

ASCENDING TO HEAVEN  
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY ILLUSTRATIONS  
OF THE PROPHET'S *MĪRĀĠ*

Sheila S. Blair

*Boston College*

Scenes illustrating the *mīrāġ*, the Prophet's ascension to heaven, are some of the most glorious in Persian painting. Single scenes illustrating the subject are found in various types of literature, ranging from such Persian classics as Nizāmī's *Hamsa* to popular devotional works about the Prophet's life such as the *Qišaṣ al-anbiyā'* (Tales of the Prophet) and biographies of his life such as the *Siyar an-nabī*. In all these cases, the ascension is merely one of many illustrations, but in addition there were at least two illustrated manuscripts devoted entirely to the subject of the Prophet's ascension. Called *Mīrāġnāma* or Book of Ascension, these works have multiple paintings illustrating several incidents of the journey. The more famous of the two manuscripts, transcribed in Uighur script, was made in the Tīmūrid period<sup>1</sup>. The other illustrated manuscript was made a century earlier under the Īlhānids, Mongol rulers of Iran from 1256 to 1353. This essay surveys the illustrations from the Īlhānid copy and shows how the topic of the Prophet's ascension to Heaven developed in the fourteenth century from a single incident in the Prophet's life to an independent hagiography with multiple, large illustrations that served as models for the next several centuries.

Individual scenes depicting the Prophet enthroned are already included in some of the first illustrated manuscripts known from the Īlhānid period, and the story of the Prophet's life was incorporated into several illustrated histories<sup>2</sup>. The earliest was the *Ġāmi' at-tawārīḥ*, the world history made for the Īlhānid vizier Rašīd ad-Dīn. This magnum opus was divided into several volumes: the first covered the history of the Mongols, the second treated the non-Mongol peoples of Eurasia, and the third was a geographical treatise that has not survived<sup>3</sup>. The Prophet's life was part of the second part of the second volume. The text survives in one of the earliest manuscripts of the world history, an Arabic copy made under the auspices of the vizier himself in 714/1314-15 and now divided between Edinburgh University Library and

---

<sup>1</sup> The manuscript was published by Marie-Rose Séguy (1977).

<sup>2</sup> See Soucek 1988.

<sup>3</sup> See Rašīd ad-Dīn, *Ġāmi'* vii-ix for a convenient overview of the organization of this complex work.

the Khalili collection in London<sup>4</sup>. The story of the Prophet's life originally comprised some 30 folios, with 15 illustrations. The section on the Prophet's ascension occupies just over two pages, including one illustration (fig. 1). It is the earliest known illustration of the subject to survive.

Like many illustrations in this section of the manuscript, the painting is a narrow strip (11 x 25 cms), which occupies the top third of the large page, the equivalent of 12 of the 35 lines of the text block that measures 37 by 25 cms. The paragraph of text on the page before the illustration summarizes the story of the Prophet's ascension. It ends by mentioning the angel who asks the Prophet to choose among three gold cups containing milk, water, and wine. The copyist, perhaps with the concordance of the author and patron who supervised transcription of this manuscript, clearly wanted this particular incident to be illustrated, for when transcribing the preceding text, he narrowed the number of words per line, tapering the text into a V-shape that ends with the very words describing the three cups. The painting then falls at the top of the facing page, with the line of text just below the painting describing how the Prophet eschews the last two choices, opting for milk.

The painter's simple composition adheres literally to the text. On the right an angel stands on a rainbow while emerging through a pair of doors representing the gates of Paradise. In the centre a second angel offers a gold bowl, evidently the one filled with milk. To the left is the Prophet, astride his miraculous steed *Burāq*. While the tripartite composition is relatively standard, the iconography is not. *Burāq* is here depicted with a spotted body, human arms, a human (and crowned) head holding a book, presumably the *Qur'an*, and a human-headed tail holding a shield and sword. The angels, who resemble those in another scene depicting the Birth of *Muḥammad* (Edinburgh 29), wear strapless gowns that drape from a tied bodice and sprout wings that, unusually, grow along the whole length of their arms.

The unusual iconography suggests that the painter borrowed these figures, without complete understanding, from other painterly traditions, both eastern and western. The unusual gowns, for example, may be derived from *Bodhisattvas* and other figures in the Buddhist tradition, though the immediate source of the imagery is not known. Contemporary Christian manuscripts offer another rich source of imagery, and many other compositions in *Raṣīd ad-Dīn's* world history that illustrate *Muḥammad's* life were adapted from Christian iconography. Sir Thomas Arnold showed that the depiction of *Muḥammad's* birth was adapted from a Nativity, with the three magi transposed into three waiting women and Joseph transformed in the Prophet's uncle 'Abd al-Muttalib (Arnold 1928:99 and pl. XXIII).

