



‘CHANTS FROM PARADISE’

A SELECTION OF SAFAVID CARPETS FROM
THE FARJAM COLLECTION

THE
FARJAM
COLLECTION



‘CHANTS
FROM
PARADISE’



COLLECTOR'S STATEMENT
FORWARD BY DR. CYRUS PARHAM

ART AND CARPET WEAVING
DURING THE SAFAVID ERA

MEDALLION CARPETS

POLONAISE CARPETS

VASE CARPETS

HERAT-ISFAHAN
CARPETS

GARDENS OF PARADISE
IN SAFAVID CARPET DESIGN

CARPETS
AND THE ARTS OF THE BOOK

THE DEFINING THREAD
THE ROLE OF THE CARPET
IN DAILY LIFE



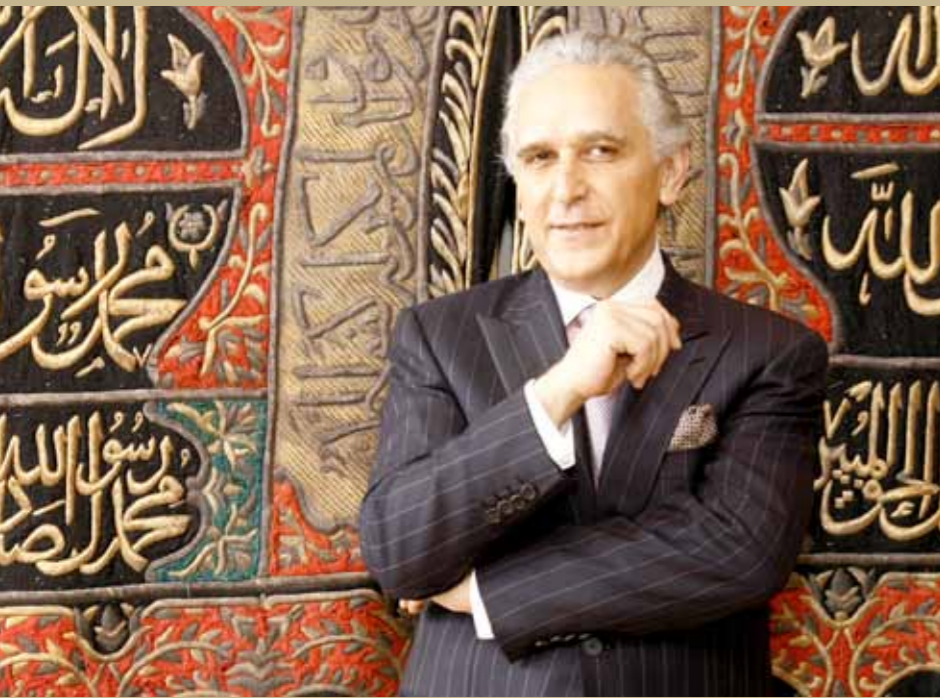
HAFIZ
FOUNDATION

THE HAFIZ FOUNDATION WAS FOUNDED IN 2008 TO SUPPORT OUTSTANDING INITIATIVES WITHIN THE VISUAL ARTS, WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE MIDDLE EAST. WITH THE CITY OF DUBAI AS ITS BASE, THE FOUNDATION AIMS TO BECOME A CENTER FOR PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF THE ARTS AT LARGE. AT THE HEART OF THE FOUNDATION'S GOALS IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH. ALSO CENTRAL TO THE FOUNDATION'S MISSION IS SERVING YOUNGER ARTISTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST, STUDENTS, SCHOLARS, CURATORS, AND ART ENTHUSIASTS. AS A PARTNER TO BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL INITIATIVES, THE FOUNDATION'S RECENT ACTIVITIES INCLUDE HAVING SUPPORTED THE FOUNDING OF THE AWARD-WINNING MIDDLE EASTERN ARTS MAGAZINE BIDOUN, SUPPORT FOR LOCAL ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS THE ORGANIZATION OF A SERIES OF EXHIBITIONS OF SELECTED WORKS DRAWN FROM THE FARJAM COLLECTION.

THE
FARJAM
COLLECTION



THE FARJAM COLLECTION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE PRIVATELY-OWNED COLLECTIONS IN THE WORLD TODAY. FEATURING ISLAMIC AND PRE-ISLAMIC ART, CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE-EASTERN ART AND INTERNATIONAL MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, THE COLLECTION IS BORN OF A PASSION FOR ART, EXPLORATION AND TRAVEL, REFLECTING THE AFFINITIES AND TASTES OF A SEASONED COLLECTOR. THROUGH A TIMELESS JOURNEY INTO ART, IT EMBODIES THE FUSION OF CULTURES AND TRADITIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST. THE ISLAMIC SECTION OF THE COLLECTION SPANS THE ENTIRE HISTORY OF ISLAM, BRINGING TOGETHER ITEMS PRODUCED THROUGHOUT THE VAST REGION BETWEEN ANDALUSIA AND MUGHAL INDIA. ITS TREASURES INCLUDE QURANIC MANUSCRIPTS, MINIATURES AND ILLUSTRATED BOOKS ON SCIENCE, MATHEMATICS AND POETRY, AS WELL AS FINELY-DECORATED METALWORK, LACQUER, GLASSWORK, TILES, GLAZED POTTERY, WOODWORK, TEXTILES, COINS, JEWELRY, AND FINE CARPETS. THE MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY MIDDLE-EASTERN SECTION OF THE COLLECTION IS ONE OF THE FOREMOST COLLECTIONS OF ITS KIND INCLUDING PIVOTAL WORKS BY FARHAD MOSHIRI, MOHAMMAD EHSAEI, ABDUL QADER AL RAES AND AHMED MOUSTAFA TO NAME A FEW. FROM ESTABLISHED TO EMERGING AND CUTTING EDGE, THE ARTISTS FEATURED MIRROR THE RICH AND DYNAMIC MIDDLE-EASTERN ART SCENE. THE MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY SECTION OF THE COLLECTION INCLUDES MAJOR PIECES FROM THE IMPRESSIONIST, EXPRESSIONIST, MODERN, POP, MINIMAL AND CONCEPTUAL ART MOVEMENTS. ITS GROWING RANGE OF WORKS INCLUDES INTERNATIONAL MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY MASTERS SUCH AS PABLO PICASSO, HENRI MATISSE, GEORGES BRAQUE, PIERRE-AUGUSTE RENOIR, JOAN MIRO, FERNAND LEGER, ALBERTO GIACOMETTI, JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT, ANSELM KIEFER, ANISH KAPOOR AND GERHARD RICHTER. SELECTED WORKS FROM THE COLLECTION ARE ON VIEW FREE OF CHARGE TO THE PUBLIC THROUGH A SERIES OF CURATED EXHIBITIONS HELD AT THE FARJAM COLLECTION AT THE DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL CENTRE IN DUBAI (DIFC). A PROGRAMME OF EDUCATIONAL EVENTS OFFERS AUDIENCES THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORKS ON VIEW AND THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THEY WERE PRODUCED. THE FARJAM COLLECTION AT THE DIFC IS GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE HAFIZ FOUNDATION.



INTRODUCTION BY DR. FARHAD FARJAM

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ART OF CARPET WEAVING DURING SAFAVIDS



IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY, IRAN WAS UNITED UNDER THE RULE OF THE SAFAVID DYNASTY. THE SAFAVIDS DESCENDED FROM A LONG LINE OF SUFI SHEIKHS BASED IN ARDEBIL, IN NORTHWESTERN IRAN. THE FIRST OF THE SAFAVID KINGS WAS SHAH ISMAIL I. THE SAFAVID DYNASTY RULED FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS AND ITS PATRONAGE, SUPERVISION AND COMMODIFICATION OF THE ARTS AND ARTISANAL WORKS RESULTED IN AN ELEVATED EXECUTION OF DESIGN, WHICH TO THIS DAY REMAINS WIDELY SOUGHT AFTER BY IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE COLLECTIONS. THREE SAFAVID RULERS WERE SIGNIFICANTLY INVOLVED IN THE CULTIVATION OF THE ARTS ON STATE AS WELL AS PERSONAL LEVELS. SHAH ISMAIL I (R.1502-1524), HIS SON, SHAH TAHMASP I (R.1524-1576), AND HIS GREAT-GRANDSON, SHAH ABBAS I (R.1587-1629). SHAH TAHMASP WAS AN ACTIVE PATRON OF MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION, SHAHNAMEH FROM WHICH ILLUMINATIONS

THE MOST RENOWNED MANUSCRIPT IS HIS WERE WIDELY DISPERSED AND COPIED INTO CARPETS PRODUCED DURING HIS REIGN. SEVERAL OF THE MOST WELL RENOWNED SAFAVID CARPETS SUCH AS THE ARDEBIL CARPETS AND THE VIENNA SILK HUNTING CARPET WERE PRODUCED DURING THE REIGN OF SHAH TAHMASP I. SHAH ABBAS PERSONALLY INVESTED IN THE PRODUCTION OF CARPETS, NOTABLY BY THE DESIGN OF THE MOTIFS. IN THE LAST YEARS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, ISFAHAN BECAME THE NEW CAPITAL OF IRAN WHEN SHAH ABBAS I RELOCATED THE SAFAVID GOVERNMENT AS PART OF HIS GREATER SCHEME TO LIFT THE COUNTRY FROM TURMOIL. THROUGHOUT THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY, THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE SHAIBANIDS THREATENED THE SAFAVID DYNASTY. THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, SHAH ABBAS I CREATED A NEW STANDING ARMY AND SUCCESSFULLY ABATED THE OTTOMAN THREAT, BRINGING POLITICAL STABILITY TO HIS PEOPLE.

A FRAGMENTARY SAFAVID TILE, 17 TH CENTURY,
PROBABLY SHAH ABBAS PORTRAIT - THE FARJAM COLLECTION



IN HIS NEW CAPITAL, SHAH ABBAS I REINVENTED THE IMAGE OF A POLIS THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL PLANNING. HE BUILT A TWO-KILOMETER LONG BAZAAR CONNECTING THE OLD SELJUQ CENTER WITH THE MAIDAN-I SHAH, A TOWN SQUARE POSITIONED NEAR THE ZAINADA RIVER. THE MAIDAN-I SHAH WAS FRAMED BY FOUR STRUCTURES THAT PROPAGANDIZED THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE SAFAVID STATE - RELIGION, TRADE, THE MILITARY, AND MONARCHY. MURALS ATTESTED TO SHAH ABBAS' MILITARY PROWESS; THE MOSQUE OF THE SHEIKH LUTFALLAH AND THE SHAH MOSQUE PROVIDED PLACES FOR WORSHIP; AND ALI QAPU WAS A TWO-STORY AUDIENCE HALL FOR THE PUBLIC. HIS EFFORTS IN TRANSFORMING CARPET WEAVING FROM A NOMADIC ENTERPRISE TO A NATIONAL INDUSTRY SECURED NOT ONLY GLOBAL APPRECIATION FOR THE ARTS OF IRAN BUT ALSO PROVIDED ECONOMIC STABILITY TO THE DYNASTY. ROYAL AND STATE WORKSHOPS WERE ESTABLISHED AND HIGHLY SKILLED CARPET WEAVERS PRODUCED CARPETS FOR THE PALACE AND MOSQUES OF THE SHAH AS WELL AS LOCAL AND FOREIGN CONSUMPTION.

