



# GERMANY VI. COLLECTIONS AND STUDY OF PERSIAN ART IN GERMANY

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Until the 19th century, Persian works of art entered collections in Germany by mere chance. From then on, works of art from all periods of Persian history were collected systematically to acquire knowledge of the world and to educate and inspire artists and craftsmen. Collecting, exhibiting, and studying Persian art reached an unprecedented scale in the 20th century.

*Before 1867.* A very limited number of Persian works of art entered the art collections of noble families as a result of marriage, war booty, or diplomatic gifts; some were acquired by diplomats and travelers who had been in Persia. State libraries and treasuries such as those of Baden, Bavaria, Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, and Prussia also added Persian works of art to their collections. They seem to have consisted mainly of arms and armor, textiles, and carpets; they rarely included manuscripts.

A mission sent to the court of Shah Şafi I (1038-52/1629-42) returned in 1639 with gifts of textiles and carpets which entered the collections of Duke



Friedrich III of Holstein-Gottorp (Bencard, pp. 64-75). In commemoration of this mission a collection of Safavid art is on exhibition in the Schleswig-Holsteinisches Landersmuseum Schloss Gottorp. Adam Olearius (1599-1671), a member of this mission, brought with him a small collection of manuscripts (Stchoukine et al, p. 12) which were sold in 1672 to the Grand Elector of Prussia and thus became the first collection of Persian manuscripts to enter the Royal Library in Berlin. In Munich, the House of Wittelsbach probably acquired Polonaise carpets (see above, IV, pp. 871-73) and a silk tapestry rug through the marriage in 1642 of the Elector Philipp Wilhelm von der Pfalz-Neuburg with Anna Catharina Constanza, a daughter of King Sigismund III Wasa of Poland (Spuhler, 1968, pp. 23-24, 182-85, 237-39). They are now in the Residenzmuseum, Schatzkammer der Residenz, and in the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum in Munich.

Persian works of art in the Badisches Landesmuseum at Karlsruhe may have belonged to the Margrave Ludwig Wilhelm of Baden, who probably seized them in the victory over the Ottomans in 1691, and which later entered the art collection of the Baden family. Among the booty, later known as the "Türkenbeute," were a silk carpet and Safavid textiles, which were sometimes used as envelopes for letters (Badisches Landesmuseum, nos. 291-92, 297-98).

In 1817, Persian manuscripts collected by Heinrich Friedrich von Diez (1751-1817) during his term as Prussian ambassador at the Ottoman court in Istanbul entered the Royal Library in Berlin. The collection included albums of miniatures, drawings, calligraphies, and designs that later became famous as the Diez albums (Ipşiroğlu, pp. 1-124; Stchoukine et al., pp. 12-13; Roxburgh, pp. 112-36). In 1857, the collection of the Royal Library was supplemented by manuscripts acquired in Persia during the Prussian mission under Julius Freiherr von Minutoli (Brugsch, II, pp. 74-94; Stchoukine et al., p. 13). Julius Heinrich Petermann (1801-71) traveled in the Near East and Persia (Petermann, pp. 230-31, 259), where he acquired Sasanian seals, Islamic manuscripts, and other objects for Berlin. The seals (Horn and Steindorff, eds.) entered the Oriental collections of the royal museums, and the illustrated manuscripts went to the Royal Library in 1857 (Stchoukine et al., p. 12). The other objects went to the Berlin Museum für Völkerkunde, founded in 1873. Other German libraries, such as the Herzogliche Bibliothek Gotha (Pertsch), and the Royal State Library in Munich also collected Persian manuscripts. The Royal State Library in Munich acquired the library of the French Orientalist Étienne-Marc Quatremère in 1858, which included illuminated and illustrated



Persian manuscripts (Gratzl, pp. 21-33; Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, pp. 25, 164-201).

