This paper focuses on an Ottoman illustrated manuscript copied in 1498–99, which is now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), New York. The MMA Khusraw va Shirin of Hatifi is significant for several reasons. Its dated colophon provides a rare opportunity to study a manuscript securely placed in the reign of Bayezid II (1481–1512). During this period illustrated manuscript production in the Ottoman realm increases significantly for the first time and can be studied in the light of approximately fifteen examples. Among these, however, only a few are securely dated, and thus the MMA Khusraw va Shirin of Hatifi has held an important place in studies of early Ottoman miniature painting. Scholarship on the manuscript has focused primarily on one of its miniatures (fig. 9), which has frequently been referred to as an example of “early Ottoman style” and has played an important role in defining the characteristics of this style. No attempts have been made to examine the manuscript in any depth or in its entirety.

Important new insights into early Ottoman luxury book production, for which little documentation survives beyond the manuscripts themselves, can be gained by studying this manuscript as a whole, that is, as a book. My reexamination of it using this comprehensive approach presents codicological information; a new fuller reading of its colophon, which reveals the role of the artist in the production of the manuscript; analysis of its little-known frontispiece and illumination; a close examination of its miniatures in relation to the text, which is translated in summary for the first time; and consideration of the significance of this Persian text and its author in the Ottoman realm. This method permits discussion of the manuscript to move beyond questions of style to address a much wider range of issues, such as iconography, patronage, and book production, that enable us to appreciate the manuscript as an artifact of the “international” culture of the Ottoman court during this period.

The MMA Khusraw va Shirin of Hatifi is a mediumsized manuscript, measuring 240 (height) × 164 (width) mm. The present binding is not original and is stylistically close to late-sixteenth-century Safavid bindings (figs. 1–2). When and where this lavish binding was attached to the manuscript are unclear, but it is possible that the manuscript never traveled to Iran, and that it was added at the Ottoman court, where the manuscript was presumably produced and where Safavid manuscripts were preserved in numbers. This scenario is also supported by a note and seal on folio 1r (fig. 3) of the manuscript, which indicates that it was previously owned by Seyyid Osman Ataullah, the müderris of Nuh Efendi Medrese. According to a note on the first flyleaf recto, Sir Thomas Phillips (1792–1872) bought the manuscript at the 1823 sale in England of Sir Gregory Osborne Page-Turner of Battlesden (1785–1843). The Phillips Collection, including this manuscript, was auctioned in London at Sotheby and Co. in 1968.

The manuscript consists of seventy-eight folios copied in two columns, each containing thirteen lines of fine nastalıq script in a text block of 159 × 79 mm with gold rules. It has six miniatures. It opens with a double-page frontispiece illustration (fols. 1v–2r, figs. 4–5) followed by a text page with the first three lines of text (in couplets) in an illuminated frame (fol. 2v, fig. 6). The next folio begins with the seventh line of the text, indicating that the missing three lines (4–6) must have been copied on a now-lost folio that was originally between the present folios 2 and 3. This missing folio most likely had the three lines of illuminated text on its recto, facing the present illuminated text page 2v, and perhaps a full-page illustration or illumination on its verso. A few other folios are missing throughout the text as well. There are no other illuminations except for the gilded background of the colophon at the end of the manuscript (fig. 7). The text itself is illustrated with five miniatures. The paper is well polished, although there are some water stains in the lower margins.
COLOPHON

The colophon of the manuscript (fig. 7) provides the date as a chronogram in Persian copied in white letters in the left column of the last line of folio 78r, after the word tāriḵ. The arithmetical value of the letters in the chronogram adds up to 904 (1498–99). Except for the date, the colophon has never before been fully read. In addition to the date, it records that the artist, who refers to himself by the pseudonym Suzī, was responsible not only for the copying of the text but also for the illumination, gilding, and illustrations in the manuscript:

Shud tamām in kitāb-i farkhunda / dil-kushāyi konad bi-gham khwāra
Farah qalb hasilist ā rā / har ki in āvarad bi-nazāra
Khatt u taqhib u tabr u tasvīrash / shud zi dast-i man dil-i āvāra

This pleasant book has been brought to completion, may it bring happiness to the sorrowful, And may those who inspect it be joyful.
The calligraphy, illumination, gilding, and illustrations have been executed by me, the destitute one.
How can I do more, since my heart is broken into a hundred pieces?
It has been completed on this date, the work of Suzī, the helpless one.

In light of this information we can now say that only one person, with the penname Suzī, was responsible for the production of the entire manuscript, except for its binding. On closer examination, the gilded colophon appears
to have been written over a previous text, of which the edges of some letters in black ink are still visible; it is, however, impossible to read this text even with the aid of an infrared camera. I do not doubt the authenticity of the colophon, since its calligraphy is similar in style to the inscriptions around the frontispiece (figs. 4–5) and those in the illuminated frame on 2v (fig. 6). It is possible that the artist first wrote the colophon in plain black ink and later decided to embellish it with gilding in order to emphasize his accomplishments.