THE ECONOMIC STABILITY RESULTING FROM SHAH ABBAS' COMMODIFICATION OF THE ARTS OF IRAN DEVELOPED A NEW CLASS OF PATRONS. THE WEALTHY ARMENIAN MERCHANTS WHO MONOPOLIZED THE EXPORTATION OF IRANIAN SILKS AND THE INFLUX OF FOREIGN TRAVELERS TO IRAN NOW ENGAGED IN THE PURCHASE OF ART. THE SALE OF BEAUTIFUL CARPETS AND MANUSCRIPTS WAS NO LONGER LIMITED TO EXTERNAL HOUSES OF NOBILITY. IN ADDITION, ARTISTS WERE NO LONGER DEPENDENT ON THE ROYAL WORKSHOP FOR EMPLOYMENT AND, WITH THE CLOSE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY AND THE SAFAVID ERA, CARPET WEAVERS AND ARTISTS FOUND GAINFUL SELF-EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRIVATE COMMERCIAL SECTOR. SHAH ABBAS I PROMOTED THE TEXTILE INDUSTRIES OF IRAN TO NEIGHBORING MONARCHS AND FOREIGN DIGNITARIES THROUGH AMBASSADORIAL GIFTS, AND ESTABLISHED COMMERCIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS WITH EUROPEAN NATIONS. COMMERCIAL EXPORTS OF CARPETS WERE TRANSPORTED BY THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY AS FAR AS JAKARTA, SRI LANKA, MALAYSIA, KOCHI, INDIA AND EVEN HOLLAND. APART FROM THE ARTS OF THE LOOM, SHAH ABBAS I IMMIGRATED THREE HUNDRED CHINESE POTTERS TO IRAN TO PRODUCE CHINESE CERAMICS THAT WERE FASHIONABLE AT THE TIME, AS WELL AS ARMENIANS WHO WERE IN CONTROL OF MUCH OF THE SILK TRADE AND NEGOTIATED A MONOPOLY WITH THEM ON SILK EXPORTS FROM IRAN. AS AN ACTIVE PATRON OF MINIATURE PAINTING AND ILLUMINATIONS, SHAH ABBAS I REESTABLISHED THE ROYAL PAINTING ATELIER AND HAD THE FIFTEENTH-CENTURY TIMURID MANUSCRIPT MANTIQ ALTAIR, THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIRDS, REFURBISHED; FOUR PAINTINGS WERE ADDED AND THE MANUSCRIPT PRESENTED TO THE SHRINE AT ARDABIL IN 1609. HIS REIGN FOSTERED THE CAREERS OF SUCH ARTISTS AS RIZA, SADIQI, ALI RIZA TABRIZI, AND MIR IMAD.



SHAH ABBAS I, ENTERTAINING VALI MUHAMMAD KHAN. CEILING FRESKO AT CHEHEL SOTOON, ISFAHAN, LATE 16 TH CENTURY

THE POPULARITY OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SAFAVID CARPETS IS EVIDENCED BY THE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES FOUND IN EUROPEAN HOUSES OF NOBILITY AND COLLECTIONS. ROUGHLY TWO THOUSAND CARPETS AND FRAGMENTS SURVIVE FROM THE SAFAVID TIME AND MANY OF THEM ARE CONSIDERED AMONGST THE MOST VALUABLE ARTWORKS IN INSTITUTIONS WITH ISLAMIC ART COLLECTIONS SUCH AS THE BRITISH MUSEUM, THE HERMITAGE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM OF ART, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART. THE CARPET DESIGNS THAT FOUND PARTICULAR POPULARITY WITH THE EUROPEAN MARKET IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY WERE THE POLONAISE, VASE AND HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS. THE TASTES OF THE EUROPEAN MARKET LARGELY DICTATED THE DESIGN OF THE CARPETS. POLONAISE CARPETS, BY FAR THE MOST WIDELY EXPORTED PRODUCT, HAVE PALE COLOUR PALETTES AND SUMPTUOUS CONSTRUCTIONS WITH SILK AND METALLIC THREADING. MANY EXTANT EXAMPLES BEAR THE COAT OF ARMS OF EUROPEAN NOBILITY AND WERE DIRECT COMMISSIONS BY THESE ROYAL HOUSES TO THE CARPET WORKSHOPS IN ISFAHAN AND OTHER PRODUCTION CENTERS. THE SAFAVIDS, BY ORDERING THEIR MOST TALENTED PAINTERS TO ENGAGE IN THE DESIGN OF RUGS, STANDARDIZED THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BALANCE IN COMPOSITION AND ELEVATED THE STANDARDS OF SAFAVID ART AND WEAVING TO ITS VERY PEAK OF EXECUTION. SAFAVID ERA CARPET DESIGN REMAINS TO THIS DAY THE INFLUENCE, IF NOT THE BASIS, OF ALL CARPET DESIGNS PRODUCED IN IRAN.



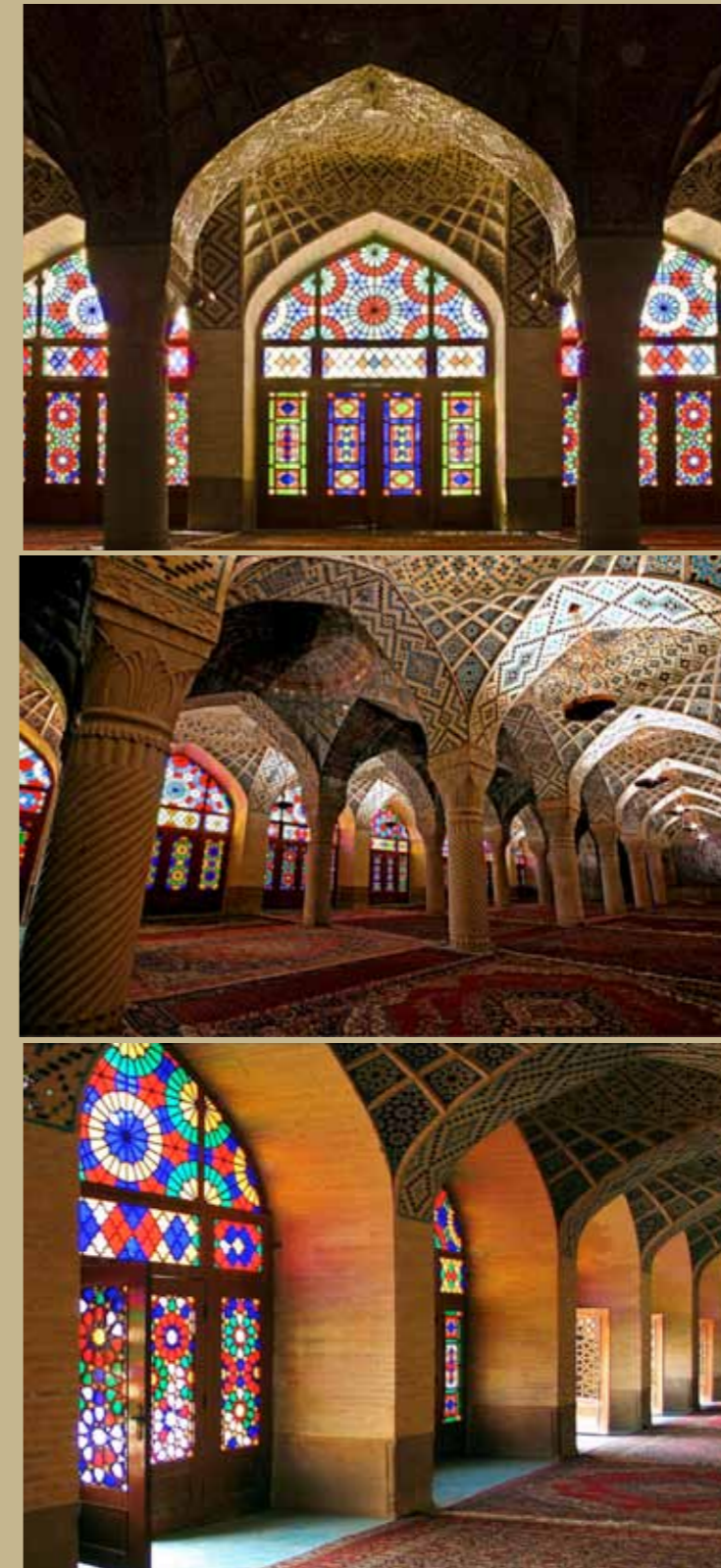
THE ROLE OF THE CARPET IN DAILY LIFE

WHEN GLANCING UPON THE BREATHTAKING BEAUTY OF A SAFAVID CARPET, ONE'S MIND BEGINS TO DRIFT TOWARDSTHESPACESOCCUPIEDBYTHESEMAGNIFICENT FLOOR COVERINGS AND THOSE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE ENJOYED DAILY INTERACTION WITH THEM. HOW WERE THESE INTRICATELY DECORATED OBJECTS INCORPORATED INTO A ROOM? WHAT BALANCE EXISTED BETWEEN THE DENSE DESIGN OF THE CARPET, THE ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR FURNISHINGS? AND MOST NOTABLY, WHY DO MIDDLE EASTERN CULTURES PLACE SUCH SIGNIFICANCE ONTO FLOOR COVERINGS?



THE CARPET IS DEEPLY ENGRAINED IN THE HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE, WITHIN THEIR HOMES AND LIVES. NEWBORNS IN THIS REGION OF THE WORLD TAKE THEIR FIRST STEPS UPON THE PILED FIBERS OF A CARPET. EVEN BEFORE ENCOUNTERING A PLANT IN NATURE, THEIR EXPERIENCE OF FLORA IS FORMED WHILE PLAYING UPON THESE VIVIDLY SATURATED WOVEN GARDENS. INTERIOR DESIGN AND FURNISHINGS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO THE IMPORTANCE OF CARPETS. THE ARCHITECTURAL FRAMEWORK OF A HOUSE CENTERS THE CARPET UNLIKE IN WESTERN ARCHITECTURE, THE ROOMS IN AN ISLAMIC HOME DO NOT HAVE A DEFINED PURPOSE. THERE IS NO DESIGNATED SPACE IN WHICH TO DINE, ENTERTAIN, SLEEP, OR STUDY. INSTEAD, EACH ROOM WILL FULFILL THE NEED AS IT ARISES. UNDESIGNATED LIVING SUCH AS THIS IS ONLY POSSIBLE WHEN THE INTERIOR FURNISHINGS OF EACH ROOM CAN BE INTERCHANGED TO SUIT THE REQUIRED NEED IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER. THE FURNISHINGS OF THE HOME ARE THEREFORE TWODIMENSIONAL AND PORTABLE WITH THE ONLY CONSTANT IN INTERIOR FURNISHING BEING THE CARPET. AS THE PRIMARY FURNISHING IN A ROOM, GUESTS AND INHABITANTS SIT DIRECTLY UPON THE CARPET AND REST AGAINST CUSHIONS THAT LINE THE WALLS OF THE ROOM. AT THE HOUR OF DINING, A SOFREH (SILK OR COTTON BASED FABRIC UPON WHICH DISHES ARE SET) IS LAID UPON THE CARPET AND GUESTS GATHER ROUND TO ENJOY THEIR MEAL. UPON COMPLETION, THE SOFREH IS CLEARED AND THE CARPET REMAINS TO SERVE A DIFFERENT PURPOSE. AS THE MOST INFLUENTIAL DECORATIVE FOCAL POINT. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ATTEMPTS TO MIMIC CARPET DESIGN BY HARNESSING THE ELABORATELY COLOURED LIGHT THAT SPILLS THROUGH STAINED GLASS WINDOWS AND COVERS THE ROSETTE MOULDINGS OF THE WALLS AND CEILING. UPON ENTERING A ROOM, GUESTS ARE CONFRONTED WITH A MESMERIZING SYMPHONY OF PATTERN, LIGHT AND COLOUR.

