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Fantasy and Animal Fables: The Illustration of Persian Literature in English

A thorough study of the illustration of Persian literature in English translation is still to be undertaken. In this brief contribution I shall first outline those categories of Persian literature that are most commonly illustrated in Iran itself, notably the work of the major poets who also came to be appreciated in the West, along with some didactic prose or mixed verse and prose texts. Turning to the illustration of these works in English, we do not find a very strong interest (with one remarkable but contrary exception) beyond a modern tendency to use Persian miniature paintings to illustrate the translation rather than create original designs. Rather than to poetry, English publishers and their artists seem to have been attracted to stories of moral edification and the anecdotes of ‘wisdom literature,’ generally though not exclusively in prose narratives, and in the genre of animal fable.

Persian Arts of the Book

A glance at any of the numerous studies devoted to Persian miniature painting or arts of the book more generally, will reveal an enormous corpus of illustrations, whether presented chronologically or discussed in terms of their main themes and subjects.1

From a chronological perspective, the illustration of Persian texts is a relatively late development in medieval manuscript production, despite the fact that the tradition it represents (the illustration of epics and romances) is undoubtedly an ancient one, as evident from its traces on wall paintings, ceramics and metalwork from an early date. Perhaps due to the destructiveness of the Mongol invasions of the early 13th century (libraries suffered particularly in the great urban centres of Eastern Iran and Transoxania), the earliest surviving illustrated Persian manuscript comes from the Western Iran and the eve of the Mongol period.2 The text is a romantic poem set in Arabia in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, called Varqa and Gulshah after its two main protagonists, a pair of star-crossed lovers who are united only after their deaths.

The manuscript and its illustration stand at the head of a long tradition of miniature painting, which developed rapidly once the invading Mongols converted to Islam and began to show an interest in patronage and creating a climate in which Persian literary production and manuscript painting could flourish. It was not until the very late introduction of printing that manuscripts gave way to printed books, first in the form of lithography in the second half of the 19th century. The tradition of illustrating certain texts survived this transition and remains a vital element of book production in the modern era.3

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1 Of more modern works, Hillenbrand (1977) and Sims (2002) take a thematic approach; useful historical surveys are provided by e.g. Gray (1961), Titley (1983), and Canby (1993).
2 The manuscript (H. 674 in the Topkapi Palace Library, Istanbul), is undated and its origin is uncertain (Melikian-Chirvani 1970). Titley dates it to Baghdad, c. 1225 (1983, 15).
Before looking further at these certain texts, let us consider briefly the thematic approach to Persian painting, which, it must be reiterated, was developed in the context of illustrating books and until the 16th century almost exclusively so. During the 16th century, and increasingly thereafter, partly no doubt following exposure to European art, court painters also began to create single page free-standing pictures designed to be kept in albums or admired separately, rather than works tied to any particular literary text.¹

Persian painters and illustrators focused on several themes, generally the life of the court and the activities of the ruling elites, both military and civilian, encapsulated in the Persian phrase bazm-o razm ('feasting and fighting') (Grabar 2000, 84-121). Among these, specifically, are scenes of a ruler or prince enthroned and surrounded by the entourage of courtiers, musicians and servants, often in an outdoor setting, under a tent or in a kiosk that opens out onto a garden landscape. Fighting being a major activity of the rulers, who were almost invariably from a Central Asian steppe background, scenes of warfare also loom large in the corpus of miniature paintings throughout the period – together with scenes of the hunt and sports such as polo, pursuits that catered for leisure enjoyment but more importantly for maintaining the skills of horsemanship and discipline so necessary for military campaigns. Romantic encounters and love stories, usually represented by pairs of lovers sitting together, or seeing each other from afar, constitute a large repertoire of images, the 'love' sometimes sublimated into idealised forms reflecting the spiritual and mystical dimensions taken on by much Persian literature that is not overtly 'religious' in content.²

Many of the paintings created to illustrate these perennial subjects of warfare, feasting, hunting and romance are generic in the iconographic solutions and the models adopted, and rather rarely contain individualistic elements that link the picture literally to the text, or a particular character – without which, the illustration could be 'read' in only a most general sense. In addition to these courtly and romantic themes, there is a strong tendency also to illustrate works with a didactic purpose; given the ethical thrust of much classical Persian literature, the idealised visual world on display could be considered to run in parallel with the written text, showing ideal monarchs, ideal lovers and spiritual leaders. Occasionally, however, individual stories and anecdotes attract attention and require more precise treatment.

