

Or. 6810

خمسه نظامی

Date Late 15th century

Title Niẓāmī Ganjavī, *Khamsah*

Content The five poems making up the *Khamsah* by Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1140 or 41-1202 or 3), containing one double and 20 single miniatures in the Herat later-Timurid style. The attributions to various artists beneath the lower margins of the miniatures were added later but the miniatures on ff. 37v, 135v, 190r, 214r, 225v, and 273r are considered to be possibly the work of Bihzād. One of the paintings (f [214r](#)) is clearly dated 900 AH (1494/95). The history of the manuscript is documented with more than 70 inscriptions and seal impressions dating from 1564/65 to 1782.

Illustrations:

[\(1v-2r\)](#) The manuscript possibly being presented to Sulṭān Mīrzā Barlās, ruler of Samarkand. Ascribed to Mīrak Khurasānī. The patron holds a piece of paper which appears to have the name ‘Alī Fārsī on it – in addition to further inscriptions which have not yet been deciphered.

Or. 6810, ff 3v-29r

Makhzan al-asrār

Illustrations:

[\(5v\)](#) The Prophet mounted on Burāq and escorted by angels passing over the Ka‘bah.

[\(16r\)](#) Sulṭān Sanjar and the old woman. Ascribed to Mīrak

[\(27v\)](#) Hārūn al-Rashīd and the barber. Ascribed to Mīrak and Bihzād

Or. 6810, ff 30v-97v

Khusraw u Shīrīn

Illustrations:

[\(37v\)](#) The elders pleading before Hurmuzd on behalf of the young Khusraw. Ascribed to Bihzād.

[\(39v\)](#) Shīrīn being shown the portrait of Khusraw by one of her handmaidens. Ascribed to Mīrak.

[\(62v\)](#) Farhād arriving at Shīrīn’s palace. Inscription: ‘Written for the library of the great Amīr, the most just, the most courageous Amīr ‘Alī Fārsī Barlās, may God strengthen his fortune until the day of resurrection). Ascribed to Mīrak and ‘Abd al-Razzāq,

[\(72v\)](#) The suicide of Farhād on Mt. Bisitun. Ascribed to Mīrak and Bihzād.

[\(93r\)](#) Shīrūy murders Khusraw while he sleeps in bed. Architectural inscriptions containing Persian quatrain. Ascribed to Bihzād.

Or. 6810, ff 98v-146v

Laylā u Majnūn

Illustrations:

[\(106v\)](#) Laylā and Majnūn at school. Ascribed to Mīrak and Bihzād, but to Qāsim ‘Alī in the text panel. Inscription over doorway containing Qur’anic texts.

[\(128v\)](#) Majnūn visited by Salīm in the desert. Ascribed to Bihzād.

[\(135v\)](#) Mourning the death of Laylā’s husband, Ibn Salām. Ascribed to Bihzād.

[\(137v\)](#) Laylā and Majnūn fainting. Ascribed to Bihzād.

[\(144v\)](#) The death of Majnūn on Laylā’s grave. Ascribed to Bihzād.

Or. 6810, ff 147v-198v

Haft paykar

Illustrations:

(154v) The building of the palace of Khavarnaq for Nu'mān who was the guardian of the young Bahrām Gūr. Ascribed to Bihzād.

(157r) Bahram Gūr kills the dragon. Ascribed to Bihzād. An artist's name has been erased from the text panel

(175r) Bishr feeling for the body of his drowned companion Malīkhā with a branch (story told by the Tartar princess). Ascribed to Bihzād underneath, but to Qāsim 'Alī in the text panel.

(190r) The owner of the garden discovering maidens bathing in his pool (story told by the Greek princess). Ascribed to Bihzād.

Or. 6810, ff 199v-303r

Iskandarnāmah

Beginning in this copy with the *Khiradnāmah* (ff 199v-234v)

Illustrations:

(214r) Iskandar, in the likeness of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, with the seven sages. Inscription: Year AH 900 (1494/95).

(225v) Iskandar on the island near the 'Lion's Mouth' whirlpool beating the wolfskin drum of the bronze talisman in order to still the waters. One of the figures in the boat is shown to be the likeness of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā.

followed by the *Sharafnāmah* (ff 235v-303r)-

(273r) Iskandar, in the likeness of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā, visiting the wise man in a cave. Ascribed to Bihzād underneath, but to Qāsim 'Alī in the text panel.

Language Persian

Physical description

Material: Paper.

Foliation: 303 ff

Dimensions: Leaf 17 x 24.5 cm

Date: ca. AH 900 (1495/96)

Script: Nasta'liq; 25 lines to a page in 4 columns

Decorations: One double and 20 single paintings which are numbered 1-22; ruled margins; shamsah (f 3r) and 6 illuminated headings

Binding: European brown leather binding with gold tooled margins

Ownership Originally created for Amīr 'Alī Fārsī Barlās (f 62v). Gift of Khvudā Qulī Tāliqānī (f 1r) at Agra in 972 (1564/65), presumably to Mu'nim Khān (d. 1575) from whose estate it passed to Akbar (f 1r) who had it with him in Srinagar in 1597. Subsequently belonged to Jahangir, Shah Jahan (their inscriptions on f 3r), and Awrangzeb. Acquired by Richard Johnson 17 December 1782. Purchased by the British Museum from the Tabbagh Brothers, 27 Feb 1908.

Bibliography Norah M. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian Manuscripts: a Catalogue and Subject Index of Paintings from Persia, India and Turkey in the British Library and the British Museum* (London, 1977), p. 141.

F. R. Martin, T. W. Arnold, *The Nizami Ms., Illuminated by Bihzad, Mirak and Qasim Ali, Written 1495 for Sultan Ali Mirza Barlās, Ruler of Samarqand, in the British Museum (Or. 6810)* (Vienna, 1926).

John Seyller, 'The Inspection and Valuation of Manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal library', *Artibus Asiae* 57 no 3/4 (1997), pp. 243-349.