

The Path of Princes

MASTERPIECES
FROM THE
AGA KHAN MUSEUM
COLLECTION



CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION

The Path of Princes

**MASTERPIECES
FROM THE
AGA KHAN MUSEUM
COLLECTION**

UNDER THE HIGH PATRONAGE OF

His Highness the Aga Khan

His Excellency the President
of the Republic of Portugal,
Anibal Cavaco Silva

The Path of Princes

**MASTERPIECES
FROM THE
AGA KHAN MUSEUM
COLLECTION**

14 March to 6 July 2008
Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon



CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

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Booking at the time of the visit, except on holidays
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CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN'S CONNECTION to Islamic culture and the fascination he had for the refined objects from different regions such as Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Mughal India are well known. Hence, alongside the diversity of objects that make up his collection of European art, the set of carpets, fabrics, ceramics, manuscripts, book bindings, lacquered objects and enamelled glass mosque lamps – from the most remarkable centres of artistic production within the Islamic world – occupy a place of great importance.

Therefore, after Parma, Paris and London, it is a privilege to host in Lisbon the magnificent exhibition of Islamic Art from the Aga Khan Museum Collection, under the high patronage of His Highness the Aga Khan and His Excellency the President of the Republic of Portugal.

This exhibition is an excellent opportunity to closely admire a series of objects that illustrate some 1000 years of artistic production, from the 9th to the 19th century, representative of a broad geographic area extending from Spain to Indonesia. It is also an opportunity all the more relevant given that many of these objects will only be shown to the public again when the Aga Khan collection is reunited, in 2011, in a purpose-designed museum in Toronto.

It must be emphasized that, beyond the intrinsic value of this encounter between two significant art collections, its symbolic value is of added importance at the present time for the role that institutions like the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture may take in furthering the understanding of diversity, a condition conducive to the opening of dialogue between peoples and cultures.

EMÍLIO RUI VILAR

President of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

IN 1983, I HAD THE PLEASURE of visiting the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and was very impressed with its activities and vision. When the first president of the Foundation, José de Azeredo Perdigão, showed me a model of the buildings and the proposed Centre for Contemporary

Art, which was due to be opened a few months later, it was perhaps the first time I gauged the extraordinary potential of a museum institution from an outreach and educational perspective.

Twenty-five years later, the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum is generously hosting an exhibition of some of the most important works of Islamic art from our collection, that in due course we will house in the Aga Khan Museum (AKM) in Toronto, Canada. In the hall outside your exhibition stands the model of this future museum, with information as to its structure and facilities. It is expected to open in 2011.

Of course, our collections are as yet modest in size in relation to the exceptional collection of arts from all major cultures – including Islamic arts – which Calouste Gulbenkian brought together with such extraordinary flair and taste. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

will also, surely, be a model for our future institution in Toronto, on how the presentation of artworks can bring about an awareness of the commonalities which are at the heart of cultural diversity and pluralism.

No one can deny that today, there are distressing and even dangerous tensions between the Muslim world and the West. With its history and cultures, and indeed its different interpretations of Islam, the Muslim world is still little known in the West, as are its contributions to global cultural heritage and patrimony. This lack of knowledge is a dramatic reality which currently manifests itself in a particularly serious way in many western democracies, through widespread attitudes and approaches to Muslim societies and countries. Be that as it may, the



H.H. the Aga Khan and the first President of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, José de Azeredo Perdigão (Lisbon, 1983).

two worlds, Muslim and non-Muslim, Eastern and Western, must, as a matter of urgency, make real efforts to get to know one another better, for I fear that what we have is not a clash of civilisations, but a clash of ignorance on both sides.

Insofar as civilisations manifest and express themselves through their art, museums have an essential role to play in facilitating respect and appreciation of social structures, values and faiths that are an integral part of the societies which produced the art, thereby, ensuring that whole populations are given the opportunity to understand each other, using new, modern methods imaginatively and intelligently.

It is indeed my sincere hope that in shaping its educational programmes and policies and in developing its presentation of art as a vehicle of discovery and understanding, the future Aga Khan Museum will be able to cooperate closely with the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Nothing could please me more than to know that the exhibition presented here is a first step in this important direction.



H.H. the Aga Khan with the Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki who has designed the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto).

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN

WHEN THE MUGHAL EMPEROR AKBAR called the Jesuits who were established in Goa to his court to discuss and debate religious issues, he showed great openness of spirit, an attitude which permitted the cultural enrichment of the people. It is obviously known that the religious authorities of both sides generally disagreed, but their curiosity for each other had fundamental repercussions in the context of a wider interaction among the people from the region, which is manifest in the artistic production.

The extremely rich cultures that developed in the immense geographic region occupied by the Muslim world result from many rich and varied influences, which make Islamic art and culture interesting, always renewed, and a cause for wonder.

During the initial stages of its expansion and conquests, the Islamic world perceived and assimilated the best of the artistic production of the places they conquered, and were able to use them to create another culture, unique in quality and varied in its manifestations.

It is not surprising that the “genius” of these cultures, which manifested itself with great splendour in the centres of power and also spread to the peripheries from where other influences came, has seduced many great collectors.

Calouste Gulbenkian, Armenian, born on Islamic territory, was so sensitive to these artistic productions that, throughout his life, with both intuition and learning, he collected objects which are paradigms of the cultures of the Islamic world. This does not mean that those absent from his collection were considered to have less quality; it was the option from a collector, in the best sense of the word, choosing according to scientific demand, as well as with an impulsive fondness, reflecting his personality and taste in his collection.

Could there be a better way of divulging this vast and varied wealth than through contact with other private collections, where a particular taste is evident, thus helping to provide a wider vision of Islamic Art? We believe that part of the answer can be found in the decision from the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to present a choice, a difficult task due to the inherent artistic quality of the pieces and the importance of the historic documents of the collection that His Highness the Aga Khan has brought together.

Here the taste of the collector is also the personal mark of a vision which combines different artistic productions, making a link to the religious and cultural values of which His Highness

is guardian. This exhibition displays objects from a great variety of origins, periods and materials, enriching the perception of our collection, in a dialogue of similarities and differences.

Part of the success of this exhibition is due to the dedication and enthusiasm with which Benoît Junod, responsible for museum and exhibition projects at the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, accompanied this project and transmitted to the Museum team, particularly to the curator Maria Queiroz Ribeiro, Mariano Piçarra, author of exhibition design, and João Carvalho Dias who was committed to the production of a catalogue intended to be a work of reference on these matters.

JOÃO CASTEL-BRANCO PEREIRA

Director of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum

The Future Aga Khan Museum, Toronto

THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN MUSEUM generously accepted to host a selection of masterpieces from the future Aga Khan Museum, offering a glimpse of the collection which, in 2011, will be housed in the building of which the construction is about to begin in Toronto.

The presence of a museum dedicated to Muslim arts and culture, in a major North American city, early in the 21st century, is not an exercise in futility. Too often the Western public has no idea of the history, culture, languages and geographies which make up the fabulous variety of Muslim civilisations, with their so varied and generous forms of expression. Thus the mission of the Aga

Khan Museum will be primarily an educational task. By stressing the role of these cultures in the unfolding of history, by bringing the arts of Islam in dialogue with those of other civilisations, the museum will highlight the contribution of Islam to universal heritage.

The idea of bringing a museum of Muslim arts and culture, a space of knowledge and contemplation, to the North American public, came naturally to the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The institution is active in over thirty countries, through projects and investments in health, education, employment and development aid. On the principle that the preservation of cultural heritage is not a burden, but a catalyst to development, the Aga Khan



A perspective of the future
Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.

Trust for Culture (AKTC, the cultural foundation of AKDN) established programmes of restoration of historic sites and rehabilitation of their neighbourhoods which have had positive cultural and socio-economic results. This original and specific approach has for ten years enabled the restoration and revitalisation of the urban environment of cities such as Cairo, Kabul, Herat, Aleppo, Delhi, Zanzibar, Mostar, Timbuktu and Mopti. This process is complemented by socio-economic initiatives such as micro-credits, training and health programmes, mother-

and-child care centres, etc., which all have measurable positive impact on the development and quality of life of people living in conditions of extreme poverty.

AKTC's programmes also include many activities for the preservation and enhancement of various components of the material and spiritual heritage of Muslim communities. Thus the initiative for music in Central Asia (AKMICA) gives support to musicians and composers, who are depositaries of the musical heritage of these regions, in particular by recording and publishing music anthologies from different ethnic groups. It also supports, through a number of schools, the transmission of musical skills to new generations and promotes, through a programme of international concerts, the knowledge of this rich heritage.

In the field of architecture, His Highness the Aga Khan has established and funded a programme of research and study of Islamic architecture at Harvard University and at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). AKTC also runs ArchNet, a reference documentary and image database on architecture and urbanism in the Islamic world. Last but not least, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, created over thirty years ago, identifies and rewards both exemplary contemporary architectural creations as well as innovative projects which offer solutions to the problems of the built environment in Muslim societies.

Thus the creation in the West of a museum dedicated to the promotion of Islamic arts and cultures is a major element in the development policies which His Highness the Aga Khan is pursuing through the institutions implementing them.

The Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki has designed the museum building, which will be surrounded by a ten-hectare landscaped park, constituting an important architectural feature of the city of Toronto. The Aga Khan Museum is a project in progress; its collections are still being developed. However, His Highness' personal commitment and the integration of collections assembled by members of his family will richly endow the museum, which will house a collection of masterpieces set in a contemporary museography. Moreover, dynamic educational programmes will make it a unique space in North America, an institution at the heart of the dissemination of knowledge of the arts and cultures of Islam, aiming at the widest public – school children, students, adults and families, as well as researchers. It hopes to become also a major



Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan's "Salon Persan" in Bellerive Castle, Geneva, Switzerland. Princess Catherine has generously donated the contents of this room to the future museum, where it will be reconstituted as above.

educational player through the web, and to house a library with specialised documentation access, as well as a virtual information centre and a large auditorium with lecture, film and concert programmes.

Beyond its permanent collection, the Aga Khan Museum plans to develop an ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions, spotlighting the diversity of Islamic arts and cultures, and from a variety of standpoints. Beyond the traditional presentation of major periods of Muslim history, original approaches will be privileged, such as underlining the relationships between Islam and other cultures, or depicting the evolution of arts, sciences, religion, literature, or music in a Muslim context from earlier times until today. Such exhibitions will be built in cooperation with other international institutions, and it is hoped that the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation will be one of our first partners.

It was only after careful study of various geographical and demographical parameters that the choice of venue for the museum fixed on Toronto. It is a city with major cultural institutions which already draw a very wide and numerous public. In synergy with its surroundings, we hope that the Aga Khan Museum will be able to attract many visitors from both sides of the Canada-USA border, an area that has a potential public of 70 million people within one hour's flight.

This preview in Lisbon of an anthology of the Aga Khan collections is an invitation to visit the future museum in Toronto in its final architectural setting with its wide choice of exhibitions, programmes and visitor services.

LUIS MONREAL
General Manager, AKTC

در تو با زین و غیره نشان همه
و لفریدن



عین جان زین صو که کر سبیل
شانی اشین ما

شاه شجاع کیش خوبی



وان می سپهران سیم اندام



The Historical Context

THE LAST IN THE LINE OF THE Abrahamic family of revealed traditions, Islam emerged in the early decades of the seventh century. Its message, addressed in perpetuity, calls upon people to seek in their daily life, in the very diversity of humankind, signs that point to the Creator and Sustainer of all creation. Revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabia, Islam's influence spread rapidly, bringing within its fold, within just over a century of its birth, the inhabitants of the lands stretching from the central regions of Asia to the Iberian Peninsula in Europe.

A major world religion, Islam today counts a quarter of the globe's population among its followers. All Muslims affirm the absolute unity and transcendence of God (*tawhid*) as the first and foremost article of the faith, followed by that of Divine guidance through God's chosen messengers, of whom the Prophet Muhammad was the last. This affirmation constitutes the *shahada*, the profession of faith, and is the basic creed of all Muslims. In its essence, Islam refers to the inner struggle of the individual, waged singly and in consonance with fellow believers, to engage in earthly life, while rising above its trappings in search of the Divine. This quest is only meaningful in tandem with the effort to do good for one's kin, for orphans, the needy, the vulnerable; to be just, honest, humble, tolerant and forgiving.

SHIA ISLAM: HISTORICAL ORIGINS

Within its fundamental unity, Islam has evoked, over the ages, varying responses to its primal message calling upon man to surrender himself to God. Historically, these responses have been expressed as two main perspectives within Islam: the Shia and the Sunni. Each encompasses a rich diversity of spiritual temperaments, juridical preferences, social and psychological dispositions, political entities and cultures. Ismailism is one such response from within the overall Shia perspective which seeks to comprehend the true meaning of the Islamic message.

During his lifetime, Prophet Muhammad was both the recipient and the expounder of Divine revelation. His death marked the conclusion of the line of prophecy, and the beginning of the critical debate on the question of the rightful leadership to continue his mission for future generations. In essence, the position of the group that eventually coalesced into the majority, the Sunni branch, which comprises several different juridical schools, was that the Prophet had not

nominated a successor, as the revelation contained in the Qur'an was sufficient guidance for the community. There developed a tacit recognition that spiritual-moral authority was to be exercised by the *'ulama'*, a group of specialists in matters of religious law, or *shariah*. The role of the caliph, theoretically elected by the community, was to maintain a realm in which the principles and practices of Islam were safeguarded and propagated.

The Shi'at 'Ali or the "party" of 'Ali, already in existence during the lifetime of the Prophet, maintained that while the revelation ceased at the Prophet's death, the need for spiritual and moral guidance of the community, through an ongoing interpretation of the Islamic message, continued. For them, the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad could only be entrusted to a member of his own family, in whom the Prophet had invested his authority through designation. That person was 'Ali, the Prophet's cousin, and the husband of his daughter and only surviving child, Fatima. 'Ali was also the Prophet's first supporter who devoutly championed the cause of Islam. Just as it was the prerogative of the Prophet to designate his successor, so it is the absolute prerogative of each Imam of the time to designate his successor from among his male progeny. Hence, according to Shia doctrine, the Imamate continues by descent from the Prophet through 'Ali and Fatima.

In time, the Shia were sub-divided. The Ismailis and what eventually came to be known as the Ithna'ashari or Twelver Shia parted ways over the succession to Ja'far al-Sadiq, the great great grandson of 'Ali and Fatima. The Ithna'asharis transferred their allegiance to al-Sadiq's youngest son Musa al-Kazim and after him, in lineal descent, to Muhammad al-Mahdi, their twelfth Imam who, they believe, is in occultation and will reappear to dispense perfect order and justice. Today, the Ithna'asharis are the largest Shia Muslim community, and constitute the majority of the population in Iran. The Ismailis gave their allegiance to Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq's eldest son Isma'il, from whom they derive their name. They trace the line of Imamate in hereditary succession from Isma'il to His Highness the Aga Khan, who is currently the forty-ninth Imam in direct lineal descent from Prophet Muhammad through 'Ali and Fatima. The Ismailis are the second largest Shia Muslim community, and are settled in over twenty-five countries, mostly in the developing world, but now also with a substantial presence in the industrialised nations.

THE ISMAILI IMAMATE FROM THE TIME OF THE DIVISION IN THE SHIA COMMUNITY: AN OVERVIEW

The foundation of the Ismaili Fatimid caliphate in North Africa in the year 909 was the culmination of a long and sustained commitment of the descendants of Imam Isma'il to promote the Islamic ideal of social justice and equity.

Centred in Egypt, the Fatimid caliphate at its peak extended westward to North Africa, Sicily and other Mediterranean islands, and eastward to the Red Sea coast of Africa, Palestine, Syria, the Yemen and Arabia. The Fatimids encouraged intellectual and philosophical inquiry, and attracted the finest minds of the age to their court, whatever their religious persuasions. Al-Azhar, the Cairo mosque built by Imam-caliph al-Mu'izz in 972, was a great centre of learning, and



Cat. no. 14

the *Dar al-^llm*, the House of Knowledge, established in 1005, was the first medieval institution of learning, a precursor of the modern university combining in its programme a full range of major academic disciplines, from the study of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions through jurisprudence, philology and grammar, to medicine, logic, mathematics and astronomy. In the same spirit, the Ismaili view of history, which accorded due respect to the great monotheistic religions of the Abrahamic tradition, provided the intellectual framework for the participation of the followers of different faiths in the affairs of the Fatimid state. Christians and Jews, as much as Muslims of either branch, were able to rise to the highest echelons of state office on grounds of competence alone. The Fatimids' policies reflected a plurality of pious ways rather than a monolithic interpretation of the faith.

In the last decade of the eleventh century, the Ismaili community suffered a schism over the succession to Imam-caliph al-Mustansir billah. One part of the community followed his youngest son al-Musta^lli. The other gave its allegiance to his eldest son Imam Nizar from whom the Aga Khan, the present Imam of the Ismailis, traces his descent. The seat of the Ismaili Imams then moved to Alamut, in northern Iran, where the Ismailis had succeeded in establishing a state comprising a defensive network of fortified settlements. These fortresses housed impressive libraries and study rooms whose collections ranged from books on religion and philosophy to scientific instruments, and the Ismailis did not abandon their liberal policy of patronage to

men of learning of Muslim as well as non-Muslim backgrounds. However, the invasions by the Mongol hordes led to the destruction of the Ismaili state in 1256. After this, the Ismailis lived in dispersed communities and, under the direction of each succeeding Imam, centres of activity were established in the Indian subcontinent, Afghanistan, the mountainous regions of the Hindu Kush, Central Asia and parts of China over the course of several centuries.

The modern phase of Ismaili history began when the forty-sixth Imam, Aga Hasan ʿAli Shah, emigrated from Iran to India in the 1840s. He was the first Imam to bear the title of Aga Khan, bestowed by the Persian emperor, Fath ʿAli Shah. He established his headquarters in Mumbai (Bombay), and this marked the beginning of an era of regular contacts between the Imam and his widely dispersed followers. Aga Khan I was succeeded by his eldest son Aga ʿAli Shah, who assumed the title of Aga Khan II, and was honoured with the courtesy of His Highness, first granted to his father by the British government. Building on the initiatives of his father, Aga Khan II set about the long-term task of social development of the community, with emphasis on education. He passed away in 1885, and the institution of the Imamate then devolved upon his son Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, who was eight years old at the time of his accession.

His life marks a remarkable era of momentous significance. From every platform, the third Aga Khan advocated free, universal, practically oriented primary education, improved secondary schools for Muslims, and a generous provision of government and private scholarships to enable talented Muslim students to study in Britain, Europe, and America. It was in pursuit of his educational vision that Aga Khan III successfully transformed the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, India, into a leading university.

Aga Khan III's abiding concern, throughout his seventy-two years as Imam – the longest in history – was the welfare of the Ismaili community. This period was a critical one in the modern history of the Ismaili community, and it was his inspiring leadership as much as its enthusiastic response to his guidance that enabled the community to enter a period of remarkable progress in the areas of health, education, housing, commerce and industry, leading to the establishment of a network of health clinics, hospitals, schools, hostels, cooperative societies, investment trusts, and insurance companies.



Cat. no. 16

THE CONTEMPORARY PERIOD

Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III passed away on 11 July 1957, having designated his grandson, Prince Karim – twenty years old at the time of his accession – to succeed him as the forty-ninth hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Under the leadership of Aga Khan IV, the institutions and activities of the Imamate have expanded far beyond their original scope. The Aga Khan has explained many times that the impulse that underpins these activities and shapes the social conscience of his community remains the unchanging Muslim ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

To give an operational structure to his humanitarian activities, the Aga Khan created the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in specific regions of the developing world. The Network's organisations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and the promotion of private-sector enterprises. Together they collaborate in working towards a common goal – to build institutions and programmes that can sustainedly respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change. The Aga Khan Foundation, Aga Khan Education Services, Aga Khan Health Services, Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Aga Khan University, and the University of Central Asia operate in the field of social development. Economic activities are the province of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance with their affiliates in tourism, ecotourism, promotion of industry and financial services. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC) implements cultural initiatives aimed at revitalising the heritage of communities in the Islamic world. One of the newest undertakings of AKTC is the project, set up in 2003, to establish an Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.

AZIM NANJI

Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London



Artistic Traditions in the Worlds of Islam: Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*

IN THE EARLY YEARS of the seventh century, the Arabian Peninsula stood on the southern vestiges of two rival empires – Byzantium and Sasanian Iran. In 622, the emigration of Prophet Muhammad and his Meccan followers to Yathrib (known as Medina after this date) gave rise to a new state which grew rapidly over the next century. Initially, from his base in Medina, the Prophet extended his influence throughout the Arabian Peninsula through a series of alliances. Subsequently, during the period of the first four caliphs, who ruled from Medina between 632, the year of the death of the Prophet, and 661, Muslim forces conquered Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, western Iran and Egypt and, by 670, the Byzantines had been forced to retreat into Anatolia.

The greatest territorial expansion of the Muslim empire occurred during the rule of the Umayyad dynasty. By the 730s, a hundred years after the death of the Prophet, the Umayyads, ruling as an Arab monarchy from Damascus, had extended the territories of the empire from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Indus River valley and the borders of China in the east. Contrary to widely held belief, the conquest of territories outside of the Arabian Peninsula did not bring about mass conversion to Islam. Indeed, for over a century after the conquests, Islam remained a minority religion in these regions. Although the Umayyads sponsored the construction of monumental mosques in Damascus, Jerusalem and Medina, as well as in other newly founded Muslim towns, the richly diversified population encompassed many different ethnic and religious communities, including Syriac Christians, Copts from Egypt, the peoples of Iran, the Romanized and Christianized peoples of Spain, Berbers from Northern Africa, the Sogdians from Central Asia; and scattered Jewish communities. During the era of Umayyad rule, Arabic established

* Editors' note: This text is compiled from elements of the essay by Sophie Makariou that appears in the catalogue of the Louvre exhibition, as well as Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250* (New Haven, 2001) and Sheila S. Blair and Jonathan M. Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800* (New Haven, 1994).

itself visually in the living space shared by various communities, Muslim and non-Muslim. From this period, we have the earliest inscriptions preserved in Arabic, and the Umayyads established Arabic as the language of administration and coinage: new coins with purely Arabic inscriptions appeared, for the first time, in 696-97.

One of the least explored areas within the subject of Islamic art history is the material culture and decorative arts produced during the first one hundred and twenty-five years of Muslim rule. Reflecting the full scope of their empire, the art of the Umayyads not only adopted the art of earlier times and adapted Greco-Roman forms and Sasanian elements, but this adoption and adaptation was combined with creative and innovative techniques that broke new ground and set a particular and unique course for the arts of Islam. In this highly complex and challenging environment emerged a vocabulary based on four elements: abstract and non-naturalistic vegetal forms, geometric patterns, calligraphy, and figural decoration.

Local uprisings and dynastic conflicts weakened the Umayyad dynasty and, in 750, the Abbasids seized control of the central Islamic lands. The only survivor of this Abbasid overthrow of the Umayyads was ʿAbd al-Rahman who succeeded in establishing an independent dynasty in al-Andalus which ruled nearly three-quarters of the Iberian Peninsula until the first decades of the eleventh century. ʿAbd al-Rahman and his descendants produced a brilliant literary and artistic culture of their own, and the Umayyad court also had a strong impact on the significant Christian and Jewish populations within and outside al-Andalus. Their capitals, Cordoba and Madinat al-Zahra, were among the most important cities of the medieval world. With access to the best available artisans from the whole Mediterranean area, in particular Byzantium and Italy, as well as from the central and eastern Islamic lands, the art of al-Andalus from this period owes a great debt to the vast vocabulary of Antique and Late Antique art, the artistic tapestry that existed in the Mediterranean societies of the early Middle Ages, and the styles that were created in the central Islamic lands.

After overthrowing the Umayyads, the Abbasids moved the capital of the empire to central Iraq, where the dynasty founded Baghdad, Samarra and other cities. The city of Baghdad soon became the wealthiest urban concentration, as well as the greatest centre of cultural and artistic production in the Muslim world. Astronomy, mathematics, geography, optics and medicine were given a major boost with a massive programme of translations from Greek, Syriac, and Sanskrit, and the appearance of paper made possible the rapid spread of knowledge and learning from North Africa in the west to Khurasan in the east. Scientists and translators developed and made available in the Arabic language all fields of knowledge. From algebra to zoology, everything was studied, written down and codified. During this period, the arts and material culture of the central Islamic lands, while continuing the pattern of adoption and adaptation from previous traditions, developed certain specific characteristics. One was the special position given to the activity of writing, which was transformed into a subject worthy of the most elaborate ornamentation. The other was the formalization of vegetal ornamentation – the term ‘arabesque’ being applied to



Cat. no. 49

signify this formalization – into a continuous pattern of scrolls or repeated motifs which have neither a beginning nor an end.

During the ninth century, the governors appointed by the Abbasids in North Africa and Egypt became semi-independent. Thus, the Aghlabids (r. 800-909) based in Tunisia and the Tulunids (r. 868-905) in Egypt formed dynasties of their own, enjoying considerable political and fiscal independence. Similarly, in Iran and Transoxiana, the Tahirids (r. 821-91), the Samanids (r. 819-1005) and the Saffarids (r. 867-963), who began as administrative appointees of the Abbasids developed into dynasties exercising effective control over large areas. Direct Abbasid rule came to an end and the Abbasid caliphs became mere figureheads when the military dynasty of the Buyids (r. 932-1062) assumed power in Baghdad in 945.

In the first decade of the tenth century, the establishment of the Fatimid state represented a direct challenge to Abbasid hegemony and the authority of the Abbasid caliph. The Fatimid dynasty which began in Ifriqiyya (modern-day Tunisia) around 908 and moved to Egypt in 969 ruled an area of shifting frontiers which, at its greatest expanse, extended from Algeria and Sicily to

northern Syria and Arabia. Under Fatimid rule, Egypt became the focal point of vast trading activities extending as far as Spain in the west and China in the east, and the newly created capital city of Cairo became a major centre of cultural, intellectual and artistic activities. Besides being an extremely important international trading city – silks and ceramics were imported from China and India – Cairo was also a great manufacturing centre and a major employer of artisans and technicians from all over the Muslim world and beyond, with no fewer than two hundred different categories of artisans. The Fatimid era, therefore, was North African, Egyptian, Syrian, Arabian, as well as Mediterranean, and this complexity of contacts, which also included the Christian West, Byzantium, India and China, gave the material culture produced during this period a visual distinction and aesthetic vitality which, in many respects, was unique, and which preceded developments elsewhere. The formalism of vegetal decoration gave way to a more lively arabesque with highly naturalistic features and images of daily life and representations of people and animals appeared in almost all different types of objects.

In the first decades of the eleventh century, the Muslim world was in a state of tremendous religious, social and political tensions. In western Iran, several small dynasties jostled for power with each other, while in eastern Iran, the Samanids were weakened by the ambitions of Turks in the army. Indeed, the Ghaznavids (r. 962-1186), who started under the wing of the Samanids, established their capital in Ghazna and conquered much of northwest India and most of eastern

Iran, while the Seljuqs (r. 1037-1157) expelled the Buyids and took Baghdad in 1055. In the middle of the eleventh century, a major political and economic crisis shattered Fatimid power in Egypt, and the Ayyubids, whose greatest ruler was Salah al-Din (Saladin), succeeded in overthrowing the Fatimids in 1171. Minor dynasties established themselves in the coastal cities and interior highlands of North Africa. Also at this time, the rule of the Umayyads of Spain collapsed and power fell into the hands of local military dynasties based in individual cities. Thus, from Spain to Central Asia, dozens of separate and often independent centres of power had come into being. The further danger of conquest by a revitalized Christian West added to these pressures.

In the eastern Islamic lands, the cultural and intellectual life in the major centres of Rayy, Nishapur, Merv, Herat, and Balkh, as well as in Bukhara and Samarqand, was dominated by two trends, one Arabic and the other specifically Iranian. These two trends were further complicated with the arrival of Turkic tribes into Iran at the beginning of the tenth century. However, in most instances, these trends became blended, and the new rulers adopted, fostered and developed these various traditions. Thinkers of universal importance such as al-Farabi, al-Razi, Ibn Sina and al-Biruni, who had Persian or Turkish origins, wrote primarily in Arabic. On the other hand, the Samanids, who originated from Iranian lineages, were devoted to the revival of the Persian language, as well as Persian historical and literary traditions. They sponsored Persian poets as well as translations from Arabic and Sanskrit, and helped to formulate a new Iranian Muslim



Cat. no. 42



Cat. no. 105

Cat. no. 76



cultural world. Also, it was in this milieu that Persian became a major vehicle for expression and poetry made its appearance, with the epic tradition of Iran being written down by Firdawsi in the *Shahnama*, which was dedicated to the Ghaznavid ruler, Mahmud Sebüktigin, who was of Turkish origin. In the western Islamic lands, intellectual and religious works were written in Arabic, and some of the most remarkable thinkers of the period – Ibn Rushd, Ibn Hazm, Ibn Tufayl and Ibn al-[°]Arabi – came from Andalusia.

During this period, the arts and material culture of the central and eastern Islamic lands saw the emergence of numerous different centres separated by long distances and with independent types of taste. Artists combined longstanding designs from the central and eastern Islamic lands with adaptations from local traditions, as well as new techniques from China and the arts of Sasanian Iran and Sogdian Central Asia. Foreign and indigenous influences were effectively adapted and new and original possibilities – surfaces of objects were transformed by animated decoration, inscriptions in Arabic as well as Persian, often from well-known literature, appeared on nearly every object – strengthened artistic traditions during this period. Similarly, in the western Islamic lands, in spite of constant political changes and territorial conflicts, the arts spread from a few cultural centres to dozens of new cities. The courts of the various independent sovereigns and party kings became renowned for their sophistication and brilliance. The material culture of this period – echoing and embracing some of the traditions created in Egypt, as well as expanding the existing North African and Andalusian decorative vocabulary – exhibited a high degree of

artistry and sophistication. The Zirids of Granada, for instance, were responsible for the twelve stone lions that now lend their name to the Patio de los Leones in the Alhambra.

The invasion of the Mongols in the second decade of the thirteenth century led to the destruction of Baghdad in 1258. With the Ilkhanid conquests, the Iranian world became the centre of artistic and cultural innovation, with Iranian models and ideas being paramount. By the third quarter of the fourteenth century, a new power, the Timurids (r. 1370-1506), emerged in Central Asia, and the capital cities of the Timurid dynasty – Shahr-i Sabz, Samarqand, Bukhara, and Herat – became important centres of art and culture. In the central Islamic lands, the Ayyubids were replaced in 1260 by the Mamluk sultans, who ruled from Cairo over Egypt, Syria, western Arabia and parts of Anatolia for the next two hundred and fifty years. In the western Islamic lands, from the early thirteenth century onwards, power came to be balanced amongst a few regional dynasties.

Following the Mongol conquests in Iran, one of the most important developments in the artistic traditions of Islam was the pivotal role of the arts of the book, especially illustration and illumination. Under Ilkhanid patronage, impressive manuscripts were produced, and new motifs and concepts were introduced. Court patronage of monumental manuscripts for royal libraries

Cat. no. 114 (detail)



Cat. no. 116 (detail)



was accompanied by smaller productions for the marketplace, and Shiraz became an important centre of manuscript production. Patronage of the arts continued with the Timurids, and this is reflected in the architecture, as well as the arts of the book, from this period. The Timurids set the standard for excellence with beautifully calligraphed, decorated and illustrated manuscripts that were produced in Tabriz, Herat and Shiraz in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The visual vocabulary of the Timurids which had been developed in the fifteenth century in Iran and Central Asia came to permeate the arts of other regions, including Turkey and India. In Egypt and Syria, the Mamluks patronized the architectural traditions, and commissioned fittings – such as glass lamps, ewers, basins and candlesticks – and furnishings for these buildings. Many of these objects were marked with prominent emblems of ownership. The principal cities of the Mamluk realm – Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo – were important focal points for trade between the Mediterranean world and the East. Textiles and spices were exported to the prosperous cities of southern Europe in exchange for wood, silver and copper. In Andalusia, the splendid court life of the Nasrids (r. 1230-1492) was exemplified by their royal city, the Alhambra in Granada, which is one of the most famous monuments of world civilization. More than seven hundred years of Muslim rule came to an end in Andalusia when the Iberian Peninsula was brought under Christian control in 1492.



The Osmanlı or Ottoman dynasty (r. 1299-1924), which had risen to power in northwest Anatolia, expanded their realm to include much of Anatolia and all of Thrace before defeating the Byzantines at Constantinople in 1453. While evidence for the patronage of the decorative arts by the Ottomans before the conquest of Constantinople is limited, a classic Ottoman style had emerged by the middle of the sixteenth century. Inspired by a range of sources of the Islamic and Mediterranean lands, the artistic traditions of the Ottomans had a distinctive visual vocabulary, which struck an extraordinary balance between the geometric order underlying much of the arts of the Muslim world and a lyric naturalism visible in the common representation of plants and flowers. The decline of Ottoman political and economic power in the eighteenth century resulted in a decline in the quality of the artistic traditions; only calligraphy continued to maintain the high standards of quality.

In the opening years of the sixteenth century, the descendants of Shaykh Safi^c al-Din established the Safavid dynasty (r. 1501-1732). The Safavids dominated Iran and Afghanistan, extending their rule into areas of Central Asia and the Caucasus from their courts in Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan. During the first half of the sixteenth century, the arts of the book took on extraordinary significance under Safavid patronage, and manuscripts of the highest quality were produced.

The importance and quality of manuscript illumination and painting is illustrated by the famous manuscript of the *Shahnama* made for Shah Tahmasp. Following Tahmasp's death in 1576, many of the court painters emigrated to Bukhara and Delhi, where they found work for royal patrons. However, a revival of the arts took place during the reign of ʿAbbas I who transferred the capital to Isfahan in 1591. An interesting development in the seventeenth century was the replacement of large-size manuscripts prepared by several artists with single-page paintings and calligraphic drawings by one individual. Thus, the works of artists such as Riza ʿAbbasi, Muʿin Musavvir and Muhammad Zaman epitomize the aesthetic of seventeenth-century Iran. Although the Afghan invasions beginning in 1732 brought an end to the Safavid dynasty, the patronage of the arts continued during the reign of Karim Khan Zand, who ruled from Shiraz.

Although Muslims had established trading settlements on the Indian coast as early as the eighth century, it was only five hundred years later, at the end of the twelfth century, that northern India was conquered. Delhi was the seat of several dynasties, collectively known as the Delhi sultanates, and became an important centre of learning and culture, with Persian as the language of high culture and administration. The sultanate rulers were succeeded by the Mughals (r. 1526-1858), who were the greatest and longest-lasting Muslim dynasty to rule India.

Under the independent sultanates, a new style of calligraphy, known as *khatt-i bihari*, emerged in manuscripts, and this became the standard in the fifteenth century. Also emerging in fifteenth-century India was a distinctive tradition of illustrated manuscripts in which Indian motifs were added to traditional Iranian themes. Following the example of the Timurids, the Mughal emperors created large libraries and supported ateliers and workshops where manuscripts were produced. Under the patronage of the Mughals, the Iranian and indigenous traditions were combined with European ones, which had begun to circulate as a result of maritime trade with and Jesuit missions to the West. By the end of the sixteenth century, the number of artists working in the royal atelier was over one hundred, and the manuscripts produced had a distinct Mughal style, in which Iranian, Indian and European elements were assimilated into a harmonious whole. Royal patronage came to an end in the early eighteenth century, and book illustration reached a stylistic plateau, with artists reverting to traditional concepts of composition. Various western decorative techniques, such as enamelling, were introduced to India by European craftsmen serving the Mughal court. And gradually, the domination and economic impact of Europe began to be felt not only in India, but also Egypt, Turkey and Iran.



Catalogue

PART ONE

The Word of God

The Text of the Qur'an and its Supports

“In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
Recite: In the name of thy Lord who created,
created man of a blood-clot.
Recite: And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen,
taught man that he knew not.”
Qur'an, 96: 1-5

IN THE FIRST DECADE of the seventh century, the Prophet Muhammad received the first of a series of revelations. The revelations came to the Prophet over a period of twenty-two years at intervals and at appropriate times in the form of divine inspiration. During the Prophet's lifetime, the revelations were not only memorised by his followers and associates, but had begun to be transcribed. Written mnemonic devices are mentioned in Arabic sources from the ninth century (Ibn Hanbal) to the fifteenth (Suyuti). The materials were very diverse: animal scapulas or skin, pottery shards (*ostraka*), leaves and others.

The oldest preserved Qur'ans are not complete manuscripts, but fragments of varying lengths. The earliest writings slant to the right and are called *hijazi* (cursive); stylistically, they are close to documents written on papyrus, and some date to the mid-seventh century. But for climatic reasons, the preserved papyri are nearly all Egyptian. During the Islamic empire (*dawlat al-islam*), was there a standard written form from one end of the Islamic lands to the other? In a word, was the Qur'an copied using the same form of handwriting throughout the entire Islamic world? It is difficult to affirm this, and therefore to identify the copy centres. For writings from the ninth and tenth centuries, we have some clues that in the end narrow things down. At the end of the nineteenth century, a considerable number of Qur'anic fragments were found at the Great Mosque of Kairouan in Tunisia. This magnificent collection of Qur'anic calligraphy had a naturally “magnetic” effect: the many Qur'an pages that are still put up for sale very often are attributed to Tunisia. Other major production centres for Qur'anic manuscripts are not easily

pinned down. What is known of the tenth-century Qur'ans from the caliphate of Cordoba? Can we really suppose that they have all disappeared, when copies of secular works wound up in eastern libraries, and ostensibly Maghribin Qur'ans (cat. no. 1) were found as far away as Tashkent? We still know only a little about Qur'ans from the Abbasid era from Syrian, Iraqi and Iranian lands. The discovery of Qur'an fragments in the Great Mosque of San^ca' (Yemen) in 1973 changed the way these early Qur'anic writings were viewed. None of the *mushafs*, or Qur'anic codices, which were found alongside Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, was made at San^ca'. At San^ca', Damascus and Kairouan, the huge quantities of manuscripts and the presence of various types of works alongside the copies of the Qur'an underscore the role of the mosques as a place of study and teaching.

The oldest Qur'an bearing a date is the Qur'an of Amajur, the governor of Damascus, upon which is preserved the notation of his donation under *waqf* to the Great Mosque of Tyre in 262 H (876 CE). So it was copied, at the latest, as of this date. Dating Qur'anic manuscripts from the first three centuries of Islam remains a difficult task because it has not been possible to locate the copy centres from which the styles spread; or to reliably trace the development of a writing style and the improvements made to a *scriptio defectiva*.

Arabic is a Semitic language with twenty-nine letters, but there are only eighteen different written forms of the letters, or fifteen within a word. The sounds *ba*, *ta*, *tha*, *nun* and *ya* are designated by the same sign. Only long vowels and semivowels (*alif*, *ya*, *waw*) were noted. This system, which may have been derived from Syriac writing, soon led to numerous ambiguities when reading. So attempts were made to enhance it in various ways: oblique lines above the line of writing, symbols written above or below the letters. Today, these are the diacritical marks notated by the points. Finally, additional symbols for the three short vowels and the orthoepic symbols – marking the absence of a vowel and the doubling of a consonant – were added. This system allowed vocalization of the text, passing from a purely consonantal scheme, a word skeleton, to a series of pronounceable phonemes, that is, a word. With regard to the date, authors and exact conditions of these additions, even ancient versions diverge. Most of the oldest pages presented here have neither vocalization (*ijam*) nor diacritical marks (cat. nos. 1 and 2).

It was not until the introduction of cursive writing that the vocalization and diacritical system became firmly established. Ibn Muqla (d. 940) and Ibn al-Bawwab (d. 1022 or 1032) left their mark on the development of the six classic styles of cursive writing (*aqlam al-sitta*). However, these styles can no longer be discerned except through textual analysis – that is, analysis of the theoretical or poetic works written in them. But their contribution can be seen in the work of later calligraphers. Only a single manuscript by Ibn al-Bawwab has survived.

Many copies of the Qur'an appear to be luxury manuscripts, a sort of glorious monument to the revealed text. During the second and third centuries of the *hijra*, writing was still predominantly in black ink, highlighted by some marginal symbols in gold or silver and sometimes a large gold marginal palm leaf. The use of chrysography indicates a copy of extreme luxury (cat. no. 2).

In the fourteenth century gold writing was still used in the Ilkhanid Qur'ans of Iran, the Mamluk Qur'ans of Egypt, and the Marinid Qur'ans in Morocco. Furthermore, the use of a monumental format to copy a relatively short text marks the will of the leaders of a vast empire to assert Islam's place in the newly conquered countries in relation to other religions of the Book, which had an impressive tradition of liturgical works. Beginning at the end of the eighth century, the creation of manuscripts on very large pieces of parchment was abandoned, not to be resumed until the tenth century, in the eastern part of the empire, this time on paper (cat. no. 5).

There are many ways to add space to the Qur'anic text: by stretching the letters, reducing the number of lines per page (cat. no. 3), dividing the text into thirty to sixty volumes (each provided with a cover adding to the thickness of the codex), and providing all the furniture that then becomes necessary to store or read it. Finally, the Qur'anic text was written in monumental characters, encircling all the mosque walls at the base of the ceiling and accentuating the perimeter (cat. no. 17).

Conversely, there are some astonishing miniature copies of the Qur'an: Qur'ans in tiny writing on two folios (cat. no. 8) or worn as a talisman in small leather or worked gold cases. This touches on a more personal and prophylactic use of the Qur'an, and on the pious and devotional practice of the act of copying the Qur'an. In both the infinitely large and the infinitely small, the difficulty adds to the piety.

