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Editor

Gülru Necipoğlu

Managing Editor

Karen A. Leal

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CONTENTS

Gülru Necipoğlu, Reflections on Thirty Years of *Muqarnas* 1

Benedict Cuddon, A Field Pioneered by Amateurs: The Collecting and Display of Islamic Art in Early Twentieth-Century Boston 13

Silvia Armando, Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881–1954) and the Establishment of Islamic Art Studies in Italy 35

Ayşin Yoltar-Yildirim, Raqqa: The Forgotten Excavation of an Islamic Site in Syria by the Ottoman Imperial Museum in the Early Twentieth Century 73

D. Fairchild Ruggles, At the Margins of Architectural and Landscape History: The Rajputs of South Asia 95

Jennifer Pruitt, Method in Madness: Recontextualizing the Destruction of Churches in the Fatimid Era 119

Peter Christensen, "As if she were Jerusalem": Placemaking in Sephardic Salonica 141

David J. Roxburgh, In Pursuit of Shadows: Al-Hariri's *Maqāmāt* 171

Abolala Soudavar, The Patronage of the Vizier Mirza Salman 213

Lâle Uluç, An *Iskandarnāma* of Nizami Produced for Ibrahim Sultan 235

NOTES AND SOURCES

Serpil Bağci, Presenting *Vaṣṣāl* Kalender's Works: The Prefaces of Three Ottoman Albums 255

Gülru Necipoğlu, "Virtual Archaeology" in Light of a New Document on the Topkapı Palace's Waterworks and Earliest Buildings, circa 1509 315

Ebba Koch, The Wooden Audience Halls of Shah Jahan: Sources and Reconstruction 351

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ABOLALA SOUDAVAR

THE PATRONAGE OF THE VIZIER MIRZA SALMAN

One often makes suggestions, or proposes theories, without ever discovering new material to reassess them. Thus, when in 2000 I surmised, in *Muqarnas* 17, that the *Dīvān* of Hafiz originally dated 989 (1581) (Topkapı Palace Museum Library [henceforth TSMK], Ms. H. 986) was made for the vizier Mirza Salman (d. 1583), I never expected additional corroborating elements to come up one day. My proposition then rested on the fact that the Topkapı *Dīvān* was illustrated by artists who subsequently worked on the vizier's 990 (1582) *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn* (Attributes of Lovers), and was thus likely to have been prepared for the same patron.[1] Two additional manuscripts, which recently appeared on the art market, not only confirm those assumptions and attributions, but also shed more light on the patronage of Mirza Salman and his relationship with the artist Muhammadi (fl. sixteenth century): one is a copy of the *Būstān* of Saʿdi dated 987 (1579) and the other a manuscript of the *Salāmān va Absāl* dated 979 (1572), which are both now part of the E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection.[2] In this article I shall discuss the merits of each and try to illustrate the role of Mirza Salman in filling the void in Safavid courtly patronage after the devastating blows that Shah Ismaʿil II (r. 1576–78) inflicted upon the Safavid royal family, and hence, on royal patronage. The key figure in our discussion shall be the painter Muhammadi, whose uncanny ability to pick up stories for allegorical and double-purpose illustrations endeared him to erudite patrons in need of producing thematically sophisticated manuscripts. In conclusion, I shall emphasize once more the pivotal role of the library-atelier of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (d. 1577), the nephew and son-in-law of Shah Tahmasb I (r. 1524–76), in the training of artists who would pave the way for the development of the next important school of painting—namely that of Riza ʿAbbasi (d. ca. 1630–31) and his followers—and the central role of Muhammadi as the lead figure in this transition process.

I. THE 1579 *BŪSTĀN* OF SAʿDI

The 1579 *Būstān* is a sumptuous manuscript whose probable passage through the Indian lands has resulted in two types of damage.[3] The first consists of extensive wear and tear on the periphery of the manuscript, as well as termite holes close to the covers, including the colophon page (fig. 3 [figs. 1–24 are placed together at the end of the article]). The second is damage through an act of vandalism committed by a religious bigot, who took it upon himself to deface the miniature figures in a most vicious way: by removing the paint with the tip of a sharp knife, penetrating sometimes into the core of paper (fig. 1). Luckily though, he lacked thoroughness in his destructive aims, since one illustration escaped his attention and remains unscathed (fig. 5). The vandal also seems to have concentrated his defacing zeal on the courtiers, while sparing attendants and commoners. The smearing on the pages has now been cleaned, and lacunae have been filled through the efforts of the master restorer Ahmad Moghbel.[4] But the faces remain blank, as no restorer can recreate the expressions emanating from the brush of the original master painter.

The colophon of the manuscript (fig. 3) reads:

> (This book) was completed by the help of God and through His benevolence. Has written it, this sinful slave who longs for the forgiveness of the Lord of the Earth and Heavens, Sultan-Husayn, in the months of the year 987 of the Hijra (1579).

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It obviously has much in common with the original colophon of the above-mentioned Topkapı manuscript (fig. 4), which reads:

> The (copying) of these noble and auspicious sayings was finished by the hands of this needy weakling who yearns for the favors of the Lord of the Two Worlds, Sultan-Husayn son of Qasim of Tun, may God forgive them both, on the 20th of the holy month of Ramadan of the year 985 after the Hijra (Nov. 30, 1577).[5]

They are both by the same hand, penned by the calligrapher Sultan-Hosayn of Tun. Similarly, the elaborate frontispiece of the 1579 *Būstān* is signed by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib (fig. 2), in a location reminiscent of his signature on the frontispiece of the Topkapı *Dīvān* of Hafiz,[6] as well as on that of the Freer's celebrated *Haft Awrang* manuscript commissioned by Ibrahim Mirza.[7]

As for the illustrations of the 1579 *Būstān*, since none of them seem to belong to the known repertoire of illustrated *Būstān* manuscripts, I shall explain that they were chosen specifically to evoke important events in the political life of Mirza Salman,[8] who figures allegorically in each of the four paintings. Since as a group they narrate the vizier's rise to power, rather than present them in the order they appear in the manuscript, I shall weave them into a brief biography of the vizier in order to show the relevance of each illustration.

