CHAD KIA

ART, ALLEGORY
AND THE
RISE OF SHIISM
IN IRAN, 1487–1565

Art, Allegory and the Rise of Shiism in Iran, 1487–1565

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A particular feature of medieval Islamic civilisation was its wide horizons. The Muslims fell heir not only to the Graeco-Roman world of the Mediterranean, but also to that of the ancient Near East, to the empires of Assyria, Babylon and the Persians; and beyond that, they were in frequent contact with India and China to the east and with black Africa to the south. This intellectual openness can be sensed in many inter-related fields of Muslim thought, and it impacted powerfully on trade and on the networks that made it possible. Books in this series reflect this openness and cover a wide range of topics, periods and geographical areas.

Art, Allegory and the Rise of Shiism in Iran, 1487–1565

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Acknowledgements

I would not have undertaken this project had Pricilla Soucek not suggested to me, many years ago, that I should have a look at the 'very odd' paintings from the *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript at the Metropolitan Museum, and I would like to thank her for her early help, advice and encouragement. Also crucial to my pursuit of this project was Robert Hillenbrand's early support and continued prodding. I would also like to thank Michael Hillmann and Jonathan Alexander, for their counsel and early guidance. I am especially grateful to Marianna Shreve Simpson for her overwhelming generosity and extraordinary knowledge, and I am forever indebted to Massumeh Farhad for her unfailing encouragement, invaluable advice and for her extraordinarily sensitive, thorough and insightful reading of earlier portions of this study. To John Short, I owe more than words can adequately express.

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این خیال اینجا نهان پیدا اثر
زین خیال آنجا برویاند صور

Here, this imagination is hidden, but for a trace.
There, this imagination will reveal images!

Rumi

Introduction: Coming to Terms with Meaning in Persian Painting

The experience of considering a Persian manuscript painting for the first time may be both perplexing and beguiling. As an outstanding example from the mid-sixteenth century shows (see Plate 1), the impression of vivid colours and the compositional intricacy of the image could be as instantly striking as encountering a contemporary Flemish painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.[1] 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' – an important work from Safavid Iran – is reminiscent of Bruegel's visual allegories, with their rich mosaic sociology.[2] However, beyond the sharp differences in form, style and patronage between this painting and an early modern Flemish work, we might also note that 'Depraved Man', like many Persian paintings of its period, is an illustration in a manuscript and as such programmatically bound by a narrative text.[3] Indeed, as the second of twenty-eight paintings in a deluxe manuscript made for Prince Ibrahim Mirza in Mashhad between 1556 and 1565, the most historically comparable counterpart to the 'Depraved Man' may be the late Gothic Parisian illustrations.[4] In contrast to some of Bruegel's great 'figurative anthologies',[5] the ambiguities in the elaborate content of 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' ought to be resolved by consulting the text it illustrates.[6] Such ambiguities are the starting point of this study.

Turning to the text to locate the narrative moment that occasioned this striking illustration – and the appellation by which art historians refer to it – we find an anecdote about a 'depraved' (فاسد – *fased*, literally rotten) man who is overcome by lust.[7] Searching 'the valley and the desert', the concupiscent man encounters a 'she-camel' that appears serviceable enough for his pressing urge.[8] Given the size of the beast, however, the depraved man satisfies

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his cravings only after he ties two pieces of wood to his own (or the camel's) legs in order to mount it. While engaged in the act, however, Satan appears before the lustful man to denounce him: people are bound to blame Satan for such a 'vile trick', even though, as Satan explicitly states, the vulgarity of this act is such that not even he, Satan, could have dreamed it up.[9] That is the entire content of the anecdote that 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' illustrates. The anecdote, or more properly the parable, itself comes from the first book of *The Golden Chain* (*Silsilat al-dhahab*), the title referring to the lineage of spiritual masters, their teachings and practices to which its author was devoted. The author, the great fifteenth-century Herati poet and mystic, Abdul Rahman Jami, composed the didactic narrative about the depraved man in rhyming-verse couplets between 1468 and 1472. This work later came to form part of a septet of well-known epics in verse, titled *The Seven Thrones* (*Haft awrang*), nearly a century before this sixteenth-century painting of it.

The depiction of the vile trick in the lower-left corner of the composition appears conspicuous enough; the inherently striking act could scarcely make it less so. But the figures and actions from Jami's parable appear to occupy only a small part of the surface of the painting. There are other figures and details – some rather prominent – in the painting that seem to have little or no direct relation to the story of the lustful man. Indeed, such apparently unrelated figures and elements occupy almost three-quarters of the painting's surface. Nowhere in the text is there any mention of the languid youth listening to a man playing the flute as he holds a book beside his ear, another man spinning wool with a spool, an encampment with children at play, a figure blowing on the fire beneath a caldron, an acrobat-like figure walking on his hands, musicians …

To assume the figures to be unrelated to the story about the lustful man is to render such details wholly fanciful or to reduce them to ornaments. But such prominently placed figures as the washerwoman in the upper-left of the painting, or the less conspicuous shepherd on the upper-right, are too emphatic to be whimsical and demand a better explanation. In any case, to equate such figures with 'ornamentation' of the main action relayed by the text merely displaces or defers the question as to the relevance, meaning and origination of such extravagant 'ornaments'. Among the crowd of figures depicted, those that transparently represent the actors and actions related by

the text are not exceptionally privileged compositionally, except for the fact that they are rather confined to a small quadrant of the composition in the lower-left and therefore easily identifiable. In illustrating the text, the artist (or artists) seems to have selected the exact moment in the story – or immediately after – when Satan has appeared before the depraved man, just before addressing him. This reading of the image would be fairly consistent with Jami's text, which states explicitly that Satan appears before the depraved man and addresses him directly. We see a dark-faced figure with a white beard and a red cap peering from the rocks in the lower-left side of the painting. This figure appears to be in the line of vision of the depraved man (and vice versa), and is holding a finger to his mouth in bewilderment.[10]

However, as Marianna Shreve Simpson has observed in her monograph study of this *Haft awrang* manuscript to which this painting belongs, even here there is ambiguity, since there are other similarly dark-faced figures depicted in the painting.[11] Is the figure in the immediate foreground of the lower-right another representation of Satan? Also dark-faced, this man gestures in the direction of the bestial act, and appears to be complaining to a companion, who is spinning thread on a spool, with little apparent interest in what he is being told or the event taking place to his right. In fact, the only two figures in the painting that are depicted unambiguously, and most specifically corroborate the details offered in the story, are the 'depraved man' and the 'she-camel' he is mounting.[12] The text of the narrative, both preceding and following the anecdote about the lustful man, contains very little that might relate to this crowd of painted figures, and Simpson's compendium helps to put in relief the complicated process through which one comes to understand the supposed literal meaning of even the first verses of the anecdote by Jami – a 'literal' meaning that itself turns out to be quite specialised and idiomatic.[13] Any anticipation that the indirect and figurative language of Jami's verse may offer some obvious clues as to the significance of the depicted figures is soon disappointed. The first four verses of Jami's tale introducing the depraved man suffice to show that the figurative language of the text does not offer much in the way of connotation for the enigmatic figures:[14]

Turned full of air a depraved man's trumpet	گشت پر باد مفسدی را بوق *gasht por bad mofsedy ra buq*

his soul took his blare to Alcyone	برد نفسش نفیر بر عیوق
	bord nafsash nafir bar oyuq
chasing his desire he sought a	شد پی میل خویش مکحله جوی
mascara-stand	*shod pey-e meyl-e khish mekhaleh juy*
running about, searching the desert	کرد صحرا و دشت در تک و پوی
and the plain	*kard sahra o dasht dar tak o puy*

It is immediately clear here that the depiction of a man mounting a camel in the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' does not represent a narrative that literally describes a man with a loud trumpet searching for a mascara-stand. Whether a word like 'inkwell' in this context conjures up its literal or figurative meaning in the mind of a reader, the general idea of the 'figural' and the inescapable figurativeness of language is palpable. The verses by Jami show that, as with much in poetry, 'literal' meaning is an evasive notion. The axiom that images always come before words often frees the poet from the bonds that may be imposed by the lexical meaning of words. In this case, understanding 'verbal imagery' as a metaphor for metaphor itself may be one way of describing the status of these ambiguous figures.[15] The literal translation of the anecdote's initial verses may be rendered as follows: 'a foul person's horn became filled with wind / his [carnal]-soul let out a cry that reached Alcyone. Following his desire, he sought a mascara-stand / running about searching the desert and plain'.[16] The discrepancy between the literal meaning of the words and the conventional understanding of the tropes used by Jami is obvious. The first verse of the first couplet describes a 'trumpet' or 'horn' (*buq*) that apparently belongs to the 'depraved man', and the third verse mentions a 'mascara-stand' (*mekhaleh*)[17] that is sought by him. In this context, Jami is using the words 'trumpet' and 'mascara-stand' as tropes for the male and female sexual organs, respectively, while the reference to Alcyone, the brightest star in the Pleiades cluster, signifies the distance of the star from the Earth, hyperbolically alluding to the magnitude of the depraved man's carnal desire – and desperation.[18] Parenthetically, the choice of Alcyone in this case was probably also determined by the rhyme scheme (*buq / oyuq*). In all three cases, the artists of the 'Depraved Man', clearly took for granted the idiomatic understanding of Jami's use of simile or *kenayeh*, where the instrument of comparison is not stated.[19]

As a manuscript painting that illustrates an accompanying textual passage, an obvious question regarding the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' is its function as a visual interpretation of the story it illustrates. What is to be made of the lack of a more transparent correspondence between the narrative content of the text and this illustration of it? Why would so many apparently unrelated figures be included in an illustration of an anecdote about a sexually aroused man desperately mounting a she-camel? Assuming the often didactic function of medieval art, what moral interpretation of Jami's parable would compel the artists to include both an acrobat walking on his hands and a man spinning wool in the visual representation of it? Our inability to answer such basic questions regarding the contents of this painting might be reasonable were the 'Depraved Man' a European panel painting – such as one by Bruegel – and not accompanied by a text. If many paintings by the Dutch master contain symbolic meanings or social-historical commentary, as does, for instance, his nearly coeval 'Massacre of the Innocents',[20] their identification would require making use of textual sources and research into the broader contemporary cultural contexts and historical circumstances – whether or not such expressions were consciously intended by the artist or were unconscious but still of some 'symbolical' value.[21]

But the 'Depraved Man', like the great preponderance of figural paintings in the premodern Islamic world since the late thirteenth century, was a commissioned illustration in a privately viewed codex of literary narratives, where its conventional function, subsidiary to the narrative text, ought to have remained substantially transparent. In fact, regardless of the setting, background and details, the greatest number of both earlier and contemporary Persianate manuscript paintings unambiguously correspond to the narrative subject they illustrate. Even the highly complex and expertly executed 'Depraved Man' remains programmatically predicated on the narrative subject of Jami's text, despite the apparently vigorous complication of its representative function.[22]

Simpson's study of this *Haft awrang* manuscript mentions the covert significance of several figures that appear in a number of its twenty-eight illustrations, including the 'Depraved Man'.[23] Her acknowledgement that the themes and lessons of Jami's seven narratives are based on the spiritual, philosophical and ethical ideas of Sufism implicates the text as the *source* of ambiguity, suggesting that the significance of the parable about the depraved

man ought to be the starting point for any inquiry into the broader cultural contexts and historical circumstances that might explain the painting's content. Indeed, Jami's *Haft awrang* is a heptalogy, or septet of didactic or allegorical epics in the service of Sufism, which, like medieval Jewish or Christian mysticism, sought a direct, individual experience of God.[24] By referencing Sufism with respect to the illustrations of *Haft awrang*, Simpson rightly situates Jami's narrative within a larger, centuries-old discourse on gnostic devotion to which Jami intended to contribute.[25]

As illustrations of a Sufi text, therefore, the covert significance of the inexplicable figures in the 'Depraved Man' may refer to a wider discourse that transcends the specifics of the narrative subject in Jami's text.[26] Indeed, the 'Depraved Man', illustrated in the mid-sixteenth century, is not an isolated case but rather a late and a fully developed example of an extraordinary trend in the history of Islamic art that began some seventy years earlier. The object of this book is to uncover the genesis, development and significance of that trend, which also highlight a neglected function of pictorial arts in the Persianate world.

The often acknowledged, but never fully explained, system of enigmatic figure-types that make their first appearance in Persian figural paintings in the late Timurid period, remained a distinctive feature of Persianate iconography throughout the sixteenth century. Many luxury Persianate manuscript paintings produced during this period, which have been praised as masterpieces of medieval art, exhibit some of these enigmatic figures.[27] It was in Herat, Afghanistan, during the rule of the last Timurid prince, Husayn Bayqara (r. 1469–1506) that the illustrations of literary works, in addition to conveying the actors and actions of a given narrative passage, began also to include depictions that seem to have little or no connection to the story related by the text. The artists at the workshop of Sultan Bayqara began to include what Simpson refers to as 'fixed figure-types' in illustrations of narratives with themes or agendas that were based on ideas and practices of what may be generically called Sufism.[28] No figure that seems so purposefully unrelated to the narrative subject of an illustrated text had appeared in Persianate painting prior to this time.[29]

Fixated on an ultimate union with God, the ascetic-mystical strand of Islam we know as Sufism emerged in Iraq and Khurasan in the ninth cen-

tury, and for millions of Muslims the religion of Islam has been inseparable from it ever since.[30] Sufism, as a powerful tradition of knowledge and practice, is believed to bring proximity to God for its adherents. Conservative and dependent on the past, Sufism is an inherently authoritarian system, founded on problems of interpretation and reliant on both discursive authority – ultimately of the Quran and the Prophetic Example – and the miraculous powers of those who were believed to have achieved proximity to God – something that was possible only if God's grace was already present within them. Since a miracle-working and blessed Sufi master could also accumulate a significant amount of endowments and property, many Sufi shaykhs also came to enjoy considerable economic power and political influence.[31]

Initially drawn to pre-Islamic Arabic poetry – especially the *nasib*, with its prototypical themes of the intoxication of wine and especially the lost beloved and the lover 'perishing' from longing for the loved one – the discursive power of Sufi Islam has been irretrievably bound up with poetry, with its phonemic patterning and figurative richness, to express ineffable experiences and beliefs.[32] Throughout the so-called 'classical' period of Persian literature, literary production consisted overwhelmingly of verse that was refined and constrained by conventions of style, form, and patterns of meter and rhyme. Inherently circuitous and indirect, Persian literary expression became more so after the twelfth century, when the 'Iraqi style' increased the ambiguity of verses with more figurative and abstract language.[33] From very early on, Sufi ideology and language influenced this poetry, increasing possible ambiguities still further and giving some words several possible connotations.[34] In addition to their lexical definitions and conventional figurative usage, many words and constructs came also to represent gnostic and religious ideas.[35] On the other hand, the profuse repertoire of figurative language was organised in a highly structured system. By developing certain constant metaphors that came to require no explanation, words and concepts in Sufi verse created a whole figurative nomenclature that was readily apprehended by initiates.[36] As a conscious exercise in inducing contemplation in readers and listeners, Sufi poetry had little use for literal expression; rather, whether lyric or narrative, such texts participate in a complex network of hermeneutic intertextuality that – through Persian poetry – imaginatively articulates a metanarrative

transcending any single literary work, trend or genre, and is apprehensible by readers across many centuries.

Before the artists at the workshop of Sultan Bayqara began to include mystically coded figures in illustrations of narrative poetry in the late fifteenth century, medieval Persianate painting, mostly confined to the pages of codices as it was, consisted largely of illustrations of historical and mythical narratives or – more often – the depiction of a moment in the unfolding plot of well-known epic romance or heroic poetry, with often recognisable genre scenes of enthronements, lovers' encounters, battles, and hunting or heroic feats.[37] It was – not unlike Christian devotional books of hours – a private art that, especially during the Timurid period, came to function as celebratory affirmation of the ruling elite and their worldview. The highly stylised 'classical'[38] mode of painting at the end of the fifteenth century in Herat gave way to a more naturalistic representation of temporal and physical reality. This shift in visual mode occurred at the same time that the content of paintings also gave way to some unconventional iconography – a repertoire of humans and animals marked by the objects and activities with which they were engaged – that served as pictorial re-presentations of an allegorical reading of the text: a figurative understanding, leading to depictions that display an aspect of the esoteric tenor of the narrative. As such, the apparently enigmatic figure-types depend on an anagogical reading of the illustrated text – even if the passage does not readily divulge to us the spiritual or mystical significance attributed to it by a fifteenth-century reader. Further, the initiated reader or viewer ought also to recognise that an 'enigmatic' depiction in the illustration of the passage – such as that of a flute player – is a figurative or intertextual stand-in, pictorially alluding to a literary trope from another mystical narrative, itself an allegory. For the so-called enigmatic figure-types to be meaningful, therefore, not only must their original historical context – temporal and geographical – be considered, but also the contemporary reception of the illustrated text.

Understanding the interpretive scope of the late medieval reader in Herat would require familiarity with the constellation of tropes and idioms that formed contemporary Sufi literary discourse, as well as an appreciation of the broader symbolic order in the religious landscape of the period. The multiple levels of signification interposed in each painting by the patron and

the artist, intentionally or otherwise, require of us a combination of visual readings and layered interpretations that may be at once historical, gnostic, poetic, religious and perhaps even astrological. Which is to say, that the fixed figure-types presented here as an enigma are in fact intelligible – obliquely, indirectly but with the promise of meaning – in the context of a world saturated with otherworldly and occult meanings.

This study posits that these enigmatic figure-types were theologically prescriptive. Encoding extraliteral meanings, the figures were intentionally introduced into illustrations of didactic Sufi allegories in order to emphasise certain praiseworthy moral qualities and virtues adhered to and advocated by mystical, trade-guild and other contemporary popular associations. The figure-types populate illustrations of well-known narratives that are either generically didactic or are allegorically coded with aspects of spiritual, philosophical and ethical ideas that were commonly adhered to by many contemporaries in fifteenth-century Herat, especially Sufis and 'chivalric' (*futuwwat*) artisans and craftsmen.[39] The seemingly purposeful yet unrelated figures in illustrations of an allegorical narrative, for instance, came to form a normative relation between the story that served as a vehicle, and a tenor that advocated some aspects of Sufism.[40] At first sight the figures in the illustrations of such texts share their conspicuous lack of any semantic link to the narrative subject of the vehicle, which is otherwise represented pictorially.[41] As we will see, notwithstanding the nuances caused by contemporary circumstances, whether human, animal, object or activity (such as spinning thread, a playing a flute, herding goats and sheep) the figures most generically allude to stock images, metaphors and parables from Persian Sufi poetry going back to the twelfth century. The depictions of the figure-types, therefore, emphasise the primary subject of the text – the moral lessons of the narrative from a generic Sufi perspective – by deploying familiar tropes, in pictorial form, from a largely Sufi intertextual literary discourse.[42]

The inherent difficulties in linking the cognitive system, the language and the culture of the medieval Persianate world to the contemporary English-speaking audience make designation of exact terminology for this phenomenon deserving of a separate study, but it may be stated here – and is discussed further in the next chapter – that the depiction of, for example, a flute player in certain Persianate manuscript paintings may best correspond

with the late fifteenth-century English concept of 'emblem': a parable that was expressed in picture or in verse and often in both.[43] By the late sixteenth century, emblem was understood, at least partially, as a 'symbolic picture', implying the conjunction of word and image. 'The emblem was both didactic and secret, riddling … and the context was needed to decide on the picture's meaning.' Artificial, the emblem does not aspire towards a universal, unchanging meaning, but rather is uninterpretable out of context.[44]

The conscious adoption of apparently inessential – but contextually emblematic – images in the iconography of manuscript illustrations produced during the 1480s was concomitant with a stylistic change or a 'shift' in Persianate painting. Art historians refer to this formal shift towards more naturalistic depiction in late fifteenth-century paintings from Herat as a 'new style'. Long associated with the works of the most well-known premodern painter in the Islamic world, Kamal al-Din Bihzad (c. 1450–c. 1535), this move towards a less idealistic, more naturalistic rendering of individuals, animals and landscapes appears to be concurrent with the adoption of the emblematic figure-types.[45] Over the years, despite the geographical movements of artists and manuscripts, the preferred subjects, special compositions and characteristics of style were perpetuated, whether through direct copying or from master to pupil.[46] Stylistically, the appearance in the late fifteenth century of the emblematic figure-types foregrounds the dense discursive formation through which these paintings become meaningful. The transmission of cultural memory through conservative artistic education in Iran, where the two basic mechanisms of continuity in manuscript illustration were literal reproduction and selective adaptation, suggests that initially the innovation of depicting emblematic figures-types in luxury manuscript illustrations of Persian narrative poetry was something that was directed by patrons.[47] But such innovations in content and style, despite adherence to tradition – which according to art historians remained an important factor in the field of Islamic manuscript illustrations – are remarkable enough to suggest a world undergoing social-historical transformations beyond the workshops at the Herati court. The steady growth in the status of poetry, which played a fundamental role in the Timurid project of cultural assimilation, led to an unprecedented number of poets among ordinary people as well as at court, which led in turn to 'new forms of poetic education and an intensive effort to

define and conceptualize the literary tradition'.[48] Events that shaped Timurid literary history during the fifteenth century affected the practice of poetry and in due course also the style and the iconography of manuscript painting.

The influence of esotericism, often expressed through verse literature, at Husayn Bayqara's court as well as in Herat, the greater Khorasan, and indeed in Transoxiana and the whole of the Iranian world during the late fifteenth century, has often been acknowledged.[49] The author of *Haft awrang*, Abd al-Rahman Jami (1414–92), repeatedly referred to by premodern writers who came after him as the most distinguished poet, scholar and Sufi, was the highest authority in the Naqshbandi order of Sufis in Herat, and composed many of his didactic and allegorical Sufi romances at the height of his prominence during Bayqara's reign in the 1470s and 1480s.[50] Jami is considered to be the second most important figure in disseminating the teachings of the influential Andalusian mystic Ibn Arabi (1165–1240).[51] He is also credited with the integration of Ibn Arabi's teachings into the intellectual world of the eastern lands of Islam.[52] Jami's writings, whether in prose or verse, invariably contain edifying messages of gnosticism in some form, either overtly or covertly.[53] Any contemplation, or 'reading', of the illustration that accompanies Jami's passage about the 'depraved man' without knowledge of the mystical connotations of Jami's parable – itself predicated on the larger Sufi discourse to which his didactic epic *Golden Chain* (*Silsilat al-dhahab*) contributes – would be bewildering, leading exactly to the kind of enigma that we have encountered with respect to the iconography of the 'Depraved Man'.

Jami's pre-eminence as a poet in late Timurid Herat was predicated on established 'reading formations' whose norms and ideals his Sufi allegories both reproduced and reinforced.[54] The absence of armed conflict and the accumulation of wealth by military and religious elites immune from taxation helped to make this period a 'golden age' for cultural and artistic achievements.[55] Bayqara and Alishir Navai (1441–1501), the progenitor of Chaghatai poetry who enjoyed close relations with the sovereign as his confidant and 'foster brother', were two great patrons of the arts under whom Bihzad's famous school of painting flourished, and, as some art historians believe, Persianate painting reached its apogee.[56] Popular literary circles in which notables and literati engaged in flights of ribaldry and bawdy rhetorical exchanges, replete with sophisticated verbal retorts and puns,[57] cultivated a

penchant for intricacy expressed in the practice of composing elaborate literary puzzles, especially logographs, acrostics and chronograms.[58] This is the field of reception in which manuscript illustrations containing 'enigmatic' figures first appeared.[59] The refined ambiguity and indirection of the dominant poetic language suffused 'high' literary discourse and correspondingly penetrated illustrations of Sufi narratives through the 'emblematic' figure-types. However, it must be emphasised that no elite enthusiasm for literary puzzles and no measure of appeal of rhetorical intricacies would have triggered this iconographical innovation in late Timurid Herat had it not been for the powerful impulse towards esotericism that dominated Persianate societies of the fifteenth century; the same impulse that lay less obliquely behind the many other religious innovations of the period. In fact, it has been argued that, conversely, the pleonastic language of contemporary poetry – a sufficient enough change for it to mark the end of the so-called 'classical' age in Persian literature – was itself undergirded by a strong cosmological framework.[60]

Therefore, prior to assessing the discursive and the visual means by which Persianate high culture of the late fifteenth century found artistic expression, it is important to consider the socio-historical context of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century world in which such innovations were triggered and flourished. The fact that towards the end of Jami's life, in the last decades of the fifteenth century, such unconventional mutations of style and iconography emerged in the supposedly conservative, tradition-bound field of Persianate painting, and then continued unabated well into the next century, is even more intriguing if we consider that only a few years after their inception numerous profound and sweeping political and religious changes transformed the Iranian world without any perceptible alteration in their appeal.[61] In fact, at least as far as the use of the 'figure-types' is concerned, their appearance in manuscript paintings seems to have increased after the violent takeover of the Safavids in 1501. Whatever socio-cultural causes triggered the appearance of these emblematic figure-types in Timurid manuscript paintings during the 1480s and 1490s, and whatever their significance may have been to the late Timurid patrons in Herat, the spectacularly violent campaigns of the early 1500s,[62] which resulted in the military conquest of Iran and the forced conversion of its population to Imami Shiism, seem to

have done nothing to diminish the appeal of these apparently superfluous and flamboyant depictions in manuscript paintings. Whether or not their significance as Sufi emblems also changed, most of these same figure-types continued to proliferate in paintings commissioned by the notables of the new dynasty, including the first Safavid shah, Ismail (1487–1524), and his son and successor, Tahmasp.

Despite the many gaps in our knowledge of the rise of the Safavids and the success of Ismail in establishing an empire – not to mention the endurance of the radical political and religious transformations brought about by him after 1501 – we may still consider the rise of the Safavids and dominance of Shiism in Iran in the light of the continued growth and spread of Islamic heterodoxy and pseudo-Islamic popular religious organisations during the centuries that preceded their takeover.[63] The introduction of new figures into the iconography of Persianate painting, when considered in connection with the success across the Iranian plateau of Imami Shiism, will reveal their shared origins. Each phenomenon in its own way stems from the same socio-cultural developments in a fifteenth-century world dominated by varying intensities of esoteric beliefs in reincarnation, the transmigration of souls and in a leader invested with divine attributes. Whether it was the influence of Naqshbandi Sufi ideas in Timurid Herat, or the association of the Turkmen tribes of eastern Anatolia with the Safavid order in Ardebil, this was a period marked by heterodoxy, other-worldly beliefs, millenarian movements and 'extremism' (Ghuluww).

It is important to note that, at least for the eastern Islamic lands, the identification of many followers of specific mystical teachings and practices with distinct confraternities that today we refer to as Sufi orders would be anachronistic. During the fifteenth century and earlier, the charisma of individual leaders remained the basis of many heterodox practices and beliefs, especially those movements infused with messianic fervour. It was the hereditary transfer of the charismatic leader's station to a follower that sustained the coherence of what gradually came to be defined as organised orders discernible from the magnetism of their Sufi masters.[64] Indeed, the followers of Baha al-Din Naqshband (1318–89) and Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252–1334), who comprised what came to be known as the Naqshbandi and Safavi Sufi orders, formed but two currents in a broad stream of militant messianic

movements, popular cabalistic associations, and pseudo-Islamic and outright heretical groups that had arisen in the aftermath of the Mongolian devastation of the thirteenth century and the collapse of the sacred caliphal authority.[65] The reconfiguration of religious and political authority along these messianic and charismatic lines was a reaction against the paganism and socio-economic injustices of Turko-Mongolian rule.[66] Such communities as the Bektashi dervishes and the followers of Shaykh Badr al-Din in Anatolia, Ahl-i Haqq in Kurdistan, the Sarbedaris in Khurasan,[67] the fervently Shia Mushashais in Kuzestan,[68] or the Kubravis and the Yasavis in Transoxiana, the Nimatallahis,[69] the Qadiris, the Nurbakhshis,[70] or the Hurufis and their breakaway faction, the Nuqtavis,[71] stand as the more notable of the esoteric religious movements of this period.[72] The ubiquity of such associations, along with the 'independent' (*ovaysi*) mystic or deviant dervish networks like the Qalandars, Haydaris and Abdals prompted one scholar to describe the spread of mysticism during the fifteenth century as an 'incredible epidemic'.[73]

The sharp post-Mongolian upsurge in esoteric, occult and messianic tendencies was in at least one respect also congenial to craftsmen such as those who worked at Bayqara's workshop in Herat. Having yet to organise into guilds in the conventional sense, craftsmen and artisans shared with almost all other popular heterodox associations, as well as the various creeds of Shiism, a strong sense of devotion to Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet of Islam.[74] With the exception of the Naqshbandis, the initiatic chain of nearly all other heterodox religious associations included Ali and often a number of the other Shia imams who were viewed as saints and spiritual guides.[75] Even the Khwajagan-Naqshbandis Sufis were not precluded from veneration of the first Shia imam, Ali. Although, unlike nearly all other Sufi groups the Naqshbandis traced their lineage not back to Ali, but to the soon-to-be-reviled-by-decree companion of the Prophet, Abu Bakr.[76]

One striking exemplar of continuity between the mystical and messianic currents of the fifteenth century and the Imami Shiism of the Safavids in the sixteenth century is Fazlallah Astarabadi (d. 1394), the founder of the lettrist, Hurufi movement.[77] Astarabadi's thaumaturgical views stemmed from the supposed attributes of letters in the Arabo-Persian alphabet: their shape, diacritical markings and numerological properties.[78] The influence of Hurufism on Ismail, the spiritual guide of the Safavid order and the founder

of the dynasty has been noted and can be seen in the propagandist, emotive verses that are attributed to him.[79] The implicit claim of direct inspiration as a source of legitimisation for political power that became the ideological basis of the Imami-Safavid authority was integral to Fazlallah Astrarabadi's concept of charismatic messianic kingship and played an important role in the emergence of the dynasty.[80]

Significant as such ideological through lines may be in connecting the pre-Safavid world of eastern Islam to the Shia polity that was brought about after Ismail's conquests, among the most tangible – and neglected – indications of continuity between the Persianate world before the takeover of the Safavids and after – indeed, what survives to our own day as the most visible evidence of continuity – is the appearance of fixed figure-types in luxury manuscript paintings which persisted into the Safavid period. This late fifteenth-century innovation, the earliest examples of which were commissioned by the Timurids, continued to appeal to Safavid notables through the first century of their rule. The appearance of these enigmatic figures within illustrations of Persianate luxury manuscripts occurs mainly between the 1480s and 1560s, that is, during the period marked by the reign of three of the most influential patrons of painting in the premodern Persianate world: besides Husayn Bayqara, the last Timurid ruler in Herat (Afghanistan), the first two Safavid kings, Ismail in Tabriz (Iran) and his son Tahmasp, who moved the capital of the nascent empire to Qazvin and dispersed the royal atelier. The latter two patrons remain unrivalled in their diversion of riches to this particular art form.[81] The figure-types that appear to us as enigmatic show that the intent of the Timurid patrons in producing an observable exposition of 'higher' truths in painting, and the first two Safavid rulers' appreciation of 'symbols' as mediators between the physical and the metaphysical world, were not irrelevant to their status as prodigious enthusiasts of the art of painting.[82]

It was only fourteen years after the initial appearance of the first emblematic figure-types in Herati manuscript illustrations that the militant Turkmen tribesmen – the Qizilbash – triumphantly entered the city of Tabriz in Azerbaijan, enabling their thirteen-year-old spiritual leader, Ismail, to declare himself temporal king. In verses of poetry attributed to him, Ismail seems to go well beyond the heterodox Sufi veneration of Ali, the archetypal saint of the Shias and the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad,

'cloaking himself in the robe of the Mahdi [messiah]'.[83] As many have already observed, Ismail's poetry combines Sufi mystical ideas about metempsychosis with apocalyptic imagery to present himself not only as the 'eye of God' but also as the spirit or reincarnation of Ali himself, as well as, among others, Ali's son, Husayn, mythical Persian kings like Jamshid and, of course, the Mahdi, the saviour.[84] Among all the heterodox confraternities, it was the fanatical devotion of the Qizilbash to their teenage godhead that led them to conquer a territory stretching from Armenia to Baghdad to Afghanistan, transforming the followers of a mystical shaykh into a ruling dynasty and the centre of political and – for a time – religious authority in Iran. These conquests enabled Ismail to impose the Imami creed on the population, which is known today as Twelver Shiism and stands as the most enduring synthesis of diverse mystical and extremist traditions that, at least since the Mongolian conquests of the thirteenth century, continued to grow and spread in the Irano-Turkish cultural world.[85] Indeed, Amir-Moezzi's description of Shiism's twofold vision of the world, 'one manifest, apparent, exoteric (*zahir*), and another non-manifest/inner, secret, esoteric (*batin*)', furnishes a striking articulation of the types of truth-determining discourse that Imami Shiism already had in common with the other pre-Safavid popular religious organisations of the eastern Islamic world.[86] This shared, dual vision of the world is fundamental to understanding the matrix that helped patrons and artists determine the iconography of manuscript painting towards the end of the fifteenth century and sustained it after the Safavid takeover.[87]

The appearance of emblematic figure-types in late Timurid manuscript painting was occasioned by the unique historical moment when the refined, high-literary culture of Herat and the dominant system of esoteric beliefs converged to form a new field of reception for iconographical innovation. Without denying the unique historical circumstances that propelled the inception of the figure-types at the Timurid court, the continued depiction of such figures as the spinner or the flute player in the 'Depraved Man' nearly seventy years after the rise of the Safavids and the establishment of Imami Shiism clearly demonstrates a degree of congruency between their meaning and reception at the Timurid court of the 1490s and their significance for Shia patrons after many decades in Safavid Mashhad. Still, the use of received imagery as either metaphors for the sycophantic aggrandisement of Safavid rulers and Imami

Shiism, or for the assertion of esoteric 'truths', certainly worked to shift the specificity of meaning of the fixed figures-types and the significance of their metaphoric values for the Safavid audience. They ultimately complemented and expressed Safavid political power at its greatest extent, in the Shia conversion of Iran. Significantly, despite the influence of Persian painting on the art produced at the Mughal and Deccan courts, as well as by the Uzbek and Ottoman schools of painting – through acquisitions of manuscripts and migration of artists – with some notable exceptions, the emblematic figure-types do not have a conspicuous presence in pictorial arts that were produced outside the Safavid realm.[88] The visual means through which the Persianate high culture of the late fifteenth century found its innovative artistic expression of religious truth was clearly more appealing to the early Safavid rulers, who continued to covet and appropriate such figure-types in paintings they commissioned. However, these emblematic figures may have seemed too closely linked with the 'abominable Shia' Safavids to be tolerated by at least some of the Ottoman and Uzbek patrons who saw themselves as upholders of the canonical practices of the 'upright community of Muhammad'.[89]

Vladimir Minorsky, in his translation of Ismail's messianic poetry, suggests that esotericism is 'fond of special dialects and symbols' that are intelligible only to the initiated in the 'immediate milieu', a premise that draws attention to the relationship between texts and their sociohistorical contexts.[90] The claim of apocalyptic messianism associated with the followers of Ismail is based mainly on the verses of poetry that are attributed to him. Far more reliable evidence that compellingly confirms the dominance of esotericism in Herat during approximately the same period is present in the content of texts produced by prolific contemporary authors residing there – writers who, it is important to note, openly embraced their indebtedness to literary forebears. It is through these texts that the connections between the hegemonic esoteric ideology of the late fifteenth century and the emblematic – or 'symbolic' – figure-types that make their first appearance in Herat in the last decades of Timurid rule can become intelligible to the uninitiated modern observer. The emblematic figures that were introduced into the iconography of manuscript paintings in Herat during the late fifteenth century may have been an innovation in the visual arts, but the conventions of poetic composition through figurative expression and a superabundant indirection had been commonplace

in Persianate poetry, especially Sufi poetry, for centuries.[91] Writings by such contemporary authors as Jami, or the Herati preacher and polymath Husayn (Vaiz) Kashifi (d. 1505), supply the language of mystico-religious didacticism on which what I have called the emblematic figure-types in manuscript paintings depended for both origin and intelligibility. Given the intertextuality of Sufi literature and the numinous authority of previous mystical works, the writings by such revered ideological forebears as Ibn Arabi or Sufism's most famous poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273) may be just as instructive to us as they were edifying for the beholden Herati authors or, for that matter, the patrons and artists directly involved in reception, interpretation and illustration of narrative Sufi poetry.

Through close reading and contextual analyses of select manuscript paintings, the study that follows aims to detect or trace possible borrowings, appropriations, simulations or acquisitions from one 'culturally demarcated zone' to another.[92] Given that almost all Persianate manuscript paintings were created after the text they illustrate was composed, often centuries after, and given that the core objective of the present discussion is deciphering the significance of enigmatic figure-types that make their first appearance in Persian figural paintings in the late Timurid period and remain a distinctive feature of Persianate iconography through the sixteenth century, attention devoted to such possible borrowings is mainly one-directional: the main interest will be in language, metaphors, stories, emblems and so forth, taken from texts and appropriated visually by artists in paintings. Although many literary and artistic works will be referred to, the chapters that follow will focus on the iconography of three seminal paintings and the discursive and textual constellations through which they gained their contemporary significance. The first of these is one of the earliest – if not *the* earliest – instances of the phenomenon: a 1487 painting in Attar's Sufi allegory, the *Conference of the Birds*.[93] The second formative painting, a 1494 illustration from Nizami's romance *Layla and Majnun* (Plate 6), may well have set in motion the trend in emblematic depiction that infiltrated Persian book illustrations for the next several decades. And, finally, the illustration that appears at the beginning of this Introduction, from a decidedly Sufi septet of didactic narratives, *Haft awrang* (*The Seven Thrones*) by Jami (Plate 1), which exemplifies the phenomenon in its full maturity some seventy years later.[94] The exposure

of the concealed correspondence of figure-types to the normative discourse of Sufism, especially in the iconography of the first two paintings would provide a basic template for analysis and decoding of other paintings in this genre.

Chapter 1 contextualises the programmatic dependence of the Persianate figural arts on narrative literature by highlighting the role of Sufi poets in the development of Persian verse and its dense use of imagery, word-play and illustrative tales, which make it central to any assessment of the common repository of forms, symbols and structures that informed the production of Persian manuscript painting in the late fifteenth century and permeated its iconography. Through a brief appraisal of previous studies relevant to the iconography of medieval Persianate painting, Chapter 2 introduces the 1487 manuscript of Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* as the seminal work in which scenes and figures that are unconnected to the narrative subject first appear, launching the new iconography that would characterise Persian manuscript painting for decades. Chapter 3 continues the discussion of the *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript by scrutinising one of its illustrations in detail and explicating one of the earliest examples of enigmatic depictions in Persianate manuscript painting. The exposition links the tenor of the text – Attar's allegorical tale – to the enigmatic iconography of the image through dense contextualisation in the world of Sufi initiates, their beliefs and practices in Herat.

Drawing on the intertextuality of Sufi discourse, Chapter 4 is devoted to the analysis of the 1494 illustration from Nizami's romance of *Layla and Majnun*, painted a few years after the Attar manuscript initiated the depiction of enigmatic figures. The painting contains the first instance of several of what I am calling emblematic figure-types that continued to appear in Persianate painting for decades. In this case, the conventional iconography is re-valourised and re-energised by the same impulse that animates the iconographical innovation in the *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript. The discussion demonstrates how the emblematic depictions relate not directly to Nizami's text but rather correspond to intertextual layers of Sufi discourse and the contemporary allegorical mode of reading romance.

Chapter 5 returns to the Safavid painting 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', discussed in the Introduction, in order to decipher the significance of the enigmatic figure-types in their maturity, seven decades after their first

appearance and after the dramatic changes in the politico-religious life of the region. Exposing the subject matter as a portmanteau of the narrative subject and a contemporary royal dictum, the analysis of the figure-types demonstrates their appropriation by the Safavid programme of legitimacy and their convergence with the propagated ideology of the Imami creed.

I

Poetics of the Picture:
Verbal Imagery and Visual Language

Inquiries into the content of Persian manuscript painting have seldom led to the questions that this study attempts to answer: how can we understand, in luxury illustrations of literary manuscripts, the significance of cryptic depictions such as the 'flute player' or the 'acrobat' in the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' (Plate 1) from Jami's *Haft awrang*, and at least dozens of other celebrated 'Persian miniatures'? How might one interpret depictions in manuscript paintings that seem unrelated to the narrative subject of the text they otherwise illustrate? For some, especially those new to Persianate painting, such figures might be dismissed as incidental details of little concern. Even scholarly understanding of such paintings has long considered details beyond what obviously corresponds to the plot of the illustrated narrative – including the conspicuously enigmatic figures in the 'Depraved Man' – as something akin to ornament.[1] But even 'ornament' does not emerge in a historical vacuum and the recurrence of these particular figures for almost a century simply shifts the question about their appearance back to their inception in the late Timurid period: what compelled their emergence in the first place?

Indeed, the initial appearance of the figure of the flute player or spinner occurs at a time of widespread cultural traffic in 'strange' signs at all levels of society. The appearance of these cryptic images in manuscript illustrations was concomitant in particular with the discovery of hidden patterns as a pleasurable aesthetic and intellectual pursuit among the elites at the fashionable court of Husayn Bayqara in Herat, where the composition of logographs (*muamma*) had become popular among the local literati.[2] As will be discussed

further below, such logographs, in which a personal name was encoded in the morphological structure of a verse or a couplet, were not at first merely a form of amusement. However, the production and consumption of enigmatic figures in manuscript illustration, whose emergence coincided with the popularity of the logograph and other word games, may represent yet another amusing exercise for the elites of Herat, apparently captivated by deciphering the hidden patterns in art and nature.[3] But as this practice in manuscript illustrations took hold, especially after the Safavid takeover and assertion of Shiism, the allusive function of such depictions remained useful even as what they signified shifted to fit the exigencies of ideas espoused by the new dynasty. Whatever the Safavids' propagandist agenda, even during their initial fanatical period, what they indisputably had in common with the elites and the literati of Herat in the late fifteenth century is the subject of this chapter and may be reduced for now to one word: Sufism.[4] This chapter will elaborate a particular genealogy of Sufism that finds its fulfilment in late Timurid Herat or, more specifically, in the figure of Jami, who – wittingly or not – as the most pre-eminent Sufi poet, happened to bear an outsize influence on the system of mystical signification in Persianate manuscript painting.

Iconographical studies in the wider field of Islamic art from the mid- or late twentieth century appear to avoid tackling these particular figures in the book arts, concentrating instead on figural representation in media such as ceramics and metal ware.[5] The study of figural painting from the Islamic world followed what has been called the 'invention' of 'Islamic art' in the late nineteenth century by mostly European travellers and connoisseurs.[6] Scholarly investigation of Persianate painting was preceded by several decades in which collection of manuscripts in Persian, Arabic and Turkish had been propelled by philological rather than literary scholars of these languages, and those interested in the history and religions of the regions where they were spoken.[7] Although the primacy of connoisseurship over scholarship was responsible for much damage to the paintings that many such manuscripts contained, ironically, language barriers too were for long a major reason for many misunderstandings of the paintings themselves.[8] The decades-long indifference towards the context of Persianate paintings and neglect of their primary function as illustrations of textual narratives also owed much to

reliance on art historical paradigms developed for other artistic traditions, especially European panel paintings.[9] Over the decades, the studies of this art form from the Persianate world, which is inherently predicated on written texts, could not avoid paying increasing attention to the content of the images and gradually ceased to be a solely visual response to the manuscript paintings.[10] The development of the modern field of Persian literary studies, on the other hand, was more or less oblivious of the images that for centuries supplemented (at the very least) countless reproductions of works that form the Persian literary canon. There is a whole history of literary reception compressed into these images, each of which is a particular reading of a canonical passage. The work of scholars in other literary traditions, on images or art, suggests something of the possibilities that scholars of Persian literature might also achieve by bringing together both the discursive and the iconographical in the study of Persian painting.[11]

But even at the end of the twentieth century, David Roxburgh was acknowledging that insights into the cultural contexts in which Persianate paintings originated had remained the least developed line of inquiry among scholars engaged with the study of painting and arts of the book.[12] Contextual approaches to manuscript paintings that, for instance, treat the text and the image with equal deliberation remain scarce.[13] Of functional aspects of Persianate manuscript painting, such as dynastic or personal elevation of the patrons, the ideological significance of depictions could scarcely be attended to any less by art historians.[14] Even those more recent contextual studies of Persianate paintings that are more attentive to the text, have yet to seriously broach the significance of ideology beyond affirmation of a scripted Islamic 'orthodoxy' or acknowledgement of the ambitions or esprit de corps of the ruling elite.[15]

For centuries, the most conspicuous element of Persian cultural identity has been poetry. Persian poetry demands attention in any serious consideration of the culture of regions including present-day Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and parts of the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Turkey. This is obviously most pertinent to the study of premodern Persianate painting, an art form largely spawned from prosodic texts and produced precisely in those same regions.[16] With a few exceptions, what has been routinely elided in scholarly studies of Persianate painting is the mystical use to which

an enormous quantity of Persian poems have been put since the early eleventh century.[17] Mysticism – or the ascetic-mystical mode of piety in Islam known as Sufism – so overwhelmed this most privileged of all Persian cultural productions that virtually any poem composed after the thirteenth century could be argued to harbour some mystical content, especially if composed during the so-called 'classical' period of Persian poetry.[18] This fact, irrespective of possible 'intended' areligious connotations of a poem, continues to cause serious problems for literary scholars in interpreting Persian verse up to the present day.[19] Considering the predominance of mysticism as the principal form of piety in the Persianate world – especially after the thirteenth-century Mongol conquest – and the fact that some works like the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz came virtually to acquire sacred authority, the near-total avoidance of informed engagement with the subject in scholarly studies of Persianate painting is remarkable, even baffling. The brief exposition of the history of mysticism that follows aims to highlight the explosion of Sufi practices and widespread currency of mystical discourse that preceded the watershed moment in the iconographical development of manuscript painting in the late fifteenth century.

The divine origin of the language of the Quran, as understood by Muslims, has sanctioned the logic of esotericism and occult sciences in Islam for centuries. Mysticism was itself interpretation; it was founded on the problems of interpretation. The entire exoteric–esoteric dichotomy that is so fundamental to the Islamic worldview emanated from the often abstruse text of the Quran. What generated the mystical inspiration were allegorical interpretations of the Quran's recondite passages and the sayings attributed to the Prophet (*Hadith*) – including, notably, the narrative accounts of the Prophet Muhammad's otherworldly journey through the heavenly spheres (*miraj*).[20] The *muqattaat* or the random, isolated letters that appear at the beginning of twenty-nine chapters in the Quran, for instance, supported centuries of occult and lettrist sciences and messianic, gnostic movements.[21] Mysticism, therefore, emerged from among the 'Quran readers' and preachers and the early compilers of the sayings of the prophet.[22] What preceded the advent of Sufism in the ninth century – with mystical speculation about God and the relative proximity of the human soul to the Divine – were the asceticism and renunciatory, even militant, pieties of late Antiquity communities, especially

those of Christians in the eastern lands of the Roman world.[23] Contemptuous of the luxuries of the temporal world, ascetics or renunciants within the nascent Muslim communities were willing to suffer on God's behalf – be it in rejecting the adornments of this life, like sitting on carpets and cushions, or in fighting the enemy by taking part in the martial form of jihad.[24] Later, in the post-conquest community of believers, the socio-economic disparities brought on as a consequence of the enormous wealth accumulated by some Arab-Muslim clans resulted not only in militant religious movements like Shiism and Kharijism, but also encouraged passive protests manifested in self-marginalisation and withdrawal from society and its corrupting ways.[25]

The allegorical-esoteric exegesis of the Quran is also the basis for the transmission of the most important principle shared by Shias and Sufis. The understanding of several Quranic passages that allude to God's immediate, immanent presence among his human servants (for instance 2:115 and 235, 50:16, 24:35) produced the most conspicuous shared conviction in Shiism and Sufism, namely, that the ability to understand the 'inner' meanings of divine speech and prophetic examples were God-given, and that only God's elect (*wali,* often translated as saint)[26] – designated in Shiism as 'friends' or 'protégés' of God, and in Sufism as 'spiritual pole' and 'perfect man' – could understand the obscurities of the Quran. Preordained, such saints have access to the underlying 'secrets' of the Quranic text and to aspects of divine knowledge, and, by extension, they possess miraculous and intercessory powers.[27] Various Sufi rituals like invocation (*dhikr* or *zekr*) or 'audition', which involved recitations, music and dance (*sama*), emerged out of the belief that an individual's status as 'friend of God' could be manifested through rapture or ecstasy (*wajd*) in such practices, which, in turn, led to congregations where the followers of such individuals could assemble – a precursor to Sufi lodges.[28]

Considering the central doctrine of Shiism, namely, the exclusive spiritual pre-eminence of Ali as 'friend of God', as well as his descendants, who are distinguished as the Shia imams, the countless number of Sufi saints who became the 'spiritual poles' to multitudes of followers virtually guaranteed a dissension that has been at the root of Shia antagonism towards Sufis since the ninth century.[29] Conversely, it was just this shared principle of 'divinely chosen saints' that led to a rapprochement between Shiism and Sufism following the Mongol invasion and proved to be so advantageous to

the 'spiritual poles' of the Safavid Sufi order in the fifteenth century, when they inventively claimed also to be distinguished descendants of Ali.[30]

During Sufism's formative period, however, in the eastern parts of the Islamic empire, the inward looking religiosity of those who adhered to the Path of Blame (the *Malamatiyya*); the extrovert pieties of their opposites, the followers of Ibn Karram,[31] with their itinerant mendicancy and activist preaching; the devotional, 'drunk' expressions of ecstasy and passionate love attributed to individuals like Bayazid Bistami;[32] and the diverse groups that acceded to a chivalric system of ethical standards marked by altruistic self-sacrifice and other codes (*futuwwat* or *javanmardi*) all contributed to the ascetic-mystical trend in Islam, which became the mode of piety we refer to as Sufism.[33] The aspirations of the introverted followers of the Path of Blame in Khorasan expressed selfless devotion to God (*ikhlas*) through self-scrutiny against the contamination of the ego, or the 'lower self' (*nafs*), by hypocrisy, pretence and conceit, the achievement of which necessarily precluded any conspicuous display of piety. In fact, a complete suppression of vanity required of them an outward conduct that appeared 'blameworthy'. It was such Malamati ethics that were to become a major theme in later Persian poetry.[34] More generally, such conceptions about the human appetitive-self and the need to cultivate one's soul away from that base and towards a 'selfless' devotion to God – to the point of annihilation *in* God (*fana*) – became integral to the subsequent understanding of Sufism.[35] The development of specialised Sufi literature, in the form of hagiographies or pedagogical guides, which emphasised the importance of master–disciple relationships for advancement on the 'spiritual path',[36] was followed during the course of the eleventh century by foundation of Sufi lodges[37] and a more formalised elaboration of rules.[38]

Verses attributed to Abu-Said Abu al-Khayr (whose depiction in a fifteenth-century illustration is discussed in the next Chapter) or to the eleventh-century 'wandering beggar,' Baba Tahir Uryan (the naked) present early examples of what came to be a ubiquitous trope in later Sufi poetry: a devoted, selfless lover. The term *qalandar*, which epitomised the uncouth libertine who enjoins wine-drinking or sexual promiscuity along with devotion to God and the Prophet in Persian Sufi poetry, is encountered for the first time in a quatrain attributed to Baba Tahir.[39] It is, however, the innovations

of the early twelfth-century poet Sanai (d. 1131) that make him the generally acknowledged pioneer of Persian-language Sufi poetry during a period that marks a profound turn in the stylistic history of Persian literature.[40]

The emergence of Persian poetry after the Arab conquest more or less coincided with the advent of the new Persian language at the court of local rulers in the ninth century along the eastern edge of the Islamic empire.[41] Panegyrical in its inception, this continuation of the Arabic literary tradition was initially an ode (*qasida*) in its form but remained inextricably encomiastic if not adulatory, even after it expanded into other forms and was, apparently, overwhelmed by mystical intent.[42] The use of embellished speech to praise the ruler (or the garden or the beloved), along with the prosodic rules, or practices like emulating the works of past poets, were part of the conventional system of this literary tradition and remained virtually unchanged for more than a millennium.[43] The court was also the environment in which heroic narratives – in the form of rhyming couplet-poems (*mathnawi*) – reached its fullest development, in Ferdowsi's epic *Book of Kings* or *Shahnama* (completed in 1010). It was Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* that in turn served as a model for the romantic epics of Nizami (d. 1209) collectively known as the *Khamsa* (pentalogy or quintet).[44] Conceived as a historical work, the original telos of *Shahnama* was to record and exalt a heritage of kingship.[45] It was this function, despite any possible eventual reception as a means of ethico-political advice to rulers, that proved to be advantageous to successive conquerors who continued to find Ferdowsi's expression of monarchical authority evocative of their own legitimacy as rulers of various regions where Persian was understood.[46] As a means of connecting to the genealogy of ancient Iranian kingship, *Shahnama* certainly proved to be beneficial to the visual arts over several centuries as successive conquering dynasties appropriated it by commissioning its reproductions in often luxury, elaborately illustrated copies.[47]

Other than the court, the most consequential setting for the development of Persian literature was among religious minorities and mystical circles.[48] The missionary purpose and homiletic poems of Nasir Khusraw (d. 1077), an Ismaili-Shia convert, proved important as precedents for the development of the future didactic ethical poetry of Sufis, which itself was a continuation of an even older Zoroastrian tradition of moralising 'wisdom' literature.[49] But the growing attraction of mysticism in the Persian-speaking world, while

contributing to the spread of analogical thinking, also encouraged the use of poetry over prescriptive discourse as a more germane idiom for the expression of spiritual ideas already articulated in theoretical writings.[50] Emerging at the beginning of the twelfth century, Sanai of Ghazna proved to have an enormous influence on the later course of religious poetry in Persian.[51] Having attempted at first to become a poet at the Ghaznavid court, Sanai's initial success seems to have begun under the patronage of various clerics and preachers in Khorasan. Modern readers of Attar will recognise in Sanai's homiletic poems the same warnings about the unfaithfulness of the world, the same advice about renouncing indulgences and battling against the tyranny of the body; poems dismissive of reason and extolling love as a moving force which could bring man closer to God.[52]

Aligned with the Quranic verse – 'He loves them and they love Him' (5:54) – the idea of closeness to God had already been expressed in terms of love, a topos that Sufism shares with neo-Platonism. Proclaiming love, even passionate love for God was evident already in the eighth century, in the Arabic verses attributed to Rabia, and in utterances attributed to Bayazid.[53] Nearly all the early figures associated with the Sufism have also acknowledged the necessity of unconditional love for God.[54] This closeness to God could be achieved, it was surmised, only by way of experiential knowledge, which entailed the taming of the 'lower self' (the 'animal soul'), and required continuous cultivation of the heart, a process that was likened to a journey, or a path that was marked by spiritual stages or stations.[55] It was Ahmad Ghazali (d. 1126), a contemporary of Sanai and the younger brother of the famous Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111), who fully developed the soteriological concept of love and endeavoured to demonstrate the complete harmony between Sufism's idea of love and the creeds and juridical theory of Islam.[56] For Ghazali, in his *Meditations on Love* (*Savanih al-ushaq*),[57] love (*ishq*) is not merely a state or station on the path of spiritual wayfaring but rather 'the Divine Essence Itself', and the ascent of the spiritual wayfarer as a passionate lover would lead to the Beloved and to annihilation in the ocean of Love that is 'the Divine Essence'.[58] Ghazali's *Savanih* is the main source of the idea of 'witnessing' and appreciating the divine beauty in human forms through gazing at the face, often, of prepubescent boys (*shahidbazi* or *nazarbazi*), something that is encountered frequently in Persian poetry, and subsequently

in later Persian painting, notably during the early Safavid period.[59] This doctrine of 'Divine Love' had a considerable impact on Persian literature and marks the beginning of what has been called 'the school of love', consisting of contemplative writings by a loosely affiliated group of Sufi mystics and poets over several centuries, with varying degrees of allegiance, among whom the Andalusian mystic-philosopher Ibn Arabi, and Persian poets Rumi and Hafiz are often noted.[60]

Ghazali's articulation of a divine love, to which all worldly beauty owes its existence, inspired dozens of other treatises in Persian and other languages but it may have also been responsible for propelling the *ghazal*, which until the time of Ghazali's contemporary Sanai had been a frivolous form used for songs about love and wine, to become the preferred vehicle for the expression of mystical love and the pre-eminent form in Persian poetry in general.[61] The idea of divine love apparently accorded well with the lyrical *ghazal* and provided it – through association of love with suffering, wine and a disregard for social norms – with antinomian themes, often presented through variations on the already-mentioned persona of the libertine *qalandar* and the ethics of blame (*malamat*), which besides exalting detachment from the world often also served to mock the norms of devotion to religious rites and highlight hypocrisies in conventional piety.[62] Somewhat analogous to what was to occur in manuscript painting during the late fifteenth century, the mystical intent in composing love poetry did not bring with it substantial change in the already rather consolidated repertoire of poetic imagery. Writers inclined towards Sufism simply adapted various forms to their own ends, and so the conventional figurative devices (*asnad-i majazi*) of prosodic Persian that had been used at court remained mostly the same even as they acquired new, additional mystical referents.[63] Characterised by a strict code with regard to both their content and the way they are interrelated, the vocabulary and the basic themes of mystical poetry remained largely indistinguishable from poetry that was secular. Conversely, there are relatively few mystical concepts that a reader, even today, would need to be familiar with in order to understand a 'Sufi poem', especially since much of such poetry concerns generic religious ethics and not intricate points of esoteric doctrine.[64]

Sanai's lyric compositions played a key role in making the *ghazal* an established poetic form, but it is his didactic moral poetry in the form of rhyming

couplets (*mathnawi*) that, besides having a great impact on the development of mystical poetry, marks also the beginning of the genre that, along with narrative romance, proved to be so favourable to the flourishing of both the literary and visual arts during the Timurid period. Released from strict adherence to mono-rhyme that was required for lyrical and stanzaic forms, the *mathnawi* rhyming couplet, already used by Ferdowsi for his *Shahnama*, made possible the composition of similarly long poems on mysticism. *Mathnawi* is often referred to in English as 'epic', which, based on the theme of the composition, may be qualified as heroic, romance or didactic.[65] Perhaps the oldest example of Sufi didactic allegory in Persian is the long introduction to Sanai's *Sayr al-ibad* (*Journey of the Servants*), in which the narrator, a proto-Dante, journeys upwards through the universe, towards spiritual maturity.[66] In addition to containing some of the essential themes of nearly all later works of this form in Persian Sufi literature, Sanai's allegory also stresses both the significance of advancement through stages or stations, as well as the importance of the spiritual guide (*pir* or *shaykh*) for gaining any 'closeness' to God.[67] Another of Sanai's works, which became a model for later Sufi writers like Attar, Rumi and Jami, is his *Garden of Truth* (*Hadiqat al-haqiqa*), a long homily on reason, gnosis, love, and a variety of religious and moral themes elucidated through learned allusions and an enormous number of anecdotes. This work proved to be the first in a long line of Sufi didactic poems that exhort readers to follow the esoteric path, and warn of approaching death and against the temptations of the lower self (the neo-Platonic animal soul), which led to vices like lust, gluttony, pride and hypocrisy.[68] The dense use of imagery, word-play and the strong current of stories in medieval Islam – taken from accounts of the Prophet's life and the lives of his companions, biblical prophets recognised by Islam, early mystics and Sufi saints, but also tales about historical kings and pre-Islamic wise men, as well as legends and animal fables – helped Persian Sufi poets in their task of elucidating moral prescriptions basic to the 'mirror for princes' genre. The assemblage of such illustrative tales, which came to form the building blocks of most didactic poetry in Persian, advanced the standardisation of mystical language and the increasingly conspicuous use of allegory that, by the fifteenth century, had become a distinctive feature of Persian narrative poetry, as exemplified by Jami's didactic *Haft awrang*, a septet of overt Sufi allegories.[69] Parabolical tales, ancillary to such epics as a

whole, provided the occasion for numerous illustrations of literary texts that came to constitute much of Persian painting.