*From 1867 to 1918.* International art exhibitions around the middle of the 19th century nourished interest in the arts and crafts of other countries. The first exhibition (London, 1851) seems to have had little immediate effect on German collectors, but in the wake of these exhibitions museums for applied art and ethnography were founded within the German states. Often affiliated to schools of arts and crafts, these institutions collected art from all over the world to educate and inspire art students (Mundt, pp. 54-56; Koppelkamm, pp. 138-53). Acquisition of Persian art by German museums began with the exhibitions of 1867 and 1873 in Paris and Vienna, respectively (Special-Catalog, pp. 54-69, 147-9). The Kunstgewerbemuseum was founded in Berlin in 1867. Similar museums, indeed nearly all those that today show Persian art as part of their pre-Islamic or Islamic collections, followed in Dresden (Kunstgewerbemuseum), Düsseldorf (Kunstmuseum), Frankfurt am Main (Museum für Kunsthandwerk), Hamburg (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe), Hagen, later Essen (Folkwang-Museum), Hannover (Kestner-Museum), Cologne (Museum für Angewandte Kunst), Krefeld (Deutsches Textilmuseum), Leipzig (Städtisches Kunstgewerbemuseum), and Munich (Bayerisches Nationalmuseum).

Julius Lessing, the director of the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin and the first European to publish a book on carpets, was responsible for the numerous acquisitions of Persian works of art for that museum. After 1877 Wilhem von Bode, the curator of the Royal museums in Berlin, acquired numerous carpets for the same museum, many of which later became part of the Islamic department (Enderlein). Bode also published the first article on a Persian carpet (Bode 1892, pp. 26-49, 108-37), which later was expanded into a book that became the standard work on carpets in Germany (Bode, 1901). Otto von Falke, Lessing's successor, wrote a study on textiles which included Persian textiles from the Sasanian period up to the 18th century.

Friedrich Sarre (1865-1945), a leading German figure in the study of Islamic and Persian art who had already been to Turkey in 1895, began his tours of Persia in 1897. During these years, he acquired a collection of Persian art of pre-Islamic as well as Islamic periods. Sarre was interested in all facets of Persian art, as witnessed by his publications on architecture (Sarre, 1910), rock-reliefs (Sarre and Herzfeld 1910), and drawings (Sarre and Mittwoch, 1914) to name but a few (Schmidt). With the founding of an Islamic



department in the Royal Museum in Berlin in 1904 by von Bode, Sarre gave the larger part of his collection on permanent loan to that museum.

Philipp Walter Schulz, the first German author to write on Persian miniature painting, acquired Persian works of art and ethnography during his travels in Persia before 1900. His collection was exhibited in Leipzig in 1900 (see Kunstgewerbe-Museum zu Leipzig) and later on sold to museums, libraries, and private collectors.

One of the first major exhibitions of Islamic art ever to be held took place in Munich in 1910. Among the more than 3500 exhibits, numerous works of art from Persia were exhibited in Germany for the first time (Sarre and Martin).

*From 1919 to 1945.* Due to the economic crisis in Germany during the 1920s, museums and libraries made only a limited number of acquisitions. The Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, founded in 1899, exhibited pre-Islamic art up to the Achaemenid period (Moortgat, pp. 1-13; Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, pp. 38-39 and nos. 178-91), and the Islamic department exhibited art from the Parthian, Sasanian, and Islamic eras. The Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte in Berlin (Potratz, 1940, pp. 169-98) as well as museums in Hamburg (idem, 1955, pp. 180-224), Mainz (idem, 1941-42, pp. 33-62), and elsewhere collected bronzes of Luristan (q.v.). Numerous studies of Persian art appeared during those years. Herzfeld published results on Ṭāq-e Bostān, and Sarre wrote the first complete account of art and architecture in pre-Islamic Persia (Sarre, 1922). Similar studies by other scholars (e.g., von der Osten, Brentjes) soon followed in the 1950s and 1960s. Beginning with 1915, the first general surveys on Islamic art (Diez, 1915, 1944; Glück and Diez; Kühnel, 1962) as well as studies on single fields of Islamic art by Ernst Kühnel (Kühnel 1922, 1925, 1942) introduced Persian art to a wider public. Kurt Erdmann (q.v.) studied Sasanian hunting plates (1936, pp. 192-232), Persian fire-temples (1941), and published the first book concerned solely with all facets of Sasanian art (1943). Sarre, Kühnel, Erdmann, and Oscar Reuther (who led the first excavation at Ctesiphon, q.v.), were, among others, contributors to the *Survey of Persian Art*.

