

*A PERSIAN MINIATURE OF THE XVI
CENTURY BY RIZA 'ABBASI*

FROM THE RUSSIAN OF F. ROSENBERG.

(Translated by L. Bogdanov.)

THE miniature discussed here represents a لوح (*lauh*), i.e., "a leaf" torn out from an album, 38×23.5 cm. in size. It was purchased in Egypt and came further into my possession from Louis Rouart's collection in Paris in 1897.

Such albums, still held in high esteem by collectors and lovers of books in Persia, are the outcome of the collaboration of a miniaturist, a calligrapher, a gilder and a setter-off, and, very often, a binder enters such a group of artists on an equal footing, so that frequently it is difficult to say, who of those five is responsible for the most important part of the work.

The obverse side of our leaf is occupied by a miniature portrait of a young woman. The picture, 14.5×9.75 cm. in size, is pasted inside a threefold frame of brick-pink colour enclosed in a further fivefold frame of multicoloured lines. The centre of the reverse side of the leaf is occupied by a calligraphical specimen in the form of a quatrain written in *nasta'liq* characters in white ink on a blue ground. The spaces between the writing disposed in two rectangles containing two hemistiches each are filled up with a thick layer of bright gilding, the remaining parts of the ground are illuminated by four triangles of which the one in the left hand bottom corner contains the signature of the calligrapher, the other three being ornamented with a gracefully executed floral design. The upper right-hand triangle, painted in gold and white on a black ground with a red insertion, is enclosed in a greenish frame. The central shield (14.5×7.5 cm.) is inserted in a fourfold frame, three stripes of which are of the same brick-pink colour as on the obverse side and the fourth stripe is of a dirty yellow hue. On the second stripe of the frame six

labels are pasted with inscriptions in prose and verse executed in China-ink on a white ground, two on each long side of the rectangle and one on each short side of the same. The margins are ornamented with graceful designs executed by hand and representing a forest with animals. The pasteboard is composed of four layers, of which the upper one is of a dirty-yellow colour on the obverse side and of a dark-blue colour on the reverse side. These layers are pasted upon sheets of ordinary paper and afterwards pasted together. The setting-off is somewhat lacking in finish by the fault of the gilder, whose work, owing to the coarsening of the artistic tastes of the time, seems to have been very considerable. That weak point, however, has its good side as it enables us to trace back the technique of this art.

We know that in Persia the exercise of some artistical handicraft was by no means considered beneath the dignity of a first class artist. The preparation of paper for books and pictures, the marmolation and graining of the same, the pasting together of the cardboard, the composition of the coloured inks, the arrangement and the drawing of the lines composing the frame and the border, the painting of the margins, the gilding, the binding, let alone the drawing of arabesques, all this enters the sphere of accomplishments obligatory for a painter; and a certain skill and dexterity in the technique of that, from the European point of view, mechanical side of the work, were considered an important quality. In one of the most important sources of biographical information regarding painters, in the collection composed in 1587 in Turkish by Mustafa b. Ahmad 'Ali, the state comptroller of Baghdad (د قتر دار), *Manaqib-i hunarvaran* (مناقب هنروران) i.e., "The Attainments of Artists", a special chapter (the 5th) is devoted to different arts and crafts of that kind and to the representatives of each of them.¹

(1) Unfortunately the manuscripts of that work both in the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences and in the former Institute of Oriental Languages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were removed from St. Petersburg among other more valuable manuscripts as far back as 1917. We were therefore limited to the use of abstracts in Dorn (Melas. II, 38 foll.), in Huart's *Les Calligraphes et les Miniaturistes de l'Orient musulman*, Paris, 1903 (passim): in Martin's *Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th century*, London, 1912, v. I., passim, more especially pp. 110 foll.; and in Karabacek's *Zur orient. Altertumskunde*, III, Rizâ-i 'Abbâsi, *Ein persischer Miniaturenmalers*, Swaw, 1911, etc. (The removed manuscript came back in late summer of 1921, but could be no longer used as the present article had already been set up by the press).

