A Taste for Intricacy: An Illustrated Manuscript of *Mantiq al-Ṭayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Yumiko KAMADA*

An illustrated manuscript of Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār’s mystical poem, *Mantiq al-Ṭayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (63.210) is one of the most important illustrated manuscripts from Timurid Persia (1370-1507). It was transcribed in 1487 and several illustrations were attached; however, the manuscript was for some reason not completed. Over a century later, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it entered into the possession of Shāh ‘Abbās (r. 1587-1629). His artists remounted the folios, added a frontispiece and four contemporary illustrations. Shāh ‘Abbās presented the manuscript to the Ardabil shrine in 1608/9 (AH 1017).

This manuscript has the following distinctive features: First, it was initiated under the Timurid court atelier and completed in the Safavid court atelier. Second, this manuscript contains illustrations which are often attributed to the celebrated painter Bihzād, who served the Timurid monarch Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (r.1469-1506) and a nobleman ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī (1441-1501). Third, it is one of the few illustrated manuscripts of *Mantiq al-Ṭayr*.

In spite of its significance, the following issues are yet to be investigated. First, the manuscript has not been fully treated as a composite manuscript initially undertaken by the Timurid court atelier and later completed in the Safavid period. Second, the text-image relation of all the illustrations of this manuscript has not been fully considered.

In this paper, the original structure of the manuscript will be reconstructed through a close investigation of all sixty-six folios. Then, each of the eight illustrations will be carefully analyzed in relation to the accompanying text. The goal of this research is to define the characteristics of this manuscript based on a reconstruction of the manuscript and an analysis of the text-image relation. This study will demonstrate the close connections between painting, poetry and Sufism at the end of the fifteenth century in Herāt.

**Keywords:** Persian painting, Timurid art, Safavid art, ‘Aṭṭār, Sufism

* Ph.D. candidate, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University
Introduction

An illustrated manuscript of Farid al-Din ‘Attar’s mystical poem, *Manjīq al-Ṭayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is one of the most important illustrated manuscripts from Timurid Persia (1370-1507).\(^1\) It was transcribed in 1487 and shortly thereafter, several illustrations were attached;\(^2\) however, for some reason, the manuscript was not completed. Over a century later, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, it came into the possession of Shâh ‘Abbâs (r. 1587-1629). Artists in his court atelier remounted each of its folios on gold-flecked colored paper and added a frontispiece, as well as four contemporary illustrations and gave the book a new binding. Shâh ‘Abbâs then presented the manuscript to the Ardabil shrine in 1608/9 (AH 1017).\(^3\)

This manuscript has the following distinctive features: First, it was begun at the Timurid court atelier in Herât and completed in the Safavid court atelier. Second, this manuscript contains illustrations which are often attributed to the celebrated painter Bihzâd, who served the Timurid monarch Husayn Bâyqarâ (r.1469-1506) and the nobleman ‘Alishir Navâ’î (1441-1501). Third, it is one of the few known illustrated manuscripts of *Manjīq al-Ṭayr*.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art purchased this manuscript from Sotheby’s London at auction in 1963. Subsequently, the first published reference to this manuscript appeared in Lukens 1967 and Grube 1967 followed by a supplementary article by Swietochowski 1972. Early studies concentrated on identifying the painter and the patron of this manuscript’s illustrations. Marie Lukens (later Swietochowski) compares its illustrations with those of other Timurid paintings and attributes its pictures to the school of Bihzâd (Lukens 1967, 338). She suggests that the patron of this manuscript was ‘Alishir Navâ’î (Swietochowski 1972, 42), who was an “overseer of all cultural activity at the court of Husayn Bâyqarâ in Herât (Subtelny 1979, 98).” On the other hand, Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 110-112) argues that an inscription in the architectural frieze depicted in folio 28r conceals the name of a Timurid painter “Mîrak.” Since then, some scholars have attributed the production of the Timurid illustrations to Mîrak Naqqâsh, a supervisor of Husayn Bâyqarâ’s court atelier (Sims 2002, 145), and concluded that Husayn Bâyqarâ was the patron of this manuscript (Soucek 2003, 54, 58).

Scholars have also endeavored to explore the relationship between text and image. Swietochowski 1972 first studied this aspect and tried to discover the reason for the selection of particular parts of its text for illustration. Following Swietochowski, who emphasized the importance of Sufism at that time, Milstein (1977, 368) studied the motifs and composition of the illustration of folio 35r.
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(fig. 2) in terms of Sufism and concluded that features depicted in the late fifteenth-century Herāt painting which seemingly lack iconographic significance do indeed have symbolic meaning through their literary connotations. Michael Barry (2004, 311-315, 336-338) attempted to interpret the symbolism of these Timurid illustrations and regards Bihzād as the painter of the manuscript because he would have been able to address fully the mystical concepts in the illustrations. Most recently, Kia 2006 has worked on the relationship between the text and the Timurid illustrations of the manuscript in relation to Sufism. In 1981, Ettinghausen approached the illustrations of the manuscript from a different viewpoint. He categorized the types of Persian painting in accordance with literary archetypes and classified Mantiq al-Tayr into the Ṣa’dī group, namely, the didactic and realistic group characterized by the depiction of ordinary daily events (Ettinghausen 1981, 61).

In spite of these useful studies, several aspects of this manuscript have yet to be investigated. First, the manuscript has not been fully treated as a composite manuscript initially undertaken by the Timurid court atelier and later completed in the Safavid period. While the folios and illustrations of this manuscript have never been studied as a whole, it has been taken for granted that the frontispiece and four illustrations are the only Safavid additions and that the rest of the folios are all Timurid originals. Consequently, the text folios of the manuscript are often introduced as the work of the leading Timurid calligrapher, Sulṭān ʿAlī Mashhadi (Soucek 2003, 54, fig. 3.8; Blair 2006, front cover image, 281-283, fig. 7.17). Second, the text-image relation of all the illustrations of this manuscript has not been fully considered. It is necessary to analyze what is described in the text itself and how it is illustrated before putting forward arguments about the characteristics of the manuscript.

In this paper, the original structure of the manuscript will be reconstructed through a close investigation of all sixty-six folios. Then, each of the eight illustrations will be carefully analyzed in relation to the accompanying text. The goal of this analysis is to define the characteristics of this manuscript based on a reconstruction of the manuscript and an analysis of the text-image relation.

I. Structure of the Manuscript

1. History

An inscription in the colophon (folio 66v) clearly states that this manuscript was completed on the first day of the fifth month of the second year of the last ten years preceding 900, that is, AH 892 (April 25, AD 1487). As the architectural frieze depicted in folio 28 recto (fig. 1) shows, at least one illustration was
completed in AH 892 (AD 1486/87). While it is unknown how the manuscript entered into Shāh ‘Abbās’ possession, it is clear that the artists in the Safavid court atelier in Isfahān added a frontispiece, four illustrations, and a binding. As a waqf seal on several of the folios indicates, Shāh ‘Abbās donated this manuscript to the Ardabil shrine in AH 1017 (AD 1608/9). However, this manuscript seems to have been removed from the Ardabil shrine before 1694 because an inscription on a seventeenth-century flyleaf (folio 1r) reads “somebody [illegible] possesses it, fifth day of Jamādī al-Awwal, 1106 [that is, December 22, AD 1694].”

This manuscript or copies of it may have been brought to India. According to Leach, there is a painting in the Khalili collection (MSS 980) which used to belong to the collection of the Mewar dynasty in India. It is almost identical to the illustration of “The Beggar and the King” (fig. 1) for the manuscript of *Mantiq al-Tayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Interestingly, the seal of the official of Awrangzib on this painting (MSS 980) indicates that it came to the Rajputs of Mewar by way of the Mughals (Leach 1998, 136, 137). Furthermore, the Rothschild collection used to have a painting which is a close copy of the illustration of “The Son Who Mourned His Father” (fig. 2) for the manuscript of *Mantiq al-Tayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Falk 1976, 180, 207).

2. An Analysis

Currently, the manuscript consists of sixty-six folios of polished paper. Among them are a flyleaf, a Safavid frontispiece, four Timurid illustrations, folios 28r (fig. 1), 35r (fig. 2), 44r (fig. 3) and 49r (fig. 4), four Safavid illustrations, folios 4v (fig. 5), 11r (fig. 6), 18r (fig. 7) and 22v (fig. 8) and fifty-six text folios. It has been assumed that the frontispiece and four illustrations are the only Safavid additions and that the remaining text folios are all Timurid (Grube 1967, 339; Welch 1987, 107). However, careful examination has revealed that some text folios were Safavid additions. The following describes the procedure of my investigation.

Since the paper is only a single thickness, text pages on the reverse side of the four Timurid illustrations are certainly Timurid. Therefore, these Timurid text pages (folios 28v, 35v, 44v, 49v) can serve as a comparison when examining the other folios. Chart 1 shows the features of these Timurid text pages. In the event that some pages seem different from these Timurid text folios in significant ways, their origin needs to be further investigated.

