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The Illumination Art of Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī's Copy in the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum

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Etik Beyanı/Ethical Statement: En az iki hakem tarafından değerlendirilmiş ve iThenticate ile %15'ten az benzerlik oranına sahip olduğu belgelenmiştir./Reviewed by at least two referees and iThenticate documented that the rate of similarity to another texts did not pass 15%.



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Abstract

The art of illumination has continued to evolve across various regions over centuries, adopting different stylistic characteristics. One of the key centers where the development of illumination can be traced and where works were produced over an extended period is the city of Shiraz, located in the Persian administrative region. This city, which served as the capital for two dynasties in the 14th century, produced a large number of works up until the late 16th century. Particularly during the 16th century, when Shiraz was governed by the Zu'lqadir governors, it became a hub for commercial production, with many works created on diverse subjects. Among the most requested pieces from this artistic center were literary books, especially those containing the Persian classics. The *Shāhnāma* manuscripts, which recount the epic and legends of Iran, were the most in-demand. The high demand for this work, particularly in the latter half of the century, led to its preparation with illuminated decorations. This study aims to examine and evaluate the work named *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*, which has been the subject of many previous studies with its different features, in terms of illumination art through a sample manuscript. The subject of this study is the illuminations of the copy of *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī* with TİEM 1983 inventory number, which is found in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts.

Keywords: Traditional Arts, Illumination, *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Shiraz.

Introduction

The art of illumination is a type of art that uses decoration made with gold and various colors.¹ This art's early examples date back to the Uyghur period as well as it continued to develop with the acceptance of Islam and spread out in different geographies for centuries. The cultural characteristics and the geographical interactions have led to the formation of stylistic characteristics within the region. The demands of the ruling class and the continuous search from the artists have enabled the usage of novel designs and motifs in the art of illumination over the centuries.² Therefore, different stylistic features were raised in each period.

Throughout history, the centers of production for the art of illumination have varied due to political circumstances. However, certain locations have maintained their status as significant artistic hubs for extended periods due to their strategic positions. In this regard, one of the cities known for continuously producing illuminated works over the centuries is Shiraz. Shiraz served as the capital of the İncü and Muzafferî dynasties in the 14th century.³ The city became under the rule of the Timurids by the end of the century,⁴ however, from the second half of the 15th century it was ruled by the ̘arā-̘oyunlu Turkman and A̘-̘oyunlū Turkman, respectively.⁵ In 1503, following the region's conquest by Shah Ismail, the city was governed by Zu'lqadir under the Safavid State's patronage. Despite being a provincial center during this period, the art of illumination in the city advanced to a highly developed stage.⁶ The city's rich artistic heritage and the concentration of artists residing there throughout the century likely contributed to this progress.⁷

In Shiraz, the works produced by prominent artists of the time also played a crucial role in the formation and development of the Shiraz style of illumination. In the early 16th century, the artistic traditions of the A̘-̘oyunlū Turkman period continued to influence the Shiraz illumination style, while innovations began to emerge after the

¹ İnci Ayan Birol, "Tezhip", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 41/61.

² Zeren Tanındı, "Başlangıcından Osmanlı'ya Tezhip Sanatı", *Hat ve Tezhip Sanatı*, ed. Ali Rıza Özcan (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2009), 243-272.

³ Filiz Çağman - Zeren Tanındı, *Topkapı Sarayı İslam Minyatürleri* (İstanbul: Tercüman Yayınevi, 1979), 38.

⁴ İsmail Aka, "Timurlular", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 41/177.

⁵ Güner İnal, *Türk Minyatür Sanatı (Başlangıcından Osmanlılara Kadar)* (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Kurumu, 1995), 125-134.

⁶ Lale Uluç, "Zülkadırlı Şiraz Valilerin Son Döneminden Resimli Bir Yusuf ve Züleyha Nüshası", *Nurhan Atasoy'a Armağan*, ed. M. Baha Tanman (İstanbul: Lale Yayıncılık, 2014), 388.

⁷ Serpil Bağcı, "Takdim Minyatürlerinde Farklı Bir Konu: Süleyman Peygamber Divanı", *Sanat Tarihinde İkonografik Araştırmalar Güner İnal'a Armağan* (Ankara, 1993), 42-44.

1530s.⁸ Among these innovations, one notable change was the design of frontispieces without dividing the inner space into horizontal and vertical sections, featuring geometric patterns or designs like shamsa (single central medallion), and corner pieces motifs. Another significant innovation was the increased use of cloud motifs in illuminated areas.⁹ In the latter half of the century, Shiraz manuscripts grew in size, and the illuminated sections became more elaborate. Works modeled after palace manuscripts saw an increase in the number of illuminated pages. Moreover, toward the end of the century, especially between 1580 and 1590, Shiraz manuscripts experienced their most productive period. Therefore, large-sized manuscripts were produced using precious metals and stones such as gold, silver and lapis lazuli.¹⁰ In addition, there has been an increase in the number of illuminated pages in the manuscripts, and as a matter of fact, almost every page of some works has been decorated. Depending on the subject matter, Shiraz manuscripts include illuminations such as sarlawh (symmetrical double-page), the unwan (heading), outer borders, and the *hātime* (colophon) illuminations.¹¹ In Qur'anic manuscripts, in addition to frontispieces, *surah headings*, and *rose illuminations*, during the second half of the century, many Qur'ans featured illuminations marking the exact center of the text, specifically at the beginning of the Surah Al-Kahf and on the last pages¹², with Persian *falnama* (prophetic omens) added to the text.¹³

Shirazi illuminators created numerous scholarly and literary works that incorporated the mentioned illumination characteristics.¹⁴ These works were highly sought after by Ottoman bureaucrats and elites throughout the 16th century. In addition to the Qur'ans, there was considerable interest in manuscripts of classical Persian literature, including works such as *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*, *Khamsa-i Nizāmī*, *Dīvān-i Nevāī*, *Yusuf and Zulaikhā*, *Haft Awrang* and *Kulliyāt-i Sadī*. Today, when examining Shiraz

⁸ David James, *After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries The Nasser D.Khalili Collection of Islamic Art* (New York: Kha, 1992), 113. Lale Uluç, *Türkmen Valiler Şirazlı Ustalar Osmanlı Okurlar XVI. Yüzyıl Şiraz El Yazmaları* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2006), 85.

⁹ Ayşe Zehra Sayın, Ahmet Çaycı, "Safevi-Şiraz Üslubu Hamse-i Nizami Nüshasının Tezhipleri", *Konya Sanat* 3 (2020), 16.

¹⁰ Lale Uluç, "Zülkadirli Şiraz Valilerin Son Döneminden Resimli Bir Yusuf ve Züleyha Nüshası", 388-389.

¹¹ Ayşe Zehra Sayın, *Safevi Dönemi Şiraz Üslubu Edebî Eserlerin Tezhip Analizi (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi)* (Konya: Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi, 2021), 534-546.

