How to tell Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal Manuscripts Apart
The Empires in Question

- Il-Khanate (1218-1356) Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan
- Timurid (1370-1507) Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan
- Bijapur Sultanate of the Deccan (1490-1686) Mid-Southwest India
- Safavid (1501-1722) Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan
- Mughal (1526-1857) Pakistan & India
Timurid Manuscripts

- Many paintings have a pronounced jewel-like quality to them
- Rulers were also great patrons of the arts of the book, commissioning manuscripts that were copied, compiled, and illustrated in their libraries. Due to the flourishing of manuscript illumination and illustration, the Herat school is often regarded as the apogee of Persian painting

- The balance between architectural, landscape, and figural elements in the design is harmoniously controlled, and color is used to set off objects from one another and at the same time unite them within the composition.
- the closely related aesthetics of figural painting and abstract calligraphy, architectural tiling and royal carpet weaving in traditional Islamic civilization, united here in a visual symphony of flat but dramatically colored patterns
- Perspective is often strange when compared to western standards, much more like Medieval Europe
Safavid Manuscripts

• Popular scenes feature idealized pastimes such as hunting, falconry, or poetry reading in garden settings.
• Popular designs included stylized flowers with delicate drawings of deer, rabbits, and birds.
• Faces were extremely influenced by Chinese pottery, figures tend to look more Chinese than Middle Eastern.
• Very stiff when compared to Mughal painting.
• Tend to depict a lot of characters in each scene.
• But also saw a rise in the art of portraiture- of depictions of just one person.
• Beautiful calligraphy and decorated borders.
• Use of many colors and gold.

Demons Saw a prophet out of a tree

A chained Prisoner
Mughal Manuscripts

Mughal manuscripts display the influence of Chinese and Mongol/Timurid texts (cloudlike rocks), European prints (cherubs, photorealistic portraits) Iranian Shanamas, Islamic Calligraphy, local Hindu and Buddhist iconography (the kings were Muslim, most of their subjects were not), and Ottoman culture (Kaftan-like borders). Translucent fabric shows off big thighs due to the Hindu/Buddhist interest in fleshy figures. Mughal kings were revered like sun gods: serene, thoughtful, visible but untouchable, while Safavid kings were both visible and accessible by all subjects. Different rulers disagreed on how much Hindu influence to allow, but they all shared an interest in animals and sumptuous gardens. Mughals revere humility: spiritual over material wealth. Often, illustrations take up a whole page, with few characters per scene.
BONUS: Ilkhanid & Deccani books

- It is really hard to tell Mughal and Deccani manuscripts apart, but Deccani use a lot of pinks and dark greens. The Deccan is in India.
- We won’t use Deccani pictures in the game since they are too hard to tell apart from Mughal ones.
- Ilkhanid manuscripts are the oldest manuscripts in the exhibit, and come from Iran.
- Many Ilkhanid manuscripts depict scenes from the fable Kalila wa Dimna or the Shahnama (Book of Kings).
- Pictures tend to be very narrative and are supplements to text. Often you will see great blocks of text as seen here on the left.
| **Review Chart** |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| **Place** | **Colors, themes, motifs** | **Cultural Influences** | **Perspective** | **Relationship between text and images** |
| **Il-Khanate** 1218-1356 | Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan | Stories of past kings, military exploits | Chinese Art, Mongol Culture, local Persian culture | Everything on a flat plane | Images are supplementary to text |
| **Timurid** 1370-1507 | Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan | Simple borders | Continued Chinese influences | Flat but things are now more open like a dollhouse, almost folded | Images take a bit of a more prominent role, but text still important-development of Nastaliq script |
| **Safavid** 1501-1722 | Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan | Carpet and Ceramic patterns, elaborate borders | Chinese faces, Persian art | Foreground, middleground, background emerge | The art of the book continues to flourish, albums emerge |
| **Mughal** 1526-1857 | India & Pakistan | Cultural synthesis, current kings and portraiture | Local Hindu and Buddhist art, Persian art, the Italian Renaissance, Ottoman Empire | More realistic, naturalistic | More likely to have books of just images, albums become more popular |
Guessing game!

Whichever team gets the most right wins! Most of the answers will be Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal, but there will be one surprise Ilkhanid mixed in there!

In order to get points, you have to come up with at least one clue why you think the page is from a certain genre- you can’t just guess randomly!
Answers

1. Timurid
2. Safavid
3. Mughal
4. Ilkhanid
5. Timurid
6. Safavid
7. Safavid
8. Safavid
9. Mughal
10. Timurid
11. Mughal
12. Mughal
Great job, everybody!
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