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MOSTLY MODERN MINIATURES: CLASSICAL PERSIAN PAINTING IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Throughout his various writings on Persian painting published from the mid-1990s onwards, Oleg Grabar has explored the place of the medium in traditional Persian culture and expounded on its historiography, including the role played by private collections, museums, and exhibitions in furthering public appreciation and scholarly study of Persian miniatures. On the whole, his investigations have involved works created in Iran and neighboring regions from the fourteenth through the seventeenth century, including some of the most familiar and beloved examples within the canonical corpus of manuscript illustrations and miniature paintings, such as those in the celebrated 1396 Divān of Khwaju Kirmani, the 1488 Bustān of Sa‘dī, and the ca. 1525–27 Divān of Hafiz. In examining these images, Grabar has given particular weight to their compositional details, such as architectural settings and figures, in defining the vocabulary, narrativity, meaning, and universality of the tradition’s visual forms and in establishing what has been aptly called “the concept of contemporary judgments,” that is, the value that Persian society and culture itself placed on these beautiful artistic productions. Finally, in formulating his notions of an aesthetic of Persian painting, Grabar has asked: “What has made this particular art possible? And especially, what made it succeed?”

While Grabar’s questions about the truth and beauty of Persian miniatures have been directed largely towards productions of the distant past, similar concerns also seem to pertain to works created at the very moment when the masters and masterpieces of traditional Persian painting began to be identified, admired, and sought after far beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin—that is, during the first decades of the twentieth century. As has long been recognized, Persian painters of recent times frequently emulated traditional painting styles and “schools” and even imitated specific works by their predecessors of centuries past, often to satisfy the tastes of foreign collectors. One such artist, who signed himself variously Turābī Bek Khurāsānī or Turābāst Bek Khurāsānī, seems to have honed to a fine art the practice of creative reuse and replication. Indeed, the quality of his production, represented by paintings in several U.S. collections (including one on Professor Grabar’s very doorstep and another not far down the road), seems to warrant designating this seemingly little-known painter as a modern master of classical Persian painting. His oeuvre also prompts reconsideration of notions of authenticity and originality within this venerable art form—issues that Oleg Grabar, even while largely eschewing the practice of connoisseurship himself, recognizes as a “great and honorable tradition within the history of art.”

In 1922 the Philadelphia bibliophile John Frederick Lewis purchased a set of seven compositions, mounted as individual album paintings and identified as “Persian, seventeenth century”; today these are part of the extensive Lewis Collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia (O 263–268 and O 270). In 1925 the Baltimore bibliophile Robert Garrett purchased a signed and dated sixteenth-century manuscript of the Khamsa of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi containing eight paintings, one of them inscribed Turābī Bek Khurāsānī; this manuscript is now part of the extensive Garrett Collection at the Firestone Library of Princeton University (no. 84G). Lewis must have been aware that two of his acquisitions (O 265 and 266) were essentially duplicates of each other, albeit in different color schemes. Neither he nor Garrett could have realized, however, that the very same composition also appears in the Khamsa manuscript, along with five other “shared” scenes. In other words, all of Lewis’s seven scenes are also to be found on the folios of Garrett’s manuscript. The two American collectors doubtless would have been equally surprised to learn that several of their paintings were artful versions of illustrations in a now-celebrated Persian manuscript of royal Safavid provenance.
To give greater specificity to these overlaps and imitations, we shall now look at the Princeton and Philadelphia works in some detail. This examination gives precedence to and focuses at length on the Garrett Khamsa manuscript, since it has the more extensive pictorial program and a somewhat complicated codicology that sheds light on its original production and later history. Discussion of the Lewis album paintings will be intercalated with that of their counterpart Garrett manuscript paintings, with attention to the subjects and models of the compositions and the similarities and differences between the two sets. In the second part of this essay, the paintings will be discussed collectively, with an emphasis on their salient iconographic and stylistic features and artistic sources, and with the goal of locating these works, and more particularly their artist and his working method and aesthetic, in art-historical time and place. What is assumed at the outset will be argued at greater length on their salient and important precedence to and focuses at length on the Garrett Khamsa, even specify their Herat origin.

Ali al-Husayni copied the four poems of the Princeton Khamsa on cream-colored paper in a fine black nastaliq, with twenty-one lines in four columns on the recto and verso of each folio. The written surface is gold-dusted, enframed with gold and blue rulings, and regularly punctuated with rubrics written in multicolored tawqil script. The scribe added a fair-sized catchword in nastaliq on the diagonal about 3.5 cm below the outer ruling on the verso of each folio. He completed his transcription of Shīrīn va Khusraw and the Hasht Bihisht on the recto side of each maqāna’s final folio, following the last verse of the Hasht Bihisht with his first colophon and leaving a pair of blank, facing pages between the end of both poems and the beginning of the next ones—a format commonly found in sixteenth-century Persian manuscripts with multiple texts. He ended the full text of the Iskandarnāma on the verso of its last folio, also the last page of the manuscript, where he signed and dated his second colophon. This is likely how Ali al-Husayni would have treated the Majnūn va Layla, perhaps including yet another colophon following the last verse. In its current state, however, the poem comes to a premature end on the recto of folio 87 and lacks the final thirteen of Amir Khusrau Dilhavi’s original verses, which Ali al-Husayni would logically have written on the verso of that same folio. Instead, what appears on folio 87b is one of the manuscript’s eight paintings.

While these compositions, to be described shortly, constitute the most obvious modification to the volume as initially completed in Herat in 1524, they are by no means the only change. Indeed, numerous folios have been replaced with sheets of paper whiter than the cream-colored ones that ‘Ali al-Husayni signed on folios 130a and 186b. In addition, and again in comparison to what can be determined as the original folios, the gold dusting on the written surface of the replacement sheets is darker and denser, the lines of text within the rubrics are spaced further apart, and the catchwords are much smaller and written quite close to the bottom edges. In short, in its present

THE GARRETT KHAMS A AND THE LEWIS ALBUM PAINTINGS

The bound codex purchased by Garrett and catalogued by Princeton as a Khamsa of Amir Khusraw Dilhavi actually contains only four of the poet’s five maqānas (poetic works in rhyming couplets). Its 186 folios open with a large shamsa (sunburst ornament) enclosing medallions inscribed with the volume’s poetic contents (folio 1a). These are: Shīrīn va Khusraw (folios 2b–54a), Majnūn va Layla (folios 55b–87a), Hasht Bihisht (folios 88b–130a) and Iskandarnāma (folios 131b–186b). Each poem begins with an elegant illuminated titlepiece, or sarlavah. The last two end with a colophon: that on folio 130a is signed by ‘Ali al-Husayni “in the royal city of Herat,” while the colophon on 186b is signed by ‘Ali al-Husayni al-kātib, also “in the royal city of Herat,” and dated Rabi‘ II 930, corresponding to January–February 1524. As has been generally accepted, ‘Ali al-Husayni was one of the various names used by Mir‘Ali Haravi, the renowned calligrapher who spent much of his early career in Herat until the Shaybanid Uzbeks captured him there in the late 1520s and took him off to Bukhara. Greatly admired in Safavid times for his proficiency in writing cursive script in various sizes from large to minute, and particularly for the refinement
collation the Garrett/Princeton Khamsa codex combines materials and formats from at least two separate phases of production—or rather production and re-production. Both phases were very carefully executed, however, and the overall “look of the book” (to adopt Elaine Wright’s felicitous phrase) is consistent enough for its distinctions to have escaped notice hitherto (or so it seems).

The homogeneous visual effect of the volume is reinforced by its four pairs of paintings, which precede each of its masnavâs. These images clearly were executed by the same hand—identified though a prominent inscription on one painting as that of Turabi Bek Khurasani. Although for the placement of his pictures the artist took obvious advantage of the original codicology of the Princeton manuscript, using (or, in the case of the break between the second and third masnavâs, creating) the facing blank folios that separate the poems, what he painted were not four double-page, unified compositions, as is the norm with “divider” paintings in Islamic manuscripts, in which the two halves form a continuous or at least balanced scene, like a frontispiece. Instead Turabi Bek produced eight individual paintings arranged in thematically and visually complimentary facing pairs, with each separate work enframed in gold and blue rulings similar to those around the written surfaces of the manuscript (figs. 1–4). The eight, along with their mates among the Lewis album paintings, are as follows:

I-1. Shirin Visits Farhad in the Mountains
84G, folio 1b: 31.5 x 20.4 cm (fig. 5)
O 265: 32 x 20.5 cm (fig. 6)
O 266: 32 x 20.8 cm (fig. 7)

I-2. Hunting Scene
84G, folio 2a: 31.6 x 20.4 cm (fig. 8)
O 264: 33.9 x 20.9 cm (fig. 9)

II-1. Tavern Scene
84G, folio 54b: 31.4 x 20.1 cm (fig. 10)
O 267: 30.8 x 20 cm (fig. 11)

II-2. Feast of ‘Id
84G, folio 55a: 31.4 x 20 cm (fig. 12)
No Philadelphia mate

III-1. Mosque Scene
84G, folio 87b: 31.5 x 20.2 cm (fig. 13)
O 263: 30.8 x 20.1 cm (fig. 14)

III-2. Shrine Scene
84G, folio 88a: 31.5 x 20 cm (fig. 15)
No Philadelphia mate

IV-1. King Dara and the Herdsman
84G, folio 130b: 31.8 x 20.2 cm (fig. 16)
O 268: 32.8 x 20.8 cm (fig. 17)

IV-2. Encounter outside a Palace
84G, folio 131a: 31.3 x 20.2 (fig. 18)
O 270: 32.2 x 20.8 cm (fig. 19)

I-1. Shirin Visits Farhad in the Mountains

The scene of Shirin visiting Farhad is most familiar today from its illustration in fifteenth- to seventeenth-century manuscripts of Khosrow va Shirín by Nizami and, to a lesser extent, in those of Shirín va Khosrow by Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. Both poets tell essentially the same story, with some slight variation in the sequence of events. One day the Armenian beauty Shirin encounters the sculptor Farhad and commissioned him to cut a channel through the mountains so that milk from her flocks grazing in the upper pastures can flow down to her palace. Smitten by Shirin’s beauty, Farhad agrees to her request and pursues the project at great speed. Shirin then visits Farhad at his work site on Mt. Bisitun.

The one Garrett and two Lewis compositions (figs. 5–7) set the scene in a steep mountainous landscape, split vertically at the left side by a tiled water channel angling down from a square pool, and in the upper middle by a small ravine. The bearded figure of Farhad stands on the left bank of the channel. He has a sculptor’s pick stuck in his sash and extends a double-handled, covered milk jug towards Shirin, who appears on horseback on the other side of the channel. Both she and her mount are depicted in a much larger scale than that of Farhad and the other figures in the scene. Five female attendants, one of them on horseback, follow immediately behind Shirin at the right; two others, also mounted, wait in the lower foreground. The upper right of the painting is anchored by a conical tent, around which several countryfolk tend goats, sheep, and other animals, in obvious reference to Shirin’s flocks. Behind the tent is a man with a camel; in front of it a woman milks a horned cow that in turn suckles a calf, while another woman appears behind an animal skin from which a bearded man pours milk into a golden bowl. Meanwhile, across the ravine, a mustachioed man squats to milk a goat straddling the square pool. Above and behind the milker, the landscape rises up to a rocky promontory with a square panel carved in relief, evidently by Farhad, of a man and a woman who represent
Fig. 1. Folios 1b and 2a of a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G. (Photo: courtesy of Princeton University Library)

Fig. 2. Folios 54b and 55a of a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G. (Photo: courtesy of Princeton University Library)
Fig. 3. Folios 87b and 88a of a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G. (Photo: courtesy of Princeton University Library)

Fig. 4. Folios 130b and 131a of a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G. (Photo: courtesy of Princeton University Library)
polychrome, with figures garbed in brightly—almost garishly—colored attire. Numerous details in these three paintings are also distinctive. In the Princeton composition Shirin rides a black and white horse and wears a wrapped-cloth head covering. In the Philadelphia paintings her horse is dappled black, and her headdress consists of a gold crown with a curved “tail.” Likewise, the Princeton milker wears a turban, while his Philadelphia confrères wear caps with turned-up and split brims, albeit in different color schemes. Furthermore, the two relief-carved figures in the Princeton painting are standing, while in the Philadelphia scenes they are seated. In addition, both Philadelphia paintings lack some of the landscape features found in the Princeton painting, such as the flowering trees.

