



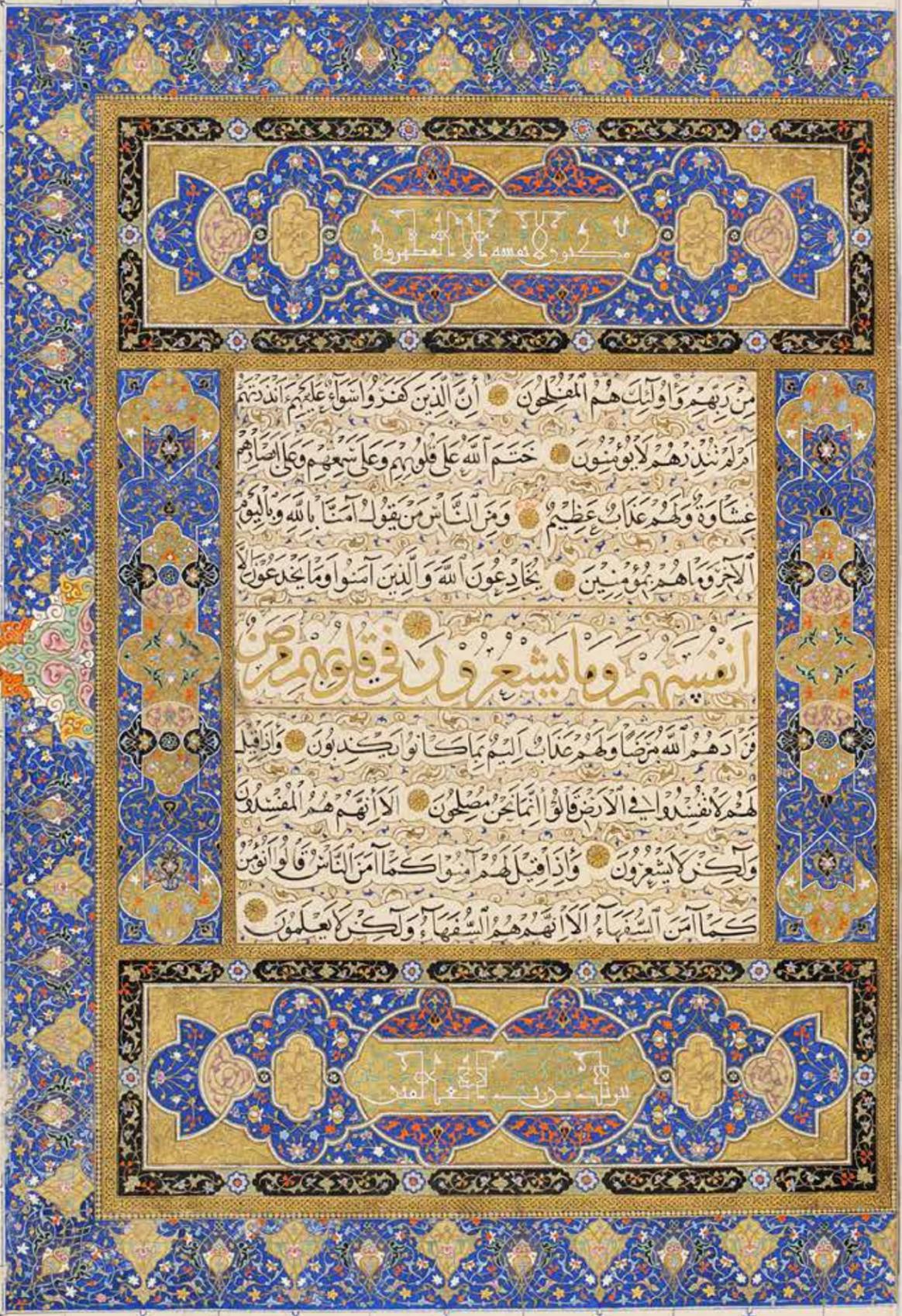
سورة البقرة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ  
إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ  
اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ  
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

