are a familiar site in cities such as Samarkand. They used a range of techniques such as *banna'i* (glazed brick patterns), carved and glazed terracotta, *cuerda seca* ('dry cord'), underglaze painted relief moulding and even lustre, all revealing the virtuoso talents of the craftsmen. The carved and glazed terracotta tiles in niche-like form would have been part of a *muqarnas* structure within and below the spandrels of an arch in a palace, mausoleum or mosque. The tile panel may have been affixed to the exterior façade of a mosque, or mausoleum in the Shah-i Zinda complex at Samarkand.



Cat. no I52



I53 Carved marble capital

Spain, Umayyad period, second half of the 10th century
Marble; 28 cm in each direction

Crisp, deep drilling has transformed this Corinthian capital into a lace-like arrangement of floral and vegetal motifs. The decorative programme is organised into wide horizontal registers demarcated by curling acanthus leaves, and topped by four projecting volutes over a thin bead-and-reel band. Capitals such as this were made for the royal palace at Madinat al-Zahra near Cordoba and represent the height of marble carving under the Umayyads in Spain. Palace construction commenced in 936 under Caliph 'Abd al-Rahman III (r. 912–61) and finished under his son al-Hakam II (r. 961–76). A similar capital in the al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya, Kuwait, contains an inscription with the names of al-Hakam; the project supervisor, Taled; the maker, Falih; and the date 362 H/972–73. Related capitals remain *in situ* at Madinat al-Zahra and others are in the Museo Arqueológico, Madrid; the Metropolitan Museum, New York; and the Louvre, Paris (Dodds, 1992, p. 247, no. 39; Atıl, 1990, p. 92, no. 23). The present capital is remarkable for the clues it gives as to its original appearance and construction. Traces of red pigment that was part of the original red and blue colouring remain in some of the recesses and under the upper register of the capital. Additionally, incised geometric lines on top of the original block (a perfect 28 cm cube) reveal the structure of the design.





Power & Kingship

The primary source of power in Islam resides with God. In their titulature sultans and shahs recognise this by referring to themselves as 'the shadow of God on earth' or 'the commander of the faithful'. Their temporal power exists only in relation to that of God. Nevertheless, from the seventh century onward the kings of the Islamic world followed established methods of declaring their dominion, such as minting coins impressed with their names (see cat. no. 58), and devised iconographies to reinforce their position. Epigraphy containing royal titles and honorific phrases has played a central role in announcing the identity and emphasising the legitimacy of rulers. Inscriptions on buildings commissioned by a particular ruler will contain his name and titles as do *tiraz* textiles destined as royal gifts to a range of deserving recipients. Fourteenth-century inlaid metalwork of Mamluk Egypt and Syria (see cat. no. 158) often contains majestic *thuluth* inscriptions of the sultan's name and titles as its principal decoration, with roundels containing flowers separating the sections of writing.

In government certain forms of monograms and seals were reserved for the ruler. Ottoman Turkey devised the *tughra*, a highly stylised form of writing the sultan's name which appeared at the top of legal documents. In Qajar Iran *firman*s, or official documents, (cat. no. 79) were written on long scroll-shaped sheets with illuminated headings and royal insignia. Standard-bearers held flags and metal standards to mark the ruler's position on the battlefield. Iranian *'alams* inscribed with the name of the Prophet and his family (cat. no. 154) are only one type of such standards. Most royal standards have not survived but some texts describe gold orbs held above the king's head and capable of intimidating his enemies.

Despite the material trappings of kingship, powerful armies and good governance were the primary means by which Muslim dynasts maintained and expanded their power. Periods of political fragmentation were invariably followed by eras of consolidation when conquerors such as the Mongols or Timurids swept across vast territories with a speed and ruthlessness not previously encountered. Like the Mongols who ended the Abbasid Caliphate, the Ottoman conquest of and expulsion of the Byzantine Church from Constantinople in 1453 had a far-reaching psychological effect on the Muslim world and Christian Europe alike. Such victories were the living proof of imperial power, supported and expressed through a whole range of symbolic forms.



154 Standard (*alam*)

Iran, 16th century
Steel; height: 81.5 cm; width: 32.5 cm
Published: Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 222

Standard (*alam*)

Iran, 17th century
Steel; height: 103 cm; width: 32 cm

Acting as military emblems of power, standards (*alam*) were often decorated with pairs of dragon heads and religious messages. The central field of this sixteenth-century standard features piercework floral scroll decoration and the phrases, 'O Allah!' 'O Muhammad!' 'O 'Ali!' in mirror images, probably to ensure legibility on both sides of the standard. James Allan has aptly remarked that there appears to be a face in the lower portion of the design: 'its eyes formed by two small rosettes, cheeks formed by the rounded 'ains of 'Ali's name, the nose formed by the two *yays*.' This ingenious use of calligraphy fits within the Islamic tradition of creating animal, bird and human forms from beautiful letterforms (Allan in Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 222). The seventeenth-century standard has three openwork cartouches which read, 'O, the assistance to those who ask for assistance, care for me!' 'O, the Opener!' and in the large, central cartouche, 'Allah, Muhammad, 'Ali.' This standard retains its original mount, giving an idea of the monumentality of these military emblems.



