

of Wladimir Ivanow's seminal *A Guide to Ismaili Literature* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1933) –, “the identification and publication of textual sources transmitted via privately circulating manuscripts, and the production of bibliographic surveys expanding upon an ever growing repository of ‘Ismaili literature’, have remained a hallmark of scholarship in Ismaili studies” (p. 4). Through the variety of subjects covered, the up-to-dateness of their content, and the formal quality of the book as a whole, there is no doubt that this open access and richly illustrated volume is exactly in line with the same approach and that it will provide an excellent basis for future research not only in the field of Ismaili studies *stricto sensu*, but also in Islamic studies more generally.

Godefroid de Callatay

UCLouvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

BARBARA BREND:

Treasures of Herat. 240 pp. London: Gingko, in association with The British Library, 2022. ISBN 978 1 909942 54 7.

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The academic study of Islamic illustrated manuscripts is almost a century old. In its first fifty years, the most prominently studied illustrated manuscripts date from the fifteenth-century Timurid period, and taking into account the products of the *naqqashkhane* (royal artistic workshop) of Herat, the elements of the pictorial style of this period have been investigated. The best known artist of this period is Bihzad. Two of the manuscripts considered in these studies, illustrated copies of the *Khamse* of Nizami, are the subject of Barbara Brend's book, *Treasures of Herat*.

Brend begins by describing the political situation in territories controlled by the Timurids, including Herat, and then discusses Timurid relations with their contemporaries and neighbours the Karakoyunlu and Akkoyunlu states. Subsequently, relying on previous articles and books on this period, she surveys the political and cultural situation in Herat between 1467 and 1510 during the reign of Husayn Baykara. The second section begins with an examination of the tradition of illustrated manuscripts in Islamic art, discussing prominent manuscripts and artists. There is also an overview of the books produced under the patronage of Timur's sons and grandsons. Drawing on information from primary sources, there follows a section discussing artists and their illustrations in the *naqqashkhane* in late fifteenth-century Herat. This section ends with a consideration of the effect of late fifteenth-century Timurid style on that of the Safavids in the first half of the sixteenth.

The next sections focus on the two copies of the *Khamse* of Nizami in the British Library, known by their accession numbers Add. 25900 and Or. 6810. Brend examines the binding, decoration, page layouts, and illustrations of both these manuscripts, considering artists' signatures, and discusses the relationship between image and painting and the paintings' iconography. Finally, Brend discusses the presence of models for the layout of these images, and the attribution of individual images to individual artists in the light of artists' signatures.

Two pages at the beginning and two at the end of the Or. 6810 *Khamse* were used almost like note paper in the Mughal period. These pages are full of the notes and

seal impressions of officials of the palace of Babur. Even though they have already been published, Ursula Sims-Williams devotes the final pages of this book to a precise and careful study of their content. In this way, we learn about the afterlife of this precious book, which was not treated well by its owners.

Barbara Brend is a renowned scholar of Islamic illustrated manuscripts, most recently her 2010 book Muhammad Juki's *Shahnama of Firdausi. Treasures of Herat* takes up these two illustrated manuscripts of the *Khamse* of Nizami, well known to scholars of Islamic arts of the book, reconsidering them in the light of previous scholarship, including newly published studies. Thanks to the author's expertise, a reader new to the subject will be able to read about and be exposed to the images of these two works, including their illustrations, decoration codicology (if only briefly), and the notes written on them, as well as the identities of the artists who made them.

When I consider the sum of the contents of *Treasures of Herat*, I think there are subjects that the author knows could also have been included. First, the codicology of Add. 25900, especially the need to include the work of someone with technical expertise in the repair of books of this kind. Second, a group of books of sultanic patronage – one of these is a copy of Amir Khusraw Dehlavi's *Hasht Behesht* (TS H. 676). Brend mentions this briefly (p. 28) and in a footnote the first person to publish it (Akalay 1974). On page 196, in order to compare it with an image in Or. 6810, she reproduces a painting taken from this book, first published by A. Sakisian in 1926, and today found in the United States. Contrary to what Brend states, this painting and other pages taken from this *Hasht Behesht* were published not by Bahari in 1996, but by Akalay in 1974. When A. Sakisian published this image, he stated in its caption that it belonged to his personal collection when he was (around 1910) a high-level bureaucrat working in the Ottoman parliament and one of the people charged with choosing works to be placed in the *Istanbul Evkaf Museum* that opened in 1914 (Ölçer 2002).