What then were these texts?³ First, works of history – prose and verse chronicles, from the 14th century onwards, starting with the universal history of Rashid al-Din (d.1318) (Gray 1978; Blair 1995), and including the highly literary account of the conquests of Tamerlane, by 'Ali Yazdi (d. 1454). Otherwise, historical texts are relatively sparsely illustrated, their focus on the deeds of kings and heroes mainly being catered for by the heroic epic, the Shahnama or 'Book of Kings' by Firdausi (d. 1025), which retells the legends and pre-Islamic history of Iran and is the most persistently illustrated of all Persian works.⁴ Among romantic epics the outstanding texts are the Khamsa ('Quintet') by Nizami of Ganja (d. c. 1208) and his emulators, Amir Khusrau of Delhi (d. 1325), and 'Abd al-Rahman Jami of Herat (d. 1492); the most popular

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¹ Canby (1993, esp. 92-101), Adamova (2008, 64-71). Most albums, nevertheless, contained many calligraphic exercises, so that the textual element was never far from the design.

² Recently, Scollay (2012, esp. 15).

³ See the useful survey by Meisami (2009).

⁴ Melville (2011); for the Shahnama, see the Cambridge Shahnama Project website at http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/.
religious narrative poetry (masnavi) is by Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. c. 1220), especially his Mantiq al-Tair ('Logic of the Birds') and the Masnavi-yi Ma'navi ('Spiritual narratives') of Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273). The collected work of poetry (divans), notably the lyrics (ghazals) by Hafiz of Shiraz (d. 1389) are also frequently illustrated, as are anthologies, biographies (tazkiras) and wisdom literature or Mirrors for Princes that instruct through story-telling. The Galliston ('Rose Garden') and Bustan ('Fragrant Meadow') by Sa'di of Shiraz (d. 1292) are the outstanding examples of these. The best known and most frequently illustrated work of didactic prose literature is the Kalila va Dimna ('Fables of Bidpai'), of Indian origin, translated into Arabic and thence into Persian, the latter providing the source for the Anvar-i Suhaili ('Lights of Canopus') of Husain Kashifi (d. 1504) (Cowen 1989; Grabar 2000, 96-99; O'Kane 2003).

This list is of course far from comprehensive, but we may concur with Robert Hillenbrand's observation "that the majority of Persian paintings illustrate poetic texts" (1977, 85); manuscripts of the works of Firdausi, Nizami, Sa'di, Hafiz and Jami, chief deities in the pantheon of Persian poets, are persistently adorned with illustrations, especially in narrative passages or in ghazals by Hafiz that allude to well-known stories with their own independent tradition of visual depiction, such as 'Yusuf and Zulaikha.'

Persian Literature in Translation

I have spent some time introducing the indigenous Persian tradition of manuscript illustration partly to identify some of its subject matter and the works most prolifically adorned with pictures, and partly to set the scene for considering how Persian literature was received and illustrated in Europe and especially in Britain. Most of the authors and works mentioned above became familiar to an English audience through service in India from the late 18th century onwards, when the first efforts were made to introduce the study of the Persian language for officials first of the East India Company and then the Government of India. Part of this language acquisition came from the study and translation of Persian texts, among which several of those already mentioned quickly established themselves as the key classics of Persian literature.

