

The Journey of *The Gift of the Noble*

Shiva Mihan¹

I. Introduction

The *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* (The Gift of the Noble) is a mystic-didactic poem in *mathnavī* form by the prominent Persian poet ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (1414–1492). It was composed in 894 AH/1489 AD in honour of the influential Naqshbandi Sufi, Khwāja ‘Ubaydullah Aḥrār (1404–1490). In this work, Jāmī followed the manner of the *Makḥẓan al-Asrār*, an ethico-philosophical poem by the well-known poet Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1141–1209). In 947/1540–41, around half a century after Jāmī’s death, a copy of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was transcribed in Herat – the city where the poet resided – which begins with Jāmī’s prose preface (punctuated with verses) to the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār*, followed by the poem. This copy is now preserved at the Harvard Art Museums, no. 2019.106.

The earliest printed edition of *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was published in London in 1848, edited by Forbes Falconer, containing a preface compiling the accounts of Jāmī in three *taz̤kiras*, including Daulatshāh Samarqandī’s *Taz̤kirat al-Shu‘ara*. The editor relied heavily on a copy of *Haft Aurang*, partly (*Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* and four other *mathnavīs*) penned by ‘Alī Hijrānī, in Herat, dated 934/1528 (formerly in the collection of N. Bland, Esq. of Randall’s Park), and an undated, but old copy (formerly, ms. 1317, East-India Company). A comparison between this edition and our manuscript shows great resemblance and also proves the precision of the scribe in transcribing.

Harvard’s copy of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* has evidently had an eventful journey through time. Although the text block dates to 1540–41, the marbled margins are probably from the eighteenth century and the binding is similar to a technique found in nineteenth-century productions. It provides an unusual case for analysis from different points of view. In what follows, first I briefly mention some of its

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significant codicological features and then discuss its historical and art historical value.

II. Codicological information

The manuscript of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* of Jāmī copied in 1540–41 in Herat on gold-sprinkled paper with marbled-paper margins was a gift from Edward Binney, 3rd (California, acquired before 1986) bequest to the Harvard Art Museums.

1. Binding

The cover, measuring 140 × 223 mm, is dark-brown, coarse-grained leather with decorated pendants, centre- and corner-pieces, which are decorated with embossed, stamped flowers in various colours on a gold ground (fig. 1). The doublures (inside covers) are made of a glossy marbled paper, etched with a fine gold tooling, very probably contemporary with the cover (fig. 2). The binding is in near pristine condition.

This type of binding with shagreen leather and painted, embossed flowers was in fashion in the late 18th and 19th centuries during the late Zand and Qajar periods. They are known as *minā'i* in Iran, as the painted flowers resemble enamels. The Harvard Art Museums has one other binding in the same technique, enclosing a Manuscript of Prayers (ms. 14.2015), dated 1253/1837 (fig. 3).² Based on that manuscript, we could deduce that the binding of the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* too was probably made in the first half of the 19th-century Iran. However, a comparison of central pieces in the two codices shows that the painted parts in Jāmī's manuscript are slightly more well-defined, and the leather of the Manuscript of Prayers (14.2015) has a slightly larger granulated surface.³

2. Paper

The support is well-burnished paper, known as *tirmah*, possibly a production of Samarqand, which measures 140 × 220 mm, with text

² Portions of this manuscript can be viewed at www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/352089?position=0 (accessed April 5, 2020).

³ For more on shagreen, see W. M. Floor, "Čarm," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. IV, fasc. 7 (London, 1990), 820–822.

panels measuring 75–80 × 128–130 mm. The paper is speckled with finely grained gold, resembling dust, covering the folio surfaces.

All 76 folios are numbered in the bottom right corner of verso pages, with a jump from folio 69 to 80 instead of 70. Although the manuscript foliation mistakenly ends in 86, a comparison with the printed edition of the text confirms that there are no lacunae between 69 and 80. A note in *siyāq* script on the first flyleaf also provides the number of folios as 76.

The first and the final folios are mounted on reddish paper, but the rest are re-margined in marbled paper. This could indicate that in addition to probable damage to some of the borders and edges, the codex suffered from lack of binding for a while (fig. 4). As a result of the removal of original margins, all the catchwords are lost, but the manuscript is otherwise complete.