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While the three pictures share their iconography and composition, including the placement and poses of the figures, they differ in many respects. The palette of the Princeton painting, for instance, is extremely subdued, almost monochromatic, with occasional touches of bright color accenting trees, animals, and “architectural” details, including most prominently Shirin’s horse and the tent top and sculpture frame. One of the two Philadelphia paintings (O 266, fig. 7) is also chromatically low key, especially in its treatment of the figures and rocky promontories, but the ground is covered with green grass. By contrast, the other Philadelphia composition (O 265, fig. 6) is totally

Fig. 5. Shirin Visits Farhad in the Mountains. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G, folio 1b. (Photo: courtesy of Princeton University Library)

Fig. 6. Shirin Visits Farhad in the Mountains. Rare Book Department, Free Library of Philadelphia, O 265. (Photo: courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia)
Finally, although the figures in all three paintings exhibit identical placement and pose, their anatomy, expressions, and even hairstyles vary in subtle ways. Shirin serves as a prime example: On the Princeton folio her body is solid and her face full, rounded, and framed with long locks of hair (the right one curving across her neck); she stares directly at Farhad with piercing dark eyes. In Philadelphia O 266 her face is less rounded, her gaze is directed upward, and her left lock of hair is a short, curling ringlet. In O 265 her face is slimmer still, her left lock of hair straight, and her right lock hidden behind her back. She looks across at Farhad, but her eyes seem to be focused above his head.

Given the recognizable subject of the first painting in the Princeton manuscript and the placement of the initial set of compositions at the beginning of the *Khusraw va Shirín* poem, it is logical to identify the princely hunter in the second painting as Khusraw. Indeed, in Amir Khursaw’s *masnavi*, Shirin and Khursraw first meet while hunting, and later in the story Khursraw goes to the hunt accompanied by servants and his boon companion, Shapur. So there is ample reason to take this scene as a depiction of Khursraw displaying his hunting skills. On the other hand, the hunter could as easily be identified as Bahram Gur, another prominent character in the *Khamsa* of both Nizami and Amir Khursraw—a possibility reinforced by the distinctive, upside-down position of the hunter’s principle prey, recalling one of Bahram Gur’s celebrated feats as a archer while hunting with his slave girl Fitna. Given the commonplace nature of its theme, however, the painting could simply be a generic scene, as entitled here.

Whatever its specific iconographic or literary referent (if any), the hunt takes place on a sloping, rock-strewn plain—bisected diagonally by a narrow stream flowing into a small pool—that rises up on the left and surrounds a small building on the right. The principal hunter, on horseback in the middle of the scene, jumps towards the right, across the stream. As the raised position of his right arm reveals, he has just taken aim with his bow and shot an arrow into the haunch of a horned gazelle. The impact has knocked the creature head first to the ground, where it lies curled as if on its side. Other animals, including a large hare, flee before the hunter; two ducks take off from the pool in the foreground. Primarily clustered at the left side, a number of male attendants or courtiers, some on horseback and others on foot, observe the hunting activity. The members of one such group gesture upwards in great excitement at the galloping hunter, while another group looks on more impassively from higher up the plain. Four more figures, shown only partially at the painting’s bottom edge, seem to react attentively to what it going on above and beside them; two of them hold index fingers to their mouths in the classic gesture of emotion. Meanwhile, in the upper-left reaches of the landscape, four mountain goats graze and gaze about, seemingly oblivious to the fate and flight of the other animals below. To the right is a small, tiled building, consisting of a square
structure with a large entrance, a flat roof, a chimney, and a prominent wind-catcher, flanked by a narrow tower with a projecting room or balcony and another small chimney or wind-catcher on top. A bearded figure stands in the open doorway, seemingly in conversation with another bearded man, who holds a basin to the mouth of a haltered donkey. To the left, a youth rides toward them on a donkey laden with straight branches.

The Princeton and Philadelphia versions of this hunting scene (figs. 8 and 9), like those of Shirin Visits Farhad, are virtually identical in composition and iconography. They are also surprisingly similar in terms of overall palette, particularly in the proportion of subdued to bright tones. The coloring of specific elements differs, however: the ground coloring in the Philadelphia composition (fig. 9), for instance, is bright green alternating with lighter green, and that in Princeton (fig. 8) very pale green. The Philadelphia hunter, although he rides a black horse, is otherwise rendered in monochrome, whereas the Princeton hunter, on a black and white horse, is dressed in a bright mauve robe and a blue and gold turban (the size of which makes him appear larger than the other riders). Likewise, several of the other Princeton horses, as well as its two ducks, are rendered in strong colors, while their Philadelphia counterparts are either very pale or monochrome.

The two paintings also diverge in many details of landscape, architecture, and attire. The rocky crags in the upper left of the Princeton scene are edged with small plants whose dark leaves look like spades or pointed caps; these are missing from the Philadelphia painting, as are the racing clouds, two white birds, and white flowering branches in the upper right zone of the Princeton painting. The buildings in the two paintings are tiled in different patterns and colors, although the overall effect is similar, and feature contrasting designs on the projecting rooms or balconies—a cartouche on one and vertical panels, probably meant to suggest inlaid wood, on the other. In addition to coloration, the robes and turbans of the two main figures also differ in style: in the Princeton painting the hunter’s mauve robe fastens down the front with gold buttons and wide “frogs,” while his turban, made of blue cloth edged in gold, has golden ends fanning out at the back. The robe of the Philadelphia hunter has no fastenings at all, and his turban is low and white, with a small loose end hanging down alongside his face and a smaller, gold end (?) on top, resting against what looks like a soft, furry cap. With one exception, all the other figures in the two paintings also wear turbans. In the Philadelphia painting these are typically white, with careful folds and an outer length in gold that often ends in a gold fan at the top of the head. The turbans in the Princeton painting are fashioned from gold-striped cloth, with a final length and fanned end of the same fabric (gold in only a single case). Instead of a turban, one of the figures behind the hunter wears a peculiar hat, seemingly a hybrid of a low, fur-trimmed cap and a high-crowned model with a down-turned brim. This special headgear suggests that he may have a higher status than the other men in the scene, and that he perhaps represents Shapur, who accompanies Khosrow on the hunt. Finally, as in the paintings of Shirin and Farhad, there are physiognomic distinctions: the leftmost rider on the white horse at the bottom of the painting is a mature man with a moustache in the Princeton composition and a clean-shaven youth in the Philadelphia one.

II-I. Tavern Scene

If the hunting scene suggests several possibilities in terms of its exact iconography, the next picture, found both in the Princeton manuscript and among the Philadelphia album paintings (figs. 10 and 11), nowadays presents no such ambiguity. Indeed, it is instantly recognizable as a version of an illustration variously known as A Drinking Scene, A Scene of Drunkenness, Worldly and Otherworldly Drunkenness, or Allegory of Drunkenness—a depiction of drinking, merrymaking, and spiritual transcendence in a Sufi tavern, signed by the celebrated Safavid artist Sultan Muhammad, in a manuscript of the Divān of Hafiz commissioned by a member of the Safavid royal family ca. 1525–27. In the context of the present discussion, the Princeton painting is also significant for the prominent inscription, in a rectangular panel over the door leading from the terrace of the tavern to its interior, that reads: ‘amal-i [work of] Turābi Bek Khurāsānī.

In the original Hafiz painting (see fig. 25) the panel over the main portal of the tavern is occupied by rows of tilework, and Sultan Muhammad’s signature (‘amal-i Sultan Muhammad Irāqī) appears in the central cartouche over the outer door to the left. The Princeton painting retains the cartouches (albeit in different colors), but the central one is blank: Sultan Muhammad’s signature has been “removed.” In
the unsigned Philadelphia version of the same scene, the panel over the inner door is filled with tilework in a diamond pattern and the outer one with a floral design in red on a gold ground. Other liberties that Turabi Bek Khurasani has taken with Sultan Muhammad’s manuscript illustration, and the “variations on the theme” that he has introduced in his Princeton and Philadelphia versions, include considerably enlarging the dimensions of the original, eliminating the paired text panels of the Hafiz verse at the top of the illustration, and adding a large simurgh in the upper left corner, evidently to fill the area of the original composition that steps down to the left of its text panels. He has painted the Princeton simurgh in purple, mauve, and green with touches of yellow and white, extended its legs as if in flight, curved its long neck, and positioned the upper part of its body, its wing, and a green tail feather in the upper margin. With less additional space available in the Philadelphia painting, he has given the simurgh there a more compact body, a shorter neck, and tucked-in legs, almost as if it was perched or about to land on the roof. He has also painted the bird in softer tones, primarily rose and light green, with touches of yellow on the upper wing. Altogether this creature looks much flatter and less ethereal than its Princeton counterpart.

In addition, Turabi Bek has slightly shifted the position of many of the original figures. Thus, for instance, the man seemingly passed out or in an ecstatic state.
and lying flat on the ground at the lower right in Sultan Muhammad’s painting is repositioned at an improbable angle in the Princeton and Philadelphia paintings. Likewise, the tipsy man who, in the Hafiz illustration, stands barefoot on the terrace outside the tavern door and proffers a book and a tall-necked vase to the young barman or sommelier within seems in both of Turabi Bek’s versions to be floating above the terrace floor, now above the level of the young man he approaches; his book is replaced by a gold wine cup. The sense of levitation is particularly strong in the Philadelphia composition since the drunkard’s feet are all but invisible.

Turabi Bek has also transformed the setting in various ways, most noticeably by replacing Sultan Muhammad’s foreground grass with a tiled terrace on which are placed numerous vessels—including a bottle lying on its side and spilling its contents—and by reworking the garden flora at the left side of the painting. He has lowered some of Sultan Muhammad’s compact white clouds in the Philadelphia sky and removed them altogether from the Princeton scene. Finally, in the Princeton painting Turabi Bek has not followed Sultan Muhammad’s bright palette of primary colors but instead has used a subdued color scheme similar to the two previous paintings in the Khamsa volume, here with a grayish or grisaille rather than a beige cast. As in the previous paintings, there are bright accents—for instance, in the rooftop terrace, the cornice-framing bands, and the simurgh.
The Philadelphia tavern scene is painted in stronger tones overall: the hues of terrace tiles, for example, create bold contrasts against which the bright red of the spilled wine stands out much more vividly than does Princeton’s subdued gray spill. Similarly, the deep blue ground of the Philadelphia cornice has much more visual “pull” than the gold of the Princeton cornice.

Interestingly, the tilework on the angled façade of the Princeton tavern—pink tiles on the window walls and blue and green ones at the dado level—compares closely in color with that of the original painting. The tile colors are somewhat different in the Philadelphia version—with mauve rather than pink tiles above, for instance—but here, too, the overall effect is comparable with the original Hafiz painting. 25

II-2. Feast of ’Id.

The painting in the Princeton manuscript that faces the tavern scene (fig. 12; it has no Philadelphia mate) is a version of yet another illustration by Sultan Muhammad in the same Divân of Hafiz (see fig. 26). Here the prototype is the now-famous Feast of ’Id, depicting the festivities that follow the sighting of the new moon at the end of the holy month of Ramadan. 26 Unlike the tavern scene, however, the Princeton painting has not retained Sultan Muhammad’s original orientation but is instead mirror-reversed, so that the enthroned prince in the center faces toward the right side of the image instead of the left.

