

# European Influences on Seventeenth-Century Persian Painting

Of handsome Europeans, naked ladies, and Parisian timepieces

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Anyone who studies Persian painting of the late Safavid period from the accession of Shah ‘Abbas I in 1587 to the death of Shah Sulayman in 1694 cannot help but admire the stylistic development and myriad individual forms of expression that are among its most salient qualities. The sheer abundance of themes, styles, and painting techniques sets this period apart both from the age of Shah Isma‘il I (r. 1501–1521) and, even more so, from that of Shah Tahmasp I (r. 1521–1576), which together count as the “classical period” of Persian painting. The nude, for example, became an important new genre, while the “linear style” of the great master Riza ‘Abbasi gave way to the “modulating style” of Shaykh ‘Abbasi, and, even more significantly, to the “European style” of Muhammad Zaman and ‘Ali Quli Jabadar. This development would not have been possible had not Persia under Shah ‘Abbas sought closer ties to Europe, and had not British, Dutch, and French merchants to say nothing of countless European diplomats made the journey to Isfahan.

Once again it was the foreigners flocking to Persia—this time with peaceful intentions—who left their mark there. Just as the Turkic-Mongol ruler Timur (Tamerlane) and his successors had held sway over this vast territory in the fourteenth century, introducing both the fine arts and objects of everyday use of the Far East, now it was the Europeans with their artifacts that were helping to shape and transform Persian art. Yet the Europeans were only one group among many. Neighboring India also played an important role, as did the Ottoman Empire on Persia’s doorstep, even if to a far lesser extent.

The discussion that follows will focus on three key themes: depictions of foreigners, the nude, and, finally, the “European style” known as *farangi-sazi*. The development of Persian

painting is not a continuum but rather falls into two distinct phases. The first covers the period from 1590 to ca. 1650/60 and the second the decades from the middle of the century to ca. 1700.

## Europeans as an Erotic Motif

As the number of Europeans in Isfahan increased, more and more Persian artists from ca. 1600 onwards discovered the potential of these exotically dressed foreigners as a motif—at first in miniature painting, and later in other genres, too. In painting, the single-leaf miniature had slowly but surely taken the place of the manuscript illustration, and by the turn of the century had become the medium of choice. It was first and foremost artists such as Shaykh Muhammad, Siyavosh or Sadiqi Beg<sup>1</sup> who began to paint group scenes or even just single figures, which out of respect for the drawing were colored with great restraint. While the genre was not strictly speaking their invention—single-leaf miniatures were certainly not unknown—these are the artists who can be credited with developing the new, pared-down aesthetic that would henceforth characterize these works. The reasons for its popularity just a few years prior to 1600 are many and various and date back to developments earlier in the sixteenth century. One crucial factor might be Shah Tahmasp’s own abandonment of miniature painting. Famed as one of the greatest patrons in the history of Persian painting, he ran his own miniaturists’ studio or *kitab-khana* with a library and workshop for the pro-

1 See Welch 1976.

duction of books and there assembled all the most talented and most famous Persian artists of the age. Notwithstanding his love of miniature painting, Tahmasp decided to close his great *kitab-khana* in the second half of his reign (1525–1574)—a decision that for a long time was thought to have been motivated by religious reasons, although these days it is assumed that other factors weighed more heavily. The artists formerly employed there had no choice but to seek a living elsewhere. Some sought a position at court, either inside or outside Persia, which in many cases meant India. Others began working on their own account, creating miniatures that instead of illustrating manuscripts were paintings in their own right, while at the same time reducing their use of costly pigments to the absolute minimum. Being comparatively inexpensive, the advent of these autonomous works of art also had the effect of enlarging the circle of potential buyers.<sup>2</sup>

Single-leaf miniatures could be collected like works of calligraphy and then stitched or pasted into fanfold albums called *muraqqa'ha* (sing. *muraqqa'*).<sup>3</sup> This ultimately explains the choice of subject matter, too. As Persian painting was by nature closely tied to literature—up until this point almost all painting had in fact been book illumination—new themes were now needed that could manage without textual sources. The palette of painterly strategies for either illustrating alone or illustrating and annotating or even interpreting a text that had been cultivated over the centuries soon became superfluous. Single figures, be it a young man or a young woman, an Uzbek or a peasant, a mystic or a dandy, proved especially suitable as motifs. Among the most popular subjects was without a doubt the *jeunesse dorée*, bright young things depicted pensively reclining in a meadow, flirtatiously passing a wine goblet, or parading their lithe young bodies to maximum effect. Not surprisingly, such figures also provided excellent models for illustrations of European dress (cat. nos. 66–68).

The young, as yet beardless men are clad in a way that can be broadly described as bourgeois European, and in most cases are shown sporting a slouch hat, cloak, doublet, ruff, knee breeches, and hose. Whether they really are Europeans or Persians disguised as Europeans it is not always easy to tell, since with very few exceptions they all wear sidelocks, slippers, and a sash made of two different pieces of cloth—all of which are purely Persian elements. In their choice of cloth patterns and colors, moreover, the painters of these works were guided by Persian rather than European conventions and preferences. Although the men's fashions by and large date from the time of the Thirty Years' War, there is something slightly formulaic about them: the garments themselves are treated more like ciphers, whose purpose is to convey what is meant by "European." The iconography is self-explanatory and does not extend beyond the aforementioned sartorial elements. There are two or three distinct types, the most common of which is the standing figure shown bowing either to the right or to the left. Although these types and variations of the same are certainly not confined to miniature painting

2 Ibid., pp. 185ff., Farhad 2001, pp. 115–16.

3 For a detailed account of the early history of *muraqqa'* up to ca. 1600, see Roxburgh 2005.

but also adorn tile panels, murals, and door panels (cat. 71), there can be no doubt that they form a homogeneous group: Of the two variations (cat. nos. 66 and 68) of a young man clad in a gray or sky-blue doublet that are now in Geneva, one originates from the hand of Riza 'Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635) and is dated the 8 Shawwal 1037 (June 11, 1628).<sup>4</sup> In another instance, it was Riza's pupil Mu'in Musavvir (1617–1697/98) whose elegant formulation fired the imagination of two, as yet unidentified, miniaturists.<sup>5</sup> Thus, while Riza 'Abbasi himself can be credited with having developed this theme in the second quarter of the century, it was his pupils and their successors who further popularized it.

One such miniature now at the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva amounts to rather more than a mere type. The work is full of sartorial detail, such as breeches secured by garters tied in bows just below the knee, a row of buttons running up the side of each thigh affording us a glimpse of the lining underneath, and shoes embellished with a rosette on the instep (cat. 69). Clearly the painter was working from a European costume print showing a young man dressed à la mode of 1630 or thereabouts.

Another exception is the *Young Woman in European Dress* (cat. 70), who to judge by the painter's use of a wash and his more pronounced modeling of the facial features should be dated somewhat later. A comparison of this work with Peter Oliver's miniature portrait of Venetia Stanley painted between 1615 and 1622 (fig. 68) shows that the artist must have had access to similar British miniatures.<sup>6</sup>

### *The erotic foreigner*

The question that is bound to arise now—assuming it has not already done so—is what it was that made young people in European dress so popular? Was it simply the pleasure the Persians took in all things exotic? Such an explanation seems likely, bearing in mind how cosmopolitan Isfahan had become towards the end of the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629). The proverbial Persian saying "*Esfahan nafz-e jahan*" or "Isfahan is half the world" did not arise by chance. The pride the people of Isfahan took in this development is apparent in the murals adorning the *Chihil Sutun* (see also cat. 71), the Palace of Forty Columns, built in 1646, and in book illumination as well. One example from an illustrated edition of the *Nahj al-Balagha* (Sayings of Ali) (cat. 72) shows Europeans alongside Persian courtiers as a matter of course. In one double-page miniature now housed in Teheran, the Europeans are just one delegation among many others—from Central Asia

4 While cat. nos. 64 and 65 together with a third work from the former Mahboubian Collection (Inv. no. 1007) form one group of young men, cat. 66 together with the aforementioned work by Riza 'Abbasi (illustrated in Canby 1996, p. 200, no. 127, now lost) and another painting by an unknown artist that likewise counts as lost (Ettinghausen/Yarshater 1981, p. 269) form another group.

5 Mu'in Musavvir's young man is now in the Khalili Collection (Inv. no. MSS 1000); the Metropolitan Museum in New York holds a mirror-image imitation (Inv. no. 1955.55.121) and the Pierpont Morgan Library a wittily inventive variation of the same motif (Read-Albums, MS 386.8).

6 See also the essay by Gerry Schwartz published here in this catalogue, pp. XY–XY, note 5 and the hypothesis in Melikian-Chirvani 2007, p. 108.



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**66 Young Man in European Dress**

Style of Habiballah Mashhadi (1587–1628)  
Iran, 1st quarter 17th century  
Pigments on paper; sheet: 28.9 x 18.7 cm, image:  
16.3 x 7.6 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi, 1971-0107-  
0373

**67 Young Man in European Dress**

Iran, 2nd quarter 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 27.8 x 18 cm,  
image: 17.2 x 9 cm  
London, The British Museum, 1948,1009,0.62

The two young men in these miniatures are clad in the "European" manner. Both wear a tight-fitting, long-sleeved doublet with baggy knee-breeches and hose. A beret or slouch hat made of felt and a cloak thrown casually over the shoulder complete the look. Lace collars and cuffs are a common feature, and one figure is depicted wearing a narrow leather belt.

Yet both young men also have long sidelocks, proving that they are indeed Persians, not Europeans; the young man sporting a slouch hat, moreover, is wearing breeches patterned in the Persian style. What this kind of dressing up

signified is not yet fully understood. Whereas Persian poetry originally cast the adolescent Turk as the object of all amorous longing, in the course of the seventeenth century, the same role passed to *farangi* or "Franks," meaning Europeans. Dressing up in European garb was perhaps a way of assuming an erotically connoted identity. The idea may seem far-fetched, but it is worth remembering that in the early nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for young Persian women to don men's clothes as a way of making themselves more desirable; some even had themselves painted in this guise (see, for example, the Qajar oil painting of a young woman dressed up as a young man in Bern Historical Museum, MB 135).

The long-necked wine flask and shallow cup also support the erotic interpretation. Both objects are a common feature of Persian miniatures and can be read as sexual symbols. They are also pointers to the figure of the *saqi*, the cupbearer of Persian poetry, who is called on to dispense pleasure (in the form of wine promising oblivion) and who is often identical with the beloved.

So how are these two young men to be read? Are they simply Persians in disguise? Do they represent the handsome, sexually desirable,

European lover? By playing the part of the cupbearer, are they perhaps offering themselves as such? Does the cup itself symbolize a kiss, or does it have connotations extending even beyond that? What is not in doubt is that both works play with erotic ambiguity and mobilize a whole arsenal of allusions with which to amuse and titillate the viewer. The method is similar to that of Persian poetry, which likewise relishes the ambiguity between spiritual matters and flesh-and-blood eroticism.

*Lit.: Robinson 1992, p. 146, no. 249.*

**68 Young Man in European Dress**

Iran, 2nd quarter 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 33.2 x 20 cm,  
image: 16.6 x 9.8 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi, 1971-0107-  
0070

Depictions of handsome young men are one of the main themes of Persian painting of the first half of the seventeenth century. Young men in European dress form a subset of this group. And just as the genre in general tended to spawn numerous variations on the same theme, so,



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too, did these depictions of men donning European garb. The composition of the painting shown here, for example, can be traced back to a work by Riza 'Abbasi of 1628, which unfortunately is now deemed lost.

'Abbasi was not just the greatest artist of the age, a painter whose style and themes the generations that came after him strove to emulate and perpetuate, but he can also be credited with having been the first Persian artist to take up the theme of the *ghulam-i farangi*, the "young European." That paintings bearing his signature keep on turning up is thus not surprising (among them this work, where what little of the signature is legible can be read as "[Ri]za 'Abbasi"). There is a third version of this work (published in Ettinghausen/Yarshater 1981, p. 269) whose whereabouts unfortunately cannot be ascertained.

One particularly striking feature of this composition is the lapdog snapping at the young man's heels. It could of course be regarded as a European "souvenir"—both as a motif of Persian painting and as a common enough sight on the streets of Isfahan. Viewed in this light, linking European dress with a European lapdog makes perfectly good sense. In Persian painting, however, lapdogs invariably have an erotic, even

sexual significance. One has only to look at Afzal al-Husaini's *Reclining Woman and Her Lapdog* (cat. 84) in which the little dog is shown drinking out of a bowl, or 'Abbasi's painting of a young man propped up against some cushions (fig. 69 in the essay) giving his dog something to drink, to be persuaded of this. While the dog in this work is merely tagging along as if it wanted to play, it could still be the vehicle of a cryptic message: after all, the young man is holding a long-necked bottle, so should presumably be read as a *saqi*, as the cupbearer who may even be the beloved. The dog, whose instinctive playfulness leads it to follow anyone and everyone, might then be a witty allusion to those men of Isfahan who ran after such fair youths—and whom Riza 'Abbasi likewise singled out for attention.

*Lit.: Robinson 1992, p. 146, no. 250.*

#### 69 European Young Man

Iran, 2nd quarter 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper;  
sheet: 28.2 x 19.3 cm, image: 18.9 x 11 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi,  
1971-0107-0383

Not all the young men dressed as Europeans in Persian miniatures are modeled on those of Riza 'Abbasi. Occasionally, as in this case, the painter worked from a European print. This is evident both from the clothes, the details of which far exceed the painterly conventions of the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and from the young man's mannered pose—admittedly somewhat awkwardly reproduced—which bespeaks an early Baroque model. A likely source is one of the numerous costume prints that in those days could be purchased in all major mercantile centers and that as a genre were as popular as they were widespread.

The painting bears a partially erased signature, which remains a source of puzzlement. It names one Muqim, although there is no mention of anyone by that name in Karimzadeh Tabrizi's biography of Iranian artists.

*Lit.: Robinson 1992, p. 152, no. 275; Menges 2007.*



Fig. 71

**Fig. 71** Riza 'Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635), *European Giving a Dog a Drink*, 1634, pigments on paper, 14.5 x 19.4 cm (Detroit Institute of Arts, 58.334)



Fig. 72

**Fig. 72** Peter Oliver (1594–1648), *Venetia Stanley, Lady Digby*, 1615–22, pigments on vellum, 6.4 x 5 cm (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, P.3&A-1950)

and Mongolia—attending upon a prince.<sup>7</sup> But somehow this explanation does not go far enough, especially as the examples cited all date from the second half of the century. For a more satisfactory answer, we must first take a closer look at the young people themselves and their attributes. On doing so, we notice that most of them are holding either a shallow drinking cup or a flask, as if they were serving wine. According to traditional Persian iconography, this can only mean that what we are looking at here are depictions of *saqi* or cupbearers.

The *saqi* plays a leading role in Persian poetry, as does the wine he serves. This is especially apparent in the *Divan* of Hafez (ca. 1315–ca. 1390), the most famous Persian poet of them all. But the cupbearer also plays a role in the works of Nizami (1141–1209), and at the time of the Safavids was a key player in the *Saqinameh* (The Book of the Cupbearer), a literary form that could be anything between a few dozen and four and a half thousand verses long. “*Biya saqi*,” meaning “Come, cupbearer!”—the summons by which the cupbearer is called upon to dispense wine and pleasure—is especially typical of such works.<sup>8</sup> The erotic innuendo is intentional,<sup>9</sup> and in

many works the *saqi* is indeed identical with the beloved.<sup>10</sup> The long-necked flask out of which the wine is poured and shallow cup from which it is sipped are likewise open to erotic interpretation.<sup>11</sup> That the pleasures thus induced might include not just drunkenness but sexual gratification, too, is confirmed by a sheet by Riza 'Abbasi bearing an inscription that translates as follows: “Completed on Tuesday, the 22 Ramadan 1043 [March 22, 1634] for [illegible]. Love compels me to run bare-foot and bare-headed in that alley [of desire] like [those] foreign slaves [*ghulaman-I farangi*]. Work of the humble Riza 'Abbasi,” (fig. 69).<sup>12</sup> As is often the case, the lines are open to interpretation—all the more so bearing in mind the picture within the picture: the Persian portrayed on one of the cushions tucked under the young man’s arm, who appears to be gazing up longingly at the European. Perhaps we are looking at Riza’s own alter ego here—or that of his patron, who like the young European is driven by his desire to wander the streets in search of the right partner.

The wine pitcher in the young man’s right hand and the drinking cup he is holding out to the little dog tell us that what we are looking at here is indeed a *saqi* and hence an object of desire.

The dog lapping up the wine, incidentally, crops up again in a Persian miniature of a reclining woman by Mir Afzal al-Husaini, who was a pupil of Riza (see below, cat. 84). The unambiguous eroticism of Afzal’s work leaves us in no doubt

7 The miniature is part of the Golshan Album, and since the legendary hero Rostam features among courtiers, it was presumably intended for a copy of the *Shahnama*. The illustration is published in *Golestan Palace Library: A Portfolio of Miniature Paintings and Calligraphy* (Tehran, 2000), pp. 262–63.

8 See Losensky 2009.

9 This reading of it is confirmed by Annemarie Schimmel, who argues that starting in the late sixteenth century, “the Franks,” as Europeans are called in Persian, gradually took over the role of “dangerous lover” from another topos of Persian love poetry, namely the “fair Turk” (quoted after Landau 2011, p. 117).

10 See EIr 2012.

11 For more on the erotic symbolism here, see Gabriele Berrer-Wallbrecht 1979, pp. 275–87.

12 According to Babaie 2009, pp. 133–34.



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#### 70 European Young Lady

Attributed to Muhammad Tahir  
Iran, 1670s  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper  
Sheet: 29.8 x 19.5 cm, image: 13 x 6.5 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi,  
1971-0107-0105

European women do not feature as a theme of Persian art until the second half of the seventeenth century—a fact which also explains why the painting differs in certain respects from those that preceded it. In this particular case we can see that the painter used a wash. The pleats of the lady's skirt, for example, are rendered in several different shades of green, which has the effect of lending the clothes greater plasticity. Folds in drapery had hitherto been conveyed by lines alone, typically just one shade darker than the color of the garment, while hairline hatching was used to model the facial features. The part of the face between the right eye socket and the bridge of the nose is especially finely "sculpted." Perhaps the artist had an English portrait minia-

ture at his disposal. Peter Oliver's medallion portrait of the prematurely deceased Venetia Stanley, Lady Digby (1600–1633) (see fig. 68 in the essay), for example, is certainly comparable, the parallels with the miniature in Geneva extending to both style and costume. The portrait of a young lady in a richly ornamented, low-cut, lace-trimmed dress with a matching Jacobean-style ruff was painted between 1615 and 1622. Her hair falls loosely over her shoulders and she wears a sash with a red ground.

Although the Geneva miniature is not signed, its similarity to an ink drawing by Muhammad Tahir showing a bust portrait of a young European lady in a hat (Sotheby's, London, October 14, 1999, lot 51) is undeniable. The latter work is dated 1669/70 (A.H. 108[0]) and although Tahir did not color it, the eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth bear such a striking resemblance to the portrait presented here that it seems very likely that both are the work of the same artist and date from more or less the same period, meaning the sixteen-seventies. *Lit.: Robinson 1996, p. 157, no. 295.*

as to the part played by the dog; it also makes it seem likely that Riza himself had this symbolism in mind when he painted his picture of a desirable young foreigner.

#### *The exotic foreigner*

Not always was the "Frank" merely an object of amorous designs or erotic desire. While the Persians extended a warm welcome to foreigners from the faraway Occident and proved extraordinarily tolerant of their ways,<sup>13</sup> relations between them were not without friction on religious matters. At least one work can be cited that bespeaks a more critical attitude: in the *Makhzan al-asrar* (The Treasury of Mysteries), Nizami tells a story handed down through a Hadith about Jesus and his Disciples who one day chance upon the cadaver of a dog lying in the street (cat. 73).<sup>14</sup> The Disciples react with abhorrence, complaining of the stench, and expressing their revulsion at the decomposing body, whereupon Jesus tells them that not even pearls could be whiter than the teeth of the dog. Drawing attention to a very visible asset of the dead animal is for Jesus

an oblique way of criticizing the self-righteousness of his followers. Since the illustrator casts the Disciples as Europeans, he presumably shared Jesus's misgivings about Christian foreigners and their stance on religious or at least spiritual matters.

Europeans also feature here and there in various historical works, such as Qadri's *Jarunnama* (The Book of Hormuz), which tells the story of the sea battle of Hormuz and how the Persians won it back on April 23, 1622.<sup>15</sup> An illustration dating from 1697 (cat. 76) shows the Portuguese, who had occupied the strategically important island at the mouth of the Persian Gulf since 1515, clad in slouch hats and typical European garb. As the illustrator was clearly anxious to present the Persian army in the best possible light, the British who rushed to the shah's aid by sending five warships and four large merchant vessels to fight alongside him are omitted altogether.<sup>16</sup>

Depictions of Europeans outside the genre of the handsome, erotically attractive foreigner, are very rare, being confined to just a few manuscript illustrations which by and large follow the type that in Isfahan had taken hold in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Where foreigners do not have any special historical significance, as they certainly do in the *Jarunnameh* discussed above, it is above all their exoticism

13 French travelers, in particular—all of whom were Protestants—were full of admiration and respect for this open-mindedness, especially Jean Chardin (1643–1713).

14 *Bihar al-Anwar*, XIV, p. 327. The tale probably originated with the Jainist monk Haribhadra, who lived in the second half of the ninth century. It is thought to have found its way into Islam through the Sumaniiyah—mystics who were especially receptive to Indian influences—at around the same time. See Arnold 1965, pp. 101–2. As a symbol of humility in mystic literature, moreover, the dog is also an example of loyal service for Sufis.

15 See Babaie 2004, p. 120.

16 See Sykes 1958, vol. 2, pp. 191ff., Babaie 2004, pp. 64–65 and Willem Floor 2009, pp. 334–35.

**71 A Pair of Painted and Lacquered Door Panels with Figural Painting**

Iran, 2nd quarter 17th century  
Pigments and lacquer on wood;  
80.8 x 19.9 cm each  
Museum Rietberg Zurich, 2010.108 a+b  
Gift of the Rietberg-Kreis

*(Right half of 2010.108b completed in Safavid style)*

Depictions of young Europeans were not confined to miniature painting. They adorned walls, tiles, and—as here—door panels. These two tall oblong panels originally formed the two leaves of a double door.

The two central medallions and two of the four small rectangular cartouches show young men dressed in the European style either alone or in the company of a young Persian or a young lady.

Decorated doors like this one are characteristic of the period from 1620 to mid-century, or thereabouts. Two more superbly preserved examples are especially worthy of mention: one is a pair of doors that was sold at auction in London in 2000 (Sotheby's, London, October 12, 2000, lot 84) while the other is the one now at the Detroit Institute of Art (inv. no. 26.7). Both feature the same ornamental arrangement of black-grounded, gold-rimmed medallions and cartouches. Yet the door leaves themselves are not monochrome, as they are in our example, but rather are painted so as to imitate wood. The conservator of the Rietberg panels, however, discovered that the coat of green paint on the door leaves shown here is a more recent addition, with either no paint at all underneath it or, at most, some yellowish lines which might also have been an attempt to imitate wood.

*The Arts of Persia and Other Countries of Islam*, in which Hagop Kevorkian describes his collection, illustrates two more doors, which he claims came from the Chihil Sutun, the Palace of Forty Columns that Shah 'Abbas II had built in 1646. The truth of this assertion cannot, unfortunately, be verified, although the design of the door panels, the stylistic details, and the fact that they are of a similar size does at least allow us to conclude that both the Detroit doors and the Rietberg panels originated in the same building—possibly the Palace of Forty Columns. *Lit.: Kevorkian 1926.*



71



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### 72 Court Scene

From the manuscript, *Nahj al-Balagha* (Sayings of Ali) by 'Ali ibn Talib  
Calligrapher: Jalal ibn Muhammed, Bukhara, 1559  
Bukhara or Iran, 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper; XX cm  
Geneva, Fondation Bodmer, Coligny, Codex Bodmer 501, fol. XY

This miniature shows a prince with his courtiers in a landscape. The prince himself is seated underneath a baldachin-like pavilion which has the effect of setting him apart from the courtiers thronging around him. There is a young page playing the part of *saqi* or cupbearer, and a falconer who is presenting one of his hunting birds. Listening to the concert at back left behind the musicians in the foreground are two Europeans. Especially interesting is the figure at bottom center, who has his back turned to the viewer. Such rear views showing only the back of the head are rare although they do occur in the works of Shaykh 'Abbasi; doubtless it was his engagement with the paintings of Mogul India that first brought this motif to his attention.