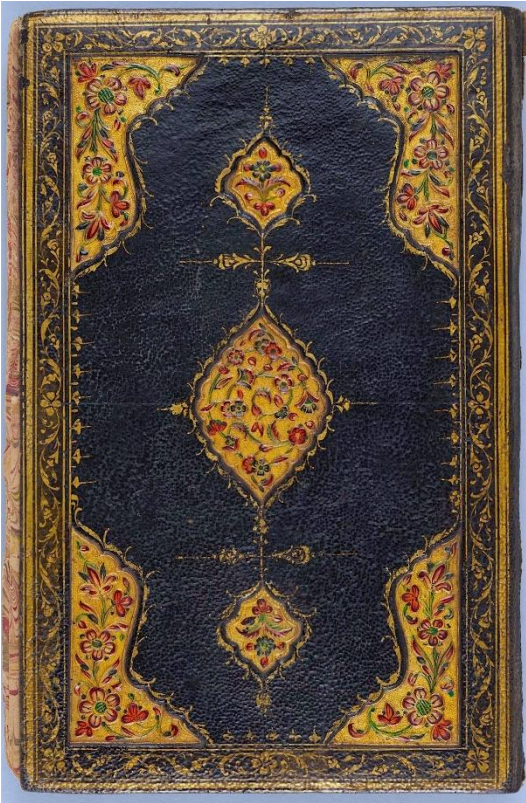


Fig. 1. The cover. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.



Fig. 2. The doublure. *Tuhfat al-Aḥrār*, 1540-41, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

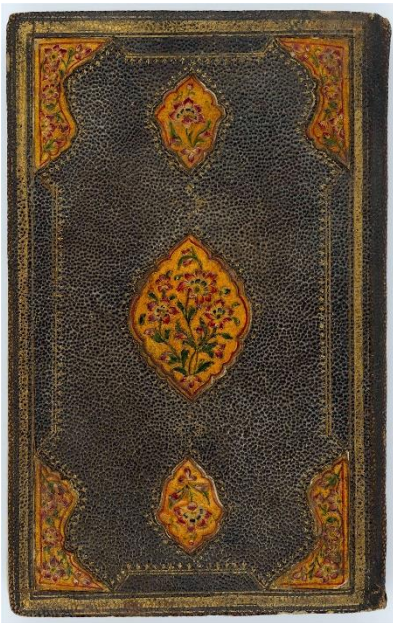


Fig. 3. The cover. *Manuscript of Prayers*, 1837, 14.2015, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Loan from A. Soudavar in memory of his mother Ezzat-Malek Soudavar.

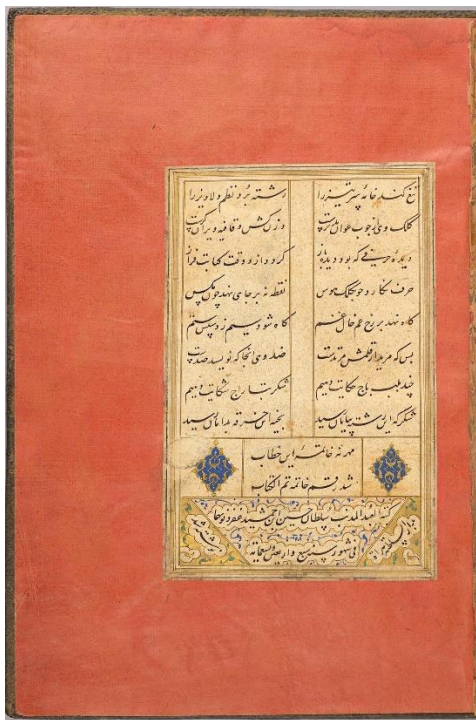


Fig. 4. Red margins. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, f. 77r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

3. Marbled paper

Marbling, “essentially a form of fluid monotype printing,” first appeared in Iran in the late fifteenth century.⁴ In this technique patterns are transferred from floating pigments on the surface of a liquid vat onto paper. The margins here are a fine and high quality example of marbled paper. The visually riveting, marbling design of the margins was created by a comb-like tool, in a palette of cream, sap green, light brown, reddish purple, with occasional accents of pale yellow and violet, on ochre-tinted, handmade paper (fig. 5).

