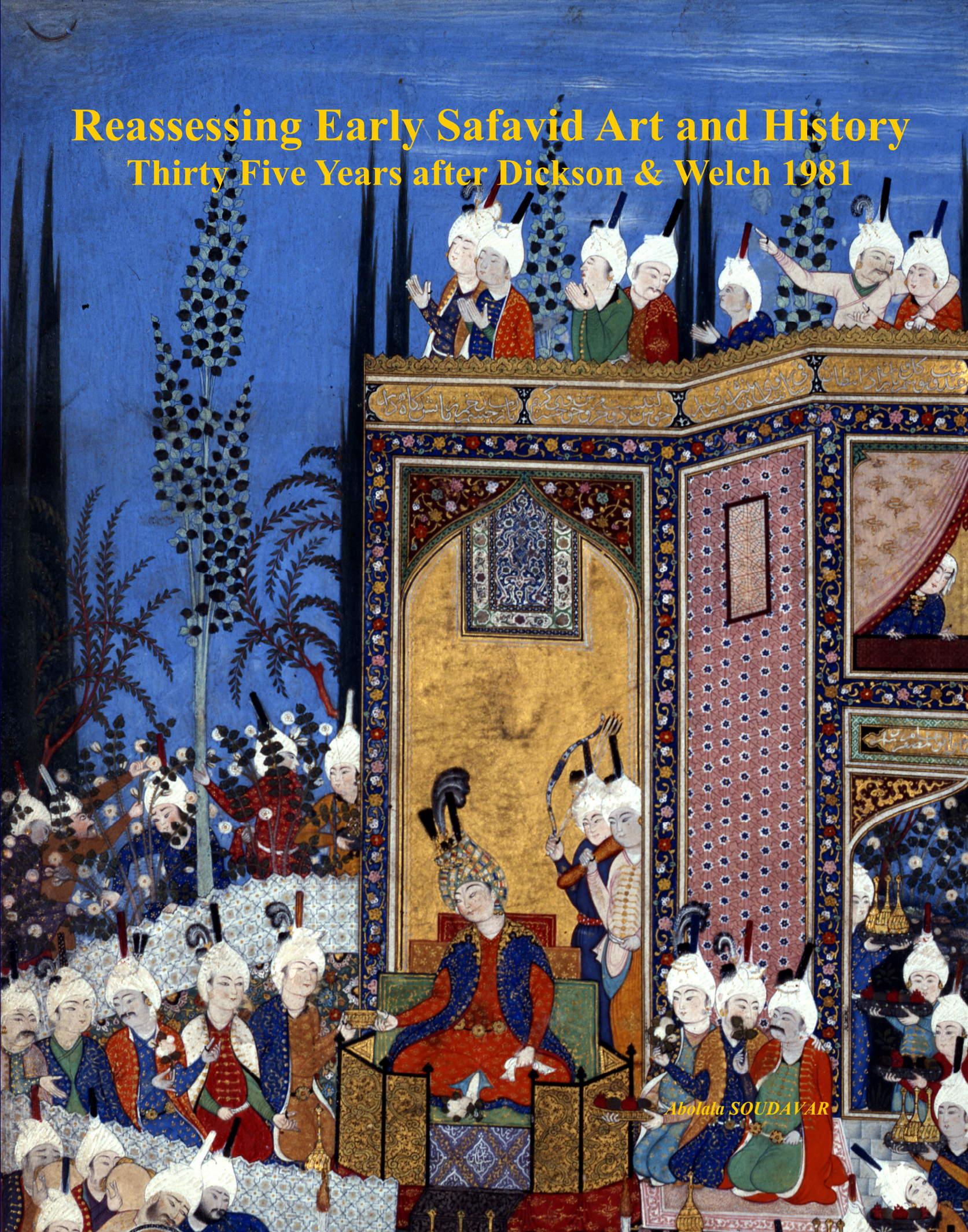
Reassessing Early Safavid Art and History

Thirty Five Years after Dickson & Welch 1981



Abolala SOUDAVAR

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Front cover: *`Id Celebration* (detail), by Soltān-Mohammad, c. 1532, Tabriz. Art and History Collection on loan to the Arthur M. Sackler Galler, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.
Back cover: *The King and the Dervish* (detail), by Shaykhzādeh, Herat circa 1528, EMS collections.

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Thirty Five Years after Dickson & Welch 1981

by

Abolala Soudavar

Houston - 2016

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In Memoriam

Stuart Cary Welch died on Aug. 13th, 2008, while traveling in Hokkaido, Japan. Cary, as he was known to all of us, was an exceptional art historian whose unbounded passion for works of art had inspired students, fellow collectors, and art dealers alike. It is perhaps no coincidence that his former students have occupied some of the most important curatorial and museum positions of the United States, including the directorship of the Harvard Museums, the Getty, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. By concentrating his efforts on the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (i.e., Shāh Tahmāsb's *Shāhnāmeh*), he explored Persian painting at its best; and by blowing up miniature details, whether through slide projections or publications, he revealed a wonderful world that the onlooker's eye could hardly penetrate at first sight. He brought to life Safavid artists, and in the process, was able to establish Safavid painting as the synthesis of two major schools, that of the Turkmens of Tabriz, and the Teymurids of Herat. The well-deserved recognition that Persian paintings enjoys today owes much to his passionate pursuit of artist identification in the Safavid era. The names of master painters such as Soltān-Mohammad, Āqā Mirak, Mirzā `Ali and Mir Sayyed `Ali shall forever be associated with that of Cary Welch who unfurled before our eyes the proof of their exceptional talents.

Sketch of Martin Bernard Dickson by Sandra Assanik Anderton

Martin B. Dickson, professor of Near Eastern studies at Princeton University, died on May 14, 1991. He was 67 years old. I had never met him in person, and only talked to him on the phone. I had been forewarned that phone conversations with him could last several hours; and indeed, we did talk for more than two hours the first time I called him. Besides knowledge, he had a remarkable enthusiasm for historical figures, which he naturally imparted to his interlocutors. His thesis, which was never officially published (*Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks; The Duel for Khorasan with `Ubayd Khan, 930-946/1524-1540,* Princeton 1958), as well as his collaborative work with S.C. Welch (*The Houghton Shahnama*, Harvard 1981) are references that I cherish and use constantly.

Dickson tutored some of the most accomplished specialists of Medieval Iran, such as John E. Woods (Univ. of Chicago), Robert D. McChesney (NYU), and Wheeler Thackston (Harvard); but he seldom wrote or published. We are therefore very fortunate that S.C. Welch was able to lure him to co-write the two magnificent Harvard volumes.

More generally, the field of Persian studies has been blessed by the attention that two such talented and erudite scholars have devoted to it, and by the synergy that their cooperation has generated.

Preface

In his article for Martin Dickson's festschrift (Mazzaoui and Moreen 1990), Stuart Cary Welch recounts that during the *Houghton Shahnama* project, when they decided to advance their understanding far beyond "the usual safe limit" of their field, "Martin prophesized—accurately, it appears—that twenty five years would pass before our fellow specialists would fully comprehend what we had achieved."[1] They were both wrong. Thirty five years later, few "specialists" have bothered to read the *Houghton Shahnama,* and to delve into the Safavid world that these two authors reconstructed for us. And "specialists" still try to debase Dickson and Welch's approach, rather than use it to further knowledge on the Safavid period.

As criticism moved from the sphere of murmur to written articles, it became clear that they were all venting their frustrations with the numerous attributions proposed by Dickson and Welch, without offering acceptable alternatives. Illogical as they were, their criticism became an impetus for me to revisit old acquaintances with a new perspective, and to seek explanations for oddities in complex manuscripts that were not easy to decipher.

In the meantime, the digitization process of images, in libraries as well as museums, had moved forward, and provided researchers with a powerful tool, often more helpful than direct access to the actual manuscript. The discovery of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France's digital portal was a pleasant surprise as it allowed perusing, long-distance, practically all of their important Persian illustrated manuscripts, page by page. Even though, the British Library's digitization process hasn't progressed as much, I was nevertheless lucky to find a fully digitized version of their celebrated *Khamseh* of Nezāmi (Or. 2265) online. The high resolution of its images was of immense help to this study. Similarly, museums that now offer digitized images of their collections provide a great service to researchers, especially, the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington D.C., the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Harvard University Art Museums in Cambridge, and the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore. What they have achieved in this respect is not only of value to researchers, but it opens the door to the general public, for items that only a privileged few could previously see and admire.

While a digitized image can provide an enormous amount of information, it is no substitute for the real thing. I am thus most grateful to Massumeh Farhad of the Freer and the Sackler Galleries, Sheila Canby of the Met, and Mary McWilliams of the Harvard Museums for letting me examine their miniatures, and to take pictures. I also wish to thank Ladan Akbarnia of the British Museum for obtaining an IRR image of a painting that I had long requested.

Finally, I am indebted to Marianna Shreve Simpson for the numerous slides that she has generously provided for this study, to Margaret Shortle and Shiva Mihan for their helpful suggestions, and Christie's of London for the images they kindly supplied to me.

Abolala Soudavar

Houston – April 2016

Abbreviations

BL: British Library, London

BNF: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris

D&W 1981: Dickson and Welch 1981

GPL : Golestān Palace Library, Tehran

HUAM : Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge MA

LACMA : Los Angeles County Museum

MPLM : Malek Public Library and Museum, Tehran

Met: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY

SPL : St Petersburg Public Library

TKS: Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul

[1] Welch 1990, 18.

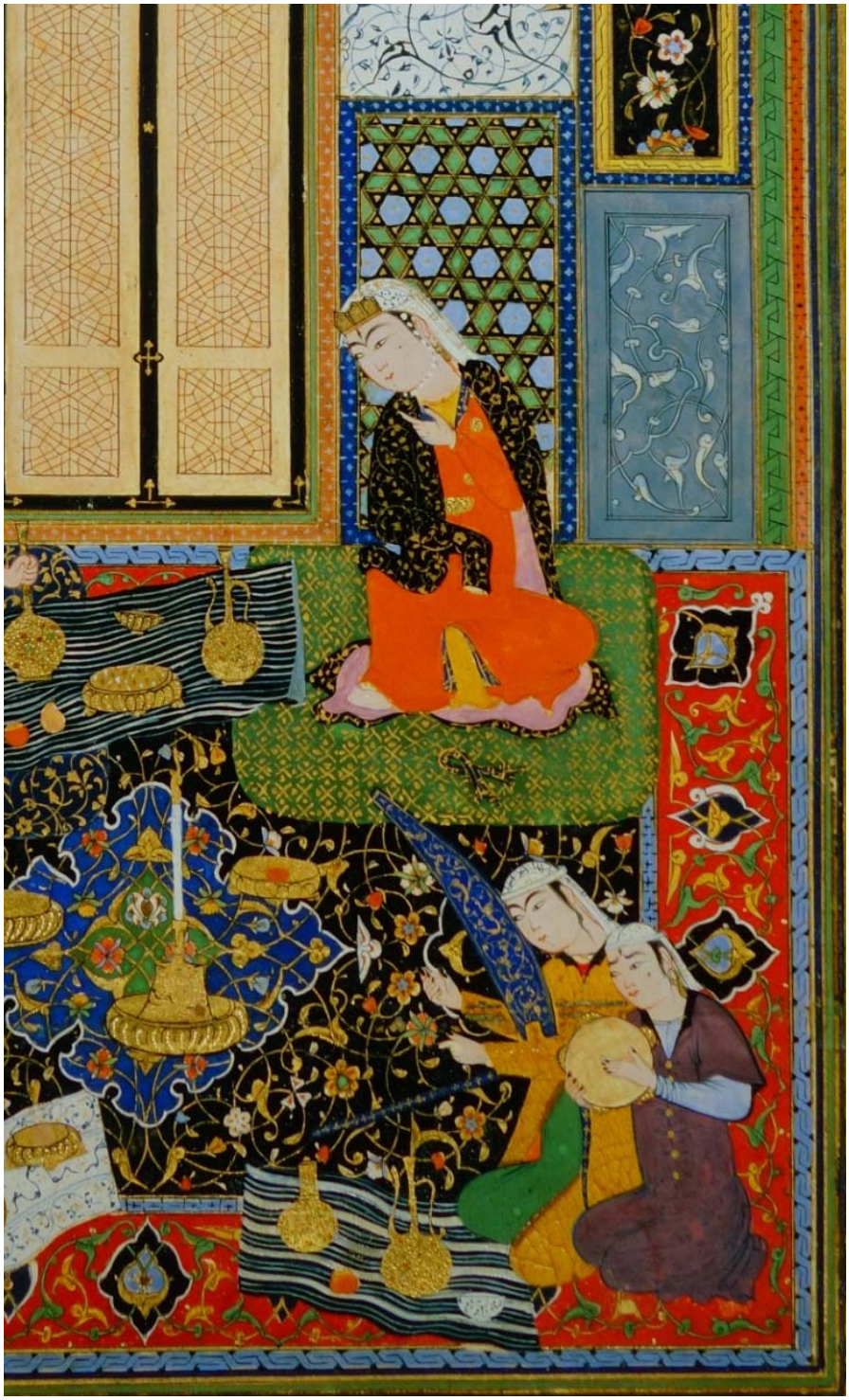

Fig. 1 - Detail of fol. 22 of a *Haft Manzar* manuscript, painted by Shaykhzādeh, displaying the artist's virtuosity in decorative designs and the broad spectrum of colors he uses Bukhara, c. 1530. Freer Gallery (56.14)

I. Art history

Art history is a discipline that, by its very name, must combine two distinct approaches to assess a work of art: One must rely on visual experience to evaluate the aesthetic merits of the work, and the other needs to explore the historical circumstances that led to its creation.

The two are complementary, and together, they tend to improve our understanding of works of art, as well as artistic trends. *The Houghton Shahnama* (D&W 1981), the monumental double volume produced by Martin Dickson (whose knowledge of early Safavid history remains unparalleled to this date) and Stuart Cary Welch (who had an incredible eye for works of art) best exemplifies this double process. What Welch often saw in miniatures, Dickson could read in texts and put it into context. Whereas Welch had an innate ability to look at works of art and isolate their peculiarities, Dickson could explain their historical settings and verify the hypotheses advanced by Welch. *The Houghton Shahnama* is so loaded with information that no serious art-historical analysis of the Safavid era can afford to ignore it. And yet, the trend is, nowadays, to ignore the information they provide or dismiss their conclusions with a sleight of hand. Three recent articles (Grabar & Natif 2001, Brend 2003, and Bahari 2014) bear witness to this trend as they all try to negate Dickson and Welch's findings.

Their negation, though, feeds on a methodological revisionism that erupted in the latter part of the twentieth century, one that treats old school connoisseurship as unreliable, and values instead nebulous theories that seldom produce concrete results. Its proponents have pushed art history towards the abstract and away from the visual, as if art history can be studied without looking.

With so many technical tools available nowadays, one can readily analyze and isolate painter-specific brushstrokes, idiosyncratic motifs, coloration, as well as surface treatment. There is simply no excuse for not using them to identify an artist or reject an attribution. And yet, none of the above papers use visual comparisons to buttress their arguments. It's easier to negate without.

But ultimately, the purpose of "looking" is to enter into a world that the artist saw, and wished to capture its mood and vibrations. When Dickson and Welch describe the work of the painter Mirzā `Ali as one who "treats us to much the same sort of incisive revelation of one segment of society as does the duc de Saint-Simon," they bring to the fore the painter's psychological grasp of the Safavid courtly milieu. And when they explain that for "this connoisseur of courtiers and servants (i.e., Mirzā `Ali), even the gardeners have taken on a slightly epicene languor," they draw attention to the ambivalent sexuality that prevailed in Safavid society, and highlight their observation with a detail image in which a beardless youth delicately raises his pinky on both hands (fig. 2).[2]

Fig. 2 - *Shāpur Shows the Portrait of Khosrow to Shirin* (det.) Attributed to Mirzā `Ali. (Fol. 48v of BL Or. 2265)

[2] D&W 1981, 133.

Welch had once surmised—through looking—that the distorted figures painted by Dust-Mohammad pointed to wine addiction (fig. 3). His hunch was substantiated by Dickson who found out that Dust-Mohammad's departure to India was due to wine addiction and the ban that Shāh Tahmāsb (r. 1524-76) imposed on alcohol.[3] Thus, when I first saw Francis Bacon's distorted portraits (as in fig. 4a), I couldn't help but see a distortion that reminded me of Dust-Mohammad's. I sought to verify whether Bacon indulged in drinking or not; as it turned out, he was addicted to it.[4] Again, when I visited the Orangerie in Paris, where a large group of Chaïm Soutine's portraits were on display (as in fig. 4b), I had the same reaction, and the same thought came to my mind. Lo and behold, I discovered that Soutine too was a notorious drinker who often accompanied Modigliani in his drinking bouts. Was it mere coincidence? Three parallels make it unlikely. Even though the distortions of the two 20th-century artists were deliberately exaggerated, and created a stylistic trademark, they emanated from a warped vision that alcohol only can induce.

Through their speculations on personalities, whether on painters or sitters, Dickson and Welch added a psychological dimension to their study that enlivened the Safavid art historical scene, and affected the outlook of many students of art history, me included. But speculations on moods and personalities did not sit well with some of their colleagues. Unable to see what Dickson and Welch saw, their detractors ridiculed their insightful observations as unscientific, without addressing the myriad of information provided in their text and extensive footnotes. Instead of looking and seeing, they turned an incredulous eye on Dickson and Welch's numerous discoveries and attributions. To borrow an expression from Saint-Simon, it was easier for them to act with a "*mine de chat fâché*" than spend time and effort to properly look and assess miniatures.[5]

Fig 3 – *The Story of Haftvād and the Worm* (det.)
Signed by Dust-Mohammad. (D&W 1981, pl. 14)

Fig. 4a - Portrait by Chaïm Soutine. Orangerie Museum

Fig. 4b - Francis Bacon, self portrait. Met 1999.363.1a-c

[3] Personal communication, and D&W 1981, 119.

[4] www.culture24.org.uk/art/painting-and-drawing/art29064

[5] Looking was Cary Welch's forte, and it went beyond a simple gaze. It was more like total immersion in a work of art. I was once a guest at his refuge in New Hampshire where he had just received a portrait of Shāh `Abbās by the Mughal artist Bishandās. He could not stop looking at it even though he had guests to entertain. At lunch, the drawing had to be put on a chair where he could see it. After lunch, while resting on a daybed, he spent hours looking at it from different angles: He would look at it upside down, from left to right, or from right to left. He absolutely wanted to feel what the original artist had felt.

It is thus that the three aforementioned papers try to contradict Dickson and Welch without delving into the kind of minutiae that may confirm or disprove painting attributions. What's more, Bahari goes so far as to conclude that Tahmāsb's *Shāhnāmeh* "deserves more serious study than it has yet received" (p. 166). One wonders how the reviewer of the *IRAN* journal accepted such a preposterous remark, when Bahari's one and only reference to D&W 1981 is nowhere to be found in those volumes (see our footnote 98).

The first and third of the papers that I have chosen to criticize deal with paintings from complex manuscripts, which were produced in different stages and altered in different library-ateliers (*ketāb-khāneh*). The second deals with artists who travelled between Iran and India, and whose works continuously evolved. The counter-analysis of the works they discuss, therefore, could not be confined to a restrictive time bracket, or location. Its scope had to be expanded in order to include a reassessment of the BL *Khamseh'*s successive transformations, to cover the 20th-century forgeries that Bahari presents as Safavid originals, and to address the unfounded myth that Bahari has been propagating since 1996, asserting that the Herati painter Shaykhzādeh and the Bukharan painter Mahmud-e Mozahheb are one and the same.

In what follows, I shall try to reaffirm the validity of some of Dickson and Welch's findings, not only on the basis of material available to them, but also additional evidence discovered since 1981. Also, following Dickson and Welch, I shall devote more attention to the psychological interaction between sophisticated artists and patrons, especially in regards to the Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez, the bulk of which has been donated by Stuart Cary Welch to Harvard. As it turns out, it's an enigmatic manuscript that follows step by step the antagonism that erupted between two Safavid princely brothers, labeled as "The Grand Sedition" by Dickson (see sec. IV.2). More importantly, it's a manuscript that was conceived as an ode to wine by one brother, trying to lure the other out of religious bigotry and wine prohibition.

Hopefully, the arguments that I shall present and the images that I shall produce will help to revive interest in the detailed analysis that Dickson and Welch were so fond of.

Fig. 5 - *Camp Scene,* attributable to Mir Sayyed `Ali (HUAM 1958.75)

II. Discrediting Persian painting studies as a whole

II.1 – "Intellectual framework" - By the title and preamble of their 2001 article, *Two Safavid Paintings: An Essay in Interpretation*, Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif purported to re-evaluate two miniature paintings of the Harvard University Art Museums attributed to Mir Sayyed `Ali (Grabar & Natif 2001). One is entitled *Camp Scene* (1958.75) and the other *Nighttime in a Palace* (1958.76) (figs. 5, 13). Grabar and Natif acknowledge their high quality, at par with the greatest of Safavid masterpieces, but rather than proposing an alternative painter, they aim to discredit Dickson and Welch who had attributed their production to Mir Sayyed `Ali for inclusion in the BL's *Khamseh* of Nezāmi (Or. 2265). Their final conclusion clearly reflects their aim, as they proclaim that the Mir Sayyed 'Ali attribution "was made arbitrarily" for one painting, and then extended to the other (p. 196). They also see these two miniatures as "genre" and/or "portfolio" paintings, rather than illustrations for a Nezāmi manuscript (p. 197). By implication, they cast doubt on all attributions and suggestions of Dickson and Welch.

Lacking perhaps the eye to reject (or detect), the hand of a painter, or unwilling to invest time and effort in the visual analysis that such a rejection (or detection) may require, they revert to smoke screens, as in their opening salvo, where, under the guise of explaining the "difficulty" in assessing what a work of art meant to its "patron and creator," they state (p.177):

> "This difficulty can best be illustrated when we contrast understanding Persian miniatures with the complex iconographic analyses carried out on more or less contemporary late Gothic book illustrations and Flemish paintings, whose relatively small size and passion for details have many parallels in our examples. But the investigation of the Iranian Islamic tradition has so far not yielded the intellectual framework of philosophical and related texts or of ritual behavior that would allow for the establishment of patterns of thought and categories of symbols applicable to the visual arts."

To borrow an expression of theirs,[6] they use "calculated blurring" to undermine Dickson and Welch's methodology by berating Persian painting studies as a whole. Since I have delved into Flemish paintings as well as Gothic manuscripts, I must disagree with their assertion. For in terms of general studies, Ivan Stchoukine's series on Persian paintings are as thorough and comprehensive as Max Friedlander's seminal study on Flemish paintings; and in terms of a focused art-historical analysis of manuscript paintings, there is simply no study more elaborate than Dickson and Welch's.[7]

As for the existence of an "intellectual framework" to analyze the vision of Flemish patrons as well as artists, I found it terribly lacking. That's why, even though an outsider, I could readily find the historical purpose, and the allegorical messages, imbedded in seven iconic but ill-understood 15th-century paintings.[8] If I could do so, it was only because studies of past scholars on Persian and Mughal paintings had indeed given me the "intellectual framework" to tackle these problems. Art historians of the Northern Renaissance, though, had neither understood the historical relevance of these iconic paintings, nor perceived the subtleties imbedded in manuscripts such as the Getty's *History of Alexander the Great* gifted to the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold (d. 1478). Scott McKendrik of the British Library who authored a lavishly illustrated publication on the latter work,[9] attributed its discrepancies with Quintus Curtius's original text to scribal error, and explained the illustration variances with other manuscripts to "rudimentary and superficial" knowledge of the text.[10] In reality though, the discrepancies were intentional, and provided a parallel narrative. Thus, contrary to Grabar and Natif's assumption, it was the European manuscript experts, who for lack of an adequate "intellectual framework," could not guess the parallel narrative: That each painting of the Getty manuscript actually illustrated one or two episodes of the story of Alexander, as well as

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[6] They qualify the *Camp Scene* as a "calculated blurring of visual expressions"; (p. 196).

[7] Also, in comparison to Islamic calligraphy, very little work has been done on Gothic and various other scripts that so beautifully adorn medieval Western manuscripts.

[8] Soudavar 2008.

[9] McKendrik 1996.

[10] Soudavar 2008, 72.

events in the life of Charles the Bold. They could not imagine that painters in Burgundy did what the painters of the *Abu-Sa`id-nāmeh* (alias Demotte *Shāhnāmeh*) had done a century and half before, in Iran, that they had juxtaposed events of Mongol history with episodes of the *Shāhnāmeh.* Which brings me back, in full circle, to Oleg Grabar and his analysis of the *Abu-Sa`id-nāmeh*.

My own insights into the *Abu-Sa`id-nāmeh* had been prompted by the investigation that Grabar and his students had conducted in 1975, the results of which were subsequently published in Grabar & Blair 1980. Noticing the unconventional illustration program of the manuscript, they wondered whether the illustration selection process was governed by a desire to evoke contemporary events.[11] But, rather than pursue this possibility, they abandoned it halfway, and diverted their attention to pages in which their miniatures were surrounded by unrelated text; and concluded that the dealer Georges Demotte had found a Parisian calligrapher-forger who could cut out damaged miniatures, and set them onto new blank pages that he would then fill with newly-copied verses, *unrelated to the image (!)*. Their conclusion defied dealer/forger motives and economics. The dealer had ample text pages at his disposition, and had no need to fabricate new ones; and if he had to have new ones made, he would have at least tried to copy appropriate verses. Their theory was also contradicted by the physical evidence. Had they spent time examining those pages, they would have noticed that their miniatures were set into windows cut in existing manuscript pages, to the extent that words or even letters were cut in half at the windows' edges.[12] The dealer/forger avenue was a dead end that could have been avoided with a modicum of physical scrutiny.

II.2 - Jāmi vs. Nezāmi - A similar flawed investigative pattern emerges in Grabar and Natif's 2001 study. They first focus on the *Camp Scene* and question whether its setting is related to an episode of the *Layla and Majnun* story, when Majnun's father comes to ask the hand of Layla for his son. Observing that such a scene was "never illustrated in the hundreds of known manuscripts" of Nezāmi's *Khamseh*, they decide to check the Jāmi version of the same story. And since they find Nezāmi's treatment of the story too "sparse," and Jāmi's more elaborate, they conclude that "if one is to look for a book in which this illustration would have been found, one should look at manuscripts of Jami's works, not of Nezāmi's" (pp. 183-85). The decoupling of these two paintings from the *Khamseh* of Nezāmi had the obvious advantage to facilitate their quest to undermine the attributions to Mir Sayyed `Ali, as the similarities of the *Camp Scene* with one of the BL's *Khamseh* illustrations (fol. 157v, *Majnun Brought in Chains*) was a key argument in Dickson and Welch's analysis.

It's an approach that should have been avoided for obvious art historical reasons. Firstly, Farhad Mehran's analysis of the "break-line verse" has clearly demonstrated that illustrations are often linked to one or two verses only.[13] And in the case of the *Abu-Sa`id-nāmeh*, I had demonstrated that it was not a verse but the particular angle of certain stories that provided illustration opportunities. It's therefore immaterial if the *Layla and Majnun* story is treated lightly by one poet and elaborately by the other.

Secondly, had they read Dickson's thesis, they would have discovered that Tahmāsb had expressed much animosity toward Jāmi, and there were rumors that he even wanted to demolish his tomb, burn his remains, and impose a death penalty on whoever read Jāmi.[14] An illustrated manuscript of Jāmi's poems was certainly not to his liking. By contrast, Tahmāsb seems to have been very fond of Nezāmi, whom he reverentially calls "Shaykh Nezāmi." [15]

[11] Grabar & Blair 1980, 49-53.
[12] Soudavar 1996, 194.
[13] Mehran 2006; Landau 2011, 109 and n.31.
[14] Dickson 1958, 190.
[15] Tahmāsb writes in his memoirs that on his way to confront the Ottomans near Soltāniyeh in 941AH/1534, he derived much comfort in repeatedly reciting verses from the *Makhzan-ol-asrār* (Or. 5880, fols. 30-31). The seven couplets he recites are in praise of God from two different sections of that book:

ای همه هستی زتو پیدا شده خاک ضعیف از تو توانا شده
زیرنشین علمت کاینات ما بتو قائم، چو تو قائم بذات
هستی تو صورت پیوند نی تو بکس و کس بتو مانند نی
آنچه تغیر نپذیرد توئی وانکه نمردست و نمیرد توئی
ما همه فانی و بقا بس تراست ملک تعالی و تقدس تراست
قافله شد، واپسي ما ببین ای کس ما، بیکسي ما ببین
چاره ما ساز که بی داوریم گرتو برانی بکه روی آوریم

Tahmāsb's reverence for Nezāmi is also reflected in Dust-

Thirdly, they observe that the *Camp Scene* has a written attribution to Mir Sayyed `Ali, but gloss over it without trying to compare it to the one written on the BL's *Khamseh*. Any art historian worthy of that name should have tried to juxtapose the two and see if they were by the same hand or not. For if they were, it ascertained that the *Camp Scene* too was once part of the BL *Khamseh*. And indeed they are by the same hand, since they have the same slant, and same shape of letters; they can almost be superimposed (figs. 6-7). If the BL attribution to Mir Sayyed `Ali is deemed correct, this too must be; a conclusion that is also supported by the stylistic analysis of the paintings (see below). The Harvard pages thus come from a Nezāmi manuscript and not a Jāmi one.

Fig. 6 – detail of fig. 8

Fig. 7 – detail of fig. 5

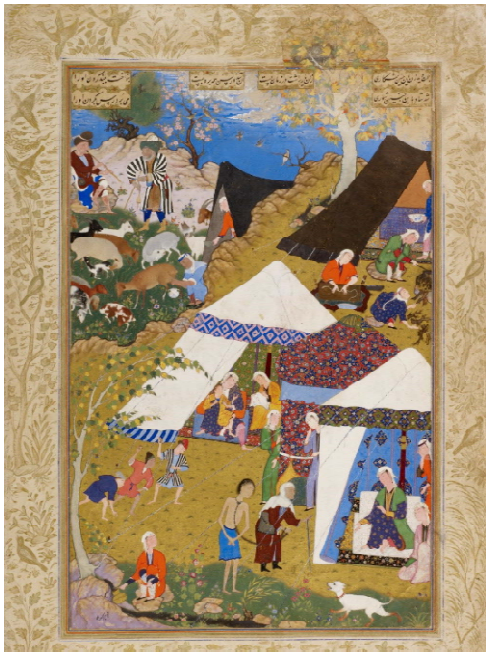

Fig. 8 - *Majnun Brought in Chains* (BL, Or.2265, fol. 157v)

II.3 - The *Camp Scene* - Its composition is dominated by a sumptuous tent surrounded by an encampment (fig. 5). It perfectly represents the *Layla and Majnun* episode in which, Majnun's father sets out to visit Layla's father and asks his daughter's hand for Majnun. It takes place among Bedouins who live in small encampments within the desert. To reach his interlocutor, Majnun's father needed to traverse a nomadic dwelling, at the center of which stood the main tent. It's there that the elderly actors of the story had to meet, and as the story goes, Layla's father refused the marriage request.

The activities depicted within the encampment reflect nomadic life, and the main figures are all wearing turbans with a loose end, which Bedouins still do to protect their faces in a sandstorm. Bedouin tents were usually depicted in black,[16] but here, the elders are conducting their negotiations within a sumptuously decorated Safavid tent. Granted that to differentiate the more important tents, the artist had to depict them in a more ornate fashion, but the main tent of the *Camp Scene* goes far beyond that, as it displays all the trappings of a royal Safavid tent (fig. 9).

Fig. 9 – Detail of fig. 5

Its floor, for instance, is covered with carpets, on top of which the chieftain's seat is designated by a luxurious rug with a cushion in gold brocade, normally placed for rulers to lean on (as in fig. 13). The high status of its sitter is also emphasized by

Mohammad's writings; see notes 38 and 40 infra.

[16] For black tents see Soudavar 1992, 107; for another desert episode see Simpson & Farhad 1997, 161.

verses from Hāfez woven on its border:

تکیه برجای بزرگان نتوان زد به گزاف
مگر اسباب بزرگی همه آماده کنی

One cannot pretend to the seat of the Greats, unless one first acquires all attributes of greatness

Moreover, food and refreshments are served in luxurious vessels that do not befit a Bedouin dwelling, and the Nezāmi verses provide no apparent reason to elevate the status of Layla's father to such a degree, nor place him in a regal setting. But if it is done so, it's because the composition was meant to allude to a known Safavid event. Indeed, in Muharram 944/June 1537, Tahmāsb's *sadr* (head of religious affairs), one Amir Mo`ezz-od-din Mohammad-e Esfahāni, nurtured the idea of marrying the *shāh*'s sister, the princess Mahin Bānu Beygom known as Soltānom (1519-61). He thus sent the physician Rokn-od-din Mas`ud of Kāzerun to ask the hand of Soltānom on his behalf. So incensed was Tahmāsb that he had the go-between physician burned alive, and removed Mo`ezz-od-din from the position of *sadr*.[17]

There was of course a good reason for Tahmāsb's seemingly impetuous reaction. His eyesight was failing and he had no choice but to hide behind, and rely on, women of his household who did not pose a direct threat to him and could be used as his "eyes": First his sister Soltānom, and after her demise, his daughter Pari Khān Khānom (1548-1578).[18] Throughout history, physical impairment of the ruler was perceived as a cause for his removal; and his brothers, including the semi-literate Alqās Mirzā (1516-1550) whom he trusted most, rebelled one after the other against him, as did his own mother who was exiled to Shirāz on suspicion of wanting to poison him.[19]

He thoroughly depended on Soltānom, who stood by him in all official ceremonies, even in hunting trips organized for visiting dignitaries.[20] The marriage of Soltānom thus meant the loss of Tahmāsb's trusted "eyes," and since he could not continue to kill or demote every suitor, the wily *shāh* concocted a clever scheme. He betrothed Soltānom, to the Twelfth Imam, the disappeared Mahdi whose comeback Twelver Shiites eagerly awaited. And in an ultimate act of religious duplicity, he had a white horse saddled every night, standing ready by the gates of his camp for the return of the Mahdi.[21]

The fate of Soltānom and her suitors was by no means a secret. Constrained as she was by her brother, and yet actively interacting with Tahmāsb's visitors, she was bound to have amorous encounters. Mirzā 'Ali even hinted at one of her love affairs when he painted *The Princely Lovers*, before going to India (fig. 10).

Fig. 10 – *The Princely Lovers* (det.), attributable to Mirzā `Ali (Soudavar 1992, 171)

[17] Soudavar 1992, 172; Rumlu 1978, 367. By one later account, this happened on the night of Saturday 8th of Muharram of 943; *idm,* 689. While such a date does not fall on a Saturday and Rumlu puts it under the events of the year 944. But on the "night of" in Persian means on the "eve of" and if corrected to 944, it will then fall on a Saturday.

[18] Soudavar 1997, 73.

