

THE BOOK OF FELICITY

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BOOK OF FELICITY

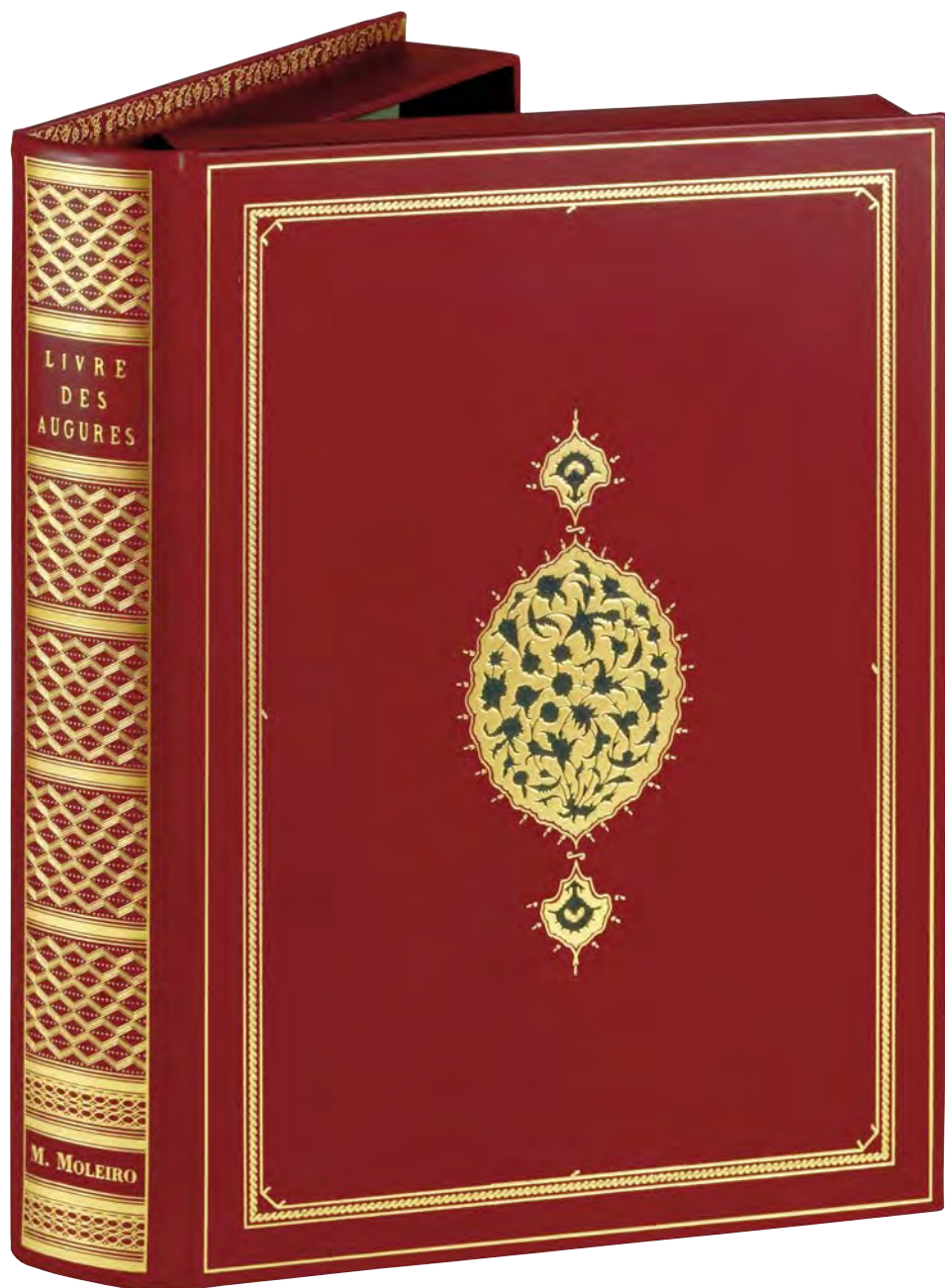
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The masterpieces on show at the Museo del Prado, the Uffizi Gallery and the Louvre can be admired in all their splendour, as can the sculptures of Ancient Greece and the Renaissance and the remarkable shrines of the history of architecture, and yet – except for the occasional, fleeting glimpse of a codex lying open in a display cabinet – we are not allowed to see the illuminated work of artists who have made the history of culture and civilization.

The difficulties in viewing such a rare treasure as the *Book of Felicity* are infinite. A truly exquisite work commissioned by the most refined sultan and caliph in the entire history of the Ottoman Empire. A sultan who surrounded himself with the greatest artists, poets, astronomers, cartographers and scholars of all types, plus the many women who bore him 103 children in his lifetime and 7 more after his death at the tender age of 49.

The Sultanate of Murad III took great care to protect miniaturists, poets and artists, astronomers and astrologers. The Sublime Porte was a haven for anyone of certain standing in the world of the arts, divination and medicine. Murad III, unlike his grandfather Süleyman I the Magnificent,





Leather book case

always stayed away from battle fronts and delegated many aspects of his government work to his women, to the extent that his sultanate is also known as the Sultanate of Women.