IN THE EVENING, MATTRESS PADS ARE UNROLLED AND SLEEPING QUARTERS ARE PREPARED. THE FOLLOWING MORNING, THE PADS ARE ROLLED UP AND THE LINENS PLACED AWAY AND ANOTHER DAY OF LIVING WITH INTERCHANGEABLE ROOMS UNFOLDS. PRAYERS OCCUR ON A SAJADEH, A MAT WITH THE FORM OF A MEHRABI FOR WHICH ONES HEAD CAN REST, LAID DIRECTLY OVER THE CARPET SURFACE. AS THE CARPET IS UTILIZED IN EVERY ASPECT OF DAILY LIFE, IT IS IMPERATIVE IT REMAINS IN A CLEAN STATE. THEREFORE, PEOPLE ARE PROHIBITED FROM WALKING WITH SHOES ON THE CARPET TO AVOID THE TRANSPORTATION OF DIRT ONTO THE CARPETS. THROUGHOUT HISTORY, THE ROLE OF THE CARPET HAS INCREASINGLY GAINED IMPORTANCE IN DAILY LIFE IRRESPECTIVE OF SOCIAL STANDING. AT THE ROYAL COURT, KINGS TOOK PRIDE IN THE PRODUCTION AND OWNERSHIP OF THESE PRECIOUS CARPETS AND THE ABILITY TO SEND THIS LUXURIOUS COURT ART AS DIPLOMATIC GIFTS TO FOREIGN HOUSES OF NOBILITY. ORDINARY PEOPLE VIEWED THE CARPET AS A STATUS SYMBOL, A SIGN OF WEALTH AND TASTE, AND THEY WERE CONSIDERED THE FOREMOST OBJECT OF A DOWRY. INTERESTINGLY, EVEN IN IRAN TODAY, THE MOST FREQUENTLY STOLEN ITEM OF A BURGLED HOME IS THE CARPET, EVIDENCING THEIR ECONOMICAL IMPORTANCE AS A FAMILY ASSET. MINIATURES DATING FROM THE SAFAVID PERIOD PROVIDE A FIRST HAND SOURCE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE WAY CARPETS WERE UTILIZED IN THAT ERA.



INTERIOR OF «NASIR AL MOLK - SHIRAZ, IRAN



D-8

MINIATURE, ROYAL BANQUET
 16TH CENTURY AD, 10TH CENTURY AH
 28 CM X 16.5 CM

THIS BEAUTIFUL MINIATURE FROM A BOOK OF SAFAVID POETRY DEPICTS A ROYAL BANQUET SET IN A GARDEN. A KING AND HIS QUEEN SIT IN FRONT OF ROYAL TENTS SURROUNDED BY ATTENDANTS AND MUSICIANS. TWO CARPETS ARE PICTURED IN THIS MINIATURE. THE FIRST HAS A BLACK AND GOLD BORDER OF ISLIMI BANDING AND A ROSE FIELD. THE OTHER CARPET, ON WHICH THE QUEEN RESTS, HAS A CRIMSON BORDER, ALSO FILLED WITH ISLIMI DESIGN, AND A MAUVE INTERIOR OF SCATTERED FLORALS. A SIMILAR ISLIMI FORM IS NOTICEABLE ON THE TEXTILES USED FOR THE TENTS. IN PERSIAN MINIATURES, THE CARPET PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE WHENEVER PERSIANS WISHED TO COMMUNE WITH NATURE. THE CARPET WAS SIMPLY UNROLLED ONTO THE GROUND AND ACTED AS A PLEASANT PLACE TO ENJOY A DAY OUTDOORS. THIS HABIT STILL EXISTS IN IRAN TODAY.



D-214

LAYLA STRIKES IBN SALAM

1560 AD
GOUACHE HEIGHTENED WITH GOLD ON PAPER
21.3 CM X 16.2 CM

THIS MINIATURE ILLUSTRATES THE STORY OF LAYLA AND MAJNOON FROM THE POET NIZAMI. IN THIS PICTURE, THE NEWLY WED LAYLA STRIKES THE GROOM, IBN SALAM, CAUSING HIM TO FALL OFF THE BED. THE CARPET DEPICTED CONSISTS OF AN INTERNAL FIELD OF CLOUD BANDS BORDERED IN WHITE WITH REPEATING ROSETTES. THIS MINIATURE PROVIDES A VIVID EXAMPLE OF THE HARMONY CAPABLE BETWEEN THE CARPET AND TILE DESIGN. ALSO DEPICTED IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF A ROOM INTO A BEDCHAMBER BY THE UNROLLING OF MATTRESSES. AS WAS CUSTOMARY IN PERSIAN MINIATURES, THE OBJECTS ARE REPRESENTED BY THEIR BEST ANGLE AND THEIR DEPICTIONS ARE NOT DICTATED BY PERSPECTIVE.



D-214

**JAMAL AL-DIN ABU MUHAMMAD
NIZAMI: KHAMSA**

1539 AD
29 CM

A KING IS DEPICTED IN HIS ROYAL TENT SITTING ATOP A MEDALLION CARPET. IN THIS ROYAL BANQUET, THE KING HAS EITHER A MINISTER OR ANOTHER RULER IN HIS COMPANY WHO SITS ON A SMALL CHAIR IN FRONT OF THE KING. AS THE GUEST DOES NOT SIT ATOP THE CARPET OF THE KING, ONE CAN ASSUME HE WAS A LOWER RANKING OFFICIAL AND IS THEREFORE NOT GIVEN THE PRIVILEGE OF SITTING ON A CARPET. SIMILAR ISLIMI DESIGNS FOR TEXTILES WITHIN THE TENT ARE ALSO USED IN THE PATTERN OF THE AWNING.

A-167

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT IN NASTA'LIQ SCRIPT

HATIFI - LAYLA WA MAJNUN

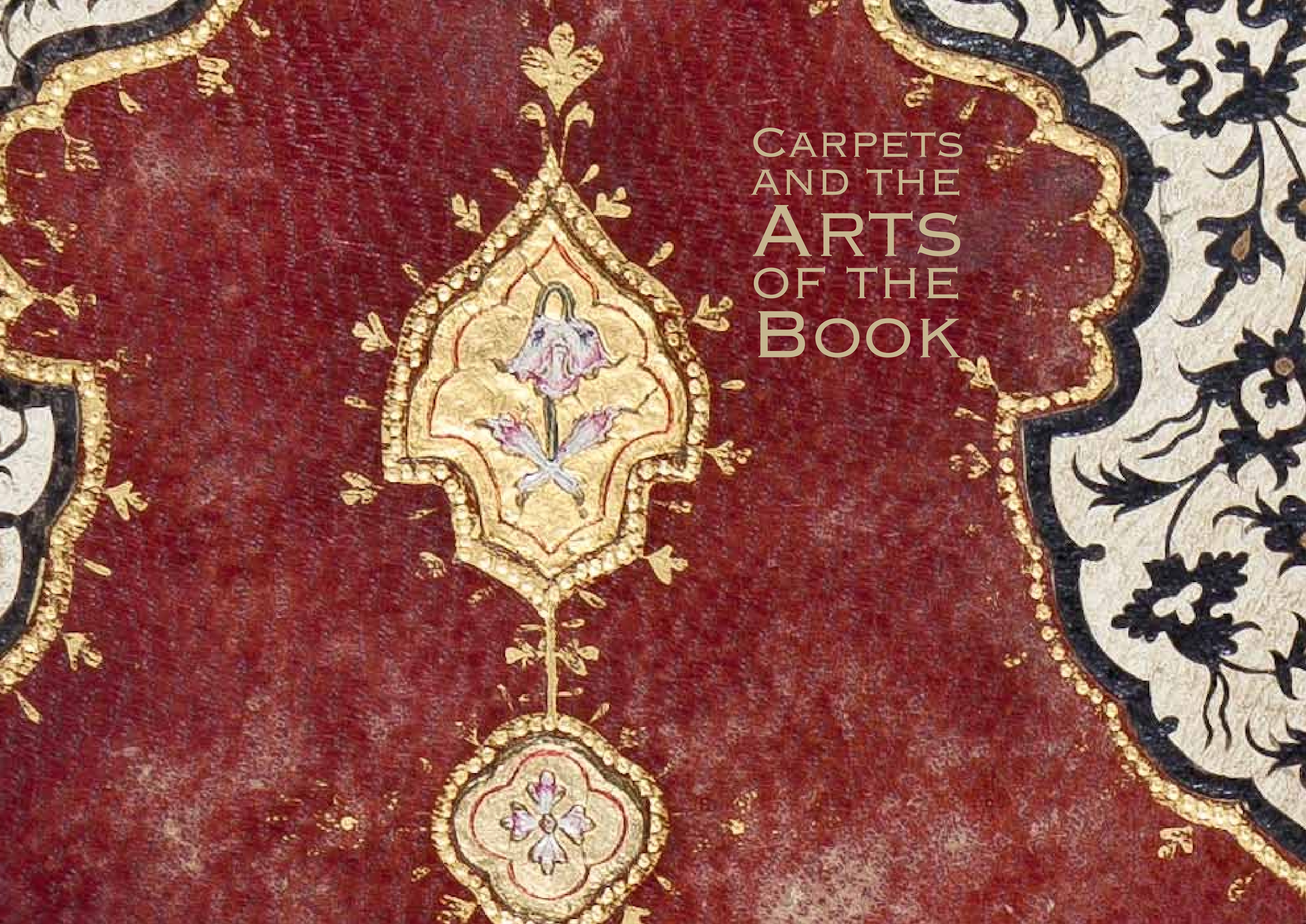
917 AH / 1511 AD

24 x 16CM

ABDULLAH HATIFI DIED IN 927/1520-21. HE WAS THE NEPHEW OF 'ABD AL-RAHMAN JAMI AND MUCH RESPECTED BY THE TIMURID SULTAN HUSAYN MIRZA BAYQARA AND HIS MINISTER MIR 'ALISHIR. THE SAFAVID SHAH ISMA'IL MET HATIFI ON HIS WAY TO FIGHT THE UZBEKS IN 917/1511-12, AND ASKED HIM TO WRITE A BOOK ON THE ROYAL VICTORIES, WHICH HE NEVER COMPLETED. HE WAS ALSO A FRIEND OF THE PAINTER BEHZAD. THE COLOPHON OF THIS MANUSCRIPT STATES THAT IT WAS COPIED BY SULTAN 'ALI IN 917/1511-12, AND THAT HE WROTE IT IN HASTE. CONSIDERING THIS DATE AND HATIFI'S CONNECTION WITH THE TIMURID COURT IN HERAT, THIS MUST BE THE FAMOUS SULTAN 'ALI AL-MASHHADI. THE FIRST MINIATURE ILLUSTRATES LAYLA AND MAJNUN AT SCHOOL TOGETHER, THE SECOND IS OF MAJNUN IN THE WILDERNESS.

IN THIS CLASSROOM SCENE, ALSO FROM LAYLA AND MAJNOON, THE PRIVILEGED SOUL WHO SITS ATOP A CARPET IS THE TUTOR, WHILE THE STUDENTS SIT ON THE BARE FLOOR. WHEN A PERSON IS DEPICTED ON A CARPET IT EMPHASIZES THE HIERARCHY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE INDIVIDUALS.