In fact, a close observation of the other text folios found that there were several text folios which differ from Timurid ones; they lack the features
detailed in chart 1. To be specific, gold lines overlap the calligraphy and minute black lines are carelessly drawn. There is a conspicuous blank space between jadval and the text. Intervals between the text columns are irregular or wider than in the Timurid folios. Interestingly enough, these features are also found in those text pages which are on the back side of the Safavid illustrations (folios 4r, 11v, 18v, 22r). Since the paper of these folios is also only a single thickness, these text pages are certainly Safavid. For the features of these four Safavid text pages, see chart 2.

All the text folios in the manuscript were examined using the abovementioned features of the Timurid and Safavid folios as the criteria to distinguish Timurid text folios from other text folios. The examination revealed that fifteen folios: 6, 14, 15, 21, 25, 29, 33, 34, 42, 47, 52, 55, 59, 60 and 63 are later Safavid additions. In this determination, gold lines are a crucial first indicator because if a gold line overlaps the calligraphy, then the folio tends to have other features characteristic of a Safavid text page. Appendix 1 shows the results of this examination.

Comparison between these fifteen text folios and the Timurid folios means it is possible to reconstruct how Safavid artists augmented the Timurid manuscript in the Safavid court atelier. At that time, in order to make the additional folios match with the Timurid ones, they needed to make text pages which would be almost identical to the Timurid originals. Therefore, Safavid artists tried to emulate not only the format of Timurid text pages, but also the design in illumination. Since they imitated the Timurid original so thoroughly, Safavid folios are almost indistinguishable from Timurid ones. However, as shown in chart 3, closer examination reveals that the Safavid additional folios are less meticulously prepared than the Timurid ones.

Investigation of the manuscript also reveals a large lacuna between folio 16v and folio 17r. Obviously, the text of these two folios is not successive, and the missing forty-eight bayts should depict the anecdote of the “Beautiful King,” “Iskandar,” and “Mahmūd and Ayāz.” On average, each text page has space to contain forty-four bayts; that is, each folio can contain eighty-eight bayts. The missing folio, therefore, upon which forty-eight bayts must have been written, should have been accompanied by an illustration. Since all missing anecdotes are about a king, this missing illustration may have portrayed the actual ruler at that time, that is, Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, in order to praise him. Moreover, as indicated in Appendix 1, further research revealed that folios 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 41 include several bayts from another mystical poem by ‘Atṭār, Muṣḥbat-nāma.
It is clear then that, in the Timurid period, this manuscript originally consisted of sixty-seven folios and should have had nine illustrations, but it was damaged over the course of time. Since many text pages and illustrations had been lost or damaged, Safavid artists added or replaced fifteen text folios, four illustrations and a frontispiece in order to reconstruct the manuscript. While they tried to restore the Timurid original structure by this augmentation, one Timurid folio with an illustration is still missing. Perhaps it was not supplemented at that time or it was removed later.

3. Characteristics of the Selection of the Scenes for Illustration

‘Aṭṭār (1145?-1221), the author of Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr, is one of the most celebrated poets of Sūfi literature. According to Schimmel (1975, 305), his works, especially Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr, have become “standard works of Sūfi literature, from which generations of mystics and poets have taken their inspiration.” However, compared to frequently illustrated literary texts, such as the Shāh-nāma, Nizāmī’s Khamsa, and Sa’di’s Bāstān and Gulistān, illustrated manuscripts of Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr are relatively rare and not well studied. The list of manuscripts related to Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr (Appendix 2) indicates that illustrated manuscripts of Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr were frequently produced in the second half of the fifteenth century and our manuscript transcribed in 1487 is one such manuscript.19

The story of Ṭanṭiq al-Ṭayr is as follows: The birds assemble to select a king for they believe that they cannot live harmoniously without a king. Among them, the hoopoe, who used to be the ambassador sent by Sulaymān to the Queen of Sheba, considers the Simurgh,20 which lives behind Mount Qāf, to be the One worthy to become their monarch. When other birds bring up pretexts and excuses in order to avoid making a decision, the hoopoe answers each bird satisfactorily by telling anecdotes and when they complain about the severity and harshness of the journey to Mount Qāf, the hoopoe relates many anecdotes to persuade them. Finally hoopoe succeeds in having the birds prepare for the journey to meet the Simurgh. The birds strive to traverse seven valleys: quest (ṭalab), love (‘ishq), gnosis (ma’rifat), contentment (istighnāt), unity (tawhīd), wonder (ḥayrat), and poverty (faqr). Finally, only thirty birds reach the abode of the Simurgh. They see her in the form of a mirror in which each bird sees itself. Thus, the thirty birds (ṣī murgh in Persian) see the Simurgh as none other than themselves. In this way, they finally accomplish annihilation (fanā). This story is an allegorical work which illustrates the quest of Sufism; birds are a metaphor for men who pursue the path of Sufism, the hoopoe is a metaphor for a Sūfi ptr (mentor), the Simurgh is a metaphor for God and the birds’ journey is a
metaphor for the path of Sufism.

A preliminary chart of frequency of occurrence of some illustrated scenes in *Mantiq al-Tayr* manuscripts (Appendix 3) indicates two facts. First, most scenes illustrated belong to anecdotes told in the story as precepts rather than to the central narrative. Second, certain anecdotes tend to be illustrated more frequently than others, such as those relating to Shaykh Ṣanʿān, Maḥmūd of Ghazna, Yūsuf, and Laylā and Majnūn. Moreover, the pictorial cycle for *Mantiq al-Tayr* was probably formed by the mid-fifteenth century, as indicated by the fact that an illustrated manuscript of *Mantiq al-Tayr* made in 1456 and two similar illustrated manuscripts dated 1493 and 1494 show a tendency to illustrate certain anecdotes with particular compositions. Further research on the illustrated manuscripts of *Mantiq al-Tayr* is required to reveal the pictorial cycle of *Mantiq al-Tayr*.

Regarding the MMA *Mantiq al-Tayr*, however, only “The Conference of the Birds” and the two scenes with Shaykh Ṣanʿān are in common with other manuscripts. The remaining six illustrated anecdotes are unique to this manuscript. Evidently, the manuscript does not conform to the usual pictorial cycle. What does the specific choice of scenes for illustration mean? What purposes or intentions were there behind the choice of scenes? In order to answer these questions, the relation between each illustration and text will be investigated. Since this manuscript was commissioned by a Timurid patron and may reflect his taste, the Timurid illustrations are the focus of this investigation.

II. Text-Image Relation in the Manuscript

1. Timurid Illustrations

A “The Beggar and the King” (folio 28r)

“The Beggar and the King” (fig. 1) on folio 28r is the first of the four Timurid illustrations. This anecdote is narrated by the hoopoe as a response to a bird’s complaint. When a bird complains, “I am very weak-willed. Sometimes I am ascetic but sometimes I indulge in dissipation. I am caught between two ways of life,” the hoopoe replies, “Obedience will lead you to rectitude,” and tells the story of a poor man who is in love with an Egyptian king. The king summons the poor man and asks him to choose between exile and death. The poor man chooses exile and is immediately beheaded. When the king is asked the reason he did so, he answers, “It is because he was not entirely in love with me. If he truly loved me, he would have chosen death rather than exile. If he had chosen death, I would have become his darvish.” This scene is not illustrated in other
extant manuscripts of *Mantiq al-Tayr.*

While this anecdote is set in Egypt, the beggar, the king and all of his attendants wear Timurid clothes. In fact, the setting resembles that in the double-page frontispiece of Sa’di’s *Bastan* made for Husayn Bâyqarâ in 1488 (Lukens 1967, 323) which must have been intended as a portrait of the patron of the manuscript, Husayn Bâyqarâ and his court. Considering this practice, it is possible that the scene of “The Beggar and the King” was also chosen in order to depict the circumstance and atmosphere surrounding the patron of the manuscript of *Mantiq al-Tayr.*

B. “The Son Who Mourned His Father” (folio 35r)
The second Timurid painting illustrates a short anecdote told as a response to a bird who complains about his fear of death. In the anecdote, a son grieves over the death of his father in front of his coffin and a sufi soothes the son explaining that his father had experienced much pain and that no one can avoid death (fig. 2). The painter depicts the incident described in this anecdote as occurring in front of a cemetery gate. While the depiction of a cemetery is appropriate to this anecdote, the scene behind the gate of the cemetery is replete with motifs which are irrelevant to the story itself. Two-thirds of the painted surface of this illustration is not directly linked to its text.

Milstein (1977, 362-365) was the first scholar to suggest a symbolic interpretation for this painting. According to Milstein, the gateway of the cemetery is an entrance to the spiritual world. Barry (2004, 311-312) also argues that the gateway separates this world from the next, and provides a symbolic interpretation for each motif. Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 146) argues that as a visual comment on the anecdote, the painter tried to convey that death is a natural cycle.

