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# *The Shiraz Connection: A Shāhnāma of 1440 from the Library of Muḥammad Shāh, Sultan of Gujarat\**

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## **Abstract**

*This article offers a new perspective on the relationship between manuscript production in Shiraz under the Timurids and in the Sultanate states of South Asia. During the so-called long fifteenth century, between Timur's invasion in 1398 and Humāyūn's return to India in 1555, there was a surge of creativity in the arts, despite the fractured political landscape of multiple courts. The resulting material culture is vibrant and diverse and belies prevalent historiography, which often portrays this period as culturally barren. The discussion will focus on an illustrated copy of the Shāhnāma of Firdausi dated 843/1440, currently in the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna, once owned by Muḥammad Shāh, Sultan of Gujarat. A study of this manuscript and its cultural context challenges the notion that 'outmoded' traits are the key criteria of a Persian manuscript's possible Sultanate origin. This article further aims to initiate a re-examination of the reception and dispersal of Persian manuscripts in the Indian Sultanates and the future lives of a particular group of manuscripts made in Shiraz.*

**Keywords:** Shiraz; Timurid; *Shāhnāma*

The courts and wealthy homes of the Sultanate states of India amassed substantial libraries. However, surviving works are relatively scarce, and any researcher working on the art of the book hopes for a discovery that will help shed light on an often obscure era of Indian art history. Between the collapse of the Delhi Sultanate following Timur's invasion and the establishment of Mughal rule was a period of just over a hundred years with no centrally controlled government, often called the 'long fifteenth century'. Once considered bereft of artistic endeavour, this period's output is now being increasingly recognised for its diversity, ambition, and invention. This discussion seeks to demonstrate the Indian provenance of a previously unpublished manuscript: a copy of Firdausi's *Shāhnāma* dated 843/1440, currently in the Khuda Bakhsh Library in Patna (3787–3788). This copy of the *Shāhnāma* is

\*I am delighted to dedicate this article to Barbara Brend, who has inspired me with her work and supported me in my research for many years. I am also grateful to Elaine Wright for her feedback and astute comments on an earlier draft.

closely related to a group of illustrated manuscripts produced in Shiraz, yet was owned by a Sultanate ruler in the state of Gujarat, Sultan Muḥammad Shāh, who reigned from 846/1442.<sup>1</sup> Such a juxtaposition makes the manuscript particularly noteworthy and questions previously held assumptions on manuscript production in Shiraz during the Timurid period and on the reception of Persianate literary and artistic culture in the Sultanate states of South Asia.

The study of material culture in fifteenth-century South Asia, specifically manuscript production, has been gathering momentum recently.<sup>2</sup> Of the small corpus of illustrated Persian manuscripts that survive, a particular group with a possible, but not certain, Sultanate provenance is still largely overlooked by scholars working on Persian manuscripts that originated from either Iran or South Asia. Barbara Brend has been a pioneer in this field with her studies of an *Anthology* in the Chester Beatty Library<sup>3</sup> and the Mohl *Shāhnāma*,<sup>4</sup> where she considers these manuscripts from multiple viewpoints. Her arguments that these two particular manuscripts are of Sultanate origin remain entirely plausible.

Robinson was the first to assemble a body of possible Sultanate manuscripts of various texts, previously thought of as provincial Persian.<sup>5</sup> Fraad and Ettinghausen published a preliminary survey of Sultanate painting, setting out the key criteria that may indicate an Indian provenance.<sup>6</sup> These authors argued that manuscripts that display ‘outmoded’ traits, specifically in their paintings, calligraphy, or illumination, suggest an Indian association; many of the ‘outmoded’ visual traits identified are those associated with Shiraz. There are five other copies of the *Shāhnāma* dating from *circa* 1430–50 (besides the Mohl *Shāhnāma*) that they attributed to the Indian Sultanates: a *Shāhnāma* in the National Museum in New Delhi;<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Robert Skelton mentioned the Patna *Shāhnāma* in his article on ‘Indo-Persian style’ painting in *The Dictionary of Art* (1996), p. 572. It was this brief mention that drew my attention to the manuscript, and subsequent encouragement from Robert led me to visit Patna to study it; see E. Shovelton, ‘Sultanate Painting from the North Indian Subcontinent: Three Fifteenth-Century Persian Illustrated Manuscripts’ (unpublished PhD dissertation, SOAS University of London, 2009), pp. 218–304. It has not previously been published but has recently been added to the Cambridge *Shahnama* Project website: <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:2143527318> (accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>2</sup>Key publications for fifteenth-century manuscripts include: É. Brac de la Perrière, *L’Art du livre dans l’Inde des sultanats* (Paris, 2008); F. Orsini and S. Sheikh, *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth Century North India* (Oxford, 2014); and B. Flood, ‘Before the Mughals: material culture of Sultanate North India’, *Muqamas* 36 (2019), pp. 1–39.

<sup>3</sup>Chester Beatty Library, Per. 124; see B. Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amīr Khusrāu’s Khamsah* (London, 2003), pp. 73–79.

<sup>4</sup>British Library, Or.1403; see B. Brend, ‘The British Library’s *Shahnama* of 1438 as a Sultanate manuscript’, in *Facets of Indian Art*, (ed.) R. Skelton (London, 1986), pp. 87–93.

<sup>5</sup>While preparing for his 1967 publication on Persian painting from the British Isles, Robinson first addressed the possibility of an Indian origin for certain fifteenth-century manuscripts, see B. W. Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting from Collections in the British Isles* (London, 1967). Later the list he worked on was published in K. Ādahl, *A Khamsa of Nizami of 1439* (Uppsala, 1981), Appendix III.

<sup>6</sup>I. L. Fraad and R. Ettinghausen, ‘Sultanate painting in Persian style, primarily from the first half of the fifteenth century: a preliminary study’, in *Chhavi. Golden Jubilee Volume. Bharat Kala Bhavan*, (ed.) A. Krishna (Banaras, 1971), pp. 48–66.

<sup>7</sup>The *Shāhnāma* in the National Museum in Delhi, 54.60 dated 831/1427–28, will be discussed in a forthcoming article by the current author following doctoral research in Shovelton, ‘Sultanate Painting’, pp. 279–283. This manuscript remains unpublished since its inclusion in Fraad and Ettinghausen, ‘Sultanate painting in Persian style’, pp. 48–66.

two in the John Rylands Library,<sup>8</sup> and two dispersed *Shāhnāmas*, one of which has distinctive, large, almost square-shaped illustrations.<sup>9</sup>

This article will challenge the notion that ‘outmoded’ traits are the only criteria for a Persian manuscript’s possible Sultanate origin. It will be shown that both manuscripts containing ‘outmoded’ elements and those exhibiting only current modes of manuscript production were in circulation in India during the long fifteenth century between Timur’s invasion in 1398 and Humayan’s return to India in 1555.<sup>10</sup> During these years, several states held sway in the northern subcontinent, the most dominant being Delhi, Jaunpur, Malwa, Bengal, and Gujarat. A wide range of books was composed, written, illustrated, imported, and collected in each state. Many different modes were assimilated into book-making practices, resulting perhaps most conspicuously in strikingly diverse painting styles.

### Introducing the Patna *Shāhnāma*

The Patna *Shāhnāma* comprises two volumes, with 561 folios in total. The text is written in black ink in a small and neat *nasta’liq* script in 25 lines divided into four columns.<sup>11</sup> There is substantial damage to the opening folios, and the entire manuscript has suffered from worming and damp conditions. A colophon at the end of the second volume on fol. 561v mentions the *Shāhnāma* was completed in 843/1440.<sup>12</sup>

Most copies of the *Shāhnāma* begin with a preface, one of four main iterations. The preface in the Patna manuscript, beginning on fol. 1v, is the earliest of the four versions, which includes an introduction thought to have been written by Abū Manṣūr al-Mu‘ammarī for a prose version of the *Shāhnāma* in 346/957.<sup>13</sup> It has been suggested that the preface found in *Shāhnāmas* of possible Sultanate origin may determine their provenance. The argument centres around two main issues: the insertion of an episode mentioning Firdausī welcomed to the court of the Delhi Sultan; and whether the preface is the ‘Bāysunghurī’ text or an earlier version.<sup>14</sup> It is interesting to note that the preface of our manuscript is the earlier Abū Manṣūrī version;<sup>15</sup> the same preface as the Mohl *Shāhnāma*, of possible Indian origin. However, this does not necessarily confirm an Indian provenance for these manuscripts as

<sup>8</sup>John Rylands Library, MS933 and MS9, see Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library*, pp. 97–115.

<sup>9</sup>1) Five folios in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC: A1986.177, A1986.148–51; see G. Lowry, M. C. Beach, with R. Marafar and W. M. Thackston, *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection* (Washington DC, 1988), pp. 84–85, no. 96.

2) Widely dispersed, including five folios in the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery: S1986.135; S1986.139; S1986.144–6; see Susan Nemazee, ‘Appendix 7: Chart of recent provenance’, in *ibid.*, pp. 403–404. There are 12 folios in the Metropolitan Museum of Art: 20.120.238–49. See S. C. Welch, *India—Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York, 1985), p. 131.

<sup>10</sup>Historians often overlook this period, but recent reassessments reveal a remarkable time of invention and creativity in South Asia. See Orsini and Sheikh, *After Timur Left*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>11</sup>The pages were trimmed when re-margined. They are on average 23 x 15 cm, and the text panels 19 x 12 cm. The binding dates to the twentieth century.

<sup>12</sup>Manijeh Bayani kindly translated the colophon on fol. 561v as follows: ‘The book called *Shāhnāma* was completed on Monday, last day of *dhi-qa’dat* (*sic*) *al-harām* of the year eight hundred and forty-three’ (3 May 1440).

<sup>13</sup>Peyvand Firouzeh sets out the four different preface types, see P. Firouzeh, ‘Convention and reinvention: the British Library *Shahnama* of 1438 (Or. 1403)’, *Iran* 57 (2019), pp. 49–70 (particularly pp. 10–15).