Certain well-known painters and calligraphers became famous merely on account of their skill in the above-mentioned domains. Thus, for instance, the miniaturist and calligrapher of the end of the 16th century, the pupil of the painter Mani and of the calligrapher Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi, Ghiyâthu-d-dîn Ahmad of Sabzavar bore the sobriquet of "gilder" (مذهب) and another, not less renowned, court calligrapher of Shâh 'Abbâs was before all famous for his skill in composing colours and for his dexterity in preparing pasteboard (وسال)¹. As regards calligraphy, it is considered an altogether first-class art, no less self-sufficient than painting and, we may take it that, in the cult of writing as an aesthetic entity, Persia does by no means cede it to her chief master in the arts, China.

As mentioned above, the work of the gilder on the leaflet under discussion is very considerable and variegated. Besides the six golden lines which divide the four stripes of the frame containing the central shields, the stripes themselves are covered with a floral design in the shape of flowers and leaves, partly finished, partly merely primed in view of a light transparent gilding, partly altogether still in the stage of golden outlining tracery. A thick layer of bright gold, as mentioned, covers the spaces between the pieces of writing and encloses the signature of the calligrapher on the reverse side; on the obverse side, in the same way, are treated a part of the head-dress and of the crossbelt. A special kind of gilding covers the transversal stripes of the trousers; here the thick layer of gold is made speckled by means of needle-pricks, wherewith the illusion of some kind of soft brocade stuff is obtained. Numerous merely primed places give to the picture a somewhat untidy appearance; that effect is still more aggravated by the grounding of natural paper-colour. If we may judge from a trial-daub and from the traced contour of a leaf the artist meant to cover it with a light golden design in the form of a flower garden as is met with on the pictures of that epoch. The golden design on the margins, especially on the reverse side, *i.e.* on the side occupied by the specimen of calligraphy, is highly artistic. The design represents here a forest with different animals and with a great variety of foliage and flowers. The theme is repeated with slight digressions on both sides of our leaflet. The bold contours of gracefully disposed

(1) Huart, 236. Dorn, *Melas.*, II, 47, understands, however, on the authority of Kazembek, وسالان as "repairers of damaged manuscripts".—

branches and leaves are filled with a light transparent layer of gold put on with great skill and taste, so that, in spite of the nerves of the leaves for instance being scarcely marked, a very great life-likeness is attained, which effect is still more enhanced by an attempt at disposing them in a certain kind of perspective. Quite a success are the trunk and the branches of a big tree on the edge of the forest, from the half-height of which a bear on the alert shows his teeth to a lion ready to spring; a little to the left, one can see a running lynx. On the top of the frame are represented a rampant stern-looking lion and in the right-hand corner a fleeing antelope. The animals are mostly traced in mere outline, their muscles being hardly marked, but owing to the amazing precision and boldness of the lines an expressiveness and fullness of life are obtained which leave far behind both the famous hunting-party of Shâh Tahmasp, attributed to Sultân Muhammad (first half of the 16th c.)¹ and those magnificent field-pictures of the time of Tahmasp (1524-76) and 'Abbâs I (1587-1629);² here, however, the influence of a Chinese original is less felt. The style is in general the same as on plates 130 ff. in Martin's book, but, as far as one can judge from the phototypes, the treatment on our leaflet is much more refined. Unfortunately, on our plate the pale gold on the blue ground of the reverse side does not show properly. The obverse side, however, which consists almost of mere contours very little prominent on the yellow ground in the original is more successful on our photo. In the upper left-hand corner are well seen a haughty lion in a sitting posture and to his right, a lynx on the alert. On the tree of the obverse side there is no animal; at the bottom there are two deer, one quietly lying on the ground, the other grazing; unfortunately the drawing in that place is a little damaged. As regards precision and life-likeness these animals are the best that I have ever come across up till now among specimens of Persian painting; and though we have to admit that the drawing is based on a Chinese stencil, still we must recognize that in this case the composite is thoroughly *iranized* and its stencil is well veiled.