Jake Benson, an expert on marbled paper in Islamic art of the book, suggests that the marbled margins of the *Tuhfat al-Ahrar* are of

⁴ J. Benson, “The Art of Abri: Marbled Album Leaves, Drawings, and Paintings of the Deccan,” in *Sultans of Deccan India 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, ed. Navina Haidar and Marika Sardar (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 157.

‘subcontinental style’ and from the late seventeenth or eighteenth century. “By 1600, several albums, including one with an ornate prose preface lavishing praise upon an enigmatic Persian artist and émigré to India – likely the Deccan Sultanates – named Muhammad Tahir, feature highly innovative marbled paper mounts including intricately-worked ‘homeomorphic’ combed designs.”⁵ “From India, Muhammad Tahir’s novel pattern-making methods rapidly spread to Greater Iran,” where marblers made papers imitating his distinct style for about two centuries.⁶ That this can be taken as a correct analysis for our manuscript is confirmed by Sheila Canby, the former head of the Department of Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who curated an exhibition of marbled paper in 2019. She attributed the same type of marbled paper to eighteenth-century Iran in the exhibition labels.

4. Text Block

The codex opens with a double-page illuminated frontispiece (fig. 6), decorated with very fine arabesque and palmette motifs in gold, white, green, yellow and pink on a lapis blue ground in the style of late Timurid Herat. The pigments are very high quality, and even without chemical tests, the fineness of lapis lazuli and the purity of gold, deployed in the illumination, are visible. In addition to the sumptuously illuminated opening, the poem is decorated throughout with diversely illuminated headings, carrying arabesque vines and floral motifs in various colours (fig. 7).

The text and heading inscriptions are both written in a beautiful *nasta‘liq*, bordered with ruled lines in gold and lapis. Except for the frontispiece with 6 lines per page, the verses are arranged in 12 lines and two columns to a page.

The colophon appears on folio 76r and provides the name of the scribe, as well as the date and place of production. His signature reads: “It was penned by the slave, the sinner, Sultan Ḥusayn son of Jamshīd, may God forgive his sins, in 947 Hijra (1540–41) at the capital Herat.”

⁵ Personal communication from Jake Benson to the author, March 2020.

⁶ J. Benson, “Curious Colors of Currency: Security Marbling on Financial Instruments During the Long Eighteenth Century,” *American Journal of Numismatics*, second series 31 (2019): 282.

A French note on the first flyleaf states incorrectly that the manuscript was copied for Sultan Ḥusayn in Herat in 947/1541, “en très beau nastaliq.” This false judgment seems to have stemmed from the similarity of the scribe’s name to that of Sultan Ḥusayn Bāyqarā (1438–1506), the Timurid ruler and great patron from a few decades earlier in Herat.

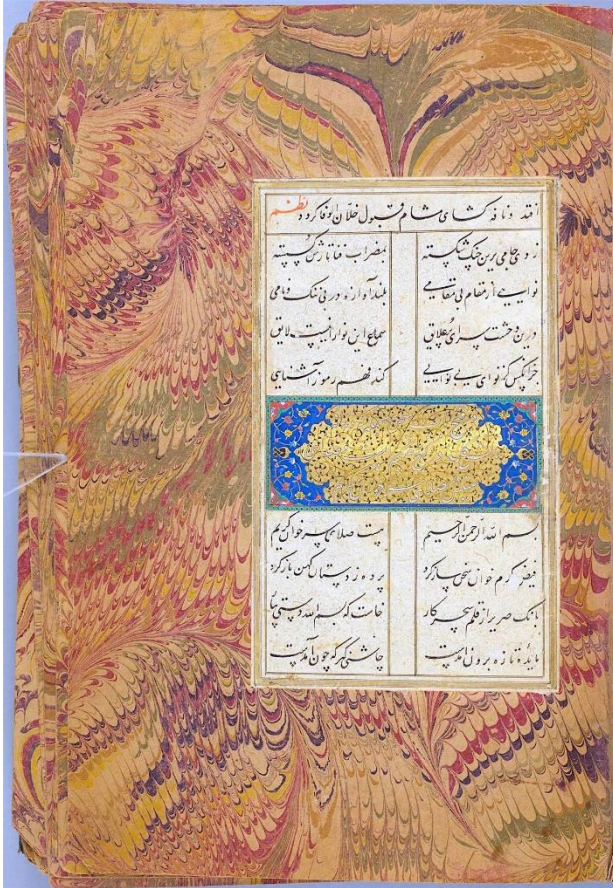


Fig. 5. Marbled margins. *Tuhfat al-Ahvar*, 1540-41, f. 4r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.