<sup>14</sup>Also, see Brend, ‘The British Library’s *Shahnama* of 1438’, p. 87.

<sup>15</sup>I am grateful to Manijeh Bayani for clarifying the preface.

there are other examples produced in Iran that post-date Bāysunghur that still use the older version.<sup>16</sup>

There are two distinct types of illumination employed in the *Shāhnāma*. The title panels ('*unwāns*)<sup>17</sup> resemble the blue-and-gold floral style that evolved in Shiraz in the latter half of the fourteenth century and continued until at least the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The style was exported to Ottoman and Mamluk territories and to Yemen and India.<sup>19</sup> Titles are in gold outlined in black against a background of delicate scrolling arabesques within a cusped-edged cartouche. The area around the cartouche is painted blue with gold sprigs of leaves dotted with small white and red flowers.<sup>20</sup>

The illuminated double-page (fol. 1v–2r, [Figure 1](#))<sup>21</sup> marks the opening to the preface in the first volume and is illuminated in the colourful palmette-arabesque style that appeared in the early 1430s, but is found more consistently in the decade after Ibrāhīm-Sultān's death (1435–36/1444–45).<sup>22</sup> The upper and lower panels contain gold kufic inscriptions against scrolls of robust white arabesques against a blue background. The panels to the left and right contain lobed cartouches, filled with geometric designs of palmette-arabesques; the central cartouche features split-palmettes in a distinctive vibrant orange-red, set against a blue background. These colour combinations, along with areas of gold on black, are characteristics of this new style.<sup>23</sup>

There are 48 illustrations: 32 in the first volume and 16 in the second.<sup>24</sup> The illustrations usually occupy half or two-thirds of the text panel. The action of each scene takes place in the foreground, and context is provided by the interior of a palace with a set formula of a tiled dado punctuated by a narrow window ([Figure 2](#)), or by a simple landscape setting with a high horizon ([Figure 3](#)).<sup>25</sup> Large tear-shaped seal impressions, stamped in the margins, occur on 46 folios scattered throughout the two volumes ([Figure 4](#)).<sup>26</sup> This seal impression

<sup>16</sup>For example, the Ibrāhīm-Sultān *Shāhnāma*, see F. Abdullaeva and C. Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings, Ibrahim Sultan's Shāhnāma* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 28–30, 125.

<sup>17</sup>See those on fols. 8v and 85v. See <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:2147354539> and <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:2147354554> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>18</sup>E. Wright, *The Look of the Book: Manuscript Production in Shiraz, 1303–1452* (Washington DC and Dublin, 2012), pp. 48–52 and 71–80, figs. 45–48.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>20</sup>The illumination on fol. 8v has been trimmed and repaired; part of a further upper panel of decoration remains—comprising three medallions filled with gold leaves on a blue background—above the main '*unwān*'. The '*unwān*' on fol. 85v is less damaged and also has a decorative panel above the main cartouche.

<sup>21</sup>These folios are damaged with holes in the upper half, particularly around the edge, and much of the colour has faded.

<sup>22</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 106.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 111. The frontispiece in a *Khamsa* of Nizāmī, 839/1435, now in the British Library, Or.12856 (see *ibid.*, p. 110, fig. 68), shares a similar page layout and colour scheme.

<sup>24</sup>See Appendix A.

<sup>25</sup>Twenty illustrations represent subjects frequently illustrated in fifteenth-century *Shāhnāmas*. The remaining 28 are less common, including two scenes illustrating stories that feature in both the *Khamsa* of Nizāmī and the *Shāhnāma*. The illustration of 'Īlyās and Khidr at the Well of Life' depicts the Nizāmī version (fol. 367v). See: <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:2147354576> (last accessed 15 May 2020). This version is illustrated in a small number of *Shāhnāma* texts, including an illustration in the Mohl *Shāhnāma* of 841/1438 (fol. 328r), a manuscript of possible Sultanate origin. For other illustrations of this episode, see the Cambridge *Shahnama* Project: <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cescene:1361691785> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>26</sup>It is unusual to have a seal impression repeated throughout a manuscript; more research may reveal a possible explanation and determine if there are other similar examples. Two other seal impressions appear: a diamond-shaped



Figure 1a and b. Illuminated double page, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fols. 1v–2r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

bears the full name of Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh, ruler of the State of Gujarat from 846/1442 until 855/1451, including Ghiyāth al-Dīn, the title he took when he ascended the throne,<sup>27</sup> which tallies with existing coins inscribed with his titles.<sup>28</sup>

### The Shiraz connection: manuscripts and artists travelling east to India

#### *A brief historical introduction to the Shiraz connection with Gujarat*

Efficient trading networks had operated in the Indian Ocean littoral for centuries.<sup>29</sup> A close connection between Gujarat and cities in Persia was established through trade long before the Delhi Sultan ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Khaljī conquered part of Gujarat in 1297. When Gujarat became independent in 1407, Muslim traders and religious figures continued to settle in the region.

one in the margin on fol. 290r; and a circular one on fol. 283r, set just below the usual tear-shaped one. Both of these are now illegible.

<sup>27</sup>Part of the seal impression has been lost on trimmed pages. However, I am grateful to Alexander Morton, who was able to decipher this seal impression, from the base to the top, as follows: Line 1) *Bi-rasm khizānat*; line 2) *al-Sulṭān al-murābiṭ al-muj [āhid]*; line 3) *Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa’l Dīn Abū’l-Maj[d]*; line 4) *Muḥammad Shāh ibn Aḥmad [Shāh]*; line 5) *ibn Muḥammad Shāh ibn Muẓaffar*; line 6) *Shāh khallada Allāh*; line 7) *mulkaḥu*.

<sup>28</sup>The title given on a silver *tanka* from Sulṭān Muḥammad’s reign is as follows: ‘*Sulṭan al-salāṭīn ghiyāth al-dunyā wa’l dīn abū’l mahāmid Muḥammad Shāh ibn Aḥmad Shāh ibn Muḥammad Shāh ibn Muẓaffar Shāh khallada khilā-fatahu*’, see S. Goron and J. P. Goenka, *The Coins of the Indian Sultanates* (New Delhi, 2001), p. 363, no. G40.

<sup>29</sup>Muslim mercantile settlements in coastal cities in Gujarat are recorded since the ninth century, see A. Patel, ‘From province to Sultanate: the architecture of Gujarat during the 12th through 16th centuries’, in *The Architecture of the Indian Sultanates*, (ed.) A. Patel (New Delhi, 2006), p. 70. See also Elizabeth Lambourn, *Abraham’s Luggage: A Social Life of Things in the Medieval Indian Ocean World* (Cambridge, 2018).





Figure 2. ‘The King of Hamavarān Pretends to Serve Ka’us’, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 78v. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

Many regions in Iran had trade and diplomatic links with the Sultanate states of fifteenth-century India, including direct communication between the Timurid royal family in Iran and certain rulers of the Indian Sultanates.<sup>30</sup> However, it is commonly understood that Shiraz was one of the key regions to export artists and manuscripts to South Asia.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup>For example, Maḥmūd Shāh, Sultan of Malwa, Gujarat’s close neighbour, received an emissary in 1468 from Abū Sa’īd Mīrzā (1424–1469), Timur’s great-grandson. As Eaton points out, the gifts Maḥmūd Shāh presented to the envoy reflected the life of a connoisseur of Persianate culture rather than a conqueror; ‘a book of wisdom, a ruby cup, a carnelian plate...’. See R. Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age 1000–1765* (Oakland, CA, 2019), p. 125; and U. N. Day, *Medieval Malwa—A Political and Cultural History 1401–1562* (Delhi, 1965), pp. 213–214.

<sup>31</sup>See A. S. Melikian-Chirvani, ‘L’*École de Shiraz et les origines de la miniature moghole*’, in *Paintings from Islamic Lands*, (ed.) R. Pinder-Wilson (Oxford, 1969), pp. 124–141.



Figure 3. ‘Salm Flees and Is Killed by Manuchihr’, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 32r. © Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.

There are two main factors as to why this was the case: first, Shiraz appears to have had a long history of ‘commercial’ production, beginning in the early Injuid period in *circa* 1330 and continuing at least into the sixteenth century;<sup>32</sup> secondly, there was ongoing travel and

<sup>32</sup>For a study of commercial manuscripts production in Shiraz, see L. Uluç, *Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth Century Shiraz Manuscripts* (Istanbul, 2006).



Figure 4. Seal, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 436r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

migration between these regions due to the movement of intellectuals, merchants, Sufis, and pilgrims. When the region became more stable after the establishment of the Gujarat Sultanate in the early fifteenth century, forts, city walls, and even entire towns were constructed. Extensive provision was made for merchants and others to settle in the region.<sup>33</sup> As Samira Sheikh points out, migration and mobility were the norm in Gujarat for all those engaged in trade, pilgrimage, and politics, from at least the twelfth century to the end of the fifteenth.<sup>34</sup>

The network of well-worn routes used by traders, religious figures, and diplomats facilitated the movement of scribes and craftsmen trained in all aspects of the arts of the book, including artists. They migrated to India and augmented the artistic communities already

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>34</sup>S. Sheikh, *Forging a Region: Sultans, Traders and Pilgrims in Gujarat 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2010), p. 61.



in existence there. Aḥmad Shāh, a ruler of Gujarat (813–846/1411–42), had his reign chronicled by the poet Ḥūlwī Shīrāzī, who records that the ruler Aḥmad himself was a fine poet and wrote in Persian verse.<sup>35</sup> Another migrant from Shiraz to the Gujarati court wrote the *Taqvīm dar Nujūm* in 844/1441, which he dedicated to Aḥmad Shāh.<sup>36</sup> In the preface, the anonymous author of this text explains that he was from Shiraz and had wanted to go to India for some time, but ‘bad luck’ and fear of the sea had prevented him until then.