The historical narrative

Mirza Salman was a scion of the powerful Jabiri Ansari family of Isfahan, whose members traced their ancestry to Jabir b. ʿAbdullah-i Ansari, one of the early companions (*anṣār*) of the Prophet Muhammad. His father had achieved high rank in the Safavid administration, and the young Salman followed suit under his tutelage.[9] He soon became the superintendent of the royal household (*nāẓir-i buyūtāt*), and it is in this capacity that, after the demise of Shah Tahmasb (r. 1524–76), he accompanied Ibrahim Mirza to greet Tahmasb's successor, Ismaʿil II, on the outskirts of Qazvin in May 1576. He was initially appointed chief scribe to the vizier Mirza Shukrullah (d. 1581),[10] but he must have quickly gained the favor of the new shah, because within a year he was nominated as grand vizier (*vazīr-i aʿlā*) in lieu of Mirza Shukrullah himself,[11] at a time when Ismaʿil had consolidated his power and was ready to eliminate all potential contenders.

"The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes" (fig. 6)

This folio, the third and, as noted earlier, only intact miniature of the book, illustrates Mirza Salman witnessing, from close quarters, the momentous decision of Ismaʿil II to decimate each and every possible contender to the throne (fig. 6). Being apprehensive about the Qizilbash amirs' reaction to such a decision, Ismaʿil moved cautiously and put a group of six princes under house arrest, each guarded by a trusted lieutenant. He then seized upon an incident, perhaps instigated by himself, to divert attention from his scheme: he neutralized the Qizilbash amirs by sending them to quell the unruly Safavid dervishes who had attacked the city guardsmen, while concurrently ordering his lieutenants to do away with the princes in their custody. Once he got word that all six princes had been killed, he came back and pardoned the arrested dervishes who had been brought to court.[12]

The *Būstān* story chosen to illustrate this episode is one from the fourth section, on the theme of humbling: while visiting the local markets in disguise, a Syrian king overhears two dervishes disparaging him; he summons them to his court in order to reprimand them, but heeds their pleas and ends up releasing them.[13]

The common denominator to the two stories embedded in this painting is that the dervishes who face punishment in both are ultimately pardoned. However, while the Saʿdi story specifies the number of dervishes as only two, our miniature depicts one more—slightly apart—in order to allude to the higher number of Safavid dervishes involved in the attack against the city guardsmen. As witness to the shah's sinister ploy, Mirza Salman stands in the doorway holding a ministerial staff; he signals his detachment from the scheme by turning his head and feigning disapproval through a murmur addressed to a young subordinate, perhaps his own son. The king, though, is listening to the dervishes, and seems noticeably satisfied, presumably after receiving the reports of the execution of the Safavid princes, conveyed by the lieutenant holding a bow and standing behind him. In the Iranian tradition, the spilling of the

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blood of princes portended bad omen. Consequently, they were usually executed through strangulation by a bowstring;[14] hence the brandishing of the bow by the shah's acolyte.

In my 2000 article in *Muqarnas*, I had enumerated a number of stylistic characteristics for Muhammadi's paintings,[15] many of which are recognizable here, including: his penchant for transgressing the text frame and blending the image into the margins; the intercolumnar gold foliage and arabesques on a lapis background; pencil-thin headgear batons; the arrow-shaped fingers of his plane-tree leaves; and his signature motif of an interacting pair of foxes. The highly polished painted surface and the crispness of details notwithstanding, we can see the true measure of Muhammadi's genius in the facial expressions of his various actors (fig. 5): the dervishes have an apprehensive look fearing the wrath of the shah; the latter is attentive to the pleas of the dervishes and looks amused; Mirza Salman feigns disinterest, while his young subordinate urges him—through finger pointing—to listen to the shah's disingenuous questioning of the dervishes.

"A black man abusing a young girl" (*fig. 7*)

The last painting in the manuscript, from the section on education, illustrates Mirza Salman's role in the discovery of Isma'il II's death (fig. 7).

Safavid princes often indulged in wine, opium, and homosexual affairs. Incarcerated for years in the remote fortress of Qahqaha, Isma'il had developed a penchant for all three. Once he consolidated his power and eliminated his rivals, he set his eyes on one Hasan Bayg, the son of the *ḥalvāchī* (halva maker), who became his lover. On the eve of November 24, 1577, Isma'il and Hasan Bayg had roamed around town, consuming a fair amount of *falūniyā* (a potent mixture of opium and cannabis),[16] in addition to drinking heavily. Later in the night, they retired to Hasan Bayg's quarters, but neither could rise the next morning. By noontime, as a faint voice crying for help was heard through the locked doors, Mirza Salman took it upon himself to break the lock and enter the private quarters of the king's lover. A suffocated Isma'il lay motionless and breathless on the ground, while holding Hasan Bayg in his arms, whose limbs were equally numbed. The shah died shortly thereafter; his debilitated lover, who survived, explained that the bottle of *falūniyā* (known as a *huqqa*) they had consumed the night before had been unsealed and tampered with, suggesting foul play from Isma'il's enemies, of which he had many.[17]

A story of Sa'di, in which he encounters a black man abusing his beautiful slave,[18] provides the necessary setting for the illustration of the decisive role that Mirza Salman played in the events that led to the discovery of Isma'il's death. Because suffocation is commonly referred to in Persian as "turning black," the image of a black man squeezing a young girl in his arms was meant to evoke the fate of Isma'il lying asphyxiated next to his beloved Hasan Bayg. Thus, the old man watching the entangled pair parallels the vizier bursting in on the scene and discovering the dying men.

The private quarters that Isma'il had set up for Hasan Bayg were next to the secretarial palace (*daftarkhāna*), and one door opened onto the royal equestrian square (*meydān-i asb*).[19] It was attached to the *dawlatkhāna* (government house), built during Tahmasb's reign as a pavilion surrounded by gardens.[20]

Although the death scene is transplanted into a garden in order to reflect the *Būstān* story, it is accurately placed by the side of the *dawlatkhāna*, marked by an elaborate dome not mentioned in the *Būstān*. The first building must be the *daftarkhāna*, with the small pavilion in between the *daftarkhāna* and the *dawlatkhāna* depicting the private quarters of the shah's lover, where they were actually found.

