

*Ferdowsi, the  
Mongols and the  
History of Iran*

ART, LITERATURE AND CULTURE FROM  
EARLY ISLAM TO QAJAR PERSIA

*Studies in Honour of Charles Melville*

*Edited by*  
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and Firuza Abdullaeva

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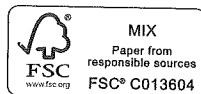
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- 12 W.M. Thackston, sel. and trans. *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 349.
- 13 See S.C. Welch, *Persian Painting: Five Royal Safavid Manuscripts of the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1976) pp. 543, 80, 84, and 88 for illustrations assigned to him.
- 14 Qadi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, p. 187. For further information and works in royal manuscripts of the 1570s and 1580s assigned to him by the author, see Welch, *Artists for the Shah*, pp. 212–13.
- 15 See Welch and Dickson, *The Houghton Shah-nameh*, p. 53 and L.S. Diba, 'Lacquerwork of Safavid Persia and its Relationship to Persian Painting' (PhD dissertation, New York University, 1994), p. 123 and references therein for a review of other sources.
- 16 Soudavar, 'The age of Muhammadi', p. 8.
- 17 Diba, 'Lacquerwork', pp. 121–5.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- 19 D. Duda, *Islamische Handschriften, I: Persische Handschriften* (Vienna, 1983), pp. 151–4.
- 20 See Welch, *Persian Painting*, p. 62 for Lovers Picnicking, p. 69 for *Diwan* illustration 'Wordly and Otherwordly Drunkenness' for similar angels and a balustrade motif and *ibid.*, p. 66 for 'the Feast of Eid' from the same manuscript for a comparable figure of a prince and a carpet strewn with flowers.
- 21 See Diba, 'Lacquerwork', p. 510 for full references. The binding is illustrated in Kemal Çiğ, 'The Iranian lacquer technique works in the Topkapı Saray Museum', *Memorial Volume of the 5th International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology* (Tehran, 1972), vol. 2, pp. 24–33, Fig. 3.
- 22 The cards were originally part of a set of 96 cards for *ganjafa*, an eight-suited card game. See Diba, 'Lacquerwork', p. 514. For colour illustrations of all eight cards see Layla S. Diba, 'Persian playing cards: a courtly art', in Colin Mackenzie and Irving Finkel (eds), *Asian Games: The Art of the Contest* (New York, 2004), pp. 234–5.
- 23 See illustration of Lion card and Preparations for a Feast in Duda, *Islamische Handschriften*, Pls 391–7.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 151–4.
- 25 Stuart Cary Welch, *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting* (London, 1979), pp. 130–1.
- 26 A superb detached painting of a *Rest on the Hunt* c. 1570s generally assigned to Sultan Muhammad or Mirza 'Ali may prove to be a key work in this respect. The painting is inscribed 'work of Bihzad'. Works signed 'Bihzad Ibrahimi' (referring to the late sixteenth-century patron Sultan Ibrahim) have been assigned to Muhammadi by Soudavar. Following his argument, this work might also be assigned to him. The importance of the work for the history of early lacquerwork lies in the fact that it served as the direct model for the lacquer binding of a lavish *Diwan*, Topkapı Saray Library, H. 986, which has also been assigned to Muhammadi by Soudavar. The discussion of this intriguing evidence lies beyond the scope of this essay and will hopefully form the subject of a future expanded study of lacquer bindings of the later sixteenth century. See Diba, 'Lacquerwork', pp. 184–7 and Soudavar, 'Age of Muhammadi', p. 8.

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## *Composite figures in the Hadiqat al-haqiqa wa Shari'at al-tariqa of Sana'i*<sup>1</sup>

Francis Richard

The problem of the interpretation of the composite figures found in the Indo-Iranian tradition and of the origin of their very particular iconography has never been brought to a satisfactory conclusion (Plates 30 and 31). While making no claim to resolve the enigma presented by these figures, the present article intends to draw up an account of the present state of knowledge with regard to this material.<sup>2</sup> It is with very great pleasure that I dedicate it to Charles Melville, who in recent years has devoted so much time and energy to clarifying the iconography of the Iranian epic in his important studies.

Composed in the twelfth century by Abu 'l-Majd Majdud b. Adam Sana'i (1079–1141), the didactic and mystical poem *Hadiqat al-haqiqa wa Shari'at al-tariqa* was widely admired in the Middle Ages. It was a source of inspiration for many poets and a guiding text for members of the Iranian elite. Again in the sixteenth century it was much read and consulted, and numerous copies following various older models were produced. Many of the manuscripts amount to no more than abridged versions (*mukhtaṣar*) or anthologies (*muntakhab*). This marked revival of interest is doubtless to be explained by the attraction experienced by Sufi devotees to the doctrines of Sana'i, expressed as these are in allegories and parables. It is also in the sixteenth century that we begin to find illustrated copies of the poem, which, it would seem, had never been accompanied by pictures at an earlier date.