---

<sup>4</sup> See Blair (1995) for a reconstruction of the original manuscript. The Edinburgh section has also been published by David Talbot Rice (1976), and the illustrations from the Khalili portion, once in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society, have been published by Gray (1978).

Priscilla Soucek went one step further, showing how both the composition and iconography of two other scenes from the Prophet's life – his encounter with the monk Bahira (Edinburgh 30) and his conquest of the Banū n-Naḍīr (Khalili Collection) – were adapted from two scenes – The Baptism of Christ and the Entry into Jerusalem – in a manuscript of the Gospels made in 1294 and now in the Matenadaran Library in Erevan. Copied by Yakob and illustrated by Khach'er at the Argelan Monastery in Berkri for a couple, Khelok and Pokhan, and their two sons Prosh and T'uma, this manuscript is the earliest of a group produced in the Vaspurakan region of Greater Armenia (Soucek 1998). Unusual features of Burāq and the angels may also have been borrowed from Armenian Christian manuscripts locally available in Tabrīz in the early fourteenth century, as religious difference was clearly no bar to iconographic pilfering. The unusual, and probably borrowed, iconography suggests furthermore that the ascension of Muḥammad in the 714/1314-15 copy of Rašīd ad-Dīn's *Gāmi' at-tawārīḥ* is not only the first version of the scene to survive, but one of the earliest made.

By the next generation, Īlḥānid painters were called upon to illustrate many scenes of the Prophet's ascension within a whole manuscript devoted to the subject. Unfortunately this manuscript has been dismembered and the text lost, but some of the illustrations were mounted in an album (Istanbul, Topkapi Library H2154) that was put together in 951/1544 by the Ṣafawid chronicler and librarian Dust Muḥammad for Bahrām Mīrzā, brother of the Ṣafawid šāh Tahmasp. Dust Muḥammad included eleven illustrations (or parts of them), pasted on eight of the 149 folios in the album (31b, 42a-b, 61a-b, 62a, 107a, and 121a)<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the full-page paintings, three pages contain scenes pasted together. For example, the upper parts of folios 61a and 121a depict scenes of Muḥammad ascending on the back of an angel, while the bottom parts can be reassembled to illustrate the scene of the Muḥammad at the tree of paradise. Likewise the top part of folio 121a can be joined to a strip of waves taken from another folio, 62a, and reversed. Clearly Dust Muḥammad was not above cutting up images to make them fill the pages of his album.

In four cases (fols. 31b, 42a, 61b, and 121a) Dust Muḥammad added labels to the illustrations, identifying them as the work of Aḥmad-i Mūsā. The Ṣafawid chronicler told us more about this artist in the preface written to accompany the illustrations in the album<sup>6</sup>. Although some authors have viewed this historical preface as apocry-

<sup>5</sup> Ettinghausen (1957) identified the eleven scenes: fol. 31b: Muḥammad and Gabriel before a big angel; fol. 42a: Gabriel carrying Muḥammad; fol. 42b: Flight over the mountains; fol. 61a (top): Muḥammad at the Gates of Paradise and (bottom): Tree of Paradise; fol. 61b: cock; fol. 62a (top) waves and (bottom): bows offered to Muḥammad; fol. 107a: Conquest of a city; fol. 121a (top): Flight over waves and (bottom): Tree of Paradise.

<sup>6</sup> Edited and translated by Thackston 2001:12-13.

phal, close scrutiny of the albums shows that preface and illustrations form a unified whole, like a collection of threads or chains meant to illustrate a “realm of collectedness” (Roxburgh 1996). Preface and illustrations were meant to be examined together, and the preface helps to explain the pictures.

