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Compilations of the *Bustān* of Saʿdī in Iran, Central Asia, and Turkey, ca. 1470–1550

This article presents two hitherto unstudied compilations of verses from the Bustān of Saʿdī. Both circulated in the Persianate world in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The article provides an analysis of the compilations' content as well as their relation to the complete Bustān. By highlighting certain stories and themes at the expense of others, and by ordering these passages in a way that differs from the complete Bustān, each compilation transforms Saʿdī's text into a shorter, more homogenous composition, with distinct formal, thematic, and generic qualities. The shorter compilation presents a series of aphorisms, forming a mirror for princes. The longer one offers a selection of stories and lessons and emphasizes mystical themes, including aspects of Sufi erotic theology. This article also investigates the manuscript copies of these compilations, revealing their use and transmission in Iran, Turkey, and Central Asia between 1470 and 1550.

Keywords: *Bustān* of Saʿdī; Compilations; Rewriting; Aq Qoyunlu; Timurid; Safavid; Ottoman; and Uzbek manuscripts

What follows presents two hitherto unstudied Persian compilations. Known in several manuscript collections under the same generic titles, *Muntakhab-i Bustān* or *Intikhāb-i Bustān* (“Selections of the *Bustān*”), these texts consist of selections of verses from the *Bustān* (“Orchard”) of Saʿdī Shirāzi (d. ca. 693/1292), a didactic poem completed around the middle of the thirteenth century. Eleven copies can be identified. They were executed between the 1470s and the 1550s in a geographical area spanning from Turkey to Central Asia.¹

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¹The current locations of these manuscripts are, with their accession number and bibliographical references (when existing): Art and History Trust collection, on loan at the Sackler Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, accession no. 48 and 71 (Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, no. 48 and no. 71); Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, accession no. 1960.64 (unpublished); Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, accession no. F1944. 48 (Roxburgh, *The Persian Album*, 178–9); Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66 (published in Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, no. 66); Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, accession no. Suppl. persan 1515 (Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 140); Gulistān Palace, Tehran,

A long *masnavi* (poem written in rhyming couplets) of approximately four thousand verses, the *Bustān* of Sa'di consists of a preface (*dibācha*) and ten chapters, each deploying a succession of short stories interspersed with moral advice.² Generally labeled as literature of advice or didactic literature, this poem is often classified as a mirror for princes, a literary genre destined to instruct rulers on certain aspects of government and behavior. But the *Bustān* is also a multifaceted, polyvalent text.³ Mixing different patterns of speech, style, and literary genre, it interweaves epic tales with humoristic anecdotes, narrative poems with proverbial sentences, mythical stories with philosophical statements, thus addressing a wide range of themes such as love, education, speech, or ascetic life.⁴ The *Bustān* is also known for its literariness or reflexive qualities. While a few stories stage a character named Sa'di, other passages comment upon the structure and function of the *Bustān*, and in particular its multi-layered, duplicitous ethics, for example when the poem is compared to a date fruit whose first, sweet layer protects a more central, enigmatic kernel.⁵

With its discontinuous structure and thematic diversity, the *Bustān* constantly oscillates between order and disorder, fragment and whole, situated detail and general lesson. A garden of words rather than a successive, linear discourse, it invites readers to read around rather than through the whole text, and thus to rearrange the poem as they please. As a matter of fact, verses from the *Bustān* were frequently used as quotations in literary texts or as epigraphic inscriptions on portable objects and architectural monuments.⁶ This paper is devoted to such an example of reuse. It presents two different compilations of Sa'di's *Bustān*. For each compilation,

accession no. 2167 (Rajabi, *Shāhkārhā-i nigārgari-i Irān*, 125–7; Ātābāy, *Fibrīst-i divān-hā-yi khaṭṭī*, no. 203); Topkapi Palace Library, Istanbul, accession no. E.H. 1690 (Karatay, *Topkapi Sarayı Müzesi*, no. 578); Bibliothèque nationale de France, accession no. Persan 257 (Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 148); Dār al-kutub, Cairo, accession no. Adab Fārisī M 4 (unpublished); British Library, London, accession no. IO Islamic 268 (Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts*, no. 1148); Bodleian Library, Oxford, accession no. Elliott 239 (Ethé and Sachau, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani, and Pushtu Manuscripts*, no. 604, 743, 812, 1034).

²For the purpose of this paper, I compare the compilations to the Persian edition of the *Bustān* established by Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufi (Sa'di, *Bustān*) as well as to the English translation by G. M. Wickens (Sa'di, *Morals Pointed*). Any modern, critical edition of Sa'di's *Bustān* will differ from the manuscript variants of this *masnavi*. The discrepancies between the critical edition and manuscript variants are, however, often minimal, and do not alter the relevance of the comparison between the compilations and Yūsufi's edition. Except for a few lines (four in the manuscripts we have worked on), all of the compilations' verses can be found in Yūsufi's edition.

³One of the most compelling analyses of the *Bustān* can be found in Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 311–48.

⁴For an exploration of these themes in other works of Sa'di, see Keshavarz, *Lyrics of Life*.

⁵The verse reads: "Like dates, the skin is incrustated with sweetness, / But open it up, and there's a kernel inside!" (Sa'di, *Morals Pointed*, v. 128).

⁶Quotations from Sa'di's poetry were widely used from Ottoman Turkey to Central Asia. For example, a verse from the *Bustān* can be found in the mosque of Meḥmed I in Bursa, Turkey (Taeschner, "Beiträge zur frühosmanischen epigraphik und Archäologie," 144; I would like to thank Khalida Mahi for this reference). In Central Asia, the use of Sa'di's poetry as funerary inscriptions was widespread (for cenotaphs dating to the fifteenth century in the necropolis of Chār Bakr near Bukhara, see Babajanov and Szuppe, *Les inscriptions persanes*, 37–9 and 47–50).

a few hundred verses were selected from the *Bustān* and mixed together in order to form a shorter poem. The earliest known copies of these compilations date back to the fifteenth century.⁷

Given the lack of scholarship on this material, I first describe the texts of the two compilations as well as their relation to the complete *Bustān*. Each compilation consists of a certain number of verses chosen from among the 4,000 verses of the complete poem. Although the *Bustān*'s total number of verses varies from one manuscript to another, the compilations' verses are found in most copies of the complete *Bustān* produced during the same period, as well as in the modern critical edition of Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufī published in 1963. The first one is composed of approximately 150 verses while the second includes around 500 verses. These compilations are different, sharing fewer than fifty verses, and they each depart considerably from the complete *Bustān*. Neither of them emulates the thematic and stylistic diversity of the poem. Instead of the heterogeneous, centrifugal richness of the *Bustān*, they offer discrete, focused texts, reassembling the *Bustān* into a uniform, contained garden. More specifically, it seems that verses were picked in such a way as to inflect the *Bustān*'s literary genre. As this paper suggests, the shorter compilation reinforces the mirror-for-princes function of the *Bustān*. The longer one, by contrast, leans toward mysticism, privileging verses that echo Sufi erotic theology.

