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A COPY OF NIZAMI'S *KHAMSA*. THIS MINIATURE (FOL. 107V): "THE CONSUMMATION OF THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN KHUSRAW AND SHIRIN"

IRAN, SHIRAZ; C. 1560

LEAF: 35.5 × 23 CM

This miniature is an illustration for the romance "Khusraw and Shirin," the second book that makes up the *Khamisa* (Quintet). The Iranian king Khusraw has heard of the ravishingly beautiful Armenian princess Shirin, who after having seen his portrait becomes deeply enamored of him. The two seek one another in vain, meet without recognizing one another, then come together and are blissfully happy, but each is tied to another. Finally, after endless tribulations, they are married.

It is the consummation of this long course of events that we witness here, together with all the women of the harem. There is something unintentionally funny about the couple, who are almost fully clothed, their private sphere protected from the outside world by a seated doorman.

There are not many explicit erotic miniatures in “serious” Islamic literature. Although some of the classical romances and also many Sufi poems can be highly sensual, rarely are these motifs elaborated graphically. This is also true to some extent in India.

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Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniatures from the David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 47;

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat.no. 57;