CALLIGRAPHY

The quality of the *nasta‘liq* calligraphy in the MMA *Khusraw va Shirin* shows that the artist was well trained in this style. In the Ottoman realm Turkish and Arabic texts were generally copied in *naskh* and Persian texts
in nasta’liq; an interesting example of this is an Ottoman Qur’an in which the text is in naskh but the Persian Fâlnûma included at the end is in nasta’liq. The use of nasta’liq for Persian texts being customary in contemporary Iran, in the Ottoman realm scribes who came from Iran or were trained in this style may have worked especially on Persian texts.

ILLUMINATION

The illumination of the frontispiece and the text page on folio 2v proves that the artist was skilled in this art as well as in the writing of nasta’liq script. He has made extensive use of dark blue and gold, adding red, white, blue, and green for details. The narrow illuminated band in the illustrated double frontispiece (figs. 4–5) is interrupted by eight gilded medallions, which are inscribed with verses. The miniscule cloud bands between the medallions are characteristic of Ottoman illumination during the reign of Bayezid II.

The written surface of folio 2v (fig. 6) is surrounded by a frame consisting of two narrow vertical rectangular panels and two wider horizontal panels that are decorated with large gilded medallions filled with small decorative floral branches and inscriptions. The top medallion provides the name of the book (“Book of Khusraw, Shirin, Farhad”); the bottom conveys good wishes. The dark blue background of the frame is decorated with a floral arabesque, which in the vertical panels is larger in scale and has an undulating character. Decorative spikes extending into the margins frame the illuminated area on three sides.

That this folio was designed as half of a double-page illumination at the beginning of the manuscript makes it similar to the opening pages in luxury Qur’ans produced in the 1490s, during the reign of Bayezid II. It is comparable in its general design and motifs to the double-page illumination of an Ottoman Qur’an (now in the Khalili Collection) dated to 1493, and also to another Ottoman Qur’an of 1494. Although illumination in the Qur’ans is more elaborate and gold predominates, the individual motifs and layout are similar to those in the Khusraw va Shirin, especially in the undulating dark blue area of the vertical side panels.

Fig. 6. Illuminated title page (fol. 2v) of Khusraw va Shirin of Hatifi. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 69.27.

Fig. 7. Colophon (fol. 78r) of Khusraw va Shirin of Hatifi. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 69.27.
AUTHOR AND TEXT

Although it is not unusual to find illustrated copies of Persian texts, such as Katibi’s *Divan* or the *Shahnama* of Malik-i Ummi, produced under Ottoman patronage during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, it is for several reasons unusual, and perhaps revealing, that Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin* should have been illustrated in the Ottoman realm as early as 1498–99.

In the first place, Hatifi must have written his poem not long before the Ottoman manuscript was produced, since the earliest copy of his text dates from 1490. In 1498–99 the poet was still active at the Timurid court of Husayn Bayqara, in Herat. He was mainly reputed as the nephew of the famous poet Jami. Trying to emulate another great Persian poet, Nizami, Hatifi attempted to write a *Khamsa* (Quintet) but only produced four works—*Laylá va Majnín*, *Khusraw va Shirin*, *Haft Manzar*, and *Timúrnama* (also known as *Zafarnama*). Although many critics of his time considered him a minor poet, he was generously praised by ‘Ali Shir Nava’i, the sultan’s influential friend and foster brother and an eminent Chaghatay Turkish poet. In fact, Hatifi and Jami were both sponsored by ‘Ali Shir Nava’i, and, most important, Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin* was dedicated to him. We also know that Jami and ‘Ali Shir Nava’i were well respected at the Ottoman court: the Ottoman sultans Mehmed II (r. 1451–81) and Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) sent sums of money to Jami, and ‘Ali Shir Nava’i sent his ghazals to the Ottoman court during Bayezid’s reign. Due to this increased interest and involvement of the Ottoman court in the literary culture of the late-Timurid court of Husayn Bayqara, it is highly possible that Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin* reached the Ottoman court soon after its completion, perhaps as a gift of Hatifi’s patron ‘Ali Shir Nava’i.

Among the surviving copies of Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin*, the MMA manuscript constitutes the earliest illustrated one with a secure date, even counting the examples produced in Persia. There appears to have been a strong interest in Hatifi’s works at the Ottoman court during this time, since another copy of his *Khusraw va Shirin*, in the Topkapı Palace collection, was also illustrated during the reign of Bayezid II. Hatifi’s other famous work, *Timúrnama*, was also copied and illustrated at the Ottoman court in 905 (1499–1500), one year after the MMA *Khusraw va Shirin*. This is all the more remarkable given that there are no illustrated copies of the esteemed works of Jami or Nava’i produced during the reign of Bayezid II. Hatifi’s popularity appears to have continued unabated at the Ottoman court, since there are sixteenth-century copies of his works, with or without illustrations, in the Topkapı Palace Library.

As a subject the story of Khusraw and Shirin seems to have been in vogue during the reign of Bayezid II, since there are also five illustrated copies of the Turkish *Hüsrev ve Şirin* by Şeyhi. One of these was copied in Shawwal 903 (May–June 1498), a year before the MMA manuscript. Thus the popularity in the Ottoman realm of illustrated texts on this subject may have begun with the Turkish work of Şeyhi, who wrote his poem circa 1420, much earlier than did Hatifi. Şeyhi’s work had become famous at the Ottoman court by the end of the fifteenth century, but no illustrated copies of his text are known before the reign of Bayezid II. As a standard part of Nizami’s *Khamsa*, *Khusraw va Shirin* was also frequently illustrated in Timurid Persian manuscripts, in which certain episodes of the story were favored for illustration. Thus, illustrated Persian copies of Nizami’s *Khusraw va Shirin* could readily have provided visual models for the five illustrated Ottoman copies mentioned above, since Şeyhi’s text had a story line similar to Nizami’s.

Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin* does not share Nizami’s story line, nor consequently Şeyhi’s. Hatifi’s poem is much shorter, omitting various episodes of Nizami’s poem and introducing new ones. However, the episodes illustrated in the MMA miniatures follow those that were well known from illustrated copies of Nizami’s *Khusraw va Shirin*; what is different in this manuscript is that literary details occurring only in Hatifi’s *Khusraw va Shirin* are illustrated in the miniatures. The artist Suzi’s knowledge of both Nizami’s and Hatifi’s texts becomes clear in this respect.

Although I have not attempted to translate the poem in its entirety, the sections related to the miniatures in this manuscript are summarized below in order to show the relationship between text and image. Five miniatures illustrate the text. The illustrated double frontispiece (figs. 4–5) that precedes the text is not related to it and will be discussed subsequently.

TEXT AND IMAGE

*Khusraw hunting* (folio 15v, verse 291, fig. 8)

The title of the episode reads: “The taking flight of that falcon of youth in preparation for hunting thousands of pheasants, and Khusraw riding on Shabdiz, the beautiful horse.” Hurmuz, the powerful ruler of
Persia, learns from a dream that he is finally going to have a son. After the birth of this beautiful son, named Khusraw Parviz, Hurmuz raises him as a noble prince. When Khusraw becomes a young man he spends his time hunting and cavorting with his lovely maidens. One spring morning Khusraw and the maidens, all clad in splendid clothes, set out on horseback to hunt birds. All the maidens are swift riders and shoot pheasants with arrows. During the hunt the entire place becomes filled with arrows. Several hunted pheasants cry out in vain, and their screams can be heard everywhere. One of the hunted pheasants springs up, and Khusraw with his horse Shabdiz rides after it for a long time. His maidens follow him.

In the miniature the depiction of a bird hunt is represented only in the background, where several falcons hunt pheasants. Khusraw is featured in the middle of the foreground, mounted on his rearing black horse, Shabdiz, as described in the text. He shoots an arrow at a lion that is attacking a gazelle. At the left side of the composition appears a crowned figure with sword in hand, ready to strike a lion attacking a person lying on the ground. Hunting dogs chase rabbits and deer. Although in the narrative Khusraw, with his beautiful maidens, hunts only birds, the miniature presents a dramatic hunt scene with details that do not relate to the text. The inclusion of Khusraw’s lion hunt must have been modeled on conventions developed for illustrating the episode of Nizami’s *Khusraw va Shirin* in which Khusraw hunts lions, but this episode comes later in Nizami’s text.

Shirin looks at Khusraw’s image (fol. 22v, verse 459, fig. 9)

The title of the poem reads: “Shapur places the sapling of love for Khusraw in Shirin’s heart and draws on the page of a leaf of her memory an incomparable portrait of beauty.”

One night during a drinking party Khusraw’s well-spoken and well-traveled attendant, Shapur, who is a painter, informs Khusraw about the beautiful princess of Arman. Khusraw is moved by Shapur’s description of Shirin’s incomparable beauty and sends him to Armenia to find her. Instructed by Khusraw, Shapur journeys disguised as a monk. He learns that Shirin lives in seclusion with beautiful virgin maidens, and that no man is allowed to see her or them. Shirin’s palace is located in a vast garden and has a single window from which she might look occasionally. Shapur secretly goes to the vicinity of the palace and, as soon as he hears the voices of the maidens, sits down. Without being noticed, he places a mirror across from the window and when Shirin’s reflection falls on the mirror, he draws her beautiful image on a piece of paper. He also draws Khusraw’s portrait on the other side of the paper. Suddenly, a swift wind comes up, causing the paper to slip from Shapur’s grasp and float into Shirin’s garden. Shapur then draws another portrait of Shirin from his memory on another sheet of paper, as a gift for Khusraw. In the meantime, the paper that landed in the garden is discovered by a maiden in Shirin’s residence. When Shirin looks at it and sees an image on each of its sides she becomes deeply affected and
immediately falls in love with Khusraw’s image. She cries and asks the image who he is and where he can be found. She tells the image that she is not able to comfort herself since she does not know the answers to these questions.

In the miniature Shapur sits in front of Shirin’s residence. He is depicted as a white-bearded old man in monk’s garb, as described in the text. Interestingly his dark blue hat with a thin red band is identical to the one worn by the figure being attacked by a lion in the previous miniature. The mirror that Shapur uses to look into Shirin’s palace. This detail, which reflects the text, is not found in Nizami’s Khusraw va Shirin, where the event takes place in a meadow and Shapur secretly places Khusraw’s image on the tree himself. Although this episode is very frequently illustrated in copies of Nizami’s Khusraw va Shirin, it is clear that the artist of the MMA manuscript has specifically illustrated Hatifi’s text.