¹² David James, *After Timur: Qur'ans of the 15th and 16th Centuries The Nasser D.Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, s.114.

¹³ Ali Fuat Baysal, "Mushaf Tezyinatının Tarihî İçindeki Gelişimi", *Marife* 10/3 (2010), 374.

¹⁴ Zeren Tanındı, "Kur'ânî Elyazmalarda Tezhip Sanatı ve Tezyini Desenler", *Kur'ân Sanatı Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Hazineleleri*, ed. Massumeh Farhad - Simon Rettig (İstanbul: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2016), 108.

manuscripts in Istanbul's Museums and Libraries, it can be stated that *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī* manuscripts are among the most preferred topics.¹⁵

This study will examine the illuminated pages of the copy of *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*¹⁶ manuscript housed in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts. The significant demand for this literary work during the period was a key factor in selecting this manuscript as the focus of the study. In addition, the miniatures of the *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*, which form the subject of the research, have been analyzed as part of a master's thesis.¹⁷ This article aims to contribute to the holistic examination of the manuscript in question in terms of traditional arts by analyzing the illuminations of the manuscript whose miniatures are the subject of study.

The copy of *Shāhnāma* by Firdawsī, registered under inventory number 1983 in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, was brought to the museum from the Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha Library on February 16th, 1911.¹⁸ The date of transcription, calligrapher, and illuminator of the *Shāhnāma* copy are not known. The dimensions of the work are 42 x 28 cm, consisting of 361 folios. At the beginning of the work, there is an introduction text written in straight lines within a the golden frame area. The text is surrounded by black outline, orange thread, gold the golden frame, orange with black thread, and surrounded by navy blue outline. The *Shāhnāma* text is divided into six columns. Within the columns, there are illuminated triangular (amulet) areas in the title's illumination and interlinear writing areas without a specific order. Furthermore, illuminated and illustrated pages are adorned with reciprocal *beynes-sutūr* (between the lines) illumination.

¹⁵ Lale Uluç, "Ottoman Book Collectors and Illustrated Sixteenth Century Shiraz Manuscripts", *Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée: Livres et Lecture dans le Monde Ottoman (Remmm)* 87/88 (1999), 86. Lale Uluç, "16. Yüzyılda Osmanlı-Safevi Kültürel İlişkileri Çerçevesinde Nakkaşhânenin Önemi", *Doğu Batı Düşünce Dergisi* 54 (2010), 25-27.

¹⁶ *Shāhnāma* is a poetic work by Ebu'l Kāsım-i Firdawsī based on Iranian epics and legends and is considered one of the greatest and most important works of Persian literature. The writing of *Shāhnāma* probably started in (370/980)-(380/990) and took its final form in (408/1018). The work starts to explain the creation of the first human being and continues to the period in which Arabs dominated Iran. In the work, the depictions of nature and war are prevalent, including famous figures such as Cemşid, Dahhāk, Gāve, Feridun, Zaloğlu Rüstem, Efrasiyab (Alp Er Tonga), Keykavus, İsfendiyar, Dara, İskender, etc. and informations about the Turkish culture. The *Shāhnāma*, is a work with significant influence in the field of literature and has numerous copies housed in various libraries across Türkiye. For further information on the subject, refer to: Mehmet Kanar, "Şāhnāme", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2010), 38/289-290; Firdevsi, *Şehname I*, çev. Mehmet Necati Lugal - Kenan Akyüz (Ankara: MEB Yayınları, 1994), 12.

¹⁷ Yunus Türkşad Yegin, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesindeki 1983 Numaralı Firdevsi Şahnamesi Minyatürleri* (Van: Yüzyüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, 2010).

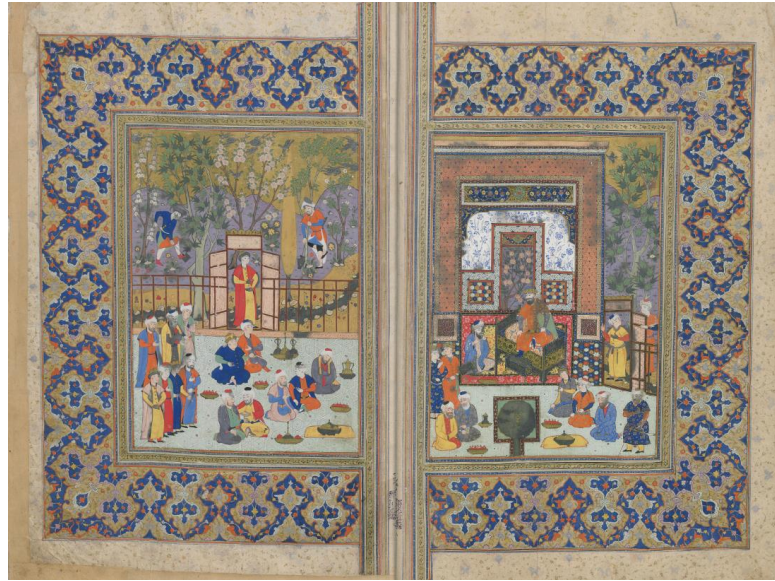
¹⁸ Kemal Çiğ, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'ndeki Minyatürlü Kitapların Kataloğu", *Şarkiyat Mecmuası* 3 (1959), 81-82.

On page 1a of the manuscript, there is the seal of Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha.¹⁹ Additionally, on the inner side of pages 1v-2r, 2v-3r, 11v, and 361v-362r, the seal of "Islamic Foundations Museum"²⁰ is printed in Ottoman Turkish. The manuscript includes border, sarlawh, the headings, as well as colophon illuminations on thirty pages.

1. Border Illumination of Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī

On pages 1v-2r of the manuscript, there is border illumination surrounding the pages with reciprocal miniatures and the area containing miniatures. The illuminated page consists of inner border, outer border, and *tığ* (elongated decorative extensions) sections from inside to outside. The inner border is surrounded by orange thread, gold thread, (+),(-) shaped ornamentation, white thread, and three-dotted guilloche (*zencirek*). The three-dotted guilloche pattern is embroidered in black on a gold background. The interwoven gaps created by the guilloche are alternately painted in orange and green, adding a vibrant contrast to the overall design.

Figure 1: Border Illumination, TİEM 1983, 1v-2r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts.)



¹⁹ Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha (1689-1758) was a statesman who served as grand vizier during the reigns of Sultan Mahmud I and Sultan Osman III. For further information on the subject, refer to: M. Münir Aktepe, "Hekimoğlu Ali Paşa", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1998), 17/166-168.

²⁰ The museum established by the Minister of Foundations, Ürgüplü Mustafa Hayri Efendi, was opened to visitors on April 27, 1914, under the name of the Islamic Foundations Museum (İslâm Vakıfları Müzesi). It contains a collection spanning from the Islamic period to the 19th century, including important manuscripts as well as carpets, candlesticks, lanterns, wooden lecterns, doors, window wings, and ceramic works, all of which are preserved within the museum. For more information on the subject, see: Nazan Ölçer, "Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 2012), 543-544.

