

Muqarnas

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# Muqarnas

An Annual on the Visual Cultures  
of the Islamic World

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Gülru Necipoğlu

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Karen A. Leal

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Both text and endnotes should be double-spaced; endnotes should conform to the usage of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition. Illustrations should be labeled and accompanied by a double-spaced caption list. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted illustrations and for supplying the proper credit-line information.

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## EDITORS' NOTE AND NEW GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the passing of our esteemed Advisory Board member, Professor Marianne Barrucand. We hope to honor her memory with the publication of her last text, based on a lecture entitled "Sabra al-Mansuriyya and Her Neighbors during the First Half of the Eleventh Century: Investigations into Stucco Decoration." We would like to thank Professors Avinoam Shalem and Jean-Pierre Van Staëvel for submitting this work on her behalf. We see it as a fitting tribute.

Professor Barrucand's piece appears in a new section we are introducing in this volume entitled "Notes and Sources." This section may feature brief articles, news about recent discoveries, occasional book reviews, debates on selected issues, and primary sources (written

and visual). In the latter category we are especially interested in publishing notes on specific documents and texts (fully transliterated), as well as on monuments, objects, and illustrated manuscripts with all their images reproduced. Interested readers and prospective authors may find information on updated guidelines for submissions below.

We also wish to alert readers to the cumulative index of articles from volumes 1 to 25, arranged chronologically, found at the end of this issue. We hope that while perusing it readers will derive a sense of the wide range of topics that *Muqarnas* has addressed over the past twenty-five years. Looking ahead, we trust that the next twenty-five, beginning with this issue, will be just as rich.

### GUIDELINES AND STYLE SHEET

*Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Cultures of the Islamic World* is a scholarly journal comprising articles on art, architectural history, archaeology, and all aspects of Islamic visual cultures, historical and contemporary. Starting with volume 26, full-length articles will be accompanied by shorter submissions grouped in a separate section entitled "Notes and Sources."

Authors are asked to provide the following information with their submissions: institutional affiliation (if any), mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Manuscripts should be submitted as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word, along with low-resolution illustrations. If an article is accepted for publication, authors will be expected to make

revisions based on the reader's and editor's reports and to submit higher-resolution images on a CD at that time. Send submissions to [muqarnas@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:muqarnas@fas.harvard.edu). The deadline is March 1st for publication in November of the following calendar year. Articles that do not follow *Muqarnas* style will be returned to the author for revision.

*Muqarnas* conforms to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition (henceforth *CMS*).

Authors are required to use the diacritic-friendly Jaghbub, a font that can be downloaded free, and that is available for PC and Mac (<http://www.smi.uib.no/ksv/Jaghbub.html>).

Submissions should be double-spaced throughout in 12-pt. typeface. Please do not justify the right margin. Use a five-character paragraph indent. Institutional affiliation and location should appear on the last text page.

Articles should be no more than about 50 pages (not including endnotes) and have an upper limit of 25 to 30

illustrations. Although some exceptions may be made, in general more lengthy articles will be published in two or more parts appearing in successive volumes.

All articles are subject to review by the editor and an anonymous external reader, whose comments will be sent to the author, if the article is accepted for publication.

### *Illustrations*

Illustrations should be labeled and accompanied by a double-spaced caption list indicating the preferred size of illustrations (i.e., full, half, quarter page). Authors should provide specific directions if they want the images to be grouped in a particular manner. It is the author's responsibility to obtain permissions to use copyrighted illustrations and to provide the appropriate credit-line information.

Illustrations should be submitted as digital images (color or b/w) in TIFF format, scanned at 300 dpi in a size that will fill at least a half page (about 4 × 6 inches). Please title each digital image with your name and the figure number.

Images not submitted in the format indicated above will not be accepted for publication.

### *Foreign Terms and Transliterations*

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For the transliteration of Arabic and Persian, *Muqarnas* uses the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* system, but with the omission of subscript bars and the substitution of *q* for *k* and *j* for *ḍj*; for Ottoman Turkish, authors should use the *EI* system. All transliterated words and phrases in the text and transliterated authors' names and titles in the endnotes must follow this system. Exceptions include

Arabic words that have entered the English language (e.g., mihrab, madrasa, iwan, Abbasid, Muhammad); these should be treated as English words, that is, not italicized and without diacriticals.

Place names and names of historical personages with no English equivalent should be transliterated but, aside from 'ayn and hamza, diacritical marks should be omitted (e.g., Maqrizi, Fustat, San'a). However, in the endnotes, Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish authors' names and titles must be fully transliterated.

*Citations*

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of all citations. Citations to source materials should be numbered consecutively throughout the text and presented as endnotes—that is, notes grouped together at the conclusion of the text. Like the text, endnotes should be double-spaced.

The endnotes should accord with *CMS*, Chapter 17. “Ibid.” should be used for uninterrupted, successive references to the same work. When referring to a previously cited work that does not follow without interruption, use the author’s name and a shortened title, not the date of publication of the work. Do not use “op. cit.” Names and titles in non-Roman alphabets (Arabic, Cyrillic, Greek, etc.) must be transliterated. Titles in Roman alphabets should be capitalized as they would be in the book’s language.

As stated above, Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish authors’ names and titles must be fully transliterated when cited in the endnotes.

Publishers may be included or omitted in the endnotes, but be consistent throughout.

Do not use initials for first names—unless, of course, the author identifies himself or herself in that way: K. A. C. Creswell, R. D. McChesney. Use the full title in the first citation of a work.

For further guidance and specific examples of endnote style, please visit <http://agakhan.fas.harvard.edu/muqarnas.php>.

MATTIA GUIDETTI

## THE BYZANTINE HERITAGE IN THE *DĀR AL-ISLĀM*: CHURCHES AND MOSQUES IN AL-RUHA BETWEEN THE SIXTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES

In the study of the formation of early Islamic art and architecture, the presence and role of late antique Christian religious buildings are elements still largely overlooked. Recent discoveries, mostly due to epigraphic and archaeological studies, have revealed the existence of churches and the foundation of new ones falling chronologically far beyond the traditional boundary of the Islamic conquest.<sup>1</sup> While for various reasons this phenomenon has become particularly evident in rural areas, the analysis of churches located in towns at the time of the Islamic conquest still presents a sort of paradox: while it is well known that the majority of the population was Christian at least until the tenth century,<sup>2</sup> its architecture, art, and material culture, starting with places of worship, appear neither in the common narrative of early Islamic history and art nor in histories of the Christian communities in the *Dār al-Islām*.<sup>3</sup> With the exception of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and its interrelation with the Dome of the Rock, almost none of the churches used by the Christian communities in the cities of Bilad al-Sham are mentioned in discussions of the formation of early Islamic art and architecture.

Starting with the city of Urfa (known as Edessa and al-Ruha in ancient times), this article examines the presence and role of late antique churches in the urban context of the medieval *Dār al-Islām*. In particular, we will attempt to clarify the connection between these churches and the mosques in the cities under investigation. Such a relationship moves from one of simple coexistence to substitution, the latter due to the neglect of late antique churches caused mainly by the diminishing Christian presence and the changing attitudes of Muslim societies towards their religious minorities. Within this framework, the way in which Muslim patrons searched for and reused late antique / Byzantine

artifacts for their new mosques represents a faithful mirror of the shifting status of churches over the centuries.

Because of the history and structure of the academic fields involved in this analysis, some periods in Urfa's past have received more attention than others. The recurring reference to Urfa in early twentieth-century academic literature, for instance, was motivated by the significant role the city played in the early stages of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> More recently, because of a new approach to studying early Islamic history, several scholars have successfully worked on a remarkable number of literary sources produced within the local (northern Syria and northwestern Mesopotamia) Christian communities, seeking to further explain the critical period of the seventh century by examining some of the non-Muslim accounts of the Islamic conquest.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the early modern and modern eras of the city have been the subject of intense discussion since the documents of the Turkish archives began to shed new light on the life of this provincial city during the Ottoman period.<sup>6</sup>

The medieval period (seventh to fifteenth centuries)<sup>7</sup> has often been considered an extension of the late antique / Byzantine period, following a pattern of decline culminating in the Crusaders' defeat.<sup>8</sup> In addition, because of the absence of monumental remains and archaeological excavations, the reconstruction of Urfa's pre-Ottoman urban fabric and buildings has been particularly difficult.<sup>9</sup> Hence, the religious art and architecture of the medieval period still lack further interpretation since they appear somehow hemmed in between the memories of the late antique / Byzantine past and the Ottoman monuments still visible in the city today.

In exploring medieval Islamic Urfa, this essay will integrate Christian art and architecture into the discussion, showing how this approach might shed new light

on the general analysis of early Islamic societies and on the specific subject of the formation of Islamic art. If Edessa is the “Christian” name of the city and Urfa the Turkish one, al-Ruha—its Arabic name—will be used to describe the early medieval era of the city, referred to in Eastern Christian sources as “the time of the Arabs.”<sup>10</sup>

#### BEYOND THE SEVENTH-CENTURY ISLAMIC CONQUEST

Edessa / al-Ruha, which fell to the Arabs in 639, was a strategic base during the campaign waged by Heraclius (r. 610–41) against the Persians (621–26), as well as during his withdrawal in the face of Muslim advances a few years later. Probably for this reason, the significant role al-Ruha played in western Mesopotamia appears to have also been recognized by Muslims during their conquest.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the actual process of the Islamic conquest can not be described in detail, since both the Christian and Muslim sources are later reconstructions, often written to support or strengthen certain positions relevant to the social and political situations of the ninth century or later.<sup>12</sup> In these later works, the details of both the conquest and the pact supposedly established between the two sides (known as the Pact of ‘Umar [after the caliph ‘Umar (r. 633–44)]) became powerful argumentative tools used in the negotiation of a *modus vivendi* between the Christian majority and the Muslim ruling minority, instead of being faithful accounts of events that had transpired centuries before. Even if the known versions of the “Pact of ‘Umar” may contain some parts dating to the period of the conquests and the related treaties, it nevertheless represented a later stage in the relations between the *dhimmi* population (non-Muslim communities under Islamic rule) and Muslim rulers.<sup>13</sup> Through this pact, the members of non-Muslim communities negotiated their relationship (both duties and rights) with their Muslim leaders. Taxes, property matters, building and restoration permissions, and behavioral and dress codes were some of the issues addressed in the pact. In the early treaties established during the Islamic conquest only some of these matters were negotiated between the two sides. In fact, the early treaties were mainly concerned

with negotiating the submission of a city and establishing the capitation tax for the conquered communities while guaranteeing them the preservation of their private and religious properties.

At the same time, however, the examination of a series of scattered sources composed after the Islamic conquest may help to reconstruct, if not the exact terms of the treaties negotiated during the conquest, then at least the general trends characterizing the transition that the Christian communities underwent from a Byzantine to an Islamic rule. With respect to al-Ruha’s cultural life, places of worship were obviously a good indicator of the ongoing process of the transfer of power.

It is clear, for instance, that no church was destroyed during the conquest.<sup>14</sup> As documented by The Anonymous Syriac Chronicle of 1234, “each confession had assigned to it those temples that were found in its possession.”<sup>15</sup> Indeed, this passage is consistent with the different versions of the pact governing al-Ruha’s conquest transmitted by al-Baladhuri (d. 892),<sup>16</sup> and with some later descriptions of the city. The rapid withdrawal of the army led by Heraclius left the area without defense so that cities like Dara, Amida, and Edessa—three Byzantine strongholds against the Persians that were renovated, strengthened, and embellished in the sixth century<sup>17</sup>—quickly surrendered when confronted with the advancing Arab-Muslim armies.<sup>18</sup> Western Mesopotamia enjoyed a sort of autonomy in the Sufyanid period (up to 685). There were fewer soldiers involved in the “Arab invasion” in this area than elsewhere, and the new Muslim taxation system was implemented at a slower pace in northern Syria and western al-Jazira than in other areas.<sup>19</sup> Hence, Christian communities were supposedly given more latitude in decision-making.

Several sources inform us that after the conquest church repairs were allowed, as recorded after the devastation caused by earthquakes in 678–79 and 718.<sup>20</sup> The first tremor left part of the structure of al-Ruha’s Great Church (i.e., cathedral) in ruins. Michael the Syrian recorded the destruction of the ciborium and of two of the church walls, while Theophanes described the extensive damage done to a dome of the cathedral (perhaps the small dome of the ciborium). Both authors mention that the Umayyad caliph Mu‘awiya (r. 660–80) was somehow involved in their restoration.<sup>21</sup>

The authorization or endorsement given by the caliph is extremely important to understanding the mechanisms governing the relations between the local elites and the central rulers, especially when compared to later attitudes. In Canon number 3 of the Nestorian synod held in 676 (almost forty years after the conquest), it was explicitly stated that the construction of new churches and monasteries was permissible only if carried out under the supervision of a bishop. No particular Islamic authority or prohibition was cited. Rather, the authority to grant permission for a new construction lay with the local Christian clergy.<sup>22</sup> As Robinson suggests, the main matters of controversy were not construction or renovation in themselves, but the chain of permission and authority behind such decision-making.<sup>23</sup> In the *Life of Gabriel of Qartmin* (Tur ‘Abdin), Mar Gabriel (ca. seventh century) is said to have been received with great joy by the emir, who “gave him a *prostagma* (official document) signed with his own hand, with ordinances on all the points he had asked for: in it he granted all the *suryāyē* (Syrian Orthodox)...[permission for] the building of churches and monasteries.”<sup>24</sup> Hence, if it is true that the construction of new churches was a common feature across Christian communities during early Islamic rule, the Mesopotamian area seems to have undergone a particularly intense period of building activity.<sup>25</sup>

Another figure worth mentioning is Athanasius bar Gumayer (ca. late seventh / early eighth century), who was highly involved with the local elites and central government. His biography illustrates both the relations between the different Christian communities and the attitudes of the ruling powers and the Christians toward building activities after the Islamic conquest. The caliph ‘Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) ordered Athanasius to tutor his brother, ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, the governor of Egypt, where Athanasius probably also held the position of tax collector.<sup>26</sup> A member of a Jacobite family in al-Ruha, Athanasius was identified as a landowner and the patron of church restorations and construction in both al-Fustat and al-Ruha. According to some Christian sources, Athanasius sponsored two churches built *ex novo* in al-Fustat, along with the renovation in al-Ruha of the Church of the Mother of God and of another building as a baptistry. In this last building, he also provided

the canals and a basin covered with brass and decorated with marble, gold, and silver. It is stated that this basin was such a fine-looking piece that it was compared with the one sponsored, under Justinian (r. 527–65), by the bishop Amazonius in the old Great Church of Edessa.<sup>27</sup>

It is probable that the Jacobite Athanasius’s authority was respected by both the Umayyad rulers and church officials, the latter either Melkite or Jacobite. Due to changes instituted by Heraclius a few years before the Islamic conquest,<sup>28</sup> Melkite officials, at least in the cities, filled the highest positions of power.<sup>29</sup> In al-Ruha, and probably elsewhere, they were assigned the Great Church,<sup>30</sup> and in al-Fustat and Hulwan (in Egypt), where Athanasius worked side by side with the Umayyad governor, Melkites served as chamberlains.<sup>31</sup> After ‘Abd al-‘Aziz’s death, Athanasius went back to Damascus, where his presence and wealth created some discontent among the local Melkite elite. He was so rich that he once offered to pay a tax collector in al-Ruha 5,000 dinars in order to prevent the *mandylion*, al-Ruha’s most famous icon, from being taken away.<sup>32</sup>

Indeed, the traditional Byzantine hierarchy within the Melkite and Jacobite communities was challenged by the nature of the new Islamic rule. A certain degree of autonomy and the absence of the Byzantine civil administrator, combined with the capacity of the people of al-Ruha to adapt to a changing world, presented the city’s Christian majority with a number of new opportunities.<sup>33</sup> With the transition to Muslim rule, the boundaries between the various Christian communities were no longer lines of exclusion from access to power; what mattered instead were the personal relations that a Christian individual maintained with a Muslim ruler, or the socio-political weight of a family, insofar as it was acknowledged and integrated into the ruling system of the Muslims.<sup>34</sup> A passage by al-Jahiz (ninth century) epitomizes the status of the Christians in this new “world of opportunities”: “Among them are to be found government secretaries, attendants of kings, physicians of nobles, perfumers, and bankers.”<sup>35</sup> In the first century after the conquest, individuals like these (and Athanasius bar Gumayer was surely among them) helped not only to preserve al-Ruha’s Byzantine heritage but also to increase the number of its Christian monuments.

Other evidence of the building activities of the Christians in the early Islamic period is provided by the order given by the local governor in the early ninth century to destroy some basilicas and a monastery that they had erected after the Islamic conquest in the seventh century.<sup>36</sup>

As part of the Umayyad caliphate, al-Ruha can be compared with other urban centers formerly under Byzantine rule (such as those in Egypt or Bilad al-Sham), or with a significant Christian population (e.g., in upper Mesopotamia). If the preservation of extant Christian places of worship and their eventual restoration were shared goals,<sup>37</sup> new building activities sponsored by Christian patrons seem to have been less common, at least in cities such as Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, and al-Raqqā, which did not witness the construction of any new Christian buildings.<sup>38</sup> Al-Ruha, in this sense, shared the fate of smaller towns such as Madaba in the Palestinian region and of villages scattered throughout the provinces, where the Muslim presence was less pronounced.<sup>39</sup> In such villages and towns, local Christian leaders continued to hold a certain authority and therefore the ongoing construction of new churches probably was allowed or at least tolerated.

If the relation between mosques and churches in Muslim-founded urban settlements represents a completely different case (which will not be taken into consideration in this article), in conquered cities where Arab Muslims decided to settle, their search for a symbolic religious space became a crucial issue during the early Islamic period. As will be shown, this search involved existing churches with the result that, as in other cities, the fate of al-Ruha's Christian monuments was connected to early Muslim efforts to step in and change this Christian urban center.

#### MOSQUES AS ADDITIONS

The Muslim religious buildings visible in Urfa today date from the late medieval and Ottoman periods. The earliest Arabic epigraphic evidence also refers to the post-Crusades era.<sup>40</sup> In the absence of archaeological studies, we can only offer speculations based on literary sources regarding early medieval constructions. At the end of the section in his history dedicated to the

conquest of Mesopotamia, al-Baladhuri mentions the foundation of prayer halls (*masjid*) in both al-Raqqā and al-Ruha.<sup>41</sup> The founder is said to have been Sa'īd b. 'Amir b. Hidhiyam, the successor of the conqueror 'Iyad b. Ghanm.

Given the fact that in the entire *Dār al-Islām* no structural foundation pertaining to the pre-Umayyad period has survived, mosques dating to the very early period are still a question mark in the history of Islamic architecture.<sup>42</sup> The *ecclesia incredulorum* in Damascus described by the Christian pilgrim Arculfus (670s) refers to the Muslim place of worship that was adjacent to the Church of St. John before both buildings were destroyed by al-Walid (r. 705–15) in 705—although the precise date and nature of its construction are unknown.<sup>43</sup> The same Arculfus described the first mosque on the area of the Haram in Jerusalem as having been built “in a rough manner” and raised “upon some remains of old ruins.”<sup>44</sup> An early mosque in Amida is cited by Theodotus in the seventh century, and it is almost certain that the Muslim community in al-Ruha required a place of worship.<sup>45</sup>

To further complicate the matter of the location and nature of early mosques, when analyzing medieval sources we should consider how, in later periods, accounts describing the existence of a mosque dating to the beginning of Islam were often used to justify certain changes in the contemporary urban fabric. Indeed, the desire to provide a newly established mosque with an “historical background” often led to the fabrication of a narrative depicting the existence of an earlier mosque in that location. For instance, when the Seljuqs took over al-Ruha in 1084, two churches—the Church of St. John and that of the Mother of God—were described as having been transformed into mosques, based on the claim that at the time of 'Umar's conquest they were used as Muslim places of worship.<sup>46</sup> In this specific case, it is more likely that if any seventh-century mosque had been established in the area where the churches were located, it was done in the area surrounding the churches and not in the precise location of their prayer halls (i.e., sanctuaries). As a matter of fact, no contemporary source says that the two churches, both built before the Islamic conquest, were transformed into a mosque at the time of the conquest. Moreover, they were both also still in use (as Christian places of

worship) after 1084. It is possible that this anecdote was related to the partial destruction of the seventh-century mosque by the Byzantines in the tenth century and to its later reestablishment by the Seljuqs after their conquest in 1084.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the tradition about ‘Umar was very often readapted in a medieval post-conquest scenario: “‘Umar, the mosque-builder” was called back into action as part of the new strategy regarding places of worship.<sup>48</sup> A connection was thus rhetorically established between the “new” medieval conquests and earlier victories over the Byzantines. Hence, in the late middle ages the construction of several mosques was ascribed to ‘Umar.<sup>49</sup>

Unlike many other cities, the new rulers in al-Ruha did not establish a congregational mosque during the Umayyad era. If in Damascus the main reason for enlarging the first mosque—beyond the prominence of the ruling community—was the growth of the Muslim population,<sup>50</sup> the absence of such a mosque in al-Ruha could be related to the scarcity of Muslims in Mesopotamia during the early Islamic period.

A mosque was, however, founded in 825 when, in the absence of the legitimate ruler, ‘Abdallah b. Tahir (d. 844), his brother Muhammad, who was left in charge, ordered its construction and, as mentioned above, the destruction of Christian buildings that he considered to have been built after the seventh-century Islamic conquest. Included among these were the Church of the Forty Martyrs, the western cubicles of the baptistery, the sacristy (*diaconicum*) and treasury of the Great Church, some basilicas, and a Melkite convent.<sup>51</sup> The following description further illustrates Muhammad’s building activities: “He built a mosque in the tetrapylon (a Roman building, often built at a crossroads, with monumental gates on each of its four sides) in front of the old church, in a place called Bethschabta in the past, where *primores* (elders, “the most distinguished ones”) used to discuss ecclesiastical and philosophical issues after morning services.”<sup>52</sup> Michael the Syrian adds that the place demolished to build the mosque was covered by a dome.<sup>53</sup>

Instead of being the personal action of a “foolish” ruler, it seems more likely that the whole or partial destruction of some churches<sup>54</sup> and the construction of a mosque on a portion of a church property were

indications of rising tensions within the Muslim community regarding Christian monuments and their visibility in the urban landscape, which began around the end of the eighth century.<sup>55</sup> The metropolitan of al-Ruha traveled with some bishops to Egypt to negotiate with ‘Abdallah b. Tahir an end to the violent acts ordered by his brother Muhammad. According to Syriac sources, in a subsequent edict the official ruler decreed that what had been demolished would have to be rebuilt and that the destruction of churches would have to stop.<sup>56</sup>

In 985, al-Muqaddasi noted the existence of a mosque in al-Ruha when he visited the city after it was set on fire by Nicephorus. After describing its magnificent church, the author mentions a mosque (*jāmi‘*) located to one side (*‘alā ṭaraf*) that was in disrepair (*sha’itha*).<sup>57</sup> During his visit after the 1144 victory over the Crusaders, Prince Zangi (r. 1127–46), while ordering the restoration of Muslim places of worship in the city, mentioned one mosque and one prayer hall. The former was the mosque dating to 825, while the latter was perhaps the seventh-century mosque mentioned above. Retrieved for Muslim worship in 1084 by the Seljuqs, it was probably used as the palace of the Latin bishop during the period of Latin rule (1099–1144).<sup>58</sup>

Before continuing with this assessment, it is necessary to stress two aspects related to the construction of these two early medieval mosques. The first one is that they were both built without taking over any of the physical space occupied by the Christians. Although the mosque constructed in 825 was built by annexing part of the property of the “old church” (St. Sophia), a passage in the *Chronicon ecclesiasticum* underlines that the building transformed into a mosque was not a consecrated place (i.e., a sanctuary or chapel). It is also certain that the “old church” remained in use long after this date. We should note, too, that the building located on the site where the mosque was later erected served different functions before it was added to the church complex and that the mosque was built when the churches believed to have been constructed after the seventh-century conquest were destroyed. These two facts may be related to the mounting Islamic debate over what was “originally” Christian, namely, that which was or was not Christian since pre-Islamic times.<sup>59</sup>



Fig. 1. The Great Mosque of Aleppo, which was enlarged in the middle ages. In the background is the dome of al-Halawiyya Madrasa, built on the site of the Church of St. Helen, which was in use until 1124. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

The second aspect is related to the specific location of the mosque built in 825, namely, its construction in front of a church. This pattern, which we see developing in al-Ruha in 825, should be considered part of a broader trend that began during the early middle ages in formerly Christian areas of the caliphate. Such a pattern, for instance, seems to have been followed in Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Hims, Amman, al-Rusafa, and other cities.<sup>60</sup> The first prayer halls or early congregational mosques were constructed in those areas of a city where a church (often the cathedral or great church) stood. This was sometimes done by taking over part of the church's property—even though its consecrated hall was not displaced by the mosque nor was it destroyed.<sup>61</sup>

Many cities followed this pattern, with the main church remaining in use and the mosque “added” in front of or adjacent to it. While in the south of Bilad al-Sham this pattern was probably followed with some variations,<sup>62</sup> other examples similar to that of al-Ruha can also be provided. In Mardin, an “atrium” was added to a mosque of the Arabs in 1170, causing great anxiety among the local Christian population.<sup>63</sup> Either the Muslims enlarged their mosque with a new courtyard or they took over the “atrium” of an extant church and added it to their mosque. The anxiety of the local Christians would support the second interpretation, and if this was indeed the case, it means that before that date the church and the mosque were situated beside each

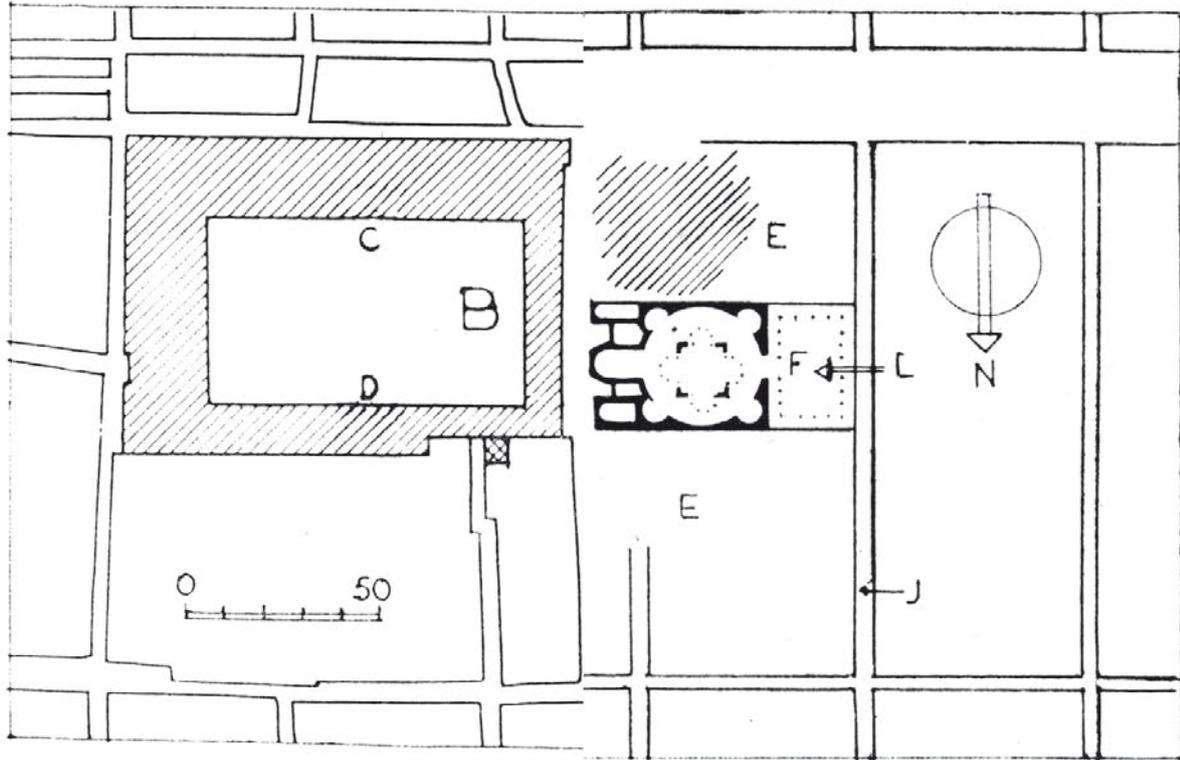


Fig. 2. The Great Mosque of Aleppo and the Church of St. Helen, between 715 and 1124. (After Michel Écochard, "Note sur un édifice chrétien d'Alep," *Syria* 27 [1950]: figs. 3, 4)

other. In Mosul, the proximity between the church and the mosque was even more apparent. While relating the different accounts of the massacre of the year 750, the local historian al-Azdi (early tenth century)<sup>64</sup> refers to a church adjacent to one of the entrances of the mosque: *dukhūl al-nās al-masjid 'alā bāb al-masjid mimmā yalī al-bī'a* (the people enter the mosque through the door of the mosque located adjacent to the church).<sup>65</sup> There is a similar passage regarding Aleppo: *hādihā al-haykal kāna fī'l-kanīsa al-'uzmā allatī mawqī'uhā tijāh bāb al-jāmi' al-gharbī* (this altar was in the great church, whose place was beside the western door of the Friday mosque),<sup>66</sup> where the original connection between the two buildings is somehow still discernible even after the architectural alterations that occurred on the site in the medieval period (figs. 1 and 2).<sup>67</sup> Hence, the idea of building a mosque in front of the main church in al-Ruha was not only a provocation by an aggressive ruler, but the manifestation of a very

early Muslim attitude in relation to existing churches.

Early mosques such as the one built in 825 in al-Ruha were thus often additions to the urban fabric. That they were often situated next to churches suggests, on the one hand, the close relationship between local Christian elites and Muslim rulers, and on the other, the ongoing negotiation of urban space that had been taking place since the seventh-century conquest. Nonetheless, with their presence next to mosques, these churches not only fulfilled their role as places of worship for the Christian communities but also, as is easy to imagine, had a role in the shaping of early Islamic religious culture.

Late antique Christian art was not simply a remnant of the Byzantine empire or a useless pile of ruins in the *Dār al-Islām*; rather, it played a vibrant role in almost every conquered city. In view of this evidence, it is logical to suppose that late antique Christian art exerted an influence on the formation of Islamic art in this period.

THE ROLE OF BYZANTINE ART AND  
ARCHITECTURE IN THE EARLY  
ISLAMIC PERIOD

Medieval chroniclers and travelers were often confused by the fact that many of al-Ruha's churches were associated with different saints at various points in time. These multiple dedications have also hampered modern efforts to reconstruct the city's sacred topography (see plan 1 in the Appendix).<sup>68</sup> It is, however, clear that especially after the seventh-century conquest one church stands out among others as the symbol of the city. Indeed, throughout the medieval chronicles many churches are cited, but only one church is described at length.<sup>69</sup> This church was the Melkite cathedral, originally dedicated to St. Thomas when his relics were brought to it and later consecrated to St. Sophia after Constantinople's cathedral on the Bosphorus.<sup>70</sup> If, as is largely accepted, the "Church of the Christians," cited by Procopius (d. ca. 565) when describing its restoration by Justinian (r. 527–65), was founded on the site where the first church of the city was established by Abgar according to the Syriac sources,<sup>71</sup> then the famous Great Church of St. Sophia was located "above the water spring, on the western side of the city."<sup>72</sup>

In fact, after the flood of 525, Justinian built a new church on the site of the earliest church of Edessa. It was probably for this reason that St. Sophia was later called either the Great Church or the Old Church. Although the name is not explicitly quoted, this is probably also the church to which a famous Syriac hymn refers.<sup>73</sup>

St. Sophia was reassigned to the diophysite (Melkite) community by Heraclius after having been used for a while by the monophysites (Jacobites) as their own cathedral. Medieval sources were aware of how long it took to build the church:

We now describe the glorious and great church of St. Sophia, which is located in the city. Its construction was started by Aitallah,<sup>74</sup> bishop of Edessa in the age of the emperor Constantinus, the victorious...Nobody can describe its beauty and its solid structure; it was admired by visitors, [and] its interiors were covered by gold, glass (mosaics), and white marble. Many kings were in charge of its construction.<sup>75</sup>

This church, in front of which the Muslims constructed a mosque, was often noted in Arab-Muslim sources: St. Sophia appears, as do the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, St. George's in Lydda, St. Sergius's in al-Rusafa, St. Helen's in Aleppo, St. Cassianus's in Antioch, St. John's in Hims, and, after 705, Holy Mary's in Damascus, to mention only the most important ones. Indeed, these structures, today either gone or in ruins, represented the Byzantine heritage in the early medieval *Dār al-Islām*, and travelers and geographers were not insensitive to their beauty.<sup>76</sup>

The cathedral of al-Ruha was among the buildings regarded as the world's greatest marvels. Starting with the descriptions of Ibn al-Faqih al-Hamadani (d. 903) and Ibn Khurradadhib (d. ca. 911),<sup>77</sup> the *kanīsāt al-Ruhā* appeared in every list of the "marvels of the world" completed by Arab geographers.<sup>78</sup> Ibn Khurradadhib, echoing the seventh-century Syriac hymn, added that the stone of which the cathedral was made was renowned, and he praised the structural quality of the church.<sup>79</sup> Other passages are more descriptive. For instance, al-Muqaddasi provided a succinct evaluation of its architectural beauty, noting that "al-Ruha has a magnificent church with arched galleries and covered by mosaics."<sup>80</sup> Al-Istakhri (tenth century) mentioned that the majority of the city's population was Christian, and that there were roughly three hundred Christian altars, monasteries, and cells, adding that its (great) church was the largest in the *Dār al-Islām*.<sup>81</sup>

The admiration for al-Ruha's cathedral went even further. Al-Muqaddasi in a famous passage included this church among those in Bilad al-Sham that represented a sort of challenge for Muslim builders. He also reported that al-Aqsa Mosque and later the Great Mosque of Damascus (after the 746 earthquake, which ruined the former) should be regarded, along with the cathedral in al-Ruha, as the top three existing majestic monuments.<sup>82</sup> The fame of al-Ruha's cathedral extended even beyond its disappearance: in the first half of the fourteenth century, the Persian traveler Hamd Allah Mustawfi described the city and mentioned both what he read in the texts by previous visitors and what he was able to see:

...[The city] was built with a polished stone and the church that was built there was also made of the same

stone. In its center there was a dome 100 *gaz* (roughly 100 English yards) in width. The author of the *Masālik wa-mamālik* (Ibn Khurradadhbih) writes that it was the most magnificent and solid building ever built; today, however, it is in ruins.<sup>83</sup>

The need to describe a city based on its ruins rather than its extant monuments may suggest that early post-Crusades Muslim architecture was not very impressive. Furthermore, this passage could be used as compelling evidence that the site of the church was not covered by new buildings (i.e., mosques), at least until Mustawfī's visit (figs. 3 and 4; fig. 4 has a view of what the area around the famous Balıklı Göl looked like before a park was constructed there in the 1980s; the Great Church [building 2 in the plans of the city] must have been located in the area down by the citadel).

In the early medieval period, one is able to distinguish other traces of the high regard that Muslim patrons had for al-Ruha's Great Church. In 829, the caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813–33) visited the city. He entered the Great Church and admired its beauty. He then discussed the church's revenues with the bishop, who listed them while complaining about the taxes. Eventually, the caliph rescinded the taxes levied on the khans, the shops, the baths, and the mills (all properties owned by the church), leaving only the land taxes in place.<sup>84</sup>

Some decades before, the caliph al-Mansur (r. 754–75), builder of Baghdad and al-Rafīqa, led an expedition to Mesopotamia in order to strengthen Abbasid rule in the region. His passage through al-Ruha was recorded, due to the destruction of the city's walls. In his chronicle, Michael the Syrian gives a detailed explanation for this destruction. According to the author, the caliph requested that a few small columns piled up in the Great Church be taken to his new palace in al-Rafīqa. The Christians of al-Ruha refused to give al-Mansur the columns and in revenge the caliph demolished the walls of the city.<sup>85</sup> This account sheds light on the caliph's desire to decorate his palace with columns from that particular church, which had probably been left there to be used for a future restoration project. The account further highlights the option that the Christians had to refuse a request by the caliph. Indeed, al-Mansur's purpose was not to destroy the church or to despoil it, since he did not ask for any structural columns and did not inflict revenge against it because he had been denied.

Instead, it is very probable that the caliph only aspired to exhibit in his palace several columns from one of the world's wonders at that time. Although one may doubt the veracity of this single witness, further analysis of different sources reveals a number of other very similar situations, indicating that the incident with Caliph al-Mansur in al-Ruha was only one expression of a widespread phenomenon.

Indeed, the primacy placed by Muslim rulers and patrons on prominently displaying Byzantine architectural fragments was evident in relation to a number of different Byzantine and Muslim buildings. For instance, three marble columns were transferred from the cathedral of San'a' (called al-Qalis or al-Qullays) to Mecca during the restoration of its mosque by Ibn Zubayr (d. 692) in 680.<sup>86</sup> Despite this transfer, San'a's church (for whose construction the builder Abraha was said to have received some material from Byzantine lands in the sixth century<sup>87</sup>) was still in use at least until the age of al-Mansur when it was looted after having been described at the court of the Abbasid al-Saffah.<sup>88</sup> A few years after Ibn Zubayr's restoration, when Mecca was reconquered and the Ka'ba needed to be reconstructed, Sergius, a Christian Melkite and 'Abd al-Malik's treasurer, persuaded the caliph to take the columns for the reconstruction of the "temple of Mecca" from somewhere else, thereby saving the Holy Gethsemane, which according to the original plan was supposed to have been stripped of its columns.<sup>89</sup> Other accounts also point to this practice. At some point before 715, the Christians of Lydda told the future caliph Sulayman (r. 715–17) to search for columns in a deposit far from the city in order to avoid having him despoil the Church of St. George. From this Christian site, highly esteemed in Islamic eschatology, the Palestinian governor (and later caliph) had originally intended to loot columns for his new mosque in al-Ramla.<sup>90</sup> Although al-Walid transferred some marble columns by sea from the Church of St. Mary in Antioch to the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus, the Christian house of worship was still in use in the tenth century, as witnessed by al-Mas'udi.<sup>91</sup> Finally, the Church of Cyrrhus was also said to have been stripped of some furnishings (*ālāt al-kanīsa*), in order to embellish the Umayyad mosque in Aleppo (under either al-Walid or Sulayman, at the beginning of the eighth century).<sup>92</sup>



Fig. 3. Urfa, view from the citadel, 1920s. Collection of Professor A. Kingsley Porter. (Photo: K. A. C. Creswell. Courtesy of the Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library); © Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford neg. EA.CA. 6593.



Fig. 4. Urfa, view from the citadel. Postcard from the 1970s. (Photo: courtesy of Dr. Ian Wilson)

These accounts narrate both successful and unsuccessful attempts by the caliph (the most prominent authority in Islamic lands) to seize property from his Christian subjects. On the one hand, there were clear requests by Muslim rulers to reclaim parts of Christian churches for their new mosques (with the exception of the example of al-Ruha, where the final destination was a palace); on the other hand, these rulers clearly acknowledged the validity of prior agreements that protected such churches, which were considered Christian properties. For this reason, the Christians often chose to refuse to allow the reutilization of church artifacts, or persuaded the claimant not to loot or despoil a particular building. It is noteworthy that whenever a transfer of material did take place, this did not mean the end of the use of the despoiled church.

The Muslims needed these architectural fragments because, at the structural level, the elements of early Islamic architecture were, at least in the Syrian area (including the Umayyad patronage of Medina and Mecca), basically the same as those of Byzantine churches: columns (in the prayer hall and often in the courtyard), marble panels (for pavements and lower parts of walls), and glass and stone tesserae (for the mosaics in the upper parts of the walls). The Muslims made use of scattered materials, sometimes recycling the ruins of churches that had been abandoned or destroyed by earthquakes,<sup>93</sup> and at other times prodding the Christian communities to “share” their precious architectural heritage. Early Islamic religious architecture in Bilad al-Sham took shape within the aesthetical horizon of the late antique world: the idea of luxury and decoration of a sacred space descended directly from monumental Byzantine architecture.<sup>94</sup> And, as mentioned above, the point of reference for these artifacts was not only the Byzantine empire but also Byzantine churches within the caliphate.<sup>95</sup>

Al-Ruha’s cathedral of St. Sophia was, like other churches of the early *Dār al-Islām*, a monument desired and admired by the Islamic elites. The church became part of the marvels of the *Dār al-Islām*, and the beauty of its structure was recorded by Muslim geographers as a source of pride for the caliphate, along with other non-Muslim structures of antiquity. However, ancient temples were for the most part not connected to a living community, while engineering projects such as the

Lighthouse of Alexandria or the bridge of Sanjar were perceived as part of the infrastructure. The cathedral of St. Sophia, too, was one of the *āthār* (antiquities) and *‘ajā’ib* (marvels) inherited by the Muslims, but it was also the place of worship of one of the main religious communities protected within the society of the *Dār al-Islām*. Indeed, Christians were not only a defeated community, but a living and productive cultural entity within medieval Islam, sharing with Muslims a mutual feeling of admiration, rivalry, and even common sacred figures and places.<sup>96</sup> These were all active elements within the sociopolitical framework wherein the Christian population formed a numerical majority although holding lesser rights (due to their *dhimmī* status), while the ruling minority was Muslim.<sup>97</sup> Hence, beyond the idea of *āthār* and *‘ajā’ib*, churches became the logical mirror for early Islamic art and architecture, acknowledged as masterworks of technical skill and opulence and utilized by a community considered to be a competitor of the monotheistic faith.

Nevertheless, some of these precious artifacts and architectural fragments remained unavailable to Islamic construction projects until the eleventh to twelfth centuries. Only then would a second major change, after that of the appearance of the early mosques, transform the landscape of al-Ruha and the other cities of Bilad al-Sham.

#### NARSES’ COMPLAINT AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF LATE ANTIQUÉ ARCHITECTURE

Around the mid-twelfth century, the Armenian patriarch Narses lamented that the Christian world had abandoned one of the cradles of Christianity to Muslim rule. In a poem, he impersonates al-Ruha and after having addressed Rome, turns his attention to Constantinople:

Listen to my desperate weeping;  
because I was part  
of your domain with the title of metropolis.  
Within my walls stood a temple built by you  
and consecrated with the same name as yours...<sup>98</sup>

The two churches of St. Sophia connected the second Rome to Edessa / al-Ruha. However, Narses’ complaint

met with no success: in the Byzantine as well as in the Latin world, al-Ruha started to be associated with its Christian past (often erroneously regarded as exclusively pre-Islamic). In that same period, a great number of Christian structures, most dating back to the Byzantine era—including St. Sophia, described as a missing monument by Narses—collapsed or were destroyed (compare plan 2 with plan 3 in the Appendix).

It is, however, misleading to consider the conquest by Zangi in 1146 and the period of early Ayyubid rule as the only causes of this major urban change. It is perhaps better to say that the apex and the end of the conflict against the Crusaders rendered irreversible a process that had already started around the first half of the eleventh century.

The chronology of the Melkite cathedral of St. Sophia is paradigmatic. Already partially destroyed in 1032 during the conflict between the Seljuq Salman and the Byzantine Maniaces,<sup>99</sup> the church was then restored for worship when it received an assembly of Christian citizens in 1083–84.<sup>100</sup> For unknown reasons, the church partially collapsed in 1105–6 and it seems to have remained in precarious condition until 1174 or 1184, when it was finally demolished.<sup>101</sup>

By the eleventh century, the continuous state of warfare was affecting the integrity of a building that in previous centuries had withstood change, even when confronted with the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur's request for its columns.<sup>102</sup> Most importantly, when during the period of Latin rule (1099–1144) the Church of St. John became the Latin cathedral of the city,<sup>103</sup> the restoration of places of worship belonging to local Christians was no longer guaranteed, as the chronology of the cathedral of St. Sophia makes clear. It continued to be difficult to make restorations after 1146 as well. This could be considered one among several causes for the decision to demolish some churches, e.g., the Church of the Apostles, which was destroyed by the Muslims once the northern part of the building collapsed.<sup>104</sup>

One should also note that following Zangi's conquest in 1146 most of the confiscated churches of al-Ruha were not transformed into mosques but used for different functions: the Church of St. John became a wool deposit, St. Stephen's a granary, and St. Thomas's a stable.<sup>105</sup> Only in a later period were they destroyed;

eventually on some sites new buildings were erected, including some mosques. It was in the midst of this transformation that Hamd Allah Mustawfi, in the first half of the fourteenth century, was still able to see the ruins of the cathedral of St. Sophia.<sup>106</sup>

One reason for the confiscation of church properties had to do with the state of war at the time. When a city was conquered by force (*anwatan*), the properties of the ruling elites, who normally escaped into exile or were jailed, became spoils of war and the property of the new ruler. Places of worship were included among such spoils. By contrast, to surrender acknowledging the enemy's superiority—as al-Ruha had in the seventh century—meant the implementation of a pact (as a consequence of surrendering peacefully to the enemy [*ṣulh*]) that would normally guarantee the soundness of the properties belonging to the defeated.

After the Byzantine conquest in 1031–32, the mosque in al-Ruha was destroyed,<sup>107</sup> to be reestablished later on under the Seljuqs in 1084.<sup>108</sup> A few years afterward, the Crusaders transformed it into the residence of their Latin bishop.<sup>109</sup> Finally, under the rule of Zangi and Nur al-Din (r. 1146–74), it was reestablished as a mosque, while at the same time a certain number of churches were shut down and eventually destroyed.<sup>110</sup> One should note that in this last case, churches not belonging directly to the Latins were also confiscated since the new rulers believed that some Latins had worshipped in them.<sup>111</sup>

In analyzing the transformation of al-Ruha's sacred landscape after the Islamic conquest in the seventh century, it is also worth taking into account factors related to the city's confessional demography. Even if divided into different communities, the population of Edessa / al-Ruha on the eve of the 639 conquest was entirely Christian and remained largely so until the tenth century.<sup>112</sup> Starting in the eleventh century—probably with the rise of the Seljuqs—the number of Muslims increased with the result that: “[The city] was then populated by numerous Christians and Muslims, and was frequented by innumerable crowds of all kinds of artisans.”<sup>113</sup> Indeed, during the period of Latin rule, the local population experienced firsthand the conflict between the Crusaders and the Muslims. Matthew of Edessa described the transfer of the local population

to Samosata ordered by the Latins in 1113–14, which left the city “deserted like a widowed woman.”<sup>114</sup> It is probable that after Zangi’s conquest, as the Muslims replaced the Latins as rulers, their numbers increased.<sup>115</sup> In 1146, Zangi had a community of Jews transferred to al-Ruha, thereby reestablishing a Jewish presence in the city almost six centuries after they had been banned by Heraclius.<sup>116</sup>

The shift in the confessional demography perceptibly affected the existence of places of worship in al-Ruha between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (compare plan 2 with plan 3 in the Appendix). Furthermore, each time a ruler of a different faith assumed control, places of worship became the first arena in which the nature of the new power could be displayed. The 1099 Crusade and the conquests of Zangi in 1146 stand out for their symbolic magnitude among such changes of rule.<sup>117</sup> Although alterations to the urban fabric had been ongoing since the beginning of the eleventh century, they accelerated at the end of the conflict between Latin and Muslim forces.

It is easy to observe how places of worship belonging to other cities in the *Dār al-Islām* followed a similar pattern. In Antioch, for instance, the Church of St. Cassianus was transformed into a mosque by Sulayman b. Qutlumish in 1084, the same year that the mosque in al-Ruha was reestablished after having perhaps been annexed to a Christian building.<sup>118</sup> In Aleppo, a church was first transformed into a mosque under Mirdasid rule at the beginning of the eleventh century.<sup>119</sup> After this date, the city would also undergo other major changes. By comparing the depictions of Aleppo offered by Ibn Butlan in 1051 and Ibn Jubayr in 1185, we can perceive the change in the nature of places of worship. The first author mentions one mosque and two churches on the citadel and one mosque and six churches in the walled city, whereas the second counts one Muslim sanctuary on the citadel and one mosque and five or six madrasas in the downtown area.<sup>120</sup> As the clash between Crusaders and Muslims intensified, further decisions to convert four churches into mosques (later transformed into madrasas) point to irreversible changes to the city’s urban panorama.<sup>121</sup>

Hence, Narses’ unheard and desperate lament could be taken as a symbolic farewell to the entirety of late

antique architecture, marking the end of the five hundred-year Byzantine presence in the Muslim-ruled cities of Bilad al-Sham. In the context of this transformation in the urban fabric, one should ask if and how the availability of numerous Byzantine architectural *spolia* affected Islamic architectural patronage, which had begun to reshape the major urban centers of the *Dār al-Islām* since the time of the Muslim drive against the Byzantines in the eleventh century and later against the Crusaders.

#### THE USE OF LATE ANTIQUE ARCHITECTURE IN THE MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC PERIOD

After Zangi’s conquest (following two military incursions, in 1144 and 1146), large sections of al-Ruha’s ramparts needed to be rebuilt. Fragments from the Church of the Confessors, the Church of St. Theodore, and the Church of St. Michael the Archangel were thus used to restore and strengthen the walls of the city.<sup>122</sup> Masonry and architectural pieces from the latter two churches were also used to fortify the citadel, as were materials from the Church of the Apostles and later (probably around or after 1174) from the Churches of St. Stephen and St. Sophia (figs. 5, 6, and 7).

No particular attention was paid to the Byzantine materials that were reused in the city walls—they became part of the structure of the masonry, just as any other element. The practice was common at that time. However, al-Ruha’s walls lack the regular insertion of column shafts found in the medieval walls of Afamiyya or Bosra, where more ancient / classical buildings were probably available.<sup>123</sup>

Additional sources also point out that some architectural fragments from the cathedral of St. Sophia were reused in the mosque of Harran, which was extended during the reigns of Nur al-Din and Salah al-Din (r. 1174–93).<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of extensive excavations prevents us from knowing the exact nature of this practice in the expansion of the mosque.<sup>125</sup> From the surveys, it seems that it mainly involved the reuse of decorative pieces with no structural function. The new courtyard entrance to the prayer hall of the mosque (which is today partially ruined) was a veritable miniature museum of late antique sculpture (fig. 8): two



Fig. 5. Urfa, Byzantine material reused in the masonry of a tower of the citadel. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 6. Urfa, detail of a Byzantine artifact reused in the masonry of a tower of the citadel. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 7. Urfa, detail of a Byzantine artifact reused in the masonry of a tower of the citadel. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 8. The Great Mosque of Harran, portal of the medieval courtyard. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 9. Left) Byzantine capital decorated with acanthus leaves and wreath. Reused in the enlargement of the Great Mosque of Harran. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

Right) Capital decorated with acanthus leaves and wreath. Open-air section of the Museum of Antiquities in Urfa. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

columns were inserted in the masonry flanking the door, while some capitals and head pillars were set symmetrically to the gate. A richly decorated stone column, nowadays in pieces, was reused as a molded cornice at the time of the mosque's enlargement. A comparison with some Byzantine remains found in Urfa today should also be made. The capital, still visible in the courtyard entrance of the mosque of Harran, is sculpted with acanthus leaves and wreaths, similar to one presently on display in the open-air section of the Museum of Urfa (fig. 9). Furthermore, the scattered fragments of the Harran mosque's stone columns decorated with grapes and vine leaves—some of which have fallen from the cornice of the entrance door of the mosque—could also easily have belonged to a fifth- to sixth-century Byzantine building (fig. 10).<sup>126</sup> One should not, however, exclude the local late antique / Byzantine church of Harran (called *kanīsat al-Rūm*) as a possible source of recycled artifacts, as it seems to have been destroyed by an earthquake in the medieval period.<sup>127</sup>

According to Michael the Syrian, Nur al-Din stole some marble columns from a church, probably in Amida, and had them transferred to one of his own residences.<sup>128</sup> At first glance, the sultan's actions, when considered in conjunction with the columns flanking the

entrance of Harran's mosque, recall al-Mansur's efforts with respect to the columns of the Great Church of al-Ruha. Upon closer inspection, however, there are three significant differences with the early medieval period. First of all, in the later middle ages, older Christian artifacts were generally taken from defunct churches that would not have been reopened for Christian worship. Second, there was usually no mention of any possibility for or effort by the Christians to stop their buildings from being plundered. Third, as the evidence indicates, Byzantine architecture and artifacts, when reused as *spolia*, were recontextualized through their insertion into a (new) Islamic artistic framework.

It is plausible to assume that an aesthetic change had reshaped the overall "taste" for this sort of religious architecture.<sup>129</sup> When thirty-two of its marble columns burned in the fire of 1181, the Church of St. John, a Byzantine church in al-Ruha embellished by the Latins, who had used it as their cathedral, was left abandoned. After the Muslim conquest in 1146, the church was seized as booty of war, its sacristy later transformed into a depot for cotton, which accidentally caught fire.<sup>130</sup> Between 1146 and 1181, the church and its "wondrous red marble columns"<sup>131</sup> were available to its new masters. In spite of this, after years of neglect, the archi-



Fig. 10. Left) Fragment of a Byzantine drum column decorated with grapes and wine leaves. Reused as a decoration in the enlargement of the Great Mosque of Harran. (After David S. Rice, "From Sin to Saladin: Excavations in Harran's Great Mosque, with New Light on the Babylonian King Nabonidus and His 104-Year-Old Mother," *Illustrated London News* 231 [Sept. 1957]: fig. 16)

Right) Shaft of a carved column decorated with grapes and vine leaves. Open-air section of the Museum of Antiquities in Urfa. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 11. Urfa, Ulu Cami, interior of the prayer hall. Collection of Professor A. Kingsley Porter. (Photo: K. A. C. Creswell. Courtesy of the Fine Arts Library, Harvard College Library); © Creswell Archive, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford neg. EA.CA. 6599.

tectural wonder that Zangi had admired when he conquered the city less than fifty years before vanished in a fire together with its renowned decoration.<sup>132</sup>

The Great Mosque (Ulu Cami) of al-Ruha is notable for the absence of Byzantine artifacts or any other reference to the pre-Islamic period in its prayer hall (fig. 11). Built between 1146 and 1191, when the adjacent madrasa was added to the mosque<sup>133</sup>—or between 1146 and 1174, if one accepts Ibn Khallikan’s statement about a mosque (*jāmi‘*) built in al-Ruha by Nur al-Din<sup>134</sup>—the mosque incorporated the remains of a church in the northern wall of the courtyard (figs. 12 and 13). Beyond the evidence of some integration of this older material into the walls and portals of the courtyard (figs. 14 and 15), however, the mosque’s structure and architectural details were not in any way affected by the presence of these church remains—or by the fact that in this same period a number of other examples of late antique architecture were available in the city.<sup>135</sup>

A brief overview of the religious patronage of Nur al-Din and the early Ayyubids shows how a new aesthetic language—one completely independent from that of the late antique churches—had developed. Whereas marble was used in new and distinct ways,<sup>136</sup> columns appear mostly in high hierarchical points, such as entrances and



Fig. 12. Urfa, Ulu Cami, reuse of late antique materials in the northern section of the courtyard, door of the hexagonal minaret. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 13. Urfa, Ulu Cami, reuse of late antique materials in the northern section of the courtyard, northern door of the courtyard. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 14. Urfa, Ulu Cami, ancient architrave (probably late antique) reused in the eastern portal. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 15. Urfa, Ulu Cami, two late antique capitals in the courtyard. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

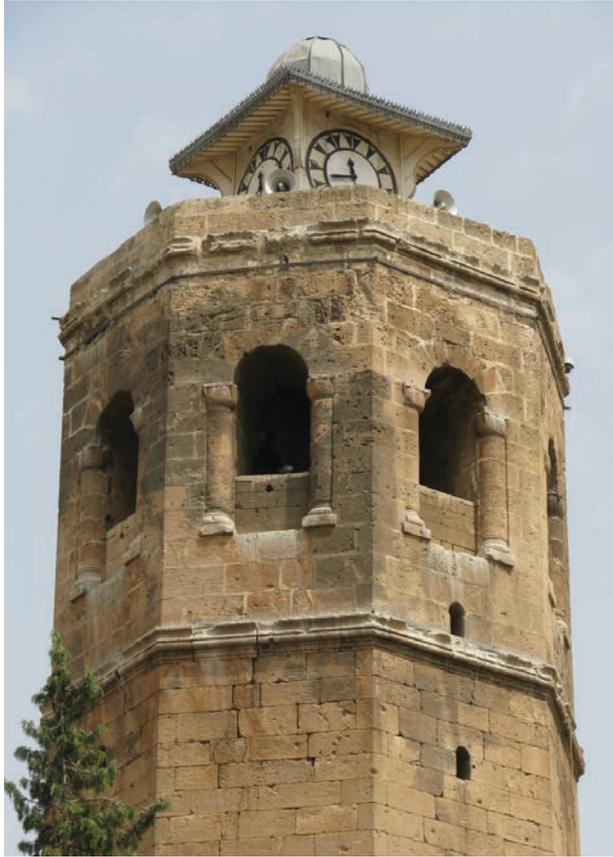


Fig. 16. Urfa, Ulu Cami, detail of the hexagonal minaret. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)



Fig. 17. The Great Mosque of Aleppo, detail of the minaret. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

mihabs. Their use in the post-Crusades period diminished extensively and they lost the central role they had held in the early middle ages.<sup>137</sup> Despite some revivals, new patterns of decoration inform the interior of the mosques.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, it seems that in medieval times, vanishing late antique Christian architecture derived its value more from its reuse as a deliberate accent (or detail) in Islamic religious buildings rather than as their main source of inspiration, as had been the case in the earlier period.

In the wake of the construction of the minaret for Aleppo's Great Mosque in 1090, the hexagonal minaret of al-Ruha's Great Mosque, which dates back to the century after the 1146 conquest, featured along its squared shaft fluted stripes inspired by late antique Christian architecture (figs. 16 and 17).<sup>139</sup> Although the decoration of al-Ruha's minaret is more sober than that of

the one in Aleppo, both examples show how pieces of late antique architecture were used as accents, inserted and more or less successfully integrated in new Islamic buildings. This reference to an ancient style hints at the nature of the reuse of Christian artifacts in the extension of the Great Mosque of Harran during the second half of the twelfth century. One may further note that in this case not only were late antique / Christian architectural pieces reused, but some reliefs with a pagan iconography and cuneiform scripts were set inverted as pavement stones. An Assyrian column base was also placed in the middle of a twelfth-century ablution basin as an ornament (fig. 18).<sup>140</sup> Such practices were connected to the disappearance of non-Muslim places of worship in the city. For example, pagan temples in use until the beginning of the Crusades but no longer tolerated by Muslim rulers or the Byzantine church were



Fig. 18. The Great Mosque of Harran. The medieval basin in the courtyard, with an Assyrian column base in the middle. (Photo: Mattia Guidetti)

not restored by the Christian community after they were destroyed by an earthquake in the eleventh century.

Without artificially postulating any symbolic representation of the “victory of Islam,” at first glance, the recycling of these pieces of late antique / Christian architecture speaks to the general homogenization of places of worship in areas that had formerly had a Christian majority, such as Bilad al-Sham, Egypt, and northern Mesopotamia.<sup>141</sup>

If the homogenization of places of worship was a substantially new process for the area, at the same time the nature of the reuse of ancient fragments and artifacts was different in comparison with their use in the early middle ages. Take, for instance, the case of al-Halawiyya Madrasa in Aleppo, where three out of four original Byzantine *exedrae* were used in new Muslim buildings constructed on the site of the Church of St. Helen (sixth century), which remained in use until

1124.<sup>142</sup> Here, the original Byzantine structure was recontextualized into a madrasa, which apart from its Byzantine core in the prayer hall was a product completely distinct from the original late antique building. The carved wooden mihrab added to the southern wall of the prayer hall is a perfect example of the new aesthetic that now ruled Islamic religious art.

Something similar could be said about the Christian marble tables reused in a third context in the sixteenth-century madrasa of Sibay in Damascus. These high-quality marble artifacts were probably first recycled for a madrasa or mosque built by Abu Sa‘id Tutush, the Seljuq ruler of southern Syria between 1078 and 1095, whose name appears inscribed in one of them.<sup>143</sup> At this point, it would not be mere conjecture to suggest that these artifacts were used as altars in an active late antique Byzantine church until they were removed.<sup>144</sup> We may even speculate that they originally belonged

to the magnificent Church of St. Cassianus of Antioch, plundered in 1084 by Sulayman b. Qutlumish, who at one time was an ally of Abu Sa'īd Tutush:

He opened the great church of Kawsyana [i.e., Mar Cassianus, the Martyr], and took from it the furniture and curtains, the vessels of gold and silver, and the rest of the objects that had been deposited therein by the citizens, a vast quantity, and he made the church into a mosque.<sup>145</sup>

In general, it is easier to imagine that the altars were plundered from a church located in the area reconquered from Byzantium rather than from one that had been under Muslim rule since the seventh-century conquest. Keeping in mind these examples, one should also think of earlier mosques, such as al-Aqsa Mosque or the Great Mosque of Damascus, where late antique marble slabs, columns, and capitals were reused with great frequency, contributing to the creation of the very essence of the early Islamic religious aesthetic. With respect to the enlargement of al-Aqsa Mosque during the Umayyad period, for instance, Wilkinson has shown how capitals with a visible Christian iconography were consciously chosen to be reused in the *maqṣūra* (private enclosure) area, in the center of the Great Mosque of Jerusalem.<sup>146</sup>

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the alteration of late antique marble fragments with Qur'anic quotations and the transformation of their original function in a new Muslim setting (altars were often inserted vertically in the walls, perhaps to be used, as Flood has observed, as two-dimensional mihrabs)<sup>147</sup> demonstrate that a new approach toward late antique art and architecture had been established.

## CONCLUSION

By studying al-Ruha between the seventh and thirteenth centuries and comparing it with other cities in the *Dār al-Islām*, we have sought to establish a connection between the existence of Christian places of worship and the reuse of late antique / Byzantine artifacts in Islamic architecture in two different chronological periods: the early medieval (seventh to tenth centuries) and the medieval (eleventh to thirteenth centuries). We have

furthermore suggested that this connection should be integrated into the analysis of the formation and development of Islamic art in the area of Bilad al-Sham.

In summary, while in the early medieval era Christian / Byzantine artifacts were borrowed and reused in a way that corresponded to their original settings and maintained the coherence of their aesthetic value, this was no longer the case during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, when such artifacts were considered in new contexts and sometimes even for new functions. Moreover, this new attitude coincides with the disappearance of late antique churches from many urban contexts, while in the previous period they were still important elements of the sacred landscape. Indeed, changing political and social circumstances, such as military conquests, transfers of rule, and variations in confessional demography, suggested different uses for late antique Christian buildings and architectural fragments. When compared to the early Islamic period, late antique churches in the twelfth century were neither essential elements of Bilad al-Sham's urban sacred landscape nor were they necessary as basic references for Islamic religious art and architecture.

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## APPENDIX

### *Introduction to the Plans*

While only an archaeological survey could provide a definitive topographical plan of the city of Urfa during the middle ages, these three plans are intended to show only the transformations of individual sites of worship within the walls of the city during three chronological periods between the fourth and fifteenth centuries. Only religious buildings are indicated. One should remember that the exact architectural plan and structure of most of these buildings are unknown. The Christian buildings may have had one of a number of plans and typologies, e.g., martyria, churches, monasteries, or cathedral complexes. Because of the complex history of the city during late antiquity and the middle ages, it is also probable that several places are missing in this

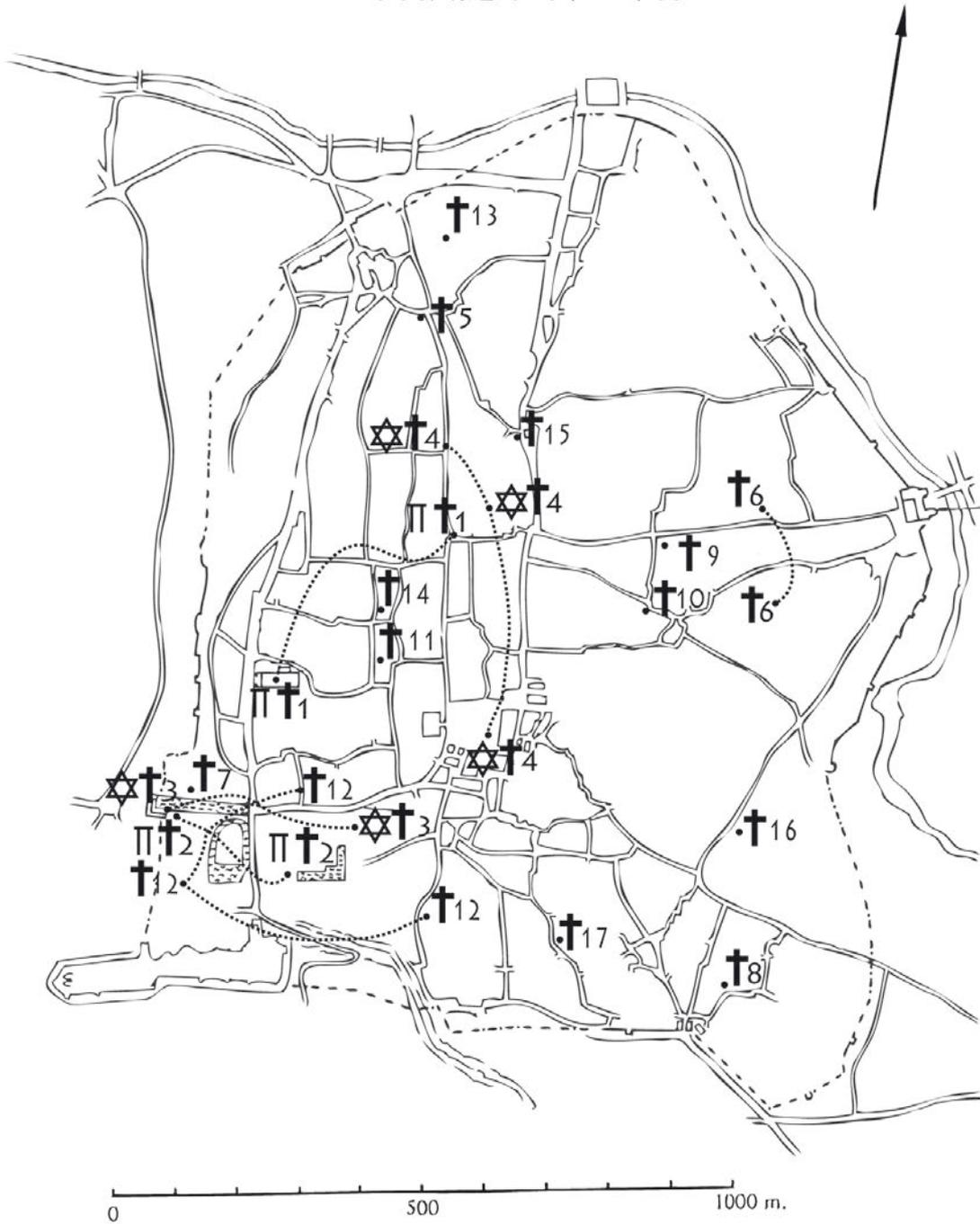
list. With respect to the Muslim buildings, the options were limited to mosques or prayer halls, although it is still unknown with which type one is dealing in each particular case. The positions of the buildings in the plans of the city proposed here are hypothetical and based directly on the written sources used in the accompanying article and on the works on these sources by Kirsten, Segal, and Sinclair (see notes 4 and 40). Where more than one location is indicated for a particular building, it signifies that there is contradictory evidence regarding its position. The following common symbols are used: Greek Pi for the temples, the Star of David for the synagogues, the cross for Christian places of worship, and the crescent for Muslim ones.

The key for each plan describes the buildings in use within the specific time period to which the plan refers. Ordinal numbers in parentheses have been used to distinguish various churches dedicated to the same saint, as well as mosques whose names are not known. A slash between centuries or years (e.g., 4th/6th centuries, 489/504) refers to the period during which the structure in question was built. The mathematical symbols < and > indicate the time before or after which a building was in use. A dash at the end of the line indicates that the building continued to be used beyond the chronological period being described. The three symbols in close succession (>>>) signal a change in the religion of worship in the building or on the site.

## KEY FOR PLAN 1

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Temple, 3rd century B.C. – 4th/5th centuries A.D. (?) &gt;&gt;&gt; Church of St. John, 457 –</p> <p>2. Temple, 3rd century B.C. – &lt;201 A.D. &gt;&gt;&gt; Old Church &lt;201–201. Rebuilt in 312; dedicated to St. Thomas (2) after the transfer of his relics in 442; destroyed by a flood in 525; dedicated to St. Sophia after its reconstruction by Justinian, 525 –</p> <p>3. Synagogue, 4th/6th centuries A.D. (?) &gt;&gt;&gt; Site annexed to the complex of St. Sophia under Heraclius (?) –</p> <p>4. Synagogue, 412 A.D. &gt;&gt;&gt; Church of St. Stephen, 412 –</p> <p>5. Church of the Martyrs (or of the Confessors), 345 –</p> <p>6. Church of St. Sergius (1), 4th/6th centuries (?) –</p> <p>7. Church of St. Thomas (1), 394 –</p> | <p>8. Church of St. Barlaha, 408 –</p> <p>9. Church of the Apostles (or Great Church), 435 –</p> <p>10. Church of St. Sergius (2), 4th/6th centuries (?)–</p> <p>11. Church of the Mother of God (1) (or Martyrium), 489/504 –</p> <p>12. Church of St. Theodore (1), 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> <p>13. Church of St. Cyriacus, 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> <p>14. Church of St. Theodore (2) / Church of the Cross, 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> <p>15. Church of the Mother of God (2), 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> <p>16. Church of St. George, 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> <p>17. Church of St. Michael, 4th/7th centuries (?) –</p> |
|--|--|

# PHASE I: IV - VII

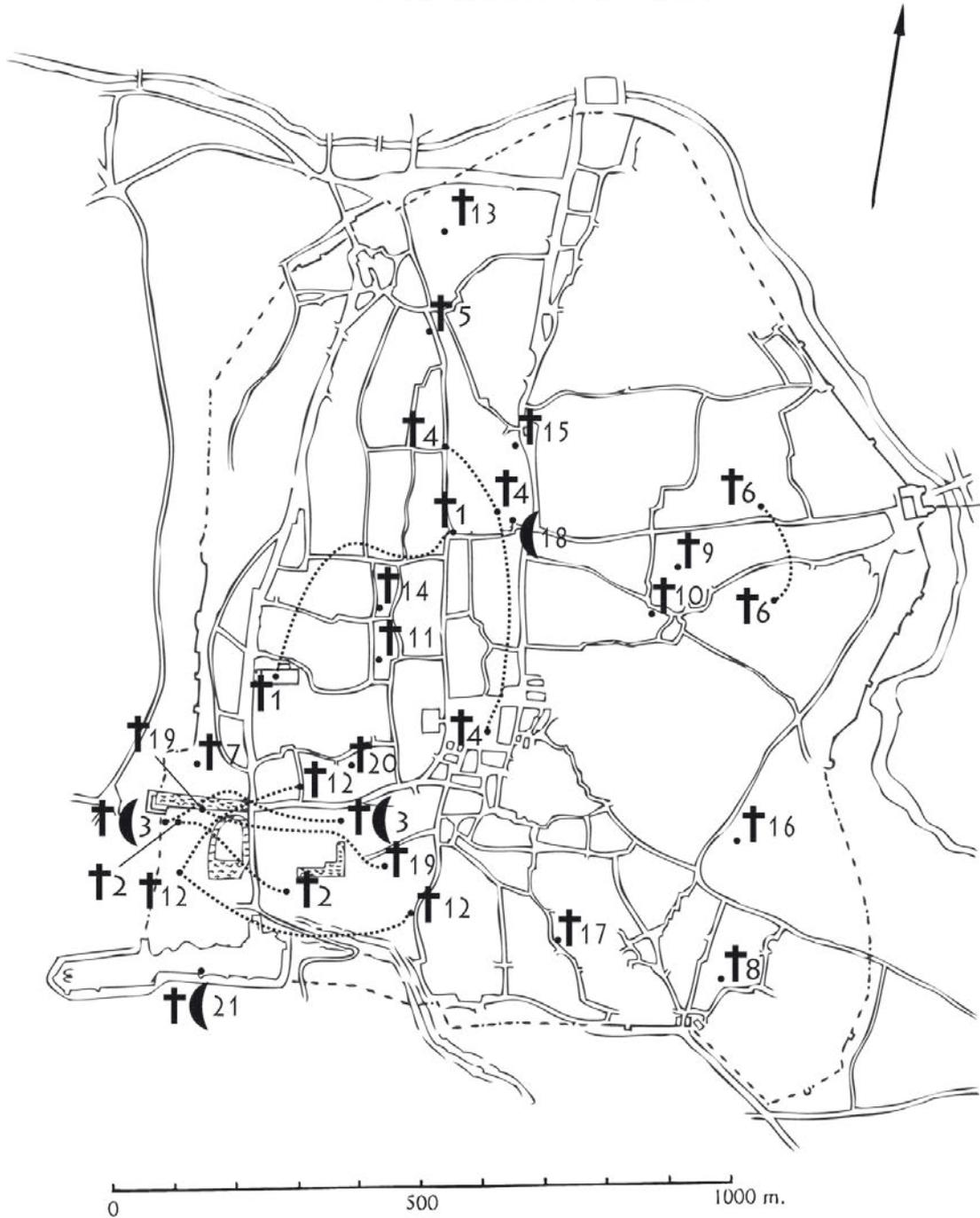


Plan 1. Phase I of Urfa, 4th–7th centuries

## KEY FOR PLAN 2

1. Church of St. John, 457; transformed and embellished by the Latins as a cathedral >1099 >>> residence of Zangi in 1146; later abandoned >>> transformed into a wool deposit, and burned in an accidental fire in 1181.
2. Old Church, <201; rebuilt in 312, dedicated to St. Thomas after the transfer of his relics in 442; destroyed by a flood in 525; dedicated to St. Sophia after its reconstruction by Justinian in 525; restored after an earthquake in 678–79; sacristy and treasury possibly destroyed in 825 (see no. 9 below); partially destroyed in 1032, but still in use in 1083; partially collapsed in 1105–6; completely destroyed in 1174 or 1184.
3. Building annexed to the surrounding area of St. Sophia under Heraclius (?) >>> Mosque (2) 825; restored in 1146 –
4. Church of St. Stephen, 412; probably used by the Latins >1099 >>> used as a granary and then destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
5. Church of the Martyrs (or the Confessors), 345; destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
6. Church of St. Sergius (1), 4th/6th centuries (?) –
7. Church of St. Thomas, 394 >>> used as a stable > 1146; destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
8. Church of St. Barlaha, 408 –
9. Church of the Apostles (or Great Church), 435; sacristy and treasury possibly destroyed in 825 (see 2 above); partially collapsed and then destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
10. Church of St. Sergius (2), 4th/6th centuries (?); destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
11. Church of the Mother of God (1) (or Martyrium), 489/504; destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
12. Church of St. Theodore (1), 4th/7th centuries (?); destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
13. Church of St. Cyriacus, 4th/7th centuries (?) –
14. Church of St. Theodore (2) / Church of the Cross, 4th/7th centuries (?); partially damaged by arson in 1032 and then restored –
15. Church of the Mother of God (2), 4th/7th centuries; destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
16. Church of St. George, 4th/7th centuries (?); destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
17. Church of St. Michael, 4th/7th centuries (?); destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
18. Mosque (1), >639 >>> partially destroyed and perhaps annexed to the buildings surrounding the Church of St. John and the Church of the Mother of God in 1032 (?) >>> restored in 1084 with the construction of a minaret >>> probably transformed into the residence of the Latin bishop between 1099 and 1144–46 >>> restored by Zangi in 1146; enlarged as the Ulu Camii (?) <1191 (probably between 1146 and 1174) –
19. Church of the Mother of God (3) and baptistery, 700; partially damaged by arson in 1032 and then restored –
20. Church of the Forty Martyrs, <825; partially destroyed in 825 and then rebuilt; destroyed between 1146 and 1174.
21. Church of St. Theodore (on the citadel), 10th/11th centuries (?) >>> transformed into a mosque (3) >1146 –

# PHASE II: VII - XII

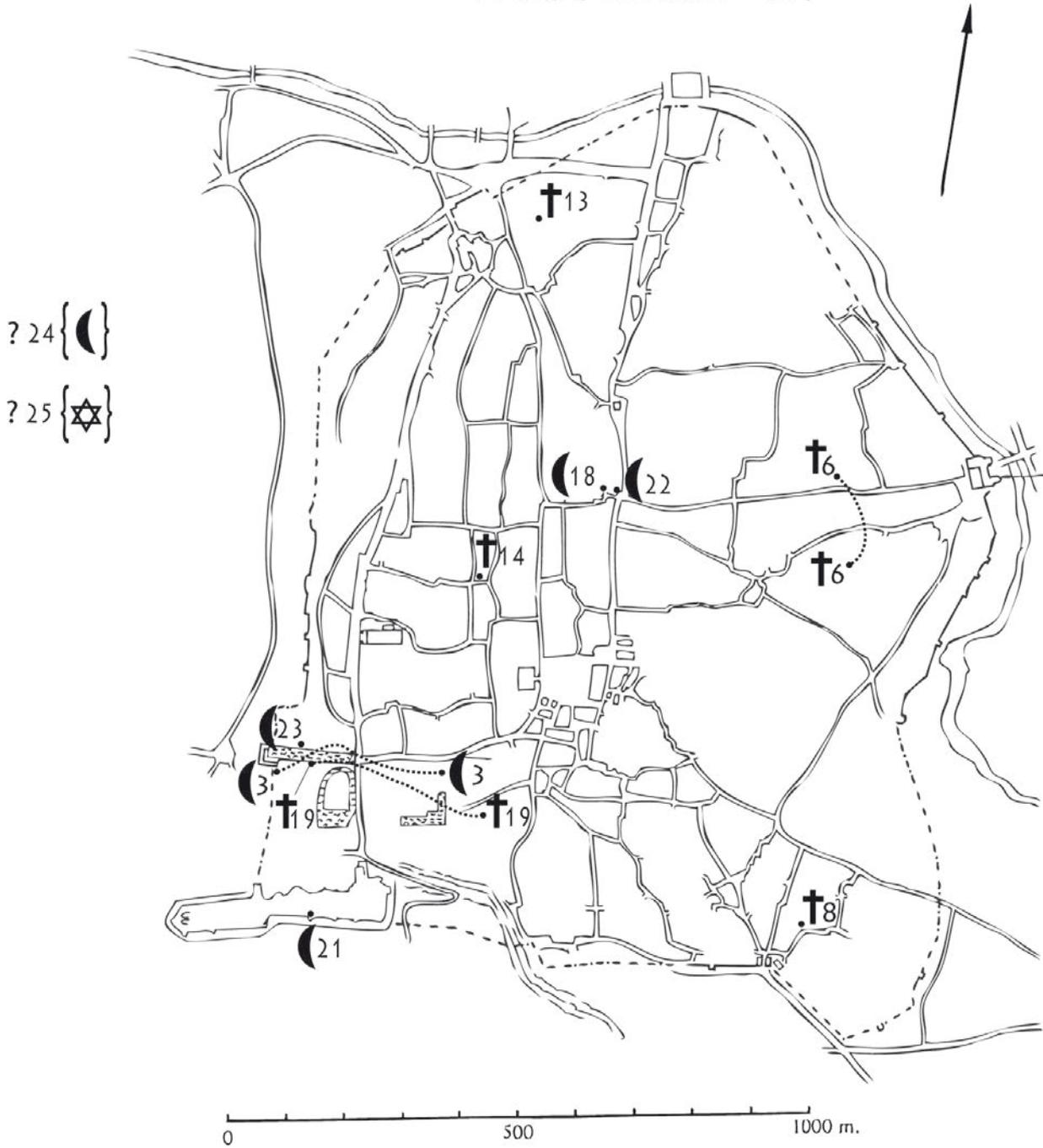


Plan 2. Phase II of Urfa, 7th–12th centuries

## KEY FOR PLAN 3

3. Building annexed to the surrounding area of St. Sophia under Heraclius (?) >>> Mosque (2) 825; restored in 1146; transformed into the Hasan Paşa Camii (?), 14th century –
6. Church of St. Sergius (1), 4th/6th centuries (?) – destroyed (?).
8. Church of St. Barlaha, 408 – destroyed (?).
13. Church of St. Cyriacus, 4th/7th centuries (?) – destroyed (?).
14. Church of St. Theodore (2) / Church of the Cross, 4th/7th centuries (?); partially damaged by arson in 1032 and then restored; in use in the 13th century – destroyed (?).
18. Mosque (1) >639 >>> partially destroyed and then perhaps annexed to the buildings surrounding the Church of St. John and the Church of the Mother of God in 1032 (?) >>> restored in 1084 with the construction of a minaret >>> probably transformed into the residence of the Latin bishop between 1099 and 1144–46 >>> restored by Zangi in 1146; enlarged as the Ulu Cami (?) <1191 (probably between 1146 and 1174) –
19. Church of the Mother of God (3) and baptistery, 700; partially damaged by arson in 1032; in use in the 13th century – destroyed (?).
21. Church of St. Theodore (on the citadel), 10th/11th centuries (?) >>> transformed into a Mosque (3) >1146 – destroyed (?).
22. Madrasa, 1191 –
23. Minaret and probable prayer hall or mosque, 1211–22 –
24. ‘Umariyya Mosque, according to an inscription dated to 1213–14 (position unknown) – destroyed (?).
25. Synagogue (position unknown) >1146 – destroyed (?).

PHASE III: XIII - XV



Plan 3. Phase III of Urfa, 13th-15th centuries

## NOTES

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1. Leah Di Segni, "Christian Epigraphy in the Holy Land: New Discoveries," *ARAM* 15 (2003): 247–67; Alan Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria: An Archaeological Assessment* (London, 2006), 120–26.
2. It is generally agreed that Bilad al-Sham passed from a Christian to a Muslim majority between the tenth and twelfth centuries: see, for example, Bruno Heyberg, "Les chrétiens," in *États, sociétés et cultures du monde musulman médiéval (Xe–Xve siècle)*, ed. J. C. Garcin, 3 vols. (Paris, 2000), 3:147–56; Nehemia Levtzion, "Conversion to Islam in Syria and Palestine and the Survival of Christian Communities," in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Toronto, 1990), 289–311; Richard W. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 104–13.
3. Modern historiographies obviously reflect the different paths taken in the medieval period by the lands formerly belonging to the Byzantine empire. Due to their disappearance in the middle ages, the late antique churches of Bilad al-Sham lack the sort of independent study carried out, for instance, on the Coptic churches in Egypt.
4. Rubens Duval, *Histoire politique, religieuse et littéraire d'Édesse jusqu'à la Première Croisade* (Paris, 1892) (orig. pub. in *Journal Asiatique* 18–19 [1891–92]; repr. Philo Press: Amsterdam, 1975); Ernst Kirsten, "Edessa, eine römische Grenzstadt des 4. bis 6. Jh. im Orient," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 6 (1963): 144–72; Judah B. Segal, *Edessa: The Blessed City* (Oxford, 1970).
5. Witold Witakowski, "Chronicles of Edessa," *Orientalia Suecana* 33–35 (1984–86): 487–98; Sebastian Brock, "North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John Bar Penkāyē's *Rīs Mellē*," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987): 51–75; Andrew Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993); Andrew Palmer, "Amid in the Seventh-Century Syriac Life of Theodūtē," in *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam*, ed. Emmanouela Grypeou, Mark Swanson, and David Thomas (Leiden, 2006), 111–38.
6. Mehdi M. İlhan, "Urfa and Its Environs in the 1560s," *Archivum Ottomanicum* 19 (2001): 5–67; Ahmet N. Turan, "XVI. Asırda Ruha (Urfa) Sancağı" (PhD diss., Ankara University, 1993).
7. I use the following periodization: fourth to seventh centuries, late antique period (Byzantine and Persian rules); seventh to tenth centuries, early medieval period (Umayyad, Abbasid, and Byzantine rules); eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries, medieval period (Byzantine, Seljuq, and Latin rules); thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, late medieval period (Zangid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk rules); sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, early modern period (brief Safavid and then Ottoman rules).
8. Cf. Duval, *Histoire politique*, and Segal, *Edessa*.
9. Very recently, a Byzantine bath and villa were discovered in an *extra-muros* quarter on the southeastern side of the city. Conservation work is being completed before the site is incorporated into the city's new museum. High-quality mosaic panels were uncovered in the villa and are currently being restored and published by Urfa's Directorate of Antiquity.
10. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), Fr. trans. Albert Abouina (Louvain, 1974), 129–30.
11. Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests: How the Spread of Islam Changed the World We Live In* (London, 2007), 94–95; Fred M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, N.J., 1981), 138; Leone Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 11 vols. (Milan and Rome, 1905–26), 4:36–48.
12. Chase F. Robinson, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest: The Transformation of Northern Mesopotamia* (Cambridge, 2000), 1–32.
13. In recent years it has been proposed that the Pact of 'Umar might have been the result of an earlier version of the pact to which new regulations were added as long as they were sanctioned by the ulema: Albert Noth, "Problems of Differentiation between Muslims and Non-Muslims: Re-Reading the 'Ordinances of 'Umar' (*al-shurut al-'umariyya*)," in *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society*, ed. R. Hoyland (Aldershot, 2004) (orig. pub. in German in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 [1987]: 103–24); Mark R. Cohen, "What Was the Pact of 'Umar? A Literary-Historical Study," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 23 (1999): 100–157. For a general overview of the concept of *dhimma*, see Clifford E. Bosworth, "The Concept of *Dhimma* in Early Islam," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 2 vols. (New York and London, 1982), 1:37–51.
14. For a description of the city in the Byzantine period, see Kirsten, "Edessa, eine römische Grenzstadt," 144–72. The presence of Jews in the area has been studied by Judah B. Segal, "The Jews of North Mesopotamia," in *Studies in the Bible Presented to Professor M. H. Segal*, ed. J. M. Grintz and J. Liver (Jerusalem, 1964), 32–63. The Jews seem to have been forced out of Edessa at the time of Heraclius' reconquest (Segal, *Edessa*, 101–4). The reference to a Jewish presence in al-Ruha in the 1216 work of Judah al-Harizi (*Jewish Travelers*, ed. E. N. Adler [London, 1930], 112) is perhaps related to the transfer of 300 Jewish families to the city ordered by Zangi in 1146: *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 102.
15. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), ed. I.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1937), 186. The city has had the following names through the centuries: Edessa (Greek),

- Urha (Syriac), al-Ruha (Arabic), Ruha (Ottoman Turkish), and Urfa or Şanlıurfa (Turkish).
16. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1968), 172–76.
  17. Procopius, *De Aedificiis = Of the Buildings of Justinian*, trans. Aubrey Stewart, Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society, vol. 2, pt. 3 (London, 1886), 42–61; Fernanda De'Maffei, *Edifici di Giustiniano nell'ambito dell'impero* (Spoleto, 1988), 51–62. The Church of St. Thomas was founded in Amida by Heraclius a few years before the Arab conquest: Dionysius I, of Tel-Mahrē, *Chronique de Denys de Tell-Mahré: Quatrième partie*, trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1895), 5.
  18. Kennedy, *Great Arab Conquests*, 94–95.
  19. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 44–62, in particular 54–59. “The pattern may not be unique to the north, but here, where the Muslim presence was so thin, autonomy was real.” *Ibid.*, 32.
  20. Dionysius I, of Tel-Mahrē, *Chronique*, 9.
  21. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Brussels, 1963), 2:457, “Baṭna de Saroug s'écroula, et aussi le ciborium de l'église d'Édesse et ses deux côtés: Mo'avia ordonna de la rebâtir”; *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284–813*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott (Oxford, 1997), 497: “Mauias rebuilt the latter—the dome—by the zeal of the Christians” (A.M. 6170; A.D. 677–78).
  22. *Synodicon orientale, ou recueil de synodes nestoriens*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris, 1902), 483.
  23. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 14–15.
  24. Sebastian Brock, “North Mesopotamia,” 57 note b.
  25. See the “Preliminary List of Dated Monuments Built by Christians in Northern Mesopotamia, A.D. 200–1500,” in Gertrude Bell, *The Churches and Monasteries of the Tur 'Abdin*, ed. M. M. Mango (London, 1982), iv–vii, 161–64.
  26. Umberto Rizzitano, “‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn Marwān, il governatore omayyade dell'Egitto, 685–704 d.C.,” *Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 2 (1947): 325–29; Kosei Morimoto, *The Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Early Islamic Period* (Kyoto, 1981), 114.
  27. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 229–30; Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj*, ed. and trans. Ernest W. Budge, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1932), 1:104–5; *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 2:476–77.
  28. Walter E. Kaegi, *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 192–219.
  29. Ahmad Shboul and Alan Walmsley, “Identity and Self-Image in Syria and Palestine in the Transition from Byzantine to Early Islamic Rule: Arab Christians and Muslims,” *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11 (1998): 269, 273.
  30. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 186; Bar Hebraeus, *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, ed. and trans. Jean Baptiste Abbeloos and Thomas J. Lamy, 3 vols. (Paris, 1872–77), 1:272. In her introduction to Bell's studies, Mango argues that the assignment of the cathedral to the Melkites prompted the Jacobite bishops to sponsor the construction of new houses of worship: Bell, *Churches and Monasteries*, iv.
  31. Abū Šāliḥ al-Armanī, *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt and Some Neighbouring Countries*, trans. B. T. A. Evetts and Alfred J. Butler (Oxford, 1969), 154–57; Kosei Morimoto, “The Dīwāns as Registers of the Arabic Stipendiaries in Early Islamic Egypt,” in *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Cahen*, ed. R. Curiel and R. Gyselen, *Res Orientales* 6 (Bures-sur Yvette, 1994), 363–65. Athanasius appears in the list of the Egyptian *dīwān* as “illustrious chartularios” (accountant).
  32. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 2:476–77; *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 230. Some decades later, in the same challenging environment, another al-Ruha native, Theodore Abu Qurra, a Melkite clergyman, would write in Arabic on Christian theology, both in response to the threat posed by the conversion of Christians to Islam and as a contribution to the ongoing discussion within Christianity on theological issues. The members of the urban Christian elites were not only administrators but also scholars at the center of cultural and theological intercommunal debates: Sidney H. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, N.J., 2008), 59–64.
  33. Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 111, 124. See also Walmsley's proposal to apply the “resilience theory” as an approach to studying the capacity of the local Syrian communities to adapt themselves to a new rule in the seventh and eighth centuries: Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 146–47; cf. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 168–69.
  34. Shboul and Walmsley, “Identity and Self-Image,” 269–74; Robert Hoyland, “Introduction,” in Hoyland, *Muslims and Others*, xvii–xviii.
  35. al-Jāḥiẓ, “Risāla fī al-Radd 'alā al-Naṣārā,” in *Three Essays of Abu 'Othman 'Amr ibn Bahr al-Jahiz*, ed. J. Finkel (Cairo, 1926), 17–18. The passage continues by underlining that in fact a Jew could only be a “dyer, tanner, cupper, butcher, or tinker.” This comment reflects the heritage of the Byzantine organization of society. See also Norman A. Stillman, “The Jew in the Medieval Islamic City,” in *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society, and Identity*, ed. D. Frankel (Leiden, 1995), 12.
  36. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 1:360. See 360 n. 11 regarding the “Pact of the Conquest.”
  37. Michael the Syrian dates the first destruction of a monastery under the Arabs (that of Qinnasrin) to the year 810 (*Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:23); in the early Islamic period, Agapius of Manbij mentions only the destruction of the Church of St. John in Damascus—an anomaly in the Muslim policy of preserving the Byzantine heritage—as a hostile act by the new rulers toward the Christians: Agapius of Manbij, *Kitāb al-'Unwān = Histoire universelle*, ed. and trans. A. A. Vasiliev (Paris, 1912), 498.
  38. At least until now, neither the literary sources nor the scanty archaeological data available have revealed any new important Christian buildings constructed in these major cities.

- However, “it is never safe to argue from negative evidence in archaeology” (Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria*, 87), and indeed in cities such as Jerusalem, for example, Christian foundations dating to the early Islamic period would not be unexpected.
39. For the Madaba region in particular, see Michele Piccirillo, *L'Arabia Cristiana: Dalla provincia imperiale al primo periodo islamico* (Milan, 2002).
  40. Albert Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques en Turquie orientale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1940), 1:277–86, 356 (inscriptions); Thomas A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, 4 vols. (London, 1975), 4:20–21. See also *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, ed. É. Combé, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet (Cairo, 1931–), vol. 9, no. 3450; vol. 10, nos. 3691–92, 3740; for non-religious buildings, see vol. 10, no. 3862. Cf. Lorenz Korn, “Ayyubidische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien: Bautätigkeit im Kontext von Politik und Gesellschaft 564–658/1169–1260,” 3 vols. (PhD diss., University of Tübingen, 1999), 2:314–15.
  41. al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-buldān*, 178.
  42. K. A. C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Islamic Architecture*, rev. and suppl. J. W. Allen (Aldershot, 1989), 4–10; Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function and Meaning* (Edinburgh, 1994), 34–35, 66–68. See the important revision of the issue of the origin of the Muslim mosque in Jeremy Johns, “The ‘House of the Prophet’ and the Concept of the Mosque,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part Two: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford, 1999), 59–112. A different interpretation is offered by Rafi Grafman and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, “The Two Great Syrian Umayyad Mosques: Jerusalem and Damascus,” *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 1–15.
  43. Adamnanus, “Adamnani de locis sanctis libri tres,” in *Itinera hierosolymitana, saeculi IV–VIII*, ed. Paul Geyer (Prague, 1898), 276; see the translation by Th. Wright, “The Travels of Bishop Arculf in the Holy Land,” in *Early Travels in Palestine*, ed. Th. Wright (New York, 1969), 10.
  44. Wright, “Travels of Bishop Arculf,” 1–2; for a possible early Muslim prayer hall in the area of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, see Heribert Busse, “Die ‘Umar-Moschee im östlichen Atrium der Grabeskirche,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 109 (1993): 73–82. The first reference to an Islamic construction in *al-Haram al-Sharif* appears in an anonymous Georgian tale published by Bernard Flusin: “L’Esplanade du Temple à l’arrivée des Arabes, d’après deux récits byzantins,” in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part One: ‘Abd al-Malik’s Jerusalem*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (Oxford, 1992), 21.
  45. Andrew Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier: The Early History of Tur ‘Abdin* (Cambridge, 1990), 167; Palmer, “Āmid in the Seventh-Century Syriac Life of Theodūṭē,” 124 n. 32; Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 41.
  46. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 35–36. The same author mentions a minaret built on this occasion, which was still extant in his time (thirteenth century). The Christian source probably reflects the widespread common *vulgata* about Seljuq claims on the places of worship in the city. On this matter, there is a well-known anecdote concerning ‘Umar’s refusal to pray in the Holy Sepulchre so as to avoid any claim by the Muslims to that church: see Busse, “Die ‘Umar-Moschee,” 72–83.
  47. For the year 1031 Bar Hebraeus says, “Some of them went down to the city and destroyed the Mosque of the Arabs”: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:192.
  48. Johns, “House of the Prophet,” 109–10.
  49. In al-Ruha, this is the case of the inscription of the year 1213 (*Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, vol. 10, no. 3740), which has been attributed to a “Moschee ‘Umariyya”: Max von Oppenheim, *Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien*, Beiträge zur Assyriologie und semitischen Sprachwissenschaft 7 (1913), 61, no. 83. Korn underlined the fact that the Mosque of ‘Umar is not among the known buildings of Urfa: Korn, “Ayyubidische Architektur,” 2:314.
  50. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rikh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. J. al-D. al-Munajjid, 2 vols. (Damascus, 1954), 2:23, 17–32.
  51. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 1:360.
  52. Ibid.
  53. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:61–62.
  54. When a source mentions the destruction of a church, this does not mean *sic et simpliciter* the destruction of the whole structure of the church. It is possible that only one particular area was damaged or that a fire burned only a section of the building; this would explain the apparent ease with which buildings were reconstructed and repaired, often within a few years after the damage had been incurred.
  55. Around 770, al-Ruha’s Seleucid walls were partially destroyed by the caliph al-Mansur because the local Christian community had not obeyed his orders: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:279. In 797, Harun al-Rashid (r. 786–809) visited the city to arbitrate a dispute between local Muslims and Christians: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:10; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, ed. and trans. P. I. Brims and G. G. Kirsch, 2 vols. (Lipsiae, 1789), 2:137. In nearby Harran, churches—as well as synagogues—built after the conquest were either partially or totally destroyed a few years before 825 by the local Muslim governor who, then, however, allowed them to be repaired: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:47–48. On early Muslim attitudes toward the public display of Christian religious symbols, see Sidney H. Griffith, “Images, Islam and Christian Icons: A Moment in the Christian / Muslim Encounter in Early Islamic Times,” in *La Syrie de Byzance à l’Islam, VIIe–VIIIe siècles*, ed. Pierre Canivet and Jean-Paul Rey-Coquais (Damascus, 1992), 121–38. The corpus of early Muslim eschatology, which expresses fear of a Byzantine *reconquista*, may have played a role in raising cultural tensions. The corpus specifically mentions Edessa / al-Ruha: Michael A. Cook, “The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology,” *Al-Qanṭara* 13 (1992): 3–23.
  56. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 1:360; *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:62–64.
  57. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma’rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1967), 141.

58. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 100–101.
59. A fruitful comparison could be made with contemporary al-Andalus. Here it is enough to stress the regulations of Muhammad I, emir of Córdoba (r. 852–86), regarding the architectural additions by the Mozarabs to the extant Visigoth churches and their new construction projects, as reported by Eulogius' *Memoriale Sanctorum*: Jerrilynn D. Dodds, *Architecture and Ideology in Early Medieval Spain* (University Park, Pa., and London, 1990), 63–64.
60. Mattia Guidetti, "Churches and Mosques in the Cities of Bilād al-Shām: Coexistence and Transformation of the Urban Fabric," in *Islamic Cities in the Classical Age*, ed. Nasser Rabbat (Boston, forthcoming 2010). To this list should be added the case of Subeyta in the Negev area, where a small mosque was added in the compound of one of the local churches, without causing any interruption to Christian worship: Avraham Negev, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, ed. Ephraim Stern (New York, 1993–), s.v. "Sobata." Similar to al-Rusafa is al-Bakhra', although in the latter the nature of the relation between the church and the mosque is still not clear: Denis Genequand, "Châteaux omeyyades de la Palmyrène," *Annales Islamologiques* 38, 1 (2004): 13–18; Denis Genequand, "Al-Bakhra' (Avatha), from the Tetrarchic Fort to the Umayyad Castle," *Levant* 36 (2004): 225–42.
61. The consecrated halls in late antique urban cathedral complexes were but a portion of such church properties. This is why in Aleppo, for instance, the Friday mosque was built in the large garden/cemetery located to the east of the city's cathedral, thereby preserving its prayer hall. In this regard, Damascus and Hama are exceptions: in the former, the described pattern was followed only before al-Walid's reconstruction of the first mosque in 705, while in the latter the church was probably turned into a mosque after the conquest: Mattia Guidetti, "Churches and Mosques in the Cities of Bilād al-Shām."
62. See, for instance, Bosra, Jerash, and Palmyra, where early mosques were built in the centers of those cities, though not exactly in the vicinity of extant churches, which remained in use long after the seventh-century Islamic conquest: Michael Meinecke, Flemming Aalund, Lorenz Korn, and Stefan Heidemann, *Bosra: Islamische Architektur und Archäologie* (Rahden, 2005); Alan Walmsley and Kristoffer Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash in Jordan and Its Relationship to Early Mosques," *Antiquity* 79 (June 2005): 362–78; Denis Genequand, "An Early Islamic Mosque at Palmyra," *Levant* 40, 1 (2008): 3–15.
63. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 1:560.
64. Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 131–41.
65. Yazīd b. Muḥammad al-Azdī, *Ta'rikh al-Mawsil*, ed. 'A. Ḥabība (Cairo, 1967), 147. The *masjid* mentioned by al-Azdi seems to refer to the congregational mosque of al-Mawsil: Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, 74.
66. Muḥibb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Shiḥna, *al-Durr al-muntakhab fī ta'rikh mamlakat Ḥalab*, ed. 'Abd Allāh al-Darwīsh (Damascus, 1984), 82.
67. Mattia Guidetti, "L'antico in due edifici siriani medievali: La formazione dell'arte musulmana e il suo rapporto con l'antico, la Siria del XII secolo," in *Medioevo Mediterraneo: l'Occidente, Bisanzio e l'Islam dal tardoantico al secolo XII*, ed. C. A. Quintavalle (Milan, 2007), 381–89.
68. One should also consider the confusion caused by some travelers who saw in each minaret a Byzantine bell tower and in each mosque a former church: George Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals: With the Narrative of a Mission to Mesopotamia and Coordistan in 1842–1844, and of a Late Visit to Those Countries in 1850*, 2 vols. (London, 1852), 1:323; Charles Texier, "La ville et les monuments d'Édesse," *Revue orientale et américaine* 1 (1859): 333–34. See the Appendix for plans 1–3, which were made with the help of Scott Walker of the Harvard Map Collection at Harvard University and are based on the plan of Urfa published by Thomas A. Sinclair, *Eastern Turkey: An Architectural and Archeological Survey*, 4 vols. (London: The Pindar Press, 1975), vol. 4, *Urfa: The Walled Area*.
69. See, for instance, *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 141–44.
70. Kirsten, "Edessa, eine römische Grenzstadt," 166–72.
71. The embellishment of the church is connected to the patronage of the bishop Amazonius. See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 1:220: "The Chalcedonians from Edessa had Bishop Amazonius, who built and decorated their grand urban church." He was probably bishop when Justinian decided to restore the buildings damaged by the flood: "The Emperor Justinian not only at once restored all the buildings of the city that were damaged, among which were the church of the Christians and a building called Antiphorus...": Procopius, *De Aedificiis*, 58–59.
72. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 97.
73. Heinrich Goussen, "Über eine 'Sughitha' auf die Kathedrale von Edessa," *Le Muséon* 38 (1925): 117–36; André Grabar, "Le temoignage d'une hymn syriaque sur l'architecture de la cathédrale d'Édesse au VIe siècle et sur la symbolique de l'édifice chrétien," *Cahier Archéologique* 2 (1947): 41–67; Kathleen E. McVey, "The Domed Church as Microcosm: Literary Roots of an Architectural Symbol," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 91–121; Andrew Palmer and Lyn Rodley, "The Inauguration Hymn of Hagia Sophia in Edessa: A New Edition and Translation with Historical and Architectural Notes and a Comparison with a Contemporary Constantinopolitan Kontakion," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 12 (1988): 117–67. Cf. the different interpretation by De'Maffei (unfortunately never developed in detail): Fernanda De'Maffei, "Il problema della cupola su vano quadrato e la Santa Sofia di Costantinopoli," in *Convegno internazionale: La Persia e Bisanzio* (Rome, 2004), 719 n. 48. She argues that the hymn refers to a church other than the cathedral: the church had to be located by the pool, the cathedral in the place later occupied by the Ulu Cami. The possibility that the cathedral stood on the site where the medieval mosque was later built was also suggested by Eduard Sachau in *Reise in Syrien und Mesopotamien* (Leipzig, 1883), 194.

74. In the previous paragraph, the Chronicle mentions Bishop Aitallah as the last builder of the first phase of the construction of the cathedral of St. Sophia: "...the foundations of the Great Church were built by Bishop Cyrus; the building was continued by Bishop Sha'du and later completed by Bishop Aitallah": *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 143.
75. Ibid.
76. For an overview of Byzantine churches in medieval Islamic cities, see Mattia Guidetti, "Bisanzio dopo Bisanzio: Le chiese bizantine nel medioevo arabo-musulmano," *Porphyra* 10 (2007), 28–51 ([www.porphyra.it](http://www.porphyra.it)).
77. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Hamadhānī (Ibn al-Faqīh), *Kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1967), 50; 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd Allāh b. Khurradādhbih, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1967), 161–62.
78. See also al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 147; Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbih wa-l-ishrāf*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1967), 144.
79. Cf. the Syriac hymn (known as Soghita), which says in verse 10, "There is no wood at all in its ceiling, which was entirely cast from stone": McVey, "Domed Church as Microcosm," 95.
80. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 141.
81. Abū Ishāq al-Fārisī al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb Masālik al-mamālik*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden, 1967), 76; the same passage is in Muḥammad b. Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J. H. Kramers (Leiden, 1967), 227, and Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh Ibn Idrīsī, *Opus geographicum*, ed. E. Cerulli (Naples-Rome, 1974), 663–64.
82. al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 147, 159.
83. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazvīnī, *The Geographical Part of the Nuzhat al-qulūb*, ed. Guy Le Strange (Leiden, 1915), 104–5 (passage translated with the help of Dr. Stefano Pellò of the University of Venice).
84. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 16. Agapius connects the restoration of the cathedral of Edessa by Mu'awiya with his visit to the city during the civil war against 'Alī's partisans: Agapius of Manbij, *Kitāb al-'Unwān*, 493.
85. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:279; cf. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (I), 261–62.
86. al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādin al-jawhar*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī'l-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1938), 3:282, no. 1956.
87. Geoffrey R. D. King, "Some Christian Wall-Mosaics in Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 10 (1980): 37–42.
88. Ismā'il b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, 14 vols. (Beirut, s.d.), 2:170, 176; Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makka*, ed. R. al-Ṣ. Maḥās, 2 vols. (Mecca, 1965), 1:141. The church is also described in detail in the early thirteenth-century work by Abū'l-Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī: Bell, *Churches and Monasteries*, 300–301.
89. *Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, 510 (A.M. 6183; A.D. 690–91).
90. Muḥammad b. 'Abdūs al-Jahshiyārī, *Kitāb al-Wuzarā' wa-l-kuttāb*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Ibyārī, and 'Abd al-Ḥafīz Shalabī (Cairo, 1980), 48–49; al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm*, 165. On the eschatological traditions, see Amikam Elad, *Medieval Jerusalem and Islamic Worship: Holy Places, Ceremonies, Pilgrimage* (Leiden, 1995), 134–38.
91. al-Mas'ūdī, *Kitāb Murūj al-dhahab*, 3:339, no. 1292.
92. Muḥammad b. 'Alī Ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra fī dhikr umarā' al-Shām wa-l-Jazīra*, ed. D. Sourdel (Damascus, 1953), 31. The fate of Cyrrhus' church (defined by Ibn Shaddād as "one of the wonders of the world," probably as a rhetorical tool in the endless rivalry between Aleppo and Damascus) is unknown. Rebuilt and embellished by Justinian, the city still had a bishop in the eleventh century, but the lack of excavations does not allow us to speculate further: Edmond Frézouls, "Recherches historiques et archéologiques sur la ville de Cyrrhus," *Les annales archéologiques de Syrie* 4–5 (1954–55): 89–128. It has to be mentioned that these columns were later part of the material (i.e., marble and ornaments) transferred to al-Anbar by the Abbasids after the looting of the Umayyad "heritage" (*athār*) in Aleppo: Ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra*, 31. For a recent description of Cyrrhus' early Islamic period, see Ian B. Straughn, "Materializing Islam: An Archaeology of Landscape in Early Islamic Period Syria (c. 600–1000 CE)," 2 vols. (PhD diss., The University of Chicago, 2006), 1:207–18.
93. See, for instance, the possible reuse in al-Aqsa Mosque of material from the Nea Church of Jerusalem, which was founded by Justinian and destroyed by an earthquake, probably before 808: Louis-Hugues Vincent, *Jérusalem: Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1912–26), 2:918.
94. The use of marble columns, variegated marble panels, and colored mosaics was governed by the chromatic or coloristic quality of the material within the place of worship. This is a clear expression of late antique aesthetics, of which the Carolingians in the West and the Umayyads in the East were the best early medieval interpreters: Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, "Policromia e polimateria nelle opere d'arte della tarda antichità e dell'alto medioevo," *Felix Ravenna* 4, 1 (1970): 239–41, 251–55, 258–59. As Mango pointed out, north-Syrian and Mesopotamian Christian art could provide instructive terms of comparison for Umayyad art and architecture: Bell, *Churches and Monasteries*, vii–x. For instance, the monastic church of Mar Gabriel in the area of Tur 'Abdin, founded under Anastasios in 512, presents in its sanctuary marble opus-sectile pavements, marble panels on the lower walls (now gone), and mosaics depicting non-figurative compositions on the upper walls. The parallel with the decorative elements of Umayyad congregational mosques is palpable.
95. In this sense, Van Berchem's criticism of the literary passages describing an exchange of material between the Byzantine empire and the caliphate seems entirely justified: Marguerite Gautier-Van Berchem, "The Mosaics of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and of the Great Mosque in Damascus,"

- in K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1969), 1:231–45, particularly, 242. By contrast, El Cheikh's assertion that "the impact that these impressive vestiges of Byzantine culture made on the Arabs is evident in the sources" sets the reference to any of the surviving—and still vibrant—traces of Byzantine culture outside the boundaries of the caliphate (and not within as is here suggested), including the provenance of the exchanged material: Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Byzantium Viewed by the Arabs* (Cambridge, Mass., 2004), 54–60.
96. A perfect example of the sharing of some *loca sancta* between Muslims and Christians is the recently discovered Church of the Kathisma, near Jerusalem on the road to Bethlehem. In the octagonal sanctuary built on the site where the Virgin Mary was thought to have rested on her way to Bethlehem, a mihrab was added in the early Islamic period for Muslim worshippers. The church was neither transformed into a mosque nor partitioned, but was used for a while by both Christian and Muslim pilgrims: Rina Avner, "The Kathisma: A Christian and Muslim Pilgrimage Site," *ARAM* 18–19 (2006–7): 541–57.
  97. For a complete and updated overview of Arab-Christian culture within early medieval Islam, with a special emphasis on the use of the Arabic language, see Griffith, *Church in the Shadow of the Mosque*.
  98. Édouard Dulaurier, ed., *Recueil des historiens des Croisades: Documents arméniens*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1858), 1:229.
  99. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, 2:231; Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, trans. A. E. Dostourian (Lanham, 1993), 53.
  100. *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, 147.
  101. *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, 198; *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 128; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Šūrat al-arḍ*, 227.
  102. For a general view on this period, see Joseph Laurent, "Des Grecs aux Croisés: Étude sur l'histoire d'Édesse entre 1071 et 1098," *Byzantion* 1 (1924): 367–449; idem, "Byzance et Antioche sous le Curopalate Philarète," *Revue des Études Armeniennes* 9 (1929): 61–72.
  103. Reinhold Röhrich, "Studien zur mittelalterlichen Geographie und Topographie Syriens," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Palaestina-Vereins* 10 (1887): 295–97; Claude Cahen, *La Syrie du nord à l'époque des Croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris, 1940), 111–15.
  104. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 128.
  105. *Ibid.*, 100.
  106. Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 104–5.
  107. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon syriacum*, 2:231.
  108. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 35–36.
  109. *Ibid.*, 100–101. Cf. the situation in Jerusalem, where al-Aqsa became the seat of the Latin bishop, while the Dome of the Rock was transformed into the *Templum Domini*.
  110. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:397–98.
  111. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 100.
  112. al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, 76.
  113. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 31.
  114. *Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, 212–13.
  115. Around 1570, Muslims accounted for two-thirds of the total population of the city, now under Ottoman rule: İlhan, "Urfa and Its Environs," 9–10.
  116. For more information on non-Muslims under Islamic rule, see n. 13 above.
  117. Even if in the final balance there was a decisive decline in the number of Christian places of worship, it is worthwhile to keep in mind that some Jacobites saw the 1146 Muslim conquest as presenting an opportunity for their community to recover its primary role among the Christian confessions. This was one of the reasons for presenting Zangi in a positive light: *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 99–102. Note his gift of two bells to the two Jacobite churches in al-Ruha (p. 102), the ringing of which was later prohibited by al-Malik al-'Adil in the thirteenth century: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:413. It is also worth mentioning that not all Christian sites in the area were subject to the deterioration that beset late antique cathedrals in the cities. In the monastery of Mar Musa al-Habashi, located on the road between Damascus and Hims, for instance, three layers of wall paintings were commissioned between the eleventh and twelfth centuries, highlighting the vitality of an important Christian site at the apex of the Crusader-Muslim clash: Erica C. Dodd, *The Frescoes of Mar Musa al-Habashi: A Study in Medieval Painting in Syria* (Toronto, 2001).
  118. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 1:229. However, the Church of St. Cassianus in Antioch (or at least its southern sanctuary) had to have been in use again during the period of Latin rule: *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 43, 230.
  119. Ibn Shaddād, *al-A'lāq al-khaṭīra*, 39. Before the eleventh century there is only the report by Michael the Syrian (not confirmed by any other source) of the destruction of the Chalcedonian church of Aleppo under al-Mahdi (r. 775–85): *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:3. If he was referring to the cathedral, the building may have been only partially ruined, since it remained in use until 1124.
  120. Ibn Butlān, in Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh al-Rūmī al-Ḥamawī, *Kitāb Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, 6 vols. (Liepzig, 1866–73), s.v. "Ḥalab"; Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, ed. W. Wright (Leiden, 1907), 251–52.
  121. Ibn al-Shiḥna, *al-Durr al-muntakhab fi ta'rikh mamlakat Ḥalab*, 82–83. Cf. the Syriac account of the same event: *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 69–70.
  122. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens* (II), 99–101. Before the twelfth century we have only a literary reference to *spolia* from churches being reused in the walls of a city. During the reign of Harun al-Rashid,

- when tensions were rising between Byzantines and Muslims in the border area in the Taurus Mountains, some churches west of Sanja were demolished and their material used to renovate a wall: *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:8.
123. Philippe Dangles, "La refortification d'Afamiyya—Qal'at al-Mudiq sous le sultanat ayyoubide d'Alep (fin de XIIe—mi XIIIe siècle)," in *La fortification au temps des Croisades*, ed. Nicolas Faucherre, Jean Mesqui, and Nicolas Prouteau (Rennes, 2004), 189–204; Cyril Yovitchitch, "La citadelle de Bosra," in Faucherre, Mesqui, and Prouteau, *La fortification au temps des Croisades*, 205–17.
  124. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinet* (II), 128.
  125. Seton Lloyd and William Brice, "Harran," *Anatolian Studies* 1 (1951): 77–111; David S. Rice, "Medieval Harran: Studies on Its Topography and Buildings," *Anatolian Studies* 2 (1952): 36–84; David S. Rice, "From Sin to Saladin: Excavations in Harran's Great Mosque, with New Light on the Babylonian King Nabonidus and His 104-Year-Old Mother," *Illustrated London News* 231 (Sept. 1957): 466–69.
  126. See also Fernanda De'Maffei, *Edifici di Giustiniano*, 53–56, 59–62; pls. LX–LXX.
  127. Lloyd and Brice, "Harran," 79, 91, 105–8. Unfortunately, the two columns are no longer *in situ*.
  128. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:396 (the author adds that Nur al-Din's death was caused by this crime). Compare this reuse of marble from a Christian place of worship with the way in which some marble was reused by a certain Usama, a customer in early thirteenth-century Damascus of the Venetian merchants who were selling what they had just pillaged in Constantinople. He is said to have reused the marble in his own residence, which was later transformed into a Shafi'i madrasa: "Muntakhabāt Kitāb al-rawḍatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn al-nuriyya wa-l-ṣalāhiyya," in *Recueil des historiens des Croisades: Historiens orientaux*, 5 vols. (Paris, 1872–1906), 5:154; cf. Michael Greenhalgh, *Islam and Marble: From the Origins to Saddam Hussein* (Canberra, 2005), 24.
  129. Nikita Elisséeff, "Les Monuments de Nūr ad-Din: Inventaire, notes archéologiques et bibliographiques," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 13 (1949–51): 5–43; Yasser al-Tabbaa, "The Architectural Patronage of Nur al-Din (1146–1174)," 3 vols. (PhD diss., New York University, 1982), 1:34–138.
  130. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon ecclesiasticum*, 2:596.
  131. *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinet* (I), 142.
  132. *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, 3:397–98.
  133. *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, vol. 9, no. 3450.
  134. Abū'l-Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' al-zamān*, ed. Yūsuf 'Alī Ṭawīl and Mar-yam Qāsim Ṭawīl, 6 vols. (Beirut, 1998), 4:410 (no. 715: al-'Ādil Nūr al-Dīn).
  135. Albert Gabriel, *Voyages archéologiques en Turquie orientale*, 1:280–83; Fernanda De'Maffei, *Edifici di Giustiniano*, 61–62, pls. LXIV, LXV, LXIXa, LXXa.
  136. Yasser al-Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle and London, 2001), 137–62, in particular 155–60.
  137. al-Tabbaa, "Architectural Patronage," 1:34–138; Korn, "Ayyubidische Architektur," 1:58–93; 3: figs. 71–253.
  138. As shown by Flood, the use of mosaics in some Mamluk buildings was more an allusion to the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus than a conscious reference to late antique aesthetics: Finbarr B. Flood, "Umayyad Survivals and Mamluk Revivals: Qalawunid Architecture and the Great Mosque of Damascus," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 57–79.
  139. Yasser al-Tabbaa, "Survivals and Archaism in the Architecture of Northern Syria, ca. 1080–ca. 1150," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 33–34; Julian Raby, "Nur al-Din, the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya and the 'Classical Revival,'" *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 292–93.
  140. Rice, "From Sin to Saladin," 466–69.
  141. As Flood has convincingly shown, the reuse of Christian *spolia* did not *de facto* mean a symbolization of the victory of Islam over (eastern and western) Christianity: Finbarr B. Flood, "The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Trope: Coptic and Byzantine 'Altars' in Islamic Contexts," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 41–72. With a "highly speculative" reading, Raby suggested that the late antique material reused in the extension of the Great Mosque of Harran was intended to evoke an ancient past with a specific reference to Abraham: Raby, "Nur al-Din, the Qastal al-Shu'aybiyya and the 'Classical Revival,'" 303–4.
  142. Terry Allen, *A Classical Revival in Islamic Architecture* (Wiesbaden, 1986), 1–23; Mattia Guidetti, "L'antico in due edifici siriani medievali."
  143. Finbarr B. Flood, "A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables as Evidence for Seljuq Architectural Patronage in Damascus," *Iran* 39 (2001): 145–54; idem, "Medieval Trophy," 46–48.
  144. The presence in almost every city of Bilad al-Sham of a late antique church still in use in the eleventh century suggests that at the moment of their reuse the marble tables were specifically identified as Christian altars. See, for example, a passage by Ibn al-'Adim regarding a marble table reused in the al-Halawiyya Madrasa in Aleppo: Ernst Herzfeld, "Damascus: Studies in Architecture—I," *Ars Islamica* 9 (1942): 4. For the original context of these architectural fragments, one has to look to examples of "vanishing" late antique architecture still in use until being recycled by the Muslims. See also the case of the marble tables in Nur al-Din's *bīmāristān* in Damascus; cf. Flood, "Medieval Trophy," 48–60.
  145. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronography*, 229.
  146. The images on the capitals were scraped off only in a later period: John Wilkinson, *Column Capitals in al Haram al Sharif (from 138 A.D. to 1118 A.D.)* (Jerusalem, 1987), 205–14; idem, "Column Capitals in the Haram al-Sharif," in Raby and Johns, *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part One*, 134–39.
  147. Flood, "A Group of Reused Byzantine Tables," 147.

## THE Umayyad MOSQUE OF TIBERIAS

Tiberias, capital of the Jund al-Urdunn (the military district of the Jordan) in the early Islamic period, grew out of an earlier Roman–Byzantine settlement. Yet despite its historical importance and the many salvage excavations conducted in this city, little is known of its urban layout between the seventh and eleventh centuries.

Among the areas excavated, the ancient city center stands out. It was first uncovered in 1952, with excavations continuing sporadically until March 2008. Over the years, these expeditions uncovered the main north–south city artery (*cardo*), a large bathhouse, a broad pillared building built over what has been identified as an unfinished Roman temple (Hadrianeum), and a basilical building to the east, lying between the *cardo* and the Sea of Galilee.

While reassessing the archaeology of early Islamic Tiberias, the author noted the profound affinity between the pillared building—identified since the 1950s as a Byzantine covered market—and the eighth-century Umayyad Mosque of Damascus. They were similar not only in the planning concept, but also in proportions, building technique, and decoration. In addition, the pillared building's very location in the center of the then recently conquered town seems fitting for a central Friday mosque.

This article presents the major archaeological finds connected to the Umayyad period (661–750) in Tiberias, as well as the main arguments that seem to support the identification of the pillared building as an Umayyad Friday Mosque.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The surrender of the Roman–Byzantine town of Tiberias to the Muslim army in 635 opened a new page in the

history of this settlement on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.<sup>1</sup> The terms of surrender guaranteed a smooth and peaceful change of government, the Arab conquerors taking possession only of those houses and places of worship (*kanā'is*) in Tiberias that had been abandoned, and profiting from the taxation of goods. According to the sources, the commander Shurahbil ibn Hasana, to whom the city surrendered, also allotted the location where a mosque for the faithful was to be erected.<sup>2</sup>

Tabariyya, as it is called in Arabic, was chosen as the capital of Jund al-Urdunn, ultimately to the detriment of Baysan (Scythopolis), which had been the capital of Palaestina Secunda.<sup>3</sup> From a modest town, listed as a bishopric but mainly renowned as the heart of Jewish life and of Talmudic studies,<sup>4</sup> Tabariyya turned into an administrative center under the authority of the governor of Bilad al-Sham (Greater Syria). When the Umayyads moved the caliphate's capital to Damascus, Tabariyya's importance certainly grew. The routes connecting Fustat and Jerusalem with Damascus converged in the area south of the Sea of Galilee, at a pass near al-Sinnabra, before continuing through a new ascent ('Aqabat Fiḡ), which was leveled by order of the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685–705) in 692.<sup>5</sup> To the north and south of Tiberias the Umayyad caliphs built winter palaces on their lands at al-Sinnabra<sup>6</sup> and Khirbat al-Minya.<sup>7</sup>

By the tenth century, Tabariyya was definitely a flourishing town. In 985, the Jerusalemite geographer al-Muqaddasi (d. ca. 1000) described it as one *farsakh* (around six kilometers!) long,<sup>8</sup> stretching between the mountains and the sea. He wrote:

Tabariyya is the capital of Jordan and a city of Wādi (the Valley of) Kan'ān.<sup>9</sup> It is situated between the mountain and the lake, cramped, with suffocating heat in summer, and unhealthy. Its length is about a *farsakh*, but it has virtually no breadth. Its marketplace extends

from one gate to the other,<sup>10</sup> with its cemetery on the hill. There are eight hot baths here needing no fuel, along with numerous basins of hot water. The mosque is large and fine, and stands in the marketplace; its floor is laid in pebbles, and the building rests on pillars of joined stone.<sup>11</sup>

It is said of the people of Tiberias that for two months they dance, for two more months they glut; for two months they flail about, and for two more months they go naked; for two months they pipe, and for two more months they wallow. The explanation of this is that they dance from the number of fleas, then glut themselves with the lotus fruit; they slap about the hornets with fly-swatters, to drive them from their meat and fruits; then they go naked from the intense heat; they suck the sugarcane; and then they must wade through their muddy streets.<sup>12</sup>

When Nasir-i Khusraw (d. ca. 1075) visited Tiberias in 1047, he mentioned that it was encircled by walls except on its seaward (eastern) side, and that it had a central mosque, as well as another one on the western side of the city. His description is as follows:

The city has a strong wall that, beginning at the borders of the lake, goes all round the town; but on the water side there is no wall. There are numerous buildings erected in the very water, for the bed of the lake in this part is rock; and they have built pleasure-houses that are supported on columns of marble, rising up out of the water. The lake is full of fish.

The Friday Mosque is in the midst of the town. At the gate of the mosque is a spring, over which they have built a hot bath; and the water of this spring is so hot that, until it has been mixed with cold water, you cannot bear to have it poured on you. They say this hot bath was built by Solomon, the son of David—peace be upon them both—and I myself did visit it.<sup>13</sup> There is, too, on the western side of the town of Tiberias, a mosque known as the Jasmine Mosque (*Masjid al-Yāsmīn*).<sup>14</sup> It is a fine building, and in the middle part rises a great platform (*dukkān*), where they have their prayer-niches (*maḥārīb*). All around those they have set jasmine-shrubs, from which the mosque derives its name. In the colonnade, on the eastern side, is the tomb of Joshua (son of Nun), and underneath the great platform aforesaid are the tombs of the seventy prophets—peace be upon them—whom the children of Israel slew. In the town of Tiberias they make prayer-mats of reeds, which sell in the place itself for five Maghribi dinars apiece. On the west of the city rises a mountain, upon which has been built in hewn

stone a castle [probably referring to the church on Mount Berenice]; and there is here an inscription in Hebrew characters, stating that, at the time it was cut, the Pleiades stood at the head of the zodiacal sign of the Ram. The tomb of Abu Hurayra (the Prophet's Companion)<sup>15</sup> lies outside the city, towards the south; but no one can go and visit it, for the people who live here are of the Shi'a sect, and as soon as anyone comes to make the visitation, the boys begin a tumult, and raise a disturbance about him that ends in stone-throwing, wherefrom injuries are received.<sup>16</sup>

#### UMAYYAD TABARIYYA: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH (FIG. 1)

In 1992, Timothy P. Harrison published what has remained so far the only conceptual study on early Islamic Tiberias.<sup>17</sup> Based on archaeological studies of other Islamic cities such as Fustat, Istakhr, Susa, and 'Aqaba,<sup>18</sup> Harrison explored the possibility that Umayyad Tiberias was provided with a *miṣr* (fortified city) at the northeastern tip of the Roman-Byzantine walled city, in the area later occupied by the Ottoman city and today's modern Tiberias. Harrison used part of the archaeological data available at the time of his research,<sup>19</sup> which showed that Tiberias had expanded considerably, both to the north and to the south, into areas previously not developed. On Mandatory maps he identified a square area, each side circa 400 meters, within the Ottoman city, which he ascribed to Umayyad activity, concluding that "sometime during the Early Islamic period the town underwent a settlement shift," that, he posited, should probably be identified with the establishment of the Umayyad provincial capital.<sup>20</sup>

The possibility that an Umayyad *miṣr* was built in Tiberias alongside the pre-Islamic settlement, as was the case in many other early Islamic towns, should not be ruled out completely.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, the reappraisal of some old archaeological evidence, together with new publications, allows us to assume that not only did the "old" town continue to prosper and expand, but its center retained its role as the heart of the capital's activity.

This is verified by the results of Gideon Foerster's excavations of 1973 and 1974 (licenses G-22/1973 and G-37/1974, fig. 2), which were published by David Stacey.<sup>22</sup> Stacey focused on five of the seven archaeo-

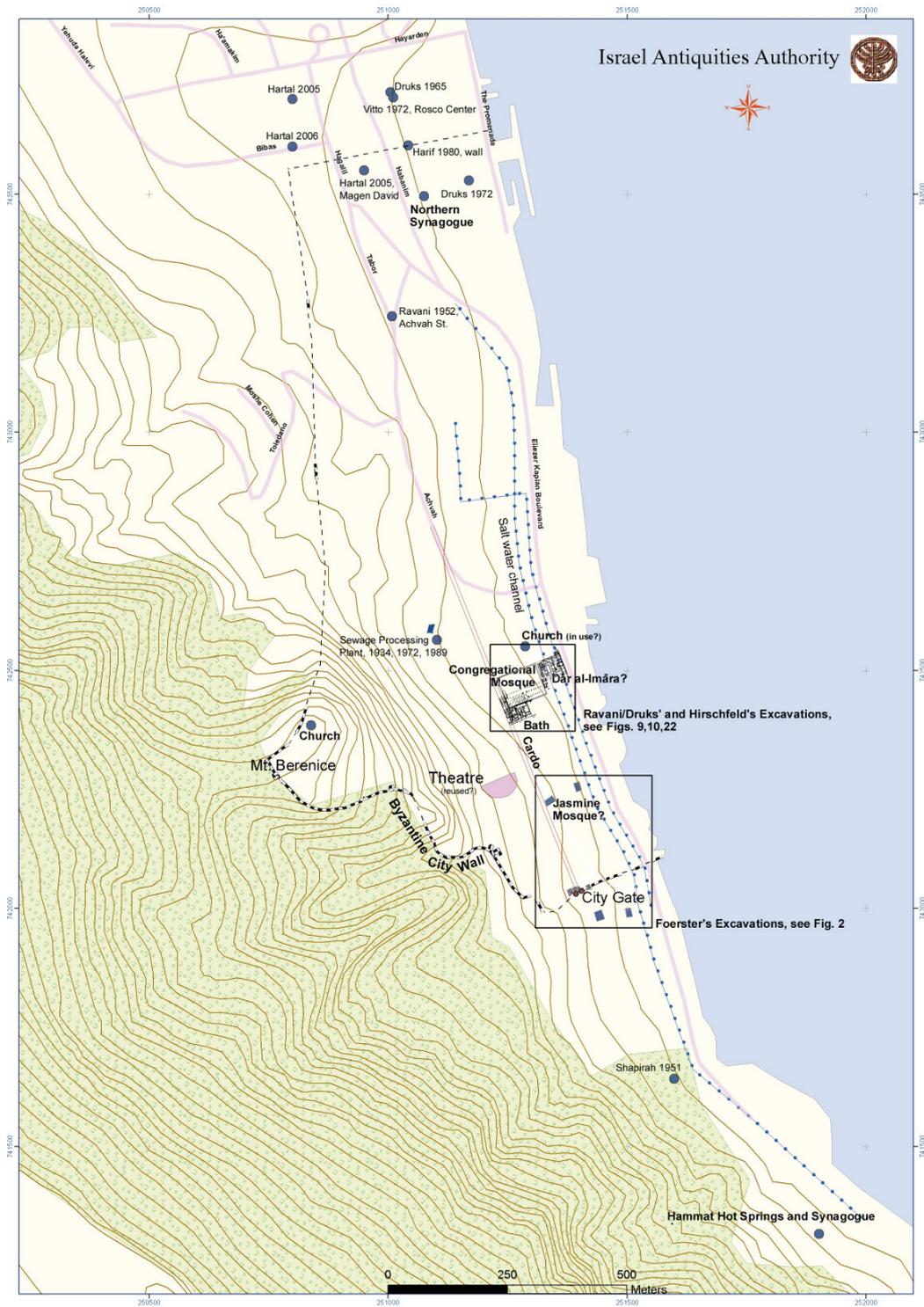


Fig. 1. Map of Tiberias, with sites mentioned in this article. (Map: Leticia Barda, Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA])

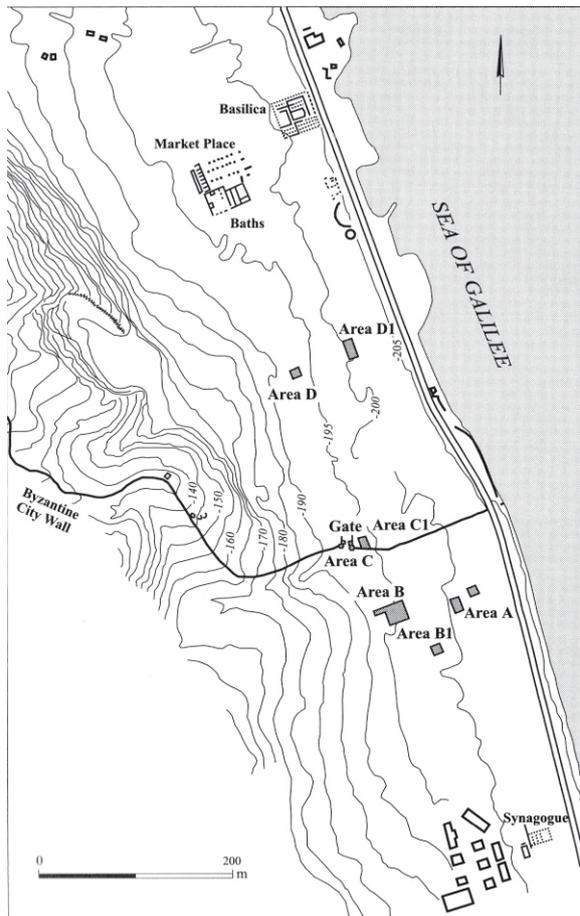


Fig. 2. Gideon Foerster's excavation areas (A–D), 1973–74. (After David Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974: The Early Islamic Periods*, IAA Reports 21 [Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004], plan 4.1)

logical layers uncovered by Foerster's excavations. These five layers were dated from the Umayyad to the late Fatimid periods and meticulously analyzed, with the aim of understanding both architectural changes and changing patterns in pottery technology and fashion over the centuries.

Stacey's research added much information regarding patterns of urbanization within and to the south of the Byzantine city. Yet the archaeological data going back as early as the excavations of the 1950s, which unfortunately remain mostly unpublished, are vaster and more diverse.

The best summary of all archaeological works completed in the 1970s and 80s—both published and unpublished—is that of Yosef Stepansky from 1985. The high incidence of early Islamic layers in almost every dig mentioned in that report is notable.<sup>23</sup> A more recent summary by Stepansky of all excavations conducted at Tiberias,<sup>24</sup> together with research carried out by the present author on the results of those excavations in Tiberias that exposed Islamic strata, both published and in the archives,<sup>25</sup> shows that over fifty sites can contribute to our understanding of the urban development of Tiberias from the Umayyad (seventh to eighth centuries) through the Fatimid (tenth to eleventh centuries) period. Nevertheless, the information concerning the Islamic layers is far from consistent among the reports. Stacey's account is the most meticulous, as already noted; the majority of the other reports are brief and mostly only refer to "Early Arab" or "Early Islamic" material. However, post-Fatimid layers, i.e., Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman, if present, are often mentioned.

First and foremost, Foerster's excavations, as discussed by Stacey, show that the expansion of the city south of the Byzantine wall, beyond the southern gate, did not start before the mid-ninth century. In area A, the construction overlaid a burial associated with five coins—four Umayyad and one ninth-century<sup>26</sup>—while in Area B the construction, also overlaying a few graves, was related to the late tenth or even early eleventh century.<sup>27</sup> Stacey's interpretation contradicts Foerster's statement that "the area south of the walls enjoyed an era of prosperity in the three centuries between the eighth and the eleventh centuries,"<sup>28</sup> but it is strengthened by the evidence, mostly unpublished, of Ya'akov Shapirah's excavation at Shikun Ovdei Hammat Tiberias from October 1951 to January 1952 (Old Israeli grid 20165.24165; licenses 36/1951; 2/1952).<sup>29</sup> His dig uncovered burials dating to the end of the Byzantine period—the pottery is transitional Byzantine-Umayyad—topped by Muslim graves, which were themselves eventually overlaid by dwellings built on either side of a narrow alley. According to some of Shapirah's pottery drawings, the late constructions seem datable to the mid-ninth to tenth centuries.

The seemingly ninth-century expansion of Tiberias south of the Byzantine city also explains certain devel-

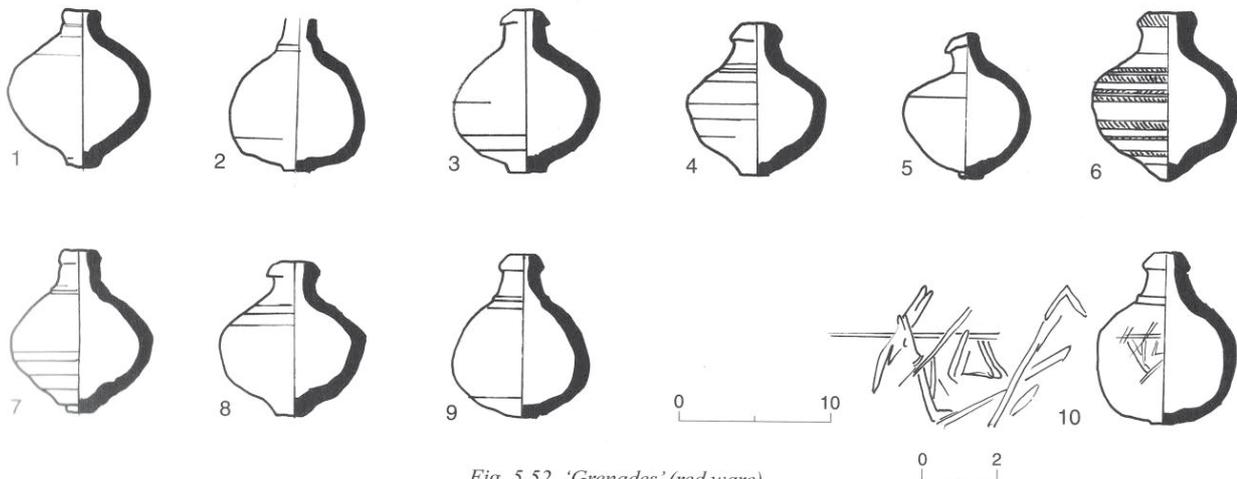


Fig. 5.52. 'Grenades' (red ware).

Fig. 3. Grenade-shaped vessels, from Area C, eastern tower. (After Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, fig. 5.52)

opments at the southern gate and its related towers. As early as 1936, E. L. Sukenik reported on a round building, yet to be identified as the eastern Roman tower:

We found evidence that the building was still in use in the Arab period. A thick layer of ashes shows that the building was used as an oven. From the remains of Arabic pottery found inside the building it may perhaps be concluded that it was used as a potter's oven.<sup>30</sup>

Sukenik's conclusions were based on limited evidence, but added to the findings of the 1973–74 excavations at this same spot—ten grenade-shaped vessels (fig. 3), an iron axe, and early ninth-century coins<sup>31</sup>—it is possible to point to its use by a local industry, though not necessarily as a potter's workshop. No wasters, kiln bars, or related artifacts were found in the vicinity. In any event, it is clear that by the ninth century the city wall had lost most of its function, matching the dating of the first constructions south of it.<sup>32</sup>

This also explains the post-ninth-century narrowing of the gate and the introduction of wooden doors, dated by Stacey to the early tenth century. He believed that the narrowing of the gate was a reaction to the Qarmatian raids.<sup>33</sup> However, given the fact that the settlement to the south of the southern city wall was by then a continuation of that within the walls, it seems that the

narrowing of the gate should rather be interpreted as part of Tiberias's urban development.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the northern perimeter of the early Islamic city, the archaeological evidence points to a considerable expansion beyond the limits of Byzantine Tiberias.<sup>35</sup> In 1972, Fanny Vitto conducted a salvage excavation at the Old Market, towards the site of the Rosco Commercial Center (today west of the main parking lot of the Tiberias tourist center, near the Caesar Hotel). This area had been briefly excavated by Adam Druks in 1964–65, but now, after the deepening of the excavation to some 3 meters, remains of stone paving, apparently of a street, came to light. The finds over this paving were dated to the eighth to ninth centuries, while the fill underneath was apparently sterile. The paving does not align with the *cardo*, the beginning of which was uncovered in Foerster's excavations (see above), its central portion having been mainly uncovered in the 1950s by the archaeologist Bezalel Ravani to the west of a pillared building and a bathhouse (see below). It is not clear, moreover, whether this stone paving was already laid during the Umayyad period, the pottery results unfortunately leaving this question open.<sup>36</sup>

Less is known about the western perimeter of the Islamic city during the transitional period. Up to 2005,<sup>37</sup>

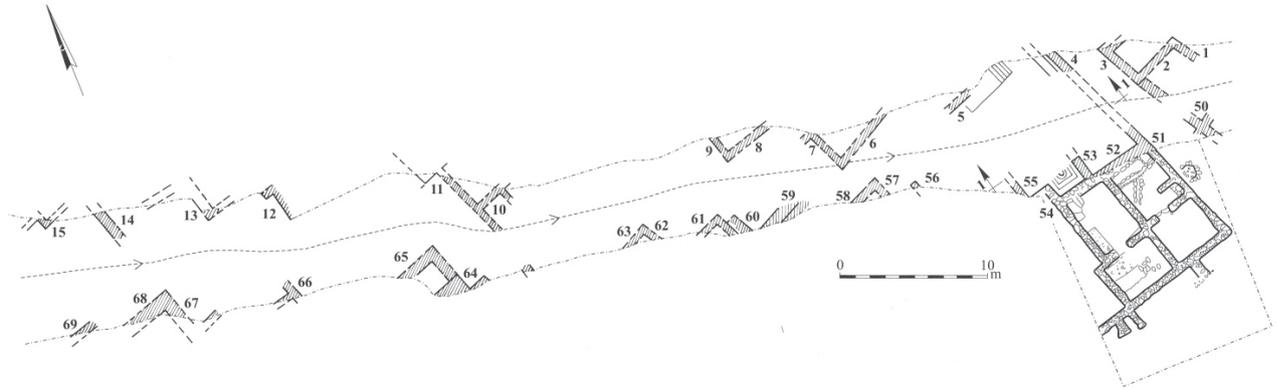


Fig. 4. Hirschfeld's excavations in Area B near the Sewage Processing Plant of Tiberias (license G-104/1989), adjacent to the 1934 excavations. (After Yizhar Hirschfeld, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1989–1994*, IAA Reports 22 [Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004], plan 1.4)

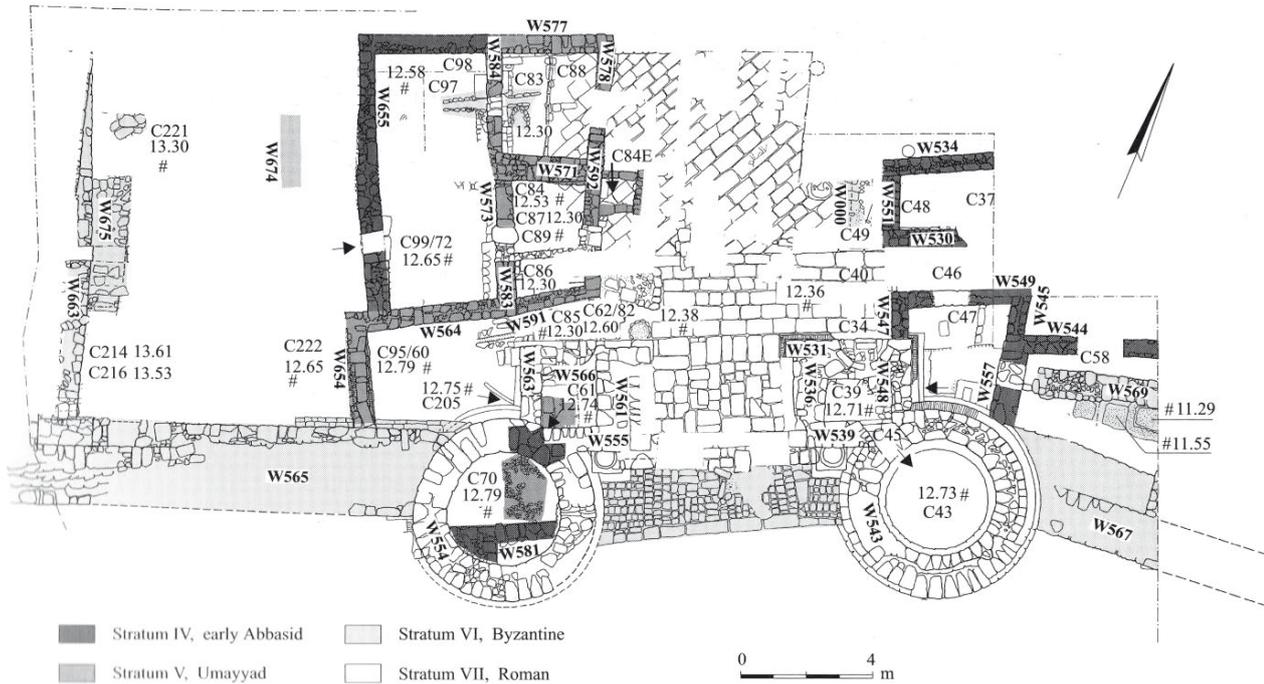
the main piece of relevant information was provided by the excavation of the burial site of a child interred in a small clay vessel at Achvah Street. The neighborhood named after that street was excavated in June and July 1952, and identified by Ravani as “Arab.” However, in contrast to other areas where Muslim burials were found,<sup>38</sup> the Achvah Street excavations also uncovered Byzantine layers. We can propose a settlement gap, but not, unfortunately, a chronological frame for it. Future excavations in that area might clarify the issue.

On the other hand, a number of soundings and excavations completed to the south of Shikun Achvah, east of Mt. Berenice, provide evidence for the extensive settlement of its slopes in the early Islamic period. As early as 1934, when a run-off channel was dug in Wadi Ghazal, leading to the Sea of Galilee (license W-30/1934),<sup>39</sup> remains of dwellings dating from the Byzantine through the Fatimid period were uncovered. According to Yizhar Hirschfeld, “[t]he buildings were modified, walls were destroyed and new walls built, but the principles of the urban plan established in the Roman–Byzantine periods continued to be observed for the duration of the settlement at the site.”<sup>40</sup> The excavations in that portion of the city were continued in 1972 by Gershon Edelstein and Fanny Vitto of the Israel Antiquities Authority (license A-348/1972),<sup>41</sup> who uncovered remains of large buildings, which they dated to the eighth century.<sup>42</sup> From 1989 to 1990, Hirschfeld excavated near the Sewage Processing Plant

of Tiberias (license G-104/1989),<sup>43</sup> not far from the 1934 excavations (fig. 4). The archaeological evidence uncovered attests to the continuous settlement of this side of the city. Hirschfeld excavated, among others, a large building from the late Roman period (Area B, stratum IV), which he identified as the Great Academy (*Beth Midrash*) of Tiberias.<sup>44</sup> Another good-quality construction dating from at least the sixth century and surviving until the mid-eighth-century earthquake was found attached to this large building (stratum III). Later on, during the early Abbasid period (stratum II), a new building was erected in this area, surviving until the late Fatimid period (eleventh century), though with some architectural modifications. The earliest phase of this building included a colorful geometric mosaic, in whose floor a group of Umayyad coins was sealed.<sup>45</sup>

Still, in relation to the western perimeter of the early Islamic city, excavations at Mount Berenice attest to the continuous use of the church, as well as of the Byzantine-period wall, into the Islamic period. During the Crusader period, the church was renovated and reinforced. The site was still inhabited in the Mamluk period, but by then it fulfilled different purposes.<sup>46</sup>

As for the inner layout of the walled city during the Umayyad period, the main feature to have been properly published so far is the southern portion of the city's main artery—the *cardo* stretching southwest to northeast (fig. 5). Foerster's excavations at Area C revealed that in stratum V (dated to the Umayyad period) the



Plan 4.3. Area C. Strata VII-IV.

Fig. 5. Foerster's excavations at the southern gate (Area C). (After Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias*, 1973-1974, plan 4.3)

street was subject to the encroachment of small shops. This phenomenon is well known from other classical cities such as Beth She'an, Jerusalem, and Palmyra, during the transition from the Byzantine to the early Islamic period. Apparently in Tiberias the narrowing of the street was not drastic—from circa 11 meters wide during the Roman-Byzantine periods to circa 9 meters during the Umayyad era. This process, nevertheless, continued into the Abbasid (after 750) and Tulunid (878-905) periods, and eventually the street was reduced to around 2 meters in width.<sup>47</sup>

The other location within the walled city excavated by Foerster and of relevance for this study was a large building (in Area D), apparently erected during the sixth century (fig. 6). It was built over an artificial platform oriented east-west,<sup>48</sup> apparently rising over the city around 5 meters to the east of the *cardo*, not far from a secondary north-south street reaching what has so far been called "the marketplace."<sup>49</sup> Stacey regarded this building, some 150 meters southeast of the theater,

as having a public function. According to the archaeological results, by the end of the Umayyad period or beginning of the Abbasid most of the original structure was in decay. Walls had to be reinforced and another one added; a door was blocked, and the rooms were filled up to a depth of over one meter. The main additions during this period were "cylindrical 'concrete' supports," as described by Stacey, that "were built into the fill for columns which replaced the earlier arches."<sup>50</sup> They were within a long building, around 4 meters wide and 15.5 meters long, oriented east-west. These supports, whose drums have not survived save for one in square D14, were apparently arranged in two rows of four or five columns, circa 2.5 meters apart.

