

Persian Drawings



in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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The Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York

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Contents

Foreword	vii
Introduction	1
Notes	10
Persian Drawings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art	12
Bibliography	85

Foreword

The subject of Persian drawings has received little attention from scholars, certainly far less than the paintings for which some of them served as studies. Yet drawings, even sketches and studies, let alone finished works destined to grace imperial or princely albums, merit our enthusiastic inspection.

The Metropolitan Museum possesses a small but choice group of Persian drawings, several of which are shown in rotation in the permanent collection galleries. Persian drawings first entered the Museum's collection in 1911. Their number grew slowly through gifts and purchases until 1925, when George D. Pratt presented nine fine examples to the Museum on the occasion of his election as Benefactor.

Born in Brooklyn in 1869, George Pratt was the son of the founder of the Pratt Institute. In addition to art collecting, Pratt had a wide range of interests including forestry and wildlife conservation. He became a trustee of the Museum in 1922; at his death in 1935, a remaining group of sixteen drawings was bequeathed to the Museum. Since then, the Persian drawing collection has been enriched by means of both gift and discerning purchase.

This publication serves as a catalogue of thirty-six of the Museum's best Persian drawings, brought together for the first time in a temporary exhibition, *Persian Drawings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. The selection was made by Marie Lukens Swietochowski, Associate Curator, and Sussan Babaie, Hagop Kevorkian Fellow, Islamic Art, who together also wrote the catalogue. To them, one an established scholar, the other beginning a promising scholarly career, we can be grateful for revealing the quiet but special pleasures of the medium. We owe a debt of gratitude also to The Hagop Kevorkian Fund, New York, whose generous support has made this publication possible, and to Reliance Group Holdings, Inc., for funding the exhibition.

Daniel Walker
Curator in Charge
Department of Islamic Art

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M.L.S.
S.B.

Introduction

Drawings are the most readily accessible means to the artist's working process. With an economy and immediacy unparalleled in any other art form, they express the artist's mind, intent, and skill. A drawing as defined here is a work of art that uses line as the primary means of graphic expression. Although they may be enhanced by touches of color or color washes, they are no longer drawings, in our view of Persian art, if the function of the line is usurped by the addition of pigments. The distinction between drawing and painting may be illustrated by a late-nineteenth-century Qajar painting in the Metropolitan Museum's collection, *The Queen of Sheba Enthroned* (figure 1). Although very close in some respects to a pure line drawing, this painting depends, for its overall effect, on the use of colors in defining the space and isolating the figures from the background.¹

Islamic scholarship has been both careless and indifferent about making the distinction between drawings and paintings, and has failed to define drawing as an art form. By default, drawing seems to have become a stepchild of painting.

Drawings from the Islamic world need to be studied on their own terms, with the realization that their functions and meanings differ from those of European drawings. In Persian drawings, as opposed to European drawings, the ground, material, and scale are the same for preparatory and exploratory drawings as they are for manuscripts, miniature paintings, and finished drawings. The close relationship between a preparatory or exploratory drawing and a finished drawing is illustrated by a leaf mounted in an album on which a model drawing of a polo player shares the same material and scale with the other more finished drawings (figure 2). In Persian art, unlike the standard European methods, model drawings and pounces retain the same scale from one piece of paper to another when transferred to what becomes a finished work, be it a drawing or a painting. Judging from their survival in fully developed form in albums from as early as the fourteenth century, finished drawings must have had as high a status in the hierarchy of the arts as paintings.

The aims of this exhibition and catalogue are to define the term "drawing" as applied to Persian art, to summarize the history of Persian drawings, to set forth their various functions, and to explore their more common themes. Our

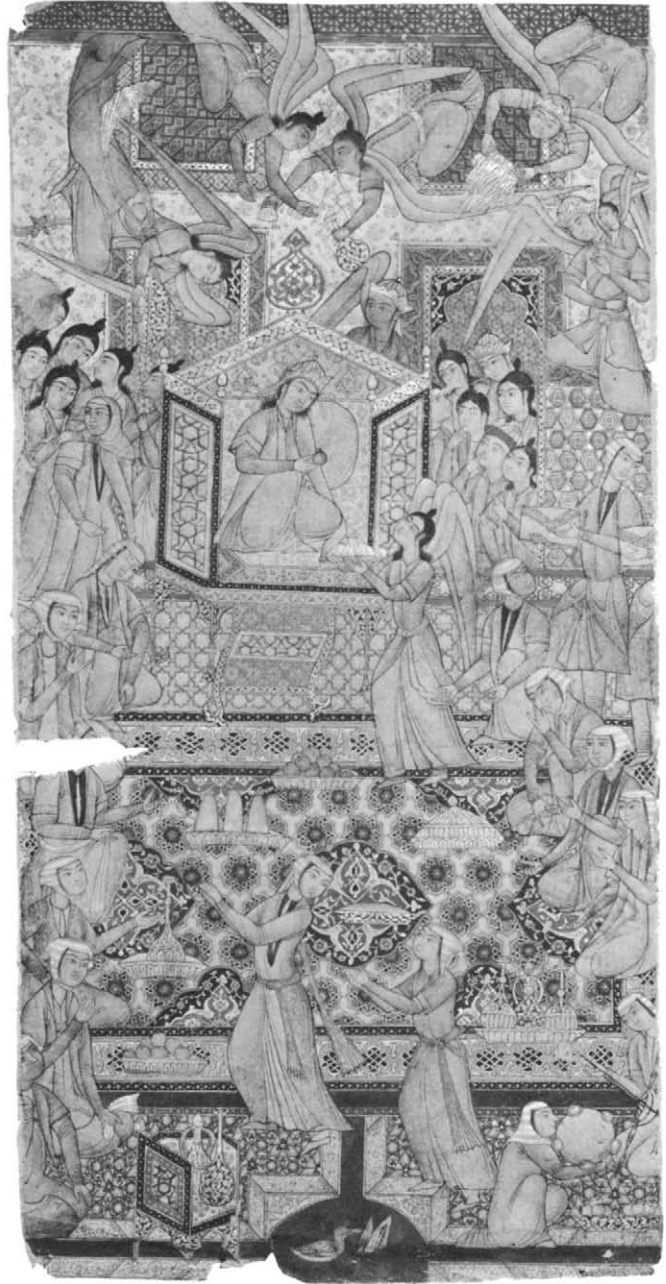


FIGURE 1. *The Queen of Sheba Enthroned*
Qajar period, late nineteenth century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Charles K. Wilkinson, 1979 (1979.518.1)

focus on Persian drawings was mainly dictated by the strength of the Museum's collection, but also by the different nature of Indian and, to a lesser extent, Turkish drawings.² To qualify as a "drawing" a work must have artistic intent from its inception; for that reason scientific and mechanical diagrams have been excluded.

Most catalogues, whether of collections or of special exhibitions, do not treat drawings as a study separate from paintings. Although there are no specialized studies of Persian drawings to date, as there are of Indian drawings, a few articles on individual drawings or small groups have been published.³ None of these studies, however, has focused on the functions and themes of drawings.

The earliest publication devoted to drawings is F. Sarre and E. Mittwoch's *Zeichnungen von Riza Abbasi* (1914). As the title implies, this work is confined to drawings ascribed to Reza 'Abbasi with the aim of identifying and classifying the contents of a single album of drawings.

In 1965, at the Victoria and Albert Museum, B. W. Robinson put on an exhibition of Persian paintings accompanied by a few drawings. The catalogue was entitled *Persian Drawings from the 14th through the 19th Century*. From the point of view of information about drawings, this title is misleading. In his introduction, however, Robinson makes a telling observation about the pen of the calligrapher in comparison with the brush of the artist: "the elegant runs, curves and flourishes of the nasta'liq script inspired the faultless line of the Persian artist."⁴

The Brush of the Masters: Drawings from Iran and India, written by Esin Atil in conjunction with an exhibition of Persian and Indian drawings, gives a brief summary of some of the types of drawings and where they were found. This is followed by a survey of the history of Iran, beginning in the fifteenth century, from which she dates the earliest drawings made in Iran.

While we have tried to confine our summary of the literature to publications focused on Persian drawings, we found it justifiable to include *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* by T. Lentz and G. Lowry since a significant number of drawings from the Diez and Topkapi Saray albums are illustrated and discussed in this catalogue.⁵ The authors divide the drawings from these albums according to their notion of different categories of representation, namely, illustrative, pictorial, and decorative. Drawings are discussed only in their functional relationship to paintings, which in turn are discussed as part of the authors' thesis of Timurid codification of visual material.⁶ The uncritical subordination of drawings to categories



FIGURE 2. Sheet with three drawings
Safavid period, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Courtesy of the
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.,
53.50

that the authors have applied to paintings has resulted in a certain confusion in the definition of functions and themes of drawings which in fact override the arbitrary barrier between illustrative, pictorial, and decorative.⁷ The Diez and Topkapi Saray albums are discussed below.

From this brief summary of the literature it can be concluded that nearly all subjects relating to drawings need clarification, particularly the history of drawings, the artists, schools and regions, patronage, economy, technique, and working methods.

It has been our intention in this catalogue to explore drawings as a separate phenomenon, and to understand them as works of art with intents, meanings, and results that differ from paintings or other visual means of representation. We view this investigation, based of necessity on the limitations of the Museum's collection, as a preliminary to a more comprehensive study of Persian drawings.

The earliest substantial number of Persian drawings on paper that have survived date from the second half of the fourteenth century, the period associated with Muzaffarid and Jalayirid rule in Iran.⁸ These are mainly to be found in two albums in the Topkapi Saray Library, Istanbul (Hazine 2152, and to a lesser extent 2153).⁹ Others belong to the Diez Album, now in the State Library in West Berlin.¹⁰

While these album drawings are not dated, many of them are more closely related to surviving paintings of the Muzaffarid and Jalayirid periods than to miniature painting and drawing of the Timurid period.¹¹ For example, the drawing *Khosrow Spies Shirin Bathing* is close enough in style to the paintings in the two Muzaffarid *Shah-nameh* manuscripts (one in Istanbul, dated 1371, the other in Cairo, dated 1393) to postulate a firm fourteenth-century date.¹² The seminude figure of Shirin resembles Khosrow at his ritual bath in the Cairo manuscript; the pillowlike rocks around the pools, the treatment of the background hills, the way the turbans are tied, and the drawing of the horses are common to all these examples.¹³

On the evidence of these drawings, a number of themes that become standard in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century drawing have already been developed in the fourteenth century. Subjects such as horsemen combatting lions,¹⁴ landscapes with animals,¹⁵ hunting scenes,¹⁶ and images based on literary sources, as in animal fables¹⁷ and heroes battling dragons,¹⁸ have fully evolved in these drawings, and the principal elements hardly change during the ensuing centuries. Not only the themes but the functions of these fourteenth-century drawings as steps in preparatory (pounced or simplified models), exploratory (quick sketches), and finished stages are already established.¹⁹

It would seem that fourteenth-century drawing must have evolved out of an earlier drawing tradition for which tangible evidence is no longer extant. That there was a pre-Mongol painting tradition is known from the survival of a probably late-thirteenth-century Seljuq manuscript, the *Varqa va Gulshah*,²⁰ and paintings on innumerable twelfth- and thirteenth-century ceramics, particularly the mina'i ware.²¹ A large proportion of Il-Khanid (the dynasty ruling in Iran from 1256 to 1353) painting, on the other hand, reflects the decisive impact of Chinese art on Persian painting. Communication between the Il-Khanids of Iran and the Yuan dynasty of China is too well established to be reiterated here.

As yet we have no evidence of a pre-Mongol drawing tradition. This, however, does not automatically lead to the assumption that no indigenous Persian drawing tradition existed before the Mongols, or that Chinese drawing provided

the impetus for the emergence of Persian drawing as an art form. What does exist from the post-Mongol period, that is the fourteenth century, is considerably informed by Chinese drawing.²² The use of Chinese motifs — dragons, simurghs (a fabulous bird patterned on the feng-huang, or phoenix), cloud-bands, lotus and peony flowers, and gnarled tree trunks — to name the obvious, has often been summarized. Less frequently discussed is the native Persian and Central Asian origin of most of the themes — hunting, animal combat, man-and-beast combat, animal fables, and literary or heroic tales. The same distinction can be made between a Chinese style of drawing and one that seems to be rooted in a Persian mode of visual representation. What is striking is that in these fourteenth-century drawings there is already the Persian artist's commitment to surface patterning, rhythmic linear movement, and an ingrained harmony of design.

The transition between fourteenth- and fifteenth-century drawing (and painting) is almost indiscernible. Frequently represented subjects of the fourteenth century continue, as does the use of preparatory and finished drawings. Two categories need to be singled out: decorative drawings and Chinese imitation drawings. Decorative drawings are a continuation of a fourteenth-century genre that gained popularity in the fifteenth century (cat. no. 1). Chinese imitation drawings, on the other hand, are a Timurid phenomenon. As opposed to the fourteenth century, when only individual Chinese motifs were borrowed and incorporated into a thoroughly Persian context, in the fifteenth century Chinese compositions, motifs, and even the style of painting were imitated (cat. no. 2) and occasionally copied. The fascination with chinoiserie was the apparent result of increased cultural contact with China in the first half of the fifteenth century, for which Shah Rukh's missions to China must have been largely responsible. Although fewer drawings have survived from the later Timurid period, there are several indicators that drawings were a fundamentally important art form. The compositional perfection of Herat painting of the school of Behzad presupposes extensive exploratory and preparatory drawings. An example is a composite sheet in the Freer Gallery of Art that consists of two preparatory drawings: a bathhouse composition perforated for duplication, and above it, on its side, two preparatory vignettes of entertainment (figure 3).

It is surprising that, considering the large number of documented late-Herat manuscript paintings, so few undeniably late-Herat drawings have survived. Nonetheless, the debt of future generations to late-Herat drawing must have paralleled that of paintings. A drawing of a youth and old man by Reza 'Abbasi in this exhibition, for example, harks back at least to

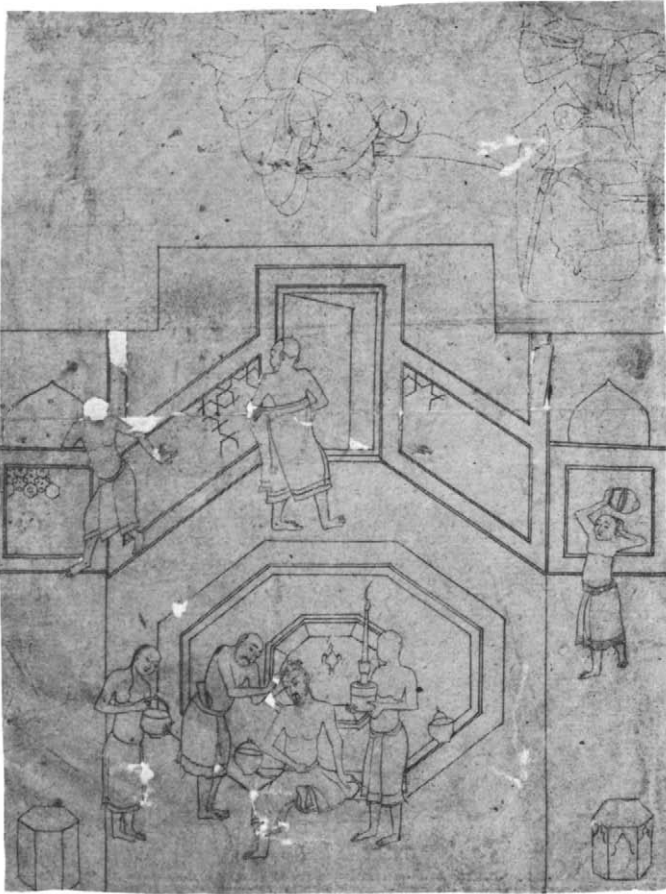


FIGURE 3. *Scene in the Bathhouse*
Safavid period, sixteenth century. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 53.56

a late-fifteenth-century Timurid painting of the same subject (cat. no. 32 and figure 29). Similarly long-lived is the Behzadian composition of fighting camels. The central motif of two camels with necks intertwined is known from a fourteenth-century drawing but has been expanded into a landscape with figures and codified, it seems, by Behzad.²³ The Museum's *Camels Fighting*, a late-sixteenth to early-seventeenth-century drawing, is a case in point (cat. no. 18).

With the advent of the sixteenth century and the Safavid dynasty, drawing assumes a new role. In court art during the course of that century there is a distinct shift from manuscript illustration toward independent images destined for albums. This may have partly resulted from the broadened base of patronage expanding outside the court, a development that seems to coincide with Shah Tahmasp's (r. 1524–1576) loss of interest as a patron of the arts about mid-century.

The sixteenth century is also marked by an increase in artists signing their works. Later-sixteenth-century patrons, probably consisting of courtiers, government officials, members of the social elite, and wealthy merchants may have stimulated a desire for signed works as an enhancement of their own prestige as collectors. While the late-fifteenth-century Herat school of painting is associated mainly with Behzad, in spite of some signed works and citations in the literature to the works of other artists, in the second half of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century signatures are a symptom of the emergence of a number of identifiable artistic personalities. The most prominent among them, Muhammadi, Siyavush the Georgian, Sadiqi Bek, and Reza 'Abbasi, signed not only paintings in manuscripts but individual works, both painted and drawn.²⁴ Not all artists' work of the period, however, can be easily recognized. A case in point is Vali Jan, a pupil of Siyavush the Georgian, whose signature is difficult to authenticate until more about him and his work becomes known (cat. no. 14, and especially cat. no. 25).

