

# The Book of Felicity

(Nazali' al-saadet)



# The Book of Felicity

(*Matali' al-sa'adet*)

Bibliothèque nationale de France

«First, unique and unrepeatabe edition, strictly limited to 987 copies»

- Shelf mark: Suppl. turc 242.
- Date: 1582.
- Size: 310 x 210 mm.
- 286 pages and 71 full-page miniatures lavishly embellished with gold.
- Turkish binding in red leather with gold decoration.
- Full-colour commentary volume.



- 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. 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 work by Muhammad ibn Amir Hasan al-Su'udi.
- The *Book of Felicity* was ordered to be translated from the original Arabic by the sultan himself –his portrait appears on folio 8v. It features different treatises illustrated with splendid illuminations: the *Book of Nativities*, containing predictions for those born under each of the twelve signs of the zodiac and a series of splendid miniatures; a short treatise on lunar mansions and their influence; a text about the portents based on the parts of the body affected by spasms; a series of tables for interpreting dreams correctly; an enigmatic treatise on fortune-telling still applicable today, etc.
- 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. Some of this fantastic imagery is inspired directly by traditional tales, such as the *Thousand and One Nights*. Also, 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. There is also an entire illustrated chapter on the monsters appearing in popular belief: the underground world of the jinns, a population of half-men and half-animals that are as numerous as the human beings; like men they can have a good or a bad behaviour, and will be judged by God at the end of times. They are not visible to men but they can appear under different forms. They were created by God from fire without smoke unlike men and angels who were made out of clay and light.

- All the paintings seem to be by the same workshop under the guidance of the famous master Ustad 'Osman, undoubtedly the artist of the opening series of paintings dedicated to the signs of the zodiac. 'Osman, active between around 1559 and 1596, directed the artists in the Seraglio workshop from 1570 onwards and created a style, adopted by other painters at the court, characterised by accurate portraits and a magnificent treatment of illustration.
- 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.

**More information:**

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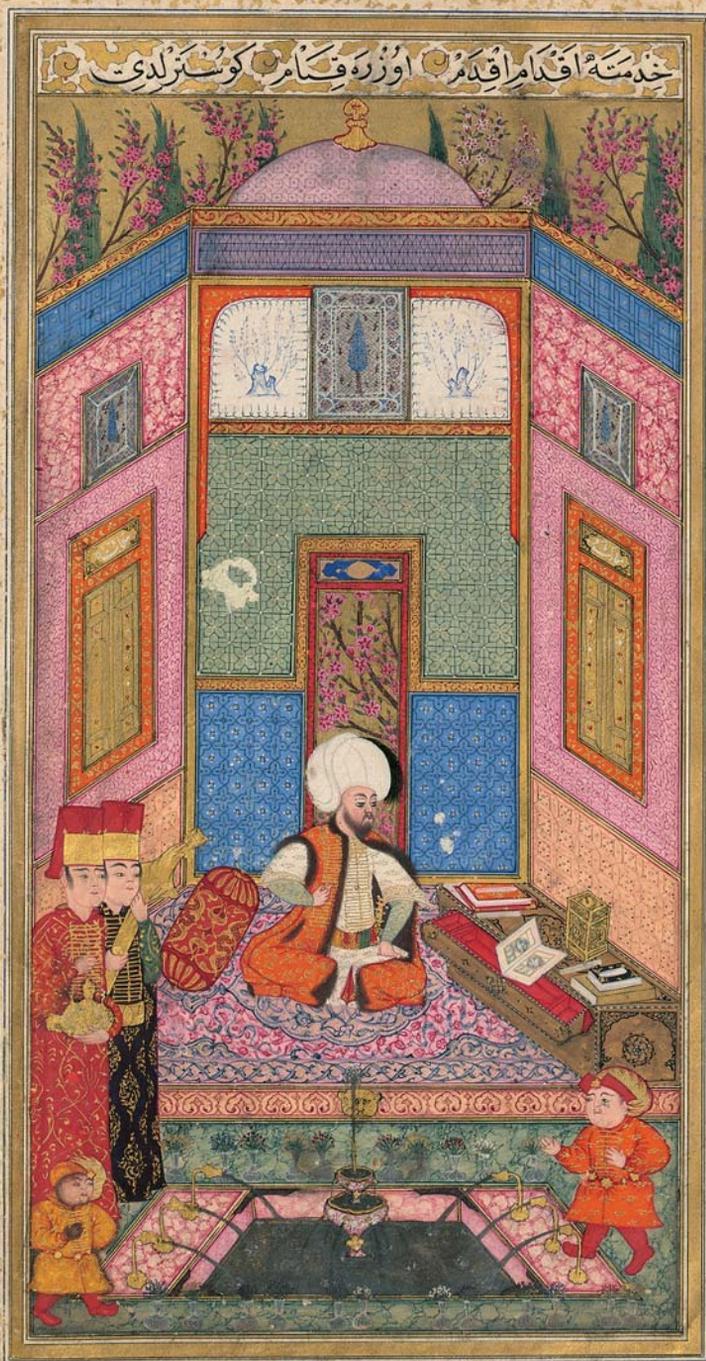