Far better known today than Sanai is the poet Attar, whose mystical epic, *Mantiq al-tayr* will be discussed in the next two chapters. Attar's writings have been considered of the greatest importance for the development of mystical thought in Iran,[70] but Attar himself, unlike Sanai, seems not to have been well known during his own lifetime, and his didactic epics were not 'discovered' until the fifteenth century.[71] The latter fact may be related to the circumstance of his death, which is assumed to have occurred violently during the Mongol devastation of his home town, Nishapur in Khorasan in 1221.[72] However, Attar's *Memoir of the Saints* (*Tazkirat al-awliya*) did become one of the most celebrated Sufi hagiographies and is a pre-eminent example of the genre as its inspirational prose on the lives and sayings of early Sufi saints came to be something akin to required reading or meditation for Sufi initiates. Today, Attar is best known as the author of several didactic mystical epics that are marked by the theme of love (as a means of reaching God) and the concomitant suffering that is deemed necessary for its refinement.[73] This partly explains Helmut Ritter's observation that Attar's epics are to a great extent dominated by a mood of acute sorrow.[74] Attar's literary and mystical indebtedness to Sanai is apparent in his didactic *Book of Affliction* (*Musibatnama*), but perhaps even more so through his lyrics and quatrains on the theme of antinomian mysticism (*qalandariyat*) and boy love.[75] The latter theme, like the story for Attar's most famous mystical epic, *The Conference of the Birds* (*Mantiq al-tayr*), about a group of birds seeking a king, was taken from Ahmad Ghazali. Although the idea of the human soul being represented by a bird went back to the philosopher Avicenna (d. 1037) and his treatise of the birds (*Risala al-tayr*), written a century earlier, which again highlights the intertextuality of medieval Persian poetry.[76]

The invented, but often repeated story about Attar in his old age being visited by a young Rumi and his father as they were fleeing westward from the advancing Mongols, appears to authenticate the younger poet's spiritual pedigree by granting him a 'spiritual lineage' that emphasises his and Attar's shared mystic heritage, connecting them with one another.[77] Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), whose poetry posits divine love as the means and end of the Sufi path, was clearly an inheritor of the Khorasani mystical poetic tradition,

and did indeed migrate west with his family before the Mongol devastation. However, the fact that the story of his meeting with Attar surfaced for the first time two centuries after Rumi's death, and was promulgated by the Herati chronicler Dawlatshah (d. 1494), may suggest the opposite direction of the process, especially since Rumi – already revered by Sufis and the literati of Herat – needed no endorsement, and it was the didactic mystical epics of Attar that had only been 'discovered' in that century.[78] Indeed, Dawlatshah's biography of poets (*Tazkirat al-shuara*), which is dedicated to Alishir Navai, was completed in 1487, and his embellishing account of Attar reflects the same climate of bibliophilism and mystical zeal that led to the atypical commissioning of Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript, whose new-fangled illustrations completed that same year, inaugurated the new emblematic iconography of Persianate painting.[79]

According to twentieth-century scholars, Persian Sufi poetry reached its prime with Rumi's massive tome of spiritual rhyming couplets (*Mathnawi-i manawi*), a didactic epic known by antonomasia as *Mathnawi*, and his lyrical poems collected in the *Diwan-i shams*, in which devotion to and glorification of his Sufi master, or shaykh, is cardinal.[80] The eminence of Rumi in Timurid circles in the fifteenth century is attested in scattered references to him in writings from the period.[81] Rumi's *Mathnawi* corresponds to that of *Savinah* by Ghazali and its structure and content follow the homiletic design of Attar's *Book of Secrets* (*Asrarnama*), which itself had Sanai's *Garden of Truth* as a model. With no frame story and no systematic structure, Rumi's *Mathnawi*, which begins with the neo-Platonic idea of the soul returning to its divine origin, likewise relies on dense use of imagery, word-play and illustrative tales – most of which by the fifteenth century were quite familiar to the educated – for exposition of moral lessons and mystical ideas.[82] By describing his own *Mathnawi* as an 'unveiling of the secrets of certain knowledge and union', Rumi seems to suggest that his opus is an edifying and instructive source and a common repository of the forms, symbols and structures with which the discursive community of Persianate Sufism was engaged.[83] Although itself rarely illustrated, Rumi's *Mathnawi*, which according to some covers almost every aspect of life, may indeed serve as a 'veritable encyclopedia of mystical lore', and, as will be seen, as a valuable reference for deciphering the significance of several of the cryptic depictions

that permeated the iconography of late Timurid and early Safavid Persianate painting.[84]

The establishment of the Mevlevi Sufi brotherhood by Rumi's successors was part of the trend in the thirteenth century that consolidated and expanded various versions of Sufism, and which in turn promoted the 'vernacularisation of Sufi teachings'.[85] In the aftermath of the Mongol invasion and the destruction of the caliphate in Baghdad in 1258, the sacred authority and unity of the Muslim community (*umma*) was gone and so it fell to such confraternities – formed around dozens of saintly figures that accommodated the religious needs and activities of ordinary people – to provide the conceptual and institutional framework needed to connect with the community of fellow believers and past traditions.[86] In the new socio-political order that took shape after the disruption to the political cultures and religious associations across much of Muslim Asia, the growing networks of these Sufi brotherhoods and Sufi shrines played a significant and constitutive role. The destruction of the Ismaili-Shia fortress in Alamut by the Mongols also led to the dispersal of messianic currents, often within the broad framework of popular Sufism, which proved to be instrumental in shaping the radical Sufi brotherhoods.[87] By the time the new Mongol rulers of the central Islamic lands converted to Islam half a century after the conquests, Islam had effectively become inseparable from the persons, ideas and institutions of Sufism, and there was hardly an aspect of public or private life in the eastern Islamic lands that remained untouched by these networks of mystical devotion.[88] Despite some sharpened boundaries, the post-Mongol period was conspicuously marked by the prevalence of confessional indeterminacy. This makes any binary discussion of a Sunni–Shia divide futile and ahistorical at least until after the heterodox messianism imposed by the early Safavids had been refitted in the early sixteenth century. The pre-eminence of occultism and esotericism, even the extremist, messianic and syncretist beliefs of, for example, Hurufis or Nurbakhshis, meant that virtually the only shared doctrine between the followers of any of these creeds was the concept of *wilaya*, the saintly or sanctified power that again, going back to the text of the Quran, was taken to be reserved for Sufi shaykhs or Shia imams.[89] Indeed, Sufism had become an embodied Islam of authority based on the blessing powers of those who had inherited it through prestigious blood lineages long before the Ismail

of the Safavi Sufi order succeeded in using such claims to subjugate most of the population of the Iranian plateau.[90] At its base, late medieval Islam in Iran, as in south and central Asia, was experienced essentially through the bodies of such saints – whether in person, at their tombs or through their appearance in dreams.[91]

Along with establishment of various followings that eventually evolved into the great number of Sufi orders, the Ilkhanid period during the fourteenth century also saw the further development of the immense canon of Persian literature. This is the era when both the poet Hafiz, with his love-intoxicated lyrics, and the founder of the Safavid Sufi order flourished and when the mystical poetry of love itself became a subject of theoretical analysis. Lists, in the form of catalogues of Sufi vocabulary, were drawn up to explain the manifold concepts used by poets for expressing their mystical ideas. In writings by Fakhr al-Din 'Iraqi (d. 1289), Mahmud Shabistari (d. 1340) or Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (1353), poetry was seen as a code that had to be deciphered in order to arrive at its true mystical meaning.[92] This was also a period of many commentaries on the works of Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), who a century earlier had integrated the contemporary pantheistic and monistic ideas into a complex system of speculative mysticism which he expounded in several definitive treatises. Through what came to be referred to as the Akbari school, Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wujud*) – a form of cosmic monism – was to prove immensely influential even as it raised objections for blurring the distinction between the Creator and His creation.[93] The doctrine focuses on the esoteric (*batin*) reality of God's creation rather than the outward (*zahir*) reality or things as they appear. For Ibn Arabi all that exists (that has *wujud*), that is, all reality in the world as it appears, is but the various manifestations – and never independent of – the one God. Ibn Arabi's doctrine of the Perfect Man, an elaboration of the idea of 'sainthood' (*wali*), is in conformity with and likely an encouragement to the followers of all those with messianic aspirations who claimed to being privy to divine mysteries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[94] Iraqi's short treatise on love, *Divine Flashes* (*Lamaat*, or effulgences) is expressively written 'in the manner of' Ghazali's *Savinah*.[95] Inspired by Ibn Arabi's theosophy, Iraqi's embrace of the unity of all existence was to preoccupy Jami enough to write his own commentary on it in 1481.[96] For our purpose, the

most important impact of Mongol rule on the literary and visual culture of the Persianate world was, of course, the expansion of manuscript painting, which flourished as a new art form, even more so after the ravages of yet another conqueror, the Turco-Mongolian Timur or Tamerlane (d. 1405). Whether it was related to the remnants of shamanistic beliefs or the continued interest in astrology and the stars, using book painting for conveying sometimes multiple levels of meaning beyond the narrative subject of the adjacent text had already been established by the end of Ilkhanid rule, even if many later artists and subsequent schools of painting seem to have recoiled from the practice.[97]

The powerful impulse towards esotericism that dominated the religious environment of the fifteenth century was spurred further by Timur through diffusion of temporal political power in his conquests, his personal reverence for holy men and by his progeny, who, intent on legitimising their own rule, embarked on an unprecedented programme of art patronage.[98] The intense devotion of the Timurid warlords and princes to holy men created the most favourable conditions for esotericism, increasing the influence of Sufi leaders and millenarian movements.[99] Sufis had developed their own tradition by way of lineages of saints and teachers whose sanction carried supplementary authority of its own. Regional sultanates became dependent on alliances with individual Sufi masters, which led to sometimes massive investment in Sufi shrines and lodges. Such investments, or *waqf* endowments, ensured financial security for Sufi institutions.[100] Not unlike the eventually militarised Safavi Sufis in Azerbaijan, under the leadership of Ubaydullah Ahrar (d.1490), the followers of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufi group effectively constituted a state in their own right.[101] It is in the example of such individuals as Ahrar that we can vividly observe the intellectual and bureaucratic synthesis of Sufism. The process solidified the institutionalisation of what had been a cult of saints and the veneration of tombs into what we may recognise as brotherhoods or Sufi orders led by a single figure with distinct rituals and master–disciple relationships that ultimately linked the spiritual lineage of those involved back to the Prophet.[102] Whether in Arabic or Persian, books and treatises on Sufi teachings, practices and institutions, such as manifestos of specific Sufi orders continued to be written as they had been in the previous century, but the profusion of Sufi poets – writers of love, gnostic (*arifana*)

and rogue (*qalandariya*) poetry – during and after the reign of Timur's son Shahrukh (d. 1447) in Herat was unprecedented.[103]

By all accounts, Timurid princely courts did indeed have a vital role in the efflorescence of Persianate culture. But during the fifteenth century what overwhelmed that culture in almost every respect was esotericism. The princely class itself was consumed, at times literally, by obtainment of blessings (*baraka*) from saints and mystics.[104] Both the importance of 'illustrated poetry' to the prestige and legitimacy of the Timurids, as demonstrated by Lentz and Lowry, and the profound changes in the social situation and function of poetry, as highlighted by Paul Losensky are predicated on the contemporary predominance of esotericism.[105] Indeed, fluency in the poetic tradition gained a new importance as a sign of good breeding and education, and as a prerequisite for participation in the cultural life of the court, but of course it was also at court that ideas of Ibn Arabi, astrology and mystical theology were being debated.[106] Court patronage, which had originally imposed the conventions and rules for composing poetry, was now in allegiance with sanctified men, be they Sufi masters, lettrist intellectuals or ultra-Shia messiahs.[107] And the tenor of the poetry that spread throughout all urban classes of society, 'from wealthy merchants to lowly craftsmen', was mystical.[108] In Herat, Tabriz or Shiraz, the Timurid and Turkmen literati, who took an unprecedented interest in collection, consolidation and systematisation of the poetic past, also sought the esoteric advice of saints and believed in the influence of charismatic Sufis.[109] Literary imitation, or more accurately imitation that 'salutes' but also aims to 'outdo' a predecessor (*muaradah*, or *jawab-gu-i*), became perhaps the most significant measure of a poet's skill and played an important role in the social expansion and conceptual consolidation of poetic tradition.[110] But even as Jami 'outdoes' Nizami's pentalogy, with his own septet, all seven of his epic poems either explicitly or allegorically – but patently – propagate Sufism.

The surge in manuscript painting during this period – the illustrative function of painting and the virtually exclusive engagement of visual artists with the written text – was itself an extension or manifestation of the general bibliophilism, part of what Losensky calls 'the cult of the book'.[111] However, with notable exceptions of some 'extremist' or post-Islamic works, fifteenth-century bibliophilism that included anthologies of poet biographies (*tazkirah*)

modelled on biographies of the Sufi saints, including the 'discovered' Attar's mystical epics in the emerging canon, and the very compulsion to write so many literary 'responses' to existing Sufi allegories like *Layla and Majnun*, all indicate that like the authors themselves, the reading and listening audiences were assumed to be in one stage or another of a 'journey' towards Sufism.[112] Fifteenth-century Timurid–Turkmen bibliophilism was effectively generated by and subordinate to mystics and ideas and institutions of Sufism.[113]

Abd al-Rahman Jami (d. 1492), whose life spans the fifteenth century, has been grouped with the prominent poets of the 'classical' period in Persian literature. He certainly had considerable influence on the intellectual, religious and cultural life of early modern Islam. It is Jami who wrote the septet *Haft awrang*[114] (see Plate 1), which remains his most celebrated work. *Haft awrang* consists of seven epic poems, three mystical didactic works and four thinly-veiled Sufi allegorical romances in rhyming couplets. Whatever influence Jami may have had on later Persian literature, it is his esoteric beliefs and his stature as a Sufi poet that make his *Haft awrang* significant for us. Jami, who deployed his discursive virtuosity in the service of Sufism, had, perhaps unwittingly, his most far-reaching cultural influence on the visual arts. The direct impact of Jami's poetry on the iconography of manuscript painting during the last decades of the fifteenth century has been well established for some time.[115] Shaped by a comprehensive synthesis of the conventional poetic praxis and infused with Akbari theosophy, it was in the final decade of Jami's life that, thanks to his political clout, his Sufi poetry at last penetrated the compositions of Persian manuscript painting, first literally, and then allusively.[116]

Born in 1414, Jami's formative years coincided with attempts by Timur's son and successor Shahrukh to assert religious conformity and stem the religious permissiveness that had characterised the post-Mongol period. Shahrukh abandoned some Turko-Mongolian customary laws in 1411, replacing them with Islamic Sharia, and he and his wife Gawharshad founded and staffed religious schools, hospices (*khanqahs*) and mosques in and near Herat. This 'Sunni revival' must have also helped to shape Jami's generally sober religious outlook.[117] The religious and intellectual atmosphere of Jami's early years in Herat were defined by the persecution and expulsion of religious figures and Sufis such as the immensely popular antinomian poet Qasim

al-Anwar (d. 1433), whose first Sufi master had been Sadr al-Din Ardabili of the Safavid order in Tabriz; or the occult philosopher Sain al-Din ibn Turka, who was suspected of Hurufism – a gnostic-messianic lettrist movement one of whose members had attempted to assassinate Shahrukh in 1427 – and by the execution in Balkh of the Sufi leader, Shaykh Khuttalani (d. 1424), and trial of his follower, Muhammad Nurbakhsh (d. 1464), who had claimed to be the Mahdi (messiah), and had to publicly renounce the claim in Herat.[118] It was in the context of such cultural currents, which produced mystics and messiahs and encompassed everything from metaphysics, cosmogony and physics to numerology, astrology and magic, that Jami's restrained character, relative conservatism and general adherence to the normative 'orthodox' sources was formed.[119]

During the earlier part of Jami's life, with institutional boundaries between various followers of Sufism yet to be formed, aspiring mystics looked for help, inspiration and companionship through a variety of associations, which in turn led to rivalries as well as cooperations between diverse spiritual leaders and scholars.[120] In Herat, Sad al-Din Kashghari (d. 1456), Jami's spiritual guide, remained aloof both from the remaining devotees of Qasim al-Anwar, who had been expelled from the city by Shahrukh, and from the charismatic Zayn al Din Khwafi (d. 1435), who disapproved of Ibn Arabi. Debates marking divisions among competing intellectual networks of Sufis concerned, for example, the permissibility of philosophy, the legality of astronomy or the practice of loud versus silent *dhikr* (invocation) by Sufi adepts. One recurring point of friction was Ibn Arabi.[121]

As the intellectual voice among the Naqshbandi shaykhs, Muhammad Parsa (d. 1420) was an ardent follower of Ibn Arabi and had already introduced his ideas into the Naqshbandi tradition through his writings. Jami admits having formed an early predilection for the Naqshbandis because of his encounter with Parsa as a five-year-old, when the old shaykh, passing through Herat, blessed the young boy by giving him 'a string of rock candy'.[122] Jami's own preoccupation with Ibn Arabi, which dates to at least his student days in the early 1440s, resulted in his *Naqd al-nusus*, which he finished writing in 1459. *Naqd al-nusus* is an anthology of material from earlier commentaries Jami had found useful in his own understanding of Ibn Arabi's late work, *Fusus al-hikam* (*Bezels of Wisdom*). Unusual for such a

theoretical work, Jami's 'derivative' commentary features exemplary verses by poets like Sanai, Attar and Rumi that present Ibn Arabi implicitly as a culminating figure in the Sufi tradition. By integrating the fragmented insights of poets and Sufi commentators who had preceded Ibn Arabi into a single complex whole, Jami elides possible differences that any of those poets may have had with each other, or with Ibn Arabi, in their approach to Sufism.[123] In synthesising the varied approaches to Sufism, Jami also offers a credible precedent for modern-day efforts at definitive interpretation of the indirect and allusive language of medieval Sufi discourse. For our purposes here, Jami's archetypal commentary suggests that the significance of each of the emblematic figure-types that began to proliferate in illustrations of didactic Sufi narratives in the late 1480s may be immanently approximate, rather than precise. It is likely that the referents for most of the enigmatic figure-types that we will encounter and analyse in the following pages transcend specifics of any single mystical perspective or school of Sufi thought.

It was not until about age forty that Jami was finally initiated into the Naqshbandis by Kashghari.[124] The Naqshbandis' principle of 'seclusion within the crowd' (*khalwat dar anjuman*), a remnant of the Malamatis of centuries past, which had enabled craftsmen and traders to become the mainstay of the early Naqshbandi leaders by allowing them to join the Sufi path without giving up their occupations,[125] must have helped to compel Jami to curb his propensity for isolation and eschewal of patronage and the politically powerful.[126] Although Jami had already dedicated his largest treatise on riddles and logogriphs, *Hilyat al-hulal*, to Shahrukh's grandson, Abu al-Qasim Babur, shortly before the latter's death in 1457, his involvement in 'worldly affairs' and his intercessions in economic and political matters did not increase significantly until after 1465 when he spent some six months in Samarqand with his next Naqshbandi teacher, Ubaydullah Ahrar.[127]

Under the spiritual leadership of Ahrar, the principle of 'seclusion within the crowd' had become especially significant to the Naqshbandis, who used it to justify interceding with the politically powerful to ensure the implementation of Sharia and to secure peace on behalf of the common people.[128] With this action-oriented principle that aimed to affect politics Naqshbandi Sufism ceased to be merely a mystical pursuit and became openly ideological. After Shahrukh's death, Ahrar became an adviser to the next Timurid leader, Abu

Said. Being financially secure, the Sufi shaykh's twofold mission remained preventing warfare and removing the non-Islamic, Turko-Mongol system of taxation imposed by Timurid amirs. Ahrar transformed the Samarqand-based Naqshbandis into the nucleus of a 'faction' made up of peasants, craftsmen and traders who, in addition to his Sufi adepts, were ready to work for him in exchange for protection (*himaya*) against, for instance, tax-collecting amirs.[129] Ahrar's influence on Timurid rulers and the ruling circles in Samarqand and Herat derived both from his spiritual status as a Sharia-bound charismatic Sufi master and from his wealth and standing as advocate for a whole segment of society much larger than merely a Sufi order.[130] The importance Ahrar attached to the principle of 'seclusion within the crowd' – and Jami's evident conviction about its rectitude – seems to have ensured Jami's involvement with worldly affairs and reinforced his influence on contemporary events, including, ultimately, the production of visual arts.

It was after Husayn Bayqara (d. 1506) ascended to power in 1469 that Jami entered the most productive writing period of his life. Jami enjoyed a close personal relationship with Bayqara and was even more intimate with Alishir Navai (d. 1501), an outstanding Chaghatai Turkic poet whose own closeness to Bayqara from their childhood schooldays made him one of the most prominent Timurids in Herat, and, for a time, the keeper of the royal seal.[131] Together, Bayqara and Navai were arguably two of the greatest patrons of painting in Islamic history and the renown of the artist Kamal al-Din and Herat's school of painting, which contributed mightily to later Safavid art, is due to the support of these two figures. Indeed, it is no overstatement to repeat Maria Subtelny's words that Navai 'was the de facto overseer of all cultural activity' of this period.[132]

Navai's interest and participation in Sufism manifests itself most significantly through his relations with Jami, whom he considered to be his teacher, Sufi shaykh and Islamic guide.[133] Being more than twenty years younger than Jami, Navai became his 'disciple' and was initiated as a Naqshbandi Sufi, extending the influence of the Naqshbandis into the Herati court. It was at Navai's behest that Jami composed several of his works,[134] the most significant of which may be his biography of Sufi saints, *Nafahat al-uns*, written between 1476 and 1479, which remains an important source for the history of Sufism from the perspective of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandis.[135] There was

also a period of five years between 1481 and 1486, during which both Jami (in Persian) and Navai (in Turkish) composed five epic poems each, in several verses of which they make adulatory references to one another.[136] This compulsion to 'respond' to several already existing epics – those by Nizami and Amir Khusrow of Delhi (d. 1325) – which contemporaries readily understood to be Sufi allegories, by writing several more that conspicuously embody a mystical vision of the relation between the soul and God, and, especially in Jami's case, highlight a devotion to the practice and teaching of Sufism, preceded the production of the *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript in 1487.[137] It is in the illustrations of this Sufi allegory that the emblematic figure-types appear for the first time, initiating an extraordinary trend in the iconography of Islamic art (see Plates 2–5).

Jami's promotion of Ibn Arabi, and his influence on the integration of ideas propagated by that mystical philosopher into the mainstream of Sufi thought,[138] should not obscure Jami's determined promotion of Sharia, and his diligent adherence to the tradition of the Prophet (*sunna*). Jami's defence of exoteric Islam is manifest in his criticisms of the Shias and his response to claims made by Qasim Nurbakhsh.[139] Indeed, the promotion of Ibn Arabi was not the most important concern of Jami's, as indicated by his 'Book of Credo' (*Itiqadnama*) section of his didactic epic *Silsilat al-dhahab*, which summarises the main tenets of the Sunna, and as is demonstrated by the deliberate omission of Shah Nimatullah Wali, a great expounder of Ibn Arabi's ideas, from his compendium of Sufis, *Nafahat al-uns*.[140] Also, Jami's exclusion of Sain al-Din Ibn Turka and Sharaf al-Din Yazdi (d. 1454) from his hagiography of Sufis despite their allegiance to Ibn Arabi again highlights Jami's suspicion of the occultists, even if their ideas had been shaped under the influence of Ibn Arabi's rationalising mysticism.[141]

In the case of Yazdi, Jami accuses him of having strayed from the path of right interpretation of Sufism, implying that the correct interpretation of Sufi traditions would be in compliance with the *Sunna* – as understood by Jami.[142] Indeed, Jami's effectiveness in integrating Ibn Arabi's teachings into Sunni mainstream thinking is a direct reflection of his success in deflecting attacks on Ibn Arabi and defusing scepticism about Ibn Arabi's ideas by exponents of Sharia and the *Sunna*.[143] Jami's skill at neutralising criticisms or polemical attacks is reflected in a number of anecdotes related by his contemporaries,

in which his quick wit, erudition and equivocations – without necessarily offering detailed counter-arguments – manage to deflect the main point of a debate, or where a disarming rejoinder introduces an unanticipated perspective that nullifies an attack.[144] In a humorous example recounted by Fakhr al-Din Ali Safi (d. 1532), Jami simply undercuts the claims of a braggart who boasts of having produced literary 'responses' to nearly all the poetry attributed to the Prophet's son-in-law Ali, by asking impassively, 'what will your response to God be [on the Day of Judgement, when all truth is revealed]?' In another example involving the obligation of fasting, it is Jami's erudition that defuses the criticism directed at Ibn Arabi.[145]

Perhaps most germane to the appearance of cryptic figures in illustrations of manuscripts produced in Herat, after their inception in 1487, is Jami's treatment and final assessment of the historian and lettrist Sharaf al-Din Yazdi, author of the celebrated *Zafarnama* history of Timur, and – according to Jami's own hagiographer – the person who had encouraged the young Jami to attend sermons on Ibn Arabi in Herat.[146] An expert in the science of letters, gematria poetry and magic squares, it was Yazdi who composed one of the first books in Persian on a form of gematria poetry known as *muamma* (logographs).[147] Rooted in the Islamic esoteric (*batini*) tradition, Yazdi wrote his *Hulal-i mutarraz* (*Embroidered Robes*) around the time of the assassination attempt on Shahrukh's life by a member of the lettrist Hurufis in Herat in 1427 – perhaps to parry the millenarian claims of Fazlallah Astarabadi (d. 1394) the founder of the Hurufi movement. In his *Hulal-i mutarraz* Yazdi admits that *muamma* follows the principles of writing poetry, but it is a metered discourse that expresses 'an evident meaning which is understood in the same way by the elites and the general public'. But Yazdi hastens to add that *muamma* also contains 'hidden intentions, the depth of which only the perspicacious ones and those who are knowledgeable in the language of hidden and concealed allusions can comprehend and find out'.[148] As Evrim Binbaş points out, for Yazdi, this insipid form of poetry, far from being merely a simple method of setting up rhymed riddles, is a way of reaching the full understanding of 'all-comprehensive words', which, according to Yazdi's version of lettrism, constitute, among other things, the knowledge of divine unity and the rules of the Sharia.[149] Had Jami been privy to these specific aims of Yazdi's practices, which in Binbaş' rendering seem not necessarily counter

to Jami's own convictions, then the lettrist activities of Yazdi might conceivably have appeared less ominous to him. But according to the conversation related by Jami's disciple, Abd al-Vasi Nizami Bakharzi, after the only meeting between Jami and Yazdi, 'on the banks of the Injil canal' in Herat – when Jami was in his thirties and Yazdi perhaps eighty – Jami was left with the impression that Yazdi and his associates had adopted as their primary style of writing, 'chimerical words which had no connection whatsoever with the way of virtue'. In short, from the perspective of the 'people of the sharia', like Jami, Yazdi's endeavours were 'misguided', bordering on 'irreligion'.[150]

Considering this level of distrust for Yazdi, whom Jami believed to be the first compiler and systematiser of the genre of *muamma*, Jami's own engagement with the subject acquires new polemical urgency. Jami's composition of no less than four separate treatises on *muamma* – in addition to Navai's own work, *Mufradat,* on the subject[151] – all appear to be attempts by the Sharia-minded Jami and his Naqshbandi disciple to normalise and routinise the art of composing and deciphering logogriphs for the 'community of Sunnis' in Herat. According to Binbaş, in order to neutralise the objectionable 'theoretical underpinnings' of *muamma* as Yazdi had envisioned it, Jami and Navai present a monolithic practice and a literary form devoid of the multiple layers of meaning its 'inventor' had conceived. Henceforth, stripped of the ideological and political potency which Yazdi's intellectual project had envisioned, *muamma* becomes a pleasurable artistic pursuit among the elites at the fashionable court of Husayn Bayqara.[152] And in 1487, as we shall see, it, or something analogous to it, even spills into the world of manuscript paintings.

From the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, during the height of Persianate manuscript painting production – when its formal aspects became codified – a series of modulated but repeated themes, preferred subjects and characteristics of style were perpetuated. This was often achieved through direct copying or from master to pupil. However, the paintings, which were often of literary or historical, but rarely of sacred narratives, seem not to permit any easy and rapid identification of excess or supplementary significance of what is depicted – if such indeed exists. According to Sheila Canby, 'symbolism in Persian painting is almost never specific in the way that one would expect of fourteenth-century Italian or Netherlandish art'.[153] For Oleg

Grabar, because Islamic visual culture never conformed to a hegemonic master narrative with its corollary system of symbols, it lacked a unified intellectual field for a recognisable iconography that could now guide our study of these images.[154] Indeed, unlike their immediately obvious comparative European illustrations, the subjects in late medieval Persian manuscript paintings have been understood as mostly secular. Notwithstanding the iconographical studies that remained disengaged from – or carefully avoided – the esotericism that defines so much of late medieval and early modern Islamic intellectual history and culture, many studies of Persianate manuscript painting have continued indirectly or explicitly to suggest that in addition to the links between the pictorial and textual content of paintings at least some of what David Roxburgh has called 'the dense accumulation of minutely rendered details' encountered in the paintings of luxury manuscripts must have additional significance.[155] Unlike manuscript paintings from medieval Europe, depictions in Persian paintings lack a constant contemporary ideological and cultural control that, for instance, influenced the iconography of illustrations in a psalter.[156]

And yet the fact that Marianna Shreve Simpson, in her study of the *Haft awrang* manuscript at the Freer Gallery, is able to acknowledge the ideals of mysticism as implicit in the content of images in Jami's manuscript suggests, even confirms, an underlying ideological and cultural direction that could have influenced the iconography in at least some of its paintings.[157] Indeed, Simpson acknowledges outright the possible links between Sufism and various depictions in the paintings of *Haft awrang*. In her description of the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' (Plate 1), Simpson notes the recurring depictions, such as the figure of a milkmaid or the flute player, whose repeated appearance in various manuscript illustrations is not required by the narrative subject. Simpson refers to such depictions as 'fixed figure-types', 'covert' elements or 'extrapictorial' depictions because unlike other 'figural types' that are often perceived in Persianate paintings such as 'the prince and his court', 'youth and age' or 'lover and beloved', these recurring figures are not relayed by the narrative subject.[158] By acknowledging the recurrence of these fixed figures in other, often deluxe manuscripts that predate Jami's mid-sixteenth-century *Haft awrang*, Simpson implicitly also grants a historical sequence with a necessary starting point to the phenomenon.[159] Although

the subject of most Persianate manuscript paintings may seem to be free of a hegemonic master narrative, the fact that Simpson is able to detect the recurrence of what she refers to as 'fixed figure-types' in illustrations of narrative poetry, produced over a period of nearly a hundred years, does suggest a unified symbolic system that may well represent an identifiable ideology, albeit one that was evidently more indirect and less universal than its Catholic counterpart in medieval Europe.

Hegemonic may indeed be one way to describe 'Sufi Islam', or the ubiquity of mysticism in the Islamicate world, especially during the fifteenth century.[160] Among all the Shia, messianic and extremist movements, and amid the heterodoxies of gnostic, occultist or cabalistic beliefs endemic in this period, it was mostly the speculative mysticism adhered to by the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi circles that prevailed in Timurid lands, which at least in Herat was virtually defined by Jami through his personal intercessions and his writings.[161] But as the above discussion indicates, Jami was a successor to a long line of Sufi writers that went back some four centuries, and as a poet he was yet another participant in the loosely affiliated group of Sufi mystics that since the beginning of the eleventh century had used Persian poetry for exposition and propagation of Sufi beliefs and practices. As such, Jami had access to a shared repository of forms, symbols, tropes and structures of a practice that was intertextual and transcended specifics of any specific group or school of Sufism. In fact, Jami's literary output, which contains virtually all the genres that had been current in the previous centuries may be seen as a series of 'responses' to various received literary models, and at least in the case of his seven didactic epics contained in his *Haft awrang*, they were not only intended to enforce the continuity of the literary tradition from which they arose, but were also revisionary in that they fostered Sufism.[162] Jami's didactic and allegorical epics also hint at reception of the literary heritage in the late fifteenth century: whether Nizami or Amir Khusrow wrote their epic romances as Sufi allegories, these were apparently received and imitated as such. Unlike the epic romances of Nizami such as *Khusrow and Shirin* or *Layla and Majnun*, Jami's imitations, or literary responses, were always intended to propagate Sufism. Indeed, the Sufi tenor of Jami's *Yusuf and Zulaykha* or *Layla and Majnun* is never left out of sight.[163] In essence Jami's imitations consolidate and explicate their models, as Losensky writes, but

they also supplement them with Sufi themes.[164]

The difficulties an art historian might face in deciphering the possible meaning of an enigmatic depiction in a particular Persianate manuscript painting from late fifteenth-century Herat are not dissimilar to the difficulties faced by literary scholars who often must recover auxiliary meanings from the verses of Sufi poets going back at least to Sanai. Insulated as the two academic fields have been, many passages from writings on Persian poetry in general, and Sufi poetry in particular, might well be mistaken for comments on manuscript paintings that are the focus of this study.[165] It would be beyond the scope of perhaps any single study to survey and account for the presence and context of every, or even many of the enigmatic or 'covert' depictions in manuscript illustrations produced by the artists in Herat during the last decades of Timurid rule. It is, however, argued here that the inception of such depictions occurred during or shortly before 1487, when a convergence of factors, including a congruency between patrons' tastes and inclinations, on the one hand, and the proclivities of the innovative artists of the 'Bihzad school', on the other, produced several unprecedented figural representations in illustrations that obliquely, allusively sought to highlight the moral lessons of a few parables in a didactic Sufi allegory. The success of this innovative schema may be measured by the proliferation of other novel and allusive figures in illustrations of subsequent Sufi narratives.

The 1487 illustrations from Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* at the Metropolitan Museum, which contain the first of such emblematic figures will be introduced in the next chapter.

2

Remaking Persian Painting:
Didactic Sufism in a Timurid Manuscript

The seminal manuscript of Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* (*The Conference of the Birds*), completed in 1487, has been the subject of much scholarly attention.[1] Out of its eight extant illustrations, the four dating to the late fifteenth century, and among these three paintings in particular, have received special scrutiny, primarily because they depict and prominently position figures and activities that appear to have no connection to the narrative subject. The paintings, 'The Beggar before the King' (Plate 2), 'The Funeral Procession' (Plate 3), 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 4), and 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' (Plate 5), were all composed in Herat, Afghanistan, during the reign of the last Timurid ruler, Husayn Bayqara (r.1469–1506).

The iconographical 'experiment' or innovation in these 1487 paintings and their supposed deviation from convention may not be wholly radical or even unusual, as a great number of depictions with esoteric significance can be detected in many earlier manuscript paintings, especially those whose content reflects contemporary events.[2] The unique status of the *Mantiq al-tayr* illustrations is mainly due to the emphatic and ostentatious use of such depictions: they are granted a status equal to the conventional illustration of the narrated events in the same painting. That they initiated a trend in Persianate manuscript painting that continued for decades strongly suggests that these compositions were occasioned by the requests of a discerning and engaged patron, who catalysed or perhaps even directly urged such pictorial innovation. Although the identity of the patron is not directly indicated anywhere in the manuscript, the contender must, in the first place, have had a special affinity for Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* which had rarely been illustrated

before 1487. As it was first suggested nearly half-a-century ago, the patron of the Metropolitan Museum manuscript was likely Alishir Navai who emulates *Mantiq al-tayr* by writing his own *Lisan al-tayr* (*Language of Birds*) in 1498 as a literary 'response' to Attar's work.[3] Navai, patron of the arts, who was Sultan Bayqara's foster-brother and childhood schoolfellow,[4] is said to have read Attar's Sufi allegory when he was very young and even to have had *Mantiq al-tayr* memorised.[5] By 1487, Navai had also already constructed a new mausoleum for Attar's tomb in Nishapur.[6] Given Navai's panache for anagrams and his production and consumption of logographs (*muammas*), in which the letters of a name were hidden in elaborate verses in order to be decoded for amusement, and given the entertainment value of representational paintings at gatherings in Herat for which there is ample evidence in accounts of courtly assemblies Navai organised or participated in,[7] it is far more likely that he, rather than, for instance, Bayqara,[8] is the person under whose patronage these unprecedented illustrations were produced.[9] Further, the fact that the manuscript was left incomplete at this time may well be related to Navai's period of 'disgrace' which also began in 1487, when he was forced to leave Herat and take up the governorship of Astarabad.[10]

It was in Herat, not long before Navai's exile that the selective adaptation of the received Timurid conventions in painting led to the appearance of what has been called the 'new style' in Persian painting. This style, associated with the celebrated artist Bihzad (d. 1535), was ushered in during Bayqara's reign without disturbing the basic mechanisms of continuity in Persian manuscript illustration.[11] Because of their novel, less idealised, more naturalistic rendering of individuals and landscapes, the 1487 illustrations of *Mantiq al-tayr* may be seen as excellent representatives of the Bihzad school of painting, and indeed may well be the earliest dated examples of this 'new style' in Persianate painting.[12]

Among the characteristics of this 'new style' is the temporal dimension of the composition, reflected in the greater variety of postures and attitudes in the depiction of figures. That such elaborations go beyond the requirements of the narrative subject is itself a novelty. The variety of facial features, and the earthly tones and complex colour mixes have also been cited as characteristics of this 'new style'. Other stylistic elements that have distinguished a painting as Bihzadian, such as a composition's focus on the peripheral action

– vis-à-vis the narrative subject – and depiction of everyday activities, may rather be seen as subordinate to another characteristic of this 'new style' in painting, namely, 'the inflection of visual narratives with Sufi themes', which will be part of the discussion in this chapter.[13]

Indeed, as we will see, this last noted element of the 'new style' should be understood as ancillary to attempts at expressing new pictorial values: as paintings shift semantically towards the mystical and the esoteric, the style of representation becomes more naturalistic, as if to capture the dialectical dependence of the otherworldly on the world itself. The fact that in three of these four paintings the earlier iconographic norms of the fifteenth century, which stemmed from the life of princes in courtly settings, are abandoned altogether, may even be linked to the influence of the 'seclusion within the crowd' principle promoted by the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufis discussed in the previous chapter. Distinguishing the Naqshbandis from most other practitioners of Sufism, the doctrine of 'seclusion within the crowd', required adepts to be outwardly active in daily work even as inwardly they kept constant remembrance of God.[14]

In the 1480s, manuscript paintings from earlier periods which contained depictions that could – at best – be construed as peripheral to the narrative subject were certainly known to the artists in Herat.[15] Some supplementary details in manuscript illustrations, such as the pitched tents or a caldron over an open fire, may be construed as naturalistic representation of a nomadic campsite, details perhaps mentioned by the text but not necessarily in the actual passage that is illustrated.[16] Several studies have already demonstrated various allusive depictions in Persian manuscript paintings that date from well before the 1480s. However, these earlier images are either surplus details or allusions to contemporary events at court or the political life of the patron mostly in harmony with the narrative subject at hand.[17] In such cases, the process of scholarly interpretation may be compared with identification of marginal depictions of the patron alongside the representation of a saint in medieval Christian painting, or of the artist within the historiated initial of a twelfth-century French manuscript.[18] As we will see, three of the four 1487 *Mantiq al-tayr* paintings are unprecedented in that while half of the surface in these illustrations is devoted to depicting the narrative subject of the accompanying text, the other half is devoted to images that seem to have

nothing to do with the actors or the events related by the text; appearing as highly self-conscious images, effectively with a separate series of logically and chronologically related events caused or experienced by unidentifiable actors with no apparent basis in the narrative subject.[19]

Translated into English under such titles as *The Speech of the Birds*, or *The Conference of the Birds*, *Mantiq al-tayr* was written by Farid al-Din Attar in rhyming couplets some three centuries before this Herati manuscript was copied and illustrated in 1486.[20] Attar's twelfth-century allegory of the birds' mystical journey to find their king, Simourgh, was indeed an explicit contribution to the discourse of Sufism, which like other, non-Islamic mystical practices, seeks a direct, individual experience of God. Advocating the pursuit of the 'real' – as opposed to the phenomenal – 'truth', Attar's narrative presents an allegorical exposition of the various stages that a seeker of God must go through in his (or her) quest for personal contact with God, which ideally, could also lead to an ultimate union with the Divine.

In retrospect it may seem logical that it was the task of illustrating Attar's mystical allegory that prompted or inspired the artists to undertake an unprecedented arrangement in illustrating it.[21] Unlike certain episodes of the often-commissioned heroic epic, *Shahnama*, Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* was intended to be a mystical allegory by its author. Also, unlike such narratives as Nizami's epic romance, *Layla and Majnun*, the understanding of Attar's epic as a Sufi allegory was not dependent on the contemporary reception or subjective discretion of the reader.[22] Attar's frame story describes the difficulties faced by a group of birds on their journey to Qaf Mountain in search of their rightful king, the mythical bird Simurgh.[23]

As its title suggests, *Mantiq al-tayr*, or the *Conference of the Birds*, is constructed of talk, of dialogue, a cacophony of voices, a profusion of parables. Despite its oft-cited plot about the journey of the birds in search of their rightful king, the bulk of the narrative in Attar's epic is devoted to the reasons for undertaking such a journey. So Attar's narrative is largely sustained through dialogue *about* the 'trip', its arduousness, its various stages and whether it should be undertaken at all. The actual journey itself is relayed only briefly near the climactic end of the story.[24] The birds' journey as a frame story allows Attar to accommodate numerous questions or concerns that the birds – and by extension, a Sufi seeker – might have about the journey to

Mount Qaf, that is, towards Truth and unity with God. The birds' discussion generates numerous didactic tales (*hikayat*) and parables that address thinly veiled questions about the path to becoming a Sufi. Also, unlike didactic or advice works like *Bustan* (*The Orchard*) by the Shiraz poet Sadi (d. 1291), or another of Attar's own works, *Asrarnama* (*Book of Secrets*), where the parables and anecdotes have no overarching themes (except within fragmentary and varied sections) and lack a frame story that encompasses and binds the entire work, *Mantiq al-tayr* provides a definitive, explicit through-line that in alternately explicit and indirect language outlines the stages and the required process for becoming a Sufi.

To be an educated Persian-speaker in late fifteenth-century Herat was fairly predicated on fluency in the common indirection and allusive language (*isharah*) of Persian poetry.[25] As an account of a 'literary banquet' attended by dignitaries and artists in Herat reveals, for the local literati, engaged as they seem to have been in flights of ribaldry and rhetorical exchanges replete with innuendos and puns, the field of reception in which the illustrations for *Mantiq al-tayr* were conceived was one already besieged by figures of speech and circumlocutions. The allusive depictions and the 'enigmatic' figures in the three 1487 paintings must have appeared considerably less equivocal to them than to us. For an audience keen on esotericism, the self-evidently Sufi illustrations exposed tasks and difficulties that were not unfamiliar, making any allusive or emblematic depiction encountered in the paintings less an enigma than a diversion.[26]

In *Mantiq al-tayr*, the Hoopoe, who in the Quran (27:20) is King Solomon's messenger, serves as the closest thing to a protagonist, the most assiduous seeker who rallies and leads the other birds. Metaphorically, the Hoopoe may be seen as the Sufi master who guides the other seekers.[27] A number of named birds speak before the series of 'questions' become anonymous.[28] The nightingale, for instance, or the duck, the hawk and the finch,[29] all have their own excuse as to why they cannot undertake the long journey to Simurgh: the nightingale is too much in love with the rose; the duck cannot leave the water; the hawk is too pleased with his status at the royal court; and the finch is too weak for the hardships of travel.[30] The Hoopoe responds after each excuse or question presented by the birds, which is then followed by a few parables or moralistic tales meant to reinforce the point already made in

the Hoopoe's response. In this way Attar presents his thesis on the necessary process through which a 'seeker' on the path of Sufism can achieve perfection and an intuitive knowledge of the Divine Truth.[31] The successive repetition of 'another one said to him', or 'he asked' ('*digari goftash*', or '*porsid*'), to introduce a question, and 'he said' ('*goft*') or such variations, which mark the beginning of the Hoopoe's reply also mark the division of the text into separate units, each addressing a separate concern, recognisable even when only listened to.[32] The process of achieving a state where the carnal self (*nafs*) is eliminated – a key goal if one is to achieve perfection (*kamal*) – and the difficulties and sacrifices involved in the process, constitute a recurrent theme.

Sequentially, the first of the four paintings dating from the late fifteenth century, 'The Beggar before the King' (Plate 2), or rather, the first textual passage selected for illustration, is the third and final parable that Attar presents in order to elaborate on the Hoopoe's response to a query from an unidentified questioner who declares itself epicene (*mukhannas* / مخنث), or effeminate in essence. Lacking virility and incapable of constancy, the questioner claims to be by turns debauched and ascetic, at times drunk in taverns due to its carnal desires and at other times consumed by prayer, bewildered as though a prisoner in a pit – and presumably, unable to embark on the journey.[33]

The Hoopoe's response is that such might be in the nature of anyone, for there are very few of singular character, and that if everyone was already pure then there would be no need for all the prophets God has sent. But then he accuses the addressee of being nothing but 'fulfilled desires from head to toe', and that to constantly nurture one's carnal soul, which is likened to a dog, in no way lessens one's effeminate essence.[34] The three parables that elaborate this point begin with an anecdote about Shebli, a tenth-century Sufi from Baghdad who thought his own devotion to God was so lacking in virility that he sought refuge in the house of catamites and compares all those who stealthy idolise their carnal desires to effeminates pretending to be manly. This is followed by a tale of two quarrelling men in Sufi robes, who are berated by a judge – in view of their behaviour – for masquerading as devotees of God. The third parable, and the fortieth of such moralistic tales in Attar's text so far, which around 1487 in Herat was selected for illustration, is a variation on a familiar motif about a pauper in love with a king.[35] In this case, the king of Egypt commands that the beggar in love must choose between going into

to exile or dying. When the beggar decides that he would rather go into exile, the king has him beheaded and explains that if the pauper had been truly in love then he would have chosen to give up his life for his beloved rather than being parted from him.[36] The moral implication of all that is presented in this segment is that there are no half measures for those embarking on the 'path of love', and that the Sufi wayfarer must do so wholeheartedly.

The 1487 illustration of 'The Beggar before the King' depicts a fenced courtyard with a gate at the right and a building at the left on which there are panels with inscriptions.[37] The condemned lover kneeling before a young king is the focal point of the painting, but the composition may be characterised as depicting an 'enthronement' scene, which has been an integral part of the art of Iran from the pre-Islamic Sasanian dynasty onward and appears in all schools and in every period of manuscript painting.[38] The depiction of twelve different human figures, six of whom appear to be quite youthful – when three or four might have sufficed – suggests possible cameo appearances by Herati contemporaries. But 'The Beggar before the King' has not raised the same iconographical questions that distinguish the other three paintings of this *Mantiq al-tayr*, which in addition to containing apparently superfluous figures unrelated to the text are also stylistically far more aligned with the naturalistic depictions associated with Bihzadian 'new style'. Indeed, it has been argued cogently that 'The Beggar before the King' must be by a different hand than the other three paintings.[39] Still, even this painting contains certain allusive, emblematic elements very much relevant to Sufi ideology expressed through Persian poetry, such as the blossoming tree, the pool of water in the foreground, as well as the stream behind the railing of the yard in the back ground.[40]

However, one of the main reasons why the other three 1487 paintings in this manuscript have drawn more attention to themselves is that unlike 'The Beggar before the King', their layout and their contents are unprecedented. The three paintings in question, 'The Funeral Procession' (Plate 3), 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 4), and 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' (Plate 5), have all been unobtrusively divided into 'halves', only one of which illustrates the events of the narrative subject as related by the text. The other half is allusive, but in all three paintings the setting and the background of the illustrations in the 'allusive' halves are in enough

iconographical harmony with respect to the composition as a whole to make the two 'halves' rather seamlessly blend with one another. The second half in each of the three paintings depicts figures engaged in various activities that have no direct connection to the narrative subject but are rather allusive references to various doctrines or practices of contemporary Sufis to which the particular anecdotes that have been selected for illustration happen to relate. In doing this, these three paintings transcend the traditional practice of illustrating textual narratives and initiate a new iconographical trend in Persianate manuscript painting that lasts through to the sixteenth century. Over the years, aside from the usual debates about attribution, these enigmatic compositions have aroused art historians' curiosity and generated a number of largely inconclusive interpretations.

The notion that various iconographic elements in these paintings were merely 'decorative' was dispelled by nearly all earlier discussions of these contradistinct paintings. The notion that half of each of these paintings serves as a commentary on the other half, which in turn illustrates the events narrated by the text has also been acknowledged. In one of the earliest studies of 'The Funeral Procession' (Plate 3), the explicit theme of this particular episode in Attar's text – which is death – is linked to certain elements depicted in the allusive half of the painting, which in this case is the upper half.[41] The elements in the painting that appear as outwardly lacking iconographic significance are 'symbolic elements' that are intertextually linked to verses by Rumi (d. 1273) and others, which in turn allude to Sufi beliefs and practices.[42]

The brief tale selected for illustration is the second of five such moralistic anecdotes in a segment of Attar's narrative devoted to death. A speaker declares itself to be too fearful of death to embark on the journey, and is berated by the Hoopoe over the frivolity of such an excuse since death is the inevitable fate of everyone who has ever been born, regardless of their rank. The first edifying tale after Hoopoe's response is the account of the phoenix, the mythical bird that dies in fiery flames, out of the ashes of which another phoenix is born. What is emphasised by Attar is the sorrow and misery of phoenix's life, 'without a mate, without a child, all alone by itself',[43] and it lasts a thousand years. And yet, even the phoenix dies.

It is the next anecdote, about a funeral procession, that was selected for illustration. In the lower half of the painting, which corresponds to the nar-

rative subject, the image of a coffin borne in a cortège, the wailing relatives, the bystander and the admonishing Sufi standing in front of an open gate are more than adequate representations of the events as related in Attar's text:

> The son was walking before his father's coffin
> Shedding tears, saying 'O, father!
> Such a day as this, which has shredded my life,
> Has never occurred before in all my days.'
> A Sufi said: 'the one that was your father
> Never had such a day either.'
>
> (Gawharin, 131, 2354–6)[44]

What is depicted in the upper half of the 'Funeral Procession', does indeed also refer to Attar's text, but more to its postulation, which is 'fear of death',[45] rather than the events described by the brief anecdote about a son grieving for his father:

> The misery that has befallen the son is nothing
> The matter is much more grave for the father
> O you who have come to the world not knowing your head from your
>   toes
> With dirt on your head, miserably traversing the wind,
> Even if you rule many nations
> You will gain nothing but the wind in the end.
>
> (Gawharin, 131, 2357–9)

There is, again, an unmistakable note of sorrow and pessimism in Attar's proclamations about our transient life and its inevitable end.[46] The theme of death in this passage is not figurative. Often in Sufi discourse, especially in poetry, the subject of death relates to the adept's wish for 'extinction' in the union with the divine, about which Attar also has much to say.[47] But in this case, 'death' is a natural death, an inexplicable, inescapable phenomenon facing all the living.[48] The absolute certainty of death is to be feared and among all of the possible measures against death, only one is viable: renouncing the world and depending on God.[49] It is not until the last brief anecdote about Socrates that a hint of this notion can be detected, but at this stage on the path of a Sufi, Attar is not concerned with the one measure against death but

rather fear itself. Fear of death is essential to Attar's justification of reliance on God. Attar's notion of mortality is acknowledged in the details depicted in the scene of the cemetery in the upper half of the painting. In the cemetery, which visually corresponds to the actual Gazurgah cemetery in Herat, labourers are depicted as engaged in a flurry of activity in preparing the burial places which are in various stages of completion.[50] The centrally placed image of two men, one pouring water from a clay jug, the other mixing the mortar with a shovel, is an unmistakable allusion to God's creation of man out of clay in the Quran (6:2). This allusion, innovatively inserted in the painting, would have been familiar to the fifteenth-century audience, especially those familiar with Attar's poetry.[51] The long and widely utilised trope in Persian poetry, perhaps known best by English readers in Edward Fitzgerald's rendition of Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*:

> And strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
> Some could articulate, while others not:
> And suddenly one more impatient cried –
> 'Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?'[52]

Indeed, the second tale following the 'funeral procession' in the same section of *Mantiq al-tayr* addressing fear of death, presents a conversation between Jesus and a lamenting clay pot which though once human has been made into many a vessel since having returned to dust.[53] The theme is also familiar to readers of Rumi who, praising the Almighty, writes:[54]

You mixed water with dirt	آب را و خاک را برهم زدی
	ab ra o khak ra bar ham zadi
You gave the shape of Adam to water	آب و گل نقش تن آدم زدی
and dirt.	*ab o gel naqsh-e tan-e Adam zadi*
(2, 696)	

Before Rumi, Attar, too, had stated that there is no part of earth that has not been previously a human being; and that every speck of the earth's dust is a deceased person's body.[55] As he wrote in his *Musibatnama*:[56]

Your wish won't come true, you,	آرزو می نکنت ای مشت خاک
hand-full of dust!	*arezu me nakonat ey mosht-e khak*

| Until that hand-full of dust becomes a pure life. | تا شود این مشت خاکت جان پاک
ta shavad in mostht-e khakat jan-e pak |

And again, elsewhere in his *Mantiq al-tayr,* Attar writes,

| Aren't you aware that life, from birth to death, | تو نمی دانی که هر که زاد مرد
to nemidani keh har keh zad mord |
| Is dust, no more than one precarious breath?
(129, 2314) | شد بخاک و هرچه بودش باد برد
shod bekhak o harcheh budash bad bord |

Also the Hoopoe, while responding to a speaker who expresses fear of death, refers to the passage in the Quran (32:7) about God's creation of man from clay, while he chastises the hesitant bird who, afraid of dying, is content to forgo the journey to the ideal king:

| If you are profligate, if you are pure, | تو اگر آلوده گر پاک آمدی
to agar aludeh gar pak amadi |
| You are but water mixed with dirt, no more
(129, 2318) | قطره‌ء آبی که با خاک آمدی
qatreh-ye abi keh ba khak amadi |

The depiction of the clay pot and the image of water being mixed with dirt is a measured, but oblique means of alluding to what Attar's verse itself alludes to. The depiction of the clay pot and the mixing of water and dirt pictorially represent a key trope used in Persian poetry, Sufi or otherwise. In fact, likening the carnal man to a clay pot is proverbial enough for the intention of the author and artist to be beside the point. But it is also not difficult to connect the depiction in the painting to what Attar's text alludes to – our lives and death are in 'the wind' (lines 2358–9), because we came from dust and shall return to dust, in other words, we will 'gain' nothing in the end but dust – even if the word 'dust' or dirt had not been specifically mentioned by the text.

Herati artists reinforce Attar's understanding of natural death as something to be feared by inscribing a verse from the Quran at the centre of the white flag held by the weeping man on the lower left side of 'The Funeral Procession'. The quote from the third Sura, Imran (3:173), speaks

of increased faith in God when faced with the fear of approaching death – as though in response to Attar's words of warning at the beginning of the section on death.[57] Many of the details in the painting may similarly – and reasonably – be understood as relating variably to Attar's notions of fear and death, which ultimately are meant to underscore the necessity of reliance on God. For instance, the inscription over the door that opens into the cemetery, reads: 'the tomb is a door through which everyone passes', is a reminder that death is merely a passage into the next world. As Rumi repeatedly emphasises in his *Mathnawi*, death is the beginning of the life that really matters:

Intellect lies, look upon yourself in reverse	عقل کاذب هست خود معکوس بین
	aql kazeb hast khod makus bin
It is this life that is death, O fool!	زندگی را مرگ بیند ای غبین
(M5.1764)	*zendegi ra marg binad ey ghabin*

and

there is no dead man who regrets his death	هیچ مرده نیست پر حسرت ز مرگ
	hich mordeh nist por hasrat ze marg
He only regrets his lack of provisions.	حسرتش آنست کش کم بود برگ
(M5.1766)	*hasratash an ast kesh kam bud barg*

Other details in the upper half of the 'Funeral Procession', such as the oil lamp[58] and the 'guardian' cat seen lying in front of a tomb-monument at the top left, could also be related to popular Sufi beliefs commonly encountered in contemporary accounts, especially those related to the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufis.[59] The turbaned man sitting next to a grave on the right-hand side, for example, is clearly not another labourer in the cemetery. He is not facing the grave, as would a relative of the deceased; rather, as the direction of the grave itself indicates, both he and the deceased are facing towards the direction of Mecca. The visiting man is gesturing as though addressing the buried person, a practice that in the context of Khwajagan-Naqshbandi practices at the time is in concord with the teachings of Alauddin al-Attar (d. 1400), who as the Naqshbandi spiritual leader is supposed to have said, 'to be near the graves of pious people has a good influence, but it is better to direct yourself to their souls'.[60] Although death is a difficult road through

which all must pass, Attar clearly indicates that it is also a road where the grave is only the first stop:[61]

Look hard at death – in our long pilgrimage	مرگ بنگر تا چه راهی مشکل است
	marg bengar ta cheh rahi moskel ast
The grave itself is but the first grim stage.	کان درین ره گورش اول منزل است
(132, 2368)	*kan darin rah gurash aval manzel ast*

Using birds or a birdcage as a metaphor for the human soul or human life, which goes back at least to Avicenna (d. 1037) and Ahmad Ghazali (d. 1126) after him, is another trope that is repeatedly encountered in Sufi poetry, especially in the verses of Rumi who also interpolates it into the parable of the merchant and his parrot in his *Mathnawi*.[62] It may be reasonable to assume that the depiction of the birds among the branches of the ancient tree at the top centre of the painting as another allusion to the age-old trope. In this case, seeing the birds as alluding to the human soul is underscored by the empty birdcage hanging from the imposing tree above the cemetery.[63] It is also possible to consider the depiction of the crows – indistinguishable from magpies in Persian lore – as representing the 'material world',[64] or see the snake, slithering up the tree towards the unprotected bird's nest as an expression of 'carnal appetites'.[65] The image of the tree itself, besides reflecting the continuation of animistic attitudes towards venerable trees,[66] also cannot be entirely divorced from Sufi exegesis which has been constellated around unravelling the concealed (*batin*) aspects of the Quran's text.[67] Beside the desirable attributes of trees referred to in several passages of the Quran, the esoteric significance of the burning tree seen by Moses (28:30), which has been interpreted by Abd al-Razaq Kashani (d. 1329) as the tree of Humanity, and by Aziz Nasafi (d. 1262) as the World of Beings or the World of Existence, may be congruent with the intentions of the artists of the 'Funeral Procession', considering the substance of Attar's discussion in this segment.[68]

However, not every detail in the painting needs to be fitted into this overarching scheme and be consonant with the central theme of Attar's text: that death is fearsome and unavoidable. Many possible allusions to events in the political or personal lives of personages in the contemporary

world, a perennial iconographical feature of Persianate painting, are as of yet
unknown, and are likely to remain so.

The upper half of 'The Funeral Procession', thus elaborates and elucidates
the tenor of Attar's text through a range of depictions, all of which share the
same referent source. This may also be said of the depictions in the lower half
of the 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 4), which will be discussed in the
next chapter, and the upper half of the 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant'
(Plate 5), which in terms of folio numbers within the manuscript is the last
of the 1487 paintings.

The fourth fifteenth-century painting, 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old
Peasant', illustrates an anecdote about the eleventh-century Sufi, Abu-Said
Abu al-Khayr from the village of Mahneh – hence his sobriquet – in Khorasan,
whom Attar admired and cites repeatedly in his poetry.[69] Here, again, the
events of the narrative are illustrated in the lower half of the painting, but
what is depicted in its upper half appears unrelated to the narrative subject.
But, again, these figures begin to make more sense if we consider them in
relation to the main theme of Attar's text. The nexus between this painting's
enigmatic elements and the central theme of Attar's anecdote corroborates
the analogous relationship in 'The Funeral Procession'. Here, too, we have a
divided picture, with half, the lower half, depicting the events described in
the anecdote about Shaykh Mahneh:[70]

> Shaykh Mahneh, in great sadness
> Went to the fields, with anguished heart and eyes bloodshot with tears.
> He saw an old peasant from a distance
> Driving cows, he shone with light
> The Shaykh went toward him and said hello and
> explained to him the condition of his great sadness.
>
> (184, 3303–5)

The issue being addressed here is the need for volition on the part of the
wayfarer. The seeker on the path of Sufism must have the compulsion, must
yearn to be in this pursuit with all his might. The quest is to want to know
and to persevere in order to know God and ultimately become one with the
Divine Beloved. Indeed, what is being explicated here is at last the first stage

on the long journey to Sufism. Through 'the valley of the quest',[71] the seeker must be eager in his pursuit; as Attar writes:

| Your head will turn to the quest from your own eagerness (181, 3244) | سر طلب گردد زمشتاقی خویش
sar talab gardad ze moshtaqi-e khish |

or

| In anticipation of the quest a man must bequeath his life on the path at any time. (183, 3285) | مرد باید کز طلب در انتظار
mard bayad kaz talab dar entezar
هر زمانی جان کند در ره نثار
har zamani jan kanad dar rah nesar |

And we see the old peasant – whose perfect piety is evinced, according to Attar's text, by the light emanating from him – still rather engaged with his cows, ploughing the field, with only his head turned to face Shaykh Mahneh in the lower right corner in a brown robe, gesturing with one hand as he addresses the wise peasant.