[19] In his memoirs, Tahmāsb writes that he loved Alqās more than all his brothers and sons, and he of himself and him as "two swords in one scabbard"; Tahmāsb (Or. 5880), folio 42b.

[20] Homāyun's sister, Golbadan Beygum, relates that in a *jargeh* hunt that Tahmāsb had organized for Homāyun, the *shāh* and his sister Soltānum watched side by side, mounted on a horse and hardly participating; Golbadan 1996, 114; Soudavar 1999b, 63.

[21] Membré 1993, 25.

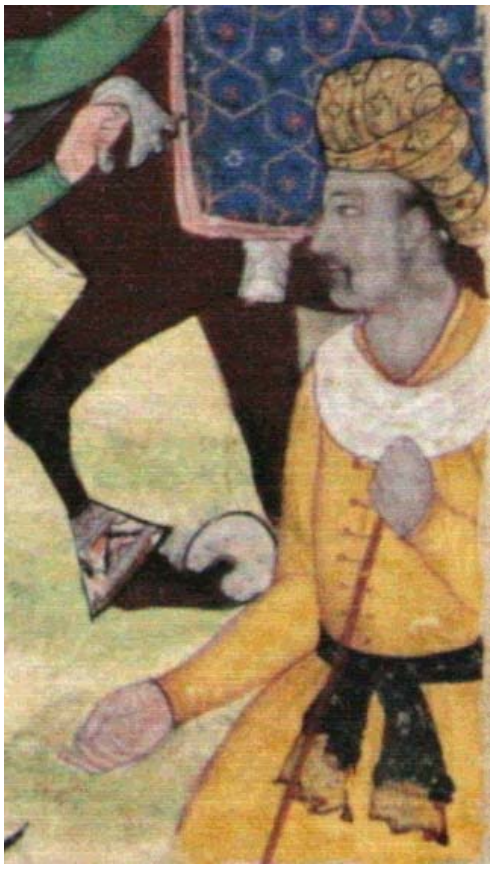

Fig. 11 – Detail of fig. 12

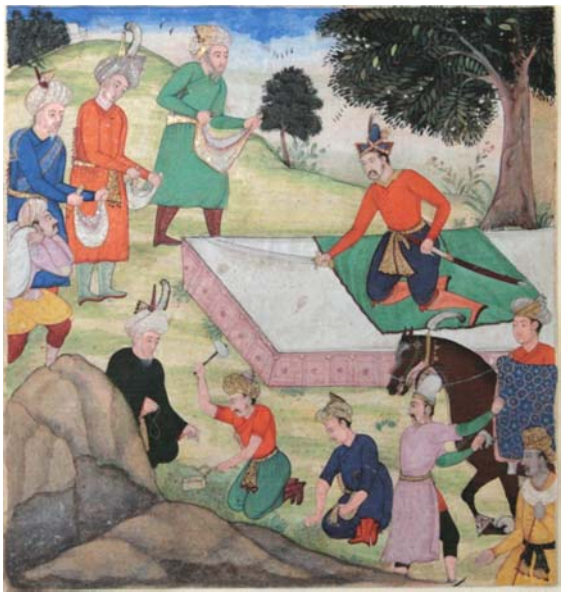

Fig. 12 – *Homāyun Separating Mohammad Khān's Pearls.* Mughal c. 1590. EMS Collections

In 1992, I had proposed that Soltānom's counterpart in that painting was the Mughal commander in chief, Bayrām Khān (d. 1561), on account of his dark skin (which was mostly used in Persian painting to designate Indians), a yellow shawl that he had on his shoulder, and his Indian-style sideburns.[22] That proposal was subsequently confirmed by a 16th-century Mughal painting that depicts the encounter of Homāyun with the governor of Herat, Mohammad Khān-e Sharaf-od-din Oghlu Takallu (fig. 12).[23] The Mughal emperor Homāyun (r. 1531–1540, 1555–1556) is accompanied by Bayrām Khān who stands on the lower right corner, has a very dark skin, sports a shawl on his shoulder, and has a peculiarly upward bulging turban.[24] It is not clear whether Mirzā `Ali had actually seen Bayrām Khān, or was depicting him based on a courtier's description; in either case, the very un-Safavid high turban that Soltānom's princely lover wears mimics that of Bayrām Khān's (fig. 11). Thus, in the milieu of Safavid artists, Soltānom's plight was well-known, and occasionally translated into painting.

The difference between the Mirzā `Ali painting and that of Mir Sayyed `Ali is that the latter was to the liking of the *shāh* and the former was not. Mirzā `Ali painted his, on his way out, to India, and as a probable gift for Bayrām Khān.[25] Mir Sayyed `Ali's painting, on the other hand, was destined for a manuscript of Tahmāsb's library, and served as a reminder to prospective suitors that a marriage proposal for Soltānom would be harshly rejected. I shall discuss, in sec. II.7, the reasons for the *Camp Scene*'s removal from the BL *Khamseh*, and the location from which it was plucked out. What is already certain though is that it was still in this manuscript at the time when a knowledgeable librarian decided to write down attributions on its various miniatures, and marked Mir Sayyed `Ali's name on it.

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[22] Soudavar 1992, 170-72.

[23] It pertains to an episode described in Afshar 1991, 245-60, in which, to honor his guest, the governor of Herat offers Homāyun to select his best pearls to be crushed and poured into the wine that he wished to offer the visiting emperor.

[24] I first presented this painting on the occasion of a LCMA symposium "Unwrapping Gifts of the Sultan" held June 10–12, 2011, the proceedings of which were never published. I shall further discuss this painting in a forthcoming paper.

[25] Soudavar 1999b, 55.

Fig. 13 - *Nighttime in a Palace,* attributable to Mir Sayyed `Ali (HUAM 1958.76)
(The composition sectionals numbered 1-4 reflect issues that Nezāmi evoked in relation to Bahrām's enthronement)

II.4 - *Nighttime in a Palace* – After describing the second Harvard painting in detail (fig. 13), Grabar and Natif characterize it as:

> "an artful composition of palatial and urban features and activities with no clear subject, but with common or original vignettes squeezed into an artificial composition of architectural fragments"

They see its compositional elements riddled with "inconsistencies and contradictions" and lacking "narrative and symbolic specificity."[26] The problem is they sought a Cartesian framework where it never existed. For unlike European painting that was informed by the laws of perspective, Persian painting was based on conventions and intuitive artifices. Whereas the former could only depict what could be directly *seen* from a certain stand point (fig. 14), the latter could even visualize what lied *beyond* opaque walls. Thus, in a painting from the 1488 *Bustān* of Sa`di in Cairo (fig. 15), the painter Behzād creates a wonderfully elaborate design that provides the viewer with a glimpse into every room and hidden staircase of a palatial building. Not only the frontal decoration of its perimeter wall is visible but also its backside, in the manner of a rolled up sleeve that reveals its inner fabric. As Welch once observed, its composition is "spatially, as logical and consistent as an architect's ground plan." [27]

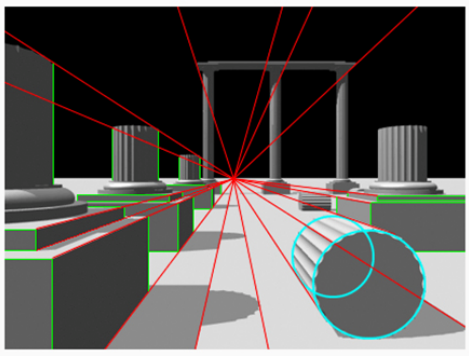


Fig. 14 - Laws of perspective structuring the visible through light rays that converge toward a hypothetical viewer (web)

Mir Sayyed `Ali's *Nighttime* scene follows the same logic, as he and other second generation Safavid artists were all taught and guided by the aging Behzād.[28] His night-scene composition depicts courtly life inside the palace and a selection of outside activities as a microcosm of the Safavid realm. Dickson and Welch admire its tumultuous composition, but Grabar and Natif complain about inconsistencies and contradictions. The latter scholars see it as an assembly of disparate motifs with no narrative purpose, while the former praise its Behzādian logic.

Fig. 15 – *Zolaykhā Grabs Yousof*, by Behzād. From a *Bustān* of Sa`di in Cairo (*adab farsi* 908) (Bahari 1996, 109)

Despite a lack of text, one can readily guess—because of the limited number of possibilities[29]—that the enthroned king must be the celebrated Sasanian King Bahrām, who is the central figure in the *Khamseh*'s book of *Haft Paykar*. Indeed, Mir Sayyed `Ali's composition incorporates most of the elements pertaining to Nezāmi's story of Bahrām's enthronement, especially the opening verses:[30]

[26] Grabar & Natif 2001, 189-94.
[27] Welch 1976, 16.
[28] Soudavar 1992, 164.
[29] The *Khamseh* weaves its stories mainly around three kings, Bahrām, Khosrow and Alexander. Although other kings are occasionally mentioned, Bahrām is the only one whose ascension to the throne is narrated at length.
[30] See the section entitled *Bahrām Sitting on his Father's*

طالع تخت و پادشاهی او فرخ آمد ز نیک خواهی او
{پیش از آن راصد ستاره شناس از پی بخت بود(؟) داشته پاس}
اسدی بود کرده طالع تخت طالعی پایدار و ثابت و سخت

His reign and throne got auspicious by his good intentions
All the while, the astrologer had been waiting for (the appearance) of a fortunate one,[31]
What did (finally) appear was a lion that stamped its auspicious sign (of Leo) on the throne; an auspicious symbol indeed that was strong, durable, and secure

To project that the prince's ascension to the throne was foretold, an old man is depicted with a lamp in one hand and a pendulum in the other (fig. 16). The pendulum—which Grabar and Natif wrongly saw as a walking stick (p. 191)—consists of a black-and-white cord with a brass weight hanging at the bottom. Supposedly, his lamp symbolized clairvoyance, and his pendulum captured the vibrations of forthcoming events.

Fig. 16 – detail of fig. 13

Since the other Harvard painting relates to an episode of Tahmāsb's reign, chances are that the enthroned king here was meant to reflect the ascension of the young Tahmāsb to the throne and the prosperity that it generated. Indeed, Nezāmi describes how the princes (*pādshāh-zādgān*) got renewed wealth and respect. And to translate it into image, Mir Sayyed `Ali depicts in fig. 13 a prince providing alms to an old woman (1), in the midst of a prosperous economy symbolized by an active bakery (2), grocery store (3), and a tavern filled with wine containers (4). As for the palace, it provides the setting for a nighttime feast accompanied by musicians, with young princes in attendance and ladies of the harem listening to the sound of music through an air vent situated at the top of the *ayvān* where the king is seated. What's more, in the Nezāmi story, the prosperity of the realm entices the king to put the pursuit of pleasure before the administration of the realm. It leads to severe famine and the *repentance* of the king from impiety. Curiously, it parallels Tahmāsb's official *repentance* from wine and opiates in 1534.

The remaining Nezāmi verses put strong emphasis on the king's piety and his observation of religious obligations (*farizeh*), which admirably reflected Tahmāsb's slide into orthodoxy. Bahrām's story was therefore very much Tahmāsb's story.

II.5 - The codicological analysis – Two recent studies have shed new light on the present composition of the Or. 2265 *Khamseh*. Priscilla Soucek and Muhammad-Isa Waley have conducted a codicological analysis of the manuscript, while Amy Landau has focused on substitute pages painted by Mohammad-Zamān circa 1675.[32] Of particular interest to us is Soucek and Waley's conclusion that the sixteen-century core of the manuscript has three distinct components. The first consists of the original text penned by Shāh-Mahmud Neyshāburi, dubbed as "Tahmāsb-A." It has elaborate margin illuminations, often enhanced with shades of silver (or blackened silver).[33] The second comprises fourteen 16th-century paintings, from a parallel manuscript dubbed Tahmāsb-B. Its paintings were later integrated into Tahmāsb-A.[34]

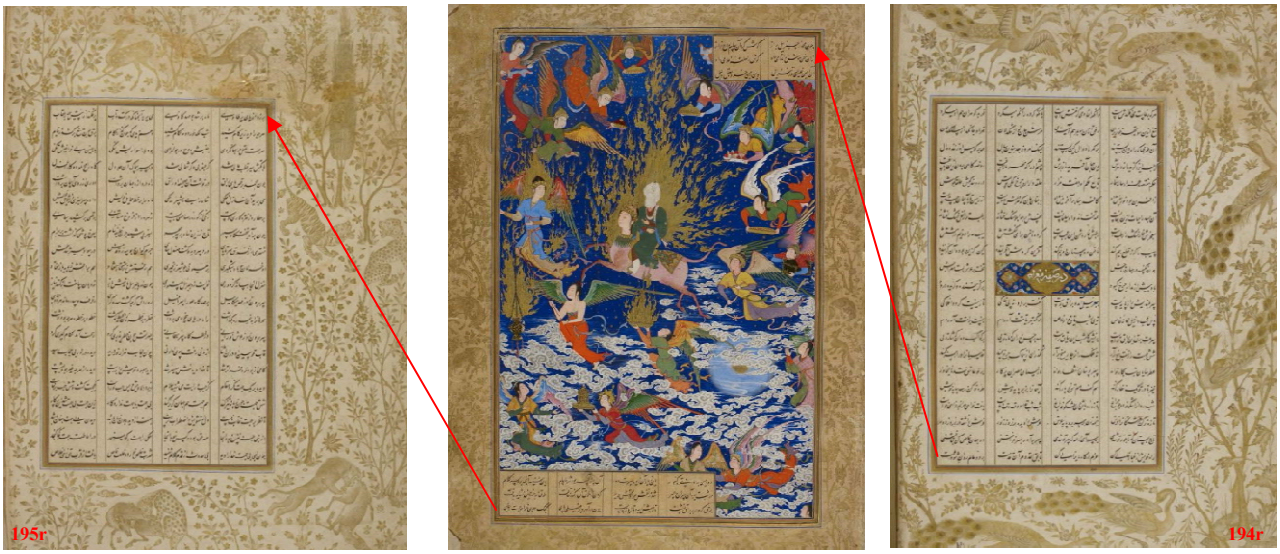
Throne at http://ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/7peykar/sh19/.

[31] This verse is problematic because the بود in the second hemistich neither provides a meaning, nor does it fit the meter. The scribe must have changed *boland,* or more probably بوند (*bovand* = high esteemed), into بود.

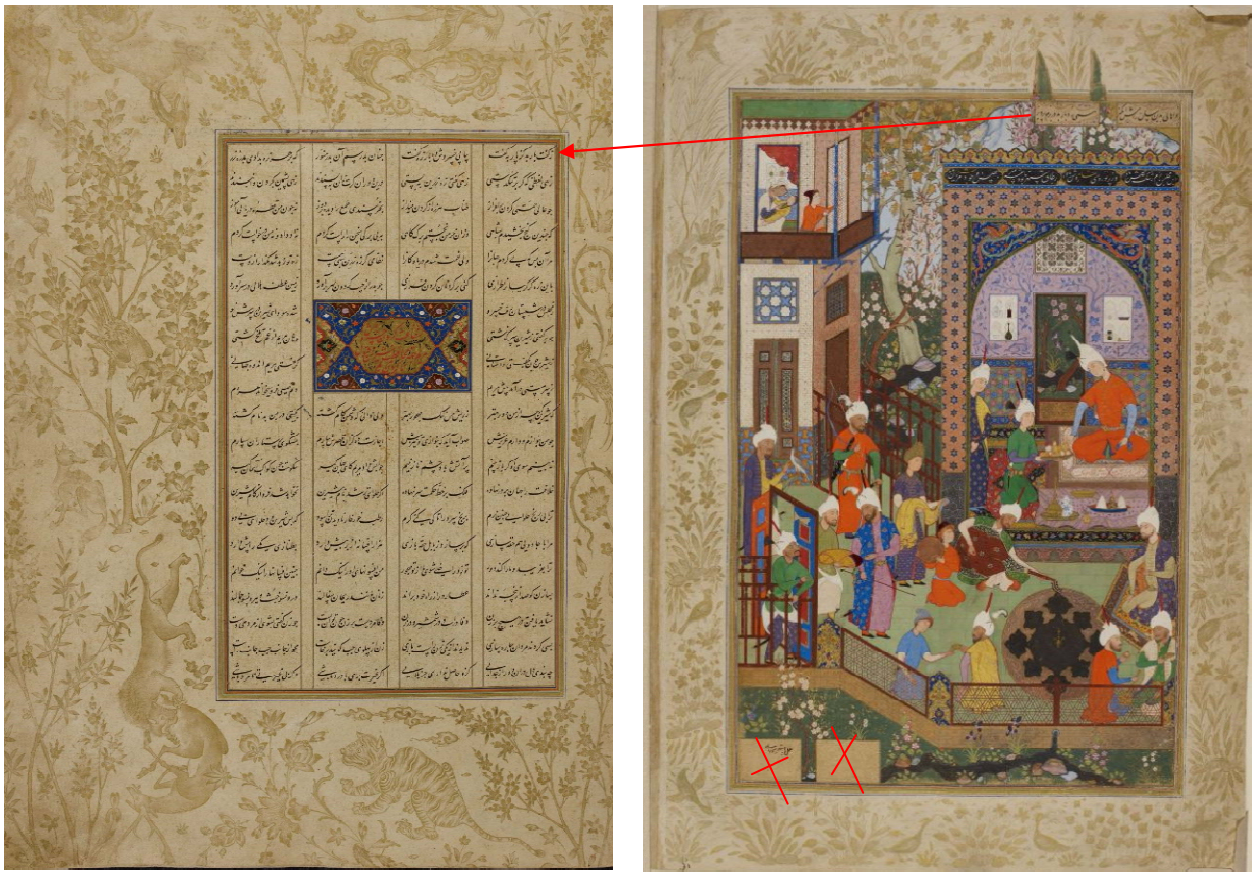
[32] Landau 2011, 124 n.8; Soucek & Waley 2011.

[33] Welch had attributed some to Aqā Mirak; Welch 1979, 144.

[34] Soucek & Waley 2011, 203.



Figs 17a, b, c -. Verses of folio 195v seamlessly bridging the verses of its preceding and following pages in BL's Or. 2265



Figs. 18 a, b – Verses on fol. 78r (left) immediately follow the couplet on top of fol. 77v (right). As a result the verses destined for the two lower boxes had to be eliminated (BL, Or. 2265, *Khosrow Listens to Bārbad Playing the Lute*)

In one case, that of folio 195r (*The Ascent of the Prophet to Heaven*), integration was achieved by simply pasting this—much larger— painting over an existing page. Since the nine couplets that appear on the painting seamlessly join the last verse of folio 194v to the first verse on 195v (figs.17a, b, c), one has to assume that, underneath, an illustration had been foreseen for Tahmāsb-A. We can also observe that the paper of Tahmāsb-A was darker, and its text/illustration surface was less important than Tahmāsb-B.

The integration of other paintings, however, needed more adjustments. Therefore, a third component of Or. 2265 consists of transitional pages that allowed the integration of paintings from Tahmāsb-B into Tahmāsb-A, while maintaining the continuity of the text. In one case though, in *Khosrow Listens to Bārbad Playing the Lute* (fol. 77v), transitional pages were not enough, and some couplets had to be wiped out from the illustration page itself for its remaining top verse to fall right before the text of the next page (fol.78r) (see figs.18 a, b).

In manuscript design, the verses that define a composition have to appear on the illustrated page; thus, careful preparation is needed to have them land on the right place. This was usually achieved by creating checkered compositions in preceding pages, which allowed the expansion of the text with diagonal verses that gobbled up the space dedicated to two or more regular horizontal verses (figs. 22-24). Oddly, in the BL *Khamseh*, we encounter numerous such pages, whether before illustrations or in sections where no painting exists, usually with two different design sets. In one set (Set-1), the corner elements of the checkered spaces have floral motifs over a solid background, often in gold or blue (fig. 19). In the second set (Set-2), the background of the corner elements is divided by the floral patterns into several zones of gold, pink, light blue, pistachio and dark blue (fig. 20). There is also a visible difference in their border rulings. The parallel colored bands are thicker in the second set and are often framed by thin black lines, while their dark blue is often faded and not as intense as in the first set. This may indicate a difference in lapis quality from one production to the other; there was less emphasis on quality in Set-2 than in Set-1. I wasn't able to physically examine the manuscript, but it seems that an illustration was planned on folio 218v, with design instructions scribbled by a project manager (fig. 22). Its illumination is somehow different, and a mix of the previous sets.[35] Together with folio 218r (fig. 23), they have rulings that follow a different sequence than the rest of the manuscript. We may bundle them as Set-3. They were both incorporated after a Set-2 page (fig. 24), which has a standard sequence of rulings in blue-red-green (inside to outside), intersperced with gold bands.

The Set-2 illumination pattern was generally conceived to allow the amalgamation of Tahmāsb-A with Tahmāsb-B. Soucek and Waley recognize that the paper for Tahmāsb-B was darker than for A. The darker paper, however, was also used on the back of the illustrated pages in conjunction with Set-2 checkered designs; such is, for instance, the case of fol. 57r (on the back side of a painting by Āqā Mirak), for which, not only the checkered design is of later date, but the calligraphy is by a different hand (fig. 21). Even though it tries to imitate Shāh-Mahmud's calligraphy, it is untidy, and does not match its steady flow and its orderly setting of letters and words. Clearly the calligrapher is hurriedly trying to fit in the verses without thinking in advance about their visual composition, to the extent that he even misspells the word *dorrāj* (fig. 27b)

In most cases, Set-1 comes before Set-2, or as in the case of the first two miniatures of the manuscript (i.e., fols. 15v, 18r), the paintings are only preceded by Set-1 illuminations (figs. 25-26). It seems to indicate that Set-1 was part of a first attempt to illustrate Tahmāsb-A. On the other hand, traces left by Set-1 rulings over Set-2 designs may indicate that the paint hadn't dried enough and stuck on the opposite page over an existing Set-2 design, perhaps after the manuscript was bound (figs. 27a, b). It's thus not clear, which came first. Perhaps the two operations were not much apart. Be that as it may, the end result still allows us to make certain assumptions.

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[35] To make it look like a finished page, a checkered pattern was subsequently added as camouflage veneer, at a time when illustration possibilities must have been exhausted. The librarian or project manager's still-visible instruction tells the artists to write 4 couplets and leave the rest blank for an illustration:

چهار بیت میباید نوشته شود و هم جای مجلس باشد

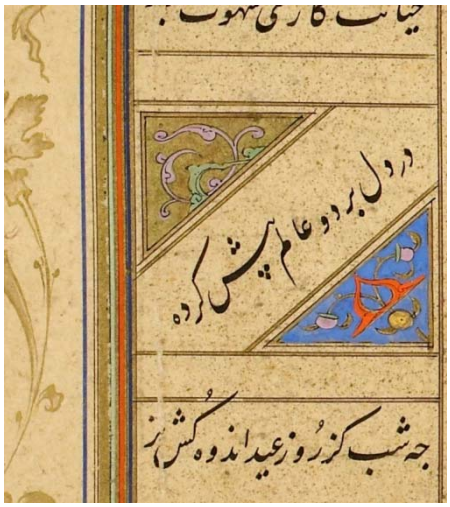


Fig 19 - Detail of fol. 56v with solid background triangles (Set-1) with thin ruling lines and dark blue (BL, Or.2265)

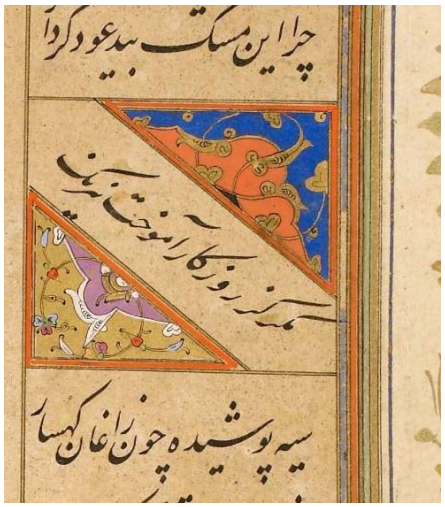


Fig. 20 - Detail of fol. 57r with divided color zones (Set-2), wider blue ruling line but light-colored, and untidy calligraphy (e.g., last line) (BL, Or.2265)

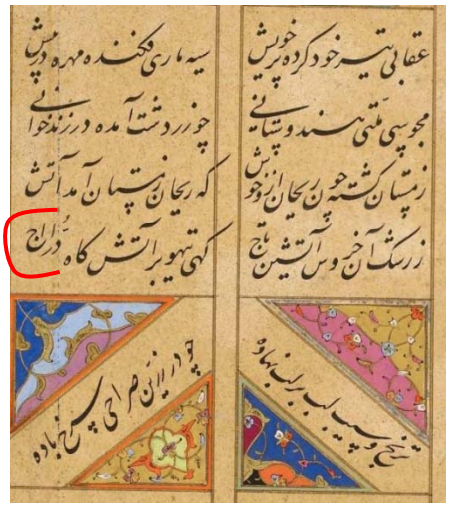


Fig. 21 - Detail of fol. 57r with chaotic word organization and the verse where *dorrāj* is misspelled (BL, Or.2265)

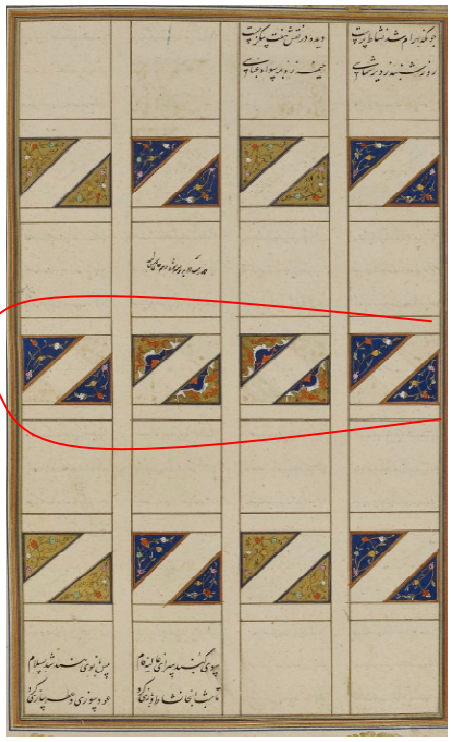


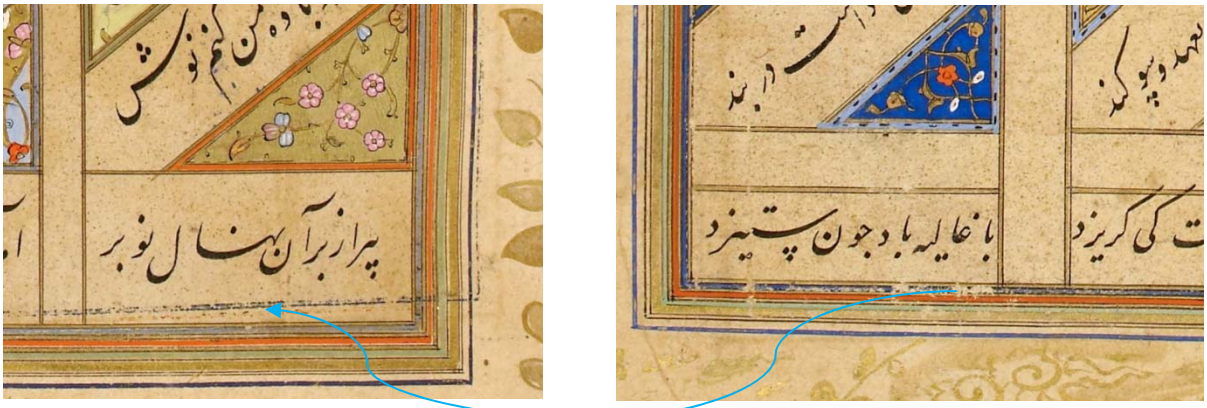
Fig. 22 - Checkered page in Style-3, mixing Style-1 with Style 2, with green-blue-red margins (BL, Or.2265, fol. 218v)

Fig. 23 – Checkered page in Stlye-3 with red-blue-green margin sequence (BL, Or.2265, 218r)

Fig. 24 –Set-2 page with standard ruling sequence (blue-red-green, from inside out) (BL, Or.2265, fol. 217v)

Fig. 25 – Āqā Mirak painting preceded by a Style-1 page; folios 15r-v of BL Or.2265

Fig. 26 – Soltān-Mohammad painting preceded by a Style-1 page; folios 18r-17v of BL Or.2265



Figs. 27 a, b – The dark blue ruling line (Set-1) of fol. 174v (right) is stuck over the ruling lines of fol. 175r (Set-2). BL Or.2265

The section where the Harvard *Camp Scene* could have appeared in Or. 2265 is between folios 142v and 143r (fig. 28). Curiously, folios 142r-v are Set-2 transitional pages, while the pages before (141r-v) are checkered in the Set-1 style. It's as if the checkered spaces of 141r-v paved the way for an illustration to appear on 142v, which was subsequently plucked out. To fill the gap left by the missing illustration, the text on its back, i.e., on 142r, had to be spread over two pages. Indeed, if fol. 142r was not checkered, it could accommodate 42 couplets, versus the 15 it now has. In other words, it could accommodate all of the 17 couplets of fol. 142v (except for two couplets that had to appear on the illustration), plus ample space for the normal heading of this section (*Majnun's Father Seeking the Hand of Layla*), which is now missing. The last two couplets of the present 142v would have then appeared on the missing illustration:

وانگه پدر عروس را گفت کاراسته باد جفت با جفت
خواهم به طریق مهر و پیوند فرزند ترا ز بهر فرزند

He thus told the bride's father, two soul mates can dazzle, I seek for love and union, your child for mine

My guess is that this missing illustration is the *Camp Scene,* and I shall provide a possible explanation for its removal in the next section. Similarly, the *Nighttime* painting could have belonged to the section that now contains folios 208r-v and 209r-v, in which the checkered spaces have eliminated a total of 48 couplets, as well as the heading: *Enthronement of Bahrām* (fig. 29). If the lost space is recuperated, it can easily accommodate the *Nighttime* illustration (with one or two couplets on it), and full text page on its back (42 couplets), as well as the missing heading.[36]

[36] Tahmāsb-A's layout must have been very similar to B's in this area, for the darker fol. 207, which came from B, was integrated without requiring any adjustment. Oddly, the verse mentioning the astrologer was suppressed; see note 31 supra.

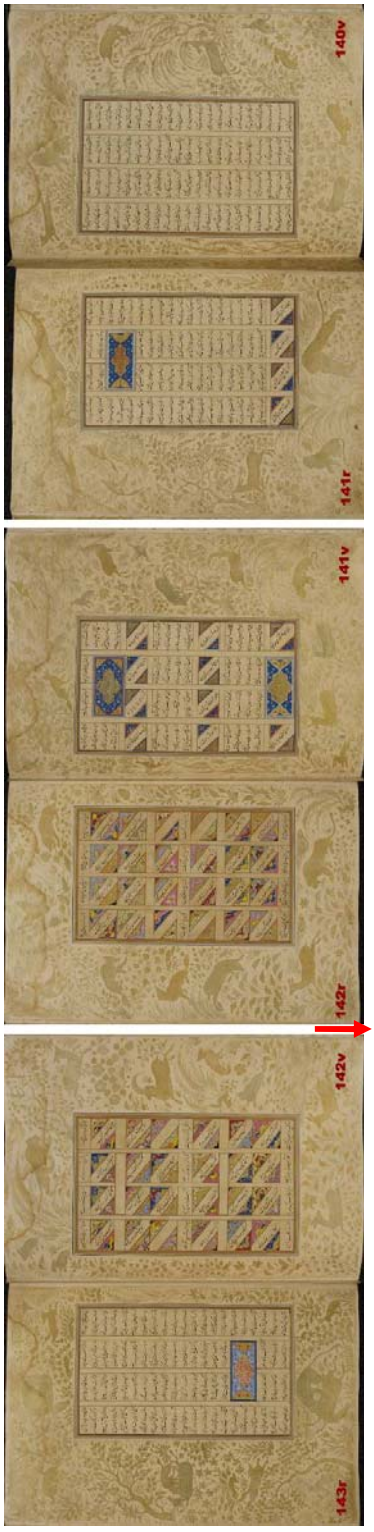


Fig. 28 – The Harvard *Camp Scene* was plucked out and replaced by folios 142v-143r. BL Or.2265

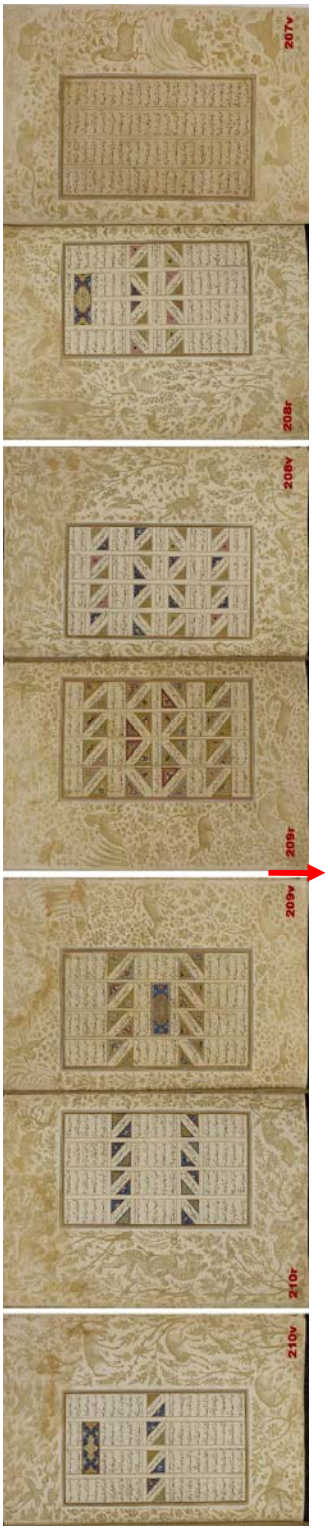


Fig. 29 - The Harvard *Nighttime in a Palace* was plucked out and probably replaced by folios 209 r-v. BL Or.2265

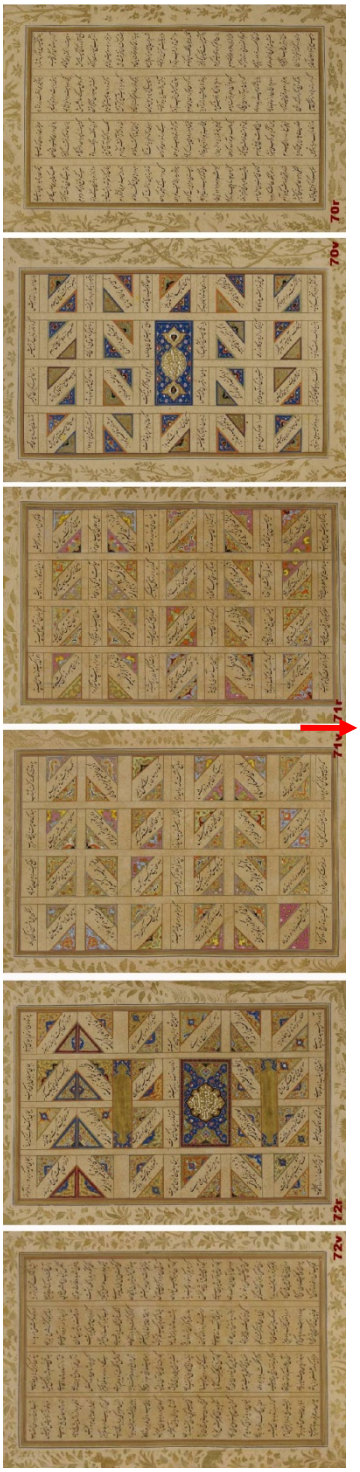


Fig. 30 - The Edinburgh *Battle between Khosrow and Bahrām Chubineh* was plucked out and probably replaced by folios 71 r-v. BL Or.2265

A third painting that must have been part of Tahmāsb-B is the *Battle between Khosrow and Bahrām Chubineh,* from the Royal Scottish Museum in Edinburgh (fig. 41). Unlike the Harvard paintings, the Edinburgh one has three couplets that point to its exact location within the *Khamseh*. These couplets are to be found at the bottom of fol. 72r, which is within a succession of four checkered pages (fols. 70v, 71r-v, 72r) that usually vouch for the elimination of a painting from their midst (fig. 30).

