

# REVEALING THE UNSEEN

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON QAJAR ART

Papers from a symposium organized by  
Gwenaëlle Fellingner and Carol Guillaume

Edited by Gwenaëlle Fellingner  
with Melanie Gibson



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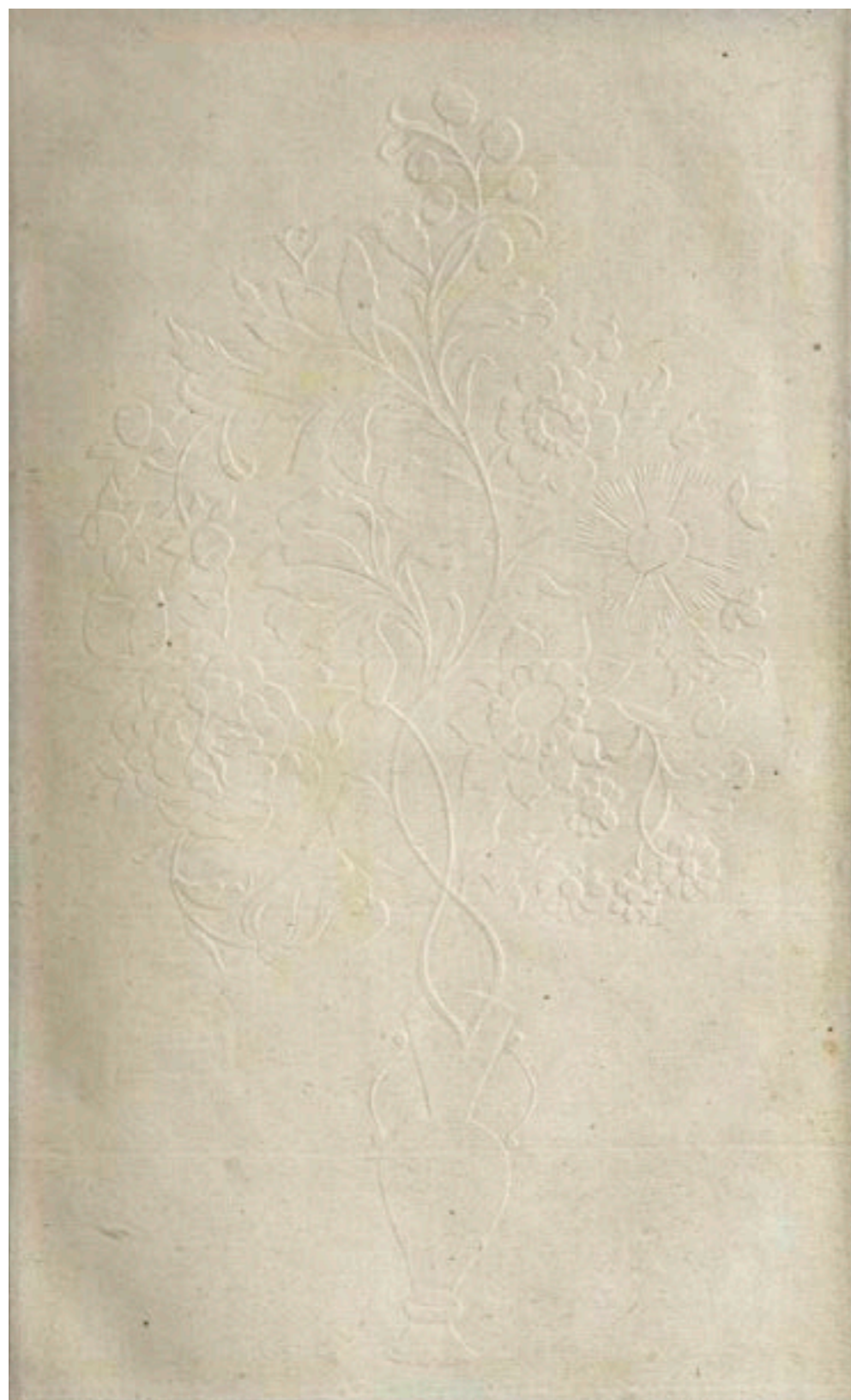


Figure 1. *A vase of flowers from an album of fingernail artwork*, 20 x 13.5 cm. Iran, 19th century. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, loan from A. Soudavar in memory of his mother Ezzat-Malek Soudavar, 30.2015, folio 8v.