It is thanks to Napoleon Bonaparte and his extraordinary taste for the most exquisite works of art that this treasure has been kept at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The *Book of Felicity* is a milestone in the history of publishing and binding. It is a clone of the original manuscript, hardly distinguishable from the one Murad III held in such high esteem. He was so proud of it that he had his portrait painted in the lavish garb of a *padishah* or “lord of the universe” in the centre of the miniature on folio 7v, gazing in obvious satisfaction at two of its illustrations.



BOOK OF FELICITY

“May good fortune be your companion
and happiness your sibling /
May your life last long,
and so your honour and power.”



وَيَسْأَلُكَ الْيَسَّاعُ

مَطَالَعُ السَّعَا

- In the latter half of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire was the largest and most powerful in the world. Its domains, stretching from Budapest to Baghdad, from Oman and Tunis to Mecca and Medina near the Red Sea, encompassed cities as great as Damascus, Alexandria and Cairo. The Turks were at the gates of Vienna and controlled the Silk Route, the Black Sea and the eastern half of the Mediterranean. The sultan governed the empire from Constantinople, where architects, painters, calligraphers, jewellers, ceramists, poets, etc, were at his service with his court and harem. Learned, sybarite sultans, such as Süleyman the Magnificent and his grandson Murad III, became great patrons of the arts and were responsible for the spectacular growth of the workshops in the Seraglio that gave birth to an original Ottoman artform that shook off the Persian influence still lingering in the 15th century.
- The 16th and early 17th centuries were the most fertile period of Turkish-Ottoman painting, with the reign of Murad III (1574-1595) being particularly prolific in beautiful works of art, such as this Matali' al-saadet or **Book of Felicity** by Muhammad ibn Amir Hasan al-Su'udi.
- This **Book of Felicity** – which the sultan himself, whose portrait appears on folio 7v, ordered to be translated from the original Arabic – features descriptions of the twelve signs of the zodiac accompanied by splendid miniatures; a series of paintings showing how human circumstances are influenced by the planets; astrological and astronomical tables; and an enigmatic treatise on fortune telling.
- The miniatures and the texts in the **Book of Felicity** are inspired by a wide variety of sources including the Koran, *One Thousand and One Nights*, *Shahnameh*, Marco Polo's *Book of Wonders*, Albumasar's *Book of Nativities* and *Ikhtilajnama* or *Book of the Bodily Spasms*, to name but a few, although it was influenced above all by the *Iskendername* or *Life of Alexander the Great*, a hero who left a profound stamp upon Arab, Persian and Turkish literature.
- The oriental world unfolds before our very eyes in each miniature: mysterious characters in peculiar poses, exotic, brightly coloured garments, luxurious mansions and sumptuous palaces, muezzins in the minarets of mosques calling the faithful to prayer, elegant horsemen riding their stylised horses with lavishly embellished trappings. Countless exotic animals fill the pages of this manuscript: exuberant peacocks, extraordinary sea serpents, giant fish, eagles and other birds of

prey, swallows, storks and other birds drawn in an elegant, stylised manner revealing considerable influence by Japanese painting. There is also an entire chapter on the dinns appearing in medieval, Turkish imagery, brimming with menacing demons and imaginary beasts.

- All the paintings seem to be by the same workshop under the guidance of the famous master Ustad 'Osman, active between c. 1559 and 1596.
- Sultan Murad III was completely absorbed by the intense political, cultural and sentimental life of the harem. He had 103 children, only 47 of whom outlived him. Nevertheless, Murad III, who held illuminated manuscripts in greater esteem than any other sultan, commissioned this treatise of felicity especially for his daughter Fatima.
- The manuscript was brought from Cairo to Paris by Gaspard Monge, the renowned geometer and count of Péluse, and deposited in the library on behalf of Napoleon Bonaparte.

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and authenticated
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Date: 1582

Size: 310 x 210 mm

**286 pages and 71 full-page
miniatures lavishly embellished
with gold.**

**Turkish binding in red and
green leather with gold
decoration.**

**Full-colour commentary
volume (448 p. and 109 ills.) by
Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra
and Evrim Türkçelik (Instituto de
Historia, CSIC, Madrid), Günsel
Renda (Koç University, Istanbul),
Yorgos Dedes (School of Oriental
and African Studies, London) and
Stefano Carboni (Metropolitan
Museum of Art, New York).**



