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Note on Transliteration, Spelling and Dates

ء	ʿ	ص	ṣ
آ / ا	ā	ض	ḍ
ب	b	ط	ṭ
پ	p	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
چ	ch	ق	q
ح	ḥ	ک	k
خ	kh	گ	g
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و	v/ ū/ au
ژ	jh	ھ	a/h
س	s	ی	y/ ī
ش	sh		

Terms that have entered standard English usage such as names of dynasties (Safavid, Mughal) and common words (muqarnas, mihrab) are not transliterated. Arabic words used in the text are considered invariable (*muraqqāʿ*, *shamsa*). Present-day place names (as of 2023) are used throughout, or specified in brackets when necessary. Dates are given according to the lunar *hijri* calendar as well as the Common Era when referring to specific, dated inscriptions or objects. Otherwise, Common Era dates are used. Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are my own.

Introduction

Among the large collections of albums, *muraqqā* in Farsi, in the Golestan Palace in Tehran, one volume includes a page carrying two isolated elements: a Safavid painting of a hunter, and an engraved lily. This particular flower was carefully cut from the *Florilegium ab Hadriaeno Collaert coelatum et a Philip Galleo editum*, published by Plantin in Antwerp in 1587, and pasted in the upper right corner of the page for reasons that elude the modern viewer.[1] Twenty to thirty years after its publication, this exact lily, alongside the others gathered on the page of the *Florilegium*, was used as model by the Indian painter Manṣūr who precisely copied the floral forms and added them colour.[2] To my knowledge, this fragment is the only European botanical engraving bound in an album, but it is not the only one that was available to Persian and Indian makers. In the first two decades of the 17th century, a new genre of painting emerged in Mughal India (1526-1857), carried by the makers of the imperial workshop such as Manṣūr. Largely inspired by printed herbaria and florilegia, extremely popular in Europe, flower paintings rapidly gained in popularity, while naturalistic and pseudo-naturalistic floral forms colonised the margins of albums, and gave rise to very distinctive productions. The fashion for naturalistic flowers similarly passed to Safavid Persia (1501-1722), partly through the lens of Mughal makers, and rapidly dominated the production of album paintings and margins, especially during the reign of the short-lived Afshār (1736-1749) and Zānd (1750-1794) dynasties. Far from being confined to paper, floral forms spread to all artistic media as soon as the 17th century, and evolved locally far into the 19th century.

The publication of the *Florilegium* in 1587 is used in the present study as an arbitrary starting point to analyse the phenomenon of formal and functional transfer from which emerged floral painting in Mughal India and Safavid Persia. This starting point can only be arbitrary, as it is currently not possible to trace back the development of these productions

[1] Badri Atabay, *Fihrist-i Muraqqa'āt-i Kitābḫānah-i Salṭanatī* فهرست مرقعات کتابخانه سلطنتی (Tehran: Čāpḫānah-yi Zībā, 1353), 289–91.
[2] Golestan Palace, Tehran (MS1663, fol. 104v). See catalogue [Gulshan album].

to a singular point of origin, nor might there be one. It is designed to provide a chronological framework to artistic productions that are inherently circumscribed in time, with a clear "before and after". This book offers to trace the developments and evolution of floral paintings on Mughal and Persian album pages through a quantitative and qualitative analysis based on a large corpus of 352 paintings produced in India and Persia between the extreme end of the 16th century and the last years of the 18th century. The partially exogeneous origin of the production offers the opportunity to investigate the practicalities of artistic and cultural exchanges between the European nations and the Persianate sphere during the first modernity, but also to question the notions of copy, adaptation and integration inherent to the art history discipline.

Coming back to Collaert and Galle *Florilegium* and to the lily, there is, to this day, no clear information regarding the modalities of transmission from the Netherlands where the book was printed to the Mughal court, where it was copied by Manṣūr, nor to the Safavid workshop where it was cut and pasted on an album page. However, the long travel of this lily illustrates the larger phenomenon of material and cultural exchanges that intensifies in the last lights of the 16th century, carried by growing economic interests of European nations in the East and the equal interest of Mughal and Safavid rulers to develop new trade routes and gain advantages by exploiting the competition between European powers. Successive ambassies and religious missions at the Mughal court during Akbar's reign (r. 1556-1605) brought numerous gifts and technological marvels in a hope to impress the ruler, including printed books and images. If these presents were random at first, we will see that an intense and selective network developed during the reign of Akbar's successor, Jahāngīr (r. 1605-1627). In Safavid Persia, the process is similar, especially during and after the reign of Shāh 'Abbās 1st (r. 1587-1629), who moved the capital to Isfahan in 1598 and transformed the city into a commercial and economical hub exchanging with every parts of the known world. Persian silk, in particular, encountered an unprecedented success in the West, its trade being

carried out by the Armenian diasporas, ruthlessly deported from their home country and installed in the New Julfa district in Isfahan.[3]