Next, I consider the manuscripts containing these compilations in order to address further aspects of reception and circulation. Although it remains difficult to assess when and by whom these compilations were made, manuscript copies offer invaluable information on their use and transmission. The compilations appear to have been particularly appreciated during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Iran, Central Asia, and Turkey. Most of them were copied in small manuscripts, hardly exceeding twenty-five folios, a format that enhances both their portability and their intimate character. Some copies were lavishly decorated and illustrated. The short compilation, which features an anthology of political advice, was diffused in princely circles in western Iran and Turkey. It was passed from the Aq Qoyunlu court to the Safavids to the Ottomans.⁸ In contrast, all copies of the second compilation were produced in the East, in the regions of Khurasan and Transoxiana.⁹ Interestingly enough, these patterns of circulation are reflected in the paintings accompanying the text, emphasizing the settings in which the compilations could be received.

⁷The earliest we know of was begun in 883/1478 (Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 48 and 71). It will be dealt with later in this paper.

⁸These are: Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 48 and 71; Bibliothèque nationale de France, accession no. Suppl. persan 1515; Gulistān Palace, accession no. 2167; Topkapı Palace Library, accession no. E.H. 1690. For references on each manuscript, see note 1 above. These manuscripts will also be described in the last section of the present article.

⁹These are: Harvard Art Museums, accession no. 1960.64; Freer Gallery of Art, accession no. F1944.48; Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66; Bibliothèque nationale de France, accession no. Persan 257; Dār al-kutub, accession no. Adab Fārisī M 4; British Library, accession no. IO Islamic 268; Bodleian Library, accession no. Elliott 239. For references on each manuscript, see note 1 above. These manuscripts will also be described in the last section of the present article.

Mirror for Princes

Let us start with the compilation that was diffused in western Iran and Turkey.¹⁰ A rather short selection, its 150 verses were drawn exclusively from the moral discourse of the *Bustān*, thus forming a collection of *amsāl* (proverbs, aphorisms) and *pand* (pieces of advice). No narrative verses were thus included. This technique of extracting moral aphorisms from their narrative contexts was quite common. Several authors approached the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī in this manner. In 1081, a certain ‘Alī b. Aḥmad made a collection of moral verses known as *Ikhtiyārāt-i Shāhnāma* or *Kitāb-i Intikhāb-i Shāhnāma* (“Selections of the *Shāhnāma*”) which he presented as a book of wisdom.¹¹ In his *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa āyat al-surūr* (“Ease of Hearts and Marvel of Happiness”), written in the early thirteenth century, Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Rāvandī quoted lengthy series of verses from the *Shāhnāma*, mostly from its non-historical sections. As explained in the preface, Rāvandī’s objective was “to choose some selections of poetry and prose, and compile them into a collection so that [men] might learn from them.”¹² By privileging general and proverbial quotations from the *Shāhnāma*, his text reveals a reception of Firdawsī’s poem as a mirror for princes, as Julie Scott Meisami and other scholars have shown.¹³ More generally, selections from the *Shāhnāma* seem to have been available to medieval authors as independent works, as reservoirs of wisdom from which they could pick wise sayings before incorporating them as quotations in their own work, as Nasrin Askari has suggested.¹⁴

In the compilations of the *Bustān*, one must further note that the aphoristic verses were picked from disparate chapters and arranged in an order that differs from the complete *Bustān*. As such these compilations contrast with other selections of *maṣnavīs* found in anthologies such as the so-called *Safīna-yi Tabrīz*, compiled in Tabriz in the 1330s, in which verses were selected in a linear way, following the order of the complete poem.¹⁵ Verses were also chosen in a linear fashion in the anthologies made for the Timurid prince Iskandar Sulṭān in Shiraz and Isfahan between 1410 and 1413, in which they follow not only the order but also the structure of the complete editions of the *maṣnavīs*, hence offering more of a summary than a rewriting of the text.¹⁶

In contrast, in the compilations of the *Bustān*, a new order of verses is created, as can be seen from the following extract (Figure 1)¹⁷ (after the Persian text, an English translation is provided, together with, in italics at the end of each verse, the chapter number and two verse numbers: the verse number in the English translation by

¹⁰See note 9.

¹¹Askari, *The Medieval Reception*, 42; Meisami, “The *Shāh-nāme* as Mirror for Princes,” 268.

¹²Meisami, 267.

¹³Ibid. Also see Askari, *The Medieval Reception*, 40.

¹⁴Askari, *The Medieval Reception*, 40–44.

¹⁵For a facsimile of the manuscript, see Tabrīzī, *Safīna-yi Tabrīz*, 539–78. For a list of the texts contained in this anthology, see Seyed-Gohrab, *The Treasury of Tabrīz*, 39.

¹⁶For a summary of the content of some of these anthologies, see Soucek, “Manuscripts.”

¹⁷The sequence can be read in this manuscript: Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 48 and 71, fol. 6b. The page is reproduced in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Intikhāb-i Bustān*, ca. 833/1478, Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 48 and 71, fol. 6b (photograph by the author).



G. M. Wickens, followed by the verse number in the Persian edition of Ghulām-Ḥusayn Yūsufī):¹⁸

¹⁸For references, see note 2. The English translations are based on Wickens, with modifications whenever appropriate, for example when the Persian verse in the *Muntakhab* does not coincide with the Persian verse from which Wickens' translation stems.

منه بر جهان دل که بیگانه ایست چو مطرب که هر روز در خانه ایست
 نه لایق بود عیش با دلبری که هر شامگاهش بود شوهری
 نشاید هوس باختن با گلی که هر بامدادش بود بلبلی
 اگر ملک بر جم بماندی و بخت ترا کی میسر شدی تاج و تخت
 ترا این قدر تا بمانی بس است چو رفتی جهان جای دیگر کس است
 چه میخواهم از طارم افراشتن همینست بس از بهر بگذاشتن
 نکویی کن امسال چون ده تراست که سال دگر دیگری ده خداست
 مکن تکیه بر ملک و مال و حشم که پیش از تو بودست و بعد از تو هم
 دل اندر دلارام دنیا میند که ننشست با کس که دل بر نکند
 نشستی بجای دگر کس بسی نشیند بجای تو دیگر کسی

Set not on the world your heart, for it's a stranger,
 Like a minstrel in a new house every day [*Chap. I, v. 841/833*]
 Love's¹⁹ unseemly with a sweetheart
 Who has a new spouse every night²⁰ [*Chap. I, v. 842/834*]
 A man should not indulge his fancy with a rose
 Who has a different nightingale at every dawning [*Chap. VII, v. 3258/3185*]
 If dominion had remained to Jam, and fortune,
 How would crown and throne have come your way? [*Chap. I, v. 833/825*]
 While you remain, this dignity suffices you
 Once gone, the world is someone else's place [*Chap. I, v. 559/554*]
 What do I want with raising vaults?
 This is enough for you to leave behind²¹ [*Chap. VI, v. 2889/2825*]
 Do good this year, while the village is yours,
 For next year another will be the headman [*Chap. I, v. 843/835*]
 Lean not on realm and wealth and retinue
 These have both been before, and after you will be [*Chap. I, v. 994/971*]
 Tie not your heart to this heart-easing world,
 For it sat with none whose heart it did not pluck [*Chap. IX, v. 3840/3745*]
 Often you've sat in the place of another,
 And another will sit in your place one day [*Chap. IX, v. 3765/3673*].