The calligraphic specimen bears the signature in full of one of the greatest artists, if not the first, of his time Mullâ Muhammad Husayn Tabrîzî (محمد حسین تبریزی).³

(1) Public Library MS. No. 489 : Martin plates 116, 117.

(2) cf. plates 130 foll. : 250-256 : 261, 262.

(3) Dorn, *Melas*. II, 44 and 49. —

The above-quoted *Manaqib-i hunarvaran* mentions as his teachers Maulâna Isma'îl, Mîr Haydar, the famous Sayyid Ahmad Mashhadî and Maulâna Mâlik. He himself is also mentioned in the list of calligraphers in *nasta'liq* of the court of Shâh Isma'îl II.¹ Sayyid Ahmad Mashhadî, the most prominent of his teachers († 1578), enjoyed for some time the favours of Shâh Tahmasp and of his successor Shâh Isma'îl II. Mullâ Muhammad Husayn Tabrîzî, son of Maulâna 'Inâyatullâh of Tabrîz, was called *mihîn ustad* (میدین استاد) "the greatest artist". He lived mostly in Tabrîz, where he applied himself to decorating with inscriptions the local mosques and convents of dervishes: these inscriptions have almost entirely disappeared owing to several earthquakes. In 1576 he was employed as the head of the personal chancellery of Shâh Isma'îl II. He performed on foot a pilgrimage to Mecca, after which, having returned to his native place Tabrîz, he continued his work of calligrapher and copyist. He was also a poet, and it is said he composed on his deathbed some verses in praise of the pen, which he ordered to be written down by one of his numerous pupils, the famous favourite and court-calligrapher of Shâh 'Abbâs, Mîr 'Imâd,² whose tragic death (in 1615) must have taken place not without the knowledge of his more fortunate rival in the favours of Shâh 'Abbâs, 'Alî Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsî called *shah navâz* (شاه نواز) "the flatterer of the Shah". The latter was a colleague of Mîr 'Imâd in the studio of their common teacher Mullâ Muhammad Husayn Tabrîzî. The exceedingly great number of pictures signed by 'Alî Rizâ made Prof. Karabacek conceive doubts as to the authenticity of the signature so often met with, and resulted in his enriching the literature of the subject by the publication of the above-quoted valuable monograph on our artist.³ The sources, as far as I can judge by the abstracts accessible to me, do not mention either the dates of the birth or of the death of Muhammad Husayn, but the exact dates of the death of his two great pupils are well-known. Of them Mîr 'Imâd died in 1615, in his 63rd year, and Mullâ Muhammad Rizâ Tabrîzî in 1627. The year of the birth of their teacher must therefore obviously

(1) Dorn, 49 has got erroneously "Isma'îl I".—

(2) A calligraphical specimen bearing his signature in the album in the Public Library, cat. No. 389, fol. 65a. --

(3) cf. Huart, 230 and 237: cf. 239 foll. and 245: Martin I, 120 foll.: Sarre, *Riza Abbasi, ein persischer Miniaturenmalers*. KK X, 1 (1910): Karabacek, *passim*.

fall somewhere in the first quarter of the 16th c. During the brief reign of Shâh 'Isma'îl II (1676-77) his name, as we have seen, is found in the lists of court-calligraphers, so that he died probably towards the end of the century, that is to say during the reign of Shâh 'Abbâs the Great.

In the collection bearing the title *تقا*, of the Public Library of St. Petersburg (Cat. No. 488, fol. 22) there is a signed specimen of his handwriting exactly coinciding with that reproduced on our plate. The similarity, one would almost like to say, identity, of the outlines of the letters, connecting strokes, diacritical dots etc., is amazing: one feels really entitled to apply with no exaggeration to our master what was said, according to the traditions, with regard to the first Arabian calligrapher, the Caliph 'Ali, who was renowned for the perfection of his writing in Cufic script and quite particularly for the beauty of the elongated *kaf* (*ك*). It was said that there was not the slightest difference whatever in shape or size between the same letters, wherever it be that they occurred even if one would measure them with a compass. One has to acknowledge that for a European eye the specimens of the handwriting of Muhammad Husayn's pupils found in the same collection, for instance that of Muhammad Rizâ Tabrizî and of 'Alî Rizâ Tabrizî, differ very little from the writing of their teacher; but a European would hardly be expected to pose as an arbiter in these matters. To the pen of the great artist belongs certainly only the quatrain attributed to Hâfiz in white ink on a blue ground and the signature; the specimens of writing in prose and in verse which cover the frame of the central picture and are written in black on white are obviously the work of an ordinary scribe; they are of little interest and break off on both sides in the middle of a word. Below we give the text and the translation of all these specimens of writing.