The question that prompted the account of Shaykh Mahneh's conversation with the old peasant concerns the distance to Mount Qaf. In response, the protagonist – the Hoopoe has not been mentioned by name for some time at this point – enumerates seven 'valleys' that must be traversed on the journey. The seven valleys are, of course, barely disguised metaphors for 'stations' or stages (*maqaamat*) on the path to Sufi perfection.[72] The first of these, the 'Valley of Quest' (*talab*), elicits six explicatory anecdotes of which the penultimate is the tale of Shaykh Mahneh.[73]

Rendered as 'quest' in the best English translation of Attar's text,[74] the word '*talab*' primarily means 'desire' (which would compel one to pursue), as well as the idea of 'pursuit' itself. The idea of *talab* as one of the 'stations' on the path of a Sufi wayfarer in fact incorporates all three meanings of the word: a Sufi hopeful in his 'quest' must very strongly 'desire' the 'pursuit'.[75] The Valley of the Quest, or *talab*, is the stage at which the active purification of one's heart must begin in earnest.[76]

The first anecdote, recounts the familiar Sufi trope that stems from the Quran about Satan (7:11–12), who unlike the other angels refuses to prostrate

before Adam as commanded by God, and is, for this act, looked upon admirably by many Sufis. Following Hallaj (d. 922), Satan's disobedience is seen by Sufis as his unyielding devotion to God by refusing to prostrate before anyone other than God.[77] However, on this particular occasion the objective for Attar is to highlight the importance of human heart, where our ability to know God already resides. It is due to the impurity of our hearts that this 'treasure' remains buried, unnoticed and unexplored. In his recounting of Satan's refusal to bow before Adam, Attar highlights Satan's deviousness and jealousy towards man: as the only angel who was not prostrating, Satan furtively saw that God placed His 'treasured' secrets into Adam's heart.[78] The second anecdote, about the tenth-century Sufi Shibli,[79] emphasises the grim persistence with which a Sufi wayfarer must desire the pursuit (*talab*), equating a failure in this regard with apostasy.[80] A four-line mention of Majnun even sifting through the dust of a road in search (*talab*) of his beloved Layla,[81] is followed by an account of Jacob's longing for his missing son Joseph, which introduces the necessity of 'patience' (*sabr*) as an important element for achieving success in the Sufi wayfarer's 'pursuit' (*talab*). This is then followed by the illustrated anecdote about Shaykh Mahneh, cited above.

So the tale of the old peasant giving advice to Shaykh Mahneh is the second anecdote concerned with patience (*sabr*), which is deemed essential for the seeker in his quest (*talab*). This is the central point of this episode, that a seeker (*taleb*) above all needs abundant patience (*sabr*). As the enlightened old peasant tells Shaykh Mahneh, the *taleban*, or those who seek, must possess limitless *sabr*, or patience, if they expect their 'quest' to come to fruition, but not everyone possesses such patience:

Much is the patience that seekers [*taleban*] need,	طالبان را صبر می باید بسی *taleban ra sabr mi bayad basi*
Not everyone can be a patient seeker [*taleb*]. (185, 3311)	طالب صابر نه افتد هرکسی *taleb-e saber nah oftad har kasi*

The proverbial necessity of patience (*sabr*), mentioned in the Quran (2:103) is routinely encountered in Persian Sufi[82] and profane poetry. Nizami in his romance of *Khusrow and Shirin* counsels the reader:[83]

With patience a shackled man is set free	به صبر از بند گردد مرد رسته
	beh sabr az band gardad mard rasteh
for patience is a key to an unlocked problem.	که صبر آمد کلید کار بسته
	keh sabr amad kelid-e kar-e basteh

Likening the difficulty of maintaining patience to 'bitterness' is one association that is encountered often through *tashbih* or simile, where the instrument of comparison is omitted. Equating the unpleasantness of patience with bitterness facilitated puns through wordplays with the name of the notably bitter taste of the aloe plant, which in Persian and Arabic is also called *sabr*.[84] The adage that patience is a virtue and it will be rewarded is therefore expressed through analogies by contrasting the bitter taste of sabr to the reward of sweet-tasting fruit. As the eleventh-century poet Nasir Khusraw (d. 1088) writes:[85]

though like patience, this advice is bitter	چون صبر تلخ باشد پند لیکن
	chon sabr talkh bashad pand likan
the advice like your patience will turn to sugar	بصبرت پند چون صبرت شود قند
	besabrat pand chon sbrat shavad qand

Sadi of Shiraz (d. 1292) also writes figuratively of the sugary-sweet fruit that bitter patience will bear:[86]

Hereafter I won't recount the bitterness of separation	من بعد حکایت نکنم تلخی هجران
	men bad hekayat nakonam talkhi-e hejran
for the fruit that patience bore was sweet as sugar	کان میوه که از صبر برآمد شکری بود
	kan miveh keh az sabr bar amad shekari bud

And again we see the same motif in Sadi's famous collection of poems and stories, *Gulistan* – the work that inspired Jami enough to emulate it by writing his own *Baharistan* – where Sadi counsels patience and contrasts the bitterness of it to the sweet fruit it will bear:[87]

Don't be sour from the turn of events, for patience	منشین ترش از گردش ایام که صبر
	manshin torosh az gardesh-e ayam ke sabr

is bitter but it bears sweet fruit.

تلخ است و لیکن بر شیرین دارد

talkh ast valikan bar-e shirin darad

Such an analogy appears to be what the artists present pictorially by using the space in the upper half of the 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' to elaborate on the central theme of Attar's tale. The Herati painters have depicted melons in at least two different clusters on the upper half of the painting. To the left, under the tree and behind the seated man in green, we can see a mass of oblate-shaped melons of the variety that is best translated as *kharbozeh*. The seated man in green is also holding one of the same variety of melon in his hand. Another cluster of the same kind of melon can be seen piled on the left pan of the scale held by the standing man in the centre. Although presented in the upper half of the composition, visually this cluster of melons may appear as central to the painting as a whole. The third man in the upper half of the painting, to the right of the other two, is depicted waiting – it may even be said that he appears to be doing so patiently– as he leans slightly forward, holding a bag open as though ready for it to be filled with the melons that are being weighed. Again, this event, as depicted in the upper half of the composition, with the three figures in the midst of perhaps selling or buying melons, appears to have no basis in Attar's account of Shaykh Mahneh and the wise peasant, unless we consider the central theme of the narrative: patience.

As the compound name for precisely the kind of sweet melon with green-white flesh depicted in the painting, *kharbozeh,* is made up of the words *khar* and *bozeh* (or *baza*), the first meaning 'big' and the second meaning 'tasty', that is, 'sweet tasting' or big-taste, that is, great-tasting melon.[88] The distinct depictions, besides demonstrating artistic perception and skill, also reflect a wider cultural discernment and appreciation for the pulpy fruit which is perhaps best imparted by the 'epic' compendium written some decades later by the Safavid poet, Abdi Bayk Shirazi, in which he includes a 120-verse paean to the melon, praising nineteen different varieties by name.[89] But regardless of its exact kind, so purposely depicted, the melons in 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' must be understood in relation to, or more precisely in contrast to, *sabr*, or the bitterness of patience. As a motif in Persian poetry, this particular melon, *kharbozeh,* has also been used as an antonym for both

sourness and bitterness. Rumi exalts the sweetness of this melon, especially when it is offered by the bounty of the Beloved:

A melon section remained; he said I will eat it,	ماند گرچی گفت این را من خورم *mand gorchi goft in ra man khoram*
to see what a sweet melon this is. (M2.1517)	تاچه شیرین خربزه است این بنگرم *ta cheh shirin kharboz-ast in bengaram*

And Sadi likens the sweetness of the beloved's laugh to *kharbozeh*:[90]

No cut-open *kharbozeh* has ever been sweeter	شیرین تر از این خربزه هرگز نبریده ست *shirin tar az in kharbozeh hargez naborideh-ast*

In his *Gulistan*, Sadi also satirises corrupt judges who reward a bribe of cucumbers with sweetness worth a whole field of *kharbozeh* melons.[91] And, famously, Hafiz speaks of his own skills as a poet by boasting that his verses drip with honey because he has been rewarded for his patience:[92]

All this honey and sugar dripping from my speech	این همه شهد و شکر کز سخنم می ریزد *in hameh shahd o shekar kaz sokhanam mi rizad*
is from the strings of rock-candy awarded me for patience	اجر صبریست کز آن شاخ نباتم دادند *ajr-e sabrist kaz an shakh-e nabatam dadand*

Jami's didactic epic poem, *Subhat al-abrar* (*The Rosary of the Devout*), which he dedicated to Sultan Bayqara, had been completed in 1482–3, only a few years before the paintings in *Mantiq al-tayr* had been planned and executed. In Jami's exposition 'patience', on par with Attar's quest, is itself one of the stages on the path to Sufism to which he devotes sixty-eight couplet verses. In his supplication on behalf of the Sufi wayfarer, Jami addresses God:[93]

Grant patience to be the creed of his poverty and annihilation	صبر بر فقر و فناش آیین کن *sabr bar faqr o fanash ayin kon*
Sweeten the bitterness of patience for him.	تلخی صبر بر او شیرین کن *talkhi-ye sabr bar u shirin kon*

And further, using the same motif Jami addresses the wayfarer:[94]

Patience, even though it is like poison	صبر اگر چند که زهر آیین است
	sabr agar chand keh zahr ayin ast
In the end it is sweet like sugar.	عاقبت همچو شکر شیرین است
	aqebat hamcho shekar shirin ast

Depictions in the upper half of 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' indicate that the artists involved were not only attuned to wordplay, so central to Persian poetry, but also seem to have undertaken to engage in their own form of visual punning. A man is shown waiting patiently (with *sabr*) to be recompensed with a full bag of sweet melons (*kharbozeh*). The sweetness of the melons aside, there is no other logical way of understanding the figure of the man on the top right, standing as he holds a large, empty bag, especially in the context of the cultural scene in Herat during the 1480s, the decade that, before Navai's exile in 1487, saw Jami and Alishir Navai each writing five epic poems, all of which overtly or allegorically promote the Sufism of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi genus.

The story of Loqman and his master from Rumi's *Mathnawi* is also pertinent to the iconology of the depicted melons in this illustration, as it demonstrates the remarkable obliqueness of ways that abstruse doctrines are mediated for everyday understanding. The legendary Loqman as a wise- or a philosopher-slave, is often encountered in didactic literature such as the second book of *Mathnawi* (M2.1432), where Loqman's nominal master, who treasures his wise slave as a Sufi wayfarer might his own shaykh (M2.1471), has been given a gift of melons (*kharbozeh*) and asks Loqman to try one first (M2.1514). The melon is cut open and Loqman eats section after section as if it were the sweetest, most delicious of melons so that he nearly finishes the entire thing by himself before his master prevents it by taking the last section for himself. However, as soon as Loqman's master bites into the melon, it is as though his tongue has caught fire, for the melon is utterly bitter and uneatable. Amazed, Loqman's master asks him to explain how he could bear such a bitter taste without outwardly betraying any signs of its awfulness. Rumi, through Loqman's master, states this specifically in terms of Loqman's 'patience' (*sabr*): how is it that the wise Loqman is able to be so 'patient':

What patience is this, why such patience?	این چه صبرست این صبوری از چه روست؟
	in cheh sabr ast in saburi az cheh rust
Is it that you are the enemy of your own life?	یا مگر پیش تو این جانت عدوست؟
(M2.1522)	*ya magar pish-e to in janat adust*

The moral of the story, as it becomes clear after Loqman's explication, is loyalty and the need for steadfastness in one's devotion, which is another way of advocating patience for outlasting hardships that arise on a journey or in a relationship, as it were, between a wayfarer and the Sufi master. Loqman explains that he had received so many blessings from his master's hand that he thought it ungrateful and petty to complain over something so trivial as a melon's bitter taste. So, Loqman ate the bitter pieces as directed without so much as acknowledging their bitterness. Indeed, for Loqman, due to all the kindness his master has already shown him, all bitterness turns to sweetness (M2.1529).

Although the account of Loqman by Rumi and the illustration of Shaykh Mahneh by artists in Herat both feature *kharbozeh* melons and concern the idea of patience, the link between the texts by Rumi and Attar is even more entwined since a version of the same story about Loqman is mentioned by Attar in an earlier passage of *Mantiq al-tayr* itself.[95] The superficial differences between the two versions of the parable may be enough to obscure their similarities to a casual reader: the names of the actors involved in Attar's rendition are simply the king and his servant, and in Attar's version the bitter taste does not come from a melon but rather from 'fruits'.[96] Rumi's version, which highlights the importance of steadfastness and loyalty, follows a story about false or frivolous friendships.[97] It begins:

Melons were brought as gifts	خربزه آورده بودند ارمغان
	kharbozeh avardeh budand armaghan
he said go get Loqman.	گفت رو فرزند لقمان را بخوان
(M2.1514)	*goft ro farzand Loqman ra bekhan*

Whereas the story in Attar reads:

There was once a just king	پادشاهی بود نیکو شیوهء
	padeshahi bud niku shiveh-i

who one day gave a servant some fruit. (135, 2417)	چاکری را داد روزی میوهء *chakeri ra dad ruzi miveh-i*

Again, in *Mathnawi* we read:

As he cut a section and gave it to him,	چون برید و داد او را یک برین *chon borid o dad ura yek borin*
he ate it like it was sugar, as if it was nectar. (M2.1515)	همچو شکر خوردش و چون انگبین *hamcho shekar khordash o chon angabin*

Whereas in *Mantiq al-tayr* it is:

The slave continued to eat his fruit happily	میوهء او خوش همی خورد آن غلام *miveh-ye u khosh hami kord an gholam*
as though he had never eaten anything more delicious (135, 2418)	گفتیی خوشتر نخورد او زان طعام *gofti khoshtar nakhord u zan ta`am*

Attar's parable in *Mantiq al-tayr* is presented as part of the response to a bird who has complained to the Hoopoe about feelings of melancholy and dejection as reasons for being unable to partake in the journey to Mount Qaf (133, 2390). And, indeed, the idea of forbearance does emerge, albeit obscurely, in the seven moralistic anecdotes that Attar presents in his response and ultimate dismissal of this particular complaint. But as an example of Sufi intertextuality, the juxtaposition of these texts, which exposes both differences and similarities between the two stories, also helps in contextualising the possible associative impact of literary tropes on pictorial representations by artists who were almost certainly exposed to many such overlapping and intertwined textual sources. Indeed, attempts at detecting many, or perhaps even any, one-to-one correspondence between two 'texts', be they textual or pictorial, would be akin to equating analogies with equivalences. The pictorial images in the upper half of 'Shaykh Mahneh' correspond to the verbal imagery – the figurative language – that emerged through the reception of a set of ideas saturating Attar's own text and the cultural context surrounding it and making it meaningful, a dynamic field of reciprocity, appropriation and resemblance.[98]

Speculatively, one may also see the context for the waiting man as a seeker (*taleb*), the subject mentioned by the text, as seeking (*talab*) cantaloupes (*talebi*) in the valley of the quest (*talab*), for the Herati painters have, in fact, depicted at least two varieties of melon in this painting. Among the cluster of melons on the left side, behind the seated man in green, the upper-most melon visible is decidedly different than the rest. The round corrugated melon in beige colour resembles a variety of cantaloupe (*talebi*), which in Persian is a homonym of 'a seeker' (*talebi*). Three anecdotes earlier in this same section of *Mantiq al-tayr*, when Attar describes 'the valley of the quest', we read, '*in chenin bayad talab gar talebi* / این چنین باید طلب گر طالبی', that is, 'you must seek thus, if you are a seeker (*talebi*)'.[99] In Persian, this pun sounds indistinguishable from, 'you must seek thus, if cantaloupe'. Admittedly an odd speculation, but this is precisely the sort of wordplay that was 'the rage' in the literary assemblies of Herat at this time.[100] The commonly used rhetorical devises as paronomasia (*tajnis*), ubiquity of lettrism, and popularity of puns, acrostics and wordplay makes such double entendres not such a farfetched possibility.[101] Aside from countless literary examples of double meaning (*iham*),[102] contemporary anecdotes attest to the vitality of such play on words, as in the example recorded by Bakharzi, who writes of Jami taunting the Herati poet by the name of Sagheri in some verse of his. Later, when he is confronted by a disgruntled Sagheri, Jami dexterously defends himself by relying on orthographic and diacritic mistakes that might arise out of the copying of Sagheri's name, which by omission of one dot and the addition of three others could be read as '*sha'eri*' or 'a poet' (ساغری .vs شاعری).[103]

The topic for this section of *Mantiq al-tayr*, quest (*talab*), is from the same three-letter Arabic root that forms the word for cantaloupe in Persian, *talebi*. The addition of this kind of melon to that of the *kharbozeh* variety may have been a pictorial pun and not a coincidence. The fact that the quest, the seeker, or the seekers (*talab*, *taleb* or *taleban*), are mentioned eight times in the story about Shaykh Mahneh may well have roused the artists to make an association with 'melon' (*talebi*), leading to another pictorial 'wordplay' in the depiction of the text.

The significance of the other allusive details in the upper half of the painting, such as the Buddha-like figure seated under the tree, next to the leashed dog to which it seems bound, and their direct link to the central

theme of this particular passage in Attar's text – patience – is more equivocal since, on the one hand, condemnation of idolatry is basic to all factions in Islam as to make it superfluous to bring it up here. On the other hand, use of idols as a trope in didactic and love poetry is so common,[104] mostly as a metaphor for beauty, that its mere appearance may indicate any number of connotations. However, in this case, the depictions may simply be linked to Attar's use in the parable of Shaykh Mahneh of the word '*bot*' or idol, a word that conventionally conjures associations with Buddha – and vice versa.[105] In the moralising passage following the anecdote about the shaykh and the peasant, Attar once again addresses the reader directly: 'if you want to reach precious treasures, then you must endeavour more in seeking it',[106] and warns the wayfarer and the reader by likening distractions to idols:[107]

whoever is distracted on the Path by something	هرک او در ره بچیزی باز ماند
	hark u dar rah bechizi baz mand
that thing becomes his idol and he will fail	شد بتش آن چیز کو بت باز ماند
	shod botash an chiz ku bot baz mand
(185, 3318)	

The figure of the dog, an animal that is, along with pigs, 'unclean' in Islam, proverbially denotes the lowest social status, but is also a literary trope representing carnal desire in Sufi poetry, especially in verses by Attar and Rumi. This depiction of the dog in 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant', tied to the figure of the idol as it appears, is intertextually too hackneyed in Sufi discourse to need further comment. However, as the moral of an earlier parable in *Mantiq al-tayr* demonstrates, a Shaykh is unconcerned about being 'defiled' by a dog because his clothes matter little, rather it is his heart that needs to be clean and cleansed of impurities.[108] Here, the segment illustrated by 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' is devoted to explicating the first stage on the path to becoming a Sufi – the 'Valley of Quest' – where again, the purification of one's heart must begin in earnest, or as Attar puts it, here 'the work, shifts to the heart'.[109]

Other details depicted in the painting 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant', such as what appears to be a pack-saddle (*palan* / پالان) lying on the ground below the tree, towards the left must also have symbolic Sufi connotations. Such a depiction is sharpened in a painting from a celebrated

manuscript executed in Herat in 1488, that is, one year after the completion 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant'. The celebrated illustrations of Sadi's *Bustan* (*The Orchard*), are the only four manuscript paintings that are indisputably signed by Bihzad, the master painter of the late Timurid and early Safavid periods. In one of these, titled 'King Dara and the Herdsman', a clearly distinguished saddle is lying on the ground to the right, which, on this occasion, seems far more congruous with the rest of the scene that includes several horses and foals.[110] However, both depictions, it could be argued, evoke another Sufi trope perhaps best described by Rumi, who in the second book of his *Mathnawi* criticises superficial piety; those who, for example, memorise the Quran but pay no heed to the content conveyed by its words. Rumi likens such people to the rider of a donkey who, to make the beast move or go faster, hits the pack-saddle instead of the donkey itself:

Those blind people excavate the words of Quran	حرف قرآن را ضریران معدن اند
	harf-e Quran ra zariran ma`danand
they don't see the donkey and hit the packsaddle	خر نبینند و به پالان بر زنند
(M2.723)	*khar nabinand o beh palan bar zanand*

Rumi's figurative use of donkey and pack-saddle is extended to compare such people with someone whose donkey has run away, but who continues to sew and make a new pack-saddle, as though there was still some use for it after the pack animal has gone. In fact, Rumi rejects using a pack-saddle altogether and reminds the reader that the Prophet used to ride donkeys without any saddle at all – and for this he cites a *Hadith* to that effect. Finally, Rumi turns towards his standard use of the donkey trope and equates it with one's carnal soul:[111]

The donkey of your carnal souls is tied to a nail	شد خر نفس تو بر میخیش بند
	shod khar-e nafs-e to bar mikhish band
for how long must it avoid from carrying its load?	چند بگریزد زکار و بار چند
(M2.729)	*chand bogrizad ze kar o bar chand*

Perhaps the most conspicuous depiction in 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' is the weighing scale that has all three people depicted in the

upper half of the painting engaged: the man standing in the centre is using both hands to clutch the horizontal lever of a balance-scale; to his right, the seated man in green is holding a melon, and appears ready to pass it on, either to the scale-pan of the balance that already holds several other melons, or to the man who is holding the open bag directly in his line of vision, on the upper right.

The association of the term for balance or scale (*mizan*) with the subject of this segment in *Mantiq al-tayr*, namely, 'quest' or 'seeking' (*talab*) is also not far-fetched, especially when considering the writings of a local saint, the eleventh-century Sufi master Khwajeh Abd allah Ansari of Herat, who considers the rules and imperatives of religion and Sharia a measuring scale (*mizan*) and considers both our 'soul and spirit' as well as our 'heart and mind to have a scale of their own in order to measure the dispensation of knowledge and holding of secrets'. According to Ansari, the two scale-pans of the scale that presumably measures our soul (*nafs*) and our spirit (*ruh*) – or keeps them balanced – are the 'Sunna and the Book (Quran)'. They measure both that which is imperative and that which is forbidden. More pertinent to the subject of Attar's text, the Valley of the Quest (*talab*, or seeking), Ansari writes that the two scale-pans of the scale that measure our 'contentment' are 'escaping' (*harab*) and seeking (*talab*), by the latter of which he means seeking God. Ansari's notion of contentment through a balance of escaping or seeking brings to mind the melancholic bird that was chastised by the Hoopoe for his unwillingness to undertake the journey. Ansari also writes:

> Lord, if some find You through seeking (*talab*), I, myself, have found seeking (*talab*) through You … O God! Because Your existence precedes the seeking (*talab*) and the seeker (*taleb*), the seeker (*taleb*) seeks (*dar talab ast*) because restlessness has overwhelmed him …[112]

To those contemporaries who may have been dissimulating their beliefs, the image of the scales in late fifteenth-century Herat might have also conjured up memories of the disturbances earlier in the century in their city, when the failed assassination attempt on Shahrukh's life by a follower of the messianic Hurufi movement had led to the purging of those who were suspected of belonging to the lettrist group. According to Fadlallah Astarabadi, the founder of the Hurufis, who developed a Kabbalistic system of letters for

understanding the secrets of the Quran, the principle of 'balance' (*mizan* / میزان) originating from the attributes of God, together with the principle of 'measure' (also *mizan*), ensured the correspondence between the visible world and the invisible truth.[113] The seditious group in Herat, back in the late 1420s, had included the bazaar artisans such as the city's drapers, tailors and cap-makers, as well as a 'famous' calligrapher.[114] *Mizan* (balance) was also the title of the most important book by the founder of another messianic movement, the Nuqtavis. Mahmud Pasikhani, a disciple of Astarabadi, who expounded the centrality of the dots in the letters of the Persian alphabet to understanding the material world, in which we may be reincarnated as a 'nobler' or 'more base' being by occupying a new body depending on the 'measure' (*mizan*) or amount of virtue we have attained in our previous life.[115] Notwithstanding occasional flare-ups and purges, such beliefs, deemed heretical in many circles, remained mostly clandestine but continued well into the Safavid period.[116] It would be reasonable to assume the extraneous depiction of an actual scale in Attar's manuscript to be related to the prevalence of the concept of 'balance' in the fifteenth-century discourse. Less reasonable, but still not wholly unwarranted, would be to suspect the unusual depiction of the scale in 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' as being a surreptitious or unwitting gesture by a dissimulating adherent to some such recondite notion current at the time.[117] As the harrowing personal account of the historian Vasifi shows, it was a little more than two decades later that the Shias of Herat quit their apparent dissimulation to exact vengeance upon their fellow Sunni townsmen.[118]

Alishir Navai's treatise on poetical meters, which he titled, 'Scales of Measures' (*mizan al-awzan*), was written a year after Jami's death.[119] However, the Herati artists who worked on the 1487 *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript are more likely to have encountered the verses composed by their own contemporary fellow Herati and Sufi-poet Jami, who used the idea of scale (conveyed in Persian by synonyms *tarazu* or *mizan*) to praise language with which the very words of God are conveyed to us, and through which also comes the measured precision of poetic expression:[120]

| In the Name of God is the crown of Quran's head, | بسمله تاج سر قرآن است
besmelah taj-e sar-e Quran ast |

| because it is measured with these scales. | زانکه سنجیده بدین میزان است
zankeh sanjideh bedin mizan ast |

and again:[121]

| You give temperament arms and scales,
you give language the muscle power it has. | طبع را دست و ترازو تو دهی
tab ra dast o tarazu to dahi
بر سخن قوت بازو تو دهی
bar sokhan qovat-e bazu to dahi |

Jami also used the concept of 'scales' figuratively, to praise the Naqshbandi order's eponymous saint:[122]

| His face is even with the scales of religious law,

his life and living comes from the life blood of religious law. | صورت او راست به میزان شرع
surat-e u rast beh mizan-e shar'

جان وی و زندگی از جان شرع
jan-e vey o zendegi az jan-e shar' |

And again, elsewhere, addressing the fair reader in the second person:[123]

| The even-scaled face of yours is the measure of beauty
Its appearance the vanguard of all good fortunes. | صورت موزون تو نظم جمال
surat-e mozun-e to nazm-e jamal
مطلع آن جبههء فرخنده فال
matla`-e an jebhe-ye farkhondeh fal |

Jami also praises his own shaykh in the Naqshbandi order, likening him to a balanced scale:[124]

| Like the Heavens, if you measure him with a scale,
you must put the sun and moon on the other scale pan | چون فلک ار زانکه ترازو نهی
chon falak ar zankeh tarazu nahi
زر مه و مهر به یک سو نهی
zar-e mah o mehr be yek su nahi |

More on this and less oblique influences of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufi practices and beliefs on the iconography of manuscript painting will be discussed in the next chapter.

3

The Third Station on the Path to Sufism: 'The Bearded Man Drowning'

The iconography of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 4), one of the three fifteenth-century illustrations that are similar enough stylistically to be attributed to the same artist (or artists), may be more remarkable than what has been discussed so far. In the very first analysis of this painting after its acquisition by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, its setting is described as being 'laid in hills and mountains', and that its painting 'two halves' are linked by the 'rushing torrent':

> a man is drowning; the coat and turban at the lower left, by the water's edge, presumably indicate that he entered the torrent there. Only a figure on the further bank is aware of his plight. The group in the foreground, while the oldest rests on a rock, is busy cutting wood and loading it on a donkey, all quite oblivious to the drama being enacted on the other side of the mountains that surround them. This scene does not appear to be a popular subject for illustration. No exact parallels with other paintings of the school of Herat have been found … The effort of the wood gatherer's action contrasted with the patient passivity of the donkey, gives the scene a spontaneity and naturalness hitherto rare in Persian painting.[1]

A subsequent study provides examples of paintings that include depiction of donkeys carrying bundles to emphasise the influence of the 1487 image, but none that present a precedent or predate 'The Bearded Man Drowning'.[2] The general view, that the 'scene of the woodcutters' in the foreground of this illustration is 'extraneous' to the text,[3] was maintained until Melikian-Chirvani at last deliberated on the text to which the illustration is bound.[4]

He noted that the tenor of Attar's allegory denounces the false attributes of a sage as exemplified by the vanity of pride in the length of one's beard. The perils inherent in falsifying insignia of virtues that one does not have, according to the parable about the bearded man, will lead to destruction.[5] Still, this accurate understanding of Attar's parable does not lead to a coherent explanation of the lower half of the painting, which is described as a 'visual gloss', or a commentary on the 'perishable character of life'. Of course, as stated, impermanence of life is neither the moral of Attar's parable nor is it transparent in the image of the donkey, the slave, the dry sapling being trimmed and the firewood in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning'.[6] One of the later commentaries on these images, following Melikian-Chirvani's call for further and 'systematic' study of Sufi concepts,[7] has linked the depiction of 'dry wood' in the lower half of the painting through a verse by Rumi, to Ibn Arabi's 'concept of damned souls as withered branches'.[8]

Indeed, as was the case with the other two 1487 paintings, the most obvious approach to understanding the content of the 'Bearded Man Drowning' would be through Attar's text. The images in the foreground of the painting can again be understood as a pictorial play on the main theme of Attar's parable, which emphasizes fighting against false piety, and as will be seen, in this case, the iconography in the other half of the illustration may be best understood as a pictorial allusion to Sufi discourse and practices prevalent in contemporary Herat.

As was the case with two of the other 1487 paintings already discussed, one half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' literally illustrates the events described in the first four verses of Attar's text:[9]

2974	A fool that had a very large beard,	داشت ریشی بس بزرگ آن ابلهی
		dasht rishi bas bozorg an ablahi
	suddenly found himself drowning in the waters of the sea	غرق شد در آب دریا ناگهی
		gharq shod dar ab-e darya nagahi
2975	From the dry land only a sincere man saw him.	دیدش از خشکی یکی مرد سره
		didash az khoshki yeki mard-e sareh
	He said, 'throw off that feed-bag from round your head.	گفت از سر بر فکن آن توبره
		goft az sar bar fekan an tobareh

Accordingly, in the top half of the painting we see a man standing on the edge of the river, on the upper right hand side, gesturing towards another figure with a raised arm struggling in the water:[10]

2976 He replied, 'This is not a feed-bag, it is my beard.	گفت نیست این توبره ریش منست
	goft nist in tobareh rish-e manast
It is not this "beard" that is causing my trepidation.'	نیست این ریشی که تشویش منست
	nist in rishi keh tashvish-e man ast
2977 The other said: 'Bravo! That is your "beard" and this is the result	گفت احسنت اینت ریش و اینت کار
	goft ahsant int rish o int kar
Having thus succumbed to the body will kill you miserably.'	تن فروده اینت خواهد کشت زار
	tan forudeh int khahad kosht zar

In the lower half of the painting we can see that the artist, much to the confusion of many viewers, has depicted the following: a man is sawing the last branch off a small, leafless tree, to the right of which another man in blue, with a white beard, sits on a rock. His knees are pulled together and he is positioned so as to have a direct view of the sawing action taking place before him. Three figures crowd the lower right corner of the painting: a donkey and two men. One of the men strains to pull a load of firewood onto the back of the beast. The other figure, standing to the right, behind the donkey, is dark faced with a white beard and a ring in his ear. He seems motionless but attentive.

There is no mention of any of this in Attar's text. The narrative says nothing about cutting trees, gathering firewood or loading a donkey. Indeed, the nearest explicit reference anywhere in Attar's text to anything depicted in the lower half of this painting is a donkey mentioned five anecdotes earlier, more than forty couplets previous to the one about the bearded man. But even in that episode the events and figures related have little to do with the actions depicted here. As mentioned in Chapter 2, previous debates as to the subject matter, the objective and the extent to which the iconography of these three 1487 paintings correspond with the literal or figurative language of the accompanying textual passage they ostensibly depict has been varied and sometimes inconclusive.[11] A closer look at the 'Bearded Man' will better demonstrate the links between Attar's text and the depictions by the artists at the Timurid atelier in Herat.

'The Bearded Man Drowning' belongs to a unit entirely devoted to expounding the necessity for eradication of one's carnal self.[12] The segment begins, like all the other separate units of the narrative, with a question asked of the Hoopoe and ends when another question or concern on another issue is posed.[13] To present his thesis on the inherent folly in the presumption of 'perfection', Attar relates seven parables, which are introduced according to the formal structure of the *Mantiq al-tayr*: a bird asks a question and a response containing the parables follows. The reply acquaints the reader with the proper (Sufi) perspective on the essence of the raised concern and can serve as the key to deciphering the moral of the parables that follow. In this case, the reply unequivocally condemns and warns the 'arrogant one' about any presumption of '*kamal*', before offering words of advice about the need to curb one's 'carnal self' by abandoning all worldly concerns and possessions.[14] The intended addressee could be an adherent of orthodoxy or a follower of any number of mystical trends conceited enough to presume sufficiency in their devotion to God or, in fact, any one fixated on superficial appearances rather than substance.

The first of the parables that follow the Hoopoe's chastising reply is about Shaykh Abu Bakr of Nishapur, who is enraged after being affronted by a donkey breaking wind. The next parable is an exchange between Satan and Moses, where in reply to the prophet's inquiry Satan warns him against egoism.[15] Then a man of pure faith (*pak dini*) opines that it is better for a neophyte to be completely in the dark at the beginning of his journey lest he be beguiled by any (*har chizi*) false ray of light and become an unbeliever. The fourth story is about a shaykh who does not shun a dog that 'defiles' him.[16] His reasons have to do with the *appearance* of purity, as opposed to the condition of one's soul. The point is that a dog is 'unclean' on the outside no more than one's 'carnal self' is on the inside. So we should not worry about the dog being ritually unclean, when we harbour so many impurities in our hearts. The next two parables both involve men with beards – a supposed sign of piety. Significantly, the first bearded man is no 'fool' (*ablah*), but a devout person (*abed*) who lives during the time of Moses. He enquires of the prophet about his own lack of inspiration and his inability to achieve the ecstasy that would come only through unity (*vahdat*). The Archangel Gabriel also makes an appearance, and reports back on the reason for the

bearded man's lacklustre achievements in spirituality: he is too vain. He is too preoccupied with his beard, which is an insidious contradiction of his presumption of detachment from worldly cares. The last couplet of this parable warns that with such a beard 'you will be at sea' (*dar darya shavi*). After this comes the story of the 'fool' with a 'very large beard' who is presumably already in the water when he is introduced to the reader. The precise nature of the difficulty he is having in the water is not clear. His exchange with the man on the shore implies that the beard is hampering his ability to swim, or perhaps has wrapped around his neck and might choke him. Regardless, the implications are that the beard may well cost him his life, for which reason he is admonished by the other fellow. The point of the last anecdote about a Sufi's futile attempts at washing his robe is that appearances do not matter, and that he should 'wash his hands clean' of such earthly concerns.[17]

Among these seven parables, it was the text of the sixth tale, about the bearded fool that was selected for illustration by the artists (or the patron) at the workshop in Herat. The narrative, after the exchange between the drowning fool and the man on dry land, continues:[18]

2978 You, who like a goat, have no shame about your beard, who is captivated by it with no ignominy:	ای چو بز از ریش خود شرمیت نه *ey cho boz az rish-e khod shamir neh* برگرفته ریش و آزرمیت نه *bar gerefteh rish o azormit neh*
2979 as long as you have the carnal soul and Satan within you, there will be a Pharaoh and a Haman in you.	تا ترا نفسی و شیطانی بود *ta tora nafsi o shaytani bovad* در تو فرعونی و هامانی بود *dar to fer'oni o hamani bovad*
2980 Distance yourself from the raucous world as Moses did, then take this Pharaoh by the beard.	پشم در کش همچو موسی کون را *pashm dar kesh hamcho musa kon ra* ریش گیر آنگاه این فرعون را *rish gir angah in fer'on ra*
2981 Seize the beard of this Pharaoh and hold tight. Wage war like a man, fight one-on-one	ریش این فرعون گیر و سخت دار *rish-e in fer'on gir o sakht dar* جنگ ریشا ریش کن مردانه وار *jang-e risha rish kon mardaneh var*

2982	Step forward, abandon that beard of yours.	پای در نه ترک ریش خویش گیر
		pay dar neh tark-e rish-e khish gir
	How long will you keep this beard? Be on your way!	تاکیت زین ریش ره در پیش گیر
		ta kayat zin rish rah dar pish gir
2983	Though your beard brings nothing but anxiety,	گرچه از ریشت بجز تشویش نیست
		garcheh az rishat bejoz tashvish nist
	not for a moment have you been concerned with your 'injury'.	یکدمت پروای ریش خویش نیست
		yek damat parvay-e rish-e khish nist
2984	On the road to faith the one who will be sagacious,	در ره دین آن بود فرزانه ای
		dar rah-e din an bovad farzaneh-ie
	is the one who has no comb for his beard –	کو ندارد ریش خود را شانه ای
		ku nadarad rish-e khod ra shaneh-ie
2985	making himself aware of his own 'beard',	خویش را از ریش خود آگه کند
		khish ra az rish khod agah konad
	spreading his beard for the feast upon the Path.	ریش را دستار خوان ره کند
		rish ra dastar-e khan-e rah konad
2986	He will find no water but tears of blood,	نه بجز خونابه آبی یابد او
		nah bejoz khunabeh abi yabad u
	He will find nothing but a charred heart.	نه بجزاز دل کبابی یابد او
		nah bejoz az del kababi yabad u
2987	If a washer, one that never sees the sunshine,	گر بود گازر نه بیند آفتاب
		gar bovad gazor nah binad aftab
	If a farmer, one that never sees water's sight.	ور بود دهقان نه بیند روی آب
		var bovad dehqan nah binad ruy-e ab

The upper half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' depicts the events from lines 2974–2976 of Attar's text. Most studies of this manuscript cannot avoid approaching its paintings by way of Attar's text, but none of the cited analyses have considered the remaining verses of the parable. Even a formalist approach to the painting, however, must first assimilate the entire segment. If a 'parable' is a short narrative about humans that stresses a tacit analogy with a general thesis or lesson, then not only is this passage a good example of a parable but it is also clear that the short narrative about the bearded fool is, literally, only the half of it.[19] The 'general thesis', or the 'tacit analogy', in fact, the very *raison d'être* for the short narrative about the

drowning man with a beard is in the verses that follow it. That in this 1487 copy of the passage some verses run onto the following page do not make them any less relevant to the parable or any illustration of it.[20] It is on line 2979 that the thesis or the 'explication' of the short narrative commences. The two previous verses – the couplet immediately following the main anecdote (line 2978) – serve as a salutation of sorts, where the narrator turns from the tale to directly address the reader (the original questioning bird, as it were), who expects the anecdote to have a moral point to make, but may be uncertain as to whether they are going to find out more about the fate of the bearded man. The first word used in the 'salutation' couplet (line 2978) ostensibly addresses the reader or listener: 'O, you!'(*Ey*) who are likely having a similar problem:

2978 You, who like a goat, have no shame about your beard,	ای چو بز از ریش خود شرمیت نه
	ey cho boz az rish-e khod shamit neh
who is captivated by it with no ignominy	بر گرفته ریش و آزرمیت نه
	bar gerefteh rish o azormit neh

This couplet leads to the actual thesis of this segment; the 'moral' of the anecdote about the drowning man with a long beard who, as will be exposed in the verses that follow, has only his own vanity and short-sightedness to blame. The moral of the story evokes the early adherents to the Path of Blame (the *Malamatiyya*) mentioned in Chapter 1, and, of course, has everything to do with a stage on the path to being a Sufi. It serves as a warning to all those arrogant enough to presume that they have truly overcome their ego and succeeded in abandoning worldly concerns.[21]

Written in second person, the couplet emphasises, through pejorative epithets, that the moral of the preceding anecdote applies not just to the drowning fool but to anyone who is shamelessly negligent in restricting his wants. The conditions and symptoms presented in the anecdote are here summarised, just as an apothecary (*attar*), who after hearing the account of a malady from a patient might chastise the sufferer for his carelessness: 'so you've been acting like a goat …?' and goes on to summarise the causes and the effects of the malady – the 'thesis' of the parable:

2979	So long as you have the carnal soul and Satan within you there will be a Pharaoh and a Haman in you.	تا ترا نفسی و شیطانی بود *ta tora nafsi o shaytani bovad* در تو فرعونی و هامانی بود *dar to fer`oni o hamani bovad*

This is a summary statement of the problem that is under discussion in this passage; indeed, this is the theme of this entire unit of *Mantiq al-tayr*: as long as you concern yourself with your carnal self, you will not be free from the qualities of the damned (such as the Pharaoh) and will likewise deviate from the true path. Until evidence to the contrary is presented, we can do no better than to assume that a pictorial depiction of this passage must on some level contain at least its main thesis, which these lines encapsulate. It is exactly at this point, in the very verse that explicates the thesis or the moral of the anecdote, that we may begin to follow what is pictorially represented in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning'.

The three focal points in the foreground of the painting are, clockwise, the image of a man sawing the last branch off a tree; a bearded man in blue sitting on a rock, apparently watching the sawing action of the man to the left; and two men, one of whom is loading firewood on to the back of a donkey that is standing in between them. There will be more to say about the seated man below. Of the others, two figures gain prominence due to their animated state: one sawing and the other loading a beast. Their prominence seems further reinforced by their direct involvement with the element that is emphasised pictorially more than any other: firewood. To echo Lisa Golombek's question, which was prompted by the prominence of a 'tree stump' in her study of a painting from a fourteenth-century *Shahnama*, why should firewood have been given such prominence in 'The Bearded Man Drowning'?[22]

Without being mentioned at all in Attar's text, it is the image of firewood (*hizom*) that the artists of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' have clearly opted to emphasise pictorially. It is presented on the ground in two separate clusters, one of which is distinguished further by its placement in the horizontal centre of the illustration, in front of the man in blue. A larger mass of firewood is also being loaded on to the back of the donkey in the lower right. Although there is nothing in the text that directly refers to firewood, branches or kin-

dling, the depiction of firewood pictorially is related, indeed is pivotal, to the theme of this section of *Mantiq al-tayr*, and in fact metaphorically may be said to be central to the entire discourse on Sufism in general. Firewood, as fuel, is a substitute for temptations or stimuli in the discourse on the carnal self (*nafs*), and is one of the numerous ways in which the appetites and passions of the body have been figuratively conceptualised in Persian verse throughout the centuries.

The Arabic word *nafs* as used in Persian, which depending on the context may be equated with such English words as ego, self, soul, essence, life, carnal desire, passion or even penis – literally – has been at the forefront of Sufi discourse.[23] Writing in the fourteenth century, Abd al-Razaq Kashani described *nafs* as 'a phrase defining the pure, vapour-like essence that carries the power of life, senses, and motor-skills … called animal spirit'.[24] Ultimately neo-Platonic, the concept of *nafs* in Sufism could be understood as an essence contained in all things, from dust and soil to angels, with an intrinsic worth that increases with closer proximity to God, so that the human soul is inherently worthier than that of a sheep, and that of a sheep is worthier than any soul possessed by a lizard, which, in turn is of a higher rank than the soul of plants, whose souls, though insignificant, outrank rocks, soil and sand.

Again, at this stage of his endeavour, the Sufi seeker must be wary of his 'carnal soul', the part of man that is shared by lower life forms. In the context of Attar's text, the complete subjugation of *nafs*, as a proto-id, is essential if one is to have any hope of proximity or union with the Divine.[25] The explicit use of the word *nafs* in the poem (line 2979) makes it clear that Attar's priority here is clarity, not mystification. Constrained by the conventions of rhyme and meter, Attar manages to highlight the importance he attributes to conquering one's *nafs* by not only equating the unvanquished *nafs* with two consummate examples of debased souls, the Pharaoh and Haman, but also with mankind's arch-enemy, Satan.

The notion of *nafs* as Satan (*shaytan*) is itself an allusion to a Hadith of the Prophet, which relates: 'There is not one of you who does not have the *shaytan* in him. They said, "and You, O the Prophet of God?" He said, "even I, except that My Lord has helped Me so that My *shaytan* has turned to Islam".'[26] Due to the repeated Quranic references to Moses' ordeals with the evils of Egypt's 'false-god' (see, for instance, 7:103–41 or 28:2–10), the

Pharaoh – and less often Haman – became a trope in Sufi poetry from at least since Sanai's time and is a surrogate for foolish arrogance, disobedience and baser manifestations of *nafs*.[27] Haman, a name mentioned in the Quran (40:24) as one of Pharaoh's men, like his master refused to accept Moses' God-given authority and accused the Jewish prophet of being a lying magician.[28] In the light of all this, Attar's use of Moses as a metaphor (line 2980) is a fitting, and not an uncommon, antonym that neutralises what is tolerated, as it were, by the Pharaoh and Haman part of one's *nafs*.[29] In short, the text of *Mantiq al-tayr* is as explicit as can be in stating the author's premise for presenting the parable about the man with a long beard: '*ta tora nafsi bovad* = as long as you have [any] *nafs* remaining [in you]', then it follows that, '*dar to fer'oni bovad* = you will have [still] some [qualities of the infidel] Pharaoh in you'. After this diagnostic statement encapsulates the 'problem', the text continues its explication by offering the 'prescription' for the sufferer. What is prescribed, as will become clearer presently, is exactly what animates the images in the foreground of the illustration 'The Bearded Man Drowning'.

It is clear, then, that the nexus between the text and the image is carnal soul – the word itself, *nafs*, and the metaphors alluding to it, Satan, Pharaoh and Haman, all appear in Attar's text to help him expound on the significance of this particular parable. The image of the firewood, an extension of the Pharaoh metaphor, strewn about the lower half of the image in bunches and piles, is the pictorial representations of *nafs* in the painting. The conventions of Sufi poetry corroborate this connection. The use of the phrase 'firewood of the pharaoh' is common enough in Sufi literature to warrant its own entry in modern literary lexicons, where it is defined as 'carnal cravings'.[30]

Having already dealt with several attributes of carnal desire earlier in this narrative, Attar now draws our attention to the worldly desires of a more complicated sort. Aside from ignorance, lust or envy, our carnal souls will also be lured by a phenomenal world that can co-opt and subvert the disciplinary mechanisms we adopt to restrict it. In this case, the supposedly pious man's conceit is exposed when his beard, while evincing the extent of his devotion, itself becomes a problem – unbeknownst to him – until it is perhaps too late. A Sufi seeker (*salek*) must be ever vigilant, making sure that all concerns with the phenomenal world and worldly possessions are eliminated from his or her soul. Seen in this light, the image of the deadwood and

branches being hauled away on the back of a donkey begins to take on a new meaning. Rumi's *Mathnawi* abounds in similar metaphors, even with verses that, like the painters of Herat, pair up the Pharaoh with the firewood:[31]

How ruined it would make you, a cursed *nafs*	چه خرابت می کند نفس لعین *cheh kharabat mikonad nafs-e la'in*
the same throws you fast and far off course	دور می اندازد ت سخت این قرین *dur mi andazadat sakht in qarin*
Your fire does not have the firewood of the Pharaoh	آتشت را هیزم فرعون نیست *atashat ra hizom-e fer'on nist*
Otherwise it would be ablaze like the Pharaoh	ورنه چون فرعون او شعله زنیست *var nah chon fer'on u sho'leh zanist*

Despite the nuances in the reception of such verses by readers over time – as is obvious from numerous works of commentary on Rumi's *Mathnawi* – the referent for Pharaoh and firewood has almost always remained intact.[32] The same tropes with the same connotations vis-à-vis the carnal self had been used by Attar in his *Musibatnama*:[33]

Then I also have a pharaoh in my soul	پس مرا فرعون نفسی هست نیز *pas mara fer'on-e nafsi hast niz*
that has nothing left but to profess the faith	کو ندارد جز شهادت هیچ چیز *ku nadarad joz shahadat hich chiz*

Elsewhere in *Mantiq al-tayr* Attar's use of verbal imagery is itself a variation on what the painters have depicted in the foreground of 'The Bearded Man Drowning'. After the prologue, when the birds have begun to assemble, the francolin is welcomed with the following lines:[34]

Burn the carnal self, like the donkey of Jesus that it is	نفس را همچون خر عیسی بسوز *nafs ra hamchun khar-e isa besuz*
Then, like Jesus, ignite your spirit for the Beloved	پس چو عیسی جان بجانان فروز *pas cho isa jan bejanan foruz*

Referring to the beast that carried Jesus to Jerusalem, 'the donkey of Jesus' has been used by Sufi poets to highlight the contrast between the animal and its rider, who exemplifies a perfect soul.[35] Rumi is particularly fond of contrasting the two:[36]

Behold o heart! Do not get false hopes with every intoxication	به هر مستی دلا غره مشو
	be har masti dela ghareh masho

Jesus is drunk with Truth, his donkey drunk with barley	عیسی مست حق خر مست جو
	isa mast-e haq khar mast-e jo

But even without referencing it to Jesus, the donkey remains a stand-in for carnal desires. In fact, when Attar using this trope in his *Asrarnama* writes that, 'the kind of nature a donkey has is due to abundant dry wood',[37] it again seems like a variation on what the painters must have had in mind when depicting the images in the 1487 painting. And again, in his *Musibatnama* he writes:[38]

You have a nature of an ass I will not call you human	طبع خر داری نگویم مردمت
	tab'-e khar dari naguyam mardomat
Eat barley you donkey! The wheat is too good for you	جو خور ای خر ای دریغا گندمت
	jo khor ey khar ey darigha gandomat

Visually, too, the trope is not without precedent. In a drawing from an album containing an eclectic assortment of paintings, drawings and calligraphic studies that belonged to Timur's grandson, Baysunghur, from the first half of the fifteenth century, we find a depiction of a woman on the back of a mule being led by a demon, while another man is visible in the back with his cane raised high as though he is about to strike the demon from behind with it.[39] The menacing looking creature is pulling the mule with both hands as the woman on its back looks on helplessly. There is little reason to presume that the drawing is a visualisation of some other concept than such a prevailing literary 'conceit', but even as a coincidence, it is a strikingly emphatic visual parallel to the substance of Attar's parable about the bearded man.

Conventionally, the Sufi seeker, as presented in poetry, must remain ever vigilant lest the carnal self attempts to fulfil its passions. Moses, the Pharaoh, Jesus and his donkey or the 'fire of Pharaoh', with their respective positive or negative connotations, can all be traced back to various accounts related by the Quran and the moral lessons promoted by them. Understanding and enjoying such literary allusions, of course, depends very much on the reader's or listener's knowledge of literary tropes (*talmihat*) and Sufi intertextuality.

To an observer unacquainted with the doctrines and conventions espoused by the medieval Sufi poets, such interpretations may seem forced and arbitrary, but it is clear from Attar's text, for example, that tropes like Pharaoh, Moses and Haman – unlike, for instance the significance of 'a very large beard' (*rishi bas bozorg*)[40] – need no further explications to the initiated, so none is provided.[41] Although it is admittedly surprising to see it rendered pictorially, the use of allusion (*ishara*) was central to Sufi discourse and the figurative language of Islamic letters.[42]

So the appearance in the painting, in abundance, of firewood is directly related to the over-arching problem addressed by the textual passage, namely, the carnal wants and desires of man's base, animal-like soul. But what are we to make of the tree, or what seems to remain of one, whose last branch is being sawed off in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning'? Although visually it is clearly linked to the firewood – it is a source for at least one pile on the ground to the right of the tree – there is no mention of any tree in the text, at least, not literally. It may not be far off, based on Kashani's understanding discussed in Chapter 2, above, for us to assume that this young tree could also signify 'tree of humanity'.[43] Alternatively, the 'blessed olive tree' (*shajarat al-zaytuna*) mentioned in *Surat al-Nur* (24:35), which has been pivotal to Sufi ideology, signifies, as Kashani understands it, the soul of mankind, the kind of *nafs* possessed by humans that is an intermediary between mind and body.[44]

Other than the carnal soul, which contains our lustful passions, the concept of *nafs* also includes the idea of soul in the medieval Christian sense – that is, the undying spirit of man, which other animals lack and which in mankind is worth saving or damning. Attar's counsel on the need to curb one's carnal desires in this passage does not concern an absolute beginner, who first and foremost must bring his or her unregenerate soul (*ammara*) under control. Several attributes of this state are addressed in the earlier question-and-answer episodes of *Mantiq al-tayr*, where, for example, the anecdote about the copulating foxes is an example that repudiates one of man's baser drives.[45] Sufi poets often advocate 'killing' this particular carnal desire altogether, a trope that Attar, too, on occasion recommends in his writings.[46] At a more advanced station (*maqam*), however, the seeker must contend with his reproachful or censuring (*lawwama*) soul, one that is desirous

of a whole array of worldly needs, which remain even when the baser desires are eliminated. At a still later stage, the soul is in a state where all becomes tranquil (*mutma'ina*), after our carnal desires have been annihilated.[47]

What we encounter in the episode about the drowning fool and his beard is an explication and rebuke aimed at a Sufi devotee who has become complacent and presumptuous. At this stage, it is the censuring-soul (*nafs-i lawwama*) that appears to be of concern. In Attar's text, the beard is a stand-in for frivolous worldly preoccupations. By playing with the double meaning of *rish* as beard/lesion, Attar advocates war against it (2981), abandoning it (2982), making it one's concern (2983), but never directly, or implicitly by use of common tropes such as *rishkan* (uprooting), does he suggest the elimination of it. It is by overcoming this stage that the soul will achieve, in turn, tranquillity, content, subtlety and finally perfection.[48] The end goal of drowning in the 'sea of unity', often conveyed through the image of the drop of water merging in the ocean, is, of course, the ideal ultimate desire of a Sufi wayfarer, but such a drowning is metaphorical.[49] The irony of Attar's parable about the drowning man is that the 'fool' with a long beard had vaingloriously hoped to drown metaphorically in the sea of oneness, but instead finds himself suddenly drowning in waters of the sea.[50] The fool's problematic drowning may also be seen as a variation on the prototypical Quranic story, where the Pharaoh, who did not listen to Moses' call to faith, drowned in the Red Sea.[51]

As its three conditions – unregenerate, censuring and tranquil – indicate, Sufism relies on the perfectibility of human soul, and it is in this sense that various references to trees in the Quran have been understood as alluding to the human soul. The intimation of God as the 'gardener', a not uncommon trope in the Sufi poetry of Rumi and Jami, is a subsidiary of the same allusion.[52] Rumi's figurative language, as we have already seen, at times seems to describe something of what our Herati painters may have had in mind:[53]

The gardener cuts off the harmful branch	باغبان زان می برد شاخ مضر
	Baghban zan miborad shakh-e mozar
So that the tree can gain height and fruit	تا بیابد نخل قامت ها و بر
(M1.3869)	*ta biyabad nakhl qamatha o bar*

Elsewhere Rumi even combines the metaphor of firewood with our carnal bodies and the need to remove from ourselves this fuel, which serves no purpose except to feed the fires of hell:

Firewood of Hell is the body, trim it	هیزم دوزخ تن است و کم کنش
	hizom-e duzakh tan ast o kam konash
and should more firewood sprout,	ور بروید هیزمی زو بر کنش
remove it	*var beruyad hizomi zu barkanash*
(M5.1098)	

Annemarie Schimmel, citing a couplet from Rumi's *divan* on how dry saplings are axed to be used as firewood,[54] reminds readers of Sura 111 of the Quran, where Abu Lahab's faithless wife is called 'the carrier of fire-wood' and that the image of a dried-up tree was taken over by most of the poets in the Muslim East.[55] Jami himself, in referring to a heart that seeks union with God as the 'tree of the heart' (*shajareh-ye del*), uses the word for a young tree or sapling (*nahal*) specifically, which indeed may be a more accurate term for identifying the puzzling depiction of the leafless plant in the lower centre of the painting. He likens a sapling to life in general:[56]

Each had a branch from the sapling of	هریک ز نهال عمر شاخی
life	*har yek ze nahal-e umr shakhi*

More than once Jami, who was the most distinguished contemporary poet for the artists at the court of Husayn Bayqara – and whose verses have been shown to have had a great influence on their imagination – utilises the concept of a 'saw' and of 'sawing off' a tree to create imagery in his writings that highlights the tension between worldly power and concerns and spiritual salvation. In Jami's version of the genre tale about the king and the crone in *Silsilat al-dhahab*, when King Sanjar is confronted by an old woman who complains of the negligence of the king and the tyranny of his men, she compares the crown of the king to the teeth of a saw:[57]

The crenellation of your crown like a	کنگر تاج تو چو اره کشید
pulled saw	*konger-e taj-e to cho arreh keshid*
cut the good health of the world from	از جهان بیخ عافیت ببرید
the bottom	*az jahan bikh-e afiyat beborid*

But Jami also specifically utilises the image of a tree branch or the dead fire-wood and compares them with man's carnal desires:[58]

You! Who, like the branch of plants, are attached to yourself	ای به خود رسته که چون شاخ گیا *ey beh khod rasteh keh chon shakh-e giya*
You are moved by the wind of carnal desires	می دهد جنبش تو باد هوا *midahad jonbesh-e to bad-e hava*

Or, in another of his allegorical romances, he writes:[59]

He has gone to hell, don't follow him	او به دوزخ رفت تو در پی مرو *u beh duzakh raft to dar pey maro*
Don't become the firewood of hell like him	هیمهء دوزخ به سان وی مشو *himeh-ye duzakh beh san-e vey masho*

The frequency with which Jami uses trees and branches figuratively in his didactic verse in order to elaborate his point corroborates the circulation of such metaphors in contemporary discourse, and may help to explain why other frequently used poetic tropes – such as the candle and moth or the rose and the nightingale – are seldom encountered in illustrations of Sufi didactic poetry. Again and again, in Jami's works we come across the imagery of the tree and its roots and branches, and nearly always as a trope in the service of the mystical form of piety he propagates:[60]

A field without water will not produce	کشت بی آب هیچ بر ندهد *kesht-e bi ab hich bar nadahad*
once the tree is dried up it will not fruit. (327.5301)	چون شجر خشک شد ثمر ندهد *chon shajar khoshk shod samar nadahad*
Uproot the tyrant from the gardens of the land	بیخ ظالم ز باغ ملک بکن *bikh-e zalem ze bagh-e molk bekan*
break the branches of cruelty from the tree of religion. (333,5416)	شاخ ظلم از درخت دین بشکن *shkh-e zolm az derakht-e din beshkan*
Don't trouble your heart for insolence	دل پریشان مکن که گستاخی *del parishan makon keh gostakhi*
cuts a new branch off a cypress (376.6263)	برد از سرو تازه بر شاخی *borad az sarv-e tazeh bar shakhi*

Each *alif* from Him is a fruitful tree

هر الف از وی شجری میوناک

har alef az vey shajari mivnak

its fruit is a knowledge of a pure being.
  (467.17)

میوهٔ آن معرفت ذات پاک

miveh-ye an marefat-e zat-e pak

Any tree whose produce is not virtue

هر درختی که نه بارش ورع است

har derakhti keh nah barash vara`ast

has grown from the seedling of greed
  and avarice. (640.963)

رسته از دانهٔ حرص و طمع است

rastoh az daneh-ye hers o tama'ast

Related to all this is the dark-featured man standing behind the donkey on the lower right, whose earring suggests that he is a slave (*gholam*). Anecdotally, such a stereotypical character in Persian verse (such as the '*hendu* slave who secretly lusted after his master's daughter' in Rumi's *Mathnawi*)[61] is either used to signify a person with base morals, often an outright infidel in need of conversion, or else to express loving devotion. In this latter case, the poet offers or longs to be the '*hindu*' of his beloved, as Navai does in his lyric verses:[62]

I am he, who became the *hindu* of the
  hindu of the beloved

بنده آنم که شد هندوی هندوی حبیب

*bandeh anam keh shod hendu-ye
hendu-ye habib*

In the lower half of the 'Bearded Man Drowning', the depiction conforms to the idea of a '*hindu*' as a slave. Presented as he is, next to the firewood and the donkey, this slave is clearly implicated and, as it appears, expected to lead the mule loaded with firewood away.