Khusraw battles Bahram Chubin (folio 32r, verse 678, fig. 10)

The title of the episode reads: “The making radiating
of Khusraw with the fire of enmity and the burning of Bahram Chubin like firewood. In the previous episode of the text, Khusraw learns that his father has been killed and his kingdom destroyed by Bahram Chubin. Khusraw decides to gather a large army and combat this enemy. The text describes in detail a long, fierce battle in which iron-clad men strike each other, causing mountains to shake around them. In the end, Khusraw’s army defeats Bahram’s, and the battlefield is filled with corpses, arrows, and swords.

In the miniature the artist successfully depicts the fierce combat between the two armies. Bloody corpses are trampled under the horses’ hooves, and the soldiers shoot arrows and use their swords against each other. Only the horses in the left half of the scene wear caparisons. In the middle of the composition, a figure clad in yellow is struck off his mount by the long spear of another figure, on the left; this may represent Bahram Chubin killed by Khusraw, and the army on the left may therefore be that of Khusraw.

Shirin visits Farhad at Mount Bisutun (folio 49v, verse 1090, fig. 11)

The title of the episode reads: “Those clouds of excellent virtue renew the withered plant of Bisutun and pour down drops of precious pearls at the place of love.” After having fallen in love, Khusraw and Shirin are separated for long periods of time, and several obstacles arise, intensifying the tension between them. The Farhad episode is one of them. The sculptor Farhad falls in love with Shirin when he is given the impossible task of opening a channel in the mountains to provide Shirin’s castle with milk. Hearing of Farhad’s passion for Shirin, Khusraw orders Farhad to be brought to him and tries to discourage him from loving Shirin by explaining to Farhad that he is not her equal. However, Farhad challenges Khusraw’s reasoning with his own arguments. Unable to convince Farhad otherwise, Khusraw imprisons him in a deep well on top of a mountain. Farhad digs into this well with a piece of steel and discovers a ruby mine while cutting through the rocks. Every night he comes across more rubies, on each of which he carves an image of Shirin’s beautiful face. When these rubies reach the hands of many, even beggars, Shirin asks Khusraw to inquire about this. Shapur, who accompanies Khusraw, realizes that such skilled carving can only be the work of Farhad. Khusraw calls Farhad to him in order to learn about the secret of the rubies. When Khusraw and Farhad meet, Khusraw is once again humbled by Farhad’s love for Shirin. Although he tries to convince Farhad that he is not suitable for Shirin, Farhad again argues against his view. As a last resort, Khusraw conjures up a task that he believes Farhad will never be able to complete—opening a passage through Mount Bisutun for Khusraw’s army—and agrees to leave Shirin to Farhad if he successfully completes this assignment. Farhad agrees to the arduous task. He first carves a relief of Shirin on the mountain and then begins carving the passage. When Shirin learns of this assignment she visits him on the mountain. Upon seeing her, Farhad throws himself at her horse’s feet,
kisses the ground, and praises his beloved’s trustworthiness. Shirin instructs her maid to offer Farhad wine to quench his thirst. At the end of the story, Khusraw, enraged with jealousy, plays yet another trick on Farhad by sending false news of Shirin’s death. When Farhad hears this, he sees no value in living any longer and dies on the spot.

In the miniature, Shirin approaches the mountain on horseback, while two maidens hold a canopy over her. She bends coyly forward to offer wine to Farhad. (In the poem she orders her maiden to give him the wine.) The red color of the wine is clearly seen in Shirin’s flask: this detail is important because, in the text of Nizami’s Khusraw va Shirin and its illustrations, she offers him milk.\(^{40}\) The artist shows an interest in illustrating the detail of the wine in Hatifi’s text, but by depicting Shirin herself offering the drink, he also demonstrates his familiarity with this episode in Nizami’s text. In the painting Farhad, with his arms extended, runs pleading toward Shirin. The darkened rectangle behind him represents the relief he has carved on Mount Bisutun. The depiction of a dead tree in Farhad’s half of the composition in contrast to the blooming one in Shirin’s half is a conventional way of representing the ill fortune that awaits him. The contrast is reinforced by the juxtaposition of the steep, harsh mountains behind him and the lush green landscape surrounding Shirin. The different colored grounds of the composition visually enhance the viewer’s perception of the separate fates of Farhad and Shirin.

**Shirin and Khusraw’s marriage (fol. 67v, verse 1558, fig. 12)**

The title of the episode reads: “The conjunction of the moon of the sky of felicity with the auspicious rising Venus of the sky of grace.”\(^{41}\) According to the text, after Farhad’s death Khusraw sends a condolence letter to Shirin. Shirin also sends a letter back to him. One day Khusraw decides to go hunting and visits Shirin on his way, but she does not allow him to enter her palace. Khusraw returns to his own palace and begins a dalliance with a girl named Shakar from Isfahan. In the meantime, Shirin regrets her behavior and laments in despair about being forgotten, saying that she feels like a doe trapped by a lion. When Khusraw hears from Shapur about Shirin’s suffering, he decides to marry her. For the wedding, the entire city of Mada’in and Khusraw’s palace are splendidly decorated. Both Shirin and Khusraw wear beautiful silk clothing. A woman prepares Shirin for the wedding. Music is played and Khusraw drinks wine and is united with Shirin while in a drunken state.