In this succession of ten verses, four chapters from the *Bustān* are represented, chapter one, six, seven, and nine, and arranged in a "random" fashion. Verses from the first chapter appear after and before verses from chapter seven or nine. However, although they do not reflect the order of Sa'di's text, the verses show a certain thematic consistency. One can note in particular the focus on the impermanence of the world.

¹⁹The manuscript of the compilation uses the word "*ishq*" (love) instead of "*aysh*" (pleasure) usually found in the *Bustān*.

²⁰In the compilation, "*shāmghāb*" (evening) is used instead of "*bāmdād*" (morning) found in Yūsufi's edition.

²¹In the modern edition, the verse reads: "What do I want with raising vaults? / This is enough for me to leave behind" (Sa'di, *Morals Pointed*, v. 2889).

The verses are also similar in structure and tone. Almost all of them are addressed to the second person, in this case a ruler. In fact, the sixth verse of the sequence, uttered in the first-person singular in Yūsufi's edition, is here conjugated in the second person, a choice that harmonizes the compilation's enunciative structure. Using the imperative, the compilation also projects a strong, prescriptive tone. The didactic dimension is enhanced by the recourse to rhetorical questions, as in the passage's fourth line.

The sequence presents other forms of continuity, in particular stylistic. The second and third verses use the same metaphor, comparing the transience of the world to, respectively, a lover's infidelity and the inconstancy of a flower. Resonances further appear through parallel constructions and repetition of words and sounds. The same two verses have a common rhyme (in "-i," see Figure 1). Their second *miṣrāʿ* (hemistich) also starts with the same words ("ki har"—"who each"). Although composed of verses from different chapters, sometimes separated by thousands of verses in the complete *Bustān*, the compilation forms a new poem with its own thematic, rhythmic, and musical consistency.

The compilation is divided into six different chapters, which all deal with the morality of kings. After a short preface praising God, the first chapter, which is the longest, starts with an elegiac sequence about the transience of the world before warning the kings of the illusion of conquest. The following chapters emphasize various values such as justice, knowledge, contentment, and compassion.

One can also note an emphasis on the pre-Islamic inspiration of the *Bustān*, as exemplified by the above extract. This compilation uses almost all the verses mentioning exemplary pre-Islamic figures such as Solomon, Jam, or Alexander, while leaving out the many verses devoted to Muslim figures such as the Prophet Muḥammad. In Persian literature, kingly ethics were often conveyed through the examples of Iran's ancient kings, as in the *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī,²² a feature that further strengthens the link of this particular compilation of the *Bustān* to the mirror-for-princes tradition.

Both in structure and content, this *Muntakhab* clearly diverges from the complete *Bustān*. First of all, the selection and arrangement of the verses do not follow the structure of a *maṣnavī*.²³ The *Muntakhab* focuses on moral sentences and makes little use of narrative sections, although these constitute the largest part of the *Bustān*. Other conventions of the *maṣnavī* are not adhered to. For instance, the introduction contains only the praise of God, whereas the introduction of a *maṣnavī* typically adds to the doxology a eulogy of the prophet, a dedication to the poet's patron, and digressions on the occasion for writing the poem. In terms of content and literary genre, the *Muntakhab* presents a collection of pieces of advice intended for the education of princes, hence magnifying the mirror-for-princes function of the complete *Bustān*.²⁴

²²Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 53.

²³On the poetic form of the *maṣnavī*, see Bruijn, "Mathnawī."

²⁴On this genre, see Meisami, "The *Shāb-nāme*"; Aigle, "La conception du pouvoir"; Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian Summa," 604–5.

This compilation does not seem to aim at providing a faithful summary of the text, thus raising the question of whether or not it was inspired by other, intermediary compilations of the *Bustān* as well as similar collections of moral advice. As a matter of fact, it recalls the epigraphic inscriptions left by Shiraz rulers on the ruins of the palace of Darius in Persepolis, which also used fragments of the *Bustān*.²⁵

In 738/1337–38, Abū Ishāq b. Maḥmūd from the Inju dynasty had these two successive verses of the *Bustān* (Chap. I, v. 800/793 and 801/794) inscribed on the ruins:

نه بر باد رفتی سحرگاه و شام سریر سلیمان علیه السلام
بآخر ندیدی که بر باد رفت خنک آنکه با دانش و داد رفت

Did not it go, morn and eventide, upon the winds
The throne of Solomon, upon whom peace?
Yet see you not how finally he went upon the wind?
Happy the one who went in knowledge and justice.²⁶

The same verses appear in the mirror-for-princes *Muntakhab*. Using pre-Islamic figures as exemplars, they address the theme of the impermanence of power. As such they remarkably encapsulate the general tenor of the *Muntakhab* and the ways in which the compilation mixes its prescriptive tone with an elegiac, mythological inspiration.

In 826/1422, the Timurid ruler Ibrahīm Sulṭān followed his peer and left several inscriptions. The longest one, supposedly carved by his own hand in *naskh* script, is also an excerpt from the *Bustān*. It frames the same two verses inscribed by the Inju ruler with three other verses picked from another section of the *Bustān*:²⁷

کرا دانی از خسروان عجم ز عهد فریدون و ضحاک و جم
که در تخت و ملکش نیامد زوال زدست حوادث نشد پای مال
نه بر باد رفتی سحرگاه و شام سریر سلیمان علیه السلام
بآخر ندیدی که بر باد رفت خنک آنکه با دانش و داد رفت
الا تا درخت کرم پروری که بی شک بر کامرانی خوری

Whom know you, of the Persians' kings
From Farīdūn's days, Zāhhāk's and Jam's [*Chap. I, v. 563/557*]
Unto whose throne and rule came no decline,
Who hasn't been offended by the hand of fate?²⁸ [*Chap. I, v. 564/558*]
Did not there go, morn and eventide, upon the winds
The throne of Solomon, upon whom peace [*Chap. I, v. 800/793*]

²⁵On these epigraphies, see Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Royaume de Salomon," although the author does not identify the source of the *Bustān*.

²⁶See *ibid.*, 20–21 for Persian transcription and French translation.

²⁷See Melikian-Chirvani, "Le Royaume de Salomon," 24–5 for Persian transcription and French translation.

²⁸The second hemistich is different from Wickens' edition and translation, which reads: "Alone remains the rule of God Almighty."

Yet see you not how finally he went upon the wind
 Happy the one who went in knowledge and justice [*Chap. I, v. 801/794*]
 Come, cultivate liberality's tree
 And you will be certain to eat its fruits [*Chap. I, v. 569/563*]

This compilation of verses resembles the *Muntakhab* in both its poetic and thematic aspects. The verses are arranged regardless of their order in the complete text. They also emphasize particular topics, here related to the conduct of rulers, in ways that further testify to a reception of the *Bustān* as a collection of kingly ethics.

Mystical Twist

The second compilation is three times longer than the first.²⁹ It is, moreover, closer to the complete *Bustān*, in that it actually repeats the form of the *masnavī*. The introduction includes all the obligatory sections of a *masnavī*'s preface mentioned earlier. Another difference with the first *Muntakhab* is the use of stories. Even if most verses belong to the abstract part of the poem, some narrative extracts were reproduced. The compilation thus emulates the ratio between narrative and proverbial verses that characterizes the form of the *masnavī*.