As far as the shaping of the future is concerned, Reza 'Abbasi is by far the most influential artist of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Reza 'Abbasi certainly popularized, even if he did not invent, single-page painting and drawing of one or two figures and established the fluid calligraphic line as the norm. His closed, unbroken outline of figures, staccato loose ends of sashes and turbans, and signature facial types set the aesthetic standard not only for his immediate followers in the seventeenth century but for Persian artists into the twentieth century. The style of Reza was so uniformly imbued in his numerous followers that, in spite of signatures, distinguishing one hand from another is primarily a question of connoisseurship.

An illuminating example of the problem of identifying different artists is found in the work of Muhammad Qasim, Muhammad 'Ali, and Muhammad Yusuf, all adherents of the Reza style, who were active in the middle of the seventeenth century (cat. nos. 31, 34). A considerable body of single-page painting and drawing signed or attributable to these three artists has yet to be sorted out.

The popularity of single-page painting and drawing in the second half of the seventeenth century is attested to by the sheer body of material that has come down to us. It is in this period that single-page painting and drawing come close together in that they share subject matter, style, and function.²⁵ Scholarship, however, has yet to resolve the problems of attribution, stylistic and iconographic sources, and patronage.

One aspect of single-page painting and drawing that may have been overemphasized is European influence (cat. no.



FIGURE 4. *Man Scratching His Head*
Signed and inscribed: Reza 'Abbasi.
Safavid period, dated 1007 A.H./A.D. 1598. Courtesy of the Freer
Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 53.12

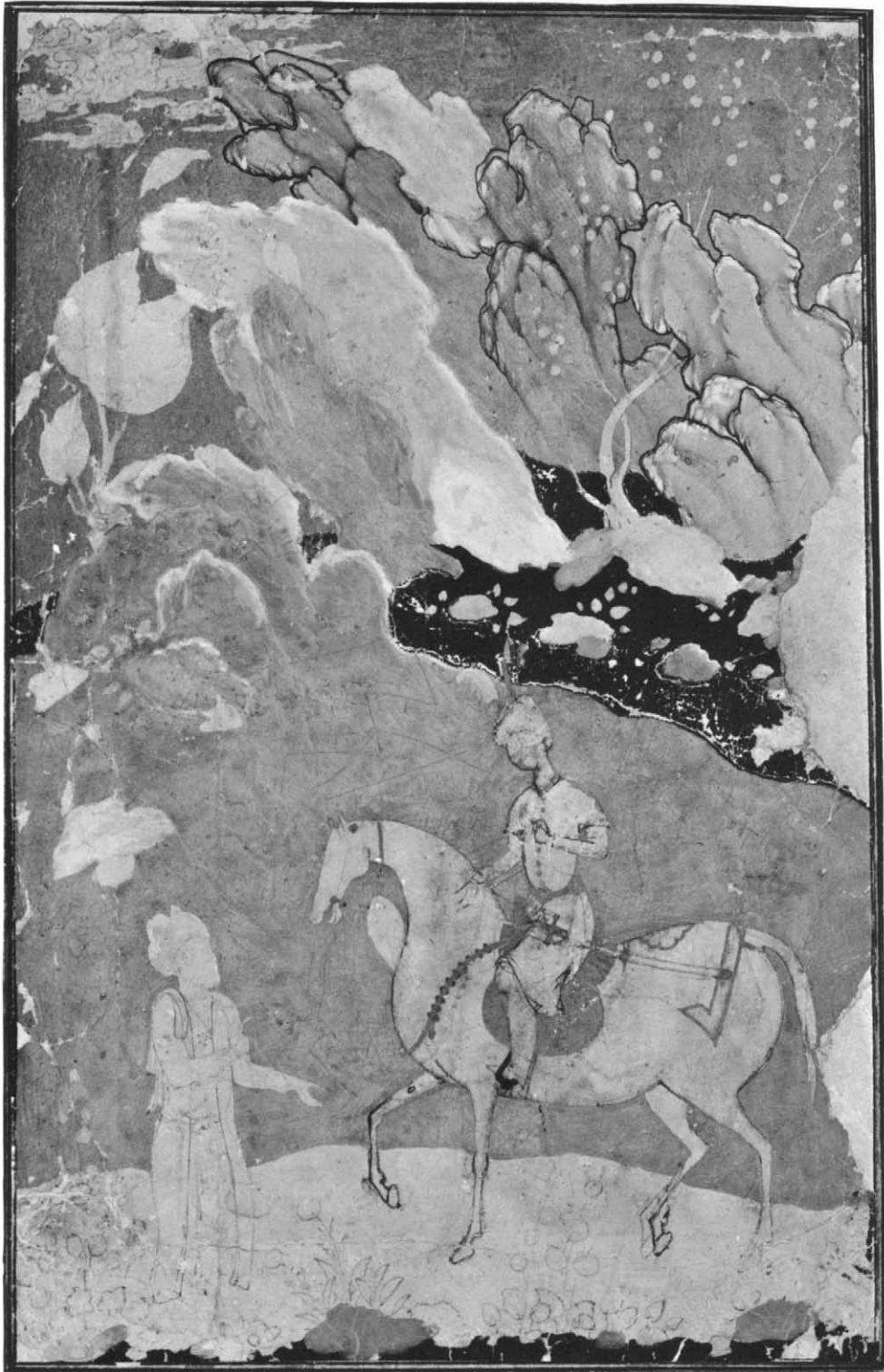


FIGURE 5. *Meeting of King and Poet*
Tabriz, Safavid period, mid-sixteenth century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.26.1)

20). Until we know more about the circumstances of patronage and economic factors that seem to have initially stimulated the demand for single-page painting and drawing in the second half of the sixteenth century and accelerated the production of images independent of manuscripts in the seventeenth century, it is reasonable to accept internal causes rather than to postulate external influences. A different issue is, however, the incorporation of European principles of representation in painting, although only rarely in drawing. European influence on Persian art of the seventeenth century is always readily detectable from items of clothing, facial types, and even whole compositions. An influence harder to define is the subtle merging of Indian motifs and figural types with the traditional Persian ones.

The eighteenth century is basically terra incognita since very little in the way of paintings and drawings has surfaced. A great deal more is known about nineteenth-century Qajar painting, but again almost nothing about drawing. Side by side with the dominant Qajar style there existed a deliberately eclectic style, an example of which is the painting *The Queen of Sheba Enthroned* in the Museum's collection that harks back to the last quarter of the sixteenth century (figure 1). This archaizing trend lives on into the twentieth century (cat. no. 36).

Drawings, either in their preparatory role for other media or as independent works of art, were an integral part of the traditional atelier system, and remained so, as long as manuscript illustration held its position of prominence. Artists worked and trained in a workshop under the supervision of a master artist. From the physical and to a certain extent the textual evidence it can be surmised that artists and apprentices constantly studied and copied the work of masters and the stock material of the workshop. Less is known about studies after nature or from life. It cannot be proven that drawings that look as portraitlike as the standing figure in cat. no. 27 or as spontaneous as the *Man Scratching His Head* in the Freer Gallery of Art (figure 4) were actually done from life or drawn from memory. In the Freer drawing the inscription reinforces the impression of a life drawing. The inscription informs us that "It was made in the presence of friends in the 'daulat-khaneh' in the holy [city of] Mashhad at the end of Friday the 10th of Muharram, 1007 [14 August 1598] by Reza; especially [for] Mirza Khajeghi" (followed by what may be a nisbah).²⁶ Quick strokes capture a fleeting moment when the man had taken off his turban and had raised his hand to an itching head. Reza says that he drew it in front of an audience.

Many drawings in the seventeenth century, probably following Reza's lead, are inscribed with the date and place, while with Reza himself and his pupil Mu'in Musavvir, the



FIGURE 6. *An Old Man Carries a Bowl*
Safavid period, early seventeenth century.
Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.,
S86.0303

inscriptions tend to be more explicit in their information.²⁷ The most informative inscription to date is in the drawing *Lion Attacking a Youth* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where Mu'in Musavvir describes in detail the circumstances of the tragic accident that he has depicted in this drawing:²⁸ The ambassador from Bukhara had brought a lion and a rhinoceros as gifts to Shah Sulayman in Ramadan of the year 1082 (A.D. 1672). At the palace gate the lion attacked a boy of fifteen or sixteen, tearing half of his face away. The youth died on the spot. That same winter was the coldest in living memory and snow fell steadily for over a month, so that there was much suffering from shortages of food and wood for fuel. Confined to his house by the snow, Mu'in goes on to say that he made this drawing to distract himself. The immediacy of the drawing and the quality of the quickly sketched line give the strong impression of an eyewitness account, belied, nonetheless, by Mu'in's own words. In most cases neither the



FIGURE 7. *Reading Girl*
Isfahan, Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century.
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C., 53.19

style nor the inscription gives conclusive evidence as to whether a drawing was made from life, memory, or a studio model.

From our observations Persian drawings can be roughly divided into two broad categories: preparatory and finished. The initial response to almost all artistic ideas and the formulation of these ideas toward a final realization is expressed by means of exploratory and preparatory drawings. From extant unfinished paintings, there is incontrovertible evidence that fully worked-out drawings were the armature upon which paintings were constructed (figure 5). From this unfinished painting we cannot tell whether the underdrawing was composed directly on the leaf destined for the finished painting, whether it was copied from a model or if it was pounced. In another example, the *Scene in the Bathhouse* (figure 3), a complete composition with visual notations as to the pattern of the tiled dado in the bathhouse is perforated for transferral.

Pounced drawings of single figures (cat. no. 22), little vignettes (cat. no. 29), and decorative designs (cat. no. 1) were used extensively in workshops not only for drawings and paintings on paper but also for transfer on ceramics,

bookbindings, metalwork, textiles, and so forth (see the examples referred to in cat. no. 1). A sheet in the Vever Collection is intriguing in the fact that it has a full-fledged single-figure drawing on one side and a cropped, pounced decorative drawing of foliage and scrolls on the reverse (figure 6).

This practice of multiple use for a single sheet of paper seems to confirm the evidence that paper was a prized and expensive commodity. It could, in fact, be considered a desecration to put something artistically unworthy down on a piece of paper. As Qadi Ahmad writes:

If the style of writing is devoid of the signs of beauty,
It defiles (even) a scrap of paper.²⁹

Qur'ans, manuscripts, and calligraphies, as highly esteemed vehicles of culture, were wholly dependent on quantities of high-quality paper. Paper is to the Persian artist what canvas or panel is to the European, hence the almost reverential attitude toward its preparation and use. For this very reason, it seems, few rough sketches and first experimental notations have survived because of the constant use and reuse of paper for this kind of drawing. Rare examples of working sketches show how the artist drew and redrew superimposed lines of his subject until he arrived at a satisfactory solution (figure 7).³⁰

The second broad category for which we have clear evidence from the sixteenth century is what we have called "finished" drawings. Finished drawings, at their best, are intended to reach the same degree of ideal perfection in design and execution as Persian painting. A very detailed and highly finished drawing such as the *Courtiers Hunting* (cat. no. 7) parallels painting in its subject matter, composition, and coloristic sense. Similarly polished, but far removed from traditional painting in both style and subject matter, is the *Lion and Dragon in Combat* (cat. no. 19). The quality of the finish and the completeness of the image independent from the text give evidence that the status of this type of drawing equals that of court-commissioned painting. Alternatively, "finished" drawings intended for a less sophisticated or demanding audience tend to portray subjects of proven popularity (cat. nos. 23, 28, 30, 31).

From the sixteenth century onward and especially in the seventeenth century, a general turning away from epic, romantic, and historic themes can be observed in favor of a more focused imagery either taken out of a larger context or derived from some other literary and poetic source often steeped in Sufism. For instance, the large number of drawings of meditative middle-aged and elderly men seems to grow out of projections of the mystic or Sufi way of life



FIGURE 8. *Lion Ch'i-lin in a Landscape*
Safavid period, late sixteenth century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.21)

rather than out of any interest in genre scenes for their own sake (cat. nos. 26–31, especially cat. no. 30). In fact, attributing a genre intent, as defined in Western art, to such drawings as couples in a landscape (cat. nos. 24, 25, 32, 33) or even representations of picnics, festivals, mystical gatherings (cat. nos. 35, 36), and scenes of hunting (cat. nos. 6, 7, 8) is inappropriate. Still deeply rooted in the visual tradition of Persian art, these iconic images isolate and elevate aspects of life.

Either known or assumed literary sources constitute the basis for a large number of drawings. Themes of Majnun in the wilderness (cat. nos. 10, 11) and a prince and groom (cat. nos. 15, 16) are derived from familiar narratives, while a subject like a man with a ram (cat. no. 12) or an emaciated horse (cat. nos. 13, 14) may have grown out of the tradition of moral folk tales. Although lacking in the Museum's collection, a few subjects that enjoyed a continuous vogue deserve mention. "Puzzle" drawings, for the want of a better term, are known from at least the fourteenth century and seem to have been particularly popular in the seventeenth century; they usually consist of identical animal bodies overlapping or

rotating about a single shared part of the body.³¹ Drawings of flowers and to a lesser extent birds proliferate beginning in the seventeenth century.³² Among the more popular themes are animals, apparently growing out of an ancient tradition of sympathetic visual treatment of the subject. The Museum's collection includes drawings of single animals (cat. no. 17 and figure 8), and animals in combat (cat. nos. 18, 19), but missing is the category devoted to animals in a landscape either interacting or absorbed in their own destinies.³³

A puzzling outcome of our investigation is that certain themes central to Persian painting such as battles, court festivities, and polo games do not appear in Persian drawing except, of course, as underdrawings.

It has become clear from our brief introduction to this catalogue of Persian drawings that our study is very much of a preliminary nature. Persian drawing as an independent art form shares the same art historical concerns as painting and demands the same art historical probing into its stylistic and historical evolution, the role of the artist and of the patron, working methods, functions and themes.

Notes

1. This point may be better understood by comparing the Museum's painting to the drawing *Ascension of Salome* in the Freer Gallery of Art, which, in spite of the addition of gold and color washes, remains a pure drawing. Atil, *The Brush*, no. 12.
2. For Indian drawings, see Coomaraswamy, *Indian Drawings*; and Hodgkin, *Indian Drawing*. There are no publications devoted exclusively to Turkish drawings.
3. Gray, "An Album"; idem, "Some Chinoiserie Drawings"; Kühnel, "Malernamen"; and Sakisian, "Persian Drawings."
4. Robinson, *Persian Drawings*, p. 16.
5. *Islamic Art I* (see Bibliography) is not included in our summary because, although devoted to the Topkapi Saray albums, most of the articles discuss paintings with an emphasis on Chinese influence.
6. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, pp. 159–236.
7. In the Timurid catalogue the *Mounted Warrior* (fig. 56) is used as an example of the illustrative category in comparison to the *Mounted Warrior Fighting a Dragon* (no. 82), which is placed in the pictorial category. The distinction between the illustrative and the pictorial is illusory when the two works are seen as preparatory and finished drawings of a popular subject.
8. Very few of the 14th-century drawings in the albums have been published. For some examples, see Kühnel, "Malernamen," figs. 3–9; İpşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben*, pls. xxix–xxxi, XLVIII, LV; and Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, fig. 60 and nos. 60, 78, 82, 83.
9. For a summary of the contents of these albums, see Çağman, "On the Contents."
10. For a few examples, see İpşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben*, pls. xxix, xxx, xxxv.
11. Many of the 15th-century drawings in these albums are published and discussed in *Islamic Art I*, and in Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*.
12. See Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pls. xxix A, xxx A; and Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, no. 83.
13. The Timurid catalogue dates this drawing to 1400–50 using, with no documentation, the inscription of Muhammad Khayyam as evidence for the dating. This view does not take into consideration the varied styles of drawing ascribed to Muhammad Khayyam. See, for example, Hazine 2152, fol. 86v.
14. Hazine 2152, fol. 47v.
15. Hazine 2152, fol. 68r; and 2153, fol. 168v.
16. Hazine 2152, fol. 47v.
17. Hazine 2152, fols. 51r, 63v, 93r, 95v; and 2153, fol. 14r.
18. Hazine 2152, fol. 90v; and 2153, fol. 48r.
19. For preparatory or exploratory drawings, see Hazine 2152, fols. 63v, 84v. For finished drawings, see Hazine 2152, fols. 47v, 68r; and 2153, fol. 48r.
20. Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Roman."
21. For examples of mina'i ware with narrative scenes, see Pope and Ackerman, eds., *A Survey*, vol. V, pt. 2, pls. 660B, 672, 674, 675.
22. See *Islamic Art I* for 15th-century chinoiserie.
23. See Hazine 2152, fol. 91.
24. For late-16th-century artists, see A. Welch, *Artists*; and Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pp. 117–20.
25. For a recent study, see Farhad, "Safavid Single-Page Painting."
26. Implicitly the 'daulat-khaneh' refers to the Mirza's house. The inscription has been translated by Sussan Babaie.
27. See Atil, *The Brush*, nos. 27, 29; and A. Welch, *Shah Abbas*, nos. 75–78.
28. A. Welch, *Shah Abbas*, no. 75 and p. 118.
29. See Qadi Ahmad, in Minorsky, *Calligraphers*, p. 43.
30. See also Atil, *The Brush*, no. 47.
31. For a 14th-century example, see Topkapi Saray Library, Hazine 2152, fol. 44v. Two examples of 17th-century "puzzle" drawings are illustrated in Atil, *The Brush*, no. 28; and A. Welch, *Shah Abbas*, no. 77.
32. For a discussion of a number of these drawings, see Gray, "An Album"; and Atil, *The Brush*, no. 35.
33. See Atil, *The Brush*, nos. 57, 58; and Grube, "Herat," figs. 50, 52.