This selection of texts for translation has since remained quite consistent, but rather few of them have been illustrated. Numerous English translations of Firdausi, for instance, have been produced since the early 19th century (Wickens 1988), but never to my knowledge illustrated until modern times and then, interestingly, the illustrations chosen are from the corpus of Persian paintings, notably the magnificent 16th-century Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp, or lithographs created in the 19th century to illustrate the first printed texts published in Iran. English translations published in

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8 This is no surprise as "many princes were keen connoisseurs of poetry" (Hillenbrand 1977, 85).
9 I am grateful to Firuza Abdullaeva for this comment.
11 For this ms. and its use, see Firdausi (1997-2004; 2007). For the lithographs, see Marzolph/Mohammadi (2005). For a modern use of computer-generated composite images from both miniature paintings and lithographs, see Rahmanian (2013). Horne (1917), frontispiece and 330, uses miniatures from an unidentified Indian manuscript of Firdausi; the bizarre scene of Rustam challenging the White Div (p. 318), however, is a modern ink and wash drawing, the artist of which is not mentioned. His version is based on the translation of Atkinson (1832). Another work that makes some limited use of original miniatures is Thackston and Ziai's translation of 'Arifi's "Ball and Polo Stick" (1999).
Iran more naturally adopt the same principle, although others choose instead to adopt a western style of illustration that is more ‘realistic’ in staying close to the details of the text (figure 1).

There are, however, exceptions, notably in prose ‘retellings’ of the stories of the Shahnama, rather than translations, with pictures embedded in the text and offering a literal depiction of the narrative; a number of these are aimed at children (Laird 2012). Nevertheless, English translations from Hafiz and Sa’di remain produced and reproduced without original or new illustration. In other cases, when pictures are included, they are often taken from a variety of Persian texts, thus creating a flavour or ‘atmosphere’ of Persian culture in general. Peter Avery’s translation of Omar Khayyam includes numerous illustrations from a number of Persian manuscripts of works such as Nizami’s Makhzan al-Asrar (‘Treasury of Secrets’) or Khusrau and Shirin, the Diwan of Hafiz and the Qisas al-Anbiya (‘Stories of the Prophets’), as well as single figures from album paintings by the famous 17th-century painter, Riza ‘Abbasi.

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12 E.g. the Iranian reprint of Reuven Levy’s translation (2001); the original edition (1967) was not illustrated. E.H. Whinfield’s translation of the Masnavi-yi Ma’navi, published in the same series (2005), was also illustrated, apparently by modern pastiches of manuscript miniatures: the “explanation of the pictures” by Karim Emami, promised on the Persian title page, is not provided in the introduction.


14 See the striking line drawings in Picard (1972).

15 In Iran, there is a whole raft of illustrated publications for children and in USA too, such as the hyperwerks.com comics, “Rostam. Tales from the Shahnameh,” largely produced by and for the Iranian diaspora community, a topic too large to explore here.

16 Omar Khayyam, trans. Avery and Heath-Stubbs, list of illustrations, (1979, 126-27), the selection justified by B.W. Robinson in Appendix 3 (Omar Khayyam 1979, 122-126). The same solution is also applied in Purandocht Piraye’s translation of Khayyam (2004), but without details of the pictures.
The inevitable mention of Omar Khayyam, which cannot be longer delayed, introduces the exception to the engagement with Persian literature on the part of Western and especially British illustrators. However, it would be more accurate to state that they are illustrating the poetry of Edward FitzGerald, whose inspired rendering of the Persian verses credited to Khayyam started the most spectacular publishing phenomenon.\footnote{This aspect of English poetic culture of the fin de siècle period is inseparably linked with Orientalist tradition both in poetry and its illustration. As for Khayyam himself, however, the scholarly consensus is hardening around the position that he wrote no Persian quatrains at all, though if he did – and it can be supposed that any man of culture at that time would be expected to compose verse – they were few and cannot now be identified with any certainty. In other words, the greatest involvement of British illustrators is with a ‘Persian poet’ who very possibly did not write poetry in Persian and furthermore whose quatrains are basically not illustrated in the voluminous Persian manuscript tradition. Most of the handful of pictures associated with Khayyam manuscripts are attributed to the great master from Herat, Behzad (d. 1535), almost as legendary a figure as Khayyam himself, and in many cases the attribution is equally apocryphal.}