The above characteristics led Stacey to identify the broad building over the platform as the *Masjid al-Yāsmīn* described by Nasir-i Khusraw (see above), which he dated to the post-Umayyad period, in accordance with the ceramic and numismatic finds, probably from soon after the earthquake of 749.<sup>51</sup> If Stacey's

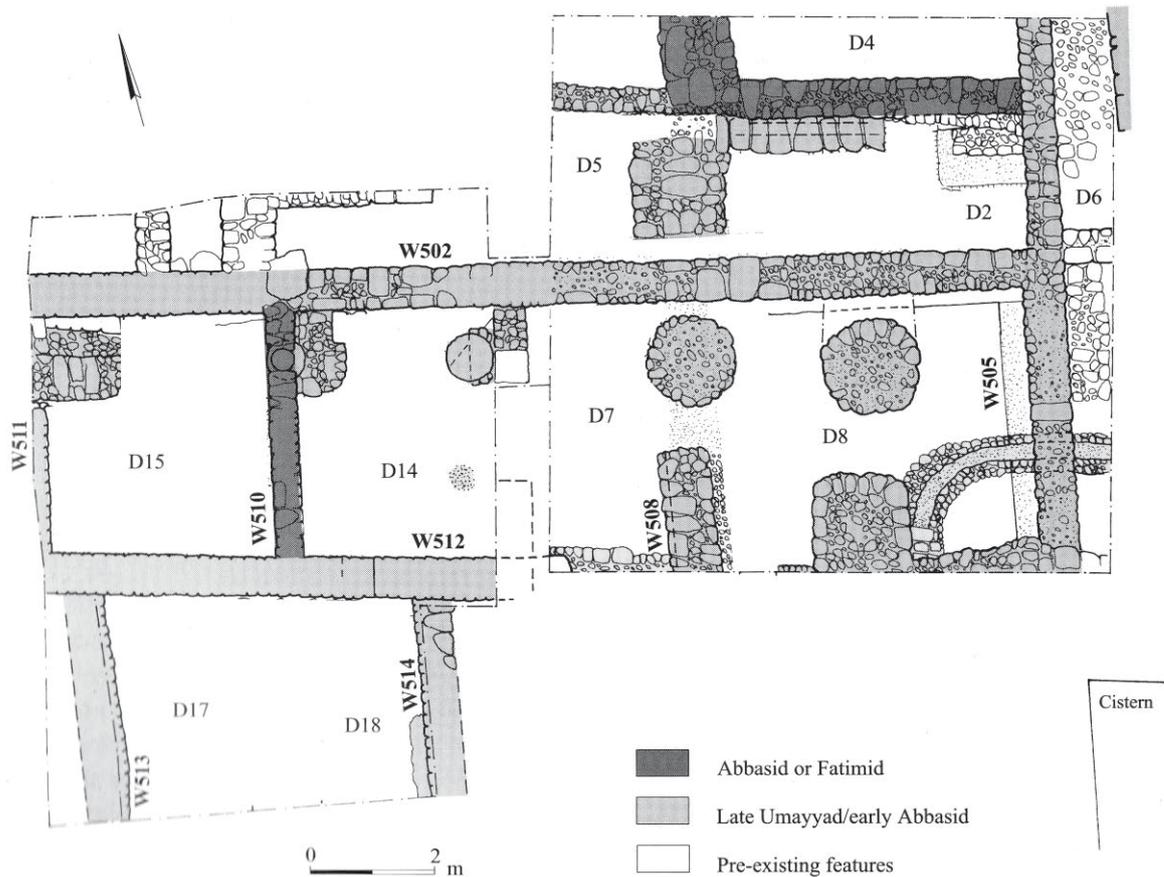


Fig. 6. Foerster's excavations in Area D. Remains of a mosque? (After Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, plan 4.16)

suggestion can be confirmed, an important feature of Islamic Tiberias has been located. Unfortunately, the excavations did not reveal the nature of the pre-Islamic building, as that would also have taught us something about the process of Islamization in Tiberias.

Further north is the Roman–Byzantine city center, where excavations spanning from 1952 to 1968 revealed a series of public buildings—a bathhouse, a pillared building, and a basilical building. The excavations also showed that the buildings, although undergoing alterations, survived until the eleventh century, when the whole area was abandoned. The excavations in this area resumed briefly in 1993, and in 2004. The basilical building has been considerably explored, while further urban features—mainly dealing with the early Islamic period—were exposed.

Nevertheless, throughout the years, scholars have failed to address a fundamental question concerning the Islamization and urban development of Tiberias: the location of its Friday Mosque. The following section will reassess previous findings, and suggest new interpretations.

#### TIBERIAS'S CONGREGATIONAL MOSQUE

Before the proposed expansion of a sports field in Tiberias (Old Israeli grid 2013.2424) in 1952, the then Department of Antiquities of Israel (now the Israel Antiquities Authority) opened seven trenches to the south and west of the field in order to approve the planned works. The trenches were excavated in two

days (January 4–6, 1952) by the district archaeologist, Bezalel Ravani. Of the seven trenches, only three (trenches I, II, and V) yielded significant archaeological evidence—well-built walls, plaster floors, and roof tiles. In the southernmost trench (I), Ravani reported finding a copper chain attached to an elongated ring, directly over the second of the three plaster floors detected one on top of the other (fig. 7).<sup>52</sup> That was enough to halt the construction and instigate a six-year archaeological project, which eventually uncovered the center of Roman–Byzantine Tiberias. The excavations at the site revealed the remains of the *cardo*, a series of shops that opened onto it, and a large and notable bathhouse, as well as the remains of a broad building oriented east–west, supported by three parallel rows of squared pillars. This building was interpreted by Ravani as the city’s marketplace and that identification has generally been accepted by the archaeological community. The main exception has been Foerster, who has long believed that it served as Tiberias’s early mosque,<sup>53</sup> although he has never published this view.

By the end of Ravani’s excavations in 1958, a little more than half of the pillared building had been uncovered (figs. 8 and 9). The building’s western wall abuts some of the small shops, while the enclosing wall to the south partly abuts the bathhouse. The three rows of pillars to the south, which stand atop reused Jewish tombstone doors of the Roman period, face an open area, probably a courtyard. The easternmost architectural remains revealed by Ravani were the square bases, around 2.3 meters a side, of two rows of three massive pillars, on either side of a passage 5.5 meters wide, which traversed the parallel rows of smaller pillars at right angles. Ravani correctly reconstructed a symmetrical plan for this building, thus yielding a rectangle 78 meters wide and 26 meters long, oriented southeast–northwest (i.e., a broad building, in which the main axis is shorter than the breadth). His interpretation of the building as a marketplace further led him to explain the transept as a passage connecting its two entrances, following the finding of a threshold, then *in situ*, on its southern side (today rather to be understood as belonging to a later stage in the pillared building’s development). Below the pillared building, Ravani discerned two further archaeological layers, which he interpreted as the market’s earlier phases.<sup>54</sup>

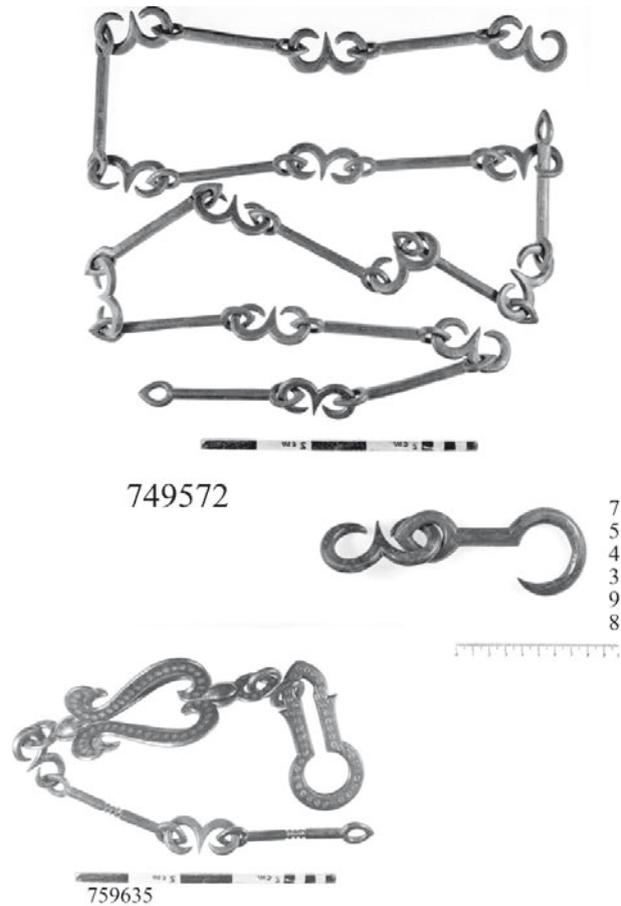


Fig. 7. Sections of bronze chain, uncovered by Ravani in 1952. (Photo: courtesy of IAA)

Five years after Ravani’s excavations, another notable building was uncovered, this time to the northeast of the pillared building. In 1963, during the installation of a salt water conduit from Tabgha to Degania Beth by the Mekorot Water Company, the Department of Antiquities supervised, and reported on, excavation works along this long north–south channel.<sup>55</sup> Among the many finds exposed along the water line, the remains of a large basilical building stand out. The Department of Antiquities required proper archaeological excavations of this building (old Israeli grid 2013.2424-5), which were carried out under the direction of Adam Druks until 1965 (fig. 9).<sup>56</sup> The building comprises a central apsidal nave facing northeast with a narrow aisle on each side, a large courtyard, and a series of rooms to the side and behind the main basilical area. According



Fig. 8. Aerial view of Ravani's excavations, looking east. In the foreground are the *cardo* and shops; in the middle is the pillared building. The bathhouse (partly covered) is to the right. (Photo: courtesy of Sonia Haliday Photographs)

to the numismatic finds retrieved by Druks, the building was dated to the fourth century<sup>57</sup> but additions, including a new apse and colorful mosaics, were made in the fifth and sixth centuries. Druks also revealed pre-Byzantine remains, which he dated to the first to second centuries A.D. No Islamic layer was clearly attributed to the complex, hindering a proper understanding of the continuity of this whole area as an urban center during the early Islamic period.

In July and August 1993, Hirschfeld returned to the areas excavated by Ravani and Druks, while also excavating at Mount Berenice.<sup>58</sup> Five strata were recorded, dating from the first to second centuries (stratum V) to the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries (stratum I). The basilical building was attributed to stratum IV, which was dated to the mid-fourth century. A section of an Abbasid street was revealed, running north-south, west

of this building. To the latest stratum (V) Hirschfeld attributed temporary structures and industrial installations, apparently connected to the sugar industry, as attested by the pottery recovered.<sup>59</sup>

In 2004, Hirschfeld resumed excavations in these same areas (license G-10/2004), mainly concentrating on the basilical building to the east (Area F), but also undertaking conservation works at the bathhouse (Area A), as well as conducting one sounding at the pillared building (Area C), at the southeast end of the transept.<sup>60</sup> Until his untimely death in November 2006, Hirschfeld was dedicated to fully exposing the basilical building, which the excavators believed had served a public function—perhaps even as the seat of the Sanhedrin, though this view is much disputed by scholars.

Hirschfeld's works of 1993 and 2004 to 2006 (fig. 10) determined that the basilical building continued to be

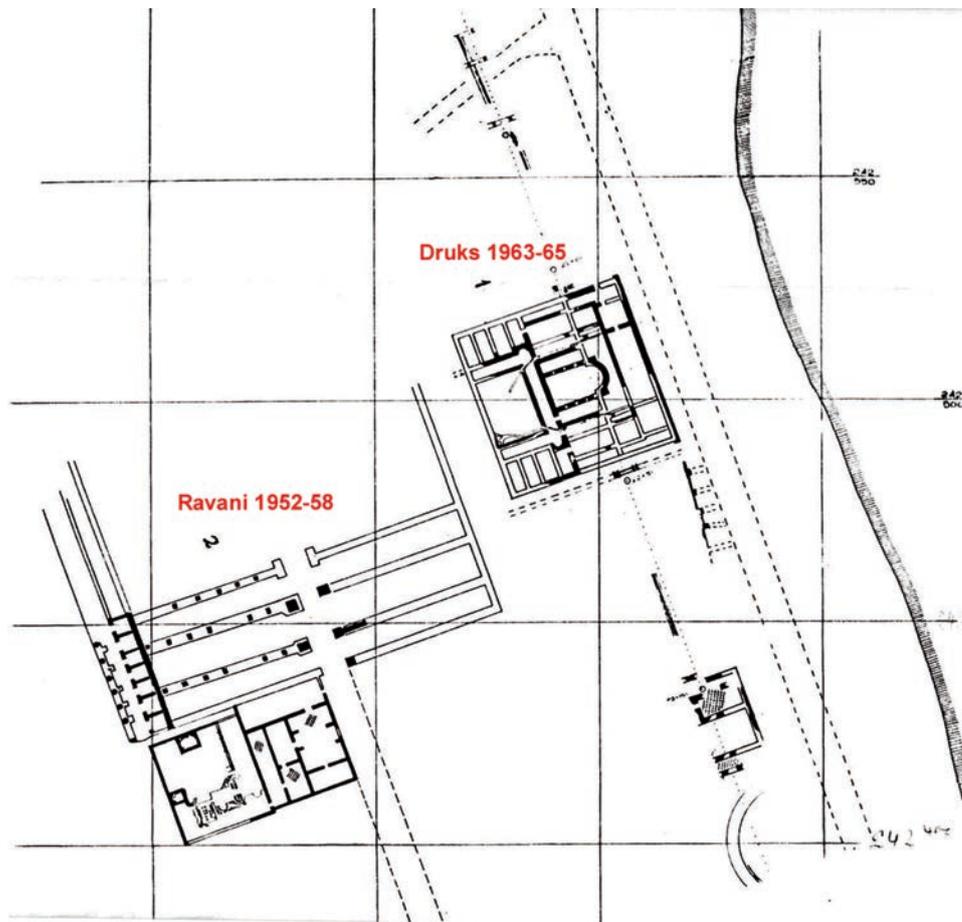


Fig. 9. Excavations by Ravani and Druks at the Roman-Byzantine city center. (Plan: courtesy of the IAA Mandatory Archive, Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem)

used into the early Islamic period, despite the impression given by Druks' brief reports. During the Umayyad period, it kept the layout it had in the sixth century, when the easternmost apse was added. Following the 749 earthquake, it is not clear if the renewed building retained its original plan. To the west, a new wing, partly overlaying the courtyard, was erected, west of a wide wall. The rooms were small, facing a paved street, and usually provided with installations. To the south, more rooms were also built. In one of them, a plaster floor yielded an eighth-century coin. A coin found on top of the floor in another room was dated to the ninth century. This layer also came to an end following an earthquake. The excavators inferred from the rich findings retrieved that this building also fulfilled

a public function. However, the renewed activity during the tenth century seems to have been mostly commercial, and the basilical building apparently ceased to be used. As in the other areas, the settlement in Area F ended sometime during the eleventh century.

The sounding in Area C uncovered a brass chain 4.8 meters long, similar to those found by Ravani in the 1950s. It was found on a plaster floor, underneath a heap of pottery roof tiles that had fallen from the roof (most probably following the earthquake of 1068).<sup>61</sup> In addition, two coins (one Umayyad and the other ninth-century Abbasid), glazed sherds, and fragments of colored windowpanes, as well as other pieces of glass (including ones from lamps of the type found in mosques), were discovered in this area.<sup>62</sup>

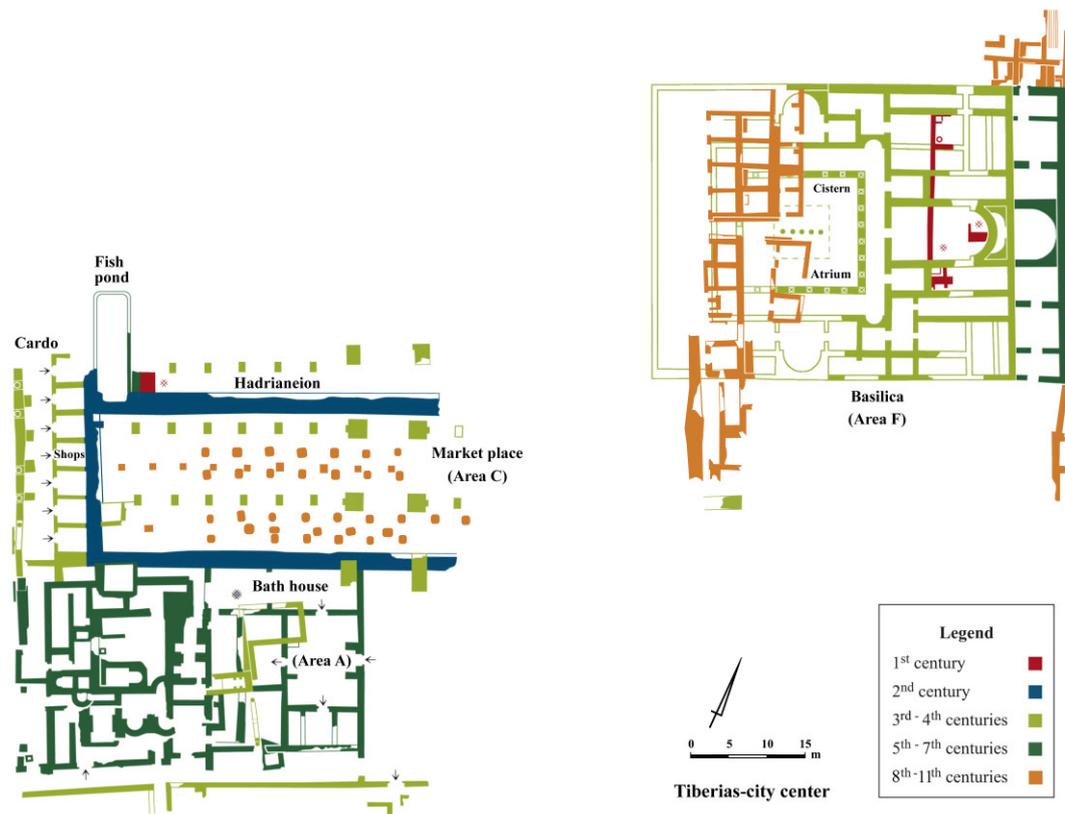


Fig. 10. Hirschfeld's excavations in Tiberias (2005). (Plan: Dov Porotsky, courtesy of the Hirschfeld Expedition team)

In March 2008, Hirschfeld's team returned to the site for a short study season. They uncovered in Area C the stylobate and column bases of what seems to be the eastern colonnade surrounding the pillared building's courtyard. Its northern limit, however, was not revealed.

Hirschfeld's archaeological sequence for the pillared building (fig. 10) supported Ravani's attribution to the Byzantine period. He also supported Ravani's interpretation of the building as a marketplace, describing it as a covered bazaar (*macellum*),<sup>63</sup> which remained in use until the Fatimid period. Hirschfeld did not discount a late use of the building as a mosque, following the discovery of the long brass chains and fragments of mosque lamps overlaying its latest floor. But the notion that the pillared building could have been used as a mosque was published with much reservation.<sup>64</sup>

According to Hirschfeld's sequence, the pillared building was built over the remains of a second-century

Hadrianeum, which apparently was never completed. This Roman temple is believed to have been built over a structure dated to the first century A.D. The construction of the pillared building was thus, in Hirschfeld's view, contemporary with that of the basilical building to its east, but pre-dated the expansion of the bathhouse, which also took place during the Byzantine period.

It is notable that in Hirschfeld's proposed architectural sequence of Tiberias's city center there is no representation of one of its most important historical moments: the Umayyad period, when it became the provincial capital. That would have been acceptable, though unusual, if the center had moved elsewhere, as has been suggested by Harrison. However, the ground plan of the three-aisled pillared building intersected by a transept and facing south suggests otherwise. This is a description well known to art historians of the Islamic period, in that it is the basic plan of the Great Mosque

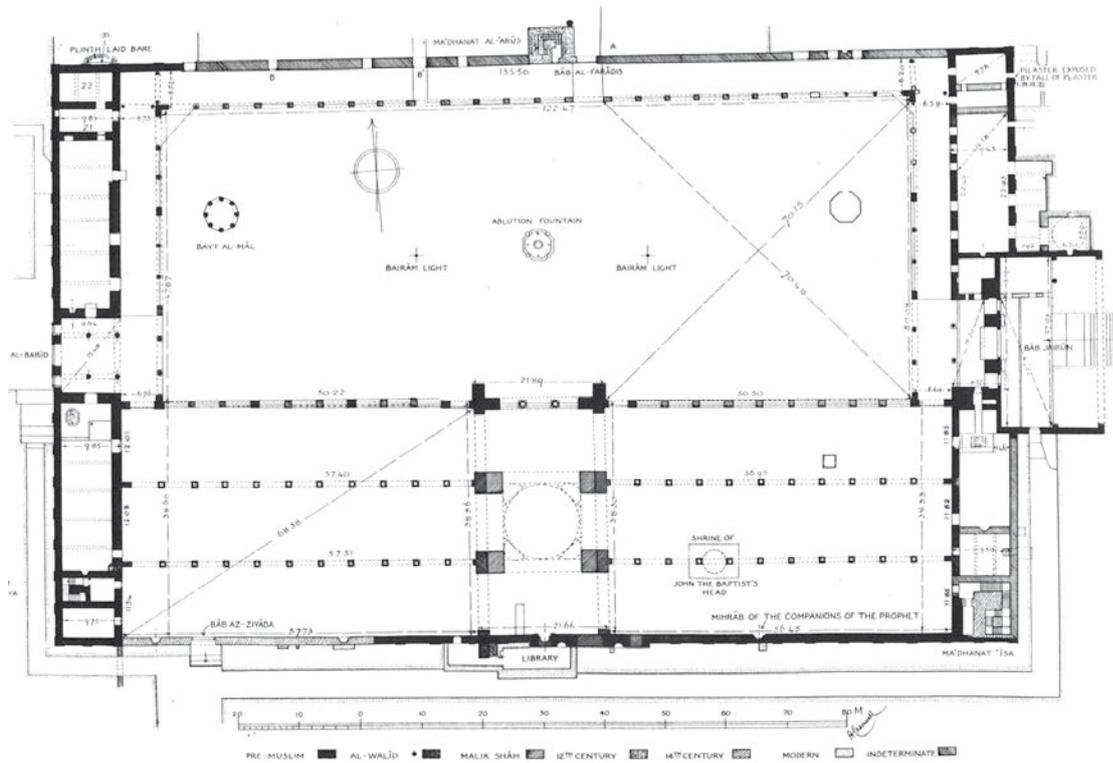


Fig. 11. Plan of the Great Mosque of Damascus. (Plan after K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture* [New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979], vol. 1, pt. I, fig. 90)

of Damascus (fig. 11), capital of the Umayyads, built by the caliph al-Walid b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 705–15) in the second decade of the eighth century (probably commenced in 706 and finished in 714 or 715). This mosque stands *in situ*, having preserved most of the Umayyad layout and some of its original decoration. The building, constructed within the limits of a first-century Roman temenos, which had also served as a church precinct from the fourth century onwards, is rectangular—157.5 meters wide (east–west) and 100 meters long (north–south). It comprises a covered area (136 meters by 37 meters) and a courtyard (122.5 meters by 50 meters) surrounded by a portico.<sup>65</sup>

To this author, it seems no coincidence that the pillared building in Tiberias (around 78 meters by 26 meters) is nearly half the breadth of the Friday Mosque in Damascus (fig. 12), nor that the proportion between these two figures is 3 (fig. 13), a number that frequently appears in Umayyad architecture. First of all, the prayer

halls in both mosques are divided into three parallel aisles, an architectural program widely followed in Umayyad Syria. In addition, in both the Friday Mosque of Damascus and the pillared building in Tiberias, the unit represented by the transept is repeated three times on each side, i.e., seven times in total.<sup>66</sup>

If the relation between the pillared building in Tiberias and the Friday Mosque in Damascus is part of a contemporary planning concept, then other mosques should follow a similar principle. A nearby example is that of the small mosque in the eighth-century palace at Khirbat al-Minya, fourteen kilometers north of Tiberias (fig. 14). While mainly serving the palace, the mosque was also open to the outside through a postern in its eastern wall. The mosque's width, including its enclosing walls, seems to be a fifth of that of the pillared building in Tiberias, i.e., a tenth of that of the mosque in Damascus. The inner layout is also that of a three-aisled mosque (fig. 14).

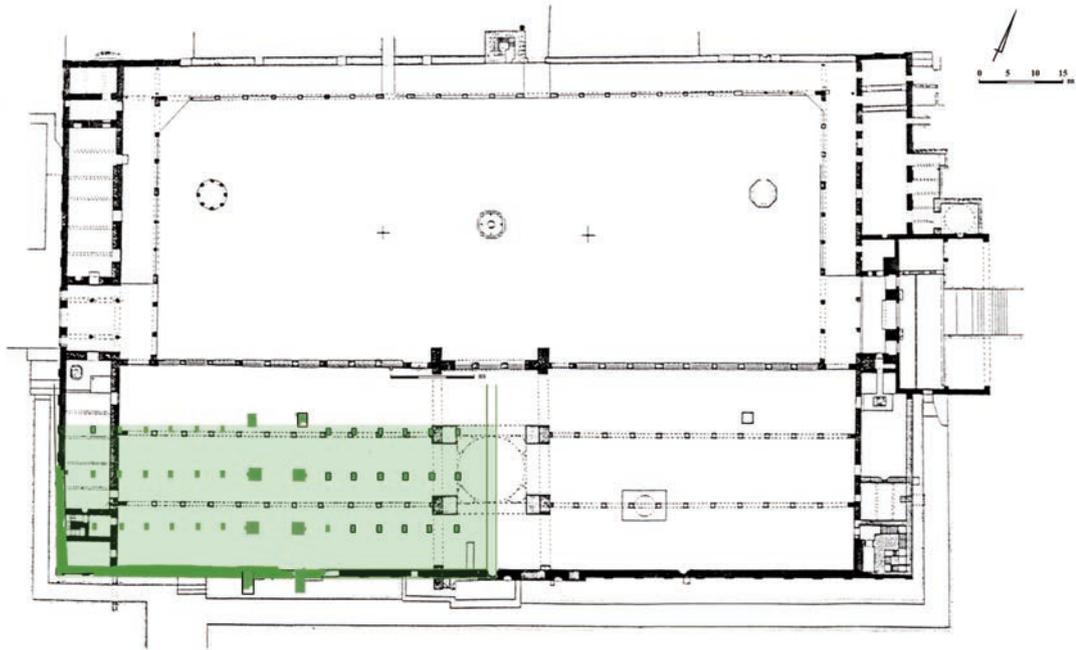


Fig. 12. The Great Mosque of Damascus and the pillared building in Tiberias (in green) compared. (Superimposition of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)

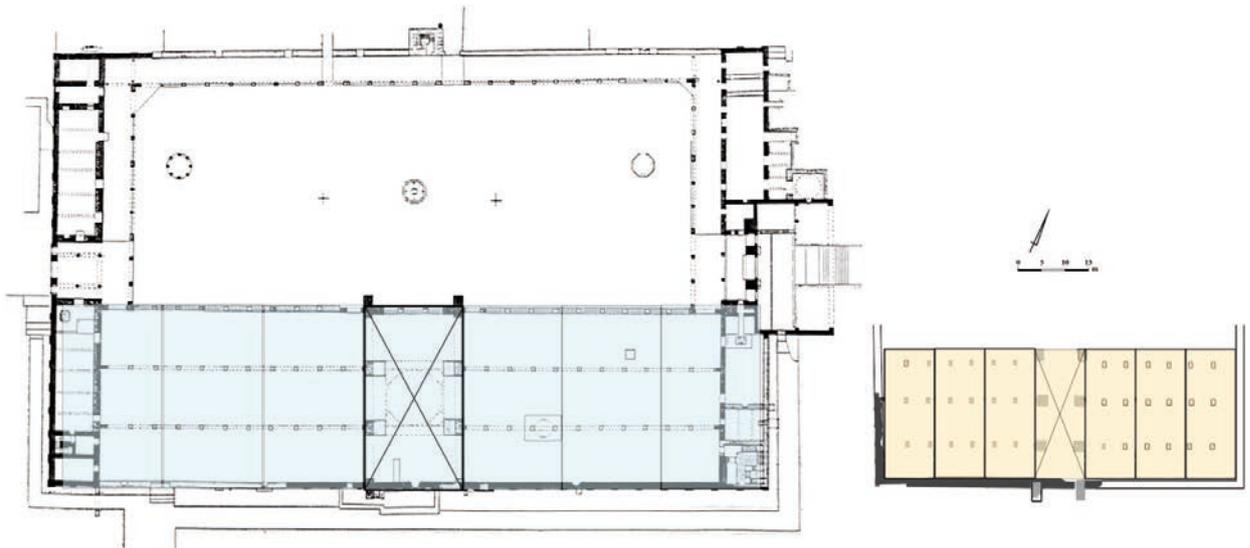


Fig. 13. The repeated transept units of the Great Mosque of Damascus and the pillared building in Tiberias. (Comparison of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)

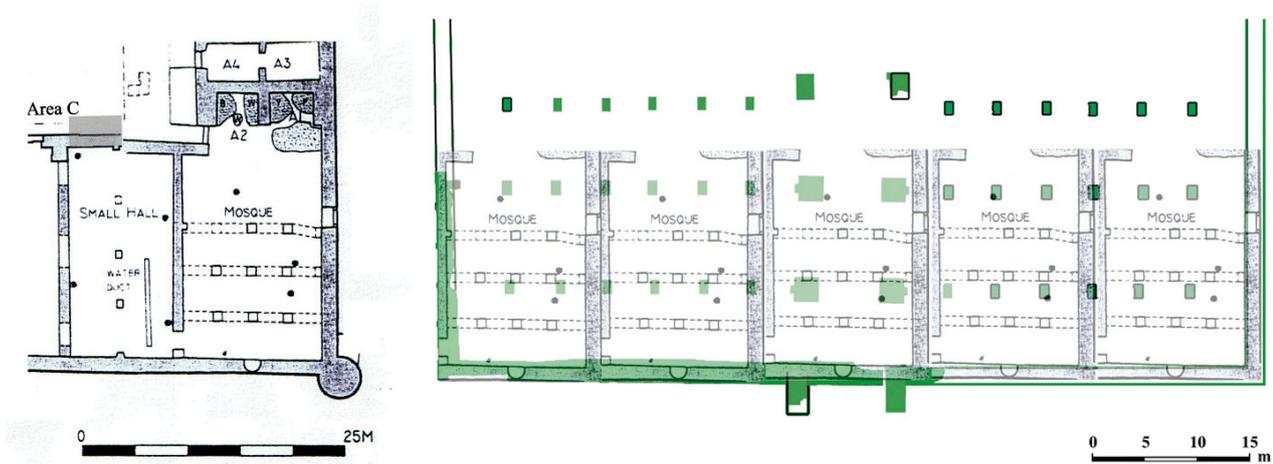


Fig. 14. The mosque of Khirbat al-Minya and the pillared building in Tiberias (in green). (Comparison of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)

The relationship between the mosque of the eighth-century “Greater Enclosure” (as it is called by the expedition team, which has identified it as a *madīna*) at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, ninety-seven kilometers northeast of Palmyra, and the pillared building in Tiberias seems even clearer (fig. 15, a and b). Qasr al-Hayr’s mosque, located in the southeastern corner of the enclosure, consists of a covered hall and a courtyard, the latter accessible from the building’s peristyle to the northwest and from the nearby *bayt* (living unit) to the west, as well as from the outside through a postern in the eastern wall of the enclosure. The covered side of the mosque is composed of three aisles of three arches each, parallel to the qibla wall. They are intersected in the middle by a broad transept. In Qasr al-Hayr’s case, the transept does not function as a repeating unit as in Damascus and Tiberias. Nevertheless, a connection to the latter is still evident: Qasr al-Hayr’s prayer hall (37 meters by 22 meters) is nearly half the width of Tiberias’s (fig. 15a), while the intercolumniations—the widths of the aisles, as well as that of the transept—seem somehow related to those at Tiberias (fig. 15b).<sup>67</sup>

The parallels are many—we could add to the list the covered halls of both Jarash and Amman, the first 38.9 meters wide by 13.8 meters long, the second 39.7 meters wide by 14 meters long.<sup>68</sup> They can also be considered roughly half the size of Tiberias’s covered hall.

The relationship between the pillared building in Tiberias and the mosque of the other provincial capital

of southern Bilad al-Sham—Ramla—is not as clear (fig. 16). Both the present measurements (93 meters long by 84 meters wide) and the subdivision of the White Mosque’s prayer hall into two aisles seem to set these two congregational mosques apart (fig. 17).<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, it could be proposed that the White Mosque was also originally a three-aisled structure, only to be narrowed following the construction of its underground cisterns during the Abbasid period.<sup>70</sup> Such an arrangement would also explain the positioning of the eastern gate at this mosque: if the quadrangular pillars north of the entrance reflect the original arrangement of the mosque’s northern portico, as proposed by Rosen-Ayalon,<sup>71</sup> the gate would then have been located at the east–west axis of the courtyard.

Turning to Jerusalem’s Aqsa Mosque, the discussion becomes even more conjectural in light of the lack of palpable evidence for comparison. If Rosen-Ayalon and Grafman’s reconstruction of the Umayyad mosque is accepted,<sup>72</sup> along with their suggestion that Jerusalem was in fact the source of inspiration for the plan of Damascus, then all the links referred to above should also be applied to Jerusalem.<sup>73</sup>

Taking everything into account, it is difficult to avoid interpreting the pillared building in Tiberias as the city’s Umayyad Friday Mosque. If the building was just a reuse of a Byzantine *macellum*, how could the affinities with the many Umayyad sites be explained? Should the plan of a covered bazaar be seen as inspiration for

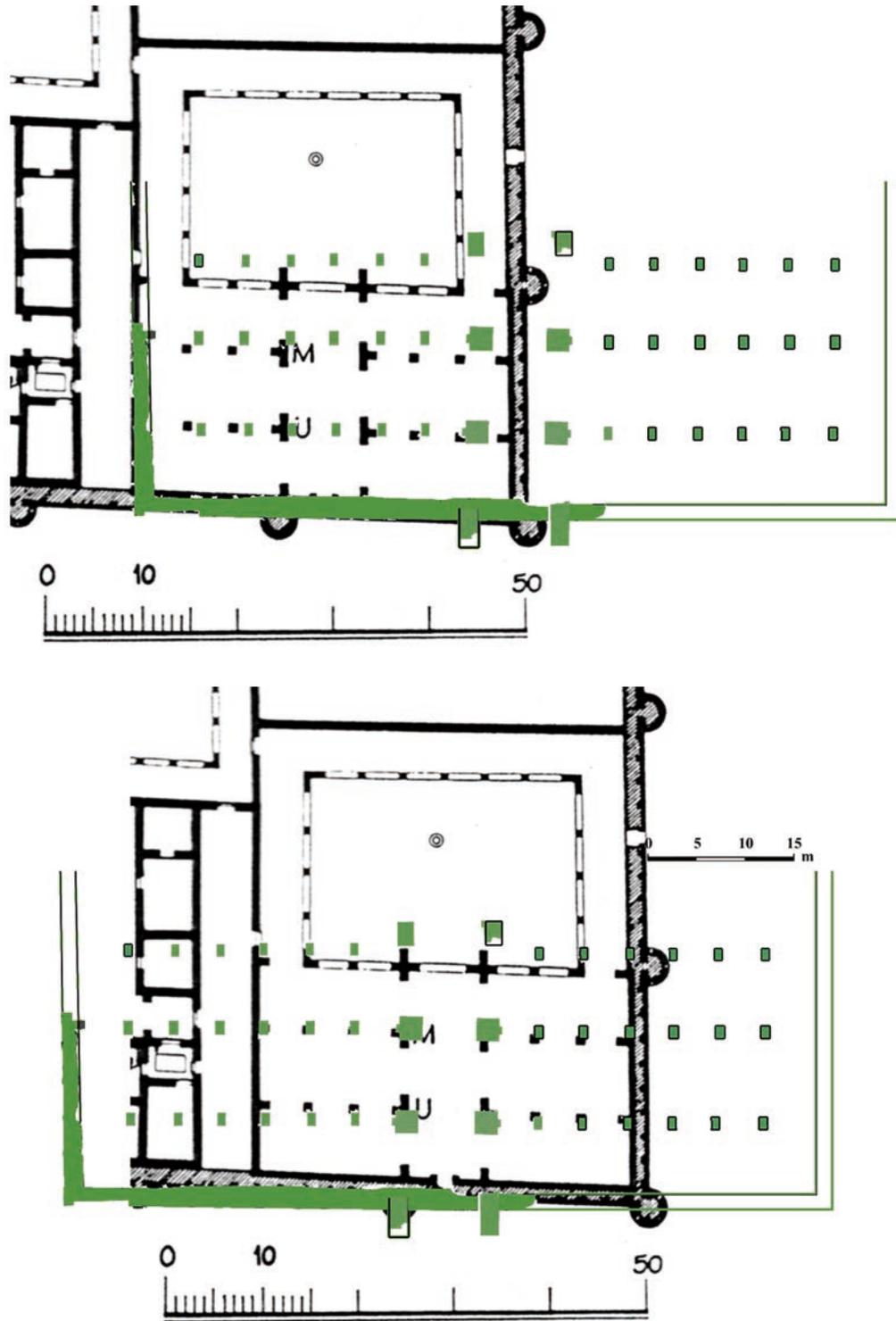


Fig. 15, a and b. The Mosque of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi and the pillared building in Tiberias (in green): a. comparison of sizes, and b. comparison of intercolumniations. (Superimposition of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)



Fig. 16. The White Mosque of Ramla (after J. Kaplan, "Excavations at the White Mosque in Ramla," *'Atiqot* 2 [1959]: fig. 1) and the pillared building in Tiberias (in green) compared. (Superimposition of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)

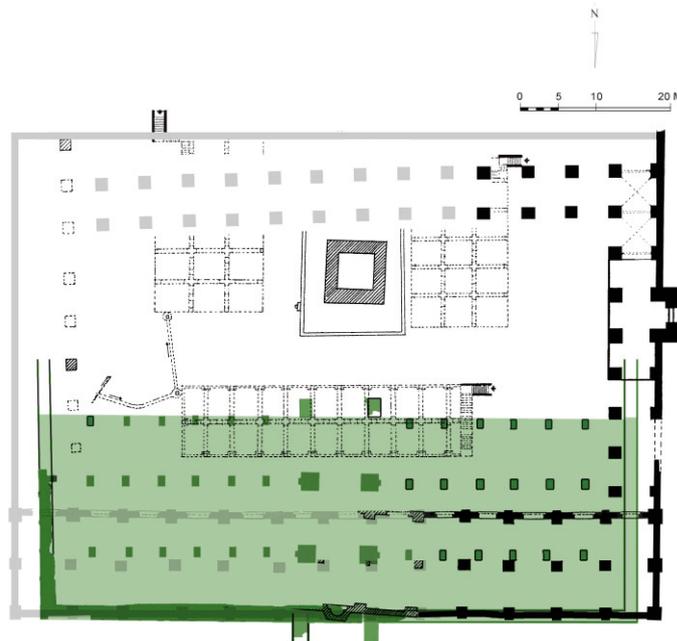


Fig. 17. Reconstruction of the original White Mosque of Ramla (after Rosen-Ayalon, "On the History of the White Mosque," *Qadmoniot* 41, 135 [2008]: 52) with the pillared building in Tiberias (in green) superimposed. The underground cisterns are later, dated to the Abbasid period. (Superimposition of plans: Katia Cytryn-Silverman)



Fig. 18. A Jewish tomb basalt door, in secondary use as a pillar base. (Photo: David Silverman)

them? Indirectly, how might we explain the “coincidentally” close proportions to the mosque in Damascus, where the measurements were basically dictated by a Roman, not Byzantine, *temenos*? Furthermore, if Damascus’ inner layout was inspired by the remains of the Herodian Royal Stoa in Jerusalem, as suggested by Rosen-Ayalon and Grafman, then the layout of Tiberias’s pillared building could at most have reflected a Roman substructure, without the mediation of a Byzantine covered market.

Further archaeological evidence appears to sustain such an interpretation for the pillared building in Tiberias. The use of basalt doors from Jewish tombs of the Roman period as bases for the pillars (fig. 18) would seem a *spolia* (secondary use with ideological motiva-

tion) more appropriate for an eighth-century mosque than for a fourth-century market, which would doubtless have also served the strong Jewish population of the town at the time.

The building technique is also reminiscent of that used nearby at Khirbat al-Minya, where the basalt bases were embedded into a strong multi-layered white mortar (fig. 19). Remains of marble paneling on the northernmost aisle—which originally faced the mosque’s courtyard—also seem reminiscent of decoration in Umayyad buildings, well known from the Dome of the Rock, the Congregational Mosque in Medina (as rebuilt by al-Walid I), the Great Mosque of Damascus, and Khirbat al-Minya, as well as from the bath at Qusayr ‘Amra.<sup>74</sup> The discovery of many sections of brass chains, as well as of fragments of mosque lamps (see above), strengthens the present interpretation. Their later date (from around the eleventh century) attests to the longevity of this central mosque.

Needless to say, only a dedicated excavation of the rest of the pillared building could supply evidence to fully confirm this argument. What survives in the archives from Ravani’s excavations does not, unfortunately, include proper documentation, while Hirschfeld’s excavations at Area C were too limited.

## CONCLUSION

By reassessing archaeological findings from past excavations in Tiberias and integrating them with recent discoveries, it is possible to reinterpret some key urban features of the early Islamic period.

It has been established that the core of the Umayyad city was contained within the Byzantine city wall, thus overruling the possibility of an Umayyad *miṣr* having been built alongside its pre-Islamic settlement. Furthermore, by reevaluating a structure previously regarded as a Byzantine market and reinterpreting it as a Friday Mosque, it is possible to suggest two additional elements of Tiberias’s early Islamic city center—the administrative center and the bathhouse.

The basilical building to the east of the proposed mosque, which still functioned throughout the Umayyad period, might be interpreted as Tiberias’s governor’s house or administrative center (*dār al-imāra*). Despite



Fig. 19. Basalt pillar bases, set in a strong white mortar. (Photo: David Silverman)



Fig. 20. Proposed city center of early Islamic Tiberias. Remains marked in orange (street and related shops) have been identified as post-Umayyad (post-749). (Plan: Dov Porotsky, courtesy of the Hirschfeld Expedition team [adapted by Katia Cytryn-Silverman])

not being located south of the qibla wall, a pattern more typical of early Islamic cities, its proximity to the mosque might have been perceived as a suitable reason to adapt the pre-Islamic public building.<sup>75</sup> In fact, such an adoption of a Byzantine public building for administrative use during the Umayyad period could explain later architectural developments, by which the design of some Umayyad palatial halls (in Amman, ʿAnjar, and Mshatta, for example) was based on the classical basilical plan.<sup>76</sup>

The layout of the Umayyad city center is completed by the presence of a bathhouse, onto which the southern wall of the mosque partly abuts. This bath, attributed to the Byzantine period, seems to have been considerably expanded during the early Islamic period.<sup>77</sup>

The proximity of the mosque to the *cardo* and its shops further enhances the centrality of the pillared building (fig. 20). It is consequently probable that the courtyard of the mosque was accessible from the west through the *cardo*, from the north through an opening facing the transept, and from the east through an opening on the axis of the basilical building. Such a consideration even allows a provisory reconstruction of the whole sanctuary as a rectangle circa 64 meters long by 78 meters wide.<sup>78</sup>

All considered, al-Muqaddasi's description of the mosque of Tiberias seems to be validated: the mosque is large and fine, and stands in the marketplace; its floor is laid in pebbles; and the building rests on pillars of joined stone. It is hoped that future archaeological works at Tiberias will further refine our understanding of the city's development and Islamization.<sup>79</sup>

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## NOTES

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1. Tiberias is believed to have been founded by Herod Antipas as his capital between 18 and 20 A.D. On pre-Islamic Tiberias, see Yizhar Hirschfeld, *A Guide to Antiquity Sites in Tiberias*, trans. Edward Levin and Inna Pommerantz (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1992), 7–9; Yizhar Hirschfeld, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (henceforth *NEAEHL*), ed. Ephraim Stern (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society & Carta, 1993–), s.v. "Tiberias"; Yizhar Hirschfeld and Katharina Galor, "New Excavations in Roman, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Tiberias," in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Identity in Ancient Galilee—A Region in Transition*, ed. Jürgen Zangenberg, Harold W. Attridge, and Dale B. Martin (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 207–29.
2. Ahmad ibn Yahyā ibn Jābir al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-buldān* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1866), 115–16. According to his account, the people of Tiberias soon failed to abide by the contract with Shurahbil, causing Abu ʿUbayda, the supreme commander of Syria, to send ʿAmr b. al-ʿAs to reconquer the city. It once again capitulated, under the same conditions as before. Baladhuri further mentions that some sources attribute this second conquest to Shurahbil as well. For a summary of the capitulation of Tiberias and a list of the most relevant sources, see Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, trans. Ethel Broido (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), §58, n. 46. See also M. Lavergne, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "Ṭabariyya." Abu'l-Hasan ʿAli b. Abi Bakr al-Harawī (d. 1215) mentioned that the tomb of Abu ʿUbayda (d. in 639, a victim of the plague; see H. A. R. Gibb, *EI2*, s.v. "Abū ʿUbayda al-Djarrāḥ"), together with that of his wife, should be found at Tiberias, even though some placed it in al-Urdunn, and others in Baysan: see Abū'l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt ilā maʿrifat al-ziyārāt*, ed. Janine Sourdell-Thomine (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1953), 19; translated into French in A. S. Marmarji, *Textes géographiques arabes sur la Palestine* (Paris: Librairie Lecoivre, 1951), 129. This evidence is late and with no match, as most of the early sources refer to other sites. For an encompassing list of locations identified as Abu ʿUbayda's place of burial, e.g., al-Urdunn in general, Pella (Fihl), Beth She'an, and ʿImwas (Emmaus), see Abū'l-Qāsim ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾriḫ Madīnat Dimashq*, 80 vols., ed. ʿUmar b. Gharāma al-ʿAmrawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995–2001), 25:486, 491.

- See also Amikam Elad, "The Description of the Travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa in Palestine: Is It Original?" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1987): 263, 270 n. 44. A shrine claiming to house Abu 'Ubayda's tomb is found at Mazar Abu 'Ubayda in Jordan (perhaps 'Amta of the sources), around 4 km north of Dayr Allah. For more on 'Amta as Abu 'Ubayda's place of burial, see Gil, *History of Palestine*, §319–20; J. Drory, "Where Did the Plague Occur? On the Location of 'Imwas in 639," in *Mehḳarim be-ge'ografya hiṣṭorit: Yishuvit shel Erets-Yisra'el = Historical-Geographical Studies on the Settlement of Eretz Israel*, vol. 2, ed. Yossi Katz, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, and Yehoshua Kaniel (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1991), 223–24 n. 25. On modern claims that he was buried in 'Imwas, see Drory's unequivocal rejection in Drory, "Where Did the Plague Occur?" 224 n. 31. However, in his article on the identification of 'Imwas (partly a reaction to Drory's work), N. Luz cites an early Islamic source, Ibn Sa'd (d. 845), whose *isnād* (chain of transmission) goes back to the first half of the eighth century, in reference to Abu 'Ubayda's burial at 'Imwas: N. Luz, "Emmaos: The First Capital of Jund Filastin," in *Studies in Geography and History in Honour of Yehoshua Ben-Arieh*, ed. Yossi Ben-Artzi, Yisrael Bartal, and Elchanan Reiner (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1999), 174. Luz nevertheless fails to point out that as early as the twelfth century, Ibn 'Asakir had already refuted this evidence as "doubtful": see Ibn 'Asakir, *Ta'riḳh*, 491.
3. It is not clear when exactly this shift of capitals took place. A good possible reference for such a geopolitical change is the leveling of the new road to Damascus via 'Aqabat Fiḳ under the patronage of 'Abd al-Malik. On this pass, see n. 5 below. The sources also inform us that in 636 (or 638) an important meeting between the army commanders and the caliph 'Umar took place in Jabiya in southern Syria. The aim of this meeting was to establish the terms of occupation, divide Syria into *ajnad* (districts), settle the various tribes who took part in the conquests, and fix tax rates and methods of tax collection: see Drory, "Where Did the Plague Occur?" 222. It is not certain, however, that the district capitals were established during that meeting.
  4. On Tiberias as the center of Jewish learning and the seat of the Palestinian Yeshiva (Great Academy), see Gil, *History of Palestine*, §738. According to the sources, the Palestinian Yeshiva remained in Tiberias until it moved to Jerusalem sometime during the mid-tenth century. Tiberias was known as a center for the study of the Massora (which deals with the correct textual reading of the Scriptures) and the Hebrew language, even after the Great Academy moved to Jerusalem: see Jacob Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine under the Fāṭimid Caliphs*, 2 vols. (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), 2:43ff. Worth mentioning are the seventy families who moved from Tiberias to reestablish the Jewish community in Jerusalem, soon after the surrender of that town to the Muslims: see Gil, *History of Palestine*, §738.
  5. Moshe Sharon, "'Aqabat Fiḳ," *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae (CIAP)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997–), 1:102–6.
  6. L. A. Mayer, "Aṣ-Ṣinnabra," *Eretz-Israel* 1 (1951): 169–70 (in Hebrew); Donald Whitcomb, "Khirbet al-Karak Identified with Sinnabra," *Al-'Usur al-Wusta: The Bulletin of Middle East Medievalists* 14, 1 (2002): 1–6.
  7. Khirbat al-Minya is located 14 km north of Tiberias, northwest of the Sea of Galilee. See the summary of the excavations from 1932 until 1959 in Oleg Grabar, *NEAEHL*, s.v. "Minnim, Ḥorvat." For the renewed excavations by the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem at Khirbat al-Minya under the direction of Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, Giora Solar, and Katia Cytryn-Silverman, see "Khirbet el-Minya," *Israel Exploration Journal* 55 (2005): 216–19.
  8. W. Hinz, *EI2*, s.v. "Farsakh." This description seems rather exaggerated. Writing in the mid-twelfth century (ca. 1154), al-Idrisi (d. ca. 1166) gave Tiberias's length as 2 *amyāl* (sing. *mīl*), i.e., ca. 4 km: see Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Idrīsī, *Kitāb Nuzhat al-mushtāq fi ikhtirāq al-āfāq (Opus geographicum)*, ed. Enrico Cerulli et al., 9 vols. (Naples and Rome: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1970–84), 4:363; translated into French in Marmarji, *Textes géographiques*, 128, and in P. A. Jaubert, *La Géographie d'Édrisi* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1975), 347. However, it seems doubtful that Idrisi's description reflected the contemporary state of affairs. By the time of his account, the city was in the hands of the Crusaders, who had built a citadel north of the Byzantine wall, at the site of Harrison's proposed *miṣr*: see Timothy P. Harrison, "The Early Umayyad Settlement at Ṭabariyah: A Case of Yet Another *Miṣr*?" *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 51, 1 (1992): 51–59. There is no doubt that during the Crusader period there was a shift in the city settlement, as is proved by the lack of post-eleventh-century layers in most of the excavations within the perimeter of the Byzantine / early Islamic city. Perhaps al-Idrisi based his figure on pre-Crusader accounts. On the excavations of the Crusader castle (license A-3893/2003), see Yosef Stepansky, "The Crusader Castle of Tiberias," *Crusades* 3 (2004): 179–81.
  9. "Kin'an," according to Guy Le Strange, ed. and trans., *Palestine under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* (London: Alexander P. Watt for the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890), 334; and Harrison, "Another *Miṣr*?" 53.
  10. The phrase *wa-sūquhā min al-darb ilā'l-darb* could also be read: "its marketplace stands between the two main streets." Thanks to Ofer Efrati of the Department of Arabic Language and Literature of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for this important observation. See also Gil, *History of Palestine*, §285 n. 50, for a similar translation.
  11. According to Efrati, the phrase *'alā asāṭin hijāra mawṣūla* can be also interpreted as "built of ashlar."
  12. Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Bannā' al-Shāmī al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma'rifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1906), 161; translated into English by Basil Anthony Collins in *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions* (Reading, UK: Garnet Publishing Ltd, 1994), 148.

13. It seems that Nasir-i Khusraw transferred the tradition concerning the hammam at Hammat Tiberias to the bathhouse to the south of the mosque, excavated by Ravani in the 1950s. This latter building would be to the right of the mosque's entrance for those coming from the *cardo*, thus matching Nasir-i Khusraw's description. We may yet find a source of hot water for this bathhouse as well.
14. For the proposed identification by David Stacey of a pillared building excavated in 1973–74 (Area D) as the Jasmine Mosque, see below.
15. On the tomb of Abu Hurayra in Tiberias, see Gottlieb Schumacher's remarks from November 1886 on an Arabic inscription in marble referring to the tomb of Abu Hurayra. The inscription was found in the course of excavations at the Tiberias municipality where, according to Schumacher, there was also architectural evidence for the existence of a mosque at the site: see Gottlieb Schumacher, "Tiberias and Its Vicinity," *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* (1887): 89. I would like to thank Paul M. Cobb, of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Pennsylvania, for drawing my attention to this reference.
16. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Safarnāma*, ed. Yahyā al-Khashshāb (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1983), 52. Translation based on Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, 336–37.
17. Harrison, "Another *Miṣr*?" 51–59.
18. Wladyslaw B. Kubiak, *Al-Fuṣṭāṭ: Its Foundation and Early Urban Development* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1988); Donald Whitcomb, "The City of Istakhr and the Marv Dasht Plain," in *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für iranische Kunst und Archäologie, München, 7.–10. September 1976*, Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran, Ergänzungsband 6 (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1979), 363–70; Donald Whitcomb, "Islamic Archaeology at Susa," *Paléorient* 11, 2 (1985): 85–90; Donald Whitcomb, "The *Miṣr* of Ayla: Settlement at al-'Aqaba in the Early Islamic Period," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East, II: Land Use and Settlement Patterns*, ed. G. R. D. King and Averil Cameron (Princeton, N.J.: Darwin Press, 1994), 155–70; Donald Whitcomb, "The *Miṣr* of Ayla: New Evidence for the Early Islamic City," in *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan V*, ed. Khairieh 'Amr, Fawzi Zayadine, and Muna Zaghoul (Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1995), 277–88; Donald Whitcomb, "Amṣār in Syria? Syrian Cities after the Conquest," *ARAM* 6 (1994): 13–33.
19. Harrison's survey of the archaeological excavations at Tiberias is not exhaustive. First and foremost, he left out Bezalel Ravani's excavations at the center of the pre-Islamic city, which took place in the early 1950s, as well as those by Adam Druks in the early 1960s. On these excavations, see the discussion in the following section.
20. Harrison, "Another *Miṣr*?" 58–59.
21. It has also been considered by Donald Whitcomb in "Amṣār in Syria?" 17–18.
22. David Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974: The Early Islamic Periods*, IAA Reports 21 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004).
23. Yosef Stepansky, "The Archaeological Research at Tiberias during the Last Decade," *Mi-Tuv Tveriah* 3 (1985): 24–28 (in Hebrew).
24. In his entry for the Supplement to the *NEAEHL*, s.v. "Tiberias" (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2008), Stepansky wrote an updated and more comprehensive article on the archaeological digs in Tiberias (not including the works in Hammat). His article is accompanied by a map that indicates the many surveys, inspections, and excavations conducted over the years. I would like to thank the author for making his draft available for reading before publication, as well as for his willingness in showing the different sites and sharing his wide knowledge.
25. According to the code of the Israel Antiquities Authority, archival material from the various excavations can be accessed providing that the last excavation season occurred more than ten years ago or that the excavator has given his explicit consent to analyze the relevant files.
26. Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 67.
27. *Ibid.*, 56.
28. See G. Foerster, *NEAEHL*, s.v. "Tiberias"; also mentioned by Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, ix.
29. Published in *Alon Agaf Ha-Atiqot* 5–6 (Sept. 1957): 28–29 (in Hebrew).
30. E. L. Sukenik, IAA Record Files / Mandate File no. 185 (ATQ/82/6, letter dated 9 January 1936).
31. Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 37–38.
32. Recent excavations (at the end of 2008) by the Israel Antiquities Authority to the south of the gate suggest that building activity outside the city wall might have already started during the Umayyad period, though mostly focused near the lake shore: Edna Amos and Moshe Hartal, personal communication, April 2009.
33. Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 36. On the invasion of the Qarmatis of Tiberias, see Gil, *History of Palestine*, §468.
34. Alan Walmsley has suggested the possibility of interpreting the narrowing of the gate and the insertion of doors into the *cardo* at Tiberias as evidence for an early lockable *sūq*. At Umm Qays in Jordan, a gate was inserted into the main *decumanus* (an east–west road), but the date is unclear. Alan Walmsley, personal communication, November 2007. David Stacey believes that after the southern expansion the city wall might have acted as an inner bastion, thus justifying the narrowing and insertion of doors at this later date. David Stacey, personal communication, September 2008.
35. It should be noted that excavations at the Jordan River Hotel in 1980 (license A-936/1980, A-947/1980) by Amos Harif revealed both a Crusader Church and the remains of a city wall, dated by the excavator to the Byzantine period based on the workmanship. He writes: "An additional and equally interesting discovery is a town wall, 2.5 m wide, which was unearthed only in part (for a length of about 50 m). This wall runs roughly east to west, forming the southern boundary of the excavations. A curve in the wall indicates that it must have been a circular wall without corners. A tower, 5.0 x

- 2.5 m, was uncovered in its northern side (the outer side) where the wall starts to curve. This wall could have been the northern wall of the late Byzantine town of Tiberias. Attached to the eastern side of the tower and the town wall, two Khirbet Mefjer vessels were found, probably indicating a pre-Mefjer date. The well-dressed basalt stones, as well as its construction, suggest Byzantine workmanship." See A. Harif, "A Crusader Church in Tiberias," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116 (1984): 107–8. Since then this wall has been considered the northern perimeter of the Byzantine city, even though Harif's work did not yield a Byzantine layer. The only finds he refers to, used as a *terminus ante quem*, are of Abbasid date. Also noteworthy are the excavations southeast of Harif's site, undertaken by Adam Druks in 1972 at the Plaza Hotel (license A-383/1972), which revealed five strata, the earliest not earlier than the seventh to eighth centuries. Druks uncovered substantial walls (2 m wide) related to the early Islamic period (with no further detailing), close to the Sea of Galilee, one of them as long as 40 m, running perpendicular to the shore. He suggested that these walls were part of the early Islamic pier. In any event, the absence of Byzantine layers at Druks' excavations should be carefully considered.
36. Dr. Moshe Hartal of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who has excavated a number of sites in Tiberias since 2002, brought to my attention three of his salvage excavations, undertaken to the west of Vitto's site (two digs in 2005 under license A-4445/05, and a third in 2006 under license A-4886/06; see map in fig. 1). According to Hartal's results, the area under discussion was beyond the limits of the Umayyad settlement, and was first settled during the Abbasid period. Hartal believes that this expansion took place following the earthquake of 749, which apparently destroyed part of the city, prompting the population to move beyond the walls. The area remained inhabited until the eleventh century. Hartal's work at the "Red Magen David Precinct" in 2005 further supports Harif's dating of the wall to the Byzantine period, even though no remains of the wall were actually exposed. On the other hand, the excavator was able to discern a Byzantine layer in the area within the proposed city-wall line, while no signs of that layer could be found to the north of it. I am most grateful to Moshe Hartal for this important contribution and for sharing his preliminary results, currently being prepared for publication.
  37. See n. 36 above.
  38. See Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 56, 65, 67.
  39. Published by Yizhar Hirschfeld, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1989–1994*, IAA Reports 22 (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2004), 19–21.
  40. *Ibid.*, 19.
  41. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 43 (1972): 2–3 (in Hebrew).
  42. The excavators specifically referred to the high incidence of "Khirbat al-Mafjar ware," but did not make clear whether it came from the buildings' foundations or from their activity levels.
  43. Hirschfeld, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1989–1994*, 3–26.
  44. *Ibid.*, 12–13.
  45. Hirschfeld, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1989–1994*, 13–18. On the Abbasid geometric mosaic, see Rina Talgam, "Mosaic Floors," in Hirschfeld, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1989–1994*, 28–30.
  46. *Ibid.*, 131–32.
  47. Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 34–36, 42.
  48. *Ibid.*, 75–81.
  49. Note that Stacey also proposed that the *cardo* might have made a detour south of the bathhouse and marketplace, running east of them: Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 8 n. 3. If the *cardo* did indeed make such a turn eastwards, it probably did not happen before the Abbasid period. According to the results of Hirschfeld's excavations (see n. 58 below), a street running between the basilical building and the so-called marketplace was erected during the Abbasid period over the pre-749 remains of the western wing of the former. That might have happened following the partial blocking of the *cardo* by the western expansion of the bathhouse. Unfortunately, the building stages of the bathhouse have yet to be clarified.
  50. Stacey, *Excavations at Tiberias, 1973–1974*, 78–79.
  51. *Ibid.*, 79–80.
  52. Israel Antiquities Authority Archives/ Inspection Files/ Tiberias/ General/ 1/ 8, letter from February 1, 1952.
  53. Gideon Foerster, personal communication, May 2006.
  54. Israel Antiquities Authority Archives/ Inspection Files/ Tiberias/ General/ 1/ 8, "The Public Buildings of Roman Tiberias," plan and summary of excavations by Ravani (1952–58) and Druks (1962?–65).
  55. Shimon Appelbaum inspected the works between September 15 and October 30, 1963 (license A-5/1963). See *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 9 (January 1964): 1–6.
  56. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 10 (April 1964): 14–16; 12 (October 1964): 16. The license numbers for 1964 are not clear. Another season took place in 1965 (A-54/1965), but apparently no related publication came out in *Hadashot Arkheologiyot*.
  57. According to an unsigned summary attached to the site's plan (see n. 54 above), the basilical building was believed to have served as a church.
  58. Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Tiberias," *Excavations and Surveys in Israel (ESI)* 16 (1997): 35–41. In Area G, the baths and pillared building were cleared and their remains re-exposed. The three rows of pillars were uncovered, even though it is not certain from the preliminary report how much of this clearing, if any, was in fact an addition to Ravani's excavations. The excavations at the basilical building were resumed in Area F.
  59. This is perhaps the only place in which reference is made to a sugar industry in this site. Later reports by Hirschfeld do not mention this important aspect of Ayyubid–Mamluk Tiberias. Worthy of mention are the contemporary and nearby remains of a large sugar factory at Khirbat al-Minya. See n. 7 above.

60. See preliminary results in Yizhar Hirschfeld and Eran Meir, "Tiberias-2004," *Hadashot Arkheologiyot (Excavations and Surveys in Israel)* 118 (April 23, 2006), [http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report\\_detail.asp?id=337&mag\\_id=111](http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail.asp?id=337&mag_id=111) (accessed on October 13, 2007).
61. Ayala Lester and Yizhar Hirschfeld, "Brass Chains from a Public Building in the Area of the Bathhouse at Tiberias," *Levant* 38 (2006): 145–58.
62. *Ibid.*, 145.
63. Hirschfeld and Meir, "Tiberias-2004"; see also Hirschfeld and Galor, "New Excavations," 216–17, in which they write: "A covered bazaar (*macellum*) is a well known urban element in Roman architecture. Examples of *macella* similar to the one at Tiberias are known from Gadara, Bosra, Jerash and Petra." Hirschfeld and Galor refer to examples given by Arthur Segal in his book *From Function to Monument: Urban Landscapes of Roman Palestine, Syria, and Provincia Arabia* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997), 61–67. It should be noted, however, that Hirschfeld and Galor dated the pillared building to the fourth century, thus making the aforementioned references—which are, in any case, dissimilar in plan to the building in Tiberias—at least anachronistic. Few *macella* are known to have been constructed at such a "late" date. A *macellum* at Antioch, erected around 363–78 at the site of the temple of Ares close to the forum, could be relevant to this discussion both for its date and location. Unfortunately, nothing is known about its ground plan and all the information is drawn from a literary source. See Claire de Ruyt, *Macellum: Marché alimentaire des romains*, Publications d'histoire de l'art et d'archéologie de l'Université catholique de Louvain 35 (Court St. Étienne: Imprimerie É. Oeffé, 1983), 36, 270–71. Thanks to Prof. Zeev Weiss of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for referring me to relevant material on the Roman *macella*.
64. Lester and Hirschfeld write: "While it is possible that part of the building was modified in the Early Islamic period to serve as a mosque, there is no evidence for this, apart from the chain, which was found in the excavation." Lester and Hirschfeld, "Brass Chains," 145.
65. K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 2 vols. (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1979), vol. 1, pt. I, 151–96.
66. Creswell drew attention to this "successive, symmetrical subdivision into three" when discussing the Umayyad buildings at Khirbat al-Minya and Mshatta. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pt. II, 384, 581–82. The numeral 7 also seems to have been part of the planning concept and will be discussed in depth in a separate article. In Tiberias, there are seven openings to each side of the entrance to the transept. The use of the number 7 in the planning of some early Islamic mosques might also explain the fifteen transversal aisles at al-Aqsa II, and perhaps even clarify the passage referring to this mosque's seven mihrabs and seven domes found in Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mir'āt al-zamān fī tārikh al-a'yān* (Hyderabad, Deccan: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif al-'Uthmāniyya, 1951–52). The passage quotes Hisham b. Muhammad al-Kalbi (d. 819) and Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidi (d. 823), the former following the testimony of his father Muhammad b. al-Sa'ib (d. 763). On the seven mihrabs and their respective domes, see Amikam Elad, "Why Did 'Abd al-Malik Build the Dome of the Rock? A Re-examination of the Muslim Sources," in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part One: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, ed. Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 35, 37. The importance given to the number 7 in Islamic architecture might also explain the replacement of the original mihrab in the mosque at Jarash by a smaller one to its east. Such an arrangement would place the new axis in the middle of a seven-aisled structure, thus also explaining the addition of another mihrab on the western side of the qibla wall. Note that numbers 3 and 7 have great symbolism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. See L. I. Conrad, "Seven and the *Tasbī'*: On the Implications of Numerical Symbolism for the Study of Medieval Islamic History," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 31 (1988): 42–73. Thanks to Prof. Elad for pointing out this elucidating study.
67. Note that the prayer hall at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi is accessed from the courtyard through seven openings.
68. Alan Walmsley, *The Islamic Jarash Project, Jordan, Report on the 2002 Season* (Copenhagen, 2003), 8, 13–15; at [http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/walmsley/IJP/IJP\\_Prelim2\\_files/IJP2002reportv2.pdf](http://www.staff.hum.ku.dk/walmsley/IJP/IJP_Prelim2_files/IJP2002reportv2.pdf). See also Alan Walmsley and Kristoffer Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash in Jordan and Its Relationship to Early Mosques," *Antiquity* 79 (2005): 362–78, which also includes a discussion of the typology of early Islamic mosques, based on their overall area and length-width ratio, as well as the relative area occupied by the prayer hall. On Amman, see Alastair Northedge, *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Ammān*, vol. 1, *History, Site and Architecture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 65, fig. 25. For a general discussion of early Islamic mosques, see Jeremy Johns, "The 'House of the Prophet' and the Concept of the Mosque," in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part Two: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. Jeremy Johns, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 59–112.
69. J. Kaplan, "Excavations at the White Mosque in Ramla," *'Atiqot* 2 (1959): 106–15. The southern wall of the White Mosque of Ramla has a deviation of some 6 degrees to the north, the result of a late reconstruction. Kaplan, "White Mosque in Ramla," 107, dated the reconstruction to the Ayyubid period. For a different interpretation of the standing remains at the prayer hall of the White Mosque, see Denys Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993–2007), s.v. "Ramla." Myriam Rosen-Ayalon has recently reassessed the various stages of the White Mosque in "The White Mosque of Ramla: Retracing Its History," *Israel Exploration Journal* 56, 1 (2006): 67–83.
70. Note how in fig. 17 the northern row of pillars in Tiberias's proposed congregational mosque (in green) overlaps Ramla's southern underground cistern. Rosen-Ayalon has shown that all three cisterns have the same proportions as Birkat

- al-ʿAnaziyya, also in Ramla and dated 172 (789). She concludes that a reconstruction of the White Mosque took place after the earthquake of the mid-eighth century, by which time the enclosure was also expanded northwards, to the present perimeter: see Rosen-Ayalon, "White Mosque of Ramla," 80–82.
71. See Rosen-Ayalon's reconstruction of the first architectural stage of the White Mosque in "White Mosque of Ramla," 68–72, and more recently in Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "On the History of the White Mosque," *Qadmoniot* 41, 135 (2008): 51–55 (in Hebrew).
  72. Rafi Grafman and Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, "The Two Great Syrian Umayyad Mosques: Jerusalem and Damascus," *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 1–15.
  73. A comparative study of al-Aqsa and the pillared building in Tiberias is in preparation by the present author. There the author explores some apparent remains of "Umayyad planning concepts" in the reconstructed Abbasid mosque.
  74. For the use of marble paneling during the Umayyad period, see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1/I, 78, 99, 146, 174; vol. 1/II, 385, 395.
  75. Prof. Whitcomb has drawn my attention to the fact that this positioning was not uncommon in early Islam. In Basra, the first *dār al-imāra* was reported to have been located on the northeastern side of the mosque (Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1/I, 22, 45), only to be moved to its qibla side by order of the governor Ziyad b. Abihi, when the mosque was rebuilt in 45 (665). Similarly, the house of ʿAmr b. al-ʿAs in Fustat (built in 21 [641–42]) was also reported to have been located to the northeast of the mosque, though separated by a road: *ibid.*, vol. 1/I, 37.
  76. Prof. Whitcomb has also pointed out the presence of a basilical building of similar plan at the *qaṣr* (chateau, palace) at Sinnabra to the south of Tiberias (see n. 6 above). This structure, associated with the caliph Muʿawiya (r. 661–80), might have also functioned as a *dār al-imāra*, or at least as an audience hall, following the example of the pre-Islamic structure by the Ghassanid al-Mundhir (r. 569–82), outside the walls of Rusafa (Sergiopolis) in northern Syria. Despite the dispute over its identification as either a church or a *praetorium* (audience hall), E. K. Fowden has recently argued for a dual function, in line with Arab tribal custom in the region during the fifth and sixth centuries. See E. K. Fowden, "An Arab Building at al-Ruṣāfa-Sergiopolis," *Damascener Mitteilungen* 12 (2008): 303–24, especially 315ff. According to Whitcomb, this pre-Islamic Arab example might be a link to the ready adoption by Muslim Arabs of the basilical plan to serve as their audience hall.
  77. Unfortunately, Ravani's notes on his excavations at the bathhouse are not detailed and a proper chronological sequence cannot be established. A thorough study of this building, based on the architectural remains, is being prepared by Hirschfeld's staff.
  78. Such measurements imply a mosque with a total area of 4,992 square meters, thus including Tiberias in Walmsley and Damgaard's classification of mosques ranging from 1,500 to 5,000 square meters. This category was associated with centers of mere regional significance: see Walmsley and Damgaard, "Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash," 372, fig. 6. Tiberias, together with Sana'a', would be the exceptions in this category, both for their large sizes and for their geopolitical importance. Worth noting is that the proposed length for Tiberias's congregational mosque coincides with that of Ramla's White Mosque, according to Rosen-Ayalon's reconstruction of its first phase. See n. 71 above.
  79. The author recently finished a short excavation season (March 22–April 8, 2009) at the site of the mosque. The project was sponsored by the Max Van Berchem Foundation and included a professional staff from the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University, volunteers from Israel, the United States, New Zealand, and Europe, and local workers. The excavation explored five areas belonging or immediately adjacent to the mosque: the covered hall, a structure to the south of the qibla wall, the enclosing wall to the west of the proposed courtyard, and the wall and stylobate to the north of it. The results will be published in a separate article by the author.



MARCUS SCHADL

## THE SHRINE OF NASIR KHUSRAW: IMPRISONED DEEP IN THE VALLEY OF YUMGAN

Under God's protection I am here in Yumgan.  
Look closely, and consider me not a prisoner.  
No one says that silver or diamonds or rubies  
Are prisoners in the rocks or lowly.  
Even though Yumgan itself is lowly and worthless,  
Here I am greatly valued and honored.

The above verse is a quotation from the *Dīvān*,<sup>1</sup> which the “Ruby of Badakhshan,” Nasir Khusraw (d. ca. 1072–78), wrote in the eleventh century during his exile in Yumgan, a district tucked away in the mountains of Badakhshan, the northeastern province of modern Afghanistan. Yumgan was to be Nasir Khusraw’s final abode, and it was there that he penned most of the surviving works that have earned him a reputation as one of the foremost writers of classic Persian poetry and as an equally weighty figure in Isma‘ili (Sevener Shi‘i) philosophy. The “hovel of Yumgan” did not become “famed and glorified” through him “just as the Arab desert became glorified by the excellence of the Prophet,”<sup>2</sup> but in his lifetime Nasir Khusraw’s teachings attracted a great concourse of followers from afar and, soon after his death, the site of his burial developed into an important place of pilgrimage.

It is surprising that despite Nasir Khusraw’s high repute, the architecture of the shrine in which he is believed to be buried has so far attracted little academic interest. The remoteness of the site may be the principal reason for this neglect. Even merited biographers of Nasir Khusraw did not personally visit his tomb. So when the pioneering scholars Ivanow and Corbin, as well as Nanji in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, describe the shrine as a “modest” construction, we must recognize that these authors based their judgments merely on pilgrims’ reports.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, published firsthand accounts are extremely scarce. We owe an early, albeit brief, report to the

Scottish explorer John Wood, who stopped at the shrine in late 1837 on his way to the source of the River Oxus.<sup>4</sup> Almost a century later, in the early 1920s, Nader Shah, who ruled Afghanistan from 1929 to 1933, travelled to the shrine and described it in writing; unfortunately, these records were lost. Another half century later, in 1976, the American scholar Louis Dupree wrote *Saint Cults in Afghanistan*, focusing his travelogue-like study on the shrine of Nasir Khusraw. Again, however, the architecture of the shrine is examined only cursorily.<sup>5</sup>

In late summer 2003, I was given the opportunity to travel to the *ziyarat* (a common abbreviation of *ziyaratgāh*, the burial site or shrine of a venerated holy person) on behalf of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The aim of the visit was to report on the building’s state of preservation and to prepare recommendations for a small-scale community-based restoration project intended to commemorate the then-upcoming millennium anniversary of Nasir Khusraw’s birth, which was celebrated in 2004. The building that I found there was, to my surprise, a centuries-old structure with many delicate details, which, when carefully put together, reveal an interesting story about the historical vicissitudes of the cult of Nasir Khusraw and, more generally, of Isma‘ilism in Badakhshan.

The purpose of this essay is to bring this small and modest, but exceptionally interesting building, the product of the rich vernacular building traditions of this remote mountain region, to the attention of art and architectural historians, who have so far largely left this field to ethnographers. I will explore the history of Isma‘ilism in Badakhshan in order to provide an understanding of the eminent importance of Nasir Khusraw and his works for the local community, which in turn explains the significance of the shrine and the various facets of its veneration. Based on evidence gleaned from

the building itself, as well as from oral traditions and inscriptions, it is possible to trace the historical development of the shrine as a mausoleum with a resident Sufi brotherhood.

### THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SHRINE

The *ziyārat* of Nasir Khusraw is located in a valley irrigated by the Kokcha (Blue River), a tributary of the upper Oxus (fig. 1). The modern district of Yumgan begins above the city of Jurm and rises rapidly in a southerly direction towards the central chain of the Hindu Kush. Due to the difficult terrain and a severe climate with hot, dry summers and cold winters, the valley is only sparsely populated and cultivation is limited to the vicinity of settlements. Public transport facilities are nonexistent. It takes even the modern-day traveler two days to journey from Kabul to the shrine of Nasir Khusraw, flying first to Faizabad, the administrative center

of Badakhshan Province, and continuing thence by car on bumpy roads via Baharak and Jurm.

The shrine is nestled on an exposed conglomerate rock above the hamlet of Hazrat Sayyid on the eastern side of the valley, 1,960 m above sea level (figs. 2 and 3). A path leads from the south onto a stone-paved terrace, which is fringed by the remains of a low perimeter wall and ruined outbuildings—a verandaed “mosque” (possibly used as a pilgrims’ lodge prior to its destruction) and a charity soup kitchen (*langar-khāna*). A group of birch and maple trees lines a pool of water in the center of the terrace, in front of the entrance to the shrine.

The latter is a rather unassuming and small structure, a cluster of four flat-roofed room cells, with two encapsulated units in the back, each fronted with a veranda-like porch. Confined in size by the limited space available on top of the outcrop on which it sits, the shrine occupies the entire surface of the boulder conglomerate, leaving only a small pathway for the circumambulation of the building. The architecture in mud and timber

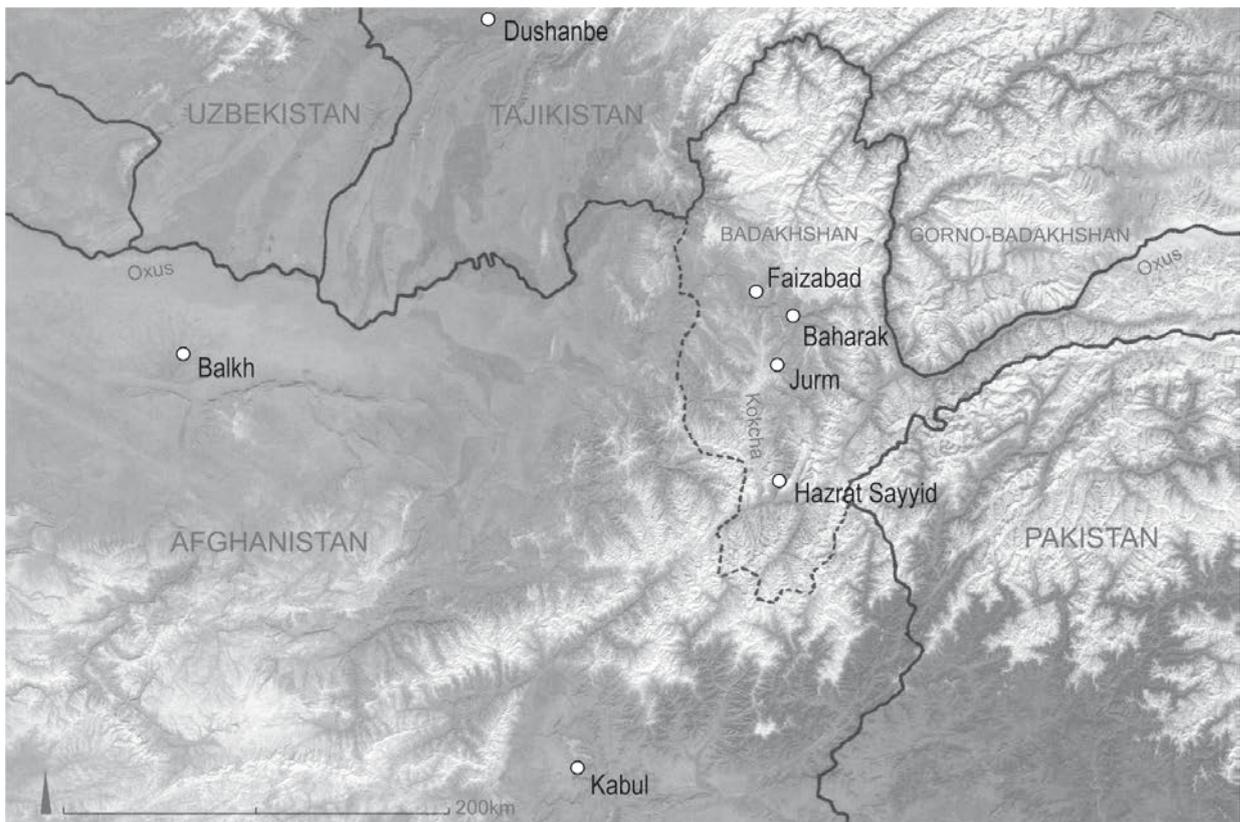


Fig. 1. Map of northeastern Afghanistan, showing Badakhshan Province. (Map: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 2. General view of the shrine from the southeast, looking over the village of Hazrat Sayyid into the Kokcha Valley. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 3. The boulder and the shrine as seen from below. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

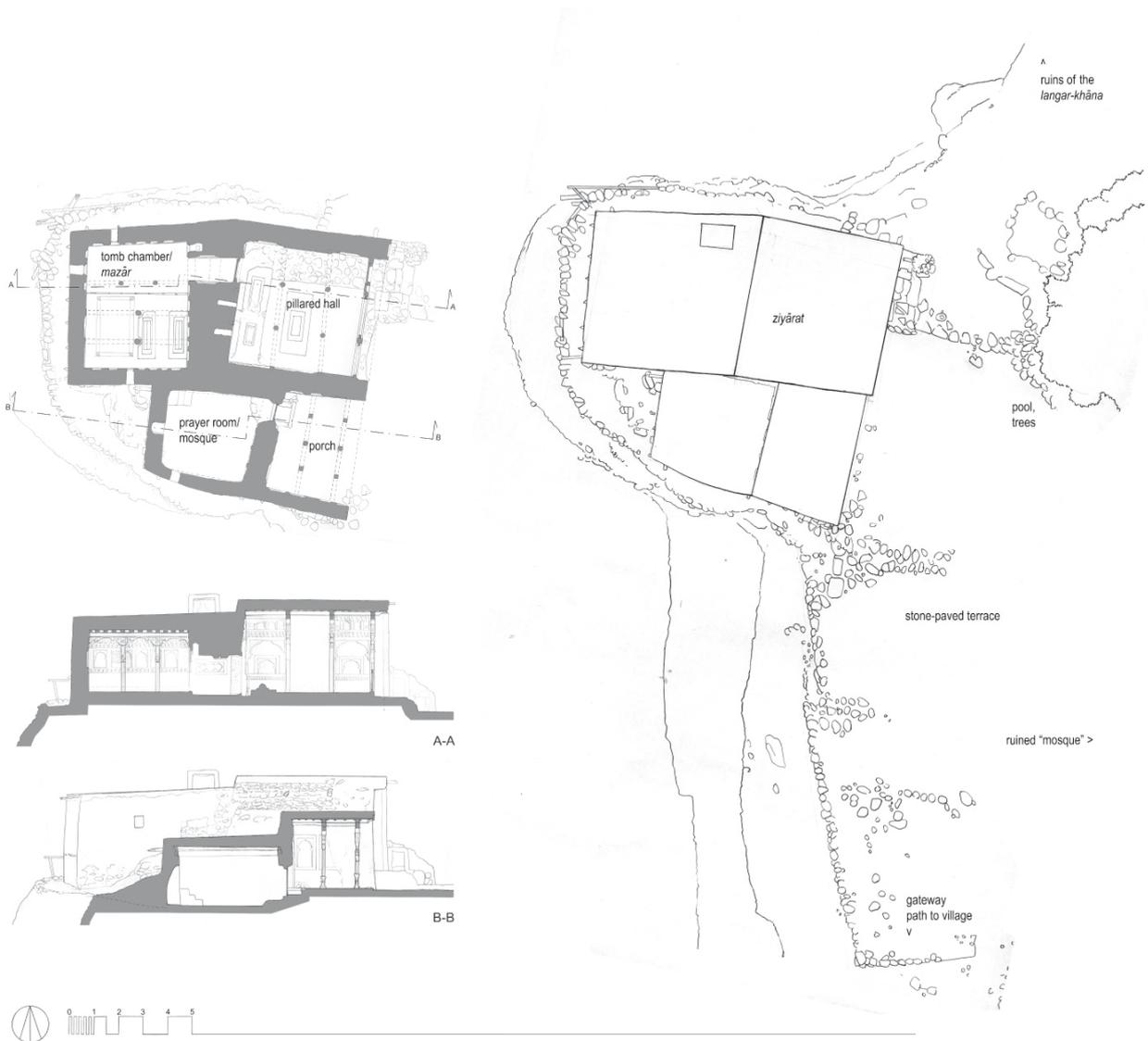


Fig. 4. Site plan, floor plan, and sections. (Drawing: Marcus Schadl)

speaks the language of the local building tradition. The varying heights, widths, and depths of the room units create an irregular roofscape and somewhat disjointed elevations. While the building shows blind mud walls on three sides, the entrance façade in the east, which is aligned with the spring of the boulder, communicates with the terrace outside, permitting showcase views deep inside the pillared porches.

The four rooms of the shrine are, starting in the north, the *mazār* (tomb chamber) and an open pillared

hall fronting it in the east, and, in the south, a smallish mosque with a second, canopy-like front hall (fig. 4). The two room pairs are separated by a communal wall and function almost independently of one another. The smaller porch (measuring 3.3 by 4 meters in area and 2.8 meters in height) is subdivided into two aisles by two rows of three pillars (fig. 5). Almost level with the outside surface, it serves as a covered shelter, projecting like an awning in front of the entrance to the mosque. The entrance door, excentrically placed in the north-



Fig. 5. Interior of the small porch, with the entrance door to the prayer room in the back. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 6. The qibla wall of the prayer room, with the mihrab and the minbar. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

western corner of the porch, is unusually low, forcing one to bend down to reach the floor level of the small prayer room a few steps further down.

Measuring 3 by 4 meters in area and 2.4 meters in height, the mosque is the least architecturally refined and ornamented room of the complex (fig. 6). Its crude construction, with a tiny aperture for lighting and ventilation, an uneven floor, bare walls, and roughly formed corners, lends the room an austere, almost cave-like character. The only focal points are, in the center of the western qibla wall, a mihrab, whose form reminds one of the keel of a ship, and, close by in the corner, a built-in, three-stepped minbar.<sup>6</sup>

The northern pair of rooms, comprising the larger vestibule and the *mazār*, has a similar spatial disposition and functional sequence: an antechamber in the front and an encapsulated, consecrated cell in the back. The floor levels of the two rooms vary only slightly, but they are raised waist-high above the forecourt, so that one needs to scale a few improvised stone steps to reach the entrance to the vestibule in the northern corner. The vestibule, the largest of the four rooms, is a nearly

square pillared hall (5 by 5 meters in area and 3.4 meters high); like its southern counterpart, it is closed on three sides and open only to the east (fig. 7). Three rows of slender wooden pillars run parallel to the qibla wall, dividing the hall into nine equal bays. The hall is further compartmentalized into a stone-paved passageway, leading along the northern wall towards the entrance to the *mazār*, and a slightly elevated platform that takes up the southern two-thirds of the room. This area is reserved for three tombs, the occupants of which are ancestors of the shrine keeper.

A funnel-shaped and curiously long corridor connects the vestibule with the *mazār*. The narrowing of the passage width is explained by a turn of orientation between the burial room and its vestibule. While the former is aligned with the cardinal directions, it was obviously necessary to turn the pillared porch about seven degrees to the southeast in order to make it fit on the boulder. The gap in the dividing wall was then filled in, making the wall unusually thick.

The *mazār*, which holds the alleged tomb of Nasir Khusraw, is the centerpiece of the complex. Although



Fig. 7. Interior view of the pillared hall, with the entrance door to the *mazār* in the back. Note the bronze cauldron on the right. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 8. Interior view of the *mazār*, showing the wrought iron railing that screens off the tombs. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 9. View of Nasir Khusraw's cenotaph / tomb, showing the wooden pillars of the *mazār* and the latticework railing around the grave. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

the oblong room is the second largest of the four, its dimensions, too, are rather modest, measuring 4 by 5 meters in area and 2.5 meters in height. It is only dimly lighted by a small, barred window on each of the three external walls, which, together with the rather low wood ceiling, the close intercolumniation, and the bulky bracket capitals, create an intimate atmosphere in the chamber. Like the pillared hall, the *mazār* is divided into a northern zone (about one-quarter of the floor space) accessible to pilgrims and a slightly raised southern zone reserved for the tombs. The tomb area is fenced off with a wrought iron railing (fig. 8). This division into an impenetrable area and a public zone, where the

devotees perform their rituals, is further emphasized by the position of the four supporting columns: while in the tomb area the two roof beams are supported by a single pillar each, beneath the northern beam the pillars are doubled, adding to the visual separation of the two zones. The grave or cenotaph of Nasir Khusraw occupies the northwestern corner of the room. It is hidden in a wooden enclosure, surrounded by a wooden trelliswork railing, and draped with cloth (fig. 9). Immediately to the south are two undecorated graves, which are believed to hold the remains of Nasir Khusraw's closest companions, his brother Abu Sa'id and his faithful Indian servant.<sup>7</sup>

## THE LIFE OF NASIR KHUSRAW

The illustrious man who is believed to be buried here in the seclusion of Badakhshan's mountains enjoyed an eventful life, although when it comes to the facts only little is known with certainty about Nasir Khusraw's vita. The existing biographies all rely heavily on the interpretation of a few autobiographical passages in the work of the poet-philosopher.<sup>8</sup>

We thus learn that Nasir was born in 1004 (394) in the town of Qubadhiyan in Khurasan, probably into a family of sayyids (male descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through the line of his daughter Fatima).<sup>9</sup> His family must have been comparatively well-to-do, judging from the fact that Nasir himself, as well as some of his close relatives, held high government offices at the Ghaznavid and, subsequently, at the Seljuk court in Marv. In his early years, Nasir purportedly led a life full of travel, study, wine, women, and friends before experiencing, in 1045, a mid-life spiritual awakening that radically altered his ways. He claimed that he was called upon in a visionary dream to resign from his government post, abjure all of life's luxuries, and set out on pilgrimage to Mecca.<sup>10</sup>

The hajj of Nasir Khusraw developed into a seven-year journey, vividly narrated in the classic travelogue *Safarnāma* (Book of Travels).<sup>11</sup> Nasir Khusraw's prolonged travels took him not only repeatedly to the holy city, but—even more importantly for his later career—also to Cairo, where he plunged into the vibrant social and intellectual life of the cosmopolitan capital of the Fatimid caliphate. Within three years, he was thoroughly imbued with Shi'i Isma'ili learning and had attained a prominent rank in the Fatimid hierarchy. Appointed *hujjat* ("proof" or "witness," designating the temporal and spiritual leader of the missionary activity) of Khurasan by the imam-caliph al-Mustansir, Nasir was commissioned to carry the Fatimid *da'wa* ("call," to convert, propaganda) to his homeland, to which he returned in 1052.

His initial successes in the dissemination of the Isma'ili faith incited the Sunni orthodoxy to turn against the "heretic"; before long the Seljuk-controlled "demonland" that Khurasan had become proved to be too hostile to his zealous preaching. Nasir was eventually compelled to leave his base in Balkh and seek

protection in Yumgan, which at that time belonged to the fief of a minor Badakhshani prince named 'Ali b. al-Asad, who, in all probability, was also of Isma'ili persuasion.

When exactly Nasir Khusraw ended up in the hide-away hills of Yumgan is unknown. The earliest evidence of his presence in Yumgan is the completion of one of his works there in 1061.<sup>12</sup> The following years of involuntary exile were no doubt the most difficult phase of his life. Restrained from his proselytizing missionary work and surrounded only by a group of devoted adherents and an increasing number of local followers, Nasir turned his energies inward and became all the more productive as a writer. Alternate outbursts of hope and despair are scattered through his works, but in general bitterness about his fate prevails. He wrote in exasperation,

Pass by, sweet breeze of Khurasan,  
To one imprisoned deep in the valley of Yumgan,  
Who sits huddled in comfortless tight straits,  
Robbed of all wealth, all goods, all hope.<sup>13</sup>

Nasir Khusraw lived out his years in this lonely seclusion. The author who had made the intellect and the role of reason in faith a dominant leitmotif of his poetry became towards the end of his life, to use his own words, a "shepherd to a herd of pigs" and a "lord of donkeys."<sup>14</sup> When he died around 1075 (or possibly as late as 1088),<sup>15</sup> it was, ironically, the local community he despised that preserved his works and teachings for posterity and venerated him at his burial site, thereby keeping alive the memory of the Isma'ili savant.

HAGIOGRAPHICAL TRADITIONS  
CONCERNING THE SHRINE

The locals preserved a number of oral traditions relating to the foundation of the shrine.<sup>16</sup> One of these traditions holds that Nasir Khusraw magically created luxurious palaces and hammams for himself in order to sweeten his miserable exile. The magic he purportedly wielded was also instrumental in his choice of a burial site.

Nasir is said to have originally selected a different place for his burial. He had tried to strike a deal with

the proprietor of the land, but the purchase was never finalized, due to the greed of the farmer's wife. Even a sack of gold, which Nasir magically created from dust, could not satisfy her. In the end, he was so annoyed about the vain bargain that he simply made the desired piece of land fly from its original location across the valley to the place where it now juts out from the mountain slope underneath the shrine. As if to lend more authenticity to the story, villagers today point to a cavity in the mountain on the opposite side of the valley. A few large pieces of rock scattered over the fields on the valley floor are believed to have fallen off during the boulder's magic flight.<sup>17</sup>

The traditions vary as to exactly where Nasir was buried after his death, with some claiming that the savant was interred not on top of the conglomerate boulder but rather in a crevasse near its bottom. One version relates that, on his deathbed, Nasir called upon his brother Abu Sa'īd to oversee his burial in a solid rock tomb, which he had previously chosen for himself. He warned his brother, though, not to look back after depositing his body in the crevasse. The end of the story echoes the fate of Eurydice as well as that of Lot's wife: Abu Sa'īd could not resist the temptation, turned around, and saw the rock close over the sepulchre. His own death is said to have followed not long thereafter. According to another version, Abu Sa'īd buried Nasir in the crevasse at the foot of the outcrop and, as instructed, broke a bottle of holy water over the opening. The rock then closed to conceal Nasir's corpse forever. In a third version, the site of the burial is believed to be at or near the cenotaph in the *mazār*. Accordingly, Nasir's soul is said to have escaped through a hole in the floor.<sup>18</sup>

The topoi of these stories recur in legends of other local saints. The narration of how a saint selected the site and prearranged the mode of his burial portrays his passing as a self-conscious process; his deliberate choice for a burial site adds to the sanctity of the place. Very commonly, these sites are connected to the vita of the saint, as, for instance, a place that he preferred for his prayers. In the mountain regions of Afghanistan and northern Pakistan, the selected locales are often exposed outcrops overlooking a settlement; the *ziyārat* thus "guards" the villagers below. Sometimes, the sites had already been venerated as sacred places: we know

of several *ziyārats* in Afghanistan and Pakistan that stand on sites previously occupied by Buddhist *stupas* (mound-like structures containing a relic). Moreover, the motif of interment in a rock is by no means exclusive to the hagiography of Nasir Khusraw. It was evidently derived from pre-Islamic, folk religious beliefs in superhuman beings inhabiting rocks.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, such stories, imbedded in a magical milieu and peppered with accounts of miracle-working, provide little factual information. Their plots are usually distorted, if not completely fabricated, in order to give meaning to the site of veneration, emphasize the sainthood of the revered person, or teach a certain moral.

It nevertheless remains a tempting and very plausible hypothesis that the alleged site of Nasir Khusraw's burial was already linked to the poet-philosopher while he was still alive. The contour of the burial chamber and possibly even its rising walls may well trace the house in which Nasir Khusraw dwelled and wrote his most essential works during the many years he spent in exile in Yumgan. It may have been a small one-room house above the hamlet of Hazrat Sayyid, possibly with a balcony with supports projecting over the boulder to the west, a raised porch on the east, and an annex containing a bathroom, a kitchen, or a storeroom on the site of the prayer room. Here, he would have lived close enough to the village to be supplied with food and, at the same time, remote enough to be undisturbed in his work.

There are many prominent examples of a revered person being entombed at his death in his own home (or, in the case of a Sufi master, in the place where he taught), which then developed into a pilgrimage site. We have most notably the case of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as that of the Sufi mystic Shaikh Salim Chishti (d. 1572) at Fatehpur Sikri, and, closer to Yumgan, Shaikh Saduddin Ahmad Ansari (d. 1810) at Pai Minar in the vicinity of Kabul. If this was also the case in Hazrat Sayyid, the site of the tomb or cenotaph may well have been Nasir Khusraw's resting place even prior to his death.

#### ISMA'ILISM IN BADAKHSAN

The history of the shrine and the cult is closely entwined with the history of Isma'ilism in Badakhshan, which in

fact begins much earlier than Nasir Khusraw's arrival in Yumgan. Unfortunately, no reliable historical records for the early period exist. Attempts to reconstruct it are further hampered by the fact that after the Shi'i schism over the succession of the sixth Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (d. 765; Isma'il is the rightful successor for Isma'ilis, while Twelver Shi'ites recognize his brother Musa al-Kasim [d. 799] as the legitimate Imam), the phenomenon broadly termed Isma'ilism developed distinctive regional variants and was by no means a monolithic movement.

We know that in the tenth century the movement reached the eastern Islamic world, gaining footholds in Khurasan and Multan. It seems very plausible that Isma'ili *da'īs* (missionaries) had by then already penetrated Badakhshan, where people had only recently begun to embrace Islam and where Zoroastrian practices—amalgamated with ancient beliefs—were still widespread. In the eleventh century, despite repeated persecution, Isma'ilism continued to have a considerable following in the region, to judge from the recorded massacres of Isma'ilis instigated by Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 997–1030).

The mountains of Badakhshan may have early on been a welcoming haven for persecuted Isma'ilis, just as they later were for Nasir Khusraw. Gradually, local nobles and chiefs (like Nasir's protector Amir 'Ali b. al-Asad), along with a number of their subjects, were won over. In the wider picture, however, in the early centuries, the spread of Isma'ilism in Badakhshan remained sidelined within the movement, which mainly flourished among intellectual urban circles.

The hub of the movement at the time was the Fatimid caliphate in the Mediterranean basin, from where missionaries were sent out to establish contact with and organize the dispersed community. Nasir Khusraw was one of these proselytizers, assigned to operate in the province of Khurasan, but eventually forced into exile in Badakhshan. In his time, the *da'wa* was successfully disseminated in the central Hindukush and in the Pamirs, so that by the eleventh century at the latest, the region had developed into a stronghold of Isma'ilism.

Not long after Nasir Khusraw's death, however, the tide again began to turn against Isma'ilis. In 1094, a fundamental rift occurred within the Isma'ili community

over which of the sons of the Fatimid imam-caliph al-Mustansir (r. 1036–1094) would succeed him—al-Musta'li or Nizar. In the end, al-Musta'li (r. 1094–1101) managed to assert his claim and depose his brother. The schism had a lasting effect, heralding the doom of the Fatimids in Egypt, while shifting the center of the Isma'ili movement eastward, as the party of Nizar and his descendants gained support from a *da'ī* based in Iran, the legendary Hassan-i Sabah (d. 1124).

In the seclusion of the Elburz mountains, Hassan and the succeeding lords (*khudāwands*) of Alamut created and defended a Nizari Isma'ili state of unconnected fortresses, which became a permanent thorn in the side of a hostile Seljuk sultanate. Alamut became the cradle of an independent Nizari *da'wa*, which developed into the largest branch of the Isma'iliyya. In 1256, however, the turbulent Alamut period ended abruptly when the Mongols of Hulagu Khan (d. 1265) captured the fortress and started to persecute Nizari Isma'ilis.

Initially, these developments went almost unnoticed by the Isma'ilis of Badakhshan, who had basically remained outside of the Nizari-Musta'li schism. The political landscape had kept them severed from their coreligionists in the west for decades after Nasir Khusraw's death, before, in the heyday of Alamut, a fragile line of communication was reestablished by visiting *vakils* (representatives) and *da'īs* like Sayyid Shah Malang and, later, Mir Sayyid Hasan Shah Khamush, who introduced the Nizari *da'wa* to Shugnan in northern Badakhshan.<sup>20</sup> However, the first Mongol onslaught of 1220–21 and, later, the fall of Alamut forced the Isma'ili community in Badakhshan into isolation again. The last notable impulse from Persia was the influx of Nizari refugees, whom the collapse of their state had left disorganized and disoriented. When they began to scatter into adjacent regions, many escaped to the sheltering mountains of Badakhshan.

The period following the fall of Alamut is a dark chapter in the history of Isma'ilism. For two centuries, the Nizari Imam was in hiding. Persecution was commonplace and in Badakhshan, like elsewhere in the Mongol and, subsequently, the Timurid realms, Isma'ilis resorted to the strict observance of *taqiyya* (precautionary dissimulation of one's religious identity).

Nevertheless, during this time, Isma'ilism also received decisive new stimuli. Mysticism and the search

for an esoteric path to Islam were generally on the rise. Sufi orders (*ṭarīqat*) sprang up in great numbers, some entering a diffuse Shi'i-Sunni syncretism. When, in the highly hostile Sunni milieu of Badakhshan, Isma'ilis needed to practice *taqiyya* in the guise of Sunnism, for all practical purposes they did so under the mantle of Sufism, without actually affiliating themselves with any one of the existing Sufi orders. They adopted Sufi terminology—such as *khānaqāh* (dervish lodge), *darwīsh* (dervish, mendicant ascetic), *ʿārif* (gnostic), *qalandar* (wandering dervish), and *murīd* (disciple)—and to outsiders the community leader appeared in the garb of a Sufi master, bearing the title *pīr*, *murshid*, or *shaykh*. The rapprochement between Sufism and Isma'ilism that characterizes the post-Alamut period was by no means limited to terminology. A sort of coalescence emerged between these two independent esoteric traditions as Nizari Isma'ilis developed close intellectual ties with the Sufi movement.<sup>21</sup>

Naturally, over the centuries, the variegated influences of *taqiyya* practices have left an indelible mark on the development of the Isma'ili community. In Badakhshan, particularly in the valleys on the fringes of Isma'ili settlement areas, the practice of dissimulation must have paved the way for conversions among the local population to Sunnism, or at least to a strong dilution of their religious practices. But in areas that were less accessible to Sunnis and where there was thus less pressure to assimilate, the Isma'ilis continued to develop a distinctive tradition of their own, disconnected, as they were, from their Imam.

Even when, in the fifteenth century, a certain Sayyid Suhrah Wali Badakhshani and, after him, his son Sayyid Omar Yumgani revived the missionary work in Badakhshan at a time when the Persian Nizari Isma'ilis were regrouping in Anjudan, communications between the two areas continued to be weak. In fact, the Isma'ilis of Badakhshan came within closer reach of the Imam (on whom the Qajar Fath Ali Shah bestowed in 1818 the honorific title of Aga Khan) only after he moved his seat from Persia to India in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the late 1990s, institutions of the Aga Khan started to implement humanitarian aid and development projects in Badakhshan, thereby reestablishing contacts with the imamate.

At present, the Isma'ili community in Badakhshan is estimated to have about 70,000 members. They are concentrated in the sparsely populated northern and eastern districts neighboring the Upper Oxus, namely, Shugnan, Roshan, Zebak, Ishkashim, and Wakhan. Here and in the southern district of Kuran wa Munjan, Isma'ilis constitute a great majority of the population. In the Darwaz district in the north, they form a pivotal minority community. In the predominantly Sunni district of Jurm and its former subdistrict Yumgan (an independent administrative unit since 2005), which together have a total population of approximately 80,000, Isma'ilis number over 5,000, and are mainly settled in the remoter side valleys.<sup>22</sup>

The inhabitants of Hazrat Sayyid claim to be Sunnis. According to a field survey carried out in 2002, Hazrat Sayyid (including immediately adjacent settlements) has a total population of nearly 2,000, of which around 150 (twenty-two households) are Isma'ilis. Their actual number, however, may be considerably higher, since the Isma'ilis living in this prevalently Sunni environment are to this day reluctant to reveal their identity and continue to practice *taqiyya*.<sup>23</sup>

#### THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OF NASIR KHUSRAW

In view of their long history of persecution and discrimination, it is understandable that the Isma'ili communities of Badakhshan vary in their degree of formal structure and self-representation, depending on whether they are settled in majority or minority areas. Generally, their communal organization centers around the authority of the *pīr* (elder, also the title of the head *dā'ī* in Nizari Isma'ilism), who is the local representative of the Imam in a district, commissioned to supervise the religious, social, and cultural affairs of the community. The *pīr*, in turn, appoints a trusted man as his *khalīfa* (deputy) in villages with resident Isma'ilis. Historically, however, as there was often no contact with the Imam, the leadership of the *pīr* was basically unrestrained. With the usually spurious claim of descent from 'Ali, the *pīrs* gained sufficient credence in the community to introduce a hereditary system of leadership, with the

result that, over the centuries, their families accumulated considerable power and wealth.

For the believer who sees in the Imam “the single cosmic individual,” who sums up in his person “the entire reality of existence” and is “God’s ‘proof’ on earth and guide to the ultimate truths of religion,” the *pīr* as a lesser guide cannot possibly be a full substitute.<sup>24</sup> But, in the hideaway hills of Badakhshan, where the Imam was for centuries out of the reach of the community, the highest local representative could bind some of the Imam’s numinous status to his own religious authority. Thus, in the “popularized” form of Nizari Isma‘ilism practiced by the mountain people of Badakhshan, the *pīr* basically functions as the main intermediary between God and the faithful. This explains why he and his ancestors are devotedly venerated, asked for blessings (*barakat*), and sought out for help in both spiritual and worldly affairs.

Revered as a *pīr* and held in high esteem as *Shāh Sayyid*,<sup>25</sup> Nasir Khusraw is, besides the Imam and the local *pīr*, a third eminent religious authority, who plays an absolutely pivotal role in the collective memory of the Isma‘ilis of Badakhshan. Not only is he regarded as the founder of their communities, but, to this day, his writings are the primary source used for the religious education of the young at home and in the *jamā‘at-khānas* (communal assembly halls). We owe to this zealously kept tradition the survival of Nasir Khusraw’s known works, in which he propagates the legitimate succession of ‘Ali after Muhammad and of Isma‘il as the seventh Imam; reverence for the Prophet’s family (*ahl al-bayt*); and the recognition of the Fatimid caliph al-Mustansir as the Imam of the age.

Apart from his famous *qaṣīdas* (elegiac poems), Nasir wrote several treatises in which he expounds Isma‘ili doctrine and provides theoretical descriptions of his religious and philosophical principles. Among them are the *Shish faṣl* (Six Chapters), also known as *Rawshanā‘ī-nāma* (The Book of Enlightenment), which provides a sort of practical cosmography and a collection of moral maxims; the *Zād al-musāfirīn* (Pilgrims’ Provisions); and the *Jāmi‘ al-ḥikmatayn* (The Sum of the Two Wisdoms), which attempts to bridge theology and philosophy. In his *Wajh-i dīn* (The Face of Religion), he introduces the reader to the Isma‘ili gnosis

through Qur’anic exegesis, imparting an esoteric (*bāṭin*) interpretation (*ta’wīl*, an “analogy” leading back to a hidden meaning) of suras from which religious commandments, prohibitions, and rites were derived, such as the call to prayer, the ablutions for prayer, and the five assigned times and correct posture for prayer, as well as fasting, almsgiving, and the hajj.<sup>26</sup>

Nasir Khusraw’s treatises have to this day retained their absolute authority in Badakhshan. It is telling that both the widely circulated *Umm al-kitāb* (The Mother of the Book), composed in the eighth century, and the *Kalām-i pīr* (Discourse of the Sage), known locally as the *Haft bāb-i Sayyid Nāṣir* (The Seven Chapters of Sayyid Nasir), were wrongly attributed to him by the local community.<sup>27</sup> Oral tradition even holds that he founded the popular religious ceremony known as *chirāgh-i rawshan* (The Luminous Lamp), a three-day funeral rite probably of Zoroastrian origin, although his own works indicate that he himself never introduced any specific ritual.

The universality of Nasir Khusraw’s authority in the region is demonstrated by the fact that it is accepted even by the notoriously fanatical Sunnis of Yumgan. They consider themselves descendants of Nasir Khusraw and believe their ancestor was a Sufi *pīr*, and a Sunni like themselves.<sup>28</sup> Nasir Khusraw has evidently survived in Badakhshan both as the leading guide and mentor of the Isma‘ili community and, beyond the sectarian divide, as a local patron saint.

#### ISMA‘ILI SAINT CULTS IN BADAQHSAN

The saint cults practiced by the Isma‘ilis of Badakhshan remain almost completely unexplored. To my knowledge, the only serious study on the subject is a forthcoming publication by Jo-Ann Gross, which deals with the shrine culture in the Tajik oblast of Gorno-Badakhshan. According to her research, Isma‘ilis north of the artificially drawn Oxus border make pilgrimages to shrines in which revered religious authorities, like their *pīr*, *khalīfa*, or a “Sufi” dervish, are buried; sites (*naẓargāh*) that are believed to have been visited by early Islamic figures, like ‘Ali or the fifth imam Muhammad Baqir (d. 735); and places where the animals carrying them passed or left footprints in the ground or rock. (A recurring story is that an unusual crack in a rock

formation was caused by 'Ali's double-edged sword named Zulfiqar). Unusual trees, caves, rock formations, and hot springs are also revered. Like the custom of depositing animal horns and prayer stones at the shrine, these cults are evidently rooted in ancient nature religions.<sup>29</sup>

The visit to the shrine is most commonly a personal experience. Large gatherings and collective rituals are usually reserved for special holidays and religious festivals (*bayrām*), such as *Nawrūz* (literally "New Year," marking the first day of spring) or *Īd-i Qurbān* (Feast of the Sacrifice). At the shrine, the believer tries to establish contact with the divine world through the mediation of the saint, to whom he or she pledges obedience and devotion. In exchange for the prayers and offerings, the saintly person is expected to let his devotee participate in his blessing (*barakat*) and to assist him in worldly matters by, for example, granting a good harvest, bestowing milk and grain, curing diseases, or ensuring fertility.

The results of Gross's field research in Gorno-Badakhshan were not unexpected. Apart from the focus on 'Alid legends, the shrine culture observed among the local Isma'ilis does not differ fundamentally from the saint cults practiced in neighboring Sunni areas or, in fact, elsewhere in the Islamic world.<sup>30</sup> After all, the belief in local saints and their miracles, which has often been discouraged and suppressed by the Islamic orthodoxy, contains a very strong popular element and retains pre-Islamic elements broadly shared regardless of sectarian affiliation.

It is not surprising that this popular belief is widespread and strong in a region like Badakhshan, where in the deep ravines and valleys cutting into towering mountain ranges peasant farmers are exposed to the forces of nature and must struggle for subsistence. Religion needs to be in the first place a non-intellectual, immediate experience, particularly since the vast majority of the population is illiterate. For most local Isma'ilis, attaining a deeper understanding of Nasir Khusraw's works and intellectual traditions is basically impossible. Even their *pīrs* are often limited in their knowledge about approaches to Qur'anic interpretations, and only a few are fully versed in the complex rituals of Isma'ilism.

This lowers expectations that the shrine of Nasir Khusraw, given his great importance for the Isma'ili commu-

nity of Badakhshan, would be a perfect case study of specifically Isma'ili saint cult practices. Moreover, the cult has over the centuries become so integrated through the practice of *taqiyya* that today the shrine is zealously guarded by Isma'ilis and non-Isma'ilis alike. Despite its remote location, the shrine is well known throughout Badakhshan and it is the most important pilgrimage site in the region.

#### PILGRIMAGE AND CULT

The main pilgrimage route leads to the shrine from the north, going upstream into the Kokcha Valley. Apart from local residents, most visitors to the shrine are probably from the aforementioned Isma'ili strongholds in Badakhshan, to the north and northeast of Yumgan. They are mostly nomadic herdsmen crossing the high mountain passes to and from the markets of Kabul.

The number of visitors seems to have notably decreased during the recent decades of war and insecurity. In the 1970s, it reportedly averaged about a dozen per night.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, during my two-day visit in 1998, which was actually undertaken in a good time of the year to travel, not a single visitor came. No flags were posted on the outside of the shrine as in the photos taken by Dupree during his visit in 1975. The shrine showed no signs of neglect and was still well maintained by a guardian (*mutawallī*), who confessed during Dupree's insistent interviews that he is the *pīr* of the resident Isma'ili community. However, wartime damage has not been repaired. The small satellite buildings in the vicinity of the shrine—the soup kitchen and the mosque opposite the shrine mentioned earlier—now lie in ruins, no attempt having been made to restore them. Tellingly, the shrine is usually locked and one needs to ask in the village at the shrine keeper's house to be allowed in.

The state of the ceremonial objects kept at the shrine similarly attests to a decline of the cult. Formerly, when a wealthy pilgrim wished to give alms (*khayrāt*) and share food in memory of his visit, communal meals were prepared in a huge bronze cauldron engraved with the date 1272 (1855–56) and measuring nearly one meter in diameter (fig. 7). It was common on these occasions for a cow to be slaughtered and wheat donated to make beef stew for the pilgrims. Nowadays, the cauldron is

kept in the vestibule in front of the *mazār* and has evidently not been used for some time.

Among the other cult objects are two wrought iron candelabra and a brazen oil lamp which, together with two wooden chests (probably dating from the eighteenth or nineteenth century), lie unused inside the *mazār* (fig. 8). During his visit in 1975, Dupree photographed an interesting “silver” (tin-plated bronze?) figurine, which is still preserved in situ in the *mazār*, as well as a pendant “bronze” (iron?) lamp.<sup>32</sup> They apparently served as, respectively, an incense burner and an oil lamp, and were possibly used in fire and light ceremonies like the *chirāgh-i rawshan* mentioned earlier. Of the lamp, only the chain remains; the intricately chased body is missing. A bulbous tinned object hangs near the alleged grave of Nasir Khusraw.

Dupree’s group also found at the shrine an illuminated Qur’an manuscript (measuring 52 by 58 centimeters) with Persian annotations, which local tradition fancied to have been written by Nasir Khusraw himself. Upon news of the manuscript’s “discovery,” the government dispatched a commission of historians, who on stylistic grounds—that is, its “apparently post-Kufic and pre-Nasta’liq” calligraphy—suggested a vague pre-fifteenth-century date. The Qur’an manuscript was taken to Kabul, depriving the shrine of another important piece of its inventory.<sup>33</sup>

#### INFORMAL GRAFFITI

Details of the saint cult practiced at Nasir Khusraw’s shrine are difficult to obtain since the local community is secretive. Some information on the “visitation culture” and the experience of pilgrims can, however, be gleaned from informal graffiti scribbled on the walls. These graffiti basically fall into two groups, graphics and writings. The former comprise a few naively painted images of flowers in a pot. This motif is a traditional symbol of blossoming life, repeatedly used in the “folk art” of Afghanistan and neighboring countries, on the walls of mosques, shrines, private homes, and tea houses, as well as on the sides of trucks.

The writings of shrine visitors are more informative and specific. Like the popular custom of tying pieces of cloth to objects near the grave or depositing prayer

stones at the shrine, the act of writing on the walls is a means for the pious pilgrim to leave behind a visible sign of his visit, reminding the revered saint of his devotion and supplication. These writings include invocations, prayers, expressions of gratitude, poems, and the names of the visitors and the dates of their visit, as well as names of deceased relatives and religious authorities. It must be remembered, however, that the authors of these scribbles do not represent the average shrine visitor, who would most likely be illiterate. They must rather be sought among educated town dwellers, local dignitaries, teachers, and clerics, including Sunni mullahs. Nearly all graffiti signatures are in Dari Persian, written by the ethnic Tajiks from the surrounding valleys.<sup>34</sup>

The graffiti are concentrated in the vestibule in front of the tomb chamber, primarily near the entrance door to the *mazār* and along the passageway leading to it. While the oldest dated signatures are from as early as the nineteenth century (the earliest one from 1828 [1244]), it is interesting that only a few graffiti have been added since 1975, to judge from Dupree’s photos. This supports the assumption that the number of visitors has notably decreased in the past thirty years. Since the political situation improved in the late 1990s, new graffiti have gradually filled the interspaces. However, in the context of a society shattered by decades of civil war, these recent *yādgārs* (mementos) are altogether of the casual “I was here” type and disclose little about the traditional cult.

The older writings, which were for the most part haphazardly scrawled on the wall, are mainly invocations (*du‘ā*) composed in the form of doggerel, ranging from simple *taṣbīḥs* (devotional acts involving the repetitive utterance of short sentences in remembrance [*dhikr*] of God’s glory) to poems exalting Nasir Khusraw and his achievements. Appellations of God such as *Allāh khudāvand* (God, Lord) appear repeatedly. For example, visiting mullahs wrote *khudāvand khudāvand-i jahāni khudāvand-i zamīn-i āsmāni* (Oh God, [you are] the lord of the world, the lord of the heavenly earth), as well as single invocations of *yā Allāh* (O God), *Allāhu akbar* (God is great[er]), and, in reference to his prophet, *Muḥammad khabīr* (Muhammad, the one who knows).



Fig. 10. Graffiti on the wall of the pillared hall. The earlier wall finish shines through underneath the whitewash. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

For the pious shrine visitor, the direct invocation of God seems to be interchangeable or even equivalent with the invocation of Nasir Khusraw, although the latter is generally more personalized and specific. The saint is addressed either directly by name (*Nāsir-i Khusraw*) or with various substitute titles like *shāh* (king), *shāh-i buzurgvār* (great king), *mawlā* (guardian), *shīd-i Yumgān* (sun of Yumgan), and *‘uqāb-i Yumgān* (eagle of Yumgan). The image of the eagle apparently alludes to one of Nasir Khusraw’s moralizing poems from the *Dīvān*. Drawing on an older fable, the story portrays an eagle circling in the air “full of selfish pride,” before it is shot down by an arrow fletched with eagle feathers. The moral of the poem is found in the climactic words, now a common proverb among Persian speakers, *az māst ki bar māst*, “what comes from us returns to us,” meaning that we have within ourselves the very quality that will bring about both our rise and downfall.<sup>35</sup> Like the jewel embedded in rock, the one precious thing in a worthless surrounding, the doomed self-centered eagle is an image in which Nasir Khusraw often found consolation during his involuntary exile.

We may gauge from these graffiti that their authors were at least superficially familiar with Nasir’s poetry and

vita. There are also sufficient indications that Isma‘īlis (one devotee signed with the epithet “follower of Nasir Khusraw”) and Sunnis alike come to the shrine to seek the blessing of Nasir Khusraw. The favors they hope to obtain for themselves through their pious visits are multiple and of a rather general nature. On the one hand, Nasir Khusraw is sought as a spiritual guide, to whom the *kalima*, the confession of the faith, is confided. He is thought of as an all-powerful guardian of the faithful: “O heart, be patient, because if the enemy is powerful, our guardian is even more powerful” (*Ay dil ṣabūr bāsh ki agar dushmān qavīst nigahbān-i mā qavītar ast*). It is believed that those who come to the *ziyārat* with a “pure heart” will find spiritual enlightenment there and improve their lives. There is also space for supplicatory prayers for deceased relatives and clerics. On the other hand, most of the concerns brought before the saint are of a rather worldly nature, e.g., intercession in daily affairs, good health, material benefits, and success. For instance, one visitor wrote that “through the blessing of this great king I gained repute and influence” (*az barakat-i īn shāh-i buzurgvār yāftam ‘izzat [va] i’tibār*).<sup>36</sup>

Close to the entrance to the *mazār*, several enigmatic letters are carefully written on the wall (fig. 10). In all

probability, the coded letter mysticism used here relates to esoteric gnostic beliefs, which may be taken as proof that Sufi dervishes (or more likely Isma‘ilis disguised as such), too, visit the shrine and, historically, may have very possibly even presided over the cult of Nasir Khusraw.

### THE *ṬARĪQAT* MAUSOLEUM

In his contribution to *The Dervish Lodge*, Baha Tanman writes that *ṭarīqat* mausoleums—shrines maintained by a Sufi order in memory of their deceased master—are “structurally exceedingly plain” and that “some... even have the structure, internal spatial arrangement, and façade” of vernacular buildings. Their modest and intimate scale may reflect the close day-to-day relationship between the members of an order and their saint. Despite their simplicity, however, *ṭarīqat* mausoleums are often larger and more spacious than ordinary mausoleums, since they were also built to accommodate the graves of *pīrs* and their immediate families. A *ṭarīqat* mausoleum “would consequently undergo continuous evolution, being enlarged and restructured several times over the years.”<sup>37</sup>

This description fits perfectly with the architecture of Nasir Khusraw’s shrine, as well as with the aura it projects as an incrementally grown structure. The assumption that a Sufi brotherhood had in the past maintained it also helps to explain the otherwise unclear function of the small prayer room adjacent to the *mazār*, the role of the tombs in the large pillared hall, and why, despite the size of the complex, the space reserved for processions by ordinary pilgrims is very limited. Allowed to pass through the building only on a relatively narrow corridor along the northern wall, they can halt and turn southwards twice to pay tribute to the tombs in the pillared hall and in the *mazār*.

This linear form of procession is very unusual in regional *ziyārat* architecture. Normally, even the simplest shrine (a tomb with a mud enclosure) provides the possibility of ritually circling the grave of the saint. In Hazrat Sayyid, however, the peripheral position of the tomb within the *mazār* (which supports the hypothesis that the tomb chamber was formerly Nasir Khusraw’s house, as the tomb in the corner may mark the site of

his deathbed) precluded this circumambulation practice from the beginning. Instead, the pathway following the edge of the boulder on the outside of the *ziyārat* may have been used for ritual circumambulation. The small windows in the outer walls of the tomb chamber may then have served as the salutation windows characteristic of the mausoleums of most Sufi orders, whereby shrine visitors can offer prayers facing the spiritual presence of the saint without actually entering the *mazār*.

The interment of the *pīr*’s ancestors (who were probably the shaikhs of the resident Sufi brotherhood) in the large pillared hall is further indication that the shrine was formerly maintained as a *ṭarīqat* mausoleum. The function of the small prayer room to the south of the *mazār* then appears less nebulous. Spatially separated from the *mazār* (with a porch of its own rather than a direct connection), it is very likely that the prayer room was not meant to be used by the normal wayfaring pilgrim. Rather, dervishes who temporarily or permanently resided at the tomb may have used the prayer room as a winter mosque, a seclusion cell, or a *dhikr-khāna* for their ritualized invocation ceremonies; this would explain the crude and austere character of the room. The reconstruction of Nasir Khusraw’s *ziyārat* as a *ṭarīqat* mausoleum with an attached *khānaqāh* thus seems to take shape. The dervishes were probably lodged nearby, perhaps in a shelter on the site of the now ruined “mosque” opposite the shrine complex.

Wood’s account from the 1830s provides us with more details of the *ṭarīqat* mausoleum in the nineteenth century. He writes that the “inmates” of the *āstāna* (sanctuary, literally “threshold”) lived off the crops produced on the waqf land inalienably endowed to the *ziyārat* “at the time the buildings [note the plural!] were erected.”<sup>38</sup> “In turn for an indulgence which has been confirmed by the subsequent rulers of Badakhshan,” Wood continues his report, “the *mazār* is bound to furnish the wayfaring man with food, water, and a night’s lodging.” Evidently, the local potentates were favorably disposed to the shrine and provided for its maintenance, although a side note in Wood’s report casts doubt on how much support the religious brotherhood really received at that time from the resident community: apparently, the waqf land yielded only poor harvests, and in some seasons the dervishes went hungry.

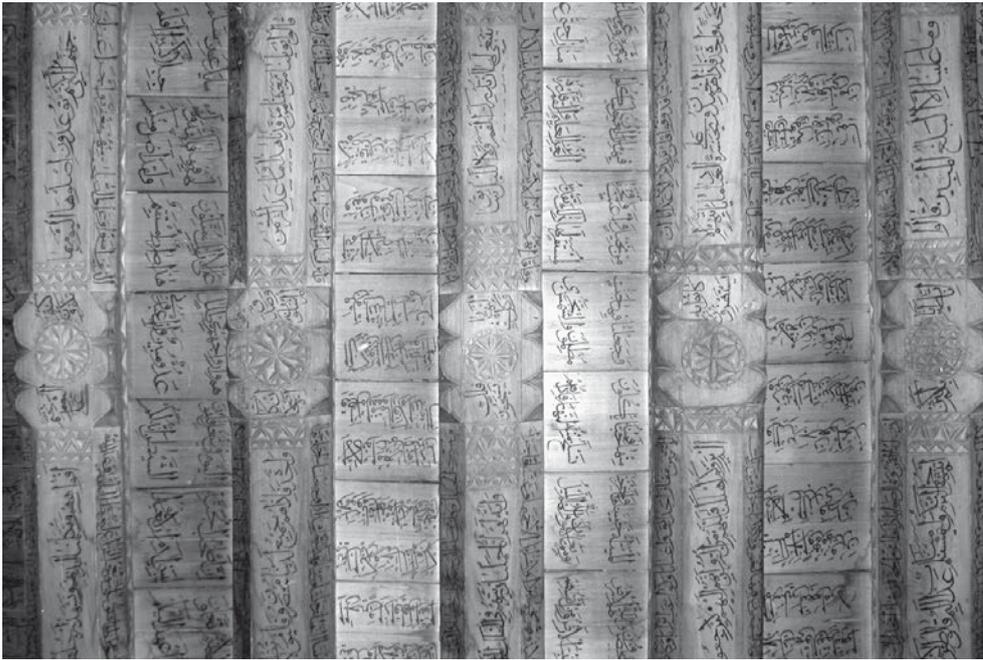


Fig. 11. The ceiling of the tomb chamber. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

#### THE INSCRIPTIONS OF 1109 (1697)

Inside the building, on the ceiling of the *mazār* and on the latticework railing around Nasir Khusraw's grave, an extensive inscription program provides a window into a time when the cult at the *ṭarīqat* mausoleum must have been in its heyday. The black ink calligraphy in *nasta'liq* script, consisting mostly of quotations from the Qur'an, contrasts beautifully with the unpainted reddish brown wood (fig. 11).

The inscriptions are written in single lines on the underside and chamfers of the secondary roof beams. The lines are neatly set in between the chip carved triangular ornament bands separating the chamfered shaft of the rafter from the star and rosette medallions at the joist ends and in the center. Most of the sarking boards spanning the narrow distance between the beams bear two lines of text. The verses in the interspaces of the beams run alternately parallel and perpendicular to those on the beams. The main beams only bear a single line on their northern side facing the pilgrims. Towards the southern wall of the room, that is, the side further away from the visitors' area, the calligraphy is, in general, more sparsely applied on the wood. At the eastern

end of the southern main beam, on the northern side facing the visitors' area, there is an inscription written in Arabic (fig. 12):

*Li-tajdīd hādhihi 'r-rawḍat al-munawwara wa-turbat al-muqaddasa ḥaḍrat Shāh Nāṣir ṭaba tharāhu l'ihtimām rif'at-ma'āb janāb Hājji Shāh Kḥiṭāb ibn al-marḥūm Mīr Muḥtaram Beg Yumḡānī sana 1109*

For the renovation of this illuminated shrine and the holy dome of his Excellency Shah Nasir, may his earth be light [i.e., the earth of his grave, meaning "may he rest peacefully in his grave"], under the care of his noble Excellency Hajji Shah Khetab, son of the late Mir Muhtaram Beg Yumgani, in the year 1109 [1697].

This information is supplemented by a carved inscription on the northeastern wooden pillar of the smaller porch in front of the prayer room (fig. 13). On the eastern side of this pillar, facing outward to the terrace, the wood-carver left a personal dedication in the form of a Persian poem, starting with: *gharāz-i naqsh kazmā bāz mānad...* (the meaning of the symbol [the building] which we left behind...). The remaining lines are difficult to decipher. On the northern side of the same pillar, the text of a second (worn-off) relief carving reads:



Fig. 12. Foundation inscription on one of the beams of the tomb chamber, dated 1109 (1697). (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

[yā] Allāh  
 Shaykh ‘Abd al-Raḥīm ibn  
 Shaykh Kalān ḡaḡarahu [Allāh]  
 ‘amala Ustā[d] Muḡammad ibn  
 Ustā[d] Sangīn [ibn]  
 Ustā[d] [...]  
 najjār Murād Jānī [?]  
 ḡaḡfru Allāh  
 ‘alayhim ajma‘īn  
 kanishkār [?] ‘Alī

[O] God  
 The patron of the blessed building is  
 Shaikh ‘Abd al-Rahim son of Shaikh Kalan, may God  
 have mercy on him  
 Built by master Muhammad son of master Sangin [son  
 of] Master [...]  
 The carpenter is Murad Jani [?]  
 God’s mercy on all of them  
 Carving [?] by ‘Ali

The aforementioned Hajji Shah Khetab, evidently the local potentate in Yumgan who sponsored a renovation of the shrine in 1697, is not otherwise known as a historical figure. The same is true for the master builder Muhammad and the other craftsmen listed above as being involved in the construction project. The “immediate” patron, ‘Abd al-Rahim, was very likely the master of the resident dervish brotherhood, as the title *shaykh* would suggest, and he apparently held a hereditary position. This ‘Abd al-Rahim may be interred in one of the anonymous tombs in the larger porch, which would then make him a direct ancestor of the current (Isma‘ili!) *pīr* of Hazrat Sayyid.

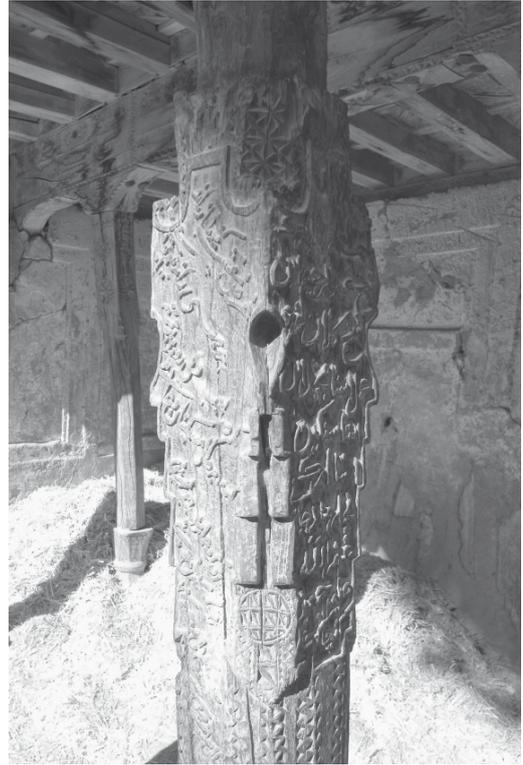


Fig. 13. The inscribed northeastern pillar of the small porch. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

The fact that the wood-carver chose a lateral of the wood pillar of the smaller, less prominent vestibule for his inscription in honor of the *shaykh* of the time and the workmen clearly supports the reading of the complex as a *ṭarīqat* mausoleum. The dervishes would pass the inscription regularly on their way from the *mazār* to the prayer room for their invocation ceremonies.

The presence of religiously educated dervishes is also supported by the fact that the Qur’anic quotations covering the woodwork (and possibly the wall surfaces beneath the later plaster) in the *mazār* required careful selection. The verses in the area reserved for the pilgrims take as their theme the power of true faith in God and the prophethood of Muhammad (Qur’an 1:48); interspersed among them are the Beautiful Names of God and the *ḡawqala* prayer, *Lā ḡawla wa-lā quwwata illā bi-llāhi* (there is no power nor strength save in God). Other verses were selected for the *mazār* because they refer to the religious cult (Qur’an 62:11

and Sura 110 [*al-Naṣr* (Succor)] or to the Last Judgment and Paradise (Qur'an 2:285–86; Sura 36 [*Yā Sīn*]; and Sura 78 [*al-Nabā'* (The Tidings)]).<sup>39</sup>

Several of the quoted suras invite an esoteric interpretation, like the brief suras 97, *al-Qadr* (Power), and 93, *al-Duhā* (Forenoon). The beginning line of the latter, “By the morning light,” was usually understood as a reference to Muhammad’s face; it was used as an oath formula alluding to the prophet’s marvellous beauty and majesty.<sup>40</sup> Sura 53, *al-Najm* (The Star), is a favorite Qur’anic passage on which mystics meditate, as it describes Muhammad’s vision and lauds his steadfast concentration on God.<sup>41</sup>

Near the entrance door, the last two verses of Sura *al-Qalam* (The Pen) are written on the ceiling. Throughout the Persian world, these words frequently appear on amulets to avert evil or bad luck:<sup>42</sup>

*wa-in yakādu 'l-ladhīna kafarū li-yuzliqūnaka bi-ab-ṣārihim lammā sami'u 'dh-dhikra wa-yaqūlūna innahū la-majnūnun* (Qur'an 68:51)

And those who disbelieve would almost smite you with their eyes when they hear the reminder, and they say: Most surely he is mad.

The epigraphic scheme of the calligraphy lends weight to the assumption that the mystical beliefs of local dervishes, their notion of veneration, and the symbolism resulting from it left their imprint in the *ziyārat* of Nasir Khusraw, and that at least in 1697, the shrine was maintained as a *ṭariqat* tomb. Still, it remains to be seen what kind of esoteric brotherhood had developed amidst the hybrid Sunni-Isma‘ili milieu of Yumgan. The calligraphy on the ceiling of the *mazār* provides at least a clue. On the chamfer of the secondary beam closest to the southern wall, next to the quoted verses from Sura *al-Qalam*, we find the following (fig. 14):

*lā fatā illā 'Alī lā sayfa illā Dhū 'l-fiqār sana 1109*

There is no hero except 'Ali, there is no sword except [his sword] Zulfiqar, the year 1109.

This sentence is inextricably connected with the *futuwwa* ideal of early Sufism, the *fatā* being the generous and faithful “young man” or “brave youth” commonly identified with 'Ali.<sup>43</sup> But the line is, interestingly enough, also central to the *du'ā'* (prayer) of Isma‘ilis, who recite



Fig. 14. The second inscription on the ceiling of the *mazār*, providing the date of the 1109 (1697) renovation. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

it in one breath together with their declaration of faith in God. In the given context, it serves as a hint that the dervish brotherhood residing in Hazrat Sayyid may have been staffed with Isma‘ilis, whose beliefs were tinged with or at least related to those of Sufi *futuwwa* groups.

#### THE WOODEN ARCHITECTURE OF 1109 (1697)

The shrine of Nasir Khusraw as it stands today is basically the result of the renovation of 1697 recorded in the inscription. The construction in wood entailed a comprehensive renewal of the building. The two pillared porches were built and the burial chamber was substantially altered. In particular, the construction of the large vestibule, which necessitated the aforementioned turn in orientation in order to fit the annex on the boulder, considerably enlarged the dimensions of the complex.

The two porches gave the shrine a new front with showpiece verandas (fig. 15). The smaller of the two, the airy portico-like porch before the prayer room, has a rather unrefined front elevation, its six pillars set against the shaded back. The cedarwood pillars are original in design and vary in shape and ornamentation (fig. 5); no two are exactly alike. The four lateral pillars have a high base that is girdled in the middle and stands on a square plinth. Their shafts are octagonal, with a square-profiled



Fig. 15. The front façade of the shrine. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

upper part featuring a pair of rosettes in medallions and bands of triangular chip carvings on each of the four sides. The inscribed pillar in the northeastern corner of the porch departs from this scheme, as at half height it bears the inscriptions and then continues above in a narrow transitional zone and a square profiled top. The two pillars in the center of the room have round shafts. The pillar in the back starts immediately from the ground, whereas the front pillar has a low square base, followed by a circular plinth. Resembling contemporary designs of wood columns in Transoxania, the shaft of the front pillar is bulbous at the bottom and tapers towards the square section at the top. The capitals are corbelled out beneath the main roof beam, whose face sides are decorated with bands of triangles and rosette medallions. The underside of the beam features striated triangles; the wooden boards above the secondary beams are diagonally striated.

The front of the large pillared hall is more complex. Above the raised platform, a waist-high parapet is set in between the two southern front pillars and a wooden portal-like door in the northern third of the tripartite front. The wood panels of the parapet and the portal foil the open character of the hall. The parapet must

have originally been even higher to judge from mortises in the stringers and a few wood fragments that can be found lying around in the building. A latticework screen similar to the one above the portal was apparently fixed on top of the parapet.

The portal is the masterpiece of the front façade (fig. 16). The surfaces of the two-leaf door and of the surrounding frame are lavishly decorated in a mesmerizing pattern: arranged in three rows on the frame, in seven rows on each door leaf, and in one row on the door mullion, “hanging chains” of pits are carved out of the wooden boards. The pits are shaped like lilies at the top and continue with a pattern of alternating lozenges and large drops. They were originally inlaid with pieces of limestone carefully trimmed to fit the form of the carvings, as tacks in the cavities and a single remnant sample of stone inlay show (fig. 17). The pattern is highly original and to my knowledge unique. It would be tempting to think that the wood-carver wanted to imitate cascading gemstones, perhaps as a metaphor for the “Ruby of Badakhshan.”

The pillars of the large porch are more slender and uniform—and also less experimental in design—than those of the southern porch (figs. 7 and 18). They have

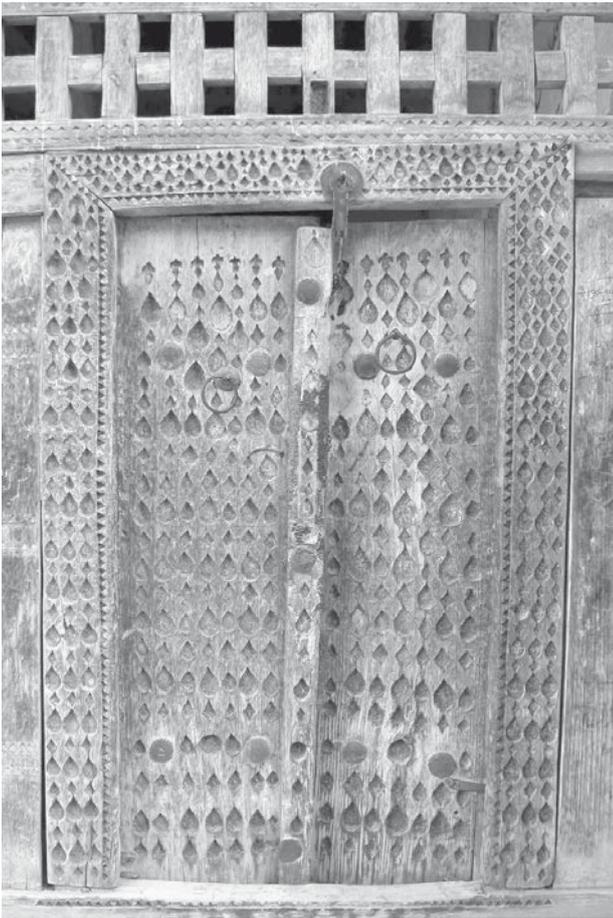


Fig. 16. The carved portal of the pillared hall. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

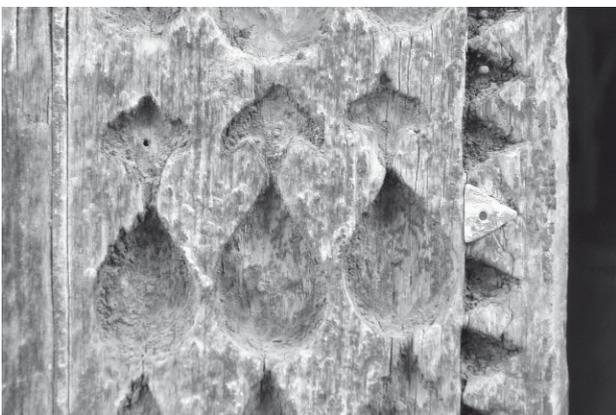


Fig. 17. A detail of the carved entrance door showing the iron tacks and the limestone inlay. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

round cylindrical shafts, which stand on the floor without a base. The transition from the round profile of the shaft to the square top is V-shaped in the case of the pillars at the front and in the row closest to the qibla, whereas the V-shaped transitions of the pillars of the middle row have an extension below in the shape of a heart turned upside down.

The capitals extend in carved brackets with stylized volutes. As in the smaller porch, the underside of the ceiling is embellished with diagonally laid sarking sticks. The motifs of the ornamental carvings on the pillars and roof beams are similar to those found in the smaller porch, comprising bands of triangles, striated surfaces, and rosettes in medallions. In general, however, the details and the ornamentation of the woodwork in the larger porch, and in the *mazār*, are more elaborate.

The appearance of the interior walls at the time of the 1697 renovation can safely be reconstructed only for the pillared hall. Where the wall is damaged (fig. 19), we can see that the original wall surface was on a level with the roof beams, in contrast with the later wall plaster, which was smeared rather carelessly over the wood (figs. 14 and 19). Traces of paint show that both the wall and the beam up to the height of the carved ornament band were originally painted in crimson. The sarking sticks of the ceiling, too, were painted alternately in crimson and green.

The finish of the walls and ceiling of the smaller porch may have originally been similar, but has not been preserved. In the *mazār*, by contrast, the original ceiling bearing the calligraphy is well preserved. The original wall finish may also have been decorated with Qur'anic verses, but more likely it has always been whitewashed only.

The architecture and ornamentation of the renovation of 1697 are clearly rooted in the vernacular building traditions of Badakhshan and the secluded mountain regions adjoining it. It can thus be safely surmised that the master-builder Muhammad and his fellow craftsmen mentioned on the inscribed pillar came from the region. Certain architectural and design elements can similarly be found in contemporary mosques and shrines, as well as in private dwellings across the north-western Himalayas, the Karakoram, Swat, Chitral, Indus Kohistan, Tajik Badakhshan, and the border regions of



Fig. 18. The pillared hall: view of the ceiling. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)



Fig. 19. The plasterwork in the northwestern corner of the large pillared hall. The original wall surface and painting can be seen underneath the stuccoed plaster on the top left of the photo. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

northeastern Afghanistan. These include: the veranda-like canopy in front of the prayer room; the pillared hall with a fretted parapet and a lavishly carved front portal; the variform cedarwood columns of the porches and the *mazār*, with their ornate shafts and bundled bases; the volutes extending from the bracket capitals; the ornamental bands of triangular chip carvings; and the carved rosettes of floral and geometric designs.<sup>44</sup>

The inhabitants of this wider cultural area at the periphery of the Muslim world are ethnically highly heterogeneous. They belong to various ethnic splinter groups, some of whom have preserved archaic cultural traits and religious beliefs into modern times. The Islamicization of the area occurred relatively late, although it accelerated just at the time when Nasir Khusraw's shrine was renovated in 1697, bringing the cultures of the neighboring mountain regions again in closer contact with each other.<sup>45</sup> This increased interaction may help to explain why, on the level of folk art, pre-Islamic architectural and decorative elements experienced a kind of renaissance in Yumgan. As we know from Swat and Nager carvings, the voluted capital, for example, is associated with long-held popular beliefs and could be a stylized representation of either ibex horns or the tree of life.<sup>46</sup> Likewise, decorative motifs such as the floral rosette and triangular chip carvings already flourished in the Buddhist Gandhara art of the Kushana period (ca. first to third centuries A.D.) and were probably nurtured since antiquity by early Iranian influences.<sup>47</sup>

#### THE REPLASTERING OF THE INTERIOR UNDER THE DURRANIS

No substantial changes or additions have been made to the shrine since 1697. Earthquakes have repeatedly damaged the building, however, and much of the original plaster on the interior walls has been lost, making emergency repairs necessary.<sup>48</sup> The somewhat deformed pier at the building's northeastern corner was the result of this sort of local repair, which disfigures somewhat the front façade of the shrine (fig. 15).<sup>49</sup>

The only intervention that altered the shrine's appearance significantly was the aforementioned renewal of the interior plasterwork. In contrast to the "folk" style

of the carpentry and the carvings, the later plasterwork on the walls of the two porches and the *mazār* is derived from the urban-oriented Mughal tradition, borrowing from its ornamental repertoire the shallow stuccoed recesses with cusped tromp l'œil arches; the rectangular wall panelling that emphasizes the architectural divisions of the rooms; the emblematic figure-ground frieze of five-lobed flowers; and the one-quarter baluster column preserved in the northwestern corner of the pillared hall.

Unfortunately, the plaster was whitewashed over at a later point. Near the entrance door to the *mazār*, however, the whitewash has fallen off, allowing the original wall finish to shimmer through. The shallow recess of the plasterwork was fully covered with text in black *nasta'liq* calligraphy on a beige background, arranged in registers by red dividing lines (fig. 10). The texts apparently included Arabic prayer formulas and also, interestingly enough, Persian prose.

To judge from the word fragments that can be deciphered, the Persian text is probably an excerpt from a passage in Nasir Khusraw's *Safarnāma*, in which he describes his visit to Basra on his return journey to Khurasan. He and his companions, "naked and destitute as madmen," were not permitted into a hammam, but chased away by children throwing stones at them. Ashamed of his nakedness, Nasir then wrote a letter to the vizier, who had clothes made for the esteemed travelers and presented them with gifts. When Nasir returned to the bathhouse a few days later, the bath attendant was embarrassed and apologetic. This story, which was recounted "so that men may know not to lament adversity brought on by fate and not to despair of the Creator's mercy,"<sup>50</sup> is fittingly placed at the threshold to Nasir's tomb.

It is difficult to determine when the plasterwork was renewed. Mughal motifs were popular for centuries in northern India and adjacent countries, from the reign of Shah Jahan in the mid-seventeenth century down to the eclectic architecture of the nineteenth century. The earliest dated graffiti on the later whitewash of the wall does, however, provide us with a *terminus ante quem*, i.e., the year 1828.

Supposing that it would take a few generations to see a need to renovate the finish of the walls (and to



Fig. 20. The inscribed wooden tympanum panel above the entrance to the *mazār*, dated 769 (1367). (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

whitewash them again later on), the plastering must have been done at some point in the latter half or near the end of the eighteenth century. The political constellations support this dating, since this was the time when the Afghan Durrani rulers, as self-styled heirs to the Great Mughals, consolidated their empire and fully expanded their power over the province of Badakhshan. The great construction works initiated in the imperial capitals of Kandahar and, subsequently, Kabul during the relatively stable reigns of Ahmad Shah (r. 1747–72), Timur Shah (1772–93), and Zaman Shah (1793–1800), such as the mausoleum of Ahmad Shah and the renovation of the Kabul Bala Hissar (citadel), attest to the Durrani preference for Mughal architectural decor. Coating the shrine of the Badakhshani patron saint with this “imperial” decorative language would then appear as a modest show of goodwill by the Durrani shahs, who

perhaps intended with this renovation to herald their (rather nominal) suzerainty over the remote mountain province.

#### REFLECTIONS ON THE MEDIEVAL SHRINE

The architecture and development of the shrine prior to its renovation in 1697 are almost completely shrouded in obscurity. The only concrete evidence that can help to develop theories about the shrine’s medieval history and design is an inscription on the oblong wooden panel (ca. 90 by 26 centimeters) above the lintel of the entrance door to the tomb chamber (fig. 20). The panel’s bas-relief carvings are organized into three compartments. The text, in *thuluth* script, fills the two narrow lateral compartments facing outward on each side:

(right side)

*jaddada hādihā 'l-bāb al-turbat al-muqaddasa Khwāja  
Nāṣir ṭāba tharāhu*

(left side)

*al-shāh al-mu'azzam Khudādād fī sana 769*

He renovated this gate of the holy grave of Khwaja Nasir, may his earth be light,  
the exalted Shah Khudadad in the year 769 (1367).

The tympanum panel and its inscription are extremely valuable. For the eastern fringes of the Persian Islamic world, this board is one of very few dated wood carvings to survive from medieval times; it is a fine example of the formative phase of Timurid wood decor during the late Chaghatay period.<sup>51</sup>

The central compartment in between the text features a close-meshed reticulated pattern of angular interlacing strapwork, radiating from a ten-pointed star in the center.<sup>52</sup> The enclosed polygons contain floral ornaments, full lotus blossoms presented in top and side view, and small-scale arabesques mainly of superimposed, lyre-shaped pairs of lancet leaves, all executed meticulously and with great technical capacity. The lush, intricately woven screen of the bas-relief foreshadows the dynastic taste for complexity and surface articulation that guided much of later Timurid artistic production across the fields of manuscript illumination, tilework, and wood and stone carving.

In the case of Nasir Khusraw's shrine, the panel is also important because it establishes that in 1367 the door to the *mazār* was renovated under the auspices of a certain Shah Khudadad (meaning Gift of God, the name can also be read as *Khudā'idād* or *Khudāyī-dād*). In the given context, this patron can be none other than the Chaghatay amir Khudaidad (r. before 765 [1363]–before 850 [1446]), to whom Mirza Muhammad Haidar (1499 or 1500–1551) refers in the *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*.<sup>53</sup> The high quality of the craftsmanship suggests that the panel was not produced locally, but instead manufactured in urban workshops, whose artisans were well versed in the fashions of contemporary eastern Iranian and Transoxanian court art.

Putting the pieces of the puzzle together, we can say that, interestingly enough, a Chaghatay overlord known for his piety sponsored the renovation of a

shrine that commemorated an Isma'ili saint. Khudaidad was no doubt a devoted Sunni, although the conversion to Islam among the heirs to Chingis Khan had occurred only recently and their belief at this time was to some degree still flexible. In fact, Sufism was a great factor in the Chingisids' conversion to Islam, and perhaps the Isma'ili cult in Yumgan had by then already adopted the guise of Sufism. But Khudaidad's tolerance may also be explained by his difficult political standing. After the death of Tughlugh Timur in 1363, the Chaghatay Khanate basically collapsed; years of war and tumult followed before Timurlane eventually emerged as the omnipotent restorer of the "Mongol" Empire. In the turbulent decade of the 1360s, Khudaidad must have still been an adolescent (in the 1440s, when he resigned after reigning for ninety years, he was allegedly 97 years old) and had only recently been established as the amir of East Turkestan, which included Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan.