A sixteenth-century manuscript of the *Hadiqat* that does contain the full text was used by de Bruijn for his study of the poet.<sup>3</sup> This is the Leiden manuscript Or. 1651, dated 987/1579; it is illuminated in Shiraz style, and contains (f. 1b) a picture, also in Shiraz

style, that shows Sana'i presenting his book to the sultan of Ghazna.<sup>4</sup> There are two further illustrated copies of approximately the date of that in Leiden that contain the *Hadiqat* in abridged form. Their paintings are very different in character and style from that of the Leiden manuscript, as they show very strange composite animals. One of these manuscripts is P. 3932 of the Raza Library, Rampur (India). This copy has 52 folios (measuring 215×120 mm); it contains three pictures of the sort in question, and one of a more traditional character that shows a cow entering the house of an old woman (f.44). The text was copied in Herat (*dār al-saltāna*) in Muharram 977/June–July 1569 by the scribe Muhyi al-Katib.

The first picture in the Rampur manuscript shows a mahout on a white elephant that is being examined by four blind men, each of whom gives a different account of the nature of the beast. This metaphor (*tamthil*) expresses man's inability to form a true picture of God. The text has been freely translated by E.G. Browne.<sup>5</sup>

The second picture (9a) has a composite camel and a foolish man (*ablah*). The camel is an object of ridicule because of its shape. This brief story is found in the *faṣl-i taqdīs*:<sup>6</sup> the man asks the camel why it is so formed, and the camel replies that this was the intention of its Maker and that man should see its curvature as the 'bow of righteousness'. The third picture (29b) shows a rider on a composite horse, preceded by a running *chā'ūsh*. The story, in the *bāb-i awal*,<sup>7</sup> signifies metaphorically that the rider of such a horse can conquer the world, but a young horse must first be disciplined and made amenable.

A copy similar to that of Rampur is lodged in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts with the accession number 09.324; it was donated to the museum in 1909 by the artist and collector Denman Waldo Ross, who may have acquired it on his travels. The copy has 55 folios, an initial double-page illumination, and eight pictures.<sup>8</sup> The margins are decorated with motifs in gold and colours, and the text area is sprinkled with gold. The manuscript contains a very much abbreviated version of the poem *Intikhab-i Hadiqat*, which corresponds approximately to the abridgement produced by Da'i Shirazi at the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>9</sup>

The patron of the Boston manuscript remains unknown, but the copying was finished in Jumada I 981/1573 by Muhyi al-Katib, the scribe of the Rampur manuscript. This calligrapher is identifiable as Muhyi Harawi, the very gifted pupil of the master Muhammad Qasim Shadishah,<sup>10</sup> who lived and worked in Khurasan, though he appears to have copied a *Shahnameh* at Qazvin in 973/1575. In 1003/1594 he was in Balkh where, together with his son 'Imad al-Din, he copied the *Mathnawi* of Jalal al-Din Rumi for the governor, Amir 'Abd al-Mu'min Han b. 'Abdallah.<sup>11</sup>

The pictures of the Boston manuscript, none of which seem to be signed, are related, as will be shown, to the school of Khurasan.<sup>12</sup> There are a number of composite figures amongst them. The first illustrates lines near the beginning of the poem that recount the story of the blind men and the elephant, though in a slightly different recension.<sup>13</sup> The white elephant that the blind men are investigating carries a young prince in a howdah. The accompanying lines are:

Hama-rā bahra qāl-u qīl āmad  
Shahr-i kūrān-u ḥāl-i fil āmad  
Har yak-ī dida juzwī az ajzā  
Dar kamāhīsh burda zann-i khaṭā

The share of all of them was just empty talk.

It was like [the tale of] the blind men of the town and their description of the elephant.

Each one of them saw just a part of the whole (literally, of all of its parts)

[But] they were [all] mistaken about its true nature.

In this painting the body of the elephant is composed of men and women in outline – a bearded man wears a turban, a girl plays the tambourine – but it is only their faces that are coloured. The figures are Indian in appearance: all wear Indian turbans and two have dark complexions.

A second picture in the manuscript shows an elephant holding a branch before him. Like the first elephant, he carries a howdah with a prince inside it wearing an Indian turban; there is also a mahout, whose dress is Indian, like that of the attendants seated on the elephant's hindquarters. Here again the white elephant is entirely composed of a collection of outlines of men and women, with some repetitions: here a couple reading a book, there a cup-bearer and a musician; there are also several animal figures, including a lion and a monkey. As with the previous elephant, it is the faces only that are coloured. The elephant's trunk ends in an animal's head.

Two further pictures in the Boston manuscript portray composite animals. One shows a young woman in a howdah on the back of a camel, again illustrating the story of the camel and the foolish man. Beside the animal a cameleer leans on his staff, while an Indian figure plays the flute. The camel's body is entirely composed of outlined figures, with many animals, men and women; the camel's four legs are particularly well contrived. The last of these pictures illustrates the story of the young man who can conquer the world on his horse. It shows a mounted falconer; he and his companions are in Indian costume and headgear. He wears a sumptuous coat, and his horse is entirely composed of outline figures: men, women and animals in various colours. The horse's hooves are formed by four men's heads.

The Indian character of the figures represented on these pages, and not seen in the four other pictures in the manuscript, is evidently a deliberate choice. The predilection of painters in Khurasan in about 1570 for Indian subjects is well known.<sup>14</sup> However, since we do not know the identity of the patron of the Boston manuscript, it is not easy to determine precisely why the painter made this choice.