In the miniature the two lovers enjoy their wedding celebration. They sit on cushions on a large elevated throne or platform, also described in the text. Both Shirin’s and Khusraw’s courtiers are shown behind the throne. The bearded Shapur, who is no longer disguised, wears a turban and stands at the left side of the scene. In the foreground, a seated servant serves drinks from gold and ceramic bottles. Female musicians play their instruments, and male servants carry food in blue-and-white ceramics.
THE FRONTISPIECE AND ITS OTTOMAN ICONOGRAPHY

The frontispiece (folio 1v–2r, figs. 4–5), which precedes the miniatures described above, provides important clues about where this manuscript was produced and who the patron may have been: it is in fact a very accurate depiction of an Ottoman court scene. In this double-page composition a sultan is shown enjoying an outdoor ceremony in the company of his guests and court staff. In the right half of the composition, the sultan and his two guests, all of whom wear large, bulbous turbans, are seated on a carpet and under two canopies securely attached to the ground with ropes. These figures also wear ceremonial long-sleeved caftans; that of the sultan appears to be of fur with a blue silk lining. The sultan holds a white napkin in his left hand and a small gold cup in his right. The two guests do not drink. Two pages stand behind the sultan, and other court officials stand at the outer edge of the scene. A seated cupbearer, who wears a crown, serves drinks to the sultan while a group of three male musicians play instruments in the left foreground.

The left half of the composition depicts more standing court officials, some of whom wear turbans and others red or white headgear. Most of these figures, too, are clothed in long-sleeved ceremonial caftans. They seem to occupy different positions in the court hierarchy, and they carry distinctive attributes such as maces or, in the case of the lieutenant doorkkeepers, staves.

A figure in a short garment dashes into the scene from the left. He wears a tall hat and carries an ax in his right hand. In the foreground other court servants bring food in bowls. Two have knives attached to their belts, which might indicate their role as members of the kitchen staff. A figure standing behind them, only half in view at the inner edge of the scene, looks at them and gestures with his right hand as if to coordinate the service.

This miniature can easily be interpreted as an Ottoman court scene in which the sultan enjoys an outdoor reception with his retinue. The sultan and his two guests wear bulbous turbans that differ from contemporary Turcoman and Safavid headgear and seem to be worn only by the Ottoman sultan and perhaps his viziers. Moreover, Ottoman household officers and janissaries are respectively distinguishable by their red and white headgear decorated with gold bands. While two sword-bearing pages from the household staff stand behind the sultan, other officers and janissaries occupy different positions. Janissaries were the elite infantry corps of the Ottoman army; by the mid-fifteenth century their ranks consisted of male children taken exclusively from Christian families engaged in agriculture in the Balkans, as an extraordinary tax levied on the Christian population. On the basis of their talent, appearance, and intelligence, the most outstanding received academic education and military training at the palace school. Some were later selected to become the sultan’s elite military guards. The janissary figures in the frontispiece must depict the ones who were trained for service at the court; their existence in this miniature clearly places the context of the scene in the Ottoman realm.

A figure who wears the same janissary headgear can also be seen in the illustration of Khusraw hunting (fig. 8). Although the text for this miniature is clearly about young Khusraw’s bird hunt, the artist, by including a janissary in the background of the hunt, might also have been alluding to the hunting activities of the Ottoman princes or sultans, who were joined by their janissary pages. But the appearance of the janissary in this miniature may also have been a mistake on the part of the painter, since similarly clad figures do not appear in the rest of the miniatures.

In the frontispiece, janissaries, household officers, and a turbaned courtier carry food in blue-and-white ceramic vessels. The largest of these, carried by two janissaries at the far left of the scene, is deep and round and features a prominent foot. Similar footed basins, approximately 40 to 45 cm in diameter, have been described by N. Atasoy and J. Raby as unique to Ottoman Iznik production and are believed to date to the first half of the sixteenth century; the earliest surviving examples of the type are dated to around 1500. Our miniature may provide the earliest depiction of such a vessel. In fact, no other Ottoman miniature is known to represent this type of vessel, whose function has heretofore been ambiguous. Based on this miniature we can suggest that these large vessels were used to serve food such as soup or sherbet at court festivities.

In addition, the figure dashing into the scene from the left can readily be interpreted as a peyk. Peyks are known to have served as the sultans’ personal couriers, whose original function was to deliver urgent messages on foot. Eventually their services and the details of their costumes changed as they assumed
ceremonial roles. A peyk is usually depicted carrying an ax in his right hand and wearing bells around his knees to announce his arrival: the figure in our miniature not only wears these usual attributes but also carries a strange blue object attached to a stick in his left hand. This object is probably a napkin filled with sweets and candies, known from written sources to have been carried by peyks in their left hands to provide energy while they ran long distances. Such attributes tell a great deal about the duties of peyks at the end of the fifteenth century, before their roles became largely ceremonial. The peyk in this frontispiece is most likely in the act of bringing urgent news, since he dashes into an otherwise calm and ceremonious scene.