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### 73 Jesus and the Dead Dog

From an edition of the *Makhzan al-asrar* (The Treasury of Mysteries) by Nizami  
Iran, mid-17th century  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper, XX cm  
London, The British Library, Add. 6613, fol. 19v

Persian depictions of Europeans that are critical of their religious attitudes are all but unknown. Possibly the only exception is an illustration in an edition of Nizami's *Makhzan al-asrar* (Treasury of Mysteries) which relates the parable of Jesus and the dead dog. Whereas the Disciples are disgusted by the rotting cadaver, Jesus points out that its teeth are as white as pearls. Or to quote Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who by retelling the famous story in his *West-East Divan* made it known in Europe, too:

“As Jesus wandered through the world  
He passed, one day, a marketplace;  
Along the path a dead dog lay,  
dragged to a nearby house's door.  
A group stood by the carrion  
As vultures round cadavers crowd.  
And one said: 'That offensive smell  
Will utterly wipe out my brain.'

And one: 'It's more than I can take,  
What graves reject brings dreadful luck.'  
So each one sang to his own tune  
The dead dog's body to disdain.  
But now, when it was Jesus' turn,  
He spoke without reviling, kind.  
In his warm-hearted way, he said:  
'The teeth are white as any pearls.'  
Hearing the words, the people felt  
Like glowing mussels, burning hot.”  
(Trans. Martin Bidney)

Most painters depicted both Jesus and his followers as Persians. In this case, however, the illustrator chose to represent the three visible Disciples as Europeans. This makes for a very visible contrast with the figure of Jesus, who as a prophet of Islam wears traditional Persian garb. The illustration can be read as comparing typically European disdain with the ability of the Muslim to see goodness in even the tiniest or most insignificant things.  
*Lit.: Arnold 1965, pp. 101–2.*



74 “Portuguese” Carpet

Iran, Khorasan, 17th century

Wool, 477 x 200 cm

Lisbon, Fondation Gulbenkian, T.99

The arrival of Europeans who traveled to Persia by ship opened up a host of new themes for both painters and textile manufacturers, including what came to be known as “Portuguese” carpets. The name derives from the depiction of European seafarers sitting in a ship in each of the four corners of the central panel.

What these nautical scenes signified, like the origin of the carpets, was for a long time a subject of intense scholarly debate. These days, it is assumed that they were made in Persia. The hypothesis that what is illustrated is an episode from the biblical story of Jonah has since been refuted. The figure swimming in the water is much more likely to be a seaman who has fallen overboard or been shipwrecked.

Persian literature has plenty of stories describing the perils of seafaring. Many of these found their way into Persian painting, too, among them Kai Khosrow’s encounter with sea monsters in the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), the rescue of a Persian slave in Sa’di’s *Kulliyat* (Complete Works), and Alexander’s voyage across the China Sea in Nizami’s *Iskandarnama* (Book of Alexander). Ships on the high seas teeming with fish and sea monsters had been a theme of Persian painting at least since the sixteenth century (see cat. 75). The sources used for the ships in the “Portuguese” carpets nevertheless remain a mystery. The square rigging and poop decks—at least in the case of the carpet in Vienna (MAK, 8339/1922 KB)—suggest that they were most probably modeled on a European vessel, in the very broadest sense. Comparisons with Persian miniatures unfortunately do not help much with regard to the question of where the vessel came from originally. Perhaps the ships were inspired by the paintings of Mogul India, such as those contained in the *Akbarnama*.

*Lit.: Sarre 1931.*



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### 75 Alexander Crossing the China Sea

From the *Khamsa* of Nizami  
Iran, Shiraz, 1543–1550  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper; XX cm  
St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, D. 212, fol. 353r

The arrangement of the text into separate “pages” in this painting of Alexander crossing the China Sea is typical of Shiraz-style book illumination. Both the semilegendary Greek conqueror—identifiable here by his crown—and his fellow travelers are represented as Persians. The turbans coiled around a red felt cap with a stalk-like appendage (*taj-e Haydari*) are typically Persian. The crew, however, is made up of the dark-skinned sailor shown climbing the mast and the captain perched in the crow’s nest using an astrolabe to determine the ship’s position.

Despite the rather curious-looking sail, which is presumably a lateen, the painter clearly knew a lot about Persian (and Arab) shipbuilding, even if he does appear to have muddled up fore and aft. Ships with two ends and an aftcastle were a common enough sight in the western reaches of the Indian Ocean. The black hull is



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not an invention of the painter but a result of the practice of caulking vessels with bitumen to make them watertight (for another example of this, see the *Maqamat* miniature of 1221 now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Ms Arabe 6094 fol. 68). The sail is stitched together out of several lengths of cloth with the seams joining them concealed beneath ornamental tape. The stemhead carved to look like the head of a beast, in this particular case a horse, was an ancient, pre-Islamic tradition, which can be found in other cultures, too. It supposedly provided protection for the seafarers on board.  
*Lit.: Agius, 2008, pp. 151 and 241ff.; Petrosyan 1995, pp. 240 and 247.*

### 76 The Sea Battle of Hormuz

From a *Jarunnama* (Book of Hormuz) from Qadri  
Iran, 1697/98 (A.H. 1109)  
Pigments and ink on paper; 29.2 x 19.7 cm  
London, The British Library, Add. 7801, fol. 43r

Hormuz, an island at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, had been in Portuguese hands since 1515. Its strategically important location gave the

occupier control over the Straits of Hormuz and hence over all trade to and from Persia; the Portuguese were thus able to levy customs duties on any cargoes that passed. The more Persia’s export trade flourished, the more eager it became to put an end to the losses inflicted on it by the Portuguese occupation of Hormuz. To reconquer the island, Shah ‘Abbas I first secured the support of the British, who placed nine ships at his disposal. The attack was launched under the command of Imam Quli Khan, the ruling governor of the Province of Fars and with it Jarun (Hormuz). Not only did he facilitate the Armenians’ overseas trade in silver and silk in this capacity, but he also acted as a mediator between the shah and the British.

The painter of this illustration shows two different types of vessel: One is a ship that is often seen in Persian miniatures of the seventeenth century. It could be a *sunbuq*, a ship with a rounded stern and upward-pointing bow shaped like a scimitar. This multipurpose vessel was very common in those days—on both the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Following his own instincts, however, the painter modified the *sunbuq*’s characteristic bow shape by adding an ornamental stemhead. When painting the Portuguese ship, on the other hand, it seems that all that was required to identify it as a European vessel was a poop deck. In all other respects, this single-masted boat with its lateen sail has more in common with Persian and Arab vessels.

Persian painters frequently took a rather summary approach to nautical scenes—unlike their Ottoman counterparts. The only exception here seems to be a manuscript illustration from a 1624 edition of Sa’di’s *Kulliyat*. This miniature done in Shiraz style shows the rescue of a Persian slave (British Library, IO 843, fol. 42v). Despite several misunderstandings on the part of the painter, he does at least succeed in reproducing all the most important details of a European oceangoing vessel, including the cannon deck, the yardarm, and the shrouds with webbing for sailors to climb up.

Although all the illustrations of the *Jarunnama* were produced in 1697 or later, they are painted in the style of the period 1630 to 1650.

*Lit.: Agius 2008, pp. 156 and 310ff.; Babaie 2004, p. 64; Canby 2009, p. 41.*

that is the main focus of attention. Unlike in the single leaves painted by Riza ‘Abbasi and his circle, the foreigners in these works do not appear to have any deeper meaning.

### The Nude in Persian Painting

Two works by Riza ‘Abbasi, both dating from the fifteen-nineties, both showing a seminude woman asleep, count as the first true nudes<sup>17</sup> in Persian painting (figs. 70 and 71).

They certainly mark a clear departure from existing conventions. While the occasional glimpse of a bared or partially nude body was not unknown from the earliest known Persian miniatures right up to the end of the sixteenth century, the motifs in question were invariably embedded in a literary context. The most frequently illustrated scene, for example, was the moment when Khosrow inadvertently catches sight of Shirin bathing in a pond (cat. 127) from Nizami’s verse epic of *Khosrow o Shirin* (Khosrow and Shirin). Another work by Nizami, the *Khamasa*, supplied still more pretexts for bathing scenes, as did an episode in the *Haft Paykar* (The Seven Beauties) and another in the *Iskandarnama* (The Book of Alexander). Still more such depictions are to be found in illuminated editions of the *Shahnama*. The many works illustrating the story of Adam and Eve likewise form an important group in this connection.<sup>18</sup>

The painters in all these cases by and large adhered to traditional norms of decency: bodies are only ever half exposed, and the zone between navel and knee is always chastely covered, just as Shirin’s long hair often provides a useful means of obscuring her breasts. The only notable exception are the *divs*, the demons of the *Shahnama*, whose circumcised penises quite often peep out from beneath their loincloths. Unlike Persia’s romantic heroes, who are motivated only by higher sentiments, *divs* are depicted as purely sexual creatures.<sup>19</sup> Until the end of the sixteenth century, nudity was apprehended primarily as *functional*—as a product of whichever literary context the painter was illustrating.

#### *A novel theme: the nude*

All the more novel, indeed almost revolutionary, was the eroticism of Riza’s nude woman (fig. 70) who does not belong to any literary context. Her breasts are not actually recognizable as such, but there is something tantalizing about the empty space between the shawl draped over her shoulders and the “wraparound skirt” she wears knotted over her belly. As Sheila Canby has pointed out, Riza’s elegant drawing was most likely modeled on Marcantonio Raimondi’s engraving of *Cleopatra* (cat. 85).<sup>20</sup>

17 I am following Kenneth Clark’s definition of the nude here, according to whom “to be naked is to be deprived of our clothes,” whereas the image projected by nudity is that of a “balanced, prosperous and confident body: the body reformed;” see Clark 1956, p. 4. The nude and seminude will be accorded equal treatment in what follows.

18 For a complete list, see Canby 1996, p. 32 and Hamdy 1979, pp. 431–34.

19 There are parallels in European art, too, specifically in representations of ancient mythological figures such as satyrs. Persian artists may also have been following a tradition dating back to Antiquity.

20 Canby 1996, p. 32.

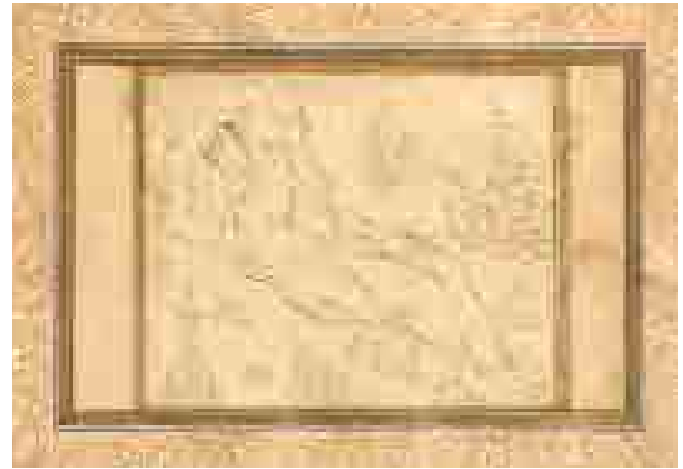


Fig. 73



Fig. 74

**Fig. 73** Riza ‘Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635), *A Maiden Reclines*, ca. 1590–92, drawing on paper, 11.8 x 14.4 cm (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Stuart Cary Welch Collection, Gift of Edith I. Welch in memory of Stuart Cary Welch, 2011.536)

**Fig. 74** Riza ‘Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635), *Reclining Nude*, ca. 1590–92, pigments on paper, 9.5 x 17.2 cm (Washington, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 54.24)

Riza’s two nudes are not isolated instances but rather belong to a group of similar works. His pupils, first and foremost among them Muhammad Qasim (d. 1659) and Mir Afzal al-Husaini (active during the reign of Shah ‘Abbas II, 1642–66), took up the same motif, alongside that of the “handsome European.”

Just as Riza drew on the works of Raimondi, so scholars have repeatedly pointed to European models as an important source of inspiration for the nudes produced by his pupils, if only owing to the lack of Persian prototypes.<sup>21</sup> From European sources, we also know that in the days of Shah ‘Abbas I, works of Italian art could be purchased in the boutique of the Vene-

21 Farhad 1987, p. 229.



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**77 Young Woman Resting after Bathing**

Muhammad Mu'min

Afghanistan, Herat, 1590s

Pigments on paper; sheet: 37.8 x 24.1 cm,

image: 6.7 x 15.2 m

New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M.386.5

This miniature shows a young woman lost in thought; she is reposing on a carpet after bathing, or so Barbara Schmitz has argued, citing as evidence her half-heartedly concealed nudity and the ducks on the blue cloth wound

round her hips. That Mu'min was inspired by a European work, as can be said of Riza 'Abbasi's drawing after an engraving by Marcantonio Raimondi (see cat. 85 and fig. 70 in the essay), is highly unlikely. While it is not inconceivable that the painter was familiar with Riza's work, as Schmitz has conjectured, it seems far more probable that we are dealing here with an independent development. A slightly older painting of another scantily clad young woman lying on a riverbank by Kamal (see fig. 72) would support this.

Mu'min's painting, moreover, could well have served another artist as a model. A drawing thought to date from the first half of the seventeenth century shows a remarkably similar figure, albeit executed with considerably less finesse (painting of a nude courtesan, Iran, early seventeenth century, Sotheby's London, October 5, 2011, lot 122).

*Lit.: Schmitz 1996, pp. 126ff.*

tian Alessandro Scudenoli at the bazaar in Isfahan. But Venetian art could be ordered directly, too; such orders were placed with Armenian merchants, as in the case of a work dating from 1610, described in some detail below.<sup>22</sup> It is also thought likely that from 1623 onwards, merchants working for the Dutch East India Company brought large numbers of engravings to Persia. The finds of Nova Zembla provide indirect evidence of this, as does a 1602 list of Dutch prints bound for Patani in Malaysia—a document which also gives us a vivid impression of the kinds of engravings that were exported as merchandise.<sup>23</sup>

This background information raises the question of what kind of role these European models played. Did Raimondi's engraving prepare the ground for what was actually a new

genre in Persia? And what influence did European prints have on the development of that genre thereafter?

That the nude did not enter Persian art history solely as a result of Riza's interest in the works of Raimondi is evident from two miniatures. One of these, a miniature showing a young woman lying on her belly, nude but for a patterned cloth wrapped around her waist and thighs, was almost certainly produced in Herat in the fifteen-nineties—or so Barbara Schmitz has convincingly argued—and is probably the work of Muhammad Mu'min (cat. 77).<sup>24</sup> The eroticism of this beautiful female body is clear for all to see: the shapely breasts are no more obscured than is the navel; her long hair delineates the curvature of her back, forming a line that is continued by the cloth wrapped around her hips. Her green shawl is positioned so as to direct the viewer's gaze to the pubic region and

<sup>22</sup> Pietro della Valle, *Histoire apologetique d'Abbas, roi de Perse*, Paris, 1631, p. 32; quoted from Farhad 1987, p. 231.

<sup>23</sup> Braat et al. 1980.

<sup>24</sup> See Schmitz 1997, pp. 126ff. Her dating is based on the duck pattern of the cloth around the woman's hips. The fact that the ducks are all facing the same way—instead of pointing first in one direction, then in the other—in her view is a clear indicator of the late sixteenth century as the period of origin.



Fig. 75



Fig. 76



Fig. 77

to the left breast, artfully thrown into relief against the somewhat dark backcloth. Here we see an artist relishing nudity for its own sake, independent of any literary context.

Somewhat older is the single-leaf miniature of a standing young woman captured in the act of winding a cloth around her hips (fig. 72). This was produced in 1580/90 in Khorasan and has been attributed to Kamal. The woman's body is rendered in the traditional, more graphic than haptic style, but is certainly not devoid of eroticism; the artist, moreover, has the woman hold the cloth so as to afford the viewer a titillating glimpse of a sliver of naked thigh.

Interestingly, the edge of a pond inserted at front left could be read as a means of tying the work to an older iconographic context; the artist seems to be legitimating his new motif by at least hinting at the accepted pretext of bathing. Mo'women's choice of ducks on a pond as a pattern for the drapery covering his own nude was perhaps motivated by similar considerations. And since in Persia ducks traditionally symbolize purity, it provides more than just a thematic link to the bathing topos.<sup>25</sup> There are thus good reasons for believing that Mo'women included these iconographic pointers as a means of anchoring something novel in a culturally accepted framework.<sup>26</sup>

Both these works were produced outside Isfahan and hence outside Riza's sphere of influence. This is significant since it proves that the groundwork had already been laid for the leap that Persian art was to make from the representation of "merely naked" to sensuously naked female bodies, indicating that the time was indeed ripe for the advent of the nude. The European nudes then entering the country can thus be said to have fallen on fruitful soil.

25 Schmitz 1997, p. 127.

26 There was a parallel development in European art, where the first nudes, painted around 1500, were invariably incorporated into a larger thematic context—whether mythological, as Venus or a nymph, or biblical, as Adam and Eve. Not until the eighteenth century, and even then only as an academic exercise, did the first "pure" nudes begin to appear, becoming increasingly popular as a genre in their own right in the course of the nineteenth century.

At this juncture, it is worth pointing out a seemingly curious parallel that might help to shed light on this development: both lists of Dutch engravings mentioned above include works by Hendrick Goltzius, and in particular his series of portraits of single officers and soldiers. Of special interest to us here is the figure of the arquebusier. When this engraving of 1585–89 (fig. 73) is compared with the *Young Man with Musket* painted by Habibullah Mashhadi in the first half of the seventeenth century (fig. 74), it is hard not to see the latter as a Persian replica of Goltzius's engraving. It is certainly not a direct borrowing such as we saw in the case of Raimondi, but rather a Persian variation of a man in mid-gait carrying an arquebus on his shoulder.

#### *A source of inspiration: the European nude*

Viewed in this light, it comes as no surprise to learn that other Persian artists also seem to have sought inspiration in the works of their European counterparts. Let us start with a drawing of a woman clad in a wide-open, see-through chemise, who is depicted reclining on cushions with a young man sitting beside her (cat. 78). The hypothesis that this work, too, might have been modeled on a European engraving rests primarily on the woman's pose. The figures in Persian miniatures are generally shown either sitting cross-legged or kneeling, while poses that entail leaning against a backrest with raised knees are comparatively rare. The posture of the young woman drawn in the first decade of the seventeenth century can thus be said to break new ground. One possible source, Abraham de Bruyn's *Gustus* (fig. 75) from a series of "The Five Senses," is reproduced alongside it:

Much the same can be said of a pair of lovers dating from the mid-seventeenth century (cat. 79) that bears a certain resemblance to not just one, but two Dutch engravings (cat. 80 and fig. 76). In this case, the exactness of the match is less important than the question of where the painter's inspiration lay, or, to put it another way, what it was that interested him most: first, the pose of the half-lying, half-sitting woman; second, the "desirous embrace" of the young man at her side.

**Fig. 75** Kamal, *Young Lady after the Bath*, Khorasan, ca. 1580–90, pigments on paper, 8.9 x 15.6 cm (Aga Khan Collection, AKM00422)

**Fig. 76** Hendrick Goltzius (1559–1616/17), *Musketeer*, 1585–89, engraving, 21.5 x 15.5 cm (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-10.248)

**Fig. 77** Habibullah Mashhadi, *Young Man with a Musket*, Isfahan, 1st half 17th century, pigments on paper, 18.1 x 9.5 cm (Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Museum für Islamische Kunst, I.4589, fol. 11r)

**Fig. 78** Muhammad Qasim (d. 1659), *Lovers' Dalliance*, mid-17th century, pigments and gold on paper, 13 x 21.5 cm (Cambridge, MA, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Grace Nichols Strong, Francis H. Burr and Friends of the Fogg Art Museum Funds, 1950.130)

**Fig. 79** Titian (1488/90–1576), *Venus and Cupid*, ca. 1550, oil on canvas, 139.5 x 195.5 cm (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi)

**Fig. 80** Attributed to Mir Afzal al-Husayni (active during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II from 1642 to 1666), *Reclining Nude*, ca. 1640, pigment on paper, 12.5 x 19.5 cm (whereabouts unknown, on sale at Christie's, London, 1975, December 4, Lot 89)

**Fig. 81** Sadiqi Beg (1533/34–1609/10), *Bilqis (Queen of Shaba)*, 1590–1600, pigments and gold on paper, 10 x 19.5 cm, published side-invertedly (London, The British Museum, London, 1948, 1211.0.8)



Fig. 78



Fig. 79



Fig. 80



Fig. 81

Let us now close this series by comparing a miniature from a *Suz o Gudaz* manuscript of ca. 1660 and the engraving called *Sight* by Raphael Sadeler of 1581. The former work, a miniature attributed to Muhammad Qasim, shows a lady surrounded by her handmaidens. Her low-cut robe, crossed legs, and above all the hand-mirror that she is holding in her hand bear a certain resemblance to Sadeler's allegory of the sense of sight (cat. nos. 82 and 83).

There is certainly an affinity between the two works. What is also apparent, however, is that many Persian artists of the first half of the seventeenth century regarded European prints primarily as a source of inspiration, as a mine of ideas, themes, and motifs that they could then adapt in line with Persian painting conventions. A direct borrowing such as that of Riza 'Abbasi from Marcantonio Raimondi was very much the exception.

Or was it? There is at least one other case of a Persian miniature coming remarkably close to a European model: looking at the *Lovers' Dalliance* attributed to Muhammad Qasim (fig. 77), it is hard not to be reminded of Titian's *Venus and Cupid* of ca. 1550 (fig. 78). Especially striking are the parallels between the two female nudes: the posture of the woman whose half propped-up body is turned towards the viewer, while she herself is gazing straight into the eyes of the figure to her left; the crooked left arm and outstretched right arm; the two bracelets that she is wearing on her right wrist;



Fig. 82

**Fig. 82** Abraham de Bruyn (1540–ca. 1587), *Gustus* (Taste), from a series of the Five Senses, 1569, engraving, 3.8 x 5.3 cm (London, The British Museum, 1850,0810.276)



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and finally the differently shaped breasts, which is an especially noteworthy detail since in most Persian miniatures, the breasts are always identical.

Unambiguously European—and truly unique in Persian painting—is the shape of the right hip and right thigh as far as the inside of the right knee. In Persia such a line would customarily have been rendered either as a continuous arc or as a gently undulating, quasi-calligraphic line. Such a “beautiful” curve might delineate a lady’s hips, but it would never endow her with the almost tactile corporeality that we cannot help but admire in Qasim’s miniature. The same is true of the left thigh, where Qasim was clearly striving for a corporeality borne of a different approach to nudity.<sup>27</sup>

Where the Persian work differs is in the “suspended” right hand holding the orange-colored cloth, the position of the woman’s feet, and her rather more twisted lower body.

Although Titian’s *Venus* was famous throughout Europe and the artist painted several different versions of the same motif,<sup>28</sup> it was not widely circulated as a print until much later,

around the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup> While it is not inconceivable that the “female nude” presented to Shah ‘Abbas by the head of the Armenian community in New Julfa on returning from Venice on February 17, 1610, was indeed a copy of Titian’s *Venus*,<sup>30</sup> in the absence of the painting itself to confirm or refute it, such a theory is doomed to remain idle speculation.

Besides Muhammad Qasim, Mir Afzal al-Husaini also produced several exquisite depictions of unclothed or scantily clad women, even if he took a rather different approach to the subject matter. His best known work these days is probably the *Reclining Woman and Her Lapdog* (cat. 84). Although his subject is fully clothed, Afzal skillfully draws out her erotic qualities, using contrasting colors of cloth, drapery, ribbons, and flowers to make the roaming eye settle on her navel, her breasts, and pubic area. The lapdog drinking out of a bowl is a European set piece whose purpose here is to accentuate the painting’s erotic character.

Apart from the dog, however, the inspiration for this miniature was not a European engraving but Riza’s “copy” of Raimondi’s *Cleopatra* discussed above. As was customary in the seventeenth century, Afzal did not adhere slavishly to his model, but rather reversed it as well as making various minor changes. Thus he was able to acknowledge his debt to Riza,

27 It is an approach shared by the unknown painter of a slightly different version of the same motif—a version recalling the art of Ancient Greece, if anything—held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (gift of Richard Ettinghausen 1975, 1975.192.10).

28 There are six different versions altogether, all of which were once in the hands of princes: two show Venus looking down at Cupid, one features an organist, and one a partridge; in the remaining two versions—one showing a lute player and the other an organist—Venus is looking up.

29 One of the first prints to be made after Titian’s six *Venus* paintings was engraved by Johan Danckerts in 1657 and so postdates the miniature by Muhammad Qasim (British Museum, Inv. no. X.1.80).

30 Farhad 1987, p. 230.

78 **Seated Woman with Young Man**

Iran, Isfahan, 1600–1610

Pigments on paper; sheet: 12.9 x 18 cm

Washington, Smithsonian Institution, Sackler Gallery, S1986.309

Clad only in a gauze-like garment that makes her look almost naked, this young woman is shown propped up on a cushion, watching the young man next to her pouring wine. The dress and pose, to say nothing of the symbolism of the long-necked wine flask and shallow wine cup, leave us in no doubt that this is an erotic encounter. The fact that the young man is sitting cross-legged in a slightly lewd pose bears this out.