#### *The Patna Shāhnāma and Timurid manuscripts from Shiraz*

Visual evidence of the movement of Persian manuscripts, scribes, and artists from Shiraz to Sultanate India during the fifteenth century and earlier can be tracked relatively easily in some instances; for example, several manuscripts that were produced in the court of Mandu in the 1490s, such as the *Ni‘matnāma* and *Miftāh al-Fuḍalā*, reference Turkman manuscripts.<sup>37</sup> The presence of Shirazi traits are not just detected in Sultanate manuscripts with Persian texts but also, albeit more tentatively, in Jain painting; their distinctive solid red background relates to Injuīd manuscripts.<sup>38</sup> Another example is an early fifteenth-century Qur’an known to have been in the library of Maḥmūd Shāh (r.1459–1511), Sultan of Gujarat, from a seal impression dated 893/1488;<sup>39</sup> the illumination can be related to fourteenth-century Shirazi Qur’ans, although it was most likely produced in Gujarat.<sup>40</sup>

All aspects of the Patna *Shāhnāma*, including the page layout, calligraphy, illumination, and illustrations, resemble manuscripts produced in the late 1430s and 1440s in the region of Shiraz. There are 22 known illustrated copies of the *Shāhnāma* produced in or associated with the Shiraz orbit between 1435 and 1450, including those of possible Sultanate origin.<sup>41</sup> Of this broader group, the Patna manuscript is particularly close to those *Shāhnāmas* produced outside the royal court that show a clear debt to an illustrated *Shāhnāma* of circa 1430, commissioned by Ibrāhīm-Sultān, Timurid governor of Shiraz from 1414 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ouseley Add. 176).<sup>42</sup> These *Shāhnāmas* have been described as ‘post-Ibrāhīm’ as they were produced after his death in 1435.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>35</sup>M. I. Dar, *Literary and Cultural Activities in Gujarat under the Khaljis and the Sultanate* (Bombay, 1960), p. 58.

<sup>36</sup>I am grateful to Manijeh Bayani for supplying me with notes on this manuscript, now in the Al-Sabah Collection in Kuwait.

<sup>37</sup>N. Titley, *The Ni‘matnāma Manuscript of the Sultans of Mandu: The Sultan’s Book of Delights* (London and New York, 2005); and N. M. Titley, ‘An illustrated Persian glossary of the sixteenth century’, *British Museum Quarterly* XXIX (1965), pp. 15–19; J. Losty, *Art of the Book in India* (London, 1982), pp. 66–67, no. 40. For an example of a Turkman manuscript that relates to the Mandu illustrations, see a *Shāhnāma* in the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, MSS838, dated to the 1490s, illustrated in C. Melville and B. Brend, *Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi’s Shāhnāma* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 76–77, no. 11.

<sup>38</sup>The Iranian book illustration tradition may have been the catalyst behind many Jain manuscripts produced from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, see Losty, *Art of the Book in India*, p. 43; also Flood, ‘Before the Mughals’, p. 26.

<sup>39</sup>Losty, *Art of the Book in India*, p. 57, no. 21.

<sup>40</sup>E. Wright, ‘An Indian Qur’an and Its 14th-Century Shiraz Model’, *Oriental Art* 42.2 (1996–1997), pp. 8–12.

<sup>41</sup>See Appendix B for an updated version of the appendix in E. Sims, ‘The illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi’s *Shāhnāma* commissioned by princes of the House of Timur’, *Asiatica Orientalis* (1993), pp. 620–623.

<sup>42</sup>Ibrāhīm-Sultān died in 838/1435 and was succeeded by his young son ‘Abdullāh, born only two years earlier in 836/1432–33, who governed Shiraz in name only until 851/1447. See Abdullaeva and Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*. Wright dates the manuscript from the late 1420s to the early 1430s, see Wright, *The Look of the Book*, pp. 114 and 191. The entire manuscript is digitised and accessible on Digital Bodleian.

<sup>43</sup>Sims, ‘The illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi’s *Shāhnāma*’, pp. 67–68, Appendix B.

The Patna *Shāhnāma* has many features in common with the Bodleian manuscript.<sup>44</sup> First, the Bodleian *Shāhnāma* of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān also contains illumination in two distinct styles. A densely illuminated Qur'an, attributed to Gujarat from around 1430–50, also combines styles from both Timurid Herat and Shiraz, along with features of local Bihari Qur'ans.<sup>45</sup> Many post-Ibrāhīm manuscripts can be divided roughly between those that follow the Shiraz blue-and-gold theme and those that consist of elements more recently derived from Herat illumination.

Of the 48 illustrations in the Patna manuscript, only seven illustrate the same episodes as those in the Bodleian *Shāhnāma*. Both manuscripts include 'Rustam Lifts Afrasiyab from His Saddle by His Belt' with similar compositions: a high horizon, although that in the Patna rises to point, while that in the Bodleian describes a gentle curve;<sup>46</sup> figures are relatively large; and the barren landscape, scattered with small, neatly placed tufts of grass (Figure 5). In the Patna scene, Rustam has a more muscular and dynamic appearance than his Bodleian counterpart.

Many of the folios in the Bodleian *Shāhnāma* have stepped text panels, a distinctive feature of Shirazi manuscripts also found in our Patna *Shāhnāma*. In an analysis of the layout of the folio in Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān *Shāhnāma*, Elaine Wright observes the frequent use of stepped text-blocks results in more effective integration of text and image, often serving both a textual and compositional function.<sup>47</sup>

Twenty-nine illustrations in the Patna manuscript have a stepped edge while the rest have straight-edges, often with a detached verse as part of the painting.<sup>48</sup> Most have a shallow step, two lines deep, with one or two verses spread over two columns. The folio depicting 'Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chin from His Elephant' is the only one that features a deep step, only one column in width, with three verses (fol. 185r; Figure 6). It is the most eye-catching page layout, with perhaps the most inventive illustrated page for its interplay of text and image. The three verses in the stepped area of this folio, or break-line verses, describe Rustam throwing his lasso around the Khāqān of Chin's neck; thus, the artist has followed the text closely.<sup>49</sup> At the base of the painting is a further verse describing the Khāqān dragged off his elephant, so the reader does not have to turn the page to find

<sup>44</sup>However, the latter is larger and there are 31 lines of text rather than 25. The text panels in the Bodleian *Shāhnāma* measure 22.2 x 14.7 cm, whereas the text panels in the Patna manuscript measure 19 x 12 cm.

<sup>45</sup>S. Rettig, 'A Timurid-like response to the Qur'an of Gwalior?', in É. Brac de la Perrière and M. Burési, *Le Coran de Gwalior* (Paris, 2016), pp. 191–205.

<sup>46</sup>*Shahnama*, circa 1430–1435. Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ouseley Add. 176, fol. 63v, see Abdullaeva and Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, p. 73, fig. 44, and <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:-97568833> (last accessed 15 May 2020). Also accessible on Digital Bodleian.

<sup>47</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, pp. 198–208. Wright tells us, for example, that in the step immediately above the illustration of 'Rustam Kills the White Div' (fol. 71r), the text describes Rustam thrusting his dagger into the Div's chest, while the step below the text describes the Div's blood filling the cave. The first full line below the miniature describes Rustam walking away from the cave. Therefore, the two stepped areas are immediately relevant to the story, and the illustration has been inserted just before the pace of the story changes. The steps have a textual function, emphasising the verses relevant to the illustration, and a compositional function, helping the viewer to focus on the illustration. See Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 199.

<sup>48</sup>Therefore, only nine paintings have no stepped upper edge or detached verse.

<sup>49</sup>The 'break-line verse or verses' is a term coined by Fatan Mehran to refer to the line most closely associated with the image. This is usually the line immediately before the image. See F. Mehran, 'The break-line verse: the link between text and image in the "first small" *Shahnama*', in *Shahnama Studies*, Vol. I, (ed.) C. Melville (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 151–169.



Figure 5. 'Rustam Lifts Afrasiyab from His Saddle by His Belt', *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 65r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

out what happens next. This carefully considered page layout is further emphasised by the artist who has arranged the composition so that the elephant's feet appear to be trampling on the text where he is mentioned.



Figure 6. 'Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chin from His Elephant', *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 185r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

Other features of the Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān *Shāhnāma* and the Patna manuscript have commonalities: aspects of the iconography and compositions of the illustrations, the layout of the page, and the interplay between text and image. However, the Patna artist drew on the



Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān legacy without directly referring to this manuscript. The Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān *Shāhnāma*, being part of the royal collection, would have had a limited audience. However, after Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's death, the court artists dispersed, and there was a rapid increase in the number of high-quality commercial manuscripts produced in Shiraz and a move away from court patronage.<sup>50</sup> The Patna manuscript can be associated more directly with this group of Shiraz manuscripts of the late 1430s and 1440s.

One such example is a copy of the *Shāhnāma* dated 839–41 (1436–37), previously owned by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava.<sup>51</sup> Robinson determined that three artists worked on this manuscript, one of whom most likely came from the royal atelier, and that the manuscript was begun before Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān died and then completed elsewhere, possibly even India.<sup>52</sup> Although the compositions in these two copies of the *Shāhnāma* are not identical, they share a relatively high number of similar subjects, and there are common traits in both iconography and composition. The Dufferin and Ava *Shāhnāma* has the same page layout as the Patna manuscript, and most of the post-Ibrahim *Shāhnāmas*, with 25 lines to the page divided into four columns.<sup>53</sup> The page layout shows an integrated arrangement of image and text, as noted above in the Patna folios, but with more imaginative use of the margins.

Another manuscript that closely compares with our Patna *Shāhnāma* is a copy of this text in Leiden University Library dating to 1437 (840).<sup>54</sup> The sizing and page layouts are close,<sup>55</sup> and the illustrations have common aspects in composition and details. Take the illustration of 'Rustam and the White Div' (Figure 7); the artist of the Leiden version of this scene uses a similar formula for the composition, allowing some variation in the landscape details. The Leiden miniature lacks the frothy rocks of the Patna version and instead has a landscape covered in red flowering plants.<sup>56</sup> Ulad and Rakhsh are placed in the margin in the Leiden version. For popular images such as this, the basic formula was repeated in many post-Ibrāhīm manuscripts and probably originated with the Bodleian version.<sup>57</sup>

Still further *Shāhnāmas*, of similar and later date, contain parallel iconographical details and compositions, such as a *Shāhnāma* of 1441, now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>50</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>51</sup>Present whereabouts unknown. See B. W. Robinson, 'Persian epic illustration: a "Book of Kings" of 1436–7', *Apollo* (September, 1982), pp. 154–157. Sold at Sotheby's, 11 October 1982, lot 214 and again 16 October 1997, lot 47.