It appears that an unpublished and undated copy of the *Gulshan-i Raz* of Mahmud Shabistari in the National Museum, New Delhi, also contains a composite camel.<sup>15</sup> It may be that this also should be seen in relation to the two copies of Sana'i's poem from Khurasan.

The attribution of these manuscripts of Sana'i's work to Khurasan seems beyond question, as is the attribution of the illustrations to an artist who had worked in Bakharz. It will suffice to mention as a comparative piece the 'Gabriel and Muhammad', a single page from a manuscript dated 975/1568 that gives a versified *Life* of the Prophet Muhammad (Geneva, Pozzi Collection, 1971/107–60).<sup>16</sup> There are also very similar pictures in the *Matla' al-anwar* and the *Hasht Bihisht* of Amir Khusraw in Supplément persan 1149 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a manuscript copied by Shah Mahmud Nayshaburi at Mashhad-i Riza, in the *wilāyat* of Bakharz, in 979/1571–2, the pictures of which reveal the distinct influence of the painter Muhammadi.<sup>17</sup>

Mention may also be made of pictures in Supplément persan 561 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a *Yusuf wa Zulaykha* of Jami copied *dar maqām-i Malan*, another district of Bakharz, in 978/1570 by the scribe Muhammad Husayn al-Husayni of Riza.<sup>18</sup> In addition, there

are those of Supplément persan 547, a collection of five *mathnawīs* (*Panj Ganj*) by Jami copied in 1565–6 by Muhammad b. ‘Ala al-Din Katib of Riza, in the *qariya* of Riza, which is again in the *wilāyat* of Bakharz, near Taybad, and not far from Herat.<sup>19</sup> When he had completed his life’s work, the scribe Muhammad b. ‘Ala al-Din Katib of Riza spent his remaining days in Mecca. But it appears that many artists and calligraphers of Khurasan followed their various patrons throughout their peregrinations to different parts of Khurasan and beyond, notably to Central Asia. There would also seem to have been close relations between the workshops of Khurasan and those of Mughal India. The portrait of a young Mughal courtier, OA 7123 in the Musée Guimet, Paris, would appear to be a copy from about 1565–70 of a model originating in Iran.<sup>20</sup>

Several isolated pages or images in Khurasani style have come to notice, and these may all be assigned to the cycle of illustration of the *Hadiqat al-haqiqa*; they come from albums or dispersed manuscripts. Of interest in the present context are the following images of camels, lions, elephants and even clothing, and they will now be analysed in turn:

1. A mounted falconer by a stream, depicted in the same position as the Boston falconer but in mirror image. Now in an album of the Reza ‘Abbasi Museum, Tehran, and exhibited in 2005,<sup>21</sup> this falconer is, as indicated by his turban, a Persian. His horse is composed of various interlocking figures of men and animals, and includes several amorous couples, four human heads by the steed’s hooves, and in its knotted tail the outline of a seated naked dervish. Datable to about 1580, this image may derive from the Boston picture or both may descend from a common original.
2. Another picture of a young horseman from the same album was shown at the same exhibition in Tehran.<sup>22</sup> Drawn with the pen, with touches of colour, it seems to be datable to the last years of the sixteenth century. The figure is no longer a falconer, but is here armed with a bow. The mountains of the horizon have been replaced with rocks and trees. The horse is formed of a very complex and slightly different assemblage of humans and animals. It is, however, once more indisputable that here again the artist follows the same model. In the absence of a signature it is not possible to offer a precise date and place of origin, but the piece seems again to be from Khurasan.
3. A young page holding a composite horse, without signature but originally from the Victor Goloubew collection and now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, accession number 14.612.<sup>23</sup> This coloured drawing seems to be Persian work datable to the end of the sixteenth century. Two people wear the broad turbans that were fashionable in Isfahan in about 1600. The drawing is comparable to that of the Tehran picture mentioned above, but the horse is constructed in a slightly different manner, despite the presence of four human heads within the hooves: a considerable variety of animals can be made out in it, together with two men hunting lions, and another who holds a fawn in his arms.
4. A very fine picture of a composite horse, produced in about 1580 in Bukhara, is preserved in a *muragga* in the National Library, Cairo (see Plate 31).<sup>24</sup> Demonstrating as it does the reception in Bukhara of the cycle of iconography associated with Sana’i’s text, this may tentatively be ascribed to the patronage of the Juybari family of Sumitan.
5. Close to the ‘Falconer’ of Tehran, certainly produced in the same workshop in Khurasan and datable to about 1580, is a picture of a composite camel in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.<sup>25</sup> The camel recalls that of Boston. It is laden with a carpet and a sumptuous

saddle, but does not carry a rider. It is led by a cameleer, who is the equivalent of the squire in the ‘Falconer’. Many of the figures that form the body of this camel were already to be seen in the Boston camel. It is undeniable that these two pictures are related.