Just as in a *masnavī*, while each verse can be read independently, the text proposes broader continuous sequences. As an example of how scattered verses were woven into coherent passages, let us take a look at a passage from the *Muntakhab*'s preface. The extract opens the section usually titled, as in the complete *Bustān*, "The Reason for Composing the Book" (*sabab-i nazm-i kitāb*) (Figure 2):³⁰

در اقصای عالم بگشتم بسی بسر بردم ایام با هر کسی
 تمتع ز هر گوشه ای یافتم ز هر خرمنی خوشه ای یافتم
 طبیبی پری چهره در مرو بود که در باغ دل قامتش سرو بود
 نه از درد دلهای ریشش خبر نه از چشم بیمار خویشش خبر
 جمالی گرو برده از آفتاب ز شوخیش بازار تقوی خراب
 شده فتنه بر روی او عالمی چو یوسف جمالی چو عیسی دمی
 گر او زهر برداشتی فی المثل بخوردندی از دست او چون عسل
 تعالی الله از حسن تا غایتی که گویی از رحمتست آیتی
 حکایت کند درمند غریب که خوش بود چندی سرم با طبیب
 نمی خواستم تندرستی خویش که دیگر نیاید طبیبم به پیش
 بسا عقل زور آور چیردست که سودای عشقش کند زیردست

Much have I roamed throughout the world's far quarters
 Spending my days with all and sundry [*Preface, v. 99/98*]
 Enjoyment I have found in every nook
 From every harvest I have gained a corn-ear [*Preface, v. 100/99*]

²⁹See note 8 above for a list of manuscript copies.

³⁰The sequence can be read in the following manuscript: Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66, fol. 5a. See reproduction in Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Intikhab-i Bustān*, begun in 933/1526–27, Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66, fol. 5a (photograph by the author).



There was in Marv a pari-visaged physician
 Whose stature was a cypress in the garden of the heart [*Chap. III, v. 1839/1790*]
 No report reached him of the pain of wounded hearts
 No report had he of his own ill eye [*Chap. III, v. 1840/1791*]
 He from the sun had borne off loveliness' stake
 And at his impudence were ruined piety's foundations [*Chap. III, v. 1766/1717*]
 The world is seduced by his face

As by the beauty of Yūsuf and the breath of Jesus³¹
 And if, just suppose, he'd held up poison,
 They'd from his hands have taken it like nectar [*Chap. IV, v. 2240/2181*]
 God is exalter over beauty to the point
 That you might say it is a sign of His mercy [*Chap. III, v. 1767/1718*]
 A sufferer, a stranger, tells the tale thus
 My head was light awhile for that physician [*Chap. III, v. 1841/1792*]
 And I no more desired my own good health,
 Lest he to me should never come again [*Chap. III, v. 1842/1793*]
 Many's the forceful intellect, valiantly equipped,
 That's been made subject to the rage of love [*Chap. III, v. 1843/1794*].

The sequence begins with the first two verses of the corresponding section of the *Bustān*'s preface. The narrator-author introduces himself as a great traveler. Also compared to harvesting, traveling is consubstantial to writing, the process by which the poet gathers and collects all things seen and heard.

Next, as an example of the stories that Saʿdī could witness along the way, the compiler has inserted the first two verses of a narrative from the third chapter of the complete *Bustān*. The story is about a physician from Marv who was known for his astounding beauty. The compiler has thus created a multilevel narrative, with an extradiegetic level featuring Saʿdī as the narrator and, embedded into it, a diegetic level that recounts the story of the physician.

The montage is even more intricate. The two following verses were picked from another two different stories. The first one belongs to a story from the third chapter, which similarly evokes a character with a confounding beauty, this time from the city of Samarqand. The following verse is from the fourth chapter and also deals with a character, here a merchant whose success owes much to his countenance. Although these two verses do not belong to the story of the handsome physician of Marv, they can easily be related to it since they describe the devastating effects of physical beauty. The compiler's strategy is associative, consolidating and developing similar stories.

Thereafter, the text retreats to the story of the doctor, adding the testimony of another character, a patient who would rather be ill than run the risk of never seeing the doctor again. The last verse of the sequence features a more abstract conclusion, highlighting the ability of love to challenge even the more rational minds.

In a few verses, this excerpt encapsulates the complex nature of the *Bustān*. Using the metaphor of travel, it mirrors the self-referential quality of the poem. By presenting at least two embedded stories—the journey of the narrator-author and the story of the doctor of Marv—it also announces its multilayered diegetic structure. In addition, it links the narrative passages to a moralistic reflection.

³¹This verse, which I found in all copies of this *Muntakhab*, is not recensed in Yūsufi's edition nor can it be found in Wickens' translation.

At the heart of this passage lies one of the most important themes of the *Munta-khab*, namely, the link between the contemplation of the beloved and metaphysical experience. This is known in Persian literature as *shāhid-bāzī* (“playing the witness”), the witnessing of divine presence in worldly manifestations. As early as the tenth century, some Sufi masters discussed the possibility that God might appear in finite, contained forms that humans can grasp, including the form of young males. This is what they called *shāhid-bāzī*, “a ritualized activity that was grounded on a belief that God may be seen by contemplating pleasant faces that bear witness to divine beauty,” as Lloyd Ridgeon wrote.³² *Shāhid-bāzī* was both a literary and an actual practice, linking the contemplation of external reality to an understanding of divine beauty.³³

With its emphasis on beauty, love, and sight, the story of the doctor of Marv in fact foregrounds one of Sa‘dī’s most important innovations, the integration of eroticism and spirituality. Sa‘dī was one of the first poets to address *shāhid-bāzī* in Persian poetic discourse, by fusing together amorous experience and metaphysical perception, as Domenico Ingenito has shown.³⁴ Sa‘dī also emphasized the visual aspect of this conflation: God appears in the act of gazing; it is the experience of sight that provides access to inner beauty.³⁵

Several other verses work to foreground the metaphysics of love. While it is impossible to generalize on Sufi theology, or even to equate Sufism with mysticism, aspects of the mystical experience do resonate with the Sufi tradition, including its claims of communion with God, and its culmination with the absorption or even the eradication of the self in God, as Ridgeon recently summarized.³⁶ At least since the tenth century, *‘ishq* or passionate love has been central to certain trends of Sufi ascetic theology, including the Persian Sufi tradition of the medieval period, infusing Sufism with a theosophy of eros.³⁷ Many Sufis considered love the highest aim of Sufi seekers, the pinnacle of the Sufi path toward transcendence.³⁸ Because the ultimate goal was the obliteration of the self, love could lend first to the mystic’s alienation, as the verse following the previous sequence explains:

چو عشق آمد از عقل دیگر مگوی که در دست چوگان اسیرست گوی

³²Ridgeon, “The Controversy of Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī,” 4. On *shāhid-bāzī*, also see Ingenito, “Tabrizis in Shiraz”; Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul*; Shamisā, *Shāhidbāzī*.