سورة البقرة آيات 1-2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَآئِبٍ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ  
الَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ  
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَتَّبِعُونَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ  
بِمَا آتَاهُم مِّنَّا  
ذِكْرًا لَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ  
أُوتَاهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ  
بِمَا آتَاهُم مِّنَّا  
ذِكْرًا لَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ  
أُوتَاهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ

سورة البقرة



سورة البقرة

مِن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ  
أَن الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
أَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ  
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ  
عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ  
وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ  
وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ  
وَمَنْ لَّا يَشَأْ  
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
غَاشِيَةً  
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
سَيُجْزَوْنَ  
الْأَجْرَ  
الَّذِي كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ  
مَنْ يَجَادِدْ  
عَنِ اللَّهِ  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
وَمَا يَجِدُ عُونَ  
لَا

سورة البقرة آيات 3-4

أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يُشْعُرُونَ  
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ  
مِنْ آيَاتِنَا  
وَالَّذِينَ  
يُؤْتُونَ  
بِمَا آتَاهُم  
مِّنَّا  
ذِكْرًا  
لَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ  
أُوتَاهُمْ  
عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَالَّذِينَ  
يُؤْتُونَ  
بِمَا آتَاهُم  
مِّنَّا  
ذِكْرًا  
لَّا يَتَّبِعُونَ  
أُوتَاهُمْ  
عَلَيْهِمْ

سورة البقرة





## Herat – Centre of the Art of the Book

Claus-Peter Haase

### The Artistic Fame of a Metropolis

Few names of metropolises are so closely linked with stunning manuscripts and their production as well as with libraries such as Herat, especially in the Timurid and early Safavid periods. Among these few, as for example the Great Library of Alexandria, the Imperial Library in Byzantium, the monastic libraries such as in St. Gallen or on the island Reichenau and the Library of Matthias Corvinus in Budapest, which had lost their *scriptoria* and original treasures completely or to the greater extent due to dispersal and destruction, Herat did not stand out with a better fate for its manuscript treasures – with some occasional exceptions, as we shall see.

In the Islamic period the first mention of painting in the Herat region concerns the whitewash of wall paintings in a palace of the Ghaznavid prince Mas'ud, who was governor of this province from 1020 to 1030. The images showed erotic scenes based on an Indian source, and his father, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, had already sent envoys who were about to destroy them.<sup>1</sup> Wall paintings in palaces obviously continued pre-Islamic traditions in self-expression of rulership, and Mahmud's move is not to be regarded as an iconoclasm but was directed against the displayed motifs – until today in the Islamic Republic of Iran wall paintings in public spaces are used to focus the advertence on political and religious subjects using various techniques.

After the Mongol destructions in Khorasan, the traveller and geographer Yaqut mentions that he had seen Herat already rebuilt (1220/21) and found it the most splendid and populated metropolis of all.<sup>2</sup> We can assume that such conditions also promoted artistic life, and part of the new style of painting and the art of books, which we know from few examples preserved and ascribed to the late Mongol court ateliers

in Tabriz and the minor ateliers of the Inju and Muzaffarid rulers in Shiraz in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, should also have had earlier origins in Herat. For proving this assumption many more libraries will have to be screened for unknown or unrecognised manuscripts with illuminations and perhaps illustrations from Herat. It is not only the style of painting which changed dramatically in late Mongol and early Timurid periods (14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries), but also the layout of the pages and the ornamental art of books – illuminations and bindings – show new techniques, new forms and compositions of motifs. These new stylistic currents were paralleled in all material fields and technologies of art – and it is surely due to the great possibilities of new connections, especially with China and eastern Central Asia, and quicker travel between the different parts of the Mongol world empire that suddenly an outburst of innovations took place.