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There is no need to plunge into the tide of issues engulfing the illustration of Omar Khayyam, but a couple of observations are in order. First, just as perhaps no more than a handful of quatrains were written by him, so too a great number of illustrations bear very little relation to the word or the spirit of the texts. It is noticeable, indeed, that very few illustrators actually have the words of a quatrain embedded in their pictures: one of the few examples is the work of Elihu Vedder, in the first published illustrated edition (FitzGerald 1884). Although there is often a general identification of the picture with a particular quatrain, in many cases the relationship is uncertain (Martin and Mason 2007, 16-17; 163-164). Specifically, also, there is almost nothing in either the Persian *Rubaiyat* or FitzGerald’s translation that could be considered to refer to romantic love, let alone the erotic, but a striking number of artists illustrate the quatrains with pictures of skimpily clad or naked girls, the latter depicted either as Muse, or wine-bearer or presumably the hedonistic aspect of ‘eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die,’ the philosophy attributed to Khayyam. Particularly prominent in such interpretations is the work of J. Yunge Bateman, whose set of seven illustrations from 1958 contains only erotic compositions (figure 2) (FitzGerald 1958). This tendency is even more marked in the numerous Russian illustrations of Khayyam, especially the work of Pavel Bunin, over half of whose drawings are extremely sensual and heightened by phallic minarets, or suggestive spouts of drinking vessels, at every turn.

Secondly, it is interesting to observe how the Western tradition of illustration fed back into the work of Iranian artists, such as Katchadourian, Hossein Behzad Miniatur and Tajvidi, who remain generally faithful to the style and motifs of Persian miniature painting but reduce it more or less to sentimental kitsch, or Indian artists such as Sett and Tagore, who are fully Europeanised; while European artists for their part attempted ‘orientalist’ interpretations that drew heavily on eastern imagery. Illustrating the poetry of ‘Khayyam,’ therefore, spawned a truly remarkable fusion of East and West, and a transcultural exchange of ideas, philosophies and images sustained largely by fantasy, whether on the basis of an imagined Persian astronomer-poet or the febrile orientalism of 19th-century Europe.

Leaving Khayyam aside, therefore, and finding few other cases of a sustained tradition of illustrating Persian poetry, I would like to concentrate on the more overtly didactic literature – of which, in a sense, ‘Khayyam’ was a part – and turn to examine the illustration of two very different texts, one poetic and one in prose, namely ‘Ubaid-i Zakani’s "Mouse and Cat" (*Mush-o Gorbeh*) and the *Kalila and Dimna* stories and their main Persian offshoot, Kashifi’s ‘Lights of Canopus.’ Both these are animal fables, a popular genre aimed at instruction through parables.

**Edifying Tales not Least for Children**

*Mush-o Gorbeh* of ‘Ubaid-i Zakani (d. 1371) is a satirical work about the tyranny, hypocrisy and deceit of the ruler, the cat, against his subjects, the mice, who finally rise up against the king only to fail to finish him off once they have captured him, through their fear and awe of the cat’s majesty. It is essentially a political parable of the horrors of 14th-century Iran in the Mongol period, although it has been proposed

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22 Omar Khayyam (2000); see the discussion in Abdullaeva et al. (2012, 177-178).
23 See e.g. Martin and Mason (2007, 23-27).
that it was written in the 16th century in the milieu of a group opposed to the rule of the Safavid Shahs. The pusillanimous subjects are not exempt from Zakani’s scorn. In terms of its message, it could refer to almost any period of Persian history, which no doubt explains its long-enjoyed popularity.