In the preface recounting the history of calligraphy and painting, Dust Muhammad added details about the artist Ahmad-i Mūsā that help to localize the paintings and their manuscript. Ahmad, according to Dust Muhammad, learned the art of painting from his father Mūsā and worked during the reign of the Īlhānid ruler Abū Sa‘īd (r. 1317-35), illustrating four manuscripts that passed to the royal Tīmūrid library owned by Sultan Husayn Mīrzā, ruler of Herāt from 1469 to 1506. The manuscripts must then have passed to the royal Ṣafawid library where they were available for Dust Muḥammad to peruse and even extract for his album. One of the four manuscripts was a *Mīrāgnāma* copied by Mawlānā ‘Abdallāh Sayrafī. One of the two most famous followers in the second generation after Yāqūt al-Musta‘simī, this calligrapher worked in Baghdad and Tabrīz from 1310 to 1344 (Blair). Dust Muḥammad’s preface thus allows us to identify these paintings as coming from a royal copy of the *Mīrāgnāma* made in one of the Īlhānid capitals between 1317 and 1335.

Dust Muḥammad also praised the painter Ahmad-i Mūsā as a master who “lifted the veil from the face of depiction, and invented the [style of] depiction that is now current,” that is, current in the early sixteenth century. Stylistic analysis confirms Dust Muḥammad’s identification of Ahmad-i Mūsā’s seminal role. Like the paintings in the Arabic copy of Rašīd ad-dīn’s *Ġāmi‘ at-tawārīḥ*, the paintings in the *Mīrāgnāma* are very wide (they all measure some 23-24 cms wide, on the same order as those in the *Ġāmi‘ at-tawārīḥ*). In contrast to the earlier paintings, however, they are very much taller, virtually the same size as the entire text block in the earlier history. They may well have been full-page images. The enlarged space provided for much larger figures, with a far greater emotional impact. It also allowed Ahmad-i Mūsā to create far more exciting compositions. They move beyond the simple tripartite arrangements typical of the *Ġāmi‘ at-tawārīḥ* and develop three-dimensional landscape space using foreshortening and repoussoir figures.

We can see these innovations in the painting from fol. 62a of Bahrām Mīrzā’s album (fig. 2). Pasted upside down at the top is the strip with waves that formed part of another painting with Muḥammad’s flight. The rest of the page, measuring 30 by 25 cms, shows Muḥammad sitting in a richly decorated building with a *mibrāb* behind him. Just behind him to the right in the painting is another figure almost as large as the Prophet and dressed in green and orange. To the left, a pair of kneeling angels offer the Prophet golden cups. Below, Burāq – the only time he is shown in these album paintings – is depicted with pink face and gold crown, gray elephant ears, and a reddish body outfitted with a gold saddle. Ettinghausen identified the scene as depicting the account of the seventh heaven in which angels offer

Muḥammad three cups. It is thus virtually the same scene shown in the *Ġāmi' at-tawārīḥ*.

The biggest difference between the two illustrations of the same subject is the setting and the sense of space. Ahmad-i Mūsā set the scene in a building supported on four columns of gray marble. The receding lines of the arches supporting the dome suggest that the building was octagonal, and it may well have been intended to represent the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Muḥammad is said to have ascended from Bayt al-Maqdis, and this city was often epitomized by the Dome of the Rock, as in a contemporary painting from a manuscript of al-Bīrūnī's *Ātār al-bāqiya* transcribed in 707/1307<sup>7</sup>.

Aḥmad-i Mūsā also elaborated the action in the foreground, setting the audience in a circle seen from the back. This convention brings the viewer into the painting, which becomes a window into space. Typical of Italian painting of the Quattrocento, it occurs already in Persian paintings made at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Indeed, it is quite possible that Aḥmad-i Mūsā had in front of him in the royal Ilḥānid library the Arabic copy of Rašīd ad-Dīn's *Ġāmi' at-tawārīḥ*, for the circular group appears there in another painting illustrating the Prophet's life, the consultation of the Qurayš (Edinburgh 35). This device was also incorporated into paintings in other royal Persian manuscripts made at this time, such as a scene of the mourning over the bier of Alexander from the Great Mongol *Šāhnāma* made in the 1330s (Grabar & Blair 1980: no. 39).

Earlier Persian manuscripts were not the only sources of inspiration for Aḥmad-i Mūsā. He, like the painters of the *Ġāmi' at-tawārīḥ*, also looked to Christian manuscripts, finding in their illustrations models, for example, for his depiction of the angels. The angels in the *Mī'rāgnāma*, unlike those in Rašīd ad-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles*, wear long-sleeved robes and have large wings striped in red and blue (fig. 3). They are much closer to the angels in contemporary Armenian manuscripts, such as a scene of the Annunciation (fig. 4) from a relatively unknown copy of the Gospels dated 1330 and now in Isfahan (DerNersessian & Mekhitarian 1986: 196 and fig. 51). Copied by Kirakos, *vardapet* of Erzincan, at the monastery of Djghavna, it was illustrated by one Kirakos of Tabrīz, who signed his name under the feet of the Virgin. The dedication mentions the merchant prince Vegen, who became religious and built, along with his brother Prince Pitchar, churches devoted to the Virgin and the convent of Deghdzanavank. It is not necessary that this small (23 x 16 cm.) manuscript be the exact model that Aḥmad-i Mūsā used; rather the 1330 Gospel now in Isfahan is typical of the school of Gladzor in the province of Siunik in Greater Armenia, best known from the splendid copy of the Gospels made there in the opening decade of the early fourteenth century and now in Los Angeles