In order to understand the implication of this illustration as a whole, it is necessary to establish the possible meaning of each meticulously depicted motif. The elements in the cemetery can be divided into three groups. The first group of motifs is depicted around a grave enclosure with a red fence and contains a cat, a lamp and a flag. The cat, as Daneshvari has demonstrated, was a symbol for betrayal, an ill-omen, and disease in medieval Persia. Therefore, it is possible that the painter of this illustration depicted a cat next to the tomb as a symbol of death. The lamp could be understood as an offering for a dead person. Or, because of the phrase in the *Qur’an* (24:35), “Allâh is the light and he leads people toward the light,” the lamp could symbolize spirituality, divine light, and theophanic revelation. In addition, in the forty-fourth chapter of *Mantiq al-Tayr,*
oil in a lamp is described as a symbol of eternity. Thus, motifs in the first group can be understood as representing death, purification and the eternity of one’s soul after death.

Four flags depicted around the tomb and on a large tree connect the first group to the second group of motifs depicted around the large tree. Three flags have an inscription of “yā Allāh.” If the fourth flag, which has a peeled-off surface, had this inscription, then the four flags represent the four-fold iteration of “yā Allāh.” This iteration coincides with a description of burial rites in the Hadith (section sixty-five), which states that people should recite “Great is Allāh” four times for a dead person.

The second group of motifs around the tree consists of a flock of birds, a cage, a nest, and a snake. As was mentioned above, birds can symbolize human beings. Moreover, birds also represent the rational soul (Heath 1990, 174); according to the Qurʾān (27:16), birds have their own language, and birds are thought to possess rational minds. Due to their greed, however, they tend to be attracted to the grains in a snare and are then kept in a cage (Schimmel 1978, 113-114). This image of birds trapped in a cage is often used in Persian literature: Sa’dī and Rūmī used the image of trapped birds (Milstein 1977, 363). In Ibn Sinā’s Risālat at-Ṭayr [The Epistle of the Bird] which was the inspiration for Mantīq al-Ṭayr, birds are caught in a hunter’s trap which represents the material world (Heath 1990, 174), and death is intended as an escape from the material world (Heath 1990, 176). Therefore, the depiction of the nest threatened by a snake, which is regarded as a wicked creature (Chebel 1995, 385-6), can be interpreted as a representation of the fragility of this world. Thus, motifs in the second group appear to represent the present world in which human beings are threatened by entrapment and death. Thus far, the discussion suggests that the painter has ingeniously arranged motifs carrying metaphorical meaning to represent afterlife around the tomb and others linked to the present world around the tree.

The third group consists of grave diggers working hard to prepare a new tomb. The reason for their inclusion has been vaguely explained as a characteristic of the school of Bihzād which produced many scenes of building activities (Swietochowski 1972, 57). The significance of this group, however, can be interpreted in the light of the teaching of Sufism: this work scene may reflect the pervasive teaching of Sufism which places a greater emphasis on manual labor. This issue will be discussed in detail in the next section.

C. “The Drowning Man” (folio 44r)
The third Timurid illustration depicts an anecdote narrated by the hoopoe in response to a bird which insists that he has laboriously acquired perfection by himself and cannot find any reason to pursue a painful journey to find the Sîmurgh. The hoopoe admonishes the bird for his self-satisfaction and explains that in order to leave worldliness one should abandon one’s pride and conceit. The anecdote is as follows: A man with a long beard is drowned in the sea. A passerby says, “Take off your tubra!” Then the man replies, “This is not a tubra! This is my own beard!” The passerby says, “Your beard is marvelous; however, that same beard causes you to drown in the sea.” The beard is a symbol of dignity in Islamic society, and this anecdote draws the moral that pride in something such as one’s own beard will eventually bring one to ruin.

The anecdote is illustrated in the picture’s background (fig. 3) and the foreground depicts men busy cutting and collecting firewood. This foreground scene is irrelevant to the anecdote itself. Why did a painter depict this scene which is totally unrelated to the text itself? What is the significance of this scene?

Lukens (1967, 331) explains that the scene is included in this illustration because the school of Bihzād often incorporated details of daily life into painting. It is true that fifteenth-century Herāt painting is characterized by a penchant for depiction of daily life. However, they did not depict daily activities which are totally unrelated to the story itself. On the other hand, Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 126-128) argues that the painter depicted firewood, a substance which is easily destroyed, as a symbol for the drowning man. While this interpretation is repeated in Sims’ monograph on Persian painting (Sims 2002, 253), this explanation does not seem persuasive because this chapter and anecdote are not about the ephemeral quality of life, but the perils of pride. In fact, in order to criticize pride, the chapter to which this anecdote belongs contains another story about a darvîsh preoccupied with his beard. Barry (2004, 336-338) interprets the scene as Bihzād’s own comment on the story: a dark-faced man at the bottom left is a devil and the visual reference to the devil’s chopped dry wood is taken from Rûmî’s work to gloss ‘Aṭṭār’s Mantiq al-Tayr. Recently, Kia (2006, 97) has suggested that the sitting man and the man cutting the tree signify a kind of meditation practiced by Naqshbandi initiates.

There must be a reason for depicting the woodcutters in the foreground, but it has not yet been explained convincingly. The following is my own interpretation of the scene. First, there seems to be a connection between the depiction of woodcutters and the representation of working or labor. The section on trade in the Hadîth (15:5) states that it is much better for the disciples of God
to gather firewood and to carry it on their backs than to beg (Makino 2001, vol. 2, 292). Moreover, Hadith (15:6) reads as follows: “Muḥammad says that it is much better for you to gather firewood with a rope by yourself than to beg (Makino 2001, vol. 2, 293).” These statements indicate that gathering firewood is viewed as work by which even a simple person can earn a living.

‘Aṭṭār also mentions the life of a woodcutter in his work entitled Asrār-nāma. He writes, “Ghazzālī visits a sick woodcutter and says to him: ‘You’ll soon get better. Don’t be so sad!’ The poor woodcutter answers: ‘And if I were feeling better, I’d have to go back to chopping wood (and finally die) (Ritter 2003, 135).’” Here, the life of a woodcutter is shown as an example of a life of monotonous and endless menial manual labor. From these accounts, the depiction of woodcutting and wood gathering can be understood as a representation of menial manual labor.

Second, the depiction of woodcutting seems to be related to the teachings of both ‘Aṭṭār and Sufism which emphasize the importance of work. ‘Aṭṭār emphasizes the necessity to undertake work (kār kardan) and insists that one must work with one’s own hands (Ritter 2003, 293). He writes in his Asrār-nāma, “A man specifies in his will that his money should be given to the village elder because he knows better the poor who are worthy of assistance. The village elder says, picking up a grain of gold in his hand: ‘It would have been better for him if he had given this one grain to the poor with his own hand, rather than all his money to the village elder (Ritter 2003, 293-294).’” In this anecdote, ‘Aṭṭār advocates that people must work with their own hands and nobody can do someone else’s work (Ritter 2003, 293).

The teachings of Sufism also regard work as important. At the end of the fifteenth century in Herāt, the Šūfi order of Naqshbandī was dominant. This order was established by Bahā’ al-Dīn Naqshband (AD 1318-1389), and his teachings uphold the authorized teachings of Islām. The basis of his teachings is “faqr” which means poverty chosen by one’s own will (Urunbaev 1997, 61). The motto of the Naqshbandī order was “hands for work, heart for the friend” (dast ba-kār, dil ba-yār), and because these teachings were based on people’s daily lives, the Naqshbandī order became popular among all classes of society, especially in the second half of the fifteenth century (Urunbaev 1997, 61). At that time, a leader of the Naqshbandī order, Khvāja Ahrār, was influential and devotion to the Naqshbandī order was prevalent at the Timurid court. For example, the ruler of Herāt, Ḫusayn Bāyqarā, influential noblemen, such as ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī, and an eminent poet, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ḫāmī (d. 1492), followed the Naqshbandī order.36
Taking the above into account, the woodcutters in the foreground can be understood as a representation of the people who pursue the way of Sufism by working. These woodcutters taking the right way in Sufi terms are contrasted with a drowning man who has failed in his spiritual quest because of his conceit. Probably, appropriate to the teaching of the anecdote which shows the right way to quest for Sufism, the painter arranged people who correctly pursue Sufism in the foreground as a good model and by way of contrast positioned a drowning man in the background as a deterrent. Similarly, the lively depiction of men working in a grave in folio 35r (fig. 2) could be understood as a reflection of the importance of manual labor among the Naqshbandi order.

D. “Shaykh Mihna and the Peasant” (folio 49r)
This fourth and last of the Timurid illustrations depicts a man’s talking to a peasant who is plowing in the foreground and shows men weighing melons in the background (fig. 4). On the middle left, a darvish is sleeping at the base of a tree.