An academic English translation has recently been published by the Swedish scholar, Bo Utas, in an edition that also provides the Persian text of a manuscript of *Mush-o Gorbeh* dated 1740, discovered in Tunis (Ubaid-i Zakani 2011). The manuscript is illustrated and this provides an opportunity to compare the visualisation of the poem in the 18th-century Persian style, already Europeanised, with the illustrations by Jim Williams of an English version of the work. This is a translation by the poet and Persian scholar, Omar Pound, under the witty punning title, *Gorby and the Rats*, which does for Ubaid-i Zakani what FitzGerald does for Omar Khayyam. Incidentally, Pound’s given name reveals his poetical lineage as heir of Ezra Pound, who presumably named him in homage to Khayyam. It is not the purpose of this paper to compare the English translations of the poem, but the difference between the rather literal translation and the free poetic rendering by Pound is as striking as the difference in the illustrations to the Persian and the English texts.

We focus briefly on two key elements of the story – the first, when the King Cat (Gorby) hypocritically prays in the mosque to atone for his cruel act of devouring a rebellious rat (or mouse), given courage by drink to oppose the cat (figures 3a and 3b) and secondly, near the denouement, when the leader of the rats is about to kill the cat (figures 4a and 4b).

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24 Ubaid-i Zakani (2011, 7; 20), Persian text.
25 Omar Pound (d. 2010); his middle name, Shakespear, does not refer to the English poet, but to Omar’s mother, the artist Dorothy Shakespear.
26 It is only fair to mention that Utas’s Swedish translation in the same volume is doubtless more poetical.
In short, cat ate rat, then
conforming to the ritual laws
washed his whiskers, face and claws,
and with all humility
went to the mosque and prayed:

Creator of the Universe,
this cat repents with contrite heart
the Muslim blood he used to shed
in rats he tore apart.
Be Clement, be Merciful,
I’ll wrong them no more
and here renounce all raining
and promise alms to the poor.

(Pound 1989, 23; original emphasis)

One of the rats chanced to overhear this, and taking the repentance to be genuine
rushed off to tell the rest – leading to a loyal delegation to Gorby, who devoured them
all. This provoked a war, in which Gorby was captured. Williams's fine drawing
shows Gorby bowed in prayer on his carpet, but with an expression anything but pious
and seemingly aware of the presence of the watching rat. The wicked image of Cat
perfectly matches the sarcastic tone of the text, with its false respect for the "ritual
laws" of Islam.

The Persian illustration (figure 3b) shows Cat upright in a mosque, holding a rosary
of prayer beads. The title, in red ink in the margin, reads: "Gorbeh becomes an ascetic
and goes to the mosque and the mouse in hiding behind the minbar (pulpit)."
The placement of the picture is within the text block, as is normal in Persian manu-
script painting, and comes after the verses:

He let his repentance be heard in the mosque.
"O You most magnanimous and holy, be praised!
All I want is asking forgiveness and grace,
O merciful, sovereign and all-mighty Lord." ('Ubaid-i Zakani 2011, 13).

Cat does have a mildly pious expression on his face and the artist has attempted to
portray the scene quite literally, enhancing the reading of the text by the emphasis on
repentance (taubeh: translated as 'grace' above) and the detail of the rosary, referred to
a few lines later in the poem:

From his hands he wouldn't let go of his beads;
like a mullah he prayed and prayed to his God.

but there is little sense of the verse that soon follows the picture (not 'translated' by
Pound):

Thus opened he the door of cheat and deceit,
So much so that he himself started to weep.

A similar contrast between works and milieus two centuries apart can be seen in the
illustration of the moment when King Cat is about to be killed by the king of the mice. The
Persian painting (figure 4a) brings several moments together in one scene, like a cartoon – the king of the mice on his elephant, King Cat bound at the foot of the gal-
lows, the hangman with a sword being instructed to get on and hang Cat or strike him with his sword: all details found in the text. At some point one might also take the hangman to be the king of the mice, for when none found the courage to drag Cat to the gallows, the king of the mice in exasperation drew his sword to kill Cat himself. Overall, it is a charming picture, but devoid of real drama or anticipation.