<sup>7</sup> Colour reproduction in Gray 1961:27.

(Mathews & Wieck 1994:no. 36; Mathews & Taylor 2001). The gilt ground and type of flying winged figures used by Aḥmad-i Mūsā also occur in pages from another large Gospel book made by T'oros the Deacon at Tabrīz in 1311 (Mathews & Taylor 2001:no. 31). This Gospel book remained intact in the Church of the Holy Mother of God in Tabrīz until 1906. Many Armenian manuscripts were therefore available in Tabrīz, and Muslim painters like Aḥmad-i Mūsā must have consulted them, continuing to find inspiration for their scenes of Muḥammad's life from contemporary Christian gospels.

In addition to style, one needs to consider the function of the ʿĪlḥānid manuscript of the *Mi'rāḡnāma*. What sort of text did these paintings illustrate? We are certainly dealing not with illustrations to a history, as was the case with the ascension scene in Rašīd ad-Dīn's *Compendium of Chronicles*, but with a full devotional text. Ettinghausen, who studied the album paintings closely, showed that they did not fit either the Arabic version of the *Mi'rāḡnāma*, now lost but known from early Western translations, or the Eastern Turkish text used in fifteenth century. This is clear, for example, from the scene of the celestial cock (fig. 5). It depicts Muḥammad, under the guidance of a crowned angel, probably the Archangel Gabriel, observing an angelic choir gigantic white cock standing on a golden dais. This angel was in charge of counting the hours of the day and night in order to announce the hours of prayer and pronounce the *tasbīḥ*, which was then repeated by roosters around the world. None of the written versions mentions a choir. Furthermore, the cock was usually positioned between the earth and the throne of God, but here apparently stands on a polygonal dias.

The scenario becomes more mysterious when we consider the final image from this manuscript that was included in the album H2154 (fig. 6). To judge from style, iconography, and composition, such as the winged angel and the audience in the foreground seen from the back, it belongs to the same manuscript of the *Mi'rāḡnāma*, but what scene it illustrates is unclear. It shows an angel presenting a city to a figure seated on a rug, surely to be identified the Prophet Muḥammad as he is surrounded by a mandorla. But who are the two figures to his left, to whom he is gesturing? And who are the two further figures standing at the lower right? The composition and figures recall the scene of Muḥammad appointing ʿAlī his successor at Ġadīr Ḥumm, shown in the manuscript of al-Bīrūnī's *Ātār al-bāqīya* made in 1307, probably at Tabrīz<sup>8</sup>. This would suggest that the two seated figures represent ʿAlī and Ḥusayn. It might further imply that the mysterious figure wearing a green robe and sitting

<sup>8</sup> Illustrated and analyzed in Soucek 1975:103-165 and Hillenbrand 2000: 129-146.

next to Muhammad when he is offered the bowls (fig. 2) is also 'Alī, who is sometimes said to have accompanied Muhammad on his nocturnal journey<sup>9</sup>.

And what city is being depicted? It is polygonal, walled, bisected by three rivers, and dotted with three large buildings with minarets. Ettinghausen argued that the presence of a river excluded Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, the three cities most often associated with the Prophet. The riparian view, by contrast, makes possible an identification of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, and Constantinople, and on the basis of the curved course of the river and the shape of the minarets, Ettinghausen, following a suggestion put forward by Helmut Ritter, opted for the Constantinople, arguing that the scene represented an apocalyptic vision of the forthcoming conquest of the mighty city long-coveted by Muslims.

This argument is not convincing. The conquest of Constantinople did not loom large in the *Īlhānīd* mentality. To the contrary, the *Īlhānīd*s had diplomatic relations with the Byzantines, and the *Īlhānīd* ruler Abaqa (r. 1265-80) even married an illegitimate Paleologue prince, Maria Despina. Abaqa's grandson, who reigned as Sultan Ulğaytu, was baptized Nicholas and raised a Christian before he converted to various sects of Islam.