6. Another composite camel has been noted in the collections of the Harvard University Museums.<sup>26</sup>
  7. Originating in the Rampur or Boston type, the rendering of the composite camel developed a different iconography in India, where the creature serves as the mount of a *pari*. The meaning of the image changes. The relationship with the work of Sana’i disappears, and instead we find the slave-girl musician who accompanied Bahram Gur in the work of Ferdowsi, and of Nizami and his imitators. Many examples of this iconography could be cited, among them a page, which can be dated to the 1630s, from Od 44 f.8 of the Cabinet des Estampes of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.<sup>27</sup>
- The composite elephant is found in several forms:
8. In a drawing from the Pozzi collection, now in the Musée de Genève, an elephant carries a howdah in which a princess is seated. This work<sup>28</sup> bears the date 965/1558, the signature of the Persian painter Sadiqi (*raqm-i Šādiqī Beg*), and the inscription *šūrat-i (Arzhandukht?) Begum*. Though this drawing displays a certain relationship to the style of other works by Sadiqi Beg Afshar (1533–1610), its authenticity is perhaps open to debate; we may wonder in what setting it was produced. It does, however, merit a mention insofar as it might permit us to bring together the rise of this iconography and important artists active in Khurasan, such as Sadiqi.
  9. A composite elephant ridden by a prince in the collection of the British Library, is, according to Norah Titley,<sup>29</sup> a Mughal piece datable to the 1580s. The motif of the composite elephant clearly achieved a speedy success in the painting of Mughal India.
  10. The ‘Elephant ridden by an ibex-headed div’ of the J.B. Gentil Album of Shir Jang, now Smith-Lesouëf 247 in the Bibliothèque nationale de France,<sup>30</sup> is probably a little later than that in the British Library. This highly finished work is similar in composition to the figures in the manuscripts of Sana’i’s *Hadiqat*, indeed it is very directly derived from them. The principle is the same: the animal, whose forefeet are two rabbits and whose hind feet are two tortoises, is made up of a multitude of interlocking animals, with – in the centre – a man in pursuit of a lion, his turban unravelling. There is a matching piece in the Binney collection. Later, numerous other elephants were produced by Indian artists no longer aware of the origin of the motif.
  11. In the very fine Golconda *Muraqqa* ‘Dorn 489 of the Russian National Library of St Petersburg, a volume whose binding is datable to the late sixteenth century, there are two composite animals that are not directly connected to the text of the *Hadiqat*. These are the figures of two composite lions that have been mounted opposite each other on folios 48b and 49a of the album.<sup>31</sup> This iconography of the lion, originating in the figures in the *Hadiqat*, should perhaps be considered in the context of the strongly marked Shi‘i sympathies of Golconda.

To this we may add the influence of examples of calligraphy in the form of lions;<sup>32</sup> and, in addition, it is in this period that the Deccan develops the depiction of composite animals by

means of tiny pieces of marbled paper.<sup>33</sup> A comparative study of these forms and our composite figures would be worth undertaking.

Accompanying a description of a composite lion ridden by a *pari*, painted in Kashmir at the end of the eighteenth century and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York, Barbara Schmitz has published a substantial note<sup>34</sup> that traces what is known of the history of composite animals, together with many further references.<sup>35</sup> Thus in India from the seventeenth century onwards, apart from elephants, often shown in combat,<sup>36</sup> camels,<sup>37</sup> horses<sup>38</sup> and other sorts of animals are conjured up. The motif is here employed without any reference to a literary text: its symbolic significance seems to have been lost, or possibly it has changed. Considering that from as early as the late fifteenth century there is an independent tradition of composite figures in Jain iconography,<sup>39</sup> we may suppose that several traditions met and mingled, thereby enabling the flowering of this iconography in the Indian world.

In the present inventory, pictures of clothing with composite motifs merit discussion; these can be related chronologically to the emergence of the figures of composite animals in Khurasan in around 1560.

12. An album page in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, presents a coat depicting scenes with human figures and is signed by Muhammadi, otherwise Muhammad Harawi, one of the foremost artists of Safavid Iran.<sup>40</sup> It shows a young prince holding a cup and wearing a coat on which are represented four scenes of capture. The inventive splendours of Safavid textiles of the period are well known, but the design recalls the scenes found in composite animals. Muhammadi, who was active in Khurasan in about 1570, produced a considerable number of pages for albums, and these were often inspired by episodes in works of literature.
13. A picture from an album, again datable to about 1570, and auctioned in Paris in May 2011,<sup>41</sup> shows a seated girl whose golden coat is ornamented with human figures much like those in the painting in the Freer Gallery. The verso of this piece bears specimens of Persian calligraphy, one of which is signed by Sultan Muhammad Khandan. It seems more than likely that this picture should be attributed to the Khurasan school.
14. The motif of the coat decorated with composite figures occurs for the first time in a Bukharan work, datable to about 1580.<sup>42</sup> The picture is not signed, and was probably destined for the opening of an anthology of poetry, or simply for a *muraqqa'*. There is no reason to seek a connection with the work of Sana'i; the piece may instead be ascribed to a local tradition, perhaps one with links to Naqshbandi Sufis.
15. Two pictures produced a few years later in Bukhara, and perhaps directly inspired by the previous item, constitute a dazzling demonstration of the success of the composite figure. The two pieces are from the same album, but today are separated.<sup>43</sup> One is in the Louvre as OA 7109 of the Department of the Arts of Islam, having formerly been in the Georges Marteau collection; the other is in the Sackler Gallery, Washington, as S. 86-0304, and came from the Charles Vever collection. Both were in the collection of Georges Demotte until 1910, when he sold them to two lovers of art who particularly liked items of this origin. The Louvre page shows a young man who is seated reading in a *bayād* (or *safina*) a poem that treats of sorrow, pardon and hope; a young princess is intended for the opposite page. Both wear coats decorated with composite figures of animals and people.