The miniature on the obverse side of the leaf (see Plate I) represents a young woman sitting on cushions and putting on a slipper; the right foot is resting on a stand somewhat reminding one of the overturned lotus of the Buddhist images. The contours, the lines of the face, the lineaments of the arms and legs are traced in vermillion, apparently with a reed pen; the folds of the dress and the cushions are merely marked. The shirt, the lower part of the skirt, the cushions and the stand for the foot, which is primed for gilding, are not quite finished. The expression

of the face is somewhat stencilled without any individualisation, the hands look rather lifeless, the legs look wooden and are extremely fat, but the general impression of the picture is that of a harmonious whole and of a great fineness of detail. The type of the face, the joined eye-brows, the roundness of the chin and the neck, the treatment of the hair and of the folds, the contours, traced with vermilion, the brocade, obtained by pricking the gilding with a pin, all this exactly corresponds to what we see on the coloured pictures of collection No. 488 in the Public Library, and were it not for a slight difference in the dimensions and in the type of drawing of the margins, it would have been possible to think that our leaf might have entered some time before the said collection which is at present being described by V. A. Eberman. A further similarity in detail is that, in the collection mentioned, the specimens of calligraphy bear also the signatures of their authors, whilst such are absent on the pictures; unfortunately not a single date is to be found in the whole collection.

The general type reminds one of the manner of the school of Sultân Muhammad, the chief painter of Shâh Tahmasp, but the same type is also encountered on miniatures signed "Rizâ."¹ Several well-known artists bear the same name Rizâ, but with the addition of different surnames, sobriquets and *nisbas*; this circumstance makes it extremely difficult to establish the identity of the author of certain given pictures, as is shown in the above-quoted articles by Sarre and Karabacek. In our case we have to deal with at least three artists bearing the same name Rizâ, who belong more or less to the same epoch; two of them were together pupils of Mullâ Muhammad Husayn. The first and the eldest of them Aghâ Rizâ, *alias* 'Alî Rizâ, the pupil of Mîr 'Alî of Herât, died in Bukhâra in 1573-4. The two others are the above-mentioned Muhammad Rizâ at-Tabrîzî, whose name sometimes also appears with the addition of the *nisba* 'Abbâsi (died in 1627) and 'Ali Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsi, the most renowned favourite of Shâh 'Abbâs (died after 1643). He was also a native of Tabrîz. Folio 21b of the said collection of the Public Library bears the signature of one 'Alî Riza at-Tabrîzî. That signature belongs certainly to our 'Alî Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsî, but refers, probably, to an earlier period of his life, when he had as yet no right to embellish

(1) cf. Martin, II, plates 106, 109, 110, also 162,—

his name with the title 'Abbâsî, which was granted him at a later epoch.