Besides this obvious compositional change, Turabi Bek Khurasani has modified the work of Sultan Muhammad in other ways, such as considerably enlarging the picture plane. 27 Along with the upper band of crenellations, he has removed the four panels inscribed with Hafiz poetry from the top of the parapet and has replaced them with an arabesque design; he has also substituted an arabesque panel for the loosely-penned (and today controversial) inscription over the door on the right in the original painting, which invokes the Safavid prince Sam Mirza. Even more significantly, he has eliminated Sultan Muhammad’s signature from the diamond-shaped cartouche on the front of the throne and added a spray of pink roses in a panel beneath the prince’s feet. The side panels of the throne, adorned in the original with interlaced and knotted gold cloud bands, now feature a tile pattern. Turabi Bek has also altered the position of some figures, most noticeably the eight attendants carrying platters of food and wine bottles through the side entrance, of which only one spandrel is visible. In Sultan Muhammad’s painting these servants move in single file, with the fifth one turning to look upwards, perhaps at the young woman peering out from the curtain above. In Turabi Bek’s version a pair of attendants stand in the doorway, of which both spandrels are shown. One of their fellow attendants has been removed, so it is the fourth “waiter” who turns outwards, although less obviously upwards toward the lady. In another minor change, the two servants who hold wine bottles in front of the throne have been brought closer together so that their outstretched arms overlap.

Other subtractions from and additions to Sultan Muhammad’s composition abound. The original Hafiz
figures all wear classic Safavid turbans with cloth wrapped around red or black batons. The prince’s turban is multicolored and adorned with a tall plume and brush. The other turbans are fashioned of white cloth; those worn by the kneeling men immediately to the prince’s right and left are edged in gold and also sport feathers or brushes. By contrast, most of Turabi Bek’s figures, including the prince, wear gold-striped turbans wrapped around low, rounded caps. The turban cap of one bearded figure at the left appears to be of fur. Likewise, the three figures seated in profile ban cap of one bearded figure at the left appears to wear turbans wrapped around low, rounded caps. The turban is multicolored and adorned with a tall plume wrapped around red or black batons. The prince’s turbans all wear classic Safavid turbans with cloth.

III-1. Mosque scene

In both the Princeton Khamsa manuscript and the Philadelphia album painting (figs. 13 and 14), Turabi Bek Khurasani has again imitated an illustration from the Divan of Hafiz of ca. 1525–27. His third Hafiz model is the mosque scene signed by the painter Shaykh-Zada, today variously called A Moving Sermon, Episode in a Mosque, or Scandal in a Mosque (see fig. 27). As in the tavern scene Turabi Bek has retained the original orientation of the composition; other modifications include expanding the picture plane and removing the Hafiz verse that appears at the top left side of the original. Through a slight proportional increase of the figures and architectural units on the left side the composition, the group of figures on the rooftop now appear at the upper edge of the painted area. Turabi Bek has also eliminated Shaykh-Zada’s small signature, inscribed in the center foreground of the original, presumably for the same reasons that he removed Sultan Muhammad’s from the tavern and feast of ‘Id scenes. In the Princeton painting he has also eliminated another Hafiz verse, which appears below the rooftop balustrade of the Shaykh-Zada painting, as well as the short, formulaic inscription directly above the doorway in the center of the iwan. Inscriptions in these locations are retained in the Philadelphia painting, however, although each is written in gold thuluth against a gold ground decorated with pinkish leaves, and the wording of the text has been changed. Both the Princeton and Philadelphia versions retain the Hafiz ode (written in the original in white naskh on a black illuminated ground) in the large horizontal panel above the iwan. In the Princeton painting this verse is rendered in gold thuluth on a gold ground with a light blue scroll, and in Philadelphia in the same form as the other inscriptions.

While Turabi Bek has largely preserved the main structural elements of Shaykh-Zada’s mosque architecture, he has transformed its decoration, most noticeably in the iwan spandrels and on the upper back wall. In the original illustration the spandrels are “illuminated” with two gold medallions against a blue ground densely sprinkled with little flowers, and the wall with a delicate blue overall floral scroll on a white ground. In the Princeton painting the spandrels are filled with two monochrome angels holding lengths of pinkish
in the original kneels on a pale, folded mat at the left side of the iwan doorway and at a comfortable distance from the minbar. In the Princeton and Philadelphia painting the knees of this figure abut the lower step of the minbar, and he now is silhouetted against the right-hand door panel. In contrast, the two figures—a bearded, bare-headed man tearing at his robe and a turbaned youth leaning over to calm him—who occupy the center of the Shaykh-Zada illustration have been shifted to the left in the Princeton and Philadelphia compositions and have lost the “breathing space” they enjoy in the original.

Numerous other differences further distinguish Turabi Bek’s compositions from Shaykh-Zada’s and
from each other, including the patterns and colors of the minbar woodwork, façade tiles, terrace tiles, and carpets. A vertical arabesque-design tile panel at the lower left of the iwan frame in the Hafiz painting is no longer visible in the Princeton and Philadelphia versions. The Safavid turban batons of the original have been replaced with rounded caps, although one remains on the leftmost figure on the parapet in the Philadelphia painting. Instead of a turban, the leaning youth in the Princeton painting wears the same odd, fur-lined and half-brimmed hat as does a figure in the hunting scene; another peculiar head covering, adorned with a thin black feather, is worn by the youth at the bottom left.

III-2. Shrine Scene

This painting, present in the Princeton Khamsa only (fig. 15), is the most intriguing of the entire Turabi Bek set. It depicts a large crowd of people—male, female, old, young, short, tall—on a pavilion terrace, where they seem to be conversing, gesticulating, and praying. A few others appear on the rooftop, one peers from the pavilion window, and another stares down from a balcony. Prominent among the terrace figures are two bearded men, their hands upraised, standing on the tiled terrace at the edge of the pavilion carpet and facing each other. Rather more unusual are three women in the foreground: one, her hair in long braids, stands with her hands uplifted; a second, bareheaded like the first, kneels and holds out a book; a third, much smaller female, her head covered with a scarf, sits or kneels behind the second. The disproportionate scale of the bareheaded women in relation to their covered sister and to other nearby figures, such as the small youth holding a ceramic vase and the stocky man framed in the terrace gateway to the left, is especially peculiar.

In the center of the pavilion a rather small, beardless youth wearing a plumed hat sits cross-legged on a small rug and gestures to his right. He is flanked by two pairs of smaller males, who seem to return his gesture. From their positions, however—superimposed on the angled walls of the pavilion—these figures seem to be painted representations—suggesting that the central male may also be a simulacrum rather than an actual person. The head and torso of yet another presumably painted youth peeks out from the front of a small octagonal structure on top of the roof. These figures recall the idols that are occasionally incorporated into the decor of the palace where, in illustrations to Jami’s Yūsuf va Zulaykhā and Sa’di’s Būstān, Zulaykhā attempts to seduce Yusuf, as well as those that appear in the temple where the priestess of Kandahar beseeches Iskandar to spare her idol in Nizami’s Iskandarnāma. An even more likely literary and visual reference, as will become evident in the second part of this paper, again comes from the Būstān of Sa’di—namely, the episode in which the poet visits the temple of Somnath in Gujarat, where an ivory image with upraised arms is the popular focus of veneration and pilgrimage. The Princeton scene too probably represents worship at a shrine or temple, although the painted idols look more like real humans than stone or metal sculptures, and none of the terrace figures
IV-1. King Dara and the Herdsman

As in the first two paintings discussed above, Turabi Bek has set this scene, which is included in both the Princeton manuscript and the Philadelphia album paintings (figs. 16 and 17), in a sloping and rocky landscape, here with multiple diagonal streams—three in the former and two in the latter. In the foreground a bearded giant of a man stands stooped and leaning on a staff, facing a mounted archer whose luxurious turban, ornamented with plume and a brush, indicates his noble status. The rider is accompanied by a small entourage, while the standing figure is surrounded by goats and grazing horses. The upper part of the hillside shelters three tents, pitched among and above the rocks, each surrounded by small groups of per-
sonages engaged in animated conversation and other interactions. Additional animals, including a camel, a cow suckling a calf, and more horses and goats (both domesticated and wild) populate the scene. A bearded horseman, holding a whip and looking backwards, rides up to the middle tent. A large, leafy plane tree fills the golden sky at the upper right. Between the tree and a large pile of rocks a mare nurses her foal. Incongruously, in both the Princeton and the Philadelphia paintings, the mare, the foal, and a rock pile above them seem to be floating in the gold sky, although the mare’s forelegs delicately touch the rocks below.

In its basic iconography as well as many compositional details, this scene closely resembles an illustration to the story of King Dara and the herdsman signed by the great master Bihzad and included in the celebrated Būstān of Sa’di dated Rajab 893 (June 1488) and made in Herat for the last Timurid ruler, Sultan Husayn Mirza (see fig. 23). According to the text, the king becomes lost and separated from his companions while hunting. Riding through the countryside, he comes upon an unfamiliar man and, fearing a possible enemy, swiftly fits an arrow to his bow. The man immediately identifies himself as the king’s own herdsman in charge of the royal horses, and reproaches Dara for being unable to distinguish friend from foe.

As has long been recognized, Sa’di’s story in general and Bihzad’s illustration in particular inspired considerable admiration among post-Timurid painters and patrons, particularly at the Uzbek court of Bukhara and in Mughal India, and various versions (although not exact copies) of the 1488 painting are known today. Like those, Turabi Bek’s renditions of the scene in Princeton and Philadelphia retain all the main elements of Bihzad’s illustration, but considerably modify, expand, and elaborate upon the original to form a much denser and more populous composition—partly by substituting pictorial elements for the large text panel with two Sa’di verses to the lower left of the original painting and the smaller panel with one verse at the upper right. Whereas Dara travels solo in Bihzad’s painting (in keeping with Sa’di’s narrative), Turabi Bek shows him accompanied by several attendants, one on horseback and two apparently on foot, and a young groomsmen holding a crook. Instead of standing up straight and gesturing confidently towards the king, as in the Bihzad illustration, Turabi Bek’s “herdsman” hunches over his staff. Evidently, given the staff and the two animals at his feet, he is a shepherd or goatherd rather than a tender of horses. Seated close behind him is a man pouring milk from an animal skin, whom Bihzad placed further above the herdsman in his composition. In addition to repositioning this figure, Turabi Bek has reduced the height of the tripod supporting his animal skin and removed his other accessories (saddle, black cooking pot, helmet, and pile of clothes).

Bihzad’s painting features three horses in the foreground, including one suckling a foal and another drinking from a stream. Turabi Bek has more than doubled this herd, and in his version it is the suckling mare who drinks at the stream. He also has considerably modified the landscape, adding another stream behind the shepherd and, more significantly, edging the foreground plane with large boulders that rise sharply to the left. Behind this divide are two tents. Around the yurt-like one are clustered a number of animals, men, and women, including a barelegged boy who sits on a rock and looks over his left shoulder; the other tent is a wide canopy sheltering two pairs of men, in front of which a cow suckles her calf. A rocky promontory runs between the canopy and the two horses who occupy the upper center of Bihzad’s illustration but are now moved to the far right. Turabi Bek also has added a large plane tree with spreading branches, under which a dappled mare suckles a foal. To the left of the canopy, a backward-turning, noose-bearing herder rides into the scene, as in Bihzad’s painting, although here he is accompanied by several sheep. Behind this figure, in the upper left of the composition, Turabi Bek has inserted a second open canopy sheltering three men in conversation; behind it a groom holds a gold basin for a horse.