The figures on both garments are very intense and create a powerful impression of the ecstasy of love or intoxication. Double pages such as these showing couples reading, and intended for a poetic *diwan*, or an anthology, are not uncommon towards the end of the sixteenth century in the Iranian world and in Central Asia. They were much favoured by the painters of Bukhara, but the originality of the present pair lies in the use of composite figures. The ensemble was produced in Bukhara under the Janids, very probably in the days of Imam Quli Khan. The patron was in all probability a member of the powerful Juybari family of Sumitan. With a dating of 1615–20, this may have been Hidayat b. Mu'in al-Din Khwaja 'Abd al-Rahim Juybari. There are signatures of two painters: the margins are the work of Muhammad Murad Samarqandi, while the young man and the lady – or *pari* – are by Muhammad Sharif Musawwir.

\* \* \*

It is now time to deal more generally with the source of these images, despite the fact that their date and location are reasonably secure. It is a curious fact that the form 44 appears in the period when the Milanese Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527–93) was at work in Europe, producing from 1562 onwards remarkable compositions in which the elements are vegetal, and from 1566 including also animals and objects. There is no known thread to connect these works to models from the Iranian world.

There was, however, an established tradition for the portrayal of composite forms in rocks. These rocks, whether anthropomorphic or zoomorphic, were a recognised theme in Persian painting from at least the fourteenth century, as Barbara Brend and Bernard O'Kane have shown.<sup>44</sup> The theme was to some extent inspired by Chinese Taoist painting, and might have been employed to evoke malevolent forces at work in natural settings. The popularity of the agglomerations of anthropomorphic or zoomorphic rock requires no further demonstration.<sup>45</sup> It is, however, worthy of note that composite rocks appear ever less frequently in the work of Iranian painters from the late sixteenth century onwards.

It would be difficult to argue for a direct influence from a picture found in some manuscripts that illustrates the scene of the combat of Rostam and the King of Mazandaran, where, by means of magic, the latter transforms himself into a rock shortly before he is vanquished. There are instances of a very unusual iconography in which the King of Mazandaran and his mount are depicted as though their bodies were composed of zoomorphic rock. One such occurs on f.73b of a *Shahnameh* illustrated at Shiraz towards 1435 for Ibrahim Sultan.<sup>46</sup> A very similar image is found on f.61b of the manuscript Dorn 332 in the National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, in a copy of the *Shahnameh* dated 1460. At the very least this iconography demonstrates that the principle of the composite figure had long been known to Iranian artists.

There are, however, further comparisons to be made that are not a little surprising. Thus, an Armenian iconographic tradition for a composite figure is to be found in copies of the *Alexander Romance*, which derives from pseudo-Callisthenes. Bucephalus, the conqueror's steed, is represented in the form of a composite horse in manuscript Armenian 3 in the John Rylands Library, Manchester; this was copied and illustrated by Zakaria Knuniantz in 1544 in Constantinople. Another representation of the same fantastical horse is found in f.10b of

manuscript Armenian 437 of the Monastery of St James in Jerusalem.<sup>47</sup> In this case the drawing in ink is dated 1536, but the composition is exactly the same as that in the Manchester manuscript, the outline of Bucephalus being formed of figures of lions, dogs and birds in pursuit of each other, interspersed with bearded human faces. Can we see in these a prefiguration of the composite horse of the Sana'i manuscripts? To make the argument stick, we need to be able to indicate by what route the Armenian images could have become known in sixteenth-century Khurasan. Moreover, the origin of that Armenian iconography is itself not yet established<sup>48</sup> and indeed the question appears to be fraught with difficulties.

Another motif in the Iranian world, the *wāqwāq* tree, makes use of representations of the human head or body, and also sometimes of animal figures, but it does so in a different way.<sup>49</sup> This fabulous tree is reputed to have been seen by Alexander the Great in the course of his extensive travels. According to tradition, the *wāqwāq* tree has fruit resembling female bodies that, when ripe, cry out as they fall. In a Golconda picture of the early seventeenth century (Polier album, Berlin) the tree is depicted with other sorts of fruit and animal heads.<sup>50</sup> The same motif is found in very stylised form on a Mughal carpet of the late sixteenth century. But any connection between the *wāqwāq* tree, its fruit, and our composite figures appears tenuous in the extreme; on the contrary, the two motifs should be seen as distinct.

A more promising comparison, and certainly a closer one, is to be made with iconography from Nishapuri's 'History of the Prophets', a very popular text in the Iranian world. In the Safavid period, and particularly around 1560, numerous copies of the *Qisas al-anbiya* were produced, often with a view to religious propaganda. These copies were often made in Qazvin, and even more frequently in Khurasan. Much favoured in the illustrative cycle of the 'History of the Prophets' is the image of the 'Seven sleepers of Ephesus', or the 'Companions of the cave' (*aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*). The bodies of the seven humans, together with that of their dog, are shown locked together in sleep. The story, which is Christian in origin, though integrated into Muslim tradition, takes place under the persecution of Decius; the seven men have fallen asleep in a cave. A classic representation of this scene is found in the manuscript Persan 54 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, f. 173b.<sup>51</sup> The manuscript was copied and illustrated in 989/1581. Qazvin has been suggested as the place of origin, but Khurasan is more probable. The bodies of the seven men closely juxtaposed do indeed bring to mind the interlocking outlines employed to draw composite animals. It is quite possible that the artists of Khurasan exercised their skills on both themes.

