

## Ḥaydar Ḥ'ārizmī's “*Maḥzan al-asrār*” and a Peculiarity of the “*Maḥzan al-asrār*” Manuscript Tradition

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The edition of a classical Chaghatay manuscript preserved in the Oriental Collection of the Library and Information Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was published in late November 2020 (Ḥaydar Ḥ'ārizmī 2020). The volume contains the transcription of the Chaghatay text, its versified English translation and images of the manuscript. The manuscript of Ḥaydar Ḥ'ārizmī's narrative poem (*masnavī*) is included in the collective volume Ms. Perzsa O. 81, that contains a Persian *masnavī* as its first text. The Persian narrative poem seems to be a unique copy of a pornographic work supposedly composed by Azraqī Haravī (d. after 1073) in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Though the manuscript is undated and the name of the copyist and the place of the copying are unknown, clues found in the Chaghatay text suggest that it was copied in Iran. Scattered marginal notes written in Ottoman Turkish indicate that the volume had Ottoman owners and it was copied perhaps in the 16<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> century. A peculiarity of the manuscript is that both texts were planned to be illustrated, which is clearly indicated by spaces left blank for the images. It is all the more interesting as a relatively great number of Ḥaydar Ḥ'ārizmī's work known today are illustrated and many of them were made in Iran. The present paper has a two-fold goal. First, it aims at defining the place of Ḥaydar Ḥ'ārizmī and his work in the context of 15<sup>th</sup> century classical Chaghatay poetry and secondly, it tries to give an answer to the question why does such an unimportant looking Chaghatay text has this many illustrated copies.

The first Muslim Turkic classical text, the *Qutadḡu Bilig* (‘Wisdom of Royal Glory’) was composed in the Qarakhanid period, in 1069. One would think that the reign of dynasties of Turkic origin, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuks brought with them the development of Turkic literature and led to a flourishing Turkic literary scene. However, this is not the case as from the period between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries only a meagre amount of Turkic texts were left to us. Moreover, the geographical distribution of these texts is quite unbalanced as in the Western parts of the Turkic world more text were produced, especially from 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

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1 For a detailed description of the manuscript see Péri–Mohammadi–Sárközy 2018, 187–189. An edition of the text is being prepared by Katalin Torma and the author of the present paper.

The situation considerably changed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the Timurids. Though the great empire created by Timur (d. 1405) disintegrated very fast and its place was taken over by a network of centres of power, the support these princely courts granted to various branches of contemporary art led to a cultural renaissance that gave an impetus to the development of literary life. Our most important literary historical sources from the period, the literary anthologies (*tazkira*) of Daulatšāh Samarqandī (d. 1494 or 1507) and Mīr ‘Alī-šīr Navāyī (d. 1501) provide the reader with snapshots of a bustling literary scene where next to the dominant literary medium, Persian, Turkic also started to play an increasing role.

This was quite certainly made possible by the socio-economic changes that led to the establishment of a well-to-do élite, the members of which were willing to spend part of their accumulated wealth on cultural projects.<sup>2</sup> As Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī’s following lines indicate, in the early 1410s there were a great number of affluent patrons of Turkic origin and they formed a new type of audience that were eager to consume classical cultural products.

*Türk zühürüdur ajunda bu kün  
Başla uluq yir bilä türkāna ün  
Rāst qıl āhang-i navā u hijāz  
Tüz yatuğani birlä şudurğani sāz  
Türk surüdüni tüzük birlä tüz  
Yaḥşi ayalğu birlä köglä qopuz* (Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī 2020, 87)

Nowadays Turks are everywhere and it’s not wrong,  
When you let everyone hear your loud Turkish song,  
Compose melodies in the *rāst* and the *hijāz* scale,  
Prepare your *yatuğan* and *şudurğan* and don’t fail.  
Play the Turkish songs, well-composed and full of bliss,  
Pluck the strings of the *qopuz*, you should never miss. (Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī 2020, 178)

Besides the appearance of Turkic consumers of classical art products, like classical music, represented in the poem by two classical musical scales (*maqāms*), *rāst* and *hijāz*, Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī’s lines also suggest that this new audience wished to enjoy art in a way that was more familiar to its members and thus easier to comprehend. In the case of music this audience preferred classical melodies played on various Turkic instruments, *şudurğan*, *yatuğan* and *qopuz*. Since the lines quoted above are parts of a poetic text it is possible to take them figuratively as well, and suggest that they were also meant to refer to literary products. Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī’s words thus clearly indicate that in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century a demand arose for classical art, music, poetry, etc. dressed into a Turkic garb.