While Turabi Bek has created basic iconographic and compositional mates in his two paintings of King Dara and the herdsman, he yet again avoids total duplication by significantly varying certain prominent details. The most noticeable difference appears in the avian population in and around the plane tree at the upper right. In the Princeton painting this includes a large white and blue phoenix seemingly feeding a small white fledgling, while two similar white birds swoop in from the left, one flying towards a nest with three eggs. Two more white birds, one perhaps a small crane, sit in the tree, and a black bird flies into the branches from the right. Finally, yet another small white bird perches on a rock to the left of the tree. By contrast, in the Philadelphia painting three small, brownish birds perch on or fly around the tree, while,
at the upper left—an area of the Princeton painting featuring only racing white clouds—two large ducks somersault among the clouds.

Other noteworthy (and by now quite predictable) distinctions include the generally soft palette of the Princeton painting and the bolder one of that in Philadelphia, particularly apparent in the illuminated designs of the tents and saddle blanket. Similar designs adorn the back walls of Philadelphia’s open canopies, whereas the central canopy interior in the Princeton painting features animal and birds in grisaille, and a nearby tree has white blossoms rather than green leaves. The nursing mare in the lower right of the Princeton painting (virtually a twin of the one under the tree above) stands on a sandy sward and drinks from the stream; the hind legs of her Philadelphia counterpart are planted in a small pool, and she grazes on grass; moreover, the suckling foal has disappeared. Also missing in the Philadelphia version is the small snow leopard who peers out from the rocks at the base of the tree in the Princeton painting.

IV.2. Encounter outside a Palace

The setting of the final painting in Turabi Bek’s Princeton-Philadelphia corpus is another grassy and rocky landscape with various figural groupings (figs. 18 and 19). In the center foreground two males, distinctly different in age, seem to be engaged in conversation, as can be inferred from their hand gestures and gazes. One is a tall, bearded man, who wears a long robe covered with black scrolls and holds a small
gray, rock-like object; the other is a boy or a young man. Following immediately behind the bearded man is a smaller boy, along with three beardless youths of different heights. A large horse, perhaps the bearded man’s steed, stands in front of these figures. Four more males of different ages, including one in rustic attire, accompany the young man to the right.

The middle ground of the composition is marked by a succession of rounded planes and a small pool of water set within a rocky promontory at the right. A clean-shaven man carrying two large jugs emerges from behind the rocks, as if he has just filled the vessels from the pool. Below and to the right, two donkeys laden with faggots, the upper one ridden by a youth bent over as if in exhaustion and the other escorted by a bearded and gestulating man, move in the direction of the water. They are followed on foot by two other fellows, one of whom places his hand on the rump of the uppermost donkey. Above these figures a young man sits on a rock, playing a pipe; he is flanked by mountain goats. Other animals are around and about: a hare leaps rather improbably between the two donkeys, and two ducks swim in the pond, from which another mountain goat takes a drink. Still other goats are tucked among the rocks above, including a ewe nibbling at the top of a small green bush.

As in his hunting scene (figs. 8 and 9), Turabi Bek has filled the background with a small, square building with a wind catcher and a chimney on its flat roof. This abuts an octagonal, pavilion-like structure that surrounds a tall wall or portal, before which a young woman entertains a young man by playing a lute. Meanwhile, a youth stands in front of the open door of the principal building and a bearded man with a sack on his back appears within the doorway. Both figures gesture toward a youth peering out from the rocks at the side of the building. Finally, in the upper right corner of the composition, a plane tree grows from behind the rising rocky promontory. In the Princeton painting a large white and blue phoenix feeds its white offspring, while a white dove (?) watches from a nearby branch and two black birds swoop in from above, perhaps aiming to raid the nest in a forked branch of the tree.

While the iconography here is less apparent than in the previous painting, it may relate to a passage in Nizami’s Iskandarnama in which Iskandar meets an adolescent who refuses the honors that the sovereign offers him, saying that he is satisfied with cultivating the land.35 As will be discussed below, however, it seems even more likely to refer to yet another story in Sa’di’s Būstān, concerning the fatal consequences of gluttony.

Once again, despite the compositional and iconographic similarities of the Princeton and Philadelphia versions of the scene, there are many differences between the two. These include the absence of the phoenix, fledgling, nest, and black birds in the Philadelphia painting and the different size and position of the cranes flying over the buildings, whose tilework differs markedly in color and design from the Princeton version. The landscape coloration also varies: in the former the grass is deep green, the rocks pale pastel, and the pool light blue; in the latter the rocks are light brown and gray and the water silver (now oxidized). Likewise all the animals differ; the horse in the foreground of the Princeton painting, for instance, is mottled black and white, whereas the Philadelphia steed is bluish gray.

Finally, certain figures are represented and attired differently: Princeton’s lute-playing female has a large, round face shown in three-quarter view, while Philadelphia’s is smaller and in profile. Likewise, the Princeton flute player is mustachioed, while his Philadelphia brother is clean shaven. Even more striking is the change in the figure standing at the lower left of the composition, who in the Philadelphia painting, for instance, is mottled black and white, whereas the Philadelphia steed is bluish gray.

TURABI BEK KHURASANI AND HIS MODUS OPERANDI

Although Turabi Bek Khurasani inscribed only one of the eight paintings in the Princeton Khamsa and none of the seven Philadelphia album paintings, the stylistic homogeneity of the signed work and the others leaves little doubt about their common authorship. All fifteen paintings exhibit the same extremely polished and meticulous execution, distinguished in particular by a subtle, stippled, almost pointillist handling of brush and paint. The Khamsa paintings share a generally pale, almost monochromatic palette, selectively brightened with touches of deeper, vibrant color that is applied more extensively in several of the Philadelphia works. Turabi Bek has also made lavish use of
gold paint throughout all fifteen paintings: for the sky; for his figures’ costumes, including their turbans and accessories; for horse trappings; for architectural features such as door and window frames; and for candlesticks, jugs, and other vessels. He has also edged many forms, frequently in the Princeton paintings and more occasionally in the Philadelphia images, with fine gold outlines. Furthermore, first-hand inspection reveals that he has regularly “pricked” the gold paint of the Khamsa paintings, adding obvious texture to the painted surfaces and enhancing the reflective properties of the gold. The pricking marks are clearly visible on the obverse of each painted sheet, forming a braille-like pattern. Finally, Turabi Bek has sprinkled a fine dusting of gold over many, albeit not all, of the figures in the two paintings (folios 87b–88a, fig. 3) that precede the Hasht Bihist poem in the Princeton manuscript.

In general, Turabi Bek’s figures are well formed and proportioned, with rounded faces, especially for youths and women, and complexions of a pronounced swarthy cast. On the other hand, as pointed out in the first part of this essay, they are sometimes out of proportion in relation to one another and even awkwardly placed. For instance, if the kneeling woman in the immediate foreground of the sixth Khamsa painting (III-2, fig. 15) were to stand, she would tower over virtually everyone else in the scene. Likewise, if the shepherd in painting IV-1 (figs. 16 and 17) should straighten up, he would be considerably taller than the mounted nobleman. And just as the drunken reveller at the wineshop door in set II-1 (figs. 10 and 11) seems to be floating over the terrace, so too the rustic villager in the foreground of set IV-2 (figs. 18 and 19) appears to be walking on air. Thus for all his technical prowess at rendering the human form, Turabi Bek was not always in full command of his figurative elements, or at least not always able to coordinate their compositional relationships.

Other features that appear most prominently throughout the Khamsa paintings and may be taken as specific signs of Turabi Bek’s personal style include black (perhaps to indicate henna) fingernails on both male and female figures, and plants with thin stalks and black, heart-shaped leaves that grow in clusters from the rocky promontories in the landscape scenes.

The consistency of Turabi Bek’s style in both the Princeton and the Philadelphia paintings is further manifest in the way the artist has tended to repeat certain figures and animals. Sometimes these repetitions occur within the same scene, as with the identical white mares suckling fawn colts (one slightly darker than the other) at the top right and bottom right of the Khamsa folio 130b (fig. 16) and the top right (but not the bottom) of its Philadelphia mate (fig. 17). More often the duplicate elements turn up in different compositions: the building with the wind catcher and chimney and the youth resting on the back of the donkey loaded with faggots, for example, appear in set I-2 (figs. 8 and 9) and reappear in set IV-2 (figs. 18 and 19). A similar pairing, although more noticeably modified in terms of the figure’s age, orientation, and placement, occurs with the male who holds up a basin for a horse in sets I-2 (figs. 8 and 9) and IV-1 (figs. 16 and 17). Likewise, three elements of set I-1 (figs. 5 and 7) can be found in set IV-1 (figs. 16 and 17): the kneeling man pouring liquid from an animal skin into a golden bowl, the suckling cow, and the figures behind the tent. Other repetitions occur only in the Khamsa paintings; thus the same row of “slithery” simurghs running along the cornice and down the building frames in folio 55a (fig. 12) also borders the doorway and balcony at the right of folio 88a (fig. 15), just as a plane tree with a distinctive white and blue phoenix and its offspring occurs in the two facing paintings on folios 130b and 131a (fig. 4), although in the latter the birds are somewhat smaller. Sometimes the Khamsa duplication takes the form of very specific motifs, such as the elegant blue and gold striped turban worn by the hunter in folio 2a (fig. 8) and by the youth standing at the left in folio 131a (fig. 18), or the more unusual hat with fur brim and floppy half-crown worn by one of the hunter’s companions in folio 2a (fig. 8) and by a young man at the left in folio 88a (fig. 15). All these are obvious instances of a type of internal reuse and replication, familiar in the history of classical Persian painting, in which motifs migrate from one painting to another within the repertoire of a single artist or even among different artists’ oeuvres.

It is with this latter well-established practice that Turabi Bek’s modus operandi really begins to emerge. Obviously he has drawn on one composition originally devised by Bihzad in the late Timurid period and has repeated three others by the early Safavid painters Sultan Muhammad and Shaykh-Zada, slightly elaborating (in the case of King Dara and the Herdsman) or modifying (in the case of Tavern Scene, Feast of ‘Id, and Mosque Scene) these works and recasting them into his own distinctive style. In addition and more generally,
he has replicated generic figural groupings, such as the men inside the tents in set IV-1 and the people tending animals in I-1, that are familiar from other sixteenth-century compositions. His range of artistic inspiration and sources for individual motifs has also extended forward into the later Safavid period. This is most apparent in the stooped herdsman in set IV-1 (figs. 16 and 17), who is a dead ringer for a shepherd painted ca. 1632–33 by Riza ‘Abbasi (fig. 24), and a mirror-reversed version of a similar figure by Mu‘in Musavvir (itself evidently inspired by Riza’s original) dated 19 Rabi‘ II 1087 (June 1, 1676). Likewise, the shape, striped material, and projecting “fans” of the fancy turbans that, as already mentioned, Turabi Bek has used twice his Khamsa paintings, and the tunics with frogged closures in which he attires many of his figures, including Shirin (figs. 5 and 7), are very close to the turbans and robes found in paintings and drawings signed by or attributed to other artists active during the second half of the seventeenth century, such as Mu‘in Musavvir, Shaykh ‘Abbasi, ‘Ali-Quli, and Muhammad Zaman. He also seems to have drawn upon additional seventeenth-century painters such as Muhammad-‘Ali and Muhammad Qasim for his soft palette, the stippled brushwork particularly evident in his landscapes, the mottled hide of many horses, the swarthy or shaded complexions of both male and female figures (itself a now-recognized element of Indo-Persian style), and the pointed beards of his mature male figures.

In short, the Khamsa paintings feature an eclectic mixture of late-fifteenth-, sixteenth-, and seventeenth-century compositions, styles, and motifs, skillfully melded by Turabi Bek Khurasani to create the impression of originality and authenticity. On the whole, he has achieved a novel version of what today is some-thing close to the turban and robes found in paintings and drawings signed by or attributed to other artists active during the second half of the seventeenth century, such as Mu‘in Musavvir, Shaykh ‘Abbasi, ‘Ali-Quli, and Muhammad Zaman. He also seems to have drawn upon additional seventeenth-century painters such as Muhammad-‘Ali and Muhammad Qasim for his soft palette, the stippled brushwork particularly evident in his landscapes, the mottled hide of many horses, the swarthy or shaded complexions of both male and female figures (itself a now-recognized element of Indo-Persian style), and the pointed beards of his mature male figures.