"Jealousy among rivals" (*fig. 8*)

This illustration, from the section on justice (the first section of the *Būstān*), depicts how the rise of a court functionary to the post of vizier arouses the jealousy of his predecessor (fig. 8).[21] It admirably reflects Mirza Salman's maneuvers to take the place of Shah Isma'il II's original vizier, Mirza Shukrullah. In the illustration, the kneeling Mirza Salman, as the newcomer, pleads his case before the king by refuting accusations brought by Mirza Shukrullah, portrayed as the older vizier in a red silk robe standing in the doorway and holding the ministerial staff.

In the preamble to this *Būstān* story, the newcomer deflects the attacks of his rival by arguing that:

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کجا بر زبان آورد جز بدم حسودی که بیند بجای خودم

How can he not say bad things about me,
the jealous rival who sees me taking his place.

به فرسنگ باید ز مکرش گریخت وزیری که جاه من آبش بریخت

One must run far away, from the malevolence of a vizier
who lost face by my rise to prominence.

While some of these verses seem to be better than others in terms of encapsulating the key theme around which this miniature should have been composed,[22] the artist instead selected a verse in which the functionary cites, as proof of his devotion to the king, his long years of service in his retinue and how he lost his pearl-like teeth in the process:

دو رسته دُرم در دهن داشت جای
چو دیواری از خشت سیمین بنای

I had two rows of pearl-like teeth in my mouth,
like a wall built out of silvery bricks.

We can only assume that the prominence of this verse in the composition was an obvious clue to the identity of Mirza Salman, one that a contemporary reader would have immediately understood. Unfortunately, no other document gives us a physical description of Mirza Salman to ascertain the veracity of this hypothesis. Two additional clues, however, corroborate the identity of the kneeling man: a) he has a golden pen box tucked into his waistband, befitting Mirza Salman's position as chief scribe before his assumption of the vizierate; and b) he is depicted with a distinctive black beard (figs. 9 and 11), consistent not only with all other images of him in this manuscript, but also with the elaborate face of a dervish depicted by the artist Shaykh Muhammad, which I had previously surmised to represent Mirza Salman (fig. 10).[23]

"A devout man being beheaded unjustly" (*fig. 12*)

The second illustration of the manuscript, also from the section on justice, is its grandest. It fittingly evokes the crucial event that propelled Mirza Salman to the forefront of the political stage and placed the reins of power in his hands, albeit for only a few years.

After Isma'il II's death, the amirs "in the company of the Asaf of the age [i.e., Mirza Salman][24] went to Pari Khan Khanum [d. 1578] in order to discuss the fate of the kingdom and kingship."[25] The latter was Tahmasb's influential daughter, who in the last years of her father's reign had become all powerful and acted as his *éminence grise*. Upon the death of Tahmasb, she championed the cause of Isma'il against all other candidates, thinking that some twenty years in prison had taken a toll on him, and that she could continue to play her role of *éminence grise* as before. But contrary to her expectations, no sooner had Isma'il ascended to the throne than he put her under house arrest and lured her powerful uncle, the Circassian Shamkhal Sultan (d. 1578), into the circle of his close lieutenants in charge of princely executions.

Mirza Salman knew very well that with Isma'il II gone, Pari Khan Khanum would take revenge on all those who had prospered at her expense, especially the grand vizier. Therefore, before the princess could close the gates of the city, he escaped toward Shiraz, where the only surviving son of Tahmasb, the blind Shah Muhammad (r. 1578–87), was preparing to go to the capital. In Shiraz, he offered his services to the new king and his very ambitious wife, Mahd-i Ulya (d. 1579), in whom he saw an ally against Pari Khan Khanum. Mahd-i Ulya quickly understood that unless the princess were eliminated, the amirs would gravitate toward her and not the queen. Thus, her first act upon arrival in Qazvin was to order the execution of Pari Khan Khanum, along with her uncle, Shamkhal Sultan.[26] The road was then cleared for the vizier not only to assume control of the administration, as before, but also to hold sway over the military, supposedly on behalf of the queen.

A joint attack by the Ottoman commander Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha (d. 1584) and the Crimean Tatar prince 'Adil Giray Khan (d. 1578) provided the opportunity for Mirza Salman to prove his military valor. The invaders were defeated, Osman Pasha fled to Shirvan, and 'Adil Giray Khan was captured. Rather than allowing Mirza Salman to pursue his campaign, the queen summoned him back to court, along with his prisoner.

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Capitalizing on "her" military victory, Mahd-i Ulya decided to settle some old scores with her own cousins, who, by a decision of Tahmasb, had taken the governorship of Mazandaran, once a fiefdom of her father. The first military expedition resulted in the capture of a local governor named Shams al-Din-i Div (d. 1578). Angry at the amirs' failure to capture Mirza Khan (d. 1578), the ruler of Mazandaran, whom she saw as a usurper, she ordered a new expedition. The two veteran commanders, Pira Muhammad and Shahrukh Sultan, realized that they could not seize the lofty mountain fortress in which Mirza Khan had taken refuge. They therefore negotiated his surrender by giving their word that he would not be executed. Meanwhile, Mahd-i Ulya not only commanded the execution of the Tatar prisoner, but paraded Shams al-Din through the city in a most humiliating way before killing him. When Mirza Khan arrived, she ordered his execution as well, despite the objections of the veteran amirs and the pleas from various courtiers for clemency. Seeing the vengefulness of the queen and fearing for their own lives, the Qizilbash amirs decided to eliminate her and she was executed shortly thereafter.[27]

The one who gained the most from all these events was, of course, Mirza Salman, who had a hand in the plot and now stood unchallenged in the political arena. With all his rivals eliminated, he further consolidated his position by marrying his daughter to the young prince Hamza Mirza (d. 1586), the elder son of the blind Shah Muhammad.[28] But less than two years later, the vizier's arrogance caused his own downfall, and he in turn was assassinated by the very Qizilbash amirs whom he had used to eliminate his enemies.