155 Bahram Gur kills two lions to prove his right to the throne of Iran

From a dispersed *Shahnama* of Firdausi, signed by Mu'in Musavvir, dated 1077 H/1666-67
 Iran, mid 17th century
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page 35 x 21.9 cm; 24 x 12.5 cm
 IRM 43 o
 Published: Welch 1972a, p. 207 and 209

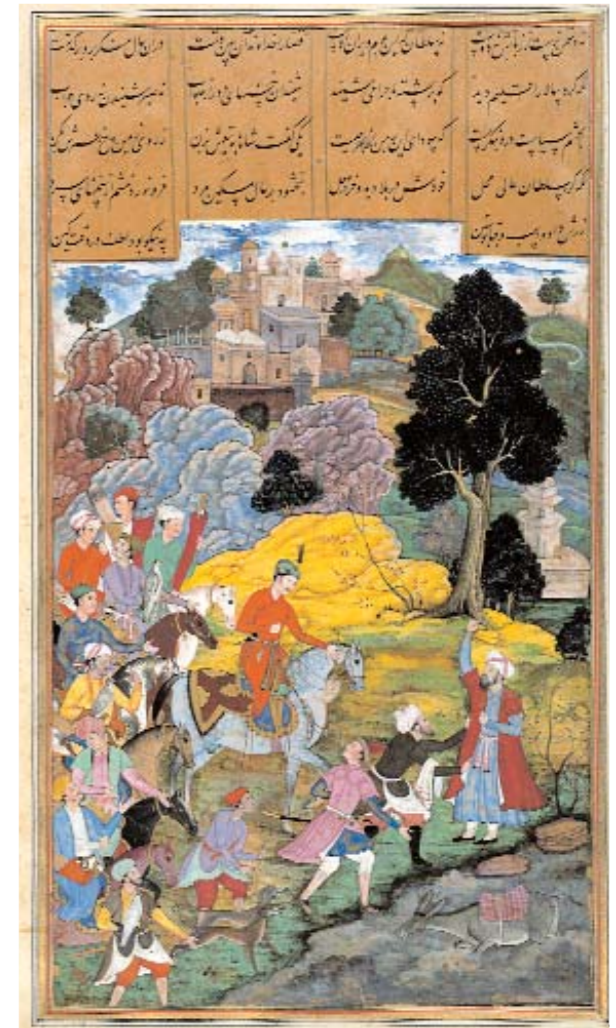
The Sasanian king Bahram Gur was regarded by both Safavid and Mughal rulers as a model hunter and king. To prove his right to the throne of Iran, Bahram Gur must kill two lions. The celebrated *Shahnama* hero levels his ox-headed mace on the first lion, which looks up at the blood spurting forth from his head. The second lion springs to action as onlookers behind a rocky hill with lion-head grotesques observe the scene, fingers to lips to gesture their amazement at Bahram Gur's power. The crown and throne of Iran are centre-stage in this detached painting which came from a *Shahnama* manuscript signed by Mu'in Musavvir, dated 1077 H/1666-67 (see Farhad 1990). There are five more leaves in the collection from the same manuscript. The present painting is in the style of Mu'in Musavvir, the eminent Safavid painter best known for his single-page portraits (cat. no. 160), although he worked on *Shahnama* projects as well, often outlining a composition to be completed by other artists. This work represents a conservative strain in mid seventeenth century painting, lacking the Europeanising elements of multi-point perspective or use of shading.



156 Illustration from the *Kulliyat* of Sa'di: A king's forgiveness

Kulliyat (Collected Works) of Sa'di
 Scribe: 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi, 'Anbarin Qalam (Amber Pen)
 Mughal India, c.1604
 Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 41.8 x 26.6 cm; image and text: 27.5 x 15.2 cm
 2005.1.284, fol. 40v (MS 5)
 Provenance: Collection of the Marquess of Bute. Published: Canby 1998, pp. 127-28 (where identified as fol. 44b)

This painting demonstrates another form of kingly power, that of benevolence. A king arrives on his dappled grey steed to forgive the man who had cursed him in anger when his ass became stuck in a mire. The man is shown on the right with upraised fist and the ass is still trapped. Instead of killing the man, as the king's men had suggested, the beneficent king gives the pathetic man gold, a horse and a fur coat. The illustration is taken from the second chapter ('On Beneficence') of the *Bustan*, in the collected works (*kulliyat*), of Musharrif al-Din Sa'di (d. 1292), the beloved Persian poet. The present manuscript (195 folios) was copied by 'Abd al-Rahim al-Haravi, 'Anbarin Qalam', as indicated on the colophon. Patron, date and place of production are not given, but folio 1a contains the seal of Shah Jahan. The paintings are assigned to c.1604, immediately preceding the time of Akbar's death and Jahangir's ascension to the throne. This painting is characteristic of late Akbari painting with its composition of numerous, small-scale figures and its little variety of facial expressions.



157 The Ottoman army marching on the City of Tunis in 1569

Scribe: Ilyas Katib
Painters: Nakkash Osman and 'Ali
Turkey, Istanbul, dated Dhu'l Hijja 988 H/12 January 1581
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 33.4 x 21.8 cm
2005.1.215 (TM 001)
Published: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 34–36 (no. 7)

The power of kingship was often celebrated through detailed histories of an individual ruler's reign. The Ottomans and Mughals were specialists in this genre of historical literature. The present painting is a detached page from the *Sehname-i Selim Han* by Lokman (Istanbul, A 3595; this is fol. 65a), commissioned by Sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74) and completed during the reign of his son, Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95). Lokman, the celebrated Ottoman historian, based his history of Selim II's reign on the format of the great Persian epic, the *Shahname*. The manuscript was copied by Ilyas Katib and illustrated by the most important Ottoman historical painter, Nakkash Osman, and his brother-in-law 'Ali (who worked on this page) in the typical Ottoman style of painting which has a straightforward documentary quality. Depicted here is the Ottoman army's march with infantry and cavalry to retake the city of Tunis from Hapsburg Spain in 1569; the Spanish had wrested the city from Ottoman control in 1534.



158 Bowl

Mamluk Egypt or Syria, first half of the 14th century
Brass, inlaid with silver; diameter: 18 cm

The inlaid silver inscription on this Mamluk brass bowl reads, 'For the High Excellency, the Lordly, the Great Emir, the Learned, the Just, the Valiant, the Supported, the Succour, the Sparkling, the Help, the Orderly, the Responsible, the [officer] of al-Malik al-Nasir.' This is a typical formulaic inscription, meant to bring glory and prosperity to the owner, and it is seen on a variety of artistic media, from ceramic bowls to enamelled glass mosque lamps, during the Mamluk period (r. 1250–1517). Mamluk society thrived on emblems and symbols. The interior of the brass bowl is decorated with a sun disc and six fish. When the bowl was filled with water, the fish and sun would appear to shimmer. The image of the sun may be seen as symbolising the ruler, as well as wealth and the source of life.