³³It was as common as it was controversial, because of accusations of *bulul*, the belief in the incarnation of God (Ridgeon, “The Controversy of Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī,” 11–13).

³⁴Ingenito, “Tabrizis in Shiraz.”

³⁵According to Ingenito, Sa‘dī’s poetry marks “the integration of the mundane and the mystical poles of the amorous experience through the anthropological experience of vision” (ibid., 117).

³⁶Ridgeon, “Mysticism.”

³⁷Lewisohn, “Sufism’s Religion of Love.”

³⁸For a brief summary of and further references on the emergence of the concept of love in Persian Sufism, as well as a description of the various stages of love in early Persian Sufism, see Ernst, “The Stages of Love.”

Once Love has come, speak no more of intelligence
The ball is but a captive in the polo-stick's hand. (*Chap. III, v. 1851/1802*)

A stock image of Sufi Persian poetry, the metaphor of the ball and the polo-stick refers to the captivity of the lover, who is played, manipulated by the beloved. A few verses later, an image of the lover's annihilation appears, comparing the lover to a moth, and the beloved to a candle:³⁹

نبخشود بر حال پروانه شمع ننگه کن که چون سوخت در پیش جمع

The candle indulges not the moth's condition
See then, how it burns before all assembled. [*Chap. II, v. 1379/1334*]

The beloved does not spare the lover any pain. What results from this ordeal is the consumption of the moth, its dissolution into the beloved's flame: the ultimate goal of the Sufi seeker was the annihilation of selfhood. Entitled "On Love and Lovers" (*dar 'ishq u 'ushshāq*) in some copies, a whole chapter of the *Muntakhab* is devoted to the sinuous, painful quest of dervishes, "knowers of the wayside halts, though having lost the track."⁴⁰ "Drunk with the Cupbearer"⁴¹—the Cupbearer being another allegorical figure of the Beloved—the Sufi lover cannot help but seek his own destruction. Yet this dangerous love is precisely the key to his liberation, "for if He destroys you," as the poem suggests, "you will be everlasting." Sufi love is the guarantee that selfish, earthly life can be dissolved into divine plenitude:

تو را با حق آن آشنایی دهد که از دست خویشت رهایی دهد

Alone that grants you acquaintance with Truth
Which first grants you release from self's own hand.⁴² (*Chap. III, v. 1960/1903*)

Just as in the *Bustān* (and many works of advice of this period), the compilation is arranged into ten chapters, some of which repeat the content of their matching chapters in Sa'dī's complete poem. These include the first chapter on justice (*dar 'adl*, "On Justice"), the second chapter on beneficence (*dar ihsān*, "On Beneficence"), the third chapter on love (*dar 'ishq u ṣifāt-i 'ushshāq*, "On Love and Lovers"), the fourth chapter on humility (*dar tavāḏu' u takabbur*, "On Humility and Pride") as well as the sixth chapter on contentment (*dar sa'ādat u qanā'at*, "On Happiness and Contentment").⁴³

³⁹The verse appears in Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66, fol. 7b.

⁴⁰Ibid., fol. 9b, see Sa'dī, *Morals Pointed*, v. 1678.

⁴¹Ibid., fol. 9b, see Sa'dī, *Morals Pointed*, v. 1695.

⁴²Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66, fol. 10a.

⁴³The chapter titles of the *Muntakhab* show some differences in wording from one copy to another, although the overall theme is the same. The titles given here follow the Freer copy (accession no. F1944.48).

The outline, however, also departs from the *Bustān*. For example, the last three chapters of the complete *Bustān*, respectively on gratitude, repentance, and close communion, were consolidated into one chapter, often entitled “On Gratitude” (*dar shukr*). New chapter titles could thus be introduced in the compilation. The most remarkable one is the title of chapter five, “On Proving the Unity” (*dar isbāt-i vahdat*), which foregrounds the Sufi notion of the unity of God and creation, a notion developed in several Sufi works, including in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1245) and the poetry of ‘Aṭṭār (d. 1221) and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 1273).⁴⁴ Several verses included in this chapter denounce the apparent diversity and fragmentation of the world, emphasizing instead the monistic idea of its unity. In the following verses, the dialectic between part and whole is illustrated by the story of the raindrop, which became a pearl as a reward for having recognized both the all-encompassing unity of the ocean and its own nothingness:⁴⁵

یکی قطره باران ز ابری چکید	خجل شد چو پنهانی دریا بدید
جایی که دریاست من کیستم	گر او هست حقا که من نیستم
چو خود را بچشم حقارت بدید	صدف در کنارش بجان پرورید
سپهرش به جایی رسانید کار	که شد نامور لؤلؤ شاهوار
بلندی از آن یافت کو پست شد	در نیستی کوفت تا هست شد

A raindrop trickled from a cloud
 And was discomfited to see the ocean’s width [*Chap. IV, v. 2041/1984*]
 Where there’s the ocean, who am I?
 If it exists, then truly I do not [*Chap. IV, v. 2042/1985*]
 But while with disparagement’s eye it saw itself
 An oyster-shell within its bosom dearly cherished it [*Chap. IV, v. 2043/1986*]
 And heaven at length so far advanced its cause
 That it became an imperial pearl, renowned [*Chap. IV, v. 2044/1987*]
 Elevation it discovered by first becoming lowly,
 Nothingness’ door it pounded until existence came to be [*Chap. IV, v. 2045/1988*].

To sum up, in contrast with the first *Muntakhab*, the second one presents both narrative and aphoristic verses. And instead of a collection of proverbs, it reads as a short *masnavī*. This is not to say, however, that it is closer to the complete *Bustān*. Within each chapter, sequences were rearranged by inserting verses from other chapters in order to complement or twist the framing verses. In addition, despite mimicking the original structure of the *Bustān*, chapter titles can differ in ways that foreground certain themes to the detriment of others.

⁴⁴It is interesting to note that while this concept is given preeminence through its use in one of the titles of the *Muntakhab*, it actually appears only once in the complete *Bustān* (in verse 1706, at the end of the third chapter). For more references on the notion of unity in Sufi literature, see Ridgeon, “Mysticism,” 130; Ritter, *The Ocean of the Soul*.

⁴⁵The sequence can be read in Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66, fol. 14b and fol. 15a.

Thematically, the second *Muntakhab* foregrounds ideas and lessons that are absent from the first selection. Examples include mystical themes, in particular the practice of *shāhid-bāzī* and its fusion of spirituality and homoerotic ideals. Such motifs do not necessarily stand out in the complete poem of the *Bustān*. Verses carrying mystical imagery such as the trope of the candle and the moth are indeed often part of larger stories, where they can be used as metaphorical supplements to reflect upon secular stories. But here, because they are decontextualized and juxtaposed with similarly themed verses, they work to center and intensify a spiritual content, and in particular the aesthetics of *shāhid-bāzī*, even as those themes might seem peripheral to the complete *Bustān*.