On the other hand, Williams's illustration (figure 4b) of the moment when the king of the rats places his sword on Gorby's chest, is pregnant with tension: the rat proudly triumphant, raising his fist in victory over Cat, who is on the gallows, looking heavenwards but still a powerful figure, and the rats anxiously watching, reflecting the masterful verses on the facing page:

And there in the market-place tied to the gallows
Stood Gorby, miaowing and caterwauling sorrows
[...]
Some edged back by nudging others on.
Their chatter soon became a murmur,
till all had swallowed silence and were dumb.
Not a rat stirred.
Not a rat in all the rout
dared step up and hang the cat,
not to win all Persia.
[...]
And stepping forward single-pawed
he raised his sword
to cut the cat in two.
(Pound 1989, 53)

On seeing this, Gorby suddenly became enraged and burst his bonds, killing all the rats around. We might note an almost exactly contemporary parallel to this political
allegory in early English literature, the wonderfully dramatic story in Langland's *Piers Plowman*. The mice and rats vote to tie a bell to the kitten's collar, but in the event none of them dares to do the actual attaching. The cat is Edward III, the kitten is the heir apparent, Richard (later Richard II).

This is not the place for many comments that could be offered about Pound's 'translation,' what is omitted and what is transformed, but certainly his final acknowledgment "to Jim Williams, the illustrator, who could 'see' the poem so clearly" (Pound 1989, 58) shows the harmony between poet and artist in the modern realisation of this perennially popular story. It is, perhaps, a fitting element of irony if indeed *Mush-o Gorbeh* is not the work of the scurrilous 'Ubaid-i Zakani, but falsely attributed to him by a later author, as in the case of Omar Khayyam.

The personification of the animal kingdom and its use to mirror human society is nowhere more evident than in the celebrated stories of *Kalila and Dimna*, which have been traced back at least as far as early 4th-century India and the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*. The journey from India into the Muslim world via translations into and from Pahlavi, Arabic and Persian is well documented, as well as the later inspiration in Europe for some of the tales of La Fontaine (d. 1695), combining stories from the classical tradition of Aesop with the eastern Bidpai, which was first translated from Persian into French in 1644 by Gilbert Gaulmin (d. 1665), under the pseudonym of David Sahid of Isfahan. This in turn was the origin of English awareness of the Fables of Bidpai (or Pilpay), although the earliest English version was published by Sir Thomas North in Cambridge, with the subtitle "The morall philosophie of Doni" in 1570. This was translated from the Arabic version, via Hebrew, Latin and Italian, and illustrated also with woodcuts "imitated from the Italian." Some of these were retained in the reprinted edition by Joseph Jacobs (1888, ix), who emphasises the fact that the pictures were intended to be read very much as part of the text, and reproduced along with it. He also gives a lengthy and informative introduction to the text and its history, including a useful family tree, which shows the derivation of North's translation.

Confining our interests here to the English translations via Persian, either directly or indirectly, we should note that their source in the 1644 French translation noted above – which had a new edition in 1698 – was the retelling of the stories of *Kalila and Dimna* in Husain Kashifi's *Anvar-i Suhaili* ('Lights of Canopus'), rather than the *Kalila and Dimna* itself.

The earliest English illustrated version of which I am aware was published in 1747, with the title *The Instructive and Entertaining Fables of Pilpay [...] Containing a Number of Excellent Rules for the Conduct of Persons of all Ages and in all Stations: Under several Heads [...] and Adorned with near Seventy Cuts recently Engraved*. This refers to the Persian translation by Nasr Allah as being greatly superior to all others and the "very edition now used [...] and from this [...] the translation was originally made." By the original translation must be intended the French, rather than Kashifi's elaboration of the Persian text, but the complex publication history of these works needs fuller investigation than can be accomplished here. It is clear at least that by the late 18th century there were several English editions of the text of the *Anvar-i*

