

## YŪSUF U ZULAIKHĀ OF JĀMĪ

DATED 1541-2

*A manuscript of Jāmī's Yūsuf u Zulaikhā*

*MEASUREMENTS, ETC.* 22.9 × 14.5 cm.; the written surface measures 13.4 × 6.6 cm.; 2 cols. of 12 lines; 174 folios.

*DATE AND SCRIBE.* The manuscript was copied in 948 (1541-2) by 'Abd al-Laṭīf.

*BINDING.* On the front board of the black lacquer cover is a painting of a young prince offering a gold cup to a lady in a garden; on the back board two wrestlers are practising their art before a king enthroned between two trees in a garden, illustrating a story in Sa'dī's *Gulistān*. Both boards are further ornamented by a floral border in gold on a black ground. The inside of the front board is of brown leather with a central medallion and two pendants and corners of badly worn black-and-gold tracery over blue; that of the back board is of modern paper.

*WRITING AND PAPER.* The writing is an elegant *Nasta'liq* enclosed within gold and blue rulings. The gold-sprinkled paper is of a deep biscuit tone, very brittle, worm-eaten in places and relaid within modern margins.

*ILLUMINATIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.* On foll. 16-2 is a double-page frontispiece splendidly illuminated in blue and gold. The titles are in blue throughout and the colophon is ornamented with floral arabesques in gold.

The miniatures were originally fine examples of the Tabriz style of the period, but the first three have been considerably repainted, probably in the 17th or 18th century. This repainting is mainly confined to the faces and head-dresses.

The subjects of the individual miniatures are as follows:

(1) Fol. 52*b*. Zulaikhā, mad with love for Yūsuf, is chained by her maids in her apartment, the wall of which is adorned by a *shādurvān* painted with a fresco of lions; a gardener is digging in the garden beyond (he is the only figure that has escaped repainting).

(2) Fol. 101*b*. Zulaikhā enthroned between trees in her park listening to an account by one of her ladies-in-waiting of Yūsuf's wondrous beauty.

(3) Fol. 125. Zulaikhā is seated in the hall of her palace in the company of some Egyptian ladies when Yūsuf enters, in a nimbus, carrying a gold jug; so dazzled by his beauty are the Egyptian ladies, who are peeling oranges, that they cut their fingers.

(4) Fol. 146*b*. Yūsuf the Prophet, on horseback with his attendants, encounters Zulaikhā as an old woman.

*SEALS AND INSCRIPTIONS.* According to a note on fol. 174*b* penned at Sialkot in India on 28 Rajab 1118 (7 November 1706), by one Ghulām Qādir, son of Maulavī Ghulām Rasūl Ṣāhib, this copy of a work dedicated in 888 (1483) to the Khurasan ruler

Sulṭān Ḥusain Mīrzā originally formed part of a manuscript, also comprising Jāmī's *Lailā u Majnūn* and *Subḥat al-Abrār*, which was valued at 502 rupees. The worm-holes in some of the pages supply additional evidence of the sojourn of the manuscript in India, while the seal, also on fol. 174*b*, of one Karīmdād, an Iranian, which is dated 1216 (1801-2), bears witness to the return of the work to Persia.

[E. B. and B. W. R.]