## Without Pen, Without Ink: Fingernail Art in the Qajar Period

CHRISTIANE GRUBER

Fingernail art (*san'at-i nakhun*)<sup>1</sup> is created by the use of fingernails, especially the thumbnail, placed on either side of a white sheet of paper that is then rotated in a circular fashion in order to impress the outlines of images or words.<sup>2</sup> Numerous specimens of fingernail art were made over the course of the nineteenth century in Qajar Iran (1789–1925). These monochromatic compositions with pictorial and textual content, which appears raised or embossed, span a wide spectrum of themes. For example, some display floral designs (Figure 1) and calligraphic compositions, while others depict hunting or fighting scenes and European subjects.

Although the practice of fingernail art lasted to the end of the nineteenth century (and continues at the hand of a few artists in Iran still today), it blossomed around 1850—that is, during a moment in Nasir al-Din Shah's reign (1848–96) when older Persian traditions of rock carving were being revived and as the printing press, photography, and other mechanical arts took off in Iran. For these reasons, fingernail art partook in and contributed to a broad and varied corpus of Persian pictorial and calligraphic traditions made in multiple media at this time. Among such materials can be counted the many royal portraits of Nasir al-Din Shah, which were executed in oil on canvas, recorded in photographs, illustrated in print media, painted on glass waterpipes, minted on coins, and, last but not least, painstakingly impressed by human fingernails onto plain white sheets of paper that were then collected and bound into albums.

### AN ACHAEMENID EFFECT

Much like albums of photographs, fingernail albums—known as *muraqqā'at-i nakhuni*—proved particularly popular during the second half of the nineteenth century. No fewer than a dozen such albums are preserved in the Golestan Palace Library in Tehran, while many more are scattered, either in complete or fragmentary form, in Iranian and international repositories. Besides their amassing by members of the Qajar

ruling elite, fingernail compositions were also offered as gifts to European and other foreign visitors. One of the more intriguing examples is an album of fingernail calligraphy and images made around 1864, which includes an opening poem dedicating the item to the Ottoman statesman Mehmet Fu'at Paşa (d. 1869). This item and other examples of fingernail artwork held in Istanbul collections reveal that this Qajar artistic practice made its way to Ottoman lands, whence it continued its westward path to Europe and America. Quite literally a form of 'digital' art, fingernail compositions seem



Figure 2. *A lion and dragon in combat*, album of specimens of fingernail images and calligraphy. Iran, circa 1281/1864–5. University of Michigan Library, Special Collections Research Center, Ann Arbor, Isl. Ms. 279, folio 7r.



Figure 3. Carved panel depicting a lion-and-bull fight. Persepolis, Achaemenid palace, Apadana, 5th century BC. Image in public domain.

to have piqued the interest of various collectors worldwide during the nineteenth century.

Among its pages, Fu'at Paşa's fingernail album includes a depiction of three lions in combat with a dragon, creating a circular composition made all the more dynamic by the Persian verses and scalloped edges that surround it (Figure 2). The lion and dragon combat motif is a recurrent one in the *nakhuni* corpus; for example, another album made for Nasir al-Din Shah by the fingernail expert 'Ali Akbar Darvish in 1267/1850–51 includes a similar scene, devoid of text and pared down to a single lion.<sup>3</sup>

The motif of animals in combat executed in a lapidary medium stretches much further back in time within Iranian visual culture, the most significant example being the scene of a lion goring a bull chiselled in the stairway of the Apadana