As a defining moment in the political career of Mirza Salman, the killing of Mirza Khan thus constituted an event that had to be grandly illustrated. To portray this scene, Muhammadi used the *Būstān* story of the beheading of an innocent, devout man on the order of the famous Umayyad viceroy of Iran, Hajjaj b. Yusuf (d. 714),[29] in lieu of the beheading of Mirza Khan, whom the Safavid chronicles describe as *Sayyidzāda-i bīgunāh* (the innocent descendant of the Prophet Muhammad).[30]

At the same time, the killing of the queen was a reprehensible deed that needed justification. It had to be portrayed as a reaction to an odious act, one reviled even by the queen's own son. The verses embedded at the top of the page, which explain the subject of the illustration, emphasize this point. But in the manuscripts of this period, this verse appears in two ways: in some, it is an anonymous person (*yakī* [one]) who addresses the king, but in others, it is the son (*pisar*) who stands before the ruler and pleads for the innocence of the about-to-be-executed kneeling man (in the table below, the former is presented in parentheses, while our manuscript's version is underlined):[31]

(یکی) پسر گفتش ای نامور شهریار	(One) *His son* told him, O great king,
(بیا) یکی دست ازین مرد صالح بدار	(come,) let this pious man be free, *at once.*
که خلقی بدو روی دارند و پشت	Whom many trust and rely upon,
نه رایست خلقی بیکبار کُشت	it is not wise to alienate with one stroke so many people.

Whether by chance or by choice, the version adopted for this manuscript is the one that most emphasized the opposition of Hamza Mirza to the king's decision (in reality his mother's) to behead the innocent sayyid.

II. INHERITING THE IBRAHIM MIRZA LIBRARY-ATELIER

With the discovery of this *Būstān* manuscript, which we have argued was commissioned by Mirza Salman, we can see that soon after the demise of Ibrahim Mirza, the vizier appropriated for himself the services of two painters from the prince's library-atelier, namely, Abdullah-i Muzahhib and Muhammadi, from whom he would later commission more works. This should come as no surprise, since his position as superintendent of royal households under Tahmasb had brought him into close contact with Ibrahim Mirza, who was court minister (*ishīk āqāsī bāshī*) at that time.[32] By the year 1579, the senior contributors to the prince's celebrated *Haft Awrang* (Freer 46.12), namely, Aqa Mirak, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz, Mirza ʿAli, and Muzaffar ʿAli must have either all died or been incapacitated.[33] The hand of Shaykh

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Muhammad (fl. latter half of the sixteenth century), however, who was younger and still alive, is conspicuously absent in the first two manuscripts of the vizier, i.e., his 1579 *Būstān* of Saʿdi and 1581 *Dīvān* of Hafiz. The artist's turbulent compositions may not have been to the liking of Mirza Salman, who seems to have favored more classical settings. Shaykh Muhammad's hand, however, reappears in the 1582 *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn*,[34] perhaps because the latter manuscript was commissioned as a gift destined for the crown prince Hamza Mirza. The addition of a work by a third painter from the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza (besides ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib and Muhammadi) would have enhanced the prestige of such a work, but his subtle humor may have amused the young prince as well. Indeed, in the last painting of said manuscript, namely "The poor man and the prince," Shaykh Muhammad adds a humorous touch by twisting the foot of the polo-playing prince backward (fig. 13). As a result, his foot engages the stirrup in the wrong direction and in an anatomically impossible manner! This is a device that the painter had tried for a pastoral scene, in which one of the princesses actually has two left hands (fig. 14).[35] A closer look even shows that this came as an afterthought, and the painter deliberately reworked the hand to create a physically impossible gesture.

Similarly, in a tinted drawing that is also attributable to Shaykh Muhammad, he has cleverly twisted the posterior of the main rider-huntsman by placing it where his knee should have been (fig. 15). Indeed, the two opening flaps of the Safavid overcoat must open in front and in continuation of the buttoned upper torso, while here they are situated on the opposite side (see, for instance, fig. 16, for a correct depiction of the same pose by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib[36]). Humor, craftsmanship, and dexterity had all contributed to energizing the Mashhad school of painting that characterized the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza.

As Persian chronicles of this period emphasize, Ibrahim Mirza's atelier had produced a new crop of painters whose association with the prince was a source of enormous prestige. Thus, the legend *Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī* on one of the paintings of the 1581 *Dīvān* of Hafiz clearly denotes affiliation to the prince's library-atelier (fig. 17). But said painting is visibly attributable to Muhammadi, and, as argued elsewhere, this added attribution must have been the result of confusing explanations provided by the Safavid mission that brought the manuscript to the Porte, circa 1587.[37] Members of that mission were surely trying to enhance the value of their gifts by explaining that Muhammadi was like the "Bihzad" of Ibrahim Mirza. The metaphor was probably lost on the Ottomans, who simply seem to have understood the painter's name as *Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī*. From our perspective, though, this appellation is indicative of the state of mind of the Safavid delegation, as well as of the prestige of Ibrahim Mirza's atelier in Safavid circles. Bypassing any reference to Tahmasb, they were equating Ibrahim Mirza's library-atelier with that of the Timurid Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506), and regarded the painter Muhammadi as its Bihzad.