The depiction of the donkey, the slave, the branch of a tree being sawed off, and the firewood in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' may be described as a 'gloss' on the theme of Attar's parable, but, of course, that theme is not some commonplace view on the non-permanence of life, rather, it is an elaboration of what Attar considers to be an important struggle on the Sufi path towards union with God, against our carnal desires, which at this stage concerns fighting against superficial piety.[63] Furthermore, unlike the depictions in the one half of the other two 1487 paintings discussed in Chapter 2, the 'gloss' in the lower half of 'Bearded Man Drowning' is much more specific to the discourse and practices relevant to the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi

Sufis who enjoyed 'a hegemonic position' in Herat at this time.[64] In this 1487 painting, the Pharaoh, Haman or the donkey each have their own exclusive reference as alluded to by Attar's text, but intertextually, what they signify is also recognisable as Sufi tropes to the educated Herati independent of Attar's text. Just as in Attar's figurative language, the depicted figures also mean to advocate resolve, stressing to the seeker the need for eliminating all traces of base desire associated with the carnal soul.[65]

Due to the striking blue colour of his robe, the final figure to be discussed in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' perhaps draws greater attention than the rest. The man, with a grey-white beard and a skullcap, is depicted as sitting on a rock just to the right of the vertical centre of the painting. Considering the narrative subject and in the context of contemporary Herat, the man, with a greying beard, may well be understood as a Sufi. Sitting as he is, it may be assumed that he is engaged in a common ritual routinely performed by virtually all Sufi orders during the late fifteenth century, namely, invocation (ذکر), referred to as *zekr* (or *dhikr*), a meditative practice of remembrance and recollection of God.[66] However, the position of his arms and his knees pulled together, as he sits attentively, does not resemble the descriptions we have of the pose adopted for performance of this ritual.

As a form of meditation, *zekr* typically requires that the pupil or spiritual disciple (*murid*) repeat, at least part of the profession of faith (*la ilaha illa Allah*), in a particular manner and a specific number of times throughout the day.[67] The ritual is at the centre of training for Sufis. The Naqshbandi line of Sufis, to which many members of the court and the leading artists of Herat adhered, is almost unique in practising this ritual inaudibly, in what came to be referred to as the silent form of *zekr*.[68] However, like other debates on many demarcating lines between different Sufi lineages during the fifteenth century, the preference for vocal or silent *zekr* was by no means conclusive among the Naqshbandi Sufis themselves.[69] This is attested to in Jami's own *Silsilat al-dhahab* where he sometimes promotes silent *zekr* and sometimes vocal *zekr*.[70]

The followers of almost all other Sufis lineages engaged in the loud *zekr*, sometimes accompanied with music.[71] Indeed, the divergence of the Naqshbandis from the more common vocal practice of *zekr* has been traced back no further than the second half of the fifteenth century, and it is mainly

attributed to the growing emphasis on the authority of the Sufi shaykhs (or *murshid*) over their pupils (*murids*) that the emphasis on silent *zekr* began as a new trend at that time.[72] In fact, however, the gradual shift towards sanctioning the silent *zekr* appears to have commenced nearly a century after the late Timurid period in Herat,[73] and that silent performance of *zekr* did not become the 'most distinctive' practice of the Naqshbandi Sufis until long after Jami's lifetime.[74]

The point of all this, as far as it concerns 'The Bearded Man Drowning', is that the seated shaykh in the blue robe, and the younger man to his left engaged in sawing off the last branch of a tree, are pictorial representations of a particular kind of meditation that was practised by the Naqshbandi initiates called 'sawing' (*zekr-e arreh*). This ritual, named after the heavy sounds made by its practitioners, is a type of loud *zekr*, which later became associated with the Rifa'i dervishes.[75] Apparently, the use of vocal 'sawing meditation' was especially helpful for new initiates.[76] Sawing *zekr* was allegedly begun by Ahmad Yasawi (d. 1166), who studied under Yusuf al-Hamadani, a shaykh in the chain of leadership of what later came to be called the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order.[77] Yasawi, who became one of Hamadani's initiating leaders (*khalifa*), seems to have had a lasting influence through his vocal sawing-*zekr* even among the Naqshbandi Sufis, the line of Sufis to which he originally belonged before his own Central Asian Yasaviyya was formed. It has been suggested that although the leaders of Naqshbandi preferred the silent *zekr*, the sawing *zekr* was still both acceptable and practised more than fifty years after these Herati images were painted.[78]

It may be arguable that the dervish in blue may not be engaged in *zekr*, although variations in method of this practice have been noted and seem natural.[79] The particular pose of the sitting figure is at odds with those associated with the rituals of meditation. Both he and the younger man who is sawing are depicted with their eyes open and directly in each other's line of vision – as though gazing at one another. The open eyes of the dervish suggest that he is not occupied but with watching intently the young man who is sawing a branch off the tree in front of him. Baha al-Din Naqshband himself is supposed to have taught that the pupil 'must not turn his face to anything in this world except to the master who will take him to the Presence of God'. According to him, there are three ways that 'those who know' (that is, the

Sufi masters) attain their knowledge: contemplation, vision and reckoning. The permission for the *zekr* must be given by the master and, indeed, it is the seeker who must direct his heart towards the spiritual master.[80]

The most authoritative source on this point may be the writings of the leading figure of the Naqshbandis in Herat, the poet, Jami.[81] The influence of Jami's literary imagination on the court painters of Herat, as exemplified by the depiction of Zulaykha's palace in an illustration for *Bustan* of Sadi, may also help to explain the depiction in the foreground of 'The Bearded Man Drowning'.[82] In the first book of Jami's, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, he explicates his opinions on orthodox rituals as well as conduct associated with Sufism, such as asceticism, solitude (*khalwat*) and meditation (*zekr*) – both the 'manifest' *zekr* (*jalli*) and the silent *zekr* (*khafi*).[83] Writing on the virtues of these two methods of meditation, Jami seems to be an advocate of silent meditation (*zekr khafi*):[84]

zekr is a treasure and treasure is better kept hidden	ذکر گنج است و گنج پنهان به *zekr ganj ast o ganj penhan beh*
Make an effort, do justice to the hidden *zekr*	جهد کن داد ذکر پنهان ده *jahd kon dad-e zekr-e penhan deh*
Be dumb in your tongue, silent in your lips	به زبان گنگ شو به لب خاموش *beh zaban gong sho beh lab khamush*
One's ear is not a confidant in this transaction	نیست محرم درین معامله گوش *nist mahram darin mu`ameleh gush*

After expounding on the benefits of *zekr*, including the orthographic significance of '*la ilaha illa Allah*', which the initiate is required to recite repeatedly during *zekr*,[85] Jami condemns noisy public meditations, characterised by singing (*awaz*) and dancing (*raqs*). He does this by devoting a whole section to 'reproaching' those who organise and partake in such exhibitionism:[86]

On the reproach of those, who in order to gather common people and gain another means of livelihood, populate their assemblies with them and openly and publicly engage with *zekr* of the Almighty, Glory be to His Highness

This is followed by an 'illustrative' anecdote in which the term saw (*arreh*) itself is implicated in Jami's condemnation:[87]

His throat gets torn by the harsh
   sound

halqash az sot-e por kharash darad

حلقش از صوت پر خراش درد

He cuts the neck of joy with a saw

گردن ذوق را به اره برد

gardan-e zoq ra beh arreh borad

A little further on, Jami also censures those who place their head on their knees in a sitting position and do not make a sound or any noise with their breath:[88]

> those who claim to conduct their *zekr* in their hearts and assume the outward appearances of such practice and consider it to be silent [*khafi*] *zekr* but they don't know that it also has the same command as the public *zekr*, and in fact even public *zekr* would be better than doing this because at least in public *zekr* the essence of meditation is investigative … unlike the silent *zekr*.

The very fact that Jami would exert himself to advocate the silent *zekr* as opposed to its open – and noisy – performance evinces the prevalence of the 'manifest' performance of *zekr* during this time. In the end, Jami explains (575–617) that his real intention is to condemn neither the silent nor the loud *zekr* but only to reproach those who abuse such practices for carnal pleasures, and that to be delivered from self-involvement and selfishness is impossible except in the service of a '*pir*' (spiritual guide, shaykh or *murshid*, but literally old [man]):[89]

Once you find a *pir* do not detach
   from him

پیر چون یافتی ازو مگسل

pir chon yafti azu magosal

If not, do not cease your search for
   him

ورنه یکدم ز جست و جو مگسل

var nah yekdam ze jost o ju magosal

What we see in the lower half of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' alludes to a seeker who is engaged in 'saw' meditation: he is 'rejecting evil whisperings and the ego's insinuations' under the supervision of his Sufi shaykh, his '*pir*'.[90] In other words, what we see is a combination of what both Attar and Jami have prescribed and proscribed. It is the young (beardless) pupil or seeker (*murid*) that has in effect 'stepped forward' (2982) and is depicted while 'sawing', manifestly *and* metaphorically. He is engaged in the 'sawing'

under the gaze of the man in blue, with the greyish-white beard, namely, under the gaze of his Sufi shaykh. All the while, he does not turn his face to anything in this world except to his shaykh. The image of the young man sawing the last branch off the tree pictorially alludes to the concerns raised by Attar's text as well as to the contemporary practice of *zekr*, which addresses such concerns. This practice, known to and performed by the contemporary followers of the Naqshbandi order was the 'saw' *zekr*. The initiated understood this as contemplation of the One God – a practice through which the seeker could disregard all other worldly desires. The man in the blue robe to the right, is depicted with his left hand on his knee, with all his fingers curled into a fist except for his forefinger, which is extended out, as though he is keeping count of the number of times his disciple has repeated the required 'profession of faith'.[91] According to Baha al-Din Naqshband, it is through counting that one can bring the heart into the Presence of the One who is mentioned in that *zekr* and to keep counting, one by one, in order to bring one's attention to the realisation that everyone is in need of the One whose Signs appear in every creation.[92]

Having a better understanding of the discursive context for the three unprecedented 1487 paintings, in which half of the composition is devoted to scenes that emblematically reinforce the moral content of the narrative subject, we may be in a better position to consider all four of the fifteenth century illustrations, including 'The Beggar before the King' (fig. 2) together. The fact that unlike Ferdowsi's epic of *Shahnama*, or Nizami's *Khamsa,* Attar's Sufi allegory *Mantiq al-Tayr*, had seldom been illustrated before 1487, make these four fifteenth-century illustrations especially suitable for considering the issue of selection: the principal by which some passages in Attar's narrative, and not others, were chosen for illustration. As suggested in the previous chapter, the novelty of the iconography in three of the four fifteenth-century paintings, already suggests direct intervention by the patron of the manuscript in their production.[93] We have seen that *Mantiq al-tayr* unfolds through numerous parables or didactic 'anecdotes' that address issues related to the difficulties faced by a Sufi on the path to achieving proximity to God – where the ultimate station is that of spiritual perfection (*kamal*). From among more than one hundred and eighty parables and simple stories related by Attar's text, why were these four anecdotes selected for illustration?

One answer that is too fitting to be coincidental may well lie in another contemporary account, or in the discursive tradition represented by it and recorded in it. The 'programme' for the four fifteenth-century illustrations in Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* may well have been drawn from a work by the brother-in-law of Jami, the famed Herati preacher, Husayn Kashifi (known by his soubriquet Vaiz or Wa'iz).[94] Kashifi's *The Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry* (*Futuwwatnameh-i Sultani*)[95] is the most comprehensive of all medieval Persian treatises on the ethics of conduct for artisans and craftsmen, and it specifically enumerates exactly the four stations on the path of Sufism that these four paintings from *Mantiq al-tayr* illustrate.[96] *Futuwwat* or chivalric ethics, which, despite its pre-Islamic roots, by the late fifteenth century had become largely indistinguishable from Sufism, belongs to the same discursive tradition that in Herat was embraced by artisans and princes alike. Put perhaps more accurately, the affinities between chivalric ethics or *Futuwwat* and Sufism emanated from the same powerful impulse towards esotericism that dominated Islamic thought during the fifteenth century.

Among the more than twenty notable literary figures from Sultan Bayqara's long reign, Husayn Vaiz Kashifi (d. 1505), who was a sought-after preacher and was praised by contemporaries as eloquent, may seem unlikely to have a connection with manuscript paintings. When listing his written works, pre-modern chroniclers make no mention of this treatise on chivalric ethics. But even though Kashifi's authorship of *Futuwwatnama* and the date of its composition remain open questions, the internal textual similarities between this work and other writings by Kashifi make it certain that *Futuwwatnama-i Sultani* – like the four *Mantiq al-tayr* paintings – originates from late fifteenth-century Khorasan and cannot be divorced from the popularity of esotericism which, as discussed in Chapter 1, thrived during the late Timurid period. Kashifi's writings – ranging from Quranic interpretation and alchemy to astronomy and commemoration of Shia martyrs – number to perhaps forty works.[97] In his *Futuwwatnama* he echoes a great figure of medieval Sufism, Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d. 1145) in claiming that *futuwwat* was an integral part of both Sufism and the everyday life of tradesmen.[98] Indeed, Kashifi states explicitly that his treatise on chivalric ethics is meant to facilitate the path for those who are unable to attain Sufism, which he deems a more arduous form of spiritual endeavour.[99] The ostensible aim of Kashifi's

book on *futuwwat,* however, remains the compiling of the rituals and rules, as well as the spiritual attributes and character traits of those who belong to *futuwwat* organisations, that is, the artisans and tradesmen. In fact, Kashifi devotes two long chapters to describing the tasks of two large groups of workers and tradesmen, and discusses the spiritualised truth embedded within each of their trades.

It is in the second chapter of *Futuwwatnama*, before developing the main body of his treatise, that Kashifi describes the link between *Futuwwat* and Sufism, highlighting four principal stations among the many that exist on the path to becoming a Sufi, explaining:

> If they ask how many stages are there on the path to Sufism (*maqamat-i tariqat*), say that there are four hundred and forty-four, but on the whole they can be summarized in four: the first is Repentance … the second, Fear … third, Jihad … fourth, Patience.

Having considered the theme of the narrative subject for the four 1487 illustrations from Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr*, the four stages enumerated by Kashifi stand out as strikingly familiar.

Surprisingly, in the opening lines of his *Futuwwatnama,* Kashifi had already cited Attar. Quoting six verses attributed to Attar about the 'science of *futuwwat*', Kashifi repeats Attar's praise of chivalric conduct as a means of leaving behind the world, and notes Attar's praise for *futuwwat*'s affinity with faith, light and the heart.[100] Continuing his instructions Kashifi writes: 'know that the science of *Futuwwat* … is a branch of the science of mysticism'.[101] Attar, for his part, at the very end of his *Mantiq al-tayr* has also written about *futuwwat* – which he calls *javanmardi*, the Persian word for chivalric conduct. In fact, the final verses of *Mantiq al-tayr* are devoted to, of all things, a parable in which Attar goes to the trouble of answering this question: 'What is *Javanmardi*?' which he then defines as disregarding (literally) the 'dirt' of others', that is, turning a blind eye to people's foibles and petty offences. Attar's own versified treatise on chivalric ethics, which is included in his collected works of poetry, makes the coveted qualities of a *javanmard* seem virtually interchangeable with those that by the late fifteenth century were required of a Sufi.[102] In his epilogue to *Mantiq al-tayr*, Attar refers to the epic as *Maqamat al-tuyur* or 'the stations of the birds',

and so foreshadows Kashifi's understanding of *futuwwat* or *javanmardi* as a branch of mysticism by explicitly acknowledging that the tenor of his allegory is Sufism.[103]

As we have seen, *Mantiq al-tayr* has been constructed through the cycle of questions by the birds, the answers provided by the Hoopoe, followed in each case by several demonstrative parables which are meant to reinforce the point already asserted in the Hoopoe's earlier answer. Attar uses this structure to present his thesis on the essential need for the elimination of carnal desires and earthly attachments.[104] Among the justifications and excuses the birds bring up for not wanting to undertake the voyage the most conspicuous are: being weak, already being a terrible sinner, a love of wealth, the love of carnal pleasures, the inability to be pure, a lack of ambition, a lack of fairness, insolence, a fear of death, depression, being a blowhard, needing guidance and an assumption of perfection. These are all repudiated or resolved by the Hoopoe's responses and the parables and simple stories that elaborate on those responses. The voyage to Mount Qaf and Simourgh is actually relayed only briefly near the climactic end of Attar's epic.[105]

The four stations on the path of mysticism enumerated by Kashifi, namely, repentance, fear, jihad and patience, appear to match the theme of the four parables that are illustrated. From among more than one hundred and eighty parables and simple stories related by Attar's text, 'The Beggar before the King' (Plate 2) illustrates one of the parables mentioned in response to the bird who is incapable of constancy, by turns debauched and ascetic; 'The Funeral Procession' (Plate 3) illustrates one of the parables mentioned in response to the bird who fears death; 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 4) illustrates one of the parables mentioned in response to the bird who thinks that it has already attained perfection; and the 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' (Plate 5) illustrates one of the parables that emphasise the necessity of patience. Each image fairly corresponds to one of the four stations mentioned by Kashifi.[106]

Although iconographically, 'The Beggar before the King' does not raise the same questions that distinguish the other 1487 paintings in this manuscript, the painting's depiction of a kneeling figure before an enthroned king may be readily understood as a visualisation of what Kashifi considers to be the first step on the path of mysticism: repentance. Even without knowing

the narrative subject, the image presents a penitent who kneels before a figure of authority, just as the Hoopoe exhorts the novice and ambivalent Sufis to renounce and repent.

The explicit theme of the parable illustrated by the second 1487 painting discussed, is death – and in the foreground of the painting the image of a coffin borne in a cortège corresponds to the narrative subject. Previous studies have related what is depicted in the upper half of the 'Funeral Procession' to Attar's text and to the theme of 'death' in general, rather than to the narrative subject of a son grieving for his father. For Attar, the absolute certainty of death and what awaits us after death is indeed something to be *feared*.[107] And the Herati artists of 'The Funeral Procession' display what awaits us all in the end. Again, Kashifi's *Futuwwatnama* considers the second stage on the path of mysticism to be fear.

The content of the third late fifteenth-century painting in *Mantiq al-tayr* is also divided into two halves. The background of 'The Bearded Man Drowning' illustrates the narrative subject of Attar's parable of the drowning man with a long beard; and the foreground depicts figures that emblematically represent necessary, often routine, Sufi practices, such as the constant endeavour to 'reject evil whisperings and the ego's insinuations' through meditations (like constant chanting of God's names or the repetition of the profession of faith).[108] In other words, partaking in practices that constitute what Kashifi has called the third stage on the path of a mystic: namely, jihad, or struggle, striving, or more precisely the struggle of the soul to overcome the sinful obstacles that keep a person from God, which is sometimes referred to as 'the greater jihad'.[109]

The last of the 1487 paintings is also the last painting in the whole manuscript in terms of the folio sequence. 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' is again divided into two halves and depicts the narrative subject from Attar's parable about the two named characters in its lower half. But its upper half contains enigmatic figures and details that would make more sense in relation to the theme of Attar's text. At this point in the narrative, the cycle of questions and answers are dealing with the details of the actual journey to Mount Qaf. Having enumerated the seven valleys the birds must traverse, the story of Shaykh Mahneh belongs to a passage in which Attar uses parables to explain the first of them: the valley of 'the quest' (*talab*). The

problem discussed in this section is the need for volition on the part of the Sufi, in other words, the seeker must be eager in his or her pursuit. However, the simple tale about the old peasant giving advice to Shaykh Mahneh is specifically about a concern that has been explained as ancillary to the Quest, namely, patience (*sabr*). The *taleban*, or the seekers, must possess limitless patience and endure the bitterness of waiting if they want their 'quest' to come to fruition. And the fourth station of the mystic's path, according to Kashifi, is patience.

Of course, numerous questions remain, but the correspondence between the four stages of mysticism enumerated by Kashifi and the iconology of the four 1487 paintings of *Mantiq al-tayr* cannot be coincidental, although it is difficult to establish for certain. However, it would also be difficult to argue that the correspondence does not exist. The compatibility of the four stages on the path of Sufism enumerated in Kashifi's *Futuwwatnama* with the themes pictorially elaborated by the four fifteenth-century paintings need not necessarily be seen as a deliberate or conscious attempt at emulation. Without speculating, we know, for example, that Kashifi dedicated several of his works to Alishir Navai, who may well have been the commissioning patron of *Mantiq al-tayr*. Also, we know that Navai defended Kashifi against accusations of being a Shia and praised him as the reincarnation of the prophet David and the best preacher since the time of Adam.[110] Since Kashifi's *Futuwwatnama* is likely to have been written at least a decade after the 1487 manuscript, it may represent a rare occasion when manuscript illustrations influence texts rather than the other way around.

However their selection came about, the iconography seen in the three *Mantiq al-tayr* paintings from 1487 remain largely exclusive, and with a few notable exceptions do not rank among the more frequently used fixed figure-types that begin to appear in manuscript paintings in the subsequent decades. The very notable exception is the firewood and the figure sawing off dry wood, which will become pervasive in later manuscript paintings with Sufi content. To a lesser degree the figure of a donkey ('Bearded Man Drowning') and the ancient leafless tree ('The Funeral Procession') also do appear in later paintings. Still less common will be depictions of weighing scales ('Shaykh Mahneh'). Perhaps not less common than others but less specifically targeted is the depiction of many birds as well as a conspicuous bird's nest containing

eggs or chicks. The manuscripts, or rather, the two or three paintings within one or two manuscripts, which will serve to introduce the most ubiquitous later emblematic figure-types, were not yet conceptualised in the late 1480s. They were to emerge a few years after the *Mantiq al-tyar* paintings and will be discussed in Chapter 4.

4

Fixed-figure Prototypes and
the Symbolic Order

The next significant painting with respect to the proliferation of the emblematic figure-types belongs to a copy of Nizami's *Khamsa* (pentalogy, or quintet), now at the British Library.[1] The manuscript, which has been called the most lavishly illustrated manuscript of the entire Bayqara period in Herat, was completed only a few years after the four fifteenth-century *Mantiq al-tayr* paintings discussed in the previous two chapters.[2] 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' (see Plate 6) depicts a scene from the romance of *Layla and Majnun* by Nizami, and is one of the twenty-two paintings that illustrate this copy of *Khamsa*, which is assumed to have been commissioned by Ali Farsi Barlas, an officer in the service of Husayn Bayqara, and has been dated to 1494–5.[3] The painting illustrates the scene in Nizami's romance following Layla's death, when her grieving lover, Majnun, shirtless and distraught, has collapsed on Layla's gravestone, where after a brief lamentation he himself dies.

The figure of Majnun on Layla's tomb is perhaps the least noticeable detail in the composition near the bottom, and were it not for the bright aquamarine loincloth, he would be even less conspicuous. The wild beasts depicted as surrounding the distraught lover – the two gazelles, the wolf, the cheetah and the lion – are not specifically mentioned by the text at this point, but they, or some of them, have been noted elsewhere and are equivalent to Majnun's attributes as a half-naked, bare-headed, vagabond lover-saint, who is shunned by or shuns the society of men, but is loved by beasts and God. In Nizami's rendition of the story, these attributes are Majnun's emblems and are central to the moral and spiritual substance of the story.[4] The water, springing from under the boulders to the right and running through the

flowers and the greenery at the bottom of the painting, may be attributed to the contemporary painting conventions for depicting 'nature', but the fact that Layla's grave is right next to this running stream cannot be simply due to convention in light of the other contemporary depictions of gravesites, one of which we have already seen in 'The Funeral Procession' from *Mantiq al-tayr* (Plate 3).[5]

Like the three 1487 paintings discussed earlier, the surface of this composition has also been divided in half with the line of grey rocks going roughly at an angle, from the upper right to just below the centre left. The depictions in the upper half of the painting, again, seem unrelated to the narrative subject. The camp scene, including the milkmaid, the shepherd and his flock of a few sheep and goats, the two women engaged in a conversation inside an open tent and the flute player on the upper right are not mentioned in the text. They may all be taken as signifying the campsite of Layla's clan; a range of imaginative accessories, ornamentation or 'reality effects' that are peripheral to the narrative subject. However, the last references to such a camp in Nizami's text are indirect – referring to Layla leaving her 'tent' or taking Majnun to her 'tent' – and are made nearly 600 verses earlier, so why present it at this point?[6] Generically, the bucolic scene that is presented, such as the figure of the old shepherd holding a stick and gesturing as though engaged with the goats and the sheep to the centre left of the composition, has seemed a fitting complement to the narrative subject. But, again, such impressionistic ways of understanding the depictions in the upper half of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' reduce what clearly dominates the composition to the peripheral, and essentially ornamental.

In the paintings of the *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript discussed earlier, the illustrated textual passage was actually on the same page as the composition.[7] This is not the case in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', since the verses that actually describe Majnun lamenting Layla's death and then collapsing and dying on her tomb appear on the preceding page.[8] The verses that appear in the 'text block' alongside the actual painting[9] are Nizami's commentary about the preceding events and five couplets after Majnun's death:[10]

Oh you who limp like the old mule at the mill,	ای چون خر آسیا کهن لنگ *ey chon khar-e asiya kohan lang*

Whose remedy for your aching muscles is the amber colour of your face,	که تاب تو روی کهربارنگ *kah tab-e to ruy-e kahroba rang*
Distance yourself from that turning mill	دوری کن از ان خراس گردان *duri kon az an kharas-e gardan*
for it is distant from men's salvation	کو دورشد از خلاص مردان *ku dur shod az khalas-e mardan*

In the context of the conventional tropes of so-called 'classical' Persian poetry, the meaning of these four verses (two couplets) is fairly clear. The narrating agent is addressing the reader or the listener, reminding them – mere mortals – that they, perhaps like the author himself, are or will become old and lame, similar to an old mule that turns the wheels of a mill. The second of the two couplets advises them to keep their distance from the transient world, which is figuratively referred to as a 'mill', whose turning wheel proverbially alludes to change, the passage of time and, by extension, the futility of the temporal world. The material world, as the last verse states, and attachment to it, has little to do with one's eternal salvation.

It would not have been difficult to depict images that could represent the literal meaning of these verses, which could in turn also have alluded to the metaphorical significance of mills or wheels according to literary conventions. We have already encountered – in 'The Bearded Man Drowning' – the unsolicited depiction of a donkey, which the text here pointedly mentions. Indeed, the spinning wheel that appears in the upper centre of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', may be said to reflect what is mentioned twice by the text that accompanies the image – a 'mill' (*asiya*) and a 'turning mill' (*kharas-e gardan*) – with the same proverbial connotation.[11] However, understanding the verses that appear alongside the 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' according to profane literary conventions is of little help in explaining the significance of other depictions in the upper half of the painting. In other words, once again much of the iconography in a late fifteenth-century manuscript painting produced in Herat seems inscrutable and unrelated to the narrative subject of the illustrated text.

However, before proceeding further with deciphering the significance of the extratextual figures in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' – figures that will

come to form some of the repertoire of recurring figure-types that I have characterised as emblematic – it may be pertinent to reflect briefly on the genealogy of the accessible pictorial vocabulary in late Timurid Herat. For instance, a number of manuscript paintings, predating this 1494–5 illustration of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', contain isolated images of figures playing musical instruments, milking cows or tending a flock of sheep and goats.[12] Examples of encampments or nomadic life are not unprecedented, but they mostly exclude the specific figures depicted in 'Manjun on Layla's Tomb'. A depiction at the forefront of a 1397 manuscript painting from Shiraz, commissioned by Timur's grandson, Iskandar Sultan, for instance, is one of the earliest examples of an encampment scene.[13] The scene includes images of yurt tents, a caldron on wood fire, a mother and her infant, a man holding a vessel in each hand fetching water from a spring and a pile of fire wood, all of which, as we will see, became standard vocabulary in pictorial presentation of Sufi concepts.[14] And, of course, there are also the extraordinary images on the margins of several folios in the *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, at the Freer Gallery of Art, one of which (folio 35) contains a scene of pastoral life at an encampment.[15]

One depiction of a nomadic encampment that is most relevant to the iconography of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' is the painting that immediately precedes it in the same 1494 *Khamsa* manuscript.[16] Referred to as 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', or sometimes as 'Layla and Majnun's Last Meeting', the painting illustrates an apocryphal passage in the story, where Layla and Majnun both swoon upon seeing each other (see Plate 7).[17] This composition is nearly a replica of what had by 1494 become an almost a standard arrangement of this scene in manuscript illustrations, containing approximately the same set of figures. The iconography and arrangement of what is presented in 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', from 1494 is virtually a remake of the painting of the same scene in a manuscript produced in Shiraz as far back as eighty years earlier, *c.* 1410.[18]

The illustrated passage is from an interpolated text of about 500 lines, towards the middle of which a young poet named Zaid, who like Majnun had been unhappily in love, is asked by Layla to arrange a meeting for the lovers by bringing Majnun and his animal entourage to Layla's tent. When Layla goes out to greet Majnun they are both overcome by emotion and

swoon. The animal companions of Majnun form a circle around them and end up attacking 'two or three persons' who try to approach the completely overcome lovers, while Zaid is attempting to revive them with rosewater.[19] In the 1494 illustration, we can see the lovers stretched out, unconscious in the centre of the composition, while Zaid, standing, is turned towards Layla, sprinkling her with rosewater. Most of the details presented in the painting are directly or indirectly referred to in the text and at any rate, the arrangement of the figures in this composition closely match the earlier illustrations of this same episode. Illustrations of Majnun's death on Layla's grave prior to this 1494 rendition of it do not include a camp scene,[20] and the shape of a caldron in yellow, which is decipherable in the upper half of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' in front of the tent with the conversing women, seems as though left incomplete. Considering the precedents for illustrating the scene of the swooning lovers, the tents in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' must have been borrowed from the encampment scene in 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting' (compare Plates 6 and 7). As the most obvious similarity between the two paintings, the camp scene assumes the focal point in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', whereas in 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting' the dramatically stretched-out figures of the two lovers render the camp site a mere backdrop.

In 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', the depiction of the tent to the right of the recumbent lovers and the two figures cowering as they watch the lion attack the man in the immediate foreground, once again could allow us to envision an imaginary line dividing a composition in half.[21] But such a contrivance would be pointless, since it is difficult to make the case that either of the two 'halves' of this composition is unrelated to the textual narrative. Indeed, in addition to the camp and the clan members being mentioned by the text, there has also been an attempt at integrating the figures in the upper half of the painting with the events depicted in the lower half through various gestures and the apparent gaze of actors. However, among the details in 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', the one depiction that seems both conspicuous and extraneous to the camp scene – and unmentioned by the text – is the image of a twisted stump of a dried-up tree, which, has been suggestively placed not once, but twice at the top centre of the composition. In 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' also, a dried-up, contorted tree has been placed

in a landscape that is otherwise almost free of vegetal elements. To the right of the painting, among the rocks that spill outside the margins of the composition, there is a small tree that still has its leaves and below it, among the rocks, there are two other dried-up, twisted tree-stumps.

Such details might seem unremarkable were it not for their precedent in paintings that date back to the first century after the Mongol invasions.[22] Whether merely ornamental or not, the fact that such apparently arbitrary but striking depictions of dried-up tree stumps have antecedents is significant to the process through which some conventional, anodyne depictions came to acquire new significance and so became what we might call iconographical innovations. The use of iconography in manuscript painting to convey multiple levels of meaning had already been embraced by artists in the Ilkhanid period (1258–1353).[23] And a variation on this particular style of depicting a dead or dying tree stump, dating to the 1330s, has been singled out in a study by Lisa Golombek alluded to previously.[24]

Golombek considers a contorted tree stump as an 'element of landscape' at the centre of the painting, 'Death of Isfandiyar' from the celebrated Great Mongol *Shahnama* manuscript. In a painting that depicts two hero-warriors on the verge of engaging in a life-and-death battle, why would such a 'detail' as a tree stump be given the 'highest prominence' at the central axis of a painting? The subject of the illustrated text conveys the anguish and pathos of Isfandiyar, who is about to be killed by his erstwhile friend and mentor. Golombek suggests that the contorted depiction of the tree stump represents an appropriate graphic metaphor for the death scene of the young hero. As the text of *Shahnama* describes it, with Isfandiyar's death the 'straight-stemmed Cypress bent'. Far from a mere 'ornament', the tree stump in the 'Death of Isfandiyar' has been interpreted as an 'extremely potent form' that concretely represents the descriptive, abstract and literary contents of the story.[25]

The same tendency for the use of landscape elements as commentary on the action of the narrative subject – rather than simply to provide a background – is manifest in other manuscript paintings from the Ilkhanid period.[26] 'Ardavan Captured by Ardashir', also from the Great Mongol *Shahnama* (Plate 10), depicts the capture of the last ruler of the Ashkanid (or Parthian) dynasty by Ardashir, who became the founder of the new Sasanian Empire (226–651 CE). The text surrounding the illustration above and below,

narrates the pursuit, the capture and the execution of Ardavan. The painting includes the principal characters as well as other figures from the narrated event, such as soldiers and the figure of the executioner, who is holding his sword as though poised to swing it with one hand while his other hand holds on to the rope that is around the prisoner's neck. Without even needing to refer to the text beyond the rubric of the episode above the illustration, the composition clearly communicates which figure is the defeated and captured Ardavan and which figure is that of the new king, who is crowned and mounted on a white horse.

The setting for the event is presented only through the terrain on which the figures stand, and a single large and leaning tree with oddly twisted branches in the background. There are at least two main branches that twist upon themselves or around a neighbouring branch and turn sharply down. The branches look strikingly like the twisted stump of two dried-up trees, in the top centre of 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting' (Plate 7). In the *Shahnama* painting, there is one smaller twisted branch below the others, which is all dried-up, but otherwise, the larger twisted branches either eventually turn upward and are green or extend as dried twigs. In light of Golombek's analysis of the tree stump in the 'Death of Isfandiyar' we may also assume a correspondence between this form of depicting the branches and the subject of the illustrated *Shahnama* story, in which case one explanation for the unusually stylised tree branches would be that they may allude to dynastic family trees with twisting branches, some that die-out and some that prosper. Echoing the simile from the Isfandiyar episode mentioned above, a verse from the text of *Shahnama* located below the painting of Ardavan's demise states:

And with him the seed of the Ashkanids was debased.	وزو تخمهٔ آرشی خوار شد
	vazu tokhmeh-ye Arashi khar shod

The inclusion of the tree stumps with similarly twisted branches in the 1494 painting of 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting' and the dried-up tree stumps in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' attest to the continuity of artistic language since early fourteenth century.[27] Whether or not the abstract intonations of such visual motifs also transcended the Ilkhanid period, it is fairly clear that after the iconographical innovations in the paintings of *Mantiq*

al-tayr in 1487, depiction of figures with extratextual connotations became more acceptable. 'Bahram Slays the Dragon' (Plate 8), from a 1490 copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami produced in Herat, when in juxtaposition with the painting of the same scene (Plate 9) in the same 1494 manuscript to which 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' belongs, highlights an early introduction of such figures in Persianate manuscript painting subsequent to the 1487 paintings.[28]

Besides having been illustrated in the more naturalistic 'new style', the 1490 'Bahram Slays the Dragon' (Plate 8), conventionally adheres to depicting the narrative subject of Nizami's text from the fourth epic of his pentalogy, the *Haft Paykar* (*Seven Effigies*): out hunting one day, Prince Bahram spots a female onager and after a long chase reaches a cave at the entrance to which a dragon is sleeping. After shooting the dragon, Bahram splits open the creature to discover the young of the onager in its stomach. The onager had led Bahram there to obtain vengeance for the death of its offspring, and to reward him leads him into the cave where Bahram finds vats full of treasure. The artist has presented the dragon backed up against an old, leafless tree in front of the entrance to the cave at the moment when Bahram, on his horse, has let go of his arrow as the onager peers out of the upper left corner. Consistent with tendencies of the discursive culture of late Timurid Herat, which attributed esoteric significance to nearly every real or fictitious event, the story of Bahram's killing of the dragon was received as yet another expression of a Hadith exalted by Sufi poets – and a not-unfamiliar allegory – where the dragon represents our carnal desires, and the 'hidden treasure' is the reward for its slaying, through which a Sufi wayfarer could achieve proximity to God.[29] Even the figure of the onager against the gold of the sky on the hill crest on the left may be understood as being indistinguishable from the ubiquitous mule, whose figurative use in Sufi poetry almost invariably has the same, negative referent, but which could lead to the 'treasure'. In his *Silsilat al-dhahab*, Jami devotes a section to the exposition of the extra Quranic revelation implicating the world as the mirror of Divine attributes through God having told David the prophet that 'I was a hidden treasure and longed to be known'.[30]

In contrast to this, the illustration of the same passage, 'Bahram Slays the Dragon' (Plate 9), painted some four years later, *c.* 1494, has several figures in place of the onager on the upper left side of the composition. In this later painting, the depiction of Bahram mounted on his horse at the moment after

he has released the arrow, and the depiction of the dragon pressed up against the side of the old, leafless tree is virtually identical to the earlier painting, but the depictions above this scene appear to be wholly unrelated: a man holding a spouted vessel riding a mule, next to whom is a figure of a woman on horseback who is playing the harp, and a youth – perhaps the harp player's attendant, with a feathered cap which has partly visible letters implying devotion written on it – with his proverbial finger of wonderment placed on his lip. Considering that the text of the story is explicit about the remoteness of the cave and the dragon, the artists' deliberate depiction of these three figures cannot be accessories or 'reality effects'. The figure of the harp-playing woman among the these three would be immediately recognisable by any educated contemporary as that of Bahram's maiden, Azadeh, as referred to in the *Shahnama*, or Fitna, as she is called in Nizami's version of the story, perhaps a stand-in for Bahram's worldly cravings. The exact mystical understanding of these three figures in the painting depicting Bahram killing the dragon – his carnal desires – is less important than the liberty taken by the artists to deviate from the convention of depicting the narrative subject. Indeed, this new impulse to highlight pictorially the mystical interpretation of a narrated story through a separate series of emblematic figures within a conventionally composed illustration of that narrative had already made a more subtle appearance in the earlier *Khamsa* manuscript containing the conventionally illustrated scene of Bahram and dragon (Plate 8).

The foreground of 'The Old Woman and Sultan Sanjar'[31] from 1490, depicts the oft-illustrated episode from Nizami's *Khamsa* when an old woman berates the Seljuq king for the injustice and cruelty she has suffered under one of his officials.[32] At the top of this painting and as the background to the image of the old woman, Sanjar and his entourage, some hints of an encampment scene are visible from behind the hill, where the tips of a tent and a yurt can be seen next to a shepherd whose legs are also hidden behind the hill. Holding his staff with both hands the shepherd is looking over his flock of sheep and goats, which can be seen below and to the left side of the hill crest. Below these figures, at the centre of the painting stands a saddled mule whose rider has apparently dismounted and is in the process of filling up a vessel with water from a spring that forms a pool exactly at the centre of the composition.

Again, all these figures in the upper half of this painting are unrelated to the illustrated anecdote in the lower half of the painting. In view of the narrative subject in the lower half, the figure of the shepherd watching over his flock and the old leafless tree in the background of the composition may be readily linked to the edifying theme of the text regarding a ruler's responsibility towards his subjects.[33] Nizami's own commentary, following the parable of the old woman with Sultan Sanjar, explicitly chastises rulers for neglecting the injustices suffered by their helpless subjects.[34] In this case a profane understanding of the ethics promoted by the story is not that different from the mystical reading of it. Sadi, whose *Bustan* (*Orchard*) had been illustrated at the same atelier some five years prior, writes of the sultan as the shepherd of the people,[35] and more than once in his writings, including early in his third book of *Silsilat al-dhahab*, Jami compares kings to shepherds and the people to a flock:[36]

We are the flock and he the shepherd	رمه ماییم و او شبان رمه
	rameh mayim o u shaban-e rameh
In our right beginning he is the	در بد و نیک پاسبان همه
protector of all	*dar bad o nik pasban-e hameh*

Considering the political clout of the Naqshbandis in Herat and their principles, which, as discussed in Chapter 1, justified interceding with the politically powerful on behalf of the common people, the idea of a shepherd looking after his flock would have been a felicitous trope.[37]

Within the framework of contemporary Sufi discourse, the image of the saddled mule standing behind the man filling his vessel with water at the centre of the painting, represents our carnal body, which Rumi has likened to a vessel into which the water of the soul is poured, though the contents vary: some bear the water of life, others deadly poison,[38] either way, the vessel is manifest and what is inside it is hidden:

What is that vessel but our bodies,	چیست آن کوزه تن محصور ما
	chist an kuzeh tan-e mahsur-e ma
the water in it, is the salty water of our	اندر او آب حواس شور ما
senses	*andar u ab-e havas-e shur-e ma*
(M.1.2708)	

Writing a few years before the creation of these *Khamsa* illustrations, Jami makes use of the same trope but calls for dispensing with even prized vessels:[39]

Throw from your hand the bowl of	بيفكن ز كف كاسهء زر ناب
pure gold	*biyafkan z-e kaf kaseh-ye zar-e nab*
for the sake of water, make the palm	كف خويش را كاسه كن بهر آب
of your hand a bowl.	*kaf-e khish ra kaseh kon bahr-e ab*

What is exhibited by 'The Old Woman and Sultan Sanjar', 'Bahram Slays the Dragon' and, indeed, 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' – all illustrated within eight years of the innovative 1487 paintings of the *Mantiq al-tayr* – is a new, morally edifying function of manuscript illustration that is pictorial and intertextual and expresses various Sufi concepts and ideals then current in Herat. This new function is achieved through inclusion of emblematic figures that are ancillary to those that conventionally illustrate the narrative subject. In other words, all these late fifteenth-century paintings, besides their formal correspondence – in varying degrees – to the more naturalistic 'new style' of painting, also serve a purpose that transcends any function Persianate manuscript paintings may have had up to that point.

In the case of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' (Plate 6), the presentation of the morally edifying, emblematic figures is more emphatic and definitive than the *Khamsa* paintings that have thus far been discussed, even though the figures in question appear so well in accord with the setting and some earlier descriptions of Nizami's narrative that their presence has been unscrutinised and with one notable exception, their edifying function, unnoticed.[40] Indeed, despite the two sizeable tents and the centrally positioned figure of an old woman at the spinning wheel, perhaps the most noticeable figure in the entire composition, placed as it is above the others on hill crest, is that of the youth playing the reed flute. Nowhere in the text of this entire epic poem is there a reference to any flute players. However, keeping in mind the favoured aesthetic and intellectual pursuits of the elites in Herat and their proclivity towards esotericism, the presence of the figure of a flute player in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', as we will see presently, is a fitting moral emblem.

Often compared with *Romeo and Juliet*, Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* is the story of a semi-historical Arab poet, Qays, better known as Majnun

(the possessed or 'the mad one'), and the tragic consequences of his love for Layla, who is from another clan. Layla, who reciprocates the boy's love, has no choice except to marry someone else, and Majnun, a vagabond, spends the rest of his days longing for his beloved.[41] Various versions of this legend had existed for centuries, but the accounts were fleshed out and versified by Nizami as a romance of more than 4,000 couplets in 1188, and, as such, became the third of what was to become a quintet of long-narrative poems known as the 'Five Treasures' or the *Khamsa* (Quintet, or pentalogy) of Nizami of Ganja.[42] Increasingly, the reading of Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* as an edifying allegory of divine love became more common, especially among those inclined towards the 'school of love'. Writers alluded to the legend proverbially and Sufi poets composed their own version of the romance as an allegory in which Majnun's circumstances represent the arduous path faced by any seeker of beatific vision, pursuing the ultimate goal of Union with the Beloved.[43] By the time 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' was painted in Herat, the story of the ill-starred lovers had become one of the most popular and enduring vehicles for conveying the arduousness of the Sufi path and the unrelenting resoluteness required of those pursuing it.[44]

Indeed, the popularity of Sufism in the fifteenth century and the resulting increase in illustrations of texts with Sufi themes in the last decades of the century and beyond helped to transform the romance of *Layla and Majnun* into one of the most illustrated works in the history of Islamic art.[45] Of all those who wrote their own version of the romance of Layla and Majnun, none was more prominent – in matters esoteric – to the artists active in Herat than their own contemporary Naqshbandi Sufi and poet, Abd al-Rahman Jami.[46] Jami's overtly allegorical romance of *Layla and Majnun* was written in 1484 as a literary 'response' to versions written by Nizami and Amir Khusrow Dihlawi.[47] But among Jami's many writings on mystical Islam and Sufi practice, the most relevant to the iconography of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' is not his own overt allegory of the romance, but rather his exegesis of the famous exordium to Rumi's spiritual *Mathnawi*, commonly known as the 'The Song of the Reed':[48]

Now listen to this reed flute's deep lament	بشنو از نی چون حکایت می کند
	Beshno az ney chon hekayat mikonad

About the heartache being apart has meant:	از جدایی ها شکایت می کند
	az joda-iha shekayat mikonad
'Since from the reed-bed they uprooted me	کز نیستان تا مرا ببریده اند
	kaz neyestan ta mara bebridehand
My song's expressed each human's agony'	از نفیرم مرد و زن نالیده اند
	az nafiram mard o zan nalidehand

The reed flute, made from the slender-leaved plant that grows in marshy areas, and perhaps the most famous literary trope in Persian Sufi verse, provided Rumi with a compelling metaphor for the human soul, which can 'utter words only when touched by the lips of the beloved, and moved by the breath of the spiritual master'.[49] Jami himself alludes to this in his *Silsilat al-dhahab*,[50] when he states, 'a hollow reed is best' (*ney-i khali beh ast*). The same word (نی or ناى; *ney*) may also refer to the reed pen, with which, for instance, the words of God are written, as well as to sugarcane, which at times refers to the sweetness of union with the Beloved. All this provided Rumi with many possibilities for word play in his writings.[51] Whether the use of a reed flute was initiated by Rumi's dictum or not, the instrument appears to have been in use already at mystical concerts and dance gatherings of Sufis (*sama*) in the thirteenth century, when a certain Muhammad Tus defends their use against the objections of the orthodox clerics.[52] The intertextuality of medieval writing, the strong adherence to Sufi conventions, topoi and precedents notwithstanding, Jami's reverence for Rumi as a poet and a saint must have come into play when, in the 1470s, he started the second book of his own didactic *Chains of Gold* (*Silsilat al-dhahab*) by echoing Rumi's 'Song of the Reed':[53]

Now listen, o ears, to the tale of love	بشنو ای گوش بر فسانهء عشق
	Beshno ey gush bar fasaneh-ye eshq
the song that's coming from the lament of the reed pen.	از صریر قلم ترانهء عشق
	az sarir-e qalam taraneh-ye eshq
Now the pen, like the reed flute's lament,	قلم اینک چو نی به لحن صریر
	qalam inak cho ney beh lahn-e sarir
recites the tale of love.	قصهء عشق میکند تقریر
	qeseh-ye eshq mikonad taqrir

Jami, through playing with both meanings of the word for 'reed', compares the tale of love that is going to be written by his pen with the 'tune' of the sad song, namely, the lament of the reed flute, which according to Rumi's precedent, complains of the separation from the (divine) Beloved. This allusion to Rumi's poetry, or one might say, this emulation of Rumi's verses, is an example of contemporary literary tastes and one criterion by which poetic skill was measured: imitation of an existing verse, passage or poem in point of style with a view to outdoing a predecessor. In doing so, the poet simultaneously acknowledges a debt of gratitude to an old master and, in case of success, promotes his own stature.[54]

Despite various possible differences in the finer points of their theosophical understanding, for the purposes of detecting Sufi connotations in iconography of Persianate manuscript illustrations, Rumi's understanding of Sufism is fairly indistinguishable from Jami's, insofar as they both believed knowledge of God may be achieved through direct intuition and spiritual ecstasy.[55] Jami's short commentary on the 'spiritual meaning' of Rumi's exordium evinces the persistent relevance of the 'song of the reed' in the learned discourse of the late fifteenth century.[56] Written in a mix of prose and verse, possibly at Navai's request, Jami's commentary elucidates the famous couplets and proclaims the reed as an 'entirely appropriate' metaphor for those who would return to the original state of non-being. For Jami, the reed flute is a metaphor for those on the path to Sufism.[57]

Elsewhere, Jami also elaborates on the key concept of the Perfect Man:[58] God manifests Himself to the heart of the Perfect Man, who is God's vicegerent (*khalifah*), and remains in existence in the phenomenal world and receives this effusion (*fayz*) from God.[59] In this sense, a perfect Sufi saint – or, for that matter, the Shia imam – is a Perfect Man, and the visible world and all creatures in it are like the body, and the Perfect Man – God's vicegerent – is like the spirit that governs that body.[60] Jami's explication of Rumi's metaphoric use of the word 'reed' and the 'reed flute', through an anecdote about Shaykh Mahneh, the Sufi saint who was also the subject in one of the 1487 paintings discussed previously (Plate 5), highlights the intertextuality of literature and painting – two contiguous forms of cultural expression. A Perfect Man, such as Shaykh Mahneh, Jami explains, apprehends the 'effusions' from God and is able to pass them on to his followers with no need to

speak or hear language as we know.[61] As Jami's commentary on Rumi's opening lines demonstrate, the two poets' shared theosophic understanding – ever so obliquely – links the figure of the flute player to the death of the Lover (Majnun) on the gravestone of the Beloved (Layla):[62]

Who is the reed flute? The one who at every breath says,	کیست نی آن کس که گوید دمبدم *kist ney an kas keh guyad dambedam*
I am but a wave (or a reed) in the ocean of pre-eternity	من نیم جز موج دریای قدم *man niyam joz moj-e darya-ye qadam*
Like the reed, I have become empty of my own existence,	از وجود خود چو نی گشتم تهی *az vojud-e khod cho ney gashtam tohi*
I am not aware, other than of God	نیست از غیر خدایم آگهی *nist az gheyr-e khodayam agahi*

We do not know if the artists at the workshop in Herat had first-hand knowledge of Jami's commentary on Rumi's 'reed flute', but considering the contemporary discourse and local practices of the literati and a court culture immersed in poetic colloquy and Sufi dogma, it was perhaps only a matter of time before a figure playing the reed flute was going to make its appearance among the emblematic depictions that however haphazardly began to populate manuscript paintings that illustrated Sufi narratives.[63]

A number of accounts related by the sixteenth-century chronicler Vasifi demonstrate, often implicitly, the interconnectedness of various court circles and the collaborative nature of patronage, which went beyond the purview of the court.[64] Among the names of those present at the gatherings of literary circles, the historian Vasifi mentions Jami as well as many other poets, artists and artisans, especially musicians and calligraphers.[65] His memoirs also attest to the sustained proximity and interaction within and between various groups of poets, artists and noblemen:

One day a group of us poets and learned men were sitting together at the shop of Mulla Zadeh the bookbinder in the perfume-makers' bazar in Samarqand and, like the pages of a book [we] were bound together by the glue of agreement, engaging in improvisations and exchange of verses …

Vasifi's accounts even suggest that Rumi's verse may have reached a platitudinous status:

One day a group of learned men of Tashkent had gathered and were read-
ing the verses from the *Mathnawi* of his holiness Mowlawi [Rumi]. Sheikh
Baqi stated that it is possible to write thousands of verses as preposterous as
these [by Rumi] every day. Those present at the gathering [*majlis*] all turned
indignant and since a copy of [Rumi's] *Mathnawi* was at hand, we decided
to open it randomly to what would turn up from the drunk-making-wine
of Rumi's verse as the fortune of Sheikh Baqi. And when we opened the
book it happened to fall on the page with the tale of a reed-flute player who,
as he put the reed-flute to his mouth to play, broke wind from his other
end. So he placed the tip of the reed-flute under his seat and said, if you can
play it better …

An instance of intermingling between court painters and poets recounted
by Vasifi is Husayn Bayqara's annual practice of 'buying' the beard of a
nobleman and ordering the painters to paint it 'like the feathers of a pea-
cock' and then the poets to compose 'strange' verses and songs about it.[66]
Whether it was the 'constant' presence of painters at court,[67] the presence
of calligraphers[68] and guilders at literary gatherings,[69] Navai's reporting to
Jami of young satirical talent,[70] or his daily visits ('after the midday prayers')
with Husayn Bayqara,[71] contemporary accounts reveal many circumstantial
details that attest to the dominance of poetry and the interconnectedness of
individuals irrespective of profession or rank.[72]

The pastoral scene of an encampment as the backdrop to the site of
Majnun's death, and the congruency of the figures of the shepherd, his flock
and the flute player breathing into his reed accompanying the love story of
two ill-starred youths make for suitable 'details' without precluding the more
emphatic, edifying function of these figures. In fact, it is almost as though the
viewer has a choice: is the figure of Majnun on Layla's tomb in the lower half
of the painting the 'detail' of the Sufi narrative illustrated pictorially above,
or is the reverse the case?

Noting all this, if we now consider the painting 'Majnun on Layla's
Tomb' with Rumi's 'Song of the Reed' in mind, with the exhortation 'listen
to this reed-flute's deep lament' depicted as it is above the scene of Majnun's
death, it would seem a plausible mystical caption of sorts for the painting as a
whole. Indeed, the figure of the flute player in the upper right, may now seem

a great deal less cryptic than the tree stump from the Ilkhanid *Shahnama* discussed above. As the emblematic figures proliferate, the trend becomes as conventional as the depiction of shadowless night scenes, or imparting omniscience to scenes where a figure in the bottom of a well, for example, is made as visible as those standing outside on the ground.[73] In its lower half, 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' exhibits an analogue, or emblem of the union of the lover (Majnun) with the Beloved (Layla) – in death. Sufi poets' oft-expressed view that death and annihilation are a return or reunion with our primordial origin is thus 'embellished' in a manner evocative of *talmih* in the literary arts: subsumed references to well-known stories.[74] The flute player, one might say, is both a figurative and a figural allusion.

Jami's literary authority, defined substantially by his adherence to precedents and typologies, may be exemplified by his own version of *Layla and Majnun,* composed in 1484 in emulation of Nizami's twelfth-century romance, as well as a later imitation of it, *Majnun wa layli* by Amir Khusrow of Delhi, whose own quintet (*Khamsa*) was completed by 1302.[75] Jami's *Layla and Majnun* is very much an 'exegetical allegory', where the authorial voice, as was common in medieval literature, interrupts the narrative to discuss or emphasise the mystical tenor, or any specific moral 'lesson' that is to be drawn from it.[76] But Jami's text as a whole betrays more interest in the Sufi tenor of the tale than the tragic love story of two youths.[77]

Elsewhere, Jami makes it clear that for him Nizami's romance was primarily, if not solely, a Sufi allegory. Early in his own *Layla and Majnun,* Jami declares that his version is not an attempt at 'matching' works of Nizami and Amir Khusrow of Delhi.[78] As Nizami's preamble had made clear, his versifying and retelling of the story of Layla and Majnun was not intended to be a Sufi allegory. He follows the purported legend about lovers from two Bedouin Arab tribes (*qabila*)[79] in which Layla dies and then Majnun, grief stricken, dies on her grave a short while later; something that is faithfully rendered in the foreground of our 1494 painting.[80] The sequence in Amir Khusrow's version of the story is the same.[81] In Jami's overtly didactic version, however, it is Majnun who dies first. As Jami himself writes elsewhere, 'Layla is nothing but a mirror on which the Absolute Majesty is reflected.' And for the 'lover' to unite with this Beloved, he must overcome many 'veils made of both light and darkness', and only then would the lover achieve his

ultimate goal and be annihilated in the Beloved.[82] This annihilation is not material, rather it involves the uprooting of all human qualities and allowing the divine essence, which each man possesses in his heart, to emerge.[83]

In Nizami's *Layla and Majnun*, narrative interjections mostly implicate fate, the material world and earthly, romantic love.[84] The text that appears on the upper corner of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' is not dissimilar to several other passages where Nizami interrupts the narrative to moralise, or to chastise and forewarn the reader/listener.[85] The didacticism in Nizami's text stems from wisdom literature, a genre suffused with pragmatic advice, mundane morality and aphoristic truths, and from the 'mirror' genre.[86] It is precisely the strength of this earlier literary tradition, the allegories of kingship and justice that facilitated Sufi poetry's ascendancy to the point that mystical convictions supplanted virtually all earlier tenors in Persian poetry.

Unlike Nizami, who appears to have used his patron's request for versifying an obscure love story as an opportunity to expound noble virtues and justice, Jami claims to have been propelled into writing *Layla and Majnun* by his need or obligation to explicate and disseminate further his convictions about Sufism as a genuine, perhaps even the truest, path to salvation. However, Jami also clearly relishes another opportunity to exhibit his literary prowess.[87] To say that we can never know precisely how Jami's contemporaries received and interpreted his text is not to say that Jami's authorial intention (*gharaz* / غرض) – an inescapable dimension of any text – could have been wholly opaque to his contemporaries.[88] In our task of deciphering the significance of emblematic figure-types in illustrations of Sufi texts produced in late fifteenth-century Herat, it would be ahistorical not to privilege Jami's authorial intention over the semantic autonomy of his texts. Both the poet and his readers, including the artists who were his contemporaries, were attempting to convey the same (and sole) truth, which, they ultimately believed, was best achieved through the path of a Sufi.[89] A good measure of this is to be found in Jami's reference to water at the opening of his *Layla and Majnun*, where he declares his authorial intention directly even as he, perhaps unwittingly, helps to shed light on the significance of one of the most ubiquitous features of settings in Persian manuscript painting: water.

As we have seen in the case of the Ilkhanid paintings from the 1330s, the addition of ancillary details in manuscript illustrations with literal or indirect

referents predates the paintings produced at Herat. Besides images of distinguished trees (see Chapter 2),[90] the other noteworthy allusive feature within the *mise-en-scène* of Persianate paintings has been water.[91] As we can see in the composition of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', the proximity of Layla's grave to the stream depicted diagonally in the lower right corner of the painting may be our first indication that the stream or, more likely, the water flowing in it, is more significant than mere embellishment. Indeed, why would Layla be buried so close to the water?