Fig. 6. Frontispiece. *Tuhfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, ff. 2v-3r, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/ Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

III. The Scribe

In the history of Islamic art of the book the information on the life and work of calligraphers is unfortunately sparse. To that end, primary sources have not much to offer about the life and career of the scribe Sultan Ḥusayn ibn Jamshīd.⁷

1. Lineage

The *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* (Principles of Scripts), written in 960/1553 by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad, discusses the principles of calligraphy and provides accounts of calligraphers. It contains an account of Sultan Ḥusayn and his father: “Maulānā Jamshīd Mu‘ammā’ī (the riddle writer) had a beautiful calligraphic hand and was famous for his skills in riddle writing.” He was educated in Herat and died in 953/1546-47, according

⁷ M. Bayānī, *Alval va athar-i kbushnvisān* (Tehran, 1363/1984): 233, nos. 371-72.

to a chronogram in a poem by his son, Maulānā Sultan Ḥusayn Jamshīd, whose penname was ‘Ayālī. The *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* reports that ‘Ayālī wrote in *nasta‘līq* and was a pupil of Muḥammad Qāsim Shadishāh. Among Sultan Ḥusayn’s students, he names Maulānā ‘Ayshī, who was well versed in calligraphy, poetry and riddle writing. The treatise adds that: “Maulānā [Sultan Ḥusayn] was also a pupil of Sultan Muḥammad Khandān.”⁸

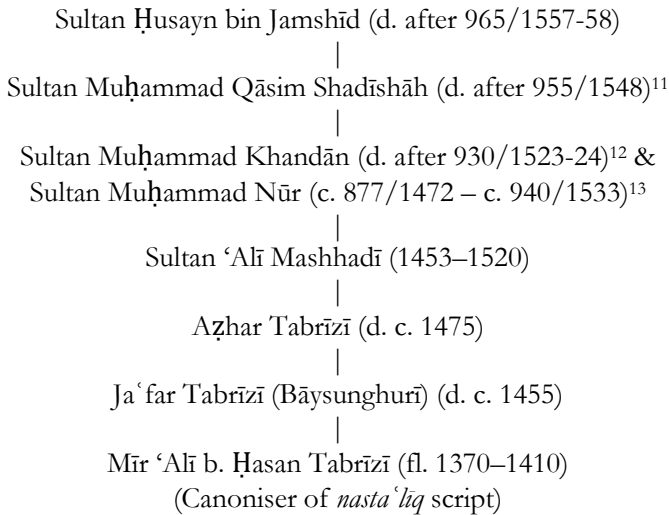


Fig. 7. Illuminated headings. *Tuḥfat al-Ahrar*, 1540-41, 2019.106, 2019.106, Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, The Edwin Binney, 3rd Collection of Turkish Art at the Harvard Art Museums.

⁸ N. Māyil Haravī, *Kitāb'arāyī dar tamaddun-i Islāmī: majmū'a-yi rasā'il dar ḡamīna-yi kbūshnīvisī, murakkab-sāzī, kaḡhaḡ-garī, taḡhīb va tajlīd: ba inḡimām-i farhang-i vāḡhīgān-i nīzām-i kitāb-ārā'i* (Mashhad, 1372/1993): 316–17. For an account of Sultan Muḥammad Khandān, see M. Bayānī, *Ahvāl va Athār*, 268.

Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh (d. after 955/1548) was a prominent scribe and a poet. There are reports that Shadīshāh often had quarrels with his contemporary calligraphy master Mīr ‘Alī Haravī.⁹ He was also a famous Naqshbandī sufi and his tomb – known as Shāhzāda Qāsim – is located in Mashhad Rizeh in Taybad (district of Khurasan), very close to Herat, where the manuscript was copied.¹⁰

The lineage of Sultan Ḥusayn’s tutelage goes back to Mīr ‘Alī Tabrizī, the canoniser of the *nasta‘liq* script in the late fourteenth century.