Finally, a fourth painting, the *Outdoor Feast* that was once part of Tahmāsb-B is now included in the *Golshan* Album of the Golestān Palace Library in Tehran.[37] It has border rulings that match the original design, with darker blues and thin bands of color. Although it's attributable to Mirzā `Ali, I was unable to find telltale indices indicating the subject of the story. Thus, its previous location within the Or. 2265 pages could not be determined.

II.6 - The state of the manuscripts prior to amalgamation - A first dilemma to address is the reason for having two manuscripts of Nezāmi, both of them seemingly penned by Shāh-Mahmud. As usual, the information provided by the available chronicles is not very helpful. In his 1545 preface to the Bahram Mirzā Album (TKS, H2154), and in reference to the activities of Āqā Mirak and Mir Mosavver, Dust-Mohammad writes that they had both been involved in "figural painting" (*chehre-goshāi*) and "coloration" (*rang-āmizi*) of the "*Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* and the *Khamseh* of Shaykh Nezāmi of the Royal Safavid library-atelier."[38] Oddly, neither Mir Mosavver's name appears in Or. 2265, nor any of its illustrations can be attributed to him.[39] And if the word "coloration" is to be trusted, said "*Khamseh"* must be Tahmāsb-B, since it's the only one with color illustrations.

But according to another account, Tahmāsb had ordered Shāh-Mahmud to complete an unfinished *Khamseh* that the Teymurid calligrapher Shaykh Mahmud had initially penned in a "minute" (*ghobār*) script; and by yet another account, this same *Khamseh*, was illustrated by Behzād.[40] One can of course envisage that, if illustrations were painted by artists nominally under the supervision of Behzād, later chroniclers would find it more prestigious to credit the master for the paintings of Tahmāsb-B; on the other hand "*ghobār*" doesn't correctly describe the script of this manuscript. In all likelihood these chroniclers had heard about one royal illustrated *Khamseh*, more likely to be Tahmāsb-B than A (because of their reference to illustrations or coloration).

By all appearances, neither Tahmāsb-B was completed nor Tahmāsb-A. It therefore seems highly unlikely that the *shāh* would have ordered the production of a second *Khamseh* volume before the completion of the first, unless one assumes that a new genre became fashionable that eclipsed the other, and Tahmāsb wanted one in each mode.[41]

We have a number of indicators that a new genre—one in which emphasis was put on *nasta`liq* calligraphy enhanced by elaborate margin illuminations—did become fashionable, and was perhaps viewed as the hallmark of Safavid achievements. Indeed, when the Mughal Emperor Homāyun visited Tahmāsb in 1544, the *shāh* gave him a Teymurid manuscript of the *Golestān* for which margins had been added—mostly by Āqā Mirak—in order to highlight the prowess of Safavid artists.[42] Different motifs from Or. 2265 were used (figs. 31-33)—with enhanced coloration—in order to embellish the margins of the said Teymurid manuscript (figs. 34 a-c). If the margin genre was chosen over regular illustration to impress an emperor, chances are that Tahmāsb-A was considered as valuable as Tahmāsb-B.

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[37] Soudavar 1999, 54. In section II.7, I shall revise my 1999 assumption that the painting was taken by Mirzā `Ali to India.

[38] Bayāni 1966, I:201. One should also note that Dust Mohammad is using the same reverential term "Shaykh" in conjunction with Nezāmi's name, that Tahmāsb did; see note 15 supra.

[39] Whereas Cary Welch had argued that the inscription on the wall of *Noshiravān Listening to the Owls* (Or. 2265, fol. 15v) was signed by Mir Mosavver, even though he attributed its painting to Āqā Mirak, I had argued that the signature should be read as Mirak-e Mosavver (Mirak the painter) with a drop of the honorific Āqā, when the painter himself is signing his work; Soudavar 1992, 178, and Soudavar 2008, 259. No other possible connection to Mir Mosavver exists.

[40] Bayāni 1966, I:299.

[41] This manuscript genre was not entirely new, for the circa 1400 *Divān* of Soltān Ahmad Jalāyer (Freer Gallery F1932.29-37) is conceptually designed in the same mode.

[42] Soudavar 1999, 178-79, 332-33.

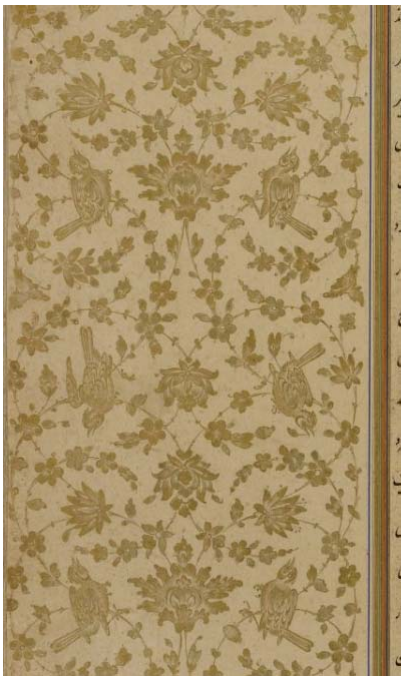


Fig. 31- Flowers and birds margins of fol.74r. BL Or. 2265

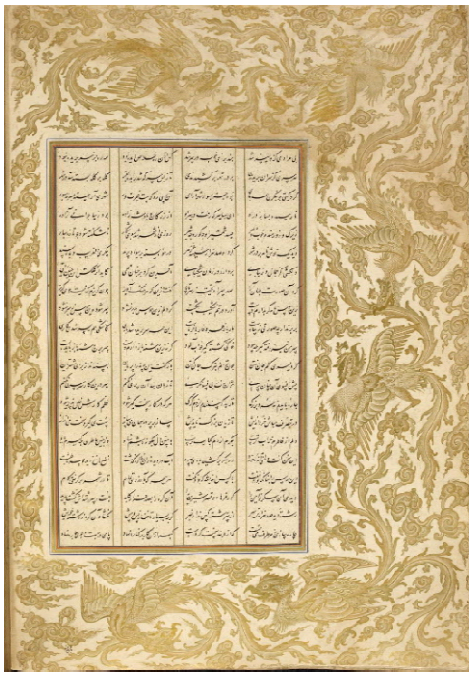
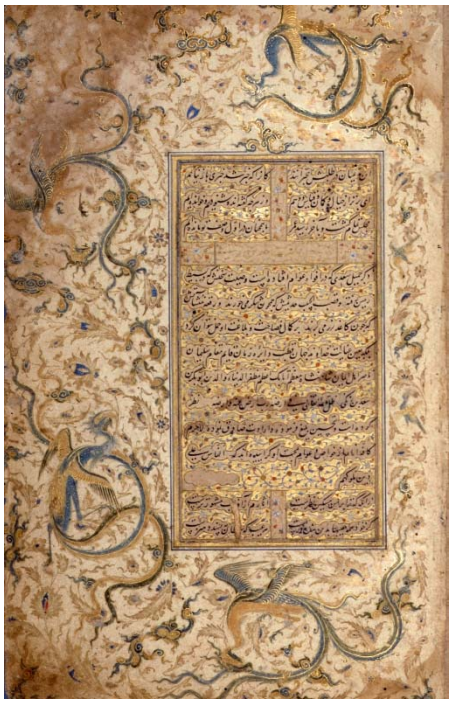
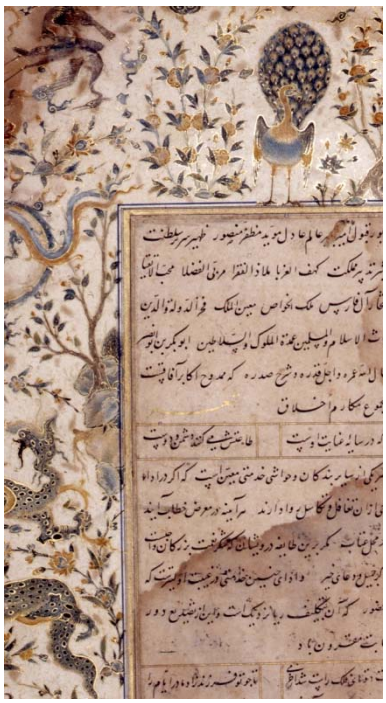


Fig. 32 – Phoenix margins of 233v (BL Or. 2265), attributable to Mir Mosavver

Fig. 33 – Peacock margins of fol. 6r (BL Or. 2265)





Figs. 34 a, b, c – Margins from a *Golestān* of Sa`di, dated 1468, added by Āqā by Mirak circa 1544, based on Or 2265 designs Freer Gallery of Art (F1998.5), Gift of the Art and History Trust in honor of Ezzat-Malek Soudavar

Fig. 35- Six-petalled lilium flower. Mir Mosavver. *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi*. (Soudavar 1992, 168)

Fig. 36 – Tiger through reed field, with six-petalled lilium flowers. Margins of fol. 208v, BL Or.2265

Fig. 37 – Lion in reed field. Attributable to Mir Mosavver. *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi*. (Soudavar 1992, 168)

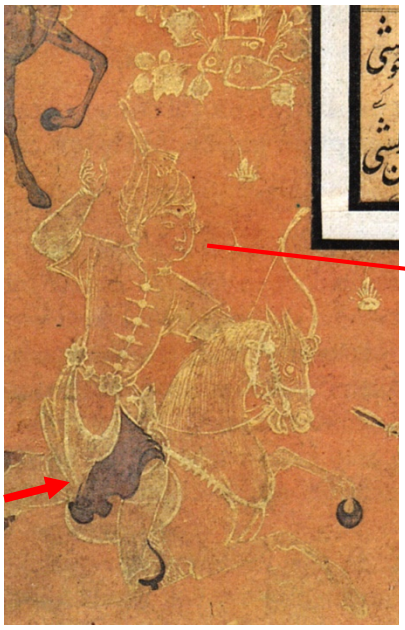


Fig. 38 - Margins from a dispersed anthology.[44] Attributable to Mir Mosavver

Fig. 39 – Typical Mir Mosavver face and hanging overcoat. *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (Soudavar 1992, 166)

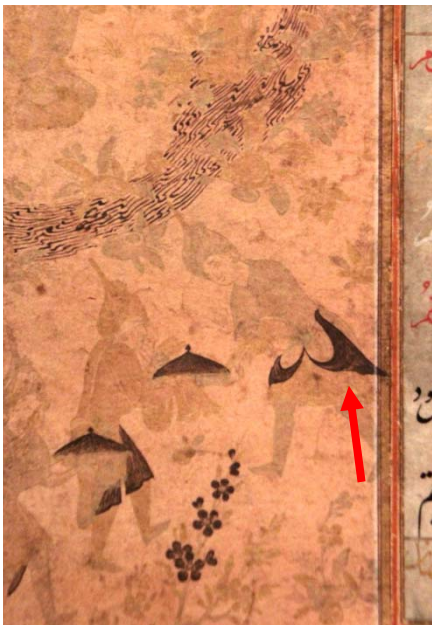


Fig. 40 – Margins of a dispersed anthology. Attributable to Mir Mosavver. Met (11.84.8)

There was also a second manuscript produced in this style, the text of which was taken out at one point in time and replaced with the text of an anthology of Hāfez and Sa`di's works, penned by Mir `Emād (d. 1615). Pages from this manuscript were dispersed in early twentieth century, and its remaining part was auctioned at Sotheby's in October of 1990.[43] They all have extraordinary illuminated margins, and although Welch has attributed some to Soltān-Mohammad, in the Sotheby's catalog entry, Toby Falk recognized other hands, all of whom had participated in the production of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi*.[44]

I believe one such artist is Mir Mosavver whose hand is visible on the margins of a page from the same manuscript, presently at the Met. The attribution to the Mir is suggested by figural and facial similarities with those he depicted in the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (figs. 38-39). A more tangible indicator, however, is his tendency to tie back overcoat tails to the belt, by prominently floating them sideways and displaying their inner linings, (figs. 38-40). What's more, Mir Mosavver's hand can also be detected in the execution of Tahmāsb-A margins. The feline crawling through curving and parallel cattail reeds (Lat. *Typha,* Pers. *khayzarān*), for instance, is a motif that he had used in fol. 118r of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (compare figs. 36-37).[45] Furthermore, the reeds rise from long-bladed tufts, in the middle of which also grow six-petalled lilium flowers. He uses the same grouping of bladed petals and lilium in the aforementioned *Shāhnāmeh* page (fig. 35).[46] Thus, Dust-Mohammad's remark that Mir Mosavver had contributed to a royal *Khamseh*, may be an allusion to Tahmāsb-A rather than B. Which one was commissioned by Tahmāsb and/or was his favorite? We can't tell.

There is, however, another possibility: Tahmāsb-A is a misnomer and this manuscript was actually produced for another prince, possibly Sām Mirzā (1517-67) for whom a manuscript of the *Selselat-oz-zahab* of Jāmi,[47] was copied by Shāh-Mahmud in Ardabil in 1549 when the prince was appointed governor of that city.[48] The assassination of Sām Mirzā in 1567 would have entailed the confiscation of his belongings, and the entry of this manuscript into Tahmāsb's library.

In sum, while the patronage and the reasons for the production of a second *Khamseh* are not very clear; the fact is that two high quality and unfinished manuscripts lingered in the royal Safavid library, and were amalgamated at a later date, with a few paintings discarded in the process.

II.7 - Amalgamation and removal - Like the two Harvard paintings, the Edinburgh one (fig. 41) also seems to relate to Shāh Tahmāsb. Indeed, it has features that allude to the successful strategy that Tahmāsb adopted in confronting the Ottoman Soltān Soleymān (r. 1520-66), in the autumn of 941AH/1534.

Tahmāsb had just launched a campaign against the Uzbeks from Herat, when he got news that the governor of Tabriz, Ulāmeh Takallu, who had defected to the Ottomans, was able to entice Soleymān to invade Iran, and was accompanying the *soltān* in his march toward the capital city of Qazvin. Tahmāsb hurried back and camped near Abhar, with less than seven thousand troops, most of them exhausted by the quick pace of the return journey. Even though Soleymān taunted him to fight like a man,[49] Tahmāsb refused to engage the Ottomans, but stayed close and pulled them deeper and deeper into Iranian territories, while implementing a scorched earth policy.[50] His strategy paid off when an early autumn snow

[43] Sotheby's London, sale of Oct. 12, 1990

[44] The extant part of the manuscript was auctioned in October 1990. A complete history of its dispersal is available at www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/c-welch-part-ii-l11227/lot.74.html in an entry written by Marcus Fraser. In addition to the *Golestān*, some Hāfez verses were also included by Mir `Emād (as in a page from the Met, no. 11.84.8). Other borders from the same manuscript were used to frame miniatures; see, for instance, Soudavar 1999, 266-67.

[45] Fol. 118r of the *Shāhnāmeh* was first attributed to Ghadimi by S.C. Welch, but then reattributed by this author to Mir Mosavver; see Soudavar 1992, 167.

[46] For a complete image see Soudavar 1992, 168.

[47] This manuscript (SPL, Dorn 434), has a double-page frontispiece attributable to Mirzā `Ali; it's reproduced in D&W 1981, I:138-39, (see also Soudavar 1999, 53).

[48] Even though Shāh-Mahmud has added the epithet *shāhi* after his name in the colophons of Or. 2265, it is possible that he was simply emphasizing an acquired entitlement. After all, works in which Rezā signed his name with the *`abbāsi* epithet weren't necessarily painted for Shāh `Abbās.

[49] Soudavar 2002, 101.

[50] Tahmāsb (Or. 5880), fols. 30-31: "we moved ahead and they followed us by one day"ما در پیش و ایشان یک منزل فاصله میآمدند

devastated the Ottoman troops near Soltāniyeh. They had to retreat while fending off Tahmāsb's counter attacks.

With the Ottomans and Ulāmeh on the run, the young Tahmāsb was finally able to assert his rule over his commanders, as Khosrow had done in defeating his rebel commander Bahrām Chubineh. The Nezāmi verses, as well as the painting composition, provide a parallel between the two events, by emphasizing the king's patience in waiting for the right time, which the vizier Bozorg Omid is trying to establish through his astrolabe:

نهاده تخت شه بر پشتِ پیلی کشیده تیغ ، گرداگردِ میلی
بزرگ امید پیش پیل سرمست به ساعت‌سنجی، اصطرلاب دردست
نظر میکرد و آن فرصت همی جست که بازار مخالف کی شود سُست

The king's throne set on an elephant, with pulled blades all around his standard
Bozorg Omid by that furious elephant, consulting his astrolabe
Looking at it and seeking the opportune time, as to when the enemy's position shall weaken

Fig. 41 - *Battle between Khosrow and Bahrām Chubineh.* Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (Gray 1977, 134)

What's more, the couplet before—which was, theoretically, at the bottom of the page preceding the Edinburgh folio in Tahmāsb-B—paved the way for the convergence of the two stories by reminding the reader that, like Ulāmeh, Bahrām Chubineh was accompanied by Turks.[51] It also alluded to the wintery period of the Ottoman defeat through a poetic metaphor:

دو چندان تیر شد بر تُرک ریزان که ریزد برگ، وقت برگ‌ریزان

Arrows fell on the Turks, twice more than falling leaves at Fall time

Thus, the Edinburgh painting glorifies the twenty-year-old Tahmāsb as Khosrow, who is depicted in the guise of a boyish king sitting on an elephant. It was a reminder of the crushing defeat that befell the mighty Ottomans in the Fall of 1534. A question then comes to mind: Was this the reason for the elimination of this painting from the amalgam project? I believe it is, and in what follows I shall suggest that this manuscript was put together as part of the gifts that the young Safavid prince, Hamzeh Mirzā (1566-86), was hastily gathering to send to the Ottoman Soltān Morād III (1574-95), to consolidate a peace treaty that he had signed.

Hamzeh Mirzā was the elder son of the almost-blind Shāh Mohammad Khodābandeh (r. 1578-87), who, since the assassination of the powerful vizier Mirzā Salmān (d. 1583), had taken the reins of power in his own hands. In 1584, the Ottomans had captured Tabriz, and after two years of warfare, a face-saving peace treaty was brokered by the Ottoman commander Farhād Pāsha, by which Hamzeh Mirzā would send one of his sons as hostage to Soltān Morād III, who, in turn, would nominally appoint Hamzeh as governor of Tabriz.[52] Gifts had to be sent with the embassy accompanying his infant son.

To honor past treaties and maintain a cordial relationship with the Ottomans, Tahmāsb had sent high quality manuscripts to the Porte; his successor Esmā`il II (r. 1576-77) followed suit by sending fifty more.[53] Shāh Mohammad may have sent another batch on the occasion of the festivities that

[51] Bahrām Chubineh was helped by the Hephtalites that Nezāmi qualifies as "Turks."
[52] Soudavar 2000, 66; Eskandar Beyk 1971, I:344-46.
[53] Soudavar 1992, 250. Soudavar 2002, 118 n. 58.

Soltān Morād organized for the circumcision of his son in 1582.[54] The gift of manuscripts was now de rigueur; even more so for Morād III who was a bibliophile and an avid collector.

But by 1586, the royal Safavid library-atelier was fairly depleted. The *ketāb-khāneh* was thus mobilized to not only enhance the quality of whatever manuscript was left, but also to "sell" them to the Ottomans as items produced by the best of Safavid artists. One such effort is visible in a *Divān* of Hāfez (TKS, H986) which was sent to the Porte. It's a manuscript that was commissioned by the vizier Mirzā Salmān, but subsequently revamped with added colophons to look as if it was made for a prince.[55] In the same manuscript we also notice an inscription on one of the paintings, attributing it to one "Behzād-e Ebrāhimi," who in reality was no other than the artist Mohammadi described as the "Behzād" of the library of the renowned bibliophile Soltān-Ebrāhim Mirzā.[56]

Contemporaneously, many drawings that bear attributions to Mohammadi include the epithet "*ostād*" before the name of this artist, to assure its recipient of the high prestige that Mohammadi enjoyed in the milieu of the royal Safavid library-atelier.[57] This same epithet accompanies the names of Mirzā `Ali and Soltān-Mohammad in Or. 2265, in the attributions scribbled on its paintings.[58] The attributions that are devoid of the epithet *ostād* contain nonetheless similarly important honorifics (such as "Āqā" before Mirak, and "Mir" before Sayyed `Ali).

Moreover, Hamzeh Mirzā had previously engaged in the refurbishing of an unfinished Jāmi manuscript that was eventually gifted to the Ottomans. This manuscript (TKS, H1483) was penned by the scribe Mohebb-`Ali between 1570 and 1572, with paintings added by Farrokh Beyg in the early 1580s, before he went to Kabul circa 1584.[59] With Farrokh Beyg gone, Mohammadi was solicited to complete the Jāmi manuscript. He also refurbished one older manuscript with a sumptuous lacquer binding, to be sent to the Porte.[60] By the time Hamzeh Mirzā concluded his peace accord with the Ottomans, the only artist left at the Royal Safavid library-atelier, and capable of matching Tahmāsb's painters, was Mohammadi. But even a virtuoso painter like him couldn't have completed an unfinished manuscript such as Tahmāsb-A in short notice. Farhād Pāsha had already sent an envoy to accompany Hamzeh Mirzā's son back to the Porte, and time was pressing. As it turned out, Hamzeh Mirzā was assassinated on December 4, 1586, before an official delegation could be sent out. Two years later though, after Hamzeh's younger brother was finally enthroned as Shāh `Abbās I (r.1588-1629), a delegation left for Istanbul with Hamzeh's orphan son and a substantial amount of manuscripts prepared or refurbished for the occasion.

The above considerations provide a possible alteration and amalgamation scenario:

a) The amalgamation of the two manuscripts were hastily organized by Hamzeh Mirzā, in preparation for which paintings of the Tahmāsb-B manuscript were scribbled with artist names and glorious epithets, by a weak hand that betrayed that of a non-artist, perhaps Hamzeh himself. Folio 48v, which has a painting by Mirzā `Ali, is quite telling in this respect. It's top and bottom (figs. 42a-b), and more generally its border areas, were damaged in the transfer process. They were painted over to fit a previously prepared setting that seems to be the original standard size of Tahmāsb-B paintings. As a result the scribbled attribution to Mirzā `Ali was lost. Instead, a new attribution, penned in good *nasta`liq*, was incorporated into the decorated margins, suggesting full coordination between calligraphers, illuminators, and task managers in charge of the amalgamation process. What's more, the decorative program on its back (i.e., fol. 48r) is of type Set-2 (fig. 43), and similar to folio 77r, which is on the back of another Mirzā `Ali painting bearing the original scribbled attribution to this artist within its painting frame (figs. 18a-b).

[54] Cagman & Tanindi 1996,144-45; Stchoukine 1966, 30. The Safavid ambassador who brought the gifts was presumably the governor of Kāshān, Ebrāhim Khān. He had come with a retinue of 200 richly dressed attendants but was either expelled or imprisoned when hostilities resumed; see Terzioglu 1995, 86.
[55] Soudavar 2000, 62-65.
[56] Soudavar 2013, 218.
[57] See, for instance Soudavar 2000, fig.21.
[58] See, for instance, fig. 18b.
[59] Soudavar 1999, 58-60.
[60] Soudavar 2000, 67.

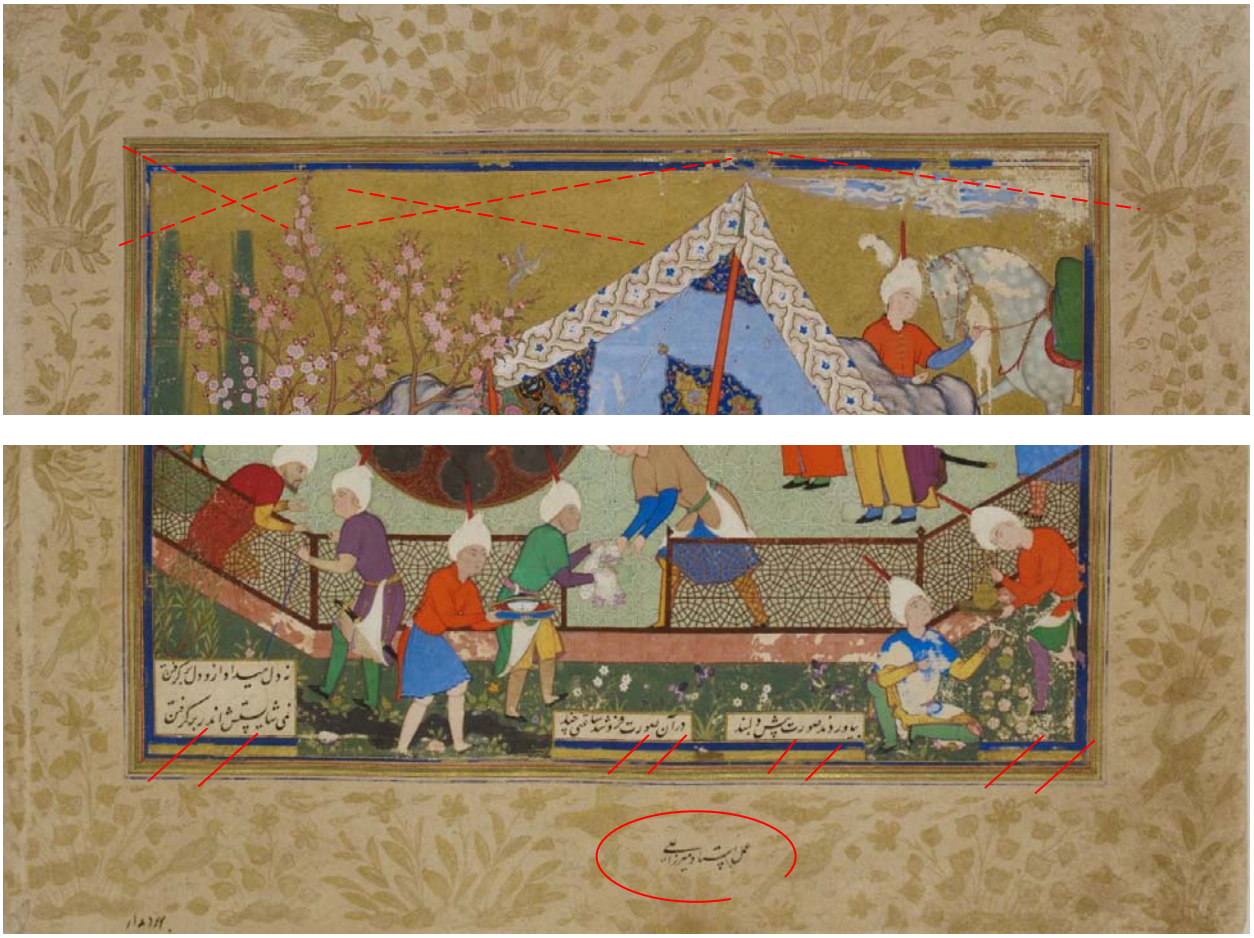


Fig. 42 a, b – Repainted damaged sections of *Shāpur Shows the Portrait of Khosrow to Shirin* (fol. 48v, BL Or. 2265)

Fig. 43 – Style-2 margins, on back of inserted *Shāpur* painting.
(fol. 48r, BL Or. 2265)

Fig. 44 - *Majnun Visited by his Father*. By Mohammed-Zamān, 1676
(Soudavar 1992, 375)

Fig. 45 – Checkered page in Style-4, after removal of the *Majnun* painting
(fol. 162r, BL Or.2265)

b) The empty spots of the discarded paintings were filled with pages decorated in Style-2 (figs. 28-30), similar to the back of many remaining paintings, including the two aforementioned Mirzā `Ali ones. It indicates that the same team of artists was available to perform both patching operations, i.e., for the initial amalgamation and the subsequent discarding. Thus, time wise the two operations couldn't have been much apart. Of the discarded paintings, one was offensive to the Ottomans, and the other two alluded to Tahmāsb's idiosyncratic behavior. The most likely person to view them as inappropriate was Hamzeh Mirzā's feeble father Shāh Mohammad. After the untimely death of his valiant son and the demise of his able vizier Mirzā Salmān, he could not risk further skirmishes with the Ottomans, especially since the Qezelbāsh *amir*s were plotting to replace him with his only remaining son `Abbās, the nominal governor of Khorāsān. The text of a letter he addressed to Soltān Morād shows the dire situation he was in. He professed to be a simple dervish who wished to retire from worldly responsibilities. And blaming Esmā`il II for the recent hostilities,[61] he recognized Ottoman suzerainty over the Iranian lands, but begged Morād III to bestow it back to him as his hereditary fiefdom (*olkā'*).[62] It was the most apologetic letter that a Safavid ever addressed to the Porte.

It stands to reason that the one who ordered a reevaluation of the amalgamated manuscript was Shāh Mohammad, who neither wished to offend the Ottomans nor belittle his own father. But, as he was deposed shortly after, he was not able to send it to the Porte. His successor, the young Shāh `Abbās had the backing of the main Qezelbāsh factions and did not feel as submissive as his father. For a while he hesitated to send the promised embassy. When he finally sent it, the amalgamated *Khamseh* wasn't included among the gifts it carried; perhaps because the manuscript wasn't wholesome, and was deemed inappropriate for Soltān Morād. It thus remained in the Safavid library.

c) It was altered once more during the reign of Shāh Soleymān (r. 1666-94), when Mohammad-Zamān added three more paintings to it. All three are inserted within Style-1 transitional pages. Oddly, a fourth page painted by Mohammad-Zamān for the same manuscript was never integrated into it. This painting which depicts *Majnun's Father Visiting his Son in the Wilderness* (fig. 44), seems to have been originally conceived for insertion within folios 162r-163r, which now display checkered layouts of a fourth type, Style-4 (fig. 45). It seems that even in this last stage of manuscript alteration, objectives were constantly revised, and miniatures—for which an insertion space was provided—were subsequently removed or not integrated at all.

**II.8 - Mir Sayyed `Ali** - Even though our codicological analysis clearly shows that the two Harvard paintings were once part of the BL *Khamseh* and one of them still carries a 16th-century attribution to Mir Sayyed `Ali, to fully refute Grabar and Natif's objections in this respect, we must provide added proof of Mir Sayyed 'Ali's participation in these two paintings. Dickson and Welch describe numerous particularities of this artist such as:

> - "fingers and toes tend to spread out in fanlike shapes"; "eyes are almond shaped";[63] "ears are placed too high"; "chilly perfection of people exists also in his calculatedly logical three-dimensional landscape."[64]

Besides these, two other considerations allow us to better detect Mir Sayyed `Ali's hand in these two paintings. The first is his almost innate ability to show his subjects in perfect balance and in full compliance with the laws of gravity. Not many painters could achieve this.[65] The two who excelled in this respect were Mirzā `Ali and Mir Sayyed `Ali.

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[61] Blaming Esma`il II for animosity toward the Ottomans was unjustified since he had officially banned the offending *sabb* and *la`nat* practice of the Qezelbāsh to alleviate tensions between his own Shiite and Sunni subjects, and to remove a major bone of contention from Safavid-Ottoman relationship.

[62] Navāi 1988, I:92. The letter that Navāi produces is entitled "Letter of Shāh `Abbās to Soltān Morād." However, since the author of the letter refers to Hamzeh Mirzā as "my son" and refers to his death as a recent event, its author must be Shāh Mohammad before his other son `Abbās claimed the throne.

[63] Figures of Persian miniature paintings are generally depicted with almond-shaped eyes, but those of Mir Sayyed 'Ali are sometimes quite elongated as in figs. 51-52.

[64] D&W 1981, 180.

[65] Soudavar 2000, 56-60.

Fig. 46 - Solidly seated king (Tahmāsb as Bahrām) and prince (detail of fig. 13)

Figs..47 a, b - Folios 2a, 1b of R.957, TKS: a) Portrait of Tahmāsb by Mir Sayyed 'Ali; b) Bahrām Mirzā presenting a petition, by Mozaffar-`Ali

Fig. 48 – Fully-balanced seated and working women (detail of Fig. 8)

Fig. 49 - Fully-balanced woman and goat (detail of Fig. 5)

Fig. 50 - Seated Prince. Mir Sayyed `Ali (Sackler1986.291)

Fig. 51 – Detail of Fig. 46

Fig. 52 – Detail of Fig. 47a

Fig. 53 – Detail of Fig. 50

Fig. 54 – Detail of Fig. 13

In 1981, when Dickson and Welch published their magnum opus, only one Safavid painting was known with a secure signature by Mir Sayyed `Ali, namely the *Seated Prince* of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (fig. 50). The discovery of a subsequent one in a Topkapi manuscript that bears a dedication to the library of Tahmāsb's brother Bahrām Mirzā (1517-47),[66] further displays Mir Sayyed `Ali's ability to deal with the laws of gravity. On folio 2a of said manuscript (fig. 47a), he depicted a seated prince under which is written: "Has painted it `Ali al-Hosayni, and has copied it Shāh-Mahmud al-Neyshāburi." The celebrated Shāh-Mahmud who had penned the verses on this folio, had also signed by proxy the painter's name as `Ali al-Hosayni, in lieu of Mir Sayyed 'Ali. In so doing, he emphasized the painter's descent from the Hosayni branch of *sayyed*s (i.e., progenies of the Prophet Mohammad), while dropping the honorifics "Mir" and "Sayyed."[67] It was a sign of humility for artists to avoid honorifics in their signatures; but in this case, the omission was also dictated by the stature of its sitter, i.e., Tahmāsb. Indeed, as I had argued in a previous study, this folio 2a replaces a previous one depicting Bahrām Mirzā playing a musical instrument, surrounded by the same poem penned by Shāh Mahmud. It was switched out in order to complement the facing page, where Mozaffar-`Ali depicts a kneeling Bahrām Mirzā petitioning Tahmāsb (fig. 47b).[68] It made more sense to have Bahrām kneel before the king than before a portrait of himself. Tahmāsb's identity in fig. 47a is further confirmed by the three ostrich feathers planted on his turban, which usually designated the king.