Although we cannot securely identify the event, the frontispiece is closely related to Ottoman court ceremonies that took place outdoors, either in palace gardens or in close proximity to the palace. The event may have just been disrupted by the arrival of the peyk. Overall, the miniature is full of details that seemingly originate from observation of actual court life. The artist Suzi was most likely a participant in these ceremonies, or, at the very least, well enough informed to create such a realistic scene. The miniature itself is an important early source for the history of costume and ceremonial at the Ottoman court.

Other miniatures of the manuscript also have certain Ottoman iconographic details. In fig. 9, the multi-layered, tower-like pavilion looking onto gardens and the arched openings with iron grilles in the garden walls can also be understood as realistic details from the artist’s immediate environment, the Ottoman court. G. Necipoğlu suggests that these details might have been inspired by the Topkapı Palace itself. She notes the head tutor’s tower, part of the palace at the end of the fifteenth century, as an example of such pavilions.

In figs. 11 and 12 the women wear tasseled scarves that cover their shoulders and seem to be attached to their heads with other rounded scarves or ring-shaped caps. Based on the detailed depiction and accurate representation of other headgear throughout the manuscript, we may presume that these are realistic representations of women’s costume at the Ottoman court. Since depictions of women are quite rare in sixteenth-century Ottoman manuscripts, the MMA Khusraw va Shirin is all the more important for its documentary and iconographic value.

In general, the artist Suzi clearly demonstrates his awareness of ceremony, clothing, objects, architecture, and personnel of the Ottoman court. This represents the beginnings of a documentary approach that will become a significant aspect of sixteenth-century Ottoman illustrations, especially in the depiction of military campaigns of the Ottoman sultans.

STYLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

The MMA Khusraw va Shirin miniatures are distinctive and can be characterized as having a Mediterranean flavor that appealed to Ottoman taste. In general, the artist has a delicate style with balanced and orderly compositions. His colors are bright yellow, green, red, and pink. In the double-page frontispiece the green ground forming a hill in the middle of the composition helps to visually unify the two halves of the composition, which do not align perfectly. The illusion of continuity between the two halves of the scene is reinforced by the cutting-off of the figures at the edges of the miniature, so that they appear to inhabit a space that continues beyond the frame, “underneath” the margins.

The miniatures share some stylistic features with contemporary Persian paintings. Two features, in particular, are typical of a group of Aqqoyunlu Persian manuscripts of the 1480s to 1490s generally attributed to Shiraz: namely, the green vegetation of the ground (figs. 4–5, 11, and 12), which consists of large bunches of leafy plants, and a specific form of male headgear that has a small drooping piece at its edge (figs. 11 and 12). While these stylistic features may indicate that the artist’s original training was in the Persian realm, or, that the “Ottoman” style was then still under the influence of contemporary Persian painting, several other features of this style signal a distinctly Mediterranean character.

An attempt to show depth in architectural forms is evident in a few miniatures. In fig. 9, Shirin’s three-storied pavilion and its garden walls (including window grilles) are drawn perspectively: the edges of the architectural forms in a single image are more or less parallel to one another. In fig. 12 the legs on three sides of the low stand next to the cupbearer are all visible and shown from the same viewpoint. The shape of the elevated dais and even the pattern of the cushions on which the two lovers are seated follow the same directional lines as those of the edges of the small stand. This simple attempt to create the illusion of depth in architecture and objects is also employed in the rendering of nature: in figs. 8, 9,
10, and 12 trees are aligned diagonally in the background to indicate vast space.

Although an attempt to show depth is also evident in contemporary Persian miniatures, it is often not as consistent as in the MMA miniatures. Above all, the use of light to enhance the illusion of depth is distinctive and innovative in the MMA miniatures. For example, in four of the miniatures, the artist uses tonal rendering to create an atmospheric blue sky. This is achieved with the application of a dark tone of blue in the upper part of the sky and a mixture of lighter blue and white in the lower part. The “perspectival” blue sky is not a convention in contemporary Persian paintings, where sky is depicted rather as a matte color that creates a decorative, two-dimensional painting surface. But the artist of the MMA *Khusraw va Shírin* is not consistent in the application of this technique, as is evident in the flat golden skies in figs. 9 and 11, and the stylized white clouds, similar to those in Persian miniatures, juxtaposed with the atmospheric sky in figs. 8 and 12.

The use of tonal rendering to create a sense of directional light and shade can be seen in the depiction of objects, nature, and architecture as well. In the frontispiece (figs. 4–5), the left edges of the white canopies above the sultan are painted with a grey tone as if the light is coming from the far right. Tonal modeling is evident in the depiction of some costumes, such as that worn by Shapur in fig. 9; of plants in almost all the miniatures; and of trees such as those in figs. 8, 9, 10, and 12—modeling that creates the effect of a distinct light source in the image. In fig. 9 the artist paints the right side of Shirin’s palace with a darker tone to indicate that it is in shadow since the sunlight is reflected from the front side of the palace. The same technique is used for the right wall of the garden. A similar form of shading is also applied to the rooftops of the palace in order to indicate depth variations in their surfaces. However, as in the rendering of the skies, the artist is not consistent in applying the technique: in this miniature the trees suggest a light source different from the one that illuminates the palace.