CARPETS
AND THE
ARTS
OF THE
BOOK

CARPETS AND THE ARTS OF THE BOOK

THE ART OF THE BOOK AND THAT OF THE CARPET ARE DIVERGENT IN TERMS OF TECHNIQUE. THOUGH THE ESSENTIAL FORMS AND ORNAMENTATION AVAILABLE TO CARPET DESIGNERS WERE THE SAME AS THOSE AVAILABLE TO THE DRAUGHTSMAN, METAL ENGRAVER, TILE WORKER, AND PLASTER MOLDER, THE MODE OF CARPET WEAVING PRESENTS HURDLES WHICH THE OTHER ARTS NEED NOT ACCOUNT FOR. A CARPET DESIGNER IS LIMITED BY THE WIDTH AND COLOURING OF HIS THREADS WHICH GREATLY AFFECTS THE FINAL ORNAMENTATION. EVEN SO, THERE ARE MANY REMARKABLY VIVID AND FINELY EXECUTED CARPETS WITH UNDENIABLE STYLISTIC PARALLELS BETWEEN PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND ELABORATE MOTIFS TO ILLUMINATIONS, BOOKBINDINGS AND MINIATURES OF THE SAFAVID ERA. EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY WORKS OF ART SHOW A DIRECT CORRELATION OF THE ARTS OF THE BOOK AND THOSE OF THE LOOM. TEXTILE DESIGNS OF THE EARLY SAFAVID PERIOD LOOKED FIRST TO THE TIMURID MINIATURE PAINTERS OF HERAT TO INSPIRE THEIR COMPOSITIONS. CENTRALIZED DESIGNS AND INTERLACED COMPARTMENTS, POPULAR COMPOSITIONS IN EARLY SAFAVID CARPETS, WERE PREVALENT IN MINIATURES OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY. IN SIXTEENTH CENTURY PICTORIAL CARPETS, THE ARRANGEMENT OF FIGURES OCCUPYING COMPARTMENTS IN THE FIELD AND SCENES OF ANIMALS IN COMBAT WERE DIRECTLY ADAPTED FOR USE ON MANY CARPETS FROM ROYAL ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE COURT OF SHAH TAHMASB I. THE DELICATELY SCATTERED FLORAL PATTERNS OF CARPETS DEPICTED IN MINIATURES AND REFLECTED TASTES OF THE BOOK IN THE MOTIFS OF THE CARPETS SUGGEST THE ROYAL WORKSHOPS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES MUST CERTAINLY HAVE PROVIDED A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP WHERE THE ARTISTS OF THE BOOK AND THOSE OF THE CARPET REGULARLY INTERCHANGED THEMES. IN FACT, IT IS PLAUSIBLE THAT THE NAQSHBAND AND THE MINIATURE PAINTER MAY HAVE BEEN ONE IN THE SAME. THE TRANSFER OF MOTIFS BETWEEN THE ARTS OF THE SAFAVID COURT IS PERFECTLY ILLUSTRATED IN VARIOUS ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS, MINIATURE PAINTINGS AND BOOKBINDINGS IN THE FARJAM COLLECTION.



A-118

PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT NASTALIQ SCRIPT
 HAKIM ABDUL QASEM FERDOWSI, SHANAMEH
 SAFAVID, 1590 AD

THIS BEAUTIFULLY COLOURED MANUSCRIPT PAGE VIVIDLY EXEMPLIFIES THE CENTRAL MEDALLION DESIGN FORM. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE TWO RECTANGLES WHICH CLOSELY RESEMBLE CARPET DESIGN WITH AN INTERIOR FIELD OF SCATTERED FLORAL ORNAMENTS INTERWOVEN BY BANDS AND A MAIN BORDER OF GEOMETRIC CABLED FORM, HAS A CENTRAL MEDALLION OF CARTOUCHE FORM, AND THE BANDS TO EITHER SIDE OF THE SCRIPT CONTAIN VERTICAL MULTI-MEDALLION LOZENGES.





A-122

COLLECTION OF POEMS
MONEM AL DIN AL OHADI
TIMURID, 15TH CENTURY AD
18 CM X 8 CM

THE INTERIOR FIELD OF THIS
MANUSCRIPT PAGE CONSISTS OF
A LOBED GOLDEN QUATREFOIL
MEDALLION AND CORNER FIELDS
WITH A COBALT GROUND OF
DELICATE FLORALS BLOOMING
FORTH FROM ISLIMI BANDS.



A-139

**PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT ON POLISHED
CREAM PAPER**

NUR AL-DIN ABD AL-RAHMAN JAMI
EARLY SAFAVID, 1509 AD
15.4 CM X 8.3 CM

BORDER COMPOSITION AND ITS SUBSEQUENT DESIGN EVOLUTION IS EVIDENT IN THIS EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPT PAGE WITH ITS MAIN BORDER OF REPEATING IRIS FORMS WITH ALTERNATING INTERIOR PETAL COLOURINGS INTERWOVEN WITH ELEGANT TRACERY. IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION, AND IN PARTICULAR THE LALEHABBASI PALMETTE REPLACED THE IRIS AS THE PRIMARY FORM OF EMBELLISHMENT IN THE MAIN BORDER.



A-137

PRAYER BOOK

COPIED BY AHMAD AL-NAYRIZI
OR A CLOSE FOLLOWER
SAFAVID, 1708 AD
26 CM X 16.5 CM

THIS PRAYER BOOK COVER'S CENTRAL EMBLEM
AND PENDANTS, QUARTERED MOTIFS IN THE FIELD
CORNERS, AND REPEATING CARTOUCHE BORDER, IS
DIRECTLY REMINISCENT OF A MEDALLION CARPET.





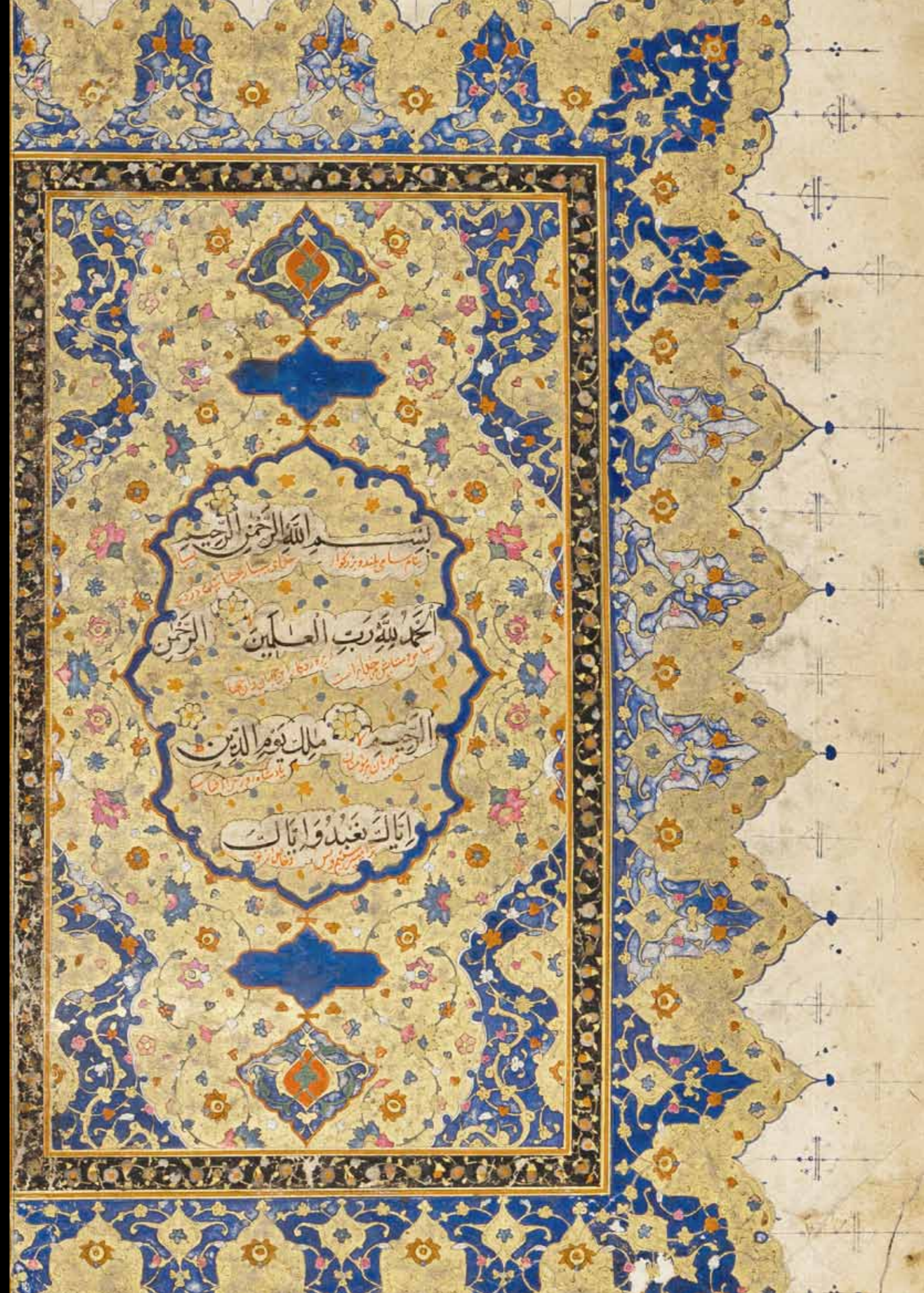
B-5

QURAN

1534 AD

30 CM X 25 CM

A LARGE GOLDEN LOBED LOZENGE INTERIOR WITH A FIELD OF DELICATELY INTERWOVEN FLORAL ORNAMENTS HAS A CENTRAL EIGHT-POINTED BADGE CONTAINING SCRIPT. FROM ITS VERTICAL ENDS HANG TWO A CARTOUCHES AND FLORAL EMBLEMED LOZENGES. THE MINOR BORDER IS COMPOSED OF A CONTINUOUS VINE OF BLOOMS, REMINISCENT OF MINOR BORDER COMPOSITION ON MANY CARPETS.





D-220

**A LARGE ILLUMINATED FRONTISPIECE
OF A MANUSCRIPT OF PERSIAN POETRY**

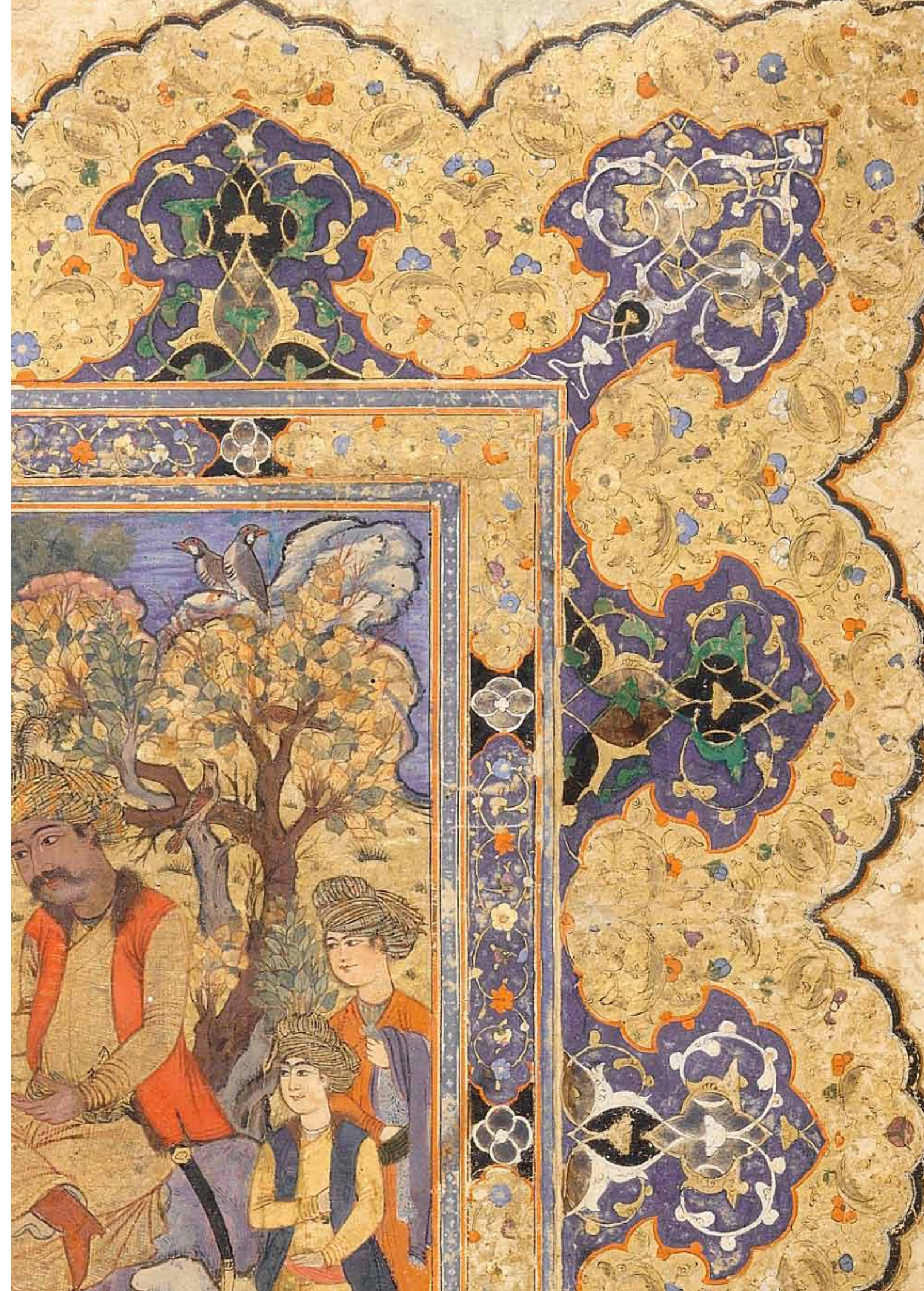
PROBABLY FIRDAUSI'S SHAHNAME

1650 AD

GOUACHE WITH THE USE OF GOLD ON PAPER

37 CM X 21 CM

GRACEFUL ISLIMI BANDS INTERTWINE TO CREATE DELICATE FLEUR-DE-LIS FORMS WHICH ARE CENTERED WITH LALEHABBASI PALMETTES OF ALTERNATING COLOURS IN THE FIELD OF THE EXTERNAL MAIN BORDER. THE INTERIOR BORDER IS COMPOSED OF ALTERNATING CARTOUCHES OF SCATTERED FLORAL PATTERNS ON GOLD OR DEEP INDIGO GROUND LINKED BY ROSETTES.