These paintings put into perspective the contrast between their painters: While Mir Sayyed `Ali's portrait of Tahmāsb is firmly seated, Mozaffar-'Ali's kneeling Bahrām is off balance and floating in the air. More generally, Mir Sayyed `Ali had a knack for drawing people in complicated positions but in full balance. In the Or. 2265 painting that is attributed to him, we have a group of three women, each performing a different task (fig. 48). The one to the left is rolling noodles on a wooden board with "fanlike" fingers; and the one on top is solidly seated on a rock while stirring the stew in a large cauldron. Both are firmly seated. A third one is attending to the fire lit under the cauldron; she is throwing more wood into the fire by leaning forward from the rock on which she is seated. To avoid falling forward, she is leaning on her right hand; one can immediately see that her weight is masterfully distributed between the rock, her knees and legs, as well as her right hand. The same type of perfect weight distribution can be detected in Harvard's *Camp Scene*, where a woman is milking a goat (fig. 49). She is crouching, as most Iranian villagers—who lack the luxury of a stool—do. They simply go down and forward on their knees, with their center of gravity positioned in between their feet.[69] What's more, she is lifting the goat's hindquarters to facilitate the milking process, and yet the goat too seems to be in perfect balance. The same attention to balance and weight distribution is visible in *Nighttime,* where the solidly-seated king is being served by a kneeling courtier who leans forward but is in full balance (fig. 46).

But by and large, the hand of a miniature painter is best recognized through the faces of his subject. Every painter has idiosyncratic facial elements that reappear time and again. For Mir Sayyed 'Ali, high eyebrows and elongated eyes often give a distinctive character to his figures. As a result, we have a high degree of facial similarity between the sitter of the Sackler drawing and one of the courtiers of the Harvard *Nighttime* (figs. 53-54). Also, the king in *Nighttime* (fig. 51), which we argued to be Tahmāsb, is facially identical to the Tahmāsb figure inserted in the TKS manuscript (fig. 52), and by the same hand, i.e., Mir Sayyed `Ali.

In their study, Dickson and Welch had relied on a number of paintings with attributions to Mir Sayyed `Ali, whether at the Safavid court or in India, to find a common thread between them and provide a basis for further attributions. It is a testimony to the correctness of their analysis that our additional discoveries, be it Mir Sayyed `Ali's signed work (fig. 47a) or the art-historical significance of the discarded pages from Or. 2265, further support their attributions and conclusion.

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[66] Simpson 1991, 376-84.

[67] One must note that the epithet in Shāh-Mahmud's name is an integral part of his name, as *sotlān* is in Soltān-Mohammad.

[68] The petition is a request by Mozaffar 'Ali to have his stipend increased by the *shāh*; see Soudavar 1999, 53.

[69] For a similarly fully-balanced crouching man in a painting attributed to Mir Sayyed 'Ali, see Lowry et al. 1988, 341.

III. Undermining Mirzā `Ali

In disagreement with D&W 1981, Barbara Brend published a paper in 2003 with "the intention" to prove that works bearing the names of Mirzā `Ali and `Abd-os-Samad were "the oeuvre of one and the same individual"; presumably, that individual was called Mirzā `Ali but changed his name upon arrival to India.[70] Of the two, `Abd-os-Samad's name was better known, because, as one of the founders of the Mughal School of painting, much had been written about him in the context of Indian painting. By attributing a page of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* to him, Dickson and Welch effectively traced back his painting career to the royal Safavid atelier. As for Mirzā `Ali, they set off with two paintings from the BL *Khamseh* of Nezāmi—with attributions to Mirzā `Ali—in order to recognize his characteristics, and followed the maturing of his style through the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi,* all the way to Soltān-Ebrāhim Mirzā's *Haft Aurang,* produced between 1556 and 1565.[71] Brend, however, could not see any extension of Mirzā `Ali's work beyond 1543, the supposed completion date of the BL's *Khamseh*; neither could she see any Safavid works that could be attributed to `Abd-os-Samad. Hence, her proposition that these two names must refer to a single artist, which she then tried to justify through stylistic similarities between the two groups of works.

I see nothing wrong with having a hunch and pursuing it, provided enough evidence is gathered in support of that hunch. The problem with Brend's analysis is that she had a bad hunch, and distorted or neglected available evidence in support of it. To begin with, she had two insurmountable obstacles that she pushed aside with a sleight of hand. The first is the "name" problem; the two artists had different names, which she circumvented by suggesting that "new life required a new name," and that the name `Abd-os-Samad (Slave of the Eternal) had "rather the character of a *laqab"* (p. 230). But `Abd-os-Samad is not a *laqab*, and is as much a name as "`Abdollāh," which has the exact same meaning. "New life" requires a new name only when a clean break with the past is sought, whether to better blend in a new environment, or to mask a previously unacceptable affiliation, mostly on religious grounds. But neither is `Abd-os-Samad a typical Indian name for a better blend with Mughal painters, nor is there any evidence that `Abd-os-Samad was previously a non-Moslem who adopted a new name, as did the celebrated `Abbāsid statesman Ruzbeh b. Dāduyeh, who became `Abdollāh b. Moqafa` (d. 756) upon conversion to Islam. Where he inscribes his name on a miniature, he does it by identifying himself as "`Abd-os-Samad-e *shirin-qalam*, (the Sweet Pen)" (fig. 56), which is clearly not a double *laqab*, but a name followed by an epithet. In sum, there is no precedence, nor a reason for her claim. More importantly, it is directly contradicted by a notation on the *Horse with a Groom* painting, which Brend acknowledges—after Roxburgh—to be from the 1545 Bahrām Mirzā album (p. 234).[72] Thus, the `Abd-os-Samad attribution therein was written prior to the painter's arrival at the Mughal court circa 1549, and is a fatal negation of her "new life, new name" theory, since he was already known by the same name at the Safavid court.

The second obstacle that she faced was the lineage and origins of these two artists that were different; one was of Tabrizi origin and the other from Shirāz. Although, biographical information about Persian artists is seldom available, we are fortunate to have some for these two: For Mirzā `Ali, because of his father, the illustrious painter Soltān-Mohammad, and for `Abd-os-Samad, because of an illustrious son Sharif Khān, who became the Commander in Chief of the Mughal army under Jahāngir (r. 1605-27). Indeed, Jahāngir states in his memoirs that:

> Sharif Khān grew up with me since his tender ages,... I hold him as a brother, friend and companion, ..., I have appointed him as my vizier, *vakil,* and commander in chief,..., his father Kh^{w}āja `Abd-os-Samad, who was unparalleled in the art of painting, and had obtained the *shirin-qalam* epithet from my late father, with whom he was authorized to sit and keep company; he was a dignitary of Shirāzi origin.[73]

[70] Brend 2003. I wish to thank Barbara Brend for sending me a copy of her article.
[71] D&W 1981, 129-53.
[72] Roxburgh 1998, 34-39.
[73] Jahāngir 2001, 10:

It is hard to imagine that such essential information provided by Jahāngir on the origins of a childhood friend and most trusted officer could be wrong, especially since he ties `Abd-os-Samad's lineage to a vizier of the Mozaffarid Shāh Shojā' who ruled in Shirāz (r. 1358-84).[74] Although Brend expresses some doubts about this artist's lineage, she accepts his Shirāzi origins but then tries to link Mirzā `Ali and his father to the same city. She does that by reasoning that Soltān-Mohammad's "`Erāqi" affiliation—as incorporated in his signature on fig. 84— didn't necessarily indicate "family origin" (p. 231). She is right. As argued elsewhere, it was meant to emphasize the artist's affiliation to the library-atelier of Tabriz rather than Herat (see sec. IV.8). But conveniently, she sets aside Budāq's assertion that "Soltān-Mohammad was from Tabriz," also echoed by Qāzi Ahmad who specifies that he was from the "*dār-os-saltaneh* (capital city) of Tabriz."[75] The two accounts establish different geographical origins, and the two artists are therefore from two different cities, with distinct family origins.

If the written record invalidates Brend's claim, so do the paintings attributable to these two artists. Dickson and Welch had assigned three `Abd-os-Samad paintings to the Safavid period. The first, the *Horse with a Groom* from the Bahrām Mirzā album (fig. 55), is undeniably Safavid and clearly pegs `Abd-os-Samad's beginnings to the Safavid era. The second is a page from the *Golshan* album, which bears the signature of `Abd-os-Samad together with his *shirin-qalam* epithet (fol. 56). I agree with Brend that the latter is not Safavid, mainly for three reasons: a), it's a page from a *Bustān* of Sa`di, and we have no record of such a manuscript being made for Tahmāsb, b) stylistically it's very close to this artist's Mughal period, c) the conical bonnets seem closer to Lahore and Bukhara than Safavid. Nevertheless, a figure therein that was the basis for Dickson and Welch's attribution of a *Shāhnāmeh* page to this artist (*The Assassination of Khosrow Parviz*), still offers a solid link. One can focus on different stylistic aspects of a painter, but no clues are more revelatory than odd and elaborate portraits. Facial prototypes are the true signatures of miniature painters, and as such, the *Golshan* page and the *Shāhnāmeh* page share a similar signature face (figs. 59-60).

But if there were only two `Abd-os-Samad paintings from the artist's Safavid period, there was room for concern. A painter of his caliber, so well received at the Mughal court, should have left more paintings behind. And indeed he has. Basil Robinson, for one, has tentatively attributed three paintings from a circa 1530 manuscript to `Abd-os-Samad, which I agree with but Brend never discusses.[76] Furthermore, two paintings from a manuscript of Helāli's *Shāh and Dervish* dated 944/1537 can also be attributed to him.[77] They both share a zigzag tile pattern with another signed painting of `Abd-os-Samad from the *Golshan* album, depicting Homāyun and Akbar (fig. 57). This tile pattern is unique to `Abd-os-Samad, and doesn't appear in any other *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* illustration. What's more, the Safavid dignitary standing in the doorway (fig. 61) is exactly the same as the one in the *Shāhnāmeh* (fig. 62), with the same short legs, hanging sword, and wandering gaze in the eyes. `Abd-os-Samad's Safavid oeuvre is certainly more substantial than Brend suggests.

شریف خان که از خردسالی با من کلان شده.... او را بمنزله پسر و برادر و یار و مصاحب خود میدانم ....او را وکیل و وزیر خود ساخته به خطاب والای امیر الامرایی... سربلند گردانیدم ... پدر او خواجه عبد الصمد که در فن تصویر بی‌بدل زمان خود بود و از حضرت جنت آشیانی خطاب شیرین‌قلمی یافته در مجلس همایون ایشان رتبه مجالست و مصاحبت داشت، و از مردم اعیان شیراز است.

[74] Dickson and Welch, treat the additional information, found in another manuscript of Jahāngir's memoirs and describing `Abd-os-samad as a descendent of the "Nezām-ol-Molk" of the court of the Mozaffarid Shāh Shojā`, as unreliable, thinking that the celebrated Saljuq vizier was meant (D&W 1981, 196). But "*nezām-ol-molk*" (the Order of the Realm) was a tile given to many powerful viziers, often in conjunction with "*qavām-od-din*" (the Pillar of Religion) since viziers were also educated in theology, and at times supervised religious affairs. Thus, not only the celebrated Saljuq vizier Abu `Ali Hasan (d. 1092) was so doubly-titled, but also a vizier of Soltān-Hosayn Bāyqarā; as such Shāh Shojā`'s powerful vizier Qavām-od-din Hasan could very well be addressed in short as the "Nezām-ol-molk of Shāh Shojā`" (see for instance, Soudavar 1992, 113, 43; Abol-Hasan 2001, 98; Vā`ez-Javādi 1966, 233-36). The Saljuq-era Nezām al-Mulk was too well known to educated Persian speakers, such as Jahāngir, to be confounded with a Mozaffarid vizier.

[75] Qomi1973, 137.

[76] John Rylands Library (ms Pers. 6); Robinson 1980, 148-51.

[77] St Petersburg Library, Dorn 459, folios 10, 17; Ashrafi 1974, 52-53.

Fig. 55 - Horse with a Groom, by `Abd-os-Samad (extracted from the Bahrām Mirzā album), LACMA (TR 12220.20)

Fig. 56 - *Sa`di and the Rich Merchant,* by `Abd-os-Samad. GPL (Rajabi 2005, 447)

Fig. 57 - *Homāyun and Akbar in a Treehouse,* by `Abd-os-Samad. GPL (Rajabi 2005,446)

Fig. 58 a, b - Two pages from a Helāli manuscript, attributable to Abd-os-Samad, SPL (Ashrafi 1974, 52-53)[77]

.Fig. 59 - Detail of fig. 56

Fig. 60 - *Shāhnāmeh* page (det.), Met (1970.301.75)

Fig. 61 - Detail of fig. 58b

Fig. 62 - *Shāhnāmeh* page (det.), Met (1970.301.75)

Fig. 63 - Detail of fig. 57 Zigzag tile patterns of `Abd-os-Samad

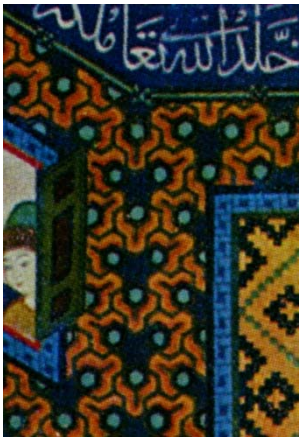


Fig. 64 - Detail of fig. 58b

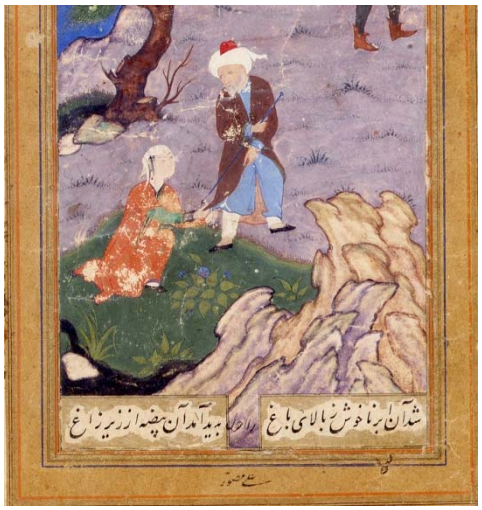


Fig. 65 a, b - Two pages from a *Bustān* of Sa`di, both signed by Mirzā 'Ali. Met (1986.216)

Fig. 66 - Page of a Jāmi manuscript by Mirzā `Ali. Sackler (86.0044)

Fig. 67 - Detail of fig. 65

Fig. 68 - Detail of fig. 18b

Fig. 69 - Detail of fig. 42

Fig. 70 - Detail of fig. 71

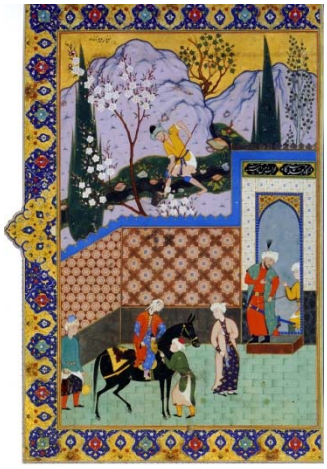


Fig. 71 a, b - Two paintings from a *Panj Ganj*, attributable to Mirzā `Ali. GPL (Rajabi 2005, 106, 119)

Fig. 72 - Frontispiece of a *Mathnavi,* by Mirzā 'Ali[80]

Fig. 73 - Detail of fig. 66

(Paintings illustrating Mirzā `Ali's penchant for two interacting figures, one of which is twisting his head backward)

As for Mirzā `Ali, Brend only concentrates on the paintings from the BL *Khamseh*—which served as the basis for Dickson and Welch's further attributions to him—and ignores the Met's *Bustān* of Sa`di, a page of which I had published in 1992.[78] Three of its paintings bear the signature `Ali-ye Mosavver (`Ali the painter), which ties in well with the "Mowlānā `Ali-ye Mosavver" named among the Safavid painters (along with Mozaffar-`Ali) whose works the calligrapher Mohammad al-Vasfi had gathered for an album, in the years 1568-76, in Mashhad.[79] The Met paintings reconfirm the characteristics that Dickson and Welch had recognized for this artist, four of which I shall further elaborate hereunder, by comparing the Met paintings to those of the BL *Khamseh* (Or. 2265), the Golestān Library *Panj Ganj* (no. 709), and two ex-Vever manuscripts of the Sackler Gallery, namely a *Selselat-oz-zahab* of Jāmi (86.0044) and a *Mathnavi* (86.0035)—all attributable to Mirzā-`Ali.[80] Except for the ex-Vever paintings, which only re-surfaced in 1986, the others had been attributed to Mirzā `Ali by Dickson and Welch. The four chosen characteristics are as follows:[81]

a) the tendency to isolate people into groups of two interacting figures, whether both standing (figs. 67, 68, 72), one seated and the other standing (fig. 69), or both seated (fig.73);

b) men with pointed beards and "fox-faced," (figs. 68-73);

c) besides tight turbans, others are wrapped "loosely, carelessly, floppily" as in figs. 2, 73;

d) more importantly, Mirzā `Ali princes look "noble, serene without being haughty" as in figs. 74-76.

What's more, the *Selselat-oz-zahab* painting clearly establishes Mirzā `Ali's presence in Safavid territory, much after the completion of the 1543 BL *Khamseh,* since it's an integral part of a manuscript dated 956AH/1549-1550, and not a later addition. And as already noted, Mirzā `Ali's short trip to India occurred after this date (he must have painted the *Two Lovers* on his way to India circa 1550, since it refers to a possible love affair between Shāh Tahmāsb's sister Soltānom and the Mughal statesman Bayrām Khān).[82] Thus, contrary to Brend's assertion, several of Mirzā `Ali paintings were produced in the aftermath of the BL *Khamseh*, at a time when `Abd-os-Samad had already left for India.

Nobody is infallible and there are certainly mistakes in the hundreds of attributions made by Dickson and Welch. But rather than trying to undermine their methodology, one should try to expand and/or improve their findings. That is the road I took in reassessing some of their attributions for the paintings of Soltān Ebrāhim Mirzā's *Haft Aurang*. Whereas Welch had attributed four of its paintings to Qadimi, I accepted their inter-relationship as a group, but attributed them instead to `Abdollāh-e Mozahheb. I also switched the attributions of two other paintings, from Mozaffar-`Ali and Shaykh Mohammad to Mohammadi and Farrokh Beyg.[83] But in doing so, I followed the road already traced by them, and I used the very elements that they had uncovered but to reach a different conclusion.

Finally, Dickson and Welch's entry on Mirzā `Ali helped me to understand the enormous impact that he had on the next generation of painters, especially Mohammadi. The relationship between Mirzā `Ali and Mohammadi was one of master and pupil, rather than father and son as Brend surmises (p. 231). Unfortunately she does that by taking at face value the notation on a *Dervish* painting that Bahari had published (fig. 148). As I shall argue in sec. VII.2, Bahari's painting is a late copy of an original by Behzād, and its inscription is a total fabrication. But despite a lengthy correspondence, I could not dissuade Brend from her misgivings about Mirzā `Ali and `Abd-os-Samad. If one cannot see the *Dervish* painting as a forgery, then one cannot see the continuity of Mirzā `Ali's work from the BL's *Khamseh* to the Freer's *Haft Aurang*.

[78] Soudavar 1992, 170.

[79] *Bustān-e khatt* 1979, 11. Mirzā `Ali couldn't sign his name with the princely sobriquet *mirzā* that designated him as heir to his father Soltān-Mohammad, the *soltān* of painters. Mir `Ali too signed his name without the epithet *mir* in fig. 132c.

[80] The *Panj Ganj* paintings, as well as those of the *Mathnavi* are later additions that we shall discuss in sec. IV.6. The GPL manuscript is reproduced in Rajabi 2005 (106-119), and the Sackler ones in Lowry et al. 1986 (48 and 241-42).

[81] D&W 1981, 130.

[82] Soudavar 1999, 55; see also pages 16-17 supra.

[83] Soudavar 1992, 229; Soudavar 1999, 58; Soudavar 2008, 257.

Fig. 74 - Serene princely face by Mirzā `Ali, c. 1530.
(det. of fig. 18b)

Fig. 75 - Serene enthroned king by Mirzā `Ali. Detail of fol. 638r of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (Private Collection)

Fig. 76 - Detail of a *Mathnavi* frontispiece, attributable to Mirzā `Ali. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery (86.0035)[80]

IV. Bahari's Panj Ganj *manuscript*

In his paper, Ebadollah Bahari argues that paintings from a *Panj Ganj* manuscript of his—three of which are similar to those of Cartier's *Divān* of Hāfez—are the originals, and that the Cartier paintings are later copies.[84] He further concludes that one of his manuscript's illustrations is signed by the celebrated master painter Behzād, and that the rest "were painted under his supervision."

I have not seen the Bahari manuscript,[85] but the published illustrations provide enough indices to conclude that it's a semi-fake, i.e., that its dated text is genuine, but masterfully enhanced with later illustrations. It is not easy to produce such a manuscript, and its planning is predicated on three conditions: a) availability of good manuscripts, b) trained painters, c) a foreign market that could not discern enhancements. In the course of Iranian history, these conditions became available to only two schools of painting. One was in the late 1530s, when Shāh Tahmāsb's interest in painting had waned and out-of-job painters from his library-atelier had laid their hands on a cache of Teymurid un-illustrated manuscripts. As the Ottomans sought to collect illustrated Teymurid manuscripts, said painters obliged by adding paintings, mostly as double-pages, to the manuscripts they had found. They did this, by splitting a page in two and slipping in two facing miniatures, or by adding miniatures in empty spaces. A number of such manuscripts are now in different libraries, some of which I have documented in two separate studies.[86]

A second period of activity was the first quarter of the 20th-century, when the three above conditions were met once again. Indeed, it was a period when: a) for want of money, the Iranian nobility was selling its manuscripts at cheap price, b) there was an abundance of painters trained at the recently-established art schools, c) there was a buoyant Western demand for Persian paintings and manuscripts. Marianna S. Simpson who has studied some of these manuscripts, has demonstrated that many were enhanced in early 20th-century, and close to the time they entered American collections in the years 1921 and 1922 (Simpson 2008). More importantly, she opened our eyes to the high quality of works produced in those days. While some imitated older compositions, others displayed much creativity in the recombination of older motifs (more below).

Interestingly, three compositions from the Cartier manuscript also appear in the Simpson-studied paintings, but in different ways than the Bahari ones. The Cartier paintings in question are: (A) the *`Id Celebration*, (B) the *Scandal in a Mosque*, and (C) the *Tavern Scene*. In addition to Bahari's, they also appear in a *Divān* of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, where (A) and (C) are combined in one double page, and (B) is incorporated into another one (figs. 77-78). Simpson produces two further copies of these, as single pages, purchased in the same period as the Amir Khosrow manuscript (figs. 79, 81a).[87] Oddly, Bahari, who praises Simpson's article, fails to see the similarities between his manuscript and the forgeries Simpson describes. Instead, he tries to turn every negative aspect of his manuscript into a positive one, with false theories and baseless claims. He contends:

1- that manuscript illustrations must "face" inward (p. 162),

2- that glued-on pages are forgeries, and a "sacrilege" if stuck over Hāfez verses (p. 164),

3- that the two signed paintings by Soltān-Mohammad are not by him (p. 165),

4- that a white *tāj* (i.e., baton of the Safavid headgear) was a kingly emblem, not to be worn by commoners (p. 163),

5- that the verse on top of the Cartier's *Tavern Scene* was superfluous (p. 164),

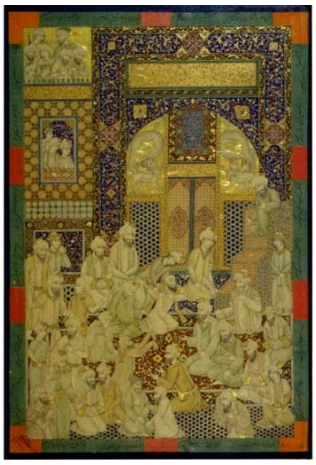
6- that integrated double-page illustrations must necessarily be genuine (p. 161),

[84] The Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez is now divided between HUAM, the Met, and the Art and History Collection.

[85] I had asked Mr. Bahari to either send me high resolution images of his manuscript or allow the *IRAN* journal to release to me those they had. I got no response.

[86] See Soudavar 1992, 118-19; Soudavar 1999a, 264-66.

[87] I am indebted to M.S. Simpson for sending me pictures of these works.



Figs. 77-78 - Fol. 54b (*Throne Scene*), fol. 55a (*Tavern Scene*), fol. 87b (*Mosque Scene*) of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi's *Khamseh*. Princeton Univ. Library (Islamic mss, 84G)

Fig. 79 - *Mosque Scene*. Free Library of Philadelphia (O263)

Fig. 80a,b - Double page of Bahari's *Panj Ganj* (pp.187-88)

Fig. 81 a,b - *Tavern Scene*s. Philadelphia (O267) & Bahari (p.192)

Fig. 82 - Detail of fig. 80. Left-handed enthroned king

Fig. 83 - Detail of fig. 80. Left-handed musicians

Fig. 84 - *'Id-e Fetr* by Soltān Mohammad. Tabriz, c. 1532 (Soudavar 1992, 160)

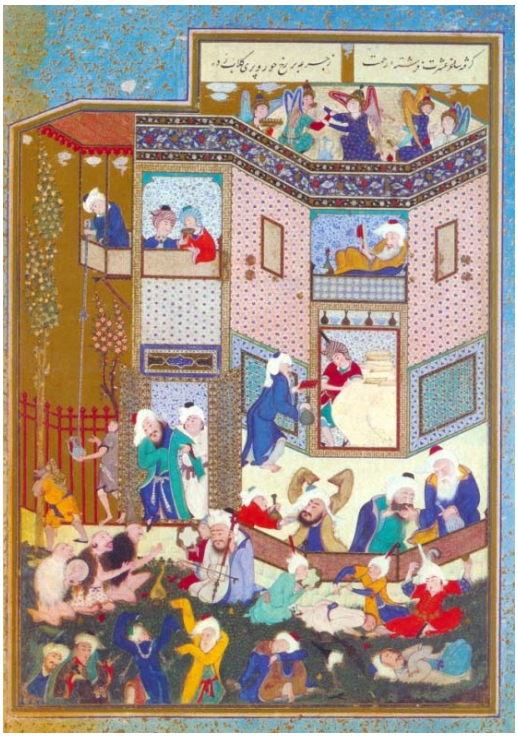


Fig. 85 - *Tavern Scene,* by Soltān-Mohammad, c. 1532, Tabriz HUAM (1988.460.2)

Fig. 86 – Shaykhzādeh's *Scandal in a Mosque,* c. 1528. HUAM (Soudavar 1992, 189)

Fig. 87 - Detail of fig. 84. Right-handed musicians and princes

7- that the royal Safavid library-atelier (*ketāb-khāneh*) remained in Herat under the supervision of Behzād, until the year 1530 (p. 163),

8- that Sām Mirzā's titles included the epithet *`Emād-od-din* (p. 162),

9- that for "nearly sixty years" the name of Mir `Ali "was omitted from the Safavid records," and "erased" from Bahari's copy (p. 161)

I shall hereby refute all of them.

IV.1 - Inward facing rule - In comparing the three Cartier paintings with his, Bahari notices that two of them maintain the same orientation, while composition (A) is reversed and is a mirror image of the other. In support of the genuineness of his painting, Bahari enunciates the rule that if a composition is "facing out" it must be wrong (p. 162). I have never heard of such a rule, and I personally think that an outward looking composition is aesthetically more appealing. Be that as it may, positional harmonization is necessary in a double page composition, where the two sides need to balance each other, whereas no such need arises in a single page composition. Thus, of the two, the more likely to have been flipped horizontally is the Bahari one. Indeed, it has oddities that immediately reveal flipping: Not only the Shāh is picking his wine cup with his left hand, but the two musicians on the right are depicted as *left-handed* (figs. 82-83). By contrast, in Bahari's *Tavern Scene* (fig. 81b), which maintains the same orientation as the Cartier's, the player of the string instrument (*qeychak*) is right-handed. Unless Bahari can prove that Safavid courtly musicians were predominantly left-handed, I believe that one can safely assume that the Cartier *Tavern Scene* is original, and the other a flipped copy.

IV.2 - Glued-on pages - The lynch-pin of Bahari's article is that some of the Cartier illustrations were glued over existing pages; it had resulted—in one case only—in the covering of verses, which he qualifies as a "sacrilege" and clear proof of forgery. He further claims that all of this went unnoticed in previous studies, which is not true, because I, for one, had extensively written on the *'Id-e Fetr* in 1992*,* and explained why it was glued over an existing page: The manuscript was designed and penned in Herat, while the painter Soltān-Mohammad was in Tabriz; if the assigned space was not to the liking of this Tabrizi painter he had to glue over a new page.[88] The first couplet of Hāfez's *ghazal*—which continues on the verso—is incorporated into the building frieze. Therein, it's followed by the *ghazal*'s fifth couplet, which also exists on the verso, in its right place.[89] There is repetition, but no loss of text. If the painter chose to repeat the 5th couplet after the first one, it's because they both incorporate the word "king" (once as *Shāh*, and once as *Khosrow*). They were meant to identify the enthroned prince as Tahmāsb and not as his brother Sām Mirzā (1517-67). I also argued that the painter, who had signed his name under the feet of the king as *Soltān-Mohammad-e `Erāqi*, had added the geographical epithet "*'Erāqi*" to his name to emphasize that it was the work of an artist from the `Erāq library-atelier (i.e., Tabriz), and not from Herat.

In the same 1992 volume, I had described another manuscript, a copy of Amir Khosrow's *Qerān-os-sa`dayn* (The Conjunction of Two Auspicious Stars) dated 920/1514, which had two glued-on painted pages.[90] The *Qerān* was initially produced on the occasion of Shāh `Esmā`il's first encounter with his newborn son Tahmāsb, in 1514; it was subsequently used by Sām Mirzā to commemorate his meeting with Tahmāsb, in Gandomān in 1531, after the prince had fled Herat in the company of his guardian, the powerful Hosayn Khān-e Shāmlu (d. 1535). The "auspicious" encounters of the two brothers as well as the visit of Shāh Esmā`il to Tahmāsb were visualized in two separate paintings that were subsequently inserted into the manuscript. In a 1999 article in Persian—which Bahari must be able to read—I further used these two manuscripts as supplementary evidence for the sinister plot that attempted to replace Tahmāsb with Sām Mirzā on the throne, and that Dickson had named "The Grand Sedition."[91] While Dickson alleged that the main instigator was Hosayn Khān-

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[88] Soudavar 1992, 159-61.

[89] ساقی بروی **شاه** ببین ماه و می بیار ... (verse 1)
... O cup-bearer behold the moon onto the **king**'s face, and bring wine,
خوش دولتیست خرم و خوش **خسروی** کریم ... (verse 5)
Fortunate is the **king** and his kingdom …

[90] Soudavar 1992; 152-56.

[91] Soudavar 1997.

e Shāmlu, I argued that these three glued-on paintings tend to prove that Sām Mirzā, far from being a mere puppet in his guardian's hands, was an active participant in the plot, and harbored high hopes himself.

While the Cartier pages were added some two years after the copying of the manuscript (see sec. IV.1), the illustrations of the *Qerān* were inserted seventeen years later in a manuscript with no space for illustrations. They thus had to be glued over existing pages, with a loss of text that I had fully documented.[92] They were certainly not forgeries. Similarly, the Cartier *Tavern Scene* was glued over text because it was added on a page where no illustration had initially been planned (sec. IV.2).

Whatever was Bahari's take on this issue, it was incumbent on him to not only highlight the glued-on nature of these two pages, but also acknowledge that not all illustrations were glued on. The *Lovers' Picnicking in a Garden* (fol. 67 r), for instance, has a couplet on top of the illustration, followed by 5 more couplets from the same *ghazal* on its verso.[93] Similarly, *Scandal in a Mosque* starts with a couplet on the top left of the illustration (fig. 86):

واعظان کین جلوه در محراب و منبر میکنند
چون بخلوت میروند آن کار دیگر میکنند
Preachers who so impress on the mosque's pulpit
Do the opposite (of what they advocate), in private

with the next four couplets penned on its verso (with an intricate 45º slant); while the *ghazal*'s remaining verses appear seamlessly on the following folio.[94] This top left couplet not only fits into the *ghazal* sequence, but sets the tone for an odd composition that mocks the clergy, and is supplemented by more derogatory verses from Hāfez, which are set on the main freeze of the *ayvān*:

برو بکار خود ای واعظ این چه فریاد است
مرا فتاد دل از عمر، ترا چه فتادست
Go and mind your own business, O preacher, what is this lament?
Love of life fell out of me, what has befallen you?

Even though, it is customary to adorn buildings, carpets, and objects, with an appropriate Koranic verse, dictum, or poem, the frieze couplet is not one that an artist dared to choose on his own, as it is truly offensive toward Islamic clerics. It fits a theme that only a princely patron could impose, or approve of. By contrast, the verse—yet again from Hāfez—on top of a window opening on the left is one that can be incorporated into any painting, because it compares the Islamic arch to an eyebrow; an apt metaphor:

رواق منظر چشم من آشیانهٔ تست
The arch of my eyebrow is where you lodge

In sum, the Cartier painting has three Hāfez verses that perfectly fit into a compendium of Hāfez poems, whereas the Bahari painting bears two Hāfez couplets, but is incorporated instead into a Jāmi manuscript! And yet Bahari wants us to believe that his is the original, without explaining why a religiously slanderous Hāfez poem adorns a Jāmi manuscript.

As we shall see, the production of the Cartier manuscript can only be understood against the foil of "The Grand Sedition" theory that Dickson had developed for his doctoral thesis, and that Bahari lists as a reference. Oddly, Bahari suggests that the kneeling man before the pulpit in the mosque to be "Prince Sām Mirzā's *lala*, Dormish Khān" (pp. 162, 165). But Durmish Khān had died in 1525 (i.e., 2-3 years before Bahari's dated colophons),[95] and was replaced by his brother Hosayn Khān who was the main actor in the Grand Sedition plot. Had Bahari actually read Dickson's thesis, he would have not proffered such a claim.[96]

IV.3 - Soltān-Mohammad's "style" - Bahari further rejects the authenticity of the signed Cartier paintings by bluntly stating that they don't "conform to Soltān-Mohammad's work." But our knowledge of Soltān-Mohammad, and the

[92] Soudavar 1992; 199 note 34.
[93] See entry for 2007.183.* in HUAM's digital collections.
[94] An illustration of the verso of the *Mosque Scene* is also available for entry 1999.300.* of HUAM. I'm indebted to Mary McWilliams for providing me, in addition, a PDF of the remaining manuscript.
[95] For the problems surrounding Durmish Khān's date of death, see note 140 infra.
[96] Another Bahari false remark is his claim that Sām Mirzā was killed by Shāh Esmā`il II (Bahari 1996, 190), whereas in reality he was killed in 1567, by the order of Tahmāsb who pretended that his brother and two of his nephews were killed in an earthquake; Qomi1980, I:554-57.

evolution of his style, is mainly based on Dickson and Welch who, over some forty pages packed with historical information and visual comparatives, describe and define his style. The signed Cartier paintings constituted the very foundation of their study,[97] and if they are discarded as fakes, the whole edifice crumbles. Did Bahari study Soltān-Mohammad anew? Did he establish certain criteria of his own? Where? I have seen none.