Worn on the chest, inscribed piecemeal on talismans or amulets, engraved on metal or on the shell of a magical healing object, the revealed text protects. It also protects in contact with water (cat. no. 12). **SM**



1 QUR'AN FOLIO IN KUFIC SCRIPT

North Africa, 8th century

Ink on parchment

55 x 70 cm

Text: *Surat al-ʿAnbiya* (The Prophets), 21: 76-82

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 34 (no. 1); AKTC 2007b, pp. 30-31 (no. 1); Makariou 2007, pp. 106-07 (no. 33)

AKM 00475

THE EARLIEST QUR'ANS are usually written on parchment in kufic script. In general, they are small and horizontal in format. It is very rare to find such a large early Qur'an leaf, and the monumentality of this one is matched by the calligrapher's well-formed and generously spaced script, making it an exceptional early Qur'an page. Other folios from this manuscript are in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Guesdon and Vernay-Nouri 2001, p. 37) and the Forschungs-und Landesbibliothek, Gotha (Déroche and Von Gladiss 1999, p. 20). This is, however, the only folio found until now with its complete border showing glue and binding perforations, and thus of great interest to researchers. An early eighth-century date is suggested for pages from this Qur'an due to the absence of gold and diacritical marks. Part of the original Qur'an manuscript from which these pages are taken is in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Déroche has noted that manuscripts such as this were brought along the Silk Road via an undetermined itinerary. This Qur'an was in St. Petersburg in the late nineteenth century, and it would appear that this page, along with others, was separated from the manuscript at this time. **AF**

و يسبح يا مع د ا و ا و ا
ا ل ل ل ا ر مع س س و ا ل ل ل
و ص ك ا ق ل ل و ا ل ل ل
ل ل ل ل ل ل ل ل ل ل ل
م ر ا س ك م ق ل ل ا ل ل
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North Africa, 9th-10th century

Ink, opaque watercolour, gold and silver (now oxidised) on blue-dyed parchment

26 x 69 cm

Text: *Surat al-Furqqan* (The Salvation), 25: 48-60 and *Surat al-Shu'ara* (The Poets),

26: 52-64

LIT.: Bloom 2007, pp. 42-44; Makariou 2007, pp. 108-09 (no. 34)

AKM 00477

THIS EXTRAORDINARY BIFOLIUM of gold kufic calligraphy on indigo-dyed parchment comes from the famous Blue Qur'an, one of the most lavish Qur'an manuscripts ever created. Careful attention to detail was devoted to every aspect of the manuscript, including the complex and costly technique of chrysography, in which letters are written in a "liquid glue" and filled in with a careful application of ground gold suspended in a solution (see Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, p. 30). Silver rosettes (now oxidized) were also used to indicate verse divisions. The virtual simplicity of decoration and illumination using the finest materials – indigo-dyed parchment, gold, and silver – combined with the angular kufic script results in an overwhelming effect on the viewer regardless of whether or not (s)he can read the page. Although the two folios are attached, they do not represent sequential pages in the manuscript. Fifteen lines of text fill each page in a dense, angular kufic script typical of manuscripts attributed to the tenth century (Déroche, 1983, p. 42); no diacritical marks are used to indicate vowels. The calligrapher also inserted cæsurae within the word in order to place isolated letters at the beginning of the line as much as possible, creating a column effect. The rhythm of the script is made even more striking by the reduction of illuminating elements to a minimum: in the margin of the left folio, an almost obliterated silver rosette marks each group of twenty verses.

Differing views exist as to the exact origins of this manuscript. One scholar has relied on palaeographical and historical evidence to suggest that it was created for the Fatimids, who ruled North Africa from Kairouan during the first half of the tenth century (Bloom 1986, pp. 59-65; Bloom 1989, pp. 95-99; Bloom 2007, pp. 42-44). Another, however, notes that the alphanumeric notation system (*abjad*), here apparent in the form of letters appearing in medallions at the end of each verse, was subsequently reserved only for the western Islamic world (Stanley 1995, pp. 7-15). The unusual colour scheme may have been inspired by Byzantine manuscripts or documents, some of which are written in silver and gold on parchment dyed blue or purple. The blue and gold decoration of the *mihrab* at the Great



Mosque of Cordoba may also bear some relation to the similar decoration used for the Blue Qur'an.

A section of the manuscript is currently housed in the National Institute of Art and Archaeology in Tunis and detached leaves or fragments are in the National Library, Tunis, the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, and in other public and private collections. AM LA



3 QUR'AN FOLIO IN KUFIC SCRIPT

North Africa or Near East, 10th century

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on parchment

23.8 x 33.1 cm

Text: *Surat al-Rahman* (The Most Gracious), 55: 52-54

Unpublished

AKM 00482

WITH ONLY THREE grand lines of elegant and carefully attenuated script per page, the Qur'an to which this folio originally belonged was surely a luxury commission produced at enormous expense. The present leaf is related to folios from two known dispersed Qur'an manuscripts located in public and private collections including the National Library, Tunis, Museum of Islamic Arts, Kairouan, the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, the Al-Sabah collection, Kuwait, and the Nasser D. Khalili collection, London. Brown ink was used to calligraph the text against a background of parchment, red to indicate vowels, and gold to illuminate the large medallions and to mark verse endings. The characteristic features shared by all of the folios in the codex include a type of kufic script notable for its dominant verticals such as the *lam-alif* combination, countered by an exaggerated width in the strokes of some letters. For instance, in the terminal *nun* letters, the calligrapher has changed the angle of his nib at the mid-point of the round letter, creating an aesthetically pleasing, symmetrical *nun* that maximises the width of the stroke. It is difficult to date and identify the geographical origins of kufic-script Qur'ans. A three-line Qur'an text folio very similar to this one has been attributed to the first half of the tenth century somewhere between Kairouan and Damascus (see Déroche 1992, pp. 42, 109; Fraser and Kwiatkowski 2006, pp. 52-57). **AF LA**



Handwritten Arabic text in three lines, featuring a circular seal or stamp in the upper right. The text is written in a cursive style with decorative elements like red and green dots. The paper is aged and has irregular edges.



4 FRAGMENT FROM JUZ' 30 OF THE QUR'AN

Iraq or Iran, 11th century

Ink and gold on paper

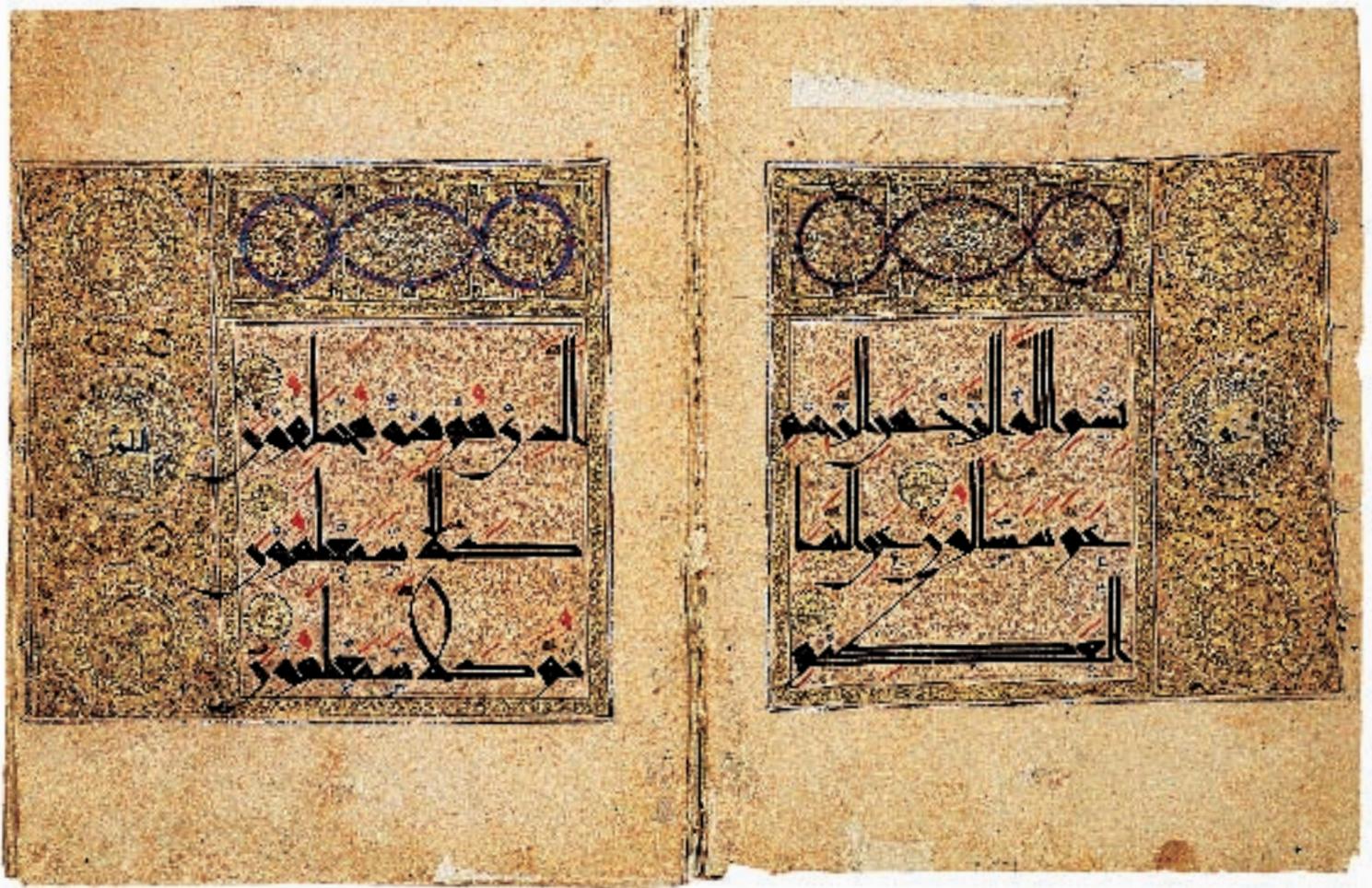
25.4 x 19.5 cm

Text: *Surat al-Naba'* (The Tidings), 78: 1-5

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 21-22 and 25-27; Welch 1979, pp. 62-63 (no. 12); Makariou 2007, pp. 116-17 (no. 38)

AKM 00261

EVERYTHING HERE IS NEW: the support medium (paper has replaced parchment), the “portrait” format – that is, a vertical format, not a horizontal “landscape” one –, the script, which tends toward the cursive, the part now vividly meaningful with illumination. The first verses of “The Tidings” spread majestically over three lines per page. This beginning of the *sura*, or Qur’an chapter, is surrounded by an illuminated frame that occupies a great deal of the space on the page. On the left-hand page, the final *nuns* stretch their hooks into the decoration. The script does retain some characteristics of kufic manuscripts from the eighth and ninth centuries, in particular the use of *naskh*. This lengthening is especially noticeable on the third line of the right page, which consists of only one word, *al-‘adhim*. The treatment of the emphatic consonant *dhal* is the gesture of one who has mastered the geometry. Just opposite, the close linking of the *lam* and *‘alif* introduces a soft curve into the writing. It is understandable that this script, which was prevalent in eastern Iran from the second half of the tenth century to the thirteenth, has defied classification. It marks a transition into the six classic styles of cursive writing (*aqlam al-sitta*). The stylistic effects on the page are such that they could explain why the anonymous scribe felt the need to clarify the reading of his copy by placing small blue letters above it. The contrast between the lengthening of the up and down strokes and the weight of the diagonal base letters, like a faithful imprint of the reed pen, is also striking. This script was used for notating Arabic and calligraphing Qur’an manuscripts, as well as for Persian and secular texts. It constitutes a radically different aesthetic feature and so is part of the stylistic distinction between the eastern and western parts of the Islamic world that was becoming established during the course of the tenth century. ■SM





TWO LINES FROM A FOLIO OF A MONUMENTAL QUR'AN MANUSCRIPT

Central Asia, *circa* 1400

Ink on paper

47.3 x 98.5 cm

Text: *Surat al-Saba*, 34: 44-45

Inscribed in lower right corner: "For ... the reviver of religion ... Sultan ... Husayn ibn Sultan ... in the year ... 23"

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 39 (no. 6); AKTC 2007b, p. 35 (no. 6); Makariou 2007, pp. 122-23 (no. 41)

AKM 00491

COMBINING MONUMENTALITY and dynamic rhythm, the two lines of this fragment demonstrate why *muhaqqaq* was the preferred script for large-scale Qur'ans in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The bold script, which cuts a sharp outline in dark brown ink across the buff paper, was previously thought to be by the hand of the Timurid Prince Baysunghur, a noted calligrapher and bibliophile. Recent studies suggest, however, that the manuscript was created under the patronage of his grandfather Timur and that it may have rested on an unusually large marble Qur'an stand commissioned for it by another grandson, Ulugh Beg, in the main chamber of Timur's congregational mosque in Samarqand (Lentz and Lowry 1989, pp. 16, 329; Soudavar 1992, pp. 59-62). Pages from the manuscript were widely dispersed as early as the sixteenth century, and now reside in various places including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Shrine of Imam Reza Museum (Mashhad), Nasser D. Khalili (London) and Art and History Trust (USA) collections. It is noteworthy that the lower right corner of this fragment includes an inscription in a *ta'liq* script stylistically comparable to that of a sixteenth-century chancery calligrapher. Although worn and not entirely legible, the wording of the inscription indicates that it was offered as a charitable donation or *waqf*, to a mosque, *madrassa* or other religious institution by a person of some importance, possibly Sultan Husayn Bayqara if the year refers to a regnal, not a calendar year. **AF**

مِنْ كُتُبِ يَدِ رَسُولِنَا وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ
قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَبِيٍّ وَرَوَّكَيْتَ كَذِبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ



FOLIO FROM A DISPERSED MANUSCRIPT OF THE QUR'AN

Egypt, Mamluk, *circa* 1450

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

41.3 x 32.1 cm

Text: *Surat al-Naml* (The Ant), 27: 88-93 and *Surat al-Qasas* (The Story), 28: 1-3

Unpublished

AKM 00243

QUR'ANS DECORATED with illumination and gilding are known to have existed as early as the tenth century, their embellishment at first limited to marking *sura*, or chapter, headings and the ends of *ayas*, or verses. On the present folio, the *Surat al-Naml* is introduced in an elegant white script, outlined in black and placed within a gilded rectangular frame. The frame contains a gold background and a series of lobed cartouches painted in red and blue and decorated with gilded vine scrolls and rosettes. Twelve-petalled rosettes outlined in black and illuminated with gold petals and red dots indicate the end of each verse. The production of these lavish manuscripts required a team of calligraphers, artists, illuminators, and gilders, all contributing to a finished product that often represented the generosity and wealth of the patron who had commissioned it. While the patron of the codex to which this page belonged is unknown, the manuscript itself can be attributed to Egypt based on stylistic grounds. Its monumental *muhaqqaq* script is typical of Qur'ans produced under the Mamluks (r. 1250-1517) in the second half of the fifteenth century; earlier manuscripts would have avoided this script as it was also associated with the Qur'ans of the Mamluks' former rivals in Iran, the Ilkhanids (r. 1256-1353). LA

وترى الحبال تحسبها جامدة وهي تمر من السحاب صنع الله الذي
اتقوا كما يشي به خبيرهم يفعلون من جاب الحسنة فله خير
منها وهو من فرغ يومئذ المؤمنون ومن جاب الشبهة فكبت
وجوههم في النار هذا جزوا لا ما كنتم تعملون انما
امرنا ان نعبدك هذه البلدة الذي حرمها وله كما يشي
وامرنا ان نكون من المسلمين وان اتوا القار فمن اهتدى
فانما يهتدي بنفسه ومن ضل فقلنا انما انما من المذنبين وقل
للذين سيرتكم آياتهم ففروا وما تارا عما تعملون

سورة القصص وانزلناه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
طس تبارك الذي انزلنا عليك كتابنا من نور مبين وقرعنا اذنك قوم يؤمنون



India, Delhi Sultanate, 15th century

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

36.9 x 28 cm

Text.: *Surat al-Isra'* (The Night Journey), 17: 29-34

Unpublished

AKM 00242

THIS FOLIO BELONGS to one of a very few Qur'an manuscripts that survive from the period between Timur's invasion of northern India in 1398-99 and the advent of the Mughal dynasty in 1526. It has been a challenge to understand the general development of the art of the book in this region during the fifteenth century due to the diversity of artistic styles corresponding to the cultural centres of independent Muslim sultanates. Manuscript production seemed to follow the Timurid tradition in Iran and Central Asia, with one distinguishing feature: the use of the *bihari* script, as shown here. A strange mutation of *naskh* script with obscure origins, *bihari* appears only in manuscripts predating the Mughals (James 1992b, p. 102). It is characterized by an exaggeration of the sublinear letter forms through a thickening of the letter's curves and a sharpening of its end points. On the present page, thirteen lines have been calligraphed in gold, black and a characteristic milky blue, with Persian translations appearing in red *nasta'liq* below each line. Eight-petalled gold rosettes with blue dots separate verses, and a teardrop-shaped blue and gold medallion with finials frames a circular blue pendant inscribed with a golden letter 'ayn. This letter stands for 'asharah (ten) and marks a group of ten verses. LA

مَخَشَوْنَا أَنْ نَلْبَسَ سِطْرَ الزُّنُوفِ

لَمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّهُ كَاتِبٌ

بِعِبَادِهِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ بَصِيرَةٍ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا

أَوْلَادَكُمْ خَشِيَةَ إِمْلَاقٍ

لَنْ نَرْزُقَكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ طَاهِرٌ قَتْلُهُ كَانَ

خِطَاءً كَبِيرًا وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الرِّسَالَ

إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي حَشَةِ نَسَاءٍ سَيِّئَةٍ

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ

اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَنْ قَتَلَ

مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيهِ

سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ

إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنْصُورًا وَلَا

تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالْقَرْبِ



Handwritten marginal notes in Arabic script on the right side.

Handwritten marginal note on the left side.

Handwritten marginal note at the bottom left.



8 COMPLETE QUR'AN ON TWO PAGES

Signed Sayyid ʿAli Tabatabai

India, dated 1283 H/1866-67

Ink and gold on paper

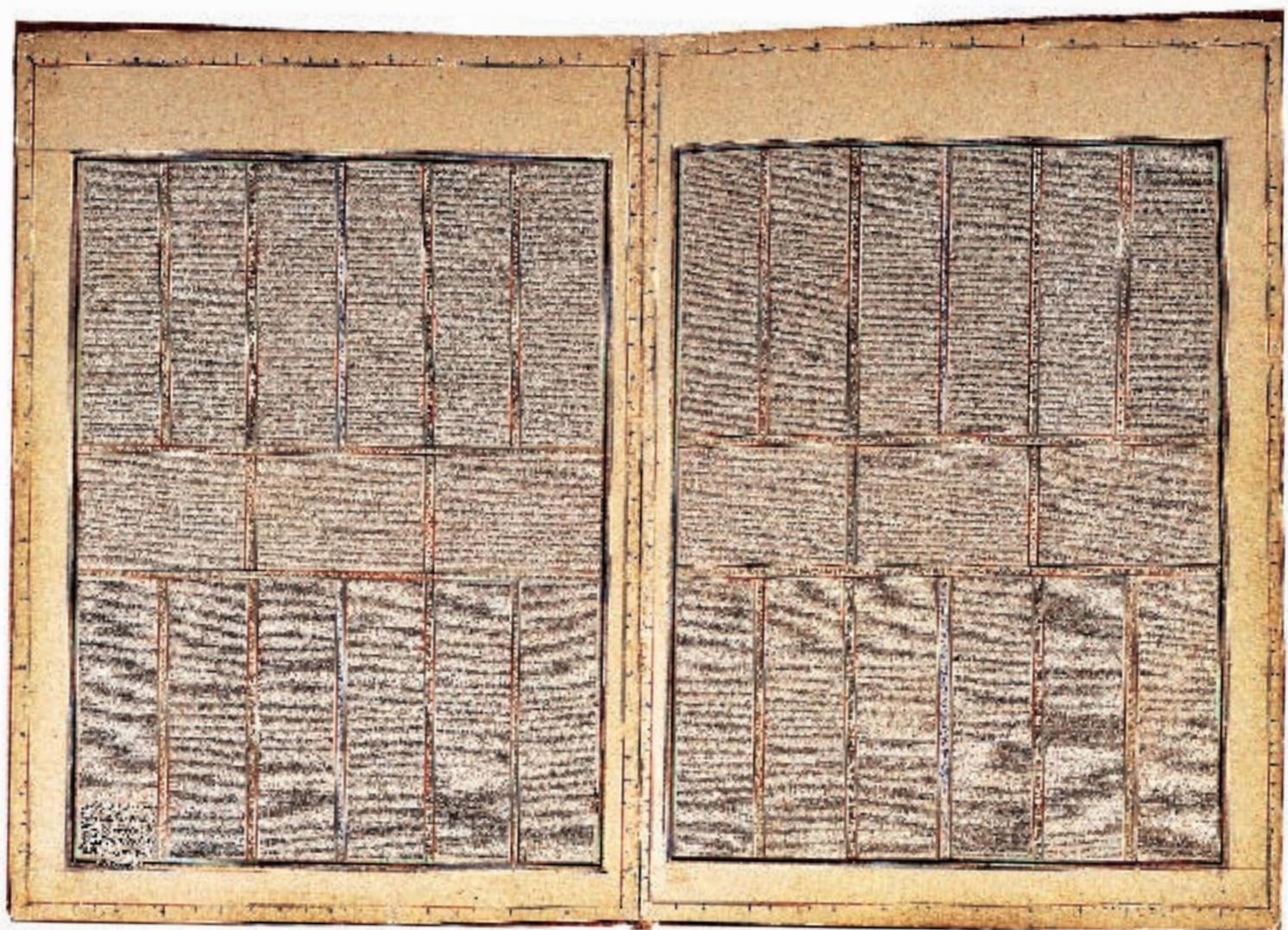
48.6 x 69 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 128-29 (no. 44)

AKM 00494

IN THIS MANUSCRIPT, the entire text of the Qur'an is copied on two pages in a minute script called *ghubari*, from the Arabic word *ghubar*, meaning "dust." The calligrapher, Sayyid ʿAli al-Tabatabai, who has signed and dated his work at the bottom of the left page, organised the space into thirty sections (fifteen per page), which corresponds to the *juz'*, one of the most commonly used divisions of the Qur'an. This allows the text to be read in one month and corresponds to a Qur'an in thirty volumes. This manuscript's presentation of the sacred text is not common, and may even be the only known example on paper. The only similar example is a Qur'an copied in Turkey in the seventeenth century, which is in The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. This manuscript is, however, written on linen, of smaller size (54 x 33.8 cm) and divided into sixty compartments, each containing thirty-one lines of text. The name of the commissioner, Sultan al-ʿUlama', is given in the colophon and on the binding. This was probably ʿAllamah Sayyid Muhammad ibn Sayyid Dildar ʿAli (d. 1867) who, like his father Sayyid Dildar ʿAli al-Nasirabadi (1752-1819), was a prominent Shia author of the time.

Although the name al-Tabatabai was widespread in Iran, it is possible that this Qur'an was made in India, where many Iranians settled in the Shia kingdoms of India, first in the Deccan, then in northern India beginning in the eighteenth century. **MB**





Patron: Hajji Mirza Zayn al-[°]Abidin Tahir, known as Iyaz Itram-Raghi

Scribe: Ibn Muhammad Baqir Muhammad al-Musawi al-Lahiji

Illuminator: Al-Mudhahhib ibn al-Katib Abu'l-Qasim al-Musawi

Iran, Qajar, dated 1220 H/1805

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; lacquer binding

24.7 x 15 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978b, pp. 131-35

AKM 00321

THE RISE OF LARGE-SCALE painting and, eventually, photography in Iran under the Qajar dynasty did not mean that illustrated and illuminated manuscript production came to an end, as extant codices attest. Qur'ans were certainly no exception. This manuscript is especially interesting for the great amount of information it reveals in its colophon: the patron was Hajji Mirza Zayn al-[°]Abidin Tahir, known as Iyaz Itram-Raghi. The scribe and illuminator were a father-and-son team, Ibn Muhammad Baqir Muhammad al-Musawi al-Lahiji and Al-Mudhahhib ibn al-Katib Abu'l-Qasim al-Musawi, who completed the manuscript in 1220 H/1805, during the early years of Fath [°]Ali Shah's reign (r. 1797–1834). The Qur'an includes 375 leaves, each page containing twelve lines of text in *naskh* script, with Persian interlinear translations executed in red, *sura* headings in red *thuluth*, and occasional marginal Persian glosses in a black *nasta'liq*. It is heavily ornamented with floral and vegetal decoration in red, blue, white, green and gold, all part of an overall layered composition of lobed and rectangular bands that frame the Qur'anic text. On the folios shown here the cartouches that would include the *sura* headings were left unfinished. These pages mark the beginning of the manuscript; the right hand folio includes the *Surat al-Fatiha* (The Opening), the first chapter of the Qur'an, and is followed on the next page by the initial four *ayas*, or verses, of the second chapter, *Surat al-Baqara* (The Cow). The calligrapher and illuminator treated these opening pages with particular care to ensure a successful first impression on the reader. The quality of calligraphy and abundance of colour and gilded decoration suggest the patron was a wealthy individual, probably connected to the Qajar court. LA





10 A CALLIGRAPHIC EXERCISE

Turkey, Ottoman, *circa* late 17th-early 18th century

Ink and gold on paper

13.1 x 27.3 cm

Text: *Surat al-Fil* (The Elephant), 105: 1-5

Unpublished

AKM 00349

THE ART OF CALLIGRAPHY in the Ottoman world flourished between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Students with potential were identified in their early years of schooling, where they were introduced to the art. Calligraphers had to obtain certification (*icazetname*) from their teachers even at the initial stages of their education. During training, the teacher would provide the student with a model line of calligraphy that would be practiced through repeated imitation (*taklid*) by the student. The present writing sample is an example of such a model or lesson, referred to as *meşk*. In the first phase of his/her training, the novice would practice different letter combinations; at the next level, words and phrases; finally, if (s)he completed the earlier lessons successfully, the calligrapher would practice writing poetic verses, *hadith* (traditions of the Prophet), and excerpts from the Qur'an (Derman 1998, p. 41). The *meşk* shown here must have belonged to an advanced student, as it contains the entire text of *Surat al-Fil* (The Elephant), the one-hundred-and-fifth chapter of the Qur'an. The large script comprising the first line of the exercise – the first *aya*, or verse, of this chapter – is written in black *muhaqqaq* (*muhakkak* in modern Turkish) script while the remaining verses are written in *naskh* (*nesih* in modern Turkish); in Ottoman calligraphy, however, the general practice was to combine *thuluth* (*sülüs*) with *naskh* rather than *muhaqqaq*. Black and red marks were used to indicate vowels and signal pauses to facilitate recitation from the text for the reader, and were added last by the calligrapher. After the scribe had completed his writing, artists and illuminators would draw in ornamentation such as the *duraklar* appearing on this folio, which are the eight-petalled rosettes rendered in black, filled in with gold, and dotted with red ink. The exercise could then be mounted on a cardboard backing or placed in a *muraqqa*^c, or album, of calligraphy. LA

المشركين فعلى ربنا أصحاب الفيل
المنجبل كبد هوى في نيل وارشا عليهم طيرا ابليس ترميهم بحجارة من سجيل
فجعلهم كعصف مأكول



11 DISH

China, 17th century

Porcelain, painted in overglaze green and black enamels on opaque white glaze

Ø 35.1 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 46-47 (no. 16); AKTC 2007b, p. 42 (no. 16)

AKM 00591

COARSELY POTTED AND COVERED with a thick, crackled glaze, this dish belongs to a distinct group of porcelain, the so-called “Swatow wares”. Swatow is a Dutch mistranslation of Shantou, the port from which such ceramics were supposedly exported, although this port was actually not used until the Qing dynasty. Recent archaeological research by Chinese scholars has established that Swatow wares were produced in Zhangzhou prefecture between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries for export to Europe, Japan and south-east Asia. Dishes similar to this one appeared in Indonesia and are believed to have been commissioned by the powerful seventeenth-century Shia sultans of Aceh in northwest Sumatra, including Sultan Iskander Muda (r. 1607-36) (Canepa 2006, no. 40). The inscriptions on this dish include invocations to Allah, verses from the Qur’an, including *Surat al-Baqara* (The Cow), *Surat al-Ikhlās* (Purity), and *Surat al-Nas* (Mankind), the *Nad-i ‘Ali* prayer and the word Allah which is repeated along the cavetto of the dish. The inscriptions are talismanic, seeking protection and assistance for the owner. **AF**





12 MOTHER-OF-PEARL SHELL

India or Turkey, 18th century

Mother-of-pearl

Ø 14.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 47 (no. 17); AKTC 2007b, p. 43 (no. 17); Makariou 2007, pp. 132-33 (no. 46)

AKM 00665

USING THE NATURAL SHAPE of this shell and its lustrous mother-of-pearl lining, the artist has created a pleasing decorative programme of eight concentric circles engraved with verses from the Qur'an. The delicate floral vinescrolls in the widest circle recall Deccani painting as well as the spiral scrollwork backgrounds of Ottoman sultans' *tughras* (*tuğra* in modern Turkish, monograms) and the cobalt blue decoration of early sixteenth-century Ottoman ceramics. The style of *nasta'liq* script, however, would suggest an Indian or Iranian hand. Gujarat was a major centre of manufacture of mother-of-pearl and perhaps this object was made for export to Turkey. In any case, the humble shell has been carefully inscribed with Qur'anic verses and supplications, and transformed into an object of beauty. **AF**





13 ALMOND-SHAPED OPENWORK STEEL PLAQUE

Iran, second half of 17th century

Incised iron alloy

H.: 34.8 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 152-53 (no. 54)

AKM 00617

THIS STEEL PLAQUE IS SHAPED like a multi-lobed almond and bears the Shia profession of faith “*La illah illa Allah wa Muhammad rasul Allah wa ‘Ali wali Allah.*” (There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is His prophet and ‘Ali is His friend.) The surface is done in openwork, with the exception of the plain plate that outlines the shape of the sconce. The three-line inscription is written in *thuluth* script that stands out from a background of delicate spirals of foliage. These twining plants have bifid leaves and stylised florets in a flowing and dynamic design. Their precision and fineness are reminiscent of the meticulous work of illumination. The sconce’s shape also evokes book art from the Safavid era: multi-lobed mandorlas at the centre of the binding plates; medallions inscribed on the heart of the initial carpet pages of Qur’ans or literary works.

In the absence of definite clues about the circumstances of their creation, it is difficult to assert that these plates were produced at the same time for the same usage. However, it seems well established that they were made as decoration for a door, and three of the plates in this group tell us something about how they might originally have been assembled (two other plates from a private collection have recently been published in Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 260-61, cat. nos. 61 and 62; they might also belong to this same group). Each is arranged on a gilded copper plate, riveted to it in several places, and framed by four angle plates without openwork that follow its contours and also are attached to the gilded copper plate. The assembly of these five plates forms a rectangular cartouche that has openwork in the central portion only. This type of assembly is known for another series of seventeenth-century openwork plates (see cat. no. 14). **CM**





14 RECTANGULAR OPENWORK STEEL PLAQUE

Iran, late 17th century

Openwork iron alloy

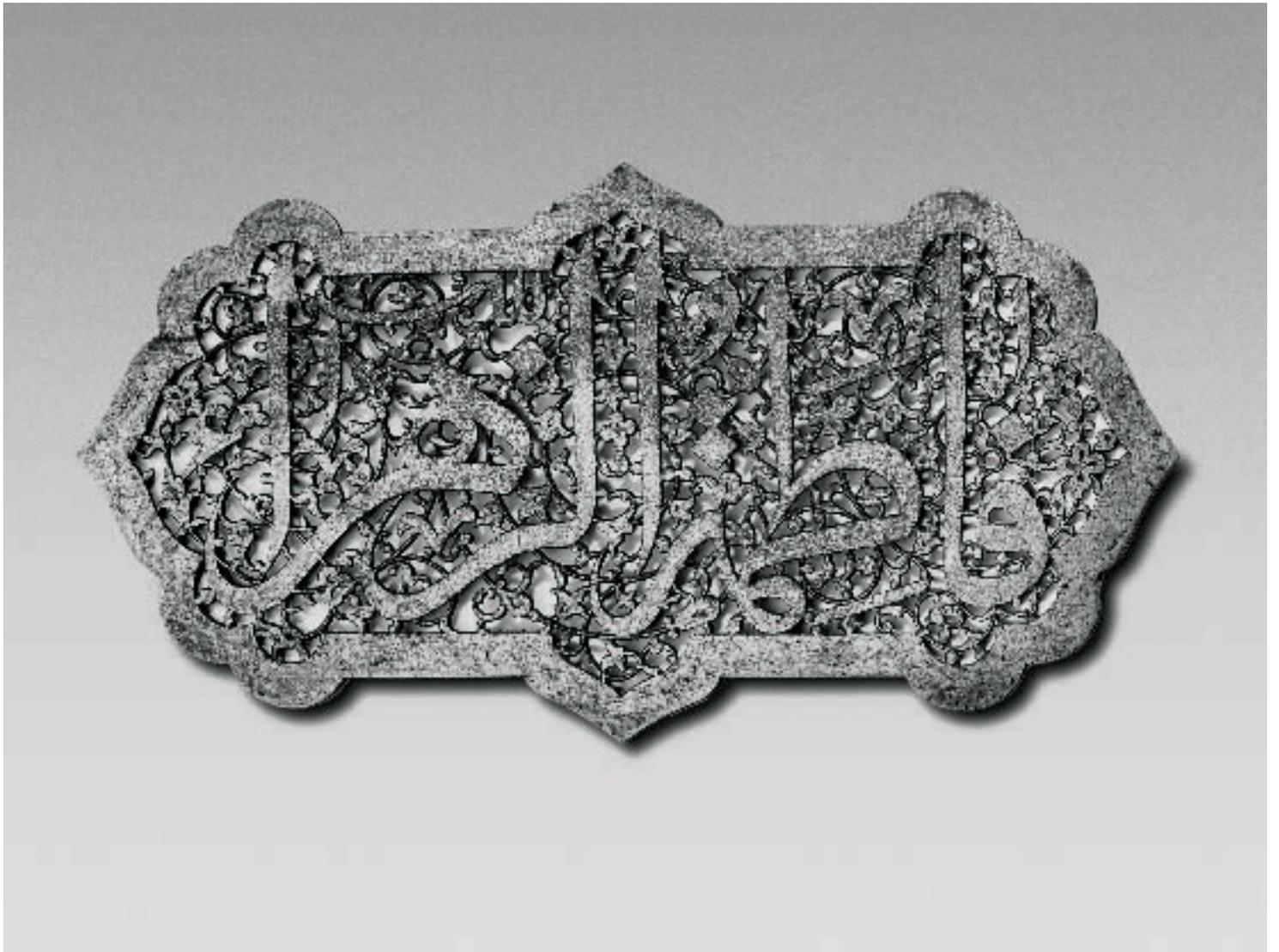
L.: 22 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 154-55 (no. 55)

AKM 00616

WITH THE EXCEPTION of the large plate that outlines it, this decorative plaque is done entirely in openwork, and the inscription in *thuluth* script stands out against a background of three spiralling scrolls bearing stylised plant elements. In its general design this plate is comparable to cat. no. 13, but differs from it in its oblong shape and a few ornamental details, such as the more developed design of plant elements: symmetrical and more complex florets and leaves with two, three and four lobes. The general effect evokes the multi-lobed medallions common in illuminated decoration and that contain the title of a work or its subdivisions. Here, the inscription is limited to the name of Fatima, the Prophet Muhammad's only daughter and the wife of 'Ali, followed by the distinctive epithet *al-zahra* (the brilliant one).

While its provenance is unknown, this object can be related to a set of ornamental plaques that are comparable in design, though longer (between 38 and 39 cm). Each of these invokes one or more of the Fourteen Immaculate Ones (*chahardah ma'sumin*) revered by the Twelver Shia: the Prophet Muhammad, his daughter Fatima, and the twelve Imams. **CM**





15 CALLIGRAPHIC COMPOSITION ON A SWEET CHESTNUT LEAF

Ottoman Turkey, 19th century

Sweet chestnut leaf

H.: 13.5 cm; L.: 28 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 49 (no. 20); AKTC 2007b, p. 44 (no. 20); Makariou 2007, pp. 134-35 (no. 47)

AKM 00538

QUR'AN VERSES WERE APPLIED to objects using an astonishingly wide variety of techniques. One of the most beautiful and unusual examples is the gilded leaf, popular in nineteenth-century Ottoman Turkey. This example features a verse from *Surat al-Isra'* (The Night Journey, 17: 80): 'And say, "Lord grant me a good entrance and a goodly exit, and sustain me with Your power."' The calligrapher has made masterful use of his elegant *thuluth murakkab* script to create a calligraphic composition resembling a boat filled with a crew, their long oars dipping into the water that is the skeleton of the leaf. Related visually to Ottoman cut-out work or *découpage*, the technique for leaf gilding was actually quite distinct. The inscription was either written or stencilled and sealed on both sides with a wax barrier. The leaf would be soaked in an alkaline solution long enough to yield only its skeleton and the inscription. The virtuosity of the present example is further highlighted since its foundation is a sweet, or Spanish, chestnut leaf (*Castanea sativa*), a leaf more fragile than many of those employed for such compositions. **AF**





16 CALLIGRAPHIC TILE FRIEZE

Turkey, Iznik, Ottoman, *circa* 1500

Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted

H.: 15.5 cm; L.: 75 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00698



THE GROWTH OF THE CERAMIC INDUSTRY in Iznik played a significant role in the codification of a distinctly Ottoman court aesthetic and ceramic technique (see cat. no. 51). Small square tiles produced in Iznik were transported to Istanbul to decorate numerous palaces and mosques in brilliant colours of blue, white, turquoise, green and an astounding relief red. This frieze, formed from three separate tiles, might once have decorated part of a mosque. Its inscription, written in Arabic in a graceful *naskh* script, comes from the twelfth *sura* of the Qur'an and reads: "God is the best guardian and He is the most merciful of the merciful" (*Surat al-Yusuf*, 12: 64). LA



WOODEN BEAM WITH QUR'ANIC INSCRIPTION

Syria, late 12th-early 13th century

Wood, sculpted decoration

H.: 11.2 cm; L.: 122 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 118-19 (no. 39)

AKM 00632



BETWEEN THE TWO SMOOTH ENDS, which have holes for fasteners, extends a long cartouche with a raised inscription that stands out from the finely sculpted background consisting of plant foliage, punctuated by small whorls, bifid leaves or palmettes with a long, curved tip, fairly typical of the Syrian repertoire.

This upright with an inscription may have belonged to the small side of a cenotaph. The inscription contains part of verse 255 of *Surat al-Baqara* (The Cow): “[His is what is in the heavens and what is in] the earth! Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission?” Known as the “Throne verse”, this is one of the passages of the Qur’an most often used in a funerary context or for decorating *mihhrabs*.

The script is highly representative of the Ayyubid *naskhi* script, a form of cursive marked by its elegant simplicity and compact, dynamic nature. The same combination of a softly rounded script standing out from slender foliage is found in some Syrian and Egyptian pieces. A fragment of an epigraphic frieze preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo (David-Weill 1931, no. 2118, pl. 21, pp. 34-35), which was discovered in Imam al-Shafi‘i’s mausoleum and certainly comes from a cenotaph, is very similar to this piece. ■ CJ ■

Devotional and Mystical Worlds

PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA, the *hajj*, plays an important role in Islam. The first two weeks of the Muslim calendar month of Dhu'l Hijja are devoted to it. In the modern world the *hajj* is organised with great precision by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which sets quotas for pilgrims according to their country of origin. Before the age of modern transport, the *hajj* was expensive, arduous and time-consuming, especially for Muslims travelling from the fringes of the Islamic world, Spain and the Maghrib in the West and Central Asia and India in the East. Often *hajjis*, the pilgrims, performed the *hajj* in old age and many of them did not survive the journey. However, dying while performing the *hajj* was thought to ensure that the *hajji* would go to heaven. Because of changing political situations in the Islamic world, Muslims often did not have the freedom of movement or the required documents to ensure safe passage to Mecca. While some of these were supplied by clerics at the point of departure, others – in the form of diagrammatic pictures of the Ka'ba and the Great Mosque at Mecca (cat. no. 19) – were produced in the Hijaz to verify that pilgrims had performed the *hajj*. The desire to demonstrate that one had performed the *hajj* resulted in pilgrims returning from Mecca with plans of the Great Mosque and other key sites visited, produced and sold in or near Mecca and in the production of Iznik tiles depicting the Ka'ba and the stations of the *hajj* (cat. no. 20). In Egypt to this day pilgrims paint scenes from the *hajj* on the exterior of their houses. Although Shia Muslims do perform the *hajj* to Mecca, they also travel to other shrine cities which are central to their beliefs. As a result the shrine of Imam 'Ali at Najaf and the shrine of Imam Husayn at Karbala, both in Iraq, draw Shia communities from all parts of the world. In Iran, the Safavid shahs promoted the shrines of Fatima Ma'suma at Qum and Imam Riza at Mashhad as alternatives to Mecca in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when their Ottoman rivals controlled Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, the three holiest cities in the Muslim world.