(Audience Hall) at the Achaemenid palace in Persepolis (Figure 3). Dating to the fifth century BC, this bas-relief is carved into a large piece of well-polished limestone marking the ceremonial ascent; it also is repeated throughout the palace's iconographical program, wherein it may have fulfilled astrological symbolism (that is, as representing the zodiacal signs of Leo and Taurus) and/or acted as a kind of 'coat of arms' for Achaemenid rulers.<sup>4</sup>

The Persepolitan heraldic device of a 'lion goring its prey' continued into the Qajar period, as did the sculpted aesthetic of a carved monolith.<sup>5</sup> Crafting their compositions with a fingernail rather than a metal pick, nineteenth-century *nakhuni* artists revived and translated older Iranian relief-work practices, making them smaller and faster to execute, as well as easier to give and collect. Fingernail art thus endowed the lapidary mode and aesthetic with a new mobility, scaling

it down and untethering it from a particular geographical location while concurrently dispersing it via lightweight, and thus highly portable, paper supports.

Qajar fingernail artists, however, did not need to travel to Persepolis to find inspiration in Persian lion combat scenes or stone-cutting traditions. By 1800, such iconographic motifs circulated widely across various media, including ceramic wares and illustrated manuscripts. Moreover, the lapidary arts had been actively revived, in particular under the aegis of Fath 'Ali Shah (1797–1834). The monarch turned his attention to constructing the Golestan Palace in Tehran during the early years of the nineteenth century. There, his

main audience chamber—an open porch whose walls are decorated with lavish mirrorwork—frames the so-called Marble Throne (*takht-i marmar*) elevated on a plinth revetted with decorative stone panels.<sup>6</sup>

The wide platform of the *takht-i marmar* is held aloft by lions, demons, and human attendants while its backside is girdled with a poem praising Solomon (Sulayman). The verses were penned by the Qajar poet laureate Fath 'Ali Khan Saba Kashani, who was a key member and proponent of the Persian literary 'return movement' (*bazgasht-i adabi*).<sup>7</sup> Combining the so-called 'ancient' technique of stone carving with ancestral poetic metaphors, the *takht-i marmar* overtly



Figure 4. Carved revetment panel depicting a lion and dragon in combat, located on the plinth supporting the Marble Throne (*takht-i marmar*). Tehran, Golestan Palace, audience hall, early 1800s. Photograph by Sally Bjork.

seeks to revive Solomon's throne as the quintessential symbol of rulership and authority. Moreover, in Persian cultural spheres Solomon often is conflated with Jamshid, while the 'Throne of Solomon'—i.e. *takht-i Jamshid*—is one of the Persian names of Persepolis.<sup>8</sup> Fath 'Ali Shah's thronal stage thus iconographically and rhetorically revives and reactivates age-old Persepolitan power within the newly established Qajar capital of Tehran.

The throne's steps appear as if supported from below by a carved panel depicting a lion-and-dragon combat scene (Figure 4). While this battle of the beasts may have carried astrological implications in Achaemenid times, within the overarching pictorial program of Fath 'Ali Shah's audience hall it most likely strengthened the monarch's display of supreme power over his subjects and competing dynasts living in his domains. This posture prompts a potential Achaemenid effect in both its chosen vocabulary and its messaging system.

From the marble throne to carved panels, fingernail artists who benefited from royal patronage had examples of lapidary arts available to them within palace quarters. Some may have chosen to emulate the animal combat motif due to its position as the most prominent royal example of a carved artwork, whose contours could be mimicked by the movement of the fingernail. Still others may have seen in this revetment panel of a dominant beast a metaphor for Fath 'Ali Shah's raw might. Both possibilities were not mutually exclusive as the leonine motif *and* its chiselled medium could be marshalled to secure the Qajar ruler's position within a long line of Persian rulers stretching back to his Achaemenid precursors who ruled in Persepolis.