Only a few decades earlier, Isma'ilism had expanded under the ruler Taj Mughal (d. 1325) from Badakhshan into the northern mountain regions of modern Pakistan,<sup>54</sup> where the *da'wa* was at the same time invigorated by Pir Shams (d. 1356) operating from his base in the Punjab. Thus, the most plausible explanation for the support of the shrine in Yumgan in 1367 (disputing the general notion that Isma'ilis faced discrimination in the Mongol and Timurid periods) is that, during his early emirate, the politically weak Khudaidad needed to come to terms with the Isma'ili communities that were thriving at the southern and western fringes of his dominion.

The question remains as to what the renovation of the "gate" entailed—whether it was really limited, as the wording of the inscription suggests, to the wooden entrance door to the *mazār*, or actually involved a more comprehensive renewal of the shrine, which seems far more likely.<sup>55</sup> How else could the need for such a refined inscription panel and the grandiose dedication text honoring Khudaidad's charitable donation be justified?

Popular tradition has preserved a legend that may provide us with a reasonable explanation for the restoration. According to this story, the shrine was destroyed by Chingis Khan's marauding troops when they passed through the area in 1220–21. A governor of Badakh-

shan, the legend continues, later started to rebuild the *ziyārat* in lapis lazuli, but again and again the walls that were erected during the day collapsed the following night. After several such days and nights, Nasir Khusraw appeared to the governor in a dream and demanded that the new shrine be built simply, with mud bricks, as this would befit the modest way he had conducted himself during his life.<sup>56</sup> It is a tempting thought that Khudaïdad hides behind the governor of the story, which may then be linked to the restoration of 1367, undertaken more than a century after the possible destruction of the shrine by the Mongols.

According to my hypothetical reconstruction of the shrine as it was in 1367, the original position of the door with the inscription panel was presumably slightly further back, in line with the external wall of the tomb chamber, before the pillared hall was added and the wall doubled in 1697 to accommodate the turn in orientation. Even without the historic inscription and the fine carvings, in a sparsely wooded area, the material value of the timber alone would explain the reuse of the door. Without the two-pillared porches of the seventeenth-century renovation, the medieval *ziyārat* consisted only of the tomb chamber and the adjacent prayer room. However, the existence of a covered veranda in front of the *mazār*, a smaller precursor of the pillared hall, is very likely, since elevated porticos are still today standard in the local vernacular architecture. Besides, such a canopy would have been needed to protect the wooden door and its delicate carvings from weathering. Judging from the geometry of the floor plan and the space available on the top of the boulder, this older canopy in front of the *mazār* was probably aligned with the eastern façade of the prayer room.

The general disposition of the interior of the burial chamber has presumably not been altered significantly in over six centuries. The separation of the tomb area from the space reserved for visitors most likely predates the renewal of the shrine in 1697. The wrought iron railing may also be older (fig. 8). Its bars are square in section, fixed at the joints with finely ribbed cylinders. The grille's two prefabricated halves are plugged at mid-height into cubic bosses with chamfered corners. The grille is difficult to date, but the quality of the ironwork seems to point to an urban provenance, bringing

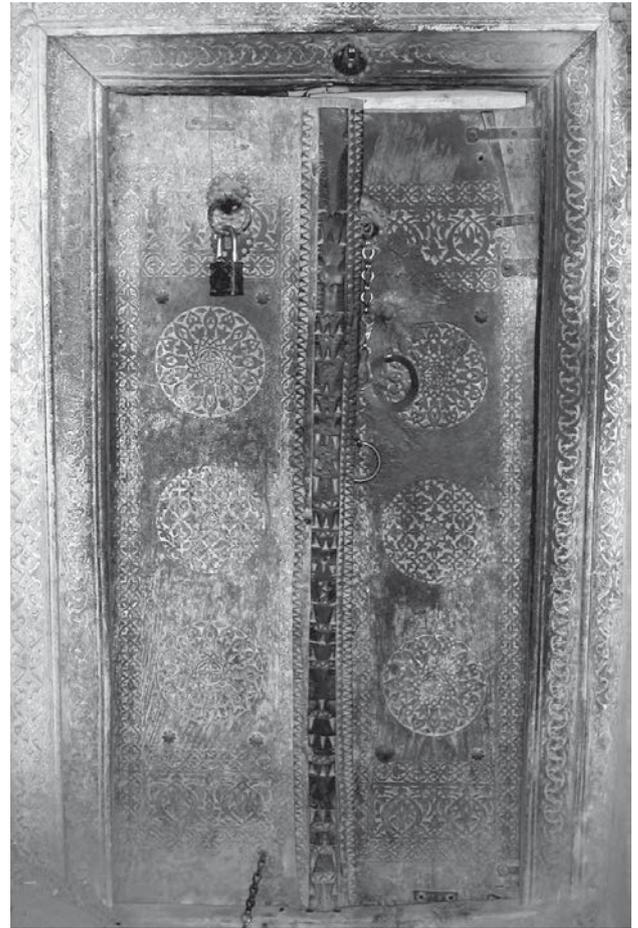


Fig. 21. The double-leaf entrance door to the *mazār*. (Photo: Marcus Schadl)

it nearer to the inscribed tympanum panel than to the more “indigenous” architecture of the late seventeenth century—although we know that historically iron ore was mined and smelted not far from the shrine.<sup>57</sup>

The entrance door below the inscribed tympanum panel is proof that an ironsmith was present during the restoration of 1367. If the inscription is to be taken literally, the “renovation” of the gate to the shrine can only refer to the (rather poor) repair work on the top right of the right door leaf (fig. 21). Securing cracks in the wood with ferrules was also necessary at the bottom of the right door leaf and at the top of the left door leaf. Perhaps the door was then also fitted with the iron chains, buckles, and rings. None of these shows consideration for the carved designs on the door leaves. The

only original metal fittings seem to be the doornails with which the door panels are fixed onto crossbeams in the rear. Their relatively small heads, designed as eight-petaled blossoms, are well positioned within the layout of the door decoration.

Apart from the damage in the top corner of the right door leaf, which could have stemmed from an attempt to pry the door open, the same leaf also bears signs of fire damage near to where the original fittings for the fastening may have been situated. These signs of damage could be traces left by the Mongols when they looted and destroyed the shrine in the thirteenth century. The door would then be a remnant of the earlier *ziyarat*, which was probably the first architecturally refined structure built over the tomb of Nasir Khusraw.

A closer examination of the carved designs on the door panels and on the doorframe supports the theory that the door predates the restoration of 1367. The carvings on each of the two elongated door leaves show an outer frame, which consists of a continuous band of interlacing bas-relief foliate scrolls—a symmetric composition of four overlapping undulant stalks, which develop in pairs into interlacing leaves at the pattern's central axis.

At the bottom and top of each door leaf, the same decorative pattern sets off within the frame two compartments of larger and more complicated arabesques. Their axis-symmetric composition features similar coiling stems that widen to form leaves. The main design motif, two counterposed lancet-shaped leaves ending in a knot-like bud, is repeated twice within each compartment. In the almond-shaped area in between the leaves, two smaller leaves intersect and then continue as outward curling stems, beneath the leaves of the foreground.

The space of the door leaf within the frame of arabesques is decorated with three roundels, vertically arranged along the central axis. The roundels feature a central blossom and a geometrical star pattern, from which vegetal patterns radiate linearly in the case of the identical designs of the bottom and top medallions, and circularly in the central medallion. The rest of the door surface is plain and undecorated. The inner doorframe is embellished with another running foliate scroll, an interlace of three sinuous lines of stalks and leaves, while

the outer frame is decorated with a more complex axis-symmetric foliate pattern.

We are on admittedly uncertain ground if we try to date the door through comparative stylistic analysis. Unfortunately, relatively few examples of Ghaznavid, Ghurid, and contemporary Transoxanian woodwork have survived the welter of invasion and conquest marking the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.<sup>58</sup> Even if we broaden our search by looking at works in other material, particularly stone and stucco, the corpus of objects from the region is rather meager and the development of their ornamentation understudied.<sup>59</sup>

The abstract, flat-carved, figure-ground designs of the foliate patterns, particularly the expressively swung lancet-shape of the addorsed leaves, have close, though not complete, analogies with decorative motifs on Ghaznavid stonework of the early twelfth century.<sup>60</sup> Recently, a wooden fragment, presumably a leaf of a double door, was unearthed at Jam, the alleged site of the Ghurid capital, Firozkoh. It was plausibly ascribed to the late twelfth century.<sup>61</sup> The designs of the sinuating stems and leaves on the inner doorframe of the door in Hazrat Sayyid and in the decorative framing on the door from Jam are nearly identical. The fragment from Jam also has a roundel set within the plain inner area of the rectangular ornamental frame, and two rectangular compartments at the top and bottom of the frame that are filled with foliate scrolls more densely knit than in the door in Hazrat Sayyid. The design of the roundel on the Jam door is not directly related to either of the two motifs of the roundels on the door in Hazrat Sayyid, but they all seem to be en route to abandoning the more clear-cut and bold character of interlacing foliate patterns that distinguishes works from the later Ghaznavid period, in favor of finer foliate designs, integrated in increasingly intricate patterns of extensive surface ornamentation.<sup>62</sup>

The door to Nasir Khusraw's *mazār* seems to have been made considerably earlier than the dated tympanum panel, very possibly even earlier than the period of the Mongol storms in the early thirteenth century. In the century following Nasir Khusraw's death, Isma'ilism maintained a strong following in the mountain areas of Badakhshan, while in more accessible regions and in urban centers Isma'ilis suffered severe discrimination

under Ghaznavid, Karakhanid, Seljuk, and later, Ghurid and Khwarezmian overlords—all declared defenders of Sunni orthodoxy. If the door to the *mazār* indeed dates from the latter half of the twelfth or the turn of the thirteenth century, it is surprising that the style of door carving clearly reflects urban traditions.<sup>63</sup> Perhaps an Isma‘ili city dweller commissioned the door—and possibly an extensive reconstruction of the original shrine. The work may even have been initiated at the behest of Alamut, which was in its heyday at the turn of the thirteenth century. Interestingly, this was also the time when the Isma‘ilis of Badakhshan openly professed their allegiance to the Nizari *da‘wa*.

### CONCLUSION

This survey of Nasir Khusraw’s shrine has yielded a number of surprising results. Nasir Khusraw’s involuntary residence and missionary activities in Yumgan earned him great respect and lasting veneration among the local populace. He is connected with the spread of Isma‘ilism in Badakhshan in the latter half of the eleventh century and, as a result of his works, he remains to this day the main spiritual guide of the local Isma‘ili community.

The specifically Isma‘ili character of saint veneration and cult practices at the shrine of Nasir Khusraw is, however, strongly blurred. The cult does not differ fundamentally from popular saint cults at other shrines and, interestingly, the Sunni population of Yumgan also visits the shrine and reveres Nasir Khusraw as a patron saint. This can be explained by the centuries-old Isma‘ili practice of *taqiyya*, which evidently in this case took the form of a Sufi dervish brotherhood. Thus, the *ṭariqat* mausoleum of Nasir Khusraw can serve as concrete physical evidence of the close relations between Isma‘ilis and Sufis in the post-Alamut period, which has so far been demonstrated by research almost exclusively on the basis of historical evidence, or by looking at the philosophical discourse between Sufi and Isma‘ili writers.

From an architectural angle, the present *ziyārat* is a rather modest structure, which through a series of subsequent extensions adopted a heterogeneous, accretive

aura. It has been possible to elucidate how the shrine was built under different auspices, from the original *ziyārat* of the eleventh century, which may have been Nasir Khusraw’s home, to traces of renewal in possibly the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, a comprehensive renovation in the late seventeenth century, and minor interventions and repair work in later times. The patrons and workmen must be sought in urban or court circles at one time and more in the vicinity of the shrine at another. The checkered history of the building perfectly reflects the problems that the cult of the Isma‘ili philosopher encountered living within a predominantly Sunni environment, where there has always been a political dimension to the veneration of Nasir Khusraw. The crossover of more refined urban-oriented styles and the “relapse” into vernacular traditions best express these vicissitudes.

Aiming at a comprehensive portrayal of the shrine, this study has obviously only been able to provide a cursory analysis of certain details and aspects of the structure. Many of the subjects that have been raised require more exhaustive research and debate. The saint culture of Isma‘ilis in Badakhshan still remains an understudied field. The suras and invocations calligraphed on the ceiling of the *mazār* likewise deserve the attention of an expert, as they promise to yield further insights into the intellectual rapprochement between Isma‘ili and Sufi mysticism.

From the standpoint of architecture and art historians, the architecture of the seventeenth-century shrine and its ornamentation still wait to be placed in more detail in the broader context of the wooden architecture of the Hindukush and the Pamirs, building upon Dani’s rather unsystematic 1989 study, *Islamic Architecture: The Wooden Style of Northern Pakistan*.<sup>64</sup> The dated tympanum panel, which documents the craftsmanship of the late Chaghatay / formative Timurid period, and the possibly twelfth-century double door—arguably the greatest treasures hidden in the shrine of Nasir Khusraw—will hopefully also stimulate a wider debate.

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## NOTES

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1. Alice C. Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher* (London and New York, 2000), 245.
2. *Ibid.*, 249.
3. Wladimir Ivanow, *Problems in Nasir-i Khusraw's Biography* (Bombay, 1956), 43; Henry Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusrau and Iranian Ismā'ilism," in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, 7 vols. (Cambridge, 1969–91), vol. 4, *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. Richard N. Frye, 537; Azim Nanji, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "Nāṣir-i Khusraw."
4. John Wood, *A Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Source of the River Oxus* (London, 1841), 259–61.
5. Louis Dupree, *Saint Cults in Afghanistan*, American Universities Field Staff Reports, South Asia Series 20, 1 (Hanover, N.H., 1976). The article is based on a journey that the author undertook in October 1975.
6. In his diary-style travelogue, Wood reported that in late 1837 the *ziyārat* was crowned by a white dome that was "visible a considerable distance down the valley": see Wood, *Personal Narrative*, 261. A look at the architecture of the shrine today reveals that only the small mosque would possess the geometry apt for such a domed structure. But if the prayer room was indeed domed at the time when Wood passed by, it still remains difficult to explain how this dome could have possibly been seen from as far away as was claimed by the author. From the south, the higher roofline of the burial chamber and the pillared hall would certainly have reduced the effect of a domed mosque, and from the north, a clear view of the cupola would have been practically impossible.
7. The buried persons could just as well be any other prominent follower or early religious authority. For a *ziyārat* in Kishm that is also venerated as the burial place of Nasir Khusraw's closest companions, see Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 11–12.
8. The first scholarly biography of Nasir Khusraw was written by Edward G. Browne, "Nasir-i-Khusraw: Poet, Traveller, and Propagandist," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (April 1905): 313–52. For an overview of later biographies, see Alice C. Hunsberger, "Nasir Khusraw: Fatimid Intellectual," in *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London and New York, 2000), 127 n. 3. The most recent publication on Nasir Khusraw's life is Hunsberger's *Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakhshan*, in which the author mixed passages from Nasir Khusraw's principal works with his biography. Faquir M. Hunzai is currently preparing a translation of Nasir Khusraw's *Wajh-i dīn* at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. In the introduction, which I am grateful he shared with me, he outlines Nasir Khusraw's vita and works.
9. Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Kalāmī Pir: A Treatise on Ismaili Doctrine*, ed. and trans. Wladimir Ivanow, Islamic Research Association Series 4 (Bombay and London, 1935), xi n. 3. Nasir Khusraw's date of birth is discussed in Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan*, 255–56. See also Wood, *Personal Narrative*, 260.
10. Wheeler M. Thackston Jr., *Nāṣer-e Khosraw's Book of Travels (Safarnāma)*, Persian Heritage Series 36 (Albany, N.Y., 1986), 1. Nasir Khusraw's "dream" was probably only the culmination of the process that triggered his zealous quest for knowledge and eventually made him embrace Ismā'ilism. His "dream" and his conversion to Ismā'ilism are discussed in Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusrau and Iranian Ismā'ilism," 533–34.
11. For an English translation of the travelogue, see Thackston, *Book of Travels*.
12. Corbin, "Nāṣir-i Khusrau and Iranian Ismā'ilism," 536.
13. From the *Dīvān* (208:1–2); translated in Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan*, 228.
14. Ivanow, *Problems*, 45 n. 28.
15. Nanji argues that Nasir Khusraw must have died between 465 (1072) and 471 (1078): see Nanji, "Nāṣir-i Khusraw," 1006. Ivanow points out that Nasir Khusraw was still alive in 1070, the year in which he composed his *Jāmi' al-ḥikmatayn* for the Amir of Badakhshan: see Ivanow, *Problems*, 47. The dubious date 481 (1088) was suggested by the seventeenth-century Ottoman historian Katip Çelebi.
16. These legends were recorded by Dupree in 1975: see Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 13–14. Some of them were recounted by the locals during my visit.
17. The magical power to let boulders fly through the air is a common attribute of saints of the region. See Jürgen W. Frembgen, "Sayyid Shah Wali—Missionary and Miracle-worker: Notes on the Hagiography and Cult of a Muslim Saint in Nager and Hunza (Northern Pakistan)," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 155, 1 (2005): 79, 84.
18. A hole at the base of the wall behind Nasir Khusraw's tomb is revered as the entrance to the tunnel through which Nasir's soul is said to have left the material world after the burial. It is marked with a pole onto which pieces of cloth and an iron "hand of Fatima" are attached, and the iron grille that screens off the pilgrims from the tomb has a miniature gate opening to the crack in the floor.
19. For a similar tradition on a miraculous rock interment in northern Pakistan, see Frembgen, "Sayyid Shah Wali," 83–84.
20. Farhad Daftary, *A Short History of the Ismailis: Traditions of a Muslim Community* (Edinburgh, 1998), 165. A strong Ismā'ili community still lives in the districts of Shugnan and Darwaz on the Upper Oxus, where after the Alamut period the Ismā'ili *da'wa* was first reinvigorated. A local tradition claims that although Nasir died and was buried in Yumgan, his remains are in Darwaz. He is said to have walked there through a tunnel after his resurrection: see Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 13.
21. The rapprochement between Ismā'ilism and Sufism in the post-Alamut period has been studied by Nasrollah Pourjavady and Peter L. Wilson, "Ismā'ilis and Ni'matullāhīs,"

- Studia Islamica* 41 (1975): 113–35; Nadia E. Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Quhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia* (London and New York, 2002), 84–107; and, most recently, Farhad Daftary, *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies* (London and New York, 2005), 183–203.
22. The population figures refer to the results of the “Field Survey of the Isma‘ilis of Badakhshan,” which was carried out in 2002 and summarily presented in Hafizullah Emadi, “Nahzat-e-Nawin: Modernization of the Badakhshani Isma‘ili Communities of Afghanistan,” *Central Asian Survey* 24, 2 (2005): 165–89.
  23. Emadi, “Nahzat-e-Nawin,” 177, table 10.
  24. Daftary, *Short History*, 168; Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan*, 223.
  25. On the Sufi background of the titles and their use among Isma‘ilis, see Ivanow, *Kalami Pir*, xi nn. 1–2.
  26. A comprehensive bibliography of Nasir Khusraw’s published works is listed in Hunsberger, *Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan*, 273–74. For works still only in manuscript form, see Ismail K. Poonawala, *Biobibliography of Ismaili Literature*, (Malibu, 1977), 123.
  27. Ivanow, *Kalami Pir*, xi–xv.
  28. Ivanow, *Problems*, 43.
  29. Jo-Ann Gross is professor of Middle Eastern and Central Eurasian Studies at the College of New Jersey. She has written an article on “Foundational Legends, Shrines, and Isma‘ili Identity in Tajik Badakhshan,” which is to be published in the forthcoming volume *Muslims and Others in Sacred Space*, edited by Margaret Cormack. This work will be expanded significantly in a book chapter on Badakhshan in a forthcoming volume entitled *Mapping the Sacred Landscape: Muslim Shrines in Tajikistan*.
  30. Saint cult practices in Afghanistan have been studied by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Khalil, *Mazārāt-i shahr-i Kābul* (Kabul, 1960); Harald Einzmann, *Religiöses Volksbrauchtum in Afghanistan: Islam* (Wiesbaden, 1977); and Lutz Rzehak, “Narrative Strukturen des Erzählens über Heilige und ihre Gräber in Afghanistan,” *Asiatische Studien* 58, 1 (2004): 195–229. Probably the most comprehensive general study on saint cults in Islam is Rudolph Kriss and Hubert Kriss-Heinrich, *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islam*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 1960–62).
  31. Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 16.
  32. *Ibid.*, 19.
  33. *Ibid.*, 21.
  34. Faizabad and Jurm are mentioned most often as the place of residence. According to the signatures, visitors also come from Takhar, Kohistan, and Tajikistan.
  35. Hunsberger, “Nasir Khusraw: Fatimid Intellectual,” 112–13. For a complete translation of the poem, see Annemarie Schimmel, *Make a Shield from Wisdom: Selected Verses from Nasir-i Khusraw’s Divan* (London and New York, 1993), 92–93.
  36. For a case where a pilgrim was relieved at the shrine of the “evil spirits” that had plagued him, see Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 16–17.
  37. Mehmet Baha Tanman, “Settings for the Veneration of Saints,” in *The Dervish Lodge: Architecture, Art and Sufism in Ottoman Turkey*, ed. Raymond Lifchez (Berkeley and Oxford, 1992), 139.
  38. Wood, *Personal Narrative*, 261.
  39. The quoted verse from Sura 62, *al-Jumu‘a* (The Congregation), counsels a life of abstinence and austereness as a path to God: “But when they see merchandise or diversion, they scatter off to it, and they leave thee standing. Say: ‘What is with God is better than diversion and merchandise. God is the best of providers’” (Qur’an 62:11).
  40. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, 1975), 218.
  41. *Ibid.*, 221.
  42. Mehr Ali Newid and Abdollah Vasegh Abbasi, “Islamische Amulette Irans als Träger apotropäischer Funktionen im Lichte persischer Quellen,” *Eothen* 4 (2007): 272–79.
  43. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 245–46. The term *javān-mard*, the Persian equivalent of *fatā*, is often used in the hagiographies of Sufis.
  44. The wooden architecture of the wider region still awaits a comprehensive study, which could follow the path of Ahmad Hasan Dani’s pioneering work *Islamic Architecture: The Wooden Style of Northern Pakistan* (Islamabad, 1989). Important contributions to the architecture of certain subregions are Lennart Edelberg, *Nuristani Buildings* (Aarhus, Denmark, 1984); Umberto Scerrato, “Survey of Wooden Mosques and Related Wood-Carvings in the Swat Valley,” *East and West* 31 (1981): 178–81; idem, “Survey of Wooden Mosques and Related Wood-Carvings in the North-West Frontier Province,” *East and West* 33 (1983): 21–29; Johannes Kalter, *The Arts and Crafts of the Swat Valley: Living Traditions in the Hindu Kush* (London and New York, 1991); and Max Klimburg, “Hölzerne Moscheen und Grabmäler in Nordpakistan,” *Eothen* 4 (2007): 125–48. A recent publication by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture explores the architecture of the Karakoram area in greater detail: see Jürgen W. Frembgen, “Traditional Art and Architecture in Hunza,” in *Karakoram: Hidden Treasures in the Northern Areas of Pakistan*, ed. Stefano Bianca (Turin, 2005), 133–48; and Max Klimburg, “Traditional Art and Architecture in Baltistan,” in Bianca, *Karakoram*, 149–64. For a comprehensive study of Nuristani woodwork, see Max Klimburg, *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush: Art and Society of the Waigal and Ashkun Kafirs*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1999).
  45. Frembgen, “Sayyid Shah Wali,” 69.
  46. Frembgen, “Traditional Art and Architecture in Hunza,” 137, fig. 103; Kalter, *Arts and Crafts*, 148, fig. 212.
  47. Erika Schmitt convincingly suggested in her doctoral thesis that the decorative forms used in the folk art of the region were basically borrowed from pre-Islamic Gandhara ornaments: see Erika Schmitt, “Ornamente in der Gandharakunst und rezenten Volkskunst im Hindukush und Karakorum,” *Dissertationsreihe des Südasien-Instituts der Universität Heidelberg*, vol. 10 (Wiesbaden, 1971), 244–93.

48. Only in the burial chamber is the ornate plasterwork comparatively well preserved, but even there the plaster has lost its cohesion with the wall near the ceiling and is about to fall off. The most endangered sections are at the moment secured with temporary supports.
49. The date of this repair work can only be conjectured. In 1893, Amir 'Abd al-Rahman (r. 1880–1901), who unified Afghanistan in a centralized state, also subjugated Badakhshan. While Isma'ilis were widely harassed under the new overlordship, forcing many to emigrate, the limited repair work at the shrine may have been a deliberate show of power by the Kabul government or the appointed governor.
50. Thackston, *Book of Travels*, 91–94.
51. Examples of fourteenth-century woodwork from the Mongol Khanates are very scarce. Scattered Ilkhanid examples from Sultaniyya have been published in Giovanni Curatola, "Some Ilkhanid Woodwork from the Area of Sultaniyya," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 97–116. An impressive piece of pre-Timurid woodwork is the huge cenotaph of Sayfuddin Bakharzi at Bukhara, published in Boris Deniké, "Quelques monuments des bois sculpté au Turkestan occidental," *Ars Islamica* 2 (1935): 69–83, figs. 9–11. Timurid woodworks from Turkestan were cursorily examined in Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles, 1989), 206–9; Joachim Gierlich, "Timuridische Stein- und Holzarbeiten," in *Amir Timur: Seine zeitgeschichtliche Beurteilung, seine Bedeutung für Usbekistan auf dem Wege der nationalen Selbstfindung*, ed. Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (Tashkent, 1998), 102–10; and Joachim Gierlich, "Timurid Woodfurnishings in Iran and Central Asia," in *Islamic Art Resources in Central Asia and Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Wijdan Ali and Khalid Deemer (Mafraq, Jordan, 2000), 149–53. Gierlich is currently preparing a more comprehensive study of Timurid woodwork in Iran and Central Asia, using mainly material from the Iranian Mazandaran and Gilan provinces.
52. On the development of these angular strapwork patterns, see J. Michael Rogers, "The 11th Century: A Turning Point in the Architecture of the Mashriq?" in *Islamic Civilization 950–1150*, ed. Donald S. Richards, *Papers on Islamic History* 3 (Oxford, 1973), 221–24.
53. Haydar Mirzā, *A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia: Being the Tarikh-i-Rashidi of Mirza Muhammad Haidar, Dughlāt*, ed. N. Elias (London, 1972). Chapter 7 contains biographical information on Amir Khudaidad, who is said to have been very religious. Khudaidad was also highly impoverished, which is an interesting side note if he indeed patronized the reconstruction of the shrine.
54. On the spread of Isma'ilism under the Badakhshani prince Taj Mughal, see Karl Jettmar, "Northern Areas of Pakistan—An Ethnographic Sketch," in *History of Northern Areas of Pakistan*, ed. Ahmad Hasan Dani (Islamabad, 1991), 62–63.
55. Ivanow pointed out that *bāb* was also an honorary title applied to the chief *hujjat* of the Fatimid *da'wa* and occasionally also to the Imam: see Ivanow, *Kalami Pir*, xiv.
56. Dupree, *Saint Cults*, 13. A variant version is recorded in Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie, *Afghanistan: The Mirage of Peace* (London and New York, 2004), 30.
57. Wood, *Personal Narrative*, 259.
58. A prominent piece of Ghaznavid woodwork is the door to Mahmud Ghaznavi's tomb in Ghazni: see Rogers, "The 11th Century," 233–44; Finbarr Barry Flood, "Lost in Translation: Architecture, Taxonomy, and the Eastern 'Turks,'" *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 79–115. Alessio Bombaci first published a wooden mihrab in Charkh-i Logar south of Kabul in "Summary Report on the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, I: Introduction to the Excavations at Ghazni," *East and West* 10, 1–2 (1959): 15. It was later reexamined in more detail by Assadullah S. Melikian-Chirvani, "Un chef-d'œuvre inconnu dans une vallée afghane," *Connaissance des Arts* 308 (1977): 76–79.
59. Two works that have pointed the way forwards are Lazar I. Rempel, *Arkhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana: Istoriia razvitiia i teoriia postroeniia* (Tashkent, 1961), 115–255; and Rogers, "The 11th Century."
60. See the outer band of the mihrab fragment published in Johannes Kalter, *Abteilungsführer islamischer Orient* (Stuttgart, 1987), 36, fig. 28. For the decor on the wooden mihrab in Charkh-i Logar, see Melikian-Chirvani, "Un chef-d'œuvre," 79. For the foliate scroll on marble friezes in the David Collection, see Kjeld von Folsach, *Art from the World of Islam in the David Collection* (Copenhagen, 2001), 246–47, figs. 394–95; for foliate scrolls on similar friezes, see Bombaci, "Summary Report," figs. 3, 5, and 7. More complex patterns employing the motif of the addorsed leaves can be seen on fragments published in Umberto Scerrato, "The First Two Excavation Campaigns at Ghazni, 1957–1958," *East and West* 10, 1–2 (1959): 23–55, fig. 31; and in Kalter, *Abteilungsführer*, 62, fig. 53. In Ghaznavid stonework, the lancet-shaped leaves sometimes transform into figurative representations similar to pre-Islamic Persian motifs, such as the wings of griffins, winged lions, and humans: see Bombaci, "Summary Report," 13–14, figs. 11–12.
61. Martina Rugiadi, "A Carved Wooden Door from Jam: Preliminary Remarks," *Iran* 44 (2006): 363–65.
62. See, for example, medallions from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries discussed in Rempel, *Arkhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana*, 163, fig. 70; 236, fig. 113. The motif of addorsed lancet-shaped leaves survives in filigree form, e.g., in the façade ornamentation of mausoleum "1360" in the Shah-i Zinda complex in Samarkand: see Rempel, *Arkhitekturnyi ornament Uzbekistana*, 271, fig. 127. One can find similar motifs in the Mediterranean also, e.g., on a doorframe in the qibla *iwān* of the Sultan al-Nasir Hasan funerary complex (1356–63) in Cairo, which was built around the same time that the tympanum panel (and probably the outer doorframe) was made.
63. However, the slightly distorted door mullion with its triangulate patterns was no doubt produced locally and must have been added at a later point.
64. See n. 44 above.



## AN EARLY SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PALACE COMPLEX (*DAWLATKHĀNA*) IN BALKH

The study of the stately residences of the political and military elites of Iran and Central Asia in the early modern (or late medieval) period presents a number of problems not encountered with other types of monumental architecture. In the first place, few such residences survive, at least in comparison with cultic buildings (e.g., mosques, madrasas, shrines, and hostels) of the same period. These latter were not solely dependent on the prestige of the individual who sponsored their construction to ensure their maintenance and preservation over time, but were generally supported by permanent endowments, as well as gifts and offerings that acknowledged their spiritual significance. The few palaces and palace complexes that do survive more or less intact are sufficiently varied in form and context as to defy easy categorization. For the historian of architecture, the relatively small number of surviving examples makes generalization about the typology of palaces difficult. Nonetheless, efforts have been made to provide a typology of palaces that is useful for comparative purposes and for placing individual cases, such as the Balkh *dawlatkhāna*, in a wider context. In a recent work, Sussan Babaie proposes four palace types: 1) the semi-public palace complex with congregational mosque, 2) the isolated absolutist and imperial private palace complex, 3) the urban citadel palace, and 4) the suburban garden palace.<sup>1</sup> To some degree, the Balkh *dawlatkhāna* described in the early seventeenth-century text *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-akhyār*<sup>2</sup> does not fit precisely into any one of these categories but shares characteristics of all but the third. It had a congregational mosque and large areas open to the public; it had segregated precincts for the royals, as well as symbols of imperial power scattered through the public areas; and it was situated in a park (*chahārbaḡh*) in the suburbs of Balkh. In many ways, it reflected the

palace-building fashions of its time as seen in the rest of the Persianate world (Ottoman Turkey, Iran, India, and Transoxania).

Like any monumental structure, a palace contains symbolic as well as material meaning, and is intended to represent and project power, as well as provide shelter for the ruler or politically powerful individual.<sup>3</sup> How the symbolic value of the building is interpreted and memorialized in the literary record varies with time, place, and trends in architecture. In his recent study of the various forms and functions of Islamic architecture, Robert Hillenbrand articulates the main problems involved in understanding the symbolic value of palace architecture—the most important being the lack of surviving examples, except from a few limited periods, and the formulaic, imprecise, and embellished descriptions of palaces found in literary sources.<sup>4</sup> Some notable exceptions are Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, the Agra Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri, whose architectural histories over half a millennium are known in considerable detail.<sup>5</sup> The geographical distribution of known examples is in part directly related to the types of available building materials. In India, the Mughal (Timurid) dynasty had access to durable materials like sandstone, limestone, and marble. Moreover, the symbolic value of their buildings was so appropriable by other rulers (especially the British) that early modern (sixteenth- to eighteenth-century) palace architecture is disproportionately well preserved there in comparison with Persianate Central Asia (Transoxania), for example, where seismic conditions and the lack of building stone adversely affected the durability of large structures.<sup>6</sup> In Transoxania, except for the remnants of the enormous Aq Saray Palace of Timur at Shahr-i Sabz in present-day Uzbekistan, we have no remains of large palaces until the last amirs of Bukhara built some extravagant

suburban Italianate palaces under Russian influence.<sup>7</sup> The typical princely residence throughout Central Asia—when the prince was not hunting or on campaign—was the fortified urban complex, the citadel (*arg*, *hiṣār*, *qalʿa*), which was simply an expanded version of the vernacular rural *qalʿa*, or residential fort, still found, for example, in Afghanistan today.<sup>8</sup>

When designing royal residences, architects and their patrons in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Central Asia were clearly inspired, or at least influenced, by the garden residences of fifteenth-century Timurid Samarqand and Herat. Robert Hillenbrand characterizes the evolution of the palace in the Persianate region in the post-Timurid era as “the translation of the tented Turco-Mongol culture into more durable elements.” He then considers the consequent palatine architecture as having a “temporary, makeshift air” about it and suggests that there was no intent to create a permanent royal residence out of an agglomeration of kiosks, pavilions, summerhouses, and audience halls that made up these royal garden habitats.<sup>9</sup> There is undoubtedly much truth in this, though it is difficult to think of the residential parts of Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri as being erected quickly and cheaply, or having anything of the makeshift about them. Perhaps the suburban garden pavilion (*kūshk*) is more what was intended by his characterization, but what the description of the Balkh *dawlatkhāna* allows us to see is how a permanent royal residence was incorporated into a semi-public garden district or park. To some degree, the reader is in need of the “visionary imagination,” which the author of *Baḥr al-asrār* invokes as necessary to comprehend the architecture of the private parts of the *dawlatkhāna*, in order to “see” the residence of the khan and assess its permanence. Since only the nearest relatives (*maḥramān*) had access to the inner sanctums and none of them, to our knowledge, left written descriptions, there is no way to know what the private residence of the khan and his family was really like. However, certain inferences may be drawn from the surviving architecture of royal residences contemporary with the Balkh *dawlatkhāna*, notably those of early seventeenth-century Mughal India.<sup>10</sup> It is certainly debatable whether the Tughay-Timurid khan in Balkh had the resources to build as luxuriously as the padishahs of India, but the basic and most

intimate elements of residential design (the placement of baths and toilets, the arrangement of sleeping and living quarters, and the ways in which all these were grouped) were certainly known in Balkh through the constant movement of people between Central Asia and India—merchants, soldiers, pilgrims, and the merely curious (the author of our text being one of the latter)—and therefore it is reasonable to assume that such elements may well have been used in the private area (*andarūn*) of the *dawlatkhāna*.

In the absence of excavated material remains, the historian has to rely today on what survives of the Balkh *dawlatkhāna* in the written record. As Julie Meisami and Hillenbrand both emphasize, literature is a highly contingent source—stylized, representative of a now only partially knowable world view, and utilizing imagery the subtleties and nuances of which may or may not be evident to the modern-day reader. On the other hand, as Meisami has shown, it is possible nonetheless to extract concrete information, particularly architectural terminology, from poetry and prose, to observe the evolution of tropes used for architectural description, and to gain a sense of the way in which palaces were intended to represent power, both human and cosmic.<sup>11</sup>

Mahmud b. Amir Wali’s *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-akhyār*, a universal history planned on a grand scale and labored on through the 1630s, provides a long literary description of the palace complex (*dawlatkhāna*) that Nazr Muhammad (d. 19 June 1651), the son of Din Muhammad of the Tughay-Timurid dynasty, built at Balkh around 1611–12. As Meisami noted about the eleventh-century poet Farrukhi, Mahmud b. Amir Wali’s description of the *dawlatkhāna* is “concrete in (many) details and tantalizingly vague in others.”<sup>12</sup> Springing from a poetic imagination and written by a man with a strong literary style (the *Baḥr al-asrār* is a fine late example of rhymed prose or *sajʿ*), the work uses familiar cosmic and mythic imagery (the *dawlatkhāna*’s gardens are “Iram-like,” its portico “reaches to the arc of Saturn’s vault,” its views are like those of a “Chinese picture gallery”) to emphasize scale and grandeur and so his patron’s glory. The *Baḥr al-asrār* text is first and foremost a work of literary creativity and only secondarily a vector of architectural information. However, the text also gives specific and detailed measurements for

the entire complex as well as for sections of the building, and occasionally orients parts of the complex to the cardinal directions. It more consistently identifies the functions associated with each section of the building in specific and unambiguous terms (the area where hunting parties mount up, the place where a summer pavilion is erected for holding court, the washrooms for visitors, the zoo, the atelier for book production, etc.). To understand the text, it is also useful to know something about the author.

Mahmud b. Amir Wali was born about 1595.<sup>13</sup> At the age of nineteen, he was studying hadith under his brother-in-law, Sayyid Mirak Shah Husayni, and remained with him for another ten years, until the latter's death in 1624. A year later, he set out for India with no particular object in mind. He arrived in Peshawar in the autumn of 1625 and traveled about the subcontinent for the next six years, journeying from Delhi south to Ceylon (Sarandip, Sri Lanka), east to Calcutta, and west to Sind.<sup>14</sup> On his return to Balkh he was appointed the khan's personal librarian (*kitābdār-i khāṣṣ*), in which office he seems to have remained for at least a decade. He was a prolific writer, though of all his works, including a reported 50,000-verse *dīwān*, only parts of the *Baḥr al-asrār*, commissioned by the khan Nazr Muhammad, have survived.

The *Baḥr al-asrār* was to have been a seven-volume universal history, each volume divided into four parts (*rukns*). Only the third and fourth *rukns* of the first volume (a geographical compilation) and the complete sixth volume (on the history of Chinggis Khan and his successors in China, Iran, and Central Asia down to Nazr Muhammad Khan) have survived. The first three *rukns* of the sixth volume exist in three copies in Tashkent's Institute of Oriental Studies. The only copy of the fourth *rukna*, which contains the *dawlatkhāna* description, is held now in the India Office Collection of the British Library.

Mahmud b. Amir Wali's patron, Nazr Muhammad, was descended from Chinggis Khan through a grandson, Tugha Timur, a son of Jochi, and held the greater Balkh region (what is now Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush from Badakhshan to Bala Murghab) as his appanage from 1611 until 1641, while his older brother, Imam Quli, ruled Bukhara in a shared and more or less

coeval fashion. Nazr Muhammad became nominal khan of both Bukhara and Balkh when his brother abdicated in 1641 but was then deposed by his eldest son, who took control of Bukhara. Nazr Muhammad returned to Balkh, where he ruled from 1645 to 1651 (except for the brief occupation by a Mughal army in 1646).<sup>15</sup> In 1651, he was forced from Balkh by another ambitious son and died in Simnan, Iran while on the pilgrimage route to Arabia. Mahmud b. Amir Wali's own career as the khan's librarian no doubt was affected by the vicissitudes of Nazr Muhammad's.

Part 4 of the sixth volume of the *Baḥr al-asrār* contains a long section devoted to the history and geography of the city of Balkh. A number of scholars have made use of this passage in their work. Yet the passage devoted to the *dawlatkhāna* has so far been overlooked, at least as far as published work is concerned. In 1970, Zeki Velidi Togan produced a description of the city based on the *Baḥr al-asrār* but relied on the portion of the work devoted to Balkh,<sup>16</sup> seemingly unaware of the passage on the *dawlatkhāna*, which is treated elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> In the 1980s, the Soviet scholars Buri Akhmedov and Akhror Mukhtarov both published works on early modern Balkh and neither noted the existence of the *dawlatkhāna*.<sup>18</sup>

The section describing the *dawlatkhāna* appears in a chapter devoted to Nazr Muhammad's "wondrous creations," which included a large madrasa in Balkh, eight hunting lodges scattered through the mountains south of Balkh City, irrigation and agricultural projects, a variety of small mosques and other infrastructure projects (bridges, roads, caravansaries), and seven parks (*bāghs*). Certainly the *dawlatkhāna*, built within the urban confines of Balkh, was the most impressive of his works, carried out at the beginning of his reign over Balkh when he was in his early twenties.

Balkh City has three distinct sections all separately walled: an outer city (called variously *rabaḥ*, *shahr-i bīrūn*, *ḥiṣār-i bīrūn*), an inner city (*shahr-i darūn*, *ḥiṣār-i darūn*, *shahristān*), and a citadel (*quhandiz*, *qal'a*, *arg*, *bālā ḥiṣār*).<sup>19</sup> On the northern side of the city, the eleven-kilometer-long walls of the outer city spring from the walls of the inner city, themselves approximately three kilometers in circumference. The inner city stands on a fairly high mound above the outer city. At its southeast-

ern corner, on an even higher mound, is the third walled section, the citadel, known in early modern times as the Hinduwan Citadel (*Qal'a-i Hinduwān*), a term that also seems to have been applied at times to the entire inner city.<sup>20</sup> The *dawlatkhāna*, by virtue of its described location in the “*chahārbāgh* of Mir Jan Kildi Bi,” was outside the inner city walls (see Appendix for map of Balkh). As far as is known, the inner city contained no verdant areas, no doubt because of its height above the canals that fed the Balkh oasis.

The *chahārbāgh* of Mir Jan Kildi Bi, which Mahmud b. Amir Wali mentions, was developed by its eponym, a leading amir of the Jani-Begid Shibanid ‘Abd Allah Khan, who reigned as supreme khan from 1583 to 1598. Mir Jan Kildi Bi belonged to the Utarchi tribe (*ūymāq*) and was very close to ‘Abd Allah Khan from 1552 until late 1582, when the khan sent his son, ‘Abd al-Mu’min, to govern Balkh and assigned Mir Jan Kildi Bi to be his chief advisor.<sup>21</sup> He does not appear among the amirs who transferred their loyalties from the Jani-Begid Shibanids to the Tuqay-Timurid house in 1599 and therefore we can assume the *chahārbāgh* was constructed during the seventeen years between 1582 and 1599. Mir Jan Kildi Bi also built a mosque, which was located very close to the *chahārbāgh*.<sup>22</sup> The *chahārbāgh* was appropriated by the new regime when it took Balkh in 1601. A decade later, when the *dawlatkhāna* was constructed and Nazr Muhammad made it his residence, the *chahārbāgh* of Mir Jan Kildi Bi was given a new name, *Bāgh-i Khānī* (Royal Park). It is described by Mahmud b. Amir Wali as follows:<sup>23</sup>

Among the garden parks that have been laid out in the city is one the *khāqān* himself gave the name Bagh-i Khani, which is the place of enthronement and the residence (*maḥall-i julūs wa waṭan-i ma'nūs*) of His Highness. Its length from east to west is from near the mosque

of Jan Kildi Bi up to the vicinity (*ḥudūd*) of the New Jabba Khan Gate. Its width from north to south is from the Dih-i Shaykh Gate by the amount of area intervening (? *bi-qadr-i*<sup>24</sup> *sāḥat-i wāsiṭah*) between the Dih-i Shaykh Gate and Jabba Khan. In it there have been established lofty structures (*imārāt-i ‘āliyāt*), joy-filled palaces (*quṣūr-i mawfūr al-surūr*), rose gardens (*gulzār-hā*), and lanterns (*sirāj-hā*).<sup>25</sup>

Zeki Velidi Togan, who visited Balkh in 1968 with this part of the *Baḥr al-asrār* text in hand, places the Jabba<sup>26</sup> Khan Gate in the northwest corner of the pre-sixteenth-century walls of the outer city, just to the south of the southwest quadrant of the inner city walls. The Dih-i Shaykh Gate was one of the three gates linking the south side of the inner city with the outer city.<sup>27</sup> The appended map shows an approximate position of the Dih-i Shaykh and the old and the new Jabba Khan Gates. The phrase “by the amount of area intervening between the Dih-i Shaykh Gate and Jabba Khan” is slightly puzzling. Having specified the “New Jabba Khan Gate,” perhaps Mahmud b. Amir Wali did not feel it necessary to repeat the word “gate.” More likely, he was referring to the area known as “Jabba Khan,” the site of an ancient fortress by that name, of which no trace remained in his time,<sup>28</sup> and mapped by Togan to the area just west of the current inner city walls. Mahmud b. Amir Wali’s wording suggests that Jabba Khan was slightly south of the Dih-i Shaykh Gate and the width of the *chahārbāgh* was equivalent to that distance. The *Bāgh-i Khānī / Chahārbāgh-i Mīr Jān Kildī Bī*, therefore, must have covered a sizeable area and it was inside this *bāgh* that the *dawlatkhāna* was built. As the *Baḥr al-asrār* notes, the *bāgh* also contained other buildings, whose description matches parts of the *dawlatkhāna*, which he had earlier depicted.

## TEXT

/۱۲۱۳\ از آن جمله دولتخانه جدید است که در مبادی جلوس همایون بطالع سعد و اختر فرح بموضع چهارباغ میر جان کیلیدی تاسیس یافته بشرف اتمام مقرون گردید و آن فضاییست چون عرصه امید فصیح مشتمل بر مبانی چون قدر فلك رفیع و چون جاه خاقانی عریض و بساتین بهشت سرشت ارم صفت و قصور خلد برین \_\_\_ طینت مهندسان استاد و معماران والا نژاد بمشورت و صوابدید رای عالم آرای طرح آن بنای جهان نمایی را بنوعی افکنده اند که گویی رضوان روضه از جنت دنیا فرستاده هوایی انس افزایش بس صافی تر از چشمه نور و صحن غم زدایش آراسته تر ز چهره حور جنت عدن از اعتدال هوایش از غیرت و صبایی (مصراع)

مشک افشان از امتزاج نسیم اش \ \ در خجلت در زمین رشک خلد برین

مشاهده میگردد و نمودار ارم ذات العماد و لم یخلق مثلها فی البلاد و معانیه میشود (بیت)

گلاب است گویی بخویش روان \ \ همی شاد گردد ببیش روان

اطباق ایوان مقرنس اش بطاق مقوس کیوان رسیده کنگره قصر رفیع اش بطاق مشتری پیوسته صفها و رواقها بر اطراف و اکناف آن با منظرهای دلگشایی و غرفهای روح افزایی مرتب گشته و دار عرصه و حوالی آن احجار خام و مرمر مفروش و در سقف و جدران آن تماثیل مصور و طلسمات مثبت مشبت و منقوش نقاشان چبک دست در هر خانه کارخانه پرداخته و بر هر غرفه منظره چون نگارخانه چین ساخته طول این فضایی بی همتا تقریباً پنجاه جریب و عرض ده جریب شرعی و از آن جمله مردم مشاهدت است دوازده دربند است که هر یک جهت مصلحتی و معاملتی معد و ممد است

چنانچه دربند اول که عرصه فصیح و ساحت وسیع دارد در ضلع جنوبی آن جامعی است مشتمل بر طاقات و رواقات کثیره و در دو صحن عریض که وسعت تمامت آن زیاده بر پنج جریب است و هنگام ادایی صلوات ده هزار کس را گنجایش دارد و در مشرق و شمال این دربند بعضی بیوتات واقع است و میان مبانی جنوبی و عمرانات شمالی شارعی عام و یک نهر آب و محل نزول مواکب اقامت مراکب واسطه و حاضر است و در این مساحت دو درب عام و یک درب خاص واقع است

و دربند دوم مربع است غیر متساوی الاضلاع بر شمالی آن مطبخ عالی است که یک نهر بزرگ از میان آن جاری است مشتمل بر بیوتات متعدده و در صوب جنوبی آن فراش خانه قوش \ ۲۱۳\ ب\ جلو واقع است که اخف خیام ظفر فرجام است در این مقام فرزندان سعادت یار و سلاطین کامکار بهنگام خروج از دیوان اعلا پای در رکاب ظفر انتساب نهند

و دربند سیم فضای است روح افزا تخمیناً سه جریب و در قبله آن بنای عالی واقع است مشتمل بر یک خانه بزرگ که طول آن سی و یک ذرع و عرض آن یازده و نیم (ذرع) و ارتفاع آن سی گز و چند بیت دیگر و دهلیزی بجانب شرقی طول آن بیست و دو گز و عرض یازده ذرع و بر فراز آن کبوتر خانه در غایت بداعت و لطافت و تمامت این منظر عالی منقش بنقوش بدیعه و مصور بصور مخترعه و از بدایع روزگار آنکه اتمام دهلیز مذکور با تمامت حجرات منبتات و تصاویر و سایر آرایش و پیرایش در عرض سه روز سمت انجام یافته و این بنا را کرسی است که ارتفاع آن از اصل زمین زیاده از ده گز است و در حوالی صحن سرای حجراتی است جهت اقامت اهل حرف و پیشه‌وران و ایضا محل حراست بعض سباع از شیر و پلنگ و یوز و سایر حیوانات غریبه است و بر یک جانب این مقام چند خانه است جهت اغتسال و آب دست غربا و مسافرین و سپاه و غیرهم معد و ممد و چند کس جهت تمهید لوازم آن مقرر و معین و در این دربند آبی است مدام جاری و در مبادی احوال و ایوم نیز گاهی بعد از ادای جمعه و اعیاد کورنش عام در این مقام عز انجام میپذیرد و تحقیق احوال رعایا و سایر برایا و غوررسی دادخواحان و بذل ملتسمات و الحاح مامولات در این بنای عالی شرف وقوع میابد

و دربند چهارم مشتمل است بر ضلعین ضلع جنوبی آن منتهی میگردد بمنازل بعض محرمان حریم خاص و باغی که دست نشان همت عالی است و از غرایب آن باغ آنکه در دو سال مثمر گشته بنو باوه کام مرام آن حضرت را حلاوت بخشید و ضلع غربی آن محدود است بباب دربند پنجم و در اقصای آن دو دهلیز واقع است یکی جهت جلوس امرا و سایر اهل کورنش و دیگر برای تمهید سماطات و خوانات و مطعومات و مشروبات و در ساحت این دربند اشجار مذله است که در ایام غلبه حرارت متجذبه در ذلال آن تذلل نمایند و از این مقام محرمان سرای را اختصاص رفع دعوت اهل اخلاص فرمایند و درونی و بیرونی از این مقام امتیاز یابند

و دربند پنجم فراخنایی است محتوی بر عمارات رفیعه و صفجات منیعه و اشجار مغروس و اصناف ریاحین و اجناس خضروات و نهري از یک جانب جاری و نسیمی بر یک صوب ساری و در چاق وسط این ساحت با سماحت در تابستان شادروانی در غایت بداعت و در زمستان خرگاہی در نهایت وسعت و زینت بر افزاند و کورنش همایون اکثر در آن عز وقوع پذیرد و موهبت و عطیت و ابتذال مستدعیت و افضال متمنیات و ازدیاد مواجب و انتمایی مآرب و مطالب و دفع تظلمات و رفع تغلبات و سایر مراسم پادشاهی و لوازم دادگستری بیشتر (از حواشی: و توشک خانه بزرگ و خیاط خانه خاصه و مقامگاه بعضی اهل صنعت مثل کتاب و صحاف و نقاش و مذهب غیر ذلک در ضلع جنوبی این دربند است در این مقام با احترام شرف وقوع یابد)

و دربند ششم که در صوب جنوبی دربند پنجم واقع است محفوف است به بیٹی معمور و دهلیزی مرفوع طول بنای اول سی و دو گز عرض دوازده گز \ ۱۲۱۴ \ و ارتفاع آن بیست گز و خشبات سقف آن بیست و یک بالار و مسافت بین الخشبین یک گز و کسرا و ابواب آن چهاردهگانه و یک طاق مقرنس کاری بر مدخل و

يك طاق شبکه کاری بر اعلا و غرایب نقوش و تصاویر و طلسمات آن عنقریب سمت نگارش پذیرفته آمد اما دهلیز این خانه که در عرصه روزگار کارنامه ایست در طول بیست و یک گز و در عرض یازده و نیم گز است و نهري که شهریرا کفایت بود از وسط دهلیز مذکور چون بارقه نور گذران است

و دربند هفتم مربع است متساوي الاضلاع هر ضلعي بچندین مباني از حجرات و دهلیزات دو افاقه منتظم و بر نشیمن و مناظر مشتمل و این حظیره قدسیه را ساحتي است بچندین ریاحین و ازهار آراسته و اشجار سرو و صنوبر و نرنج و لیمو و سایر نباتات غریبه از قصب السکار و قرنفل و غیر ذلک پیراسته و کتابخانه و توشك خانه خاصه در این مقام واقع است

و دربند هشتم که نسخه ایست از فلك ثواب و سیاره نگاه را در آن راه نیست و خیال اهل انتباه از حقایق آن بواقعی آگاه نی و آنچه از طیب روایح و عطر فوایح آن بمشام ارباب مکاشفات میرسد چنان بوضوح می پیوندد گلکده است (مصراع)

ز باغ ارم قطعه منتخب و حوض خانه ایست در آنکه از رشك آن آب در دهان حوض کوثر می گردد

و دربند نهم و دهم و یازدهم که حمام گوهر کام در آن واقع است هر يك نمونه ایست (مصراع)

ز عشرت پیرای خلد

بالجمله این چند دربند چون معکوفات سرایر عصمت از نظر هر بی بصر دربند احتجاب و ستر اغتراب است و ورا دربندات اثنا عشر که موافق است با بروج سماویه دوازده دربند دیگر است (بیت)

خزان را در آن بوستان راه نیست \\\ صبا هم ز خلوتگه آگاه نیست

در او لاله بی داغ روید ز گل \\\ چو از صاحت سینه گل برگ دل

نبوده در آن غیر عصمت مقیم \\\ ز عفت بزنجیر بار شمیم

ندیده ز بس عصمت مامن اش \\\ رخ مهر را دیده روزن اش

## TRANSLATION

/213a/ Among these [buildings of his] is a new *dawlatkhāna*, for which he laid the foundations in the *Chahārbāgh-i Mīr Jān Kildī* and completed at the inception of [his] royal accession, under auspicious signs and good omens. This is a space as capacious as the roomy arena of hope, containing structures as high as the lofty firmament, as expansive as royal dignity, with fine paradisiacal Iram-like gardens and Paradise-like palaces. Master architects and highborn engineers, in consultation with and with the approval of the world-adorning mind, laid out such a design for that world-model structure that it is as if the Chief Gardener has sent it down from Paradise. Its intimacy-increasing air is purer than the fountain of light [sun] and its consoling spaces are better embellished than the face of a *houri*. The Garden of Eden is in envy of the temperateness of its air, and the east wind (hemistich)

spreading musk, is confounded by its breezes.

It is seen in the world as the envy of Paradise and an exemplar of “Iram of the pillars, the like of which has never been created in the land” [Qur’an 89:7]. And its meanings are (verse):

One would say its fragrant waters flow on their own  
Joyful are those covered by the flow.

The massed elements of its *muqarnas iwān* reach to the arc of Saturn’s vault; the lofty battlements of its palace conjoin the arc of Jupiter. The platforms and arcades along its sides and peripheries have been laid out with heart-stopping belvederes and delightful rooms. Its floor and surrounding areas are paved with undressed stone and marble. Skilled painters have made an atelier (*kārkhāna*) of every room, with images and talismans permanently inscribed and painted on ceilings and walls. In every room they have made a panorama (*manzara*) like the picture gallery of China (*nigār-khāna-i Chīn*). The length of this unparalleled space is approximately fifty *jarībs* and its width is ten canonical *jarībs*.

Of what people have seen, there are twelve *darbands*, each of which has been prepared and readied for a use and purpose.

**The first *darband***, which is of vast expanse and spacious ground, [contains] a congregational mosque com-

prising many vaults and arcades on its south side. In it (*dar ū* for *dar dū*) there is a wide plaza the total extent of which is more than five *jarībs*. At the time of performing the [congregational Friday] worship, it can hold ten thousand people. East and north of this *darband* there are some workshops (*buyūtāt*). A public street runs between the southern and northern buildings, as well as a water channel. This is also the place where the [royal] retinue dismounts and in the middle of which mounts stand ready. There are two public gates and one private gate into this space.

**The second *darband*** is a quadrangle of unequal sides. On the northern side is a lofty kitchen through the middle of which runs a large water channel. It has numerous work stations (*buyūtāt*). On the southern side [of the *darband*] is located the falconry (? *farāsh-khāna-i qūsh jalaw*), /213b/ which [comprises] the finest of triumphal tents (*akhaff-i khiyām-i zafar-farjām*). The auspicious [royal] sons and successful princes upon leaving the royal court (*dīwān-i a’lā*) mount their horses in this place [literally, place the foot in the victorious stirrup].

**The third *darband*** is a soul-inspiring expanse of approximately three *jarībs*. On its qibla [western] side, there is a lofty structure containing one large room measuring thirty-one *zar*’s in length, eleven and one-half *zar*’s in width, and thirty *gaz* in height, as well as some other rooms. On its eastern side, there is a hall (*dihlīzī*) twenty-two *gaz* long and eleven *zar*’s wide. On top of [this hall] is a dovecote of extreme inventiveness and subtlety. This entire sublime prospect (*manzar*) is inscribed with wonderful inscriptions and painted with creative images. One of the most novel things about it is that that hall, with all its chambers, inlay work (*hujarāt-i munabbatāt*), images, and other decorations and ornamentation was brought to completion in the course of [only] three days. This structure has a throne (*kursī*), which stands more than ten *gaz* above the ground. Around the courtyard (*ṣaḥn-i sarāy*) [of the *darband*] are residential rooms for craftsmen and artisans, and also [rooms for] keeping wild beasts, such as lions, leopards, panthers, and other exotic animals. On one side of this place there are some rooms (*chand khāna*) where strangers, wayfarers, soldiers, and others may attend to their personal hygiene (*ightisāl wa āb-dast*). Several

attendants are assigned there to look after the necessities. There is a source of continually flowing water in this *darband*. In earlier times, as well as today, sometimes after the performance of the Friday and holiday worship services, a public audience (*kūrniṣh-i ‘āmm*) is held in this noble place. Here in this sublime structure, [the khan] ascertains the circumstances of his subjects and other people, investigates [the cases of] those seeking justice, fulfills requests, and dispenses what is hoped for.

**The fourth *darband*** contains two [developed] sides [literally, axes (*zil‘ayn*)]. Its southern side terminates at the residences of some of the [khan’s] close family members (*maḥramān-i ḥarīm-i khāṣṣ*) and at a garden, which is the product of the sublime [royal] attention. One of the marvelous things about that garden is that it became productive in [only] two years and gave sweetness to the first fruits of His Highness’s desires. The western side is bounded by the gate of the fifth *darband*. At the far end of it (*dar aqāṣī-yi ān*—i.e., the fourth *darband*) are two halls, one where the amirs and other attendees of a [public] audience may sit, and the other for preparing dining cloths, tables, food, and drink. In the courtyard of this *darband* are shade trees, where soldiers seek shade at the height of the [summer] heat. From this place, [the khan] instructs his close family members (*maḥramān-i sarāy*) to invite people of integrity (*ahl-i ikhlāṣ*). Here is found the line [literally, the distinction (*imtiyāz*)] between the “inner” (*darūnī*) and the “outer” (*bīrūnī*) [i.e., the private and public areas].

**The fifth *darband*** is a spacious area containing lofty structures, mighty raised platforms, planted trees, and different types of aromatics and greenery. A canal flows from one side to the other and a breeze blows [through it] in one direction. On a platform (? *chāq*) in the middle of this bountiful area, an extremely fine pavilion (*shādirwānī*) is erected in summer and in winter a very capacious and finely decorated trellis tent (*khargāhī*).<sup>29</sup> Most royal audiences take place [on that *chāq*], and the bestowals, grants, fulfillment of requests, dispensing of felicitations, increasing of stipends, taking care of pressing business, satisfying of demands, dealing with oppressive and unjust acts, and all those other things required of a king and a justice-giver are mostly carried out in this esteemed place.

[**Marginalia**] On the south side of this *darband* are

a large furnishings [or bedding] storeroom (*tūshak-khāna*), a private tailor’s room (*khayyāt-khāna*), and places (*maqāmgāh*) for craftsmen such as scribes, book-binders, painters, illuminators, and others.

**The sixth *darband***, which is located on the southern side of the fifth *darband*, is encompassed by a *bayt-i ma‘mūr* and a lofty hall (*dihlīz*). The former is thirty-two *gaz* long, twelve *gaz* wide, /214a/ and twenty *gaz* high. The ceiling is twenty-one beams, and the spacing between the beams is one *gaz* and a bit.<sup>30</sup> There are fourteen doors leading into it. At the entrance there is an arch of *muqarnas* work on top of which is another arch of grille-work (*shabaka-kārī*). The wondrous paintings, images, inlay work, and talismans will soon be described (? *‘anqarīb samt-i nigariṣh pazīrufta āmad*). As for the vestibule (*dihlīz*) of this structure, which is a model for the time, it is twenty-one *gaz* long and eleven and one-half *gaz* in width. A channel of water, sufficient for an entire city, runs through the middle of the vestibule like a shaft of lightning.

**The seventh *darband*** is a square, each side of which has several buildings with rooms and vestibules arranged with two elevations [two storeys? (*dū afāqa*)], benches (*bar nashīman*), and all-encompassing views. This enclosure (*ḥazīra*) is vast and adorned with several aromatic plants and flowers; cypress, piñon pine, orange, and lemon trees; and other exotic plants like sugarcane, clove, etc. There is a library and a private furnishings storeroom here.

[As for] **the eighth *darband***, which is a copy of the sphere (*falak*) of the fixed [stars] and revolving [planets], one cannot enter it and [even] people possessing acute comprehension in fact are unable to grasp the true reality of it. [But] whatever reaches the olfactory senses (*mashām*) of those possessing a visionary imagination (*arbāb-i mukāshafāt*) makes it clear that it [the *darband*] is a rose garden. (hemistich)

It is a piece selected from the Bagh-i Iram.

In it there is a reflecting pool (*hawẓ*) the water of which is the envy of the waters of Kawsar.

**The ninth, tenth, and eleventh *darbands***: In them are jewel-like (*gawhar-qām*) baths, each one an exemplar (hemistich)

from pleasure-embellishing eternity.

In short, these few *darbands*, like the secluded places (*ma'kūfāt*) of the secrets of chastity, are the enclosures (*darband*) of seclusion and the veil of separation from the view of anyone who is without the sight to see (*har bī başr*).

Beyond the twelve *darbands*, which correspond with the twelve heavenly constellations [signs of the zodiac], are another twelve *darbands*: (verses)

In this garden, there is no autumn  
 The east wind too is unaware of its secret places.  
 In it the tulip grows from the mud without a mark,  
 Like the heart's petal [grows] from the expanse of the breast.  
 Nothing but virtue (*'iṣmat*) resides there,  
 Feminine purity (*'iffat*) wraps it in fragrance.  
 Never before has virtue had such a refuge:  
 Its windows see the sun's cheek.

#### COMMENTARY

Mahmud b. Amir Wali's overall description of the *dawlatkhāna* introducing the individual parts or *darbands* employs conventional Qur'anic, cosmological, and mythic imagery to emphasize the grand scale of the work and thus, by extension, the power and glory of his patron. His placement of the *dawlatkhāna* in the *chahārbāgh* formerly owned by Mir Jan Kildi Bi and its size present one of the recurrent problems of interpreting the text: the ambiguity of the pronominal antecedent. The recording of the length and breadth of "this unparalleled space" raises the question: which space? The *dawlatkhāna* itself, which is the proximate subject and logical antecedent, or the whole *chahārbāgh*? Moreover, how large was an area fifty *jaribs* in length and ten in width, and to which of the antecedents does it most likely refer?

The *jarīb* may be either a unit of length or a unit of area (i.e., a square *jarīb*), though it is more commonly encountered as a unit of area.<sup>31</sup> The area described by Mahmud b. Amir Wali would have been some 7,000 feet (2,134.1 meters) long and 1,400 feet (426.8 meters) across for an area of 9,800,000 square feet or 910,833.9 square meters, i.e., 225 acres or 91 hectares, using the *jarīb* of sixty *gaz* and the *gaz* of twenty-eight inches. This is a sizeable piece of property and given the even numbers "fifty" and "ten," the author might just have been

estimating (and perhaps exaggerating) the size. When the author gives *zar'* or *gaz* dimensions (in his usage these are interchangeable) for individual structures in the *dawlatkhāna*, they seem reasonable for a building, whether the *gaz* / *zar'* was the twenty-eight inches of nineteenth-century Balkh, the thirty-two inches of seventeenth-century India and Central Asia, or some other comparable equivalent. Probably at this point we should understand that when Mahmud b. Amir Wali wrote down the overall dimensions of fifty *jaribs* by ten *jaribs*, he was referring to the entire *chahārbāgh* and not to the palace complex itself.

His use of the term *darband* and specifically the "twelve *darbands*" that he says the *dawlatkhāna* comprised is also problematic. *Darband* is a compound word, according to Dikhhkuda, made up of *dar* (door) and *band* from *bastan* (to close); one has the sense that what is intended by the term here is a part of the complex that can be closed off—a wing, or simply a section. It has been suggested by Maria Subtelny that, in conjunction with the number "twelve," it may have been applied by the author to an architectural context, but without any preexisting architectural connotation.<sup>32</sup> I have not encountered this term in any other architectural description for a sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Central Asian building. It does appear later, however, as an architectural term in the *Sirāj al-tawārikh* (Lamp of History), an early twentieth-century chronicle of Afghanistan. In one context, the amir of Afghanistan orders one of his generals to build a fort with "one *darband* being a storeroom or granary."<sup>33</sup> In another instance, it would also seem to be referring to a section of a building: "they also destroyed one *darband* of the residence (*sarāy*) of Mir Hashim."<sup>34</sup> For the most part here, the term is applied to what appears to be a unit of the palace complex that generally comprises several elements—workshops, waiting rooms, washrooms, plantings, shops, throne rooms, a library. The third and sixth *darbands*, however, each seem to have been made up of a single monumental building (*bayt-i ma'mūr*), with a vestibule (*dihlīz*) but no mention of a courtyard, walls, or gates.

The design and terminology of the *dawlatkhāna* could well have been shared with Mughal India during Jahangir's and Shah Jahan's eras (1605–ca. 1635). The

*dawlatkhāna* predates by a few years the Jahangirid fort at Lahore, one of the few examples of Jahangir's work more or less untouched by Shah Jahan's later renovations and thus exhibiting a basis for comparison with the contemporary Balkh *dawlatkhāna*. Jahangir completed the Lahore Fort between 1617 and 1620 and his work remains visible today.<sup>35</sup> In particular, there is a striking similarity between the *Baḥr* description of the *bayt-i ma'mūr* of the sixth *darband*, measuring thirty-two *gaz* long, twelve *gaz* wide, and twenty *gaz* high with its picture gallery, and the surviving "picture-wall" of the Lahore Fort, which R. Nath dates to between 1612 and 1619.<sup>36</sup> However, the picture wall at Lahore is on the building's exterior, while the *Baḥr al-asrār* text implies that the pictures are inside the building, though this is not entirely certain. Besides the Lahore Fort, the architecture of the Agra Fort, which he saw in the late 1620s, may also have been on Mahmud b. Amir Wali's mind as he described the Balkh *dawlatkhāna*.<sup>37</sup> But if the structure were undertaken as early as he states, then it is more or less contemporaneous with the work on the Lahore Fort. The royal complex of Fatehpur Sikri is also a series of connected walled compounds, which might easily have been labeled *darbands*. Seen from the air on Google Earth, it is not hard to imagine that this is the kind of complex described by Mahmud b. Amir Wali.

We know that architectural ideas and fashions were shared between India and Central Asia, something well documented for earlier times.<sup>38</sup> Mahmud b. Amir Wali himself spent some seven years traveling around India between 1625 and 1632, during which time he toured and later referred to some of the extant Mughal architecture.<sup>39</sup> Among the many cities he visited were Lahore, Delhi, and Agra, and though he does not write about the Mughal buildings of these cities, he must have been as impressed by what he saw in those places as he was by Ajmer and Fathpur in Jaipur, the buildings that he described as "inciting the envy of the Chinese picture gallery and heightening the jealousy (*ghayrat*) of Paradise (*khuld-i barīn*),"<sup>40</sup> rhetorical images that he also employs in the description of the *dawlatkhāna*. Although he traveled to India well after construction of the *dawlatkhāna*, according to his dating, he did not write about it until his return. So it is not unreasonable to think that he carried a memory of it to India

and then added his recollections of Mughal buildings he had seen or heard of when he later wrote about the Balkh *dawlatkhāna*.

Did Mahmud b. Amir Wali know the designers and builders of the *dawlatkhāna* and might he have heard the term *darband* from them? Although he knew the names of the architects and construction engineers<sup>41</sup> who worked on Nazr Muhammad's great madrasa in Balkh, where work began in October 1612, by which time the *dawlatkhāna* was supposedly finished, he does not tell us who was responsible for the design and construction of the *dawlatkhāna*.

Contemporary Safavid architecture may have been a source of inspiration for Mahmud b. Amir Wali's patron, Nazr Muhammad. Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629) had already commenced work on major building projects in Isfahan before moving his capital there from Qazvin in the 1590s. More than a dozen years before work began on Nazr Muhammad's palace complex, the royal precincts in Isfahan were already known by the name *dawlatkhāna* and were also probably famous for their figural decoration. Moreover, the description of the various structures of the *Bāgh-i Naqsh-i Jahān* in Isfahan bears some overall resemblance to that of the twelve *darbands* of Nazr Muhammad's *dawlatkhāna*.<sup>42</sup> But until the *dawlatkhāna* site is surveyed and excavated, any discussion of influences and similarities has to remain speculative.

### *The First Darband*

The description of *darbands* seems to proceed in a more or less linear fashion from the public, to the semi-private, to the private areas of the palace (see Appendix for tentative plan of the complex). The ordinal arrangement (first, second, third, etc.) of *darbands* in Mahmud b. Amir Wali's description suggests the sequence in which they would appear to the visitor proceeding through the *dawlatkhāna*. Whether the visitor could enter the complex at a point other than through the *muqarnas*-decorated arch of the first *darband*, it is impossible to say. The first *darband* was completely public space and incorporated a large congregational mosque. In his description of the *darband*, Mahmud b. Amir Wali uses the areal *jarīb* to give some sense of its size. The mosque plaza alone was "more than five

*jaribs*,” about a hectare, or some two and a half acres, approximately 110,000 square feet. There is evidence from a contemporary source that the mosque did indeed exist. Mahmud b. Amir Wali, who was meticulous about recording the architectural legacy of Nazr Muhammad, attributes only one congregational mosque to him and the Mughal historian ‘Inayat Khan refers to it when recording the Mughal conquest of Balkh in 1646. On Tuesday, the third of Jumada II 1056 (17 July 1646), Prince Murad Bakhsh made a triumphal entry into the city. On the following Friday, the khutba was recited in Shah Jahan’s name “within the mosque founded by Nazar [*sic*] Muhammad Khan *outside the gate of his palace*” (my emphasis).<sup>43</sup> There should be little doubt that the congregational mosque of the *dawlatkhāna* and the one noted by ‘Inayat Khan are one and the same.

The *Baḥr al-asrār* text suggests a mosque plan not unlike that of Shah Jahan’s much later Juma Maṣjid in Delhi, a domed mihrab, in this case of three large iwans, probably open on three sides. Adjacent and to the east of this large mihrab was a large plaza,<sup>44</sup> undoubtedly capable of holding the ten thousand worshippers whom Mahmud b. Amir Wali mentions. A water channel ran along the eastern edge of the sanctuary area and provided the ablution stations required by ritual. Next to it was the public road, also oriented north–south. Somewhere along the road, probably close to the entrance to the private gate leading from the *darband*, was the spot where the khan and his retinue would mount their horses when leaving the *dawlatkhāna* and dismount when returning. To ‘Inayat Khan, this probably gave the area the appearance of being at the gate of the palace, even though Mahmud b. Amir Wali clearly identifies the entrance to the mosque as the entrance to the entire palace complex. Shops (or workshops [*buyūtāt*]) were arrayed outside the mosque, along the east and north sides of the *darband*. Finally, the *darband* had three gates, two public and one private, which may provide a clue to the relationship of the first *darband* to other *darbands*. Although the location of the gates is not given, we have to assume that the two public gates were at either end of the north–south road leading in and out of the *darband*. The private gate probably led to the *andarūn* or private residences of the khan’s family, later described as lying to the south of the fourth *darband*, and was most likely in the east wall of the first *darband*.

### *The Second Darband*

The author provides only a few indirect hints as to the location of this *darband* with respect to the first *darband*. Nor does he tell us about its size, other than that it held a kitchen and a falconry. The kitchen with its numerous work stations was presumably able to serve the private needs of the khan and his family, as well as fulfill his public responsibilities to provide food at holidays for the needy, and as rewards for, and for the daily needs of, soldiers, scholars, and anyone else deserving; this food would be distributed on the grounds of the mosque. Like the first *darband*, the second *darband* also had an area where, the author tells us, the khan’s sons mounted their horses, probably adjacent to the gate connecting it to the first *darband* and, one would assume, near the place where the khan and his retinue would mount and dismount.

The southern gate of the first *darband*, again on the assumption of a roughly north–south axis for the entire complex, would have most likely then been the northern gate of the second.

### *The Third Darband*

The third *darband* presents more difficulty. On only one occasion does Mahmud b. Amir Wali feel it necessary to establish the relationship of one *darband* to another. Perhaps he felt that the reader would understand his progression and could puzzle out the relationships from the clues he gave.

For the third *darband*, he provides the size, three *jaribs* or about an acre and a half, but leaves the reader with only a vague idea of where it stood in relation to the first two *darbands*. The fact that on occasion the khan would conduct a *darbar* here after the Friday service or on holidays is some indication that it was near the mosque. Since the author only describes buildings on the east and west sides of the *darband*, I would tentatively locate it to the south of the second *darband*, assuming that the gates leading in and out of it were on the north and south road, but there is only the slight evidence of the location of the major structures in it to support this placement.

The *darband* included two large and probably connected structures. On the west or qibla side stood a

tall one-room building (called simply *binā-yi ʿālī*, lofty edifice) measuring thirty-one *zarʿ* in length, eleven and one-half *zarʿ* in width, and thirty *zarʿ* in height. Using the nineteenth-century Balkh *gaz* or *zarʿ* standard of twenty-eight inches, this works out to a structure 72 feet 4 inches (22 meters) long, 26 feet 10 inches (8.2 meters) wide, and 70 feet (21.3 meters) high. To the east (presumably of this tall edifice) were several other rooms (*chand bayt-i dīgar*) and an equally tall *dihlīz* (vestibule, hall, or passageway with rooms leading off it) measuring twenty-two *gaz* by eleven *zarʿ* (*zarʿ* and *gaz* used interchangeably) and thirty *gaz* in height, or 51 feet 4 inches (15.6 meters) long by 25 feet 8 inches (7.8 meters) wide and 70 feet (21.3 meters) high. I will return to the issue of this reported scale below. The *dihlīz* had numerous rooms, all decorated with images and inlay work (*munabbatāt*), and a dovecote on its roof of sufficient distinction to elicit the author's admired note. It was in this *darband*, whether in the one-room hall or the *dihlīz* is not clear, that Nazr Muhammad Khan would on occasion hold special public audiences, after Friday and holiday worship services. The *kursī* (throne) in the *dihlīz*, which was reportedly ten *gaz* (23 feet 4 inches [7.1 meters]) high, was where he probably sat during those audiences. These receptions, ceremonial rather than administrative, were distinct from the *durbars* (*kūrniṣh*, *kur(u)nush*) held in the fifth *darband* (see below). The approximately one and one-half acres covered by the third *darband* were also home to a small zoo and facilities where "strangers, wayfarers, and soldiers" could attend to their personal hygiene in washrooms staffed by attendants.

#### The Fourth Darband

We have a better picture of the relationship of this *darband* to other parts of the palace, although the east and north sides remain undefined. The southern side was bounded by the royal private quarters, the *andarūn* or *ḥaram-sarāy*, and a garden of which, we are told, the khan was inordinately proud. In another part of his work, Mahmud b. Amir Wali commends his patron for his agricultural and horticultural interests and investments, and attributes to him the introduction to Balkh of many new species and varieties of edible and non-edible plants.<sup>45</sup>

This side of the *darband*, whose size is not given, is where the women of the harem could meet with invited guests; it marked the boundary between public and private space. The west side of the *darband* contained a gate leading into the fifth *darband*. Since the women's quarters and the khan's garden were to the south and the fifth *darband* was to the west of the fourth *darband*, a reasonable placement of this *darband* would be to the west of the third *darband*. The fourth and fifth *darbands* are the only ones explicitly related to each other. "At its farthest end," i.e., on the fourth *darband's* side of the gate into the fifth, were two vestibules, one a waiting room for amirs and other worthies prior to attending audience in the fifth *darband*, the other a kind of butler's pantry, where the necessaries for dining were assembled and prepared. The central square of this *darband* was well planted with shade trees to provide a haven in the heat of a Balkh summer. Although the author provides no dimensions for this *darband*, its mainly garden character suggests it was of considerable size.

#### The Fifth Darband

The khan and his immediate entourage seem to have spent most of the working day while in Balkh in the fifth *darband*. With its pavilions, running water, aromatic trees, and shrubs, it was probably meant to evoke the Chinggisid and Timurid ideal of the garden residence, connecting the architecture to patterns of order and rule.<sup>46</sup> Here Nazr Muhammad took care of "all those other things required of a king and justice-giver." Here the khan operated in a mutable space, the royal tents (*shādirwān* and *khargāh*) being pitched and struck with the changing seasons. But that impression of nomadic life was anchored in the reality of permanent structures on the south side of the *darband*, which housed crucial adjuncts of the royal court—the ever-important keeper of the cushions, and the specialists in illustrated book production. The unicum manuscript of the *Baḥr al-asrar* held now by the British Library in the India Office Collection is not an autograph copy but was made for Nazr Muhammad's library, which was famous in its time (see below). The information about the work space for "scribes (*kuttāb*), a bookbinder (*ṣaḥḥāf*), a miniaturist (*naqqāsh*), and an illuminator (*muzahhib*) on the south side of the *darband*" is given in a marginal

note; indeed one can almost imagine either the copyist, Shah Qasim,<sup>47</sup> or one of the artisans working on the volume, adding the note to memorialize themselves and their workplace.

#### *The Sixth Darband*

This appears to have entirely been taken up by what the author calls a *bayt-i ma'mūr*. The Qur'anic *Bayt al-Ma'mūr* is explained as a wondrous building in the fourth (or seventh) heaven and is the prototype of the earthly Ka'ba. It was the Prophet Muhammad's final stop during his miraculous ascent (*mi'rāj*) or Night Journey from the Dome of the Rock to the Throne of God. Exactly what the author meant by this term in the case of the *dawlatkhāna* and what the function of the building was, we simply do not know. Particularly notable in the description of the *bayt-i ma'mūr* is the reference to "wondrous paintings, images, inscriptions, and talismans."

Mahmud b. Amir Wali gives very specific dimensions for the *bayt-i ma'mūr* and for the vestibule attached to it so that one tends to think that it is not just rhetorical flourish. As described, the building itself was thirty-two *gaz* long, twelve *gaz* wide, and twenty *gaz* high—that is, 74 feet 8 inches (23 meters) in length, 28 feet (8.5 meters) in width, and 46 feet 8 inches (14.2 meters) in height. It was covered by a "twenty-one beam" roof. This suggests that the "beam" measurement in Balkh was somewhat longer than in Bukhara (see note 30). The *bayt-i ma'mūr* itself had a large vestibule leading into it measuring twenty-one *gaz* by eleven and one-half *gaz* (49 feet by 26 feet 10 inches, or 15 meters by 8.25 meters).

The major question we are left with is: what was the function of the building? The fourteen doors would indicate a public building, but its location deep within the *dawlatkhāna* and the fact that other areas and structures have been already designated for public audiences and receptions suggest it was the khan's own residence and possibly housed his chancellery, secretariat, and other offices of officials close to him.

#### *The Seventh Darband*

The seventh *darband*, a square whose dimensions are not given, contained the khan's library, which must

have been sizeable. From the description of this *darband* as well as the fifth *darband*, it appears that the *kitābkhāna* corresponded more with library as repository than with library as an atelier for the production of books, since the craftsmen associated with the production of manuscripts had their workshops in the fifth *darband*. Nazr Muhammad Khan must have had a remarkable collection. He is said to have donated more than two thousand volumes to his great madrasa, which is also dated to this early period of his time in Balkh.<sup>48</sup> Mahmud b. Amir Wali, as head librarian, was able to do most of his research for the *Baḥr al-asrār* in the khan's library, although he also had access to the collection of his brother-in-law, Sayyid Mirak Shah Husayni, which probably focused more on hadith and related Qur'anic disciplines. In the *Baḥr al-asrār* he cites a large number of the works he consulted and provides an idea of the books at his disposal.<sup>49</sup> Geographies and histories predominate because these were the subjects in which the *Baḥr al-asrār* was mainly interested, but Nazr Muhammad's library certainly would have included the standard works in Hanafi jurisprudence, Qur'anic commentary, hadith and hadith studies, Arabic linguistics, rhetoric, theology, Sufism, and classical Persian poetry—the typical kinds of titles that would have made up a book donation to a madrasa library at the time.<sup>50</sup>

#### *The Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Darbands*

It is probably fair to say that the *dawlatkhāna* accessible to the public was limited to the first seven *darbands*. The description of the eighth through eleventh *darbands* ascends into the metaphorical and imagistic, and one has the impression that either they were a private space that Mahmud b. Amir Wali had not himself examined, or he was struggling to make the description of the actual complex correspond with the duodecimal literary structure he had imposed on it. There is hardly anything specific about the eighth *darband* except for the fact that it had a pool. Mahmud then moves on and conflates the next three *darbands* into one description, which again suggests that he is writing about something that he never saw himself, a private area of the palace to which he did not have access. He never mentions a twelfth *darband*.

There are elements, probably attributable to the demands of style, that make one wonder sometimes about the correspondence of the description with reality. Not least of these is the parting remark that “beyond these twelve *darbands* lie another twelve *darbands*,” which may be understood as simply a way to reinforce the reader’s impression of a truly grand complex or to correspond with a mystical world view in which a truer reality lies just beyond the physical world. If the twelfth *darband* and another twelve did indeed exist, the evidence for them suggests that any such areas were deep in *andarūn* territory, in the private space inaccessible to outsiders, or more likely deep in the imagination of the writer.

### CONCLUSION

The precise description of eight of the *darbands* of the *dawlatkhāna* is compelling evidence that the building was at least partially occupied by 1635, when this part of the *Baḥr al-asrār* was written. Certainly the use of the mosque by invading Mughal forces in 1646 corroborates its existence. From the description, it clearly corresponds with three of the four palace types proposed by Sussan Babaie. The evidence is equally clear that the *dawlatkhāna* was planned and served as a permanent residence and not simply as a garden pleasure for the khan. The architecture and its use provide a sketch of the daily activities of the khan. The *andarūn*, which could only be hinted at by the author, was the center of the khan’s family life, while the adjacent *bayt-i ma’mūr* might well have housed both residential quarters and the bureaucratic offices that his government relied on. The fifth *darband* with its seasonally tented audience chamber area must have required his presence for a substantial part of every working day. There he would hear and act on appeals to the throne, dispense favors, receive foreign envoys (there was a continual flow of envoys between Mughal India and Balkh, and Isfahan and Balkh), read out proclamations, award (and increase) salaries and stipends, preside over the sessions (*majālis* and *maḥāfil*) at which scholarly and literary talent was displayed and occasionally rewarded, and undertake “all those other things required of a king and justice-

giver.” When he tired of these duties, he might find relief from the strain of rule in his nearby garden and various agricultural projects; not far away were the stables and falconry, where he could equip himself for the hunt. The shops, kitchen, and workshops provided for the needs of the court, and during the three-decade long rule of Nazr Muhammad at Balkh we find him in residence for the vast majority of the time. When campaigns were mounted against the Safavids in the marches to the west and the Mughals to the south, he tended to send his sons or his amirs. He is said to have had a number of hunting lodges in the mountains south of Balkh, but there is not much evidence in the *Baḥr al-asrār* or elsewhere that he made a great deal of use of them.

As far as we know, no physical traces survive today of the *dawlatkhāna*, but only a careful survey of the area in which it was located will verify that it has indeed completely vanished. While the description of it brings to mind two well-preserved palace complexes—the *dawlatkhāna* in Isfahan and the Mughal suburban residence of Fatehpur Sikri, both of which might have served as models for Nazr Muhammad’s architects—without an archaeological survey it is difficult to go beyond general remarks about the similarities.

There is, however, some intriguing photographic and plan evidence that substantial remains of the *dawlatkhāna* survived as late as the third decade of the twentieth century. In 1922, Alfred Foucher signed a treaty on behalf of the French government with the Afghan government of Amir Aman Allah Khan (r. 1919–29) that established the Délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan (DAFA) and gave the French rights to survey and excavate in the country. As DAFA’s main academic interest in the 1920s was the Hellenistic legacy in Afghanistan, it turned its attention first to Balkh as the center of Bactrian civilization. In 1924, an expedition under Foucher surveyed the area around the inner city, made some sondages inside the inner city, took photographs, and produced a few plans. The results of the work were not published for almost twenty years.<sup>51</sup>

In a letter to Émile Senart dated 10 February 1924, which is included in the published volume, Foucher wrote:

The richest collection of Musulman ruins is found, as I have already told you, in the western part of the city, especially between the roads to Aqcheh and Kelif. In this regard, there are the remains of the old Charsu, the crossroads market; surviving porches of two colleges; (the ruins) of a fine mosque, the boldness of whose still-standing arches were worth including on the general plan and photographing; and finally numerous wall panels, the vestiges of palaces referred to by Marco Polo and Arab authors. But similar debris is spread almost everywhere both inside and outside the (city) walls and awaits the attention of specialists in Islamic art.<sup>52</sup>

While it is doubtful that either Marco Polo or the Arab geographers spoke of these particular ruins, Foucher's brief remarks are significant: first, they establish that some portion of the 'Abd Allah Khan and Nazr Muhammad Khan Madrasas (the "two colleges") survived well into the twentieth century,<sup>53</sup> and second, they give us the only known evidence that the Nazr Muhammad palace complex was actually built out to the degree that Mahmud b. Amir Wali describes. However, it is quite possible that the ruins photographed by Alfred Foucher in 1924 and labeled by him *mosquée du quartier ouest* (pl. 1), *ruines de la ville moderne* (pl. 2), and *restes d'un palais musulman* (pl. 3) are important elements of Nazr Muhammad's extensive *dawlatkhāna*.<sup>54</sup> These photographs show the surviving portion of a mosque, a three-bayed mihrab, from two sides, the north (pl. 1) and the west (pl. 2). The latter photograph, in which the mosque is on the far left-hand side of the picture, shows its relationship to most, if not all, of the entire complex and gives a vivid sense of the vast area that the complex covered, one that fully confirms Mahmud b. Amir Wali's description. Moreover, in plate V (d), *quartier ouest* of the published volume (not reproduced here), taken from the heights of the Balkh citadel and looking down on the *dawlatkhāna* district, ruins are clearly visible, standing where the *Baḥr al-asrār* situated the *dawlatkhāna* inside the *chahārbāgh* of Mir Jan Kildi Bi. According to Foucher's measurements, the mihrab was 27 meters long and 12 meters wide, giving a floor area of about 324 square meters (3,500 square feet) (fig. 1). Judging by the person posed to give scale (pl. 1), the arches supporting the three domes, which had collapsed by 1924, were at least six or seven meters above ground level and probably originally much

higher, the ground level having silted up considerably in the meantime.

A comparison of the dimensions given by Mahmud b. Amir Wali for the *bayt-i ma'mūr* and the measurements taken by the Foucher expedition of the *palais musulman* reveals considerable correspondence. Foucher's plan (fig. 2) of the building, as well as the photograph, shows a rectangular structure flanked at right angles by two connecting wings. The central structure measures 79 feet 1 inch (24.1 meters) long by 30 feet 2 inches (9.2 meters) wide, numbers and proportions that correspond closely to Mahmud b. Amir Wali's thirty-two *gaz* by twelve *gaz* (75 feet 6 inches [23 meters] by 27 feet 11 inches [8.5 meters]), allowing for some uncertainty about the actual length of the seventeenth-century Balkh *gaz*. The northern wing on the plan measures 65 feet 7 inches (20 meters) by 30 feet 2 inches (9.2 meters), somewhat longer and wider than the *gaz* dimensions of Mahmud b. Amir Wali for the vestibule (49 feet 3 inches [15 meters] by 27 feet 1 inch [8.25 meters]). More difficult to reconcile is the presence of a second wing (or vestibule) not mentioned by Mahmud b. Amir Wali. Nonetheless, the overall dimensions and the photograph provided by Foucher show a building very much in keeping with the one described by the author of the text. In the case of the height of these buildings, the height dimension of about forty-seven feet given by Mahmud b. Amir Wali seems to correlate well with plate 3 showing the palace building with a man standing against one wall for scale. In 1924, the height of that wall was at least five times the height of the figure standing in front of it and it is evident that erosion has reduced the height while no doubt raising the grade level around the building on which the man is standing.

If we assume for the moment that the DAFA expedition did indeed photograph the remains of the *dawlatkhāna*, we can use the shadows on the buildings to tentatively establish that the complex was oriented along a north-south or northwest-southeast axis, beginning at the main entryway. In addition, Foucher's plans of the mosque (fig. 1) and the *palais* (fig. 2) orient them north-south. The mihrab wall of the mosque had to have faced west (or actually more southwest). In plate 2 the façade of the mosque is in full sun and the



Pl. 1. The three-bay mihrab. (After A. Foucher and Mme. E. Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route de l'Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, 2 vols. [Paris: Les Éditions d'art et d'histoire, 1942–47], vol. 1, pl. XXVI [b])



Pl. 2. View of the *dawlatkhāna* from the southwest, with the three-bay mihrab to the left and the *bayt-i ma'mūr* to the right. (After Foucher and Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route*, vol. 1, pl. XXVI [c])



Pl. 3. Remains of the *bayt-i ma'mūr*. (After Foucher and Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route*, vol. 1, pl. XXVI [d])

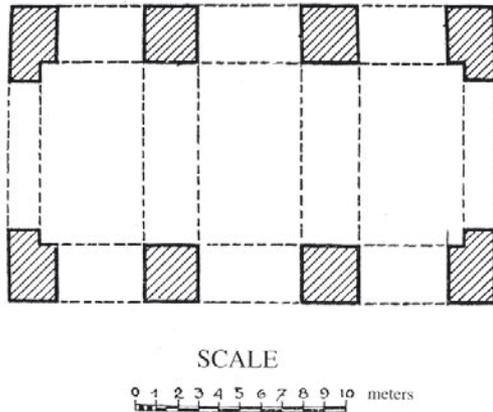


Fig. 1. The Balkh *dawlatkhāna*, mihrab of the first *darband*. (After Foucher and Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route*, vol. 1, fig. 12)

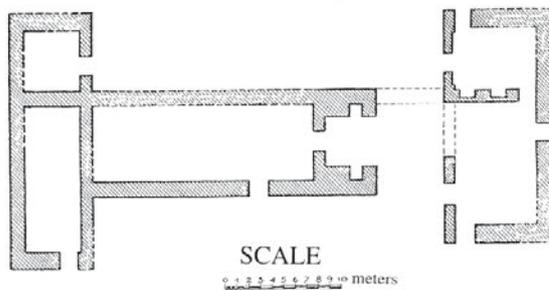


Fig. 2. The Balkh *dawlatkhāna*, *bayt-i ma'mūr* of the sixth *darband*. (After Foucher and Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route*, vol. 1, fig. 13)

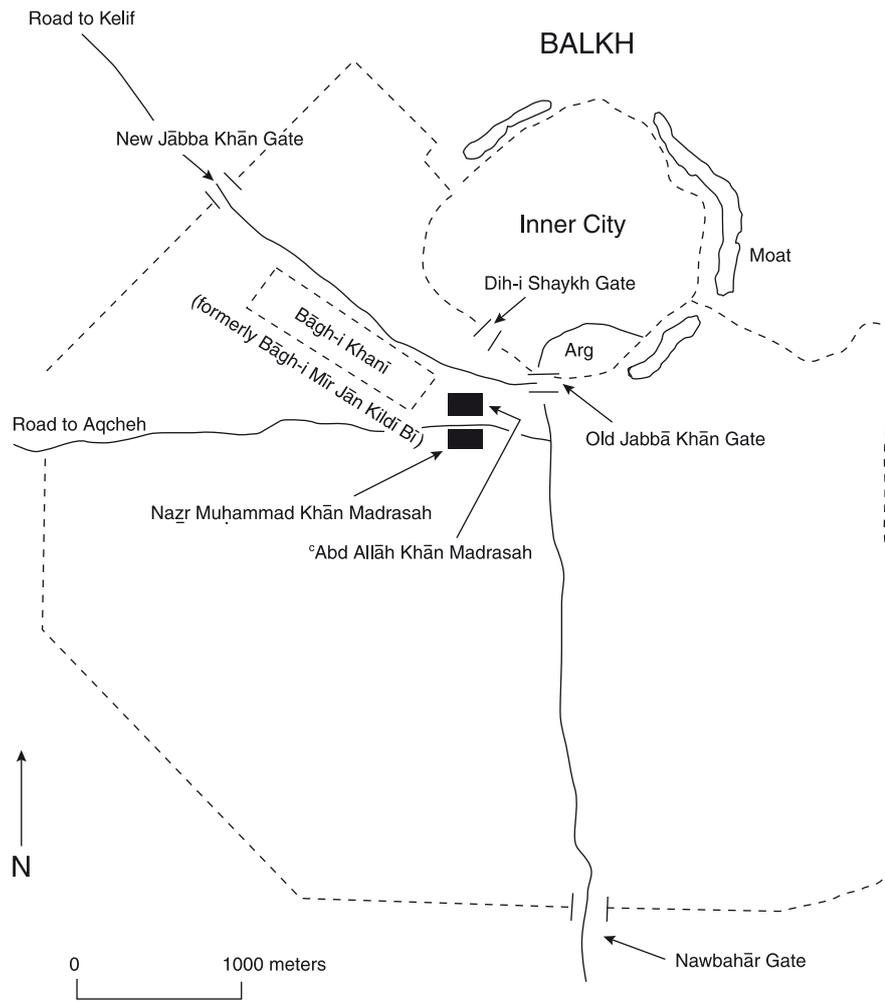
shadows on the palace to its far right are on the walls at right angles to the mosque. This indicates that the photograph was probably taken in the afternoon and the photographer was facing the mihrab wall with the sun at his back and his camera pointed east or northeast.

All of these ruins seem to have been leveled by the abortive plan to rebuild Balkh as the “cradle of Aryanism” in the 1930s.<sup>55</sup> A series of concentric ring roads with the Abu Nasr Parsa Mausoleum at their center was laid out and excavated though never developed further. The pattern of these ring roads is still visible from the air. Those excavations appear to have included the area where the *dawlatkhāna* was constructed and there has been no report since then of anyone seeing anything like the structures photographed by the DAFA expedition.

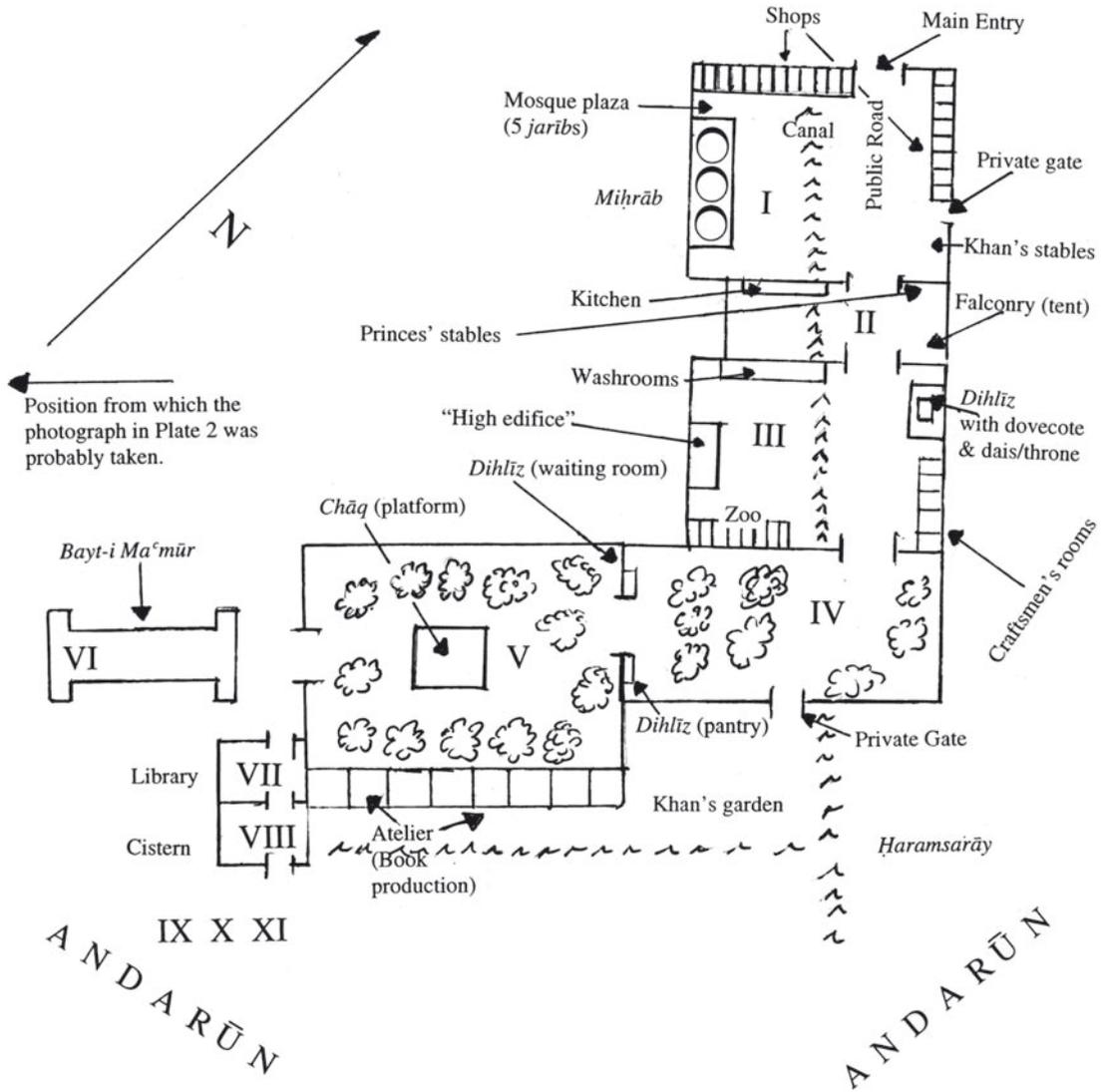
One hopes future archaeological work may be able to establish the entire plan of the *dawlatkhāna*, but in the meantime, the *Baḥr al-asrār* text offers compelling evidence of the architectural vision of the leaders of early seventeenth-century Balkh and the technical expertise they could call on. Though the structure itself has now disappeared, the remarkable description of it by Mahmud b. Amir Wali is another reminder of this region’s full incorporation in the larger Persianate cultural realm.

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APPENDIX



Map of Balkh, showing approximate location of the *Bāgh-i Khāni*. (Map: Robert McChesney)



Tentative plan of the Balkh dawlatkhāna. (Plan: Robert McChesney)

## NOTES

*Author's note:* I am grateful to Sussan Babaie, Ebba Koch, Bernard O'Kane, and Florian Schwarz for reading drafts of this paper and sharing their insights on architectural terms and their use at different times and in different contexts, and to Maria E. Subtelny for suggestions on the translation and interpretation of some of the Persian imagery.

1. Sussan Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces: Statecraft, Shi'ism and the Architecture of Conviviality in Early Modern Iran* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 16–23.
2. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-akhyār*, vol. 6, part (*rukn*) 4, ms. no. 575, India Office Collection, British Library, fols. 213a–214a.
3. Julie Meisami, "Palaces and Paradises: Palace Description in Medieval Persian Poetry," *Princeton Papers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 8 (2001): 21.
4. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function, and Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 377. It should be noted that he does not include in his discussion the rich palace-building tradition of Mughal India, for which see the works of Ebba Koch and R. Nath.
5. See, e.g., Gülrü Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York and Cambridge, Mass.: Architectural History Foundation and MIT Press, 1991), and Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Fatehpur-Sikri* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987).
6. See Bernard O'Kane, *Timurid Architecture in Khurasan* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda, 1987), 43–45; and Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), vol. 1, chap. 6, on building materials (in particular the decorative materials), and 133–34. Both works note the infrequent use of stone as a structural element.
7. For published photographs of the suburban structures of the late nineteenth-century amirs, see Andrei G. Nedvetsky, comp., *Bukhara, Caught in Time: Great Photographic Archives*, ed. Vitaly Naumkin (Reading, UK: Garnet, 1993), photographs 129–39.
8. For the Arg of Bukhara, see M. S. Andreev and O. D. Chekhovich, *Ark (kreml') Bukhary v kontse XIX-nachale XX vv.* (Dushanbe: Donish, 1972). The work is based on the posthumous materials of Andreev, compiled in the years 1940–41 and later annotated and edited by Chekhovich and A. K. Pisarchik. For Kabul, Ahmad 'Ali Kuhzad has written a thorough history of the citadel, the Bala Hisar, prior to its large-scale destruction by a vengeance-seeking British army in 1879; see Ahmad 'Ali Kuhzād, *Bālā Ḥiṣār-i Kābul wa pīsh-āmad-hā-yi tārikhī* (Kabul: Anjuman-i tārikhī-i Afghānistān [Afghan History Association], 1340 [1961]). On the *qal'a*, see Albert Szabo and Thomas J. Barfield, *Afghanistan: An Atlas of Indigenous Domestic Architecture* (Austin: University of Texas, 1991), 161–95.
9. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 433.
10. On the private royal residential sections of Agra Fort, for example, see R. Nath, *History of Mughal Architecture*, vols. 1–3 (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1981–85), especially vol. 2, 118–28 with plans; and Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 68–69. For illustrations of the royal bath and the women's toilets at the Lal Mahall hunting palace of Shah Jahan completed in 1637, see Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture: An Outline of Its History and Development (1526–1858)* (Munich: Prestel, 1991), 105.
11. Meisami, "Palaces and Paradises," 21.
12. *Ibid.*, 24.
13. The biographical information on Mahmud b. Amir Wali is derived from B. A. Akhmedov, "The *Baḥr al-Asrār* of Maḥmūd b. Walī," translated from the unpublished Russian ms. by Devin DeWeese in *Journal of Asian History* 25 (1991): 163–80. See especially 163–65.
14. For a detailed analysis of his travel account, which he included in the folios of the *Baḥr al-asrār* (vol. 6, pt. 4, fols. 389a–408a), see Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "From an Ocean of Wonders: Maḥmūd bin Amīr Walī Balkhī and His Indian Travels (1625–1631)," in *Récits de voyages asiatiques: Genres, mentalités, conception de l'espace, Actes du colloque EFEO-EHESS de décembre 1994*, ed. Claudine Salmon (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1996), 161–84. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī Balkhī, *The Baḥr ul-aṣrār: Travelogue of South Asia*, ed. Riazul Islam (Karachi: Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, 1980), provides the Persian text and an English summary.
15. The *Baḥr al-asrār* only covers his reign at Balkh until Zu'l-Qa'da 1050 (February–March 1641), a year before Imam Quli Khan abdicated and Nazr Muhammad moved from Balkh to Bukhara. For a general account of the period between 1641 and 1651, see Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans: A Dynastic, Diplomatic and Commercial History 1550–1702* (Surrey: Curzon, 1997), chap. 7.
16. *Baḥr al-asrār*, fols. 305a–375a. This segment of the India Office Library (henceforth I.O.L.) ms. no. 575, which describes Balkh, its lore, and its famous people, has recently been published in typescript by Mayil Haravi as *Bakhsh-i Balkh: Tārikh-i Baḥr al-asrār fī manāqib al-akhyār* (Kabul: Akādīmī-yi 'Ulūm-i Afghānistān [Afghanistan Academy of Sciences], 1360 [1981]). Unfortunately, there are many errors in the transcription.
17. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, fols. 212b–216a.
18. B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriia Balkha (XVI–pervaia polovina XVIII v.)* (Tashkent: Fan, 1982); and A. M. Mukhtarov, *Pozdnesrednevekovyi Balkh: Materialy k istoricheskoi topografii goroda v XVI–XVIII vv.* (Dushanbe: Donish, 1980). The latter work was translated by R. D. McChesney, Nadia Jamal, and Michael Lustig as *Balkh in the Late Middle Ages*, Papers on Inner Asia 24 (Bloomington, Ind.: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1993).
19. It should be noted that *qal'a* and *ḥiṣār* are somewhat general terms and could be applied to the inner city as well, or to the walls of any of the sections.

20. On the various names for the parts of the city, see Z. V. Togan, "The Topography of Balkh down to the Middle of the Seventeenth Century," *Central Asiatic Journal* 14 (1970): 278–79.
21. For Mir Jan Kildi Bi's appointment to Balkh, see Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh b. Mir Muḥammad Bukhārī, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī*, I.O.L., ms. no. 574, fol. 373b. His participation in 'Abd Allah Khan's many campaigns can be found passim in *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī*. There are twenty citations for his name in the index of M. A. Salakhedinova's incomplete edition of the *Sharaf-nāma*, which only covers (in two of four projected volumes) the period up to the beginning of 987 (early 1579), ten years short of the period covered by the entire work; see Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh ibn Mir Muḥammad Bukhārī, *Sharaf-nāma-ii shakhi = Kniga shakhskoī slavy*, ed. and trans. M. A. Salakhedinova (Moscow: Nauka, 1983–89).
22. See Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, 306b.
23. See n. 16 above.
24. Haravi changes *bi-qadr-i* into *bi-qurb-i*. Haravi, ed., *Bakhsh-i Balkh*, 9.
25. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, 306b.
26. According to Togan, "Topography of Balkh," 282, *jabbā* or *jubbā* is a corruption of the Turkic word *yābghū*, the title of the pre-Islamic ruler of Balkh, and is not to be confused with the word for armory or arsenal (*jubbah khāna* or *jabā khāna*). 'Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma*, s.v. "*jabā khān*," citing Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, identifies it as a village near the "gate of Balkh," probably a gate of the inner city. The toponym has long since disappeared.
27. Togan, "Topography of Balkh," 282.
28. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, 316b–317a.
29. A *ger* (yurt)-like structure, with a collapsible frame. I am grateful to Bernard O'Kane for suggesting a refinement to my original translation of *khargāh* as "tent." For an image of the kind of structure meant by *khargāh*, see Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and the Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 260.
30. I am grateful to Florian Schwarz for telling me that in Bukhara the size of certain buildings, in particular guest houses (*mihmānkhānas*), is still measured in terms of the number of ceiling beams, usually spaced a *gaz* apart.
31. E. A. Davidovich, *Materialy po metrologii srednevekovoi Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1970), does not include the *jarīb* in her chapter on terms of linear measurement (pp. 109–121). She concurs with A. A. Semenov that *jarīb* and *tanāb* (the more commonly encountered areal units of measurement) were synonymous and were equal to 3,600 square *gaz*. The *jarīb* as a linear measurement would therefore have been equal to sixty *gaz*. See Davidovich, *Materialy*, 110–18, for a full discussion of the various sizes of the *gaz* in post-Mongol Central Asia, and 122, 125–28, on the *tanāb* and *jarīb* as areal measurements. In Riazul Islam's edition of the travelogue section of the *Baḥr al-asrār*, he takes the author's use of *jarīb* as a unit of length equivalent to 144 yards! (Riazul Islam, ed., *Travelogue of South Asia*, 34.) That would have made the *chahārbāgh* three-quarters of a mile wide and four miles long, impossible for the area within the outer walls of Balkh. A contemporary Mughal work, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Lāhawri's *Bādshāhnāmah*, 2 vols. (Calcutta: Asiatic Press, 1865–72), vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 15, states "one *kurūh* (karoh) is 200 *jaribs*, one *jarīb* is 25 *zīrā*'s, one *zīrā*' is forty *angusht*." I am grateful to Ebba Koch for this reference and for the information that the *Shāhjahānī gaz* or *zīrā'* corresponded ideally to 81.28 centimeters, or 32 inches. In this case, the *jarīb* would be equal to 66 feet, 8 inches, or a little more than 22 yards (20 meters). John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī, and English* (orig. pub. London, 1884; repr. New Delhi, 2004), s.v. "*Jarīb*," gives the equivalent length of the (presumably nineteenth-century) *jarīb* as 55 English yards. By that standard, the Bagh-i Khani would have been about 1,650 feet in width and 8,250 feet in length, for a total of about 310 acres, or 124 hectares. This would have made the Bagh-i Khani larger than Balkh's inner city. The nineteenth-century Balkh *gaz*, according to a British source, was 28 inches and the *jarīb* therefore 140 feet, or 46 yards and 2 feet. (India Army, General Staff Branch, *Historical and Political Gazetteer of Afghanistan*, ed. Ludwig W. Adamec, 6 vols. [Graz: Akadem. Druck, 1972–85], vol. 4, xi.) This corresponds somewhat with the eighteenth-century *gaz-i shar'i* of Bukhara of 31 inches. See Davidovich, *Materialy*, 113. Where building dimensions are given for the *dawlatkhāna* and the *chahārbāgh* in which it was sited, I have converted them using the twenty-eight-inch *gaz/zar'* (Mahmud b. Amir Wali uses the terms interchangeably) and the *jarīb* of sixty *gaz*.
32. Private communication.
33. Fayẓ Muḥammad Kātib Hazārah, *Sīrāj al-tawārikh* (Kabul, 1333 [1915]), vol. 3, 1109.
34. Fayẓ Muḥammad Kātib Hazārah, *Sīrāj al-tawārikh*, ed. Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn Ḥusaynī (n.p.: Ismailiyan Press, Winter 1372 [1993–94]), vol. 3, pt. 1, 605.
35. Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, 84–85.
36. Nath, *History of Mughal Architecture*, vol. 3, chap. 5, and color pls. 9–18.
37. Koch, *Complete Taj Mahal*, 68, fig. 85, is particularly evocative of what Mahmud b. Amir Wali might have meant by *darband*, the figure showing two *darbands*.
38. See M. E. Subtelny, "Mirak-i Sayyid Ghiyāṣ and the Timurid Tradition of Landscape Architecture: Further Notes to 'A Medieval Persian Agricultural Manual in Context,'" *Studia Iranica* 24 (1995): 19–60.
39. See Riazul Islam, ed., *Travelogue of South Asia*, 88–89; and Alam and Subrahmanyam, "From an Ocean of Wonders," 162–89.
40. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, fol. 404b.
41. Mir Qasim, Ustad Hajji, and Ustad Nur Muhammad. See Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, fol. 214a, last line.
42. See Babaie, *Isfahan and Its Palaces*, chap. 4. It is worth noting that (depending on the size of the linear *jarīb* in Balkh) the

- area of the Bagh-i Khani was twice the size of the Isfahan *dawlatkhāna*. *Ibid.*, 119.
43. ‘Ināyat Khān, *The Shah Jahan Nama of ‘Inayat Khan*, trans. A. R. Fuller, ed. and compl. W. E. Begley and Z. A. Desai (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 353. Unfortunately, I do not have access to the Persian original and so do not know what term ‘Inayat Khan used for “palace.”
  44. This is comparable to the size of the plaza of the Juma Masjid, the area of which, including the three-bay *iwān-mihrāb*, is slightly less than a hectare. See Koch, *Mughal Architecture*, 119, pl. 142.
  45. This information is found in vol. 1 of *Baḥr al-asrār*, the geographical part of the work. B. Akhmedov has edited and translated into Russian the portions of this volume relating to the geography of Central Asia. See Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *More tain otnositel’no doblestei blagorodnykh*, trans. and ed. B. A. Akhmedov (Tashkent: Fan, 1977), 4–5 (text), 25–26 (translation).
  46. See James L. Wescoat, Jr., “Mughal Gardens and Geographic Sciences, Then and Now,” in *Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires: Theory and Design*, ed. Attilio Petruccioli (Leiden: Brill, 1997), esp. 190–92.
  47. *Baḥr al-asrār*, colophon, fol. 409a.
  48. On Nazr Muhammad’s library and its formation, see Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, *Baḥr al-asrār*, fol. 350a. His madrasa is dated 1021 (1612–13) by a much later work, Mīrzā Muḥammad Amīn b. Mīrzā Muḥammad Zamān’s *Muḥīt al-tawārīkh*, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, ms. no. 472, fol. 95a–b. The two thousand books he endowed to the madrasa library comprised a collection he had bought and some of his own books. Presumably the remainder of his collection was kept in the *dawlatkhāna* library.
  49. For a partial listing of the works and authors he was able to consult for the *Baḥr al-asrār*, see B. A. Akhmedov, *Istoriiko-geograficheskaia literatura Srednei Azii XVI–XVII vv.: Pis’mennye pamiatniki* (Tashkent: Fan, 1985), 68–70; and idem, “*Baḥr al-Asrār* of Maḥmūd b. Valī,” 164, 166–67.
  50. Numerous such donations of books are found in endowment deeds (*waqf-nāmas*) of the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries held at the Uzbek State Archives in Tashkent in Fond I-323. For a recent study, see Stacy Liechti, “Books, Book Endowments, and Communities of Knowledge in the Bukharan Khanate” (PhD diss., New York University, 2007).
  51. A. Foucher and Mme. E. Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route de l’Inde de Bactres à Taxila*, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Éditions d’art et d’histoire, 1942–47).
  52. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 64–67, including plans of the mosque and one of the main buildings of the *dawlatkhāna* (65, figs. 11 and 13).
  53. On these madrasas, see R. D. McChesney, “Architecture and Narrative: The Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa Shrine. Part 1: Constructing the Complex and Its Meaning, 1469–1696,” *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 109–10.
  54. Foucher and Bazin-Foucher, *La vieille route*, pls. XXVI (b), (c), and (d).
  55. On this project see, R. D. McChesney, “Architecture and Narrative: The Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa Shrine. Part 2: Representing the Complex in Word and Image, 1696–1998,” *Muqarnas* 19 (2002): 87–89.



## THE WRITING ON THE WALL: READING THE DECORATION OF THE ALHAMBRA

As Cynthia Robinson has recently highlighted, in the current generation of scholarship, study of the Alhambra (fig. 1), a palatial city constructed in Granada by the Nasrids (r. 1238–1492), the last major Muslim dynasty in the Iberian Peninsula, has been oriented by the seminal work of Oleg Grabar.<sup>1</sup> Of particular importance for the field in general and the present essay in particular has been Grabar's assertion that the "iconographic inscriptions" were "chosen in order to emphasize some special purpose of the building or to make an association which is not *a priori* obvious."<sup>2</sup> Grabar refers here concretely to the abundant poetic epigraphy throughout the Alhambra, which had long been recognized as one of its most salient features. But typical of his work, one finds theoretical richness in his hybrid formulation, "iconographic inscriptions," which opens a new perspective on the interrelationship of word and image, epigraphy and architecture. Much important work has followed that lead. Informed by semiotic theory, José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, Valérie Gonzalez, and D. Fairchild Ruggles in their various ways read the Alhambra as a text; that is, they take its architectural structures, gardens as well as palaces, and its decoration to constitute elements in a system of signs designed to communicate a message—a message most often understood to concern the power of the sultans who were patrons of the works.<sup>3</sup>

Robinson herself stands within that general line of inquiry. Drawing particularly on Puerta Vilchez, she has opened new directions through what may be called a cultural studies approach—studying Islamic buildings "within the cultural framework intended by patrons for very specific publics"<sup>4</sup>—dating back to her work on the arts of the *taifa* period.<sup>5</sup> First, Robinson considers built structures as the site of cultural practices, such as the *majlis* of the court elite in the Aljafería in Saragossa, social assemblies that included poetic recitation

as a principal element. Her examination raises poetry from an incidental ornament—if one may still speak of ornament as incidental after Grabar<sup>6</sup>—to the level of a major contributor to the construction of a fundamental aesthetics embracing architecture no less than literature. Second, she demonstrates that those aesthetic principles may be used to draw a new map of cultural interaction between Muslim al-Andalus and its Christian neighbors. The latter point is especially relevant to Robinson's analysis when she turns her attention to the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra.<sup>7</sup>

The bridge that carries Robinson's argument from the Aljafería to the Alhambra is a verse inscribed on the wall of a different palace in the Nasrid complex, the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I (r. 1333–54), commonly known today as the Tower of the Captive. The verse, composed by Ibn al-Jayyab (1274–1349), a court poet and vizier of the Nasrid sultans, reads: "It [the *Qalahurra*] speaks *badī'* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras, and *muraṣṣa'* (*mujannas*, *muṭabbāq*, *mughāṣṣan*, and *muraṣṣa'*)."<sup>8</sup> Antonio Fernández-Puertas has observed that explicit reference to poetic devices was unusual in mid-fourteenth century Arabic verse.<sup>9</sup> Against that backdrop, the verse in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* caught the attention of scholars such as Puerta Vilchez and Emilio García Gómez, the philologist to whom all contemporary work on the poetic inscriptions of the Alhambra is indebted.<sup>10</sup> But it was Robinson in her *In Praise of Song* who highlighted the importance of *badī'* poetry, which originated towards the end of the ninth century at the Abbasid court in Baghdad and was prevalent in medieval Arabic poetry, for understanding the aesthetics of al-Andalus throughout the *taifa* period, thus providing the more proximate point of departure for my discussion.<sup>11</sup> Robinson observed, for instance, that *al-Badī'* was the name of one



Fig. 1. Alhambra. General view. (Photo: Olga Bush)

of the palaces of al-Ma'mun (r. 1043–75) in Toledo in the *taifa* period, which “indicates that both [al-Ma'mūn] and his contemporaries conceived of palace and poetics as intimately connected.”<sup>12</sup> A detailed examination of Ibn al-Jayyab’s verse in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is the heart of the study that follows, but before turning to that reading, I would frame the underlying issues in my approach to poetic figuration, particularly with respect to its differences with Robinson’s argument.

In studying the poetics of the *taifa* period, Robinson had demonstrated the centrality of “transformative metaphor,” the effect of which, she summarizes in “Marginal Ornament,” was “fusion and sameness.”<sup>13</sup> Delineating the distinct cultural context of the later Nasrid period, Robinson cites a new and contradictory emphasis on mimetic description—that is, literal *imitatio*—articulated in the poetics of Hazim al-Qartajanni (1211–85), an Andalusian poet and literary critic,

as well as a corresponding shift in the Alhambra (as compared to the Aljafería) to “aesthetic principles of differentiation and categorization.”<sup>14</sup> Although in Ibn al-Jayyab’s verse the reference to *badi‘* would suggest continuity between his own poetics and the theory and practice of this tradition dating back to the *taifa* period and earlier, Robinson declares that the four tropes enumerated in the verse “are explicitly related to the *differentiation and organization* of the various ornamental themes, materials, and techniques of the “Tower of the Captive,”<sup>15</sup> which is to say, following her argument, that they pertain to the work of mimesis. Yet Robinson also notes that “a new element has been added to al-Qartajanni’s theory of poetic mimesis” in the late fourteenth century, expounded by Ibn al-Khatib (1313–74), a vizier and an illustrious literary figure at the Nasrid court. Robinson refers to this element as “bewitchment,” which she characterizes as “an aesthetic

experience that propels the reader or listener beyond the ‘real’ or the ‘natural’ or their mimetic evocation.”<sup>16</sup> She then cites verses inscribed elsewhere in the Alhambra, in the Hall of the Two Sisters, as an example of this bewitchment:

Oh, what raiment of embroidered stuff have you thrown  
about it! It makes one forget the tulle of Yemen!...  
Her columns are so beautiful in every aspect that word  
of their fame has reached far and wide!  
Her smooth, diaphanous marble brightens the farthest  
corners darkened by shadow...<sup>17</sup>

The latter two verses are clearly mimetic, as Robinson would suggest, but the first verse that she cites goes beyond mimesis. The analogy, or “fusion and sameness,” of architectural decoration and luxury textiles is in fact achieved by metaphor (*isti‘āra*), which, moreover, Ibn al-Khatib declared in the preface to his poetic anthology, *al-Siḥr wa’l-shi‘r* (Enchantment and Poetry), “occupies the place of honor” in poetry.<sup>18</sup>

The implicit tension between anti-metaphorical mimesis and metaphorical bewitchment is resolved by Robinson through the elucidation of another form of poetic figuration beyond mimesis in the Palace of the Lions, namely, allegory. Robinson then goes on to interpret the Palace of the Lions as an allegorical paradise-garden. Among the results of this analysis, she is able to demonstrate the manner in which a decorative element previously seen as isolated and anomalous—the “Gothic-style” paintings on the ceiling of the northern alcove of the Hall of Justice in the Palace of the Lions—is indeed integrated into the allegorical program of that architectural setting, thus furthering her general thesis of the transcultural framework of the aesthetics of al-Andalus.

My goals are more narrowly circumscribed, but my approach to poetic figuration is more broadly conceived. I confine myself on this occasion to the context of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, which, Ibn al-Jayyab declares, “speaks *badī‘*,” where speaking *badī‘* means deploying the elements of architectural decoration in accordance with the figurative transformations of the four particular tropes of the *badī‘* tradition that Ibn al-Jayyab enumerates (neither allegory nor metaphor being among them). Even were one to emphasize “differentiation and organization” in the workings of these devices—I think otherwise—it is necessary to recognize that here, as in

the case of the verses inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters, any mimetic function ascribed to them is grounded in a prior metaphor: the fusion, if not quite the sameness, of architecture and poetry, which is to say the very grounds for speaking about architecture in poetic terms. To grasp the complexity of that way of speaking and hence of perceiving architecture, it is necessary to investigate the specific workings of each of Ibn al-Jayyab’s tropes. I agree with Robinson in ascribing a special place to *mujannas*, but this does not obviate a detailed study of the other terms. Nor is the tension between literal description and “bewitching” figuration transcended by allegory in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. But here I underline the local setting and so bring out a point implicit in Robinson’s study, when she begins by establishing a contrast between the stasis of the Court of the Myrtles and the dynamism of the Palace of the Lions. The goal of achieving an understanding of the overall aesthetics of the Alhambra is dependent upon the analysis of the particularities of its varied precincts. Hence, as Robinson, too, says of her scholarly interlocutors,<sup>19</sup> my discussion of the range of poetic figures that explicitly guide the reading of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is not “at odds” with an allegorical reading of the Palace of the Lions. Like the decorative elements that I will now discuss, the poetic figures are conjoined in a larger program.

The most significant common ground shared by this and other readings of the “iconographic inscriptions” in the Alhambra continues to be a suggestion by Grabar: “Ornament is itself or exhibits most forcefully an intermediate order between viewers and users of art, perhaps even creators of art, and works of art.”<sup>20</sup> The poetic epigraphy of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* may be characterized as the intermediary of the intermediary. The poetry serves as an intermediate order between the beholder and the geometric and floral motifs of the architectural decoration, such that the reader of the one is prepared to become the reader of the other. The understanding of the decorative program that emerges from the interposition of the poetic guide in this specific setting, I would further propose, is suggestive not only for the reading of architectural decoration throughout the Alhambra, but also for illuminating the function of poetic inscriptions, where they appear, on other objects and monuments in the medieval Muslim world.<sup>21</sup>

## I. ARCHITECTURAL AND POETIC CONTEXTS

In addition to the explicit reference to the figures of *badī'* poetry in Ibn al-Jayyab's verse, the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I helps to elucidate the role of the inscriptions in understanding the Alhambra due to the following considerations: the state of preservation of the tower's original decoration; the fact that the poems were composed for this particular site; and, finally, the simple matter that it remains one of the least studied areas of the Alhambra.<sup>22</sup> Constructed under the patronage of the Nasrid sultan Yusuf I sometime before 1349,<sup>23</sup> the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is embedded in the curtain wall on the north side of the Alhambra enclosure (fig. 2). Flanked by the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII (also known as the *Torre de las Infantas*) (fig. 3) to the east and the *Torre de Cadi* to the west, it forms part of the defensive system of the Alhambra's *madīna*, which includes

these and other towers and gates, and a curtain wall that links these structures. The curtain wall (figs. 2–4), with a sentry walk along the top as well as a vaulted passageway below the ground level of the tower within the wall itself, presents a system of communication, not only among all the defensive structures of the enclosure, but also between them and the *madīna*.<sup>24</sup> The tower's rooftop terrace, reached by an interior staircase, allows unobstructed observation of the terrain on the north, east, and west sides, including the pathways that link the escarpments of the Generalife and the Alhambra, and thus contributes to the defense of the enclosure.

The exterior appearance of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* (fig. 2) is not dissimilar to that of other towers in the Alhambra. Its projection is that of a massive defensive bastion with solid walls, except for a double-light window piercing each of the west, north, and east walls high in its elevation. The plan (fig. 5) is rectangular and mea-



Fig. 2. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, exterior with the curtain wall, looking west. (Photo: Olga Bush)

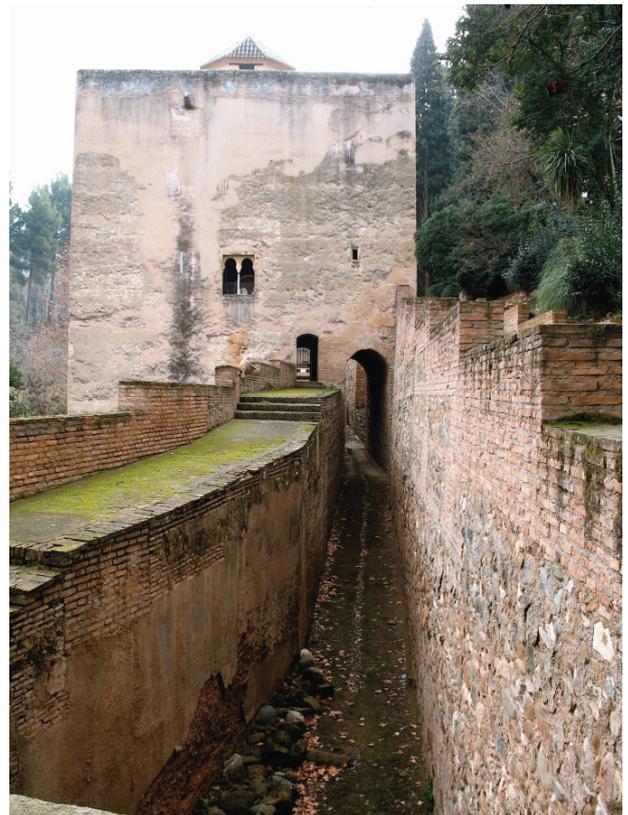


Fig. 3. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, exterior with the curtain wall, looking east. (Photo: Olga Bush)

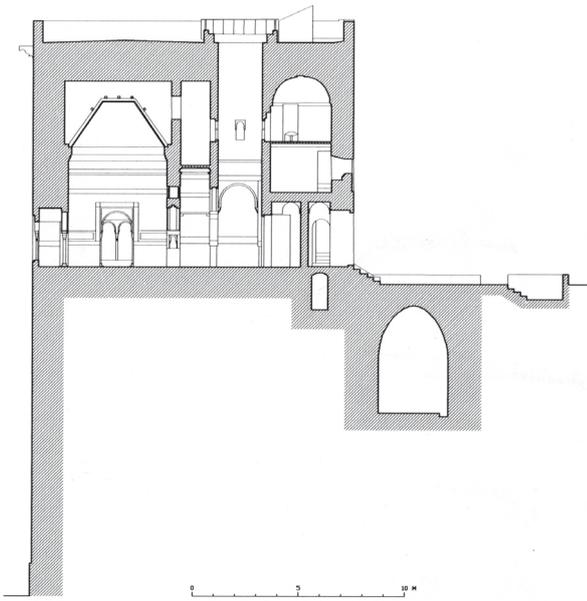


Fig. 4. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, longitudinal section. (After Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios nazaríes, siglos XIII–XV* [Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995], 131, used with the author's permission)

sures 15.14 meters by 7.5 meters.<sup>25</sup> The volume of the tower is divided, as it were, into three connected parts: the entrance, with a room above it on the second and third floors; a small patio, which was originally open to the sky, but is now covered with a glass lantern; and the principal room, whose elevation extends nearly the entire height of the tower (figs. 4 and 5). The *bāshūra* (bent entrance corridor), a defensive feature characteristic of Nasrid buildings, leads from the entryway, situated on the south side, to the small interior patio, which is square in plan. The pilasters on the entrance side of the patio and the square piers on the opposite side (fig. 6) support the structure of the lantern that crowns the patio, serving as its source of light. The principal room in the interior of the *Qalahurra* (figs. 7 and 8) is reached through an archway from the small patio. Square in plan, it has a central niche cut within its thick walls on three sides; each niche (fig. 10) is open to the exterior by a window with twin lights. The plan of the principal room belongs to the typology of the *qubba*,<sup>26</sup> a room covered by a vault or a cupola. It shares many architectural and decorative features with the Hall of

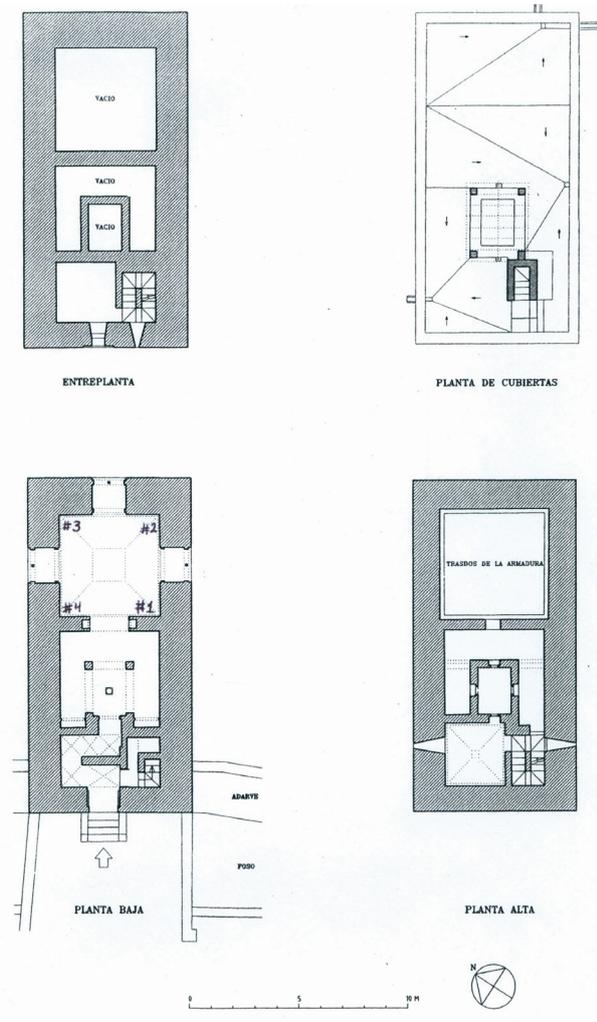


Fig. 5. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, plan. The location of the inscriptions of Ibn al-Jayyab's poems is indicated by number on the plan of the ground floor at the lower left. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 130, used with the author's permission)

the Comares, the most outstanding example of this type in the Alhambra, which, like the *Qalahurra al-jadida*, was constructed under the patronage of Yusuf I.

The tower suffered mutilations, especially during the French occupation from 1808 to 1812, during which time the wooden doors and the ceiling in the principal room were destroyed.<sup>27</sup> It appears that the first restoration and conservation works were begun as early as 1814 and they have continued intermittently since then.

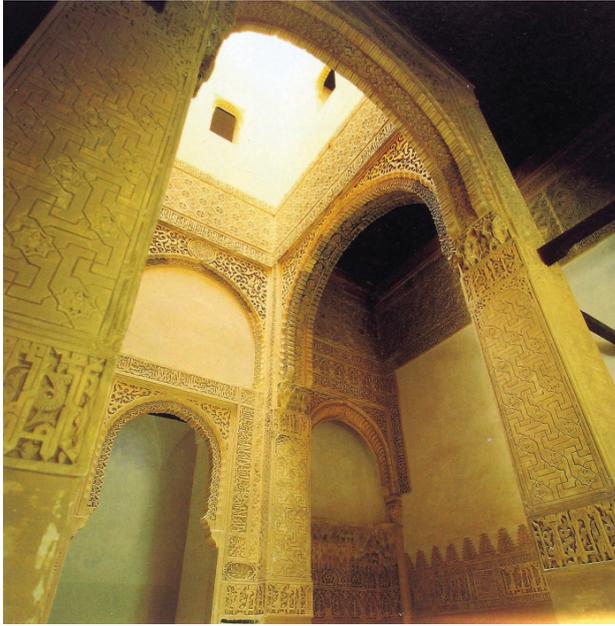


Fig. 6. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior patio. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 132 fig. 69) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

The present-day wooden ceiling dates to the period between 1878 and 1892; several panels in the dadoes of the ceramic tile, and the marble floor, belong to later periods.<sup>28</sup> Despite the vicissitudes of time and human intervention, the decoration of the interior of the principal room has in general been preserved in its original state. The stucco decoration in the interior patio of the *Qalahurra* (fig. 6) sustained considerable loss on the piers, but has otherwise been mostly preserved.<sup>29</sup>

Parietal epigraphy constitutes part of the decoration of the interior spaces of the *Qalahurra*. While it appears that only formulaic inscriptions seen in many other precincts in the Alhambra were employed in the patio, both formulaic inscriptions and Qur'anic verses (Sura 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* [Oneness], and Sura 113, *al-Falaq* [Daybreak]) were inscribed in the principal hall.<sup>30</sup> It should be noted that the Qur'anic verses inscribed in the ceramic dadoes are only partially preserved. Four poems composed by Ibn al-Jayyab form the third type of parietal epigraphy found in the *Qalahurra al-jadida*. Inscribed in the interior of the principal room,<sup>31</sup> each poem occupies a rectangular ornate inscription band

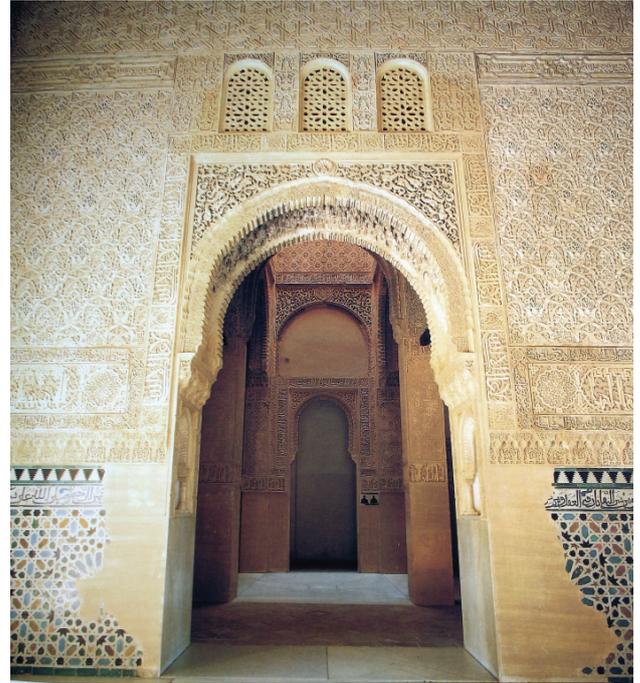


Fig. 7. Alhambra. *Al-Qalahurra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior of the *qubba*, south side. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 133 fig. 70) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

(*ṭirāz*) on two adjoining walls (fig. 11), and frames two large cartouches with Kufic epigraphy, which in turn alternate with circular polylobed cartouches filled with foliate motifs. The poetic epigraphy forms part of the carved stucco decoration and is situated on the walls above the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaics. The verses, executed in cursive Maghribi style, are vocalized.

The key to my reading of the parietal epigraphy as an interrelated ensemble is the passage mentioned at the outset of my discussion, which appears in poem 3, verse 6.<sup>32</sup> Although throughout my analysis I will refer, when appropriate, to all four poems,<sup>33</sup> I will focus my discussion primarily on the text of this poem, which reads:

1. This monument (*maṣnaʿ*) embellishes the Alhambra,  
It is the abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior.
2. *Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaṣr*)  
So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness.

3. The beauty (*bahā'*) of the palace (*qaṣr*) is distributed between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samā'*), and the earth (*arḍ*).<sup>34</sup>
4. Marvels of stucco and tiles  
[it] holds, but the carpentry of its ceiling is even more marvelous.
5. In storing so much treasure it triumphed  
in going up and in rising to the highest heights.
6. It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badī'* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras, and *muraṣṣa'* (*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughāṣṣan*, *muraṣṣa'*).<sup>35</sup>
7. If Yusuf is there, his face is a marvel  
that accumulates all enchantments.
8. The main glory [comes] from Khazraj, whose traces  
in the religion are the thunder with light that spreads.

As noted at the outset of my discussion, in verse 6 Ibn al-Jayyab names the specific tradition of *badī'* poetry, as well as four of its principal poetic figures. The first three are *mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, and *mughāṣṣan*, which may be rendered as paronomasia, antithesis, and caesura, respectively. The fourth term, *muraṣṣa'*, will require a more extended gloss than the simple identification of a common analogue; I will return to this matter below. *Badī'* poetry employs other figures, among which both its medieval and modern theoreticians generally consider *isti'āra* (metaphor) the most important.<sup>36</sup> And metaphor is also much in evidence in these four poems of Ibn al-Jayyab, as, for example, in his allocation of beauty to the four directions, the earth, and the sky (3.3), which, given the architectural context, appear as metaphors for walls, floor, and ceiling, whose collective figurative force is to liken the palace (*al-qaṣr*) to the world, and so expand its significance. Nevertheless, I will restrict my discussion to the four poetic terms explicitly enumerated by Ibn al-Jayyab, arguing that their inscription in the very site of the architectural decoration provides a guide to the perception of the *Qalahurra's* visual elements.

The use of the term *badī'*, the literal meaning of which is “new, creative, beautiful,” and the insertion of the four poetic figures into the verse make an explicit reference to a tradition of classical Arabic poetry. The *badī'* poetry that fully emerged at the end of the ninth century

at the Abbasid court was considered innovative at that time. *Badī'* was exemplified in the works of such Abbasid poets as Abu Nuwas (d. ca. 815), Abu Tammam (d. 845 or 846), and Ibn al-Mu'tazz (d. 908), among others. The new poetry was examined for the first time by Ibn al-Mu'tazz in his *Kitāb al-Badī'*, a work that became the model for theoretical writing about poetry.<sup>37</sup> He proposed that *badī'* poetry was not entirely new, but rather its innovations were a matter of degree.<sup>38</sup> Ibn al-Mu'tazz analyzed five rhetorical figures of speech employed in *badī'* poetry: *isti'āra* (metaphor), *tajnīs* (paronomasia), *ṭibāq* (antithesis), *radd a'jāz al-kalām 'alā ṣudūrih* (internal repetition), and *al-madhhab al-kalāmī* (“dialectical” manner).<sup>39</sup> His analysis suggests that the interrelationship of these five rhetorical elements formed the structure of a *badī'* poem, which, in Kamal Abu Deeb's words, can be understood as “a system within which the elements are not isolated but interrelated”; moreover,

...the basic property of the structure is that it is formed on the level of the code, rather than the message of discourse; it explores relations of opposition and similarity, of oneness and multiplicity, between the linguistic constituents of poetry.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the complex interrelationship of different linguistic elements in the structure of a poem, the question of what constituted a poem's ultimate beauty occupied poets and literary critics of the period as well, informed primarily by Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Thus, according to Ibn Tabataba (d. 934), the ultimate beauty of a poem depends on *i'tidāl*, or “well-formedness and harmony.”<sup>41</sup>

In sum, defined and judged by these criteria, an innovative *badī'* poetry not only took hold at the Abbasid court but transformed the medieval poetry of all Muslim lands, including al-Andalus.<sup>42</sup> From the tenth century onward, Andalusian poets composed *badī'* poetry.<sup>43</sup> Ibn al-Khatib included poems of the most accomplished practitioners of *badī'* poetry—Abu Nuwas, Abu al-'Atahiya, Ibn al-Rumi, and Ibn al-Mu'tazz—in *al-Sihr wa 'l-shi'r*, the poetic anthology mentioned above, which was to serve as “a guide to good poetry and literary taste.” It has been noted that Ibn al-Khatib's own poetry in traditional genres betrays dependence on the poetic works of Abu Nuwas, Abu Tammam, and al-Mutanabbi.<sup>44</sup> In short, his work as compiler and poet



Fig. 8. William Harvey, drawing of the interior elevation of the “Tower of the Captive” (*al-Qal'ahurra al-jadida*) of Yusuf I, the Alhambra. Pen and ink, india ink, watercolor, and pencil. Victoria and Albert Museum, no. E.1274-1963. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum)

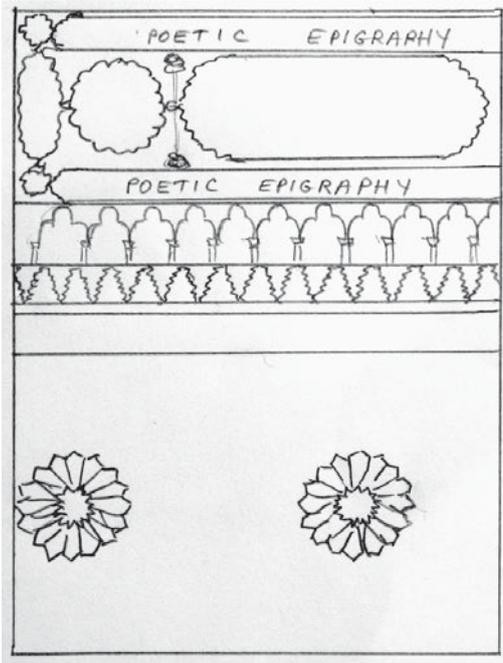


Fig. 9a. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #1. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

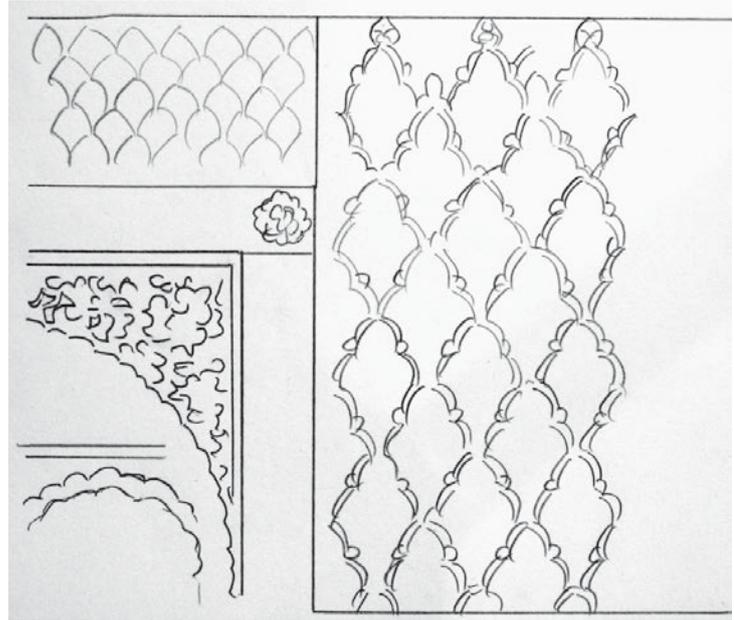


Fig. 9b. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #2. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

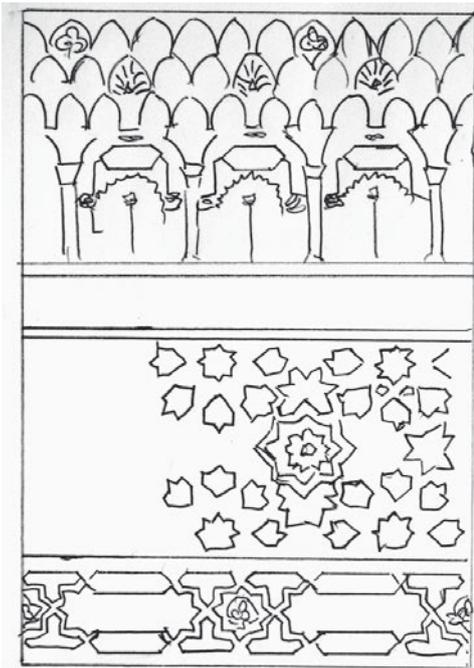


Fig. 9c. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #3. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

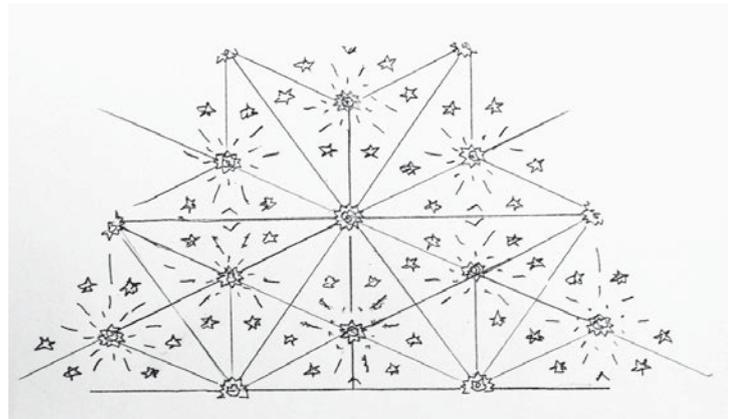


Fig. 9d. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, elevation, schematic drawing of decoration, area #4. (Drawing: Olga Bush)

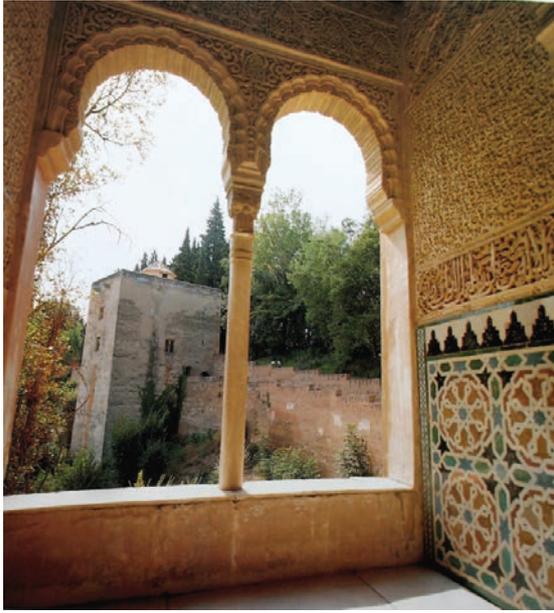


Fig. 10. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, niche on the west wall with a view of the *Qalaturra* of Muhammad VII. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 134, fig. 71) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

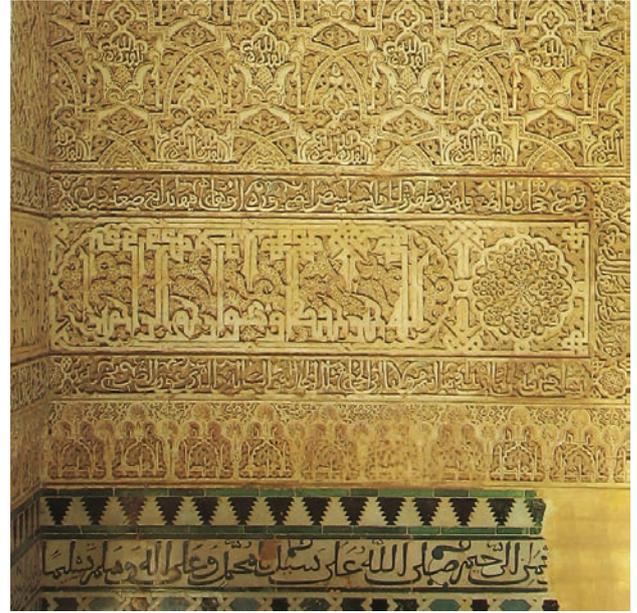


Fig. 11. Alhambra. *Al-Qalaturra al-jadida* of Yusuf I, interior, partial view of Ibn al-Jayyab's poem, inscribed in the rectangular frame around the large cartouche. (After Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 135, fig. 74) (Photo: Miguel Rodríguez Moreno, reproduced with permission)

attests to the continuity in the understanding and interpretation of the terms of figuration of *badī'* poetry under the Nasrids. Indeed, this poetic tradition culminated in the Nasrid period in the writing of the court poets Ibn al-Jayyab and Ibn Zamrak (1333–93), in addition to Ibn al-Khatib himself, all three of whom composed poems inscribed on the walls of the Alhambra.<sup>45</sup> The examination of Ibn al-Jayyab's poetic program in the *Qalaturra al-jadida* serves as further evidence of this trajectory.