Mysticism has played an important role in the Islamic world, in both Shia and Sunni contexts. Mystics, known as Sufis or dervishes, have sought to achieve oneness with God through prayer and specific exercises, such as *dhikr*, the repetition of sacred words or phrases. While some mystical thinkers, for example al-Hallaj in the ninth and tenth centuries, were considered heretical, many others led lives as wandering mendicants, seeking the company of other dervishes or settling in dervish lodges in the presence of their spiritual advisors, or *pirs*. In India, with its long tradition of Hindu *sadhus*, or holy men, Mughal paintings depict them meeting their Muslim counterparts. The Mughal emperors and many Iranian and Central Asian rulers before them employed religious advisors and are portrayed in spiritual or philosophical discussion with the sages of their day (cat. nos. 27 and 30). Even when political leaders did not sanction particular Sufi orders, the ideas that they espoused were spread by the faithful through pilgrimage to shrines and other holy sites. In the same way, the *hajj* enabled Muslims from throughout the *Dar al-Islam*, or Muslim world, to meet and exchange ideas, thus cementing a unity that depended on a shared faith and the communal understanding of the Arabic language. ■ SC



18 PANEL EVOKING A MIHRAB

Syria, Damascus, *circa* 1575-80

Siliceous clay paste, colours under transparent colourless glaze

H.: 123 cm; L.: 62 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 200-01 (no. 72)

AKM 00585

THE SET OF EIGHTEEN TILES making up this panel has numerous points in common with two similar *mihhrabs* located on the north courtyard wall of a mosque founded by Governor Darwish Pasha in Damascus in 1572-75: the two candelabra, the Prophet's sandals, the suspended lamp bearing the *shahada*, and the false marble of the columns inhabited by hidden creatures. At the Darwish Pasha Mosque, one of the *mihhrabs* is topped by a ceramic tympanum bearing the date 982 H/1574-75 (Makariou 2007, p. 206, note 1). However, there are some differences between the *mihhrabs* at the Darwish Pasha Mosque and this panel: the number of tiles is different, the set is narrower, and the two candelabra touch each other, which is not the case on the Darwish Pasha panels (*ibid.*, note 2). There are a great many clues – the design of the lamp's chains, which curve softly to the left, the false marble – indicating that these were probably produced in the same “studio.” The false marble's decoration is a refuge for a crowd of small animals hidden there. Still, the catalogue of animals – rabbits, flatfish, small quadrupeds and ducks – is richer here (*ibid.*, note 3).

In the centre of the panel, the Prophet's sandals occupy a place of paramount importance. The iconography of the Prophet's sandals, which sometimes seems to be confused with the representation of his footprints, became widespread in the sixteenth century and is also present in Safavid Iran and India (*ibid.*, note 5). The sandal is a sign of distinction specific to the Prophet of Islam, in comparison to Moses; its protective shape (*mithal*) “leads to life in both homes” (earthly, then eternal). This devotional context explains the remarkable image of a pair of sandals right in the middle of a space where all faithful believers are required to remove their shoes. These sandals, which have touched the throne of God, make the Prophet of Islam the quintessential intercessor and an example (*ibid.*, note 10). **SM**





19 PILGRIMAGE CERTIFICATE WITH ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE KA'BA

Probably the Hijaz (present-day Saudi Arabia), dated 1192 H/1778-79

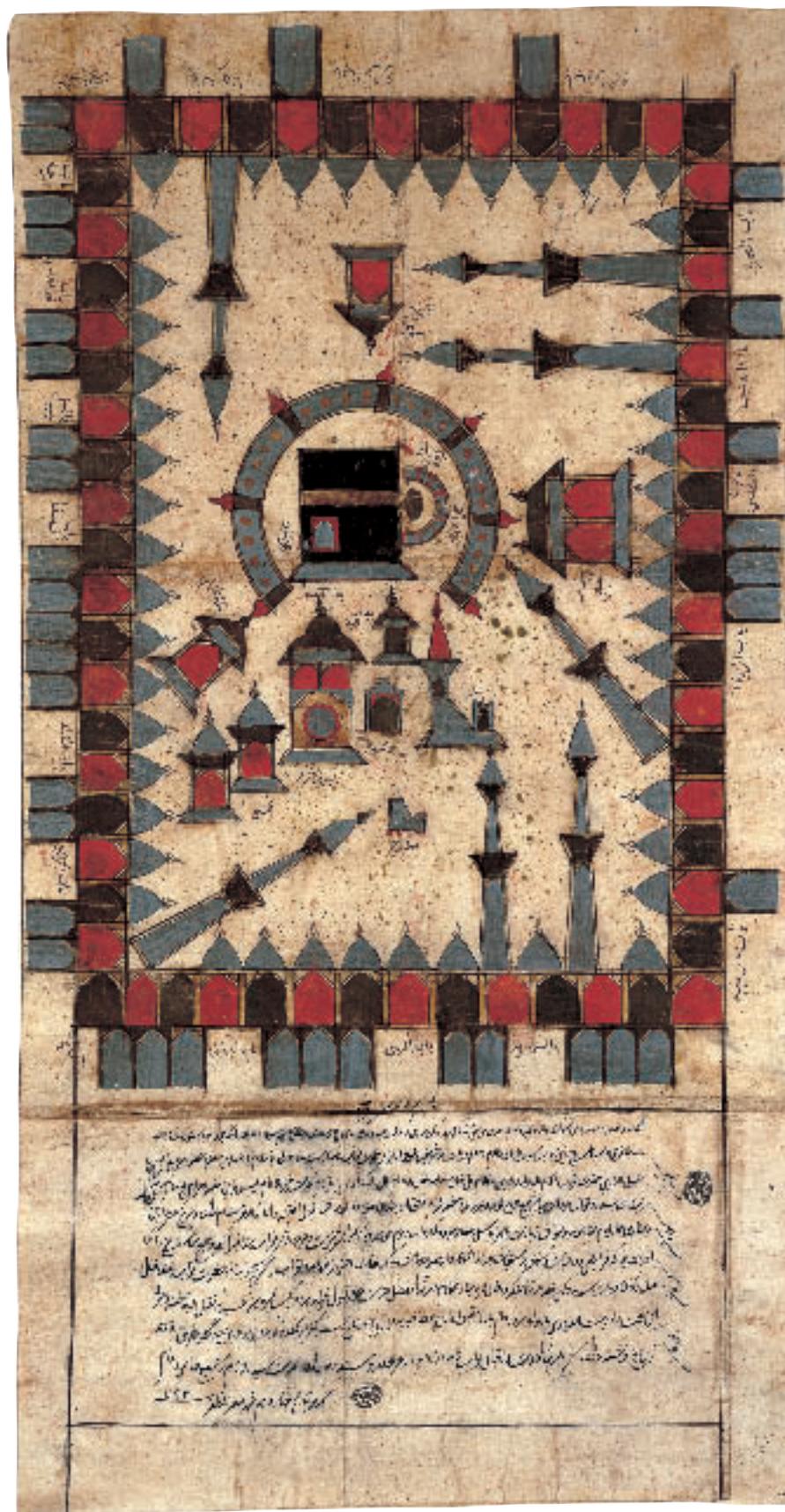
Ink, opaque watercolour and silver on paper

85 x 44.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 56 (no. 24); AKTC 2007b, p. 52 (no. 24); Makariou 2007, pp. 204-05 (no. 74)

AKM 00528

COMPLETION OF THE PILGRIMAGE (*hajj*) was a source of great pride and often marked by an illustrated certificate. If a person were physically unable to accomplish the *hajj*, because of disease or a handicap for example, he could ask someone to bring him a certificate. This example depicts a schematic view of the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, with the Ka'ba in the centre, draped with the black curtain (*kiswa*). The Persian text below the large illustration reveals that this certificate belonged to one Bibi Khanum, who required the services of a certain Sayyid 'Ali Wali to perform the pilgrimage. The certificate is dated at the bottom of the text and includes the seal of Sayyid 'Ali, guaranteeing the performance of the *hajj* rites. The painting's exact provenance remains a mystery, but similar works with fanciful onion-shaped domes and texts in Persian, the former literary language of many Indian Muslims, have been attributed to Indian draughtsman working 'on site' in the Hijaz (Rogers *et al.* 1999, pp. 80-83). **AF**





20 POLYCHROME QIBLA TILE

Turkey, 17th century

Stonepaste body with polychrome underglaze painting

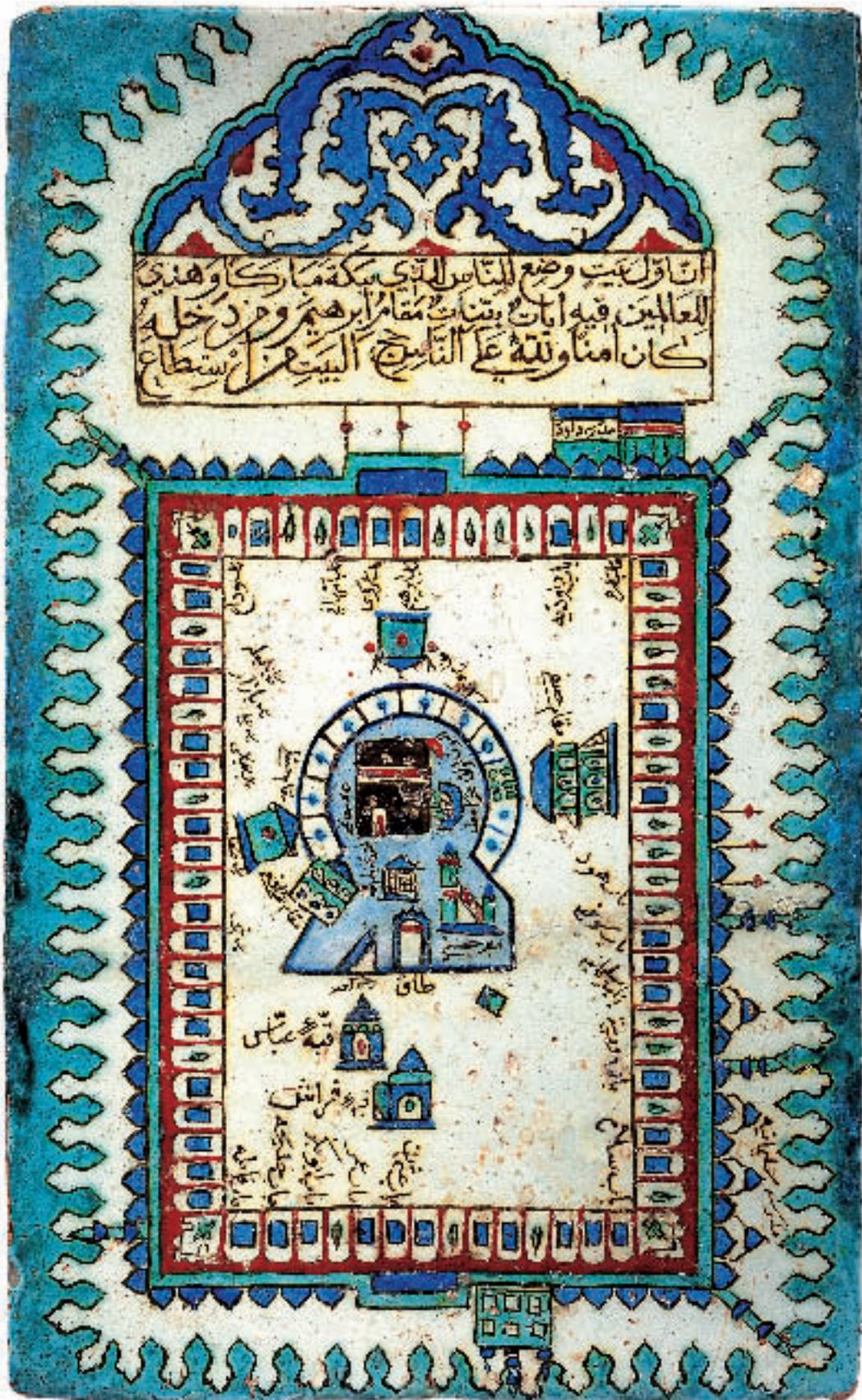
52 x 32 cm

Inscribed: “The first House established for the people was that at Bakka [Mecca], a holy place and a guidance to all beings. Therein are clear signs – the Station of Abraham and whosoever enters it is in safety. It is the duty of all men towards God to make a pilgrimage to the House if they are able.” (*Surat Al ‘Imran*, 3: 96-97)

LIT.: Falk 1985, p. 238 (no. 240); AKTC 2007a, p. 57 (no. 25); AKTC 2007b, p. 52 (no. 25); Makariou 2007, pp. 202-03 (no. 73)

AKM 00587

THIS TILE DEPICTS the black-shrouded Ka’ba within the Great Mosque of Mecca (Masjid al-Haram), the site of the annual Muslim pilgrimage (*hajj*). The artist uses multipoint perspective – both plan and elevation – to give a sense of the overall form of the site. As in pilgrimage guides, which were produced throughout the Islamic world, essential locations are labelled here for further clarity. Decorated with the characteristic Ottoman ceramic palette of turquoise, cobalt blue, green and red on a white ground, tiles like this one were produced in the seventeenth century. They were often placed in an architectural setting such as a mosque’s south-facing wall to indicate the geographical direction of Mecca and one’s prayers. This plaque reflects the Ottoman interest in topography and the long-standing Islamic tradition of depicting the holy shrine of Mecca in various artistic media. **AF**





Illustrated manuscript of the *Dala'il al-khayrat* (The Ways of Edification) of al-Jazuli (d. 869 H/1465), fols. 110v-111r

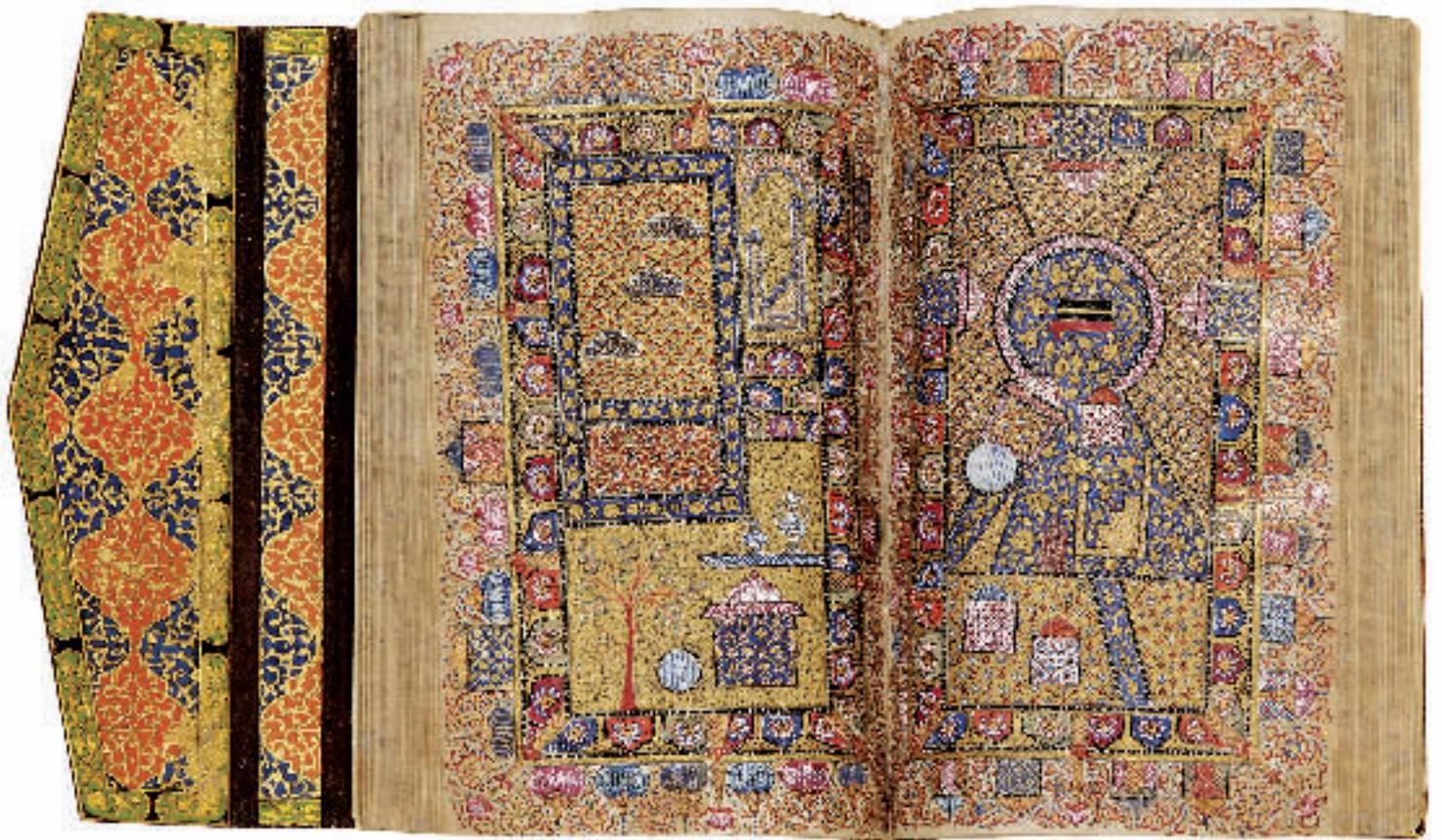
Turkey, Ottoman, dated Muharram 1233 H/November 1818

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper; binding: yellow and brown lacquer and gold
13.7 x 8.2 x 2.4 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978b, pp. 137-43

AKM 00278

THE *DALA'IL AL-KHAYRAT* of Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli (d. 869 H/1465), a member of the Berber tribe of Jazula in southern Morocco, is a devotional prayer book comprised of a collection of prayers for the Prophet, a description of his tomb, his names and epithets, and other devotional material. Al-Jazuli compiled the material for the manuscript using books from the library of al-Qarawiyyin, the celebrated Marinid mosque and university at Fas (modern Fez) in Morocco. The *Dala'il* became the centre of a popular religious brotherhood, the *Ashab al-Dalil*, the essential function of which revolved around the recitation of this book of religious piety. This manuscript is an early nineteenth-century Ottoman copy of al-Jazuli's text, opened to two fully illustrated pages containing depictions of Mecca and Medina. The images have been executed in black and painted in bright shades of red, blue, green, white and gold, with landmarks and attributes rendered clearly for immediate recognition; Medina is identified by a large courtyard and the Prophet's *minbar*, while the Ka'ba in Mecca is brought to the viewer's attention as the focus of four mosques representing the cardinal directions. Covered in a black and gold cloth and set against a blue backdrop with gilded floral decoration, the Ka'ba is framed by a geometric red and white circular band that spills out into the bottom half of the painting where the Prophet's *minbar* appears. Views from multiple perspectives in both images result in stylized renditions of each city and prioritize the inclusion of essential information over naturalistic representation; they recall a rich history of geographic manuscripts with similarly executed illustrations in the Ottoman world dating back to the sixteenth century. LA AF





China, 1861

Woodblock on rice paper

15 x 26.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007b, pp. 54-55 (no. 29)

AKM 00681

MA FUCHU (Ma Dexin, 1794-1863) was considered among the most eminent Hui Chinese scholars of Islam and Sino-Muslim philosophy during the rule of the Qing dynasty. The author of more than thirty-five works ranging from metaphysics to history written in Chinese and Arabic, Ma Fuchu is also well-known for his five-volume translation of the Qur'an into Chinese. The *Chao jin tu ji* is a travelogue which provides an account of his journey from China to Mecca. Ma Fuchu left China with a group of Muslim merchants, travelling overland and by riverboat to Rangoon, where he boarded a steamship to take him to the Arabian Peninsula. After performing the pilgrimage, he spent two years in Cairo, where he studied at Al-Azhar University, and thereafter travelled throughout the Ottoman Empire before returning to Yunnan. **AM**



شكل المسجد الحرام والكعبة

凱爾白圖式



23 PRAYER AMULET WITH LEAD CASE

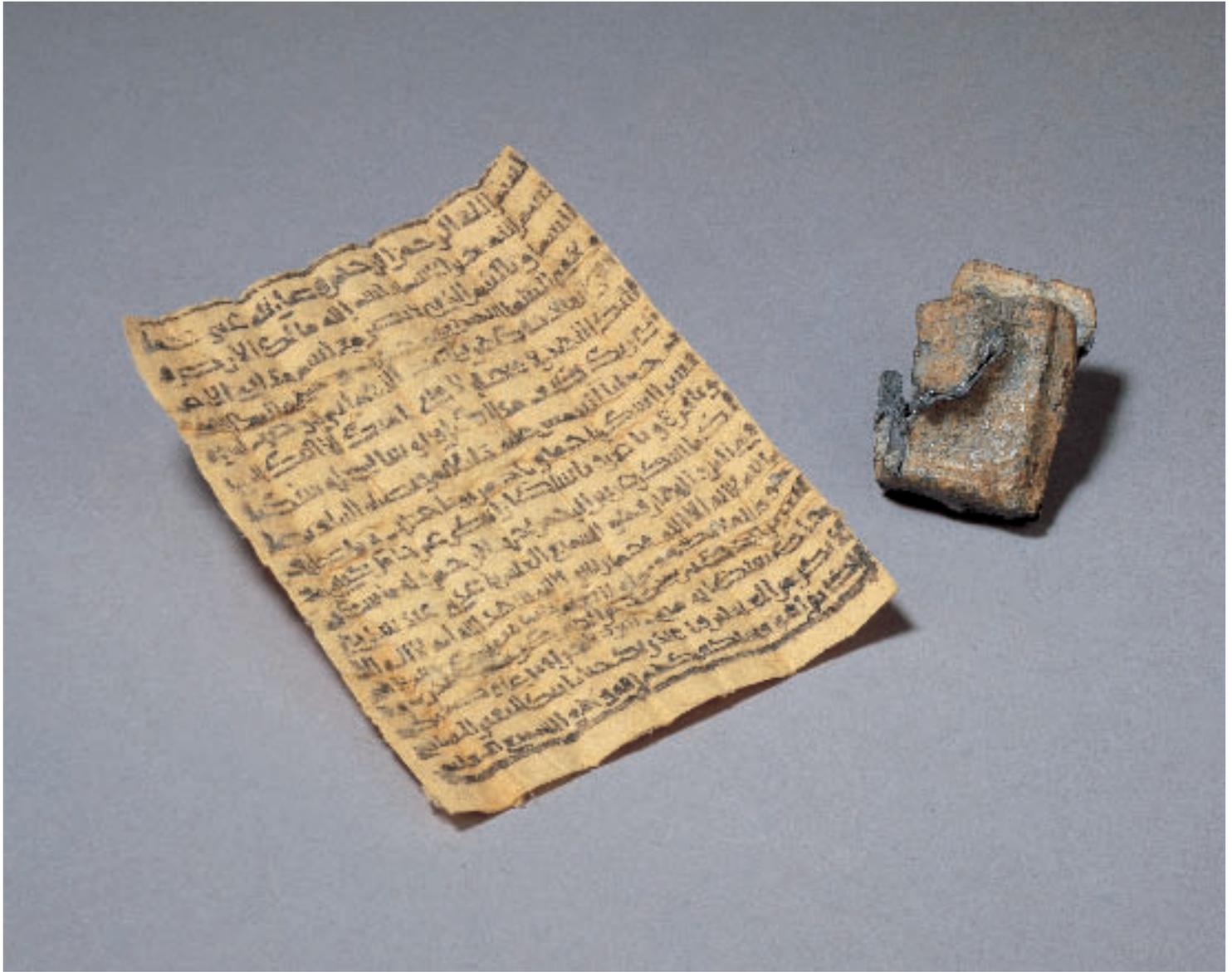
Egypt, *circa* 11th century

Paper amulet: 7.2 x 5.5 cm; lead case: 2.7 x 1.3 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 61 (no. 30); AKTC 2007b, p. 58 (no. 30); Makariou 2007, pp. 130-31 (no. 45)

AKM 00508

THIS PRAYER AMULET is a rare example of an early Arabic printing technique known as *tarsh*. The paper contains eighteen lines of kufic text and further lines on the reverse, which may have been offset from the recto when the paper was folded inside its lead case, also a very rare survival. The style of the kufic characters in the present example would indicate a Fatimid origin and no later since this script was no longer used for manuscripts after the Fatimid period. The printing technique probably involved metal plates or woodblocks. The history of early printed amulets has yet to be written. What is known about them is based on the small group of extant printed amulets and literary sources. Bulliett cites poetry verses from tenth- and fourteenth-century authors referring to printed amulets from wooden blocks and cast tin plates (Bulliett 1987). **AF**



Iran, second half of the 16th century

Brass

61 cm

LIT.: Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 3-112 (especially pp. 35-37, p. 69, note 172; figs. 60-63, pp. 97-98); AKTC 2007a, p. 63 (no. 32); AKTC 2007b, p. 60 (no. 32)

AKM 00612

SNARLING DRAGON HEADS project from either end of this boat-shaped *kashkul* or dervish's begging bowl, which contains a wide band of elegant *nasta'liq* inscriptions engraved in cartouches, and several bands of floral interlace decoration. This engraved brass *kashkul* is one of five important Safavid examples from the end of the sixteenth century. The others are in the Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul; Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar (ex-Khosrovani coll.); in a private collection (offered at Christie's, *Islamic Art and Manuscripts*, 27 April 2004, lot 97); and one formerly in the Rothschild and Edwin Binney III Collections (Pope, *A Survey of Persian Art*, London and Oxford, 1938, pl. 1386A and Welch 1973, fig. 42, pp. 470-71). Melikian-Chirvani presented this group in an article that demonstrates how the dervish's begging bowl developed from the ancient, pre-Islamic royal wine-boat shape. He notes that "... the idea [is] embodied in the shape: the crescent-moon out of which wine, seen as liquid sunlight, is poured." (Melikian-Chirvani 1991, p. 21). The inscriptions on this vessel have been read in full by the same scholar, who comments that this *kashkul* once belonged to the head of a *khanaqa* or Sufi hermitage.





Persian verses, Side 1:

“The prince of the two worlds, the seal of messengers
Came last: he became the pride of the very first
To the throne and the seat, not to the sky, he made his ascent
The prophets and friends of God were in need of him
His existence was spent in guarding the two worlds
The whole surface of the earth became his mosque
The lord of the two worlds, the leader of mankind:
The moon was split by the tip of his finger.”

Persian verses, Side 2 (in a different metre):

“The one had for him the friend of the Beloved
While the other was the leader of the Pious bands
(The servant of the Shah of Najaf, Shams al-Din)
. . . For this reason did they become friends of God
The one was a fount of moral gentleness and spiritual modesty in the world
While the other was ‘The Gate of the City of Knowledge’
That envoy of Truth/God that was the best among humans
His immaculate uncle was Hamza son of ‘Abbas.”

(Melikian-Chirvani 1991, pp. 35-36)

AF



Page from an illustrated manuscript of the *Divan* of Amir Shahi

Scribe: Attributed to ʿAbd al-Rahim al-Haravi

Painter: Attributed to Miskin

India, Lahore, Mughal, *circa* 1595

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

26.5 x 20.2 cm

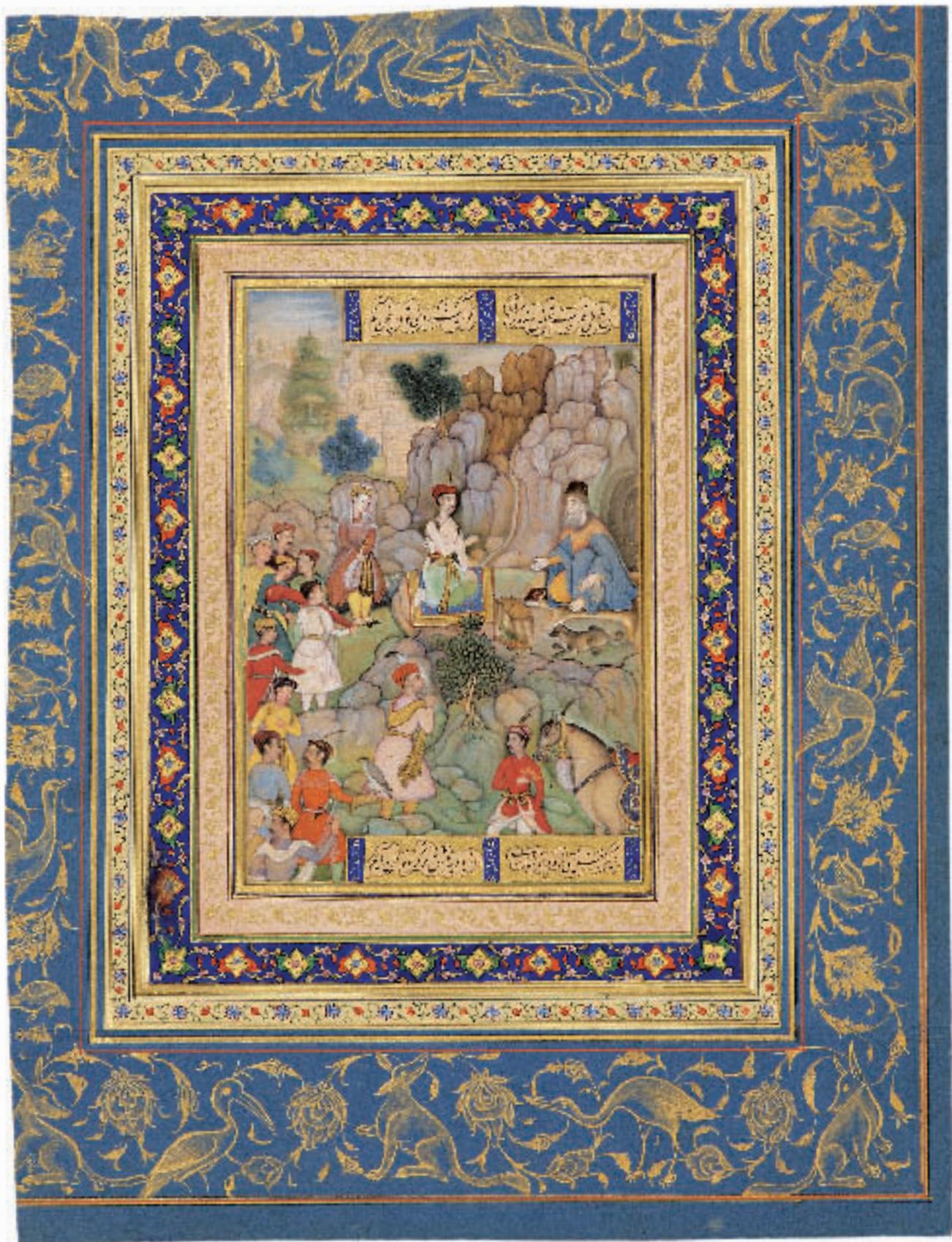
LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 175-79 (no. 59A); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 154-55 (no. 75);

Canby 1998, p. 121 (no. 89)

AKM 00157

AMIR SHAHI (Aqa Malik ibn Amir Jamal al-Din Firuzkuhi of Sabzavar, d. 1453) was a poet and calligrapher at the court of the bibliophile Timurid prince Baysunghur (d. 1433) in Herat (modern Afghanistan). His work, however, enjoyed acclaim among the Mughal royalty in India as well. Anthony Welch has attributed the style of this painting to that of the royal atelier in Lahore under the reign of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and, more specifically, to the artist Miskin (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 176). The scene depicts a young princely figure and a large group of attendants, dressed and prepared for the hunt but stopping at a hermit's cave. The royal figure may represent Akbar's son Selim, who succeeded his father as emperor under the name Jahangir (r. 1605-27). The skilful handling of detail from landscape elements to the architecture of the distant city beyond the mountains, in addition to the careful modelling of each figure's individual features and expressions, is remarkable. The overall atmosphere is defined by sharply outlined textile patterns, jewels, and rock faces, all of which provide an appealing textural contrast to the softer outlines of the trees, animal coats, and shading throughout the scene. Such superb quality is typical of late sixteenth-century Mughal illustrated literary manuscripts, many of which were produced in smaller sizes but with a higher level of refinement.

The two couplets at the top and bottom of the painting have been attributed to the hand of ʿAbd al-Rahim al-Haravi, the famous “Anbarin Qalam” (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 179). The top one reads, “I am the sacred parrot who remains imprisoned in a cage / where is the mirror of your visage so that I can speak?”, while the bottom reads, “No longer will I give away my royal treasures / lest I should die from the desert of your love.” LA





26 MANUSCRIPT OF THE *MATHNAVI* OF RUMI

Iran, Shiraz, dated 1011 H/1602

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

29.5 x 16.3 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 64 (no. 33); AKTC 2007b, p. 61 (no. 33)

AKM 00376

THE *MATHNAVI-I MA^cNAVI* is a poetic masterpiece of around 25,000 couplets, written by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi (d. 1273) and concerned with the main theoretical issues and themes of Sufi doctrine. Although his nationality is contested among Iranians, Turks, and Central Asians, Rumi is one of the most celebrated mystical poets in Sufi and Persian literature and the originator and ultimate *pir*, or spiritual master, of the Mawlawi (Turkish *Mevlevi*) dervish order. While illuminated manuscripts of Rumi's writings, sometimes enclosed in elaborate bindings, are not unusual, illustrated manuscripts of this text are rare. The image on the left-hand folio shown here depicts a tale told within the context of a larger story about a devotee who broke a noble's wine jar with a stone, justifying his action by declaring that followers of God should not indulge in wine. Two stories are embedded in this narrative in order to bring its major points to light; the one illustrated here recounts an episode in which Sayyid Shah Tirmidh angrily throws a chessboard at his court jester's head after being checkmated by him. The next time the two sit down to a game, the courtier anticipates the need to protect himself by covering his head with a turban of felt. The scene is identified both by the figures seated on either side of a chessboard as well as by a caption just above the painting. Its depiction suggests the importance of this story, perhaps to the patron who commissioned the manuscript; not only was the episode selected for illustration, but it was also allotted most of the space on the page, leaving room for only three lines of Persian text above and below the image. LA



27 PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG PRINCE WITH MYSTICS

Mughal India, *circa* 1635

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

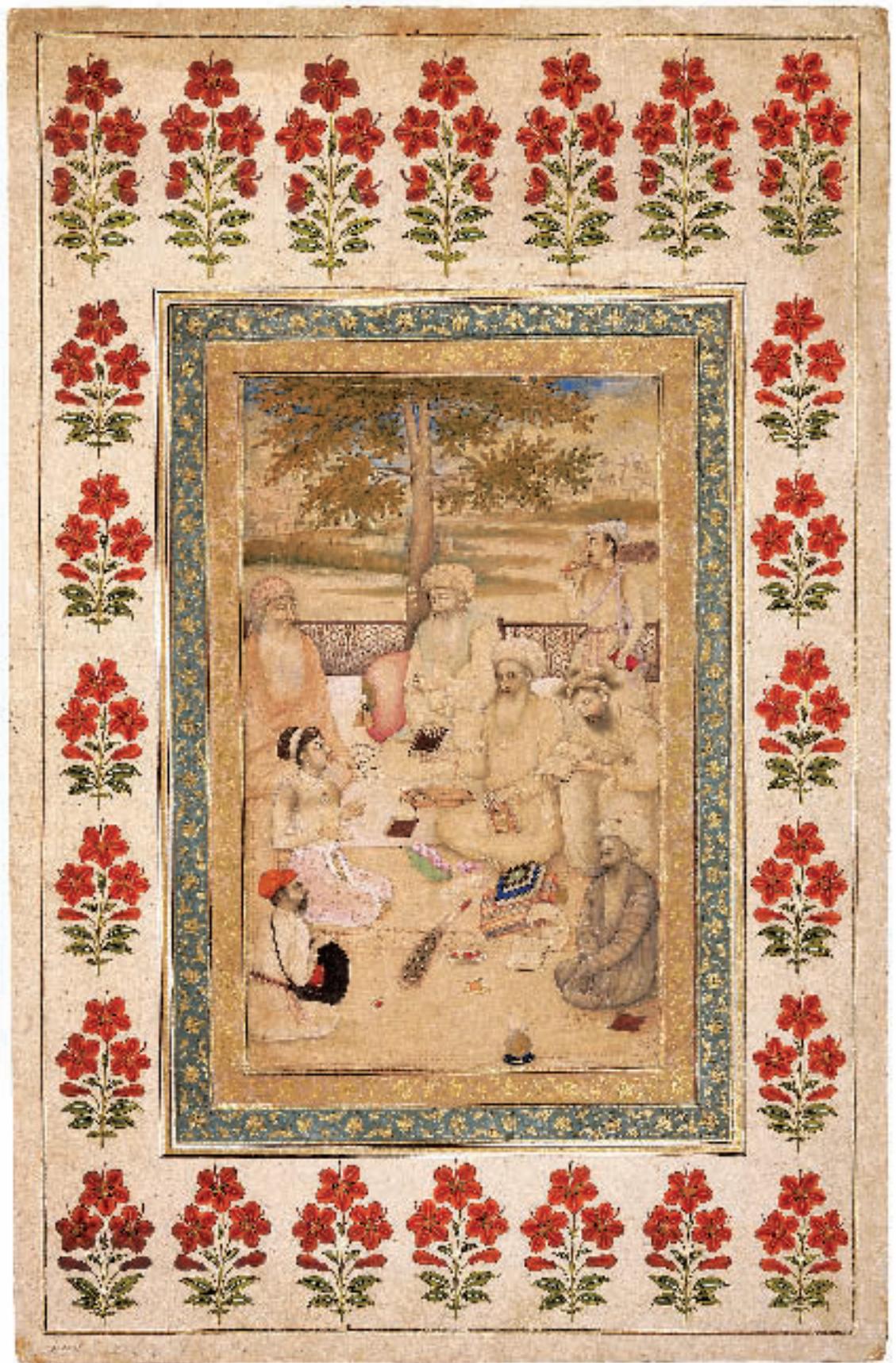
42.7 x 28.2 cm

Provenance: Bequeathed to the Norwegian artist J. C. Dahl (1788-1857) in 1844 by his pupil the Prince of Java, Ben Jaggia Rader Saleh (1801-80) and thence by descent. On loan to the National Art Museum in Oslo until 2005.

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 66-67 (no. 35); AKTC 2007b, pp. 62-63 (no. 35); Makariou 2007, pp. 30-31 (no. 4)

AKM 00498

THE MUGHAL PRINCE Dara Shikuh (1615-59), the eldest and favourite son of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal, was profoundly interested in mysticism and his writings centre on Sufi topics and poetry. A noted patron of the arts and calligraphy, the prince presented his wife with an album of paintings and calligraphy now known as the Dara Shikuh Album and held in the British Library. The present portrait is compositionally and stylistically very similar to paintings in the album by an artist identified by Falk and Archer as “Artist B” (Falk and Archer 1981, pp. 73, 383). It has been suggested that “Artist B” was influenced by the work of Govardhan, the celebrated Mughal painter whose paintings of sages and ascetics are full of life, psychological depth, a subdued palette and perspective. All of these elements are present in this extraordinary portrait. On the reverse of the album leaf is a calligraphy specimen by Muhammad Husayn of Kashmir, the famous Akbari calligrapher known as “Golden Pen” (*Zarin Qalam*). **AF**





Attributed to Mu^oin Musavvir (active *circa* 1635-*circa* 1697)

Iran, Isfahan, Safavid, dated 1074 H/1663

Ink and watercolour on paper, mounted with double border of beige and pink paper

Page: 27.8 x 17.5 cm; Image: 15.4 x 5.8 cm

Provenance: Probably formerly in the collection of Claude Anet, Paris

LIT.: Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray 1931, no. 373b; Welch 1972a, p. 215

AKM 00451

SINGLE-PAGE PAINTING began to appear in Iran in the sixteenth century, when artists were active not only at the court but also in their own homes. The medium of drawing as a finished work of art, in particular, became more common as it did not require expensive materials and compositions could also be achieved in less time. As a medium, it offered the artist the opportunity to experiment with designs, compositions, and typologies. One of the most popular subjects depicted in the seventeenth century was the Sufi dervish, often shown in a contemplative pose in a landscape. In this portrait, the dervish is identified by his cap, robe, and the *divan* he holds in his lap. He sits in a clearing against a backdrop of a large, jutting rocky mound. A cup and a *carafe*, likely filled with wine, are situated before him and he appears either to be feeding himself a small piece of fruit or bringing his fingers to his lips in a gesture of reflection.