The Gulistan Library's Silsilat al-dhahab

If Muhammadi was really the star of Ibrahim Mirza's atelier—at least in its latter days—we should be able to find more of his works from this period. I believe that an illustrated manuscript of the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami at the Gulistan Library in Tehran (no. 671), copied in Ramadan 977 (February–March 1570) by the calligrapher Babashah, may be relevant in this respect.[38] Although of modest size (24.5 cm × 15.5 cm), it is distinguished by its glittering, gold-speckled margins and the beauty of its fourteen miniatures, a few of which are attributable to Muhammadi. "Moses carrying a sheep on his shoulders" (fig. 20), for instance, already incorporates many elements that we have recognized as characteristic of his style: a typical ascending mountainous landscape sprinkled with red and blue flowers, an imposing plane tree with his favored autumn-colored leaves, a prominent running stream, and, most importantly, a goat descending the rocks alongside his favorite black-and-white colored goat. This is a subject that he revisited in the 1580s, with his single contribution to Hamza Mirza's magnificent *Haft Awrang* (TSMK, Ms. H. 1483, fol. 130b).[39] Another painting, "The imam Zayn al-ʿAbidin visiting the Kaʿba" (fig. 21), displays Muhammadi's fondness for scrollwork illumination, visible on the blue and black portions of the Kaʿba coverings. As for the faces, one can already notice his penchant for open-ended eye contours as well as for a black beauty spot on the cheek, which characterizes, for instance, the face of the prince

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and even that of simple attendants in his painting in the 1582 *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn* (figs. 18 and 19).[40]

This manuscript also puts into evidence Muhammadi's talents as an illuminator and book cover painter. We had previously attributed a Topkapı binding to him on the basis of its figures.[41] The illumination pattern on the binding here (fig. 22) ties in with the margin illumination of the "Jealousy among rivals" in the *Būstān*, as well as the decorative scheme of the back wall therein, especially in terms of its pheasants perched in the trees and flapping their wings (fig. 8). We thus see in Muhammadi an accomplished painter who could by himself manage the entire illustrative and decorative program of a manuscript, including its binding.

While the study of this magnificent manuscript merits a separate monograph, on the basis of the published material, one can already attribute at least two paintings in it to Muzaffar-ʿAli, as well as one to ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib.[42] Therefore, not only does its roster of artists point to an affiliation with the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza, but its sumptuousness vouches for an expensive production affordable only by a prince of high rank. As for Babashah, he was the master calligrapher who was credited with bringing the *nastaʿlīq* script to full maturity during the sixteenth century.[43] And as such, he was the most accomplished calligrapher of his age, and the most suitable choice for a connoisseur such as Ibrahim Mirza, in lieu of calligraphers like Malik-i Daylami (d. 1562), who had participated in the production of the Freer *Haft Awrang* but was no longer available. It is with the Gulistan Library's *Silsilat al-dhahab* in mind that we shall speculate on the patronage of our next manuscript.

The Salāmān va Absāl

Copied in Dhu'l-Hijja 979 (April–May 1572) by the same calligrapher, Babashah, one could, of course, see the *Salāmān va Absāl* as a sequel to the previous manuscript, especially since its lone illustration is attributable to Muhammadi (fig. 24). Both texts are part of the *Haft Awrang* of Jami, but whereas the *Silsilat al-dhahab* shines by its opulence, the *Salāmān va Absāl* is a mere shadow of the former work. Slightly smaller in size (20.1 cm × 11.9 cm), its decorative program is meager, with just the one illustration (fig. 24) and one small opening heading. Its binding, however, closely imitates that of the *Silsilat al-dhahab* (fig. 23). It is as though a member of the prince's circle such as Mirza Salman, having seen the previous manuscript, desired to have a similar one, but unable to afford it, settled on a more modest version. Given the constant presence of Muhammadi in the later manuscripts of Mirza Salman, one can reasonably speculate that the relationship between the two developed at an earlier stage, when the artist was still in the employ of Ibrahim Mirza. For it seems that, in addition to his talent as an artist, Muhammadi had the intellectual capacity to find a suitable text and match it with an inventive composition in order to allude to contemporary events. From one patron to another, he continued to create such compositions, even during the Uzbek occupation of Herat (1588–98).[44] It may be precisely this intellectual capacity that endeared the artist to Mirza Salman, who was himself fond of metaphors, and famously pronounced this verse from Jami, "To be 'double-sighted' is to be fickle / the object of love is one and only one," to prevent the split of the Safavid empire between two competing factions, one supporting Hamza Mirza and the other his younger brother, ʿAbbas, the future Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1587–1628).[45]

CONCLUSION

In the person of Mirza Salman we can see a patron who was well acquainted with the library-atelier of Ibrahim Mirza, who had built a rapport with its artists, and who, for a short while after the demise of the prince, picked up his mantle and began to commission a series of prestigious manuscripts in the same tradition. At the center of this new activity stood Muhammadi, who, by mixing the styles of his predecessors, namely Mirza ʿAli and Shaykh Muhammad, pushed the development of Persian painting into a looser and more fluid mode, thereby paving the way for the next generation of painters.[46]

While there was perhaps a short lull in patronage from the assassination of Ibrahim Mirza to the ascendance of Mirza Salman—in which period Muhammadi reverted to tinted drawings[47]—the vizier's ambition to pick up the mantle of Ibrahim Mirza must have generated much hope for the remaining Safavid artists. In addition, the coming of age of Hamza Mirza and the for-

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mation of his princely atelier invigorated Safavid artistic activity. In both cases, the lead artist had been trained in the atelier of Ibrahim Mirza: the vizier had taken Muhammadi under his wings, while the prince relied on Farrukh Beyg, who was from a family of Georgian slaves devoted to the Safavid household.[48] Even though the vizier had strengthened his ties to Hamza Mirza by giving him his own daughter in marriage, one feels that there was nevertheless a sense of competition between the two in terms of patronage. The prince, however, had the edge because of his vaster resources—not only in terms of artists but also because of the works he had inherited from Ibrahim Mirza's atelier, such as the unfinished *Haft Awrang* (TSMK, Ms. H.1483), which he gave to Farrukh Beyg to refurbish.[49] Both ateliers were short-lived and disappeared with the early deaths of their respective patrons, Mirza Salman in 1583, and Hamza Mirza in 1586. In terms of a legacy though, it was the school of Muhammadi that marked the next generation of Persian artists. Muhammadi's fluid style and airy penmanship had a lasting impact because it was adopted and propagated by the celebrated Riza ʻAbbas—who referred to Muhammadi as *ustād* (master).[50] On the other hand, Farrukh Beyg's highly polished style and his emphasis on elaborate idiosyncratic facial expressions were best suited to the Indian subcontinent—where he took refuge after leaving the Safavid court circa 1585—and abandoned in Iran after his departure.