<sup>52</sup>The scribe of this manuscript was named Jahangir, who later added al-Sultani to his name in a *Khamsa* of Nizāmī, 1449, ex-Kevorkian collection; see Sotheby's, 7 December 1970, lot 186 and again 22 October 1993, lot 151.

<sup>53</sup>The pages are slightly larger in size, measuring 26.4 x 17.2 cm. Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', Vol. II, figs. 3.67–71.

<sup>54</sup><http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:-1651814428> (last accessed 15 May 2020). E. Sims, 'Towards a study of Shirazi illustrated manuscripts of the "Interim Period": The Leiden Shāhnāmah of 840/1437', *Oriente Moderno* II (1996), pp. 611–625. This manuscript was not collected in India, but in Istanbul by Levinus Warner, the Dutch ambassador to the Sublime Porte, who bequeathed it to the University of Leiden in 1665.

<sup>55</sup>The Leiden *Shāhnāma* pages measure 18.1 x 11.4 cm.

<sup>56</sup>See <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1009798338> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>57</sup>Although Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's *Shāhnāma* did seem to provide the model, this particular composition can ultimately be traced back even further to the Epics of 800/1397–98, see Sims, 'The illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*', fig. 8.

<sup>58</sup>The illustrations are listed in F. Richard, *Splendeurs Persanes: Manuscrits du XIIe au XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1997), p. 80, no. 45. Three other later manuscripts from this group are:

1) *Shāhnāma*, dated 845/1441, now in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC, lent by The Art and

However, the closest comparison with our Patna *Shāhnāma* is an illustrated copy of this text in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, with some loose folios in the British Museum in London, which is undated but probably produced in the late 1430s.<sup>59</sup> In the illustration of ‘Salm Flees and Is Killed by Manūchihr’ (Figure 3), the two leading figures in the battle strike a similar pose as those in the same scene in the British Museum illustration, including the more unusual position of having Manūchihr’s horse in front of Salm’s (Figure 8).<sup>60</sup> The rendering of the horses themselves is also alike. Improvisation was confined to secondary features such as lesser figures, the landscape, and decorative details.

Another painting in the Cambridge manuscript of ‘Rustam Lifts Afrasiyab from His Saddle by His Belt’ (fol. 22v; Figure 9) is virtually identical to the same subject illustrated in the Patna manuscript (fol. 65r; Figure 3), discussed above. Most figures in the Patna version of this episode are replicas of those in the Cambridge painting. Rustam thrusts his arm up in the same manner with his left arm held away from his body. The few differences between these two paintings are the extraneous details. The paintings look similar at first glance, and on closer inspection, the measurement from the top of Afrasiyab’s helmet to the edge of the caparison over Rustam’s horse is identical in both scenes.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, it seems clear that the striking similarity is the result of the Patna artist making a copy of either the Cambridge illustration itself or an identical model.

#### *A note on the repetition of images*

It is notable that although these ‘post- Ibrāhīm’ manuscripts contain many repetitions in their illustrations,<sup>62</sup> each manuscript displays original compositions and choices of subject.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, the Patna illustrations have a fresh and vigorous look. In an analysis of a group of royal manuscripts produced in Herat in the fifteenth century, Adamova concludes that the artists were following set rules for repetition and invention to demonstrate proficiency at reproducing well-known compositions and an ability to invent new interpretations of the text.<sup>64</sup> In studies of non-courtly Shiraz manuscripts, it has been suggested that repetition

History Trust Collection, LTS1995.2.189, see A. Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts—Selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York, 1992), pp. 71–77, no. 27.

2) *Shāhnāma* dated 847/1443, now in the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, Ms.2173, see S. A. Sharifzadeh, *Namavama* (Tehran, 1991), pp. 21–32.

3) *Shāhnāma*, dated 848/1444. Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, Supplément persan 494 and Cleveland, 45.169 and 56.10, see Richard, *Splendeurs Persanes*, p. 81, no. 46

<sup>59</sup>There are five folios in the British Museum and 25 in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. The remaining text pages are dispersed and their current locations are unknown. The text panels and illuminated double-page are close in size to the Patna folios, although there are 23 lines rather than 25. The text panels measure 17.8 x 11.4 cm compared to the Patna *Shāhnāma*’s measuring 19 x 12 cm. See Melville and Brend, *Epic of the Persian Kings*, pp. 66–67, nos. 6, 7, pp. 122–127, nos. 40, 41 and 42.

<sup>60</sup>British Museum, 1948.10–9.049, see <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:-465791527> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>61</sup>I am grateful to Svetlana Taylor at the Fitzwilliam Museum for verifying this measurement and Laura Weinstein for generously checking this for me on a field trip to Patna.

<sup>62</sup>A case in point is the episode of ‘Rustam Killing the White Div’ illustrated in all the manuscripts discussed thus far, and more besides. The basic formula, which probably originated from the Bodleian version, is repeated in the other later versions, although none are identical. See Shovelton, ‘Sultanate Painting’, Vol. II, figs. 3.102–9.

<sup>63</sup>For a more detailed examination of this topic, see *ibid.*, pp. 259–267.

<sup>64</sup>A. T. Adamova, ‘Repetition of compositions in manuscripts: the *Khamsa* of Nizami in Leningrad’, in *Timurid Art and Culture—Iran and Central Asia in the 15th Century*, (eds) L. Golombek and M. Subtelny (Leiden and New York, 1992), pp. 67–75.



Figure 7. ‘Rustam Slays the White Div’, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 74r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

was due to the need for swift production.<sup>65</sup> However, those responsible for planning Shiraz *Shāhnāmas* for the market were also following an established protocol of repetition and invention. The Shiraz illustrations correspond on many levels, ranging from copying a

<sup>65</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 121 and p. 350, note 247 where Wright clarifies that she is not disputing Adamova’s conclusion but that the ‘rules’ were probably less closely adhered to for commercial manuscripts, and repeated compositions could fulfil a more practical function.





Figure 8. 'Manuchihr Kills Salm', *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, circa 1438–89. Source: British Museum, 1948.10-09.049 © Trustees of the British Museum.





Figure 9. 'Rustam Lifts Afrasiyab from His Saddle by His Belt', *Shāhnāma* of Firdausi, circa 1438–39. Source: Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 22-1948, fol. 22v © The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

group of figures to repeating the majority of the composition. Nevertheless, each manuscript included only a small number of copies of earlier compositions, with the remainder of the paintings being original compositions; therefore, the planning of each illustrative cycle was not entirely dissimilar to courtly manuscripts.<sup>66</sup>

Within the post-Ibrāhīm group of manuscripts, the source for copied compositions is frequently the Cambridge *Shāhnāma*. This manuscript served as a type of copybook, or perhaps copies or pounces of certain paintings were circulated.<sup>67</sup> However, just one painting within the Patna *Shāhnāma* is modelled on an illustration in the Cambridge *Shāhnāma*, and only seven of its 48 paintings illustrate scenes also included in the Cambridge manuscript. It is surprising that copying was not more frequent in making commercial manuscripts, as this would have reduced production times. Perhaps manuscripts containing a combination of recognisable scenes and new compositions were more valued and therefore easier to sell.<sup>68</sup> It is quite likely that soon after its production in Shiraz, the Cambridge *Shāhnāma* was taken to India, where it was acquired much later by Percival Chater Manuk, a high court judge in Patna and a pioneer collector of Indian painting.<sup>69</sup>

The artists working on this particular group of manuscripts were not necessarily all from the same workshop. Indeed, the Patna manuscript was probably not produced in the same city or even country. However, artists trained in the Shirazi style usually included both copied and original illustrations in their manuscripts. Extensive research by Sims and Wright has shown that the manuscripts associated with Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān and their antecedents have significant historical value, even if their aesthetic value is not of the same calibre as contemporary Herat painting.<sup>70</sup> Sims also points out that the importance of post-Ibrāhīm Shirazi manuscripts lies in the fact that their style was to have an impact from India to Turkey.<sup>71</sup> The burgeoning number of manuscripts has been attributed to the death of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān, when artists left the royal atelier to seek employment elsewhere.<sup>72</sup> I would extend this argument to suggest that the potential market in the Indian Sultanates was a contributory factor in the high number of manuscripts produced at this time.<sup>73</sup> Alongside the market for manuscripts in India there was a demand for artists and calligraphers to relocate and work for local patrons.

<sup>66</sup>The Patna set of illustrations contains only one that replicates an earlier work, 19 illustrating popular subjects, and 28 representing unusual subjects. The Patna *Shāhnāma* has between four and 14 subjects in common with manuscripts from Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's lifetime and post-Ibrāhīm *Shāhnāmas*. See Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', Appendix D, pp. 340–346 for a comparison of subjects illustrated in the Patna *Shāhnāma* and nine *Shāhnāmas* dating from 1436 to circa 1450.

<sup>67</sup>One example is 'Jamshid Carried by Divs' in the Cambridge *Shāhnāma* (<http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1733133005>) and two other *Shāhnāmas* with near-identical compositions; see <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:2147348130> and <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:1862802853> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>68</sup>A future statistical study of all manuscripts produced in Shiraz is needed to provide more precise information on their interrelationships.

<sup>69</sup>See Appendix C for a preliminary list of illustrated *Shāhnāma* manuscripts produced in Iran but collected in India, along with those of possible Indian provenance and others of Indian origin.

<sup>70</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 162. Wright goes further and points out that although Shiraz painting might appear stylised and rigid due to a lack of ability on the artist's part, more careful analysis shows that depicting the world around them in a more naturalistic manner was simply of no interest to them.

<sup>71</sup>E. Sims, *Peerless Images: Persian Painting and its Sources* (New Haven and London, 2000), p. 54.