This illustration is connected with an anecdote which stresses the importance of the quest (talab): in order to search for God, one must lose oneself and abandon the temporal world. The anecdote is as follows: Shaykh Mihna (Abū Sa‘īd Mihna’ī, AD 967-1049), a famous shaykh of Khurāsān, wandered in the wilderness in a state of depression. He saw a peasant in the distance cultivating wasteland with an ox-plow. The peasant emitted light. Shaykh Mihna approached the peasant and told him of his painful condition. The peasant asked him to be patient and pursue the endless quest.

The physical condition of the folio is puzzling. First, three bayts between folio 49r and 49v which are essential to the anecdote are omitted from the text of this manuscript. Closer observation indicates that two text columns had been pasted on the illustration: one on the top right corner, the second on the bottom left. It is suggested here that the text column at the bottom left should have been placed at the bottom right to include the now-lost three bayts, thus making the text clearer. Second, this illustration is exceptionally heavily damaged. A large crease in the middle of the illustration, which is also visible from the back side, suggests that this folio was once damaged and then reconstituted. Third, the back side of this illustration, that is, folio 49v, is the only text page in which illumination is left incomplete. Fourth, the illustration lacks the stylistic uniformity of the other illustrations of this manuscript. These facts seem to indicate that Safavid artists were remiss in repairing this damaged folio which had not been completed in the Timurid period.
The illustration itself is also enigmatic. Comparison between text and illustration reveals that the content of the story, that is, the dialogue of Shaykh Mihna and the peasant, is depicted in the foreground. On the other hand, the images in the background of three men weighing melons and filling bags with them, and one sleeping darvish in a black stole accompanied by a dog at the base of a tree are totally irrelevant to the text itself. Why were these three men and a darvish depicted?

This issue has attracted scholarly interest; Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 132-135) has explored the metaphorical meaning of this part of the illustration. He explains that a carrying pole which weighs melons is a metaphor for “balance,” which has many symbolic meanings in Sufi thought; however, he does not sufficiently explain the meaning of the sleeping darvish. Barry (2004, 313-315) assumes that the sleeping darvish represents and epitomizes all Seven Sleepers of the Cave. He regards the melon-weighing men as symbols of the angels who shall weigh human souls in scales on Judgement Day. However, this interpretation does not provide a relation between the anecdote itself and the metaphorical meanings of each motif. Kia (2006, 101) tries to decipher the meaning of the melon-weighing scene as one of patience and its recompense. Probably, the painter intentionally depicted these enigmatic motifs so that people could enjoy decoding them. While the true connotation of this illustration is still not known, there must be a hidden meaning which would have been intelligible to the people who appreciated this manuscript at the end of the fifteenth century.

Given the fact that, in the second and third Timurid illustrations, motifs carrying metaphorical meaning are arranged ingeniously to paraphrase the precept of each anecdote, these melon-weighing men and a sleeping darvish could signify some metaphorical meaning which exemplifies the importance of the quest (talab).

2. Safavid Illustrations
The following four illustrations were added at the Safavid court atelier. These four illustrations would have been prepared in the Timurid period, but were dispersed at some point in time. In this section, the relation between each illustration and text will be discussed to investigate the characteristics of these Safavid illustrations.

A. “The Man and the Ruffian” (folio 4v)
The anecdote of this illustration belongs to a part of the invocation which explains the Unity of God. The anecdote is as follows: A pitiful man was about
to be put to death by a ruffian. When the ruffian attempted to kill him, he realized that the poor man had a piece of bread in his hand. The ruffian asked him from whom he got it and the poor man answered that he had received it from the ruffian’s wife. Then, the ruffian said, “I cannot kill him since we had the same bread!” Right after this story, ‘Aṭṭār mentions gratitude toward the God who supplies him with bread and prays that God will always be with him. The illustration (fig. 5) is a straightforward depiction of a story and in contrast to Timurid illustrations there seem to be no hidden meanings. The style of clothing is typical for the Safavid period; however, a depiction of a garden with a red fence is typical of the Timurid period. The artist may have adopted features from a Timurid illustration on folio 28r (fig. 1) to link this illustration with the Timurid ones.

B. “The Conference of the Birds” (folio 11r)
This painting (fig. 6) is signed by a Safavid painter, Ḥabīb Allāh.³⁹ The text on this folio belongs to the hoopoe’s speech which proposes that birds set out on a journey to find Stmurgh and ask it to be their king.⁴⁰ This illustration is basically faithful to the text and depicts a gathering of birds. On the other hand, a man with a matchlock, a tree with a snake aiming at a bird’s nest and two goats on a mountain appear irrelevant to the story. Why were they included? Do they convey any hidden meaning?

The motif of a man with a matchlock is totally irrelevant to the text itself. Probably it was painted just because it was a popular motif at that time: Ḥabīb Allāh painted a man with a matchlock at least twice and Rizā ʿAbbāsī also used this motif.⁴¹ On the other hand, the tree with a snake climbing toward a bird’s nest may have been inspired by the same motif on Timurid folio 35r (fig. 2) as this type of motif was rarely depicted in Safavid paintings. While this motif symbolizes the fragility of this world in the Timurid painting, it does not necessarily convey the same meaning in the Safavid illustration because this anecdote does not deal with the topics of death or the transient quality of life. Ḥabīb Allāh may have included this feature in order to match his painting with the original Timurid illustrations of this manuscript. Similarly, the motif of goats on a mountain may be inspired by Timurid painting, such as an illustration of Hasht Bihisht of Amīr Khusraw in 1496 (Bahari 1996, 169), to provide a Timurid atmosphere in this illustration. Thus, Safavid artists were able to use Timurid motifs to make the Safavid additional illustrations look more Timurid-like so that they would match more closely with original Timurid pages. However, unlike the motifs in the Timurid illustrations of this manuscript, these
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Safavid motifs are not intended to convey any metaphorical meaning.

C. “Shaykh Šan‘ān and a Maiden on a Balcony” (folio 18r)

The third and fourth Safavid illustrations depict scenes from a famous anecdote about Shaykh Šan‘ān which is often illustrated in other manuscripts of *Mantiq al-Tayr*. In the text related to the third Safavid illustration, the hoopoe uses this anecdote to illustrate that those who are in love should give up their own lives. The anecdote is as follows: A celebrated Shaykh named Šan‘ān went from Ka‘ba to Greece and fell in love with a Christian maiden there. At her suggestion, he became a Christian and even looked after swine which are considered unclean in Islam. When his disciples heard about this, they came to Greece and prayed to God that Shaykh Šan‘ān would return to his belief in Islam. Owing to the disciples’ prayers, he regained his Muslim faith and returned to his home in Hijāz. Then, repenting of her deed, the Christian maiden followed him and converted to Islam. Shaykh Šan‘ān sensed that she had true faith in Islam and turned back to seek her with his disciples. When she had found Shaykh Šan‘ān, she fainted and this made him cry. Later, when the Christian maiden recovered consciousness, she begged his pardon and died.

The text on this folio describes how Shaykh Šan‘ān lost belief in Islam and continued to gaze at the countenance of a Christian maiden ignoring remonstrances made by his disciples.42 In the illustration (fig. 7), Shaykh Šan‘ān gazes at a Christian maiden who stands on a balcony, and his disciples are talking to each other with perplexed expressions. Thus, this illustration is quite faithful to ‘Aṭṭār’s text.

Compositions in which a man looks up at a woman on a balcony had been popular since the end of the fourteenth century.43 As with the second illustration, this Safavid painting also tries to incorporate Timurid elements. While the balcony with wooden beams and a painted vault is typical of Safavid architecture, such as a balcony at ‘Ālī Qāpū and a vault of a palace at Nā’in, respectively,44 the style of inscription band on the building seems to be inspired by that on the lower part of the Timurid building depicted in folio 28r (fig. 1). A red fence surrounding a garden was also a popular motif in the Timurid period. While the Christian maiden’s style of clothes is typical of those worn at Isfahān from the end of sixteenth century to the beginning of the seventeenth century, Shaykh Šan‘ān’s coat with long sleeves and his disciple’s round hat are Timurid in style. Why did Safavid artists add such Timurid elements and motifs? Welch (1976, 183) has argued that Shāh ‘Abbās attempted to restore Iran to a period of power and stability such as that experienced in the Timurid period and this
attempt was accompanied by a deliberate revival of the Timurid style in the arts, and because of these Timurid elements, Grube and Welch regard the manuscript of *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr* as an example of such an intentional “Timurid Revival.”