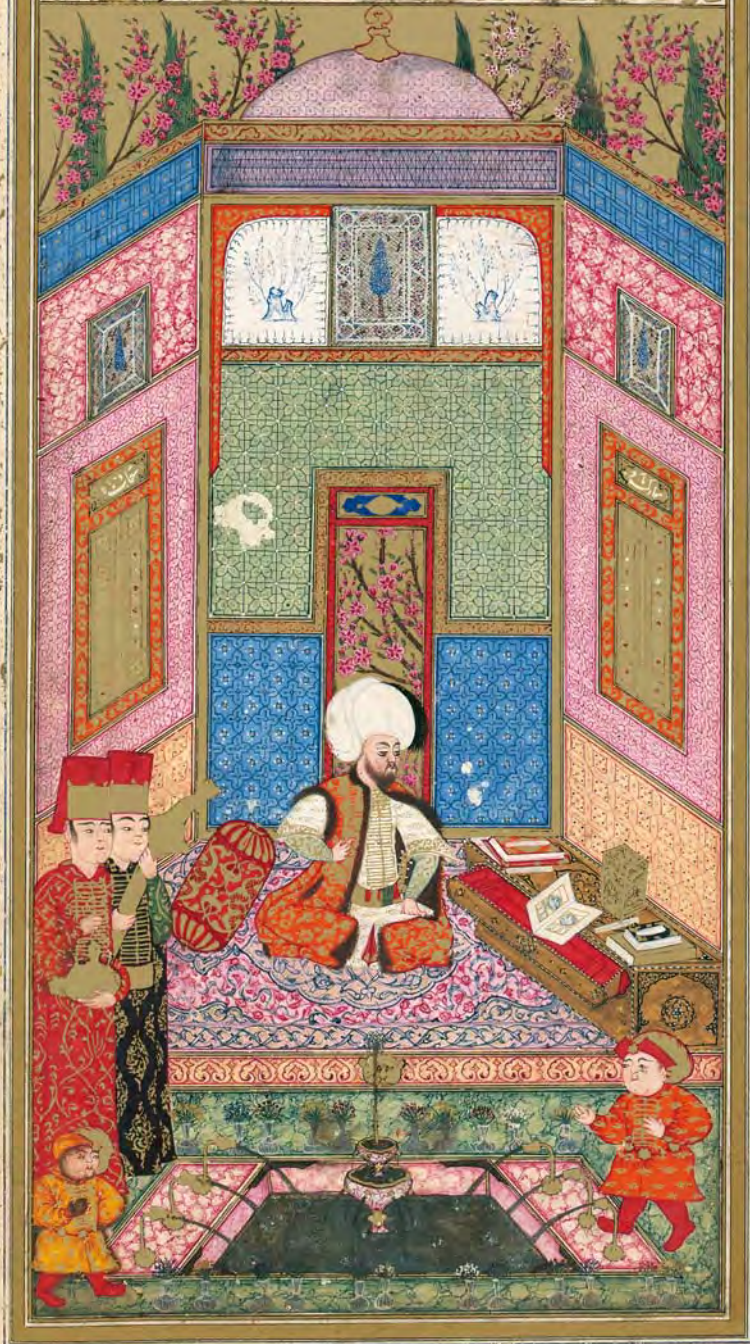
Sultan Murad III
Marvels at
the Manuscript, **f. 7v**

The first illustration in the manuscript depicts the patron of the work, Sultan Murad III. The sultan sits cross-legged in the center not only of the miniature, but also of a low platform, a “central medallion” carpet, the room and, symbolically, the world, as the *padishah* (“the ruler of the universe”). He wears elaborate clothing with a sleeveless outer coat and the large turban typical of 16th-century Ottoman sultans. Three colorful walls in the room, painted with an awkward perspective, are visible. The window behind him looks out onto the flowering garden behind the building, two other windows on the side walls are shut. The rest of the room is decorated with tile work, “marbleized” paint, blue on white drawings and three *qamariyya* stained-glass windows with a cypress tree in the middle.

Standing in the foreground, below the low platform and in front of the sultan are two janissaries. One of them holds the royal sword inside a cloth bag and the other, a globular gold vessel with a narrow neck and domed lid which, if not merely a wine vessel, is probably another symbol of sovereignty. Two royal dwarfs entertain the sultan, playing on the edges of a fountain in the center of a pool, which also features six gold spouts each with an animal’s head pouring water into the pool.

The focus of the illustration, however, is on the position of Murad III’s head and what lies on the low desk on the right side of the painting. The sultan pores over and admires the manuscript resting on the open drawer of the desk with obvious satisfaction. The opening clearly shows illustrations of the signs of the zodiac and the decans as depicted on folios 8v to 30v of this codex. There is no doubt, therefore, that Murad III is marveling at the very copy of the *Matali’üs-sa’âdet* that was presented to him after completion in 1582. Other manuscripts are on the desk, emphasizing the sultan’s refinement and literary inclinations. Also on the desk is a tall, decorated, golden box possibly containing one of the clocks or mechanical wonders that Ottoman sultans and royalty were particularly fond of and which they often requested as gifts from the ambassadors of European courts in Istanbul.

خدمت افکار اقدم اوزره فکام کوشنرلدي



The image of Aries,
f. 8v

Each of the twelve signs of the zodiac in Abu Maʿshar's *Kitab al-mawalid* (*Book of Nativities*) are illustrated inside a circle, almost as if they were seen through a telescope pointing at the respective constellation in the night sky. The dark blue sky invariably includes wispy white clouds and is dotted with gold stars. The circle with the sign of the zodiac dominates the center of each composition and is set within a square illuminated in gold and often other colors, each composition richly decorated with typical Ottoman patterns of scrolling motifs, arabesques, flowers, leaves, pendants, medallions and ribbons. Each square has a different decoration, although similar compositions are recurrent. The central square is topped by a rectangular cartouche bearing the title of the illustration written in gold *muhaqqaq* cursive script that invariably begins with the words "*taksim-i derecat-i burc-i...*" ("the image of the sign of the zodiac ...") followed by the name of the sign. At the bottom of the entire composition is another rectangular cartouche divided into three equal arched spaces, each including one of the planets associated to the first, second and third decade of the sign illustrated above.

Aries is illustrated as a white ram seen in profile. One of its hind legs rests on the frame of the circle whereas its forelegs are both raised as if galloping, a posture that must be derived from the most common astronomical representation of the constellation of the Ram. Aries is depicted here as a domesticated animal with a cloth and a saddle on its back, stirrups, thin harnesses and reins and a collar with a bell hanging around its neck.

