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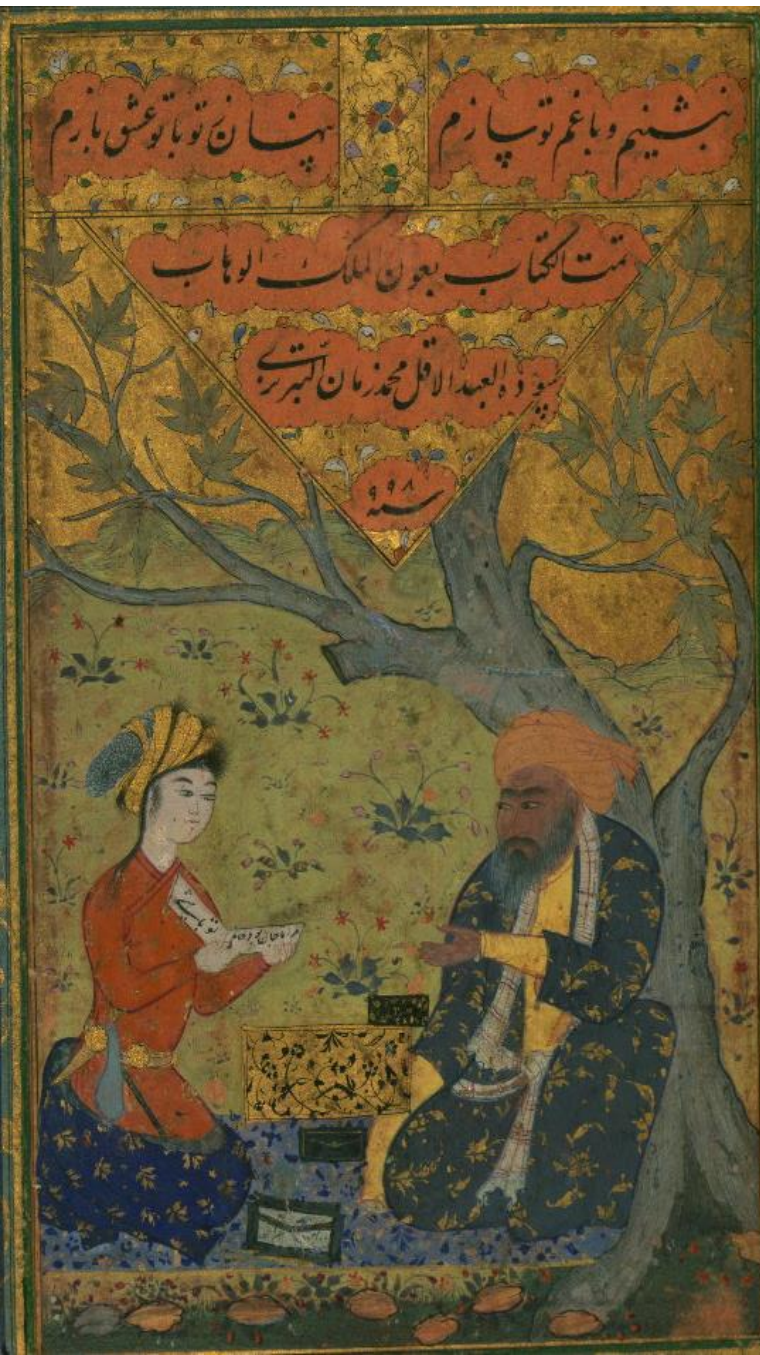
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Not All of the Poets Went to India: Literary Culture in Iran under Safavid Rule

Paul Losensky

Indiana University, Bloomington

Thursday, March 10, 2016 | 11348 Charles E. Young Research Library | 4:00pm



The great migration of poets from Iran to India typically dominates modern accounts of the history of Persian poetry in the 16th and 17th centuries. While many of the most famous poets of the period, such as Tāleb Āmoli and Kalim Kāshāni, did find fame and fortune at the Mughal courts, they were the products of a lively literary culture in Safavid Iran (1501-1722) that flourished before the start of the migration in the 1580s and again after the 1630s. While the patronage of the Safavid court never matched that of the Mughals, poetry thrived in a broad public sphere of coffee shops, mosques, tradesmen's shops, and private homes in several urban centers. This was a period of great poetic innovation and experimentation that witnessed the emergence of new genres and the formation of two distinctive schools of lyric poetry. In this talk, Professor Losensky will outline the history of this literary culture in its social and political contexts, highlight some of its key movements and figures (such as Mohtasham Kāshāni, Shafā'i Esfahāni, and Sā'eb Tabrizi), and indicate possible directions for future research.

Paul Losensky (Ph.D. University of Chicago, 1993) is Professor in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies and the Department of Comparative Literature at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he teaches Persian language and literature, comparative studies of Western and Middle Eastern literatures, and translation studies. His research focusses on Persian literary historiography, biographical writing, and the Fresh-Style poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His publications include *Welcoming Fighāni: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (1998), *Farid ad-Din 'Attār's Memorial of God's Friends: Lives and Sayings of Sufis* (2009), and *In the Bazaar of Love: Selected Poems of Amir Khusrau* (2013). He has authored numerous articles on Persian literature for journals such as *Iranian Studies* and is a frequent contributor to *Encyclopedia of Islam* and *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. He is a former fellow at the National Humanities Center.

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