As such, the second *Muntakhab* echoes the mystical literature produced in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Khurasan. This is not to say that this particular selection should be attributed to late Timurid/early Safavid Khurasan, only that it testifies to and recalls literary contexts that privileged mystical readings of canonical texts, and that also promoted a reception of Sa'dī as a mystic, as I will suggest below. The *Muntakhab* resonates for instance with *Majālis al-ʿushshāq* (The Assembly of Lovers), a collection of imaginary love stories starring legendary and historical personalities. Modern scholars have attributed the work, dated 1503, to Ḥusayn Gazurgāhī, a disciple of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī and a boon companion of the Timurid ruler Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqara (1438–1506).⁴⁶ Lovers include famous Sufis such as Ibn ʿArabī and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, mythical kings like Solomon, historical rulers such as the Seljuq sultan Malikshāh, and late fifteenth-century figures like Jāmī, Mīr ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī, and Sulṭān Ḥusayn himself, to whom the last chapter is devoted.⁴⁷ While the stories appear to treat worldly love, most often using homoerotic language, the introduction reminds us of the narratives' allegorical dimension, of the metaphorical link between carnal and spiritual love.

In terms of *poiesis*, the *Muntakhab* recalls the practice of literary imitation developed in Herat at the end of the fifteenth century. A large part of the literary production of late Timurid Herat was devoted to the rewriting of literary models. Most often, literary forms and structures were reused, while the thematic content was adjusted to contemporary literary and intellectual interests. These practices were known as *istiqbāl* (reception), *jawāb* (response), or *tatabbuʿ* (imitation) (by the end of the fifteenth century, all three terms were used interchangeably and for different poetic forms, whether the *ghazāl*, the *qaṣīda*, or the *masnawī*).⁴⁸ These literary processes were neither passive nor antiquarian. They did not merely attempt to duplicate, conserve, or restore a tradition. Rather, as Paul Losensky put it, imitation was “simultaneously a method of poetic self-definition, a characteristic feature of the historical period and a form of literary interpretation.”⁴⁹ The aim was to recreate the past in

⁴⁶On this text and its illustrations in sixteenth-century Shiraz, see Uluç, “Arts of the Book,” 117–38.

⁴⁷Soucek, “Interpreting the *Ghazals*,” 154.

⁴⁸On these practices, see Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 137 and 191–2; Subtelny, “A Taste for the Intricate,” n. 33, 62–3; Zipoli, *The Technique of the Gawāb*.

⁴⁹Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*, 191–2.

ways that were relevant to the present, while engaging with both the history and the poetics of literature.

Responses were performed by a great variety of writers, orally during the *majlis* (a form of literary gathering) or on written supports. Jāmī, for example, based a large part of his works on the imitation of past models, as in the *Bahāristān* (“The Spring Garden”), which he presents in the preface as an imitation of the *Gulistān* (“Rose Garden”) of Sa’dī, composed shortly after the *Bustān*.⁵⁰ The similarities between the *Bahāristān* and the *Gulistān* are limited to formal aspects. They both consist of a *prosimetrum*, a text mixing prose and poetry. They have the same outline, deploying eight chapters, and both use in their titles the image of the garden to characterize their structure. Thematically and stylistically, they remain, however, quite different. While the *Gulistān* combines anecdotes and aphorisms of both secular and religious content, the *Bahāristān* belongs to the genre of the *tazkīrāt*, a collection of biographies. It is composed of a series of portraits of saints and Sufis, philosophers and poets.

Very often, in these practices of *javāb*, just as in the *Muntakhab*, the new version would present a mystical twist. Another example is the story of *Yūsuf u Zulaykhā*, rewritten by Jāmī as a mystical *masnavī*. In Arabic and Persian traditions, the story usually relies on the Qur’anic version, in which Zulaykha personifies the temptation of sin while Yusuf represents the ideal believer, who resists sinning for fear of God.⁵¹ In Jāmī’s version, by contrast, Zulaykha is a positive character.⁵² She stands for the Sufi seeker who, in their initiatory journey, must wrestle with the inaccessibility of the beloved, personified by Yusuf. The love affair between Zulaykhā and Yūsuf becomes a spiritual quest, in which Yūsuf personifies God while Zulaykhā stands for the Sufi seeker. Zulaykhā’s earthly love is thus “a manifestation of love for God” and her lust a desire for knowledge and truth, as Gayane Merguerian and Afsaneh Najmabadi have written.⁵³

It seems, in fact, that Jāmī largely contributed to the reception of Sa’dī as a mystical poet. Sa’dī is indeed portrayed as a Sufi guide in Jāmī’s *masnavī* entitled *Subḥat al-abrār* (“The Rosary of the Pious”). This *masnavī* consists of forty sections in which moral discourses are accompanied by anecdotes. The third section deals with versified speech and its divine nature. It includes verses on the inability of language to describe divine action as well as on the mystical function of poetry. The anecdote illustrating this paradoxical discourse is centered on Sa’dī. A Sufi mystic dreams of Sa’dī being rewarded by angels for a verse in which he praises God.⁵⁴ Sa’dī’s literary production is therefore cast as mystical poetry, a shift in Sa’dī’s reception that is paralleled in the *Muntakhab*, where the multifaceted *Bustān* is given mystical inflections.

⁵⁰Jāmī, *Bahāristān*; Sa’dī, *The Gulistan of Sa’dī*.

⁵¹On the character of Zulaykha and its reception in the Islamic tradition, see Stowasser, *Women in the Qur’an*, 50–56; Merguerian and Najmabadi, “Zulaykha and Yusuf.”

⁵²Jāmī, *Masnavi-i Haft Avrang*, vol. 1, 17–209.

⁵³Merguerian and Najmabadi, “Zulaykha and Yusuf,” 497.

⁵⁴Jāmī, *Masnavi-i Haft Avrang*, vol. 1, 579, v. 477.

Patterns of Circulation

These compilations seem to have circulated during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in different parts of the Persianate world. The mirror-for-princes *Muntakhab* was copied in courtly milieus of western Iran and Turkey, while the second *Muntakhab* seems to have been more frequently copied in Timurid and post-Timurid Khurasan and Transoxiana.

The princely status of the mirror-for-princes *Muntakhab* is enhanced in the manuscripts by at least four aspects: the presence of a dedication to a royal patron, the signature of celebrated artists, the addition of paintings illustrating courtly scenes, as well as the manuscripts' circulation and transformation in princely workshops. The group's first manuscript is dedicated to the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Sulṭān Khalīl (d. 833/1478) as stated in the double *shamsa* opening the book.⁵⁵ The manuscript remained unfinished: the paintings were not completed until later and the copy lacks a colophon. As Abolala Soudavar has suggested, it is possible that its making was interrupted by Sulṭān Khalīl's death in 833/1478 and that it was made in Tabriz, after Sulṭān Khalīl had just succeeded to his father Uzun Ḥasan (r. 861/1457–882/1478).⁵⁶ Soudavar also attributes the copying of the manuscript to the famous calligrapher ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Khvārazmī, who produced several manuscripts for the Aq Qoyunlus.⁵⁷

It is no surprise that such a copy was produced for Sulṭān Khalīl, for it is consistent with the interest of the Aq Qoyunlus in the “mirrors” genre, as evidenced by their commissioning of the *Akhlāq-i Jalālī* (“Ethics of Jalāl”), a mirror for princes written by Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (830/1427–980/1502).⁵⁸ This book was composed after the model of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* (“Ethics of Naṣīr”), written in 633/1235. At the core of both books lie the four cardinal virtues of the king: *ḥikmat* (wisdom), *shajāʿat* (courage), *ʿiffat* (modesty) and *ʿadālat* (justice), which are also emphasized in the *Muntakhab*.⁵⁹

Sulṭān Khalīl was, moreover, particularly appreciative of the *Bustān*'s aphoristic verses, some of which he encountered as epigraphic inscriptions on Darius' palace in Persepolis. The event is reported by the same Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī in a text called the *ʿArz-nāma* (“Account of the Parade”).⁶⁰ While in Fārs, Sulṭān Khalīl went to Persepolis to complete a military review. During his visit, he discovered the inscriptions left on the ruins of Darius' palace by the Inju ruler Abū Ishāq b. Maḥmūd and the Timurid prince Ibrahīm Sulṭān.