The drawing has been attributed stylistically to the artist Mu^oin Musavvir, active at the courts of four Safavid rulers (Shah Safi^o, r. 1629-42; Shah ^oAbbas II, r. 1642-66; Shah Sulaiman II, r. 1666-94; and Sultan Husayn, r. 1694-1722). The Persian inscription dates the composition to 1663 (“dated Rabi’ al-awwal [the first] in the year 1074”) and corresponds to Mu^oin’s active years; it is also dedicated to his son (“for my son, Hatim Biq”). Mu^oin was one of the closest followers of Riza ^oAbbasi, the most celebrated artist of the Safavid period. While this drawing is not his finest, Mu^oin’s refined style is suggested by the careful manner in which the details of the dervish’s face, his round, sloping forehead and the silhouette of the rocks are formed from a series of calligraphic strokes that waver in thickness and density. LA





“SHAYKH SAFI^c'S DREAM”

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of the *Tadhkira* (Biographical Accounts) of Shaykh Safi^c al-Din (d. 1334)

Iran, Shiraz, dated Sha^cban (August-September) 990 H/1582

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

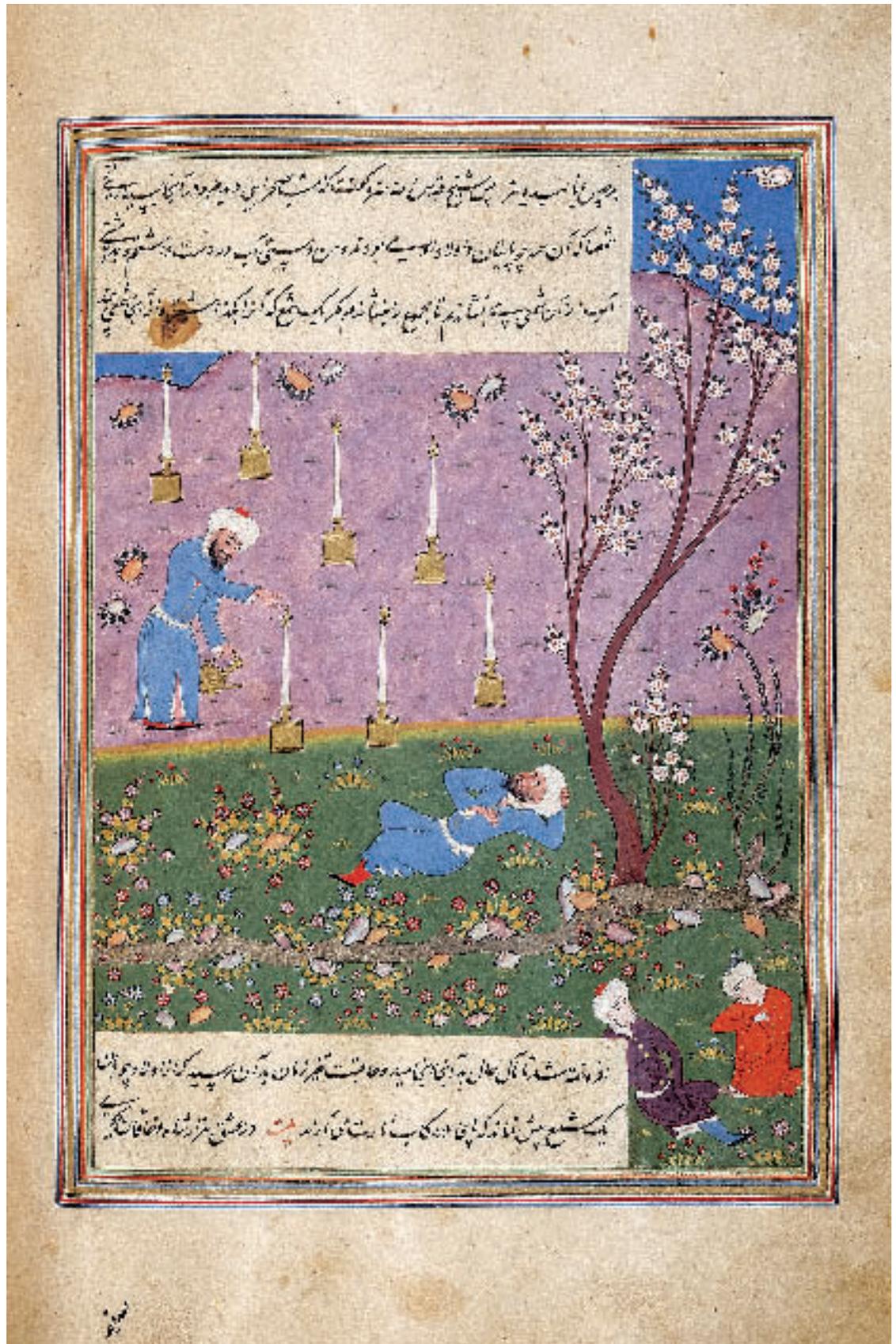
35.2 x 22 cm

Provenance: Marquess of Bute

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 48 and 57; AKTC 2007a, p. 69 (no. 38); AKTC 2007b, p. 65 (no. 38)

AKM 00264

THIS PAINTING BELONGS to the only known illustrated manuscript of the *Tadhkira* (Biographical Accounts) of Shaykh Safi^c al-Din, a Sufi saint and the founder of the Safavid dynasty (r. 1501-1732) of Iran. The painting illustrates the accompanying text, in which the shaykh recounts a dream he had foretelling the rise of the Mongol-descended Chubanids (r. 1335-57). In the dream, the shaykh sees a field filled with candles lighting up one after the other, representing the Chubanids and their descendants and their imminent rise to power. The episode is depicted beautifully by a division in two parts: the lower half of the painting shows Shaykh Safi^c and two accompanying figures reposing in a grassy plain dotted with colourful flowers and a cherry blossom tree, while the upper segment, painted in an idyllic lavender shade, illustrates the shaykh's vision. Dream and reality become united by their situation under a single, bright blue sky and are held together by the length of the sinewy cherry blossom tree that extends from the bottom of the painting through the dreamscape and into the sky. The manuscript is dated Sha^cban 990 H/1582. LA





Folio from an illustrated manuscript

India, Kashmir, Mughal, *circa* 1670

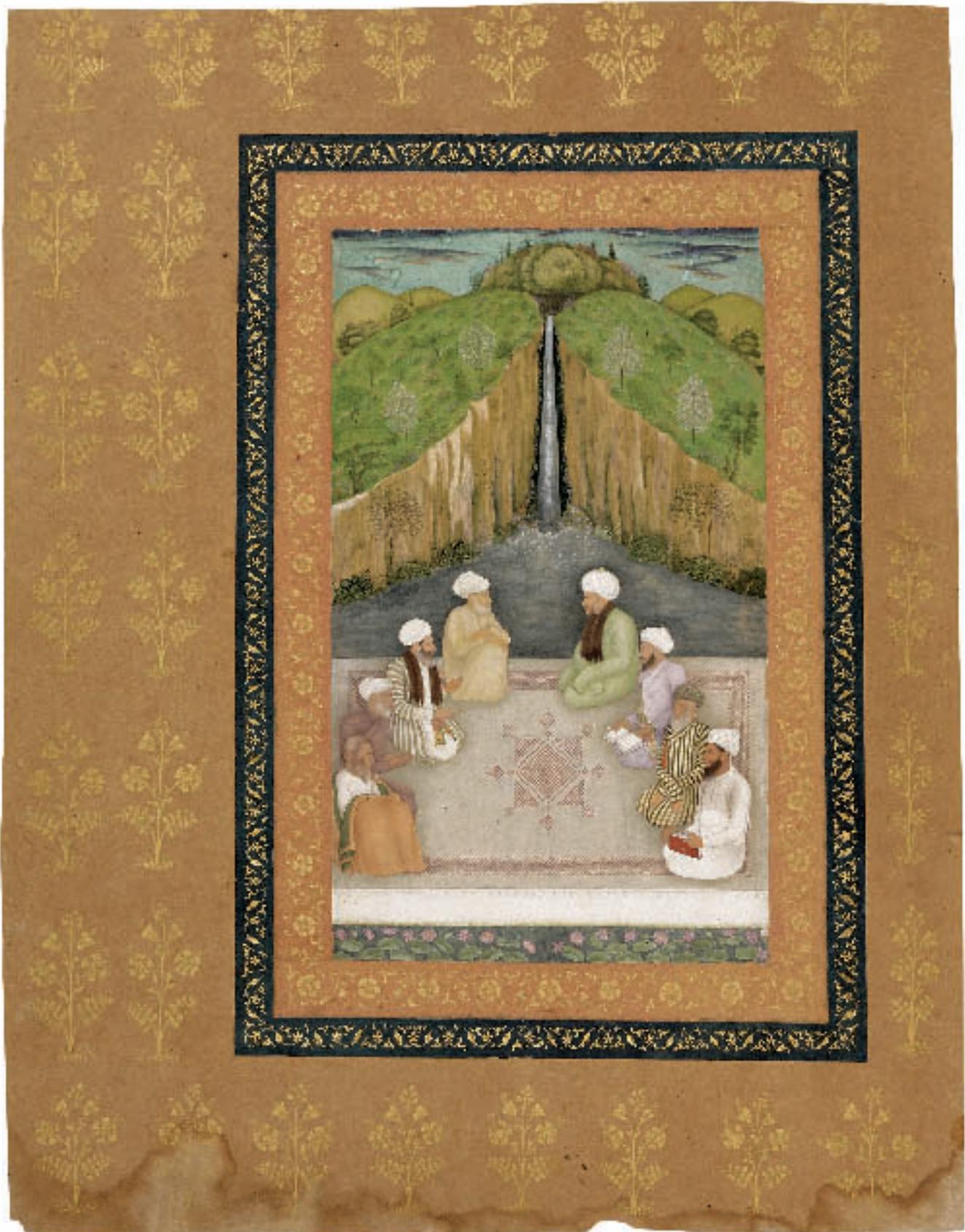
Opaque watercolour on paper

44.2 x 34.3 cm

LIT.: Leach 1986, p. 128 (no. 6); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 189-90 (no. 93); Canby 1998, pp. 151-53 (no. 113)

AKM 00172

THE MUGHAL FASCINATION with the spiritual guidance of mystics and sages was so profound that it was even acknowledged in this painting from the reign of Awrangzeb (r. 1658-1707), the most orthodox and least tolerant of the Mughal emperors. Canby has attributed this work to Awrangzeb's ruling period due to its strict symmetry – emphasized by the formation of eight figures divided by a central waterfall and a geometric carpet medallion – as well as the move away from depicting a more naturalistic landscape in the typical Mughal manner (Canby 1998, p. 152). In this scene, four figures face each other on either side of the picture plane, engaged in deep discussion, probably led by the central figures sitting closest to the waterfall. One might imagine that the figure on the left represents the figure of the revered Shaykh Salim Chishti. The emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) built a white marble shrine for the shaykh at Fatehpur Sikri after his prayers for a son were answered with the birth of Jahangir (r. 1605-27). Mystics, scholars, and sages were frequently portrayed in paintings under Akbar, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) and Jahangir; Canby suggests the present image might have even been inspired by the work of the artist Govardhan, known for his superb paintings of sages under Shah Jahan (*ibid.*). LA





The Garden as Paradise

MUCH OF THE QUR'AN is concerned with man leading a righteous life in order to prepare for the Day of Judgement, when he will enter Heaven or Hell. Heaven is described in the Qur'an as *jannat*, a word also translated as "garden". Thus, the connection between Paradise and cool, green gardens with running water and fruit trees runs through the whole history of Islam. The earliest mosques outside of Arabia, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, are decorated with mosaics including trees and rivers, an apparent reference to Heaven. In both secular and sacred contexts, flowers, fruits and trees were considered acceptable forms of ornament. Even in cemeteries where the tombstones are inscribed with the name of the deceased and prayers, the surroundings were planted as gardens with grass and trees. Paintings from Iran and India depict figures enjoying picnics, concerts and colloquies in garden settings, while flowers, birds and animals enliven pottery and metalwork of the medieval and early modern periods across the Islamic world. ■ SC



31 ROBE

Iran, 8th-11th century or China, 8th century (?)

Silk samite

H.: 124 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 46-47 (no. 12)

AKM 00676

THIS ASTONISHING ROBE is unequalled in both its cut and fabric. There is scarcely anything in any of the preserved manuscripts to compare with the very roomy cut (Makariou 2007, p. 55, note 68). Similarly, the fabric, which has a very large-scale pattern, is extremely disconcerting; even more so the absence of compartmentalisation around the colossal birds facing one another and towering over smaller birds (*ibid.*, note 69). Some details evoke Iranian textiles from the Sasanian tradition, in particular the beaded strip at the base of the birds' wings.

The state of preservation of the textile, which in itself is remarkable, gives precious clues: a broad halo on the back indicates the action of a body decomposing and the funerary use of the garment. This would dissuade one from thinking that the textile was used in an Islamic milieu, where bodies, wrapped in a shroud, were buried right in the earth (*ibid.*, note 70). In contrast, garments made of imported fabric have been found in both Europe and in Xinjiang province, China.

In this case the parallels with pieces discovered in Xinjiang are the most telling. One detail adds to the complexity of the piece: an inscription in kufic script in mirror writing was affixed to the shoulder, parallel to the sleeve. The inscription reads: "Glory and prosperity, long life to its possessor" (*ibid.*, note 73). Manufacture in China based on an Iranian pattern cannot be completely ruled out, nor can a rather broad range of dates be dismissed (*ibid.*, note 74). There are no examples of similar fabrics that would establish beyond all doubt that the piece was made in Iran. Rather, the list of available examples suggests this even though the absence of compartmentalisation has no equivalent in medieval production – the boundaries of which are, in any case, continually changing. It is certainly Chinese excavations that are contributing to our knowledge in this area. **SM**







Iran, late 16th century

Lacquer with gold and mother-of-pearl

27.7 x 16.7 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 74-75 (no. 43); AKTC 2007b, pp. 70-71 (no. 43); Makariou 2007, pp. 70-71 (no. 21)

AKM 00637

DEER GATHER AROUND a duck-filled pond, while peacocks, birds and flying ducks call to one another in and amongst the flower-filled branches of two intertwining trees in this magnificent pair of book covers. No detail is too small for the artist's attention in this mirror-like composition which has been colourfully painted, outlined in gold and heightened with crushed mother-of-pearl and gold flakes to create a scintillating effect under a clear, protective varnish. Sixteenth-century Safavid lacquer bookbindings such as this one grew out of the fifteenth-century tradition developed in Timurid Herat which, as one scholar argues, was in turn dependent on Chinese models (Stanley 2003, p. 185). The red, orange, gold and black colours of the present binding are visually similar to Chinese *tianqi* ("filled-in lacquer", see *ibid.*, pp. 186, 193) wares that are built up with small blocks of colour outlined in gold. Islamic lacquer bindings are technically different from the Chinese lacquer objects which are made with sap from the "lacquer tree" (*Rhus verniciflua*). The Islamic bindings are covered by a varnish called *rawghan-i kaman*, or "bow gloss", in the literature from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (see cat. no. 84). Related lacquer bindings of the mid-sixteenth century are found in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Mss. Or. Suppl. Pers. 1962 and 1171 and 129; see Stanley 2003, pp. 190-91; Richard 1997, pp. 169, 179, and Bernus-Taylor 1989, pp. 165-66) and in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Haldane 1983, no. 94). Such motifs had great influence on the designs of Portuguese *azulejos* (ceramic tiles). **AF**





TWO KUBACHI WARES

Large dish

Iran, Kubachi, Safavid, early 17th century

Ceramic, fritware, polychrome underglaze painted

Ø 34.7 cm; H.: 7 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 173 and 177

AKM 00692

Large dish

Iran, Kubachi, Safavid, early 17th century

Ceramic, fritware, polychrome underglaze painted

Ø 34.2 cm; H.: 6 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 173 and 175

AKM 00691

KUBACHI WARES are named after the small village in which several of them were found in the second half of the twentieth century, located in the Caucasus in the Daghestan republic of Russia. Kubachi, however, does not have a history of pottery production; it is more likely that such ceramics were produced in north-western Iran. While Kubachi vessels display a range in decorative schemes, these two large vessels fall into the group produced in the early seventeenth century under the reign of the Safavid Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1587-1629) (Welch 1973, p. 58). The subject matter in each – a youth in a spotted blue coat and red turban and a young woman in a floral-patterned robe and colourful headdress – represent idealized portraits commonly depicted on ceramic surfaces and single page compositions during this time. Both figures appear against a colourful background of flowers in red, gold, green and dark blue, and each portrait is framed by two circular bands, the outer one being the rim of each plate and including a condensed scallop design. LA



33



34



Fol. 37r

Manuscript has 68 folios of Ibrahim Mirza's Persian poetry and 20 folios of his Turkish poetry. One painting (fol. 23r) signed by °Abdullah al-Mudhahhib, also known as °Abdullah Shirazi; illumination ascribed to the same artist

Iran, Qazvin, 1582

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

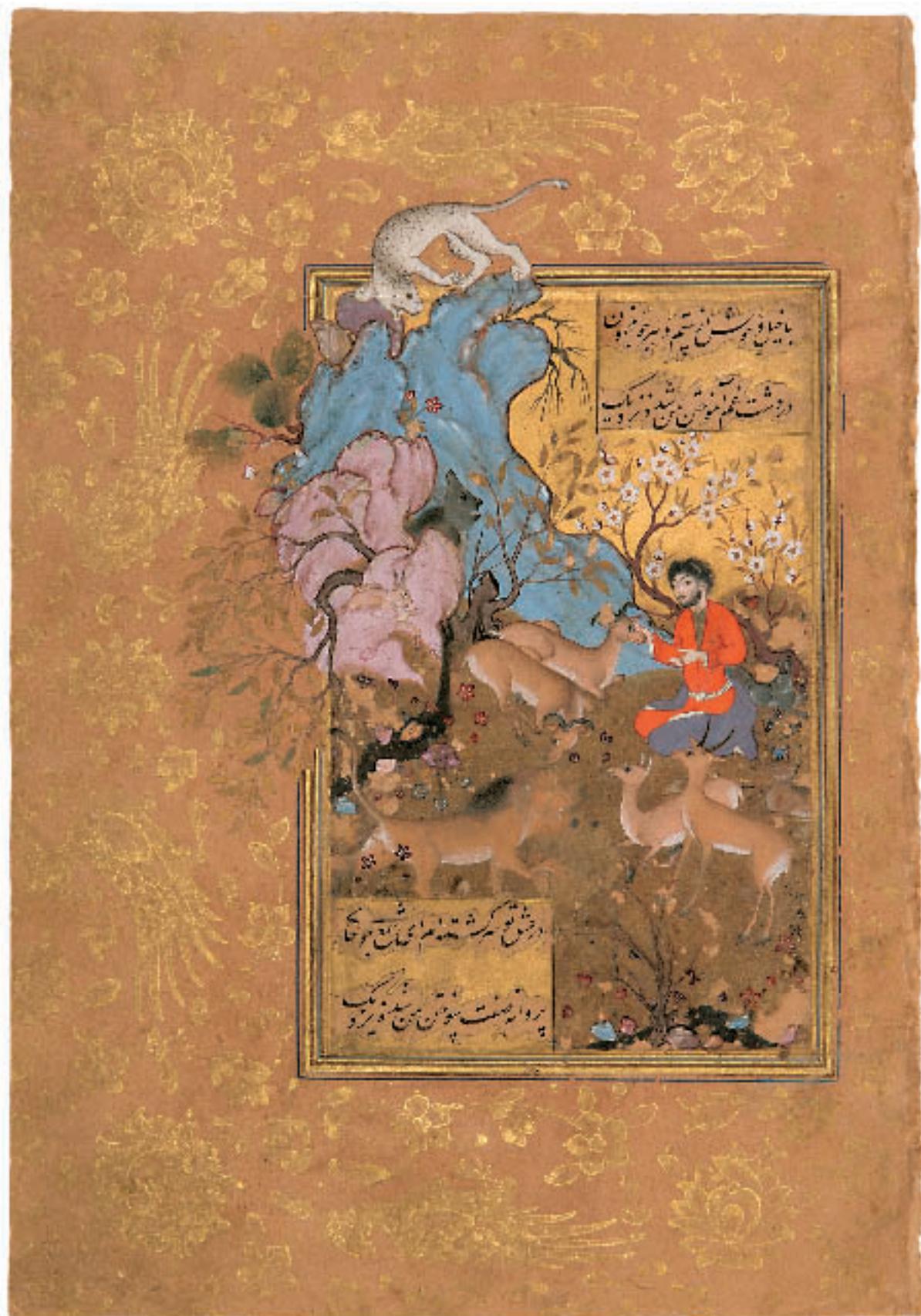
23.8 x 16.6 cm

LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 94-98 (no. 30, fol. 23v); Canby 1998, pp. 63-64 (no. 38, fol. 86v and 87r)

AKM 00282

ACCORDING TO ITS PREFACE, this *divan* (also spelled *diwan*), or collection of poetry, was compiled by Gawhar Shad, the daughter of Ibrahim Mirza (1543/44-1577), nephew to the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76). Orphaned at six years of age, the young prince was raised under the care of his powerful uncle, who gave him his own daughter in marriage and appointed him governor of the holy city of Mashhad. Ibrahim Mirza was a great patron of the arts and a poet, scholar, calligrapher and artist in his own right; he is said to have written five thousand verses in Persian and Turkish (Qadi Ahmad in Minorsky 1959, p. 157) and was the patron of a superbly illustrated and illuminated manuscript of the poet Jami's *Haft Awrang* (Seven Thrones, 1556-65) during his tenure in Mashhad. In 1574, the governor returned to the Qazvin court of Shah Tahmasp and stayed until the ruler's death in 1576. Ibrahim Mirza was murdered the following year by Tahmasp's son and successor, Isma'îl II (r. 1576-78).

This folio represents the image of the garden in its wider connections to spirituality and mysticism. It depicts the figure of the love-sick, delirious Majnun, known from the poet Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet), seated among wild animals, including a leopard, lion, gazelles and rabbits, in a landscape abundant with fantastic pastel-coloured rocky mountains and foliage. Tree trunks and curving branches grow out of jutting rocks and spill out of the picture frame into the border of the folio, which is interspersed with phoenixes, lotuses and peonies delicately rendered in gold. Framed diagonally from each other at two corners of the painting, Persian verses in *nasta'liq* script complement the desperately romantic mood of the painting. The verse above the painting speaks to the writer's own suffering and delirium, while the one at the bottom alludes to the story of the moth and the flame: "I am bewildered by your love, O selfish flame / a crude moth, my burning approaches". Both the story of Laili and Majnun and the tragic romance of the moth and the flame have mystical connections to Sufism, and it is not surprising that such metaphors would be included in a cultured prince's *divan*. LA





36 BOWL

Iran, Kashan, early 13th century

Stonepaste body, decoration painted in black under a turquoise glaze

Ø 21.9 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 78 (no. 47); AKTC 2007b, p. 76 (no. 47)

AKM 00562

THIS BOWL has a pronounced aquatic theme: undulating leaves and stems fill the sides and fish swim over its base, all under a “sea” of transparent turquoise alkaline glaze. Water is an important symbol in Islam and gardens with axial pools filled with fish were seen as metaphors for the heavenly garden. The so-called “water-weed” design on this bowl was a popular theme in Persian underglaze ceramics from the early thirteenth century. The design was applied with a brush, which allowed for more fluidity and spontaneity than previously possible in the earlier, slip-carved “silhouette wares”. The painter of this bowl seems to revel in the new-found freedom of brushwork in the underglaze technique, adding decorative flourishes to the leaves. **AF**





37 VASE

Central Iran, 13th century

Stonepaste body, decorated with a turquoise glaze

H.: 71 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 78-79 (no. 48); AKTC 2007b, pp. 76-77 (no. 48)

AKM 00566

THIS MONUMENTAL VASE demonstrates the technical expertise of Iranian potters and belongs to a small group of comparable pieces, all distinguished by their great size, plain opaque turquoise glaze and combination of moulded and incised decoration. The decoration of the vase is organised into horizontal registers and includes benedictory wishes in a moulded band of *naskh* around the neck and a moulded frieze of running animals on a vinescroll ground around the shoulder. Incised bands of bevelled motifs and scale-like motifs complete the exterior decoration. **AF**







38 A COMPOSITE ELEPHANT AND RIDER

Border painting signed “*amal-i Dawlat Khan*” (the work of Dawlat Khan)

India, Mughal, *circa* 1600; border *circa* 1640

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

38.6 x 25 cm

LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 184-88 (nos. 62-3, recto and verso)

AKM 00143

A ROYAL FIGURE riding an enormous elephant follows a guide in a wintry landscape, the season signalled by a lack of leaves on trees in the distance. The colourfully painted elephant and rider stand in stark contrast to the muted background. A lavish golden crown and flames or plumage extending from behind the rider's head suggest that he might be a king or another royal figure. His prominence is further emphasized by the presence of the elephant, as these massive creatures were highly prized by the Mughals and valued for their strength and bravery. Most interestingly, both elephant and rider are comprised of several human and animal figures, including bearded men, lions, cows, leopards, birds, and gazelles, all rendered in an abundance of colour. Even the king's belt is formed by a snake coiled around his waist. Depictions of composite figures, animals in particular, are not uncommon in Islamic art, and many such images come from the Mughal period. The plethora of species contained in the immense body of the elephant may stand as a metaphor for the diverse worldly elements kept in balance by the Solomon-like ruler. It has also been suggested that the illustration contains mystical undertones, with the figure on the ground, a Sufi guide painted in white, lighting the symbolic path before them (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 187).

A narrow border of golden, floral vines against a deep blue background frames the painting, which has been mounted in an album assembled (along with the border) at a later date. The album folio, a marginal element at first glance, becomes an elaborate painting in its own right. Antelope, gazelles, birds and a leopard wander or sit peacefully among rocks, streams and foliage, attracting the viewer's attention beyond the central image on the page. Margin paintings frequently appeared in Mughal albums and their prominence is suggested by the fact that the artist, Dawlat Khan, has signed his work on this folio. Such borders perhaps gave artists a chance to experiment with and demonstrate their talents in draughtsmanship, painting, and composition. LA





39 BOWL

Syria, 12th century

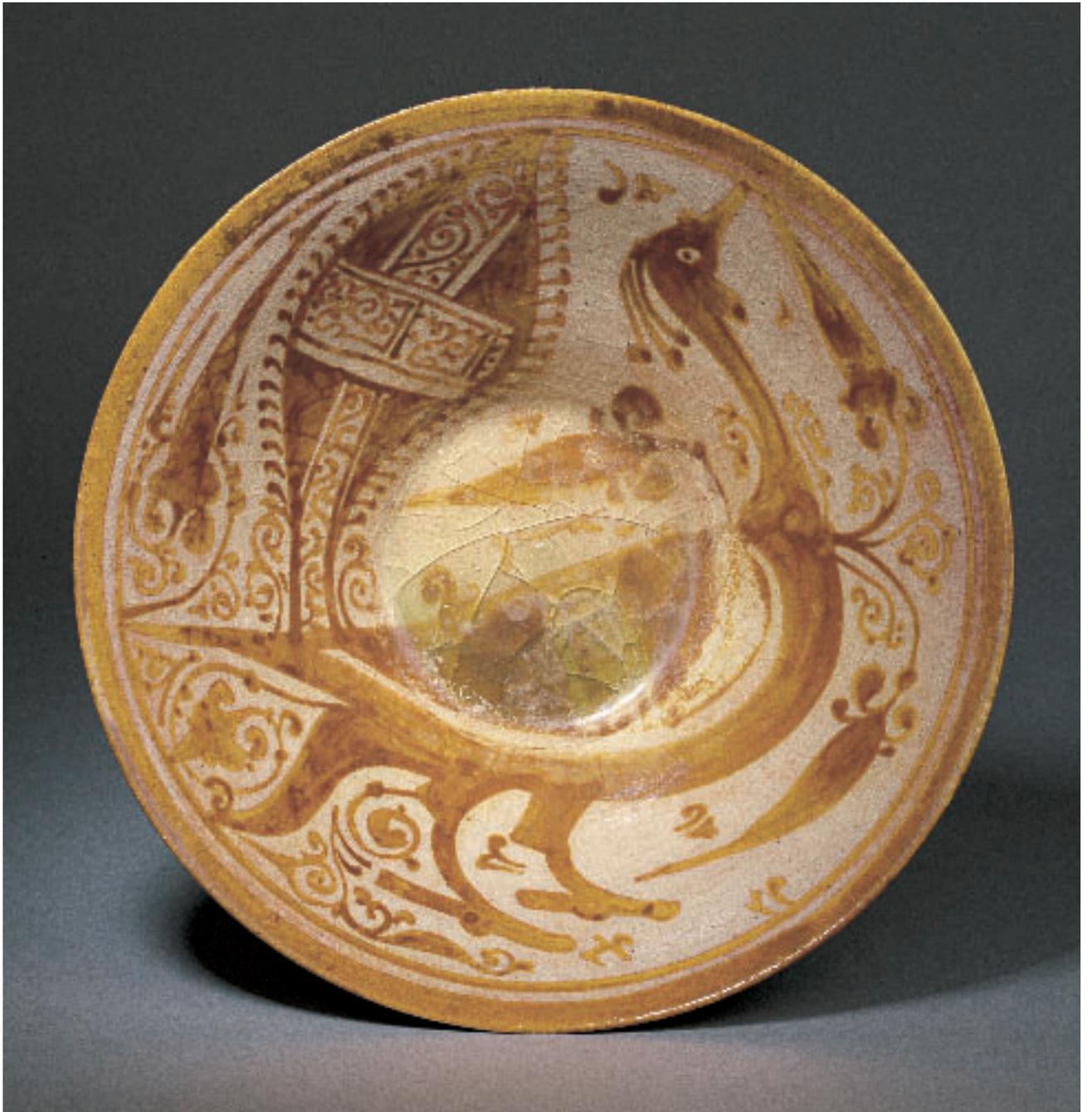
Stonepaste body painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

Ø 24.3 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 82 (no. 51); AKTC 2007b, p. 80 (no. 51)

AKM 00550

THE PEACOCK is associated with paradise and royalty; it is depicted on a wide range of Islamic objects, from ceramic bowls to textiles, metalwork and arts of the book. Some believe that the peacock was ejected from Paradise with Adam and Eve, which is why its cries sound so mournful. The peacock is a very popular motif for the decoration of ceramic bowls throughout the Islamic world, from North Africa to Central Asia, over a long span of time. The bird's shape fits neatly within the cavetto and the tail feathers are often curved back toward its head. In this piece, the tail feathers appear as a wide band elaborately decorated with foliated kufic and scrolling motifs. **AF**





40 A BOWL WITH A BIRD

Iran, probably 11th century

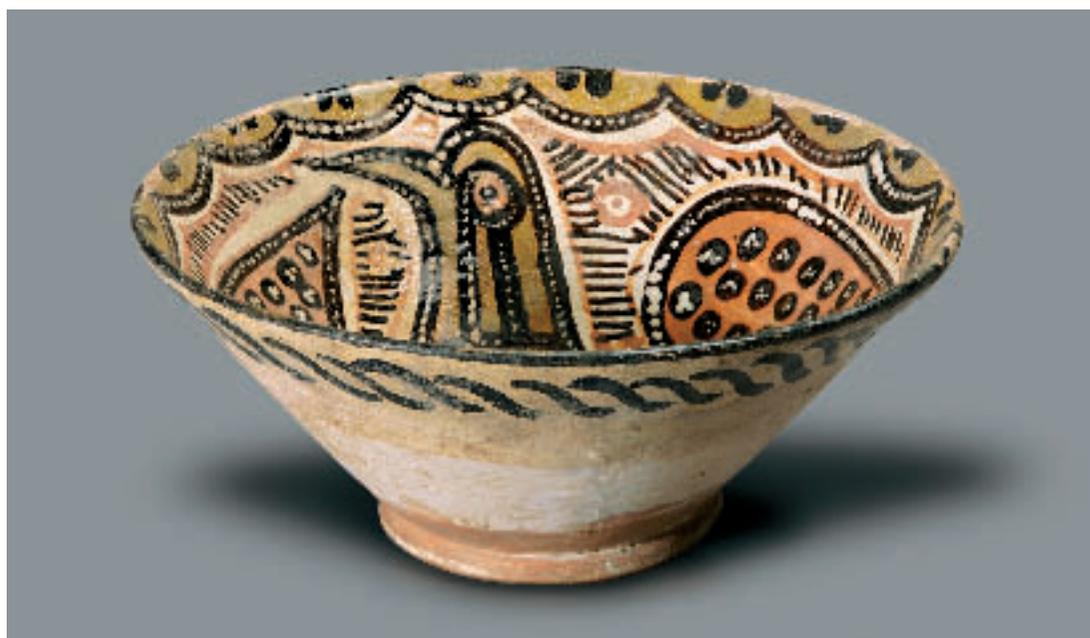
Earthenware, white slip with decoration in red, yellow, ochre, black and dark brown pigment

Ø 17.5 cm; H.: 7 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 109 and 111

AKM 00695

THE STYLISED BIRD in this bowl's interior attracts the viewer with its size and swelling body, decorated with a colourful dotted pattern that contrasts with the black-striped background and ochre-coloured scalloped border. Its decoration and technique tempt a somewhat composite classification among Abbasid, imitation Abbasid, and so-called "Sari" wares. The bowl recalls similarly decorated Abbasid lustre wares from the tenth century or even imitation lustre wares (created from slip-painted earthenware with slip decoration) from Iran in the same period, where birds are depicted with large bodies and tails and shown holding a leaf in their beaks (see Watson 2004, pp. 193, cat. E.15 and 239, cat. Ge.1). The teardrop shape of the bird's body, tail, and leaf is also reminiscent of the "bevelled" style in Abbasid wood and stucco decoration, such as at Samarra in Iraq (*ibid.*, p. 193). Finally, the composition and technique of this bowl bear resemblance to so-called "Sari" wares, often identified by an interior filled mostly by the figure of a large bird, often against a background





of smaller birds or “lollipop” flowers and decoration in reds, yellows and browns. Sari wares were named after a town in the northern Iranian province of Mazandaran where some were found and believed to have been produced. Watson, however, mentions wasters of a similar ceramic type excavated in Gurgan, another northern town near the Caspian Sea, and believes Gurgan was one of the production centres for such wares (*ibid.*, p. 243). Since none of the wares in Sari were found in excavations, an attribution of Sari as a place of production cannot confidently be made. Given the stylistic variations in so-called “Sari” wares and other ceramic pieces such as the present bowl, one can only speculate that a number of local production centres existed in northern Iran and were responsible for the circulation of a variety of wares exhibiting a wide range of quality. LA



INCENSE BURNERS IN THE FORM OF BIRDS

Incense burner in the form of a cockerel

Iran, 11th century

Bronze, inlaid with copper

H.: 28 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 84-85 (no. 54); AKTC 2007b, pp. 82-83 (no. 54)

AKM 00602

Bird incense burner

Islamic Mediterranean, 11th-12th century (?)

Bronze

H.: 17 cm; L.: 22.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 85 (no. 55); AKTC 2007b, p. 82 (no. 55)

AKM 00603

INCENSE WAS USED in the Islamic world to scent people and air alike with a fragrant mix of aloes (wood), frankincense and ambergris. Guests of the ninth-century caliph al-Ma^cmun (r. 813-33) were offered an incense burner to perfume themselves before meeting with him, according to the historian al-Mas^cudi (Bloom and Blair 1997, p. 120). Metalwork incense burners were made in a variety of shapes including animal forms such as lions and birds, and the fragrant smoke was emitted through the pierce-work decoration of their bodies. Birds were associated with paradise and good fortune; cat. no. 41 has turquoise bead eyes, thought to protect the owner from the evil eye and misfortune. This Khurasan-style bronze incense burner appears to be in the shape of a fighting cockerel with an interesting second bird head on its tail. It has an innovative design for an incense cup, a hemispherical bowl suspended under the belly, allowing the bowl to be filled but remaining concealed when the bird is set upright again. In cat. no. 42, by contrast, the head and neck are hinged to facilitate the placement of the incense. Cat. no. 42 is a masterpiece of medieval bronze casting. It is a representation of a variety of pigeon called “scandaroon”, a distortion of the name of the Turkish town Iskenderun, itself derived from the name Iskandar (Alexander). This pigeon originated from Iraq, and spread westward across the Mediterranean. It is close in shape to contemporary Khurasan-style bird incense burners, but the casting is heavier and more sculptural and the colour and patination are different. The pierce-work holes are also larger. It has been suggested that this bird incense burner may have been produced in Sicily in the late eleventh or early twelfth century under its Arab and Norman governors, although further research may yet indicate a different source. **AF**



PART TWO

The Power of the Sovereign

Great Historical Courts



The Fatimids

BY THE LATE NINTH CENTURY, the hegemony of the Abbasid Caliphate had weakened. Regional governors in Egypt and Iran exercised near-total control of their territories, paying lip-service to the caliph through the mention of his name in the Friday sermon (*khutba*) and in coinage and *tiraz* textiles produced at official manufactories. Some Islamic dynasties, such as the Umayyads of Spain, operated entirely outside the caliphate, while local leaders in parts of Syria and Arabia espoused Shia Islam. In 267 H/909 a new Shia leader, ʿAbd Allah al-Mahdi, conquered Tunisia and founded a new capital at Mahdiyya. He followed the Ismaili doctrine of Shia Islam which claimed a new era of history would be heralded by the arrival of the Mahdi (the messiah), who would be descended from ʿAli and Fatima through Ismaʿil ibn Jaʿfar al-Sadiq. ʿAbd Allah and his successors, the Fatimids, set themselves up as rivals to the Abbasids and within seven years of Imam al-Mahdi's conquest of Tunisia they had established a governor in Sicily. In 969 an exceptional general, Jawhar, occupied Egypt, and in 973 the fourth Fatimid Imam-caliph, al-Muʿizz, relocated the Fatimid capital to Cairo (*al-Qahira*, the Victorious), the new town he built on the Nile next to the pre-existing city of al-Fustat.

Although the Fatimids maintained their capital at Cairo, they taught their vision of Islam by proselytising through a broad regional organisation, the *daʿwa*. At the height of their power in the late tenth century, the Fatimids controlled Mecca and Medina, Yemen and parts of Palestine and Syria. Supported by an army of North African, Turkish and Sudanese soldiers, the Fatimids eventually suffered from internal dissensions that took both ideological and political forms. Exacerbating the power struggles within the military, drought led to economic woes in the 1060s and the inability of the Fatimid caliph to pay his army. In 1067, during the reign of al-Mustansir, the soldiers ransacked the Fatimid treasury. While this was a disaster for the Fatimid ruler, it has proved to be a boon for historians of Fatimid art because of the descriptions by the historians, Ibn al-Zubayr and Makrizi, of the objects dispersed from the treasury. While the Fatimid dynasty survived until 1171, its territories in Sicily, Syria and Palestine fell to its rivals and finally Saladin delivered the *coup de grâce* with his conquest of Egypt.

The historical descriptions of the Fatimid treasury corroborate the tangible evidence of the luxury and refinement of this court. Carved rock crystal vessels designed to contain precious substances (cat. no. 44), gossamer-thin textiles embroidered with animals and figures (cat. no. 45), and jewellery made of the finest filigree and enamel (cat. nos. 46-49) reflect the Fatimid court's opulence. Fatimid art shows a loose influence of Abbasid and Byzantine prototypes. While some elements of Fatimid lustreware pottery derive from Abbasid lustrewares, the iconography of large hares, figures engaged in sports such as cock-fighting, and the combination of foliated epigraphy and geometric ornament (cat. no. 43) are more typical of the Fatimids than the Abbasids. The descriptions of the Fatimid treasury call attention to how much was lost, but the few items that remain are witness to a period of great cultural creativity and wealth. ■ SC



Egypt, 10th-11th century

Earthenware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

H.: 29 cm

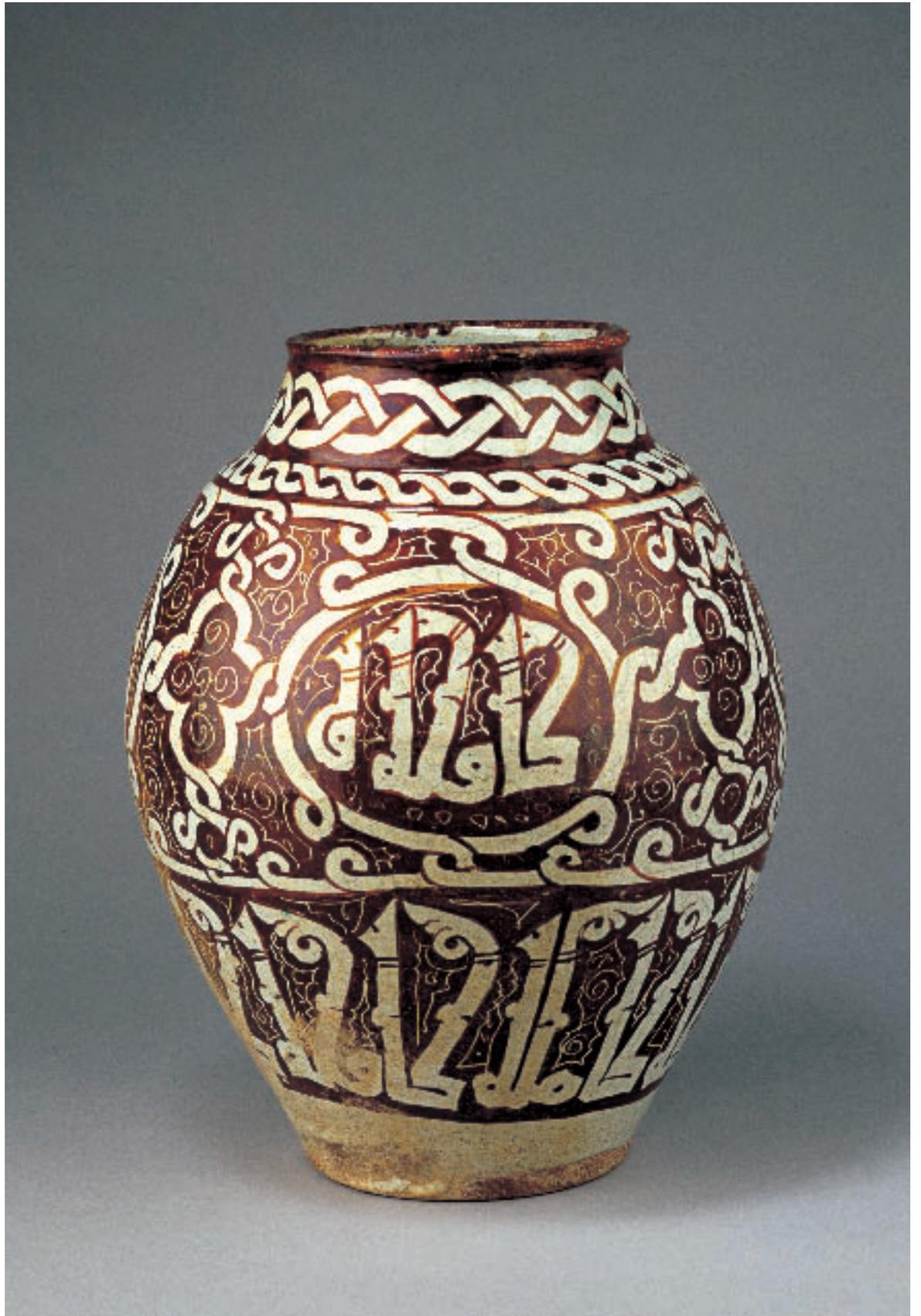
LIT: Riyadh 1985, pp. 134-35; AKTC 2007a, p. 90 (no. 56); AKTC 2007b, pp. 6 and 88 (no. 56);

Makariou 2007, pp. 186-87 (no. 67)

AKM 00548

THIS INTACT FATIMID LUSTRE JAR is both rare and beautifully decorated: two horizontal registers of bold foliated kufic inscriptions, interlacing strapwork and fine scrollwork in reserve on a copper lustre background. The inscriptions in the roundels on the body include the words, “blessing”, “perfect” and “complete”. The inscription around the base reads, “perfect blessing, complete, complete, complete, complete, perfect, complete”. Foliated kufic script in a similar style is also seen in *tiraz* textiles and marble inscriptions.