The lady's pose, on the other hand, is without precedent in Persian painting, leading us to

surmise that she may have been modeled on a European print, possibly an allegory. The woman in the *Lovers' Dalliance* from Geneva is shown in a similar pose (cat. 79). But while that work seems to be making fun of European ineptitude in amorous matters, this painting conveys a much more laid back attitude to erotic foreplay.

As is often the case, there is at least one other version of this brush drawing in existence. A work based on the same composition, but colored green, red, and brown, and showing the young man in his entirety, turned up on the London art market in the autumn of 2012 (Sotheby's, London, October 3, 2012, lot 70).

while at the same time demonstrating his own skill and virtuosity as a painter.

Another work by Afzal shows a slumbering woman in a gauze chemise being approached by two young men in European dress. The main motif, the man lifting the woman's chemise, has quite rightly been linked to similar scenes involving satyrs in European art. In such works, the lecherous creatures are generally shown creeping up on a sleeping Venus or reposing nymph and raising a corner of the cloth covering her private parts.

Afzal's rendering of the same theme is very different if only because it draws on a Persian cast of characters. This much is clear not only from the kneeling youths, but also from the figure of the woman herself, which once again paraphrases Riza's nude.<sup>31</sup> Afzal's "most classical" nude might also be regarded as belonging to this category (fig. 79). His subject's elegant, self-absorbed pose once again makes us inclined to suspect a Venetian model.<sup>32</sup> Yet it is much more probable that the work is an invention of the artist himself, who as we can see managed very well without any foreign antecedents.

Two works which prove that this was indeed possible are Sadiqi's *Bilqis* (Queen of Sheba) shown reposing beside a stream (here deliberately reversed), painted in ca. 1595 (fig.

80), and Muhammad Qasim's *Lovers' Dalliance*, which was discussed above. Sadiqi, like Riza, worked in the shah's own *kitab-khana* in the early days of 'Abbas I, and was in fact its head—at least until his ignominious dismissal in 1596/97.<sup>33</sup>

If Afzal's nude occupies the middle ground in this group of reclining women, then not only does this reflect his own personal loyalty to tradition, but it also exemplifies the way most Persian artists worked: drawing on an established repertoire of poses, they varied them either by modifying their attire or by producing a mirror image of the original.

To summarize, it can be said that the fifteen-nineties saw the crystallization of a new theme in the art of the Persian miniature: the theme of the erotically bared female body. This development took place independently of European influences, but laid the groundwork—as we saw in the case of Riza 'Abbasi—for the future development of this theme based on European engravings. It was because they fell on such fertile soil that European prints could unfold their potential so readily.

This new theme began its ascendancy after 1600, reaching its apogee in the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Today, we know of a whole series of female nudes, or at any rate erotic paintings, dating from this period. The female body is presented as neither more nor less than a beautiful body, whether alone or flanked by a man—who in most cases is fully clothed. The attempts of earlier years to lend legitimacy to the theme by adding iconographic signals such as a

31 This work belongs to the collection of the Riza 'Abbasi Museum in Teheran. See Farhad 1987, cat. 8, for a detailed reproduction and *ibid.*, p. 93 for more on the woman's pose.

32 The engraving by Pieter Claesz Soutman after Titian's *Sleeping Venus*, which must have been made after 1616, seems a likely candidate (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Inv. no. RPP-OB-59.657).

33 Welch 1976, pp. 69–70.





Fig. 83

**Fig. 83** Jacob Matham (1571–1631), *Venus and Adonis*, 1599–1600, engraving, 17.3 x 22.8 cm (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1899-A-21748)

letter, a river, or such like—as in the works of Mo'men, Kamal, or Riza 'Abbasi—slowly but surely fall by the wayside. Yet it cannot escape our notice that the men shown approaching these nude women, whether as lovers or suitors, are frequently cast as Europeans. As Babaie has argued, it is indeed possible that the inclusion of foreigners was a way of implying that the scene was a depiction of foreign ways and customs and hence a form of cover.<sup>34</sup>

The strategies underlying the reception of European prints and the development of the nude as a genre in Persian painting can be outlined as follows: While in the case of Riza 'Abbasi, and most probably Muhammad Qasim as well, the strategy was one of direct appropriation followed by adaptation to the Persian aesthetic, other artists were happy to borrow only certain elements, such as the seated posture, or only certain motifs, such as a lapdog, a mirror, or artfully draped body wraps. This is the tactic most frequently observed. Similarly typical is the “master/pupil copy,” as in the case of Afzal, who paraphrases 'Abbasi's nude drawing after Raimondi on at least two occasions. There are later works elaborating the same theme, too, although these are of the artists' own invention.

European prints, in other words, served above all else as a source of ideas from which Persian painters could draw certain set pieces and motifs which they then “Persianized” in much the same way as they had absorbed Chinese influences three hundred years earlier.

34 Babaie 2009.

#### 79 Lovers' Dalliance

Iran, Isfahan, 2nd quarter 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper;  
sheet: 39.8 x 26.5 cm, image: 19.5 x 13 cm  
Geneva, Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1971-107-547

#### 80 Ver Veneris

Crispijn van de Passe the Elder (1564–1637) after  
Maarten de Vos (1532–1603)  
Netherlands, 1st quarter 17th century  
Engraving; sheet: 208 x 301 cm;  
image: 19.7 x 21.8 cm  
Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek,  
Graph. A1: 1951g

This depiction of a pair of lovers by an unknown Persian artist shows a scantily clad woman lounging on a large cushion with her gauze robe casually flung open all the way down to her belly (see also cat. 86). She receives the embraces of the young European kneeling at her side with her eyes wide open—admittedly in a rather blank stare. Scattered on the floor in front of the couple are a pair of sandals, a golden, European-style helmet ewer, a long-necked flask, apples and quinces, a lapdog, and a Persian pitcher made of metal and decorated with a face. Both the scene itself and the arrangement of objects make it clear that what we are looking at is the prelude to coitus.

The pose of the exceptionally pale-skinned woman was almost certainly inspired by a work of European origin. One possible source is Crispijn van de Passe's *Ver Veneris* (Spring of Love), in which Venus is shown in a comparable pose. Another possible source of inspiration might be Jacob Matham's *Juno with the Belt of Venus* (ca. 1600, British Museum, 1928,121 2.46, see fig. 76 in the essay).

In her article about scenes involving nudity in Persian painting, Sussan Babaie makes the interesting suggestion that some of the paintings dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, which in most cases are all too easily explained away as “pairs of lovers,” in fact show far more than just an amorous encounter. She argues that they might also be intended as visual comment on modes of erotic or sexual behavior that differed significantly from the artist's own, in other words the Persian. The celibacy practiced by members of the religious orders in Isfahan, for example, mystified the Persians. Likewise, the demonstrative abstemiousness of many of the merchants and emissaries who visited the city was more likely to elicit surprise and even pity than admiration. Babaie takes the view that this work in particular highlights just such “peculiarities” of European behavior.

Indeed, we have only to look at depictions of lovers dressed in Persian attire to notice significant differences in body language. While such couples are always fully clothed, they are also shown locked in an embrace so intimate that their bodies look as if they were about to fuse together (see cat. 81). Here, too, there is no doubting the man's amorous intentions: he is trying hard to put his arm around the woman, but is prevented from embracing her properly by the fact that he is kneeling at her side. He cuts a rather pathetic figure, for try as he might, he seems unable to enjoy full communion with the woman, despite her very obvious willingness. The attributes lined up in front of the pair are all part of the standard repertoire of the erotic embrace motif and hence leave us in no doubt as to her availability. But the scornful gaze which Babaie believes her to be wearing can at the same time be read as a comment on the man's ineptitude.

That the Persians' prejudices about Europeans rested solely on observation and hearsay seems highly unlikely. European prints and paintings must surely have had an important role to play, too. Being ignorant of the underlying iconography and unfamiliar with the erotic symbolism of European art, they must have found works such as Matham's *Juno* perplexing. They might even have read such works not as mythologically embellished narratives, but rather as true depictions of European sexual mores.

*Lit.: Babaie 2009.*



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81

**81 Lovers, Observed by a Wet Nurse**

Mu'in Musavvir (ca. 1617–1697?)

Iran, Isfahan, dated December 4, 1678 (19th Shawwal 1089)

Pigments, ink, and gold on paper;  
sheet: 27.7 x 35 cm, image: 12 x 20.5 cm

Museum Rietberg Zurich, 2006.182

Gift of Catharina Dohrn, Ulrich Albert, Dominik Keller, Alex Vannod

Mu'in Musavvir combines Persian and European elements in this work. Following Persian tradition, the lovers are shown locked in an embrace, lying brow to brow with their bodies entwined. The man is already reaching for the cord tying the lady's robe, while she is gently resisting him. The undulating, calligraphic lines defining the young man's importunate arm and the arm on which the young woman is resting together form a kind of clasp, underscoring the intensity of the moment. The painter was clearly drawing on compositions by his teacher Riza 'Abbasi or on Sadiqi Beg's *Balqis* (fig. 80 in the essay).

But the draped curtain, like the perspective view of the door and the old woman spying on

the lovers, are all unequivocally European elements. The spying wet nurse was to become a very popular motif in the eighteenth century, and even more so in the nineteenth—so much so that it spawned parodies and caricatures, too.

When this work is compared with the previous one, we can see straight away that the Persians perceived themselves as superior to the Europeans in the art of lovemaking. There is, after all, a glaring difference between the determined but inept fumbling of the European and the casual, self-assured indulgence of sensuality demonstrated by the Persians, which in turn seems to be indicative of an uninhibited *joie de vivre*.

*Lit.: Jahresbericht MRZ 2006.*

**82 The Bride and Her Mother Prepare for Her Wedding**

From a *Suz o Goudaz* manuscript by Nau'i Khabushani

Attributed to Muhammad Qasim (died 1659)

Iran, early 1650s

Pigments, ink, and gold on paper;  
sheet: XX cm

Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, MS 268, fol. 16

**83 Sight**

From a series of *The Five Senses*

Raphael Sadeler the Elder (1560–1628), after

Maerten de Vos (1532–1603)

Germany, Cologne (?), 1581

Engraving; image: 10.1 x 13.3 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-7574

The Indian story of a young couple that ends tragically in the woman's self-immolation (*sati*) on her husband's funeral pyre was a popular one in mid-seventeenth-century Persia, as is evident from the existence of three different manuscripts, illustrated—or so it is thought—by



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the artists Muhammad 'Ali, Muhammad Yusuf, and Muhammad Qasim.

The illustration shown here and the nine others belonging to the same manuscript are not signed, but these days are regarded as the work of Muhammad Qasim. The heroine of the story, assisted by her mother, is shown preparing for her forthcoming wedding. Qasim almost certainly drew on European models for this particular motif. The hand-mirror and the bride's bared breast can both be cited as evidence of this. One possible model is a print by Raphael Sadeler the Elder of 1581 showing a personification of the sense of sight.

Sadeler was the scion of a Flemish family of engravers, publishers, and sellers of prints which played a dominant role on the European print market. His influence extended as far as India, where some of his works inspired Mogul artists. That merchants of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) took prints such as this one with them to Persia is proven, if only indirectly, by a list of merchandise bound for Patani in Malaysia in 1602. The commodities listed there include "7 boeken van de 5 sinnen" by Raphael Sadeler (personal communication of Claudia Swan), this being the series to which the engraving mentioned here belonged. Shipping cheap prints along with other merchandise was a common practice right from the start. They were not always deemed worthy of inclusion in bills of lading, however, which is why tracking their passage remains difficult.

We can nevertheless assume that from the sixteen-twenties, when the VOC assumed the lead role in trade with Persia, right up to the days of 'Ali Quli Jabadar and Muhammad Zaman, it was above all prints of Dutch provenance that made their way to Persia. Similarly typical of this period is the Persians' practice of using European works as a source of inspiration without actually copying them. This is apparent in Muhammad Qasim's appropriation of the hand-mirror and bared breast, which he then adapted in line with Persian conventions: Instead of painting the face of the young woman reflected in the mirror, Qasim filled it with silver (which has since turned black as a result of oxidation) to represent the reflection itself rather than the painterly illusion of a face. He is nevertheless guilty of a misinterpretation. Being ignorant of the role played by an allegory in European art, he takes this female figure at face value and treats her as an illustration of European reality.

*Lit.: Farhad 2001; Landau/Parshall 1994.*



84



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#### 84 Reclining Woman and Her Lapdog

Mir Afzal al-Husaini (active during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II, 1642–1666)  
Iran, Isfahan, ca. 1640  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper;  
image: 11.7 x 15.9 cm  
London, The British Museum, 1930,0412,0.2

Inscribed: "*Raqam-i kamtarin Mir Afzal-i Tunī*"  
("Work of the most humble Mir Afzal Tunī")

Afzal modeled this picture of a young woman reclining against a mound of cushions on a drawing of 1595 done by his teacher, Riza 'Abbasi, who was in turn inspired by an engraving, ostensibly of Cleopatra, by Marcantonio Raimondi (fig. 70 in the essay). The figure in Afzal's work has been reversed and despite being fully clothed is a good deal more erotic.

Especially eye-catching is the pale-colored cloth coiled round her right thigh and plunging down between her legs. The green of her rolled-up robe makes her bared belly seem all the paler and diverts the viewer's gaze to her floral bloomers, tied by a cord that trails invitingly over her thigh. The sprig of jasmine tucked between her breasts gives us an inkling of the delightful scents that must be emanating from her. And then there are the long braids of hair, snaking down over her body ...

Afzal's miniature at first looks like a deliberate replica of 'Abbasi's model but replaces the innocence of the nude with the erotic allures of a fully clothed, self-assured young lady. Viewed in this light, Sussan Babaie's argument that this is a "shameless exhibitionism" is undoubtedly correct. The lapdog shown greedily drinking out of a bowl belongs to the group of direct borrow-

ings from European iconography. The dog can thus be read less as a fashion accessory than as a speaking symbol. This holds true not just for Afzal's painting but for all the others that feature lapdogs, too (see cat. nos. 68 and 79). Whether Babaie is right to read the licking puppy as a cryptic pointer to oral sex, however, remains open to question.

Lit.: Farhad 1987, pp. 91–92; Babaie 2009, pp. 133 and 134–35.

#### 85 Cleopatra

Marcantonio Raimondi (1465–1534)  
Italy, Rome, ca. 1515–1527  
Engraving; sheet: 11.3 x 17.5 cm  
London, The British Museum, 1882,0513.368

Marcantonio Raimondi's famous print shows the dying Cleopatra on a daybed. The print rests on a Roman copy of a Hellenic statue of Ariadne dating from the third or second century BC. Pope Julius II purchased it in 1512 and put it in the Cortile del Belvedere in the Vatican (now the Museo Pio Clementino, Galleria delle Statue, 548). The snake coiled round the woman's upper arm, which in the Renaissance led to her being mistakenly identified as the dying Egyptian queen, is actually a bracelet. The discovery of the connection with the statue of Ariadne was made only by Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751–1818).

#### 86 Seated Woman

Iran, Isfahan, 1610–1640  
Pigments and gold on paper;  
sheet: 29.8 x 19.5 cm, image: 16.2 x 8.3 cm  
London, The British Museum, 1974,0617,0.15.24

This picture concentrates exclusively on a seated woman clad in a transparent dress or long chemise, which is open down the front as far as her knees—or even beyond (see also cat. nos. 78 and 79). The gossamer-like fabric is edged with a bold blue border which contrasts sharply with the ethereal lightness of the dress itself and inevitably becomes the focus of our gaze. In fact, it is the almost abstract-looking blue lines that draw out the intimacy of the female body underneath. Holding a little blue dish in her left hand, the woman appears to be pinching one of her nipples with her right.

The painter has positioned her next to a stream, which has the effect of turning her into a bather preparing to enter the water. The dish in her left hand is thus a bathing dish, in other words a vessel used to scoop up water and pour it over the body. Tying this work to an ancient



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custom also lends legitimacy to its depiction of nudity (see cat. 77).

The figure's seated pose is very much in keeping with Persian conventions and recalls the works of Riza 'Abbasi, too. Whereas Persian painters, as we have seen, tended to draw on European models for their nudes, this could be one of the few exceptions to the rule.

The work is also remarkable for its perfect balance of erotic desire and innocent self-absorption.

#### 87 **Mother and Child**

In the style of Muhammad Qasim

Iran, ca. 1640

Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 37 x 24.5 cm, image: 17 x 9.2 cm

London, The British Museum, 1922,0711,0.1.a

Inscribed: "*Raqam-e kamtarin Reza-ye 'Abbasi*" ("Work of the most humble Riza 'Abbasi")

#### 88 **Mother and Child**

Iran, Isfahan, 2nd half 17th century

Material; XX cm

Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, PA-240

#### 89 **Woman with Pitcher**

Iran, Isfahan (?), 2nd half 17th century

Oil on plaster (?); XX cm

London, Collection of Ali-Reza Rastegar

Although Riza 'Abbasi is named as the author of this miniature *Mother and Child*, these days it is assumed that it was painted by a painter of the second quarter of the seventeenth century. Opinions are divided as to its attribution, although Massumeh Farhad proposes Muhammad Qasim as the most likely candidate. The modeling of the body in a fleshy pink color overlaid with white supports this theory. After all, Qasim counts as the first painter to use such tonal gradations—following the European lead.

Similarly controversial is the interpretation of the dedication on the right, which Farhad translates as follows: "Manuchir Bega, [it was made] for his Excellency, the Prince." While this could well be a play on words, or so Michael Chagnon has suggested in a personal communication, even just the motif poses certain problems. While the most obvious association is bound to be with the Madonna and Child, the position of the child in this work—perched on his mother's shoulders—is more likely to recall Saint Christopher. The question remains relevant even if it cannot be answered conclusively, as the work can be seen as a kind of prototype for whole series of paintings.

The fresco now in Qatar (cat. 88) is a particularly good example. It shows a woman in a skirt and tight-fitting caraco with generously cut tabs draped over her hips. A gauze veil and apron complete the outfit, and in her arms she holds a child. A fragment of another fresco shows a



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woman clad in similar fashion (cat. 89). Especially noticeable in both works is the low-cut neckline that leaves both breasts fully exposed; the rectangular cut and braiding could even be said to accentuate them.

The European-looking garb, here combined with a chador-like, full-length veil, have the effect of placing the figure in a non-Persian, i.e. foreign—perhaps even erotically exotic—context.

Even if a Madonna Lactans cannot be ruled out as the source of inspiration, doubts remain. No European painter would ever have exposed more than one breast at a time and the motif that reached its zenith in the Early Modern Age had in any case lost much of its relevance by the seventeenth century. Comparisons with female allegories, especially those showing Charity as a mother and child, seem to present a more promising line of inquiry. As Persian painters were not always familiar with the symbolic significance of these seemingly free-spirited female figures, they frequently misread them, believing them to be a reflection of European reality. They therefore anticipated an impression that in fact would not gain currency until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when on returning from their travels in the West, several Persians remarked on how immodestly European women dressed in public. What began in painting as a misunderstanding a short time later evolved into a theme in its own right that would retain its validity long after the Safavid period, becoming a popular subject in the early days of the Qajar dynasty, too.

*Lit.: Diba 1998, cat. nos. 58 and 65 and figs. 26 and 27b and 28a; Najambadi 1998; Tavakoli-Targhi 1994.*



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### ***Farangi-sazi*: Painting in the “European manner”**

The second wave of interest in European art that commenced shortly after mid-century was to have an enduring impact on the visual appearance of Persian painting right up to, and even beyond, the end of Safavid rule in 1722. Two artists who had a formative influence on this development were Muhammad Zaman (active 1649–1700) and ‘Ali Quli Jabadar (active 1657–1716?).

Our perception of these two painters, unlike that of their predecessors earlier in the century, is shaped primarily by what look like “copies” of European models. Their direct appropriation of occidental motifs and styles, extending even to minutest of details, gave rise to what is now called *farangi-sazi*, meaning made “in the European manner.” The term applies not only to technical aspects such as the use of atmospheric perspectives, attempts at central perspective, shading with watery paint as a way of modeling bodies, and the *chiaroscuro* to which this gave rise,<sup>35</sup> but also to the adoption of European iconography.<sup>36</sup> While Persian artists had begun showing an interest in Western themes even before 1600, not until several decades later did they dare to experiment with, and in some cases adopt the relevant techniques. Opinions are divided as to when, exactly, this happened and how these new techniques found their way to Persia.<sup>37</sup> What is not in doubt is that their engagement with European art fell into two separate waves. In the first wave, Persian artists saw European themes as a source of inspiration in the form of single motifs that they could borrow and adapt at will, even if they brought rather less alacrity to bear to the application of new techniques such as shading to suggest plasticity. This was followed by a second wave in which their engagement with European art deepened, becoming more “archaeological” in nature. It is this second wave that will concern us in what follows.

#### *European techniques in Persian painting: The wash*

The earliest known work to apply *farangi-sazi* in full, embracing all its crucial points in terms of both technique and iconography is a painting (cat. 90) dated June/July 1649 (Jumadaz A.H. 1059). Unlike the date, the signature is barely legible and stems from one “kamtarin Muhammad.” These days it is generally assumed that this, “the lowliest Muhammad,” is in fact none other than Muhammad Zaman.<sup>38</sup>

The work shows a scantily clad, winged woman holding a book and a palm frond in her hands. Reclining on a floating bank of cloud and surrounded by a host of airborne spirits, she looks down to earth just as she does in the engraving by Zacharias Dolendo after Karel van Mander, of which this

brush drawing, colored with a wash, is almost a one-to-one reproduction. The engraving is a rendering of the *Victory of Truth* from the series *The Powers that Rule the World*, which was published in Amsterdam between 1595 and 1596 (cat. 91).<sup>39</sup>

The artist’s evident mastery of the colored wash, which he uses to model the woman’s body, the clouds, and the rocky promontory far below might make us more inclined to a European attribution, were it not for the signature. Yet the technique of the wash was already known in Persia by the time this work was painted, whether from Indian miniaturists, who adopted European conventions somewhat earlier, or from the Armenian Bible illustrations produced in New Julfa, the Armenian quarter at the gates of Isfahan.<sup>40</sup> The classical Persian painters of the early Safavid period, moreover, were likewise familiar with the use of glazes, even if they chose to reserve the technique for just a few single features, notably rocks and cliffs. These they modeled by applying one watery shade on top of another.<sup>41</sup>

Especially striking, and indeed novel, in the case of the *Victory of Truth* is the way Muhammad Zaman dispenses altogether with outlining to separate the various areas of color. While Zaman used washes as one of a whole palette of techniques in his later works, especially when painting trees in full leaf or for the background in *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon* (cat. 121), this particular painting remains the only one of its kind in his oeuvre. Much the same can be said of the works of the other artists who before long were using the same technique. Pure washes of a comparable quality are not to be found until a century or so later in the works of Muhammad Baqir (active in the 1750s and 1760s). Earlier examples such as the ones in the Kaempfer Album (cat. 96) of 1684/85 or the very fine painting of a young lady in European dress dating from the sixteen-sixties (cat. 70) tend not to forgo outlining as a means of defining the shape of their subjects.

35 Muhammad Qasim seems to have been the first Persian artist to flesh out his faces, see Farhad 2001, p. 125.

36 For a summary of the discussion hitherto dominated by Layla Diba, Abolala Soudavar, Sheila S. Canby and references to the relevant sources in the literature, see Landau 2011, p. 103 and note 12. Melikian-Chirvani 2007 also refers to Ivan Stchoukine, see pp. 106 and 118, note 1.

37 Landau 2011, for example, names the period around 1630, a position supported by Farhad 2001.

38 Sims 2001, esp. p. 187; Weis 2011, cat. 31, p. 129. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Friederike Weis for kindly granting me access to her voluminous catalogue, which is available only as a typescript.

39 Weis 2011, p. 128.

40 Both an *Annunciation* painted in Mogul India in 1615 (published in the auction catalogue of Christie’s London for October 5, 2010, lot 374), and an illustrated *Awetaran hamerabar* of 1635, now in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin (signature: Minutoli 272) are of relevance here; I would like to thank Jürgen Kanitz for alerting me to this work.

41 Muhammadi (active ca. 1579–1587) had used the wash to paint rocks and trees even in his works of the fifteen-eighties. In both cases, however, the wash was merely the ground onto which he applied the finest parallel hatching in a somewhat darker shade, this being his technique of choice for modeling surfaces.