<sup>72</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 291.

<sup>73</sup>The current discussion is based on the dispersal of the *Shāhnāma* text in particular; numerous other texts of Persian origin were collected, written, and created in Sultanate India.

Manuscripts are portable objects and might be collected, gifted, and read far from their original place of production. It is vital to consider the future life of each manuscript ‘post-production’ in the context of Sultanate India, rather than focus entirely on its place of origin. A considerable number of manuscripts with Persian texts from the Shiraz orbit, now in private and public collections worldwide, were collected in India (see Appendix C).<sup>74</sup> In order to fully understand the art of the book in the Indian Sultanates, we need to consider where and how manuscripts were collected and commissioned across the South Asian Sultanate states. While this article is largely intended to provide evidence of a Shiraz-style manuscript’s India provenance, this research also reflects on the production and movement of a particular group of *Shāhnāma* manuscripts produced in post-Ibrahim Shiraz, and others besides.

### Evidence for the Indian origin of the Patna *Shāhnāma*

Two striking elements point to an Indian provenance for the Patna *Shāhnāma*, despite its Shiraz connections. First, the number and form of the elephants depicted. In the Patna manuscript, there are three depictions of elephants: ‘Rustam Lassoes Kāmūs’ (fol. 177r; [Figure 10](#)), ‘Rustam Pulls the Khāqān of Chin from His Elephant’ (fol. 185r; [Figure 6](#)), and ‘Hormuz Giving Bahrām Chūbīna Command of the Army’ (fol. 489v). The episode where Kāmūs is pulled from his horse by Rustam was an unusual choice for fifteenth-century *Shāhnāmas*.<sup>75</sup> The Patna scene shows Kāmūs riding an elephant rather than the horse referred to in the text. The Mohl *Shāhnāma* is the only other *Shāhnāma* from the first half of the fifteenth century to feature this scene, and here Kāmūs is also riding on an elephant who has a similar stance, with one of the forelegs stretched forward and the other bent back at the knee.<sup>76</sup> Along with some other observations, it was the gait of this particular elephant that Barbara Brend noted as one argument for an Indian origin of this manuscript.<sup>77</sup>

The form of the three white elephants in the Patna paintings is unlike those shown in Persian painting and is instead more realistically depicted with a domed forehead. Contemporary Shirazi versions, on the other hand, usually feature large frilly edged ears, bulbous feet, and decorative adornments; for example, the elephant in the Leiden *Shāhnāma* of

<sup>74</sup>Interestingly, two of the three ‘royal’ *Shāhnāmas* commissioned by Timurid princes were brought to India, perhaps arriving not long after production. Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān’s *Shāhnāma*, now in the Bodleian Library, was collected by Sir Gore Ouseley, and was likely to have been in India for some time before then, see Abdullaeva and Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, p. 11. The *Shāhnāma* of Muḥammad Jūkī of *circa* 1444 was owned by a succession of Mughal emperors, the first of whom was Bābur, founder of the dynasty; Royal Asiatic Society, Persian 239. The manuscript may have arrived in India before the Mughal dynasty was established. Brend remarks that the manuscript was ‘lost to sight during the second half of the fifteenth century but reappears in the sixteenth century in the hands of the Mughal dynasty’, see B. Brend, *Muhammad Juki’s Shahnamah of Firdausi* (London, 2010), p. 148.

<sup>75</sup>However, several early fourteenth-century *Shāhnāmas* feature this scene. For example, the first small *Shāhnāma* in the Chester Beatty Library (Pers. 104, fol. 22r, of *circa* 1300), see <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:29318919> (last accessed 15 May 2020) and an Inju *Shāhnāma* in the Chester Beatty Library (Pers. 110, fol. 17v, dated 1341), see <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:788542070> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>76</sup>‘Death of Kāmūs’, *Shahnama*, dated 841/1438, British Library, London, Or.1403 (ex-Collection Jules Mohl), fol. 171r. See: <http://shahnama.lib.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/ceillustration:-402111475> (last accessed 15 May 2019).

<sup>77</sup>Brend noted the ‘slant of the animal’s hindquarters and the rhythm of its trot’ in her argument for an Indian origin of this manuscript; see Brend, ‘The British Library’s *Shāhnāma* of 1438’, p. 88.





Figure 10. 'Rustam Lassoes Kamus', *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 177r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.



1437, mentioned above.<sup>78</sup> In short, none of the post-Ibrāhīm paintings of elephants resemble the more realistically depicted Patna *Shāhnāma* elephant.

By contrast, the form of elephant found in the Patna illustrations, with a domed forehead, small ears, and foreleg bent at the knee, is found in Indian painting from the fourteenth century onwards. A Jain *yantra* (sacred diagram), painted on cloth in Gujarat in 1447, has an elephant with a comparable outline to the elephants in the Patna illustrations, even though the skin is painted or covered with ornaments in the Gujarat version.<sup>79</sup> Painted at the same time as the *Shāhnāma*, in the nearby state of Mandu, the *Kalpasūtra* of 1439 contains elephants whose heads have a similar profile, with a high-domed forehead.<sup>80</sup> The same type of elephant also appears in the Sultanate copy of the *Ḥamzanāma*.<sup>81</sup> Like the Mandu *Kalpasūtra*, the elephant in the *Ḥamzanāma* also wears rings around its ankles and has a painted trunk. This form can be seen later in Mughal paintings<sup>82</sup> and even in Kashmir paintings four centuries later.<sup>83</sup>

The second visual element that suggests an Indian connection are the textiles depicted in many of the illustrations in the Patna manuscript. The variety of patterns on clothes, armour, and the interiors is a notable feature of the Patna illustrations not found in contemporary Shirazi painting. Comparisons on certain horses in the Patna *Shāhnāma* feature designs ranging from simple lines to rows of scrolls or diamond shapes (Figures 7, 10–12). In contrast, horses depicted in both the Bodleian and Cambridge *Shāhnāmas*, for example, have caparisons of similar form, sometimes in monochrome colours, or they feature lines and strokes to represent the joins and seams of the horse covering.<sup>84</sup>

Some of these designs in the Patna illustrations find echoes in contemporary Gujarat textile designs. Gujarat has a block-printing textile industry that dates back to at least the eleventh century and is still well-known today. Under the independent sultans of the fifteenth century, the industry was thriving, and exports grew considerably.<sup>85</sup> The caparison on the three horses in the foreground of fol. 32r (Figure 3) and the horse on the left of fol. 135v (Figure 11) feature alternate rows of vine scrolls and finials. Suhrāb's horse on the right of the illustration on fol. 88r

<sup>78</sup>'Rustam pulls the Khāqān of Chin from his elephant', *Shāhnāma*, 840/1437, University Library, Leiden, Cod.Or.494, fol. 180r, see <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/item/2034887#page/187/mode/rup> (accessed 15 June 2022). Sims notes that the text describing Timur's invasion of Delhi of 801/1398 in the *Zafarnāma* mentions the visual effect of the Indian army mounted on elephants, but the illustration shows no elephants. Sims pointed out that this may be because the artist had never seen an elephant. See Sims, 'Ibrahim-Sultan's illustrated *Zafar-nameh*', p. 188, fig. 14.

<sup>79</sup>Victoria and Albert Museum, IM 89-1936, see J. Guy and D. Swallow (eds), *Arts of India, 1550–1900* (London, 1990), p. 18, fig. 4.

<sup>80</sup>'Marudevī mounted on an elephant on his way to meet Rishabhanātha', *Kalpasūtra*, Mandu, dated 1439, National Museum, New Delhi, no. 49.175, fol. 50r; see K. Khandalavala and M. Chandra, 'A consideration of an illustrated manuscript from Mandapadurga (Mandu) dated 1439 A.D.', *Lalit Kala* vol. 6 (1959), pl. IV, fig. 14.

<sup>81</sup>Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Berlin, Or.fol.4181, see Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', pp. 155–217.

<sup>82</sup>The elephant depicted in the foreground of the Mughal painting 'The Maharana of Mewar submitting to Prince Khurram' of circa 1618 also shares the same domed headed profile as those in the Patna paintings, and the Mughal elephant is also unadorned. See S. Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor. The Art of the Book 1560–1650* (London, 2002), p. 125, pl. 90. Like the Mughal artist, the Patna artist depicts an elephant closer to life and, at the same time, refers to depictions from indigenous artists rather than Persian predecessors.

<sup>83</sup>Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms.Minutoli 134, fol. 181v, dated 1830, made in Kashmir; see the *Shāhnāma* website: <http://shāhnāma.caret.cam.ac.uk> (last accessed 15 May 2020).

<sup>84</sup>See Abdullaeva and Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings*, p. 87, fig. 56.

<sup>85</sup>Many fragments of block-printed textiles from Gujarat, dating to the fifteenth century, have been discovered in Egypt; see R. Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt: The Neuberry Collection in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford, 1997), Vol. I, pp. 78–84; and Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, p. 120.

(Figure 12) also features scrolls and finials in a distinctive colour scheme of orange against a yellow background. This design resembles fragments of contemporary cloth from Gujarat that survive in the Newbury Collection in Oxford (Figure 13).<sup>86</sup> Another block-print design found on Garshāsp's horse on fol. 30r, composed of repeated diamond shapes in friezes alternating with finials, can also be paralleled with a Gujarati textile design.<sup>87</sup>

A further factor indicating an Indian origin is the thin brown paper, a type usually associated with India and also used for the suspected Sultanate Mohl *Shāhnāma*. A proper scientific study of paper used in fifteenth-century manuscripts has not yet been carried out; this study, preferably in collaboration with conservators, would help clarify the similarities and differences between paper made in Iran and South Asia.

All the elements that constitute the Patna manuscript derive from the Shiraz orbit of the 1430s and 1440s: illumination, page layout, calligraphy, and illustrations. However, the well-defined elephants and the links to Gujarat textiles strongly suggest an India link. The Patna manuscript must have resulted from the arrival of an artist from the Shiraz region migrating to India seeking patronage after the royal atelier had disbanded following Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān's death. The few Indian elements in the Patna manuscript probably resulted from the impact of an Indian environment on an artist who was otherwise trained in the Shiraz mode. Alternatively, he was working in tandem with an artist familiar with local traditions.

