



18th Annual City Tech
Poster Session

Shared Provenance

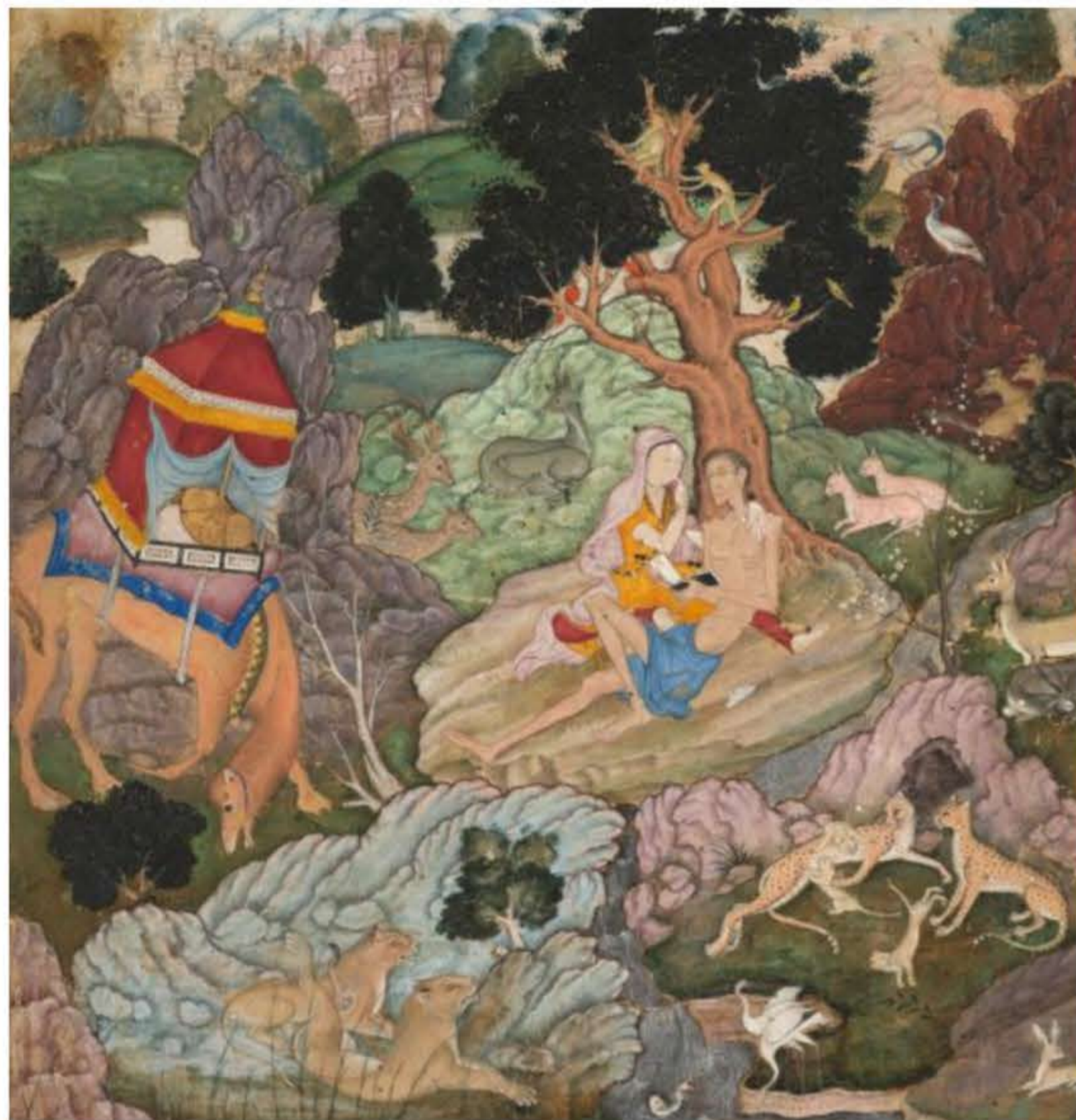
Investigating Safavid-Mughal Cultural Exchange through
Luxury Silk Production in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

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Persian Weavers take tradition of Narrative Silk-Weaving to India through Immigration

Indian Painting of Persian poetry



“Layla and Majnun in the wilderness with animals”
Khamsa (Quintet) of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi
Attributed to Sanwalah, c. 1590–1600
Mughal India. Cleveland Museum of Art (2013.301)

This study examines the impact of immigrant artisans in Mughal India the early modern period, based on a series of narrative silk textiles used for apparel. Paintings provide clues to love scenes from Persian poetry woven into apparel textiles in the 16th-17th centuries. The poems represent Sufi allegories that would have resonated with Indian and Iranian patrons, but due to shared cultural elements, provenance and patronage are unclear.