D-155

AN ALLEGORICAL MINIATURE
SAFAVID SHIRAZ, SOUTH IRAN,
16TH CENTURY AD
17 CM X 9.5 CM

PICTORIAL SCENES FILLED THE FIELD OF SAFAVID CARPETS IN THE EARLY SIXTEENTH CENTURY. THE SCENES, AS IN MINIATURE PAINTINGS, POSSESS SINGLE DIRECTIONALITY. THIS ALLEGORICAL SCENE IS BORDERED BY AN OVER SCALED INDIGO BORDER OF RED SCROLLING ISLAMIS, EACH DETAILED IN THE INTERIOR WITH BLACK CLOUD BANDS. THE PLAQUE CENTERED AT THE TOP OF THE MINIATURE DETAILS A CARPET OF MEDALLION FORM WITH ALTERNATING CARTOUCHE AND ROUNDEL FORM.

GARDENS OF PARADISE IN SAFAVID CARPET DESIGN

FIN GARDEN - KASHAN, IRAN





WHETHER IT IS THE ABILITY FOR SELF REFLECTION ONE ALWAYS SEEMS CONFRONTED WITH WHEN WALKING THROUGH COLONNADES OF TREES, OR THE ROMANTICISM IMBUED IN DIMLY LIT CORNERS OF TALL SHRUBBERY, THIS VERDURE REALM HAS ENCHANTED FOR CENTURIES. THE DESIRE TO HARNESS NATURE FOR PERSONAL ENJOYMENT, TO INSTILL A CONTROLLED, ORDERLY REIGN OVER NATURE HAS INFLUENCED AND INTRIGUED MANKIND, AND IN PARTICULAR THE RULERS OF IRAN, FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. IN 540 BC, CYRUS THE GREAT BUILT IN HIS CAPITAL PASARGADAE, THE LARGEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL GARDEN COMPOSED OF A RECTILINEAR WALLED ORCHARD WITH PAVILIONS THAT OPENED THROUGH LOGGIAS ON FOUR SIDES AND NAMED IT 'PARADAIZA'. THIS NAME IS DERIVED FROM THE AVESTAN AND OLD PERSIAN WORDS FOR A WALLED-AROUND. XENOPHON, THE FIFTH CENTURY BC GREEK HISTORIAN, TRANSLATED THE PERSIAN WORD INTO 'PARADEISOI'.

HASHT BEHESHT GARDEN - ISFAHAN, IRAN



IN HEBREW, 'PARDES', OR PARADISE, HAS BEEN USED AS A SYNONYM FOR THE GARDEN OF EDEN. THE GARDEN OF EDEN HAS A CENTRAL POINT FROM WHICH FOUR RIVERS FLOW. IT FOLLOWS, INTERESTINGLY, THAT THE ARABIC WORD FOR PARADISE, FIRDAUS, ALSO MEANS 'GARDEN' AND THE QUR'AN DESCRIBES PARADISE AS A LUXURIANT GREEN GARDEN WHERE ONE CAN ENCOUNTER DELIGHTFUL SHADE UNDER TREES WHOSE BRANCHES BEAR SWEETLY SCENTED BLOSSOM AND DELICIOUS RIPE FRUIT AND FERTILE GROUNDS REplete WITH STREAMS OF WATER, MILK AND HONEY. IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, HAFIZ PRAISED THE BOUNTIFUL GARDENS OF SHIRAZ AND 'THE ROSE GARDEN', WRITTEN BY THE PERSIAN POET SADI, SPOKE OF THE ETERNAL JOYS PROVIDED BY A ROSE GARDEN AND NOTED FORMAL CONCERNS FOR A GARDEN, STATING 'THIS DENSELY WOODED GROVE SHOULD, LIKE PARADISE, BE DIVIDED INTO EIGHT PARTS IN ORDER THAT IT MAY BECOME THE LESS LIKELY TO FATIGUE.' THE RECTANGULAR PLAN OF THE GARDEN, ITS SYMMETRICAL DIVISION INTO DISTINCT QUADRANTS BY IRRIGATION CHANNELS, WAS EMPLOYED IN THE GARDEN AT PASARGADAE OF CYRUS THE GREAT AND IS STILL MAINTAINED IN FAMOUS GARDENS, SUCH AS THOSE OF THE VERSAILLES AND THE TAJ MAHAL, TO THIS DAY. AS BEAUTIFUL OBJECTS BEARING ORNAMENTATION DERIVED FROM PLANT SHAPES AND REFLECTIONS OF A LUSH EARTH WERE REMINISCENT TO THE VIEWER OF THE

PARADISE WHICH AWAITED THEM, IT IS LITTLE WONDER THAT GARDEN AND FLORAL ORNAMENTATION FOUND THEIR PLACE IN CARPET DESIGN. THE FIRST RECORD OF THE GARDEN DESIGN ON A CARPET DATES FROM THE SIXTH CENTURY AD, AT THE CTESIPHON PALACE OF THE SASANIAN KING KHOSROW I (R. 531-579). CARPETS THAT INCLUDE A STYLIZED REPRESENTATION OF A GARDEN ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS 'PARADISE PARK'. CHARACTERISTICALLY, THESE CARPETS FOLLOW THE TRADITIONAL CHAHR BAGH PLAN OF BOUNDARY WALLS AND INTERIOR PATHWAYS, INTERSECTING WATERCOURSES THAT CREATE FOUR EQUALLY SIZED QUADRANTS, WHICH ARE FURTHER DIVIDED INTO PARCELS THAT CONTAIN ALTERNATELY FLOWERBEDS AND PLANE TREES. THE SPECIES OF FLORA EMPLOYED IN THE EMBELLISHMENTS OF SAFAVID CARPETS EVOKE NOT ONLY THE RICHNESS OF NATURE, BUT ALSO MAY ALLUDE TO THEMES OF PARADISE. CYPRESS TREES PLAYED A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE DESIGN OF IRANIAN GARDENS AND HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH FUNERARY RITES. THE LOTUS PALMETTES ARE SYMBOLS OF THE SUN, OF CREATION AND REBIRTH. ROSETTES BEAR MULTIPLE ICONOGRAPHIES; CELESTIAL CONNECTIONS, ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE TREE OF LIFE, AND EVEN DEATH. CARPETS WHICH BEAR AN OVERALL DESIGN CONSISTING OF VEGETAL ORNAMENTATION MAY ALSO BE TERMED AS GARDEN CARPETS AND AS A RESULT, MANY SCHOLARS HAVE DEEMED HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS AS GARDEN VARIETY.

MEDALION CARPETS

MEDALLION CARPETS ARE THOSE ORGANIZED AROUND CENTRAL EMBLEM, WHICH MAY TAKE MANY FORMS. THE MEDALLION CAN BE A STAR SHAPE, WITH FOUR TO SIXTEEN POINTS; A ROUNDEL, VARIOUS EXAMPLES HAVE PINCHED BORDERS CREATING SIXTEEN LOBES; OGIVAL OR LOZENGE SHAPED. ONE MEDALLION CAN OCCUPY THE CENTER OF THE FIELD, IN A COMPACT OR OVERSIZED MANNER, OR MANY SMALLER MEDALLIONS MAY REPEAT VERTICALLY THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF A CARPET. THE CONTOURS OF THE MEDALLION MAY BE ANGULAR OR FLUID AND THE ORNAMENTATION OF THE FIELD EITHER HIGHLY STYLIZED OR DELICATELY RENDERED. THIS FREEDOM OF DESIGN, THE ABILITY OF THE CARPET DESIGNER TO RENDER NOT MERELY ONE FIELD AS IMPORTANT BUT TO PLAY WITH VARIOUS FIELDS AND DECIPHER HOW TO CREATE HARMONY WITHIN THE COMPOSITION, ACCOUNTS FOR THE VARYING THEMES FOUND ON EXTANT MEDALLION CARPETS. THE FIELD DESIGN MAY CONSIST PURELY OF SCROLLING VINES AND SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION, EMPLOY COMPARTMENTALIZED EMBELLISHMENT, OR CARRY PICTORIAL MOTIFS SUCH AS TREES AND HUNTING SCENES. MEDALLION CARPETS OFTEN HAVE QUARTERED DESIGNS IN THE CORNERS OF THE FIELD WHICH REPLICATE THE CENTRAL MEDALLION FORM, THOUGH THIS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE AS CAN BE OBSERVED IN THE FARJAM COLLECTION MEDALLION CARPET. THE MOST RENOWNED OF SAFAVID CARPETS IS A

MEDALLION CARPET PRESENTLY IN THE COLLECTION OF THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM TITLED THE ARDEBIL CARPET. A SECOND RELATIVELY IDENTICAL CARPET IS IN THE COLLECTION OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MUSEUM OF ART. IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED THAT SHAH TAHMASP COMMISSIONED THE ARDEBIL CARPETS AS THE DECORATIVE STYLE DIRECTLY CORRELATES WITH THAT OF THE TAHMASPI SHAHNAMEH. THE CENTRAL MEDALLION OF THE ARDEBIL CARPET IS ELABORATED BY THE ADDITION OF A PENDANT FORM ON EACH OF THE SIXTEEN POINTS, AND TWO FURTHER HANGING LAMPS EXTENDING LONGITUDINALLY. EXQUISITELY RENDERED, THE FIELD DECORATION IS BALANCED BILATERALLY AND TRANSVERSELY, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF TWO HANGING LAMPS OF SLIGHTLY DIFFERING SIZE, OFTEN THOUGHT TO BE AN ATTEMPT AT PERSPECTIVE, AS WELL AS THE IVORY CARTOUCHE CONTAINING A COUPLET BY THE PERSIAN POET HAFEZ AND A SIGNATURE. "I HAVE NO REFUGE IN THE WORLD OTHER THAN THY THRESHOLD. MY HEAD HAS NO PROTECTION OTHER THAN THIS PORCHWAY. THE WORK OF THE SLAVE OF THIS HOLY PLACE, MAKSOD [MAQSUD] OF KASHAN IN THE YEAR 942 [1535]." ALTHOUGH THERE IS SOME DEBATE AMONGST SCHOLARS PLACING THIS RUG CLOSER TO 1539-1540, IT APPEARS TO BE THE OLDEST SURVIVING DATED EXAMPLE OF A PERSIAN CARPET. THE MEDALLION CARPET PRESERVED IN THE FARJAM COLLECTION IS A WONDERFUL EXAMPLE OF A HIGHLY STYLIZED AND GEOMETRIC MEDALLION CARPET COMPOSITION.