More specifically, Turabi Bek Khurasani made a series of separate, preliminary paintings of nearly identical size—the ones now in Philadelphia—drawing on and modifying a wide range of late Timurid- and Safavid-period models, including entire compositions such as the Sa‘di illustration first painted by Bihzad and the Hafiz illustrations by Sultan Muhammad and Shaykh-Zada, individual figures such as the Riza/Mu‘in shepherd, and other features such as the shape of turbans and the stance of nursing maes. He used these preliminary works to experiment with colors, facial features and expressions, attire, architectural elements, landscape features, tilework patterns, and so forth. Like a printmaker perfecting a composition through various states and adding his signature on the final print, he worked out his scenes until he was ready to produce final versions on the blank folios of the Khamsa volume, taking maximum advantage of the generous dimensions of the manuscript and enhancing the paintings still further with a lavish application of gold in pricked and outlined form. These were his best effort (the equivalent of a final print state), and these were the ones he signed (admittedly only once). Part of the development process also involved adjusting the orientation of the iconographically distinct paintings so that they would appear to form coherent double-page compositions in the Khamsa. This explains, for instance, the mirror-reversal of Feast of ‘Id so that it reads as a compositional pendant to the facing Tavern Scene. Similarly, the two mounted figures (Shirin on the right and Khusrorw or perhaps Bahram Gur on the left) and their attendants in the first pair of Khamsa paintings are positioned so as to move towards each other in symmetry.

It is possible, even likely, that the transition from the individual album paintings to the manuscript paintings was facilitated by Turabi Bek’s use of a pounced
classical persian painting in the early twentieth century

This tent a young woman peeking out from behind a rock while covering her mouth with her sleeve; behind it a beaded man, his finger to his mouth, conversing with a woman depicted in profile; and, at upper right, a leafy plane tree.

Likewise, although the compositions of the shrine scenes in the Khamsa (fig. 15) and the Duke Būstān (fig. 21) are reversed, they feature the same architectural setting (including the rooftop pavilion); a central idol flanked by two smaller idols; two bearded men facing each other before the idol while a younger man kneels
drawing of each of the same scenes—a time-honored intermediary practice in classical Persian painting. In addition, the artist seems to have engaged in an even earlier stage of experimentation, as may be inferred from a manuscript formerly belonging to Hagop Kevorkian and now to the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art at Shangri La in Honolulu (ms 10.7). In his seminal typescript catalogue of the Kevorkian collection, B. W. Robinson identified this volume as a Būstān of Sa’di and noted its spurious colophon—signed ‘Ali al-Tabrizi, dated 779 (1377), and dedicated to Amir Timur Gurgan—and its four illustrations on unfoliated leaves. While not specifying the subjects of these miniatures, Robinson considered them “of splendid quality and in very good condition,” and dated them ca. 1575.

Based on their surrounding text and iconography, the Duke illustrations now may be identified as:

1. King Dara and the Herdsman (fig. 20)
2. Jesus, the Self-Righteous Man and the Sinner
3. Sa’di and the Idol of Somnath (fig. 21)
4. A Greedy Man Falls from a Date Palm, or the Glutton Punished (fig. 22)

As Robinson noted in his Kevorkian catalogue, the final illustration is signed above the doorway: ‘amal-i Turābāsī[?] Bek Khurāsānī. The signature in the Duke Būstān does indeed introduce an additional letter (ṣīn, with three points underneath its extended loop) in the first name—an apparent variation of its form in the Princeton Khamsa and another possible indication of artistic experimentation. Of equal relevance for our understanding of the artist’s working method is the similarity between paintings 1, 3 and 4 in the Būstān and sets III-2, IV-1 and IV-2 in Princeton and Philadelphia. For instance, the illustration of King Dara and the herdsman in the Duke Būstān (fig. 20) follows the original Bihzadian formulation of the scene, particularly in representing the herdsman as standing confidently upright and gesturing outwards. Other figures and elements here not found in Bihzad’s illustration (albeit sometimes present in later Bukharan versions) but shared with the Princeton and Philadelphia paintings (figs. 16 and 17) include, at center right, a bare-legged youth sitting on a rock and turning to look over his left shoulder (a novel addition to the normal iconography of the scene); a goat resting on the ground between this youth and the man pouring milk from an animal skin; a tent with a cloth draped over its smoke hole; in front of this tent a young woman peeking out from behind a rock while covering her mouth with her sleeve; behind it a beaded man, his finger to his mouth, conversing with a woman depicted in profile; and, at upper right, a leafy plane tree.

Likewise, although the compositions of the shrine scenes in the Khamsa (fig. 15) and the Duke Būstān (fig. 21) are reversed, they feature the same architectural setting (including the rooftop pavilion); a central idol flanked by two smaller idols; two bearded men facing each other before the idol while a younger man kneels.
in front and an older one prostrates himself at the side; a youth holding lighted tapers walking through a side door; a figure pulling his cloak over his face at the upper window; a corpulent man framed in the front terrace entrance; and a group of men, women and youths on the side terrace. Conspicuously absent from the Bāstān illustration, however, are the women in the foreground of the Princeton painting, although the bearded man who gestures at them while turning his head to confer with another greybeard remains. On the other hand, in the lower-left illuminated margin of the Bāstān folio, outside the picture plane proper, stands a youth with his arms lifted in prayer. This figure would not fit into the neat rectangular space allocated to the comparable Princeton painting and has consequently been omitted.34

More interesting still is the artist’s treatment of the scene that he actually signed as Turabasi Bek Khurasani. Its subject is now identifiable, based on the Sa’di text, as the greedy man who meets his just deserts. This story tells of a group of Sufis passing by a date plantation. One of their number climbs a tree to pluck its fruit and then falls to his death. The village headman demands to know who killed the man, whereupon the group leader and narrator (presumably the poet himself) explains that the deceased was a victim of his
own greed: “His belly ‘twas that pulled his skirt down from the branch!”

The right side of the Bûstân illustration features a tall palm tree laden with dates and a man lying face down on the ground underneath, clearly dead, with his unwound turban at his side. These telltale details are missing, however, from the Princeton and Philadelphia scenes, perhaps because Turabi Bek wanted to mask their iconographic origin. Otherwise his three versions have much in common. In the foreground of each painting appear the central figures of a bearded man and a youth in conversation, the rustically attired village headman hovering over the ground, and the pair of youths in conversation at the far left (one with his hands tucked into his sleeves). In the upper-middle ground are the youth prone on his faggot-carrying donkey, the bearded man who prods or guides the beast from behind, and the youthful piper perched on a rock. In the background is the building with a flat roof, chimney, and wind-catcher from whose entrance emerge a bearded man with a sack and younger man, as well as a secondary structure with a man and woman (in the Bûstân illustration minus her lute) on the rooftop.

Turabasi (aka Turabi) Bek Khurasani’s Bûstân illustrations, like his Princeton and Philadelphia paintings, are executed in a consistent, homogenous style. The obvious difference, however, is that here the artist has produced a creditable and convincing form of a classic sixteenth-century painting style with certain touches, such as the round faces of his youths, that could easily pass for Bukharan. Small wonder that neither B. W. Robinson, who catalogued the Sa’di manuscript for Kevorkian, nor his son William Robinson, the Christie’s expert who inventoried the Duke estate, raised any serious questions about the illustrations’ authenticity.

It seems, therefore, that the four paintings in the Bûstân manuscript were Turabi Bek’s first essay in the development of scenes that he would subsequently enlarge and embellish for the paintings in Princeton and Philadelphia, evidently taking care as he did so to remove features, such as the date tree and dead glutton in A Greedy Man Falls from a Date Palm, that might betray his literary point of departure. Thus, the Bûstân now in Honolulu represents the first stage in the artist’s transformation from a traditional and predictable classic painter into an eclectic and innovative “post-classical” one.

All this raises the question of exactly when and under what circumstances the person signing himself Turabasi and Turabi Bek Khurasani was working. We know, of course, that Garrett acquired his Khamsa in 1925 and Lewis his album paintings in 1922. The Philadelphia works actually provide a slightly earlier terminus ante quem, since each is stamped with the seal of the Iranian customs service and dated by hand in purple ink with the year 1339, corresponding to AD 1920–21. Although very little seems to be known about the dealer—a certain S. Hossein Khan—from whom Lewis made his purchases, it would make sense that Khan might have brought the works out of Iran and immediately set about finding a purchaser.

So, at the very latest, Turabi Bek was active in the first decades of the twentieth century, that is, towards the end of the Qajar period. Such, in fact, was the opinion of the person—perhaps Muhammad Simsar, who catalogued John Frederick Lewis’s “Oriental” manuscripts—who prepared the typed labels currently pasted next to the handwritten ones on the display mats in which the album paintings are now stored. Each of these typed labels begins with the heading “Late Qajar Period,” followed by a paragraph describing the painting. A second paragraph explicates the initial heading; on all but the tavern scene it is worded:

This painting is a late nineteenth or early twentieth century copy of a sixteenth century Safavi original. Its facial types, architectural details and its endless ornamented patterns are positive evidence for this attribution, but its coloring and the quality of paper suggest workmanship of modern Persian painters.

The second paragraph of the label for the tavern scene (fig. 11) is even more explicit:

This painting is a late nineteenth or early twentieth century copy of a sixteenth century Safavi original. See plate 127c [sic], Lawrence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson and Basil Gray, Persian Miniature Painting, Oxford University Press, London, 1933.

This refers, of course, to the catalogue-of-record, long abbreviated as “BWG,” published two years after the celebrated international exhibition of Persian miniature painting held at Burlington House in London from January to March 1931. Catalogue number 127 consists of a substantial description of the Divân of Hafiz and its illustrations, including Shaykh-Zada’s mosque scene (127c) and Sultan Muhammad’s tavern scene (127e) and Feast of ‘Id (127d), with reproductions of all.

While the three Hafiz scenes in Philadelphia and Princeton clearly are modified copies of the paintings
long accepted as originals by Sultan Muhammad and Shaykh-Zada, they just as obviously could not have been copied from the reproductions in BWG, since that publication, and indeed the Burlington House exhibition itself, followed by some years the acquisitions made by Lewis and Garrett in 1922 and 1925. It is conceivable that Turabi Bek Khurasani might have had direct familiarity with the Divān of Hafiz itself, although in the early twentieth century the manuscript was in France, and the Lewis album paintings left Iran only in 1920–21, as documented by their dated customs stamps. It is much more likely that the artist had access to some of the European and British monographs and exhibition catalogues on Persian painting published during the first decades of the twentieth century, and that he copied his Hafiz and Sa’di compositions and borrowed many of their motifs from these published reproductions.

F. R. Martin’s 1912 work, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, for example, contains a version of Bihzad’s *King Dara and the Herdsman* (fig. 23) as well as Riza’s drawing of the stooped shepherd (fig. 24), while Marteau and Vever’s *Miniatures persanes… exposées au Musée des Arts Décoratifs*, published the next year, includes reproductions of Sultan Muhammad’s *Feast of ‘Id* and *Tavern Scene* in the Divān of Hafiz, which then belonged to the French numismatist and dealer Arthur Sambon. For a more complete set of reproductions of the the Hafiz illustrations, including Shaykh-Zada’s mosque scene, Turabi Bek may well have drawn on the sales catalogue of the Sambon collection, which was auctioned at the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris in May 1914 (figs. 25–27).