A definition of the style of Herati book art in the Mongol and early Timurid periods is rather complicated, as Basil Robinson explains.<sup>3</sup> The highly diversified subjects and dimensions of painting, the artistic observations, the introduction of new techniques in the central and the petty courts of Iran and Central Asia in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century appeared like an outbreak of diverging views on cosmos, nature and human acts and expression. The great diversity of styles, created in and perhaps reflecting the cultural trends of petty principalities and artistic ateliers, did not seem to be representative for the new centralised empire of which Timur and his son Shahrokh may have dreamt. In the view of most art historians the stylistic trend in the paintings, the art of books and also the arts in general point to a sort of fusion of diverse spirited tendencies in the former art centres, especially in the Jalayirid Tabriz and Muzaffarid Shiraz ateliers, and also to an attempt of smoothening expressive and violent depictions in style and theme. But Robinson for example, from his stupendous knowledge of manuscripts from this period, points to a continuing rivalry between the metropolis of Herat with its immense financial means and the princely residence in Shiraz, which once again finds expression in the first third of the 15<sup>th</sup> century under the patronage of the brothers Ibrahim in Shiraz and Baysunqur in Herat; and there may be defined other smaller ateliers, like in Yazd and Mashhad. At the same time, he also emphasises the observation that in the decades since the late 14<sup>th</sup> century the style sheets for book production in Iranian and Persianate art ateliers were defined for the following 250 years. This holds true not only for painting, but also the arts of illumination, paper production and bookbinding and even calligraphy were brought to a distinctive high standard in the luxury exemplars, which was followed by other ateliers according to their means. Adel Adamova has beautifully expressed the artistic achievement of this 'Golden Age' of book art and painting in Iran, which followed the poetic delicacies of the Jalayirid style and completed the refinement of brilliant colours, ideal harmony of compositions and expressions.<sup>4</sup>

1 Bayhaqi 1947–1954, vol. I, 121–124.

2 Yaqut 1866–1873, vol. IV, 658–659.

3 Robinson 1958, 12–15.

4 Most recently in: Adamova 2012, translated by J. Michael Rogers, 14–18.

◀ Frontispiece (shamsah), dated 670/1272, with later library inscription of Sharokh, 1405–44, HNA 107 (see Fig. 18)

◀◀ Double headpiece (sarlah), Qur'an, dated to Herat, 890/1485 (Topkapi Saray Library, H.S.4)



Fig. 1 Audience of a Timurid ruler or Prince – Shahrokh or Baysunqur; frontispiece of the *Kalila wa Dimna*-manuscript for Baysunqur (Topkapi Saray Library R.1022, Herat 833/1429, f. 1b-2a)

Ernst Grube endeavored to paint a coherent picture of these main stylistic trends in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, under the reign of Shahrokh until 1447<sup>5</sup>; followed in parts by Robert Hillenbrand.<sup>6</sup> A great gap is to be felt between the daring 14<sup>th</sup>-century ateliers in Tabriz and elsewhere following the Mongol tradition and those during the reign of Shahrokh from about 1410 onwards. It is the period of the warrior and empire-builder Timur (conquests from 1371 to his death 1405). Grube's early endeavor was to assign works to ateliers in 'his' city Samarqand, as no signed and dated works from there are known to this day. The historical sources mention Timur's fondness for assembling artists in Samarqand or even abducting them, and assure us of several types of pictorial representations in his palaces or tents. Some names of painters working there are reported, among them Abdulhayy, who had been the principal painter under the Jalayirid ruler Sultan Ahmad in Baghdad and stands for a possible link to the next to unknown great tradition of painting and the arts of the former Abbasid caliphal metropolis, but no originals of his work seem to have been detected so far.<sup>7</sup> Under the nearly unlimited connections and wealthy conditions of Timur's court, Grube supposed that as an intermediate between the earlier fantastic pictorial inventions in Ilkhanid Iran and the smoothed style under his successors, some of the