The main criteria used by Robinson, Fraad, and Ettinghausen to assert the Indian provenance of the group of Persian manuscripts mentioned above were the presence of unusual characteristics in the illustrations that seemed out of line with contemporary Persian painting.<sup>88</sup> However, unusual characteristics alone cannot prove an Indian origin. Furthermore, being entirely in line with contemporary Shiraz painting does not exclude the possibility of an Indian provenance; as we have seen, the Patna *Shāhnāma* does fit with contemporary manuscripts from Shiraz. Access to literature and artists from Iranian cities was not confined to the years of the Delhi Sultanate but continued into the fifteenth century in regional centres.

### Persianate culture in the Indian Sultanates, and the reception of the *Shāhnāma*

During the fourteenth century, the political frontiers within India were in constant flux with new urban centres established; these new settlements facilitated the spread of Persianate culture through the circulation of Persian texts.<sup>89</sup> There was an increased interest in Persian literature among the elite across South Asia, particularly during the reign of the Tughluqs.<sup>90</sup> Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (r. 725–752/1325–51) was famed for his knowledge of Persian

<sup>86</sup>See Barnes, *Indian Block-Printed Textiles in Egypt*, p. 33, no. 123: This fragment displays the same combination of vine leaves and finials, or *bodhi* leaves, see also nos. 125 and 145 for other similar vine leaf designs.

<sup>87</sup>See *ibid.*, p. 34, no. 127. Although the colours of these block-printed designs are usually blue or red, the patterns resemble friezes found in Patna illustrations.

<sup>88</sup>Fraad and Ettinghausen, 'Sultanate painting in Persian style' was the first attempt to publish a body of material of possible Sultanate manuscripts. For a condensed and more precise version of the main points, see the summary of this article in B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library* (London, 1980), pp. 95–96, where he added a few more manuscripts to the corpus in his catalogue of the John Rylands Library.

<sup>89</sup>Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, p. 73.

<sup>90</sup>The Tughluq dynasty was founded in 720/1320 by Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq. The two most notable rulers, with the longest reigns, were Muḥammad ibn Tughluq (r. 725–752/1325–51), son of Ghiyāth al-Dīn, and Firūz Shāh (r. 752–790/1351–88).



Figure 11. ‘Giv, Son of Gudarz, Finds Kay Khusrau’, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 135v. © Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna.





Figure 12. ‘Sührab in Combat with Gurdāfarīd’, *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, dated 843/1440. Source: Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, no. 3787, fol. 88r. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

literary works and was keen on the *Shāhnāma*.<sup>91</sup> The upsurge in lexicography at this time indicates that Persian classics were popular. Dictionaries were needed to explain obsolete

<sup>91</sup>I. Prasad, *History of the Qaramah Turks in India* (Allahabad, 1936), p. 311; see also K. C. B. Elliot and M. R. A. S. Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians: The Muhammeden Period/edited from the post-humous papers of the late Sir H. M. Elliot by John Dowson*, 8 vols (London, 1867–1877), Vol. 3, pp. 235 and 580.





Figure 13. Blue and white textile, block-printed resist, dyed blue, fifteenth century, made in Gujarat. Source: Ashmolean Museum, Newberry Collection, EA 1990.131, © Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford.

or unfamiliar words and expressions used in classical literature. The *Farhang-i Qawwās* was the earliest Persian dictionary produced in India and was compiled by Fakhr al-Dīn Mubārak Shāh, who stated that the *Shāhnāma* is the zenith of all literary achievements.<sup>92</sup>

The focus of this study is the *Shāhnāma*. However, there were, of course, numerous other popular texts from many genres and other literary texts in circulation, such as the *Ḥamzanāma*<sup>93</sup> and the *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī, seen above, and the *Būstān* of Sa'dī.<sup>94</sup> Of the many Persian works written in India, well-known illustrated manuscripts include Amīr Khusrau's *Khamsa*, composed between 1298 and 1302,<sup>95</sup> and the *Ni'matnāma*, mentioned above, written in Mandu in the late 1490s, for Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn and completed in the reign of his son Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh (r. 1500–1510).<sup>96</sup>

The earliest surviving *Shāhnāmas* produced in India, aside from the Patna *Shāhnāma* under discussion, are two illustrated copies dating to *circa* 1450–75.<sup>97</sup> The Indian origin of these two manuscripts is apparent due to their close correlation with Indic material culture. The first of these manuscripts survives as only six *Shāhnāma* paintings, which are removed from their text and now reside in the Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum in Varanasi (Figure 14).<sup>98</sup> The other is a dispersed copy, often called the 'Jainesque *Shāhnāma*', as the paintings were executed by an

<sup>92</sup>The exact date of this dictionary is unknown, but it was written around the turn of the fourteenth century. H. Siddiqui, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information of the Life and Conditions in the Sultanate of Delhi* (New Delhi, 1992), p. 79. The author of another key dictionary from this period, Ḥājib Khairat Dihlavī (or Ma 'ruf), describes Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* as the most popular work of his age; see Siddiqui, *Perso-Arabic Sources*, pp. 78 and 82. See also Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', p. 123.

<sup>93</sup>Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', pp. 155–217.

<sup>94</sup>R. Ettinghausen, 'The Bustan manuscript of Sultan Nasir-Shah Khalji', *Marg* 12 (1959), pp. 40–43.

<sup>95</sup>Brend, *Perspectives on Persian Painting*, p. xxi.

<sup>96</sup>Titely, *The Ni'matnāma Manuscript*.

<sup>97</sup>Interestingly, Mughals rulers were less keen on the *Shāhnāma*, particularly by the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see L. Weinstein, 'Illustration as localization: a dispersed Bijapuri manuscript of the *Shah-nama*', in *Shahnama Studies III: The Reception of the Shahnama*, (eds) G. van den Berg and C. Melville (Leiden and Boston, 2018), pp. 347–372. See also E. Wright, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (Hanover and London, 2008), p. 240.

<sup>98</sup>Seven illustrations survive from this manuscript, separated from their surrounding text. These loose folios form part of a distinct group of Sultanate manuscripts that display a mixture of Persian, Mamluk, and Indic sources. For a discussion of this manuscript, see Shovelton, 'Sultanate Painting', pp. 79–81. See also Brac de la Perrière, *L'Art du livre dans l'Inde*, pp. 270–271, no. 2, pl. 4.



Figure 14. *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, circa 1450–75. Source: Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 9943. Photo: Emily Shovelton.

artist trained in the Jain tradition.<sup>99</sup> The Varanasi *Shāhnāma* forms part of a small group of nearly identical manuscripts; the others in the set being copies of the *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī.<sup>100</sup> The paintings accompanying these texts have a consistent and unique style with elements related to both Indic and early fourteenth-century Persian illustrative traditions.

The Varanasi paintings and the Jainesque *Shāhnāma* illustrations have no obvious visual connections with our Patna manuscript and instead demonstrate how Persianate literary works in South Asia were absorbed and reinterpreted through Indic visual culture. The prevalence of Persianate literary and visual arts had been well established during the centuries of Delhi Sultanate rule. However, under the Sultanate states of the fifteenth century, material culture reflects diverse ‘local’ traditions rather than a more unified vision emanating from one dominant central court. A case in point is the appearance of the Sufi romances, or so-called *prema-kahānī*, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>101</sup> These embody the transcultural environment at this time as the stories are based on the Persian genre of Sufi poetry but adopt local folk stories and Hindu mythology and deities. One such text was the *Chandāyan*, a

<sup>99</sup>This manuscript once contained at least 350 folios, 67 with illustrations. It is now dispersed, and the whereabouts of only 17 illustrations are known. For a discussion of this manuscript, see B. N. Goswami, *A Jainesque Sultanate Shāhnāma and the Context of pre-Mughal Painting in India* (Zürich, 1988).

<sup>100</sup>E. Shovelton, ‘Remaking Persian narratives in the Indian Sultanates: A *Khamsa* of Niẓāmī in the British Library’, forthcoming.

<sup>101</sup>A. Behl, *Love’s Subtle Magic: An Indian Islamic Literary Tradition, 1379–1545*, (ed.) W. Doniger (New York, 2016).

vernacular romance composed by the Chishti Sufi Maulānā Dā'ūd in 1379 in Avadhī, a local eastern dialect of Hindavī text, and written in the Arabic script. Several copies were produced with illustrations in various styles that reflect this cross-cultural dialogue.<sup>102</sup>

These two copies of the *Shāhnāma* further testify to the fluidity of cultural traditions; both show how a Persian text was remade in India with illustrations that reflect overlapping local and 'foreign' elements.<sup>103</sup> The boundaries between different cultural traditions were not clear-cut, and iconography and ideas flowed in multiple directions. Consider the *Kālakācārya-kathā*, probably made in Mandu in *circa* 1430–40, now in the Lalbahi Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmadabad.<sup>104</sup> This manuscript was the product of a thriving and wealthy Jain community. Nevertheless, certain elements from Persian and Arabic illustrated literature were assimilated into these Jain paintings. The variety of illustrative interpretations of the *Shāhnāmas* produced in South Asia show that different illustrative traditions were not bound to a single language or text, and diverse audiences across the subcontinent appreciated the text.

### The Patna *Shāhnāma* and Indo-Persian culture in the Sultanate state of Gujarat

The Bahmani dynasty in the Deccan was the first Sultanate state to declare independence in 1347.<sup>105</sup> Following the sack of Delhi in 1398 by Timur, other provincial governors took advantage of the absent Sultan, seized control, and established their independence.<sup>106</sup> The governor of Gujarat, Zafār Khān, declared Gujarat to be a sovereign state in 1407 and entitled himself Muẓaffar Shāh (r. 1407–11).<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, this seemed to have been Timur's tactic. Digby surmises that there were two main aims behind Timur's campaign in India: first, to wipe out central authority and thereby reduce the threat from the East to Timur's realm; and, secondly, to establish subsidiary alliances with less powerful chieftains and governors across the country.<sup>108</sup>

The seal impressions found on multiple folios in our Patna *Shāhnāma* bear the name of Muḥammad Shah, ruler of Gujarat from 1442–51. Other than describing him as a pleasure-loving ruler who preferred courtly life to the battlefield, sources do not provide much detail

<sup>102</sup>Q. Adamjee, 'Strategies for Visual Narration in the Illustrated "Chandayan" Manuscripts', (unpublished PhD dissertation, New York University, 2011).