Furthermore, the action of offering the city does not necessarily imply conquest, but rather presentation, and an alternative explanation for the scene is the presentation of Sultāniyya, the new capital founded by Sultan Ulğaytu<sup>10</sup>. The *Īlhānīd*s, like the Yuan dynasty in China, founded their own imperial cities: the one established by Ulğaytu in the 1315s has mostly disappeared, but its layout can be reconstructed from texts: the inner city there was polygonal, walled, bisected by a river, and had at least three major building complexes (Blair 1986), as shown in the view by the sixteenth-century Ottoman chronicler Maṭrakçı Naşuh<sup>11</sup>. This illustration too uses an architectural shorthand in which conventional features are repeated and stylized, but many of the topographical elements are the same in both images. Incorporating a depiction of the newly-founded capital as a gift presented to Muhammad would symbolize the *Īlhānīd*s' submission to Islam. Though Ġazan had officially declared his allegiance in 1295, the Mongol court was slower to do so and many amīrs did not convert until the time of Ulğaytu's son Abū Sa'īd, the first of the *Īlhānīd*s to be raised a Muslim.

Contemporary Christian art, both from Byzantium and Armenia, can once again offer sources and parallels for the subject of a donor presenting a model of his foundation. Founders of churches and monasteries are often shown offering a model

<sup>9</sup> Ettinghausen suggested the figure was Moses, whom the Prophet had met just before he was offered the cups in the European version of the story, but this suggestion does not seem likely to me.

<sup>10</sup> I made this suggestion in Blair 1987:89.

<sup>11</sup> Colour reproduction in Blair & Bloom 1994:fig. 3.

of their work to an enthroned Christ or the Virgin and Child. Theodore Metochites, leading statesman at the Paleologue court who rebuilt the church of the Monastery of the Chora between 1315 and 1320, for example, is depicted this way in the mosaic set over the door leading from the inner narthex to the nave (fig. 7) (Underwood 1966: II, 26). Armenian churches often had the donor(s) sculpted in relief on the façade, and the Virgin and child are often depicted seated on a fringed rug, as the Prophet is shown here (Manuelian 1996). In the Īlhānid interpretation of the scene, the single building has been transposed into a city, and the Virgin and child transposed into Muḥammad and his family.

We do not have to imagine that Aḥmad-i Mūsā had been to Constantinople or Armenia to see such buildings. Portable objects provided better means for the transferal of iconography. These included not only books, but liturgical objects and even portable architecture. Maria Despina's dowry, for example, included a tent intended for use as a church. In 1301, during the reign of Ulḡaytu, a church was dedicated to St. John the Baptist in Marāḡa. We have no idea what sort of decoration it had, but we can imagine that, even if executed by Īlhānid craftsmen in the vernacular materials of brick and stucco, it must have had painted decoration derived from Christian iconography.

In sum, then, the scenes of Muḥammad's ascension from a copy of a *Mi'rāḡnāma* incorporated into Album H2154 in Istanbul open a window into the fascinating pot-pourri of religious life in Īlhānid times. The paintings attest to the increasingly fervent veneration of Muḥammad, and possibly his family, in the early fourteenth century. They also show the importance of Christian sources when Muslim artists were called upon to develop a new iconography to illustrate scenes that had apparently not been illustrated before in the Muslim tradition. As Ettinghausen pointed out, "Thus, just as Dante's *Divina Commedia* initiates modern Italian and even all Western literature, so do this Persian manuscript and the other work of the master called Aḥmad-i Mūsā stand at the beginning of matured Persian painting and through it also of Turkish and Mughal miniatures. The historical parallel goes even further, because just as Dante was quite possibly influenced by Muslim ideas, so was Aḥmad-i Mūsā in turn stimulated by foreign concepts, Chinese and Western ones"<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, in the fifteenth century when artists at the court of Tīmūrid court of Šāh Ruḡ wanted to illustrate another copy of the *Mi'rāḡnāma*, they turned to outside sources, stimulated this time by models from Central Asia and beyond.

<sup>12</sup> Ettinghausen 1957:378. The role of Chinese elements is a separate subject that needs to be pursued.