While this helps shed light on the probable sources for Turabi Bek’s paintings, it still leaves us in the dark about his identity and career. An artist named Turabi has been described as being from Isfahan; he is possibly to be identified with Turabi Balkhi, a mulla highly regarded by Shah ‘Abbas, who worked in the style of the later Safavid painters Riza ‘Abbasi and Mu’in Musavvir. Certainly Turabi Bek Khurasani fits that stylistic characterization since, as the Princeton and Philadelphia paintings demonstrate, his work is resonant with late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century painting in general and, in the form of the stooped shepherd (figs. 16 and 17), includes direct quotations from Riza and Mu’in in particular.

The only work hitherto identified with Turabi is a brightly colored painting of a solitary hermit or ascetic (fig. 28). The bearded figure—eyes downcast, hands tucked within the sleeves of his salmon robe and holding a book, and head covered by a conical brown cap criss-crossed with a narrow length of cloth—kneels within a large, hollowed-out green tree trunk. In the fork of the tree’s sawed-off upper limbs a white stork stands on a nest and preens itself with its red beak. Two black and white magpies and a small nest with two eggs occupy branches at the left. A wide blue and white bowl containing four quinces or pears rests on the ground outside the tree and may be the focus of the hermit’s gaze.

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Fig. 23. Bihzad, *King Dara and the Herdsman*, in a Bustān of Sa’di, 1488. (After F. R. Martin, *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey*, from the 8th to the 18th Century, 2 vols. [London: B. Quaritch, 1912], 1: fig. 28)
Presumably conceived and currently mounted as an album painting with surrounding rulings and an outer border, the composition is inscribed in a panel at the upper right: “[This] was painted in the library [or workshop] of his highness [or excellency] Qulbaba Kukaltash.” At the bottom edge, a distich, thematically apropos of the seated hermit, reads, “I was sitting alone in seclusion, and thus people forgot me.” The two hemistichs of the couplet are separated and ruled in gold lines. A small square box on the left contains the artist’s signature on the vertical: rāqimahu Turābī (drawn by Turabī). All these inscriptions are penned in a clear, flowing nastaliq (albeit with what appears to be a slip of the pen in the top panel) and would seem to be contemporary with the painted image. Another inscription, written in a much lighter and sketchier hand, appears on the plain background to the right of the stork: “This also is among the miracles [i.e., miraculous works] of Turabī Bek.” In addition, above the fruit bowl are the clear traces of an effaced oval seal; another such seal may have been rubbed out above the tree trunk.

While the overall composition is believable enough as later Safavid work, several physical features suggest it may be a more recent, or at least pastiche, production. The joint between the painted sheet and the surrounding rulings is rather ragged, and the top rulings are lifting from the sheet just above the uppermost branch of the tree. In addition, the verse in the lower panel seems to be pasted on top of the painted
Representations of seated hermits (often called dervishes) with their hands tucked into their sleeves are by no means uncommon in Persian painting and seem to have been a favorite subject of later Safavid painters such as Riza Abbasi. Likewise, there are examples of figures seated inside hollowed-out trees. One particularly effective composition of an ascetic in such an arboreal hermitage was shown in the 1913 exhibition at the Musée des arts décoratifs in Paris and published in Marteau and Vever’s accompanying catalogue (fig. 29). Although certain prominent details in that tinted drawing, such as a younger seated figure to the hermit’s right, leafier branches growing in

sheet and the signature written in a leftover space at the side. In the painting itself, the brown cloak wrapped over the ascetic’s shoulders and arms and draped over his clasped hands has an odd mottled appearance, as if from water staining. The lack of similar damage in surrounding areas of the painting suggests that the robe might have been deliberately rendered this way to create an “antique” effect. And while it is not unusual for album paintings to bear seal impressions, the ones here, combined with these other anomalies, lead to the suspicion that the hermit in his tree was painted on a “previously-used” piece of paper, perhaps the flyleaf of an old manuscript.
greater number from the hollowed-out tree, and two ducks flying above, do not figure in the painting now in Tehran, the position, appearance, and distinctive headgear of the ascetic and the configuration of the tree in the drawing strongly suggest that the Marteau and Vever reproduction was Turabi Bek’s model. The artist has even taken the two magpies from the right side of the drawing and used them in reverse at the left of his painting.67 So once again, as in his Philadelphia and Princeton paintings, Turabi Bek has made liberal use of an available prototype while introducing enough changes (both by paring down the iconography and adding inscriptions) to give the impression of an original work of art.

There remains to be considered one more work by Turabi Bek, which seems to clinch his versatile and varied artistic persona. The Lewis collection in Philadelphia contains yet another mounted album painting (O 90), depicting a moustachioed man with strong facial features and penetrating eyes, who kneels and faces towards the left in three-quarter view against a plain background (fig. 30). He wears a white robe with
free end rendered in “spluttered” style. This is also true for the man’s moustache, which first calls to mind the handlebar style familiar from representations of Shah ‘Abbas and subsequent Safavids. Upon closer inspection, however, the moustache is much bushier than the typical Safavid variety and sports jaunty unturned ends in Salvador Dali or Hercule Poirot fashion. Likewise, the intense expression of Turabi Bek’s seated man is not one that can be easily associated with genuine Safavid paintings, nor with any of his other paintings in Princeton and Philadelphia; the subject also lacks the swarthy complexion characteristic of Turabi Bek’s other figures. All and all, his facial features look highly individualized, as if Turabi Bek was seeking to depict an actual person. In stylistic terms, the painting may be a hybrid; in representational terms, it appears close to life-like.

THE “IDENTITY” OF TURABI BEK KHURASANI

When I first encountered the paintings of Turabi Bek Khurasani among the pages of the Princeton Khamsa some years ago, I was certain that he was a seventeenth-century or perhaps somewhat later Persian painter who was consciously imitating and modifying works by earlier, revered masters such as Bihzad, Sultan Muhammad, and Riza ‘Abbasi that he actually might have been able to examine and copy at first hand. Subsequent study of more of his oeuvre, and particularly the “repeat” compositions and princely “portrait” in Philadelphia and the manuscript in Honolulu, prompted a more critical evaluation of his style, sources, and place in the history of Persian painting. Even now, however, recognition of his apparent modernity and use of reproductions published in 1912 and 1914 to make paintings that were available for sale six to eight years later does not enable us to pinpoint his “real” identity. Indeed, his nomenclature shifts, from Turabasi to Turabi, make him even more elusive—something of a work in process, like the apparent evolution of his personal painting style from a classic Timurid-Safavid mode (as in the Bū斯坦 manuscript) to an amalgam of early and later Safavid formulations (as in the Princeton and Philadelphia pairs) to modern touches (as in the Philadelphia seated man). It may even be that Turabasi/Turabi Bek Khurasani was not an actual name at all, but a fictive and impressive-sounding nom de plume—possibly even of an artistic collectivity rather than a single person. If so, this “enterprise” may have
functioned, as suggested at the outset, specifically to create plausible Persian paintings that would appeal to the tastes of refined yet unsuspecting collectors outside Iran. (Combined with what has thus far emerged about Turabasi/Turabi Bek, including his creation of sets of similar images, use of published reproductions for sources, and consistent transformation of borrowed compositions and details to disguise their origin, the possibility that “he” actually may have constituted a workshop with a specific marketing mission and targeted audience offers a striking parallel with the story that has been reconstructed for the more celebrated, albeit to this day anonymous, Spanish Forger, who was active in Paris during the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century and was responsible for over 100 illustrated manuscripts and single miniatures in fifteenth- to sixteenth-century European style, which are now in American and European collections.)

Two of the Philadelphia album paintings—the mosque scene (fig. 14) and the tavern scene (fig. 11)—provide a further hint that Turabasi/Turabi and his possible collaborators were perfectly aware of what they were about, and particularly that they recognized the literary context in which their pictorial models originated. Like the other Lewis compositions, these works are mounted with colored borders of various designs. Their borders include, immediately around the painted surfaces, a thin band of orange paper panels separating wider green paper panels inscribed with ten ghazals by Hafiz. While the verses are not the ones that appear on the illustrations by Sultan Muhammad and Shaykh-Zada, their presence on Turabi Bek’s copies nevertheless seems deliberate—another sign of the considerable efforts expended to validate “his” production.

Imitation and duplication of past styles, both period and individual, are familiar hallmarks of Persian painting, part of the overall aesthetic of this artistic tradition. This is as true for the Qajar period as for earlier eras, although the manifestation of the phenomenon, especially during the final decades of the Qajar dynasty, awaits comprehensive investigation. Nonetheless, it is evident that calligraphers and painters working in the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth drew general inspiration and specific models from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in a practice aptly characterized as “continuity and revivalism,” and that their works were made both on commission by specific patrons and for speculation or sale on the open market. Often the quality of such production was very high, with the same kind of meticulous execution, for instance, that distinguishes Turabi Bek Khurasani’s paintings in the Princeton Khamsa.

What is equally striking about Turabi Bek is the way the artist (or the artistic collaborative bearing this name) used both literal reproduction and “selective adaptation” (to employ Priscilla Soucek’s succinct formulation) to create original compositions evidently intended to be presented, accepted, and valued as dating from the Safavid period. Looked at in terms of both connoisseurship and commerce, the outcome of this endeavor could be characterized in any number of ways: plagiarism, fraud, falsification, fabrication, counterfeiting, deception, etc. “Fakes” and “forgeries” are still other words that come to mind, although, as B. W. Robinson once pointed out with regard to Qajar imitations of Safavid prototypes, and Oliver Watson has opined more recently with reference to medieval Persian ceramics, there is an important distinction to be made between legitimate and illegitimate artistic manipulations. Likewise, the prevailing scholarly view of forgery generally concedes that notions of authenticity are culturally grounded, and that a work regarded as fake in one context may be considered genuine in another. Simply put, the definition of originality, and thus of aesthetic value, can and does vary historically. At the same time, however, the consensus seems to hold that a universal attribute of a fraudulent or forged work, no matter how distinctive or beautiful, is its maker’s intention to deceive and to gain from such deception. Although Turabi/Turabasi Bek asserted “personal” identity, and thus claimed artistic credit, by signing “his” name on the paintings he emulated rather than co-opting the name of Bihzad, Sultan Muhammad, or Shaykh-Zada, the fact that he inserted his compositions into otherwise legitimate Safavid-period manuscripts can leave little doubt that fraud was being deliberately perpetrated.

In his most extensive meditation on Persian miniature painting, Oleg Grabar offers yet another perspective on the concept, motivation, and impact of compositions such as those created by the artistic hand(s) signed Turabi or Turabasi Bek Khurasani. Much of Persian book painting is elusive and secretive, requiring a key or code to be revealed. “Each manuscript hides its miniatures. Each miniature, in resplendent color, hides its subject in an atmosphere that is physically and humanly repetitive.” All this Grabar quantifies as “an atmosphere of dissimulation” peculiar to the intrinsically private art form that is manuscript illustration. Dissimulation also could be
considered the primary motivation behind the production of works that seek to hide their true origins (as well as the identity of their artist) and that pretend to be something different from—indeed, something older and thus more valuable than—what they really are. In the hands of a modern master such as Turabi/Turabasi Bek Khurasani, amorphous atmosphere is transformed into a conscious attitude and a duplicitous effort or subterfuge aimed at simultaneously preserving and subverting the traditional practices of Persian painting—and thus its privileged aesthetic and aura—to appeal to the collecting sensibilities of another time and place.