<sup>103</sup>Viewing this period in South Asia through the lens of religion and invoking a binary notion of 'Muslim' and 'Hindu' overlooks ethnic groups, such as Turks or North India's martial clans, later called Rajputs. Society and culture under the Sultanates were far more nuanced and transcultural than scholarship has traditionally perceived. See Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, pp. 3–10.

<sup>104</sup>K. Khandalavala and M. Chandra, *New Documents of Indian Painting—A Reappraisal* (Mumbai, 1969), p. 23, pl. 3.

<sup>105</sup>Islam first made contact with the Indian subcontinent when Arab armies crossed the river Indus in the early eighth century and conquered Sind. However, it was not until 1192 that the last Rajput ruler of Ajmer and Delhi was defeated in the Battle of Tarain by Muḥammad ibn Sām, son of the Ghūrīd ruler Ghiyāth al-Dīn, and the Delhi Sultanate began. While the empire grew rapidly, the southern region of the Deccan was only conquered in the early fourteenth century. The Bahmani Sultanate established independence after a revolt among the officers of the Delhi Sultanate stationed in the Deccan.

<sup>106</sup>Zafār Khān, the son of a peasant who converted to Islam, was sent by Sultan Firuz Tughluq to restore central authority in the region, see Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age*, p. 119.

<sup>107</sup>The most powerful of those in the northern subcontinent besides Gujarat were neighbouring Malwa; to the east, Bengal; and the north, Delhi and Jaunpur. Other states were Sind and Punjab in the Indus valley, and Khandesh between Malwa, Gujarat, and the Deccan. The three main areas that remained under Hindu control were the Rajput dynasties to the northwest, the Vijayanagar empire to the south, and Gondwana to the east.

<sup>108</sup>S. Digby, 'After Timur left: North India in the fifteenth century', in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century North India* (Oxford, 2014), p. 48.

on his life and character.<sup>109</sup> His father, Sultan Aḥmad Shāh (813–846/1411–42), founded a new capital city Ahmadabad, which soon attracted merchants, poets, Sufi sheikhs, and scholars from all over India, as well as from Persia, Egypt, and beyond.<sup>110</sup> Aḥmad Shāh and future rulers and the elite in Gujarat patronised literature in Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit.<sup>111</sup>

Muḥammad Shāh grew up in this environment and courtly life for him would have encompassed diverse literary and religious traditions;<sup>112</sup> a Brahman writer mentions that he visited Muḥammad Shāh's court in Ahmadabad and impressed all the scholars there.<sup>113</sup> Rather than marry into the family of a Sultanate ruler or noble, he was the first Sultan from Gujarat to marry the daughter of a local chieftain, Rā'i Har of Idar. She was known as a great beauty who charmed the Sultan into restoring the fort of Idar to her father.<sup>114</sup> Although there had been Persian-speaking communities in Gujarat for centuries by then, the use and spread of the language was more significant under the independent Sultanate state. Take epigraphic inscriptions; in the early fourteenth century, long Sanskrit inscriptions would be followed by short rudimentary texts in Persian. This changed during the fifteenth century when most combine Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit,<sup>115</sup> with the Persian section usually being the most lengthy.<sup>116</sup>

We cannot know for sure what it was about the *Shāhnāma* that interested Muḥammad Shāh. However, presumably the story resonated for any ruler trying to establish or maintain sovereignty in Sultanate India, where Persian was the language of politics and elite culture. In Gujarat, with such close links to Iran, the epic tales of past rulers must have had particular relevance. Muḥammad Shāh, a 'pleasure-loving' ruler interested in courtly culture, most likely enjoyed the entertaining stories and appreciated them from a literary perspective as a mirror for princes. The Patna *Shāhnāma* is dated 843/1440,<sup>117</sup> and Muḥammad Shāh came to the throne in 1442; therefore, the seal impressions were added two years, if not more, after the manuscript was completed.

<sup>109</sup>E. C. Bayley, *The History of India as Told by its own Historians: The local Muhammadan Dynasties* (New Delhi, 1886, reprinted 1970), p. 129.

<sup>110</sup>The scholar and grammarian from Egypt, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Damāmini, came to the court of Ahmadabad and is known to have completed at least three works in Arabic, all dedicated to Aḥmad Shāh, see Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, p. 206. For examples of unillustrated manuscripts that survive with dedications to Sultan Aḥmad Shāh, see S. Azmi, 'The glimpses of medieval India Gujarat through the pages of Miratī Sikandari', in *The Growth of Indo-Persian Literature in Gujarat*, (ed.) M. H. Siddiqi (Baroda, 1985), p. 58.

<sup>111</sup>One of many migrants from Iran who settled in Gujarat was 'Abd al-Husayn b. Hājī, who wrote the latter part of the *Ta'rikh-i Maḥmūd Shāhi*. Sultans of Gujarat were prolific patrons of literature and learning, including religious subjects and texts on music, medicine, farriery, philology, astrology, and astronomy. Sheikh, *Forging a Region*, pp. 206–207.

<sup>112</sup>During this period, scholars and poets began to write in early Gujarati and Gūjārī, see *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95, n. 6.

<sup>114</sup>According to Firishṭa, she poisoned him to death on the initiative of some of his officers. See Firishṭa, Abū'l-Qāsim, *Ta'rikh-i Firishṭa, History of the Rise of Mahomedan Power in India till the Year 1612*, (trans.) John Briggs, 4 vols (London, 1829; reprint Delhi 1981), Vol. 4, p. 76.

<sup>115</sup>Samira Sheikh points out that of all literary genres, stone-carved epigraphs give a clear picture of the economic and political relations of the day; in the records of the construction of buildings, legal proclamations or religious donations, see S. Sheikh, 'Languages of public piety: bilingual inscriptions from Sultanate Gujarat, c.1390–1538', in *After Timur Left: Culture and Circulation in Fifteenth-Century North India* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 186–209.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 193–194.

<sup>117</sup>This was the date that the text was completed. The illustrations were added after the text was written; it would have been unlikely to take two years to complete the paintings, so there is still a gap between completion and the addition of seal impressions. Of course, Muḥammad Shāh may have acquired the manuscript straight after its completion before coming to the throne and added his seal impressions later.



### Conclusion

This brief examination of the Patna *Shāhnāma* and its historical context establishes a close connection between the production of illustrated manuscripts in the Iranian world and South Asia, perhaps earlier than is often assumed. The manuscript differs from other near-contemporary *Shāhnāmas* produced in South Asia. Instead, it echoes Shirazi styles, thus demonstrating that many different modes were assimilated into painting practices in fifteenth-century India, both from prior and contemporary traditions. Previous art historical discussions of codicology and painting styles often assume that the arts of the book in India at this time tend to display only ‘outmoded’ rather than ‘current’ traits. This viewpoint needs to be reconsidered. Moreover, the term ‘outmoded’ when applied to South Asian manuscripts is redundant as the Persian model was not always the prime initiator for painting in India. Any so-called outmoded trait in South Asia painting has been selectively absorbed and transformed into a current trend in its new context.

Considering the Patna *Shāhnāma* in an Indian courtly context also demonstrates that the development and consumption of intellectual and artistic pursuits in the complex transcultural world of the Indian Sultanates cannot be explained through the dichotomy of provincial versus courtly. Muḥammad Shāh’s ownership of this *Shāhnāma* demonstrates that ‘provincial’ styles were enjoyed in the court. The dialogue often employed by historians of centre and periphery cannot be applied to the Indian Sultanates;<sup>118</sup> lines usually drawn between courtly and provincial material culture were blurred during the fifteenth century when multiple provincial courts ruled South Asia.

The Patna *Shāhnāma* was most likely made in India by an itinerant Shirazi artist. Alongside craftsmen, manuscripts themselves were likely to have travelled to India at this time. The Patna *Shāhnāma* dates to the most prolific decade in the first half of the fifteenth century for the production of Shiraz manuscripts (838–48/1435–45), after the death of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān. It has been suggested that these manuscripts were made in Shiraz for the open market and possibly for export. This could be regarded as a resurgence of commercial production that began in Shiraz during the Injuīd period of the 1330s and continued to grow under the Turkmans in the second half of the fifteenth century when Shiraz became a major centre of this kind of activity.<sup>119</sup>

In a Sultanate context, manuscripts’ use and earliest owners can be as significant as the exact place of production. The impetus behind the high level of production in the 1430s to 1440s in Shiraz was likely due not only to the death of Ibrāhīm-Sulṭān but also to the hospitable environment of South Asia. The immigration of artists, and the export of manuscripts, to India from many different regions in the Iranian world would continue later in the century to Malwa, Bengal, and the Deccan. A similar and much better-known influx occurred under the Mughals from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards.

<sup>118</sup>Alka Patel challenges the ‘centre-periphery lens’ usually employed when considering the multiple architectural traditions of the twelfth to sixteenth centuries in South Asia, see A. Patel, ‘From province to Sultanate: the architecture of Gujarat during the 12th through 16th centuries’, in *The Architecture of the Indian Sultanates* (Mumbai, 2006), p. 69.

<sup>119</sup>Wright, *The Look of the Book*, p. 346.

The independent state of Gujarat was founded in 1391 and consolidated during Aḥmad Shāh's reign. By the 1440s, Gujarat and neighbouring Malwa and other states were now fully established and had both the economic resources to encourage an active cultural life and a need to promote themselves. Patronage of Persian literature, and collecting works, was expected of any Indo-Persian ruler. Adding this copy of the *Shāhnāma* to the corpus of fifteenth-century material sheds new light on the relationship between Iranian and South Asian production and patronage of Persian manuscripts and leads to a more nuanced understanding of patterns of production in Iran and their reception in South Asia.