159 Dish

Iran, Kashan style, late 12th – early 13th century
Stonepaste body, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze;
diameter: 17 cm

This lustreware dish depicts a princely enthronement scene familiar from manuscript frontispieces: a centrally placed ruler is flanked by officials. This venerable tradition traces its roots to enthronement scenes on Sasanian rock reliefs. In this luxury ceramic example, the central figure sits cross-legged, wearing a robe with unscripted *tiraz* bands. The flanking attendants are noticeably smaller than the ruler. It is customary for all three figures to have aureoles behind their heads. In the classic tradition of the Kashan lustre style, the figures are large and fill the dish. They are painted in reserve and the space between them is taken up by busy patterns of scrolling motifs. The potter has made masterful use of the floral decorative motifs in the patterns of the robes to give volume to the body of each figure beneath them. Note especially the palmette-shaped flowers that accentuate the prince's broad knees. The exterior of the dish contains a band of benedictory inscriptions.



160 Nawab Mirza Muhammad Baqir and his son Mirza Husayn

Signed by Mu'in Musavvir
Iran, Isfahan, dated 1085 H/1674
Opaque watercolour and gold on paper; page: 42.1 x 29.2 cm; image: 13.6 x 24 cm
2005.1.81 (Ir.M. 48)
Provenance: J. Goldschmidt, Berlin; Olsen Foundation, Bridgeport, CT. Published: Canby 1998, pp. 86–87 (no. 59)

This is a double portrait of a government dignitary, Mirza Muhammad Baqir, and his son, Mirza Husayn, signed by the eminent Safavid painter, Mu'in Musavvir. The nawab is most likely to be identified as the *munajjim bashi*, or chief astrologer, under the Safavid Shah Sulayman (Francis Richard, *Raphaël du Mans: missionnaire en Perse au XVIIe s.* [Paris, 1995], vol. II, p. 270). He would have been in a position to commission this double portrait of himself and his son wearing sumptuous garments in a learned atmosphere complete with accoutrements for writing. Mirza Muhammad Baqir's robe of Indian silk with tulips on white ground reflects the normalisation of trade relations with India by the 1670s. It is possible that Indian textiles such as this were sold in Iran or made intentionally for the export market (Canby 1998, p. 87).



161 Illustration from the *Falnama* of Ja'far al-Sadiq: A King being chased out of the Tomb of Imam 'Ali at Najaf see page 178

Falnama (Book of Divination) attributed to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq
Iran, Tabriz, c.1550 or Qazwin, c.1555
Opaque watercolour, gold and ink on paper; page: 59.8 x 45 cm
2005.1.96 (Ir. M. 65)
Published: Canby 1998, pp. 54–55 (no. 30)

Flames emanating from a hand in the catafalque pursue a furtive king as he exits Imam 'Ali's tomb. He leaves behind four furious onlookers, rattling metal mosque lamps, and a tomb full of gold flames. This detached painting is from a *Falnama* (Book of Divination), a book of omens and guidance attributed to the Shia imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 765). The text on the verso of this page gives an idea of the book's tenor and approach: 'Here is the good news for you who have this prophecy. Bad luck has vanished from your star. Your problems will end favourably ...' (Welch 1978a, p. 67). One of the last great manuscript commissions of Shah Tahmasp, the *Falnama* was appropriate subject matter for a ruler who was becoming more superstitious as he embraced religious fundamentalism. The unusually large format of the pages has invited a number of explanations from scholars, including the Shah's declining eyesight in middle age, and his wish to read the complicated text with an interpreter.