5 Grube 1968, especially 25–32; Grube 1980a, 26–42.

6 Hillenbrand 1977, 10. Oleg Grabar (2000) adds some considerations on the role of the patron.

7 Haase 1981, 61–73; for Abdulhayy and the copies of drawings modeled by Muhammad al-Khayyam in the mentioned albums see Priscilla Soucek (1982), and Zeren Tanindi, in: Gonnella et al. forthcoming.

best images in the Saray Albums in Istanbul and Berlin might originate from Samarqand.<sup>8</sup> Among these images, some very disparate in style had been assigned by a later court librarian to the enigmatic artist *Siyah-qalam*, and some of the drawn examples with motifs and ornaments particularly close to Chinese painting were painted on silk like the hangings described in the sources for Timur's gigantic tents.

For another cycle in the Istanbul albums containing representations of stocky figures, peasants or nomads in simple garments with animals or in dancing positions, Samarqand is suggested as place of origin by Grube. It is the city where Mongol and Turkish tribes met regularly with the oasis population, and that can be expected to have been a potential melting pot for remnants of Central Asian nomadic culture with courtly art and its nostalgia for nomadism. The interpretation was taken up by some Turkish art historians, but it remains speculative. Not less uncertain are dates in the second quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century for these paintings and their localisations to Herat proposed more recently. The question seems to be still unsettled, and it is of little help to know of a few beautiful astronomical codices produced for Ulugh Beg in Samarqand, which may have been produced on special order, and of the transfer of artists from Herat after the death of his father Shahrokh in 1447.<sup>9</sup>

The main features of early Timurid paintings are commonly defined as showing the high horizon of a landscape or an architectural frame under which humans, animals and their surroundings appear small, a limited arsenal of 'fanciful vegetation'<sup>10</sup>, strong colours, especially in Herat produced from valuable ingredients, and the slenderness or elongation of figures in sober stature. These features were copied by some conservative artists until the late Safavid period and are still underlying the modern repetitions of Persian taste to create a historicist 'mark of identity.'

8 Grube 1981, 1–30; Grube 1980, 37–42.

9 Cf. the illustrated copy of star constellations by al-Sufi, *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Paris, BN arabe 5036), which Lentz (Lentz/Lowry 1989, 166; 169 and cat. no. 56) assigns to Samarqand in Ulugh Beg's period of governance.