The planetary lord of Aries is Mars, a warrior-like, mustachioed figure that invariably holds a sword in his right hand and often, as here, a severed head in his left. Mars's military paraphernalia are limited here to his sword, sheath and a tall helmet that is probably derived from the headgear worn by the Ottoman janissaries.

The secondary planets associated with the three decades are, from right to left: Mars again, sitting cross-legged holding a mace on his knees and wearing a pointed hat and a long red tunic; the Sun, a man seated facing forward with his head surrounded by the bright rays of the sun; and Venus, a female figure sitting cross-legged and playing the *ʿud* or lute.

نقشہ در جانبِ حجل



عِلْمِ فِرَاسَتِ بَيَانِندَهُ دُرِّ

هِيئَات	تَاثِيَرَات	هِيئَات	تَاثِيَرَات
اَرْقَهُ طَوغَرِي اُولَسَه	طَبْعُكَ اَيُوْلَكْنَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَرْقَهُ اَيْنَلِي اُولَسَه	شِدَّتَه وَكَبِيَرَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَرْقَهُ نُوْكَرِي اُولَسَه	سُوْخُلُقَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَوْ كُوْرَغَه كَمِكْرِي عَظَايْمُ	حِيلَه وَخُدَعَه اَبَدِيْجِي اُولَه
كُوْكُنْ طَار اُولَسَه	ذَلَتْ وَعَجْزَه دَلِيلْدُر	كُوْكُنْ حَقِيْق اُولَسَه	سُوْمُ هَمَه وَسُوْخُلُقَه
كُوْكُنْ چُوْز اُولَسَه	خُبْتِ نِيْتَه دَلِيلْدُر	كُوْكُنْ اَسَع وَآدِي وَر اُولَسَه	شَجَاعَتَه وَقُوْتَه دَلِيلْدُر
حَقِيْق اَتَلِي قَارِي اُولَسَه	شَهْوَتَه وَسُوْمُ هَمَه دَلِيلْدُر	دَكْرِي كُوْچُك قَارِي اُولَسَه	حُسْنِ فَهْمَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَرْقِيَه بَاشِق قَار اُولَسَه	ظُرْفَتَه وَخَفِيْتِ نَفْسَه	عَمَه لَو عُوْرَتِ كِي بُوْكَ اُولَسَه	عُوْرَتِ خُوْبي اُولَغَه دَلِيلْدُر
يَان بَاشِي اَتَلِي اُولَسَه	قُوْتَه دَلِيلْدُر	يَان بَاشِي حَقِيْق اُولَسَه	شَجَاعَتَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَوْبَلِيْق اَتَلِي اُولَسَه	شَهْوَتَه دَلَالَتِ اَبَدُر	اَوْبَلِيْق اَتِي اَز اُولَسَه	شَجَاعَتَه دَلَالَتِ اَبَدُر
اَوْبَلِيْق قِصَاصِ اُولَسَه	قُوْتَه وَسُوْمُ هَمَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَوْبَلِيْق اَتِي اَز اُولَسَه	عُوْرَتِ خُوْبي اُولَغَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَوْبَلِيْق قِصَاصِ اُولَسَه	شَجَاعَتَه دَلَالَتِ اَبَدُر	اَوْبَلِيْق اَتِي اَز اُولَسَه	عُوْرَتِ خُوْبي اُولَغَه دَلِيلْدُر
دَكْر اِنْجَه اُوْرُوْز اُولَسَه	شَهْوَتَه وَحُسْنِ خُلُقَه دَلِيلْدُر	دَكْر قَالِك وَاُوْرُوْز اُولَسَه	طَبْعُكَ بَر اَز لَغْنَه دَلِيلْدُر
خُصْتَيْنِ عَظِيْم اُولَسَه	اَبْلَه لَكَه وَحُبَّتِ جَمَاعَه دَلِيلْدُر	اِنْخِيْلَك مَكِّي وَاَوْكَبَه	اَبْلَه لَكَه وَعَجْزَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَوْكَبَه سِكْرِي قَالِك اُولَسَه	شِدَّتَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَوْكَبَه سِكْرِي لِنْجَه اُولَسَه	قُوْر قَا قِلْعَه دَلَالَتِ اَبَدُر
اَيَاقِ اَتَلِي اُولَسَه	سُوْمُ هَمَه دَلِيلْدُر	بِر بَر مَقْ زِيَاد اُولَسَه	حُبِّ رِيَا سَتَه دَلِيلْدُر
طَبَايِي اَتِي دُوْر اُولَسَه	هَلْوِي سُوْمُ مَكَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَقْشَق اُولَسَه	سُوْمُ خُلُقَه دَلِيلْدُر
اَدِي كِي وَكْج اُولَسَه	تَاثِيِيَه وَجَمَاعَه دَلِيلْدُر	اَدِي قِصَاصِ اُولَسَه	عَجَلَه يَه وَاصْلِي بَر قِيَا سَتَه دَلِيلْدُر