Cat. no. D Karim Khan Zand and his kinsmen

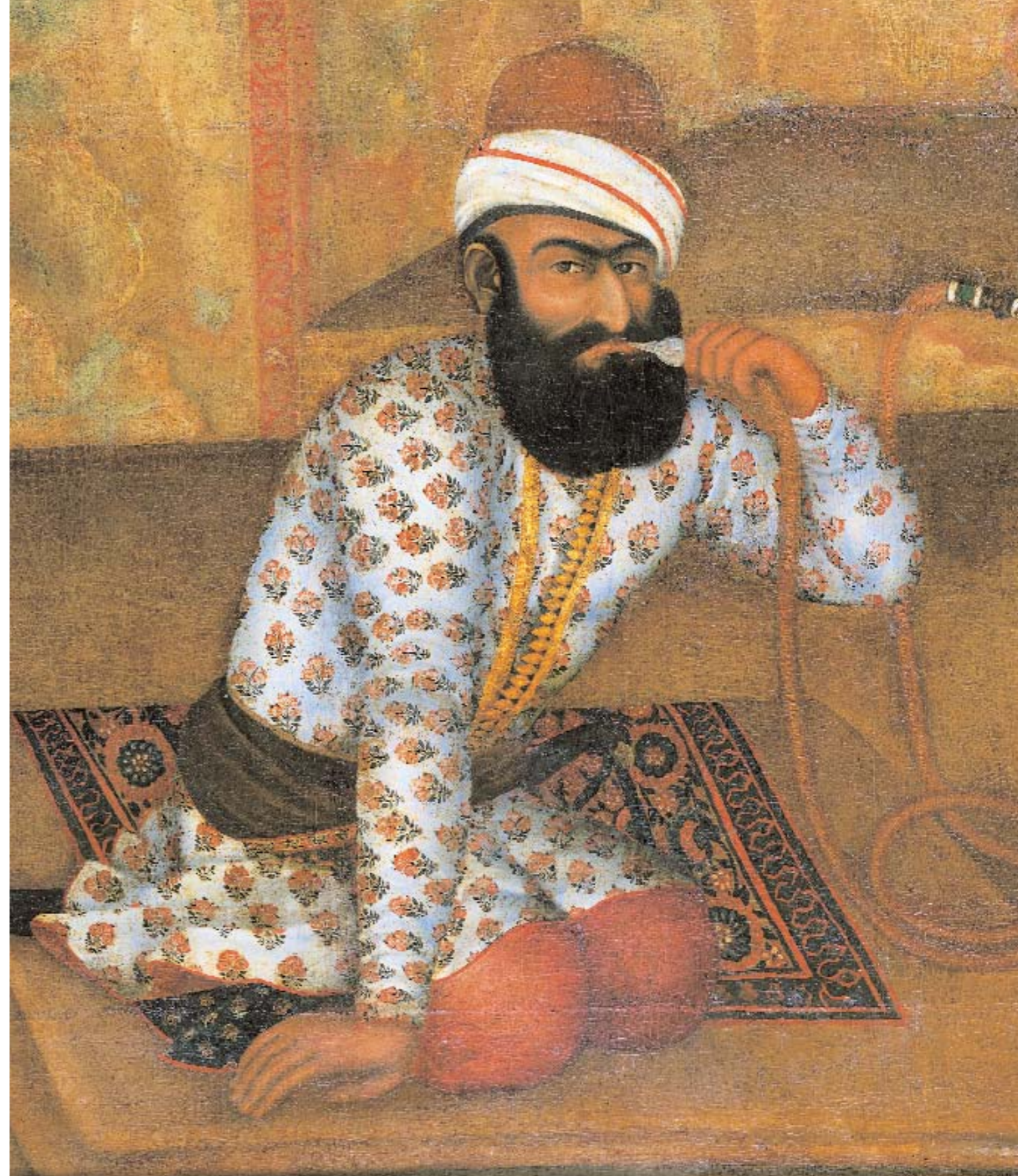
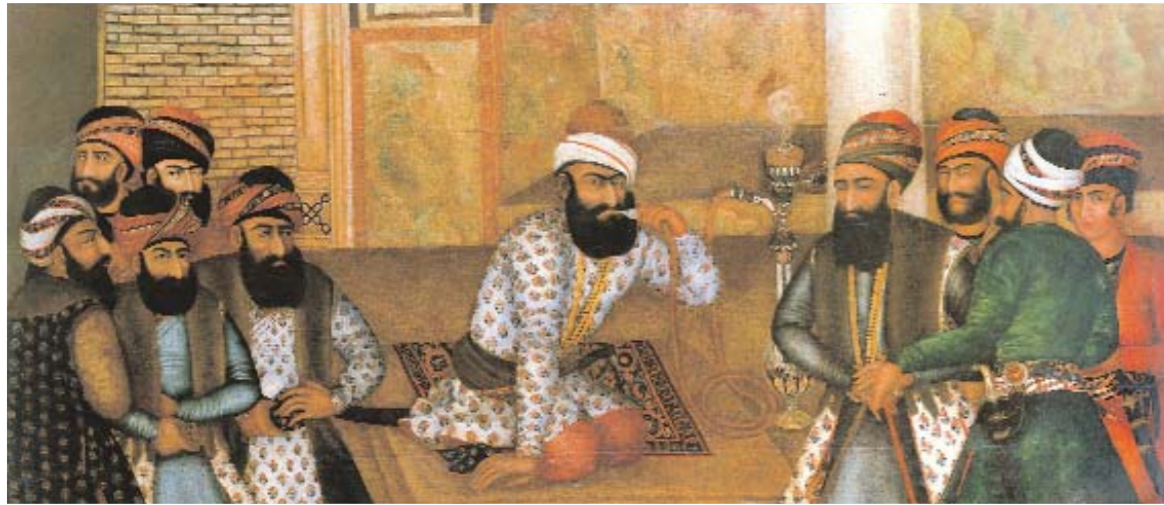
Attributed to Muhammad Sadiq

Iran, Shiraz, after 1779

Oil and metal leaf on canvas; 129.5 x 276.8 cm

Published: Mrs Eskander Aryeh; Eskander Aryeh Collection; Diba 1998, pp. 152–53

In contrast to the Qajar imperial enthronement scenes of Nadir Shah (r. 1736–47) and Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1798–1834; cat. no. 75) both of whom are decoratively depicted in full regalia, there are few indicators that this is an imperial image. Karim Khan Zand, the Zand regent who ruled for one of the last Safavids, wears a Zand turban but no official regalia. The informality of this casual smoking portrait relates to the style of his rule. Karim Khan Zand's strong shoulders, the deferential posture of his courtiers, the monumentality of the columned porch and the sheer size of the painting itself convey the power of his rule and the stability he brought to Iran. Diba has attributed the work to Muhammad Sadiq based on a portrait sketch of Karim Khan Zand signed by the artist and details such as the heavily shaded faces, turbans and small-scale floral patterns, all also found in the artist's signed portrait of Rustam Khan Zand. She has suggested that the present painting may have been a commemorative portrait commissioned after the ruler's death, based on her observation that the serious tone of the courtiers contradicts the reportedly coarse humour and joculariry of Zand's actual court (Diba 1998, pp. 152–53).



Cat. A Ceramic tile arch *see also half-tile page*

Pakistan, 16th century or later
Earthenware, white slip, underglaze painting in cobalt blue and turquoise; 124 x 226 cm

The tiles form a spandrel of an arch from an unknown building. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century funerary monuments in Multan, Punjab were decorated on the exterior with tile panels such as this. The sixteenth-century tomb of Sultan 'Ali Akbar is clad with spandrels that closely parallel this example. Each of the eight sides of that mausoleum have spandrels above blind arches. The palette of turquoise, white and blue underglaze reflects the strong influence of Timurid Central Asia, possibly a source of craftsman potters as well as designs. Used here as a central point around which stylised leaves rotate, the star motif is commonly found on tilework from Multan and Sind in southern Pakistan from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.