Safavid painters were generally well acquainted with Timurid paintings through copying compositions of old masterpieces. For instance, Safavid painters such as Rizā ‘Abbāsī often copied Timurid paintings such as those by Bihzād (Canby 1996, 129-136). Another Safavid court painter Ṣādiqī Beg painted illustrations of *Anvār-i Suhaylī* in 1593 (Welch 1976, 129-130, fig. 44), which were apparently inspired by Timurid paintings like those in the *Kalila va Dimna* in 1429 and the *Khamsa* by Nizāmī in 1494 (Bahari 1996, 143). These Safavid artists copied Timurid masterpieces for practice or for inspiration and not necessarily for the sake of a politically imbued “Timurid revival.” It seems more reasonable to assume that, as illumination of Safavid additional text folios closely imitates that of original Timurid pages in the manuscript of *Manṭiq al-Ṭayr*, Safavid artists tried to emulate the original Timurid illustrations to maintain the integrity of the manuscript.

D. “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and the Unconscious Maiden” (folio 22v)
The fourth and last Safavid illustration also depicts an anecdote about Shaykh Ṣanʿān (fig. 8). On the way back to Greece, Shaykh Ṣanʿān found that a Christian maiden had collapsed in the street. She then recovered consciousness. The text on the folio describes the last dialogue with Shaykh Ṣanʿān right before her last breath: she apologizes to him and bids him farewell. After this anecdote, ‘Aṭṭār states: “We leave this world as wind. You cannot understand the mystery if you adhere to worldly pleasure. A fight with desire is always furious.” In the illustration, the Christian maiden addresses her last words to Shaykh Ṣanʿān as she lies in his arms and his disciples gaze in astonishment at the event. Thus, this illustration harmonizes with the text on this folio.

The text describes the most impressive scene in the anecdote of Shaykh Ṣanʿān, but the composition of the illustration is quite straightforward and its quality is mediocre. While the clothes of the figures are similar to those of contemporary Safavid paintings, the depiction of ground covered with small pebbles and weeds was probably inspired by that of the Timurid folio 44r (fig. 3).

III. Characteristics of the Manuscript
1. Characteristics of Timurid Illustrations and Safavid Illustrations
As was stated earlier, there is a missing illustrated folio between the current
folios 16 and 17 which may depict the actual ruler at that time. The patron of this manuscript may have chosen the anecdote of “The Beggar and the King” (fig. 1) for illustration to depict the circumstances and the atmosphere which surrounded him. The second and third Timurid illustrations (figs. 2 and 3) depict motifs and scenes which are not clearly described in the text. They are ingeniously arranged to paraphrase the message of each anecdote and the teachings of Sufism. While it is currently difficult to interpret the fourth Timurid illustration (fig. 4), the hidden meaning of the illustration is likely to have been intelligible in its own time. Thus, Timurid illustrations convey specific meanings which are appropriate to the content, message or precept of the anecdote itself. The viewer of this manuscript must have enjoyed deciphering these intricately arranged motifs for their metaphorical meanings.

In contrast, their Safavid replacements provide a much more straightforward pictorialization of ‘At’ār’s text. They do not include any motif which carries a metaphorical meaning. In order to match the Timurid illustrations of this manuscript, Safavid artists tried to emulate the style of Timurid illustrations and included many elements of Timurid painting. Likewise, following Timurid original text folios, Safavid artists added text pages which are almost indistinguishable from Timurid original pages at first sight. In this way, Safavid artists supplemented illustrations and text folios so as to maintain the integrity and unity of the manuscript as a Timurid work.

2. Literary Taste in the Timurid Period
As was mentioned above, the Timurid illustrations include many motifs which await decipherment. This riddle-like intricate nature coincides with the literature at that time. As has been pointed out by Subtelny, Persian poetry of the late Timurid period is characterized by a taste for intricacy. In the late fifteenth century, rulers and influential men held literary gatherings called majlis. It is clear from Dawlatshāh’s Taṣkirit al-shu’ara’ [Memoirs on Poets] completed in 1487 that those who participated in the majlis of Husayn Bāqarā had this taste for complexity (Subtelny 1986, 58). People regarded it a great achievement to emulate a work of a poet which seemed impossible to imitate (Subtelny 1986, 68). This tendency contributed to the increasing intricacy of poetry at the time. Additionally, the use of rhetorical devices, such as homonymic puns was favored (Subtelny 1986, 71). The riddle-like verse forms of the acrostic (muvashshah), the chronogram (ta’rikh) and the enigma (mu’amma) were also preferred (Subtelny 1986, 72, 75-76). The mu’amma especially was in vogue in literary circles at the end of the fifteenth century in Herāt and according to Subtelny
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(1986, 77), ‘Alishir Navâ’î was perhaps the single greatest enthusiast of the mu’amma. Those who were able to solve mu’amma without knowing the solution beforehand were greatly admired (Subtelny 1986, 76).

Solving these riddles in the words of a poem and deciphering the hidden meanings in a painting presupposes the same taste. If people who held literary gatherings also owned ateliers, such literary taste for intricate, enigmatic poems could be easily reflected in the contemporary Timurid illustrations. In fact, “The Seduction of Yusuf” in Sa’di’s Bastân made in 1488 for Husayn Bâyqarâ clearly reflects such taste. It is not based on Sa’di’s work but draws upon the version of this story in the work of Jâmî who was influential in both literary and Şûfi circles at that time. In contrast to Sa’di’s brief description of “The Seduction of Yusuf,” Jâmî fully transferred this story into a Şûfi allegory of the soul’s search for divine love (Blair and Bloom 1997, 216). Probably, in order to satisfy his predilection for the literature of Jâmî and commitment to Sufism, Husayn Bâyqarâ asked painters to use Jâmî’s description rather than Sa’di’s as the basis for this illustration of Sa’di’s Bastân. Likewise, the Timurid illustrations of the MMA Manṭiq al-Ṭayr demonstrate a close connection between painting, literary taste and Sufism at the end of the fifteenth century.

IV. A Possible Patron and Painter for This Manuscript
The preeminent illustrations and exquisitely written text and accompanying illumination clearly indicate that the MMA manuscript of Manṭiq al-Ṭayr was produced by a leading atelier. Who was the patron of this manuscript? The key to this question is the colophon of this manuscript which reads: “By the scribe, the first day of the fifth month of the second year of the last ten years preceding 900 [that is, 892], transcription of this precious book was done by humble Sulân ‘Alî by the mercy of the One [God].” If this manuscript had been made in a royal atelier for the ruler Husayn Bâyqarâ, the scribe would have added epithets to his own name such as al-kâtib-u al-sulṭânî (royal scribe) to indicate a royal origin. For example, in the colophon of a royal manuscript of the Dvân of ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î, the calligrapher Sulţân ‘Alî Mashhâdî specifically mentions that it was made for “the treasury of Sulţân Ḥusayn.” The simple and concise description in the colophon of Manṭiq al-Ṭayr indicates that its patron was not royal and therefore, the patron of this manuscript cannot be Husayn Bâyqarâ.

At the end of the fifteenth century in Herât, many aristocrats, high officials and ‘ulama’ patronized art and literature. Possessing rare and luxuriously illustrated books was one of the pleasures of nobles and some of them had their own ateliers; however, according to Subtelny’s study (1988, 490-494), no one is
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known to have operated an atelier equal to those of Husayn Bayqarã and ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î.

‘Alîshîr Navâ’î was a most sophisticated poet-statesman and a friend of Husayn Bayqarã.53 He not only held literary gatherings (majlis) in Herât but also had his own atelier and patronized many poets, scholars, calligraphers, painters and musicians.54 He was so impressed with ‘Âṭâr that he imitated ‘Âṭâr’s Manîq al-Ṭayr by writing Lîsân al-Ṭayr in the Chagatai language. He also erected a tomb for ‘Âṭâr (Ritter 1960, 752). Moreover, as was mentioned above, since he was involved in the Naqshbandî order, he must have felt empathy with Šûfî literature such as Manîq al-Ṭayr. Taking these circumstances into consideration, ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î is a probable patron. If so, ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î may have intended to portray Husayn Bayqarã in the missing illustrated folio between folio 16v and 17r to praise him. ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î is known to have presented precious gifts to Husayn Bayqarã whenever the latter came to see him (Kubo 1990, 28).

As for the painter(s) of this manuscript, Lukens (1967, 323, 327) attributes them to the school of Bihzâd from a stylistic point of view but she does not deny the possibility that Mîrak Naqqâsh might also have been engaged in the illustrations. Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 108-113, 124, 129-130, 136) argues that one illustration includes Mîrak’s name and consequently attributes all Timurid illustrations to Mîrak. On the other hand, Barry (2004, 311-315, 336-338) attributes illustrations to Bihzâd because he was a unique painter who could address mystical concepts in paintings. How can we identify the painter of the Timurid illustrations of Manîq al-Ṭayr in the absence of any signature?