It should be said, however, that the artists who illustrated the *Qisas al-anbiya* can hardly be described as innovators. The manner in which the Seven Sleepers was illustrated has a considerable history.<sup>52</sup> It is already to be found in an album (H. 2160 in Topkapı Museum, Istanbul, f. 83) that predates 1500 and contains models used in the royal painting workshop of the Aqqoyunlu in Tabriz. Doubtless it was in Tabriz and during the Aqqoyunlu period that Persian painters began to imitate Chinese works that were available to them in copies. Examples are to be found in two of the Topkapı albums, on f. 55 of H. 2154 and f. 48v of H. 2160. The original intention of these pictures was no more than to represent three *arhats*, 'holy men', and a celestial guardian, a theme that was common to metropolitan China and to northern China after the Yuan. This iconography was adopted to illustrate the subject of the Seven Sleepers.

It is in these same two Istanbul albums that we find pictures of dogs, other animals and a close encounter between an ox and a tiger. This close encounter recurs in the composite animals

that appeared in about 1570 in Khurasan. This implies that painters in the eastern province were in possession of models much like those in the Aqqoyunlu albums. This is eminently likely, not least because several amirs and Safavid officials were resident in Khurasan. They were alive to art and were active patrons, rivals in this to the Sunni lords of the Shaybanid state. The movement of artists and exchanges between workshops would explain the adoption and reuse of these themes in the eastern part of the Iranian world.

The fundamental point to be emphasised, however, is that there can be no doubt of the association between the vogue for composite images from the 1560s onwards and cultivated society in Khurasan and Central Asia. That is to say that it was certainly deemed appropriate to illustrate Sana'i's text with such figures. And this iconography – which would have an evident posterity in India, rather than central or western Iran, being unknown in Isfahan in particular – was doubtless chosen expressly because it answered the metaphorical, aesthetic, and probably also mystical preoccupations of eastern Iran at that time.

### Notes

- 1 The editors are indebted to Barbara Brend for translating this chapter from the French.
- 2 These observations were first presented in the form of a lecture at the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Dushanbe, on 8 April 2011.
- 3 J.T. de Bruijn, *Piety and Poetry: The Interaction of Religion and Literature in the Life and Works of Ḥakim Sanā'i of Ghazna* (Leiden 1983).
- 4 This classic rendering of the theme is reproduced as the frontispiece to de Bruijn's edition.
- 5 E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, vol. 2, *From Firdawsī to Sa'ādī* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 319–20. The precise text is given in Nasir 'Amili, *Bar-Guzīda-i Ḥadiqa-i Sanā'i, ba muqaddima va tawdīb-i luḡhat, bi-kushish-i N. A.* (Tehran, n.d.), pp. 2–3.
- 6 'Amili, *Bar-Guzīda*, pp. 7–8. The text occurs in the complete version of the *Hadiqa*, see, for example, Sana'i Ghaznawi, *Hadiqa al-haqiqa wa shari'at al-tariqa*, ed. Maryam Husayni (Tehran, 1382/2003), p. 11 (distich 173 *et seq.*). The anecdote is translated by de Bruijn, *Of Piety and Poetry*, p. 223.
- 7 'Amili, *Bar-Guzīda*, p. 34.
- 8 Resembling the Rampur volume in its small format, this manuscript measures 27 × 17 cm.
- 9 As in, for example, Supplément persan 704 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.
- 10 Mahdi Bayani, *Aḥwāl wa aṯar-i Khwushnīvisān* (Tehran, 1363/1984, 2nd edition), pp. 895–6, no 1339.
- 11 See Barbara Schmitz, *Mughal and Persian Painting and Illustrated Manuscripts in the Raza Library, Rampur* (New Delhi, 2006), pp. 182–3.
- 12 Basil W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1958), p. 151.
- 13 The illustration corresponds to the text of f. 4b, line 9, of Supplément persan 704: in the Boston page the four hemistichs that match the text are copied in the margin.
- 14 An instance is the picture of a young Mughal nobleman, OA 7123 of the Musée Guimet, Paris, of about 1565–70, which seems paradoxically to copy a model produced in Iran (compare, for example, *Chefs-d'oeuvre de la collection des arts de l'Islam du musée du Louvre* (Riyad, 2006), pp. 162–3).
- 15 B. Schmitz, *Mughal and Persian Painting*, p. 183. I regret not having had the opportunity to see this manuscript.
- 16 Basil Robinson et al., *L'Orient d'un collectionneur: Miniatures persanes, textiles, céramiques, orfèvrerie rassemblés par Jean Pozzi [...]* (Geneva, 1992), p. 131, no 131. The catalogue's identification of this piece as Ottoman is clearly mistaken.
- 17 F. Richard, *Splendeurs persanes* (Paris, 1997), p. 173, no 118.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 173, no 117.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 172, no 116.
- 20 Cf. note 15 *supra*.
- 21 Muhammad-'Alī Rajabī (ed.), *Shahkarha-yi nigargari-i Iran (Iranian masterpieces of Persian Painting), bi-munasibat-i barguzari-yi namayishgah-i shahkarha-yi nigargari-i Iran dar Muza-i hunarha-yi mu'asir-i Tebrān, bahār 1384h.* (Tehran, 2005), p. 515.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 514.
- 23 To be found on the Museum's website; for references see Ernst J. Grube, *Muslim Miniature Paintings from the XIII to XIX Century from Collections in the United States and Canada: Catalogue of the Exhibition* (Venice, 1962), pp. 91–2, which in turn refers to Coomaraswamy and Kühnel.
- 24 Heba Nayel Barakat, *Treasures of the illustrated and illuminated Persian manuscripts at the national library of Egypt* (Cairo, 2008), no 41 M. *tarikḥ-i fārsī*, Pl. 10–11.
- 25 Published, though with an attribution to Bukhara, in Grube, *Muslim Miniature Paintings*, 91–2, no 70.
- 26 No 1954.57, published by Marianna Shreve Simpson in 1980.
- 27 R. Hurel, *Miniatures et peintures indiennes* (Paris, 2010), p. 66, no 24.