IV.4 - The baton rule – Bahari seizes upon the appearance of a few white batons (*tāj-e haydari*) implanted in the headgear of some of the *`Id* courtiers (fig. 84), to declare that they constituted added proof of forgery, because, a white baton can only designate the king (p. 163). The fact is that there are simply no well-established contemporary portraits of Tahmāsb to proclaim such a rule. The references that he gives are wrong,[98] and if the paintings of the British Library *Khamseh* are meant, none has a white baton, nor is any baton *entirely* wrapped in a white turban.

Figs. 88 a, b - Two portraits of Tahmāsb by Mir Sayyed 'Ali
a) detail of fig. 13 b) detail of fig. 47a

Inscriptions on two of them, may insinuate that the depicted prince represents Tahmāsb, but their faces differ from one to the other, as they are by two different hands. In folio 60v (*Khosrow Enthroned*), the king's name is incorporated on its *ayvān* frieze, and the painting bears an attribution to Āqā Mirak and yet the face of the king (fig. 88a) is very similar to Mir Sayyed `Ali's portrait of Tahmāsb in the TKS manuscript Bahrām of Mirzā (fig. 88b), and markedly different from another seated prince of the *Khamseh* (fol. 66v) that is correctly ascribed to Āqā Mirak (fig. 89). It seems that pages, such as folios 26v and 60, that were designed by Āqā Mirak had their faces finished by Mir Sayyed `Ali.

In *Khosrow Listening to Bārbad* (fig. 90), which is correctly ascribed to Mirzā `Ali, the word *shāh* is emphasized twice in gold, on the friezes above the seated prince; he may be Tahmāsb.[99] By the same token, the seated prince in fig. 84 is probably Tahmāsb, since, in addition to the double emphasis of his kingly status on the building frieze, he is seated on a golden throne, and—according to a custom that dated back to the Mongols—a prince, and not a servant, is serving wine to the ruler.[100]

Fig. 89 - BL Or.2265, fol. 66v (det)

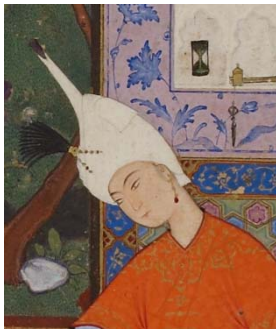

Fig. 90 - Detail of fig. 18b

Fig. 91 - Detail of fol. 7r of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi*, attributed to Āqā Mirak.
Aga Khan Museum Toronto

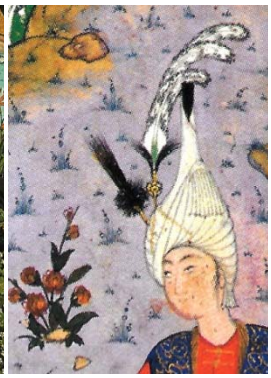

Fig. 92 - Detail of the frontispiece of a *Bustān*, by Mir Mosavver, GPL (Rajabi 2005, 126)

[97] D&W 1981, 51-86.
[98] No kingly images can be associated to Bahari's reference given on p.163, n.38 as: "D&W 1981 (pls. 18-22)." He may be referring to pls. 18-22, from Welch 1976, in which only one painting, that of pl. 22 has a baton substantially covered with a white turban, but with a red end sticking out.
[99] See also Welch 1979, 152-61.
[100] This custom was called *kāseh-giri,* or bowl-offering.

Two other paintings may incorporate a portrait of Tahmāsb. The first is an early illustration of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* attributable to Āqā Mirak, in which a prince is hovering over the gathering of courtly poets stunned by Ferdowsi's poetical prowess (fig. 91). Dickson and Welch plausibly suggest that he may be Tahmāsb, as there is no other explanation for the appearance of such a sumptuously dressed prince in that garden scene.[101] The second is in the frontispiece of an exquisite *Selections of the Bustān*, penned by Shāh-Mahmud Neyshāburi, and painted by Mir Mosavver (my attribution) (fig. 92). Although painted by two different artists, these two figures seem to represent the same kingly person, i.e., Tahmāsb. What they all clearly establish, however, is that kingly status was conveyed through highly elaborate headgears, with ostrich feathers attached to them in addition to the black plume of a heron. In four of them (figs. 88a, 89, 90, 92), the turban is wrapping the *tāj* almost to the top, and in two others, it is not (figs. 88b, 93). And none of the headgear batons is white from top to bottom.

Fig. 93 - Detail of fig. 84. The king and the princes have all an archer ring ↑. The king has also a *dastārcheh* in his left hand ↑

Moreover, as the Venetian traveler Michele Membré ascertains, the *shāh*'s brothers, tutor and *qurchi*s all wrapped their turbans to the top as he did.[102] The high-wrapped baton didn't necessarily designate the ruler, and thus, the painters tried to single out the king through other means, including a maximum number of ostrich feathers affixed on the turban (usually three, and occasionally four as in fig. 88a).[103] Bahari's forger though, only placed two on his central figure (fig. 82). He also missed two other indices (fig. 93). One is the archer's ring which was de rigueur for a prince or king,[104] and the other is the tucked handkerchief (*dastārcheh-ye khāss)* that a ruler usually held in his hand.[105]

IV.5 - Suppression of key verses, and other tell-tale indices - In comparison to Cartier's *Tavern Scene*, Bahari's composition has been extended at the top, in order to match the size of the facing page. But once again Bahari uses reverse logic to claim that his is the original, and the Cartier painting only a downsized version of his. Logically, if any of the two needed resizing, it's the one within a double-page; a single page painting doesn't need size adjustment. More importantly, the Bahari *Tavern Scene* lacks the Cartier's Hāfez couplet, which is the key to the understanding of the composition:

گرفته ساغر عشرت فرشته رحمت
زجرعه بر رخ حور و پری گلاب زده
The archangel of mercy has grabbed the cup of joy,
and perfumed the forehead of angels with a wine mist

If not for these verses why should angels appear on the roof top of a tavern? Bahari's painting is clearly meaningless without them.

Finally, we have three added elements that are visibly wrong (fig. 94). First is the appearance of a dome on the very back edge of the octagonal rooftop, as if hanging in the air. In Islamic architecture a ceramic-covered dome must adorn a holy building such as a mosque or mausoleum, and certainly not a tavern.

[101] D&W 1981, 43 fig 46.

[102] Membré 1993, 41. The wrapping of the turban to the top was called *shāh-dasturi*, i.e., by the *shāh*'s permission.

[103] For another ruler with four feathers see, for instance, Roxburgh 2005, ii.

[104] See for instance the ring on Soltān-Hosayn Bāyqarā's thumb on the cover of Soudavar 1992.

[105] Soudavar 2003, 9-19.

Fig. 94 - Detail of fig. 81b. From right: a tiled dome hanging in the air, a sealed wind cupola, and a closed balcony sidewall

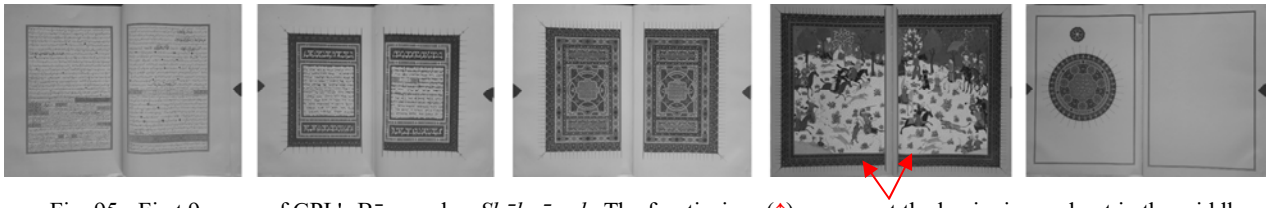

Fig. 95 - First 9 pages of GPL's Bāysonghor *Shāhnāmeh*. The frontispiece (↑) appears at the beginning and not in the middle.

Fig. 96 - The BNF's Navāi manuscript (Sup. Turc 317). Two pairs of empty double pages (↑) already appear in the first 13 pages.

Second, a venting cupola is placed on top of a balcony on the far left. By definition, such a cupola needs to have openings to let air through, as in the Behzādian architecture of fig. 15. Not here though. So focused is the forger on producing minute and intricate tile-work designs that his cupola is fully sealed with tile work. Third, a protruding balcony, open on one side, needs to be open on the opposite side as well. But once again, the forger's passion for minute designs has pushed him to add an unnecessary side wall, filled with scrollwork.

IV.6 - Integrated double pages - A double-page painting usually appears as a frontispiece, in homage to the patron depicted feasting and/or hunting (e.g., the *Bāysonghor Shāhnāmeh*, fig. 95). Inside miniatures illustrate text stories, and as Farhad Mehran has demonstrated, they pertain to a judicially placed verse within the composition, which he calls the "brake-line verse" (Mehran 2006). It's usually the last verse on the upper side of the painting. An inside double page without verse or text does not make much sense since the viewer is deprived of a pointer to its subject.[106]

To establish the genuineness of his double-page paintings, Bahari emphasizes that they are set on pages "fully integrated" into the manuscript. But

[106] A single illustration can be devoid of text, as in the *Bāysonghor Shāhnāmeh*, since it has text on the facing page; see *Shāhnāmeh-ye Firdowsi (Bāysonghori)* 1971.

most compendiums (e.g., the quintets of Nezāmi, Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, or Jāmi) had blank pages that could be subsequently painted. Indeed, librarians regarded each component as a separate "book," delimited by blank pages and starting on *a right page*. Thus, if a book ended on a left page, *two* facing blank pages had to be inserted for the next book to start with an illuminated heading on a right page. A case in point is the Navāi manuscript of the BNF, which is composed in Chaghatai Turkish but closely follows the works of Nezāmi and Jāmi, in both style and content.[107] It's doubly relevant to our discussion, since it is dated 1526-27 (i.e., a year earlier than Bahari's manuscript his), and its calligrapher is `Ali Hejrāni whom I shall argue to be the one who also penned Bahari's (see below). Furthermore, as Welch has demonstrated, four of its paintings are by Shaykhzādeh, i.e., the painter of *Scandal in the Mosque*, in the Cartier manuscript (fig. 86).[108]

The BNF manuscript is a compendium of Navāi's literary works, comprising five sections conceived as "books." As a result, it incorporates a number of blank double-pages, two of which appear up front, between folios 2a and 8a (see fig. 96.) More double pages can be found on folios 154b-155a, 193b-194a, 337b-338a, and 391b-392a.[109] Thus, compendiums like Bahari's *Panj Ganj* (Five Treasures) often incorporated blank pages,[110] which forgers could turn into integrated paintings. As a matter of fact, the double-page paintings of the GPL *Panj Ganj* manuscript, which Bahari produces as a comparison model to his, are also later additions. Indeed, while said manuscript was penned by Mir 'Ali in Herat and dated 928/1521, all of its paintings are from a later date. Two of its double-page paintings are attributable to Mirzā `Ali and datable to the 1540s, despite the fact that one bears an attribution to Qāsem `Ali, and the other to Soltān-Mohammad (see our discussion for figs. 71a-b).[111] Of the other two double-pages (Bahari pp. 169, 173), one is ascribed to Mozaffar-`Ali and the other to Haydar `Ali; they may or may not be by them, but are clearly in a style approaching that of the circa 1556-65 *Haft Aurang* manuscript of Soltān Ebrāhim Mirzā. A fifth one, bearing an attribution to Maqsud, is in a neo-Behzādian style. No matter how subjective my comments may seem, it is clear that four different hands are involved, each stylistically more advanced than Herat ever produced when Mir `Ali was there. Herat had basically one active painter left in that period, namely Shaykhzādeh. These double-pages are therefore later additions, as Bahari's are. Rather than providing proof of authenticity, integrated double-page paintings often indicate forgery or later enhancement.

IV.7 – The whereabouts of the royal Safavid *ketāb-khāneh* – To show that the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* artists could have collaborated with Mir `Ali, Bahari elaborates a theory that the royal Safavid library remained in Herat, at least until 1530. To do so, he misinterprets the text of a letter appointing Behzād as head of the royal library-atelier circa 1522 (p. 158),[112] and tries to present a number of paintings added to pre-1530 Herati manuscripts, as the work of Behzād.[113] But Dickson and Welch—who discover a stylistic shift in the evolution of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* paintings, from the tumultuous Turkaman style of Tabriz toward a more sober and structured Herati composition—argue otherwise. That shift, they conclude was probably initiated by the aging Behzād who could no longer paint with a firm hand but acted as the guiding guru of the *ketāb-khāneh* painters. By all measures, it had to happen

[107] For the complete manuscript see "Supplément Turc 317" in *http://gallica.bnf.fr*.

[108] Welch 1976, 18-22.

[109] When a "book" ends on a right page, as on folios 236b or 298b, the added blank page (on its left) will result in a one-and-half-facing-blank pages, and not a full double-page.

[110] Another such manuscript is BL's *Khamseh* (Or. 2265), which has similarly blank pages after each "book." For instance, 4 pages are left blank after book 3 of the *Khamseh* (fols. 192r-191v).

[111] They are also reproduced in Bahari 2014 (169, 172-73).

[112] This appointment letter, however, was included by the historian Kh^{w}andmir in a compendium of letters that were gathered as templates for scribes, and not as historical documents. Thus dates and names were often omitted in these templates. As stated in D&W 1981 (p.243, n.6-7), in one manuscript the date was left blank, while in another, the date of 928/1522 was uniformly applied to all the letters produced in that compendium. It needed further verification that they could not do.

[113] These include the abovementioned *Panj Ganj,* and the Freer anthology (F1944.48), the hodgepodge nature of which I have described in Soudavar 2008, 254-55. Neither of them contains post-1520 Herati paintings.

after Tahmāsb was summoned back from Herat in 1522.[114] Their conclusion is fully supported by Budāq-e Monshi-ye Qazvini, the one source that they could not consult.[115] Indeed, as I had written in 1992 and must now reiterate again, Budāq relates that when "in his *youth*, Tahmāsb displayed a liking for illustration, painting, and calligraphy, painters were brought from distant places, including master Behzād who was from Herat."[116] He also noted that "when Behzād came to `Erāq (i.e. Tabriz), Soltān-Mohammad, who was from Tabriz, had already activated the royal library-atelier and had taught the *shāh*."[117] Things cannot be said more clearly. The royal library-atelier was in Tabriz and under the supervision of Soltān-Mohammad when Behzād came from Herat to join it. And the painters of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* (which began under Esmā'il but was dedicated to Tahmāsb) were all in Tabriz and not in Herat.

IV.8 - The inscriptions – As I have previously argued on numerous occasions, and even once in the very journal that has published Bahari's article, the inscription above the doorway of the Cartier *`Id Celebration* was a later addition and was meant to portray Sām Mirzā as the Safavid leader and king; it reads: *Al-hādi Abol-Mozaffar Sam Mirzā* (الهادی ابوالمظفر سام میرزا).[118] Therein, Sām Mirzā is given his brother's kingly epithet of *Abol-Mozaffar* in lieu of his own, which was *Abol-nasr*.[119] What's more, he is also given the epithet *al-hādi* (the guide), an epithet that his father had used as leader of the Safavid order.[120] The *toghrā* of a *farmān* of Sām Mirzā brings added perspective to this awkward titulature (fig. 97); for it reads:

حکم لله ، ابوالنصر سامِ اسمعیل بهادر ، سیوزومیز
Orders are God's (prerogative). Thus says Abol-nasr Sām, son of Esmā`il Bahādor.

Fig. 97 - Edict in the name of Sām Mirzā, with a *toghrā* sign evoking his father. Karimzadeh collection

It is dated Rabi` II, 941/November 1534, i.e., a few months before the Grand Sedition plot unraveled, and before Sām Mirzā hurriedly left Herat with the hope of conquering Qandahar.

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[114] D&W 1981, 27-48.

[115] The unique manuscript of Budāq's *Javāherol-akhbār* is in the collection of the State Public Library, St. Petersburg (Dorn 288), with a photocopy at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of the University of Chicago. I am indebted to Prof. J. Woods for giving me access to it. Somehow, Dickson and Welch never got hold of a copy of Budāq's work.

[116] Budāq 1576, 111a-b:
چون ... شاه طهماسب حسینی را در طفولیت میل تصویر و نقاشی وخط بود، از اطراف و بلاد ازین طبقه مردم را آوردند از جمله استاد بهزاد که او از هرات بود ...
استاد سلطانمحمد از تبریز است، در وقتی که استاد بهزاد بعراق آمد سلطانمحمد کتابخانه را گرم کرده بود، استادِ شاهِ دین پناه بود

[117] Budāq 1576, 112a.

[118] Soudavar 1992, 161; Soudavar 1997, 57-60; Soudavar 2008, 258. Tahmāsb's epithet was at first *abol-fath*, but used *abol-Mozaffar* when he succeeded his father; Vāleh 1994, 70-73. *Abol-fath* was later on passed to Bahrām Mirzā, and subsequently to Soltān-Ebrāhim Mirzā; Soudavar 1997, 76. The added epithet seems to have been written with a ض rather than ظ; it is not clear, however, whether the *alef* of the name سام above it was supposed to serve as the missing vertical of ظ or not.

[119] Kh^{w}andmir 1974, 586, 593.

[120] Soudavar 1992, 161.

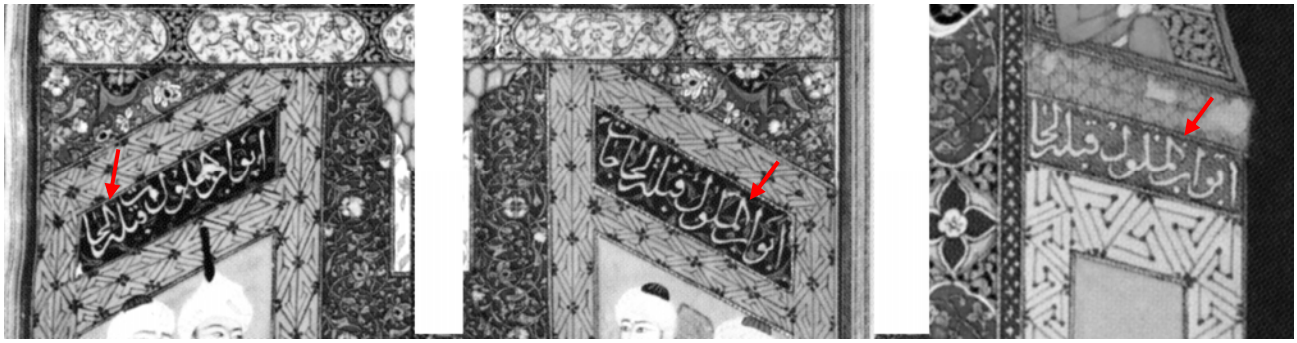


Fig. 98 a, b, c - Unintelligible inscriptions above doorways, and the peculiar *a-l* ligatures (↑) of Bahari's *Panj Ganj* (fols.107a-154b)

This *toghrā* clearly shows him on a path to claim his father's titles, which he finally did, through the added titulature on this illustration. Because his titulature had to be squeezed into a space that could not accommodate it in full, the two initial letters of ***al-hādi*** transgress into the painting's frame (fig. 99). As a result, they were not visible in most reproductions

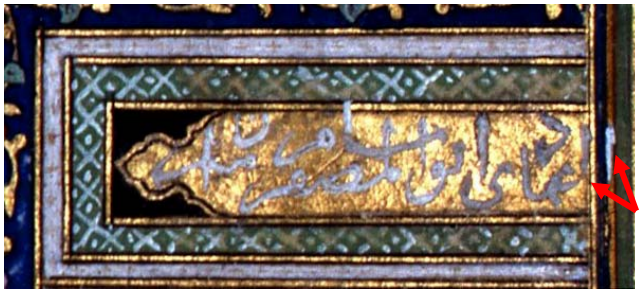


fig. 99 - Later added inscription on doorway of fig. 84, with its letters *alef* and *lām* (↑) transgressing into the frame

Fig. 100 - Detail of fig. 80a, with unintelligible imitation of the inscription in fig. 99

Unable to read these two letters,[121] the Bahari forger reproduced what he thought was a faithful copy, and transcribed *hādi* into a word that Bahari reads as *`emādi*, which has no meaning at all. But to justify it, Bahari extrapolated *`emādi* into *`Emād-od-din* (Pillar of the Religion). Titles, however, are never abbreviated in official inscriptions, and one cannot whimsically expand an incomprehensible graffiti into a title that Sām Mirzā never had, and is at odd with the very anti-clerical and anti-religion sentence on the *ayvān* frieze of the *Mosque* scene, as well as the illustration program of the manuscript.

More generally, our forger seems to have been more concerned with intricate designs than with the meanings of inscribed idioms, since we have the same idiom faultily written on three portals, while displaying a very small *alef* in an unconventional *a-l* ligature (↑ in figs. 98 a, b, c):

ابواب الملوک قبلة **لحا**/ **لحاجات**/ **الجات**

The correct version of the idiom is:

ابواب الملوک قبلة **الحاجات**

Wishes are fulfilled at the kings' gates

These mistakes, however, don't seem to have affected Bahari's judgment, as he unfolds one twisted reasoning after another in praise of his manuscript. But none can surpass what he conjures about Mir `Ali, which we shall next discuss.

[121] As Simpson suggests, these forgers must have had a copy of Martin's 1912 publication, Simpson 2008, 382.

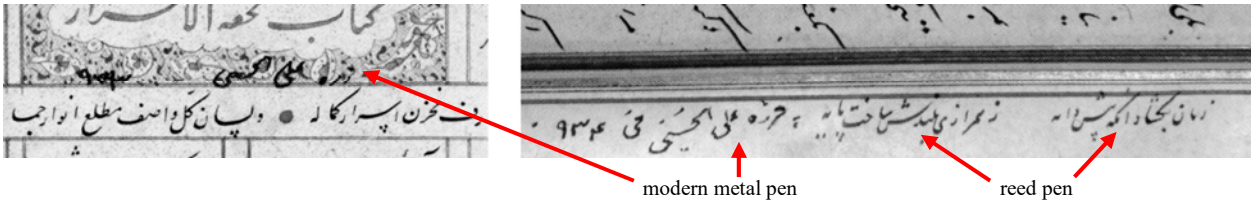


Fig. 101 a, b - Clumsily added "signatures" of Mir 'Ali with a modern pen
(a) within a heading on fol. 2b, and (b) next to margin corrections on fol. 65a

**IV.9 – Suppression of Mir `Ali's name** – In the Bahari manuscript, the calligrapher's name has been erased in all colophons. Instead we have two added graffiti that read "*harraraho `Ali al-Hosayni, 934*" (written by `Ali al-Hosayni, 1528-29). One is next to a couplet that the original calligrapher had left out and later added on the margins of fol. 65a (fig. 101b), and the other is within a chapter heading on fol. 2b (fig. 101a). I have never seen a calligrapher signing his name in such awkward locations, and so clumsily. What's more, it's written with a modern pen, and maintains a steady thickness, unlike the text next to it, which fully displays the thickness variation that is proper to the *nasta`liq* script. And it begs the question: if a vandal wiped out Mir `Ali's name from the colophons, why didn't he do it in these two locations, especially the very visible one within the heading of his fol. 2b?

To justify the erasure of the calligrapher's name, Bahari asserts that, after Mir `Ali went to Bukhara (1529), for sixty years "his name was omitted from Safavid records." I am not sure what he means by "Safavid records," but the fact is that there is no single artist praised as much as Mir `Ali in Safavid chronicles. Budāq, who was the secretary of Bahrām Mirzā from circa 1535 to 1549, says that "As Mollā Mir `Ali became disenchanted in Khorāsān, he settled in Bukhara; … his works are cherished by the rulers of the world, who will pay any price to have them."[122] Budāq acknowledges Mir `Ali's defection to the Bukhara court, and yet he is reverential toward him. Qāzi Ahmad-e Qomi who wrote his *Golestān-e honar* in 1596 (with a revision in 1616) explains that "Mowlānā Mir `Ali was of the noblest Hosayni Sayyeds."[123]

Thus, besides Mir `Ali's prowess in calligraphy, his descent from the Prophet Mohammad gave the chroniclers an added reason to address him as *mowlānā* or *Mollā* (i.e., our lord). And Vāleh-ye Esfahāni ads more praise by contending that Mir `Ali "nullified the work of all other calligraphers."[124] If Mir `Ali was ever considered a pariah, he wouldn't have been resurrected later on with so much praise. Moreover, all of the chroniclers describe how much his works were in demand, to the extent that the erasure of his saintly name would have been simply idiotic.

As we shall now argue, the calligrapher whose name was wiped out is one `Ali Hejrāni, who also penned the BNF Navāi manuscript. He is otherwise not mentioned in Safavid sources; perhaps because, like Shaykhzādeh, he too had defected to Bukhara and left no direct pupil behind to uphold his legacy.[125] But omission of one's name does not entail the obliteration of his signature from manuscripts. If it was done here, it's because Hejrāni's name had no market value and the forgers who had enhanced Bahari's manuscript wanted to go one step further by adding a marketable calligrapher's "signature."

To ascertain that `Ali Hejrāni was the calligrapher of his manuscript, we shall try to highlight, on the one hand, its stylistic differences with the GPL *Panj Ganj* manuscript (penned by Mir `Ali) that Bahari reproduced in his paper, and on the other, show its similarities with the BNF manuscript.

Practically all chroniclers and calligraphy experts

[122] Budāq 1576, fol. 109b: چون ملا میر علی از خراسان دلگیر شده بود رخت اقامت به بخارا انداخت... کار اورا شهریاران جهان همچو جان در بر نگه میدارند و بهر بها که گویند بها میدهند

[123] Qomi 1980, 78.
[124] Vāleh-ye Isfahāni , 314.
[125] Soudavar 1992, 189. `Ali Hejrāni may have been a Turkish speaking Khorāsānian who felt more at ease to copy works in Chaghatāy Turkish; Soudavar 1992, 112.

attribute to Mir `Ali the ultimate development of *nasta`liq* canons, which subsequent calligraphers, including the celebrated Mir `Emād, fully adopted.[126] These canons were not only to determine the individual shape of each letter but its relative positioning within the line, in order to have harmonious series of intertwined letters. A quick comparison of verses penned by Mir `Ali versus the Bahari ones, can show how orderly are Mir `Ali's letters and words, and how disheveled can be Hejrāni's (figs. 102 vs. 103-104).

Whereas Mir `Ali uses the back-curving (*shekasteh*) end *yā* only when preceded by at least one other letter, Hejrāni uses it for the single *yā* as well. More importantly, Mir `Ali maintains similar ending *yā*s for the verses of a couplet, while Hejrāni may change it from one to the other, and create a visual imbalance (figs. 103, 106). Mir `Ali also invented some curving ligatures for ending letters such as ره, or ده , or اغ (fig. 105), which are absent in Hejrāni's work. Finally, some visible tendencies of Hejrāni are to pull in the final *jim*, and to have very long and reclining accents for the *kāf* (figs. 103, 107, 108).

These elements are also visible in a manuscript of Jāmi's *Yusof and Zolaykhā* that was auctioned in a recent sale,[127] to which were added two Shaykhzādeh-type miniatures from the same school of 20th-century forgers. Although the illuminated frontispiece has been reduced in size, and remargined to fit a smaller format (fig. 109),[128] it clearly duplicates the pattern of the Bahari illuminated frontispiece (Bahari 2014, 180-181). It also has all the calligraphic peculiarities that we have ascribed to `Ali Hejrāni. The similarity of certain verses between the Bahari and Christie's manuscripts are so striking that it leaves no doubt as to their common authorship. Thus Bahari's manuscript is not the only Hejrāni work to have been enhanced by modern forgers.

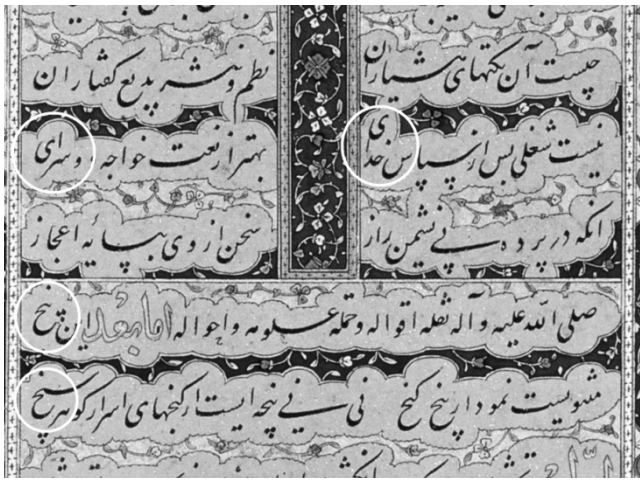


Fig. 102 - Mir 'Ali's isolated ending *yā,* and precisely curved and bulging ending *jim.* GPL *Panj Ganj* (Rajabi 2005, 118)

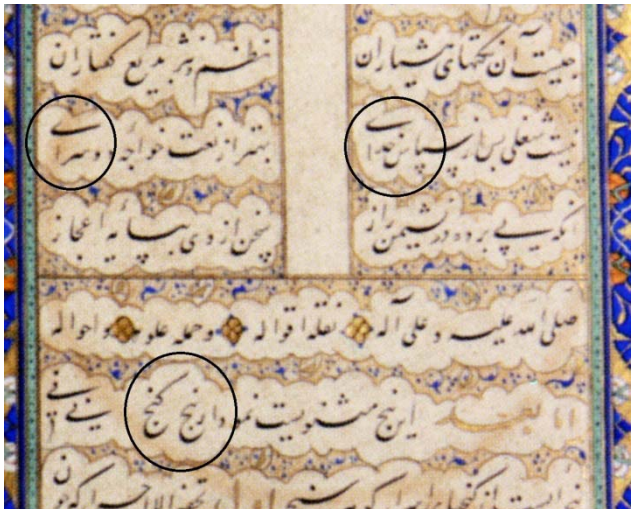


Fig. 103 - Hejrāni's treatment of the single ending *yā* and *jim* In the same passage as above (Bahari 2014, 178)

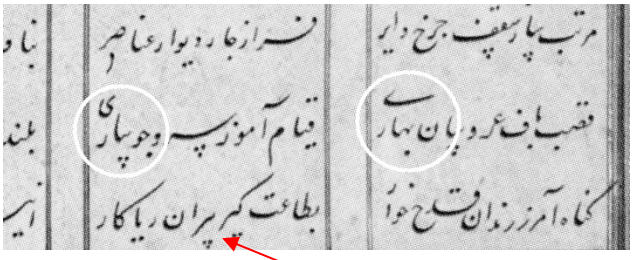


Fig. 104 - Hejrāni's disheveled positioning of words and his mixing of the ending *yā* (Bahari 2014, 189)

[126] Bayāni 1976, II:496-99. For Mir `Emād copying Mir `Ali, see Soudavar 1992, 405.

[127] Christie's London sale catalog of Apr. 10, 2014, lot 114, in which the two added paintings were correctly described as 20th-century.

[128] It is not clear whether it was done to fit an available binding, or because the outer edges of the manuscript had been damaged, or both.

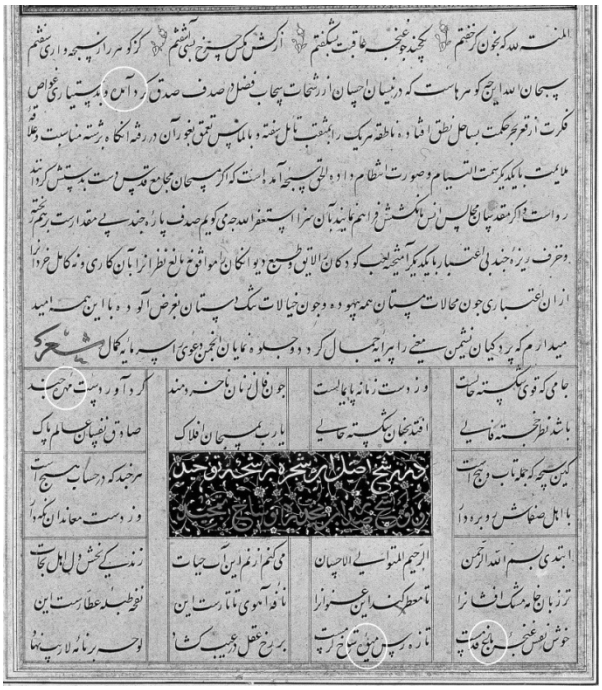
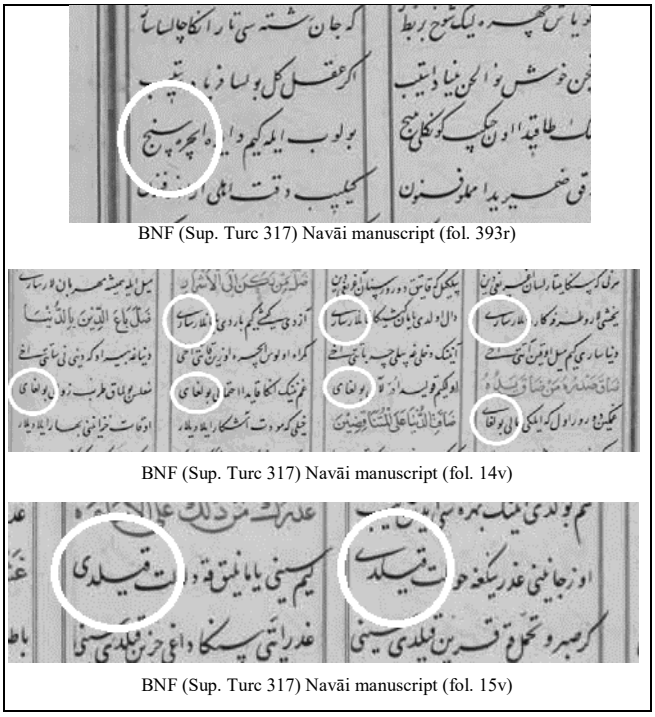


Fig. 105 - Mir 'Ali's curved ligatures in the GPL *Pan Ganj*



BNF (Sup. Turc 317) Navāi manuscript (fol. 393r)

BNF (Sup. Turc 317) Navāi manuscript (fol. 14v)

BNF (Sup. Turc 317) Navāi manuscript (fol. 15v)

Fig. 106 - Hejrāni's pulled-in ending *jim*, and mix of ending *yā*s

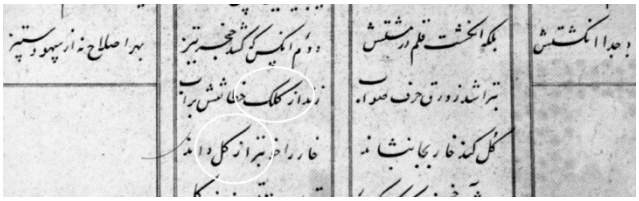


Fig. 107 - Long and reclining *kāf* accent (Bahari *Panj Ganj*, fol. 54a)

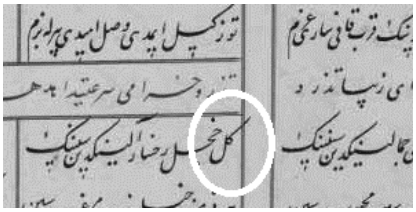


Fig. 108 - *kāf* accent in BNF Navāi (fol. 160b)

Fig. 109 - Frontispiece of a *Yusof-o-Zolaykhā* of Jāmi, displaying Hejrāni characteristics. Christie's 2014 sale.[127]

V. An ode to wine: Cartier's Divān *of Hāfez*

V.1 - Its chronology - Following Dickson and Welch, I had previously assumed that the Cartier manuscript was produced in Herat, and the pages signed by Soltān-Mohammad were contributions from the *shāh*'s Tabriz atelier that were sent back to Herat to be integrated into the manuscript. Thus, the *Divān*'s text and miniatures were dated prior to 936AH/1529, the year that Hosayn Khān-e Shāmlu, together with his protégé Sām Mirzā, had fled Herat. A number of indices, however, seem to contradict this scenario, and I now wish to propose an alternative one: When fleeing Herat, Sām Mirzā and Hosayn Khān took along a number of unfinished manuscripts, which were then completed in Tabriz.