2 For a detailed description of the process see Subtelny 1988.

It has been mentioned earlier that the patronage of the new élite gave an impetus to the development of art and in the Timurid centres of power a bustling art scene emerged.

The city of Shiraz in the province of Fars was one of the important centres of art during the reign of the Timurid prince, Iskandar Sultān (d. 1415). Preceding the advent of the Timurids, Shiraz had already grown into a major city and a capital to several Iranian dynasties since the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> It had become an important centre of trade, pilgrimage and culture during its history and it was the hometown to such important representatives of classical Persian poetry as Sa‘dī (d. 1292) and Hāfīz (d. 1390).

After the Timurid conquest in 1393, the province of Fars and its capital Shiraz was governed by the eldest surviving son of Timur, ‘Umar Šayḥ (d. 1394). Following his death three of his sons, Pīr Muḥammad, Rustam and Iskandar Sultān continuously fought for supremacy until 1412–1413 when Iskandar’s power was finally acknowledged in the province (Soucek 2012).<sup>4</sup> One year later he rebelled against his uncle, Šāhruḥ (d. 1447) and declared himself an independent ruler. He minted coins and his name was included in the Friday sermon (*ḥutba*). However, his revolt didn’t last long and it ended with his execution in 1415.

The prince’s court situated in Shiraz and later in Isfahan, was an important hub of contemporary cultural life adorned with the presence of distinguished intellectuals of the age like the astronomers Giyās al-Dīn Kāšī (d. 1429) and his brother, Maḥmūd Kāšī (d. 1428), the historian Mu‘īn al-Dīn Naṭanzī (d. early 15<sup>th</sup> c.), the author of a voluminous chronicle, and the poet Būshāq (d. 1424 or 1427) who became famous for his poetic lampoons collected in a volume entitled *Dīvān-i aṭ‘ama* (‘A Collection of Poems on Food’).

Near contemporary literary historical sources list Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī among the court poets of the Prince. Though the first reference work written on classical prosody in Turkic, the *Funūn al-balāḡa* (‘The Sciences of Eloquence’) compiled by Šayḥ Aḥmad Tarāzī in 1437, doesn’t say explicitly that Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī was a court poet, it quotes quite a few of his lines, which would suggest that he was an acknowledged poet of the Turkic poetic scene in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (De Weese 2005, 123, 150–153).<sup>5</sup> Later sources, the anthologies of Daulatšāh, Navāyī and Faḥr al-Dīn Rāzī (d. after 1566), and Bābur’s handbook on prosody also mention him (Péri 2020, 13–15) indicating that he was still remembered in the late 15<sup>th</sup>–mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, both as a poet composing Turkic poetry and a panegyrist of Iskandar Sultān.

Our sources make it clear that besides composing panegyrics addressed to the Prince, he was the author of two narrative poems. One of them titled *Gul u Naurūz* (‘Gul and Naurūz’) is still often attributed to a better known Turkic poet, Maulānā Luṭfī and the other, originally titled *Gulšan al-asrār* (‘The Rosegarden of Secrets’), is

3 For an outline of the history of pre-Timurid Shiraz see Limbert 2011, 3–46.

4 For a detailed account of his life see Soucek 1996.

5 For more on Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī see Péri 2020.

usually mentioned as *Maḥzan al-asrār* ('The Treasury of Secrets') in modern scholarship.<sup>6</sup>

The *Gulšan al-asrār* is an approximately 600 couplets long narrative poem<sup>7</sup> meant as a poetic reply (*javāb*) to Niẓāmī Ganjavī's (d. 1209) *Maḥzan al-asrār*. Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī's intentions are made clear by his references to Niẓāmī:

*Şayḥ Niẓāmī damīdīn jān tapīp*  
*Ma'nāsīdīn yarlıq u farmān tapīp*  
*Qoptum ise öpti elimni bilig*  
*Ganj-faşānliq bilä ačtim elig*  
*Keldim etäkläp gavhar-i şāhvār*  
*Qilsa qabul öz qulidīn şahriyār* (Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī 2020, 88)

The spirit of Niẓāmī made my tired soul glow,  
 His works gave me guidance in which direction to go.  
 I set to work; knowledge arrived and paid me tribute,  
 It offered a great treasure for me to distribute.  
 With pockets full of jewels, worried did I come,  
 Would the king accept from his servant at least some? (Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī 2020, 180).

The poem, as the lines above and the chapter devoted to praising the ruler indicate, was dedicated to Iskandar Sulṭān and as the author made it clear, it was composed in a period when the Prince ruled as an independent king (*pādšāh*) displaying the most important signs of sovereignty: minting coins and having his name included in the Friday in the *ḥuṭba*. These hints suggest that the poem was composed between 1412 and 1415, when the Prince acted as an independent ruler.

*Sikka u ḥuṭba āyīnīdīn sar-firāz*  
*Fath u zafar himmatīna kār-sāz* (Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī 2020, 83)

He issues coins and to his name *ḥuṭba* is said,  
 His army has always made the enemy fled. (Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī 2020, 176).

The *Gulšan al-asrār* is not the only *javāb* inspired by Niẓāmī's *Maḥzan al-asrār* and it is not even the first one. Bābur's *Muḥtaşar ft'l-'arūz* ('A Compendium of Prosody') mentioned above, lists the most important ones from the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Bābur 1971, 194). The first such poem, titled *Maṭla' al-anvār* ('Dawn of Lights') was composed by Amīr Ḥusrau Dihlavī (d. 1325) followed the *Gulšan-i abrār* ('The Rosegarden of the Righteous') by Kātībī (d. 1434 or 1436), a contemporary of Ḥaydar

6 For the details see Péri 2020, 16–17.

7 The length of the text varies in the manuscript tradition.

Ḥ̄v̄ārizmī. The end of the century witnessed the production of two more *javābs*, ‘Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī’s *Tuḥfat al-aḥrār* (‘Gift to the Nobles’) in Persian and Navāyī’s *Ḥayrat al-abrār* (‘The Wonder of the Rightous’) in Turkic. Two Persian, one Eastern Turkic and two Ottoman poems from the 14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries should be added to Bābur’s list. Ḥ̄v̄ājū-yi Kirmānī (d. 1361) wrote his poetic reply titled *Rauzat al-anvār* (‘The Garden of Light’) in 1342 (Niyāz Kirmānī 1991, 35). Madīḥī’s *masnavī*, *Jannat-i Aḥrār* (‘A Garden of the Noble’) is from the reign of the Aq Qoyunlu ruler, Ya‘qūb (1478–1490) (Çakar 2012, 15). Sayyid Qāsimī composed his *Majma‘ al-aḥbār* (‘A Collection of News’) during the reign of the Timurid ruler Abū Sa‘īd Mīrzā (1459–1469) (Eker 2004, 136, 139). Derviş Ḥayālī’s *Rauzat el-envār* (‘The Garden of Light’) was completed in 1449–1450 (Köksal 2003) and Behištī (d. 1511?) finished his *Maḥzen el-esrār* (Ersoy 2011, 256–257) during the reign of Bāyezīd II (1481–1512).

Since these poems were all meant as *javābs* to an earlier poetic text they share a few features of the model text. They are composed in the metre (*ṣarī‘-i musaddas-i maṭvī-i maksūf*; - . . - | - . . - | - . -) and they imitate the structure, the subject and the tone of Niẓāmī’s work. All of them are didactic poems written in an admonitory tone and focus on ethical concepts, such as righteousness, generosity, perseverance, trust in God, etc. They start as *masnavīs* in the Persian tradition usually do, with an introduction containing the praise of God, the Prophet Muḥammad, the Caliphs, and the dedicatee, usually the acting ruler. The text is divided then into chapters. Each chapter starts with the author’s introductory lines expressing his views concerning an ethical concept, which is followed by a story meant to illustrate what was said earlier. Chapters are concluded by the poet’s concluding remarks.