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**90 Victory of Truth**

Muhammad Zaman (active: 1649–1700)  
Iran, June/July 1649 (2nd Jumada 1059)  
Pigments on paper; sheet: 27.3 x 20.5 cm,  
image: 18.2 x 24.5 cm  
Collection of Franz-Josef Vollmer



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**91 Victory of Truth**

From the series *The Powers that Rule the World*  
Zacharias Dolendo after Karel van Mander, published by Claes Jansz. Visscher the Younger in Amsterdam, 1595/96  
Engraving; sheet: 21.1 x 28.2 cm  
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1904-3467

This brush drawing done on European paper is almost certainly one of the earliest known works by Muhammad Zaman, or so the illegible part of the inscription leads us to believe: “*Jumada 2 [10]59 kamtarin Mohammad*” (June/July 1649, the lowliest Muhammad).

Zaman’s model was a print by Zacharias Dolendo (1561/73–before 1604) belonging to a series of four. The book that Truth is holding in her hand quotes a verse from the fourth chapter of the Apocryphal Third Book of Esdras: “*Omnis terra veritatem invocat, caelum etiam ipsam benedicat. Magna est veritas et praevalet*” (III Esdras, 4:36: “All the earth calleth upon the truth, and the heaven blesseth it; 4:41: Great is truth and mighty above all things.”) The third and fourth chapters debate the question of which powers are the greater: wine, the king, women (sheets 1–3), or truth. Interestingly, in his reworking of the fourth print in the series, Zaman focuses exclusively on the figure of victorious truth and leaves out the group of worshipers altogether. He thus detaches the motif from its Christian underpinning and “neutralizes” the content. The decision is similar to that made in his rendering of *Venus and Cupid*, in which it was the crucial figure of the satyr that was omitted (see cat. 104).

*Lit.: Weis 2011, pp. 127ff.; catalogue entry in the Rijksmuseum database ([www.rijksmuseum.nl](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl)).*



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### 92 Head Studies

Iran, 1st quarter 17th century  
Ink, pigments, and gold on paper;  
sheet: 11.6 x 7.3 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi,  
1971-0107-0415

### 93 Head Studies

Iran, 1st quarter 17th century  
Ink and pigments on paper; sheet: 10.9 x 6.8 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi,  
1971-0107-0417

### 94 Young Man with Wine Cup

Iran, Isfahan, 1660–1680  
Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 15.8 x 12.5  
cm, image: 11.9 x 8.7 cm  
London, The British Museum, 1920,0917,0.271.4

Since Persian painters rarely kept their studies and sketches, such works are now extremely rare. Whether they were produced in preparation for a painting or for training purposes, they afford us a rare glimpse of working methods and techniques that we would not otherwise have.

The studies in Geneva are excellent examples of this. The first sheet demonstrates with unparalleled clarity how a face was to be painted: The first task was to draw a cross made up of a single vertical line for the brow, nose, mouth, and chin and two parallel horizontal lines for the area occupied by the eyes and the bridge of the nose. Starting from the eyes, the artist then drew the curves delineating the cheeks and temples and finally completed the rest of the head. That the lines on this study have been preserved is truly remarkable and perhaps indicates that it was used for teaching purposes. Especially astonishing is how reminiscent these works are of today's methods for teaching drawing.

For all the stylistic differences, the approach taken in Persia was a traditional one. This is borne out by scrutiny of some older drawings dating from the first quarter of the fifteenth century, preserved in the Diez Album in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. While these studies of male and female heads dating from the early Timurid period follow a slightly different ideal of beauty that attaches more importance to a pronounced chin, there is no difference at all with regard to the shape of the head and how the features are proportioned.

This insight into the technical aspects of Persian painting also helps us to make sense of some of the theoretical writings on the subject

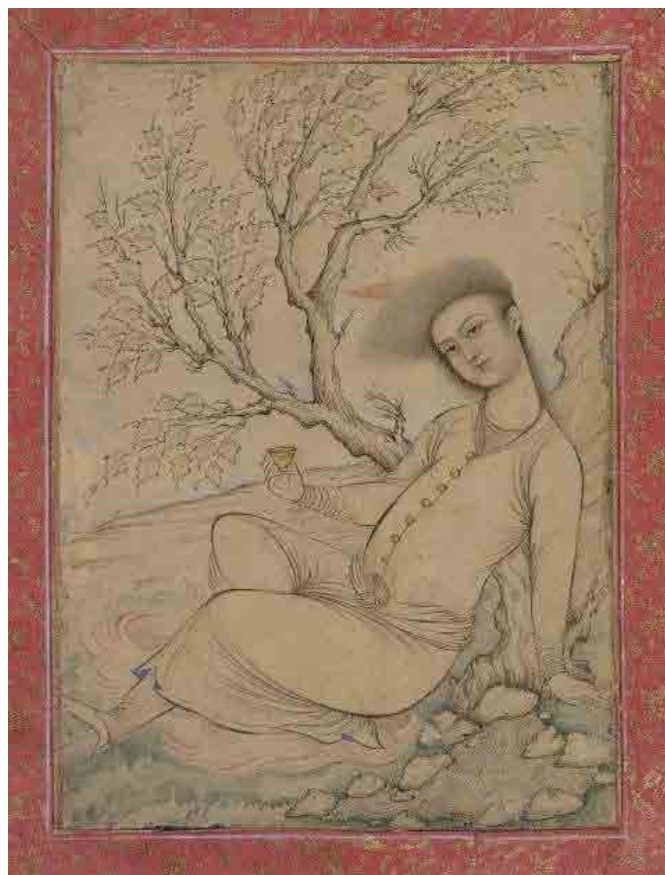
produced in the course of the sixteenth century. In his *Ayin-i Iskandari* (Rules of Alexander) of 1543, for example, 'Abdi Beg Shirazi tells us that calligraphy and painting must abide by the same principles. The painter of a miniature, or so Yves Porter has been able to show, is just as bound by vertical and horizontal lines as is the calligrapher preparing a page of manuscript. And when Shirazi writes of the "tip of the reed pen" as the "key to art," we can assume that he is alluding to the point as the unit of measurement with which the calligrapher defines both the height of the script and the length of the letters. It seems reasonable to assume that the same principles applied to painting in general and, as in our case, to the proportioning of heads in particular.

The parallels to calligraphy extend even further, however. Examining the study of male and female heads more closely (cat. 93), we are struck first and foremost by the line of the shoulders. The line defining the figure is a calligraphic line that swells and narrows and was drawn all at once without interruption. The

cheeks are outlined in much the same way, as is evident from the other study.

The pursed mouth, nose, eyelids, and ears drawn in orangey-red inside the face are similarly characteristic, as is the tiny study of a clenched fist on the same sheet. The use of red for faces and hands, incidentally, was likewise dictated by ancient convention.

We have only to study this miniature of a *Young Man with Wine Cup* (cat. 94) dating from the period between 1660 and 1680 and the changes brought about by experimentation with European painting techniques become instantly apparent. As intrinsically harmonious as this picture looks, we can nevertheless make out three distinct "styles": Focusing exclusively on the clothes, we notice how the aforementioned "calligraphic" style typical of the first half of the seventeenth century is perpetuated here. The swelling and narrowing of the line have a vitalizing effect and so can be said to follow an abstract aesthetic to which even the rather busy play of folds has to submit.



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While the man's robe is no more than vaguely suggestive of corporeality, the landscape evinces a certain plasticity that might even be described as materiality. The hatching of the wind-lashed tree (which resembles the hard lines familiar to us from European engravings) not only models it in the round but gives the viewer an inkling of how the bark might feel to the touch. The dabbed-on paint and wash used to reproduce grass, on the other hand, allow us to imagine just how soft the ground must be.

The highlight of the work, however, is undoubtedly the face. As in the portrait of a European young lady from Geneva (cat. 70), here, too, hairline hatching is used to model even the tiniest indentation or elevation, but is done so finely that the lines are almost impossible to tell apart even when magnified. The work is very probably a direct result of the artist's study of European portrait miniatures. Yet it is worth remembering that Persian painters had developed the necessary techniques long before this. What they learned from European models was that microscopic parallel hatching translates into a kind of *sfumato* (hazing in the manner of smoke) which in turn can be used to lend the body plasticity.

Painting *en pointillé*, or stippling, as developed by 'Ali Quli Jabadar and Muhammad Zaman marks the last stage in this development (see for instance cat. nos. 99 and 102).  
*Lit.: Babaie 2009, p. 123; Lentz/Lowry 1989, pp. 181 and 344 (cat. nos. 73 and 74); Porter 2000, p. 111; Robinson 1992, p. 157, no. 295.*

#### 95 Fresco Fragment

Iran, probably Isfahan, ca. 1680  
 Pigments on stucco; 77 x 56.5 cm  
 Art and History Trust Collection, LTS1995.2.121

The most mature manifestations of *farangi-sazi*, the Persian term for "painting in the European manner," are the works of 'Ali Quli Jabadar and Muhammad Zaman. The style was not confined to miniature painting, however, but extended to murals as well. The two key techniques applied here, albeit in the somewhat coarser form demanded by the medium, are *chiaroscuro*—the use of light-dark contrasts to model faces—and spatial perspective.

Abolala Soudavar quite rightly points out that the bulging eyes in the faces of these figures recall the faces in Zaman's miniatures, and on the basis of this attributes the mural either to Zaman himself or to a member of his circle. This also explains his dating of the work to the period between 1675 and 1680, or perhaps a lit-



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tle later. Zaman is known to have been preoccupied with traditional Persian themes at the time.

Another fragment sold at auction in London in 1998 (Sotheby's, London, October 15, 1998, lot 70) was attributed to the same painter.  
*Lit.: Soudavar 1996, p. 377; Ritter 2009, p. 271.*

#### 96 Double Page with Persian Figures

From the "Kaempfer Album"  
 Jani, 1684/85 (A.H. 1096)  
 Pigments on paper; sheet: 21.4 x 29.9 cm  
 London, The British Museum, 1974,0617,0.1.12 and 1974,0617,0.1.13

The album known as the "Kaempfer Album" from which this double page was taken belonged to the German physician and explorer Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716), who spent the years 1683 to 1693 traveling through Russia to the Near East, India, Java, Siam, and Japan. He was in Persia for about a year from 1684 to 1685 and there commissioned an artist to paint pictures of animals, people in traditional Persian dress, and street scenes. These works, supplemented by some of Kaempfer's own sketches, were later collated in a single, leather-bound album.

According to the caption, this double page shows a young *Qizilbash* with a seated lady on the left and a veiled storyteller with her audience on the right.

Jani, the artist credited with these illustrations, described himself as a *farangi saz*, a painter "in the European style." And there are indeed several telltale features that support this claim, including the shadows cast by the figures and the partial modeling of their faces and clothes. Especially striking is the painter's skilled use of the wash.

Jani, it seems, worked for the bazaar. His style is nowhere near as sophisticated and elaborate as that of Muhammad Zaman or 'Ali Quli Jabadar, but his scenes of everyday life are often full of vitality and attest to his keen powers of observation.

Unfortunately, as commercial artwork intended for a much wider audience, very few such pictures have survived; almost all of those that have were brought back to Europe by European travelers as souvenirs. Alongside another album of "colored sketches" on show in the British Museum (having formerly been a possession of Hans Sloane, British Museum, 1928,0323,0.1-9), there is—or was—a set of fifty-eight very fine costume drawings assembled in an album called the "Mansur Album." As in the Kaempfer Album, the works are all brush drawings done with a wash showing one or two figures against what in most cases is an empty background.

*Lit.: Canby 1993, pp. 113–14.*



96

**97 Palace Garden of Hezar-Jarib in Aliabad**

Iran, last quarter 17th century  
 Pigments on paper; sheet: 33 x 22.1 cm  
 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1895-A-3069

**98 Private Audience Hall of Shah Safi I**

Iran, last quarter 17th century  
 Pigments on paper; sheet: 33 x 22.1 cm  
 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-T-1895-A-3070

The two views of a palace garden and audience hall are the work of an unknown Persian painter.

They were commissioned by a Dutchman, or so we can conclude from the inscription on verso. We can tell from the use of a wash and the attempt at perspectival foreshortening—of the garden, the terrace, the wall niches, the roof, and the palace interior—that the painter of this work was familiar with *farangi-sazi*. The tall trees with their clumps of foliage sprouting out of a central trunk, moreover, recall the works of Muhammad Zaman. The vista through Safi's audience hall to the park beyond might also remind us of the banqueting Europeans

adorning the eastern wall of the Qaysariyya Gate of the *maydan* of Isfahan. Yet the painter combines these new techniques with elements drawn from a much older tradition. This is most clearly apparent in the single-story annexes built onto the palace of Hezar-Jarib. To judge by the style, both works date from the last quarter of the seventeenth century (or later). Alongside the brush drawings from the Kaempfer Album, Sloane Album, and Mansur Album, they are the only evidence we have of commercial painting in the *farangi* style in Isfahan.



97



98

99 **Madonna with the Infant Jesus and Saint John**

Muhammad Zaman (active 1649–1700)  
Iran, dated 1682/83 (A.H. 1093)  
Pigments and gold on paper;  
sheet: 50.5 x 36.5 cm, image: 17.2 x 11.1 cm  
Singapore, Asian Civilisations Museum,  
2011-02267

Inscribed: “*Raqam-e kamtarin [illegible]  
Muhammad Zaman, seneh 1093*” (“Work of the  
most humble . . . Muhammad Zaman, the year  
1682/83”)

The sheet is signed in gold and dated. The marbled border, moreover, is inscribed in a different hand in *nasta’liq* script as follows: “*Kar-i hesrat-i ustad-i Muhammad Zaman ast.*” (“It is the work of the high master Muhammad Zaman.”)

The work resurfaced only recently and was auctioned at Christie’s in London on April 7, 2011 (lot 261). Unknown prior to that, it now counts as the seventh leaf in Muhammad Zaman’s group of works after European models. The latest research findings have turned up several possible models, all of which have their origins in the *Sainte famille avec Saint-Jean et l’ag-*

*neau*, a painting by the French Classicist Jacques Stella (1596–1657) dated 1633 (Montpellier, Musée Fabre, 2001, 6.1).

At least two different engravers are known to have produced prints based on this painting: one is the Frenchman Gilles Rousselet and the other Melchior Küsel of Augsburg. Rousselet’s version was most likely the source used for the enameled watchcases of two pocket watches made by Jacques Goullons. One of those miniatures borrows Rousselet’s use of a draped curtain as a theatrical prop with which to set the stage (see cat. 100).

It therefore seems likely that Muhammad Zaman was inspired by just such an enameled miniature on a now lost pocketwatch. The technique of applying paint *en pointillé* (also known as stippling) and the relatively large proportion of white mixed into the paint are both typical of the enamels adorning the watchcases made in Blois and Paris in the sixteen-forties and fifties. The colors of the robes worn by the figure of the Virgin and the infant John the Baptist might also stem from the same source.

What the pocket watches cannot explain, however, are those details that had to be eliminated on account of the round format, but

which are present in Küsel’s engraving of *St. Maria Mater Dei*. Yet not even Küsel’s influence can explain the shepherd’s crook reworked in the shape of a cross held by the infant John the Baptist, the meaning of the architectural ruins, or the symbolic significance of the remains of a wooden frame visible behind them.

Once again, we are bound to admit that we know very little about this work, and have no choice but to reiterate what Anthony Welch said in 1973 of Zaman’s *Return of the Holy Family from Egypt*. Welch hypothesized that the work was perhaps made for a Christian—presumably Armenian—patron. That would explain the theologically weighty pointers to the nativity, baptism, and crucifixion of Christ that are so clearly present in this work. Much the same can be said of Zaman’s rendering of *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (cat. 108).



**Fig. 84** Jacques Goullons (fl. 1626–1671), watch, ca. 1645–50, case and dial: painted enamel on gold; movement: gilded brass and steel, partly blued, 6.7 x 5.9 cm (New York, Metropolitan Museum, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917, 17.190.1627)

*Painting “en pointillé”*

Another European technique that was to become a hallmark of Zaman’s work is painting *en pointillé*, or stippling. While some scholars have indeed remarked on this, it was never thought to merit further investigation.<sup>42</sup> *The Madonna with the Infant Jesus and Saint John* (cat. 99), a painting signed by Muhammad Zaman and dated 1682/83 (A.H. 1093) is a shining example of the technique. In this work, the Madonna’s red robe and blue cloak that has slid down off her shoulders, the parapet and ruined columns, as well as the sky in the background are all modeled by tiny, more or less densely spaced dots or strokes of paint in different hues, applied with a precision that points to European enamels or miniatures as possible models.

It is an impression confirmed not just by direct comparisons with the relevant works but also by the instructions contained in certain European treatises, which in some cases read rather like an exact description of Zaman’s picture. Claude Boutet’s widely circulated and translated *Traité de Mignature pour apprendre aisément à Peindre sans Maître* of 1673,<sup>43</sup> for exa-

<sup>42</sup> Sims 2002, p. 312.

<sup>43</sup> The *Traité* was originally published as the *Ecole de la Mignature* in Paris and Rouen in 1673; the second edition titled *Traité de la Mignature*, the name by which it is more commonly known, was published in Paris in 1673 and 1674 (Kuehni 2010, p. 2).



mple, contains the following passage: “quand on veut faire quelque piece, soit carnation, soit draperie, ou autre chose, il faut commencer par ebaucher, c’est-à-dire, coucher sa couleur à grand coup, le plus uniment que l’on peut, comme font ceux qui peignent en huile, & ne pas lui donner toute la force qu’elle doit avoir pour etre achevée, je veux dire faire les jours un peu plus clairs, & les ombres moins brunes qu’elles ne doivent etre, parcequ’en pointillant dessus comme il faut faire apres que l’on a ebauché, on fortifie toujours sa couleur, qui seroit à la fin trop brune.”<sup>44</sup> Philippe Ferrand provides similar advice in his *L’art du feu ou de peindre en émail* of 1721. In his “Instructions et préceptes de la mignature,” which were intended for students of enamel painting, he describes each step in the process, and ends by remarking: “Les fonds sont très-importans, & il est nécessaire de les terminer entierement avant que d’achever le Portrait, afin d’y travailler des cheveux dessus, lesquels souvent y doivent voltiger & être fort legers, de même que sur l’habit, il sera à votre option de pointiller ces fonds ou de les laisser unis; mais les pointillez seront toujours plus gracieux.”<sup>45</sup>

Miniature portraits<sup>46</sup> painted on vellum or paper were extremely popular in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Starting in England, the trend soon spread to France, where before long it was being practiced by enamellers. The man credited with the “invention” of enamel painting is Jean Toutin (1578–1644), who is said to have applied it first in 1632<sup>47</sup> after discovering that it is possible to paint over white enamel as long as it has been fired first. This method prevented the colors from running into each other during the second firing. No sooner had the technique been mastered than the demand for enamels skyrocketed, as is evident from the large number of watchcases manufactured just a short time later first in Blois and then in Paris.

One of the watchmakers famed for his outstanding timepieces housed in enameled watchcases was the Paris-based Jacques Goullons (who was active from 1626 to 1671). That two of his *montres à gousset* to have survived are comparable with Zaman’s *Madonna* not only in terms of technique but in terms of subject matter, too, is surely more than just fortuitous.

Although these enamels were the work of different artists working under contract to Goullons, both are based on a print engraved by Gilles Rousselet between 1633 and 1638 after a painting called the *Holy Family with John the Baptist and the Lamb*



44 *Traité de Mignature pour apprendre aisément à Peindre sans Maître* (Brussels, 1692), p. 24–25, author’s italics. (“When you want to paint something, be it flesh, drapery, or something else, start by applying a layer of paint in large and uniform brushstrokes, rather as you would if you were painting in oils, but not with the same intensity as it is to have later, by which I mean that the light areas should be lighter, and the dark areas less dark than they are to be eventually, because by stippling after applying this first layer of paint, you can always intensify the color so that it is very dark ultimately.”)

45 Ferrand 1721, pp. 24–25, author’s italics. (“The ground is very important, and to work on the hair, which must be very light and may have to fly around, on the clothes too, it must be finished in its entirety before working on the portrait. Whether the ground is stippled or left plain is up to you, although stippling will always be the more comely option.”)

46 Up to this point, European miniatures had had nothing whatsoever in common with their Persian equivalents, even if these days both fall under the same heading.

47 Weinhold 2000, p. 15.



101

#### 100 Pocketwatch

Jacques Goullons

France, Paris, 1645–1650

Watchcase and dial: enameled gold; clockwork: brass, some parts gold-plated, and steel, some parts blued; XX cm in diameter

Museum of Horology at Le Locle, 417

The clockwork of this pocket watch was made by Jacques Goullons (active: 1626–1671), a watchmaker who until his death in 1671 was in the service of first Gaston and then Philippe, Duke of Orléans. Of the handful of pocket watches made by him that have survived to this day, one belonged to Louis XIV and another to Cardinal Mazarin.

This *montre à gousset* has a pendant that is iconographically similar, although the case was

painted by a different enameler. The outside of the watch shows a *Holy Family with the Infant John the Baptist* based on an engraving by Gilles Rousselet (1610–1686), which in turn was modeled on a small oil painting on slate done by Jacques Stella (now in the Musée Thomas Henry in Cherbourg). Both works were made between 1635 and 1638. The inside of the lid likewise recalls an engraving by Rousselet, which in turn is based on a different rendering of the *Holy Family with Saint John and the Lamb* by Jacques Stella (Montpellier, Musée Fabre, inv. no. 2001 6.1). Both paintings informed the pendant now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (inv. no. 17.190.1627)

The verso presents a third *Holy Family*, the exact source of which has not yet been identified. The underside of the watchcase shows a

*Madonna and Child* featuring a group of angels flying past with a cross. This miniature is based on an etching of 1639 by Laurent de la Hyre (1606–1656) (Nancy, Musée des beaux-arts, inv. no. TH.99.15.537 and 536). I would like to thank Jürgen Kanitz for pointing this out to me.

Of particular interest here is the inside of the watchcase showing Mary, Jesus, and Saint John. Here, we see the enameler appropriating Rousselet's composition, which dispensed with the figure of Joseph and staged the three remaining figures under an artfully draped curtain. Instead of an interior containing a table draped with a heavy tablecloth for the Virgin to lean on, the painter set the piece against a landscape backdrop. Part of a wall serves to round off the composition at right.

*Lit.: Vincent 2002; Vincent 2012, p. 82.*

#### 101 S. Maria Mater Dei

Melchior Küsel (1626–1684)

Germany, Augsburg, between 1651 and 1682

Engraving; sheet: 37 x 25.8 cm

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August-Bibliothek, Graph.

A1: 1450

The oldest son of a watchmaker, Melchior Küsel ranks among Augsburg's most important engravers, alongside his brother and his four daughters. He studied engraving with Matthäus Merian in Frankfurt am Main, but returned to Augsburg following the latter's death in 1651. He had his own publishing house and most of his prints were made after other people's works, among them several French engravings. His own engravings, meanwhile, proved a useful source of motifs for Augsburg's enamellers.

The inscription "*Melchior Küsell fecit et exudit*" in this case indicates that both composition and engraving were Küsel's own work. While the grouping of Mary with the infants Jesus and John the Baptist can be traced back to a painting by Jacques Stella, the stage set with column, niched wall, balustrade, and trees is Küsel's own invention. Not that he was the first to resort to the use of such architectural set pieces. A watch now in New York made by Jacques Goullons between 1645 and 1650 likewise draws on Stella's group of figures and on the right-hand side features two broken columns mounted on a high pedestal (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17.190.1627).



**Fig. 85** ‘Ali Quli Jabadar (fl. 1657–1716?), *Penitent Magdalene*, ca. 1675 (?), pigment on paper, diameter 4.4 cm (John Rylands Library, Manchester)

**Fig. 86** Melchior Küsel (1626–1684), *Penitent Magdalene*, 1646–83, engraving, 37.9 x 25.6 cm (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, MKüsel AB 3.7)



Fig. 85

by the “peintre du roi” Jacques Stella (1596–1657).<sup>48</sup> In a departure from Stella, however, Rousselet focuses on the figure of the Madonna and the two little boys, omitting Joseph and the cavorting putto altogether. The architectural set that Stella merely hints at, moreover, is replaced with an artfully draped curtain and a table covered with a heavy tablecloth. The greatest fidelity to the engraving was that demonstrated by the enameller of the pocket watch that is now in the Museum of Horology at Le Locle (cat. 100), while the painter of the second watch, the one now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 81), must have found Rousselet’s stage set rather too theatrical and so replaced it with columns.