On the science of physiognomy



Characteristics	Influences	Characteristics	Influences
Having a reddish complexion	A sign of ardour and lust	When the back is hunched	A sign of violence and arrogance
Having blue eyes	(A sign of) being vigorously desirous of wedding	When the ribs are visible	Will be keen on trickery and fraud
Having protruding eyes	A sign of width of the vulva	When the chest is protruding	(A sign of) misconstruing and an evil character
Having extremely red eyes	A sign of deriving great pleasure from intercourse	When the chest is wide and flat	A sign of bravery and strength
Having a small mouth	A sign of narrowness of the vulva	When the stomach is small and rounded	A sign of good understanding
Laughing and moving rapidly	A sign of intensity of lust	When the nipples are big as a woman's	A sign of having a womanly disposition
Having a thick lower lip	A sign of a small vulva	When the sides of the back are protruding	A sign of bravery
Having a round tip of the tongue	A sign of moistness of the vulva	When the thigh is not fleshy	Indicates bravery
Having a thick neck	(A sign of) the great size and narrowness of the vulva	Having a big seat	A sign of having a womanly disposition
When the body is hot, the lips red and the torso firm	A sign of being strongly desirous of intercourse	When the seat is protruding	A sign of having a womanly disposition
Having firm breasts	A sign of intensity of lust	When the male organ is long and thick	Points to an immoral temperament
When the behind sticks up towards the back	A sign of the width of the vulva	Shinbone and heels	A sign of foolishness and helplessness
Having thick shins	(A sign that) the sides of the vulva are thick	When the ankle tendons are thin	Indicates being scared
Excessive laughing	A sign of intensity of lust	When there is one finger extra	A sign of love for leadership
Having a fleshy top of the foot	A sign of the great size of the vulva	When one is lame	A sign of an evil character
Being inclined to music and conversation	A sign of being desirous of intercourse	When one's step is short and fast	A sign of haste and doing things in vain

The *Ikhtilajnama*,
f. 66r

The *Ikhtilajnama* or *Book of the Bodily Spasms* is a text about predicting the future by interpreting the parts of the body affected by spasms.

The figure illustrating the treatise, the text of which is arranged in a checkerboard pattern, is difficult to interpret in relation to its textual significance. It represents a crowned figure facing forwards, richly dressed in a long green tunic with long sleeves and a short-sleeved, orange outer garment with gold embroidery which is slightly shorter than the tunic underneath. A long scarf-like belt floats and curls at the two sides in a mirror-like composition. The hands of the figure are open, the fingers joined under the stomach. The individual parts of the body are not highlighted as, for example, in some images of the so-called Zodiac Man, so this standing figure probably only has the generic significance of an oracle divining the future. The miniature in the *Kitab al-bulhan* (f. 51r), although similarly generic, seems to make the meaning clearer since the oracle's hands are raised with open palms in a gesture of foretelling and he is flanked by two lit candles. The Ottoman painter may have not paid much attention to these details, or perhaps the position of the hands depicted here was a more evident symbol of divination in Ottoman Turkey.

Alexander and Khidr
Enter the Land
of Darkness, **f. 75v**

The Koran tells the story of how Alexander the Great – a mythical figure who was known in the Arab world as Iskandar or *Dhu al-qarnayn* (“the man with two horns”) and became one of the most written about heroes in Arabic, Persian and Turkish literature – was accompanied by Khidr, “the green one”, in search of the Fountain of Life in the Land of Darkness (sura 18, verses 59-81).

The illustration is set in a brilliant landscape with tall, pale purple rock formations, a golden sky, a large tree and several leafy flowering bushes stemming from the rocks. Khidr’s torch is lit, its flames springing in the air, but it is not clear whether the two figures are just about to enter the Land of Darkness or it is the fire of the torch and of their faith that has set the landscape around them ablaze. Alexander is dressed in full regalia with a tall crown, richly embroidered clothes and jeweled sword, bow-case and caparisons for his horse whose legs and tail are curiously painted with henna. His companion and his horse are partially hidden behind Alexander, but his direct and encouraging glance at Alexander makes his close relationship with the hero obvious.

In the *Kitab al-bulhan* the corresponding illustration is very different, depicting a crowned horseman followed by a servant holding a closed parasol, a symbol of power (f. 39v). The title above was partially erased, perhaps by a reader who realized that the painter had not interpreted the story correctly. In the Ottoman copy, the artist clearly understood the subject and may have improved upon the work of his predecessor considerably.

اسکندر خوارقنیز ظلمای کندی



The Wall of Gog
and Magog, **f. 76r**

Continuing to illustrate episodes from the life of Alexander the Great, the painting on the opposite side of his search for the Fountain of Life shows one of Alexander's grandest legendary accomplishments, that is, the erection of a huge iron wall that would keep the wild populations of Gog and Magog out of the civilized world.

The story features in the Koran in connection with the figure of Alexander (sura 18, verses 94-97, where the peoples are referred to as Yuj and Majuj) but it represents one of the most ancient myths of the dispersion of populations and languages to the farthest corners of the world. In Genesis, Magog was one of Japheth's sons (Gen. 10: 2-5). In St. John's Apocalypse, the peoples of Gog and Magog will be seduced by Satan and wage war against humanity (Rev. 20: 7-8).

The lively illustration follows the story in the Koran and is an almost exact copy of the corresponding painting in the *Kitab al-bulhan* (f. 38r). Curiously, the viewpoint of the artist is as if he were looking at the scene from inside the lands of Gog and Magog. The wall, made of iron blocks covered with molten bronze making it so smooth it was impossible to climb, is depicted as a mauve brick barrier with a stepped upper section. Its enormity is emphasized by the diminutive size of the inhabitants of the lands of Gog and Magog in the foreground, four of whom are riding a large snake while seven others are frantically trying to climb the wall or wear away its surface by licking it with their scratchy tongues. Their wild behavior explains why they have to be kept locked away.