⁵⁵Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 48 and 71: *Intikhāb-i Bustān*, thirteen fols., 205 x 120 mm, with ten lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nastaʿliq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece (fols. 1b–2a), one painting (fol. 12b), and one drawing (fol. 13a). The *shamsa* is reproduced in Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 136.

⁵⁶This hypothesis has also been formulated by Soudavar (see *ibid.*).

⁵⁷*Ibid.* On this calligrapher, also see Soucek, “Abd al-Raḥīm Khvārazmī.”

⁵⁸Davānī, *Akhlāq-i Jalālī*.

⁵⁹Lingwood, “Jāmi's *Salāmān u Absāl*,” 180.

⁶⁰For a partial English translation with notes, see Minorsky, “A Civil and Military Review.”

Figure 3. *Risāla [Intikhāb-i Bustān]*, 907/1502, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, accession no. 1960.64, fols. 1b–2a (photograph by the author).



After the fall of the Aq Qoyunlus, the manuscript of Sulṭān Khalīl was taken to the early Safavid capital of Ṭabriz in the first half of the sixteenth century. A double illustrated frontispiece and a painting were added at the Safavid workshop.⁶¹ Showing scenes of courtly entertainment, the frontispiece clearly reflects the princely setting in which this *Muntakhab* was intended to be shared. The manuscript then traveled to the Ottoman Empire, for it also contains an Ottoman drawing. The picture was added on the verso of the last folio of text. It is executed in gold and consists of a vegetal composition in the *saz* style, featuring serrated leaf foliage.⁶²

⁶¹For a reproduction of these paintings, see Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, no. 71.

⁶²This drawing remains unpublished.

The rest of this group's manuscripts confirms the transmission of this compilation in the royal courts of western Iran and Turkey. They include a Safavid copy signed by the calligrapher Shāh Maḥmūd al-Nīshāpūrī (d. 972/1564–65), one of the most celebrated artists of the court of Shāh Ṭahmāsp (d. 984/1576).⁶³ This manuscript opens with a double frontispiece illustrating courtly scenes.⁶⁴ Another example of this *Muntakhab* was produced around 1530 and has been attributed by Francis Richard to Ottoman Turkey.⁶⁵ Finally, one should mention a copy made in Shamākhī in the region of Shirvān in 1539 and signed by the calligrapher 'Abd al-Laṭīf Muzahhib.⁶⁶

In contrast, the manuscript copies of the second *Muntakhab* were mostly diffused in Khurasan and Transoxiana. Such diffusion reflects the literary and spiritual trends of these regions, which were largely marked, as mentioned above, by a taste for rewriting, as well as an interest in bridging the mundane and the metaphysical, as noted by Ingenito and others.⁶⁷

The first known copy of the mystical *Muntakhab* is dated 907/1502 and was produced in the region of Bākhraz in Khurasan.⁶⁸ The double frontispiece opening the book shows gatherings of scholars, rather than courtly assemblies (Figure 3).

Other copies were made in Herat at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is interesting to note that the famous calligrapher Muḥammad Qāsim b. Shādīshāh was responsible for copying of two of these *Muntakhab*. The first one appears in a larger anthology (*Majmū'a*) executed in Herat in 930/1523–24. The book also contains selections from other texts (*Khusraw u Shīrīn* of Nizāmī Ganjavī, *Subḥat al-Abrār* of Jāmī, the *Maṣnavī* of Rūmī, the *Khamsa* of Nizāmī and the *Ḥadiqat al-Ḥaqīqa* of Sanā'ī).⁶⁹ It opens with a preface that presents the content of the anthology. Several calligraphers from Herat were involved in its making, including 'Alī al-Ḥusaynī, Muḥammad Qāsim b. Shādīshāh, Sulṭān Muḥammad Khvandān and

⁶³Gulistan Palace, accession no. 2167: *Intikhāb-i Bustān*, twenty fols., 160 x 100 mm, with ten lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece and one painting. For more information on the life and work of Shāh Maḥmūd al-Nīshāpūrī, see Farhad and Simpson, *Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang*, 254–69 and 385–406.

⁶⁴For reproductions of these paintings, see Rajabī, *Shāhkhārbā-i nigārgari-i Irān*, 125–7.

⁶⁵Bibliothèque nationale de France, accession no. suppl. persan 1515: nine fols., at least two folios are missing (between fol. 7 and fol. 8 and between fol. 8 and fol. 9), 109 x 119 mm, with eleven lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, two paintings (fol. 3a and fol. 6a). See Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 140.

⁶⁶Topkapi Palace Library, accession no. E.H. 1690: *Intikhāb-i Bustān*, eleven fols., 175 x 115 mm, with eleven lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece (fols. 1b–2a) and one painting (fol. 9b). Since I have not had the opportunity to examine the manuscript, I cannot comment on the paintings.

⁶⁷Ingenito, "Tabrizis in Shiraz," 95. On the Sufi scene in Herat, see Gross, "Multiple Roles and Perceptions of a Sufi Shaikh."

⁶⁸Harvard Art Museums, accession no. 1960.64: *Risāla*, fifteen fols., 229 x 138 mm, some folios are missing, with twelve lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece.

⁶⁹Freer Gallery of Art, accession no. F1944.48: *Majmū'a*, sixty-nine fols., 250 x 167 mm, with twenty-one lines of text per page, copied in a very small and fine *nasta'liq* script, one painting.

Muḥammad Nūr. In fact, as indicated by Dust Muḥammad in his preface to the album of Bahrām Mīrẓā written in 951/1544–45, these artists belonged to the same lineage of calligraphers and were linked through master-pupil relationships.⁷⁰ Next, a painting marks the transition from the preface to the compilations.⁷¹ Inscribed in a circular frame, it represents an old man and his disciple. This iconography plays a double role: it reflects the pedagogical and spiritual relationships between the calligraphers involved in the making of the book while announcing the Sufi vein of the texts enclosed in the anthology.

The second *Muntakhab* copied by Muḥammad Qāsim b. Shādishāh is contained in a freestanding manuscript that underwent multiple changes over time.⁷² The calligraphy was executed in 933/1526–27, probably in Herat, before the double illustrated frontispiece and two paintings were completed a few decades later, perhaps in the city of Mashhad.⁷³ Just like the preceding examples, the frontispiece shows an assembly of scholars. The self-reflexivity of the painting is further highlighted by the representation, in the middle of the composition, of a book toward which the characters' attention seems to converge.