It is unnecessary to emphasise the fact that one of the chief characteristics of a painter is his palette; there is no need to have a particularly experienced eye in order to recognize for instance a Fra Angelico or a Titian at sight from the tone of the picture amongst dozens of other painters. With reference to Persian art, taking into consideration the particularities of the psychology of Eastern painters, that rule can be applied only with a certain reservation. No need to say that the delicate colouring of Bihzâd is of course altogether different from the rich green hues of Aghâ Mirak or from the brilliant tones of Sultan Muhammad. Our picture represents precisely that palette which is considered by Martin as characteristic of 'Alî Riza-yi 'Abbâsî' and by Karabacek as showing certain of the peculiarities of the art of Aghâ Rizâ.² That combination of colours is also found in the miniatures of the collection of the Public Library. The same reddish-violet upper garment with a blue lining can be also seen on the so-called "portrait of the poet Sa'dî",³ whereas the treatment of the ends of folds is amazingly similar; the underwear in both cases is executed in vermillion, the slippers on the "portrait of Sa'dî" are also vermillion-coloured, on our miniature they are, however, crimson; he wears a green shawl, on our miniature the shirt is green; the grounding is in both instances of the same pale-yellow hue, there with a finished, in our case with a merely primed, gold floral ornamentation. In the collection of the Public Library there is a replica of the "portrait of Sa'dî" which, as far as we can judge, represents the first rough draught of the picture later on developed and carefully finished in the course of time. In our opinion, there is no doubt whatever that, on the one hand, our picture, on the other "the portrait of Sa'dî" attributed to the painter Aghâ Rizâ and the miniatures of one of two widely differing from each other groups of pictures in the Public Library album belong to the brush of one and the same painter. To him also, in our opinion, must be attributed the portrait of a young man reproduced in Karabacek's work⁴ and provided with three signatures: on the right side (عزیز) Aghâ Rizâ on the top

(1) op. cit., I, 71.—

(2) op. cit. 13, 14.

(3) Karabacek, plate II.—

(4) Plate VII.—

merely رِزَا Rizâ and to the left on the grounding of the picture اَغَا رِزَا عِبَّاسِي Aghâ Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsî. As regards Mullâ Muhammad Husayn, not a single miniature with his signature has been found up to the present time, and the sources do not so much as hint of his ever having applied himself to painting. It is therefore inadmissible to connect his signature on the reverse side of the leaflet with the picture on the obverse side as well. On the other hand, it is only natural that the teacher and the pupil should have joined their talents for the composition of leaflets (*lauh*) which were at that epoch very much in demand and in which both these arts were represented on an equal footing. Owing, however, to the triple signature on the picture just mentioned the question arises: which of the three painters bearing the name Rizâ is the author of the isolated group of pictures and the collaborator of Muhammad Husayn. Aghâ Rizâ, called also 'Alî Rizâ, was the disciple of Mîr 'Alî of Herât, he came to the court of Tahmasp from Isfahân and, as he was of the same age as Muhammad Husayn, probably even his senior in age (he died in 1573-4), he would hardly, in such mature years, have started taking lessons from him. Furthermore (though it does not constitute a conclusive proof) his signature in the album of the Public Library is absent, but the signatures of Muhammad Rizâ at-Tabrîzî and 'Alî Rizâ at-Tabrîzî are figuring in it: both of them are, authentically, pupils of the calligrapher of Tabrîz and both of them bear the *nisba* 'Abbâsî, the second rightfully, the first, in all probability, owing to a mistake of his biographers. It is known of Muhammad Rizâ that after having attended the lessons of Muhammad Husayn and having worked for some time in Tabrîz he left for Constantinople in 1585. Having got into favour with Sultân Murâd III, he was appointed to work in the Imperial arsenal and enjoyed the friendship of the court historiographer Sa'du'd-dîn. On his return to Tabrîz, he died there in 1627. The sources do not mention whether he was honoured by any special favours on the part of Shâh 'Abbâs and whether the *nisba* 'Abbâsî ever was conferred upon him. The incomparable beauty and fineness of his brush¹ is highly praised, but it must be acknowledged that his manner and his technique, as they are shown, for instance, in a drawing attributed to him, with dubious signatures, reproduced by Karabacek², are far from being

(1) Karabacek, 87-89.—

(2) Plate IX.—

of the same type as the one represented on our miniature and on the pictures of the album in the Public Library. It is therefore hardly necessary to take into account any possible authorship of Aghâ Rizâ and Muhammad Rizâ. There, thus, remains, in accordance with what has been said, only one 'Alî Rizâ who in his youth, before the period of his friendship with Shâh 'Abbâs, was called simply at-Tabrîzî. We do not entertain any doubts as to his authorship in the miniature discussed by us here, which must have been executed by him in his younger days, *i.e.*, in Tabrîz, probably, during the time, when he was still attending the lessons of Muhammad Husayn. The latter would hardly have consented to adorn with his famous signature and handwriting the work of an utter stranger and a painter of a still undeveloped talent, or a worthless copy.