#### FARANGI-SAZ MEETS OPTICAL ART

Although 'Ali Akbar Darvish is the fingernail artist responsible for the most accomplished fingernail albums in the Golestan Palace Library, which he made for Nasir al-Din Shah around 1850,<sup>9</sup> another notable *nakhuni* practitioner was Fakhr-i Jahan, the daughter of Fath 'Ali Shah. A rare example of a female skilled in the craft, Fakhr-i Jahan created an album that includes impressed calligraphy as well as depictions of a lion attacking a bull, Qajar soldiers, and European ladies.<sup>10</sup> One of the fingernail depictions executed and signed by Fakhr-i Jahan depicts a traditional Persian pictorial scene known as 'rose and nightingale' (*gul-u bulbul*) (Figure 5).<sup>11</sup> A symbol of the lover and beloved, the pattern of *gul-u bulbul* would have been available to the Qajar princess in many different media, including contemporary

lacquer bindings that covered Persian romances and other texts.<sup>12</sup>

Besides looking to Persian artistic traditions, fingernail artists like Fakhr-i Jahan actively engaged with European printed materials that came to Iran during the nineteenth century, especially after 1851 when Nasir al-Din Shah founded a new school—the Dar al-Funun—for which European books and other print materials were imported, translated, and reprinted using a series of newly installed printing presses.<sup>13</sup> At this time, European printed images influenced and expanded the Persian artistic repertoire. Fakhr-i Jahan's *gul-u bulbul* proves a case in point: here, the traditional bird-and-flower composition is framed by flaming torches and bundles of rods with a single axe (known as fasces), both of which functioned as key emblems of the Roman Empire and the French Revolution of 1789.



Figure 5. *A rose and nightingale (gul-u bulbul)* composition, accordion album of fingernail art and calligraphy, signed by Fakhr-i Jahan. Tehran, 19th century. Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, ms. 1574, page 2.

Other *nakhuni* albums likewise display a keen interest in European subjects and themes. For instance, many include depictions of dashing young men dressed in the latest fashion, including top hats, frock coats, and trousers (Figure 6).<sup>14</sup> These images appear to have been copied from European prints, which were extracted from news magazines and made their way to Iran as single leaves. This Europeanizing or 'Frankish' (*farangi-saz*) mode was not at all new; rather, it had been a staple of Persian pictorial expression stretching back to the seventeenth century.<sup>15</sup>

In this regard, it is important to note that a number of Qajar albums combine exemplars of Persian fingernail art with European printed specimens. Album viewers thus were invited to compare and contrast two technologies of impression—the primordial tool of the fingernail on the one hand, and the modern metal machine on the other—in order to explore each work's visual qualities, singly and in relationship to other images within the album. As David Roxburgh underscores, this particular 'aesthetics of aggregation' can be traced back to early modern Persian practices of album-making, which themselves display a certain logic and coherence beyond merely bringing together a haphazard miscellany of textual and visual content.<sup>16</sup>

Qajar albums also invited visual engagement through their varied contents, which expanded album-making traditions by including both *nakhuni* exercises and print materials. As a result, the album's viewers could discuss, among other issues, the relative merits of the black-and-white print versus the monotone paper relief, the latter necessitating strong light and a movement of the page in order to grasp a fingernail composition in its entirety. Put otherwise, since the *nakhuni* impressions are barely visible when examined frontally or from above, the viewer must move the artwork in order to produce light shadows of the embossed lines to make the composition visible. Such kinetic viewing practices were rare but not unprecedented: for example, lusterwares, metalworks, and daguerreotype photographs were likewise visually mutable due to their reflectivity. Unlike these examples, *san'at-i nakhun* required dynamic movement in proper lighting conditions for viewers to be able to decipher the contents of a composition. The medium therefore proved ahead of its time as a kind of abstract expressionism or, one might argue, even op-art.