That watches, and above all pocket watches, should have had a role to play in the development of later Safavid painting is not especially surprising. Being small and easy to transport, they were an extremely useful commodity whether as merchandise or as costly gifts—both of which European travelers and merchants were likely to need at some point on their

travels. According to the Sherley brothers, there were European watchmakers working in Isfahan as early as 1590 and in 1613, Shah ‘Abbas is known to have sent a watch as a diplomatic gift to the court of the Mughal emperor. British merchants also remarked on how pocket watches and clocks were highly prized collectibles for both the shah himself and the Persian nobility in general.<sup>49</sup> Also worthy of mention in this connection is the Swiss watchmaker Johann Rudolf Stadler (1605–1637) of Zurich whose story is related by both the traveler Adam Olearius and by Jean de Thévenot, whose travelogue recounts it in great detail (cat. nos. 20 and 21). Stadler was in the service of Shah Safi I who tasked him with taking care of the royal clocks and winding them all up every day. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier tells of a goldsmith of Orléans, one Lescot, who was commissioned by an Englishman to make a clock of 15 cm in height with a “garniture d’or émaillé.”<sup>50</sup> According to Tavernier, however, many of the pocket watches in Isfahan were imported by Armenian traders, and Engelbert Kaempfer, who was in Persia in 1684/85, reports that even the

<sup>48</sup> Vincent 2002, p. 93. Jacques Stella’s painting is illustrated in Thuillier 2006, pp. 82–83.

<sup>49</sup> See Floor 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Tavernier 1678, vol.1, p. 552.



Fig. 86

royal physician wore a pocket watch. Nor should we forget the French jeweler Jean Chardin, who actually dealt in pocket watches. There is at least one Safavid oil painting featuring both a turret clock made in Augsburg or Nuremberg and a chased pocket watch.<sup>51</sup>

At this juncture, I would like to discuss a miniature which supports—even if only indirectly—the hypothesis that enameled French (or European) pocket watches had a formative influence on the development of *farangi-sazi*. The work in question is an especially striking round miniature by ‘Ali Quli Jabadar, the other great painter “in the European style” and a coeval of Muhammad Zaman; measuring just 4.4 cm in diameter, it shows a penitent Mary Magdalene (fig. 82). Although we know of no watchcase with a comparable scene that might be adduced as a model, the format alone, which is extremely unusual for Persian miniatures, is surely a clear pointer in that direction since it matches more or less exactly the size and shape of the watchcase lids for which Parisian watchmakers were famous.

51 The work under discussion here is the *Portrait of a Persian* now in the Sa’dabad Museum of Fine Arts in Teheran.

The famous sinner was a popular theme in seventeenth-century France, and there are countless variations on the theme of the Magdalene by the most diverse painters.<sup>52</sup> Since we know of at least one enameled brooch from Limoges bearing a similar motif,<sup>53</sup> it seems reasonable to suppose that watches, too, might have been adorned with this popular subject. What can be proved is that ‘Ali Quli Jabadar’s *Magdalene* had its origins in France, specifically in a work of Simon Vouet (1590–1649) created between 1628 and 1633.<sup>54</sup> As Michel Dorigny (1617–1663) is known to have made an engraving of this painting, meaning that it would have been widely available, the *Penitent Magdalene* could well have served an enameller as a model for a watchcase in much the same way as described for Goullons’s watchcases. Dorigny’s engraving also provided a model for Melchior Küsel of Augsburg (1626–1684), whose engraving is shown here by way of comparison (fig. 83). Küsel often drew on French sources, which were then copied by the enamel painters of Augsburg.

But let us return to Zaman’s *Madonna*. We have already shown that both the iconography of this work and the stippling technique in which it is painted point to a French pocket watch as the primary source of inspiration. It is also worth noting that when painting drapery, Zaman shows a clear preference for paints containing a high proportion of white<sup>55</sup>, which is likewise a hallmark of French enamel painting, and that the colors of the clothes worn by the Madonna in Zaman’s work also match those of the original painting.

One question, however, has still not been adequately answered: How did Muhammad Zaman know which shoes might befit the Madonna? How did he know that she wore sandals? After all, the watchcase does not show her feet at all. One possible source for this particular detail is another engraving, this time by the aforementioned Melchior Küsel (cat. 101), which incidentally also contains the columns familiar to us—albeit in a slightly different rendering—from Goullons’s watch in the Metropolitan Museum.

This is a puzzling coincidence, especially as it is hard to countenance the idea that Zaman drew on two different sources which were ultimately both of the same origin. It is of course possible that he was actually drawing on a third, as yet unknown, source, although this is no more than idle speculation. The facts of the matter are not in doubt, but a definitive interpretation of them continues to elude us.

52 See Bardon 1968. For another work by ‘Ali Quli Jabadar, see cat. 112 (upper half).

53 *Maria Magdalena*, Pierre Nouailher the Elder, last quarter of the seventeenth century, Bourges, Musée des Arts décoratifs, Inv. 1916.5.50; 49 (Inventaire D) and 2182 (Inventaire E).

54 This work is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund, CMA 88.108.

55 Vincent 2002, p. 94.



102

### 102 European Lady with Wine Glass

'Ali Quli Jabadar (active: 1657–1716?)  
Iran, dated September 1674 (A. H. Rajab 1085)  
Pigments on paper; sheet: 27.5 x 21 cm; image:  
14 x 9 cm

Inscribed: *"Ba tarikh-i shahr-i rajab al-morajjab 1085 dar dar al-soltana Qazvin surat-i etmam yaft raqam-e 'Ali Quli Jabadar"* ("It was completed in the month of Rajab al-murajjab 1085 in the capital city of Qazvin, work of 'Ali Quli Jabadar").

### 103 Autumn

From the series *The Four Seasons*  
France, Strasbourg, 1621–1669  
Peter Aubry the Younger (publisher)  
Engraving; sheet: 30.4 x 20.7 cm  
Wolfenbüttel, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum,  
JMMoscherosch AB 3.3

This portrait by 'Ali Quli Jabadar is based on an engraving published by the engraver and publisher Peter Aubry the Younger of Strasbourg (1610–1686). The print in question belongs to a

series of *Four Seasons* showing each of the seasons as a fashionably clad allegory and inscribed with poems by Johann Michael Moscherosch (1601–1669). A native of northern Alsace, Moscherosch counts among the most influential German writers of the seventeenth century, when he was famed mainly for his satirical works. Whether the signature *"I M Moscherosch fecit"* really does attest to his authorship of the engraving is open to doubt. Another print on the same theme, also published by Aubry, has an almost identical background, but is inscribed *"Philandri lusus"* or "one of Philander's pranks," Philander von Sittewalt being Moscherosch's literary alter ego. This, however, relates to the authorship of the text rather than the engraving itself, which in turn leads us to suspect that the latter was done either by Aubry or by an unknown engraver.

When appropriating the allegory for his work, Jabadar replaced the original background with a hilly landscape bathed in warm, autumnal sunlight and populated only by a lone huntsman

and his dog. The artist clearly understood the allegorical meaning of the Strasbourg print but saw that an atmospheric vista would be more congruent with the month of Rajab (September) than the rather busy background of the original.

Both the view and the architectural stage set with its perspective view of a tiled floor and lavishly draped curtain can be traced back to both the European portrait tradition and to late Safavid portraiture in oils. The dating of Jabadar's picture might therefore provide a pointer to the period in which such oil portraits were painted. The artfully draped curtain and landscape vista (albeit without the architectural props) recur in another work, an unfortunately undated portrait of a French marshal or prince (Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet, Paris, MA2478).

The significance of this work to the history of art lies in the painting technique. Jabadar painted it by stippling, in other words by dabbing on tiny dots of wet paint—a method hitherto unknown in Persia and comparable with the European technique of painting *en pointillé*, which is characteristic of European miniatures. The liberal use of white in both the red curtain and the blue dress is likewise typical of this type of painting. Muhammad Zaman used the same technique just a short time later for his four *Khamsa* illustrations produced in Ashraf in 1675/76. This is not surprising bearing in mind that Zaman, like Jabadar, was in the service of the shah during the period in question. *Lit.: Thieme-Becker, article on "Peter Aubry," Deutsche Biographie, article on "Johann Michael Moscherosch"*



103

### *When did stippling first emerge in Persia?*

Muhammad Zaman's *Madonna* dates from a period in his career in which he was already a consummate master of the art of stippling. Even a cursory glance at his earlier works is enough to show that he began using this technique much earlier, especially when painting faces and hands. *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon* of 1675/76 (A.H. 1086) (cat. 121) is an especially good example of this.

Fortunately, we possess a signed and dated work by 'Ali Quli Jabadar that is stippled not just in part, but in fact was painted almost exclusively *en pointillé* (cat. 102). As no earlier example of this technique has been found to date, it seems reasonable to conclude that the stippling that is a hallmark of

*farangi-sazi* was first adopted in 1674 (A.H. 1085), or perhaps slightly earlier, around 1670.<sup>56</sup>

#### *Copy or invention?*

'Ali Quli Jabadar painted his *European Lady with Wine Glass* after an engraving of the figure of autumn from an allegory of the *Four Seasons* published by Peter Aubry the Younger in Strasbourg, which has been linked to the lawyer and satirist Johann Michael Moscherosch (1601–1669) (cat. 103). Jabadar translated the richly clad personification of autumn with her standard attributes of a wine glass and basket of fruit into a work on a significantly smaller scale, reproducing the minutiae of her garb—her lace collar lined with pearls, her silk ribbons, and double cuffs made of lace—with painstaking attention to detail. But Jabadar also fleshed out those elements that the engraver had simplified in the interests of painterliness, just as he “corrected” those features that he regarded as poorly done. Thus, the string of pearls which in the engraving is no more than an asymmetrical, pinned-on ornament, becomes an integral part of the décor and follows the neckline of the lady's gown all the way round. Jabadar also omits the braid fastenings on her bodice and reworks her hair so that instead of sporting wavy tresses that cascade down over her shoulders and a headdress lavishly trimmed with ostrich feathers, her hair is pulled straight on either side her parting, ending in a mass of tightly curled ringlets on either side of her neck.

Jabadar also had ideas of his own with regard to the setting. Thus the pedestal on which the lady is standing becomes a tiled floor ending in a pillar or the corner of a wall, most of which is concealed behind a lavishly draped curtain. The view of the landscape beyond likewise follows a new idea, to the extent that instead of peasants busy with the harvest and wine-making, it shows a lonely huntsman with a shotgun and his dog.

This dominance of architectural set pieces and heavy velvet drapes in front of distant landscapes can undoubtedly be traced back to a European pictorial convention that first emerged in the portraiture of Flemish painters such as Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641) and that after spreading to England soon became standard practice. On only one other occasion did 'Ali Quli Jabadar draw on this kind of iconography,<sup>57</sup> although the triad of tiled floor, curtain, and architec-

tural element soon became the *sine qua non* of a whole group of early Safavid oil paintings (cat. nos. 139–141).<sup>58</sup>

This inevitably raises the question of whether works such as this one can, or should, be regarded as copies at all, and of how the works of Jabadar and Zaman based on European models should be categorized. The first question, it should be stressed right at the start, is of relevance only to those schooled in Western art, since only in Western culture does invention enjoy primacy over imitation—a hierarchy first formulated in the Renaissance and so frequently reiterated in the course of art history that by the nineteenth century it had become axiomatic. Having said that, it must also be noted that in recent years, scholars have come to take a more nuanced view. The supremacy of the original over the copy and the distinction traditionally drawn between hallowed original and profane reproduction is now beginning to wear thin. Scholars these days prefer to talk of appropriation or interpretation.<sup>59</sup> The copy now counts as “fundamental to progress” since “certain fundamentals must be duplicated in order to produce an effect.”<sup>60</sup>

Invention in Persia was rated no more highly than imitation or appropriation. Solutions once found for certain scenes—a horseman, say, or a group of figures—were used again and again in different contexts. The Timurid painters of the fifteenth century worked in large workshops where they made extensive use of pouncing, a method that entailed passing charcoal dust or a similarly fine powder through tiny holes pricked into the original, to transfer motifs from one sheet to another.<sup>61</sup> The copy was further elevated in the seventeenth century and it has to be said that Riza 'Abbasi's style and many of his pictures would not have been disseminated as quickly as they were, had not his “pupils” painted copies of the “master's” works. The image of the pale imitation conjured up by the term “pupil's copy” is misleading, however, as the copies in question are often the mature works of artists who had long since become masters in their own right.

Based on how little we know of Persian art and the mechanisms underlying it from the time of Shah 'Abbas to the fall of the Safavids, it is impossible to draw any sweeping conclusions on this point. Yet the sheer number of “copies after” in existence is of itself remarkable. Also striking is the fact that none of these “repetitions” replicate the original without any deviations at all. As far as we can tell, there was no pouncing as there had been in the fifteenth century. This could mean that freehand imitations were deemed to have merits of their own, and that this form of appropriation should be interpreted rather as a variation on a theme—to borrow the phraseology used above (cats. 66 and 67, 84, and fig. 70).

In his *Iskandarnama*, Nizami recounts a famous dispute between two painters, one of them Greek and the other Chi-

56 It should, however, be mentioned that Shaykh 'Abbasi (active 1650–1684), who is known to have engaged with the painting of Mogul India, painted his figures' faces, and occasionally their clothing too, in a manner that is not dissimilar: to paint a face such as that of the Indian guest in *Shah 'Abbas I Receiving an Indian Emissary* (cat. 115), he first applied a wafer-thin white ground. After outlining the head in dark brown on top of this ground, he modeled the face by dabbing on a slightly lighter shade of brown. The thin, dry paint is similar to that used in Indian portraits dating from the same period. The result is a kind of *sfumato* that is strongly suggestive of plasticity. Since the technique was confined to the use of brown, however, the modeling of colored areas is not especially effective. It should also be stressed that this “dabbing” is very different from the stippling of a Muhammad Zaman or an 'Ali Quli Jabadar, both of whom used not just one, but several shades of the same color, and it seems worked with paints that were not as dry as those preferred by Shaykh 'Abbasi and the Mogul school of painting. Another method of modeling faces was by parallel hairline hatching. Here, too, the result is a kind of *sfumato*, one especially good example of which is the *Lady in European dress* from Geneva (see cat. 70). These observations are provisional in nature, however, and await more thorough investigation.

57 See his portrait of a French army commander in the Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet in Paris, Inv. MA 2478.

58 See Michel Chagnon's essay here in this catalogue (pp. XX–XX). The dating of 'Ali Quli Jabadar's picture could supply a crucial pointer to the possible date of the oil painting.

59 See, for example, Gramaccini/Meier 2003, p. 11.

60 Gramaccini/Meier 2003, p. 11. For an even earlier rehabilitation of imitation, see Weinhold 2000.

61 See “The Kitab-khana and the Dissemination of the Timurid Vision” in Lentz/Lowry 1989, esp. pp. 172–74.

nese, which may help us to understand this phenomenon. Nizami tells us how on a visit to China, Alexander and the Chinese emperor got into a discussion of the relative merits of their respective peoples. To answer the question of which of them made the better painters, the Greeks or the Chinese, two artists were commissioned to paint a room, each of them taking responsibility for half the total wall space. The two halves were separated by a curtain down the middle, and only when both painters were finished did Alexander order the curtain to be removed. To the adjudicators' amazement, what was revealed was the same picture twice over, or rather a picture and its mirror image. It turned out that while the Greek had painted a picture on his wall, the Chinese had used the time to polish his own wall to a shine, effectively turning it into a mirror. The Greek was hailed as the better painter and the Chinese as the better polisher; both "arts," however, were deemed to be of equal worth.<sup>62</sup>

It should also be remembered that in Iranian culture, calligraphy and painting have always been regarded as two sides of the same coin, and not just by art theorists but by practitioners, too. When 'Abdi Beg Shirazi in his *'Ayin-e Iskandari* (Rules of Alexander) of 1543 spoke of two *qalam*—the scribe's pen and the painter's brush—as tools of equal value, what he was really doing was to lend greater legitimacy to painting. By according it the same prestige as calligraphy, one of the "high arts," he was in fact upgrading it.<sup>63</sup> This juxtaposition, moreover, allows us to presume that when judging the two arts, the criteria applied were—or at least could be—similar. The Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, for example, boasted that he could tell the difference between the work of every one of his calligraphers. Such discrimination in a discipline in which the emphasis is on the exact repetition of fixed forms and on universality rather than individuality, presupposes an ability to discern even the tiniest variations. A comparable sensitivity to minute differences and variations could well have played a role in the judgment of painting, too.

This is the backdrop against which the many "interpretations" that sprang up in the circle of Riza 'Abbasi and the generation of painters that followed him should be understood. Apart from such obvious discrepancies as variations in color or the reversal of a particular motif or composition (which seems to have been regarded as a feat in itself), most of the differences are so tiny that although deliberate, they are barely perceptible at all; often all that is modified is some minor detail of dress, background matter, or line (which may be of uniform thickness or vary in thickness in the manner of calligraphy). The discriminating viewer appreciates what the artist has done and not only follows every line but savors it, too, whether because the imitation is so good, because the line is so different, or because some crucial detail has been significantly improved. Ultimately, it is an elitist way of seeing—an appreciation of art reserved for connoisseurs only.

This hypothesis is supported, even if only indirectly, by the *muraqqa'* albums used for collecting single miniatures and specimens of calligraphy. The loose leafs contained in such

albums were not just bundled together at random but systematically compiled.<sup>64</sup> That double pages had to be symmetrical was one of the rules that could not be broken under any circumstances, which is why they show two pictures or two calligraphic works that are either thematically related or can be read as a question and answer.<sup>65</sup> The pages onto which the works were pasted likewise had to have symmetrical borders and were colored and designed with a view to enhancing the work displayed there.<sup>66</sup> Clearly they were meant to be read as a coherent whole and to stimulate the viewer to look for connections.

The value attached to the mirror image—the reflection<sup>67</sup>—and the importance of symmetry in general and of viewing pictures in parallel, as also the appreciation of variation and of miniscule differences are surely proof enough that in Persia, a copy could never be perceived as mere repetition or as banal reproduction but possessed its own intrinsic value as a work of art.

Without having grasped this cultural premise we would not know how to appreciate the works "after European paintings"<sup>68</sup> by 'Ali Quli Jabadar and Muhammad Zaman. To be able to judge what those two artists achieved, in other words, we have to view their works alongside those that served them as models or to which they were a response.

Let us now return to Muhammad Zaman. His *Venus and Cupid* of 1676/77 (A.H. 1087) (cat. 104) and *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (cat. 108) are generally considered to be the earliest of his seven interpretations of European engravings.<sup>69</sup> Although not dated, even just the style of his *Judith* seems to set it apart from the later group of works dating from between 1682 and 1689, leading us to surmise that it was painted before 1675.

The work in which Zaman appears to stray furthest from his model is his rendering of *Venus and Cupid*. Although painted on much the same scale as the engraving of *Jupiter and Antiope* that Raphael Sadeler the Elder produced between 1596 and 1632 (cat. 105), Zaman reproduces only the figures of the reclining Venus and Cupid behind her. The satyr shown stealing up on the seminude princess in the engraving, doubtless not with entirely honorable intentions, is omitted altogether, and the scene of the action is now a lush park, such as would have been hard to find in largely arid Persia. Leaving out the satyr has the effect—at least to European eyes—of casting the work adrift from its literary moorings, because instead of looking at the satyr, Cupid is now looking straight at the viewer. The one stealing up on the goddess, in other words, is not the supreme deity in the guise of a lecherous satyr stalking an unsuspecting nymph, but rather the viewer himself, who has no sooner slipped into this role than he is

64 See Roxburgh 2005.

65 Eleanor Sims.

66 The St. Petersburg Album is an especially magnificent example of this.

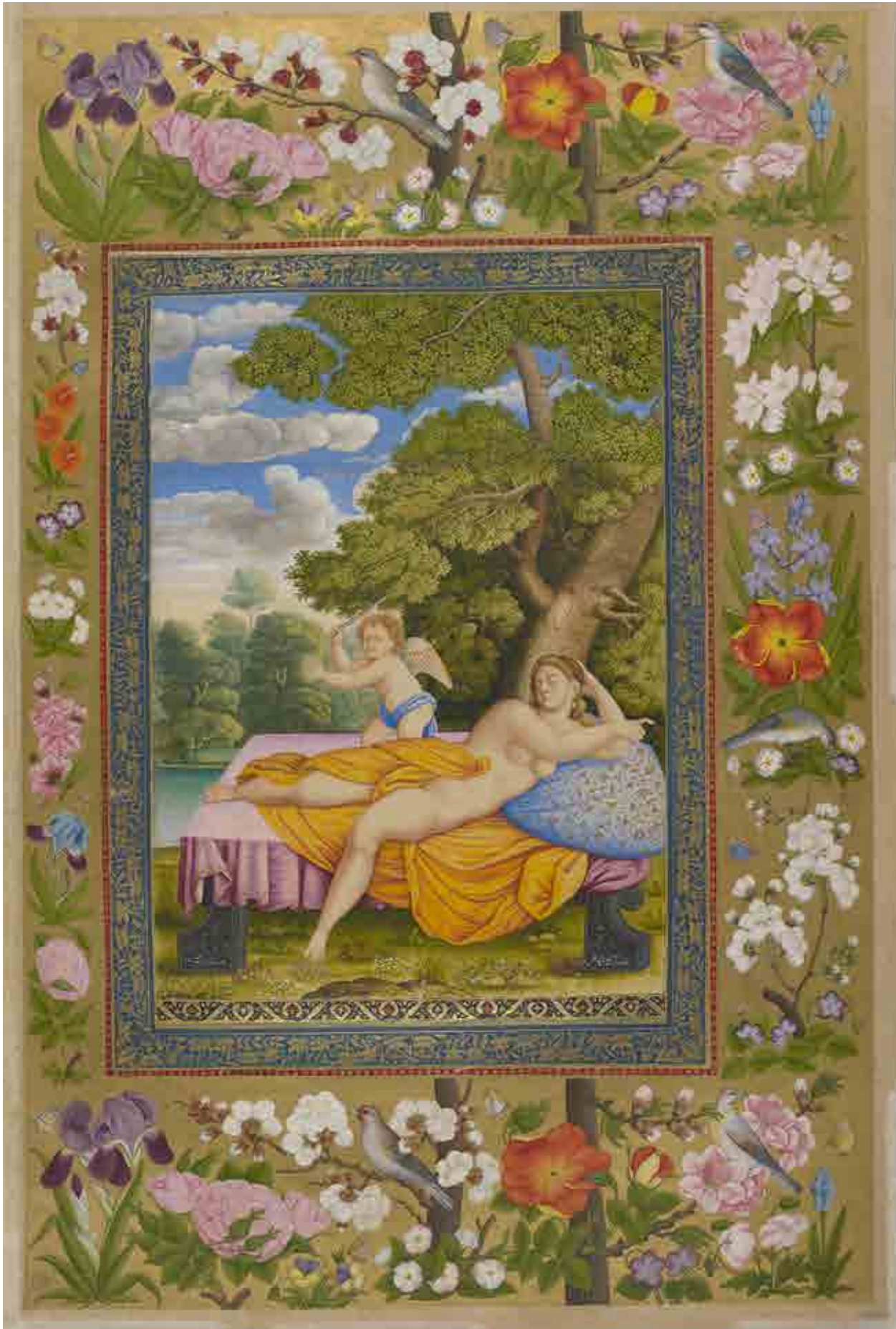
67 For a more detailed discussion of this, see the chapter "The Magic Mirror: On Some Structural Affinities in Islamic Miniature, Calligraphy, and Literature," in Bürgel 1988, pp. 138–81.

68 Sims 2001, p. 191.

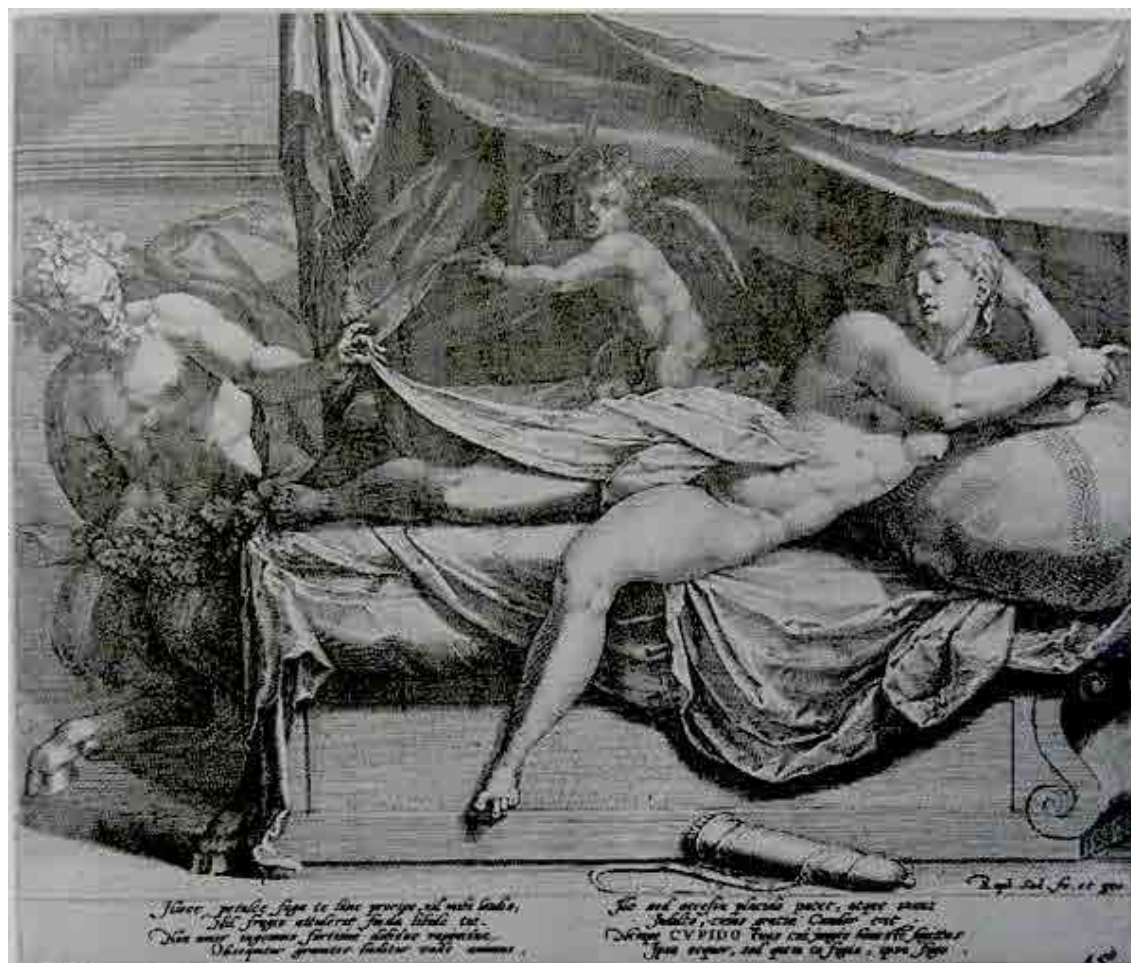
69 Sims 2001, pp. 191–94, enumerates only six works, omitting the *Madonna with the Infant Jesus and Saint John*.