Persian Drawings

in The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1. *Decorative Drawing*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,

5 1/2 x 4 in. (14 x 10.2 cm.)

Herat, Timurid period, first half of the fifteenth century

Rogers Fund, 1941 (41.46)

Decorative designs have a long tradition in Persian art, beginning in the second half of the fourteenth century with the Jalayirid dynasty, continuing through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries under the Timurid, Turkomen, and Safavid dynasties, and migrating as well to Ottoman Turkey in the sixteenth century.¹ The type does not appear in painting, although some are tinted, and tend, as here, to be particularly “calligraphic” in their use of bold curving lines. They are prone to abound in a variety of animal, bird (real and mythological) and, less frequently, human forms (figure 9). Some of the forms — such as the goat or antelope head growing out of a stem near the top center or the lion mask, slightly lower near the left margin — are related to the so-called *vaq-vaq* design. This design with animal and human heads in various arabesque scrolls (allegedly evolving out of the story of Alexander and the talking tree) goes at least as far back as the early twelfth century.²

In this drawing the remainder of the human and animal forms are hidden behind the foliage rather than growing out of it. In spite of its small size, and even with the damage to the center portion, there are eleven animals or animal heads, two dragons, ten birds and two bird heads, and seven human faces or parts of figures in the drawing. It is possible that these drawings were more than purely decorative and had mystical overtones.³ Some of them, as here, are hard to orient since the figures appear in varied positions among the foliage. The missing center design may have provided an obvious answer to the primary visual direction of the composition.

Many of the drawings seem to have been patterns or models to be copied in other media, such as embroideries, ceramics, and bookbindings, and have a variety of shapes.⁴ Stylistically related to this drawing and others like it, first appearing under the Jalayirid but not found after the Timurid period, are a group more narrative in subject matter (figure 10). They too appear only as drawings. They are equally dense, and lively to the point of intensity. This parallel group, however, lacks the pronounced calligraphic lines of the decorative drawings, but was probably a simultaneous development.

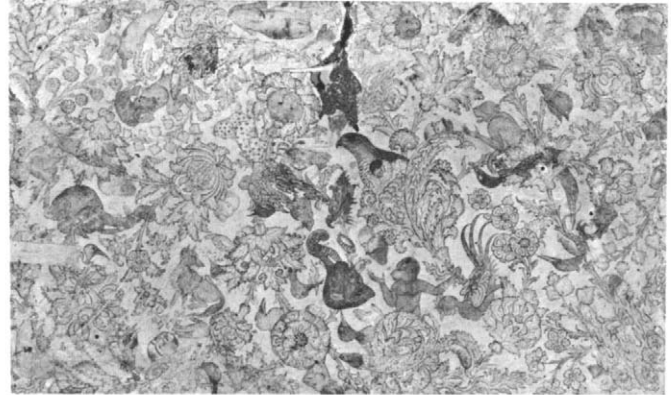


FIGURE 9. *Ornamental Design*
Page from the *Album of the Emir of Bukhara*, late fifteenth–early sixteenth century. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M.386.14



FIGURE 10. *Forest Conflict*
Jalayirid period, late fourteenth century. Collection Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, IR.M.7



1.

1. Most of these drawings are found in the Istanbul albums, Hazine 2152, 2153, 2160, and also in the Diez Album, see Ipşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben*.

2. The design appears on a marble slab in Ghazna, probably associated with Mas'ud III (r.1099–1115).

3. See, for example, a drawing in the Fogg Art Museum, ca. 1650; A. Welch, *Shah 'Abbas*, fig. 59.

4. For a cloud-collar shape, see Ipşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben*, pl. xxxv, fig. 47. See also Gray, "Some Chinoiserie Drawings"; and Lentz and Lowry, *Timur*, pp. 189–200.

2. *Two Lohans*

Inscribed: Ustad Muhammad . . . Qalam
Ink and transparent colors on paper,
13 7/16 x 9 3/8 in. (34.2 x 23.9 cm.)
Timurid period, early fifteenth century
Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.48)

This drawing of a pair of lohans, or canonical Buddhist saints, walking with a lioness is an early Timurid copy of a Chinese painting of the Yuan dynasty (1280–1368). Whether, as Basil Gray suggests, the Chinese original came to Iran when the Il-Khanid (Mongol) dynasty ruled Iran in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries or whether it was a “find” during renewed contacts with China under Shah Rukh (r. 1405–1447) is difficult to determine.¹

So fine a drawing is in itself a testimonial to the high caliber of the Chinese original. The quality of line — fine, clean, and hard-edged — indicates that the copy was achieved with a reed pen as opposed to a brush. Although seemingly an accurate copy that captures the spirit of the original, the perception of abstract patterning, especially in the folds of the garments, is a predilection of the Persian artist.

The appreciation of Chinese art in Iran and its influence on the development of Persian painting are theories too well established to need reiteration here, but they do not in themselves explain the motive behind this particular copy. Did this Chinese drawing simply appeal to the Persian artist as a superior work of art that would challenge his skill to imitate? Did he find the subject matter particularly enticing? Men and beasts in such a jovial frame of mind, as is evident from their laughing faces, must have seemed exotic to a Persian artist. Oddly, lohans do occasionally appear in otherwise characteristically Persian compositions, such as in a miniature in the late-fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Mantiq al-Tayr* in the Museum’s collection.²

1. Gray, “A Timurid Copy.”

2. Lukens, “The Language of the Birds,” figs. 29, 30.



2.

3. *Two Mounted Warriors*

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,
2 3/4 x 3 3/4 in. (7 x 9.5 cm.)
Safavid period, mid-sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.3)

The Parthian shot, that is, the shot delivered backward while galloping forward, must have required considerable practice. It was also a worthy challenge for an artist. Here, unusually graceful rhythms have been set up and the movements of the pair of horsemen and their mounts have the happy harmony of a ballet. The left-handed rider facing us has just released his arrow while his horse lags slightly behind that of his companion. The other, with his bow stretched to the full, is about to release his arrow. His shoulders are hunched with the effort, while strength seems to be drawn along the pronounced line down his spine.

There is a later drawing of two hunters shooting a leopard in which their positions and those of their horses are very close to the Museum's drawing, differing mainly in costume, in the position of the horses' legs, and the spacing of the figures (figure 11). Although that drawing is more developed compositionally and more finished, it lacks the harmonious relationship between the horsemen that is the crowning glory of the Museum's drawing. The Sotheby's drawing is dated in the upper-right-hand corner 1052 A.H./A.D. 1642, and is in the style of that period, while the Museum's drawing, probably dating to the mid-sixteenth century, comes out of the fifteenth-century Herat tradition.

In the Museum's drawing, the target is not visible, so whether the archers are warriors or hunters cannot be determined. The Parthian shot, however, takes its name from a battle maneuver. Battle scenes from as early as the opening decades of the fourteenth century are similar in spirit to the horsemen in the Museum's drawing and are not infrequently shown from a back view.¹

At an undetermined later date, the gold and some of the landscape elements including the peculiar scattered flower-heads were added to the drawing, and the head of the second horse seems to have been carelessly gilded over, but the outline is still visible. Fortunately, the drawing is so tautly unified in its interplay of line and form that the later additions do not substantially detract from it.



FIGURE 11. *Two Hunters on Horseback*
Safavid period, second quarter of the seventeenth century.
Courtesy of Sotheby's, London (April 3, 1978, lot 42)

1. See İpşiroğlu, *Saray-Alben*, pl. ix.



3.

4. *Turkomen Horseman*

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,
3 7/16 x 3 1/4 in. (8.7 x 8.3 cm.)
Safavid period, sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.7)

The sturdy independence of the Turkomen warrior, born to the saddle and inseparable from his horse, must have been as much admired as he was probably feared in the urban Iranian world. The horse's eye is rolled back and his ears are also turned back toward his rider, reinforcing the impression of the fine-tuned communication between man and mount. The high cheekbones, slant of the eyes, and wispy mustache and beard of the figure, as well as the tall cap with the turban cloth wrapped around its base, identify his ethnic origins. The high wooden saddle is also characteristic of the steppe, as is the horse's knotted tail, which, however, appears in depictions of horses as early as the Seljuq period; although by now (the sixteenth century) it had become an artistic cliché, it is still a feature identified with the steppe. Interestingly, the whip held by the horseman is not the usual short whip with a long thong that had come to be associated with Turkomens or Mongols, but more of a quirt with a split end, a shape with a long Iranian tradition.

The completion of such details as the subtly rendered dappled coat of the horse gives the drawing a finished appearance; however, the simplicity of the sure, firm outlines suggests that the drawing may have been used as a model. The cutting off of the leaf at the top indicates the possibility of a further drawing or drawings on the rest of the sheet. The hemispherical shape at the upper left would appear to be an erased seal.

Renditions of Turkomen horsemen were popular in Iranian art and there are a number showing galloping Turkomen engaged in hunting or falconry.¹ Such self-contained figures as this horse and rider are, somewhat surprisingly, rare.

1. Atil, *The Brush*, fig. 11, called late 15th century but in fact probably late 16th or early 17th century where the horseman is carrying the usual whip mentioned above.



4.

5. *Turkomen Prisoner*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
7 1/2 x 4 9/16 in. (19.1 x 11.6 cm.)
Isfahan, Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century
Louis V. Bell Fund, 1967 (67.266.2)

Figures of horsemen, as the pair performing the Parthian shot (cat. no. 3) and the Turkomen horseman (cat. no. 4), are found in both the role of warrior and hunter with sometimes a certain ambiguity as to which activity is represented in a particular drawing. In the case of a Turkomen prisoner, such as the one in this drawing, his condition as a prisoner under restraint seems clear enough; and yet other paintings and drawings of this popular subject depict the warriors often girt about with their weapons, no doubt with intent on the artist's part, and successfully so, of adding to their aura of formidable ferocity. A number of paintings and drawings of unfettered Turkomen warriors are also to be found, testifying to the overall fascination with these figures.¹

The Turkomen prisoner shown here, like all depictions of this subject, is fettered by the *palahang*, a device made of a forked stick of wood, to which one wrist, usually the left, has been attached by an additional band of metal or wood. The V formed by the fork goes on either side of the head with a crossbar across the back of the neck. In the Museum's drawing, the prisoner kneels with his right hand resting lightly over the end of his sash, which drops down over his raised right knee. An almost identical pose (without the sash) is seen in the painting of a prisoner published by Marteau and Vever.² He wears a split-brim hat similar to our prisoner's, but is carrying his bowcase, quiver, and sword, as well as a weapon consisting of a ball on the end of a thong attached to a short shaft. Another Turkomen in the same pose with the same weapons but a different costume and wearing a turban, painted in Bukhara, is in the Pierpont Morgan Library (figure 12). The Museum's drawing is a seventeenth-century work, which in composition and iconography was clearly based on sixteenth-century forerunners. But the only weapon carried by the prisoner in the Museum's drawing is a dagger, the top half of which is hidden by a hanging end of the voluminous sash.

The calligraphic line swelling and diminishing as it delineates the form of face and body and the sash with the staccato brushstrokes of its hanging ends are all associated with the stylistic innovations of Reza 'Abbasi, which were carried on by his followers. There is no horizon line to tell the viewer when the plants and rocks of the landscape give way to the scudding clouds, all, however, making a suitable calli-

graphic surrounding for the kneeling figure. While his physiognomy clearly identifies the figure as a Turkomen and the double plume in his cap suggests a prince or nobleman, the artist is by no means attempting to individualize the figure, as opposed, possibly, to some of the prototypes. He seems to be intent on creating a pleasing figural composition — based on his command of the rhythms of the calligraphic line — that was doubtless destined to be mounted in an album.³

1. See, for example, Marteau and Vever, *Miniatures persanes*, vol. II, pl. cxv, fig. 139, from the Goloubew Collection, called "Portrait de prince ou de chef d'armée."

2. Ibid., pl. cxiii, fig. 137.

3. There are too many paintings of Turkomen prisoners to cite here, but for a drawing, as opposed to more numerous paintings, in similar pose, only with the right hand in the *palahang*, see Blochet, *Musulman Painting*, pl. cxix, a 16th-century work. For a Turkomen, not, however, a prisoner, in a pronounced calligraphic drawing style, see A. Welch, *Artists*, fig. 24, by Sadiqi, ca. 1595.



FIGURE 12. *A Prisoner*
Page from the Album of the Emir of Bukhara, Uzbek period, first half of the sixteenth century. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M.386.2



5.

6. *Mounted Hunter with Dog Pursuing Game Birds*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,

4 3/4 x 3 5/8 in. (12.1 x 9.2 cm.)

Safavid period, sixteenth century

Gift of Richard Ettinghausen, 1975 (1975.192.17)

Hunting was a truly royal pastime, as was feasting, and during the fifteenth century most court-commissioned manuscripts had double-page frontispieces of either a royal hunt or a royal feast. In epic literature, heroes were almost by definition great hunters, and manuscripts abound with illustrations of fabled hunters and various exploits of their hunts. Hunting was also used as a metaphor to express the courage and skill of a ruler or hero. In later literature the hunt imagery evolved into a more romantic, didactic, and mystical metaphor.¹ Hawking, or falconry, was among the highly esteemed branches of the sport of kings, and scenes of hawks after game birds are not uncommon, although they compete with scenes of courtiers with falcons on their wrists taking their ease either before or after the hunt.²

The drawing illustrated here is unusual in that no hunting falcons are present; the rider himself pursues the game and successfully shoots one of the three flying cranes with his bow and arrow. The sense of motion and animation is also unusual as both the dog and the horse are shown leaping into the air as if trying to reach the flying quarry. The taut curve of the dog's tail seems to help its forward surge. The tree at the left acts as a kind of springboard from which the scene is propelled toward the limitless air and space on the right. The prince's hair, the mane of the horse, the hair on the dog's back and rear leg, and the rider's boot have all been given texture. Otherwise, the drawing is so economical of line that it could have been made as a model, were it not for the sense of spontaneity, usually absent from model drawings.



FIGURE 13. *Two Hunters with a Falcon*

Safavid period, mid-seventeenth century. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 53.46



6.

A later drawing in the Freer Gallery of Art shows a similar subject, with two mounted hunters and a falcon attacking cranes (figure 13). The flying gallop of both mounts, the bent grass before them, and the movement of birds lend motion to the scene but the tree circling back into the picture, while making a pleasing composition, stops the directional flow of movement, contrary to the Museum's drawing, which, however, is an altogether less elaborate work.³

1. An informative discussion of the hunt and its metaphors in Persian literature is presented in Hanaway's article, "The Concept of the Hunt."

2. See, for example, cat. no. 25.

3. For another earlier drawing of a mounted falconer about to release his hawk after an assemblage of flying and swimming ducks, see Blochet, *Persian Painting*, no. 105, where the hunter has the wings of a decoy hanging from his saddle. In the Freer drawing the younger falconer is holding the same equipment aloft. In detailed drawings, much can often be learned from the hunter's equipage.

7. *Courtiers Hunting*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
6 15/16 x 4 1/2 in. (17.6 x 11.4 cm.)
Qazvin, Safavid period, second half of the sixteenth century
Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.81.2.)

As previously mentioned, the hunt was a pastime that was the prerogative of the court, and in this lyrically orchestrated drawing a prince (the only crowned figure) and his courtiers are spread out across the landscape in lively yet controlled cadences. Highly finished, this drawing is the functional equivalent of a painting — shading, pattern, and the precision of detail remove the need for color. The foreground vignette of an ideally handsome young nobleman cutting with his sword a leopard that has killed an antelope could easily be plucked out to form a separate drawing were it not for the addition of a curious fox observing the contest. The courtier who rides at full gallop and thrusts his lance into a tumbling bear dominates the center of the composition as well as lends it a certain air of gay abandon. The falconer entering the scene from the upper left adds another dimension to the hunt.