Considering the ingenuity of the Timurid illustrations in the manuscript, leading artists of the time such as Bihzâd and Mîrak Naqqâsh must have been engaged in these illustrations. In fact, Bihzâd and Mîrak were known to have worked for both Husayn Bayqarã and ‘Alîshîr Navâ’î (Kubo 1990, 41-42, 44, note 35; Qâdî Ahmâd 1959, 180). Melikian-Chirvani (1988, 110) reads the name of Mîrak Naqqâsh in the architectural frieze of folio 28 recto (fig. 1) as follows: “Joyful is the assembly where the king stays; Bright is Mîrak where the moon throws light on him.” However, there is an alternative reading: “Joyful is the assembly (maḥfîl) where the king stays; Bright is the house (manzîl) where the moon throws light on it.”55

There are, however, several reasons to dispute Melikian-Chirvani’s reading. First, it would have been unusual to put the painter’s name so prominently in a painting. Most Persian paintings lack signatures but whenever a painter did sign his work, he did so inconspicuously. For instance, Bihzâd’s signature in the 1488
Bastan in Cairo is so meticulously written that it is difficult to recognize it in the painting. His pupil, Maḥmūd, also concealed his signature on a tambourine held by a musician (Arnold 1965, 71). Second, in terms of rhyme, a reading of “Mirak” is inappropriate. It does not rhyme with “mahfil,” but the latter reading of “manzil” (house) does rhyme with “mahfil.” Moreover, it is quite difficult to believe that the painter praises himself so boldly in the inscription. Rather the inscription appropriately praises the place where the king stays.

In order to reinforce his argument, Melikian-Chirvani cites Dūst Muḥammad’s statements on Mirak Naqqāsh, which describe how Mirak was engaged in calligraphy/outlining (taḥrīr) and illumination (taẓhib). However, since many calligraphers, illuminators, gilders and painters had these skills, it would be impossible to attribute the illustration to Mirak simply because of Dūst Muḥammad’s account. Thus, Melikian-Chirvani’s attribution of the painting to Mirak is not convincing.

As the Timurid illustrations of this manuscript indicate, the painter must have had a high intelligence to be able to imbue the illustrations with metaphorical connotations. It has been pointed out that, in general, artists at the end of the fifteenth century were highly cultured: Kubo’s research on the collection of letters entitled Nāma-yi nāmit written by the historian Khvāndamīr (c.1475-1535) reveals that at the end of the fifteenth century, an intellectual such as Khvāndamīr wrote samples of letters for craftsmen and merchants (Kubo 2001, 75-76). The urban growth of Timurid Herāt raised the social status of the common people, and at the same time, it enriched the level of people’s education. Moreover, the memoir about Timurid Herāt entitled Badā‘i’ al-Vaqā’i’ written by Vāsīfī demonstrates that many intellectuals have names which indicate that they were either craftsmen or merchants (Kubo 2001, 76). The painters therefore seem to have had enough literary knowledge to include hidden meanings in their illustrations.

Even though a painter at that time could have been an intellectual, such enigmatic paintings, which modern scholars are unable to decipher, are rare among the works of the fifteenth century. As we have seen from the signed illustration by Bihzād in the Bastan of Sa’dī, Bihzād was exceptionally talented at imbuing painting with metaphysical thought. Bihzād was close to ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī and is believed to have joined his majlis (Kubo 1990, 44, note 35). Occasionally, some Timurid illustrations of the manuscript of Manṭiq al-Tawr in the Metropolitan Museum of Art have been attributed to Bihzād (Bahari 1996, 83-93) even though it is difficult to do so because there are only a few signed works by the painter. However, considering all these facts, Bihzād probably...
played an important role in illustrating this manuscript.

Conclusion
The careful investigation of the structure of the manuscript of *Mantiq al-Tayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art has revealed several facts for the first time. During the fifteenth-century, the manuscript must have contained sixty-seven folios including nine illustrations. It was produced in a non-royal atelier, and possibly for ‘Alīshīr Navā’ī, who is known to have admired ‘Aṭṭār. Bihzād may have played an important role in making the illustrations of this manuscript. Later, Safavid artists added twenty folios including four illustrations. They tried to emulate the style of the Timurid illustrations and illumination to maintain the appearance of the original Timurid manuscript. Therefore Safavid illustrations contain many Timurid elements. While the Safavid text page closely follows the Timurid original, close observation makes it possible to differentiate Safavid additions from Timurid originals.

A pictorial cycle for *Mantiq al-Tayr* had already been established before our manuscript was produced; however, instead of following it, the scenes illustrated in this manuscript were chosen according to some other principle. The first Timurid illustration (folio 28r) was, perhaps, intended to record the atmosphere and circumstances of that time. The still missing illustration (between folio 16v and 17r) may have portrayed the actual ruler at that time. If so, this could have been intended as a reference to Ḥusayn Bāyqarār. The remaining three Timurid illustrations contain many motifs and scenes which are not mentioned in the text itself. By ingeniously arranging these motifs and scenes, the painter appears to have paraphrased the message or precept of each anecdote. The depiction of scenes from daily life can be connected with the teachings of the Naqshbandi order which emphasized the value of physical labor. A viewer of this manuscript probably enjoyed deciphering hidden meanings as well as answering riddles. The taste for intricacy apparent in Timurid illustrations of the manuscript was also prominent in the poetry of that time. People enjoyed solving poetic riddles in *majlis*. In contrast, illustrations added in the Safavid period are quite literal and do not have metaphorical aspects. This manuscript clearly demonstrates the close connections between painting, poetry and Sufism at the end of the fifteenth century in Herāt.

Notes
1 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 63.210. I greatly appreciate the generous assistance provided by Dr. Stefano Carboni, Dr. Navina Haidar, Dr. Maryam Ekhtiar and Mr. Tim Caster in the Department of Islamic Art during my research in 2003. This paper is
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2 This date, fifth month of AH 892, that is 1487, is written on a colophon of this manuscript. However, since Lukens introduced the manuscript as copied in 1483 (Lukens 1967, 317; Swietochowski 1972, 39), this date has been mistakenly repeated in later publications. The most recent publication (Canby 2009, 171) still repeats this date. For the colophon inscription, see the section, “A Possible Patron and Painter for This Manuscript” in this article.

3 Waqf seals on the folios show a date of AH 1017.

4 For the inscription, see the section, “A Possible Patron and Painter for This Manuscript” in this article.

5 Folio 1v and folio 2r each measure 32.7cm × 21.1cm. An inscription on this frontispiece says that it was made by Zayn al-ʿAbidin in Isfahān by the order of Shāh ‘Abbās. Zayn al-ʿAbidin was a famous illuminator and painter. For information on him, see Qāḍī Ahmad 1959, 187.

6 For Shāh ‘Abbās’ waqf policy, see McChesney 1981, 172-178.

7 The inscription reads “...(illegible) mālikhū panjum Jamādī al-Awwal 1106.” I am indebted to Professor Yoshifusa Seki and Professor Abdullah Ghouchani for the reading of this inscription.

8 I would like to thank Professor Abdullah Ghouchani who kindly read the inscription on the seal.

9 This painting was sold in 1990. See Sotheby’s auction catalogue, Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures, London, Friday, 12th October, 1990, lot no. 116. I would like to thank Dr. Asok Kumar Das who kindly drew my attention to this painting.

10 A jadval is a decorative frame enclosing text. For illumination, see Akimushkin and Ivanov 1979. Folio 28v is especially important since it is the only folio without an additional Safavid jadval, and the original Timurid gold outer frame of the text is still extant. The outer frame and adjoining jadval of the Timurid folio closely surround the text.

11 The text of folio 4r corresponds to bayts 158 to 199 in the Dezfuliyan edition. See ‘Aṭṭār 1961, 46-48. The last bayt (couplet) of this page corresponds to the beginning of the first story contained in the section of the invocation. According to the convention of the other folios in this manuscript, the ‘unvān (illuminated heading) at the bottom of the folio would have been inscribed “iṭāyār [narrative].” Instead, “waqf” is inscribed in this ‘unvān (folio 4r). Since this is the only ‘unvān with a waqf inscription, this text page was certainly added at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

12 As shown in Appendix 1, for example, the design of the ‘unvān of Safavid folio 29v imitates that of Timurid folio of 56v.


14 1070th bayt to 1102th bayt in the Dezfuliyan edition, see ‘Aṭṭār 1961, 89-90.

15 1103th bayt to 1109th bayt in the Dezfuliyan edition, see ‘Aṭṭār 1961, 91.


17 It is known that a patron of a manuscript, in many cases the ruler at that time, is often depicted in a double-page illustration. Bāysungkur is depicted in the 1429 Kitāb va Dimna; Ḥusayn Bāyāqar is depicted in the 1488 Bāṣrān. Bāysungkur has also been suggested as the ruler portrayed in a lost manuscript of ca. 1425-1430, see Lentz and Lowry 1989, 110-111, 260-261 and 125 for the plates of each double-page illustration, respectively.