No lustre jars with related calligraphic decoration survive, although there are comparable fragments in the Benaki Museum, Athens, and the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo. A late tenth- or early eleventh-century date has been suggested for the jar based on similarities of decoration, colour and size to jar fragments excavated at Bahnasa in Egypt by Fehérvári in 1986-87. The excavated fragments were found in a Fatimid house along with a jar that contained gold dinars bearing the names of the Fatimid Imam-caliphs al-°Aziz (r. 975-96) and his successor, al-Hakim (r. 996-1021) (see Fehérvári 1987). **AF**





44 ROCK CRYSTAL VESSEL

Egypt, 10th-11th century

Rock crystal

L.: 9.3 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 92 (no. 60); AKTC 2007b, p. 90 (no. 60)

AKM 00653

PRECIOUS OBJECTS FASHIONED from rock crystal were highly prized in Egypt. They may be linked to Fatimid Egypt as they are often mentioned in Fatimid treasury accounts, and there are extant objects inscribed with the names of Fatimid caliphs and officials. Valued throughout the centuries, Fatimid rock crystal objects are found today in European royal and church treasuries to which they were brought by Crusaders and travellers to the Holy Land. An extraordinary ewer in the San Marco church treasury, Venice, features an inscription with the name of the Fatimid Imam-caliph al-°Aziz (r. 975-96). The rectangular dish contains two circular compartments and is decorated with palmettes and scrolls in the familiar “bevelled” style, which ultimately originates in the stucco decoration of Abbasid Samarra (Iraq). The vessel’s shape is unusual and seemingly without parallel in rock crystal from this time. It may have been used as a cosmetics dish. **AF**





45

SILK-EMBROIDERED LINEN PANEL WITH BIRDS, HUMAN FACES AND HARESEgypt, 10th-11th century

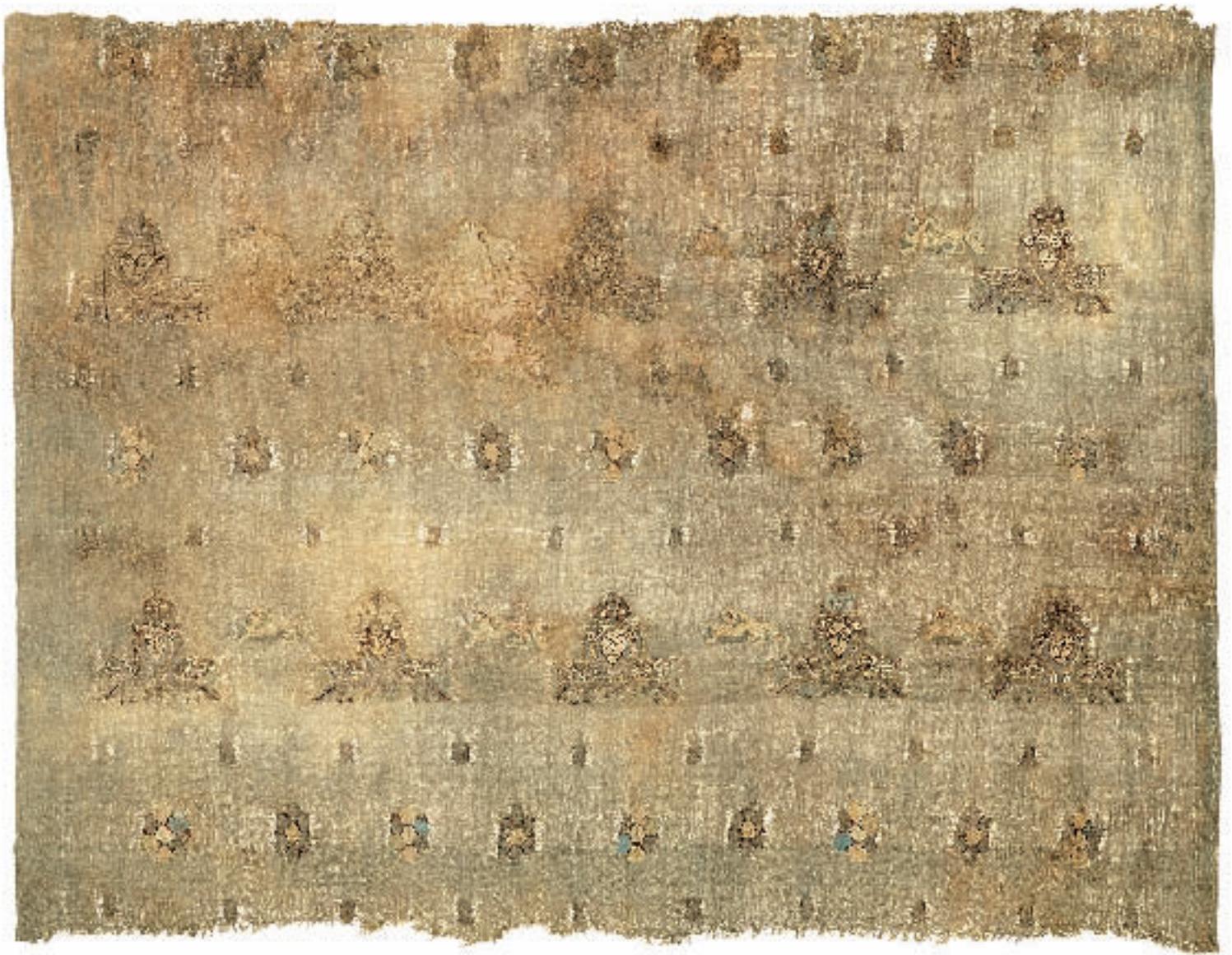
Linen, dyed with indigo and embroidered with silk and silk wrapped in gold thread

43 x 62 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00671

THIS SILK-EMBROIDERED textile fragment blurs the typical stylistic, chronological and geographical boundaries in the study of Islamic art. The ground fabric, woven in an indigo-dyed linen, is embroidered in silk and gold thread (wrapped around a silk core) with decorative elements comprised of confronting pairs of birds flanking a human face, small running hares, and ornamental rosettes. The use of silk thread wrapped in gold recalls the luxurious *nasij* textiles woven in Iran and Central Asia before and during the medieval period, after the Mongol invasions. It is possible that the practice of weaving in silk and gold might be related to the cross-cultural exchanges resulting from trade (and sometimes war) between Egypt, the Near East and Central Asia during this time. The appearance of animals on a medieval Egyptian textile is also not uncommon; confronting and addorsed animal pairs, in particular, have a rich history in the Ancient Near East. The inclusion of a human face without a body, however, is unusual. On a technical level, given the linen ground of the fabric and even its figural decoration, this skilfully woven panel relates to Fatimid and Coptic textiles produced in Egypt during the tenth and eleventh centuries. LA





46 THREE ENAMELLED GOLD PENDANTS

Egypt or Syria, 10th-11th century

Gold and cloisonné enamel

Ø 3.2 cm, 2.9 cm and 2.6 cm, respectively

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 94 (no. 63); AKTC 2007b, p. 91 (no. 63)

AKM 00594

THESE PENDANTS REFLECT the superb craftsmanship of goldsmiths working in Egypt and Syria during the Fatimid period (r. 909-1171), especially in the tenth and eleventh centuries (see cat. nos. 47-49). The crescent (*hilal*) shape was particularly popular. Semi-precious stones or pearls may have been suspended from the loops on each pendant, which was made of typical Fatimid box construction featuring filigree and gold strips embellished with granulation. The colourful cloisonné-enamel plaques pose a separate issue. The scarce evidence for medieval Islamic enamelled objects and the bountiful contemporary descriptions of Byzantine enamelled jewellery in the Islamic world, such as those included in the Cairo Geniza documents, have led scholars to wonder if the cloisonné enamel plaques in Fatimid jewellery were actually ready-made Byzantine enamel plaques imported into Egypt and Syria. A pendant in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, stylistically similar to the present crescents, is presented as further support for this thesis by Jenkins-Madina. The enamel plaque in the MMA pendant was not secured to the object's structure; rather, the pendant was constructed first and the plaque was adhered to the surface afterward via adhesive, a curious technical oversight for a talented craftsman, unless the plaque was bought separately. Not surprisingly, another Fatimid gold pendant in the MMA is missing its enamelled plaque (Jenkins-Madina 1997, pp. 420-21). **AF**





GOLD FILIGREE JEWELLERY

Biconical gold bead

Egypt or Syria, 11th century

Gold

H.: 2.9 cm; L.: 7.2 cm; Weight: 18 grams

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 64); AKTC 2007b, p. 92 (no. 64)

AKM 00618

Miniature Qur'an case

Egypt, 11th century

Gold

L.: 4.7 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 65); AKTC 2007b, pp. 92-93 (no. 66)

AKM 00598

Three gold filigree rings

Egypt, 10th-11th century

Gold

H.: 3.4 cm, 2.5 cm, 3.1 cm, respectively

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 95 (no. 65); AKTC 2007b, p. 92 (no. 65)

AKM 00596; AKM 00595; AKM 00597

FATIMID GOLDSMITHS were renowned for their high-quality workmanship. Precious objects such as this miniature Qur'an case and jewellery, including necklaces of biconical (cat. no. 47) and spherical beads, pendants (cat. no. 46) and a variety of rings (cat. no. 48), all made from gold filigree work and embellished with gold granulation, were produced in eleventh-century Fatimid Egypt and Greater Syria. The rings and biconical bead exhibit the typical Fatimid filigree arabesques and S-shapes with granulation. This filigree work was called *mushhabbak* (latticework) in twelfth-century trousseau lists from the Cairo Geniza documents, which are an important source for the study of medieval Mediterranean history (Jenkins-Madina 1997, pp. 419-20, citing Goitein 1967-83, vol. 4, pp. 211-12).

The miniature Qur'an case is a beautiful example of Fatimid-style granulated filigree decoration, exposing the goldsmith's skill with different patterns on each side. The front has dense foliate scrollwork formed into a programme of circles and triangles around a central panel (with missing inset), while the reverse exhibits a geometric lattice based on interlocking hexagons. The case would have contained a miniature Qur'an and hung around the wearer's neck, suspended by two loops (one is missing here). The influence of the Fatimid goldsmiths' work extended far and wide; the goldsmiths' decorative vocabulary was adapted later by the Mamluks (r. 1250-1517) and in Spain by the Nasrids (r. 1230-1492). **AF**



47



48a



48b



48c



49



The Ottomans

THE WORKS IN THIS SECTION mostly date from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the period of large, powerful empires which dominated the Middle East, North Africa and India. Known as the Gunpowder Empires, the Ottomans (r. 1299-1924), Safavids (r. 1501-1732) and the Mughals (r. 1526-1858) ruled in an age of increasing global trade, not only between Europe and Asia but also with Africa and the Americas. With the wealth gleaned from trade and conquest, the sultans and shahs of these dynasties were directly involved in forging distinct artistic styles of architecture, ornament and painting through which they broadcast their imperial messages.

In the sixteenth century, following the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the sultans supported the formation of an imperial Ottoman style in the arts. In textiles and ceramics, a penchant for non-figurative decoration manifested itself in designs based on floral and vegetal forms. Unlike Iran, where poetic and epic texts were most often chosen for illustration, the Ottomans preferred to illustrate historical manuscripts either chronicling their own history or that of the prophets. Foreign trade and the extent of the Ottoman Empire, which included Arabia, the Levant and parts of eastern Europe and Egypt, led to stylistic changes in painting, architecture and ceramics. Nonetheless, in all the lands under Ottoman control, distinct artistic and architectural forms reinforced their presence.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the Ottomans extended their version of “branding” to portraiture. Ottoman portraits (cat. nos. 50 and 52) depict the sultan dominating his surroundings and accompanied by attributes specific to himself. Series of portraits of the Ottoman sultans were produced for albums where their sheer numbers placed them in marked contrast to the Safavids, Mughals and Uzbeks, all dynasties that came to power in the sixteenth century. Although distinct artistic styles developed at different Muslim courts, the aim of using art to present the ruler as regal, cultured and powerful was common to all of them. **SC**



50 PORTRAIT OF SULTAN SELIM II

Attributed to Haydar Reis, called Nigari

Turkey, Istanbul, *circa* 1570

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

44.2 x 31.2 cm

Later inscription in window panes: “*sultan*” (right); “[*ya*] *kabikach*” (left)

(an invocation against bookworms)

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 97-99 (no. 70); Carboni 2006, pp. 142 and 297; AKTC 2007a, pp. 98-99 (no. 68);

AKTC 2007b, pp. 94 and 96 (no. 68); Carboni 2007, pp. 142 and 297

AKM 00219

THIS LARGE ALBUM PORTRAIT of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-74) reveals much about his reign. It was Selim’s father, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66), who solidified the geographical borders of the Ottoman Empire and refined the central administration of his government, allowing his son and successor to pursue more sedentary pleasures such as literature, art and wine-drinking. Nicknamed “Selim the Sot” for his affection for wine, the sultan was nonetheless a great bibliophile and patron of architecture, music and the arts of the book. The painter, poet and naval commander Haydar Reis depicted Selim II as larger than life; the robust sultan in his luxurious fur-lined and brocaded gold garment dwarfs both the page boy and the interior in which he sits in a cross-legged position on a carpet. This composition was one of a number of conventions for Ottoman royal portraiture developed in 1570s and is similar to portraits in Loqman’s *Kiyafetü’l İnsaniye fi Semailu’l-Osmaniye*, a study to record the physiognomy of the Ottoman sultans. ■ AF





51 DISH

Turkey, Iznik, Ottoman, *circa* 1575

Fritware, polychrome underglaze painted in cobalt blue and green

Ø 29.2 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00586

OTTOMAN VISUAL CULTURE reached its apex under the reign of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66). As his predecessors had done before him, Süleyman used art and architecture to legitimize his power and authority; unlike them, however, he initiated the creation of a royal aesthetic that would become understood as uniquely Ottoman. In addition to continuing the practice of royal portraiture, which could be transported via medals and albums throughout the empire and to foreign lands, the court's design atelier, or *nakkaşhane*, developed an imperial style that visually unified the Ottoman realm and distinguished it from neighbours and rivals. Before the 1550s, the Ottoman court had relied on an eclectic court culture that drew from both the Iranians to the east and the Europeans to the west. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, these foreign artistic models were synthesized into a classical Ottoman style, which coincided with the replacement of Persian with Ottoman Turkish as the official language of the court.

This new artistic vocabulary was immediately recognisable in the medium of ceramics, where a selection of floral, vegetal, geometric and *khita'i* (*chinoiserie*, arriving via the Timurids in fifteenth-century Iran) elements were painted under a transparent glaze onto a white, fritware body. The tulips, rosettes, grape designs and wave patterns on this dish comprise some of the aspects of this distinctive new genre, which was canonized through architectural decoration. The dating of this beautifully painted dish is based on sources that attest to a move of ceramic production from Istanbul (where the ceramic industry was declining in the shadow of a growing textile industry of *kemha*, or silk brocade) to Iznik, where potteries thrived from their close proximity to wood and other materials needed for kilns and ceramic production. The symmetrical organisation of geometric and floral ornament on this dish recalls other ceramic wares produced during the reign of Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95) and attributed to his patronage based on stylistic and technical comparison to contemporary datable architectural tiles (Atasoy and Raby 1989, pp. 246-49). LA





52 PORTRAIT OF SULTAN SELIM III

Turkey, Istanbul, *circa* 1805

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

54.1 x 40.5 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, p. 103 (no. 75); AKTC 2007a, p. 99 (no. 69); AKTC 2007b, pp. 96-97 (no. 69)

AKM 00220

ROYAL PORTRAIT SERIES bound into albums provided an important way for Ottoman sultans to record their lineage and statecraft. The portraits of Selim II (cat. no. 50) and Selim III (r. 1789-1807) are examples of this venerable tradition. This image of Selim III represents a different format for Ottoman royal portraiture. It demonstrates the profound effect of European painting, particularly French, on Ottoman art by the nineteenth century. Of note are the attention to shading and a grisaille, blue and gold palette, as well as the painting's presentation as an oval window set on an allegory of the Sultan's reign, framed on a black ground highlighted with gold details. Canby suggests that the buildings in the distance may be the new army barracks built by Selim III at Haydarpasha in Istanbul or restorations of Mevlevi complexes. In either case, this depiction reflects the Ottoman interest in topographical representations and maps. Continuing this story of cross-cultural influence, the series to which this portrait belongs subsequently provided the inspiration for a London printed version of Ottoman Sultan portraits published in 1815 by John Young, *A Series of Portraits of the Emperors of Turkey: Engraved from Pictures Painted at Constantinople*. **AF**





The Safavids

THE SAFAVID SHAHS OF IRAN were not only the first native Iranian dynasty to unite the country for nearly a millennium, but also they introduced Shia Islam as the state religion. The impact of this institutionalized faith was wide-reaching. It instilled Iranians with an intensified sense of religious and national identity that set them apart from their Sunni rivals, the Ottomans and Uzbeks. While Safavid painters of the early sixteenth century synthesised the styles they had inherited from the Turkman court at Tabriz and the Timurids at Herat, the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a new emphasis on single-page paintings made for inclusion in albums. New styles in metalwork included openwork steel plaques (cat. nos. 13 and 14) and small objects, while Safavid potters relied on Chinese prototypes for their inspiration.

Foreign influences also had an impact on the arts of the Islamic world in this period. In Mamluk Syria, Chinese blue and white porcelains inspired new floral patterns on tiles and dishes. An interest in portraiture intensified in the seventeenth century in Turkey, Iran and India, in part reflecting the increased importation of European prints including portraits of kings and other notable people.

Different conventions for royal portraiture developed at different courts. The Safavid shahs of Iran were portrayed at official gatherings greeting foreign diplomats in works on paper (cat. no. 57) and on the walls of the Chihil Sutun, a royal palace built in the 1640s in Isfahan. These scenes emphasise the shah's supremacy and magnanimity. **SC**



53 PAIR OF SAFAVID DOORS

Iran, 17th-18th century

Wood, carved and painted

H.: 161 cm; W.: 84.5 cm

Inscription: “*Dar-i shadi bi sahib-i in bab / bigushay muffatih al-abwab*”

(Open the door of happiness for the owner of this door, opener of doors)

Unpublished

AKM 00704

THESE WELL-PRESERVED polychrome painted doors are carved with floral and foliate motifs in high relief, enclosed within a strapwork design of oblong star-shaped frames and bordered by narrow and shallow-carved bands of vegetal scrolls and rosettes. Their floral ornamentation is typical of the dynamic vegetal designs of the Safavid period and probably originated in manuscript illustration and bookbinding. Two frames located above the star-shaped panels on each door include an inscription in Persian, carved against a background painted in green and surrounded by a stylized vine scroll painted in red. The text, which speaks on behalf of the person who would stand on the outer side of the doors, appears to carry a more spiritual significance characteristic of Sufi-inspired Safavid culture: “*Dar-i shadi bi sahib-i in bab / bigushay muffatih al-abwab*” (Open the door of happiness for the owner of this door, opener of doors). While their original context remains unknown, these doors might have once opened into a Sufi hospice or a palatial retreat. LA



Iran, Isfahan, *circa* 1663

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper, pasted on blue cardboard

24.2 x 33.2 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 80-81 (no. 53); Diba 1998, pp. 148-49; AKTC 2007a, pp. 102-03 (no. 72);

AKTC 2007b, pp. 84-85 and 102 (no. 72)

AKM 00153

SHAH ʿABBAS II (r. 1642-66) sits centre stage in this elegant reception which overflows with sumptuously dressed courtiers in striped turbans (some wrapped around a red *kula*) bearing strings of pearls and turban-ornaments with a tuft of black feathers. Musicians play their instruments and servants bring gold-covered dishes and gold cups on trays. Shah ʿAbbas appears in regal splendour wearing a jewelled dagger and sword at his waist, and on his head an elaborate striped turban adorned with jewels, curling white feathers and a tuft of black feathers. He is identified by a *thuluth* inscription on the building behind him: “The Lord of the Court, the Lord of the Two Conjunctions, the Victorious, Shah ʿAbbas, may God make his rule eternal.” This painting, with its masterful use of European-style techniques including shading and tonal perspective, has generated much scholarly debate over its attribution (for a summary, see Canby 1998, pp. 80-81). Diba recently published this painting as a historical portrait by the Zand artist Abu’l Hasan Ghaffari Mustawfi Kashani (*fl.* 1781-94) who had trained as a historian and was known for historical portraits of Safavid and Turkman rulers, in addition to paintings of his own family and that of Karim Khan Zand. She makes a stylistic comparison to his “lively composition, broad-shouldered figures, stiff turbans, and placid faces of the youths” which look back to early eighteenth-century style, and supports her attribution by citing similar epigraphic panels in *thuluth* script found in arched bays in two other paintings by the artist (Diba 1998, pp. 148-49; 1989, p. 156). The painting is called *Shah ʿAbbas II (r. 1642-66) and the Mughal Ambassador*, although the identity of the “ambassador” – a small bearded man in white wearing a red turban and an Indian *qatar* at his belt, gesturing with upturned hand toward the shah – remains unresolved. The arguments are summarised by Canby who suggests another alternative for the identity of the ambassador: the Indian rulers of Deccani Bijapur and Golconda, who sought Safavid help against the Mughals in the second half of the seventeenth century (Canby 1998, pp. 80-81). **AF**





ARCHITECTURAL DECORATIVE PLATE

Iran, 17th century

Siliceous paste, painted decoration under glaze

Ø 42 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 52-53 (no. 15)

AKM 00589

THIS PLATE OWES ITS SHAPE, range of colour and general organisation to Chinese ceramics. The wide border with its decoration compartmentalised into sixteen panels and its scalloped outline are characteristic of a group of blue-and-white ceramics produced in China for export during the “Transition period” (1620-83). The stylised floral motifs characteristic of the Chinese plates are still recognisable on the border, although they have been reinterpreted. These consist of the two stems with round flowers on one of the border’s large panels and the eight stylised palmettes occupying the narrowest panels (Makariou 2007, p. 55, note 84). The other plant elements – flowered vases, shrubs and sprays of flowers – do not seem to relate to the Chinese tradition any more than does the iconography in the central scene, which belongs to the Islamic world. This scene shows a superposition of architectural elements seen in cross section: small kiosks, onion domes, rows and columns of arches. It also contains two religious symbols: the stylised representation of the Prophet’s two sandals (*na^ʿlayn*) and the representation of *Dhu al-faqar*, the legendary two-pointed sword that belonged to Prophet Muhammad and was later given to ʿAli after the Battle of Uhud. A *minbar* is also recognisable above the representation of *Dhu al-faqar* and perhaps a second on the border, adjoined by other kiosks. Two standards and a number of suspended lamps also confirm the sacred nature of the place. ■CM■





ISA KHAN, *QURCHIBASHI* (COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ROYAL GUARD)
OF SHAH ʿABBAS I

Ascribed to Bishndas

India, Mughal, *circa* 1620

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper, mounted on borders
of the *Farhang-i Jahangiri*

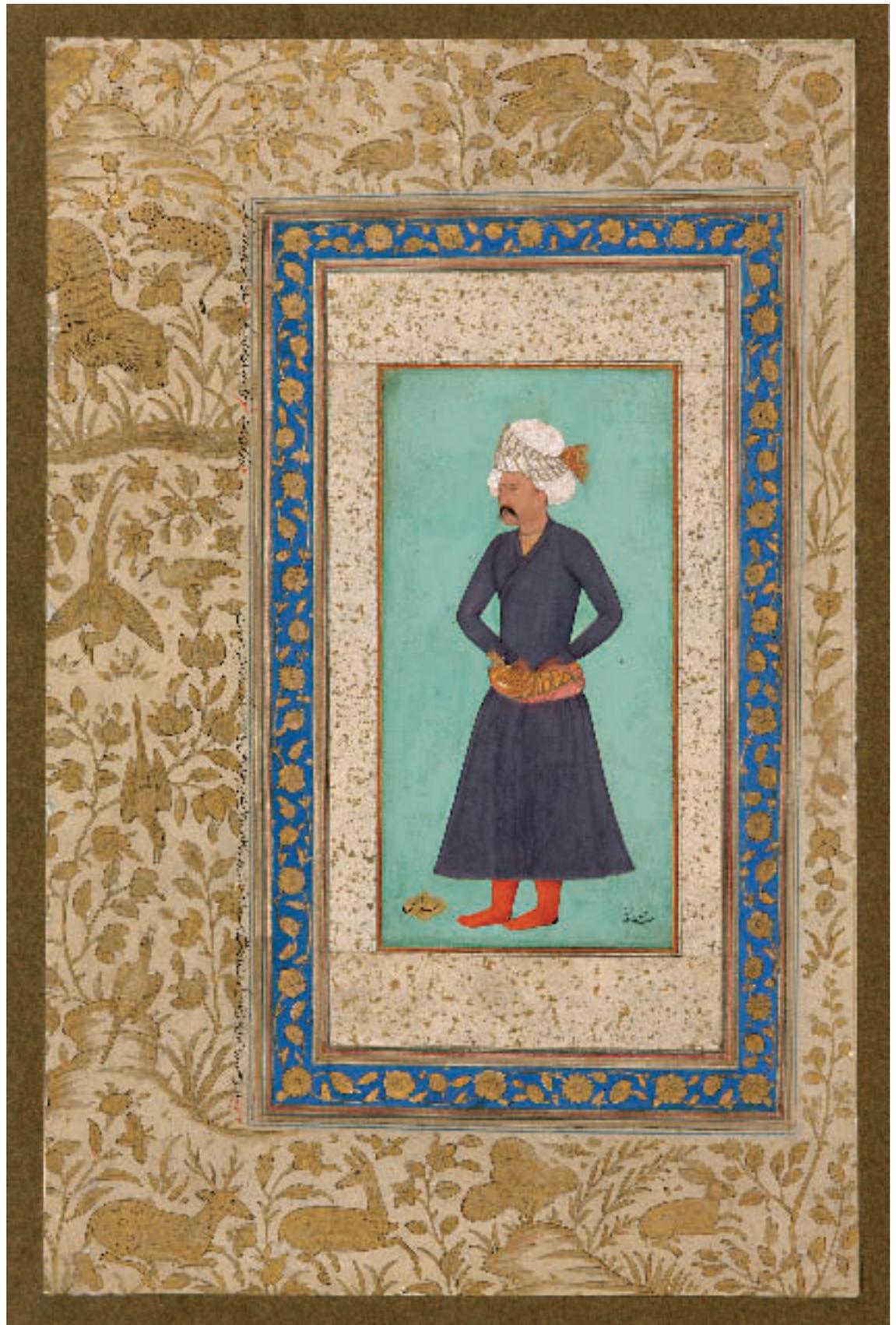
36.9 x 24.7 cm

LIT.: Robinson 1976b, pp. 190-92; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 203-05 (no. 67); Falk 1985, p. 164 (no. 141);
Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 144-45 (no. 70); Canby 1998, pp. 139-40 (no. 103)

AKM 00110

SAFAVID IRAN HAD MUCH CONTACT with its Indian neighbours to the east, the Mughals, and its artistic legacy, passed down from the Timurids, often served as a source of inspiration for Mughal art and architecture. In fact, the second Mughal emperor, Humayun (r. 1530-40 and 1555-56), spent considerable time at the Safavid court after the Afghan sultan conquered his Indian territories. The Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76) welcomed the exiled ruler and helped him reclaim the Mughal throne a few years later. Diplomatic relations continued between Iran and India during the reign of Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1587-1629), the high point of Safavid power. This portrait, once identified as representing Shah ʿAbbas I, is ascribed at the lower left to Bishn Das (“Bishndas”), a Mughal portraitist favoured at the court of Jahangir (r. 1605-27). As foreign embassies often travelled with their own artists, it is possible that Bishndas accompanied the envoy of the Mughal Khan ʿAlam, stationed in Iran from 1618-19 (Canby 1998, p. 139).

In the late twentieth century, scholars suggested that the figure in the painting was ʿIsa Khan (d. 1632), the *qurchibashi*, or commander-in-chief, of the king’s royal guard. The justification behind this identification comes from a reading of the Persian inscription at the lower right of the painting as “*shabih-i ʿIsa Khan*” (the likeness of ʿIsa Khan). Appointed as *qurchibashi* in 1612-13, ʿIsa Khan is mentioned by Iskandar Beg Munshi in the latter’s history of Shah ʿAbbas. His prominent status is underscored by the fact that the king’s successor, Shah Safi ʿ (r. 1629-42), had ʿIsa Khan executed three years after he ascended the throne (Eskander Beg Monshi 1978, vol. 2, p. 1309; Canby 1998, p. 140). It would therefore not seem unusual for Bishndas to record the likeness of a pre-eminent courtier as one of the portraits painted on his visit. On the other hand, however, the inscription appears more clearly legible as “*shabih-i ʿAli Khan*”, which encourages further research on the identity behind this name as well. LA





SHAH SAFI^c AT A PICNIC WITH AMBASSADORS

India, 19th century

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

28.5 x 17.7 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 104-05 (no. 73); AKTC 2007b, pp. 102-03 (no. 73)

AKM 00456

THE SCENE OF A SAFAVID RULER entertaining a foreign ambassador with music and refreshments in an opulent court setting was a popular one as it reinforced the power and grandeur of the ruler (see cat. no. 55). The painting is likely a copy after a lost original, based on a type of seventeenth-century composition known from the time of Shah ^cAbbas II (r. 1642-66), such as the painting depicting the audience of the Mughal ambassador Tarbiyat Khan and Shah ^cAbbas II ascribed to Shaykh ^cAbbasi and dated 1074 H/1663-34 (Welch 1973, p. 100, no. 62). The ambassador in the present painting may be a European as suggested by his hat. The unusual feather headdresses on some of the figures could be a misplaced reference to the Mongols. The painting's lavish use of gold and bright palette of contrasting colours may suggest an attribution to the Deccan. **AF**





The Qajars

THE QAJAR DYNASTY, which ruled Iran from 1779 to 1925, was descended from a Turkman tribe that rose to prominence under the Safavids (r. 1501-1732). In the second half of the eighteenth century Karim Khan Zand and his heirs controlled Fars province in southern Iran but could not bring the rest of the country to heel for any extended period of time. In this period the Qajar heir, Agha Muhammad, was kept under house arrest at the Zand court where he was castrated. A desire for revenge fuelled Agha Muhammad's eventual rebellion against the Zands and his consolidation of power. Upon his death in 1797, his nephew Fath 'Ali Khan, acceded to the throne.

Fath 'Ali Shah began his reign on shaky political ground and did not experience unqualified military success. Yet he masterminded the promotion of his imperial image to a far greater extent than earlier kings of Iran had done. His long black beard and narrow waist emphasised his manliness and made his image instantly recognisable. In addition, Fath 'Ali devised a new Kayanian crown which stressed his royal connection with the ancient Achaemenid emperors of Iran. Numerous portraits of Fath 'Ali Shah were produced for wide dissemination; at the same time, court artists produced lifesize portraits of him in oil on canvas for installation in palatial dwellings.

While Fath 'Ali Shah looked to the past to validate his reign, Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-96) embraced new artists and technological ideas from Europe. The shah developed an interest in photography, taking pictures himself of members of his household. Painting styles changed to reflect this new preoccupation.

The Qajar period was also the heyday of Persian lacquerware, which had been used for pen boxes, book covers and caskets increasingly since the late fifteenth century. Bird and flower motifs were especially popular on Qajar lacquers, though portraits and vignettes after European print sources also found their way onto them. Politically, the Qajars could not withstand the pressure to open markets to European countries; this monopolised lucrative industries and weakened the shahs' economic control of the country. Culturally, the Qajars encouraged traditional arts such as calligraphy while showing a curiosity about the outside world. This sometimes contradictory combination resulted in an immediately recognisable artistic style that frequently served the shahs' political purposes. **SC**



DOUBLE ALBUM PAGE

Iran, early 19th century

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

33.3 x 20.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 106-07 (no. 74); AKTC 2007b, pp. 106-07 (no. 74)

AKM 00531

THIS DOUBLE-PAGE OPENING features a portrait of the Qajar ruler Fath ʿAli Shah (r. 1798-1834) and a calligraphic exercise signed by him. Even in miniature, this portrait of Fath ʿAli Shah with his full beard and formal regalia manages to convey the same monumentality and power as life-size imperial enthronement scenes of the ruler (for comparison, see the Hermitage portrait, vr-1107; Diba 1998, p. 183). Perhaps the present double-page once belonged to an album like the early nineteenth-century one with calligraphies and portraits of rulers, including one of Fath ʿAli Shah on the Sun Throne (cat. no. 59). **AF**





Iran, Tehran, early 18th-early 19th century

Sixteen hinged folios; ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper,
in a contemporary lacquer binding

29.2 x 19.5 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978b, pp. 98-119; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 132-34 (no. 45); Diba 1998, pp. 176-78;

AKTC 2007a, p. 110 (no. 76); AKTC 2007b, pp. 110-11 (no. 76)

AKM 00275

THIS MURAQQA^c (album) opens in concertina-style format to reveal twelve Persian ruler-portraits and eighteen calligraphy specimens mounted onto decorated pages. The calligraphy pages are written in *shikasteh*, *thuluth*, *naskh* and *nasta^cliq* script, set within finely illuminated floral borders. Amongst the twelve portraits, there are three of the most important kings of the *Shahnama*, Jamshid, Kay Khusrau and Kay Kavus. There are also portraits of Timur and Chinghiz (Genghis) Khan, and of Safavid, Zand and Qajar rulers. A painting of Fath ^cAli Shah (r. 1798-1834) in opulent imperial finery on the Sun Throne on fol. 3v contains a medallion inscribed with his name and the date 1234 H/1819. The album may have been commissioned by Fath ^cAli Shah or presented to him by an attentive courtier. According to Robinson, the album is perhaps a “portable” version of the large oil paintings commissioned by Fath ^cAli Shah from Mir ^cAli for the ^cImarat-i Naw palace in Isfahan (Ekhtiar *in* Diba 1998, p. 176). Like the life-size portraits of past and contemporary rulers, this album represents another way the Qajars used the visual arts to convey imperial power and dynastic legitimacy. ■ AF



Iran, 19th century

Enamelled gold

Ø 9 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 111 (no. 77); AKTC 2007b, p. 112 (no. 77)

AKM 00625

EVERY SURFACE of this rare and beautiful enameled gold compendium has been decorated and finished to a high level of craftsmanship. The design is European and includes a universal equinoctial dial. It reflects the Qajar court taste for personal luxury objects and an interest in scientific knowledge and in trade with Europe. **AF**







61 LACQUER PEN BOX

Signed: Isma[°]il (Muhammad Isma[°]il)

Iran, dated 1282 H/1865

Papier-mâché, painted and lacquered

L.: 26.8 cm

LIT.: Robinson 1989, figs. 1 and 10; Karimzadeh Tabrizi 1990, vol. 1, p. 457; AKTC 2007a, p. 111 (no. 78);

AKTC 2007b, p. 112 (no. 78)

AKM 00643

THE VISUAL ARTS flourished under Qajar patronage in the nineteenth century and lacquer painting was a particular speciality (see cat. nos. 9 and 84 for examples of bookbinding and a bow). The scribe's humble pen box was often transformed into a work of beauty and this box is no exception: it is highly decorated with images of familiar political, legendary, literary and mystical themes. The Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah holds court in a central cartouche; legendary kings are crowned; poems of Sa[°]di and Nizami are illustrated; and there are six portraits of Sufi dervishes. This important pen box is signed by the Qajar painter laureate (*naqqash bashi*), Muhammad Isma[°]il, who was active in the mid-nineteenth century and famous for his lacquer paintings. On the inside of the drawer, it contains a miniature self-portrait of the artist wearing an Astrakhan hat, paintbrush in hand, in an oval cartouche. A couplet above and below identifies the artist's name, Isma[°]il. **AF**







CALLIGRAPHY BY FATH ʿALI SHAH

Written and signed by Fath ʿAli Shah Qajar (r. 1798-1834)

Iran, Tehran, Qajar, *circa* 1800

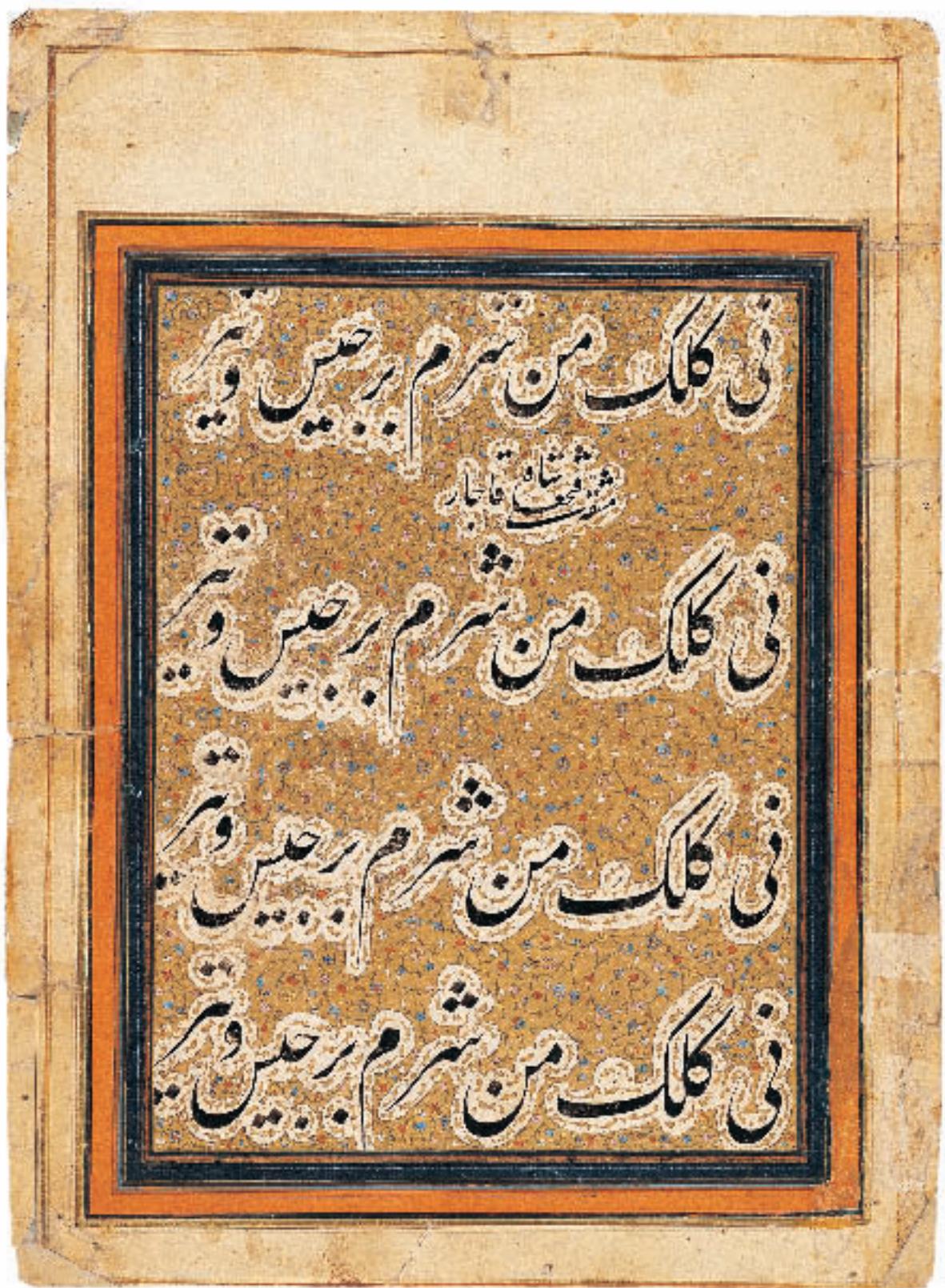
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

36.3 x 26.7 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978a, pp. 196-97; Falk 1985, p. 189 (no. 176)

AKM 00235

THE ARTS OF THE WORD AND IMAGE were not confined to artists and calligraphers at the courts of the Iranian rulers, and the Qajar dynasty was no exception. This beautifully inscribed sample in Persian *nastaʿliq* script demonstrates the calligraphic skills of the Qajar ruler Fath ʿAli Shah, who filled the page with a writing exercise involving the repetition of this phrase, containing words worthy of a powerful king: “My reed pen shames Jupiter (lord of the planets) and Mercury (scribe of the heavens).” His signature is proudly inscribed between the first and second lines: “*Mashqahu Fath ʿAli Shah Qajar*” (Fath ʿAli Shah Qajar wrote it). The elegantly formed letters are written in black ink and outlined with gold leaves against the beige colour of the page, while the remaining interstices are ornamented with colourful floral scrolls and sprays and set against a gold background. LA





Handwritten text in Persian script, likely a name or title, located on the left side of the oval frame.

Handwritten text in Persian script, likely a name or title, located on the right side of the oval frame.

The Mughals

THE FIRST MUGHAL EMPEROR OF INDIA, Babur, was born in Central Asia, the descendant of Timur (Tamerlane) and Chinghiz (Genghis) Khan. Despite his pedigree, he failed to realise his ambition of conquering Samarqand and from 1514 until 1526 he turned his energies to Afghanistan and then to India. In 1526 Babur defeated the Lodi Sultan of Delhi at the Battle of Panipat and thus began to rule northern India. Following Babur's death in 1530, his son and heir, Humayun, struggled to hold onto power in India. After a period of exile in Iran and delay in Afghanistan, however, he regained Delhi and Agra in 1555. Humayun brought artists with him from the Safavid court of Iran, whom he had invited to work in his library. His untimely death in 1556 meant that his son, Akbar, benefited from these *émigrés* far more than his father did. Chosen because of their more naturalistic painting style, the Persian artists at the court of Akbar worked on numerous, ambitious illustrated manuscripts alongside native Hindu and Muslim painters as well as some from Central Asia.