While many of these scenes of the hunt formed a part of frontispieces, as stated above (cat. no. 6), many others were painted as illustrations for manuscripts.¹

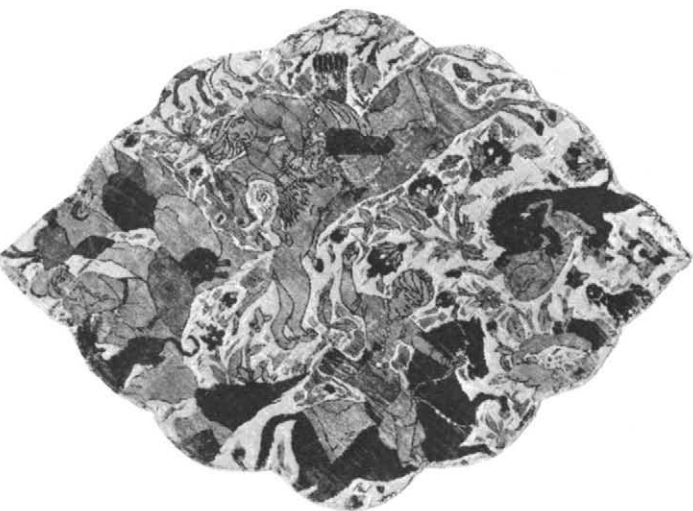


FIGURE 14. Tent Panel
Velvet, cut-silk pile with metallic background, Safavid period,
late sixteenth–early seventeenth century. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1972 (1972.189)

This drawing appears not to relate a specific tale but to represent a generic royal hunt in very much the same way as the hunting scene woven in a cut-velvet tent panel in the Museum's collection (figure 14) or a superb tinted drawing in the Freer, which in its density of hunters and prey seems to depict a *battue*, that is, a hunt in an enclosed space to which the animals are driven (figure 15). The Museum's drawing appears to have been made for an album, with leaves probably similar to the one on which it is now mounted, which in its decorated borders depicts a hunting scene, contrasting in its loosely constructed spare linearity with the controlled polish of the work it surrounds. The quality of the drawing suggests that it was commissioned and attests to the presence of sophisticated connoisseurs attuned to this type of highly finished drawing.

1. For a frontispiece, see a *Divan* of Jami (13.228.4) in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Turkomen, 15th century. For two examples of manuscript illustration, see Stchoukine, *Les Peintures . . . Safavis*, p1. xxviii; and S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting*, pl. 13.



FIGURE 15. *Imperial Hunt*
Safavid period, second half of the
sixteenth century. Courtesy of the
Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian
Institution, Washington, D.C., 54.32



8. *Hunting Scene*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
9 x 5 1/4 in. (22.9 x 13.3 cm.)
Qazvin, Safavid period, late sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.16)

This hunting scene is a highly finished work of art, again worthy of presentation to a connoisseur. Unlike the orchestration of figures and forms spread out across the picture space of cat. no. 7, the towering rocks of the mountainous landscape evoke a totally different mood. The well-bred lineage of the riders and their mounts is of less importance than in the previous drawing. Here, in contrast, they appear in conjunction with the wild forces of the natural world. In both drawings a leopard attacking an antelope looks over its shoulder at the attacking hunter; in this one, however, the impression is given that the beast of prey has been surprised during its kill by the archer suddenly emerging from the cover of the rocky escarpment. In the foreground a naturalistically realized boar dashes for cover. A hunter with a raised sword, galloping in from the other direction, is after a pair of stags with magnificent antlers. A hare and a gazelle dash madly in opposite directions in the space separating the two hunters. The open ground sweeps up between the jumbled rock piles, drawing the eye into their midst. These distant rocks are rich in more

animal life and abound as well with concealed animal forms in their own contorted shapes.

This drawing, in its treatment of landscape, animals, human figures, and horses, as well as the subtle light touches of color, is very like the drawing *Hero and Dragon* (cat. no. 9), and was probably done by the same skillful artist. Both are extraordinarily accomplished finished works of art and share the same combination of naturalism, idealism, and lyricism.

A hunter attacking a leopard is far less usual than the time-honored subject of the hunter or hero in confrontation with a lion. Although it sometimes occurs, as does the occasional subject of a lion with its prey, the more usual convention shows the lion alone (figure 16).¹

1. See also Sotheby's, April 3, 1978, lot 33, showing an Indian hunter spearing a leopard, Khorasan, ca. 1580. The Museum has another drawing (17.81.1) that shows a figure on foot attacking a leopard helped by a mounted companion. For a similar scene, see Pope and Ackerman, eds., *A Survey*, vol. V, pt. 2, pl. 919 B.



FIGURE 16. *Lion Hunt*
Safavid period, second half of the sixteenth century. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1955 (55.121.18)



8.

9. *Hero and Dragon*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,

8 5/8 x 5 5/8 in. (22 x 14.3 cm.)

Qazvin, Safavid period, third quarter of the sixteenth century

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1925 (25.83.7)

A hero attacking a mythical monster is a familiar theme in epic literature. However, in spite of the graphic depiction shown here — a dragon swallowing an antelope — specific identification remains illusive. The most likely reason is that, rather than an illustration for a manuscript, this highly finished drawing was conceived as a separate entity. It is an imagined and idealized version of a narrative that has been combined with the lively running animals found in hunting scenes.¹

The steed, with its arched neck and dappled hide, carrying its rider, in every inch the princely hero, and the dragon, with the boldly calligraphic curve of its spine, are nevertheless frozen in time. In their gracefulness and charm the pairs of ibexes, foxes, and rabbits in the foreground belong to the world of the prince-hero and his steed, while the submerged menagerie in the rocks of the dragon's mountainous lair belongs to its demonic world in which the cloud, whipped by a witch-blown wind, has joined.

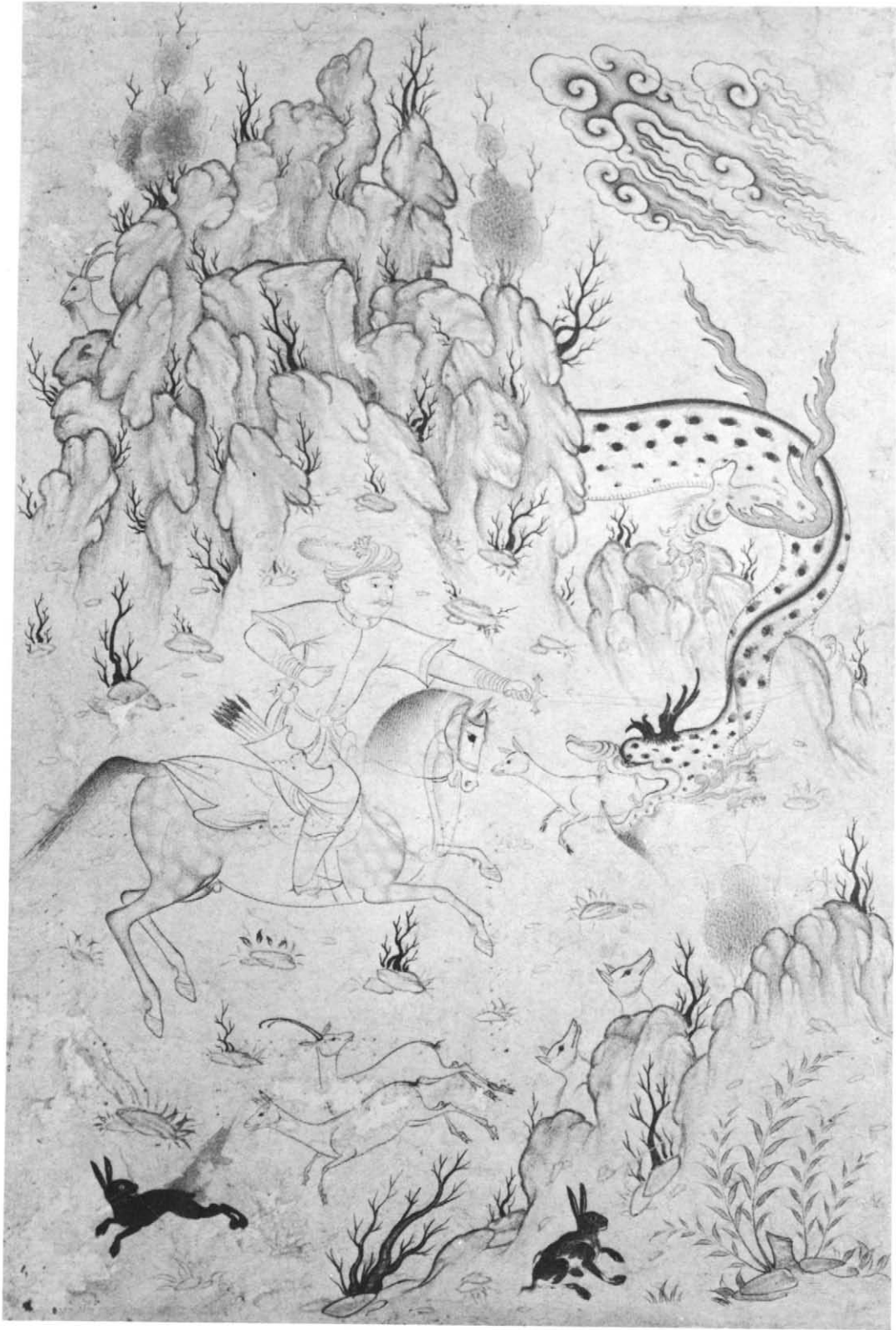
The iconography of the dragon emerging from a mountainous rocky landscape had already become standard in the fifteenth century.² A drawing of an archer attacking a dragon by Siyavush the Georgian, of about 1590, in the Louvre, is the closest parallel to this drawing, although slightly later.³

The light washes and touches of color (including the drops of blood on the dragon's fangs) add to the polished finish of the drawing, which functions as a viable alternative to a painting. It may have been produced on commission, perhaps for an album, or on speculation.

1. See the *Hunting Scene*, cat. no. 8, seemingly by the same artist.

2. Hero and dragon scenes from one epic, the *Shah-nameh*, for example, often include Faridun in the shape of a dragon testing his sons, Esfandiyar in a conveyance slaying a dragon, Gushtasp slaying a dragon, Eskandar slaying a dragon accompanied by his army, and two episodes of Bahram Gur slaying a dragon. In none of these is the dragon described as swallowing an antelope or a gazelle.

3. See A. Welch, *Artists*, fig. 8.



10. *Majnun in the Wilderness*

Ink and transparent and opaque colors on paper,
4 1/4 x 2 in. (10.8 x 5.1 cm.)
Safavid period, last quarter of the sixteenth century
Rogers Fund, 1974 (1974.21)

In spite of its diminutive size this magical drawing, heightened with washes and touches of color, stands as a work of art in its own right and was presumably conceived as such. The rendition of the woolly coat of the horned goat dominating the flock in the foreground and the fur of the bear clambering up the rocks above the lion in the center of this composition are extraordinary. A leopard responds to the lion's roar with a particularly feline curve of its spine. The economical use of line used for a pair of mountain sheep at the upper left and the browsing antelope at the upper right, the figure of the gentle Majnun himself, and the trustful gazelle beneath him are all rendered with the sureness of touch and delicacy of a line of lyric poetry.

The poet Nezami's celebrated epic poem about the star-crossed lovers Layla and Majnun became a favorite with illustrators. Separated from Layla, Majnun seeks solace among the wild beasts of the wilderness. The yearning for his beloved translates to a yearning for union with the divine. The name Majnun, which means mad, refers to the imbalance brought about by a single-minded, all-pervasive devotion.

There are many tales and traditions of Sufis, or mystics, who, by their purity of spirit, were able to communicate with wild beasts.¹ While having its roots in literary tradition, drawings of Majnun came to represent the embodiment of the spirit of Sufism. A drawing from the Goloubew Collection in Boston of an even more vertically elongated format of shepherds and their flock is very close to this drawing not only in subject matter but in its combination of observed naturalism elevated to a plane of spiritual sensitivity (figure 17). In the Museum's drawing, the combination of a shepherd attuned to domestic animals and a mystic attuned to wild animals was no doubt intentional and can be interpreted on various levels.²

1. See Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, pp. 207–8.

2. For an example of Majnun and the wild animals, see Gray, *Persian Painting*, pl. 120; see also Shah Tahmasp's *Khamseh*, the British Museum, in Binyon, *The Poems*, pl. XIII.



FIGURE 17. *Two Shepherds and Their Flock*
Safavid period, sixteenth century.
Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Goloubew Collection, 14.611



10.

11. *Majnun in the Wilderness*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,

3 7/8 x 2 5/8 in. (9.8 x 6.7 cm.)

Safavid period, second half of the sixteenth century

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.6)

The two Persian drawings of Majnun in the wilderness in the Museum's collection, while close in date, are quite different in concept.¹ The one seen here may almost be termed a sketch in that it appears to have been drawn with quick, sure brushstrokes and has an economy in its presentation. Majnun and the gazelle beside him dominate the composition. The fine, evenly undifferentiated lines of Majnun's body contrast with the detailed treatment of his head. The eye is led from Majnun's face to that of the trusting gazelle, both rendered in sensitive detail. Only a fox and a rabbit, dashed off with sympathetic liveliness, represent Majnun's usual wild-animal coterie. The broad, wet-brush treatment of rocks and stones, full of suggestive animal faces, contrasts with the trim, delicate lines of much of the foliage as well as of Majnun himself. It is difficult to judge the function of a drawing such as this: It does not seem to have been a "model" to be copied, as it is not structured or simplified enough, and it is not a carefully finished "presentation" drawing. Was it dashed off at the request of a friend or patron, or to please the artist himself?

1. For more on the subject matter, see cat. no. 10.



11.

12. *Man with a Ram*

Ink on paper,
4 x 6 1/8 in. (10.2 x 15.6 cm.)
Isfahan, Safavid period, early seventeenth century
Bellini Album
Louis V. Bell Fund, 1967 (67.266.7.7)

There seems to have been a fascination for seventeenth-century artists in the subject (found primarily in drawings) of a man in juxtaposition with a ram, frequently confronting or restraining the beast. It is difficult to determine the source for this subject. Is it ultimately a literary one, as for the drawings of Majnun in the wilderness? Does the subject have a philosophical or social basis, such as the interdependency of man and the domesticated ram? Or is it a betrayal of trust, one of the two erstwhile companions about to become a sacrifice? There may be a fable, a poem, or even a pun of which we are unaware. Finally, the prime appeal may have simply been the contrast in human and animal contour and form and the challenge to calligraphic virtuosity. This subject seems to have become popular under the influence of Reza 'Abbasi, as did the calligraphic style.¹

The drawing in the Bellini Album was done with quick, sure strokes, thickening where the artist wanted to articulate a backbone, shoulder, strength of arm or turn of heel, thinning to a hair's breadth and picking up again in dynamic runs and sudden pauses. Particularly associated with Reza 'Abbasi are

the folds of turban and sash and the staccato ends of the tied cloths. A few deft strokes and a landscape setting is indicated, a few more and the clouds race overhead.

All of these "ram and man" drawings are different and this one is unusual in that the man appears to have lifted the ram bodily off the ground, the animal resisting with forelegs extended stiffly forward. Perhaps the closest parallel to the Museum's drawing is one in the Sackler Museum at Harvard University (figure 18). It has no landscape setting, but the swift, telling handling of brushstrokes and the calligraphic thickening and thinning of the line, almost to the point of disappearance, are very similar. In the Harvard drawing, the figure is facing the ram, so that the confrontation is even more compelling.

1. Of the seven drawings of the subject of a man and a ram that we have located, four have ascriptions to Reza 'Abbasi: the Harvard drawing (figure 18 below); Sotheby's July 8, 1980, lot 212; Pope and Ackerman, eds., *A Survey*, vol. V, pt. 2, pl. 917 B; and Brooklyn Museum, 85.80.

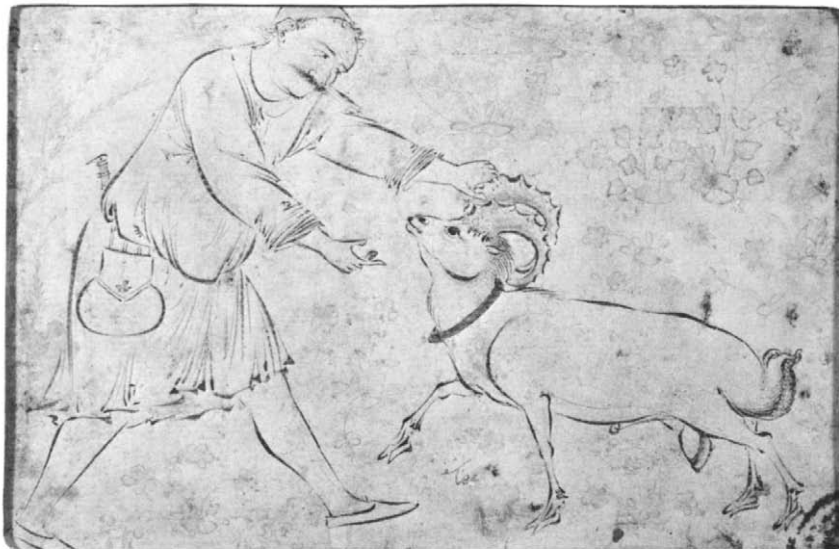


FIGURE 18. *Man with a Ram*
Signed: Reza. Qazvin, Safavid period, ca. 1590. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., Francis H. Burr Memorial Fund, 1948.59



12.