The outer border illumination is designed with horizontal symmetrical straight lines. Gold and navy blue areas are separated by orange thread. The interior of the $\frac{1}{2}$ symmetric white and lilac cloud motifs on the gold ground is navy blue. The enclosed area created by horizontal symmetrical simple *rūmī* motifs is underneath. These simple *rūmī* motifs are painted in orange and white. Alongside cloud and *rūmī* motifs, there are also the *khatāyī* group motifs comprising of *khatāyī*, *penç* (five-petal flower), *goncagül* (rosebud), and leaf. *Khatāyī* group motifs are colored in orange, yellow, blue, and lilac. The outer border illumination is bounded in a straight manner with gold thread, orange thread, and navy blue lamb color.

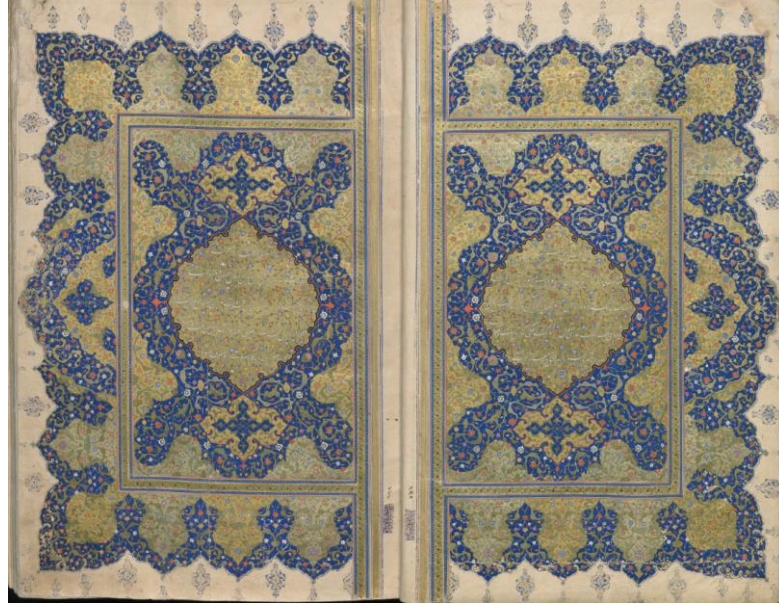
In the border illumination, the *tığs* are designed with half-symmetrical and quarter-symmetrical plain *rūmī* motifs. The *tığs* are painted in navy blue. Over time, there has been fading in the colors of the *tığ* sections. The space between navy blue *rūmī* motifs in the *tığ* sections is adorned with $\frac{1}{2}$ symmetric *khatāyī* group motifs (Figure 1).

2. Sarlawh Illumination of Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī

The sarlawh (symmetrical double-page) illumination, consisting of reciprocal double pages, is composed of inner area, inner border, outer border, and *tığ* sections. The sarlawh illumination's inner area is designed symmetrically in $\frac{1}{4}$ sections without being divided into horizontal and vertical parts. In the center, there is a medallion form bordered with orange and black threads. Within the medallion area, there is a text written in ta'lik script with white ink on a gold ground. The writing ground contains free spiral *khatāyī* group motifs, as well as *penç*, rosebud, and leaf motifs. Additionally, at the ends of some spirals, there is spring-branch-style ornamentation formed by the sequential arrangement of *penç* and rosebud motifs. At the top and bottom of the medallion form, there are areas bordered with orange thread. Inside these areas, there is a design with simple *rūmī* motifs on a $\frac{1}{4}$ symmetric gold spiral. Two different shades of gold are used in the motifs. The area is balanced with gold and navy blue. Outside the *paftas* (panel), intertwining *rūmī* motifs create areas with gold and navy blue grounds. Their interiors are adorned with cloud and *khatāyī* group motifs. The *rūmī* and cloud motifs are in gold, while the *khatāyī* group motifs are colored in white, yellow, orange, lilac, and blue on gold branches. Gold is used in different tones, including yellow and green, as a characteristic of the period.²¹

²¹ Ayşe Zehra Sayın, *Safevi Dönemi Şiraz Üslûbu Edebî Eserlerin Tezhip Analizi (Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi)*, 599.

Figure 2: Sarlawh Illumination, TIEM 1983, 2v-3r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The inner border is surrounded by orange thread, gold thread, white (+),(-) shaped ornament on a navy blue ground, and a guilloche. The central square gaps of the black key chains are painted in orange and green. There are some flakes in the green colors due to aging.

On the exterior border, there is a design characterized by transverse symmetry *dendanlı* (lobed; a decorative pattern that divides the ornamented area into segments)²² with $\frac{1}{2}$ symmetrical domes along the longer edge axis. Within the transversely symmetrical loped dome area, the interior of the swirling *rūmī* motifs is set against a gold background, while the exterior is on a navy blue base. The gold backgrounds are filled alternately with shades of yellow and green gold. Both the interior and exterior of the areas are adorned with swirling *rūmī* motifs as well as cloud and *khatāyī* group motifs. Gold is used in varying tones in *rūmī* and cloud motifs to add movement and distinguish details. The section with $\frac{1}{2}$ symmetrical domes along the longer edge axis is divided into two with white thread. The inner area is divided into gold and navy blue backgrounds, containing swirling *rūmī* and *khatāyī* group motifs. The outer area with a navy blue background is adorned with cloud and *khatāyī* group motifs. In the illuminated area, cloud and *rūmī* motifs are painted in gold, while *khatāyī* group motifs are painted with yellow, white, orange, green, lilac, and blue. The transversely symmetrical areas are

²² Fatma Çiçek Derman, “Tezhip Sanatında Kullanılan Terimler, Tabirler ve Malzeme”, *Hat ve Tezhip Sanatı*, ed. Ali Rıza Özcan (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2009), 526.

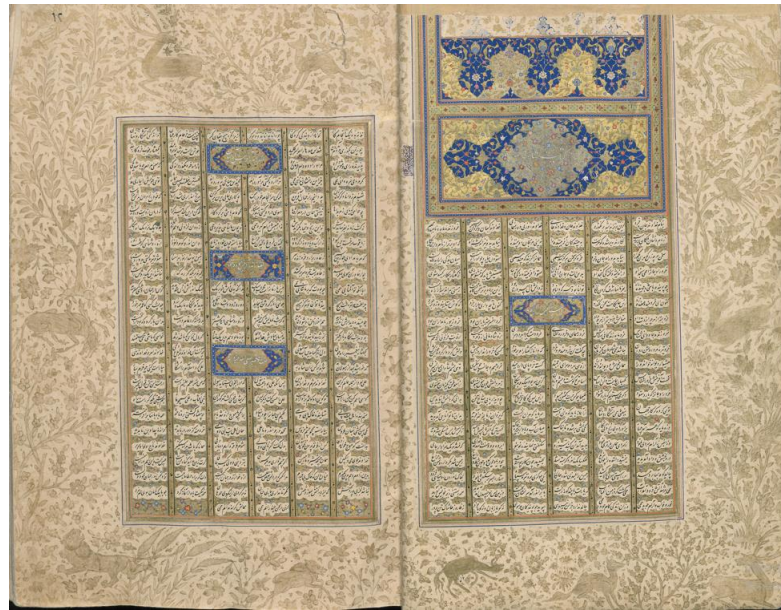
embroidered with gold thread and navy blue threads; the domed area along the longer edge axis is finished with gold thread, the golden frame, and navy blue thread.