On the opposite side of the wall, the civilized world is represented in the upper part of the painting as a rocky, hilly landscape with a large central tree and a gold sky. On each side of the wall two horsemen are playing musical instruments, a long trumpet on the left and a drum on the right. Their large size underlines once again the difference between the civilized and the wild worlds. According to the story, the reason why loud music was played outside Alexander's wall was that, once his army had left, the wild people of Gog and Magog were led to believe that a large number of people were still outside, guarding the barrier.

شکل دایجوج و مائجوج



Sinbad and the Old Man
of the Sea,
f. 79v

The story illustrated here is most likely taken from the most famous Arab tales, the compilation known as *The Thousand and One Nights*, which is itself based on a large number of different oral and written sources. One of the tales told by Sinbad the Sailor is about how he came across an old man on a desert island where he was cast up after a shipwreck. He helped him by carrying him on his shoulder, but the Old Man of the Sea wrapped his legs tightly around Sinbad's body and would not let go, ordering him around and beating him every time the sailor protested. Eventually Sinbad came across a grape vine. He picked some grapes to make some juice and exposed it to the sun. When it fermented he gave it to the nasty old man who became drunk and released his grip. The sailor quickly freed himself of his burden, threw him to the ground and killed him with a stone.

Once again, in order to understand the story one needs to compare the present illustration with the original painting in the *Kitab al-bulhan* (f. 43r), where the scene is set against the background of a large vine tree with a wine bucket on the ground next to the two intertwined figures. In the Ottoman painting, the artist retained only the two men in the same position, the Old Man of the Sea represented as a fish with a human head and his arms – rather than his legs as described in the story – wrapped around Sinbad's body. The creature has two pointed horns which do not appear in the *Kitab al-bulhan*. But in the present case there is no trace of the vineyard nor the wine that will bring an end to the story. Rather, deliberately or not, the scene is set in a broad coastline landscape with a large fish in the foreground and a house on a hill in the background, immediately after Sinbad rescues the creature from the sea and is trapped in his grip.

پیر دریا بعر طوطا و غید



The Abandoned Well,
f. 80r

The story of the abandoned well is briefly mentioned in the Koran (Sura 22, verse 45) and was elaborated upon by several authors, including *Kisa'i in the Qisas al-anbiya'* (*The Tales of the Prophets*) which became a popular, illustrated book in the reign of Murad III like the present manuscript. The title of the miniature clearly refers to the Abandoned Well although how it relates to the story is not as obvious. A man called Hanzala went to Mecca from his tribal home of Aden on the southwestern tip of the Arabian peninsula but had a vision telling him to return home because his tribe had started to worship idols. He did so and preached to them but was killed, and God in revenge dried up a well that was vital for their sustenance.

The evil acts of Hanzala's tribe are emphasized by what seems to be the illustration of their punishment, depicting a man unaware that the bucket being raised from the well contains a human head instead of water. The bottom of the well, conveniently visible through a cross-section in the ground, is guarded by a jinn holding a sword, although his role in the story is unclear. The scene is set in a landscape with sparse pebbles in the foreground and the usual trees and hills in the background, but it is dominated by a large, elaborate yurt made of white felt with another man asleep inside. The heads of two camels appear from behind a hill and the forequarters of a horse and a donkey are depicted to the right of the tent, emphasizing the remote location of the well.

قَائِدَهُ ذِكْرُ أُولِنَا زَبْرُ مَعْطَلِ الشَّكْلِ



The Church
of the Maidens, **f. 82r**

Here is another story that can be related to the miniatures illustrating the Churches of the Crow, the Idol and the Starlings (ff. 78r-79r). However, like the Church of the Idol, this story is not found in the *Kitab sukkardan* so the only information available is the title: the Church of the Maidens.

The painting shows a large basilica-like building with a high central transept and two lateral aisles, the best attempt in this manuscript to depict a Christian building. Inside the windows of the two aisles are four monks but attention is obviously drawn in the illustration to the two upper tiers of the central aisle where it is possible to discern eight faces: those of the maidens described in the title. Unfortunately, the reason why these girls, perhaps novices about to become nuns, live in the church is not known, although the story must have been curious enough for the compiler of the manuscript to decide that it deserved an illustration. When referring to the illustration in the *Kitab al-bulhan* (f. 35r), the author of the nineteenth-century catalogue of the Bodleian Library mentions that the church is in Cairo without citing his source. If the information is correct we may therefore assume that we are dealing with a Coptic building.

شَكَرَ كُلِّ نَسَائِكِ بِنَايَعِي قَرْهَرِ



A Man Killing a Snake,
f. 83v

The title of this illustration is descriptive, mentioning that a man who had helped a snake subsequently killed it. We are not informed, however, about the name of the man or, consequently, the source of the story: being a fairly common deed in Arab and Persian epic and non-epic literature, it is difficult to pinpoint.

Like Saint George slaying the dragon in Eastern Christian iconography but also like the epic hero Esfandiyar in the Persian *Shahnameh* (*Book of Kings*), the man is depicted piercing the throat of the dragon-headed snake with an impossibly slender spear. The reptile is also trampled under the feet of the camel on which the man rides high. The mount has a full caparison including a bell tied around the base of its neck. The scene shows a stream in the foreground and a high rocky landscape with a large tree behind the main characters.