62 Sims 2002, p. 239.

63 Porter 2000, pp. 110–11.



104



105

#### 104 Venus and Cupid

Muhammad Zaman (active: 1649–1700)

Iran, 1676/77 (A.H. 1087)

Pigments on paper ; sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm,

image: 17.9 x 24.7cm

St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 86r

Inscribed: “*Raqam-i kamtarin-i ghulaman, Muhammad Zaman,*” “*surat etemam yaft, sana 1087*” (“Work of the lowliest of slaves, Muhammad Zaman / The picture was completed [in the] year 1676/77”)

#### 105 Jupiter and Antiope

Raphael Sadeler the Elder (1560–1628), after

Maerten de Vos (1532–1603)

Germany (?), before 1603

Engraving; sheet: 17.9 x 20.8 cm

London, The British Museum, 1937,0915.403

Muhammad Zaman’s miniature is modeled on an engraving of Raphael Sadeler the Elder’s own invention. The print illustrates a scene from the

ravishment of Antiope by Jupiter, but is sometimes incorrectly identified as *Venus with a Satyr*. Sadeler was drawing on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which relates Jupiter’s many amorous adventures, including “How in a satyr’s form the god beguil’d, / When fair Antiope with twins he filled,” (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 6, translated by Sir Samuel Garth, John Dryden et al.). Antiope was the daughter of the Theban King Nycteus and it is this crucial scene in her bed-chamber that Sadeler captures in his print.

Yet it is precisely those elements that from the Western point of view are essential to an understanding of this work as a mythological scene that Zaman chooses to omit. The satyr disappears altogether and instead of a bed-chamber, the set is a lush, park-like landscape. Zaman’s painting thus belongs to the tradition of Persian nudes in a landscape setting. And by making his Cupid look out of the picture and fix the viewer’s gaze, moreover, he forces the viewer himself to take the place of the satyr as the intruding voyeur.

Lit.: Habsburg 1996, p. 67; Sims 2001, pp. 191–92



promptly unmasked. This is Zaman at his wittiest. Making only minimal changes he turns a mythological scene, which Persian viewers would not necessarily have recognized as such, into something universal. In his work, Antiope/Venus is simply a beautiful woman asleep, espied not by a satyr but by the voyeuristic viewer whom Cupid bravely tries to face down. That Zaman was deliberately “Persianizing” here is clear from the way he reworks Sadeler’s European-style box bed as an oriental-style *takht* mounted on short posts and embeds the scene in an unspoiled landscape, which is a hallmark of almost all Persian nudes.

Zaman’s *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, which is modeled on an anonymous engraving after Guido Reni’s oil painting of 1623 or earlier (cat. 109),<sup>70</sup> adheres much more closely to the original, although here, too, certain crucial changes have been made:

Having severed Holofernes’ head—a dirty job for which she first had to roll up her sleeves—Zaman’s Judith gazes wistfully into the distance rather than heavenward, as in Reni’s composition. The headless body is no longer visible; all that is left of Holofernes is his head, which is somewhat reduced in size and suspended by the lock of hair that Judith is holding in her left hand. The muscular arm hanging down limply in Reni’s painting has metamorphosed into a chair leg in the shape of a griffon’s leg and Zaman has enlarged the group by adding an elderly lady in a white wimple, who is shown holding out a sack, presumably as a repository for the severed head. Zaman does not make any significant changes to the locale, however, although he does change night to day and inserts a tree in full leaf—his stylistic signature—in the background.

That Zaman assigns Judith a servant allows us to conclude that he was familiar with this Old Testament story. A similarly intelligent addition was made to his depiction of the *Madonna* described above, in which the boy who will become John the Baptist holds a cross made of twigs lashed together that features neither on the enamel paintings of the same scene nor on Küsel’s engraving. The truncated columns and wooden beams visible behind the group, moreover, can be read as an allusion to the stable of the Nativity, or at least to the impoverished circumstances into which Jesus was born.

Whether Zaman painted this work for a rich Armenian patron, as Anthony Welch has argued—albeit in a different context<sup>71</sup>—is a matter of conjecture. Of rather more importance is Zaman’s readiness to “correct” his models according to his knowledge of the literary sources on which they were based and/or the European iconographic tradition. Either he adapted his theme in line with its intended recipient, as in the case of his *Venus and Cupid*, which was painted for a patron unfamiliar with classical mythology, or, as in the case of his *Madonna* and *Judith*, he added certain crucial elements that are in fact essential to an understanding of the underlying narrative. The latter work, for example, was presumably intended for a

patron who knew the story of Judith and Holofernes. Translating engravings into paintings, moreover, was a way of putting his mastery of his chosen medium to the test. Whereas the engraver has only the line to work with and can model his figures only with the aid of parallel or cross hatching, the painter has a whole range of techniques at his disposal, by no means the least of which is color. Zaman uses color to lend his works an aesthetic that is radically different from the gray scale of the print. His use of two techniques that until then had had no place in Persian art history, namely stippling and the wash, further adds to the sheer mastery that shines through in his works.

Much the same can be said of ‘Ali Quli Jabadar, even if he appears to be following a rather different strategy. Those of his works that are based on European (or Indo-European) models never relied on a single work, but always drew on several different ones. This is evident from his *Two Ladies with a Page* of 1674/75 (A.H. 1085) (cat. 112) from the St. Petersburg Album. The standing woman in this work is based on the allegorical figure of spring from the same series of *Four Seasons* as that from which he drew his *European Lady with Wine Glass* (cat. 113). The couple next to her, however, belong in a different category. Although the exact source has not yet been identified, there can be no doubt that Jabadar was combining elements from one or more European models which he then amalgamated to form a couple, later fleshing out the details.<sup>72</sup> The said details include the coronet and Persian agraffe worn by the seated lady, the string of pearls trimming the rim of the young man’s black beaver hat, and the strangely awkward-looking shoes and stool. These last two motifs in particular seem to be stylistically at odds with the standing figure, which Jabadar appropriated to much better effect and whose right hand, now holding a handkerchief instead of a flowerpot, is of the utmost elegance.

Looking at Jabadar’s work as a whole, it is clear that he reveled in pastiche. He was an eclectic in the very best sense of the word, his primary interest being in the appropriation of all sorts of models, which he then combined and harmonized to create new compositions of his own. His greatest strength was his experimental augmentation of the repertoire of motifs.

70 The painting used to belong to the Sedlmeyer Collection on Lake Geneva, but was stolen from there in 1971 and did not resurface until March 2012, when it was seized by police in Rome (see <http://art-crime.blogspot.ch/2012/03/list-of-artworks-recovered-by.html>).

71 Welch 1973 p. 117, cat. 72 (see also the entry for lot 261 in the auction catalogue of Christie’s London for April 7, 2011).

72 The bust of the seated woman does evince certain parallels to a French pocket watch of ca. 1630/40 now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (on permanent loan from the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection, Inv. Gilbert.301-2008). The shoulders, exposed bosom, and white chemise peeping out from beneath the orange gown of the lady on the watchcase in fact look very much like a mirror image of Jabadar’s painting.



106



107

#### 106 **Slumbering Nymph**

Muhammad Baqir (active in the 1750s and 1760s)  
Iran, 1765  
Pigments on paper; sheet: 25 x 20 cm, image:  
14.2 x 9.8 cm  
Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, 282.VI

#### 107 **Venus and Cupid Asleep**

From the series of *Scherzi d'Amore*  
Late copy after Odoardo Fialetti (1573–ca. 1638)  
Italy, 1650–1700  
Engraving; sheet: 14.6 x 9.8 cm  
The British Museum, U,5.35

Odoardo Fialetti (1573–1638) published his series of *Scherzi d'Amore* in 1617. The title is ambiguous and translatable either as “Love’s Jests” or as “Amor’s Pranks”; after all, the thirteen copperplate engravings show scenes from the life of Amor (Cupid), who more often than not proves quite a handful for his mother Venus. The series was very popular and it comes as no surprise to learn that the plates had to be re-engraved at least twice.

One of the new editions dating from the second half of the seventeenth century reproduces the original prints in reverse, among them the one showing the Venus asleep with Cupid at her side. This was the work that served ‘Ali Quli Jabadar as a model for his miniature of 1673/74 (A.H. 1084), whose whereabouts is now unknown. That work in turn served as a model for Muhammad Baqir’s *Slumbering Nymph* of 1764/65 (A.H. 1178).

Baqir follows ‘Ali Quli very closely in that he omits the figure of Cupid altogether and replaces the precipitous terrain in the background with gently rolling hills extending deep into the picture. This omission of the waggish god of love recalls the changes that Muhammad Zaman made to Sadeler’s *Jupiter and Antiope*, allowing us to surmise that ‘Ali Quli deliberately decided to disregard all extraneous matter and to focus exclusively on the figure of the female nude.

*Lit.: Diba 1989, pp. 153–54 and 158.*



108

108 **Judith with the Head of Holofernes**

Muhammad Zaman (active: 1649–1700)

Iran, ca. 1675

Pigments and gold on paper; image: 20.2 x 17 cm

London, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection,

MSS1005

Signed: “*Ya sahib al-zaman*” (“O Lord of Time”)

109 **Judith with the Head of Holofernes**

after Guido Reni

Italy, 2nd half 17th century

Etching; sheet: 28.6 x 18.8 cm

London, The British Museum, 1874,0808.658

Muhammad Zaman based this work on an etching by an unknown Italian artist, which in turn is an exact reproduction of a painting by Guido Reni, measuring just 39 x 30 cm.

Zaman nevertheless adapted it in a way that is characteristic of his work: he turned night into day, changed the position of the armor, and made Judith gaze into the far distance. He also planted a tree next to her tent and gave her a maidservant—indicating that he was familiar with other European renderings of the same theme.

The trimming of the sheet prior to mounting led to the loss of the inscription, which might have permitted a more exact dating. A comparison of the group of European-inspired works in the St. Petersburg Album nevertheless allows us to surmise that this particular miniature was painted around 1675 or perhaps even earlier. The assumption rests primarily on the fact that relatively little white went into the modeling of the fabrics, whereas the liberal use of white was to become a hallmark of Zaman’s mature style from 1675 onwards, possibly even earlier, and is directly linked to his reception of European miniatures on enamel. It therefore seems very likely that we are looking here at the earliest of his seven works based on European models.

*Lit.: Sims 2001, p. 193.*



109



111

**110 Abraham Sacrificing Isaac**

Muhammad Zaman (active: 1649–1700)

Iran, 1684/85 (A.H. 1096)

Pigments, silver and gold on paper; sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm, image: 17.7 x 24.9 cm

St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 89r

**111 Abraham Sacrificing Isaac**

Egbert van Panderen (1580/81–after 1617),

after a painting by Peter de Jode the Elder (1570–1634)

Netherlands, Amsterdam, between 1590 and 1637

Engraving; sheet: 30.1 x 20.5 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1889-A-14342

Muhammad Zaman’s miniature is based on an engraving by Egbert van Panderen, which is itself based on a painting by Peter de Jode the Elder, as Anatoly Ivanov has already noted. Unlike the other works based on European compositions, Muhammad Zaman followed the original closely, although he did reduce it in size considerably. There are several possible explanations for his decision not to make any additions or improvements such as those made in other works. Perhaps his client requested complete fidelity to the original in this case. The story of Abraham, the man who was ready to sacrifice his own son when called upon to do so by God, is related in both the Old Testament and the Quran, and would therefore have been familiar to both Muslim and Christian clients alike.

Zaman’s version became quite popular and at least two more variants of it are known: one dating from ca. 1700 done in grisaille (Christie’s, London, April 8, 2008, lot 222) and another, possibly nineteenth-century, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1970.275).

Panderens’s engraving provided a model not just for Zaman but also for Willem Jansz. Verstraten, who painted a plate with the same motif, albeit with a different background (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, BK-1958-33).

*Lit.: Habsburg 1996, p. 67.*



110

### 112 Two Ladies with Page

'Ali Quli Jabadar (active: 1657–1716?)

Iran, 1674/75 (A.H. 1085)

Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm, image: 21.4x 14.9 cm

St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 93r

Inscribed: "Ba tarikh-i shahr-i safar khatm . . . wa al-zafar dar dar al-sultana-yi qazwin marqum shod. Raqam-i kamtarin-i ghulaman 'Aliqoli Jabadar. Seneh 1085" (In the prosperous and victorious month of Safar in the capital city of Qazvin. Work of the lowliest of slaves 'Ali Quli Jabadar. The year 1085)

Musée des Arts décoratifs, 1916.5.50)—that was modeled on Reni's *Magdalene*. It follows that there must have been at least one print of the composition in circulation, even if the exact identity of that work has yet to be established. Compared to the two works named above, Jabadar changed the position of the penitent Magdalene's head to make her look wistfully to one side instead of heavenwards. The death's head on which her right hand is resting, moreover, has been replaced by a book.

Source: *Habsburg 2009*, p. 65.

### 113 Spring

From the series *The Four Seasons*

France, Strasbourg, 1621–1669

Peter Aubry the Younger (publisher)

Engraving; sheet: 30 x 19.8 cm

Wolfenbüttel, Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum, JMMoscherosch AB 3.1

As Anatoly Ivanov has been able to show, this work was made in two parts that were later joined together. 'Ali Quli Jabadar drew on several European models for the lower part: The lady in the green gown, for example, is modeled on the allegory of spring from the same *Four Seasons* series by Aubry/Moscherosch as the *European Lady with Wine Glass* (cat. 102), even if Jabadar follows the original more closely here than he did in that work. While a model for the couple next to her has yet to be found, the lady clad in an orange dress looks very much like the miniature adorning a pocket watch from Blois of 1630/40 (The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection on loan to the Victoria and Albert Museum, GILBERT.301-2008). That work shows a personification of autumn wearing a strikingly similar orange dress and with her bosom similarly bared, while standing next to her is a personification of winter as a hoary old man.

The figure at the top that Ivanov describes as an "allegory" and that seems to float into the picture like a figment of the imagination is in fact *Mary Magdalene*, painted after a work by the Italian Baroque painter Guido Reni (1575–1642). Here, too, there was an engraving in between, however. Not only is there a second version of Reni's painting in existence (the original went under the hammer at the Dorotheum in Vienna on April 15, 2008), but we know of at least one Limousine enamel—by Pierre Nouailher the Elder dating from the fourth quarter of the seventeenth century (now in Bourges,



113



112



## Farangi-sazi style and how it became embedded in Persian iconography

'Ali Quli Jabadar's delight in experimentation was not without consequences for his other works. Reviewing his oeuvre in its entirety, we can observe how his styles slowly but surely collided. His skilled modeling of bodies and clothes becomes ever freer and his faces take on an almost portrait-like verisimilitude. By appropriating foreign models he was able to develop an idiom of his own that in turn enabled him to find new solutions for purely Persian themes.

This development manifests itself in four large paintings, all of which were commissioned by Shah Sulayman (r. 1666–1694) and belong to the St. Petersburg Album.<sup>73</sup>

The most mature of these works shows a very youthful-looking shah smoking a hookah. The courtiers around him include two Georgians, a group of musicians consisting of two *daf* players and one *kamancha* player, and a row of pages. Also numbered among them is a European holding a red-hot coal in a pair of tongs to keep the shah's hookah alight at all times (cat. 114).<sup>74</sup>

The scene is a veranda whose roof is supported by four twisted gilded wooden pillars that end in cantilevered *muqarnas* capitals at the top. Similarly typical of the late Safavid era is the balustrade with its geometrically patterned openwork that fences in the veranda without obscuring views of the hilly landscape beyond. The wooden structure is a simple post and beam construction viewed from a low vantage point with perspectival foreshortening, indicating that the artist was at least aware of European conventions for depictions of architecture in art, and that he might even have been trying to imitate them.<sup>75</sup>

Jabadar's work belongs to the large group of audience scenes that count among the oldest themes of all in Persian art. Since the reign of Shah 'Abbas I, however, the genre had undergone a crucial transformation. The scenes depicting Shah 'Abbas receiving an ambassador or at some other major event show him as he was. This marks a break with the tradition long since cultivated by Persian rulers, who had preferred to see themselves cast in the role of an epic hero such as King Bahram Gur at the center of a court scene taken straight out of the *Shahnama* or the *Khamasa*. Under Abbas, however, a new iconography came into being which allowed the shah to be shown sitting face to face with a guest of state against a land-

scape backdrop. A version of this theme by Shaykh 'Abbasi (cat. 115)<sup>76</sup> painted in 1654/55 (A.H. 1065) and hence after the death of Shah 'Abbas gives us a very vivid idea of how these picnic-like scenes typically looked. The seated ruler, recognizable on account of his exceptionally large moustache, is surrounded by a group of pages. He is shown performing a gesture betokening hospitality: passing a cup of wine to the Indian dignitary seated at a respectful distance from him.

Shaykh 'Abbasi produced a variation on the same theme for Shah 'Abbas II, too. This work dating from the year 1664 shows the ruler and his guest, the Indian ambassador, in the same position as the figures in the painting produced ten years earlier.<sup>77</sup> Once again, the meeting takes place outdoors, although this time, Shaykh 'Abbasi has enlarged the group of courtiers and given them all carpets to sit on.

Jabadar's composition marks the last stage in this development and was doubtless inspired in part by the building of the Palace of Forty Columns and the painting of the murals inside its great hall. Those frescos, which depict major events in the history of the Safavids and follow a clear political program,<sup>78</sup> changed the standard mode of presentation for courtly scenes. An architectural framework paraphrasing one or other of the new buildings dating from the reign of Shah 'Abbas II or his successor Sulayman would henceforth be the norm, although none of those depicted in the murals have verandas.

It is hard to say which of the many buildings in Isfahan's large palace quarter the painter is illustrating. Theoretically, Jabadar might even be alluding to one of the hypostyles in the so-called "Paradise Garden" south of the *Hasht Behesht*, the Palace of Eight Paradises built under Sulayman in 1669/70 (A.H. 1070).<sup>79</sup> This is supported by a dating of the work, based on stylistic grounds, to the period 1670 to 1675.

What is not in doubt is that here, Jabadar arrived at a formulation that would serve as a model for still more *darbar* scenes right up to the end of the period of Safavid rule, among them *Grand Vizier Shah Quli Khan Presents a Ring* of 1694/95 (A.H. 1106) (cat. 116),<sup>80</sup> which has been attributed to Muhammad Soltani, and the *New Year Festivities* of 1721 (A.H. 1133) by Muhammad 'Ali, Muhammad Zaman's son (fig. 90).<sup>81</sup> Much the same can be claimed for Zaman's *Khamasa*

73 Habsburg 1996, fol. 96r (pl. 172), 98r (pl. 173), 99r (pl. 191), and 100r (pl. 136).

74 Europeans in the service of the shah were not as rare as one might think. In his account of his travels, Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, for example, mentions a French goldsmith by the name of Sain in the service of Shah Sulayman. Sain's playfulness "sur tout quand il est entre deux vins," was very much to the liking of the Persian potentate, who had him tease his courtiers on his behalf (Tavernier 1678, p. 556).

75 This can be proved in at least one specific case. For one scene from the *Shahnama*, namely *The Head of Iraq is Presented to his Brothers Salm and Tur*, of 1675/76 (A.H. 1086) now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Inv. no. P. 277, fol. 10) Muhammad Zaman used as his backdrop the same Baroque columns that are to be found in Hans and Paul Vredeman de Vries's *Architectura: La haulte & fameuse science, consistante en cinq manieres d'edifices ou fabriques [...]*, published by Henrik Hondius in The Hague in 1606. The drawing illustrating the fifth order of columns shows a palace at the port dedicated to the sense of touch and is titled "Composita. Tactus"; see the dissertation by Amy Landau, *Farangi-sazi at Isfahan: the Court Painter Muhammad Zaman, the Armenians of New Julfa and Shah Sulayman (1666–1694)*.

76 The topicality of this iconographic type has been extensively documented (e.g. in Robinson 1972). The most famous work is the one by Bishn Das that can be traced back to an Iranian original (see Canby 2009, pp. 60–63). Also of interest in this connection is a miniature held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art showing Shah Safi I (1629–1642), Abbas's successor, welcoming an Uzbek emissary. The inscription translates as follows: "This meeting came to an end on Saturday, the 18th day of the month of Safar in the victorious year 1048 [July 1, 1638]." (Inv. no. M.73.5.469).

77 The work once belonged to Medhi Mahboubian and is illustrated in Welch 1973, p. 98.

78 See Babaie 1994 and S. Blake 1999, pp. 66–69. The murals show scenes from the battles between Isma'il and the Uzbeks, Shah Tahmasp and Homayun, Shah 'Abbas I and Vali Muhammad Khan, and Shah 'Abbas II and Nadr Muhammad Khan. The dating of the work continues to pose a problem, especially as what is visible today is not the original version, but a reconstruction, which according to various sources was painted in the style of the original in 1706, the latter having been destroyed in a devastating fire (S. Blake 1999, p. 69).

79 S. Blake 1999, p. 73.

80 Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, E-14, fol. 97r.

81 British Museum, Inv. 1920,0917,0.299.



114

**114 Shah Sulayman with Courtiers on a Veranda**

'Ali Quli Jabadar (active: 1657–1716?)

Iran, probably Isfahan, 1670–1675

Pigments, silver, and gold on paper;

sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm, image: 28.2 x 42.1 cm

St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 98r

Inscribed in the cartouche: "*Ghulam-zada-yi qadim*/'Ali Quli Jabadar" ("The son of an old slave/'Ali Quli Jabadar")

Assembled in the St. Petersburg Album are four miniatures showing the young Shah Sulayman. In this particular work, he is sitting cross-legged on a veranda, smoking a hookah. His head is haloed, which is a characteristic of Mogul painting of the same period. His courtiers, among them three Georgian *ghulams* (members of the military slave elite), and three musicians are sitting or standing at a respectful distance. Among them are six figures painted with a portrait-like attention to detail. Sitting to the left of the shah is the same elderly eunuch clad in a yellow robe who figures in the work called the

*Review of the Herd* (E-14, fol. 96r, see also fig. 89, p. XY). The two dignitaries standing furthest to the left are Georgians, although their exact identity is not yet known.

The miniature is not dated, but there are at least two indications that it must have been made before 1674: one is the fact that unlike in the *European Lady with Wine Glass*, there is no evidence of painting *en pointillé*; the other is the fact that certain groups of motifs from this work recur in two other paintings by Muhammad Zaman of 1675/76. His *Fitna Takes Bahram Gur by Surprise* from the *Ashraf Khamsa* (British Library, Or. 2265, fol. 213a) features a similar cast of characters: the group of musicians to the shah's right, for example, is again made up of two young *daf* players and one *kamancha* player, just as there are similarities in the dignitaries positioned to his left. The shah's own pose is another point in common, as is the fact that here, too, there is a servant busy preparing the hookah. Another *Khamsa* in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, many of whose illustrations are the work of Zaman, contains two more reminiscences: not only does it feature a simplified and slightly modified, mir-

ror-image version (M.469, fol. 41v) of the aforementioned *Fitna* painting in London, but the episode in which *Bahram Gur Visits the Indian Princess Furak in the Black Pavilion* (M.469, fol. 46) shows Bahram sporting an identical lamb-skin hat. The colonnaded veranda looking out onto a mountainous landscape also recalls Jabadar's work.