The *tıǵs* have three different designs, each featuring half-symmetrical, plain separating *rūmī* motifs in navy blue. The *pafta* formed by the *rūmī* motifs are painted in a watery manner with navy blue and gold (Figure 2).

3. Headings Illumination of *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*

Headings (unwan) illumination is a single page consisting of the title, inner border, upper, and the *tıǵ*.

Figure 3: Headings Illumination, TIEM 1983, 11v-12r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The headings illumination is $\frac{1}{4}$ symmetric. In the middle of the horizontal rectangle section, there is a green gold area bordered with gold thread. Inscribed within is the title "*Āgāz-ı Kitāb-ı Şahahnāme*" in ta'lik script with white ink. The background of the writing contains free spiral *khatāyī* group motifs. Additionally, like the sarlawh illumination, a spring-branch style decoration, formed by the sequential arrangement of *penç* and rosebud motifs, appears at the end of the spirals. Outside the written area, a spiral *rūmī* motif in gold thread creates a closed form. In this area, with a gold and navy blue as a background, alongside with the *rūmī* motif; there are cloud, *penç*, rosebud, and leaf motifs.

The inner border is embellished with gold and orange threads, white-colored (+),(-) ornament, and three-pointed guilloche on a navy blue background. The dots of the guilloche on the gold background are in black, while the central square areas within the guilloche are alternately painted in green and orange.

In the upper section, there is a 1/6 composition folded to the right and left. In this area, spiral *rūmī* motifs on gold thread create *paftas* with gold and navy blue backgrounds. The gold background is applied in yellow and green, adding dynamism to the surface. Within the gold-background *paftas*, there are small areas with navy blue backgrounds. As in other illuminated areas, the *paftas* feature a heavy use of cloud motifs and *khatāyī* group motifs. The inner surface of the swirling *rūmī* crown, placed skipping one point from the symmetry point, is blue. In the illuminated areas, *rūmī* and cloud motifs are painted in gold, while *khatāyī* group motifs are painted in yellow, white, orange, blue, and lilac as a gradient. The upper section is finished flat with gold and orange-colored threads.

The *tığ* is designed with alternating $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ half plain *rūmī* motifs. As in other *tığ*, the inner parts of the *paftas* formed by *rūmī* motifs are painted with dark blue and gold in a watery way. The spaces between the *rūmī* motif *tığ* are decorated with *khatāyī* group motifs using the *halkār* technique (Figure 3).

4. Halkār Illumination of Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī

Within the examined copy of the *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*, there are thirty reciprocal pages (11v-12r, 22v-23r, 28v-29r, 43v-44r, 52v-53r, 64v-65r, 69v-70r, 81v-82r, 100v-101r, 112v-113r, 123v-124r, 133v-134r, 141v-142r, 160v-161r, 166v-167r, 171v-172r, 184v-185r, 192v-193r, 196v-197r, 208v-209r, 223v-224r, 228v-229r, 235v-236r, 244v-245r, 256v-257r, 266v-267r, 287v-288r, 308v-309r, 336v-337r, 361v-362r) adorned with *halkār* illumination. The pages containing *halkār* illuminations are 12r, 29r, 44r, 53r, 64v, 82r, 100v, 112v, 123v, 133v, 141v, 161r, 166v, 171v, 185r, 209r, 223v, 236v, 244v, 256v, 267r, 287v, 308v, and 337r, while the upper and lower border *halkār* illuminations of pages 28v, 43v, 52v, 65r, 101r, 113r, 124r, 134r, 142r, 160v, 167r, 192v, 208v, 224r, 235v, 245r, 257r, 266v, 288r, 309r, and 336v are applied in the same manner. An example of *halkār* illumination from the pages where the same *halkār* illumination is applied will be examined.

In the examined work, the *halkār* illumination predominantly depicts representations of nature. The clusters of plants in these areas are designed with *khatāyī*, *penç*, rosebud, and leaf motifs. In addition to the classical use of *khatāyī* motifs, there are also larger motifs featuring prominent wide crown-like petals. Since the *penç*, rosebud, and leaf designs on the spirals in the inner sections of the pages are similar or identical to the plant cluster motifs, they will be referred to as plant clusters during the descriptive phase.

The page containing title illumination, found on page 11v, is the first page adorned with *halkār* illumination. Since the page contains title illumination, three sides of the page are decorated with *halkār* illumination. The *halkār* illumination is described as a depiction of nature. A simurgh in motion is depicted among cloud motifs on the outer

long edge. In the bottom of the page, there is a tree, each with a bird perched upon it. The qilin has turned its head backward. In the lower section, among trees and clustered plant, there are deer, foxes, and qilin. The deer and fox are facing each other. In the inner section of the page, the plant cluster continues in a single-thread spiral pattern, extending upward (Figure 3).

Figure 4: Halkār illumination, TIEM 1983, 12r
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)

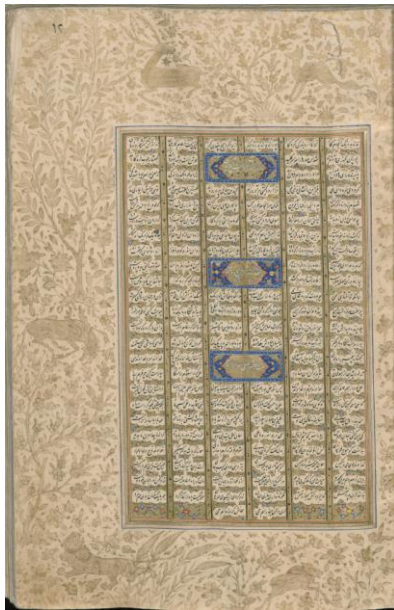


Figure 4: Halkār illumination, TIEM 1983, 28v
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The *halkār* illumination on page 12r is similar to the *halkār* illumination found on pages 29r, 44r, 53r, 64v, 82r, 100v, 112v, 123v, 133v, 141v, 161r, 166v, 171v, 185r, 209r, 223v, 236v, 244v, 256v, 267r, 287v, 308v and 337a. Free sky designs and various nature depictions adorn the page borders. Among clusters of trees and plant at the top edge of the pages, foxes and deer are pictured, while birds are pictured among the clouds. The deer's head is turned towards the fox, and the bird is flying towards both the fox and the deer. Along the long outer edge, the qilin amidst the arranged trees is facing towards the lion located beneath the tree at the bottom. The lion lifts its head looking at the qilin. Among clusters of plant at the bottom, there is a moving pig. Inside, plant cluster continues upwards (Figure 4). On page 100v, a deer is pictured instead of a lion. In some pages, there is a difference in the direction of the pattern on the upper and lower borders. This indicates that the patterns used as templates are applied in reverse or straight directions.