*Were they created in Iran or India, and by whom?
Were these garments worn by royalty or the elite?*

Ghiyath al-Din was a famous 16th c. Persian weaver from Yazd, Iran who “signed” his textiles, but the stories depicted correspond with the Indian version of the famous tale of Layla and Majnun.

Persian Ambassadors in Figural Silk Garments



Portraits of Naqdt Ali Beg (L) and Robert Sherley (R)
Anonymous Artist, 1626; Trust of the Earl of Berkeley

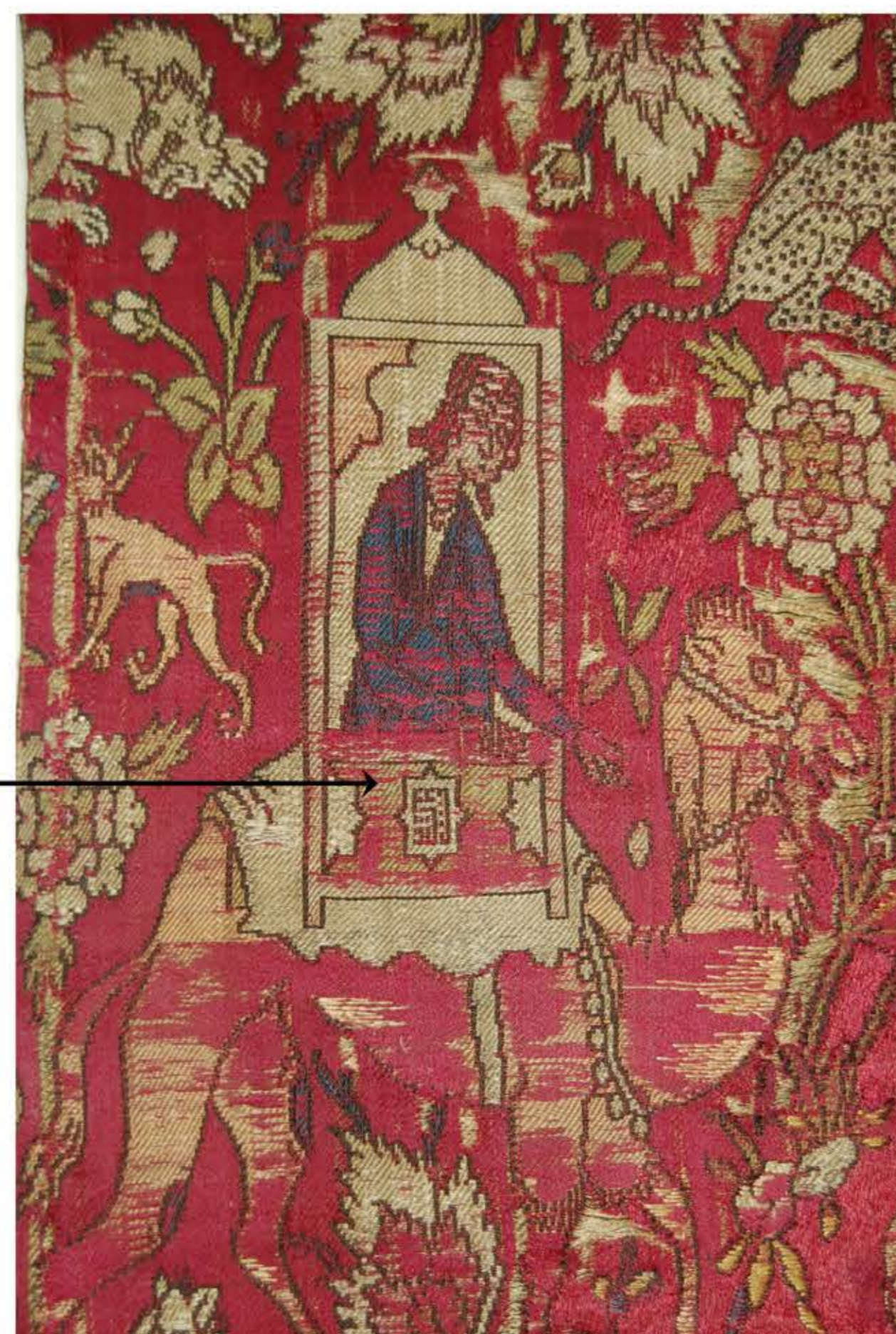


Silk Textiles Signed
“Work of Ghiyath”

