

Or. 2265

خمسه نظامی

Date Jum. II 946-Zu'l-H. 949 (1539-1543) at Tabriz

Title Niẓāmī Ganjavī, *Khamsah*

Content The five poems making up the *Khamsah* by Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1140 or 41-1202 or 3). Originally copied for the Safavid ruler Shāh Tahmāsp (ruled 1524-76) between 1535 and 1543, it was augmented by the addition of 14 full page illustrations by some of the most famous court artists of the mid-16th century. Further pages were inserted probably during the 17th century, and again at a later stage, perhaps when the manuscript was rebound in the early 19th century at the court of Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh Qājār (ruled 1797-1834). Includes three paintings by the artist Muḥammad Zamān (fl. 1649-1704).

Or. 2265, ff 2v-35r *Makhzan al-asrār*

Illustrations:

([15v](#)) Anūshīrvān and the owls. Inscribed 'Mīra[k] the painter 946 (1539/40)'.

([18r](#)) Sulṭān Sanjar and the old woman.

([26v](#)) The physicians' duel.

Or. 2265, ff 36v-128r *Khusraw u Shīrīn*

Illustrations:

([53v](#)) Khusraw watches Shīrīn bathing. Artist: Sulṭān Muḥammad.

([57v](#)) Shāpūr returning to Khusraw. Artist: Mīrak.

([60v](#)) Khusraw enthroned. Inscription over pavilion: 'O Lord protect the sovereignty of the mighty Sulṭān, the just Khāqān, the most just and most noble Sulṭān, the son of a Sulṭān, the victorious Sulṭān Shāh Ṭahmāsp al-Husaynī al-Ṣafavī Bahādur Khān, may Allah perpetuate his kingship and sovereignty for ever'. Artist: Mīrak.

([66v](#)) Khusraw and Shīrīn listening to stories told by Shīrīn's maidens. Artist: Mīrak.

([77v](#)) Khusraw listens to Bārbad playing the lute. Artist: Mīrzā 'Alī.

Or. 2265, 129r-192r *Laylā u Majnūn*

Illustrations:

([157v](#)) Majnūn brought in chains by the old woman to Laylā's tent. Artist: Mīr Sayyid 'Alī.

([166r](#)) Majnūn with the animals in the desert. Artist: Mīrak.

Or. 2265, ff 193v-259v *Haft paykar*

Illustrations:

([195r](#)) Ascent of the Prophet on Burāq to heaven, guided by Jibrā'īl and escorted by angels.

([202v](#)) Bahrām Gūr shoots an ass and lion with one arrow. Artist: Sulṭān Muḥammad.

([203v](#)) Bahrām Gūr kills the dragon. Artist: Muḥammad Zamān, 1086 (1675/76) 'in Ashraf, Mazandaran'.

([211r](#)) Bahrām Gūr (in the likeness of Shāh Ṭahmāsp) pinning an ass's hoof to its ear with one arrow to prove his prowess to Fitnah. Artist: Muẓaffar 'Alī.

([213r](#)) The servant girl Fitnah impresses Bahrām Gūr with her strength by carrying an ox on her shoulders. Inscription: 'In accordance with the most mighty command, time of Sulaymān'. Artist: Muḥammad Zamān, dated at Ashraf, Mazandaran, 1086 (1675/76).

([221v](#)) Episode from the Indian Princess's story: King Turktazī's visit to the magical garden of Turktaz, Queen of the Faeries. Artist: Muḥammad Zamān at Ashraf, Mazandaran, dated 1086 (1675/76).

Or. 2265, ff 260v-396r *Iskandarnāmah*

Illustration:

([48v](#), misplaced) Iskandar looks at his own portrait in the presence of Nushābah. Artist: Mīrzā 'Alī.

Language Persian

Physical description

Material: Paper.

Foliation: ff 396.

Dimensions: 14.5 x 10in [leaf]. Script: Nasta'liq, in 4 columns. Copied by Shāh Maḥmūd Nīshāpūrī.

Decorations: 17 Miniatures; 6 'Unvāns; Shamsahs (f 1v and f 2r); gold-rimmed columns; margins decorated throughout with designs in gold of birds, animals, mythical beasts, trees and plants.

Binding: Painted Qajar covers dated 1797 decorated with floral designs (inside) and representing (outside):

([front cover](#)): Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh emulating the hunting prowess of Bahrām Gūr. Signed: Sayyid Mīrzā 'slave of the court'.

([end cover](#)): Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh spearing a lion. Signed: Muḥammad Bāqir 'the feeble slave'.

Ownership In a note on [f 348v](#), dated 1243, Maḥmūd Qajar states that he had placed this volume in the palace of the princess Tāj al-Dawlah by order of His Majesty (Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh).

Purchased by British Museum 9 October 1880 from Messr. Trübner & Co.

Bibliography Ch. Rieu, [Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum \(London, 1879-1883\), pp. 1072-3.](#)

Norah M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: a Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India and Turkey in the British Library and the British Museum* (London, 1977), p. 139 and p. 393 (binding).

Priscilla Soucek and Muhammad Isa Waley, "The Nizāmī manuscript of Shāh Tahmāsp: a reconstructed history." In J.-C. Bürgel and C. van Ruymbeke (eds.), *A Key to the Treasure of the Hakim: artistic and humanistic aspects of Nizāmī Ganjavī's Khamsa* (Leiden 2011), pp. 195-210.

Amy Landau, "From Poet to Painter: Allegory and Metaphor in a Seventeenth-Century Persian Painting by Muhammad Zaman, Master of Farangi-Sazi", *Muqarnas* 28 (2011), pp. 101-131.

B. W. Robinson, "A pair of royal book-covers", *Oriental Art* 10.1 (Spring, 1964), pp. 3-7.