The upper and lower *halkār* illuminations on pages 28v, 43v, 52v, 65r, 101r, 113r, 124r, 134r, 142r, 160v, 167r, 192v, 208v, 224r, 235v, 245r, 257r, 266v, 288r, 309r, and 336v are similar to the previously examined upper and lower *halkār* illuminations. Since these

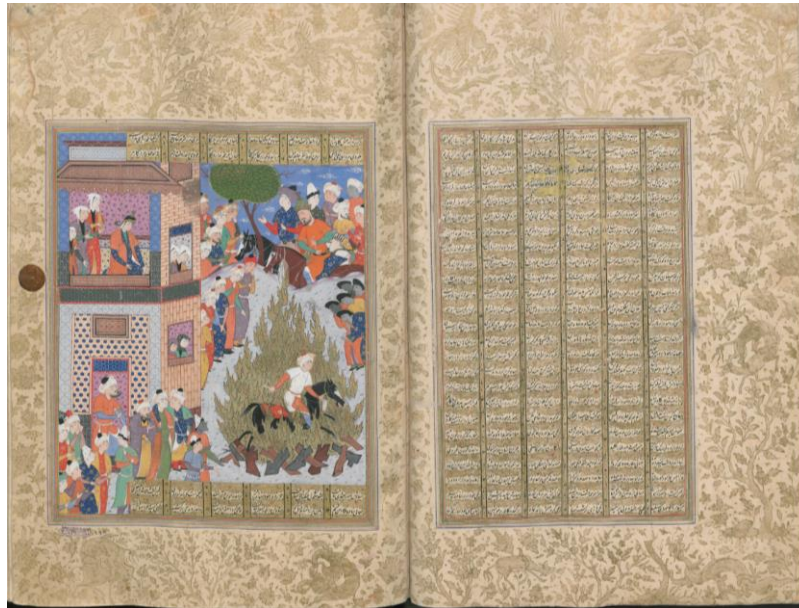
pages contain miniature areas, the outer border remains thin. On these pages, the plant cluster in a single-thread spiral motifs continues upward along both the inner and outer fine borders. Uniquely, on page 28v, wide crown-like petals *khatāyī* motifs are used along the outer long border, and a depiction of a monkey is also included between the motifs (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Halkār illumination, TIEM 1983, 22v-23r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The *halkār* illumination on pages 22v-23r exhibits a different pattern. While other pages depict free sky and natural landscapes, here, *khatāyī*-group motifs (*khatāyī*, *penç*, rosebud, and leaf) are featured on a double-thread spiral. The *khatāyī* motif is placed in its classical form on one spiral, while on another spiral, it is drawn with wide crown-like petals. This design is applied on the outer three borders of the page. On the inner border, there is a single-thread spiral with *penç* and leaf motifs. Between the *khatāyī*-group motifs on the outer part of the page, birds are depicted at regular intervals. These birds are drawn in various styles. Although the patterns on facing pages may seem symmetrical at first glance, careful examination reveals differences (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Halkâr illumination, TİEM 1983, 69v-70r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



On the upper border of page 69v, among the cloud motifs, there is a depiction of a flying simurgh. In the adorned area with clusters of trees and plants, a qilin is depicted in motion. A bird perched on a branch of a tree looks downward. Along the long outer edge of the page, amidst clusters of trees and plants, the qilin is depicted attacking the deer. The bird perched on the upper part of the tree looks downward to observe the struggle between the qilin and the deer. At the bottom edge, a dragon with one foot on a dry tree trunk is visible with its mouth open. The qilin is depicted amidst clusters of trees and plants. In the inner narrow section of the page, the plant cluster continues upward on a double-thread spiral (Figure 7).

On page 70r, in the upper part, there is a tree in the center, with a simurgh on each side of the tree. In the adorned area with cloud, cluster of plant, and tree motifs, there is a bird on the tree. At the bottom edge of the page, between clusters of plant on either side of the tree, scenes of dragon-deer and qilin-deer battles are depicted. In the inner section, the plant cluster continues upward on a single-thread spiral, while in the outer section, it continues on a double-thread spiral (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Halkâr illumination, TİEM 1983, 81v
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish
and Islamic Arts)



Figure 8: Halkâr illumination, TİEM 1983, 172r
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish
and Islamic Arts)



At the top part of page 81v, tree branches extend beyond the golden frame area at the top from the inner miniature area. The ground beneath the tree branches is adorned with *khatâyî*- group motifs (*penç*, rosebud, and leaf) in negative technique. Outside this area, a struggle between a qilin and a deer is depicted among the plant clusters, and a simurgh is illustrated among the clouds. Along the outer and lower edges of the page, double-thread *khatâyî* group spirals are presented. The use of *khatâyî* motifs here is similar to the design on pages 22v-23r. On one spiral, the *khatâyî* motif is used in its classical form, while on the other, it is drawn with wide crown-like petals. The different uses of the *khatâyî* motif along the page's edges follow a sequential arrangement. On the narrow inner border, the plant cluster continues upward in a single-thread spiral (Figure 8).

On the upper part of page 172r, among various trees and plant clusters, there are two simurghs and one bird perched on a tree. However, along the bottom edge, depictions of a tiger, a qilin and a lion are situated among various clusters of plant. The qilin and the lion are facing each other. Along the inner and outer long edges, the plant cluster continues upward on a single-thread spiral. (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Halkâr illumination, TĪEM 1983, 184v
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish
and Islamic Arts)