The primary reason for this proposal is that there are two other illustrated manuscripts, which were copied in Herat and illustrated by Shaykhzādeh, with one miniature added to each by a Tabrizi artist. In terms of logistics and the distances involved, it just didn't make sense to send back and forth pages between these two cities for the sake of adding illustrations to ordinary scenes that did not warrant such a complicated procedure. The first of the two manuscripts is the aforementioned BNF manuscript penned by Hejrāni, a painting of which Welch has attributed to Soltān-Mohammad (Fig. 110a).[129] Indeed the quick brushwork on several of the faces, their elongated and upward eyes, as well as their general physiognomy recall this painter's brushwork. But a closer look reveals that several of these faces have been reworked, with a visible transition line at the neck level (fig.110b). What's more, two of the hunters (fig. 110c) have frowned eyebrows, which are typical of Shaykhzādeh (see lower-right corner of fig. 1, and sec. V.2). They were either substantially painted by him, or had a strong under-drawing that obliged the finisher, i.e., Soltān-Mohammad, to basically follow the original pattern and recreate the same persona.

a

b

new faces above their neck-level transition line (↑)

c

Fig. 110 a, b, c - *Bahrām Hunting Before Āzādeh* (BNF Sup. Turc 317, fol. 350v), with Shaykhzādeh-type figures visible in (c)

[129] Welch 1976, 58; D&W 1981, 37.

Fig. 111 a – *Alexander at a Banquet*, Met (1913.228.7)

Fig. 111 b, c - (b) musician, (c) typical Mir Mosavver figure

Similarly, the Met *Khamseh* (1913.228.7), which we shall argue to have been prepared for Hosayn Khān-e Shāmlu, has one later painting added to its *Eskandar-nāmeh* section, which Dickson and Welch have rightly attributed to Mir Mosavver (fig. 111a).[130] Here too, while the design elements and many of the figures are typical of Mir Mosavver (fig. 111 c), the upward eyebrows of the musician in fig. 111b, either points out to a surviving figure by Shaykhzādeh, or an under-laying pattern that he had drawn and that the Mir used and painted over.

As for the Cartier manuscript, its sumptuous lacquer binding, which I was only able to see recently, provides a solid argument in favor of its completion in Tabriz rather than Herat (fig. 123).[131] Cary Welch has attributed it to Soltān-Mohammad, even though one may recognize the hand of Āqā Mirak in its design and execution.[132] In either case, it is clearly a product of the Tabriz atelier and by the artists involved in the production of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi,* rather than the Herat atelier whose only illustrator was Shaykhzādeh. If the manuscript was bound in Tabriz, it then makes sense that artists such as Soltān-Mohammad and Āqā Mirak were commissioned to complete an unfinished manuscript that Sām Mirzā had brought with him.

Like their Teymurid predecessors, this first generation of Safavid princes cherished their books and illustrated manuscripts. Among the Teymurid princes, Homāyun was so fond of books that he transported a portion of his library on camelback even when going into battle.[133] It seems that Sām Mirzā and Hosayn Khān did the same when they abandoned Herat; and the unfinished manuscripts that they brought along were subsequently completed or modified in Tabriz.

The sequence of historical events fully supports this scenario. Tahmāsb, as well as his *vakil* and commander in chief Jucha-soltān Takallu, had been apprehensive about Sām Mirzā and Hosayn Khān's motives in abandoning Herat to the Uzbeks and not joining the royal camp immediately. Instead they had embarked on a long journey

[130] D&W 1981, 90.

[131] Bahari praises the quality of his binding without ever comparing it with the Cartier one (p. 161). Even though of good quality, his is a stamped binding, which ateliers produced in multiplicity out of the same mould. The Cartier binding though is unique, and of exceptional quality among lacquered bindings.

[132] My attribution of the binding to Āqā Mirak rests in fact on Welch's own attribution of the border drawings of the BL *Khamsa* to this painter; Welch 1979, 144-45. The faces of the angels, along with their sweeping wings, the cloud bands and the stance of the standing men are clearly more in tune with Mirak than with Soltān-Mohammad. Also, the foliage, birds, and overall design are in conformity with Sādeqi Beyk's description of Mirak's illumination work; Soudavar 1992, 178-79; D&W 1981, 259-69.

[133] Soudavar 1992, 303 (in entry written by Milo Beach).

through Sistān, Kermān and Shirāz, while Tahmāsb had to liberate Herat on his own. They finally agreed to meet in Gandomān, on the Nowruz of 1531 (22nd of Rajab 937/March 21st, 1531). Upon their arrival, Tahmāsb embraced his brother and whisked him away, into the royal harem and out of Hosayn Khān's control. Deprived of his princely protégé and outmaneuvered, Hosayn Khān first retreated, but then attacked the royal encampment, killing Jucha-soltān. After further pummeling of the Takallu by the Shāmlus, Tahmāsb was left with no alternative but to make peace with Hosayn Khān and appoint him as *vakil*.[134] As for Sām Mirzā, he went to Tabriz with Tahmāsb, and stayed there until sent once again as viceroy to Herat in early 1534.

In between, he must have had free access to the painters of the royal library atelier. To ingratiate himself, Sām Mirzā decided to offer Tahmāsb a manuscript that would evoke their encounter in Gandomān. Among the books he carried was a 1517 copy of the *Qerān-os-sa`dayn* (The Conjunction of Two Auspicious Stars) of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi that celebrates the reunion of two feuding brothers who vied to succeed Soltān Balbān of Delhi (r. 1266-87). Sām Mirzā's copy, however, was devoid of illustrations. He thus had two illustrations added to it, one by Mozaffar-`Ali and the other by Mir Mosavver (see sec. IV.2). The latter depicts an outdoor scene in which the young Sām Mirzā expresses his submission by symbolically taking his turban off and handing it to the king (fig. 112). It echoes what Tahmāsb wrote in his diaries about the Gandomān encounter:

> When Sām Mirzā, struck by remorse, approached us by repeatedly sweeping his forehead to the ground, I comforted him and took him into the harem to see the Beygum, whom he always honored as a mother"[135]

Interestingly, the sumptuously dressed Hosayn Khān-e Shāmlu, whose features we shall discuss in the next section, is seated behind Sām Mirzā and in conversation (or negotiation) with Tahmāsb, almost as equal to equal.

Fig. 112 – Tahmāsb receiving Sām Mirzā and Hosayn Khān in *Gandomān*, by Mir Mosavver (Soudavar 1992, 156)[135]

In the meantime, Tahmāsb was losing interest in painting because of failing eyesight.[136] He was also growing more and more religious, and moving on a course that would culminate—in 1534—in his repentance (*towbeh*) from drinking wine and the use of stimulants.[137] We can thus imagine the joy of the *ketāb-khāneh* painters in accepting commissions from Sām Mirzā and Hosayn Khān, and indulging in compositions that went against orthodoxy.

V.2 - Attack on orthodoxy – More than a personal preference for Hāfez and wine drinking, the purpose of the Cartier manuscript was to

[134] To diminish Hosyan Khān's power, Tahmāsb appointed another cousin of his, `Abdollah Khān Ostājlu, as co-*vakil*; Soudavar 1997, 65-68; Dickson 1958, 243.

[135] Tahmāsb ND, fol. 13. The Gandomān meeting is equated here to the meeting of the Dehli princes in Amir Khosrow's *Conjunction of the Two Auspicious Stars*; Soudavar 1992, 154.

[136] Soudavar 1999b, 51-53.

[137] The *towbeh* that was proclaimed 940AH/1534, came in the wake of an aborted poisoning scheme that happened when Tahmāsb had stopped in Jājarm, on his way to Mashhad and Herat; Soudavar 1997, 53.

emphasize the contrasting views of the two brothers about religiosity. The tone is set by the *Scandal in the Mosque* (fig. 113). While it attacks the duplicity of the clerics,[138] it also provides a snapshot of the three main actors of the Grand Sedition. On a level right below the pulpit are positioned two crowned princes that we can assume to be the *shāh* and his brother: On the right is Sām Mirzā, with a boyish face and a small crown, and opposite him on the left is Tahmāsb, wearing a larger crown and looking slightly older than his brother. Two other young princes, also wearing golden crowns, watch the sermon from above, one from a window opening and the other from the roof top. The fact that none of them is wearing, as yet, the Qezelbāsh headgear (*Tāj-e Heydari)* means that they were all very young. It probably alludes to an event that took place in Tabriz, right after Tahmāsb's return in 1522, when Sām Mirzā hadn't left as yet for Herat and the four princely brothers were together in one place.

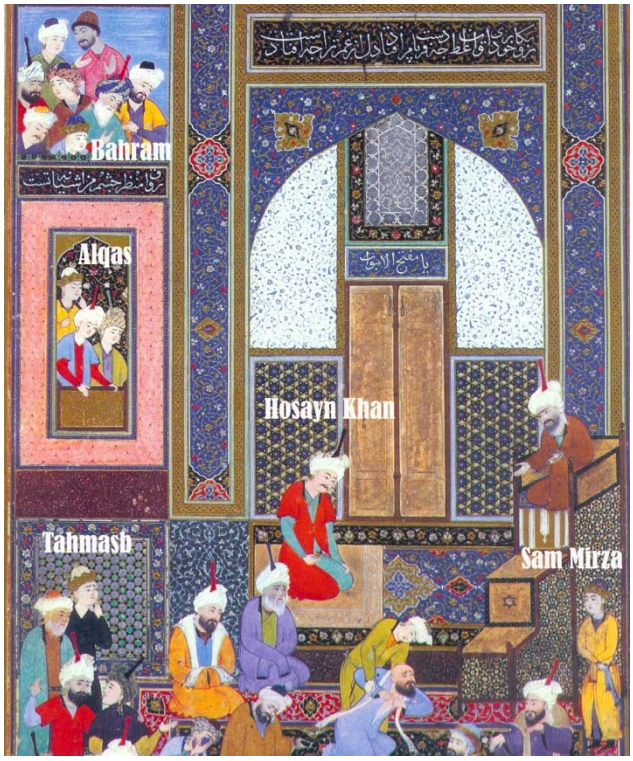


Fig. 113 - Preacher admonishing wine drinking (det. of fig. 86)

Figs. 114 a, b, c, d - Details of fig. 113. Frowned eyebrows for those impressed (a) by the preacher (b), including Tahmāsb (c) Sām Mirzā though is unimpressed, even amused (d)

To show Tahmāsb's interest in the preacher and his religious discourse, Shaykhzādeh makes use of a clever device. All those who are mesmerized by the preacher's sermon have frowned eyebrows, as he does. The frown is a sign of perplexity and high attention, and designates a group that includes an ecstatic devotee who is tearing up his shirt, as well as the young Tahmāsb who has his eyes riveted on the preacher (figs. 113, 114a). By contrast, rather than being perplexed, Sām Mirzā seems to be amused by the futility of the sermon and the overreaction of the crowd (fig. 114 d). The central figure of the composition, however, is the seated Qezelbāsh dignitary wearing a red robe. It stands to reason, that he personifies Hosayn Khān, the acting governor of Herat, and the one seated behind Sām Mirzā in Gandomān (fig. 112). The presence of the same persona in two other Herati manuscripts, penned by Soltān-Mohammad-e Nur and illustrated by Shaykhzādeh, reinforces such a supposition. The first is a manuscript of the *Divān* of Hāfez, dated 930AH/1523-24. In a ceremonial scene, Durmish Khān is seated on a dais, and his brother, the red-robed Hosayn Khān, is positioned below him—along with the vizier Habibollāh Sāvaji (d. 1526)—at the center of the composition (Fig.115).[139] They share family traits, but Durmish Khān is older looking and more chubby.

[138] A generation before, most Herati had the epithet *Hāfez*, which indicated that they were Koran reciters by day and singers by night, Soudavar 1992, 122 n.2.

[139] I'm indebted to Margaret Shortle for suggesting a possible linkage between this *Divān* of Hāfez and the Cartier one.

Fig. 115 - Hosayn Khān (in red) standing with the vizier Kh^{w}ājeh Habibollāh Sāvaji (↑), below Durmish Khān (enthroned). Freer (1932.52) (det.)

Fig. 116 - Hosayn Khān enthroned after his brother's demise, with the vizier Habibollāh Sāvaji (↑) holding a petition from a scribe requesting his seal of approval (Met 13.228.7.4) (det.)

Fig. 117 - Hosayn Khān being admonished (det. of fig. 113)

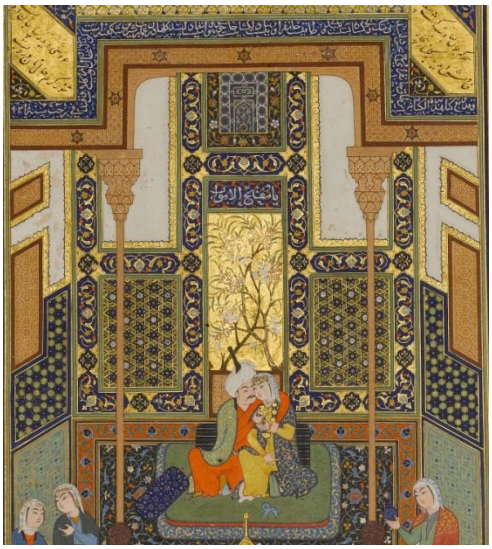


Fig. 118 - Celebrating Hosayn Khān's marriage. Detail of the Met's1524 *Khamseh* (13.228.7.6)

Fig. 119 - Hosayn Khān as Khosrow (Met 13.228.7.3, det.)

The second manuscript is the Met's *Khamseh* of Nezāmi, with three illustrations in which Hosayn Khān is depicted with the same physiognomy (figs. 115-16). One of them, the Marriage of *Khosrow with Shirin* (fig. 118), is dated Rajab 931/May 1525 and seems to refer to the taking of a new wife by Hosayn Khān, prior to the death of Durmish Khān.[140] A second one, *Khosrow Catches Sight of Shirin Bathing*, which depicts Hosayn Khān as Khosrow (fig. 119), strengthens the marriage theme as purpose of the manuscript.

While the production of both manuscripts falls under the governorship of Durmish Khān, the patron is nevertheless Hosayn Khān, for, as Amir Mahmud Kh^{w}andmir emphasizes, he was previously called Hosayn Mirzā, an appellation that gave him "unparalleled distinction among his peers."[141] Indeed, the epithet *mirzā*, which is a contraction of *amir-zādeh* (son of Amir), evoked the erudition of the descendants of Amir Teymur (Tamerlane). Initially, it was only applied to Shāh Esmā`il's sons, and if Hosayn Khān was given the same epithet, chances are that he too was considered as a connoisseur and active patron of the arts, especially in Herat where a long tradition of princely patronage existed. This would explain his presence in the above illustrations. In the third illustration (fig. 116), however, Hosayn Khān's paraphernalia has been enhanced to almost regal levels. He has an ostrich feather planted in a fancy turban, wears a sumptuous gold embroidered coat, and is seated on a canopied dais, similar to the one his brother was seated on in the earlier manuscript (fig. 115). What's more, the contour of his turban is pricked with gold dots to convey his aura (*farr*) and good fortune (fig. 120). Together with the verses on top, they clearly allude to an almost regal status, i.e., the governorship of Herat:

بدین طالع کزو پیروز شد بخت ملک بنشست بر فیروزه گون تخت
With a fortune that foretold auspiciousness, the ruler sat on the celestial-colored throne

Fig. 120 - Hosayn Khān with glowing turban (det. of fig. 116)

As such, this painting was surely added after Durmish Khān's death, i.e., sometime in early 932/1526. Hosayn Khān's rise to guardianship of Sām Mirzā created parallel grounds for competing interests. If Tahmāsb had a manuscript of *Guy-o-chowgān* illustrated as present to his mentor Qāzi-ye Jahān,[142] Sām Mirzā too may have decided to commission a manuscript as present for the learned Hosayn Khān, who was his mentor and father-in-law. The lost painting of the Cartier manuscript, depicting Hosayn Khān as a champion polo player

[140] The sources provide conflicting dates for Durmish Khān's death. Hasan Beyk Rumlu situates it among the events of the year 931AH (Rumlu 1978, 248); but Amir Mahmud b. Kh^{w}andmir states that it was in 932AH, although he avows not knowing in which month it occurred. His main source is a chronogram formulated by the poet Helāli, which gives the number 932 (افسوس، هزار حیف، افسوس افسوس); Amir Mahmud 1991, 236. Amir Mahmud also describes a feud among remnants of Durmish Khān's administration that culminated in the assassination of the vizier Kh^{w}ājeh Habibollāh Sāvaji on the 5th of Rajab, 932AH/April 27, 1526 (see Habibollāh's figure on p. 95). The way he describes it, the events couldn't have happened overnight but dragged on for a while after Durmish Khān's death. The *khān*'s demise would have most likely happened at the transition of 931 to 932AH, i.e., 5-6 months after this painting's date.

[141] Amir Mahmud 1991, 237:
در آخر همان روز ، حسین خان را که برادر حقیقی خان مرحوم بود و تا آن زمان به حسین میرزا از ماسوی ممتاز می نمود، به جایش بر مسند للگی نواب میرزا و حکومت دارالسلطنه هرات نشاند

[142] Welch 1972, 51-53.

who conquers the world,[143] and Sām Mirzā holding a golden tray next to him (fig. 121), validates the idea that the prince had initially wanted to honor his mentor.

Fig. 121 - Sām Mirzā standing before Hosayn Khān whose polo stick supposedly rules the world (Welch 1976, 21)

The Qezelbāsh, in general, and Durmish Khān, in particular, were known for their excessive drinking bouts,[144] and there is no reason to think that Hosayn Khān behaved differently. Since he is sheepishly looking down in the *Mosque* scene, while the preacher is staring at him (fig. 113), one can only speculate that he was being admonished for the sin of drinking wine. The Hāfez verses on the *Mosque* scene (fig. 86) then take a fuller meaning as they insinuate that: preachers, who admonish drinking, often drink themselves in private! It was a counter-attack directed against the preacher who had admonished Hosayn Khān.

I believe that it's against the foil of this imbedded message in Shaykhzādeh's *Mosque* composition that one must understand Soltān-Mohammad's decision to add the *Tavern* scene at a spot where no illustration had been previously planned. By illustrating a couplet that presented wine drinking as a celestial activity, he was upping the ante on the wine theme that his Herati rival had developed. It's a couplet (see p. 48) that reflects the Koran's verse XLVII:15, which describes paradise as a place where inebriating liquids freely flows.[145] For Hāfez, who, by his very name, knew the Koran by heart, a strict prohibition on wine was nowhere to be found in the Koran, since its verses described wine as both good and bad, and advocated self-thought in assessing its effect; and if the faithful erred, it promised mercy rather than punishment; if Islamic jurists instituted a punishable wine prohibition, it was mainly to combat the unruly brotherhoods and avatars of ancient Mithraic societies, such as the Qezelbāsh, who defied religious authority.[146] For these brotherhoods, as well as all the learned poets who praised the wine, and the `Omayyad and `Abbāsid caliphs who openly indulged in wine drinking, the Koranic prohibition only applied to the prayer period, and beyond that, there was no forbiddance. If black-eyed *huri*s and angels could enjoy wine up high, so could mortals on earth. Thus, Soltān-Mohammad's composition depicted the tavern as an extension of the celestial pleasure dome, and stressed a point of view radically different from the orthodoxy that Tahmāsb was sliding into.

Considering that Shaykhzādeh's compositions were often repetitious, one can assume that the *'Id* illustration that he had initially planned was not very different from fig. 116, i.e., one in which Hosayn Khān would have been seated on a dais, and portrayed as the governor of Herat—acting on behalf of Sām Mirzā who was the nominal viceroy of Khorāsān. But meanwhile, the situation had changed, since they had both left Herat. Sām Mirzā was now in the retinue of his regal brother, and to show his subordination, he was honoring Tahmāsb by offering him a wine bowl (the *kāseh-giri* ritual). He is thus depicted as a high-ranked prince, the only one on the left side with two ostrich feathers (versus three for Tahmāsb, figs. 84, 87). As such, the ceremony may illustrate one of the *'Id*s that occurred after Gandomān and before Sām Mirzā's departure for Herat. It was probably the *`Id* right after the Gandomān encounter, i.e., 28th of May 1531, when Tahmāsb was seventeen years old and

[143] Hāfez 's opening verse is a wish for the conquest of the world, and access to the heavens, through a polo metaphor.

[144] Tahmāsb would often curse Durmish Khān for having advised his father Esmā`il to postpone the attack on the Ottomans, and to drink all night before the battle of Chāldirān; Tahmāsb ND., fol. 28b; Qomi 1980, I:232. Durmish Khān's death was provoked by excessive drinking after defending Herat against the Uzbeks; Amir Mahmud 1991, 234.

[145] "Paradise which the pious have been promised, in it there are rivers of ... and rivers of wine" (XLVII:15). In addition, XI:67 seems to present the "inebriating juice of grapes" as a sign from God; Amir-Moezzi et al. 2007, 910-911.

[146] See Soudavar 2014, 218-19 (as revised in 2015), where I provide a different reading of Koran II:219.

his brother, fourteen.[147]

Figs. 122 a, b - Details of *Lovers' Picnicking in a Garden* (fol. 67r of the Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez, HUAM)

As for the first illustration (figs. 122 a, b), *Lovers Picnicking in a Garden*, its opening verse exalts once again the pleasures associated with wine:

گل، بی رخ یار خوش نباشد بی باده، بهار خوش نباشد
Flower can't be enjoyed without the beloved's face.
Spring can't be enjoyed without a cup of wine.

But, whereas Welch attributes it to Soltān-Mohammad, I see the contribution of different hands, especially that of Shaykhzādeh in the dancing girls below. It stands to reason that, as the first illustration of the manuscript, Shaykhzādeh had done substantial work on it, and the Tabriz atelier only provided a finishing touch. Be that as it may, this first illustration intended to depict Hosayn Khān—and not Tahmāsb—feasting in a garden. Sām Mirzā may have even participated in the painting of this page, in the same way that Tahmāsb had substantially painted the frontispiece of the St Petersburg *Guy-o-chowgān* for his mentor Qāzi-ye Jahān.[148]

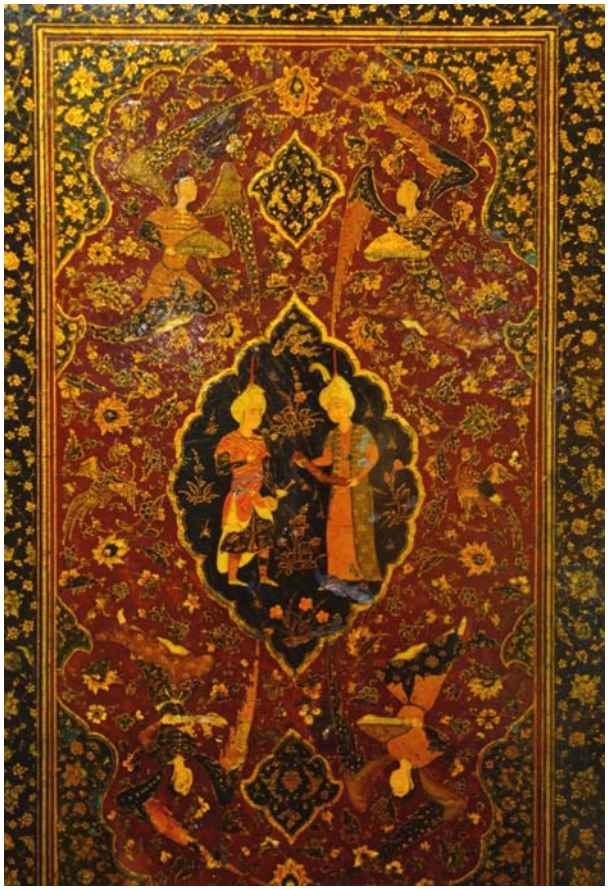


Fig. 123a – Detail of the *Divān* of Hāfez's binding, with a medallion portraying Tahmāsb with a manuscript given to him by Sām Mirzā who holds a wine carafe. (HUAM 1964.149)

[147] I had previously speculated that it related to an *'Id* that occurred before Sām Mirzā's departure from Herat; Soudavar 1991, 161; Soudavar 1997, 60.

[148] Vasilyeva 2008, 68-69; Ashrafi 1974, 46-47. Welch attributes it to Behzād assisted by Dust-Mohammad (Welch 1972, 51), but a closer look reveals a clumsy hand that goes hand in hand with Tahmāsb's penmanship in that manuscript.

Fig. 123b – Sām Mirzā explaining the merits of his ode to wine to Tahmāsb (HUAM 1964.149)[149]

V.3 - The manuscript's intended recipient - Back to the binding of the Cartier manuscript, it incorporates a central medallion that bears a message (fig. 123a, b). It depicts a young prince holding a wine carafe, presumably Sām Mirzā, and standing next to him is a slightly older prince with a manuscript in his hand, presumably Tahmāsb as the recipient of this ode to wine. This is what the medallion seems to suggest, and this is what Sām Mirzā must have conveyed to the *ketāb-khāneh* painters to attract their full cooperation, especially Soltān-Mohammad who contributed two signed masterpieces and was the head of the library-atelier. Being at the mercy of his brother, Sām Mirzā's objectives had probably shifted; he saw more benefit in flattering his brother than his elder cousin, and thus decided to dedicate the manuscript to Tahmāsb. While Sām Mirzā holds a wine carafe in his left, he is pointing to the manuscript with his right hand, as if explaining its merits; what's more, gift bearing angels seem to condone his actions and explanations.

Be that as it may, the manuscript must have remained in the possession of Sām Mirzā, for, had it remained in Tahmāsb's possession, he would have never allowed the usurpation of his titles—as it was done on the portal of fig. 99. Also, by the time it got completed, Tahmāsb could neither see well nor liked to be reminded of his past penchant for drinking. Chances are that Sām Mirzā thought best to keep it for himself, rather than further irritate his brother. It thus remained with him, and he, or someone in his entourage, added the lofty titulature at a time when the Grand Sedition plot seemed promising. Tahmāsb was expected to be crushed by the Ottomans, and replaced by Sām Mirzā who would rule Iranian lands on behalf of Soltān Soleymān. Faith decided otherwise. Tahmāsb survived the plot and Sām Mirzā had to flee, and eventually surrender to Tahmāsb. He was never fully pardoned, and as Membré recounts, the prince was mockingly referred to as the "Emperor of Constantinople," a reminder of the failed ambitions of Sām Mirzā to sit on Iran's throne as vassal of Soltān Soleymān.[150]

Since the Harvard Museum has now a project to technically analyze the physical aspects of this important manuscript, more information may be soon available in respect to the under-drawings of paintings conceived in Herat and finished in Tabriz. It is hoped that same will be done for the Met's *Khamseh* of Nezāmi and the BNF's *Khamseh* of Navāi manuscripts, both of which have such paintings.[151] They all bear testimony to the preciousness of manuscripts in the consciousness of princes who were qualified as *mirzā*s, and who kept alive the Teymurid tradition of the *ketāb-khāneh,* by commissioning such wonderful masterpieces.

[149] As their accession numbers indicate, the binding and the text of the Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez—minus the illustrated pages—were gifted to Harvard in 1964. Therefore, Bahari's contention (Bahari 2014, p. 164) that, in the "mid 1970s," he was received by Cary Welch as a "potential buyer" for the "Cartier Hāfiz" that Welch had put up for sale, misrepresents the facts. In 1978, Welch decided to sell only one illustrated page to finance the purchase of additional *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* pages from Arthur Houghton. His first choice was the *Mosque* scene but ended up selling the *'Id Celebration*.

[150] Membré 1993, 25, 77.

[151] The Infrared Reflectography (IRR), for instance, can provide a lot of information, for oil painting as well as miniature painting.

VI. Shaykhzādeh vs. Mahmud-e Mozahheb

In his book about Behzād (Bahari 1996), where he first postutlated that the production of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* began in Herat and under Behzād's supervision, Bahari also spilled considerable ink to suggest that Shaykhzādeh was Mahmud-e Mozahheb (i.e., the illuminator).[152] Whereas Dickson and Welch had attributed a number of post-1522 Herati illustrations to Shaykhzādeh, based on a signed page from a royal Bukhara manuscript (Freer 1956.14) and Cartier's *Mosque* scene (fig. 86), Bahari attributed them to Behzād, based on the assumption that the latter remained in Herat between 1522 and 1530.[153] We proved this assumption to be wrong; also, as Dickson and Welch have explained, Shaykhzādeh paintings maintain such a steady and continuous style that it is hard to attribute them to anybody else. Moreover, Bahari was already claiming in 1996 that the Cartier *Mosque* scene was not by Shaykhzādeh (p. 237). In retrospect, it seems that in proposing all this, Bahari was preparing the ground to promote his Jāmi manuscript as the genuine precursor of the Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez, and that the identification of Shaykhzādeh with Mahmud Mozahheb suited his purpose. Unfortunately, that identification also rests on similar false claims and hyperboles.

His inspiration may have come from a wrong proposition by Armenag Sakisian that the miniature *Bahrām in the Yellow Pavilion* from the Met *Khamseh* of circa 1525 bears the "signature" of Mahmud (Mozahheb); a claim subsequently refuted by Ivan Stchoukine.[154] Bahari conveniently bypasses Stchoukine, and elaborates a theory by which Shaykhzādeh was the son of the Teymurid calligrapher Shaykh Mahmud, who was named Mahmud after his father! "Shaykhzādeh" obviously means "son of *shaykh*," but naming a son after his father was not a common practice in the Persian context. Moreover, the latest known work by Shaykh Mahmud is dated 877/1472, and by Bahari's own avow, works by Mahmud-e Mozahheb stretch to 961/1554 (p. 247).[155] In other words, the son was still *active,* 80 years after his father! An almost impossibility in that day and age.

The crux of his argument, however, is a manuscript of *Tohfat-ol-ahrār* (BNF, Supl. Persan 1416) that bears an inscription by the Mughal Emperor Shāh-e Jahān (r. 16128-58). Bahari asserts that Shāh-e Jahān's inscription refers to the manuscript's two double-page paintings and designates Shaykhzādeh as their painter; and since one bears a signature of Mahmud-e Mozahheb, and the other of Shaykhzādeh, he concludes that the "Shāh-e Jahān inscription" not only confirms the validity of these "signatures", but indicates that the two painters are one and the same (p. 246).

Almost everything is wrong in these assertions. There is an inscription by Shāh-e Jahān on folio 3r, but it does not name any artist; the one that does is a librarian's inventory inscription under the colophon of folio 79v (figs. 124a-c). By its handwriting and seal, this librarian is the same as the one who inventoried for the first time the 1486 *Golestān* that Akbar (r. 1556-1605) received from his mother, a certain Ghiāth-od-din who calls himself the *morid* (follower) of Akbar Shāh, with a seal dated 996/1587.[156] The BNF inscription reads:

تحفة الاحرار ملا جامی بخط نا شبهۀ مولانا سلطانعلی مع
دیباچۀ تصویر کار شیخ زاده، حاشیۀ الوان افشان از بابت
پیشکش میرطاهر، ۷۵ ورق

The *Tohfat-ol-ahrār* of Milord Jāmi, penned by the incomparable Soltān-`Ali; with a decorated *dibācheh*, the work of Shaykhzādeh, and with gold-sprinkled color margins; a gift submitted by Mir Tāher; 75 folios

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[152] Bahari 1996, ix, 230, and Appendix 2.

[153] Bahari 1996, 200, 201, 204, 205, 207, 208. Based on the same false premise, he attributed a number of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* paintings to Behzād; id. 211-13.

[154] Stchoukine 1959, 58-59. The word "mahmud" was part of a poem by Kamāl Esmā`il that qualified the celestial dome as golden, i.e., an adage that suited well a Golden Pavilion:
شنیدم که برین طارم زراندودست * خطی که عاقبت کار جمله محمودست
I heard that it's written on this Golden Dome that, at the end, all shall be good and praiseworthy (*mahmud*).

[155] Bayāni 1979, 202-204. For a 1560 work by Mahmud, see p. 72 infra.

[156] The seal and notations of this librarian appears on other manuscripts inherited by Akbar; see Soudavar 1999a, 67 n.3.

Figs. 124 a, b, c - Three pages from BNF Sup.Pers. 1416
a, b) double rosettes on fols. 3r, 2v; c) colophon on fol. 79v

Shāh-e Jahān's notation is on the opening double-page with rosettes, and the librarian's is below the colophon, i.e., on the very first and last pages that were available to them for writing their notations (figs. 124a-c). Thus, the librarian's reference to Shaykhzādeh was in relation to pages within the then boundaries of the manuscript. Indeed, what he attributes to Shaykhzādeh is the *dibācheh,* which unequivocally refers to the illuminated double-page that contains the opening text of the book, usually in praise of God and his Messenger.[157]

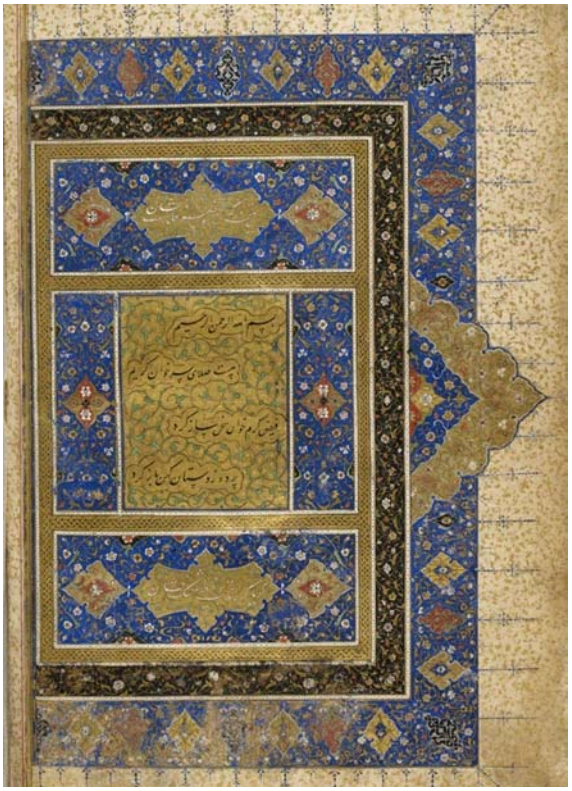

Fig. 125 – Frontispiece (fol. 3v) of BNF Sup.Pers. 1416 attributed to Shaykhzādeh by a Mughal librarian in 1587

Fig. 126 – Detail of a Herati *Bustān*, attributable to Shaykhzādeh (Soudavar 1992, 193)

[157] The Dehkhodā dictionary (*loghatnaameh.com*) equates the *dibācheh* with an illuminated section containing the *khotbeh*, i.e., the text in praise of God and his Messenger. The word is derived from the Persian word *dibāj* (colorful woven-silk).