## II. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF POETRY

In light of Abu Deeb's explication, where the code (roughly, structural properties and figurative functions), rather than the message (i.e., the contents), constitutes the aim of poetic composition and thus the principal touchstone for judgment, García Gómez's dismissal of Ibn al-Jayyab's four poems in the *Qalaturra al-jadida* as a mere redundant "variation on the same theme" must be contested.<sup>46</sup> This is necessary not least because, in line

with García Gómez's view, virtually the whole decoration of the Alhambra, and not only its poetic epigraphy, would then be judged inferior. Against such a conclusion, one may cite Grabar's positive assessment of the "conservatism" of the Alhambra:

Even if at times repetitive and obvious, the forms of the Alhambra are perfect in the sense that each of them is developed and used with a full awareness of its possibilities and with visual clarity and logic in spite of their complexity.<sup>47</sup>

Hence, in contrast to García Gómez's disparagement of redundancy in the parietal epigraphy of the *Qalaturra al-jadida*, other scholars of Arabic poetry, such as Julie Scott Meisami, have emphasized that *takrār* (repetition) is a characteristic feature on various levels of the poetic code, serving, for instance, as "a structural device, whose function is to unify the segments of a poem."<sup>48</sup> Thus, in an analysis of a *qaṣīda* by Ibn Zamrak, a portion of which was inscribed in the Hall of the Two Sisters in the Alhambra, James T. Monroe argues against the view of

the repeated use of an image as a sign of “metaphoric impoverishment.”<sup>49</sup> While García Gómez’s vital contribution to the study of the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is unquestionable, here he has imported a modern European expectation of a certain form of originality into his analysis.

The issue, then, is to seek to understand the aesthetic goal that Ibn al-Jayyab thought to articulate by means of the governing poetics of the *badīʿ* tradition, which he explicitly invoked in the third poem. It is evident from the first glance at the parietal epigraphy in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* that the poems’ contents are very similar; in each case, the verses communicate much the same message, glorifying the building and its patron (see Appendix II). But the glory of the poetry itself resides rather in its figurative variety, which, in “the dialectical manner,” depends upon a similarity or “oneness” against which opposition and multiplicity may be perceived. Thematic repetition serves here above all, I suggest, to underline that the poems work as a unified ensemble made visible around the perimeter of the room, a system of interrelated poetic figures whose purpose is to guide the reading of—rather than merely describe—the decorative program.

The poems are short, each composed of eight verses that are divided into three parts: the beginning, in which the theme is enunciated in general terms; the middle, in which the theme is developed; and an ending, which presents a *fakhr* (glorification) of the patron.<sup>50</sup> The first verse of poems 1, 3, and 4 states that the text is about a *burj* (tower), and places it immediately in the context of, and in relationship to, the Alhambra. The Alhambra is “proud” of it, “like [of] a crown” (1.1); it “embellishes” the Alhambra (3.1); and it “honors” the Alhambra (4.1). Moreover, the opening verse of the remaining poem (2.1) extends the context beyond the palatial city, proclaiming that the “monument’s” (*al-maṣnaʿ*) “fame spread through every land.” The middle part of each poem—verses two through five—supplies the works with the imagery of the building, while the concluding *fakhrs* glorify the sultan Yusuf I. These poems are characterized by a linear movement from a general and metaphorical statement to detailed descriptive images.<sup>51</sup> The abundant *waṣf* (poetic descriptions) of the carved

stucco panels (3.4, 4.3), the dadoes of the mosaic tiles (1.4, 3.4), the cupola of the *artesonado* ceiling (2.5, 3.3), and the floor (1.4, 3.3) draw attention to the lavish embellishment of the tower, placing emphasis on the variety of techniques, materials, and designs.

A transitional link between the middle part and the ending *fakhr* is carefully crafted by the poet in verse 6 of poems 1, 2, and 4, in which the image of the tower developed in the preceding verses, and that of the sultan, to be elaborated in the conclusion, are evoked in the same verse: “Dressed in a *ṭirāz* of glory, as in them [the walls] appears / the name of Our Lord (*mawlānā*) Abu’l-Haj-jaj” (1.6); “It [the tower] reveals Yusuf to us, his face / like the sun that a night can never hide” (2.6); and “A marvelous edifice was made to manifest [itself] by wisdom / that which only the caliph Yusuf achieved” (4.6). As has already been noted, the corresponding verse in the remaining poem (3.6) makes an allusion of a different kind: “It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badīʿ* poetry: paronomasias, antithesis, caesuras and *muraṣṣaʿ*.”

I emphasize the structural analogy. The crucial verse enumerating the tropes of *badīʿ* poetry fills the place and the function of transition otherwise supplied by the juxtaposition of tower and sultan. This structural position, I propose, presents poetry itself—or concretely, the four poems inscribed in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*—as the mediator articulating the figurative relationship between architecture and ruler. For, as scholars of the Alhambra all agree, despite the great variety in their approaches, the architecture represents the sultan, which is to say that beauty (*bahāʾ*) represents power.<sup>52</sup> The poetry speaks for the manner in which this representation is realized. To do so, poetry gives voice to the forms of interrelationship between visual elements that constitute the beauty of the architectural decoration. An analysis of the poetic inscriptions, therefore, can provide a foundation for understanding the parietal decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. Most broadly, I emphasize that poetry and architectural decoration shared principles of figuration and thus that a coherent aesthetics crosses the boundaries between artistic media in the Alhambra.<sup>53</sup>

### III. FIGURATIVE SYSTEM AND DECORATIVE DISPLAY

García Gómez made an attempt to interpret Ibn al-Jayyab's list of poetic figures as a guide to the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. For instance, he understood the term *mujannas* to mean "similarity,"<sup>54</sup> supported by the meanings of the verb (root *j-n-s*) in its second and third forms, which respectively correspond to "to make alike, make similar" and "to be alike, similar, related." And in fact, the numerous decorative forms employed in the embellishment of this space support this understanding, since there are certainly similarities between features. Such a conception of *mujannas*, however, bespeaks García Gómez's mimetic bias, reinforced in his interpretation of *mughāṣṣan* as "branching,"<sup>55</sup> on the basis of the meaning of its root (*gh-ṣ-n*), Forms II and IV of which have the meaning "to put forth branches, to branch (tree)." Thus, García Gómez understood *mughāṣṣan* to refer mimetically to the vegetal decoration, whose leaves and tendrils sprout and branch out to fill the space.<sup>56</sup> The design does not, however, isolate the foliate motifs. Quite the contrary, they appear within an area (figs. 8 and 9b), which, as Fernández-Puertas has demonstrated, consists of a pattern built of no less than three superimposed rhomboid grids—one geometric, one floral, and one epigraphic.<sup>57</sup> In short, the foliate "branching" is inextricably interrelated with the other motifs. What is wanted, then, is an enlarged view of figuration beyond the "similarity" of mimesis that can account for more varied and complex interrelations.

I prefer to speak of "relatedness" as the overarching trope of all the terms of *badi'* poetics enumerated by Ibn al-Jayyab, and of all the types of motifs in the architectural decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. In this sense, the figurative system shared by poetry and architectural decoration participates in the larger scheme, one of the major components of which is the geometric "relatedness" of the Alhambra elucidated by Fernández-Puertas, who has demonstrated that all the architectural features of the palatial complex are interrelated through their dependence upon a single geometric proportion—that of the diagonal of a square to its side, or the square root of 2.<sup>58</sup> I, in turn, seek to demonstrate the ways in which poetry provides a common language for the varied figurative relations between visual elements.

Sophie Makariou's interdisciplinary approach to the inscriptions in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* proves more illuminating for my analysis.<sup>59</sup> Makariou, too, considers the poems to be of limited literary quality in themselves, but finds nonetheless that "one is faced there with a compositional process that links the thing written tightly to the thing seen or to be read."<sup>60</sup> She focuses her attention on the visual disposition of the inscriptions. Her analyses are altogether persuasive, but the figurative system that she finds exemplified in the layout of the text must be extended to the experience of the parietal decoration as a whole. In this last respect, I note one discrepancy between our conceptions of the "compositional process." Makariou likens the disposition of the parietal epigraphy to a manuscript.<sup>61</sup> She is careful to circumscribe her own simile ("comme dans un manuscrit") in a note in which she indicates that her research did not uncover any "convincing comparison" between the format of any extant contemporaneous manuscript and the disposition of the parietal epigraphy.<sup>62</sup> Yet she continues to assess the parietal decoration against the standard of manuscript design, arguing that "the main field is not that of the essential inscription—the poem—and that the layout constitutes rather a sort of testing or deception of that which is given to be read."<sup>63</sup> In short, the rest of the decoration dominates over the poetic inscriptions, and Makariou takes this to be an upending of the hierarchy expected of a manuscript, in which the poem would be "essential," and the non-linguistic motifs secondary. There is no reason, however, to expect that inscriptions in an architectural setting would share the same hierarchy. Makariou is more to the point when she adds in passing, "In effect the poem appears in marginal inscriptions, which, in the hierarchy of the page, would occupy the place, if one may extend the comparison with books, of glosses."<sup>64</sup> Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi expresses a similar view in her semiotic analysis, arguing that the Alhambra is to be seen as "text" and its parietal epigraphy as "commentary" on the "text."<sup>65</sup> My reading of the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is consonant with this view, though I would exercise some caution, since the "glosses" or "commentary" are not extraneous additions to the "essential" architectural text. The poetic inscriptions are in fact an integral part of the "text" itself.

Rather than offer a full description of that “text,” that is, a detailed visual analysis of the *Qalahurra*’s complex parietal decoration, I emphasize here its main organizing feature: the division of the elevation of the interior (fig. 8) into four major horizontal areas, each increasing in height in relation to the preceding one, and consisting of a number of distinct decorative bands. The main import of Ibn al-Jayyab’s reference to *badi‘* poetics in the epigraphy concerns the ways in which the four figures articulate the interrelationships between those horizontal areas. I will expand on the visual analysis of particular decorative elements while elucidating the poetic figures.

Ibn al-Jayyab’s four poems are inscribed in the first, that is, the lowest, horizontal area, which, in the context of my present argument, calls for a fuller description. This area (figs. 8 and 9a) combines two materials: ceramic mosaic and plaster. The lower part of the wall is occupied by dadoes of ceramic mosaic tiles divided into three bands: a wide strip of geometric designs based on a motif of radiating stars;<sup>66</sup> a narrow epigraphic band above it;<sup>67</sup> and crowning the latter, a similarly narrow band with a crenellation element. Four different geometric designs can be distinguished in the dadoes: the first two are based on the eight-pointed star, while the third and fourth each have a sixteen-pointed star as the central element. They are distributed around the perimeter of the room in the following manner (figs. 5, 7, and 8): the dadoes with the first design are located on the walls of the central niche; those with the second design appear in the lateral niches; the dadoes on the walls between the three niches are embellished with the third design; and the dadoes on the walls between the lateral niches and the entrance are decorated with the fourth design.<sup>68</sup> Here, in addition to white, green, blue, and brown in the polychromed color scheme of the ceramic tiles, luster tiles with sulfates of copper and silver appear for the first time in the decoration of the Alhambra.<sup>69</sup>

Between the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic and the main expanse of the wall formed by panels of carved plaster there are two horizontal bands.<sup>70</sup> The first of the bands is filled with a *muqarnas* frieze supported by miniscule columns. The next contains polylobed cartouches—large ovals filled with epigraphy alternating

with smaller circles filled with foliate forms—enclosed by a rectangular frame inscribed with Ibn al-Jayyab’s verses (fig. 11). The poetic text in this band starts on one wall and continues to the adjoining wall, linking two sides of a corner, as though the verses were providing structural support for the *qubba* as a whole.

The second area (figs. 8 and 9b) is filled with the three superimposed rhomboid grids (geometric, floral, and epigraphic) mentioned above.<sup>71</sup> Although only the floral grid is easily detectible, the superimposition of three different grids, all placed on the same vertical axis, produces the effect of a pattern densely filled with mixtilinear, floral, and epigraphic elements. The epigraphic grid deserves special attention. Fernández-Puertas has discerned that Kufic calligraphy was employed here and that all of the letters are executed in a proportional script. The letters *alif* and *lām* are extended to form adjoining intersecting arches at the apex of the grid, while their prolongations are knotted at its base.<sup>72</sup> The Kufic phrase, which reads, “*al-mulku li-llāhi*” (Dominion [belongs] to God), alternates with another inscription placed within the adjoining arch of the same grid and executed in *naskh-thuluth* script: “*al-qudratu li-llāhi*” (Power [belongs] to God). A second *naskh-thuluth* inscription with the invocation, “*al-‘izzatu li-llāhi*” (Glory [belongs] to God), is placed at the base of the floral grid.<sup>73</sup>

Just as in the first area, this level of decoration extends onto the adjoining walls, creating the effect of a continuous band around the perimeter of the room. This effect is counterbalanced by the interruptions of the apertures: the entrance arch and the three openings with screens of carved and pierced plaster above it on the south wall (figs. 5 and 7);<sup>74</sup> and the deep, linteled niche on the three other walls (figs. 5 and 8). The vertical thrust of the apertures is emphasized architectonically by the single slender column of the double-light window, and decoratively by the rectangular frame or *alfiz*, which articulates the openings of the niches and which contains an epigraphic band. The contrast of vertical and horizontal directions in the decoration is made even more emphatic in the small panels placed directly above the *alfiz*. These panels constitute an area that mimics, on a diminutive scale, the rhomboid grid that flanks it on either side. Thus, this area further empha-

sizes the articulation of the niche and of the double-light window within it—just as the latticed windows do on the south side—and consequently it makes the vertical ascent of the panels with the large rhomboid grid more prominent.

The third area (figs. 8 and 9c) is divided into four bands of various widths. The geometry of the first band is articulated through an alternation of eight-pointed stars and epigraphic cartouches, whose lateral sides repeat the profile of the stars. The second band is also dominated by the eight-pointed stars, the interstices of which are filled with polygonal geometric shapes and further embellished with floral elements. Above it is an epigraphic band, surmounted by the wide band of a *muqarnas* frieze supported by a colonnade.

Finally, the fourth area (figs. 8 and 9d) is the wooden cupola of the *artesonado* ceiling, embellished with rows of radiating stars.<sup>75</sup> An epigraphic band carved in wood crowns the parietal elevation and serves as a transition to the cupola. The band contains the Nasrid motto, “*walā ghālib illā Allāh*” (There is no conqueror, but God), which is inscribed repeatedly throughout the precincts of the Alhambra.

Some decorative features are common to the first three areas. In the plaster panels of parietal decoration, the superimposed grids and their constituent elements were carved at different depths, varying from 0.5 centimeters to 4 centimeters.<sup>76</sup> Hence, the great variety of decorative forms, carved at several levels of relief, gives the appearance of intersecting and overlapping each other. The complexity of the design, combined with the carving method, resulted in the intended optical effect of a three-dimensional texture. This texture was enriched even more by the treatment of the surface of the foliate motifs that fill the grids in different ways: some are left flat or plain, while others are ribbed, dented, serrated, lenticular, and beveled.<sup>77</sup> In a panel containing an epigraphic cartouche (fig. 11), for instance, several depths of carving can be distinguished: the letters of the inscriptions form the foreground, while the vegetal motifs, carved in lower relief, constitute the middle ground.

The use of colored pigments contributed further to this effect. Although throughout the precincts of the Alhambra the carved and molded plaster panels have

lost their original polychrome painting, the remains of pigments in many places provide evidence of the rich and vibrant palette that was used in the decoration. The traces of pigments show that most of the parietal epigraphy was painted with gold or silverleaf, or in white with black outlines.<sup>78</sup> Executed in these colors, the inscriptions “stood out” on a red, blue, or turquoise ground.<sup>79</sup> Foliate elements in some compositions were also painted with gold or silver leaf, while in others their serrated edges were painted either in red or blue in contrast with the ground color.<sup>80</sup> In a historical account describing a *qubba* in the Alhambra, Ibn al-Khatib stated that the poetic epigraphy was executed in letters of “pure gold” on a ground of lapis lazuli.<sup>81</sup> And speaking of the parietal decoration in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* of Yusuf I, Ibn al-Jayyab, in a poem inscribed on its wall, says that the designs are *muzakhrāf* (polychromed) and *mudhahhab* (gilded) (4.5). The juxtaposition of primary colors red, blue, and gold (a brilliant and costly substitute for yellow) appears to have predominated in the color scheme of the carved plaster panels in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, where the red and blue grounds alternate within the rows of the rhomboid grid, as does the color of the *naskh-thuluth* inscriptions within it.<sup>82</sup>

The embellishment of the interior of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* is but one example of a unified and clearly articulated aesthetic approach to decoration in the palaces of the Alhambra. Various facets of this approach are employed consistently throughout the interiors of all palatial precincts: the division of the wall plane along its elevation into successive horizontal areas, in which a specific decorative element (geometry, foliation, or epigraphy) predominates; the superimposition of decorative grids, carved at various depths; the employment of similar embellishments in distinct areas of the decoration, which further enhances visual unity and coherence in the compositional scheme as a whole; the application of pigments in a color scheme with respect to fore- and background motifs; the use of decorative materials along the elevation (dadoes of ceramic tile mosaics, carved stucco, wood *artesonados*, or molded plaster *muqarnas* vaults); and, finally, the use of all three types of parietal epigraphy—Qur’anic, formulaic, and poetic.

#### IV. DEPLOYING THE FIGURES, READING THE DECORATION

I begin the concrete analysis of the relationship between Ibn al-Jayyab's deployment of the four poetic tropes and the architectural decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadida* with the figure of *muraṣṣa'* (or *tarṣī'*), which, in terms of poetic composition, is understood as internal rhyme.<sup>83</sup> Two types of *tarṣī'* have been defined: first, "when the words in each segment are completely equivalent in metre and rhyme" and second, "when one word in the first member differs from the corresponding one in the second."<sup>84</sup> The poems under examination are written in the same meter, *kāmil*, but in different rhymes: (1) — *ājī*; (2) — *ashā*; (3) — *'u*; (4) — *fu*. The first verse in all four poems has rhyming hemistiches; thereafter, however, a single rhyme occurs at the end of every verse.<sup>85</sup>

The popularity of *tarṣī'* has been attributed to "its potential for enhancing both the musicality of the poem and its affective impact on the audience";<sup>86</sup> it is thus related to the performative aspect of poetry. As Meisami noted, however, the term is derived from an expression related to the jeweler's craft—*tarṣī' al-'iqd*, or the setting of stones in a necklace in a corresponding or symmetrical manner, according to Ibn al-Athir (d. 1239), a literary theorist and critic at the Zangid court in Mosul.<sup>87</sup> Other scholars have identified *tarṣī'* with "inlay," recalling that the Arabic word is the etymological root of Spanish *taracea* and Italian *intarsio*.<sup>88</sup> This understanding of inlay, or "the inserting of one part within another,"<sup>89</sup> would correspond to the structure of internal rhyme, that is, the insertion of a rhyme within a verse (at the close of the first hemistich), in addition to the end rhyme.<sup>90</sup>

Given the association of the term *tarṣī'* with the craft of jewelry, García Gómez admitted that the meaning "inlaid," which he had proposed as the basis for the relation between Ibn al-Jayyab's verses and the parietal decoration of carved plaster, was problematic.<sup>91</sup> This difficulty might have been better resolved had he considered all of the decorative media, in which case the term in its literal understanding might be seen to apply more adequately to the description of the revetments of ceramic tile mosaic. The latter technique is similar to inlay, and, the poet admires it in the same verse in

poem 3 in which he also refers to carved plaster: "Marvels of stucco and tiles..." (3.4). Yet a more complete understanding of *muraṣṣa'* may be gained by recognizing that poetry, too, is among the decorative media of the *Qalahurra al-jadida*, and that it, too, is inlaid in the decoration.

Hence, reading the term as it was defined and employed in *badī'* poetics will shed light on its relevance to the discussion of decoration, suggesting a more plausible explanation for its use by Ibn al-Jayyab. Examining the theoretical writing on poetry of the Abbasid literary critic and poet Qudama b. Ja'far (d. 948), Abu Deeb has proposed that the term *tarṣī'* signified "both morphological and metrical harmony and internal rhyming [that] can occur in single words or in phrases," and that this poetic feature, acting as "a structural property," belongs to "the level of organization and symmetry of a poem."<sup>92</sup> Neither the term itself nor Qudama's understanding or interpretation of it was new at the time, since the Abbasid writer insisted that ancient and modern poets alike strove to attain this poetic goal.

Recalling the preeminent aspect of repetition in *tarṣī'*, the "morphological internal rhyming" of a poetic text would correspond to the visual repetition of elements and forms self-evident in the decorative bands of the *Qalahurra al-jadida*. The combination of elements of three types of decorative vocabulary—geometric, epigraphic, and vegetal—serves as visual parallels to the linguistic morphemes that constitute the building blocks of a composition. What the understanding of *tarṣī'* in relation to *badī'* poetics allows me to emphasize here is that this form of "relatedness" operates as a structural property at "the level of organization and symmetry" of the decorative scheme as a whole.

The internal rhyming of *tarṣī'* is linked to the second poetic term named by Ibn al-Jayyab, *mughāṣṣan*, or caesura. As a poetic term, caesura refers to a compositional device that distributes the syllables of a verse more or less evenly into hemistiches; it thus functions as an "architectural" element dividing the entire structure of a poem into proportional units. Caesura not only highlights the quality of balance between the hemistiches, but also indicates a logical pause in the performance of a poem, thereby amplifying the hemistiches' rhetorical impact. The poet's praise for "the beauty of the palace" is articulated as just such a question of dis-

tribution: “The beauty (*bahā*) of the palace (*qaṣr*) is distributed between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samā*), and the earth (*arḍ*)” (3.3). Caesura, which both isolates the hemistich and sets it in a symmetrical pair, is a paradigm for the “marvelous work” of the architectural space.

Balance and proportionate distribution, even the pause of caesura, so important for the performance of the poetic recital, are crucial to the analysis of the non-verbal decoration. The properties of caesura as a marker that divides the whole into parts are defined with still greater precision by Meisami when she notes that such markers in *badī* poetics “indicate both connections and shifts.”<sup>93</sup> As concerns the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, I would suggest that Ibn al-Jayyab’s reference to *mughāṣṣan* should be understood in this way, and, furthermore, I would point to the parietal epigraphy itself as the principal element performing the role of the visual caesura. For unlike the reception of the other decorative elements, in which the eye would take in abstract forms, whether floral or geometric, all but instantaneously, the reading of the epigraphy and the contemplation of its message would create an effective pause in the performance—here, the act of beholding. This would be especially true of the poetic inscriptions, situated somewhat below eye-level and thus perfectly accessible to a person seated on the floor.

The third poetic term named in Ibn al-Jayyab’s poems is *muṭabbaq* (also *ṭibāq*), or antithesis. *Muṭabbaq* is formulated by “antithetical words, ideas, or constructs,” which have a “potential for organizing larger units,” such as verses, segments of a poem, and whole poems.<sup>94</sup> Considering the length of the poems, antithesis is employed abundantly, appearing in several verses in each poem. There are numerous examples of one-word antitheses, such as in the descriptions of the decoration, referring to motifs “single and paired” (1.3), and “sky (*samā* [ceiling]) and earth (*arḍ* [floor])” (1.4 vs. 2.5; and 3.3), where an antithesis functions to underscore the division of a unified architectural and decorative composition into balanced parts.

*Muṭabbaq* can even be found at several reprises within a single verse, as in the first poem: “*Qalahurra* on the outside, while it conceals within a palace (*qaṣr*) that emits a burning light” (1.2). The antitheses of out-

side—within and conceals—emits are self-evident, but the more subtle opposition between the distinct architectural terms used establishes an architectural typology that provides the figurative key to the antithetical structure of the ensemble of four poems. Although it is generally accepted that the term *qalahurra* designates a military tower,<sup>95</sup> in Nasrid architecture it may refer to a large defensive tower that contains a royal dwelling within its interior.<sup>96</sup> This proposition is justified by the two standing examples in the Alhambra: the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* or new *Qalahurra*, as Ibn al-Jayyab called it, under study here, and the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, built between 1393 and 1395, and designated by that term by the poet Ibn al-Zamrak.<sup>97</sup>

Ibn al-Jayyab introduced the building in the opening words of the first verse with the most generic of designations, “Of this tower (*burj*)” (1.1). The conjunction of *burj* and *qalahurra* (found also in the opening verses of poems 2 and 4) is more than a specification of the building type; rather, the division of *burj* into the twin images of *qalahurra* and *qaṣr* speaks to the antithetical nature of the tower itself. In the subsequent poems, Ibn al-Jayyab provides a further explication of the dual nature of the building by means of *muṭabbaq*: “*Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaṣr*) / So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness” (3.2), and “*Qalahurra* outwardly, on the inside a palace (*qaṣr*) / So, say: it is a stronghold or a dwelling for happy tidings” (4.2). What is notable in the poetic logic is that antithesis is not a choice between opposites, but rather a unity in contradiction. The *Qalahurra* can be the seat of pleasure and of pacific assembly precisely because it also projects military strength. The same antithesis is transferred from the architecture to express the dual nature of its royal patron: “This monument (*maṣna*)...abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior” (3.1). This *muṭabbaq* engages another antithesis that expresses the fundamental opposition between Islam and Christianity in 1.5, “It has been an honor to the faith that forced captive slaves built it [i.e., the *Qalahurra*],” since the “captive slaves” in question would have been Christians, who, it appears, took part in the royal construction projects of the Nasrids in Granada.<sup>98</sup> In this context, as elsewhere, the ruler stands for the faith, since it is both faith and ruler that defend against the infi-

dels: “we are protected from everything that bewilders us” (2.7). The image of Yusuf I as protector is further elaborated in yet another antithesis: “If the kings compare their glories, / his [glory], the Qur’an itself tells us” (4.7). The vainglory of other kings is merely rivalry for earthly power and so circumscribed by history, whereas the true glory of the defender of the faith is sacred and inscribed in the Qur’an.

The logic of antithesis follows the more general principle of interrelationship. The special strength and glory of the sultan can only be known through his relationship to the infidel. Moreover, the repeated use of antithetical words, phrases, and concepts serves to organize and forge links between different poems. The primary link, central to all four poems, is the image of the *Qalahurra* itself, understood as an antithetical structure.

With respect to the decoration of the *Qalahurra*, *muṭabbaq* can be understood as “alternation,” the meaning proposed by García Gómez.<sup>99</sup> For instance, the band in which circular and oblong cartouches alternate in the first (i.e., lowest) horizontal area is “related” to the band with alternating eight-pointed stars and cartouches in the third area. Not only do the lateral sides of the large cartouches in both bands repeat the profile of the smaller ones, but the large cartouches contain epigraphy, while the smaller ones are filled with floral elements. Furthermore, the rectilinear cartouches, which alternate with stars in the third area, are related to the small rectilinear cartouches, once again filled with inscriptions, that are suspended from the *muqarnas* frieze in the upper band of the same area. At the same time, the band above the *muqarnas* frieze in the fourth area, in which oblong cartouches alternate with circular ones with polylobed contours, relates back to the band in the first area with alternating cartouches: the knotted elements that link the cartouches in both bands clinch, as it were, the visual analogy.

The relationship of the two friezes of *muqarnas* supported by a colonnade in the first and third areas is primarily a matter of proportions; but in addition, the profile of the tiered-*muqarnas* configuration is reminiscent of the profile of the rhomboid grid in the second area, in the panels featuring both large- and small-scale grids. Finally, the epigraphy executed in *naskh* script in continuous bands and contained in the cartouches and present in all areas of decoration, and the short, knotted

Kufic inscription repeated between the columns of the *muqarnas* frieze, visually link diverse decorative bands, functioning as the “seams” of the design.

I would suggest a further reading of *muṭabbaq* beyond the understanding of alternation with regard to the decoration of the *Qalahurra*. In addition to the sense of *ṭibāq* as “corresponding or analogous to something, consistent or compatible with something,” in Form II, its root, *ṭ-b-q* spans a range of meanings: “to cover, to make coincident or congruent, to superpose (two figures in geometry); to spread throughout something, to pervade.”<sup>100</sup> One finds analogy in the relation of the star design in the first, third, and fourth areas and the rhomboid grid in the second area, as both elements serve to make geometry explicit in the design. The analogical relation of the elements, as in the above example, allows at once the recognition and appreciation of similarities and dissimilarities between the decorative elements.<sup>101</sup>

The notion of superposition and congruency could not have been more evident than in the three superimposed grids that form the rhomboid patterning in the second horizontal area (fig. 9b). All three are congruent, since, despite being formed by rectilinear shapes in the primary, geometric grid, and by foliate and epigraphic elements in the other two, the foliate and epigraphic grids follow the outlines of the geometric one. Indeed, more than congruent, the grids quite literally pervade the panel and, moreover, cover one another. On a larger scale, this sense of *muṭabbaq* is evident with regard to the design within any panel, which spreads in horizontal and vertical directions, and for the decorative scheme as a whole, which covers the entire surface of the architectural interior.

The last of the four figures mentioned by Ibn al-Jayyab is *tajnīs* (also *jinās*, the terms are interchangeable, and both take their name from “the principle of relationship of kind or *mujānasa*”),<sup>102</sup> usually translated as paronomasia. Although there are several types of *tajnīs*, all of them depend “on the extent of the identity between the two terms that form the paronomasia.”<sup>103</sup> The types can be defined as follows: terms derived from the same root, they

may be two identical words with different meanings, one of which may be a combination of two words; they may contain identical letters, but differ in their vocalization and diacritics; they may be only partially identical verg-

ing on alliteration; and the two words may be identical except for a reversed sequence of their letters.<sup>104</sup>

Meisami emphasizes that the Arabic language “lends itself especially well to this device,” and that it was therefore employed extensively in medieval Arabic poetry.<sup>105</sup> Ibn al-Jayyab was no exception, and his poems abound with *tajnīs*.

There are many examples in the poems of *tajnīs* based on etymology. In poem 3, for example, three verses employ a word with the root *j-m-ʿ*: in Form I (to collect, to combine, to accumulate, to gather, to compose), we have *majmaʿ* (assembly) (3.2), in reference to the *Qalahurra*’s palatial aspect as a place of gathering, and *jumiʿat* and *jamʿ* (storing so much treasure; literally, gathering, collecting, or combining in a collection) (3.5), which also refer to the tower; and finally, in Form V (to gather, to accumulate), we have *ajmaʿ* (3.7), in reference to the sultan’s face, which “accumulates” enchantments.

The repetition of words gives rise to the suspicion that the poet intends a certain self-referential word play as a way to draw attention to his accomplishments, since he is in fact combining, accumulating, and gathering forms that derive from the root *j-m-ʿ*. In that light, one might well offer an alternative interpretation of verse 3.5, that is, to understand the verb *jumiʿat* to mean “to compose” poetry and the word *jamʿ* (treasure) to refer to poetic epigraphy. The poet’s use of *tajnīs* indicates at once the dual nature of the treasures contained within the building—its visual and linguistic artistry—while at the same time it serves to praise his own compositions. This interpretation is reinforced by the subsequent verses of poem 3, in which Ibn al-Jayyab gathers or combines four tropes from *badiʿ* poetics.

In other instances, *tajnīs* is employed to link several poems together. A few brief examples will suffice to demonstrate this point. Words derived from the root *ṣ-n-ʿ* (work, workmanship, design, artistic skill) are of particular importance in creating the image of the tower in terms that praise the building’s construction and embellishment. Thus, the root is used in two different verses of the first poem: *ṣanʿa* (workmanship) (1.3), and *ṣanāʿiʿi* (skillfully made) (1.4). It is employed in the second poem as *maṣnaʿ* (monument; literally, man-made structure, grand structure) (2.1), and as *ṣanʿ* (fabrica-

tion) (2.5); and finally, it is repeated as *maṣnaʿ* in the third poem (3.1). Similar employment of *tajnīs* linking several poems can be found with the root *f-kh-r*: *al-fakhr* (glory) (1.6, 3.8); and, in Form VIII, *iftakhara* (vying for glory), alongside *al-fakhr* (4.7).

I will end my discussion of this rhetorical figure with an example that is used to create ideological constructs in addition to a display of poetic skill. If antithesis constructed the poetic image of the sultan on the model of the *Qalahurra*, paronomasia with the root *n-ṣ-r* develops a historical depth for the image of the patron. The root *n-ṣ-r* first and foremost refers to the name of the Nasrid Sultanate and its dynasty, founded by Muhammad I (Muhammad b. Yusuf b. Nasr), who came from the clan of Banu Nasr, also known as Banu al-Ahmar, and who ruled in Granada between 1237 and 1273.<sup>106</sup> While the Form I verb of *n-ṣ-r* means “to help, aid, assist; to render victorious, let triumph; to protect, to save” and the verbal noun *naṣr* means “help, aid, support; victory; triumph,” the Form II verb draws on a secondary meaning of the root and denotes “to make someone Christian,” i.e., to convert someone to Christianity.

The poetic punning on the dynastic name and the variety of meanings derived from its root are exploited to the fullest by the poet. For instance, referring in the first poem to the sultan as “of the family of Saʿd and of the Banu Nasr tribe, who helped / and sheltered the one who ‘ascended the Ladder,’” the poet places emphasis on the Nasrids’ progenitors, who “helped” (*naṣarū*) the Prophet in the *miʿrāj* (Ascent) (1.8). A similar *tajnīs* is employed in the last verses of the second poem as well, which again make reference to Nasrid genealogy: “May it always—the blood of Nasr—in triumph (*naṣr*) and / happiness (*saʿd*) build whatever it wants wherever it wants” (2.8). Here, however, further puns, or, perhaps, a double *tajnīs* can be detected. The Form III verb of the root *s-ʿ-d* (to help, to assist, to aid) is at once a *tajnīs* on Saʿd, the name of the Nasrids’ ancestors, and a reference to their assistance in the Prophet’s *miʿrāj*, both of which appeared in the preceding poem (1.8). As Ibn al-Khatib stated in his *Ihāṭa* with regard to the genealogy of the Nasrids, “...there are abundant references in many writers to the fact that the Nasrid house descends from Saʿd b. ʿUbada, lord of the tribe of Khazraj and Companion of the Prophet.”<sup>107</sup>

Even though the poet dispenses with *tajnīs* based on the root *n-ṣ-r* in the last verses of poem 3, he makes a reference to the Nasrids' dynastic genealogy, praising Yusuf I's "enchantments" (3.7), and stating that his "main glory [comes] from Khazraj" (3.8). The poet refers to the Khazraj tribe once more, but this time by its other name, *Anṣār*, by which the tribe is known in the Qur'an.<sup>108</sup> Thus, in the last verses of the remaining poem (4.8), Yusuf I's lineage is linked in a *tajnīs* to "triumph": "Because he is the chosen of the Ansar, may his kingdom always / continue to have triumph (*naṣr*) and may he continue to lead in the religion."

This gesture was particularly important with regard to dynastic claims, since Yusuf I's father, Isma'il I (r. 1314–25), was a matrilineal descendant of the founder of the dynasty, Muhammad I—Isma'il I's mother, Fatima, was Muhammad I's granddaughter. Isma'il I took the throne in a revolt against Sultan Nasr (r. 1309–14), the last ruler in the direct line of descendants of Muhammad I.<sup>109</sup> The struggle for power between the two sides of the family, *al-dawla al-ghālibiyya* (the victorious state) and the collateral branch of the Banu'l-Ahmar termed *al-dawla al-Ismā'īliyya* (after Isma'il I), predated Isma'il I's reign and continued between the Nasrid princes through the reign of Muhammad V (1354–59 and 1362–91).<sup>110</sup> Consequently, the poet's reiteration of Yusuf I's genealogy and the Nasrids' dynastic ties to the Companion of the Prophet links Yusuf I's triumphs to those of the prophetic faith itself.<sup>111</sup> Thus, it can be seen that the ideological constructions of the *fakhr* part of the poems were built in part on multiple *tajnīsāt*, in which the image of the ruler Yusuf I is central.

When one considers that Ibn al-Jayyab works self-consciously within the tradition of *badī'* poetics, and hence, his use of the term *tajnīs* bears the more precise, technical meaning of paronomasia, the frequent etymological punning in the poetic text may be seen as the principal figurative manifestation of the "relatedness" of the decorative design. For, if *tajnīs* is primarily the type of verbal similarity that works through variations upon a single root, then one might well recall with Fernández-Puertas that the whole decorative scheme and, in fact, the overall design of the architecture of the Alhambra derive, likewise, from a single root, literally the square root of two equal to the proportion of the diagonal of a square to its side.

Study of paronomasia based on the root *j-m-'* in poem 3 revealed a more particular relationship that Ibn al-Jayyab drew between poetry and architecture as artistic forms of gathering. In this light, it is possible to move beyond the general notion of similarity to view *tajnīs* as a strong form of "relatedness," gathering elements from the various horizontal areas of the decoration (figs. 8 and 9a–d), or different bands within an area, into an interconnected whole. Hence, while it would be true to state that the eight-pointed stars in the two consecutive bands of the third area are similar despite the difference in scale, what is more important is their relation to other star-motifs elsewhere in the overall parietal decoration: the eight- and sixteen-pointed stars in the dadoes of ceramic mosaics and the twelve-pointed stars in the cupola. Moreover, this broader form of "relatedness" develops from the more specific function of *tajnīs* as it appears within the design of a given band, since the star motifs serve as a root out of which the rest of the design radiates. Thus, at one and the same time, the *tajnīs* generates a variety of polygonal forms as a visual paronomasia within individual bands (a "play on visual motifs," as one might say a "play on words"). The star explodes into a myriad of small particles, and yet the star motif still serves to gather the different bands together in an interrelated composition of the whole elevation that belies the diversity of media.

It is the "relatedness" of the different horizontal bands that provides the underlying harmony of the decoration of the *qubba* in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*, and it may be discovered in many aspects. One might no doubt corroborate Fernández-Puertas's findings by examining the geometry of the elements and the proportional relations that govern them. But on a different scale, one might also note the relatedness established, most obviously, by the presence of all three types of decoration—vegetal, epigraphic, and geometric—in all four major horizontal areas. More subtly, relations are also created between different decorative types in different bands through visual analogies in their deployment. The derivation of diversity from a common root of *tajnīs*, the antithetical alternations of *muṭabbaq*, the internal repetitions of *tarṣī'*, and the visual pauses produced by *mughāṣṣan*, as Ibn al-Jayyab understood them, all contribute to the coherence and harmony of the diverse, but related forms of the overall visual composition.

## V. DYNAMIC RELATIONS

One might well consider Ibn al-Jayyab's *tajnis* on *b-d-*, the root of *badī'*, the key to understanding the aesthetic code of the decoration of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*. The root appears throughout the four poems, now referring to the architecture ("marvels [*badā'i'*] of stucco," 3.4), now to the sultan (the superlative form—*abdā'*—in reference to the face of Yusuf I, 3.7), and now to poetry itself, as the mediator between the two ("It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badī'* poetry: *mujannas, muṭabbaq, mughaṣṣan, muraṣṣa'*," 3.6). But, given the frequent use of epigraphy in Islamic art, including the prominent deployment of poetic inscriptions in architectural decoration and other media, I wish, by way of conclusion, to suggest a wider scope.

The use of *waṣf*, i.e., description, in the service of ekphrasis is well attested in Arabic poetry as in other poetic traditions. But where poetry is inscribed on the very objects that the verses purportedly describe—from metalwork to architecture—an alternative or additional purpose may well be inferred. A visual description of what stands before the eye, after all, is largely superflu-

ous. Rather, the capacity of poetry to speak of its own figurative devices can be summoned to give voice to inanimate objects—nowhere more dramatically than in the use of prosopopeia (i.e., a first-person voice speaking for an otherwise mute subject), which is an oft-used trope in Arabic and Persian poetic epigraphy and especially notable in the Alhambra, though not a device named or employed by Ibn al-Jayyab in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*.<sup>112</sup>

And what does this poetry say? Not, I suggest, merely that the visual images in the verses resemble the object, but rather that the dynamic relations between visual elements may be articulated and understood by analogy to poetic figures, which would have been familiar to the cultivated beholder and exemplified in the inscriptions at hand. Careful consideration of poetic figuration as it is found in epigraphy, therefore, can enrich the resources of visual analysis while speaking a language literally inscribed in the cultural milieu of the object of study.

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## APPENDIX I

Formulaic inscriptions and Qur'anic verses<sup>113</sup>1. *The patio*

It appears that only formulaic inscriptions seen in many other precincts in the Alhambra have been preserved in the patio that precedes the principal hall (*qubba*). Inscribed in Kufic on the stucco decoration, they read: "The kingdom and eternity belong to God" (*al-mulku li-llāhi wa'l-baqā'u*); "Eternal glory—forgiveness for its lord" (*al-'izzu al-qā'imu li-ṣāhibihi al-'āfiyatu*); "Eternal kingdom—forgiveness for its lord" (*al-mulku al-dā'imu li-ṣāhibihi al-'āfiyatu*); and "Praise to God for the benefit of Islam" (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi 'alā ni'mati al-islām*).

2. *The principal hall (qubba)*

The text of the inscriptions around the double-light window on the main axis of the hall is only partially preserved. It reads: "Glory to our lord the sultan, king, conqueror, and warrior... (sul)tan the martyred, holy, the deceased Abu'l-Walid Isma'il, May God help him with his victory" (*'izzun li-mawlānā al-sultāni al-maliki al-muẓaffiri al-mujāhidi... ṭāni al-shahīdi al-muqaddasi al-marḥūmi Abī'l-walīd Ismā'il ayyadahu Allāhu bi-naṣrihi*).<sup>114</sup>

A phrase, written in knotted Kufic, which reads "God is the best guardian and most merciful" (*Allāhu khayrun ḥifẓan wa-huwa arḥamu al-rāḥimīna*), is repeated in each of the two large cartouches. The cartouches are executed in carved stucco and are located in the lower part of the adjoining walls in each of the four corners of the hall. It is these cartouches that are framed by a poem in each corner.

In the south corner (to the right of the entrance), in a band situated between the band with the crenellation motif and the panels with radiating stars, all three forming a part of the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic, the text of the inscriptions reads: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. God's blessing and peace on our lord Muhammad and on his family" (*bi-smi Allāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi ṣallā Allāhu 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa-'alā ālihi wa-sallama taslīman*). This text is followed by the inscription of Sura 113, *al-Falaq* (Daybreak), which is a brief invocation, asking God for protection from the evil: "Say: 'I seek refuge in the Lord

of Daybreak from the mischief of his creation; from the mischief of the night when she spreads her darkness; from the mischief of conjuring witches; from the mischief of the envier, when he envies.'" <sup>115</sup>

In the west corner (to the left of the entrance), executed in the same technique and in a location similar to that of the inscription above, the text reads: "In the Name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful. God's blessing and peace on our lord Muhammad and on his family and companions" (*bi-smi Allāhi al-raḥmāni al-raḥīmi ṣallā Allāhu 'alā sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa-'alā ālihi wa-ṣāhibihi wa-sallama taslīman*). This text is followed by Sura 112, *al-Ikhlāṣ* (Oneness), a declaration of God's absolute unity: "Say: 'God is One, the Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him.'" <sup>116</sup> It should be noted that the Qur'anic verses inscribed in the ceramic dadoes were only partially preserved.<sup>117</sup>

Three short inscriptions, each consisting of two lines of rhymed text of religious content, are found in each of the three niches of the main room.<sup>118</sup> The first text is the following: "I praise God for his constant favor, as his power and glory deserve. And I bless the chosen Prophet and his noble Companions and family" (*Allāha aḥmadu fī 'amīmi nawālihi / ḥamdan yaḥiḥqu li-'izzihī wa-jalālihi / thumma al-ṣalātu 'alā al-nabiyyi al-mujtabā / wa-'alā ṣāḥābatihī al-kirāmi wa-ālihi*). The second inscription reads: "Praise of God is delicious satisfaction: you will employ your tongue to repeat it" (*ḥamdu Allāhi rat'atun ladhīdhatun wa-ta'malanna al-qawla fī tardīdihī*). The third one reads: "Praise to God for prosperity he has given day and night. I hope that, as he did in the past, he may favor me in the future" (*al-ḥamdu li-llāhi 'alā mā manaḥā / min an'umin tatrā aṣīlan wa-ḍuḥā / arjū kamā an'ama fīmā qad maḍā / la'allahu fīmā baqiya an yasmaḥā*).

Formulaic words and phrases appear as a repeated element in the parietal decoration executed in carved stucco. They read: "The riches you possess come from God" (*wa-mā bi-kum min ni'matin fa-mīna Allāhi*); "Power [belongs] to God" (*al-qudratu li-llāhi*); "Glory [belongs] to God" (*al-'izzatu li-llāhi*); "Dominion [belongs] to God" (*al-mulku li-llāhi*); "Happiness" (*al-ghibṭatu*); "There is no conqueror but God" (*wa-lā ghāliba illā Allāh[u]*); and "Greatness to God" (*al-'aẓīmatu li-llāhi*).

## APPENDIX II

Poems by Ibn al-Jayyab inscribed in the *Qalahurra al-jadīda*<sup>119</sup>

## Poem 1

1. Of this tower (*burj*), which is grand among the towers,  
the Alhambra is proud, like a crown.
  2. *Qalahurra* on the outside, while it conceals within  
a palace (*qaṣr*) that emits a burning light.
  3. In it there are marvels of workmanship, single  
(*afrād*) and paired (*azwāj*),  
that were made comparable in terms of proportions  
(*nisab*).
  4. Skillfully-made ceramic tiles in its walls  
and floor are like marvels of brocade (*dībāj*).
  5. It has been an honor to the faith that forced  
captive slaves built it.
  6. Dressed in a *ṭirāz* of glory, as in them [the walls]  
appears  
the name of Our Lord (*mawlānā*) Abu'l-Hajjaj.
  7. Magnanimous, brave, generous king [is]  
sustenance to the one who implores, rain to the one  
who hopes.
  8. Of the family of Sa'd and of the Banu Nasr tribe, who  
helped (*naṣarū*)  
and sheltered the one who “ascended the Ladder”  
(*ṣāhib al-mi'rāj*).
1. *burj-un 'aẓimu al-sha'ni fi'l-abrāj*  
*qad bāhat-i al-Ḥamra'-u minhu bi-tāj-i*
  2. *qalahurra ẓaharat lanā wa-stabṭanat*  
*qaṣr-an yuḍi'u bi-nūrihi al-wahhāj-i*
  3. *fihā badā'i'u ṣan'atin qad nuẓirat*  
*nisaban min al-afrādi wal-azwāj-i*
  4. *fa-ṣana'i'u al-zalliji fi ḥiṭāni-hā*  
*wal-arḍi mithla bada'i'i al-dībāj-i*
  5. *wa-kafā bi-'izzi al-dīni an qad sukhkhirat*  
*fihā mamālīku min al-a'lāj-i*
  6. *labisat ṭirāza al-fakhri lammā an badā*  
*fihā (i)smu mawlānā Abī al-Ḥajjāj-i*
  7. *maliku al-jalālāti wal-basālāti wal-nadā*  
*ghawthu al-ṣarīkhi lahu wa-ghaythu al-rāj-ī*
  8. *min āli Sa'din min Banī Naṣrin wa-man*  
*naṣarū wa-āwaw ṣāhibā al-mi'rāj-i.*

## Poem 2

1. Never has there arisen so great a monument (*maṣ-  
na'*):  
its fame spread through every land.
  2. God has a tower (*burj*) that looks like a lion,  
great and ardent, so beware of its attack.
  3. Alhambra is embellished by it to the extent that it  
takes pride in its beauty, like someone who is drunk.
  4. *Qalahurra* inlaid among the celestial bodies,  
it is next to Pleiades and Pisces.
  5. In its fabrication and ceiling of carpentry,  
it unfurled skillfully as much art as it desired.
  6. It [the tower] reveals Yusuf to us, his face  
like the sun that a night can never hide.
  7. Because of it we love everything that delights us;  
and [with it] we are protected from everything that  
bewilders us.
  8. May it always—the blood of Nasr—in triumph (*naṣr*)  
and  
happiness (*sa'd*) build whatever it wants wherever  
it wants.
1. *mā mithla hādihā al-maṣna'i al-a'lā nashā*  
*fa-ḥadithuhu fi kulli ṣuq'in qad fashā*
  2. *li-llāhi min burjin ilā al-asadi ntamā*  
*sāmin wa-ḥāmin fa-ḥdharū an yabṭishā*
  3. *zīnat bihi al-Ḥamrā'u ḥattā annahā*  
*tuzhā bi-ḥusni ḥalāhu zahwa mani ntashā*
  4. *qalahurra zaḥamat nujūma al-jawwi fi*  
*falakin fa-jāwarati al-thurayya wal-rishā(')*
  5. *ammā mabānīhā wa-far'u najāratin*  
*fal-ṣan'u fihā qad ta'annaqa kayfa shā(a)*
  6. *abdat 'alaynā min muḥayyā Yūsuf*  
*shamsan wa-lākin laysa yaḥjabuhā al-'ishā(')*
  7. *fīhi ḥababnā kulla khayrin sarranā*  
*wa-bihi kafaynā kulla khaṭbin adhashā*
  8. *min āli naṣrin dāma fi naṣrin wa-fi*  
*sa'din fa-yabnī mā yashā'u kamā yashā'(u).*

## Poem 3

1. This monument (*maşna'*) embellishes the Alhambra,  
It is the abode of the peaceful person and of the warrior.
  2. *Qalahurra* was set as a palace (*qaşr*)  
So, say: it is a stronghold or a gathering place for happiness.
  3. The beauty (*bahā'*) of the palace (*qaşr*) is distributed  
between its four directions (*jihāt*), the sky (*samā'*), and  
the earth (*arḍ*).
  4. Marvels of stucco and tiles  
[it] holds, but the carpentry of its ceiling is even  
more marvelous.
  5. In storing so much treasure it triumphed  
in going up and in rising to the highest heights.
  6. It [*al-qalahurra*] speaks *badī'* poetry: paronomasias,  
antithesis, caesuras, and *muraşsa'* (*mujannas*, *muṭab-*  
*baq*, *mughaşsan*, *muraşsa'*).
  7. If Yusuf is there, his face is a marvel  
that accumulates all enchantments.
  8. The main glory [comes] from Khazraj, whose traces  
in the religion are a thunder with light that spreads.
1. *qad zayyana al-Ḥamrā' hādhā al-maşna'u*  
*huwa lil-musālīmi wal-muḥārībi marba'u*
  2. *qalahurra qad ūdī'at qaşran fa-qul*  
*hiya ma'qalun aw lil-masarrati majma'u*
  3. *qaşrun taqassamati al-bahā'u samā'uhu*  
*wal-arḍu minhu wal-jihātu al-arba'u*
  4. *fī al-jişşi wal-zallīji minhu badā'i'u*  
*lākin najāratu saqfihi hiya abda'u*
  5. *jumi'at wa-ba'da al-jam'i uḥkima rafhā*  
*lil-naşbi ḥaythu lahā al-maḥallu al-arfa'u*
  6. *yaḥkī badī'a al-shi'ri minhu mujannasun*  
*wa-muṭabbaqun wa-mughaşsanun wa-muraşsa'u*
  7. *abdā lanā min wajhi Yūsuf āyatan*  
*fīhā takāmalati al-maḥāsīnu ajma'u*
  8. *min Khazrajīn al-fakhru al-ulā āthāruhum*  
*fī al-dīni şā'iqatun bi-nūrin taşta'u.*

## Poem 4

1. It honors the Alhambra, this tower (*al-burj*), which  
dominates the  
skies and which was conceived by the most noble  
imam.
  2. *Qalahurra* outwardly, on the inside a palace (*qaşr*)  
So, say: it is a stronghold or a dwelling for happy tid-  
ings.
  3. Its walls (*ḥiṭān*): in them there are markings (*ra-*  
*qūmun*) that disarm the most eloquent,<sup>120</sup>  
and their beauty (*ḥusn*) is ineffable.
  4. They surprise; and each part equals another part  
in proportion (*nisba*), and so it is a poem (*muwash-*  
*shaḥ*) and a literary work (*muşannaḥ*).<sup>121</sup>
  5. Wherever you look, there are different designs (*nu-*  
*qūsh*)  
always, either polychromed (*muzakhrāf*) or gilded  
(*mudhahhab*).
  6. A marvelous edifice was made to manifest [itself] by  
wisdom,  
that which only the caliph Yusuf achieved.
  7. If the kings compare their glories,  
his [glory], the Qur'an itself tells us.
  8. Because he is the chosen of the Ansar, may his king-  
dom always  
continue to have triumph and may he continue to  
lead in the religion.<sup>122</sup>
1. *qad sharrafa al-Ḥamrā'a burjun mushrifu*  
*fī'l-jawwi dabbarahu al-imāmu al-ashrafu*
  2. *qalahurra fī ḍimnihā qaşrun fa-qul*  
*hiyā ma'qalun aw lil-başā'iri ma'lafu*
  3. *ḥiṭānuhā fīhā raqūmun a'jazat*  
*amadda al-balīghī fa-ḥusnuhā lā yūşafu*
  4. *rāqat wa-nāzara kullu şaklin şaklahu*  
*fī nisbatin fa-muwashshaḥun wa-muşannaḥu*
  5. *mahmā laḥaḫta ra'ayta nuqūshan wushshiyat*  
*anwā'uhu fa-mudhahhabun wa-muzakhrāfu*
  6. *mabnan badī'un abrazathu ḥikmatun*  
*mā ḥāzahā illā al-khalīfatu Yūsuf*
  7. *malikun idhā iftakhara al-mulūku fa-fakhruhu*  
*fī al-dhikri yatlūhu 'alaynā al-muşḥafu*
  8. *min nukhbati al-Anşāri dāma li-mulkihi*  
*naşrun, lahu fī al-dīni sa'yun muzallafu*

## NOTES

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1. Cynthia Robinson, "Marginal Ornament: Poetics, Mimesis, and Devotion in the Palace of the Lions," *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 185. The arguments articulated in this essay were presented in a preliminary form by Robinson at the Word and Image Conference in 2005 in Philadelphia. See also Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).
2. Grabar, *Alhambra*, 101.
3. The work of José Miguel Puerta Vilchez stands apart. Well versed in medieval texts on aesthetics, philosophy, and theology, and employing the principles and methodology of semiotics, Puerta Vilchez sought to identify and interpret the signification and symbolism of the messages encoded in particular architectural and decorative forms and to situate them within a unified aesthetic system for the whole Alhambra. His monographs are seminal works in the field of medieval Andalusian studies: see José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *Los códigos de utopía de la Alhambra de Granada* (Granada: Diputación Provincial de Granada, 1990); José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe: Al-Andalus y la estética árabe clásica* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1997); José Miguel Puerta Vilchez, "El vocabulario estético de los poemas de la Alhambra," in *Pensar la Alhambra*, ed. José Antonio González Alcantud and Antonio Malpica Cuello (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial, 2001), 69–88. Puerta Vilchez's studies guided the work of many scholars, among them D. Fairchild Ruggles, Valérie Gonzalez, and the author of the present essay. See D. Fairchild Ruggles, "The Eye of Sovereignty: Poetry and Vision in the Alhambra's Lindaraja Mirador," *Gesta* 36 (1997): 180–89; Valérie Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: I. B. Tauris/Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2001); and Olga Bush, "'When My Beholder Ponders': Poetic Epigraphy in the Alhambra," in *Pearls from Water, Rubies from Stone: Studies in Islamic Art in Honor of Priscilla Soucek*, ed. Linda Komaroff, *Artibus Asiae* 66, 2 (2006): 55–67.
4. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 189.
5. Cynthia Robinson, *In Praise of Song: The Making of Courtly Culture in al-Andalus and Provence, 1005–1134 A.D.* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
6. Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
7. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 185–214.
8. I return to the complex term *muraṣṣa'* below.
9. Antonio Fernández-Puertas, *The Alhambra* (London: Saqi, 1997), 312.
10. Emilio García Gómez, *Poemas árabes en los muros y fuentes de la Alhambra* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos, 1996). In their reading of the crucial verse from the *Qalahurra al-jadida*, García Gómez, somewhat disparagingly, and Puerta Vilchez, with considerable theoretical sophistication and historical depth, both emphasized mimesis in their understanding of the relationship between the poetic epigraphy and its architectural setting. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 44–46; Puerta Vilchez, "El vocabulario estético," 81–82.
11. See especially Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 88–160.
12. *Ibid.*, 189. Robinson also suggestively extends her discussion of the aesthetics of *badī'* poetry to other artistic media in her examination of Cordoban ivories of the Umayyad and *fitna* periods. She considers these objects as a visual counterpart of the linguistic artifice of *badī'* poetry, noting that their design is "governed and informed by *badī'*'s opaque complexities." *Ibid.*, 134–40.
13. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 191.
14. *Ibid.*, 192.
15. *Ibid.*, 193, emphasis added.
16. *Ibid.*, 195.
17. *Ibid.* I cite Robinson's translation, including her ellipses.
18. Cited in Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Poesía árabe clásica: Antología titulada "Libro de la magia y de la poesía,"* ed. and trans. J. M. Continente Ferrer (Madrid: Instituto Hispano-Arabe de Cultura, 1981), 40.
19. Robinson, "Marginal Ornament," 5.
20. Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, 45.
21. The formulaic and Qur'anic inscriptions require historical and religious contextualizations that call for separate treatment. The work on poetic inscriptions here, however, may offer a conceptual and methodological frame for such a study, suggesting modes of textual analysis and pointing toward the art historical questions concerning the selection of a particular sura or formulaic inscription for a particular site in any given precinct of the Alhambra, and perhaps other Islamic architectural monuments where epigraphy plays a prominent role in the decoration.
22. For an analysis of architectural features of the *Qalahurra al-jadida* within the context of Nasrid architecture and the history of its conservation, see Antonio Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios nazaríes: siglos XIII–XV* (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995), 129–36. For the geometrical scheme of the ground plan and a brief discussion of the decoration of the interior, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 28–29 and 312–14, respectively. Basilio Pavón Maldonado's analysis of the dadoes of ceramic tile mosaic that decorate the interior can be found in his *Estudios sobre la Alhambra*, 2 vols. (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1977), 2:21–29. The place of poetic epigraphy within the decorative scheme is discussed in Sophie Makariou, "Étude d'une scénographie poétique: L'oeuvre d'Ibn al-Jayyâb à la tour de la Captive (Alhambra)," *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 95–107.

23. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312.
24. The place of the *Qalahurra al-jadīda* within this system of communication, shared by all structures of the outer wall of the Alhambra, *madīna* and *qaṣaba* (military quarters) alike, may be a contributing factor to its relative neglect in the vast bibliography on the Alhambra; the history of the transformation of the Alhambra from a military to a palatial complex has yet to receive the sustained attention it requires. In this regard, I limit myself here to remarking that as an architectural type, the *Qalahurra* plays a significant role in that history, since in al-Andalus the term refers to a building that is at once a fortification and a royal residence. As I will discuss below, this composite nature of the *Qalahurra* proves crucial to the poetic figuration of the epigraphy.
25. Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 129. The dimensions of the principal room and the patio are relatively small, which, combined with insufficient light, precludes taking photographs that would incorporate the entire interior space. For this reason, I provide many partial images to give as complete a view of the interior as possible.
26. Among examples of a *qubba* in the palaces of the Alhambra are the Hall of the Comares, the Hall of the Two Sisters, the Hall of the Abencerrajes, and the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII (*Torre de las Infantas*). On the typology of a *qubba*, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, “Salas con linterna central en la arquitectura granadina,” *Al-Andalus* 24 (1959): 197–220. For a more general introduction to the typology of Nasrid residential architecture, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 19–26.
27. I will address the question of the restoration of the ceiling below.
28. For a summary of scholarly works on the building, as well as bibliographic references, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y palacios*, 129. For the conservation work that took place in the 1980s, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312 nn. 4 and 5.
29. The schematically outlined grid of the decoration indicated on the piers shows the areas where the loss of original decoration occurred, and is a result of the approach to conservation in the Alhambra that took hold in the last quarter of the twentieth century.
30. For transliterations and translations of the formulaic inscriptions, and translations of the Qur’anic verses, see Appendix I. See also n. 22 above.
31. María Jesús Rubiera Mata pointed out instances of words in the parietal inscriptions that are the result of erroneous restoration work undertaken over the course of the twentieth century. Her work on Ibn al-Jayyab’s *Dīwān* allowed her to reconstruct the original compositions that were inscribed in this building. García Gómez benefited greatly from this scholar’s work, although he indicated certain differences between his version of the Arabic and the readings proposed by Rubiera Mata. See María Jesús Rubiera Mata, “Los poemas epigráficos de Ibn al-Yayyāb en la Alhambra,” *Al-Andalus* 35 (1970): 453–73; María Jesús Rubiera Mata, “Poesía epigráfica en la Alhambra y el Generalife,” *Poesía* 12 (1981): 17–76.
32. I refer to the Arabic texts of these four poems as published in García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137–42, and have adopted his numbering of the poems and verses. In order to facilitate discussion of specific images or figures of speech, I will cite the texts throughout by parenthetical reference to poem and verse (rather than page number). Hence, for instance, the aforementioned verse will be cited as “3.6,” that is, poem 3, verse 6.
33. For transliterations and translations of all four poems, see Appendix II; for the location of these poetic inscriptions, see fig. 5. My translations aim at a literal adherence to the original texts, instead of seeking to render them into a more fluid and poetic English, in order to preserve as nearly as possible the features that I discuss in my analysis. I am greatly indebted to García Gómez in my versions, but occasionally highlight discrepancies in notes to my translations or in the discussions in the body of my text.
34. In order to explain a certain point in my analysis that turns on a connection between descriptive elements in the poems, I note that the metaphorical terms, *jihāt* (directions), *samā’* (sky), and *arḍ* (earth), correspond to walls, ceiling, and floor, respectively.
35. The terms that appear in this verse—*mujannas*, *muṭabbaq*, *mughāṣṣan*, and *muraṣṣa’*—are passive participles of Form II verbs. A detailed discussion of the terms will follow shortly in the analysis of the poems.
36. The literature on metaphor is immense, both with regard to medieval sources, rooted in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, and modern scholarship. Regarding the former, Kamal Abu Deeb provides an extremely useful introduction, underlining the contributions of the major literary critics of the Abbasid period, such as al-Farabi (d. 950), Ibn al-Mu’tazz (d. 908), and ‘Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 1079). See Kamal Abu Deeb, “Literary Criticism,” in *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, ed. Julia Ashtiany, T. M. Johnstone, J. D. Latham, R. B. Serjeant and G. Rex Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 339–87. For a comprehensive treatment of the subject, see Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Orient Pearls* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2003), 319–403. Kamal Abu Deeb’s discussion of al-Jurjani’s theory of metaphor has been crucial to the present discussion. See Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī’s Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, 1979). Abu Deeb reviews the striking similarities between al-Jurjani’s concepts and modern linguistic theories of metaphor as articulated by Ferdinand de Saussure and I. A. Richards; see Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjānī’s Theory*, 24–64. Paul Ricoeur reviews the literature on metaphor and makes original philosophical contributions to the discussion in *The Rule of Metaphor* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).
37. On the significance of Ibn al-Mu’tazz’s *Kitāb al-Badī’* for the tradition of literary criticism on poetry, see S. A. Bonebakker, “Ibn al-Mu’tazz and *Kitāb al-Badī’*,” in Ashtiany et al., *Abbasid Belles-Lettres*, 388–411.
38. Abu Deeb, “Literary Criticism,” 339–87.
39. *Ibid.*

40. Ibid., 347.
41. Ibid., 368–69.
42. For the impact of Abbasid poetry on the poetry of al-Andalus during the Umayyad period, see Salma Khadra Jayyusi, “Andalusī Poetry: The Golden Period,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 317–66.
43. Examples include works by the most distinguished poets from each of the following periods. For the Umayyad period: Ibn Hanī’ al-Andalusī (d. 973), Ibn Darraj al-Qastallī (d. 1030), and the Umayyad prince al-Sharīf al-Talīq (d. ca. 1009); for the *taifa* period: Ibn ‘Ammar (d. 1084), al-Mu’tamid (d. 1095), the Abbasid ruler of Seville, Ibn Hamdī (d. 1132), and al-Himyari (d. 1048), who compiled one of the first Andalusian anthologies of poetic and rhymed-prose compositions, entitled *al-Badī’ fī waṣf al-rabī’* (The Most Ingenious Descriptions of Spring); for the Almoravid and Almohad periods: Ibn Khafaja (d. 1139), Ibn Quzman (d. 1160), and al-Rusafī (d. 1177). See James T. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 3–71; Robinson, *In Praise of Song*, 92–140.
44. Alexander Knysh, “Ibn al-Khaṭīb,” in *The Literature of al-Andalus*, ed. María Rosa Menocal, Raymond P. Scheindlin, and Michael Sells (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 358–71.
45. For a survey of Nasrid literature, see Celia del Moral, “La literatura del período nazarī,” in *Estudios nazarīes*, ed. Concepción Castillo Castillo (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1997), 29–82. On the cultural production of the Nasrid court—literary, artistic, and scientific—see José Miguel Puerta Vílchez, “La cultura y la creación artística,” in *Historia del Reino de Granada*, ed. Rafael G. Peinado Santaella, 3 vols. (Granada: Universidad de Granada–El Legado Andalusí, 2000), 1:349–413.
46. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137. Puerta Vílchez commented on the disparaging remarks of García Gómez and María Jesús Rubiera Mata with regard to the literary merits of Ibn al-Jayyab’s and Ibn Zamrak’s poetry in the Alhambra, suggesting that the conventionality of their compositions should be attributed not to the limits of their talents, but rather to the restricted poetic goal that they served of creating a vision of dynastic power. See Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopía*, 106–7 n. 1.
47. Grabar, *Alhambra*, 205.
48. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 285–87. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, too, underlines the “emotive significance” of repetition; see Suzanne Pinckney, “Toward a Redefinition of ‘Badī’ Poetry,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 12 (1981): 1–29. My reading of the poems, especially my understanding of the terms of poetic figuration, is based on Meisami’s work on classical Arabic and Persian poetry. For her analysis of architectural imagery in poetry, see Julie Scott Meisami, “Palaces and Paradises: Palace Description in Medieval Persian Poetry,” in *Islamic Art and Literature*, ed. Oleg Grabar and Cynthia Robinson (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), 21–54; Julie Scott Meisami, “The Palace-Complex as Emblem: Some Samarran Qaṣīdas,” in *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra*, ed. Chase F. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69–78.
49. Monroe, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, 67.
50. On *fakhr* as a frequent device in the poetic inscriptions of the Alhambra, see García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 42–46. Puerta Vílchez elaborates on the aesthetic terms employed in epigraphy to praise architecture in *Los códigos de utopía*, 146–51, and “El vocabulario estético,” 75–83.
51. For an extended discussion of poetic structure, see Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 55–143.
52. Puerta Vílchez’s semiotic analysis of poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra is especially useful in his discussion of other themes associated with the ruler’s power, such as victory, distinguished lineage, generosity, temporal and spiritual power, and luminosity; see Puerta Vílchez, *Los códigos de utopía*, 104–28. Elsewhere, Puerta Vílchez considers the term *badī’* and the derivatives of its root in conjunction with such aesthetic terms as *ḥusn* and *jamāl* (beauty), and *kamāl* (perfection), within a broader context of poetic imagery in the epigraphy of the Alhambra; he proposes that these terms participate in the construction of a symbolic portrait of the Nasrid ruler as a divinely inspired creator of the architecture and its decoration, and that beauty as a concept has divine origin. See Puerta Vílchez, “El vocabulario estético,” 75–76.
53. The complexity of composition, as one of the aspects shared by poetry and ornament, has been discussed in studies by Gülru Necipoğlu, *Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 210–15; and Yasser Tabbaa, *The Transformation of Islamic Art during the Sunni Revival* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 73–102. I consider the place of textiles in the aesthetic interrelationships of architecture and poetic inscriptions in Olga Bush, “A Poem is a Robe and a Castle: Inscribing Verses on Textiles and Architecture in the Alhambra,” forthcoming in the proceedings of the Eleventh Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, held in Honolulu, Hawaii in September 2008. For some of the preliminary arguments, see Olga Bush, “Architecture, Poetic Texts and Textiles in the Alhambra” (PhD diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2006).
54. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
55. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
56. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45. Puerta Vílchez and Fernández-Puertas follow García Gómez’s interpretation of the terms with regard to the decoration. See Puerta Vílchez, “El vocabulario estético,” 81–82; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
57. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 96–97.
58. Ibid., 16–18 and 19–79.
59. Makariou, “Étude,” 95–107.
60. Ibid., 103.

61. *Ibid.*, 99.
62. *Ibid.*, 99 n. 12.
63. *Ibid.*, 99.
64. *Ibid.*
65. Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 155–232.
66. On the geometric patterning (known in Spanish as *lazo*), its construction, and its variations, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 94–96 and 332–49.
67. The epigraphy contains Qur’anic verses, which are partially preserved. For the text, see Appendix I.
68. For the distribution of the dadoes in the room and a summary of their affinities with those in other precincts in the Alhambra, and in other Nasrid constructions, see Pavón Maldonado, *Estudios*, 2:21–29.
69. *Ibid.*, 28.
70. Fernández-Puertas noted that during the early period of Nasrid art, which he dates between 1273 and 1302, the plaster panels were carved *in situ*. Afterwards, plaster panels were made with the aid of a mold. See Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 92. However, José Antonio Ruiz de la Rosa and Antonio Almagro Gorbea have discovered the traces of a geometric grid on plaster panels made with artisan’s tools in the Patio of the Harem in the Palace of the Lions in the Alhambra, which belongs to the period of Muhammad V, as well as in a contemporaneous house in Granada, located on Cobertizo de Santa Inés Street, no. 4. See José Antonio Ruiz de la Rosa, “La arquitectura islámica como forma controlada: Algunos ejemplos en al-Andalus,” in *Arquitectura en al-Andalus: Documentos para el siglo XXI*, ed. Rafael López Guzmán and Mauricio Pastor Muñoz (Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores, 1995), 44.
71. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 96–97.
72. *Ibid.*, 96–97 and 312–15.
73. *Ibid.*, 314.
74. These screens are a result of restoration work. See Pavón Maldonado, *Estudios*, 2:21–29. Further research is needed in order to establish whether their present-day design corresponds accurately to the original plasterwork.
75. *Artesonado* is a timber roof construction in the shape of an inverted trough, composed of four slanting trapezoidal sides and a flat horizontal panel at the top. There is only limited information available today regarding the original ceiling. For a brief, general description stating that the ceiling was constructed of four main decorated panels of wood, see Simón de Argote, *Nuevos paseos históricos, artísticos, económico-políticos, por Granada y sus contornos*, 3 vols. (Granada, 1807), 3:91. This description predates the destruction of the ceiling during the French occupation between 1808 and 1812. The present ceiling is not original, but the result of late nineteenth-century restoration work undertaken by Rafael Contreras. It was rebuilt according to the Nasrid method of constructing *artesonado* ceilings. As Orihuela Uzal pointed out, the present ceiling is related to those preserved in the Palacio of Partal and in the Hall of the Comares. While the ceiling in the *Qalahurra* resembles the former in its size and in the use of clusters of *muqarnas*, its shape—constructed of four main *artesonado* panels—is related to that of the latter, and corresponds to Argote’s description of 1807. What is important here, however, is that the design of all three examples is based on the *lazo* (geometric patterning) of radiating stars. Hence, I will consider its decoration in this analysis. For references to Argote’s publication and Contreras’s reconstruction, see Orihuela Uzal, *Casas y Palacios*, 136.
76. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 92.
77. The treatment of the foliate motifs is examined by Fernández-Puertas. *Ibid.*, 96–104.
78. *Ibid.*, 128.
79. Antonio Fernández-Puertas, “Calligraphy in al-Andalus,” in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), 639–76.
80. *Ibid.*, 667.
81. Emilio García Gómez, *Foco de antigua luz sobre la Alhambra* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto Egipcio de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1988), 124.
82. The vibrant color scheme is recorded in Owen Jones’s drawings of the interior of the Hall of the Ambassadors. See Owen Jones and Jules Goury, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Details of the Alhambra, From drawings taken on the spot in 1834 by the late M. Jules Goury, and in 1834 and 1837 by Owen Jones Archt, With a complete translation of the Arabic inscriptions, and an historical notice of the Kings of Granada from the conquest of that city by the Arabs to the expulsion of the Moors, by M. Pascual de Gayangos* (London, 1842–45). The same color scheme is shown in William Harvey’s drawing, made between 1913 and 1915, of the interior of the *Qalahurra al-jadida*; the drawing belongs to the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Fernández-Puertas has reproduced some of Jones’s plates and Harvey’s drawing: see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, pls. 25–34 and fig. 154, respectively. In Fernández-Puertas’s opinion, Harvey’s drawing is “the best colour section ever made and the most faithful to the *Qalahurra*”; see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 312 n. 1. Despite such praise, this scholar raised one objection with regard to the drawing, namely, that the gold leaf, whose traces can be still detected in the stucco panels, was not used as abundantly as depicted in Harvey’s and, for that matter, in Jones’s color drawings; see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314. The color scheme of the interior as it is depicted in Harvey’s drawing, with the use of red and blue pigments for the background and of gold leaf for the foreground elements, such as the epigraphy, is consistent throughout interiors of the Alhambra. Moreover, the accuracy of the saturated, intensely deep blue and red colors in Harvey’s drawing was confirmed by recent studies, in which sources for these pigments were identified. See Lucia Burgio, “Microscopy Analysis of Hispano-Moresque Samples from the Alhambra,” *V&A Museum Science Report* (June 2004): 1–23; Victor Borges, “Nasrid Plasterwork: Symbolism, Materials, Techniques,” *V&A Conservation Journal* 48 (Autumn 2004): 10–14.

83. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 294–98.
84. *Ibid.*, 296.
85. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 137–42.
86. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 294–98.
87. *Ibid.*, 295–96. In his *Minhāj al-bulaghā' wa-sirāj al-udabā'* (Method of the Eloquent and Lamp of the Literary), al-Qar-tajanni mentions that the term *tarṣīf* is applicable to the arts of poetry and jewelry alike; cited in Puerta Vilchez, *Historia del pensamiento estético árabe*, 382–83. The term was also used to describe luxury objects studded with precious stones. For examples of such descriptions, see Aḥmad ibn al-Rašīd Ibn al-Zubayr, *Book of Gifts and Rarities = Kitāb al-Hadāyā wa al-Tuḥaf*, trans. and ed. Ghāda al-Ḥijjāwī al-Qaddūmī (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996). Michael Roberts has proposed that the link between the craft of jewelry and that of poetic composition can be traced to the period of late antiquity. He notes that “the jeweled style’ with respect to verse and artistic prose was a commonplace; e.g., verses were deemed ‘little jewels.’” Michael Roberts, *The Jeweled Style: Poetry and Poetics in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 53.
88. For a summary of the definition and use of the term in Arabic and Persian by medieval rhetoricians, see G. Schoeler, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. “*Tarṣīf*.” See also Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314, following García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
89. Schoeler, “*Tarṣīf*.”
90. *Ibid.* Schoeler pointed out that there is no single and consistent meaning of the term’s definition; among several possible relationships covered by this term are: an agreement of word patterns in corresponding parts of the two phrases, which in turn could be partially or completely rhymed, and a metrical equivalence in the first parts of the two phrases.
91. García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45.
92. Abu Deeb, “Literary Criticism,” 371.
93. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 429.
94. *Ibid.*, 253–64. For a concise discussion of the term and its use, see also W. P. Heinrichs, *EI2*, s.v. “*Tibāq*.”
95. For a study of historical sources with references to *qalahurrāt* in al-Andalus, see María Jesús Viguera and Elías Terés, “Sobre las calahorras,” *Al-Qantara* 2 (1981): 265–75. Among extant examples of this type of tower is the *qalahurra* in the *qaṣaba* of Gibraltar, built by the Marinid sultan Abu’l-Hasan between 1333 and 1349; for a study of this tower, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, “Gibraltar, llave y guarda del reino de España,” *Al-Andalus* 7 (1942): 168–219.
96. Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 175–76.
97. For the dating of the *Qalahurra* of Muhammad VII, see Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 16. For Ibn al-Zamrak’s use of the term *qalahurra* with respect to that tower, see María Jesús Rubiera Mata, “Ibn Zamrak, su biógrafo Ibn al-Ahmar y los poemas epigráficos de la Alhambra,” *Al-Andalus* 42 (1977): 447–51.
98. García Gómez notes that Ibn Zamrak also mentions the captives in a poem located in the Court of the Myrtles. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 96; for the text of the poem, see *Poemas árabes*, 94. On the subject of Christian captives at work on the Nasrid buildings, see Leopoldo Torres Balbás, “Las mazmorras de la Alhambra,” *Al-Andalus* 9 (1944): 198–218.
99. See García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 45; Fernández-Puertas, *Alhambra*, 314.
100. In Form III, *t-b-q* has the meanings “to cause to correlate, compare, contrast something with, to correspond to something,” which would reinforce the understanding of visual antithesis as a correlated alternation of corresponding forms.
101. See also Lisa Golombek’s concept of “an imperfect symmetry,” which she develops in her essay, “The Function of Decoration in Islamic Architecture,” in *Theories and Principles of Design in the Architecture of Islamic Societies*, ed. Margaret B. Ševčenko (Cambridge, Mass.: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1988), 35–45.
102. On *tajnis*, its use, and some examples, see Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 247–53; W. P. Heinrichs, *EI2*, s.v. “*Taḍj̣ṇiṣ*.”
103. Meisami, *Structure and Meaning*, 247.
104. Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey, eds., *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), s.v. “Rhetorical Figures.”
105. *Ibid.*
106. Scholarship on the history of the Nasrid Sultanate is extensive. Several monographic studies, among them Rachel Arié, *L’Espagne musulmane au temps des Nasrides (1232–1492)* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1973); Aḥmad Mukhtār al-‘Abbādī, *El reino de Granada en la época de Muhammad V* (Madrid: Publicaciones del Instituto de Estudios Islámicos en Madrid, 1973); and Leonard Patrick Harvey, *Islamic Spain, 1250 to 1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), still remain the most comprehensive and complete in their analysis of the primary sources. For a brief overview of Nasrid genealogy, see Antonio Fernández-Puertas, “The Three Great Sultans of al-Dawla al-Isma‘iliyya al-Naṣriyya Who Built the Fourteenth-Century Alhambra: Ismā‘il I, Yūsuf I, Muḥammad V,” *Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 7, 1 (1997): 1–25.
107. Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 29.
108. For a history of the adoption of the *nisba* “*al-Anṣārī*” in pre-Nasrid al-Andalus, its understanding in the context of the Qur’anic use of words based on the root *n-ṣ-r*, and therefore, its ideological implications for the legitimization of the Nasrid dynasty, see Maribel Fierro, “The Anṣārīs, Nāṣir al-Dīn and the Naṣrids in al-Andalus,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 31 (2006): 232–49. I wish to thank the anonymous reader for bringing this essay to my attention.
109. See Harvey, *Islamic Spain*, 171–90; Fernández-Puertas, “Three Great Sultans,” 1–25.
110. Fernández-Puertas, “The Three Great Sultans,” 1–25.
111. Fierro points out the importance and frequent use of words with the root *n-ṣ-r* in Nasrid poetry, inscriptions, and coinage; see Fierro, “Anṣārīs,” 245.

112. Although the use of prosopopeia in the poetic epigraphy in the Alhambra has received some scholarly attention—Puerta Vélchez, *Los códigos de utopía*, 146–54; Ruggles, “Eye of Sovereignty,” 180–89; Robinson, “Marginal Ornament,” 9; and Bush, “When My Beholder Ponders,” 55–67—a more focused study is still needed. I began a broad survey of prosopopeia in inscriptions in both Islamic architecture and luxury objects under the Nasrids and elsewhere in Bush, “Architecture, Poetic Texts,” 42–122, and will return to this topic and other issues related to epigraphy in Islamic art and architecture in a monograph now in preparation.
113. The transliterations of all texts in Appendix I follow the original texts in Arabic published by Emilio Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes de Granada* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2000), 177–85.
114. The name of the reigning sultan was not preserved, but Lafuente Alcántara suggested that the text must have referred to Yusuf I, since the name of his father, Isma‘il I, who indeed was murdered, appears in this inscription. Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes*, 185.
115. See *The Koran*, trans. N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 434.
116. *The Koran*, 434.
117. Lafuente Alcántara, *Inscripciones árabes*, 178–79.
118. The transliterations of these inscriptions follow the original texts in Arabic published in García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*, 133–34 and 144–45.
119. I follow the Arabic text as published by García Gómez, *Poemas árabes*. For the location of the poems, see the plan of the tower-palace (fig. 5).
120. The meaning of the root *r-q-m* is “to write, to dot a book, to put stripes on a cloth”; *raqm* also stands for a type of variegated cloth. Although this poetic line refers to the parietal decoration, I prefer to translate the word *raqūmun* as “markings,” in order to convey what seems to me the poet’s intentional ambiguity in his choice of a word that could encompass all types of parietal decoration. In this regard, my translation differs from that of García Gómez, who translated *ḥiṭānuhā fi-hā raqūmun* as “wall ornamentation,” employing the Spanish term *ataurique*, which derives from the Arabic *al-tawriq* and is used to refer to a decorative design based on vegetal forms. Rubiera Mata, however, chose the word “inscriptions,” based, no doubt, on the primary meaning of the root and on the parietal epigraphy itself. See María Jesús Rubiera Mata, *Ibn al-Yayyāb: El otro poeta de la Alhambra* (Granada: Patronato de la Alhambra y Generalife, 1994), 114. For an extended discussion of this particular verse and its fuller implications for the analysis of the parietal decoration, see Bush, “Architecture, Poetic Texts,” 201–3 and 236–39.
121. It should also be noted that the word *nisba* could be rendered as “prestige.” I agree with García Gómez’s translation as “proportion,” especially in light of Ibn al-Jayyab’s employment of the words *muwashshah* and *mušannaf*, which refer to specific literary works, distinct in their particular structures. Although García Gómez omitted these words from his translation of the verse, they are significant in considering the interrelationship between the verbal and visual contents and thus merit attention. For a sustained discussion of these terms, see Bush, “Architecture, Poetic Texts,” 201–3.
122. Rubiera Mata pointed out that each of the four poems in the *Dīwān* is preceded by the same epigraph, which reads: “He [Ibn al-Jayyab] spoke and it was inscribed in the corner of the new *qalahurra* of the Alhambra” (*al-qalahurra al-jadīda bi’l-Ḥamrā*). This connection between the poet’s recitation of a poem and its immediate use as a decorative embellishment echoes a statement made some years later by Ibn Zamrak with regard to his own compositions. See Rubiera Mata, “Los poemas epigráficos,” 459 n. 29.



## THE JALAYIRID CONNECTION IN MAMLUK METALWARE

A copper basin inscribed with the name of the Jalayirid sultan Uways (r. 1360–74) reveals stylistic parallels between Mamluk and Iranian metalworking in the late fourteenth century. A review of the characteristics of Mamluk metalwork between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries will demonstrate that these parallels were due to a Mamluk, i.e., Egyptian or Syrian, influence on the art of the Jalayirids in Iran, Iraq, and Azerbaijan. While exploring the tradition of Mamluk tinned copper vessels, we will demonstrate that the prototypes of the Uways basin are to be found in this context rather than in Iranian metalwork.

The history of Mamluk metalware can be divided into two periods, each with its own distinctive stylistic features, separated by a hiatus of almost a century. Metalwork of the earlier period, when the Bahri Mamluks ruled (1250–1382), is primarily associated with silver-inlaid brass. The figural representation common during the second half of the thirteenth century recedes in the arts of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun (r. 1294–1341, with two brief interregnums) and his sons, to be superseded by bold inscriptions with princely names and titles accompanied by blazons.<sup>1</sup> The ceremonial character of this epigraphic style can be related to the *tughra* (calligraphic monogram) of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad, who also introduced the royal epigraphic blazon into Mamluk heraldry.<sup>2</sup>

The inscriptions on classical Bahri Mamluk vessels dominate a central register framed by horizontal ribbons that interlock to form medallions that transect the register. The aesthetic effect is achieved through the clear composition of monumental calligraphic inscriptions and the contrast between the inlaid silver and the brass ground.

Very few Mamluk metal vessels can be attributed with certainty to the first six decades of the fifteenth century. This scarcity of surviving material has been

interpreted as being due to a metal shortage.<sup>3</sup> When Mamluk metal vessels reappeared in noticeable quantities in the second half of the fifteenth century, their defining features had become distinct from those of their Bahri predecessors. The mainstream of the new production, now mainly made of tinned copper, combined different techniques and a new aesthetic.<sup>4</sup> The decoration is characterized by an engraved design, based on a composition of either horizontal ribbons interlocking to form medallions, or a sequence of cartouches alternating with medallions.

Inscriptions interspersed with decorative motifs fill the segments of the register, as well as the cartouches and medallions. These inscriptions no longer dominate the vessel's surface, as was the case with the Bahri Mamluk brass vessels; rather, they are integrated within the composition, as one element among others. Set against a crosshatched ground, they in most cases lack the calligraphic quality of their Bahri Mamluk antecedents. The texts consist primarily of votive poems, but the occasional names and titles of patrons date this group to the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

Although the inscribed names identify patrons who were prominent members of the Mamluk aristocracy, the vessels themselves seem to have been intended for practical rather than ceremonial functions. Their workmanship generally lacks the princely quality associated with the inlaid metalwork of the Bahri period. A typical example, a dish bearing the name of the eminent amir Yashbak min Mahdi al-Dawadar (d. 1480), is inscribed with a rare text indicating that it had been endowed for his mausoleum in Cairo.<sup>5</sup> It thus seems that this category of vessels, of which we have numerous specimens, was associated with use in princely pious foundations.

James Allan has documented the reappearance of Mamluk metalwork in the second half of the fifteenth

century on the evidence of lunch-boxes and dishes.<sup>6</sup> To these we may add another subgroup consisting of copper bowls and basins of varying dimensions. The vessels of this group are likewise decorated with votive inscriptions, in particular the ubiquitous poem that begins with the phrase *balaghta min al-'ulyā* (may you reach / achieve the highest honors); their composition is based on interlocking ribbons.<sup>7</sup> Patron names are not commonly found on these basins. However, an inscription on one such basin with a rather worn surface in the Benaki Museum mentions a certain Qansuh with the title *amīr ākhūr* (master of the stables).<sup>8</sup> An amir by this name was appointed master of stables in 1496 by Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay, who ruled briefly in that year.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE UWAYS BASIN AND TWO RELATED BASINS IN THE BENAKI MUSEUM

This group of basins bears a striking resemblance to a copper basin found in the shrine of Shaykh Safi in Ardebil and now in the Islamic Museum of Tehran.<sup>10</sup> It is inscribed with the name of the Jalayirid sultan Uways, who ruled Iraq and Azerbaijan from 1360 to 1374. The

basin has been attributed by Yedda Godard to Mosul; more recently, Linda Komaroff has assigned it to north-western Iran or Iraq (figs. 1–4).<sup>11</sup>

As with its late Mamluk counterparts, the decoration of the Uways basin (which has a diameter of 67 centimeters at the top and is 36 centimeters high) is based on a composition of horizontal ribbons interlocking in cartouches and medallions. Its decorative scheme, however, is more elaborate than that of any of its Mamluk counterparts, consisting of a central register with ten lobed cartouches alternating with ten lobed roundels or rosettes. Three patterns are repeated in the cartouches, three others in the roundels. The same composition appears in the basin's narrow upper and lower triple registers.

The first, third, sixth, and eighth cartouches contain inscriptions, while the second, fourth, seventh, and ninth are filled with a tightly braided curved pattern (hereafter referred to as the “weave” pattern). The fifth and tenth cartouches have knot medallions. We thus find a pattern with the sequence ABABC.

The first and sixth medallions feature a repeating “Y” pattern; the second, third, seventh, and eighth medallions are filled with six-pointed knot medallions, the fourth, fifth, ninth, and tenth with interlaced stars. Their



Fig 1. Basin inscribed with the name Sultan Shaykh Uways. Islamic Museum, Tehran. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Islamic Museum in Tehran)



Fig. 2. Detail of the Uways basin. Islamic Museum, Tehran. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Islamic Museum in Tehran)



Fig. 3. Detail of the Uways basin. Islamic Museum, Tehran. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Islamic Museum in Tehran)



Fig. 4. Detail of the Uways basin: cartouche filled with the weave pattern. Islamic Museum, Tehran. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Islamic Museum in Tehran)

sequence is thus DEEFF. Half-circles decorate the lower part of the register, each one containing a small engraved roundel.

In comparison with the fine workmanship of the Uways basin, suitable indeed for a royal patron, the related Mamluk vessels known to us so far appear rather

coarse, and of simpler composition. However, the connection between the Uways basin and two exceptionally fine basins in the Benaki Museum<sup>12</sup> (figs. 5–9) should be noted. One of these basins has a foot in the same style attached to it, an embellishment that might have been added at a later date as an afterthought; it is



Fig. 5. Late Mamluk copper basin. Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13068. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Benaki Museum)

inscribed with the title *al-malikī, al-nāṣirī* (royal, the Nasiri), discussed in more detail below.

Both basins have central registers engraved with interlocking ribbons forming six lobed cartouches alternating with six lobed medallions. The ribbons are framed above and below by narrow bands of interlocking cartouches. Two of the six cartouches in the central registers are inscribed with poems.<sup>13</sup> Of the other four, two are engraved with knot patterns and two with the weave pattern. The footed basin features cross-hatching in the epigraphic cartouches. The type of knotted pattern found on each basin is distinct: whereas the footed basin has knotted medallions like those in the Uways basin, in the other one a series of knots fills a cartouche.

The footed basin has remarkable scrolls with naturalistic floral motifs and four-petalled patterns reminiscent of Timurid metalwork. Unlike the Uways basin, the inscriptions of this group are generally set against a crosshatched ground, a feature that links it stylistically to other groups of copper vessels from the late Mamluk period. (Cross-hatching, which is used in Timurid and Turkmen metalwork,<sup>14</sup> is not common on Bahri Mamluk brass vessels, but regularly appears on late Mamluk copper vessels.) The other basin has a smooth surface and no cross-hatching, like the Uways basin.

The title *al-nāṣirī* on the footed bowl might refer to either al-Nasir Faraj (r. 1399–1412) or al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qaytbay. As mentioned above, the foot may have been added at a later date and thus does not necessarily date the basin, although it is likely that it is contemporary to it. However, in light of the similarities



Fig. 6. Late Mamluk footed basin. Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no 13077. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Benaki Museum)

between these two vessels and the Uways basin, their attribution to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century cannot be excluded.

#### THE MAMLUK INFLUENCE ON THE UWAYS BASIN

Linda Komaroff, who has already noted the characteristics that the Uways basin shares with Mamluk metalware, has ascribed its style to Mamluk influence. She rightly refers to the inscription that starts with the Mamluk formula *mimmā ‘umila bi-rasm*, meaning “made by order of.”

Although a direct Mamluk precursor for the Uways basin cannot be identified with certainty, some of the elements of its design and decoration were already familiar to Mamluk craftsmen. Lobed medallions and cartouches appear in the metalwork of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun. In addition, knot medallions, found on the Uways basin and very common on late Mamluk vessels across their entire stylistic spectrum, including so-called Veneto-Saracenic ware, are also seen in Bahri Mamluk metalwork. For example, knot medallions fill three small cartouches on a spectacular tray in the Islamic collection of Doha that bears



Fig. 7. Detail of footed basin. Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13077. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Benaki Museum)



Fig. 8. Detail of footed basin. Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13077. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Benaki Museum)



Fig. 9. Detail of footed basin. Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13077. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Benaki Museum)

the aforementioned sultan's name.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the very design of this tray consists of a circular net of interlocking cartouches and medallions that anticipates the style of later Mamluk copper vessels.

The weave pattern is another characteristic feature of the Uways basin that links it to Mamluk metalwork of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and it does not seem to have ever been used in Iranian metalwork.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, while the Uways basin does not seem to have any Iranian parallel, it does bear many undeniably Mamluk features.

#### *Copper vessels*

The Mamluk influence on the style of the Uways basin becomes even more evident when we look at some Mamluk copper vessels from the fourteenth century.

Contrary to the paradigm presented in current art history, fourteenth-century Mamluk metalwork did not consist solely of inlaid brass or bronze vessels inscribed with aristocratic titles; it also included a more mundane, anonymous category of vessels, some of which were inlaid and others engraved with votive and poetic inscriptions (that have yet to be published).<sup>17</sup>

Tinned copper bowls from the Bahri Mamluk period have also been overlooked thus far, probably because they bear little resemblance to the more luxurious ceremonial pieces, making it difficult to establish the connection between them. In addition, the poetic inscriptions of the tinned copper bowls are more difficult to read than names and titles, further compounding the problem of dating them with accuracy.

An unpublished and rare copper bowl in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha<sup>18</sup> points to an interesting production of Mamluk copper vessels in the fourteenth century (fig. 10). The exterior displays a simple sequence of two cartouches finely inscribed with a votive text and two roundels, one of which is engraved with the scene of a bird of prey attacking another bird that seems to be a duck. This bird scene appears in a very similar treatment in medallions on the aforementioned tray of al-Nasir Muhammad ibn Qalawun, which is in the same collection. The style of the script is also Bahri Mamluk.

A copper bowl of rather crude quality in the Hermitage Museum<sup>19</sup> features a cup blazon (fig. 11). Its register is inscribed with the votive poem that begins *balaghta min al-'ulyā*, referred to earlier. The inscriptions are set against scrolls and escutcheon-shaped pendants hang beneath the register.<sup>20</sup> If we are to trust the blazon, this bowl should be seen as an example of fourteenth-century Mamluk copper production.

An interesting vessel in the Khalili Collection<sup>21</sup> is a finely engraved silvered basin with a decoration consisting of a single register beneath the rim and escutcheon-shaped pendants (fig. 12). The register consists of a pair of horizontal ribbons that interlock in lobed medallions, separating segments filled alternately with inscriptions and the weave pattern. The inscription consists of the *balaghta* poem set against a ground of scrolls. It is written in a fine Bahri Mamluk *thuluth*. The vessel is very closely related in shape, decorative composition, and style of script to a basin in the Islamic Museum in Cairo bearing the name of Sultan al-Nasir Muhammad



Fig. 10. Bahri Mamluk copper bowl. Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar, Doha, inv. no. MW 093-99-HU. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art in Qatar)



Fig. 11. Detail of a copper Mamluk bowl with blazon. Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. EG-1315-2. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Hermitage Museum)

ibn Qalawun, as well as to a copper basin in the Hermitage from the same period, which is inscribed with the name of a daughter of an amir in Damascus.<sup>22</sup>

A vessel of smaller size than these basins, a bowl with a rounded profile, was recently published in the catalogue of Bonhams Auction House (fig. 13).<sup>23</sup> The bowl is of great interest in this context. It bears a similar decoration to the previous specimens, engraved with a single register of alternating cartouches and medallions and with escutcheon-shaped pendants. However, its four cartouches are inscribed with the titles of an anonymous Mamluk amir in the service of an unnamed



Fig. 12. Silvered Mamluk copper vessel. Khalili Collection, Nour Foundation, London, inv. no. MTW 1368-b. (Photo: courtesy of the Nour Foundation)



Fig. 13. Mamluk bowl at Bonhams with blazons on both sides. Bonhams Catalogue, October 2008, 118 no. 177. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of Bonhams)

sultan with the title *al-Ashraf*, and two of its medallions include a Mamluk blazon. A number of Mamluk sultans bore the title *al-Ashraf*: Khalil (r. 1290–93), Kujuk (r. 1341–42), Shaʿban (r. 1363–77), Barsbay (r. 1422–38), Inal (1453–61), Qaytbay (r. 1468–96) Janbalat (r. 1500–1501), and Qansuh al-Ghawri (r. 1501–16). The configuration of the composite blazon, albeit undocumented, displays a napkin between two swords, suggesting a late fourteenth-century attribution. The double emblem set without registers in the medallion is an early form of composite blazon that became

common in the fifteenth century.<sup>24</sup> This bowl might refer either to an amir of Kujuk or Shaʿban. Its rounded profile also characterizes the triple-register group discussed below.

These vessels reveal the existence of a Bahri Mamluk production of engraved, rather than inlaid, metal vessels decorated with poetic inscriptions. It is difficult to determine whether the Khalili basin was originally silvered, as it is today, or simply tinned; another similar basin in the same collection is gilded. It cannot, then, be ruled out that finely engraved metal vessels from this period were silvered and gilded rather than tinned. In any case, these specimens demonstrate that the classical silver-inlaid brass style traditionally associated with Bahri Mamluk vessels coexisted with a monochrome copper or brass style.

#### *Vessels with tripartite registers*

There also exists a more elaborate version of the Khalili basin and the Bonhams bowl, with a tripartite instead of a simple register (fig. 14).<sup>25</sup> The vessels in this group are primarily bowls with rounded profiles, as well as basins. Their decoration is thinly engraved. Medallions or rosettes cut through the central part of the register, in which inscriptions alternate with the weave pattern. They all bear escutcheon-shaped pendants. Set against scroll grounds, the inscriptions themselves are clearly written, the style of their *thuluth* script of higher quality than that generally found in the fifteenth-century production. As with the Uways basin and the Bahri Mamluk brass specimens mentioned above, the bowls have smooth surfaces, without any cross-hatching.

In a study dedicated to bowls of this category found in the Hermitage Museum, Ivanov attributed them to fourteenth-century Iraq, based on the fact that some vessels of this style are inscribed with Persian texts.<sup>26</sup> The Persian-inscribed bowls are very similar, but not identical, to the Arabic-inscribed ones. One example in the al-Sabah Collection in Kuwait is dated 760 (1359) and signed by Hasan al-Shirazi;<sup>27</sup> another one, published by Sotheby's,<sup>28</sup> is signed by a craftsman with a Khurasani *nisba* (element of a name indicating relation or origin). Their decoration differs from the Arabic-inscribed pieces in the naturalistic floral motifs that are used instead of the weave pattern, which, as mentioned above, is not associated with Iranian vessels.



Fig. 14. Triple-register bowl. Private collection. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif)



Fig. 16. Basin with an engraved triple register and Rasulid rosettes. Werner Daum Collection. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of Werner Daum)

The word *al-‘ālim* (the knowledgeable) is repeated in the band of a triple-register bowl in the Sadberk Hanım Museum<sup>29</sup> (fig. 15), forming a pattern that appears frequently on Bahri Mamluk pottery and glass, as well as metal vessels. Strong evidence for the Mamluk provenance of the Arabic-inscribed triple-register bowls is further provided by a basin of this style bearing the patron’s name and a blazon (fig. 16).<sup>30</sup> The register is inscribed with the patron’s name, al-Jamali ‘Abd Rabbih, followed by those of his deceased father, Muhammad; grandfather, al-‘Ala’i Aqbars; and great-grandfather, al-Hajj Taybars. The medallions are each filled with an escutcheon-shaped blazon containing a Rasulid rosette.<sup>31</sup> The Mamluk genealogy of the patron—his great-grandfather, who died in 689 (1290), was governor of Damascus during al-Zahir Baybars’ reign (r. 1266–69), in addition to being the sultan’s



Fig. 15. Detail of a triple-register bowl. Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul, inv. no. HK 554-3617. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Sadberk Hanım Museum)

in-law (*ṣihr*), and his grandfather was entitled to an *iqṭā‘* (a type of lifetime fief) in Muharram 729 (November–December 1328)—dates this vessel and similar ones to the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the smaller triple-register bowls are anonymous.<sup>33</sup> Their epigraphic repertoire, more varied than that of the previous group in the style of the Uways basin, includes poetic texts such as maxims and good wishes, which are common in other categories of Mamluk vessels. Some of the texts, however, seem to be exclusive to this group, in particular those which describe the bowl as a *ṭāsa* for drinking.<sup>34</sup>

In light of their epigraphic repertoire, the quality of their script, and their similarity to other vessels of undisputable Mamluk provenance, the Arabic-inscribed triple-register vessels may be attributed to Bahri Mamluk craftsmanship. The triple-register bowls are represented by a number of pieces in the Hermitage Museum (one of them signed by Mahmud ibn al-Bitar),<sup>35</sup> as well as in the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul, the Benaki Museum in Athens, and the Geyer-Anderson Museum in Cairo. They also appear in auction catalogues.

Related groups and subgroups of bowls with inscriptions and decoration on a hatched ground, and sometimes of cruder craftsmanship, suggest that this category of vessels continued to be produced in the late Mamluk



Fig. 17. Detail of a Mamluk copper bowl with half-circles. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 561-78. (Photo: Doris Behrens-Abouseif, courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum)

period, even as it underwent stylistic changes. During the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, metal bowls (*tāsāt*) were used on festive occasions to drink from fountains filled with lemonade.<sup>36</sup> Sultan al-Ghawri (r. 1501–16) drank water from golden bowls (*tāsa*).<sup>37</sup> Despite their simpler composition, these late Mamluk bowls are connected with the Uways basin and vessels of the type represented in the Benaki basins through common features such as the interlocking ribbons of their registers and the weave pattern.<sup>38</sup> A Mamluk copper bowl with poetic inscriptions in the Victoria and Albert Museum<sup>39</sup> should also be mentioned (fig. 17). Engraved with interlocking cartouches and medallions that also incorporate the weave pattern, it possesses an interesting detail linking it to the decoration of the Uways basin, namely, a very similar sequence of half-circles beneath the register, each one centered on a small engraved roundel. The style of script suggests a fourteenth-century date for this bowl.

In view of the features it shares with Mamluk tinned copper vessels of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the use of a Mamluk formula in its inscription, and the style of its script, the Uways basin should be attributed to Mamluk rather than Iranian craftsmanship, with which it has no stylistic parallel. It seems to represent the culmination of the triple-register style. As the only tinned copper vessel of this category to be produced by royal commission, the Uways basin set a stylistic trend,

even as it remained unparalleled in its craftsmanship. A Mamluk attribution for the Uways basin would provide a link, thus far missing, in the evolution of Mamluk copper vessels and may suggest the need for a reconsideration of the period when metalwork was scarce.

#### THE JALAYIRID-MAMLUK CONNECTION

The Uways basin may have been produced in a Mamluk workshop in Syria; alternatively, it might have been the creation of a Syrian craftsman working abroad. Virtually any portable object can transfer a style or a technique across time or space without the involvement of particular political connections. Diplomatic and commercial exchanges, as well as encounters during pilgrimages, presented plenty of opportunities for artistic interaction. However, the connections between the Jalayirid and the Mamluk courts at the end of the fourteenth century may have provided an additional impetus for exchanges between western Iran and Iraq on one side and Egypt and Syria on the other. Al-Maqrizi reports that in 1365 Mirjan, the Jalayirid governor of Baghdad, rebelled against Uways, replacing his name in the khutba and on coinage with that of the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Sha‘ban (r. 1363–76). Mirjan’s envoys were accordingly welcomed in Cairo, where they received the Mamluk insignia.<sup>40</sup> Such contacts likely encouraged artistic exchanges between Iraq and Mamluk territory. Craftsmen from Syria might have worked for Jalayirid patrons, developing common metalworking traditions with their counterparts in Iraq and Azerbaijan, as suggested by the vessels discussed here.

The Uways basin is neither the earliest nor the last case of Mamluk-Iranian metalworking encounters. Already under the Ilkhanids, as a result of the Mosul legacy, Mamluk and Iranian inlaid brass vessels exhibited common features. Similarities continued to develop in other forms between Mamluk and Timurid, as well as Turkmen, vessels. For example, we find the Mamluk spouted bowl assuming its characteristic shape with Khurasanian Timurid decoration.<sup>41</sup> Timurid and late Mamluk metalwork display important similarities in

their tinned copper vessels, such as interlocking ribbons and hatched grounds. Their shapes and decorative repertoire differ, however, the Iranian decoration being predominantly floral. The *nisba* “*al-Dimashqī*” (the Damascene) in the signature of Shir ‘Ali ibn Muhammad on a Timurid jug dated 872 (1467) may not be entirely meaningless, even if the term might refer to a quarter in Samarqand.<sup>42</sup>

The Jalayirid-Mamluk connection continued during the reign of Sultan Barquq (r. 1382–89, 1390–98), when Ahmad, the fourth son of Uways, fled to Egypt in 1393–94, following Timur’s attacks on Tabriz and Baghdad. In Cairo, Ahmad was warmly received by Barquq, who married Ahmad’s niece Tandi, the daughter of his brother and predecessor, Husayn ibn Uways (d. 1374).<sup>43</sup> With Barquq’s help, Ahmad returned to Baghdad. Not long thereafter, when Timur attacked Baghdad for a second time in 1401, Ahmad fled once more, this time to Syria. During the war between Timur and the Ottoman sultan Bayazid, Ahmad returned to Baghdad for a while before he was forced to flee, yet again, to Syria. There he dwelt with his retinue until Timur’s death in 1405. Ahmad had only a short rule over his entire realm; he eventually lost Azerbaijan and was killed in 1410. Al-Maqrizi tells us that when the Turkmen Qara Muhammad (r. 1380–89) held Tabriz in 1388, the *khutba* was pronounced and coins were struck in the name of Barquq.<sup>44</sup>

Migration from the east to Mamluk territories was a continuous phenomenon. After the first wave pushed forward by the Mongols, a second one followed Timur’s invasion. The number of Iranians in Cairo increased substantially in the first half of the fifteenth century, so much so that orders were repeated on several occasions to evict them.<sup>45</sup> However, Iranians continued to occupy high positions in the bureaucracy and religious establishment, thereby provoking hostility among Egyptians. Iranian merchants are regularly mentioned in Cairo’s bazaar and in Mecca, where Iranian sojourners also dwelt.<sup>46</sup> More needs to be known about the Arab presence in Timurid territory at that time.

However, artistic interaction on portable objects did not require migration of individuals or populations to take place. The great common market of the Muslim world provided ample opportunity for the transfer of merchandise and works of art, and along with them, the

transmission of designs. The culture of portable objects is fluid, as is manifested on the objects themselves.

The Uways basin was a link in a long chain of mutual artistic interaction between Egypt and Syria on one side and Iran on the other.

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## NOTES

1. James W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: The Nuhad Es-Said Collection* (London, 1982), 24ff., 96–105; Esin Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks* (Washington, D.C., 1981), 86–99; Ursula Staacke, *I metalli mamelucchi del periodo bahri* (exhibition catalogue) (Palermo, 1997); Rachel Ward, “Brass, Gold and Silver from Mamluk Egypt: Metal Vessels Made for al-Nāṣir Muḥammad,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 14, 1 (2004): 59–73.
2. Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Qalqashandī, *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-a’shā fī ṣinā’at al-inshā’*, 14 vols. (repr. Cairo, 1964 [orig. pub. 1913–22]), 13:162–66.
3. James W. Allan, “Sha’bān, Barqūq, and the Decline of the Mamluk Metalworking Industry,” *Muqarnas* 2 (1984): 85–94.
4. Louis Massignon, “Six plats de bronze de style mamelouk,” *Bulletin de l’Institut français d’archéologie orientale*, 10 (1912): 79–88; Gaston Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée arabe du Caire: Objets en cuivre* (repr. Cairo, 1984 [orig. pub. 1932]), pls. LVI, LXVI, LXVIII, LXIX; Peter Ruthven, “Two Metal Works of the Mamluk Period,” *Ars Islamica* 1 (1934): 230–34; James W. Allan, “Later Mamluk Metalwork: A Series of Dishes,” *Oriental Art* 15, 1 (1969): 38–43; James W. Allan, “Later Mamluk Metalwork II: A Series of Lunch-Boxes,” *Oriental Art* 17, 2 (1971): 156–64; Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 107; *Diplomaten und Wesire: Krieg und Frieden im Spiegel türkischen Kunsthandwerks* (exhibition catalogue), ed. Peter W. Schienerl and Christine Stelzig (Munich, 1988), 93.
5. Jeanne Mouliérac, *La médecine au temps des califes: À l’ombre d’Avicenne* (exhibition catalogue) (Paris, 1996), 207, cat. no. 136.
6. See n. 4 above.
7. For the full text of this poem, see Allan, “Later Mamluk Metalwork II,” 158; A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, “Venise entre l’Orient et l’Occident,” *Bulletin d’études orientales*, 27 (1974): 109–26, at 112. See also Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 107–111; Maria Sardi, “Late Mamluk Metalwork in the Benaki Museum,” *Mouseio Benaki* 3 (2003): 157–76.
8. Inv. no. 18579.
9. Ibn Iyās, *Badā’i’ al-zuhūr fī waqā’i’ al-duhūr*, 9 vols., ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden and Cairo, 1961–75), 3:340.

10. Unfortunately, I do not have the inv. no.
11. Yedda A. Godard, "Bassin de cuivre au nom de Shaikh Uwais," *Athār-é Īrān* 1 (1936): 371–73 and *Athār-é Īrān* 2 (1937): 352; Linda Komaroff, *The Golden Disk of Heaven: Metalwork of Timurid Iran* (Costa Mesa, Calif., 1992), 8, 21, 27; Shirin Bayāni, *Tārikh-i Āl-i Jalāyir* (Tehran, 1967), 363ff.
12. Inv. nos. 13068 (copper basin) and 13077 (footed basin).
13. The text inscribed on the footed bowl is published in connection with a late Mamluk lamp as "text A" in Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "A Late Mamluk Lamp in the Hungarian National Museum," in *Sifting Sands, Reading Signs: Studies in Honour of Professor Géza Fehérvári*, ed. Patricia L. Baker and Barbara Brend (London, 2006), 155–60. For the inscription on the other basin, see Allan, "Later Mamluk Metalwork II," 158.
14. See Komaroff, *Golden Disk of Heaven*, group III, 100–114, 221–36; A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World, 8th–18th Centuries* (exhibition catalogue) (London, 1982), 233–44, 251–59; James W. Allan, "Metalwork of the Turcoman Dynasties of Eastern Anatolia and Iran," *Iran* 29 (1991): 153–59.
15. James W. Allan, *Metalwork Treasures from the Islamic Courts* (exhibition catalogue) (Doha, 2002), 91ff., cat. nos. 18, 23.
16. Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée arabe*, pls. XL, XLII (upper), XLIX; Anatoly Ivanov, *Masterpieces of Islamic Art in the Hermitage Museum* (exhibition catalogue) (Kuwait, 1990), 89, cat. no. 58.
17. Anonymous inlaid brass vessels are found in many collections. For published examples, see Giovanni Curatola, *Eredità dell'Islam: Arte islamica in Italia* (exhibition catalogue) (Venice, Italy, 1993), 309–10, cat. nos. 176–77; James W. Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: The Aron Collection* (London, 1986), 92ff.; Giovanni Curatola, in *Islam: Specchio d'Oriente, rarità e preziosi nelle collezioni statali fiorentine* (exhibition catalogue), ed. Giovanna Damiani and Mario Scalini (Livorno, 2002), 122.
18. Inv. no. MW 093-99-HU.
19. Inv. no. EG-1315-2.
20. Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée arabe*, pl. XL
21. Inv. no. MTW 1368-b.
22. Wiet, *Catalogue général du Musée arabe*, 96ff., pl. XLII; Ivanov, *Masterpieces of Islamic Art*, figs. 89 and 88, inv. no. EG-1235. The name of the amir should probably be read as *Baktut*, not *Baltut*.
23. Bonhams Catalogue, October 2008, 118 no. 177. The bowl was recently acquired for the Khalili collection in London (no inv. no. yet available).
24. Michael Meinecke, "Zur mamlukischen Heraldik," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 28, 2 (1972): 207–20, 253.
25. The vessel in figure 14 is from a private collection.
26. See also the Arabic-inscribed bowl with a eulogy to an anonymous monarch, attributed to Fars by Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork*, 222; Anatoly Ivanov, "Bronzovyy tazik serediny XIV v.," in *Srednyaya Aziya i Iran: Sbornik statei*, ed. A. A. Ivanov and S. S. Sorokin (Leningrad, 1972): 114–34; Ivanov, *Masterpieces of Islamic Art*, 89, cat. no. 59. Atıl has attributed a bowl of this group to the late Mamluk period: see Atıl, *Renaissance of Islam*, 105.
27. Inv. no. LNS 192.
28. Sotheby's Catalogue, April 1983, p. 164, cat. no. 306.
29. Inv. no. HK 554-3617. See also Fulya Bodur Eruz, *Türk Maden Sanatı = The Art of Turkish Metalworking*, trans. Robert Bragner (Istanbul, 1987), 109.
30. The basin, which is approximately 39 cm in diameter at the rim and 49 cm at the bottom, is in the collection of Dr. Werner Daum, who acquired it in Yemen. I would like to thank Dr. Daum for graciously giving me the opportunity to examine and photograph this vessel.
31. On the Rasulid rosette, see Venetia Porter, "Die Kunst der Rasuliden," in *Jemen, 3000 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabien*, ed. Werner Daum (Frankfurt, 1987), 231ff.; idem, "Enamelled Glass Made for the Rasulid Sultans of the Yemen," in *Gilded and Enamelled Glass from the Middle East*, ed. Rachel Ward (London, 1998), 93ff.
32. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ṭūlūn, *I'lām al-warā bi-man wulliya nā'iban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-Shām al-kubrā*, ed. Muḥammad A. Duḥmān (Damascus, 1964), 32–33; Khalīl ibn Aybak al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfi bi'l-wafayāt*, 30 vols., (Wiesbaden, 1962), 16:508ff.; Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*, 4 vols., ed. Muḥammad Ziyāda and Sa'īd 'Ashūr (Cairo, 1970–73), 2:312.
33. Rachel Ward has brought to my attention a bowl of this category in a private collection that is inscribed with the name of a Bahri Mamluk amir.
34. These inscriptions will be investigated in a separate study, already in progress.
35. Ivanov, *Masterpieces of Islamic Art*, 89, fig. 58, inv. no. VC-167.
36. Ibn Iyās, *Badā'i' al-zuhūr*, 1:1445.
37. Ibid., 5:88.
38. These similarities have already been noted by Ivanov in his study of this group of bowls.
39. Inv. no. 561-78.
40. al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, 3:112.
41. Komaroff, *Golden Disk of Heaven*, 224, fig. 32; Allan, *Nuhad Es-Said Collection*, 101.
42. Komaroff, *Golden Disk of Heaven*, 220.
43. W. Barthold, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden 1913–36), s.v. "Aḥmad Djalā'ir"; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, 3:799ff., 807ff.
44. al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, 3:947.
45. Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1981), 63–68; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, 3:962, 1058; 4:436, 1206.
46. al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-sulūk*, 3:692; 4:930.



## IMARI PORCELAIN IN MOROCCO

Much has been written about the presence of Far Eastern porcelain at the Ottoman court and in Safavid Iran, as well as its impact in European palaces and houses from the seventeenth century onwards. Virtually nothing, however, has been published about the existence of Japanese and Chinese porcelain in Morocco. In particular, Imari ware was—and continues to be—highly prized, both as decoration in the furnishing of houses and palaces, and for the presentation of food, including rituals involving food and drink. Although there is no Far Eastern porcelain in the national museums of Morocco, examples can still be found in private collections. Of particular interest are family collections with items acquired in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, prior to the modern collecting of porcelain as antiques. Through these private collections we can gain a rare insight into the pre-modern taste for and usage of Far Eastern porcelain in a Muslim country.

It is well known that Chinese porcelain was in great demand and had a significant impact on Islamic ceramics manufacture from the Abbasid era onwards. Chinese porcelain was highly regarded by rulers and the wealthy across most regions of the Muslim world, and was included in trousseaus and presentation gifts.<sup>1</sup> Not only has Chinese porcelain been found at various locations in the Middle East, including Hormuz and Siraf on the Persian Gulf, Samarra in Iraq, and Fustat (old Cairo), but Ibn Battuta, who was born in Tangier in 1304 and reached China in 1345, indicated that Chinese porcelain was known in the Maghrib.<sup>2</sup> As for earlier centuries in the Maghrib, the presence of Chinese porcelain is less clear. No porcelain, for example, has been found at al-Basra in northern Morocco, which flourished between the ninth and eleventh centuries.<sup>3</sup>

The use of porcelain in Muslim lands for serving food was probably encouraged by the condemnation

in the hadith about eating from vessels made of precious metals. It is known, for example, that in Yemen the Rasulid sultan al-Malik al-Ashraf (r. 1377–1401) displayed many dishes of Chinese porcelain for his son's circumcision feast; in Edirne, sherbets and sweets were served in porcelain bowls at the circumcision feast held in 1457 for Bayezid and Mustafa, the sons of the Ottoman sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. The Ottoman sultans subsequently amassed a vast collection of Chinese porcelain at the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, along with various Japanese and European pieces. Most of this porcelain was used for serving food or other purposes; it thus contrasted with the Ardebil Shrine collection in Iran, which was not used.<sup>4</sup>

The Chinese porcelain items in the present-day collection of the Topkapı Palace Museum number over ten thousand. According to the inventory completed in 1936, the Topkapı Palace Museum also had 721 Japanese pieces. There is no specific mention, however, of Japanese porcelain in the archives of the Topkapı Palace. One can only assume that the earlier cataloguers, like their European contemporaries, were incapable of distinguishing Japanese from Chinese items. Furthermore, the Ottoman court's method of acquiring Far Eastern porcelain was haphazard. There is only limited evidence to suggest that the Ottomans made special orders. Some porcelain was received as gifts from foreign rulers, especially from Iran. Other items were obtained as booty, and by unclaimed inheritance or confiscation (Ott. *muhallefat*), the latter being prominent in the eighteenth century. Purchases were rare, although there was a porcelain market in Istanbul, and the court disposed of objects there. By the eighteenth century, it was the practice for Ottoman officials to be given presents when they took up a new post, and they often received porcelain.<sup>5</sup>

Historical sources also point to the use of porcelain in the Mamluk era (1250–1517),<sup>6</sup> and Far Eastern porcelain was sold in the Khan Khalili in Cairo in 1615–16.<sup>7</sup> Cairo seems to have acted as a point of dispersal, and porcelain was also disseminated at Mecca.<sup>8</sup> The Hajj pilgrimage was a means by which Moroccan officials, merchants, and scholars immersed themselves in the culture of the Ottomans. In this respect, however, it should be noted that by 1722 the British had set up a trading mission in Jidda, and, by the late eighteenth century, Europeans were challenging the Suez–Jidda monopoly of the Egyptians.<sup>9</sup>

In the late sixteenth century, the Moroccan ambassador to the Sublime Porte, al-Tamgruti, described a royal reception at the Badi' Palace in Marrakesh, where food was served on "...gilt dishes from Malaga and Valencia [probably Mudejar-style lusterware plates], and on admirable dishes from Turkey [presumably Iznik ware] and from India [presumably Far Eastern]...."<sup>10</sup> Might it have been the case that Far Eastern porcelain began to replace Spanish lusterware and even Iznik pottery in Morocco as these wares ceased to be available? Neither Spanish lusterware nor Iznik pieces have been preserved in Moroccan museums or family collections. Iznik tiles were, however, in use in Morocco by the early seventeenth century, as seen, for example, on the mihrab of the Zawiya of Mawlay Idris in Fez, which was rebuilt by Sultan Zaydan (r. 1603–27).<sup>11</sup> There was a regular exchange of ambassadors and lavish goods between the Sa'dian (1511–1659) and Alawi (1631–) dynasties in Fez and Marrakesh and the Ottoman court in Istanbul.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, in Moroccan Arabic, a common word for a dish or plate is *ṭabsil*, which is probably derived from the Turkish *tepsi*.<sup>13</sup> This implies a transfer of Ottoman ceramic fashions (and culinary traditions).

Yet the geographical location of Morocco also exposed the country to the expansion of European maritime trade, which from the sixteenth century brought Far Eastern goods around the Cape of Good Hope. Portugal occupied most of the Moroccan ports in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and Chinese porcelain seems to have reached the country through them. Several decades ago, archaeological investigations at Qsar es-Seghir, the enclave in northern Morocco held by the Portuguese from 1458 to 1550, revealed the presence of Chinese porcelain in the uppermost levels of the Portu-

guese occupation debris, which can be dated to the first half of the sixteenth century.<sup>14</sup> Beginning with the capture of Sebta (Ceuta) in 1415, the Portuguese were the first of the European seafaring nations to establish trading forts or "factories" (Port. *feitoria*) on the shores of Africa and Asia. The first Portuguese trade contacts with China occurred between 1516 and 1521, and in 1543 the Portuguese reached Japan. By this time, they had established themselves as a mercantile power in Asia.<sup>15</sup> Chinese porcelain was among the many commodities that they traded, and a market developed for it in Lisbon.

The taste for Imari porcelain in Morocco, however, was a later phenomenon, made possible by the growth of large-scale Dutch and British maritime trade. The Dutch began to trade in Asia in the seventeenth century and soon displaced the Portuguese. The first contact between Holland and Japan was made in 1600, and the Dutch East India Company (Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie) was founded two years later. Thereafter, the Dutch opened a trading facility at Hirado in Japan in 1609, moving to Deshima at Nagasaki in 1641.<sup>16</sup> From 1639 to 1854, the Dutch were the only European traders allowed in Japan. Headquartered in Asia at Batavia (Jakarta) on the island of Java from 1622, the Dutch East India Company initially purchased Chinese porcelain in quantity, having become aware that there was a great market for it in Europe and elsewhere. More than three million pieces of Chinese porcelain were shipped to Holland in Dutch East Indiamen between 1602 and 1657 alone.<sup>17</sup> Much of it was then reexported to other European countries or conducted by seaborne trade to the Mediterranean. The latter region was thoroughly exploited by both the Dutch and the British, and helped make their early fortunes.<sup>18</sup> By the 1640s, the Dutch were also shipping hundreds of thousands of pieces of Chinese porcelain to ports in Japan, Southeast Asia, India, Iran, and Arabia.<sup>19</sup> At first, the Dutch shipped *kraak-porcelein* (carrack-porcelain), the name applied to Ming dynasty (1368–1644) blue-and-white, but then expanded to other varieties. From the late seventeenth century, Europeans were ordering porcelain with shapes and decoration quite different from the usual Chinese repertory.

When political unrest in China accompanying the fall of the Ming dynasty disrupted the Chinese porcelain trade for several decades, the Dutch East India Com-

pany found a substitute in Japanese porcelain. Company records indicate that Japanese porcelain was purchased from the 1650s onwards. The porcelain included blue-and-white wares, enameled wares, and polychrome enamels decorated with gold. Many had a rich decoration of floral and other motifs adapted from Chinese porcelain. Production in Japan accelerated drastically; by the 1660s, between 50,000 and 100,000 pieces of porcelain were produced annually in the Arita region. Much of it was made for export, and given the name Imari after the port from which it was exported. Japan began to enjoy a near monopoly on porcelain exports to Europe and Asia. Between 1659 and 1682, about 190,000 pieces of Japanese porcelain were shipped to Europe in Dutch East Indiamen. It is noteworthy that while much of Muslim Asia seems to have preferred blue-and-white wares, Holland and other European countries also sought brilliant enamel colors, including Imari dishes with blue, red, and gold decoration.<sup>20</sup> It was around this time that Japanese Imari began to enter Morocco and a taste for it developed.

The Japanese near monopoly was, however, short-lived. From the early 1680s, the irregular deliveries, uneven quality, and high prices of Japanese porcelain led the Dutch East India Company to return to Chinese porcelain, which was starting to become available again in quantity. The bulk of the continuing trade with Japan was then taken over by representatives of the Dutch East India Company acting in a private trading capacity.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Chinese traders may have bought over twice the amount of Japanese porcelain by value as that bought by the Dutch,<sup>22</sup> and they sold it to Europeans who did not have access to Japan. During the peak of the trade in Japanese porcelain, which lasted from 1659 to 1745, it was highly sought after and expensive in Europe. After 1757, however, the Dutch East India Company did not buy porcelain in Japan, largely because of the high prices, although private individuals still brought Japanese porcelain on to the market.<sup>23</sup>

The increased Chinese competition in the first half of the eighteenth century also extended to the field of Imari. Adopting the Japanese palette of underglaze blue, iron red, and overglaze gold, the Chinese version of Imari is similar, although the red is brighter than is

typical of Japanese wares. The earliest pieces of Chinese Imari ordered by the Dutch, carrying coats of arms, date from around 1705. Chinese Imari was less expensive than Japanese Imari and available in greater quantity; it was therefore more profitable for those who transported goods from Asia to Europe. Nevertheless, Chinese Imari still cost about twice as much as ordinary Chinese blue-and-white.<sup>24</sup>

The arrival of Japanese and Chinese Imari in Morocco happened to coincide with a new phase of Moroccan relations with Europe. In the seventeenth century, Dutch and English consuls were appointed in Morocco, particularly Tetuan and Salé, and trade began to flourish. As hostilities with Spain made it desirable for the English to find a port where their ships could be re-provisioned and repaired, in 1656 the sea-commander Robert Blake reached an agreement with the governor of Tetuan, 'Abd al-Krim al-Naqsis, which enabled Blake's ships to use the port of Tetuan. A further episode in Anglo-Moroccan relations commenced in 1662, when Charles II received Tangier from John IV of Portugal as part of the dowry of Princess Catherine of Braganza; the English presence in Tangier lasted until their withdrawal in 1684.<sup>25</sup> Although the episode was negligible as far as Far Eastern porcelain was concerned, twenty years later, in 1704, the British established a permanent base across the strait at Gibraltar. This presence had important ramifications for trade throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The desire for "china ware" in Morocco becomes evident in various sources at this time. In 1721, for example, the gift of a British diplomatic mission to Sultan Isma'il (r. 1672–1727), which traveled from Tetuan to the court at Meknes, consisted of a chandelier, cloth, sugar, and a box of china ware.<sup>26</sup> In 1727, "a large Box of China" was given as a present to the governor of Tetuan, while "1 Box of China Ware" and "1 Box containing 3 Large China Jars of Sweetmeats" were given to the Sultan.<sup>27</sup>

Among the earliest and finest Japanese Imari pieces surviving in Morocco are chargers or massive plates datable to the early decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup> A charger preserved in a private collection in Tetuan with a diameter of 53.5 centimeters has a sloping rim and decoration divided into three shaped panels (fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Charger (diam. 53.5 cm). Japanese Imari, early eighteenth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernuit)



Fig. 2. Charger (diam. 53.5 cm). Japanese Imari, early eighteenth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernuit)



Fig. 3. Plate (diam. 29 cm). Japanese Imari, ca. 1700–1725. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernuit)

An almost identical charger, with the same diameter, is in the collection of Queen Elizabeth II,<sup>29</sup> and another is in the Freda and Ralph Lupin Collection.<sup>30</sup> Another early-eighteenth-century Imari charger in Tetuan, with the same shape and diameter, has a rarer design of a vase on a table with a red tablecloth, surrounded by four cartouches with lions (fig. 2).<sup>31</sup> A smaller plate (diameter 29 centimeters) in Tetuan, which can be dated to the first quarter of the eighteenth century, has a wisteria design (fig. 3); this design was copied in the late eighteenth century at the Amstel factory near Amsterdam.<sup>32</sup> Some other pieces in Tetuan are Chinese Imari, such as a charger from around 1730 (fig. 4); a Chinese Imari piece with a similar design, consisting of a pavilion surrounded by a fence, is in the Topkapı Palace collection.<sup>33</sup>

The proximity of Tetuan to Gibraltar suggests that such porcelain was transshipped in London. Besides chargers, Imari items of the early eighteenth century preserved in Tetuan include covered jars about 50 centimeters high (fig. 5), vases (fig. 6), and bowls (fig. 7).<sup>34</sup> There was a demand for polychrome Imari with large-scale motifs and richly patterned surfaces, highlighted with gold, which conveyed an aura of wealth and status.



Fig. 4. Charger (diam. 47 cm). Chinese Imari, ca. 1730. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 5. Covered jar (ht. 50 cm). Japanese Imari, ca. 1700–1725. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 6. Vase (ht. 34 cm). Japanese Imari, ca. 1700–1725. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 7. Bowl, interior (diam. 28.5 cm). Japanese Imari, early eighteenth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

However, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, figural imagery on porcelain and especially molded figurines, which were sought after in Europe, were deemed less acceptable.

Most of the early Imari plates found in Morocco are large chargers, around 46 to 56 centimeters in diameter. While the chargers were used for communal eating, Imari bowls and jars were probably intended for storing food. Large glass vessels and bottles were rare. Large deep bowls of different sizes and lidded jars were used for storing oil, honey, preserves, and oily food, such as butter, clarified butter (*smín*), and dried meat preserved in fat (*khli*), essentials of pre-colonial Moroccan cuisine.

As time went on, the three-color Imari palette of blue, red, and gold saw an increase in clarity and brilliance. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, a pink wash made from colloidal gold was introduced, and often used thereafter. In addition, the palette was expanded to include other colors, such as yellows, greens, aubergine, and black. Morocco continued to import Imari porcelain in the nineteenth century, and, in this respect, was conservative in its taste.

It is well known that no great house in eighteenth-century Europe was without impressive garnitures of covered ovoid jars and tall cylindrical or concave-sided vases. These garnitures, in matching sets of three (two jars and one vase), five (three jars and two vases), or seven (four jars and three vases), adorned the mantel-pieces and shelves of the aristocracy, and were among the most popular shapes for Imari ware. Such covered jars and trumpet vases were also introduced to Morocco, although they are less common than chargers, and whole garnitures of five or seven pieces have not been preserved.

There is also archaeological evidence for Far Eastern porcelain in Morocco, although there have been no formal excavations of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century strata. The recent restoration of the Luqash Madrasa in Tetuan, carried out by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, uncovered a few fragments of Chinese porcelain, along with many shards of Moroccan and European earthenware. The fragments were found several meters below the surface, in the foundations of the building, at levels that were sealed around 1750, when



Fig. 8. Fragment of a Chinese blue-and-white plate with double foot-ring, ca. 1700. Found at the Luqash Madrasa, Tetuan. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Veroit)

the madrasa was built. They include the base of a fine, large, blue-and-white plate with a double foot-ring, of Chinese manufacture and datable to around 1700 (fig. 8), and eggshell-thin pieces of a blue-and-white cup or saucer. Both would indicate a taste for blue-and-white porcelain wares in Morocco that has since been forgotten, as these particular types have not survived in private collections.

A small number of historic courtyard houses still exist in Morocco, decorated in the old manner with original furniture and decoration, including displays of porcelain. Chargers and bowls are hung or placed on supports in rooms and porticos open to the courtyard (fig. 9). They are hung alongside mirrors, calligraphic inscriptions, and photographs. Some plates are in identical sets of three or more, and displayed on special mounts, such as a late-nineteenth-century Meiji plate with a design of two birds and flowering pomegranate, here placed upside down (fig. 10). Other items are displayed in cabinets (fig. 11) or on shelves (figs. 12 and 13).

If not in England, Far Eastern porcelain was transhipped in Holland before reaching Morocco. The Dutch archives contain references to the Moroccan demand for Far Eastern porcelain from Amsterdam merchants of the Levant trade. In 1788, 640 Chinese Imari “punch-



Fig. 9. Ground-floor room of a courtyard house in Tetuan, with nineteenth-century porcelain displayed on brackets. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 10. Plate displayed on bracket (see fig. 9). Japan, Meiji, late nineteenth century. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

bowls,” required to be “beautifully painted like turbans and rich with gold,” were shipped to Morocco.<sup>35</sup> Such “punchbowls,” which were large and deep, were probably used in Morocco for storing food.

Although the Barbary pirates, the corsairs of Salé and elsewhere, posed a threat to Dutch, British, and other shipping from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, and may have seized some ships to prey upon the cargoes and take captives for ransom, their actions alone are insufficient to account for the taste for Far Eastern porcelain in Morocco.

Rather, there seems to have been a link between the importation of porcelain and the demand for tea in Morocco. In the ships carrying tea from the Far East,

chests of porcelain, which was non-odorous, were often placed beneath the chests of tea to protect them from water damage. Porcelain bottles, teapots, and garniture sets were filled with tea.<sup>36</sup> Unlike neighboring Algeria and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, where coffee drinking predominated, tea began to be consumed in Morocco from the early eighteenth century. At first it was a rare and expensive commodity, and the drinking of tea was limited to the upper classes. A fall in the price of tea, however, allowed the beverage to be drunk among the affluent classes from around 1800. Thereafter it entered urban society between 1830 and 1860, and then spread from the towns to the peasantry.<sup>37</sup> In this context, it can be noted that the typical Moroc-



Fig. 11. Porcelain displayed in a cabinet in the reception room of a courtyard house, Tetuan. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 12. Porcelain displayed on shelves in the reception room of a courtyard house, Tetuan, mid-twentieth century. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

can teapot has a shape that has been faithfully replicated since the first British pewter teapots of a “Queen Anne” or “Queen Anne revival” shape were imported in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Made of a metal alloy rather than ceramic, it has a pear-shaped body, a tall conical lid, and a distinctive, large, projecting handle. The best-known specimens are the later nineteenth-century teapots exported by Wright of Manchester, signed on the base in English and Arabic.

European travelers’ descriptions refer simultaneously to the Moroccan habit of drinking green tea with mint, and to the quantities of foreign porcelain in use. For example, in 1789–90, when the surgeon William Lemprière was received at the court of Sidi Muhammad

ibn ‘Abdallah (r. 1757–90) in Marrakesh, the discussion turned to the drinking of tea with mint. Lemprière noted that the Sultan had an official tea maker, who was one of the courtiers deemed important enough to receive presents from the British embassy. Moroccans served their tea in “small cups of the best India china, the smaller the more genteel.”<sup>38</sup> “India china” presumably refers here to the East India Company, suggesting that Far Eastern porcelain was being used.

Among other porcelain items shipped to Europe and then reexported for sale in Muslim lands were “Moorish” or “Turkish” cups. These Chinese porcelain cups with straight outward-sloping sides had no handles or saucers. They were requested from the Dutch East India



Fig. 13. Porcelain displayed on shelves in the reception room of a courtyard house, Tetuan, mid-twentieth century. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

Company at least from 1753 onwards. As this company did not concern itself with transshipment from Holland, others were responsible for their reexport. The Amsterdam merchants of the Levant Trade were among the biggest buyers of the Turkish cups at the sales, and sold them around the Mediterranean, often with the involvement of Greek middlemen. It was requested that the decoration of the cups was non-figural; they were never supplied in blue-and-white, and some of them were in the Chinese Imari style. Around 1790, however, such cups went out of fashion.<sup>39</sup> None have been encountered so far in Morocco, if indeed they were ever exported there, perhaps because they were associated with coffee.

From the late eighteenth century, trade into Morocco occurred largely through the ports of Tetuan in the north, and Essaouira on the Atlantic coast. In 1764, Sidi Muhammad established the royal port and city at

Essaouira to take the place of Agadir, over which he was not always able to exert control. Henceforth, European merchants trading with southern Morocco were confined to Essaouira,<sup>40</sup> while Tetuan was dominant in the north. Except for this trade, Morocco was essentially closed to the outside world.

In addition to porcelain and tea, British imports into Morocco in the early nineteenth century included linen and cotton cloth, firearms, iron, tin, hardware, paper, sugar, coffee, and chocolate. Morocco exported cattle, mules, beeswax, honey, raw silk, goat skins and other animal hides, ivory, and ostrich feathers. The Moroccan sultans attached great importance to the customs dues levied on imports and exports. According to one estimate, duties levied in Tetuan and Tangier on goods passing between those ports and Gibraltar amounted to nearly two million dollars a year. These duties, together with those levied at Essaouira, constituted the chief source of royal revenue, since the monarch was unable to extract taxes from more than one-third of his lands.<sup>41</sup> This policy was also designed to keep foreigners from the interior of Morocco; in 1832, there were perhaps no more than about 248 Europeans living in Morocco—in Tangier, Tetuan, Essaouira, and Rabat. By this time, all the European consuls resided in Tangier. Muslim and Jewish Moroccan merchants, based in Gibraltar, Tetuan, and Essaouira, controlled imports into Morocco.

James Grey Jackson made note of some of the porcelain imports that passed through Essaouira in the early nineteenth century: in 1804, 330 dozen teacups and saucers from London and thirty dozen from Amsterdam; and, in 1805, forty dozen pieces of china from London and ten crates of British earthenware or British china, also from London.<sup>42</sup> In these instances, we cannot tell whether the porcelain was European or from the Far East.

By 1792, the British East India Company stopped buying Chinese porcelain altogether.<sup>43</sup> From the early eighteenth century, the rise of European porcelain manufacture undermined the Far Eastern porcelain trade. The first record of European porcelain (*frengi fağfuri*) in Topkapı Palace documents occurs in 1145 (1733).<sup>44</sup> European pottery in an Imari style was also exported. One such plate, made at the Belvedere factory in Warsaw, comes from a service believed to have been a

present from the King of Poland to the Ottoman sultan, Abdülhamid I, in 1776, but not delivered until 1789.<sup>45</sup> Other European factories such as Amstel in Holland in the late eighteenth century produced more direct copies of Imari ware, and in the nineteenth century, the firm of Samson, which was established in Paris in 1845 and moved to Montreuil in 1864, made some imitations.

During the reign of Sultan Sulayman (r. 1793–1822), trade at Essaouira was dominated by the Macnin family, who were Jewish merchants to the Sultan, and from 1800 onwards, Meir Macnin (d. 1835) was active in London. The Macnin family invested heavily in maintaining a special relationship with the Moroccan government, sending presents (*al-hadiyya*) to the Sultan at the time of their monthly installments and giving gifts to officials. In February 1815, for example, shortly before the *mawlid* festival celebrating the birth of the Prophet, Shlomo Macnin, a brother of Meir Macnin, traveled from Essaouira to Marrakesh with some twenty boxes of presents for the Makhzan (the central administration of the Moroccan government). In these boxes, as recorded in Shlomo Macnin's account book, were various luxury items including velvet, satin, and other fine cloths and linens—some of them embroidered—as well as silk, fine tea, loaf sugar, fine porcelain, a silver platter, candles, medicine, and watches.<sup>46</sup>

Captain George Beauclerk, who accompanied a medical mission to the Moroccan court at Marrakesh in 1826, illustrated his travel account with a view of “The Interior of an Opulent Jew’s House” in Essaouira (fig. 14); this was the house of Aaron Amar “Bujnah,” who married a daughter of Meir Macnin.<sup>47</sup> The engraving shows a typical room in a Moroccan house: with one entrance, from the courtyard, the room is both shallow and wide, with a curtained niche at one end for a bed. The only other furnishings are a carpet on the floor and two large lidded jars, which are taller than the child that stands between them. The decoration on the lidded jars is not rendered clearly, but they are most probably Far Eastern; the animal finials on the lids clearly indicate that these are not Moroccan lidded jars (*khabya*). While in the house of the governor of Rabat, Beauclerk also noted the following objects:

An English tea-board then made its respectable appearance, attended by a tea-kettle of steam-engine dimen-

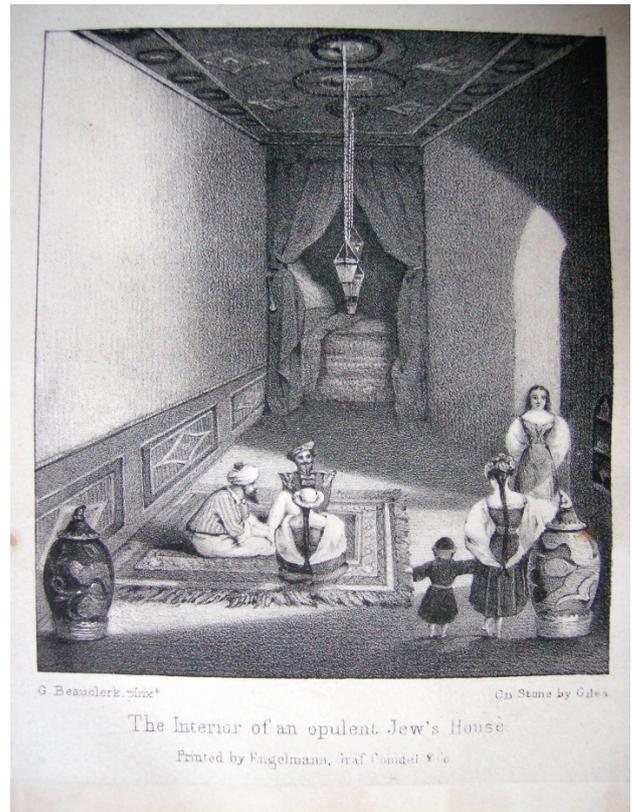


Fig. 14. “The Interior of an Opulent Jew’s House” in Essaouira. G. Beauclerk, *A Journey to Morocco* (London, 1828).

sions, and covered with mutilated coffee-cups of all ages, shapes and sizes; and two large bowls of curious Fezzan earthenware, full of rich milk, formed the advance-guard of the motley Chinese corps drawn up behind them.<sup>48</sup>

In 1848, David Urquhart, who was a British Member of Parliament, described being served tea in the house of the Muslim merchant Makki Brital in Rabat, well known for his international wholesale trade. The service included a teapot of Britannia metal (an alloy that succeeded the pewter teapots mentioned above), a japanned epaulette box for sugar, and small and delicate Chinese teacups and saucers. Urquhart also noted “...many coloured racks or brackets...on which stood fine chinaware and ornaments.”<sup>49</sup>

In Morocco today the word *shina* is used to describe porcelain or china in general; despite the Arabic spelling, it is pronounced *china* in the Moroccan dialect. By contrast, Imari ware and imitation Imari are specif-



Fig. 15. Exterior of a bowl (diam. 46.5 cm), with peacock or phoenix on rim. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini/Stephen Vernoit)

ically known as *ṭaws*, also spelled *ṭāws* and *ṭāwūs* (literally “peacock”); the peacock probably refers to the phoenix often found on these wares (fig. 15). The terms *shīna* and *ṭaws* can also be found in nineteenth-century Moroccan documents. In the Erzini Archive of Tetuan and the Corcos Archive of Essaouira (now in Israel), there are documents that refer to the nineteenth-century importation of porcelain at the ports of Tetuan and Essaouira, and thence overland to Fez and Marrakesh. References to Imari ware (*ṭaws*) are found in letters, commercial transactions, accounts, and documents of division of inheritance. One European author who mentions the term *ṭaws* with reference to porcelain imported from Britain is the Spanish diplomat, historian, and long-term resident of northern Morocco, Teodoro de Cuevas, in 1884. He added that few could afford it, and that cheaper French porcelain was competing with it.<sup>50</sup>

The trade in porcelain is also mentioned in nineteenth-century bills of lading to and from Gibraltar, written in English, French, and Spanish, but it is not always clear whether this refers to European or Far Eastern porcelain. A ship’s bill of lading for an eighty-kilogram case of porcelain sent in 1838 from Marseille to Ahmad al-Razini of Tetuan in Gibraltar suggests that French porcelain manufacturers were already having an impact (fig. 16).<sup>51</sup>

However, Moroccan trade in the nineteenth century was principally in British hands. Direct trade from Britain was carried out only with Essaouira, while British

trade with Tetuan or Tangier went through Gibraltar.<sup>52</sup> In a notebook in the Erzini Archive dated 1272 (1855–56) that documents trade conducted by Tetuani merchants in Gibraltar, it is recorded that a Far Eastern porcelain tea service (*zīnat ṭaws*) and an earthenware tea service (*zīnat qash*) were bought by the former slave and later consul in Gibraltar, Sa’id Gassus, for the then consul in Gibraltar, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Razini; the porcelain service was three times the price of the pottery service.<sup>53</sup> Although the word *ṭaws* may have been interchangeable with *shīna*, which was used more often, both terms were clearly distinguished from *qash* or earthenware.<sup>54</sup>

Those requesting *ṭaws* in Morocco included the Sultan, the royal family, and ministers. For example, in 1272 (1855–56), dozens of Far Eastern teacups (*kīsān ṭaws*) appear in the accounts of the Erzini family, which imported goods from Gibraltar to the interior of Morocco, including one set of cups specifically bought for a minister.<sup>55</sup> In 1864, Muhammad al-Mukhtar al-Jama’i, who was later Grand Vizir, writing from Fez or Marrakesh, requested from Abraham Corcos in Essaouira, “six cups of very, very fine *ṭaws*.”<sup>56</sup> The *ṭaws* vessels mentioned include sets of cups, plates, bowls, and lidded jars.

A most informative document is the inventory of the property of the governor of Tetuan, ‘Abd al-Qadir Ash’ash, who in 1267 (1850–51) was removed from office, imprisoned, and had his property and that of his family confiscated by Sultan ‘Abd al-Rahman (r. 1822–59). This record of items was comparable to the Ottoman *muhallefat*, mentioned above. The inventory was drawn up by a financial administrator of the Sultan, one Makki ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Qabbaj of Fez, a well-informed and well-traveled merchant.<sup>57</sup> In addition to land, houses, and shops, the document provides a detailed description of the contents of the houses. There was a substantial amount of pottery and glass in the houses of the governor and his brothers; twelve packing cases of confiscated china and glass vessels were sent to the Sultan, one case containing 110 china plates, another thirty-four bowls. The pottery is variously described as earthenware (*qash* or *fakhkhār*), porcelain (*shīna*), or Far Eastern porcelain (*ṭaws*). The cut glass or crystal (*billār*) included plates, urns, tea glasses, bottles, and



Fig. 16. Ship's bill of lading for a case of porcelain sent from Marseille to Gibraltar in 1838. Erzini Archive. (Photo: Nadia Erzini)

tea boxes. Of the earthenware and porcelain, some is specified as foreign or European (*rūmī*) and some as English (*qash inglīzī*). Most of the latter objects are tea services, including a set of teapots, teacups and saucers, milk jugs, and sugar bowls. A foreign or loan word is used to describe the tea sets or tea services—*sarbisīyūn*, an Arabic plural form of “service.” Such was the British influence on the import trade into Morocco that in the same inventory cloth is often measured in yards (*yarda*, pl. *yardāt*); elsewhere, tea is measured in pounds, in Arabic, using the Spanish loan word *libra*. French glass or china cups (*kīsān*) are also listed. The taste for foreign goods in Tetuan is quite apparent, as can be seen from the Ash‘ash inventory, which also mentions European music boxes, soaps, perfumes, candles, wall- and hand-mirrors, rifles, grandfather clocks, smaller clocks, writing bureaus, tables and chairs, parasols, maps, and children’s playing cards; European and Turkish carpets; British iron and brass bedsteads; Indian shawls; silks, velvets, and woolen cloth from Europe; and chests from Livorno. Since ‘Abd al-Qadir Ash‘ash had been sent as

ambassador to France six years earlier,<sup>58</sup> he might also have made some purchases there.

The inventory also specifies where the china was found in each house, room by room. Teacups and saucers were displayed on shelves in the reception rooms, along with china vases, urns, and glass bell jars covering artificial flowers. Large plates and bowls were stored in women’s marriage chests or displayed on shelves over the kitchen hearth (*dukkana*).

A document from 1273 (1856–57) certifying a gift from the merchant and consul in Gibraltar, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Razini of Tetuan, to his wife Um Kulthum Hassara mentions a great variety of porcelain objects, including large bowls, cups, teapots, and perfume sprinklers “...of European and Chinese manufacture, of many types and from many nations” (*‘amal al-rūm wa’l-shīna ‘alā akhtalaf al-ashkāl wa tabāyin al-ajnās wa’l-anwā’*). The notary or scribe who drew up the document felt obliged to use this phrase twice.<sup>59</sup>

In 1317 (1899), upon the death of al-‘Arbi ibn Mhammad [sic] Barisha of Tetuan, an affluent merchant, gov-

38399	الجميع يمشد
0033	كفرس ودمع آ
0300	زينة ككفرس كلوس
0075	ككفرس مند
0005	2 مرملع الصم
0090	ككفرس امير انديس
0030	ككفرس زجاج مومنة
0025	ككفرس تينا
0010	ككفرس زجاج
0030	ككفرس زجاج ايقانة
0060	ككفرس زجاج
0010	ككفرس زجاج صيفي
0050	علية كعود
0160	ككفرس زجاج و ككاسا من
0030	ككاسا كاودا
0040	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
0060	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
0010	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
0030	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
0010	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
0040	ككاسا من قلاية ابار
39427	الجميع

Fig. 17. Page listing *ṭaws* and *shīna* porcelain from the division of inheritance of al-‘Arbi Barisha of Tetuan in 1899. Erzini Archive. (Photo: Nadia Erzini)

ernment administrator, and diplomat,<sup>60</sup> his estate was listed, and included European and Far Eastern porcelain (*shīna* and *ṭaws*) items—cups (*zīnāt ku’ūs*), bowls (*ṭīsān* and *zalāyif*), and plates (*ghuṭār*) (fig. 17).<sup>61</sup> Barisha’s property was inherited in part by his wife, Fatma al-Turkiyya (d. 1943), one of several Circassian slaves whom he had bought in the Ottoman Empire for Sultan Hasan I (r. 1873–94) and for notables of Tetuan. A porcelain bowl displayed on a bracket can be seen in a photograph of the Barisha house in Tetuan taken around 1930 (fig. 18).