_Baltimore, Maryland_
7. Princeton University Library, Islamic Manuscripts, no. 84G, gift of Robert Garrett, 1942. Mohammad E. Moghadam and Yahya Armajani, Descriptive Catalog of the Garrett Collection of Persian, Turkish, and Indo-Persian Manuscripts including Some Miniatures in the Princeton University Library (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939), cat. no. 14 (where the second name of the signature is given as "Bey"); Phyllis Ackerman, Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art (New York: The Iranian Institute, 1940), 214: gallery VII, case 82B; the second edition of this catalogue, published in May 1940, lists Mr. Garrett's Khamsa on 206: gallery VII, case 89B. Neither edition mentions the paintings or artist. Previously the Khamsa manuscript was exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago (March 1932) and the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore (February 1–21, 1937), although without published catalogues; see also below, n. 44. References to these loans appear in the Robert Garrett Papers, CO 627. Special Collections, Princeton University Library. The same papers contain correspondence with Dr. Ali-Kuli Khan, from whom Garrett acquired the Khamsa, along with an invitation to a viewing of Khan’s collection of Persian art, held at Parish-Watson and Co. in New York City, Mar. 26 to Apr. 16, 1925, and a newspaper article from the New York Evening Post dated Feb. 23, 1926, detailing Khan’s diplomatic career, including service during 1910–19 as chargé d’affaires at the Persian legation in Washington, DC. During that time he already was offering manuscripts to American collections and institutions, judging from letters in the archives at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. The 1925 exhibition invitation makes reference to the fact that Khan “has now returned to America on a leave of absence from his Government to liquidate his personal affairs.” The newspaper article mentions that he had established the Persian Art Center, as confirmed by the carbon copy of a letter dated April 22, 1925, from Garrett to Khan, c/o Persian Art Center, 707 Fifth Avenue, New York. For more on Garrett’s collecting activities, including Arabic and Persian manuscripts, see Robert Garrett, “Recollections of a Collector,” The Princeton University Library Chronicle 10 (Apr. 1949): 102–16.


10. Average folio dimensions: 36 x 24 cm. The rulings are consistent throughout the manuscript and feature black, gold, and blue lines, often separated by a space that allows the color of the paper to show through. The range of dimensions of the written surface, with rulings, is 22–22.5 cm x 14–14.2 cm.


12. The texts of all four maqānas in the Princeton manuscript have been checked against the following edition: Khamsa-i Amir Khusrau Dihlaví (Tehran: Shaquvay, 1362 [1985]). The last verse of Majnun va Layla on folio 87a of the Princeton volume compares with verse 25 on 241 of the printed edition, which is thirteen verses before the actual end of the poem on 242.

13. The collation of the manuscript consists primarily of ternions (six leaves per gathering or quire), with occasional binions (four leaves). Most of the replacement folios appear in the Shīrín va Khosraw (fol. 19–20, 24–27, 30–33, 36–39, 42–45, 48–51, 54) and Majnun va Layla poems (fol. 55–57, 60–63,
For the sake of convenience, the subjects, folio numbers

Such double-page paintings are typically enframed in wide illuminated borders, which add further coherence to the compositions.

For the sake of convenience, the subjects, folio numbers (of the Garrett Khamsa), and dimensions (without rulings) are first listed here. To reiterate: the Princeton paintings are painted on full-size manuscript folios measuring 36 x 24 cm and, with their rulings, occupy almost the entire surface of the folios. The Philadelphia paintings are mounted on large cardboard sheets measuring 41.2–42.8 x 28.4–29.0 cm and are surrounded on the front by rulings and margin paper of different colors and designs.


Sultan Muhammad’s signature in this and his other Hafiz painting, to be encountered in II-2, is discussed in Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, The Houghton Shahnameh, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1:51B, 54B, and 241A n. 23; Bahari, Bihzad, 250 (where its ten note on the back of the painting’s original cardboard mount and on a handwritten label affixed to the front of the display mat, as well as in Paintings and Drawings of Persia and India, cat. no. 16 (see below for another identification). For listings of illustrations of Khusraw hunting see Titely, Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts, 279; Dodkhudoeva, Poemy Nizami, 156, entry 92.


authenticity is questioned); and Melikian-Chirvani, Chant du Monde, 63. It is telling in terms of his evident interest in following the lead of earlier painters that Turabi Bek Khurasani has used the same, admittedly standard, formula for his signature.

24. The dimensions of the original Hafiz painting are 21.5 x 15 cm. The Philadelphia and Princeton versions add between 9.3 and 9.9 cm to the height and 5.0 and 5.1 cm to the width.

25. See n. 59 below for a possible implication of this seemingly minor point of comparison.

26. Soucek, “Sultan Muhammad Tabrizi,” 60–61; idem, “Hafez and the Visual Arts,” 503 and pl. III; Bahari, Bihzad, 250–51, 255 (where Sultan Muhammad’s authorship is debated and the signature style characterized as “alien” to the artist); Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, cat. no. 59 (titled Celebration of ‘Id and with previous references); Sims, Peerless Images, 139–40, no. 55 (titled The Sighting of the New Moon after Ramadan); Melikian-Chirvani, Chant du Monde, 63–66 and cat. no. 37 (titled Célébration de la fête de la Rupture du jeûne).

27. The dimensions of the original Hafiz painting are 20 x 15 cm, to which the Princeton version adds 11.4 cm in height and 5.0 and 5.1 cm in width.

28. Bahari, Bihzad, 237 and fig. 130 (with review of previous scholarship and substantial discussion [through 248] of Shaykh-Zada, but strongly questioning that the painter executed this painting and characterizing its style and signature as at variance with other works signed by or ascribed to Shaykh-Zada (254); Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, 189–97 (also with substantial discussion of Shaykh-Zada) and fig. 31. For a larger color reproduction see Stuart Cary Welch, Persian Painting: Five Royal Safavid Manuscripts of the Sixteenth Century (New York: George Braziller, 1976), pl. 16.

29. The dimensions of the original Hafiz painting are 25 x 14.4 cm, to which the Princeton and Philadelphia versions add between 6.5 and 6.8 cm in height and between 5.7 and 5.8 cm in width.

30. The original inscription in the iwan reads Yâ mîfâh-i al-bawâb (O opener of doors). The Philadelphia inscription reads Al-sulân al-‘adil yâd (The sultan of the justice-dispensing hand).

31. The verses are identified and translated in Welch, Wonders of the Age, cat. no. 42.

32. For the Yusuf and Zulaykha illustrations (“Zulaykha takes Yusuf to her palace,” “Zulaykha takes Yusuf into the seventh chamber,” “Zulaykha threatens suicide,” “Zulaykha tries to hold back the fleeing Yusuf”) see Simpson, Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang, 382; B. W. Robinson, Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library (London: Sotheby Parke Bernet, 1980), 225, no. 659; Na’ama Brosh with Rachel Milstein, Biblical Stories in Islamic Painting (Jerusalem: The Israel Museum, 1991), 74; Sheila R. Canby, Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan (London: British Museum, 1998), cat. no. 98. For the Iskandar scene see Stchoukine, Khamseh, nos. IV, 32; XX, 26; XLI, 31; LXI, 5; Dodchkhodeva, Poemy Nizami, 282 entry 325; Barbara Brend, The Emperor Akbar’s Khamsa of Nizami (London: British Library, 1995), 62 and figs. 42–43. In his Iskandarsâma Amir Khusrau Dihlavi has Iskandar denounce Zoroastrians for the practice of fire worship, but this does not seem to involve actual idols. See Brend, Perspectives, 21; Seyller, Pearls of the Parrot, 20, 165 (Alexander Denounces the Zoroastrians). For the Sa’di text see Sa’di, Shahr-i Bûstân, ed. Muhammad Khâz’îlî (Tehran: Intishârât-i Jâvidân, 1383 [1984]), 351–54; G. M. Wickens, trans., Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned: The Bûstân of Sa’dî (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 214–19 (table 140). For some illustrations to this scene see R. H. Pinder-Wilson, “Three Illustrated Manuscripts of the Mughal Period,” Ars Orientalis 22 (1957): 417 and fig. 11; Ernst J. Grube, The Classical Style in Islamic Painting (Germany: Edizioni Orients, 1968), pl. 97.3; Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, 351 no. 137r. For helpful listings of all these scenes see Titley, Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts, 270 (“Iskandar at idol temple”), 317 (“Sa’dî at the idol temple at Summâth”), 350 (“Zulaykha trying to seduce Yusuf”).


34. For the literary reference see Sa’dî, Shahr-i Bûstân, 92–95; Wickens, Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned, 30–32 (table 2). For some Bihzadian illustrations see Grube, Classical Style, 52, 39, and pls. 46.1 and 97.1; Sims, Peerless Images, 58; Richard, Splendeurs persanes, cat. no. 98; Soudavar, Art of the Persian Court, 191 cat. 73a: B. W. Robinson, A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), cat. no. 686 and pl. X. See also n. 58 below for another sixteenth-century version of Bihzad’s illustration. The connection of O 268 with Sa’dî appears, however, to have escaped Lewis and his dealer, as well as those involved with exhibiting and labeling his paintings, and the painting is identified as King Khosraw and a Hunting Party on the note written in pencil on the back of its cardboard mount as well as on a handwritten label affixed to the display mat, and as Khosrav and a Party of Hunters in Paintings and Drawings of Persia and India, cat. no. 14. This is hardly surprising given that the Bûstân illustrations, including King Dara and the Herkmen, were first published in full in J. V. S. Wilkinson, “Fresh Light on the Herat Painters,” Burlington Magazine 58 (Feb. 1931): 60–69. See also Laurence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson, and Basil Gray, Persian Miniature Painting (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), cat. no. 83.

35. Stchoukine, Khamseh, 132, ms. LXVI (24). The Philadelphia version (O 270) is identified as Scene from the History of Khosraw and Shirin and described broadly as “animals and figures before the gates of a palace” in Paintings and Drawings of Persia and India, cat. no. 18.

36. For instance, in the lower margin of 84G fol. 2b, it is possible to see the pricked outlines and folds of the turbans in the painting on folio 2a. Similar pricking is visible on fols. 55b, 56a, and 56b (from the painting on 55a); 84a and b
and 87a (from the painting on 87b; for more on this particular case see n. 46 below), 88b (from the painting on 88a); 130a (from the painting on 130b) and 131b (from the painting on 131a). The only pricking in the Philadelphia paintings appears in Shirin’s crown in 0 265.


38. Here it should be noted that Bahari, *Bihzad*, argues, on the basis of a codicological and textual study of the *Divân* of Hafiz (250, 254–55), that the mosque, tavern, and ‘id paintings are not “integral with the book but are clearly stuck on to the pages” (255) and, furthermore, that these compositions are not the work of Shakhzada and Sultan Muhammam, who could not have collaborated with one another (257, 250–51, 254, 256), but are “copies of illustrations executed by Bihzad with assistance from his pupils in Herat around 1527” (257). If this is indeed the case, then Turabi Bek would have been copying copies of works by Bihzad. For an even more radical possibility, see n. 72 below.

39. As, for instance, in the *Haft awrang* made for the Safavid prince Sultan Ibrahim Mirza in 1556–63. See Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza’s Haft Awrang*, 92 (depicting a male seated on a rock playing a pipe), 124 (depicting three figures in a tent, a man pouring water from an animal skin, and man holding a basin for a horse), 194 (depicting a male seated on a rock playing a pipe and a woman milking a cow). Various of these same motifs reappear in a somewhat later illustration attributed to Muhammam (Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 232–33 no. 90b).


42. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, cat. 128; Canby, *Persian Painting*, fig. 67. See also Sims, *Peerless Images*, nos. 10, 18, 87, 134 for illustrations in a *Shahnâma* of 1648 with some of these same characteristics, particularly in the landscape and mottled horses. Modern scholarship regards some of these formal features as resulting from the influence of seventeenth-century art, both European and Indian: see Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 365; Canby, *Persian Painting*, chap. 6; Sims, *Peerless Images*, 75–77. A more substantive discussion appears in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 13 (2006), s.v. “India xxii. Indian Influences in Persian Painting,” by Barbara Schmitz.

43. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 4 (1990), 114 (as in n. 4).