#### MOVEABLE TYPES: MOLDS AND FINGERS

Although known as masters of fingernail art, Qajar *nakhuni* artists also turned to other implements to produce their



Figure 6. *Man in European garments (with moveable type inscription)*, from an album of fingernail artwork, 20 x 13.5 cm. Iran, 19th century. Cambridge MA, Harvard Art Museums, loan from A. Soudavar in memory of his mother Ezzat-Malek Soudavar, 30.2015, folio 12r.

compositions. Alongside their purpose-trimmed keratin tools, they made use of metal styluses and stamps as well as moveable type letters and numbers. Typographic letters in metal moulds seem to have been conceived of and used as stamps, as can be seen in the depiction of the young dandy illustrated in Figure 6. Here, it appears that an adapted Cyrillic script has been used, perhaps in emulation of Russian dry-stamped papers.<sup>17</sup>

Iranian fingernail artists were interested in global fashions, looking to European illustrated magazines as well as to Russian prototypes. A number of albums incorporate depictions of dapper young men and women wearing attire and headwear very much à la mode.<sup>18</sup> This boom in interest in international vesture and dress, especially during the last

decades of the nineteenth century, must have been spurred by Nasir al-Din Shah's own European travels. It was also catalysed by the availability of European printed materials, including the *Illustrated London News* whose images were cut out and included as *découpage* wall decoration in elite Qajar houses.

Another example of the use of moveable type letters, included in a Qajar album of fingernail art and European prints, appears on a single sheet of unadorned paper. The impressed capital letters are clearly legible and spell: 'MAD[R]AS AUXILIARY BIBLE SOCIETY' (the 'R' in Madras is upside-down).<sup>19</sup> This imperial British Bible Society included among its goals the spread of Christianity in the Indian subcontinent through missionary efforts. During the nineteenth century, its Church Mission Press published a number of Christian works: for example, in 1835, it printed the *Gospel According to St. Luke*, and, from the 1840s onward, it issued several copies of the *Old Testament* in both Tamil and Telugu translation. Judging from the impressed letters in the Qajar album, one or several of the Bible Society's books must have been available to fingernail artists, who copied the press's imprint with the letters at their disposal.

These few examples of the use of moveable letters highlight how typographic technologies were combined with *nakhuni* art in Qajar Iran. There, such technologies were sourced, adapted, and 'remediated', a process widely common in Qajar artistic practices.<sup>20</sup> In this particular instance, however, it appears that moveable type letters may have been used precisely because they were discarded in favour of lithographic printing, which was preferred in Iran due to its lower cost and effectiveness for rendering *nasta'liq* script.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, lithography allowed for the production of illustrated texts and thus the continuation of centuries-old Persian scribal practices and book arts. As a form of planographic printing,<sup>22</sup> lithography proved central to an entire circuit of images in Qajar Iran, especially after the first lithographed illustrated books were published in the 1840s.<sup>23</sup> For their part, the letter moulds of the typographic press, itself rather unsuccessful in Iranian spheres, appear to have found new life within the context of fingernail art, in which these letterist forms provided yet another tool to achieve an embossed, monotone aesthetic.

#### ROCKS, SCULPTURES, AND FINGERS

As mentioned previously, this particular artistic mode likewise can be detected in rock reliefs. Interest in this quintessentially Achaemenid and Sasanian art form is



Figure 7. *Shirin watching Farhad carve Mount Bisutun*, album of specimens of fingernail images and calligraphy, signed by 'Ali Akbar Darvish. Tehran, 1267/1850-1, Tehran, Golestan Palace Library ms. 1568, page 8.

found in Islamic depictions of Shirin falling in love with the rock-carver Farhad, who was associated with the rock reliefs at Mount Bisutun and Taq-i Bustan.<sup>24</sup> Such depictions of Shirin and Farhad are a staple of Safavid illustrated manuscripts as well as Qajar paintings and polychrome tiles, and they also are included in 'Ali Akbar Darvish's fingernail albums held in the Golestan Palace Library (Figure 7).<sup>25</sup> In the latter case, Farhad's professional vocation as a stone-carver may have proved of special interest to the relief artists of the Qajar *nakhuni* mode, who may have couched themselves as latter-day Farhads chiselling away on their own paper surfaces.