27 Langland (1924), vol. 1, Prologue lines 146-210, and the historical note on this passage in vol. 2, 17. Thanks to Colin Wilcockson for this touch. Langland d. c. 1386.
28 North (1570), new edition by Jacobs (1888), insert at p. lxxx; see also de Blois (1990, 11).
29 Kashifi (1747, iv); for the 12th-century Persian translation by Nasr Allah Munshi, see O'Kane (2003, 26-27).
Suhaili and this being so, it was one of the very few Persian works available to support the study of Persian by the English in India. Sir William Jones, in his seminal *A Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771), mentioned the *Anvar-i Suhaili* as second only to Sa'di’s *Gulistan* for recommended reading and he offered a passage from the text for language practice.\(^30\) Authors of subsequent Persian grammars followed suit, such as the Rev. Edward Moises (1792), and as late as 1877, H. Wilberforce Clarke was lamenting the impediment to the study of Persian for want of translations, only the *Gulistan*, *Anvar-i Suhaili* and *Shahnama* being available, and regularly used as set texts for the Indian Civil Service examinations (Clarke 1878, xi).\(^{31}\)

\(^{30}\) Jones (1771; second ed. 1775, xv-xvi, 105-113: “The Gardener and the Nightingale”).
\(^{31}\) See also van Ruymbeke (2003, 574).
tions. The earlier work's "Seventy Cuts" are distributed in groups of three on one page opposite the text, with the page number identified to which they refer. The pictures themselves provide elements of the story, or rather the characters, with sufficient detail to visualise the scene, in a classic English landscape without any hint of oriental or Persian features.

![Fable XXIII. The Frog, the Cray-fish, and the Serpent.](image)

Figure 6

The same could be said of the 1886 edition, in which the images are presented as a sort of cartouche at the heading of each story, thus more directly associated with the text to which they refer, but providing a snapshot of the opening scene rather than any narrative action. Thus, for the story of "The Frog, the Cray-fish and the Serpent" (cf. Eastwick trans., 174 in Kashifi 1877), the Frog and the Cray-fish are depicted talking, but there is no sign of the serpent and it is not at all obvious what the story is about. Neither picture can therefore be said truly to illustrate the story. In the Persian corpus, this story is rather seldom illustrated in manuscripts of *Kalila and Dimna*, but they generally depict various parts of the narrative, showing the weasel eating the trail of fish to the snake's lair, or the weasel devouring the frog as well. It is noticeable, however, that Arabic manuscripts take the same approach as the English works, merely depicting the characters 'talking' at the outset of the story (O'Kane 2003, 130-131; 282, and pls. 41-42).

Conclusions

This brief survey of the illustration of Persian texts in English translation has focused on a penchant for stories with a moral message, or wisdom literature, of which those expressed as animal fables have proved the most popular. With the exception of Edward FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, which in both text and illustration bear only a slight resemblance to the Persian original (whether composed by Khayyam or not), Persian poetry has not been the subject of much illustration beyond the use of Persian miniature paintings, although it can be asserted that translations into poetry are also rather rare. The text most often translated and illustrated, Firdausi's *Shahnama*, is generally worked into prose and its stories retold, for a variety of
audiences. In recent times, this has been especially to reach children of the Iranian diaspora and familiarise them with their cultural heritage, but also serving usefully to reintroduce it to Western audiences, now far less acquainted with Persian classical literature than was the case with their 19th-century forebears.

Acknowledgments

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Illustrations

Figure 1: "Bizhan in the Pit." Reproduced from Firdausi, Shahnama (1965), 49-50.
Figure 2: "A Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough." Reproduced from FitzGerald, Rubaiyat, illustrated by Bateman (1958), 17. Copyright holder not traced.
Figure 3b: "The Cat in the Mosque." Reproduced with permission from 'Ubaid-i Zakani, Mush-o Gorbeh (2011), Tunis ms. f. 3r.
Figure 4a: "The Cat at the Gallows." Reproduced with permission from 'Ubaid-i Zakani, Mush-o Gorbeh (2011), Tunis ms. f. 9v.
Figure 5: "The Frog, the Cray-fish and the Serpent." Reproduced from Kashifi, Anvari Suhaili (1747), opp. 111. Reproduced with kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, from SSS.31.21.
Figure 6: "The Frog, the Craw-fish and the Serpent." Reproduced from Kashifi, Anvari Suhaili (1886), 134. Reproduced with kind permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, from 1886.7.1262.

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