Islamic Art and Culture

Major Islamic Manuscript Illustrations

Automata (al-Jazari, early 12th c., Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices)

Assemblies (see Makamat)

Babur-nameh (history of Babur, founder of Mughal Dynasty)

Bestiary (see Manafi)

Bustan (Sa’di of Shiraz, d. 1291, book pub. 1257; garden; Bihzad illus. c. 1488 for sultan of Herat, last Timurid ruler)

Chronology (al-Buruni al-Asar al-Baqiya; Chronology of Ancient Peoples)

Gulistan (Sa’di; ethical work, prose and verse)

Hamza-nameh (tales of uncle of Prophet; created for Akbar)

History of the World (completed 1310-11; copies made yearly; composed by Rashid al-Din, fell in 1318; produced in Rashidiyya, suburb of Tabriz; most famous section, History of the Mongols)

Kalila wa Dimna (Mirror of Kings, or Fables; historical/fables from India, translated into Arabic in 750 by al-Mukaffa; lessons on princely behavior taught through stories enacted by animals; Prophet and first four caliphs, animals, Sikander and Furak appear)

Khamseh of Jami (poems by celebrated poet and scholar who d. 1493; religious and romantic themes; Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, Zulaykha, whirling dervishes)

Khanseh of Nizami (1140-1202; five poems, most famous of all romantic poetry; includes Sikander, sirens, Khusraw and Shirin, Shirin and Farhad, Laila and Majnun, etc.)

Kitab al-Aghani (great pre-Islamic and Islamic poets)

Luqman (costumes and customs of mankind)

Makamat (by al-Harari; Assemblies; discourses in highly ornate and rhetorical diction; contemporary people represented; adventures of Abu Zayd, disreputable old man who obtains money by craft and spends it on indulgences)

Manafi al-Hayawan (Ibn Bakhtishu; Bestiary or Natural History)
Marvels of Creation (by al-Kazawini (Qazwini), 1203-83; Wonders of World and Oddities of Existence; cosmology and geography)

Materia Medica (Dioscorides; On the Properties of Plants; pharmaceutical use and flora of Asia Minor; translated from Greek into Arabic in 9th century)

Progress of the Prophet (Zarir; life of Muhammad, and especially his night journey to heaven)

Shah-nameh of Baysungur (Shah Rukh d. 1435, made for Baysungur, 1430; scenes of Nizami’s life and rest of Shah-nameh)

Shah-nameh of Firdausi (Book of Kings; completed in 1010 for patron Mahmud of Ghazna; Humayum, Shapur, Rustam, Bahram Gur, Iskandiyar, Ardashir; heroism of Iranian kings of several pre-Islamic dynasties; Houghton Shah-nameh,)

Suleyman-nameh (earliest dated Ottoman manuscript, for Bayezid II)

Tuti-nameh (Tales of a Parrot; for Akbar)

Zafar-nameh (history of Tamerlane; Bizhad)

Major painting centers:

a. Abbasid Period, 749-1258: Baghdad

b. Mongol Period (conquest of 1220): Samarkand, Tabriz, Baghdad

c. Timurid Period, 1370-1502: Samarkand, Heart, Tabriz, Shiraz, Baghdad; School of Bihzad

d. Safavid Period, 1502-1736: Isfahan, Shiraz; Riza-i-Abbasi