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### Appendix A: *Shāhnāma* of Firdausī, Khuda Bhaskh Library, Patna, 3787 and 3788

48 miniatures

Volume I (3787)

- 1) fol. 10v: 'Praise of Sultan Mahmud'
- 2) fol. 20r: 'Faridun defeats Zahhak'
- 3) fol. 30r: 'Combat between Shiruy and Garshab'
- 4) fol. 32r: 'Manuchihr kills Salm'
- 5) fol. 38b: 'Rudaba's companions contrive to see Zal'
- 6) fol. 44a: 'Sam before Manuchihr'
- 7) fol. 48r: 'Zal visits Manuchihr'
- 8) fol. 57r: 'Combat between Barman and Qubad'
- 9) fol. 65r: 'Rustam lifts Afrasiyab from his saddle by his belt'
- 10) fol. 67v: 'Kay Ka'us listens to singer extolling Mazandaran'
- 11) fol. 74r: 'Rustam slays the White Div'
- 12) fol. 78v: 'The king of Hamavaran pretends to serve Ka'us'
- 13) fol. 84r: 'Battle between Pilsam and the army of Iran: Pilsam flees on hearing of Rustam's arrival on the battlefield'
- 14) fol. 88r: 'Suhrab in combat with Gurdafarid'
- 15) fol. 93v: 'The first battle between Rustam and Suhrab'
- 16) fol. 96r: 'Rustam wounds Suhrab and discovers his identity'
- 17) fol. 97v: 'Rustam mourns Suhrab'
- 18) fol. 106v: 'Afrasiyab relates his dream to Garsiwaz'
- 19) fol. 115v: 'Siyawush meets Farangis'
- 20) fol. 125r: 'Murder of Siyawush'
- 21) fol. 128r: 'Piran takes Kay Khusraw to Afrasiyab'
- 22) fol. 135v: 'Giv, son of Gudarz, finds Kay Khusrau'
- 23) fol. 142v: 'Kay Khusrau enthroned'
- 24) fol. 157v: 'Battle between the Iranians and Turanians'
- 25) fol. 177r: 'Rustam lassoes Kamus'

- 26) fol. 185r: 'Rustam pulls the Khaqan of Chin from his elephant'
- 27) fol. 196r: 'Rustam kills the Demon Akhwan'
- 28) fol. 200r: 'Bizhan comes to Manizha's tent'
- 29) fol. 212v: 'Rustam and Bizhan before Kay Khusrau'
- 30) fol. 222r: 'Bizhan kills Human'
- 31) fol. 235r: 'Piran is slain by Gudarz'
- 32) fol. 267r: 'Capture and execution of Afrasiyab and his brother Garsiwaz'

## Volume II (3788)

- 1) fol. 282v: 'Gushtasp and the dragon'
- 2) fol. 321v: 'The battle between Rustam and Isfandiyar'
- 3) fol. 325v: 'Rustam shoots Isfandiyar in the eyes with a forked arrow'
- 4) fol. 340v: 'Death of Rustam'
- 5) fol. 367v: 'Ilyas and Khidr at the well of life'
- 6) fol. 372b: 'Iskandar dies and his coffin is carried to Iskandariya'
- 7) fol. 393r: 'Shapur and Ta'ir's daughter preside over Ta'ir's execution'
- 8) fol. 396r: 'Capture of Caesar'
- 9) fol. 402r: 'Bahram Gur's mount tramples Azada'
- 10) fol. 403r: 'Yazdagird killed by a white demon horse'
- 11) fol. 414r: 'Bahram Gur kills the dragon which had devoured a youth'
- 12) fol. 435r: 'Accession of Qubad'
- 13) fol. 489v: 'Hormuz giving Bahram Chubina command of the army'
- 14) fol. 493v: 'Bahram Chubina kills the fleeing Sava Shah'
- 15) fol. 498v: 'Bahram Chubina is sent woman's clothes by Hurmuzd'
- 16) fol. 538v: 'Khusrau Parviz visits Shirin in her castle'

**Appendix B: *Shāhnāmas* from the Shiraz orbit, circa 1430–50**

- 1) 831/1427–28, National Museum, New Delhi, no. 54.60. 89 illustrations
- 2) circa 1430–35, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Ouseley Add. 176. 42 illustrations
- 3) circa 1435, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 22-1948 (25 illustrations) and London, British Museum, 1948.10-09.48-52. 5 illustrations
- 4) circa 1430–40, John Rylands Library, Manchester, Pers.MS933. 100 illustrations, only 4 contemporary
- 5) 839–841/1436–37, Current whereabouts unknown. Ex-collections: Sidney Churchill; the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava; the Aga Khan. 58 illustrations
- 6) 841/1438, British Library, London, Or.1403 (ex-Collection Jules Mohl). 93 illustrations
- 7) 844/1441, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Supplément persan.493. 52 illustrations
- 8) 844/1441, Dār al-Kutub, Cairo, MS59. 15 illustrations
- 9) 845/1441, The Art and History Trust, currently on loan to the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC (the 'Soudavar' *Shahnama*), MS Cat.27. 24 illustrations
- 10) circa 1440–50, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, S86.0177, 0148-49, 0151. 5+ illustrations

- 11) *circa* 1440–50, Staaliches Museum fur Volkerkunde, Munich (ex-Preetorius Collection, 77-11-281, and Nasser D. Khalili Collection, MSS845). 2 illustrations
- 12) 847/1443, Tehran, Gulistan Palace Library, Ms.2173 (formerly Ms.475). 14 illustrations
- 13) 848/1444, Current whereabouts unknown Ex-Kevorkian XXV (Sotheby's, London, 12/6/67, lot 189). 14 illustrations
- 14) 848/1444, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Supplément persan.494 (and Cleveland, 45.169 and 56.10). 21 illustrations
- 15) 849/1445, St. Petersburg, Oriental Institute, Academy of Sciences, C1654, 29 illustrations
- 16) 853/1449, Riza Abbasi Museum, Tehran, Ms.1971. 18 illustrations
- 17) *circa* 1450, St. Petersburg, Archives of Academy of Sciences, C.52, 31 illustrations
- 18) *circa* 1450, John Rylands Library, Manchester, Pers.MS9. 42 illustrations
- 19) 855/1451, British Library, London, Or.12688 (ex-Collection Erskine of Torrie, the 'Dunimarle' *Shahnama*). 80 illustrations
- 20) 855/1451, Turk ve Islam Eserleri Muzesi, Istanbul, no. 1945. 63 illustrations
- 21) *circa* 1450–60, Current whereabouts unknown (ex-Sohrab Hakim Collection, Bombay), 103 illustrations
- 22) late 1420s to early 1430s, Dispersed, 3 folios in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, S.1986.144-46



### Appendix C: *Shāhnāmas* produced in Iran, circa 1430–50, previously or currently in Indian collections

Manuscript and current location	Date	Origin	Indian connection
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , Bodleian Library, Oxford Ouseley Add. 176	circa 1430	Shiraz (patron: Ibrahim Sultan)	Collected in India by Sir Gore Ouseley
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , Current location unknown. Previously owned by the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava	839–841/ 1436–37	Probably Shiraz	Possibly collected in India by the Marquess of Dufferin and Ava, whilst he was viceroy of India from 1884 to 1888
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 22-1948 and British Museum, London 1948-10-09.48-52	circa 1438	Probably Shiraz	The manuscript and loose folios were bequeathed by Percival Chater Manuk, who was a high court judge in Patna, India
<i>Shāhnāma</i> (so-called Dunimarle <i>Shāhnāma</i> ), British Library, London, Or.12688	850/1446	Mazandaran	Previously owned by John Drummond Erskine, fourth baronet of Torrie (1776–1836). Collected in Varanasi in 1801
<i>Shāhnāma</i> of Muhamamad Juki, Royal Asiatic Society, London Persian 239	circa 848/1444	Herat style	Owned by the Mughal Emperor Bābur, followed by a succession of Mughal rulers
Hakim <i>Shāhnāma</i> , Current whereabouts unknown	circa 1440–45	Possibly Shiraz	Previously owned by Dr Sohrab Hakim Collection, Bombay

### *Shāhnāmas* now accepted as of Sultanate origin

Manuscript and current location	Date	Further information on possible Indian provenance
<i>Shāhnāma</i> National Museum, Delhi, no. 54.60	831/ 1427–28	Currently in the National Museum in Delhi. No documentation of previous provenance
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , Dispersed, including five folios, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC: S1986.135, S1986.139, S1986.144– 6; 12 folios, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: 20.120.238–49.	circa 1430	
<i>Shāhnāma</i> ('Mohl') British Library, London Or.1403	841/1438	Previously owned by Jules Mohl (d. 1876). The provenance is unknown before Mohl's acquisition
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , Khuda Bhaksh Library, Patna 3787-88	843/1440	Owned by Sultan Muhammad Shah, ruler of Gujarat (r. 1442–51)

(Continued)

Continued.

Manuscript and current location	Date	Further information on possible Indian provenance
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , 5 dispersed folios, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington DC, S1986.177, 148-151	<i>circa</i> 1440-45	
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , John Rylands, Manchester MS933	<i>circa</i> 1430-50	
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , John Rylands, Manchester MS9	<i>circa</i> 1450	Previously owned by Sir Gore Ouseley, and then later purchased by the Earl of Crawford. It was likely to have been collected during the 15 years that Sir Ouseley resided in India

### ***Shāhnāmas* of Sultanate origin**

Manuscript	Date	Provenance	Current location
<i>Shāhnāma</i> , 6 dispersed folios	<i>circa</i> 1450-75	Unknown, possibly Delhi/Jaunpur region	Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, 9940-9946.
<i>Shāhnāma</i> (known as the 'Jainesque <i>Shāhnāma</i> ')	<i>circa</i> 1450-75	Unknown; possibly Gujarat or Malwa	Dispersed