44. Princeton University Library, Robert Garrett Papers, CO 625, box 1, folder 8. Indeed, one scholar whom Garrett consulted in 1925 about the volume opined that it was “remarkable” and a “unicum” (letter from N[icolas] Martinovitch, Department of Slavonic Languages, Columbia University, dated Sept. 10, 1925). The weight of this opinion is diminished, however, by the fact that Martinovitch identified the poems as being by Jami and the artist’s signature as that of Bihzad. That he was looking at the right manuscript, however, is clear from his mention of the rare theme of one painting: “Moslem angels drinking wine!” Twelve years later Garrett lent the manuscript, along with other books and miniatures, for an exhibition at the Enoch Pratt Free Library in his native Baltimore (see above, n. 7). A typed checklist of these loans among the Garrett papers lists the manuscript, still referred to as by Jami, as having eight full-page miniatures “of later date” (folder 15). It may be that the suggestion of a “later date” came from Richard Ettinghausen, who wrote Garrett on Jan. 28, 1937, about some other Persian paintings in his collection. Be that as it may, under the correct title of the *Khamsa* of *Amir Khusraw*, the entry for the manuscript in the 1939 catalogue of the Garrett holdings at Princeton characterizes the eight paintings as “of high quality by Torabi Bey [sic] Khurasani.” Curiously, no mention of Turabi Bek Khurasani or his paintings was made when the manuscript was shown at the major exhibition of Persian art in New York in 1940 (see n. 7 above for references). The comment about the paintings’ quality was repeated verbatim, however, when the volume was exhibited at Princeton in honor of the campus visit of the Shah of Iran in Nov. 1949. See *The Golden Age of Persian Literature, 1000–1500 A.D.: Miniatures, Illuminations and Manuscripts in Persian and Arabic from the Robert Garrett Collection. An Exhibition in Honor of the Visit to Princeton of His Imperial Majesty Reza Shah Pahlavi* (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1949), case XVI, no. 52.

45. The handwritten notes date the paintings variously to the sixteenth or seventeenth (sometimes early seventeenth) century. In the catalogue (see n. 6 above), cat. nos. 12, 14, 16, 18, and 27 are dated to the seventeenth century, and no. 91 to the sixteenth. Likewise O 263 is attributed to the seventeenth century in a reproduction caption in *The New Orient* 2 (May–June 1924), unpagd.

46. That he already knew the “destination” of his final versions seems evident from the fact that he made the preliminary paintings close in size to the *Khamsa* folios. As already men-
tioned (n. 36), folios 84a and 84b contain clear traces of the outlines and pricking marks of the mosque scene on 87b (the architectural outlines are particularly clear), suggesting that these replacement sheets were stacked together as Turabi Bek worked and not yet folded or collated in codex form (since the same pricking marks are not visible on folios 85 and 86).

47. As noted above (n. 22), Bahari, *Bīshād*, has suggested that the tavern scene (what he calls *A Sufi Eacty*) originally formed part of a double-page illustration, with this scene “representing the outer parts of a palace where, in the normal fashion, the court attendants and servants would gather” (250).


49. B. W. Robinson, *The Kevorkian Collection: Islamic and Indian Illustrated Manuscrits, Miniature Paintings and Drawings* (New York: Trustees of the Kevorkian Foundation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1953), 54 cat. CLXIV (mentioning only three miniatures). Kevorkian may have acquired the manuscript at a sale held in 1935: *Catalogue of a Very Choice Collection of Persian and Indian Miniatures and Manuscrits: The Property of a Lady* (London: Sotheby and Co., Feb. 5, 1935), lot 22 (with reproductions of paintings 1 and 2), in which all four illustrations are described in general terms and the colophon information given without qualification. The volume was subsequently shown at the great Persian exhibition of 1940 in New York. The catalogue describes it as “Extracts from Firdausi and other poets…16th century… Illuminations and miniatures of c. 1550–1560” and suggests that the colophon stating that the manuscript was offered as a present to Timur in 779 “may have been copied from an earlier version of this Anthology” (Ackerman, *Guide to the Exhibition of Persian Art*, 276, gallery IX, case 15D). Doris Duke acquired the manuscript in 1962 from a Kevorkian sale, in the catalogue of which the volume is described as a “Book of Poems…Persian School, XVI Century” and as bearing the date of 979 (1574): *Classical and Near Eastern Art Collected by the Late Hagop Kevorkian* (New York: Parke-Bernet Galleries Inc., Dec. 14–15, 1962), lot 317. In the inventory of Duke’s estate prepared by Christie’s in Jan. 1995, the manuscript, item 4670, is catalogued as a Gūlāstān by Sa’dī and described as having “four fine early 16th century full-page illuminations [i.e., illustrations] in the text.” The entry also notes, “The miniatures in this manuscript are probably Bukharan, mid-16th century.” Physical evidence casts further doubt on the colophon’s authenticity, since it seems to have been written on a cut and/or mended piece of paper pasted on top of the original (?) written surface—a condition that is clearly visible on the folio’s verso. There are numerous other peculiarities about this manuscript, including the fact that the majority of its text pages have been remargined, and that it may have had another illustration, judging from the pigment offset on fol. 97b. All four existing illustrations are on the recto side of their folios and all include two text panels that measure the same from top to bottom as the height of the written surface of the text folios. I owe this information to Amy Landau.

50. Robinson subsequently mentioned the Kevorkian Būstān twice in his Bodleian Library catalogue, and gave the same qualified reading of the artist’s name, while dating the manuscript ca. 1590, apparently because of its stylistic similarity to a Bodleian manuscript (MS Elliott 163) dated Rabi’ II 1001 (Jan. 1593). More significantly, he took note in this publication of the Khamsa of Amir Khusraw in Princeton “dated at Herat in 930/1524 [that] contains one miniature signed ‘Turabi Bey [sic] Khurasani’ which may well be a variant reading of the same signature [that is, the one in the Kevorkian manuscript]. If so, it is presumably a later insertion.” By this Robinson apparently assumed that the miniatures in the Princeton manuscript, which he evidently had not seen, were contemporary with the transcription date of 990 and that the signature had been added in the later sixteenth century. Although Robinson’s apparent assumption was wrong, his instinct, as always, was right. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library, 147 and 150* (for the direct quote regarding the Princeton Khamsa).

51. Amy Landau notes that this figure is much fainter than those in the main part of the composition, and that his facial features and costume are also different.


53. Reproductions of the album paintings and their typed labels appear in an unpublished series of bound albums titled “Oriental Miniatures: John Frederick Lewis Collection. Catalogued and Edited by Muhammad Ahmad Simsar, 1941,” and housed in the Freer Library’s Rare Book Department.

54. Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, cat. no. 127 and pls. LXXV, LXXXIII A and B, and LXXXIV A and B. Catalogue number 127c is actually Shaykh-Za’dā’s mosque scene and not the tavern scene as mistakenly indicated on the label for Lewis’s painting O 267. Curiously, there is no comparable reference to the 1933 catalogue on the typed labels for O 263 (cat. no. 127d) or O 268 (cat. no. 83b).

55. For a dissenting opinion on these attributions see above, nn. 22, 24, and 28.

56. See Bahari, *Bīshād*, 253, for a summary of the manuscript’s provenance.

57. Robinson, “Zand and Qajar Painting,” 889, gives another example of this practice.


59. Arthur Sambon, *Catalogue des objets d’art et de haute curiosité… formant la collection de M. Arthur Sambon, dont la vente aura lieu à Paris, galerie Georges Petit…les Lundi 25, Mardi 26, Mercredi 27 et Jeudi 28 Mai 1914…* (Paris: Imp. G. Petit, 1914), lot no. 189 and reproductions. Rudolph Meyer-Riefstahl was the expert for “les objets d’art oriental” in this sale and presumably wrote the long entry on the Hafiz manuscript. Given the close similarities in color between the tiled facade
in the Princeton and Philadelphia tavern scenes and that of the Hafiz prototype, as mentioned above, there is also the possibility that the artist, or a colleague or representative, saw the Hafiz manuscript and its illustrations in Paris during the preview days, May 23 and 24, leading up to the Sambon sale. If this were the case, however, then one might expect Turabi Bek to have followed the bright colors of the original Hafiz paintings for his overall palette. On the other hand, his deviation from the classic Safavid color scheme may be yet another indication of his own artistic ingenuity.


62. I am grateful to Maryam Ekhtiar for initially reviewing these inscriptions for me. All have now been published in Melikian-Chirvani, Chant du Monde, cat. no. 78, with a detailed discussion of Qulbaba Kukeltash, the milk-brother of the Shaybanid leader 'Abdullah Khan (b. 1558–59). The more hastily written inscription about the “miracles” of Turabi Bek (or Beg) has led Melikian-Chirvani to suggest that the artist signed another painting in the album from which this folio was removed.

63. The following comments are based on first-hand examination of the painting as exhibited in Tehran and Paris in May 2005 and Dec. 2007, respectively.

64. Canby, Rebellious Reformer, 139–40 and 196 cat. no. 102; Melikian-Chirvani, Chant du Monde, cat. no. 96.

65. Lowry and Beach, Checklist of the Vever Collection, 270–71 cat. no. 319.

66. Marteau and Vever, Miniatures persanes, vol. 2, pl. CL, no. 211. See also Claude Ainet, “Exhibition of Persian Miniatures at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris—II,” The Burlington Magazine 22 (Nov. 1912): 112 and pl. 11 (H), where the caption reads “Grisaille of Shah Abbas Period 1629 A.D.” The drawing then belonged to the Smet collection. I have not been able to track its present whereabouts.

67. He also reversed one of the “dive-bombing” ducks at the top of the tinted drawing for use in his King Dara and the Herdsman in Philadelphia (O 268).

68. Lewis acquired this work in April 1929: Catalogue of Valuable Printed Books and Illuminated Manuscripts...Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures (London: Sotheby and Co., Apr. 15, 1929), lot 436: “A fine Life Portrait of a Prince seated holding a carafe and wine cup, signed Narahi [sic] Bek Khurasani and dated 938 A.D. = 1531.” A typed label similar to those on the other album paintings that Lewis gave to the Free Library reads the date correctly as 947 and attributes the painting to the “Early Safavid Period...Shah Tahmasp School.”

69. For example, Sims, Peerless Images, cat. nos. 186 and 188.

70. For example, Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, cat. nos. 104, 107, 121–122.

71. For example, Sims, Peerless Images, cat. nos. 36, 128, 191; Soudavar, Art of the Persian Courts, cat. no. 125; Lukonin and Ivanov, Lost Treasures of Persia, cat. no. 212; Welch, Shah 'Abbas, cat. no. 85.

72. Given Bahari’s assertion (in Bihzad, see n. 38) that the three paintings in the Diván of Hafiz under discussion here are neither original to the manuscript nor by the Safavid painter whose names are inscribed thereon and his proposal that they are “copies of illustrations by Bihzad...” it is a tempting heresy to speculate that these works too might be modern—perhaps even by Turabi/Turabasi Bek!


74. The ghazals have been identified according to the following edition and translation: Hafiz, The Divan of Hafiz: A Bilingual Text, Persian-English, trans. Reza Saberi (Lanham and New York: University Press of America, 2002). O 263: seven verses on top, right side, and bottom, 415, ghazal 350, vv. 8, 6, 1; 2, 3, 5, 4; three verses on left side, 423, ghazal 357, vv. 6, 5, 7. O 267: two verses at top, 424, ghazal 358, vv. 1, 2 (the last two words in the first hemistich are reversed); six verses on right and left sides, 403, ghazal 339, vv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7; two verses on bottom, 440, ghazal 372, vv. 8, 9.

75. See above, n. 37. Also Grabar, Mostly Miniatures, 131–33.


77. See, for instance, “The Queen of Sheba Enthroned,” in Swietochowski and Babaie, Persian Drawings, 1 and fig. 1;