Cat. A detail

Cat. B Robe *see also frontispiece*

Central Asia, Mongol period, 13th–14th century
Silk brocade; height: 140 cm

This rare example of a complete robe of the Mongol period closely resembles an example excavated in 1978 from Onggut tombs in Inner Mongolia. (Kessler 1994, pp. 158–59) With the blessing of Genghis Khan, the sons of the Onggut tribal leaders had intermarried with the Mongol royal family from the early thirteenth through the second half of the fourteenth century. A robe such as this would have been worn under a cloak with short sleeves, which may explain why the lower sections of the arms are sewn onto the upper sleeves, breaking the continuity of the pattern. Unlike the excavated example and other textile fragments, the roundels do not contain addorsed fantastic beasts but are simple lobed rosettes surrounded by a pseudo-kufic inscription. This and the double band of fabric that forms the edge along the neck and under the arm indicate an Islamic source and may indicate that the robe originated in Central Asia rather than Mongolia. The design also suggests that the robe is of fourteenth-century date rather than earlier.



Cat. no. E Beam

Morocco or Spain, Almohad period, 12th–13th century
Pine, carved and painted; 313 x 30.8 cm

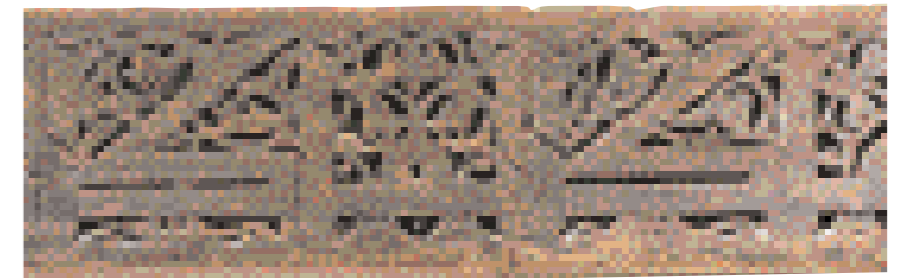
This carved and painted wooden beam carries an elegant, foliated kufic inscription interlaced with a vine scroll. The composition is framed by an upper band of alternating white and yellow rosettes and a white band along the base. There is a clarity and strength of design on this beam that comes from the carver's decision to leave space around the main motifs. The bifurcated leaves, base petals with curling tapering 'tongues' and conical bud-like forms are characteristic of Almoravid and Almohad designs which continued under the Nasrids. The Almohads from the southern Maghrib conquered present-day Morocco and Spain in the twelfth century, bringing with them a religious fervour that prompted a prolific building programme and a sober decorative style focused on calligraphy. The beam's inscription appears to be taken from a poetic source, a pre-Islamic *qasidah*, so the beam may have been among the inscribed panels flanking the entrance to a palace.



Cat. no. F Carved wooden beam

Iran, 12th–13th century
Carved wood; 239 x 20.8 cm

A foliated kufic inscription enlivened by split palmette vine scrolls forms the main decoration of this beam. The inscription appears to be a truncated reference to the common phrase, *al-mulk li'llah* – the power/dominion is God's. Traces of paint indicate that the beam was originally painted.