The face of the man killing the snake is inexpressive; he wears a turban that is also wrapped around his chin, an atypical Ottoman headgear probably intended to represent a tribal nomadic character setting the scene in an earlier period.

يَا لَنَا نِيلِكِ أَيْدٍ وَرُجْمٌ هَذَا لَنَا
كَمَنْه

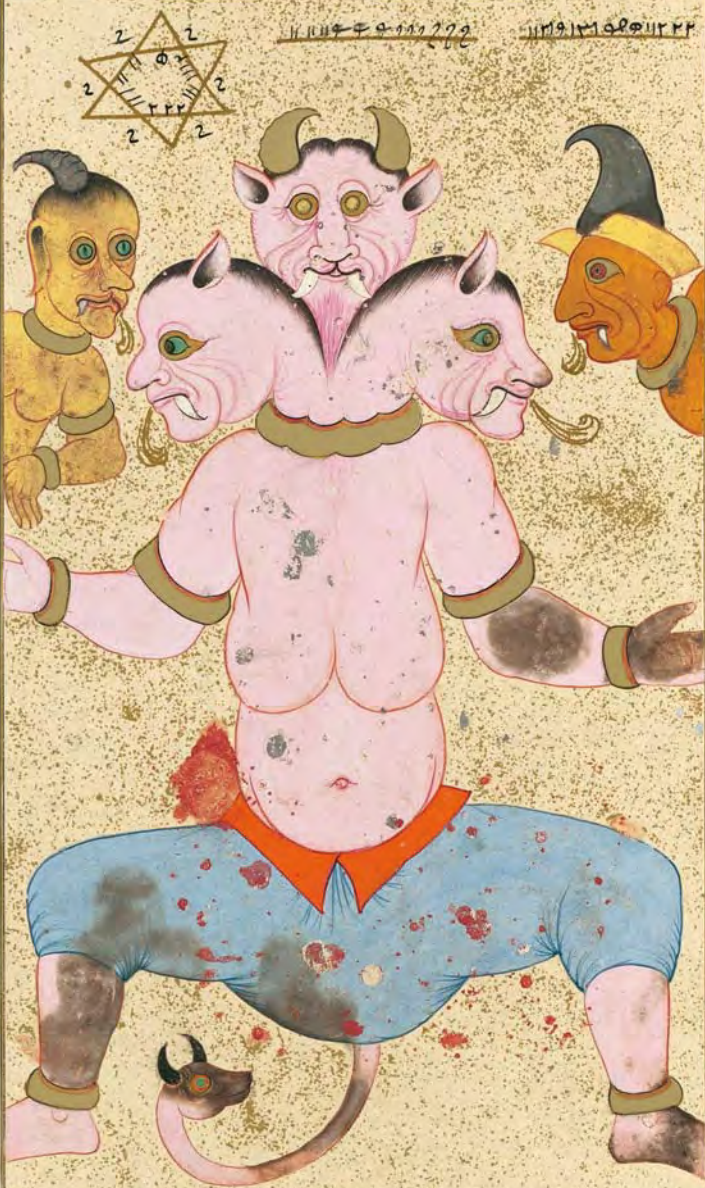


The Talisman of Fever,
f. 90r

Huma is the name of this jinn meaning one who brings heat to the human body, i.e. he is responsible for the common fever. Consequently, Huma is one of the most popular of the jinns responsible for human illnesses, so his talisman is encountered frequently.

The jinn of fever is commonly represented as a demon with three heads, perhaps an iconography whose roots lie in the Biblical *Testamentum Salomonis* (*The Testament of Solomon*), in which a three-headed demon is considered responsible for the birth of blind, deaf and epileptic babies. In the illustration two heads are identical, vaguely equine but with the usual tusks and smoke, one looking right and the other, left. The third head looks more demoniac and is placed above the other two facing forward in the centre. The frontal position of Huma is not unusual, but his open legs with bent knees and open arms, almost as if he wanted to capture the viewer, distinguish him from all other jinns. The presence of a tail ending in an animal's head is also peculiar. Whilst not at all uncommon in representations of demons and jinns, it is unique in this series of illustrations. Two single-horned attendants (one of them wearing a hat) peak into the painting very close to Huma's side heads.

حُجْرَتِکَ وَفَحَارِکَ شَکْلِ طَلسم



The Laughing Snake,
f. 90v

The iconography of this last painting is particularly interesting. The scene shows a large snake with a human head set in a secluded hilly landscape with a few trees and a walled city in the distance. A group of men appears in the distance from behind the rocks, the first one in the line holding up a large silver disk that hides his face. The human-headed snake looks in the direction of the approaching men.

The title informs us that the story is about the Laughing Snake (*mar-i kakhkaha*) and the Mirror (*ayine*), which brings us to a rather complex set of ancient myths ranging from Ancient Greece to Iran. We can infer from the painting that the mirror is used by the men to protect themselves from the deadly stare of the snake, who will see its own reflection instead and die. Although the exact literary source remains unknown, the association with an extraordinary number of legends is evident: from the Gorgon who killed with her stare to the Iranian motif of the horse-phoenix that killed people by making them laugh; and from the basilisk, a reptile with a terrifying stare in Roman mythology which translates from Persian exactly as “laughing snake” to the epic Iranian figure of Dahhak, “the man who laughs”, who grew two hungry snakes on his shoulders. In addition, the mirror is another symbolic object that appears in all legends, many of which are related to Alexander the Great while others represent local derivations, such as the story of Sannaja, a sort of abominable snowman living in Tibet, as reported by the geographer al-Qazwini.