Compared to the model poem and other poetic replies Ḥaydar Ḥ̄v̄ārizmī’s text is much shorter; it consists of approximately 600 couplets and contains only eight stories. The order of the stories can vary in the manuscript tradition. 1. The story of the young man who lost his money in the bazaar highlights the hypocrisy of various characters connected to religion; 2. The story of Amīr Temūr and the ant illustrates the importance of perseverance; 3. The story of the Prophet Jacob warns everyone that ordinary love shouldn’t replace the love of God; 4. The story of the cloth-merchant and the poor widow reproaches heartless people making profit on others who are in need; 5. The story of the caravan at Ḥātīm-i Ṭayy’s tomb speaks of generosity; 6. The story of King Sulaymān and the earthenware jar warns of the ephemeral character of power; 7. The story of the meeting of the Ghaznavid ruler Maḥmūd and the dervish focuses on true devotion and faith in Divine Providence similarly to the story of Hārūn al-Rašīd and the saintly Bahlūl.

Osman Fikri Sertkaya mentions that he prepared a critical edition of Ḥaydar Ḥ̄v̄ārizmī’s text based on eighteen manuscripts (Sertkaya 1974, 182, note 9). Unfortunately Sertkaya didn’t list the manuscripts and his edition has never been published. Later works on the text list less copies (Goca 2000, VI; Çakmak 2019, 336–338) and the critical edition published in 2008 was prepared based only on five (Gözütök 2008, 6–7).

As it has been mentioned in the introduction, some of the manuscripts are illustrated. The oldest illustrated copy (Persian Ms. 41) prepared for the Aq Qoyunlu ruler, Ya'qūb (1478–1490) in 1478, is preserved in the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library.<sup>8</sup> The manuscript was compiled using expensive Chinese paper and it contains one painting illustrating the story of the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd and the dervish.<sup>9</sup> The copyist was one of the famous calligraphers of the period, Sulṭān 'Alī Mašhadī (d. 1520).<sup>10</sup>

According to Blochet's catalogue the copy of Ḥaydar Ḥ'arizmī's text kept in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris was made in the 1550's in Tabriz (Blochet 1933, 116). Lale Uluç an expert on Shirazi paintings, however, thinks that they were made in the second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century in Shiraz.<sup>11</sup>

The copy kept in the Vever Collection at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington was copied by Mīr 'Alī al-Kātib in the late 1570s somewhere in Iran, perhaps in Khurasan. The manuscript contains eight illustrations, one to each story (Lowry & Beach 1988, 133–134). The manuscript of the Chester Beatty library (Ms. No. 433) is thought to have been copied somewhat later also in Iran and Minorsky suggested that it was dedicated to the Safavid ruler, 'Abbās I (1587–1639). The volume contains eight paintings, six of them prepared to illustrate stories. Interestingly, the story of the old woman and the cloth-merchant has two illustrations (Minorsky 1958, 56–57).

The undated copy of the Millet Kütüphanesi (Ae Mnz 951) is also supposed to have been copied and illustrated in a Safavid environment, perhaps in Tabriz in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Öztürk 2012, 248–249). The copy contains nine paintings, one to each story and an additional miniature in the introductory chapter. There are two copies of the text in the collection of the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yazma Eser Kütüphanesi. One of them (E.H. 1641) was illustrated by Rizā-yi 'Abbāsī (1565–1635), a celebrated artist from 'Abbās I's reign and copied by an equally acknowledged painter, Şādiqī Beg, the librarian of the ruler (Soudavar 1992, 199).<sup>12</sup> The copy contains seven illustrations (Çağman & Tanındı 1979, 48). The other manuscript (E.H. 1640) was copied by Mīr 'Imād al-Ḥusaynī (1553–1615), a famous calligrapher of the same period in 1605 (Gözütok 2008, facsimile 22a). Rizā and Mīr 'Imād worked together on the fragmentary copy preserved in the art collection of the Art and History Trust Collection in Houston (Cat. no. 110). Only the nine pages containing paintings, including the colophon page, are preserved all the others seem to be lost (Soudavar 1992, 200–201). According to Abolala Soudavar both the Topkapı and the Houston manuscript was commissioned in Isfahan in the early 17<sup>th</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed description of the copy see Soucek 1988.