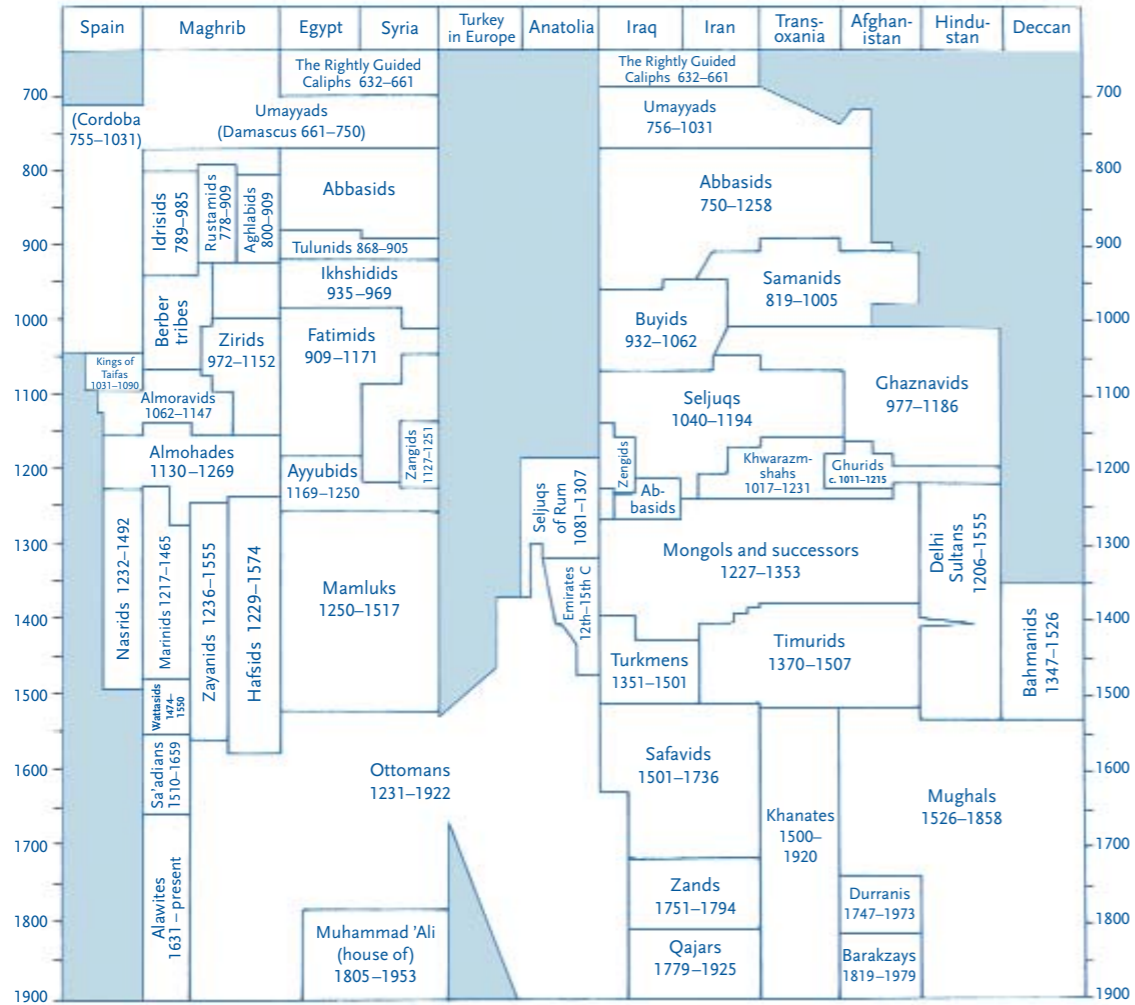




Cat. no.94

Principal Islamic dynasties

This schematic chart does not give more than a very simplified picture of the political complexity of certain periods. Large parts of Central Asia, China, South-east Asia and Africa have been omitted.



Adapted and modified from a chart published in: Hayward Gallery, *The Arts of Islam*, London, 1976, p. 46

Cat. no. 140





Cat. no. 76 (detail)

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Cat. no. 140
(detail)

Chronology

Entries in **bold blue type** indicate items in the exhibition

- | | | | |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| c. 570 | Birth of Muhammad in Mecca | 830 | <i>Bayt al-Hikma</i> (House of Knowledge) established in Baghdad |
| 595 | Muhammad marries Khadija | 847 | Great Mosque of Samarra built |
| 610 | Muhammad receives first revelation; beginning of the Prophetic mission | ca. 850 | Medical works of Hippocrates and Galen translated into Arabic |
| 620 | Death of Khadija | 855 | Death of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, founder of the Hanbali school of law |
| 622 | The <i>Hijra</i> : emigration of Prophet Muhammad to Medina. Starting point of the Muslim lunar calendar | ca. 866 | Death of the philosopher and scientist al-Kindi |
| 624 | Expedition of Badr | 868 | Death of al-Jahiz, litterateur and master of Arabic prose |
| 625 | Marriage of Fatima and 'Ali | 870 | Death of al-Bukhari, author of a respected canonical collection of <i>hadith</i> |
| 630 | Bloodless conquest of Mecca | 873 | Death of Hunayn ibn Ishaq, translator of medical, scientific and philosophical works from Greek into Arabic |
| 632 | Event of Ghadir Khumm. Death of Prophet Muhammad in Medina | 879 | Mosque of Ibn Tulun completed in Fustat |
| 632–34 | Abu Bakr, first caliph | 909 | Establishment of the Fatimids in North Africa |
| 634–44 | 'Umar, second caliph | 922 | Death of the mystic Mansur al-Hallaj in Baghdad |
| 644–56 | 'Uthman, third caliph | 923 | Death of al-Tabari, author of important texts on early Islamic history |
| 656–61 | Caliphate of 'Ali | 925 | Death of the physician and philosopher Abu Bakr al-Razi (Rhazes) |
| 661 | Murder of Imam 'Ali | 929 | Death of the astronomer al-Battani (Albatenius) |
| 680 | Death of Imam Husayn at Karbala | 935 | Death of Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari, founder of Ash'ari school of law |
| 691 | Building of the mosque (Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem | 940 | Death of the Abbasid vizier and calligrapher Ibn Muqla |
| c.696 | Monetary reform; replacement of Sasanian and Byzantine coinages by coins with purely Arabic inscriptions | 950 | Death of the philosopher al-Farabi |
| 706 | Building of the Great Mosque in Damascus | 953 | Coin of al-Mu'izz (cat. 58, 1st coin middle row) |
| ca. 750 | Translation of classical medical and philosophical works into Arabic begins | 956 | Death of al-Mas'udi, author of an encyclopaedia on history, geography and sciences |
| 762 | Baghdad founded as capital city of the Abbasids | 967 | Death of Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani, author of a major source for ancient and classical Arabic poetry |
| 765 | Death of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq | | |
| 767 | Death of Abu Hanifa, founder of the Hanafi school of law | | |
| 784–86 | Great Mosque of Cordova built | | |
| 794 | Paper mill established in Baghdad | | |
| 795 | Death of Malik ibn Anas, founder of the Maliki school of law | | |
| 808 | Foundation of Fez | | |
| 820 | Death of al-Shafi'i, founder of the Shafi'i school of law | | |