- 28 Robinson, *L'Orient d'un collectionneur*, pp. 190, 336, no 490.  
 29 N.M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: A Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India and Turkey in the British Library and British Museum* (London, 1977), p. 173, no 401 (12). The other 15 or so composite animals noted by Titley are Indian, and appear to be of considerably later date. They include elephants, camels, dogs, a sheep, a cow and a horse; there is also a sorceress.  
 30 *A la cour du Grand Moghol* (Paris, 1986), pp. 144, 149, no 133.  
 31 These two pictures appear to be unpublished.  
 32 A fine example, with the names of 'Ali and Fatima, datable to the first half of the seventeenth century (before AD 1653) is to be found on folio 9b of the album Supplément persan 388 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.  
 33 For example, a falcon on f. 1 of the same album (Supplément persan 388), produced in Golconda before 1653. See M.-A. Doizy and S. Ipert, *Le Papier marbré* (Paris, 1985), p. 53.  
 34 Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian Manuscripts and Paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library* (New York, 1997), pp. 182–3, no 53.  
 35 Unfortunately, I have not been able to consult Juan Lessing's thesis, 'The Visible and the Unseen: Indo-Persian Composite Animals of the 16th Century' (Princeton University, 2005).  
 36 *A la cour*, pp. 149–50, no 134.  
 37 Ibid., p. 146, no 132, where a *pari* musician and other items related to music and musicians form the body of the animal. See also *L'Etrange et le merveilleux en terres d'Islam* (Paris, 2001), p. 82, no 56.  
 38 *A la cour*, p. 150, no 135; *L'Etrange et le merveilleux*, p. 81, no 55.  
 39 For the Indian pictures, see Robert Del Bonta, 'Reinventing nature: Mughal composite animal painting', in Som Prakash Verma (ed.), *Flora and Fauna in Mughal Art* (Mumbai, 1999), pp. 69–82.  
 40 Esin Atil, *The Brush of the Masters: Drawings from Iran and India* (Washington, DC, 1978), p. 47, no 15 A. We may add that this could well be a very faithful portrayal of a luxury fabric from the Safavid looms.  
 41 Auction at Rossini, Paris, 17 May, 2011, no 79, 16.  
 42 Auction at Christie's, London, 15 October 1996.  
 43 Francis Richard, 'A propos d'une double page réalisée à Bukhara: la tradition picturale persane des figures composites; tentative d'interprétation', *A'ina-i mirath*, Tehran, new series, 4 no 4 (35) (2007), pp. 145–75, ill. 44. For a general approach to this theme see Jean-Hubert Martin (ed.), *The Endless Enigma* (Ostfildern-Ruit and Dusseldorf, 2003).  
 44 See B. Brend, 'Rocks in Persian miniature painting', *Landscape Style in Asia, Colloquies on Art and Archaeology in Asia no 9* (London, 1980), pp. 111–37; B. O'Kane, 'Rock Faces and Rock Figures in Persian Painting', *Islamic Art* 4 (1991), pp. 219–46.  
 45 The earliest example so far to have come to light is that in the Jalayirid *Kalila wa Dimna* of about 1370, in which human and animal heads can be distinguished in masses of rock (J.S. Cowen, *Kalila wa Dimna, An Animal Allegory of the Mongol Court* (New York and Oxford, 1989), Pl. V; Bernard O'Kane, *Early Persian Paintings, Kalila and Dimna Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century* (London, 2003), p. 128 etc.). This use of rock, still to be found in pictures of the second half of the sixteenth century, became progressively rarer after 1600 in work of the school of Isfahan.  
 46 Oxford, Ms. Ouseley Add. 176, f. 73b, reproduced in T.W. Lentz and G.D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Washington and Los Angeles, 1989), pp. 166, 341, no 58; in F. Abdullaeva and C. Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings: Ibrahim Sultan's Shahnama* (Oxford, 2008), p. 81.  
 47 My cordial thanks are due to my colleague Dickran Kouymjian for kindly drawing my attention to this instance.  
 48 Is it possible that Armenian artists could have already known of the Jain figures in India at the outset of the sixteenth century, or even earlier? On the other hand, we may wonder if there could be any connection between these figures and the work of Arcimboldo.  
 49 F. Richard, 'L'arbre waq-waq vu par les Persans', in J.-L. Bacqué-Grammont, M. Bernardini and L. Berardi (eds), *L'arbre anthropogène du waq-waq, les femmes-fruits et les îles des femmes, recherches sur un mythe* (Naples, 2007), pp. 133–8 and Pl. VIII.  
 50 On f. 26a of the album T. 4594. Reproduced, for example, in *L'Etrange et le merveilleux*, pp. 168–9, no 118.  
 51 *Splendeurs persanes*, p. 176, no 122.  
 52 Cf. the examples published in *Islamic Art* 1 (1981), pp. 2, 52, 71 and 95, nos 178, 179, 180 and 182.