Whether it is a running brook, a mountain spring, a courtyard fountain or simply an indistinct patch of oxidised silver on the surface of the painting, water is the element that repeatedly appears in Persianate manuscripts since the fourteenth-century Jalayirid school – to which the Timurid style of painting is most obviously linked.[92] Such depictions of water may well reflect the artistic urge to conform pictorially to the repeated references to water in Sufi discourse. Besides recurrence of sacred testimonials to water as a cleanser and giver of life,[93] the seemingly endless use of imagery associated with water in Sufi poetry may be exemplified by the couplet from Rumi, where he likens water to the life-giving love of the Beloved:

Once again the Water of life flowed through my stream,	باز آمد آب جان در جوی ما
	baz amad ab-e jan dar juy-e ma
once again came our King into our street.	باز آمد شاه ما در کوی ما
(M6.940)	*baz amad shah-e ma dar kuy-e ma*

In the prelude to his *Layla and Majnun*, Jami provides perhaps one of the best references for a contextual understanding of both water as a trope in Sufi poetry and its pictorial presence in so many manuscript illustrations since the Jalayirid period. In the customary opening section 'reasons for composition of this book', Jami declares that after having recently written his allegorical romance, *Yusuf and Zulaykha* (*Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*), the bird of his heart longed to sing a tune from elsewhere and settled on Majnun. Jami acknowledges that as a story, the legend of Majnun's love already has two monumental manifestations in the world of letters, one by that 'pourer of treasure' from Ganja (in the Caucasus) and the other by a 'sugar-pouring parrot' from India – referring to Nizami and Amir Khusrow, respectively.[94]

At first, Jami adds modestly that he is aware that he could only reach the dust of the road the two previous masters had travelled, but then suddenly realises his own recounting of the story of Layla and Majnun does not have to settle merely for dust:[95]

No, no I am drowned in the waves of the Red Sea,	نی نی غرقم به موج قلزم
	ni ni gharqam beh moj-e qolzom
why should I settle for dust?	از خاک چرا کنم تیمم
	az khak chera konam tayamom
I will seek water from the spring of 'ambition'	از چشمهء همت آب جویم
	az cheshmeh-ye hemat ab juyam
and wash that dust from my face.	وز روی خود آن غبار شویم
	vaz ruy-e khod an ghobar shuyam

The waves and the Red Sea are allusions to Sufism's sea of Divine Unity.[96] With the water of the spring of 'high ambition' or 'spiritual power' (*himma*) he will wash from his face the dust that has settled on it from the road travelled by Nizami and Amir Khusrow. He declares his preference for drinking by cupping his own hand rather than drinking out of a golden bowl – and writes of the project as though of a quest or a mission of discovery. Unlike his 'introduction' to his collected septet under the title of *Haft awrang* (*The Seven Thrones*), it appears that Jami is writing these lines before he has actually written the work, and not, as it is common, after its completion:

There is no parsimony in the depths of Grace	در لجهء فیض نیست امساک
	dar lajeh-ye fayz nist emsak
but an unaware mind suffers from a drought.	لیکن قحط است خاطر پاک
	likan qaht ast khater-e pak
The mouth of the spring is blocked by a boulder.	بسته ست دهان چشمه را سنگ
	bastast dahan-e cheshmeh ra sang
For water too makes its bubbling sounds,	چون آب کند به جوشش آهنگ
	chon ab konad beh joshesh ahang
I will remove the boulder from its source	سرچشمه کنم ز سنگ خالی
	sar cheshmeh konam ze sang khali
so that water can fill up all around.	تا سر کشد آب بر حوالی
	ta sar keshad ab bar havali

I will run the water in ditches to all directions,	هر سو جویی ز آب رانم *har su juyee ze ab ranam*
both I will drink and will make others drink (245–8)	هم خود خورم آب و هم خورانم *ham khod khoram ab o ham khoranam*

Jami wants or is hoping that writing this allegory – of the Sufi wayfarer going through the stations until his achieves union with God – will allow him to focus and prevent his own mind from becoming idle. He states explicitly that he will drink from the spring of divine grace (فیض / *fayz or faidh*) and will also make others drink.[97] Although it was an inherited convention, the insistent tendency of Herati artists to depict water in so many of their paintings – as running streams, springs, even pools for indoor settings with fishes and ducks – suggests the relevance of Jami's exhortation to drink from the spring of divine grace and its resonance among painters.

Intended as an allegory of the Truth (of the Sufi way), and notwithstanding the gratification of reading finely composed verses, the appeal of Jami's version of Majnun's story – as we may judge, for example, by its climax, which, crucially, occurs when a bird builds a nest on Majnun's head – is plausible, or even comprehensible, only from a Sufi perspective. This passage is climactic only if we understand it in terms of various stages on the path to union with the Godhead. Jami's title for the section that contains this crescendo includes the word bewilderment (*hayrat*), which is also the last stage on the Sufi path before the ultimate Union.[98] Jami's heading is:[99]

> Majnun meets Layla in one of the paths and while waiting for her return, standing in the Station of Bewilderment so that a bird builds a nest on his head.

Although the two will see each other again on Layla's return trip, as far as it concerns Majnun their meeting in 'one of the paths' is his last encounter with Layla. He stands there waiting, so devoted and so motionless that birds, thinking him a tree, nestle on his head (line 3324). When Layla finally does return and finds Majnun still waiting as before, he does not recognise her and tells her to go away. The reason, as becomes clear after several verses, is that the love Majnun feels for Layla is so intense that it leaves him no mind, no

love, no attention for anything besides, including the object of that intense love herself, Layla (3345–3355). Layla, for her part – it is explicitly stated – 'understood for certain what his condition was' (3357). After some verses of lament Layla leaves, resuming her trip (3376), and Majnun resumes wandering the wilderness with wild beasts as his companions (3379).

It is the very next passage that is pertinent to the figure of the spinner and her spinning wheel in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb'. Jami does not relay Majnun's death; instead, he introduces an altogether new character after the fashion of such minor actors in the Layla and Majnun cycle: a Bedouin poet and a kind soul from the 'Arab desert' (3381), who had heard the legends about Majnun and his undying love. In his eagerness to meet the famed lover, he rides to Majnun's clan to enquire after his whereabouts (3386), and is told of Majnun's vagabond state. After searching the wilderness 'up and down' (3393) he suddenly notices a herd of deer and Majnun, as though a shepherd, in their midst (3394). The Bedouin notes Majnun's sorry state (3400) and bends forward in a bow as he greets him, which causes the herd of wild beasts to charge in panic (3401). Majnun reacts by picking up stones to throw at him, castigating him for making his companions flee, and warns the Bedouin to turn back and leave him alone (3405) for:

you are chained to your carnal soul and I have escaped,	تو بند به نفس و من رهیده *to band beh nafs o man rahideh*
you've been tamed by your nature and I have taken flight (3406)	تو رام به طبع و من رمیده *to ram beh tab` o man ramideh*

Majnun does not engage in conversation with the Bedouin (3408). Instead, he starts chanting a joyful love song (*nasib*) that recounts a portion of his life story (3409). By hearing Majnun's song, the Bedouin becomes so joyous that he decides not to leave Majnun's side (3410). Majnun's songs and the Bedouin's attention to them are mixed like sugar and milk. The omniscient narrator describes how Majnun 'poured' verses and songs on his listener like sugar (3411). The Bedouin listened to Majnun's singing and:[100]

3414 whatever pearl reached his ears	هر در که به گوش می رسیدش *har dor keh beh gush mi residash*

3414b	he would string it into his memory	در **رشته‌ء** حفظ می کشیدش
		dar reshteh-ye hefz mi keshidash
3415	his work was this from day to night	کارش همه روز تا شب این بود
		karash hameh ruz ta shab in bud
3415b	his chanting every night was continuously the same	**وردش** همه شب مرتب این بود
		verdash hameh shab moratab in bud
3416	Whatever he captured from him during the day	روز آنچه زوی شکار می کرد
		ruz ancheh ze vey shekar mikard
3416b	at night he would strengthen its foundation	پایش به شب استوار می کرد
		payash beh shab ostovar mi kard
3417	when one pulls words into a string during the day,	حرفی که کشند روز در **سلک**
		harfi keh keshand ruz dar selk
3417b	repeating it at night will make it one's own property.	تکرار شبش همی کند ملک
		tekrar-e shabash hami konad melk

The Bedouin stays with Majnun for three or four days, thus occupied (3416). After this, Majnun is abandoned by both the Bedouin and the narrator. Jami does not tell us about Majnun, but rather we follow the Bedouin as he returns after some time (*yekchand*), during which he had kept to his own 'work' (*kar o bar*), when it occurs to him on a 'whim' (*hava*) to visit Majnun again (3424–3425). Although Jami scarcely has anything to say about this new actor, still the reader is dragged away from Majnun on the verge of death in order to reveal little that seems of interest. When, after the lapse of 'two or more weeks' (2427) we encounter Majnun, he has already died.

By restricting the narratival 'field' and focalising away from Majnun, Jami is implicitly affirming the indescribability of the moment (perhaps still unfathomable to him) of annihilation, death and theosis. The Bedouin discovers Majnun, as though asleep, embracing a gazelle whose white neck and bright eyes resemble Layla's (3436), but soon he realises that their sleep is that of death (3437). That the two have died *together* is stressed again after a few verses: Majnun and the gazelle have died together, one embracing the other, and they will be buried together (3497). It is scarcely possible to be less subtle, or more allusive: 'gazelle' as a stand-in for the 'beloved' dates back to pre-Islamic poetry and had been used by Sufi poets for centuries.[101] After some ninety couplets, Jami finally interrupts the narrative by inserting an

exegesis of Majnun's death – what he now reveals to have been an allegory. The long title of the section reads:[102]

> On expounding the 'State' of Majnun who had moved from the [merely earthly] figurative manifestation [of the Beloved] to the Meaning of the Truth. He had drunk the Wine of Meaning from the Cup of Manifestation.

The point that may be obscured by all this is that despite the apparent differences with Nizami's romance, the Bedouin scene in Jami's text is the last time that the reader/listener encounters Majnun alive, and in Sufi terms it is equivalent to the moment in Nizami's story illustrated by 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb'. The moment in the narrative depicted by the Herati artists is the scene shortly before Majnun's death, which, in Jami's version of the story, occurs when Majnun sings and chants his 'sweet songs' to the Bedouin. This is the point of convergence between the two texts – read allegorically – where the artists in Herat used the tenor of the text from another work (Jami's) to illustrate the text for which they had been commissioned (Nizami's).[103] Without suggesting a one-to-one correspondence between text and image, one might even note that in the painting the woman at the spinning wheel is pictured doing something analogous to what the Bedouin is doing in Jami's version of the story: according to the text, the Bedouin is listening to Majnun's chants and as he receives each word he threads it into his memory (3414b above). And as we have the image, a woman is depicted as she 'pulls' wool or some other material 'into a string' (3417). The content that is 'imported' into the composition that illustrates Nizami's description of Majnun's death is taken from the tenor of Jami's allegory and it may well have been triggered by Nizami's fateful verses that appear in the same page. However, as far as the seeker on the path to Sufism is concerned, the passage being depicted in Nizami's manuscript is the stage of annihilation on the path of Sufism, the stage of union with the Beloved. In this sense, it matters little who has versified which detail of the allegory: Majnun's death as rendered by Nizami is the same stage – or station – on the path to Sufism as conveyed by the passage from Jami's narrative quoted above (lines 3414–3417).

One word in Jami's version of Majnun's final 'scene' may be instructive in further contextualising the iconography in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' and relating it more specifically to the language used by Jami. The word is '*verd*'

(ورد – see line 3415b, above), which is translatable as incantation, prayer, recited prayer, prayer by rote, habitual phrase, the saying of one's beads – in other words, what Sufis would call *zekr* or *dhikr* (ذکر). The 'string' which in Jami's text of *Layla and Majnun* is likened to one's memory (*reshteh-ye hefz* – see line 3414b, above) is one of the clues as to why the painters of Herat may have chosen to depict a spinner and a spinning-wheel in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb'. Another clue is the word '*selk*' (سلک), translatable as rope, thread or string, which is from the Arabic root '*salaka*', or to follow, travel, proceed and even to thread a needle, and from which other words like '*saalek*' (سالک), the 'seeker', or the 'wayfarer', the person, usually a novice, in his '*soluk*' (سلوک), or the spiritual journey, or the 'wandering' through different 'stations' on the path to Sufism.[104] Jami, in his short piece *Risala dar moraqiba wa adab-i zekr* (published in the twentieth century under the title, *Risaleh-ye sar rishta* (*Essay on the Beginning of the Thread*) describes the practice of meditation, or *zekr* (*dhikr*), explaining that the ways to *vusul* (طریق وصول), that is, 'to arrive' or 'to be united' with God, are three: first is *zekr*, or the meditation or chanting of (usually) the profession of faith (*la ilaha illa Allah*), rather constantly, but in a way that someone next to you cannot hear.[105] The second method or stage is referred to as *moraqebeh* (مراقبه), or vigilance, where the seeker *thinks* the name of God without resorting to language, 'Arabic, Hebrew, or Persian'. This requires intense concentration. The third method is through the relationship of the seeker with his '*pir*' (literally old [man], spiritual guide, sheikh or *murshid*). This commentary on *zekr* begins with verses (four couplets) which again liken, even equate, the practice to a string (*silk*):[106]

Grasp in your palm, o brother, the tip of the string of salvation	سر رشتهٴ دولت ای برادر به کف آر *sar reshteh-ye dolat ey baradar beh kaf ar*

Jami had used the same concept of 'string' earlier, during the reign of the previous ruler of Herat, Abu Said, when insisting that the seeker on the Path must keep in conversation with a master.[107] A common expression for writing or speaking too long as a 'long string' is extended by Jami in his *Silsilat al-dhahab*, where 'returning to the beginning of the string' means going back to the original topic, before the digression:[108]

Since the string of words has gotten long	چون سخن را کشید رشته دراز
	chon sokhan ra keshid reshteh deraz
one must come back to the beginning of the string,	به سر رشته باید آمد باز
	beh sar-e reshteh bayad amad baz
the beginning of the string was recollection of the uncouth,	بود سر رشته ذکر بی ادبان
	bud sar-e reshteh zekr-e biadaban
in order to teach those who seek	از پی عبرت ادب طلبان
	az pey-e ebrat-e adab talaban

In his *The Gift of the Liberated* (*Tuhfat al-ahrar*), completed in 1481, as well as his *Rosary of the Pious* (*Subhat al-abrar*), completed the following year, Jami routinely uses the term for string or thread (*rasan* or *reshteh*), and nearly always does so as an allusion to remembrance of God. At the opening of his *Rosary of the Pious*, for instance, in the conventional introductory passage devoted to 'Reasons for composing this work', which he is apparently writing after having already completed the work, as prologues often are, Jami reveals that the content of the book came to him during his nightly meditations. One by one, Jami explains, he strung and tied together the 'inspirations' that came to him, forming a rosary:[109]

Its circular string had faith at its centre	سلک آن دایرهٔ مرکز دین
	selk-e an dayereh-ye markaz-e din
the string formed the wick of the candle in the night of certainty.	رشتهٔ شمع شبستان یقین
	reshteh-ye sham-e shabestan-e yaqin

In the same book, Jami laments the fate of the twelfth-century jurist-consult Ayn Qudat Hamadani for heresy, who was executed, and warns other 'seekers' not to lose the tip of the 'string' that guides them or they too, like Ayn Qudat, will be lost.[110] Jami's own understanding of spiritual ecstasy, revealed in an autobiographical passage of his *Gift of the Liberated*, came about because, as he writes, his 'string' was freed (untied) from any obligation or care (*reshteh-ye man az gereh-e qeyd rast*).[111]

The use of words denoting strings or threads made of silk (cognate of the word *selk*) or other material were not at all new in Persian poetry. They most often appeared figuratively in discourses on poetry itself, where to versify language is routinely likened to stringing pearls – or words – which the poet

has first to 'pierce'. Jami himself does this when praising the poet Anwari's panegyrics to the Seljuq king, Sanjar, noting that the poet's fame has out-lasted that of his patron, the king. He likens Anwari's verse to pearls that have remained even though the Seljuqs are extinct:[112]

| and that pearl did not separate from | وان در از رشتهء بقا نگسیخت |
| the string of existence | va an dor az reshteh-ye baqa nagosikht |

As suggested above, the text of Nizami's *Layla and Majnun*, written some three centuries earlier, employs similar tropes, including a memorable reference to spinning and spindles specifically. In a section titled, 'On the state of Layla', Majnun's beloved, who was left with no one to talk to, Layla pours out her heart and reveals her secret love for Majnun to her own 'shadow'. Nizami's text links her crying to spinning – a figure of speech usually associated with women's singing, not crying:[113]

The song of a female singer is the cry	خنیاگر زن صریر دوک است
of the spinning wheel,	khonyagar-e zan sarir-e duk ast
it is an arrow from the quiver of kings;	تیر آلت جعبهء ملوک است
	tir alat-e jabeh-ye muluk ast
she has thrown down the double-	او دوک دوسر فکنده از چنگ
headed spindle from her grip	u duk-e dosar fekandeh az chang
has taken up the music of the single	برداشته تیر یکسر آهنگ
headed arrow.	bardashteh tir-e yeksar ahang

Layla's cry, like a pointed spear, could pierce any and all hearts. The implication being that this is unlike the usual singing of women which sounds like the drone of the double-headed spool (with which women must often have been occupied). Later when Layla, by now married, has a tryst with Majnun in a palm grove – chastely, only to listen to him sing – there is another figurative use of 'string'. Alluding to the concept of spinning, Nizami describes how two lovers might become one as a string that has been spun from many strands. Majnun sings:[114]

I will pull you into me, for a string is	در خود کشمت که رشته یکتاست
but one	dar khod keshamat keh reshteh yektast
so that these two become one and	تا این دو عدد شود یکی راست
straight	ta in do adad shavad yeki rast

There are too many examples in Persian poetry of the figurative use of words denoting strings and spinning, but the point here is that, despite using words like strings, threads, spindles and spinning in constructing verbal imagery with a variety of referents, poets before Jami seem not to have used any such trope to allude to the remembrance of God or, to be exact, to *zekr*.

This recalls the discussion of *zekr* in Chapter 3, when action of sawing of a tree branch was a deliberate allusion to the vocal *zekr* practised by some members of the Naqshbandi. Indeed, these innovative pictorial references to sawing and spinning, which continue in manuscript illustrations, and which obliquely refer to the practice of *zekr* (remembrance of God), may well be related to the contemporary debates about the appropriateness of vocal verses the silent *zekr*.[115] As mentioned before, Jami's exposition of the issue in his *Silsilat al-dhahab* promotes both silent and vocal *zekr* as long as they are genuine.[116]

The idea of *zekr*, chanting or repeating to oneself various invocations, is as old as Sufism, but the practice was by no means always associated with strings or spinning. The endless, uninterrupted repetition of the Divine names or of the profession of faith, which is held to resemble the act of spinning, is a rhetorical development that must have occurred subsequent to the late fifteenth century. Jami does make rhetorical use of 'threads' or 'spindles', some of which even intimate the idea of spinning – like when he advises the wayfarer to grasp 'the string of salvation' – and Nizami uses the trope to 'pull' the lovers and the Beloved into one thread. But the rhetorical use of the idea that 'just as the thread becomes finer and more regular by constant spinning, so the human heart is refined by constant *zekr*', does not seem to predate the image in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb'.[117] Annemarie Schimmel has observed that the use of 'spinning' (wool or silk) became a popular metaphor for remembrance of God through repetition of words, especially among the later Indo-Muslim poets who 'compared the *zekr*, the recollection of the Divine Names, to the movement and sound of spinning by which the heart becomes soft like the most valuable yarn'.[118] 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' may represent one of the earliest depictions – in word or image – of the concept or figure of 'spinner' or 'spinning' as a metaphor that signifies 'remembrance of God' – an imaginary ascription that is not reducible to simile and in Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani's understanding is based on a broader analogy between

two sets of elements – a *tamthil*.[119] Although the verbal imagery used by Sufi writers had incrementally brought the idea of *zekr* and spinning into a comparative relationship through similes and analogies, the linking of the two concepts remained mostly implicit. But in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' we see the artists in Herat finally making explicit the simultaneous understanding of spinning as *zekr* by their emphatic visualisation of it. Henceforth, 'remembering God' is the tenor of 'spinning' and the two will involve one another. The figural image of a 'spinner at a spinning-wheel' as depicted in this painting vaulted the gap between the two linguistic constructs, creating a fixed, veritable metaphor.

Contrary to the usual pattern, where it is the poetic imagery that gives rise to the forms and the iconography of manuscript paintings, in the case of the spinner, it is the painting that will supply the imagery to the poets. The pictorial conceptualisation of Sufi meditation (*zekr*) as 'spinning thread' in manuscript illustrations preceded its rhetorical dissemination in the so-called Indian style of poetry.[120] Although Schimmel has acknowledged that 'spinning' became a popular trope in the poetry of Muslim India, to my knowledge no one has elaborated on its possible origins, which may well have been late fifteenth-century Herat, and possibly the very manuscript painting that is under scrutiny here.[121]

Another trope that *was* used to intimate *zekr* well before Jami's time was milk. In *The Book of the Perfect Man* (*Kitab al-insan al-kamil*), another populariser of Ibn Arabi's teachings, the thirteenth-century Sufi Aziz al-Din Nasafi, writes of *zekr* and enumerates four levels of performing it, likening it to milk for infants:[122]

> Know that *zekr* for the Seeker is like milk for any infant and the Seeker
> must have received *zekr* from his Sheikh through inspiration.

Other than alluding to *zekr*, milk even more commonly represented spiritual nourishment, an implication that extended to those who produced it – the figure of the mother (human or animal) – as well as those who consumed it and were nourished by it – a suckling – or simply enjoyed it, especially when mixed with sugar, as when Jami writes of Majnun's verses and songs cited in the passage above.[123] Rhetorically Rumi has exalted 'milk' from the 'teat of Grace', and suggested that faith and belief must come forth like milk from

the 'soul's teat'.[124] A couplet by him even combines the three Sufi tropes of 'spinning', 'spindle' and 'cow' in a single ensemble. What is also noteworthy here is the animal Rumi specifies: it is explicitly a 'black and white' cow (bicoloured Holstein or Hereford; '*pis*' in this case, but '*ablaq*' elsewhere):[125]

At this time secrets are like a black and white cow	اين زمان سرها مثال گاو پيس
	in zaman serha mesal-e gav-e pis
the spindle of speech of nations spins a hundred-coloured strings	دوک نطق اندر ملل صد رنگ ريس
(M6.1868)	*duk-e notq andar melal sad rang ris*

Demonstrating how labyrinthine the verbal imagery of Sufi poetry can get, the (divine) 'secrets' are here overtly 'likened' to a bicolour cow, whereas the notion that 'speech' is produced 'spindle-like' is implicit and assumed. The equation of the hundred different languages that different 'nations' speak is likewise implicitly 'likened' to threads that are made of 'a hundred colours' spun together. One comparison is a simile, the other two metaphoric, that is, an abridged comparison whose comparative term, 'like', or 'as', is deemed unnecessary and dropped. Because metaphor does not exist in itself and only in and through an interpretation, then the introduction of such emblematic figures by the painters in Herat likewise presupposes a scrutinising observation on the part of the viewer, in which transfer of meaning is accomplished inferentially rather than directly.[126]

Commentators on Rumi's poetry have understood the specificity of the 'black and white' of the bicolour cow to refer to night and day, or death and life, but the black and white of the cow has also alluded to the secrets of our world that are invisible and that will become apparent only after the Day of Judgement, when all is revealed and it becomes apparent that all the varied colours are really just one and the same Unity of Being.[127] To make this last point, the figurative references are again spindle and spinning.[128] We might note that the sheep depicted at the centre of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', like the cow that is being milked, is also bicolour, adding another layer of allusion to the image of the white-bearded shepherd and his flock. The literal understanding of such imagery is likely not that different from the mystical reading of it. Indeed, the trope is less mystical than it is a hackneyed parable, be it Islamic or Christian. As for the seeker on the Sufi path, he knows or ought

to know that the image of the good shepherd is extended to the Beloved.[129] Much more can be said about Persian poetry's use of tropes such as bicolour cows, their milk, shepherds or spinning threads, but already the depiction of the figure of a milkmaid milking a black and white cow in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' seems less arbitrary and, in fact, rather elemental.

Peeking from behind the rocks, the two figures at the centre of the composition – the bearded man with his hand over his mouth and his companion – are a variation of the conventional 'spectator figures' at the horizon line of countless Persian manuscript paintings from the late four-teenth century onward, serving 'to model the psychological approach the viewer should take to the painting'.[130] The depiction of such 'third-party' viewers in Persian manuscript paintings, peering from behind from a hill, with the 'finger of wonderment' at their lips or pointing, often seems as though it is an obligatory convention – especially in 'commercial' paint-ings produced in Shiraz. So ubiquitous are they in manuscript illustrations that they require a systematic comparison with illustrations that lack such figures.[131]

Not every detail in every illustration of a Sufi text needs to be fitted into the specific aims of Jami's text, but many details may nevertheless point to the overarching dominance of contemporary Sufi discourse. The previously mentioned popular treatise on spiritual chivalry (*futuwwat*), written by Jami's brother-in-law, Kashifi, is replete with references to many of the details found in illustrations of Sufi manuscripts. Kashifi enumerates the various branches of artisan guilds and describes the mystical significance of objects, actions and rituals peculiar to each trade in order to provide a guide for the righteous artisan seeker (*saalik*) on the path to Truth and Union with the Divine.[132] For example, regarding the tent depicted at the centre of our composition, Kashifi begins by likening the very idea and the canopy of a tent to 'the heav-ens', and states that the firmament is held up by the Almighty's 'central pole of righteousness and justice'. Noah is declared the first man to construct a tent 'after the flood had subsided', and the ropes and nails used to fasten tents to the ground – and meticulously represented in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' – are deemed to be significant in that the first signifies 'the rope of submis-sion left in the hands of the Beloved', and the nail signifies 'the sedentary and steadfast state' that the seeker must adopt.[133]

What is on display in 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' is precisely the 'shift' that Thomas Lentz and others have noted in Persian manuscript painting, which introduced the 'new style'; however, it was a shift propelled by semantics: as the 'semantics' of what is depicted make a decided turn towards the mystical, the style of representation becomes more naturalistic – perhaps in order to better reveal or emphasise the 'supernatural' signifieds.[134] The stylistic 'shift' in Herat corresponds with Sufism's focus on the individual's personal relationship with God, and is manifested through depictions of common people and day-to-day scenes. The elaborate allusions of Sufi poetic discourse as reflected in the extratextual, emblematic depictions that appear in illustrations of it could not have been wholly divorced from the stylistic change that brought about the 'new style' in painting. Stylistically the exposition of the otherworldly message encoded in the new extratextual emblems, functioned best in a more temporal and naturalistic setting. Allegorical or overtly didactic, the impetus of Sufi narrative literature was to involve its readers or listeners directly or emotionally. The naturalistic shift in illustrations of such texts could not but have helped to cast into relief the otherworldly 'message' of the emblematic figures all the more. Stylistically, the depictions manifest the synthesis of Sufi ideology and orthopraxis, which is to say, that the 'new style' of painting in Herat was the dialectical fusion of the inexpressible and the imitable.[135] After this, allusive, extratextual, emblematic depictions continued haphazardly to disseminate in manuscript illustrations.

Plate 1 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', from *Haft awrang* of Jami, 1556–65. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase – Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1946.12.30
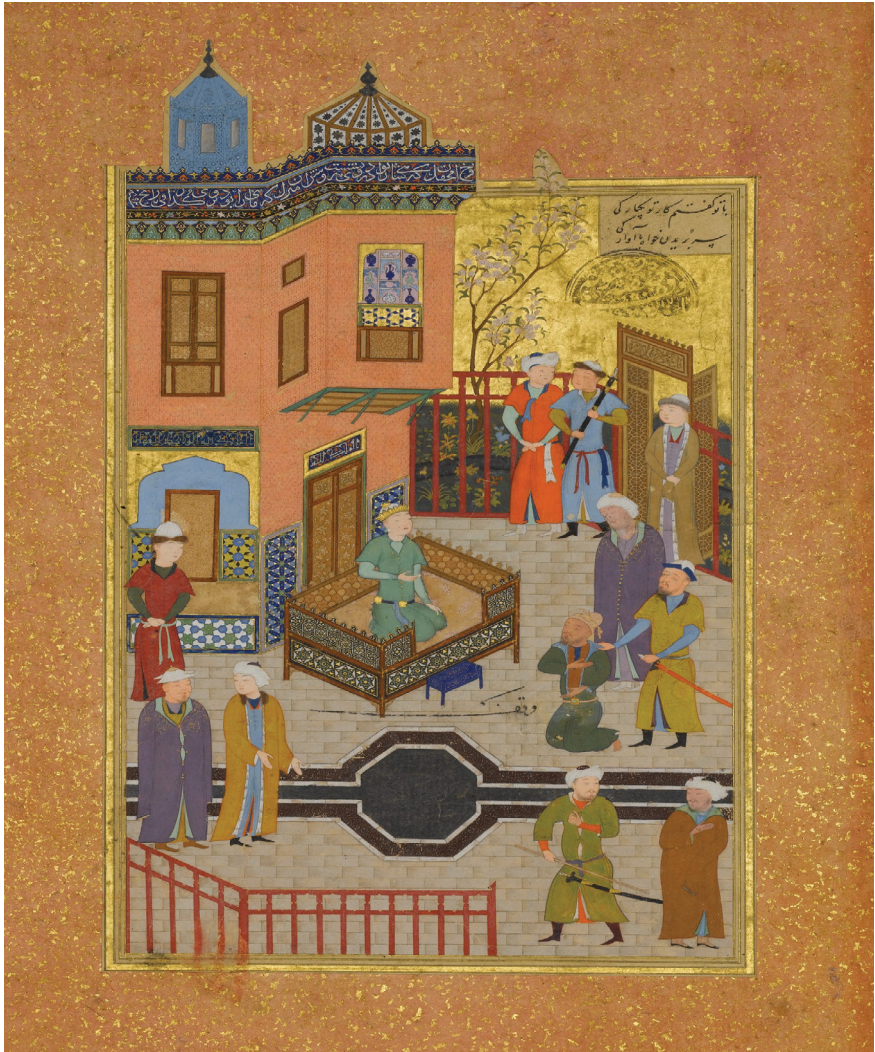
Plate 2 'The Beggar before the King', from *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar, 1487. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 63.210, fol. 28r

Plate 3 'The Funeral Procession', from *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar, 1487. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 63.210, fol. 35r

Plate 4 'The Bearded Man Drowning', from *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar, 1487. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 63.210, fol. 44r

Plate 5 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Peasant', from *Mantiq al-tayr* of Attar, 1487. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 63.201, fol. 49v

Plate 6 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', from *Khamsa* of Nizami, 1494. British Library, © The British Library Board, Or. 6810, fol. 144v

Plate 7 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', from *Khamsa* of Nizami, 1494.
British Library, © The British Library Board, Or. 6810, fol. 137v

Plate 8 'Bahram Slays the Dragon', from *Khamsa* of Nizami, *c.* 1490. British Library, © The British Library Board, Add. 25900, fol. 161r

Plate 9 'Bahram Slays the Dragon', from *Khamsa* of Nizami, 1494. British Library, © The British Library Board, Or. 6810, fol. 157r

Plate 10 'Ardavan Captured by Ardashir', from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, 1330s. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase – Smithsonian Unrestricted Trust Funds, Smithsonian Collections Acquisition Program, and Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, S1986.103

Plate 11 'Story of Haftvad and the Worm', folio from the *Shahnameh* of Shah Tahmasp, painted by Dust Muhammad, Tabriz, Iran, *c.* 1540. Opaque watercolour, ink, gold and silver on paper 45 cm × 30 cm, Aga Khan Museum, AKM164

Plate 12 'Qays First Glimpses Layla' from *Haft awrang* of Jami, 1556–65. Freer Gallery of
Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase –
Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1946.12.231

5

The Culmination of a Trend: 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality'

The ideological function of manuscript painting survived the Safavids'
bloody takeover of Iran and the accompanying forced conversion of
the population to Imami Shiism. The continued appearance of the allusive
figures in illustrations of mystical narrative poetry, or rather in illustrations
of any literary passage to which esoteric connotations could be assigned,
continued unabated during the 'formational' reigns of the first two Safavid
kings, Ismail (1501–24) and Tahmasp (1524–76). The doctrinal affinities
between Sufism and Shiism, and the heterogeneity of Safavid ideological
pretensions facilitated the continued use of the allusive, esoteric figure-types
in manuscript painting commissioned by the Safavid patrons.[1] As we will
see, the evidence from the illustrations of manuscripts produced during the
first decades after the establishment of the new dynasty suggest that luxury
manuscript paintings provided a propitious space for ideological expressions
even as patrons and artists remained highly attentive to the vicissitudes of
political power. The earliest luxury manuscript illustrations commissioned by
the founder of the new dynasty, Ismail, exhibit more the Turkmen style of
painting associated with Tabriz, whereas those produced for his son Tahmasp
exhibit the incorporation of the Herati style, displaying what has been called
the Safavid synthesis.[2]

The aim in this chapter is at last to discuss the iconography of the illustra-
tion introduced at the beginning of this book: 'A Depraved Man Commits
Bestiality' (Plate 1), from Jami's *Haft awrang* manuscript at the Freer
Gallery. The manuscript was commissioned by Ibrahim Mirza, the nephew
of Shah Tahmasp, and with twenty-eight paintings is one of the last deluxe

manuscripts to be illustrated at the high point of development in Safavid – or, indeed, Persian – manuscript painting.[3] The work on the manuscript, which was executed between the years 1556 and 1565, began about a year after Ibrahim Mirza had been appointed the governor of Mashhad at the age of sixteen. The paintings of this *Haft awrang* have been described as:[4]

> Complex compositions … The eye is pulled restlessly over the page from detail to detail. It is as though the painters had lost confidence in the power of the ostensible narrative subject to interest the viewer, and were searching for other means to hold the attention. Innocence had been lost: the classic works would continue to be illustrated but only as a vehicle for the painters' skill; they seem no longer to have a mythic hold on the imagination.

According to Barbara Brend, the paintings mark a change 'which is not so much one of style as of attitude'. Many of the twenty-eight paintings in the manuscript contain at least some iconographic elements that at least partly correspond to the narrative subject but also allude to events in the life of its patron. These allusive figures, situated within complex compositions, would require individual analysis.

As we have seen, 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' illustrates a passage from Jami's *Silsilat al-dhahab* (*Chains of Gold*), which is not an allegorical romance like *Layla and Majnun*. Nor are the contents of the narrative encased within a frame story like Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr*. Jami's epic is rather a straightforward didactic work in rhyming verse-couplets on mystical piety that covers a plethora of devotional subjects. It came to form the first of seven works that make up Jami's *Haft awrang* and is itself in three parts, which aim to instruct on the essentials of Sufi education and tenets of Islam. Like much of Persian didactic poetry, the content and style of Jami's narrative are also reminiscent of the mirror-for-princes tradition.[5] As is basic to the genre, Jami uses numerous anecdotes to explicate and elaborate on his lessons on the practices and importance of Sufism and Islam.

Based on Jami's praise for the Timurid ruler, Husayn Bayqara at the beginning of the first book of *Silsilat al-dhahab,* the work must have been composed after 1468, and considering the fact that certain other comments it contains brought trouble for Jami in Baghdad in 1472, it must have been composed before that year, when Jami was on his pilgrimage to Mecca.[6]

Silsilat al-dhahab may be characterised as a long homily in the fashion of Sanai's *Hadiqat al-haqiqa* (*Garden of Truth*), forming a compendium of Jami's philosophical, mystical and ethical views on the essentials of Sufism and Sunna of the Prophet. As was the case with Attar's allegory, many – but not all – of Jami's expositions on the intricacies of gnostic knowledge and pious practices are followed or accompanied by illustrative anecdotes. Many of these anecdotes and parables may be read as allegories 'in reverse', since the tenor of the tale is often introduced before the story itself. In this way, the semantics of the narrative in *Silsilat al-dhahab* overtly supersede any substituting trope. Indeed, what is noted about the artists' loss of confidence in the power of the ostensible narrative subject is, in fact, their close adherence to Jami's intent and in allowing the tenor of the text to supersede their pictorial representation of what is in effect the narrative's secondary subject or vehicle.

The twenty-eight illustrations of the Freer *Haft awrang*, including 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', were created more than sixty years after the Herati paintings that have been discussed up to now. Stylistically, they are comparable to the paintings made for Ibrahim Mirza's uncle, the second Safavid king, Shah Tahmasp, whose diminishing interest in manuscript painting projects led to the migration of many artists from the royal atelier, by then in Qazvin, to other courts – or professions – such as, most famously, the Mughal court in India. But some also became available to work for the young governor of Mashhad, and patron of what is known as the Freer Jami, the *Haft awrang* of Ibrahim Mirza.[7]

A number of allusive representations, or figures with esoteric referents that appear in illustrations of the Freer Jami, had already appeared in earlier illustrations of such celebrated Safavid luxury manuscripts as the *Collected Works of Mir Alishir Navai* made in Herat in 1526–7;[8] the *Divan* of Hafiz, probably made for the younger brother of the Safavid king *c.* 1527;[9] or the *Khamsa* of Nizami made in 1539–43 for Tahmasp.[10] A number of illustrations in the decidedly non-mystical narrative of *Shahnama* by Ferdowsi, which was made for Shah Tahmasp, also betray allusive depictions with esoteric signifiers.[11]

Likely commissioned around 1522 by Ismail, the founder of the Safavid dynasty, the manuscript is, however, firmly associated with the patronage of his son, Tahmasp.[12] The production of this unprecedented masterpiece

with 759 folios and 258 paintings took approximately twenty-five years, with the majority of its paintings devoted to scenes of battles and subjects related to war.[13] Encountering depictions that allude to mystical teachings among its illustrations is therefore, unexpected, especially given the political and patriotic intentions of the project.[14] Not unlike paintings from other manuscripts, the iconography of many illustrations in the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp also allude to contemporary events and the political life of its patron,[15] and it is noteworthy that these particular depictions exclude any of the emblematic figure-types associated with Sufi homilies that we have previously encountered. The painting 'Nushirvan Receives an Embassy from the King of Hind', which is an unprecedented scene in the long-established tradition of *Shahnama* illustrations, is one such example.

The painting treats the Indian guests' presentation of the game of chess to Nushirvan – the pre-Islamic Iranian king – but, in fact, it contains no actual representation of the main plot element: a chess game.[16] The absence of an image of the game within the illustration or any depiction that could resemble a chessboard or pieces in a chess set is curious, and has prompted the suggestion that the thirty-two human figures featured in the composition as a whole, in fact, equal the number of pieces in a chess set. Another iconographic curiosity in this painting is the representation of monkeys: one visible in the lower left of the composition, making its entrance on the back of an elephant; the other two depicted in ornamental painting on the wall in the top right corner of Nushirvan's throne room, where a fantastic figure with the body of a large feline, head of a canine and horns of an antelope leers at them in the tree below.[17] The simian imagery has been linked to the date of Tahmasp's birth as well as the year when he ascended the throne, both of which coincided with the year of the monkey.[18] This, in turn, could define the leering beast as representation of the enemies of the realm (Uzbeks or the Ottomans), reluctantly slouching away from the tree occupied by Tahmasp (and his father?). Accurate or not, such iconographical significations should hardly be seen as far-fetched, since Colin Mitchell's study has shown that in the case of the Safavid epistolary writers (*munshis*) during the reign of Tahmasp, for instance, deployment of elaborate rhetorical means to present oblique and veiled 'messages' was a normative feature of Safavid propaganda and their promotion of dynastic legitimacy.[19]

The one illustration in the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp that is conspicuous for its allusive depictions is the 'Story of Haftvad and the Worm' (Plate 11), which dates from *c.* 1540 and is perhaps the last painting to be inserted into the colossal manuscript.[20] 'Haftvad and the Worm' presents a group of women sitting with spinning wheels that are immediately reminiscent of the image from the upper part of 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' (Plate 6).[21] Unlike the woman spinning in the 1494 *Khamsa* painting, the spinning wheels depicted in this painting are not extratextual but count as a key plot element in Ferdowsi's text, which involves several women spinning cotton with their spinning spools (*duke*).

In the legendary episode, from pre-Islamic Iran that is recounted in Ferdowsi's epic, Haftvad, a local ruler, gains enormous fortune and power from a mysterious apple worm. The episode, one in the cycle of accounts about the coming to power of Ardashir I (d. 242), the founder of the Sasanian dynasty (224–651), corresponds to the Zoroastrian prophetic literature that presents Aradshir as the saviour of the 'Good Religion'. The painting 'Haftvad and the Worm' shows the scene at the beginning of the story when the daughter of Haftvad, working at a spinning wheel with her companions outside their village, finds a small worm in an apple and decides to place it in her spindle case for safekeeping. The illustrated scene and Ferdowsi's account appear to part ways here, but the *Shahnama* narrative continues, describing how the worm kept growing and growing as did, correspondingly, Haftvad's fortune.

The images in the painting give no hint of the climax of the story, where the 'dragon' worm, representing a 'snake-god' in its pre-Islamic origins, is at last slain by the upright Ardashir. Having heard of the miraculous creature, Ardashir sends an army to destroy the worm but Haftvad repels this attack and the young king learns that Haftvad's worm was in fact created by a demon and could be conquered only by craft. So disguised as merchants, Ardashir and his men gain admittance to the mountain fortress where they are eventually able to kill the giant worm by pouring molten lead in its gullet.[22] Whatever esoteric significance the story of Haftvad and the worm may have had, for Ferdowsi or its original, pre-Islamic audience, battling demons appears to have been dispensed with in this *Shahnama* illustration, or rather the esoteric significance of the legend is re-valorised for a contemporary audience.

We can see the girls at their spinning wheels on the lower left of the painting, and recognise Haftvad's daughter holding the apple. Of course, Ferdowsi's text is specific about the spools the girls carry with them and mentions no spinning wheels, which at any rate would be too impractical for itinerant girls who walk daily to the 'side of the mountain' to spin cotton.[23] But at least the spinning wheels are amenable to the story, whereas nearly every other detail in the painting seems fanciful and extratextual, with no obvious relation to the narrative subject of the story. What are we to make of all these other figures that comprise most of the painting? Even if we take some of the depictions as being fanciful evocations of, for example, the village where Haftvad and his daughter live, or the fortress that is later built to house the ever-growing worm, we still have no clear way of understanding the apparently random depictions of, for example, the woodcutters or the water carriers – so emphatically presented in the painting and more than once. The question is again, why? Why depict, for example, two water carriers that have nothing whatsoever to do with the story?

Although the ease with which the pre-dynastic Safavids had subsumed Imami Shiism into their recusant movement once again underscores the fundamental compatibility of Shiism with various strands of Islamic mysticism, it is still legitimate to ask if our approach to deciphering the enigmatic figures in manuscript painting through the tenets and practices of Sufism is still viable. Up to now, to better understand the significance of enigmatic figures within the historical context in which they were conceived, we have relied on the affinities between rhetorical devices in verses by poets then in vogue, like Jami, Rumi and Attar, and Sufi teachings and practices propagated by the dominant Sufi group at the court of the Timurids in Herat. But would the same approach be useful for highlighting the significance of these allusive images produced after the transformations brought about by the Safavid takeover of Iran?

Besides the fact that many of the artists working on Tahmasp's *Shahnama* were adepts from the earlier Turkmen and Timurid workshops,[24] we may also consider the 'staggering' number of poems (by Hafiz, Sadi, Jami or Nizami) cited in official letters written by Tahmasp's chancellery,[25] or the fact that despite propagating stringent application of Shia doctrines, throughout his own *Memoir* (written in 1562),[26] Tahmasp did not cease quoting verses by

poets like Nizami, Hafiz and Sadi. It would be fair, then, to assume that the intertextuality of Persian poetry and the rhetorical devices encountered in Sufi discourse may continue to assist in disclosing the significance of the emblematic representations even in the paintings that were commissioned by the Safavids.[27]

Further, we must also note that Ismail (d. 1524), who conquered Iran and Iraq and established Imami Shiism as the religion of his domains, was – not unlike a number of earlier or contemporary chiliastic movements[28] – the spiritual guide of the Safavi Sufis. Besides his Turkmen Qizilbash disciples who venerated him as the messiah or the incarnation of God on Earth, Ismail also had a following among the urban craftsmen, shopkeepers and merchants. His son, Tahmasp, already possessing spiritual authority by virtue of his descent, rejected his father's role as the holy messiah king, and by calling himself the 'shadow of God on earth', opted for being a pious Shia mystic king.[29] Nevertheless, by maintaining the same genealogical association as his father with Ali and the family of the Prophet, Tahmasp used dreams of the first Imam as a means of legitimising his own power. Tahmasp's reliance on such metaphysical encounters is fairly indistinguishable from the means of inspiration claimed by such visionary mystics as Ibn Arabi, Suhrawardi or Najm al-Din Kubra.[30] The Qizilbash, in the manner of all Sufi disciples, believed that physical proximity to Tahmasp guaranteed spiritual advantages. Even later Shia juridical scholars charged with promoting doctrinal law had to depend more on Sufi-like charisma to advance their agenda than any emerging Imami institutional power.[31] What continued to influence and mould piety for most of those who lived during Tahmasp's reign was a fusion of rituals and liturgies that were influenced by Sunnism, Imami and Ismaili Shiism, neo-Platonic theosophy, militant Hurufi millenarianism and Turkmen shamanism.[32]

As a late addition to the celebrated *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, 'Haftvad and the Worm' was definitely illustrated after Tahmasp's first public repentance in 1533 and his subsequent prohibition of drinking alcohol, gambling and other irreligious behaviour.[33] At that time, Tahmasp had also decreed that henceforth all religious matters were to be controlled by al-Karaki (d. 1534), a juridical Shia scholar who had come to Iran at Ismail's invitation. Such moves had encouraged the chancellery officials to incorporate not only tropes and metaphors, but also sayings and deliberations

associated with the Imami traditions.[34] The painting may also date to the aftermath of a Karaki ruling (*fatwa*) ordering the closure of taverns (*sharab-khana*), drug dens (*bang-khana*), public theatres (*qaval-khana*), brothels (*bait al-lutf*) and such games as pigeon contests, as well as banning any public recitations of *Abu Muslimnama*.[35] This heroic epic about the exploits of Abu Muslim (d. 755), who had aided the overthrow of the tyrannical rule of the Umayyads in the mid-eighth century, had enjoyed considerable popularity among the Turkmen Qizilbash since the late fifteenth century.[36] The embellishment of the legend of Abu Muslim as representing the ideals of manliness and chivalric ethics, and exemplifying devotion to Ali and the family of the Prophet, besides being popular with the artisan classes, had also proved to be quite useful to Ismail, who had been likened to Abu Muslim during his rise to power. Yet, by 1534, the figure of Abu Muslim, his story and those who recited it were seen as such a threat to the particular brand of Shiism that Karaki privileged that they were condemned and banned.[37]

The inexplicable iconography of 'Haftvad and the Worm', illustrating an episode in the *Shahnama* about a mysterious worm, certainly indicates some enigmatic schema, which may be best accessed not through mystical poetry but rather through the artisanal guild culture in which the artists realised their craft, their beliefs and their social relations, despite the political and ideological vicissitudes of the period. The affinity of such craftsmen to initiation rites, a tradition of respect for an elder master, adherence to secrets and rituals that represented various advantages for members of the group, and, of course, devotion to Ali and the family of the Prophet was shared by virtually all the cabalistic associations of the fifteenth century – including the Safavids themselves. The extant manuals on the *futuwwat* or ethics of 'chivalric' conduct may suggest a measure of the rapport that existed between artisans, Sufis and Shias. Kashifi's treatise, *Futuwwatnama Sultani*, the most comprehensive of such manuals, spells out the worldview of artisans as well as their rituals and ceremonies, explicitly claiming to be a manual for a simplified version of mysticism because it makes Sufism easier to understand and adhere to by ordinary craftsmen.[38] Although the specific practices of a trade or techniques of a given craft are predicated on *futuwwat* ideology, Kashifi ultimately regards it all as part of Sufism and as a high stage on the way to the Divine Truth.[39] It should be noted that Kashifi's other work, *Rawdat al-*

shuhada, which became one of the most influential works in all Imami-Shia literature, undoubtedly helped to heighten interest in his craftsmen's manual and increased the receptiveness of the Safavid artisans – who idolised Ali and the family of the Prophet in any case – to its content. Kashifi's *Rawdat al-shuhada* commemorates the martyrs of Karbala, where the Prophet's grandson and his family had been slaughtered, and is recited in Shia mourning ceremonies to this day.[40]

According to Kashifi, every implement and instrument of a given trade – the butcher's meat-hook, his knife handle, the strap of a water skin – is imbued with connotative, otherworldly significance. As such, Kashifi's text may prove useful as a means of decoding the images found in so many of the manuscript illustrations from this period, which contain depictions of allusive figures engaged in quotidian activities.[41] The section of Kashifi's *Futuwwatnama* devoted to the trade of water carriers brings us back to the two figures in the lower right of 'Haftvad and the Worm'. Surprisingly, Kashifi's classification of various trades has led him to group the water carriers together with the encomiasts (*maddah*).[42] Encomiasts and eulogisers are professional reciters, who, in formal, oral recitations, eulogise and praise the Prophet Muhammad and his family, including Ali and all the other imams of the Shias. Regarding the trade of encomiasts, Kashifi writes, 'know that, among the professional guilds no group is more noble than the eulogizers of the House of the Prophet'.[43] He explains that if it were not for the work of reciters and eulogisers, then 'the blessings of words in supplication and celebration [of the saints] would have no way of reaching the people'. Kashifi explains that he is classifying the 'water carriers' together with the 'encomiasts of the House of the Prophet' because they too are in their own way encomiasts, and it is during such recitation ceremonies that the listening audiences are served by the 'extremely respectable' water carriers from whom 'Divine emanation reaches the people'.[44] Citing the Quran, 'And their Lord will give them purifying drink'(21:76), Kashifi grants the water carrier profound spiritual significance and provides the trade with a sacred pedigree by attributing its origin and past practice to 'four prophets', namely, Noah, Abraham, Khezr (Khidr) and Muhammad. He urges the people to acknowledge and respect the spiritual ancestry and the prophetic validation of the water carriers, adding that, like those four prophets, the water carrier is 'the giver of life'.[45]

Having this insight into the possible significance attributed to various trades and professions, especially that of water carriers, we may now view the depictions of everyday life in so many Persian manuscript paintings from a new perspective. But how might this knowledge help us understand the extratextual depictions represented in the illustration of the Haftvad story (Plate 11), which combines two episodes from Ferdowsi's narrative: Haftvad's daughter finding the apple and the prosperity it brought to the entire village which, with the fortress that was later built for the protection of the blessed worm, dominates the painting. The composition gives no hint of the later development in the narrative, after Ardashir' suspicions are aroused.

The subject of the illustration of the story, therefore, may be summarised as follows: a mystical worm found by Haftvad's daughter, which grew so big that a fortress had to be built for it, brings amazing bounty (*baraka*) and fortune to Haftvad and his people. Decontextualised from Tahmasp's *Shahnama* project – indeed, decoupled from Ferdowsi's epic altogether – this was apparently the point of interest for the sixteenth-century artists.[46] They continue the pictorial precedent from the Timurid period and depict wood-cutters gathering the emblematic firewood that alludes to worldly desires, which we can see is being taken on the back of the mule into the fortress built to protect the blessed and bountiful worm. The two water carriers in the lower right of the painting, one filling his water-skin from the stream that has collected at the base of the tree, while the other, having already done so, is walking away from the fortress. Significantly, the stream is flowing from the pile of rocks at the base of the wall of the fortress, where the 'blessed' worm is kept. This water even passes through the pool by which Haftvad's daughter and the other spinning women sit.

Outlining the significance of water carriers in his *Futuwwatnama*, Kashifi also recounts the legendary story about the day the Prophet's grandson Husayn suffered martyrdom in the desert of Karbala. Kashifi writes that the Shia saint's brother, Abbas, had made his way to the Euphrates River to fetch water for the women and children of his clan, who had been trapped and were dying of thirst. Abbas does not think it right to take even a small drink of water for himself while Husayn and the others had nothing, so, instead, he fills up his water-skin to bring water to them first.[47] Water carriers, which

conjure Shia martyrological images of the suffering of Husayn and his family at Karbala, perhaps did not always do so. The fact that to this day water carriers remain a feature of the pageantry that commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn and are featured in passion plays re-enacting the tragedy of Karbala may well be linked back directly not only to Kashifi's writings but, because of the visual promotion of his ideas in luxury manuscript painting, also to the artists active during the early Safavid period.[48]

It was at least sixteen years after the painting of 'Haftvad and the Worm' that work on the *Haft awrang* manuscript of the Safavid prince, Ibrahim Mirza commenced. Before returning to the discussion of 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' (Plate 1) – sequentially the second painting of this manuscript – it should be noted that the iconography of many of the other twenty-eight illustrations in this *Haft awrang* is likewise overwhelmed by extratextual and enigmatic depictions. Some of these figures, as we now know, date back to the 1490s, and, it should be noted, they also appear in illustrations of other sixteenth-century Safavid manuscript paintings.[49] Among the paintings in the Freer *Haft awrang* that exhibit the more refined manifestations of the types of emblematic figure we have already encountered, 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' (f. 30a), 'Yusuf is Rescued from the Well' (f. 105a), 'Qays First Glimpses Layla' (f. 231a), and 'Majnun Approaches the Camp of Layla's Caravan' (f. 253a) are the most complex and seem overall to contain the greatest number of extratextual figures.

Even the relatively plain and uncomplicated iconography of the first painting in this *Haft awrang* manuscript, 'The Wise Old Man Chides a Foolish Youth', contains extratextual depictions. Marianna Shreve Simpson describes the composition, which is almost half the size of all the other paintings in the manuscript, as 'a modest introduction to the manuscript's otherwise complex pictorial program'.[50] The subject it illustrates is a recurring image of a youth and an old man in a landscape.[51] In this case, the painting may be an apt preamble to a collection of didactic works on Sufi ethics for which obeisance to a wise, old master is axiomatic.[52] But even this introductory painting, in addition to the narrative subject, contains symbolic depictions not only of the conventional running water and blossoming trees, but also a gazelle,[53] a conspicuously incongruous bear, and the more surreptitiously placed fox and hare (or rabbit) – all four of which by this time had

become relatively common signifiers of various aspects of carnal desires that, in the case of the last three animals, a Sufi must eliminate.[54]

The painting 'Qays First Glimpses Layla' from the *Layla and Majnun* passages of the *Haft awrang*, for instance, contains several of the same figure-types that we have already encountered in the iconography of Nizami's 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' (Plate 6). In this painting, which was completed almost seven decades after that 1494 painting, we see Jami's Majnun as Qays, at the very beginning of his allegorical journey before he has lost his reason (become *majnun*) in the pursuit of his love, Layla.[55] In this painting, even the section that illustrates the narrative subject is evocative of tropes from Sufi literary discourse and relates to the accompanying text less than faithfully, as it seems to illustrate some of the descriptions from earlier in Jami's text. The depiction of the narrative subject includes what appears to be details from Jami's narrative, not when Qays sees Layla for the first time, but rather when he nearly falls in love with another girl by the name of Karimah.[56] This is unlike the decoupling of the subject matter of the text and its depiction, or the image being cut off from the relevant text, which we have encountered before.[57] Here, the text appearing within the illustration and immediately preceding it, does in fact describe Qays' first glimpse of Layla. But part of what is illustrated belongs to the narrative description forty-five lines earlier – beyond even the verses that appear on the page facing the illustration.[58]

In Jami's version of *Layla and Majnun,* Qays, the soon-to-become '*majnun*' (obsessed) lover of Layla, is fourteen years old at the beginning of the story, and unlike Nizami's version where Layla and Majnun meet at school when Qays is only seven years old, in Jami's overt Sufi allegory, when Majnun (or Qays) is introduced to the reader, he is actively looking for someone to be his beloved.[59] Jami describes Qays as a restless youth, whose 'mould' was mixed with love from the beginning (line 377); he is a poet (354) looking around for love (379), riding around on his she-camel (383) every day (389), visiting various tribes to find any 'beauty' (390). Before meeting Layla, Qays visits another tribe: one day as he is wandering about the land (391), he spots from a distance a moon-faced beauty sitting in the midst of a circle of good people (393) and is told that her name is Karimah. Directly in his line of vision, Qays steals glances at her.

The descriptions from Jami's narrative so far appear to provide the details that seem to be pictorially represented in 'Qays First Glimpses Layla'. For example, just after Qays' arrival, we read about what he does with his camel, how he sits, what he does with his hand and what is in his line of vision:

He tied the camel's knees and sat	زانوی شتر ببست و بنشست
	zanuy-e shotor bebast o benshast
putting his hand politely on his knee	بنهاد به زانوی ادب دست
	benhad beh zanuy-e adab dast
he stole a glance, seeing her face	دزدیده به روی از نظر کرد
	dozdideh beh ruy az nazar kard
that glance did affect his soul	در جان وی آن نظر اثر کرد
(398–399)	*dar jan-e vey an nazar asar kard*

Later in Jami's text, Qays hears of a beauty called Layla and goes to see her. We are told that Layla's people seat Qays at the head of the chamber (*sadr-e khaneh*) – which does not seem to be exactly what is depicted in 'Qays First Glimpses Layla'. Nevertheless, when Layla finally appears, for Majnun she seems like a cypress, indicating that unlike Karimah, Layla was standing, which is how she is pictured in the lower right of 'Qays First Glimpses Layla'. However, it is also not possible to see if Layla is wearing the anklet, the sound of which, according to Jami's text, transforms the 'state' (*hal*) that Qays is in.

In the light of our previous discussion of encampment scenes, most of the depictions in this painting are connotative and can be only indirectly related to the narrative subject. Some of these figures we have already encountered in the earlier paintings: the flute-playing shepherd, with one goat at the top; the boy below him, filling his vessel in a stream of water coming out of the rock;[60] the milkmaid behind him or the man he faces at the opening of a tent where a child has his hand on his shoulder from within the tent. This man is holding a spool, spinning. Near the spinner we again have the figure of a mother and child, an open fire beneath a caldron and even a cat, recalling the cat sitting near a lamp on the tomb monument in the 'Funeral Procession' (Plate 3) from Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr*. But the painting also exhibits superfluous figures that we have not seen or discussed: the man making butter under the tree using a laced skin pouch, suspended with ropes from a branch, or the figure of a youth reading a book at his leisure on the left.[61] The figure of the reader

may be a counterpart to the figure of the 'viewer', or a variation of the conventional 'spectator figure' that appears in numerous Persianate manuscript paintings. In this case, the spectator figure has, self-referentially, become the 'reading figure', perhaps of Sufi love poetry, exalting Divine Love.[62] There is also the familiar large, dominating tree, distinguishable by its leaves as a plane tree, extending into the margins of the page.

Despite the level of flexibility that the artists of 'Qays First Glimpses Layla' have shown in illustrating the narrative subject according to Jami's text, and despite the reduced space allotted to it in a number of *Haft awrang* illustrations, it is clear that adherence to the text remained an essential function of manuscript paintings even in the 1550s. Indeed, in the twofold vision of the pictorial presentation, the emphasis on the esoteric content implied by the narrative subject often overwhelms the latter. Nevertheless, even the composition's emphasis on the esoteric 'message' of the text can only strengthen the link between the image and the 'real' content of the text. In 'Qays First Glimpses Layla', the tenor of Jami's text – which in this episode highlights the passion of a novice Sufi who has experienced God's proximity for the first time – is glossed in a series of depictions that although fairly 'legitimate' to the story, also signify esoteric connotations. The emblematic figures convey eagerness and longing with the image of a youth filling his empty cup (shell of the human body) with water (spirit, or Love and 'the draw of the Truth').[63] According to Sufi literary discourse, perhaps initially generated by the prolegomena to Rumi's *Mathnawi*, the man playing the flute and likewise the mother with a child on her back, filling a cup from the caldron, both signify human helplessness in answering the primordial call of Divine Love.[64] The trope of the father also carries similar connotations, and so we see the image of the child at the right-centre of the painting, holding on to the neck of the man who may be his father, who is spinning in front of another tent. Once again, a spiritual couplet by Rumi may provide us some context:

Until the child is unable to search and catch,	طفل تا گیرا و تا پویا نبود
	tefl ta gira o ta puya nabud
his steed will be nothing but his father's neck.	مرکبش جز گردن بابا نبود
	markabash joz gardan-e baba nabud
(M2.376)	

By now we may associate the figure of the spinner with remembrance of God, or *zekr (dhikr)*, and the milkmaid and the man making butter in the upper left of the composition to tropes encountered in verses by Rumi, for whom 'milk' from the 'teat of Grace' is a favourite expression, and religion is comparable to the 'milk in the soul's teat'. Further, we may also understand the image of the man shaking the laced skin pouch under the tree by means of Rumi's spiritual poetry: God's Truth is hidden in our hearts like butter fat is hidden in milk.[65] Even the depiction of the camel, which is mentioned by the text and is part of the story, may be taken as evocative of the human soul, and Love.[66]

Then, there is the caldron over the fire, which is itself a stand-in for the human heart in Rumi's poetry. The kettle or caldron provides Rumi with a convenient metaphor for the human heart as it constantly boils from the fire of Divine Love.[67] Depictions of caldrons and tents may provide an insight into the process through which 'mundane' iconography acquired – likely due to contiguity – additional esoteric significance. As discussed in Chapter 4, images of tents or caldrons had appeared in manuscript illustrations long before the circumstances related to the appearance of the so-called 'new style' in manuscript painting absorbed them into a constellation of figure-types with dual significance. By the end of the fifteenth century, during which time Nizami's profane love story between Qays and Layla came to be read almost exclusively as a Sufi allegory, many supplemental figures and actions in illustrations of its various episodes also came to acquire new didactical intent, connoting abstruse forms of piety. Many 'legitimate' depictions seemingly organic to a nomadic camp scene were recruited for this purpose, including, for instance, a caldron over an open fire, a woman milking a cow, a shepherd tending his flock and even the tents themselves.[68]

Returning to the beginning of our discussion, 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' is the first full-page composition in the Freer *Haft awrang*, and one of the most extravagant paintings in the manuscript.[69] The composition eclipses the painting that precedes it in almost every way and it could be seen as the grand opening to a monumental event – to which the compilation of Ibrahim Mirza's deluxe *Haft awrang* manuscript may certainly be likened.[70] The painting belongs to the first and the longest book of three that form Jami's *Silsilat al-dhahab*.[71] Besides being an exposition of beliefs and practices

of Naqshbandi Sufis, the first book of *Silsilat al-dhahab* is also an exposition of Ibn Arabi's theosophy with which many Naqshbandi shaykhs had been impressed,[72] and it devotes more than one thousand couplets to only one short treatise by the Andalusian philosopher, which was about the four basic practices that all Sufi saints had mastered before reaching their exalted positions.[73] Seclusion, silence, refraining from food and refraining from sleep are the four elements (*rokn* / رکن), adherence to and practice of which enabled the 'saints' (*abdal* / ابدال) to reach their lofty station.[74] The painting 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' belongs to the section of the text that expounds one of these four 'basic practices', namely, silence.