Akbar's policy of engaging with all the populations of India and welcoming Europeans at his court resulted in an emphasis on realism and the adoption of illusionistic techniques in painting. This tendency was heightened during the reign of Jahangir (r. 1605-27). Portraiture gained in importance (see cat. nos. 63 and 64) and paintings of the flora and fauna of India were a subject of profound interest to Jahangir. Like his father, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) commissioned many portraits of members of the Mughal dynasty and lavish illustrations to the history of his reign, the *Padshahnama*. One of Shah Jahan's sons, Dara Shikuh, demonstrated a broadminded interest in art and mysticism (see cat. nos. 26 and 93). However, his brother, Awrangzeb, proved to be militarily more powerful and not only had Dara Shikuh murdered but also deposed Shah Jahan. In his very long reign, from 1658 to 1707, Awrangzeb pushed the Mughal conquest of India southward but abandoned the tolerant attitudes of his predecessors. The wars and rigid attitudes of Awrangzeb ultimately weakened the Mughal Empire so that the eighteenth century saw a long decline and a nostalgia for the heyday of the dynasty under Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan. **SC**

Portrait of Jahangir signed by Balchand

Portrait of Shah Jahan signed and dated by Abu'l-Hasan

India, Mughal, 1628

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

55.1 x 34.5 cm; Jahangir portrait within borders: 5 x 4.1 cm; Shah Jahan portrait within borders: 18.2 x 13.9 cm

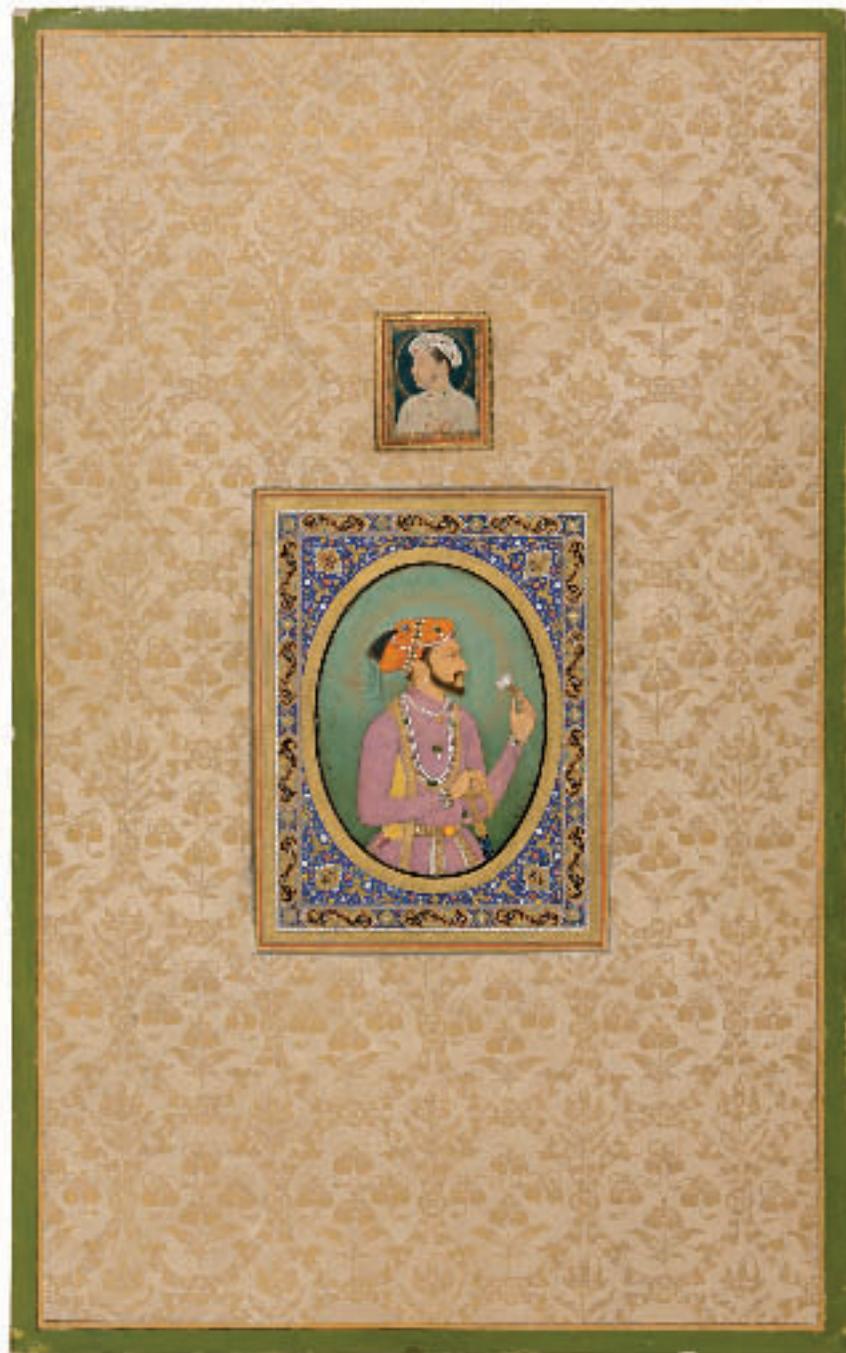
LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 215-17 (no. 71); Falk 1985, p. 165 (no. 143); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 96-7 (no. 43); Canby 1998, pp. 142-44 (no. 106)

AKM 00135

FRAMED WITHIN ELABORATELY PAINTED and illuminated borders and mounted on an album page filled with vegetal design in gold, portraits of two of the greatest Mughal emperors illustrate the contrast in the artistic conventions under each of their reigns. The painted bust of Jahangir (r. 1605-27), the fourth ruler of the dynasty and the son of Akbar (r. 1556-1605), represents the miniature portraits that became fashionable for important figures to wear during this emperor's reign. The trend began after 1615, when miniature portraits were introduced to India from England by Sir Thomas Roe (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 215; Canby 1998, p. 143). The artistic style under Jahangir is well-represented by the artist Balchand, known for his ability to capture the more emotional and "human" qualities of subjects in his paintings (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 215). Balchand identifies himself through a Persian inscription on Jahangir's left shoulder: "*rasm-i* [the drawing of] *Balchand*."

The portrait of Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58), Jahangir's son and successor, provides a stark contrast to the image of his father. While both sitters are shown in profile view and are illuminated by the golden halo around their heads, the standard convention for representing Mughal emperors, Shah Jahan's larger, oval-shaped portrait commands a more





public viewing audience. The illustration of the later emperor's torso allows the artist to show Shah Jahan holding attributes that symbolize his power, such as his sword and the official seal in his hand. The seal inscription, deliberately made legible (in reverse mirror-image) for the viewer, lists the emperor's titles: "Abu'l-Muzaffar Muhammad Shihab al-Din Shah Jahan Padshah-i Ghazi Sahib Qiran-i Thani 1." Sheila Canby has suggested that the last title, "Sahib Qiran-i Thani" (the Second Lord of the Astral conjunction), refers to Timur (r. 1370-1405), the founder of the Timurid dynasty from which the Mughals were descended (Canby 1998, p. 143). This connection to the greatest Timurid ruler would have helped Shah Jahan legitimise his right to the throne following his father's death. The iconic, idealized courtly style of Shah Jahan's era is already apparent at the start of his reign; the painting is signed and dated in the first year of the emperor's rule to the left of the portrait by Nadir al-Zaman, known as Abu'l-Hasan: "It was painted at the beginning of the blessed ascension / Presented for the appraisal of the most pure / the work of the humblest of servants, Nadir al-Zaman." The emperor is shown in strict profile, staring blankly ahead while covered in precious, easily-identified jewels. In contrast to the naturalistic rendering of his father, whose facial features are carefully modelled and suggest a three-

dimensional appearance, Shah Jahan's image has become iconic and creates a greater distance between the viewer and the sitter. These disparities demonstrate the varying uses of art by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, the latter of which was known for his active involvement in the conception of artistic and architectural projects (Koch 1997). Using the painted portrait in different ways, one ruler preserves his royal status while evoking his human character, while the other dehumanizes himself by creating an iconic image that will emphasize his power and authority and render awe in his subjects. LA



Page from the “Late Shah Jahan Album”

India, Agra, *circa* 1650

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

38.1 x 26 cm

LIT.: Brown 1924, pl. 26; Welch 1963, fig. 17; Falk 1985, p. 170 (no. 149); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 94-5 (no. 42); Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 223-25 (no. 74); Canby 1998, pp. 150-51 (no. 112)

AKM 00149

THIS POSTHUMOUS PORTRAIT of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605) was probably commissioned by his grandson Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58), who was thirteen when the emperor died. The aged Akbar is depicted in three-quarter profile, a view reserved for figures of lesser rank but perhaps accepted for posthumous emperor portraits. Mughal conventions such as the golden halo and the fact that the emperor stands upon the orb of the world signify Akbar's power as a ruler. The intricate details of his embroidered robe and sash, the pearls around his neck, and the bejewelled dagger hilt emphasize his royal standing and are complemented by a scrolling vegetal border rendered in gold. On the border of the album page, believed to be contemporary with the portrait, three of the emperor's attendants stand symbolically (and literally) behind him, respectively holding his umbrella, standard, and shield. Two *puttis*, winged angelic figures derived from European models, hold a golden canopy protectively over Akbar's portrait, while the antelope and deer depicted below, also on the earthly orb, associate the reign of the late emperor with a peaceful era.

This portrait is believed to come from Shah Jahan's last album, the compilation of which began around 1650, and may never have been completed. Its paintings include several single-figure portraits that acted as models for future albums (Canby 1998, p. 151). The numerous border paintings are extremely developed and skilful works of art in their own right. In the early twentieth century, the “Late Shah Jahan Album” was bought by a dealer who unfortunately dispersed the manuscript and sold its leaves, often split into two, separately. LA





Page from an illustrated manuscript

Attributed to Ghulam Murtaza Khan

India, Delhi, *circa* 1811

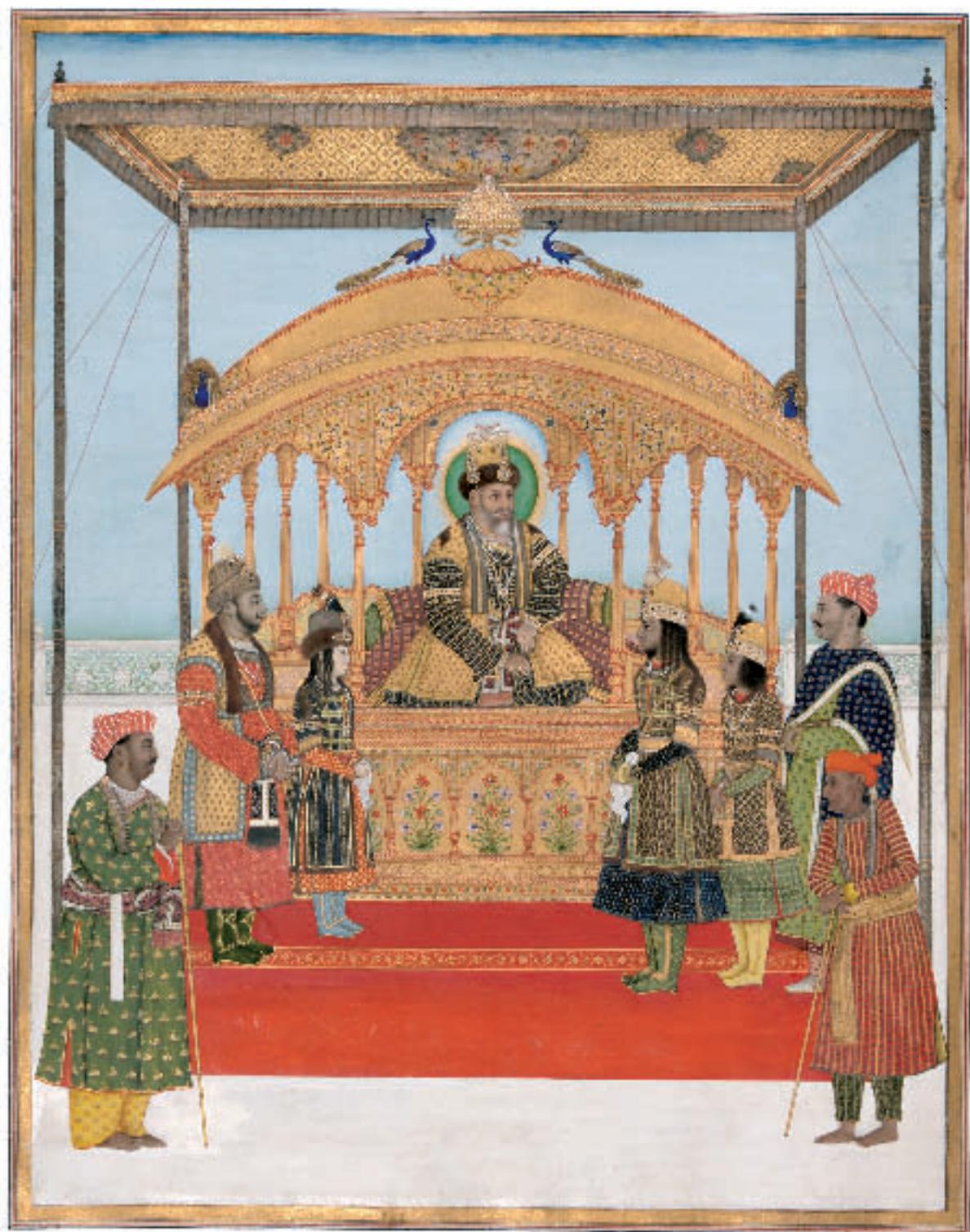
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

39.4 x 30.9 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00214

IN THIS PAINTING ATTRIBUTED TO THE ARTIST Ghulam Murtaza Khan, the Mughal emperor Akbar II (r. 1806-37) holds court from atop an exquisite, jewel-encrusted *jharoka*, or throne, covered by a baldachin and topped with an embroidered canopy; the *jharoka* is a copy of the famous Peacock Throne looted by the Iranians under the Afsharid ruler Nadir Shah (r. 1736-47) in 1738-39. Akbar's sons, Abu Zafar Siraj al-Din (the future Bahadur Shah II and the last ruler of the Mughal dynasty, r. 1838-57), Mirza Salim, Mirza Jahangir and Mirza Babur, stand in attendance on either side of their father. They are visually distinguished from the two barefoot servants flanking the scene by their dress, their situation on the royal red carpet, and their closer proximity to Akbar, whose figure fills the centre of the picture plane. The scene represents a continuation of the Mughal practice of *darshan*, the presentation ceremony for the Mughals, into the nineteenth century. *Darshan* reflected a merging of the Hindu practice of that name, meaning "beholding," with the notion of the king being accessible to his subjects and imparting auspicious blessings to them in the same manner a deity's image would to its beholder (Asher 1993, p. 282). The Mughal adoption of the *darshan* ritual from Hindu culture enhanced the rulers' semi-divine image, alluded to in paintings such as this one by the glowing halo around the ruler's head. The setting in which Akbar II appears is known as the *jharoka-i khass-u-^camm*, where the ruler would hold court and take care of administrative duties. The *darbar*, or assembly, could consist of all classes of people, from family members and court grandees to the general public (hence *khass-u-^camm*, or "high and low") (Koch 1997, p. 133). LA



The Path of Princes



Education and Learning

MUSLIM COURTS LARGE AND SMALL attracted the learned who taught the children of the royal household and brought lustre to the ruler. The instruction of a royal child would centre on reading and writing, learning the Qur'an and the basics of statesmanship. Mathematics, science, poetry and philosophy also featured in the traditional academic curriculum. Because of its connection to the Qur'an and inspired by the example of 'Ali, Rightly-Guided Caliph and the first Shia Imam, writing beautifully was considered the highest art. Inkwells, pen cases and the other implements of the calligrapher were created from durable and precious materials with loving attention to detail. The royal *kitabkhana* combined the functions of a library and a scriptorium in which all elements of the book were produced by a team of specialists.

A high level of achievement in mathematics, astronomy and medicine was a hallmark of the Abbasid and subsequent Muslim courts of the eighth to twelfth centuries. While a certain amount of very significant information entered the Arabic and Persian body of knowledge through translations of ancient Greek, Latin and Syriac texts, mathematicians in Baghdad and elsewhere made new discoveries, such as the zero, that remain fundamental to this day. Thanks to the expanded use of paper from the eleventh century onwards, manuscripts were produced in large numbers and widely distributed. With Arabic as the common language, scholars from Cordoba to Bukhara had access to the findings of their colleagues and thus knowledge spread across the Muslim world. ■ SC



GROUP OF SCRIBAL IMPLEMENTS

Turkey, 18th-19th century

Various materials

L. (max.): 28.8 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 121 (no. 86); AKTC 2007b, p. 123 (no. 86); Makariou 2007, pp. 170-71

AKM 00622

BEAUTIFUL WRITING (calligraphy) is the highest form of Islamic art and is thought to bring one closer to God. Although the primary criteria for a calligrapher's tools are quality and usefulness, it was felt that beautiful tools contributed to the creation of beautiful writing. Throughout the centuries Islamic artisans have produced exquisite scribal implements and other related objects, including scribe's boxes, pen boxes and inkwells (see also cat. nos. 61 and 69-70). Lavishly decorated with precious metal inlays or painted designs under varnish, these tools are beautiful objects in their own right. This group of Ottoman scribal implements is no exception. It includes three pairs of steel scissors and a steel rule all inlaid with gold; a silver and gilt pen box and inkwell; two pen rests, one in ivory and the other of gold inlaid steel; a gold inlaid steel pen; a cylindrical implement holder painted with floral sprays; two further inkwells, one in brass and the other in silver with a turquoise stud; and a lobed silver and gilt pot. The handles on one pair of scissors have been appropriately formed in an openwork inscription which reads as an invocation to God, "O the Opener!" **AF**





SCHOOL COURTYARD WITH BOYS READING AND WRITING

Folio (149r) from the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* of Tusi

Ascribed in the lower margin to Khem Karan

Lahore, *circa* 1595

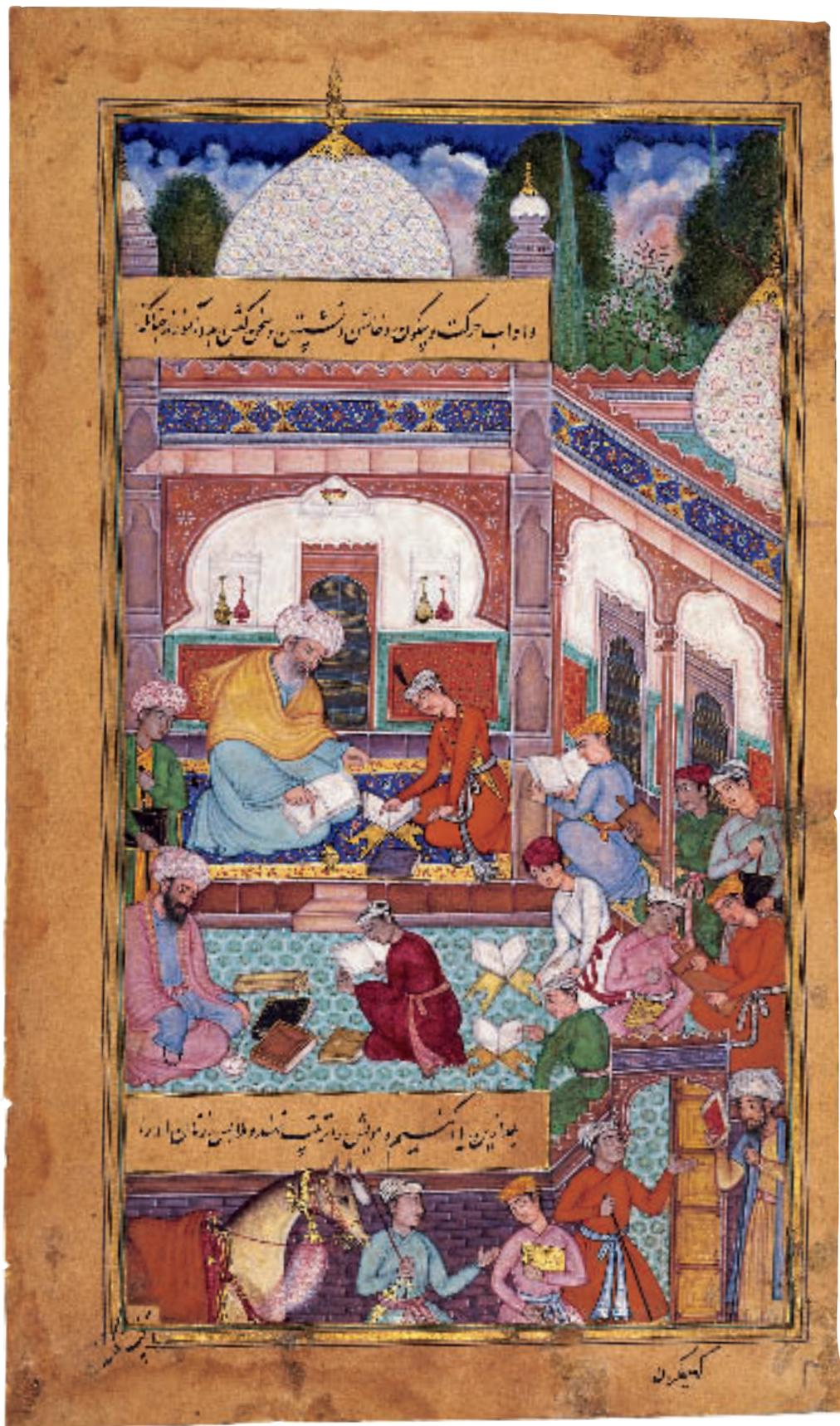
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

23.9 x 14.1 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 122 (no. 87); AKTC 2007b, p. 124 (no. 87)

AKM 00288

THIS PAINTING COMES from one of the favourite manuscripts of Akbar (r. 1556-1605), the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (Ethics of Nasir), a philosophical treatise on ethics, social justice and politics by the thirteenth-century medieval Persian philosopher and scientist, Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274). This folio (149r) may demonstrate the importance of knowledge as a form of authority although the text does not lend itself easily to artistic interpretation. On a raised, carpeted platform the master works with a young student, while other boys read independently or with tutors in the school courtyard. According to Verma, Khem Karan was “among the leading painters of Akbar’s court”, where he was active between 1582 and 1604 (Som Prakash Verma, *Mughal Painters and their work*, Delhi, 1994, pp. 216-19). The painting is rich in detail for the documentation of Mughal educational practices. **AF**





Signed by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri (d. 1564-65)

Iran, Mashhad, Safavid, *circa* 1540

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper pasted on an album folio of marbled paper

26.7 x 16.7 cm

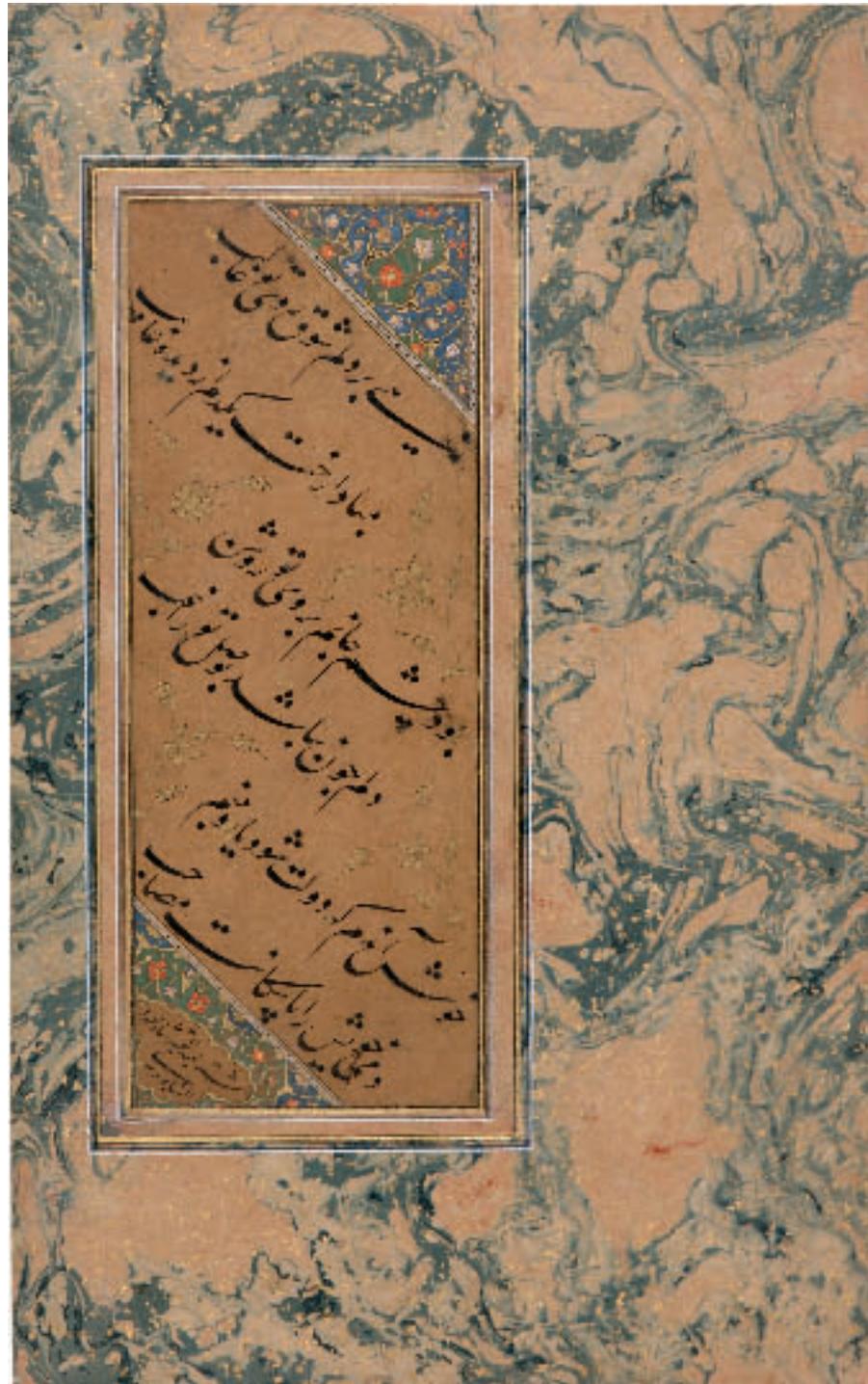
LIT.: Ackerman 1940; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 76-78 (no. 24)

AKM 00254

ALBUMS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE in the cultivation of royal virtues; the assembling of these codices traces back at least to the Timurid (1370-1506) period in Iran. Just as princes were trained in the skills of hunting, war and politics, they also had tutors to teach them about the sciences, philosophy and the arts. Extant album collections and dispersed album folios from the Safavid period also reveal the interest in collecting single-page drawings and paintings, designs and calligraphies. This example of Persian poetry was written and probably composed by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri (d. 1564-65), a well-known and respected scribe and poet. He was considered one of the three greatest Safavid calligraphers by the historian Qadi Ahmad, along with Sultan ʿAli Mashhadi and Mir ʿAli Shirnavaʿi, whose calligraphic talent can be seen in cat. no. 106. Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76) recognized Nishapuri's gift by bestowing upon him the *laqab*, or honorific title, of *Zarin Qalam* (Golden Pen) (Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 76-78).

The poet has signed his name in the left corner of this writing sample in a small space surrounded by vegetal ornament in green, blue, red, white and gold: "*Mashqahu al- ʿabd al-khafir Shah Mahmud al-Nishapuri*" [the poor servant of the protector, Shah Mahmud al-Nishapuri, wrote it]. The beautifully scripted letters are executed with black ink in an elegant *nastaʿliq* that stands in contrast to the plain surface on which they appear; peonies and other flowers painted in ink and gold add a subtle embellishment. The verses express a lover's longing for his beloved:

"O my heart, overwhelmed by [its] yearning for you
May your face never be absent from the eye
My soul's eye becomes brightened upon [seeing] your face
When should my heart not wish to be joined to you?
Joyful would be that moment, if fortune becomes my friend, and I see,
For a moment, myself as a companion of your compassion!"



Nishapuri's poem was probably designed as a single page and may have been intended for a *muraqqa*^c, or album, of calligraphy. The blue and gold-flecked album folio is decorated in the marbled technique and provides a complementary frame around the writing. LA



GOLD AND SILVER-INLAID BRASS PEN BOX AND INKWELL

Pen box

North-west Iran or Anatolia, *circa* 1300

Brass, inlaid with gold and silver

L.: 19.4 cm; W.: 4.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 124 (no. 90); AKTC 2007b, p. 127 (no. 90); Makariou 2007, pp. 166-67 (no. 59)

AKM 00609

Inkwell

Iran, Khurasan, second half of 12th century

Moulded copper alloy, chased decoration inlaid with silver

Ø 10.4 cm; H.: 8.5 cm

LIT.: Makariou 2007, pp. 162-63 (no. 57)

AKM 00604

ELABORATELY DECORATED metalwork pen boxes and inkwells are amongst the finest objects associated with writing in the medieval Islamic world. Pen boxes held both practical and symbolic functions at Islamic courts. They served as compact and often beautifully decorated containers for scribes' tools, but they could also represent a specific court office or the power of kingship more generally. Profusely decorated with precious gold and silver





inlay and engraved geometric, floral and vegetal designs, this luxury pen box would have been carried by a high-ranking individual, perhaps even a ruler.

Along with the reed pen, the inkstand, called *dawat* (Baer 1981, pp. 203-04) or *mihbara*, is the quintessential attribute of the scribe and calligrapher. Here, decorative form and function are in harmony with each other, as writing (*khatt*) is also the main decorative theme of this object. The edge and top of the lid are decorated with an inscription in kufic script and an inscription in a cursive form that are successive wishes in Arabic. On the edge of the lid can be read, twice, “*al-yumm wa al-baraka*” (Good fortune and divine grace) and on the flat part: “*al-‘izz wa al-iqbal wa al-dawla wa al-sa‘ada wa al-salama wa al-‘inaya*” (Glory and prosperity and good fortune and happiness and salvation and divine grace).

On the body of the object, the composition is arrayed on three superposed levels: votive formulas in both Arabic and cursive, interrupted by the hanging rings, surround a frieze with figures. These good wishes twice repeat the following formula: “*al-‘izz wa al-iqbal wa al-dawla wa al-sa‘ada*” (Glory and prosperity and / good fortune and happiness). The receptacle was intended to contain a glass ink bottle, which itself contained the ink, with black ink being used the most often. Three main types of black ink were made in the medieval Islamic world. They are known thanks to texts written by calligraphers or copyists, who gave the recipes. The first type of ink had a carbon base, the second a base of oak galls and metal, and the third a mixture of the other two (Déroche 2000, p. 120 ff.). Traditionally, inks of the first type were called *midad* and of the second type, *hibr* (*ibid.*, p. 121). AC



71 A DROWSY COURTIER READING BY CANDLELIGHT

Inscribed “*amal-i Naqi* (the work of Naqi)”

India, Deccan, Sultanate, *circa* 1630

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

35.4 x 22.1 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00201

IN THIS SINGLE-PAGE TINTED DRAWING, enclosed in a border of golden flower sprays and mounted on a blue album page decorated with a gold floral scroll, a middle-aged courtier – perhaps a scholar or princely tutor – demonstrates royal interest in the pursuit of knowledge. Struggling to stay awake, he continues to read by candlelight. The finished composition reveals points of colour selected to highlight the sash around the courtier’s removed turban, his collar and belt, a set of rosary beads and the vegetal designs on the border and cartouches of the carpet. Drowsily, he leans against a cushion tied at each end with tassels rendered in black ink, its folds marked by light washes of red. The candlestick in front of the reader is painted in gold, suggesting the object’s medium, while white is used to represent both the candle and the borders of the man’s book.

This image draws attention to the profound dedication to learning in Islamic India. During the first half of the seventeenth century, the sultanates of the Deccan were at varying moments either ruling their respective regions autonomously or struggling under Mughal power. Their artistic influences appear to have come from a mixture of Persian, Turkman, Ottoman, and Mughal sources. In this case, the drawing seems to combine an attempt at portraying the calligraphic silhouettes and subtle textures of the Safavid painter Riza °Abbasi (in the figure’s stance and the extra-long sleeves of his fur-collared robe) with a more naturalistic rendering of the courtier’s facial features, such as his furrowed brow and double chin. LA





“CONCERNING THE USES OF THE *SHIQRAQ* (MAGPIE)”

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of the *Manafi^c al-hayawan* (Usefulness of Animals) of Ibn Bukhtishu

Northwest Iran, possibly Maragha, Ilkhanid, *circa* 1300

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

40.1 x 32.2 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978a, pp. 36-37; Makariou 2007, pp. 44-45 (no. 11, recto)

AKM 00083

IBN BUKHTISHU (d. 1085) composed his bestiary, the *Manafi^c al-hayawan* (Usefulness of Animals) around the middle of the eleventh century, describing the entire range of species from humans to insects, including their characteristics and medicinal properties. The original Arabic text was then translated into Persian by ^cAbd al-Hadi ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn Ibrahim al-Maraghi by order of the Ilkhanid ruler Ghazan Khan (r. 1295-1304). This folio belongs to a Persian translation of the bestiary, although its headings are written in Arabic in an eastern-style kufic script. The illustration on this folio corresponds to the heading painted in blue, and reads, “Concerning the uses of the *shiqraq*,” or magpie. The text that follows describes the habits and qualities of the green magpie, which perpetually seeks flies for food. It also explains that the droppings of the *shiqraq*, when boiled in fat with gall, will darken white hair, and that the carat value of gold will increase if warmed up under the bird. The text above the heading belongs to a preceding discussion about the properties of the *khuttal*, or swallow.

The paintings on both sides of this folio reveal characteristics of early Ilkhanid painting. Most noticeable is the Chinese-inspired large-petalled lotus blossom, reinterpreted by Iranian artists unfamiliar with this species as a flower that grows on land. Lotuses identical to this one appear ubiquitously on tiles from the Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Sulaiman in Iran. The twists and turns of the willow tree foreshadow the dramatically gnarled trunks and branches appearing in the Great Mongol *Shahnama* (*circa* 1318-35) and extant illustrated manuscripts of the Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din’s (d. 1318) *Jami^c al-tavarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles) produced in the early fourteenth century. The simple ground line and the lack of a backdrop suggesting depth, however, more closely relate to a contemporaneous copy of the same manuscript, most of the folios of which are preserved at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. This codex was copied in 1297-1300 at Maragha in northwest Iran and supports a similar attribution for the manuscript to which the AKM folio belongs. LA

و بعد تان خانه سانه **چشم طلا** و در کوی مژده و بر رخ او بنده که بر آن تخت جسمه خویش
 نبرد **کین** بده نیل ننده نرم **کینه خون** زن شهرت ناک دنده شویب ببرد
 و زایل **کینه** اند و ز نرا از شهرت سار باز بر آید

در منافعه حشرات

شغراق که ما از می گمانیم که آید و در شمن مکن بکین از استنجد از ک در بد بخورد ما میر شود

که باقی جز در آنکه نماند بزند و بکشد

و از شامع شهر ز که او با اعانه و صانه

سرین کوفته کرد و در روز غنچه شانه و بیوی

پیید بهما لند سبب لرد از جوش

غراب و اگر روی با عیار کم با نده و در کوه

این میخ اندازند کم کرده در راه

عیا تمام آورد و اگر در زنده و بیانه





Iran or Mesopotamia (?), dated 444 H/1052

Ink on paper

21.2 x 16.4 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 128 (no. 96); AKTC 2007b, pp. 122 and 131 (no. 96)

AKM 00510

IBN SINA'S *Qanun fi'l-tibb* (Canon of Medicine) is the most important encyclopaedic corpus of medieval medical knowledge in the Islamic world. With the transfer of knowledge to the Latin west in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it became the most used of all medieval references in the medical schools of Europe, almost until the beginning of modern times. The *Qanun* is organised into five books. The present manuscript is a copy of the fifth book, on compound drugs and pharmacopoeia. Copied only fifteen years after the death of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), it is one of the earliest, if not the earliest manuscript of this work. The other books cover topics including anatomy, the humours, the temperament, the effects of environment on health and disease, *materia medica*, specific pathology and diseases of various parts of the body, general pathology, fevers, leprosy, surgery, dislocations and fractures. Born near Bukhara in 980 to a Samanid government official, Ibn Sina received a proper education and was, at eighteen, a talented physician who had mastered all the sciences and made a great number of medical discoveries and observations that remain relevant today. **AF**



Folio from an illustrated manuscript of the *Kitab Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of Fixed Stars) by ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn ʿUmar al-Sufi (d. 986)

Iran, Timurid, *circa* 1450

Ink, opaque watercolour, silver and gold on paper

21.3 x 14.7 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00043

THIS ILLUSTRATION of the constellations Andromeda and Pisces belongs to a dispersed Arabic copy of the *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book of Fixed Stars) by the Iranian astronomer al-Sufi (d. 986), an analysis of earlier Arabic treatises based on Ptolemy and originally composed in Shiraz in 964 for the Buyid ruler ʿAdud al-Dawla (r. 949-83). In this image, the figures and the borders of the page have been outlined in red. Andromeda, depicted as a woman in an orange robe with a grey undergarment, wears a crown-like cap with a gold rim over her long tresses while holding her arms outstretched. The fish Pisces appears to swim just in front of her feet, its head and gills once rendered in silver (now oxidised) and its fins and tail in a brown wash. A label has been written in *naskh* script in the top margin: “the constellation of the chained woman who did not marry as it is seen in the sky, together with the fish, which is located by Ptolemy.”