The *Muntakhab* was diffused even further East, as evidenced by a copy executed by Mir Ḥusayn al-Ḥusaynī, probably in Bukhara around 1550.⁷⁴ This calligrapher is known to have produced several manuscripts for Uzbek rulers, including a copy of the complete *Bustān* of Sa'dī executed in Bukhara in 938/1531 for Abū al-Ghāzī Sulṭān 'Abd al-'Azīz Bahādur.⁷⁵ The illumination and the paintings are also refined examples of Uzbek book arts. The book opens with a double illustrated frontispiece showing a prince and a *shaykh* in a courtly setting, a theme that emphasizes again the mystical tenor of this particular *Muntakhab*.⁷⁶

In Conclusion

Compilations of the *Bustān* prove to be an important tool in the study of the *Bustān*'s reception. Generally, they show that the *Bustān* was received as a flexible text, a platform for literary and artistic adaptations. Through operations of selection and juxtaposition, the compilations foreground themes that might otherwise seem secondary in the complete *Bustān*. While the complete *Bustān* can be approached as a didactic *masnavī* destined to a great variety of audiences, the compilations narrow the moral

⁷⁰For the Persian text with an English translation, see Dust Muḥammad, "Preface," 10–11.

⁷¹Reproduced in Roxburgh, *The Persian Album*, 178.

⁷²Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 66: *Intikhāb-i Bustān*, twenty-five fols., 192 x 119 mm, with twelve lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece, two paintings and one drawing.

⁷³The paintings are reproduced in Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, 174–5.

⁷⁴Bibliothèque nationale de France, accession no. Persan 257: twenty-two fols., 244 x 157, with thirteen lines of text per page, copied in a fine *nasta'liq* script, one double illustrated frontispiece.

⁷⁵Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, accession no. 1979.20.

⁷⁶Fols. 1b–2a. The whole manuscript has been digitized and can be accessed online: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84149970> (accessed April 26, 2016).

content of the *Bustān* to specific interests, thus altering the *Bustān*'s genre. More tightly focused on the life and rule of kings, the first compilation resembles a mirror for princes. Meanwhile, the second compilation privileges mystical verses that resonate with aspects of Sufi erotic theology.

The selections do not simply summarize the *Bustān*, since they each leave out major thematic and formal aspects, including the self-reflective quality of the *Bustān*, as well as its humor and irony, which often upend the poem's moralizing tendencies. In contrast with the complete *Bustān*, the selections, moreover, present a limited set of themes, while projecting a certain generic consistency. By highlighting certain stories and ideas at the expense of others, and by ordering verses in a way that differs from Saʿdī's order, the acts of selecting and juxtaposing transform Saʿdī's text, in effect creating a different, more homogeneous composition. Even though all verses come from the *Bustān* of Saʿdī, because they are severed from their original context and reshuffled they produce a different literary experience. The act of selecting "disintegrates the text and detaches [it] from context," to use Antoine Compagnon's assessment of the act of quoting.⁷⁷

In a way, the selections reveal an effort to actualize the *Bustān* of Saʿdī. As Yves Citton has suggested, an actualizing reading seeks to adapt the original text to contemporary taste, instead of trying to uncover the original meaning or the author's intentions, thus deliberately fashioning an anachronistic interpretation of the source.⁷⁸ The selections also conjure up the notion of rewriting, defined by André Lefevere as "the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience, with the intention of influencing the way in which that audience reads the work."⁷⁹ While the selections do not literally rewrite the poem of Saʿdī since all verses come from the *Bustān*, through the poetics of juxtaposition, as in a collage, they do adapt the *Bustān* to certain interests, thus influencing its reception or at least reflecting the preferences of particular audiences.

How then to further define and conceptualize the relation of the compilations to the complete *Bustān*? This question would deserve a full study by itself. As a conclusion, I will restrict myself to a few more remarks. Each compilation of the *Bustān* seems to engage with the complete poem of Saʿdī using a distinct hypertextual technique, to borrow Gérard Genette's terminology: each selection derives from and thus refers to—and transcends—the *Bustān*, its hypotext, in a different way.⁸⁰ In the first *Muntakhab*, proverbs were picked from the *Bustān* and assembled so as to form a book of wisdom, an abridged version of the mirror for princes that runs through the *Bustān*. While analogous to the complete *Bustān* in terms of its thematic emphasis on advice, the compilation stands out formally not as a *masnavī* but as a collection of sayings, a sort of *pandnāma* addressed to kings and rulers. As such it uses a technique

⁷⁷Compagnon, *La Seconde Main*, 18.

⁷⁸Citton, *Lire, interpréter, actualiser*.

⁷⁹Lefevere, "Mother Courage's Cucumbers," 4.

⁸⁰Genette, *Palimpsests*, esp. 1–10.

Figure 4. *Bustān*, ca. 1525, Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 73, fol. 72b (photograph by the author).



similar to quotation: reflecting themes essential to the *Bustān* while altering its literary form.

The transformation that has led to the second *Muntakhab* is different. The formal conventions of the *masnavī* were repeated. But in pushing secondary themes to the fore, including the homoeroticism of Sufi spirituality, the second *Muntakhab*

diverts the content of the complete *Bustān* toward mysticism. As such it can be compared to a transposition, separating the form of the work from its spirit, and investing the content with a different meaning.⁸¹ The selections thus constitute a pair of symmetrical and inverse transformations—the first says a similar thing differently while the second says another thing similarly. In the first case, the compiler transformed the *Bustān*'s form while leaving the subject rather intact—as intact as the formal transformation from *maṣnavī* to *pandnāma* allows; in the second case, the compiler borrowed the form of the *maṣnavī* while emphasizing secondary themes, diverting the *Bustān* from its original purpose.

Literary reception was, moreover, tightly linked to material practices, as the *Bustān* was copied, circulated, anthologized, and illustrated. Paintings were used within the selections to further assert certain readings, as shown in the last section of this paper. One might also expand this idea to the use of paintings in complete copies of the *Bustān*. Such hypothesis would require further research, but as a way to open up the discussion, I will finish this article with one last example. The calligrapher Shāh Qāsim b. Shādishāh mentioned earlier, who made at least two copies of the mystical *Muntakhab*, also produced two copies of the complete *Bustān*. One of them contains a painting that illustrates, for the first time in our knowledge, the story of the physician from Marv analyzed above and which appears in the *Muntakhab*'s introduction (Figure 4).⁸² The painting selects a story that was itself selected in the *Muntakhab*, hence signaling, within the complete version of the *Bustān*, the presence of the *Muntakhab*.

The intertextual dimension of this pictorial choice is further enhanced by the architectural epigraphy represented in the painting. Quoting a verse by Āṣāfi, the inscription features a lover who complains to his beloved about the absence of a remedy for unrequited love. This quotation complements the content of the image and its surrounding text by foregrounding the theme of mystical love. Painting and epigraphy, in sum, act like a *muntakhab*: a lens emphasizing a particular reception of the *Bustān*.

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⁸¹Ibid., 10–12.

⁸²Art and History Trust collection, accession no. 73, fol. 72b, Soudavar, *Art of the Persian Courts*, fig. 33, p. 193.

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