As explained under the subheading 'Logos of Adam' by Ibn Arabi himself, the world was brought into existence as the manifestation of God's attributes, and Adam was created as a kind of microcosm of those same attributes. God also taught Adam the names of all of His attributes and by doing so, made Adam know basically all that there is to know. For Ibn Arabi, Adam was the first 'perfect man'.[75] On some level, for Jami the entire enterprise we call Sufism was to strive to achieve such an all-but-impossible status: to become as much as possible like Adam, or Muhammad or other such Perfect Men. In short, the four practices mentioned by Ibn Arabi, which Jami is at pains to explain in his *Silsilat al-dhahab*, pertain to becoming a Perfect Man.[76] If one is to achieve such a status, one must adhere to these four basic practices: to seclude oneself from the world; to privilege silence and discretion; and not indulge in consumption and the pleasures of eating and sleeping. It must also be noted that the pre-dynastic Safavids were not immune from the influence of such gnostic, neo-Platonic ideas, and judging by their continued disposition towards and treatment of their shahs as 'the Perfect Man', their adherence to such views continued at least through the sixteenth century.[77]

So 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' illustrates a passage within a discourse about the qualities of the Perfect Man and how they could be achieved or aspired to. It is a serious topic with profound implications, but Jami's illustrative anecdote is clearly meant to be humorous in its hyperbolic exemplification of what would happen if one did not strive to 'silence' one's carnal desires.[78] It adheres to a generic scheme to which, as we saw, Attar's anecdote about the drowning of a bearded man also belongs.[79] It is not unusual for Jami's humour, which has been noted by a number of contemporar-

ies, to penetrate his narratives.[80] Decades after Jami's death, when Ibrahim Mirza (1540–77) – the son of Shah Tahmasp's favourite, deceased brother, Bahram – commissioned this illustrated copy of Jami's *Haft awrang,* he was only sixteen years old, and his personal involvement with the planning of the project may be reflected in the choice of this bawdy subject for illustration. However, as will be seen, the historical circumstances that affected the iconography of the 'Depraved Man' are less light-hearted. After all, Ibrahim Mirza was sent to Mashhad by his uncle Tahmasp to replace the governor there and to enforce religious edicts.[81] Several of the illustrations from the second epic in the Freer *Haft awrang*, namely, Jami's overtly allegorical romance, *Yusuf and Zulayka*, depict actual events from the life of Ibrahim Mirza. For instance, impressions from the arrival of Ibrahim Mirza's bride in Mashhad, in eastern Iran, where he was the governor, or from the banquet given for his wedding, both appear to have been superimposed on the illustrated scenes from Jami's story about Yusuf.[82]

Of course, some of the figures in 'A Depraved Man' are immediately recognisable from paintings we have already discussed. One of the twenty-six human figures presented in the 'Depraved Man' is the figure of the 'third-party viewer' behind the rocks, in the lower centre of the composition. The other figure watching the events with the 'finger of wonderment' on his lips is the representation of Satan, explicitly mentioned by the narrative subject. But the shepherd and his few goats and sheep at the top of the painting, the flute player on the right, the man with a spinning spool on the lower right, and of course the tents of the encampment scene, and the image of the caldron over an open fire are all familiar. Rather common iconographically, the figure of the camel presented by Jami's narrative is also common as a trope in Sufi poetry, where it is used figuratively to connote patience, the human soul, the spiritual leader, and other, mostly positive attributes or behaviour.[83] Behind or above the flute player on the right we can also see perhaps the oldest of all depictions with allusive connotations of all, early examples of which we have also discussed: the twisted branches and trunk of a dried-up tree. Not the least among the unprecedented depictions in the composition is, of course, the illustration of the narrative subject, namely, that of a man copulating with a camel.

In the compositions from the late Timurid period, we have seen generally two roughly equal planes dividing the surface of the painting into a section

that illustrates the narrative subject and another in which the depictions allude to the moral subtext or the esoteric themes of the narrative.[84] In the 'Depraved Man' there are several 'planes' – distinguishable by colour – that appear to divide the composition, totalling to six sections, beginning with the extreme foreground, in the right corner, where we can recognise the spinner on the pink rocks, who seems to be ignoring the other figure – dark-faced and similar to the figure of Satan – who is addressing him and gesturing towards the scene conveyed by the text. The figures in the purple-blue plane, below the central plane of the composition, represent the narrative subject as related by Jami's text: the depraved man is unable to keep his sexual urges 'silent' and loses control, mounting a she-camel. One of the possible morals of this didactic parable is presented on the plane to the right, in pink. By now we can assume that the figure of the spinner is engaged in *zekr*, that is, the meditation based on remembrance of God, which is the best weapon for combatting one's urges so as to avoid the same predicament as the depraved man. So we see the spinner as though he is unaware of the deviant behaviour taking place to his right and what the 'Satan' figure has to say about it.

Moving further back, or up in terms of the surface of the painting, past the plane where the events of the story are depicted, we can see the grassy-green patch at the centre of the painting, infiltrated by flowers or trees that are blossoming, forming the 'central plane', or the focal point of the composition.[85] It is in this central section that we encounter the assembly of unusual, even unprecedented, figures such as the dark-bearded man on the left, wearing only a light brown pointed cap and a black and white striped robe draped over his shoulder, and the upside-down young man who is balancing on one hand. To his right are the two kneeling musicians playing a spike fiddle and tambourine, after which we see the young couple who are holding each other as the boy offers the girl a single flower. The man playing the reed flute and the boy listening to him are to the extreme right and are separated from the others by a flowering sapling.

Above these figures is the depiction of an encampment scene, to which all the figures mentioned so far may be related, but like them it would also be unjustified by the text. Unlike the camp scenes often encountered in the cycle of *Layla and Majnun* illustrations – which could be literally or semantically warranted by the storyline and the setting of the narrative subject

– there is no textual basis whatsoever for any 'camp' in 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality'. Based on what we have learned so far, we must assume all these supplemental figures to be allusive or emblematic and, of course, instructional.

As is the case with at least two of the paintings from *Yusuf and Zulayka*, mentioned above, the historical circumstance can provide important information for a better understanding of the iconographical programme in 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality'. Work on Ibrahim Mirza's *Haft awrang* was commenced in 1556, the same year as the lesser-known 'second repentance' of his uncle, Shah Tahmasp. This was preceded by the rising influence of Shia families from Astarabad and other traditional Shia centres, who continued to promote Karaki's interpretations of Shiism across Safavid dominions.[86] Twenty-four years earlier, at the age of twenty, Tahmasp had already decreed to all provincial governors that they must 'prevent' all behaviour that is prohibited by religious law (*shar'* / شرع), including 'drinking wine or arrack, adultery, pederasty, and other acts'. At that time Tahmasp gave orders that if the regional leaders heard a singer singing 'outside the religious law' they should 'wound him with an ear-rubbing', and if they saw a harp next to any shameless person they must 'cut his hair', and should 'a reed flute cry an unlawful song do not allow the breathing to continue', to burn a dulcimer if it is played, and so on. With regard to music 'the ban was so severe that anyone caught would have his hand cut off'.[87]

Like much of Tahmasp's policies, his 1556 repentance and decrees prohibiting homosexuality, alcohol and music were inspired by a dream in which he was visited by Ali, in this case, after the humiliating Amasya treaty with the Ottomans.[88] Tahmasp ordered all the governors and nobles in the land personally to 'repent' and to do so emphatically by swearing on the Quran.[89] If Prince Ibrahim Mirza, in Mashhad, did demonstrate his obeisance to this command, he must have dissimulated, since we know that he commissioned the Freer *Haft awrang* manuscript that same year. Also, he is known to have 'played the lute beautifully' and was a master craftsman in making musical instruments.[90] It could not have been too long before this time that Ibrahim Mirza had heard of the fame of a master player of the dulcimer in Herat by the name of Mawlana Qasim Qanuni (Qasim the Dulcimer Player) and invited him to come to Mashhad to reside and perform at his court. Qasim

Qanuni did join Ibrahim Mirza's court and reportedly performed twice a day, so expertly that his fame reached as far as Isfahan and Tabriz. However, when, according to the historian Qazi Ahmad, orders came that all singers and players in the land in general, but Mawlana Qasim the Dulcimer Player in particular, should be killed, Ibrahim Mirza saved him by digging a cellar under his own 'living quarters with bricks and plaster'. And for a long time, under his own watchful protection, Ibrahim Mirza kept Qasim the Dulcimer Player safe by covering the opening with felts and rugs.[91]

Qazi Ahmad also writes that Ibrahim Mirza, in addition to painting and writing poetry, was 'another Rumi' in contemplative and mystical matters, an expert horseman and polo player, a frequent hunter who loved hawking quails, who shot left-handed, was unmatched in horsemanship and playing polo, swam like a boat, was an excellent chess player, a confectioner, a cook, in short, 'his noble nature, eminent mind, and outstanding taste enabled him to perform without peer any enterprise he was inclined towards'.[92] In addition to the pursuit of his passions for sports, the arts and literature, Ibrahim Mirza also made daily visits to the shrine of Imam Reza. He was also well-versed in matters of Sufism – including Sufi poetry – to the extent that justified being called 'another Rumi'.[93]

It is unclear if Ibrahim Mirza's pious uncle was aware of all his activities, but by 1560, Tahmasp felt compelled to order a letter to be written to his nephew in Mashhad to make sure the young prince was made aware of an auspicious event that had occurred in February of that year: Isa Khan, a prince from one of the Georgian principalities, arrived at the court of Shah Tahmasp to 'place himself under the shadow of the Safavid shah on account of his display of purity and trust'.[94] In short, the young prince had turned away from Christianity and dedicated himself to Islam and the Safavid shah, who in turn had conferred numerous kindnesses and favours on him. By ordering his chancellery to send a letter to Mashhad, Tahmasp clearly singled out his nephew Ibrahim Mirza as the person who needed to be told of this auspicious event. The letter emphasises the imminent appearance of the Twelfth Imam (in whose light 'all vestiges of the oppression of idolatry and wickedness will be annihilated and dispersed from the pages of the world') and recounts the conversion of Isa Khan to Islam as a miracle. It also emphasises to its Mashhad audience that the conversion occurred on the anniversary

day and month of Ali's great victory over Aisha at the Battle of the Camel, as it also coincided with the birthday of the fourth Shia Imam, and that the Georgian prince was in turn exalted as a son by Tahmasp during the court ceremony.

Colin Mitchell's suggestion that this letter was designed as an admonition to the twenty-year-old Ibrahim Mirza to forgo his passion for music, dancing, painting and poetry – and to emulate the piety and zealotry of Tahmasp's new adopted son in the Caucasus – adds to the historical context in which the iconography of the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' was shaped.[95] By 1563, the prince was indeed in more trouble and was reprimanded through a demotion. Due to a mocking comment – made supposedly by one of Ibrahim Mirza's courtiers – Tahmasp removed his nephew from the governorship of Mashhad and sent him to a small provincial town some 300 kilometres south.[96]

The most illuminating context with regard to the iconography of 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', however, is a decree from 1567 that demonstrates how far the aspiration of Shia families (*sayyids*) to regulate and monitor public piety had advanced. Tahmasp's decree to Khan Ahmad Khan admonishes and warns the semi-autonomous ruler of Gilan partly in the hope of avoiding an actual Safavid invasion. The work on the Freer *Haft awrang* manuscript had ceased in 1565, and despite a brief reinstatement, it is likely that by the time this decree was issued Ibrahim Mirza had already been removed as the governor of Mashhad for good and was already living in Sabzavar.[97] Nevertheless, the decree expresses the kind of proselytising efforts on Tahmasp's part, to which Ibrahim Mirza had also been subjected, and to which the iconography of the 'Depraved Man' clearly seems to be responding.[98]

The 1567 decree laments the fact that the ruler of Gilan had started to fraternise with wretched troublemakers and riffraff. Enumerating the various classes of people and professions that are to be, in Mitchell's words, *personae non gratae* in the model Shia Safavid society that Tahmasp envisioned; the undesirables listed in the decree bear an uncanny resemblance to the figures represented in the central plane of the 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality'.

As though a guide to the unprecedented depictions at the centre of the painting, the list of unacceptable people in Tahmasp's decree includes street

performers, antinomian Sufis (*qalandar*), gypsies (*shatiran*), minstrels, story-tellers, catamites, clowns and infidels. Precision in rendering the names into English notwithstanding, if we now turn to the painting and the green grassy patch at the centre of the 'Depraved Man', we can see figures that may likewise be described, from left to right, as a gypsy or *qalandar*, a street performer, two minstrels and two 'lovers'. By depicting these representatives of the unacceptable riffraff at the centre of the composition, the artists must have been equating such people with the depraved man of Jami's anecdote and identifying their professions as being as abhorrent as the bestiality referred to in the text, by which even Satan himself is appalled. In doing this, the artists appear to be concurring with Tahmasp's repeated decrees and reiterating the proselytising efforts of the king. Understanding this as the central iconographical programme of 'Depraved Man' also helps to better understand the other supplemental figures in the composition.

To begin with, the figure holding (or offering) the flower at the centre of the composition is at least suggestive of a young man, or a young couple in love. According to the way this particular gesture continues to appear in single-sheet drawings, and based on the portraits of figures offering or contemplating a flower that predate this painting, the figure in possession of the flower could be read simply as the lover: a lover of prostitutes, of art or simply of the Beloved.[99] The flower, often a mark of cultivation and refinement of the patron – sometimes a stand-in for the aesthetic contemplation of beauty, or of offering such beauty to a beloved – must be seen, in this case as intended and received by the contemporary audience, to contain at least a twofold significance: one that is in agreement with Karaki and Tahmasp's propaganda condemning the depravity of brothels (*bait al-lutf*), and the other more in line with the views of the connoisseur patron of the manuscript, one obsequious, the other defiant.[100]

To the right of the two young 'lovers' in the central plane of 'Depraved Man', the significance of the flute player may also be understood at least on two levels. The lament of the reed flute, if we recall Rumi's preamble, is due to its separation from the reed bed, a lament that is a longing for and a remembrance of God, the Beloved, which may be linked, on the one hand, to the Sufi theme of Jami's anecdote and, on the other hand, in concurrence with Tahmasp's decrees in promoting devotion and remembrance of God's

Sharia, and not 'an unlawful song' for the pursuit of pleasure. The figure of the heedful youth, holding a closed book next to his ear and listening intently to the flute player, is a striking reminder of the figure of the reader we have encountered before, where the figure of 'reading youth' was seen as a counterpart to the figure of the 'viewer', or the 'spectator figure'. In this case, however, as per Shah Tahmasp's condemnation of poetry, the youth has closed his book and is instead enraptured by the 'lament' of the reed flute and all that it entails.[101] The depiction of the youth enraptured by the song of the reed flute nearly matches an earlier passage in the *Silsilat al-dhahab*, where Jami writes of his own wish for silence, after he has found the right shaykh with whom he could,[102]

be an eye should he grace a gathering	چشم باشم چو مجلس آراید
	cheshm basham cho majles arayad
be an ear should he present a point …	گوش باشم چو نکته فرماید
	gush basham cho nokteh farmayad
As I place his words into my ears	سخنش را چو جاکنم در گوش
	sokhanash ra cho jakonam dar gush
it would allow me to silence my speech	سازدم از سخنوری خاموش
	sazadam az sokhanvari khamush

Jami's text goes on to recommend what could be done by others who cannot or have not yet found a good spiritual guide: they should, among other things, read the Quran on their own. The recommendation is deemed important enough for Jami to be given its own section with a heading: 'on persuasion regarding the chanting (*talawat*, or public recitation) of the Quran'. Here, Jami's first couplet states: 'once you're bored with the carnal soul (*nafs*) and its discourse, head for the timeless Word (*kalam-i qadim*)', adding:[103]

Seek a book that is like a moonfaced witness,	مصحفی جو چو شاهد مهوش
	mushefi ju cho shahed-e mahvash
kiss it and pull it next to your person.	بوسه زن درکنار خویشش کش
	buseh zan dar kenar-e khishash kash

A few verses later, Jami's text reads as if instructing the figure of the youth who is listening to the flute player:

by the side of this auspicious
  splendour,

Should you arrive, don't look
  elsewhere.
  (1568)

به کنار این نگار فرخ فر

beh kenar-e in negar-e farokh farr

چون در آری به غیر او منگر

chun dar ari beh ghayr-e u mangar

With it, turn your ears into a mine of
  jewels,

with it, make your mind into a store
  of secrets.
  (1571)

گوش ازو معدن جواهر کن

gush az u ma'dan-e javaher kon

هوش ازو مخزن سرائر کن

hush az u makhzan-e saraer kon

Jami also suggests that there is no difference between the 'reciter' (that is, of
the Quran or 'the *qari*') and the listener (*sami'*), and warns that the only thing
that could make someone abandon witnessing these Truths is that 'highway
robber', the 'demon (*div*)', warning his readers to take refuge in God from the
evil (*sharr*) of this demon.[104] From what we have seen, the counsel offered by
the text, originally directed at the wayfarer on the Sufi path, remains perfectly
compatible with the sensibilities of the readership in the late 1550s, and the
historical circumstances of Safavid Iran after Tahmasp's second repentance.

Considering the decrees issued by Tahmasp, the centrally placed min-
strels, one playing the spike fiddle (*kamancheh*) and the other the tambourine,
are also meant to condemn such professions and practices and place them on
par with the actions described by the narrative subject and the depraved man.
Still, the depiction of the musicians may also be seen as a reminder of Ibrahim
Mirza's continued love for music in violation of his obsessive uncle and his
repeated commands against it and those who practice it.[105]

The upside-down figure to the left of the musicians is also placed in the
central plane of the painting for the same reason, and despite the lack of an
exact term in English may safely be described as an acrobat walking on his
hands. The acrobat's looks, attire and hair are almost identical to the paintings
of the professional entertainers at the Safavid court in an album belonging to
Ibrahim Mirza's father, Bahram. His looks are most like a certain Shah Nazar
Zurgar whose image is extant, showing him also barefoot, wearing similarly
short trousers, with a shock of hair. Such a figure must have been a member of

Ibrahim Mirza's court who provided 'amusement for the royal entourage'.[106] And, indeed, as reported by Qazi Ahmad, at least on one occasion when Ibrahim Mirza gets word that his brother is on his way to Mashhad for a visit, he goes to greet him outside the city, as he often did with visitors. On this occasion, Qazi Ahmad specifically states that, along with others, Ibrahim Mirza took with the greeting party 'carriages' (on which the entertainers performed) and 'magicians'.[107] Equivalent words in Persian denoting an 'acrobat' fall under appellations that refer to performers of gymnastics and other popular acts among street performers such as tumblers/somersaulters, tightrope walkers, puppet-show masters or magicians, all professions that had already been condemned by Tahmasp, the Shia scholars and sayyids who sought to regulate and monitor public piety. Names for such artisans are often listed in dictionaries as equivalent terms for 'acrobat'.[108] Figures of such characters are also present in 'Aziz and Zulaykha Enter the Capital of Egypt' (folio 100), which is another of the *Haft awrang* paintings that bear a resemblance to an actual historical event in Ibrahim Mirza's life. In this case, it is the arrival of his young bride and her entourage from Tabriz, when they are greeted by a party of nobles and courtiers outside the gates of Mashhad.[109] In 'Aziz and Zulaykha Enter the Capital of Egypt', the figures of two boys with castanets and the same short pants and haircuts can be seen in the lower left corner.

Besides their autobiographical significance, the figures depicted in the central plane of the 'Depraved Man', such as the acrobat, can be seen also from a mystical perspective. An 'upside-down' figure, for instance, is indeed a trope in the poetic discourse on the states and stations of the Sufi wayfarer. Ibrahim Mirza, in his own *Diwan* of poetry, conjures an image not unlike that of the acrobat:[110]

O my heart, on the path of poverty towards the Beloved,	در ره فقر بسر منزل مقصود دلا *dar rah-e faqr besar manzel-e maqsud dela*
use your head as your feet if you desire arrival.	پا ز سر ساز اگر میل رسیدن داری *pa z-e sar saz agar mayl-e residan dari*

The advice given by Rumi to the Sufi seekers offers another level of meaning that remained cogent, reinforcing the possibility that the figure of the acrobat has dual significance:[111]

These slaves of carnal wishes are upside-down,	این غلامان هوا بر عکس آن
	in gholaman-e hava bar aks-e an
they pretend they are the master of their mind and soul.	خویشتن بنموده خواجه عقل و جان
(M.2.1493)	*khishtan benmudeh khajeh aql-o jan*

The last figure in the central plane of the 'Depraved Man' is the man wearing a light brown pointed cap and a black and white striped robe draped over his shoulder, and may be taken as the figure that is perhaps most objectionable to the Shia scholars and Shah Tahmasp. Representing the antinomian Sufis (*qalandar*) he is clearly placed with the other objectionable characters and equated with the depraved man in Jami's text. As we saw in Chapter 1, since at least the tenth century the figure of *qalandar* has been celebrated in ascetic-Sufi poetry as someone who lacks worldly possessions but is rich spiritually and so close to God without necessarily observing the dictates of the orthodoxy. Though less accurate, the depiction may also be taken as representing a '*shatir*', which is at times translated as gypsy. As with the figure of '*ayyar*' or '*rind*', a *shatir* may generally be understood as a rogue – but at times chivalric – character whose presence in folklore and popular culture dates back to pre-Islamic times. All such figures had already been condemned by Karaki in the early 1530s when he had banned the recitations of *Abu Muslimnama*. Both *qalandars* and *shatirs* are denounced yet again by name in Tahmasp's 1567 decree.[112]

Despite all the uncertainties, the iconographic programme of the 'Depraved Man' already appears to make more sense. Illustrated in the lower left corner of the composition, the vile act of the narrative subject is then surrounded by witnesses, including, as per Jami's text, Satan himself: once with the finger of wonderment at his lips to the left, and then again in the lower right, as he appears gesturing towards the action while he addresses the man in green spinning a spool, as though saying, in keeping with tenor of Jami's parable, 'what can be done about such a man?' Placed above these two figures is yet another familiar supplicatory depiction: that of the flute player and the youth who is listening intently. Both the spinner and the flute player highlight the necessity for remembrance of and yearning for God.

Restricting the illustration of the narrative subject to the lower left of the composition, the artists of 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' evidently felt it politically prudent to link the condemnation of the 'vile act' in Jami's parable to the contemporary public anathematisation of a host of undesirable classes of people and professions promoted by Tahmasp and the Shia scholars, including the progenitors of Karaki. By placing several of the *personae non gratae* in the Safavid domain at the centre of this composition, Ibrahim Mirza, the patron of the manuscript, could be shown to concur with the sovereign's agenda and seem a suitable guardian of Imam Riza's shrine in Mashhad.

The top of the painting, above these motley representations of the depraved, is devoted to depictions of 'remedial' figures – a number of allusive and emblematic characters and objects drawn from, what was by then, a decades-old tradition of Sufi manuscript illustrations. Already familiar to us are the figure of the shepherd tending a ram and a goat at the top right, the tents themselves and the figure of the mother and child before an open tent, at the centre, as well as the depiction of a caldron over an open fire on the top left of the composition.

The obvious link between the shepherd and his herd, and the mother and child as an analogy of God's relationship to his servants may be further highlighted through Rumi's use of this trope to elaborate how God protects 'His own' by distinguishing the people of the Pharaoh from the people of Moses, whom he saved from harm as a mother would do her child:[113]

A mother looks after her child	مادر فرزند جویای وی است
	madar-e farzand juyay-e vey ast
the wholes always look after the parts	اصلها مر فرعها را در پی است
(M1.878)	*aslha mar far`ha ra dar pey ast*

Also, as mentioned in the case of 'Qays First Glimpses Layla', a caldron may allude to the human heart that may boil over from the fire of Divine love or wrath. The lid of the caldron, which happens to be included in the 'Depraved Man', may also be linked, via Rumi, to the human tongue: 'when it moves, one smells what kind of food is contained in it, whether sweetmeat or vinegar-spiced stew'.[114] But considering that the anecdote about the depraved man is part of Jami's exposition of the four exemplary practices

of the Perfect Man, the caldron here may be more aptly linked to another simile by Rumi in which the dervish or a Sufi master is likened to it, that is, someone who can be in contact with 'fire' directly instead of the novice wayfarer:

without a barrier, water and what's in it	بی حجابی آب و فرزندان آب *bi hejabi ab o farzandan-e ab*
will not cook in fire, or be addressed	پختگی ز آتش نیابند و خطاب *pokhtegi z atash nayaband o khatab*
the go-between is a caldron or a pan,	واسطه دیگی بود یا تابه یی *vaseteh digi bovad ya tabeh-ie*
just as feet require shoes for walking. (M2.832–33)	همچو پا را در روش پاتابه یی *hamcho pa ra dar ravesh pa tabeh-ie*

Just as a Sufi seeker needed a master for his journey to the Divine, water (and whatever is made of water) cannot be put on or in the fire directly, but is in need of an intermediary to become complete (*kamal*), that is, a *murshid* or master – an intermediary would be a caldron or a pan, just like a foot that needs a shoe, so that they become (those watery things) cooked and 'perfect' (*kamal*).[115] This understanding may also be more in accordance with the agenda of Tahmasp and his Shia scholars, who sought to be the intermediaries between the Safavid subjects and the wishes the Hidden Imam.

The most mundane understanding of the allusive image of the woman washing clothes in the upper left of the 'Depraved Man', above the assortment of non-acceptable people would be an allusion to rinsing and cleansing required by the depraved. More relevant to the content of Jami's text is the account in the second book of Rumi's *Mathnawi*, where a group of disciples in a Sufi monastery who go to their shaykh and complain that one of their fellow seekers has three intolerable habits: eating too much, sleeping too much, and talking too much. The shaykh responds by emphasising moderation and the importance of considering the middle ground. The examples the shaykh uses to emphasise the importance of moderation includes an analogy involving a clothes washer:

The clothes washer only matters to clothes wearers	جامه پوشان را نظر بر گازرست *jameh pushan ra nazar bar gazor ast*

but the naked soul needs only Divine manifestations	جان عریان را تجلی زیورست
	jan-e oriyan ra tajali zivar ast
Either get away from the naked,	یا ز عریانان به یک سو باز رو
	ya z-e oryanan beh yek su baz ro
or like them discard your robes,	یا چو ایشان فارغ از تن جامه شو
	ya cho ishan faregh az tan jameh sho
and if you cannot become wholly naked,	ور نمی تانی که کل عریان شوی
	var nemitani keh kol oryan shavi
then lessen your garments and be moderate.	جامه کم کن تا ره اوسط روی
(M2.3523–3525)	*jameh kam kon ta rah-e osat ravi*

For our purposes the first two verses of this passage is revealing enough, and may also help to explain the presence of the small figure observing from behind the tree on the upper left of the 'Depraved Man', who appears to be a child, totally naked save for a white kerchief pulled over long dark hair.[116] But Rumi's use of 'clothes-wearer' is also an allusion (*kenayeh*) to those who are prisoners of bestial drives and those who are slaves to passion. Their spirit or soul is imprisoned by their body and their clothes are their senses. But the pious (actually gnostics, or *arifan*) who are free from the bond of 'the lasso' that is our bodies, and free from the materiality of the world are only interested in the manifestations of the Truth (*haq*).[117]

Another unfamiliar supplemental figure in the 'Depraved Man' is the woman in front of the elaborately patterned tent on the right, who is looking at a cat in front of her and holding what appears to be a shirt against her mouth as though she is smelling it – an unmistakable gesture that may well allude to the story of Joseph (Yusuf) whose father had been given his bloodstained shirt by his conspiring brothers.[118] The story of Zulaykha's love for Yusuf is the subject of one of the seven narrative poems in Jami's *Haft awrang*, which in the Freer manuscript immediately follows *Silsilat al-dhahab*. Without discounting the possibility of a link between the depiction of this figure and the tenor of the allegorical romance that is to follow, it is also likely that what this image signifies is a rather generic trope often used in love and Sufi poetry where grief-struck Jacob, or Yaqub, recognises the scent of his beloved son's shirt, as stated by Rumi:

It was not the one who was carrying Yusuf's shirt	بوی پیراهان یوسف را ندید
	buy-e pirahan-e Yusuf ra nadid
who could sense its fragrance but Ya'qub who smelled it.	آنکه حافظ بود و یعقوبش کشید
(M3.4529)	*ankeh hafez bud o Yaqubash keshid*

And again,

Smell! the cure for eyes will shed light	بو دوای چشم باشد نورساز
	bu davay-e cheshm bashad nur saz
Yaqub's eyes opened as a result of a scent.	شد ز بویی دیدهء یعقوب باز
(M1.1902)	*shod z-e buyi dideh-ye Yaqub baz*

Scent in this context has been understood as a 'code for knowledge [of God] and the scent of Joseph's shirt is a code for knowledge that is gained through inspiration and discovery'.[119] Rumi also uses the same trope from the story of Joseph to privilege the sense of smell over the ability to hear, claiming that Satan and his minions are incapable of sensing (learning) the divine secrets.[120]

The last figures, to the right of the young lovers at the centre of the composition, are the three boys playing, one of whom is riding a 'hobby horse'. Whether such an activity is iconographically novel or not, the image is a familiar one in Sufi poetry. The theme of the narrative subject of the 'Depraved Man', silence, is also the theme in several sections of Rumi's *Mathnawi,* where the importance of silence to the wayfarer is highlighted. Among the anecdotes in the *Mathnawi* about people riding hobby horses one is specifically about the importance of silence.[121] In the first book of *Mathnawi*, in a section is titled, 'Discourse on why one must conceal one's "state" and one's "drunkenness" from the ignorant', there is a parable of a drunken man leaving the tavern, who is then followed and teased by children, which is used to compare people who are not drunk with Divine Love, to ignorant children:

But for those drunk on God's truth, people are simple children.	خلق اطفالند جز مست خدا
	khalq atfaland joz mast-e khoda
What is maturity but being free from what is worldly	نیست بالغ جز رهیده از هوا
(M1.3430)	*nist balegh joz rahideh az hava*

The verses suggest that an adult is 'he who has freed himself from the bounds of desires and wants.' Rumi then compares the disputes and wars of people who are not 'drunk' with Divine Love, to childhood games such as the hobby horse:[122]

They are all at war with their wooden swords	جمله با شمشیر چوبین جنگشان
	jomleh ba shamshir-e chubin jangeshan
they all aim meaninglessly	جمله در لا ينفعى آهنگشان
	jomleh dar la yanfa`i ahangeshan
they have all mounted a piece of reed	جمله شان گشته سواره بر نی ای
	jomlehshan gashteh savareh bar ney-ie
claiming this is our steed like that of the prophet.	کین براق ماست یا دلدل پی ای
	kin boraq-e mast ya doldol pey-ie
It is they who carry the burden of ignorance,	حامل اند و خود ز جهل افراشته
	hameland o khod z-e jahl afrashteh
carrier of the load, yet think they are the rider.	راکب محمول ره پنداشته
	rakeb-e mahmul rah pendashteh
You are all like children riding your own robes,	همچو طفلان جمله تان دامن سوار
	hamcho teflan jomlehtan daman savar
pulling up your garments as if riding a horse	گوشهء دامن گرفته اسب وار
(M1.3436, 3438)	*gusheh-ye daman gerefteh asb var*

According to Rumi, because ordinary people – like children – are not capable of understanding the ways of a Sufi, and the states and stations of a wayfarer on the Sufi path, it is best for the seeker to keep silent and not reveal the secret.

If Ibrahim Mirza, who would be in and out of favour with his uncle Shah Tahmasp throughout the 1560s and 1570s, or the artists he commissioned to illustrate this episode had other connotations in mind by depicting a scene of children playing hobby horse, it is not clear.[123] What is clear, even in the case of Shah Tahmasp – a staunch propagator of Shia confessional purity – is that the belief in esoteric truth, which had dominated late fifteenth-century Herat, had remained largely intact even as late as the 1570s. Similarly, after Tahmasp's death, when his son Ismail II decided to publicly humiliate a Qizilbash leader in 1576, he couched much of his public abasement by invoking the pre-eminence and sanctity of his own status not as a king but

as the 'Perfect Sufi Master' (*murshid-i kamil*).[124] Certainly, Ibrahim Mirza, who had commissioned the deluxe copy of the seven overtly Sufi epics by Jami, and was also otherwise intensely involved in the literary and visual arts, could fully appreciate the supplementary depictions throughout his own *Haft awrang* paintings. It should be noted that such allusive figures are found in paintings besides the 'Depraved Man' as well, such as that of a man carrying firewood in the upper right corner of 'Yusuf Tends His Flocks' (folio 110),[125] or the extratextual figure of a man practising silent invocation (*zekr*) in the lower right of the painting 'The Gnostic Has a Vision of Angels Carrying Trays of Light to the Poet Sadi' (folio 147).[126]

Discovery of hidden patterns as a pleasurable aesthetic and intellectual pursuit must have also remained a factor that contributed to the iconographical programme of the *Haft awrang*. In this respect we may wonder if Ibrahim Mirza as an engaged patron of the manuscript was also instrumental even when it came to depicting a bird's nest among the branches of the plane tree in the top left corner of the 'Depraved Man'. In the case of this detail in 'Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', the significance seem to not be confined to the boundaries of this illustration alone: the next two consecutive paintings in the manuscript, for example, also exhibit plane trees in each of which there is likewise a bird's nest. As though a series, beginning with the 'Depraved Man', we can see that the bird's nest contains what appears to be two white eggs; the *Haft awrang* painting immediately following it, namely, 'The Simple Peasant Entreats the Salesman not to Sell His Wonderful Donkey' (folio 38b), appears stylistically to be by a different artist and yet also exhibits a plane tree with a bird's nest, in which by now two young, perhaps newly hatched, chicks are depicted. The next painting sequentially, 'A Father Advises his Son about Love' (folio 52a), again contains a plane tree with yet a third depiction of a bird's nest, and in this case two collaborating boys having climbed the tree, are in the process of stealing, or at any rate, taking away the same or two different chicks from the nest and passing them down to their fellow waiting below. What, beyond playfulness, is the significance of this sequence involving the birds' nests? We may wonder if the patron was aware of this detail at all, whether he enjoyed its playfulness or was privy to its other possible significance. In any case, it is unlikely that such a sequential arrangement was a coincidence.[127]

Art historians have suggested that because the painters working on the illustrations of this *Haft awrang* were located in different cities and completed the paintings apart from the physical matrix of the book itself – in which the images were inserted later – the artists must have felt less obliged to adhere to the text they were illustrating. It has also been suggested that the *Haft awrang* paintings began 'to play a separate role' than illustrating the text and that they stand at the crossroads between earlier and later traditions of book painting because with these images the artists began 'to produce paintings independent of texts', as separate, discrete works of art.[128] In this way, it has been suggested, the paintings of the Freer *Haft awrang* demonstrate a palpable divergence between text and image in luxury manuscript illustrations that progressively grew and led to the end of illustrated luxury books.[129]

If all that is, in fact, how things transpired, then surely any supposed 'divergence' between text and image would have occurred earlier, dating back to the time before the Safavids. Indeed, the 'fatal blow' that in effect 'finished' luxury book painting in Iran was not the death of Ismail II in 1577.[130] Rather, the 'fundamental change in the representational arts of Iran' occurred in Herat in the late fifteenth century, when Sufi piety penetrated the iconographical programme of manuscript paintings and began a process that gradually subordinated the figural, representational function of narrative illustrations to the underlying tectonics of their esoteric truths.[131]

Conclusion: The Sufi Synthesis

The 1487 paintings from Attar's *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscript at the Metropolitan Museum – 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 3), 'The Funeral Procession' (Plate 4) and 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' (Plate 5) – contain perhaps the earliest examples of a trend in Persianate manuscript illustrations in which allusive depictions that programmatically re-present, for emphasis, a specific theme from the tenor of the text beside the illustrated narrative subject and do so in accordance with the conventions that governed the contemporary interpretive practices of the 1480s. These iconographic innovations in manuscript painting are inseparable from the ideological influences that helped to form the interpretive community of the late Timurid period, and in this respect the principle of 'seclusion within the crowd' promoted by the Khwajagan-Naqshbandi Sufis played a significant if oblique role in bringing about the so-called 'new style' of painting, a style that is evident even in the most conventional of the four original *Mantiq al-tayr* paintings from 1487, 'The Beggar before the King' (Plate 2). The first of the paintings we examined, 'The Funeral Procession', is drastically different from virtually all Persian manuscript paintings that preceded it because more than half of the surface of the painting is devoted to depictions that are extratextual, although every detail may be said to complement the theme stressed by the narrative subject, which is fear of death. The next two paintings are the most radical of the four: both 'The Bearded Man Drowning' and 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' exhibit, relatively speaking, an unprecedented departure from the conventions of composition by going beyond depictions of merely supplementary figures to bold displays that are not only incongruous with the narrative subject but may even be said to undermine the transparency and cohesiveness of the composition as a whole. Manuscript illustrations up

to this point, including the other two 1487 *Mantiq al-tayr* manuscripts had been, at first, mostly ancillary to the text and then, as a complex art form, supplementary to it. The paintings 'The Bearded Man Drowning' (Plate 3) and 'Shaykh Mahneh and the Old Peasant' (Plate 5) stand further apart still in that their iconography augments the theme stressed by the narrative subject through depictions and details that, far more than those in 'The Funeral Procession', are dependent on temporality and conventions of Sufi discourse expressed through the intertextual Persian poetry dating back to the eleventh century.

The painting 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb' (Plate 6), also composed in Herat a few years later, contains an assembly of figures that were to become more or less standard types, each re-presenting, for emphasis, a specific theme from the tenor of the text that, again, corresponds with the gnostic referents within a wider – mostly prosodic – Sufi discourse. Again, the reception of the text by the artists, or the patron's response to the narrative subject were in accordance with the conventions that governed the contemporary interpretive practices of late Timurid Herat, where the discovery of hidden patterns as a pleasurable aesthetic and intellectual pursuit among the elites and the literati was favoured widely. A co-text, which provides further historical context about the culture in which these emblematic figures gained their significance, is Kashifi's *Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry* (*Futuwwatnameh-i Sultani*).[1] The reception of Niazmi's twelfth-century romance as a Sufi allegory, or what proved to be most relevant about Attar's epic to the interpretive community of Herat in the late fifteenth century, were traced through this treatise on ethics of conduct for artisans and craftsmen.

The fact that the occurrence of such unconventional mutations of the style and iconography in the supposedly conservative and tradition-bound field of Persianate painting, during the last decades of the Timurid rule in the 1480s and 1490s, continued after the Safavid takeover of Iran and the propagation of Imami Shiism stands as a testimony to the importance that the Safavid dynastic household attributed to esotericism and its instrumentality as a means of religio-political control, if not domination.[2] Despite the spectacularly violent campaigns between about 1500 and 1514, which resulted in the military conquest of Iran and the forced conversion of its population to Imami Shiism,[3] the appeal of depicting superfluous but emblematic figures

in manuscript painting continued, or in the case of illustrations in the Freer *Haft awrang*, it may be argued, intensified.

The perceptible decrease in the production of luxury manuscript paintings, which was predicated on court patronage and devotion of enormous resources, is not entirely unrelated to the appearance in the 1480s of the apparently enigmatic figures in illustrations of didactic Sufi narratives. Promoting Sufi piety by alluding mostly to stock images and metaphors from Persian poetry, these 'emblematic' figure-types served to emphasise the moral lessons of the primary subject of a given narrative by pictorial representation of often familiar literary tropes. This innovation in the iconography of Persian painting represents the culmination of popular esoteric beliefs that is also reflected in the rise of the Safavids in 1501. Indeed, the emblematic figures complemented and expressed Safavid political power at its greatest extent, in the Shia conversion of Iran.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the historical forces that sustained the cultural world of the late Timurid and early Safavid periods began to assume new forms: across the middle third of the sixteenth century a new moral order was being imposed by the shah and Shia scholars that eventually hardened into what was, on the surface at least, an anti-Sufi orthodoxy. After Tahmasp's book workshop was shuttered, the artists dispersed – some leaving the Safavid realm altogether – and the royal court eventually moved from Tabriz to Qazvin.

What survived of the Sufi–Shiite synthesis of the Timurid and early Safavid periods, and how Persian figural art took on new functions after both the culmination in the *Haft awrang* of the developments analysed here and the demise of Prince Ibrahim Mirza, may be traced through the artistic energies that flowed into new media: single-sheet drawings or wall paintings, such as the murals of the new palace in Qazvin.[4] The iconography of these paintings is frequently overtaken by the fixed-figures that were once embedded in Sufi structures of meaning – and in the intimate, miniature, allegorical world of the illuminated manuscript.[5] What we detect are the subtleties of continuity and change in the religious, intellectual and social context – in the cultural and symbolic order in which Persian art was meaningful. Most compelling is the problem of art and religion, if we map art along the trajectory of a developing Imami Shiism in Safavid Iran: where Shiism's origins

in heterodox esotericism, exhibiting strong affinities with Sufism, first find artistic reflection in the mystical-allegorical world of the illuminated manuscript, the persistent, yet faintly vestigial, presence of the allegorical form in single-sheet painting after the full flowering of a self-consciously anti-Sufi Shiism reveals the deeper conservation of the unacknowledged, repressed mysticism at the heart of the Iranian religious tradition. The emergence and continuation of single-sheet paintings may be the art-historical exception that proves the religious rule: from the manuscript to the single sheet, from Sufism to Shiism, the more things changed, the more they stayed the same.

Notes

Introduction

1. Amy Orrock, 'Homo Ludens: Pieter Bruegel's Children's Games and the Humanist Educators', *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 4(2) (2012): 1–42.

2. 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality' is one of twenty-eight illustrations in *Haft awrang* of Jami, 1556–65, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (46.12, fol. 30a).

3. Regarding the treatment of Persian 'miniature' painting not as illustrations of narrative texts but as essentially similar to European easel painting, see David J. Roxburgh, 'The Study of Painting and the Arts of the Book', *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 4; and Yuka Kadoi and Iván Szántó, 'Why Persian Art needs to be Studied and Collected', in Yuka Kadoi and Iván Szántó (eds), *The Shaping of Persian Art: Collections and Interpretations of the Art of Islamic Iran and Central Asia* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 11. On the shifting patterns of thought about Persianate painting as autonomous object analogous to an easel picture of the western European tradition versus emphasising the painting's position in a book, see David Roxburgh, 'Micrographia: Toward a Visual Logic of Persianate Painting', *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43, *Islamic Arts* (2003): 12–30.

4. For example, see the 1409 painting by Boucicaut Master (*c.* 1390–1430) of Paris in the *Reponses de Pierre Salmon*, Paris, Bibliotèque National, MS. fr. 23279, fol. 4 (Charles VI with the Author and Three Nobles), available at: http://www.oberlin.edu/images/Art233/Art233-10.JPG, and compare with Safavid painting, 'Nighttime in a City' (c. 1540), at Harvard Art Museums, 1958.76, available at: http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/303390?position=77, last accessed 29 November 2015.

5. For a brief description, see Pieter the Elder Bruegel, online at: https://www.pieter-bruegel-the-elder.org/biography.html, last accessed 29 October 2016.

6. Ibid.

7. It is a typical feature of the so-called 'classical period' of Persian painting to have 'islands of text' within paintings that otherwise overtake the entire page; see Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 141. The principal stylistic characteristics of 'classical' painting as 'large-scale compositions that frequently overflow into the surrounding margins' is described briefly in Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage: Illustrations in a Sixteenth-Century Masterpiece* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 14.

8. Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, ed. Jabilqa Dad-Alishah, Asghar Janfada, Zahir Ahrari and Husain Ahmad Tarbiyat (Tehran: Center for Iranian Studies, 1378/1999), 171, lines 2191–3. See also, Marianna Shreve Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript from Sixteenth-Century Iran* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 93.

9. 'Vile trick' is the word choice of Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 23. See also Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 93.

10. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 97, n. 3.

11. Ibid., 332; and Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 23.

12. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 331.

13. Long before Jami 'a ready stock of stereotypical expressions – ruby for the lips of the beloved, moon for the face, narcissus for the eyes – came to supplant the poet's personal search for innovative images'. See Heshmat Moayyad, 'Lyric Poetry', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *Persian Literature* (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation-Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 131.

14. Jami, *Haft awrang,* vol. 1, 171. As a basic rule of Persian prosody before the twentieth century, each poem was constructed as a sequence of two half-verses with identical metrical patterns, forming a couplet, which in this case rhyme.

15. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 21.

16. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 171, lines 2, 191–2.

17. According to Dehkhoda dictionary, the term may also be vocalised as *mukhuleh*, available at: https://www.vajehyab.com/dehkhoda/مکحلة, last accessed 30 November 2017.

18. More appropriate to the medieval context, *mekhaleh* refers to any inkwell-like

vessel, containing kohl (antimony sulphide) or another substance used for dark-ening of eyelashes. Playing with words, Jami uses it as a counterpart to the depraved man's '*mil*' (desire or [mascara] wand), and so a euphemism for the female sexual organ.

19. 'Kenning', a conventional metaphoric name for something, especially in Old Norse and Old English poetry, may be a compelling translation in these cases for the Persian term *Kenayeh*, which is considered by Julie Scott Meisami as a type of metaphor. Synecdoche and metonyms – tropes closely associated with allegory – are generally included among the functions of *kenayeh*, where the process of 'transfer' is generally accomplished inferentially, not directly. *Kenayeh* has also been defined as the sort of *tashbih* (simile) where the instrument of comparison is not stated. See Julie Scott Meisami, 'Allegorical Techniques in the Ghazals of Hafez', *Edebiyat* 4(1) (1979): 39.

20. See Stanley Ferber, 'Peter Bruegel and the Duke of Alba', *Renaissance News* 19 (1966): 208–11, on the cruelty of the biblical Herod as an allusion to the piti-lessness of contemporary Habsburg officials in the Netherlands.

21. Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1938), 8.

22. Illustrated scenes since the early post-Mongolian period have been described as 'translations' into painting of, or 'visual commentaries' on the textual passage – these occasionally also commemorate contemporary events that correspond to the narrative subject. Oleg Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures: An Introduction to Persian Painting* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 47. Compare with Meyer Schapiro's 'reading' of images from late antiquity to the eighteenth cen-tury in, *Words, Script and Pictures: Semiotics of Visual Language* (New York: George Brazillier, 1996), 11.

23. In a précis for each of the twenty-eight paintings, for example, see Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 93 and 332–3. With respect to the tex-tual references, Simpson acknowledges the assistance of Jerome W. Clinton, Wheeler M. Thackston and Massumeh Farhad for carrying out a wide variety of research in primary sources. Ibid., 9.

24. Ovamir Anjum, 'Mystical Authority and Governmentality in Medieval Islam', in John J. Curry and Erik S. Ohlander (eds), *Sufism and Society: Arrangement of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200–1800* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 78.

25. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 18–27; and Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 10–11.

26. Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter's 'A Sufi Theme in Persian Painting: The *Diwan*

of Sultan Ahmad Gala'ir in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC', *Kunst des Orients* 11(1/2) (1976/7): 43–84, and Rachel Milstein's 'Sufi Elements in the Late Fifteenth-Century Painting of Herat', in Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem: Institute of Asian and African Studies, Hebrew University, 1977), 357–69, are predicated on this notion.

27. Selected examples in Stuart Cary Welch, *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting 1501–1576* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1979).

28. The familiarity of the artists at Bayqara's court with Sufi literature has been acknowledged in Olympiada Galerkina, 'Some Characteristics of Persian Miniature Painting in the Later Part of the 16th Century', *Oriental Art* 21(3) (1975): 231–41; Basil Gray, 'Timurid Pictorial Arts', in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History, vol. 6: The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 869; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', *Journal Asiatique* 276 (1988): 134; Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), 251–53 and 285; and Barbara Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau's Khamsah* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 175.

29. In terms used by Erwin Panofsky, the figures are iconologically novel even if not unprecedented iconographically: in accordance to the narrative subject, the figure of a spinner from earlier in the fifteenth century appears in Baysunghur's *Shahnama*, Gulistan Palace Museum MS.716, 31. Reproduced in Robert Hillenbrand, 'Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece: The Gulistan *Shahnama* of Baysunghur', *Iranian Studies* 43(1) (2010): 103.

30. Definitions of Sufism given by Sufis who lived in the ninth and tenth centuries are provided by Sarraj (d. 988) in an early book on Sufism. See Abu Nasr Abdullah bin Ali al-Sarraj al-Tusi, *Kitab al-Luma' fi l-tasawwuf*, ed. R. Nicholson (Leiden: Brill, 1914), 34–5; Michael A. Sells (ed.), *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Mi'raj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 196–211; Alexander D. Knysh, *Sufism: a New History of Islamic Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 15–34.

31. Nile Green, *Sufism: A Global History* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 1–14.

32. Emil Homerin, 'Tangled Words: Toward a Stylistics of Arabic Mystical Verse', in Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (ed.), *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 190.

33. Yarshater considers the 'decorative' tendency as one of the four general features

of Persian literature. Ehsan Yarshater, 'The Development of Iranian Literatures', in Ehsan Yarshater (ed.), *Persian Literature* (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation-Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 18–19. The change in style during the twelfth century is discussed in Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry* (Amsterdam/West Lafayette, IN: Rozenberg/Purdue University Press, 2008), 31–68. Also, see Natalia Chalisova, 'Persian Rhetoric: *Elm-e Badi'* and *Elm-e Bayan*', and Riccardo Zipoli, 'Poetic Imagery', in J. T. P. de Bruijn (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature, vol. 1: General Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 139–40 and 172–232. On delimiting such literature with problematic terms like 'Persian' or 'Iranian', see Bo Utas, '"Genres" in Persian Literature 900–1900: Indigenous Concepts of "Literature" and "Persian Literature",' in Gunilla Lindberg-Wada (ed.), *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective, vol. 2: Literary Genres: An Intercultural Approach* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 199–241.

34. 'The refinement of theme, mood, emotion and diction within [Arabic] poetry was from very early on in Sufism an integral aspect of the mystical sensibility.' Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 57.

35. Julie Scott Meisami, 'Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition: Nezami, Rumi, Hafez', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17 (1985): 230; Moayyad, 'Lyric Poetry', 132–7; Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, 'Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 1: Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi (700–1300)* (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993), 549–51. Regarding 'analogical habit of thought' in medieval Islam and the 'heavy' reliance of theology and literature on analogy', see Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 31–2, esp. n. 65, and 238, n. 2.

36. J. T. P. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry: An Introduction to the Mystical Use of Classical Persian Poems* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 1–3.

37. Sheila S. Blair, 'The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran', *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 266–74; Marie Swietochowski, 'The Development of Traditions of Book Illustration in Pre-Safavid Iran', *Iranian Studies* 7(1) (1974): 40–71; Lisa Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', in Richard Ettinghausen (ed.), *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 23–34.

38. Regarding the problematic notion of 'classical' categorisation of Persian manuscript painting, see Christiane Gruber, 'Questioning the "Classical" in Persian

Painting: Models and Problems of Definition', *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012): 1–25.

39. Sufism and *futuwwat* 'have never been … separate from one another'. See Mahjub, 'Chivalry and Early Persian Sufism', 550; Khachik Gevorgyan, '*Futuwwa* Varieties and the *Futuwwat-nāma* Literature: An Attempt to Classify *Futuwwa* and Persian *Futuwwat-nāmas*', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 40(1) (2013): 2–13.

40. Allegory is predicated on interpretation. 'Perhaps allegories would be more accurately termed intertexts … allegories produce their generic mark as the interpretation of prior texts.' Deborah L. Madsen, *Rereading Allegory: A Narrative Approach to Genre* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1994), 91.

41. Notwithstanding the current discussion, Persian manuscript paintings 'almost always followed the text very closely … they are true illustrations, direct and immediate'. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 46.

42. On primary–secondary subject, see Monroe C. Beardsley, 'The Metaphorical Twist', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 22(3) (1962): 293–307.

43. Jeremy Tambling, *Allegory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 65–6; Madsen, *Rereading Allegory*, 125. On metonymy and metaphor as a cognitive and cultural phenomena, see Zoltán Kövecses, *Language, Mind, and Culture: A Practical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 97 ff. Also, Roxburgh, 'Study of Painting', 4 and 14, n. 36.

44. Tambling, *Allegory*, 65–6. 'Double-sided' understanding of emblem in panegyric Arabic poetry dates back to the ninth century. Julie Scott-Meisami, 'The Palace-Complex as Emblem: Some Samarran Qasidas,' in Chase F. Robinson (ed.), *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69–78. A 'new outlook' after the 1400s saw symbols as 'mediators between the physical and the metaphysical'. Shahzad Bashir, 'The World as a Hat: Symbolism and Materiality in Safavid Iran', in Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.), *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 344. Regarding the premodern lack of distinction between symbol and allegory, see Umberto Eco, 'Two Models of Interpretation', in *The Limits of Interpretation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 12.

45. Thomas W. Lentz, 'Changing Worlds: Bihzad and the New Painting', in Sheila Canby (ed.), *Persian Masters: Five Centuries of Painting* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1990), 45; David J. Roxburgh, 'Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting', *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 119–21.

46. On dissemination of subjects and styles, see Mika Natif, 'The SOAS *Anvar-i Suhayli*: The Journey of a "Reincarnated" Manuscript', *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 331–58; Barbara Brend, 'A Sixteenth-Century Manuscript from Transoxiana: Evidence for a Continuing Tradition in Illustration', *Muqarnas* 11 (1994): 103.

47. Priscilla Soucek, 'Comments on Persian Painting', *Iranian Studies* 7(1/2) (1974): 73.

48. Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1998), 136–48; Zabih Allah Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Firdaws, 1368/1990), vol. 4, 66–78. Regarding the post-Mongolian inversion of epistemological hierarchy to textuality from what had been the oral methods of transmitting knowledge in the earlier centuries, see Matthew Melvin-Koushki, 'Of Islamic Grammatology: Ibn Turka's Lettrist Metaphysics of Light', *Al-Usur al-Wusta: Journal of Middle East Medievalists* 24 (2016): 50, n. 32.

49. See Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, 67–8; Eshan Yarshater, 'Persian Poetry in the Timurid and Safavid Periods', in Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart (eds), *The Cambridge History, vol. 6: The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 977–82; Julian Baldick, 'Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century', in George Morrison (ed.), *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 132; Mehdi Farahani Monfared, *Paywand-i siyasat wa farhang dar' asr zawal-i Timurian wa zuhur-i Safavian (873–911/1468–1505)* (Tehran: Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries, 2003), 229–52. For the influence of Sufi mystics at the Aq Qoyunlu court in Tabriz, see Chad Lingwood, *Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran: New Perspectives on Jami's Salaman va Absal* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 30–1.

50. Ranked as '*afdhal*' and '*aqdam*' in the sixteenth century by Sam Mirza Safavi, *Tazkireh-i tuhfeh-i sami*, ed. Rukn al-Din Humayunfarukh (Tehran: Intisharat-i Kutub-i Iran, 1347/1968), 143; Mir Nizam al-Din Nava'i, *Majalis al-nafa'is*, ed. Ali Asghar Hikmat (Tehran 1363/1943), 56, 229. Shafi'i Kadkani distinguishes between poets and versifiers like Jami. Muhammad Reza Shafi'i Kadkani, 'Persian Literature (Belles-lettres) from the Time of Jami to the Present Day', in George Morrison (ed.), *History of Persian Literature from the Beginning of the Islamic Period to the Present Day* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 135–64.

51. After Sadr al-Din Qunyawi (d. 1273), according to William C. Chittick, 'The

Perfect Man as the Prototype of the Self in the Sufism of Jami', *Studia Islamica* 49 (1979): 141.

52. For example, Jami's devotion of some 1,000 couplets in his *Silsilat al-dhahab* to expounding the content of Ibn Arabi's short thesis on four basic elements of devotion for a Sufi wayfarer in the introduction to Ibn Arabi, *Dah risali-i Ibn Arabi*, trans. Najib Mayil Haravi (Tehran: Mulah 1367/1989), 38. A bilingual edition of Ibn Arabi's *Hiliyat al-abdal* is translated by Stephen Hirtenstein as 'The Adornment of the Spiritually Transformed', in *The Four Pillars of Spiritual Transformation* (Oxford: Anqa, 2009).

53. As cited in Monfared, *Paywand-i siyasat*, 291. It is 'futile' to look for 'a purely profane interpretation' of the poems of Jami. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 288.

54. Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero* (New York: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1987), 59–60; Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Community* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

55. 'Later Persian historiography viewed his reign in Herat as the golden age.' Maria Szuppe, 'Herat 3, Medieval Period', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/herat-iii, last accessed 29 November 2015. Conditional grants (*soyurghul*) and other unique systems of tax immunities 'created the preconditions and context for extensive patronage activity'. Maria Subtelny, 'Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 20(4) (1988): 408.

56. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 224; Maria Subtelny, 'Ali Shir Nava'i: Bakhshi and Beg', *Harvard Ukranian Studies* 3/4 (1979/80): 797.

57. Zain al-Din Mahmud Vasifi, *Badai' al-Vaqai'*, vol. 2, ed. Alksandr Buldirūf (Moscow: Institute of Asian Nations, Eastern Literature Publications, 1961), 532–7.

58. *Muamma*, literally, 'blinded' or 'obscured', is translated here as logograph following Gernot Windfuhr's 'Riddles', in T. J. P. de Bruijn (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature, vol. 1: General Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 315. *Muamma* has been translated as enigma, riddle and conundrum in the past. See, for example, Maria Eva Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate: The Persian Poetry of the Late Timurid Period', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen*

Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 136(1) (1986): 72; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 157; Seyed-Gohrab, *Courtly Riddles*, 15. Lentz and Lowry render *muwashshah* as acrostic, *tarikh* as chronogram, and *muamma* as enigma. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 284.

59. Basil Gray, *Persian Painting* (New York: Rizzoli, 1977), 118.

60. Such metaphorical devices were deemed not simply rhetorical: 'patterns of letters, words, numbers, and even colors had an association with rhythms of the cosmos'. See Ahmad Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 61. The baroque ostentation of contemporary prose can be seen in an example provided by Christine van Ruymbeke's otherwise perplexing piece 'Kashifi's Powerful Metaphor: the Energising Trope', in Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (ed.), *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 74.

61. Colin P. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power, Religion and Rhetoric* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 19.

62. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 23–8.

63. Kioumars Ghereghlou's review of *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran: Power Religion and Rhetoric*, by Colin P. Mitchell, *Iranian Studies* 44(3) (2011): 423. Ali Anooshahr, 'Franz Babinger and the Legacy of the "German Counter Revolution" in Early Modern Iranian Historiography', in K. Aghaie and A. Marashi (eds), *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity: Histories and Historiographies* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014), 25–47. John Woods' lament that the post-Mongolian history before the rise of the Safavids 'remains obscure in many of its fundamental aspects', has been echoed two decades later by Melvin-Koushki, who considers the study of later Islamicate societies to be 'in its infancy'. John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1999), 1; Melvin-Koushki, 'Of Islamic Grammatology', 54.