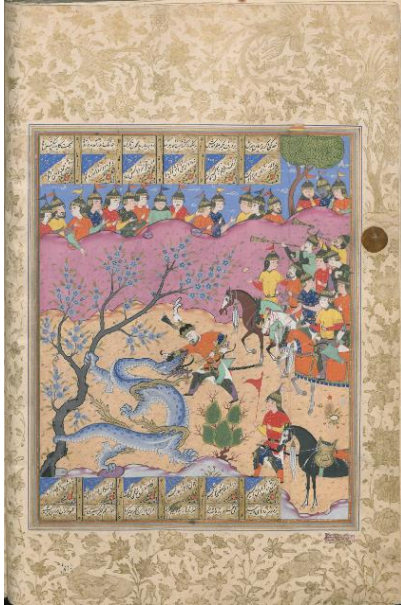


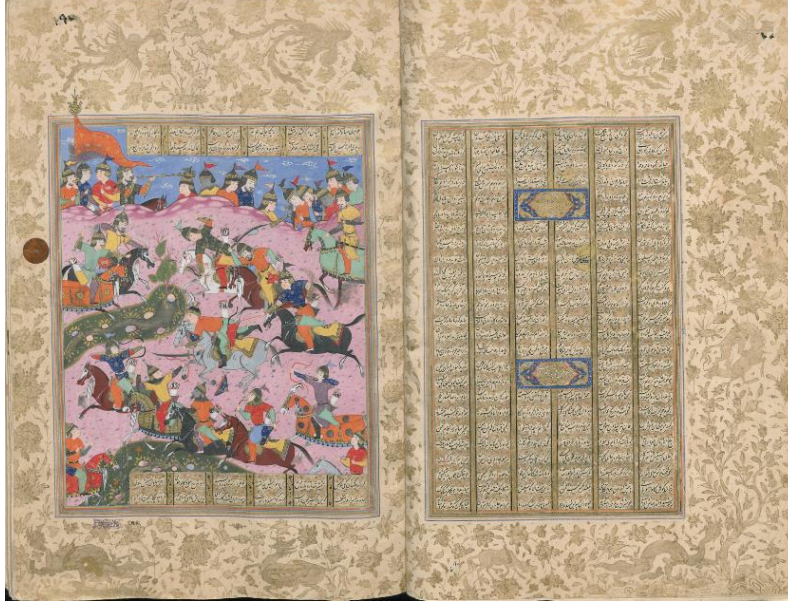
Figure 10: Halkâr illumination, TĪEM 1983, 193r
(With the permission of the Museum of Turkish
and Islamic Arts)



At the top part of page 184v, two simurgh birds in motion among clusters of plant are depicted. On the outer long edge, there is a spiral adorned with *khatāyī* and leaf motifs, extending upward without a visible starting point. In addition to the classical use of the *khatāyī* motif, wide crown-like petals, as seen on previous pages, are also employed. At the top of this *khatāyī* motif spiral, a tree is depicted with a bird perched on its branch, looking downward. Along the lower edge, amidst clusters of plant, there are depictions of a deer and a pig. The qilin, facing away, is looking towards the pig. The pig is in motion with its back turned. On the inner side, the plant cluster continues upward along a single-thread spiral (Figure 10).

At the top part of page 193r, two simurgh birds in motion are drawn among trees and clusters of plant. The simurgh on the left side is moving towards the qilin located at the outer long edge of the page. The qilin among the clusters of plant is also turning its head towards the simurgh. Along the outer long edge, amidst the plant and trees, a struggle between a deer and a qilin is observed. Below, a dragon leaning one foot on a tree, watches the struggle. Along the lower edge, within the cluster of plant, a lion in a sitting position is observing the dragon. On the inner part of the page, a plant cluster is depicted along a single-thread spiral (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Halkâr illumination, TiEM 1983, 196v-197r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



On page 196v, amidst clusters of plant, a qilin turns its head towards another qilin depicted in motion among the clouds. In the corner, a bird is depicted in flight. At the top of the outer long edge, there is a cluster of plants that includes a *khatāyī* motif with wide crown-like petals. In the middle of the page, a battle between a qilin and a deer is illustrated. Below this scene, a dragon is shown with one foot resting against a tree, gazing toward the struggle. Along the bottom edge, the qilin is depicted moving toward the dragon among clusters of plant. On the inner side, a single-thread spiral of plant clusters continues upward (Figure 12).

On page 197r, at the top edge, two simurgh birds are depicted in motion among various clusters of plant. Along the lower edge, there are depictions of a dragon and a qilin amidst clusters of plant. The qilin's head is turned backward, while the dragon, with one foot resting on a leaf, is depicted with its head facing upwards. On both the inner and outer long edges, a plant cluster continues along a single-thread spiral. The outer long edge features the *khatāyī* motif with wide crown-like petals (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Halkār Illumination, TiEM 1983, 361v-362r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



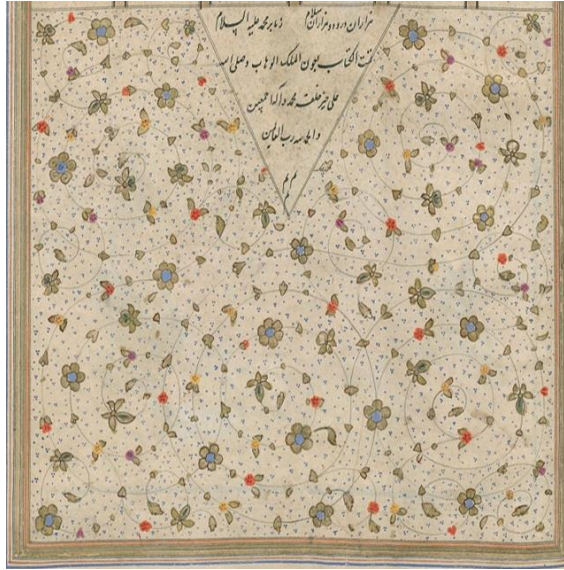
Pages 361v-362r feature imaginative and nature-inspired animals in *halkār* illumination, which differ in variety and style from those found in previous *halkār* illuminations. On page 361v, at the top edge, amidst clusters of plant and trees, there is a dragon and a stork. The dragon, with its head turned backward, gazes at the flying stork. Along the upper part of the outer long edge, a fox is depicted in motion. Next to it, a tree stands with a bird perched on its branches. Along the lower edge, two deer are depicted in motion among the clusters of plant. In these examined facing pages, the vertical inner golden frame surrounding the area with miniatures has drawn the page completely. This feature distinguishes it from other pages. In the inner long area, there is a spiral featuring *penç* and leaf motifs, with no visible starting point (Figure 13).

On page 362a, amidst clusters of plant, two deer and a simurgh are depicted in motion side by side. Along the outer long edge, there is a qilin facing towards the simurgh and a tree on rocky terrain. Along the lower edge, two deer are placed facing each other among the clusters of plant. One of the deer is painted with spots. In the inner long area, the opposite page is identical to the inner area of the current page. The fox and the paired deer depicted within the miniatures are directly applied in *halkār* illumination as well (Figure 13).

5. Colophon Illumination of *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī*

The illuminated area of the colophon (*hātime*) is bordered with gold thread. The five lines of text within the area narrow, creating a triangular form.

Figure 13. Colophon illumination, TiEM 1983, 361r (Source: With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The colophon embellishment, adorned with "S" spiral *khatāyī* group (*penç*, rosebud, leaf) motifs, is intricately detailed. The spirals and leaves are gold, with certain sections of the motifs colored in shades of blue, orange, yellow, and lilac. Some colored areas are subjected to gradient effects. On the background, there are navy blue *şāhī benek* (three pearl-shaped dots)²³ (Figure 14).