The Qajar monarchs understood the political potential of reviving rock relief traditions to promote their imperial rule and grandeur throughout Iranian lands. For example, between the years 1817 and 1833, Fath 'Ali Shah commissioned seven reliefs.<sup>26</sup> At Taq-i Bustan, Chashma 'Ali,

and in Shiraz, these rock reliefs show the Qajar monarch enthroned, often accompanied by his sons, thereby stressing the legitimacy of the Qajar household and most especially the ruler's heirs apparent.<sup>27</sup> By 1850, depictions of Fath 'Ali Shah seated or enthroned permeated canvas and manuscript paintings as well as rock reliefs, and such multi-media figural images no doubt influenced similar fingernail renderings of the Qajar monarch.<sup>28</sup>

While fingernail art could respond to already existent products and forms, it also could anticipate others; it thus could be on both the generative and receiving end of the creative spectrum. Such could be the case for equestrian images of Nasir al-Din Shah dating from the 1870s-1880s, including the rock relief of the monarch chiselled on the Haraz Road (1878-79) in which the Qajar ruler is shown sitting on horseback and flanked by ministers. The lapidary

composition yields what Judith Lerner calls an 'enlarged snapshot',<sup>29</sup> whose photographic qualities seem due to the fact that the relief was based on a photograph or printed copy of a painting.<sup>30</sup>

A decade later, around 1888, the famous photographer Antoin Sevruguin took a photograph of yet another image of Nasir al-Din Shah, this time of his equestrian statue (Figure 8).<sup>31</sup> This form of public three-dimensional representation outraged the 'ulama' and eventually the statue was melted down during the early Pahlavi period. In conceiving this monument of himself, Nasir al-Din Shah must have been influenced by the equestrian statues of great rulers that he saw during his travels to major European cities. Perhaps also, the printed image of Jacques-Louis David's painting of *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* (1800) inspired this type of hero-on-horseback visual trope.



Figure 8. Photograph of the equestrian statue of Nasir al-Din Shah, Antoin Sevruguin, circa 1888. Myron Bement Smith Collection: Antoin Sevruguin Photographs. Washington D.C., Smithsonian Institution, Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Gift of Katherine Dennis Smith, 1973-1985, FSA A.4 2.12.GN.48.03.



Figure 9. *Nasir al-Din Shah on horseback*, album of specimens of fingernail images and calligraphy, signed by ‘Ali Akbar Darvish, 1266/1849–50. Tehran, Golestan Palace Library ms. 1570, page 5.

At the more local level, it is also possible that other paintings and images of the Qajar horse-riding monarch—including ‘Ali Akbar Darvish’s *nakhuni* compositions of the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 9)<sup>32</sup>—may have influenced the three-dimensional statue. Indeed, the embossed, single-tone aesthetic of fingernail art appears a natural pendant to rock carving, sculpture, photography, and printing. Moreover, its rhyming inscription offers praises of Nasir al-Din Shah’s seal of kingship (*khatam-i shahi*), and these verses were believed to have been composed by the monarch and engraved on his own royal seal. It seems quite apropos that they should be ‘carved’ or embossed within the white paper as well.

#### IMPRESSIONS BACK AND FORTH

Although one could discuss many more examples of fingernail art—including works that transcribe Islamic devotional texts or depict Shi‘i saints and heroes (Figure 10)<sup>33</sup>—a few preliminary concluding remarks nevertheless can be offered. First, the practice of fingernail art and calligraphy is an artistic development particular to the Qajar period in Iran, and it found an especially keen patron in Nasir al-Din Shah. In this practice, both pen and ink are discarded from the calligraphic and pictorial process. Instead, a carefully grown and cut fingernail, a metal stylus, letter moulds, and other stamps are used to create impressions on a monochromatic sheet of paper that mimics alabaster or grey limestone.