P-474

A NORTHWEST PERSIAN MEDALLION CARPET

17TH CENTURY AD

650 CM X 240 CM

THE CENTRAL MEDALLION CONSISTS OF EIGHT MULTI-POINTED STAR MEDALLIONS OF DECREASING SIZE PLACED ONE INSIDE THE OTHER WITH VARYING GROUND COLOURS AND DECORATIVE MOTIFS. THE LARGE SCALE OF THE FINAL MEDALLION RIM ENCROACHES UPON THE INTERIOR MINOR BORDER AND SEPARATING LINE, THEREBY CREATING THE APPEARANCE THE MEDALLION IS FLOATING ABOVE THE FLORAL NETWORK OF THE FIELD. THE INTERIOR CORNERS OF THE FIELD DO NOT POSSESS QUARTER-MEDALLIONS. THE MAIN BORDER CONTAINS A DARK GROUND OF ALTERNATING CLASSIC AND MULTI-LOBED CARTOUCHES BORDERED BY ROSETTE HALVES. THIS DENSELY SATURATED CARPET DISPLAYS THE DIVERSITY OF COLOURS USED WITHIN A SAFAVID CARPET AND ITS INDIVIDUAL ORNAMENTATIONS: IVORY, PALE YELLOW, APRICOT, PALE BLUE, MID-BLUE, ULTRAMARINE, PISTACHIO, TEAL, CLARET, AND WALNUT.



POLONAISE
CARPETS

AT THE PARIS INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION OF 1878, PRINCE CZARTORYSKI OF POLAND EXHIBITED A BEAUTIFUL SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SILK CARPET BEARING HIS FAMILY'S COAT OF ARMS EMBELLISHED WITH GOLD AND SILVER THREAD. THE CARPET WAS WRONGLY THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN POLAND DUE TO THE NUMEROUS EXAMPLES THAT BORE CRESTS OF THE POLISH AND EUROPEAN NOBILITY AND CARPETS OF THIS TYPE WERE MISNAMED AS POLONAISE. IN THE 1930S, POLONAISE CARPETS WERE IDENTIFIED AS HAVING PERSIAN ORIGINS, AND YET THE MISCLASSIFICATION OF THIS CARPET GROUP REMAINS. POLONAISE CARPETS ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN PRODUCED ON THE IMPERIAL LOOMS OF SHAH ABBAS I IN ISFAHAN. SHAH ABBAS I AND HIS SUCCESSOR SHAH SAFI EXPORTED LUXURIOUS SILK RUGS EXTENSIVELY EMBELLISHED WITH METALLIC THREADS WITH THEIR EMBASSIES TO THE NOBLE HOUSES OF EUROPE AND THERE ARE PRESENTLY OVER TWO HUNDRE D EXTANT EXAMPLES. IT IS THE PRESENCE OF THESE COSTLY THREADS THAT SUGGESTS THE MANUFACTURE WAS CARRIED OUT BY AN IMPERIAL WORKSHOP. IN GENERAL, POLONAISE RUGS ARE KNOTTED WITH SILK PILE ON COTTON WARPS WITH EITHER COTTON OR SILK WEFTS AND MOST HAVE FLAT FIELDS OF BROCADING WITH GOLD, SILVER-GILT OR SILVER WRAPPED THREADS WHICH SEPARATE PILED SILK FLORAL ORNAMENTATION. THE INCLUSION OF METALLIC THREAD, WHILE PROVIDING A BREATHTAKING DISPLAY OF SCINTILLATING LUXURY, ALSO PROVIDED MANY TECHNICAL COMPLICATIONS. THE COST OF

GOLD AND SILVER WAS PROHIBITING AND THE WEIGHT TOO HEAVY TO BE WOVEN THROUGH THE FIBERS OF A CARPET WITHOUT CAUSING IRREPARABLE DAMAGE. THE SOLUTION TO WAS TO COIL VERY THIN AND NARROW STRIPS OF GILDED SILVER AROUND SILK FIBERS TO PRODUCE METAL-WRAPPED THREADS. THE METAL THREADS WERE WOVEN BETWEEN THE WARP THREADS, THE WEFT THEN PASSED ALONG THE ENTIRE WIDTH OF THE CARPET AND PACKED DOWN BY A BEATING COMB. WOVEN IN VARIOUS MANNERS TO ACHIEVE THE VISUAL EFFECT DESIRED WHEN THE LIGHT REFLECTED UPON THE GOLD, THE SILVER-GILT THREADS WERE EITHER PASSED UNDER AND OVER EVERY ONE OF THE TOP WARP THREADS; PASSED UNDER AND OVER BOTH THE TOP AND BOTTOM WARP THREADS; OR PASSED ONLY ONCE UNDER THE BOTTOM WARP AND THREE OR MORE TIMES OVER THE TOP WARP THREADS. BROCADING WAS NOT RESERVED SOLELY FOR POLONAISE CARPETS AND IS FOUND ON NUMEROUS FINE SILK CARPETS PRODUCED FOR THE ROYAL COURTS OF EUROPE AND THE SAFAVID DYNASTY. POLONAISE CARPETS ARE TYPICALLY COMPOSED OF VARYING GROUND COLOURS OF PASTEL HUES WITH OVERALL VEGETAL MOTIFS. SEVERAL EXTANT EXAMPLES CONTAIN VERTICAL ROWS OF ARABESQUES, ALTERNATING WITH DIAGONAL ROWS OF PALMETTES WHICH INVERT AND MIRROR EACH OTHER. THESE ORNAMENTS ARE LINKED BY DELICATE PINK LATTICEWORK. THE POLONAISE CARPET IN THE FARJAM COLLECTION HAS SEVERAL UNUSUAL FEATURES MAKING IT AN INTERESTING SAMPLE OF THE VARIETIES FOUND IN THE POLONAISE CARPET GROUP.

P-733

AN ISFAHAN POLONAISE RUG

CENTRAL PERSIA, EARLY 17TH CENTURY AD
194 CM X 137 CM

THIS CARPET HAS SEVERAL UNUSUAL FEATURES MAKING IT AN INTERESTING SAMPLE OF THE VARIETIES FOUND IN THE POLONAISE CARPET GROUP. DIFFERENTLY COLOURED PANELS OF SERRATED LEAVES EXECUTED IN METAL THREAD FORM BEAUTIFUL OGIVALS IN THE FIELD, A LOZENGE IS CREATED IN THE CENTRE OF THE FIELD, AND FAINT CLOUD LINE TRACERY CONNECTS THE COMPOSITION. METAL THREADING IS MORE OFTEN USED IN POLONAISE CARPETS AS FLAT FIELDS WHICH SEPARATE PILED SILK FLORAL ORNAMENTATIONS. ALSO UNUSUAL IS THE RED THREADING OUTLINE OF THE EMBELLISHMENTS. TYPICALLY, THE OUTLINES OF THE MOTIFS IN POLONAISE CARPETS EMPLOYED BLACK THREADING AND RED COLOURED THREAD WAS PRESERVED FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THE PRESENCE OF THE RED WEFT THREADS ON THE TOP HALF OF THE RUG WHICH DISPLAY UNDERLYING STRUCTURE OF HIGHLY SATURATED THREADS WHICH PRODUCE A SOFTLY PASTEL FINISHED PILE. THE LANGUID SERRATED LEAVES OF THE FIELD ARE BALANCED IN THE MAIN BORDER BY MORE TIGHTLY COMPOSED ALTERNATING LALEHABBASI PALMETTES AND CROSSED LEAF MOTIFS INTERLACED WITH FEATHERY VINE BLOSSOM TRACERY.



VASE CARPETS

EXTENSIVELY PRODUCED DURING THE REIGN OF SHAH ABBAS I, THE VASE CARPET WAS A FASHIONABLE DESIGN FOR THE EUROPEAN MARKET AND WAS EXPORTED IN GREAT NUMBERS. THE STRONG DESIGN AND POPULARITY OF THE VASE CARPET SECURED ITS CONTINUED PRODUCTION IN POST- SAFAVID TIMES. VASE CARPETS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY MULTIPLE OVERFLOWING TENDRIL SCROLLS THAT ISSUE LARGE PALMETTES, BLOSSOMS AND BUDDING FLOWER HEADS FROM A FIXED POINT, TYPICALLY A STYLIZED VASE. THE INCLUSION OF A VASE IS NOT A REQUISITE FOR A CARPET TO BE CLASSIFIED AS SUCH; IT IS THE UNDULATING VINES OF FOLIAGE THAT FORM COMPLEX INTERLACED COMPARTMENTS THAT DISTINGUISH CARPETS OF THIS GROUP. A WIDE THEMATIC RANGE CAN BE EXPRESSED WITHIN THE VASE CARPET DESIGN INCLUDING CLASSICAL MEDALLION, SAZ LEAF AND GARDEN MOTIFS, ANIMALS AMID ROWS OF FLOWERING SHRUBS AND TREES, AS WELL AS INTRICATE SYMMETRICAL FILIGREE FRAMEWORK. CARPETS OF THIS GROUP CONTAIN WARPS OF COTTON, WEFTS OF WOOL AND EITHER SILK OR COTTON, WITH WOOL PILE. THE UNIQUE TECHNICAL STRUCTURE OF CARPETS OF THIS CLASSIFICATION; THE PRODUCTION OF A WAVY FINISH TO THE SURFACE BY THREE WEFT PASSES BETWEEN ADJACENT ROWS OF KNOTS, THE FIRST AND THIRD OF MIXED COLOURS OF WOOL, HAS ATTRIBUTED THEIR MANUFACTURE TO KIRMAN.

P-697

A SAFAVID VASE RUG

KIRMAN, SOUTH EAST PERSIA, SECOND HALF OF 17TH CENTURY AD
268 CM X 178 CM

THIS VASE RUG IS TWO DIRECTIONAL WHEREAS MOST VASE CARPETS HAVE ONLY SINGLE DIRECTIONALITY. STANDING ON EITHER END ALLOWS THE VIEWER TO SEE A THREE VASES IN A ROW TOWARDS THE CENTER OF THE RUG ISSUING BOUNTIFUL YELLOW ARCHED VINES OF ISLIMI, PALMETTE AND COMPOSITE ROSETTES ON VINES WHICH FLOW DOWNWARD. TWO FULL AND FOUR HALF-FORMED VASES AND THEIR TENDRILS COMPOSE THE TOP LAYER OF THIS CARPET; THE VASES ARE SLIGHTLY OVERSHADOWED BY THE LARGE SIZED PALMETTES AND THE DISTINCT ARABESQUES OF THE TENDRILS. THE RED GROUND OF THE CARPET IS PLANTED WITH DELICATE BLOSSOMS AND ROSETTE ORNAMENTS INTERWOVEN WITH FINE BLUE TRACERY. THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MINOR BORDERS ARE SIMILARLY COMPOSED OF S-SHAPED TENDRILS OF ROSETTES. THE BORDER IS A STUNNING EXAMPLE OF MULTILAYERED SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION AND HERE A BEAUTIFUL CHAIN OF MAUVE ISLIMIS TAKES ON AN ALMOST ARCHITECTURAL FORM.







P-699

A SAFAVID VASE CARPET FRAGMENT

KIRMAN, SOUTH EAST PERSIA, FIRST HALF OF 17TH CENTURY AD
124 CM X 102 CM

RICHLY PIGMENTED INDIGO OGIVALS OF LATTICEWORK, FRAMING EIGHT POINTED STAR-SHAPED COMPOSITE FLORAL EMBLEMS, ARE INTERJOINED BY QUATREFOIL TERMINALS. VINES WHICH PUT FORTH FOLIAGE BLOSSOM IN SHADES OF LIGHT INDIGO, ROSE, CRIMSON AND VIOLET AND WELL DELINEATED AUBERGINE CLOUD BANDS FILL THE INTERSTICES. THOUGH THIS PIECE IS MERELY A FRAGMENT OF A CARPET, THE LEVEL OF BALANCED COMPLEXITY AND SUMPTUOUS MEANDERING OF LINE ACCOUNT FOR THE OTHER FRAGMENTS OF THIS CARPET TO BE HELD IN SUCH IMPORTANT INSTITUTIONS AS THE MUSEE HISTORIQUE IN LYON; THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART; THE ISLAMIC MUSEUM IN BERLIN; THE IPARMUVESZETI MUSEUM, BUDAPEST; AND THE ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM.