The word ‘Sultan’ before the names of calligraphy masters seems to have been added as a title and initially was not part of their names, as

⁹ A. A. Na‘īmī, *Khattātān va naqqāshān-i Harāt* (Herat, 1353/1974): 41–42.

¹⁰ A. Īrānī, *Paydayish-i khatt va khattātān* (Tehran, n.d.): 212.

¹¹ *Qavānīn al-Khutūt* refers to Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh as a direct student of Sultan ‘Alī Mashhadī. Māyil Haravī: 314.

¹² Bayānī states that he had seen a manuscript in his hand dated 957, but it seems unlikely that he would have been active that long. He was certainly alive in 930, as mentioned alive and a resident of Herat by Khwāndamīr in the *Ḥabīb al-Siyar* (composed in 930). See A. A. Na‘īmī, “Sultan Muḥammad Khandān,” *Ariana* 1:4 (1322/1943): 31.

¹³ For details of his life and works, see M. Bayānī, *Ahvāl va Athār*, 272–80. An example of his hand is found on: www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/453167 (accessed April 6, 2020).

their accounts appear in some sources without the word Sultan. As an example, the author of the *Qavānīn al-Khuṭūṭ* refers to Sultan Muḥammad Qāsim Shadīshāh without ‘Sultan’.

2. Works¹⁴

The Harvard Art Museum’s manuscript *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* of Jāmī, dated 947 AH, is probably the earliest manuscript signed by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd. He copied the *Haft Manẓar* of Hātifi in the same year (ms. no. 100 in the Yehuda Collection of the National Library of Israel).¹⁵ We also know of a manuscript of the *Būstān* of Sa’dī in his hand, dated Ramadan 953 AH (October–November 1546), now in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library, Isl. Ms. 302.¹⁶ The double-page frontispiece of the *Būstān* is similar to the Harvard manuscript regarding its design and layout (fig. 8). The four rectangular boxes on the top and bottom of each page in the frontispiece of both manuscripts carry inscriptions on decorated cartouches in a similar arrangement; however, the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* is decorated slightly more profusely and exquisitely. The headings in the *Būstān* manuscript are narrower and less elaborate. The margins in the *Būstān* are also replaced, but in that case with gold-sprinkles on tinted paper. *Būstān*’s colophon does not inform us about the place of copying, but contains the scribe’s name: Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd (fig. 9).

¹⁴ To avoid confusion, I do not provide a Gregorian equivalent date for most hijri dates here.

¹⁵ E. Wust, *Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Manuscripts of the Yehuda Collection of the National Library of Israel* (London: Brill, 2016): 176–77.

¹⁶ The ms is accessible in: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015079128206;view=1up;seq=2> (accessed July 10, 2020).



Fig. 8. Frontispiece. *Bustan* of Sa'di, 1546, ff. 2v–3r, Isl. Ms. 302, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library.

Another manuscript transcribed by him is the *Yusuf and Zulaykhā* of Jāmī, which he signs Sultan Ḥusayn bin Jamshīd Haravī, in Bukhara, dated 963 AH (Aligarh University Library, ms. no. 88/2).¹⁷ In the same year, he copied *Gūy-u Changān* (*Hal-nāma*) of 'Ārifī Haravī, now preserved in the Golestan Palace Library, no. 2222.¹⁸ The scribe states that it was copied “in haste” in Bukhara at the *khanqah* (sufi convent) of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā (c. 756/1355, Bukhara – 822/1419, Medina),¹⁹ who

¹⁷ I was not able to find the reference for this manuscript but it is mentioned in A. Ḥabībī, *Hunar-i 'abd-i Taymuriān* (Tehran, 1355/1976): 754.

¹⁸ M. Dirāyatī, *Fihristvāra Dastnīshht-hā-yi Irān*, vol. 5 (Tehran, 1389/2010): 1073.