The creative genius of 'Alî Rizâ 'Abbâsî is extensive and variegated. We do not find, it is true, on our miniature any of the daubs which became so characteristic with him in course of time, nor the characteristic strokes in the outlines which terminate in peculiar indented lines. Still the general trend, the somewhat fastidious *finesse* of the lines, the soft beauty of the almost expressionless faces in his innumerable masculine, feminine or sexless figures and, last but not least, the palette of his colours, to which he, obviously, remained faithful to the very end—his last dated work belongs to 1643—are fully convincing proofs of his authorship as regards our miniature. As we know, 'Alî Rizâ 'Abbâsî was very much concerned with his own renown, so that the greater part of his works bears his signature, in some cases repeated several times on the same picture. His miniatures bear moreover very often the exact date of their composition. The absence of such data on our leaflet, as well as on the *laushs* of the album in the Public Library, might be explained by the fact that they belong to the beginning of his artistic career. The mere presence of such signatures and dates cannot, besides, be considered as a proof positive of their authenticity. Every signature on a Persian miniature, and, more especially so, one of a prominent artist, always needs careful verification. Very edifying in that respect are the examples given in Karabacek's monograph, and, among others, two pictures reproduced in Martin's book,¹ one signed by Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsî and the other bearing the signature of Bihzâd himself. The latter represents a portrait

(1) On plate 110,—

of Shâh Tahmasp, although in his youth, but already as a grown-up man, who ascended the throne at the age of ten, in 1524. We have no information as regards the date of Bihzâd's death, but the testimony of Khwândamîr, who speaks of him as being his contemporary, refers to the year just mentioned. He must therefore have been still alive at that time. As, since that time, he is no more mentioned, it must be supposed that he died soon after and could hardly have drawn the above-mentioned portrait; the work on the same has, besides, nothing characteristic of the art of Bihzâd.

The Eastern dealers in antiquities and second-hand book-sellers, as one knows, do not cede it in any way to their European colleagues as far as unscrupulousness is concerned. No wonder then that every kind of rubbish bearing the signatures of most famous artists, appears year after year on the market. Thus, for instance, the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences has recently purchased a rather ancient, fairly well written manuscript dated A.H. 894 of the "third" divan of Jâmî,¹ into which, in order to attract snobs and to inflate its price, are pasted some vulgar miniatures of recent fabrication, which have nothing in common with the text of the book.

We are perfectly aware that it is a risky enterprise to build up any hypotheses regarding an authorship on the strength of the style and coloration of a given picture, the more so as the pitfalls of a general character are, as already mentioned, very much increased in the case of Eastern artists by certain psychological peculiarities in their attitude with regard to the work of their predecessors. It is a well-known fact that imitating, even slavishly, the great in the domains of arts and literature was, and still is, considered in the East by no means reprehensible. Quite the contrary, an art-student, and only a beginner at that, used to choose a patron whose ways and manners he tried to follow, applying all his energies to do it most thoroughly. Such a patron is called in Persian *pishva* "the one who walks in front", in Arabic "*muqtada*", "he who is imitated". The imitator is called *muqallid*. These are generally adopted technical terms. In the biographies of painters one very often comes across mention of so-and-so having followed first such-and-such a master and, after having attained perfection in his

(1) MS. 1920 No. 1. has been described in detail by E. E. Bertels in an article which has appeared in the "Iran".

manner of painting, having betrayed his earlier ideals and having begun imitating some other artist, sometimes his own rival. We have, for instance, such information with regard to 'Alî Rizâ-yi 'Abbâsî and his murdered rival, Mîr 'Imâd.¹ Although it is certainly easier to attain such minute precision of imitation in the domain of calligraphy than in painting, still one has only to turn over the pages of original albums and of manuscripts containing miniatures, or merely of publications like those of Martin or Marteau et Vever, in order to recognise that in the way of imitation the same amazing perfection is very often attained in painting, as in calligraphy.