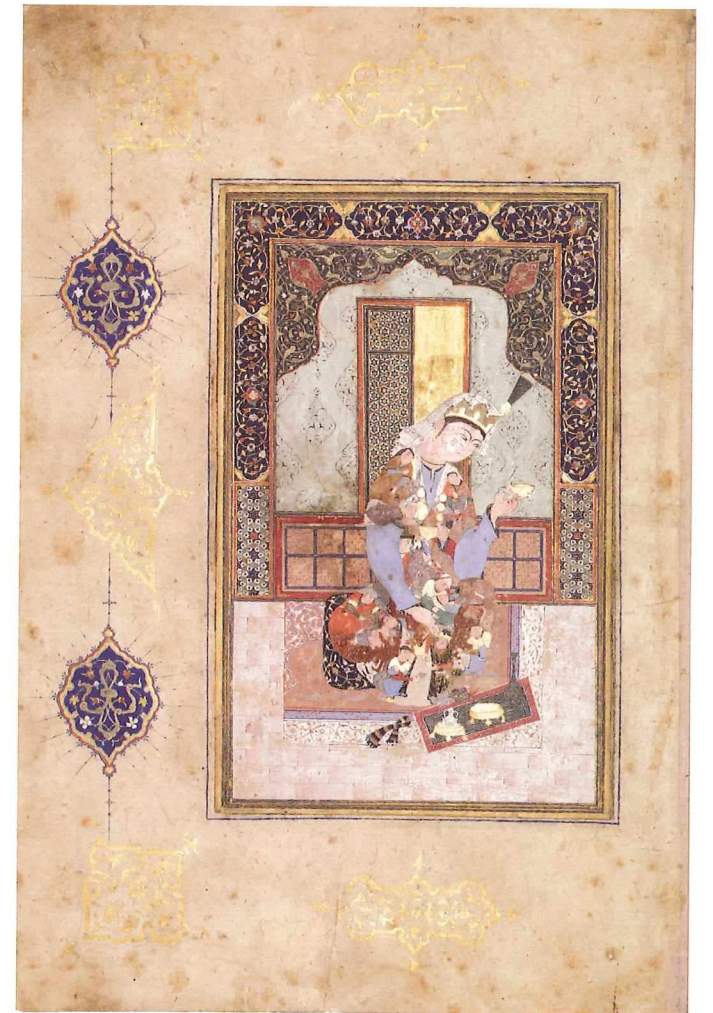
# 36

## A medieval representation of Kay Khusraw's *jām-i gītī namāy*

Marianna Shreve Simpson

Towards the middle of the *Shahnameh* tale of love and derring-do involving the Iranian warrior Bizhan and the Turanian princess Manizha, King Kay Khusraw takes up his *jām-i gītī namāy*, 'the cup that shows the world', and scans its depths for Bizhan's whereabouts. Finding the missing youth imprisoned at the bottom of an enemy pit, the Persian ruler enlists the services of the great hero Rostam to the rescue. Notwithstanding the drama inherent in Kay Khusraw's search for Bizhan through his magic cup, and the turning point that this discovery represents within Ferdowsi's narrative, the scene rarely appears in illustrated *Shahnameh* manuscripts. This apparent pictorial lacuna is all the more surprising given the prominent place that the *jām-i gītī namāy* occupies, under various names, within Persian lore and literature, and particularly its frequent evocation by Persian poets and other writers. That the theme did have a presence, however, within Iran's visual arts and material culture in medieval times, and more specifically before the rise of the Persian illustrated manuscript tradition during the Ilkhanid period (1256–1353), is demonstrated by the ceramic drinking vessel commonly known as the Freer Beaker and datable to the mid-twelfth or early thirteenth century, which through its form, decoration and function may be interpreted as both a three-dimensional and a pictorial realisation of Kay Khusraw's magical *jām-i gītī namāy*.<sup>1</sup>





30 Elephant composed of humans and animals, Sana'i, *Hadiqat al-Haqiqah*, Iran, 1573.

31 Horse composed of human beings, *Muraqqa' Farisi* Tarikh 42, c. 1580.

32 Maiden in a robe composed of humans and animals.