J-216

A LARGE CUERDA SECA TILE PANEL

17TH-18TH CENTURY AD
145.5 CM X 95.5 CM

TWO CYPRESS TREES FRAME AN OVER SCALED COBALT VASE FROM WHICH BLOOMING ROSETTES AND LALEHABBASI PALETTES SPRING FORTH. THE DESIGN OF THE VASE ITSELF HAS A CENTRAL LALEHABBASI PALMETTE FRAMED BY LONG CURVING SERRATED LEAVES DOTTED WITH ROSETTES. PEACOCKS, DUCKS AND DOVES FILL THE YELLOW GROUND FIELD AND THE BORDER CONTAINS A CONTINUOUS SCROLL OF ISLIMI BANDS, WHICH IN TURN CREATE TULIP FORMS. THE FLORAL MOTIFS OF THIS TILE PANEL, THE DIRECTIONALITY OF THE SCROLLING VINES OVERFLOWING THE LIP OF THE VASE AND THE THEMATIC COMPOSITION IS REMINISCENT OF 17TH CENTURY VASE CARPETS.



HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS



HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS WERE PRODUCED IN GREAT QUANTITIES THROUGHOUT THE 17TH CENTURY (11TH CENTURY AH). THE MATERIALS USED IN THEIR PRODUCTION; MOSTLY COTTON AND WOOL WARPS AND WEFTS AND THE ABSENCE OF COSTLY FIBERS OF SILK AND METALLIC THREAD EXCEPT ON THE FINEST EXAMPLES, RELATE THAT THESE CARPETS WERE PRODUCED FOR THE COMMERCIAL MARKET AND AVAILABLE TO A WIDE CLIENTELE. THE DIMENSIONS OF CARPETS WITHIN THIS GROUP VARY WIDELY AND SUBSTANTIALLY LARGE CARPETS OF AN ELEVATED QUALITY EVIDENCE ROYAL COMMISSION. CARPETS OF THIS GROUP APPEAR FREQUENTLY IN EUROPEAN PAINTINGS, MOST NOTABLY BY FLEMISH ARTISTS OF THE 17TH CENTURY, AND ARE DEPICTED IN MANY PICTORIAL SCENES OF ISLAMIC ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THESE CARPETS AS HERAT-ISFAHAN STEMS FROM THE DEBATE OF WHERE CARPETS OF THIS DESIGN ORIGINATED. THE DESIGNS ARE DERIVED FROM SIMPLIFIED VERSIONS OF THE HERAT TYPE IN WHICH SYMMETRICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF VINES AND PALMETTES OCCUPY A DEEP-RED FIELD WITH DARK-GREEN BORDERS. ANIMALS WERE RARELY DEPICTED AND CARPETS THAT CONTAIN THEM ARE TYPICAL OF CLASSICAL 16TH CENTURY HERAT PIECES AND ARE DEEMED TRANSITIONAL PIECES. SUCH TRANSITIONAL RUGS SUGGEST THAT THE HERAT-ISFAHAN CLASS REPRESENTS A CONTINUATION OF THE HERAT TYPE AND ITS ADAPTATION TO COMMERCIAL PRODUCTION. VARIOUS LOCATIONS FOR PRODUCTION HAVE BEEN SUGGESTED IN THE REGIONS OF ISFAHAN, HERAT, AND NORTHERN INDIA. HOWEVER, SCHOLARS TYPICALLY FAVOUR THE ATTRIBUTION OF THESE CARPETS TO PERSIA AND SPECIFICALLY TO ISFAHAN, AS THIS WAS THE CAPITAL DURING THE REIGN OF SHAH ABBAS I AND IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED THERE WAS A PROLIFIC CARPET AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY LOCATED IN ISFAHAN UNDER ROYAL SUPERVISION DURING THE 17TH CENTURY.

CARPETS OF THE HERAT-ISFAHAN GROUP GENERALLY BEAR CRIMSON INTERIOR FIELDS COMPRISED OF HIGHLY STYLIZED FLORAL ORNAMENTATION INTERWOVEN BY DELICATE TRACERY. THE FIELDS ARE FURTHER BORDERED BY GREEN OR INDIGO GROUND AND ALSO COMPOSED OF DENSELY INTERLINKED FLORAL FORMS. THE CHARACTERISTIC ORNAMENTATIONS OF THIS GROUP ARE COMPRISED OF KHATAI FLOWERS. THIS FORM OF FLORAL EMBELLISHMENT IS TITLED SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION. OTHER IMPORTANT ORNAMENTS IN HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS ARE BANDS BY WHICH ALL THE FORMS ARE JOINED, ISLIMIS, AND SECONDARY ORNAMENTS. SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTS HAVE SEVERAL FORMS; LALEHABBASI, ROSETTES, BLOSSOMS, LEAVES AND COMPOSITE FLOWERS. LALEHABBASI FLOWERS MAY BE DESCRIBED AS HAVING TULIP OR PALMETTE SHAPES. CHARACTERISTICALLY, THIS ORNAMENT IS THE LARGEST AND MOST VISUALLY STRIKING AS EACH PALMETTE DESIGN IS CREATED BY THE COMPLEX LAYERING OF MANY PETALS, IN THE FINEST EXAMPLES EACH SECTION POSSESSES A DIFFERENT HUE AND EVERY PART HAS DIRECTIONALITY FROM THE BASE OF THE FLOWER TO THE TIP. ROSETTES ARE ALSO DESIGNED IN SEVERAL LAYERS OF THREE TO EIGHT PETALS AND HAVE RADIAL SYMMETRY AT THEIR CENTERS. IN THE ORNAMENTATION OF A CARPET, ROSETTES TEND TO BE OF SMALLER SCALE THAN LALEHABBASI AND THE TENDRILS OF VINERY THAT JOIN ROSETTES TO OTHER MOTIFS PASS UNDER AND LINK AT THEIR CENTERS VERSUS THEIR STEMS AS WITH OTHER SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTS. SMALL ROSETTES ARE COMMONLY FOUND IN THE INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR GUARD BANDS. BLOSSOMS ARE SMALL, HALF BLOOMED FLOWERS OR UNOPENED BUDS OFTEN LOCATED AT THE END OF

SCROLLING TRACERY OR ATTACHED VIA THEIR STEMS TO MINOR BANDS OF OTHER SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTS. THEY ARE PREVALENT IN THE FIELD OF THE MAIN BORDER. THE LEAVES OF SAFAVID CARPETS HAVE SEVERAL FORMS. LONG LEAVES MAY BE SWORD-SHAPED, SHAMSHIRI, FISH-SHAPED, MAHI, OR FLAME-SHAPED. CURVING, SERRATED SAZ LEAVES ARE MOST PROMINENTLY USED THROUGHOUT THE DESIGN AND ARE OFTEN BICOLOURED. SMALL FLORAL ELEMENTS SUCH AS ROSETTES AND BLOSSOMS MAY BE WOVEN WITHIN LEAVES. WHILE THE STEM OF A LEAF IS ALWAYS CONNECTED TO TRACERY, THE TIP IS USUALLY UNATTACHED AND OFTEN IT CURVES BACK OVER ITSELF. LEAVES ARE QUITE IMPORTANT TO THE DESIGN OF A CARPET AS THEY IMPART DIRECTIONALITY TO THE VIEWER. THE MOST RENOWNED OF SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATIONS IS THE ISLIMI. AN ISLIMI, OFTEN REFERRED TO AN ARABESQUE WITH THE FORM IS CONNECTED TO OTHERS BY BANDS, IS A BEAUTIFULLY ORGANIC MOVEMENT CONNECTABLE TO OTHER ORNAMENTS FROM THREE TO FOUR POINTS. ISLIMIS ARE EXTENSIVELY USED IN ALL FIELDS OF A CARPET AS THEY ARE CAPABLE OF CREATING SEAMLESS REPETITION AND EXTENSION IN ALL DIRECTIONS. SECONDARY ORNAMENTS WHICH MAY PERVADE AN HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPET GROUND ARE ANIMALS, THOUGH RARELY, BOTTEH OR PAISLEY FORMS, VASES AND BOUQUETS. AS A GENERAL RULE, CARPETS THAT ARE CLASSIFIED AS HERAT-ISFAHAN TYPICALLY BEAR ONLY SHAH ABBASI EMBELLISHMENT. THE SELECTION OF HERAT-ISFAHAN CARPETS FROM THE FARJAM COLLECTION WHICH FOLLOW PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE EXAMPLE OF THE VARIOUS COMPOSITIONS AND STYLISTIC DESIGNS AVAILABLE TO THE CARPET DESIGNER; SOME ARE HIGHLY STYLIZED AND ANGULAR IN FORM WHILE OTHERS BEAR A REMARKABLE FLUIDITY AND LIGHTNESS.



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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
343 CM X 183 CM

THIS BRILLIANT EXAMPLE OF RED FIELD, GREEN BORDER SHAH ABBASI CARPETS HAS SEVERAL FEATURES THAT SET IT APART FROM THIS GROUP. THE MAIN BORDER IS A SIMPLE CONTINUOUS VINE OF VARIOUS LALEHABBASI PALMETTES BRACKETED BY SAZ LEAVES IN A HARMONIZED OPPOSITION OF ORANGE AND BLUE HUES. THE MINOR BORDERS ARE MOST INTRIGUING AS THERE ARE EIGHT IN TOTAL AND THEY RANGE IN DESIGN FROM SIMPLE SOLID COLOURED LINES, BI-COLOURED ROPING, SCROLLING ROSETTES ON VINE LEAF, TO ROSETTES LINKED BY CHAINED CLOUD BANDS. THE SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION OF THE FIELD IS STYLIZED AND THE ANGULAR COMPOSITION SIMPLIFIES THE DETAIL OF ORNAMENTATION IN DRAUGHTSMANSHIP, WHILE THE COMPOSITION OF VARIOUS COLOURS IN EACH REMAINS STRONG. THE CARPET HAS BEEN REDUCED IN SIZE, AS IS CLEARLY VISIBLE IN THE FIELD, AND THE REPETITION AND DIRECTIONALITY OF MOTIFS SUGGEST THE CARPET MAY HAVE BEEN A THIRD AS LARGE IN ITS ORIGINAL STATE.

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AN ISFAHAN RUG

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
188 CM X 124 CM

THOUGH MAINTAINING THE TRADITIONAL, SLIGHTLY OVER-SCALED REPEAT FLORAL PATTERN, THIS RUG HAS ATYPICAL FEATURES OF A CAMEL FIELD COLOUR AND A BORDER COMPOSED OF LARGE LALEHABBASI ELEMENTS INTERWOVEN WITH SINEWY ROSETTE TRACERY. THE OVERALL FIELD DESIGN APPEARS TO HAVE RADIAL SYMMETRY HOWEVER THE ELEMENTS ALONG THE VERTICAL CENTRAL AXIS, THE CURVED BASE FORMS OF THE LALEHABBASI IN THE CENTRAL QUATREFOIL DESIGN AND THOSE FORMED BY CLOUD BANDS NEAR THE BOTTOM AND TOP BORDER, HAVE IRREGULARITIES IN THEIR COMPOSITION. THE ENDS OF THE RUG ARE FINISHED WITH ORIGINAL SILK BROCADING.





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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
853 CM X 353 CM

THIS CARPET HAS BEEN WIDELY PUBLISHED AND EXHIBITED AT THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ITS LARGE PROPORTIONS, OVERALL EXCELLENT CONDITION AND NEATLY COMPOSED ENDLESS FLORAL REPEAT PATTERN COMBINE TO MAKE THIS CARPET A FINE EXAMPLE OF THE HARMONY ACHIEVED IN SAFAVID CARPET DESIGN OF THE 17TH CENTURY. THOUGH THE GROUNDS OF THE FIELD AND BORDERS ARE NEARLY FILLED BY VINE TENDRILS, SAZ LEAVES, PALMETTES, ROSETTES, BLOSSOMS AND CLOUD BANDS, THE SYMMETRY OF DESIGN AND COLOURS RESULTS IN A PERFECTLY BALANCED COMPOSITION.