Finally, should our assessment of the patronage of the 1572 *Salāmān va Absāl* and 1579 *Būstān* manuscripts be correct, we can view them as evidence of a growing trend among non-royal patrons who commissioned illustrated manuscripts in parallel or in competition with princely ateliers. But in this context, it is the occasional interaction of erudite viziers such as Mirza Salman with sophisticated painters such as Muhammadi that gave rise to the creation of sumptuous but enigmatic manuscripts such as the 1579 *Būstān,* whose illustration program cleverly mirrored the historical events described in the text.

Independent scholar,
Houston, Texas

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Fig. 1. Detail, showing examples of damaged faces, of fig. 12, "A devout man being beheaded unjustly," by Muhammadi. From the *Būstān* of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 2. Frontispiece, signed by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib. From the *Būstān* of Saʿdi, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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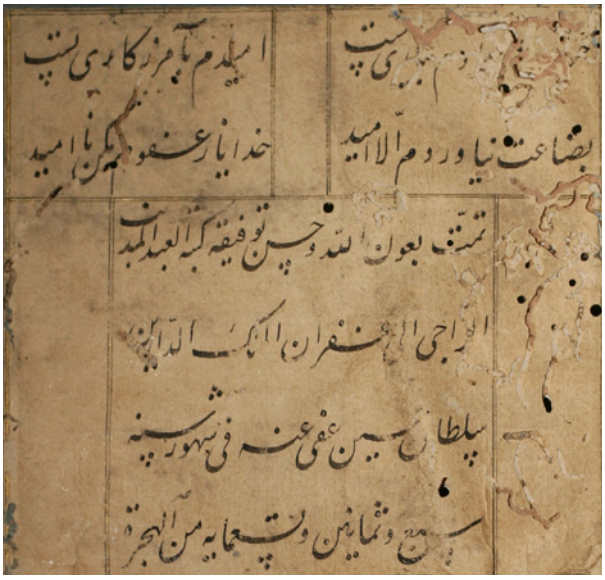

Fig. 3. Colophon of the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

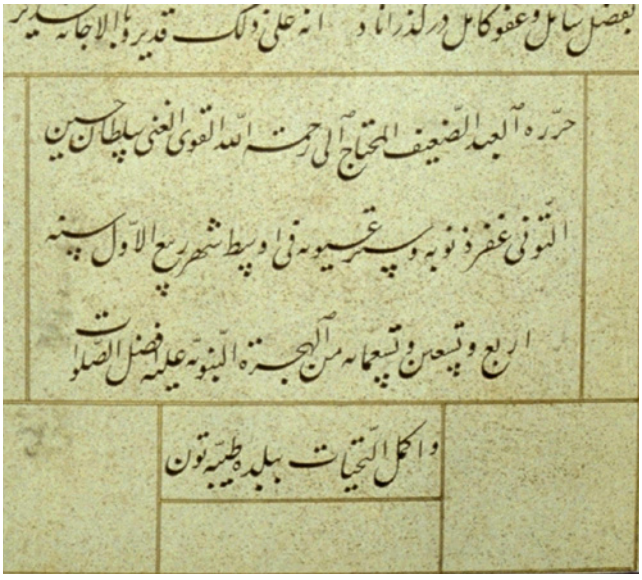

Fig. 4. Colophon of the *Dīvān* of Hafiz, dated 989 (1581). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSMK), Ms. H. 986. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

Fig. 5. Detail, showing the variety in facial expressions, of fig. 6, "The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes," by Muhammadi. From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 6. Muhammadi, "The Syrian king and the apprehensive dervishes." From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 7. Muhammadi, "A black man abusing a young girl." From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 8. Muhammadi, "Jealousy among rivals." From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 9. Detail of fig. 8, Muhammadi's "Jealousy among rivals," showing a golden pen box tucked into the waistband of a figure identified as Mirza Salman. From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 10. Detail, showing Mirza Salman, of fig. 12, "A devout man being beheaded unjustly," by Muhammadi. From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579), Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 11. Detail, showing Mirza Salman, of "The poor man and the prince," by Shaykh Muhammad. From the *Ṣifāt al-'āshiqīn*, dated 989–90 (1582), fol. 55r. Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York, 1992), cat. 90c. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 12. Muhammadi, "A devout man being beheaded unjustly." From the *Būstān* of Sa'di, dated 987 (1579). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 13. Detail, showing a twisted foot, of "The poor man and the prince," by Shaykh Muhammad. From the *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn*, dated 989–90 (1582), fol. 55r. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 90c. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 14. Detail, showing a princess's twisted right hand, of the pastoral scene "Ladies preparing a picnic," by Shaykh Muhammad. University of Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 180, fol. 192. (Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby, eds., *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran 1501–1576* [Milan, 2006], 132.)

Fig. 15. Detail of a "Hunting scene," attributable to Shaykh Muhammad (single folio). Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, F1954.32. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 16. Detail of "Horseman and running page," by ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib (single folio). Washington, D.C., Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1958.62. (Photo: courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Museum)

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Fig. 17. Detail of "Dervishes together," attributed to Bihzad-i Ibrahimi (i.e., Muhammadi). From the *Dīvān* of Hafiz, dated 989 (1581). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSMK), Ms. H. 986, fol. 21b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

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Fig. 18. Detail, showing the beauty spot and open-ended eye contours, of "Throwing down the impostor," by Muhammadi. From the *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn*, dated 989–90 (1582). Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 90b. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 19. Detail, showing the beauty spot and open-ended eye contours on two faces in "Throwing down the impostor," by Muhammadi. From the *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn*, dated 989–90 (1582). Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 90b. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig 20. Muhammadi, "Moses carrying a sheep on his shoulders." From the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 21. Muhammadi, "The imam Zayn al-'Abidin visiting the Ka'ba." From the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 22. Binding of the *Silsilat al-dhahab* of Jami. Tehran, Gulistan Library, Ms. 671. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