Even though this librarian's attributions may be less than accurate in other instances,[158] his claim that the illuminated frontispiece was the work of Shaykhzādeh ties in well with my own observation that Shaykhzādeh often illuminated frontispieces as well. Indeed, the illuminations of a Herati *Bustān* decorated by Shaykhzādeh (fig. 126) closely parallel those of the BNF frontispiece.[159] What's more, the librarian saw no double-page illustrations before the *dibācheh* (ending on fol. 4v), and beyond the colophon (fol. 79v), as he only registered a *dibācheh* plus 75 pages. Like Bahari's manuscript, these illustrations were later additions.

Figs. 127 a, b, c, d - a & b) Double-page of Sup.Pers.1416 (fols. 2r, 1v); c) spurious Shaykhzādeh signature ↑; d) detail of (a)

As for the added double-page paintings, the first one is a forgery with its left page bearing an attribution to Shaykhzādeh (fig. 127c), inspired by the librarian's inscription. Its composition is also telling as it replicates a Bukharan duo prototype established by Shaykhzādeh that I had published in 1992 (fig. 129). The latter seems to have been taken out of a *Divān* of Amir Shāhi-ye Firuzkuhi (BNF Sup. Pers. 1960), in which a too-small Bukharan copy of the same has been fitted instead (fig. 128). They both incorporate the related Amir Shāhi verses on the painting page:

"I won't let a beauty like you go without a struggle,
for it took a passionate tear to win you."

Fig. 128 – Inserted painting in fol. 30 of BNF Sup.Pers.1960, by Mahmud-Mozahheb (?)[160]

Fig. 129- Original *Lovers Duo* attributable to Shaykhzādeh, c. 1530 (Soudavar 1992, 197)

Among the numerous copies of this composition, this double page stands out as the worst; and the Shaykhzādeh attribution—squeezed in a tight space within the text area—is most awkward and obviously fake (figs. 128a-d).[161] As for the ending double-page, it's another poor quality forgery with a fake Mahmud-e Mozahheb signature, on a tambourine that it overwhelms (figs. 130a, b, d).[162] This second double-page also incorporates another poorly executed version of the Shaykhzādeh duo (fig. 130c). The BNF *Tohfat-ol-ahrār* thus provides no common grounds for the two names.

[158] For the 1486 *Golestān,* this Ghiāth-od-din attributes two of its paintings to Behzād and one to `Abdol-hayy, whereas I attribute one to Behzād, and the others to Shāh-Mozaffar and Hājji Mohammad; Soudavar 1992, 101-109.
[159] Soudavar 1992, 194-96.
[160] See note 172 infra.
[161] It also appears in: TKS (R958, 29r), MFA Boston (14.584), and H. Afshar Collection, Kuwait.
[162] See empty tambourines on figs. 85, 111b, 115, 122b, 131d.

Figs. 130 a, b, c, d - a & b) added double page (fols. 81v-82r) in the BNF Tohfat-ol-ahrār; c & d) details of above

The question then is: If Shaykhzādeh and Mahmud-e Mozahheb were both illuminators could they be one and the same? I believe that the time span of their activities negates such a possibility, as the earliest Shaykhzādeh paintings appear in a manuscript of the Walters Art Gallery dated 918AH/1512 (figs. 131a-d).[163] And the next one is a frontispiece that adorns a manuscript from the Matenadaran collection (Yerevan) copied by Mir `Ali, and dated 922AH/1516.[164] The same pair of artists, i.e., Mir `Ali and Shaykhzādeh, regularly collaborated on manuscript decoration, even after the two defected to Bukhara in 1529.[165] Another collaborative work is a *Guy-o-chowgān* manuscript dated 925/1519 (figs. 132a, b). Together, the paintings of these early Safavid manuscripts document Shaykhzādeh's style before reaching full maturity in the 1520s, in painting as well as illuminations. As Dickson and Welch had surmised, they show his indebtedness to Behzād, whether in architectural settings (fig.131b), or dancing dervishes (fig. 131c).[166] And they display characteristics that he will always maintain, including raised eyebrows (fig. 1, bottom right), and the alternating red and green diamond motifs in his illuminations (figs. 1, 125, 126, 131a, 132b).

Figs. 131 a, b, c, d – Illuminations and illustrations from a selection of Hāfez and Jāmi poems; Walters Art Gallery, W.628

[163] See http://art.thewalters.org/files/pdf/W628.pdf.
[164] Tokatlian 2013, 584a-b.
[165] Two such manuscripts are the *Haft Manzar* of the Freer 956.14) and an anthology in the Oriental Institute of St Petersburg (S860); Soudavar 1992, 196-97.

[166] D&W 1981, 241. The dancing dervishes derive from a Behzād painting (*Dancing Dervishes*) at the Met (17.18.4).

Figs. 132 a, b, c - Painting (a) and heading illumination (b) by Shaykhzādeh, colophon by Mir 'Ali (c), from a *Guy-o-chowgān* manuscript dated 1519. EMS collections

They also offer a good comparison basis for assessing the validity of the supposed signature of Mahmud-e Mozahheb on a portrait of Amir `Ali-shir Navāi, which has a facial expression far more accomplished than those of Shaykhzādeh from circa 1512-19. Amir `Ali-shir died in 1501, and if Shaykhzādeh had started painting by then, he would have been even less able to draw such a portrait. As for the Mahmud-e Mozahheb who dated his calligraphy to 1554, he was certainly not around half a century earlier.[167] The Amir `Ali-shir portrait is either a copy of an existing portrait, or an imagined older-looking one, based on his figure as it appears in the *Two Wrestlers* of 1486 the *Golestān* that he offered to Soltān-Hosayn Bāyqarā (fig. 134).[168] In either case, Mahmud-e Mozahheb was not a contemporary of the Amir, and this painting is no proof of him being active in Herat.

Fig. 133 – Portrait of Amir `Ali-shir. Āstān-e Qods Library Mashhad.

Fig. 134 – Detail of the Two Wrestlers of a 1486 *Golestān* (Soudavar 1992, 105)

Moreover, it's hard to imagine that in the Bukharan context, the same artist would be referred to in two radically different ways, as "Shaykhzādeh" and "Mahmud-e Mozahheb." But as the latter's spurious signatures appear on many Bukharan paintings,[169] one may assume that his name had a certain cachet. The starting point for any attempt to identify this artist should then be high-quality mid-16th-century Bukharan works, commensurate with such a cachet. The most viable candidates are paintings from a Nezāmi manuscript (BNF Sup. Pers. 985), with (possible) signatures: "`*amal-e* (the work of) Mahmud-e Mozahheb"; and a date of 952/1545 (figs. 135a-c). Unfortunately, since almost all of their faces have been repainted by

[167] Dickson and Welch seem to accept Mostafā `Āli's contention that Mahmud-e Mozahheb was a pupil of Behzād; D&W 1981, 241, n.24. But this 16th-century Ottoman historian was too far away from Herat to have accurate first hand information. As I have argued elsewhere, his information came through Safavid envoys who fed false information to the Ottomans, in order to make their gifts look more valuable; Soudavar 2000, 67, Soudavar 2013, 218. Dickson and Welch also observe that a drawing of two panthers from the Bahrām Mirzā album has a signature that can be read as Shaykh Mahmud; D&W 1981, 241, n.24. Since paintings were usually somehow paired in this album, and this drawing appears opposite a mid-15th century Teymurid painting (Roxburgh 2005, 258), my guess is that the panther drawing too is Teymurid. In any event, it's hard to justify the inclusion of a Bukharan drawing within the Bahrām Mirzā album.

[168] Soudavar 1992, 101-109.

[169] See for instance Soudavar 1992, 212-15.

Mughal artists, facial prototypes are of no use, and we must concentrate on the rest, particularly natural elements and clothing. What stands out most is a colorful rock formation capping the composition, in conjunction with a background filled with flowers displaying a cluster of white or black dots, and a stark plane tree with multicolored leaves dominating the landscape (figs. 135a-c).

In architecture, Mahmud-e Mozahheb has a distinct style of his own, with fine scroll-works and extensive geometric designs (fig. 135b). Whereas Shaykhzādeh reveled in colorful scroll-works—wherever he had an opportunity to use them—Mahmud is content with some dull ones on quivers and saddle cloths (fig. 137d).

Fig. 135 a, b, c - Folio 34r of BNF Sup. Pers. 985, with details

Fig. 136 - Possible signature of Mahmud-e Mozahheb dated 952/1545, with clusters of black-dots (detail of 137a)

Fig. 137 a, b, c, d - Frontispiece (a) and two details (b & c) of BNF Sup. Pers. 985

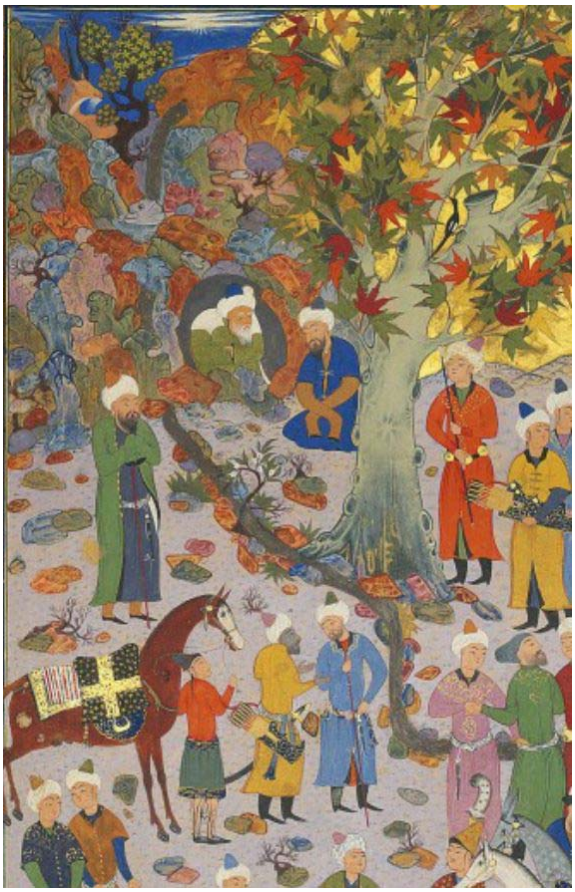

Fig. 138 a, b - Details of a painting with a signature of Mahmud-e Mozahheb, similar to the one in fig. 136

Through comparison with these paintings, we can evaluate other works attributed to Mahmud-e Mozahheb, such as the painting that Bahari sold at Christie's for the benefit of Oxford University (fig. 138 a, b).[170] Its dominant colorful plane tree recalls that of fig. 135b, and its vibrant rock formations recall those of fig. 137a-b. Thus, its signature and date—"the work of Mahmud-e Mozahheb, 968" (1560)—are fully compatible with those of the BNF manuscript (fig. 136), and to a certain extent, complementary.

Unfortunately, Christie's catalog entry repeats Bahari's unwarranted claims about this painter, including the reference to a Mahmud-e Mozahheb that Mirzā Haydar Dughlāt mentions in his *Tārikh-e Rashidi*. In his entry, Mirzā Haydar specifies that a certain "Mahmud" had worked for seven years on the *dibācheh* of a manuscript commissioned by Soltān-Hosayn Bāyqarā.[171] Since this Teymurid ruler died in 1506, Mahmud would have started said manuscript by 1499 at the latest. Bahari's painting, though, is dated 1560. To believe that the Teymurid Mahmud was still active sixty years later in Bukhara defies common sense. Clearly, there was more than one illuminator named Mahmud.

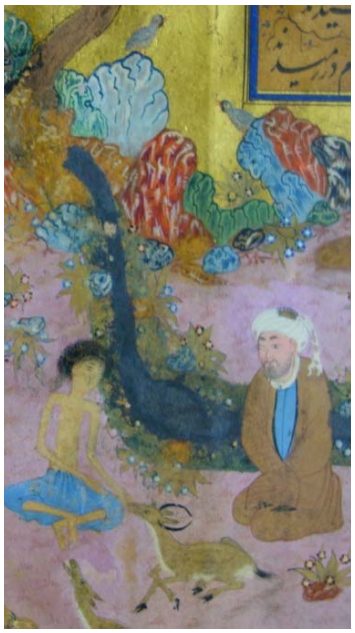

Fig. 139 - Detail of fol. 90 of an *Anthology*, attributable to Mahmud-e Mozahheb[172]

Fig. 140 - Two Lovers by `Abdollāh, Bukhara c. 1540, Sackler Gallery (1986.225)

[170] Christie's sale of Oct. 4, 2012, lot 12. Two accompanying paintings were later sold on Apr. 25, 2013 (lots 26-27).
[171] Dughlāt 2004, 319.

A painting from another manuscript recently sold in Paris can also be attributed to Mahmud-e Mozahheb, as they combine colorful rock formations with the dotted flowers (fig. 139).[172] What all of these painting have in common are figures with run-of-the-mill Bukharan faces, and puppet-like rigid silhouettes. It's a weakness that affects all of Mahmud's works, not only in comparison with Shaykhzādeh's Bukharan works (fig. 1), but also with a contemporary painter, `Abdollāh of Bukhara (fig. 140). It's perhaps to dissimulate this weakness that Mughal painters repainted all faces of the BNF manuscript.

Fig. 141 - *The Dervish and the King* (in the profile of Hosayn Khān-e Shāmlu). Attributable to Shaykhzādeh, circa 1528, Herat (EMS Collections)

While Mahmud preferred a tumultuous landscape, Shaykhzādeh often opted for a barren background to allow his figures to stand out, especially when the central figure was Hosayn Khān. It's perhaps a testimony to the erudition of Hosayn Khān, and a justification for his "Mirzā" epithet that a great number of manuscripts were produced, with their main character depicted in his silhouette. They were all illustrated by Shaykhzādeh who seems to have singlehandedly painted and illuminated all important manuscripts of Herat in the 1520s. These manuscripts are: the Freer *Divān* of Hāfez (fig. 115), the Met's *Khamseh* of Nezāmi (figs. 116, 118), and a dispersed *Khamseh* of Amir Khosrow Dehlavi (fig. 141).[173] It's almost as if Hosayn Khān was competing with the Teymurid bibliophile prince Bāysonghor (d. 1433), and tried to have an illustrated copy of each important literary masterpiece. Curiously, Sām Mirzā followed suit, by also commissioning works to Shaykhzādeh, who simultaneously honored him and his powerful cousin: First in the Cartier *Divān* of Hāfez, and then, a *Khamseh* of Nezāmi, in which the silhouette of Hosayn Khān appears in a secondary position vis à vis a polo-playing prince, presumably Sām Mirzā (fig. 142).[174]

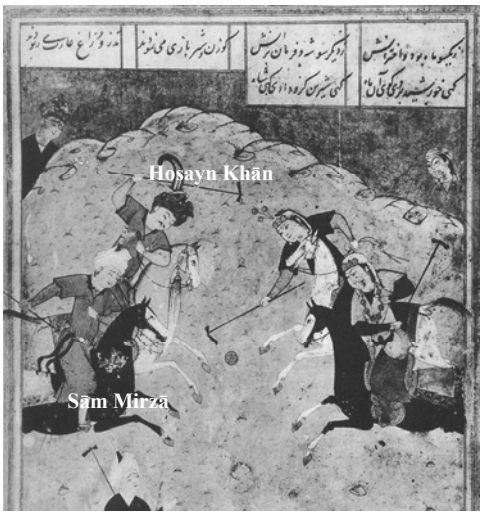

Fig. 142 - *Khosrow and Shirin Playing Polo*, a page from a *Khamseh* of Nezāmi (BL, Add. ms. 16780, fol. 45v) attributable to Shaykhzādeh (Stchoukine 1959, pl. XII)

[172] Paris, Hotel Drouot, sale by Millon on Dec 3, 2012, lot 111. Because of this dotted flower, fig. 128 supra may also be attributed to Mahmud-e Mozahheb.

[173] Three of its paintings are at the Met, and two others at the Sackler; see Lowry et al. 1988, 168-69.

[174] The BL *Khamseh* of Nezâmi was copied in Herat under the Safavids; see Soudavar 1992, 202 n.155.

But, like all other courtly artists, Shaykhzādeh had to also pay his respects to powerful courtiers, especially viziers such as Kh^{w}ājeh Habibollāh Sāvagi, who may have actually supervised the *khān*'s library-atelier. It is thus that in the scene of Hosayn Khān's enthronement, special attention is devoted to the vizier Habibollāh, depicted with a most sumptuous gold-embroidered robe, receiving a petition from a scribe who is requesting him to affix his seal on it (fig. 116). But such is Shaykhzādeh's prowess in detail painting that he can even depict the scribe with a finger carrying ink (from the penbox tucked in his belt) and ready to apply it on the vizier's signet.

Fig. 143 - A scribe (with a penbox in his belt) asking the vizier Habibollāh Sāvaji to sign a petition he has written, while applying black ink on his signet (detail of fig. 116)

In sum, Shaykhzādeh was a prolific painter and illuminator, primarily active in Herat (in the 1520s), with limited production in Bukhara (in the 1530s). On the other hand—despite his "illuminator" epithet—Mahmud-e Mozahheb, has left us no identifiable illumination, and his paintings are Bukharan, from three decades later. Both seem to have been active in a limited time span of 15-25 years and not beyond: Shaykhzādeh from 1512 to circa 1530, and Mahmud-e Mozahheb from 1545 to circa 1560.

Mahmud-e Mozahheb may have been a pupil or a follower of Shaykhzādeh, but his work is a far cry from the Herati master's highly polished and flawlessly executed illuminations and paintings, as in figs. 1 and 143. The two cannot, and must not, be confounded.

VII. The Safavid-revival school of painting

The illustrations that Simpson reproduced in her paper show complex compositions that combine a variety of motifs from different schools and periods (figs. 77-79, 81a). One can get easily dazzled by their masterful execution. Simpson's paper was an eye opener and provided much food for thought. My intention here is to follow up on that, by providing further insights into the work of this 20th-century Safavid-revival school of painting. As I shall argue, it's a school that, like the Chinese painter Zhang Daqian (1899-1983) and his atelier, its members excelled at making old-looking fake paintings, but also produced and sold artworks under their own name. To assess this school, I shall first explore four more of their works that better show their modus operandi.

VII.1- Partial copy - The first is a partial copy of a work by Soltān-Mohammad from the BL *Khamseh* of Nezāmi (fig. 144), in which the forger has opted to only replicate the central motif and forego coloration (figs. 145 a, b, c).

Fig. 144 - Detail of a painting by Soltān-Mohammad from BL Or 2265 (fol. 202v)

Fig. 145 a, b, c - Album page in Safavid style. Malek Museum, gift of Mrs. E.M. Soudavar

Fig. 146 - Detail of 145

Fig. 147 - Detail of fig. 144

The result is a masterful ink drawing, with minute arabesques on a golden saddle. To enhance its salability as a stand-alone painting, it has been framed by elaborately illuminated margins (fig. 145c). Moreover, the forger seems to have been well-aware of Mohammadi's tinted drawing production and has thus added a fake Mohammadi signature to his work. If not for the knowledge of the BL original, one would be hard pressed to assess it as fake. Interestingly, the forger must be one who had previously worked on the Bahari manuscript, especially on its Shaykhzādeh painting, for he has introduced Shaykhzādeh-type frowned eyebrows in a Soltān-Mohammad composition (compare figs. 146, 147).

VII.2 – Intriguing text or signature - The second example is a tinted drawing that Bahari has published as a genuine work of Mohammadi.

Fig. 148 - Bahari's *Seated Dervish* (Bahari 1996, p. 177)

Fig. 149 - Original *Seated Dervish* (Martin 1912, pl.85)

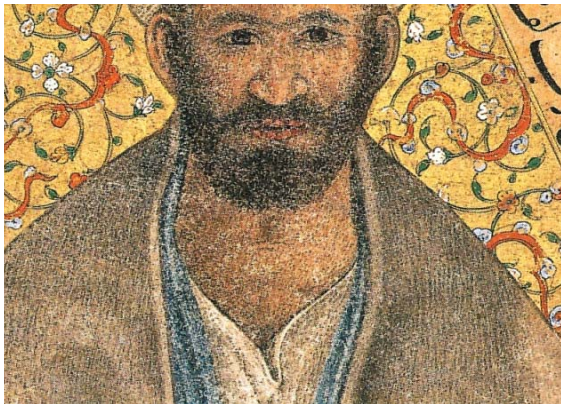

Fig. 150 - detail of fig. 148, showing modern striated shading

In reality it's a copy of the *Seated Dervish* from the Chester Beatty Library (no. 3094.5) that was first published by F.R. Martin in 1912 (Martin 1912, 85). David Roxburgh has convincingly argued that the latter belonged to a group of paintings that had been spirited out of the Bahram Mirzā album (TKS, H2154).[175] The Bahari painting is a clear forgery as it reproduces the Martin illustration with heavy modeling, which did not exist in the 16th century. Modeling was gradually introduced in Iranian painting in late 17th century, and the striated shading used on the Bahari painting is a technique that only prevailed in Persian art schools at the turn of the 20th century.[176] As in some of Bahari's *Jāmi* paintings (Bahari 2014, 191, 195), the forger has submerged his dervish in a sea of arabesques that overshadows the mediocrity of his figural drawing. It also incorporates an inscription, supposedly written by "Mohammadi son of Mirzā `Ali," describing it as a masterpiece of Behzād:

> "The belief of this seeker of Godly felicity, Mohammadi, son of Mirzā `Ali, is that the above portrait, which is above the reach of exceptionally creative masters, is one of the tall (*boland!*) works of the Master-of-miraculous-and-magical-works Behzād. God is most knowing."[177]

"Master of miraculous and magical productions," is a formula that the forger uses to give added prestige to his copy, but one that a 16th century painter would have never used. Painting was constantly under attack by orthodox Moslems for trying to duplicate God's creatures; to portray a painter with miraculous powers was to provide more ground for attacks.

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[175] Roxburgh 1998, 40.

[176] I am indebted to master miniature painter Abbas Moayyeri in Paris—a pupil of Hossein Behzād who was active in the first half of the 20th century—for explaining this technique to me, and who, upon seeing the Bahari *Dervish*, immediately recognized it as a forgery.

[177] Bahari distorts the forger's praise of Behzād, and translates it as "Master of miraculous works and shading" to justify the odd shading technique of his painting. To do so, he mis-translates the word *pardāz* in استاد سحرساز معجزه پرداز , as "shading"; Bahari 1996, 177. But the root *pardākhtan* of *pardāz* means "to achieve, to finish," and as such, *pardāz* has acquired the meaning of "finishing" in modern times, which is now applied to polishing, as well as modeling. But in combination with words such as "miracle" and "magic," it clearly denotes a magical production, and not shading.

Although a follower of Mirzā `Ali in painting, Mohammadi was not related to him. The forger seems to have construed this relationship out of the confusing information provided by Ottoman sources, especially Mostafā `Āli Efendi.[178] The Martin painting bares an attribution to Behzād (fig. 149), which, like most paintings from the Bahrām Mirzā album, was written by the calligrapher Dust-Mohammad circa 1545. Between the two attributions, Dust Mohammad's is certainly more reliable. But such is Bahari's trust in spurious attributions and signatures that he considers his mediocre copy to be by the hand of Behzād, and superior to Martin's.

Fig. 151 – Ascetic. Signed by Torābi Beyk. Herat, circa 1590. Rezā `Abbāsi Museum, Tehran

Among the Mashhad-type paintings that Simpson has published, there is a Honolulu manuscript with a painting with a doorway inscription ascribing it to a certain Torābi Beyk Khorāsāni (our fig. 156a).[179] As she saw the same signature on three more paintings, she concluded that they were all forgeries. I beg to differ on two of them. The first, which is presently at the Rezā `Abbāsi Museum (Tehran), depicts an ascetic seated within a hollow tree (fig. 151). I have examined it from close and see nothing wrong with it. Most telling is the face of the ascetic, who is depicted in a somber mood with thick eyebrows, and with a precision far above what the Safavid-revival school could ever produce (fig. 152).

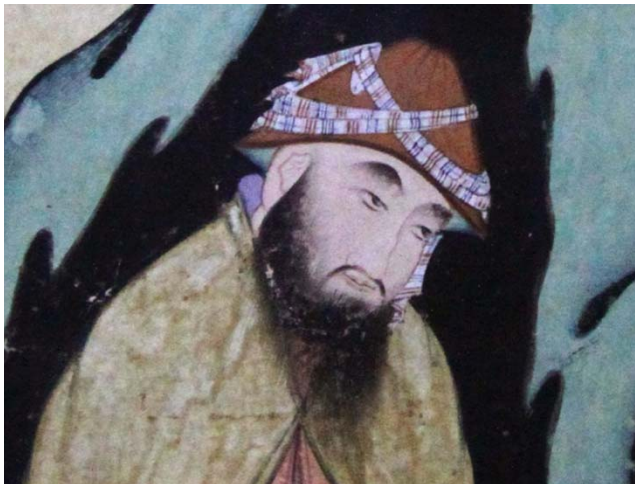


Fig. 152 – detail of fig. 151

Fig. 153 - Uzbek drawing (det.), c.1595. Hossein Afshar Coll.

[178] Soudavar 2000, 53 and 67.

[179] Simpson 2008, 369.

In comparison, a similar ascetic drawing that Simpson thought as the original model has weaker facial features (fig. 153). The latter once belonged to Henri d'Allemagne and was published in 1913. It's certainly a genuine drawing, but a copy nevertheless, since innovative compositions and motifs were often duplicated, even in the 16th century. The Tehran *Ascetic* bears a Torābi Beyk signature below, and an inscription on top stating that it "was drawn (*tahrir yāft*) at the *ketāb-khāneh* of his Excellency Qolbābā Kukaltāsh." Qolbābā (d. 1598) was the foster brother (*kukaltāsh*) of the Uzbek ruler `Abdollāh Khān (r. 1583-98) who invaded Herat in 1588, and appointed him as governor of that city. Qolbābā was a bibliophile and commissioned, among other manuscripts, a *Golestān* of Sa`di with paintings by Mohammadi. A painting therein, which depicts Qolbābā as its central figure (fig. 154),[180] is much relevant to our discussion. Firstly, it allows us to see the tree of the Tehran painting as a blend of Mohammadi and Mahmud-e Mozahheb's plane tree (compare figs. 154, 155, and 156).

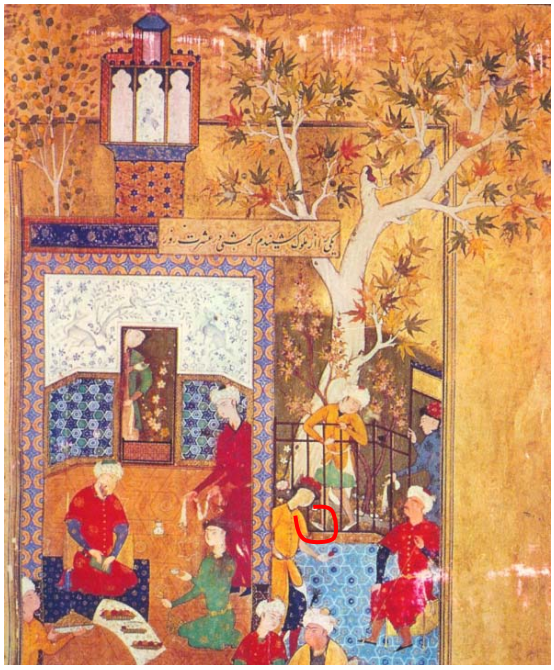


Fig. 154 - *Qolbābā sending a gift to 'Abd-ol-Mo`men*. From a *Golestān* of Sa`di. Attributable to Mohammadi, Herat, c. 1590. Bruschettini Collection

Since Torābi worked for Qolbābā, he may have been very well affected by the stylistic traditions of Mahmud-e Mozahheb as well as Mohammadi—who remained in Herat during the Uzbek occupation. It also explains why the youth in the Henri d'Allemagne version of the *Ascetic* has an Uzbek headgear: This composition must have gained a certain eminence in Uzbek circles and copied thereafter.

Fig. 155 – Plane tree leaves by Mohammadi, Herat c. 1590. (Soudavar 1992, 238)

Fig.156 – Detail of fig.149

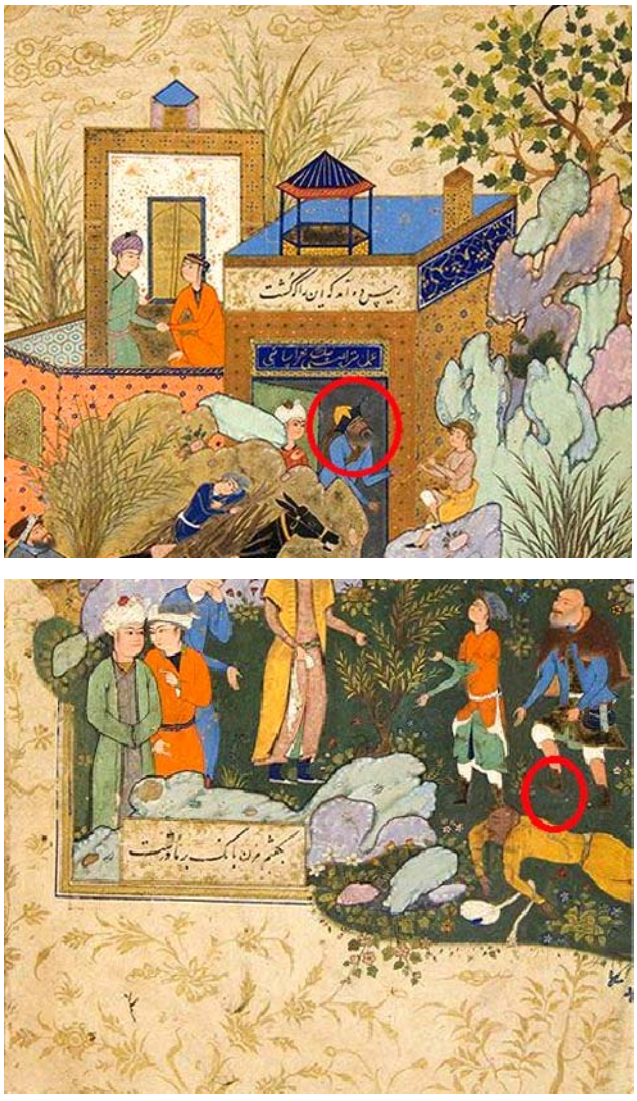
Although I haven't actually seen the *Bustān* manuscript of Honolulu that bears a "Torābi Beyk" inscription, I trust Basil Robinson's opinion that they are of "splendid quality." And they display enough similarities with Mohammadi's works of the 1590s to accept them as Herati works, and not forgeries as Simpson suggests.[181] Indeed, the margins of the manuscript are subtly illuminated with gold floral designs and arabesques (figs. 155a-b), in a continuation of the Mashhad style that Mohammadi kept alive; and one which I had singled out as his favorite illumination pattern mixing "simplified peonies with loose foliage and minimal scroll lines," whether on canopies or interlinear decoration.[182] Such an investment in time and gold was not, and is not, economical for any forger or dealer, since miniatures fetched high prices but illuminated pages—which required almost as much work—did not. More importantly, it also appears as interlinear decoration on the building's written frieze. And as usual with Mohammadi, the landscape is sprinkled with small red and blue flowers. Finally, a tell tale detail for

[180] For an explanation of this painting see Soudavar 2000, 67.

[181] Simpson 2008, 379-82.
[182] Soudavar 2000, 57.

Mohammadi is the sharp-angled raised foot on some of his subjects, which we can notice in fig. 155b, and in fig. 154.[183]

Before its acquisition by the Armenian dealer Hagop Kevorkian, the Honolulu manuscript must have been in the possession of the forger group, for, as Simpson observes some of its motifs were borrowed and used in other paintings of theirs.[184]



Figs. 157 a, b – Details from a *Bustān* page, attributable to Mohammadi, Herat c. 1590. Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art Shangrila, Honolulu, 10.7, photo: David Franzen

Interestingly, the "signatures on the Tehran and Honolulu paintings are by two different hands. On the Tehran one (fig. 151), it's written in a solid *nasta`liq*, by the same hand who has written the verses below, and probably the inscription on top. Like some of the letters of the verses, said signature extends into the ruling frame, and therefore seems to have been part of the piece's initial composition. On the other hand, the awkward sentence in its center is written with a modern pen, and is a later addition:

این هم یکی از معجزات ترابی بیک است

This too is one of Torābi Beyk's miraculous works

As for the Honolulu "signature," it's so badly written that—as noted by Simpson—it's likely to be read: "Work of Torābsi Beyk Khorāsāni" (rather than Torābi Beyk). As such, it recalls the faulty inscriptions above the doorways of Bahari's Jāmi manuscript (fig. 98a-c). Finally, the portrait of an Indian nobleman that Simpson correctly qualifies as forgery also bears a false signature of Torābi Beyk.[185]

We are faced thus with a dilemma: We have two genuine paintings, with two different signatures, one of which is spurious, and two forgeries supposedly signed by the same artist; what is right and what is wrong? One can of course assume that the Torābi name was totally fictitious, and was added to all four. But I believe otherwise: The signature on the Tehran *Ascetic* is authentic, and from a painter by the name of Torābi who worked with Mohammadi at the court of Qolbābā in Herat; his name was then added to the other three.

There are several reasons for this belief. Even though, the Tehran *Ascetic* borrows some highly visibly motifs—such as the bird nest in the tree with on-looking magpies—from Mohammadi,[186] it has distinctive features of its own. For instance, Mohammadi's plane-tree leaves are hand shaped, with five chubby fingers (fig. 155), while Torābi leaves have thin elongated fingers, often more than five (fig. 156). Furthermore, the thick arched eyebrows of the *Ascetic*, its sculpted nose, as well

[183] See also Soudavar, 1992, 239.
[184] Simpson 2008, 375.
[185] Simpson 2008, 386. This Indian nobleman has much in common with two others that we shall discuss further below as modern forgeries (figs. 166-67).
[186] See, for instance, Soudavar 1992, 240.

as the pale blue coloration of some of its plane-tree leaves are never encountered in the Mohammadi repertoire.

