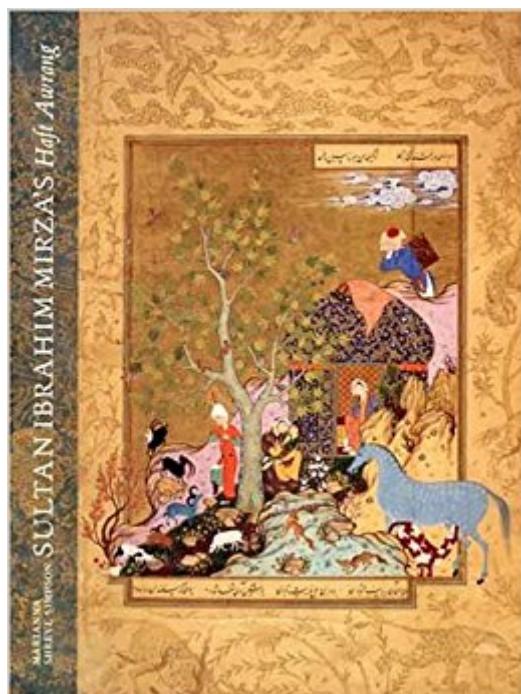


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Sultan Ibrahim Mirza's Haft Awrang: A Princely Manuscript From Sixteenth-Century Iran



Synopsis

In 1556 Prince Sultan Ibrahim Mirza commissioned a copy of the great Persian literary classic, the *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones) of Abdul-Rahman Jami. For the next nine years, five court calligraphers worked on the transcription of the poetic text, and then another group of gifted artists illuminated and illustrated it. This magnificent volume, now housed in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, and known as the *Freer Jami*, is renowned as one of the most sumptuous works of the Safavid period and a masterpiece of Islamic art. Marianna Shreve Simpson explores the production, purpose, and meaning of the *Haft Awrang*, providing historical documentation about its princely patron and artists and analyzing its contents. She summarizes Jami's seven poems and examines the individual *Freer Jami* illustrations, focusing in particular on their iconography, their interpretations of the poetic verses, and their relationship with other known illustrations of the same text. Her study also sheds light on a number of fascinating art historical issues. These include the *kitabkhana* (workshop) system and the practices of deluxe manuscript production in sixteenth-century Iran, the respective roles and relationships of those involved in the complicated enterprise of Safavid bookmaking, the intersection of art and literature in a culture that respected both form and content, and the significance of an illustrated book as a document of the artistic taste, social relations, and economic conditions of its time.

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