Morocco remained largely free from foreign intervention until 1859–60, when Spain invaded in the north. The Spanish occupied Tetuan and then evacuated the city after the Moroccan payment of an indemnity. The Spanish novelist Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, who was

sent to Tetuan in 1859 as a war historian, mentioned seeing oriental and English bowls and plates in the principal houses of the town, which were occupied and looted by Spanish generals.<sup>62</sup> Charles Yriarte, a journalist for *Le Monde Illustré* who also reported on the war, mentioned that china was displayed in the house of Muhammad al-Razini: “Les étagères étaient remplies de porcelaines de tout pays, depuis celles de la Chine, et du Japon jusqu’à celles de Londres et du faubourg Saint-Antoine.”<sup>63</sup> Frederick Hardman, a correspondent of *The Times*, noted that there was a good deal of old china in the houses of Tetuan, and that several cases of china were sent to Queen Isabella II in Madrid, along with other booty, such as Moroccan tents and banners.<sup>64</sup> In the 1870s, Dr. Arthur Leared observed that in the houses of several affluent Muslims in Tetuan,

Brackets, of Moorish design, held not only specimens of Moorish pottery, but some very good pieces of china, chiefly old Oriental...About five years previously the then Spanish vice-consul set to work and bought up all the old china that he could...<sup>65</sup>

By the reign of Sultan Muhammad IV (r. 1859–73), there was much greater economic interaction in the world at large. The first international exhibition at which Morocco participated was the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867. Muhammad IV was invited by Napoleon III to the exhibition, and the Sultan sent Hajj Muhammad ibn al-‘Arbi al-Qabbaj al-Fasi (presumably related to al-Makki ibn ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Qabbaj of Ash‘ash’s inventory), one of the principal merchants of Fez, with a variety of exhibits, leading Moroccans to nickname him “the Frenchman” (*al-faransāwī*).<sup>66</sup> From then on, Morocco took part in all the major international exhibitions. Although the export of Imari porcelain from Japan continued in the nineteenth century, a fire at Arita in 1828 terminated production until it experienced a revival from 1860, following the “opening up” of Japan in 1854. In the late nineteenth century, the international exhibitions provided a new forum for Arita potters. Furthermore, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 altered trade routes and promoted the influx of, among other things, Chinese and Japanese raw silk.

A late-nineteenth-century Japanese bowl of fine eggshell-quality porcelain, decorated with two birds, can also be found in Tetuan (fig. 19). The base carries the

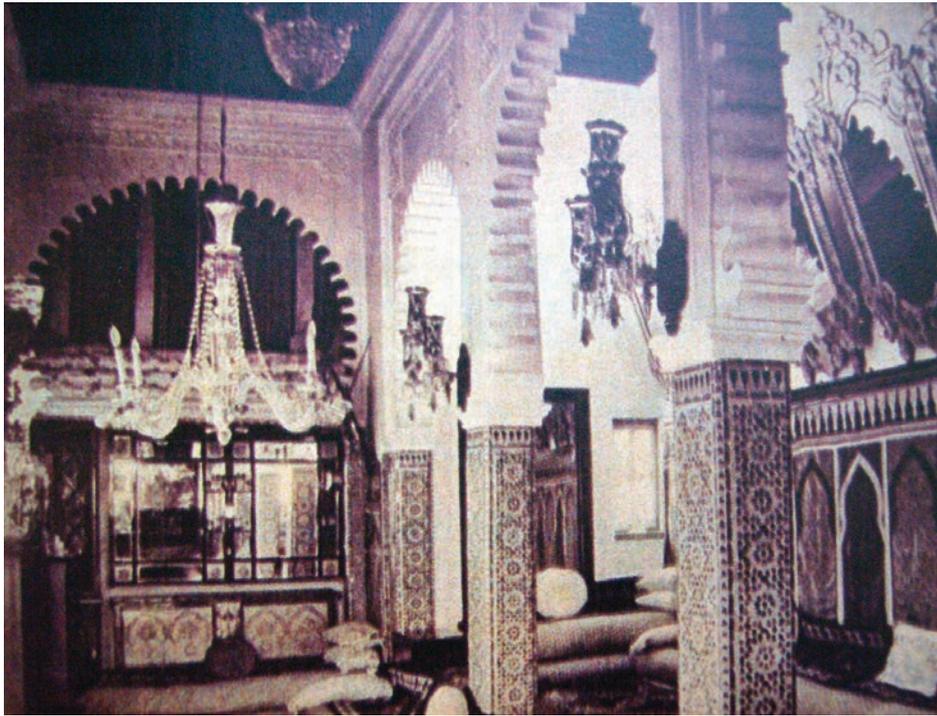


Fig. 18. Porcelain bowl displayed on a bracket in the Barisha house, Tetuan, ca. 1930. (Photo: Bibliothèque générale, Tetuan)

Japanese mark for Kutani (Nine Valleys) ware. The flimsy mount seems to date to the late nineteenth century. Some mounted bowls were placed freestanding on tables. A Meiji jar of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century was turned into an oil lamp (fig. 20). A bottle that was turned first into an oil lamp and then an electric one is not Japanese and may have been produced by Samson in the late nineteenth century (fig. 21); its mount is not Moroccan.

When the orientalist, author, and collector Pierre Loti accompanied the French minister to the court of Hasan I in Fez in 1889, he ate off Japanese plates in the houses of Moroccan viziers. Loti vividly described the hospitality, which included:

...luncheons worthy of Pantagruel...On tables or on the ground, are set large tubs of European or Japanese porcelain, heaped with fruits, shelled nuts, almonds, 'gazelles' hoofs', preserves, dates, saffroned sweetmeats. Gauze veils, highly coloured and sequined with gold, cover these mountains of things...<sup>67</sup>

At lunch in the house of the Minister of War in Fez, Loti continued:

The plates and dishes are Japanese; the glasses are gilt and variegated with colours...There are something like twenty-two courses...The dishes are so copious that a single man has difficulty in holding them; there are quarters of sheep, pyramids of chicken, mountains of fish, couscous for an ogre's feast. To these are added other edibles under the inevitable cones of white esparto ornamented with red designs; and all these cones accumulate on the ground, forming in the court a kind of dépôt of gigantic Chinese hats [cf. fig. 22].<sup>68</sup>

Loti's identification of the Japanese porcelain was well informed; three years earlier, he had published his novel about Japan, *Madame Chrysanthème*, based on his travels in the Far East.

The presence of foreign wares in Morocco did, to a limited extent, influence Moroccan potters, who imitated motifs found on Iznik pottery (carnations, *saz* leaves, and ships),<sup>69</sup> European and Indian textiles (paisley motifs),<sup>70</sup> and other designs. Moroccan potters also copied the shapes of some European vessels, such as decanters, jardinières, and teapots.<sup>71</sup> One clear example of the imitation of a Far Eastern shape is the tall ovoid Moroccan jar (*khabya*), about 50 centimeters high, with



Fig. 19. Bowl with two phoenixes. Japan, Kutani (Nine Valleys), late nineteenth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

a narrow foot and high domical lid with a finial.<sup>72</sup> This shape does not appear in Moroccan pottery of the medieval period. It is more difficult, however, to prove a Far Eastern inspiration for the large Moroccan bowl with a matching lid (*jabbana*), or for the large serving plate (*ghuṭār*) of an average 50-centimeter diameter. While the bright colors of polychrome Moroccan ceramics perhaps owe something indirectly to Imari, the blue-and-white ceramic palette is a distant echo of Far Eastern blue-and-white porcelain.

In the twentieth century, wardrobes and glass-fronted cabinets often replaced chests in the alcoves of rooms. Porcelain became the principal exhibit in these cabinets, especially such pieces as large lidded jars and tea services, which can be safely stored in them. However, Imari ware is intended not only for display but also

for eating and storing food. The distinctive Moroccan presentation of food remains much the same as when it was described by Loti; there are numerous courses, presented on large Imari-style porcelain plates with conical covers of palmetto and leather (*tbaq*), which are placed on small individual tables or trays with feet (*mayda*). One need not look further than a Moroccan cookbook to find evidence of the ubiquitous presence of Imari. Thus, in Latifa Bennani-Smires' *Moroccan Cooking* (1984) such national dishes as couscous or bastela are presented on imitation or pseudo-Imari plates. (By contrast, foreigners who write about Moroccan cooking prefer to serve their meals on Moroccan pottery.)

The use of Imari is deeply engrained in Moroccan culture. Even today, among the affluent and the urban families of long-standing, no celebration of a birth, cir-



Fig. 20. Jar, mounted as an oil lamp. Japan, Meiji, late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)



Fig. 21. Bottle, mounted as an oil lamp, then an electric lamp (ht. with mount 28 cm). Possibly Samson, nineteenth century. Tetuan, private collection. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

cumcision, wedding or funeral wake, or return of a pilgrim from Mecca, is complete without reproduction Imari plates and bowls. During a wedding, the bridegroom traditionally welcomes the bride with a symbolic meal of milk and dates, served on reproduction Imari bowls and plates. Following a bereavement, a Tetuani family does not light a fire or cook meals, but is supplied by relatives and friends with elaborate meals and tajines served on large Imari chargers for the duration of a three- to ten-day wake. Visiting monarchs or heads of state also receive the traditional greeting of milk and dates. This was the case, for example, when Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom visited Hasan II (r. 1961–99), and when the Tunisian president Zayn al-‘Abidin Bin ‘Ali visited Muhammad VI (r. 1999–) in 2000 (fig. 23).

The combination of milk and dates suggests a return to a primitive Bedouin diet, but to serve them on chinaware and specifically Imari porcelain evokes an image of luxury and refinement. When the daughter of the Venezuelan president paid condolences to Muhammad VI in 1999 on the death of the latter’s father, Hasan II, they were photographed in a room with Imari-style plates in the background.

Today imitation Imari is also widely on sale, mass-produced in China and in Morocco (fig. 24). The modern Chinese imitation Imari porcelain often carries a drawing of a peacock and the word *ṭaws* written in Arabic on the base. The Tajamu‘ti family of Fez, who have been active for several decades, is associated with its manufacture in Morocco.

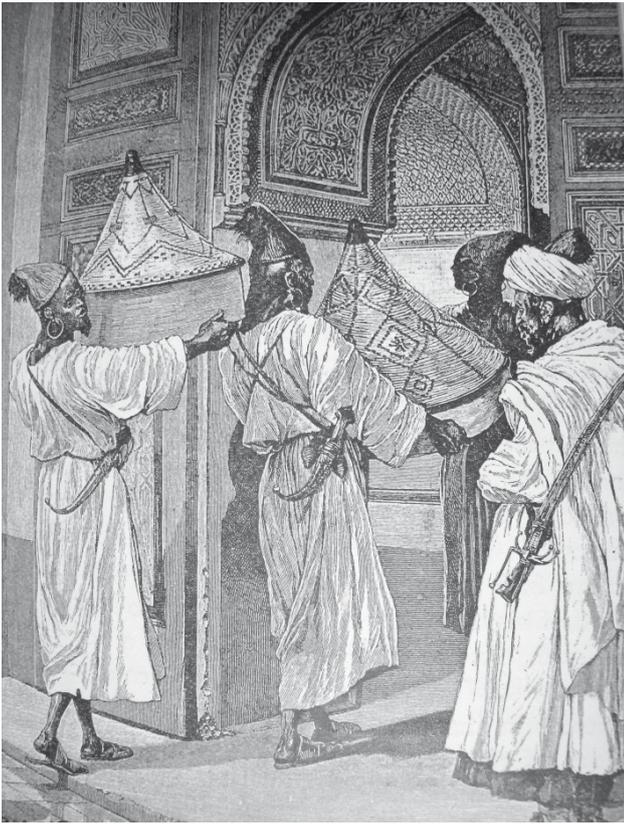


Fig. 22. "Bringing in Dishes at Sid Gharnet's [the Grand Vizir, Sidi Gharnit] Dinner" in Fez. Stephen Bonsal, *Morocco As It Is* (London, 1893), p. 171.

Since the seventeenth century at least, Morocco has had a distinctive local ceramic tradition of highly-colored and strongly-patterned glazed earthenware. This local production was supplemented by a taste for imported porcelain, which became an essential component of the country's tastes and requirements. The financial, technical, ritual, and artistic value attributed to this porcelain by Moroccans outweighed the importance given to indigenous ceramics. Thus, although Morocco was a separate and sometimes isolated political entity, the taste for Imari porcelain not only places it in the wider context of the Middle Eastern cultural milieu but also in the nexus of European trade and fashions. In this respect, Imari porcelain was a significant component of the material culture of Morocco; indeed, it was assimilated into the sphere of "Islamic art."

*Tangier, Morocco*



Fig. 23. King Muhammad VI receives the President of Tunisia, Zayn al-'Abidin Bin 'Ali in 2000 with milk and dates served in imitation Imari. *Anbi'ath al-Umma* (Rabat, 2000). (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Archives, Rabat)



Fig. 24. Shop selling imitation Imari, Tangier, 2008. (Photo: Nadia Erzini / Stephen Vernoit)

## NOTES

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20. Volker, *Porcelain and the Dutch East India Company*, 129ff.; John Ayers, Oliver Impey, and J. V. G. Mallet, *Porcelain for Palaces: The Fashion for Japan in Europe 1650–1750* (exhibition catalogue) (London, 1990), 18–19; Boxer, *Dutch Seaborne Empire*, 174.
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26. John Windus, *A Journey to Mequinez, the Residence of the Present Emperor of Fez and Morocco* (London, 1725), 86–87.
27. John Braithwaite, *The History of the Revolutions in the Empire of Morocco, upon the Death of the Late Emperor Muley Ismael* (London, 1729), 45, 87.
28. The authors wish to thank Prof. Christiaan Jörg for his comments and observations on the various Imari items discussed below.
29. Ayers, Impey, and Mallet, *Porcelain for Palaces*, no. 236, which gives the date 1690–1720 for the charger.
30. Lisa E. Rotondo-McCord and Peter J. Bufton, *Imari: Japanese Porcelain for European Palaces, from the Freda and Ralph Lupin Collection* (exhibition catalogue) (New Orleans, 1997), 71 no. 52.
31. For related designs, see Christiaan J. A. Jörg, *Fine & Curious: Japanese Export Porcelain in Dutch Collections* (Amsterdam, 2003), nos. 297 and 303.
32. See, for example, the piece in the Groninger Museum, Groningen, inv. no. 1986.420, illustrated in Ayers, Impey, and Mallet, *Porcelain for Palaces*, 276 no. 324; see also Jörg, *Fine & Curious*, no. 108.
33. Krahl, *Chinese Ceramics*, vol. 3, no. 2989.

34. This study is based primarily on inherited family collections in Tetuan, a town that has enjoyed a long continuity of its historic families. The choice of Tetuan as the capital of the Spanish Protectorate (1912–56) contributed to the survival of porcelain collections in family homes, whereas under the French Protectorate many houses in Fez, Meknes, and Marrakesh were abandoned for Rabat and Casablanca. The Jewish families of Essaouira might also have owned porcelain but have long since emigrated, though it is possible that they preserve Imari collections in Israel, along with the Corcos Archive in Jerusalem.
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36. *Ibid.*, 129.
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39. Jörg, *Porcelain*, 132, 180–81.
40. Rogers, *History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, 135.
41. *Ibid.*, 110, 134–35.
42. James Grey Jackson, *An Account of the Empire of Morocco, and the District of Suse* (London, 1809), 198–207.
43. Jörg, *Porcelain*, 353 n. 127.
44. Raby and Yücel, “Chinese Porcelain,” 53.
45. Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. no. 544–1897; illustrated in Ayers, Impey, and Mallet, *Porcelain for Palaces*, 253 no. 285. A large part of the service remains in the Topkapı Palace Museum.
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48. *Ibid.*, 95.
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51. The first use of the word porcelain (*bürsilān*) in a document in the Topkapı Palace was in 1293 (1876): Raby and Yücel, “Chinese Porcelain,” 53 n. 177.
52. Rogers, *History of Anglo-Moroccan Relations*, 134–35.
53. Erzini Archive ms. 138. For the archive and the consuls in Gibraltar, see Nadia Erzini, “*Hal yaslah li-taqansut* (Is He Suitable for Consulship?): The Moroccan Consuls in Gibraltar during the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of North African Studies* 12 (2007): 517–29.
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55. Erzini Archive, letters, 1864, al-Jama‘i.
56. Michel Abitbol, *Les commerçants du roi: Tujjār al-sultān: une élite économique judéo-marocaine au XIXe siècle* (Paris, 1998), 83–84. This is a publication of 170 of the 215 *makhzani* letters in the Corcos Archive. The word *ṭaws* was misread by Abitbol as *ḥaws*, which has no meaning.
57. For the inventory, see Muḥammad Dā‘ūd, *Tārīkh Tiṭwān*, 10 vols. (Tetuan, 1959–2006), 3:313–34.
58. Susan G. Miller, trans. and ed., *Disorienting Encounters: Travels of a Moroccan Scholar in France in 1845–1846, The Voyage of Muḥammad aṣ-Ṣaffār*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 14 (Berkeley, 1992).
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68. *Ibid.*, 197–98.
69. See, for example, André Boukobza, *La poterie marocaine* (Paris, 1987), pls. 24, 29, 46, 69.
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## AL-SUFI AND SON: IBN AL-SUFI'S POEM ON THE STARS AND ITS PROSE PARENT

The *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, or Poem on the Stars, is a short verse text surviving in several illustrated manuscripts, which has long lain in the shadow of a formidable father figure.<sup>1</sup> Written in Arabic, it was composed in the eleventh century, probably in Rayy, by one Abu 'Ali Husayn b. al-Sufi,<sup>2</sup> and is dedicated to a late Buyid amir, who used the titles *shāhinshāh fakhṛ dīn Allāh* (king of kings, pride of the religion of God).<sup>3</sup> Little more is known of this scholar-poet: no further bibliography has been attributed to his name, although two autograph manuscripts (his copies of works by different authors) do survive. One of these two is a key document in Islamic art history, and the earliest extant copy of a well-known uranometry treatise composed by the poet's father: *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* (Book of the Fixed Stars, or Constellations) by the astronomer Abu'l-Husayn 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Umar b. Muhammad b. Sahl al-Sufi (henceforth al-Sufi, d. 986), one of many intellectual luminaries welcomed at the Buyid court of 'Adud al-Dawla (d. 983) in Shiraz.<sup>4</sup> This copy is the Bodleian Library's MS Marsh 144, dated 400 (1009–10), a remarkably accomplished if isolated example of manuscript illustration in the Islamic world prior to the twelfth century (fig. 1).<sup>5</sup> Although precious little survives of illustrated books before this time, contemporary accounts clearly describe the currency of such material by referring to the holdings of famous libraries, or to known copies of illustrated works.<sup>6</sup> Their rarity makes it difficult to discuss usefully the extant surviving examples in terms of any traditional art historical patterns, such as specific regional, dynastic, or even linguistic categories: their collective survival as “early Islamic book illustration” gives them an artificial association, when each manuscript or fragment may rather be a unicum, requiring the study of its own history as a specific illustrated text, and of the internal evidence of each object.<sup>7</sup>

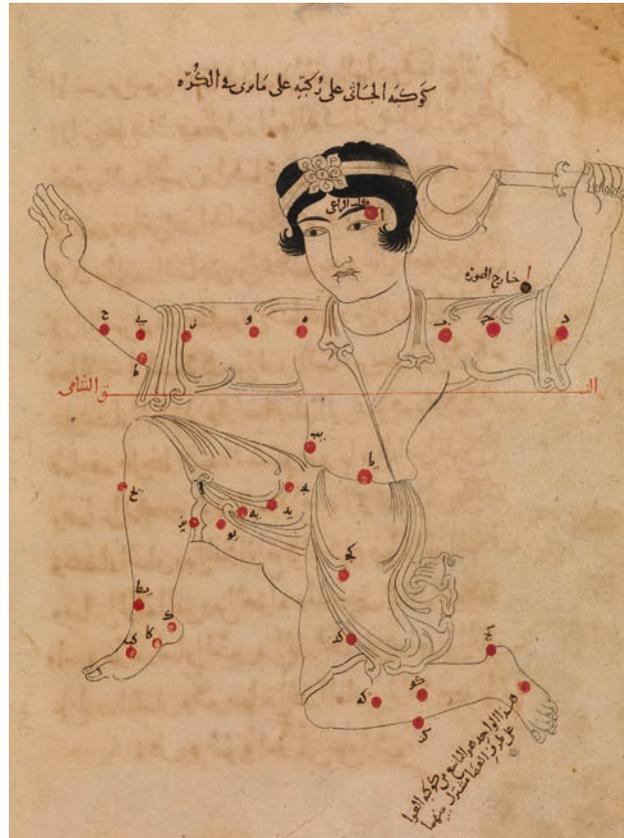


Fig. 1. The constellation Hercules. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, dated 400 (1009–10). Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Marsh 144, fol. 43v. (Photo: courtesy of the Bodleian Library)

The Bodleian's *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* manuscript has been examined in terms of its iconographic inheritance from late classical and early Islamic mapping imagery, and within the subsequent tradition of illustrating this particular astronomy treatise.<sup>8</sup> To this may now be added further discussion about the copyist and his connections with the original author.



Fig. 2. The constellation Ursa Major. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 519 (1125). Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms. MI-02-98-90, fol. 164r. (Photo: courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art)

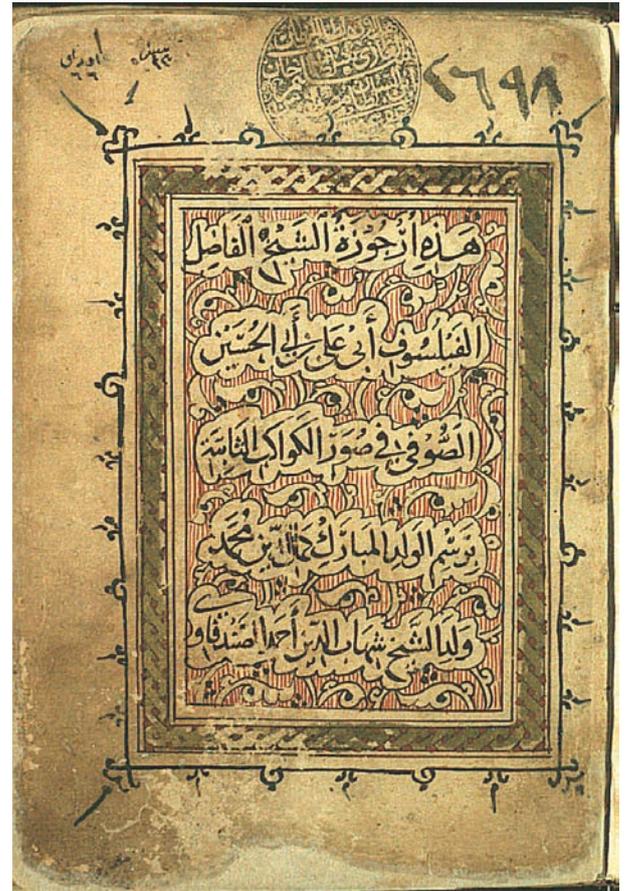


Fig. 3. Frontispiece. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 718 (1318). Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lâleli 2698, fol. 1r. (Photo: courtesy of the Süleymaniye Library)

According to its colophon statement, the 1009–10 copyist, Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Umar b. Muhammad, was responsible for both the transcribed text and the superb line-drawn illustrations.<sup>9</sup> His parental genealogy matches our astronomer, as was noted by Wellesz in 1959: the 1009–10 copyist Husayn and our scholar-poet Abu ‘Ali Husayn b. al-Sufi (henceforth Ibn al-Sufi) may therefore be identified as one and the same. The splendid Bodleian manuscript, produced within forty-five years of al-Sufi’s initial composition of the treatise in 964, shows that the son was contributing to the continuing dissemination of his father’s scholarship in spectacular fashion. Ibn al-Sufi further dedicated himself to this enduring legacy by composing *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, its

first known derivative work, a poem drawing selectively from the textual content and illustrative format of his father’s *Kitāb Šuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*. There are at least eighteen extant manuscript copies of this poem, of which the earliest is dated 519 (1125) (fig. 2).<sup>10</sup> The exact title of the Poem on the Stars is not consistently cited across these manuscripts. Aside from *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, the following alternative titles are also presented: *Urjūza fī Šuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, *Urjūza Ibn al-Šufi fī ma‘rifat Šuwar al-kawākib*, *Maqāl li-Abi ‘Ali*, *Maqāl fī'l-kawākib*, *Qašida fī Šuwar al-kawākib*, *al-Qašidat al-falakiyya*, *Kitāb fī ‘ilm al-nujūm*, *Risālat al-Šufi fī'l-kawākib*, and *Urjūza al-shaykh al-fāsil al-faylašūf Abū ‘Ali b. Abi'l-Husayn al-Šufi fī Šuwar*



Fig. 4. The southern constellations of Cetus, Orion, and Eridanus. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 519 (1125). Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms. MI-02-98-90, fols. 175v–176r. (Photo: courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art)

*al-kawākib al-thābita* (fig. 3). The majority of extant copies also have no constellation images, offering gaps where the illustrations should be, usually tantalizingly captioned *ṣūrat al-* (the picture of the...), which indicates an understanding that the Poem should correctly include images (fig. 4).<sup>11</sup>

This article examines the history of how and where the Poem was composed, illustrated, and subsequently transmitted and received. It also investigates how Ibn al-Sufi's Poem relates to its parental treatise, both in terms of fidelity to and emancipation from the original text, for the son was certainly selective in what he saw fit to extract and versify. Focussing on the finest surviving copy of the Poem, the text and illustrations are analyzed here along a model of two corresponding chronological layers: the initial era of the Poem's composition, and the later period when this particular copy, and many other illustrated Arabic manuscripts, were produced. The first "layer" examines how Ibn al-Sufi

combined versified data and imagery to elucidate a connection between classical Ptolemaic constellations and those of Bedouin Arab usage as two distinct systems of mapping the (same) stars in the night sky. This comparison had already been a major aspect of al-Sufi's *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* as a learning tool to assist the student's memorization process. Ibn al-Sufi reformatted that device, deftly exploiting verse as a second mnemonic medium, which could better support the role already required of visual memory.

The second "chronological layer" proceeds to a specific manuscript copy of the Poem, produced about a century and a half afterwards, in order to consider how the work was used and judged in later times. These twelfth-century illustrations and the accompanying double author portrait make clear reference to the influence of the poet's father, and also strongly position the manuscript among contemporary illustrated works of science and literature. With regard to the author



Fig. 5. The constellation Hercules. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fi'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 10v. (Photo: Moya Carey)

portraits in particular, this contextualization allows new consideration of frontispiece portraiture in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly in works of declared multiple authorship, and those under obvious influence from other earlier sources. The model of chronological layering is then applied to the frontispiece portrait genre to distinguish two categories of typical candidates: the original author with his patron or with influential authors from earlier times, and the later patron of the current manuscript copy. This analysis is intended to justify a new identification of the individuals in this particular manuscript, which is further supported by the character of the illustrated text itself.

Like al-Sufi's treatise, Ibn al-Sufi's Poem was designed as an illustrated text from the outset, and among the extant corpus of manuscript copies, the most remarkable is today in the Riza 'Abbasi Library in Tehran.<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 6. The constellation Delphinus. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fi'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 16v. (Photo: Moya Carey)



Fig. 7. The constellation Auriga. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fi'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 13v. (Photo: Moya Carey)

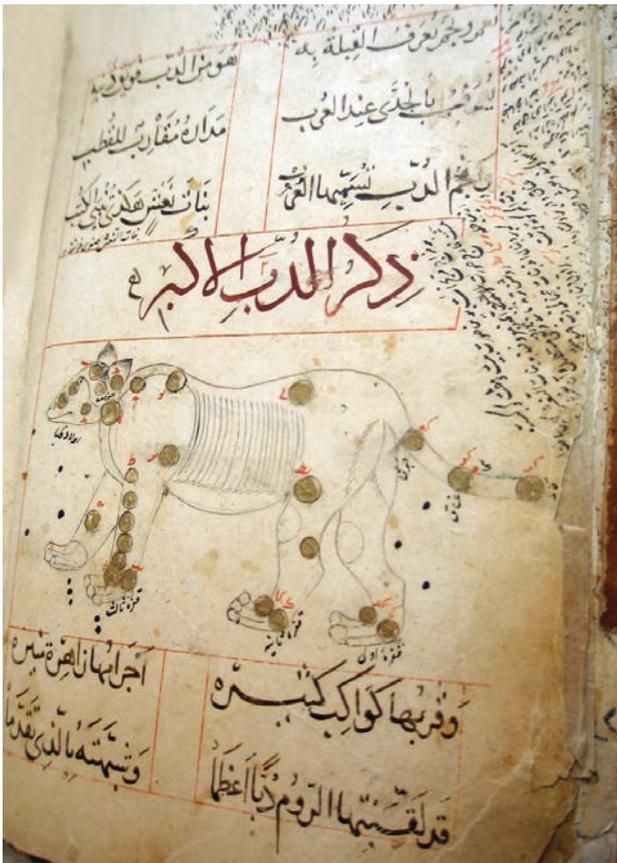


Fig. 8. The constellation Ursa Major. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza ‘Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 3v. (Photo: Moya Carey)

This important manuscript is dated 554 (1159–60), and fully illustrated throughout with forty-one line drawings of the classical constellations (figs. 5–8). Previously little studied, the images’ fluent execution and distinctive Seljuk style provide new chronological evidence for the history of manuscript painting in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and are a welcome expansion to the current corpus of what has long been termed “Arab Painting,”<sup>13</sup> a diverse group of illustrated Arabic manuscripts and detached folios, covering many branches of learning, datable up to the Mamluk period. Uniquely among copies of Ibn al-Sufi’s Poem, the Riza ‘Abbasi manuscript commences with a telling double-frontispiece author portrait, depicting an older and a younger scholar facing one another from opposite folios (fig. 9). As will be further discussed below, the pair must be the

father and son whose combined scholarship delivered this text, al-Sufi and Ibn al-Sufi.

### I. POET AND PATRONAGE UNDER THE BUYIDS

As noted above, to study a mid-twelfth-century copy of an early eleventh-century text involves the perception of two chronological layers. The first lies at the initial time of composition in the late tenth to early eleventh centuries, across various court centers held by the Buyid dynasty (945–1055), where the poet Ibn al-Sufi and his father lived and worked. This was a vibrant period for intellectual patronage: the Buyids hosted major cultural luminaries, including the calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1022), the poets Abu’l-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri (d. 1058) and Abu’l-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 967), and the scientists Buzjani (d. 998), Ibn A‘lam (d. 975) and Ibn Sina (d. 1037), among many others. At the same time, further east, Firdausi (d. 1020) was working for Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna (r. 998–1030). I will be looking to this first historical layer for details and documentation of Ibn al-Sufi’s biography, and the overwhelming influence of his father’s illustrated treatise upon his own text.

My second layer lies in the mid-twelfth to thirteenth centuries, a period that is suddenly rich in illustrated manuscripts on both literary and scientific subjects, mostly written in Arabic.<sup>14</sup> The majority of these are new copies of classic texts composed, compiled, or first translated at least a century or two beforehand, if not more.<sup>15</sup> These also cross-refer to the first chronological layer: they show an ever strong connection with that earlier period—acknowledging classic authors directly in frontispiece portraiture or biographical scenes, and demonstrating the enduring importance of their works, sustained by the continuing transmission of knowledge through attentive production of illustrated copies.<sup>16</sup> The quality and prominence of private non-courtly production is also striking, depreciating the traditional art historical arrangement of manuscript painting by dynastic style.

To start off with the first chronological layer, the poet’s father, Abu’l-Husayn ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Umar b. Muhammad al-Sufi, is well known to art historians of the Islamic world, as well as historians of science. Along



Fig. 9. Double frontispiece. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fols. 1v–2r. (Photo: Moya Carey)

with seven other titles on instruments, astrology, and timekeeping, in 964 he wrote the influential *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, an extensive treatise, which survives in many beautifully illustrated copies, and in translation and abridgement.<sup>17</sup> The work describes the constellations used in classical Ptolemaic astronomy, as well as Arabian nomenclature, directly comparing the different identifications perceived in each culture. There also follows a formidable tabulated catalogue of over a thousand stars, which closely adheres to the structure of Ptolemy's star catalogue in the *Almagest*, with al-Sufi's additional contribution of revised star magnitude values. The star positions, recorded in coordinates of celestial longitude and latitude, are dated to 964, presumably

the year in which the treatise was formally presented to its patron. Al-Sufi worked for the Buyid amir 'Adud al-Dawla (936–983), teaching the prince astronomy and conducting astronomical projects with other scientists at an observatory in Shiraz built by his royal pupil. From his writings and secondary accounts, it can be inferred that he also made astrolabes and celestial globes.<sup>18</sup>

Prior to Buyid Shiraz, al-Sufi seems to have worked in his hometown of Rayy for the eminent statesman Ibn al-'Amid (d. 970), initially the wazir of the prince's father Rukn al-Dawla (d. 976), and also a patron of astronomical observation projects. According to al-Sufi himself, he had travelled with the wazir in 946 and 949, and the pair later collaborated on an astrolabe treatise.

tise.<sup>19</sup> Known for his diplomatic skills, Ibn al-ʿAmid was dispatched to Shiraz to educate, advise, and possibly placate the headstrong young ʿAdud al-Dawla; al-Sufi seems to have arrived there at the same time, perhaps in the same entourage of 956–57. He was certainly active in Shiraz by the 960s: *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* was composed in 964, and al-Sufi worked with a team of others at the newly built observatory, where he led a series of solar observations at the winter solstice of 969, the summer solstice of 970, and the autumn equinoxes of 971 and 972, in order to determine the obliquity of the ecliptic.<sup>20</sup> The main instrument used was a large graduated ring, known as *al-ḥalqat al-ʿAḍudiyya* (the ring of ʿAdud), after the princely patron.

Intellectual life in Shiraz was specifically fostered by the ambitious prince, an ideal ruler in the classic bibliophile mode and the most militarily formidable of the Buyid dynasts.<sup>21</sup> He courted scholars, assembled a large library, and built the observatory, as well as hospitals. According to Ibn al-Qifti, ʿAdud al-Dawla liked to boast of the famous resident scholars who had taught him: he specifically mentioned that his tutor in the constellations and their movements was al-Sufi, while another astronomer, Ibn Aʿlam, was responsible for instructing the prince in the use of *zīj* tables (tables of astronomical data).<sup>22</sup> ʿAdud al-Dawla also liked to participate in intellectual debates at court, and apparently went nowhere without his copy of *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of Songs). His book collecting extended to the diplomatic level—a dispute with his cousin ʿIzz al-Dawla Bakhtiyar included the grievance that the cousin, clearly another bibliophile, had refused him some rare documents.<sup>23</sup> His remarkable palace library is described with keen interest and obvious satisfaction by the geographer al-Muqaddasi (ca. 985), who visited during the amir's lifetime: “There is no book written up to this time in whatever branch of science but the prince has acquired a copy of it.”<sup>24</sup>

ʿAdud al-Dawla was also ambitious militarily, taking control of ʿUman, Kirman, and Makran, before moving on Iraq. In 977–78, he moved his court from Shiraz to Baghdad, which he had summarily seized from his weaker cousin ʿIzz al-Dawla Bakhtiyar. There he further pursued his cultural policies, building an academy and a teaching hospital (named *bīmāristān ʿAḍūdī* after him) and restoring the infrastructure of the dilapidated

city. He died in 983, not yet fifty years old, of epilepsy. Though in advanced age, al-Sufi had also moved to the new court capital, where he died three years later. This then was the rarefied environment in which our poet Ibn al-Sufi grew up. Baghdad and the Abbasid caliphate remained under the care of the (Shiʿi) Buyids until 1055, when the Seljuks invaded. Private and princely libraries and academic institutions, where the presence of scientists and scholars was courted, were widespread.<sup>25</sup> Celebrated librarians were employed at these places, including the historian Ibn Miskawayh (d. 1030) in the library of Ibn al-ʿAmid in Rayy, and the calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab in Shiraz. The political currency of intellectual company and materials was highly rated, as shown by the feud between the two Buyid cousins over ancient manuscripts.<sup>26</sup> A further likely example of cultural politics is an astrolabe (now in Doha), designed for use at the latitude of Baghdad by Abu Mahmud b. al-Khidr al-Khujandi (d. 1000), an astronomer based in Buyid Rayy, who was in the service of the amir Fakhr al-Dawla (d. 997).<sup>27</sup> The instrument dates to 374 (984–85), the year in which Fakhr al-Dawla officially reconciled with his nephew, Samsam al-Dawla (r. 982–90), the paramount Buyid amir, in Baghdad.<sup>28</sup> It would have made the perfect diplomatic gift. Like Baghdad and Shiraz, Rayy was the location of celebrated libraries, including that of Ibn al-ʿAmid. Many were shortly to fall foul of invaders, both Ghaznavid and Seljuk.

In historiographical terms, the emergence of the poet Ibn al-Sufi from the shadow of his famous father was gradual and hazy. This is principally because the material treated in the Poem and the treatise is so very similar, as of course are the two scholars' names. This muddled early attributions to Ibn al-Sufi in his own right: according to Ibn al-Qifti's *Taʾrīkh al-ḥukamāʾ*, an illustrated *Urjūza* on the constellations (*Kitāb al-Urjūza fīʾl-kawākib al-thābita al-muṣawwara*) was listed squarely within the father's bibliography.<sup>29</sup> Later scholars agreed that this attribution was in error, but differ widely on the author's real identity, their debate revolving around the identity of the patron cited in the opening verses of Ibn al-Sufi's Poem: *li-malik al-amlāk, li-malik al-umma shāhinshāh [Abī] al-Maʿālī Fakhr Dīn Allāh* (To the king of kingdoms, the king of the Islamic community, the king of kings, Abu al-Maʿali Fakhr Din Allah). Various identities have been volunteered for this figure, including

a Fatimid wazir, an Artuqid prince, and even the older brother of Salah al-Din.<sup>30</sup> None is anything like a perfect fit, chiefly because although the title *shāhinshāh* was demonstrably used by several people of greater or lesser political importance, nowhere does it seem to be found in conjunction with the full title *fakhr dīn Allāh*. A misidentification of our poet as the twelfth-century scientist and poet Abu ‘Ali al-Muhandis al-Misri had contributed a further red herring to the puzzle, causing scholars to search for patrons exclusively within the twelfth century.<sup>31</sup> The best conclusion remains that of Emmy Wellesz, that the poet was obviously and simply the astronomer’s son<sup>32</sup>—as the Poem itself states with some pride in several instances. Following the bismillah, the incipit states, “This is the account by Abu ‘Ali/Son (*najl*) of Abu Husayn al-Sufi,” and the Poem concludes with the line, “My father (*wālidnā*) mentions [these matters] in his books. And so I seek them diligently according to his wishes.”<sup>33</sup> Given the poet’s family connection with Buyid patronage, and the well-known history of that dynasty’s preference for the aspirationally-imperial title *shāhinshāh*, it seems more acceptable to identify the Poem’s patron with a minor Buyid who used the exact title *shāhinshāh fakhr dīn Allāh* on his coinage: Abu Kalijar Fanna’ Khusrau (1009–d. after 1047), the son of Majd al-Dawla (d. after 1029), the last Buyid amir of Rayy.<sup>34</sup>

The title *shāhinshāh* was touted as a propaganda weapon by several Buyid family contenders.<sup>35</sup> The dynasty organized its territories with different branches ruling from various amirate courts, including Rayy, Shiraz, and Baghdad. Although Shi‘i, they nonetheless strategically protected and controlled the Abbasid caliphate, following their seizure of Baghdad in 945. The obliging caliph in turn acknowledged them, granting honorific titles, which legitimized their dominion.<sup>36</sup> Given how many Buyid amirs assumed the title of *shāhinshāh*, it does not connote any particular supremacy on the part of the user, as would seem to be the case with Ibn al-Sufi’s likely patron, who only briefly grasped any control of Rayy, once his father’s capital. Aside from Shahinshah Fakhr Din Allah’s credit in Ibn al-Sufi’s Poem, his titlature is recorded on a unique gold dinar, minted at al-Muhammadiyya (Rayy) in 432 (1040–41): *Sharaf al-Mulūk Abū Kālījār [...] Shāhinshāh Fakhr Dīn Allāh*



Fig. 10. Gold dinar dated 432 (1040–41). Paris, private collection. (After Luke Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage: A Die Corpus (322–445 A.H.)* [Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2001], 155)

*b. Majd al-Dawla Buwayh*, together with that of the then current Abbasid caliph, al-Qa‘im (r. 1031–75) (fig. 10).<sup>34</sup> This surprisingly late date shows that a Buyid must have regained a measure of power in Rayy following its sack by Mahmud of Ghazna in 1029 (Rabi‘ II 420).<sup>38</sup>

In terms of building our poet’s wider biography, we have rather bare bones to go on. We know that Ibn al-Sufi composed this poem and may infer from the text and his full name that his father was indeed the famous astronomer ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi. As the Poem constitutes a close editorial analysis and précis of his father’s treatise, it seems that Ibn al-Sufi was also a scholar. Quite remarkably for an eleventh-century individual, there survive to this day two signed manuscripts in his handwriting, which further testify to his scientific interests. The first is his copy of Ibn al-Dayā’s *Tafsīr kitāb al-thamara li-Baṭlamīyus*, a commentary on the astrological treatise *Centiloquium* attributed to Ptolemy, located in the Malek Library in Tehran.<sup>39</sup> According to its colophon, this unillustrated manuscript, which is dated Sha‘ban 392 (August 1002), was copied in a library in Rayy and signed al-Husayn b. ‘Abd al-Rahman b. ‘Umar al-Sufi.<sup>40</sup> The second manuscript, copied only

seven years later, is better known, being the Bodleian's illustrated copy of *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* discussed above, his father's constellation treatise.<sup>41</sup> The colophon, dated 400 (1009–10), is signed al-Husayn b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. 'Umar b. Muhammad.

It seems, then, that besides being a poet and scholar, Ibn al-Sufi copied scientific texts for himself and may have also been an extremely accomplished artist. Two of his known projects deal with the reception and dissemination of his father's treatise on the constellations, one being the Bodleian's luxury copy of that text, the other being our poetic recension. The Ibn Daya commentary manuscript shows that he was active in a Rayy library in 1002, while his Poem's apparent dedication to the Buyid prince Abu Kalijar Fanna' Khusrau b. Majd al-Dawla suggests that he was still there after that amir had succeeded his father—therefore no earlier than 1029, some twenty-seven years later, when Majd al-Dawla died.<sup>42</sup> There is an interesting implication here for the provenance of the intermediate 1009–10 Bodleian manuscript—was it also produced in Rayy?<sup>43</sup>

## II. POEM AND ILLUSTRATIONS: THE INVISIBLE LAYER

*Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* was and remains an important landmark in the history of uranometry, prompting many derivative works—of which Ibn al-Sufi's Poem must certainly be the first, and the closest to home. Perhaps spurred by his father's instant success, the son composed this greatly condensed adaptation, a poem of rhyming couplets in *rajaz* meter, in forty-eight verses of differing length, one for each constellation. There are a few questions worth posing about this interrelationship, and the extent to which the Poem can be described as purely derivative. Does it not have independent merit? There is a long intellectual history of writing poetic accounts of astronomy and astrology (particularly of the constellations), going back to classical and late classical literature: the *Phaenomena* by Aratus of Soli (third century B.C.) was particularly influential.<sup>44</sup> Al-Fazari, Ibn al-Shatir, and Ibn Sina wrote didactic verses on scientific data, astrology, astronomy, and medicine.<sup>45</sup> In relation to the treatise, should Ibn al-Sufi's Poem be characterized as a dilution or a distillation?

The Poem describes both Arabian (Bedouin) and classical (Ptolemaic) conventions for naming and visualizing the stars, offering much the same intercultural tally as did the treatise. Both texts treat the forty-eight classical constellations in separate chapters following the same order, each illustrated in a linear style with identical constellation iconography and the constituent stars clearly painted. A close comparison of both texts and their illustrations, however, reveals how a long story was cut short. Ibn al-Sufi's omissions are somewhat telling: the content has been greatly shorn of scientific conventions for referencing star positions, drawing the reader away from instrumentation and written records—and towards memorization and fluency. For example, the poet omits the tables of star positions for the year 964. Thus, in the Poem's illustrations, the stars are not numbered, whereas in the treatise, they are fastidiously labelled in reference to the catalogue table.<sup>46</sup> Without the catalogue, the Poem cannot be used as a basis for calculating new star positions (unlike the treatise). The Poem also avoids the long account of every star's magnitude, which makes for rather prolix reading in the prose of the treatise chapters.<sup>47</sup> In the Poem's illustrations, we are shown only one version of each constellation figure, dispensing with al-Sufi's innovative double format, which clarified the tricky fact that the figure outlined on a celestial globe is a mirror image of the same constellation when perceived in the starry sky. In the 1159–60 manuscript, the great majority of the images depict the constellation only as it would be seen on a globe.<sup>48</sup> Exceptionally, three of the smallest constellations, Delphinus (the dolphin) (fig. 6), Sagitta (the arrow), and Triangulum (the triangle), are illustrated twice, as juxtaposed mirroring pairs, even though the Poem's content in no way supports or explains such a format. This lapse indicates that the artist's ultimate source of reference was indeed a copy of al-Sufi's original treatise.

Thus stripped down, Ibn al-Sufi's work can be used purely for information about the corresponding names of constellations from classical and Arabian systems. Here his choice of a rhyming versification becomes pertinent, as the material is intended to be committed to memory, for use away from the written text—presumably in the dark of night when observing the stars themselves.<sup>49</sup> This is the purpose of scientific poetry:

rhyiming cadence greatly facilitates the memorization process, which graduates the student from his text. This much is laid bare in the title of al-Fazari's astrological poem: *Urjūza fī'l-ḥudūd 'amala al-Fazārī li-yusahhila ḥifzāhā*: *Urjūza* on the Terms, written by al-Fazari to make memorizing them easy.<sup>50</sup>

The forty-eight animals and people illustrated in Ibn al-Sufi's Poem are the constructs of classical Greek astronomy, retained and developed in the Islamic world thanks to the enlightened court cultures of the Translation Movement. Although the work is organized as a catalogue of classical constellations, the accompanying verses do not recount any Greek legends associated with the likes of Hercules and Cassiopeia; instead they deal exclusively with the alternative star names and identities used in Arabian tradition for the same stars. Arabian culture had long employed a system of astronomy distinct from that of the Greeks, preserved in oral tradition. This system was also organized around the measurement of time: it delivered an annual and monthly calendar, based on the rising and setting of principal stars at dusk and dawn, and on the lunar mansions, a series of twenty-eight "mini-constellations," which demonstrate the monthly circuit of the moon.

Being essentially imaginary, constellation groups tend to be the distinct designation of each star-gazing culture. Thus, constellation identities often deliver an interesting index of the people who created them—a cultural Rohrschach test, as it were, reflecting deeper concerns and truths. The classical Greeks elevated their heroes and their exploits to the stars, e.g., Perseus, the gallant rescuer of Andromeda, along with monsters, such as Cetus and Hydra. By contrast, the uranometry of the Bedouin Arabs employs far fewer people or even human artefacts, principally figuring a wide range of animals in their constellations, such as ostriches, wolves, and camels. This cultural index reveals the interests of a non-urban reality—i.e., nomadic concerns about pasture and the wilderness. A rare instance of a man-made construction is the small triangular constellation *al-athāfi*, the temporary campfire hearth, built out of three stones laid in a triangle (this being the only trace of a departed tent settlement), found in the constellation Draco. Very occasional human traffic includes travelling horsemen (within Cygnus), and a lone shepherd with his dog (in Cepheus).

For example, Ibn al-Sufi's second verse, about the constellation Ursa Major, is duly illustrated by a drawing of a large bear traced around the stars. Having first described the bear, the text then gives an alternative account for the same stars, as perceived in Arabian tradition. Arabic proverbs about particular stars are also included. The following extract describes seven different names given to single stars or small groups, corresponding to the bear's torso, tail, and paws (fig. 8):<sup>51</sup>

The stars for this figure are many  
They shine brightly

In number they are twenty-seven  
This was known through observation

The Greeks called it a Great Bear  
They liken it to the previous figure<sup>52</sup>

In the bear's body, there are four stars  
They form a square

It turns around the [North] Pole like a wheel  
The Arabs call it the Bier (*na'sh*)

Three stars are in a line<sup>53</sup>  
At dusk they appear to the eye

The Arabs call them the Daughters (*al-banāt*)  
This follows the traditional narrators

Of the stars beside the square,  
One of these three [stars in a row]

Is known as the Gulf (*al-jūn*) to the Arabs  
Thus it is described by the wise

Then the one following after this star  
Is a shining star of bright light

The Arabs know it as a female Goat-kid (*'anāq*)  
Above which is a small dim star

Some Arabs call it the Overlooked (*al-suhā*)  
It is mentioned in some traditional accounts [...]

By this star, the eyesight can be tested  
Also, it seems to twinkle

The man said "I can see *al-suhā*"  
While staring stupidly at the full moon

After this star is a solitary star  
It shines brilliantly, and is called the Governor  
(*al-qā'id*)

Below the stars of *na'sh* and *al-banāt*  
There are the stars known as the Galloping Leaps  
(*al-qafzāt*)

They are along the edges of this Bear<sup>54</sup>  
Nearby to *al-banāt* and *al-suhā*

They are in pairs  
Truly, it is said according to the Arabs,

They are called the Bolting Animals (*al-nawāfir*)  
They are the tracks of leaping gazelle

These stars are named the Leaps (*al-qafzāt*)

The two systems are thus presented at once, as an intercultural tally, but they require the reader's active participation for their fullest content to be exposed. There are no drawings here of the running gazelles, nor of any of the other Arabian identities, only the Great Bear in profile. Silently embroidered across the classical image, these undrafted Arabian groups form an "invisible layer," which is only revealed by reading the accompanying poetry. Rather than forming a physical silhouette, the Arabian nomenclature tends to identify single stars with individual references: each of the three stars along the bear's tail is one of three daughters following a funeral bier.<sup>55</sup> Another minor narrative episode is next: we follow the leaping gazelles' footprints (*qafzāt*) as they reach a safe place with their young (*awlād al-dhibā'*)—the name given to the group of stars beyond the bear's nose. Thus, the tiny trail of stars records a mapped vector of movement, not a figural shape as such. Truly to digest the verses, the student reader must be able to grasp both concepts—which requires a strong simultaneous grip on memory, visual imagination, and celestial orientation. The purpose is educational, for presumably the intended reader is an eleventh-century student coming to classical astronomy and its many constellations for the first time. Perhaps the story and location of the Arabian gazelles were already a familiar anchor. Thus their apparent demotion—denied the privilege of visual representation—is in fact an acknowledgement of their preestablished position in the reader's memory.<sup>56</sup>

A direct comparison with the corresponding prose section in al-Sufi's treatise<sup>57</sup> demonstrates that the poet has added no further data, and indeed has omitted information about each star's individual magnitude. Yet, by delivering his material in a format more conducive to memorization, the poet's text has arguably more value as a tool of learning for the student. This purpose har-

monizes all the better with the illustrations, which also serve a mnemonic function, graphic rather than performative.

The critical impact of this poem is difficult to assess, and early confusions of the poet for his more famous father (such as Ibn al-Qifti's attribution) may account for that, as well as the apparent lack of supplementary content contributed by the Poem itself. We do find a critical assessment in the 1318 copy of the Poem, which includes a unique compendium of commentaries.<sup>58</sup> Following each constellation verse, the anonymous compiler compares how Ibn al-Sufi's account diverges from or agrees with a series of earlier and later astronomers. Each authority's quotation commences with the phrase *qāla X*, written in red *naskh* script. In order of frequency, these are: al-Shaykh (identifiable from the textual content as al-Sufi *Père* [d. 986, Baghdad]), Ibn Faris (unidentified), Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abi Bishr Baha' al-Din al-Kharaqi (d. 1138–39, Merv), Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Sura b. al-Salah (d. ca. 1145–53, Damascus), and Ptolemy (second century, Alexandria). This does not necessarily prove that al-Kharaqi and Ibn al-Salah knew and reacted to Ibn al-Sufi's Poem, but, in 1318 at the latest, a fourth party analyzed the Poem's contents against other versions.<sup>59</sup>

### III. THE RIZA 'ABBASI LIBRARY MANUSCRIPT

Having examined the authorship, patronage, and content of the original text, we can jump forward to our second chronological layer to see how posterity treated the Poem on the Stars. The earliest known copy, dated 519 (1125), was transcribed in Baghdad. In that manuscript, Ibn al-Sufi's Poem literally comes second, appearing as an appendix to a copy of al-Sufi's treatise *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* (fig. 2).<sup>60</sup> The earliest independent copy is the manuscript in the Riza 'Abbasi Library, dated 554 (1159–60) according to the copyist's note inserted above the text incipit, and signed Abu'l-Husayn b. 'Ali b. Ahmad.<sup>61</sup> The colophon on folio 37v is complete, but offers no information about provenance, patronage, or date.<sup>62</sup> As stated above, the poem's title is not consistently used among the many copies of the text, and three different versions are offered within this manuscript alone: a gold shamsa medallion on folio 1r

has *Risālat al-Šūfī fi'l-kawākib*, then the preface prefers *Maqāl li-Abī 'Alī najl Abī'l-Husayn al-Šūfī*, and finally the colophon gives *Qašīdat al-falakiyya*. The manuscript consists of thirty-seven folios, with eleven lines per page, clearly written in a dark brown *naskh* script. Verse titles are written in a larger dark red *naskh*. The folios measure approximately 22.5 x 15 cm and are weathered along the edges; the brown leather binding with blind-tooled decoration appears to be original to the codex. Folios 1v–2r feature a double-page frontispiece of two author portraits (discussed further below), which is unique to this copy of Ibn al-Sufi's Poem (fig. 9). Aside from these two paintings, there are forty-one illustrations—very fine, black line drawings of the constellation figures, with the constituent stars marked as gold circles outlined in black. The external stars, which lie beyond the outline of the constellation figure, are painted as red circles. Light red underdrawing is frequently discernible around the figures. Approximately five folios are missing, which included entries and images for the constellations Perseus, Capricorn, Aquarius, Canis Major, and Canis Minor.

The illustrations and margins bear the evident intervention of a rather keen later owner, which only confirms the overbearing impact of the parent treatise upon Ibn al-Sufi's Poem: to the original images have been added star numbers (using the alphanumeric system of *abjad*) and labels, corresponding to data in al-Sufi's text—not the Poem itself. Additional information is inserted throughout: chapter numbers are placed (as ciphers, not in *abjad*) above the Poem's verse titles, and long text entries in Persian fill the margins by the illustrations, systematically describing al-Sufi's account of star magnitudes, which Ibn al-Sufi had originally omitted. Neat new red frames have also been set around all text blocks. A late-nineteenth-century copy of the Poem, also in Tehran, is a near-perfect facsimile of this same manuscript, which reproduces the later owner's additions, showing that the earlier manuscript was in Iran at that date.<sup>63</sup>

The images are fluently drawn in refined detail, depicting human figures, animals, birds, mythical creatures, and inanimate objects one by one. The taxonomic format of showing the single specimen against a blank paper folio background is a strong feature of twelfth- and thirteenth-century scientific illustration, used also



Fig. 11a. Detail of the constellation Serpentarius. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fi'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 15r. (Photo: Moya Carey)



Fig. 11b. Detail of the constellation Centaurus. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fi'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 35v. (Photo: Moya Carey)



Fig. 11c. Detail of purple betony plant with two figures. Dioscorides, *Kitāb al-Ḥashā'ish fī ḥayūla 'ilāj al-ṭibb*, or *Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-ashjār*, also known as *De Materia Medica*, dated 621 (1224). Folio from a dispersed ms. Harvard Art Museum, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Cambridge, Mass. Bequest of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960. (Photo: Allan Macintyre, President and Fellows of Harvard College)

in works of natural history, automata mechanics, pharmacy, and toxicology. Thus presented as a microform of information, the specimen—in this case, a selective map of a small part of the night sky—lacks environmental context here, such as relative scale, celestial location, or orientation to other constellations; but its isolation also

allows for scrutiny without distraction, which is arguably more important on an initial level of acquaintance.

Students of this period will recognize that the figural style mastered throughout this twelfth-century manuscript is an idiom found in a number of other illustrated books. The Seljuk *sharbūsh* (a fur-trimmed cap with a triangular front) is worn by the constellations Serpentarius and Centaurus, and is also frequently cited in other twelfth- and thirteenth-century manuscripts (figs. 11[a–c]).<sup>64</sup> The most remarkable stylistic similarity is with the illustrations of two early-thirteenth-century manuscripts: the 1224 dispersed Dioscorides folios (figs. 11[c] and 12)<sup>65</sup> and the undated *Kitāb Na't al-ḥayawān* (Treatise on the Characteristics of Animals) in the British Library.<sup>66</sup> Animals, human figures, furniture, and even garment folds, fabric patterns, and palette are almost identical, particularly with the paintings of the latter manuscript,<sup>67</sup> so much so that the attributed date of around 1220 for the (undated) bestiary might now come under question. At the very least, if the Poem's 1159–60 dating may be trusted as secure, the potential longevity of a figural style (between 1159 and 1224) must inform our understanding of artists' training and conservatism in this period. Certainly the 1159–60 Poem's illustrations are not stylistic anomalies for their given date, given that there are identifiable parallels with several contemporary dated manuscripts. The light garment folds with pale red underpainting recall the 1131 al-Sufi illustrations, which employ subtle blue and red highlights (fig. 13).<sup>68</sup> In spite of their zoological variety, the Poem's animal constellations share a distinctive facial type, in that a curling line encircles the cheek and passes around the eye, which usually “hangs” from the line itself (figs. 6–8, 14, and 15). This type is produced throughout the magnificent paintings of the British Library bestiary and the 1224 Dioscorides,<sup>69</sup> but also features in the 1171 Mosul al-Sufi manuscript (fig. 16).

#### IV. A DOUBLE AUTHOR PORTRAIT: FATHER AND SON

The first set of pages of the Riza 'Abbasi manuscript reveals a magnificent double frontispiece, not found in any other copy of this text (fig. 9). Here Ibn al-Sufi's



Fig. 12. Doctor and assistant preparing a poultice. Dioscorides, *Kitāb al-Hashā'ish fī hayūla 'ilāj al-ṭibb*, or *Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-ashjār*, also known as *De Materia Medica*, dated 621 (1224). Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F1932.20. (Photo: courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art)



Fig. 13. The constellation Auriga. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, dated 525 (1131). Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, Ms. A. 3493, fol. 33v. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum)

parental legacy is rather more declared, in two facing author portraits. On each side, a scholar sits comfortably on a majestic high-backed couch covered with textiles and cushions, each man framed under an archway hung

with knotted curtains. On the left-hand page, an older man in profile reads from a book, while the younger man on the right-hand page raises an astrolabe, about to take a reading. The pair can only be the father and son whose combined scholarship delivered this text, al-Sufi and Ibn al-Sufi.

Like many an academic prologue, this double frontispiece acknowledges the author's scholarly debts and simultaneously credits his own achievement. The author portrait was a late classical genre that was retained and developed in the Islamic world, most successfully during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, after which the ruler portrait increasingly stole the limelight.<sup>70</sup> The portrait was typically located at the start of a book, either immediately in the frontispiece paintings, or within a few pages, as a visual preface. The scholar appears in some formal magnificence, seated upon a throne and holding a copy of his book, consistently posed within an architectonic frame. The compositional convention echoes late classical portraits of authors and consuls, and Gospel portraits of the Evangelists.<sup>71</sup>

In the case of compendia, multiple authors were depicted, often organized in a number of complex



Fig. 14. The constellation Hydra. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 34r. (Photo: Moya Carey)

arrangements: in a set of bust portraits laid out in a matrix grid together, in the mid-thirteenth-century Vienna *Kitāb al-Diryāq* (Book of Antidotes);<sup>72</sup> in a group portrait showing the different scholars in conference together, as in the 1287 *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'* (Treatises of the Brethren of Purity);<sup>73</sup> or in a strange hybrid of both, as in the double frontispiece and finispiece paintings in the mid-thirteenth-century *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsīn al-kalim* (Choice Judgments and Finest Sayings), in which perching scholars occupy the cavities around a decorative lattice and converse across the divide.<sup>74</sup> Such implied assemblies may be anachronistic, referring to intellectual relationships that span generations, such as the nine doctors in *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, whose successive scholarship contributes to the development of theriac as a universal antidote. The double portrait in Ibn al-Sufi's Poem belongs to this category of multiple, intergenerational acknowledgement, and makes a strong statement about the single major influence on the author's work.<sup>75</sup>

Celebrating and commemorating intellectual achievement, the genre of author portraiture did not endure.

Robert Hillenbrand has observed that the extraordinary *Rasā'il ikhwān al-ṣafā'* group scene of 1287 is the last double frontispiece to honor only the scholar: the author portrait was overtaken in the late thirteenth century by the princely frontispiece, which was to enjoy a long history in Persian painting.<sup>76</sup> Mamluk painting also embraced ruler portraiture in frontispiece scenes: the ca. 1350 *Sulwān al-muṭā' fī 'udwān al-atbā'* (The Comforts of Rulers during the Hostility of Subjects) manuscript opens with a courtly scene of an enthroned prince approached by three deferential falconers prepared for a day of sport,<sup>77</sup> and the 1334 *Maqāmāt* commences with a portrait of a ruler surrounded by a bevy of attendants and entertainers.<sup>78</sup> Even during the thirteenth century, this exchange of pen for crown was in progress, although it must be noted that there are very few proven princely commissions among extant illustrated manuscripts of this early period.<sup>79</sup> Colophon information indicates production for private patrons (albeit obviously those with the means for luxury illustrated manuscripts) far more often than for ambitious rulers, but often gives no indication of any patron.<sup>80</sup> Another occluding factor is



Fig. 15. The constellation Pegasus. Ibn al-Sufi, *Urjūza fī'l-kawākib*, dated 554 (1159–60). Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, fol. 18v. (Photo: Moya Carey)

the physical vulnerability of the initial and final folios of a codex: colophon statements and frontispiece paintings may long be lost, which might have revealed much more about the production and patronage of illustrated books in this period.<sup>81</sup> Where a royal sponsor is indeed responsible for the new manuscript, the presence of a princely patron certainly intrudes on the traditional author portrait format, by the insertion of the ruler's portrait as a formal enthronement scene.<sup>82</sup> These royal figures are not the original historical sponsors of the text's composition, but the benevolent financiers of the current prestigious copy.

There are two chronological levels of production, and therefore two options for due acknowledgement in front-matter portraiture: original authorial genesis and the reality of current production.<sup>83</sup> When a manuscript does not abound in paintings, these two levels conflict—and the author portrait suffers first. In the ca. 1217–19 multivolume set of *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, the original and renowned compiler, Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani (d. 967), is completely absent from the surviving

frontispiece paintings, while the contemporary sponsor, Badr al-Din Lu'lu', the Atabeg ruler of Mosul (d. 1259), takes center stage.<sup>84</sup> In many cases, the genesis of the work is discussed and described in the preface text, where due credit is noted for the original historical partnership of an enlightened patron and the scholar resident at his court. Major literary manuscripts might also illustrate these special relationships in the course of the introduction, such as sixth-century Burzoy with Khusrau Anushirwan for *Kalīla wa Dimna*,<sup>85</sup> and eleventh-century Firdausi with Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna for the *Shāhnāma* (Book of Kings). This type of historical ruler portrait remains an acknowledgement of the text's composition, and places the original patron and scholar together in the same painting. Portraits of the *current* patron focus instead on the environment of the new copy, in which the classic text is being enjoyed and treasured anew. These portraits tend to vie with visual acknowledgements for the original author, eventually replacing them altogether. Historical and intellectual achievement is outshone by the financial lights of the



Fig. 16. The constellation Pegasus. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi, *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, dated 566 (1171). Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Hunt 212, fol. 68r. (Photo: courtesy of the Bodleian Library)

material world and the glamour of contemporary political power. Incidentally, although prefaces usually finish with a short concluding prayer, spiritual credit is almost never acknowledged in visual terms, the sole exception being the group portrait of the Prophet Muhammad with his Companions, in the 1299 *Marzubānnāma* (Book of the Margrave).<sup>86</sup>

Produced then with no apparent fanfare, written or visual, for a contemporary patron, the 1159–60 copy of Ibn al-Sufi's Poem nonetheless commences with its dramatic double frontispiece. The pair do not portray a princely patron with his resident scholar, as was suggested by Mahboubian and 'Azzada, who both identified 'Adud al-Dawla with 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi (thereby dismissing the poet Ibn al-Sufi from enqui-

ries altogether),<sup>87</sup> and by Contadini, who proposes the poet Ibn al-Sufi with his Buyid patron.<sup>88</sup> Neither sitter has headgear or attributes related to contemporary political authority, such as a Seljuk *sharbūsh*, a drinking cup, or armed attendants; rather, they are two scholars, one holding a book, the other an astrolabe, sitting face to face.<sup>89</sup> Although the pair may appear to receive equal credit for the verses that follow, they are portrayed according to a classic thirteenth-century iconographic convention wherein a young student attends the words of an elderly learned sage. The student-assistant repeatedly depicted in the dispersed 1224 Dioscorides folios follows the same personal appearance: a younger man in three-quarter face, turbaned with black beard and long hair, typically following directions or standing

at attention, while his teacher, usually in profile, with a white beard and either a turban or a hooded cloak, delivers instructions or generally holds forth from a reclining position (fig. 12). The pairing also echoes the mismatched duo in the picaresque adventures told in al-Hariri's *Maqāmāt*: throughout the illustrations of the 1237 al-Wasiti manuscript, for example, wily Abu Zayd has a white beard, while the earnest al-Harith is younger, dark-haired and, of course, rather greener, in the naive sense of the word. Ibn al-Sufi would certainly have learned much from his father, perhaps working under him at the observatory in Shiraz, and of course by studying his treatise.

Such juxtapositions illustrate the process of transmitting knowledge down the intellectual hierarchy from master to apprentice. Still in the shade of his father's great work, Ibn al-Sufi's Poem offers an abbreviated version of the treatise that was such a milestone in the history of uranometry. In this double portrait, we can read that seniority and precedence of the famous astronomer over the lesser-known poet, as well as the implied age difference between father and son. Their staged encounter recalls another form of textual transmission: knowledge was also passed down on a more literal basis when the author might dictate his book to a student, and then listen to the student reading back the text, before conferring his *ijāza* (literally "permission," a formal attestation of master status) indicating that the text was sound.<sup>90</sup> The father here surveys the son's project with a similar air of authority, his presence implying a degree of approval. The personal iconography implies that the son's scholarship is very much secondary to that of the father. And yet, Ibn al-Sufi's combination of mnemonic systems both visual and verbal gives the Poem a didactic force that the treatise did not previously offer. These portrait poses may therefore be interpreted as mutually challenging in intellectual terms: the younger man holds an astrolabe up to eye-level, as though putting it to use, demonstrating—even protesting—his proficiency as a scientist and as an author of valuable material. In answer, the older scholar on the left simply holds up a copy of his classic treatise.

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## NOTES

1. I first came across references to this poem while researching the early copies of al-Sufi's illustrated Book on the Constellations. See Moya Carey, "Painting the Stars in a Century of Change: A Thirteenth-Century Copy of al-Şūfi's *Treatise on the Fixed Stars*, British Library Or. 5323" (PhD diss., SOAS, University of London, 2001). In two instances, the Poem was actually inserted as an appendix to the treatise, i.e., within the same manuscript, bringing itself directly to my attention, and characterizing a relationship wherein the treatise overshadowed the far shorter poem. The Poem is also placed as an appendix in the 1954 Arabic edition of al-Sufi's treatise. I noted it briefly in my thesis and have since worked on a fuller study of this little-known text and its history of illustration. This article therefore builds upon papers delivered between 2004 and 2007 at: an internal staff research seminar (Dept. of Art & Archaeology, SOAS), a meeting of Maps & Society (Warburg Institute), a conference entitled "The Image of Maps: Maps of the Imagination" (Oxford University), the HIAA Majlis (NYU), and the Islamic Art Circle (SOAS). I am very grateful to the Iran Heritage Foundation and to the Barakat Trust for generously supporting my travel research on this project.
2. A slightly different version, al-Shaykh al-Fāsil al-Faylaşūf Abū 'Alī b. Abī'l-Ḥusayn al-Şūfi, is used in a 1318 (718) copy of the Poem: Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lâleli 2698, fols. 1r, 5v (fig. 3).
3. For the array of alternative identities that has been volunteered for this otherwise obscure patron, see n. 30 below.
4. For al-Şūfi, see Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ta'riḫ al-ḥukamā*, ed. Julius Lippert (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), 226; Anton Hauber, "Zur Verbreitung des Astronomen Sufi," *Der Islam* 8 (1918): 48–54; S. M. Stern, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Umar al-Şūfi, Abu 'l-Ḥusayn"; Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur* (henceforth *GAL*) (Leiden: Brill, 1937–49), SI:398; Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (henceforth *GAS*) (Leiden: Brill, 1967–), 5:309–10; 6:212–15; 7:168. For *Kitāb Şuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*, see 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Umar al-Şūfi, *Description des étoiles fixes composée au milieu du dixième siècle de notre ère, par l'astronome persan Abd-al-Rahman al-Sufi*, ed. and trans. Hans C. F. C. Schjellerup (St. Petersburg: Commissionaires de l'Académie impériale des sciences, 1874); 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Umar al-Şūfi, *Şuwaru'l-kawākib or Uranometry (Description of the 48 Constellations): Arabic Text, with the Urjūza of Ibnu's-Şūfi, Edited from the Oldest Extant Mss. and Based on the Ulugh Beg Royal Codex*, ed. M. Nizamu'd-Din (Hyderabad-Deccan: Osmania Oriental Publications Bureau, 1954); John Upton, "A Manuscript of the Book of the Fixed Stars by Abd Ar-Rahman As-Sufi," *Metropolitan Museum Studies* 4 (1933): 179–97; Emmy Wellesz, "An Early Al-Şūfi Manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford: A Study in Islamic Constellation Images," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959): 1–26; Emmy Wellesz,

- “Islamic Astronomical Imagery: Classical and Bedouin Tradition,” *Oriental Art* 10, 2 (Summer 1964): 84–91; Paul Kunitzsch, “The Astronomer Abū’l-Ḥusayn al-Ṣūfī and His Book on the Constellations,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften* 3 (1986): 56–81; Emilie Savage-Smith, “Celestial Mapping,” in *History of Cartography*, vol. 2, bk. 1, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, ed. J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 12–70; Julian Raby, “Saljuq-Style Painting and a Fragmentary Copy of al-Ṣūfī’s ‘Fixed Stars,’” in *The Art of the Saljūqs in Iran and Anatolia: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Edinburgh in 1982*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1994), 106–17; Sophie Makariou and Anna Caiozzo, “La tradition des étoiles fixes sur les globes célestes et dans les manuscrits illustrés d’al-Ṣūfī,” in *L’apparence des cieux: Astronomie et astrologie en terre d’Islam*, ed. Sophie Makariou (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1998), 97–116; Carey, “Painting the Stars”; Moya Carey, “Mapping the Mnemonic: A Late Thirteenth-Century Copy of al-Ṣūfī’s *Book of the Constellations*,” in *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, ed. Anna Contadini (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 65–72.
5. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Marsh 144, dated 400 (1009–10). First analyzed by Wellesz, “An Early Al-Ṣūfī Manuscript”; Barbara Brend, “A Reconsideration of the Book of Constellations of 400/1009–10 in the Bodleian Library,” in Hillenbrand, *Art of the Saljūqs*, 89–95; facsimile edition: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn ‘Umar al-Ṣūfī, *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib* (The Book of Constellations), ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1986).
  6. See Houari Touati, *L’armoire à sagesse: Bibliothèques et collections en Islam* (Paris: Aubier, 2003), reviewed by Moya Carey in *Journal of the History of Collections* 20 (2008): 305–6. See also Hoffman’s review of the secondary evidence, where she notes that “[t]he discrepancy between the accounts of significant library holdings and the paltry surviving material evidence may simply speak to the enormity of the decimation that befell the holdings of all of these libraries.” Eva R. Hoffman, “The Beginnings of the Illustrated Arabic Book: An Intersection between Art and Scholarship,” *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 37. Bloom discusses the earliest fragments and manuscripts in detail, but concludes differently, noting that “this evidence does not amount to very much, let alone sufficient evidence for the existence of a coherent tradition of manuscript illustration in the first four centuries of Islam.” Jonathan M. Bloom, “The Introduction of Paper to the Islamic Lands and the Development of the Illustrated Manuscript,” *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 20.
  7. For the numerous Fatimid folio fragments, see Ernst Grube “Part I: Fostat Fragments,” in *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, ed. B. W. Robinson, Keir Collection (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 25–110. Aside from these, one may also cite the 1037 *Geography* by Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Khwārizmī (d. ca. 846) (Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Cod. 4247, reproduced in Gerald Tibbetts, “The Beginnings of a Cartographic Tradition,” in Harley and Woodward, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, figs. 4.8 and 4.9; pls. 4 and 5), and the 1083 *De Materia Medica* (*Kitāb al-Ḥashā’ish fī ḥayūla ‘ilāj al-ṭibb*, or *Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-ashjār*) by Dioscorides (Leiden University Library, Ms. Cod. Or. 289, reproduced in M. M. Sadek, *The Arabic Materia Medica of Dioscorides* [Quebec: Sphinx, 1983]).
  8. See Wellesz, “An Early Al-Ṣūfī Manuscript”; Carey, “Painting the Stars.”
  9. The colophon is reproduced in the 1986 facsimile of the manuscript (see n. 5 above). The phrase *katabahu wa ṣawwarahu* indicates at the least that having copied out the entire text, Ibn al-Sufi plotted, marked, and labelled the stars’ points for each constellation-image. It may even mean that he drew the figures, too. See Carey, “Painting the Stars,” chap. 4, “Recent Re-Assessment of Marsh 144.”
  10. I have assembled a provisional catalogue of these eighteen: Bologna, Bologna University Library, Ms. no. 2953 (dated 956 [1549], unillustrated); Cairo, Dar al-kutub 417/2, Ms. Miqat 163, and Miqat 831/1 (all undated); Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms. MI-02-98-90 (dated 519 [1125], 4 illustrations only, appendix to al-Sufi’s illustrated treatise); Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Ms. Orient. A.1398 (undated, unillustrated); Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lâleli 2698 (dated 718 [1318], unillustrated); London, Khalili Collection, Ms. 730 (undated, fully illustrated); London, SOAS Library, Ms. 45806/6 (undated, unillustrated); Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Ms. 870 (undated, fully illustrated); Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. Ar. 2561/4 (undated); Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Library, Garrett Collection, Ms. 356 (undated, unillustrated) and Ms. 211 (dated 1204 [1789–90], unillustrated); Tehran, Riza ‘Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570 (dated 554 [1159–60], fully illustrated); Tehran, Majles Library, Ms. 198 (dated 1312 [1895], fully illustrated); Tunis, Zaituna, Ms. 415 (undated); Vatican Library, Ms. Rossiani 1033/2 (dated 621 [1224], unillustrated; appendix to al-Sufi’s illustrated treatise); and a copy sold at Christie’s in October 1990 (dated 1224 [1809]). See Brockelmann, *GAL*, SI:863 no. 4a; Sezgin, *GAS*, 6:232; Heinrich Suter, *Die Mathematiker und Astronomen der Araber und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900), no. 138.
  11. A copyist would include a caption and space for a picture, either because a painter was expected subsequently to complete the reproduction-work from an illustrated exemplar manuscript (and never did), or perhaps because the copyist’s exemplar was similarly incomplete. Some of the Poem’s copies (such as the 1125 Doha manuscript) leave the caption but no space for a picture—which suggests the latter.
  12. Tehran, Riza ‘Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570, reproduced in *Treasures of Persian Art After Islam: The Mahboubian Collection* (exhibition catalogue) (New York: Plantin Press, 1970), no. 913: frontispieces and the constellations Andromeda, Aries, and Gemini; N. Pourjavady, ed., *The Splendour of Iran*, 3 vols. (London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 2001), 3:267–73,

- frontispieces and the constellations Cassiopeia, Orion, Centaurus, Lupus, and Ara; Qurbān ‘Azizzāda, “Urjūza yā risālat al-Ṣūfī fi’l-Kawākib,” *Mūzihhā* 10, 31 (2002): 12–14, frontispieces and the constellation Pegasus; Anna Contadini, “A Question in Arab Painting: The Ibn al-Ṣūfī Manuscript in Tehran and its Art-Historical Connections,” *Muqarnas* 23 (2006): figs.1–4, 12, 14, 16, 18–20, 22, 24, 26, and 27, frontispieces, and the constellations Ursa Minor, Cygnus, Cassiopeia, Delphinus, Pegasus, Andromeda, Leo, Sagittarius, Pisces, Centaurus, and Lupus; Robert Hillenbrand, “The Schefer Ḥarīrī: A Study in Islamic Frontispiece Design,” in Contadini, *Arab Painting*, 117–34; fig. 3, frontispieces. I am very grateful to Mrs. Ahmadi, then director of the Riza ‘Abbasi Library, for allowing me to study and photograph the manuscript; the Iran Heritage Foundation for sponsoring my research trip; and Mr. Zahedi, current director of the Riza ‘Abbasi Library, for granting me permission to publish my photographs.
13. Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1962). The term is reviewed by Anna Contadini, “The Manuscript as a Whole,” and Oleg Grabar, “What does ‘Arab Painting’ Mean?” the first two articles of Contadini, *Arab Painting*, 3–16 and 17–24 respectively.
  14. Bloom has described this as an explosion: see Bloom, “Introduction of Paper,” 17.
  15. As well as *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* by al-Ṣūfī (d. 986) and *Urjūza fi’l-kawākib* by Ibn al-Ṣūfī (early eleventh century), this eleventh-to-thirteenth-century illustrated manuscript group includes numerous copies of the following titles: *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122), which draws strongly from al-Hamadhānī (d. 1008); *Kitāb al-Ḥashā’ish fi ḥayūla ‘ilāj al-ṭibb*, or *Kitāb Khawāṣṣ al-ashjār*, also known as *De Materia Medica* by Dioscorides (first century A.D.), translated and possibly also appended by Hunayn b. Ishaq (d. 893); *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, attributable to a pseudo-Galenic tenth-century Arabic source; *Kitāb Manāfi’ al-ḥayawān*, which combines Aristotelean sources with Ibn Bakhtishū’ (eleventh century); *Kalīla wa Dimna* by Ibn al-Muqaffa’ (d. 756); and different geographical treatises by al-Istakhri (tenth century), al-Khwārazmī (ninth century), and others. There are also single illustrated copies of: *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (in one twenty-volume set) by Abū’l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967); *Mukhtār al-ḥikam wa-maḥāsin al-kalim* by al-Mubashshir (eleventh century); *Rasā’il ikhwān al-ṣafā’*, compiled by the Brethren of Purity group (tenth century); and *Warqa wa Gulshāh* by ‘Ayyūqī (early eleventh century).
  16. Pancaroğlu discusses how the transmission of knowledge is a key theme of the painting cycles in the two Pseudo-Galenic toxicology manuscripts, epitomizing “the cultural endorsement of learning in the late Seljuk period.” Oya Pancaroğlu, “Socializing Medicine: Illustrations of the *Kitāb al-Diryāq*,” *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 155.
  17. Carey, “Painting the Stars,” Appendix 1, provides a provisional catalogue of extant copies, listing seventy-one manuscripts.
  18. Carey, “Painting the Stars,” chap. 2, includes a discussion of al-Sufi’s biography and bibliography. The astronomer wrote treatises on the construction and use of the astrolabe and the celestial globe, and it was reported that in 435 (1043–44) there was a silver celestial globe made by al-Sufi for ‘Adud al-Dawla, among the holdings of the Fatimid library; see Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ta’rikh*, 440.
  19. The preface of al-Sufi’s Constellations treatise describes travelling with Ibn al-‘Amid between 946 and 949; see Michel Caussin, “Les constellations d’Aboulhossain Abderrahman Es-Soufi,” *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi et autres bibliothèques* 12 (1831): 244–45, 251. Another instance of collaboration between the two occurred sometime before Ibn al-‘Amid’s death in 970: al-Sufi composed a treatise on the astrolabe dedicated to Sharaf al-Dawla (d. 989, son of ‘Adud al-Dawla), the preface to which was written by Ibn al-‘Amid. See E. S. Kennedy and Marcel Destombes, *Introduction to Kitāb al-‘Amal bi’l-aṣṭurlāb* (Hyderabad: Osmania Oriental Publications, 1962), reprinted in *Studies in the Islamic Exact Sciences* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1983), 405–15. For a brief biography of Ibn al-‘Amid, see Mafizullah Kabir, “Uṣṭād Abū’l-Faḍl ibn al-‘Amīd,” *Islamic Culture* 35 (1961): 8–11. For a discussion of his patronage of astronomy, see Aydın Sayılı, *The Observatory in Islam and Its Place in the General History of the Observatory* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1960), 103–4.
  20. As al-Sufi names the *ḥalqat al-‘Aḍudiyya* in his Constellations treatise (964), the observational activity may have begun before the major projects of 969 to 972. According to al-Biruni, the other participating astronomers included Abu Sahl Wayjan b. Rustam al-Quhi, Ahmad b. Muhammad ‘Abd al-Jalil al-Sijzi, Nazif b. Yumn al-Yunani, and Abū’l-Qasim Ghulam Zuhā (“the Slave of Saturn”). Sayılı, *Observatory in Islam*, 106.
  21. For a brief biography of ‘Adud al-Dawla, see Joel L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: The Cultural Revival during the Buyid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 272–85.
  22. Ibn al-Qiftī, *Ta’rikh*, 226.
  23. Mafizullah Kabir, *The Buwayhid Dynasty of Baghdad (334/946–447/1055)* (Calcutta: Iran Society, 1964), 29.
  24. “In the upper part [of the palace] was the library, a compartment by itself. There is a manager, a librarian and a supervisor from among the people of good repute in the town...It consists of a long oblong gallery in a large hall, with rooms on every side. He attached to all the walls of the gallery and of the rooms bookcases six feet in height and three cubits long, made of wood, and decorated. On the bookcases are doors that open from above, and the books are arranged on shelves. For every subject there are bookcases, and catalogues in which are the names of the books; and noone has access to them except he be a person of distinction.” Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muqaddasī, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions: A Translation of Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fi ma’rifat al-aqālīm*, trans. Basil A. Collins (Garnet, 1994), 395. The library gradually fell into neglect,

- and the calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwab complained to the later Buyid ruler Baha' al-Dawla that a precious Qur'an copied by Ibn Muqla had been allowed to fall apart. Yāqūt's *Irshād*, as quoted in Olga Pinto, "The Libraries of the Arabs during the Time of the Abbasides," *Islamic Culture* (April 1929): 235.
25. One such private library was the *Dār al-'ilm bayn al-sūrayn* in western Baghdad, founded in 993 by the Buyid wazir Abu Nasr Shapur b. Ardashir (d. 1025). This short-lived institution reportedly held over ten thousand volumes, provided scholarly stipends, and hosted symposia; it was burned down in 1059 following the Seljuk conquest of the city. See Moya Carey, "Shapur's House of Science: The *Dar al-'ilm bayn al-surayn* library in Buyid Baghdad," forthcoming.
  26. The cultural capital of books and libraries in Abbasid times is described and analyzed in Touati, *L'armoire à sagesse*.
  27. Reproduced in Sabiha al-Khemir, ed., *From Córdoba to Samarkand: Masterpieces from the New Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar* (exhibition catalogue) (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 2006), 159, 161.
  28. Fakhr al-Dawla was also granted the additional title of *falak al-umma* by Caliph al-Ta'i.
  29. Ibn al-Qifti, *Ta'rikh*, 226. The Poem is not mentioned in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadim, compiled in Baghdad, which is contemporary with al-Sufi, and therefore slightly too early to record the output of the next generation.
  30. The Fatimid wazir al-Malik al-Afdal Shahinshah (d. 1121–22) served Caliph al-Amir; the Ayyubid Nur al-Dawla Shahinshah (d. 1148–49), brother of Salah al-Din; and the Artuqid Fakhr al-Din Qara Arslan of Hisn Kayfa (r. 1144–74). See Suter, *Mathematiker und Astronomen*, 62–62, 212; Brockelmann, *GAL*, SI:863; Manfred Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Ragazpoesie* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966), 57.
  31. Needless to say, the occurrence of the name Abu 'Ali in two places is hardly compelling.
  32. Wellesz, "An Early Al-Šūfi Manuscript," 1 n. 2.
  33. This translation and further passages below are based on my collation of several manuscripts: the Gotha, Munich, Doha, and Tehran copies. Three copies of the Poem (Tehran Riza 'Abbasi, London Khalili, and Gotha) use the word *shaykhnā*, meaning "my master," instead of *wālidnā*.
  34. I think it less convincing to propose an earlier member of the Buyid family, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali Fakhr al-Dawla (d. 997), who intermittently ruled the dynasty's Jibal branch from Rayy, and dared assume the title *shāhinshāh* only following the death of his half-brother, 'Adud al-Dawla, in 983.
  35. First used by Rukn al-Dawla on a gold portrait medallion in 351 (962–63), the title's deliberate evocation of Iranian imperial glory, Sasanian-style, has been analyzed by numerous Buyid historians and numismatists: see Wilferd Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title *Shāhānshāh* by the Buyids and 'The Reign of the Daylam (*Dawlat al-Daylam*)'," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 28 (1969): 84–108, 168–83; Lutz Richter-Bernburg, "Amīr-Malik-Shāhānshāh: 'Aḍud ad-Dawla's Titulature Re-Examined," *Iran* 18 (1980): 83–102; Luke Treadwell, "Shāhānshāh and al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad: The Legitimation of Power in Samanid and Buyid Iran," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Josef W. Meri (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 318–37. I am very grateful to Michael Bates for discussing the Buyid medallions with me (personal communication, November 2003), and also to Luke Treadwell for discussing the Buyid titulature of the Poem's patron.
  36. With territory distributed among jostling brothers and nephews, the death of the paramount amir was perennially followed by a power struggle and protracted negotiations, sometimes arbitrated by the caliph and concluded with the granting of further titles.
  37. Paris, private collection, reproduced in Luke Treadwell, *Buyid Coinage: A Die Corpus (322–445 A.H.)* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2001), 155. See also George C. Miles, *The Numismatic History of Rayy* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1938), 193–94 no. 222A, pl. VI.
  38. Miles, *Numismatic History*, 194, citing Ibn al-Athir, provides these further details: following the Ghaznavid sack, Abu Kalijar made an unsuccessful attempt to retake Rayy in 421 (1030), fought with the Ghuzz against Hamadhan in 430 (1038–39), and seized Amid from Tughril Beg's guard in 439 (1047–48). Miles notes that this coin "is material for a monograph in itself," and also that the titles *shāhinshāh*, *fakhr dīn Allāh*, and *sharaf al-mulūk* are otherwise unrecorded for Abu Kalijar.
  39. Tehran, Malek Library, Ms. 5924, as noted in Sezgin, *GAS*, 7:157, where the colophon date is read as 371 (981–82). The codex therefore remains extremely close to Rayy, its place of production over a thousand years earlier. I would like to thank Saeid Khoddari Naini of the Malek Library for his kind help.
  40. I would like to thank Tim Stanley for discussing the Malek Ms. colophon, and comparing the scripts of these two manuscripts (from photographs) with me (October 2007). The sheer felicity of finding two early-eleventh-century manuscripts in the same hand might seem astonishing, but even though the manuscripts are of different size and presentation level, the two scripts bear comparison.
  41. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Marsh 144; see n. 5 above.
  42. Aside from the connection with the maturity of Fakhr Din Allah, the Poem's date of composition is not known. Contadini misquotes Sezgin, *GAS*, 6:232 by stating the composition date to be 371: Sezgin is actually discussing the date of the Ibn Daya commentary manuscript. See Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," n. 11.
  43. To date, little discussion of the Bodleian manuscript has dwelt upon its likely provenance, although Melikian-Chirvani attributed it firmly to "une tradition conservatrice purement iranienne issue du Tabarestan"; see Asadullah Souren Melikian Chirvani, "Trois manuscrits de l'Iran seldjoukide," *Arts Asiatiques* 16 (1967): 9.
  44. For discussion of Aratus's Arabic translations in the ninth century, and parallels with al-Sufi's treatise, see Savage-Smith, "Celestial Mapping," 15–16, and Carey, "Painting the Stars," 105–8,

45. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen zur Ragazpoesie*, 57–60.
46. Al-Sufi's Treatise tables note that he has added 12°42' to Ptolemy's celestial longitude values to make the star positions correct for the year 1276 in the Alexandrian calendar (964). As described below, the illustrations in the 1159–60 Riza 'Abbasi copy have been overwritten by a later owner, who collated the chapters against a copy of al-Sufi's treatise.
47. As mentioned above, the magnitudes were the fruit of al-Sufi's personal observations, and original research.
48. A simple explanation for this apparent preference may be that in copies of al-Sufi's treatise, the globe version tends to be illustrated first in the text-sequence, followed by the sky version: the artist referred to the first one encountered. The exceptions in the Riza 'Abbasi illustrations are Ursa Minor, Equuleus, Pegasus, Taurus, Scorpio, Cetus, Centaurus, Lupus, and Piscis Austrinus, which show the constellation as it would be seen in the sky.
49. Carey, "Mapping the Mnemonic," 65–66, discusses the role of memory in using al-Sufi's treatise.
50. Charles Burnett, "Learned Knowledge of Arabic Poetry, Rhymed Prose, and Didactic Verse from Petrus Alfonsi to Petrarch," in *Poetry and Philosophy in the Middle Ages: A Festschrift for Peter Dronke*, ed. John Marenbon (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 43.
51. Translation made based on collation of the Gotha, Munich, Istanbul, Tehran, and Doha texts.
52. That is, Ursa Minor, the smaller bear, described in the previous chapter.
53. That is, along the bear's tail.
54. The sequence of pairs, left by the gazelles' cloven hoofs, corresponds to the paws of the bear.
55. Exceptions to this are a group of extra-large Arabian constellations, including the female figure of *al-Thurayyā*, the Horse (near Andromeda), and the She-Camel (near Cassiopeia).
56. "Being already familiar with the stars by their Arabian identities, the student could therefore rely on such labels as useful pinpoints while getting to know the layout and locations of the classical constellations. The direct juxtaposition of the two systems is presented as a deliberate principle in the final lines of [al-Sufi's] preface: 'We will now discuss in detail the stars of each constellation, noting their numbers, proper names, and other names according to the astronomers and according to the Arabs, so that [learning about] one system [of nomenclature] may facilitate learning about the other.'" Carey, "Mapping the Mnemonic," 66. On an Ilkhanid brass celestial globe from around 1288, the two uranometric traditions are differentiated by the selective use of silver and gold inlay for classical nomenclature, and blind engraved script for the Arabian references; see Moya Carey, "The Gold and Silver Lining: Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mu'ayyad al-'Urdī's Inlaid Celestial Globe (ca. 1288) from the Ilkhanid Observatory at Marāgha," forthcoming.
57. Schjellerup, in al-Šūfī, *Description des étoiles*, 48–60.
58. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Lâleli 2698, dated 22 Rabi' II 718 (June 22, 1318), 66 folios, 13 lines per page, unillustrated. On the illuminated frontispiece (fig. 3), the patron is named as *Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad walad al-Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Sandqāfī* (?) (according to its colophon, copied from an exemplar collated against an autograph manuscript, and then corrected against another manuscript dated 519 [1125–26]). See also Max Krause, "Stambuler Handschriften islamischer Mathematiker," *Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Mathematik, Astronomie und Physik*, Abt. B 3 (1936): 464. I am very grateful to the Barakat Trust for supporting my research on this manuscript.
59. Ibn al-Salah did, however, strongly critique al-Sufi's star-catalogue from *Kitāb Šuwar al-kawākib al-thābita*. He condemned many previous scholars' examinations of Ptolemy's star positions as too uncritical. Analyzing potential causes of accidental textual distortion by copyists, he showed how the figures in Ptolemy's tables easily became obscured as the star catalogue was copied successively: certain letters were misread for one another, and ambiguities arose between coordinates for degrees and minutes. Al-Sufi had chosen to ignore many of Ptolemy's errors, and had also been inconsistent by depending on different available versions of the *Almagest*. See Carey, "Painting the Stars," 82–83, discussing Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Šalāh, *Zur Kritik der Koordinatenüberlieferung im Sternkatalog des Almagest (Qawl fī sabab al-khaṭā' wa'l-taṣḥīf al-'arīdayn fī jadāwil al-maqālatayn al-sābi'a wa'l-thāmina min Kitāb al-majastī wa taṣḥīḥ mā amkana taṣḥīḥuhu min dhālika)*, ed. and trans. Paul Kunitzsch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1975), 109–11.
60. Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, Ms. MI-02-98-90 (dated 519 [1125]), with only 4 illustrations (fig. 2), appended to al-Sufi's treatise, which is fully illustrated. Both texts are copied in the same hand, with altogether three colophon statements, detailing a lengthy process of transcription and collation. See B. Brend, R. Hillenbrand, and D. King, "A Previously Unrecorded Illustrated Manuscript of the Kitāb Šuwar al-Kawākib of Al-Šūfī, Copied and Illustrated in Baghdad in A.D. 1125," in Sotheby's (London) *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures*, 29th April 1998, 32–48.
61. Tehran, Riza 'Abbasi Library, Ms. M. 570 (dated 554 [1159–60]). Written in tiny script by the introductory bismillah, this note reads: *nasakha* [or *nusikha*] *minhu Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī b. Aḥmad fī sanat arba' wa-khamsīn wa-khams mi'a* ("Abū'l-Ḥusayn 'Alī b. Aḥmad copied it in the year 554"). There seems little justification to query this inscription. See Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," 50, fig. 3.
62. Reproduced in Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," fig. 27.
63. Tehran, Majles Library, Ms. 198 (dated 1312 [1895]), reproduced in Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," figs. 10 and 11; 39 folios measuring 24.8 x 16.3 cm, 11 lines per page. This codex reproduces the marginal glosses as well as the original text and its illustrations—except for the double frontispiece paintings. It does not carry over the additional labels and star-numbers made to the Riza 'Abbasi MS illus-

- trations. See also Yūsuf I'tišāmī, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans et arabes de la bibliothèque du Madjless* (Tehran: Majlis, 1933–), 1:109. I would like to thank Mr. Abhari and Mr. Shokrollahi at the Majles Library, for permission to study this and other manuscripts.
64. Note, for example, that the *sharbūsh* worn by Centaurus (fig. 11[b]) shows two spiked finials, while those of Serpentarius (fig. 11[a]) and the Seljuk officer depicted in the 1224 Dioscorides (fig. 11[c]) have a single finial.
  65. Codex, Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, Ms. Ahmet III 2147, and 31 dispersed folios listed in Ernst Grube, "Materialien zum Dioskurides Arabicus," in *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst: Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1959), 135–42. See also Rogers, "Dioscorides."
  66. London, British Library, Ms. Or. 2784, undated; reproduced and discussed in detail in Contadini "Question in Arab Painting," figs. 5, 6, 9, 13, 15, 17, 21, 23, 25.
  67. See Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," 54–60.
  68. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Ms. Ahmet III 3493 (dated 525 [1131]), reproduced in J. M. Rogers, Filiz Çağman, and Zeren Tanındı, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Carey, "Painting the Stars," pls. 10a, 14b, 19c, 52a, 70b.
  69. Animals are illustrated in the following folios from the 1224 manuscript: the gazelle fleeing a wolf behind the atraghalus plant (Rogers, "Dioscorides," fig. 5), the rabid dog (Freer 53.91r, reproduced in Dietrich Brandenburg, *Islamic Miniature Painting in Medical Manuscripts* [Basel: Roche, 1982], no. 27), the fish in the riverboat scene, the fox by the lablab plant (Brandenburg no. 38), the rabbit by the tombolos bitkisi plant (Brandenburg no. 36), and various birds and insects around plant specimens (reproduced in Brandenburg nos. 35, 37, 39, 40, 53; Rogers "Dioscorides," figs. 6, 8).
  70. See Eva R. Hoffman, "The Author Portrait in Thirteenth-Century Arabic Manuscripts: A New Islamic Context for a Late-Antique Tradition," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 6–20. Hoffman also discusses the role played by the biographical tradition in the development of both author and ruler portraiture in manuscript painting (p. 16). See also Touati, *L'armoire à sagesse*, 89–93.
  71. See Hoffman, "Author Portrait"; Hillenbrand, "Schefer Ḥarīrī."
  72. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F. 10, reproduced in Jaclynne Kerner, "Art in the Name of Science: The *Kitāb al-Diryāq* in Text and Image," in Contadini, *Arab Painting*, 25–39, fig. 2. In the 1199 Paris copy of *Kitāb al-Diryāq*, the doctors are portrayed in single vignettes, "pigeon-holed" in a sequence of illuminated tables over three consecutive folios.
  73. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ms. Esad Effendi 3638, reproduced in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 98–99. See also Robert Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted: The Double Frontispiece to the Epistles of the Sincere Brethren," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. Linda Komaroff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 183–212.
  74. Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, Ms. Ahmet III 3206, reproduced in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 75; Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted," figs. 24–26.
  75. Hillenbrand's close analysis of double frontispieces focuses on the 1237 *Maqāmāt* paintings; see Hillenbrand, "Schefer Ḥarīrī." He notes that double-page frontispiece portraits are relatively rare (118–19).
  76. Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted," 212, describes this as a "sea change in the subject matter of Islamic painting." See also M. S. Simpson, "In the Beginning: Frontispieces and Front Matter in Ilkhanid and Injuid Manuscripts," in Komaroff, *Beyond the Legacy*, 213–47.
  77. Undated codex (Doha, Museum of Islamic Art) and dispersed folios (Freer Collection, Washington D.C.; Aga Khan Collection, Toronto; al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait). The right-hand folio (1v) is in the collection of the Aga Khan, while the left-hand folio (2r) remains in the codex, now in Doha. Facsimile edition: A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, *Sulwān al-muṭā' fi 'udwān al-atbā': A Rediscovered Masterpiece of Arab Literature and Painting* (Kuwait: T. R. I., 1985).
  78. Vienna, Nationalbibliothek, Ms. A.F.9, dated Rajab 734 (March 1334), reproduced in Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, 148, 150–51.
  79. For example, in my provisional survey of extant manuscript copies of al-Ṣūfi's *Kitāb Ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* (Carey, "Painting the Stars," Appendix 1), only one out of the seventeen datable up to the fourteenth century is dedicated to a known patron, namely, Sayf al-Din Ghazi II, Zangid Atabeg of Mosul (r. 1169–80): Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hunt 212, dated 566 (1171).
  80. Referring to the spectacular 1237 *Maqāmāt* copied and illustrated by al-Wasiti, Hillenbrand, "Schefer Ḥarīrī," 132 suggests that the omission of a named patron indicates production for the open market.
  81. Hillenbrand, "Schefer Ḥarīrī," n. 7. Similarly, Pancaroğlu notes that the Vienna *Kitāb al-Diryāq* might originally have possessed a second frontispiece painting to complement the court scene, as two folios are missing from the start of the codex; see Pancaroğlu, "Socializing Medicine," 169.
  82. Pancaroğlu discusses this "assertion of royal affiliation with learning" as a deliberate attempt to magnify the ruler's status and image by appropriating scholarly prestige, and thus satisfy a model of ideal kingship; see Pancaroğlu, "Socializing Medicine," 168–69.
  83. Hillenbrand identifies the two 1237 portraits as the author al-Hariri opposite the prospective patron of the 1237 copy; see Hillenbrand, "Schefer Ḥarīrī," 132.
  84. There are six surviving codices from a twenty-volume set, each with one frontispiece painting: vol. 2 (Cairo National Library, Ms. Adab 579/2), vol. 4 (Cairo National Library, Ms. Adab 579/4), vol. 11 (Cairo National Library, Ms. Adab 579/11), vol. 17 (Istanbul Millet Library, Ms. Feyzullah Efendi 1566), vol. 19 (Istanbul Millet Library, Ms. Feyzullah Efendi 1565), and vol. 20 (Copenhagen Royal Library, Ms.

- Cod. Ar. 168). These are the only illustrations in the whole anthology.
85. See the two patron / scholar scenes depicting Bidpai with the Indian king, and Burzoy with Khusrau Anushirwan, in the early-thirteenth-century Paris copy (Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. Ar. 3465, fols. 14v, 23v). See also the double frontispiece of an early-thirteenth-century Persian translation of the fables (Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum, Ms. H. 363), which depicts the translator Nasr Allah Munshi delivering his book to his Ghaznavid patron, Bahram Shah; see Pancaroğlu, "Socializing Medicine," 162 and fig. 9a, b.
  86. Istanbul Archaeological Museum, no. 216, reproduced in M. S. Simpson, "The Role of Baghdad in the Formation of Persian Painting," in *Art et société dans le monde iranien*, ed. Ch. Adle, Bibliothèque Iranienne 26 (Paris, 1982), 100, 102, 104.
  87. Mahboubian, *Treasures of Persian Art*, n.p.; 'Azizzāda, "Urjūza," 13, also suggested Ptolemy with 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi.
  88. Contadini, "Question in Arab Painting," 53. She identifies Ibn al-Sufi's patron Fakhr Din Allah as Fakhr al-Dawla, another (earlier) Buyid amir, grandfather of Abu Kalijar. Her discussion rather misreads the pose of the right-hand figure holding the astrolabe: not so much "irreverent" or "curious," the figure deftly lifts the instrument high in order to take a reading.
  89. Hillenbrand, "Erudition Exalted," 189–90, reaches the same conclusion, but prefers Vesel's identification of the pair as al-Sufi and Ptolemy.
  90. This process and record guaranteed the accuracy of the copied text, which is often challenged by generations of successive copying from book to book. Described in Johannes Pedersen, *The Arabic Book*, trans. Geoffrey French (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 32.

BERNARD O'KANE

## RECONCILIATION OR ESTRANGEMENT? COLOPHON AND PAINTINGS IN THE TİEM ZAFARNĀMA AND SOME OTHER CONTROVERSIAL MANUSCRIPTS

The relative homogeneity of Persian painting in the early fifteenth century, represented by the court style of Herat,<sup>1</sup> with provincial activity at Shiraz, Yazd, and Samarqand,<sup>2</sup> gave way in the second half of the fifteenth century to more diverse idioms, with the Turkmen court centers of Baghdad and Tabriz, and other provincial centers such as Shirvan and Gilan, producing work in different styles.<sup>3</sup> With the coming of the Safavids at the beginning of the sixteenth century, there was a further diversification of ateliers, as some painters working for Timurid patrons left for new centers of manuscript production at Bukhara, Tabriz, and Istanbul. Some remained at Herat or neighboring Mashhad, or perhaps even moved to Shiraz, where painted manuscripts display a marked increase in quality in the sixteenth century. However, this flux produced to some extent a homogenization of styles, with the result that differentiating late Timurid from early Safavid, Uzbek, and Ottoman painting can raise many difficulties. It can be even more difficult when, as is not uncommon, a manuscript has a colophon stating that it was calligraphed at a certain place, but some, or all, of its paintings are in a style that is different from others made in that location.

This paper examines this problem with regard to a number of manuscripts calligraphed in late fifteenth-century Herat, taking as its main subject the unjustly neglected *Zafarnāma* now in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, henceforth TİEM) (Ms. T 1964) in Istanbul.<sup>4</sup> Its text is dated firmly within the Timurid period, but its paintings are in a variety of styles. Some of them, I suggest, are masterpieces equal to the finest produced for the court of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506).

The reason for the neglect of its paintings probably stems from the only major scholarly analysis of it

to date, by Eleanor Sims in her doctoral dissertation of 1973.<sup>5</sup> Sims recognized that there were paintings in several styles within the manuscript. She divided them into three groups, the first of which she claimed was “related to certain late Herat painting but falling well below its standards.”<sup>6</sup> The style of groups two and three, which display figures with red batons or long white plumes, was clearly Safavid and had many affinities to known paintings from the Shiraz school. The provenance of group one she also ascribed to Shiraz in the early sixteenth century, partially on the basis of the colophon, one signed by Hamd Allah b. Shaykh Murshid al-Katib,<sup>7</sup> whose father, Shaykh Murshid, calligraphed several manuscripts “at Shiraz.”<sup>8</sup> Her main argument with regard to this was that the colophon had been tampered with, and that the current date of 891 (1486) was the result of the first digit, the eight, having been added and a last digit, a seven, having been scratched away. Thus, she argued, the original date of 917 (1511–12) had been altered to read 891, and this might have taken place at Shiraz. However, the most recent discussion of the manuscript assumes that they were all painted at the same time and place.<sup>9</sup> I have examined the colophon carefully myself, but have not found any evidence for these supposed changes; on the contrary, the date is centered above the word *sana* (year) exactly as one would expect (fig. 1).<sup>10</sup>

This means the manuscript paintings need to be looked at afresh for evidence of date and provenance. Knowing that the calligrapher’s father worked in Shiraz, and anticipating my conclusions on the choice of subject matter of the paintings, which suggests an atelier not quite familiar with the planning of royal iconography, one could raise the question at the outset whether the calligrapher may have brought with him painters

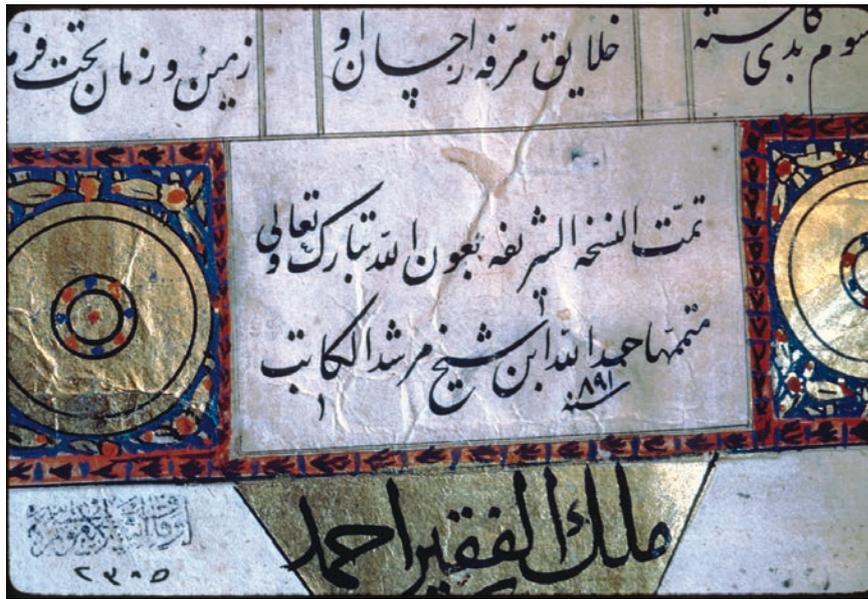


Fig. 1. Detail of colophon. Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TĪEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 491a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

from Shiraz who worked at the Timurid capital, possibly in a style different from that of the mainstream. Could it be that the stylistic features of sixteenth-century Shiraz were anticipated in Herat in the late fifteenth century, and that all the paintings of our manuscript might have been completed in Timurid Herat? Other scholars have suggested that the production of paintings in Herat at that time did not necessarily conform to the canonical model of Bihzad (d. 1537) and his school normally taken for granted in discussions of this period. A review of the evidence for this will put us in a better position to evaluate the possibilities for a variety of idioms in or around the court atelier.

The claim for diversifying the canon rests primarily on three manuscripts, which I shall refer to hereafter as the core group. The first is the *Dīvān* of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, located in the Topkapı Saray Museum (henceforth TKS) (Ms. E.H.1636), with a colophon dated the end of Sha‘ban 897 (June 1492) specifying that it was written in Herat. It has a double-page frontispiece (fig. 2) and three other paintings. The most thorough examination of the paintings of this and related manuscripts was by Filiz Çağman,<sup>11</sup> who attributed all of the paintings to the date of the manuscript. A little earlier, Stchoukine had argued that the frontispiece and

the painting on the colophon page were contemporary with the text, but that the other two paintings were inferior and must have been added much later.<sup>12</sup> Soudavar assigned all its paintings to Tabriz, around 1530.<sup>13</sup> More recently, David Roxburgh has informed me that he considers the frontispiece to be the only original painting from the manuscript.<sup>14</sup>

The second manuscript is another *Dīvān* of Husayn Bayqara, in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (henceforth BN) (Suppl. Turc 993), with a colophon also stating that it was written in Herat, dated 890 (1485). Çağman considered its three paintings to be original,<sup>15</sup> as did Welch, who considered them to be the output of “a less sophisticated Herat atelier that was busy at the same time as the great royal one led by Bihzad.” Welch recognized that “some specialists suppose (the) miniatures to be later additions to their manuscripts”; however, his own ambivalence seems to be reflected in his final judgment on them as “barely distinguishable in quality from the run-of-the-mill output of the Shiraz picture factories.”<sup>16</sup> Stchoukine argued that they were later, suggesting first the second half of the sixteenth century at Istanbul,<sup>17</sup> and in a subsequent publication the same dating, but at the court of Ibrahim Mirza (r. 1556-67) at Mashhad.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 2. Double-page frontispiece. *Dīvān* of Sultan Husayn Bayqara, TKS Ms. E.H. 1636, fols. 1b–2a. (After David Roxburgh, ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* [London, 2005], 240)

The third manuscript is an undated copy of Mir ‘Ali Shir’s *Gharā’ib al-ṣiḡhar* (Wonders of Childhood) in the Istanbul University Library (henceforth IUL) (Ms. T 5740), calligraphed by Sultan ‘Ali al-Qa’ini. Sultan ‘Ali al-Qa’ini worked mostly at the Aqquyunlu courts of Ya‘qub (r. 1478–90) and Rustam (r. 1493–97), appending many of his calligraphies with the *nisbas* (element of a name indicating relation or origin) al-Ya‘qubi or al-Rustami accordingly.<sup>19</sup> He returned to Khurasan late in life. Bayani makes a good case for him being the Sultan ‘Ali (rather than Sultan ‘Ali al-Mashhadi) who was responsible for the text of one of the most important manuscripts that has early Safavid images, the Asafi *Jamāl and Jalāl* now at Uppsala, dated to 908 (1502–3) and written at Herat.<sup>20</sup> Eldhem and Stchoukine assigned the eight paintings of the *Gharā’ib al-ṣiḡhar* to

the second half of the sixteenth century, perhaps after a Timurid model;<sup>21</sup> Çağman and Welch considered them to be original.<sup>22</sup>

What are the common characteristics of this core group? Çağman herself suggests that “the paintings reveal a style that is very different from the one identified with Herat.” She aptly notes that they feature the work of an illuminator with “an exceedingly decorative handling... particularly noticeable in architectural renditions.”<sup>23</sup> This is certainly true of the frontispiece of the *Dīvān* of Sultan Husayn. The octagonal pavilion on the right page alone has six different geometric tile patterns; that on the left page has seven (each different from the previous six). In contrast to the usually simpler Timurid paving patterns, that of the courtyard has a design of six-pointed stars surrounded by hexagons.<sup>24</sup> This busy-

ness is compounded by the design of the throne, with arabesques on blue and gold backgrounds, arabesques on white for its cushions, and again arabesques on white for the wall painting in the alcove behind the throne. No Timurid painting tries to cram in this amount of detail. Even Bihzad's "Yusuf and Zulaykha" from the Cairo *Būstān*, which, it can be argued, uses pattern as an element in the psychological heightening of tension, leaves the paving of the courtyard and the white walls of its two alcoves plain as a foil to the surrounding visual complexity. Çağman notes that the *Shāhnāma* of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76) also has similarities to this style,<sup>25</sup> and amongst its tendency to greater decorativeness than Timurid examples, we may note that plain paved courtyards are a rarity, and that the use of six-pointed stars surrounded by hexagons as paving occurs in a full twenty-three of its paintings.<sup>26</sup> The style was not confined to court-sponsored painting; an example contemporary to the *Shāhnāma* of Shah Tahmasp that is very similar to the *Dīvān* frontispiece is "Bahram Enthroned," from a *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsi that has been attributed to Shiraz around 1535, showing precisely the same tendency to cram ornament on architecture (including the paving of six-pointed stars of the courtyard), textiles, and thrones.<sup>27</sup> Another related manuscript mentioned by Çağman is a *Dīvān* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi dated 943 (1537) in Vienna. Its double-page frontispiece<sup>28</sup> repeats the servant cooking kebab that is found in the frontispiece of the BN *Dīvān* of Husayn Bayqara, and the octagonal pool inhabited by one or more ducks that figures in all of the frontispieces of the core group.<sup>29</sup> In addition, it also includes a harpist remarkably similar to one in another indoor scene in the BN *Dīvān* of Husayn Bayqara<sup>30</sup> and to that of the frontispiece of the IUL *Gharā'ib al-ṣighar*.

A common feature of the major personages in these three manuscripts is the presence of a white feather outlined in black springing forward from their turbans. Although Sultan Husayn does not wear one in the frontispiece of the TKS *Dīvān*,<sup>31</sup> the figure isolated in the gateway on the page opposite does.<sup>32</sup> In the BN *Dīvān*, the sultan wears a feather in the frontispiece, as do four courtiers; he is the only figure with a feather in two other paintings, and in another, a prince and a courtier each wear one. In the IUL *Gharā'ib al-ṣighar*, the enthroned

figure of the frontispiece as well as some courtiers sport feathers in their turbans, as do the principal actors of the polo game and the hunting scene.<sup>33</sup>

There are some Timurid paintings that have figures wearing feathers in their turbans (or sometimes military helmets), but the feathers differ in three respects from those in the above group: they are much smaller in size; they are monochrome; and they adorn relatively insignificant personages, not those who embody imperial power.<sup>34</sup> Where then do we find similar examples? They appear in the TKS Ms. H 762 *Khamṣa* of Nizami, a manuscript with both Aqquyunlu and very early Safavid paintings. The dating of some of them can be hard to pinpoint, but in general, the more obvious the use of the black-fringed feather, the more likely a painting is to be early Safavid.<sup>35</sup> That northwest Iran was where the fashion first developed is further suggested by several paintings of the 899 (1494) *Shāhnāma* (known as the "big head" *Shāhnāma*), which have much larger feathers than is usual previously, some of them gray, tinged with a darker outline.<sup>36</sup> Its patron, 'Ali Mirza, was the ruler of Gilan in the Safavid heartlands (and a supporter of the young Shah Isma'īl [d. 1524]), so it would be no surprise if, as Welch observed, "the style of its miniatures... must closely resemble pre-1500 Safavid art."<sup>37</sup> Closely related to the Safavid paintings in the TKS Ms. H 762 *Khamṣa* of Nizami are those of the Uppsala *Jamāl and Jalāl*, where the black-fringed feather appears in a full eighteen of its thirty-four paintings.<sup>38</sup> In a manuscript of Shah Isma'īl's Turkish poetry prepared for the Shah himself, the black-fringed feather also features prominently.<sup>39</sup> It remained a staple of early Safavid painting.<sup>40</sup>

There are three other stylistic traits present in the above manuscripts that are more typical of early Safavid than late Timurid paintings: turbans, beards, and clothing. The large top-heavy turbans characteristic of Turkmen painting were enthusiastically adopted in early Safavid examples.<sup>41</sup> They are more obvious in 'Ali Shir's *Gharā'ib al-ṣighar* and the BN *Dīvān* of Husayn Bayqara than in the TKS *Dīvān*; sometimes, as in Turkmen examples,<sup>42</sup> the importance of the figure is reflected in the relative size of his turban.<sup>43</sup> Beards are, of course, a not uncommon feature of late Timurid painting. However, there is a plethora of dense but neatly trimmed

black beards in paintings in the core group of manuscripts<sup>44</sup> that is unmatched in any group of Timurid paintings. Rather, early Safavid examples again provide the closest parallels.<sup>45</sup> Thirdly, caftans and the tunics underneath them in the core group often have fastenings that feature bars spreading out horizontally on both sides.<sup>46</sup> Again, this type of button appeared in late Timurid paintings, but not with the almost regimental repetitiveness of the three manuscripts in question.<sup>47</sup> Although obviously different in scale, some of the nearest analogues are again found in the *Shāhnāma* for Shah Tahmasp.<sup>48</sup> In fact, this manuscript is one of the parallels mentioned by Çağman for the style of the paintings in the core group.<sup>49</sup> With respect to its busily-decorated architectural forms and its portrayal of figures with black-fringed plumes, large turbans, dense black beards, and garments with fastenings featuring horizontal bars, it is virtually the style of the core group writ large.

The main parallels for the paintings of the manuscripts were also examined in detail by Çağman. Of one of the paintings in another copy of Mir ‘Ali Shir’s *Gharā’ib al-ṣiḡhar* in the Istanbul University Library (Ms. T 5669), calligraphed in Herat in 1524, she says “the only variation is the headdresses of the figures who wear the turbans of the Safavid period.”<sup>50</sup> Of the frontispiece in yet another copy of Mir ‘Ali Shir’s *Gharā’ib al-ṣiḡhar* (TKS Ms. R 803), copied in 1532–33 at Tabriz, she writes that

the landscape elements...are not only reminiscent of the hunting scenes which originated in Herat but the postures of the riders and the hunting motifs are almost identical...The only variation from the Herat example is that in this scene the ground is painted in a different manner.<sup>51</sup>

Of an enthronement scene in the same manuscript, which in truth is the style of the core group writ small, Çağman notes the similarity in composition and in the decorative details of the throne and garments.<sup>52</sup> She goes on to identify similarities with other manuscripts produced in the early sixteenth century in Istanbul.<sup>53</sup>

Keeping in mind these parallels, two comments by Çağman on the overall style of the paintings of the core group are instructive: “The paintings reveal a style that is very different from the one identified with Herat,”<sup>54</sup>

and “It is my opinion that these works are the product of an atelier which was completely alien to the school of Bihzad.”<sup>55</sup> I am quite in agreement, but there are two possible explanations for this. Çağman and others posit that the paintings of the core group are contemporary with the late Timurid manuscripts in which they were written, and were used as models by later painters. There is another much simpler, and, to my mind, much more plausible explanation: the reason why the atelier was so alien to the school of Bihzad, and why its paintings have so many characteristics not otherwise found in late Timurid painting but common in early Safavid painting, is that the paintings were added to the manuscripts in the early Safavid period. This is also the conclusion reached by Soudavar, who noted that several manuscripts related to the core group had paintings with figures wearing Safavid Qizilbash headgear. He astutely suggested that the lack of such headgear in the core group could be because the Tabrizi Safavid artists painting them wanted to sell them to the Ottoman market (perhaps even as Timurid originals), and also therefore picked texts by the most prominent figures of their time in Turkish literature, Mir ‘Ali Shir and Sultan Husayn.<sup>56</sup>

Might the paintings of the TİEM *Zafarnāma* also have been added in the Safavid period? A detailed discussion of the manuscript can help to determine this. Although the calligrapher was from Shiraz, his *nasta’liq* (fig. 1) is the equal of that of the finest contemporary Herat manuscripts. However, this should be no surprise, given the excellent penmanship in earlier Shiraz manuscripts such as the *Khāvarānnāma*.<sup>57</sup> It is not certain whether the binding of the manuscript is late Timurid or sixteenth-century Shiraz. It is less fine than one might expect for a major Timurid manuscript, but Shiraz manuscripts of the fifteenth century are less elaborate,<sup>58</sup> while those of the sixteenth century tend to be more ornate.<sup>59</sup> The outer cover (fig. 3) of stamped and tooled leather, showing fine Chinese cloud scrolls in the central and quarter medallions and outer cartouches, is similar to that of a Turkmen manuscript copied in 1463 at Baghdad.<sup>60</sup> A close parallel to the black filigree on a blue ground of the inner cover (fig. 4) is found in a commercial Turkmen manuscript of the late fifteenth century in the Chester Beatty Library (henceforth CBL),<sup>61</sup>

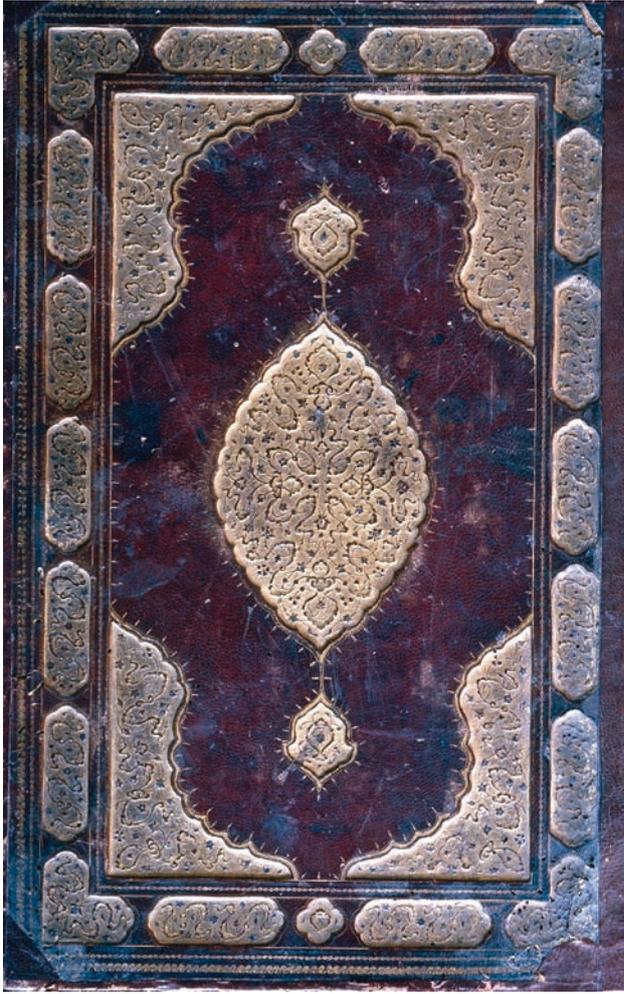


Fig. 3. Outer binding. Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)

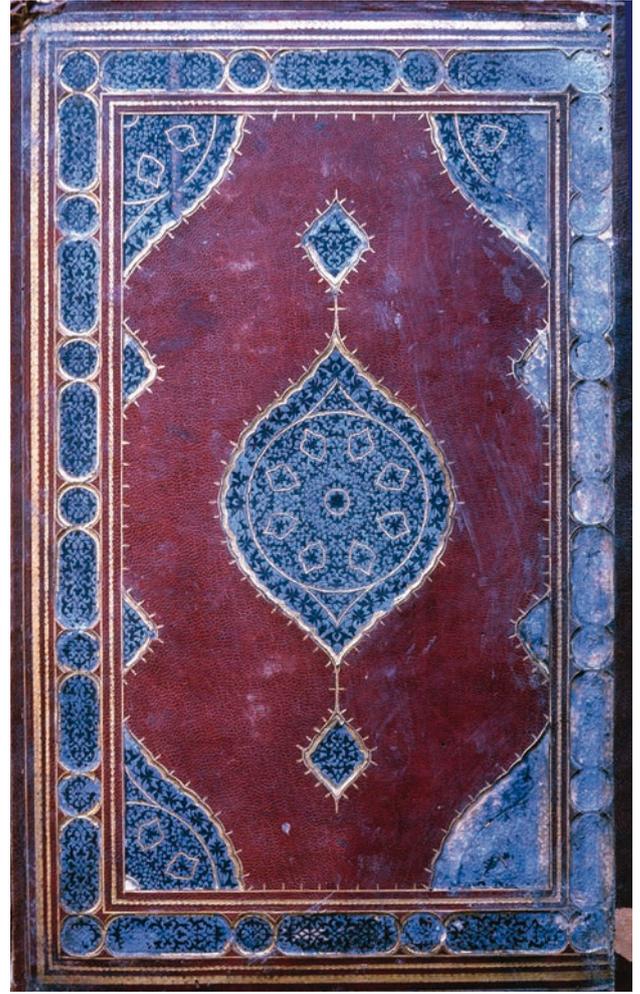


Fig. 4. Inner binding. Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)

although the TIEM example is a more elaborate version of the CBL one. The illumination in this manuscript is confined to the first two pages (fig. 5); in this it is paralleled by Sultan Husayn's *Zafarnāma*, but it lacks the initial *shamsa* (medallion) of the latter. Although this is not a sufficient characteristic to attribute the illumination to a Timurid date, it may be noted that the frame is mostly rectangular, rather than having the irregular outline associated with some later Safavid Shiraz examples.<sup>62</sup> In addition, more space is reserved on a plain background for the text than in later Shiraz examples,

and the concomitant smaller outer border of reciprocating gold and dark blue crenellations contrasts with the larger, later Shiraz ones.<sup>63</sup> It is in any case much less common for illumination than for paintings to postdate the colophon of a manuscript.

With regard to the paintings themselves, there is more definite evidence for the attribution of several to the date of the colophon. We may begin their investigation with a discussion of the paintings that are presently in or known to have been in the manuscript.

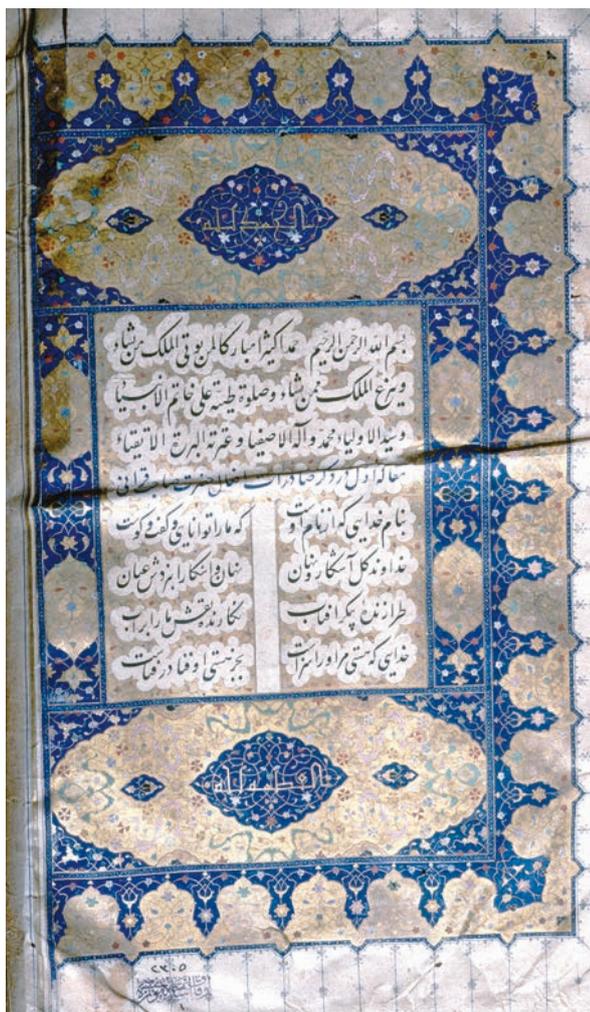


Fig. 5. Illumination. Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 1b. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)

Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*,  
Istanbul, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Ms. T 1964

*Folio 32a, 228 x 155 mm*<sup>64</sup>

"Timur and Amir Husayn Defeat Mengli-Buqa at the Ab-i Siyah" (fig. 6)

The two opposing armies face each other across the river, which cuts a diagonal swath across the painting, its two-dimensionality emphasized by the bird's-eye view given of its flowering borders, and by the improbable teardrop-shaped tree beside it. The transition from the flower-strewn ground to the rocky horizon is abrupt



Fig. 6. "Timur and Amir Husayn Defeat Mengli-Buqa at the Ab-i Siyah." Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 32a. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)

and awkward.<sup>65</sup> Although the musicians at the top of the painting convey a sense of action, the cavalry is stiff and lifeless, with all facing one another except for a single horseman at the lower right, who turns to face his companion. All of the figures wear helmets of chain mail that extend to cover the shoulders. Although the painting is an ambitious full-page one with many figures, their stiffness and lack of variety, the repetition of the horses' gold carapaces, and the two-dimensional landscape are all hallmarks of Shiraz painting of the sixteenth century.<sup>66</sup>



Fig. 7. "Timur Attacks the Forces of Amir Husayn at Tang-i Haram." Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 49b. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)

*Folio 49b, 155 x 172 mm*

“Timur Attacks the Forces of Amir Husayn at Tang-i Haram” (fig. 7)<sup>67</sup>

Although some of the warriors wear helmets with colored flags on top that resemble those in fol. 32a, any similarity with the style of the previous painting ends there. The narrow defiles of the mountainous setting are convincingly conveyed, and the opposing forces are arrayed in a variety of poses. The attackers are spurred on by the most prominent figure in the group on the mountain, that of Timur, portrayed, as in several paintings of the Husayn Bayqara *Zafarnāma*, with a green *jāma* (a long-sleeved coat) and a long, bearded face. The soft wash of the contours of the mountain, the delicacy of the coloring, and the variety of the poses of the figures, some of whom are frantically pulling their horses’ bridles as they try to escape their attackers, are all features that differentiate this painting from Safavid Shiraz examples, and would argue for a date equivalent to that of the colophon, 891 (486–87).

*Folio 62a, 175 x 182 mm*

“Aq Timur on Foot Causes Üch Qara Bahadur to Flee” (fig. 8)<sup>68</sup>

Without knowing the text, it would not be clear from the composition that the focus is the unmounted figure with raised sword, whose horse has just been struck down, but who nevertheless was able to cause his enemy to flee. Timur watches the battle from afar. Like the scene of the first painting, this battle took place beside a river, in this case the Ab-i Rahmat near Samarqand, but perhaps the painter thought its omission here preferable to the perspectival awkwardness of the first painting. The figure of Aq Timur has a long white plume tinged with black in his helmet. The discussion of the use of black-fringed feathers above made it clear that they are a likely indication of Safavid provenance; this applies with even greater force to the more prominent feather here. This composition is more lively than most Shiraz painting of the time, but the crude landscape details, including the single incongruous Chinese cloud, the clump of pasteboard trees on the horizon, the rigid group of figures in the upper right, and the awkward pose of Aq Timur, raising his sword and gazing towards the rump of a horse rather than his enemy, all corroborate a Shiraz provenance.



Fig. 8. “Aq Timur on Foot Causes Üch Qara Bahadur to Flee.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 62a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

*Folio 70a, 222 x 168 mm,*

*Metropolitan Museum of Art, 52.20.4.*

“Timur and Jahan Malik b. Amir Husayn Rout the Badakhshan Army at the Jarum Gorge” (fig. 9)<sup>69</sup>

This illustration fills a gap at fol. 70a of the original manuscript. The other illustrations in the manuscript have a seal of the Evqaf Museum (now the TIEM), and a number corresponding to the ten paintings in the manuscript plus the double-page illustrated frontispiece on fols. 1b–2a. The numbers are in sequence, so this illustration must have been removed before the manuscript was transferred from its previous location, the Yıldız Palace, to the museum. As we shall see, there are three other lacunae in the manuscript, which suggest that more folios with paintings were removed. The setting, the coloring, and the figures betray a great similarity to fol. 49b, and it is probably the work of the same painter. The composition is nevertheless a more ambitious one,



Fig. 9. “Timur and Jahan Malik b. Amir Husayn Rout the Badakhshan Army at the Jarum Gorge.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 52.20.4. Originally fol. 70a of TIEM Ms. T 1964. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

with hand-to-hand fighting taking place at the bottom left, while archers attack each other across a river at the bottom right. Various groups look on from defiles in the upper parts of the painting, including Timur with his usual long, bearded face and green *jāma* at the top left.

*Folio 90a, 265 x 167 mm*

“Shaikh ‘Ali, Storming the Fort of Kat, Seizes and Breaks the Lance of a Defender While Striking Him on the Head” (fig. 10)<sup>70</sup>

The text at the breakline celebrates the audacious exploit of Shaikh ‘Ali, the first to ascend the attackers’ ladders, who simultaneously grabs a defender’s lance and administers a fatal blow to his head. Three attackers are close behind him, while on the other side the upturned shield of a figure on the ladder protects him from the stones about to rain down on him from the defend-

ers. One figure on the ground has already been felled, while two attempt to break through the main door. The inhabitants within the fortress are rendered vividly, with youths and women looking on in consternation behind the defenders. At a window at the top left, a woman raises her henna-decorated hands to her face, while several old crones at the top right look on in dismay. The shield that one defender employs above the central crenellations is decorated with an unusually delicate arabesque in black and maroon, almost identical to one found in fol. 49b. Other, more exceptional characteristics link this painting to the artist of fols. 49b and 70a, namely, his drawing of eyebrows, almost like the hieroglyph for a snake, with a line turned down at the outer end and up at the inner end, unlike the standard, bow-shaped eyebrows of the time. His mouths are also distinctive, being usually compressed to a small, dark red, wriggly line.

Many features of this composition were copied later by Shiraz painters. The defender at the top of the ramparts on the right, who is about to hurl a rock from his two hands raised above his head, also appears in three other paintings from sixteenth-century Shiraz *Zafarnāmas*.<sup>71</sup> The whole centerpiece of the assault on the city was also very closely copied in two other sixteenth-century Shiraz *Shāhnāma* paintings, one in the David Collection representing “Shah Anushirvan Capturing the Fortress of Saqila,”<sup>72</sup> another, with the composition reversed, in the John Rylands Library, in the scene of “Kay Khusrau Attacks the Castle of Bahman.”<sup>73</sup> Even so, the variety of poses, the liveliness of the detail of the figures, and the more ambitious composition of the TIEM page elevate it above its imitations. I will argue later that the manuscript was in Shiraz in the sixteenth century, so it would not be surprising that its Timurid compositions should have been copied for other manuscripts there.

*Folio 97a, 253 x 167 mm*

“The Marriage of Timur and Dilshad Agha” (fig. 11)<sup>74</sup>

While the subject, but not the details, of the previous painting, the assault on the castle, is paralleled in the *Zafarnāma* for Sultan Husayn, here at least part of the subject and its general treatment are similar to the double-page illustration of “Timur’s Accession” in the same manuscript (fig. 12).<sup>75</sup> In both, Timur is seated

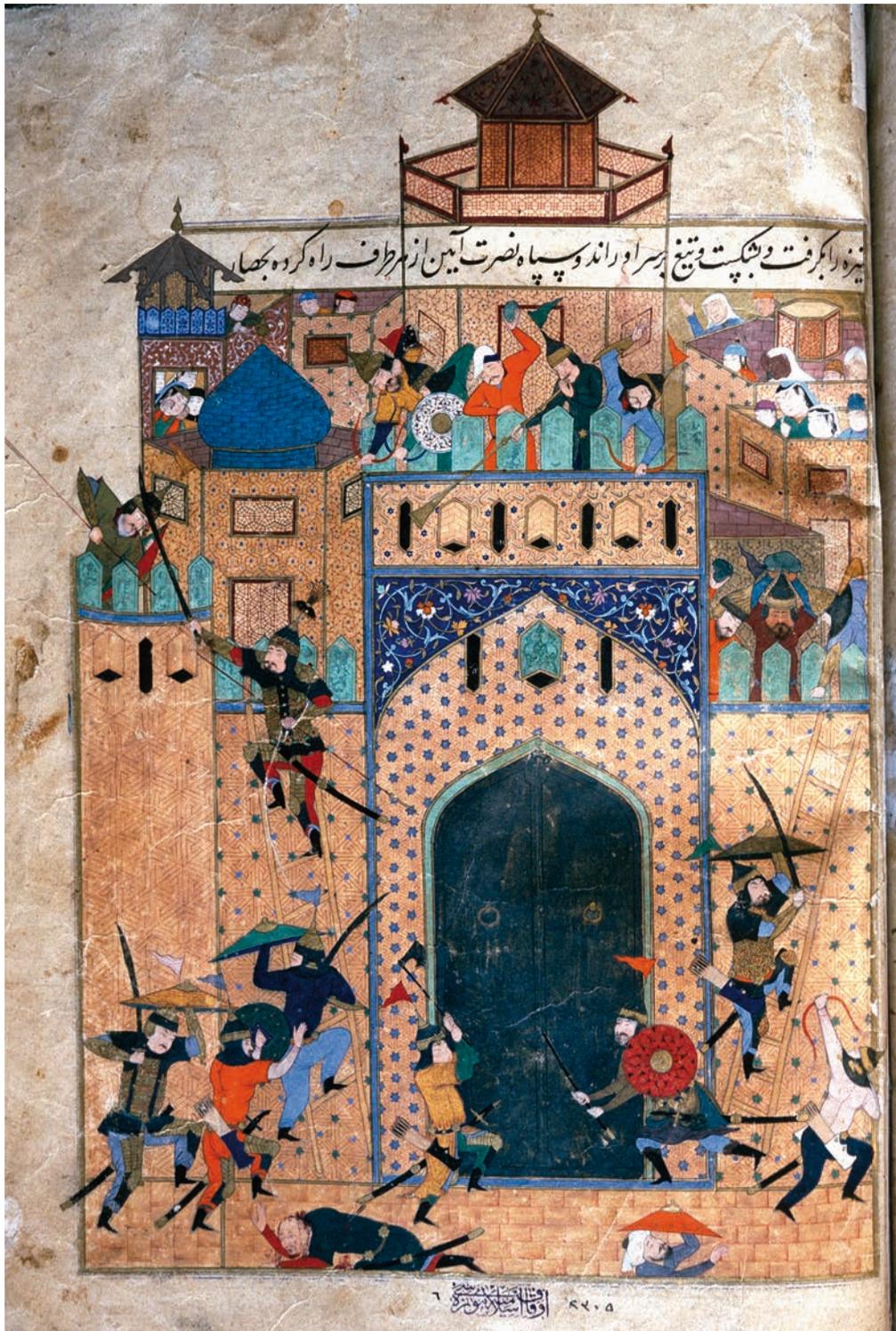


Fig. 10. “Shaikh ‘Ali, Storming the Fort of Kat, Seizes and Breaks the Lance of a Defender while Striking Him on the Head.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 90a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)



Fig. 11. "The Marriage of Timur and Dilshad Agha." Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 97a. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)



Fig. 12. “Timur’s Accession to Power at Balkh.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, fols. 82b–83a. John Work Garrett Collection, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. (After Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* [Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., 1989], 294–95)

on a throne with one leg on a footstool, the throne on a carpet in front of a circular trellis tent (*khārgāh*) with an awning. The setting in both is a deep-green colored meadow, studded with flowers. There the similarities end: the Garrett manuscript has courtiers arrayed somewhat stiffly around Timur, while the TIEM painting shows dancers and musicians, and a more varied group of courtiers on the left, including one in red with a pronounced potbelly. The horizon is filled with the royal, tented enclosure (*sarā parda*), in which several of the female members of Timur’s entourage can also be viewed. The eyebrows of the figures are all of the

more common bow-shaped variety here, suggesting that a different painter was at work from the three previous Timurid ones analyzed. The painting has previously been attributed to Mirak by Soudavar.<sup>76</sup> The oeuvre of Mirak is by no means canonized,<sup>77</sup> but if one relies on, for instance, the attributions of Jahangir in the *Khamsa* of Nizami (BL Ms. Or. 6810), then the frontispiece of that manuscript (fig. 13) is closest in subject to our painting.<sup>78</sup> One detail, however, of the type that would have been unconsciously added by the painter, is enough to suggest that an artist other than Mirak was at work. The courtiers of the Or. 6810 paintings have



Fig. 13. Double-page frontispiece. Nizami, *Khamsa*, BL Or. 6810, fols. 1b–2a. (After Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* [London, 1997], 130–31)

turbans whose ends invariably are tied with a tail that barely emerges vertically to the right of the skullcap. The turbans in the *TĪEM* painting, by contrast, are long and droop to the side of the skullcaps. In addition, the courtiers of the *TĪEM* painting are more varied in pose and expression than those of Or. 6810, suggesting the work of a more skillful painter.

*Folio 145b, 125 x 205 mm*

“Timur Hunts after the Conquest of Tiflis” (fig. 14)<sup>79</sup>

This is the last of the original Timurid paintings in the manuscript. It is in much worse condition than the others, displaying flaking and some crude retouching of faces. Even with the damage to the faces, however, it

is possible to see that the eyebrows are again the conventional bow-shaped type, and so the artist here was not the painter of the first three Timurid paintings in the manuscript.

At first sight, the conventional ground, with its regularly spaced tufts of grass and lack of color variation, gives the impression of a sixteenth-century Shiraz painting. However, the figural depictions are much livelier and more varied than any of that school. Presiding over all, as usual, is the mounted Timur in green *jāma*, a courtier behind holding a parasol over his head. Immediately below Timur, two figures carry a dead ram. They are quite similar to the two figures carrying a cauldron in “The Preparation of a Feast,” a late fifteenth-century



Fig. 14. "Timur Hunts after the Conquest of Tiflis." Sharaf al-Din 'Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 145b. (Photo: Bernard O'Kane)



Fig. 15. “The Wedding Celebrations for Muhammad Sultan, Pir Muhammad, and Shah Rukh at the Bagh-i Bihisht, Samarqand.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fols. 163b–164a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

painting, later mounted in an album, that has been attributed to Bihzad.<sup>80</sup> The awkward pose of the left figure of each pair in particular may be compared, with the neck in each case twisted to an unnatural degree.

The framing of the lower edge of the painting with a horseman in a U-shape recalls the double-page painting of a hunting scene inserted into a later copy of Jami’s *Silsilat al-dhahab*. The exact dating and provenance of the latter is still a matter of speculation, but it is probably earlier than our manuscript.<sup>81</sup> However, another double-page painting of the Herat school also follows the same compositional device, the frontispiece of the *Hasht Bihisht* of Jami, TKS Ms. H 676, dated 902 (1496). The setting of the *Hasht Bihisht* frontispiece is much

more detailed and varied than the *Zafarnāma* hunting scene, but several of its horsemen also share another slightly unusual feature—white domical hats with a brim cut in a V-shape at the front and back.<sup>82</sup>

*Folios 163b–164a, 242 x 161 mm (163b), 244 x 159 mm (164a)*

“The Wedding Celebrations for Muhammad Sultan, Pir Muhammad, and Shah Rukh at the Bagh-i Bihisht, Samarqand” (fig. 15)<sup>83</sup>

This is the most ambitious and accomplished Shiraz painting in the manuscript, and the only double-page painting in the manuscript. It echoes the themes of the earlier “The Marriage of Timur and Dilshad Agha,”

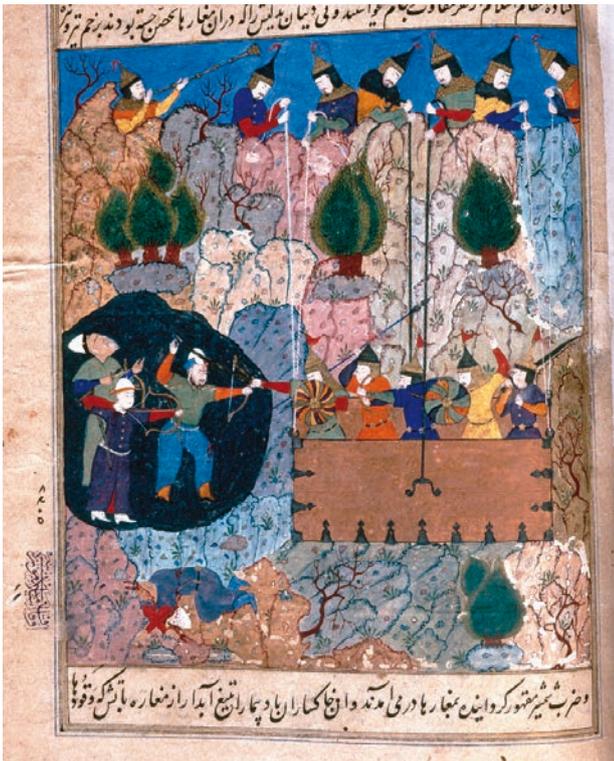


Fig. 16. “Timur’s Army Is Lowered in Boxes to Fight the Georgians in Caves.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 343a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

including the enthroned figure of Timur with a royal, tented enclosure behind him, but this time the setting is the courtyard of a garden or palace, rather than the verdant meadow of the former. Dancing women and courtiers are also present here, but among the additions are the three betrothed princes (each sporting a turban with no less than five black-fringed white feathers at the back, and two at the front), and the bearers of food and drink in the lower half of the left side. The princes, like virtually all of the other major figures in the painting, also wear the Safavid baton (*tāj-i haydarī*), an incontrovertible sign of a Safavid date.

*Folio 343a, 201 x 141 mm*

“Timur’s Army is Lowered in Boxes to Fight the Georgians in Caves” (fig. 16)<sup>84</sup>

This is another scene that repeats the subject of one of the Garrett *Zafarnāma* paintings. The abstract treatment of the rocks here is unmistakably characteristic



Fig. 17. “Sultan Mahmud Khan Brings the Defeated Yıldırım Bayazid into Timur’s Presence.” Sharaf al-Din ‘Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnāma*, TIEM Ms. T 1964, fol. 401a. (Photo: Bernard O’Kane)

of sixteenth-century Shiraz painting; the composition is also greatly simplified, with one cave instead of three, one box instead of two, and a rigid line of soldiers at the top of the cliff rather than the varied group of the earlier painting.<sup>85</sup> The rocky landscape with crudely drawn trees is very similar to one in another Yazdi *Zafarnāma* manuscript, dated 939 (1533),<sup>86</sup> possibly written by the father of our *Zafarnāma* calligrapher.

*Folio 401a, 167 x 141 mm*

“Sultan Mahmud Khan Brings the Defeated Yıldırım Bayazid into Timur’s Presence” (fig. 17)<sup>87</sup>

This is by a more accomplished painter than the previous one. An unusual attempt at perspective is given by the diminutive figures that are visible in the upper balconies. However, the red batons of the courtiers make it clear that it is also a Safavid addition.

In order to gain a complete picture of the iconography of the manuscript, it should be realized that four folios, which almost certainly once contained paintings, are now missing from it. This is corroborated by the foliation of the manuscript. Two systems are used, and in one, clearly the older, the colophon is labelled fol. 495a; in the other, it is fol. 491a. One of the missing pages is the original fol. 70a mentioned above, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. At present, the other three have unfortunately not come to light.

The first of them was after fol. 12b, which ends at fol. 92a, line 2 in the ms. of the *Zafarnāma* edited by Urumbaev (henceforth ZNU; see also the *Zafarnāma* edited by 'Abbas [henceforth ZNA], vol. 2, p. 314, line 13); fol. 13a starts at ZNU, fol. 92a, line 20 (ZNA, 1:24, line 1).<sup>88</sup> A typical page of text occupies sixteen lines in the Urumbaev manuscript. Had a folio with text filling both pages been missing, one would have expected fol. 13a to start thirty-two lines later; in fact, it starts eighteen lines later, indicating a painting that would have taken up virtually a full page. The subject matter in the missing folio concerned the battle of Malik Husayn Kart with Amir Mas'ud Sarbidar and Shaykh Hasan Jawri, in which Malik Husayn was ultimately victorious.<sup>89</sup>

The second gap is at fol. 172b, which ends at ZNU, fol. 206a, line 1 (ZNA, 1:349, line 20); the following folio, now 173a, starts at ZNU, fol. 206a, line 20 (ZNA, 1:351, line 7). This is again a gap of only nineteen lines rather than the expected thirty-two, also leaving a space for a nearly full-page painting. The subject would have been "Timur and His Courtiers Go Hawking at the Winter Quarters of Gul-i Firkati."