The sources of this interest in creating the illusion of depth in Ottoman miniatures are not well known. Ottoman contacts with Europe and European painting seem to have been influential. Artists at the Ottoman court may have been exposed to fifteenth-century European painting through artists or artifacts arriving from Europe, and such contacts can be proposed as the major source for the above-mentioned stylistic innovations that characterize Ottoman miniature painting of this period. The artist Suzi must have learned the new illusionistic techniques in the Ottoman realm even if he had been previously trained in a Persianate tradition. While his ease with the Persian language and with *nastaliq* script may reflect his training in Persia, his careful depiction of an Ottoman court scene in the frontispiece of the MMA manuscript strongly suggests that he spent a considerable period of time in the Ottoman realm—almost certainly at the court.

The other illustrated copy of Hatifí’s *Khusraw va Shírin* in the Topkapı collection is illustrated in a Persianate style by an artist who can be documented to have arrived in the Ottoman realm after serving Aqqoyunlu Sultan Ya’qub in Tabriz. In contrast to the MMA Hatifi, the illustrations of the Topkapi manuscript have no Mediterranean flavor and the iconography of the illustrations is in no way specific to Hatifi’s text. A comparison of the two artists suggests that Suzi learned the arts of illustrating and illuminating in an Ottoman context, whereas the already formed style of the artist who came from Iran did not change in his new locale.

**CONCLUSION**

Turning the pages of the MMA *Khusraw va Shírin* provides much useful information. The binding of the manuscript and the stamps of ownership reveal clues about its “afterlife.” The double-page frontispiece with its depiction of an Ottoman court scene suggests that its patron was the Ottoman sultan. The fine *nastaliq* script draws attention to the Persian text. The surviving half of the double-page illumination that frames the first lines of text shows close similarities with the illumination of other Ottoman manuscripts from the period. Details of the illustrations are specific to Hatifi’s version of *Khusraw va Shírin*. The iconography and style of the miniatures give us a glimpse of what was going on socially and artistically at this time at the Ottoman court. Finally, the rereading of the colophon shows us not only that the manuscript was produced in 905 (1498–99) but that it was copied, illuminated, and illustrated by a single artist, Suzi.

In order to better evaluate the MMA *Khusraw va Shírin* and the new information gained by examining the manuscript as a book, it is helpful to look generally at the production of illustrated and unillustrated
luxury manuscripts in the Ottoman realm, especially during the reign of Bayezid II.

After the Ottoman court was established in Istanbul in 1453, luxury manuscripts were produced in numbers, and illustrated manuscripts began to constitute a small part of this production. Present evidence suggests that the production was mainly under the patronage of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451–81), and that court workshops were responsible for most if not all of this production,52 which included at least four illustrated manuscripts.

During the reign of Bayezid II, the court workshops were organized for the first time. The outcome of this organization and of Bayezid’s direct patronage can be seen in the many luxury Qur’ans that were produced mainly after 1490, several of which were dedicated to Bayezid himself.53 Bayezid’s special relationship with the famous scribe of these Qur’ans, Şeyh Hamdullah, is worth noting in this context.54 Although Şeyh Hamdullah was not a salaried artist of the court, he was given special quarters in the palace and was well compensated for his work. Bayezid is also known for his patronage of other artists, poets, and historians.55

Compared to the luxury Qur’ans of the period, the illustrated manuscripts seem relatively modest. Yet almost twice as many were produced at this time as during the reign of Mehmed II; organization of the court workshops must have positively affected both their quantity and their quality. In addition, the Ottoman defeat of the Aqqoyunlu in 1494 seems to have resulted in the arrival of Persian artists at the Ottoman court workshops:56 the copy of Hatifi’s Khusraw va Shírín in the Topkapi collection57 was illustrated by an artist from the Aqqoyunlu realm.58 Like Suzi, he was also the scribe of the manuscript. The above-mentioned Qur’an of 1493, whose style of illumination is similar to that of the MMA Khusraw va Shírín, was likewise illuminated by its scribe.59 In the Ottoman context the frequency of scribes who were also illustrators and/or illuminators might reflect the relative modesty of luxury book production, especially of the illustrated manuscripts, during this early period. Studies analyzing more manuscripts in depth may bring out further examples of single individuals executing various aspects of a book.

A register of imperial gifts60 from the reign of Bayezid II provides an insight into artistic production and patronage at the Ottoman court, especially gift-giving, which may also have been a factor in the production of the MMA manuscript. This register records the names of artists, the works they presented to the sultan on specific occasions (mostly religious festivals), and the amount of money in cash or goods that they received in reward. In general, the recompense that artists received from the sultan was much greater than the value of the gifts they presented. Through such gifts, salaried artists could substantially increase their income; in fact it is suggested that by using this system the court could pay small salaries and still encourage artists to produce important works.61 The valuable materials needed for manuscript production, such as paper, gold leaf, and lapis lazuli, were stored in the inner treasury of the Topkapi Palace, and their distribution was carefully monitored.62 It has been proposed that the head of the palace workshops was required by the head of the treasury to distribute assignments to artists.63 The court presumably provided materials to artists of the book, who were also paid salaries to execute commissioned manuscripts. However, we do not know exactly how the artists acquired such materials when they were preparing gifts for the sultan; their status may have affected their access to them.

