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CAT. 31. "THE DERVISH FROM FARYAB CROSSES THE RIVER ON HIS RUG." MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF SADI'S *BUSTAN* (THE FLOWER GARDEN)

IRAN, ISFAHAN; C. 1600–1608

THE LEAF H: 28.5; W: 18.5 CM

This painting illustrates a seemingly autobiographical story. While its writer, Sadi (c. 1210–1291) paid to cross a river with a ferry, an impoverished dervish used his rug as transport.

the painting, the ferry takes the form of a European carrack with canons, patterned sails, and an elegant banner waving in the wind. Behind the ferry sails the old man, shown with the dervish's domed felt hat and the prayer stone used by Shiites on the carpet. He is gesticulating up towards Sadi in the green caftan standing in the stern of the ferry.

The other figures in the painting are a motley collection of passengers and sailors, depicted with an element of humor. Some are shown with almost caricatured noses or beards, while others differ in their clothing

and skin color. On the deck, a sailor is in the process of loading a cannon – perhaps a reaction to the dervish on his inexplicable journey?

At the top above the landscape, ducks fly in front of cliffs that form the kind of imaginary faces found in Persian painting right from the 14th century.