¹⁹ M. A. Mudarris Tabrīzī, *Raḥānat al-Adab*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1369/1990): 310, gives his birth date as 749.

was a famous Naqshbandi sufi, and the founder of the Pārsā'iyya order.²⁰ He was the author of numerous books, including a Persian commentary on the *Futūḥāt* of Ibn 'Arabi. Jāmī met Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā in 822, in Bukhara at the age of 5. In *Nafāḥāt al-Uns* he stated that he could still remember Khwāja's luminous face, and that the joy of that meeting was still in his heart.²¹ The *Khanqah* of Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā was reconstructed and repaired a few years before the scribe copied those two works in Bukhara in 963. "In 959 [1552] in Balkh, His Excellency, of guiding rank, 'Abd al-Hadi Parsa, rebuilt (*ta'mir namudand*) the lustrous resting place of his noble forebears and distinguished ancestors."²²

A couple of years later, in 965, Sultan Ḥusayn copied the *Ramẓat al-Muḥibbin* (Garden of Lovers) or *Dah-nāma* of Ibn 'Imād Khurāsānī (d. 800/1398), now in the Astan Quds Library in Mashhad.²³ In Ramadan of the same year, he copied the *Divan* of Amīr Alīshīr Navā'ī in Chagatai Turkic, *Navādir al-Shabāb* (Rarities of Youth), which is now housed in the Malek National Library and Museum, no. 5300 (fig. 10).²⁴

The author of the *Rayḥān-i Nasta'liq*, a treatise on calligraphy, written in 989/1581-82, records that the scribe had also penned a copy of the *Subḥat al-Abrār* by Jāmī.²⁵ Unfortunately he does not provide further information about the date and place of copying.²⁶

²⁰ For more on Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā, see J. Misgar-nizhād, "Pārsā, Khwāja Muḥammad," in *Dānishnāma-yi Buẓurg-i Islāmī*, vol. 1 (Tehran, 1375/1996): 2588. <http://lib.eshia.ir/23019/1/2588> (accessed March 31, 2020).

²¹ A. Jāmī, *Nafāḥāt al-Uns* (Tehran, 1370/1991): 398. See ibid, 401, where Jāmī quoted from Khwāja Muḥammad Pārsā: "Ibn 'Arabi's *Fusus* is the soul and his *Futūḥāt* is the heart."

²² R. McChesney, "Architecture and Narrative: The Khwaja Abu Nasr Parsa Shrine. Part 1: Constructing the Complex and Its Meaning, 1469–1696," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 94–119.

²³ 'Ala' al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Imād Khurāsānī composed this work in 794/1392. He also composed many poems praising the Prophet and other Imams, which indicate his strong shi'ism.

²⁴ Alīshīr Navā'ī composed this work of 5423 verses in 1492-98.

²⁵ A. M. Chaghata'ī, *Rayḥān-i Nasta'liq* (Lahor, 1941): 25–26. For a study of the treatise, see T. Beers, "On the so-called *Rayḥān-i nasta'liq*" (a conference paper presented in September 2019, Berlin, ccis 9). I am grateful to Dr Theodore Beers for sharing with me his unpublished paper on this subject.

²⁶ Our scribe should not be mistaken with another scribe who was known as Sultan Ḥusayn Haravī, who was active several decades earlier. He was the scribe of the Ḥusayn Vā'iz Kashifī's *Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī* (Or. 13089 in the British Library) dated 912/1506, and the *Shah-nāma* of Firdausī (ms. Elliott 325, Bodleian Library) copied 14 Ramadan 899/18