Linked to the modern rise of the printing press and photography, but also reviving older Persian lapidary practices, this Janus-like artistic tradition looks both outward and inward as well as to the past and future. Qajar artists also experimented with a more abstract and physically-inclined approach towards calligraphy and painting by frequently discarding tools in favour of the human digit. In the process, they crafted a distinct form of minimalism—itsself an aesthetic closely affiliated with modernist ideals. Qajar fingernail artworks thus fatefully anticipate abstract expressionist painting and the minimalist ‘white cube’ museums in which they would eventually be displayed.



Figure 10. *Imam ‘Ali kneeling and holding his double-pointed sword Dhu’l-Fiqar*, album of specimens of fingernail images and calligraphy. Iran, second half of the 19th century. New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Pers. Ms. 27, page 17.

## NOTES

- 1 This expression is found in some artists' signatures. See, for example, the 'fingernail art' (*san'at-i nakhun*) made in 1319/1901–2 by Mishkin Qalam, now held in the Bern Historical Museum, Switzerland (M.B. 288, no. 39b). For further information about Mishkin Qalam, see Francesco Stermotich-Cappellari, 'The Calligraphic Art of Mishkin Qalam', *Persian Art: Image-Making in Eurasia*, ed. Yuka Kadoi, Edinburgh, 2018, 133–156.
- 2 For a discussion of Qajar fingernail art and calligraphy, see Abu'l-Fazl 'Arabzadah, 'Mu'arrifi-i asari nadir al-vujud va nafis: khatt-i nakhuni', *Payam-i Baharistan* 2/4, 1388/2009, 831–82; Mitra Kahvand, 'Bar-rasi-i nuskaha-yi khatt-i nakhuni mawjud dar kitabkhanaha-yi buzurg-i kishvar', Masters Thesis, Shahid Bihishti University, Tehran, 1394/2015; and Christiane Gruber, 'Matériaux mystiques: L'art religieux et dévotionnel de l'Iran qajar', *L'empire des roses. Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art persan du XIXe siècle*, eds. Gwenaëlle Fellingner and Carol Guillaume, Ghent and Lens, 2018, 77–78. Also Shiva Mahan, 'Fingernail Art (I): Three-Dimensional Calligraphy and Drawing in the 19th Century', *Digital Orientalist*, 11 December 2020, <https://digitalorientalist.com/2020/12/11/fingernail-art-three-dimensional-calligraphy-and-drawing-in-19th-century/>
- 3 This fingernail composition is based on earlier drawings, including some by Muhammad Baqir and Mu'ir Musavvir. See Maryam Ekhtiar, Sheila Canby, Navina Haidar, and Priscilla Soucek, eds., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York City, 2011, 275–76, cat. no. 192; Marie Swietochowski and Sussan Babaie, *Persian Drawings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York City, 1989, 48–49, cat. no. 19; and Filiz Çakır Phillip, *Enchanted Lines: Drawings from the Aga Khan Museum*, Toronto, 2014, 70–72, cat. no. 15.
- 4 A. Shapur Shahbazi, 'Persepolis', *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 2012, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/persepolis>; and Ernst Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, Oxford, 1941, 251–52.
- 5 For a further discussion of the influence of Persepolis on Islamic art, see Priscilla Soucek, 'The Influence of Persepolis on Islamic Art', *Études arabes et islamiques, histoire et civilisation* 4, Paris, 1975, 195–200.
- 6 For a further discussion of the *takht-i marmar*, see Layla Diba, 'Images of Power and the Power of Images: Intention and Response in Early Qajar Painting (1785–1834)', *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch, 1785–1925*, eds. Layla Diba and Maryam Ekhtiar, London, 1999, 38; Jennifer Scarce, 'The Architecture and Decoration of the Golestan Palace: The Aims and Achievements of Fath 'Ali Shah (1797–1834) and Nasir al-Din Shah (1848–1896)', *Iranian Studies* 34/1–4, 2001, 109–10; and Priscilla Soucek, 'Solomon's Throne/Solomon's Bath: Model or Metaphor?', *Ars Orientalis* 23, 1993, 119–21.