The MMA Khusraw va Shírín may have been produced as a gift for the sultan by an artist attempting to raise his status in this system. The depiction of an Ottoman sultan with his entourage in the frontispiece suggests that the manuscript was intended for the sultan himself. Suzi’s declaration in the colophon that he is an accomplished artist of the book may indicate his desire for recognition by the sultan and his hopes for a reward appropriate to his skills. In the illuminated cartouches around the frontispiece he has in fact added a few lines in Persian praising his patron and directly beseeching his aid. The verses in the lower left medallion (fig. 4) read: dastgört kun yá sáhib, ayván-i mah (Oh my patron, the moon-like portal, be generous with your aid). This plea might indicate Suzi’s expectations of reward when he presents his finished work as a gift to the sultan, and perhaps his hope for future employment. In this light, the fourth line of the colophon, “How can I do more, since my heart has been broken into a hundred pieces?” again suggests that the artist might be humbly beseeching his patron, promising that he can do more good work if he is given a lavish royal commission.

The fact that Hatifi’s poem was first illustrated in the Ottoman realm attests not only to a taste for this Persian work at the Ottoman court but also to the
close contacts that existed between the late-Timurid court at Herat, where the poem was written, and the Ottoman court, where it was copied, illuminated, and illustrated at the end of the fifteenth century, only a short time after its composition, by a skilled artist whose origin was perhaps in Iran. Furthermore, the illustrations of this artist represent a new style—one that combines European and Persian features. It is exactly this combining of traditions, which seems to have appealed to the Ottoman court and to reflect its distinctively "international" character, that is embodied in the MMA *Khusraw va Shirin* itself.

**Ankara, Turkey**

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**NOTES**

1. Acc. no. 69.27. I am especially thankful to the Department of Islamic Art of the Metropolitan Museum of Art for allowing me to study the manuscript as a Kevorkian Fellow during 1997–99.
4. This period is defined by Atıl in *Turkish Art*, 154.
5. The name of the poem is mentioned in the manuscript itself as “Khusraw, Shirin, Farhad.”
6. The manuscript was trimmed slightly, as can be seen from the inscription at the top of fol. 1r.
8. An unidentified, possibly Ottoman, teacher who worked in this madrasa named after a Turkish clergyman, Nuh Efendi.
10. Ibid., p. 42, also mentions the missing folio.
11. In the order of the Persian letters: 70+40+30+60+6+7+10+60+400+2+10+3+1+200+5=904.
12. The Persian word *süz* comes from the verb *sukhtan* and means “burned [by love].”
13. I am thankful to M. L. Swietochowski, formerly associate curator of the Department of Islamic Art of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for arranging the examination of the colophon page with the assistance of the Conservation Center of the Museum.
16. At least ten copies were produced after 1490. For their illumination see Yoltar, “The Role of Illustrated Manuscripts,” 267, 280.
30. Istanbul Hacı Selim Ağa Library, Ms. 906.
32. Timurtaş, *Şehi’inin Hüsrev ü Şirin’i*, 89.
33. The verse numbers of Hatifi’s poem are taken from Asadullaeva’s study: M. Timurtaş, *Shirin i Khusrau = Shºrºn va Khusraw*, ed. S. Asadullaeva (Moscow, 1977).
34. Hatifi, *Shirin i Khusrau*, 21. The titles are from Asadullaeva’s study. I am thankful to William Kwiatkow for helping me with the English translations.
42. Teodoros Spanduginos, *Petit traité de l’origine des Turc par*
Théodore Spandouny Cantacasin, publié and annoté par Charles Schefer (Paris, 1896), a source from the Bayezid II period, describes Ottoman costumes in detail; according to the author, janissaries wore white headgear; the red ones were worn by household officers. The white pigment used to depict the headgear in the frontispiece has darkened as a result of deterioration.

44. N. Atasoy and J. Raby, Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey (London, 1989), 41–43. Atasoy and Raby suggest that these large basins were used for ritual ablutions by people of rank.
47. G. Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries (New York, 1991), 187. The present building has been transformed from its fifteenth-century state.
51. This proposition has been explained in detail in my dissertation: Yoltar, “The Role of Illustrated Manuscripts,” 402–6.
52. Atıl, Turkish Art, 151; Raby and Tanndi, Turkish Book Binding, chap. 2; Yoltar, “The Role of Illustrated Manuscripts,” 83–98.
54. Raby and Tanndi, Turkish Book Binding, 96–100; Yoltar, “The Role of Illustrated Manuscripts,” 268–70.
56. B. Mahir suggests that Aqqoyunlu-style illumination was adopted in Istanbul after the defeat in 1494. B. Mahir, “II. Bayezid dönemi nakkaşhanesinin Osmanlı tezhip sanatına katkıları,” Tarihçiye 60 (1990): 8.
59. The scribe of the Qur'an was twice rewarded by the sultan, once with the title nakkas: Rogers, Empire of Sultan, 48–49.
61. Raby and Tanndi, Turkish Book Binding, 89.