Whether his *Shah Sulayman with Courtiers* shows a real veranda or, as is also conceivable, an archetypal late Safavid hypostyle is impossible to say with any certainty. What does seem plausible is the suggestion that what we are looking at is one of the wooden halls to the south of the *Hasht Bihisht* (Palace of Eight Paradises) built under Shah Sulayman in 1669/70 (A.H. 1070).

Jabadar's work marks a further development of the type of the ruler's portrait that was first formulated under Shah 'Abbas I on the occasion of his meeting with the Indian Ambassador Khan 'Alam. A painting done posthumously by Shaykh 'Abbasi (see cat. 115) gives us a vivid impression of that event.

Jabadar's composition was to spawn numerous other works like it. These are all either

group or individual portraits and they include both the work entitled *Grand Vizier Shah Quli Khan Presents a Ring*, which is attributed to Muhammad Sultani (cat. 116) and the *New Year Festivities of 1721* (A.H. 1133) by Muhammad Zaman's son Muhammad 'Ali (London, The British Museum, 1920,0917,0.299).

Especially illuminating is a comparison of Jabadar's work with *darbar* scenes from Mogul India, particularly those from the *Padshahnama* of Shah Jahan, which is now housed in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Most striking of all to the casual viewer is how eminently approachable the shah of Persia seems to be (even allowing for the fact that the Persian work shows the shah enjoying a moment of leisure rather than engaged in official business). While the Mogul ruler, true to tradition, is shown in profile in an architectural framework that cuts him off from his surroundings, the Persian ruler sits cross-legged on the floor, his special status signified only by a faint halo and the carpet on which he is sitting. While the Mogul work is a triangular composition with the ruler at its apex, the Persian painting is composed along a horizontal axis. The sharp contrast between the rigorous hierarchy observed in India and Persia's more companionable rulers informs the palaces built by these two empires, too, as Ebba Koch has shown.

Lit.: Canby 1993, Koch 1994.

### 115 Shah 'Abbas Receiving an Indian Ambassador

Shaykh 'Abbasi (active 1650–1684)  
Iran, dated 1654/55 (A.H. 1065)  
Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: 17 x 26 cm,  
image: 8.3 x 16 cm  
Museum Rietberg Zurich, RVA 1039  
Gift of the Dr. Carlo Fleischmann-Stiftung

Inscribed: "*Baha gereft cho gardid Shaykh 'Abbasi*" ("He gained worth because he became Shaykh 'Abbasi [i.e. because he is allowed to bear the *nisba* or honorary title '*abbasi*']")

This posthumously done portrait of Shah 'Abbas I shows him receiving a dignitary clad in Indian-style attire. That the subject is not the shah's grandson 'Abbas II, as Jeremiah Losty has claimed, is apparent from a comparison with another painting by Shaykh 'Abbasi showing 'Abbas II with a full beard (Welch 1973, p. 98).

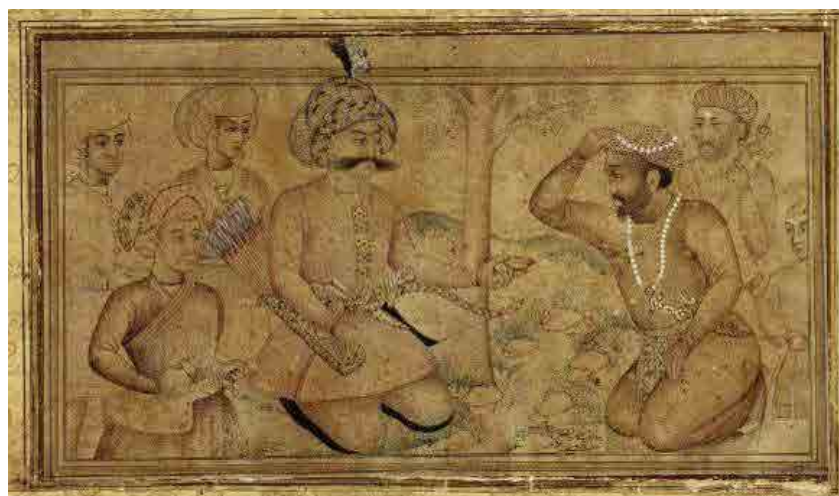
Shaykh 'Abbasi here revisits the type of the ruler's portrait which is thought to have been developed by Riza 'Abbasi under Shah 'Abbas I and which was continued—there is at least one known instance—under his successor Safi I (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M. 73.5.469). In that work, too, Safi sits cross-legged facing an Uzbek emissary. The occasion for this work, the inscription tells us, was a meeting that drew to a close on July 1, 1638. The deliberately infor-

mal staging of the scene, which recalls the older tradition of scenes showing the prince and his retinue picknicking in a landscape setting, was to continue until the sixteen-sixties.

The shah, identifiable on account of his magnificent mustache, is wearing a short skirt and tight-fitting pants (here rendered as black "shadows" from the knee down); he is armed with both a saber and a bow with a quiver full of arrows. That these weapons should be regarded as his insignia of office and hence as the manifestation of royal prerogative is evident not just from comparable scenes, but also from the writings of Adam Olearius, who in his travelogue of 1663 described the appearance of Shah Safi I as follows: "His saber at his side sparkled with gold and gems, behind him lay bow and arrow." A brief glance at Anthony van Dyck's portrait of Sir Robert Sherley seems warranted at this juncture (see fig. 30, p. XY). Not only is the British ambassador in the service of Shah 'Abbas clad entirely in gold brocade, but he also dons an exquisite turban jewel and like the shah is armed with bow and arrow. Clearly, Sherley took his role as ambassador very seriously indeed and at least here styled himself as a proxy of the Persian shah—or even a kind of *rex persarum*.

Three other versions of this work are known and all three of them are dated and signed: two date from the seventeenth century, while the third is from the eighteenth century.

Lit.: Grube/Sims 1995, pl. IV a–c; Jahresbericht MRZ 2004; Losty 2013, pp. 16–17; Olearius 1663, p. 510.



115

### 116 The Grand Vizier Shah Quli Khan Presents a Ring

Attributed to Muhammad Sultani  
Iran, dated 1694/95 (A.H. 1106)  
Pigments, gold, silver, and ink on paper;  
sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm, image: 22.2 x 30.3 cm  
St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 97r

Inscribed: "*U, ya sahib al-zaman*" ("He, o Lord of Time")

This courtly scene shows Shah Quli Khan, grand vizier to Shah Sultan Husain I (1694–1722), presenting a youthful courtier with a ring. The young man is holding out his right index finger ready to receive the ring. Shah Quli Khan is shown sitting on a printed cotton cloth, possibly of Indian origin. Strewn over the cloth are a dish



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full of gherkins (?), a lacquered pen box, a flask, and several books. In his hands he is holding a sheet of paper with the first few words of a text. Four young men are standing close by, following the event. Not by chance does the scene of the action, a colonnaded veranda surrounded by a balustrade, recall 'Ali Quli Jabadar's depiction of Shah Sulayman smoking a hookah (cat. 114), which was undoubtedly the model here.

Ivanov has plausibly attributed the picture to Muhammad Sultani, although the style seems more like that of Muhammad Zaman. This is apparent in the slim tree with a thick, bushy crowns in the background, for example, in the bark of the trees closer to the foreground, and even in Shah Quli Khan's facial features. The inscription likewise appears to point to Zaman. *Lit.: Habsburg 2009, p. 110.*

illustration, *Fitna Takes Bahram Gur by Surprise*, which dates from 1674/75 (A.H. 1068),<sup>82</sup> and for other related scenes from a different *Khamsa* dating from the same year.<sup>83</sup>

Unlike Jabadar, whose engagement with non-Persian art led him to develop works that were uniquely his own, Zaman's paintings after European models mark the culmination, rather than the beginning, of his development as an artist. Having found his own personal style early on in his career, he used the lessons he learned from his study of European art for a whole series of works whose iconography is firmly anchored in the Persian tradition.

This is especially apparent in a variation on the theme of the dragon-slayer generally attributed to him (cat. 119). Zaman's miniature reads like a "copy after" a miniature painted around a hundred years earlier, the style and colors of which have merely been adjusted in line with *farangi-sazi* style (cat. 120). Apart from that, the work reproduces the earlier model down to the last detail. Especially notable is the shape of the dragon coiled almost decoratively around the body of the horse, the horse snapping at the monster's neck, and the

82 British Library, Or. 2265, fol. 213a

83 Pierpont Morgan Library M.469, fol. 41v und 46.



117

**117 Courtier on a Veranda**

Attributed to Muhammad Sultani  
Iran, last quarter 17th century  
Pigments and gold on paper; sheet: XXX  
St. Petersburg, Russian Academy of Sciences,  
Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, D-181, fol. 42r

**118 The Vizier Khalifeh-Soltan**

Attributed to Mu'in Musavvir (1617–1697/98)  
Iran, probably Isfahan, ca. 1650  
Pigments, gold and silver on paper;  
sheet: 20.6 x 10.3 cm  
Art and History Trust Collection, LTS1995.2.88

This portrait of an unknown courtier shows all the key characteristics of *farangi-sazi* or painting “in the European style.” The very respectable-looking, seated gentleman, is wearing a yellow quilted tunic, and on top of it another garment called a *kurti*, which is a kind of coat made of a dark cloth brocaded in gold and silver and lined with sable. On his head he wears a late Safavid turban made of ikat-patterned fabric. He is sitting with his legs tucked under him on a light-colored, patterned carpet with a rather hard-looking cushion behind him by way of a backrest. In the background, and separated from him by the balustrade, is a lake surrounded by a range of mountains with little boats



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sailing in and out of the many inlets in the lake-shore. Unlike the verandas in the works described above, this one is not colonnaded but is instead flanked at either side by two trees as high as the painting itself that are cut off on either side by the edge of the paper. While the scenery in the background follows European conventions, the painter must have been painting for Persian eyes: he certainly makes no attempt to foreshorten the carpet but instead shows it from a bird’s-eye perspective.

In Persia, the portrait as a faithful likeness of a real person only really began with Riza ‘Abbasi. Yet it can still look back on a much older tradition, as the impressive portraits of Bizhad (1465–1535) and even older likenesses dating from the fifteenth-century Timurid period bear out. Verisimilitude, however, was never the main focus of interest.

Not until after their first encounters with European art were Persian painters inspired to attempt more naturalistic works. This development also began with Riza ‘Abbasi, whose lovingly done caricature of *Nashmi the Archer* of 1630, for example, already bore a number of realistic traits. The same is true of this portrait of Khalifa-Sultan, which has been attributed to Mu'in Musavvir and is dated ca. 1650. A pupil of Riza, Musavvir shows the influential minister

against a neutral background. Unlike the portrait of Shah Quli Khan (cat. 116) painted just half a century later, there are no pointers at all to the subject’s high rank. The only hint as to the person portrayed is the petition and golden purse that he is holding in his hands. He is identified only by the inscription. As idealized as many of the facial features are, the short, scanty beard is likely to have been drawn from life. The portrait thus belongs to a whole series of works dating from the period of Riza and the artists who came after him. For them, specific features such as build, visible scars, or the shape of a man’s beard, were all that was needed to characterize him in a portrait.

If explanatory attributes are missing from the *Courtier on a Veranda*, then perhaps because the viewer would in any case have known right away who the person was. Perhaps the dagger encrusted with precious gems was enough to identify him. This would also explain the absence of any writing at all naming the person portrayed.

*Lit.: Soudavar 1992, pp. 228–29; Canby 1996, p. 176; Petrosyan 1995, p. 273; Soucek 2000.*



119



120

**119 A Hero on Horseback Fighting a Dragon**

Attributed to Muhammad Zaman

(active 1649–1700)

Iran, pre-1675 (?)

Pigments, silver, and gold on paper;

sheet: 47.5 x 33 cm, image: 23.6 x 16.5 cm

St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, E-14, fol. 95r

**120 A Dragon Coiled Round a Qizilbash and His Mount**

Iran, Qazvin (?), mid-16th century

Pigments and gold on paper;

sheet: 37.8 x 24.1 cm, image: 17.2 x 14.8 cm

New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, Read-Album, M.386.6r

As Ivanov has been able to prove, this dragon-slayer clad in pale red is undoubtedly the work of Muhammad Zaman, even if the cartouche pasted onto the miniature declares his brother Hajj Muhammad to be the artist. Among the telltale pointers are the snapped tree trunk in the foreground, which is also a feature of *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon* (cat. 121), and the tall tree framing the composition at left.

Whether Zaman's source of inspiration was a depiction of the European Saint George is open to doubt. European iconography typically has

the hero-saint slaying the dragon with a lance or occasionally with a sword. It therefore seems more likely that Zaman was basing his work on Persian models, as is borne out by a comparison with a dragon-slayer dating from the mid-sixteenth century (cat. 120). With so many elements in common between these two works, there is actually no need to hunt for a European source. Zaman's version reads very much like the perpetuation of an existing tradition but with different means.

Zaman's picture did not go unnoticed and became a benchmark for many later artists. One particularly fine example dating from the first half of the eighteenth century proves that the painter must have known the *Bahram Gur* painting (cat. 121) as well; the rock formations in the background can certainly be read as a kind of cross reference (Free Library of Philadelphia, Lewis Ms. P213). There is another such work dating from the eighteenth century in Paris, too, (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Rés. Od. 44, fol. 42). In addition to these versions, both of which are named by Schmitz, there is another version in Vienna, possibly dating from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, in which the horseman is facing in the opposite direction (Albertina, Vienna, inv. no. 24327), as well as an outline drawing dating from the nine-

teenth century, in which the heroic dragon-slayer is depicted in a helmet with leather aventail typical of the Qajar period (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, 1960.161.10).

*Lit.: Habsburg 1996, pp. 77–78; Schmitz 1997, pp. 128–29*

**Fig. 87** Nicolas Bernard (fl. 1636–1670), watch, 1640–50, case and dial: painted enamel on gold; movement: gilt-metal, brass and blued steel, diameter 5.8 cm (London, Victoria and Albert Museum, 2359-1855)



hero sitting bolt upright in the saddle, brandishing a dagger in one hand and holding the monster's head in the other. The parallels extend even further—to the way the horse appears to be galloping through the air and to the dragon's talon's sunk into its forelegs.

The painting reads rather like a study for *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon*, a work that Zaman painted in 1674/75 (A.H. 1085) for an older *Khamsa* manuscript (cat. 121).

At the beginning of his *Haft Peykar* (The Seven Beauties), Nizami narrates the story of a female donkey who goes to King Bahram to ask him to return her foal, which has been swallowed alive by a dragon. In return for this service, she promises to show him the treasure that the dragon is hiding in its lair. As the viewer will soon realize, Zaman tells us the whole story in a single picture: the elegantly dressed young man sporting a padded red doublet has just shot an arrow that has struck the monster between the eyes. At the same time, the donkey in the background appears to be galloping towards the entrance of the cave, ready to lead her champion to his reward.<sup>84</sup>

Several elements that are typical of Zaman's work can be identified in this composition, among them the tree with coarse bark framing the painting at left, the gathering clouds, and the flock of birds. There can be no doubt that Zaman was

following European landscape conventions here, as is instantly apparent from a more or less random comparison of his work with the lid of a pocket watch decorated by Nicolas Bernard in 1640/50 (fig. 84). The atmospheric perspective and palette are very much the same; in Zaman's work, moreover, the viewer's gaze zigzags towards the vanishing point, steered by landscape motifs inserted into the composition like pieces of scenery in a stage set. In spite of this, Zaman's painting is still firmly anchored in the Persian iconographic tradition. The content of the picture is thus readily understandable even to those with no knowledge of the tale it tells. A comparison with a rendering of the same episode from Shiraz highlights this effect (cat. 122). While this particular illustration is but one of many possible examples, it shows the same basic iconographic features as does Zaman's work: the dragon with its scaly reptilian body, serpentine tail and neck, auricular horns, and gaping maw with bared fangs, and the figure of Bahram mounted on his stallion, hastening to the scene at a gallop and shooting the forked arrow that will blind the evil dragon.

Combat with lions, wolves, and dragons counted as the ultimate test of both horsemanship and valor, and as a prerogative of kings and heroes is one of the oldest motifs in the Persian iconographic repertoire. Similar hunting scenes adorn Sasanid silver plates (cat. 123), indicating that the type of the horseman with his bow drawn ready to shoot, advancing at speed on a horse "frozen" in mid-gallop was already a set piece even then. In the course of the fourteenth century, this kind of

<sup>84</sup> Sims 2002 pp. 232ff.





scene found its way into book illumination, too, and over the centuries was to remain largely unchanged right up to the Qajar period.

These examples show that while Zaman is indeed a *farangi-sazi* painter, he does not deny his own roots. He draws on traditional iconography, but at the same time enriches it by adding new elements which although present in the literary sources, such as the mare in *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon*, had never before been depicted. He also extends the formulaic repertoire and finds new solutions.<sup>85</sup>

Reviewing the development of *farangi-sazi* outlined above, it soon becomes clear that the two techniques that were to have a crucial impact on this style both emerged in the mid-seventeenth century or shortly thereafter. Stippling first arrived in Persia in the form of European miniatures, especially enamels. The earliest known evidence of its appropriation by a Persian painter is 'Ali Quli Jabadar's *European Lady with Wine Glass* of 1664/65 (A.H. 1075).

A further aspect that has not been discussed in any depth here concerns the origin of the European models. The pocket watches are known to have been transported by wealthy merchants and high-ranking travelers, while the question of how the prints made their way to Persia is rather more complicated. Especially notable is the fact that while almost all the engravings used as models in the first half of the century were of Dutch or Flemish provenance, starting in ca. 1660, engravings from other sources must have become widely available, too, among them the aforementioned *Four Seasons* by Peter Aubry of Strasbourg and the works of Melchior Küsel of Augsburg. The question of where these works came from adds an extra dimension to the history of the reception of European art in Persia, and at the same time raises new questions. Were Küsel's engravings imported into Isfahan together with the turret clocks? Is it possible that Olearius or even Kaempfer brought the prints from Strasbourg with them? Further research is needed to answer these and other questions—assuming they can be answered at all.

Another technical innovation of European origin to be found in the works of Jabadar and Zaman is the wash, which to judge by a brush drawing attributed to Zaman must have been introduced into Persia no later than mid-century.

Although 'Ali Quli Jabadar and Muhammad Zaman count as the two great exponents of *farangi-sazi*, their respective oeuvres differ significantly in terms of both style and theme. Jabadar's work is heterogeneous, which makes it more difficult to categorize. It seems that he experimented not just with European but also with Indo-Persian models—which have been mentioned only in passing here, but would have to form a major part of any future discussion of the subject. Taking single motifs from a wide range of sources, he combined them to produce compositions of his own invention. In the first half

85 That this observation is by no means confined to the *Khamsa* illustration discussed here, but applies to other works belonging to the same manuscript has been proven by Amy Landau—at least in relation to the folio hitherto identified as *Bahram Gur and the Indian Princess* showing Turktazi and the Fairy Queen (Landau 2011).



122



123

**121 Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon**

From a *Khamsa* by Nizami  
Muhammad Zaman (active: 1649–1700)  
Iran, 1674/75  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper; XX cm  
London, The British Library, Or. 2265, fol. 203v

**122 Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon**

From a *Khamsa* by Nizami  
Iran, Shiraz, ca. 1530  
Pigments, ink, and gold on paper;  
sheet: 22.9 x 14.6 cm, image: 8.2 x 9.9 cm  
Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée  
d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi,  
1971-0107-0491

123 **Shallow Bowl**

Iran, 600–800

Silver, gilt; diameter: XX cm

Washington, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S1987.109

Muhammad Zaman's *Bahram Gur Slays the Dragon* is a masterpiece of *farangi-sazi*, or painting "in the European style" and shows us the master combining several different techniques. The shaded mountainsides in the background are done with a wash and look like something taken straight out of a European watercolor. The jagged walls of the cave are

also done with a wash, while the youthful Bahram Gur and his horse are painted *en pointillé*. In other words, the artist modeled the body of both horseman and mount by dabbing on innumerable dots of color. Proceeding just as described in European treatises, he painted a pale ground first and then mixed the same color in a slightly darker shade for dabbing onto the ground; this was followed by still more stippling in an even darker shade so that the transitions, as promised by Claude Boutet in his *Traité de mignature*, became so gradual as to be barely perceptible at all. Zaman was such a consum-

mate master of this technique that he was even able to model the veins standing out from the steed's belly—a tour de force of miniature painting! To lend plasticity to the dragon's body, he combined the wash with the more traditional technique of parallel hairline hatching. Also noteworthy are the various techniques he used to reproduce the foliage of the trees and the way the rather busy-looking brushstrokes in the background gradually give way to the paler leaves outlined in a darker shade in the foreground. The technique used for the grass likewise varies depending on whether it is in the foreground or middle ground. Thus, in a single miniature, Zaman played through the whole gamut of painting techniques both ancient and modern.

As thrilled as we may be with his technical virtuosity, it should not be forgotten that his theme was one that is deeply rooted in Persian tradition. This is clear from a comparison with a manuscript from Shiraz showing the same scene (cat. 121), which is likewise just one of countless depictions of men locked in mortal combat with a wild beast—be it a lion, a gazelle, or a dragon. The Bahram Gur episode is distinctive in that it shows the king galloping up on his stallion and slaying the dragon by shooting him in the eyes with a double-headed arrow.

The hunting theme, of which Bahram Gur's heroic feat is a variant, dates back to Sasanid times. Even then, the horseman was shown advancing at a gallop with his bow drawn—as here on this silver bowl (cat. 123), in which the horse is captured in mid-leap.

Lit.: Robinson 1979, p. 121, no. 74; Sims 2000, p. ??



124



125

124 **Shirin Bathing, Observed by Khosrow**

From a *Khamseh* by Nizami

Iran, dated 1675/76 (A.H. 1086),

possibly 1700–1715

Pigments on paper; sheet: 30.5 x 18.1 cm,

image: 7.5 x 12 cm

New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M.469,

fol. 90

Inscribed: "*Raqam-i kamtarin Muhammad Zaman 1086*" ("Work of the most humble Muhammad [Zaman], 1675/76")

125 **Susanna Bathing**

Crispian van de Passe the Elder (1564–1637) after Maarten de Vos (1532–1603)

Belgium, Antwerp, 1574–1637

Engraving; sheet: 9,8 x 12,8 cm

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-1898-A-20617

of the sixteen-seventies, for example, he created in his groundbreaking group portrait of Shah Sulayman and his retinue (which incidentally can almost certainly be related to a recently completed portrait of the same ruler)<sup>86</sup> that would henceforth serve as a model for many of the painters who came after him. The portrait of an unknown courtier on a veranda (cat. 118) is mentioned here as but one example among many. Perhaps much the same could be said of his *European Lady with Wine Glass*, whose mise en scène with draped curtain, architectural props, and landscape vista beyond were to become leitmotifs of late Safavid oil painting.

Muhammad Zaman's accomplishments are very different. His works, especially his *Khamsa* illustrations of 1674–76 (A.H. 1085/86), show him taking up foreign influences in true Iranian fashion, in other words “persianizing” them, and adapting them to fit Persian art. His series of interpretations of European works takes much the same approach as does Jabadar, to the extent that he “corrects” existing compositions where necessary, and either adds to the iconography—as in his *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*—or simplifies it, as in the case of his *Venus and Cupid*.

Zaman's works were to have a much more formative impact on Persian art of the eighteenth and nineteenth century than did those of Jabedar. This is especially true of his aforementioned dragon-slayer motif and of his *Shirin Bathing, Observed by Khosrow*. This last episode, which he illustrated for a *Khamsa* of 1675/76 (A.H. 1086) now in the Pierpont Morgan Library (cat. 124), predictably takes up a long since codified iconography (cat. 126).

Without disdaining such crucial elements as the figure of Khosrow riding by and biting his fingers in astonishment, the nude figure of Shirin bathing in the river, her own mount grazing nearby, the obligatory tree, and even the rocky terrain, Zaman reorganizes the composition so that the two protagonists are on the same level. Perhaps he had been inspired by an engraving of *Susanna Bathing* by Crispijn van de Passe the Elder (1564–1637) after a painting by Maerten de Vos of ca. 1600 (cat. 125). At any rate, his figure of Shirin seated on a rock in the water was to define the image of the bather in Persian miniatures for two centuries to come, as is borne out by the inside of a mirrored box showing a group of bathers painted by Muhammad Baqer in 1760/61 (A.H. 1174) (cat. 127) and by a *Khamsa* illustration of Shirin bathing from the first half of the nineteenth century (cat. 128). *Farangi-sazi* marked not only the apogee and the end point of Persia's long painting tradition, but also held within it the seed of something new that was to reach its full bloom only during the long reign of the Qajars in the nineteenth century.