Evaluation and Conclusion

In Shiraz, which was recognized as one of the significant artistic hubs of Islamic civilization, commercial production thrived throughout the 16th century, resulting in the preservation of numerous manuscripts that have reached us today. Upon scrutinizing the illuminations of these surviving manuscripts, a consistent *pafta* emerges across many of them. Interestingly, while not immediately apparent at first glance, closer examination reveals the repetition of intricate designs. These recurring patterns are sometimes replicated exactly in certain areas, while in others, variations occur through alterations in background colors or main motifs. Similar observations of these resemblances were noted in the examined illuminated areas.

Within the manuscript, the border illumination surrounding the introductory miniature, *sarlawh* illumination, and heading illumination are balanced with gold and navy-blue backgrounds. Only in the heading illumination, the upper part features a blue background for the central medallion motif. Gold, characteristic of the era, is employed

²³ Please refer to the detailed information about this motif: Aziz Doğanay, "Türk Sanatında Pelengî ve Şâhî Benek Nakışları ya da Çintamani Yanılgısı", *Divan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi* 17 (ts.), 193-218.

in various tones within the inner sections and motif details of the *pafta*. The application of different shades of gold on the *pafta*'s backgrounds enlivens the pattern. Classical illuminated pages feature an inner border that encloses the design or transitions to the illuminated area, as seen in the introductory miniature. The inner borders of illuminated pages are adorned with threads of different colors, (+),(-) embellishments, and three-pointed guilloche. The points of the are black, while the central areas are alternately embellished with orange and colored in green. In addition to the *rūmī* and *khatāyī* group motifs, cloud motifs, frequently observed in Shiraz manuscripts, are used across all illuminated areas. In classical illuminated pages, half-symmetrical or quarter-symmetrical *tig* form half of the simple *rūmī* motifs. Pages 1v-2r and 11v are embellished with *khatāyī* group motifs interspersed between the *tig*.

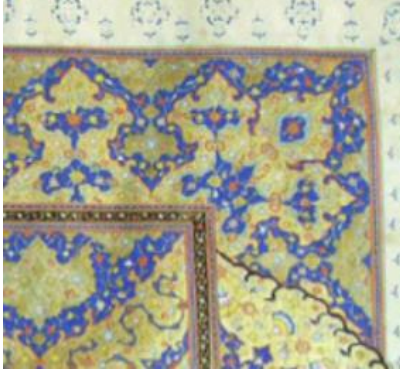
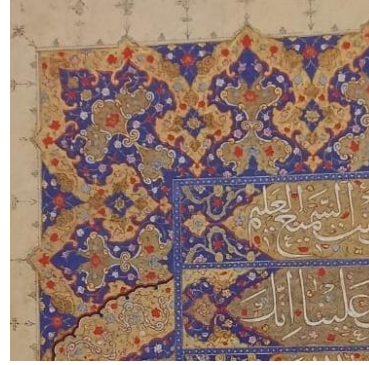
The border illumination surrounding the introductory miniature on pages 1v-2r of the manuscript closely resembles designs found in various works from the same period, with only minor modifications in some cases. In the TSMK H.752 manuscript, the same design is applied to the flat areas, but the corner design is adjusted to feature a single cloud motif rather than the tripartite cloud design (Figure 16). Additionally, in the examined manuscript, the outer border decoration, which is confined to a flat area, shows the same inner framing design, while the outer framing extends beyond the flat area, with the outer border being bounded by a straight and segmented pattern (Figure 18).

Figure 14: TiEM 1983, 1v-2r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



Figure 15: TSMK H.752, 1572, 1r (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)



Figure 1: SK Sultan Ahmed I 22, 2v²⁴Figure 16: Astan Quds Ravazi 262²⁵

The inner area, outer border, and domed areas on the outer border of the sarlawh illumination found on pages 2v-3r of the manuscript appear in various manuscripts. The sarlawh illumination and the design system of the inner space and outer margins of the B.146 manuscript, preserved in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library and believed to have been produced in Shiraz, have been directly replicated (Figure 20). In the TIEM 503 manuscript, the inner space design, including the panel arrangement and spiral system, is identical (Figure 22). Similarly, in the TIEM 378 manuscript, the panel design formed by the spiral motifs is applied in the same manner. However, there is a different arrangement in the cloud motifs outside of the spiral motifs (Figure 21). Zeren Tanındı¹⁴ dates the examined work, along with the TIEM 378 and TIEM 503 manuscripts, to around 1580.

²⁴ Gül Güney, "Safevi-Şiraz Dönem Özelliği Gösteren Bazı Kur'an-ı Kerim Nüshalarının Serlevha Tezhipleri", *Akademik Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 5/43, 152.

²⁵ Mahdi Simriz - Mahdi Sahragard, *Masterpieces of Astan Quds Razavi Library&Museum Quran Manuscript Collection* (Mashhad: Art Creation Institute of Astan Quds Razawi Mashhad, 2014).

Figure 19: TIEM 1983, 2v-3r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)

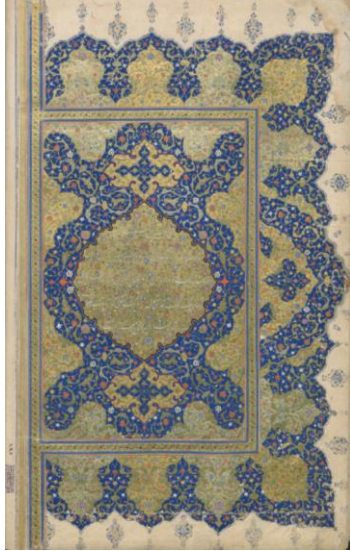


Figure 20: TSMK B.146, 2v (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)

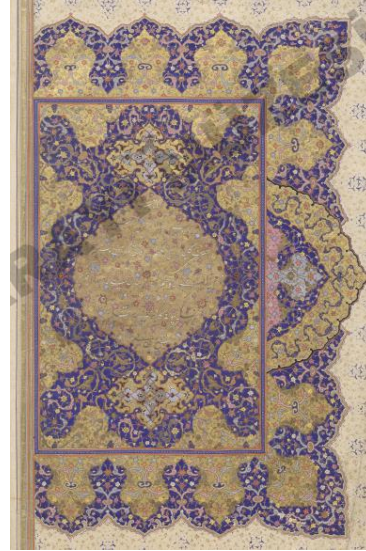


Figure 21: TIEM 378, 1v (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)