The question then is: Why add a fake signature to a genuine painting of Mohammadi? Every deceptive action must have a motive, and the motive here is obviously purely commercial, i.e., to raise the value of an object. That object, however, was not the Honolulu *Bustān*. It was clearly a "splendid" miniature, as Robinson had observed, and the insertion of an obscure painter's name didn't increase its value. But by adding Torābi's name on the Honolulu painting, the forger established better credentials for its other forgeries, namely his *Tavern* scene with a spurious Torābi Beyk inscription on its doorway (fig. 157a). To further shore up this artist's reputation, and value, another spurious inscription was added to Torābi's *Ascetic*, qualifying it as one of his "miraculous works (*mo`jezāt*)." The latter is a 20th century Persian expression, never to be found in 16-17th literature to describe a painting. Painting, which was already under attack by orthodox Islam for trying to duplicate God's creations, was better off not being qualified with a word that described prophetic wonders. No wonder then that a derivative of the same expression, *mo`jezeh-pardāz* (miraculous producer), is used beneath Bahari's *Dervish.*[187] These were all part of a concerted effort to establish credentials for forgeries that mimicked late 16th-century Herati paintings. What they also reveal is that they were not the work of a single painter, but a group that used artists as well as learned people who had access to information not readily available in Iran, whether the 1912 Martin publication, the treatise of Mostafā `Āli, or more importantly, actual 16th-century manuscripts and paintings.

VII.3 - Creative duplication - A third example is a recently sold tinted drawing in the style of Mohammadi (fig. 158 a-b).[188] It's beautifully conceived and drawn, but two indices reveal its true nature. First, the contour lines, which under intense magnification (20x) reveal some hesitancy and reworking, whereas in the miniatures of 16th century, master painters had a steady stroke.

Fig. 158 a, b - Pastoral Scene. Early 20th-century. Iran EMS collections

Second, some of the faces betray a late Qajar facial expression (fig. 156b, yellow-circled faces). It is a well-established tradition among Iranian forgers

[187] See note 177 supra; and see note 212 infra for a possible identification of the dealer who sold this to Doris Duke.

[188] It was sold at Christie's South Ken, Oct. 8, 2010, lot 305, and correctly described as late 19th century. It's presently in the EMS collections.

that whenever they discover a novel and unseen object, they would make a few fakes in the same spirit, before selling the original one. It seems that in this case too, the possession of the Honolulu *Bustān* allowed our forgers to get creative and produce a few variations on the themes that it offered.

Our tinted drawing seems to be the byproduct of such an endeavor as it is based on a painting from the Honolulu *Bustān*, *Dārā and the Herdsman*, the original prototype of which goes back to Behzād.[189] As such, it's not a duplicate of the same scene, but an amalgam of Honolulu manuscript's various paintings. It takes, for instance, a figure of fig. 157a (red-circled bearded man) and plants him as the herdsman in the center of our tinted drawing (fig. 158b).

As with the Bahari manuscript, our forgers excelled at scroll works, and similar to the saddle in fig. 143b, they have adorned the tent on the left with minutely executed scroll works. The main objective for adding scroll works was to provide the painting with the cachet of a master painter, since good scrollwork vouches for a strong hand.

VII.4 – Full-color composition - The fourth painting is from the Karimzadeh Collection.[190] It is the right side of a double-page illustration inserted into a manuscript. Unlike the previous three, it's painted in full color, and, as in fig. 145c, the composition is surrounded by an elaborate illuminated border.

Once again, elaborate illumination was meant to add importance to the work. It's a work that did not attract a foreign buyer and remained in Iran where it was marketed (and supposedly published) as a 16th-century signed work of the Teymurid painter Behzād. The signed half ended up in an Iranian museum, while Karimzadeh bought the other half. But as he avowed to me, he knows that said attribution is not correct and that it's an early 20th-century production.[191] Clearly, "Behzād" and "Mir `Ali" were names that forgers valued because of the recognition they had achieved in the West. The question then is: Who produced these forgeries?

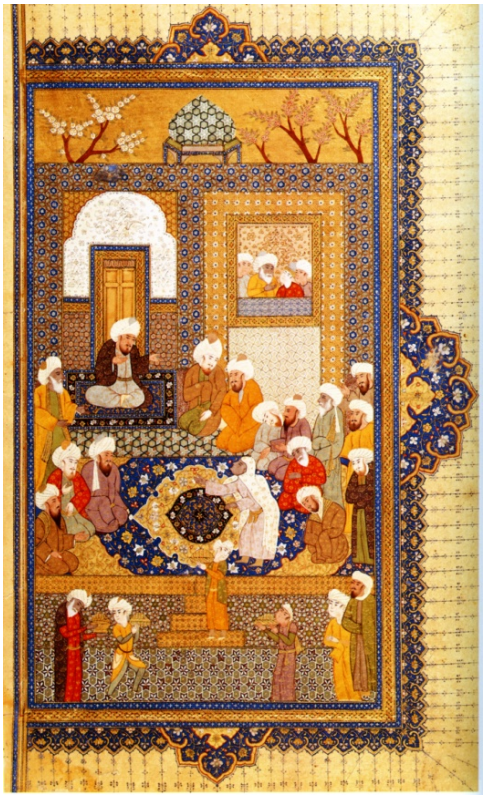


Fig. 159 - Half of a *Shāhnāmeh* frontispiece. Karimzadeh Coll. (Karimzadeh 1991, III: 1494)

VII.5 – The 20th-century masters – The name of three painters stand out among Iranian miniaturist painters of the early 20th-century who were engaged in the revival of the Safavid style. First and foremost is Mirzā Āqā Emāmi (1880-1955), second is Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki (1889-1969), and third is Hossein Behzād (1894-1968). We shall briefly study some of their works to determine a possible name for the forger group of Bahari's manuscript. We must indeed look for a group of forgers since the Bahari paintings are so elaborately loaded with details that they cannot be the work of a single person; a whole atelier must have been involved in their production. We shall proceed in reverse order because the latter two painters were in reality followers and disciples of Mirzā Āqā Emāmi. The latter had an active atelier in Esfahān, and is the most likely candidate to emerge as the Iranian Zhang Daqian.

VII.6 - Hossein Behzād – He is best known for a romantic Safavid style that wished to visualize Persian literature in praise of wine and beautiful

[189] Simpson 2008, 379.
[190] Karimzadeh 1991, 1494.
[191] Personal communication (May 11, 2015).

maidens. But he also dabbed into classical compositions that bordered on kitsch. The latter must have had a European or local tourist market, for some his works appeared in French collections. Thus, when the French art journal *Dossier de l'Art* ran an issue on Persian art, one of Hossein Behzād's "Safavid" works was prominently featured as an authentic Safavid painting (fig. 160).[192]

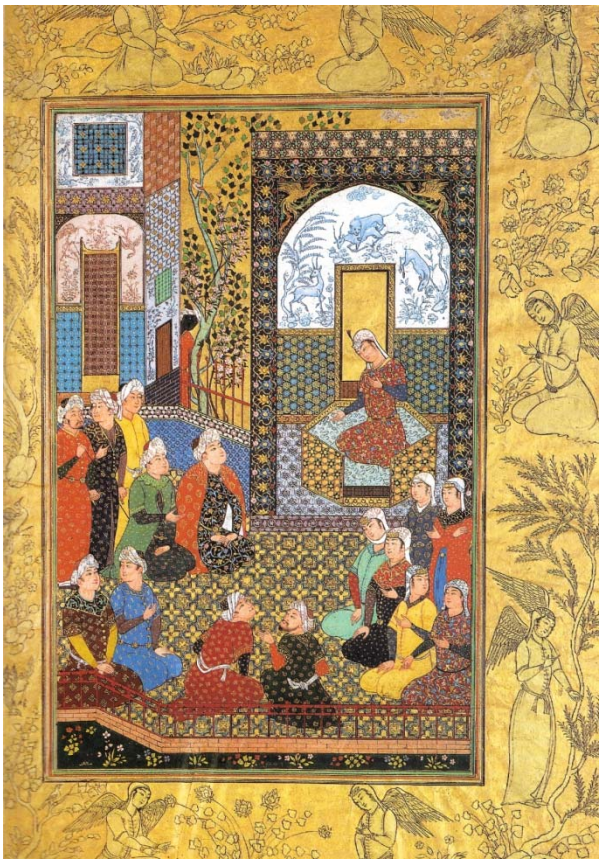


Fig. 160 - A queen receiving a delegation by Hossein Bahzād[191]

As his pupil, `Abbās Moayyeri had recognized it as the work of his own master and notified the journal accordingly. He also explained to me that the Bahari paintings are not by him. Hossein Behzād figures have a dominating head with distinct faces that are chubby and have elaborate eyebrows as in fig. 158; moreover, he usually worked in solo and did not have the means to produce so many elaborate works.[193] But we do notice in this work a similar tendency for filling the background with tile work, which, as we shall see, seems to be a common trait of the Emāmi followers.

VII.7 – Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki - A most talented painter seems to have been Hajj Mosavver-ol-molki, whose drawings exhibit a steady hand, worthy of any of Rezā-ye `Abbāsi followers. Two ink drawings that have recently appeared on the London art market attest to his draftsmanship, and his humor in shaping his signature into a head with a hat (figs. 161-62).

Fig. 161 – *Praying man*, by Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki[194]

Fig. 162 – Sufi Gathering, by Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki[195]

[192] *Peinture Persane*, (*Dossier de l'Art*, 36, March 1997), 71.

[193] I am indebted to `Abbās Moayyeri for identifying this miniature as a work of Hossein Behzad

[194] Christie's South Ken, sale of 9-10-2015, lot 211.

Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki also drew highly elaborate Safavid looking paintings (fig. 161). But there again, his personas have the same nonchalant demeanor and the same kind of airy and lightly wrapped turbans (fig. 161). He does not seem to have contributed to the Bahari manuscript.

Fig. 163- Sufi master and disciples, by Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki[196]

VII.8 – Mirzā Āqā Emāmi – Mirzā Āqā had an active atelier in Isfahan, with numerous pupils.[197] He was mostly known for his Safavid-style lacquer work on doors and tables, which were purchased by locals as well as tourists. They were usually signed, as are the five works that recently appeared on the London art market. They show enormous versatility and the talent of an artist who could work on different media, and in a variety of styles, from ink drawing (fig. 170), to tinted drawing (fig. 164a), to fully colored miniature painting (fig. 164b), to illuminated lacquer binding (fig. 164d), as well as a miniature expanded into a large scale painted object by the integration of a fully painted frame. When he indulged in miniature painting, he had the ability to shift modes, from one style to another. He could do that because he had a solid technique and a fluid stroke, most visible in his floral decoration and arabesques. He could decorate robes with superb floral patterns in black and gold (as in fig. 165), or saddle cloths (as in fig. 145), where he tried to transform a Soltān-Mohammad miniature into a tinted drawing by Mohammadi. It wasn't just an exercise in painting; it was meant to deceive, since it bore a "signature" by Mohammadi. These two paintings are clearly the work of the same painter because of the similarities between the horseman in figs. 145-46, and the black man in fig. 165, who has the same type of Shaykhzādeh-like frowned eyebrows.

The arabesques, scrollwork, and tile works from the same miniature (fig. 166) provide a possible first link to Bahari's *Panj Ganj* paintings, where the forger shows his preference for scrollwork by changing the carpet of the *Mosque* composition, from floral in the original (fig. 86), to arabesques in Bahari's (fig. 80b). He also uses the same geometric pattern for the tile works.

The stylistic shift, from miniature-like faces in fig. 165-66 to the European-like realistic face in fig. 167, bears testimony to the ability of Mirzā Āqā to create different looks. The same realism affects an obvious forgery of the Malek Museum in Tehran (fig. 168), which mixes Indian and Safavid clothing, as well as a Safavid-looking kneeling youth in a private collection (fig, 169). They provide a direct link to the Indian drawing that Simpson had found bearing a spurious attribution to "Torābi Beyk."[198] What closes the circle, however, and unequivocally links Mirzā Āqā to the Bahari and "Torābi Beyk" forgeries is the Simorgh bird that he prominently introduces in the corner of fig. 170a. The same is then reproduced in three of his different adaptations of the Cartier *Mosque* and *Tavern* scenes (figs. 81a, 171-72). There is absolutely no rhyme or reason to have a Simorgh squeezed into the corner of these compositions. The exact Simorgh of fig. 173 is then planted, again for no reason at all, over a scene where a Sufi is seated in the wilderness and surrounded by a goat and a sheep (fig. 173).

[195] Bonham's London sale of 9-6-2015, lot 144.
[196] Bonham's London sale of 2-4-2009, lot 20.
[197] Karimzadeh 1991, 1269-71.
[198] Simpson 2008, 386.

Fig. 164 a, b, c, d – Four work of arts signed by Mirzā Āqā Emāmi: a) tinted drawing on paper[199]; b) fully-colored painting[200]; c) Painting on paper with decorated frame[201]; d) illuminated lacquer binding (private collection)

Fig. 165 – detail of fig. 162a. Compare circled face with fig. 144

Fig. 166 – detail of fig. 162a

Fig. 167 - detail of fig. 162c

Fig. 168 - "Indo-Persian" tinted drawing
MPLM, Tehran

Fig. 169 - "Safavid" youth
EMS Collections

[199] Bonham's sale of 21-4-2015, lot 108
[200] Bonham's sale of 2-4-2009, lot 20
[201] Bonham's sale of 7-10-2014, lot 181

Fig. 170 a, b – Details of an ink drawing with a mythical Simorgh bird and illuminated frames, signed by Mirzā Āqā Emāmi (Christie's, London sale of 9-10-2015, lot 212)

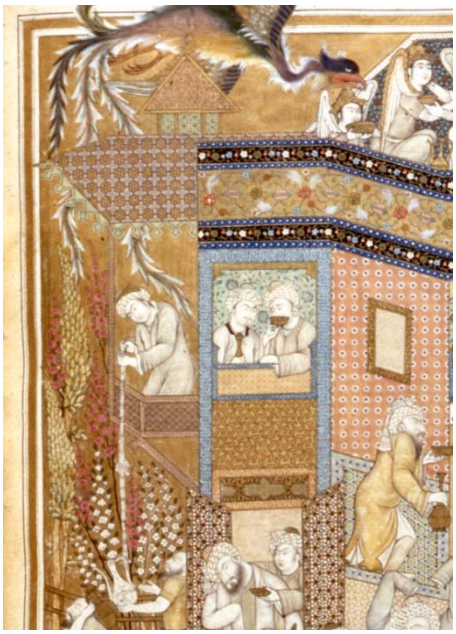


Fig. 171 – Manuscript page of Princeton University Library (no. 84G, fol. 131a) (Simpson 2008, 368)

Fig. 172 - Manuscript page of Princeton University Library (no. 84G, fol. 55a) (Simpson 2008, 375)

Fig. 173 – Tinted drawing of an ascetic with Simorgh. (Christie's sale of 25-4-2013, lot 30)

VII.9 – The forger ring - Interestingly, this exquisite Sufi painting (fig. 173) was sold by Christie's, as part of the collection that Bahari graciously donated to Oxford. And as such, it brings to the fore the issue of provenance. Collectors often buy in series and from the same dealers or intermediaries. The four signed Mirzā Āqā paintings sold at Bonham's (figs. 164 a-d), as well as those of Hājj Mosavver-ol-molki, seem to have all come from the collection of Mansour Afshar in Geneva who collected Qajar and Pahlavi items. He had bought them as what they purported to be, i.e., 20th-century Iranian paintings. Bahari though, seems to have bought his *Panj Ganj* manuscript, his *Seated Dervish* (fig. 148), and the Sufi drawing (fig. 173) as authentic Safavid ones.

While Mirzā Āqā Emāmi and his atelier probably produced most of these Safavid-looking paintings, they did not do it on their own. Buoyed by the high demand for Persian paintings in Western countries, and the high prices that they fetched, especially in the Parisian art market at the turn of 20th-century, Armenian dealers joined forces with a group of local artwork purveyors and forgers to supply more and more paintings and manuscripts. Chief among them was a certain Sadr-ol-afāzel who was a man of knowledge, but put his knowledge at the service of forgeries. He regularly bought manuscripts from local collections and enhanced them for resale. My grandfather, Hājj Hossein Āqā Malek who founded the Malek Public Library and Museum (MPLM), had bought a few from him. On the back of one his books, he had noted: "The *kufic* inscriptions on this treatise are by the hand of the late Sadr-ol-afāzel; many of the books that were bought from him were subjected to similar operations (*`amaliyyāt*). This one was bought from his son Majd-ol-afāzel (dated 9/6/17 i.e., Aug. 31, 1938)."[202]

Among the manuscripts of the MPLM is a compendium of the *Shāhnāmeh* and Nezāmi's *Khamseh* (no. 6031), with an ex-libris of Bāysonghor, and penned by one Mohammad b. Motahhar, which was enhanced through the addition of paintings in empty spaces, especially the blank pages that existed between its two "books."[203] When I first looked at them in the early 1970s, they seemed to be obvious forgeries, even to my untrained eyes. And when I later questioned the ex-keeper of the library, Ahmad Soheyli Kh^{w}ānsāri, about this manuscript, he confided that the paintings were by the hand of a certain Khatā'i. His opinion carried weight; not only had he been involved with the book trade for more than thirty years, but his brother Mohsen Soheyli held a painting academy in the South Lāleh-zār district of Tehran. Karimzadeh lists Khatā'i as one of the disciples of Mirzā Āqā Emāmi, who specialized in leather bindings.[204] But like so many other apprentices who passed through the Emāmi academy-atelier, Khatā'i must have been trained in miniature painting as well. In fact, the paintings that he reportedly added to the Malek manuscript are of inferior quality, and much weaker than Bahari's (fig. 174). His forte may have been leather bindings, but that did not prevent him to accept commissions from the likes of Sadr-ol-afāzel to enhance un-illustrated manuscripts.

Fig. 174 – Detail of added painting to manuscript 6031 of the Malek Public Library and Museum (MPLM website)

In a recent study of the Malek manuscript, Shiva Mihan has advanced decisive arguments to show the non-Teymurid aspects of the manuscript, including a prominent inscription over a dais, which names Bāysonghor (fig. 175).[205] As she correctly argues, in all works of the Teymurid

[202] Minovi 1946, 456

[203] The news of the availability of such a manuscript had already reached London in 1931, as it is mentioned in the catalogue of the Burlington exhibition; Binyon, Wilkinson & Gray 1933, 69.

[204] Karimzadeh 1991, 1270.

[205] Mihan 2016 (in press).

period mentioning his name, Bāysonghor is spelled with a *ghayn* (e.g., fig. 176), whereas in this inscription it's spelled with a *qāf*. The *qāf* version of his name is a modern phenomenon. What's more, we can distinctly see the awkward "a-l" ligature of figs. 98a-c duplicated here (↑). They are obviously by the same hand.

Fig. 175 – Inscription detail on the *Shāhnāmeh* section of MPLM's manuscript (no. 6031, p. 677, Mihan 2016)

Fig. 176 – Inscription detail (*khallad-allāho molkohu*) on page 469 of the Bāysonghor *Shāhnāmeh*, GPL

Furthermore, there is on p. 14 of said manuscript an ovoid-shaped ex-libris (fig. 177) in the name of Bāysonghor, that ends with the following wish:

خلّد الله مملكته (May God eternalize his country)

It's a wrong formula, and the correct one, as used on the GPL Bāysonghor *Shāhnāmeh* (fig. 176) and throughout that period is:

خلّد الله ملكه (May God eternalize his kingdom)

In the old days, countries were not delimited by borders as they are today. People thought in terms of kingdom, i.e., an aggregate of nations and people who submitted to a king (*molk*), rather than a geographical country (*mamlekat*).

Moreover, Bāysonghor is qualified in fig. 175 with a "Mirzā" title, whereas in his days, the progenies of Amir Teymur were called *amir-zādeh*, as witnessed by the text of both manuscripts (on fol. 2v of the GPL manuscript, and p. 9 of MPLM's). The term "*Mirzā*," as a contraction of *amir-zādeh,* only appeared in the second half of 15th-century. Furthermore, the ex-libris is drawn on page 14 of said manuscript, after the introduction, whereas genuine ones only appear at the beginning (e.g., figs. 95-96). Here again, the manuscript comprised three different sections (introduction, *Shāhnāmeh, Khamseh*), with blank pages in between. Similar to Bahari's manuscript, the forgers seized upon these blank pages to embellish the manuscript and make it look more important. Adding an ex-libris of Bāysonghor was perhaps more effective than all of their other efforts.

Fig. 177 – Inscription detail on page 14 of MPLM's compendium (no. 6031) (*khallad-allāho mamlekatehi)*

Finally, as Shiva Mihan has demonstrated, the forgers were not mere artisans but had enough historical knowledge to depict a scene where Bāysonghor is surrounded by an intellectual circle that included the historians Hāfez-e Abru and Fasihi-ye Khāfi, who all look at the scribe Mohammad b. Motahhar supposedly offering the manuscript he had penned, to Bāysonghor (fig. 174). Different talents had thus cooperated to "improve" the manuscript, including painters, calligraphers and historians, who all conceived added elements for it, in order to increase its value.

But to start the project, the forger group needed capital to acquire "improvable" manuscripts—such as Bahari's *Panj Ganj,*[206] or the Malek's

[206] Because of its calligraphy, high quality paper and fine

compendium—in order to embellish them for added value. The Emāmi atelier and the Sadr-ol-afāzel family were able to finance some of the purchases. There were also intermediaries (mostly Armenians) who advanced money for manuscript purchases. The robust pre-WWI market that prevailed in Paris, probably enticed many to participate in this lucrative activity.

As my grandfather's notation indicates, it was Sadr-ol-afāzel's son, Majd-ol-afāzel who actually sold some of the manuscripts. In the Tehrani milieu of antique dealers, he was known as the mastermind of two infamous projects: 1- he had acquired some of the first Buyid textiles that were dug out, and had forged pieces woven in the city of Yazd, in the same spirit; 2- he conceived and orchestrated the production of the two fake *Qābus-nāmeh*s. Majd-ol-afāzel had two sons who pursued his activities. The first, known as Fakhr-od-din-e Nasiri, had inherited a treasure trove of "improved" manuscripts. When I visited him at his home in the 1970s, he showed a full spectrum of them, such as an early 20th-century painting, with an added signature of Afzal, as well as manuscripts with added colophons in the name of Soltān-`Ali Mashhadi, Mir `Ali and the like. When the Persian painting market got hot again in the 1970s, dealers who had traded in antiquities decided to expand their activities, and offer Persian manuscripts and paintings as well. As the antique dealer Houshang Mahboubian avowed to me, they all got burned because Nasiri sold them fake manuscripts.[207] I suspect that the Bahari series also came from Nasiri. He either sold them directly or through intermediaries

The most interesting character of the family, however, was the second son, who had changed his name to Āzarbod. I had not met him but came to know him by proxy, because of a bizarre episode. In 1981, I visited Spink & Son in London, at a time when they had just received an imposing silver plate with a *kufic* inscription on its contour. The in-house expert of Spink's in those days was Ralph Pinder-Wilson. Despite the fact that a big chunk of the contour (approximately 1/4th) was missing, he figured out that it was made in the name of a ruler entitled "Hosām-od-dowleh," and wrote a preliminary description sheet, suggesting two possible dynasts: A ruler of the Bāvandid dynasty of northern Iran, Shahriyār b. Qāran (r.1074-1114), or an Arab ruler,[208] and since the "dealer who had sold the piece had vouched that it was unearthed in Israel," he favored the latter possibility. In the aftermath of the Islamic revolution, the market for Iranian antiquities had weakened, while any item with an "Arab" pedigree was in high demand. The Israeli provenance pegged the plate to the latter category, and Spink's thus asked 50 thousand pounds for it, which was an exorbitant price in those days. The problem was that the contour contained another title, which Pinder-Wilson had not been able to decipher: *Esfahbod* (commander). It was a typical title of Northern-Iranian rulers, which obviously eliminated the "Arab" alternative. My reading of *esfahbod* must have been immediately relayed to the dealer, for, shortly after, he miraculously found the missing piece of the contour, and gave it to Spink's. It carried indeed the name "Shahriyār."[209]

In the meantime, I had returned to Paris and found that a similar piece had surfaced there. It was in the possession of a man named Sidi, whose father was the intermediary through whom Georges Demotte had bought the famous Il-Khānid *Shāhnāmeh* (i.e., *The Abu-Sa`id-nāmeh*). Sidi had given it to be straightened and cleaned, to the Maison André, a highly competent Parisian restoration house. It is there that their metal expert, Alain Millau,

illuminations, Bahari's manuscript must have fetched a high price, even before enhancement.

[207] Personal communication.

[208] I don't rember the name of the ruler Pinder-Wilson was proposing but he may have meant Moqallad b. Mosayyeb (996-1001) who reigned in Mosul.

[209] The intriguing question though was: Who was the dealer who had concocted this scheme? As he was surely Iranian, I investigated in the milieu of Iranian antique dealers of London, and was told that Nasser D. Khalili had offered it to Spink's, but since it was too risky a deal, Spink's had taken it on consignment with a provision that the first 20 thousand pounds of the proceeds will go to Khalili and the rest would be split fifty/fifty. As for the missing piece, Khalili threw it later into the deal—after its miraculous rediscovery—for an additional price of 5 thousand pounds. In those days, Khalili had an antique shop on Clifford Street, and when I visited him to verify this information, the SOAS professor who subsequently bestowed a PhD on him, Geza Fehrevary, was acting as his dorman. I couldn't get any confirmation from them, but oddly, when Khalili convinced a Brunei prince to jointly invest in Islamic art with him, he bought back the plate from Spink's.

explained to me how difficult it was to fix gold granules on such a wide contour, because one had to heat the silver first, and by the time one side was finished and one wanted to handle the other side, the high conductivity of the silver would cause the heat of the new side to hit the other gold granules, which would immediately fall off. He knew of no technician who could do it, had not seen anything similar before, and could find no fault in it.

The Parisian plate (fig. 177) was in the name of a son of Shahriyār b. Qāran, `Alā-od-dowleh `Ali (r. 1118-42), and was being offered at a much lower price. Its inscription read:

الدوله للاصفهبد الكبير علی بن شهريار بن قارن، ادام الله دولته

(May) the Great Esfahbod `Ali b. Shahriyār b. Qāran have a fortunate rulership, and may God prolong his good fortune

Different experts expressed their opinions, both pro and con, but none of them provided a solid argument. As far I was concerned, for every argument in support of its authenticity, I could also find one against it, and vice versa. As I was trying to study the history of these Iranian dynasts, I suddenly realized that a story of Sa`di about princes who unsuccessfully attempted to kill their brother (a story which my mother used to recite for me when I was a kid) actually pertained to 'Alā-od-dowleh 'Ali.[210] As I relayed this to my mother, we got both excited about the plate, but to minimize our exposure, we decided to acquire it through an exchange. We had in our collections a Saljuq bird-shaped bronze incense burner that did not relate to any other piece therein; it was swapped for the silver plate through the intermediary of an English dealer.[211] Our guess was: Iranian antique dealers must have unearthed one, and duplicated the other, and of the two, the Parisian one seemed more authentic, by the beauty of its inscription and by its double emphasis on *dowlat* (fortunate rulership), which reflected the reward for the travails that `Alā-od-dowleh `Ali had gone through, before ascending to the throne.

It turned out to be wishful thinking. No sooner had we done the exchange that two other plates popped up. One was a gold plate in the name of `Alā-od-dowleh `Ali, with inscriptions and arabesques incised on it. And the other was a silver plate in the name of a later ruler of the same dynasty, Hosām-od-dowleh Ardashir (r. 1173-1206), which was offered at a Parisian auction. At this stage, it seemed like a serial production by forgers who had opened one of the local histories of Tabarestān—either by Ebn-e Esfandiyār or Zahir-od-din-e Mar`ashi—and had the clever idea to produce plates citing obscure dynasts of that region. In addition, I found out that all four plates had been in the possession of the notorious dealer Ayoub Rabenou who had them for some time,[212] and had decided to liquidate them as old age was catching up with him. Rabenou had been a major conduit of fakes to institutions as well as individuals.

Fig. 177 - Fake silver plate in the name of `Alā-od-dowleh `Ali
EMS collections

All four plates seemed to be forgeries, and the common thread between them was the intricacy of the inscriptions, three in *kufic* and one in *thuluth*, all well-balanced and beautifully executed. The

[210] http://ganjoor.net/saadi/golestan/gbab1/sh3/,(*Golestān*, sec. 1, story 3)

[211] The bronze incence burner is now in the David collection of Copenhagen.

[212] Rabenou worked closely with Doris Duke on her Shangrila project, and it is perhaps through him that she got the Bustān manuscript that had the fake "Torābi Beyk" inscription and served as a prototype for many of Emāmi's creations, including figs. 155, 170.

designer/forger must have been the same, or of the caliber of the one who had designed the so-called Ālp Arslan plate of the Boston MFA (34.68), and it was most probably conceived by someone from the circle of Sadr-ol-afāzel. To find this person, I asked my mother to get in touch with an intermediary by the name of Hājj Taraqqi who had first introduced me to Fakhr-od-din-e Nasiri. To our surprise, the latter directed my mother to his less known brother, Āzarbod, who was a most talented master calligrapher with an ability to produce works in different scripts and different sizes. He did not divulge whether he was the culprit or not, but when my mother showed him a picture of the plates, he simply said "I advise you not to buy them." It was of course too late. Nevertheless, it dawned on me that he may still have the blueprints of many of his designs, and we offered through the same intermediary to buy his stock of blueprints, whenever he was ready for it. He refused, but kindly designed a *toghrā* in the name of my son Saadi.

Several years later, on the occasion of a trip to Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to take this plate to LACMA, where its chief conservator, Peter Meyers, saw nothing wrong with it after a brief inspection. I then began to provide information on its provenance and point out negative aspects of the plate. He immediately stopped me and gathered all his staff and asked me to repeat the story. He explained that this was not the type of information that his conservation staff was usually exposed to, and wanted them to benefit from it. He then reexamined the plate. After an hour of elaborate investigation and under a powerful microscope that projected the details of the plate on a screen, a concrete proof of forgery was found: There were tiny aging spots (probably acid-induced) in an area that could not have occurred naturally. At that point the piece was pronounced to be fake.

One must learn from mistakes. This silver-plate episode allowed me to get a better knowledge of the circle of Sadr-ol-afāzel and his progenies, and the ingenuity that they displayed in conceiving and creating their forgeries. I now see the same ingenuity in the circle of Mirzā Āqā Emāmi, who most probably cooperated with the former circle, as they all used the same intermediaries to sell their products abroad. A very elaborate door that was recently auctioned in London, is clearly from the Emāmi atelir despite the fact that it has an inscription stating that it was commissioned by Shāh `Abbās I in the year 1041 AH (1631) (fig. 178).[213] It was clearly made for foreign markets, and like so many other doors from the same atelier ended up abroad.[214] As for Zhang Daqian and his atelier, the decision to produce works in their own name or as forgeries, depended on market demand. When there was little demand for their own works and undiscerning foreign markets eagerly bought antique-looking works of art, the temptation to take make forgeries prevailed.

By presenting this brief survey on the Safavid-revival school of painting, I can only hope that other researchers may be able to shed more light on the subject.

Fig. 178 - Elaborately painted door from the Emāmi atelier, bearing an inscription in the name of Shāh `Abbās[213]

[213] Christie's London, sale of Apr. 21, 2016, lot 145, correctly catalogued as a product of the Emāmi atelier.
[214] Many were sold by H. Khan Monif (*idem*), whose father Reza Khan Monif was an active dealer in Paris before 1923.

Epilogue

Miniature paintings were always produced for the elite, and mostly for manuscript illustration. As such, they were confined to libraries that only a privileged few had access to. Pioneering enthusiasts like F.R. Martin had to travel to cities across two continents to discover paintings. And yet, Martin was able to gather and reproduce—in 1912—the majority of today's known masterpieces, and intelligently regroup them in a book (Martin 1912), at a time when Persian painting was fairly unknown. Ivan Stchoukine, who was active in mid-20th century, worked mostly off of black-and-white photos, and was able to compensate his lack of access to the actual miniatures with his inherited sensitivity for paintings, and his belief in the importance of the historical context.[215] Dickson and Welch had the rare opportunity to have all 258 miniatures of the *Shāhnāmeh-ye Shāhi* at their disposal, and to compare them with the thousands of slides that Cary Welch had gathered from different collections. Fortuitous connections can of course open doors, but all of these scholars mainly used their enormous passion for miniatures to overcome access problems in order to study them.

Things are now different. A host of new publications, as well as the digital revolution, is changing the basic premises of miniature studies. There is no type of artwork in the world that is better rendered in print, or on a digital screen. And since all important collections are gradually putting their treasures online, the access problem is becoming less and less relevant. We now have better means to evaluate past studies, especially the conclusions of D&W 1981.

The three studies that I have criticized here neither take advantage of new technologies, nor value old school connoisseurship. They make gratuitous assertions without verifying their validity. Their unwarranted conclusions, however, gave me the impetus for the reevaluation of complex and hitherto ill-understood art works. The quest to counter their false claims pushed me to delve deeper into works that I had only superficially studied in the past, and to discover peculiarities that could not be understood at first sight. Unwarranted claims and false conclusions are therefore not wholly devoid of benefits, and I must thank the authors of the aforementioned studies for stirring controversies that brought renewed attention to these enigmatic masterpieces.

Finally, I wish to stress the importance of new technologies for the better understanding of paintings, especially those that have been reworked in different stages. Infrared Reflectography (IRR), for instance, can provide precise information on additions and modifications. A case in point is the analysis of the British Museum's *Reading Youth*, originally sketched by Mohammadi, and finished by Rezā-ye `Abbāsi. The expansion of the original turban, which can be more or less observed by the naked eye (fig. 179), is much better rendered in IRR.[216] Same must be done with many of the miniatures discussed in this study, in order to better assess the reworking they were subjected to.

Fig. 179 – Detail of *Reading Youth*, with an original turban by Mohammadi, expanded by Rezā `Abbāsi (beyond the ↑) (British Museum, ME 1920.0917.0)

[215] Ivan Stchoukine was the son of Sergei Stchoukine whose collection of Impressionist paintings is at the heart of the Hermitage collection in St Petersburg.

[216] Upon my request, Ladan Akbarnia of the British Museum has conducted an IRR on this painting, the result of which she will hopefully publish in the near future.

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Martin Dickson once confided to Stuart Cary Welch "that twenty five years would pass before our fellow specialists would fully comprehend what we had achieved." The "achievement" he was referring to is the monumental double volume *The Houghton Shahnama* (1981), still ill-understood thirty five years later. Their "achievement" is a treasure trove of information that needs to be rediscovered and reused. Three recent papers that tried to discredit Dickson and Welch provided the impetus to revisit some of the complex manuscripts that they had analyzed, and to discover historical details that provide a better insight into Safavid society.

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