Cat. no. 143

- | | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 969–70 | Fatimid conquest of Egypt and foundation of new capital city, Cairo (al-Qahira) | | important commentaries on the works of Aristotle |
| 987 | Marble funerary stele (cat. 42) | 1204 | Death of the philosopher and religious teacher Maimonides |
| 988–89 | Al-Azhar university founded | 1209 | Death of the Persian poet Nizami, author of romantic verse epics |
| 990–1013 | Construction of the mosque of Imam al-Hakim | 1233 | Death of Ibn al-Athir, author of a monumental world history |
| 1000 | Death of al-Muqaddasi, world-traveller and geographer | 1235 | Manuscript of the <i>Mi'a layla wa layla</i> (cat. 122) |
| 1005 | Foundation of the <i>Dar al-Hikma</i> (House of Wisdom) in Cairo | 1240 | Death of the philosopher and mystic Ibn al-Arabi |
| 1006–07 | Tower mausoleum, Gunbad-i Qabus, built near Gurgan | 1258 | Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols |
| c. 1010 | Firdausi completes the epic of the <i>Shahnama</i> | 1259 | Construction of the observatory at Maragha begins |
| 1022 | Death of the calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab | 1273 | Death of the mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi, author of mystical didactic poems |
| 1030 | al-Biruni completes his work on India. Death of the philosopher and historian Miskawayh | 1274 | Death of the eminent philosopher and astronomer Nasir al-Din Tusi |
| 1037 | Death of the influential philosopher and physician Ibn Sina (Avicenna) | 1284 | al-Mansuri hospital constructed in Cairo |
| 1039 | Death of the astronomer and physicist Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) | 1292 | Death of the Persian poet Sa'di, master of lyrical and ethical-didactic poetry |
| 1052 | Manuscript of the <i>Qanun fi'l-tibb</i> of Ibn Sina (cat. 96) | 1294 | Death of the musician, Safi al-Din |
| 1067 | Nizamiyya <i>madrasa</i> founded in Baghdad | 1310 | Death of the playwright Ibn Daniyal |
| 1068–69 | Destruction of Fatimid libraries | 1325 | Death of the theologian and philosopher al-Hilli |
| 1090 | Ismaili state established in the fortress of Alamut | 1333–54 | Construction of the Alhambra in Granada, Spain |
| 1111 | Death of al-Ghazali, jurist and theologian | 1341 | Firdausi and the three court poets (cat. 126) |
| 1122 | Death of al-Hariri, master of the literary genre of the <i>maqamat</i> (prose poem) | 1344 | Manuscript of the <i>Taqwim al-sihha</i> of Ibn Butlan |
| 1143 | First translation of the Quran into medieval Latin by Robert of Ketton | 1349 | Library of al-Qarawiyyin created in Fes |
| ca. 1150 | Translations of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) into Latin | 1368 | Death of the traveller Ibn Battuta |
| 1154 | al-Idrisi completes his universal geography at the court of Roger II in Sicily | 1390 | Death of the Persian poet Hafiz |
| 1154 | Hospital of Nur al-Din built in Damascus | 1298 | Death of the calligrapher Yaqut al-Musta'simi |
| 1162 | Death of the physician Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar) | 1406 | Death of the philosopher of history Ibn Khaldun |
| 1170–80 | Construction of the mosque in Seville with its minaret, the present-day Giralda | ca. 1420 | Observatory at Samarkand founded |
| 1185 | Death of the physician and philosopher Ibn Tufayl | 1453 | Constantinople becomes the capital of the Ottomans |
| 1187 | Farid al-Din 'Attar writes the allegorical verse epic, <i>Mantiq al-tayr</i> (Conference of the Birds) | 1492 | End of Muslim rule in Spain |
| 1198 | Death of the philosopher and physician Ibn Rushd (Averroes), author of | 1494 | Bahram Gur kills the rhinoceros (cat. 108) |
| | | 1498 | Ibn Majid guides Vasco da Gama across the Indian Ocean to India |
| | | 1536 | Death of the painter Bihzad |
| | | 1537–38 | First edition of the Quran printed by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini |

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| 1544 | Death of the poet and calligrapher Mir 'Ali Haravi | 1885 | Exhibition of Persian and Arab art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London |
| 1550–57 | Building of the Suleyman mosque complex in Constantinople | 1893 | Exposition d'Art Musulman at the Palace de l'Industrie in Paris |
| 1581 | Illustration of Ottoman army marching to Tunis (cat. 157) | 1893 | Manuscript of <i>Gulshan-i-raz</i> (cat. 81) |
| 1582 | Double frontispiece from <i>Diwan</i> of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (cat. 46)
Manuscript of the <i>Tadhkira</i> of Shaykh Safi al-Din (cat. 38) | 1903 | Exposition des Arts Musulman at the Pavillon de Marsan in Paris |
| 1588 | Death of the architect Sinan | 1905 | Exposition d'Art Musulman in Algiers |
| 1593 | Manuscript of the <i>Anwar-i-Suhayli</i> of Kashifi (cat. 103) | 1910 | Exhibition on Islamic art (Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst) in Munich |
| 1602 | Manuscript of the <i>Mathnawi</i> of Rumi (cat. 33) | 1912 | Exposition d'Art Persane at the Musee des Arts Decoratifs in Paris |
| 1631–32 | Page of calligraphy (cat. 89) | 1914 | Death of the novelist Jurji Zaydan |
| 1632–54 | Building of Taj Mahal at Agra by Mughal ruler, Shah Jahan | 1920 | Aligarh College upgraded to the status of University |
| 1640 | Death of the theologian and philosopher Mulla Sadra | 1931 | Exhibition of Persian art at Burlington House in London |
| 1646 | Lovers in a landscape (cat. 124) | 1935 | Exhibition of Persian art at the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (St Petersburg) |
| 1658 | Death of the Turkish cosmographer and encyclopaedist Hajji Khalifa | 1938 | Death of the poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal |
| 1666–67 | Illustration of Bahram Gur killing two lions (cat. 155) | 1973 | Death of the writer Taha Husayn |
| 1674 | Nawab Mirza Muhammad Baqir and his son (cat. 160) | 1977 | Establishment of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture |
| 1718–20 | Quran on cloth (cat. C) | 1976 | Exhibition on the Arts of Islam at the Hayward Gallery in London |
| 1727 | Ibrahim Muteferriqa sets up first Ottoman printing press | 1979 | Abdus Salam awarded Nobel Prize in Physics |
| 1778–79 | Pilgrimage certificate (cat. 24) | | Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) established at Harvard-MIT |
| 1798–1801 | French expedition under Napoleon to Egypt | 1980 | Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad in Algeria added to World Heritage List |
| 1808 | Letter from 'Abbas Mirza to Napoleon I (cat. 80) | 1981 | Medina of Fez in Morocco, and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan added to World Heritage List |
| 1809 | Royal order of Fath 'Ali Shah (cat. 79) | 1982 | Old Walled City of Shibam in Yemen added to World Heritage List |
| 1821 | Setting up of the Bulaq printing press in Cairo | 1983 | Agra Fort and Taj Mahal in India added to World Heritage List |
| 1828 | Appearance of the first Arabic newspaper | 1984 | Alhambra in Granada and the Historic centre of Cordoba added to the World Heritage List |
| 1832 | Appearance of the first Ottoman newspaper | 1985 | Historic mosque city of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, Quseir Amra in Jordan, the Great Mosque and Hospital of Divrigi in Turkey, and the Medina of Marrakesh in Morocco added to World Heritage List |
| 1847 | Quran scroll (cat. 11) | 1986 | Fatehpur Sikri in India, and the Old City of Sana'a in Yemen added to World Heritage List |
| 1859 | Beginning of the construction of the Suez Canal | | |
| 1861 | Travelogue by Ma Fuchu (cat. 29) | | |
| 1865 | Lacquer pen box (cat. 78) | | |
| 1869 | Opening of the Suez Canal | | |
| 1876 | Exhibition of Persian art at the South Kensington Museum in London | | |