18 I would like to thank Professor Abdullah Ghouchani who kindly helped me in identifying these bayts.

19 This is a preliminary list based on several published catalogues and articles, and further research is required. Some illustrations in the list were published in Swietochowski (1972).

20 The Simurgh is an imaginary bird. It derives from the legends and myth of pre-Islamic Persia. The Simurgh plays an important part in Shāh-nāma and is often illustrated in Persian
manuscripts.

21 For instance, the composition of “Majnūn visiting Laylā’s camp” is similar for all three manuscripts. In addition, the 1456 manuscript and 1493 manuscript have six more illustrated scenes in common, and the 1493 manuscript and 1494 manuscript depict two more scenes which are closely related in their composition. For detailed information on each manuscript, see Appendix 2.

22 As Sims (1973, 279, 283-284) demonstrates in her study on ‘Ali Yazdi’s Zafar-nāma, illustrations and illuminations in manuscripts made for royal or noble patrons could reflect their desires.

24 See Appendix 3.
26 Milstein argues that as one looks from the foreground to the background, that is, from the cemetery to a large tree, one follows the direction of time from the transient world to the eternal one. See Milstein 1977, 365.
27 According to Barry, a cat is an allegory of danger; a smokeless lamp is an allegory of the dead human frame; a gnarled tree is a symbol of the Tree of Life; birds are symbols of the souls liberated from the body; a snake is a symbol of the devil; and a cage is a metaphor for the physical body.
28 A famous natural historian and geographer of thirteenth-century Persia, Qazvinī, writes in his ‘Ajā'ib al-Makhlūqāt [The Wonders of Creatures] that a cat will eat his own offspring. Rūmī uses the cat as symbols of disease, death and unlucky events. See Daneshvari 1986, 41.
30 Makino 2001, vol. 2, 41. This description is based on the Ḥadīth compiled by Būkhārī.
31 Melikjan-Chirvani interprets this as an ongoing process of death, see Melikjan-Chirvani 1988, 146.
32 A tubra is a bag put on a horse’s nose for feeding.
34 For example, an illustration of “The Caliph Ḥārūn al-Rashīd in the Bath House” in Nizāmī’s Khamsa made in 1494 (British Library, Or. 6810) depicts the content of the anecdote in the left side of the painting, but more than half of the space is used for a lively depiction of the bath house itself. The setting of this anecdote is a bath house, so it is natural to depict the daily activities of a bath house. For illustration, see Bahari 1996, 134-135.
36 Jāmī was a head of the Naqshbandi order at Herāt. According to him, ‘Allīshīr Navā’ī also joined this order in 1476/77. See Barthold 1962, 33-34, 41, Urunbaev 1997, 61 and Kubo 2001, 73.
37 3284th bayt to 3300th bayt in Dezfūliyān edition. See ‘Attār 1961, 201-202. The third to fifth bayt of this anecdote are written on folio 49r.
38 The now lost original Timurid illustrated folio 11r would have contained only one bayt; however, Safavid artists put two bayts on the supplemented illustration of folio 11r. Since adjoining folio 10v and folio 12r are Timurid, the fifteenth line of Safavid text folio 11r should have extended one bayt to fill a line which is supposed to contain two bayts. This fact proves that illustrated folio 11r was originally prepared in the Timurid period but was dispersed at some point in time. On the analogy of this folio, illustrations of folios 4, 18 and 22 would also have been prepared in the Timurid period and then dispersed. I am indebted to Professor Priscilla Soucek of New York University who kindly examined this manuscript with me on April 7th, 2005 and pointed out this fact.
39 Ḥabīb Allāh is a famous painter of the court of Shāh ‘Abbās. (The most celebrated painter at that time was Rīzā ‘Abbāsī.) For Ḥabīb Allāh, see Schmitz 2003.
40 The text on this illustration corresponds to the 667th bayt to 668th bayt of Dezfūliyān edition.
See ʿAṭṭār 1961, 69.

41 For illustrations, see Swietochowski 2000, 293; Sims 2002, 233-234; Canby 1996, 135. The most famous painter at that time, Rizā ŠAbbāsī would have been assigned to add some illustrations to this valuable manuscript. According to Canby, however, Rizā was engaged in illustrating a manuscript of Shāh-nāma made for Shāh ʿAbbās from 1587 to 1597. Moreover, at some time between 1603 and 1610, he suddenly left the court atelier and took up with libertines. Perhaps this is why he was not involved in the Safavid illustration of the Mantiq al-Ṭayr manuscript. See Canby 1996, 35, 77-81.

42 The text on this folio corresponds to 1205th bayt to 1214th bayt in Dezfuliyan edition. See ʿAṭṭār 1961, 96.

43 For example, an illustration for a manuscript of a poem by Khvājū Kirmānī at Baghdād in 1396. See Canby 1993, 45, fig. 24.

44 For ʿAlī Qāpū, see Canby 1999, 95. For a palace at Nā’in, see Sims 2002, 172.

45 Grube 1967, 346; Welch 1976, 184. This idea is currently not agreed with. See Swietochowski 2000, 290.

46 For this practice of repeating compositions, see Titley 1984, 223-224 and Lentz and Lowry 1989, 170-179.

47 The text on this folio corresponds to the 1553th bayt to 1557th bayt in the Dezfuliyan edition. See ʿAṭṭār 1961, 112.

48 Subtelny 1986, 78; Kia (2006, 102) also recently points out this dimension of the Timurid illustrations of the manuscript.

49 For the majlis at that time, see Subtelny (1984).

50 While the main text written on the illustrated page is based on Saʿdī’s version, Jāmī’s text is also inscribed as an inscription band on the building depicted in the illustration. See Blair and Bloom 1997, 216, fig. 112.


52 Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, Tashkent, Ms. 1995. I did not examine this manuscript myself. This information is from Soudavar’s catalogue. See Soudavar 1992, 102, 123, note 65.

53 For the life of ʿAlīshīr Navāʾī and his poetic circle, see Barthold 1962 and Subtelny 1979.

54 Kubo 1990, 39-44. A famous painter, Bihzād, and a calligrapher, Sultān ʿAlī Mashhādī also received his patronage.

55 farrukh ān maḥbūl ki shāhāt rā huvad dar vay nishast; rāshan ān manzil k ān māhī rā huvad bar vay guzar ft tārkīh-i safart-i 892.

56 For illustration, see Blair and Bloom 1997, 215.


58 A document concerning Bihzād’s appointment to the Safavid court atelier tells us about the system of the atelier at that time. See Qazwini 1914, 152-154, 158-161.

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**Notes:**
- Type of border
- Page of border
- Size of margin
- Type of text and page layout
- Color of text
- Name of hand
- Date of publication
- Place of publication

**Total Notes:**

- [Add or remove notes based on the table]
Appendix 2: List of Manuscripts related to Manṭiq al-Ṭayr

1410-11  
Text of Manṭiq al-Ṭayr at the margin of Anthology of Iskandar Sultān (London, BM, Add.27261), Shīrāz, no illustrations. (Klimburg-Salter 1976-1977, 66)

Early 15th century  

1411  
Text of Manṭiq al-Ṭayr in the margin of Anthology (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.19), Shīrāz, 3 illustrations (Jackson and Yohannan 1965, 79-90)

f. 11r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 13r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden”

f. 30v “A Prince and a Darvīš”

1412-13  

1444-5  
Manṭiq al-Ṭayr (London, BL, Or. 12003), 54 folios, no illustrations. (Meredith-Owens 1968, 74)

cia. 1440-50  

f. 94 “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

15th century  
Text of Manṭiq al-Ṭayr (f. 310v-f. 329v) in Kulliyāt-i Saʿdi (London, BL, Or. 9567) 392 folios, no illustration. (Meredith-Owens 1968, 57)

1456  

f. 13r “Miʾrāǰ”

f. 27r “The Conference of the Birds”

f. 39v “A King Aims at an Apple on a Man”

f. 49r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 57v “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and the Swine”

f. 68v “Māḥmūd of Ghazna Helping a Boy Fish”

f. 70v “Māḥmūd of Ghazna and a Woodcutter”

f. 96v “Burning Phoenix”

f. 109r “Yūsuf Sold”

f. 114r “Yūsuf and His Brothers”

f. 143v “Majnūn Visiting Laylāʾs Camp”

f. 174r “A Prince and a Darvīš”

f. 188v “A King Falls in Love with a Wazīrʾs Son”
A Taste for Intricacy

1457-8

(Titley 1981, 36-37; Titley 1977, 34; Barnett 1931, 78-9)

f. 35r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 49r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān Looks at a Maiden Seated on a Carpet in the Desert”

1472

f. 92v “Sulaymān”

f. 96v “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and the Swine”

f. 125r “Mahmūd of Ghazna and Ayāz”

ca. 1450-1500

f. 59 “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 68 “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and the Swine”

1487
*Mantiq al-Ṭayr* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 63.210)