The third gap is after fol. 387b, which ends at ZNU, fol. 400a, line 22 (ZNA, 2:280, line 11); fol. 388a starts at ZNU, fol. 401a, line 3 (ZNA, 2:281, line 13), a gap of twenty-two lines, leaving a slightly shorter space than the others. The subject would most likely have been "Timur Hunts Lions near the Aras River."<sup>90</sup>

The iconography would have been determined when the original manuscript was written, and so any later Shiraz additions would not, of course, have altered its original program. A list of the thirteen original subjects of the paintings in order will make the iconographic program clearer:

- 1) "The Battle of Malik Husayn Kart with Amir Mas'ud Sarbidar and Shaikh Hasan Jawri"
- 2) "Timur and Amir Husayn Defeat Mengli-Buqa at the Ab-i Siyah" (fig. 6)
- 3) "Timur Attacks the Forces of Amir Husayn at Tang-i Haram" (fig. 7)
- 4) "Aq Timur on Foot Causes Üch Qara Bahadur to Flee" (fig. 8)
- 5) "Timur and Jahan Malik b. Amir Husayn Rout the Bada-khshan Army at the Jarum Gorge" (fig. 9)
- 6) "Shaikh 'Ali, Storming the Fort of Kat, Seizes and Breaks the Lance of a Defender while Striking Him on the Head" (fig. 10)
- 7) "The Marriage of Timur and Dilshad Agha" (fig. 11)
- 8) "Timur Hunts after the Conquest of Tiflis" (fig. 14)
- 9) "The Wedding Celebrations for Muhammad Sultan, Pir Muhammad, and Shah Rukh at the Bagh-i Bihisht, Samarqand" (fig. 15)
- 10) "Timur and His Courtiers Go Hawking at the Winter Quarters of Gul-i Firkati"
- 11) "Timur's Army Is Lowered in Boxes to Fight the Georgians in Caves" (fig. 16)
- 12) "Timur Hunts Lions near the Aras River"
- 13) "Sultan Mahmud Khan Brings the Defeated Yıldırım Bayazid into Timur's Presence" (fig. 17)

As Sims has pointed out, there seems to be no obvious illustrative program to this manuscript, as it can be argued there was for the two earlier fifteenth-century *Zafarnāma* manuscripts.<sup>91</sup> The 1436 manuscript made for Sultan Ibrahim has paintings celebrating the entry of Shah Rukh into Samarqand, when he was made its governor after the birth of his son, Ibrahim Sultan. And even Ibrahim Sultan himself is represented in one of its paintings, as an eleven-year-old leading the Timurid army.<sup>92</sup> The Garrett manuscript, made for Sultan Husayn, has two double-page paintings celebrating the exploits of 'Umar Shaykh, the son of Timur, from whom Sultan Husayn was descended. There is no such obvious bias towards a particular Timurid line in the TIEM manuscript. Dilshad Agha, for instance, was not the mother of any of his sons, although she did produce

a daughter named Sultan.<sup>93</sup> Roxburgh has also pointed out that the iconographic emphasis is on Timur rather than his sons, and suggests this was to associate rulers with Timur's valor.<sup>94</sup> However, the decision to include "The Battle of Malik Husayn Kart with Amir Mas'ud Sarbidar and Shaikh Hasan Jawri," where Malik Husayn was ultimately victorious, is mystifying—Timur was not even a participant, and later was involved in a power struggle with Malik Husayn. Neither Timur nor his sons appear in another battle scene, "Shaikh 'Ali Storms the Fort of Kat." Another feature that distinguishes this manuscript from the two earlier illustrated Timurid examples is its incorporation of only one double-page painting, a great contrast, especially with the Baltimore manuscript, which features double-page paintings exclusively, six in all.

But evidence of difference and of the lack of a coherent iconography is itself useful, since it raises the possibility that, rather than being commissioned by a particular member of the Timurid family, it was produced on spec by a local atelier. Aware that it was a prominent text, but with insufficient nous to appreciate that a coherent iconography was very much a desideratum with this manuscript, work was perhaps begun on the manuscript. Even with a few finished paintings by some of the finest artists of the day, the atelier was unable to sell the product to a potential buyer, and hence it remained unfinished. In the following century, however, any Safavid buyer would have been happy to be associated with the glorious cultural legacy of the Timurids. The manuscript was worth finishing and placing on the market to compete with the many newly produced *Zafarnāma* manuscripts that were executed in Shiraz in the sixteenth century.

The analysis of the paintings of the TĪEM *Zafarnāma* has shown that the style of five of them, although not definitely attributable to any of the known Herat masters, is clearly related to them. Even if the patron is unknown and can not be connected with the illustrative program, its five original paintings, ranging from only a fair example of the school (fol. 145b) to one the equal of any produced in late Timurid Herat (fol. 97a),<sup>95</sup> are a valuable addition to the corpus of painting in the reign of Sultan Husayn. Its lack of a known patron and illustrative program is possibly also significant. It enables us

to raise the possibility that either the royal *kitābkhāna* was less centrally directed than is usually thought, or that an independent atelier with access to some of the finest painters might have been at work in the capital at the time.

Rather than diversifying the canon, this paper has inadvertently made the distinctly unfashionable case for reifying it. This is certainly not on principle; the Timurid court atelier worked in a variety of styles under Shah Rukh earlier in the century.<sup>96</sup> David Roxburgh's work on Bihzad has shown convincingly how the master himself was capable of working in several idioms,<sup>97</sup> and it would not be surprising if further research on the paintings in the Istanbul albums reveals other just as likely candidates for this. But I believe that on the evidence from the manuscript painting that we have at the moment, there is no good reason for supposing that ateliers working in a variety of idioms were active in late fifteenth-century Herat.

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## NOTES

*Author's note:* I am grateful for the suggestions of several readers of this manuscript, including Sheila Blair, Gülru Necipoğlu, and an anonymous reader for *Muqarnas*, for encouraging me to take a broader view of the problems of late Timurid and early Safavid painting. Thanks also to all those who responded to a request for bibliographic information posted on the H-ISLAMART discussion list.

1. The appropriate word here is relative; even in manuscripts produced at Herat quite different idioms were used for paintings in historical and literary manuscripts: Bernard O'Kane, "Removing the Veil from the Face of Persian Painting," *Oriental Art* 48, 2 (2002): 57.
2. For Shiraz and related styles at Yazd, see Basil Gray, "The School of Shiraz from 1392 to 1453," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th–16th Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray (Paris and London, 1979), 121–46. For Samarqand, see B. W. Robinson, *Fifteenth-Century Persian Painting: Problems and Issues* (New York, 1991), chap. 3, "Transoxiana."
3. Basil W. Robinson, "The Turkman School to 1503," in Gray, *Arts of the Book*, 215–48.
4. I am grateful for the assistance I received from Şule Aksoy while studying this manuscript at the TĪEM.
5. Eleanor G. Sims, "The Garrett Manuscript of the *Zafar-Name*: A Study in Fifteenth-Century Timurid Patronage" (PhD

- diss., New York University, 1973). Earlier mentions or illustrations occur in: Armenag Sakisian, *La miniature persane du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris and Brussels, 1929), 83, pl. 64, fig. 109 (fol. 97a), attributed to the Herat school; B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1958), 68 (in a list of mss. of the later Herat style); Z. V. Togan, *On the Miniatures in Istanbul Libraries* (Istanbul, 1963), 48, pls. 108–9 (fols. 62a, 97a); Ernst J. Grube, *The Classical Style in Islamic Painting*, (n.p., 1968), fig. 39 (fol. 70a, an unidentified battle scene, attributed to Herat, about 1490, although it was not discussed in the text). Following Sims, Lentz and Lowry also asserted that the Ibrahim Sultan and Husayn Bayqara *Zafarnāmas* were the only fifteenth-century copies: Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., 1989), 262. Two paintings from the TIEM manuscript, fols. 49b and 97a, were illustrated in Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York, 1992), figs. 16 and 17, with an attribution to Mirak. In my article “Removing the Veil,” 55–60, fol. 97a and the colophon were reproduced. I also argued that fol. 97a was from the date of the manuscript, that other pages were original, and that the colophon, *pace* Sims, “Garrett Manuscript,” 213, had not been altered. Mika Natif, “The *Zafarnama* [Book of Conquest] of Sultan Husayn Mirza,” in *Insights and Interpretations: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-Fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane, *Index of Christian Art Occasional Papers* 5 (Princeton, 2002), 211–28, had evidently not seen the manuscript, summarizing (p. 227 n. 31) Sims’s account of it as: “The manuscript’s patron and location are unknown, it has mediocre-quality paintings, and it is very ambiguous.” She mentions in the text (p. 223) the two paintings that Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, published (see above), but merely to query his identifications of the subject matter. In a recently published study of Timurid illustrated *Zafarnāmas*, the TIEM manuscript is again conspicuous by its absence: Eleanor Sims, “The Iconography of the Illustrated Timurid *Zafarnāma* Manuscripts,” in *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London, 2005), 129–39. In another recent publication, David Roxburgh, ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600* (London, 2005), Roxburgh’s discussion of catalogue entry 172 seems to assume that the paintings are all contemporary with the manuscript; only fols. 96b–97a are illustrated. The catalogue entry attributes it specifically to “Iran”; since other entries by the same author have, for instance, specific attributions to “Herat, Afghanistan,” this presumably indicates the author’s doubts about a Herat provenance.
6. Sims, “Garrett Manuscript,” 211. She included fol. 62a in this group, but, as I argue in the text, the style of this Safavid Shiraz painting bears little resemblance to that of late Herat painting.
  7. The signature reads: *tummat al-nuskha al-sharīfa bi-‘awn Allāh tabārūk wa-ta’ālā mutammimhā Hamd Allāh ibn Shaykh Murshid al-kātib, sana 891*: The noble copy was finished with the help of God, may He be praised and exalted; its finisher was Hamd Allah, son of Shaykh Murshid the calligrapher, in the year 891 (1486–87). Mahdi Bayānī, *Aḥvāl va āsār-i khushnivīsān*, 2 vols., 4 pts. (Tehran 1363 [1984–85]), 1:170, reads *nammaqahā* instead of *mutammimhā*.
  8. Sims, “Garrett Manuscript,” 311–12.
  9. Roxburgh, *Turks*, cat. no. 172.
  10. O’Kane, “Removing the Veil,” 60 n. 20.
  11. Filiz Çağman, “The Miniatures of the Divan-i Hüseyini and the Influence of Their Style,” in *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. G. Fehér (Budapest, 1978), 231–59.
  12. Ivan Stchoukine, “Les images de Sultān Hosayn dans un manuscrit de son Dīvān de 897/1492,” *Syria* 53 (1976): 141–48.
  13. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 118–19, fig. 18. He also points out that “[n]one of the four paintings of the 1293 Topkapı manuscript is integral to the manuscript design: two have been added as a double-page frontispiece at the beginning, one occupies a blank space at the end of the text, and the last one is on the following page, below the colophon”: Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 125 n. 127. The other painting in the manuscript, on fol. 32a (Çağman, “Miniatures,” fig. 2), shows rocks and trees invading the text space in such a way as to make it clear that that is also one in which the painting is a later addition.
  14. Personal communication.
  15. I have not seen the original, but it has at least three in addition to the double-page frontispiece; all are illustrated in Edgar Blochet, *Les enluminures des manuscrits orientaux—turcs, arabes, persans—de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris, 1926), pls. XLIII (fols. 2b–3a), XLIVa (fol. 27a), XLIVb (fol. 36b), and XLVa (fol. 51b).
  16. Martin Bernard Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1981), 1:26.
  17. Ivan Stchoukine, *Les peintures des manuscrits timūrides* (Paris, 1954), 70–71, ms. no. 76.
  18. Stchoukine, “Les images de Sultān Hosayn,” 147.
  19. Bayānī, *Aḥvāl*, 1:236–41.
  20. Bayānī, *Aḥvāl*, 1:240–41, on account of the adjective *al-gharīb* (never used by Sultan ‘Ali al-Mashhadi) with which he prefaced his signature in this and several other manuscripts. This may be a more effective way of determining the authorship of the signature than the micrographic comparison called for by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Le chant du monde: l’Art de l’Iran safavide, 1501–1736* (Paris, 2007), 160 n. 1. Melikian-Chirvani assigns the paintings of this manuscript to Tabriz or Herat in the caption of the illustration, but in the text argues for a Herat instead of the traditional Tabriz attribution. He states (p. 160) that an argument used in favor of a Tabrizi attribution, the portrayal of the *tāj-i ḥaydarī*, could be used as an argument for the opposite, as it is shorter and wider than typical Safavid ones, as if the painter wanted to represent a Safavid baton but did not know the model used in the west of Iran. On the contrary, the model used at

- this time in the west of Iran, as evidenced in the early Safavid paintings added to the *Khamsa* of Nizami, TKS Ms. H762, is precisely the short, wide one, not the later tall, narrow one. Compare, for instance, “Jalal Sees the Pavilion of Jamal” (Melikian-Chirvani, *Le chant du monde*, 161, no. 7) and “Bahram Gur in the White Pavilion” (Lale Uluç, *Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth-Century Shiraz Manuscripts* [Istanbul, 2006], 62, fig. 28): both paintings have one figure wearing a turban identical with the *tāj-i haydarī* and another wearing a red cap that transforms into a *tāj-i haydarī*. In Shiraz at this time, a similar form of turban with a *tāj-i haydarī* was also used, as evidenced in the *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 913 (1507–8), Saltykov-Schedrin Public Library, no. 340: *Miniatiuryk “Khamse” Nizami = Miniatures Illuminations [sic] of Nisami’s “Hamsah,”* ed. E. Yu. Yusupov and Fazila Suleimanova (Tashkent, 1985), pls. 87–101. Melikian-Chirvani also argues that since two paintings are dated 1502–3 and 1503–4, a volume of this quality is unlikely to have been made for Shah Isma‘il since his troops had not even taken the town of Tabriz by 1502–3; Melikian-Chirvani, *Le chant du monde*, 160 n. 1. On the contrary, Shah Isma‘il was crowned at Tabriz in 1501: R. M. Savory, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. “Isma‘il I (Abu ‘l-Muzaffar)”; H. R. Roemer, “The Safavid Period,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6, *The Timurid and Safavid Periods*, ed. Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (Cambridge, 1986), 212.
21. Fehmi Edhem and Ivan Stchoukine, *Les manuscrits orientaux illustrés de la bibliothèque de l’Université de Stamboul*, Mémoires de l’Institut français d’archéologie de Stamboul 1 (Paris, 1933), 35–37, figs. 27–28. Stchoukine is thus most consistent in his willingness to assign dates to paintings later than the date of the manuscript; I have argued against this tendency in the cases of two other manuscripts: Bernard O’Kane, “The Bihbihani Anthology and Its Antecedents,” *Oriental Art* 45, 4 (1999/2000): 9–18.
  22. Çağman, “Miniatures,” 233–34; Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:27.
  23. Çağman, “Miniatures,” 231.
  24. Present also in fols. 2b–31 and 27a of the BN *Dīvān* of Sultan Husayn: see Blochet, *Les enluminures*, pls. XLIII and XLIVa.
  25. Çağman, “Miniatures,” 236.
  26. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 2: pls. 11, 14–16, 25–27, 33, 36–37, 47, 56, 60, 73, 111, 134, 146, 216, 220–21, 246, 252, and 260.
  27. From the Bernard Berenson Collection: Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 142.
  28. Illustrated in Robert Hillenbrand, *Imperial Images in Persian Painting: A Scottish Arts Council Exhibition* (Edinburgh, 1977), 40, cat. no. 43.
  29. Çağman, “Miniatures,” figs. 1, 5, and 7.
  30. Fol. 36b, illustrated in Blochet, *Les enluminures*, pl. XLIVb.
  31. There is only a thin wispy black feather visible at the back of his turban. The rather unprepossessing conical cap that he wears is also seen on the figure of Timur giving an audience in a *Timurnāma* that has been attributed to Bukhara, early sixteenth century: Crofton Black and Nabil Saidi, *Sam Fogg: Islamic Manuscripts* (London, 2000), 93.
  32. Illustrated in Roxburgh, *Turks*, 240.
  33. Çağman, “Miniatures,” figs. 7–9; however, none in the scene “Solomon and Sheba Enthroned” wears it: *ibid.*, fig. 10.
  34. One figure has a turban with a small white feather facing backwards in “Iskandar and the Seven Sages,” *Khamsa* of Nizami, BL, Ms. Or. 6810: Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* (London, 1997), 152. Three figures with small black feathers in their turbans are present in “Shaykh ‘Iraqi’s Farewell,” Navā‘ī, *Hayrat al-abrār*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Elliott 287: *ibid.*, 162.
  35. Khusrau, in “Khusrau at Shirin’s Palace,” one of three paintings from this manuscript that are now in the Keir collection, displays such a feather: B. W. Robinson et al., *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, Keir Collection (London, 1976), col. pl. 20, although in his commentary Robinson is equivocal on whether it is later fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Two figures in “Iskandar and the Shepard” have prominent plumes: *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran 1501–1576*, ed. Jon Thompson and Sheila Canby (Milan, 2003), 73. The plumes appear throughout on military helmets in a battle scene from the manuscript that is usually attributed to the Aqquyunlu period: Robinson, “Turkman School,” pl. 135.
  36. Robinson, “Turkman School,” col. pls. LXVIII–LXIX. The paintings were argued to be later by Stchoukine, who considered them mid-seventeenth-century Turkish works: Ivan Stchoukine, *La peinture turque d’après les manuscrits illustrés*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1966–71), vol. 2, *De Murad IV à Mustafa III 1623–1773*, 61–62. His arguments were analyzed in detail by Robinson, *Islamic Painting*, 160–62, who gave convincing reasons for their rejection.
  37. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:27.
  38. K. V. Zetterstéen and C. J. Lamm, *Mohammed Āṣafī, The Story of Jamāl and Jalāl: An Illuminated Manuscript in the Library of Uppsala University* (Uppsala, 1948), figs. 1–2, 4, 5–7, 15–22, 24, 29, and 31–32.
  39. Wheeler M. Thackston, “The *Diwan* of Khata‘i: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Isma‘il I,” *Asian Art* 1, 4 (Fall 1988): figs. 1, 3.
  40. For another early example in a Shiraz *Gulistān* of Sa‘di, dated 919 (1513–14), BL Ms. Or. 11847, see Sheila Canby, *The Golden Age of Persian Art 1501–1722* (London, 1999), 33, fig. 21. It is unnecessary to detail, for instance, its ubiquity in the *Shāhnāma* of Shah Tahmasp. A large, white feather tinged with black appears in the late Timurid *Khamsa* of Nizami BL Ms. Add. 25900, with mostly late Timurid paintings, on fol. 44v, “Khusrau Sees Shirin Bathing” (illustrated in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 118, fig. 59). However, this is surely because, as Stchoukine (Stchoukine, *Les peintures des manuscrits timûrides*, 77) and Welch (Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:126; attributed to the Safavid painters Shaykh Muhammad and Dust Muhammad) thought, it is one of several Safavid additions to the manuscript. The rocks, which have more jagged edges than is usual in Timurid paintings,

- and the plane tree in this painting may be compared to those in "Bandits Attack the Caravan of Aynie and Ria," Jāmī, *Haft Aurang*, 963–72 (1556–65), Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., 46.2, fol. 64b, illustrated in Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (New Haven, 1997), 113.
41. 'Aṣṣār, *Mihr u Mushtari*, BN Sup. Pers. 765, dated Shiraz 909 (1504), illustrated in Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits du XIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1997), 133; Zetterstéen and Lamm, *Story of Jamāl and Jalāl*, passim.
  42. E.g., in the "big head" *Shāhnāma*: Robinson, "Turkman School," col. pl. LXVIII.
  43. Çağman, "Miniatures," figs. 5–7.
  44. *Ibid.*, figs. 1–7.
  45. E.g., in the *Khamsa* of Nizami, Metropolitan Museum of Art 13.228.7, of ca. 1525 (Bahari, *Bihzad*, 204) and above all in the *Shāhnāma* for Shah Tahmasp, especially those attributed by Welch to Aqa Mirak: Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:95–117, and Bahari, *Bihzad*, 211.
  46. For extant early Ottoman examples of such caftans, see J. M. Rogers, Hülye Tezcan, and Selma Delibaş, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: Costumes, Embroideries and Other Textiles* (London, 1986), pls. 1–3, 7–8, 10–12.
  47. This type of fastening is especially prominent in the court scene of Solomon in the IUL 'Ali Shir *Gharā'ib al-ṣiḡhar*: Edhem and Stchoukine, *Les manuscrits*, fig. 27; Çağman, "Miniatures," fig. 10; and in another enthronement scene in the same manuscript: Çağman, "Miniatures," fig. 7; as well as in the figures at the bottom left of the frontispiece of the TKS *Divān* of Sultan Husayn: Çağman, "Miniatures," fig. 1, and Roxburgh, *Turks*, 240.
  48. See, for example, Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 2: pls. 3, 15, 19, 32, 37, 54, 66, 110, and 125, to list just a few.
  49. Çağman, "Miniatures," 236.
  50. *Ibid.*, 236. Another manuscript contemporary with this one, which also has a similar style, is the Jāmī, *Yūsuf u Zulaykhā*, TKS Ms. R 910, dated 931 (1525), calligraphed by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri: Ivan Stchoukine, "Un poème de Jāmī illustré à Tabriz en 931/1525," *Syria* 51 (1974): pls. XXI–XXIV.
  51. Çağman, "Miniatures," 231, 236.
  52. *Ibid.*, 236.
  53. *Ibid.*, 236 n. 9.
  54. *Ibid.*, 231.
  55. *Ibid.*, 235.
  56. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 118. To this core group we should add a *Divān* of Mir 'Ali Shir in the Soudavar Collection, which has one painting in the style of the others: see *ibid.* It is interesting that it is undated: those willing to pass painted manuscripts off as intact Timurid works might have been willing to add paintings to the text, but stopped short of forging manuscript dates. Perhaps they realized that connoisseurship of calligraphy would let them down faster than expertise in painting; the safer course would then be to leave the manuscript with no colophon.
  57. Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*, 1:25, fig. 22.
  58. Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in The Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1997), fig. 43.
  59. For Shiraz examples, see Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, figs. 133, 171–2, 175, 184, 195–6, 197–8, 235, 247, and 259–61.
  60. From a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, reproduced in Oktay Aslanapa, "The Art of Bookbinding," in Gray, *Arts of the Book*, pl. XV.
  61. Ms. 171, a *Khamsa* of Nizami, unpublished.
  62. For example, that seen in a *Haft Awrang* of Jami, TKS Ms. H 751, illustrated in Lâle Uluç, "Selling to the Court: Late-Sixteenth-Century Manuscript Production in Shiraz," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): fig. 1; in a *Kulliyāt* of Sa'di, Bodleian Library, Oxford, illustrated in *idem*, *Turkman Governors*, 102, fig. 50; and in a *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsi, TIEM Ms. 1984, *ibid.*, 154, figs. 103–4.
  63. In addition to the examples in the previous footnote, see also an *Iskandarnāma* of Ahmadi, TKS R.813, illustrated in Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 172, fig. 121. She also illustrates (*ibid.*, 95, fig. 48) a *Kulliyāt* of Dihlavi, TIEM Ms. 1980, dated 903 (1497), which has a contoured text area and bolder reciprocal crenellation in the outer border, indicating a transition in the later Timurid period towards characteristics that would become normal in the following century.
  64. The dimensions of the paintings are given in millimeters, height followed by width. The folio size has been cut down, but at present it is 335 x 224 mm; the size of the text frame is 223 x 138 mm.
  65. A landscape with a diagonal river and a verdant border, a flower-strewn ground, and a transition to a rocky horizon is also seen in "Shaykh 'Iraqi's Farewell," Nava'i, *Hayrat al-abrār*, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Elliott 287: Bahari, *Bihzad*, 162, fig. 95. The perspective rendering of the river, the variety of the clumps of flowers, and the smooth transition to the horizon all contrast strongly with the *Zafarnāma* painting.
  66. For comparable examples, including the helmets with fluttering flags worn by most of the cavalry, see another Yazdi *Zafarnāma* manuscript, written by Murshid al-kātib al-Shirāzī (presumably the father of our *Zafarnāma* calligrapher), 939 (1533), India Office Library, London, Ms. 137: B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London, 1976), 82, no. 237; and a Firdawsi *Shāhnāma*, copied at Shiraz by Muḥammad b. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Kātib, TKS Ms. H 1485: Uluç, *Turkman Governors*, 132, fig. 40.
  67. Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, *Zafarnāma: Tārīkh-i 'umūmī mufaṣṣal-i Irān dar dawrah-i Timūriyān* (henceforth ZNA), ed. Muḥammad 'Abbāsi, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1336 [1957]), 1:94, line 20.
  68. ZNA, 1:118, line 5.
  69. ZNA, 1:134, line 7.
  70. ZNA, 1:177, line 12.
  71. At the center of defenders of a *Zafarnāma*, BL Ms. Or. 1359 (959 [1552]), illustrated in Grace Dunham Guest,

- Shiraz Painting in the Sixteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1949), pl. 40A; in a leaf from the Praetorius *Zafarnāma* (953 [1548]) in the V&A (ibid., pl. 39A); in the Gulistan Library *Zafarnāma* (ibid., pl. 38B); in the *Zafarnāma*, BL Ms. Or. Add. 7635 (929 [1523]) (ibid., pl. 28A). The latter (pl. 28A) also has similarities in the figures of the attackers at the left scaling the ladder, especially the warrior with outstretched sword near the top of the ladder. The motif of the rock thrower is, of course, earlier; it is found (but in a differing pose) in the painting of “Timur’s Assault on the Fortress of Smyrna” in the Garrett *Zafarnāma*: Bahari, *Bihzad*, fig. 38.
72. *Sultan, Shah, and Great Mughal: The History and Culture of the Islamic World*, ed. Kjeld von Folsach et al. (Copenhagen, 1966), 203, no. 179, Shiraz, mid-sixteenth century.
  73. Illustrated in B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London, 1980), 172, no. 586. A much freer version is to be found in a copy of ‘Abd Allāh Hātifī, *Zafarnāma*, dated 976 (1568), Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, no. 2012, fol. 45b, reproduced in *Oriental Miniatures: The Collection of the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, vol. 1, *14th–17th Centuries*, ed. M. Khairullaev, G. Pugachenkova, et al. (Tashkent, 2001), 162, attributed to the “Maverannahr” style.
  74. ZNA, 1:191, line 6.
  75. Bahari, *Bihzad*, 70–71, pls. 28–29.
  76. See n. 1 above.
  77. As seen in the controversy over whether Mirak or Bihzad was the painter of the frontispiece of the Cairo *Būstān*: Michael Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzād of Herāt (1465–1535)* (Paris, 2004), 194–96 (which mentions earlier studies on the topic); Barbara Brend, “A Kingly Posture: the Iconography of Sultan Husayn Bayqara,” in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. Bernard O’Kane (Edinburgh, 2005), 81–92.
  78. Bahari, *Bihzad*, 130–31, pls. 69–70.
  79. ZNA, 1:293, line 22.
  80. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 52.20.4, reproduced in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 92, fig. 45.
  81. Reproduced in Robinson, “Turkman School,” figs. 140–41; for a color illustration, see G. Pugachenkova and O. Galerkina, *Miniatiury Srednei Azii* (Moscow, 1979), pls. 1–1a. Although attributed to the period of the Aqqyunlu ruler Uzun Hasan by Robinson, the extraordinary rock faces in this painting have no parallels in any manuscript painting outside of the Istanbul albums.
  82. Illustrated in color in J. M. Rogers, Filiz Çağman, and Zeren Tanındı, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts* (London, 1986), pl. 64; and in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 166–7, pls. 99–100.
  83. ZNA, 1:331, line 3.
  84. ZNA, 2:173, line 14.
  85. Several of the soldiers have eyebrows portrayed as an almost straight line, joined in the middle. This is also found in fol. 62a, “Aq Timur on Foot Causes Üch Qara Bahadur to Flee.”
  86. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library*, 87 no. 255.
  87. ZNA, 2:314, line 13.
  88. Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī, *Zafarnāma* (facsimile), ed. ‘Iṣām al-Dīn Urunbaev (Tashkent, 1972); for the *Zafarnāma* edited by ‘Abbas, see n. 67 above.
  89. Pace Sims, “Garrett Manuscript,” 307 n. 1, there is nothing in this passage about Timur, nor anything about Amir Husayn making peace with the kings of Badakhshan and Talikhan.
  90. *Ibid.*, suggests that the scene represented the ambassadors of Yıldırım Beyazid carrying letters to Timur. The ambassadors were honored at the end of the hunt, and are mentioned before it began, but almost all of this passage is devoted to a description of the lion hunt itself.
  91. *Ibid.*, 305–8.
  92. Sims, “Garrett Manuscript,” 315.
  93. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Khvāndamīr, *Tārīkh-i Ḥabīb al-siyar*, 4 vols. (Tehran, 1333 [1954]), 3:542.
  94. Roxburgh, *Turks*, 420.
  95. Sakisian, *La miniature persane*, 83, was also of the opinion that this was the finest painting in the manuscript, hence his decision to reproduce it.
  96. See n. 21 above.
  97. David J. Roxburgh, “Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting,” *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 119–46.



CHRISTIANE GRUBER

## BETWEEN LOGOS (*KALIMA*) AND LIGHT (*NŪR*): REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD IN ISLAMIC PAINTING

Notwithstanding the long-held assumption that Islam forbids the representation of figural images, including the depiction of the Prophet Muhammad—a widespread belief underlying the furor that broke out following the September 2005 publication of a series of caricatures in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*<sup>1</sup>—there nevertheless exists a notable corpus of images of Muhammad produced, mostly in the form of manuscript illustrations, in various regions of the Islamic world from the thirteenth century through modern times. A good number of these paintings, however, underwent later iconoclastic mutilations in which the facial features of the Prophet were scratched or smeared (fig. 1),<sup>2</sup> thus compromising the body of pictorial evidence. Besides cases in which an image was mutilated, further surviving materials underscore the diverse and sometimes conflicting understandings of the permissibility of image-making in Islamic traditions, whether such understandings emerged as cultural constructions or reflect personal preferences.

Variant approaches and responses to images unfortunately render the examination of Islamic pictorial production quite speculative in nature. Despite these impediments, it is possible to explore some of the main iconographic developments and various symbolic implications of representations of Muhammad in a number of Islamic artistic traditions. However, it is not feasible to offer here a complete coverage of this complex subject. Rather, this study attempts to provide a preliminary discussion of textual and visual descriptions of the Prophet by concentrating principally on Persian materials. Although select Arabic and Ottoman Turkish texts and images are considered as well in order to highlight a particular theme or motif, there are two reasons for emphasizing Persian sources: firstly,

because illustrations of the Prophet flourished in Persian lands, especially during the Ilkhanid (1256–1353), Timurid (1370–1506), and Safavid (1501–1722) periods;<sup>3</sup> and secondly, because these depictions are often embedded within Persian illustrated historical and biographical texts, as well as illustrated “Books of Ascension” (*Mi’rājnāmas*) and encomia to Muhammad and his heavenly ascension (*mi’rāj*) included in poetic texts produced as illustrated manuscripts from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

Examining first how scholarship has approached the concept of visibility in Islamic pictorial traditions and in representations of the Prophet more specifically, this study then attempts to sketch out the ways in which the Prophet Muhammad has been represented, how such depictions developed over the centuries, and some of the possible reasons behind the gradual move from “veristic” representation (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries) to techniques of abstraction (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries). In this development, three principal kinds of “portraits” of the Prophet stand out, namely, veristic, inscribed, and luminous.<sup>5</sup> These divergent pictorial trends at times overlap and therefore reveal that one particular iconographic tradition did not necessarily belong to one time or place.

Verism or veristic representation is defined here as the manner in which an artist attempts to depict the human form as it is visible to the human eye, by including such details as facial features, bodily limbs, and other physical characteristics. The adjective “veristic” is used interchangeably with the terms “mimetic,” “naturalistic,” and “realistic” as a suitable means to describe visually what is essentially not a “real” person but rather a “memory image.”<sup>6</sup> The painter’s technique therefore involves the desire to represent the depicted subject’s



Fig. 1. The Prophet Muhammad's ascension (defaced), from Amir Khusraw Dihlavi's *Maṭla' al-anvār* (The Rising of the Lights), located in an anthology of Persian poetry, Yazd, 810 (1407). Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul, Ms. H. 796, fol. 4v. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

physical reality in a natural manner, even if the subject (like the Prophet Muhammad) is no longer alive and thus exists not in the flesh but rather in recollection—a process of memory-building that can depend on iterations emerging from both culturally circumscribed mnemonic cues and an artist's own system of visual associations.

Inscribed depictions of the Prophet contain inscriptions either below or above a painted surface—usually the Prophet's white facial veil—and thus reveal the painter's processual approach to image-making and / or the viewer's active reception to it. In general, inscribed

“portraits” highlight the affective power of images of the Prophet, and suggest a relationship to personal invocation and prayer (*du'ā'*) practices, which tend to call forth the Prophet through a combination of verbal prayers and mental picturing. In such representations, a written text serves to buttress a visual construct, while the declarative mode helps to realize the demonstrative mode.

Luminous paintings adopt the metaphorical language of the golden aureole to convey the Prophet's sacred, primordial, and creative light, called the “light of Muhammad” (*nūr Muḥammad*).<sup>7</sup> This pictorial technique seeks to transcend the restrictions of mimetic description in order to herald the Prophet as a cosmic entity freed from temporal boundaries and corporeal limitations. His body, just like the rest of the existential world, was widely believed to have been created by the sensible touch of primordial irradiation, a sensate yet empyreal substance. Artists interested in conveying the Prophet's preexistent luminescence purposefully stressed this more avataristic element by including golden blazes and halos in their paintings. In other words, the pictorial technique of representing Muhammad's numinous qualities engages with abstract thought (as it pertains to the prophetic body) and transfers the process of intellectual allegory to artistic production by deploying certain choice motifs, including the flaming nimbus.

What these three principal genres of depiction disclose is that the Prophet could be imagined in multiple ways and that this variety reveals a complex and nuanced approach to describing Muhammad by writers and artists alike. Similarly, the emergence of methods of abstracting the prophetic body from circa 1400 onward in paintings frequently attached to texts of mystical inclinations suggests that images of the Prophet were, at least to some extent, influenced by various mystical ideas and practices, which themselves became further ensconced within Persian spheres under the royal auspices of the Sufi-Shi'i Safavid dynasty.<sup>8</sup> Displacing the veristic mode, pictorial techniques that abstract the prophetic body appear to have emerged at this time much more from the allegorical desire to represent a more “metaphorical Muhammad” than from attempts to prohibit or eradicate his depiction—the latter being only one facet of a distinctively modern phenomenon.<sup>9</sup>

The imaginative attempts to recollect the Prophet's body and being in mystical milieus find intriguing parallels in the visual arts as well. For these reasons, it appears that depictions of the Prophet were reflective of pre-modern mystical and popular sentiments calling for a visualization of Muhammad through the twin procedures of remembrance and evocation. Sufi writers discussing the subject in particular believed that the Prophet had both a human (*nāsūt*) and superhuman (*lāhūt*) nature united into one being,<sup>10</sup> and that his corporeal form occurred only after the physical appearance of his primordial light. Therefore, Muhammad's physical manifestation *in corpore* can be understood as an ongoing process of theophany, oftentimes beyond the visual reach of the believer's eyes.

In order to convey the antipodes of disclosure and exposure, artists likewise seem to have experimented with various motifs and techniques to communicate visually the Prophet's exceptional status. In turn, such explorations crystallized into specific pictorial traditions that could be given new meanings in different contexts, be these Shi'i, Sunni, Sufi, or some combination thereof. Although it remains difficult to determine the exact character and changing meanings of images of the Prophet, an analysis of pictorial details and an exploration of text-image relations—anchored in a historical but not historicist framework—can offer some preliminary suggestions as to the various symbolic and interactive mechanisms through which representations of Muhammad came to be formed and received during the pre-modern period.

#### MODES OF VISUALITIES AND THE PROPHETIC CORPUS

Scholars have examined portraiture practices in Islamic traditions and how such traditions tend to embrace either non-naturalistic or abstract modes of representation. Two particular theories attempt to explain artists' quests to go beyond the mimetic imitation of forms, which is itself based on the scientific mechanisms of visual perception. One hypothesis, put forth by Alexandre Papadopoulo, proposes that artists purposefully utilized certain forms (bodily topoi) and shunned others (linear and aerial perspective) in order to achieve inver-

similitude.<sup>11</sup> Papadopoulo argues that the lack of optical naturalism in Islamic art hints that artists attempted to capture something beyond the physical world. Rather than representing a likeness bound by the parameters of physiognomic verisimilitude, artists indeed seemed to acknowledge the possibilities of identifications existing above and beyond the restrictive limitations of physical mimicry. Although suffering from limited credibility, Papadopoulo's point of view attempts to provide one way of explaining why Islamic systems of portraiture-making did not evolve from flat and frontal to natural and three-dimensional, as in the case of Western traditions of portraiture.

A second commonly held belief contends that in Islamic practices the total negation of physical form and the predilection for verbal description displace more conventional methods of portraiture, due to the putative (and often transgressed) prohibition of figural imagery. This hypothesis is borne out most especially by traditions of representing the Prophet Muhammad through the non-figurative verbal description known as a *ḥilya* (fig. 2).<sup>12</sup> Primarily produced in Ottoman spheres from the seventeenth century onward, the *ḥilya* (or Ottoman Turkish, *ḥilye*) could mediate a visual recollection of the Prophet through verbal expression. However, the *ḥilya* represents only a modern development of practices concerned with conveying an "image" of the Prophet—in this case, a later artistic tradition whose text-based aniconicity reflects only one possible culmination of abstracting tendencies in the figural arts of Islam.

Beyond inverisimilitude and the negation of form, methods of visualizing and depicting persons as rich and complex entities blending presence and essence—and not just material fact<sup>13</sup>—have been central to practices of portraiture in a variety of cultural traditions.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the general shift from understanding a portrait as a simple likeness to perceiving it as a procedure that aims to describe an individual's entire character has led to new discussions that highlight the deep divide between *vision*, as the scientific mechanism linked to the production of sight, and *visuality*, which encompasses the many culturally contingent modes of seeing. Although vision has traditionally been understood in terms of artistic production and visuality in terms of viewer reception, it can be argued that both are inseparable and can serve as complementary channels for



Fig. 2. Verbal description (*hilya*) of the Prophet Muhammad, Istanbul, 1130 (1718). Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1-88-154.13. (Photo: courtesy of the Library of Congress)

individual contemplation. As a consequence, most traditions of portrait-making and portrait-viewing utilize optical depiction, sight, gaze, and mental imagination in an attempt to achieve a total visionary experience.<sup>15</sup>

Oftentimes experiential confrontations in pictorial form come to fruition through the phenomenology of seeing in religious contexts. While art history's methods of analyzing compositional forms as historically and symbolically significant provide one venue for understanding religious painting, other approaches (iconographical analysis, text-image relations, etc.) may illuminate how a representation can act as an effective medium for the stimulation of affective piety, thus

functioning as a meditative or devotional image—in other words, what historians of medieval European art have called an *Andachtsbild*.<sup>16</sup>

Even though methodological tools from Western art history have been adopted to explore traditions of icon-making and depictions of the sacred in a variety of cultures, these have rarely been utilized to examine the practice of making and viewing pictures in an Islamic context, due to the prevalent belief that traditions of “religious iconography” simply do not exist in Islamic artistic practices.<sup>17</sup> Despite such impediments to exploring the role of images in possibly religious or devotional contexts, scholars such as Priscilla Soucek have broken new ground by examining how painters and viewers

might have envisioned and engaged with images in Islamic traditions.

Soucek has pursued questions of audience reception, using this methodological approach as a basis for exploring theories of visual perception as they pertain to practices of Islamic portraiture.<sup>18</sup> For instance, based on Persian textual sources, she demonstrates that a pictorial image can be engendered by the viewer's mental activity of imagination (*khiyāl*).<sup>19</sup> A number of Persian writers in fact contend that portraits are expected to lead their audiences from the formal image (*ṣūrat*) to its more elevated meaning or inner reality (*ma'nī*), that is, from the phenomenal world to a visionary encounter with the unseen.<sup>20</sup> This process may itself cause the viewer to engage in other forms of encounters as well, some of which may be religious or spiritual in nature.

This visual approach, which uses the formal mode to hint at an elevated meaning, appears eminently suited to images of the prophets, themselves understood as visual epiphanies of being (*tajalliyyāt al-wujūd*)<sup>21</sup> whose outer forms are only fully appreciable through the viewer's inner perception (*al-bāṣira al-bāṭina*).<sup>22</sup> For these reasons, representations of prophets in Islamic traditions—much like a number of philosophical and mystical texts describing the bi-substantial prophetic condition of presence (*wujūd*) and essence (*dhāt*)—must extend the boundaries of mimetic description, both at the moment of the artist's production and, later, at the time of the viewer's reception. In other words, both the maker and beholder of an image can be dared to rise above the creation or perception of an "outer form" in order to engage with an "inner form." This challenge therefore involves abstract thought put into artistic practice through the supple lexicon of symbolic form.

The Prophet Muhammad, as a mortal man and as the collective prototype of all humanity, is defined in a variety of Islamic mystical, theological, and philosophical writings as both existential being and pre-existential reality. The widely held belief in the Prophet's bi-substantial nature has permeated Islamic literature and popular piety from the beginnings of Islam to the present day.<sup>23</sup> This twofold approach, adopted by biographers, historians, exegetes, philosophers, and mystics alike, coalesced into the "Doctrine of the Person of the Prophet Muhammad,"<sup>24</sup> which promotes its protagonist

as Mensch and Urmensch, as corporeal and transcendent, and as phenomenal and primordial all at once. Bearing in mind this widespread belief, should not attempts to depict the Prophet as a human organism and cosmic being arise in the visual arts as well?

This study builds upon the answers that emerge from this fundamental question in order to demonstrate that a number of pictorial strategies were adopted to convey the compound nature of the Prophet Muhammad. These techniques, which were used especially after circa 1400 and were applied to illustrations accompanying mystical and poetic texts, displaced earlier veristic methods of depiction deployed largely within narrative contexts and henceforth became "normalized" within the pictorial arts of Islam.

In early texts within or deriving from the hadith (Sayings of the Prophet) genre,<sup>25</sup> attempts at thoroughly describing the Prophet Muhammad's physical traits and personal characteristics—both of which are encompassed under the literary rubric of *shamā'il* (features or character)—form the main impetus for envisaging the Prophet. Texts on the Prophet's *shamā'il* composed by well-established authors such as al-Tirmidhi (d. 880),<sup>26</sup> al-Baghawi (d. ca. 1117),<sup>27</sup> and Ibn Kathir (d. 1373)<sup>28</sup> are expository, and thus bear a strong resemblance to veristic portraits of the Prophet Muhammad that otherwise shy away from techniques of physical abstraction. In this case, images and texts are both explanatory in nature and devoid of verbal and pictorial embellishments that seek to overly abstract or conceptualize the prophetic corpus. The stress on legibility in textual sources parallels the emphasis on the Prophet's visibility in paintings produced between circa 1200 and 1400.

On the other hand, philosophical works and Sufi manuals, particularly those composed by famous mystics like Ibn 'Arabi (d. 1240),<sup>29</sup> 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili (d. 1408),<sup>30</sup> and Abu 'Abdallah Muhammad al-Jazuli (d. 1465),<sup>31</sup> among many, reveal a shift in popular practices related to the devotion of the Prophet Muhammad. In these kinds of works, the Prophet is praised as the perfect or complete man (*al-insān al-kāmil*), as well as a vehicle or channel (*wasīla*), an isthmus or boundary point (*barzakh*), and a medium or intermediary (*wāsiṭa*) between God and man.<sup>32</sup> Sufi writers such as al-Jili also point out that the Prophet's nature continuously

fluctuates between the phenomenal world (*al-ḥadath*) and everlasting being (*al-qidām*).<sup>33</sup> Sufi texts stress that through mental contemplation and meditation the devotee can achieve total union (*tawḥīd*) and self-annihilation in the Prophet (*fanā' fi'l-Rasūl*).<sup>34</sup>

These mystical methods of communion with the prophetic corpus necessitated the development of an ideational vocabulary that tended quite often to divest the Prophet of his human attributes and transform him into an emblem of superhuman proportions. Forming a particular process of intellection, these abstracting tendencies find intriguing parallels in the obscuring pictorial details found in depictions of the Prophet. Such paintings, which include inscribed prayers or portray the Prophet as the elemental and luminous *nūr Muḥammad*, likewise seek to convey the sum total of the Prophet's spiritual and material makeup. It appears that the rise of mystical practices and Sufi poetry were guiding factors in elaborating new concepts of the prophetic persona and hence its representation after circa 1400. Armed with an "equipoise between poetry and painting,"<sup>35</sup> artists appear to have wanted to shed the kind of pictorial didacticism found in bio-historical texts in favor of more abstract visual forms derived from poetical expressions that could facilitate an aesthetic experience.<sup>36</sup> By 1500, abstracting visual forms gained such prevalence in both Sunni and Shi'i milieus that they formed a particular pictorial "canon," amenable to various adaptations and interpretations.

#### THE VERISTIC MODE: PORTRAYING THE PROPHET'S *SHAMĀ'IL*

The earliest extant paintings of the Prophet Muhammad depict him as a fully visible corporeal figure, whose facial features or *shamā'il* are neither hidden beneath a veil nor engulfed by flames. These sorts of realistic depictions of the Prophet are included in the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts produced from the period of Anatolian Seljuk (1077–1307) and Ilkhanid rule to the beginning of the Safavid reign. The texts themselves belong largely to the historical and biographical literary genres, and thus are primarily concerned with conveying important information about

Islamic history and explaining the life and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad.

When closely examined, however, expository texts and images do not seem to abrogate spiritual encounters. The close connection between textual exposition and spiritual contemplation is best illustrated in the literary genre known as *Shamā'il al-Rasūl*, or the Features of the Prophet. These kinds of works were produced as early as the ninth century and describe the physical traits and personality of the Prophet. They are closely associated with other texts that describe his physical attributes and personality as manifest proofs of his prophecy (*dalā'il al-nubuwwa*).<sup>37</sup> The *shamā'il* genre can be classified as "explanatory hadith," because each text presents a compendium of Sayings about the Prophet's features and character, as transmitted by his companions and other eyewitnesses. Each hadith is then followed by a clarification of its meaning: for example, al-Tirmidhi collected over 397 sayings on the Prophet's *shamā'il* and divided them into fifty-five discrete chapters describing, to name just a few, Muhammad's facial features, complexion, hair, shoes, and turban.

Although burdened by the close attention paid to each hadith's chain of transmission (*isnād*) and characterized by a matter-of-fact rhetoric, it is clear that works in the *shamā'il* genre were intended to provide a spiritual blueprint for commemorating and visualizing the Prophet Muhammad long after his death. As al-Tirmidhi states in the introduction to his *Shamā'il al-Rasūl*:

To draw a pen-picture of his appearance is beyond one's capacity, but the companions have endeavored, according to their capabilities, to preserve what little they could, of which some is written here... They have done the community an immense favor by conveying the perfect intrinsic knowledge, as well as the perfect conspicuous elegance and beauty of the Prophet. When an unfulfilled lover is deprived of meeting the beloved then he stands in front of the beloved's house remembering the features of his beloved in an attempt to gain some solace. It is from habits and features that the heart is appeased.<sup>38</sup>

Al-Tirmidhi describes how a pictorial representation fades in comparison to the Prophet's companions' attempts at describing the facial traits and character of their "beloved." Thanks to collections of such descriptions, the author further notes, he who has not had the opportunity to see or meet Muhammad in person can



Fig. 3. The Prophet Muhammad, accompanied by the King of Sham and the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, resurrects Varqa and Gulshah from their tomb. From ‘Ayyuqi’s *Varqa va Gulshāh*, Konya, ca. 1200–1250. Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul, Ms. H. 481, fol. 70r. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Library)

find comfort through the continual recollection and celebration of the Prophet’s character and physical traits, themselves forming “memory images” capable of soothing an aspirant.

Since only one generation of believers saw the actual physical body of the Prophet, many thereafter had to try to perceive his form through verbal and visual methods of sustained contemplation.<sup>39</sup> This notion, as put forth in Arabic-language *shamā’il* texts of the early period, also infiltrated Persian works by the early thirteenth century at the latest. For instance, the historian Najm al-Din Abu Bakr Mahmud b. ‘Ali al-Ravandi, best known for having written a history of the Anatolian Seljuks, composed a *shamā’il*-like text entitled *Sharaf al-Nabī* (The Nobility of the Prophet), which he began in 1202 and completed in 1211.<sup>40</sup> Written in Persian, his *Sharaf al-Nabī* is based on and expands an earlier text in Arabic written by Abu Sa’d ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abi ‘Uthman al-Wa’iz, a Sufi *shaykh* who composed treatises on mystical thought and practice. In his introduction, al-Ravandi tells us that he translated al-Wa’iz’s *Sharaf al-nubuwwa* (The Nobility of Prophethood) so that it could be useful and instructive to Persian speakers; this remark is then followed by sixty-one chapters describing Muhammad, his character and physique, and his prophetic mission, as well as the merits of visiting his tomb, directing prayers towards him, and contemplating him

through the imaginative faculty (*khiyāl*) and in dream (*khwāb*). Al-Ravandi’s work and others like it helped spread knowledge in Persian lands about the Prophet’s physical features while also contributing to a more notional envisaging of the prophetic persona by mixing expository writing with conceptual thought.

At the same time as al-Ravandi finished his *Sharaf al-Nabī* in the early thirteenth century, an illustrated manuscript of ‘Ayyuqi’s tragic story of the lovers Varqa and Gulshah was completed in Konya between circa 1200 and 1250. The manuscript contains the two earliest surviving representations of Muhammad, one of which depicts him resurrecting the two dead lovers upon the Damascene Jews’ conversion to Islam (fig. 3).<sup>41</sup> In this scene, the Prophet sits cross-legged in the center of the composition; much like the other characters, he is depicted with facial features and a halo. Only his long black outer cloak (*burda*), which partially covers the top of his turban, along with his central location in the composition and his seated position, sets him apart, thereby suggesting a moment of authority and solemnity—namely, the ultimate triumph of Islam within the salvific context of redemption and resurrection.<sup>42</sup> In this painting, the Prophet remains rather undifferentiated from the other protagonists; such a lack of pictorial focus on Muhammad might be traceable to ‘Ayyuqi’s text. Originally composed between circa 1000 and 1050 during

the early Ghaznavid period (975–1187), ‘Ayyuqi’s *Varqa va Gulshāh* places emphasis on the moralizing aspect of the episode, rather than on affective attachment to the persona of the Prophet. Such a narrational—rather than devotional—approach is rather typical of Islamic texts produced in Persian lands during the early period.

The drive to present the Prophet in narrative terms in ‘Ayyuqi’s text, as well as in descriptive detail in al-Ravandi’s *Sharaf al-Nabī* and in other texts in the *shamā’il* genre, also infiltrated other writings in Persian, most notably prologues praising Muhammad initiating larger works in the belletristic (*adab*) genre. For example, another extant representation of the Prophet appears in the encomium to Sa’d al-Din al-Varavini’s collection of didactic fables entitled *Marzubānnāma* (Book of the Margrave), executed in Baghdad in 1299 (fig. 4). In this painting, the Prophet sits cross-legged and enthroned, wearing his large white head shawl over his blue robe. Two flying angels, whose faces have been scratched out, hover above him holding a fluttering drapery. The angel on the right appears to offer Muhammad a branch or to pour rays of light upon him, while the angel on the left appears to anoint him with a heavenly liquid or scent. Other figures sit or stand around the Prophet; however, like the other two paintings in the manuscript, their faces, and in particular their eyes, were damaged at a later date.<sup>43</sup>

The Persian text immediately above and below the image describes the Prophet as emitting radiance much like a torch of light (*mash’ala-i nūr*) and his two sandals (*na’laynash*) as exuding the minty smell of the pennyroyal or black poley herb (*kaisū-i ḥūr*).<sup>44</sup> The angels above Muhammad imbue him with the dual synesthetic attributes of numinous brilliance and fragrant aroma, adding a layer to the Prophet’s features not otherwise visible upon first glance. The petalled flowers and leaves in the foreground, moreover, may represent two pennyroyal flowers, thus offering a more olfactory evocation of Muhammad’s prophetic aroma, itself praised in al-Varavini’s text as a “perfumed earth” (*turbat-i mu’aṭṭar*).<sup>45</sup>

Even though the painting’s composition and corresponding text suggest that the Prophet’s inner essence, perfumed and radiant, can be a subject of praise and mental picturing, it also pays heed to his more observable features. Indeed, Muhammad’s *shamā’il* are



Fig. 4. The Prophet Muhammad enthroned, from Sa’d al-Din al-Varavini’s *Marzubānnāma* (Book of the Margrave), Baghdad, 698 (1299). Archaeological Museum Library, Istanbul, Ms. 216, fol. 2v. (Photo: courtesy of Marianna S. Simpson)

extolled in the two lines of Arabic poetry below the painting, which read:

*Salāmu Allāh kulla ṣabāḥi yawmin ‘alā tilka’l-ḍarā’ibi  
wa’l-shamā’il*

*Salāmu murannaḥin li’l-shawqi ḥattā yamīlu min al-  
yamīni ilā’l-shamā’il*<sup>46</sup>

Peace of God every morning of a day upon those characteristics and features

Peace upon a frenzied one who, in longing, rocks from the right to the lefts

The poem exalts the noble character of the Prophet’s features (*ḍarā’ib* and *shamā’il*) and the mystic’s swaying upon contemplating them. By using a double entendre based on the plural of the word “left” (sing.

*shimāl*; pl. *shamā'il*) and the term regularly used to describe Muhammad's personality and physical features (*shamā'il*), the author al-Varavini equates the ecstatic reflection upon the Prophet's personal traits with the visionary's bodily oscillations.

Based on the Persian text and the Arabic poem in honor of the Prophet inserted into it, it is possible to suggest that the painting in the *Marzubānnāma* is intended to depict the Prophet's companions, sitting or standing around him as they meditate on his non-corporeal attributes (scent and light) while simultaneously recalling his facial traits (*shamā'il*). The men's postures hint that they are engaged in spiritual reflection and in active prayer: all look upward towards their epiphanized vision of the Prophet and the angels. One man seated to the left of the Prophet raises both hands, palms facing upwards, in a gesture of piety known as the *raf' al-yadayn* (raising of the two hands). Swaying back and forth, seated, or raising their hands in prayer, the onlookers are engaged in a visual and rapturous praise of the Prophet's characteristics. Theirs is a devotional practice that engenders a powerful imagination of the Prophet. The image's large scale and vertical format also force the viewer-reader to a halt, in effect activating a de-narrativized and de-poeticized visual contemplation of the prophetic presence, itself deployed through pictorial form and through the suggestion of scent.

In the background of the composition stands a lone tree, whose branches and leaves caress the upper left corner of the picture's frame. Not simply a landscape feature in the composition, the tree in this particular instance may stand in for the Prophet's totality. A number of mystical texts, such as Ibn 'Arabi's short treatise entitled *Shajarat al-kawn* (The Tree of Being), describe the Prophet Muhammad as a large tree, growing and proliferating in a cosmic fashion. Much like the human and superhuman nature of the Prophet, the Tree of Being's inner core is outwardly visible:

When it became firm and grew taller there came from its upper and lower branches the world of form (*ṣūra*) and idea (*ma'nā*). What came from the outer bark and visible covering was the earthly world (*mulk*). What came from its inner core and the quintessence of its hidden meaning was the angelic world (*malakūt*). What came from the sap running in the passages of its veins, from which come its increase, its life, its splendor, which causes the

flowering and its fruitage, was the exalted world (*jabarūt*), which is the secret of the word "be" (*kun*)... Whenever anything happens in this tree, or whenever anything descends from it, such things raise humble hands of entreaty.<sup>47</sup>

Like the Tree of Being, the Prophet bears an outer form (*ṣūra*),<sup>48</sup> or bark, that is visible, and an unseen inner essence (*ma'nā*), or sap, that nourishes the world. It is this Muhammad, as the quintessential Tree of Being, who links this world with the otherworld and forms the target of the devotee's prayers. As a symbolic stand-in for the Prophet's everlasting bi-substantial existence, the tree evokes his ever-expanding being. Similarly, the pennyroyal flowers in the foreground visually fill the composition with Muhammad's prophetic redolence, itself a frequent subject of praise in Islamic literature.<sup>49</sup>

Although the Prophet's facial features are now missing, the artist may have represented Muhammad's visage in a manner similar to a painting included in the laudatory preface to another collection of didactic fables entitled *Kalīla va Dimna*, produced as an illustrated manuscript in Iran between circa 1350 and 1400 (fig. 5).<sup>50</sup> In the painting, the Prophet rides his human-headed flying steed Buraq, while accompanied by the angel Gabriel on the left and another angel on the right as he embarks on his *mi'rāj*. He wears a blue robe with inscribed decorative bands (*tirāz*), as well as a white turban with its end flap (*shamla*) wrapped around his neck and folded over his left shoulder. Although his facial features have sustained some damage, his black beard, arch-shaped eyebrows, round cheeks, rosy lips, and two long hair plaits are still visible, as is the flaming nimbus radiating from his head and turban.

The tales of *Kalīla va Dimna*, which describe the adventures of two jackals, were composed in Arabic around 750 by 'Abdallah ibn al-Muqaffā', who drew from the Sanskrit *Panchatantra* and its Pahlavi (Middle Persian) translation. Around 1145, the Persian writer Nasrallah Munshi—who, like 'Ayyuqi, was in the service of the Ghaznavids—translated Ibn al-Muqaffā's Arabic text into Persian, adding his own introduction, which he called "the translator's preface" (*dībācha-i mutarjim*), and a new conclusion, which he entitled "the translator's close" (*khātima-i mutarjim*).<sup>51</sup> The introduction, which praises God and the Prophet Muhammad, provides a pious prolegomenon to *Kalīla va Dimna*, in effect



Fig. 5. The Prophet Muhammad's ascension, from Nasrallah Munshi's *Kalīla va Dimna*, possibly Shiraz, ca. 1350–1400. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Suppl. Persan Ms. 376, fol. 2v. (Photo: courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France)

folding these moralizing tales into the larger framework of Persian Islamic literature produced from the ninth to the twelfth centuries and illustrated during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries at the latest.

After praising God in his introduction, Nasrallah Munshi pays homage to Muhammad, the seal of the prophets (*khātām al-nabiyyīn*), whose evident miracles are visible even to disbelievers.<sup>52</sup> These miracles, the author continues, appear in a number of verses in the Qur'an. One such verse, as quoted immediately above the painting, reads: "Indeed, God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O you who believe, send your blessings on him and salute him with respect!"<sup>53</sup> This excerpt encourages the faithful to praise and honor Muhammad, much as God and His angels do on the occasion of his miraculous ascension to the skies. This invitation is particularly appropriate within the context

of a eulogistic preface that stresses the wondrous nature of the Prophet's heavenly ascent.

Nasrallah Munshi's text and its Qur'anic excerpts command the believing viewer-reader to send prayers to the Prophet in Arabic, which functions as a sacred language in contraposition to the text's Persian "vulgate." By extension, the image serves as a pictorial guide for the directing of such prayers, adding a level of blessing above and beyond a textual template.<sup>54</sup> In this case, as in the *Marzubānnāma*, the author's preface and the attendant image combine effectively to promote the praising and visualizing of Muhammad through an opening pictorial accolade embedded into a larger illustrated work of a didactic and propaedeutic nature.

In the painting of the Prophet's *mī rāj* from Nasrallah Munshi's *Kalīla va Dimna*, Muhammad's slightly round face (*wajh al-tadwīr*), his black eyes and long

eyelashes, his beautiful wheat-colored complexion and radiant color (*aẓhar al-lawn*), his long and very dark hair (*shadīd sawād al-sha'r*), his full and dense beard, and the slight turn of his body are depicted much as they are described in the *shamā'il* texts composed by al-Tirmidhi, al-Baghawi, and Ibn Kathir.<sup>55</sup> The inclusion of his long cloak, robe, turban, and hair plaits, moreover, provides the indexical properties required to signify his identity, a common practice of portraiture utilized to distinguish a person by his associated accoutrements and memorabilia.<sup>56</sup> This essentially detail-oriented tradition of representation lends the painting an aura of naturalism and spontaneity, while helping the acculturated viewer to identify the Prophet Muhammad through readily recognizable visual cues.

Although these kinds of portraits of the Prophet tend to fade around 1500, there nevertheless exist a few later Persian paintings that continue veristic traditions of depiction. For example, one unusual painting probably executed in Bukhara (Uzbekistan) around the middle of the sixteenth century also conveys the notion that a contemplative viewer can observe the entirety of Muhammad's *shamā'il* (fig. 6).<sup>57</sup> Located in the introductory section in praise of the Prophet in the *Bustān* (Fruit Orchard) by Sa'di (d. 1292), the composition depicts Muhammad's *mi'rāj* above three meditative men kneeling in an enclosed space. Above the building's entrance door, on the far right, appears the *shahāda* (the profession of faith, "There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Messenger"), inscribed on a horizontal frieze of blue panels. In a niche in the background, the smoke of a brazier appears to engender a luminous vision of the Prophet, above whom angels hover in the skies. Here, Muhammad is again represented in a naturalistic manner: facial features such as his beard, his two long tresses, and his almond-shaped eyes are fully visible.

Sa'di's encomium to the Prophet provides the textual vehicle for praising Muhammad, his many names (*asmā' al-nabī*), and the *nūr Muḥammad*. The author describes him with various honorific epithets and adjectives, such as intercessor (*shafī'*), prophet (*nabī*), and generous (*karīm*).<sup>58</sup> The author invokes the Prophet directly as God's creative light:



Fig. 6. The Prophet Muhammad ascends over three Sufis, from Sa'di's *Bustān* (Fruit Orchard), text calligraphed in 920 (1514) and painting added ca. 1550 in Bukhara. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1974.294.2. (Photo: courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

*tavāṣul-i vujūd āmadī az nukhust*  
*digar har cha mawjūd shud far'-i tūst*<sup>59</sup>

You, from the first became existence's continuance  
All else existent is a branch of you<sup>60</sup>

The expression *tavāṣul-i vujūd* (existence's continuance) describes the organic conduit of Muhammad's light, as primordial and productive flux,<sup>61</sup> while also calling to mind the analogy of the Prophet to the *Shajarat al-Kawn* or Tree of Being.

At least twice in his tribute, Sa'di overtly encourages the reader to give praise (*du'ā'*) to the Prophet.

For example, towards the start of his encomium, he asks himself how he might best laud the Prophet:

*cha na't-i pasandīda gūyam turā?*  
*'alayka al-salām, ay Nabī al-warā'*<sup>62</sup>

How shall I eulogize you acceptably?  
Peace upon you, o Prophet to humanity<sup>63</sup>

And then the author concludes:

*Cha vaṣfat kunad Sa'dī-yi nātamām*  
*'alayka al-ṣalāh, ay Nabī wa'l-salām'*<sup>64</sup>

How can an imperfect Sa'di describe you justly?  
Prayer and peace upon you, o Prophet<sup>65</sup>

The author wishes to extend a fitting laudation to Muhammad but bemoans the fact that his text cannot provide a perfect or complete description (*vaṣf*) of his larger-than-life being.

Transcending the author's limitations, the complementary painting offers a tangible representation of devotees fully engaged in visualizing the Prophet, his physical form, and his heavenly light through the medium of oral praise. The three figures may well represent the companions of the Prophet and the first three caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman, who personally knew the Prophet and described his *shamā'il*.<sup>66</sup> The man on the left with the white beard (possibly Abu Bakr) holds prayer beads, thus suggesting that he is engrossed in contemplating Muhammad and his prophetic form. In a dialogic manner, one could also interpret the three men as devout viewer-readers engaged in reflective prayer as prompted by Sa'di's preface, while the brazier in the background generates a reified image of the Prophet Muhammad.

Much like the earlier "featured" portraits discussed previously, this rare sixteenth-century painting reveals a great indebtedness to its accompanying text, as well as to *shamā'il* literature, which formed the basis for describing the Prophet's attributes as integrated in subsequent laudatory prefaces included in illustrated Persian manuscripts. In these contexts, Muhammad is depicted in a veristic or expository manner, not only as an individual but, more importantly, as the most perfect prototype (*nuskha*) of humankind.<sup>67</sup> The representation of his physical features and garments, moreover, provides a means to conceptualize and praise his prophetic

corpus, through the symbolic mechanisms afforded by the formal idioms of the pictorial mode.

Veristic representations of Muhammad embody a particular trend in prophetic iconography in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with very rare exceptions of the genre (as in the painting in Sa'di's preface) dating from after 1500. The reasons for this trend are many and may include the following: the influence of descriptive *shamā'il* texts translated into Persian, the selection of biographical and historical (rather than poetic) texts for illustration, and a general ease with the figural arts during this period—an ease and directness that, due to a constellation of cultural and artistic factors, would eventually give way to more abstract methods of representing the prophetic corpus.

#### KALIMA PORTRAITS: INSCRIBING AND INVOKING THE PROPHET

Although veristic portraits sometimes appear after 1400, they were largely displaced by renditions of the Prophet that combined figural form with textual inscription. The earliest examples of such hybrid compositions are best called "graphical" or "word" (*kalima*) portraits because Muhammad's facial features are removed and replaced by the vocative statement *Yā Muḥammad!* (O Muhammad!). Inscriptions that replace his eyes, nose, and mouth literally deface him, rendering his visage an "imagetext," that is, a representation that is neither image nor text alone but a synthesis that is either viewed or experienced as both.<sup>68</sup> This two-pronged approach to the creation and reception of the Prophet's image suggests that artists and viewers turned to epigraphic details (the graphic mode) to explain and expand upon the Prophet's physical representation (the pictorial mode).

Inscribed portraits of the Prophet from circa 1400 onward seem indebted to the steady spread of Sufi thought, which developed the religious belief that God's divine word or logos (*kalima*) manifested itself in the person of Muhammad rather than just in or through the Qur'an. At the heart of this idea lies the conviction that God transmitted His revelations through His messenger, and that these revelations, much like men's destinies, had been inscribed with His divine pen (*qalam*)

on a tablet (*lawḥ*) since time immemorial.<sup>69</sup> Mystics and esoteric philosophers equated this primordial tablet with the occult knowledge of God, hidden from human comprehension, but perceptible by the mystic through sudden flashes of inspiration. This idea, in turn, applied to the Prophet Muhammad, with whom Sufis attempted to communicate through the devotional practices of recollection, oral worship, and invocation. With their predilection for the oral and the auditory, devotees venerating the Prophet transformed the object of their affection into a highly symbolic “soundspace,” in which a vision of the Messenger could be induced through pious utterances.<sup>70</sup>

The earliest extant representation of the Prophet that visually expresses the conceptual notion of Muhammad as God’s concretized *kalima* dates from circa 1400 (fig. 7).<sup>71</sup> It appears in the form of a tinted sketch that depicts the Prophet Muhammad on Buraq’s back and accompanied by the angel Gabriel, while a number of other angels in a rocky landscape present the Prophet with various offerings. This sketch includes the foundations of the painterly process: red highlights are applied to Gabriel’s hair, Muhammad’s turban top, Buraq’s saddle and crown, the angels’ hair and crowns, and the stars in the sky.

The artist has sketched out the faces of the angels, Gabriel, and Buraq. The Prophet Muhammad, on the other hand, is neither provided with facial features such as a mouth, nose, or eyes nor is his face left blank, to be covered later with a painted veil. Rather, the oval of his face is inscribed with a written vocative statement reading: *Yā Muḥammad!* (O Muhammad!). This inscribed portrait contains an infra-inscription, that is, an inscription not meant to be seen in the finished product. This kind of representation portrays the Prophet as a bodily shell containing verbal components, giving him volume and presence through two very dissimilar techniques of depiction: that of physiognomic form combined with inscribed verbal enunciation.

Although this sketch may be pushed aside as a solitary example of a hermetic practice peculiar to one artist active at the turn of the fifteenth century, other inscribed portraits occur in later centuries, thus indicating that this particular procedure was at the center of a long-lived albeit overlooked pictorial tradition not only



Fig. 7. The Prophet Muhammad on Buraq and accompanied by Gabriel. Sketch with brown wash, red paint, and gold highlights, possibly Shiraz, ca. 1390–1410. Pozzi Collection, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, Geneva, 1971-107/406. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

in Persian spheres, but in Ottoman circles as well.<sup>72</sup> For example, a Safavid painting depicting ‘Ali, the Prophet Muhammad’s son-in-law, storming the Khaybar fortress reveals a similar kind of underpainting (fig. 8).<sup>73</sup> The composition, which is included in a manuscript of al-Nishapuri’s *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* (Stories of the Prophets) executed probably in Qazvin between circa 1570 and 1580, has suffered some wear through the centuries, and the pigments have flecked off partially to reveal the underpainting. Just like the sketch from circa 1400, Muhammad’s face, which appears in the background



Fig. 8. The Battle of Khaybar, from al-Nishapuri's *Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets), Qazvin, ca. 1570–80. Keir Collection, London, Ms. III.234.90, fol. 306r. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

surrounded by a gold, flaming nimbus, is inscribed with his name in the vocative, while 'Ali's face is inscribed with the vocative *Yā 'Alī!* (O 'Ali!). 'Ali's attendant, who is holding a horse, however, bears facial features marked in red and black ink on a gray ground, showing that he is not worthy of being named or exclaimed.

The juxtaposition of Muhammad's and 'Ali's facial imprints with the attendant's facial features substantiates the hypothesis that the inscribed names do not constitute mere labels helping the artist determine the figures' placement in his composition. This is not an instance of an Islamic *cartolino* or name tag. Rather, the inscribed names carry with them other qualities of religious importance to the artist, who purposefully and consciously decided, either by personal faith or by inherited artistic custom (or both), to portray sacred

faces by means of emblazoned forenames. The inscribing of 'Ali's name in particular suggests that, even if it is unclear whether this artistic practice emerged from within a Sunni or Shi'i milieu, it could be adapted and applied to representations of 'Ali, and not just images of Muhammad.<sup>74</sup>

These *kalima* portraits—consisting of facial traits made up of letters calling out names in the vocative—become activated by the pen and the voice of the artist, who either seeks to invoke a form through words or performs an oral prayer directed towards Muhammad and, in some cases, 'Ali. It shows a clear connection between orality, faith, and portraiture, where the pious, written, and uttered word helps to bring about the presence of an individual. An aspirant's desire to see the Prophet usually through oral, but here inscribed,

invocation gives these particular kinds of representations the potential to transform into a communion—visual, graphic, and oral all at once—between the artist and the object of his affection. In fact, when the mimetic technique of *shamā'il* remains insufficient, the artist opts for speech and its epigraphic rendition, both of which bear the potential for capturing a deeper meaning, itself written into the infrastructure of the painting proper.

These underpaintings reveal the private, undercover world of the artist, who uses verbal and pictorial topoi to call forth the presence of the Prophet by means of his inscribed portrait, and by means of an infra-inscription meant to remain buried under paint. Such depictions of the Prophet go far beyond the boundaries of mimetic description by including the artist's otherwise camouflaged invocation, furtively evoking the Prophet's persona through the graphic mode. The sketch and painting therefore exemplify some of the unpremeditated conceptions of personhood within Islamic traditions, which manifest themselves upon close scrutiny at the pictorial level. These conceptions include the artist's metaphysical imagining of the Prophet's visibility as made manifest via the combination of figural depiction, verbal inscription, and oral invocation.

This practice of combining prayer with mental imagining, by which an individual may envision the Prophet's spirit inhabiting the vessel of the image, finds strong echoes in Sufi devotional texts from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries. For example, in his *Qāb qawsayn* (The Space of Two Bows),<sup>75</sup> al-Jili describes how a mystic can use visual aids to continuously recall the Prophet's image and therewith reach spiritual realization. He notes: "I have only described for you his [the Prophet's] physical form to enable you to picture it in your mind... If you cannot do this constantly, then at least summon this noble image in all its perfection while you are blessing him."<sup>76</sup> Al-Jili describes the beckoning of an image through the unremitting oral prayers characteristic of Sufi practices. In the two *kalima* compositions, just as in Sufi thought, the active *vox* of the painter likewise transforms Muhammad's cognomen into a praise name, by which the artist spells out, commemorates, and ultimately visualizes the Prophet.

Ibn 'Arabi also describes how a life form can materialize through contemplation. He states in his *Fuṣūṣ*

*al-ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) that "prayer brings about the emergence of non-being (*'adam*) to being (*wujūd*)" by the activation of a mental image through devotional worship.<sup>77</sup> That is, when a man's desires are so intense, the utterance of a pious sound can generate a visual counterpart, itself concretized through an imagetext. Whether in mystical writings or visual materials, the consensus appears clear: the statement of a desire or the optative expression of an agent's wish can initiate a series of material images bound by the parameters of pious personal imagination. In such cases, representations of Muhammad can achieve completion through the creative force of the artist's oral praise and his furtive inscription below the painted surface of his composition, a practice which bears intriguing similarities to Sufi practices of orally imagining the Prophet's form and presence.

These verbalized figures of the Prophet represent the portraitists' intentions and are not meant for the beholder of the picture. On the other hand, other paintings bearing supra-inscriptions, that is, the Prophet's name written above his facial veil, suggest that an artist could use visible verbal proclamations of the Prophet as vehicles for visualizing the entirety of his being. In such cases, the picture's viewer is forced to conceive of the prophetic corpus through the double agency of visual and verbal expression, using his imaginative faculty (*khiyāl*) to symbolically expand and complete the picture before his eyes.

The Prophet's ascension continues to serve as the thematic medium for *kalima* representations, as seen in a Safavid painting included in the *Kulliyāt* (Compendium of Poems) by Amir Khusraw Dihlavi (d. 725), produced in Iran circa 1580 (fig. 9). Here, Muhammad sits on Buraq with his palms outstretched in a position of prayer, while Gabriel, holding a green banner with inscriptions invoking God, Muhammad, and 'Ali, accompanies him on the left. Unfortunately, Buraq's face has been scratched out. On the other hand, Muhammad's white facial veil has not been defiled; rather, it seems that the manuscript's owner, or perhaps the painting's artist, thought it unwise to erase the Prophet's form, especially his head. Instead, an inscription written on top of his facial veil praises him by calling forth his name in the exclamatory "*Yā Muḥammad!*".



Fig. 9. The Prophet Muhammad's ascension, from Amir Khusraw Dihlavi's *Kulliyāt* (Compendium of Poems), Yazd or Shiraz, ca. 1580. The British Library, London, Ms. Add. 21104, fol. 317r. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

The Prophet no longer exists as a being defined through a form, but takes on fuller dimensions through an additive verbal veneration. His facial veil transforms into a blank slate for the expression of piety, and his “portrait” thus becomes the record of a written and oral tradition of invocation couched in verbo-pictorial terms. The inscribed portrait of the Prophet here emerges from—as well as incites—oral prayer on the viewer's, rather than the artist's, part.

In a similar manner, Ottoman artists, who also were active in including or adding supra-inscriptions to the Prophet's and other figures' veils, continued the practice of eliding facial traits into inscribed prayer. This practice is used in a painting of the Prophet and 'Ali visiting their own graves in Medina at night with their companions, as included in a Persian manuscript of the Ottoman Turkish-language poem by Fuzuli (d. 1556) entitled *Ḥadiqat al-su'adā* (Garden of the Blessed) (fig. 10).<sup>78</sup> The Prophet's (now barely visible) name, in the vocative case, is inscribed over his veil immediately below his green turban, in a similar manner as 'Ali's name. Unlike the Prophet and 'Ali, other persons such as 'Uthman and 'Umar in the lower right corner have their names simply labeled on their turbans, rather than proclaimed with the exclamative *yā!* on their faces.

In other copies of Fuzuli's text that fell into Ottoman hands, pictorial manipulation and textual editing show that sectarian concerns could play out on the picture plane, in some cases reaffirming the Shi'i cause by stressing 'Ali's high rank through pictured oral invocation while, in other cases, advancing the Sunni cause by crossing out prayer formulas directed to prominent Shi'i figures.<sup>79</sup> Within the context of Sunni-Shi'i power struggles over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, *kalima* representations of Muhammad therefore appear to have been deployed and used as visual tools by both sides to assert their competing claims to religious and political legitimacy as well as prophetic legacy.

The practice of adding a vocative statement above Muhammad's facial veil proves that the evocation of a prophetic presence does not just constitute part of the inceptive procedures of artistic creation but also makes a strong case for the active response by the beholder of the image, whether artist or owner, operating within particular religio-cultural circumstances. In other words, the picture's viewer forges a dynamic and discursive relationship based on the following principles: the painting tells a story in pictorial terms buttressed by its laudatory text, while the viewer inscribes pious, and at times even sectarian, meaning into its pigments.

The vocative *yā!*, which calls to mind *Ave Maria* salutations included in a number of fourteenth-century



Fig. 10. The Prophet Muhammad and Imam 'Ali visiting their graves with their companions, from Fuzuli's *Ḥaḍīqat al-su'adā'* (Garden of the Blessed), text transcribed possibly in Shiraz ca. 1550–1600 and painting dated 1118 (1706). The British Library, London, Ms. Or. 12009, fol. 66v. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

paintings of the Virgin Mary, likewise prompts the viewer to read the words aloud, thereby educating an interactive response.<sup>80</sup> The prayer formula, or *obsecratio*, by which the human aspirant implores a prophetic entity to make itself manifest, translates, at least at the pictorial level, into a verbal desideratum of optical visibility written over and replacing the Prophet's facial features. As Peter Parshall has noted with regard to

similar images in European pictorial traditions, “[t]he object or idea to be remembered is privately overwritten with an image that absorbs and subordinates its prototype, a case of the signifier overwhelming the signified.”<sup>81</sup> In other words, the viewer's interaction—his overwriting—gives the prophetic body new significance and subsumes the imagetext within new systems of meaning. In the context of the early modern period,

these systems of meaning are linked to textual presentations of prophetic praise, at times combined with other elements clearly indicative of a Sunni or Shi'i *parti pris*.

The viewer's or artist's inscribing of Muhammad's name onto his facial veil suggests that the written word, especially in its vocative form, has the conceptual potential of converting a physical frame into a live body imbued with spirit and presence through the medium of the participant's animated response. Such a phenomenon bears parallels in mystical texts as well. For example, al-Jazuli notes in his popular prayer manual *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* (Proofs of Good Deeds), itself a text of immense popularity in Ottoman lands,<sup>82</sup> that a certain man felt the transfigurative intensity of writing down Muhammad's name. The man admits: "As soon as ever I wrote the name of Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a book, I spoke a blessing on him, and my Lord granted me what my eye had not seen nor ear heard, nor has occurred to the heart of a mortal man."<sup>83</sup> In both the painting and al-Jazuli's text, the written word, coupled with a blessing or oral prayer, transforms an epigraphic symbol into an experience of the totality of the Prophet's being. In other words, letters have the ability to transmute into the graphic mediators of personhood.

Beyond sectarian concerns, methods of inscribing the Prophet's name, either hidden under his facial veil or inscribed upon it, reveal man's need to give material form to a more metaphysical or emblematic Muhammad. The idea of an "all-inclusive" Muhammad appears in a number of Persian poetic texts as well, whose figurative language oftentimes migrates into the visual arts. For example, the celebrated poet Nizami (d. 1218) provides several introductory eulogies (*na'at*) to the Prophet and his ascension in his poem entitled *Makhzan al-asrār* (Treasury of Secrets). Inserted into the encomium to Muhammad's ascension belonging to a Persian manuscript copy of Nizami's text produced in 1441,<sup>84</sup> a painting omits the winged steed Buraq and the Prophet's body, replacing the latter with a flaming gold disk inscribed in its center with Muhammad's name (fig. 11).

Why is it that, in this particular instance, the Prophet's body disappears entirely from a depiction of his own ascension? The question can be answered at least in part by examining Nizami's complementary text, which describes the Prophet's ascent as a release from



Fig. 11. The Prophet Muhammad as a gold disk ascending through the heavens, from Nizami's *Makhzan al-asrār* (Treasury of Secrets), western India, 844 (1441). Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul, Ms. H. 774, fol. 4v. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

terrestrial boundaries and physical restrictions. The author states:

He departed from this world with the prison of his body  
And it was the spirit of his heart that reached God's abode.

His heavenly spirit jumped out of its cage  
His body became heavier than his heart.

The First Tablet received from *mīm* and *dāl*  
The circle of the empire and the line of perfection.

Describe a circle with your finger,  
So that whatever exists may be bestowed upon you.

The source of the sun, dependent on him  
Is but half the crescent moon on the night of his ascension.<sup>85</sup>

In his poem, Nizami describes Muhammad's ascension through the skies and into the domain of the Lord as a casting off of physical being and as a spiritual and devotional escape from a bodily cage (*qafas*). He also equates the letters of Muhammad's name—particularly the *mīm* (m) and *dāl* (d)—with the primordial Tablet (*lawḥ*) containing God's decrees: the initial, spherical *mīm* of Muhammad's name corresponds to the shape of the globe and the sun,<sup>86</sup> while the incised, linear *dāl* represents the descent to earth of God's creation.

Through the image of a circle, both poet and artist attempt to embrace Muhammad as a creative force, as an all-encompassing disk, and as a life-giving epigraphic carving of God's primordial laws, that is, His divine *kalima*. The Prophet dematerializes into an allegorical stand-in for sacred creation, the entirety of the cosmos, and the "source of the sun"—a poetical image that the artist has attempted to convey by depicting the Prophet as God's inscribed, encircled, and radiant disk. As in other inscribed or graphic renderings of the prophetic corpus, this depiction of Muhammad appears indebted to the metaphorical language that developed under the aegis of Persian poetry.

#### THE *NŪR MUḤAMMAD*: DEPICTING THE PROPHET'S PRIMAL RADIANCE

As Nizami describes in his *Makhzan al-asrār*, the Prophet is deemed the luminous "source of the sun" and the primal cause for the existence of all living beings. The idea that God created Muhammad as the light source of the entire physical and spiritual world pervades a large number of Islamic texts penned from the first centuries of Islam until today. The Qur'an itself mentions in several places a glowing light or lamp that writers understood as a metaphor for Muhammad. In two Qur'anic verses (5:15 and 33:46), for example, it

is stated that God sent a light (*nūr*), or an illuminating torch (*sirājan munīran*), and a book (*kitāb*) to his people to lead them out of darkness.<sup>87</sup> Exegetes interpreted these verses as evidence that God communicates with humans through His Book (the Qur'an) and His Prophet, who himself crystallizes into a luminous substance indicative of divine revelation.

Many Sayings of the Prophet further elaborate upon the concept of the *nūr Muḥammad*. For example, the famous hadith compiler al-Bukhari (d. 870) states that, "whenever he went in darkness, [the Prophet] had light shining around him like the moonlight."<sup>88</sup> In a similar manner, biographers of the Prophet such as the thirteenth-century Andalusian judge (*qāḍī*) al-Yahsubi (d. 1149) and the blind Turkish author al-Darir (fourteenth century) often included eyewitness accounts in their texts to illustrate the Prophet's blinding luminosity. For mystical writers like al-Tustari (d. 896) and Ibn 'Arabi, Muhammad symbolized the prime matter of light from which all beings issued,<sup>89</sup> thus linking pre-existence with post-existence, or creation with manifestation.<sup>90</sup> Finally, thirteenth-century Persian poets such as Nizami and Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. 1230) further elaborated upon the notion of the *nūr Muḥammad* in their eulogistic compositions to the Prophet, in order to describe him as a primal man freed from temporal space. In all of these texts, Muhammad is described as the cosmic and luminous prototype of all humanity.

Through the authority of their own particular literary genres, exegetes, biographers, and poets helped to fashion the pervasive belief in Muhammad as a primordial light and luminous body derived from God's incandescent essence and emitted as creative substance into the world. These sustained efforts gave rise to the notion of the *nūr Muḥammad*, or the "light of Muhammad." This conceptualization of the prophetic corpus stipulates that God epiphanized Himself as light, which then manifested itself as the light of Muhammad, from which the entire universe came into existence prior to the Prophet's later physical manifestation on earth.

Using terms derived from the Qur'an and tinting them with poetical expressions, Persian Sufi poets in particular developed new concepts about Muhammad's physicality and God's substance, alongside related visionary experiences. In his *Haft paykar* (Seven Icons),



Fig. 12. The Prophet Muhammad's ascension, from 'Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* (The Speech of the Birds), probably Herat, 860 (1456). Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Ms. Oct. 268, fol. 13r. (Photo: courtesy of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin)

for example, Nizami describes Gabriel commanding the Prophet to traverse the celestial spheres (“for you’re the moon” [*māh tū’ī*]),<sup>91</sup> and illuminate them with his own light. Further, Muhammad, whose luminescent quality is compared to a lamp (*charāgh*), must also “give the stars blooms of light.”<sup>92</sup> To the stars, he gives his colors and his own light, cloaking the firmament with his radiant attributes.

While writers such as Nizami attempted to depict the sum total of the Prophet Muhammad’s being as a compound of pre-existential time and its encounter with the temporal universe, artists appear to have drawn inspiration from texts describing the *nūr Muḥammad*, following suit with their own compositions. They, too, considered the Prophet both numinous and luminous, as well as immaterial but not disembodied. This hybrid concept of the Prophet—as a dual substance, or a combination of physical body and non-physical being—necessitated the development of one principal pictorial

strategy: the prophetic blaze (*ghurraṭ al-nubuwwa*),<sup>93</sup> a symbolic manifestation of God’s creative light emanating from and sometimes wholly enveloping Muhammad’s corporeal self.

One of the earliest extant paintings utilizing the prophetic blaze to emphasize the Prophet’s physical self appears in the ascension encomium included in a Timurid manuscript of ‘Attar’s *Mantiq al-tayr* (The Speech of the Birds), completed in Herat in 1456 (fig. 12).<sup>94</sup> The painting represents the Prophet sitting atop Buraq in the center of the composition. Muhammad’s face is covered by a rectangular gold veil—most likely added at a later date—and part of his left cheek remains visible, suggesting that his facial features were depicted before being camouflaged by gold paint. From under the veil appear his two long black hair plaits, which extend down to his waist. He wears a white turban and bears a flaming gold halo around his head as he lifts both hands in a gesture of supplication. Around Muhammad

and Buraq, five angels fly on gold swirling clouds that hide their bodies from the waist down. The angels carry a number of offerings, including a gold dish, a blue jug on a gold platter, a blue-green cushion, a gold platter with two cups, and a gold and white crown. Located on a blue sky with no other details suggestive of time and space, the painting has been elevated to an emblem of mystical worship.

The gold veil may have been added after the painting's original production for one of two reasons: either post-1500 pictorial traditions of representing the Prophet with a facial veil prompted *a posteriori* emendations of pre-1500 representations of the Prophet;<sup>95</sup> or a subsequent artist may have attempted to create a pictorial correspondence between the image and 'Attar's text in order to bring it in line with the widespread concept of the *nūr Muḥammad*. If the latter, then how did the artist draw upon the *Mantiq al-ṭayr* or, rather, what is the relationship between the author's text and the altered image?

In the introductory section entitled "In Praise of the Prophet" (*dar na't-i hazrat-i Rasūl*), 'Attar turns the story of the Prophet's ascension into a vehicle for praising the *nūr Muḥammad*. The Prophet's luminous qualities are described in the following verses:

Sun of the Divine Law and Ocean of Certitude  
Light of the World, a Mercy for the Worlds,  
Lord of Creation and Sultan over all,  
The Sun of the Soul and the Belief of All.

Describing Muhammad as primordial light and substance, the author continues:

The purpose of his light was created beings,  
It was the origin of inexistences and existences.  
That which appeared from the Invisible of the Invisible  
Was his Pure Light without a doubt.  
His light since it was the origin of existences,  
His essence since it was the bestower of every essence.<sup>96</sup>

In 'Attar's exordium, the Prophet Muhammad appears as Pure Essence (*zāt-i pāk*), Light of the World (*nūr-i 'ālam*), Pure Light (*nūr-i pāk*), and Majestic Light (*nūr-i mu'azzam*). He also glows like the moon (*māh*), the sun (*āftāb*), or a candle (*sham'*), and his primordial luminence gives birth to all things seen and unseen. The author's conceptual description of the protagonist's radiant quintessence supersedes any attempts at merely

reporting his physical characteristics—a technique that reverberates strongly in the original painting's heavy use of gold.

For 'Attar and other mystical poets, seeing the Prophet in all his dimensions had very little to do with an optical experience. They believed that real sight occurs not through ocular perception, but by means of the eye of the heart (*dīda-i dil*) or the eye of the soul (*dīda-i jān*). For instance, in his exordium on the Prophet's ascension, 'Attar states: "For the eye of the soul, meeting with you [Muhammad] is sufficient."<sup>97</sup> To grasp the essence of the Prophet, it appears that the "eye of the soul" must levitate through the upwards movement of communal prayer. Here, the author concludes with the following declaration:

From the orisons of the Light of that Ocean of Mystery  
For the whole community prayer became obligatory.<sup>98</sup>

The Prophet as the Light of that Secret Ocean (*nūr-i ān dariyā-yi rāz*) is the ultimate goal of his community's prayer (*namāz*). Even though his essence appears as a large and enigmatic numinous body, the believer can attain this higher, formless realm through the catalyst of prayer. As a result, it is possible to suggest that the accompanying painting inserted in 'Attar's exordium was intended to fulfill a similar role: it could have served as a visual prompt for imagining the Prophet through prayer, not form. The orison's terms are couched in allegorical figures of speech, whereby the Prophet's persona is called forth by his primordial *nūr*. Such methods of abstracting the prophetic body as deployed in poetry and the pictorial arts were not just linked to prohibitory impulses; they could also elevate the viewer's vision beyond the realm of form while simultaneously overcoming the disloyalty of mimetic depiction.

These textual and pictorial ways of giving preeminence to the Prophet's cosmic, primordial essence over his human qualities and physical characteristics appear in other illustrated texts as well. For example, the idea that Muhammad exists as primordial light and creative flux is further developed in al-Yahsubi's much loved biographical work, *Kitāb al-Shifā' bi-ta'rif huquq al-Muṣṭafā* (Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One).<sup>99</sup> In his text, al-Yahsubi records various eyewitness reports about the Prophet's luminous nature in a section he calls simply "The *Nūr Muḥammad*."

In a manuscript copy of al-Yahsubi's text dated 1759, the section on the "Light of Muhammad" includes an image of the Prophet with his hands upraised in a position of prayer, squatting frontally on a bed of flowers and creating a florid explosion of colors below his person—a pictorial adaptation of the philosophical precept that Muhammad serves as an ever-flourishing "Tree of Being" (fig. 13). Muhammad's face is not veiled but swallowed up by the radiance of his prophetic *nūr*, which turns into a large blaze above his turban. Behind a hilly landscape, three men look at him in awe and enter into discussion with one another. In the text immediately before and after the image, the Prophet's companions discuss Muhammad and his superhuman attributes.

Al-Yahsubi records three companions speaking about the luminous qualities of the Prophet Muhammad. For example, the Prophet's companion Ibn 'Abbas states: "When he laughed and his teeth showed, it was like a flash of lightning or they [his teeth] seemed as white hailstones. When he spoke, it was like light issuing from between his teeth."<sup>100</sup> The second companion, Abu Hurayra, follows suit by stating: "I have not seen anything more beautiful than the Messenger of God. It was as if the sun were shining in his face. When he laughed, it [his light] reflected off the wall."<sup>101</sup> And finally, the third companion, Ibn Abi Hala, simply notes: "His face shone like the moon."<sup>102</sup>

For Ibn 'Abbas and his friends, Muhammad is the possessor of the face of light (*ṣāhib wajh al-nūr*),<sup>103</sup> whose effulgent luminescence overwhelms and overtakes the whole of his facial features, transforming them from physical matter into shooting rays of light. It is this visible, yet primordial, illumination that is elevated to the rank of cosmic entity and heralded as the universal source of revelation, life, and existence. The late Ottoman artist of this painting—guided, it seems, more by allegorical expression than by a putative ban on figural imagery—here attempts to convey this complex idea of the *nūr Muḥammad* through his composition, in which the Prophet's flaming nimbus entirely subsumes his face, turning even his facial veil into golden light.

Biographers of the Prophet after al-Yahsubi continued to transmit information about the *nūr Muḥammad*, and artists who illustrated biographies even as late as the



Fig. 13. The Light of Muhammad (*Nūr Muḥammad*), from al-Yahsubi's *Kitāb al-Shifā' bi-ta'rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā* (Healing by the Recognition of the Rights of the Chosen One), possibly north Africa, text dated 1172 (1759) and painting from ca. 1900. The New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Turk Ms. 4, fol. 101r. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

eighteenth century had to confront these texts, paying close attention to their highly symbolic contents while folding them within the norms of their own pictorial traditions. One such text is the *Siyer-i Nebī* (Biography

of the Prophet), originally written in 1388 in Anatolian Turkish by the author al-Darir. Al-Darir's biography of the Prophet was executed for the Mamluk Sultan Barquq (r. 1382–89 and 1390–99), who wished to have a biography of the Prophet written in the Turkish language. Abiding by the Mamluk ruler's wish, al-Darir composed his text by freely translating into Anatolian Turkish the version of Ibn Ishaq's *Sīrat al-Nabī* (Biography of the Prophet) composed by al-Bakri (fl. thirteenth century).<sup>104</sup> The *Siyer-i Nebī* became well regarded in Ottoman lands during the sixteenth century, at which time a number of works were translated into Turkish from Arabic and Persian, in order to strengthen the Ottoman Sunni cause.<sup>105</sup> Its popularity, moreover, was further solidified thanks to its production as an illustrated, five-volume manuscript completed in 1595–96 by the order of the Ottoman Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–95).<sup>106</sup>

Artists in the Ottoman royal book atelier in Istanbul were faced with certain iconographic choices deriving both from the text's descriptions and from their own pictorial traditions as they created the most extensive surviving program representing the Prophet at all stages of his life. Although the white facial veil was applied systematically to depictions of Muhammad in the illustrated *Siyer-i Nebī* of 1595–96, Ottoman artists nevertheless could have turned to al-Darir's text for further inspiration, thus making the issue of prophetic representation not just one of strict prohibition but of image-text interaction as well.

In his text, al-Darir pays particular attention to the idea of the *nūr Muḥammad* with reference to Muhammad's parents. The author describes the transference of the Prophet's primordial *nūr* from his father 'Abdallah to his mother Amina until she herself became radiant while pregnant with Muhammad. Al-Darir further describes Muhammad's luminosity as the "light of prophethood" (*peygamberlik nūri*) in an autonomous section entirely dedicated to the subject.<sup>107</sup> In his discussion of the *nūr Muḥammad*, the author states that God's primordial light, from which He created all lights, spirits, and prophets, consisted of the Prophet's illumination, itself made of white light that remains hidden (*gizli*) from all human beings.<sup>108</sup> The Prophet Muhammad, the author then concludes, exists as a cosmos

unto himself, as a "world of lights" (*nūrlar 'ālemi*) and a "world of secrets" (*esrār 'ālemi*).<sup>109</sup> Al-Darir's emphasis on the Prophet's light as a concealed and invisible substance—itsself indicative of an undisclosed and sacred universe—can explain at least in part why artists confronting this text saw the necessity to veil the Prophet's face while simultaneously attempting to convey his ineffable luminosity by means of the prophetic blaze (fig. 14). Such procedures of pictorial abstraction as linked to the prophetic body appear to be more than just a roundabout way to avoid figural representation; rather, they disclose a complexity and nuance that emerge from sustained efforts in the domains of literary production and of artistic practice to describe and imagine the Prophet Muhammad beyond the restrictive boundaries of mimetic description.

The concept of the *nūr Muḥammad* as developed in these many texts and paintings reveals a number of attempts over a vast period of time to describe the Prophet Muhammad as an immaterial substance too brilliant to behold but nonetheless contained in a corporeal vessel perceptible by the human eye. Representations attempt to convey the diametrically opposed forces at work in such procedures of depicting the Prophet—procedures that are caught between the wish to disclose Muhammad's mortal physical presence and the drive to veil his immortal luminous nature. The visual antipodes of exposing and concealing are negotiated here through the intermediary of the flaming nimbus and the facial veil. Muhammad's primordial irradiation transforms him into a supra-sensory life form and yet discloses the powerful conjunction of opposing forces that consist of light and its encounter with matter.

In paintings representing the Prophet as primordial light, artists utilized the incandescent medium of the prophetic blaze not only to describe Muhammad's primordial nature but also as a means of demonstrating, and potentially activating, the pious remembrance of the Prophet of Islam. One can imagine that viewers, in their turn, responded to such paintings in an interactive fashion, much as with the portraits containing vocative supra-invocations.

Pious responses to paintings are unfortunately not recorded in textual sources; thus, it is difficult to determine how a viewer may have reacted to such paintings.



Fig. 14. The Prophet Muhammad's revelations at Mount Hira, from al-Darir's *Siyer-i Nebī* (Biography of the Prophet), Istanbul, 1003 (1595–96). Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul, Ms. H. 1222, fol. 158v. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Library)

In at least once instance, however, we are told how onlookers were brought to tears when gazing upon a “light” image of the Prophet. The anecdote describes how a number of the Prophet's companions visited the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41), who brought in a box, called the “box of witnessing” (*ṣandūq al-shahāda*). This box included a number of drawers or compartments containing pieces of silk with painted

images of the prophets Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Muhammad. We are told that when the Prophet's portrait (*ṣūrat*) was taken out, it was as luminous as the sun and better than any beautiful form. When the companions looked at this portrait, “teardrops streamed like stars from their eyes, and a longing for the Prophet was renewed in their hearts.”<sup>110</sup> This story not only serves to prove that “portraiture (*taṣvīr*) is not without justification,”<sup>111</sup> but also provides evidence for the affective response that an audience might have experienced upon contemplating a concretized light image of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>112</sup>

#### FROM LOGOS TO LIGHT

Representations of the Prophet Muhammad depicting the totality of his physical characteristics—as the resultant presence of an inscribed vocative and as primordial light—attempt to convey his multifaceted makeup as both existential body and atemporal presence. They hover in an intermediary visual zone between mimetic representation and the total abstraction of form in an attempt to define the elusive nature of the prophetic corpus. For these reasons, artists' creative output resulted from their drive to capture Muhammad's inner reality, divorced from accidental matter and temporal concerns and yet entirely derived from both. Through pictorial metaphors and such hybrid “memory images,” artists primarily working within Persian and Turkish cultural spheres from circa 1200 to 1800 sought to portray the Prophet in the full sum of his life form, as celestial essence and human being.

Although some paintings can be circumscribed in part by prohibitive impulses, or burdened by iconoclastic practices within Islamic traditions, many others, particularly those produced in Persian lands until the present day (fig. 15), prove that a putative ban on figural imagery has not historically constituted the principal driving force behind the nonfigurative elements used in representations of the Prophet. To the contrary, the overwhelming belief in a metaphorical Muhammad—as a unity of being, a primordial flux, a perfect man, and an eternal prototype—compelled artists to engage in conceptual thought and, as a consequence, to experiment with a wide variety of visual abstractions.

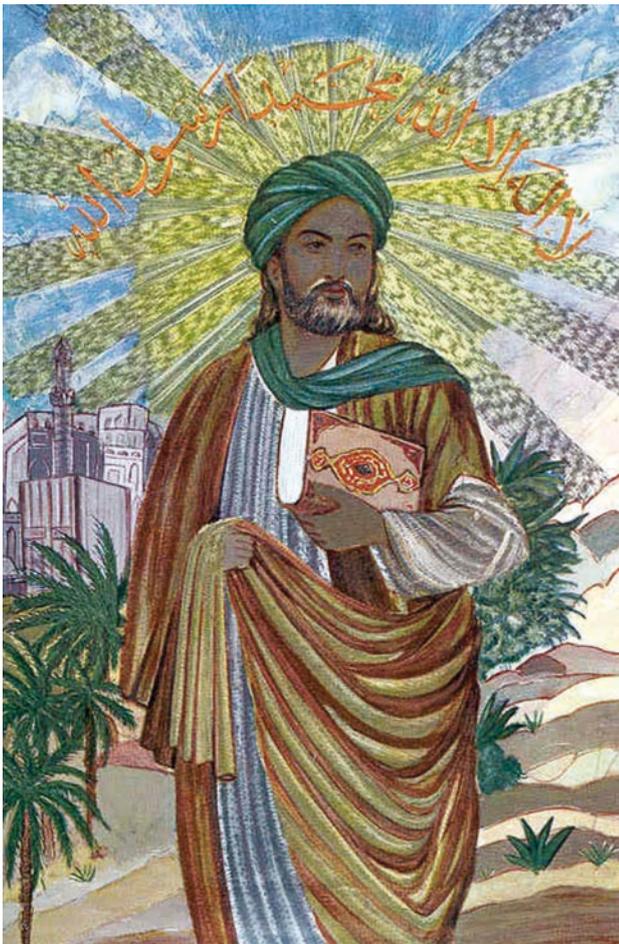


Fig. 15. The Prophet Muhammad with a radiant halo holds the Qur'an. Postcard purchased in Iran in 2001. (Photo: Christiane Gruber)

Persian writers and artists in particular understood that the Prophet's likeness entails not just a process of physical identification but also a figurative approach to his singular properties, which could not be captured by mimetic or expository means. More specifically, paintings that seek to create "images" of Muhammad that do not conform to the expository genre or do not condense his physical presence entirely to a graphic construct reveal a careful attention to distinguishing between the Prophet's outer appearance and inner essence, a conceptual dichotomy also developed in Persian historical and biographical texts, as well as in Sufi treatises and poems, during the pre-modern period.

Between 1200 and 1600, a few broad lines of pictorial development are clearly discernable: veristic depictions of the Prophet mark the period between circa 1200 and 1400; inscribed portraits develop circa 1400 at the latest; and light and veiled representations eventually dominate from around 1500 onward. Although it is difficult to untangle the exact forces behind each one of these "movements" in prophetic representation, a few preliminary suggestions can nevertheless be offered.

First, the placement of veristic representations in historical and biographical illustrated texts follows the expository mode, itself used to explain the life and deeds of the Prophet. Narrative textual and visual clarity dominates in this early period, and serves as an effective mechanism to teach Islamic thought in Persian lands from the Ghaznavid to the Timurid periods. Drawing upon Arabic and Persian *shamā'il* texts, artists created recognizable "portraits" of the Prophet by representing his specific physical (e.g., large eyes, long hair plaits) and vestmental (e.g., the *burda*) attributes. The concern with recordkeeping and knowledge transmission, along with a general ease with figural imagery, typifies this particular period of artistic activity.

In subsequent centuries, hybrid images emerge in illustrated poems. Such images appear indebted at least to some extent to mystical thought—especially the belief in an oral prayer's ability to conjure up a vision of the prophetic body. They also bear witness to the application of allegorical imagination (*khiyāl*) to visual production. Inscribed portraits in particular can disclose sectarian concerns and thus prove to be one of the many battling grounds for political and religious authority.

Veiled portraits emerged around 1500 in an early Safavid context, probably due to a constellation of factors linked to the newly emergent Sufi-Shi'i synthesis. Nevertheless, Ottoman images of the veiled Prophet produced during the last quarter of the sixteenth century may also be seen as a culmination of "sacralizing" procedures of iconography linked to a general growth in Ottoman-Islamic piety. In this period of "turning inward," images of the veiled Prophet reached their peak while simultaneously acting as a direct challenge to, or a visible differentiation from, European pictorial traditions.<sup>113</sup>

Despite the conjectural nature of understanding the various mechanisms by which images of the Prophet

changed over the course of several centuries, veristic, inscribed, and light portraits reveal that images of Muhammad are not only changeable but purposefully destabilizing. They necessitated active negotiation between the world of forms and the realm of the supraformal, and thus force us to further explore the symbolic roles played by images, especially those of the Prophet, in Islamic traditions. As Oya Pancaroğlu has previously demonstrated, such images could be used “as instruments in ethical instruction rather than traps leading to idolatry.”<sup>114</sup> They also provide evidence for artists’ and viewers’ personal pietistic relationship with the Prophet, while also serving as sites of remembrance that bear witness to varied attempts to express and convey Muhammad’s dual nature through the abstraction of visual form.

Rhetorical and visual strategies aimed at allegorizing the prophetic body are ubiquitous in Islamic traditions because Muhammad was understood as a hybrid entity, a literal personification of the encounter between the realms of the natural and supernatural. For these reasons, writers and artists seem to have wanted to draw a clear and visible distinction between his physical body (*khalq*) and his interior form (*khulq*).<sup>115</sup> In many texts and images, therefore, the Prophet’s body is described as bi-substantial and transmigratory. Ultimately, the language of metaphor dominates, particularly in pre-modern Persian literary and artistic traditions, in which the Prophet is described in word and in form as being simultaneously polymorphic and pictographic, visible and unseen, logos and light.

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#### NOTES

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1. The controversy over the cartoons was so immense that it became an entry (“Jyllands-Posten Muhammad Cartoons Controversy”) in the popular online encyclopedia Wikipedia. The Wikipedia entry includes all twelve original cartoons published in the *Jyllands-Posten* and provides a concise overview of the controversy. It also discusses freedom of the press, censorship, and (briefly) Islamic pictorial traditions. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten\\_Muhammad\\_cartoons#Islamic\\_tradition](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jyllands-Posten_Muhammad_cartoons#Islamic_tradition). For an artistic evaluation of the cartoons, see Art Spiegelman, “Drawing Blood: Outrageous Cartoons and the Art of Courage,” *Harper’s Magazine* 312/1873 (June 2006): 43–52.
2. In his research, Finbarr B. Flood points to the “waves” of iconoclastic practices in Islam, which waxed and waned over the centuries in a manner similar to other iconoclastic moments in early Christian, Byzantine, and Protestant Europe: see Finbarr B. Flood, “Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, 4 (December 2002): 641–59.
3. Cycles of illustrations depicting the Prophet Muhammad emerged in Ottoman lands as well, and for these reasons are discussed in some detail subsequently in this study.
4. For an overview of ascension paintings produced during this period, see Christiane Gruber, “The Prophet Muḥammad’s Ascension (*Mi’rāj*) in Islamic Art and Literature, ca. 1300–1600” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2005); idem, “L’Ascension (*Mi’rāj*) du Prophète Mohammed dans la peinture et la littérature islamiques,” *Luqman: Annales des Presses Universitaires d’Iran* 39, 1 (Fall and Winter 2003–4): 55–79; idem, *The Timurid “Book of Ascension” (Mi’rajnama): A Study of Text and Image in a Pan-Asian Context* (Valencia, Spain: Patrimonio Ediciones, 2008), 254–56; and idem, “Me’rāj. ii. Illustrations,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <http://www.iranica.com>.
5. Although other pictorial techniques exist, only three methods are discussed here. A fourth, namely, the facial veil, is too complex to be discussed in detail within the scope of this study. For a detailed examination of the Prophet’s facial veil, see Christiane Gruber, “When *Nubuvvat* Encounters *Valāyat*: Safavid Paintings of the Prophet Muḥammad’s *Mi’rāj*, ca. 1500–1550,” in *Shi’ite Art and Material Culture*, ed. Pedram Khosronejad (London: I. B. Tauris, forthcoming 2010). This study shows that the first original (rather than a *posteriori*) facial veil emerged during the time of Shah Isma’il’s I reign (1501–24) and that it was used as a purposeful means of associating the ruler’s persona with that of the Prophet. In paintings produced for Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76) and certainly in late sixteenth-century Ottoman paintings, the facial veil appears to have lost its initial religio-political associations with the first Safavid ruler. Instead, it appears to have been used as a means to inhibit a viewer’s full witnessing of the Prophet. The reasons for the facial veil’s “codification” over the course of the sixteenth century in both Persian and Ottoman lands is a complex issue, which remains to be further analyzed in light of religious developments (Sunni-Shi’i contentions, the delineation of

- Twelver Shi'ism in Persia, the rise of Sunni "orthodoxy" in Ottoman lands, the expansion of Sufism, etc.) and their potential effects on pictorial traditions.
6. The term "memory image" is borrowed from Peter Parshall, "The Art of Memory and the Passion," *The Art Bulletin* 81, 3 (September 1999): 456–72. Here, Parshall describes the "memory image" as a picture produced in the mind through a kind of memory that is "artificial," namely, through man's innate capacity to cultivate and control his memory in the service of a particular task (such as remembering Christ's passion).
  7. Throughout this study, the phrase *nūr Muḥammad* will be used as such since it appears most frequently in this form in Islamic texts: see Uri Rubin, "Pre-existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of *Nūr Muḥammad*," *Israel Oriental Studies* 5 (1975), 62–119. However, the expression can also appear as *nūr Muḥammadī*: see U. Rubin, *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition* (henceforth *EI2*) (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "Nūr Muḥammadī"; other variants include *al-nūr al-Muḥammadī* and, in Persian, *nūr-i Muḥammad*.
  8. For a discussion of the Safavids' synthesis of Sufi and Shi'i ideas, see Kathryn Babayan, "The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism," *Iranian Studies* 27, 1–4 (1994): 135–61, further developed in idem, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).
  9. For example, in 1997 the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) requested that the sculpted representation of the Prophet Muhammad in the north frieze of the "Great Lawgivers of History," located in the courtroom of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, be removed or sanded down. CAIR expressed offense at the medium (a sculpture) and the belligerent content (the Prophet holding a sword), to which Chief Justice William Rehnquist responded that the depiction was a "well-intentioned attempt by the sculptor Adolph Weinman to honor Muhammad." Further stressing that the figure of the Prophet was not intended as a form of idol-worship, that physical injury to an architectural feature in the Supreme Court building was unlawful, and that the sword in the iconographic program of the Supreme Court friezes represented a symbol of justice and not of war, Chief Justice Rehnquist rejected CAIR's request to remove the sculpture (two-page letter from Chief Justice William Rehnquist to Nihad Awad, Executive Director, and Ibrahim Hooper, Communications Director, of the Council on American-Islamic Relations dated March 11, 1997; provided to the author by Kathleen Arberg, Public Information Officer, Public Information Office, Supreme Court of the United States). Based on the input from a number of Muslim groups such as the American Muslim Council, however, Chief Justice Rehnquist, agreed to change the Supreme Court's literature on the depiction of the Prophet on the north frieze to include a concluding sentence stating that "Muslims generally have a strong aversion to sculptured or pictured representations of the Prophet." (*Ibid.*, 2.) In agreement with Chief Justice Rehnquist, Taha Jaber al-Alwani issued a fatwa in favor of retaining the sculpture, noting that: "What I have seen in the Supreme Courtroom deserves nothing but appreciation and gratitude from American Muslims. This is a positive gesture toward Islam made by the architect [Cass Gilbert] and other architectural decision-makers of the highest Court in America": Taha Jaber al-Alwani, "Fatwa Concerning the United States Supreme Courtroom Frieze," *Journal of Law and Religion* 15, 1–2 (2000–2001): 1–28. With the persistent division of opinion on this sculpture alone, it becomes evident that modern Muslim views on representations of the Prophet Muhammad are not always in accord or monolithic.
  10. Earle Waugh, "Following the Beloved: Muḥammad as Model in the Sufi Tradition," in *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, ed. Frank Reynolds and Donald Capps (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1976), 77.
  11. Alexandre Papadopoulo, *Islam and Muslim Art*, trans. Robert E. Wolf (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1979), 56–57; and Priscilla Soucek, "The Theory and Practice of Portraiture in the Persian Tradition," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 97.
  12. On the layout and text of Ottoman *hilyes*, see Nabil F. Safwat, *The Art of the Pen: Calligraphy of the 14th to 20th Centuries*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, ed. Julian Raby, vol. 5 (Oxford: The Nour Foundation, in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1996), 46–50. For a discussion of Ottoman *hilyes* as Sunni visualizations of the hadith, which symbolically place the Prophet Muhammad between the realm of the sacred and that of humankind, see Tim Stanley, "From Text to Art Form in the Ottoman Hilye," in *Studies on Islamic Art and Architecture in Honor of Filiz Çağman* (Istanbul: Topkapı Palace Museum, forthcoming). For comparative *hilyes* on wooden panels, see Safwat, *Art of the Pen*, 54–55; Ali Alparslan, *Osmanlı Hat Sanatı Tarihi*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004), 133–34; *In Pursuit of Excellence: Works of Art from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul* (Istanbul: Ahmet Ertuğ, 1993), pl. 38; and numerous examples included in Faruk Taşkale and Hüseyin Gündüz, *Hat Sanatında Hilye-i Şerife: Hz. Muhammed'in Özellikleri = Characteristics of the Prophet Muhammed in Calligraphic Art* (Istanbul: Antik A. Ş. Kültür Yayınları, 2006).
  13. Joanna Wooddall, "Introduction: Facing the Subject," in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Wooddall (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 12.
  14. Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991). New paradigms for practices of portraiture and modes of visibility in non-Western traditions have been analyzed in Richard Brilliant and Jean Borgatti, *Likeness and Beyond: Portraits from Africa and the World* (New York: Center for African Art, 1990); and Robert Nelson, ed., *Visibility Before and Beyond the Renaissance: Seeing as Others Saw* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). However, these studies do not take into consideration Islamic practices of portraiture, an unfortunate

- albeit noted omission: see Nelson, *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, 10.
15. Nelson, *Visuality Before and Beyond the Renaissance*, 2. The question of the gaze in religious art (i.e., the “sacred gaze”) has been examined recently by David Morgan in his *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2005). Much like Robert Nelson, David Morgan argues that the sacred gaze, as a visual medium of belief, encompasses a visual network that constitutes a social act of looking and is therefore a practice that includes the image, the viewer, and the act of viewing: Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 3–6.
  16. For a review of devotional images (*Andachtsbilder*), which typically represent scenes from the Passion of Christ, and their use in devotional practices in medieval European art, see Nigel Morgan, “Andachtsbild,” *Grove Art Online* (accessed 28 February 2008).
  17. David James, “Qur’ans as Works of Art,” in *The Master Scribes: Qur’ans of the 10th to 14th Centuries AD*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, ed. Julian Raby, 2 (New York: Nour Foundation, in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1992), 11. James contends that religious art in Islam consists solely of Qur’ans and calligraphy, while illustrated manuscripts depicting the Prophet Muhammad, such as Sultan Murad III’s *Siyer-i Nebi* of ca. 1595–96, are not “true works of religious art, although they may, and often do, have a spiritual element.” On the other hand, scholars such as Ernst Grube, J. M. Rogers, and Priscilla Soucek take the position that illustrated religious narratives begin early and continue in their new cultural milieu, whether these are Persian or Turkish, and therefore reveal that “religious painting” is a relevant category in Islamic art: see J. M. Rogers, “The Genesis of Safawid Religious Painting,” *Iran* 8 (1970): 126; article republished based on idem, “The Genesis of Safawid Religious Painting,” in *Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology, Tehran-Isfahan-Shiraz, 11th–18th April 1968*, ed. A. Tajvidi and M. Y. Kiani, 2 vols. (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Arts, 1968), 2:167–88.
  18. Priscilla Soucek, “Nizami on Painters and Painting,” in *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 9–21; and idem, “Theory and Practice of Portraiture.” Although Soucek examines a wide range of portraits in her two articles, she does not address images of the Prophet Muhammad *per se*. In another study, however, she discusses apocryphal (written) portraits of Muhammad in Persian illustrated manuscripts produced during the fourteenth century: see idem, “The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated Versions,” in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World: Papers from a Colloquium in Memory of Richard Ettinghausen, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 2–4 April 1980*, ed. Priscilla Soucek (University Park, Pa., and London: published for the College Art Association of America by Pennsylvania State University Press 1988), 193–218.
  19. Priscilla Soucek, “Nizami on Painters and Painting,” 12.
  20. Yves Porter, “La forme et le sens: À propos du portrait dans la littérature persane classique,” in *Pand o Sukhan: Mélanges offerts à Charles-Henri de Fouchécour*, ed. Christophe Balag et al. (Tehran: Institut français de recherche en Iran, 1995), 219–31.
  21. *Ibid.*, 222.
  22. Soucek, “Theory and Practice of Portraiture,” 102 (quoting al-Ghazzālī’s *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* [The Revival of Religious Sciences]).
  23. This concept finds a parallel in the Christian conviction that Jesus Christ is both divine and human. In Islamic thought, however, the Prophet Muhammad is considered to be a mortal man bearing “sacred” qualities, rather than being divine *per se*.
  24. Arthur Jeffery, “Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Shajarat al-Kawn*,” *Studia Islamica* 10 (1950): 43–77. The process of idealizing the Prophet Muhammad in biographical works and, later, in mystical sources reveals a series of sustained attempts at promoting the Messenger of Islam in popular piety, thus yielding a veritable veneration of the Prophet, or a “Prophet-cultus.” *Ibid.*, 45.
  25. Many hadith compendia include chapters providing a description of the Prophet (entitled *ṣifat al-Nabī*), in which Muhammad’s physical and moral characteristics are enumerated. These chapters in turn gave rise to the *shamā’il* genre.
  26. Muḥammad b. ‘Isā al-Tirmidhī’s work on the Prophet Muhammad’s features bears a number of titles, including *al-Shamā’il al-sharīfa* (The Noble Features), *al-Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya* (Muhammadan Features), *al-Shamā’il al-Nabawiyya* (The Prophetic Features), and *Shamā’il al-Muṣṭafā* (The Features of the Chosen One). It also is simply referred to as *Shamā’il al-Tirmidhī* (al-Tirmidhī’s Features) and is best rendered in English as The Virtues and Noble Character of the Prophet Muhammad. There exist a number of Arabic editions of al-Tirmidhī’s text, including *al-Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya*, ed. Sayyid ‘Umrān (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1996). It is available in French as *Les qualités caractérielles de Mohammad: As-shamā’il al-Mohammadiyah*, trans. Marjan Jardaly (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2004); and in English as *The Virtues and Noble Character of the Prophet Muhammad*, at <http://www.inter-islam.org/hadeeth/stmenu.htm> (accessed April 5, 2009).
  27. al-Ḥusayn b. Maṣ’ūd al-Baghawī, *al-Anwār fī shamā’il al-Nabī al-mukhtār*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ya’qūbī (Beirut: Dār al-Diḥya, 1989).
  28. Ismā’il b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Shamā’il al-Rasūl wa-dalā’il Nubuwwatihi wa-faḍā’ilihi wa-khaṣā’iṣihi*, ed. Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Wāḥid (Cairo: ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1967).
  29. The Andalusian mystic Ibn ‘Arabī provides his theosophical elaboration of a pantheist world principally in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (The Meccan Illuminations) and *al-Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom). In both works, as in a

- number of others, Ibn 'Arabi argues that spiritual oneness can only be achieved through the abolition (*fanā*) of the self and the existential world.
30. For biographical information on al-Jili, see H. Ritter, *EI2*, s.v. "Abd al-Karim al-Djili"; Titus Burckhardt's introduction to 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, *Universal Man: Extracts*, Engl. trans. Angela Culme-Seymour (Sherborne Stables, England: Beshara, 1983), i–xiii; and Yūsuf Zaydān, 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili: *Faylasūf al-Şūfiyya* (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li'l-Kitāb, 1988). The date of al-Jili's death is still disputed. However, it seems most probable that he died in 1408: see Valerie Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God: The Development of a Sufi Practice," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31 (1999): 366 n. 6.
  31. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūli (also spelled al-Juzūli) is best known for his popular prayer manual entitled *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* (The Proofs of Good Deeds), which circulated widely from the fifteenth century onward, especially in lands under Ottoman rule.
  32. For a description of the Sufi doctrine of the "Complete Man," see 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *al-Insān al-kāmil fi'l-Islām*, 2nd ed. (Kuwait: Wikālat al-Maṭbū'āt, 1976); and al-Jili, *Universal Man*. For the use of the term *wāsiṭa*, see 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili, *al-Kamālāt al-ilāhiyya fi'l-ṣifāt al-Muḥammadiyya*, ed. Sa'īd 'Abd al-Fattāḥ (Cairo: Maktabat 'Ālam al-Fikr, 1997), 44 (*wāsiṭa bayn Allāh wa-bayn adam*). Muhammad is also described (ibid., 46) as the intermediary between God and created beings (*wāsiṭa bayn Allāh wa-bayn al-khalq*). On the mystical concept of *barzakh*, see Salman Bashier, *Ibn al-'Arabi's Barzakh: The Concept of the Limit and the Relationship between God and the World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004).
  33. al-Jili, *al-Kamālāt*, 42.
  34. The annihilation (*fanā*) of one's separate personhood while contemplating the Prophet has been a central motif of Sufi piety since Ibn 'Arabi. For a general discussion of Sufi *fanā*, see Valerie Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God."
  35. Teresa Fitzherbert, "Khwaju Kirmani (689–753/1290–1352): An *Ēminence Grise* of Fourteenth-Century Persian Painting," *Iran* 29 (1991): 149.
  36. See Lisa Golombek, "Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting," in Ettinghausen, *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 23–34; and Sheila Blair, "The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 266–74.
  37. The *dalā'il al-nubuwwa* genre is best represented by Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, ed. Muḥammad Rawwās Qal'ahji and 'Abd al-Barr 'Abbās (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1419 [1999]), and Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī's *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa wa-ma'rifat aḥwāl Šāḥib al-Sharī'a*, ed. Sayyid Aḥmad Saqr (Cairo: n.p., 1960).
  38. Text in English available at: <http://www.inter-islam.org/hadeeth/stmenu.htm> (accessed July 15, 2008). Translation slightly adapted by author.
  39. Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God," 360.
  40. Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth BnF), Paris, Ms. Pers. 82. This unstudied manuscript is quite lengthy at a total of 206 folios (measuring 31 x 23 cm), and it is meticulous in its descriptions of the Prophet's various body parts, which include: his head, forehead, eyebrows, eyes, eyelashes, nose, mouth, teeth, breath, face, beard, hair, neck, shoulders, shoulder blades, back, chest, stomach, navel, hands, fingers, forearms, legs, heels, feet, and joints; his size, skin color, and beauty; and, finally, his sweat and spit (whose olfactory and curative powers made them highly sought after). After describing these physical traits and bodily excretions, there follows the author's disquisition on the Prophet's moral and spiritual makeup. For further information on this manuscript, see Edgar Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*, 4 vols. (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1905–34), 1:249–50, cat. no. 371. On Ravandi's life and works, see ibid., 1:276–77, cat. no. 438.
  41. See Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Le roman de Varqet et Golshah: Essai sur les rapports de l'esthétique littéraire et de l'esthétique plastique dans l'Iran pré-mongol, suivi de la traduction du poème," *Arts Asiatiques* 22 (1970): 5–262, especially pl. 64 (Topkapı Palace Library, Istanbul, Ms. H. 481, fols. 69v–70r) and verses 2169–2238. For an analysis of the text, see Ahmed Atesh, "Le récit de Warqah et Gulshah," *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961): 143–52.
  42. The inclusion of the Prophet's *burda* suggests a moment of utmost solemnity or prayer. For example, two Ilkhanid paintings executed during the first half of the fourteenth century portray the Prophet wearing the *burda* during particularly critical moments in his prophetic career: 1) in a painting depicting Muhammad's investiture of 'Ali at Ghadir Khumm included in al-Birūnī's *al-Āthār al-bāqiyya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliyya* (copied in Tabriz, Maragha, or perhaps Mosul in 1307–8) (Edinburgh University Library, Ms. Arab 161, fol. 162r); and 2) in a composition showing the Prophet receiving a vision of Jerusalem upon his prayer to God as a means of verifying the miracle of his ascension, included in a now fragmentary illustrated *Mi'rājnāma* most likely produced in Tabriz ca. 1317–35 (Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. H. 2154, fol. 107r). For the painting in al-Birūnī's text, see in particular Robert Hillenbrand, "Images of Muhammad in al-Biruni's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*," in *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars: Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 134, and pl. 13; and for the *Mi'rājnāma* painting, see in particular Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, trans. J. M. Rogers (Boston: Little, Brown, 1986), 69, fig. 47.
  43. The painting of the enthroned Prophet is one of only three paintings included in the *Marzubānnāma*. The other two paintings, also placed at the manuscript's opening, depict the author's composition of the *Marzubānnāma* (fol. 5r) and the work's patron (fol. 7r). These paintings correspond respectively to the textual praises of the Prophet, as well as

- of the work's author and its patron, a structure of eulogy typically found at the beginning of Persian didactic, moralizing, romantic, and heroic texts. For a discussion of these paintings, the *Marzubānnāma* manuscript, and Ilkhanid painting produced in Baghdad, see Marianna S. Simpson, "The Role of Baghdad in the Formation of Persian Painting," in *Art et société dans le monde iranien*, ed. Chahryar Adle (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, Éditions Recherche sur les civilisations, 1982), 91–116.
44. A member of the mint genus of herbs, the poney herb (*kaisū*), also known as pennyroyal or perennial mint (*mentha pulegium*), has small blue or violet flowers with small aromatic leaves that exude a minty aroma. Essential oil of the poney herb was frequently used in folk medicine, and today it is used in aromatherapy.
  45. Sa'd al-Din al-Varāvīnī, *Marzubānnāma*, Baghdad, 698 (1299), Archaeological Museum Library, Istanbul, Ms. 216, fol. 1v; idem, *Kitāb-i Marzubānnāma*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī (Tehran: Furūghī, 1984), 1; and Simpson, "Role of Baghdad," fig. 47.
  46. al-Varāvīnī, *Marzubānnāma*, fol. 2v, bottom two lines; and idem, *Kitāb-i Marzubānnāma*, 1. (The first line of Arabic poetry in the published edition of the *Marzubānnāma* reads: *salāmu al-ṣabbi kulla...* The term *ṣabb* means "enamored" or "ardently in love.") The encomium to the Prophet in al-Varāvīnī's text is omitted from the English translation *The Tales of Marzuban*, trans. Reuben Levy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959). Instead, the English translation begins immediately with the author's introduction and reasons for writing the *Marzubānnāma*, a section that typically occurs only after an exordium, first, to God and, then, to the Prophet Muhammad.
  47. Jeffery, "Ibn al-'Arabī's *Shajarat al-Kawn*," 67–68. The imperative *kun* (be) is borrowed from the famous verse in the Qur'an (2:177) that describes God's creation of the heavens and earth: "When He decreed a matter, He said to it: 'Be, and it is' (*kun fa-yakūn*)."
  48. The term *ṣūra* can mean "image, form, shape, face, or countenance": see A. J. Wensinck, *EI2*, s.v. "Ṣūra."
  49. Much like the *nūr Muḥammad* and the veil, authors and poets extolled the ethereality of Muhammad's scent. For example, the historian al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) reports in his historical encyclopedia that Anas b. Malik stated that he "never encountered any scent, not even the scent of a bride, more fragrant than the skin of the Messenger of God": al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī = Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*, vol. 6, *Muḥammad at Mecca*, trans. W. Montgomery Watt and M. V. McDonald (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 80. Likewise, the theologian al-Ghazzālī reports that the "beads of sweat on his face were like pearls; they were more fragrant than the most pungent musk": al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn = Revival of Religious Sciences*, trans. Leon Zolondek (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 42. Persian poets often described the Prophet's scent (*bū-yi Rasūl*) and its power over humans. For instance, Nizāmī (d. 1218) addresses Muhammad directly, saying: "Your scent is the elixir of our lives": Aḥmad Ranjbar, ed., *Chand Mī'rājnāma* [Several Books of Ascension] (Tehran: Amīr Kabīr, 1372 [1952]), 31; and Nizāmī, *Makhzanol asrār: The Treasury of Mysteries of Nezāmī of Ganjeh*, trans. Gholām Hosein Dārāb (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1945), 104, verse 209.
  50. The painting is included in a manuscript of Naṣrallāh Munshī's *Kalīla va Dimna* that was calligraphed in Baghdad (*Madīnat al-Salām*) in 678 (1279–80). This manuscript was completed just two decades before the *Marzubānnāma*, and therefore provides another piece of evidence for the production of manuscripts in Baghdad during the Ilkhanid period. However, its paintings seem to have been added later, most probably during the Jalayirid or Muzaffarid periods, that is, ca. 1350–1400. On the paintings' probable date of execution, see Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997), 69.
  51. For the Persian text, see Naṣrallāh Munshī, *Tarjuma-i Kalīla va Dimna*, ed. Mujtabā Mīnuvī (Tehran: Dānīshgāh-i Tīhrān, 1924–25).
  52. Naṣrallāh Munshī, *Tarjuma-i Kalīla va Dimna*, 2–3; and idem, BnF Suppl. Persan Ms. 376, fol. 2r.
  53. Naṣrallāh Munshī, *Tarjuma-i Kalīla va Dimna*, 3; and idem, BnF Suppl. Persan Ms. 376, fol. 2v, lines 2–4; and Qur'an 33:56.
  54. The addition of the Qur'anic prayer and the image of the ascension, as argued by Bernard O'Kane, bestows a blessing (*baraka*) on this book: see Bernard O'Kane, *Early Persian Painting: Kalīla and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2003), 50.
  55. al-Baghawī, *al-Anwār fī shamā'il al-Nabī al-mukhtār*, 141–47 (on the Prophet's white, rosy, and brilliant complexion), and 148–153 (on his hair); Ibn Kathīr, *Shamā'il al-Rasūl*, 9–14 (on the Prophet's complexion, his hair, and his round face), and 23–28 (on his hair, its length and color, and his hair plaits); and al-Tirmidhī, *Les qualités caractérielles de Mohammad*, 5–16 (on the Prophet's physical appearance).
  56. Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 26.
  57. A small inscription in the lower left corner of the upper right gold text panel attempts to attribute the composition to the famous painter Bihzad, active in Herat during the last quarter of the fifteenth century. It is not atypical to find later attempts to ascribe paintings to the master painter, even if certain paintings (like this one) do not relate to his style. Based on stylistic grounds, the painting appears to have been made ca. 1550 in Shaybanid Bukhara, on which see M. M. Ashrafi-Aini, "The School of Bukhara to c. 1550," in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, ed. Basil Gray (Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala Publications, 1979), 248–72.
  58. Muḥammad Khazā'ī, *Sharḥ-i Bustān* (Tehran: Sāzmān-i Intishārāt-i Jāvidān, 1984), 48.
  59. *Ibid.*, 52.
  60. Sa'dī, *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned: The Bustan of Sa'dī*, trans. G. M. Wickens (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 8, lines 95–96.

61. Khazā'ili, *Sharḥ-i Bustān*, 52 n. 10. The term is inspired by two famous hadiths, in which the Prophet states that "the first thing God created was my light" (*awwal mā khalaqa Allāh nūrī*) and "I am [made] of God's light and all created beings [are made] of my light" (*anā min nūrī Allāhi wa'l-khalqu kulluhum min nūrī*).
62. *Ibid.*, 51.
63. Sa'dī, *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned*, 7, lines 85–86 (with slight changes in my English translation).
64. *Ibid.*, 53.
65. *Ibid.*, 8, lines 101–2 (with slight changes in my English translation).
66. Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali are mentioned in Sa'dī's encomium (*ibid.*, 51). However, only three, not four, figures appear in the painting. If one accepts the attribution of the composition to Shaybanid Bukhara (1500–1598), then it is possible that the artist purposefully omitted 'Ali, the figure-head of Shi'i Islam and thus a figural stand-in for the Sunni Shaybanids' Shi'i enemies, the Safavids of Iran.
67. Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God," 354. The term *nuskha* also can be translated as "copy" or "replica."
68. Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 65. David Morgan applies the term "imagetext" to Jewish artifacts and Islamic calligraphic panels that create animal or human forms (*ibid.*, 67, fig. 16).
69. The term *lawḥ* appears five times in the Qur'an, and the "well-preserved" tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*) is used to describe God's revelations or the archetypal Qur'an (85:22 and 97:1). It also stands for the tablet of destiny, on which the fate of mankind is inscribed. See A. J. Wensinck and C. E. Bosworth, *EI2*, s.v. "Lawḥ."
70. Morgan, *Sacred Gaze*, 64. David Morgan describes a "sound-space" as a location in which prayer looms large and defines an area, such as a mosque or dervish lodge. It is here argued that the term "soundspace" can also describe the calling forth of the Prophet's presence through oral traditions of prayer.
71. On the painting's style and date, see Basil Robinson, *Jean Pozzi: L'Orient d'un collectionneur* (Geneva: Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, 1992), 110, 221 (cat. no. 20).
72. Although it is difficult to illustrate this technique in Ottoman painterly traditions through published reproductions, it is clear that illustrated manuscripts depicting the Prophet Muhammad, such as Sultan Murad III's *Siyer-i Nebī* of 1595–96, include a similar procedure. When one holds paintings of the Prophet from the *Siyer-i Nebī* up to natural sunlight, an inscription below his white facial veil is clearly visible. It is hoped that in the future images taken using infrared photography will show the longevity of this tradition in both Persian and Turkish pictorial traditions.
73. The episode depicts 'Ali's storming of a Jewish stronghold about one hundred miles from Mecca in the seventh year of the *hijra* (628). According to historical chronicles, Muhammad entrusted the attack to 'Ali, whose ophthalmia (inflammation of the eyeball) was cured immediately after the Prophet spit into his eyes. 'Ali proceeded to kill the Jewish chieftain and, after losing his shield, lifted the fortress's door from its hinges and defended himself with it against a variety of propelled weapons like arrows and rocks. He then used the door as a bridge to gain access to the redoubt. It later took eight men to put the door back on its hinges, thus confirming the superhuman strength of Muhammad's valiant relative: C. E. Bosworth, *EI2*, s.v. "Khaybar." Al-Nishāpūri's *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets) describes this and other events in the lives of the prophets, including Adam, Moses, Alexander, Mary, Jesus, and Muhammad. This text was frequently illustrated during the sixteenth century in Safavid Persian and Ottoman Turkish lands: see Rachel Milstein et al., *Stories of the Prophets: Illustrated Manuscripts of Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1999).
74. Another sketch representing 'Ali with his name in the vocative (*yā 'Alī!*) inscribed on his face appears to form a series with the tinted sketch of Muhammad: see Robinson, *Jean Pozzi*, 110, 221 (cat. no. 21). In these paintings, we can hypothesize that the inscribed vocative of 'Ali's name provides evidence for the Shi'i practice of proclaiming his name aloud (the so-called *nād-i 'Alī*) in order to muster his presence and support.
75. The title of al-Jili's work, *Qāb qawsayn* (The Space of Two Bows), is taken from Sura *al-Najm* (The Star), the fifty-third chapter of the Qur'an (verse 9). Verses 1–17 of Sura *al-Najm* narrate the Prophet's ascension, and his proximity to God is described as a space of two bow arcs or even less. In Sufi thought and poetry, the expression *qāb qawsayn* is indicative of the mystic's ability to become intimate with the Lord and thus reach the ultimate "station of proximity" (*maqām al-qurba*), in which he realizes a fullness of spiritual knowledge.
76. Hoffman, "Annihilation in the Messenger of God," 356.
77. Ronald Nettler, *Sufi Metaphysics and Qur'anic Prophets: Ibn 'Arabī's Thought and Method in the Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 199.
78. British Library (henceforth BL), London, Ms. Or. 12009. Although the text seems to have been written around 1600, all paintings (except for fol. 19v) bear the date of 1118 (1706). On fol. 66v, the date 1118 is written in light blue ink immediately below the gold cenotaph in the center of the painting. Despite these dates, G. M. Meredith-Owens attributes the paintings to Shiraz, ca. 1550–60, based on stylistic grounds: see G. M. Meredith-Owens, *Turkish Miniatures* (London: British Museum, 1963), 29. Although the paintings may have been executed at this time, some overpainting and the date (1118) on the compositions themselves strongly suggest that an artist, perhaps working in Ottoman lands at the turn of the eighteenth century, retouched the paintings.
79. For example, another copy of Fuzūli's *Hadiqat al-su'adā'* (Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, Istanbul, Ms. 1967), whose paintings are closely related to those in BL Ms. Or. 12009, reveals distinctly Sunni Ottoman alterations: the images and text have been carefully manipulated to omit honorific prayers to the *ahl al-Bayt* (members of the Prophet's household) and the imams. For example, on fol. 92v, the

- praise formula *'alayhi al-salām* (peace be upon him) after 'Ali's name has been crossed out.
80. *Ave Maria* inscriptions appear in paintings of the Annunciation, such as in Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi's *Annunciation* in the St. Ansanus Altarpiece dated 1333. Gabriel's angelic salutation to the Virgin inscribed on the surface of the painting served as a visual clue for the popular fourteenth-century devotional practice of praising the Virgin Mary. These inscriptions elicited the painting's viewer to say the words aloud, thereby provoking a devotional response from the pious onlooker. In this instance, however, the salutations provide additional commentary upon the painting and never replace the Virgin's facial features, as they do in the case of the Prophet Muhammad. See Ann van Dijk, "The Angelic Salutation in Early Byzantine and Medieval Annunciation Imagery," *The Art Bulletin* 81, 3 (September 1999): 420–36; and Roger Tarr, "'Visibile Parlare': The Spoken Word in Fourteenth-Century Central Italian Painting," *Word and Image* 13 (1997): 223–44.
  81. Parshall, "Art of Memory and the Passion," 458.
  82. For a discussion of Ottoman illustrated copies of the text, see Jan Just Witkam, "The Battle of the Images: Mecca vs. Medina in the Iconography of the Manuscripts of al-Jazuli's *Dalā'il al-Khayrat*," *Beiruter Texte und Studien* 111 (2007): 67–82.
  83. al-Jazūlī, *Guide to Happiness: A Manual of Prayer*, trans. Rev. John B. Pearson (Oxford: printed for private circulation, 1907), 10; and 'Abd al-Majīd al-Sharnūbī, *Sharḥ Dalā'il al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār fī dhikr al-ṣalāh 'alā al-Nabī al-mukhtār* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1994), 6.
  84. This painting was published (in black and white) in Basil Robinson, *Fifteenth-Century Painting: Problems and Issues* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 68–69, fig. 22. Robinson correctly states that this painting has no parallel in the history of Persian painting. However, he neither addresses the reasons behind the painting's iconography nor its relationship to Nizami's text.
  85. Nizāmī, *Makhzanol asrār*, 97–109; and Ranjbar, *Chand Mi'rājnāma*, 24–25.
  86. For al-Jili and other mystics, the letter *mīm* also represents the transcendental spirit of the Prophet, because the empty space within the circle of this letter provides the area in which the "Secret Treasure" resides while the circle itself is the reality in which the "Secret Treasure" becomes manifest. In other words, there is a mutual relationship between the circle and its empty space, or between manifestation and essence. As al-Jili concludes: "The *mīm* represents existence, it is the reality that incorporates both worlds, the visible and the invisible... In the *mīm* of Muḥammad, there appears the eternal being and the created being." Ridha Atlagh, "Le point et la ligne: Explication de la *basmala* par la science des lettres chez 'Abd al-Karim al-Jili (m. 826 h.)," *Bulletin d'études orientales* 44 (1992): 176–77. Al-Jili and other mystics describe the round shape of the "Muhammadan *mīm*" as a suture between the primordial and created worlds: see Annemarie Schimmel, "The Primordial Dot: Some Thoughts about Sufi Letter Mysticism," *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987): 355–56.
  87. Some Sufi exegetes also claimed that the "verse of light" (*āyat al-nūr*), Qu'ran 24:35, describes a tabernacle (*mishkāh*) believed to represent the Prophet Muhammad and a torch (*misbāh*) contained within it as the "light of Muhammad" (*nūr Muḥammadi*): see M. K. Hermansen, "The Prophet Muḥammad in Sufi Interpretations of the Light Verse (24:35)," *Islamic Quarterly* 42, 2 (1998): 218–27.
  88. Uri Rubin, "Pre-existence and Light," 62, quoting al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. and ed. Muḥammad M. Khān, 9 vols. (Medina: Dār Ihyā al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya, n.d.), 4:229.
  89. Michel Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints: Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. Liadain Sherrard (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 67–68.
  90. Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl At-Tustarī* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 150.
  91. Nizāmī, *The Haft Paykar: A Medieval Persian Romance*, trans. Julie Scott Meisami (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6, verse 7; and Ranjbar, *Chand Mi'rājnāma*, 47.
  92. Nizāmī, *Haft Paykar*, 6, verse 14; and Ranjbar, *Chand Mi'rājnāma*, 48.
  93. The Prophet's earliest biographer, Ibn Ishāq (d. 768), describes in his *Sīrat al-Nabī* (Biography of the Prophet) the emergence of the prophetic blaze (*ghurrat al-nubuwwa*) on Muhammad's father 'Abdallah, which then passed to the Prophet's mother Amina before finally resting with Muhammad: see Rubin, "Nūr Muḥammadi."
  94. The painting measures 9 x 8 cm. Folios are 15.5 x 24.9 cm, and the written surface measures 9 x 15.7 cm. The text is executed in black *nasta'liq* script at twelve lines per page in two columns.
  95. For example, the nine paintings from a fragmentary Ilkhanid *Mi'rājnāma* dated ca. 1317–35 (Topkapı Palace Library, Ms. H. 2154) arrived in Istanbul sometime over the course of the sixteenth century, at which time the Prophet's facial features were covered with white painted veils added by artists active in the Ottoman royal book atelier. These facial veils were recently removed by conservators: see Rogers, "Genesis of Safawid Religious Painting," in Tajvidi and Kiani, *Vth International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology*, 178. They appear to have been added in order to render the Ilkhanid paintings consistent with sixteenth-century Ottoman pictorial traditions of representing Muhammad with a white facial veil. These traditions, which remain to be examined in greater detail, appear to have emerged over the course of the sixteenth century. They may have been linked to a growing "sacralization" of the prophetic body in Ottoman Sunni biographical writing and philosophical thought (on which, see Gottfried Hagen, "The Emergence of a Pietas Ottomanica," lecture delivered at the 2nd Great Lakes Ottoman Workshop, DePaul University, Ill., September 23–24, 2005).

96. Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, ed. Aḥmad Khūshnīvis ‘Imād (Isfahan: Intishārāt-i Sanā’ī, 1978), 23–25; and idem, *The Speech of the Birds: Concerning Migration to the Real, the Manṭiqu’-ṭ-ṭair*, trans. Peter Avery (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1998), 25–29.
97. ‘Aṭṭār, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, 29; and idem, *Speech of the Birds*, 37, verse 398.
98. ‘Aṭṭār, *Manṭiq al-ṭayr*, 24; and idem, *Speech of the Birds*, 27, verse 289.
99. Qāḍī ‘Iyād b. Mūsā al-Yaḥṣūbī, *Kitāb al-Ṣhifā’ bi-ta’rīf ḥuqūq al-Muṣṭafā*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī (Cairo: ‘Īsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1977); and idem, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah: Ash-Shifa of Qadi Iyad*, trans. Aisha Abdarrahman Bewley, 2nd ed. (Granada, Spain: Madinah Press, 1992).
100. al-Yaḥṣūbī, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah*, 34. This statement is also reported in al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 74. Al-Tirmidhī also describes the Prophet’s smile in his *Shamā’il*: see al-Tirmidhī, *Les qualités caractérielles de Mohammad*, 140–45.
101. al-Yaḥṣūbī, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah*, 34. This hadith is reported in a number of other works; see, for example, Yūsuf b. Ismā’il al-Nabhānī, *Wasā’il al-wusūl ilā shamā’il al-Rasūl*, ed. Ḥasan Tamīm (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāt, 1970), 43.
102. al-Yaḥṣūbī, *Muhammad, Messenger of Allah*, 34. Also see al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 68; Ibn Sa’d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. Eduard Sachau and Carl Brockelmann, 9 vols. (London: E.J. Brill, 1904), 1: pt. II, 125; and al-Bukhārī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4:229, in which the author states: “Whenever he [the Prophet] went in darkness, light was shining around him like the moonlight.” A number of accounts also compare Muhammad’s luminosity to the moon on the night of Badr, when he and his forces defeated the Meccan forces in 624. Such statements include most notably: “Muhammad was the most handsome and luminous of men. No one described him but that he likened him to the moon on the night of Badr”; see *inter alia* al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 42 and 48; and Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣfahānī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwa*, 227.
103. Ibn ‘Abbās, *Le voyage et l’ascension nocturnes du Prophète Muḥammad / al-‘Isrā’ wa-l-Mī’rāj*, trans. Ali Druart, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Dar Albouraq, 2002), 14.
104. The text is available in Muṣṭafā al-Ḍarīr, *Kitab-i Siyer-i Nebī: Peygamber Efendimizin Hayatı*, ed. and trans. Mehmet Faruk Gürtenca, 3 vols. (Istanbul: n.p., 1977).
105. On the sixteenth-century Ottoman trend of translating Arabic and Persian texts, including biographies of the Prophet, into Ottoman Turkish, see Gottfried Hagen, “Translations and Translators in a Multilingual Society: A Case Study of Persian-Ottoman Translations, Late Fifteenth to Early Seventeenth Century,” *Eurasian Studies* 2, 1 (2003): 95–134.
106. On the Ottoman illustrated copy of al-Darir’s text, see Zeren Tanındı, *Siyer-i Nebī: İslam Tasvir Sanatında Hz. Muhammed’in Hayatı* (Istanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1984); Garrett Fisher, “A Reconstruction of the Pictorial Cycle of the *Siyar-i Nabī* of Murād III,” *Ars Orientalis* 14 (1984): 75–94; and Ernst Grube, “The *Siyar-i-Nabi* of the Spencer Collection in the New York Public Library,” *Atti del Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Arte Turca* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario di Turcologia, 1965), 149–76.
107. al-Ḍarīr, *Kitab-i Siyer-i Nebī*, 31–37.
108. *Ibid.*, 31–32.
109. *Ibid.*, 35.
110. This anecdote is included in the preface to the Bahram Mirza album of calligraphies and paintings written by Dust Muhammad in 1544–45. See Wheeler Thackston, *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 11.
111. Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 12. For further discussions of this episode and the *ṣandūq al-shahāda*, see David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 274–76 and 301–2; David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 170–74; Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, “The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet Muḥammad,” *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 19–38; Oleg Grabar, “Les Portraits du Prophète Mahomet,” *Comptes rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 2002 (2004): 1431–45; and Nadia M. El-Cheikh, “Muḥammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy,” *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 19. The same anecdote is reported in a variant version in al-Ṭūsī’s Persian-language *‘Ajā’ibnāma* (Book of Wonders), written in Persian and dedicated to Tughril b. Arslan (r. 1176–94), the last ruler of the Great Seljuks. In his text, al-Tusi informs us that the Byzantine emperor (Heraclius) secretly swore by Muhammad, either because he consciously accepted Muhammad and Islam or because he simply swore by the last of the portraits of prophets in the “chest of witnessing,” thereby inadvertently embracing the Islamic faith: see Oya Pancaroğlu, “Signs in the Horizons: Concepts of Image and Boundary in a Medieval Cosmography,” *Res* 43 (Spring 2003): 34, 37. In this twelfth-century variant of the narrative, it is interesting to note how a portable image of the Prophet Muhammad serves as a vehicle to foretell the ultimate triumph of Islam. In his *‘Ajā’ibnāma*, al-Tusi also reports two other anecdotes related to images of the Prophet, stressing both their didactic and affective potential: the first describes how a portrait of Muhammad was used by an Iranian king’s diviner to foresee the victory of Islam (Pancaroğlu, “Signs in the Horizons,” 33), and the second describes a copper statue of the Prophet held in Constantinople, which—much like two other statues representing Bilal and ‘Alī—were believed to prevent natural disasters from occurring (Pancaroğlu, “Signs in the Horizons,” 34, 37).
112. al-Jilī, *al-Kamālāt*, 257: “God created Muḥammad from the light of His Essence in order to epiphanize His Own Essence.” So as to describe the primacy or primordial-

- ity of the “Muhammadan light” (*awwaliyyat al-nūr al-Muḥammadi*), al-Jili also argues that the Prophet is the locus of the epiphanies of God’s essence (*mazhar tajalliyāt dhāt Allāh*) in the world (*ibid.*, 8–11).
113. For a discussion of Ottoman-Islamic cultural self-awareness and the codification of classical visual culture (in particular architecture) from ca. 1550 onward, see Gülru Necipoğlu, “Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of the Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry,” *Art Bulletin* 71, 3 (September 1989): 425–26.
  114. Pancaroğlu, “Signs in the Horizons,” 40.
  115. For a discussion on the differences between *khalq* and *khulq*, see Denis Gril, “Le corps du Prophète,” *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée* 113–14 (November 2006): 39.

THE PRODUCTION OF THE *ŞEHNĀME-İ SELĪM HĀN*

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Recent scholarship on the arts of the book from the Islamic world has been moving towards an examination of illustrated manuscripts as whole books, considering their aesthetic and intellectual components, as well as the contexts of their production and use.<sup>1</sup> Particular attention has also been paid to the workshops in which books and albums were produced and stored: the *kitābkhāna* (book house) of the Persian-speaking world, or the *naḳḳāşhāne* (designers' house) of the Ottomans.<sup>2</sup> So far, archival documents, albums, treatises, and other workshop materials have been much more informative on the making of illustrated books than have the manuscripts themselves.<sup>3</sup> Notable exceptions include the *Haft Awrang* of Jami prepared for the Safavid prince Sultan Ibrahim Mirza between 1556 and 1565; its multiple colophons and complicated production history have been incorporated into a detailed analysis of the manuscript as a whole.<sup>4</sup> The Great Mongol *Shāhnāma* is another exceptional manuscript that has been examined in terms of the relationship between image, text, and production.<sup>5</sup> Most recently, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Persian albums of calligraphy and painting and their prefaces have been masterfully studied, particularly with respect to the history of their production and the contexts in which they were used.<sup>6</sup> While these studies have immensely expanded our field of knowledge, our understanding of how illustrated manuscripts were produced is still erratic. We now have a sense of the general process and contexts of creation, but we still have much to learn about the individual choices involved in the making of specific books. There is ample room and need for multi-layered studies that bring the production

process to bear on a manuscript with its text, images, and illumination.