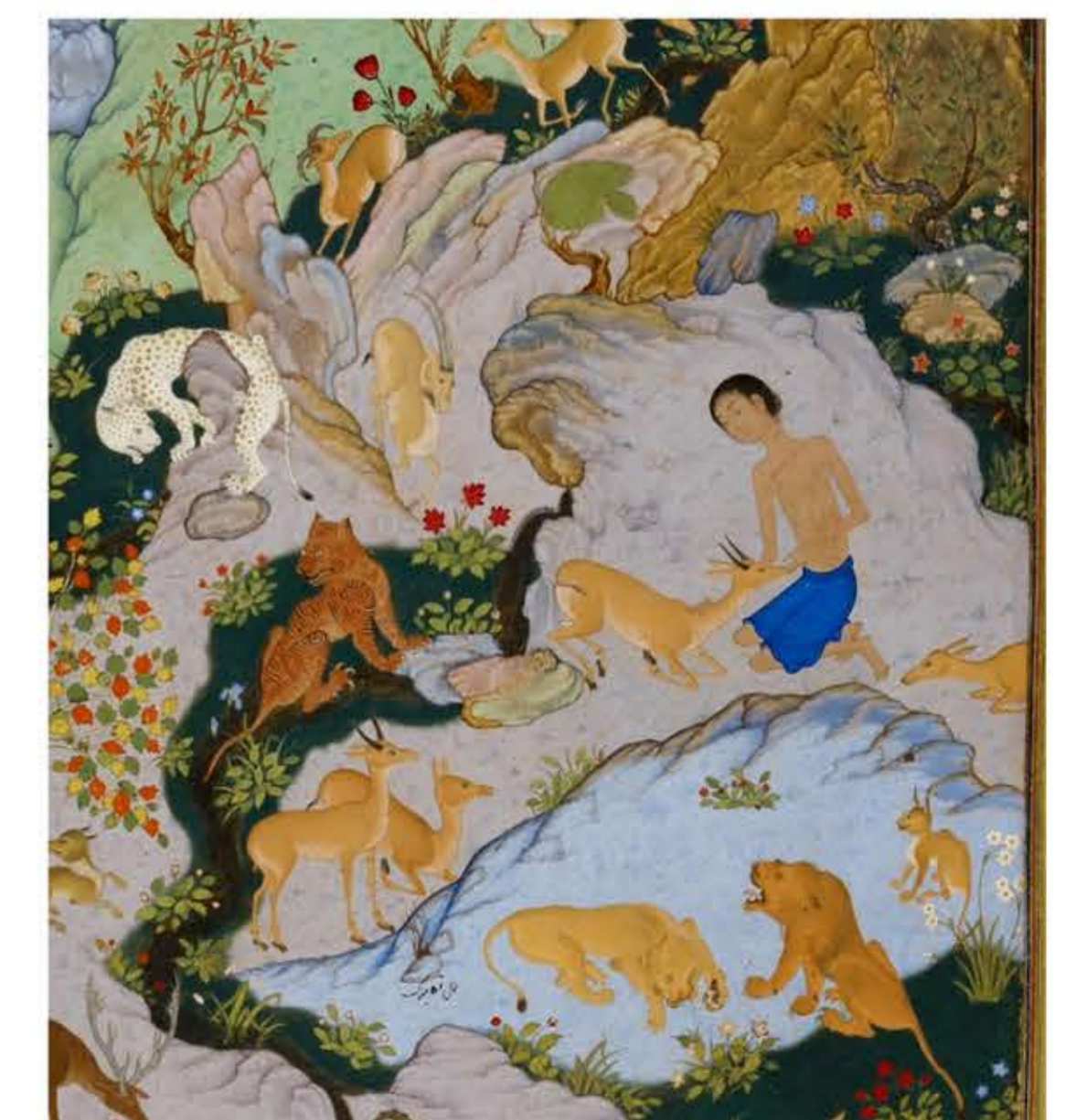
عمل غياث

Layla and Majnun
Satin lampas designs
Signatures in Kufic and Naskh
(See Layla’s Palanquin)

Lampas silks signed by Ghiyath al-Din
Mid- to late 16th c. Iran
The Textile Museum (TM 3.318) (right)
The Cooper-Hewitt SI (1902-1-780) (left)



Illustrations of
Majnun in the
wilderness
surrounded by wild
animals is a famous
depiction from
Nizami’s Persian
poem, but this
velvet has Indian
iconography. Did
Safavid Persian
immigrant weavers
create these silks?



Majnun with the animals in the desert (above)
Khamsa of Nizami of Tahmasp
Aqa Mirak. 1539-1543 Tabriz, Iran
British Library (Or 2265)

Silk velvet, with silver thread (detail, left)
Attributed to Iran, 16th c.
State Hermitage Museum (IR-2327)