13. *An Emaciated Horse Led by His Master*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
2 1/8 x 5 3/8 in. (5.4 x 13.7 cm.)
Safavid period, late sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.11)

In this drawing the artist, by means of both economy and manipulation of the line, has articulated the angular protuberance and bony frame of the emaciated nag with extraordinary skill. Its ears droop with resignation and the mouth hangs open with the effort of movement. The spots of red where the birds are pecking are the only color in the drawing. The beast's erstwhile rider is also drawn with a sure, spare line. Seemingly aware of his own comparative sturdiness, he carries the saddle and other paraphernalia on his right shoulder while leaning on a staff in his left hand. The landscape is conventional, with the charming addition of an ibex, gazelle, and mountain goat in the background and a rabbit in the lower right corner, hiding behind boulders, two of which have the heavy profiles of creatures seemingly observing the scene.

The Museum has a second Persian drawing that includes an emaciated horse (cat. no. 14).¹ In the Pozzi Collection in Geneva there is a Persian drawing of a starving horse, alone, munching a tuft of grass; it also has a magpielike bird pecking its back.² Still another emaciated horse drawing, this time attributed to Rezi 'Abbasi, includes a rider in a leopard cap conversing with his pet monkey.³ These are but a few of the various presentations of this subject.

What is the significance of the emaciated horse, and why its popularity as a subject for drawings? In Sufi terms it

is among the images used for the *nafs*, "the lower self, the base instincts."⁴ ". . . the restive horse or mule . . . has to be kept hungry and has to undergo constant mortification and training so that, eventually, it serves the purpose of bringing the rider to his goal," that is, to God.⁵ If this Sufi meaning is behind the Museum's drawing, the compassionate master trudging along and burdened by the saddle must be interpreted as sharing the mortification of his mount. Some of the other drawings of the subject seem to lack any suggestion of spiritual interpretation and have more of a genre or even humorous intent. In any case, the drawing illustrated here is one of the most sensitive and moving of the series.

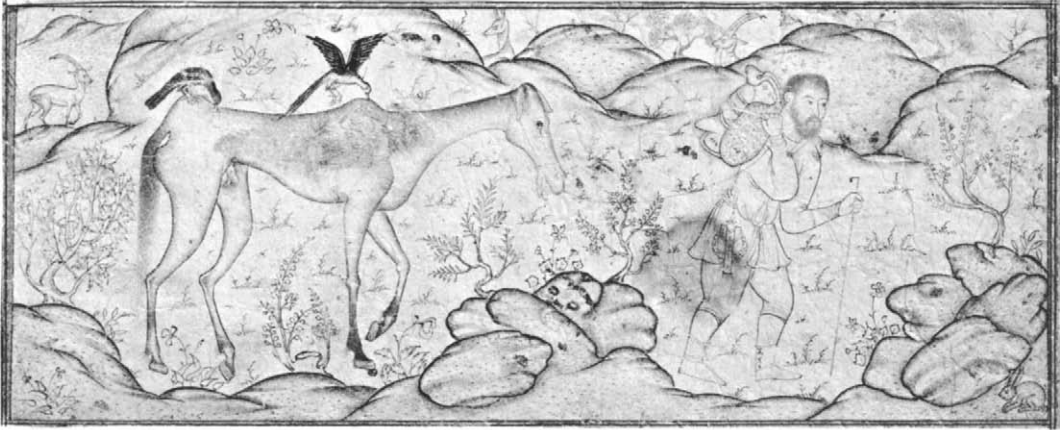
1. Also in the Museum's collection (44.154) there is a Deccani Indian drawing of a horse done in the marbled technique with an equally emaciated Majnun-like rider.

2. Blochet, *Miniatures*, pl. XIII. Also published by Blochet is the drawing of a stumbling, broken-down nag with a man described as affected by wine about to bounce off its back; idem, *Les Enluminures*, pl. LXXIII.

3. A. Welch, *Artists*, fig. 56.

4. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 112; idem, "Nur ein störrisches Pferd."

5. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 113.



13.

14. *The Prince and the Petitioner*

Inscribed: Vali Jan

Ink and gold on paper,

3 x 4 5/8 in. (7.6 x 11.8 cm.)

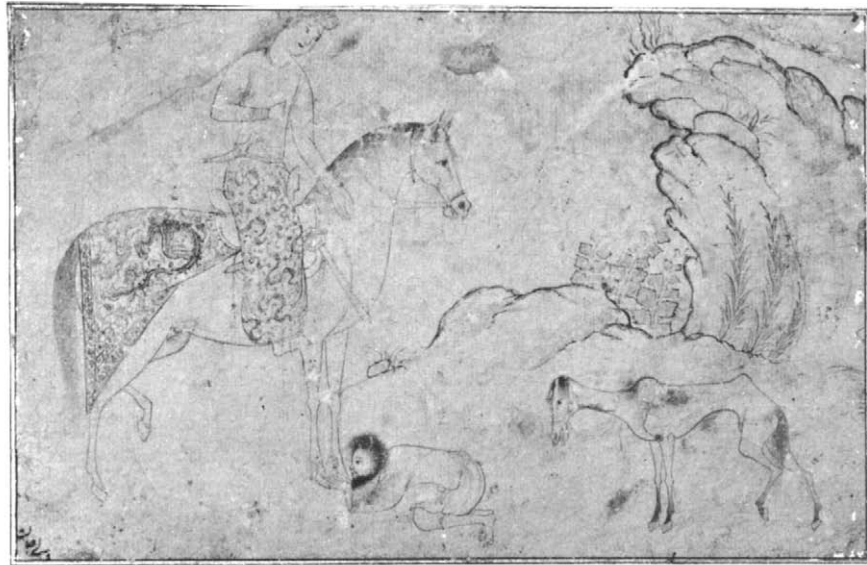
Safavid period, late sixteenth century

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.23)

While the emaciated nag in this drawing is true to the established convention, there is a certain humor in its diminutive size in relation to the stately steed of the prince. The pose of the petitioner seems slightly comic with his hand held out in a gesture of supplication and his body bent in a position of abject humility. The elaborate and rich decoration of cloud-bands on the prince's ample trousers and the simurgh dominating the dense patterning of the saddlecloth emphasize the contrasting circumstances of the two figures and their mounts. The prince, however, by the tilt of his head and gesture of hand, is shown as lending a sympathetic ear to the petitioner's plight. The conventionally drawn landscape provides the neutral setting for the scene, and is arranged so that the towering rocks on the right balance the simple composition.

There may be a literary source or folk tale behind the encounter pictured here, or perhaps the artist who first conceived this theme was recording in an exaggerated form his own humble position in regard to his patron. There is a slightly earlier drawing of this same subject, exactly similar in the size and poses of the horses and figures. The only differences appear in the undecorated costume of the prince, who wears a fur-trimmed cap, the addition of a plume for his horse, and a different setting.¹ The Museum's drawing is signed Vali Jan in the lower left corner. For a discussion of this artist, see cat. no. 25, which is another drawing signed by Vali Jan.

1. See Sakisian, *La Miniature*, pl. LXXXIII, fig. 149, from his own collection; he calls it beginning of the 16th century, by Sultan Muhammad, but it actually appears to be a later 16th-century Qazvin drawing. Sakisian entitles it "Le Seigneur et le manant."



14.

15. *Prince and Groom*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
4 3/8 x 3 1/8 in. (11.1 x 7.9 cm.)
Safavid period, mid-sixteenth century
Gift of George D. Pratt, 1925 (25.83.5)

The subject of a young prince on horseback attended by a groom, often equally youthful, is found in a variety of contexts within the compositions of miniature paintings. The prince, with a smooth untroubled face and slender graceful body, fulfills the ideal of youthful beauty. His turban is wrapped around the cap with the tall baton characteristic of the reign of Shah Tahmasp. His horse, with its long and slender legs, is equally aristocratic. And with his springy step and pixyish expression, the groom adds a note of liveliness to the drawing.

The extreme economy of line suggests that this drawing may have served as a model, perhaps to be incorporated into a larger composition. An unfinished painting of a mounted prince and groom from a *Bustan* of Sa'di in the Chester Beatty collection lends support to this theory.¹ However, the extreme cleanness and delicacy of the line and the added texture of the groom's cap allow it to stand as a finished statement on its own.

1. Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pl. cviii, A.180.



15.

16. *Prince and Groom*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,
6 1/8 x 4 7/8 in. (15.6 x 12.4 cm.)
Safavid period, mid-sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.26)

This drawing of a prince and a groom is very close compositionally to its predecessor (cat. no. 15). The stance of the horse differs only in a less fully bent foreleg — here it is not stepping quite so smartly! The grooms are dressed almost identically from cap to high leggings, but this one sports a dagger in his belt and, with head turned back, seems to move at a leisurely pace. The prince's costume is given pattern and design. The most striking difference in the drawings, however, is the careful dappling of the horse. The added touches of color, the hill used as a backdrop, and the addition of the trees (including a rather oddly drooping weeping willow), shrubs, and plants, have rendered this drawing, in spite of iconographic similarities, totally different from the other. While this is not so fine or sensitive as the other *Prince and Groom*, it seems, rather than having been done as a model for incorporation into a large composition, to have been extracted from just such a composition to stand on its own, a pleasing and popular subject, perhaps to be sold to an aspiring collector.



17. *Portrait of a Horse*

Ink on paper,

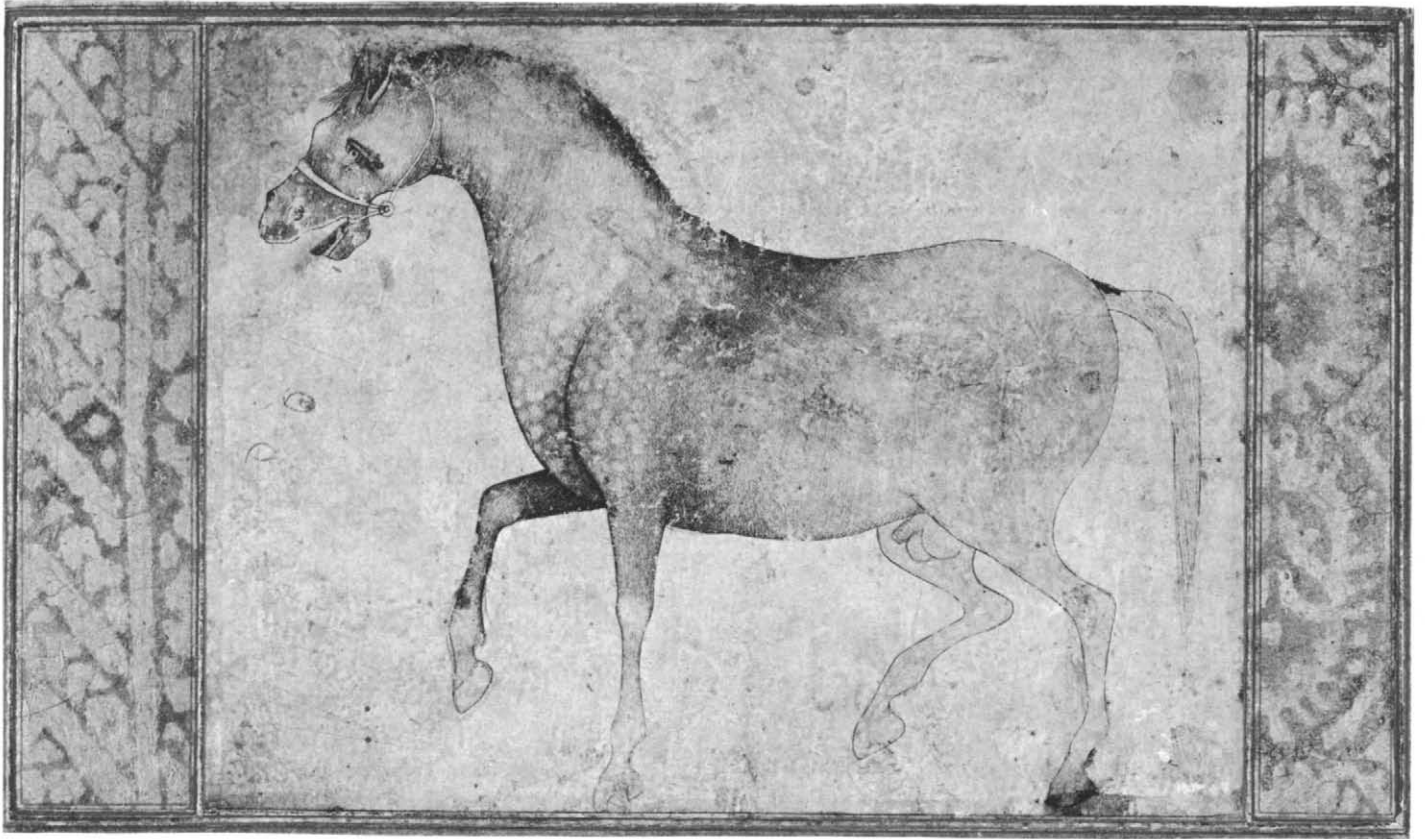
5 x 6 1/2 in. (12.7 x 16.5 cm.)

Safavid period, sixteenth century

Gift of Stephan Bourgeois, 1914 (14.84)

This stallion striding to the left without a rider or groom or any accoutrements save a bridle is surely one of the most striking and unusual of all Persian drawings. His dappled coat, a favorite with artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, seems to be ahead of its time in its impressionistic treatment. The deep chest, massively muscled neck, and strong back, pulsing with life, take form in the mastery of this drawing. It is, however, in the head of the prized stallion that its own individualistic qualities are most manifest. The overwhelming impression of a palpable presence would suggest that this is a portrait drawn from life, were it not for the unusual, if not distinctly peculiar, treatment of the head.¹ The portrait of this magnificent horse was most likely commissioned by a dotting patron or may even have belonged to an artist-cum-courtier himself, perhaps a gift from his royal patron.

1. For a discussion of artists' life studies, see the Introduction, pp. 7–8.



17.

18. *Camels Fighting*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,

4 1/8 x 7 7/8 in. (10.5 x 20 cm.)

Safavid period, late sixteenth–early seventeenth century

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.20)

Watching combat between domesticated animals, from oxen to elephants to camels, was a traditional pastime of the court. Persian artists were particularly drawn to camel fights, probably because of the artistic possibilities inherent in their naturally undulating shapes. The depiction of a camel fight, allegedly by the great Behzad, seems to have been the progenitor of a series of such pictures produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In this very accomplished and highly finished drawing, two camels with intertwined necks are thrusting against each other. The bells around their necks and the richly designed saddle covers, one with a pair of simurghs flying through clouds and the other with a mounted falconer and a mahout before an elephant, indicate that these are highly prized animals. A keeper struggles to pull his charge away. Presumably, the keeper of the right-hand camel, not shown in the drawing, has had the rope pulled out of his hands.

The encounter has been placed in a conventionally wild landscape, hardly the appropriate setting for a staged combat, but forming framing devices that surround the meticulously observed camels. The profile of a youth in a fur cap can be seen to the left of the towering rocks, and the head and upper torso of a man in an elaborately tied turban (apparently observing the camel fight) appears to the right of the rocks. The

delicacy of the drawing of both figures contrasts with the rugged contours of the rocks in which the usual animal profiles are concealed.

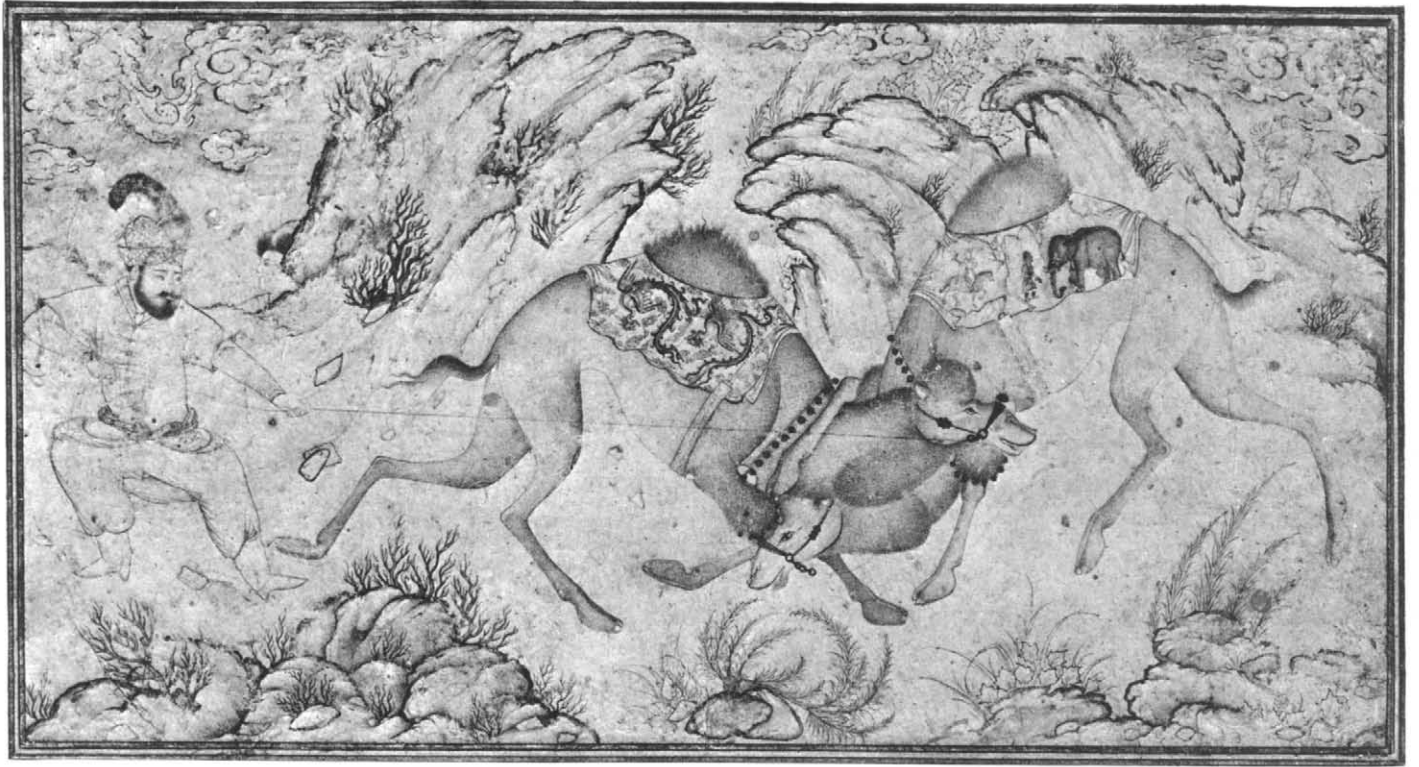
In the so-called Behzad drawing of about 1525 in the Gulestan Palace Collection in Tehran, the keeper on the left also tries to pull his camel away, although his rope is attached to its foreleg rather than to its halter, as in the Museum's drawing.¹ The keeper on the right carries a raised switch, but whether this is intended to encourage or discourage his charge is difficult to determine. A wilderness setting has been provided and an observer is also present. A faithful copy of the Behzad drawing was made by the Jahangiri artist Nanha in 1608/09.² The collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan contains an enchanting variant of the camel fight, dated to the second half of the seventeenth century.³ A most extraordinary drawing of a camel, while not engaged in combat, but struggling to break its hobbles, was signed by the artist Mu'in Mussavir in 1678.⁴

1. Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pl. LXXXVII, A.132.