The period when Persian painting was at its height was very brief : it lasted only a little more than fifty years beginning from the end of the 15th century. As early as in the second half of the 16th century an apparent decline in that domain is observed and the politically brilliant period of Shâh Abbâs I (1587-1629) was, as far as art is concerned, a period of an absolute decay. No new ideas, no new creative power ; it is a powerful reign of stencil and routine, and painter-artisans try to substitute quantity for quality. Not only a total absence of anything new in style is observed, but all the illuminations are done for the same works of the same poets, for preference of Firdausî, Khosrau Dahlavî, Jâmî ; and almost always such illuminations represent the same scenes. These unavoidable Rustams, Iskandars, Leylas and Majnûns set the teeth on edge *a la longue*. The decline in the domain of art was preceded by the decadence of poetry. The last true poet of Persia, although already with some signs of the decay, was Jâmî (1414-1492).

Under Shâh 'Abbâs I, the court-academy showed a boisterous activity. A great number of painters worked in all branches of art and numerous foreign embassies, especially European, which made at that time their first acquaintance with the development of Persian art, did much to spread its renown in the whole world. China-ware was made from Chinese models, often by Chinese masters, and the first Persian imitations of the same bear sometimes disfigured Chinese hieroglyphics and trademarks, the meaning of which was unknown to the imitators. Engraving on different metals was started, palaces and public buildings were decorated with painting. As regards the latter application of painting, a few patterns, preserved chiefly in Isfahân, prove that fresco-painting of

(1) Huart, 245 and elsewhere,

that kind is mainly of the same kind—miniature, but on a larger scale.¹

After all we have to acknowledge that in Persia, in spite of its former high culture and the existence of an indisputable artistic taste among large classes of the population, fine arts always remained in the state of *Klein-kunst* and that the artistic idea could not throw off the bonds of being merely an ancillary craft and did not possess the necessary forces to develop into a true, independent Art for Art's sake.

Text and Translation of the Inscriptions.

PLATE I.

و چون از شایسته سمعت و غایت شهوت مصون و مهر و سب و نود است
تصرف بیکانه بدامن عصمتشان نرسید و کوشه طرز عقلاشان بسر
انگشت خیا نیت کسی فرو نکشید و رخساره احوالشان از خجلت غار
و حجر مت طعن در صورت عفت و حرزا مانیت محفوظ ماند چنانکه
گفته اند کرم آل و ده دادم چه عجب همه عالم گواه عصمت او است
لا جرم غزلهای جها نکیرش -

“ And as they were guarded and defended from the suspicion of malignity and the misfortune of passion, and the hand of alien encroachment had not attained the skirt of their virtue and nobody had pulled off with the tips of his fingers the corner of the vestment of their intellect, and the cheeks of their circumstances had remained protected in the state of virtue and in the preservation of security from the shame of dishonour and the disgrace of insult, as has been said (verse) : If my skirt is bespattered—what wonder ! The whole world bears testimony to his chastity. Certainly his world-conquering ghazals. ”

The Inscription by Muhammad Husayn.

PLATE II.

دی آمدنی بهیتر از منزل خویش امروز فرازی نه بکام دل خویش
فردا شدنی خبر نه از حاصل خویش پس من چه نشان دهم ز آب و گل خویش

(1) Martin holds the exactly opposite opinion and sees in the Persian miniatures of the epoch when that art was at its height (that is, according to him, from 1800 to 1540) traces of the influence of the fresco-style, which he is inclined, “at least from the decorative point of view”, to place above the productions of the best Italian masters of the Renaissance. On what such a point of view can be based, is not clear. See also the introduction to the monograph *Les miniatures de Behzad dans un MS. persan, date 1485*. Munich, 1912, 22 pl. in-fol.—



PLATE I : the obverse side.