This copy of the *Hasht Behesht* comes at the head of the list of books of sultanic patronage attributed to the “school of Bihzad” due to its dimensions (38 × 26 cm), the fact that its calligrapher was Sultan Ali Mashhadi, its dedication, its paintings and illuminations, and its lacquered binding containing powdered mother of pearl and decorated with mythical beasts and foliage.

Another illustrated book in the Topkapı Palace library that can be attributed to sultanic patronage is a copy of Haju Kirmani's *Humay'u Humayun* (R. 1045). The writer of these lines first published it in English (Persica, 1979). Due to its leather binding, decoration, and illustrations it resembles products of the Herat *naqqashkhane* around 1485 (pp. 152 and 156). The filigree work on the inside cover is a peerless example of sultanic binding from late fifteenth-century Herat. The masters who designed the interior and exterior decoration of its binding and its paintings must have influenced the Safavid *naqqashkhane* of early sixteenth-century Tabriz.

Most scholars who work on the painting of late Timurid Herat ignore the presence of a different style, despite it being discussed in detail 40 years ago in an article in English (Çağman 1978) and more recently by others (Soucek and Çağman; Bağcı et al.). The main exemplar of this style can be found in a copy of the *Divan* of Husayn Baykara (TS. E.H. 1636). This book is the product of sultanic patronage of the late fifteenth-century *naqqashkhane* of Herat as evidenced by its lacquered binding, the use of powdered mother of pearl in some of its illumination, and the elegance of its paintings. Like the two sultanic commissions discussed above, this *Divan* entered the Treasury of Topkapı Palace directly. The masters who produced the binding, decoration, and illustrations of this copy of the *Divan* influenced early sixteenth-century Safavid arts of the book until 1532, first while in Herat and subsequently in Tabriz to where they moved.

When I studied the books made for sultans and produced in palace workshops in Timurid Herat, in the Safavid realms of Shah Abbas as well as in Ottoman Istanbul, I found that not only was there production of new books, but that sultanic books that had, for whatever reason, become worn, had missing or incomplete illumination, illustration, or binding were restored and reworked (TS. H. 1654, TS. H. 1510, TS. H. 362; Add 25900, MET. 63.210.28, and others). Consequently, I think the time has come to write, and this is not restricted to the art of painting of fifteenth-century Herat, the full range of the arts of the book, together with their codicologies, their biographies, the identities of their patrons, and the relationship between the patronage of the arts of the book and those of other arts in neighbouring cultures.

Zeren Tanındı

Uludağ University, Bursa, Turkey

ALAIN GEORGE:

The Umayyad Mosque of Damascus: Art, Faith and Empire in Early Islam.

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A brief excavation of part of the Damascus Great Mosque's courtyard in 1962–63, of which only a handful of photographs survive (pp. 48–49, 114), revealed foundations of the massive temple of Zeus/Jupiter/Hadad, and patches of mosaic floor probably from the church that was eventually intruded into its temenos. From the diameter of a huge fluted column fragment that had fallen from a great height and lay amid the walls, it is deduced that the temple rivalled those at Baalbek and surpassed those at Palmyra and Jerash. From the dig's abrupt halt, as a result of "blackmail" according to the Syrian excavator A. Bounni (p. 231, n. 26), it may be deduced that the *awqāf* authorities were nervous about what else might be found.

Among scholars, though, there is increasing interest in what lies behind, or under, the carefully curated facade of the Muslim historiographical tradition's Quranic and early caliphal narratives. Even at the time, it was recognized that the Umayyads' move from the Hijāz to Damascus exposed them to a civilization whose Christian monks were as seductive to some as its thinly clad dancing girls were to others. Hence for example the growing fascination of Quranic philologists with the impact in Arabia of Christian Syriac writers like Ephrem of Nisibis or Jacob of Serugh. Alain George's erudite, fascinatingly illustrated and beautifully presented book focuses tightly on a building project executed in a mere decade (705–15), while "re-embracing the monument in its full complexity" (p. 41) inflicted by a long history of fires and earthquakes. But it may also be understood by the more general historian as a contribution to what "Christoph Luxenberg" called a *Syro-Aramaic Reading of the Koran*.

Since 2001, the go-to reference has been Finbarr Barry Flood's *The Great Mosque of Damascus* (Leiden: Brill). Flood highlighted parallels with the East Roman emperor's palace in Constantinople. George takes his cue instead from exultation over the destruction of the church by al-Walīd I's court poets Jarīr, al-Farazdaq, and al-Nābigha, and in the mainly Quranic foundation inscription on