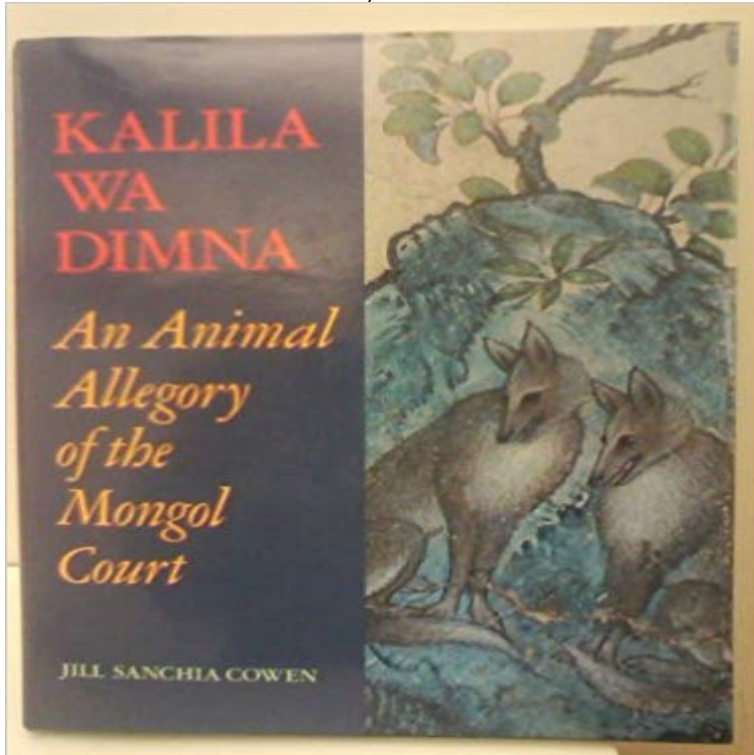


Kalila wa Dimna: An Animal Allegory of the Mongol Court: The Istanbul University Album



The Kalila wa Dimna, animal tales known in the West through Les Fables of La Fontaine, can be traced to 4th-century India. Written for the edification and amusement of princes and magistrates, they were second in popularity only to the Koran. The witty dialogue of the animal characters, led by two scheming jackals called Kalila and Dimna, reveal a Machiavellian code of behavior and mirror a real world of intrigue, diplomacy, and statecraft. Though the tales have been illustrated numerous times, it was in the 14th-century Mongol court of Persia that they inspired one of the most remarkable works of Persian art--a narrative cycle of paintings now in the collections of the Istanbul University Library. The paintings, which match the text in wit, spirit, and drama, are unsurpassed in their beauty and vigorous style. This book, a lively translation of the tales and a study of fifty paintings from the original manuscript, explores the ways in which the artists enriched and expanded the content of the fables, revealing a uniquely personal and mystical interpretation. Beautifully illustrated in full color and black-and-white, the book will interest a wide range of readers interested in art history and Middle Eastern and East Asian studies.

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