<sup>9</sup> For the use of Chinese paper in Timurid manuscripts see Blair 2000, 26–28.

<sup>10</sup> For Sulṭān 'Alī Mašhadī see Serin 2016.

<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Lale Uluç for her views on the paintings.

<sup>12</sup> All references to Soudavar's book are to the .doc version of the book available at the author's website. [www.soudavar.com/ArtPersCrt.doc](http://www.soudavar.com/ArtPersCrt.doc) (Accessed on 08. 01. 2021).

century (Soudavar 1992, 198). He thinks that the Mīr ‘Imād version was prepared first, perhaps for a well-to-do patron and the other copy was prepared on the order of the shah to prove that the royal atelier can produce a manuscript equalling the Rizā–Mīr ‘Imād copy (Soudavar 1992, 199).

As it has been mentioned before, the Budapest manuscript was also meant to be illustrated. Spaces for two paintings, one illustrating the story of the old woman and the cloth merchant and the other the story of the caravan at Ḥātim-i Ṭayy’s tomb, were left blank (fols. 32a, 35a). Several linguistic features of the manuscript suggest that the text was copied by a scribe whose mother tongue was an Oghuz dialect close to Azeri. Just to mention a few examples, on fol. 33a instead of *toqulğan* ‘woven’ *toḥulğan* on fol. 33b instead of *berür* ‘he/she gives’ *verür*, on fol. 34b instead of *yigit* ‘young man’ *igit*, on fol. 41a instead of *yürägim* ‘my heart’ *ürägim* is written. Since the first work in the collected volume containing Ḥaydar Ḥvārizmī’s work, is a Persian text, it is not without reason to believe that the manuscript was also copied somewhere in Iran. Since the text of the *Gulšan al-asrār* fits perfectly into the ‘*Maḥzan al-asrār* tradition’, perhaps the answer for the question, why are there this many illustrated copies of an unimportant looking Turkic text, prepared by well-known artists, should be looked for in the manuscript tradition of the *Maḥzan al-asrār* genre.

It seems that illustrations became an inseparable part of the Nizāmī textual tradition during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Many illustrated copies are known to have been prepared in well-known centres of Persian manuscript production Herat, Shiraz and Baghdad.<sup>13</sup> The tradition appears to have been continued during the reign of the Safavids and quite a few exquisitely illustrated copies of Nizāmī’s *Ḥamsa* were produced and as the *Maḥzan al-asrār* was one of the five *masnavīs* it was often illustrated too.<sup>14</sup> The Topkapı Palace Museum Library alone has seventy-one illustrated copies out of which thirty are “dated prior to 1503–1504” (Tanındı 2019, 227).

Being illustrated seems to be a feature most of the poetic replies inspired by Nizāmī’s *Maḥzan al-asrār* share. Though some of these texts were preserved in copies without paintings, a great number of the manuscripts belonging to the ‘*Maḥzan al-asrār* tradition’ is illustrated. It is especially true for Amīr Khusrau’s *Maṭla‘ al-anvār*,<sup>15</sup> Jāmī’s *Tuḥfat al-aḥrār*<sup>16</sup> and Nevāyī’s *Ḥayrat al-abrār*.<sup>17</sup> Nizāmī’s *masnavī* and these three *javābs* were fashionable texts in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and perhaps, must

13 For a detailed account on these manuscripts see Soucek 1971.

14 See e.g. Lowry and Beach 1988, 216–224, 239

15 For a detailed study of the topic see Brend 2003.

16 See Lowry and Beach 1988, 149–157; Robinson 1958, 108–109, 166–167. Digital images of Ms. Elliot 149 preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford are available online at <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/dab179f1-21bb-4dfd-a14b-b6d3a534e6ed/> (Accessed on 01. 02. 2021). See also Arberry et alii 1962, 18–19, 24.