2. *Ibid.*, pl. LXXXVII, B.133.

3. See A. Welch, *Collection*, vol. I, IR.M. 36.

4. See Pope and Ackerman, eds., *A Survey*, vol. V, pt. 2, pl. 924 A.



18.

19. *Lion and Dragon in Combat*

Inscribed: Muhammad Baqir

Ink and transparent color on paper,

5 1/2 x 9 in. (14 x 22.9 cm.)

Safavid period, mid-seventeenth century

Rogers Fund, 1974 (1974.20)

While totally different in subject matter and artistic vision, this drawing shows the evolution of the calligraphic style that was first seen in the opening drawing of the exhibition (cat. no. 1). From the first influx of Chinese influence in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century, the dragon had become thoroughly established in Persian iconography, while until that time it was unknown in the Sasanian and early Islamic artistic tradition of Iran. Some dragon forms had been modified by their journey through the art of Central Asia, while others, as here, were directly influenced by Chinese prototypes. From the beginning, in Islamic Iran, dragons were fearful and evil monsters of the demonic or chthonic world and were often, in carpets and other media as well as paintings and drawings, shown in combat, most often with a simurgh, but also frequently with a ch'i-lin or other form of Chinese fabulous beast. Far more unusual is the depiction seen here of an earthly lion in mortal combat with an unearthly dragon. The power of the king of beasts, muscles taut with strain, contrasts with the sinuous, con-

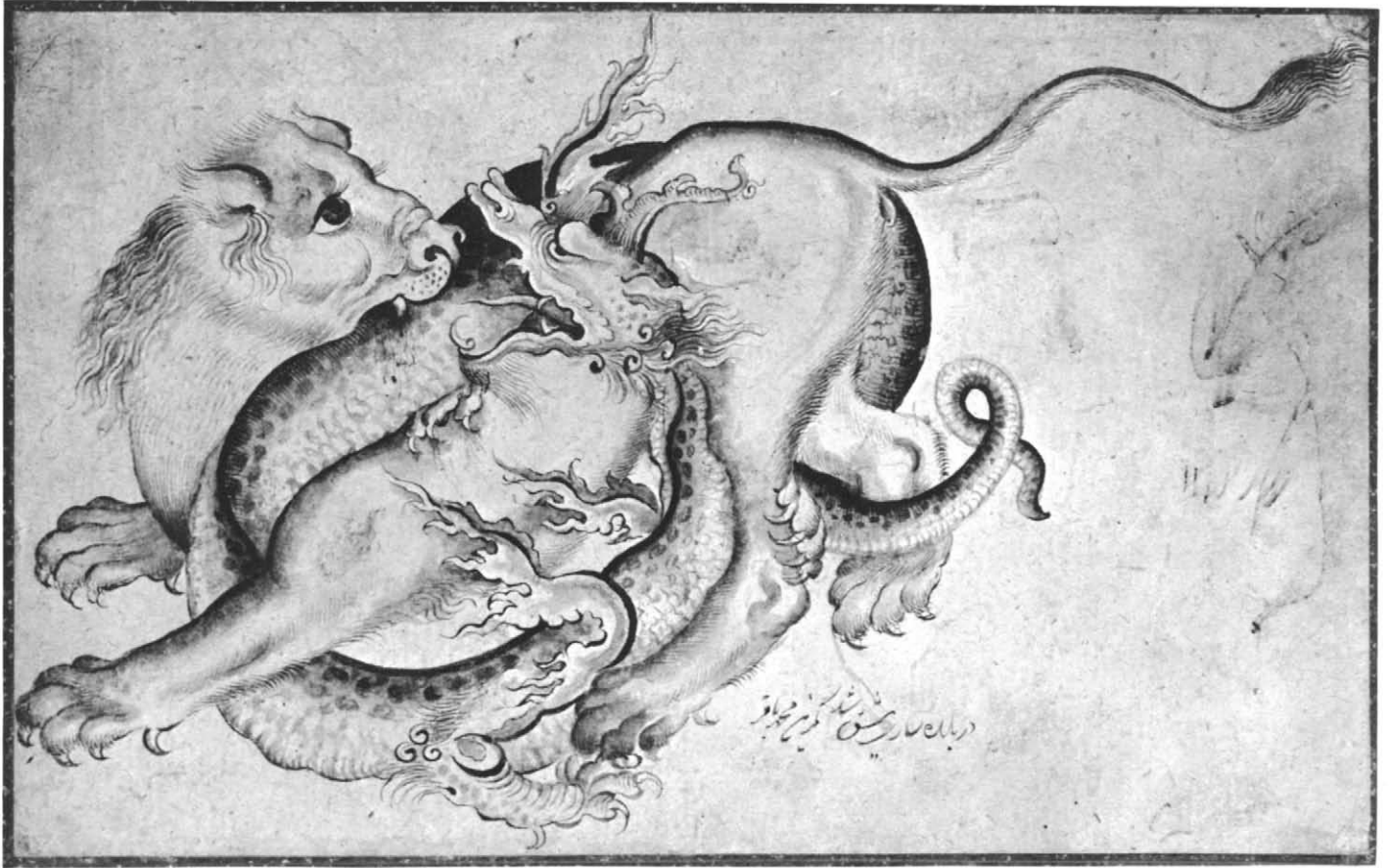
stricting envelopment of the reptile, while the detail of the dragon's patterned form contrasts with the tactile rendition of the lion's fur.

The artist, Muhammad Baqir, who has written the inscription, "Made in the city of Sari by the humblest Muhammad Baqir," has created a highly polished, finished drawing of a struggle that is not literarily narrative and only traditionally symbolic. It must have been made for a highly sophisticated connoisseur, who wanted what Muhammad Baqir could best produce — a self-contained work that elevated to the highest degree "art for art's sake," in the same way that Persian poetry was more admired for its virtuosity of form than for its content.

The Museum's drawing gives the impression of a carefully planned and tightly controlled work that could readily serve as a model. A direct copy of this drawing is to be found in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (figure 19). While a fine drawing, its artist was not quite able to recapture the polish and harmonious tension of the original.



FIGURE 19. *Struggle of a Lion and a Dragon*
Isfahan, Safavid period, late seventeenth century. Collection Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, IR.M.50



19.

20. *Reclining Woman*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,
3 3/4 x 6 7/8 in. (9.5 x 17.5 cm.)
Safavid period, early seventeenth century
Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.223.3)

The motif of the reclining female figure became increasingly popular in Persian art from the middle of the sixteenth century onward. Often portrayed nude or seminude, in a languid resting pose, or asleep with one or both arms supporting the head and shoulders, these representations generally strike the viewer as erotic and sensual in intent. The eroticism of these reclining figures, expressed naturally by nakedness (itself a rare subject in the arts from the Islamic world) and the inherent sensuality of the pose, also seem to reflect visual familiarity with the Venetian type of reclining female figure, such as Giorgione's *Sleeping Venus* and Titian's *Venus of Urbino*.¹ Specific features of the pose, however, were already part of the Persian artists' repertory well before the sixteenth century. The head propped on one arm, the other reaching over the torso resting on a pillow, and one leg folded over the other are found in sleeping or reclining figures in manuscript painting as early as the fourteenth century.² Most striking in this drawing is the pose itself. At first glance, the young woman is yet another of the Venus look-alikes of the later sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. But the twist of the body pivoting at the waist so that the upper body turns in the direction of the viewer while the legs turn away invests the figure with a wholly new sensation of movement and vitality.

As if punctuating the torsion of the body, the sash too is knotted at the center and its loose ends flow in opposing directions. From this vivid movement of the body, the eye comes to rest on the tranquil position of the head and the dreamlike expression of the perfect oval of the face. All of this part of the drawing assumes an amusing quality. The right hand is situated between two rabbits from the pattern of the pillowcase in such a way that it looks as if the rabbits are playing with her fingers. The mass of hair parted in the middle to look like wings is pulled back to the side of her head and is drawn with the utmost care given to every single hair. An anomalous patterned shape projects behind the hair. Other elements of the composition, the landscape motifs and the bottle and cup, are familiar from outdoor scenes.

The dating of these reclining figures poses certain problems. A number of them are the product of the surge in single-figure representations that took place in the middle of the seventeenth century and share the stylistic and iconogra-

phic preferences of painting and drawing in Isfahan at this time. The Museum's drawing, on the other hand, belongs to a group which is generally dated to the sixteenth century. These are the *Reclining Nude* in the Freer Gallery of Art (figure 20), and *A Reclining Nude* from the Album of the Emir of Bukhara at the Pierpont Morgan Library, among others (figure 21). Nearly all of these reclining figures are paintings.



FIGURE 20. *Reclining Nude*
Inscribed: Reza. Safavid period, late sixteenth century. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 54.24

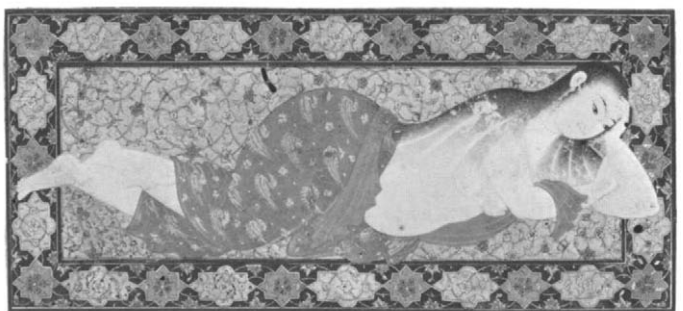


FIGURE 21. *A Reclining Nude*
Page from the Album of the Emir of Bukhara, Uzbek period, early sixteenth century. The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, M.386.5



20.

1. See illustrations of Khosrow observing Shirin and Eskandar observing the Sirens for the examples of the female nude. Farhad, in discussing the popularity of the pose in the mid-17th century, emphasizes the European influence at the expense of the Persian precedence and cites only one Persian forerunner, a Reza 'Abbasi *Sleeping Girl*; see Farhad, "Safavid Single-Page Painting," pp. 227–30 and fig. 2.

2. See *Darab Sleeping in the Vault* from the "Demotte" *Shah-nameh*, in Grabar and Blair, *Epic Images*, fig. 26; see also *Tahmineh in Rustam's Chamber*, from an early-15th-century *Shah-nameh*, in Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting*, no. 8; and *Khosrow and Shirin United* from a 15th-century *Khamseh* of Nezami at the Metropolitan Museum (13.228.3), folio 104a.

21. *Standing Prince*

Ink, opaque colors, and gold on paper,

7 x 4 1/16 in. (17.8 x 10.3 cm.)

Isfahan, Safavid period, early seventeenth century

Louis V. Bell Fund, 1967 (67.266.7.6)

This very fine drawing of a standing young man comes from the so-called Bellini Album.¹ Drawn in the calligraphic style of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the lines thin and thicken to create a surprisingly voluminous impression of the body underneath the kaftan, the billowing cloak, and the head beneath the folds of the turban. Such fineries as the feather plume and the string of beads or pearls embellishing the turban imply a high social status. The mace in the right hand and the dagger hung from the belt add to the aura of nobility seen in this figure. In its fineness of line, the almost liquid quality of the flowing forms, the gentle features of the face, and the aristocratic air of the figure, this drawing is a descendant of the finest figures drawn and painted in the workshops of Shah Tahmasp in the early years of his reign. The figure is surmounted by an illuminated archway, which may have been a later addition. Single figures of young men are among the most popular subjects in Persian drawing and painting in the sixteenth and especially the seventeenth century.²

1. Today the album contains eight European prints from the 16th and 17th centuries, with religious scenes; one 16th-century Turkish miniature painting; six sheets of calligraphy samples; two pages of ornamental illumination; a Chinese painting on silk of a goose; this drawing; and the *Man with a Ram* (cat. no. 12).

2. Farhad, "Safavid Single-Page Painting," p. 217.



21.

22. *Young Man Sewing*

Ink on paper,

4 7/8 x 3 in. (12.4 x 7.6 cm.)

Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century

Gift of Dr. Friedrich Sarre, 1913 (13.172)

This drawing embodies all the essential characteristics of a model-book sample from the first half of the seventeenth century. The almost completely undifferentiated line drawing that outlines the form in the simplest, most direct manner and the perforation of all lines except in a very few unessential spots indicate its use for workshop duplication. Even though the motif of a youth sewing is rare, every other feature of this drawing points to a stock-figure type.

The facial features are typical of youthful figures by Reza 'Abbasi. Also familiar is the costume with the multiple folds of the turban snaking around the central cap, a striped shirt showing at the neck, and a waistcoat worn over the robe.¹ The seated pose, one leg bent under the body and the other supporting the object of work, is found in numerous other seated figures.

1. For the fashionable clothes of the 17th century, see Farhad, "Safavid Single-Page Painting," pp. 218–22.



22.

23. *Kneeling Youth*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,
6 1/2 x 3 1/2 in. (16.5 x 8.9 cm.)
Qazvin, Safavid period, late sixteenth century
Rogers and Fletcher Funds, 1973 (1973.92)

Several drawings almost identical to the *Kneeling Youth* exist.¹ There seems to have been a venerated master drawing of the figure that has inspired or perhaps challenged the later artists to reproduce the figure in this particular kneeling position, with the same hair style, headgear, and sashed robe. The Museum's youth kneels on the right leg while his hands are placed one above the other on the left knee. His robe, buttoned in front, is animated by images of simurghs drawn in gold. A sash knotted at the waist and a beaded string with a small purse hung around his left shoulder and torso complete his attire. The peculiar oval cap, with what seems to be a fur trimming, slants downward over his forehead. From beneath the cap long strands of hair flow over the shoulders running parallel to long, dangling earrings. The landscape setting is made up of low-lying rocks in the foreground with bushes and foliage interspersed behind the figure. An identical drawing is the *Young Man in a Gold Hat* in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (figure 22).

These two drawings share a common tradition not only in terms of motifs but also with regard to their refined courtly mood and the generalities of the style. Yet the Museum's example seems to be a costlier (if the amount of gold is used as a gauge) variant but not so high in the quality of draftsmanship as the drawing in the Prince Sadruddin collection. At least two other drawings of the same pose and general appearance of the costume, albeit of female figures, may be mentioned: a *Young Woman Kneeling*, signed by Reza 'Abbasi and dated 1603, in the Hermitage, Leningrad, and a *Girl in a Furred Bonnet* by Muhammad 'Ali, dating to about 1650–60, in the Louvre.²



FIGURE 22. *Young Man in a Gold Hat*
Qazvin, Safavid period, last quarter of the sixteenth century.
Collection Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, IR.M.73

1. See figure 22; Stchoukine, *Les Peintures . . . Shah'Abbas Ier*, pl. xxxii; and Robinson, *Persian Drawings*, pl. 62.

2. See note 1 above.



24. *Young Man and Woman in a Landscape*

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,

4 1/8 x 6 3/4 in. (10.5 x 17.2 cm.)

Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.9)

Amorous encounters of a modest nature between young men and women, that is to say, seated at a distance from one another, are abundant in miniature painting, in particular in the story of Bahram Gur and the Seven Princesses from the *Khamseh* of Nezami. However, in both single-figure painting and drawing the subject is rarely represented. In the Museum's drawing, even though the figures are posed and composed in an interactive fashion, each finds its precedence in other images. The pose of the woman and her gesture of offering a bowl and fruit are reminiscent of the paintings of the seven princesses from a *Khamseh* of Nezami in the Museum.¹ The young man leaning on a pillow with bent knees, one resting on the ground, and the head inclined is known, although in a bolder twist of the pose, from *A Youth and an Old Man*, inscribed by Reza 'Abbasi in the Vever Collection at the Sackler Gallery, and from a single-figure painting in the Metropolitan Museum.²

In determining the subject matter, it is tempting to label the images as lovers in a landscape. Yet in comparison with seventeenth-century representations of lovers, often portrayed in a close embrace, this couple's love affair appears tame and platonic.³ Theirs seems to be the muse and the poet relationship, closer in spirit to the "youth and the dervish" group than to the lover group. No matter how we interpret the subject, the idyllic setting and the two tree trunks in the upper left-hand corner, bending toward one another in a gesture of intimacy, imply a poetic mood as does the figures' remote encounter.

1. See Chelkowski, *Mirror*, miniatures 7–9 (13.228.7, folios 213a, 216b, 220a).

2. See Lowry and Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye*, fig. 66 and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.39; Robinson, *Persian Drawings*, pl. 56.

3. See the well-known painting *Two Lovers* by Reza 'Abbasi in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Ettinghausen and Swietochowski, "Islamic Painting," p. 30 (50.164).



24.

25. *Youthful Falconers in a Landscape*

Inscribed: Vali Jan

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, silver and gold on paper,
6 3/4 x 3 1/4 in. (17.2 x 8.3 cm.)

Safavid period, second half of the sixteenth century

Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.27)

A landscape of rocky hills, bushes, small blossoming trees, a stately plane tree, and a stream of water trickling downhill plays backdrop to a scene of repose. Two young men rest by the stream during a hawking expedition, one seated upright, the other leaning on a cushion with his legs crossed.¹ Both display their falcons on their wrists. By virtue of the more elaborate costume and headgear, the more relaxed pose and larger size, the youth on the right must be of a higher social rank. Even though these men, drawn large and very finely, occupy a prominent position in the foreground, the real interest of the drawing lies in the intricacies of the landscape. Finely drawn with brush and picked out in some details with colors, the masses of rocks and branches of the trees are enlivened with two gazelles, quails, cranes, and other birds. Close and careful viewing of this drawing is required to discover all the hidden treasures of the natural setting. And it comes as a delightful surprise to find the head of a bearded man peeking from behind the plane tree just above the edge of the rock in the center. His gaze is directed out and to the left, looking beyond the peaceful, enchanting spring world of the drawing.

The signature, Vali Jan, appears on the lower left-hand side. Vali Jan was a gifted artist from Tabriz, a pupil of Siyavush the Georgian, who went to the Ottoman court during the reign of Murad III (1574–95). A brief reference given by 'Ali Effendi seems to be the basis for all published information on this artist.² While surprisingly little seems to be known about him, the Museum's drawing is close in style, which entails a detailed descriptive observation of nature, to a drawing, *Visit to a Hermit*, in a Topkapi album.³ The other Museum drawing inscribed Vali Jan, *The Prince and the Petitioner* (cat. no. 14), comes close in spirit to the other two drawings in the parts that have been fully described, such as the saddlecloth. But before firm attributions can be made, the works of Vali Jan need further study.

In its pantheistic mood, this drawing resembles the Timurid decorative drawing (cat. no. 1), *Majnun in the Wilderness* (cat. no. 10), and the two drawings *Landscape with Animals* in the Freer Gallery of Art.⁴

The subject of leisurely rest in the outdoors with a tree and a body of water is known from numerous other drawings. A tinted drawing, *Dervish and His Disciple*, in the Freer Gallery

of Art shows the extended popularity of the general theme in the seventeenth century (figure 23).

1. For a discussion of the subject of hunting and hawking in Persian art and literature, see cat. no. 6.
2. See Huart, *Les Calligraphes*, p. 337.
3. Çağman, *Topkapi*, fig. 40.
4. Atil, *The Brush*, figs. 57, 58.



FIGURE 23. *Dervish and His Disciple*
Signed: Muhammad Muhsin. Safavid period, mid-seventeenth century. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 47.23



25.

26. *Dervish Leaning on a Staff*

Ink and transparent and opaque colors on paper,
3 3/16 x 2 1/8 in. (8.1 x 5.4 cm.)
Safavid period, sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.1)

If numerical evidence is a sign of popularity, there is perhaps no subject more popular in Persian drawing than the single figure of a mature-to-elderly man posed seated or standing. These men vary in profession, social rank, and race and constitute one of the richest repertoires of costume, motif, gesture, and pose. This drawing and the following five entries exhibit a sampling of this visual diversity within a single type.¹

Attributes and details of costume distinguish these men and often denote membership of a particular Sufi order (cat. no. 28). Sufi orders customarily bestowed the adept, on the festive day of the initiation, with a *taj* (cap) and a *khirqa* (frock) of the order.² Each order was distinguished by the color and shape of its headdress.³ Regardless of whether a Sufi or religious vocation is intended, all these images display a preference for a contemplative mood.

In this small drawing the man leans on a stick for support, lifting his head in the opposite direction from his bent back. The age of the subject and his tired posture are implied by the sensitive drawing of the drooping lines on the face, and the gently curving lines of the cloak, which opens in front to reveal a frail body beneath, silhouetted against the rougher texture of the animal skin he wears.

In its delicacy and incisivness this drawing resembles the *Two Seated Men*, attributed to Behzad, in the Sackler Museum of Harvard University (figure 24). The appearance of the Museum's figure seems to correspond to the description of the wandering dervishes whose modest worldly possessions included a stick and a beggar's bowl; the latter is not seen in this drawing.⁴ A tinted drawing from one of the Saray albums, dated to the end of the sixteenth century, shows a landscape filled with men and animals engaged in a variety of activities, among whom two similarly dressed and posed dervishes can be seen leaning on staffs.⁵ The type later became popular in Indian art.⁶



FIGURE 24. *Two Seated Men*
Herat, Timurid period, late fifteenth
century. Arthur M. Sackler Museum,
Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
Gift of Philip Hofer in honor of Stuart
Cary Welch, 1972. 299b

1. For a brief discussion of the costumes of this group, see Farhad, "Safavid Single-Page Painting," p. 232.

2. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 234.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

5. Hazine 2160, fol. 27r; and Ipşiroğlu, *Masterpieces*, fig. 29.

6. See, for example, Welch and Welch, *Arts*, fig. 68.



26.

27. *Standing Portrait*

Ink on paper,

5 9/16 x 2 1/2 in. (14.1 x 6.4 cm.)

Safavid period, early seventeenth century

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1925 (25.83.8)

This drawing of a middle-aged man with distinct Turkomen features is one of the rare examples of a true portrait in Persian art. In spite of the many single-figure paintings and drawings in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, few are distinctive enough for either individualized features or the depiction of some psychological state to be considered portraiture. In this drawing it is the face alone that reflects the artist's sensitive observation of the sitter while neither the pose nor any detail of the costume and headgear differ from the general type.

The artist's enormous control of the brush implies volume and depth with such economy that a mere variation in the pressure applied to the brush in a single stroke describes the bulging of the forehead or the bulbous shape of the layered headdress. A closely related portrait, both in intent and in the final effect, is the *Old Man with a Cane* in the Freer Gallery of Art (figure 25).



FIGURE 25. *Old Man with a Cane*
Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century. Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 53.16



27.

28. *Seated Dervish*

Ink and transparent colors on paper,
3 1/2 x 1 5/8 in. (8.9 x 4.1 cm.)
Safavid period, late sixteenth century
Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.12)

The closed-in, compact pose of this seated and hunched over figure aptly relates the man's meditative state, also evident in his transfixed gaze. The peculiarly shaped cap pulled down over the eyes and the crossed arms, clad in sleeves long enough to cover the hands but not the rosary which hangs from under the left arm's sleeve, are known from numerous other drawings and paintings (figures 26, 27).¹ Judging from the disparity in style and design between the vegetal decoration in the upper left-hand corner and the rocks and foliage beneath the figure, one may assume that this figure was among other drawings on a single, larger sheet. If so, the upper-corner foliage with its

calligraphic style and its rhythmic movement of leaves and twigs belongs to a separate study which may be compared to the tradition of decorative drawings as in cat. no. 1. Further evidence of the preparatory status of the drawing may be deduced from the mechanical quality of the uninterrupted and not notably distinguished outline of the figure that stands in contrast to the more careful treatment of the face.

1. See also *Scandal in a Mosque* from a *Divan* of Hafiz, where both the crossed-arm pose and the cap lowered over the forehead are found in two of the figures; S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting*, pl. 16.



FIGURE 26. *A Sufi*
Signed: Mu'in ad-Din. Safavid period, late sixteenth century. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Goloubew Collection, 14.616



FIGURE 27. *A Dervish Kneeling Beneath a Hillock*
Safavid period, late sixteenth century. Courtesy of Sotheby's, London (December 7, 1970, lot 53)



28.

29. *Seated Man Painting or Writing*

Ink on paper,

4 5/8 x 3 3/8 in. (11.2 x 8.6 cm.)

Isfahan, Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century

Fletcher Fund, 1976 (1976.183)

This drawing contains a number of unusual features within a generally conventional type of single-figure representation. Figures seated under or near a tree portrayed in a meditative mood or with writing implements at hand enjoyed a great deal of popularity.¹ In this figure, however, the man faces rather than leans on the tree. He is shown in the act of painting or writing, holding a paint or ink container in his left hand and resting two sheets of paper on his knee. In its portrayal of a man at work, this drawing shares attributes with *Youth Painting a Flower* in the Freer Gallery of Art, *Portrait of a Painter* published by Marteau and Vever, and the portrait of Reza 'Abbasi by Mu' in Musavvir in the Princeton University Collection.² The earliest representation of the subject seems to be a portrait of a figure in Middle Eastern costume writing, presumably by Gentile Bellini.³

The depiction of the head in full profile and the peculiar headgear, resembling a Christian monk's cap, distinguish the Museum's drawing from the general type.

This drawing is pounced, indicating that it was intended for duplication.

1. See, for example, *Seated Man* in the Freer Gallery of Art. He is also surrounded by writing implements; Atil, *The Brush*, fig. 37. For further examples, see Schulz, *Die persisch-islamische Miniaturmalerei*, pl. 165; Blochet, *Les Enluminures*, pl. LXXXV; and Martin, *Miniature Painting*, vol. II, pl. 165a.

2. Atil, *The Brush*, fig. 47; Marteau and Vever, *Miniatures persanes*, vol. II, pl. CXXIX, fig. 165; and Binyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting*, pl. CXII, A.374.

3. A copy of the painting is now in the Gardner Museum in Boston; see Atil, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," p. 112, fig. 22. For another copy of this composition with the figure painting, rather than writing, in the Freer Gallery of Art, see Kevorkian and Sicre, *Les Jardins*, p. 132.



29.

30. *Seated Man in the Wilderness*

Ink and gold on paper,
4 x 2 1/2 in. (10.2 x 6.4 cm.)
Isfahan, Safavid period, first half of the seventeenth century
Gift of Tabbagh Frères, 1911 (11.6.2)

This drawing consists of the most popular formula in the single-male-figure category: the isolated image of a middle-aged man, seated in a contemplative mood in an outdoor setting, such as we see here and in a drawing from the British Museum (figure 28). The formula includes the offering of fruit, a cup, a book, or other object.¹ Judging from the finesse of the drawing of the face and the fluid, calligraphic drawing of the turban and the body, a follower of Reza 'Abbasi was probably responsible for the Museum's example.

Man Holding an Album (figure 28) is closely related in both subject matter and style. There is no evidence to prove or

disprove the religious vocation of these pensive, middle-aged men. Yet one cannot fail to note some degree of spirituality in the way these figures are perceived, as if to present their image as an example of the behavior and countenance of the faithful: "The faithful is the mirror of the faithful."² While in that case it is the Sufi seeing himself in his brethren, here we are urged to find role models in the image of the wise old man.

1. See cat. no. 31; Atil, *The Brush*, fig. 20; and Sotheby's, April 27, 1981, lot 47, to cite just a few.

2. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, p. 228.

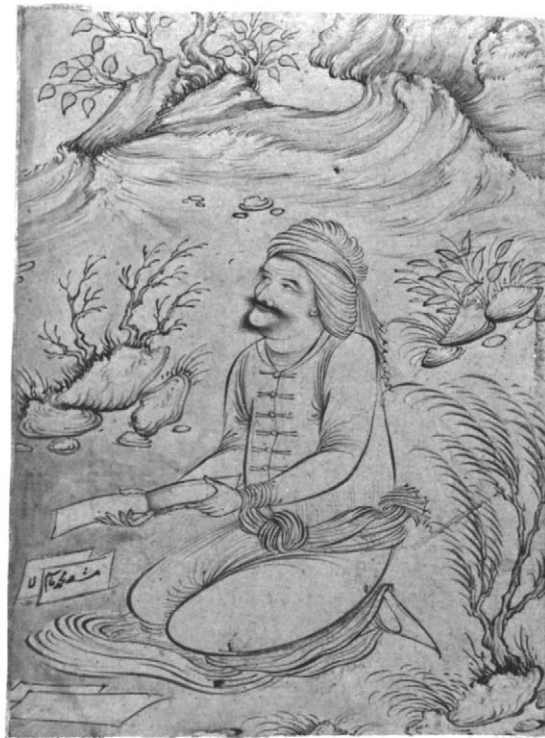


FIGURE 28. *Man Holding an Album*
Signed: Muhammad Qasim. Safavid period,
mid-seventeenth century. Courtesy of the British
Museum, London, 1920. 9. 17. 0278 (2)



30.

31. *Man with Prayer Beads*

Inscribed: Muhammad 'Ali

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,

4 1/2 x 1 5/8 in. (11.4 x 4.1 cm.)

Isfahan, Safavid period, mid-seventeenth century

Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913 (13.228.34)

Signed by Muhammad 'Ali, this drawing is another variation on the isolated, contemplative older man (see cat. no. 30). Here, however, the natural surroundings seem to complement the spiritual state of the sitter. A visual parallel to this mood is provided by the evenly ascending striations in the rock formation behind him.

Muhammad 'Ali has left a number of drawings of this particular figure that are near carbon copies of one another: the same pose; the tilting upward of the head; the left hand resting on the knee; the slippers, with one seen in profile, the other from its sole; and even the folds of the cloak as they turn and fall under the left leg.¹

1. See Sotheby's, July 11, 1972, lot 171; and Schulz, *Die persisch-islamische Miniaturmalerei*, pl. 171.



31.

32. *The Old Man and the Youth*

Inscribed: Reza 'Abbasi

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,
5 x 2 1/8 in. (12.7 x 5.4 cm.)

Isfahan, Safavid period, second quarter of the seventeenth century
Fletcher Fund, 1925 (25.68.5)

This album page is composed by the pasting together of three separate pieces framed within two bands of floral-decorated borders. The standing figures of a youth and an old man are drawn in ink and touched with opaque colors and gold. Both are signed by Reza 'Abbasi and fit comfortably within his oeuvre at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In style and mood the two drawings seem so closely related that had it not been for the cut-out and pasted condition of these sheets, they could be conceived as a single composition. In fact, the theme of an old man standing or walking behind a youth is known from late-fifteenth-century and early-sixteenth-century painting.

In the miniature painting *Old Man and Youth in a Landscape* in the Freer Gallery of Art (figure 29), the old man holds on to a staff and points toward the youth, who seemingly turns in response to the elder's call. Gently sloping rocks in the background with trees growing in between and birds resting here and there, lead to a field of spring flowers, where we find the two figures standing near a stream that bends to follow the roundness of the frame. Whether the inscribed poetic passages above and below the painting were relative to it is not certain. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the passage relates the encounter between a wise old man and an arrogant youth.

Whatever the meaning of the theme, in the Freer painting the imploring elder and spring backdrop correlate with an even earlier painting from a manuscript of the *Khamseh* of Amir Khosrow Dihlavi, dated 1485.¹ Here we find the same spring landscape with the youth leaning on a fragile young tree and the old man stepping forward with the help of a staff and pointing toward the youth. A large plane tree visually separates the two figures, as do a tree and rocks in the Freer painting, and the central band of the frame in the Museum's drawing. Most telling, however, is the passage from the *Khamseh* that accompanies this painting. In this context, although from a mystical point of view, the old man's desire for the youth has not yet faded away. The popularity of the theme is attested to by its continued life in the seventeenth century, for example, the *Old Man and the Youth* in the Bibliothèque Nationale, where the old man's pursuit assumes a comical quality as the artist caricatures his imploring attitude in the drooping lines of his face to match those of his sleeves.²

1. Martin, *Miniature Painting*, pl. 75.

2. Stchoukine, *Les Peintures . . . Shah 'Abbas Ier*, pl. xxxiv.



FIGURE 29. *Old Man and Youth in a Landscape*
Inscribed: Behzad. Safavid period, early sixteenth century.
Courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution,
Washington, D.C., 44.48A

33. *Two Men Conversing*

Inscribed: Reza 'Abbasi

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,
3 7/8 x 6 1/4 in. (9.8 x 15.9 cm.)