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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
975 CM X 366 CM

PERHAPS MOST STRIKING IS THE VIVID HUES AND VARIATIONS THROUGHOUT THE INTERIOR FIELD AND THE PETAL-FORM SPANDRELS THAT CREATE FLUID SCROLL ISLIMIS OVER THE LENGTH OF THE FIELD. THE FIELD CORNERS ARE EMBELLISHED, AS IS COMMON PRACTICE IN MEDALLION CARPETS, THOUGH THIS CARPET LACKS A CENTRAL MEDALLION IN FAVOUR OF A SMALL, CENTRALIZED LOZENGE FRAMED BY OPPOSING PALMETTES. THE RATIO OF THE BORDER TO THE INTERIOR IS RELATIVELY THIN AND THOUGH DENSELY FLORID, IT DOES NOT CONFLICT WITH THE HARMONY OF THE INTERIOR. THE IMMENSE SIZE OF THIS CARPET COUPLED WITH THE MASTERFUL MANNER OF EXECUTION IS EVIDENCE OF THIS CARPET HAVING BEEN MANUFACTURED AND UTILIZED IN A ROYAL SETTING.





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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
422 CM X 274 CM

THIS INTRICATELY WOVEN AND EXTRAORDINARILY WELL-DESIGNED CARPET FEATURES A SLIGHTLY OVERSIZED BORDER; THE INTERIOR FIELD CONSISTS OF DOUBLE LAYER BLUE AND CREAM VINERY WITH VARIATIONS OF BOLD, FEATHERY PALMETTES. IN THE TOP QUARTER OF THE CARPET, THE CORNERS CONTAIN GRACEFULLY ARCHED BLACK CLOUD BANDS AND A CENTERED WHITE CLOUD BAND DRAWS THE EYE DOWNWARD. THIS VISUAL CUE IS CONTINUED THROUGH INVERTED PALMETTES ON THE VERTICAL AXIS AND TERMINATES IN TWO ROUNDELS CONTAINING SMALLER PALMETTES, BORDERED ON EACH SIDE BY LARGE TURQUOISE FEATHERY COMPOSITE ORNAMENTATION.

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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

17TH CENTURY AD

484 CM X 213 CM

SYMMETRICAL ON TWO AXIS, BILATERAL AND TRANSVERSE, THE EMBELLISHMENT OF THIS CARPET IS A COMPLEX WEB OF VARIOUS SIZED PALMETTES, ROSETTES, CURVED SERRATED LEAVES AND BLOSSOMING ANGULAR TENDRILS. THOUGH ANGULAR IN THE UNDERLYING TENDRIL STRUCTURE OF THE FIELD, THIS CARPET DOES NOT FEEL GEOMETRIC DUE TO THE CURVES OF THE SAZ LEAVES, BILLOWING CLOUD BANDS, MULTIPLE DIRECTIONALITY AND FINELY EXECUTED DETAILS OF THE SHAH ABBASI ORNAMENTATION. THE EXTERNAL GUARD BAND, COMPOSED OF SMALL ROSETTES, AND THE MAIN BORDER OF INVERTING VERSIONS OF PALMETTES ROTATING WITH LEAVE ENCASED ROSETTES, ALSO ASSIST IN BREAKING THE GEOMETRIC FRAMEWORK OF THE TENDRIL. THE FORMAL INTERIOR MINOR BAND OF CABLED HEXAGONS IS SUFFICIENT TO DIFFERENTIATE THE MOTIF OF THE FIELD FROM THE MAIN BORDER.





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AN ISFAHAN RUG

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
201 CM X 137 CM

THIS MAGNIFICENT RUG, NEARLY COMPLETE IN ITS ORIGINAL STATE, DISPLAYS CLEARLY THE BEAUTY OF THE SIMPLICITY OF DESIGN. IT IS SIMILAR TO THE CAMEL FIELD ISFAHAN RUG P-465 WITH ITS SMALL SIZE AND CENTRAL LOZENGE CREATED THROUGH QUATREFOIL KHATAI FLOWERS, AS WELL AS ITS ENDS DISPLAYING ORIGINAL SILK AND METAL THREAD BROCADING; YET THIS RUG HAS LESS TRACERY THROUGHOUT AND LARGER, MORE DISTINCT CLOUD BANDS AND CLEARLY DELINEATED LALEHABBSI ORNAMENTATION.



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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

17TH CENTURY AD

550 CM X 250 CM

THIS RARE BORDER FEATURES A PAIR OF BICOLOURED-SERRATED LEAVES FROM WHICH A BLOSSOM SPREADS FORTH. A LOTUS PALMETTE IS CENTERED BETWEEN THESE PAIRED FLORALS AND LINEAR BLUE TRACERY INTERLINKS THE ELEMENTS. THE FIELD DESIGN CENTERS ON A LOZENGE FORMED BY TRACERY ISSUING FROM THE STEMS OF PALMETTES. SOLID AND BICOLOURED CURVED SAZ LEAVES TERMINATE THE WHITE VINE SCROLLS THROUGHOUT THE FIELD AND INFLUENCE THE NOTION OF DIRECTIONALITY, WHICH IS PARAMOUNT IN CARPET DESIGN. THE SAZ LEAVES, WHICH TERMINATE THE DELICATELY SCROLLED ROUNDELS, FURTHER EMPHASIZE THE CIRCULAR FORM WHILST THOSE LEAVES THAT TERMINATE TOWARDS THE BORDER OF THE FIELD DIRECT THE EYE BACK TOWARDS THE CENTRALIZED LOZENGE.

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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
808 CM X 330 CM

THE BRILLIANCE OF COLOUR AND FLORID ELABORATION OF 17TH CENTURY SAFAVID CARPETS IS EVIDENT IN THE BOTTOM THIRD OF THIS CARPET WHERE THE ORIGINAL PILE IS RETAINED. THE MAIN BORDER CONSISTS OF A PAIR OF ROSE AND LIGHT BLUE ISLIMIS AND TWO ALTERNATING PALMETTES WHILE THE RED GROUND FIELD ECHOES THE DUALITY OF COLOUR IN SERRATED LEAVES, AND DELICATELY RENDERED PALMETTES AND BLOSSOMS ARE LINKED BY A SCROLLING VINE TENDRIL.





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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
340 CM X 160 CM

THE STRIKING FEATURE OF THIS CARPET IS THE FOUR ROSETTE ROUNDELS, WHICH DUE TO THE JUXTAPOSITION OF DARK AND LIGHT COLOURED THREAD, MIMIC AN ASIAN-INSPIRED FLARE SPIRAL AND RENDERS THE DUAL AXIS SYMMETRY OF QUITE NOTICEABLE. VINE TRACERY GRACEFULLY CURVES AROUND THESE ROUNDELS AND JOINS A LARGE PALMETTE, WHICH BY ITS CLOSE PROXIMITY TO FOUR OTHER LALEHABBASI RESULTS IN A QUATREFOIL. IN THE CENTER OF THE FIELD A LOZENGE IS CREATED IN THE NEGATIVE SPACE FORMED BY TWO PALMETTES AND THE SCROLLWORK ISSUED FROM THEM.

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A PART-COTTON ISFAHAN RUG

CENTRAL PERSIA, CIRCA 1650

208 CM X 140 CM

THE BEAUTY OF THIS RUG IS FOUND IN THE SATURATION OF VARIOUS COLOURS WITHIN EACH DESIGN ELEMENT AND THE INTRICATE LACING OF MOTIFS. THE MAIN BORDER OF THE RUG, COMPOSED OF LARGE PALMETTES ALTERNATELY EMPHASIZING THE FLOWER BUD AND THE LEAVES, ENCASED BY WHITE DOTTED SEPARATING LINES, IS ENCLOSED BY A DENSELY PACKED EXTERNAL BORDER OF CONSIDERABLY SMALLER FLORA. WITHIN THE FIELD, FLAME-LIKE FORMS EXTEND FROM THE TOP AND BOTTOM INTERNAL MINOR BORDERS, SINUOUS TENDRILS AND TRACERY ESCAPES AND EXTENDS FROM UNDER THE ELABORATELY COLOURED COMPOSITE KHATAI FLOWERS, CLOUD BANDS FORMING OVALS INTERSECT GREEN AND YELLOW LOTUS PALMETTES TO A CENTRAL LOZENGE AND DELICATE ORGANIC FORMS OF CLOUD BANDS AND FLARED SPIRALS ARE REMINISCENT OF CHINESE ART. BILATERALLY SYMMETRICAL, THIS CARPET MAY SLIGHTLY BE CONSIDERED A FLORAL GROUND MEHRABI DUE TO CURVED LIGHTLY FORMED CLOUD BANDS IN THE TOP QUARTER OF THE FIELD THAT FORM THE PRAYER NICHE. THE RED BACKGROUND FIELD COLOURING IS PERCEIVED AS MULTI-COLOURED DUE TO THE EXTREME SATURATION OF THE MOTIFS AND NO LONGER RESEMBLES COMMON RED FIELD, GREEN BORDER CARPETS OF THIS GROUP.





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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, CIRCA 1650
409 CM X 180 CM

WITH ALMOST ENTIRELY ORIGINAL PILING, THIS VIVID BILATERALLY SYMMETRICAL CARPET IS COMPRISED OF INFLATED ORNAMENTATIONS QUITE SIMPLIFIED IN THEIR EXECUTION, AND A DENSE BORDER OF LARGE CYPRESS TREES ALTERNATING WITH LARGE FREELY WORKED PALMETTES WITH UNUSUALLY LARGE BLOSSOMING VINE TENDRIL SURROUNDS THAT DO NOT LINK BUT MERELY EMPHASIZE THE INDIVIDUAL ORNAMENTS. A CENTRAL QUATREFOIL IS COMPOSED OF V-SHAPED ORANGE CLOUD BANDS AND FOUR PALMETTES WHOSE STEMS LINK TO FORM A ROSETTE.

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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA,
FIRST HALF OF 17TH CENTURY AD
442 CM X 183 CM

THIS SUMPTUOUS CARPET CONTAINS AN ENDLESS ARRAY OF OGIVAL AND POINTED PALMETTES, A LARGE PRESENCE OF CURVACEOUS CLOUD BANDS, DELICATE TRACERY AND VARIEGATED, HIGHLY TEXTURAL FLORAL EMBELLISHMENTS. DUE TO THE LACK OF SERRATED SAZ LEAVES WITHIN THE FLORID ORNAMENTATION, THIS CARPET HAS BEEN CONSIDERED AN EARLY EXAMPLE OF THE HEART-ISFAHAN CARPET GROUP. HIGHLY FLORID CARPETS WITH DELICATE AND SKILLFUL DRAUGHTSMANSHIP SUCH AS THIS PRESENT EXAMPLE WERE CONSIDERED EXTREMELY FASHIONABLE IN 17TH CENTURY EUROPE AND WERE WIDELY EXPORTED.





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AN ISFAHAN CARPET

CENTRAL PERSIA, 17TH CENTURY AD
493 CM X 203 CM

THOUGH THERE ARE AREAS WHERE THE FOUNDATION MAY BE SEEN, THIS CARPET RETAINS MUCH OF ITS ORIGINAL VIVIDNESS OF COLOUR. DELICATE CREAM TENDRILS GENTLY ENCIRCLE AND LINK LARGE RESPLENDENT FLORAL ORNAMENTATION, PROVIDING LIGHTNESS TO THESE OTHERWISE OVER SCALED EMBLEMS. BILATERALLY AND TRANSVERSELY SYMMETRICAL IN THE FIELD AS WELL AS THE MAIN BORDER, THIS CARPET DISPLAYS THE SKILLFUL REPETITION OF FORM AND ACCURATE PLACEMENT CHARACTERISTIC OF SAFAVID MASTERPIECES.

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