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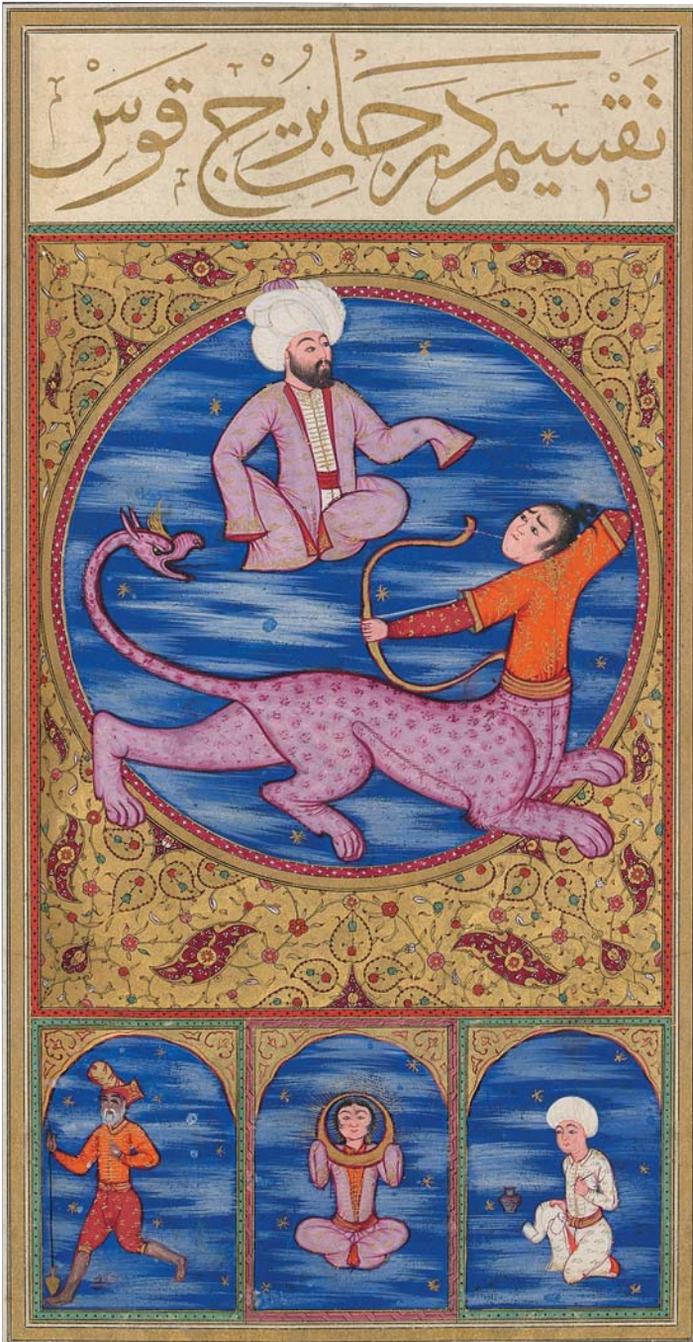