Isfahan, Safavid period, second quarter of the seventeenth century
Rogers Fund, 1911 (11.84.13)

Drawn in the calligraphic line, hallmark of Reza 'Abbasi and the seventeenth-century style, two men, a princely youth and an old sage, converse in the open, separated only by the unimposing golden tree in the middle. Each protagonist, it seems, conveys his role in the outlines of the body and the gesture of the hands. By his compact outline and confined pose, the sage implies his spiritual control unswayed by the youthful hand that extends a bowl, while the youth himself swings forward in a pose more vulnerable than his elder's.

Each figure appears to display something of an attribute associated with him: an ink pot and some paper in front of the old man, a bottle and some fruit in front of the youth.

In the absence of contemporary written documentation, the meaning of this drawing and many others with the con-



FIGURE 30. *Youth and Sage Conversing*
Isfahan, Safavid period, early seven-
teenth century. Courtesy of the Keir
Collection, Richmond, Surrey, III. 349

versing figures of a youth and an old man remains puzzling. The theme was popularized, it seems, by Reza 'Abbasi in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹ In the *Youth and Sage Conversing* from the Keir Collection (figure 30), the two figures are viewed against an extended landscape but remain visually apart, as the bottle and the curving trunk of the tree stand between them. In that drawing, the gestures of both figures indicate a lively conversation. Even though the youth is physically larger than the sage, this alone does not seem to indicate moral or social superiority. For example, a variant of the subject is found in an encounter where the youth seems to hold the position of superiority (figure 31). This is implied not through the size of the figures but by the more servile pose and gesture of the elder, in comparison with the more relaxed attitude of the youth. In either case, the theme seems to reflect something of the concern with the youthful energy lacking in old age and the mature wisdom lacking in youth, a subject dear to Persian poetry. The Museum's drawing is inscribed:

Drawn by the most lowly Reza 'Abbasi,
Made for the Sultan of the Poor, Rahima

In spite of the inscription and the very fine treatment, especially of the heads, the swelling and diminishing of the calligraphic lines appear too dry and lacking in verve to be from the hand of Reza himself. Opaque colors are applied selectively to some articles of clothing.



FIGURE 31. *Visit to a Hermit*
Safavid period, early seventeenth century. The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, Bequest of George D. Pratt, 1935 (45.174.22)



33.

1. See also Sotheby's, April 12, 1976, lot 32; Sotheby's, May 3, 1977, lot 44; Sotheby's, December 1, 1969, lot 87; and Marteau and Vever, *Miniatures persanes*, vol. II, pl. CXLV, fig. 200.

34. *Chastisement of a Pupil*

Inscribed: Muhammad Qasim

Ink, transparent and opaque colors, and gold on paper,
9 5/8 x 6 1/4 in. (24.5 x 15.9 cm.)

Safavid period, second half of the seventeenth century

Frederick C. Hewitt Fund, 1911 (11.84.14)

Muhammad Qasim has taken a piquant little vignette of a pupil being punished with the bastinado (probably stemming from earlier versions of illustrations of mosque schools) and turned it into the focal point of his drawing. The school scene, from which most other similar compositions were derived, is found in the popular story of Layla and Majnun from Nezami's *Khamseh*.¹

In addition to reading and writing, these scenes invariably show a figure burnishing paper, as in the scene of Layla and Majnun at school from the Museum's *Khamseh* of Nezami of 1524–25.² A wonderful painting of a school held outdoors, dated to the early sixteenth century, shows, among other activities, a figure polishing paper as well as paper drying on a line.³ A later painting, attributed to Mir Sayyid 'Ali, also depicts a mosque school and includes both the figure polishing paper and another being bastinadoed.⁴

In Muhammad Qasim's drawing, a youth in the foreground is polishing paper in the same pose as the other examples cited while the second foreground figure is writing calligraphic exercises. Two other youths hold the stick to which the victim's feet are tied. The schoolmaster applying the bastinado is very characteristic of Muhammad Qasim's

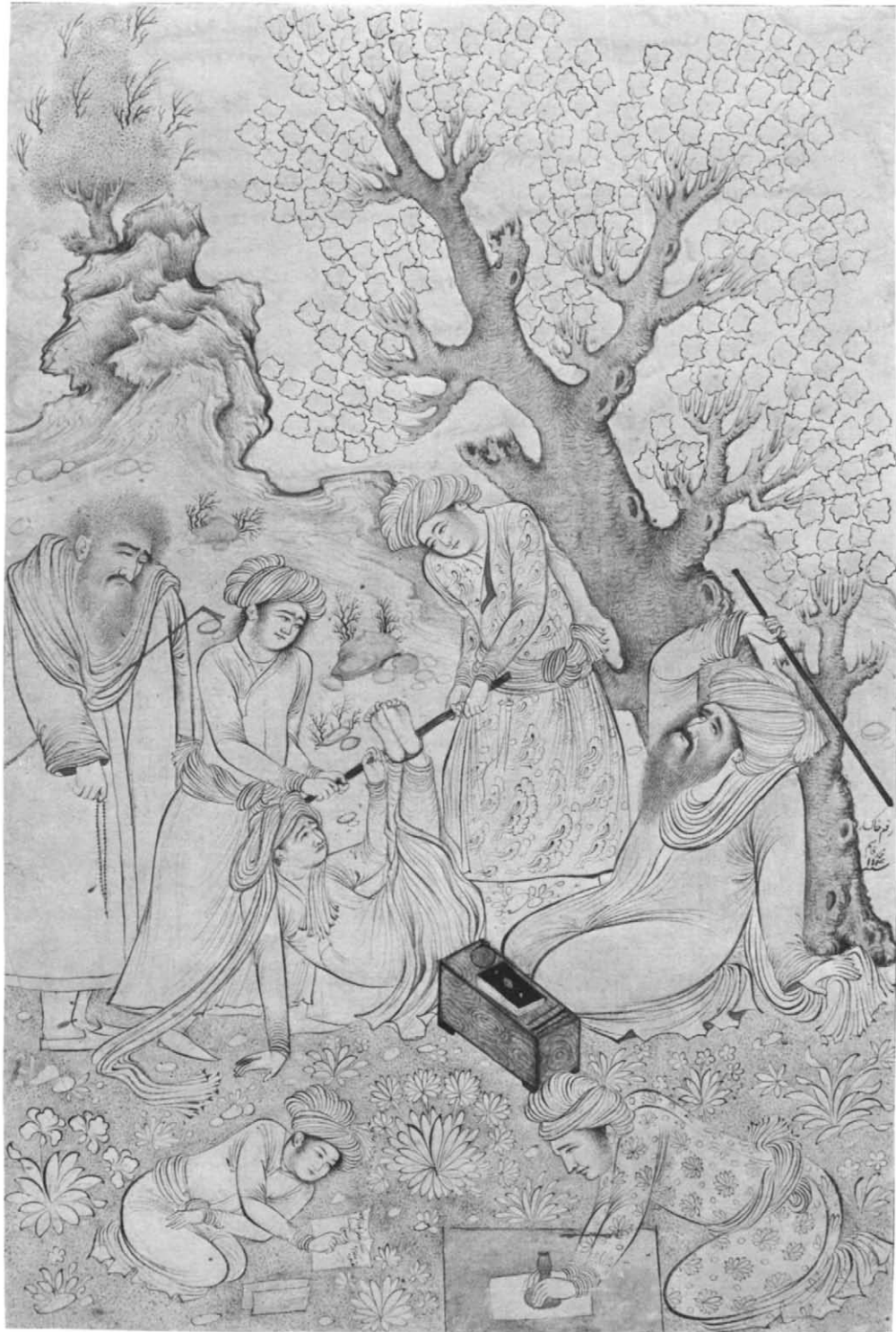
mature figure type, as is the elderly dervish type on the left. The kind of thick plant in which the blossoms resemble the leaves can be found in many paintings and drawings by this prolific artist, as can the cloud-band decoration on one of the youth's costumes. The thick-trunked tinted tree with its stylized foliage like paper cut-outs also appears in many of the examples of Muhammad Qasim's work. He has signed the drawing along the right edge and dated it 114, the equivalent, if another digit is added, to 1692–93, rather late in the long span of productivity of this artist. The style of Muhammad Qasim and of two other mid-seventeenth-century artists, Muhammad 'Ali (cat. no. 31) and Muhammad Yusuf, derived from the, at that time, innovative style of Reza 'Abbasi.

1. For a derivation, see for example, a school scene in a manuscript of Sa'di's *Gulistan* dated 1486, with the bastinado being administered in the foreground; Stchoukine, *Les Peintures . . . Tîmûrides*, pl. LXXVI.

2. Chelkowski, *Mirror*, miniature 5; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.222.7, folio 129a.

3. See Martin, *Miniature Painting*, pl. 80, from Leningrad.

4. Lowry and Nemazee, *A Jeweler's Eye*, fig. 59, ca. 1540.



35. *Men Preparing Some Sort of Intoxicant in the Country*

Ink and transparent and opaque colors on paper,
6 1/4 x 5 in. (15.9 x 12.7 cm.)
Safavid period, mid-seventeenth century
Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1952 (52.20.7)

Fourteen men of varying ages and, judging from their costumes, vocations are assembled in the country preparing and using, it seems, intoxicants. The theme of an all-male gathering in the open, where men are shown asleep and even just drowsy or in conversation, enjoyed some popularity in Iran during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century (figure 32).¹ Best described as a conceit, these drawings illustrate different states of intoxication, a favorite theme in Persian mystical poetry.² Although the subject possesses a good deal of genre quality, as is seen by the addition of such details as a cat or a dog as observers, the main features of the theme remain unchanged. That is to say, these are not primarily genre scenes but the theme belongs to the visual and literary tradition as does wine drinking.³ The two men mixing the substance with their hands in a large bowl are the most constant feature of these drawings. Also consistently present is the half-conscious man seated at the far right, middle row, in the Museum's drawing, posed precariously with one bent leg barely keeping the upper body from tipping over.



FIGURE 32. *Ascetics Preparing Bhang in a Secluded Glade Deccan*, first quarter of the seventeenth century. Courtesy of Sotheby's, London (October 11, 1982, lot 32)

The Museum's drawing is datable to the second half of the seventeenth century and benefits from direct earlier Persian visual models, such as the *Party of Men Drinking in a Landscape*, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (figure 33). The Museum's drawing is also indebted to Indian painting, as is evident in the types of the two conversing figures in the upper right-hand corner.

1. For another Indian copy closely following the Persian models, see Sotheby's, July 11, 1972, lot 53. Two further examples, although in Mughal style, are illustrated in Sotheby's, September 20–21, 1985, lot 375 and Sotheby's, April 12, 1976, lot 105.
2. A. Welch, *Shah Abbas*, p. 63. Welch uses this very apt term in reference to a drawing in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, entitled *Different Kinds of Spirit* (our figure 33, now known as *Party of Men Drinking in a Landscape*), ascribed to Muhammadi and dated ca. 1575, but probably early 17th century.
3. See *An Allegory of Worldly and Other-Worldly Drunkenness*, from a *Divan* of Hafiz; and S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting*, pl. 18.

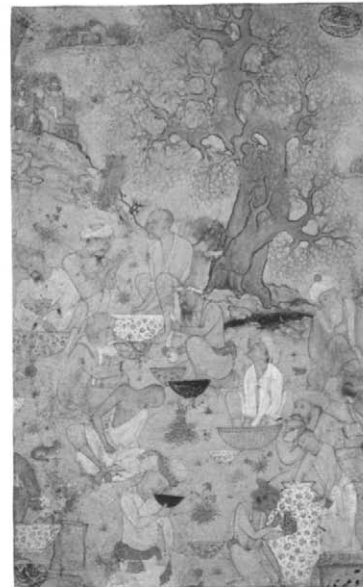
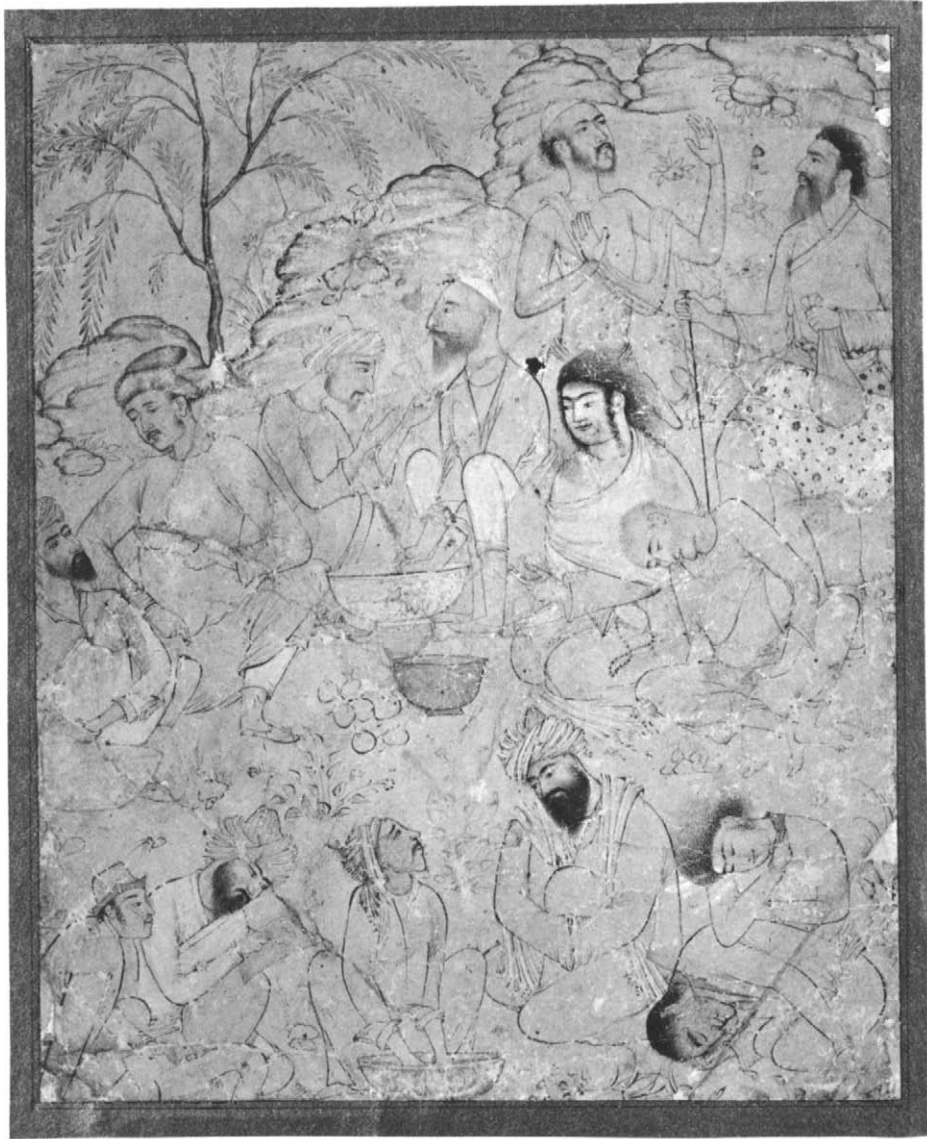


FIGURE 33. *Party of Men Drinking in a Landscape* Safavid period (?), early seventeenth century. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Purchased, Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 and Picture Fund, 14.649



35.

36. *An Unusual Assembly*

Ink, transparent colors, and gold on paper,
9 1/8 x 5 3/4 in. (23.2 x 14.6 cm.)

Qajar period, late nineteenth–early twentieth century
Gift of Charles and Irma Wilkinson, 1979 (1979.461)

This twentieth-century drawing is of great interest for several reasons. Thematically, it is a direct descendant of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century drawings of the scenes of entertainment and conversation in the open.¹ Similar to our drawing in intent, but different in context, since it is a picnic, is a drawing in Cleveland (figure 34). Stylistically, the Museum's drawing also descends from such seventeenth-century drawings as the *Seated Dervish* by Muhammad Tahir in the Keir Collection (figure 35). Although little of Muhammad Tahir's fluid calligraphic line is to be seen in our drawing, the almost brutally caricaturized elders with their narrow

slanted eyes and exaggerated noses and even the position of raised knees in the two elders in front are undoubtedly in the tradition of their seventeenth-century model. Also similar is the careful attention given to the finished rendering of the head, as against the simplified outline drawing of the bodies and robes. There seems to have been a resurgent interest in this mode of representation, which has a great potential for satire, in early-twentieth-century Persian art.²

1. See Blochet, *Les Enluminures*, pl. LXXXIV; and Sotheby's, April 21, 1980, lot 75.

2. *The Local Meeting*, Christie's, June 11 and 12, 1984, fig. 171.



FIGURE 34. *Picnic in the Mountains*
Qazvin, Safavid period, second half of the sixteenth century.
Courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Purchase from
the J. H. Wade Fund, 44.491



FIGURE 35. *Seated Dervish*
Signed: Muhammad Tahir. Isfahan, Safavid period,
first half of the seventeenth century. Courtesy of
the Keir Collection, Richmond, Surrey, III. 352

چنان شاد شد نامور بهلوان
 که خواهد بر افشاند ز روش رویان
 بد و گفت ای پور پست سپاه
 سر نه داران دیهم ش ه
 ز نو در بادا بد به کنشش
 وزان پس خیر شد با فراسنبا
 که شد روز نوران سران خراب



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