10 Hillenbrand 1977, 10.

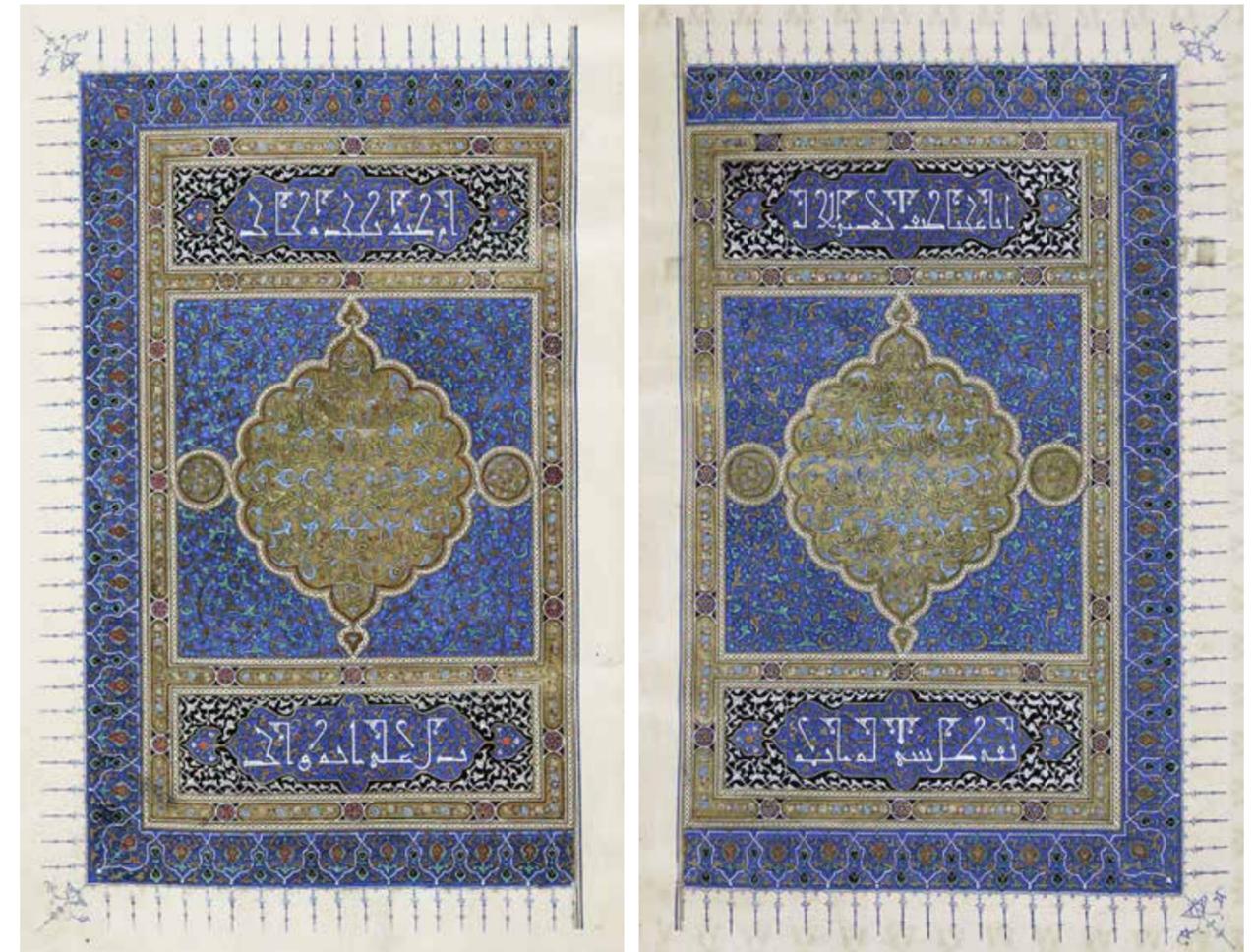


Fig. 2 Ornamental double page naming the patron Baysunqur; *Kalila wa Dimna*-manuscript for Baysunqur (Topkapi Saray Library R.1022, Herat 833/1429, f. 2b-3a)

The so-called 'classical style' in Iranian art with its idealised soberness and clear expressions of balanced forms, composition and systems of ornamentation, not only in painting, was formed in the Timurid cultural stronghold of Herat. Here, Timur's son Shahrokh and his wife supported architecture and the arts, and their son Baysunqur (1399–1434) actively formed the royal ateliers as the creative centre of 'style' in the arts across the whole Timurid empire; a younger son Mohammad Juki (1402–1445) patronised the most exquisite art of books. As mentioned above, in this special field some competition with other centres was observed in stylistic variations, as i.e. between Shiraz and the strong tradition in Tabriz. On the whole, the stylistic discern of regional assignation and chronological sequence

often – with some exceptions of scrutinising analyses or indications within the manuscript – remains a matter of art-historical guess more than of an agreed state of art. Even when a colophon or signatures indicate dates, later additions of illustrations to the texts, re-paintings, and other alterations make assignments to ateliers very difficult or may have altered the original appearance of the images. Another feature of the material now dispersed in many collections is the fact that apart from the royal family several other political figures and nobles patronised artists, and that simpler artistic and material qualities in paper and colours of some less known manuscripts point to other parallel styles. This phenomenon has up to now hardly been analysed except for special periods, like the studies on books from the end of the Timurid period, when the court of Sultan Hosayn Bayqara once more led poets and artists to another flowering and the poet and companion of Sultan Mir Ali Shir Nawa'i strengthened Chaghatay Turkic literature.<sup>11</sup>

11 See below for the studies of Çağman and Rührdanz.