Within the complex network of exchanges that characterised the relationship between East and West during the 17th century, printed flower books played a tiny but important role. They reached Mughal and Safavid workshops, where they were copied by makers who deconstructed the form and integrated the core principles into an existing vocabulary. Scholars such as Basil Gray and Robert Skelton were first to highlight the correspondence between some Persian and Indian pages and European prints.[4] Their effort constitute the foundation on which this book is build, and was followed by other studies in the same vein, with more or less successful results.[5] While these scholarly publications are of paramount importance, they offer only a partial view of the production by focusing on its genesis. However, flower paintings constitute one of the largest productions of album pages during the 17th and 18th centuries, and can be considered as an independent genre including local and temporal specificities that can only be understood through the analysis of a large corpus. Engravings, copies, and all the creations that followed are inherently linked to the support of the album, as demonstrated by Collaert's lily and Manṣūr's coloured copy, both bound in albums. We owe to David Roxburgh one of the most influential analysis of this type of books that appeared in the 15th century.[6] He was the first to consider the internal coherence of these volumes, previously seen as gatherings of disparate and rando material, and to highlight the

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[3] Edmund Herzig, *The Armenian Merchants of New Julfa Isfahan: A Study in Pre-Modern Trade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Edmund Herzig, 'The Rise of the Julfa Merchants in the Late Sixteenth Century', in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: I.B. Tauris, 1996), 305–22; Vazken S. Ghougassian, *The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the Seventeenth Century*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, no. 14 (Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1998).

[4] Basil Gray, 'An Album of Designs for Persian Textiles', in *Aus Der Welt Der Islamischen Kunst. Festschrift Für Ernst Kühnel Zum 75. Geburtstag Am 26. 10. 1957 Herausgegeben von Richard ETTINGHAUSEN*, vol. 1, 1 vols (Berlin: Verlag Gebr. Mann, 1959), 219–25; Robert Skelton, 'A Decorative Motif in Mughal Art', in *Aspects of Indian Art: Papers Presented in a Symposium at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, October, 1970*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 147–53.

[5] Vivian Rich, 'Mughal Floral Painting and Its European Sources', *Oriental Art* 32, no. 2 (1987): 183–90; Barbara Brend, 'On the Borders: A Possible Source for Naturalistic Floral Decoration at the Mughal Court', in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Robert Skelton et al. (London : Ahmedabad, India: Victoria & Albert Museum ; Mapin Publishing, 2004), 138–40; Susan Stronge, 'The Minto Album and Its Decoration', in *Muraqqa' Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, ed. Elaine J. Wright (Alexandria, Va. : Hanover: University Press of New England, 2008), 82–105; Ebba Koch, 'Jahangir as Francis Bacon's Ideal of the King as an Observer and Investigator of Nature', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19, no. 3 (2009): 293–339.

[6] David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400-1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

significance of the content in connection with their patronage. Following his approach, this book aims at replacing flower paintings and floral designs in their original context by taking into consideration the artistic, intellectual and economical contexts of production. In summary, what was the purpose of flower paintings in the Persianate sphere before the rise of colonial empires? I deliberately use here the qualifier "Persianate" for two reasons, first to emphasize the dense and long-lasting network of exchanges in the region, and secondly to highlight the absence of Shaybanid and Ottoman artistic productions.[7] The exclusion of Central-Asia is due to the almost complete absence of material evidence, hinting to a lack of interest of patrons for flower paintings in general. On the contrary, Ottoman Turkey, developed a brilliant floral art in the 16th century, in conjunction with the Sublime Porte *tulipomania.* If parallels exist with Indian and Persian productions of flower paintings, the geographical proximity, political and cultural relationships with Europe, as well as the particularities of the Turkish cultural and linguistic sphere lead to consider the development of Ottoman flower paintings separately.

This book offers a comprehensive analysis of Indian and Persian flower paintings from the creation of the genre to the diffusion of floral motifs outside the boundaries of the album. It starts with a short prologue based on the cross-history of botany and curiosity during the Renaissance and the first modernity, serving as an introduction to the history of botanical illustration and the most prominent characteristics that found their way to the East.

The first chapter then deals with the transmission of naturalistic floral designs from Europe to India and Persia and their reception by local makers. It focuses on the process of copy and adaptation through the analysis of the material linked to European models, and takes a particular interest in the longevity of printed models and the concept of assimilation and integration of exogenous models.

The second chapter is interested in differentiating genre and individual creativity. In a first time, the compositional, stylistic and thematic traits of flower paintings are analysed to highlight the characteristics of the genre and their local and temporal variations. In a second

[7] On the definition of the so-called "Persianate sphere", see the brilliant introduction, as well as the first paper: Abbas Amanat and Assef Ashraf, eds., *The Persianate World: Rethinking a Shared Sphere*, Iran Studies, volume 18 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2019), 15–62.

time, the career and works of the most renown painters of flower are examined, in particular their individual style.

The third chapter extends the analysis of floral motifs, from individual pages to inherent part of albums, through the analysis of several volumes produced under royal patronage, as well for a larger audience that, in some cases, remain to be defined.

A short prologue offers a concise opening by analysing the diffusion of floral motifs outside the album, as well as a case study on the stylistic evolution of the iris motif. Additionally, the full corpus catalogue, as well as an overview of the terminology are offered in annexes.