Thus, even if probably misplaced from the original sequence, this miniature represents an appropriate conclusion to an extraordinarily complex and rich series of illustrated stories without text that have no known parallels in the history of Islamic painting.

شکل مار قهقهره و اینی

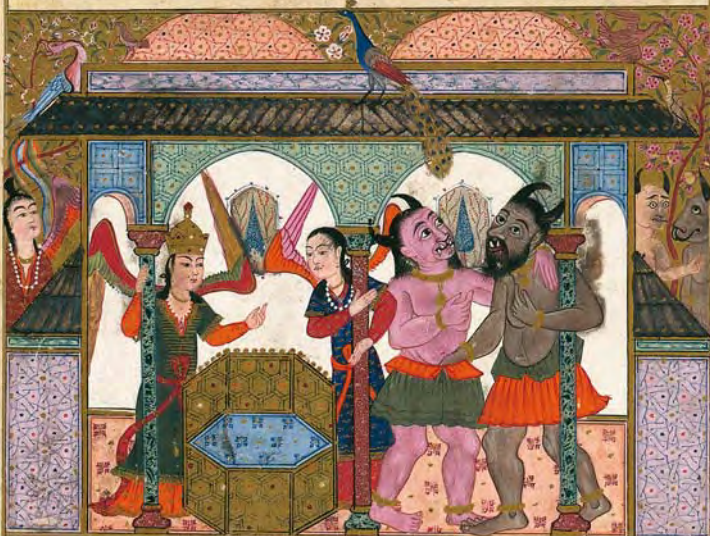


The Divination of the
Prophet Sulayman
(Solomon), **f. 131v**

The only illustration in this section featuring figures represents the House of Sulayman, or the Prophet Solomon. In the Koran, Sulayman is the son of Dawud (David, f. 129v), who passed on to him his ability to gather all kinds of animals, after which Allah gave him power over all creatures, including the jinns. He was particularly known as a prophet of wisdom and fair, or “Solomonic”, judgment. His vast kingdom included Yemen and the best known story about his life reported in the Koran refers to his relationship with Bilqis, the Queen of Sheba, who converted from being a sun worshipper and eventually married Sulayman.

The building and especially the garden behind, have become of secondary importance in this illustration, which is dominated by the presence of two winged angels and two horned jinns who have their arms wrapped around the slender marble columns that support the arched entrance to Sulayman’s throne room. The prophet’s hexagonal throne is visible between the two angels who are guarding it, although there is no trace of Sulayman himself. The busts of another angel and of two jinns can be seen peering out on either side behind the building. Four birds, including a peacock and a *simurgh* or phoenix, are perched or fly above the roof, symbolizing Sulayman’s relationship and power over all living creatures. Above the throne room, which occupies most of the pictorial space, are a sloped roof and two low tiled domes, and shorter extensions of the throne room fill the remaining space on either side.

فَالسَّيِّئَاتِ يَنْصَحُ بِكَرَامَاتِهَا



بُوشَكَلْ اُونْ اُوچُجُيْ اُوکْ صَاحِبِيْ دُرْ فَا لَایَسَنَکْ کَنْدُ وَنْفَسِنَکْ
سِرِيْ اَوِيْدُرْ سَعِيْدُ دُرْ مَایَهْ مَنَسُوْدُرْ نَایَتْ دُرْ یِلْدِرِيْ قَمَرُ دُرْ بَرِي
سَرَطَانْدُرْ کُوْنِيْ اَنِيْنْ دُرْ سَایَنَکْ کُوکْلِيْ سَرُورْ اَوَلَسِنَهْ وُمرَادْ وَنْفَسِنَهْ
اَبُو لَیْکَهْ حَاصِلْ اَوَلَسِنَهْ وَخَرِکَتِيْ اَبُو اَوَلَسِنَهْ وُموَاقِفَتَنَکْ
وَدُ وُسْتَلِفَنَکْ اَبُو لَیْکَهْ وَهَرْ غَمْ وَغَضَهْ دَنْ وَطَارْ لَقْدَنْ
فُورْ تُو لَسِنَهْ دَلَالَتْ اِيْدُرْ وُغَايِيْدَنْ اُولَانْ کِسَهْ سِيْ کَهْ
وَحَجَهْ کِيْدَنْ وَحَضَرَتْ بِيْغَمَبَرِيْ زِيَارَتْ اِيْدَنْ مَطْلُوْبْ اَلَدَنْ
مَقْهُورْ دَایَسَادْ وُسَرُورْ اُولَا وَاَللهُ اَعْلَمُ بِالْصَوْبْ

لَقَائِلَهْ

طَرَبُوْ اُولَدِيْ بُو شَكَلْ چُونْ کَهْ اِيْمِيْ
مُرَادْکْ دَاخِيْ مَقْصُوْدْکْ بِيْلَدَنْ
خُدا وِيْرْدُ وُکِنَهْ مَانِعْ اُولُوْنُرْ
کَلُوْرْ لَا بِيْدَنْ نَصِيْبْ اُولَانْ لَهْ

آدم کا حکم

وَنَزَمَقُولُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ بَدَأُوا



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