[To face p. 332.]

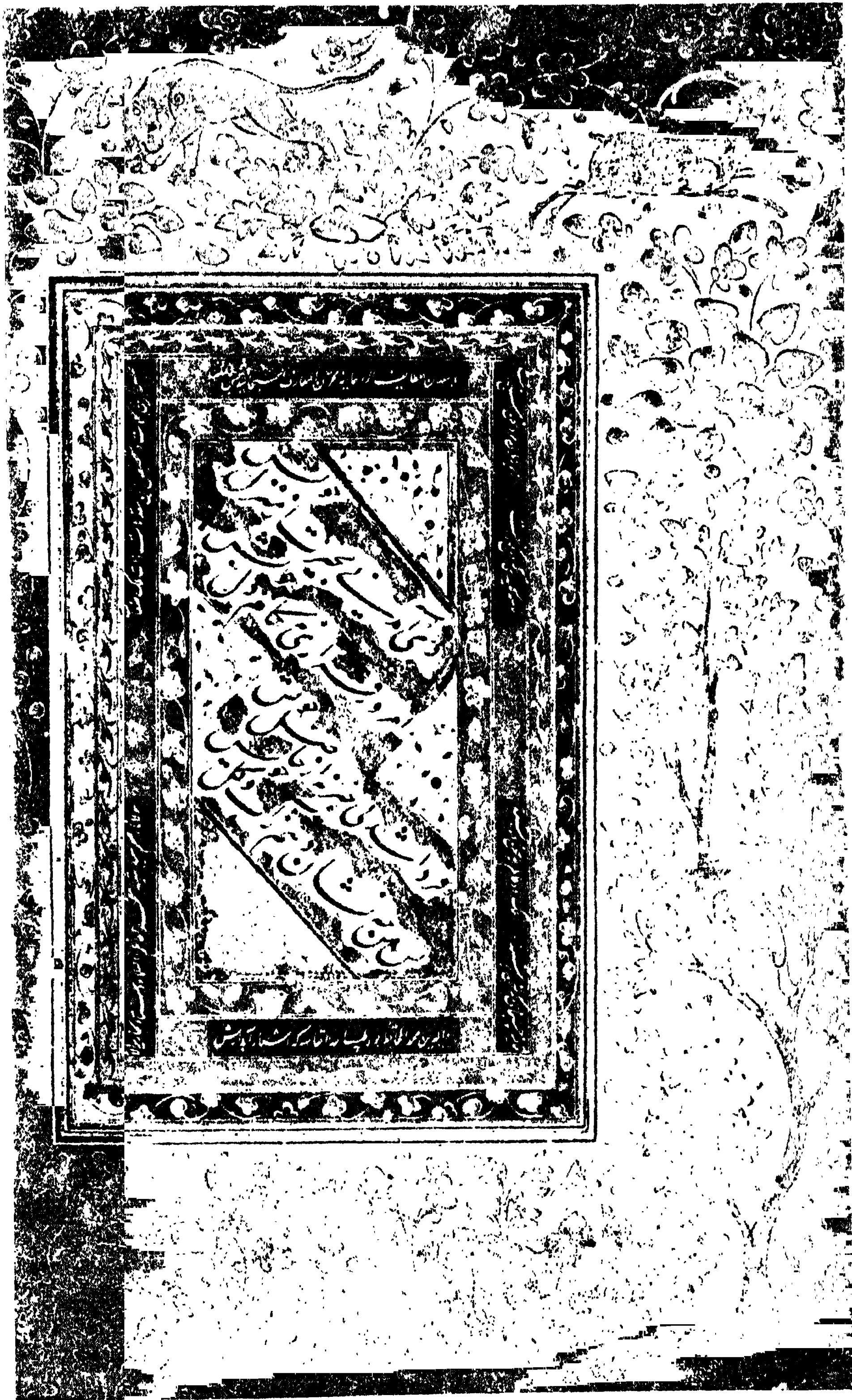


PLATE II : the reverse side.

[To face p. 332.