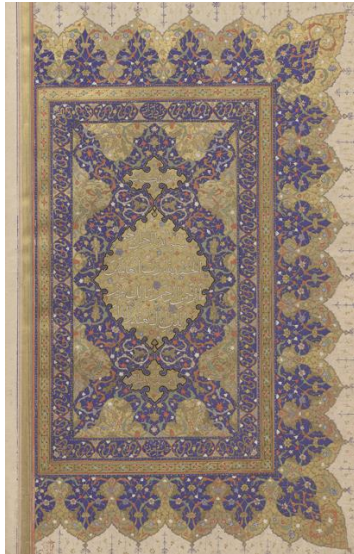
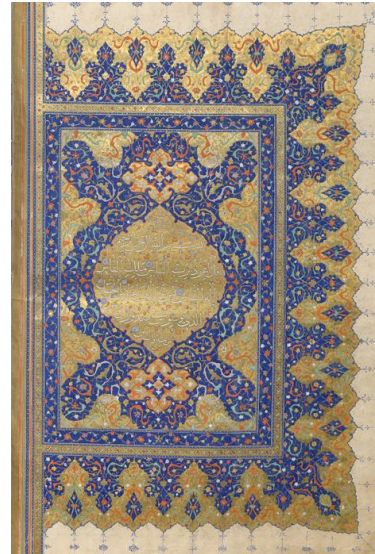


Figure 22: TIEM 503, 366v (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



The title section of the heading illumination on page 11v of the examined *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī* manuscript shares the same design as the title section of page 63v of the TSMK A3559 manuscript. The only difference is found in the area where the title text is written. The upper design of the examined heading illumination is identical to that found on the outer margins of the miniature sections in the TSMK R.1548 and TSMK B.146

manuscripts. In these areas, the spiral system of spiral *rūmī* and cloud motifs are the same, although there are some differences in the coloring.

Figure 23: TIEM 1983, 11v (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



Figure 24: TSMK A.3559, 63v (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)



Figure 25: TSMK R.1548, 1585, 549v²⁶



Figure 26: TSMK B.146, 1v (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)



The manuscript features *halkār* illumination on thirty facing pages. On pages 22v-23r, bird motifs are drawn amidst the *khatāyī* group motifs on a double-thread spiral, arranged in a specific order. Apart from pages 22v-23r, various trees, clusters of plants, and animals are depicted in the *halkār* illuminations. Animal motifs can be categorized into two groups: those sourced from nature such as birds, deer, foxes, lions, tigers, boars, monkeys, and imaginative creatures like simurghs, dragons, and qilin.

The *halkār* illumination in the *Shāhnāma* by Firdawsī manuscript, cataloged as H.1497 in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library, is stylistically very similar to that of the manuscript being examined. Both works feature *halkār* illuminations with trees, plant clusters, and animals that are notably similar. It is highly probable that the mythical animals in both manuscripts were created using the same template. These animals, exhibiting similar movement, are present in both works (Figure 27, 28). This suggests that

²⁶ Lale Uluç, *Türkmen Valiler Şirazlı Ustalar Osmanlı Okurlar XVI. Yüzyıl Şiraz El Yazmaları*, 421.

the *halkār* illuminations in both manuscripts may have been executed by the same artist or prepared in the same workshop. Additionally, the *halkār* illumination style in the manuscript TSMK H.1475 also shows similarities in the types of trees, plant clusters, and animals used (Figure 30). The manuscript housed in the Metropolitan Museum exhibits only similarities in the trees and plant clusters in its *halkār* illuminations (Figure 29).

Figure 27: TIEM 1983, 44r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)

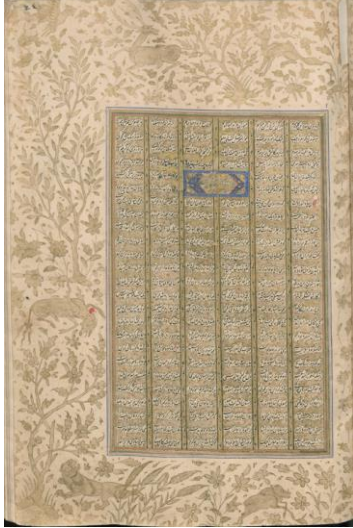


Figure 28: TSMK H.1497, 1574, 313r (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)

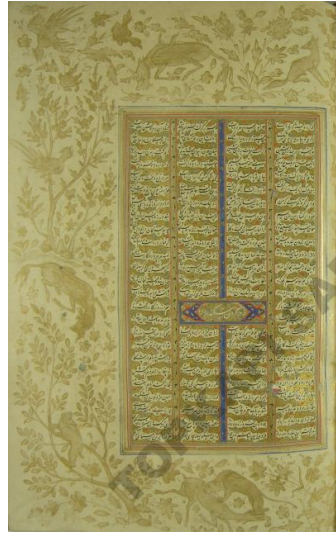
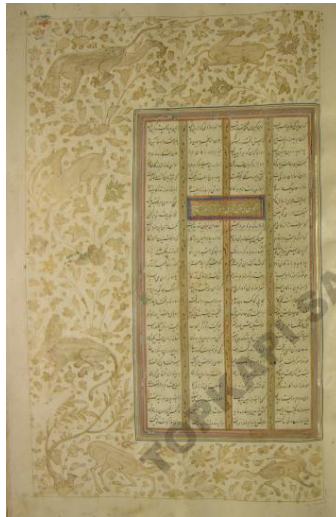


Figure 29: Metropolitan Museum 57.51.39.40v²⁷



Figure 30: TSMK H.1475, 209r (It belongs to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate of National Palaces)



²⁷ Met Museum, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. "The Collection / Islamic Art" (Erişim 15 Şubat 2024).

The stylistic feature of the *halkār* illumination surrounding the finishing miniature of the manuscript differs from previous *halkār* illuminations. The stylistic variation is particularly notable in the use of animal motifs. This discrepancy suggests that the artist responsible for the final *halkār* illumination is different from the artists of the preceding illuminations. Additionally, the direct application of the naturalistic animal depictions within the *halkār* illumination, as seen in the finishing miniature, is noteworthy. It is probable that the artist who created the miniature also executed the border ornamentation.

Figure 31: The Finishing Miniature and Halkār Illumination in Details, TİEM 1983, 361v-362r (With the permission of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)



In conclusion, the illuminated areas within the *Shāhnāma-i Firdawsī* manuscript with inventory number TİEM 1983 are significant in terms of their number and characteristics. Despite the absence of historical and illuminator information, the manuscript, through its illumination features and comparison with other illuminations, reflects the Shiraz style of the 1570s-1590s. The prevalence of extensive illumination on the pages, the incorporation of *halkār* illuminations surrounding headings and illustrated pages after the mid-century, and the inclusion of intermediate headings and corner illuminations between columns are all representative features of the illumination styles of the period. Despite being a provincial center in the 16th century, the identification of a significant number of illuminated manuscripts produced in Shiraz and the understanding of their stylistic characteristics are important for research. Moreover, identifying other copies of the *Shāhnāma of Firdawsī* produced in Shiraz and analyzing their decorated areas will be essential in determining the stylistic characteristics.

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