Another manuscript of the *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* survives from the library of the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg (1394-1449), who was fascinated with astronomy and commissioned and acquired numerous manuscripts dealing with this subject. This manuscript includes seventy-four colour drawings with figural personifications of constellations rendered in Timurid dress and often displaying Chinese-inspired fantastical creatures. Lentz and Lowry attribute its production to possibly Samarqand, *circa* 1430-49 (Lentz and Lowry 1989, pp. 153-54, cat. no. 56). LA





A BLOOD-LETTING DEVICE

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of al-Jazari's *Kitab fi ma'rifat al-hiyal al-hindasiyya* (Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices), also known as the *Automata*

Scribe: Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Izmiri

Egypt, Mamluk, dated Safar 755 H/February-March 1354

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

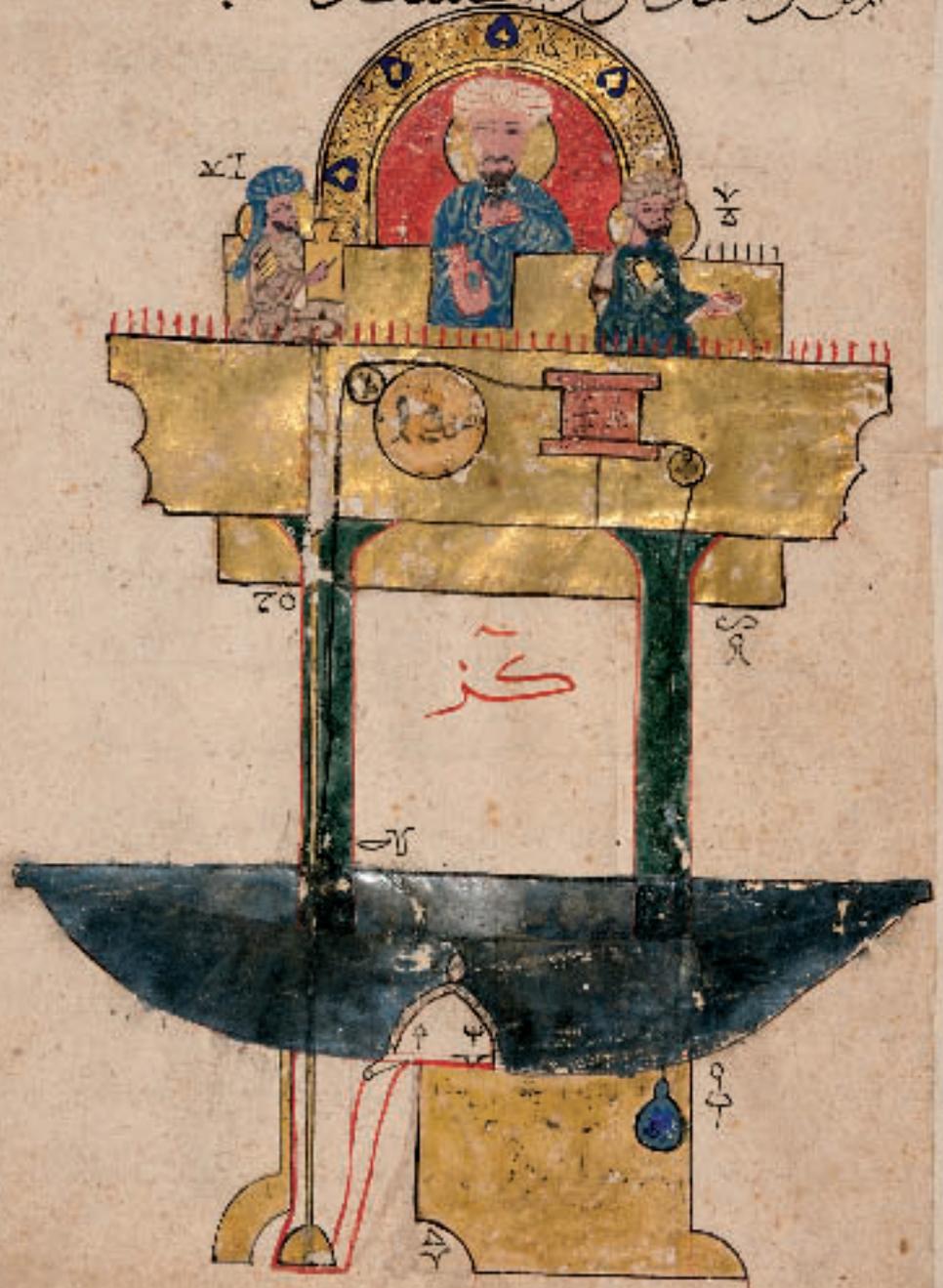
39.3 x 27.2 cm

LIT.: Blochet 1929, pl. 36; Welch 1972a, pp. 28-32; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 24-26 (no. 3)

AKM 00011

BADIAL-ZAMANIBNAL-RAZZAZAL-JAZARI wrote his mechanical treatise, the *Kitab fi ma'rifat al-hiyal al-hindasiyya* (Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices), in 1206 for the Artuqid Sultan Nasir al-Din Muhammad (r. 1201-22), who had a great fascination for machinery. The book included descriptions and illustrations of gadgets invented by al-Jazari and was highly copied and disseminated throughout the medieval Middle East. This folio, depicting a blood-letting device explained in the seventh chapter, comes from an Egyptian copy dated February-March 1354, made for the Mamluk amir Nasir al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulak al-Hasani al-Malik al-Salih at the time of Sultan Hasan's second reign (r. 1354-61). The Arabic description at the top of the page reads: "This is a device in the shape of a basin. It is a basin, and a cubus, and cylinders" (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 24). While most of the extant folios from this codex, including its colophon, are in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul (Aya Sofya 3606), a number of the original illustrated pages remain dispersed. Anthony Welch has alluded to the humour that may have been intended to accompany some of these illustrations (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 26). Perhaps this followed in the footsteps of al-Hariri's (d. 1122) witty *Maqamat*, or Assemblies, illustrated copies of which were circulated widely in the thirteenth century. LA

المقنعة واما صورة الطست والكعب والاسا طين





SILVER-INLAID BRASS PLANISPHERIC ASTROLABE

Spain, probably Toledo, 14th century

Engraved copper alloy inlaid with silver

Ø 13.5 cm

LIT.: King 2005, pp. 831-914; Makariou 2007, pp. 28-29 (no. 3)

AKM 00611

EVERYTHING ABOUT THIS ASTROLABE indicates that it came from Spain: the rete (*ankabut*, or “spider”), representing part of the celestial coordinate system – the fixed stars – forms a network ornamented with openwork, the line of which is characteristic of Maghribin and Andalusian instruments. Indeed, on the ecliptic circle, which bears the names of the zodiacal constellations in Latin and Arabic, the cutouts are in the form of half quatrefoils; they end in three openwork rings and a long curved point. The point indicates the exact position of the star whose name is engraved on the base in Arabic and Latin; other star names are inscribed on the outer circle and the segment of the median circle (equator). There are four tympana, each bearing a projection of the celestial coordinates onto the given terrestrial coordinates. Three of them, which date back to the first phase of the instrument’s history, are for latitudes ranging from Jerusalem to the north of Paris. While many astrolabes made in *al-Andalus* (Arab-controlled Spain) during the eleventh through fifteenth centuries have been preserved, only five astrolabes from pre-fifteenth-century Christian Spain are extant. Four of them are from Catalonia. This one does not come from there, and furthermore is the only one with inscriptions in Arabic, Latin and Hebrew, the latter in the form of traces on one of the tympana (Makariou 2007, p. 54, note 23). The ring topping the openwork “throne” (*kursi*) bears an Arabic inscription: “Its owner [is] the poor Mas‘ud confident in Him who should be adored.” Moreover, the last tympanum, which probably dates to the second phase of execution of the astrolabe, is marked *‘Ard al-Jaza’ir* (latitude of Algiers or the Balearic Islands); on the back





is a tympan corresponding to the latitude of Mecca, which is not mentioned by name. It is possible that the inscriptions on the ring and the last tympan were done by the same hand, namely that of Mas^ud.

On the back, the centre of the mater bears a double shaded square and, on the circumference, the signs of the zodiac in Arabic (to the outside) and the names of the solar months (to the inside), in inlaid and engraved silver cartouches. The inlaid silver cartouches are unique on a western astrolabe. In any case, there are a number of mistakes in the Arabic, which is probably evidence of a vernacular Arabic – and therefore, of the survival of Arabic in Spain long after the *Reconquista*. SM



FOLIO FROM *DE MATERIA MEDICA* (KHAWASS AL-ASHJAR)

Iraq, circa 1200

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

24 x 16.8 cm and 24.8 x 17.2 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972a, pp. 21-23; Falk 1985, p. 40 (no. 10, different folio from the same manuscript); AKTC 2007a, pp. 130-31 (no. 100, different folios); AKTC 2007b, pp. 134-35 (no. 100, different folios from the same manuscript); Makariou 2007, pp. 24-25 (no. 1, different folio from the same manuscript)

AKM 00004

ONE OF THE EARLIEST scientific manuscripts to be translated from Greek to Arabic was Dioscorides' *De Materia Medica*, as it is called in Latin. Pedanius Dioscorides, a Greek physician, wrote his treatise on medicinal plants in the first century. The manuscript was initially translated into Syriac, and then into Arabic in Baghdad in the ninth century (Guesdon and Vernay-Nouri 2001, p. 118). It became the foundation for Islamic pharmacology and was copied widely. These Arabic manuscript illustrations follow the Greek model closely. Although the paintings do not lack artistic sensibility, for accuracy, each specimen is depicted in its entirety from tip to root against the plain paper ground. The single-stemmed plant with three blossoms (recto) was used in the treatment of leprosy, mange and bladder stones. The verso side of this page depicts an unnamed plant which grows on river banks, probably a form of watercress. **AF**



recto



verso



Syria, Mamluk, late 14th-early 15th century

Stonepaste body, underglaze painting in blue and black

H.: 31.7 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 133 (no. 101); AKTC 2007b, p. 136 (no. 101); Makariou 2007, pp. 190-91 (no. 69)

AKM 00569

SERVING AS STORAGE VESSELS in the Islamic world, *albarelli* were also exported to Europe where they may have been prized as luxury objects as well as for the medicinal and pharmaceutical substances they transported. The Italian word *albarello*, the common term used to describe these wares, probably caught on as a result of the export of similar vessels to Italy and other parts of Europe. This object provides a rare example of the characteristic palette, decoration and form of Mamluk Syrian *albarelli*, although its cylindrical shape seems to have existed as early as the eleventh or twelfth century in Iran. A related example with calligraphic decoration and a blue and white palette is housed in the Musée national des céramiques in Sèvres. The inscription on this *albarello* is written in Arabic in *thuluth* script and has not been deciphered, although it has been suggested that the text could relate to the contents that were meant to fill the vessel (Juvin *in* Makariou 2007, p. 190).

Stylistic comparison to other blue and white *albarelli* in early fifteenth-century Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia has led scholars to propose a similar date for this piece (*ibid.*, pp. 26 and 190). However, it should be noted that this vessel contains a colour scheme that includes black in addition to the blue and white. Ceramic wares decorated in these colours have a history of production in Iran during the Ilkhanid period (1256-1353). While almost certainly inspired by Chinese blue and white porcelain wares, the use of black appears to be an Iranian addition to the decorative scheme, found on numerous ceramics as well as in the architectural decoration of some Ilkhanid tombs in Yazd. With the close contact existing between the Mamluks and the Ilkhanids in both times of war and diplomacy, it would not be far-fetched to suggest the additional possibility of Chinese inspiration through an Ilkhanid filter or even an earlier date of production in the fourteenth century. **CJ LA**





Fables and Myths

A TIME-HONOURED METHOD of preparing princes to rule was the genre of literature known as “mirrors for princes”. These books contain fables with amusing, moralising tales in which animals are the protagonists. Thought to have been introduced to the Muslim world from India, the fables were collected and illustrated in *Kalila wa Dimna* manuscripts from the thirteenth century onward in the Arab lands and from the fourteenth century in Iran. Versions such as *Anvar-i Suhayli*, or *The Lights of Canopus*, enjoyed popularity in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Iran and Mughal India.

While tales of fantastic beasts are deeply rooted in the pre-Islamic past of Iran, Central Asia and India, their depiction in metalwork, pottery and manuscript illustration became frequent only from the twelfth century onwards. Dragons in Persian painting, ceramics and metalwork acquired their common attributes – a sinuous body, four feet, a horned head, and flaming shoulders – after the Mongol conquest in the thirteenth century, reflecting Chinese aesthetic norms. Likewise, the *simurgh*, the magical bird of the *Shahnama* (the Persian national epic) inherited its streaming tail feathers and long neck from Chinese phoenixes introduced to Islamic art by the Mongols. These fantastic beasts and the stories in which they occur attest to the abiding interest in tales of wonder that continued well into the seventeenth century, long after people had ceased expecting actually to encounter such fantastic beasts. **SC**



79 THE CROW LAMENTING TO THE FOX ABOUT THE TYRANT SNAKE

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of the *Anvar-i Suhayli* (Lights of Canopus) of Husayn ibn ʿAli al Waʿiz al-Kashifi (d. 1504)

Scribe: Naʿim Muhammad al-Husayni al-Tabrizi; Artist: Sadiqi Beg

Iran, Qazvin, dated 13 Safar 1002 H/8 November 1593

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

30.1 x 20.3 cm

Provenance: Marquess of Bute

LIT.: Welch 1976, pp. 125-44, figs. 42-55 (fols. 10r, 17r, 38r, 28v, 20v, 52r, 309r, 55v, 85r, 227v, 40v, 313r, 83v, and 22r); Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 100-05, cat. no. 32 (fols. 22r, 139v, and 198r); Canby 1998, pp. 70-72 (no. 43); AKTC 2007r, p. 136 (no. 103); AKTC 2007v, p. 138 (no. 103); Melikian-Chirvani 2007, pp. 446-47 (fol. 22v)

AKM 00289

THE PAINTING ON THIS FOLIO depicts a story from the *Anvar-i Suhayli* (Lights of Canopus), a selection of fifteenth-century fables based on a twelfth-century version of the *Kalila wa Dimna* (Kalila and Dimna) collection. The text's origins are thought to lie in the oral traditions of India and to have first been recorded in writing around 300 CE as the *Pancatantra* (Five Occasions of Good Sense), a book of five chapters on statecraft (*arthasastra*) (De Blois 1991, p. 10). Its stories are held together by the framework of an Indian king, Dabshalim (or Dabishlim), consulting his court philosopher Bidpai (or Pilpay, both corrupted versions of Bidnag and later, in Arabic, Bindna) about proper ruling conduct in a variety of situations. Bidpai responds to each question with a fable featuring animal protagonists, each fable in turn framing other stories and substories and eventually returning to the king's conversation with Bidpai in order to lead to the next of the five main fables. In the present scene, a mournful crow laments to her friend the fox about a snake that keeps devouring her young and her desire to avenge their deaths and prevent the tyrant from ever preying on her offspring again. The crow warns her to take into account the risks of pursuing a dangerous enemy by recounting a story about a heron that risked and lost its life to a crab.

The history of the *Pancatantra*'s transmission to the Islamic world is recalled in its various recensions into Persian and Arabic, as the story of *Kalila wa Dimna* was first translated into Pahlavi or Middle Persian by the physician Burzoy in the sixth century; then into Arabic in the eighth century by Ibn al-Muqaffa; later into neo-Persian in the mid-twelfth century by Nasrallah Munshi; and, at the end of the fifteenth century, incorporated into the *Anvar-i Suhayli*, or *Lights of Canopus*, by Husayn ibn ʿAli al Waʿiz al-Kashifi (d. 1504).



ما بخوردی و حکم را بخوانی بر آن فرزند با سحری جز سحر آری از حد گذشت
 ز آنچه در مانده شکایت کن سال یا شعله ای که در دست او بود در میان آورد و گفت
 می نماند شکم که خورد از بلای ما و رعای



این ظاهر جان شکار باز رهانه شغال چپ

که بجه طایفه قدر دین مهم خواهد شد و بجه شود و قهر حضرت اینو کرده
 ز آنچه گفت میماند که چون ما در خواب شود بمقار خون خوار چشم چه آن پیش
 برکم نادر که قصه قهر الدین بنویسد که در غزنی که نویدین مملکت از شر او
 این باشد شغال گفت این قدر بر از صوب صواب بخرهست چه خورد مراد از قصه
 دشمن بر تو می یازد که در آن خطر جان باشد زهار که از این فکر بکار نامیوت
 ماهی جوار نشوی که در هلاک سوختن سعی کرده و جان عزیز بر باد داد ز آنچه
 که حکم کرده است آن حکایت شغال گفت ماهی خواری بود بر لب آب که

Kashifi was the court preacher of Husayn Bayqara (1470-1506), the Timurid governor of Herat, and his manuscript was named in honour of Ahmad Suhayli, Husayn Bayqara's minister (Atil 1981, pp. 57-58). This recension became popular in Persian-speaking circles of India and was translated into many Indian languages. *Kalila wa Dimna* was then increasingly modified, reworked, and altered within various languages (including Ottoman Turkish), becoming the inspiration for other literary texts in the Islamic world, as well as for the well-known and admired fables of Jean de La Fontaine (d. 1695).

This 1593 version of the *Anvar-i Suhayli* is particularly distinguished by the originality and abundance of its illustrations, numbering 107; they are characterized by a naturalism and dynamic vitality that depart from the conventional aesthetic of the Safavid court (Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 102-05). The colophon suggests that the manuscript was commissioned



entirely by and for the Safavid artist and writer Sadiqi Beg: “It is written as it is ordered by the rare man of the time, the second Mani and the Bihzad of the age, Sadiqi Musavvir [Sadiqi the Painter]” (Canby 1998, p. 70 citing Welch 1976, p. 126). At the point of the manuscript’s completion, Sadiqi Beg would still have held the post of *kitabdar*, head of the royal library-atelier of the Safavid Shah ʿAbbas I (r. 1587-1629) and would probably have enjoyed access to the best materials and services (he would be dismissed by the ruler a few years later). Although none of the paintings are signed, some scholars are convinced that Sadiqi was responsible for the illustrations as well as for the commissioning of the manuscript; Melikian-Chirvani, however, believes that the style of the paintings and the use of *naskh* rather than *nastaʿliq* script for the Persian text are more typical of Indian manuscript production at the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar (r. 1556-1605). Since the copy of the *Anvar-i Suhayli* is known to have entered the possession of Akbar’s son Jahangir (r. 1605-27) in 1618, the connections between Iran and India invite further consideration in a more detailed examination of this remarkable manuscript. LA



80 A SEA-SERPENT SWALLOWS THE ROYAL FLEET

Folio from a Deccani Urdu epic written in *naskh*

India, Deccan, *circa* 1670

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

39 x 23.5 cm

LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 229-31 (no. 77); Falk 1985, p. 174 (no. 154); AKTC 2007a, p. 137 (no. 104); AKTC 2007b, p. 139 (no. 104)

AKM 00167

A GIANT SEA SERPENT constricts its gold coils around a royal fleet, its full mouth leaving no doubt as to its intentions toward the remaining vessels. As if the carnivorous serpent were not enough, the alternative is a scary sea filled with demon-headed fish, giant crabs and turtles, as well as a mermaid and merman. Most of the sailors appear to pray with upturned hands for deliverance from this nightmare. The painting has been identified as an illustration from the *Gulshan-i ʿIshq* (Rose Garden of Love) a heroic epic written in Deccani Urdu by the court poet Nusrati for Sultan ʿAli II ibn Muhammad ʿAdil Shahi (r. 1656-72) (Falk 1985, p. 174). The ʿAdil-Shahis were great patrons of the arts and ruled Deccani Bijapur as an independent Shia kingdom from 1489 until it became part of the Mughal Empire in 1689. It has been suggested that this painting was produced for an aristocrat at the end of Sultan ʿAli’s reign or during the reign of his successor, Sikandar ʿAli Shah (r. 1672-86) (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 229). The theme of disaster at sea in this painting may be compared with similar episodes in the *Hamzanama* as part of the picaresque genre of adventure-romances, featuring heroes who travel through strange lands and meet with danger on land and sea. ■ AF





81 BOWL

Iran, late 12th-early 13th century

Stonepaste body, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

Ø 15.2 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 138-39 (no. 105); AKTC 2007b, p. 140 (no. 105); Makariou 2007, pp. 68-69 (no. 20)

AKM 00556

MEDIEVAL KASHAN lustre ceramics often feature a single monumental animal or figure in reserve on a lustre ground filled with floral vinescrolls. Representations of birds, horses and leopards are more common; the elephant-bird seen here seems to be unique. Perhaps this fantastic creature with the head of an elephant and body of a bird is inspired by the mythological bird (*roc*) of *A Thousand and One Nights*. The *roc* may have been derived from the enormous elephant bird, a now extinct flightless bird of the family *Aepyornithidae* that was native to Madagascar. **AF**





82 BOWL WITH A HERO KILLING A DRAGON

Iran, probably Shiraz, Zand, mid-18th century

Fritware, overglaze lustre painted in brown and blue

Ø 22.2 cm; H.: 9 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978b, pp. 194-95

AKM 00697

THE LUSTRE PAINTED TECHNIQUE and the subject matter depicted on this small bowl are more reminiscent of medieval Seljuq and Ilkhanid wares, which commonly illustrated scenes from Persian literature, especially the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi, written in *circa* 1010. A princely or heroic figure pursues an awkward-looking dragon around a central, eight-petalled rosette; two sets of triangular mountain peaks appear between the figures, setting the scene for the hunt. The circular shape of the bowl and the running stance of the hunter add a dynamic tension to the episode. Stylistically, however, the figure of the hunter appears more related to the early Zand period (r. 1750-79) during which artists closely followed the aesthetic models of their Safavid predecessors. The exterior of the bowl contains six panels displaying various landscapes and a large bird that appears in alternating frames. LA







83 A DRAGON IN A LANDSCAPE

Iran, Isfahan, *circa* 1610

Ink, light watercolour and gold on paper, mounted on a page from a *muraqqa*^c

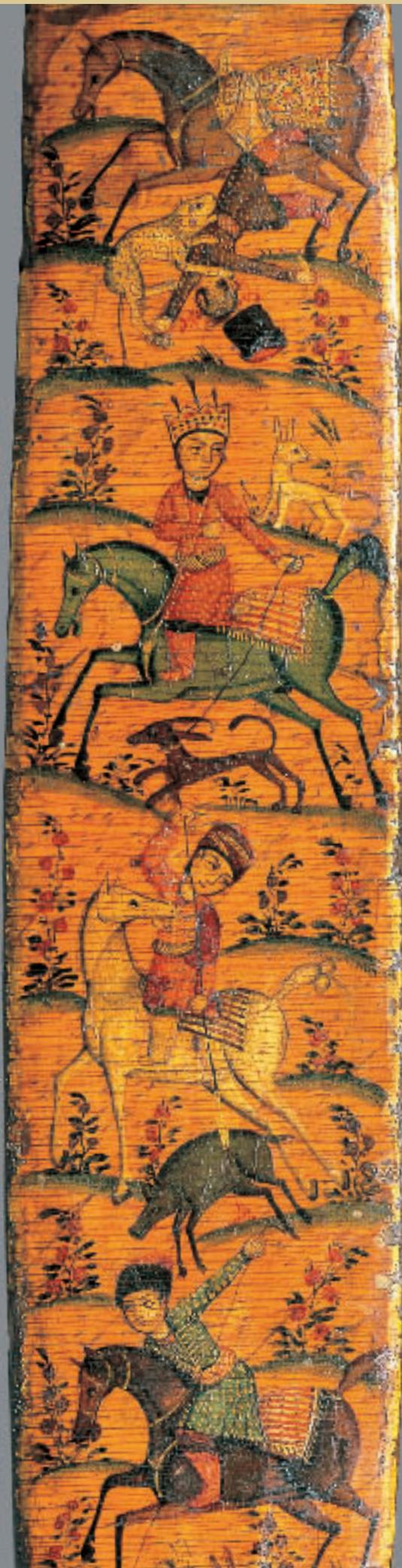
23.7 x 36 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978a, pp. 124-25; Canby 1998, pp. 73-74 (no. 45)

AKM 00108

A LARGE, APPARENTLY WINGED, dragon scampers up a sloping hill while breathing clouds of fire behind him to ward off anyone in pursuit. The flames form a series of thick clusters, taking on the appearance of cloud bands common in drawings and paintings of the Islamic world, especially in Iran. The curving, rippled body of the dragon, formed from a series of short, calligraphic strokes, initiates a circular movement that extends through the flames of fire breathed through the dragon's mouth. This "looser" calligraphic manner of draughtsmanship, consisting of several breaks in the lines formed by a brush or pen, recalls the later compositions of Sadiqi Beg, who may have been influenced by the even more elegant style of his contemporary, Riza ʿAbbasi. While line serves as an anchoring element in some drawings (see cat. no. 88), here it creates a dynamic atmosphere of movement and urgency appropriate to the terrifying actions of the beast. LA





Riding and Hunting

THE IMPORTANCE of horsemanship equalled that of reading and writing in the education of a prince. As a preparation for leading armies into war, future rulers needed to be confident in the saddle from an early age. Mamluk *Furusiyya* manuscripts described the training of both horse and rider, but one must assume that instructors taught horseback riding through practice rather than texts.

Hunting and games such as polo reinforced riding skills but also served as metaphors for war. The imagery of kings hunting is deeply embedded in the art of the Middle East, from Assyrian reliefs depicting lion hunts to Sasanian bowls with kings pursuing wild boar. Until the introduction of firearms in the sixteenth century, hunters used bows and arrows, swords and spears to kill their prey. Additionally, hunters portrayed on ceramics, metalwork, enamelled glass and in manuscripts employed dogs, falcons and cheetahs. The highly developed sport of hawking involved falcons of various sizes and skills, some for flying high and attacking other birds, and some for flying low and killing mammals. Images of princely falconers on horseback include drums, gauntlets worn on the hand on which the bird perched, as well as a pouch containing food for the bird. Royal falcons were hooded with leather and held by gold chains to their keepers to stop them from flying off unexpectedly.

In spite of the traditional importance of the hunt in Islamic art, the development of new types of weapons was necessary if armies wished to defend themselves against their enemies. One result of such progress was the transfer of techniques to peaceful uses. Thus, lacquer was first used for smoothing, strengthening and decorating the surface of bows, but in the late fifteenth century it began to be applied to the production of book covers and boxes. Following the Ottoman rout of the Safavids at Chaldiran in 1514, the royal Safavid metalworkers were forcibly relocated to Istanbul. In the short term this destroyed the Safavid luxury metalwork industry, but in the longer term it stimulated the development of a highly sophisticated steel industry which manufactured sword and knife blades as well as openwork steel plaques. Despite the transition to cannon and other firearms from the sixteenth century onwards, traditional weapons remained popular for the hunt in Iran into the nineteenth century, but less so in India. ■ SC



84 LACQUER BOW

Iran, Zand or Qajar, late 18th century

Wood, painted and varnished

L.: 92 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 144-45 (no. 110); AKTC 2007b, pp. 25 and 148 (no. 110)

AKM 00641

THE ARCHER'S BOW was a symbol of kingship as well as a tool of the hunt. This elaborate lacquer bow has been painted and covered by a clear sandarac-based varnish which protects the painting and imparts luminescence. Persian literary sources from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries refer to the varnish as *rawghan-i kaman*, or bow gloss. This reference coupled with the fascinating fact that the Timurid Sultan Husayn's keeper of books (*kitabdar*) and manager of manuscript production Mirak Naqqash (d. after 1507) produced bows and came from a family of Herati bow-makers, has led Stanley to suggest that the earliest lacquer book covers may have been produced by him using bow gloss (Stanley in Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 189). An example of a late sixteenth-century pair of lacquer book covers is cat. no. 32. **AF**







85 STEEL DAGGER

India, Deccani or Mughal, 17th century
Steel inlaid with gold and set with rubies

L.: 38.2 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 145 (no. 111); AKTC 2007b, p. 148 (no. 111)

AKM 00619

THE ANIMAL COMBAT scenes worked in *koftgari* (steel inlaid with gold) on the forte of this steel dagger recall the bravery and skill required for warfare as well as the princely pastime of hunting. The horse-head hilt with precious ruby inlay suggests the dagger had a ceremonial function. **AF**







86 A HUNTING SCENE

In the style of Muhammadi

Iran, Qazvin, Safavid, *circa* 1580

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

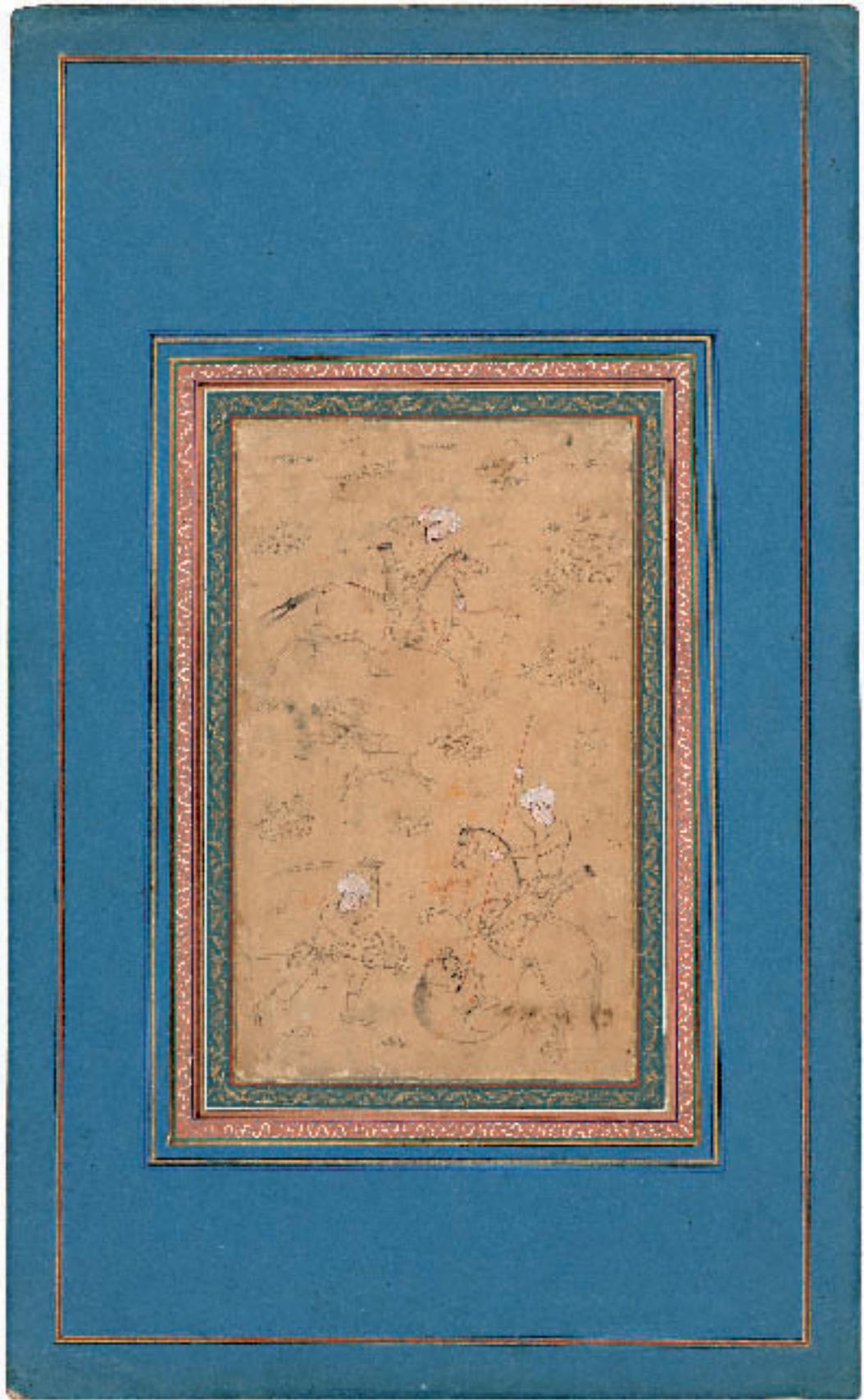
33.8 x 20.7 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00421

THIS DRAWING OF RIDERS at the hunt reveals one aspect of the process of manuscript making in the Islamic world, which involved the use of a *tarh*, an Arabic term that refers to a design or model and also suggests a foundation. Thus the *tarh* could be the underdrawing for a final work that would eventually be covered in pigment and completed as a painting. The artist would create a composition using a brush or pen and ink (usually limited to black and/or red). A colourist, sometimes the same artist, would then add various pigments to the page.

In this scene, three men actively pursue their prey in an open landscape inferred by small tufts of rocks and foliage under Chinese-inspired cloud bands. The turbaned rider to the bottom left spears a lion from atop his rearing horse, assisted by his companion who runs toward the beast with a raised sword, ready to finish the kill. A second mounted rider appears to have just shot an arrow at a fallen gazelle while a deer and antelope attempt to flee to the left; the horseman's positioning at the top of the page follows the convention of illustrating background or depth through vertical placement of objects or figures. Although the few points of colour shown on the figures' heads and turbans suggest that the illustration could have been destined for a manuscript, the drawing satisfies the eye as much as any finished composition; a circular energy flows throughout the scene, evoking the thrill of the chase and the fear of the victims pursued. The longer figures in and graceful draughtsmanship of this work can be compared to the style of Muhammadi, one of the leading artists active under the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76). Stock figures and compositions produced by the famous artist and his followers might have served as models for this drawing, which in turn could be reproduced through other techniques (e.g., pouncing) used to transfer designs. As a result, figures or activities appearing in underdrawings were often generic in the sense that the same stock characters could be used to illustrate a variety of stories. This hunting scene could therefore be used to show the legendary Sasanian king Bahram Gur at the hunt (cat. no. 113) or represent any of the courtly figures illustrated in this section. LA



Iran, *circa* 1580

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

21.3 x 13.1 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 146 (no. 113); AKTC 2007b, p. 150 (no. 113)

AKM 00522

THIS MYSTICAL POEM by °Arifi (d. *circa* 1449) uses the conceit of the polo ball and mallet as a metaphor for yearning for and being spurned by the beloved. In the painting a dervish on the edge of a rocky horizon observes a princely polo player who is accompanied by an attendant carrying a mallet. The illustration is stylistically close to the work of °Ali Asghar who worked at Qazvin in the 1570s and 1580s and joined the *kitabkhana* of Shah °Abbas I upon his accession in 1587. °Ali Asghar illustrated two manuscripts of *Guy u Chawgan* and one of *Shah u Darvish* of Hilali that all include polo-playing scenes (Robinson 1988, p. 126). The jutting rocks, sharply bent elbows and treatment of the hair of the dervish recall these equally small-scale works by °Ali Asghar. **AF**







88 YOUNG HUNTER WITH A FALCON

Folio from an album

Turkey, Ottoman, last quarter of the 16th century

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

12 x 6 cm

LIT.: Welch 1978a, pp. 72-73; Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 30-31 (no. 5); Canby 1998, p. 97 (no. 69)

AKM 00097

THIS FINELY RENDERED DRAWING depicts a young hunter nestled in a curving tree trunk as he watches the falcon perched on his finger. In the hills beyond, an onlooker spies on the scene as a *simurgh*, a fantastic bird similar to the Chinese phoenix, and other birds hover in the sky. Its skilled display of draughtsmanship is demonstrated through a wide variety of textures created by the pen or the brush, ranging from the gnarled, rough tree trunk to the folds of the falconers robe and the soft fur of his cap. The inked line acquires a certain virtuosity in its representation of texture through varying thickness and shades of black. Line also acts as an anchor for the entire composition, with the undulating tree trunk balanced by the curves of the hills in the distance and the *simurgh's* plumage overhead.

The extraordinary technical skill in this composition is reminiscent of the style of Vali Jan (Velican in Turkish), a Persian artist of the Safavid court who emigrated to Istanbul from Qazvin around 1580. The drawing follows Persian prototypes but betrays Ottoman influence in the sharply pointed leaves that presage the *saz* style, an Ottoman adaptation of Chinese-inspired foliage. LA





TWO LUSTRE BOWLS WITH MOUNTED HORSEMEN AND A CARAVAN OF CAMELS

Iran, late 12th-early 13th century

Fritware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

Ø 21.6 cm; H.: 9.2 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 128 and 133

AKM 00693

Iran, late 12th-early 13th century

Fritware, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

Ø 17 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00557

BEGINNING IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY, ceramics in Iran were produced with a frit body that provided a clean, light surface for painting. In addition to the many transparent and opaque coloured glazes, lustre could also be added to the ceramic decoration, painted over the glaze after it was fired and then fired a second time, developing an impressive metallic sheen in the process. These two stunning bowls belong to a group of pre-Mongol lustre wares with decoration that can be classified as illustrative or pictorial (see Lentz and Lowry 1989, ch. 2). The interior of one depicts a mounted horseman riding his horse toward the left with a dog running at his side; the other contains a central figure riding a horse at the base, with a caravan of camels following another figure around the wall below the rim. The decoration on these objects resembles manuscript illustrations containing stock figures and compositions that could either depict genre scenes or refer to a specific text. Given their concave surface, however, different conventions were used to fill the background of a figural scene on bowls and deep dishes. In the bowl with the mounted horseman, large, spiralling lines fill the negative space and curl into stylised leaf forms at the ends. The horse and rider in the second bowl are also shown against a background of curving stems, dotted on either side to suggest the presence of leaves. A band of vine scrolls borders the base image and is topped by the caravan frieze, where chequered trees add pauses to the steady rhythm created by the moving camels. These types of wares may be compared to the highly figural *mina'i* or *haft-rangi* (seven-colour) wares, also attributed to pre-Mongol Iran, a period that witnessed an intensive proliferation of figural art, especially in the production of ceramics. LA



89



90



91 POTTERY BOTTLE

Iran, 12th century

Stonepaste body, moulded under a white glaze with streaks of blue

H.: 35.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 149 (no. 117); AKTC 2007b, p. 152 (no. 117); Makariou 2007, pp. 64-65 (no. 18)

AKM 00552

THIS ELEGANT long-necked bottle features a frieze of riders on horseback attacking lions and other animals; and a multi-lobed mouth adorned with faces. The decoration was achieved through the use of a mould, a two-piece matrix containing the negative image of the bottle's relief decoration. The fine stonepaste body is well suited to the technique, translating with accuracy the details contained in the mould. This bottle is a successful application of this method: the riders seem to pop out in sharp, detailed relief from its bulbous middle. The bottle's shape corresponds to similar Seljuq examples with bulbous bodies, tapering necks and lobed mouths. The physiognomy of the riders and faces, with their high cheekbones, square chins and small mouths, is related to that seen in Seljuq stucco sculpture and painting. **AF**







Folio 294r from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp

(also known as the “Houghton” *Shahnama*)

Attributable to Muzaffar ʿAli

Iran, Tabriz, *circa* 1530-35

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

47 x 31.8 cm

LIT.: Canby 1999, pp. 51-52 (no. 27); Digard 2002, p. 233 (no. 198); Makariou 2007, pp. 80-81 (no. 25)

AKM 00162

IN RESPONSE TO THE COMPLAINTS of a herder whose horses had been attacked by a vicious onager, Kay Khusraw called on the hero Rustam for help in flushing out and killing the beast. According to the description, Kay Khusraw suspected the onager of being an avatar of the destructive *div* (demon) Akvan. Rustam mounted his gallant steed Rakhsh and departed post-haste to look for the onager. On the fourth day, a golden onager appeared, galloping across a plain; Rustam and Rakhsh took up the chase. But scarcely had Rustam touched the animal's neck with his snare when the *div* vanished in smoke. In this painting, Rustam is on the point of seizing the onager, which is turning its head to look back at its pursuer without slackening its speed. Horses are running in all directions, terrified by the *div*-onager.

This early work of Muzaffar ʿAli, the grand-nephew of Bihzad, radiates exuberance. However, his style was never as simple and accurate as his great uncle's. Muzaffar ʿAli, one of the rare artists to have worked for Shah Tahmasp throughout his entire reign, was trained as a calligrapher and gilder as well as a painter. In addition to compiling a *muraqqaʿ* (album), he helped illustrate Nizami's *Khamsa*, executed between 1539 and 1543 and preserved in the British Library in London; Jami's *Haft Awrang*, compiled between 1556 and 1565 for Shah Tahmasp's nephew; and Asadi's *Gashaspnama*, executed in 1573-74. He also produced murals for the royal palace in Qazvin, which was built between 1544 and 1562 to receive the shah in his new capital. **SC**

THIS MAGNIFICENT ILLUSTRATED FOLIO is from one of the greatest illustrated manuscripts of all time, the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) produced for the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Tahmasp. Known as the “Houghton” *Shahnama* (after the collector who broke it up in the 1970s), this manuscript took twenty years or more to complete. Almost all the major Persian artists from the first half of the sixteenth century were involved in this monumental project, and its 258 illustrations are considered the absolute zenith of the art of Persian painting.





Ascribed on reverse to Farrukh Khurd-i Chela

India, Mughal, *circa* 1615

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

29.7 x 19.9 cm

LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, pp. 201–02 (no. 66); Canby 1998, p. 136 (no. 100); AKTC 2007b, p. 153 (no. 120)

AKM 00161

AS WITH THEIR TIMURID ancestors and Safavid and Ottoman contemporaries, the Mughals treated the hunt as one of their most important royal pastimes. Not only did it allow them to acquire and boast their hunting skills, but it also prepared them for war and demonstrated their kingly virtues of courage and bravery. In this lively scene, set within a mountainous region containing a large, leafy tree with thick, gnarled branches and numerous figures engaged in much activity, the viewer's eye is drawn to the central image of an elephant with two riders, one of which spears a lioness that is attacking a man. Inscriptions on the reverse side of the folio name the main characters in this scene, identifying the principal figure spearing the predator as the emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–27), with Suhrab Khan seated behind him on the elephant and the ruler's son Parviz (d. 1625) rushing in from the right to help (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 201). Actual royal hunting expeditions and battles were frequently illustrated in Mughal manuscripts, but Canby has proposed that the existence of an almost identical painting in the AKM collection (with a lighter colour palette) and a drawing of *circa* 1580 showing the same composition suggest that the scene is a generic one used to promote kingly virtues as demonstrated at the hunt (Canby 1998, p. 136; for a reproduction of the drawing, see Leach 1986, p. 40, fig. 11).

Drawings played a major role in design transfer and as models for repetition; generic compositions showing hunting, battle, or enthronement scenes could thus be applied to several different surfaces to represent both actual scenes as well as non-specific courtly genres. Canby also suggests that the ascription to Farrukh Khurd-i Chela may apply more directly to the composition as it was first conceived in the form of a drawing in the late sixteenth century; this composition is closely related to the artist's work of *circa* 1590 (Canby 1998, p. 137). One might suppose that the underdrawing for this illustration was executed by the ascribed artist and that another artist later completed the painting (creating the actual portraits of the royal figures within the composition), a practice not associated with Farrukh Khurd-i Chela, who was known more for designing compositions rather than portraits. LA





Love and Literature

BECAUSE OF THE STYLISTED NATURE of Ottoman, Persian and, to a lesser extent, Mughal painting, the viewer must infer loving relationships between people on the basis of subtle signs. The inclination of a woman's head toward her lover, a glance over a shoulder, or eyes meeting eyes, all imply intimacy.

Much but by no means all Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetry concerns love. However, in a common mystical interpretation, physical love is considered a metaphor for man's love of God. In the huge body of Arabic literature a relatively small number of texts were illustrated. These include books of fables, the *Maqamat* of Hariri, and the love story of *Bayad wa Riyad*. Iran possesses a far richer vein of illustrated literature. The *Shahnama* of Firdawsi and *Khamsa* of Nizami account for a significant proportion of extant manuscript illustrations. However, numerous other poetical works by Jami, Sa'adi, Hafiz, Khwaju Kirmani, Amir Khusraw Dihlavi and 'Attar, to name a few, contain illustrations.

The rulers of Mughal India carried on the Persian tradition of commissioning illustrated manuscripts. In characteristically thorough fashion, Akbar's *kitabkhana* produced historical, poetic and biographical texts in impressive variety. Although the early Mughals spoke and wrote in eastern Turkish, by the time of Akbar such manuscripts were translated into Persian, the language of the court. By the mid-seventeenth century some Mughal and Deccani princes learned Sanskrit as well as Persian and commissioned the translation of Sanskrit philosophical texts.