17 See e.g. Uluç 2019. Images of an exquisitely executed copy of the *Ḥayrat* preserved in the Royal Collections are available online at <https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005032/khamsah-yi-navai-khmsh-nwyy-the-quintet-of-navai> (Accessed on 01. 02. 2021).

have items in the libraries of affluent patrons who could afford to have such valuable books commissioned or purchased. As it has been referred to earlier, the number of wealthy patrons considerably increased during the reign of the Timurids. The demand for illustrated books grew and these popular texts with their short stories were especially suitable for being illustrated. It seems that due to these three factors, the increase in the number of rich book lovers, the popularity of these texts and their suitability for being decorated with paintings, illustrations became part of the ‘*Maḥzan al-asrār*’ tradition’ and texts accepted as belonging to the genre were often illustrated. This general practice continued beyond the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in the centres of Persianate book production, in the Ottoman Empire, in Safavid lands, in Shaybanid Bukhara and in Mughal India many illustrated copies of these texts were prepared.

Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī’s *Gulšan al-asrār* also seems to have been a popular text in the 15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries, though in a narrower circle, among consumers of Turkic literary products. Quotations contained in the *Funūn al-balāga* and the three copies written in Uyghur script (Çakmak 2019, 336–337) in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century are all signs of this popularity. One of these copies produced in Istanbul in 1480 was part of the library of Bayezid II (1481–1512) (Csirkés 2019, 716).<sup>18</sup> If we add that the New York manuscript was also prepared for another royal patron the Aq Qoyunlu ruler, Ya‘qūb in 1478, it is clear that the reputation of Ḥaydar Ḥ‘ārizmī’s text enjoyed in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Such a high prestige may have been attributed to it partly because it was originally dedicated to a Timurid prince and thus it carried the air of the Timurid cultural ethos, and more importantly because when the above mentioned royal copies were prepared Navāyī’s *Ḥayrat al-abrār* still didn’t exist and thus the *Gulšan al-asrār* was the sole representative of Timurid poetic replies written in Turkic to Niẓāmī’s model poem.

The prestige of the text seems to have remained unbroken in the Safavid period. At least this is what the number of manuscripts produced under the Safavids and the Chester Beatty copy supposedly prepared for ‘Abbās I, another royal patron would suggest.

Though the status of Persian was unquestionable in the Safavid Empire, Turkic was an integral part of the court culture (Csirkés 2016). Safavids, at the same time, were heirs to many diverse aspects of the Timurid cultural legacy and this quite naturally means that there had to be a market for copies of Chaghatay texts composed by Timurid period authors. Though particularly the works of Navāyī were sought for, seeing the number of its manuscripts produced under the Safavids, it can be surmised that the *Gulšan al-asrār* was popular as well. There might have been another factor that influenced the Safavid popularity of the text. Originally it was composed in a region that was ruled by the Safavids so perhaps those who were interested in this text had an easier access to manuscripts that could be copied.

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<sup>18</sup> For the edition of the text see Goca 2000.



As a summary it can be said that the relatively high number of the illustrated copies of the *Gulšan al-asrār* can perhaps be explained with the favourable conjunction of several factors. Nizāmī's *Maḥzan al-asrār* inspired quite a few poetic replies from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards and the texts had formed a distinct 'Maḥzan al-asrār genre' by the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As a result of various socio-economic processes the wealth of potential patrons of art increased during the same period and it also created a high demand for illustrated books that could reflect their possessor's financial and cultural status. Texts of the 'Maḥzan al-asrār tradition' with their short stories were perfectly suitable for being decorated with paintings, and by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century illustrations became an inseparable part of this tradition. Ḥaydar Ḥ'arizmī's *Gulšan al-asrār* was the first Turkic text composed in this genre and it quickly became popular. This popularity still held in the 16<sup>th</sup>–early 17<sup>th</sup> century. As it was considered part of the *Maḥzan al-asrār* tradition, it also started being illustrated and this custom was still followed in the early years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. After this period, Ḥaydar Ḥ'arizmī's narrative poem seems to have sunk into oblivion for reasons yet undiscovered.

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