## REFERENCES

- Arnold, T. W. 1928. *Painting in Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Blair, Sheila S. 1986. "The Mongol Capital of Sultāniyya, 'the Imperial'". *Iran* 24. 139-151.
- . 1987. "The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture". *Islamic Art* 2.43-96.
- . 1995. *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World*. London: The Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press.
- . "Yaquṭ and His Followers". *Proceedings of the IIIrd International Conference on Paleography and Codicology of Middle Eastern Manuscripts* ed. by François Déroche and Francis Richard. Paris.
- Blair, Sheila S. & Jonathan M. Bloom. 1994. *The Art and Architecture of Islam, 1250-1800* (= *The Pelican History of Art*). London and New Haven: Yale University Press.
- DerNersessian, Sirarpie & Arpag Mekhitarian. 1986. *Armenian Miniatures from Isfahan*. [Brussels]: Les Editeurs d'Art Associés, Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia.
- Ettinghausen, Richard. 1957. "Persian Ascension Miniatures of the Fourteenth Century". *Convegno di scienze morali storiche e filologiche, Accademia Nazionale Dei Lincei* 12.360-383.
- Grabar, Oleg & Sheila Blair. 1980. *Epic Images and Contemporary History: The Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shah-Nama*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gray, Basil. 1961. *Persian Painting*. Geneva: Skira.
- . 1978. *The World History of Rashid al-Din: A Study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Hillenbrand, Robert. 2000. "Images of Muhammad in al-Bīrūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*". *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars, Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, ed. by Robert Hillenbrand, 129-146. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Manuelian, Lucy der. 1996. "Armenia, §IV, 1(i) Architectural sculpture, before 1828". *The Dictionary of Art* ed. by Jane Turner. London: Macmillan Publishers Limited.
- Mathews, Thomas F. & Roger S. Wieck, eds. 1994. *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illustrated Manuscripts*. New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library and Princeton University Press.
- Mathews, Thomas F. & Alice Taylor. 2001. *The Armenian Gospels of Gladzor: The Life of Christ Illuminated*. Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum.
- Rašīd ad-Dīn, Ġāmi' = *Rashiduddin Fazlullah's Jamī'u't-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*. English transl. & annot. by W. M. Thackston. Pts. 1-3, *A History of the Mongols* (= *Sources of Oriental Languages & Literatures*, 45; *Central Asian*

- Sources, 4.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 1998.
- Roxburgh, David J. 1996. *'Our Works Point to Us': Album Making, Collecting, and Art (1427-1565) Under the Timurids and Safavids*. Ph. D. Diss. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Séguy, Marie-Rose. 1977. *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet: Mirāj Nameh*. London: The Scolar Press.
- Soucek, Priscilla P. 1975. "An Illustrated Manuscript of al-Bîrûnî's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*". *The Scholar and the Saint* ed. by Peter Chelkowski, 103-165. New York: New York University Press.
- . 1988. "The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated Versions". *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World* ed. by Priscilla P. Soucek, 193-218. University Park, PA and London: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- . 1998. "Armenian and Islamic Manuscript Painting: A Visual Dialogue". *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion and Society*, 115-131. New York: Pierpont Morgan Library.
- Talbot Rice, David. 1976. *The Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashīd al-Dīn* ed. by Basil Gray. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Thackston, Wheeler M. 2001. *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters (= Studies and Sources in Islamic Art and Architecture Supplements to Muqarnas)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Underwood, Paul. 1966. *The Kariye Djami (= Bollingen Series)*. New York: Bollingen Foundation.



Fig. 1. "The Prophet's Ascension" from a copy of Rašid ad-Dīn's *Ġami' at-tawāriḥ*, made in 714/1314-15 probably at Tabriz. Edinburgh University Library, Arab ms. 20, no. 36



Fig. 2. "The bowls offered to Muḥammad in heaven" from a copy of the *Mir'āḡnāma* copied by ʿAbdallāh Sayrafī, probably at Tabrīz ca. 1330, and later mounted in an album compiled by the Safawid librarian Dust Muḥammad in 951/1544. Istanbul, Topkapı Library H2154, fol. 62a



Fig. 3. "Flight over the Mountains" from the same ms as Fig. 2, Istanbul, Topkapi Library H2154, fol. 42b



Fig. 4. "Annunciation" from an Armenian copy of the Gospels dated 1330.  
Isfahan, Holy Saviour's Cathedral, New Julfa, ms 47(43)



Fig. 5. "The Celestial Cock" from the same ms as Fig. 2, Istanbul, Topkapi Library H2154, fol. 61b



Fig. 6. "Presentation of a city" from the same ms as Fig. 2, Istanbul, Topkapi Library H2154, fol. 107a