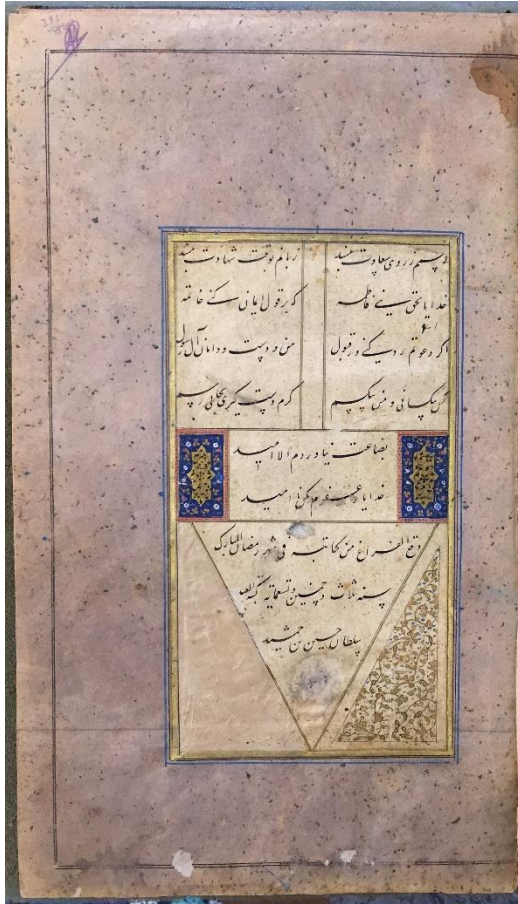


Fig. 9. Colophon. *Bustan* of Sa'di, 1546, ff. 22r, Isl. Ms. 302, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Special Collections Library.

Piecing together the *Tuhfat al-Ahrār* and other works copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī adds to our knowledge of the scribe's life and career and we can assume now that he was already a prominent scribe in 1540, based in Herat (Khurasan) before he later travelled to Bukhara.

June 1494. He signed his name as Sultan Ḥusayn b. Sultan 'Alī b. Aslān Shāh al-Kātib. My thanks to Prof. Maria Subtelny for mentioning the full name of the scribe.

Table 1. Manuscripts copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd

Title	Date	Place	Signature	Collection
<i>Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār</i>	947	Herat	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>ibn Jamshīd</u>	Harvard Art Museums, 2016.106
<i>Haft Manẓar</i>	947	?	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd al-</u> <u>Haravī</u>	Yehuda Collection, <u>ms.</u> no. 100
<i>Būstān</i>	Ramadan 953	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd</u>	Ann Arbor, Isl. Ms 302
<i>Subḥat al-Abrār</i>	?	?	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd</u>	Not found (mentioned in the <i>Ravḥān Nasta‘īq</i>)
<i>Yūsuf and Zulaykhā</i>	963	Bukhara	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>bin Jamshīd al-</u> <u>Haravī</u>	Aligarh University Library, <u>ms.</u> no. 88/2
<i>Hāl-nāma</i> (<i>Gūy-u Chawgān</i>)	963	Bukhara <u>Khangah</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	<u>Golestan</u> Palace Library, no. 2222
<i>Rawḥat al-Muḥibbīn</i> (<i>Dab-nāmā</i>)	965	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	<u>Astan Quds Razavī</u> (formerly in Dr Reza <u>Sehhat’s</u> collection), <u>ms.</u> 10378
<i>Divan of</i> Amīr Alishīr Navā‘ī	Ramadan 965	<u>n.p.</u>	Sultan <u>Ḥusayn</u> <u>al-Haravī</u>	<u>Malek</u> Library, <u>ms.</u> 5300

Piecing together the *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* and other works copied by Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī adds to our knowledge of the scribe’s life and career and we can assume now that he was already a prominent scribe in 1540, based in Herat (Khurasan) before he later travelled to Bukhara.

IV. The Patron

The high quality of the Harvard’s manuscript presupposes a patron of equally high status. To identify the patron of this manuscript, a look at the history of Herat, the city where it was produced, seems necessary. Herat was under the rule of the Safavid king, Shah ‘Tahmasp (r. 1524–76). In 943/1536-37, the governorship of the city was bestowed on Sultān Muḥammad Mīrzā (b. 938/1531-32), Shah Tahmasp’s eldest son, on the occasion of the defeat of the Shaybanid ‘Ubaid Khan that year and the Uzbek’s temporary retreat from the assaults on Khurasan

throughout this period. Sultān Muḥammad Mīrzā was only 5 at that time and obviously could not have been an active patron. He is the Muḥammad Khudābanda, who eventually became king, and was the father of the famous Safavid king, Shāh ‘Abbās. Although in later life he is not credited with being a patron of the arts, this may only have followed the onset of his blindness from c. 974/1566 during his third spell as prince-governor of Khurasan (based in Herat). He was supposed to be slightly unworldly and a poet under the name ‘Fahmī’.²⁷ He was potentially interested in maintaining the royal atelier at first, but obviously too young in 947–953 (dates of the earliest manuscripts by the same scribe).