1487
*Mantiq al-Ṭayr* (New York, Kevorkian Collection) Shirāz?


ca. 1490-1500

(Titley 1977, 35; Swietochowski 1972, 47, 50, 56, 65-67)

f. 28v “A Princess and a Darvish”

f. 30v “Hoopoe and a Peacock”

f. 49r “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 68r “Mahmūd of Ghazna Helping a Boy Fish”

f. 75v “A Man Worshipping an Idol in a Christian Monastery”

f. 84r “A Prince Hunting”

f. 91r “The Sage Talks about the Crevice in a Wall”

f. 151r “A Beggar and Ayāz”

f. 181v “A Prince and a Darvish”

1492

f. 43v “A King Aims at an Apple on a Man”

f. 54v “Shaykh Ṣanʿān and a Maiden on a Balcony”

f. 77 “Mahmūd of Ghazna and a Woodcutter”

f. 120v “Yūsuf Sold”

f. 187 “A Prince and a Darvish”

1 Titley incorrectly identified an illustration of f. 49r as an anecdote on King Mahmūd. (Titley 1977, 34)

2 Bibliothèque Nationale has another 15 manuscripts of *Mantiq al-Ṭayr*. Their accession numbers are as follows: Suppl. Persan 655, 656, 657(I), 659 (II), 781A, 811, 826, 940, 1682, 1709, 1710, 1777, 1906, 1907 and 2025. They have not been surveyed yet. See Richard 1989, 322.
1493  
*Mantiq al-Tayr* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 246) Shirāz?
Copied by Na‘īm al-Dīn. 7 illustrations. (Robinson 1958, 47-48; Swietochowski 1972, 47, 50, 53, 59, 63, 67)

f. 25v  “The Conference of the Birds”
f. 45r  “Shaykh Şan‘ān and a Maiden on a Balcony”
f. 52v  “Shaykh Şan‘ān and the Swine”
f. 63r  “Māhmūd of Ghazna and a Woodcutter”
f. 96v  “Yūsuf Sold”
f. 124v  “Majnūn Visiting Laylā’s Camp”
f. 150v  “A Prince and a Dārūsh”

1494  
*Mantiq al-Tayr* (Cracow, Czartoryski Museum, Ms. 3885, 28, 48, 60)
Shirāz, 6 illustrations, Turkmen style. Illustrations bear a close resemblance to the *Mantiq al-Tayr* made in 1493 (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Elliot 246) (Robinson 1954, pls.4-5)

“ʿĀdīm”
“The Conference of the Birds”
“Māhmūd of Ghazna Helping a Boy Fish”
“Yūsuf Sold”
“Majnūn Visiting Laylā’s Camp”
“A King Falls in Love with a Wāzīr’s Son”

ca. 1500  
*Mantiq al-Tayr* (New York, Kevorkian Collection) Shirāz?
7 illustrations (Klimburg-Salter 1976-1977, 66)

1515  
An illustration of *Mantiq al-Tayr*
(Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayi, Hazine 1512) Tabrīz?
(Soudavar 1992, 119)
f. 1v  “Ṣulaymān”

1565  
Text of *Mantiq al-Tayr* in *Anthology*, Bukhārā, under the reign of the Shaybānid ʿAbd Allāh Khān. 3 illustrations in *Mantiq al-Tayr*. (Melikian-Chivani 2000, 170-172)

“Shaykh Şan‘ān and a Maiden on a Balcony”
“Shaykh Şan‘ān and a Maiden”
“Shaykh Şan‘ān and the Unconscious Maiden”

1610  

1671  
*Mantiq al-Tayr* (Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum and Library, A./Nm.977), copied in 1671. 132 illustrations are painted in 19th-century India (?). 28 illustrations depict figures and 104 illustrations depict animals. Most of them are birds. (Ashraf 1967, 91-92)

Beginning of the 18th century  
Text of *Mantiq al-Tayr* (ff.2v-30v) in *Intikhāb-i Maṣnavīyāt-i ʿAttār* (Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum and Library, A./Nm.90). India?
No illustrations? (Ashraf 1967, 95)
A Taste for Intricacy

1741

*Mantiq al-Tayr* (London, BL, Or.5010) Persia, among 34 illustrations, most of them depict birds. (Titly 1977, 35)

- f. 16r “A Princess and a Darvish”
- f. 26r “Yûsuf” (this anecdote is not found in Dezfuliyân edition)
- f. 30r “Shaykh Šan’ân Dreams of Worshipping an Idol in Greece”
- f. 30v “Shaykh Šan’ân Leaves for Greece”
- f. 31r “Shaykh Šan’ân and a Maiden on a Balcony”
- f. 44v “Hoopoe Enthroned”
- f. 90r “A Muslim and a Christian”
- f. 91r “Yûsuf and His Brothers”
- f. 109v “Two Drunken Men”

Second half of 18th century

*Mantiq al-Tayr* (Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum and Library, A./Nm.979), India?
(Ashraf 1967, 92)

1794

*Mantiq al-Tayr* (Hyderabad, Salar Jung Museum and Library, A./Nm.980), India?
(Ashraf 1967, 93)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene Description</th>
<th>Frequency of Occurrence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1-1400 1401-1425</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dezf π liy ± n pi 24-1450 1458 1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Man and the Ruf fian 199-243</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mi'r ± j2 4 4 - 3 8 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Conference of the Birds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulaym ± n about 680</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Princess and a Darv µ sh 753-777</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoopoe and a Peacock</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>A King Aims at an Apple on a Man</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n Dreams of Worshipping Idol about 1170</td>
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<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n Leaves for Greece</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n and a Maiden on a Balcony about 1200-1217</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n and a Maiden about 1388</td>
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<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n and the Swine about 1391-1436</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>™ an' ± n and the Unconscious Maiden about 1543</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoopoe Enthroned 1565-1590</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ma π m of Ghazna Helping a Boy Fish 1639-1663</td>
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<td>Ma π m of Ghazna and a Woodcutter 1680-1707</td>
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<td>A Man Worshipping an Idol 1815-1833</td>
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<td>The Beggar and the King 1924-1939</td>
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<td>A Prince Hunting 1995-1998</td>
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<td>The Sage Talks about the Crevice 2130-2144</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burning Phoenix 2295-2328</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Son Who Mourned His Father 2329-2334</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y π s u f Sold 2582-2596</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Muslim and a Christian 2664-2687</td>
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<tr>
<td>Y π s u f and His Brothers 2688-2716</td>
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<td>The Drowning Man 2946-2959</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Drunken Men 2998-3007</td>
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<td>Ma π m of Ghazna and Ay ± z3 0 5 7 - 3 0 8 1</td>
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<td>Shaykh Mihna and the Peasant 3284-3300</td>
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<td>Majn π n Visiting Layl ± 's Camp 3345-3367</td>
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<td>A Beggar and Ay ± z3 3 6 8 - 3 4 0 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>A King Falls in Love with a Waz µ r's Son 4263-4423</td>
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fig. 1 folio 28r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.28)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 2 folio 35r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.35)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 3  folio 44r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.44)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 4  folio 49r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.49)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 5  folio 4v

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.4)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 6  folio 11r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.11)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 7  folio 18r

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.18)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
fig. 8  folio 22v

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.22)
Photograph by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Chart 1: Characteristics of Timurid Text Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Gold lines</th>
<th>Gold lines framing each column do not overlap the calligraphy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="44v" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>(44v)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(2) Jadval (decorative frame)</th>
<th>Outer frame and adjoining <em>jadval</em> closely surround the text</th>
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</table>

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<th>(3) Black lines</th>
<th>Minute black lines framing gold lines carefully avoid having the lines lying one upon another</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(4) Intervals between each column</th>
<th>Intervals between each column are almost equal (about 4 millimeters)</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(5) Design of <em>'unvān</em> (illuminated heading)</th>
<th>Carefully painted/ sober color scheme</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>(35v)</td>
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The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.28, .35, .44, .49)  
Photographs by author  
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Chart 2: Characteristics of Safavid Text Page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gold lines</th>
<th>Jadval</th>
<th>Black lines</th>
<th>Intervals between columns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>Gold lines cross over the calligraphy/no care is taken to avoid this overlap</td>
<td>Tend to leave a blank space between the text and jadval</td>
<td>Intersect each other/create squares when gold lines cross at right angles</td>
<td>Irregular/wider than Timurid text page (about four to five millimeters)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.4, .11, .18)
Photographs by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Chart 3: Comparison between Timurid Illumination and Safavid Illumination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timurid folio</th>
<th>Safavid folio</th>
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</thead>
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<td><img src="34r" alt="Safavid folio" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="48v" alt="Timurid folio" /></td>
<td><img src="42r" alt="Safavid folio" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="43v" alt="Timurid folio" /></td>
<td><img src="59v" alt="Safavid folio" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963 (63.210.34, .42, .43, .48, .51, .59)
Photographs by author
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art