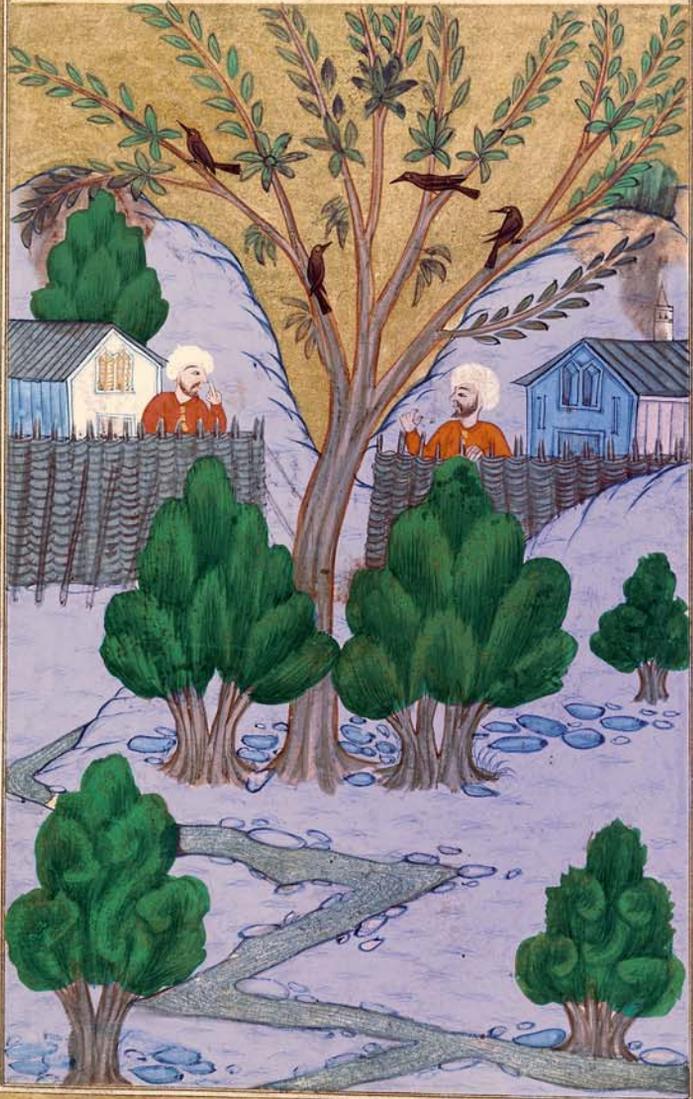
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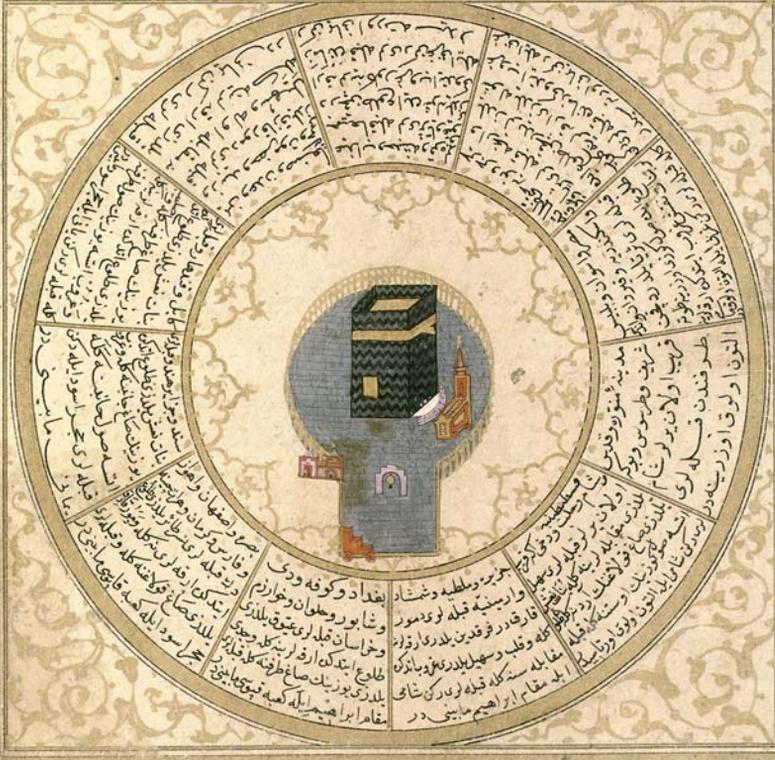
اسکنند ز خو القنیز ظلمایا کندی





# صَوْرَةُ قِبْلَةِ عَلِيٍّ كَعْبَةِ مَعْظَمِهِ

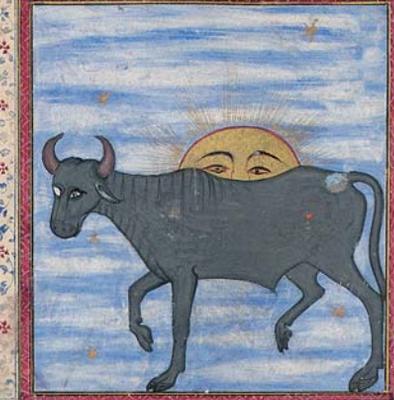
هَرَمٌ مَلَكُوتِيٌّ كُنْتُ قِبْلَةً لِي سَمَّيْتُهُ اِيْدُو كِي بُوْد اِيْرَه دَنْ مَعْلُوْمٌ اُوْلُوْر  
 مَشْرِقٍ وَمَغْرِبٍ وَجَنُوبٍ وَشِمَالٍ مَعْلُوْمٌ اُوْلِيْحَقِّي زِيْر اَحْوَقَ لِي كَعْبَةُ  
 مَعْظَمِهِ فِي عَالَمِكُ اُوْر نَاسِنِكُ يَرَا تَشُدُّ بُوْد اِيْرَه دَه هَبُّ كُو سِتْر لِسْتِد  
 جَنُوبِيْن سُهَيْلِيْلْدِي دُوْر وَشِمَالِي كُجْدِي يِلْدِي دُوْر كِي اَنْلَرَه دَمُوْر قَازِقِ  
 دِر زَرَه مَعْلُوْمٌ اِيْدُنْ كُ كَر كُدُر



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