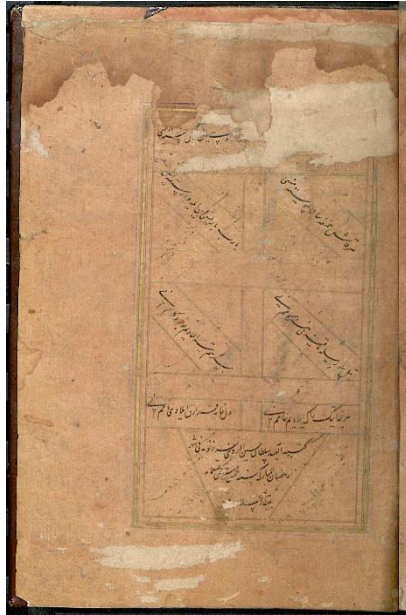


Fig. 10. *Divan* of Amīr Alishīr Navāʾī. f. 146r, no. 5300, Malek National Library and Museum.

His guardian, however, Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Oğlu (of Tekkelu tribe), appointed at the same time, seems more likely to have

²⁷ For his biography see I. B. Munshī, *‘Ālam Arā-yi ‘Abbāsī*, 2 vols.; tr. R.M. Savory as *The History of Shah Abbas* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1977): 206–7.

been the patron. He had been a governor of Baghdad and rose to influence under Shah Tahmasp, who appointed him commander-in-chief in Khurasan and guardian to the prince at Nowruz 943/March 1537. Together, Sultan Muḥammad Mīrzā and his guardian, presided over a period of peace and regeneration in Herat, keeping the Uzbeks at bay. Muḥammad Khān died in 964/1557; that is, after holding the post for twenty years after giving considerable security and stability to the city and, therefore, the opportunity for the arts to flourish.²⁸

There is a report in Qāzī Aḥmad's *Gulistan-i Hunar* – (Rose Garden of Art) of c. 1596-1606 –stating that Muḥammad Khān commissioned the Herati artist, Agha Ḥasan Naqqāsh, to decorate the inside of the Shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad – surely a sign not only of his piety, but also interest in the arts.²⁹ His piety can also be supposed from Qāzī Aḥmad's lengthy description of his last days, when Muhammad Khan paid a final visit to Mashhad before dying in late Dhu'l-Hijja 964/October 1557, but unfortunately there is at present no other indication of his artistic patronage.³⁰

It is perhaps worth noting that the year before the manuscript of *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* was completed (i.e. when it could have been commissioned, 946), was the death of the great Uzbek ruler and threat to Iran, 'Ubayd Khan. So that could have been a reason for celebration!³¹

V. Conclusion

The *Tuḥfat al-Aḥrār* in the Harvard Art Museums is yet another example of an artistic and literary treasure with a complicated history. The text was copied and decorated in the 16th century; the margins were replaced

²⁸ See K. Husaynī, *Tarikh-i Ilchi-i NizāmShah* (2000): 136–37, for an account of Muhammad Khan's rise, and p. 141 for his appointment as guardian. See also Falsafi, Naṣrullāh, *Zindigāni-i Shah 'Abbas I*, ed. F. Murādi, vol. 1 (Tehran: Negah, 1391/2012): 37.

²⁹ Qumī, Qāzī Aḥmad, *Gulistan-i Hunar*, tr. V. Minorsky, *Calligraphers and Painters* (Washington, D.C., 1959): 187.

³⁰ Q. A. Qumī, *Khulāsat al-Tawārikh*, ed. I. Ishrāqī, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1350/1971): 390–91. The obituary does not say anything about his patronage of arts, but he was clearly not simply a rough and ready military chief, but a sophisticated person and died of old age. He was governor at the time the Mughal sultan Humāyūn sought refuge with Tahmasp, and passed through Herat.

³¹ I am thankful to Prof. Charles Melville for his help to identify the patron of this work.

in late seventeenth or eighteenth century and the binding was replaced around mid-nineteenth century. Similar to many elegant Persian manuscripts, the codice's history is reflected in the various transformations it underwent over time and place during its journeys from library to library.

This study has assembled details of all currently known manuscripts penned by the calligraphy master Sultan Ḥusayn b. Jamshīd Haravī, which in turn suggested its probable patron, who has not previously been identified as a significant promoter of the arts: Muḥammad Khān Sharaf al-Dīn Oġlu who was the guardian of Shah Tahmasp's heir, Sultan Muḥammad Mīrzā (Khudābanda).

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