#### 126 **Khosrow Discovers Shirin Bathing**

From a *Khamsa* by Nizami  
Iran, 1640–1660  
Pigments and ink on paper; sheet: XX cm, image:  
XX cm  
Museum Rietberg Zurich, RVA 1037

#### 127 **Mirror Case**

Muhammad Baqir (active in the 1750s and 1760s)  
Iran, dated 1760/61 (A.H. 1174)  
Pigments and lacquer on papier mâché,  
mirror; XX cm  
Museum Rietberg Zurich, RVA 1010

Inscribed: “*Kamtarin Mohammad Baqer 1174*”  
 (“The lowliest Muhammad Baqir, 1760/61”)

#### 128 **Khosrow Discovers Shirin Bathing**

Now mounted as a single-leaf miniature but formerly part of a *Khamsa* by Nizami  
Iran, first half of the 19th century  
Pigments, gold, and ink on paper;  
sheet: 16.7 x 12.1 cm, image: 8.7 x 5.2 cm

86 Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies, E-14, fol. 99r.



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Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi, 1971-0107-0362-c

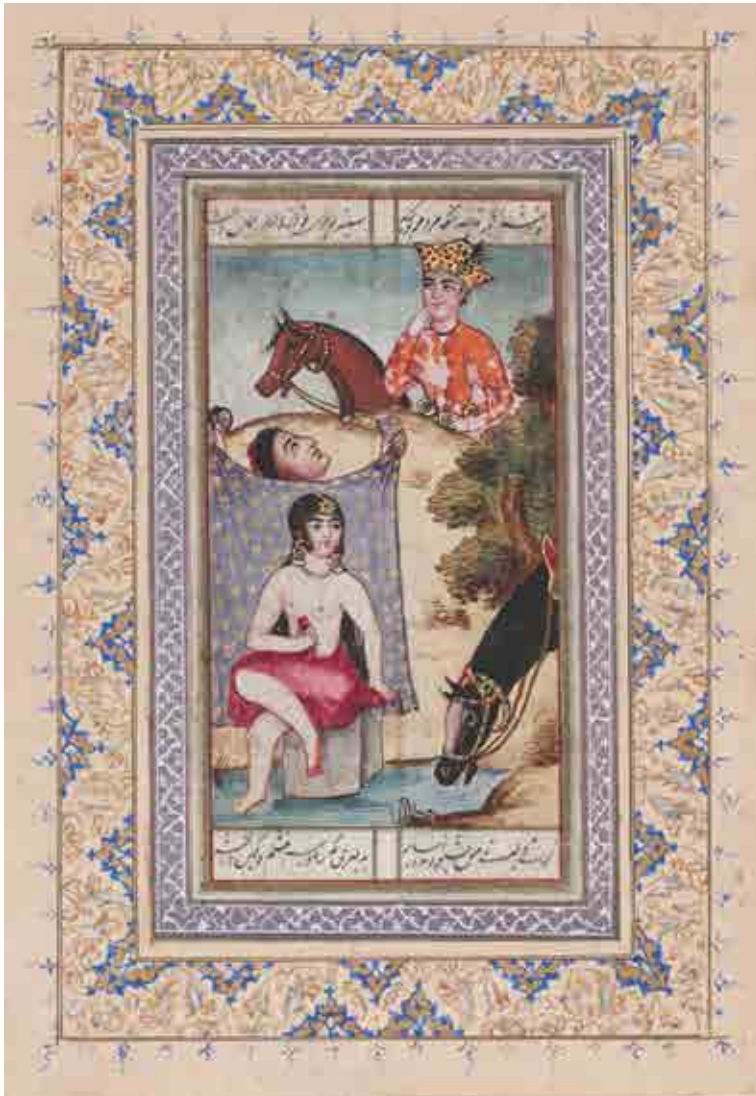
This illustration (cat. 124) comes from a *Khamsa* manuscript on European paper, the text of which was copied between 1674 and 1675. The inscriptions on some of the *Khamsa* illustrations tell us that they were drawn by Muhammad Zaman and his brother Hajji Muhammad between 1674 and 1678. Schmitz is skeptical, however, proposing a date between 1700 and 1715, even if Amy Landau takes the inscriptions and dates on the miniatures themselves at face value without further discussion. While there can be no doubt that some of the miniatures are modeled on works signed and dated by Muhammad Zaman and his brother, the significant discrepancies in quality between original and variation inevitably raise questions. Bearing in mind, however, that Zaman worked for both a royal patron, namely for Shah Sulayman, and for private clients—in this particular instance Mirza Muhammad Ma'sum,

assuming the inscription on folio 128 is to be believed—it seems much more likely that pecuniary grounds, and possibly even a tight deadline, are the real reason for the haste evident in the work's execution.

The theme of Khosrow chancing upon Shirin bathing counts among the classics of Persian book illumination. By the late fifteenth century, therefore, the iconography that had developed over the years was accepted as standard by almost all artists, including the unknown illustrator of the Rietberg *Khamsa* (cat. 126). The figure of Shirin bathing in a pond beneath a tree with a cloth draped over her and her long hair cascading down over her breasts is characteristic of this tradition, as is the figure of Khosrow lurking behind a rock in the background, biting his index finger in a gesture traditionally expressive of astonishment. The diagonals linking Khosrow at top right to Shirin at bottom left mimic Persian reading habits and Persian ways of seeing. The miniature from the Morgan *Khamsa*, on the other hand, marks a clear departure from this composition.

While Zaman's Khosrow complies with Persian conventions, he depicts Shirin unclothed, allowing us to speculate that he was drawing on a European source. In her detailed analysis of this work, Schmitz proposes that the painter was influenced by 'Ali Quli's *Susanna in Her Bath* (now in the Manucci Collection), which in turn can be traced back to a painting by Peter Paul Rubens. It should be said straight away that the story is a complicated one. It starts with an engraving by Lucas Vosterman the Elder of 1620 (British Museum, 1981.U.377) and a reproduction of the same (albeit reversed) by an anonymous engraver (Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1993.63-156), which was published by Claes Jansz. Visscher the Elder (1586–1652). 'Ali Quli's source was presumably the latter of the two—the mirror-image version of Rubens's original.

In view of the differences between 'Ali Quli's *Susanna* and Zaman's nude Shirin, we might still justifiably wonder whether Zaman modeled his heroine on a different work altogether. One possibility is the engraving of *Susanna Bathing* by



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Crispijn van de Passe the Elder after Maerten de Vos (cat. 125)—who ironically was himself inspired by Rubens's *Susanna and the Elders!* 'Ali Quli, however, adjusted the position of Shirin's legs to make them fit his own composition.

Zaman's new approach to an old theme did not go unnoticed and was to have a lasting influence on later generations of painters. This is evident from a lacquer painting on the inside of a mirror case (cat. 127). This composition, which is signed by Muhammad Baqir and dated 1760/61, shows Shirin surrounded by other bathers, none of whom seems to notice the young man spying on them from behind a bush. If Baqir was working directly from the Morgan miniature or from a derivative of the same, he

must have found Shirin's open-hearted abandon to be excessive, since in keeping with Islamic notions of decency, he took the precaution of winding a red cloth around her hips.

But the theme continued to resonate long after the eighteenth century. We know of at least five more examples dating from the nineteenth century, one of which, from the first half of the century, is likewise reminiscent of Zaman's figure (cat. 128), even if the unknown painter also recalls the older, diagonally structured composition. Much the same can be said of other illustrations of the same scene (Geneva, Cabinet d'arts graphiques du Musée d'art et d'histoire, Legs Jean Pozzi, 1971-0107-0196; Sotheby's, London, October 13, 1999, lot 7; Christie's, London, April 23, 2012, lot 256,

and the Georgian National Museum, pen box by 'Ali Isfahani, dated 1813 [A.H. 1228], inv. no. sxm/ag 913; thanks are due to Maka Mamporia for drawing my attention to this). Finally, there is the lacquered book binding of a *divan* (a collection of poetry) by Muhammad 'Ashiq Isfahani of 1862/63 (A.H. 1279), painted by Najaf 'Ali (Sotheby's, London, October 11, 2006, lot 22).

Here, even more so than in the case of Muhammad Baqir's slumbering nymph (cat. 106), we see how the works of Muhammad Zaman—and up to a point those of 'Ali Quli Jabadar—continued to influence Persian painting long after the Safavid period. Theirs were the models that were followed by the painters of the eighteenth century during the period of Afsharid rule, and in the early nineteenth century at the time of the Qajars. As Leyla S. Diba has been able to show, this was possible only because the royal workshops miraculously remained operational, despite the instable—at times tumultuous—political situation, and because the master-pupil relationship was so firmly established that both iconographic know-how and the necessary technical skills were handed down from one generation to the next. *Lit.:* Adle 1980; Diba 1989; Landau 2011, p. 117; Robinson 1992, pp. 168 and 172; Schmitz 1997, pp. 49–58, esp. p. 52.

**129 Bird Sitting on a Twig with a Butterfly in Its Beak**

Attributed to Shafi' 'Abbasi (active 1628–ca. 1678)

Iran, ca. 1650

Pigments on paper; sheet: 21 x 32.5 cm, image: 11.6 x 18.2 cm

London, The British Museum, 1922,0316,0.1

Inscribed: "*Ya sahib al-zaman 1152*" ("O Lord of Time, 1739/40")—a later, misleading, addition

**130 Bird Sitting on a Twig**

Shafi' 'Abbasi (active 1628–ca. 1678)

Isfahan (?), dated 1651/52 (A.H. 1062)

Pigments on paper; sheet: 11 x 15 cm

Art and History Trust Collection, LTS1995.2.177

Inscribed: *"Raḡam-i kamtarin Shafī'-e 'Abbasi, saneh 1062"* ("Work of the most humble Shafī 'Abbasi, the year 1651/52").

### 131 Bird on a Rose

From an album (*muraqqa'*)

Shafī 'Abbasi (active 1628–ca. 1678)

Isfahan (?), between 1633 and 1674

Pigment on paper; XX cm

London, The British Museum, 1988,0423,0.1.26

### 132 Various Birds

From Francis Willughby, *Ornithologiae libri tres in quibus aves omnes hactenus cognitae, in methodum naturis suis convenientem redactae accurate describuntur: Descriptiones iconibus elegantissimis et vivarum avium simillimis, aeri incisus illustrantur*, pl. 41

Great Britain, London, 1676

Engraving; XX cm

Zurich, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, TZ 135 I G

The motif of the rose and nightingale, in Persian called *gol-o-bolbol*, has been part of the standard repertoire of Persian poetry for centuries. There, the unequal pair can symbolize the lover and his beloved (male or female), or the soul of the mystic yearning for God. These days, the term *gol-o-bolbol* is used for painting, too, where it describes a specific genre.

The first instances of a flowering bush combined with a bird in Persian painting date from the fifteenth century. The inspiration was China's tradition of bird-and-flower painting, which since the mid-Song Dynasty (960–1279) had been a genre in its own right. Thanks to the friendly relations cultivated between Persia and the court of the Yuan emperor in the fifteenth century, several examples of these pictures painted on silk found their way to Central Asia and Persia, where they attracted the notice of local artists. The most persuasive evidence of this is two Persian albums, both now in Istanbul (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, H. 2153 and H. 2160), that bring together several examples of Chinese painting.

The real breakthrough for *gol-o-bolbol* painting, however, came under the Safavids (1501–1722). Whereas flowering rose bushes with nightingales were a common feature of sixteenth-century manuscript illumination, only in the seventeenth century did they become a genre in their own right—a genre that was soon adopted and developed in other media as well, first and foremost in textiles and ceramic tiles, but also in wood paneling and murals.

Once again it was Riza 'Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635) who had a crucial role to play: three bird studies by him have survived, all of them dating



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from the second quarter of the seventeenth century, and one copied from a painting by the famous early Safavid painter, Bihzad (1465–1535). Mu'in Musavvir (1617–1697/98), a pupil of Riza, later took up the same theme, while Riza's son, Shafi' 'Abbasi, devoted himself exclusively to this theme and painted numerous outstanding *gol-o-bolbol* miniatures both during his time in the service of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1642–1666) and in later years, too.

Bahram Sufragash turned to this theme at around the same time. Although we know almost nothing at all about this artist, he was clearly schooled in the Indian style of painting and must have had close ties to the art of the Deccan (see, for example, Christie's, October 14, 2003, lot 126). The influence of India can be claimed for Shafi' as well; there are certainly clear parallels between his work and the paintings in the Dara Shikoh Album collated in the sixteen-thirties for the oldest son of the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan. An especially good example of this is his *Goldfinch and Narcissus* of 1653 (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, inv. Od.

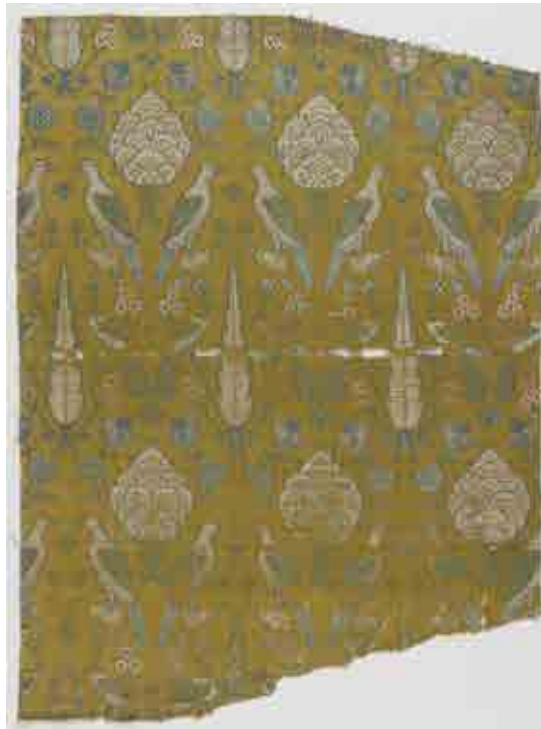
41-in 4° n°7) and the painting in the Dara Shikoh Album of *Narcissi and Irises* (British Library, Add. Or. 3129, fol. 66r).

The generally accepted hypothesis these days is that European engravings were an important source for *gol-o-bolbol* painting in both Persia and India. This certainly holds true for the last third of the century, as we know from what Cornelis de Bruijn had to say about a Persian painter in his travelogue: "Ce Peintre étoit occupé à copier en détrempe pour le Roi, un livre de fleurs en taille douce, imprimé en notre païs, dont un Ecclesiastique *European* lui avoit appris le coloris le mieux qu'il lui avoit été possible." Basil Gray, moreover, has been able to prove that for at least one of his pictures, Shafi' 'Abbasi copied a motif from *A booke of flowers fructs beasts birds and flies exactly drawne*, a compendium published by the British engraver John Dunstall (active: 1644–1675, d. 1693) in 1661.

Once we start looking for comparisons, however, we soon run up against certain limits. It seems that to start with at any rate, European prints were more likely to be an inspiration than

a model. Certain details were copied, but the composition itself followed Persian concepts. One important stimulus both for Persian painters—and for zoological publications in Europe—was that supplied by the Flemish engraver Adriaen Collaert (1560–1618), whose *Avium vivae icones* (Living Pictures of Birds) first went to print in Antwerp around 1600. These fifteen plates each show two or more birds in their natural surroundings against various landscape backdrops. Collaert was probably the first artist to show the birds—among them a hoopoe and a magpie—perched on the stumps of felled trees. His work was reprinted several times, indicating that it met with great interest. Perhaps Riza 'Abbasi was inspired or guided by one of the *Avium* plates when he produced his bird study of 1634 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985.2). The size of the bird relative to the landscape would certainly support such a theory. For an eye untrained in perspective, some of Collaert's background landscapes do seem excessively tiny.

Another work published around the same time as the *Avium* plates, this time in Bologna,



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is the *Ornithologiae Libri XII* by Ulisse Aldrovandis (1522–1605), which also shows birds in a minimally sketched-in environment. Many of them are perched on a small mound of earth with a little twig growing out of it. The same conventions were followed in the rather more comprehensive *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XX* of 1634 (cat. 135), and by 1676, the bird perched on a branch or a tree was a standard European trope, as Francis Willughby's (1635–1672) *Ornithologiae libri tres* proves (cat. 132).

It is interesting to note that the insects in the works of Shafi' 'Abbasi are invariably schematically drawn, indicating that here, too, Riza's son was following European models. These may not have been the work of any one engraver or have belonged to any one album, but are more likely to have been prints made for decorative purposes or as material for other artists to copy.

Another noteworthy feature of Shafi' 'Abbasi's flower-and-bird pictures is the fact that the flowers are generally shown from several different angles and the roses always in various stages of development from closed bud

to opening bud and rose in full bloom. Here, too, the Persian painter seems to have appropriated European conventions.

Ultimately, however, we are talking about details here, whereas the composition as a whole was most definitely a product of the artist's own invention. This is evident from the three paintings presented here. That Shafi' 'Abbasi used a range of sources for his reproduction of insects, certain flowers, or twigs, and that he had more than one model for any given work seems more than probable. The varying degree of naturalism in his work also supports this assumption. He basically took an eclectic approach to his work and in this respect was similar to 'Ali Quli Jabadar, who likewise drew on all kinds of different sources.

*Lit.: Le Brun 1718, p. 222; Canby 1996, p. 132; Canby 1998, pp. 81–82 and pp. 157–58; Diba 2012; Gray 1959; Grube/Sims 1985.*





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### 133 Book Binding

Iran, ca. 1640  
Leather, molded & tooled; XX cm  
London, The British Museum, 1993,0727,0.1

This leather book binding features a rectangular panel enclosed inside a frame made up of variously sized cartouches. What makes it so fascinating is the way it unites two different worlds in a single artifact: while the floral pattern adorning the frame is clearly of Persian provenance, the inside panel is decorated with European flowers and insects. No obvious models have been identified to date. There is a comparable book binding in Istanbul: a single-volume edition of Jami's *Masnavis*, completed in Qazvin in 1571 (Topkapı Saray Müzesi, H.1483). The inside panel of this work, which is similarly enclosed inside a frame made up of cartouches and clover-leaf medallions, shows several different flowers and insects, which could well have been drawn from European prints.

But the composition of the panel also recalls the *Archetypa studiaque patris Georgii Hoefnagelii*, first published by Jacob Hoefnagel (1573–1632/35) in Frankfurt am Main in 1592. The same work was published a second time in Nuremberg by the publisher Paulus Fürst (first mentioned in 1639), and a third time in the eighteenth century. Jacob based his engravings on miniatures by his father Joris (Georg) (1542–1601) and works by other artists. The *Archetypa* comprising forty-eight plates and four frontispieces was the first real symbiosis of insects and flowers, in many cases combined with snakes, lizards, snails, shells, and other amphibians. The work had an instant impact and was copied by numerous painters. Even the *Volatilium verii generis effigies* published in 1594 by Nicolaes de Bruyn (1571–1656) contains fruits, flora, and fauna copied from the *Archetypa*.

As already hinted, there do not appear to be any exact matches between Hoefnagel's work and the Persian book binding. Besides, the inside panel is arranged horizontally and the plants are shown growing out of the soil—unlike in the *Archetypa*, where they are presented in painterly disarray complete with their fallen petals. Yet it is still reasonable to assume that either a print or prints by, or inspired by Hoefnagel supplied the model for this work.  
*Lit.: Thompson/Canby 2003, pp. 169 and 179, cat. 6.18; Vignau-Wilberg 1994.*

### 134 Textile Fragment

Iran, 1st half 18th century  
Lampas; 50.8 x 38 cm  
Washington, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery; Purchase – Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler S1986.490

### 135 Northern Wheatear (*Oenanthe oenanthe*)

From Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XX*, p. 763  
Italy, Bologna, 1634  
Woodcut; XX cm  
Zurich, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, TZ 41 I F

The bird-and-flower motifs were certainly not confined to painting. Their most far-reaching impact was on Persia's highly sophisticated textile arts. That Shafi' 'Abbasi provided an important stimulus here, too, (see cat. nos. 129–131), as Basil Gray has argued, certainly cannot be ruled out. There are indeed parallels between 'Abbasi's work and several fabric patterns, as in the case of the drawing of a *Poppy with Butterfly* of 1645, now in Yale (Yale University Art Gallery, 1937.4796) and a textile fragment showing a poppy-like fantasy flower (Textile Museum, Washington, 3.138). Textile patterns nevertheless follow their own logic, dictated in part by whichever weaving technique is used.

We can tell from the sheer abundance of bird-and-flower motifs on textiles that most weavers preferred to create their own patterns. These range from abstract fantasy flowers and birds to more naturalistic motifs that can be unequivocally identified. Some draw on European conventions, too, as in the case of the Washington fragment. The motif of the parrot standing on one leg on a stone with a tulip growing out from under it is remarkably similar to the illustration of the northern wheatear from Aldrovandi's *Ornithologiae hoc est de avibus historiae libri XX* of 1634.  
*Lit.: Gray 1959.*

### 136 Lacquer Box with *Gol-o-bolbol* Painting

Muhammad 'Ali Ashraf (active: ca. 1735–1780)  
Iran, dated 1753/54 (A.H. 1147)  
Pigments and lacquer on papier mâché, mirror glass (of more recent date), leather, metal hinges; 20.9 x 15 x 2.5 cm  
Museum Rietberg Zürich, 2011.402  
Gift of the Rietberg-Kreis

Inscribed: "*Ze ba' d-i Muhammad 'Ali ashraf ast*" (Several interpretations are possible: "Ali [ibn Abi Talib] is the highest after Muhammad [the Prophet]" or "Ali Ashraf is next in rank after Muhammad ['Ali].")

The theme of the rose and nightingale continued to develop in late Safavid painting. Shafi' 'Abbasi's simple paintings were gradually displaced by more complex compositions. One brilliant example is this lacquered box by Muhammad 'Ali Ashraf. The ambiguous signature indicates that Ashraf was trained by someone belonging to the circle of Muhammad Zaman, possibly Zaman's own son Muhammad 'Ali.

He also seems to have specialized in lacquered objects, which he embellished for the most part with flowers, birds, and butterflies. Among his best known works is the binding of the St. Petersburg Album of 1737/38, which on the outside is teeming with countless nightingales and roses. A mirror case of 1761 now in the Brooklyn Museum of Art (88.92) features the same subject executed in a comparable style—to say nothing of many more of the motifs to be found on this lacquered box.

Unlike in these two examples, however, Ashraf's main focus of interest seems to have been nature in all its luxuriant bounty: the four stages of the rose—from closed bud to opening bud, to full bloom, to the bloom past its best—can be read as a metaphor for the flowering of love, which brings us back to the motif's origins in literature. The fact that this is reflected in other varieties of flower, too—in hyacinths, tulips, carnations, and fruit blossoms, for example—supports this interpretation. The singing, hunting, and pecking nightingales add still more life to the picture, lending it a brightness and vitality that is not at all usual for this genre. 'Ali Ashraf here provides proof not just of his imaginative powers but also of the direction in which the *gol-o-bolbol* theme had developed since the days of Shafi' 'Abbasi (cat. nos. 129–131).  
*Lit.: Jahresbericht MRZ 2011; Robinson/St Stanley 1996/97, pp. 72–77; Adle 1980.*



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**137 Persian Coat**

Iran, 2nd half 17th/18th century

Cloth woven out of silk and metal threads

Height: 114 x 163 cm

Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2229

**138 Persian Coat**

Iran, 2nd half 17th/18th century

Cloth woven out of silk and metal threads

Height: 98 x 160 cm

Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1456

In addition to the silks patterned with large figures and in some cases brocaded in gold and silver that are characteristic of the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (r. 1587–1629), countless other silks in an infinite variety of patterns were also produced. Most were floral designs that took the form of scattered flowers inside stripes or in an endless repeat.

These two garments are T-shaped coats with a tight-fitting upper half and a widely cut, trapezoid skirt. As individual garments in Persia varied very little and several layers were worn one on top of the other, it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether this coat was worn over a shirt or was rather a kind of outer garment. Nor do we know for sure whether it was intended for a man or woman.

Even the dating is problematic. Coats like this one with flared sides came into fashion around the mid-seventeenth century during the reign of Shah 'Abbas II (r. 1644–1666) and remained popular until well into the eighteenth century. The side slits (cat. no. 138), however, are almost certainly an innovation of the post-Safavid era. Unfortunately, the patterns do not give us much to go by either: the general assumption is that motifs became smaller and repeats shorter over time, just as there was a steady decline in the number of colors used.

Textiles densely patterned with intricate flowers and foliage were clearly very popular in the second half of the seventeenth century and can be seen, for example, in the portrait of a *Courtier on a Veranda* (cat. no. 117), in the figure of the *daf* player in *Shah Sulayman with Courtiers on a Veranda* (cat. no. 114), and in two late Safavid oil paintings (cat. nos. 139 and 142). Examples of patterns made up of alternating stripes with garlands of flowers can be found throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This coat's alternating white and yellow bushes (*boteh*) on an azure ground could be read as evidence that it is an eighteenth-century garment.

*Lit.: Van Puyvelde 2009.*