

97. Persian 2, probably India, 18th century.

Contents; *Shāhnāma* of Firdawsī (partial).⁵²

Folios: 121 fols. in four sections of 134, 133, 110 and 121 fols. each (with three flyleaves at the front and one at the back), meas. 28.2 x 17 cm. Paper. Folios are numbered bottom left of each verso in Persian and top left of each recto in Arabic. Each of the four books starts the numbering anew.

Ruling: 25 lines, ruled in four columns in black and yellow in a frame (21 x 11.5 cm) edged in yellow and red.

Script: *Nasta'liq* in black ink, with titles in red.

Binding: Original gold block-stamped medallions and centrepieces on a red leather ground, the same front and back.

Illumination: Fol. 1v of each of the four books has a decorated aniconic titlepiece. The first has a pyramid of floral motifs against a gold ground enclosing another against a blue ground, with a small central cartouche. The others comprise rectangular panels with gold cartouches surrounded by flowers in yellow and brown (originally red?) on a dark blue ground, with pale green corner motifs. Each has a gold frame with geometric motifs drawn in black ink. a gold marker is attached to the outer edge of the folios with the titlepieces. Mid-17th-century Safavid manuscript painting can be cited as a model for the titlepieces.⁵³

⁵² Waley, *List*.

⁵³ A parallel for the first frontispiece in particular is: Sotheby's Sale catalogue, *Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures* (London, Friday 12th October, 1990), no. 222 Safavid *Qur'ān* of the time of Shah Abbas II, dated AH 1069/AD 1658. For the others: Christie's Sale Catalogue, *Important Islamic, Indian, and South East Asian Manuscripts, Miniatures and Works of Art* (London, 11th October, 1988), no. 57 with colour plate.