Fig. 23. Binding of the *Salāmān va Absāl* of Jami, dated 979 (1572). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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Fig. 24. Muhammadi (attr.), "Salaman seated with Absal." From the *Salāmān va Absāl* of Jami, dated 979 (1572). Houston, E. M. Soudavar Trust Collection. (Photo: Abolala Soudavar)

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NOTES

1. Abolala Soudavar, "The Age of Muhammadi," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 62–65.
2. Christie's, London, *Islamic Art and Manuscripts*, Oct. 12, 2004, lot 186; and Christie's, London, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds*, Oct. 7, 2008, lot 350.
3. Termite holes usually indicate that a manuscript passed through Indian lands, and the disfiguration is akin to the damage in the pages of the famous Akbar-period *Hamzanāma*.
4. In 2005, Ahmad Moghbel restored the miniatures by filling the damaged spots in order to arrest the flaking process. Moghbel, who previously had an atelier in Houston, now resides in Rome.
5. The Topkapı manuscript has three colophons, all of which are discussed in Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 62–65. The above quote pertains to the second colophon of the manuscript.
6. Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, "Remarks on Some Manuscripts from the Topkapı Palace Treasury in the Context of Ottoman-Safavid Relations," *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 135, fig. 4.
7. Marianna S. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's* Haft Awrang*: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Washington D.C., 1997), 34.
8. While I could not find any of the four subjects depicted as a group in earlier manuscripts of the *Būstān*, later or contemporary copies such as Ms. Or. 10909 of the British Library may include one of the scenes (the story of the Syrian king on fol. 85a): see Norah M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: A Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India, and Turkey in the British Library and the British Museum* (London, 1978), 146. Significantly, a *Kulliyyāt* (Complete Works) of Sa'di with 72 illustrations (London, British Library, Ms. Add 24944) contains none of our miniatures: Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts*, 148–50.
9. Colin P. Mitchell, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Online edition, 2007), s.v. "Jāberi": http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jaberi.
10. Qāżī Aḥmad Qumī, *Khulāṣat al-tavārīkh*, ed. Iḥsān Ishrāqī, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1359 [1980]), 2:618.
11. Ibid., 2:648.
12. Iskandar Bayg Munshi-yi Turkmān, *Tārīkh-i ʿālamārā-yi ʿAbbāsī*, ed. Īraj Afshār, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Tehran, 1350 [1971]), 1:208–9; Qāżī Aḥmad, *Khulāṣat*, 2:628–30, 643.
13. Shaykh Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Sa'dī Shīrāzi, *Būstān*, ed. M. A. Nāṣiḥ (Tehran, 1371 [1992]), 500; see www.ganjoor.net/saadi/boostan/bab4/sh14 (accessed March 2, 2013).
14. Iskandar Bayg, for instance, gives the added information that princes were strangled with a cord (*rīsmān* [Iskandar Bayg, *Tārīkh*, 1:212]), or with a bowstring (*bi zih-i kamān* [Iskandar Bayg, *Tārīkh*, 1:240]). The practice goes back to Sasanian times—Ibn Balkhi reported that both Khusrau II (r. 590–628) and his father were killed by a bowstring. Ibn-i Balkhī, *The Fārsnāma of Ibnu'l Balkhī*, ed. G. Le Strange and R.A. Nicholson (London, 1968), 100 and 107.
15. Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 55–57.
16. On *falūniyā*, see ʿAlī Akbar Dihkhudā, *Lughatnāma* (Tehran, 2003), accessed online at www.loghatnaameh.org, s.v. "falūniyā."
17. Qāżī Aḥmad, *Khulāṣat*, 2:652–53; Iskandar Bayg, *Tārīkh*, 1:218–19.
18. Sa'dī, *Būstān*, ed. Nāṣiḥ, 645–46; see also www.ganjoor.net/saadi/boostan/bab7/sh9/ (accessed March 2, 2013).
19. Qāżī Aḥmad, *Khulāṣat*, 1:653; Iskandar Bayg, *Tārīkh*, 1:218.
20. Abolala Soudavar, "Between the Safavids and the Mughals: Art and Artists in Transition," *Iran* 37 (1999): 62n45; ʿAbdī Bayg Shirāzī, *Takmilat al-akhbār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Navā'ī (Tehran, 1369 [1990]), 94.
21. Sa'dī, *Būstān*, ed. Nāṣiḥ, 67–73; see also www.ganjoor.net/saadi/boostan/bab1/sh2 (accessed March 2, 2013).
22. In his research on the *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, Farhad Mehran has concluded that the last verse in the upper half of the illustration (which he calls the break-line verse) is the one that sets the tone for the illustration and provides its major compositional element: Farhad Mehran, "The Break-line Verse: The Link Between Text and Image in the 'First Small' *Shahnama*," in *Shahnama Studies*, ed. Charles Melville (Cambridge, 2006–), 1:151–69. I believe that this was an almost universal practice and that the break-line verses in the illustrations of our manuscript also define their composition.
23. Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York, 1992), 235.
24. Since Asaf was the vizier of the Prophet Solomon and the paragon of wise justice, his name was often used in reference to a prominent vizier, especially Mirza Salman, who was referred to as such in the colophon of his *Ṣifāt al-ʿāshiqīn*: Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 227.
25. Qāżī Aḥmad, *Khulāṣat*, 2:656.
26. Iskandar Bayg, *Tārīkh*, 1:226.
27. The primary source for these events is Qāżī Aḥmad's *Khulāṣat*, 2:690–702, in which he recounts how Shams al-Din was paraded about on a camel, beardless and dressed as a woman, with a man hugging him from behind.
28. Both Mahd-i Ulya and Mirza Salman had leaned on Hamza Mirza to consolidate their powerbase. See Hirotake Maeda, "Ḥamza Mirzâ and the 'Caucasian Elements' at the Safavid Court: A Path toward the Reforms of Shâh 'Abbâs I," *Orientalist* 1 (2001): 159.
29. Sa'dī, *Būstān*, ed. Nāṣiḥ, 178–79-; see www.ganjoor.net/saadi/boostan/bab1/sh21 (accessed March 2, 2013).
30. Qāżī Aḥmad *Khulāṣat*, 2:690–702.
31. Sa'dī, *Būstān*, ed. Nāṣiḥ, 178. The most popular prints of the *Būstān* are based on the Furughi edition—Sa'dī, *Būstān*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAlī Furūghī (Tehran, 1316 [1898–99])—which includes the word *pisar*: پسر گفتش ای نامور شهریار یکی دست از این مردصوفی بدار