Cat. no. 10



Cat. no.67

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| 1987 | Death of the dramatist Tawfiq al-Hakim | 2001 | Lamu Old Town in Kenya, and Samarkand in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List |
| 1988 | Timbuktu and Old Towns of Djenne in Mali, and Kairouan in Tunisia added to World Heritage List | 2002 | Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam in Afghanistan added to List of World Heritage in Danger
ArchNet, online library on architecture, launched |
| | The Aga Khan Trust for Culture founded | 2003 | Shirin Ebadi awarded Nobel Peace Prize |
| 1989 | Death of the architect Hassan Fathy | | Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in Kazakhstan added to World Heritage List |
| 1990 | Itchan Kala in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List | 2004 | Tomb of Askia in Mali added to World Heritage List |
| 1993 | Humayun's Tomb and the Qutb Minar complex in Delhi, India, the Historic Town of Zabid in Yemen, and the Historic Centre of Bukhara in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List | 2005 | Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar in Bosnia, Kunya-Urgench in Turkmenistan, and the Mausoleum of Oljaytu in Soltaniyeh, Iran added to World Heritage List |
| 1996 | Ancient <i>Ksour</i> of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oulata in Mauritania, and the Historic city of Meknes in Morocco added to World Heritage List | | Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park, Cairo |
| 1997 | Qila Rohtas in Pakistan added to World Heritage List | 2006 | Orhan Pamuk awarded Nobel Prize in Literature
Muhammad Yunus awarded Nobel Peace Prize |
| | Death of the musician Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan | | Death of the writer Naguib Mahfouz |
| 1999 | Ahmed Zewail awarded Nobel Prize in Chemistry | | Death of the singer-musician Ali Ibrahim Toure |
| 2000 | Historic Town of Zabid in Yemen, and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan added to List of World Heritage in Danger | | |
| | Stone Town of Zanzibar, and the Historic Centre of Shaksrisyabz in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List | | |
| | Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) established | | |

Glossary

basmla	the invocation 'Bism Allah al-rahman al-rahim', meaning 'In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful', which appears at the beginning of most chapters of the Qur'an
bihari	stately cursive script used exclusively in India with thick round bowls for endings and wide spaces between words
dhikr	form of prayer, which consists in the constant repetition of a name or formula, performed either in solitude or collectively
firman	royal decree or written edict
ghubari	miniscule script said to have received its name because it resembled motes of dust and to have been invented to write messages carried by pigeon post
hadith	report of the sayings of the Prophet, and in Shia Islam, for the traditions of the Imams
hajj	annual pilgrimage to Mecca
Imam	in general, a leader of prayers or religious leader; used by the Shia to denote the spiritual leaders descended from 'Ali ibn Abi Talib and the Prophet's daughter, Fatima
iwan	vaulted hall or chamber
janna	heaven or paradise in the Qur'an, symbolised by the serenity of a garden
Ka'ba	cubic building in Mecca, and the focus of the <i>hajj</i>
khanaqa	lodge or hospice for Sufis
khutba	sermon delivered in a mosque during Friday prayers
kiswa	textile covering for the Ka'ba in Mecca
kufic	angular script with clear vertical and horizontal lines
madrasa	college or educational institution, especially for religious studies
maghribi	distinctive round style script used in North Africa and in Spain
mihrab	niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of prayer
minbar	elevated pulpit in a mosque from which the Friday sermon is delivered
muhaqqaq	monumental cursive script with well-balanced ascending and horizontal strokes
muqam	musical mode in Uyghur music combining in suite form sung poetry, popular tales of famous lovers, and dance rhythms
muqarnas	decorative vaulting system composed of tiers of small niche-like elements resembling stalactites or honeycombs
muraqqa'	album with a collection of samples of calligraphy and paintings
naskh	cursive script used to transcribe texts, and the basis for modern typography
nasta'liq	elegant 'hanging' script characterised by short ascending strokes and sweeping elongated diagonal strokes, developed especially for Persian poetry
pir	spiritual guide qualified to lead disciples on the mystical path
qasidah	a poetic genre; in Persian, a lyric poem, most frequently panegyric
qibla	the relative direction of Muslim prayer towards Mecca

rihan	round script, which is the smaller counterpart to <i>muhaqqaq</i> and notable for its smooth line, even spacing and balance
riqa'	script <i>par excellence</i> for administrative decrees and official letters
saz	type of vegetal decoration common in Ottoman art of the 16th century
shari'ah	standard term used for the body of rules guiding the life of a Muslim
shikasteh	dense script in which letters and words that should be detached are sometimes joined allowing the calligrapher to complete each word in a single penstroke
Simurgh	gigantic mythical Persian bird
sura	chapter of the Qur'an
tauqi'	script usually used for administrative documents, the larger counterpart to <i>riqa'</i>
tawhid	the Oneness of God or belief in Divine Unity, one of the fundamental tenets of Islam
thuluth	elegant monumental cursive script often used for inscriptions, the larger counterpart to <i>naskh</i>
tiraz	textile with woven, embroidered or painted inscriptions
tughra	distinctive and intricately executed monogram of the Ottoman sultan
ulama	religious and legal scholars
waqf	pious endowment or trust stipulated for a charitable purpose



Cat. no. 84 (detail)



دین و دنیا

Spirit & Life

Spirit & Life

دِينٌ وَدُنْيَا

تلف: الفخر الإسلامى من متون متف الإغان

MASTERPIECES OF ISLAMIC ART
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