A rare survival from the late sixteenth-century Ottoman court provides an opportunity for just such a study, one that follows the production of a particular manuscript step by step and analyzes the evolution of its visual and verbal contents. It is particularly instructive to examine an Ottoman court history in this fashion because the illustrations of these books are often described in the scholarship as “realistic” or literal depictions of their verbal contents.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between text and image is assumed to be a rather transparent one, where the visual simply reflects the verbal, which in turn is understood to be passively descriptive of its time and context. My examination of the production process, however, demonstrates clearly that the image-text relationship is a deliberate construction, in which the two work together to create meaning. Through the complicated dialogue between word and image, the manuscript works in its entirety to simultaneously subvert and strengthen different aspects of the Ottoman court's social hierarchy by representing it in very particular ways.

The artwork in question, *Şehnāme-i Selīm Hān* (Book of Kings of [Sultan] Selim Khan), chronicles the events of the reign of the Ottoman sultan Selim II (r. 1566–74).<sup>8</sup> In addition to the expansive preface detailing how the manuscript was produced, two preparatory drafts of the project provide invaluable material evidence of the creative process.<sup>9</sup> One draft in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library contains the entire text, complete with corrections, additions, and edits.<sup>10</sup> This volume also has instructions for the page layout of the final version, but no decorations of its own—that is, no ruling, illuminations, or illustrations. By contrast, a second draft currently in the British Library contains only the

introductory sections of the book, but is embellished with gold ruling, illuminated section headings, and nine paintings.<sup>11</sup>

A pioneering study by Filiz Çağman introduced the manuscript and took note of the two earlier drafts. Çağman used the Topkapı draft to identify and complete those sections of the introductory narrative that are missing from the final version due to the loss of pages.<sup>12</sup> She also published the two archival documents related to the project in order to identify the artists who worked on the paintings. Using Çağman's article as a starting point, I will take my analysis of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* in a different direction to examine the relationship between how the manuscript was produced and its intended meanings.

The three versions of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* provide a treasure trove of information about the making of manuscripts in the Ottoman court and the sequence of steps taken by a collective group. We learn about the individuals involved in the project, their division of labor, and their methods of collaboration, and we see how word and image were deliberately brought together to create not only a luxurious account of the reign of Selim II but also a complex document containing multiple political messages targeted at its courtly audience. While this rich material can be taken in many directions to support a variety of studies and approaches, what I hope to show in the following pages is that a comprehensive account of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* informed by the production process reveals layers of meaning in the manuscript that are otherwise not readily visible. When examined this way, we see that one of the primary goals of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* was to record and thereby perpetuate the power structure of the Ottoman court, which was itself evolving.

#### THE FINAL VERSION: TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM LIBRARY, MS. A. 3595

The *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* was composed in Persian verse by Seyyid Lokman, the official historian (*şehnâmecî*) from 1569 until 1595. Measuring 23.6 by 34.3 centimeters, the book currently has 158 folios and thirty-nine illustrations (figs. 1–41 [after the Appendix]).<sup>13</sup> Some pages are missing from the manuscript, and on the basis

of comparison with one of the drafts, it is clear that it originally had forty-six paintings, of which at least ten were double-page compositions.<sup>14</sup> The date of completion provided in the colophon on folio 156a as January 12, 1581 (9 Dhu'l-Hijjah 988) places the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* squarely within the most prolific period of Ottoman illustrated manuscript production. The manuscript was a very long time in the making: it was begun before October 1571 during the reign of Selim II and finished under his son and successor Murad III (1574–95).<sup>15</sup> As is evident from the manuscript's large size, numerous illustrations, fine calligraphy, and careful illumination, the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân* was deemed an important project.

The book opens with illuminated double pages announcing that this “opulent compendium and excellent copy, chosen from the treasury of the jewel-like holy events written on the bejeweled priceless tablet, is the introduction to the Book of Kings of the deceased Sultan Selim.”<sup>16</sup> The introduction begins with an image of creation as the workshop of pure imagination—a familiar metaphor linking the making of the manuscript to the ultimate act of divine creation.<sup>17</sup> After briefly praising God the creator, the Prophet Muhammad, and the first four caliphs, Lokman turns to the Ottomans, enumerating the qualities that in his eyes made the empire great. The dynasty is lauded for the beauty of its capital city, the strength of its army, the generous patronage its sultans extended to scholars and intellectuals, and the levy of Christian children through the *devşirme* system. The allusion to the institutions of the army, the scholarly class, and the *devşirme* implies that the greatness of the empire was closely tied to the ruling classes in general, a vision that incorporates a broad segment of the Ottoman court into the imperial image.

The discussion of the *devşirme* leads seamlessly into praise for the illustrious grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, who also rose through the ranks of that system. Having attained the position of grand vizier towards the end of the life of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520–66), Sokollu Mehmed Pasha served three successive sultans in this position until his assassination in 1579. He gained significant political and economic power as grand vizier, and his overarching control of the Ottoman state during the reign of Selim II inspired some of the historians of the day to refer to him as the “virtual sultan.”<sup>18</sup> Such

power naturally inspired rivalry and jealousy, which, as will be discussed below, affected the editing process of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*.

After recounting the high points of Sokollu's career, Lokman also praises the grand vizier's confidant and secretary, Feridun Ahmed Beg. These two men happened to be Lokman's main patrons, and mentioning them together allows the author to explain how he was appointed court historian with their help and the story of the writing of the present book.

The introduction sets the tone for the remainder of the manuscript: Lokman cites and praises the members of Selim II's court almost as much as he does the sultan himself. This is partially due to the active involvement of these individuals in the production of the manuscript, which is discussed in detail in the introduction. Lokman also wished to ingratiate himself with those in the sultan's entourage who were his patrons and sponsors. These motivations, however, are not enough to explain the unprecedented emphasis on the ruling elite in the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. A stronger reason seems to have been a desire on the part of the author to record the power structure of the Ottoman court. It is this structure that gives the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* its final shape.

That this is so is clear from the beginning of the text, when Lokman praises God, the Prophet, and the four caliphs, who, he notes, worked "with the consultation of good viziers and country-adorning councilors."<sup>19</sup> The theme of helpers, i.e., viziers, is thus highlighted at the start of the manuscript. In addition to praising his patrons, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Feridun Ahmed Beg, Lokman also brings other viziers and courtiers into his text. The poem on fol. 10a, for example, begins as a eulogy to the sultan, but ends up praising his advisers as well. The emphasis on the court continues throughout the text of the manuscript, and is equally present in the images.

The *Şehnâme* proper begins with the ex libris of Selim II's son, Sultan Murad III. The creation of the book is attributed here to Murad's treasury, suggesting that work began on the final copy after his accession in 1574—at least three years after the project was initiated.<sup>20</sup> The illuminated title *Şehnâme-i Selim Hâniyye* signals the start of the account. The customary praises of God, the Prophet Muhammad, and each of the four

caliphs are followed by a eulogy of Sultan Selim. The encomium of the sultan also encompasses the greatness of his viziers, called the "shadows of the shadow of God on earth,"<sup>21</sup> thereby drawing attention once again to the members of the court.

The narrative begins with a detailed account of Selim II's accession to the throne.<sup>22</sup> This is not merely a convenient starting point but also an opportunity to comment on the strained relationships between the new sultan's entourage and the grand vizier. According to Lokman, the crown prince received a message from Sokollu Mehmed Pasha informing him of the death of his father Sultan Süleyman while on campaign in Hungary, and asking that he meet the army on its march back to the capital. This important matter was duly illustrated with a double-page spread, but one of the pages is missing, so that all we have is an image of the messenger arriving at Selim II's camp (fig. 4). The new sultan, however, on the advice of his tutor and other companions, decided to stop first in Istanbul to accede to the throne, a move that can be interpreted as an assertion of independence from the grand vizier. Selim met the army after a brief stay in the capital. The second illustration comes at this point, and depicts Selim's second accession in Belgrade, where he greeted the army. The enthronement is also marked with a celebratory poem eulogizing the sultan's justice and enumerating his viziers. The sultan, his entourage, and the army then returned to Istanbul.<sup>23</sup>

Interwoven with the account of Selim II's accession is a subtle detailing of the Ottoman structure of power. In the next few pages, Lokman continues to praise the sultan's viziers, who are each depicted holding an audience.<sup>24</sup> Among the important members of Selim II's court praised by Lokman were the chief religious official of the empire, the *şeyhülislam* Ebussuud Efendi (d. 1574), the two army judges of Anatolia and Rumelia, and the leader of the sayyids. Other scholars and judges are not named but are mentioned in general terms. These early pages of the manuscript read almost like a record of the social and political hierarchies of the Ottoman court, a collective verbal portrait of the ruling elite during the decade of the book's production.

Lokman finally begins his account of the significant events of Selim II's reign on folio 38a. Here, too, the main protagonists are Selim's generals and viziers. This

is perfectly in line with the way Lokman presents his duties a few pages earlier: to praise the House of Osman and its warriors.<sup>25</sup> The remainder of the manuscript concentrates on their military deeds: Iskender Pasha's suppression of rebels in Basra; Osman Pasha's victories in the Yemen aided by Behram Pasha; the Tunisia and Cyprus campaigns featuring the governor of Algeria, Ali Pasha, as well as Koca Sinan Pasha, Piyale Pasha, and Lala Mustafa Pasha; the battles on the Dalmatian coast fought by Pertev Pasha and Ahmed Pasha; and Siyavuş Pasha's dealings in Bogdan. A number of other naval engagements led by Selim's commanders are also recounted. The overall tone is rather victorious, celebratory, and energetic. The defeat at Lepanto is glossed over on folios 127b–130a, almost as if it had been a minor skirmish dwarfed in importance by the Ottomans' numerous naval victories. All these victories are connected to the sultan via the series of letters sent to Istanbul to keep him informed of what was happening at the various fronts. Lokman also inserts short descriptions of the commanders taking leave of the sultan before going on campaign, thus implying that all of these victories were effected by his grace and permission. Also bringing the focus back to Istanbul are the gifts that arrived at the capital, either from Selim's commanders or from foreign envoys. The receipt of news from the front allows for a transition in the narrative, and the discussion moves once again to Selim's commanders. Thus, while the historian has chosen to focus the majority of the text on events away from the capital, thereby having the viziers as the main protagonists, a balance is provided by the rhythmical return of the authorial gaze to Istanbul to discuss audiences, the arrival of gifts, and other goings-on connected to the sultan in the capital. The sultan who did not go to war is thus cast into the center of the text as the one who makes possible all the action that is the main focus of the *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*.

Other themes addressed in the book include the Ottomans' protection of pilgrimage routes and Selim II's architectural patronage, as demonstrated by his renovations at the Ka'ba, and the construction of the Selimiye Mosque and of a bridge in Büyükçekmece. These topics allow the author to portray the sultan as charitable and pious, and as a model follower of the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, the two faces of sovereignty

underlined by the text of the *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân* feature the sultan as the center of an empire effectively protected and administered by his lieutenants, and as the shadow of God on earth, who guarantees pilgrimage routes and shows his generosity and piety through his architectural projects. The sultan's funeral is one of the last topics treated by Lokman. The main body of the manuscript begins with the events leading to Selim's accession in 1566, and ends with his death in 1574. The scope of the book, determined by major turning points in Selim II's life, also underscores the importance of the sultan to the work as a whole, even if the focus of the action lies with his courtiers.

The sultan appears in only six of the illustrations in the *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*: the first two relate to the making of the book (figs. 2 and 3); the third, which is missing, shows him receiving the news of his father's death (see fig. 4 for the right half); the fourth portrays his accession (fig. 5); the fifth depicts him receiving the Safavid shah's gifts (fig. 16); and the last is of his funeral (see fig. 40 for the left half). By contrast, twenty-six paintings feature Selim's commanders and viziers. The distribution of images tilts the focus of the manuscript further towards the court than the text appears to, allowing for a slightly different reading than one would get from the words alone. The juxtaposition of the visual and verbal narratives of the *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân* produces a court history that is as much an account of the Ottoman ruling elite surrounding the sultan as it is of the sultan's reign.

The *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân* thus presents a map of the social hierarchies of the Ottoman court, with the sultan appearing at the apex of a solid pyramid made up of bureaucrats, companions, and scholars. His power is supported by these deputies: he rules through his viziers and judges and conquers through his commanders. This understanding of the Ottoman court finds its reflection in the manuscript's detailed record of the individuals who produced it, as if to emphasize the close relationship between the creation of the manuscript and its intended meanings.

#### THE STORY OF THE *ŞEHNÂME-İ SELÎM HÂN*

Many illustrated manuscripts from the Islamic world, especially within the Ottoman context, contain the

stories of their creation. The story is often given in an introductory section named “Reason for Writing” (*sebeb-i te’lif*), revealing, however, not so much *how* the book was written but *why*, that is, who the patron was, who commissioned the book, or why the author deemed it worth writing. Often this story relates to the composition of a text, with no discussion of the illumination or illustrations contained therein. The colophon, if there is one, will reveal, at most, when, where, and by whom the book in hand was penned, as well as how long it took to complete. The preface of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, by contrast, is extremely detailed about the story of its own making. Not only do we learn how the book was commissioned, but also how the production team was chosen, the names of those involved in the project, and the steps that had to be followed to attain approval of the illustrated copy. This highly detailed preface helps to contextualize the editorial choices that can be traced through the various drafts. Analyzing the preface with all its nuances is therefore crucial to an understanding of the production of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*.

In the preface, Lokman recounts how he came to compose the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* and how the final copy was prepared.<sup>26</sup> He begins by explaining how he was sent by the *şeyhülislam* Ebussuud Efendi to seek the opinion of the renowned scholar Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği (d. 1600) regarding the first imperial commission he had completed, the *Zafernâme* (Book of Victory).<sup>27</sup> We are not told exactly when this meeting took place, but it must have been sometime between the completion of the *Zafernâme* in 1579 and the start of this project in October 1581. Praising Lokman’s work, Karabaği encouraged him to write an account of the reign of Selim II. He then gave Lokman his notes on the period and invited painters and scribes to discuss the project.

The illustrious Ebussuud Efendi had been appointed *şeyhülislam* by Sultan Süleyman in 1548, and retained his influential position as the highest religious and judicial official of the empire until his death in August 1574.<sup>28</sup> As head of the ulema, he was aligned with Sokollu in constructing the policies of the state. The two men remained staunch allies despite the shifting dynamics of the post-Süleymanic Ottoman court. Given Ebussuud’s involvement in Lokman’s appointment to the position of court

historian, it comes as no surprise that he would be the one to encourage the author to commence work on a new composition.

Despite his less familiar name, Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği was an influential scholar during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. Among his prestigious teaching appointments was one at the madrasa of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in Lüleburgaz. Between June–July 1572 and January 1574, he served in the Istanbul-Kadırga madrasa of the grand vizier and his wife İsmihan Sultan, the daughter of Selim II.<sup>29</sup> Karabaği also taught at the madrasa founded by İsmihan Sultan in Eyüp on the Golden Horn. He was clearly backed by the royal couple as he rose through the ranks of the ulema hierarchy to hold various teaching positions and judgeships, his successful career culminating in multiple terms as chief military judge of Anatolia.<sup>30</sup> It is likely that he was acting in his patron Sokollu’s name and interest when he encouraged Lokman to write a narrative of the reign of Selim II.

It is tempting to suggest that the audience Karabaği had with Lokman took place in Kadırga, as many of Sokollu’s protégés and employees had settled around the palace of the grand vizier and his royal wife in that neighborhood.<sup>31</sup> Such a location would also explain the scholar’s ability to summon an artist and a scribe. It was highly unlikely that he would have had artists in his personal employ, but he may have had access to those affiliated with the chancery and workshops of the grand vizier’s palace. He did not teach at the grand vizier’s Lüleburgaz madrasa after August 1571, which increases the likelihood that he was present in the capital during the autumn of that year, prior to his appointment at the madrasa in Kadırga.

The first illustration in Topkapı Palace Museum Library (hereafter TSK) A. 3595 depicts this meeting (*majlis*) between the author Lokman and the scholar Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği. Lokman and his host are portrayed conversing with a painter, an illuminator, and a scribe, who are shown holding examples of their work (see detail of fig. 1 on following page).<sup>32</sup> There are also two attendants in the background bringing in books, attesting to Ahmed Karabaği’s scholarly qualities. The image presents Lokman in the midst of this learned atmosphere, claiming a scholarly status for



Detail of fig. 1, Şemseddin Ahmed Karabağî's audience with Lokman and the potential artist and scribes for the manuscript. *Şehname-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 9a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

him. Perhaps most importantly, by illustrating one of the milestones in the production of the manuscript, the painting guarantees that the reader will not skip over the description of the creative process, but will linger over the page, thereby becoming familiar with the names and faces of those who were involved in the project from the beginning.

That the first painting should concern the creation of the manuscript points to the significance of the production process as a key to understanding the contents of the book. While manuscripts and albums from elsewhere in the Islamic world do at times proclaim in their texts and inscriptions the collaborative effort that led to their production, or bear traces of such joint efforts, the *Şehname-i Selim Hân* is unique in the extent to which its multiple creators are allowed to be visible to its audience. Even more than the text of the preface, this painting marks the detailed account of the creation of the manuscript as an unusual feature of the work; it can be thought of as a multiple author portrait, giving credit to those who were involved in the making of the book.<sup>33</sup>

In the pages following this first painting, Lokman describes how he showed Sokollu Mehmed Pasha some of his text.<sup>34</sup> Sokollu, in turn, brought in Osman, who was unequalled among Ottoman (*Oşmānī*) painters (thus making a pun on the artist's name) and Sinan, a calligrapher with a spear-like pen (*sinānī qalam*), to write and illustrate the work. Osman painted an image of the sultan shooting an arrow from the Tower of Justice (in the second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, adjacent to the Imperial Council Chamber) at a gilded openwork spherical target (*qabāq*) hanging from the dome of the Imperial Council Chamber. Sinan wrote out one of Lokman's couplets. The first examples of painting and calligraphy were received positively by Sokollu, who then sent the painting to the sultan for his approval.<sup>35</sup>

Osman's depiction of Selim's symbolic feat of archery (fig. 2) was included in the introduction, but is no longer in the manuscript. The sultan is seated in the upper left, under the conical dome of the Tower of Justice, accompanied by two attendants. He gazes down at a meeting of the Imperial Council, depicted in the lower part of the image. The openwork sphere hanging from the dome of the Council Chamber has an arrow, just shot by the sultan, planted in it.

If the first painting is a collective author portrait, this second one can be interpreted as a visual schematization of the Ottoman power structure. Lokman's verbal description of the painting demonstrates that he himself understood it in such metaphorical terms. Writing that the scene was painted to show both the sultan's skill in archery and his justice as a ruler, Lokman refers

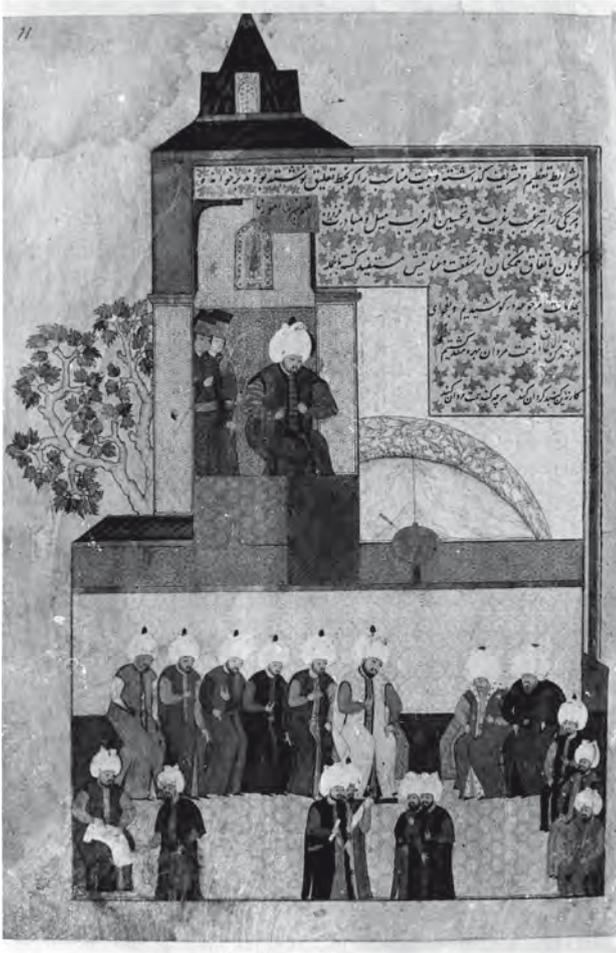


Fig. 2. Selim II in the Tower of Justice watching the Imperial Council. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 11a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

to the sultan's location in the tower above the Imperial Council Chamber as the "pavilion of justice and the seat of the caliphate, which is above the council chamber of the auspicious viziers." The sultan observes the meeting from "the window of intellect from which he can watch the affairs of Rum and Yunan (the provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia), the grid-lined cage of the palace of fortune." Selim is said to follow the events of the Imperial Council with the "gaze of compassion, with which he watches the affairs of the state and the faith, and the ear of understanding, with which he listens to the affairs of the country and the people." The gilded

target hanging from the vault of the Imperial Council Chamber is likened to the sphere of the earth, at the center of which is the seal of the vizier (or deputy) of the sultan, the grand vizier. The rest of the text elaborates on the justice of Selim's rule and how he controls the lands and the seas with the help of his grand vizier.<sup>36</sup>

Lokman's description of the Tower of Justice and the Imperial Council Chamber accords with contemporary interpretations—including his *Hünernâme*, where he is even more explicit in his verbal description. The arrow represents the imperial decrees guaranteeing justice, the gilded openwork sphere the world under the sultan's dominion, and the window a means for the sultan to oversee and protect both state and religion. The grand vizier is his representative in the dispensing of justice, albeit under the sultan's ultimate authority.<sup>37</sup>

The composition of the image begs an allegorical reading. That the separate parts of the painting stand for more than themselves is obvious from Lokman's descriptions. The triangular formation of the figures, with the sultan at the apex, whose power is both supported and represented by the members of the Imperial Council spreading out to either side below him, graphically depicts Lokman's verbal description. At the bottom of this pyramid are the functionaries, such as the scribes, while in the next level are the viziers, the representatives of the sultan. Selim's gaze falls directly on his grand vizier, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, seated at the head of the viziers and facing the two army judges of Anatolia and Rumelia, who represent the central territories of the empire. This verbal and visual description of the sultan overseeing the Imperial Council is also a depiction of the Ottoman world order. The seating arrangement at the Council was determined in the fifteenth century, and has already been interpreted as a "clear diagram of the centralized state structure."<sup>38</sup> That schema was carefully replicated in Osman's painting of the Council, and on some level informs the entire conception of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*.

The process involved in getting the manuscript approved is also recounted in terms that demonstrate the court's constitution. Upon examining the painting, the sultan determined that the rest of the account should be written, and a section of the introduction along with some of the poetry was then presented to him.<sup>39</sup> Lokman mentions that since some in the sultan's

entourage did not like this excerpt, the sultan wanted “the lofty ones who scrutinize things” (*mumayyizān-i sāmī*) to examine it.<sup>40</sup> The companions of the sultan who read and approved the “introduction and some of the text” were the sultan’s tutor Hoca Ataullah Efendi, the *şeyhülislam* Ebussuud Efendi, and Mevlana Ebulfazl Mehmed, the son of the renowned historian Idris-i Bitlisi (d. 1520).<sup>41</sup> Hoca Ataullah was one of Selim II’s most trusted advisers and a leader of the anti-Sokollu faction in Selim II’s court; Ebussuud Efendi, on the other hand, was an ally of the grand vizier. We will turn to the content of their editorial interventions in the next section, but suffice it to say here that the nature of the changes they made suggests that their respective political allegiances came into play.

Their eventual approval of the work was communicated to the grand vizier, and Lokman was summoned to court for a second time. This time, the artist Osman and the scribe Sinan, whose work had been examined earlier, were also present, and were assigned the task of copying and illustrating the book.<sup>42</sup> By Sokollu’s order, a “clean” copy of the approved part of the text was produced, and presented to the sultan. Lokman then moves into a description of how he was first appointed to the task of composing a royal history, namely, the *Zafernâme*, thus coming full circle to the beginning of the story of how the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* was written, since it was while seeking opinions on his *Zafernâme* that he had been sent to the scholar Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği in the first place.

The third illustration of the finished manuscript (fig. 3) relates to the commissioning of the *Zafernâme*, and depicts Lokman and Sokollu Mehmed Pasha in the sultan’s audience.<sup>43</sup> However, the grand vizier is not explicitly mentioned in the text immediately surrounding the image. Instead, Lokman writes in the passive voice: “My situation was presented to the Sultan.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the text does not even describe an audience such as the one illustrated here. Hence, the painting visually clarifies what the text omits: that it was the grand vizier who made it possible for Lokman to get his first imperial commission. Sokollu’s role as intermediary is underscored by his position: slightly in front of Lokman, and closer to the sultan.

The introduction thus highlights a point of utmost importance, namely, that the creators of the manuscript

were fully aware of and interested in maintaining a close relationship between text and image in such a way as to enhance the multivalency of both media. This conclusion is further strengthened as other examples of deliberate image-text dialogue are revealed through an examination of the multiple drafts. The complexity and variety of these verbal-visual connections challenge conventional understandings of the image-text relationship in Ottoman manuscripts, as it becomes clear that the illustrations are not merely visual restatements of the narrative, but rather add new layers of meaning, enhancing and/or inflecting the textual contents of the book.

The making of the manuscript and its meanings are nowhere more closely linked than in these introductory pages describing how the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* was produced. The environment in which Ottoman historical manuscripts were created was here closely aligned with the content of the histories themselves.<sup>45</sup> There was a community of scholars close to the court who were the intellectual supervisors of the project, and since they were older and more experienced, they guided Lokman in his work. In fact, the *şehnâmeçi* was under constant supervision, perhaps because he was at an early stage of his career. After all, prior to this project he had only produced the *Zafernâme*, and that was admittedly a ver-sification of a pre-approved text, the *Nüzhetü’l-Aḥbâr der Sefer-i Sîgetvâr* (Joyful Chronicle of the Szigetvár Campaign), composed by his supporter Feridun Ahmed Beg for their common patron, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. By contrast, those who supervised Lokman (namely, Karabaği, Ebussuud, Ataullah, and Ebulfazl) were among the most esteemed minds of the Ottoman court and intelligentsia. Lokman’s recounting of the involvement and approval of these powerful intellectual and political figures can almost be interpreted as boasting of being in their company.

The introduction makes it abundantly clear that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha was the intermediary between the sultan and this intellectual community. The grand vizier is portrayed as the linchpin in the equation: he supervised not only the writing but also the embellishment of the work, and was of course instrumental in attaining Selim II’s approval of the project. Additionally, he was the patron of the scholar who instigated the project. It is clear from the numerous approvals

required and the various excerpts and examples prepared that the decision to embark upon a *şehnâme* was not an automatic one. Indeed, it appears to have been closely dependent on the personal involvement of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. Thus, the survival of the two drafts might be a direct result of the control mechanisms the grand vizier had established.

BRITISH LIBRARY MS. OR. 7043:  
EVIDENCE FOR A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS

The British Library draft consists of thirty-one folios (as opposed to the 158 and 131 of the others), and is illustrated with nine paintings.<sup>46</sup> The book contains the introduction and the first few pages of the main narrative in verse. The partial manuscript is much larger in size than the other two copies, which was probably useful for seeing the details of the paintings and the calligraphy, and provided ample space for editorial markings.<sup>47</sup> A comparison of the verbal and visual contents of this draft with the two later versions (i.e., the Topkapı draft and the final manuscript) reveals that a significant shift in emphasis occurred during the editing process. This raises two possibilities: either the British Library manuscript was intended as a draft, or it was begun as the final copy, but was abandoned once its contents were deemed unsuitable.

In either case, the most important fact is that the British Library manuscript provides solid evidence that at a certain point the collaborators in this project decided to take the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* in a different direction. Probably as a result of this shift, it was treated as a working draft. Lines of text are crossed out and replaced by others, there are empty but ruled pages at the end, and large portions of text are cancelled by vertical lines drawn over them. The nine paintings demonstrate not only the style and skill of the artists but also the types of relationships between text and image that would be established in the final copy.

The introduction in its entire and final format is not present in this draft. The last section of the prefatory text in the final version, where Lokman relates his dream and the *şeyhülislam*'s interpretation, and the mystically oriented excursus on composing poetry, are not found

here. There are also discrepancies in the sections of the text that are present in both; these reveal exactly where the British Library draft fits into the production process. Of particular interest is the middle section of the story of the making of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*.<sup>48</sup> The earlier stages—through the discussion of the painter Osman and the scribe Sinan's submission of examples of their work—are described with the same words in all three copies. However, the British Library manuscript is missing some crucial lines before the first painting on folio 7b (fig. 42). The sending of an excerpt to the sultan, the mixed reviews it received, and its eventual submission to the scrutiny of grand scholars are not described here. Instead, this version of the account simply states that as soon as the scribe and the painter were approved, they exited the grand vizier's audience and started recopying. In the meantime, they benefited greatly from Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's generosity.<sup>49</sup> The British Library draft and the final manuscript converge again with the remark that after some sections were made into a clean copy according to the grand vizier's instructions, they were presented to the sultan.<sup>50</sup> The story of the making of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* ends at this point in the British Library draft.

The omission of both the mixed reviews given the excerpt and the subsequent consultation with the sultan's companions suggests that the British Library manuscript might have been the very excerpt submitted to the sultan's advisers. "The introduction and some of the poetry" are precisely what Lokman presented to Selim II after the painter Osman and the scribe Sinan were appointed to the project.<sup>51</sup> Could it be that he was referring to British Library (hereafter BL) Or. 7043? The details of its contents, the markings on the text, and the discrepancies between this draft and the other two would certainly direct us toward such a conclusion. The statement following this—that a clean copy was made of some sections upon the grand vizier's orders—is the same in both drafts, and is non-specific enough to refer to either draft. The author did not deem it necessary to modify these lines in the final version, but instead inserted the description of the mixed reviews and the consultation of the scholars in such a way so as not to disrupt the flow of his text.<sup>52</sup> Of the three manuscripts considered here, in other words, the British Library one



Fig. 42. Selim II in the Tower of Justice watching the Imperial Council; and, beneath, the author, artists, and scribes of the manuscript. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571. British Library Board. All rights reserved. Ms. Or. 7043, fol. 7b. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

came first—even though it is illustrated and Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSK) R. 1537 is not.<sup>53</sup> Consequently, the changes introduced into the Topkapı draft can be understood as being the result of the mixed reviews given the British Library draft.

What were the changes deemed necessary? The first alteration was in the illustration depicting how the manuscript came to be produced, the first painting in the British Library manuscript (fig. 42). The lower half

of this two-part image appears to be the first incarnation of the gathering of the author Lokman, the scholar Karabağî, and the artists and scribe of the manuscript, the final version of which I discussed above (fig. 1). The upper part of the page depicts Selim II after he has shot the target hanging from the dome of the Imperial Council Chamber, a scene that also appears in the final manuscript (fig. 2). For the final copy, the makers of the manuscript separated the two halves of the painting so that the image of the scholarly gathering would come first. While the British Library image is a fascinating example of an image within an image, emphasizing the artists' creativity, the final manuscript privileges Karabağî's central role in the production process by isolating his audience scene and including it as the first painting in the manuscript.

What remained constant between the British Library draft and the final manuscript was the allegorical nature of the image of Selim II in the Tower of Justice. The associated section of the text was already present with the same words in the British Library manuscript.<sup>54</sup> In BL Or. 7043, however, the pyramidal scheme of the Ottoman polity expands to include the lowest register of the painting. Those above both supervise—the sultan overseeing his viziers, the grand vizier the production of the manuscript—and are represented by—whether literally or figuratively—the scribes, scholars, and artists below them. Understood in this way, the British Library painting explains why the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* was commissioned in the first place. An appropriately rendered history helps to shape the image of its protagonists in very particular ways, potentially supporting the careers of the *şehnâmeeci*'s patrons.

The two scenes are not merely separated in the final Topkapı manuscript, however—they are also changed in other ways. The scholarly gathering in the Topkapı manuscript (fig. 1) is the mirror image of the original composition, with the figures on the left now on the right and vice versa. Furthermore, the background becomes more streamlined between the first and the second versions: the tree to the right of the Bursa arch in the British Library image (fig. 42) disappears, implying that the scene is now indoors; the cushion behind the central figure and the textile he is sitting on have been discarded; and the background no longer has a

brick dado. The seated figures have been moved into a tighter triangular formation with the scholar at the center, as a result of which the stack of books on the right side of the first image has been placed rather awkwardly between the heads of the two figures seated on the left side of the illustration in the Topkapı scene. These two men are clearly more senior, a status evident from their placement in the image and their larger turbans; the faces have also become more elongated. In addition, the clothing worn by the two attendants bringing the books has been simplified in the second painting, their animal print and fur-trimmed caps replaced with plain white turbans and the gold frogging on their outfits removed.

The image of Selim II overseeing the Imperial Council has also been altered in a similar fashion. Here, too, the later image contains less detail than the earlier one, even though it has been enlarged to fill the entire page. The column on the right supporting the arch of the Council ceiling, for example, is no longer there, and the arch of the dome no longer extends to the edge, appearing to float in the air. The sparser image may have been deemed more appropriate as an embodiment of the abstract idea of just rule, and it also presents the Imperial Council as a unified body as opposed to distinct individuals. The spatial relationship between the Council Chamber and the sultan's viewing room has been significantly altered as well. By moving the roof line above the sultan and the council in the first image to the center of the second one in such a way that it separates the sultan from his Council, the distance between the ruler and his subjects is exaggerated.

Why were these changes made? What was gained by them? One answer is suggested by the British Library image's location in the text. We know from the surrounding text that the *majlis* image in the Topkapı manuscript depicts Lokman's audience with the scholar Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği. The British Library painting, however, is inserted after Lokman's description of how the grand vizier, upon examining his verse, summoned the painter Osman and the scribe Sinan. The inscription on the paper scroll in front of the seated scribe at the far left also links the painting with its surrounding text. The verse inscribed there translates: "The arrow from his bow pierced his enemy like his rule on the face of the earth."<sup>55</sup> This is the exact same line that

Lokman reports as having been penned by the scribe Sinan to demonstrate his calligraphic skills. It refers, undoubtedly, to Selim II's shooting his arrow from the Tower of Justice, and incorporates the symbolic aspect of the sultan's arrow as his rule (*hukm*) penetrating the openwork globe, which stands for the world (*rû-ye zamîn*) under his dominion. The arrow, then, as the vehicle of the sultan's rule, can be understood as an imperial decree that delivers justice. Furthermore, the piece of paper held by the man seated next to Sinan contains the sketch of a vertical pavilion with a conical roof. This is probably a summary sketch of the Tower of Justice (depicted in the image in the upper register of Selim shooting his arrow), referring to the scene painted by the artist Osman upon the grand vizier's request.

In other words, its relationship with the text around it suggests that this painting represents not the audience of the esteemed scholar Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği with Lokman, but that of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha with Lokman, accompanied by the artists and scribe whom the grand vizier invited to work on the project. The framing text allows us to comprehend the nature of the relationship between the two images positioned one atop the other. We know from Lokman's account that the image of the sultan with his arrow planted in the hanging target was the only sample painting submitted by the artist Osman. The image above is the larger and more detailed version alluded to by the sketch in the hands of the artist in the lower register.

If this was indeed the case, we can interpret the visual changes found in the final manuscript as an attempt to adapt the preexisting composition depicting a scene from either the grand vizier's palace or the scribes' chamber just outside of the Imperial Council Hall, to the place where Karabaği taught—either his madrasa or house. What challenges such a reading of the British Library image, however, is that the elongated face and larger turban are what mainly distinguish the two central figures, a difference not large enough to correspond to the vast disparities between the social status of a scholar and that of the powerful grand vizier. Indeed, the portrait of the grand vizier in the upper part of the British Library image depicts him with clothing and headgear more luxurious than that worn by the central figure in the lower register, suggesting that the latter

individual was not Sokollu, but Karabaği. The humble way in which the central figure sits on the ground along with the scribes also makes it rather difficult for him to be the grand vizier.

In this instance, the relationship between the text and the image leads to one kind of interpretation, but the visual specifics of the painting itself suggest another explanation. This potential for rather divergent readings can be regarded as a manifestation of the multivalency of the manuscript. Alternatively, a more mischievous reader might view this as an inconsistency or unresolved point brought about by the ten-year-long production process, or by the involvement of multiple individuals in the project. While such an imperfection might not have been deliberate, the changes outlined above do also point to the conscious development of a recognizable visual idiom for the work produced by the office of the court historian. This represents a significant development for the history of the arts of the Ottoman court. The detailed and embellished visuals of the British Library manuscript do not accord with the official style of the final version, which is more in keeping with other Ottoman *şehnâmes*, privileging compositional order and legibility over detail and complexity. The second version of the painting is a simpler and clearer representation of the hierarchies of the Ottoman court, and presents its members as a collective whole rather than as distinct individuals. Though the grand vizier is identifiable in both paintings, his depiction is less divergent from that of his colleagues in the final image.

A closely related editorial decision was to change the beginning of the main narrative. In the British Library draft, the account of Selim's reign begins with the Szigetvár campaign preceding his accession.<sup>56</sup> This was clearly found to be inappropriate: the whole page following the "Beginning of the Story" (*āghāz-i dāstān*) section has vertical lines going over each column, indicating that the text should be deleted. It was obviously determined at some point in the production process that the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān* should begin not with the start of the campaign but with the accession of Selim II, which took place at its conclusion.

The Szigetvár expedition was one of the highlights of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's career. The conquest of the fortress of Szigetvár under his guidance, and his subsequent success in hiding Sultan Süleyman's death from

the army until Selim II was on his way to the front, were significant achievements. Additionally, Sokollu's precautions guaranteed the smooth transition of rule from father to son. The removal of the account of the campaign indicates that those who gave the manuscript mixed reviews wanted to tone down the positive image of the grand vizier in the work. The presence of the sultan's tutor among those who examined the British Library excerpt renders this scenario highly likely, since we know from historical accounts that Selim's princely entourage resented the grand vizier's power and influence.<sup>57</sup> Their disapproval of a work that exalts him at the expense of the sultan would not be surprising. Thus, the trio of the royal tutor, the *şeyhülislam*, and the historian Ebulfazl Efendi must have suggested some compromises (such as changing where the story would begin) to make the manuscript more acceptable to a wider group of courtiers, including those on the grand vizier's side. The recommended changes also had practical implications. The Szigetvár campaign had already been recorded in detail—in prose, verse, and image—by the *Nüzhetü'l-Ahbār der Sefer-i Sigetvār* and the *Zafernâme*. It did not need to be repeated. Moreover, the highly detailed discussion of Sokollu's contributions in the preface already included the Szigetvár campaign.<sup>58</sup>

The decision to remove the Szigetvár account explains the different portraits of the sultan in the London and Istanbul manuscripts. While in the British Library copy Selim is depicted enthroned in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul (fig. 43), in the final version his enthronement in Belgrade was chosen (fig. 5). This was because the final manuscript only includes the story of Selim II's accession in Belgrade rather than a narrative of the entire Szigetvár campaign. Just as with the additions Lokman made to his account of how the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān* was created, the discussion of Selim's accession to the throne was inserted into the existing text, and the ensuing sections were left the same.

The inclusion of the sultan's meeting with the army in Belgrade highlights the delicacy of the power struggles at court, and can be understood as an attempt to gloss over tensions. As I have already explained, Selim's decision to accede to the throne in Istanbul prior to meeting with the army was an assertion of his independence and power, a mini-revolt on the part of the new sultan against the status quo, which favored the grand

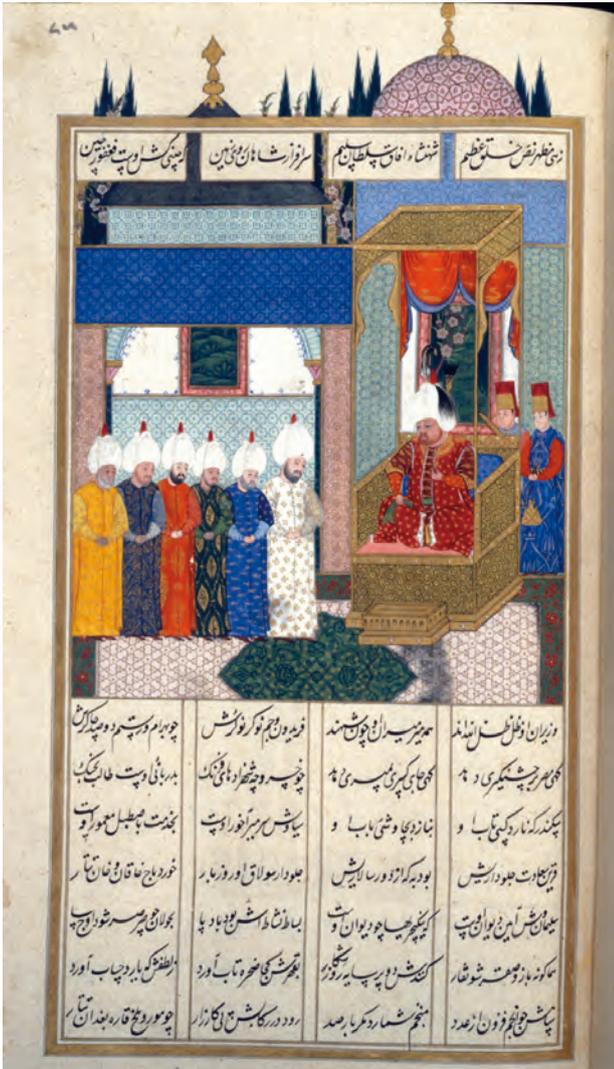


Fig. 43. Selim II enthroned. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571. British Library Board. All rights reserved. Ms. Or. 7043, fol. 14a. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

vizier and the army. This act of autonomy caused the soldiers to revolt in protest upon their return to the capital, by blocking Selim's entrance into the palace. The situation was smoothed over by the grand vizier.<sup>59</sup> The depiction of Selim II enthroned in Belgrade shows the army paying homage to the new sultan—with no hints of the underlying strife. The choice of this scene over a generic one of the sultan being enthroned with only his viziers present (as in the British Library image) is a

much more powerful statement of the sultan's acceptance by his subjects.

The pages lauding Selim II's viziers have also been altered for the final manuscript, with the addition of individual section titles giving the name of each vizier. The encomium of Sokollu is given its own title in both cases, but the British Library version contains only one group title for the discussion of the other viziers: "Mention of the Laudable Qualities of the Great Viziers."<sup>60</sup> Those who oversaw the manuscript evidently decided that more emphasis needed to be placed on Sokollu's junior colleagues by stating their names in individual headings. This change also allowed a slightly different picture of the social and political hierarchies in court to be inscribed into the manuscript—one that partially levels the differences between the grand vizier and the other members of the Imperial Council.

In comparing the British Library draft with the finished version (TSK A. 3595), we find that a significant shift in emphasis resulted from the mixed reviews that the draft had received. Once this draft was viewed, then, and the sultan's entourage had weighed in on what changes needed to be made, Lokman and his colleagues went back to work.<sup>61</sup> The paintings were modified to present the members of the Ottoman court as a collective whole, unified and orderly; the discussion of the Szigetvár campaign was edited out, and greater emphasis was placed on other members of the Imperial Council. The focus was moved away from Sokollu Mehmed Pasha as the sultan's deputy. The next surviving piece of the production puzzle—the non-illustrated draft currently in the Topkapı Library—is instructive as to what the new focus would be.

#### TSK MS. R. 1537: PAGE LAYOUT AND FINAL EDIT

The Topkapı draft (TSK R. 1537) is the last surviving step in the production process before the final manuscript. At 131 folios, measuring 33.3 by 22.5 centimeters, it contains the full text of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. This draft is nearly the same size as the final copy, the fewer number of pages reflecting the greater amount of text contained on each one (seventeen lines as opposed to fifteen in the final manuscript), the lack of images, and

the addition of text in its margins. Just like the British Library draft, this was also a working copy, as can be gathered by the numerous corrections and edits inserted into its margins. The annotations are not only textual changes: the margins are peppered with instructions and shorthand notations relating to spacing of text on a page and the location and size of paintings. This draft was an internal document, used in the workshop to make corrections and plan for the next version. TSK R. 1537 thus provides us with invaluable information about the mechanics of manuscript production. After first interpreting the annotations that determined the appearance of the final copy, I will then turn to those that shaped its contents. Since it is impossible to give an account of all the markings on the 131 folios in a study of this scope, I will present selected examples to give a sense of how this draft was used.

The most basic function of the Topkapı draft was to determine the pagination and organization of lines in the final copy. Many of the page breaks are indicated by the words *şahife* (page) or *varak* (sheet), written in the margins in red ink. These notations do not correspond to page breaks in the draft, but rather to the pagination of the final manuscript. At times, the number of lines to be included on a given page is also marked in the margin—fifteen for most, and nine or seven for those pages with illuminations. Though illuminated text pages were usually indicated with a simple dot placed in the margin next to the beginning and end of the section to be illuminated, additional markers consisting of a horizontal line and three dots in triangle formation above or under it were also used in a few places.<sup>62</sup> These markings indicate that TSK R. 1537 was used to plan the rhythm and spacing of the final copy.

The creative ways in which the extensive marginal additions were incorporated into the final manuscript highlight how important regulating the rhythm of the manuscript was for its creators. One means of absorbing extra material was to create illuminated pages, which, as noted, all comprise seven or nine lines, fewer than the usual fifteen lines of verse found on the regular text pages of the final manuscript. Certainly some of this illumination was intended to draw attention to the content and prompt the reader to dwell on it—hence, the fewer lines per page. All of the illuminated pages

come right before (and in one case after) a painting— itself already a marker of the importance of the relevant topic.<sup>63</sup> Some of these images depict singular subjects, of greater symbolic significance than others, and would have therefore been chosen for lavish attention. Selim II receiving news of his father's death and the presentation of gifts from the Safavid shah are cases in point (figs. 4 and 16). Other instances, however, suggest that the illuminated pages were a way to incorporate extra text without changing the order of the rest of the book. The beginning sections of the text, it must be remembered, were modified significantly between the British Library draft and the Topkapı manuscripts. The large portions of new text would have complicated the layout process, a complication eased somewhat by the presence of illuminated pages. Surely the two paintings relating to the Cyprus and Tunisia campaigns, which are both preceded by illuminated pages in the final version, were singled out in this way because they contain significant portions of text that had been added in the margins of TSK R. 1537 (figs. 32 and 38). The planners of the manuscript found a way to absorb those additions by altering layout schemes to insert extra folios in between. Otherwise, their subject matter is no more or less significant than other illustrations depicting other events from the same campaigns. The presence of illuminated pages on which lines of poetry are diagonally arranged demonstrates how intentional and well orchestrated the layout of the manuscript was. The planners were clearly willing to go to great lengths to retain the visual organization of the manuscript.

Some of the textual additions were made expressly for aesthetic purposes, e.g., to line up titles with the text of the sections they contain, or to place the title at a certain point on the page. An example is TSK R. 1537, fol. 50a, where there is a note saying that the two couplets before the title should be on the same line (*ikisi bir saṭūr*)—and this is how it appears on fol. 60b of the final manuscript. The additions on folios 67a, 67b, and 70a from TSK R. 1537 all include one or two verses that do not change the meaning of what is described in the preexisting text, but simply elaborate on similar themes; one or two couplets are thus added for the sake of visual order. The insertions on folio 70a (fig. 44), for example, elaborate further on how easy it had been to capture

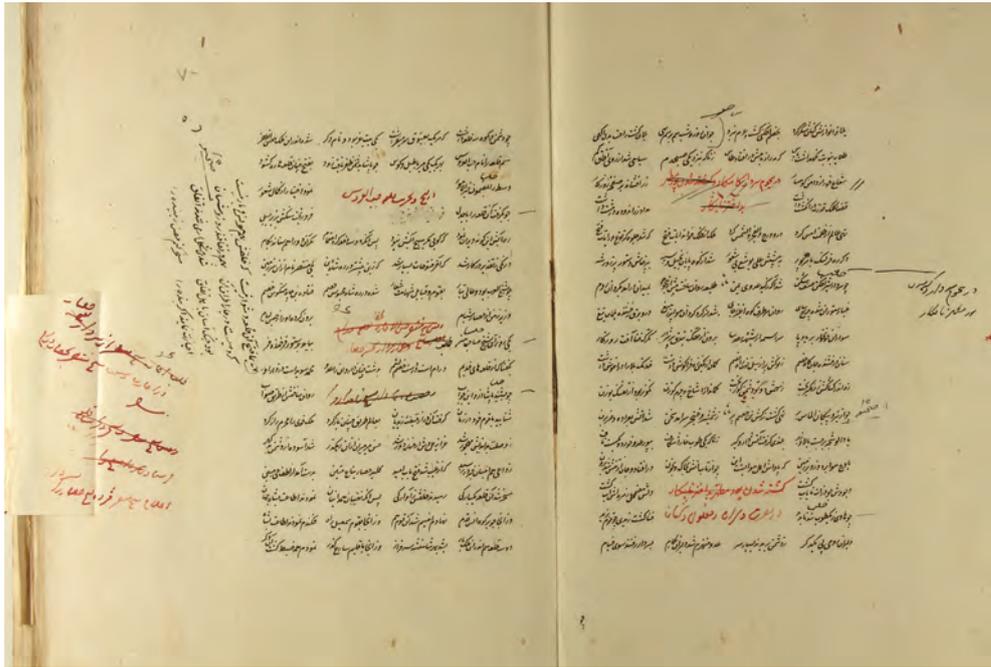


Fig. 44. Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 69b–70a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 45. Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 35b–36a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

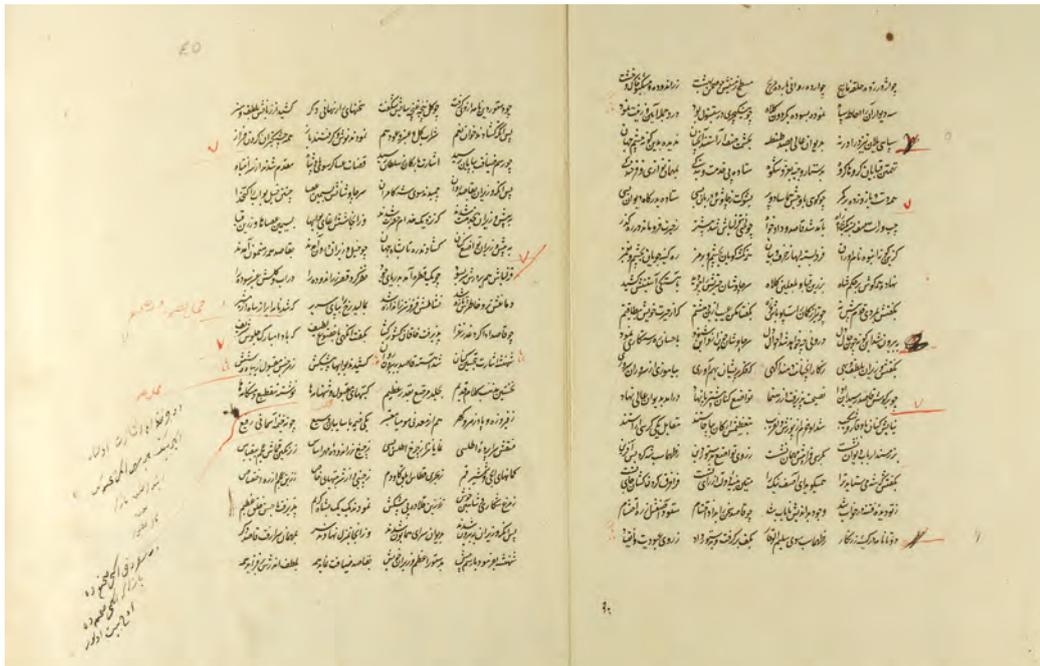


Fig. 46. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 44b–45a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

the castle whose siege had already been detailed in the text.

Unfortunately, the draft does not provide direct instructions to the painters about the content or appearance of the illustrations. What it does specify is where the paintings should be located and the number of lines to be included on the same page. These two factors, of course, indirectly determined the size and subject matter of the illustrations. All of the images in the main narrative—those that come after the portraits of the individual viziers—are indicated on TSK R. 1537 with the words “location of painting” (*maḥall-i taṣvīr*).<sup>64</sup> With five phrases inserted into its margin, folio 36a (fig. 45) provides an apt example. The top one, in red ink, is a correction to the section heading, and I will turn to it below. The other notations relate to the spacing of the image. The second one from the top, linked to the text by a straight line, reads “location of painting”; the third phrase qualifies it by saying “after six lines” (*altı saṭurdan soñra*). Turning to the final copy, we see that indeed there are six lines before the painting on

the corresponding page (fig. 12, fol. 41b), and that the image comes immediately after the indicated hemistich, written on the same line as the title for the next section. The fourth phrase, “page complete,” is indicated by the word *ṣaḥīfe* and the letter *mim*, shorthand for *tamām*, meaning “complete.”<sup>65</sup> The scribe would thus know to continue copying the text onto the next folio. As a reminder, the last annotation further clarifies where the next line of poetry should go: “on the facing page” (*qarṣu ṣaḥīfede*). And indeed, the finished right-hand page consists only of the six lines and the painting, which comes directly after the title. The first line of text, describing the waters of the enemy terrain, is found above the other half of the picture on the facing page.

An even more intricate example can be found on folios 44b–45a of the draft (fig. 46), corresponding to folios 51a–54a (figs. 47, 48, and 16) in the finished product.<sup>66</sup> The title of the section is “On the Presentation of Gifts by the Persian Envoy during the Kissing-of-the-Feet of the Sultan.”<sup>67</sup> Folios 53b–54a of the final version contain the well-known depiction of the Safavid envoy



Fig. 47. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 51b–52a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 48. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 52b–53a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 49. Audience of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571. British Library Board. All rights reserved. Ms. Or. 7043, fol. 15a. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

presenting gifts from Shah Tahmasp to Selim II in honor of his accession to the throne (fig. 16). Annotations on the page preceding the “location of painting” notation in the draft reveal that the initial pagination plan was changed, probably because lines had been miscounted. On fol. 44b of TSK R. 1537, two sets of page breaks are indicated with the number seven (“V” in Arabic numerals) in the right-hand margin, but the first set is crossed out, and the new set of seven lines, starting two lines later, corresponds to fol. 52a of the final manuscript (fig. 47).

These changes in the pages leading up to the illustration meant that the image had to be moved as well. The repetition of the phrase “location of painting” in red ink on the draft is a result of this alteration. The painting was moved two lines down so that it could be spread over two facing pages and incorporate a certain amount of text. The lengthy inscription in the left margin of fol. 45a of the draft further clarifies the desired changes: “The two distiches indicated by three dots should be written at the beginning of [each of] the two pages, then [comes] the location of the painting.”<sup>68</sup> The second inscription reads: “And this line should be written on two pages so that there are three distiches on [each of the] two pages.”<sup>69</sup> The final result, however, does not take into account this last instruction, as there are only two distiches per page, not three.

The most important result of this change in pagination has to do with the text-image pairing. Instead of coming after lines describing the Safavid envoy, the painting now follows lines relating to the actual presentation, detailing the gifts “of all kinds of beautiful decorated things: an illuminated Qur’an with a grand decorated binding, great books, and *shāhnāmas*.”<sup>70</sup> It is tempting to conclude that this was a deliberate effort to associate the most appropriate lines of poetry with the image, especially because the verse on the same page as the painting is actually describing the scene before our eyes.

The effort to line up specific verses with their relevant image was a concern throughout the planning process. The depiction of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha’s audience, illustrated in both the British Library draft and the final copy in the Topkapı (figs. 49 and 6), is a case in point. The text praising Sokollu is the same in all three drafts, but there are two lines (four distiches) that have been moved to correspond to the painting depicting his court. The content of these verses is as follows:

You are the just grand vizier,  
Vizier to Selim of Süleymanic stature.  
I am your slave Lokman, in your hands of generosity;  
I am the eulogizer of the *shāhs* with the writing of  
*shāhnāmas*.  
Into your council of justice  
Women and men and children of Muslims and others  
came,  
Mehammed of name and that is a good name,  
Faith and the world find their wishes through you.<sup>71</sup>

Accordingly, the depiction of Sokollu's court includes women, men, and children in both versions! In fact, the British Library image incorporates these lines into the painting. The scenes depicting the courts of the other viziers include only generic images of men with petitions, standing around, waiting, and conversing. Clearly, the specific image of Sokollu's court was inspired by these few lines, and a concerted effort was made to keep the lines most pertinent to the image as physically close to it as possible in both of the illustrated drafts.

These two examples amply demonstrate that the pairing of text and image was very deliberate in the *Şehnāme-i Selīm Hān*. There are various instances throughout the editorial process in which the effort to insure the proximity of an image to the desired lines can be discerned. In the case of the Safavid envoy presenting gifts to Selim II, the order was determined in the margins of the non-illustrated draft.<sup>72</sup> The image of the audience of the grand vizier, however, had already been worked out in the British Library draft. The non-illustrated Topkapı draft has no special markings in the place of this painting; indeed, it is not even indicated. Yet the wording reflects the final order, in which the two lines cited above appear in the same sequence as in the final, illustrated copy. The format already worked out, image follows word in the final instance.

There was no one uniform way in which the final details of the *Şehnāme* were determined. The Topkapı draft is not perfectly consistent in the way it was edited, or at least in the way the edits were marked. There are places where page breaks and the locations of paintings as they are found in the final copy are not indicated and others where they are. Inconsistencies resulted from the fact that a team of artists collaborated on the project, and because their working methods involved both written and verbal communication. They simultaneously consulted the two drafts as they prepared the final copy. The work on the final manuscript probably proceeded quire by quire, which also explains some of the inconsistencies—different quires might have been prepared in different settings.

It was difficult to determine how many folios made up a quire. Folios 94b, 96a, 104b, and 124b of the Topkapı draft have notations using the term *cüz* (volume or quire) in them. The most explicit one, on folio

96a, reads: "Beginning of volume [or quire]. Musa still has not submitted the ruling for the second volume; it should be requested."<sup>73</sup> The next notation is on folio 104b, marking the end of a *cüz*.<sup>74</sup> These notes do not refer to the draft, however, as they do not all appear at the ends of folios. A comparison with the final copy (TSK A. 3595) clarifies the situation. When we line up the texts of the two manuscripts, the beginning of the quire corresponds to folio 115a in the final manuscript and the end to the last line of folio 124b. In other words, there were ten folios to each quire in the final manuscript, and the progress of the work on the quires of the final manuscript was noted in the draft.

Another inscription pertaining to the copying process is on folio 66a of the Topkapı draft (fig. 50), corresponding to the last few lines of folio 78b of the final manuscript. In fact, there are a few related notations on this page. The first one reads "delivery of paper" and gives the name Hüsrev.<sup>75</sup> The double lines drawn on either side of the text block underneath the annotated verses mark off the section that was delivered to, or by, a certain Hüsrev. The transcription was to then continue with the lines indicated by the circled note "beginning of the writing" (*ibtidā-i kitābet*), found just below.<sup>76</sup> In addition to the title, the word *kitābet*, which I have translated here as "writing," could also refer to illuminated text on the same page as a painting. In the other margin, the location and size of the next illustration are indicated with the words "location of painting, one page."<sup>77</sup>

Most of the titles in the draft are accompanied by a repeating word indicating that they are to be illuminated. I have not been able to make out the word exactly; it is possible that it reads *çust*, meaning "beautiful" or "elegant," or *çasb*, meaning "to glue," which might refer to the way in which gold leaf was applied to the page.<sup>78</sup> The annotation appears twice on folio 36a (fig. 45), just below each title. The same word is found on folio 102a, referring to the text that is to be illuminated (fig. 51). There the instruction reads: "This page shall be written as seven illuminated lines."<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the lines of that page are illuminated in the final copy, as, of course, are all the titles in the manuscript. Another shorthand notation that occurs in a few places comprises the letters *şād* and *hā'* (*ş* and *h*). This is an abbreviation for either the word *taşhīh*, which means "to edit" or "emend," or the

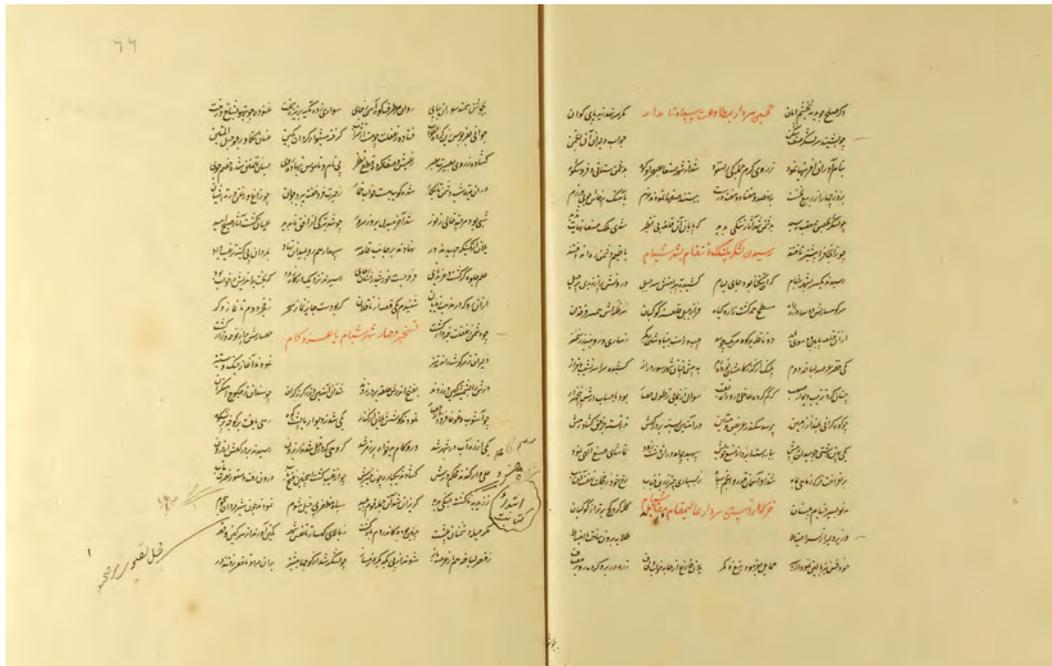


Fig. 50. Şehnâme-i Selim Hân, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 65b–66a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

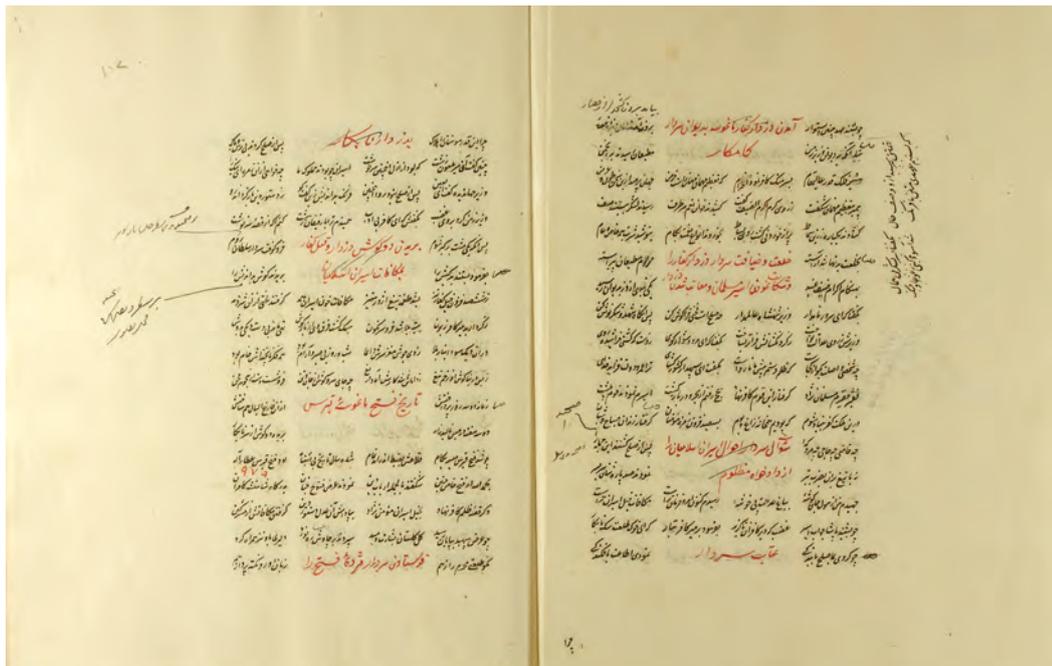


Fig. 51. Şehnâme-i Selim Hân, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 101b–102a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

word *şahh* (“correct”), also used as an editorial mark. In other words, the sections that had been edited were marked in this way to indicate that it was all right for the scribe to copy them.<sup>80</sup>

From this material, it is possible to reconstruct the various steps in the production process. One of the first questions that comes to mind in such a reconstruction concerns who actually made the red markings. Lokman himself is the most likely candidate. Numerous documents in the Ottoman State archives in Istanbul contain decrees sent to the court historian, as well as requests he sent to the Imperial Council regarding raises or promotions to be given to scribes, illuminators, painters, binders, and others who worked on manuscript projects under him. He appears in these documents as the one responsible for hiring and dismissing those involved in the manuscript project, as well as determining how the income from the dismissed employees should be spent. He was also the one who submitted requests for paper and other supplies. It is clear that the position of court historian was as much an administrative as an intellectual one. Lokman was a project director in the full sense of the word, responsible for finances, human resources, and artistic and intellectual content.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the notations on the Topkapı draft were most likely his.

The lack of detailed instructions on this draft implies that there was a certain amount of verbal communication between Lokman and the artists working under him. What we see on paper are only the traces of these discussions—reminders of the important points agreed upon in earlier meetings. Such a method of communication is supported by the relationship between the two drafts. The first eleven paintings are not marked on the TSK R. 1537 copy, probably because the previous draft, BL Or. 7043, already contained initial versions of these paintings. In determining where the paintings would go, the two drafts were used in conjunction with each other. Clearly, when the time came to create the final copy, the team of artists had access to the earlier draft and made use of its thirty-one folios. Its larger size would provide the perfect canvas on which to practice laying out compositions and correcting lines.

Who, besides Lokman, was involved in the production process? Archival documents yield the names of three artists (*naqqāş*) who worked on the *Şehnâme-i*

*Selīm Hân* project: Osman, ‘Ali, and İbrahim Peykeri. According to Çağman, İbrahim Peykeri worked solely on the illumination and not the illustrations.<sup>82</sup> Sinan, the first scribe to work on the project, was dismissed on September 1, 1573 (4 Jumada I 981), after which two other scribes—İlyas b. İbrahim, who worked on the final copy (*kâtib-i beyâz*), and Haydar b. Süleyman, who penned a draft (*kâtib-i müsvedde*)—contributed to the project. Musa Ahmed was responsible for ruling the pages (*cedvelkeş*).<sup>83</sup> As also noted by Çağman, the colophon at the end of TSK A. 3595 names İlyas as the scribe, attesting to the scenario whereby Sinan was replaced by İlyas b. İbrahim.

The editorial annotations suggest that the scribe used the non-illustrated Topkapı draft as he transcribed the text. He appears to have made notes on it, such as “page complete,” put small dots next to lines that he wrote diagonally so that they could be illuminated, and made other similar notations. While copying, the scribe would also have had to refer to the markings in the draft indicating where the paintings were to be placed. Thus, I believe that what we have in TSK R. 1537 are partially instructions for the scribe and partially notes made by him to mark his progress as he moved along. The notes relating to other aspects of the production process, such as the ruling of sections or the delivery of paper, were ones that would have directly affected the scribe. I will return to larger conclusions about the production process later, but suffice it to say here that TSK R. 1537 provides ample evidence for a team of artisans—ruler, scribe(s), painter(s)—working under the supervision of a leader—in this case Lokman. This team had easy access to other books, such as the two drafts, which suggests that they were probably working together in the area where the books were located. Continuous interaction between the artisans is also implied by what is missing from the drafts we have examined, i.e., more specific instructions for painters and illuminators. Thus, just as the planning and approval process was a collective one, so, too, was that of the physical production of the book.

I would now like to turn to the textual changes indicated in the Topkapı draft and a consideration of the contents of the *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân*. Some of the margins are filled with lines to be inserted into the final version, as well as with corrections of the section headings.

Indeed, the most consistent edits in the Topkapı draft relate to the titles of sections, almost all of which were crossed out and changed, the final version usually noted in the margin. Many of these edits do not alter the meaning of the titles at all, but are more flowery renditions conveying the same idea; others use fewer words that would fit into a single line heading. A few examples should suffice. The title edited in the example we looked at earlier (fig. 12) reads “The Commander Raising a Tent Facing the Rivers of ‘Aqara [near Basra]” in the final manuscript.<sup>84</sup> However, the original title was “The Arrival of the Commander in the Lands of the Enemy and the Raising of a Tent Facing ‘Aqara.”<sup>85</sup> First, the word “commander”<sup>86</sup> was inserted before the word “raising” in this title, at the center of the block of text. That was obviously deemed insufficient, and the new title was written in the margin as “The Commander Raising a Tent Facing ‘Aqara.”<sup>87</sup> Yet somehow, in the transfer from the draft to the final copy, the word “rivers” was also inserted in the title, so that the commander’s tent is said to face the “rivers of ‘Aqara,” as opposed to just “‘Aqara.” In the final analysis, the title was edited to be more specific and succinct. It was thus short enough to fit into a single line spread across two columns of text. Indeed, all of the titles in the finished manuscript fit into a single line spanning two columns; some are more packed than others, but no title takes up two lines. This was probably one of the criteria the editors used when correcting the longer titles in the draft.

Instances of shortening section titles abound in the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. In the section describing Iskender Pasha’s suppression of rebels, the original title, “The Accomplished Commander Receives News of the Defeat of the Lowly Enemies,” was replaced with “Informing the Commander of the Defeat of the Seditious Ones.”<sup>88</sup> On the subject of the Cyprus campaign, a title that initially read “The Announcement of the Situation to the Commanders of the Victorious Army on the Cyprus Campaign” became, in the final version, “The Announcement of the Situation to the Group of Victorious Soldiers.”<sup>89</sup>

At other times, a decision was made to highlight a different aspect of the relevant section by altering the title. In the discussion of North African affairs, the heading that originally read “The Elite Officer Learns of the

Rebellion of the Ruler of Tunisia and Informs the Sultan’s Court” was replaced with “The Arrival of the Imperial Decree to the Commander of Algeria to Conquer Tunisia.”<sup>90</sup> In other instances, a title that described the sending of a message was replaced with one relating its arrival, or vice versa. There were also instances where a person’s name was replaced with his position, or again, vice versa. Various changes of emphasis were thus achieved by changing the title. Indeed, the exact wording of a title was clearly regarded as very important, as is attested by one that was changed three times on folio 60b in TSK R. 1537 before it found its final shape. There was also one heading that was not originally in the draft, but was added in the margin: “The Sultan Visits Eyub,” which refers to Selim visiting the tomb of Eyub al-Ensari as part of the customary Ottoman accession ceremonies in Istanbul.<sup>91</sup> Though this visit was described in the text, it was not initially highlighted by a title, the insertion of which draws more attention to the event.

The additions of long text sections in the margins of TSK R. 1537 point to even larger shifts in emphasis in the final manuscript. Indeed, the incorporation of these amendments significantly affected the appearance and contents of the final version of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. These changes once again intimate that the subject matter of the book was closely correlated with the shifting power dynamics at court: the insertions privilege the courtiers who rose in importance during the final years of the project. A few distinct subjects received extra attention in the final copy—for example, the accession of Selim II, especially his accession ceremonies in Istanbul before he marched further west to meet the Ottoman army on its way back from the Szigetvár campaign. The aforementioned addition of a title to the section describing his visit to the tomb of Eyub al-Ensari (folio 23b) was one aspect of the heightened emphasis placed on the Istanbul accession, and the marginal extension on folio 34a of TSK R. 1537, which was incorporated in TSK A. 3595, folios 38a–b, is another. The marginal text almost doubles the description of the festivities in Istanbul in honor of the sultan’s accession. Additional details relate how the city was decorated “almost as if it were a wedding house,” while its stores were full of artful objects; even the ships in the harbor were decked out, and the Galata quarter was all lit up, as if with silver.

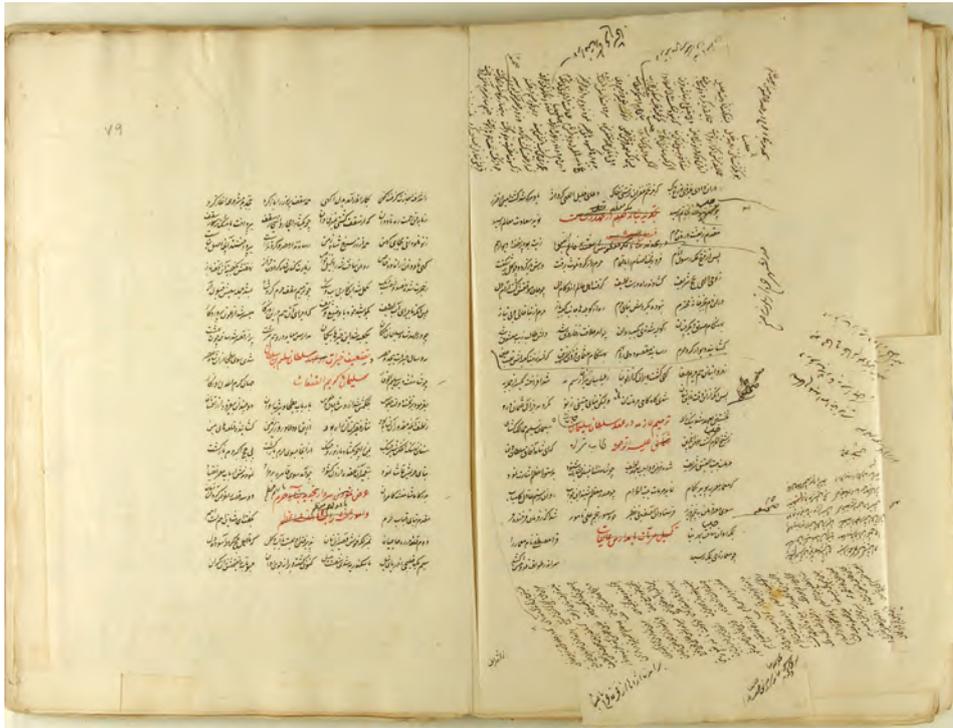


Fig. 52. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 78b–79a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

The accession of Selim II was a delicate subject to say the least, as I explained in my discussion of the changes made to the British Library manuscript. Selim's accession in Istanbul took place against the grand vizier's advice, but following that of his tutors. His visit to Eyub el-Ensari's tomb could be interpreted as a revolt against the status quo privileging the grand vizier and the military. Lokman's description of the festivities in Istanbul and the highlighting of Selim's visit to Eyub al-Ensari's tomb were a way to put a positive spin on a tense situation. The description of the urban festivities emphasizes the public's joy and enthusiasm for their new sultan and the visit to the saint's tomb establishes Selim's position as the new ruler of the Ottoman state. The illustration of his accession in Belgrade (fig. 5) as opposed to the accession in Istanbul (fig. 43) takes some of the pressure away, and shows Selim's viziers, especially his grand vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, by his side, with the army paying homage to their new sultan.

Amendments to the final manuscript also served to showcase the architectural patronage of Selim II, in particular the building of the Büyükçekmece Bridge by

Sinan, and the additions made to the Ka'ba (figs. 28, and 52–54), also under the supervision of the chief architect.<sup>92</sup> The new sections brought with them illustrations, which, of course, drew even more attention to these subjects. Even though the Ka'ba project was discussed to a certain extent in the original text, large portions of the final text were marginal additions from the Topkapı draft, and the "location of painting" note (on fol. 79b of the draft) is associated with the newer material (fig. 53). Why were Selim's architectural projects, in particular these two, added so mindfully? Certainly the prestige of architectural patronage was an important factor, but that was already a part of the manuscript, which had initially included the Selimiye Mosque in word and image.

Perhaps the answer lies in what aspects of the Büyükçekmece and Ka'ba projects were emphasized in the *Şehnâme*. The bridge in Büyükçekmece is described as having been begun during the reign of Süleyman, but completed under Selim, "with the income from Bogdan and Rus." The usefulness of the bridge and the appearance of its environs are also detailed. The main empha-

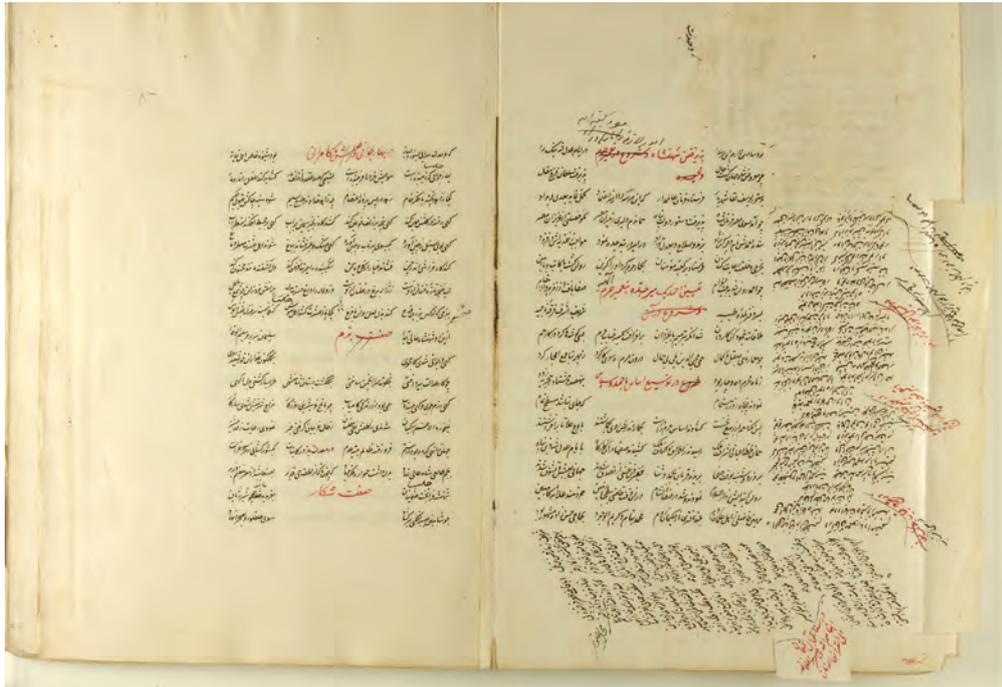


Fig. 53. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 79b–80a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 54. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 94b–95a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

sis is on continuity between the deeds of father and son. The claim to have sponsored the Büyükçekmece Bridge and its environs, along with the acknowledgment that they were begun under Süleyman, allowed the sultan to align himself with his forebears, who had engaged in similar acts of “colonization of space through settlement” and cultivation.<sup>93</sup> Of course, continuing a project begun under Süleyman presented the sultan as the legitimate heir to his father’s traditions.

The renovations at the holy sanctuary of Ka’ba also carried connotations of Süleymanic traditions, as this was another project begun during his reign.<sup>94</sup> For Süleyman, the Ka’ba had been an important aspect of his development of the Hajj route, which in turn enhanced the sultan’s image as universal caliph.<sup>95</sup> Lokman’s words attempt to mold Selim’s image with similar caliphal eminence by emphasizing the long history of the Ka’ba renovations and placing him at the end of that tradition. Beginning with the “situation” of the building from the time of Adam to the Prophet Muhammad, and from then until the present, the author includes Selim in a long line of embellishers of the holy sanctuary. The sections detailing the pre-Süleymanic additions to the structure are from the margins of the draft TSK R. 1537, but the contributions of Sultan Süleyman, the description of Sultan Selim’s generosity to the sanctuary and its environs, the report of the commander (Sinan Pasha) on the progress of the renovations, the appointment of Ahmed Beg, the governor of Jidda, to oversee the renovations, and the enlargement of the foundations are part of the original text of the draft.<sup>96</sup>

The marginal notes on folio 79b of the draft also include the intended location of a painting illustrating the beginning of the new construction project. The image (fol. 95b, fig. 28) depicts the progress of the renovations. In the bottom margin are the bodies of three animals sacrificed during the ground-laying ceremony. The lower part of the painting details the workers, while at the center is the black cube of the Ka’ba, placed within the keyhole-shaped precinct around it. The qadi and sharif of Mecca are pictured praying in the upper right, while the building supervisor, Ahmed Beg, and the architect are shown on the left side of the image, deep in conversation. The verses incorporated into the painting proclaim that the qadi and sharif of Mecca worked in unison on this project. The full cooperation of the local authorities and the industrious activities of the workers

bolster the image of the all-encompassing power of the universal caliph, and possibly also attest to the legitimacy of the entire enterprise, as implied in the absence of resentment and tension at the local level. Text and image seem to convey that here in the provinces, so far away from the capital and the palace, pious activities in the name of the sultan are proceeding with utmost efficiency and harmony, with the full support of local subjects and religious functionaries. With its message of an efficient and just administration, the painting also contributes to the mapping of the Ottoman social hierarchy onto the manuscript.

The nature of the marginal additions reveals that the intention to link the legacies of Süleyman and his son Selim had been there from the inception of the *Şehnâme*, while the decision to emphasize pre-Ottoman developments came later. The inserted text allowed Lokman to extend the tradition beyond the father-son duo, perhaps with an eye towards the next generation, under whom he finished the project. The marginal additions *following* the painting certainly suggest as much. These words, into whose midst the painting was inserted, praise the Ottomans and their acts of generosity, and describe the domed arcade surrounding the sanctuary, as well as the repairs to the harbor of Alexandria and Selim II’s charitable deeds in the Yemen. Lokman states that the domes were completed during the reign of Selim’s son Murad, under the guidance of a wise vizier, most certainly Sinan Pasha, who oversaw the repairs of the Alexandria harbor. These marginal additions must have been made after 1576–77, the date of completion of the domes.<sup>97</sup> The *Şehnâme* was thus updated during the long years of its production to incorporate some recent developments, and to burnish the image of the current sultan as much as those of his ancestors.

The Ka’ba renovations served other purposes besides enhancing the pious images of the Ottoman sultans and linking them to Islamic traditions. In addition to being related to the Cyprus campaign, one of whose justifications had been to secure the pilgrimage routes, the nature of the renovations was determined by other contemporary events, such as the building of boats for the navy in the aftermath of the Ottoman disaster at Lepanto.<sup>98</sup> Stone had to be used for the renovations, since wood was needed to build ships after the defeat at Lepanto. The successive overseers of the Ka’ba project were the governors of Egypt, all of whom subsequently

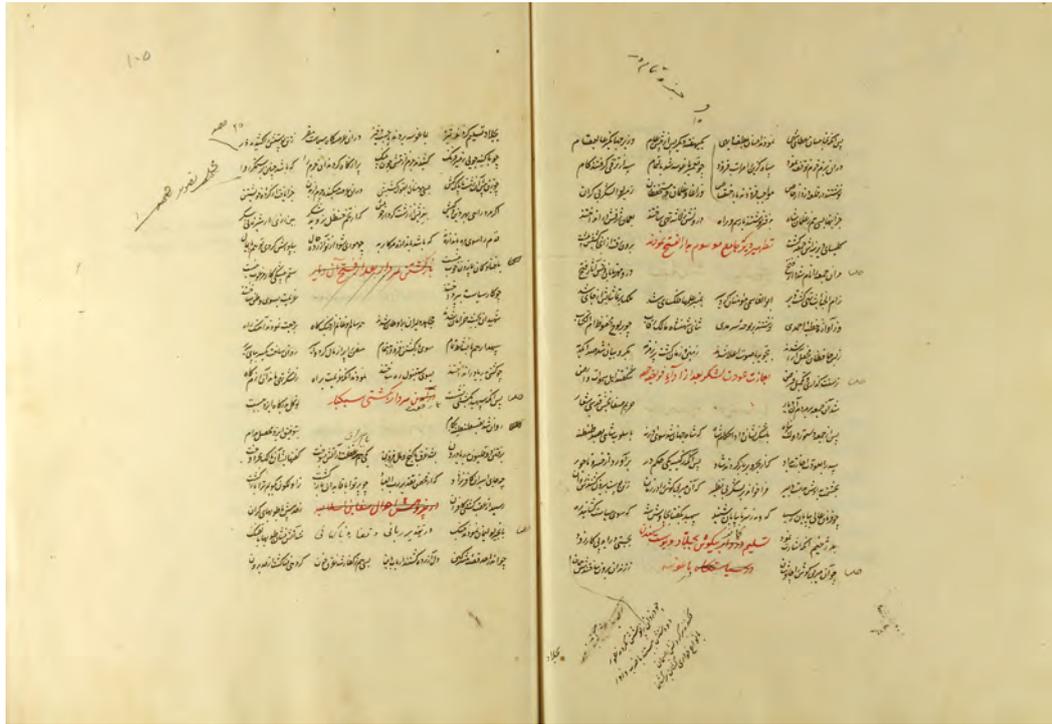


Fig. 55. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, R. 1537, fols. 104b–105a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

served in important positions in the Imperial Council, and were among the significant power wielders of the period. Among those involved were the three important members of Selim II and Murad III's courts, Koca Sinan Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha, and Piyale Pasha. Thus, the heightened emphasis on the Ka'ba renovations, attained through the insertion of extra text and a painting, was related to the careers of all of these men. However, a particular effort seems to have been made to highlight the contributions of Sinan Pasha, whose name was specifically mentioned in connection with his oversight of the Ka'ba renovations and of the repairs to the harbor in Alexandria.

Another topic that received increased coverage in accordance with the marginal additions found in the Topkapı draft was the Cyprus campaign of 1571. The early stages of the operation, such as the arrival of the navy on the island and its organization and camp setup, were followed by elaborations on various aspects of the expedition, filling the margins of numerous folios of the draft (fols. 57b, 70a, 72a, 84b, 91a, 101b, and 104b). Most of the additions augment the textual

account of the campaign, but those on folio 104b are geared towards the visual (fig. 55). The additions here appear to have been made so that the page with the relevant image could contain a line describing how the Venetian commander's skin was severed from his body.<sup>99</sup> That is precisely what we see in the illustration (fig. 33, TSK A. 3595, fol. 125b). The commander's skin, intact and retaining its shape, hangs on a pole, while the remainder of his body lies on the ground—a very direct and literal image-text relationship was thus established. Other than this gruesome detail, the additions made were geared towards providing further information about one of the few campaigns of Selim II's reign, led by his tutor and vizier Lala Mustafa Pasha.

Other added sections found in the Topkapı draft relate to the Tunisian campaign undertaken by Sinan Pasha (TSK R. 1537, fol. 54b); Piyale Pasha's exploits with the navy along the Venetian-controlled coasts of the Adriatic Sea (fol. 82b); Behram Pasha's exploits in the Yemen (fol. 90a); and Ahmed Pasha's Ethiopian battles (fol. 115b, which adds extensive material, and allows

for the insertion of a painting depicting the subject as well). These were all significant military successes of Selim II's reign. The capture of various castles in Tunisia, the victory over the Venetians for Cyprus, and the suppression of rebels in the Yemen, which led to the Ethiopian and Indian Ocean campaigns, were amply illustrated in the manuscript, partially as a result of the marginal additions found in the Topkapı draft.

The embellishment of these topics with further detail calls attention to not only the high points of Selim II's reign, but also those responsible for them. The power and rivalry of the commanders involved in these campaigns—in particular Koca Sinan Pasha and Lala Mustafa Pasha—lasted well into the reign of Murad III, the period of the manuscript's completion. It seems highly appropriate, therefore, that the roles of these commanders would be elaborately described in the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. The detailing of gifts brought by Sinan Pasha and others after the conquest of Cyprus (which had been achieved under the command of Lala Mustafa Pasha) is another case in point. This description was also expanded later, to almost twice its original length.<sup>100</sup> The importance of the sultan's deputies certainly appears as a major theme in this manuscript, beginning with the first illustration of the arrow piercing the target under the dome of the Imperial Council, and continuing with individual portraits of all of the viziers in both the Topkapı and the British Library illustrated copies.

#### *ŞEHNÂME-İ SELİM HÂN*: THE FINAL ANALYSIS

The *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* was completed on January 12, 1581 (9 Dhu'l-Hijjah 988). By that time, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha had been dead for over a year (October 1579), and Sinan Pasha was grand vizier. The constitution of power at the Ottoman court had changed significantly during the decade in which the book was produced and the Imperial Council was no longer the main force in the palace. The sultan himself was the target of constant criticism—for not going on campaign with the army, for allowing his unofficial companions to wield power, and for generally straying from the militarily-oriented legacy of his grandfather, Süleyman. Many of Sokollu's supporters had been ousted from the ranks of the bureaucracy during the earlier

years of Murad's reign. However, by 1581 the new circle of influence around Murad must have ceased to feel threatened by Sokollu's legacy, as some of his allies were eventually allowed to return to the court. For example, Feridun Ahmed Beg, who had been dismissed from the position of chief of the chancery in 1575–76 (983), was reinstated in February 1581—mere weeks after the completion of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. Did the improved fortunes of Feridun Ahmed Beg play any role in the push to complete this project, which had been dragging on for ten years? Lokman's repeated eulogies to him, incorporated into the multiple descriptions of his own appointment as court historian, would certainly seem to indicate a correlation.

When considered in the context of the dynamics of the Ottoman court of the 1580s, the choices that were made during the production of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* gain in significance. The ways in which the contents of the final manuscript diverged from the British Library draft have been discussed in detail above. The gist of those changes was a de-emphasizing of Sokollu's centrality in favor of a more equitable distribution of praise among the viziers of the Imperial Council. These changes appear to have affected the beginning sections of the manuscript, which were finished before the remainder of the book. The amendments to the later sections of the text, evident in the extensive additions in the margins of TSK R. 1537, clearly underline the achievements of Sinan Pasha, known as the conqueror of the Yemen and Tunisia, and Lala Mustafa Pasha, the conqueror of Cyprus, who were influential viziers of the Imperial Council during the reign of Murad III. These two men were in rival camps not only to each other but also to Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. It is most probable, especially when the completion of the Ka'ba domes in 1576–77 is taken into account, that these editorial choices were made during the early years of Murad III's reign, when Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's power was being seriously contested by those in Murad's retinue. This contestation was even more acute than the jealousy the grand vizier faced from the companions of Selim II. Lokman may have started the project hoping to aid not only his own fortunes but also those of his patron Sokollu Mehmed Pasha with exuberant praise of the grand vizier, but he was certainly not allowed to complete the project in those terms. He had to cater to the tastes and interests of the new players in the arena of

power. The political forces of the 1570s are thus explicitly manifest in the contents and appearance of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*.

The quest for a more positive image of the Ottoman sultan was equally a motivation for the commissioning of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. Some of the changes were aimed at refining the imperial image portrayed in the manuscript. The concept of a sultan acting through deputies was a spin on the negative image of a ruler who had let go of the reins of government in favor of feasting in the palace. That the *Şehnâme* was intended as a public relations document for both Murad III and the memory of his father is evident from the added emphasis on those projects with links to Süleyman's legacy. Hence, Selim's architectural patrimony—parts of which had been inherited by his son—was cast as a continuation of Süleymanic trends. The manuscript as a whole embodied a new imperial image, which extended to include those in the sultan's retinue. In the end, the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* served as a locus where the changes in the nature and constitution of the Ottoman ruling elite were negotiated and recorded.

The long and thorough planning process, evident in the drafts of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, involved the collaboration of a group of artisans, scholars, and members of the Imperial Council. Through careful manipulations of textual content and layout, shifting emphases via titles, illustrations, and illuminated pages, and very deliberate image-text pairings, the makers of the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* created an account of the reign of Selim II that not only presented the sultan in a positive light, but also highlighted the contributions of his deputies. In the end, this group of auteurs—including the grand vizier, the numerous scholars who critiqued the manuscript, the official author Lokman, and the artists, illuminators, and scribes who collaborated on the project—produced a consolidated work of art with multiple targeted messages that not only pleases the eye and attests to the refined and educated tastes of its final patron, Sultan Murad III, but also manages to account for the contributions of many in his entourage—whether in the introductory sections relating to the making of the book, or in the main narrative detailing the events of Selim II's reign.

That an illustrated history created in a court setting should have political undertones is no surprise. What is extraordinary about the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* (and a number of other Ottoman examples) is that it car-

ries multiple, often incompatible messages that bring an unprecedented plurality of meaning and purpose to the manuscript. This multivalency is clearly a product of the collective mode of production so visible in the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*. The careful aesthetic choices evident in the drafts examined here resulted in a rich manuscript that continues to unveil its meanings to successive generations of audiences.

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## APPENDIX

### List of Current and Missing Illustrations of TSK A. 3595

1. fol. 9a: Audience of Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği with Lokman and the potential artist and scribes for the manuscript
2. missing: Selim II in the Tower of Justice watching the Imperial Council
3. fol. 13a: Audience of Selim II with Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Lokman
4. fol. 24b (facing page with half of image missing): Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's messenger arrives at Prince Selim's camp
5. fol. 26b (facing page with half of image in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts): Selim II enthroned in Belgrade
6. fol. 27a: Audience of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha
7. fol. 28a: Audience of Second Vizier Pertev Pasha
8. fol. 29a: Audience of Third Vizier Piyale Pasha
9. fol. 29b: Audience of Fourth Vizier Ahmed Pasha
10. fol. 30a: Audience of Fifth Vizier Zal Mahmud Pasha
11. fol. 30a: Audience of Sixth Vizier Lala Mustafa Pasha
12. fols. 41b–42a: Iskender Pasha's tent facing the rivers of 'Aqara (near Basra)
13. fol. 43a (facing page missing with half of image): The battle at 'Aqara
14. fol. 45b: The execution of the ruler of Ju-yi Tawvil (in the Gulf region)
15. fol. 48b: The story of the crafty jackal entering the Ottoman camp
16. fols. 53b–54a: The presentation of gifts to Selim II by the Safavid envoy
17. fol. 55b: The Selimiye Mosque
18. fol. 56b: The Büyükçekmece Bridge
19. fol. 59b: The display of the hippopotamus head from Egypt

- 20. missing: illustration relating to Shah Tahmasp's agent seeking permission to perform the pilgrimage
- 21. fol. 65a (facing page with half of image missing): The conquest of Tunisia
- 22. fol. 68a: Shah Tahmasp's agent Ma'sum killed en route to the Hajj
- 23. fol. 72b: Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's battle with the enemy at Ta'izz during the Yemeni campaign
- 24. fol. 75b: Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha crossing the Shabaka pass
- 25. fol. 79a: The conquest of Shibam castle in the Yemen
- 26. missing: illustration relating to the Yemeni campaign
- 27. fol. 84a (facing page with half of illustration missing): The attack on Kawkaban castle in the Yemen
- 28. fol. 90a: Behram Pasha's conquest of Habb castle in the Yemen
- 29. fol. 91b: The envoy of the Yemeni governor asking the commander for peace
- 30. fol. 95b: The renovations at the Ka'ba
- 31. fol. 102b: The Ottoman army lands on Cyprus
- 32–33. missing: illustrations relating to the Cyprus campaign
- 34. missing: illustration relating to the battle of Dukagjin during Piyale Pasha's naval campaign to the Dalmatian coast
- 35. fol. 117a: The conquest of Dukagjin castle in Dalmatia
- 36. fol. 119a: The siege of Famagusta castle in Cyprus
- 37. fol. 122a: Lala Mustafa Pasha's execution of Venetian commanders
- 38. fol. 125b: The flaying of the Venetian commander Bragadino
- 39. fols. 130b–131a: Hüseyin Pasha's battle at Navarino
- 40. fol. 138a: Ahmed Pasha's battle with the Ethiopians
- 41. fol. 143a: The execution of the voivode of Moldavia during Siyavuş Pasha's Moldavian campaign
- 42. fols. 147b–148a: The conquest of Little Bastion castle (also known as *La Goulette* or *Ḥalq al-wādī*) in Tunisia
- 43. fol. 150a: The conquest of Bastion castle (also known as *Nova Arx*, a new fortress constructed by the Spanish between the city walls and the lake) in Tunisia
- 44. fol. 152a: The display of the rhinoceros sent as a gift by the Ethiopian ruler
- 45. The funeral of Selim II (left half of double-page composition in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, right half missing)
- 46. fol. 156a: The Aya Sofya Mosque



Fig. 1. Audience of Şemseddin Ahmed Karabaği with Lokman and the potential artist and scribes for the manuscript. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 9a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

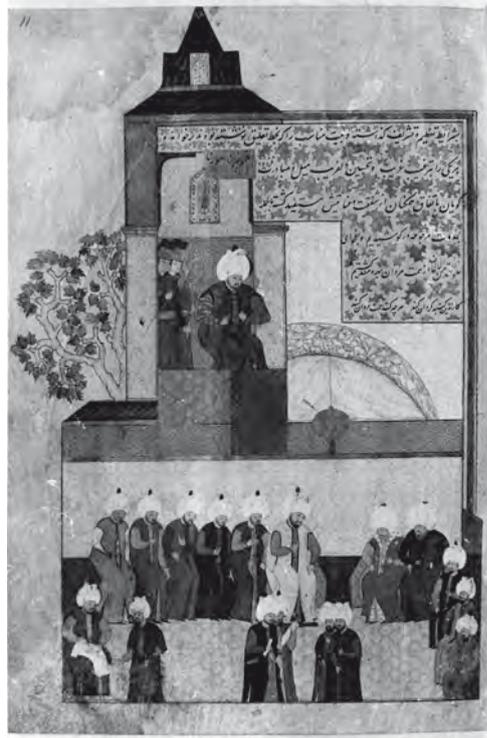


Fig. 2. Selim II in the Tower of Justice watching the Imperial Council. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 11a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

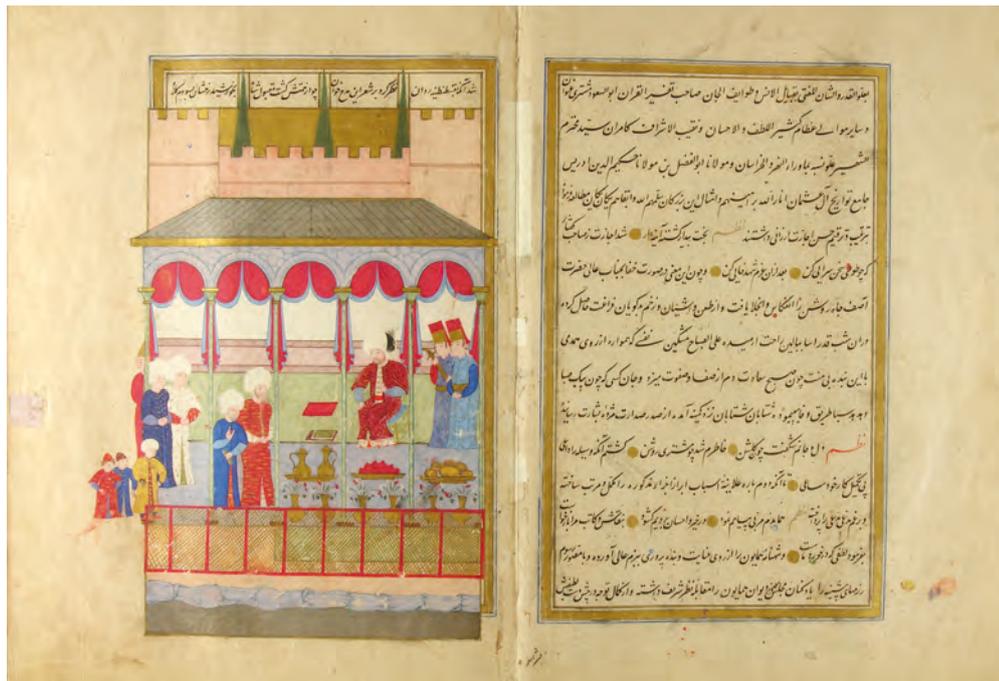


Fig. 3. Selim II's audience with Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and Lokman. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 13a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 4. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha’s messenger arrives at Prince Selim’s camp (facing page with half of image missing). *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 24b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

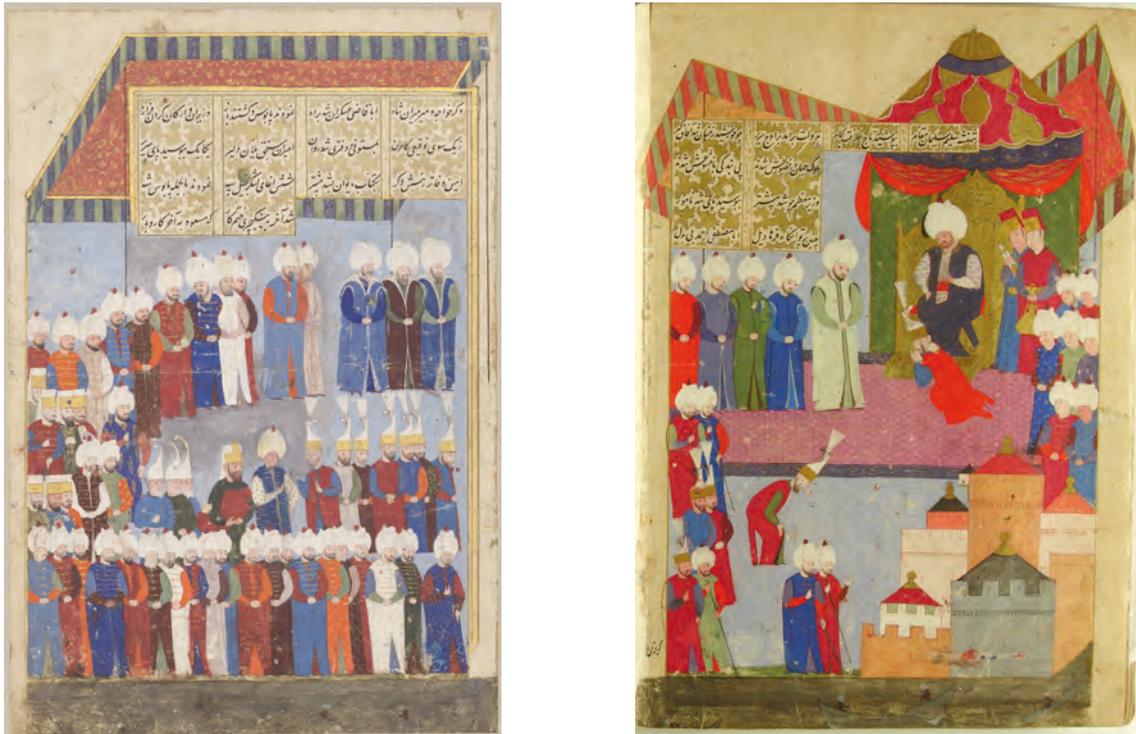


Fig. 5. Selim II enthroned in Belgrade. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 26b, and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 and Picture Fund, 14.693. (Photograph © 2009, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



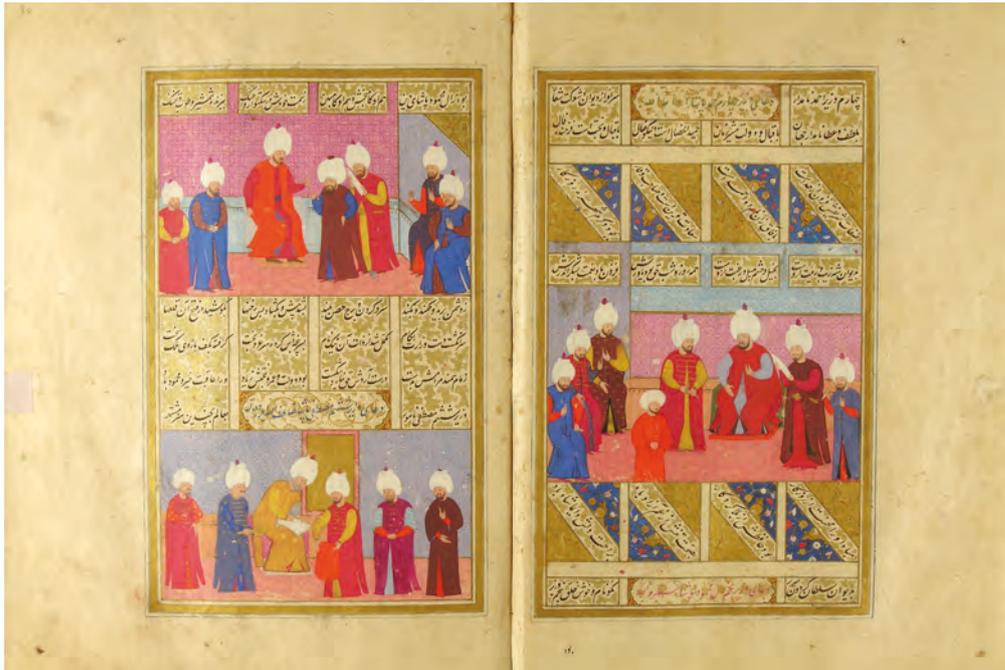
Fig. 6. Audience of Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Pasha. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 27a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 7. Audience of Second Vizier Pertev Pasha. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 28a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 8. Audience of Third Vizier Piyale Pasha. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 29a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Figs. 9, 10, and 11. Audiences of Fourth Vizier Ahmed Pasha, and on the left, of Fifth Vizier Zal Mahmud Pasha and of Sixth Vizier Lala Mustafa Pasha. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 29b–30a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 12. Iskender Pasha’s tent facing the rivers of ‘Aqara (near Basra). *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 41b–42a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 13. The battle at ‘Aqara (facing page missing). *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 43a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 14. The execution of the ruler of Ju-yi Tawvil (in the Gulf region). *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 45b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 15. The story of the crafty jackal entering the Ottoman camp. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 48b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 16. The presentation of gifts to Selim II by the Safavid envoy. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 53b–54a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

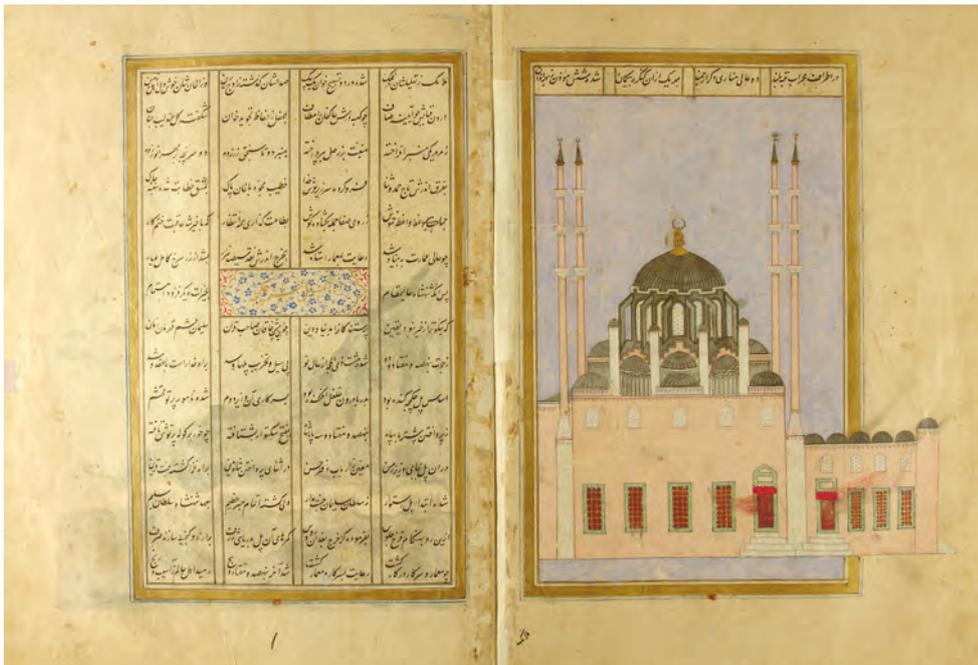


Fig. 17. The Selimiye Mosque. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 55b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 18. The Büyükçekmece Bridge. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 56b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 19. The display of the hippopotamus head from Egypt. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 59b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 20. The conquest of Tunisia (facing page with half of image missing). *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 65a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 21. Shah Tahmasp’s agent Ma’sum killed en route to the Hajj. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 68a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 22. Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha's battle with the enemy at Ta'izz during the Yemeni campaign. *Şehname-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 72b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 23. Özdemiroğlu Osman Pasha crossing the Shabaka pass. *Şehname-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 75b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 24. The conquest of Shibam castle in the Yemen. *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 79a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 25. The attack on Kawkaban castle in the Yemen (facing page with half of illustration missing). *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 84a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 26. Behram Pasha's conquest of Habb castle in the Yemen. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 90a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 27. The envoy of the Yemeni governor asking the commander for peace. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 91b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 28. The renovations at the Ka'ba. *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 95b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 29. The Ottoman army lands on Cyprus. *Şehnâme-i Selîm Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 102b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 30. The conquest of Dukagjin castle in Dalmatia. *Şehnāme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 117a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 31. The siege of Famagusta castle in Cyprus. *Şehnāme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 119a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 32. Lala Mustafa Pasha's execution of Venetian commanders. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 122a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 33. The flaying of the Venetian commander Bragadino. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, İstanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 125b. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 34. Hüseyin Pasha's battle at Navarino. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 130b–131a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 35. Ahmed Pasha's battle with the Ethiopians. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 138a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 36. The execution of the voivode of Moldavia during Siyavuş Pasha's Moldavian campaign. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 143a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 37. The conquest of Little Bastion castle (also known as *La Goulette* or *Halq al-wādī*) in Tunisia. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fols. 147b–148a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

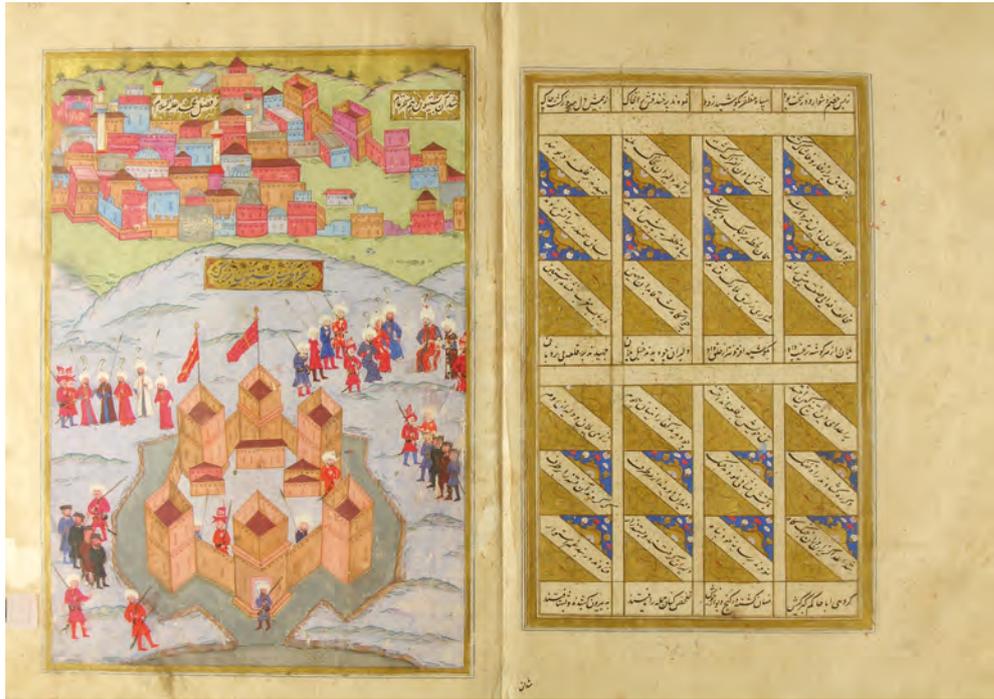


Fig. 38. The conquest of Bastion castle (also known as *Nova Arx*, a new fortress constructed by the Spanish between the city walls and the lake) in Tunisia. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 150a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

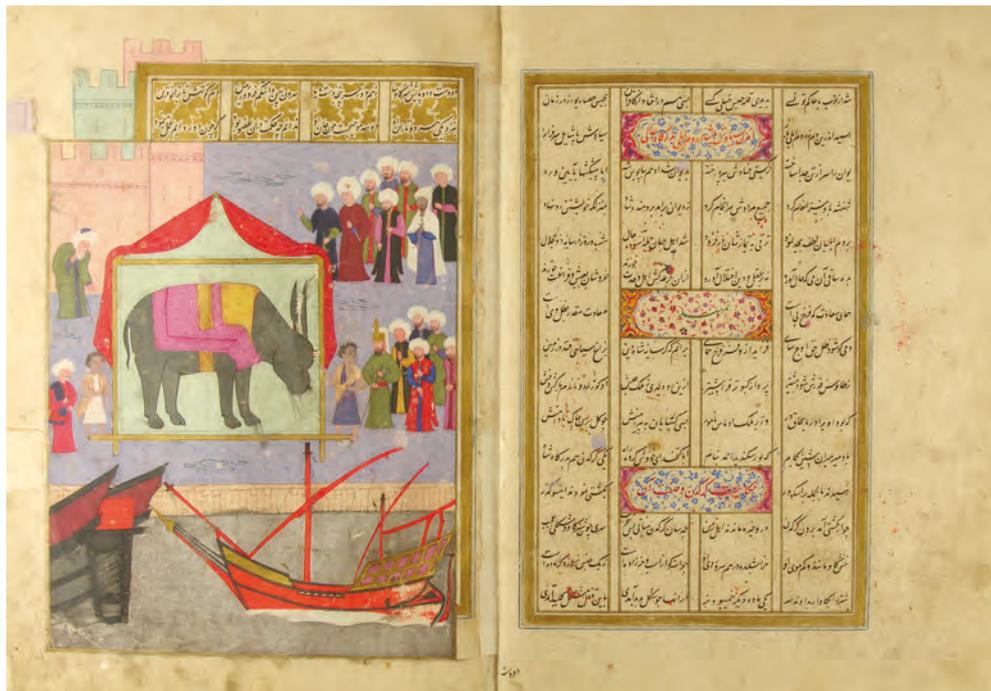


Fig. 39. The display of the rhinoceros sent as a gift by the Ethiopian ruler. *Şehnâme-i Selīm Hān*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 152a. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Palace Museum Library)



Fig. 40. The funeral of Sultan Selim II. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 and Picture Fund, 14.694. (Photograph © 2009, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)



Fig. 41. The Aya Sofya Mosque. *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân*, Istanbul, ca. 1571–81, Topkapı Palace Museum Library, A. 3595, fol. 156a.

## NOTES

*Author's note:* This article was inspired by some of the questions I explored in my dissertation, "Viziers to Eunuchs: Transitions in Ottoman Manuscript Patronage, 1566–1617" (Harvard University, 2005), but was written after the dissertation itself. I am grateful to my advisors, Professors Gülru Necipoğlu and David J. Roxburgh, for their comments on the earlier drafts of the article, and for the extremely helpful suggestions of the anonymous reader for *Muqarnas*. I conducted research for this article in 2005–6 while teaching at Rice University, and wrote it in the fall of 2006 when I was a Humanities Post-Doctoral Fellow at Stanford University. I would like to thank my colleagues at Rice for their encouragement and Professor Seth Lerer and my fellow post-docs at Stanford for their comments on an earlier presentation. In November 2006, I had the opportunity to present my findings in a lecture for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University Lecture Series: A Forum for Islamic Art and Architecture. I am grateful to the organizers as well as the audience for their probing questions and suggestions.

1. For a clear delineation of trends in scholarship, see David J. Roxburgh, "The Study of Painting and Arts of the Book," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 1–16. Select examples of the "whole book" approach include David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Cynthia Robinson, "Prologue," and David J. Roxburgh, "The Aesthetics of Aggregation: Persian Anthologies of the Fifteenth Century," in *Islamic Art and Literature*, ed. Cynthia Robinson and Oleg Grabar (Princeton, N.J.: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2001), ix–xi and 119–42.
2. Marianna Shreve Simpson, "The Making of Manuscripts and the Workings of the Kitab-khana in Safavid Iran," in *The Artist's Workshop*, ed. Peter M. Lukehart, *Studies in the History of Art* 38 (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1993), 104–21; Roxburgh, *Persian Album*; John Seyller, *Workshop and Patron in Mughal India: The Freer Rāmāyana and Other Illustrated Manuscripts of 'Abd al-Rahim* (Zurich and Washington, D.C.: Artibus Asiae Publishers and Museum Rietberg, in association with the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1999); Zeren Tanındı, "Manuscript Production in the Ottoman Palace Workshop," *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5 (1990–91): 67–98; Alan W. Fisher and Carol Garrett Fisher, "A Note on the Location of the Royal Ottoman Painting Ateliers," *Muqarnas* 3 (1985): 118–20; Filiz Çağman, "Saray Nakkaşhanesinin Yeri Üzerine Düşünceler," in *Sanat Tarihinde Doğudan Batıya: Ünsal Yücel Anısına Sempozyum Bildirileri* (Istanbul: Sandoz Kültür Yayınları, 1989), 35–46; Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London and Princeton, N.J.: Reaktion Books and Princeton University Press, 2005), 148–49; Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kānūn for the State, a Canon for the Arts: Conceptualizing the Classical Synthesis of Ottoman Art and Architecture," in *Soliman le magnifique et son temps*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: Documentation française, 1992), 195–216; Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, Cambridge, Mass., and London: Architectural History Foundation and the MIT Press, 1991), 48 and nn. 73–79.
3. Yves Porter, *Peinture et arts du livre: Essai sur la littérature technique indo-persane*, Bibliothèque Iranienne 35 (Paris and Tehran: Institut français du recherche en Iran, 1992).
4. Marianna Shreve Simpson and Massumeh Farhad, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).
5. Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Legacy of the Great Mongol Shahnama," *Islamic Art* 5 (1994): 41–52.
6. Roxburgh, *Persian Album*; David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
7. Examples include Nurhan Atasoy and Filiz Çağman, *Turkish Miniature Painting*, trans. Esin Atıl (Istanbul: R. C. D. Cultural Institute, 1974); Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname: The Illustrated History of Süleyman the Magnificent* (Washington, D.C. and New York: Harry N. Abrams and the National Gallery of Art, 1986); Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındı, *The Topkapı Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts*, trans. and ed. J. M. Rogers (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Eleanor Sims, "The Turks and Illustrated Historical Texts," in *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, ed. Géza Fehér (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiado, 1978), 747–72. I believe the notion of "realistic depiction of recent historical events" was initially emphasized as an effort to distinguish Ottoman painting from Persian. But the idea still persists: the "documentary value" of Ottoman manuscripts is deemed "particularly important" by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom in *Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 245. By contrast, Zeren Tanındı applies a contextual approach to analyze the relationship between the visual and the verbal: see Zeren Tanındı, "Transformation of Words to Images: Portraits of Ottoman Courtiers in the Diwans of Baki and Nadiri," *Res* 43 (Spring 2003): 131–45. Barry D. Wood adds new insight to the difference between "Ottoman" and "Safavid" manuscripts and viewers: see Barry D. Wood, "The Shāhnāmāh-i Ismā'īl: Art and Cultural Memory in Sixteenth-Century Iran" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002).
8. Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Ms. A. 3595 (hereafter TSK A. 3595). Filiz Çağman describes the manuscript and its paintings, and gives a brief account of the introduction: see Filiz Çağman, "Şehname-i Selim Han ve Minyatürleri," *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı* 5 (1972–73): 411–42. Çağman also published the two archival documents relating to the project: İstanbul Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (hereafter IBOA), Kamil Kepeci Ruus Defteri (hereafter KK) no. 238, p. 197, and no. 225,

- p. 321, dated, respectively, 10 Safar 989 (March 17, 1581) and 4 Jumada I 981 (September 1, 1573). Zeren Tanındı also gives a summary of the preface, based on Çağman's article: see Tanındı, "Manuscript Production."
9. As this article was going to press, I found yet another draft of the manuscript in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSK Y.Y. 1203). This must be the draft that Tahsin Öz had in mind when he mentioned additional sheets in the palace library related to this project: see Tahsin Öz, "Hünername ve Mınyatürleri," *Güzel Sanatlar Mecmuası* 1 (1939): 3–16. Because he did not indicate their shelf marks, it has not been possible until now to locate these sheets. TSK Y.Y. 1203 was known to be related to Lokman's projects, but its contents had not been determined until I compared them with British Library Ms. Or. 7043 (hereafter BL Or. 7043) and Topkapı Palace Museum Library, Ms. R. 1537 (hereafter TSK R. 1537). Consisting of seventy folios, TSK Y.Y. 1203 appears to be the earliest draft of all, and contains only text and blank spaces for illustrations—no instructions or decorations. Based on a brief comparison of the early parts of the text I have determined that this must be the draft on which the British Library volume was based. My conclusion is strengthened by the fact that on fol. 10a of this earliest draft, there is a blank space left for an illustration, which matches, in both shape and location, the first painting in the British Library volume. The odd outline of the space—narrow at the top and wider at the bottom—matches only the British Library image (see fig. 42); the text surrounding the two is also identical. This brings the number of *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* versions to four, but only three are discussed in this article.
  10. TSK R. 1537.
  11. BL Or. 7043.
  12. Çağman, "Şehname-i Selim Han."
  13. See the Appendix for a full list of the subjects of the current and missing illustrations. My close comparison of the drafts reveals that although there were originally 46 illustrations, there are now 39 left in the book. One of the missing images is also reproduced here (fig. 2). The folio numbers correspond to the current folios of the manuscript. All of the illustrations still in the final manuscript (figs. 1–41) are located together after the Appendix, to give the reader a sense of the book as a whole. A detail of figure 1, as well as figure 2, have been reproduced in the text to aid the reader.
  14. Six paintings are missing from the manuscript altogether, and six of the double-page compositions have lost one of their pages. Of these, two are in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston: the left halves of both the accession ceremony of Selim II (MFA 14.693) and the funeral of Selim II (MFA 14.694). The right half of the funeral scene is missing altogether. The funeral scene in the MFA Boston has recently been identified as that of Murad III by Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein in *Le serail ébranlé: Essai sur les morts, dépositions, et avènements des sultans ottomans (XIVe–XIXe siècles)* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), 413, pl. 8, because his name appears in the text above the image. However, upon consulting the complete text of that section in the TSK R. 1537 draft (fols. 129b–130a), one finds that Murad III's name is brought up because his arrival at the capital after his father's death is being discussed. The image is, therefore, of Selim II's funeral, and not that of Murad III.
  15. We do not have an exact date for the beginning of production, but the earliest document related to the manuscript is IBOA, KK no. 225, p. 321, dated 4 Jumada I 981 (September 1, 1573). The beginning of the *Şehnâme* seems to reflect the vizierial line-up of 1571 and earlier, which is another way to date the beginning of the manuscript. Pertev Pasha, who is listed as second vizier, was dismissed soon after the Ottoman defeat at Lepanto in October 1571. See Selaniki Mustafa Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, ed. Mehmet İpşirli, 2 vols. (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1999), 1:84 for Pertev Pasha's dismissal; 1:58–59 for the appointments of Piyale Pasha and Zal Mahmud Pasha as viziers; and 1:15 for the vizierial line-up just before Selim's accession. The introduction, which describes the making of the book, names three scholars: the sultan's tutor Hoca Ataullah, who died in 1571, and the *seyhülislam* Ebussuud Efendi and the historian Ebulfazl Efendi, who both died in 1574. Thus, the project must have begun before 1571.
  16. TSK A. 3595, fols. 1b–2a: *În mukhtaşar-i marghûba va nuska-i maṭbû'a ıst intikhâb shuda az makhzan-i javâhir-i vâridât-i ilâhiyya jihat-i tarşî-i lawḥa-i pur zîb ü bahâ dîbâcha-i shâhnâmâ-i 'aliyya-i pâdishâh-i jannat makân ve shâhinshâh-i 'Adn âshiyân Sulṭân Salîm Khân b. Sulṭân Sulaymân Khân ṭâba şarâhumâ.* (Folio numbers throughout reflect the current positions of the folios in the manuscript, and do not account for the missing pages. The translations and transliterations are all mine.)
  17. TSK A. 3595, fols. 2b–12b: *Dar kârkhâna-yi khayâl-i pur...* See Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 82–121, for literary metaphors used in album prefaces, including that of creation.
  18. The term *pâdişâh-i ma'nevî* (virtual sultan) was used by both Mustafa 'Ali and Peçevi when discussing Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's grand vizierate during the reign of Selim II: see Muştafâ 'Âli, *Kühû'l-aḥbâr*, Süleymaniye Camii Kütüphanesi, Nuruosmaniye Ms. 3409, fol. 125b; and Peçevî, *Târîḥ-i Peçevî*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Enderun Kitabevi, 1980; facsimile of 1281–84 [1864–67] edition), 1:25.
  19. TSK A. 3595, fol. 3a.
  20. TSK A. 3595, fols. 16b–17a: "by order of the treasury of the king of Hüsrev-like country-conquering kings, and the padishah of country-adorning rulers, the most just of the rulers of the world, and in accordance with the verse 'God commands justice and the doing of good' [Qur'an 16:90] sultan, son of sultan, son of sultan Sultan Murad Han, son of Sultan Selim Han (may God make him victorious)."
  21. TSK A. 3595, fol. 23a.
  22. TSK A. 3595, fols. 24a–26b.
  23. The events leading up to Selim's accession are also detailed in Vatin and Veinstein, *Le serail ébranlé*, esp. 107–9, 179–80, 263–65, 281–84, 338–41.
  24. TSK A. 3595, fols. 27a–30a.

25. TSK A. 3595, fol. 30a: *madh-i ahl-i ghazā*.
26. TSK A. 3595, fols. 9a–12b; TSK R. 1537, fols. 9b–13b; BL Or. 7043, fols. 6a–9a. The text is to be found in all three versions, its fullest incarnation being in the unadorned Topkapı copy, as there are pages missing from the final manuscript.
27. Lokman says here that he had composed the *Zafernâme*, which is the verse version of Feridun Ahmed Beg's *Nüzhetü'l-Ahbâr der Sefer-i Sigetvâr* (Joyful Chronicle of the Szigetvâr Campaign), with the encouragement of Ebussuud Efendi. The book is an account of the Szigetvâr campaign, during which Sultan Süleyman died, and his son Selim acceded to the throne.
28. Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i Osmani*, ed. Nuri Akbayar, transcribed from the Ottoman by Seyit Ali Kahraman (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı and Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996–), 439–40. Nev'izade 'Ata'i gives the date as Jumada I 982 (August 18–September 16, 1574); see Nev'izade 'Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ikü'l-Hakâ'ik fi Tekmileti'l-Şakâ'ik*, facsimile with index published by Abdülkadir Özcan as vol. 2 of *Şakaik-i Nu'maniye ve Zeyilleri* (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1989), 183–88.
29. For the architectural patronage of Sokollu Mehmed Pasha and İsmihan Sultan, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 331–68.
30. 'Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ikü'l-Hakâ'ik*, 440–42; Cahid Baltacı, XV–XVI. *Asırlarda Osmanlı Medreseleri* (Istanbul: İrfan Matbaası, 1976), 600; and Abdurrahim Güzel, *Karabaği ve Tehâfütü* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1991), 44.
31. For the Kadirga palace, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 333; and Tülay Artan, "The Kadirga Palace Shrouded by the Mists of Time," *Turcica* 26 (1994): 55–124.
32. TSK A. 3595, fol. 9a.
33. It must be noted, however, that Lokman does not explicitly state whether the artists gathered by Karabaği are the same ones appointed by the grand vizier later on to work on the project. We can no longer assume, therefore, that these portraits are those of Osman, Sinan, and İbrahim Peykeri. Nevertheless, the painting does bear witness to the planning process. Karabaği and Lokman, the principal figures here, are part of the group of authors, of course.
34. Lokman describes what he wrote as "from the pronunciation of the oneness of God (*tawâhîd*) to the beginning of the story (*âghâz-i dâstân*)," in other words, the introductory section. Fol. 10, which would have immediately followed the folio with the painting on it (folio 9) is missing from the finished copy (TSK A. 3595), but the text can be followed from the unadorned draft TSK R. 1537, fol. 10a.
35. TSK A. 3595, fol. 9b: *Numûna-i taşvir-i naqqâshrâ dar muqâbala-i nazar-i sharîf âvurda*. The names of Sinan and Osman are confirmed by the archival documentation on the manuscript, which will be discussed below. Osman's name appears in relation to a number of illustrated histories from the last quarter of the sixteenth century; Sinan was appointed as a *shâhnâme* writer (*şehnâme-nüvis*) in 1569 (IBOA, KK 1767, p. 28b), and also worked on the first volume of the *Hünernâme* (TSK H. 1523). Thus, his 1569 appointment was not a guarantee of permanent work, nor was his dismissal from the *Şehnâme-i Selim Hân* project a sign that he had been completely removed from the service of the *şehnâmecî*.
36. TSK R. 1537, fols. 10a-b: *Bi-timşâl-i ân ki khud bi-sa'âdat dar kushk-i 'adl va maqarr-i khilâfat ki bi-sudda-i şaniyya mâ fawq-i divânkhâna-i vuzarâ-i farkhunda ârâst mustaqarr gashta va az darîcha-i 'aql ki murâd az ân bi-iştîlâh-i Rûm va Yûnân qafas-i mushabbak-i zarrîn panjara-i sarây-i kâmkârist bi-nazar-i marhamat mutavajjih-i muhimmât-i dîn va dawlat shuda va gûsh-i hûshfarâ maşlahat-i mulk va millat dâshta. Va dar tâq-i ayvân-i dâr ul-'adl-i guzîn-i vuzarâ nishîn shakl gûya mişâl-i mushâbih kurra-i zamîn afrâkhhta va dar muhâqq-i vasat-i ân dâ'ira-i tûlânî chûn khâtam-i vizârat-i sultânî ta'bîr namûda.*
37. Necipoğlu thoroughly analyzes the physical and symbolic features of the Imperial Council Hall and the Tower of Justice, incorporating numerous contemporary visual and verbal descriptions to support her insightful interpretation: Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power*, 78–86.
38. *Ibid.*, 82–83.
39. TSK A. 3595 fol. 10a: *Juzvî az dîbâcha-i marqûma bâ miqdârî az manzûma bi-dast-i şâhib-i dawlatî az khâşş bi-tarîqa-i shafâqat va ikhtîşâş bi-pâya-i sarîr-i 'alam...ibrâz karda.*
40. TSK A. 3595, fol. 10a: *Tâ ki bi-amr-i 'âlî manzûr-i anzâr-i mumayyizân-i sâmi gashta.*
41. 'Atâ'î, *Hadâ'ikü'l-Hakâ'ik*, 188–90. He had written a sequel to his father's masterpiece, and was the author of another Ottoman history, composed in Ottoman Turkish. He also translated a number of works from Persian to Ottoman Turkish, and wrote poetry in three languages. After having served for thirty-three years as *defterdar* (finance director) and being appointed twice as *baş defterdar* (chief financial officer), he died in November 1574.
42. TSK R. 1537, fols. 11a–b: *Tâ ân ki duvvum bâra 'alâniyan asbâb-i ibrâz ajzâ-i mazkûra-râ mukammal va murattab sâkhhta ... va shâhnâme-i humâyûn-râ az rûya 'inâyât va banda parvarî bazm-i 'âlî âvurda va bâ muşavvar-i rusûm-i razmhâ-i pîshîna-râ yâd kunan majlis-i muşavvar-i divân-i humâyûnrâ muqâbala-i nazar-i sharîf dashta va az kamâl-i tavajjuh dar pîsh-i dast-i lutfash bi-sharâ'it-i ta'zîm va tashrîf guzâshta. Va bayt-i munâsib-râ ki bi-khatt-i ta'liq navashta bûdand barkhânda va har yakî-râ bar targhib-i gharîb va tahsîn-i dilfirîb mayl va mubâdarat farmûda ... juzvî chand dar qit'a numâyân az musvadda bi-bayâz bi-mûjib-i ishârat-i mustavjib ul-bashârât-i 'âlî janâb-i âşaf makân-i 'âlîshân...*
43. TSK A. 3595, fol. 13a.
44. TSK A. 3595, fol. 13a: *Shud ahvâl-i man 'arz-i sultân-i dîn.*
45. Such a vision of patronage, where Lokman's compositions are discussed in courtly or intellectual group settings, also finds a parallel in the model of poetic patronage put forth by Walter Andrews and Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).
46. The illustrations of BL Or. 7043 are on fols. 7b, 14a, 15a, 15b, 16a, 16b (two scenes), 17a, and 24b.

47. The folio size is 43.5 x 27 cm, compared to the 34.3 x 23.6 cm of the final manuscript, and the 33.3 x 22.5 cm pages of the Topkapı draft.
48. These discrepancies occurred not because pages were lost or taken out over time as with the missing folios from the final copy, but are rather the result of details that were simply not included. The text flows from one page to the next with no indication of missing pages.
49. BL Or. 7043, fol. 7b.
50. BL Or. 7043, fol. 8a, and TSK R. 1537, fol. 11b: *Juzvī chand dar qit'a numāyān az musvadda bi-bayāz bi-mūjib-i ishārāt-i mustavjib ul-bashārāt-i 'ālī janāb-i āsaf makān-i 'ālīshān ... bi-vasīla-i kāfī va vāsīta-i shāfi muqarrib-i khidmāt-i ḥazrat-i pādīshāh-i jihān madārī ... Siyāvush sar-i mirākḥūr ūst / Bi-khidmat b'isṭabl ma'mūr ūst tahniyya-i bahiyya ibrāz namūda.*
51. TSK R. 1537, fol. 11a: *Juzvī az dibācha-i marqūma bā miqdārī az manzūma.*
52. TSK A. 3595, fols. 12a–16a, TSK R. 1537 fols. 13b–15b. The Topkapı copies also contain a second introduction, which praises the Prophet Muhammad and his family, and moves into a discussion of spirituality and the composition of poetry. By mentioning the names of Jami, 'Ali Shir Neva'i, Hatifi, and Firdawsi, Lokman associates himself with the ranks of great poets and statesmen. This second introduction seems to be an attempt on his part to contextualize his work within the pantheon of the great poets and present himself as their heir. The praise of the Prophet Muhammad's life might be understood as part of the same attempt at self-aggrandizement: Lokman's family also claimed descent from the Prophet's family, hence the title "Seyyid" in Lokman's name.
53. There are also a number of lines that were crossed out on this draft and changed in marginal notations. Both of the other two copies contain the changed versions of these lines.
54. TSK R. 1537, fols. 10a–b, and BL Or. 7043, fols. 7a–b: *Va ustād naqqāsh dar muqābala-i qabāq va tīr andāzī ki qā'ida-i khāṣṣa-i shāhān-i Īrān va Tūrān va idmān-i 'amma-i 'āma-i sipāhiyān-i Rūm va Yūnānist va qānūn-i in pādīshāhān-i 'ālīshān dar har ṣan'at va hunar chūnānki shāyasta-i sīrat-i shāhinshāhist khālī az khudfurūsh va khudnumāyī bi-mūjib-i rasm-i ma'hūd va in mas'ūd numūna az nawk-i qalam-i mūyī shikāf khud āvurda va šifat-i kamāndārī-i ḥazrat-i khudāvandīgār-i salīm ul-vukārrā mashkash sākhata bi-timṣāl-i ān ki khud bi-sa'adat dar kūshk-i 'adl va maqarr-i khilāfat ki bi-sudda-i ṣaniyya mā-fawq-i dīvānkhāna-i vuzarā-i farkhunda ārāst mustaqarr gashta va az darīcha-i 'aql ki murād az ān bi-iṣṭilāḥ-i Rūm va Yūnān qafas-i mushabbak-i zarrīn panjara-i sarāy-i kāmkārist bi-nazar-i marḥamat mutavajjih-i muhimmāt-i dīn va dawlat shuda va gūsh-i hūshfarā maṣlaḥat-i mulk u millat dāshta. Va dar ta'līq-i ayyān-i dār ul-'adl-i guzīn-i vuzarā nishīn shakl-i gūya miṣāl-i mushābih-i kurra-i zamīn afrākhta va dar muḥāqq-i vasat-i ān dā'ira-i ṭūlānī chūn khātam-i vizārat-i sulṭānī ta'bīr namūda.*
55. BL Or. 7043, fol. 7b: *Khadang-i kamānash bar khiṣm az kamīn / Guzāshta chū ḥukmash az rū-yi zamīn.*
56. The titles of the sections are as follows: fol. 22a *Āghāz-i dastān*; fol. 23a *Nāma-i humāyūn bi-qirāl-i Bech*; fol. 24a *Javāb-i nāma-i humāyūn az qirāl-i Bech*; fol. 24b *Ziyārat-i ḥazrat-i khudāvandīgār bi-mazārāt-i sharīfa* (this section contains an illustration of Süleyman visiting the tomb of Eyub el-Ensari); fol. 27b *Tavajjuh-i humāyūn bi-safar-i zafar-maqrūn.*
57. For an analysis of these tensions, see Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Āli* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 41–70.
58. Lokman praises Sokollu as the "shadow of the shadow," referring no doubt to the title often used for Ottoman sultans, "shadow of God on earth." He is lauded as the upholder of the faith, the conqueror of Temesvár, guarantor of peace at Nakhchevan, and the defeater of the sedition of Bayezid, referring thus to the services he had rendered the Ottoman dynasty throughout his career. The conquest of the castle of Temesvar is discussed in the *Futūḥāt-i jamīla* (Admirable Conquests, TSK H. 1592), which is an excerpt from the *Süleymānnāme* (TSK H. 1517). This manuscript describes the 1551 conquest of the castles of Timisoara, Pecs, and Lipva by the Ottomans, and claims many of the victories for Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, instead of his supervisor, Ahmed Pasha. Additionally, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's circular seal of 1564–65 is on folio 1a of the manuscript. The year on the seal corresponds to the year Sokollu became grand vizier, further strengthening the connection between him and the manuscript. Zeren Tanındı mentions the seal and suggests that Sokollu Mehmed Pasha "played an influential part in the production of this manuscript": Zeren Tanındı, "Cat. no. 286: *Futūḥāt-i jamīla* [Admirable Conquests]," in *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2005), 449. The reference to Nakhchevan relates to the Ottomans' battles on the eastern front, and "the sedition of Bayezid" is an allusion to Selim II's struggle with his brother Bayezid for the throne while Süleyman was still alive. Accused of rebelling against his father, Bayezid was defeated in a battle with Selim in Konya. He then took refuge in Safavid Iran, but was eventually killed, leaving Selim the only potential heir to Süleyman's throne.
59. Selaniki, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, 1:54–57. See also Vatin and Veinstein, *Le serail ébranlé*, esp. 107–9, 179–80, 263–65, 281–84, 338–41. Their account is based mostly on that of Selaniki.
60. BL Or. 7043, fol. 15b: *Zikr-i awṣāf-i vuzarā-i kirām.*
61. In addition to these larger changes, there are a few lines scattered throughout the pages of BL Or. 7043 that were crossed out and rewritten. Not all of them could be deciphered, and the ones that were do not entail major changes of meaning, but rather appear to be improvements in clarity or in rhyme and/or meter.
62. Fols. 50b–51a, for example.

63. The subject matter of these paintings is as follows: Sultan Selim receiving news of his father's death from Sokollu Mehmed Pasha's messenger (fig. 4); the audiences of the individual viziers (figs. 6–11); Iskender Pasha's tent in 'Aqara, facing the rivers (fig. 12); a jackal's descent into the Ottoman camp near Basra (fig. 15); the gifts of the Safavid shah presented to Selim II by the shah's envoy (fig. 16); the Büyükçekmece Bridge (fig. 18); the renovations of the Ka'ba (figs. 28, 52–54); Lala Mustafa Pasha ordering the execution of Venetian commanders (fig. 32); and the conquest of Bastion castle (also known as *Nova Arx*) in Tunisia (fig. 38).
64. *Maḥall-i taṣvīr*. The last six paintings are not indicated thus, but the last section of the draft does not contain many editorial notations.
65. The letter *mīm* is often found at the conclusion of manuscripts, below the colophon, and must have the same connotation in both cases.
66. The two pages of text extend over so many folios in the final copy because two of those pages are taken up with the painting, while the preceding four pages contain only seven lines each, and are illuminated.
67. *Dar pīshkash kashīdan-i qāṣid-i Īrānī bi-pāyūs-i sulṭānī*. The literal translation would be: "The pulling of presents by the Persian envoy at the foot-kissing of the sultan." The "pulling of presents" refers to the almost parade-like format of the presentation of the gifts.
68. *Üçer noḡta ile işāret olman iki beytūn her biri iki ṣahīfenūn ibtidāsına yazıla bā'de maḥall-i taṣvīr*. See fig. 45.
69. *Ve bu saṭūr daḡi iki ṣahīfede yazıla ki iki ṣahīfede üç beyit olur*.
70. Instead of following *Dimaghash tar va khātirash tāza shud / Nishātash fazūntar az andāza shud / Bimālīd-i rukhrā bi-pā-yi sarīr / Ki shud nāma-i ibrāz-i shāh az mushīr*, the text now follows: *Shāhīnshāh-i ishārat bi-taḥsīn kunān / Shud āhista qāṣid bi-bīrūn ravān / Kashīdand bavvābhā pīshkash / Zi har jīns-i maqbūl-i zībā va khush / Taḥsīn muṣahhab kalām-i qadīm / Bī jīld-i muraṣṣā' bi qadr-i 'azīm / Kitābhā-i maqbūl va shāhnāma-hā / Navashta bi-tartīb va sankārḥā*.
71. BL Or. 7043 fol. 15a; TSK R. 1537, fols. 25a–b; TSK A. 3595, fol. 27a.
72. The same is true of the Cyprus scene.
73. *Cüz başıdur, Mūsā'dan ikinci cüzūn cedveli gelmemişdür buyrıla*.
74. *Cüz tamāmdur*.
75. *Teslīm-i kāḡid*.
76. The term *kitābet* could also mean heading, but there is no section heading next to the inscription, or in the part of the final manuscript that corresponds to these verses.
77. *Maḥall-i taṣvīr bir ṣahīfe*.
78. In some incarnations, the word seems to end with an *alif*, as on folio 102a, and the first "tooth" after the letter *ç* (which does not always have its dots) seems tall enough to be a *lām*.
79. *Bu ṣahīfe yedi saṭūr çust* (or HLSA?) *yazılır*.
80. Öz, "Hünername ve Minyatürleri," also discusses the use of the shorthand letters *ş* and *h* for the word *taṣḥīh*.
81. See Emine Fetvacı, "Office of the Ottoman Court Historian," in *Studies on Istanbul and Beyond: The Freely Papers*, ed. Robert Ousterhout (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum Publications, 2007), 7–21.
82. IBOA, KK no. 238, p. 197, from 10 Safar 989 (March 17, 1581) dates to the year the manuscript was completed and grants raises to the *şehnāme*ci Lokman, the artists Osman and 'Ali, and three other unnamed contributors, a scribe, an artist, and a binder, in appreciation of their work on the project. IBOA, KK no. 225, p. 321, dated 4 Jumada I 981 (September 1, 1573), states that the scribe Sinan was dismissed and divides his salary among the others working on the manuscript. Both are discussed by Çağman, "Şehname-i Selim Han," 415–17.
83. IBOA, KK no. 225, p. 321; and Çağman, "Şehname-i Selim Han," 415–17.
84. *Khayma afrākhṭan-i sardār dar muqābala-i anhār-i 'Aqāra*.
85. *Rasīdan-i sipahdār bi-iqlīm-i dushmān va khayma afrākhṭan dar muqābala-i 'Aqāra*.
86. TSK R. 1537, fol. 36a: *Sipahdār*.
87. TSK R. 1537, fol. 36a: *Khayma afrākhṭan-i sipahdār dar muqābala-i 'Aqāra*.
88. TSK R. 1537, fol. 35a: *Āḡāhī yāftan-i sar lashkar-i kāmkar bi daf-i ā'dā-yi khāksār*, replaced with: *Āḡāhī-i sardār bi-tadārik-i daf-i ashrār*.
89. TSK R. 1537, fol. 83a: *Īlām-i hāl bi-sipahdārān-i 'asākīr-i manṣūra bi-safar-i Qibris*; TSK A. 3595, fol. 100a now reads: *Īlām-i hāl bi-jam'iyat-i sipāh-i muṣaffar farrukh-fāl*.
90. TSK A. 3595, fol. 63b: *Khabardār-i katkhudā az tuḡhyān-i ḥākīm-i Tūnus ve 'arż kardanash bi-dargāh-i 'ālī* was changed in TSK R. 1537, fol. 53a, to: *Vurūd-i farmān-i humāyūn bi-Mīrmīrān-i Jazāyir (jihat-i [crossed off]) bi-fath-i Tūnus*.
91. TSK R. 1537, fol. 23b.
92. For the bridge and aqueducts, TSK R. 1537, fols. 45b–46a; for the Ka'ba, TSK R. 1537, fols. 78b and 79b. The Selimiye Mosque was already a part of the original draft, and was not further elaborated upon in the margins. For an analysis of these monuments, see Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 71–72, 167–69, 238–56.
93. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 71.
94. TSK R. 1537, fols. 78a–79b; TSK A. 3595, fols. 92b–96b.
95. Necipoğlu, *Age of Sinan*, 189–91.
96. Necipoğlu discusses the details of these renovations on the basis of archival documents and imperial decrees: *ibid.*, 167–68.
97. Necipoğlu states that the domes were completed in 1576–77, during the reign of Selim II's son, Murad III: *ibid.*, 168.
98. Necipoğlu discusses how the original renovation plan called for the use of wood, which had to be diverted to build new ships for the navy after Lepanto; hence, renovations were completed using stone and other materials: *ibid.*, 167–68.
99. *Chū bā kunya jūyī zamīr-i frank / Kashīdand jarm az tanash chūn palang / Pur azgāh kardand ān jarmrā / Ki bāshad chūnīn barast maḡar ravā*.
100. TSK R. 1537, fol. 114a.



## UNDER THE PEACOCK THRONE: CARPETS, FELTS, AND SILKS IN PERSIAN PAINTING, 1736–1834

The status and use of carpets in Iran in the century following the end of the Safavid age, in 1722, have not been altogether clear, partly because this period in Iran's history has not been properly covered or well understood. Due to the era's complicated political situation, among other factors, the arts received inadequate attention.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, few scholars were aware of the carpet weaving tradition of this long period. While the Safavids (1501–1722) were directly involved with the carpet industry—setting up workshops and using carpets in their palaces<sup>2</sup>—little is known about how their successors dealt with it. The present study addresses an aspect of carpet history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely, the presence and use of carpets and related floor coverings in royal Persian paintings from the Afsharid (1736–96) and Zand (1760–93) periods, as well as the reigns of the first two Qajar monarchs (1785–1834).<sup>3</sup>

It has recently been shown that carpet weaving in Iran continued throughout these years and did not decline as was previously believed.<sup>4</sup> Even though it was primarily a rural craft practiced at the folk level, fine carpets were nonetheless woven in professional ateliers (*kārkhāna*) in urban centers. Furthermore, they are repeatedly mentioned in historical accounts in royal contexts. We thus learn, for instance, of the large number of carpets commissioned by Nadir Shah (r. 1736–47) from Kirman, and of the gold-threaded carpets donated by 'Ali Mardan Khan Zand (r. 1781–85) to the shrines in Iraq. In the Qajar epoch, carpets were omnipresent in the palaces of Fath 'Ali Shah (r. 1797–1834) and some have survived bearing dedicatory inscriptions to Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848–96). Consequently, it is safe to assume that knotted-pile carpets were woven in Iran

during these two centuries and, moreover, were used by members of the various dynasties.<sup>5</sup>

Persian painting in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often depicted royal subjects and scenes at court. A substantial number of textiles are present in these works as elements of furnishing. Afsharid painting has generally been overlooked, due to its scarcity and poor quality, but floor coverings are ubiquitous in the formidable corpus of Zand and Qajar art, a better-studied subject.<sup>6</sup> No carpets have been recognized in these paintings, however, nor has any convincing explanation been given towards identifying the various floor coverings therein. The common assumption is that they are stylized models of textiles that have not survived.

Relying on historical and artistic evidence, including surviving carpets from the period, this paper argues that carpets were indeed represented in Persian painting from the post-Safavid period. Furthermore, the evidence presented below demonstrates that in addition to carpets, Persian artists often depicted two very particular types of floor covering: felts and silks. We will examine the nature and significance of these two types, as well as the impact they had on carpet weaving.