The Furughi reference manuscripts from the Malik Library in Tehran all use the word *yakī* instead of *pisar* (nos. 5618, 5939, and 5979), except for no. 5954, which has a spurious date of 623 (1226). Other manuscripts, such as AHT no. 73, also use *yakī,* while the version of the *Būstān*

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included in a manuscript of the collected works of Saʿdi at the British Library (Ms. Add 7741, dated 901 [1495–96]) uses the word *pisar*.

32. Qāżī Aḥmad, *Khulāṣat*, 2:618.
33. For the Freer Jami paintings attributed to these artists, see Stuart Cary Welch, *Royal Persian Manuscripts* (London, 1976), 24–27, 98–125; Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's* Haft Awrang, 366–68.
34. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 235.
35. For a complete reproduction of this painting in color, see Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby, eds., *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576* (Milan, 2003), 132.
36. Previously attributed to the painter Qadimi by Stuart Cary Welch in his *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501–1576* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 202, this painting should be attributed to ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib—for the same reasons that I also attributed to him four paintings of the Freer manuscript of Jami that Welch had attributed to Qadimi: see Abolala Soudavar, "*Le chant du monde*: A Disenchanting Echo of Safavid Art History," *Iran* 46 (2008): 253–76, 257.
37. As I have argued in "Age of Muhammadi," 66–67, the Safavid library had been badly depleted, and the Safavid mission that Hamza Mirza was preparing to send to the Ottomans (before his sudden death in 1586) had to refurbish many manuscripts, including the 1581 *Dīvān* of Hafiz, to make them worthy of the Ottoman sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95), a known bibliophile and avid collector. The merits of these newer works had therefore to be explained and advertised by the mission that Shah ʿAbbas sent along with Hamza Mirza's son. But in the post-Tahmasb era, neither the provincial atelier of Ibrahim Mirza nor the short-lived patronage of Mirza Salman or Hamza Mirza had established any reputation beyond Safavid courtly circles. The multiple colophons of the 1581 *Būstān* clearly showed the Safavid concern that this splendid manuscript would not be accepted as "royal," since it was commissioned by Mirza Salman—hence the manipulation of its colophon by naming a fictitious "Sultan Sulayman" as its patron. One may conjecture that the *Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī* notation was added at the same time by the Safavids. On the other hand, some erroneous information relayed by the Ottoman writer Mustafa ʿAli (d. 1600) tends to show that the Ottomans' confusion was due to Safavid efforts to aggrandize the value of the gifts sent to the Porte: Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 66–67. One may therefore presume that this notation was added after the work was presented to the Ottomans, especially since an album page (TSMK, H. 1483, fol. 130b) that was probably gifted at the same time has two drawings by Muhammadi, one bearing his authentic signature and the other a Safavid attribution naming him as "*Ustād Muḥammadī*": see Anthony Welch, "Painting and Patronage under Shah ʿAbbas I," in *Studies on Isfahan: Proceedings of the Isfahan Colloquium Sponsored by the Fogg Museum of Art, Held at Harvard University, January 21–24, 1974*, ed. Renata Holod, Iranian Studies 7, 3–4 (Chestnut Hill, Mass., 1974), 502. One could therefore argue that the Safavids would have used the same legend, i.e., "*Ustād Muḥammadī*," rather than "*Bihzād-i Ibrāhīmī*." In either case, the source of this fanciful and erroneous notation was Safavid propaganda. While in my article in *Muqarnas* 17 I had only envisaged the latter possibility, I am indebted to Gülru Necipoğlu for prompting me to consider the other alternative as well.
38. See Muḥammad Ḥasan Simsār, *Kākh-i Gulistān* (Tehran, 1379 [2001]), 188–95; Badrī Ātābāy, *Fihrist-i dīvānhā-yi khaṭṭī-yi Kitābkhāna-i Salṭanatī* (Tehran, 1355 [1976]), 223–24. I wish to thank Ms. P. Seghatoleslami for granting me permission to take photos of Ms. 671 in the Gulistan Library.
39. Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 65; Soudavar, "Between the Safavids and the Mughals," 58.
40. Painting P6 in Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 54, 60, and figs. 9 and 10.
41. Binding of the *Dīvān* of Amīr Shāhī, copied by Shah Mahmud Nayshaburi in 1542 (TSMK, R. 999): see Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," fig. 22.
42. Of the paintings reproduced in Ātābāy, *Fihrist-i dīvānhā-yi khaṭṭī-yi Kitābkhāna-i Salṭanatī,* p. 224+4, five are attributable to Muzaffar-ʿAli, and the one on p. 224+3 to ʿAbdullah-i Muzahhib (illustrated pages in this volume do not bear page numbers, hence the numbering "+" from the last numbered page).
43. The celebrated Mir ʿImad was but a follower of the canons developed by Babashah; Mahdī Bayānī, *Aḥvāl va āsār-i khūsh'navīsān*, 4 vols. (Tehran, 1345 [1966]), 1:85–91.
44. Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 67–69.
45. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 228.
46. Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 69.
47. Ibid., 60.
48. Soudavar, "Between the Safavids and the Mughals," 58–60.
49. Ibid.
50. Sheila R. Canby, *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi ʿAbbasi of Isfahan* (London, 1996), 44 and 198. For Riza's indebtedness to his predecessors, see Soudavar, "Age of Muhammadi," 69.

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