**PLATE III.** Bowl with lute-player and Arabic benediction in Kufic script on the edge. Silver and niello. Iran, 10th-11th century. Courtesy of Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst (Inventory no. I.582). 5-77). Photograph courtesy of Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Berlin.



**PLATE IV.** Glazed ceramic mehrāb with arabesque reliefs and Koranic inscriptions in Kufic and naskò scripts. Kāšān. Dated Šafar 623 (February-March 1226) and signed by Ḥasan b. ‘Arabšāh. Courtesy of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Museum für Islamische Kunst (Inventory no. I. 5366).

*From 1946 to 1996.* During these years, museums in the western part of Germany began to expand their collections systematically or to build up new sections devoted to Persian art. Many works, such as Luristan bronzes and Amlash pottery, Achaemenian and Sasanian glass, Islamic pottery and glass from the Nīšāpūr region, and metalwork from eastern Persia, entered museum collections for the first time (for Persian art collections in German museums see Erdmann, 1966, pp. 19-34; idem, 1967; *Deutsches Ledermuseum*, pp. 5-8; Klesse, 1963, nos. 44, 529-71; idem, 1966, nos. 1-74, 105-17; Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz; Stchoukine et al., pp. 1-9, 17-144; Böhner, pp. 40-42; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, pp. 108-32; Museum für Kunsthandwerk, pp. 57-84; Ohm, nos. 67-98; Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 1980, pp. 38-49; Kröger, 1984; Hauptmann von Gladiss and Kröger; Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf, I, pp. 188-215; Kalter; Spuhler, 1987, pp. 69-93; *Aus den Sammlungen*, pp. 148-91; Die Adolf und Luisa Haeuser-Stiftung □, pp. 38-71; Niewöhner, 1991; Ricke, pp. 36-50; von Saldern, 1995, nos. 1, 13-8, 161-68; Müller-Wiener).

The Exhibition of 7000 Years of Art in Iran (Essen, 1961), which included items from various countries among them Persia and Germany, was the first of a series of exhibitions that promoted the knowledge of Persian art of all periods. Some of the exhibitions were based on the museum collections (Lommel; Kalter et al., pp. 5-106; *Islamische Kunst*) while others were devoted to special themes such as archeological excavations (Naumann), court life (Niewöhner, 1995), animals (*Das Tier ...*), ceramics (Klein et al.), glass (Städtisches Museum Braunschweig), silks (Deutsches Textilmuseum), and carpets (Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, 1950, pp. 62-93; Deutsches Textilmuseum). In the eastern part of Germany, the study of Persian miniature paintings led to an exhibition of items from museums and libraries in Berlin, Dresden, Gotha, Halle, Weimar, and Leipzig (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin). During this period only a limited number of private collectors in Germany were particularly interested in Persian art (Calmeyer; von Saldern, 1974; Haase, Kröger, and Lienert).

Studies on single groups of objects focused on Luristan bronzes (Calmeyer), Sasanian fire-temples (Schippmann), Sasanian stucco (Kröger, 1982), Safavid



carpets (Luschey-Schmeisser; Spuhler, 1968), carpets of all periods (Erdmann, 1955, 1966), a Safavid *Šāh-nāma* (Enderlein and Sundermann), textiles from the Safavid to the Qajar periods (Neumann and Murza), and a number of different Islamic themes (Brentjes, 1990, pp. 19-27, 65-76, 77-86). Since the foundation of the Persian branch of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (q.v.) in 1961, many studies of Persian art conducted by German scholars have been sponsored by this institute.

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