64. Anjum, 'Mystical Authority', 76–7; Devin A. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 138–9; Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 1–4; Ertuğrul Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492): His Biography and Intellectual Influence in Herat', PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2007, 92–3, 178–9. On the formation of schools of mysticism, see J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971),

1–30; Alexander D. Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 172 ff.

65. Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 3. Lawrence G. Potter, 'Sufis and Sultans in Post-Mongol Iran', *Iranian Studies* 27(1) (1994): 77–102.

66. Maria E. Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, 'The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shah-Rukh', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115(2) (1995): 211; Leonard Lewisohn, *Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari* (Richmond: Curzon, 1995), 104, 135. Compare with Leonard Lewisohn, 'Overview: Iranian Islam and Persianate Sufism', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 2: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism (1150–1500)* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 33–6.

67. Bektashi dervishes were closely related to the founding of the Safavid Empire in Iran. M. Fuad Köprülü, *The Origins of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Gary Leiser (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1992), 52. Sarbadarids, who 'rose against the fiscal exactions of the Mongols', had close ties with *futuwwat* circles that resembled bandits but also held the same egalitarian principles of Sarbadarid movement. Mohsen Zakeri, 'Javanmardi', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/javanmardi, last accessed 29 November 2015; Hamid Dabashi, *Shi'ism: A Religion of Protest* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 137.

68. Shahzad Bashir, 'The Imam's Return: Messianic Leadership in Late Medieval Shi'ism', in L. S. Walbridge (ed.), *The Most Learned of the Shi'a: The Institution of the Marja' Taqlid* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 22 ff; Rudi Matthee, 'The Safavid Mint of Huvayzeh: The Numismatic Evidence', in Andrew Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 268–9.

69. Said Amir Arjomand, 'Religious Extremism (*Ghuluww*), Sufism and Sunnism in Safavid Iran: 1501–1722', *Journal of Asian History* 15(1) (1981): 17.

70. Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 46.

71. See Abbas Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam and Iranian Shi'ism* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 73–8.

72. Ahmad Azfar Moin, 'Islam and the Millennium: Sacred Kingship and Popular Imagination in Early Modern India and Iran', PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 2010, 121–3. There were other sodalities such as Qadiri, Mevlevi, Khalwati, Mahdavis, see Trimingham's *The Sufi Orders in Islam*; and an updated perspective in Green, *Sufism*.

73. Ehsan Yarshater, *Shi' r-i farsi dar' ahd-i shah-rukh ya aghaz-i inhitat dar shi' r-i farsi* (*Persian Poetry during the Shahrukh Period or the Beginning of the End for Persian Poetry*) (Tehran: University of Tehran Press, 1334/1956), 19, 27. Safa attributes the phenomenon to the strong devotion of the Timurid princes rather than to a turning towards religion on the part of a people devastated by foreign invasions, which is the main reason given by Yarsharter. Both also cite the devotion of the Timurids to literature, especially poetry. Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, vol. 4, 67.

74. Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 39–46. Both conceptually and historically Sufism and Shiism share the idea of *walayah*, or an infallible 'group leader', which is of significance to the rise of the Safavids. Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 4; Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain Sherrard, with Philip Sherrard (London: Kegan Paul, 1993), 24–5, 72.

75. An 'imam' and a Sufi shaykh, both embodied authority based on blessing powers inherited through prestigious blood lineages. Green, *Sufism*, 2. 'Imams represent the repositories of hidden knowledge for Sunni and Shi'i alike.' See Matthew S. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Quest for a Universal Science: The Occult Philosophy of Sa'in al-Din Turka Isfahani (1369–1432) and Intellectual Millenarianism in Early Timurid Iran', PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012, 70; Mohammad Masad, *The Medieval Islamic Apocalyptic Tradition: Divination Prophecy and the End of Time in the 13th Century Eastern Mediterranean* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), 142–66.

76. While condemning extremism (*ghuluww*) in devotion to Ali, Jami also praises him. See Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 109–13, lines 968–1038. Also, see Robert McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480–1889* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 34–5.

77. The 'movement's vigour testifies to the religio-cultural valency of lettrism in Iran at all levels'. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Quest for a Universal Science', iii.

78. Moin, 'Islam and the Millennium', 185.

79. Indeed, as Melvin-Koushki puts it, 'the ubiquity of lettrism in late medieval and early modern Islamicate thought' should free researchers of the need to refer to the Hurufis specifically when discussing the dominance of lettrist thought. Melvin-Koushki, 'The Quest for a Universal Science', 281–2, n. 397. See Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 31; Kathleen R. F. Burrill, *The Quatrains of Nesimi Fourteenth-Century Turkic Hurufi: With Annotated Translations of the Turkic and Persian Quatrains from the Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa MS* (The Hague: De Gruyter Mouton, 1972), 84; Amelia Gallagher, 'The Fallible

Master of Perfection: Shah Ismail in the Alevi-Bektashi Tradition', PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2004, 142; Mais J. Nazarli, *Jahan-i dugane-yi miniyatur-i irani: tafsir-i karbordi-ye naqashi-ye dori-ye safavi*, trans. Abbasali Ezzati (Tehran: Moaseseh-yi ta'lif, tarjomeh va nashr-i asar-i honari-i matn, 1390/2006), 29–30.

80. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power: Hurufi Teachings between Shi'ism and Sufism in Medieval Islam: the Original Doctrine of Fadl Allah Astarabadi* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 15.

81. Manuchehr Parsadust, *Shah Tahmasb-i aval* (Tehran: Intishar, 1377/1998), 862–4. Also, see Priscilla Soucek, 'Persian Literature and the Arts of the Book', in J. T. P. de Bruijn (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature, vol. 1: General Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 399–400.

82. Bashir, 'The World as a Hat', 344, 360.

83. See Rula Jurdi Abisaab, *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 11–12; Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 31–2.

84. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 32; Amelia Gallagher, 'Shah Isma'il's Poetry in the *Silsilat al-Nasab-i Safawiyya*', *Iranian Studies* 44(6) (2011): 899; Kathryn Babayan, 'The Safavid Synthesis: From Qizilbash Islam to Imamite Shi'ism', *Iranian Studies* 27(1/4) (1994): 135, 146; Vladimir Minorsky, 'The Poetry of Shah Isma'il I', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10(4) (1942): 1047a; Wheeler Thackston, 'The *Diwan* of Khata'i: Pictures for the Poetry of Shah Isma'il I', *Asian Art* 1(4) (1988): 37, 54.

85. Etan Kohlberg, 'The Term "Rafida" in Imami Shi'i Usage', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 99(4) (1979): 677.

86. See Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, 'Icon and Meditation: Between Popular Art and Sufism in Imami Shi'ism', in Pedram Khosronejad (ed.), *The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 29–30.

87. Regarding an increase in illustrations of texts with Sufi themes in the last decades of the century, see Monfared, *Paywand-i siyasat*, 232–44; Eleanor Sims, with Boris I. Marshak and Ernst Grube, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 57.

88. For the influence of Timurid art on Ottoman and Mughal art, see Lale Uluç, 'The Common Timurid Heritage of Three Capitals of Islamic Arts', in Carol La Motte (ed.), *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi, vol. 3: Capitals of Islamic Art, Masterpieces from the Louvre Collection* (Istanbul: Sakip Sabanci Muzesi, 2008), 39–51.

89. From the correspondence between the Safavid shah and the Ottoman sultan. 'Letters from Selim and Isma'il', in William H. McNeill and Marilyn Robinson Waldman (ed.), *The Islamic World* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 339.

90. Minorsky, 'The Poetry of Shah Isma'il I', 1007a. A 'natural union of sign and meaning', the word symbol is rather commonly used as a generic, self-evident term without being clearly defined and often confused with metaphor/allegory. See Andrea Mirabile, 'Allegory, Pathos, and Irony: The Resistance to Benjamin in Paul de Man', *German Studies Review* 35(2) (2012): 322.

91. Medieval Sufi poets, such as Fakh al-Din 'Iraqi (d. 1289), with his *Istilahat-i Sufiyya*, created handbooks explaining what they meant by the figurative language of their poems. Dick Davis, 'Sufism and Poetry: A Marriage of Convenience?' *Edebiyat* 10(2) (1999): 280.

92. Regarding the much discussed 'poetics of culture', see Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), esp. 5–7.

93. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 63.210.44;

94. For a study of Attar's manuscript and its fifteenth-century illustrations as an artefact, see Marie G. Lukens, 'The Language of the Birds: The Fifteenth-Century Miniatures', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 25(9) (1967): 317–38. See all twenty-four illustrations for the Nizami manuscript in F. R. Martin and Thomas Arnold, *The Nizami Ms., Illuminated by Bihzad, Mirak and Qasim Ali, Written 1495 for Sultan Ali Mirza Barlas Ruler of Samarqand*, in the British Museum (OR. 6810) (Vienna: Printed by the author, 1926).

Chapter 1

1. 'When Western scholars first began to research and examine the Islamic art of painting, they called this practice miniature-painting … Later on, scholars in Islamic countries replaced the terms "ornamentation" and "representation" with the Western concept of miniature.' Nurhan Atasoy, 'Islamic Miniatures', in Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu (ed.), *The Different Aspects of Islamic Culture, vol. 5: Culture and Learning in Islam* (Paris: Unesco Publishing, 1998), 589. On the subject of the emblematic 'figure-types', see Ernst J. Grube, *The Classical Style in Islamic Painting: The Early School of Herat and Its Impact on Islamic Painting of the Later 15th, the 16th, and the 17th Centuries* (Venice: Edizioni Oriens, 1968). Swietochowski calls the figures 'extraneous'. Marie Lukens Swietochowski, 'The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506', in Basil

Gray (ed.), *The Art of the Book in Central Asia* (London: Serindia, 1979), 204.

2. Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 61–2; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 136.

3. Exciting and manipulating the imagination (*khiyal*) of an audience was a fundamental feature of poetry. Mitchell, *The Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 14. Meisami observes that medieval Islam, no less than medieval Christianity, was 'an era of the symbol'. As this chapter will aim to show, for Sufi poets 'all creation is one vast metaphor'. Meisami, 'Allegorical Gardens in Persian Poetic Tradition', 230, 240; also Julie Scott Meisami, *Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Poetry: Oriental Pearls* (London: Routledge-Curzon, 2002), 345.

4. Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs: Cultural Landscape of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), xix–xxiv.

5. Richard Ettinghausen, *The Unicorn* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers 1, 3, 1950); Grace D. Guest and Richard Ettinghausen, 'The Iconography of a Kashan Luster Plate', *Ars Orientalis* 4 (1961): 25–64; and compare with Klimburg-Salter, 'A Sufi Theme in Persian Painting, 43–84.

6. Robert Hillenbrand, 'Western Scholarship on Persian Painting before 1914: Collectors, Exhibitions and Franco-German Rivalry', in Andrea Lermer and Avinoam Shalem (eds), *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition 'Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst' Reconsidered* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 201–29.

7. Priscilla P. Soucek, 'Walter Pater, Bernard Berenson, and the Reception of Persian Manuscript Illustration', *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 40 (2001): 113.

8. Hillenbrand writes of (modern) profit-making as the motive for dispersal of the paintings from a unique *Shahnama* manuscript. Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Arts of the Book in Ilkhanid Iran', in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (eds), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asian, 1256–1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 155–8.

9. What makes the art 'Persian' is of concern in an early study by Laurence Binyon, James Wilkinson and Basil Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933); later, Gray writes of the spectator viewing the thirteenth-century Ilkhanid paintings from *Manafi' al-Hayawan* as looking through the paper and experiencing the illustrations as a 'window' into a 'world beyond' – a statement expressed, almost verbatim by Kurt Weitzmann when discussing the mid-fourth-century transformation from a column picture

of a simple Roman papyrus to a full-page miniature of a Byzantine codex. Gray also refers to the theatrical device of the coulisse when discussing Persian manuscript paintings. Although several forms of theatre in Khorasan date back to the eleventh century, Gray's concept of 'coulisse' seems alien to the context of his discussion. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 23, 34, 67; Kurt Weitzmann, 'Book Illustration of the Fourth Century: Tradition and Innovation', in Herbert L. Kessler (ed.), *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 98, 115; and Attar, *Mantiq al-tayr*, ed. Mohammad Reza Shafi'i-Kadkani (Tehran: Sokhan, 1384/2006), 635–38.

10. Gray, scrutinising mainly the form and style of paintings writes of the spaciousness of the Il-Khanid compositions, or harsh colour contrasts and stiff, doll-like figures. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 52.

11. Writing on the visual arts, W. J. T. Mitchell, Mieke Bal, Catherine Gallagher, Brian Stock or Susan Stewart, for instance, are not 'art historians'. The 'ornamental' reproduction of Persian manuscript paintings in published works of modern scholars in nearly every field related to the premodern Islamic world is testimony to the superficial treatment of Islamic visual arts; see, for example, Annemarie Schimmel, *As Through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), or William Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi* (Bloomington, IN: World Wisdom, 2005).

12. Roxburgh, 'The Study of Painting', 2–3. For speculation on textual origins of two sixteenth-century folios, see Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, 'Two Safavid Paintings: An Essay in Interpretation', *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 173–202; Abolala Soudavar, *Reassessing Early Safavid Art and History Thirty-Five Years after Dickson and Welch 1981* (Houston, TX: Published by the author, 2016), 13–20.

13. See Priscilla P. Soucek, 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*: 1386–1482', PhD dissertation, New York University, 1971; Marianna Shreve Simpson, *The Illustration of an Epic: The Earliest Shahnama Manuscripts* (New York: Garland, 1979); Oleg Grabar and Sheila Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

14. Compare the sources cited as the origins of narrative accounts about the Prophet Muhammad's otherworldly journey through the heavenly spheres (*mi'raj*) by Subtelny (a literary historian) and Gruber (art historian), in Maria E. Subtelny, 'The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in

Medieval Iran: An Apocalypse at the Intersection of Orality and Textuality', in Julia Rubanovich (ed.), *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction Across the Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 95, and Christiane J. Gruber, *The Timurid 'Book of Ascension' (Mi'rajnama): A Study of Text and Image in a Pan-Asian Context* (Valencia: Patrimonio Ediciones, 2008), 252.

15. Roxburgh cites Simpson's *The Illustration of an Epic*. See Roxburgh, 'The Study of Painting', 2, n. 19. Also, see Sheila S. Blair, *Text and Image in Medieval Persian Art* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), ch. 5, 172–227; Lentz, 'Changing Worlds', 39–54; Oleg Grabar and Cynthia Robinson (eds), *Islamic Art and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2001), ix–xiv.

16. See Sheila S. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World* (New York/Oxford: Azimuth Editions/Oxford University Press, 1995); David Talbot Rice, *The Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid al-Din*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1976.

17. Writing in the 1970s, Basil Gray links depiction of gardens to a 'culture permeated by the Sufi sense of the immanence of the divine in the world'. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 88; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 1–3.

18. Dick Davis, 'On Not Translating Hafez', *New England Review* 25(1/2) (2004): 2, available at: http://cat.middlebury.edu/~nereview/25-1-2/Davis.html, last accessed 1 April 2015.

19. Annemarie Schimmel, *Deciphering the Signs of God: A Phenomenological Approach to Islam* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 168; Meisami, 'Allegorical Gardens in Persian Poetic Tradition', 230; Moayyad, 'Lyric Poetry', 132–7. Also see the discussion of Nizami's *Leyli and Majnun* of Nizami in Chapter 4, below.

20. Knysh, *Sufism*, 64 ff. On medieval views on the Quran's problematic content, see Sarah Stroumsa, 'The Blinding Emerald: Ibn al-Rawandi's *Kitab al-Zumurrud*', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114(2) (1994): 182.

21. Steve Wasserstrom, 'The Moving Finger Writes: Mughira B. Sa'id's Islamic Gnosis and the Myths of its Rejection', *History of Religions* 25(1) (1985): 1–29; William F. Tucker, *Mahdis and Millenarians: Shiite Extremists in Early Muslim Iraq* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008), 52–70.

22. Green, *Sufism*, 25–6.

23. In Baghdad, Sufism was 'a full-fledged movement' by the late ninth century according to Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *Sufism: The Formative Period* (Edinburgh:

Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 6–19. Also, see Christopher Melchert, 'The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.', *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 52; Knysh, *Sufism*, 20–3.

24. Thomas Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 144–95; and the introduction to Harry S. Neale, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

25. Knysh, *Sufism*, 25–6; Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 4–5. Both the Kharijites and *mujahidun* were characterised by their 'pious renunciation, and avid concern for the defense of their communal boundaries, [and] a fervent desire for martyrdom in defense of the community those boundaries enclosed', Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 226–7. See the introductions to Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief*, and Neale, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writing*.

26. '*Wilaya*' or '*walaya*' is the notion of spiritual authority, the right and responsibility to guide the faithful. Knysh, *Sufism*, 42. Also, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization, vol. 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Peroids* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 453.

27. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, x, 2; Knysh, *Sufism*, 38, 46, 65–81. The twofold vision of the world, one manifest, (*zahir*), and the other hidden (*batin*), may be traced back to the allegorical-esoteric exegesis of the Quran and is not exclusive to Shiism alone but general to Islam and the functional role of Sufism in Islamic communities. See the Introduction to this volume, n. 85; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam* vol. 2, 219.

28. See Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 20, 114–41

29. Ibid., 157; Nasrollah Pourjavady, 'Opposition to Sufism in Twelver Shiism', in Frederick de Jon and Bernd Radtke (eds), *Islamic Mysticism Contested: Thirteen Centuries of Controversies and Polemics* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 614–23.

30. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov, 'Conflicting Synergy of Patterns of Religious Authority in Islam', in Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.), *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 11–12; Kazuo Morimoto, 'The Earliest 'Alid Genealogy for the Safavids: New Evidence for the Pre-dynastic Clami to Sayyid Status', *Iranian Studies* 43(4) (2010): 447–69.

31. Muhammad bin Karram, d. 869. See Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 88–93.

32. Abu Yazid Bistami d. 848 or 875. See Gerhard Böwering's entry, 'Bestami, Bayazid', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/

articles/bestami-bastami-bayazid-abu-yazid-tayfur-b, last accessed 1 November 2016.

33. Mohammad Reza Shafi'i-Kadkani, *Qalanariyya dar tarikh: digar dasisiha-i yik idiolozhi* (Tehran: Sukhan, 1387/2009), 21–9; Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 4–5; Neale, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writing*, 3–4.

34. Based on Quran 5:59, 'and they do not fear the blame of a blaming person'. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 86; Leonard Lewishon, 'Introduction', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 36–55.

35. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 48–51; Knysh, *Sufism*, 70; Sara Sviri, 'Hakim Tirmidhi and the Malamati Movement in Early Sufism', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 1: Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi (700–1300)* (London: Khaniqahi Nimatullahi Publications, 1993), 583–613.

36. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 114–22.

37. Variously known as *khanqah*, *ribat*, *zaviya*, *tekiyya* or *dargah*.

38. Green, *Sufism*, 81.

39. Shafi'i-Kadkani, *Qalanariyya*, 263.

40. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 35; Zabih Allah Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat-i dar Iran*, vol. 2 (Tehran: Intisharat-i Firdaws Publishers, 1369/1991), 565–67; Nasrollah Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', in J. T. P. de Bruijn (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature, vol. 1: General Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 308–9.

41. This preceded the generally acknowledged Persian literary renaissance of the tenth–eleventh centuries, and the re-emergence of pre-Islamic Sasanian bureaucratic tradition. C. E. Bosworth, 'The Tahirids and the Saffarids', in R. N. Frye (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4: *The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 129; Colin Paul Mitchell, 'To Preserve and Protect: Husayn Va'iz Kashifi and Perso-Islamic Chancellery Culture', *Iranian Studies* 36(4) (2003): 485.

42. J. T. P. de Bruijn, 'Classical Persian Literature as a Tradition', in J. T. P. de Bruijn (ed.), *A History of Persian Literature, vol. 1: General Introduction to Persian Literature* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 31.

43. Ibid., 1–3.

44. A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature* (Richmond: Curzon, [1958] 1994), 124–26. Although Nizami's literary characters, like Laya, became archetypes of the divine beloved for later Sufi poets, and Ahmad Gazali's influence is

apparent in such Nizami work as *Makhzan al-athrar*, it is inaccurate to consider Nizami a Sufi poet.

45. Julie S. Meisami, 'History as Literature', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Persian Historiography* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 8.

46. As a chronicle of contemporary events, *Shahnama* is reconfigured in Abolala Soudavar, 'The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan: The Abu-Sa'idname', in Julian Raby and Teresa Fitzherbert (eds), *The Court of the Il-khans 1290–1340* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 95–218.

47. See, for example, Marianna Shreve Simpson, 'In the Beginning: Frontispieces and Front Matters in Ilkhanid and Injuid Manuscripts', in Linda Komaroff (ed.), *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 241; Lentz, 'Changing Worlds'. Regarding *Shahnama* as 'mirror for princes', see Nasrin Askari, 'The Medieval Reception of Firdausi's *Shahnama*: The Ardashir Cycle as a Mirror for Princes', PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2013.

48. J. T. P. de Bruijn, 'Persian Literature', *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, available at: https://www.britannica.com/print/article/452843, last accessed 1 November 2016.

49. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 34, 86–7. Also, see Alice Hunsberger, 'Nasir Khusraw: Fatimid Intellectual', in Farhad Daftary (ed.), *Intellectual Traditions in Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 112–29; W. Ivanow, *Nasir-e Khusraw and Ismailism* (Bombay: Ismaili Society, 1948).

50. For a sampling of such works, see Knysh, *Sufism*, 67–81. Also, see Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 33; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 38; Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism*, 150–1.

51. Abu al-Majd Majdud ibn Adam Sanai of Ghazna likely died in 1131.

52. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 40–1.

53. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 3–6; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 10.

54. Joseph E. B. Lumbard, 'From *Hubb* to *'Ishq*: the Development of Love in Early Sufism', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 18(3) (2007): 349–64.

55. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 19.

56. See Lumbard, 'From *Hubb* to *'Ishq*', 348, as well as the introduction to his *Ahmad al-Ghazali, Remembrance, and the Metaphysics of Love* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2016), esp. 5–8; also, see 'Ahmad Ghazali: Shahidbazi as Saintly Behavior Beyond Reproach' in ch. 5 of Cyrus Ali Zargar's *Sufi Aesthetics: Beauty, Love, and the Human Form in the Writings of Ibn 'Arabi and 'Iraqi* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2011).

57. Ghazali's *Savanih al-ushaq* (the lovers flashes [of the mind]) has been trans-

lated into English, by Nasrollah Pourjavady as *Sawanih: Inspirations from the World of Pure Spirits* (London, 1986). See Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 298, n. 58.

58. See Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 298–9; Lumbard, 'From *Hubb* to *'Ishq*', 349, 351

59. For instance, see 'Yusuf is rescued form the well', folio 105a in Freer Jami; Metropolitan Museum's 'Princely Hawking Party' attributed to Mirza Ali, 12.223.1 Rogers Fund, 1912; B. Berenson, I Tati collection, folio *Farhad and Shirin*, folio 23v; or Freer Gallery anthology folio attributed to Bihzad, 'Old man and a youth in a mountain landscape', F1944.48.3.

60. William C. Chittick, 'The Spiritual Path of Love in Ibn al-'Arabi and Rumi', *Mystics Quarterly* 19(1) (1993): 5; Lewishon, *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, xxi–xxii; Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature',117–18. For qualifications regarding Rumi, see Zargar, *Sufi Aesthetics*, ch. 4, and Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present, East and West: the Life, Teaching and Poetry of Jalal al-Din Rumi* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 285–7.

61. J. T. P. de Bruijn, 'Comparative Notes on Sana'i and 'Attar', in L. Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 1: Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Ruumi (700–1300)* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 364; de Bruijn, 'Classical Persian Literature', 14; Franklin D. Lewis, 'Reading, Writing and Recitation: Sana'i and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal', PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1995, xv.

62. Lewishon, *Hafiz and the Religion of Love*, 36; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 71–5.

63. Zipoli, 'Poetic Imagery', 174. For allusive use of language (*isharah*) in Persian Sufi verse and analogical compositions, see Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 36–9.

64. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 5. In contrast, difficult passages, or even single verses in Rumi's *Mathnawi*, or Jami's *Silsilat al-dhahab*, for instance, are more than just a few.

65. See Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 52.

66. Sanai's *Sayr al-ibad* has been compared with Dante's *Divine Comedy* by E. E. Berthels and R. A. Nicholson. See Bo Utas, 'The Literary Expression of Persian Sufism', in Sven S. Hartman and Carl-Martin Edsman (eds), *Mysticism* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970), 212, n. 2.

67. Hakim Sana'i-i Ghaznavi, *Sayr-i al-'Ibad ila al-ma'ad* (*Journey of the Servants to the Place of Return*), ed. Sa'id Nafisi (Tehran: Nasim-i Saba, 1316/1938). See

de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 88–91; Baldick, 'Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century', 113–17.

68. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 92, 121; Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 309.

69. Abu Majd Sana'i, *Hadiqat al-haqiqah va shari'at al-tariqah*, ed. Mudarris Razavi (Tehran: Danishgah Tehran, 1359/1980). J. C. Brügel refers to Jami's *Haft awrang* as 'seven epic poems' and breaks them down into three categories: three of the epics are called 'didactic'; three are 'romantic'; and the seventh (*Kiradnama-yi Iskandari*) is called a '*mixtum compositum*'. J. C. Brügel, 'The Romance', in Eshan Yarshater (ed.), *Persian Literature*, (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation-Bibliotheca Persica, 1988), 175.

70. Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade: The Imagery of Persian Poetry* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 30.

71. Benedikt Reinert, 'Attar, Farid-al-Din', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/attar-farid-al-din-poet, last accessed 30 December 2012. The text of *Mantiq al-tayr* has been copied on the margins of an Anthology commissioned by Timurid Iskandar Sultan of Shiraz, dated to 1410–11, see 'The Miscellany of Iskandar Sultan, British Library, Add. 27261, available at: http://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2014/03/the-miscellany-of-iskandar-sultan-add27261.html, last accessed, 18 April 2016.

72. Badi'al-Zaman Furuzanfar, *Sharh-i ahwal wa naqd wa tahlil-i athar-i shaykh Farid al-Din Muhammad 'Attar-i Nishaburi* (Tehran: Dihkhuda Publishers, 1353/1974), 6–17.

73. Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 284–5; Farid al-Din Attar, *Tadhkirat al-awliya* (*Lives of Saints*), ed. Muhammad Isti'lami (Tehran: Zawwar Publishers, 1391/2013).

74. Helmut Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul: Men, the World and God in the Stories of Farid al-Din 'Attar*, trans John O'Kane (Leiden: Brill, 2003),133.

75. J. T. P. de Bruijn, 'The Qalandariyyat in Persian Mystical Poetry, from Sana'i Onwards', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 2: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism 1150–1500* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 75–86; Franklin Lewis, 'Sexual Occidentation: The Politics of Conversion: Christian-love and Boy-love in 'Attar', *Iranian Studies* 42(5) (2009): 693–723; Sirus Shamisa, *Shahid-bazi dar adabiyat-i farsi* (Tehran: Firdaws 1381/2002), 80.

76. Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 293–4; also de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 101. See Faridud-Din Attar, *The Conference of the Birds*, trans.

Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis (London: Penguin, 1984) (henceforth Darbandi and Davis).

77. Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 116.

78. Lewis, *Rumi Past and Present*, 64–5. For an account of a visit Jami received from Anatolia by one of Rumi's descendants (*yeki az farzandan*), see Fakhr al-Din Ali Safi bin Husayn Waiz-i Kashifi, *Rashahat ayn al-hayat*, ed. Ali Asghar Mu'iniyan (Tehran: Nikukari-yi Nuryani Foundation, 2536/1977, vol. 1, 281. Dawlatshah Samarqandi bin Ala al-Dawla Bakhtishah al-Ghazi, *Tadhkiratu sh-shu'ara* (*Memoirs of the Poets*), ed. Edward G. Browne (Leiden: Brill, 1901), 193–4. Part of Dawlatshah's *Tadhkiratu* is available in English in *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art*, trans. W. Thackston (Cambridge: Agha Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture, 1989); de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 108; Reinert, 'Attar'. Jami also repeats the fictional story, see Abd al-Rahman Jami, *Nafahat al-uns min hazarat al-quds*, ed. Mehdi Tuhidipour (Tehran: Mahmudi, 1336/1958), 460, or p. 374 of *Nafahat*, available online at: http://ketabnak.com/book/36310/نفحات-الانس.

79. Dabih-Allah Safa, 'Dawlatshah Samarqandi', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dawlatsah, last accessed 1 November 2016. Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1963, Accession Number: 63.210, available at: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mant/hd_mant. htm, last accessed 1 November 2016.

80. Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 279; Baldick, 'Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century', 128; Michael Glünz, 'Sufism, Shi'ism, and Poetry in Fifteenth-Century Iran: The Ghazals of Asiri-i Lahiji', in Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (eds), *Timurid Art and Culture, Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 195.

81. Lloyd Ridgeon, 'Naqshbani Admirers of Rumi in the Late Timurid Period', *Mawlana Rumi Review* 3 (2012): 124–68; Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005), 104; Hamid Algar, 'Astarabadi, Fazlallah', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/astarabadi-fazlallah-sehab-al-din-b, last accessed 1 November 2016.

82. Pourjavady, 'Genres of Religious Literature', 310–11; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 108. Regarding *Mathnawi*'s 'plan' and its similarity to Attar's *Ilahinama*, see Baldick, 'Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century', 125.

83. From the prose introduction by Rumi, Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Masnavi, Book One*, trans. Jawid Mojaddedi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 3. Also, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 321.

84. Rumi's *Mathnawi* articulates the ideas of Sufism 'for a larger constituency within the Islamic literary culture than other Islamic intellectual discourses which have not had such enduring historical significance'. Hamid Dabashi, 'Rumi and the Problem of Theodicy: Moral Imagination and Narrative Discourse in a Story of the *Masnavi*', in Amin Banani et al. (eds), *Poetry and Mysticism in Islam: The Heritage of Rumi* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 113; Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 93, 101.

85. Green, *Sufism*, 103. For a very brief look at this phenomenon, see Homa Katouzian, *Sa'di: The Poet of Life, Love and Compassion* (London: Oneworld, 2006), 74–5.

86. Green, *Sufism*, 87, and the concise overview by Charles Melville, 'The Mongols in Iran', in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (eds), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 57.

87. Abbas Amanat, 'Messianic Islam in Iran', *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/islam-in-iran-v-messianic-islam-in-iran, last accessed 1 November 2016.

88. Green, *Sufism*, 73, 85–7; Charles Melville, '*Padsha-i Islam*: The Conversion of Sultan Mahmud Ghazan Khan', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Persian and Islamic Studies in Honour of P. W. Avery* (Cambridge: Centre of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, 1990), 159–77; Judith Pfeiffer, 'Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate', in Judith Pfeiffer (ed.), *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 136–7; Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 4–5.

89. Sheila Blair, 'The Religious Art of the Ilkhanids', in Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (eds), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2002), 125; Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 466–7; Shahzad Bashir, 'The *Risalat al-Huda* of Muhammad Nurbakhsh (d. 869/1464): Critical Edition with Introduction', *Rivista Degli Sudi Orientali* 75(1/4) (2001): 2–3; Melvin-Koushki, 'The Quest for a Universal Science', PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2012, 69–71.

90. Green, *Sufism*, 2.

91. Moin, *Millennial Sovereign*, 8; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 295–334; Shahzad Bashir, *Sufi Bodies: Religion and Society in Medieval Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011). See the discussion of 'vision' and 'self-disclosure' (*tajalli*) in Zargar, *Sufi Aesthetics*, introductory ch., and Matthew

Pierce, 'Remembering the Infallible Imams: Narrative and Memory in Medieval Twelver Shiism', PhD dissertation, Boston University, 2013, 121–80.

92. Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, 'Hafiz and the Sufi', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *Hafiz and Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry*, trans. S. Guppy and L. Lewisohn (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 143–4; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 71. Medieval Sufi poets, such as Fakh al-Din Iraqi with his *Istilahat-i Sufiyya*, created handbooks explaining what they meant by the figurative language of their poetry, see Davis, 'Sufism and Poetry', 284.

93. Jürgen Paul, 'The Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order in Timurid Herat', in Nile Green (ed.), *Afghanistan's Islam: From Conversion to the Taliban* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 73. Origins of early modern radicalism may be attributed to Ibn Arabi's cosmology. Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 462–7.

94. Knysh, *Sufism*, 87; Amanat, 'Messianic Islam'.

95. Said Nafisi, Forward, *Kulliyat-i Shaikh Fakhr al-Din Iraqi* (Tehran, 1338/1960), 376; Utas, 'The Literary Expression of Persian Sufism', 210, n. 4. Iraqi's work has been published in English as *Fakhruddin 'Iraqi Divine Flashes*, trans. William C. Chittick and Peter Lamborn Wilson (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

96. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 59. Iraqi's *Lamaat* is considered to be one of the most popular Sufi works in verse. Before Jami's time, Ibn Arabi's ideas had also been spread in the Persian-speaking world, notably by Abd al-Razzaq Kashani (d. 1330) and Shah Nimat allah Wali (d. 1437). William Chittick, 'Ebn al-'Arabi', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranica.com/newsite, last accessed 30 November, 2015.

97. On superstition, see Assadullah S. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Le Livre des Rois, miroir du destin, II: Takht-e Soleyman et la symbolique du Shah-Name', *Studia Iranica* 20 (1991): 76–8; Hillenbrand, 'The Arts of the Book in Ilkhanid Iran', 165–6.

98. Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9–11; Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam*, 73–4.

99. Such reverence is recounted by Ghiyas al-Din Khwandamir, *Habib al-siyar*, 4 vols, ed. Dabir Siyaqi (Tehran: Khayyam, 1362/1984), see, for example, vol. 3, 543 and vol. 4, 149; also, Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, 66–78; Arjomand, 'Religious Extremism'.

100. Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 195–6.

101. Green, *Sufism*, 126, 149.

102. Ibid., 24, 113.

103. Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, vol. 4, 66–76; Yarshater, *Shi'r-i farsi dar 'ahd-i shah-rukh ya aghaz-i inhitat dar shi'r-i farsi*, 78–80, 171.

104. Paul, 'The Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya', 72, 77, and the case of Abu Said, 84.

105. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 114; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 136–40.

106. Hamid Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi: Khatam al-Shu'ara' and Khatam al-Awliya', *Ишрак: Ежегодник исламской философии* 3 (2012): 146, online at: *Ишрак: Ежегодник исламской философии* https://iphras.ru/uplfile/smirnov/ishraq/3/11_algar.pdf, last accessed 29 November 2015; İlker Evrim Binbaş, 'Timurid Experimentation with Eschatological Absolutism: Mirza Iskandar, Shah Ni'matullah Wali, and Sayyid Sharif Jurjani in 815/1412', in Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (ed.), *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 287–93.

107. For Abu Said and Ubaydullah Ahrar, see V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia, vol. 2: Ulugh-Beg*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 165. For Sharaf al-Din Yazdi and Sultan Muhammad, see İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Din Yazdi and the Islamicate Republic of Letter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 51 ff. For Uzun Hasan and Baba Abd al-Rahman Shami, see Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 107. For Uzun Hasan and Haydar Safavi, see Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Gulat Sects* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 31–2.

108. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 4; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 136.

109. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 2, 165; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 70–1.

110. Hillenbrand, 'Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece', 110. *Taqlid* is the word with negative connotations similar to that of the English word 'imitation'; *imitatio* is the word Losensky prefers. Paul Losensky, '"The Allusive Field of Drunkenness": Three Safavid-Moghul Responses to a Lyric by Baba Fighani', in Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (ed.), *Reorientations: Arabic and Persian Poetry* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 230–2; Maria Subtelny, 'The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid, Sultan Husain Baiqara, and its Political Significance', PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1979, 74–8. Echoing Persianate poetry – especially after Baysunghur's time – a derivative-

illustration based on existing compositions was used as a tribute to earlier masters.

111. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 145–6.

112. In Herat, between 1481 and 1486, Jami (in Persian), and Navai (in Turkish) each composed five epic 'responses' to what was considered Nizami's Sufi allegories. Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492), 199. Despite certain affinities, works of Pasikhani and Astarabadi are rather post-Islamic than Sufi. See Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 78 ff.

113. See n. 76, above; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 144–5; Green, *Sufism*, 73.

114. The seven thrones, or 'The Seven Brothers' as the star constellation Ursa Major is known in Persian.

115. Regarding Jami's influence on the painting by Bihzad in a contemporary manuscript of Sadi's *Bustan*, see Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 28; Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250–1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 63–4; Michael Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzad of Herat, 1465–1535* (Paris: Flammarion, 2004), 203–4.

116. Green, *Sufism*, 126.

117. Subtelny and Khalidov, 'Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning', 211; Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 216–18.

118. Shahzad Bashir, *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nurbakhshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 45–50, 57, 59; Abd al-Vasi' Nizami Bakharzi, *Maqamat-i Jami*, ed. Majib Mayel Heravi (Tehran: Nay Publishing, 1992), 192; Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 240–1.

119. Melvin-Koushki, 'Quest for a Universal Science', 5–6; Hans R. Roemer, 'The Successors of Timur', in Peter Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), vol. 6. 140.

120. See Jo-Ann Gross, 'Authority and Miraculous Behaviour: Reflections on Karamat Stories of Khwaja 'Ubaydullah Ahrar', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 2: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism. 1150–1500* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 166–8; Itzchak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 35.

121. Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi', 142.

122. '*Yik sar nabāt-i Kirmani*', Jami, *Nafahat al-uns min hazarat al-quds*, 267, available at: http://dl.downloadbook.ir/up1/nafahat-jami_downloadbook.ir.pdf,

last accessed 15 November 2017; Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 55; Kashifi, *Rashahat*, 242.

123. Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi', 149.

124. Around 1453–4; Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 75.

125. Hamid Algar, 'The Naqshbandi Order: A Preliminary Survey of Its History and Significance,' *Studia Islamica* 44 (1976): 133–4; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 28.

126. Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 204; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 33; Kashifi, *Rashahat*, 238; Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 72–3, 85–6.

127. See V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia, vol. 3: Mir Ali-Shir*, trans. V. and T. Minorsky (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 34; Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 204; Kashifi, *Rashahat*, 247–52. The first recension of Jami's divan was dedicated to Abu Said in 1463, Paul Losensky, 'Jami, Life and Works', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jami-I, last accessed 30 December 2012. Also, see Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 85–6, 106, 399, fig. 6.

128. Algar, 'Naqshbandi Order', 138.

129. See Jürgen Paul, 'Forming a Faction: The *Himayat* System of Khwaja Ahrar', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23(4) (1991): 533–48.

130. Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 19, 35–7.

131. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 3, 38. The unique system of tax immunities in Bayqara's time 'created the preconditions and context for extensive patronage activity', see Subtelny, 'Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage', 408, 479–505.

132. Subtelny, 'The Poetic Circle', 98; also Abolala Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts: Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), ch. 3.

133. Navai mentions Jami as his *ustad*, sayyid, *sanad*, *makhdum* and shaykh al-Islam. Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 200, n. 63.

134. Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 33. Among such works by Jami are his essay on music, his commentary on the opening verses of Rumi's *Mathnawi*, and at least one essay on *muamma* (logogriph). Ala Khan Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharh-i ahwal-i Jami* (Tehran: Center for Iranian Studies, 1378/1999), 166, 170, 179.

135. Ali Shir Navai, *Khamsat al-mutahayyirin*, trans. Muhammad Nakhjavani, ed. Mehdi Farahani-Monfared (Tehran: Farhangestan, 1381/2003), 31.

136. Bakharzi, *Maqamat-i jami*, 235. It was only later that, in Jami's case, two other *mathnawi* epics were added to this pentalogy to make what we now know as

the *Haft awrang* (*Seven Thrones*). For the dating of Salman and Absa l, see Lingwood, *Politics, Poetry, and Sufism in Medieval Iran*, 3, 23–5.

137. Regarding mystical themes in Navai's epics, see Alessio Bombaci, *Histoire de la littérature turque*, trans. Irène Mélikoff (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968), 123–9.

138. Paul, 'The Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya', 85.

139. Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi', 141, n. 13; Bashir, *Messianic Hopes*, 178 ff.

140. Regarding possible Nimatullah–Wali rivalry with the spiritual master of Baha al-Din Naqshband, see Jean Aubin, *Matériaux pour la biographie de Shah Ni'matullah Wali Kirmani* (Tehran, Paris: Institut Français d'Iranologie de Téhéran, 1983), 12–15; Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 234–47; de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 124.

141. N. Hanif, *Biographical Encyclopaedia of Sufis: Central Asia and Middle East* (New Delhi: Sarup, 2002), 3; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 96; Melvin-Koushki, 'Quest for a Universal Science', 397.

142. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 69.

143. Chittick, 'Perfect Man', 141.

144. Fakhruddin Ali bin Hussein al-Wa'iz-i Kashifi-Safi, *Lata'if al-tawa'if*, ed. Hamad Golchin Ma'ani (Tehran: Iqbal, 1367/1989), 237; Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi,' 145.

145. Kashifi, *Rashahat*, 280–1. Also see Jami's promotion of Ibn Arabi in Erik S. Ohlaner, *Sufism in an Age of Transition: Umar al-Suhrawardi and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 128–9.

146. Kashifi, *Rashahat*, 244–5; Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 77; Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 41–2. Also Gray, *Persian Painting*, 95, 122, 130; Eleanor Sims, 'The Garrett Manuscript of the *Zafar-Nama*: A Study in Fifteenth-century Timurid Patronage', PhD dissertation, New York University, 1973.

147. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 12, 20, 48, 81–9. Also, Windfuhr, 'Riddles', 317, 319.

148. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 83–4.

149. Ibid., 84–5.

150. Binbaş characterises Yazdi's views as essentially neo-Platonic, entailing belief in persistence of prophetic intervention – especially through dreams – in the world. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 79, 81, 96.

151. Ibid., 86.

152. Ibid., 88; Melvin-Koushki, 'Quest for a Universal Science', 327, 385, 424–6. Also, see Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, 118–19; Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate', 56–79, 71; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 155.

153. Sheila Canby, *Persian Painting* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 44.

154. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures,* 84–5.

155. Roxburgh, 'Micrographia', 13, 16.

156. See ch. 11, Oleg Grabar, *Islamic Visual Culture, 1100–1800: Constructing the Study of Islamic Art* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), vol. 2, esp. 229–51.

157. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 9.

158. See Sims, *Peerless Images*, xi–xiii. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 331–3.

159. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 78.

160. Green, *Sufism*, 126.

161. Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 30.

162. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 62; Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, 310.

163. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 123.

164. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 175.

165. Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, 31.

Chapter 2

1. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Fletcher Fund, 1963, Accession No.: 63.210, see at: https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mant/hd_mant.htm, last accessed November 2016. For a codicological examination of the manuscript, see Yumiko Kamada, 'A Taste for Intricacy: An Illustrated Manuscript of *Mantiq al-tayr* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art', *Orient: Reports of the Society for Near Eastern Studies in Japan* 45 (2010): 129–34, 156–75.

2. See 'Enthronement of Zav' in Blair, 'The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran', 270–1.

3. Marie Lukens Swietochowski, 'The Historical Background and Illustrative Character of the Metropolitan Museum's *Mantiq al-tayr* of 1483', in Richard Ettinghausen (ed.), *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 42.

4. Subtelny, 'Ali Shir Navai: Bakhshi and Beg', 797–807; Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 3, 16.

5. Marc Toutant, 'Materialist Ideology Facing a Great Sufi Poet: The Case of Ali Shir Nawa'i in Soviet Uzbekistan; From Concealment to "Patrimonalisation"', *Orient* 46 (2011): 36.

6. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 3, 46.

7. Maria Eva Subtelny, 'Art and Politics in Early Sixteenth-Century Central Asia', *Central Asiatic Journal* 27(1/2) (1983): 144; Gülru Necipoğlu, 'The

Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sights, Insight, and Desire', *Muqarnas* 32(1) (2015): 36–7.

8. Priscilla Soucek, 'Calligraphy in the Safavid Period 1501–76', in Jon Thompson and Sheila R. Canby (eds), *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576* (Milan: Skira, 2003), 54, 58.

9. It was largely due to Navai, who composed his own treatise *Mufradat* on the subject, that the distinction between *muamma* and *lughaz* was obscured and the practice of *muamma* lost its philosophical underpinnings, becoming instead a form of riddle in which – in Navai's words – only 'the minds of small children and curious Turks' would be interested. Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks*, 86. Also see Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate', 71.

10. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 3, 47–55; Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 87–8.

11. Lentz, 'Changing Worlds', 45.

12. Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's *Zafarnama* of John Work Garrett Collection at Johns Hopkins University is undated but estimated to be from *c.* 1490. See Mika Natif, 'The *Zafarnama* [*Book of Conquest*] of Sultan Husayn Mirza', in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *Insights and Interpretations: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 211–28. Regarding Bihzad and the 'new style', see Lentz, 'Changing Worlds', 45.

13. Many of these characteristics were customarily attributed to Bihzad until Thomas Lentz proposed 'a curative' of sorts to the mythologised 'Bihzadian' legacy, and the dearth of historical facts by proposing the idea of the 'new style' as brought about by several artists of the late Timurid period (*c.* 1485–1506). Roxburgh, 'Kamal al-Din', 121.

14. Sims, *Peerless Images* 57; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 29; Paul, 'Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order', 80.

15. For example, Nizami's *Layla and Majnun* from the early decades of the fifteenth century in Soucek, 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', 578–623.

16. For an early examples of an encampment scene and the possible Jalayirid origins of many possible details in such a scene, see *Diwan* of Ahmad Jalayir in the Freer Gallery of Art (F1932.34); Massumeh Farhad, 'The *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir and the Diez and Istanbul Albums', in Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis, and Christoph Rauch (eds), *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 503–5; Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 51–2.

17. Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 25–7; Grabar and

Blair, *Epic Images and Contemporary History*, 13–27; Soudavar, 'The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahador Khan', 95–211.

18. Jonathan J. G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and their Methods of Work* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) 12. See comments on paintings 'Aziz and Zulaykha Enter the Capital of Egypt and the Egyptians come out to Greet Them' (folio 100b), and 'Yusuf Gives a Royal Banquet in Honor of his Marriage' (folio 132a) in Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 118–23 and 142–5.

19. For example, 'Majnun visited by his father' from a partial *Khamsa* of Nizami, Muzaffarid Shiraz, late fourteenth century, Keir Collection (reproduced in Canby, *Persian Painting*, illustration 22, p. 40); or the 1410–11 painting of 'Khusraw's Lion Combat', commissioned by Sultan Iskandar, Gulbenkian Foundation, LA 161, in Soucek, 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', plate 54.

20. See Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*; Farid ud-Din Attar, *The Speech of the Birds: Concerning Migration to the Real, The Mantiqu't-Tair*, trans. Peter W. Avery (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1998).

21. Citing Northrop Frye, Meisami writes, 'It is continuity that distinguishes [allegory] from ambiguity or simple allusion.' Understood approximately as an extended metaphor, allegory without some kind of narrative basis will be a simple allusion or a single metaphor. Meisami, 'Allegorical Techniques', 2–3.

22. See Chapters 4 and 5, below.

23. See Attar, *Speech of the Birds*, trans. Avery; also see the introduction to Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 9–25.

24. See Taqi Purnamdarian, *Didar ba Simurgh: haft maghala dar 'irfan, shi'r wa andishi-i Attar* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1996), 107–22.

25. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 59. On analogical composition, see Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 36–9. Poets and artists of this period 'were expected to know the work of earlier masters and to be able to incorporate minor details and entire compositions from the past'. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 251–3, 285; also Gray, 'Timurid Pictorial Arts', 869; Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 134.

26. Vasifi, *Badai' al-waqai'*, 532–7. See Subtelny: 'A Taste for the Intricate', 56–79; Maria E. Subtelny, 'Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat', in Roger M. Savory and Dionisius A. Agius (eds), *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in*

Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 137–55.

27. Furuzanfar, *Sharh-i ahwal*, 317.

28. According to Julian Baldick, there are eleven named birds, and the same series of eleven birds ask questions more than once, but anonymously. Baldick, 'Persian Sufi Poetry up to the Fifteenth Century', 121.

29. Attar's *sa'veh* (صعوه) is rendered as sparrow by John O'Kane. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 12.

30. Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 35–6, 40–1, 45–6, 49–50.

31. Sa'id Nafisi, *Sarchishmah-i tasawwuf dar Iran* (Tehran: Asatir [1343/1965] 1383/2005), 32–42. Regarding *ma'rifa*, or gnosis, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 130.

32. Most twentieth-century publications of the *Mantiq al-tayr* have divided the text into numbered chapters that vary from edition to edition. See Shaykh Farid al-Din Attar-i Nishaburi, *Mantiq al-tayr*, ed. M. J. Mashkur (Tehran: Kitabfurushi-i Tehran, 1347/1968).

33. See 'An indecisive bird complains', in Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 92–3; also Farid al-Din Muhammad Attar-i Nishaburi, *Mantiq al-tayr* (*maqamt-i tuyur*), ed. Sadiq Gawharin (Tehran: Intisharat-i 'Ilmi va Farhangi, 1381/2003), 106, 1911–14 (henceforth Gawharin). Unless otherwise indicated all Persian verses cited from *Mantiq al-tayr* will be from this edition of the work, with references parenthetically noted in the body of the text, page number(s) followed by line number(s).

34. Gawharin, 106; Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 92–3.

35. Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 94–5.

36. Gawharin, 108–9.

37. Lukens, 'The Language of the Birds', 327

38. Swietochowski, 'Historical Background', 54. See n. 2, above, and the image of King Gushtasp in Gauvin Alexander Bailey, 'The Bernard Berenson Collection of Islamic Painting at Villa I Tatti: Mamluk, Ilkhanid, and Early Timurid Miniatures', Part I, *Oriental Art* 47(4) (2001): 54.

39. Lukens, 'The Language of the Birds', 323–8.

40. Compare with the 'enthronement' scene of the 'Execution before a King' from *Matla al-Anwar* of Amir Khosrow Dihlawi of 1485 at Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, MS 163, f. 28r; reproduced in Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* (London, I. B. Tauris, 1996), 63. For more on the depiction of water and trees, see Chapter 5, below.

41. Milstein, 'Sufi Elements in the Late Fifteenth-Century Painting of Herat', 357, 363. Also see the attribution of images to stories in Swietochowski's comments in 'Historical Background', 54, and compare with Gray, 'Timurid Pictorial Arts', 869–70.

42. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 97–146.

43. Gawharin, 131, 2347.

44. Compare with Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 117, and a similar tale in book 2 of Rumi's *Mathnawi-i ma'nawi*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (Tehran: Majid Publishers, 1382/2004), lines .3116–54.

45. '*Digari guftash ki mitarsam zi marg*', Gawharin,128, 2306.

46. Gawharin, 128; Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 151.

47. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 594–603.

48. Still, Badi' Al-Zaman Furuzanfar points out that the Hoopoe's answers to the questions about the Path are sometimes 'defective and unacceptable'. Here, for example, it is unclear if the questioner, who uses the excuse of death to forgo the journey, is afraid of natural death or a metaphorical death related to the mundane ways of life that must be abandoned. It is unclear why the risk of natural death is any greater for a Sufi initiate than a layperson. Both Furuzanfar and Ritter treat Attar's reference to death in this passage literally, not metaphorically. See Furuzanfar, *Sharh-i ahwal*, 317, 374; Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 42.

49. Ultimately, it is the phenomenal world that 'kills' us, and so renouncing the world and dependence on God will make death meaningless. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 34–61.

50. Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, 311.

51. Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 36, 62.

52. Edward Fitzgerald, *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (New York: Avenel Books, n.d.), ruba'i No. 60.

53. Gawharin, 132–3, lines 2370 ff.

54. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of Persian text from Rumi's *Mathnawi* are from *Mathnawi-i ma'nawi*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (Tehran: Majid Publishers, 1382/2004), henceforth designated parenthetically in the body of the text with an 'M' followed by the book (volume), and then the verse number.

55. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 35–6.

56. Shaykh Farid al-Din Attar-i Nishaburi, *Musibatnama*, ed. Nurani Wasal (Tehran: Zawar Booksellers, 1364/1986), 58.

57. See Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 122.

58. In his *Musibatnama*, Attar associates flickering oil lamps with life:

> mi natarsi kin cheraq-e zud mir   می نترسی کاین چراغ زود میر
> zud mirad gar tavani zud gir   زود میرد گر توانی زود گیر

Attar, *Musibatnama*, 89.

59. Cats were associated with miracles and convents kept cats as guardians. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 209, 365; İsenbike Togan, 'The Khafī, Jahrī Controversy in Central Asia Revisited', in Elisabeth Ozdalga (ed.), *Naqshbandis in Western and Central Asia: Change and Continuity* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1994), 27; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 138.

60. Muhammad Hisham Kabbani, *The Naqshbani Sufi Way: History and Guidebook of the Saints of the Golden Chain* (Chicago, IL: Kazi Publications, 1995), 189. See also, Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 175, 238–9; Manz, *Power, Politics, and Religion*, 219; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 31.

61. Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 118.

62. Rumi, *Mathnawi* 1.1547 ff. See also comments by Karim Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i mathnawi-i ma'nawi*, 6 vols (Tehran: Ettela'at Publishers, 1380/2002), vol. 1, 493 ff.

63. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 306–8; Milstein, 'Sufi Elements in the Late Fifteenth-Century Painting of Herat', 363.

64. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 308.

65. Ibid., 113.

66. Bernard O'Kane, 'The Arboreal Aesthetic: Landscape, Painting and Architecture from Mongol Iran to Mamluk Egypt', in Bernard O'Kane (ed.), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 242.

67. Mustafa Shah (ed.), *Tafsir: Interpreting the Qur'an, vol. 1: Gestation and Synthesis* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 45.

68. See Ja'far Sajjadi, *Farhangi-istelahat wa ta'birat-i 'irfani* (Tehran: Tihuri, 1375/1997), 381–82; Aziz al-Din ibn Muhammad Nasafi, *Kitab al-insan al-kamil*, ed. Marijan Molé (Tehran, Institute Franco-Iranien, 1962), 302.

69. Sa'id Nafisi (ed.), *Sukhanan-i manzum-i abu said abu al-khayr* (Tehran: Shams Library Publications, 1334/1956), 22; Paul Losensky's introduction in Farid ad-Din Attar's *Memorial of God's Friends: Lives and Sayings of Sufis* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 14; Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 122–4.

70. Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 170.

71. Or the 'Valley of Seeking'. Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 15.

72. According to Gawharin, in the earlier centuries it was held that the 'stations' (*maqama*) on the Sufi path were seven, in addition to ten 'states' (*hal*). The names and numbers of these varied and changed according to the author and the period. See Gawharin, 333, n. 3225.

73. Gawharin, 181–2.

74. Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 166–7.

75. Gawharin, 334.

76. Navai, using his pen name, reproves himself in a verse from one of his ghazals, 'O Fani! disregard the superficial expression and seek the [true] meaning' (*ze lafz bogzar o mani talab kon ey Fani / ز لفظ بگذر و معنی طلب کن ای فانی*). Mir Ali Shir Nawa'i, *Diwan-i amir nizam al-din alishir nawa'i-i fani*, ed. Rukn al-Din Humayunfarukh (Tehran: Ibn Sina, 1342/1963), 64.

77. For a brief account, see Michael Sells, 'Bewildered Tongue: The Semantics of Mystical Union in Islam', in Moshe Idel and Bernard McGinn (eds), *Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 98–101. Also Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 554 ff.

78. Gawharin 181–2; Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 560–1.

79. On Shibli, see Karamustafa, *Sufism*, 23–6.

80. Gawharin, 183, line 3287.

81. Ibid., 183, lines 3388–91

82. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 124–6.

83. Iliyas b. Yusuf Nizamī Ganja-i, *Khusrow wa shirin*, ed. Ḥasan Vahid Dastgirdi (Tehran: Qatr Publications, 1378 /2000), 350, line 5.

84. Or, the synonymy with bitterness may have led to the plant's appellation as *sabr* (aloe). See Sirus Shamisa, *Farhang-i isharat-i adabiyat-i farsi: asatir, sunan, adab, i'tiqadat, 'ulum,* 2 vols (Tehran: Āl-i Tabataba'i University, 1377/1998), 788. See also Muhammad Mu'in, *Farhang-i Farsi mutavassit (An Intermediate Persian Dictionary)* (Tehran: Amir Kabir Publishing, 1984), s.v. 'sabr'.

85. Mehdi Muhaqiq, *Tahlil-i ashar-i nasir khusrow: ayat-i qurani, ahadith, lughat, amthal* (Tehran, 1344/1965, Kabul, 1365/1987), 212.

86. Muslih al-Din Sa'di, *Kulliyat-i Sa'di*, ed. Muhammad Ali Furughi (Tehran: Herems, 1385/2007), 680.

87. Muslih al-Din Sa'di, *Gulistan-i Sa'di*, ed. Muhammad Ali Furughi (Tehran: Iqbal, 1370/1992), 32.

88. '*Baza*' is Mongolian for cucumber. Muhammad Khaza'ili, *Sharh-i Gulistan* (Tehran: Jawidan, 1348/1969), 748.

89. Paul E. Losensky, 'The Palace of Praise and the Melons of Time: Descriptive

Patterns in 'Abdi Bayk Sirazi's *Garden of Eden*', *Eurasian Studies* 2 (2003): 18.

90. Sadi, *Kulliyat-i Sadi*, 557.

91. Ibid., 669. The Bukhara and Khwarazm regions were known for cultivation of this particular melon (*kharbozeh*). Shamisa, *Farhang-i isharat-i adabiyat-i farsi*, 412. Regarding Husayn Bayqara's 'agrarian patronage state', see Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 128–9. She cites Dawlatshah's *Tazkirat al-Shuara*, where the historian writes of 'Farming and agriculture' that they have reached such a high level that it has made Saturn and Virgo envious of peasants, 130.

92. Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz of Shiraz, *Diwan*, ed. Muhammad Qazwini and Qasim Ghani (Tehran: Zavar, 1941), 124.

93. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 610, line 1100.

94. Ibid., 613, line 1161; also, 614, line 1170.

95. Gawharin, 135, 2417.

96. See Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 2, 377. Loqman is mentioned again elsewhere by Rumi in relation to 'patience'. See *Mathnawi* 3.1842–54. See also Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 3, 479–82.

97. See Rumi's account of Dhul Nun al-Misri, M2.1386–1461.

98. Further contextualising the depiction of melons (*talebi* and the *kharbozeh* varieties) is Jami's summary of the chronicles kept by a disciple of the Naqshbandi's eponymous master, Baha'uddin Naqshband. A passage in Jami's *Anis al-talebin*, involving seekers and *kharbozeh* melons reads: 'His Munificence the shaykh … would eat melons (*kharbozeh* / خربزه) and throw the rinds to him and due to the fervor of his quest (*talab* / طلب) … he would eat the blessed rinds completely. Three times in this assembly the melon rind was thrown to him and he ate it whole' (*hazrat-e Khajeh … kharbozeh mikhord pust-e kharbozeh ra be suy-e ishan andakht – ishan az ghayat-e hararat-e talab … pust ra hamchenan bar sabil-e tabarok betamami mikhordand – seh bar dar an majles pust-e kharbozeh beh suy-e ishan biandakht va ishan betamami khordand* / حضرت خواجه ... خربز ه/ می خورد پوست خربزه را بسوی ایشان انداخت ـ ایشان از غایت حرارت طلب ... پوست را همچنان بر سبیل تبرک بتمامی می خوردند ـ سه بار در آن مجلس پوست خربزه سوی ایشان بینداخت و ایشان بتمانی خوردند). See Abdul Rahman Jami, *Khulasa-i anis al-talebin*, ed. Muhammad Dhakir-Hussein (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1996), 65.

99. Gawharin, 182, line 3271.

100. Subtelny, 'A Taste for the Intricate', 71.

101. Chalisova, 'Persian Rhetoric: *Elm-e Badi'* and *Elm-e Bayan*', 144–51.

102. *Iham* has been called the chief characteristic of Hafez's style. See Meisami, 'Allegorical Techniques', 39.

103. Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 115–16. Also see Bakharzi, *Maqamat-i jami*, 122.

104. As Alishir Navai writes, 'I am infidel of love and desiring of idols [*botan*] is my religion' (*kafar-e eshqam o soday-e botan din-e man ast* / کافر عشقم و سودای بتان دین منست), Nawa'i, *Diwan-i nawa'i*, 49.

