

DĪVĀN OF SHĀHĪ

CIRCA 1600

A manuscript of Shāhī's Dīvān

SUBJECT AND ARRANGEMENT. This copy of the *Dīvān* of Āqā Malik ibn Jamāl al-Dīn Amīr Shāhī, who died in 857 (1453),¹ comprises the usual *ghazals*, followed (fol. 47) by a few *muqatta'āt* and (fol. 47b) quatrains.

¹ See Ethé, *India Office Catalogue*, i, col. 740, no. 1293.

MEASUREMENT, ETC. 22.1 × 13.5 cm.; the written surface measures 12.1 to 12.4 × 6.2 cm.; 2 columns of 11 lines; 50 folios.

WRITING AND PAPER. The writing is a *Nasta'liq* enclosed between gold, green, and blue rulings. The paper is of a deep ivory tone, polished and firm and set within margins of firm paper of various tints covered in a floral design in gold.

BINDING. The outside of the red leather cover has a sunk and gilt central medallion with two pendants and corners containing a stamped floral design in gold, the field between being embellished with an elegant floral pattern in gold, and the whole contained within a floral border surrounded by a cord and line border, also gilt.

DATE AND SCRIBE. According to the almost obliterated colophon on fol. 49 the copy was made by the famous scribe Mīr 'Imād al-Ḥusainī [or Ḥasani], who worked at Isfahan. A note inserted in the latter part of the 16th century by the librarian of the imperial palace at Dehli, containing a description of the manuscript in the traditional terms, vouches for the authenticity of the script.

ILLUMINATION AND ILLUSTRATION. On foll. 3b-4 is a double-page frontispiece of two pictures, forming a whole which depicts a young prince seated on a carpet in a garden beneath an arghavan in bloom, surrounded by his court, listening to a recitation of Shāhī's *Dīvān*. This painting, executed in the Bukhara style of the mid-16th century, is surrounded by a black border containing floral ornament and fleurons in gold and dull colours. On fol. 4b is a *sarlah* in gold and two tints of blue, with floral ornament in colour and a little black. Between each piece are smaller *sarlahs* of similar style in black or colour, decorated with floral scroll-work in colour or gold.

SEALS AND INSCRIPTIONS. According to a note on fol. 1b this book formed part of the library of Shāh 'Abbās I. That the manuscript ultimately found its way into the library of the Mughal emperors at Dehli is shown by a further note (49b) dated 2 Ābān i Ilāhī (11 June 1556) stating that on that day in the first year of faith of Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar Pādishāh it passed from the care of Muḥammad Muvaqqar into that of 'Abd al-Ghaffūr, both of whom were librarians to Akbar. On fol. 2b, in the clumsy hand of Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr Pādishāh, is an autograph note of four lines recording, in the customary terms, the acquisition of this precious manuscript by the emperor, at his accession, for his private collection. His son, Shāh Jahān, contented himself with inserting, in his large hand, on fol. 49, a note recording that on 10 Āzār of the fifth year of his reign (31 March 1632) he deigned to glance at this *Dīvān* of Shāhī. On fol. 3 is also set the square imperial seal, dated 968 (1560-1), of Ḥamīdah Bānū Begum, wife of the Emperor Humāyūn. [E. B.]