S. G. W. Benjamin, the first American envoy to Iran, remarked upon the reliability of Persian paintings in depicting real objects when he visited the Gulistan Palace and its treasury rooms in 1883. Looking at the early nineteenth-century paintings on the walls, he noted that:

The portraits are evidently characteristic likenesses, while the various court costumes of eighty years ago—silks, embroidered sashes, tunics of Cashmere shawls, and glittering decorations and armor—are represented with a fidelity that give great historic value to the painting.<sup>7</sup>

We may infer that floor coverings were represented with similar precision. Within the wider scope of woven fabrics, therefore, we will focus on these, since other textiles have been covered elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

#### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH

The later Safavid shahs grew lax and their rule was weak and negligent. Regional peace and prosperity aided them but matters came to a head under Shah Sultan Husayn (r. 1694–1722), when in 1722 a band of marauding Afghans under the command of Mahmud Khan Ghilzai captured Isfahan after a brutal siege. The city's fortunes plummeted under the weight of the atrocities that befell its population and its institutions (including its workshops). The Afghan invasion ushered in three-quarters of a century of warfare and general instability, during which the country was rarely unified. Afghan rule was put to an end in 1729 by Nadr Quli, a chieftain from the Afshar tribe. After expelling the Russian and Ottoman armies that had wrested control of the western half of Iran, he had himself crowned as Nadir Shah in 1736, inaugurating a reign that was violent, harsh, and excessively occupied with warfare. His invasion of India in 1739 stands out, mostly for the extraordinary booty that he brought back: it kept the Iranian economy afloat for the rest of the century and had a powerful impact on the Persian decorative arts. Nadir's assassination in 1747 led to a further period of turbulence, with the country eventually splitting into two separate entities. Khurasan, the large northeastern province, formed a buffer state for the revived Afghan kingdom and was ruled by Nadir's blinded grandson, Shahrukh (r. 1748–96). The southern and western provinces, meanwhile, were submerged in tribal wars until they were brought together under the rule of Karim Khan Zand (r. 1760–79), whose reign brought to his domains a measure of respite, allowing arts and crafts to revive, particularly lacquer and oil painting, which flourished in this period. His Zand successors were quickly eclipsed by the rising fortunes of the Qajar tribe, whose leader, Agha Muhammad Khan (r. 1785–97), defeated the last Zand army in 1794 and regained control of Khurasan in 1796, reunifying the country at last. The Qajars would rule Iran until 1925.

Even though Iran's borders contracted in the nineteenth century, its society, economy, and craft production were greatly influenced by events during this period. The reign of Fath 'Ali Shah witnessed a major revival in royal patronage for the arts, mostly painting, and a distinctive Qajar style evolved out of the foundations that took shape under the Zands. Miniature painting revived while the age's greatest artists worked on lacquer painting and the characteristic oil portraits that became the hallmark of Qajar art. These trends continued under Muhammad Shah (r. 1834–48) and Nasir al-Din Shah, during whose reign European cultural and economic penetration reached new heights.<sup>9</sup>

#### A NOTE ON FELTS

It is necessary to explore the characteristics and functions of luxurious felts before embarking on a study of post-Safavid carpets. Felts or *namads* often appear in paintings and lacquer work and are regularly mentioned in contemporary accounts. However, they have hitherto received little attention from scholars, partly because they were not exported<sup>10</sup> and also because not many have survived.<sup>11</sup> There is considerable evidence that they were regarded as an essential element of Iranian furnishing (see below), admired mostly for the comfort they provided. As Benjamin noted: "But nothing in the way of a carpet can be so luxurious and suggestive of comfort as a Persian *namad* an inch thick."<sup>12</sup> Some saw in carpets and *namads* a way for an Iranian to express his wealth. Around 1820, the British artist and traveler Sir Robert Ker Porter observed:

The utmost magnificence of his [an Iranian's] house consists in the number of apartments and extent of the courts; of the rose trees and little fountains in the one, and the fine carpets and nummuds in the other.<sup>13</sup>

Felts were made all over the country; Kirman, Yazd, and Hamadan were noted production centers.

*Namads* were ubiquitous across all sections of Iranian society, i.e., among nomads, in villages and cities, and at the royal court. Relatively coarse and intended primarily for practical comfort rather than decoration, *namads* played a major role in nomadic life, covering

the grounds of most tents and keeping those within warm and dry. In rural communities as well, *namads* were often, but not always, the sole mode of floor covering, since they afforded warmth and insulation. Urban households, on the other hand, commissioned felts from workshops, sometimes ordering them to fit specific rooms.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, the upper classes generally preferred high-quality felts decorated with flowers and geometric figures. Felts were frequently mentioned alongside rugs in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century accounts and the two were often placed together. The *divānkhāna*, or reception room in private mansions, was often “covered with a rich carpet, and handsome numuds,” according to E. S. Waring, an Englishman who visited southern Iran in the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> The British diplomat Sir John MacDonald Kinneir, writing in the same period, stated that all mansions of the nobility were “covered with carpets and numuds.”<sup>16</sup> In an audience with the governor of Bam in 1810, the East India Company officer Henry Pottinger described the chamber as having a “floor covered with rich Persian carpets, and round the walls Numuds, or felts, for sitting upon.”<sup>17</sup>

Felts were to be found at the court as well, as visitors to Iran during Fath ‘Ali Shah’s reign noted. Porter observed that in the audience hall in the Sulaymaniyya Palace, “the whole of its capacious floor was, as usual, covered with carpets and nummuds of the most costly fabric,” while at the Nigaristan Palace, “[t]he carpets and nummuds of these apartments were of the most delicate fabric, and literally, as we moved, we felt we were treading on velvet.”<sup>18</sup> Travelers saw carpets in the provincial courts of Fath ‘Ali Shah’s numerous progeny as well. Although the court of ‘Abbas Mirza, the crown prince, was less ceremonial than that of his father, nonetheless, according to the English visitor George Fowler, it “was richly carpeted, and nummuds were laid on each side, for the visitors to range themselves according to their rank.”<sup>19</sup> Delegates of the British embassy to the court of Husayn ‘Ali Mirza in Shiraz, furthermore, sat “according to rank on nammeds laid close to the wall, over the splendid carpet of this room,” as witnessed by Sir William Ouseley.<sup>20</sup>

The *namads* in all the above cases were made of sheep’s wool that was of a natural brownish hue, although the patterning was done in different colors.<sup>21</sup> Felts had fuzzy or jagged edges and were quite thick, as contemporary observations verify.<sup>22</sup> In all these sectors of society, carpets—if present—would be placed on top of felts because they were more precious and tended to be more decorative. In one notable exception, however, members of the ruling class reclined on a specially made felt called the *takya-namad*, which was made of fine goat’s hair<sup>23</sup> called *kurk* that came in two natural varieties, beige or reddish brown. Historical records, especially from the English and Dutch East India Companies, show that the latter was preferred.<sup>24</sup> Due to their fineness, *takya-namads* were often folded to achieve more padding. Paintings and historical texts indicate, however, that they were also laid out flat on top of carpets that covered the ground.<sup>25</sup> In some cases, a silk or cotton textile would be placed on top.

This practice of layering floor coverings is verified by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century paintings, as well as by contemporary accounts, which reveal how they were arranged in a strict hierarchy, with the coarser fabrics on the bottom and the more precious ones on top. According to Johnson, a traveller who visited Iran in 1817, “[t]he floor, generally of clay, is first covered with mats, then with a carpet, on which are small nummuds, or felts.”<sup>26</sup> The mats would have served as a protective layer to keep the carpets clean and dry without being soiled by clay; they would also have kept the carpets from sliding. J. B. Fraser, the most prolific travel writer of the 1820s and 1830s, noted that “[b]eautiful numuds and rich carpets were spread above Indian mats on the floor.”<sup>27</sup> Felts were commonly placed on top or along the sides of the carpet. It is in this way that we should understand the numerous references to “carpets and numuds” in these accounts. In 1800, the French traveler Olivier observed that these two types of floor coverings were also layered the other way, with the felt beneath the carpet: “Le premier des tapis qu’on met sur le plancher, est un feutre fort épais et assez fort; le second est ce que nous connaissons sous le nom de *tapis de Perse*.”<sup>28</sup> It should be noted that two types of felt were used with carpets: coarse and fine.<sup>29</sup> Olivier’s “strong felt” (*feutre fort*) denotes the former kind, which was placed under the carpet. It was



Fig. 1. Prince reclining on a *takya-namad*. Attributed to Aqa Mirak, Safavid dynasty, ca. 1530. Album page, opaque watercolor, ink and gold on paper. Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase, Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S1986.300. (Photo: courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery)

closer in shape and function to the aforementioned mats than to the soft, fine *namads*, which were smaller and placed above carpets for seating. The finest of this kind were the *takya-namads*.

*Takya-namads* appeared in Persian miniature paintings from the fifteenth century at least, as Timurid



Fig. 2. Picture of a seated nobleman, showing a *takya-namad*. Muhammad Zahad Samarqandi, Safavid dynasty, 1660s. Oil on woven fabric support mounted with decorated paper surrounds backed with eighteenth-century Indian album-page paper, with a smaller piece of calligraphy on the back. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase, F1999.18. (Photo: courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art)

works show.<sup>30</sup> These fine felts were depicted more regularly in Safavid miniatures and were even mentioned by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century observers.<sup>31</sup> An excellent example appears in an early Safavid painting (ca. 1530) depicting a prince reclining on a reddish-brown *takya-namad* folded in four and with what looks like an uneven edge (fig. 1). Delicate patterning appears in the central field and border, beyond which is a broad, plain stripe. The same details of color, pattern, and appearance are repeated on a *takya-namad* in a Safa-

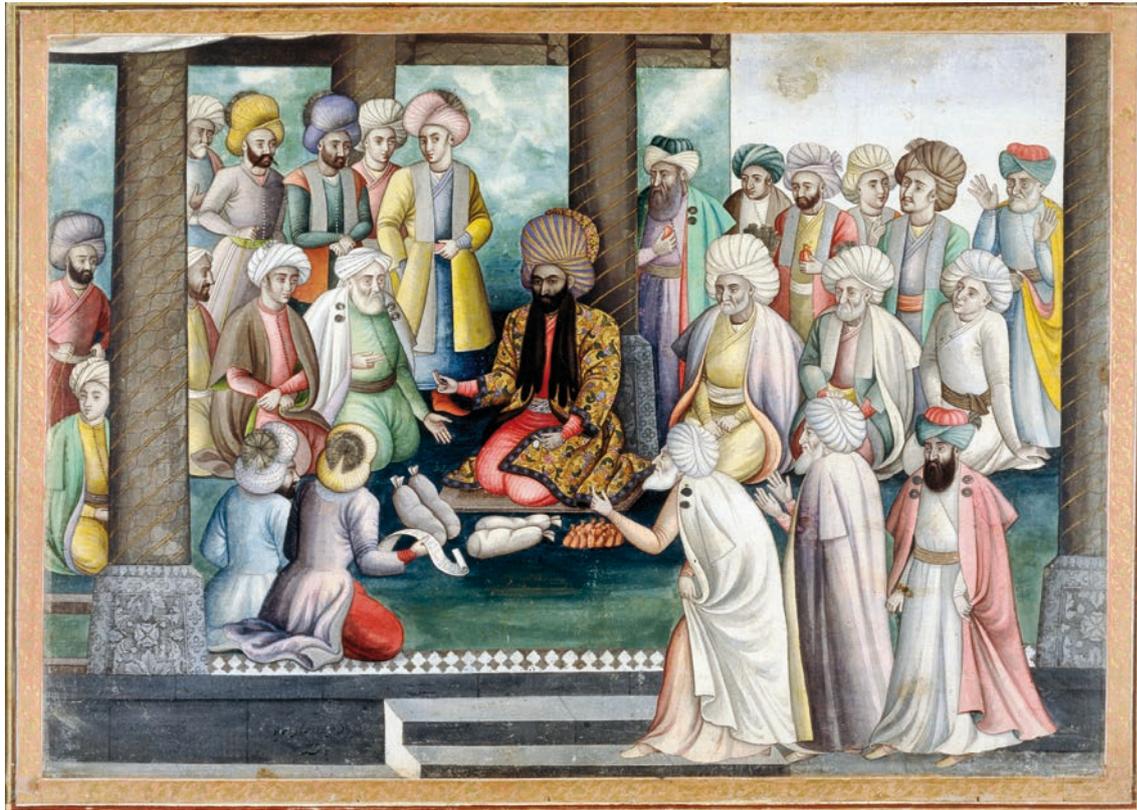


Fig. 3. Distribution of New Year presents by Shah Sultan Husayn. Isfahan, probably 1721. Painting once mounted in an album. London, The British Museum, 1920, 0917.0299. (Photo: © The Trustees of the British Museum)

vid painting from the 1660s showing a seated nobleman (fig. 2). These *kurk* felts do not seem to have changed very much in the intervening years, the only major difference being that the latter was folded in two. However, this does not appear to have been standard practice, as almost all other Safavid depictions show them folded in four. Such was the case, for instance, with a *Shāhnāma* miniature dated 1107 (1696–97),<sup>32</sup> as well as with a very late painting from the waning days of the dynasty, which shows the distribution of *Nawrūz* gifts in 1134 (1722) by Shah Sultan Husayn, who is seated on a beige *takya-namad* with a plain outer stripe (fig. 3).

No examples of *takya-namads* have survived, probably owing to their fragile nature. The few extant *namads* correspond to historical accounts and are consistent with painted representations. These are mostly the products of nineteenth-century commercial workshops. A good example, in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford,

is a Persian felt with a relatively detailed field design and a thick edge (fig. 4); another one can be found in the Ardabil shrine in Iran (fig. 5).<sup>33</sup> These felts have two distinct design elements, found both on surviving examples and on their representations in painting, which are so recurrent they may be considered identifiers of Persian felts, namely, a border pattern consisting of a frame of reciprocal, interlocking finials and a broad outer band in natural-colored wool. It is useful to bear these features in mind because they appear on all felts in post-Safavid painting, occasionally allowing us to identify the type of object depicted. Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that these two characteristics are found on the *takya-namad* in figure 3 as well.

These examples demonstrate that it was possible to achieve fine and detailed patterns in *namads*.<sup>34</sup> Medallion designs appeared on felts such as the one in the Ashmolean; however, all-over patterns were more common.



Fig. 4. Iranian felt. Nineteenth century, 1.77 x 3.50 m. University of Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, EA2002.6. (Photo: courtesy of the Ashmolean Museum)



Fig. 5. Iranian felt. Ardabil Shrine, nineteenth century. (Photo: courtesy of Prof. James Allan, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford)

Lattice designs were especially prevalent, but other patterns involving the repetition of small-scale motifs, such as roundels and geometric ornamentation, also occur.

Having established what *namads* looked like, it becomes possible to identify them in post-Safavid painting. An oil painting of Karim Khan and his kinsmen offers the clearest example (fig. 6): the Zand ruler reclines on a red-brown felt that is folded beneath him. As with subsequent depictions below, it has a broad, plain outer band and a reciprocal finial border, which, together with the color and manner in which it is folded, indicate that it is a *takya-namad* made of *kurk*. Face-up flower heads are visible in the pattern. It now becomes easier to embark on a chronological study of carpets and felts at the various Persian royal courts.

#### CARPETS AND FELTS IN AFSHARID PAINTING

Hardly any evidence survives from the tumultuous Afghan decade of the 1720s, when most of Iran's institutions collapsed. With the paltry documentation we have on the period's weaving industries, it is difficult to attribute any surviving carpets to this brief interlude. Nor does it seem that any paintings were commissioned during this period.

The situation is different for the 1730s and 1740s, which are relatively well documented: Muhammad Kazim Marvi, a contemporary historian, mentions



Fig. 6. Karim Khan Zand and his kinsmen. Attributed to Muhammad Sadiq, Shiraz, after 1779. Oil painting. Private collection. (After *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785–1925*, ed. Layla Diba [New York, 1998], cat. no. 25)

Nadir's various commissions of carpets from Kirman, as well as the presence of carpets in his palaces and military encampments.<sup>35</sup> Owing to the stability of Nadir's rule and the aura surrounding his military achievements, numerous paintings were executed of him and his court. These works are a particularly useful source for this study because of the carpets and textiles depicted in them.

Indeed, Afsharid paintings offer substantial evidence for the type of carpets in fashion at Nadir's court and the manner of their use. A large oil painting in the Victoria & Albert Museum (ca. 1740) shows a bejeweled Nadir Shah kneeling on a red floor covering with a central medallion design (fig. 7). As with felts, surviving carpets tended towards a general preference for all-over patterns of small-scale motifs rather than central medallion patterns; nonetheless, a few medallion carpets have survived.<sup>36</sup> However, it is not clear exactly what type of floor covering is portrayed in this painting: its border resembles Indian textiles of the period (in its repeating vegetal ornamentation, which recalls one of the earliest forms of the *boteh* [paisley] motif), while the range of colors is somewhat limited. Indeed, the item is more likely of Indian origin rather than Persian, as

is suggested by various elements of the composition, indicating that the portrait was completed after Nadir's successful invasion of India. The manner of adorning his costume with jewels, particularly the armbands, was borrowed from Mughal rulers.<sup>37</sup> The diverse studded objects in the picture are reminiscent of the Mughal treasures that Nadir looted from Delhi in 1738, some of which he dispatched to the Russian tsar in 1741,<sup>38</sup> while other pieces came up at auction in 2004.<sup>39</sup>

From roughly the same period, we have a painting showing Nadir receiving an Ottoman envoy, which offers a good example of the Iranian custom of layering different textiles on top of one another (fig. 8). It is especially valuable because it shows the earliest—and perhaps the only—depiction in painting of a carpet pair, i.e., two carpets of the same size, woven with the same pattern. Blossoming shrubs decorate both fields, each of which has a pink border with a floral scroll that runs between yellow guard stripes. The carpets cover the ground longitudinally with their outer stripes placed side by side in the center of the composition. Placed across the top end of both carpets is a long *namad* with a camel-colored ground whose proportions, thickness, ground color, reciprocal border, and wavy edge



Fig. 7. Portrait of Nadir Shah. Oil Painting, ca. 1740. London, © Victoria & Albert Museum, IM.20-1919. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum)

all match the usual characteristics of felts. On top of the *namad* is what seems to be a fine textile, probably of silk or Indian cotton, on which Nadir sits. The custom of layering different textiles with the most precious on top—a tradition described in documentary and visual sources—is also seen in the paintings of the Astarabadi manuscript, discussed below. Those paintings show Nadir sitting on what certainly are fine textiles.

Little of note has survived from the post-Nadiri Afsharid state based in Khurasan. Painting continued, albeit in rougher and far less ambitious forms. Most works mimic late Safavid fashions and are weak in

comparison with contemporaneous Zand production in central and southern Iran; they lack sophistication and generally do not depict carpets. A good example of the relative weakness of post-Nadiri Afsharid painting is a copy of Mirza Muhammad Mahdi Khan Astarabadi's *Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, Nadir's official biography, located in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society in London.<sup>40</sup> It contains five miniatures that are rather crude in style and execution, some of which were left unfinished. They generally feature battle scenes with little attention to detail and, regrettably, no depictions of carpets.<sup>41</sup> However, this is not to say that carpets were not woven in Afsharid Khurasan during the second half of the eighteenth century; numerous references testify to such production,<sup>42</sup> as do a few dozen surviving rugs with a demonstrable Khurasani technique.<sup>43</sup>

Nonetheless, it appears that there were exceptions to the low-quality works typical of Afsharid Khurasan, the principal one being a beautifully written and executed copy of Astarabadi's *Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, dated to 1757.<sup>44</sup> This particular manuscript has three paintings that depict carpets in various audience scenes with the shah, one of which shows Nadir and the defeated Muhammad Shah (r. 1720–48) of Delhi (fig. 9). A blue textile with a generic design of leafy arabesques and flowers covers the enclosed platform, though it is difficult to ascertain exactly what type of covering it is. The textile that Nadir sits on is held down by four weights, called *mīr-i farsh* (roughly, lord of the carpet),<sup>45</sup> indicating that it was a light object and not a knotted-pile carpet.<sup>46</sup> The textile seems to be studded with pearls and jewels (probably rubies and emeralds) jutting out from its surface.

The significance of the painting lies in the carpet in the foreground, which corresponds to a major extant type. Inspection of the field (especially to the right) shows a clear lattice pattern with flowering shrubs, while the border displays a meandering scroll of flowers, alternating in red and blue. Lattice carpets, among the most prevalent in the eighteenth century, were produced in relatively great numbers, with Kirman and Kurdistan among the principal weaving centers.<sup>47</sup> Surviving examples are essentially similar to the image in the 1757 painting, with an all-over network of compartments formed by vegetal scrolls enclosing flowering plants and

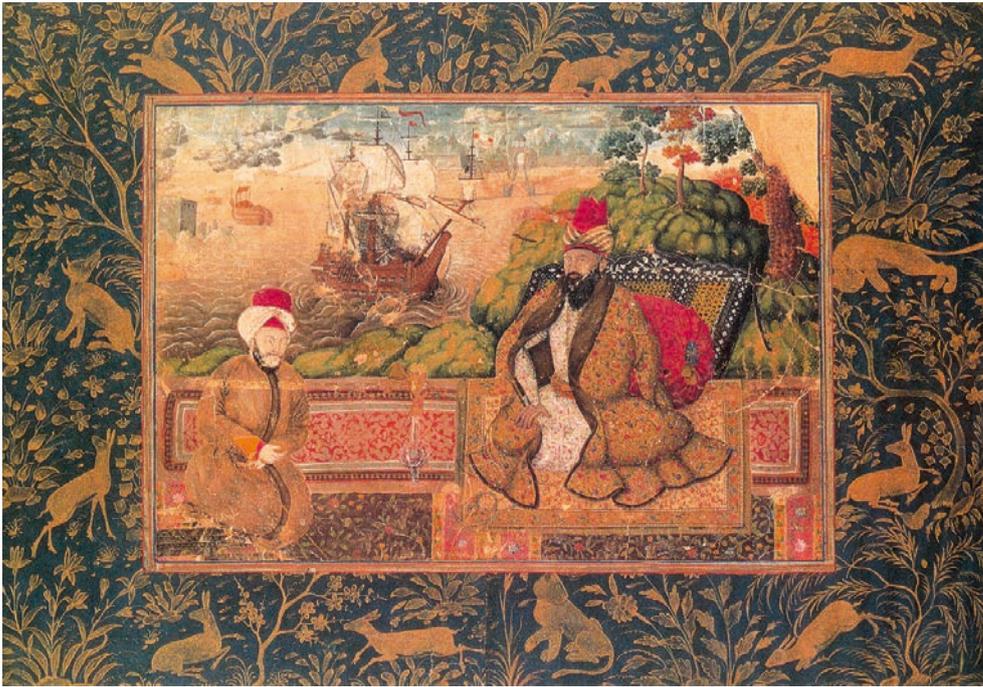


Fig. 8. Nadir Shah receiving an Ottoman envoy. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper, ca. 1740. Private collection. (After *Royal Persian Paintings*, ed. Layla Diba, cat. no. 21)



Fig. 9. Nadir Shah and Muhammad Shah of Delhi. Miniature Painting, 1757. (After Mirza Muhammad Mahdi Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, ed. A. A. Burumand [Tehran, 1991], 330)

bushes. A notable illustration is a Kirman lattice carpet in the Iran Bastan Museum in Tehran, inscribed *'amal-i ustād Muḥammad Sharīf Kirmānī sana 1172* (work of the master Muhammad Sharif Kirmani, in the year 1758–59)—that is, a year after the Astarabadi manuscript was completed.<sup>48</sup> Another, in St. Petersburg, has a very similar pattern without inscriptions (fig. 10).

Another painting in the manuscript shows Nadir being entertained by musicians and dancers in front of an iwan (fig. 11). The two textiles in the painting appear more clearly in another work that shows Nadir at his coronation in Mughan (fig. 12).<sup>49</sup> The recurrence of both types reinforces the idea that they were used on ceremonial occasions. Extending across the picture is a large red carpet whose beige border is filled with a zig-zagging flowered vine. It may have been made in Kirman, as textual evidence indicates that Nadir ordered carpets woven there for this event.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting that large, red carpets appear both in the manuscript and in the oil painting in figure 7. We may infer that the textile on which Nadir reclines is most probably a silk or cotton weaving for three reasons. First of all, there was the custom of layering different textiles. Secondly, the smaller textile is held down by *mīr-i farsh* weights, indicating that it was a light object and not a knotted-pile carpet. Thirdly, the textile seems to be ornamented with precious stones, a feature not associated with carpets or felts.

The scattered evidence for the Afsharid period reveals that large carpets on a predominantly red ground were used in royal audiences; lattice, medallion, and shrub designs were common in these contexts as well. Paintings from this era are also valuable for their depictions of layered floor coverings.

#### CARPETS AND FELTS IN ZAND PAINTING

References to carpet weaving in textual sources continued in the Zand period, occasionally in association with various members of the dynasty. Indeed, carpets and felts feature in many of the artworks produced during their rule. As mentioned earlier, the painting “Karim Khan Zand and His Kinsmen,” for instance, depicts a fine *takya-namad* (fig. 6).



Fig. 10. Lattice-type carpet. Probably Kirman, ca. 1750, 1.52 x 2.16 m. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, VT-1009. (Photo: courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum)

Lacquer work acquired additional prestige in the second half of the eighteenth century as a result of increased patronage, and because it was easier to transport than life-size oil paintings. Some of the foremost artists of the age worked in both media.<sup>51</sup> Lattice carpets frequently appear in lacquer work. A well-executed early example is found on a Zand casket dated 1190 (1776–77), which depicts a gathering of scholars seated on a red lattice rug of a type common at the time.<sup>52</sup> Most depictions of lattice carpets, however, occurred in royal contexts.

Textual and visual sources combine to give us a clear picture of what floor coverings were used in the period between 1781 and 1785, when ‘Ali Murad Khan Zand ruled from Isfahan. The nineteenth-century historian Mirza Fasa’i tells us that the ruler donated rich carpets, woven with gold thread, to the shrine in Najaf,<sup>53</sup>

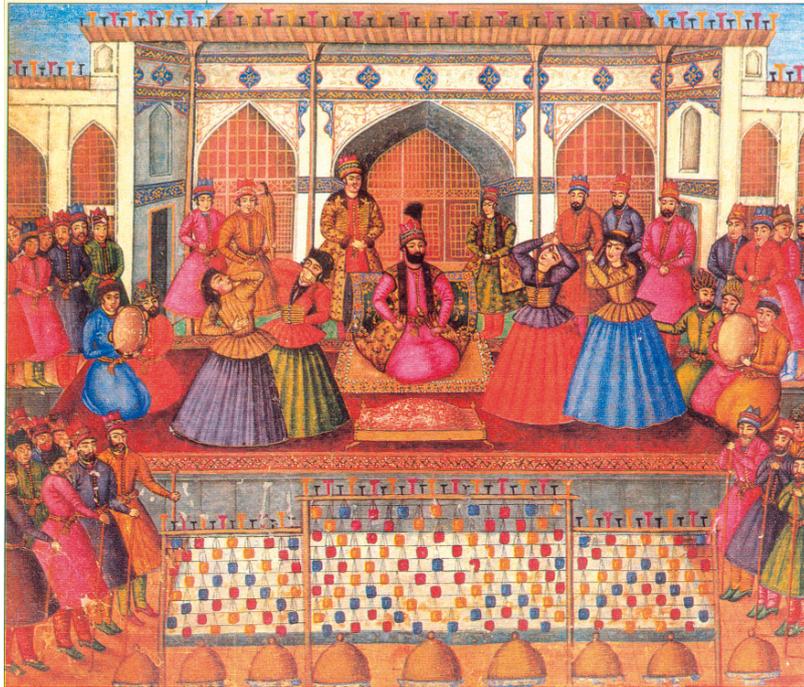


Fig. 11. Entertainments at the court of Nadir Shah. Miniature Painting, 1757. (After Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, 139)



Fig. 12. The coronation of Nadir Shah. Miniature Painting, 1757. (After Astarabadi, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, 271)

while another historian, Mirza Muhammad Kalantar-i Fars says that he also gave some carpets to the Karbala shrine.<sup>54</sup> A painting of ‘Ali Murad in his palace shows what royal furnishings of the time looked like and also puts into context what William Francklin, an East India Company agent, saw in the camp of ‘Ali Murad’s successor, Ja‘far Khan Zand, in 1786. The latter’s tent was “covered with a rich carpet and long felts,” while that of his minister was “covered with a fine Persian carpet, and with long felts, made at Yezd.”<sup>55</sup>

The painting in question, one of a series of three contained in an album in Berlin, depicts this combination of carpet and *namad* quite well. French handwriting in the upper margin of each page indicates that these works were painted in Baghdad in 1785. The drawing is remarkably similar in all three paintings, which share the same elements of composition, differing only in details of dress or landscape. Their style resembles other Zand paintings and the evident familiarity with costume and headgear indicates the hand of a Persian artist. Each of the three paintings shows a contemporary ruler receiving a dignitary. The first one (fig. 13) portrays the Afghan Timur Shah (r. 1773–93). The next (fig. 14) depicts ‘Ali Murad Khan Zand, *Régent Despotique actuel de la Perse*, i.e., the reigning *vakil* or regent.<sup>56</sup> He and the courtier to the right wear typical Zand turbans, which are consistent with contemporary paintings of the period (e.g., fig. 6). The third painting (fig. 15) shows the governor of Baghdad, Sulayman Pasha (r. 1780–1802).

All three paintings depict two types of textile furnishings, with only small variations in each case. With the exception of the border details, the design on the item on which the central figure actually sits is identical in each of the three paintings, with back-to-back arabesque leaves forming a large-scale lattice pattern. The main border in figure 15 has the reciprocal toothed pattern associated with felts. The thickness of the edge of the fabric facing the viewer, its wide, undecorated, camel-colored outer border, and the manner in which it is laid on top of the carpet, all point to this being a high-quality regular felt, although given its size and the lack of folding it was probably not a *takya-namad*.

The lower section of each painting shows a floor covering with an all-over lattice pattern. Each resultant compartment, formed by four leaves laid out in a diamond,



Fig. 13. Timur Shah of Qandahar. Miniature Painting, 1785. Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, B124. (Photo: courtesy of the Museum für Islamische Kunst)

encloses a flower head. The floor coverings in the first two paintings have red fields, while the one in the portrait of Sulayman Pasha has a blue field. This design was popular on late eighteenth-century carpets, as evidenced by various surviving specimens.<sup>57</sup> The positioning of these pieces under the fine felts further supports the idea that they were carpets; moreover, no other Persian floor coverings had similarly ornamented patterns.

Figures 13, 14, and 15 feature lattice *namads*, which were used until at least the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> A book painting from the 1820s demonstrates that lattice patterns were used for both carpets and felts: the ground is blanketed by a large blue carpet bearing a

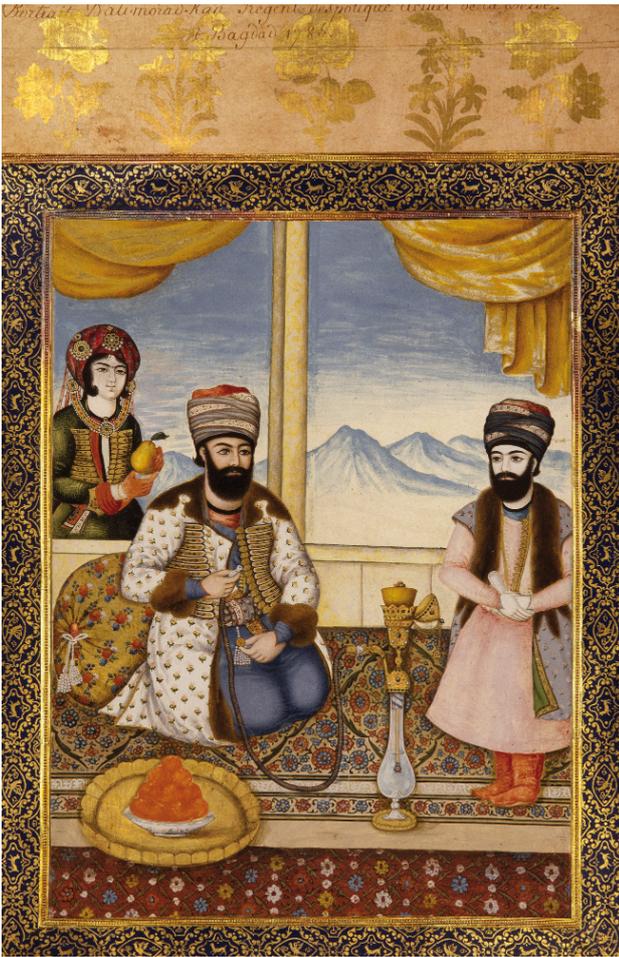


Fig. 14. ‘Ali Murad Khan Zand. Miniature Painting, 1785. Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, B125. (Photo: courtesy of the Museum für Islamische Kunst)



Fig. 15. Sulayman Pasha of Baghdad. Miniature Painting, 1785. Berlin, Museum für Islamische Kunst, B126. (Photo: courtesy of the Museum für Islamische Kunst)

lattice structure of alternately concave and convex lobed compartments, while the far end of the room is covered with a long felt, placed in a way that matches written accounts of how rooms were furnished.<sup>59</sup>

From the late Zand period we have a painting of Shah ‘Abbas II (r. 1642–66) featuring a textile that almost certainly was a carpet (fig. 16). Its central medallion design is mostly associated with pile carpets, a fine example being the Kirman rug (dated 1213 [1798–99]) that was exhibited in the groundbreaking Persian exhibition held in London in 1931.<sup>60</sup> While the field decoration in the painting is simplistic and stylized, the red border—which has a corner solution like almost all urban

Persian carpets—is not.<sup>61</sup> The design, consisting of palmettes between arabesque leaves, corresponds to actual carpet borders from the period, such as those found on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *herāti*-pattern and *harshang*-pattern carpets from Khurasan.<sup>62</sup>

Most of the artistic evidence from the brief Zand epoch illustrates carpets and felts with lattice patterns. The popularity of the design is echoed in the tremendous proportion of lattice rugs that survive from the second half of the eighteenth century. This type, which had earlier appeared in Afsharid painting, was deemed elegant enough to be used at the courts of the Zand rulers, who also favored fine *namads* with lattice patterns.



Fig. 16. Shah 'Abbas II receiving a Mughal ambassador. Attributed to Abu'l Hasan Ghaffari Mustawfi Kashani, Shiraz, ca. 1780–94. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, IRM 93. (After *Royal Persian Paintings*, ed. Layla Diba, cat. no. 23)

In addition, there is evidence that they used carpets with medallion designs. Other Zand paintings, however, exposed a rather different sort of aesthetic, as we shall presently discover.

#### CARPETS AND FELTS IN QAJAR PAINTING

The artistic transition, specifically in painting and carpet weaving, between the Zand and Qajar epochs was smooth. Trends and forms in vogue at the Zand court were adopted by early Qajar rulers, abetted by the close artistic links between both courts. A large number of the painters and artisans who worked under the first two Qajar shahs (1785–1834) were formerly employed by the Zands at Shiraz.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the change of dynasty was reflected in the movement of these people from

one court to another. Zand styles were thus consciously embraced at the Qajar court.

Carpets and felts that appear in Qajar paintings generally correspond to actual woven material from the period. It is intriguing to observe the uniformity between the subject category of the painting and the textiles represented therein. The three main categories that concern us are domestic scenes with female courtiers; formal scenes of the shah, enthroned, holding audience; and ceremonial portraits of the monarch.<sup>64</sup>

A number of Zand and Qajar oil paintings feature carpets with all-over floral scrolls that have hitherto not been seen to match any surviving carpets.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, it is not clear whether the artists were representing actual carpets or merely offering stylized depictions. They probably did both, since some representations actually depict certain surviving carpets quite well. This sug-

gests that the general style of floral tracery popular at the time led to stylized or simplified representations in painting. The fact that these carpets only occur in depictions of female courtiers and entertainers would seem to indicate that specific design elements tended to be associated with certain genres of painting. Fraser provides historical support for the presence of such carpets in these scenes when he says that during the festivities held in Tehran's *maydān* to celebrate a royal wedding, "[a] large square stage [was] covered with carpets and numuds, upon which the dancers and musicians of the king were to exhibit."<sup>66</sup>

The Victoria & Albert Museum has two paintings that exemplify this type (figs. 17 and 18), to which many contemporaneous paintings conform. The carpets in both cases are covered with spiraling vines bearing blossoms and leaves. Lozenge-shaped spaces centered on a flower head appear between sets of four spirals, and four flower heads appear on each circular outline. The arrangement of these motifs links these floor coverings to so-called *mīnā khānī* carpets, which were produced extensively in this period and appear prominently in other paintings. The *mīnā khānī* is an all-over design constructed around three types of flower heads laid out as if on a grid. The pattern is defined by repeating circular outlines that link sets of four flower heads of one type; in each of these circles lies a solitary, tilted flower head of another type surrounded by four small rosettes. Four adjacent circles form a lozenge-shaped space in the center, which is occupied by a single flower head of the third type. Such carpets were woven from at least the second half of the eighteenth century, as is illustrated by an example inscribed with the date 1214 (1799–1800) that sold recently at auction (fig. 19).

One of the best examples of a *mīnā khānī* design appears in an oil painting presented by Sir Gore Ouseley to the Royal Asiatic Society, which he acquired in Iran while serving as British ambassador there between 1810 and 1814 (fig. 20).<sup>67</sup> This is the only surviving painting on one canvas showing figures under multiple arches and it is possible to trace the line along which the two halves were meant to be separated. The work belongs to the same genre of oil paintings depicting female courtiers as do the diverse paintings from the period that feature, in one way or another, *mīnā khānī*-type carpets. The entertainers are sitting on a carpet,



Fig. 17. Female acrobat. Oil Painting, early nineteenth century. London, © Victoria & Albert Museum, 719-1876. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum)

which displays a variant of the *mīnā khānī* design: the three distinct types of flower heads are arranged in a set pattern on, within, and between the design's characteristic circular outlines. The various types of flower



Fig. 18. Female acrobat. Oil Painting, early nineteenth century. London, © Victoria & Albert Museum, 720-1876. (Photo: courtesy of the Victoria & Albert Museum)

heads are marked out in different colors. The main difference with the standard pattern as it appears on surviving rugs is that the flower heads within the circles are shown face up rather than tilted. The circles and intervening lozenges are closer to the actual carpet pattern and less stylized than other painted depictions. The



Fig. 19. *Mīnā khānī*-type carpet. Persian Kurdistan, dated 1214 (1799–1800), 2.04 x 4.97 m. Rippon Boswell & Co., *Antike Teppiche, Flachgewebe, Stickereien, Textilien* (Wiesbaden, 18 November 2006), lot 133. (Photo: courtesy of Rippon Boswell & Co., Wiesbaden)

presence of two subsidiary borders, or “guard stripes,” on either side of the main border reinforces the identification of the covering as a carpet.

This is the clearest example that we have of this type of carpet in a painting. It permits us to explain the nature of the floral-scroll carpets in other Zand and Qajar paintings, which, though similar in form, are presented in a more stylized manner. Other oil paintings, notably landscapes and still lifes, illustrate this point, featuring terraces in outdoor palace scenes, with carpets whose



Fig. 20. Two harem girls on a *mīnā khānī* carpet. Oil painting, ca. 1810. London, The Royal Asiatic Society, 01.002. (Photo: courtesy of the Royal Asiatic Society)

floral scrolls are very elaborate and somewhat chaotically arranged in comparison with the calmly repeating units of the *mīnā khānī*. These landscapes generally feature bowls of fruit and animals such as rabbits or cats but do not depict any human forms.<sup>68</sup>

Another clear representation of a *mīnā khānī* carpet appears in a *Shāhānshāhnāma* manuscript acquired by the British Library in 1816 (fig. 21). It features a female courtier, this time in the presence of Fath ‘Ali Shah. The carpet is depicted quite accurately, in a manner that corresponds to actual *mīnā khānī* rugs from the period. The drawing of the pattern is precise in its arrangement of flower heads, circles, and lozenges. The border pattern appeared on a number of rugs from the period,<sup>69</sup> and the combination of blue border and red field was standard. Finally, the carpet in this miniature has a *kelleh-*

size format corresponding to the majority of surviving city workshop carpets from the period (e.g., fig. 19).<sup>70</sup>

The second category of paintings, which depicts monarchs holding formal audiences, is dominated by lattice patterns that appear on both carpets and *namads*. In fact, the two floor coverings are often presented together, as in figure 14. While domestic scenes featuring women were mostly concentrated in the genre of large oil paintings, those of monarchs and lattice floor coverings occurred more in the media of book painting and lacquerware. Lattice carpets had first appeared in Afsharid paintings (fig. 9) and seem to have been particularly employed in court settings. An excellent example of the ubiquitous presence of lattice floor coverings appears in the front doublure of another book manuscript in the British Library; it features a typical

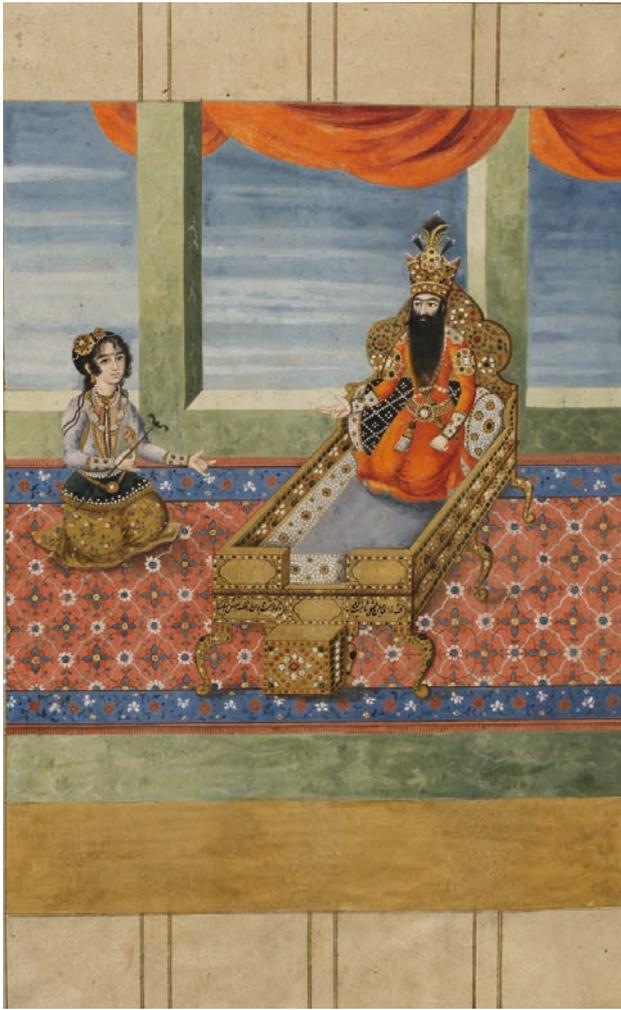


Fig. 21. Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned on a *mīnā khānī* carpet. Miniature Painting, *Shāhānshāhnāma*, ca. 1810. London, British Library, India Office Library, I.O. Islamic Ms. 3442, Ethé 901, fol. 263a. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)



Fig. 22. Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned on a lattice felt and carpet. Lacquer painting, ca. 1820. London, British Library, India Office Library, I.O. Islamic Ms. 3558, front doublure. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

scene that is rendered on several lacquered objects, and in various book paintings, from the reign of Fath 'Ali Shah (fig. 22). The work depicts the shah seated on the Peacock Throne (brought by Nadir from Delhi) and surrounded by some of his numerous sons and attendants. The throne is placed atop a long *namad* with a lattice pattern, identified by its distinctive camel-colored ground, its thick edge, and the characteristic reciprocal-finial border design. The *namad* is in turn placed on a large lattice carpet with a dark field. The scene is

repeated in quite a few small-scale Qajar paintings—to such an extent that the subject and constituent elements hardly change: Fath 'Ali Shah remains on his Peacock Throne wearing his Kayanid crown; his progeny wear either smaller crowns or Qajar-style felt hats; the courtiers sport Zand-style turbans; and lattice patterns appear on both felts and carpets.<sup>71</sup>

The clearest indication that lattice carpets were used at the Qajar court is offered by the valuable account of Sir William Ouseley,<sup>72</sup> the only one to present us

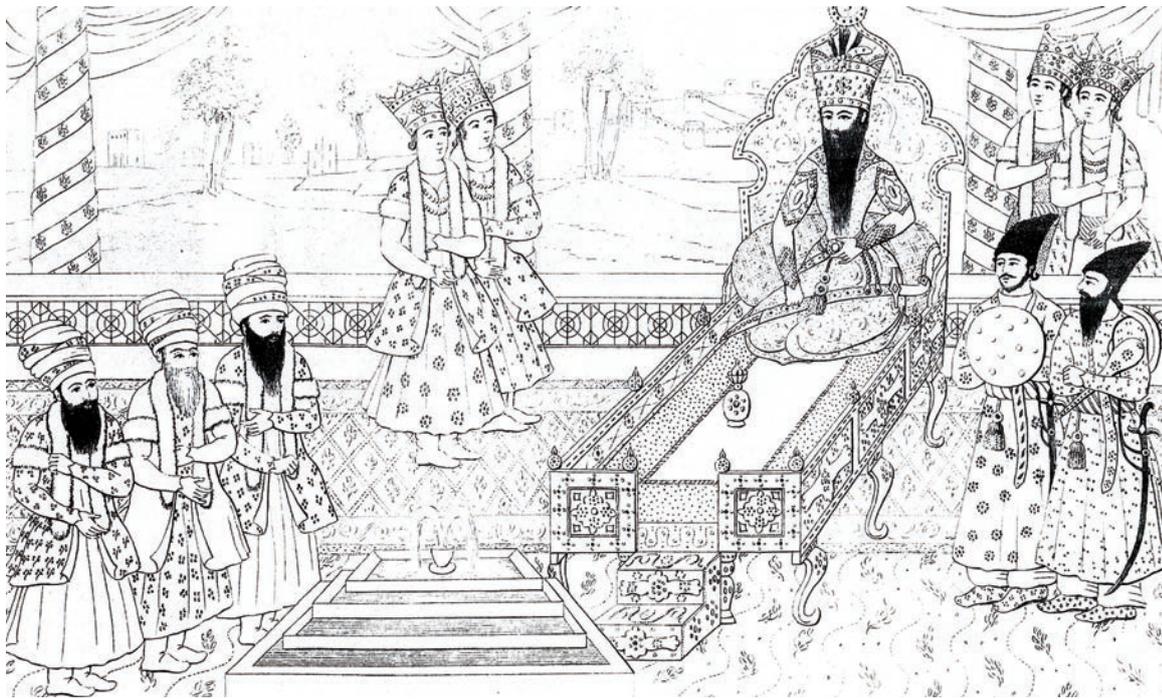


Fig. 23. Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned. Drawing by Sir William Ouseley. (After Sir William Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East* [London, 1823], pl. LXIV)

with a precise image of what royal Qajar carpets looked like. Indeed, its importance stems from its unequivocal confirmation that the paintings and their contents accurately represented real-life royal audiences. During one audience with Fath 'Ali Shah, Ouseley noted: "On the floor is spread such a carpet as we daily saw in the apartments of great men, bordered with one of those *nammeds*...having a colored pattern." The significance of his account lies in an illustration of a similar carpet in his book, the accuracy of which he goes to some length to highlight, stressing that it was "faithfully traced from the original picture of the same size, without the slightest correction." The painting portrays the shah holding audience, with the carpet under his throne (fig. 23). The specific nature of the setting is valuable, since Ouseley claims that such carpets were ubiquitous in "the apartments of great men," by which he meant the court and residences of princes and ministers.<sup>73</sup> The accompanying plate in the book shows what royal carpets looked like: long and narrow (of *kelleh* format), with an allover

design of diamond-shaped lattices. The depiction corresponds to the style of numerous surviving lattice carpets and matches representations in contemporary paintings. Ouseley's mention of felts ("*nammeds*") with "colored patterns" recalls the elaborate felts of figures 13 to 15. Due to his prolonged and intimate acquaintance with the rituals and styles of the royal Qajar court, Ouseley was in a position to observe that carpet depictions in Persian painting faithfully represented the actual rugs that were used at the Persian court. Indeed, he confirms as much when he states that he used to see this specific type of carpet on a "daily" basis. Lattice *namads* also continued to appear in Qajar art, mostly on lacquerware.

The prestige associated with *namads* would manifest itself in the influence they had on carpet weaving, especially in the area between Hamadan and Sarab in western Iran. Carpet weavers in that region copied certain features of felts, specifically the reciprocal border, the plain camel-colored band, the "runner"-shape, and, in

some cases, even the pattern. The migration of design from felts to carpets could have occurred at Hamadan, a major center for *namad* production, later to be imitated elsewhere.<sup>74</sup> This is evident from the lattice designs that appear almost identically on felts<sup>75</sup> and carpets produced in Hamadan in the nineteenth century, both of which have similar fields and borders (fig. 24). It now seems likely that these carpets were originally inspired by the high-profile and prestigious *namads* that appeared in royal paintings.<sup>76</sup>

Lattice carpets appear in other Qajar settings, such as a painting of an amorous princely couple from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, in which a *mīnā khānī* pattern is superimposed on a blue lattice ground (fig. 25). On the one hand, the leaves draw out a lattice network, with a red and blue flower head in each compartment; on the other hand, four such flower heads are linked by a circular outline. Both the circles and the spaces between them contain smaller blue flowers—which in turn represent the conflux of four leaves. Lattice carpets of this type, some of which are dated, have survived. The textile with *boteh* motifs on which the couple reclines is probably a shawl cloth.

The above representations indicate that lattice patterns on carpets with red and blue grounds were popular. The lattice compartments contained floral elements, either centralized flower heads or directional flowering plants. Carpets with lattice patterns are found in Persian art from the mid-eighteenth century and continued to be depicted until the mid-nineteenth century, appearing, for example, in ceremonial settings depicting Nadir and the Zands.

The majority of extant lattice carpets from the period under examination were woven in either Kirman or the northwestern provinces. As established with great certainty by May Beattie, Kirman carpet weaving is identifiable by the so-called Vase technique, characterized by three shoots of weft between rows of knots. The first and third are typically woollen and at high tension, while the second one, at low tension, is normally made of silk or cotton. Warps are markedly displaced and the Persian knot is open to the left.<sup>77</sup> This technique distinguishes Kirman carpets from both the Safavid (1501–1722) and subsequent (1722–1834) periods.<sup>78</sup> Northwestern Persian carpets, a much larger group, all share the Turkish knot and fall into two clusters: village rugs woven



Fig. 24. Lattice-type carpet. Probably Hamadan, mid-nineteenth century, 1.03 x 5.28 m. Sold at Rippon Boswell & Co., *Antike Teppiche, Flachgewebe, Stickereien, Textilien* (Wiesbaden, 23 March 2006), lot 221. (Photo: courtesy of Rippon Boswell & Co., Wiesbaden)

on cotton warps and nomadic rugs woven on woollen warps.

It is more probable that the actual carpets used by the Persian court were woven in Kirman, the city with the longest history of urban workshops, whose carpets were markedly finer than the relatively coarse village rugs of the northwest, owing to the city's professional setup, the high-quality wool found in its vicinity, and the artistic superiority of its designs. Furthermore, we have evidence that Kirman carpets were woven on commission

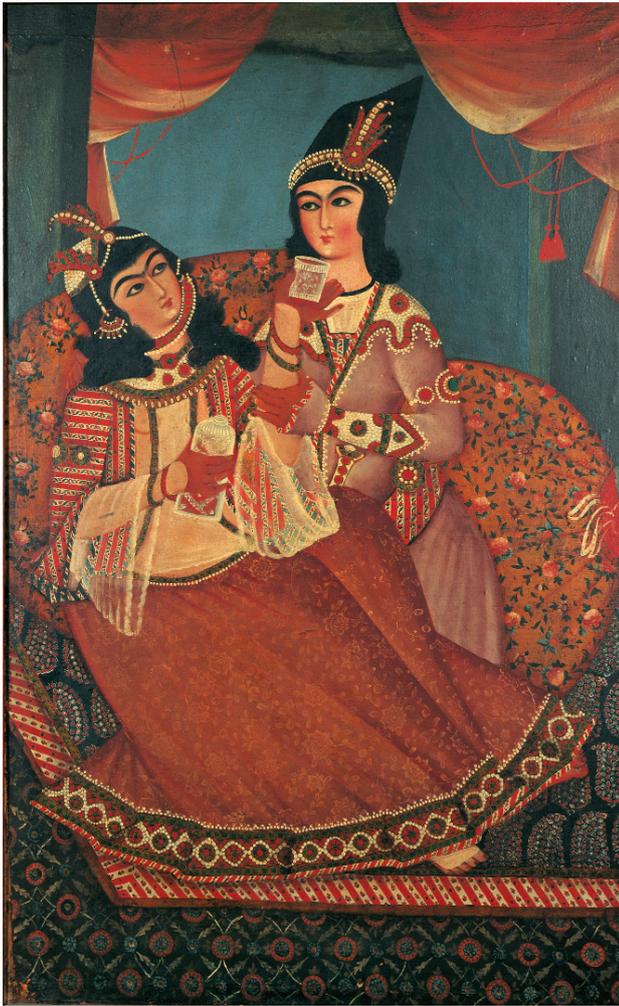


Fig. 25. An amorous couple. Qajar painting, ca. 1840. Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland. (Photo: Peter Horner; Ille 1 © Museum der Kulturen Basel, Switzerland)

by professional master weavers. As noted above, Nadir Shah commissioned rugs from Kirman's workshops on numerous occasions, most notably for his coronation;<sup>79</sup> Nasir al-Din Shah also had carpets woven in Kirman.<sup>80</sup> In the intervening years, it appears that it was customary for the governor of Kirman to send "a great number of camels laden with carpet" as tribute to the Shah for *Nawrūz*, the Persian new year.<sup>81</sup> It would have been unusual for royal palaces to be furnished with the lower-grade lattice carpets woven by villagers and nomads.

When considered together, these factors make it likely, but not conclusive, that royal Persian paintings depicted lattice carpets of the type woven in Kirman.

### THE SILKS OF THE PEACOCK THRONE

Various sources, apart from Ouseley, refer to royal carpets but they do not shed any light on their distinguishing characteristics. A few observers, however, mention "carpets of pearls," which apparently made a great impression on them. These mysterious objects do not correspond to any known type, but the reverent tone in which several authors speak of them suggests they were very highly thought of and thus worth investigating. At first glance, they bring to mind the textiles that appear in some paintings of Nadir Shah (fig. 12).

The Russian official Kotzebue visited Fath 'Ali Shah's palace in 1817 and saw "a carpet worked with genuine pearls, and upon [it] lay a round cushion." In the jewel chamber, he was shown many royal treasures, which included "the beautiful carpet worked with pearls [and] the cushion that belonged to it."<sup>82</sup> Two other travelers mention these textiles in the context of the Peacock Throne. Isabella Bird noted the pearls while describing the throne:

It is entirely of gold enamel, and the back is encrusted with rubies and diamonds. Its priceless carpet has a broad border, the white arabesque pattern of which is formed of pearls closely stitched.<sup>83</sup>

Benjamin's initial observation of how the Shah "seats himself on the carpet of pearls before the peacock throne" was later expanded to yield more detail: "The finest silk rug I have seen was the one spread before the famous peacock throne in the audience hall of the Shah, inwoven with pearls."<sup>84</sup> It seems that these textiles were made of silk; however, there is no evidence in sources from the early Qajar period for silk knotted-pile carpets bearing pearls. The objects could have been either knotted-pile carpets with pearls woven onto them,<sup>85</sup> or pearl-studded silk textiles instead, in which case the term "carpet" was used loosely. Although there is no evidence from either textual accounts or extant carpets suggesting that pearls or gemstones were incorporated into knotted-pile weaving, the consistent use of the



Fig. 26. Portrait of Fath 'Ali Shah seated against a jewelled bolster on a pearl-edged rug. Attributed to Mihr 'Ali, Qajar, Iran, ca. 1805. (Photo: courtesy of Sotheby's Picture Library)

term “carpet” by sources that, without fail, reserved it to denote the knotted-pile product leaves the possibility open that these items may in fact have been real carpets.<sup>86</sup> In all cases, these items had a wide white border woven with genuine pearls, which made them easy to identify in paintings.

Royal paintings seem always to depict these objects in the presence of Fath 'Ali Shah (fig. 26) and the manner



Fig. 27. Fath 'Ali Shah seated on a “pearl” carpet. Signed Mihr 'Ali, dated 1229 (1813–14). Oil painting. St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, VT-1108. (Photo: courtesy of The State Hermitage Museum)

in which they were represented matches the written accounts to a remarkable extent. The silks were recognizable by their distinctive borders, which were “broad” and “stitched” with pearls, as Bird noted. They were



Fig. 28. Fath 'Ali Shah seated on a "pearl" carpet and a *takya-namad*. Oil painting, signed Mirza Baba, dated 1213 (1798–99). London, British Library, Oriental and India Office Library Collections, Foster 116. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

most often depicted with a plain-colored field, principally red or blue.<sup>87</sup> At times the field was patterned, as in the case of the red textile in a large painting of Fath 'Ali Shah by Mihr 'Ali in St. Petersburg (fig. 27). Paintings confirm Kotzebue's statement that each pearl-encrusted silk had a matching cushion, studded and designed similarly, which would be placed at the further end of the textile for the Shah to recline against in the traditional manner of Turkic rulers.

These textiles were used in two ways. They were frequently placed on the throne itself, as demonstrated by

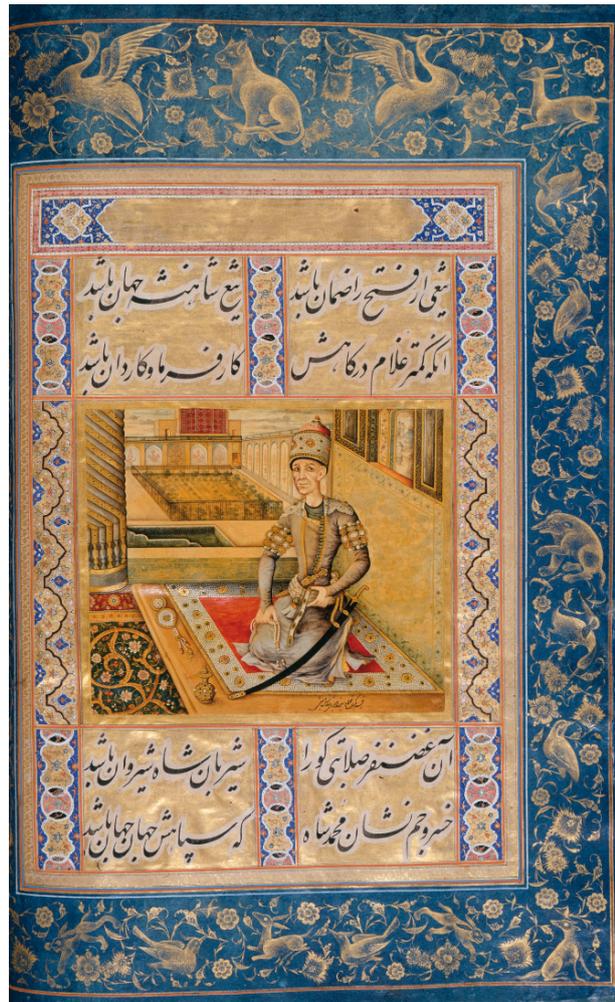


Fig. 29. Agha Muhammad Shah seated on a "pearl" carpet and a *takya-namad*, dated 1216 (1802). Miniature painting, signed Mirza Baba, from *Dīvān-i Khāqān*, 1802, by Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar and Muhammad Mahdi al-Tihrani, fol. 13. Windsor Castle, The Royal Collection, © 2009 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. (Photo: courtesy of Windsor Castle)

the above accounts and many paintings from the period, e.g., figures 21 and 22. In fact, these silks are discernible in almost any book or lacquered painting depicting Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned, including all those mentioned in the references below.

The other method of using these textiles involved placing them on top of carpets and *namads*, as seen in two paintings by Mirza Baba. The majestic painting in figure 28 illustrates this perfectly: a red silk is placed

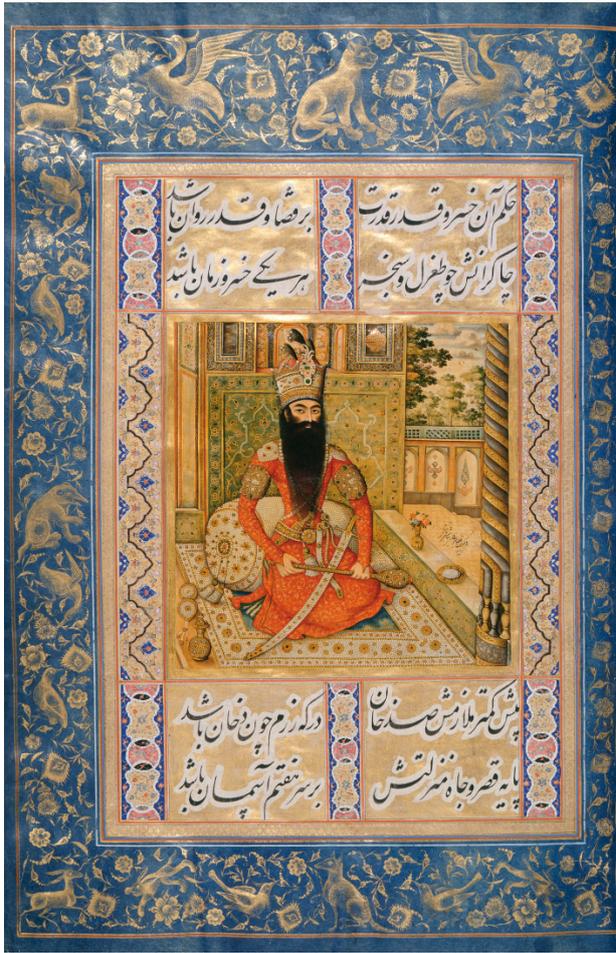


Fig. 30. Fath 'Ali Shah seated on a "pearl" carpet and a *takya-namad*, dated 1216 (1802). Miniature painting, signed Mirza Baba, from *Dīvān-i Khāqān*, 1802 by Fath 'Ali Shah Qajar and Muhammad Mahdi al-Tihrani, fol. 12v. Windsor Castle, The Royal Collection, © 2009 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. (Photo: courtesy of Windsor Castle)

on top of a *takya-namad*, whose ends are showing; it is folded back on itself, as can be seen in the bottom left corner. The border of reciprocal finials appears just inside the plain-colored outer strip. The habit of layering textiles is also evident in a posthumous painting of Agha Muhammad Shah (fig. 29): a plain red silk with a pearl-encrusted border is placed on a felt, which is folded in half. No patterning can be seen on the felt that lies on top of what appears to be a carpet—which Mirza Baba mistakenly positioned under the pillar. Its blue



Fig. 31. Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned on a lattice carpet. Miniature painting, *Shāhānshāhnāma*, ca. 1810. British Library, London, India Office Library, I.O. Islamic Ms. 3442, Ethé 901, fol. 317b. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

field has a broad, scrolling vine with flowering stems. No similar ones have survived from this time, but such carpets were produced in the Safavid period.<sup>88</sup> It is unlikely that this depiction was the product of the artist's imagination, suggesting that he was portraying either a Safavid carpet or a contemporary type that has not survived. Figure 30, from the same manuscript, shows a similar scene with Fath 'Ali Shah, who is seated on a plain blue silk with a pearl-studded border underneath which is a felt folded in half.

## CONCLUSION

Persian painting is a highly valuable source for the study of material objects, particularly carpets and other floor coverings. Timurid and Safavid paintings are now known to portray these items with a fine degree of precision and detail.<sup>89</sup> A closer look at Afsharid, Zand, and Qajar painting demonstrates that the same applies to later periods. These works frequently depict carpets, often in royal contexts, shedding important light on the function and fashion of such pieces in the Persian courts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We see that lattice carpets were more common than other types in depictions of court scenes, especially those in which the monarch was present. They were essentially associated with formal occasions, a fact confirmed by Sir William Ouseley's precise evidence. Domestic palace scenes with female attendants tended to feature carpets with more floral patterns. The dichotomy is well illustrated by two paintings from the Qajar manuscript in the British Library to which figure 21 belongs. A painting showing Fath 'Ali Shah among princes and ministers depicts a lattice carpet (fig. 31), while another depicts a scene with Fath 'Ali Shah and female courtiers on a *kelleh*-format carpet with an all-over floral scroll design of the type known as the "Shah 'Abbas" or *afshān* pattern, which was related to the *mīnā khānī* (fig. 32).

Paintings are equally instructive about other fine textiles that were common at the Persian court, though less familiar to modern observers. Perhaps the most ubiquitous floor coverings we see in post-Safavid paintings are felts. They were used by the upper echelons of society and some seem to have been very luxurious. Indeed, the highest-quality felts or *takya-namads* were woven with very fine *kurk* and then folded to provide comfortable seating for sovereigns. These observations are complemented by a combination of visual and written materials that reveal for the first time the finest and most lavish of royal textiles, namely, the silks studded with pearls on which the shah would sit during formal audiences. Their fields were either plain or patterned with small repeating motifs, while their borders were worked with pearls. Such textiles are first seen in depictions of Nadir Shah but are more prevalent in paintings of Fath 'Ali Shah.

Post-Safavid paintings are faithful in depicting the Persian manner of layering textiles according to a set



Fig. 32. Fath 'Ali Shah enthroned on a floral carpet. Miniature painting, *Shāhānshāhnāma*, ca. 1810. British Library, London, India Office Library, I.O. Islamic Ms. 3442, Ethé 901, fol. 339a. (Photo: courtesy of the British Library)

hierarchy, with the finest textiles placed on top. The basic sequence used at court was: felt, carpet, *takya-namad*, silk. This layering is mentioned by the sources and is faithfully adhered to in representations. The paintings also confirm what we read in historical sources: carpets and other textiles were the most basic as well as the most prominent items of furnishing in Iran—particularly at court. They were often placed in tents, including military camps (figs. 7 and 12), or in the open (fig. 8), and in palaces they were visible both indoors (figs. 14 and 21) and outdoors (figs. 9 and 11).

The paintings of the post-Safavid period have traditionally been organized according to genre: book, lacquer, and oil. In addition, we may classify them by their subject. This division highlights an interesting feature of Persian painting, namely, that different floor coverings were used for different occasions. Domestic scenes consistently portrayed *mīnā khānī*-type rugs, while lattice carpets and felts appeared in pictures of royal audiences; fine silks with pearls were present in scenes where the shah was enthroned, or in his individual portraits. All in all, this diversity reflects the rich nature of the paintings and of the luxurious textiles depicted in them.

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### NOTES

1. The trend has shifted slightly in the past decade with a handful of events dedicated to Qajar art, such as the 1998 Brooklyn Museum exhibition *Royal Persian Paintings 1785–1925*, curated by Layla Diba. Shortly afterwards, the British Institute of Persian Studies and the School of African and Oriental Studies hosted a conference in London on “The Qajar Epoch: Arts & Architecture.” Recent years have witnessed a parallel increase in the profile and value of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Persian objects at auction and in the marketplace.
2. The Safavids, primarily Shah ‘Abbas (r. 1587–1629), set up royal carpet workshops in the country, the most prominent among them being that of Isfahan, which the seventeenth-century French travelers Tavernier and Chardin described: Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Les six voyages de Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, chevalier baron d’Aubonne, qu’il a fait en Turquie, en Perse, et aux Indes*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1681), 1:397, 589; Jean Chardin, *Voyages du chevalier Chardin en Perse, et autres lieux de l’Orient, 1664–77*, 8 vols. (Amsterdam, 1711), 4:95. Father Krusinski, a Jesuit who lived in Isfahan in the early eighteenth century, says that the royal carpet workshop, which made rugs for royal consumption, was centrally located between the *Chihil Sutūn* (forty pillars) and the *Maydān-i Shāh* (shah’s square). Krusinski also states that Shah ‘Abbas set up commercial carpet workshops in Shirvan, Qarabagh, Kashan, Khurasan, and Astarabad, notably instructing the *kārkhāna* (atelier) in each province to weave “in its own manner”: Tadeusz Mankowski, “Some Documents from Polish Sources Relating to Carpet Making in the Time of Shah Abbas I,” in *A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, ed. Arthur U. Pope and Phyllis Ackerman (London, 1938), 2431. Carpets were ubiquitous in Safavid palaces. John Cartwright, a Protestant preacher who traveled in Iran during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas, said that the royal palace in Qazvin was “spread with most fine carpets, woven and tissue with silk and gold, all ensigns and monuments of the Persian greatness.” The palace in Isfahan, moreover, was “spread [with] carpets wrought with silk and gold”: John Cartwright, “The Preacher’s Travels,” in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels, Compiled from the Curious and Valuable Library of the Late Earl of Oxford*, comp. Thomas Osborne (London, 1745), 730, 734. Carpets can be seen in paintings of the Safavid court, e.g., a painting by ‘Ali Quli Jabbar of the court of Shah Sulayman, currently in the Hermitage Palace Museum in St. Petersburg, which depicts a scene showing what is probably the earliest *herātī*-type carpet: Hadi Maktabi, “Lost & Found: The Missing History of Persian Carpets,” *HALI* 153 (2007): 68–79, fig. 2. (On *herātī* carpets, see n. 62 below.) John Bell, another English traveler, offered an eyewitness account of a formal audience with Shah Sultan Husayn in the ‘Ali Qapu Palace in 1716. The floor was “covered with silk carpets, interwoven with branches, and foliage, of gold and silver”: John Bell, *Travels from St. Petersburg in Russia to Diverse Parts of Asia*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1763), 2:81. This type of silk carpet, interwoven with metal thread, is the one most closely associated with the later Safavids. Carpets featured prominently in public and domestic furnishings as well. Cornelis de Bruyn, the Dutch painter who visited Iran in the early eighteenth century, observed them in many mosques and homes: Cornelis de Bruyn, *Travels into Muscovy, Persia, and Part of the East Indies*, 2 vols. (London, 1737), 2:149, 167, 231.
3. Theoretically, the Afghan occupation (1722–29) should be included, but no carpets, paintings, or other works of art can be dated to this brief interlude.
4. The topic was the subject of my PhD dissertation, which was a broader study of carpet weaving in the post-Safavid period: Hadi Maktabi, “In the Safavid Shadow: The Forgotten Age of Persian Carpets (1722–1872)” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2007).
5. The term “carpet” is taken, in the common sense of the word, to refer to the specific item woven on looms by tying “knots” on pairs of warp threads and passing horizontal shoots of weft after rows of knots, leaving a shaggy pile on the surface, which is then clipped.
6. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Persian paintings were, for a long time, at best neglected and at worst disparaged by scholars who concentrated instead on Timurid and Safavid painting. S. J. Falk’s *Qajar Paintings: Persian Oil Paintings of the 18th & 19th Centuries* (London, 1972) was the first to focus exclusively on these works. In more recent years, surveys of Persian painting have expanded to include works from this period, e.g., A. T. Adamova, *Persidskaia zhivopis’ i risunok XV–XIX vekov v sobranii Ermitazha = Persian Painting and Drawing of the 15th–19th Centuries from the Hermitage Museum* (St. Petersburg, 1996); and Eleanor Sims, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (London, 2002). As the period’s paintings have become more accepted as a topic worthy of academic study, we have seen

- works dedicated to them exclusively, e.g., B. W. Robinson, “Persian Painting under the Zand and Qajar Dynasties,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 7, *From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville (Cambridge, 1991), 870–89; and B. W. Robinson and G. G. Guadalupi, *Qajar* (Milan, 1990). A helpful overview of post-Safavid paintings is provided by Layla Diba, “Persian Painting in the Eighteenth Century: Tradition and Transmission,” *Muqarnas* 6 (1989): 147–60. Meanwhile, the standard reference for later Persian painting has become her better-known work: *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785–1925*, ed. Layla Diba (New York, 1998). The focus of post-Safavid paintings has gradually shifted to Qajar paintings, leaving the bulk of the eighteenth century unaccounted for. Even though Afsharid painting is often of low grade, nevertheless there are some highlights that deserve to be studied in their own right. In addition, the half-century of post-Nadiri Afsharid rule in Khurasan (1747–96) has received almost no attention, be it historical, economic, or artistic. Zand painting, on the other hand, has become accepted within mainstream Persian art, if only for its seamless continuation into what became Qajar art.
7. S. G. W. Benjamin, *Persia and the Persians* (London, 1887), 77.
  8. Regarding costumes and garments, for instance, see Patricia Baker, “Following Fashion, Qajar Dress Observed,” in *HALL, 25 Years Special Anniversary Edition* (2004): 100–109.
  9. European powers interfered more actively in Iranian affairs beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, mainly through the introduction of new technologies such as railway and telegraph lines, administrative, educational, and military reforms, and monopolies such as the Tobacco Concession. European influence was also felt in the realms of architecture, theater, and painting: Abbas Amanat, “Qajar Iran, A Historical Overview,” in Diba, *Royal Persian Paintings*, 24–28.
  10. Contemporary observers confirm these facts. “The great weight and bulk of these felt carpets forbid their exportation”: Benjamin, *Persia*, 277. Isabella Bird, an American traveler who had rare access to domestic spaces in Iranian households, said, “*Namads*, owing to their bulk and weight, are never exported”: Isabella Bird, *Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan*, 2 vols. (London, 1891), 2:151.
  11. Felts tended to be used until they wore out. Bird offered another reason why they have not survived. “Chairs spoil them, and as it is becoming fashionable among the rich men of the cities to wear tight trousers, which bring chairs in their train, the manufacture of these magnificent floor-coverings will probably die”: Bird, *Journeys*, 2:151.
  12. Benjamin, *Persia*, 277.
  13. Sir Robert Ker Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia, &c. &c., during the Years 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1820*, 2 vols. (London, 1821–22), 2:41.
  14. Bird observed, “For rich men’s houses they are made to order to fit rooms” (Bird, *Journeys*, 2:151), while Benjamin said that they were “invariably made to order, measured to fit the apartment for which they are intended” (Benjamin, *Persia*, 425).
  15. Edward Scott Waring, *A Tour to Sheeraz, by the Route of Kazroon and Feerozabad* (London, 1807), 44.
  16. John Macdonald Kinneir, *A Geographical Memoir of the Persian Empire* (London, 1813), 53.
  17. Henry Pottinger, *Travels in Beloochistan and Sinde* (London, 1816), 196.
  18. Porter, *Travels in Georgia*, 1:303, 338.
  19. George Fowler, *Three Years in Persia: With Travelling Adventures in Koordistan* (London, 1841), 317.
  20. Sir William Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries of the East; More Particularly Persia*, 3 vols. (London, 1823), 2:12. His brother, Sir Gore Ouseley, was the first British ambassador to Iran (1810–14) since the days of Charles I (r. 1625–49). Both men were avid Orientalists, and promoted the study of Persian in England.
  21. “The felts are self-coloured, with a small amount of stamped pattern”: Napier Malcolm, *Five Years in a Persian Town* (London, 1905), 22. “These *namads*, the most delicious of floor-coverings, are usually a natural brown, with an outline design in coloured threads or in a paler shade of brown beaten into the fabric”: Bird, *Journeys*, 2:151. “A pretty design of colored threads beaten in on the upper side relieves the monotony of the general tint”: Benjamin, *Persia*, 425.
  22. “A good carpet felt of Hamadan manufacture is an inch thick, but some made at Yezd reach two inches”: Bird, *Journeys*, 2:151. Benjamin, *Persia*, 277, confirms this.
  23. Two accounts from the reign of Shah Tahmasp (1524–76) demonstrate the high regard in which *takya-namads* were held and their usage at court. The Italian Michele Membré met the Shah in his camp near Marand in Azerbaijan in 1539. “He was then in the place of audience, with those beautiful pavilions, all decorated with cut designs of foliage inside and, on the floor carpets of great price. The King was thus seated on a *takya-namad*, that is a felt of Khurasan, which was of great price”: Michele Membré, *Mission to the Lord Sophy of Persia (1539–1542)*, trans. A. H. Morton (London, 1993), 21. When Tahmasp presented the Mughal emperor Humayun (r. 1530–56) with precious gifts in 1540, he ordered that Humayun be given “reclining felts made of *kork* and lined with *atlas*”: Willem Floor, *The Persian Textile Industry in Historical Perspective* (Paris and Montreal, 1999), 59. In his recent study on fine Safavid felts, Jon Thompson concluded, “It is less well known that felt was also used at the very highest level of society. People of the higher orders actually sat on a specially made reclining felt, the *namad-e takiyeh* or *takya namad*”: Jon Thompson, “Early Safavid Carpets and Textiles,” in *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Iran, 1501–1576*, ed. Sheila Canby and Jon Thompson (New York, 2003), 307.
  24. “The ginger colour of the reclining felts depicted in miniature paintings will have been made from the wool of red-brown goats”: Thompson, “Early Safavid Carpets,” 308. In Europe, this *kurk* was used for the period’s very fashionable felt hats. For a discussion of *kurk* in European trade,

- see Rudolph Matthee, "The East India Company Trade in Kirman Wool, 1658–1730," in *Études Safavides*, ed. Jean Calmard (Paris and Tehran, 1993), 343–83.
25. See, for example, a miniature painting (The National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, Ms. Dorn 434, fols. 1b–2a) depicting a Safavid prince hunting: he is seated on a beige felt folded in four and with fuzzy edges. The fineness of the *takya-namad* is evident in the fact that it has legible inscriptions worked into its pattern. It is, moreover, placed on top of a carpet, denoting its higher status. See also Sheila Canby, "Safavid Painting," in Canby and Thompson, *Hunt for Paradise*, 113, fig. 4.26b.
  26. John Johnson, *A Journey from India to England through Persia, Georgia, Russia, Poland and Prussia in the year 1817* (London, 1818), 61.
  27. James Baillie Fraser, *Travels and Adventures in the Persian Provinces on the Southern Banks of the Caspian Sea* (London, 1826), 34.
  28. G. A. Olivier, *Voyage dans l'empire othoman, l'Égypte et la Perse*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1800), 5:259.
  29. The distinction is made clear by Percy Sykes, who noted that "[n]either of these varieties is exported": Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia* (London, 1915), 214.
  30. Timurid examples include a *Bustān* of Sa'di in Cairo, General Egyptian Book Organization, Ms. Adab Farsi 908, fol. 1b; and a painting in Geneva, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, no. 424. They appear in Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision* (Los Angeles, 1989), cat. nos. 146 and 155 respectively.
  31. See Thompson, "Early Safavid Carpets," 307.
  32. Strangely, this *takya-namad* has a violet color: see Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, Ms. 1913 (13.228.17), fol. 110 verso. The painting is published in Sims, *Peerless Images*, cat. no. 100.
  33. I am grateful to Professor James Allan at Oxford University for the photograph.
  34. Benjamin noted that patterning as fine as calligraphy could be inscribed on them. "I have seen a *namad*, or felt carpet, eighty feet long and fifty feet wide, without a seam. The name of the maker is woven in it—as the painter puts his name on the painting": Benjamin, *Persia*, 277. In 1872, a British explorer visited felt-making workshops in Kirman and described "a very beautiful one, covered with an intricate geometrical pattern in blue, red, and green worsted." He went on to explain the process of imparting designs to felts. "In an inner room, carefully protected from the wind, is a polished plaster form. On this pieces of coloured worsted are arranged in the desired pattern, with some sort of size. A very thin felt is then carefully pressed over them, and at once removed, carrying on its face the pieces of worsted in their proper place. This thin felt is laid on the thicker felt of the carpet, and the two incorporated with blows of the mallet": Oliver St. John, "Narrative of a Journey through Baluchistan and Southern Persia, 1872," *Eastern Persia* 1 (London, 1876): 101–2.
  35. Muḥammad Kāzīm Marvī, *Tārīkh-i 'ālam-ārā-yi Nādirī*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Riyāhī, 3 vols. (Tehran, 1369 [1990]). Marvī mentions that in 1732 Nadir sent felts and carpets (*namad va qālī*) to furnish the Hasht Behesht Palace and other buildings in the royal *Chahārbāgh* district (*Chahārbāgh-i Shāhī*) of Mashhad, his new capital (vol. 1, p. 206). Carpets and felts from *vilāyat-i Kirmān* were ordered for court use during Nadir's prolonged coronation at Mughan in 1736 (vol. 1, p. 410). Carpets from Kirman (*qālīhā-yi Kirmānī*) were commissioned for the coronation tent itself (vol. 2, p. 454), while others from the vicinity of Kirman (*az navāhī-yi Kirmān*) were ordered for the Najaf shrine (vol. 3, p. 892).
  36. Kirman rugs with medallion designs survive from the eighteenth century, among them two dated examples that demonstrate the distinctive "Vase"-structure of rugs woven there since the Safavid period. One was published by the renowned carpet scholar Kurt Erdmann in 1941 and is inscribed '*amal-i Ustād Yūsuf Kirmānī sana 1191* (work of the master Yusuf Kirmani, in the year 1776–77): Kurt Erdmann, "The Art of Carpet Making," *Ars Islamica* 7 (1941): pl. 1. The other has been published in *HALI* and is signed '*amal-i Ustād Ḥusayn Kirmānī sana 1213* (work of the master Husayn Kirmani, in the year 1798–99): "HALI Gallery," *HALI* 5, 1 (1981): 14.
  37. This style had become the norm for early eighteenth-century Mughal rulers such as Muhammad Shah, whom Nadir defeated in 1738 and whose treasury he looted. The former's habit of adorning his costumes with jewelry appears in various paintings, such as one in the British Library dating to the 1720s (Ms. Add. Or. 2769). "The portrait may be dated sometime after the conquest of India in 1739, since the ruler, who dressed modestly at the beginning of his reign, is shown wearing armbands in the Indian style, festooned with ropes of pearls set with emeralds, diamonds, and polished red spinels": Diba, *Royal Persian Paintings*, text to cat. no. 19.
  38. The objects are in the collection of The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg. Some are published in *Heaven on Earth: Art from Islamic Lands, Works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection*, ed. M. B. Piotrovsky and J. M. Rogers (London, 2004), cat. nos. 120–25.
  39. Five fantastic Mughal objects, first looted by Nadir and then "acquired" by Sir Robert Clive (d. 1774), were put up at auction by the latter's descendants, fetching £4,700,375. See Christie's (London), "The Clive of India Treasure," in *Catalogue of Islamic Art* (London, 27 April 2004).
  40. I am grateful to the Royal Asiatic Society for allowing me to study this work (Mirzā Muḥammad Mahdī Khān Astarābādī, *Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, Ms. 147).
  41. I hope to publish these paintings as part of a broader survey of Afsharid painting in a future article.
  42. According to a French nobleman who visited Mashhad in 1784: "Les plus beaux tapis de Perse sont fabriqués dans le Korassan, il s'y en fait d'un tissu à fond d'or qui sont magnifiques & d'un prix immense": Comte de Ferrières-Sauveboeuf, *Mémoires historiques, politiques et géographiques des voyages du comte de Ferrières-Sauveboeuf faits en Turquie, en Perse et en Arabie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1790), 2:8. A contem-

- poraneous East India Company report from 1790 indicated that the appeal of Khurasan rugs lay in the quality of their dyes and weave, “for the brightness of their colours and the elegance of their workmanship are deservedly in high estimation all over the world”: British Library, India Office Records, EIC Factory Records, G/29/21, Report on British Trade with Persia and Arabia.
43. These primarily include carpets of the so-called *afshān*, *herātī*, and *harshang* groups: see, for example, Maktabi, “Lost & Found,” 73. This topic was also addressed in my paper at the 11th International Conference on Oriental Rugs in April 2007, to be published in the conference proceedings. The *afshān* pattern consists of offset rows of repeating units, each of which is bounded by four large rosettes. A unit is centered on four flowers that are shaped like split leaves, with palmettes between adjacent flowers and a rosette in the center. On the *herātī* and *harshang* patterns, see n. 62 below.
  44. Various copies of this work have survived. The one in question, which is dated to 1757, was completed under the auspices of Nadir’s Afsharid successors. Now in Tehran, it was published with an introduction by A. A. Burumand: Mīrzā Muḥammad Mahdī Astarābādī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī* (Tehran, 1991). It ranks among the rarest and most important illustrated manuscripts of the period, having fourteen relatively high-quality illustrations. As Burumand notes (pp. 3–4), the decoration of the scenes, in addition to the faces of the people and the clothes and headgear they wear, indicates that the painter was among Nadir Shah’s retinue and that he painted scenes he had personally witnessed.
  45. These ornamented metallic weights were placed at the corners of relatively small and light floor coverings, especially cotton ones, when outdoors. They were not placed on knotted-pile carpets, which were sturdier. The weights were prevalent in Mughal India but were also used in Safavid Persia (cf. the painting “Shah Sulayman and His Court” by ‘Ali Quli Jabbar, mentioned above).
  46. For more on *mīr-i farsh*, see Mark Zebrowski, *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India* (London, 1997), 26, 130–33.
  47. For eighteenth-century lattice carpets from Kirman and Kurdistan, see Maktabi, “Lost & Found,” 70–73, and figs. 3, 4, 10. More than fifty lattice carpets woven between 1722 and 1872 were identified in my doctoral dissertation, making the group one of the largest (in terms of production and distribution) from the period: see Maktabi, “In the Safavid Shadow,” 181–92.
  48. See Jenny Housego, “Kirman and Mahan,” *Oriental Art* 23, 4 (1977): 464–69.
  49. The paintings appear in Astarābādī, *Tārīkh-i Jahāngushā-yi Nādirī*, 139 and 271 respectively.
  50. According to the eighteenth-century historian Marvī, Nadir commissioned carpets from Kirmani weavers on numerous occasions. The earliest recorded mention was in 1732 when he ordered carpets *en masse* to furnish the palace of Hasht Behesht in Mashhad. The largest batch from Kirman was ordered for his coronation at Mughan. Kirman carpets were occasionally commissioned as royal gifts to shrines. See Marvī, *Tārīkh-i ‘ālam-ārā-yi Nādirī*, 1:206, 410; 2:454; 3:892.
  51. Diba, *Royal Persian Paintings*, 170, 221.
  52. The Zand casket was published by Adamova, *Persian Painting and Drawing*, cat. no. 49.
  53. Mīrzā Ḥasan Ḥusaynī Fasā’ī, *Fārsnāma-yi Nāsirī*, ed. Maṣṣūr Rastgār Fasā’ī, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1378 [1999]), 1:224.
  54. Mīrzā Muḥammad Kalāntar-i Fārs, *Rūznāma-yi Mīrzā Muḥammad Kalāntar-i Fārs: Shāmil-i vaqāyī-i qismathā-yi janūbi-i Irān az sāl-i 1142 tā 1199 Hijrī Qamarī*, ed. ‘Abbās Iqbāl (Tehran, 1325 [1946]), 82.
  55. William Francklin, *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia, in the Years 1786–7* (Calcutta, 1788), 194, 197.
  56. Karim Khan did not crown himself Shah but rather assumed the title of *vakīl*, thus denoting his regency over the country in the name of a puppet descendant of the Safavids. His successors followed suit.
  57. A number of such carpets have appeared on the market in recent years, most of which have sold at auction. For instance, see Rippon Boswell & Co., *Antike Teppiche, Kelims, Flachgewebe und Textilien* (Wiesbaden, 19 May 2001), lot 71; Phillips, *Oriental Carpets* (London, 12 June 1992), lot 27; Sotheby’s, *Fine Rugs & Carpets* (London, 24 April 1991), lot 91; and Christie’s, *Oriental Carpets* (New York, 30 September 1997), lot 282. For a dated example (1222 [1807–8]) from a private collection, see F. R. Martin, *A History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800* (London, 1908), pl. 23.
  58. See, for instance, a lacquered painting from the mid-nineteenth century in the Khalili collection: Nasser D. Khalili, B. W. Robinson, and Tim Stanley, *Lacquer of the Islamic Lands* (Oxford, 1996), cat. no. 130.
  59. The painting is one of several sold at Sotheby’s, *Islamic Art* (London, 13 October 1999), lot 10.
  60. For a listing of rugs at the 1931 exhibition, see C. E. C. Tattersall, “Carpets and Textiles at the Persian Exhibition,” *Apollo* 13 (1931): 1–9, 82–89.
  61. A carpet has a “corner solution” if the pattern in its end borders flows seamlessly, without break, into the side borders at a 45-degree angle. This feature is associated with carpets woven in Iranian city workshops, and is generally absent on carpets woven in rural and nomadic communities.
  62. The *herātī* pattern was—and is—one of the most prevalent designs on Persian carpets since at least the late eighteenth century. It is a small-scale, endlessly repeating design whose fundamental element is a pair of arabesque leaves that curve opposite one another with a flower head placed in between. For a good example depicting the border in question, see the *herātī* carpet that sold at the Fine Rugs & Carpets sale in Sotheby’s London, 2 May 2001, lot 72. The *harshang* design is composed of offset rows of endlessly repeating small-scale blocks. The repeating unit is outlined by four palmettes, which are arranged in a diamond formation with their tips facing inwards. These were seen to resemble crabs—hence the name *harshang* or crab. A *harshang* carpet with the aforementioned border sold at the Rugs & Carpets sale in Christie’s London, 4 April 2006, lot 106.
  63. Diba, *Royal Persian Paintings*, text to cat. no. 44.
  64. Naturally, there are other genres of painting from this period, such as works showing landscapes or literary subjects.

65. Even though the field color may at times be reminiscent of *namads*, none of the floor coverings in this section displays other attributes of felts, such as the reciprocal border or blank outer stripe. These features were so prevalent in depictions of felts that their absence, along with the absence of any extant felts with such patterns, may be taken to signify that the object in question was not a *namad*.
66. James Baillie Fraser, *A Winter's Journey (Tâtar), from Constantinople to Tehran*, 2 vols. (London, 1838), 2:76.
67. Stuart Simmonds and Simon Digby, *The Royal Asiatic Society: Its History and Treasures* (Leiden and London, 1979), 110.
68. For two relevant still lifes, see Diba, *Royal Persian Painting*, cat. nos. 64 a, b. According to Diba (in the corresponding text), "these paintings admirably convey the paradisiacal delights of the classic Persian garden celebrated by its poets: shade, peace and luscious repasts."
69. For an example of this border on a *mīnā khānī* rug, see James D. Burns, *Antique Rugs of Kurdistan: A Historical Legacy of Woven Art* (London, 2002), pl. 1.
70. Most Persian carpets in the pre-modern age (prior to ca. 1870) came in *kelleh* format, designed to suit Persian interiors, especially public reception rooms. *Kellehs* are relatively long and narrow compared to pieces produced after ca. 1870. They were typically about 2 meters in width, and in length they varied from 4 to 7 meters on average.
71. Examples of this particular scene abound on Persian lacquer work. An early nineteenth-century depiction appears in Adamova, *Persian Painting and Drawing*, cat. no. 68. Khalili et al., *Lacquer of the Islamic Lands*, cat. no. 121, shows one from the reign of Muhammad Shah, proving the enduring popularity of lattice carpets.
72. Between 1810 and 1813, he stayed with his brother, Sir Gore Ouseley, in Iran, where the latter served as British ambassador until 1814. The plates in his account were drawings and sketches made *in situ*.
73. Ouseley, *Travels in Various Countries*, 1:132–33.
74. Hamadan's production of felts was noted by various observers. According to James Morier, a distinguished British diplomat, "[t]he principal manufacture of [Hamadan] is a particular sort of felt carpet called nummud, highly esteemed among the Persians": James Morier, *A Second Journey through Persia, Armenia, and Asia Minor, to Constantinople: Between the Years 1810 and 1816* (London, 1818), 269. Another Englishman lauded the city's "beautifully painted numuds of felt": T. B. Armstrong, *Journal of Travels in the Seat of War, during the Last Two Campaigns of Russia and Turkey* (London, 1831), 141. According to Bird, "[t]he best [are] made at Hamadan": Bird, *Journeys*, 2:151.
75. Further examples of lattice *namads* are widespread in lacquer painting: see, for example, Khalili et al., *Lacquer of the Islamic Lands*, cat. nos. 129 and 130. Two similar felts appear in late eighteenth-century book paintings that were sold at Christie's London, *Arts of the Islamic World* (London, 16 October 2001), lots 96 and 100.
76. It is worth adding that it is highly unlikely that the plain-bordered, camel-colored floor coverings in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Persian painting represented Hamadan or Sarab pile carpets. Indeed, we can be sure that they depicted *namads*. It is generally acknowledged that carpets similar to the felts depicted in these paintings were produced in this broad region during the second half of the nineteenth century. While there is no reference to Sarab in the sources, Hamadan is frequently mentioned as a felt-producing center from the Safavid period at least—and never as a carpet-weaving locale. Visitors to Hamadan, such as James Morier in 1811 and J. B. Fraser in 1822 (see above nn. 66 and 74), made no mention of carpets being woven there. The earliest reference to Hamadan rugs that I came across was by Horatio Southgate, around 1840, who wrote that "[t]he principal manufacture of the place itself is leather...there is also a considerable manufacture of coarse carpets, besides woolsens and cotton stuffs": Horatio Southgate, *Narrative of a Tour Through Armenia, Kurdistan, Persia and Mesopotamia*, 2 vols. (London, 1840), 2:101. The coarseness of Hamadan rugs is not surprising given what we know about the later productions of the area. To conclude, we can surmise that felt production preceded rug production in Hamadan, and that these painted depictions of lattice-patterned textiles represented *namads*.
77. The Persian (also known as the *Senneh* or asymmetrical) knot is tied around two adjacent warp threads, with only one of them completely covered. The Turkish (also known as the *Ghiordes* or symmetrical) knot is likewise tied around two adjacent warps, both of which are covered or encircled completely. The Persian knot is tighter, allowing for a greater fineness of weaving (or knotting density); it is generally used in Iran, India, and China. It typically appears on Iranian city carpets, and many village rugs, too; it is also found on some very high-end Turkish carpets (mostly from Istanbul and Hereke). The Turkish knot is less fine but more durable. It is generally found on Anatolian and Caucasian carpets, as well as most tribal weavings from Turkmenistan and the Turkic-speaking nomads of Iran. Carpets made in Iranian Azerbaijan, including the city of Tabriz, employ the Turkish knot. For more details, see C. E. C. Tattersall, *Notes on Carpet Knotting and Weaving* (London, 1920).
78. See May Beattie, *Carpets of Central Persia: With Special Reference to Rugs of Kirman* (London, 1976); idem, "Vase-Technique Carpets and Kirman," *Oriental Art* 23, 4 (1977): 455–73.
79. Marvī, *Tārīkh-i 'ālam-ārā-yi Nādirī*, 1:410; 2:454.
80. See, for example, a room-size carpet woven by Husayn Kirmani for Nasir al-Din Shah in 1284 (1867–68), which sold at Sotheby's Geneva, 18 November 1983, lot 69.
81. Fowler, *Three Years in Persia*, 309.
82. Moritz von Kotzebue, *Narrative of a Journey into Persia, in the Suite of the Imperial Russian Embassy, in the Year 1817* (London, 1819), 270, 299.
83. Bird, *Journeys*, 1:207.

84. Benjamin, *Persia*, 199, 426.
85. The technique of “studding” authentic carpets with pearls or precious stones is attested to in carpet production. Louise Mackie at the Cleveland Museum told me that in the White House storerooms in Virginia she came across a knotted-pile carpet woven with precious stones, apparently dating from the early twentieth century. Such carpets are still made today in Isfahan, although in small quantities only. A leading master weaver in present-day Isfahan continues to produce knotted-pile carpets—albeit on a very limited scale—in what he calls the “traditional Qajar way”; precious metals (gold, silver), semi-precious stones (agate, turquoise), and pearls are incorporated into the pile of his high-end carpets. (Interview with Ustad Muhammad Ali Khoja in Isfahan, February 2, 2009.)
86. A thorough reading of Kotzebue, Benjamin, and Bird—among others—indicates that these authors were reliable *and* consistent in the terms they used for floor coverings. This is true of most nineteenth-century authors who were well acquainted with Persian culture and society and thus aware of the varieties of furnishings and floor coverings that Iranians used. See Maktabi, “In the Safavid Shadow,” chap. 2, “Notes on Documentary Sources.”
87. For examples of each from private collections, see Diba, *Royal Persian Paintings*, cat. nos. 37 and 42.
88. For such a Safavid-period carpet, see Pope and Ackerman, *Survey of Persian Art*, pl. 1215.
89. Amy Briggs’ two seminal articles demonstrate the accuracy of the depictions of carpets in fifteenth-century Timurid painting: Amy Briggs, “Timurid Carpets,” *Ars Islamica* 7 (1940): 20–54; and 11–12 (1946): 146–58. Jon Thompson has commented on the faithfulness of Persian paintings to real-life material objects such as carpets: see Jon Thompson, *Milestones in the History of Carpets* (Milan, 2006), 182–85, and figs. 164–66. Thompson furthermore compares the manner in which mythical animals (figs. 167–69) are depicted on a Safavid-period carpet (pl. 17) with contemporary drawings of such animals (figs. 170–71). He also compares the cartouche border of another Safavid carpet (pl. 18) with the drawing of a Timurid illumination (fig. 172), and with the borders of carpets depicted in Timurid painting (fig. 174).



## SABRA AL-MANSURIYYA AND HER NEIGHBORS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY: INVESTIGATIONS INTO STUCCO DECORATION

*This article was edited by Avinoam Shalem and Jean-Pierre Van Staëvel in honor and memory of Marianne Barrucand.*

*Editors' note: Professor Marianne Barrucand was invited by the Department of Art History of the University of Munich and the Society of the Friends of Islamic Art and Culture in Munich to give a public talk at the University on the 12th of June 2008. Unfortunately, she was too ill to travel, and a few weeks later, on the 25th of July 2008, she passed away. A day before she was due to deliver her lecture in Munich, Barrucand sent her paper along with some of the relevant images to Avinoam Shalem, hoping that it could be read by him in her absence. This article is based on her last text. The important material presented here is a preliminary report on the excavations in Sabra al-Mansuriyya (in Tunisia), which are due to be published at the end of 2009 as part of a comprehensive volume. The excavated evidence in Sabra al-Mansuriyya sheds new light on the visual expression of the Fatimids and, more importantly, might provide medieval art historians with the "missing link" for the emergence of the Romanesque style of South Italy in the eleventh century.*

### SABRA AL-MANSURIYYA

In the fifth decade of the tenth century, al-Mansur (r. 946–53), the third of the Fatimid caliphs, founded a new royal city south of Kairouan. After his victory over the insurrection of Abu Yazid (d. 947)—“the man with the donkey”—he wanted to leave Mahdiyya, the first Fatimid foundation with a royal official character. Construction of the new city near Kairouan seems to have begun around 946. It was not yet finished at the time of al-Mansur's death in 953, but his successor, al-Mu'izz (r. 953–75), was an active builder and the mosque was completed that year. The suqs of Kairouan were transferred to Sabra al-Mansuriyya, and the aqueduct of Shirishara, other water systems, and palaces were constructed concomitantly. When he left

the city in the summer of 972 in order to establish the caliphate in Egypt, al-Mu'izz transferred the administration of Ifriqiya to Buluqqin b. Ziri, a Sanhaja Berber whose base was in Ashir (now in Algeria). He and his successors settled in Sabra al-Mansuriyya and continued construction there. In 986, the Zirid ruler al-Mansur b. Buluqqin (r. 984–96) built his personal palace. His grandson, al-Mu'izz b. Badis (r. 1015–62), seems to have renewed the city wall of Kairouan and to have connected Kairouan to Sabra al-Mansuriyya by a street flanked by two walls. Building activities ceased in the middle of the eleventh century: in 1057, pressure from nomadic Arab tribes forced the Zirid family to leave Sabra al-Mansuriyya and take refuge in Mahdiyya.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the time of prosperity and construction in Sabra al-Mansuriyya scarcely exceeded a century, and the town was never again inhabited. Excavations have revealed layers upon layers, indicating numerous building periods, but very few vertical structures have been found.<sup>2</sup>

### THE EXCAVATIONS

Today, Sabra al-Mansuriyya is a huge wasteland with many ditches, encircled by housing for the poor. For centuries, the inhabitants of Kairouan have scavenged in the ruins for materials that could be recycled and other usable items. The principal building materials were earth (*tūb* and *ṭabiya*) and a local kind of concrete used in the medieval period. However, the looters took all the stones, marble, burnt bricks, glazed ceramics, metal and glass objects, and other remnants they could find and reuse. Although most of these objects vanished and have not been recovered, many stucco fragments regarded as

useless escaped this fate, allowing us to appreciate the particular and important role of stucco decoration in Sabra al-Mansuriyya.<sup>3</sup> It should be emphasized that the stone fragments are modest in quantity and quality.

French travelers began mentioning the site in the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Georges Marçais conducted a small excavation in the 1920s, and in the 1950s Slimane Mostafa Zbiss did more intensive archaeological work, excavating the palace in the southeast quadrant.<sup>5</sup> In the late 1970s and until 1982, a Franco-Tunisian team under the direction of Brahim Chabbouh and Michel Terrasse excavated this site, working most of the time in and around the southeastern palace.<sup>6</sup> None of these various archaeological activities has been published—other than in small, elusive notes—and none of the stucco finds was stratigraphically located. Excavation began again in 2003 under the direction of Mourad Rammah and Patrice Cressier, with Marianne Barrucand in charge of the stucco finds. The new project was planned and financially assured for five years.

#### THE STUCCO FRAGMENTS

Most of the known stucco fragments have been found in a pit near the northwestern side of the southeastern palace.<sup>7</sup> We do not know precisely when this building was erected. Zbiss called it “the Fatimid palace,” an attribution that has generally been accepted and confirmed by later digs. But the numerous layers of flooring indicate different periods of building, and the architectural decoration thus may have been renewed at later times, reflecting new ideas and tastes concerning ornamental beauty. The dimensions of this structure, the only one yet known, are modest (figs. 1a and 1b),<sup>8</sup> and do not conform to the image provided by the written sources on Fatimid caliphal palaces. For this reason, the building was probably not the palace erected in 986 by the Zirid governor al-Mansur b. Buluqqin. Near its northwestern façade, Chabbouh and Terrasse discovered a pit with a great quantity of stucco fragments, which they both argued, as has everyone since, came from the southeastern palace. Since these pieces were discovered, they have been stored in boxes in the Museum of Islamic Art of Raqqada. In April 2003, we counted more than 2,500 fragments, but when we include the stuccos dis-

covered in 2007 and add some older findings now in the archaeological museums of Tunis (the Bardo Museum), Mahdiyya, and Monastir, there are actually around 3,000 stucco fragments from Sabra-al-Mansuriyya.

In 2005, Sandra Aube and Florence Cicotto created a data bank of the fragments using filemaster software,<sup>9</sup> which has proven very valuable for their study. The vividly colored stucco fragments discovered in sector 2 during the most recent excavations—in April and October 2007—were located stratigraphically, but since they were treated as rubbish from an undetermined (but medieval) time, they were neither in their original location, nor lying beneath it. The archaeological environment of this group is Zirid. The fragments, which will be entered into the database, have also been stored in the Museum of Islamic Art of Raqqada.

The decoration of the fragments can be divided into four categories: vegetal ornament, geometric ornament, epigraphy, and figural representations, among which human and animal reliefs can be distinguished.<sup>10</sup> Differences in the fragments suggest different datings. The oldest group (figs. 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, and the lower surface of the fragment depicted in fig. 8) consists of tendrils with leaves (half-palmettes with two distinct and diverging lobes) in a technique that we have tentatively defined as *effet de champlevé*, since the pattern appears to have been cut out of a plane field with an engraver’s tool. This type of ornament is flat, without any surface modelling. The cuts are vertical and the uniform blue ground and delicate white tendrils and leaves are strikingly elegant. These graceful but rather monotonous scrolls are found on the surface of larger flat bands and palmettes, which were attached on the back directly to the plaster of the mud brick masonry. No bolts, nails, pegs, or bones<sup>11</sup> used to fix these larger elements onto the walls have been found, but some of the mortar fragments underneath show zigzag engravings intended to allow the stucco to adhere to the wall. Some of these band fragments clearly show arcade forms (figs. 3a and 3b) and belong to a decorative repertoire that may be compared to Andalusian wall paneling from the caliphal period (fig. 4). Nevertheless, this style of architectural decoration can be also found in pre-Islamic Tunisia (figs. 5a and 5b) and seems to go back to claustra (a latticework screen or window panel, resembling a cancel-lum in a church or a maqsura in a mosque) designs in

Byzantine art, as well as in Umayyad palace architecture of the Near East.<sup>12</sup>

At a later period—though we do not know how much later—these delicate tendrils and leaves were covered by a voluminous, roughly modulated, stucco vegetal decoration, which hides the blue and white scrolls but adopts the shape of the bands and palmettes that form their base (fig. 8). Thus, the arcaded scheme of the underlying pattern seems to have survived in this later style. This type of decoration is called “bulgy” (figs. 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 7a, 7b, 8, 9a, 9b, and 9c). The large, bulky, and simple ornaments have maintained slight but interesting traces of their original polychrome decor: many of them have kept hints of the blue and white ornaments that they once covered, although these remains were hidden since they were located underneath the outer level of the ornaments. On the top surface (defined in the data bank as “face”), other colors are visible: blue, red, yellow, and even gold.

The third group of this stucco decoration is less homogeneous, consisting mostly of vegetal ornaments, but also including some geometrical designs. It may belong to the same period as the first group: the technique of some of the geometrical fragments closely resembles that of group 1, and blue and white coloring predominates (figs. 13a, 13b, and 13c). At any rate, the third group is earlier than the bulgy style, since it often appears beneath the bulgy-decorated fragments. Palmette leaves with more than two or three lobes are common in this group, although their surface is less flat and more modulated than those done in the *effet de champlevé* style (figs. 10a, 10b, 10c, 11a, and 11b). The outline is usually framed by bands of perforations (figs. 10b, 11a, and 11b). This specific detail and the general character of the vegetal motifs are frequently found on the carved ivories of al-Andalus in the caliphal period (fig. 12). Numerous geometrical rosettes (fig. 13a) and some fragments with motifs of geometrical recti-curved plaits (fig. 13b and, to some extent, fig. 13c), all of them done in the *effet de champlevé* style, belong to group 3; they have also been found in a pit near the southeast palace. This kind of geometrical stucco decoration frequently appears in the context of Tunisia’s Christian period, but it probably goes back to more ancient times.

Some rather rough palmettes with perforations may evoke simplified vine leaves of the so-called style A of Samarra (fig. 13d).<sup>13</sup> There is also a remarkably homogeneous series of brackets and fragments of brackets (figs. 14a and 14b) of about forty pieces, each with a pair of hooves beneath a five-lobed palmette leaf. The use of brackets recalls not only the wall coronae of the pre-Islamic Christian basilicas of Tunisia, but also those of the caliphal era in Spain. While the Sabra al-Mansuriyya brackets seem closer in style to the nearly contemporary Andalusian brackets than to those of the older Tunisian basilicas, the iconography of the Sabra al-Mansuriyya group is distinct, and, one must also add, unusual.

The approximately seventy stucco fragments found in 2007 are striking, especially in their vivid polychromy dominated by blue, red, yellow, and white (figs. 15a, 15b, and 15c). Their forms and technique, however, are reminiscent of the previously discovered fragments of groups 2 and 3.

As far as epigraphic motifs are concerned, at the moment there are only a few fragments of this type, which cannot be directly associated with other epigraphic finds. Lotfi Abdeljaouad is preparing these for publication in the final report on the excavation. On stylistic grounds, they seem to belong to the end of the tenth or the first half of the eleventh century; to some extent, a comparable material can be found at Qal’a Banu Hammad (1007–88).<sup>14</sup>

The material and technique of the figurative fragments are close to those of the bulgy group. Their iconography is striking: warriors (fig. 16), some heads of young men (figs. 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d, 18, 19, and 20), torsos (figs. 21a and 21b), and a horn in the hands of a trumpeter (fig. 22), a rather frequent motif in Andalusian ivories. The head of an old man (fig. 23), with a curly beard with drill holes and one remaining blue eye,<sup>15</sup> is rather surprising. As parallels in Fatimid or Berber contexts are not known, it might be suggested that these examples follow some late antique or early medieval models.

As for animal motifs, there are several hares (figs. 24a and 24b), one gazelle (fig. 25), a quadruped that may represent a cow (fig. 26), two lions (figs. 27a and 27b), and one griffon (fig. 28). There are also riders on horseback (figs. 29a, 29b, and 30) and on dromedaries

(figs. 31, 32a, and 32b). The gallery of various eagles found at the site must have been most impressive (figs. 33, 34a, 34b, 35a, and 35b). Twenty-one eagles' bodies (without heads) have been found, some with wings fully extended, others with wings next to their bodies. At any rate, the eagle motif strongly recalls the hieratical, frontal, and notorious one of classical antiquity. A ceramic panel used as a wall decoration, which was found by Mostafa Zbiss in Sabra al-Mansuriyya,<sup>16</sup> shows a similar use of the eagle motif; another eagle of this type, though made out of stone, was recently discovered in sector 2.<sup>17</sup> Are these eagles related to the well-known examples produced in al-Andalus at the end of the Umayyad caliphate?<sup>18</sup> They are certainly related to the eagles found on the basins of al-Mansur and his son 'Abd al-Malik (dating from around 988), but the eagles of the slightly later "basin of King Badis" in Granada<sup>19</sup> present a different conception of this royal predator, one that is more abstract in form and possessing an apotropaic function. The rather classical representation of an eagle sculpted on a stone corbel, probably made for the Christian basilica of Ouled Agla in western Algeria,<sup>20</sup> is closer to those of Sabra al-Mansuriyya. These birds must have been beheaded before falling to the earth, as the stumps of the necks show rain corrosion. The eagles were painted and must have been rather ostentatious; nevertheless, we have not yet found any literary mention of them in the medieval evocations of Sabra al-Mansuriyya. They remind us of the eagle gallery of Nero's *Domus Aurea* or of the eagles of *Domus Tiberiana*, both made of painted stucco.<sup>21</sup> But these buildings were not known during the Middle Ages. The missing links may perhaps be found in the Byzantine realm, though we have not yet encountered this specific concept of a whole arrangement of eagles as part of a visual program. Surely the eagles at Sabra al-Mansuriyya were meant as an expressive and even ostentatious symbol of power and triumph, particularly in the iconography of imperial apotheosis, as were those decorating the private domains of Nero and Hadrian.

## THE NEIGHBORS

The social, political, economic, and cultural relations between Sabra al-Mansuriyya and her neighbors were intense, and not always peaceful.<sup>22</sup> The city's most regular ties were with Qal'a Banu Hammad (in Algeria). The Zirid cousins—the Badisids in Kairouan and the Hammadids in the Qal'a—were usually in conflict with one another; nevertheless, the relations between them were close, and the architectural decoration of Sabra al-Mansuriyya and the Qal'a has numerous rather comparable features, as far as material and techniques, as well as iconography and form, are concerned.<sup>23</sup>

The Banu Qalb family, which came from Ifriqiya, reigned more or less successfully in Sicily from 947 until the Norman conquest in the second half of the eleventh century, most of the time in the name of the Fatimid caliph. Although their political, intellectual, and economic contacts with the Zirids in Sabra al-Mansuriyya have been historically documented,<sup>24</sup> little is known about the possible artistic ties between the two. The *Torre Pisana* in Palermo<sup>25</sup> and the Qur'an that was copied in Palermo in 372 (982–83)<sup>26</sup> are both particularly interesting and serve as visual evidence for the artistic interaction between Sicily under the Banu Qalb and Zirid Ifriqiya. Nevertheless, the whole field would benefit from further investigation into these histories.

The sites of Adjabiyya and Madina Sultan in Libya have preserved some fragments of architectural decoration, particularly of stucco work, which have some similarities to Sabra al-Mansuriyya pieces of the second and the third stylistic group.<sup>27</sup> The artistic relations with Fatimid Egypt, at least until the middle of the eleventh century, were dense and complex, but at the same time far from as evident as one might have expected.<sup>28</sup> Despite the attraction of the Tunisians and the Egyptian Fatimids to figural imagery, it is rather the detailed rendering of palmettes, plaits, and even epigraphy that reveals the closeness of the artistic relationship between the two.

Despite the permanent state of war between the Fatimids and the Zirids on the one hand and the Umayyads and their allies on the other, al-Andalus seems to have played a rather obvious and active part as an artistic center from the end of the tenth until the middle of

the eleventh century.<sup>29</sup> The quantity of “Ifriqiyān” coins found in al-Andalus is the best testimony for the frequent economic and cultural contacts between these populations.

Finally, the local heritage should not be overlooked. Stucco was in use in North Africa in the pre-Roman and Roman periods, and the technique continued to be employed in this region during the following centuries, namely, after the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of Islam.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, it must be emphasized that no spectacular visual evidence of stucco dating from the end of the pre-Islamic period is known to us, and, even if the material and the technique were then current in Tunisia, a new artistic impulse may have come to the Maghreb from the Near East during the first centuries of Islam. The iconography and technique of the stuccos of Sabra al-Mansuriyya are much rougher than those known from the famous Umayyad “desert castles” of the Near East. However, the vocabulary of motifs seems to be more related to that of Syrian Umayyad stucco decoration than to that found in Samarra (in Iraq).<sup>31</sup>

Hence, although Sedrata (Algeria), founded in the early tenth century, offers beautiful examples of non-figurative stucco panels, most of which are decorated with geometric ornaments, those panels are entirely different from the Sabra al-Mansuriyya fragments, both in their iconographic program and in their technique.<sup>32</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

The particular technical possibilities of stucco seem to have been well understood by artisans, who, aware that they were working with a cheap material, did not try—most of the time—to imitate stonework. The specific qualities of the stucco technique, namely, its quick execution, the spontaneous impression it confers, and even the acceptance of neglecting some details for the sake of the whole decorative and impressive impact, were emphasized by artisans in the realization of the huge and ambitious program of Sabra al-Mansuriyya. In addition, stucco surfaces were vividly colored.

Ornamental wall panels were usually decorated with vegetal motifs, with only a few displaying purely geometrical and interlaced designs. We find palmettes in

various forms, as well as with different types of lobes, but we almost never find in this stucco the so-called *palmette digitée* (a fan-shaped palmette), which originated earlier in Umayyad al-Andalus and was very popular in the later, post-Fatimid period in the Maghreb. While these *palmettes digitées* were still in vogue in later Andalusian decorative art, they seem to have been replaced during the second half of the tenth century by another type of palmette characterized by a string of holes that surrounds its leaves—the type of palmette of the so-called style 3 in Sabra al-Mansuriyya.

In the rather “abstract” stucco vegetation found in Sabra al-Mansuriyya we have discovered neither pomegranate nor grape motifs, and even if each five-lobed palmette could generally be defined as a vine leaf, there are in fact very few examples of this motif among the fragments and none of them is clearly characterized as such. When compared to other stucco ornamentation, group 1 appears as the most abstract of all and is probably the earliest, recalling the Zirid painted woodwork of the Sidi ‘Oqba Mosque in Kairouan, now kept in the Museum of Islamic Art of Raqqada. It is beyond the scope of this article to go into detail about the connections between the stucco decoration of Sabra al-Mansuriyya and Zirid painted woodwork. However, since the specimens of Zirid painted woodwork are better dated, and since the stylistic influence between the two is noticeable, we might suggest a Zirid dating for the first group of stucco wall panels—those of the blue-and-white *effet de champlevé* style. Thus, a slightly later date may be suggested for the ornamental group that is applied over them, namely, group 2—the bulgy style—as well as for the figural stuccos. If we accept this hypothesis, the ornamental stuccos of group 1, the somewhat heterogeneous group 3, and the bulgy group 2, as well as of the figural group, might be tentatively associated with the Zirid period. Of course, a better and more precise knowledge of Zirid art should precede such a conclusion.

It also seems that contemporary Andalusian art played a considerable role in the elaboration of some of the vegetal stucco ornaments; this could be detected mainly in the choice of images, that is, the iconography, of the figural group. It is likely that this artistic influence was transmitted to North Africa through the import of

portable luxury artifacts from Muslim Spain, such as textiles and ivories.

As far as figural architectural decoration is concerned, the artistic heritage of late antiquity is remarkable. This particular pre-Islamic artistic tradition is well represented in Fatimid art. For example, the Fatimid mosque of Mahdiyya clearly illustrates the admiration that the Fatimids had for this particular heritage. It must be noted, though, that this notion seems to be less evident in the Qal'a and is better represented in the Zirid palace of Achir.<sup>33</sup> The dependence of the stucco decoration of Sabra al-Mansuriyya on stucco ornaments of the Islamic world, especially those of the Syrian Umayyad

castles and early Abbasid monuments like Raqqa,<sup>34</sup> is generally accepted by scholars but awaits more differentiated study and accurate evaluation.<sup>35</sup>

The workmanship in the stuccos of Sabra al-Mansuriyya is often rough, particularly in style 2, the bulgy style, and in the group with figural representations. This less careful work is inconsistent with the often lavish and elaborate iconographic program of the décor. Did the demand for the rapid production of the architectural decoration at Sabra al-Mansuriyya dictate the less careful style of the stuccos? This and many other questions remain unresolved, a challenge for the future study of this site.

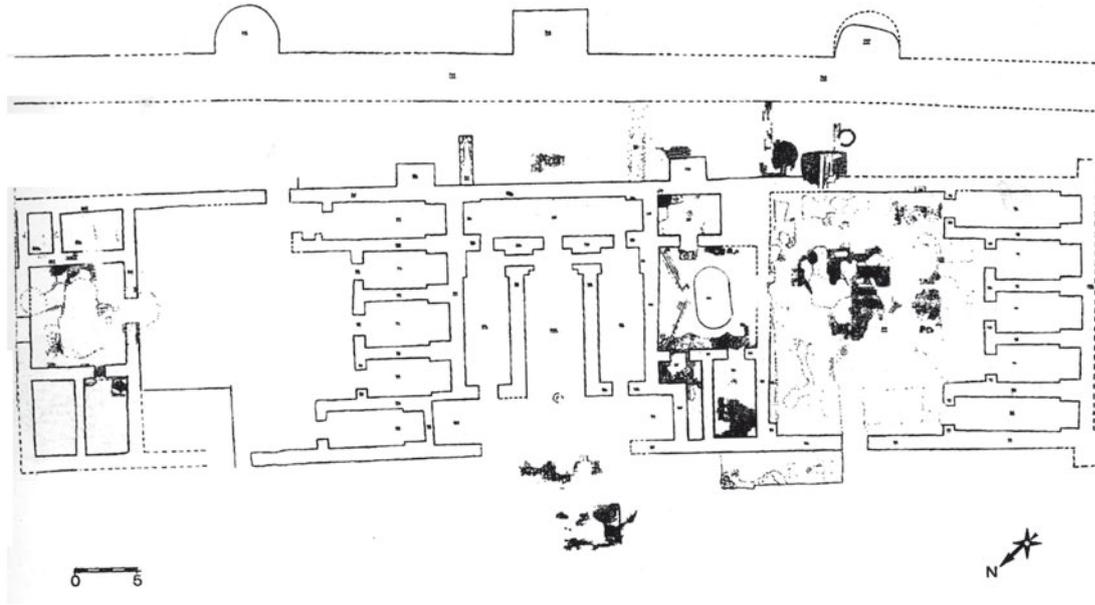


Fig. 1a. Plan of the southeast palace, Sabra al-Mansuriyya. (After Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah, "Sabra al-Mansûriyya: Une autre ville califale," *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrâ'* 4 [2004]: 255, fig. 3)

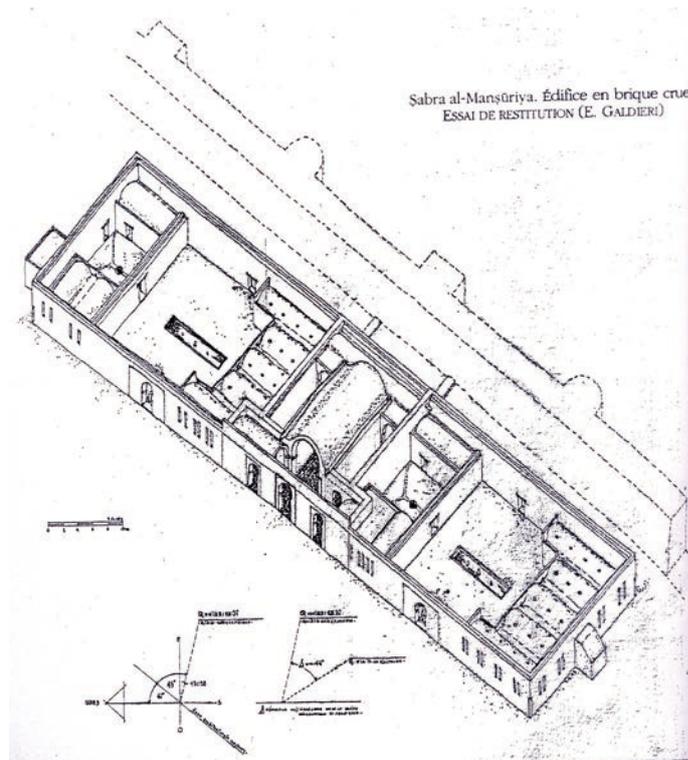


Fig. 1b. Reconstitution of the southeast palace at Sabra al-Mansuriyya proposed by Eugenio Galdieri.



Fig. 2a. Stucco, group 1. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 2b. Stucco, group 1. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 3a. Stucco, group 1. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 3b. Stucco, group 1. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)

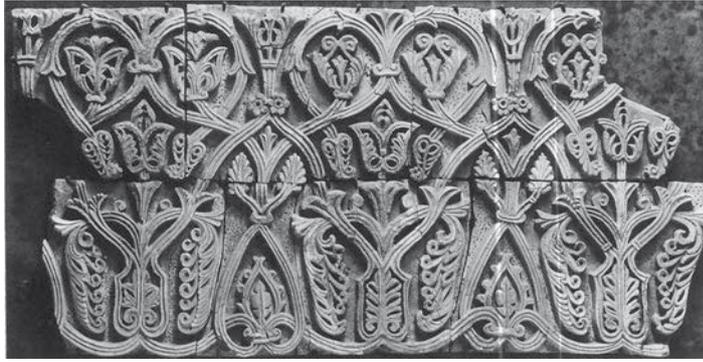


Fig. 4. Panel from the Palacio del Alcaide, Spain. (After Christian Ewert, "Die Dekorelemente des spätumayyadischen Fundkomplexes aus dem Cortijo del Alcaide (Prov. Córdoba)," *Madridrer Mitteilungen* 39 [1998]: pl. 53)

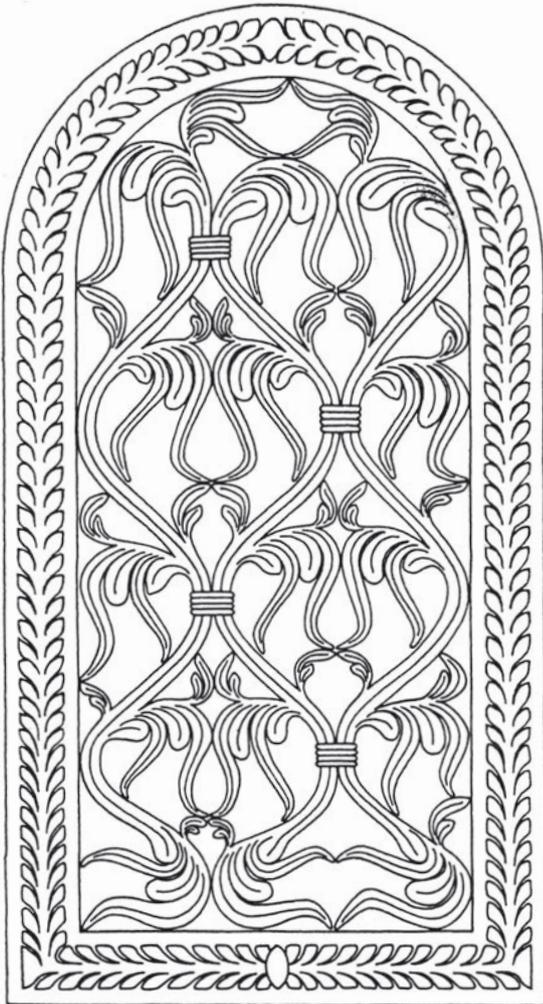


Fig. 5a. Drawing of a stucco panel from Tebessa. (After Jürgen Christern, *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa: Architektur und Ornamentik* [Wiesbaden, 1976], 311, pl. 62)

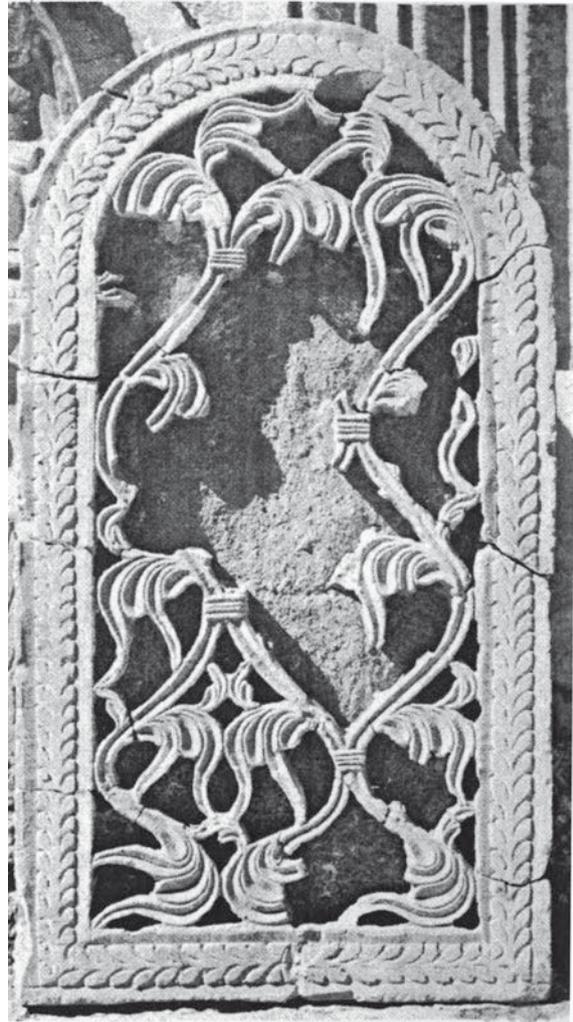


Fig. 5b. Stucco panel from Tebessa. (After Christern, *Pilgerheiligtum*, 311, pl. 62)



Fig. 6a. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 6b. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 6c. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 6d. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 7a. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 7b. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 8. Stucco, group 2; found on a fragment of a stucco of group 1. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 9a. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 9b. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 9c. Stucco, group 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 10a. Stucco, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 10b. Stucco, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 10c. Stucco, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Bar-rucand)



Fig. 11a. Stucco, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 11b. Stucco, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 12. Carved ivory pyxis. The caliphal period, al-Andalus, 965–70, New York, American Hispanic Society, inv. no. D752. (After Ernst Kühnel, *Die islamischen Elfenbeinskulpturen*, 8.–13. Jh. [Berlin, 1971], cat. no. 28)



Fig. 13a. Stucco, geometrical pattern, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 13b. Stucco, geometrical pattern, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 13c. Stucco, geometrical pattern with half-palmettes, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 13d. Stucco, vine leaf, group 3. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003-8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 14a. Stucco brackets. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barucand)



Fig. 14b. Stucco brackets. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barucand)



Fig. 15a. Stucco fragment found in 2007, sector 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 15b. Stucco fragments found in 2007, sector 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 15c. Stucco fragments found in 2007, sector 2. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 16. Stucco, head of a warrior. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



a



b



c



d

Figs. 17 a, b, c, and d. Stucco, reconstitution of the head of a young man. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 18. Stucco, head of a young man. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 19. Stucco, head of a young bearded man in profile. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig 20. Stucco, fragment of a head. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig 21a. Stucco, torso. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig 21b. Stucco, torso. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig 22. Stucco, horn held by a human hand. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig 23. Stucco, head of a bearded man. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 24a. Stucco, hare. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 24b. Stucco, head of a hare. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 25. Stucco, fragment of an ibex. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 26. Stucco, quadruped (a cow?). Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 27a. Stucco, fragment of the mane of a lion. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 27b. Stucco, fragment of the head of a lion. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 28. Stucco, head of a griffon. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 29a. Stucco, rider with stirrup on horseback. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 29b. Stucco, rider with stirrup on horseback. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 30. Stucco, reconstitution of a rider. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)

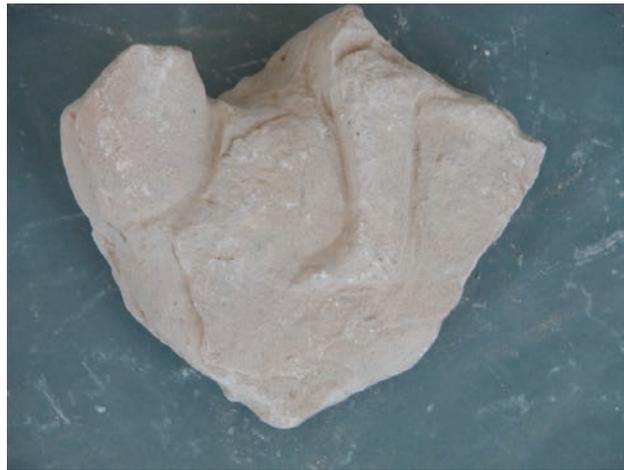


Fig. 31. Stucco, fragment of a dromedary with rider. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 32a. Stucco, fragment of a dromedary with rider. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 32b. Stucco, fragment of the head of a dromedary. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 33. Stucco, reconstitution of an eagle. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 34a. Stucco, fragment of an eagle. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 34b. Stucco, fragment of an eagle. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 35a. Stucco, fragment of an eagle. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)



Fig. 35b. Stucco, fragment of an eagle. Excavation in Sabra al-Mansuriyya, 2003–8. (Photo: photographic collection of Marianne Barrucand)

## NOTES

1. Concerning the historical background, see Heinz Halm, *Das Reich des Mahdi: Der Aufstieg der Fatimiden (875–973)* (München, 1991; Engl. trans. Leiden, 1996); and Michael Brett, *The Rise of the Fatimids: The World of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in the Tenth Century CE* (Leiden, 2001). See also Lucien Golvin, *Le Magrib central à l'époque des Zirides* (Paris, 1957); and Farhad Dachraoui, *Le califat fatimide au Maghreb* (Tunis, 1987).
2. Concerning the excavations, see Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah, "Sabra al-Mansûriya: Une autre ville califale," *Cuadernos de Madīnat al-Zahrâ'* 4 (2004): 241–55; Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah, "Chronique d'archéologie: Première campagne de fouilles à Sabra al-Mansûriya (Kairouan, Tunisie)," *Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez* 34, 1 (2004): 401–9; Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah, "Sabra al-Mansûriya: Une nouvelle approche archéologique," in *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres de l'année 2006: Journées d'étude nord-africaines* (Paris, 2006), 115–35; Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah, "Sabra al-Mansûriya (Kairouan, Tunisie): Chronique de fouille 2007," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 119 (2007): 503–11; *Sabra al-Mansûriya: Capitale fatimide*, ed. Patrice Cressier and Mourad Rammah (final report on five years of excavations) (Rome, forthcoming 2009).
3. At present, more than 3,000 fragments have been found. We do not use the term "stucco" as Vitruvius (d. ca. 25 B.C.) did, and as is often found in publications intended for specialists of classical antiquity. For us, it means the lime of the coating of walls (with or without plaster), which dries slowly and can be used as a flat wall coating, as well as for relief decoration. Exact analyses of the quality of the stuccos in Sabra al-Mansuriyya are in progress and will soon be established thanks to Alain Dandrau. For stucco materials and technique, see Hermann Kühn, "Was ist Stuck? Arten—Zusammensetzung—Geschichtliches," in *Stuck des frühen und hohen Mittelalters: Geschichte, Technologie, Konservierung, Tagung Hildesheim, Juni 1995*, ed. Matthias Exner (Munich, 1996) (= Hefte des deutschen Nationalkomitees / ICOMOS 19), 17–24; Alain Dandrau, "La peinture murale minoenne: Matériaux et techniques de production," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 123 (2003): 1–30; Alain Dandrau, "La peinture murale minoenne, II: La production des enduits: matériaux et typologie," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique* 124 (2004): 1–27; Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon, "La nature des stucs entre le Ve et le XIIe siècle dans l'Europe médiévale: Confrontation de la caractérisation physico-chimique des matériaux aux contextes géologiques, techniques et artistiques de la production," in *Stucs et décors de la fin de l'antiquité au moyen âge (Ve–XIIe siècles): Actes du colloque international tenu à Poitiers du 16 au 19 septembre 2004*, ed. Christian Sapin (Turnhout, 2006): 13–48.
4. Jean André Peyssonnel, *Voyage dans la régence de Tunis, 1724*, ed. Mohamed L. Snoussi (Tunis, 2003), 84ff.; A. Berbrügger, "Itinéraires archéologiques en Tunisie," *Revue archéologique* 2 (1857–58): 196; Victor Guérin, *Voyage archéologique dans la régence de Tunis*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1862), 2:335ff.; Charles Tissot, *Géographie comparée de la province romaine d'Afrique: Exploration scientifique de la Tunisie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1888), 2:607ff.; Cdt. Monlezun, "Mémoires: Kairouan à travers les temps," *Bulletin de géographie historique et descriptive: Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* 2 (1889): 63; *Voyage en Tunisie de R. Cagnat et H. Saladin*, ed. François Baratte (Paris, 2005), 114. I would like to thank Patrice Cressier for his bibliographical help concerning the travelers of the past.
5. Published 1924: Georges Marçais, "Recherches d'archéologie musulmane en Tunisie," *Bulletin de la Société française des fouilles archéologiques* (1924): 39–47. However, the excavation seems to go back to 1921: see L. Poinssot, "Rapport sommaire de M. Georges Marçais sur les recherches entreprises par lui à Sabrah en novembre 1921," *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques* (1922): 26; Slimane Mostafa Zbiss, "L'activité du Service d'Archéologie Musulmane de la Direction des Antiquités et Arts de Tunisie," *Bulletin économique et social de la Tunisie* 81 (1953): 74–78; Slimane Mostafa Zbiss, "La représentation des êtres animés dans le décor musulman d'Ifrîqiyyah (Tunisie)," *Cahiers des arts et techniques d'Afrique du Nord* 4 (1955): 3–14; Slimane Mostafa Zbiss, "Mahdiya et Sabra-Mansouriya: Nouveaux documents d'art fatimide d'Occident," *Journal Asiatique* 244 (1956): 79–93; Slimane Mostafa Zbiss, "Documents d'architecture fatimite d'Occident," *Ars Orientalis* 3 (1959): 27–31.
6. Michel Terrasse, "Recherches archéologiques d'époque islamique en Afrique du Nord," in *Comptes rendus des séances de 1976 de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (Paris, 1977), 591–95; idem, *Islam et Occident méditerranéen de la conquête aux Ottomans* (Paris, 2001), 76–82.
7. Only a few of them have ever been published: Michel Terrasse, "L'Islam," in *Le grand atlas de l'archéologie*, ed. Jacques Bersani (Paris, 1985), 155; Mourad Rammah, "Sabra al-Mansûriya, cité fatimide," in *Tunisie, un patrimoine inédit* (exhibition catalogue, Institut du monde arabe) (Paris, 1995), 86–90; Mourad Rammah, *Tùnez, tierra de culturas* (Barcelona, 2004). We would here like to thank Antonio Vallejo-Triano and Salvador Escobar for their collaboration and help with the stuccos, particularly in recognizing the relations between apparently isolated fragments, thus allowing for reconstructions and possible locations of significant forms.
8. All figures are located at the end of the article.
9. This database includes more than 3,000 stucco fragments, classified in a catalogue according to their forms and motifs.
10. This schema has been used for the organization of the data bank.
11. We would like to thank Madame Bénédicte Palazzo-Bertholon for her knowledge and for her patience in showing us the stuccos, and the elements used to fix them to walls, in Vouneuil. See Palazzo-Bertholon, "La nature des stucs," 13–48.

12. Compare with Jürgen Christern, *Das frühchristliche Pilgerheiligtum von Tebessa: Architektur und Ornamentik* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 311, fig. 47b; p. 52b, pl. 62. For stucco decorations found in Christian Tunisia and Algeria, see Pierre Cayrel, "Une basilique donatiste en Numidie," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome* 51 (1934): 126–28, fig. 5, pl. 1; M. Simon, "Fouilles dans la basilique de Henchir el-Ateuch (Algérie)," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome* 51 (1934): 172, pl. 2; Michel Labrousse, "Basilique et reliquaire d'Henchir Tarlist (Algérie)," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome* 55 (1938): 235ff.; G.-L. Feuille, "L'église de Yunca," *Revue tunisienne* (1940): 131–34, pls. 1–5; Louis Leschi, "La basilique chrétienne en Algérie," in *Actes du 4e Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne* (Rome, 1940), 1:157; André Berthier, *Les vestiges du christianisme antique dans la Numidie centrale* (Algiers, 1942), 96ff., 181–85, pls. 9, 29–30; G.-L. Feuille, "Note sur le monastère des Iles Kneiss," *Revue tunisienne* 49–51 (1942): 253ff., n. 11; G.-L. Feuille, "Stucs et peintures de l'église de Yunca," *Cahiers archéologiques* 4 (1949): 131–34, pls. 1–4; Mohamed Fendri, *Basiliques chrétiennes de la Skhira* (Paris, 1961), 17–27, 58–59, pls. D, E, F, 6, 8, 10; Noël Duval and Paul-Albert Février, "Le décor des monuments chrétiens d'Afrique (Algérie, Tunisie)," in *Actes du 8e Congrès international d'archéologie chrétienne* (Barcelone, 1972), 5–55, pls. 1–26; Isabelle Gui, Noël Duval, and Jean-Pierre Caillet, *Basiliques chrétiennes d'Afrique du Nord*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1992), 1:95, 319–21, pl. 95.
13. On the so-called style A of Samarra's stucco, see K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, rev. 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York, 1979), 2:286, pls. 52 d–e, pls. 78 d–f.
14. For Sabra al-Mansuriyya, see Lotfi Abdeljaouad, "Inscriptions arabes des monuments islamiques des grandes villes de Tunisie: Monastir, Kairouan, Sfax, Sousse et Tunis (2e s./8e s.–10e s./16e s.)," 3 vols. (Thèse de doctorat, Université de Provence, 2001); Lucien Golvin, *Recherches archéologiques à la Qal'a des Banû Hammâd* (Paris, 1965); 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Ma'zûz, *al-Kitâbât al-kūfiyya fi'l-jazâ'ir bayna al-qarnayn al-thānī wa-l-thāmin al-hijriyayn* (Algiers, 2002). For the Qal'a, see Imene Bessah, "Recherches sur le décor architectural à la Qal'a des Banû Hammâd," 2 vols. (Mémoire de master, Paris, 2007).
15. In fact, the glass used is transparent and not blue. Probably a fragment of a bottle, it is rather carelessly fixed on the hole marking the eye. The slight blue is only an effect of the hole behind the glass. This issue will be discussed in Cressier and Rammah, *Sabra al-Mansûriya: Capitale fatimide*, forthcoming in 2009.
16. See Zbiss, "Mahdiya et Sabra-Mansouriya," 88, pl. IV.
17. See Cressier and Rammah, "Chronique de fouille 2007."
18. For the basin of al-Mansur, see Almut von Gladiss, "Aspekte der spanisch-islamischen Kunst," in *Denkmäler des Islam, von den Anfängen bis zum 12. Jahrhundert: Hispania Antiqua*, ed. C. Ewert, A. v. Gladiss, K.-H. Golzio, and J.-P. Wisshak (Mainz am Rhein, 1997), 176–77, pls. 110a, 110b. For the basin of 'Abd al-Malik, in Marrakech, see *Les Andalousies de Damas à Cordoue* (exhibition catalogue, Institut du monde arabe) (Paris, 2000), 134, no. 133.
19. Purificación Marinetto Sánchez, "Pila del Palacio de Almanzor," in *Arte islámico en Granada: Propuesta para un Museo de la Alhambra* (exhibition catalogue) (Granada, 1995), nos. 74, 277–80; von Gladiss, "Aspekte der spanisch-islamischen Kunst," 177–78, pls. 110a and 111b.
20. Gui, Duval, and Caillet, *Basiliques chrétiennes*, 1:74ff., 2: pl. 55, 3 and pl. 55, 5.
21. See Nicole Blanc, "Le stuc dans l'art romain: Origine et développement d'une technique décorative, Ier s. av.-IIe s. ap. J.-C.," 4 vols. (Thèse d'état, Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2007), 557, fig. 552; 729, fig. 740.
22. We present here only the general direction of our research, the results of which will be published in Cressier and Rammah, *Sabra al-Mansûriya: Capitale fatimide*, forthcoming in 2009.
23. See Georges Marçais, *L'architecture musulmane d'Occident: Tunisie, Algérie, Maroc, Espagne, et Sicile* (Paris, 1954), 69–134; Golvin, *Le Magrib central*; Rachid Bourouiba, "Rapport préliminaire sur la campagne de fouilles de septembre 1964 à la Qal'a des Bani Hammad," *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* (1962–65): 243–61; Golvin, *Recherches archéologiques*; Rachid Bourouiba, "Monnaies et bijoux trouvés à la Qal'a des Bani Hammad," *Revue de l'Occident musulman et de la Méditerranée*, numéro special (1970): 67–77; Rachid Bourouiba, "Sur six chapiteaux trouvés à la Qal'a des Bani Hammad," *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* 4 (1970): 435–44; Rachid Bourouiba, "Mihraabs hammadides," *Revue des études islamiques* 40 (1972): 329–42; Rachid Bourouiba, "Objets de plâtre et pierre sculptée mis au jour à la Qal'a des Bani Hammad," *Bulletin d'archéologie algérienne* 5 (1971–74): 223–33; Rachid Bourouiba, *Les hammadides* (Algiers, 1984); Rachid Bourouiba, *Apports de l'Algérie à l'architecture religieuse arabo-islamique* (Algiers, 1986); Allaoua Amara, "Pouvoir, économie et société dans le Maghreb hammadide (395/1004–547/1152)," 2 vols. (Thèse de doctorat, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne [Paris], 2002); al-Ma'zûz, *al-Kitâbât al-kūfiyya*; Bessah, "Décor architectural."
24. See, for instance, Hady Roger Idris, *La Berbérie orientale sous les Zirides, Xe–XIIe s.*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1962), 2:777ff.; Umberto Rizzitano, "Gli Arabi in Italia," in *L'occidente e l'Islam nell'alto medioevo*, 2 vols., Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 12 (Spoleto, 1965), 1:93–114; Chédly Bouyahia, *La vie littéraire en Ifriqiya sous les Zirides (362–555/972–1160)* (Tunis, 1972); U. Rizzitano, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1954–2004), s.v. "Kalbids"; L. C. Chiarelli, "Sicily during the Fatimid Age" (PhD diss., University of Utah, 1986); Henri Bresc, "La Sicile, de la pré-croisade à la monarchie oecuménique (1060–1190)," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 35 (2004): 22–24. See also Ernst J. Grube and Jeremy Johns, *The Painted Ceilings of the Cappella Palatina, Islamic Art*, Suppl. 1 (Treviso, 2005),

- 282–495, pls. 1–104; the bibliography and the iconographical documentation with its remarks are useful for Zirid art as well.
25. David Knipp, “The Torre Pisana in Palermo: A Maghribi Concept and Its Byzantinization,” in *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, ed. Andreas Speer and Lydia Wegener, *Miscellanea mediaevalia* 33 (Berlin, 2006), 745–74.
  26. François Deroche, “Cercles et entrelacs: Format et décor des Corans maghrébins médiévaux,” in *Comptes rendus des séances de l’année 2001 de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres* (Paris, 2001), 593–620.
  27. Concerning Libya, see Abdulhamid Abdussaid, “The Old Islamic City of Adjabiya,” *Libya Antiqua* 1 (1964): 115–19; H. Blake, A. Hutt, and D. Whitehouse, “Adjâbîyah and the Earliest Fatimid Architecture,” *Libya Antiqua* 8 (1971): 105–20; David Whitehouse, “The Excavations at Adjabiya: An Interim Report,” *Libyan Studies* 3 (1972): 12–21; David Whitehouse, “Excavations at Adjabiya: Second Interim Report,” *Libyan Studies* 4 (1973): 20–27; Abdulhamid Abdussaid, “The Old Islamic City of Adjabiya,” *Art and Archaeology Research Papers* (1976): 19–24; J. A. Riley, “Islamic Wares from Adjabiya,” *Libyan Studies* 13 (1982): 85–104; Géza Fehérvári, Masoud Shaglouf, and Hal Bishop, *Excavations at Surt (Medinat al-Sultan) between 1977 and 1981*, ed. Elizabeth Savage (London, 2002); Michael Brett, “Libya: Some Aspects of the Mediaeval Period, First–Ninth Century H/ Seventh–Fifteenth Century AD,” *Libyan Studies* 20 (1989): 210–14; Geoffrey D. King, “Islamic Archaeology in Libya, 1969–1989,” *Libyan Studies* 20 (1989): 193–207.
  28. Concerning the artistic relations between Fatimid Egypt and Ifriqiya, see K.A.C. Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt*, vol. 1, *Ikshîds and Fāṭimîds, A. D. 939–1171* (New York, 1978); Lucien Golvin, “Note sur les entrées en avant-corps et en chicane dans l’architecture musulmane de l’Afrique du Nord,” *Annales de l’Institut d’études orientales* 16 (1958): 221–45; Marçais, *L’architecture musulman d’Occident*; Dachraoui, *Le califat fatimide*; and, recently and particularly importantly, Jonathan M. Bloom, *Arts of the City Victorious: Islamic Art and Architecture in Fatimid North Africa and Egypt* (New Haven, 2007).
  29. See Maribel Fierro, “Madinat al-Zahrâ: El paraíso y los fatimies,” *Al-Qantara* 25 (2004): 300–327.
  30. See n. 12 above. I would like to thank François Baratte for his interest in Sabra al-Mansuriyya and for his very efficient bibliographical help.
  31. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, forms the basis of our knowledge; see also K.A.C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, rev. and supp. James W. Allen (Aldershot, 1989). Jens Kröger scarcely dealt with the Umayyad stuccos, but his book is interesting for his analysis of some of the stuccos of Sabra al-Mansuriyya: see Jens Kröger, *Sasanidischer Stuckdekor: Ein Beitrag zum Relieffdekor aus Stuck in sasanidischer und frühislamischer Zeit nach den Ausgrabungen von 1928/9 und 1931/2 in der sasanidischen Metropole Ktesiphon (Iraq) und unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Stuckfunde vom Taht-i-Sulaimân (Iran), aus Nizâmâbâd (Iran) sowie zahlreicher anderer Fundorte* (Mainz am Rhein, 1982).
  32. For Sedrata, see Marguérite van Berchem, “Sedrata, un chapitre nouveau de l’histoire de l’art musulman: Campagnes de 1951 et 1952,” *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 157–72; Ali Hamlaoui, “Les stucs de Sedrata,” in *L’Algérie en héritage: Art et histoire* (exhibition catalogue, Institut du monde arabe) (Paris, 2004), 301–6.
  33. On the classical heritage, see Marçais, *L’architecture musulmane d’Occident*, 107; Marianne Barrucand, “Les monuments fatimides et leur décoration à l’époque de la fondation de la mosquée de Bâb Mardûm: La question des héritages classiques,” in *Entre el califato y la taifa: Mil años del Cristo de la Luz: Actas del Congreso internacional, Toledo 1999* (Toledo, 2000), 153–68; Marianne Barrucand, “Les chapiteaux de la mosquée al-Azhar et l’émergence d’un type de chapiteau médiéval en Egypte,” *Annales Islamologiques* 36 (2002): 37–75; Marianne Barrucand, “Die Rezeption spätklassischer Spolien in Ägypten und im Maghreb (10.-12. Jh.),” in *Al-Andalus und Europa, Zwischen Orient und Okzident*, ed. Martina Müller-Wiener, Christiane Kothe, Karl-Heinz Golzio, and Joachim Gierlichs (Petersberg, 2004), 163–75. For Achir, see Golvin, “Note sur les entrées”; and Lucien Golvin, “Le Palais de Zîrî à Achir,” *Ars Orientalis* 6 (1966): 47–67.
  34. For some beautiful Raqqa illustrations, see *Les Andalousies* (exhibition catalogue), 28–31, nos. 5–12. For a recent work on Umayyad architectural decoration, in which stucco is widely discussed, see Rina Talgam, *The Stylistic Origins of Umayyad Sculpture and Architectural Decoration*, 2 vols. (Wiesbaden, 2004).
  35. Earlier publications on the pre-Islamic stuccos of Ifriqiya insist on their dependence on East Mediterranean and Near Eastern art, but recent research tends to reject this hypothesis.

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