105. Etymologically, the word for idol, '*bot*', has been connected to 'Buddha', but according to Dihkhoda, it is more likely that it comes from the name of a daeva, the proto-demons in Zoroastrian Bundahishn. See Dihkhoda dictionary, available at: www.vajehyab.com/dehkhoda/8-بت, last accessed 30 June 2016. See also *Farhan-i Muin*, s.v. 'bot'; Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, 315.

106. Gawharin, 185, line 2316.

107. Attar, *Mantiq al-tayr*, ed. Muhammad Reza Shafi'i-Kadkani (Tehran: Sokhan, 1384/2006), 714.

108. Gawharin, 164–5.

109. Ibid., 180, line 3236.

110. 'King Dara and the Herdsman', from a *Bustan* of Sa'di, 1488, Cairo, National Library, Adab Farsi 908. Reproduced in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 105.

111. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 2, 211–13.

112. *Kashf al-asrar*, vol. 5, 56, as cited in Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 753–4.

113. Mir-Kasimov, *Words of Power*, 441–2.

114. Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis*, 101–4. See also H. T. Norris, 'The Hurufi Legacy of Fadlullah of Astarabad', in Leonard Lewisohn (ed.), *The Heritage of Sufism, vol. 2: The Legacy of Medieval Persian Sufism 1150–1500*, ed. (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999), 93.

115. Hamid Algar, 'Nuktawiyya', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edn (Leiden: Brill, 1995), vol. 8, 114–17; Amanat, *Apocalyptic Islam*, 73–88; Ali Reza Zakavati Qaraguzlu, 'Sayri dar mataleb "Mizan"-i Mahmud Pasikhani', *Ma'aarif* 17(1) (1379/2001): 130–66.

116. Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 46–54, 68.

117. See the account of Bayqara, who reverts the Friday prayer *khutba* back to the 'Sunni way' in Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 135–8.

118. Vasifi, *Badai' al-waqai'*, 250. See, also Robert W. Dunbar, 'Zayn al-Din Mahmud Vasifi and the Transformation of Early Sixteenth Century Islamic Central Asia', PhD dissertation, Indiana University, 2015, 135–52.

119. Amir Ali Shir Nawa'i, *Mizan al-awzan*, trans. H. M. Sadiq (Tehran: Takderakht, 1393), 20.
120. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1.
121. Ibid., 580, line 492.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid., 539, line 1459.
124. Ibid., 488, line 429.

Chapter 3

1. See Lukens, 'The Language of the Birds', 9, 331.
2. 'In the accuracy of the narrated elements, combined with the predominance of the genre elements, this miniature appears to be unique.' Swietochowski, 'Historical Background', 58–62.
3. Swietochowski, 'The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506', 204.
4. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 97–146.
5. See ibid., 126–8.
6. This observation has been repeated by other art historians, more recently, Sims, *Peerless Images*, 168. Regarding the artist of these illustrations, Melikian-Chirvani writes, 'Il témoigne de la connaissance approfondie qu'a l'artiste de l'oeuvre d'Attâr et de sa démarche dans la voie soufie. Comme les choix précédents, celui-ci confirme son indifférence foncière à l'égard du contenu narratif.' See Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 126–8 and 132.
7. For example, see Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 112, n. 24 and 134, n. 49.
8. Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, 336. Also see Michael Barry, 'Illustrating 'Attar: A Pictorial Meditation by Master Habiballah of Mashhad in the Tradition of Master Bihzad of Herat', in Leonard Lewisohn and Christopher Shackle (eds), *'Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition: The Art of Spiritual Flight* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 135–64.
9. Lines numbered (for each couplet) according to Farid al-Din Muhammad Attar-i Nishaburi, *Mantiq al-tayr* (*maqamt-i tuyur*), ed. Sadiq Gawharin (Tehran: Intisharat-i 'Ilmi va Farhangi, 1381/2003), 166 (henceforth Gawharin). For an English translation, see Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 152–3.
10. Notwithstanding the orthography and diacritics, these verses are worded as they appear in Persian on the upper left side of the 1486 painting.
11. Swietochowski writes that the 'scene of the woodcutters' in the foreground

of this illustration is 'extraneous' to the text. See Swietochowski, 'The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506', 204; also Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 97–146; Bahari, *Bihzad*.

12. Nafisi, *Sarchishmah*, 169.

13. Gawharin, 161–7, lines 2897–2994.

14. Furuzanfar, *Sharh-i ahwal*, 387.

15. Gawharin, 163, line 2939.

16. Ibid., 164, lines 2953 ff.

17. Ibid., 167, line 2993.

18. For our purposes the discrepancies between Attar's text here, as edited by Gawharin, and the text as copied on folio 44v of the 1487 manuscript – such as the manuscript's omission of the word 'goat' in line 2978 – are negligible.

19. M. H. A. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6th edn (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 6. For a discussion qualifying such concepts and terminology for Persian poetry, specifically Hafiz, see Meisami, 'Allegorical Techniques', 1–40.

20. For a discussion of critical verse or break-line in Persian manuscript painting, see Farhad Mehran, 'The Break-Line Verse: The Link between Text and Image in the First Small *Shahnama*', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Shahnama Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 151–70.

21. See Ritter's rendition of this anecdote in *Ocean of the Soul*, 355.

22. To be further discussed in Chapter 4; see Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 25–7.

23. See Shamisa, *Farhang-i isharat-i adabiyat-i farsi*, s.v. 'nafs'.

24. Abd al-Rrazaq Kashani, *Istilahat al-sufiya ya, farhang-i istilahat-i `irfan wa tasawwuf*, trans. Mohammad Kwajavi (Tehran: Mawla, 1372/1993), 144.

25. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 112–14.

26. Shamisa, *Farhang-i isharat-i adabiyat-i farsi*, 781.

27. Gawharin, 332, n. 2979. 'Pharaoh' has been explicitly defined as an 'allusion to vainglory and pride, out-of-control nafs'. Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 621.

28. Attar, *Speech of the Birds*, trans. Avery, 496, n. 194.

29. 'Abd al-Karim Jurbuzahdar, *Ta'birat-i 'irfani az zaban-i 'Attar-i Nishaburi* (Tehran: Asatir, 1374/1995), 141, 185–6. For examples in Rumi, see Rahim 'Afifi, *Farhangnama-i shi'ri: bar asas-i athar-i sha'iran-i qarn-i siwum ta yazdahum-i hijri* (Tehran: Surush, 1372/1993), 1903–4.

30. 'Afifi, *Farhangnama*, vol. 3, 2676.

31. See Rumi, *Mathnawi-i ma'nawi*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (Tehran: Majid Publishers, 1382/2004), vol. 3, verse 974–5. Henceforth designated paren-

thetically in the body of the text with an 'M' followed by the book (volume), and then the verse number.

32. See, for example, Jalal al-Din Muhammad Balkhi, *Mathnawi*, vol. 3, ed. Muhammad Isti'lami (Tehran: Zawwar, 1369/1990), 262.

33. Attar, *Musibatnama*, ed. Nurani Visal (Tehran: Zavar, 1364/1986), 16; also, Reza Ashrafzada, *Farhang-i nawadir lughat wa tarkibat wa ta'birat-i athar-i 'Attar-i Nishaburi* (Mashhad: Astan-i Quds-i Razavi, 1367/1988), 639.

34. Gawharin, 36, lines 644–5.–50; see also Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 284.

35. See Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 78, 348, n. 125. See also 'Afifi, *Farhangnama*, vol. 1, 774.

36. Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 4, 2692; Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*, 78.

37. See the last couplet of the penultimate 'tale' in 'Essay 19' of Attar, *Asrarnama-i shaykh Farid al-Din 'Attar Nishaburi*, ed. Sadiq Gawharin (Tehran: Chap-i Sharq, 1338/1959), 169. Also, Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 5.1394.

38. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 215; Attar, *Musibatnama*, ed. Visal, 85.

39. Drawings of various subjects in Baysunghur's calligraphy album, Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul H.2152, fol. 87a. Reproduced in David Roxburgh, *The Persian Album: From Dispersal to Collection, 1400–1600* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 89.

40. Gawharin, 166, line 2974.

41. See Glünz, 'Sufism, Shi'ism, and Poetry in Fifteenth-Century Iran, 196.

42. See Schimmel's introduction in *A Two-Colored Brocade*. For the likely origins of such conventions, see Shah, *Tafsir: Interpreting the Qur'an*, vol. 1, 45.

43. See Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 381–2. See a discussion on the play of meaning around trees in Franklin Lewis, 'A Persian in a Pear Tree: Middle Eastern Analogues for Pirro/Pyrrhus', in Olivia Holmes and Dana E. Stewart (eds), *Reconsidering Boccaccio: Medieval Contexts and Global Intertexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 305–43, esp. 320–3.

44. Kashani, *Istilahat*, 144. William Chittick points out that in the theophany according to Ibn Arabi, so Jami, the 'loci' of the (perfect) individual as an example of manifestation of God, is symbolised by the tree. See Chittick, 'Perfect Man', 155.

45. Gawharin, 112, 2023–6.

46. See Qadir Fazili, *Farhang-i muzu'i-i adab-i parsi: muzu'bandi wa naqd wa barisi Mantiq al-tayr wa Pandnamah-i Shaykh Farid al-Din 'Attar-i Nishaburi* (Tehran, Talaya, 1374/1995), 406.

47. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, 154–7.

48. For many nuances of *nafs* see Badi'al-Zaman Furuzanfar, *Farhang-e foruzanfar*, ed. Maryam al-Sadat Ranjbar (Esfahan: Prosesh, 1374/1995), 639–46. See also Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 763–8; Kashani, *Istilahat*, 144–6.

49. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 613–14.

50. On the 'Primordial Ocean', see Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 631.

51. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 113. The Red Sea is used by Jami as a metaphor in a critical line on reasons why he is writing his own version of the *Layla and Majnun*. See ch. 4.

52. Jami, especially in his *Subhat al-abrar*, makes repeated references to trees and uses the expression *shajara-i dil* (the tree of the heart) implying that the Beloved 'gardener' should tend to his heart. Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman Jami, *Masnawi-i Haft awrang*, ed. Aqa Murtida Mudarris Gilani (Tehran: Sa'di Publishers, 1361/1982), 462, 467; also Julie Scott Meisami, 'The World's Pleasance: Hafiz's Allegorical Gardens', *Comparative Criticism* 5 (1983): 168.

53. Parenthetically, the poet Jami is recorded to have been mistaken specifically as a '*hizum-kish*' (firewood-carrier) due to his clothes and personal appearance. See Rukn al-Din Humayunfarukh's introduction to Nawa'i's *Amir Nizam al-din Alishir Nawa'i-i fani* (Tehran: Ibn Sina, 1342/1963), 31–3.

54. Rumi, *Diwan-i kabir*, ed. Badi' al-Zaman Furuzanfar (Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1977), 196, No. 888, line 9315).

55. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: a Study of the Works of Jalaloddin Rumi* (London: East-West Publications, 1980), 87.

56. See Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 573, vol. 2, eds A'lakhan Afsahzad and Hussein Ahmad Tarbiyat (Tehran: Centre for Iranian Studies, 1378/1997–9), 241, line 339.

57. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 341, line 5554.

58. The often cited influence of Jami's text on the painting, signed by Bihzad, of the scene of the seduction of Yusuf from *Bustan* of Sa'di. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 63–5. Also, see Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 18–25. See also Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 655, line 1966.

59. Jami, *Salaman wa absal*, in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 444, line 1045.

60. All verses from Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, ed. J. Alishah, with page and line numbers within the brackets.

61. Rumi, *Mathnawi*, 6.249–352.

62. See Nawa'i, *Diwan-i nawa'i*, 64. See also the tale of 'an Indian King' in Gawharin, 149–50, lines 2667–85.

63. Melikian-Chirvani, 'Khaje Mirak Naqqash', 126–8.

64. Paul, 'Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order', 77.

65. As Meisami, writes, 'analogical symbolism … goes beyond simple allegorical tropes that link abstract and concrete … [and constructs], through the use of recurrent images, of larger and more inclusive figures, creating a complex system of imagery'. See Meisami, 'Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition', 248.

66. Hamid Algar, 'Silent and Vocal *zekr* in the Naqshbandi Order', in Albert Dietrich (ed.), *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 39–46.

67. See Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism*, 46; Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 194.

68. See Ian Richard Netton, *Sufi Ritual: The Parallel Universe* (Richmond: Curzon, 2000), 79–90.

69. Paul, 77; Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 27

70. See Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 82–3. For the superiority of silent *zekr*, see *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 80; for the superiority of vocal *zekr*, see Jami, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 86.

71. Ibid., 266. See also, Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 366.

72. Togan, 'The Khafī, Jahrī Controversy', 24. Also see Kishwar Rizvi, '"Its Mortar Mixed with the Sweetness of Life": Architecture and Ceremonial at the Shrine of Safi al-din Ishaq Ardabili during the Reign of Shah Tahmasb I', *Muslim World* 90 (2000): 332, 342.

73. By 1550, but even then 'also giving a place to the vocal one'. See Togan, 'The Khafī, Jahrī Controversy', 32.

74. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 20.

75. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 176; Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 197. John Woods cites Muizz al-Din Pir Husayn Muhammad Kart (d. 1370), who announces the re-establishment of Islamic sacred law in place of the 'filthy trees of unbelief'. Woods, *Aqquyunlu*, 8. Citing the same, Kathryn Babayan writes of the cutting down of 'filthy trees of unbelief'. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 305, 341, n. 37.

76. Ibid., 97, n. 33.

77. See Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 54, 58–60.

78. See Togan, 'The Khafī, Jahrī Controversy', 32–3.

79. See Amir-Moezzi, 'Icon and Meditation', 28.

80. Kabbani, *Naqshbani Sufi Way*, 207.

81. See Algar, 'The Naqshbani Order', 137; see also Jo-Ann Gross and Asom Urunbaev, *The Letters of Khwaja 'Ubayd Allah Ahrar and his Associates*

(Leiden: Brill, 2002), 10; and Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 19–20.

82. See Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting' 28; also see Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 63–4.

83. Susan Al-i Rasul, *'Irfan-i Jami dar majmu'a atharash* (*The Gnosticism of Jami in His Corpus*) (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance: 1383/2005), 32–3.

84. Jami, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 80, lines 405–6.

85. Jami refers to the 'la' (لا) in the 'Profession of Faith' as two 'saplings', conjuring up the image of that which is being sawed in the painting. See Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 78, line 369.

86. Section heading in *Silsilat al-dhahab*, Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 82.

87. Ibid., 83, line 646.

88. Ibid., 86, lines 515–16.

89. Ibid., 90, line 611.

90. Kabbani, *Naqshbani Sufi Way*, 172.

91. For other depictions of Sufis in a similar pose, see 'a Seated Sufi Hugging His Knees', New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 57.51.30, reproduced in Sims, *Peerless Images*, 259, fig. 174. Also see reproductions in Muhammad Khaza'i, *Elixir of Painting: A Collection of Works by Masters of Iranian Painting and a Review of the Schools of Painting, from 'Mongol' to 'Safavid'* (Tehran: Art Bureau of the Islamic Propagation Organization, 1989), 424, fig. 286, and 323, figs 284 and 285.

92. Kabbani, *Naqshbani Sufi Way*, 175.

93. Soucek, 'Comments on Persian Painting', 73.

94. Maria Subtelny, 'Kāšefi', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, available at: www.iranicaon-line.org/articles/kasefi_kamal, last accessed, 30 August 2016. See also Arley Loewen, 'Proper Conduct (*Adab*) is Everything: The *Futuwwat-namah-i Sultani* of Husayn Va'iz-i Kashifi', *Iranian Studies* 36(4) (2003): 545

95. Hussein Wa'iz Kashifi Sabzavari, *Futuwwatnama-i sultani*, ed. Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub (Tehran: Farhang-i Iran Foundation, 1349/1971), 365–8.

96. Loewen, 'Proper Conduct (*Adab*) is Everything', 545.

97. Subtelny, 'Kāšefi'.

98. Lloyd Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi: A Sufi Code of Honour* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 168.

99. Kashifi, *Futuwwatnameh-i sultani*, 29; Ridgeon, *Jawanmardi*, 6.

100. Kashifi, *Futuwwatnameh-i sultani*, 5–6.

101. ʿ*har keh az elm-e futuvvat bahreh yaft / ru suy-e din kard o az donya betaft*ʾ, Kashifi, *Futuwwatnameh-i sultani*, 5.

102. See Attar, ʿ*Futuwwatnama-i manzum*ʾ, in *Diwan-i Farid al-Din Attar-i Nishaburi*, ed. Saʾid Nafisi (Tehran: Sanaʾi Books, 1339/1960), 92–5.

103. See Attar's epilogue, ʿ*khatm shod bar to cho bar khorshid nur/ mantiq al-tayr o maqamat-e tuyur*ʾ. See Gawharin, 247, line 4460.

104. See Nafisi, *Sarchishmah*, 32–42. Regarding *ma'rifa*, or gnosis, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 130.

105. See Purnamdarian, *Didar ba Simurgh*, 107–22.

106. Gawharin, 105.

107. See Ritter, *Ocean of the Soul*, 34–45.

108. Kabbani, *Naqshbani Sufi Way*, 172.

109. Neale, *Jihad in Premodern Sufi Writings*, 3–7.

110. Alishir Navai, *Majalis al-nafais*, trans. Hakim Shah Muhammad Qazvini (Tehran, 1323/1945), 268.

Chapter 4

1. 'Majnun on Layla's Tomb', from *Khamsah* of Nizami, British Library, Or. 6810, f. 144v.

2. Robert Hillenbrand, 'The Iconography of the *Shah-nama-yi Shahi*', in Charles Melville (ed.), *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 57.

3. Swietochowski, 'The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506', 206. The paintings have been reproduced in a volume compiled and published by Martin and Arnold, *The Nizami Ms.*, 8–9.

4. Majnun recalls 'wild men' of the medieval European tradition, such as 'Lancelot, and the legendary "hairy anchorite"'. See Julie Scott Meisami, review of *Love, Madness, and Poetry: An Interpretation of the Magnun Legend*, by Asad E. Khairallah, *Edebiyat* 4(2) (1979): 283. Regarding Majnun as a trope in lyric poetry, see Meisami's *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 257, n. 33.

5. See 'Majnun Mourns on Layla's Tomb' from 1410, 1460 and 1451, plates 134, 135 and 136, respectively, in Soucek, 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', 134–6.

6. Or approximately 300 couplets earlier. See Ilias b. Yusuf Nizami Ganjah-i, *Layla wa Majnun*, ed. Hasan Vahid Dastgerdi (Tehran: Qatreh, 1378/2000), 236–65. Layla's tent is mentioned at pp. 241–2.

7. On break-line or critical verse, a couplet that occurs before or after the painting, see Mehran, 'The Break-Line Verse'.

8. *Khamsah* of Nizami, British Library, Or. 6810, f. 144r. For early examples of graph–text or image–subject matter decoupling, see Persis Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, and Cosmos in Medieval Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 77, 79, 98.

9. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam* , 33. Enclosing the text in the field of the painting was initiated in the 1390s by the Jalayir school of painting. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 72.

10. Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 265. The final verse of the second couplet in the manuscript begins with the word '*gar*', which makes less sense than Dastgerdi's edited text, '*ku*', an abbreviation of 'for it' referring back to the 'firmament', or, as it were, the phenomenal world.

11. In *Majnun wa layli* of Amir Khusrow of Dehli, completed by 1302, after both lovers are dead, allusions are made to fate and bad fortune reminiscent of Nizami's words '*charkh ast kharas-e asiya row.*' Amir Khusrow Dihlawi, *Khamsa: Shirin wa Khusrow, matla al-anwar, hasht bihisht, majnun wa layli, aiyna-i iskandari*, ed. Amir Ahamad Ashrafi (Tehran: Shaqayeq, 1362/1984), 233.

12. Depictions of musical instruments in earlier illustrations of *Shahnama* are mostly occasioned by scenes of fights or feasts (*razm u bazm*) – and hunting, which was a form of training exercise for war – where horn-blowers or flute players may appear. Basil W. Robinson, *Fifteenth-Century Persian Painting: Problems and Issues* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), 5, fig. 1.

13. *Shahanshah-nama* of Ahmad Tabrizi, British Museum, Or. 2780, fol. 44 v, reproduced in Ivan Stchoukine, *Les Peintures des manuscrits Tîmûrides* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1954), plate 14. See also Gray, *Persian Painting*, 67.

14. A canopy and Turkmen yurts with only the top parts visible from behind the hills are also depicted in the double-page painting, completed in 1410–11 in Shiraz, 'Pilgrims at the Ka'ba' in an anthology of various texts, at the British Library, Add 27261, fols. 362v–363r; reproduced in Sims, *Peerless Images*, 135, fig. 51. Also, 'Mongol encampment', from *Jami' al-tawarikh* from *c.* 1415, in which a figure appears kneeling on the ground to stir a caldron set on a burning wood fire under a zigzag-shaped tree with spiky branches at the centre of the composition. The caldron, the cook and the tree are flanked by two white tents that are held down with a series of ropes nailed to the ground. Ms. Suppl. persan, 1113, fol. 30, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris. See Stchoukine, *Les Peintures*, plate XLIX.

15. *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad (d. 1410) of the Jalayirids, at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 32.35. The drawings on the margins of folio 35 in the *Divan* may represent one of the earliest encampment scenes not required by the text. See Farhad, 'The *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalayir, 485–512. Grabar, *Islamic Visual Culture 1100–1800*, vol. 2, 230, n. 22; Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 52; David Roxburgh, 'Heinrich Friedrich von Diez and His Eponymous Albums: Mss. Diez A. Fols. 70–74', *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 112; Roxburgh, *The Persian Album*, 172 n. 57; D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Islamic Gardens and Landscapes* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 69; Klimburg-Salter, 'A Sufi Theme in Persian Painting', 43–84.

16. British Library, Or. 6810, f. 127v.

17. Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 241–2.

18. 'Layla and Majnun Faint at their Meeting', at the British Museum, Add. 27261, fol. 131b; Soucek, 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', 482, and plate 127. At least two other manuscripts made in Herat earlier in the fifteenth century appear to follow the same arrangement, see at the Topkapi Saray Museum, Hazine 781, fol. 138a, and, especially, Hazine 761, fol. 140a. See Soucek 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', plates 128–31.

19. Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 241–2.

20. See Soucek 'Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamseh*', plates 134–6.

21. An image of a lion assaulting and devouring a man's head has been reported to exist in a Timurid workshop album dated *c.* 1370–1430, at Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul (H.2152, fol. 64b). Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 140.

22. Melville, 'The Mongols in Iran', 50.

23. Hillenbrand, 'The Arts of the Book in Ilkhanid Iran', 165–6.

24. Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 23–34.

25. In the same study, Golombek also describes the function of another tree in a painting from the *Kelilah and Dimna* in expressing the moral of the story. Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 24, 27.

26. 'Ardavan Captured by Ardashir', a page from the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, Iran (probably Tabriz), 1330s; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC (S1986.103).

27. The depictions continued into the Safavid period. See 'The Prince and his Intimate', captioned: 'the best work of Master Dust the artist', Tabriz, *c.* 1530–40. Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul (H.2154, f. 138b); reproduced in Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 247, fig. 133.

28. Swietochowski, 'The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506', 206. The paintings have been reproduced in a volume compiled and published by Martin and Arnold, *The Nizami Ms.*, 8–9.

29. Rumi, *Mathnawi-i ma'nawi*, ed. R. A. Nicholson (Tehran: Majid Publishers, 1382/2004), vol. 4, verse 3029; Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, 102; Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 225–6. For the continued popularity of this visual trope, see Kishwar Rizvi, 'The Suggestive Portrait of Shah Abbas: Prayer and Likeness in a Safavid *Shahnama*', *Art Bulletin* 94 (2012): 232–3, fig. 9.

30. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1,130, lines 1386 ff.

31. Also 'Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman'. *Khamsa* of Nizami, *c.* 1490; fol. 18r, British Library, Add. 25900; reproduced in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 116, fig. 57.

32. Ilias b. Yusuf Nizami, *Makhzan al-asrar*, ed. Hasan Wahid Dastgerdi (Tehran: Sura Mehr, 1379/2001), 86–90.

33. See O'Kane, 'The Arboreal Aesthetic', 237, 242.

34. The tale of the old woman berating the Saljuq king, Sanjar – who, having died in 1157 was Nizami's contemporary – is the first tale in the fourth essay titled, 'On respect for Serfs'. Nizami, *Makhzan al-asrar*, 86–90.

35. *Bustan* of Sa'di, Cairo, National Library, MS Arab Farsi 908. See Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 63; Roxburgh, 'Kamal al-Din Bihzad', 121.

36. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 330, line 5347; also 225, line 3280.

37. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 264.

38. In numerous verses by Rumi water and vessel are stand-ins for body and soul. See Rumi, *Mathnawi* 1.17 and *Mathnawi* 3.1439. For Rumi, watering the body may lead to Hell, whereas watering the soul will lead to the paradisiacal lotus tree. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 265.

39. Nur al-Din 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, ed. A'la Khan Afsahzad, Hussein and Ahmad Tarbiyat (Tehran: Center for Iranian Studies, 1378/1999), 458, line 862.

40. 'A gnostic meaning should perhaps be read into the flute player on the horizon.' Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting*, 175.

41. See Alessio Bombaci's discussion of the literature spawned by the legend of Leyla and Majnun in Arabic, Persian and Turkish in the preface to Fuzuli's, *Leyla and Mejnun*, trans. Sofi Huri (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979); see also Jerome Clinton, 'A Comparison of Nizami's Layli and Majnun and Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet', in Kamran Talattof and Jerome Clinton (eds), *The Poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: Knowledge, Love, and Rhetoric* (New York:

Palgrave, 2000), 15–27. The English guitarist and singer, Eric Clapton alludes to Nizami's tale in his 1970s song, 'Layla', where the beloved appears to have been given more agency in not reciprocating the singer's love.

42. '*Panj Ganj*'. See Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 612.

43. *Layli wa Majnun*, already popular, became enormously so during the fifteenth century, when more than ten authors composed their own versions of the story in verse. Afsahzad lists the names of some forty-six authors who composed at least some rendering of the story between the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries, ibid., 766–9.

44. A. A. Seyed-Gohrab, *Layli and Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing in Nizami's Epic Romance* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 68–9.

45. Monfared, *Paywand-i siyasat*, 232–44. By the late fifteenth century, *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi still remained the most frequently illustrated text. Barbara Brend, 'Review of *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam and the Riddle of Bihzad of Herat, 1465–1535*, by Michael Barry', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 17 (2007): 66.

46. Afsahzad lists the names of forty-six authors who composed at least some rendering of the story between the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 766–9. Also, see Sims, *Peerless Images*, 57.

47. Referred to with superlatives, '*afdhal*' and '*aqdam*', in the sixteenth century by Safavi, *Tazkireh-i tuhfeh-i Sami*, 143.

48. Rumi, *The Masnavi, Book One*, 4.

49. Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, 273–5, 436, n. 13.

50. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 189, line 2546.

51. In his thirties, Jami composed an abridged version of the discourses, spiritual sayings and the miraculous deeds of Baha al-Din Naqshband, the eponymous founder of the Naqshbani Sufi order. Jami's text contains numerous verses from *Diwan* and the *Mathnawi* of Rumi – far more than the quotes from Sadi and Attar, whose verses are also cited. Abdul Rahman Jami, *Khulasa-i anis al-talibin*, ed. Muhammad Dhakir-Hussein (Patna: Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, 1996), preface, 6, 8, 14, 73, etc. See also Jami, *Nafahat al-uns min hadarat al-quds*, 459–64.

52. Ahmad b. Muhammad Tusi, *Sama' wa futuwwat* (*Listening and Chivalry*), ed. Ahmad Mujahid (Tehran: Manuchehri, 1359/1981), 9–10. For a description of *sama'*, see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 178–86.

53. Jami, *Haft awrang,* vol. 1, 249.

54. The concept is '*muaradah*'. Writing in the eleventh century, the North African Ibn Rashiq states, 'most themes, images and metaphors (*al-maani*) belong equally to all poets'. See Losensky, '"The Allusive Field of Drunkenness"', 227–9. Also, see Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 107.

55. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 93; Chittick, *The Sufi Doctrine of Rumi*, 14. See Chapter 1 references to 'the school of love', for example, n. 57.

56. Written some time after Alishir Navai's initiation into the Naqshbandi order, which occurred in 1476. Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 178–9.

57. Jami, *Baharistan wa rasa'il-i Jami*, ed. Ala Khan-i Afsahzad (Tehran: Mirath-i Maktub, 1378/2000), 330–1.

58. Schimmel, *Triumphal Sun*, xii; also, Chittick, 'Perfect Man, 155; Jami's *Silsilat al-dhahab*, in Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 131–2, lines 1411–25.

59. Ibn Arabi's quintessential book on Sufism, *Fusus al-hikam,* was summarised in another (shorter) work, *Naqsh al-fusus*, on which Jami wrote a popular commentary in Arabic and Persian, *Naqd al-nusus fi sharh naqsh al-fusus*. See William Chittick, 'Ibn Arabi's Own Summary of the *Fusus*: "The Imprint of the Bezels of the Wisdom"', *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi Society* 1 (1982): 1–2.

60. See Knysh, *Sufism*, 84–95.

61. Jami, *Baharistan*, 332.

62. Ibid., 330.

63. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 295.

64. For examples, see Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 85–8; Subtelny, 'The Poetic Circle', app. 4, 208–10.

65. Subtelny, 'Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat', 146

66. Vasifi, *Badai' al-waqai'*, 897.

67. Ibid., 900–1.

68. Ibid., 412.

69. Ibid., 470.

70. Ibid., 474.

71. Subtleny, 'The Poetic Circle', 199.

72. Herat 'was permeated with literary concerns', Subtelny, 'Scenes from the Literary Life of Timurid Herat', 150.

73. For example, see the often illustrated scene in *Shahnama* of Ferdowsi, where Rustam rescues Bizhan from the well. Sims, *Peerless Images*, 204–6.

74. Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 282; Tambling, *Allegory*, 64, 174. The

precise terminology awaits analysis among the various concepts (in English/ Latin and Arabic/Persian).

75. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, 278. See Amir Khusrow Dihlawi, *Khamsa*.

76. Madsen, *Rereading Allegory*, 65. In an epilogue to his *Salaman and Absal*, Jami also provides the key to the allegory that is presented through the story. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 123; Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 91

77. Davis, 'Sufism and Poetry', 288.

78. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 236, lines 227–34; Afsahzad's reading of those lines in *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 640–1.

79. Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 60, line 15; 66, line 10, and passim.

80. Ibid., 24–30. The existence of a historical 'Majnun' has been debated over the centuries, e.g., Ibn al-Kalbi, who died in 764 CE suggests that such a person never existed. Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 594.

81. In Amir Khusrow Dihlawi's version of the story, it is Majnun who marries (the daughter of Nufel). Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 638, 666.

82. As quoted in ibid., 646.

83. In his mostly prose work *Lawa'ih*, which deals directly with Sufi metaphysics, Jami emphasises the paradoxical conditions for achievement of such a state, 'if the annihilated is conscious of his annihilation he is not annihilated', Jami, *Lawa'ih dar bayan-i ma'arif wa ma'ani*, in *Baharistan*, 452.

84. Meisami writes that Nizami's judgement of Majnun's moral conduct is, in fact, critical and negative. Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 160.

85. Nizami's spirituality, it has been pointed out, is never absent and it would be hard to deny traces of Sufi learning in his writings. For a critical reading of Nizami's celebrated romance, including its narrative shortcomings, see Clinton, 'A Comparison of Nizami's Layli', 7, 25.

86. Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 178. For an example of 'mirror for princes', see the *Qabusnama* of Qabus b. Vushmgir, ed. Gholam Hussein Yusofi (Tehran: Kitabha-i Jibi, 1377/1999); or Nizam al-Mulk, *Siyasatnamah: The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Drake (Richmond: Curzon, 2002).

87. Poetic function to emphasise the message (for its own sake) at the expense of the reference is often almost reversed in Jami's allegories. See Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Forth Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 36.

88. See Kamal Abu Deeb, *Al-Jurjani's Theory of Poetic Imagery* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979), 52–5.

89. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 30. For the appropriateness of discussing what the painting 'should be' before the Hegelian 'aesthetic age', see Jacques Rancière, *The Future of the Image* (London: Verso, 2007), 69–79.

90. Meisami, 'Allegorical Gardens in the Persian Poetic Tradition', 229–60. Also, see Schimmel's discussion of water and trees in *The Triumphal Sun*.

91. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 48, 88; Canby, *Persian Painting*, 44.

92. From a manuscript of *Three Poems* by Khwaju Kirmani, made in Jalayirid Baghdad, dated 1396, British Library, Add. 18113, f. 26v. Reproduced in Canby, *Persian Painting*, 45.

93. See, for example, Quran 8:11. Ahmed Ali, trans. *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 155.

94. See *Layla wa Majnun* in Jami's *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 236, lines 225 ff.

95. Ibid., lines 238–9.

96. Sajjadi, *Farhang*, 748.

97. M. Bakhirniya, *Sayri dar shi'r-i Jami* (Tehran: Abraviz, 1352/1973), 35–8.

98. The same term is also used by Attar. See Darbandi and Davis, *Conference of the Birds*, 166, 196.

99. The numbers within parentheses that follow refer to line numbers according to the text of *Layla and Majnun* in Jami's *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 379 ff., lines 3280 ff.

100. Jami, *Haft awrang,* vol. 2, 385, lines 3414–17.

101. Its referents may vary. In Rumi, the gazelle, producing musk, becomes a representative of the gnostic who 'feeds on Divine Light in God's garden to bring forth beauty'. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 106. Akiko Motoyashi Sumi, *Description in Classical Arabic Poetry: Wasf, Ekphrasis, and Interarts Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 153–4. The particular trope of the gazelle as the beloved was also well known in folk literature. The 'guarantor of the gazelle' (*Zaamin-i aahu*) was used as a sobriquet for the eighth Imam of the Shias, who like Majnun, saves a gazelle from death at the hands of a hunter. Jami recounts the story of Majnun doing so not only in the romance of *Layla and Majnun*, in *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 310, lines 1810 ff., but also in his first book of *Silsilat al-dhahab*, in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 218, lines 3119–37.

102. Jami, *Haft awrang,* vol. 2, 390, lines 3517 ff.

103. Lisa Golombek made this observation first about 'Seduction of Yusuf', by Bihzad from the 1488 manuscript of Sadi's *Bustan*. See Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 28; Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of*

Islam, 63–4. Verses from Jami's allegorical Sufi romance, *Yusuf wa Zulaykha*, are incorporated in the architectural details in Sadi's *Bustan*. Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*, 203–4

104. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 98.

105. The date of its composition is unknown. Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 180.

106. Jami, '*Risala dar muraqiba wa adab-i zekr az Moulana Jami*' (*On Vigilance and Customary Rituals of Remembrance by Master Jami*), in *Baharistan*, 487 ff. Also, see nn. 55 and 56 and the related text, above.

107. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 157, line 1927.

108. Ibid., 117, lines 1130–1.

109. See Jami's *Subhat al-abrar* in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 569, line 282.

110. Ibid., 572–3, esp. lines 350–1.

111. Jami, *Tuhfat al-ahrar* in *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 497, line 626.

112. See Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, 6190.

113. Explanatory notes by Vahid Dastgerdi, see Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 94.

114. Ibid., 217, line 13.

115. Silent form of *zekr*, generally recognised as the mainstay of the Naqshbandi ritual, was often accompanied by vocal forms. See Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 13, 25–7; Paul, 'Rise of the Khwajagan-Naqshbandiyya Sufi Order', 75; Algar, 'Jami and Ibn 'Arabi', 142.

116. See Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 82–3. For superiority of silent *zekr*, see *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 80; for superiority of vocal *zekr*, see Jami, *Silsilat al-dhahab*, in *Haft awrang,* vol. 1, 86.

117. Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, 224.

118. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 159.

119. Mordechai Z. Cohen, 'Moses Ibn Ezra vs. Maimonides: Argument for a Poetic Definition of Metaphor (*Isti'ara*)', *Edebiyat* 11 (2000): 12–13. The figure of a spinner from earlier in the fifteenth century appears in Baysunghur's *Shahnama*, Gulistan Palace Museum Ms. 716, p. 31. Reproduced in Hillenbrand, 'Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece', 103.

120. British Library collection to which Nizami's *Khamsa* manuscript Or. 6810 belongs, 'arise from the many and varied connections between Britain and India' since the foundation of the East India Company in 1600. See Martin and Arnold, *The Nizami Ms*. Also, see British Library website at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_6810_f003v#.

121. Schimmel, *Two-Colored Brocade*, 244.

122. Nasafi, *Kitab al-insan al-kamil*, 106.

123. The appeal of 'milk and sugar' as a Sufi trope led Shia scholar, Baha al-Din Amili (d. 1621), who was criticised for believing in the Sufi doctrine of Divine Love, to use it as the title for his allegorical *mathnawi*, *Shir wa shekar*. Maryam Moazzen, 'Shi'ite Higher Learning and the Role of the Madrasa-yi Sultani in Late Safavid Iran', PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2011, 163, 183

124. Rumi, *Mathnawi* 4, lines 3031–51.

125. Rumi, *Mathnawi* 6, 1868.

126. In fact, metaphor has more than an emotive value, it offers new information. See Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 47–53. Also see Meisami, 'Allegorical Techniques', 39; Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 287–8.

127. For this Ali Tajdini cites Rumi's work *Fihi ma fihi* (*It Is What It Is*). Ali Tajdini, *Farhang-i namadha wa nishaniha dar andishe-i Mowlana* (Tehran: Surush, 1383/2005), 745.

128. Commentary from Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 6, 517.

129. This is in the case of Rumi's writings, whose theosophy was in line with Jami's. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 97.

130. See Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, and Cosmos*, ch. 3, esp. 97–102.

131. Sadi makes use of the expression 'finger of wonderment'. See Muhammad Khaza'ili, *Sharh-i Bustan* (Tehran: Javidan, 1348/1969), 137.

132. See Kamal Kashifi, *The Royal Book of Spiritual Chivalry*, trans. Jay R. Crook (Chicago, IL: Kazi Publications, 1997).

133. Throughout, Kashifi supports his claims by citing the sayings of the Prophet or verses from the Quran. The citations here are from the Persian edition, Hussein Va'iz Kashifi Sabzavari, *Futuwwat-nama-i Sultani*, ed. Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub (Tehran: Farhang- Iran Foundation, 1349/1971), 365–68. Also see Plate 12 in this volume which relates to Kashifi's account of Solomon who built Queen Sheba (Belqis) a canopy with 'many figures and images' after she complained about the heat and the sunlight in *Futuwwat-nama-i Sultani*, 371.

134. Soucek, 'Comments on Persian Painting', 73.

135. Roxburgh, 'Kamal al-Din Bihzad', 121.

Chapter 5

1. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 5.

2. See 'The Safavid Synthesis', in Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 147 ff. The great change Persian manuscript painting underwent during the reign of the second Safavid king, Tahmasp, shows 'the integration of the refined, cool and

classical Bihzadian style of Herat with the exuberant, vibrant and brash style practiced in Tabriz under the Turkomans and Isma'il'. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 168.

3. Abd al-Jami's *Haft awrang*, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, F1946.12. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 173; Jon Thompson and Sheila Canby (eds), *Hunt for Paradise: Court Arts of Safavid Iran, 1501–1576* (Milan: Skira, 2003), 73; Canby, *Persian Painting*, 79.

4. Brend, *Islamic Art*, 164.

5. de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*, 124.

6. Afsahzad, *Naqd wa barisi-i athar wa sharhi ahwal-i jami*, 208; Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*, 438. The accusation of being a Shiite sympathiser levelled against Jami in Baghdad based on some verses from *Silsilat al-dhahab* is not necessarily a sign of Jami's fame; in fact, the difficulties he faced there suggest the opposite, as they have been traced back to a dispute between two members of Jami's travelling entourage, one of whom quit the group in Baghdad and perhaps deliberately spread rumours about his former friends. See Ali Asghar Hikmat, *Jami barayeh dabirestanha: mutizamin tahqiqat dar tarikh ahwal wa athar-i mandhum wa manthur-i khatam al-shu'ara Nur-al-din 'Abdulrahman Jami (817–898 AH)* (Tehran: Bank-i Meli, 1320/1941), 83–4. Also, see Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 117, 144–5.

7. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 173; Canby, *Persian Painting*, 79; Thompson and Canby, *Hunt for Paradise*, 73.

8. Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, supp. turc 316, 317, see at: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84271998/f720.item.zoom. Texts written by Navai enjoyed popularity in Safavid Iran, underscoring the importance of the Timurid legacy to the Safavids. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 84.

9. Harvard Art Museums, object No. 1964.149, available at: https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/art/216248.

10. British Library, Or. 2268, available at: http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/files/or.2265-5.pdf.

11. Sheila Blair and Jonathon Bloom 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin* 85(1) (2003): 177. For examples, see 'Suhrab Gains the Upper Hand: The Second Day' (f. 153v), or 'Ruhham Stops the Hand of the Weather Shaman' (f. 254v).

12. Sheila R. Canby, *The Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp: The Persian Book of Kings* (New York/New Haven/CT: Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 2014), 16, 164, 214.

13. Sheila Blair and Jonathon Bloom, *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidon, 1997), 338.

14. Hillenbrand, 'The Iconography of the *Shah-nama-yi Shahi*', 59, 63, 66.

15. Ibid., 66, 69.

16. Freer–Sackler Galleries of Art, Washington DC, lent by the Ebrahimi Family Collection, available at: http://archive.asia.si.edu/explore/shahnama/ELS2010.7.3.asp, last accessed 16 November 2016; Canby, *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp*, folio 638r., 305.

17 Samantha Lauren, 'Painted Interiors from the Houghton *Shahnameh*', MA thesis, Florida State University, 2004, 77; reproduced in Stuart Cary Welch, *A King's Book of Kings: the Shah-Nameh of Shah Tahmasp* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 180–1.

18. Discussed in Nazarli, *Jahan-i dugane-yi miniyatur-i irani*, 47, 88. See also Charles Melville, 'The Year of the Elephant: Mamluk–Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abu Sa'id (1317–1335)', *Studia Iranica* 21 (1992): 197–214.

19. See, for example, the discussion of letters to the Ottomans from the 1559–61 period. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*,126–8.

20. Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 172.

21. Attributed to Dust Muhammad (Dust-i Divaneh), *c.* 1540, from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp. The 'Story of Haftwad and the Worm', fol. 521v., Aga Khan Museum accession No. KM164 (formerly the Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan). See Stuart Cary Welch, '78 Pictures from a World of Kings, Heroes, and Demons: The Houghton *Shah-nameh*', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 29 (8) (1971): 341–2, Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), vol. 2, 121, 124.

22. Askari, 'The Medieval Reception of Firdausi's *Shahnama*', 150, 156, 158; Welch, *A King's Book of Kings*, 172.

23. See text in Abu al-Qasim Ferdowsi, *Shahnama*, ed. Ye. E. Bertel (Moscow 1971; reprint, Tehran: Ququns, 1378/2000), vol. 2, Reign of Ardshir I, lines 1378–98.

24. Canby, *Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp* 16; Hillenbrand, 'Iconography of the *Shah-nama-yi Shahi*', 59.

25. Tamimdari notes the 'great influence' of gnostic ideas by Hafiz and Rumi during the Safavid period, and lists at least eighteen poets who wrote their own versions of Nizami's quintet or Jami's septet. The extreme abstractness and mystical content of these romances were well regarded, and the general complexity of Safavid letters – due to its figurative (*mujazat*) language, its similes (*tashbihat*), synecdoches and metonyms (*kenayat*) – was viewed as elo-

quence. Ahmad Tamimdari, *'Irfan wa adab dar 'asr-i safavi* (Tehran: Hikmat, 1373/1995), vol. 1, xiii, 108.

26. Shah Tahmasb Safavi-i Husseini, *Tazkira-i Shah Tahmasp*, ed. D. C. Phillott (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1912).

27. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 318; Mitchell also notes that despite inculcation of anti-Sufi sentiment begun by Karaki in 1530, there is evidence of Sufi influence in the Safavid government at least through 1555. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 95 ff, 128.

28. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 303–4, 340, n. 35; H. R. Roemer, 'The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids, and Sarbadars,' in Peter Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), vol. 6, 17, 22–3.

29. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 296–300.

30. Ibid., 313–17.

31. Ibid., 460–1.

32. Colin P. Mitchell, 'Tahmasp I', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tahmasp-I, last accessed November 2016.

33. Sheila R. Canby, *Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan* (London: British Museum Press, 1998), Nos 29 and 2. Also, see Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 69, 72.

34. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 18, 69, 72; Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 306; Said Amir Arjomand, 'Two Decrees of Shah Tahmasp Concerning Statecraft and the Authority of Shaykh 'Alī al-Karakī', in S. A. Arjomand (ed.), *Authority and Political Culture in Shi'ism* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 250.

35. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 121–2.

36. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 72.

37. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 141–2, Abisaab, *Converting Persia*, 24.

38. Suhrawardi as quoted in Gevorgyan, 'Futuwwa Varieties and the *Futuwwat-nāma* Literature',9, 11.

39. See, ibid., 11.

40. Abbas Amanat, '*Meadow of the Martyrs*: Kashifi's Persianization of the Shi'i Martyrdom Narrative in the Late Timurid Herat', in Farhad Daftary and Josef Meri (eds), *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 250–1.

41. Loewen, 'Proper Conduct (Adab) is Everything', 545.

42. See Jean Calmard, 'Popular Literature under the Safavids', in Andrew Newman (ed.), *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East: Studies on Iran in Safavid Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 316.

43. Kashifi, *Futuwwatnama-i sultani*, 280.

44. Ibid., 282.

45. Ibid., 292; Loewen, 'Proper Conduct (*Adab*) is Everything', 569.

46. Regarding two artists named Dust Muhammad, see Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 258; Chahryar Adle, 'Les artistes nommés Dūst-Muhammad au XVIe siècle', *Studia Iranica* 22(2) (1993): 219–96; David Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 27–8.

47. Kashifi, *Futuwwatnama-i sultani*, 293.

48. Regarding the vast influence that Kashifi had with his book on Shia martyrs on various rituals practised today, see Amamat, '*Meadow of the Martyrs*', 250–75. A detailed account of Ashura procession, commemorating the martyrdom of Hussein from the early twentieth century can be found in H. G. Dwight, *Persian Miniatures* (New York: Doubleday, 1917), 129–39, water carriers are mentioned on 133.

49. Some sixteenth-century Safavid, Mughal and Ottoman examples, respectively, include, 'Majnun in Chains Brought by a Beggar Woman to Layla's Tent'; *Khamsa* of Nizami, 1539–43, British Museum, Or 2265, f.157v.; 'Farhad Receives the False News of Shirin's Death', from Amir Khusrow's *Khamsa*, made in sixteenth-century Lahore, at Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, Ms. W.624, f.66b; 'Hatim al-Tai Giving a Reception', from Kashifi's *Akhlaqi Muhsini*, made in Ottoman Baghdad in the late sixteenth-century, at Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, R 392, f.61a.

50. Folio 10a, depicting a passage in *Silsilat al-dhahab*; Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 21.

51. See Chapter 1 and the discussion of Ahmad Ghazali and his work *Savanih* related to the idea of 'witnessing' (*shahidbazi*), esp. n. 59.

52. One often reproduced example is an 'Old Man and the Youth' *Shamsa*, attributed to Bihzad, dated 1524, in an anthology at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, No. 44.88; a 'Dervish and His Disciple', from the mid-seventeenth century, Freer Gallery, No. 47.23. For reproductions of this and other drawings, see Marie Lukens Swietochowski and Sussan Babaie, *Persian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum, 1989),

60–79. This may be the only *Haft awrang* manuscript with an illustration of this particular anecdote. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 378.

53. Likely alluding to musk deer leaving a fragrant trace that indicates the way to the Beloved. See Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 77.

54. As a poetic trope, a gazelle signifies the Beloved, the Beloved's beauty or other positive attributes. The moral of the proverbial story of 'the friendship of the bear' in Rumi's *Mathnawi*, 2.193, 2129, highlights obedience to 'the master' by disciples, and the cunning fox, as opposed to the 'majestic' lion, exemplifies greed and a code for the carnal soul. See *Mathnawi*, 2, line 2722. The hare can represent the weak, base soul. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 98, 106.

55. Lines 443–4, and the line numbers given in parentheses in what follows, are from *Layla wa Majnun* of Jami in *Haft awrang*, vol. 2.

56. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 244, line 396.

57. See Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, and Cosmos*, 77, 79, 98; Golombek, 'Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting', 23.

58. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 2, 244–6, 280.

59. Nizami, *Layla wa Majnun*, 60.

60. Echoing the depiction from 'Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman', *Khamsa* of Nizami, *c.* 1490; f. 18r, British Library, Add. 25900, discussed in Chapter 4, reproduced in Bahari, *Bihzad*, 116, fig. 57.

61. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 196.

62. See Berlekamp, *Wonder, Image, and Cosmos*, ch. 3, esp. 97–102.

63. Numerous instances for this trope in Sufi poetry include the seventeenth line of Rumi's preamble to the *Mathnawi*; and *Mathnawi*, 5, line 3298. See also Schimmel: *The Triumphal Sun*, 265; Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 108–9.

64. See Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 121, 131.

65. Rumi, *Mathnawi* 4, lines 3031–51.

66. Schimmel, *As Through a Veil*, 26, 77.

67. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 148; see also Rumi, *Mathnawi* 6, line 4898. Depiction of a caldron, often over an open fire, in compositions dating from late fifteenth-century Herat which depict certain episodes from accounts of Majnun's all-consuming love indicate that association of this object with mystical love in line with Rumi's usage of it may have been initiated during this period, if not earlier in Herat. See, for example 'Majnun visited by his friends' from a copy of Amir Khusrau's *Majnun va Layla* at the Russian National Library, St Petersburg, Dorn 395 (ML12) 20h, reproduced in Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting*, 215.

68. See Chapter 4, n. 17. For examples of earlier depictions of tent or caldrons, see *Shahanshah-nama* of Ahmad Tabrizi, British Museum, Or. 2780, fol. 44 v., reproduced in Stchoukine, *Les Peintures*, plate 14. See also Gray, *Persian Painting*, 67.

69. 'A Depraved Man Commits Bestiality', *Haft awrang* of Jami, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, F1946.12, f. 30a. See Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 92–3.

70. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 94, 378.

71. This work was completed before the idea for presenting a septet of compositions as a set called the *Haft awrang* had emerged.

72. Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 18, 29–33.

73. Simpson situates the illustration within the larger narrative: 'the section of text immediately preceding the illustration, "Depraved Man" concerns two of the four pillars of Gnostic devotion: seclusion and prolonged silence'. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 93.

74. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1,167 ff. Schimmel defines *abdal* as 'forty or seven saints', Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 497, also 202. Haravi cites 'Mr. Shaykh al-Islami', having noted that Jami devotes some one thousand couplets to the short piece by Ibn Arabi regarding the four basic elements of devotion for a wayfarer. See Najib Mayil Haravi's introduction to translations of Ibn Arabi's treatises, *Dah risali-i Ibn Arabi* (Tehran: Mulah 1367/1989), xxxviii.

75. See Ali, *Al-Qur'an*, 2:31. Regarding Quran 38:76, Chittick writes, 'He placed within Adam's primordial nature the subtle essence (*latifah* / لطیفه) of each of His Names and through those subtle essences prepared him to realize all of the Names of Majesty (*jalal*), and Beauty (*jamal*), which he referred to as His two hands. For He said to *Iblis*, 'What prevented thee from falling prostrate before that which I created with My two hands?' Chittick, 'Ibn Arabi's Own Summary of the *Fusus*', 4–5.

76. God manifests himself to the heart of the Perfect Man, who is His vicegerent and the reflection of the lights of His self-manifestation overflows into the world which remains in existence by receiving this effusion (*fayz*). Chittick, 'Ibn Arabi's Own Summary of the *Fusus*', 7.

77. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 5.

78, See Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 17.

79. Typical also in Rumi's *Mathnawi*, see the tale of the travelling villager whose donkey was sold, M2.414.

80. Accounts of Jami's humour are recorded, among others, by Kashifi's son, Safi,

in Kashifi-Safi, *Lata'if al-tawa'if*, 232–9. The targeted audience for Jami's not particularly humorous 'humour' in his *Baharistan*, which he wrote in imitation of, or in 'answer' to, Sadi's *Gulistan*, was Jami's third and only of his sons to survive him, Ziya al-din Yusuf, who would have been about nine years old at the time. See Ökten, 'Jami (817–898/1414–1492)', 128, n. 45, 187, 411–12.

81. Newman, *Safavid Iran*, 32.

82. 'The Aziz and Zulaykha Enter the Capital of Egypt and the Egyptians come out to Greet Them' (folio 100b); 'Yusuf Gives a Royal Banquet in Honour of his Marriage' (folio 132a). Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 118–23, 142–5.

83. In her discussion of imagery in Rumi's poetry inspired by animals, Schimmel devotes several pages to the significance of the camel as patient, a code for the spiritual leader; it also signifies the soul etc. See Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 93–6.

84. The tendency of artists to divide manuscript pages into geometrically defined sections was noted in Ernst J. Grube, 'The Miniatures of Shiraz', *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 21(9) (1963): 284. See also Milstein, 'Sufi Elements in the Late Fifteenth-Century Painting of Herat', 362–3. Gray notes the 'significant move towards the opening of a second "plane"' in a Tabrizi *Kalila wa Dimna* from 1360–74, or in the later Jalayirid works by Junayd. Gray, *Persian Painting*, 37, 52.

85. For another interpretation of flowering trees, see Thackston, 'The *Diwan* of Khata'i', 44.

86. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran,* 110.

87. The text of Tahmasp's decree announcing the prohibition to the public in Kashan, carved in stone above the shop of the 'Imad al-Din Mosque, survives. Parsadust, *Shah Tahmasp*, 610–12.

88. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 110.

89. Parsadust, *Shah Tahmasp*, 613.

90. Simpson, *Persian Poetry, Painting and Patronage*, 12, 115.

91. Qazi Ahmad Ibrahimi Husayni Qummi, *Gulistan-i hunar*: *Tazkira-yi khush-nivisan va naqqashan*, 3rd edn, ed. Ahmad Suhaili Khwansari (Tehran: Kitabkhanah-i Manuchihri, 1366/1987), 112–14. Also, recounted in Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 238–9.

92. Ibid., 114–15.

93. Ibid., 116.

94. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 115.

95. The order to Mashhad, however, commanded the playing of music for three consecutive days. May Farhat, 'Shi'i Piety and Dynastic Legitimacy: Mashhad under the Early Safavid Shahs', *Iranian Studies* 47(2) (2014): 206–7.

96. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 231.

 97 Ibid., 232.

98. Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 118.

99. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 121. Examples of portraits with the figure holding or offering a flower followed by the page number in parenthesis for reproductions, with page numbers between brackets may be found in Sims, *Peerless Images*; 'Sultan Mehmet Fatih Smelling a Rose', *c.* 1460, Istanbul, Topkapi Sara Library, H.2153, f. 10r (59); double-page frontispiece in a manuscript of Sa'dis Bustan, 1488, Cairo, National Library, Adab Farsi 908, fols. iv–2r (118); 'Two Men in a Landscape', from Tabriz, 1530–40, London, British Museum, 1930.11-12.10; 'A Man in a Landscape', painting on paper at British Museum, 1930.11-12.02 (62); 'Seated Princess with a Fantastic Headdress', dated 1540–50, Harvard University Art Museum, 1958.60 (237); 'A Seated Angel', *c.* 1575, the Art and History Trust, on deposit at Sackler Gallery, Washington (265).

100. Writing of the iconography of portraits that depict people of high position holding or offering a flower, Brend writes that we are being presented with a concept rather than a record. See Barbara Brend, 'A Kingly Posture: The Iconography of Sultan Husayn Bayqara', in Bernard O'Kane (ed.), *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 89.

101. Qazi Ahmad (Ahmad Hussain Munshi Qumi), *Khulasat al-tawarikh* vols 1–2, ed. Ihasan Ishraqi (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1359/1980), 391–2; Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 231.

102. Jami, *Haft awrang*, vol. 1, 136–7, lines 1512, 1514.

103. Ibid., 138, 1554.

104. Ibid., 139, line 1567, and 140, lines 1580, 1582, 1583.

105. For the obsessive-compulsive tendencies of Shah Tahmasp, see Abulqasim Tahiri, *Tarikh-i siyasi wa ijtima'i-i Iran: az marg-i Timur ta marg-i Shah 'Abbas* (Tehran: 'Ilmi wa Farhangi, 1347/1969), 250. See also Parsadust, *Shah Tahmasp*, 618–19, 838–42.

106. Roxburgh, *Persian Album*, 281–3.

107. Qazi Ahmad, *Khulasat al-tawarikh*, 434.

108. A 'magician' or a 'tightrope walker' (*sho'badeh baz*, *band baz*) may be rendered in English as an 'acrobat'. The closest equivalent word for acrobat would mean someone who performs somersaults, and its verb form (*mo'alaq zadan*). Other activities associated with street performers, according to *Loghatnama-i dihkhoda*, appear to be at times interchangeable in meaning and usage, such as 'the cup and balls trickster' (*hoqeh baz*), or the 'quarrel rouser' (*ma'rekeh gir*).

109. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 118–23, 230.

110. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (formerly Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan collection) AKM282, folio 53b, courtesy of Marianna Shreve Simpson.

111. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 2, 385.

112. Collins, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 118.

113. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 1, 299, line 861; 863, line 300.

114. Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun*, 148; see also Rumi, *Mathnawi* 6, 4898.

115. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 2, 234.

116. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 95.

117. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 2, 861.

118. Regarding the significance of cats, see Chapter 2, n. 52, above.

119. 'Ali Tajdini, *Farhang-i namadha*, 883.

120. Zamani, *Sharh-i jami'-i*, vol. 3, 1152, line 4529. Regarding the significance of scent, see also Christiane Gruber, 'Between Logos (Kalima) and Light (Nur): Representations of the Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Painting', *Muqarnas* 26 (2009): 258, n. 49.

121. Zamani, *Sharh-i*, vol. 1, 965.

122. Ibid., 984.

123. Marianna S. Simpson, 'Ebrahim Mirza', in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, available at: http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebrahim-mirza, last accessed 2 November 2016.

124. See the account of Husain Quli Rumlu and his 10,000 loyal Qizilbash Sufis in Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 147.

125. Ibrahim Mirza's name appears five times in the colophons and three times in architectural decoration within the paintings. Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam,* 173. See also Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 130–3.

126. Considered a Sufi 'state' (*hal*): when in the state of 'watching' or *muraqiba*, the wayfarer pulls his knees up to his chest and places his head on his knees as he engages with silent invocation. Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 149–51.

127. See the fixated eyes on the bird's nest in 'Gathering of Dervishes', from the late sixteenth century, in the style of Muhammadi of Herat, at the Aga Khan collection AKM 00104, reproduced in Anthony Welch, *Collection of Islamic Art: Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan*, vol. 3 (Geneva, 1978), 98–9.

128. 'In many ways this copy of the *Haft Awrang* stands at the crossroads between earlier and later traditions of Persian book painting.' Blair and Bloom, *Art and Architecture of Islam*, 173.

129. A. T. Adamova, *Persian Painting and Drawing of the Fifteenth–Nineteenth Centuries from the Hermitage Museum* (St Petersburg: Hermitage Museum Exhibition Catalogue, 1996), 73–4.

130. Canby, *Persian Painting*, 91.

131. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1999), 240–1.

Conclusion

1. Hussein Wa'iz Kashifi Sabzavari, *Futuwwat-nama-i Sultani*, ed. Muhammad Ja'far Mahbub (Tehran: Farhang- Iran Foundation, n.d.).

2. Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs, and Messiahs*, 306; Mitchell, *Practice of Politics in Safavid Iran*, 19, 23–8, 202.

3. Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson, 'The Tabarra'iyan and the Early Safavids', *Iranian Studies* 37(1) (2004): 47–71.

4. See Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 199–200; Losensky, 'The Palace of Praise, 14–16; Abdi Bayk Shirazi, *Sahifat al-ikhlas*, ed. Abu al-fazl Hashim Awghli Rahimuf (Moscow: Danish, 1979), 119.

5. See 'Man with a Spindle', from 1633, by Reza Abbasi, Freer Gallery, F1953.25.

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