- 7 On Saba's verses on the *takht-i marmar*, see Soucek, 'Solomon's Throne/Solomon's Bath', 120.
- 8 Other Persian names for Persepolis include *Chihil Sutun* (Forty Columns), *Sad Sutun* (One Hundred Columns), and *Masjid-i Sulayman* (Solomon's Mosque); Judith Lerner, 'A Case of Synchronicity: Photography and Qajar Iran's Discovery of its Ancient Past', *The Eye of the Shah: Qajar Court Photography and the Persian Past*, ed. Jennifer Chi, New York City, 2016, 162.
- 9 See Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, album nos. 1568, 1569, and 1570.
- 10 Badri Atabay, *Fihrist-i muraqqa'at-i Kitabkhanah-i Saltanati*, Tehran, 1353/1974, 163–64, cat. no. 80.
- 11 Atabay, *Fihrist-i muraqqa'at*, 163–4, cat. no. 80.
- 12 On Qajar *gul-u bulbul* images, see Gwenaëlle Fellingner, 'La rose et l'oiseau: du thème littéraire à la description clinique', *L'Empire des roses: Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art persan du XIXe siècle*, eds. Gwenaëlle Fellingner and Carol Guillaume, Ghent and Lens, 2018, 210–16.
- 13 On the Dar al-Funun, see Maryam Ekhtiar, 'The Dar al-Funun: Educational Reform and Cultural Development in Iran', Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1994; and 'Nasir al-Din Shah and the Dar al-Funun: The Evolution of an Institution', *Iranian Studies* 34/1–4, 2001, 153–63.
- 14 On these vestments popular in Iran during the nineteenth century, see Jennifer Scarce, 'Vesture and Dress: Fashion, Function, and Impact', *Woven from the Soul, Spun from the Heart: Textile Arts of Safavid and Qajar Iran, 16th-19th Centuries*, ed. Carol Bier, Washington D.C., 1987, 47 and 50.
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- 16 David Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection*, New Haven, 2013; and 'The Aesthetics of Aggregation: Persian Anthologies of the Fifteenth Century', *Seeing Things: Textuality and Visuality in the Islamic World*, ed. Andras Hamori, Princeton, 2001, 119–42.
- 17 The language may be Tajik or Azeri, and the letters may spell 'Khodz-i-oli' (son of a notable). I wish to thank Ulrich Marzolph for his suggested reading of this inscription.
- 18 Scarce, 'Vesture and Dress'.
- 19 Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic Manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, New York City, 1992, 144–45, cat. no. II. 27 (Pers. Ms. 27, page 8).
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- 25 Atabay, *Fihrist-i muraqqa'at*, 173, cat. no. 85.
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- 27 On Qajar paintings of Fath 'Ali Shah's sons as heirs apparent, see Layla Diba, 'From the Miniature to the Monumental: The Negarestan Museum Painting of the Sons of Fath Ali Shah', *Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online*, 28 October 2020, 2020, <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/khamseen/short-form-videos/2020/from-the-miniature-to-the-monumental-the-negarestan-museum-painting-of-the-sons-of-fath-ali-shah/>
- 28 For a fingernail depiction of Fath 'Ali Shah, see the album of 'Ali Akbar Darvish in the Golestan Palace Library, ms. 1570, page 3; and Atabay, *Fihrist-i muraqqa'at*, 169–70, cat. no. 83.
- 29 Lerner, 'A Case of Synchronicity', 168.
- 30 Lerner, 'A Case of Synchronicity', 167–68; Scarce, 'Ancestral Themes', 240–42; and Roxburgh, 'Technologies of the Image', 14.
- 31 On Sevruguin's oeuvre, see in particular Frederick Bohrer, ed., *Sevruguin and the Persian Image: Photographs of Iran, 1870–1930*, Washington, D.C., 1999.
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