To this day many people in the Arabic-, Persian-, and Turkish-speaking world can recite extensive passages of poetry by heart. In the premodern world, this skill would have been the norm at all levels of society, even if the texts being quoted varied. As the patrons of poets, rulers ensured that their own names would live on, either in panegyrics written specifically for them or in works such as Firdawsi's *Shahnama*, in which the poet mentions Mahmud of Ghazna in his efforts to obtain the ruler's patronage. ■ SC



94 LOVERS IN THE STORM WITH *DIVS*

From a dispersed *Divan* of Sana^ci (d. 1131)

Attributed to Shaykh Zada

Herat, *circa* 1525

Opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper

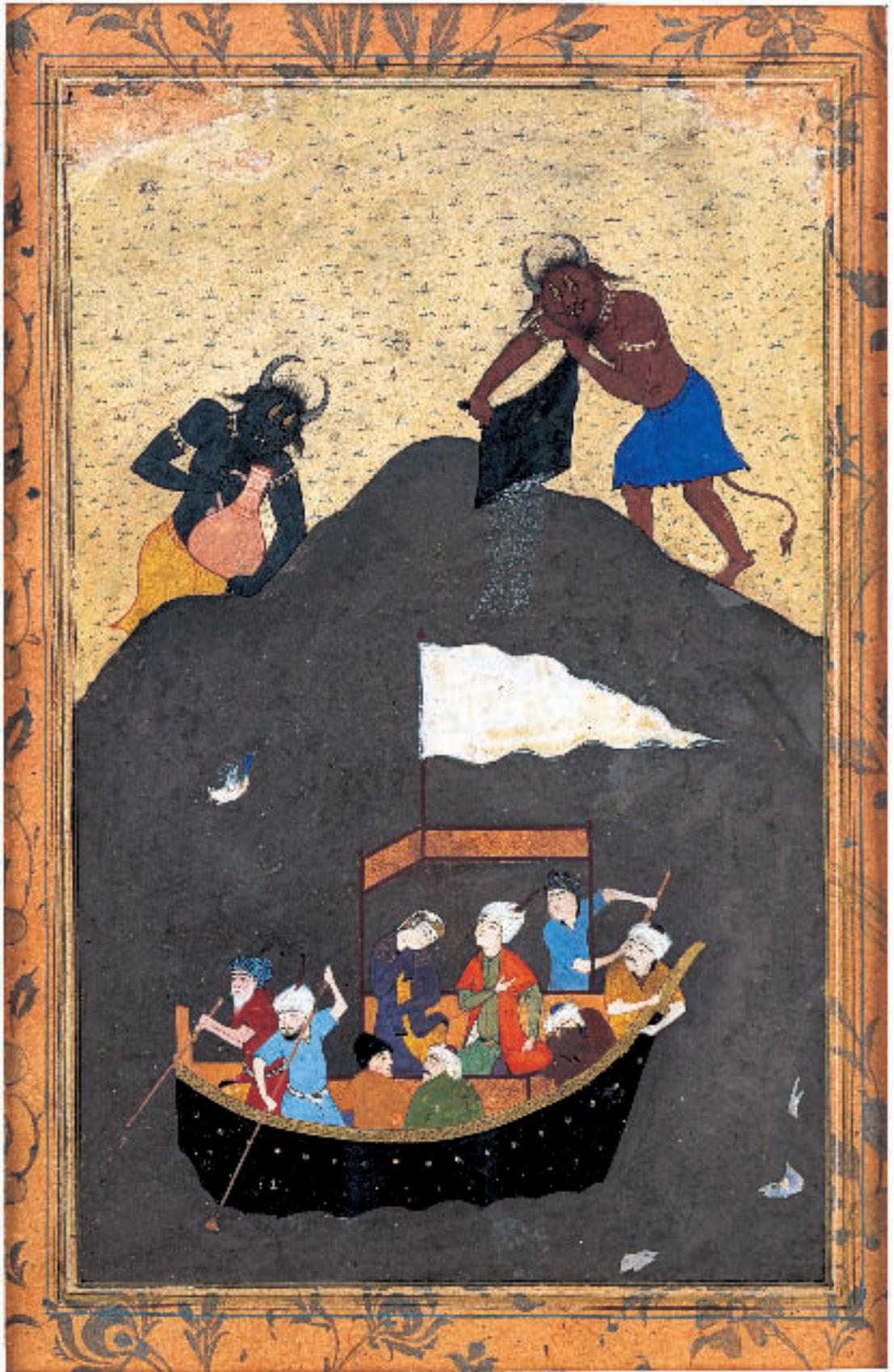
29.4 x 19.5 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 45-46 (no. 22); AKTC 2007a, p. 154 (no. 123); AKTC 2007b, p. 156 (no. 123)

AKM 00094

TWO HORNED *DIVS* (demons) with big teeth sprinkle a storm on a pair of lovers and their crew as their boat makes its way along a silver river (tarnished black over time). *Divs* are well known characters from Persian mythology. Those in this painting appear either from behind a riverbank or from the sky. The uncertainty of their position is unsettling: at least one crewman covers his eyes in response to the oncoming storm created by the beasts. The text on the reverse of this painting is poetry from the *Divan* of Sana^ci (d. 1131) relating a journey but not the one seen here.

The painting has been attributed to Shaykh Zada, a student of Bihzad who adopted his master's precision-detailed forms. Shaykh Zada contributed paintings to several royal-calibre manuscripts commissioned either for Shah Tahmasp or his brother, Sam Mirza, who was governor of Herat from 1522 to 1529 (see Canby 1998, pp. 44-45). **AF**





Folio from the dispersed “Muhammad Baqir” album

Attributed to Balchand

India, Mughal, *circa* 1645

Margins attributed to Muhammad Baqir, Iran, 18th century

Opaque watercolour and gold on paper

33.5 x 21 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 149-50 (no. 111)

AKM 00189

THE MUGHAL PRINCE Dara Shikuh (1615-59) and a young mistress lie in bed, locked in a loving embrace and lost in an intense shared gaze. In spite of the presence of several female attendants – two seated musicians and three servants at the foot and either side of the bed – this scene emits an aura of quiet and romantic intimacy. It also invites the viewer to take some time examining the portrait, for the longer one looks, the more one becomes seduced by the image itself. Meticulously rendered details of floral, vegetal and geometric designs appear on the surfaces of carpets, the marble floor, and the countless variety of embroidered textiles woven in silk and gold. Every pearl and jewel worn by the lovers and their attendants can be identified and counted. Even trailed-glass bottles sitting in the cupboard in the back are rendered in skilful detail; one bottle, held on a tray by the servant closest to the prince, contains a duck-headed spout. The entire portrait appears to have been framed more than once, containing a border of flowers and leaves rendered in gold, and mounted finally on an album whose margins are painted with a dense design of colourful flowers, including irises and peonies, and a single bird.

Royal portraits depicting subjects in private or informal settings gained favour during the reigns of Jahangir (r. 1605-27) and Dara Shikuh’s father, Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58); they were painted by artists such as the brothers Payag and Balchand, whose careers began under Akbar (r. 1556-1605). This work has been attributed to Balchand between the 1640s and 1650s as it has been painted in sombre, ominous colours and employs the European technique of *chiaroscuro* to highlight certain elements in the picture. Canby has noted a possible relationship between Balchand’s attention to so much detail and a similarly meticulous style exhibited in seventeenth-century Dutch painting; Balchand would surely have had access to Dutch paintings and could have reinterpreted the style for use in Mughal art (Canby 1998, p. 150). LA



Folio 7r from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp

(also known as the “Houghton” *Shahnama*)

Attributed to Aqa Mirak

Iran, Tabriz, *circa* 1532

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

47 x 31.8 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 24-27 (no. 4); Makariou 2007, pp. 74-75 (no. 22)

AKM 00156

THIS MINIATURE, like cat. no. 92, is from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp. Firdawsi left Tus, the city of his birth in north-eastern Iran, to seek patronage for his *Shahnama* at Sultan Mahmud’s court in Ghazna, a city located in what is now Afghanistan. Before meeting the sultan, he was confronted by three court poets, who backed him into a corner before acknowledging the superiority of his talent.

In this picture, a small black servant is roasting a bird on a spit while young boys with delicate faces bring wine and sweetmeats to the three Ghazna poets, seated in the centre of the picture on the grassy bank of a stream. Firdawsi’s isolation is emphasised by his position at the far left of the main group, where the composition runs into the margin. Above him, the artist has shown a farmer holding his spade, a set character who plays the role of a silent observer, but who is not related to the story. The function of the young man standing at the right of the picture, elegantly coiffed with a golden turban topped by the red *taj* of the Safavids, is not immediately apparent. Although at first glance he might be taken for a servant, he carries no dish or bottle and is standing back from the poets seated in the centre. He is not watching the picnic, but Firdawsi, as if he senses the role that the poet from Tus will soon be playing.

The identity of the young man in the yellow turban is a key to the broader interpretation of this illustration and of Aqa Mirak’s role in the creation of the *Shahnama*. As a member of a distinguished Sayyid family (recognised descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) from Isfahan, Aqa Mirak was described by Dust Muhammad as being “unique in his day, a confidant of the Shah and an unequalled painter and portraitist” (Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray 1933, p. 186). **SC**



در جواب گفت که تو نام بلورم و از رحمت بررم
 چون از وضع ما بنامش در خون
 مانده زنت کنی بود بکشش
 مانند پستان گوی و در جنگ پستان

ایسان گرفت جنگ که درین پر سپیدند
 تقریری خوش کرد و بنام خود مجروح غنیمت
 ستانین شد در شهر او استخوانست بیکرند
 و سر فله دریند و خطینه یک در میان آن آوراند
 در دوی هر چه بود به جایت تکب پوار بود
 بر کشتی با سب درین سوار
 بر آرد وی از نسیل کثرت و
 بریح پنهان در چش از تکان
 کشتن بکلیه حلقه سب طاب
 و چون شعری غزلی از حقایق او انچه سپهر بر ما
 در این فنون سر معلوم کردند
 ما در طاعت مجلس سلطان و طرق معرقت
 او با عیاب آریان
 سینه و سینه شدند تا او را با یک که در آن
 مای مجلس سلطان و خدایات انما
 درین است و درت بر سر هم و مگر که
 درین



TORCH STAND WITH CHEVRONS

Iran, late 16th century

Cast brass

H.: 43.2 cm

Provenance: Wildenstein Collection

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 158 (no. 127); AKTC 2007b, p. 159 (no. 127)

AKM 00614

THIS SAFAVID TORCH STAND (*mash^cal*, or pillar candlestick) is profusely decorated with a combination of geometrical motifs and inscriptions. The texts on them are verses of Persian mystical poetry, a motif which appeared earlier in fifteenth-century metalwork under the Timurids and continued to be used under the Safavids. The verses have profound mystical overtones and communicate the desire to be subsumed in the divine nature, like the moth who is so attracted to the candle's flame he burns his wings. There are similar torch stands in major public collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris and the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg (see Melikian-Chirvani 1982). **AF**







98 CALLIGRAPHIC WOOD PANEL

Iran, 15th century

Carved wood

H.: 52 cm; L.: 138 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 159 (no. 129); AKTC 2007b, p. 160 (no. 129); Makariou 2007, pp. 194-95 (no. 71)

AKM 00635

THIS TWO-TIERED WOODEN PANEL, divided into six sections, closely resembles carved *thuluth* inscriptions from Mazandaran, a northern province of Iran. Two published examples bear the signatures of two sons of a master carpenter, Ustad Ahmad-i Sari. One is dated 1468 and signed by Husayn, son of Ustad Ahmad (Welch 1979, pp. 130-01); the other is dated 1494 and signed by Shams al-Din, son of Ustad Ahmad (Bivar and Yarshater 1978, pl. 65). Even if this panel is not the work of one of these woodcarvers, the examples share the manner in which vertical letters rise and intersect letters above the text line and words within each panel are written on two levels, lower and upper. Unlike the comparative examples, this panel contains verses.

First register:

“I confided heart and soul in the eyes and eyebrows of my beloved
Come, come and contemplate the arch and the window!
Say to the guardian of paradise: the dust of this meeting place [...]”

Second register:

“ [...] do not falter in your task, pour the wine into the glasses!
Beyond your hedonism, your love for moon-faced beings,
Amongst the tasks that you accomplish, recite the poem of Hafiz!”

As the panel is fragmentary, it may have been part of a frieze that ran around the walls of a room. Despite being poetic and not religious, the inscription may have come from one of the many shrines in Mazandaran with carved wood decoration. **AF**





BEAM

Morocco or Spain, Almohad, 12th-13th century

Pine, carved and painted

H.: 30.8 cm; L.: 313 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 189 (cat. E); AKTC 2007b, p. 191 (cat. E) ; Makariou 2007, pp. 192-93 (no. 70)

AKM 00631



THIS CARVED AND PAINTED wooden beam carries an elegant, foliated kufic inscription interlaced with a vine scroll. The composition is framed by an upper band of alternating white and yellow rosettes and a white band along the base. There is a clarity and strength of design on this beam that comes from the carver's decision to leave space around the main motifs. The bifurcated leaves, base petals with curling tapering "tongues" and conical bud-like forms are characteristic of Almoravid and Almohad designs which continued under the Nasrids. The Almohads from the southern Maghrib conquered present-day Morocco and Spain in the twelfth century, bringing with them a religious fervour that prompted a prolific building programme and a sober decorative style focused on calligraphy.



The beam's inscription reads:

"We are a people who do not find shame at death in combat
Even when we consider [the tribes of] Amir and Salul.
Love of death brings us closer to our fated time
Whereas they hate the moment and drag out the hours.
Not a single one of us died in his bed
And no one was killed without being avenged.
Our lives are run on the steel of our swords
On nothing but our blades do they meet their end."

It appears to be taken from a pre-Islamic *qasida*, so the beam may have been among the inscribed panels flanking the entrance to a palace. **AF**



Music

WHILE THIS SECTION comprises pictures and a musical instrument from Turkey, Iran and India, the musical inheritance of other parts of the Islamic world are every bit as rich. Medieval metalwork from Mosul and Damascus decorated with vignettes from the courtly cycle regularly includes musicians and dancers alongside hunters and drinkers. As early as the eighth century, there was a mural of dancing women in the Umayyad palace of Qusayr Amra, while in the eleventh century, popular songs were collected in a book called the *Kitab al-aghani* (The Book of Songs), with lyrics but no notation. In addition to music played at entertainments, drummers and trumpeters accompanied armies into battle, and tambourinists and musicians playing stringed instruments performed while their princely patrons rode in processions (cat. no. 103).

A genre of Persian and Islamic Indian painting depicts single musicians, often strumming stringed instruments in the countryside. In some cases, these are portraits of known individuals who were the star musicians at specific courts. In other examples, they are lovelorn young men. A related group of works depict dervishes, alone or in a group, making music. Sufi music consisted of singing love poetry as an allegory for the dervish's love of God or the Prophet Muhammad. Some illustrations portray dancing dervishes alongside musicians playing flutes, tambourines and stringed instruments. This music was intended to induce an ecstatic state. Because some conservative religious schools frowned upon or condemned music, it was performed privately under the protection of courts and wealthy patrons. **SC**



100 *TAMBURA OR TAMPURA*

India, Rajasthan, *circa* 1800

Teak wood, a calabash, metal and bone

L.: 126 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 165 (no. 138); AKTC 2007b, p. 166 (no. 138)

AKM 00700

THE *TAMBURA* is a long-necked four-string plucked drone lute, traditional in both northern and southern India, and is found both in art and in classical music. The example here is certainly a northern instrument, and is comparable to a sitar, with a three-part resonator including a gourd or calabash. The *tambura* is used by both women and men, but men's instruments tend to be over 130 centimetres long. It provides the drone, but can also be plucked in a regular ostinato pattern, providing a rhythmic background. The special drone effect comes from the flat bridge or *jawari*. **AF**





101 MUSICIAN PLAYING A TAR

Iran, Qajar, early 20th century

Ink and opaque watercolour on paper

10 x 12 cm

Unpublished

AKM 00696

THIS WATERCOLOUR DRAWING depicts a Qajar musician playing the *tar*, a long-necked string instrument resembling the lute that is believed to have originated in Sasanian Iran (224 BCE-642 CE). The instrument developed into diverse forms within the cultures of the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia and India, the variations on its name – *tar* is Persian for “string” – usually indicating the number of strings appearing on the instrument; the *dutar* thus indicated two (*du*) strings, while the *sitar*, associated with India, indicated three (*sih*). The presence of the *tar* in this drawing emphasizes the importance and abundance of music at the Iranian court. Its use by musicians of the Qajar period might also reflect the forging of a connection to the pre-Islamic Iranian kings by the Qajars. In a larger sense, therefore, although the drawing itself is quite modest, both music and its representation in this image inevitably hint at a dynastic ideology that sought to legitimate Qajar rule. LA





102 A MUSICAL GATHERING

Turkey, Istanbul, Ottoman, early 18th century

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

38.2 x 24.8 cm

LIT.: Welch and Welch 1982, p. 42

AKM 00218

THIS COLOURFUL ENSEMBLE of musicians and entertainers illustrates the royal taste for music and dance in the Ottoman world, an interest shared with other Islamic and European courts. While single-page paintings had been introduced to the artist's repertoire over a century before, the formation of the figures and the fact that they appear to direct their performance to an audience at their right suggests that this image formed one half of a double-page manuscript painting. Falling in line with earlier princely images depicted in Persian illustrated manuscripts, the audience would probably have consisted of a king and his attendants or courtly lovers enjoying a musical interlude in the country (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 42). Three women stand next to the musicians, dressed in peach- and crimson-coloured robes, while a fourth sits on her knees to play the *ektar*, a one-stringed lute. Meanwhile, a young boy sits to the left of the lute player and taps his tambourine to the music. The painting, once mounted on an album, retains part of a margin that was decorated in gold vegetal scrolls.

While illustrated Ottoman manuscripts first tended to emphasize history and geography – sieges and battles and maps of conquered territories – this painting seems to fit into a later interest in the more peaceful aspects of courtly life. It probably dates to the early eighteenth century, during the reign of Sultan Ahmad III (r. 1703-30), when war was not at the forefront of the political agenda and the sultan could refine his artistic taste, inspired by seventeenth-century Persian painting. Yet Ottoman features also abound: the cypress trees and cherry blossoms surrounding the musicians are reminiscent of such depictions on Iznik tiles made for the Ottoman court in the mid-sixteenth century under Süleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66). LA





India, Deccan, *circa* 1690

Opaque watercolour on paper

35.2 x 23.7 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 169 (no. 142); AKTC 2007b, p. 168 (no. 142)

AKM 00176

A YOUNG PRINCE sets off on horseback accompanied by four musicians playing the tambourine, drum and *vinas* (stringed instruments).

Two inscriptions on the reverse side of this folio suggest the identity of this seemingly royal figure. One is written in Sanskrit and the other, in Persian, appears to be a translation of the former. It claims the subject is “Nat” the first son of Makhiya Malhar Rag and describes the image, saying that the figure “is riding a horse and holds two swords, one fastened to his body and the other [drawn] over his shoulder and he is prepared for and going to war”. The equestrian figure is also described as “wheat-coloured” and his horse “marked with blood [-coloured] spots”.

The Muslim courts of India combined indigenous instruments like *vinas* with others common at the Persian court. They were used for a wide range of occasions, including military contexts. LA AF





Folio from a dispersed *ragamala* series

India, Punjab Hills, Mankot, Rajput, *circa* 1700

Opaque watercolour on paper; borders cut down; glued to card

14.8 x 16.5 cm

LIT.: Canby 1998, pp. 166-67 (no. 125)

AKM 00194

THE RISE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE (1526-1858) called for the subjugation of numerous small states that had existed in India before the sixteenth century. Some of these principalities were already Muslim, while others, like those ruled by the warrior Rajput caste in northern India, belonged to a native Hindu heritage. Situated at the foothills of the Himalayas, the Rajputs' were known for their military might but even they, like many other indigenous groups in India, eventually faced Mughal domination. The Rajputs came to an agreement with the Mughal conquerors; the Mughals would allow them to rule their individual territories in exchange for their participation in Mughal military campaigns and their sending of an important member of their family to be raised at the Mughal court.

In spite of their military talents, the Rajputs also cultivated the arts, producing distinctive painting styles, one of which included a bright yellow colour (made from the urine of mango-fed cows) and a stylised, flat quality, seen in this painting with two figures seated on a tilted carpet against a plain, bright yellow backdrop. This may have corresponded to the fact that Rajput paintings sought to illustrate an ideal world (Cummins 2006, p. 93). One of the most popular subjects in Rajput painting was the depiction of *ragas*, or musical modes, indigenous to the northern Indian region. These modes eventually became described through a new genre of writing and, later, through illustration, gathered into what came to be called *ragamalas*, or "garlands of *ragas*." The paintings were meant to evoke the multilayered quality of the musical modes through visual representation and sought to create a similarly complex sensory experience for the viewer. *Ragas* were classified into family groups, headed by the *raga* or patriarch, and followed by his wives or *raginis*, sons, or *ragaputras*, and (occasionally) daughters, or *ragaputris* (*ibid.*, pp. 95-96). This image, in which a man and woman are seated facing each other, each with a bird delicately perched on their hand, is an expression of the Kausa *ragaputra*, which belongs to the Malakausika *raga* family; the man in the painting is understood as the personification



of the *raga* (Canby 1998, p. 167). It is an example of a *ragamala* illustration that is romantic in nature, inspired by the amorous side of Rajput culture (when not at war) and belonging to other such paintings that express the diversity of love, whether joyful or heartbreaking (Cummins 2006, p. 99).

It is believed that *ragamala* illustration existed before the Mughal period. The Mughals, however, did not seem to adopt this form of painting, perhaps because of their greater interest in Persian music coming from Iran and Central Asia (*ibid.*, p. 96). Nevertheless, *ragamala* illustrations exhibiting a Mughal aesthetic suggest that some paintings might have been produced by Mughal artists for non-Mughal clients, or by non-Mughal artists who integrated Mughal tastes with indigenous subjects (cat. no. 80). LA



Patronage of the Arts

THE MAGNIFICENT MOSQUES, tombs, *madrasas*, and palaces that survive from Spain to India from the eighth to the nineteenth century are testament to the patronage of Muslim rulers and their families. Whereas the hypostyle mosque form is believed to have derived from the shape of the house of the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, local materials and pre-existing architectural styles have to a large part determined the directions in which regional types of mosques developed thereafter. Perhaps in no other area of Islamic art are the dual inheritances from the Roman and Byzantine worlds on the one hand and the Sasanian on the other more evident than in architecture.

In Samarqand and Bukhara, the Timurids built their monuments of brick and either combined glazed and unglazed bricks to produce epigraphic patterns or reveted their buildings entirely in glazed tilework. Tile mosaic, deeply carved and moulded tiles and *cuerda seca* polychrome tiles (cat. nos. 110-11) all characterise the decoration of the Shah-i Zinda in Samarqand, the street of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century tombs and mosques commissioned by members of the Timurid court.

Textual sources and artefacts alike demonstrate the royal interest in collecting precious objects and curiosities. From at least the beginning of the fifteenth century, royal albums of calligraphy dating back to Yaqut, the famous thirteenth-century calligrapher, are attested. By the seventeenth century, Mughal albums included poetry copied by famous Persian masters of *nasta'liq* script (cat. no. 106) and their emulators. Chinese porcelains, inscribed gemstones and exquisite carpets all formed part of the collections in the royal households of the Safavids and Ottomans. The survival of medieval ceramics decorated in a variety of styles suggests that the general population expressed its preferences by acquiring and treasuring glazed ceramics and metalwork. A courtly interest in locally produced ceramics is more difficult to prove since descriptions and later manuscript illustrations concentrate on objects made of precious metal, imported treasures, and opulent silk textiles. The royal prerogative to collect rarities, however, remained constant from the Umayyads in the eighth century to the Qajars in the nineteenth. **SC**



105 TANKARD

Iran, 13th century (?)

Brass, inlaid with silver

H.: 24.5 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 172 (no. 145); AKTC 2007b, p. 172 (no. 145)

AKM 00608

BLESSINGS OF GLORY, prosperity, wealth, happiness, well-being and the intercession of the Prophet are bestowed upon the owner of this tankard according to its inlaid silver inscriptions. Foliate motifs and eight-petalled rosettes further adorn this bulbous-shaped vessel. The modelled bird finial and harpy represent common imagery of the period but may not be original to this tankard. **AF**



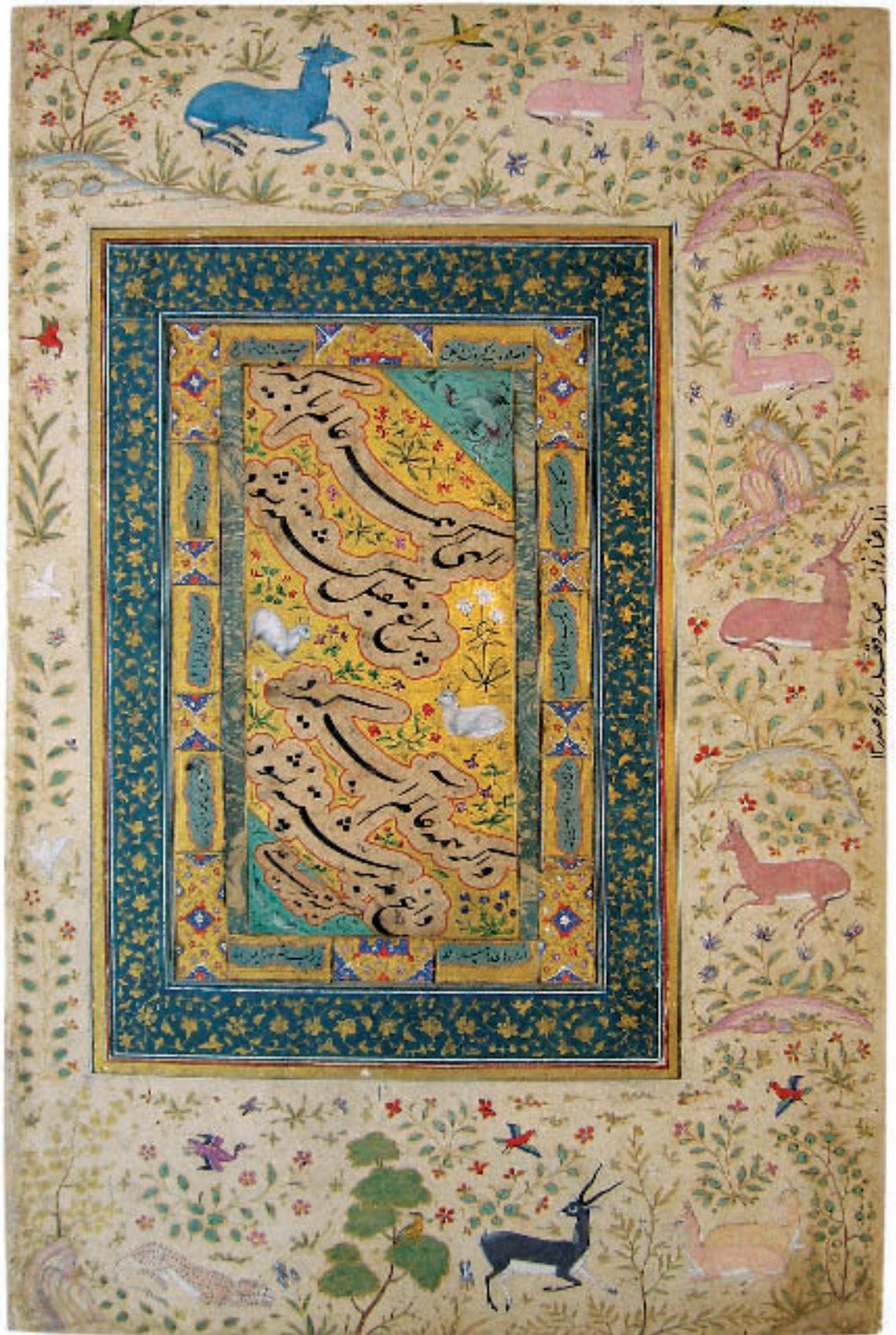


Page from an album made for Shah Jahan
Calligraphy signed by Mir °Ali; margins signed by Dawlat Khan
Iran, Herat, *circa* 1520
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper
39.2 x 25.4 cm
LIT.: Falk 1985, p. 65, no. 36; AKTC 2007a, p. 173 (no. 146, recto); AKTC 2007b, p. 173 (no. 146, recto)
AKM 00145

THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES witnessed a growing interest in art and the art of collecting in the three “gunpowder” empires, beginning with the Safavids in Iran and followed by the Ottomans and Mughals. Not only did more artists exhibit a hitherto rare sense of self-awareness by increasingly signing their works, but the royal and wealthy patrons who compiled or commissioned the albums had the chance to express their own taste and connoisseurship through their collecting. These extraordinary codices were filled with specimens of calligraphy, painting and drawing, including single-page, finished compositions as well as elements of illustrated manuscripts and calligraphy exercises (for a Qajar example, see cat. no. 62). Artists’ and calligraphers’ works were recognized within the albums for their individual talents and styles – sometimes by glosses added by the patron himself.

This album folio contains an example of a calligraphic sample penned by one of the greatest masters of the *nasta °liq* script, Mir °Ali (d. *circa* 1544), who served in Herat and Bukhara at the Timurid, Uzbek and Safavid courts and was extolled by Qadi Ahmad in his sixteenth-century treatise on calligraphers and painters (Qadi Ahmad in Minorsky 1959, p. 131). He has signed two couplets of poetry in the lower left corner of the innermost rectangle on the page, using the Arabic formula, “*katabahu Mir °Ali* (Mir °Ali wrote it).” The verses, calligraphed in black but outlined in red, are written in Persian:

“My god, if the entire universe should be blown by wind
Let not the light of fortune be extinguished
And if the entire universe should become flooded with water
Let not the mark of the unfortunate be washed away!”





More verses in Persian border the main text, set within ten rectangular cartouches alternating with small panels containing colourful floral and vegetal scrolls; they also frame two strips of green, marbled paper on the right and left, drawing attention to the fact that the entire composition of text, image and border has been created from various cut pieces of paper. A green and gold border of vegetal ornament provides the largest frame around the calligraphy and sets it off from the margins of the folio on which it is mounted. These margins have been treated as a painting surface, on which several different species of flora and fauna appear.

The subject matter, painting style and signature – “*amal-i Dawlat Khan*” (the work of Dawlat Khan) – on the outer margins of this page have led to its identification as part of an album made for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58). The careful rendering of the plants in particular is typical of the Mughal style, influenced by European plant manuals that reached India via Jesuit missionaries. While the text might be attributed to the early sixteenth century, the album was probably assembled around 1640, at which point the same artist responsible for the margins might have also painted the flowers and cows in the interstices of Mir °Ali’s text. It is possible the Mughals admired Mir °Ali not only for his talent but also because of the praise he gave to Babur, the founder of the Mughal dynasty, in one of his poems (Welch and Welch 1982, p. 220). By the time Shah Jahan’s album was compiled, however, Persian poets had been emigrating to the Mughal courts in Agra and Lahore, and the influence once coming from Iran to India now began to move from east to west, initiating the *sabk-i hindi*, or Indian style, in Iran (Welch 1976, p. 9) LA



Vase

Eastern Iranian world, Khurasan (Nishapur, Iran) or Transoxiana (Samarqand, Uzbekistan), late 9th-early 10th century

Earthenware, white slip with black slip decoration under a transparent glaze

H.: 19.8 cm

Inscription in Arabic: “Blessing to its owner”

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 174 (no. 148); AKTC 2007b, p. 174 (no. 148)

AKM 00544

Dish

Eastern Iranian world, Khurasan (Nishapur, Iran) or Transoxiana (Samarqand, Uzbekistan), late 9th-early 10th century

Earthenware, covered with a white slip and painted in black under a transparent glaze

Ø 34.3 cm; H.: 14 cm

Inscription in Arabic: “Peace is that which is silent and only his speech will reveal the [...] of the man with faults”

LIT.: Welch 1972b, pp. 82 and 93

AKM 00694

USING THE HUMBLEST MATERIALS – earthenware and slip-painted decoration – medieval ceramicists transformed simple, functional wares into stunning works of austere beauty. A white slip formed from semi-fluid coloured clay was used to cover the ceramic body and create a blank surface ornamented with epigraphic decoration. Calligraphy, traditionally thought of as the highest form of Islamic art because of its power to transmit the word of God, provides the sole adornment for these vessels.

Letters have been gracefully elongated vertically and horizontally to fill the cavetto of the dish and the circumference of the vase, creating pleasing rhythms of positive and negative space. The inscriptions are typically pious aphorisms addressed to the owner and give a glimpse into a genre of Arabic literature that does not survive in manuscript form from this period. The shapes of the wares may derive from contemporary Iranian silverware.



The Samanids (r. 819-1005) were a Persian dynasty that ruled autonomously over Khurasan and Transoxiana and oversaw a wide variety of ceramic production (see also cat. no. 81). Epigraphic slipwares such as this vase and dish have been ascribed to centres of production such as Nishapur and Afrasiyab (old Samarqand) and were for local consumption; they are not found in excavations west of central Iran or at Rayy. **AF LA**



109 THE ARCHITECT NU^c MAN IS THROWN FROM A FORTRESS

From an unidentified manuscript

Iran or India, 16th century or later

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

23.2 x 15.6 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, pp. 170 and 176 (no. 151); AKTC 2007b, p. 176 (no. 151)

AKM 00429

ALTHOUGH THIS EPISODE does not appear in the most frequently illustrated Persian manuscripts, such as the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi or the *Khamsa* of Nizami, the story of an architect being thrown from a parapet to his death in the presence of a king recalls the tale of Timur (Tamerlane) ordering the execution of an architect whose work displeased him. The style of the painting relates to that of the Turkman school, with the oversized clusters of flowers, limited number of figures, and narrow range of facial expressions. However, the palette and matte surface finish may indicate that this painting was either produced or “improved” in India. **AF**





CERAMIC PANEL AND TILE

Central Asia, late 14th-early 15th century

Carved and glazed terracotta

Panel: 56 x 39 cm; Tile from a panel: 32 x 32 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 176 (no. 152, panel); AKTC 2007b, p. 76 (no. 152, panel)

AKM 00572; AKM 00577

TIMURID TILEWORK from the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is some of the finest Islamic tilework ever created. Timur (r. 1370-1405) and his successors were fierce rulers but also grand patrons of the arts (see cat. no. 5). Monumental buildings demanded extraordinary decoration. The brilliant turquoise domes and elaborately patterned façades of Timurid buildings are a familiar site in cities such as Samarqand. They used a range of techniques such as *banna'i* (glazed brick patterns), carved and glazed terracotta, tile mosaic, *cuerda seca* (dry cord), underglaze painted relief moulding and even lustre, all revealing the virtuoso talents of the craftsmen. The tile panels may have been affixed to the exterior façade of a mosque or mausoleum in the Shah-i Zinda complex at Samarqand. **AF**



111



Power and Kingship

THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF POWER in Islam resides with God. In their titulature, sultans and shahs recognised this by referring to themselves as “the shadow of God on earth” or “the commander of the faithful”. Their temporal power exists only in relation to that of God. Nevertheless, from the seventh century onward, the kings of the Islamic world followed established methods of declaring their dominion, such as minting coins impressed with their names, and devised iconographies to reinforce their position. Epigraphy containing royal titles and honorific phrases has played a central role in announcing the identity and emphasising the legitimacy of rulers. Inscriptions on buildings commissioned by a particular ruler will contain his name and titles as do *tiraz* textiles destined as royal gifts to a range of deserving recipients.

Fourteenth-century inlaid metalwork of Mamluk Egypt and Syria (see cat. no. 117) often contains majestic *thuluth* inscriptions of the sultan’s name and titles as its principal decoration, with roundels containing flowers separating the sections of writing. In government, certain forms of monograms and seals were reserved for the ruler. Ottoman Turkey devised the *tughra*, a highly stylised form of writing the sultan’s name which appeared at the top of legal documents. In Qajar Iran, *firmans*, or official documents, were written on long scroll-shaped sheets with illuminated headings and royal insignia. Standard-bearers held flags and metal standards to mark the ruler’s position on the battlefield. Iranian *‘alams* inscribed with the name of the Prophet and his family (cat. no. 112) are only one type of such standards. Most royal standards have not survived but some texts describe gold orbs held above the king’s head and capable of intimidating his enemies.

Despite the material trappings of kingship, powerful armies and good governance were the primary means by which Muslim dynasts maintained and expanded their power. Periods of political fragmentation were invariably followed by eras of consolidation when conquerors such as the Mongols or Timurids swept across vast territories with a speed and ruthlessness not previously encountered. Like the Mongols who ended the Abbasid Caliphate, the Ottoman conquest of and expulsion of the Byzantine Church from Constantinople in 1453 had a far-reaching psychological effect on the Muslim world and Christian Europe alike. Such victories were the living proof of imperial power, supported and expressed through a whole range of symbolic forms. **SC**



112 STANDARD (ʿALAM)

Iran, 16th century

Steel

H.: 81.5 cm; W.: 32.5 cm

LIT.: Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 222; AKTC 2007a, pp. 178-79 (no. 154a); AKTC 2007b, pp. 180-81 (no. 154a); Makariou 2007, pp. 148-49 (no. 52)

AKM 00679

ACTING AS MILITARY EMBLEMS of power, standards (*ʿalam*) were often decorated with pairs of dragon heads and religious messages. The central field of this sixteenth century standard features piercework floral scroll decoration and the phrases, “O Allah!” “O Muhammad!” “O ʿAli!” in mirror images, probably to ensure legibility on both sides of the standard. Allan has aptly remarked that there appears to be a face in the lower portion of the design: “its eyes formed by two small rosettes, cheeks formed by the rounded *ʿains* of ʿAli’s name, the nose formed by the two *yays*.” This ingenious use of calligraphy fits within the Islamic tradition of creating animal, bird and human forms from beautiful letter forms (Allan *in* Thompson and Canby 2003, p. 222). **AF**





113 BAHRAM GUR GOES HUNTING

Folio from a dispersed manuscript of a small *Shahnama*
Greater Iran, possibly Baghdad (Iraq), Ilkhanid, *circa* 1300
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper
30.4 x 21.7 cm
Unpublished
AKM 00020

THROUGH THE SASANIANS, the last pre-Islamic dynasty in Iran, the legacy of the ancient kings lived on through oral tradition and the versification of the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) by the poet Firdawsi in *circa* 1010. During the Mongol period (1256-1353), this Iranian national epic may have served as a legitimising tool for the foreign rulers in their newly conquered territory. It is possible that the Ilkhanids literally “wrote” themselves into Iranian history and legend by commissioning lavishly illustrated historical, panegyric or poetic manuscripts and highlighting memorable kings or heroes that could be compared to them in the present. This folio belongs to a dispersed manuscript belonging to a group of small-format *Shahnamas* probably produced at the turn of the fourteenth century in Baghdad (Simpson 1979), all of which exhibit illustrations set within a six-columned page framed by doubled red lines and text in Persian *naskh* script.

One of the most prominently featured figures in Persian manuscripts is the Sasanian King Bahram V (r. 421-38), named Bahram Gur for his great skill in hunting the *gur*, or onager. According to the *Shahnama*, Bahram Gur earned his name after coming across a lion that had just sunk his claws into an onager. Bahram Gur killed both lion and onager with one shot of an arrow. After this incident, he was referred to as “the one with lion strength”, or Bahram Gur, “Bahram of the Onagers”. No doubt it was this formidable strength that allowed him to reclaim the Iranian throne for the Sasanians.

This painting depicts an episode in which Bahram Gur sets out with his attendants to hunt for onagers. As nightfall approaches, the king and his entourage set up camp. Bahram Gur orders everyone to drink well and get a good night’s sleep, for tomorrow they will have to hunt and kill the lions first in order to have the onagers all to themselves. The scene illustrates the following day, when the king confronts a lion and uses his sword to kill him rather than shooting an arrow in order to show his prowess and bravery. The female lion peers out from the rocks, fearing for her life, shown just a moment before she runs away. When Bahram Gur kills a second lion, one of the attendants implores his king to have mercy as he is already king and the world belongs to him.

Chinese-inspired cloud bands float against a blank sky and stretch slightly out of the picture frame, along with one lion's tail. While the colour of Bahram Gur's robe is no longer visible, a small patch on his left shoulder suggests a design common to Ilkhanid illustrations of royal or important figures: a deep blue background covered with gold peonies or lotus blossoms. Such depictions must have represented the luxurious *nasij* textiles possessed by the Mongols, woven from silk threads wrapped in gold. LA

نسخه شاه گور بخارا

The manuscript page contains Persian text in a traditional script, arranged in columns around the central illustration. The text is written in black ink on aged, yellowish paper. The illustration shows Bahram Gur, a hero from the Shahnameh, riding a black horse. He is wearing a dark, patterned robe and a turban. The background of the illustration is a mix of yellow and blue, suggesting a landscape or sky. The text is written in a clear, legible script, likely a later copy of the original manuscript.



Folio 29r. from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi

Ascribed to Naqdi

Iran, Qazvin, Safavid, *circa* 1576

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

45.9 x 30.5 cm

LIT.: Columbus, OH 1951, no. 200; Welch 1972a, pp. 172, 177; Robinson 1976a, p. 2 (no. 5); Canby 1998, pp. 57-58 (no. 32)

AKM 00071

INTRODUCED EARLY in the *Shahnama* as one of the first kings of Iran, Jamshid succeeded Tahmuras to rule peacefully for three hundred years. His reign was a fruitful one in which he encouraged his subjects to improve their natural talents and learn new skills, teaching them the arts of metalworking to produce arms and armour and jewellery-making with precious stones. Men, women, and *divs* (demons) lived in peace, lions lived in harmony with the lambs, and all followed the orders of their benevolent king with great respect and compliance. Jamshid, however, eventually became too proud of his successes and consequently lost his throne to the evil Zahhak, king of the Arabs.

While the illuminated chapter heading on this page marks the beginning of the story of Jamshid's ruin, the illustration on the page refers to the text preceding the illumination, which recounts the moment after Zahhak unwittingly allows Ahriman, the devil, to kiss his shoulders. Two serpents spring out of each shoulder and Zahhak has their heads severed, but new ones grow in their place. Zahhak, here sitting on a golden throne with a cobalt blue back decorated with a gold vegetal scroll design, with two dark (probably once silver) serpents attached to his shoulders, summons a group of specialists to determine what to do about his plight. No one is able to suggest an explanation until Ahriman reappears in the form of a physician and informs Zahhak that he can only appease the serpents by feeding them human brains.

Without the serpents to identify the Arab king, one might assume that the painting represents Jamshid surrounded by his peaceful subjects within a serene, outdoor landscape. Yet both the serpents and the Persian text, written in an elegant *nasta'liq* script typical of the Safavid period, inform us otherwise. The episode foreshadows the doom to befall the world, signalling the end of Jamshid's reign and the seizure of the Iranian throne by Zahhak. The backdrop to it, however, acts as a reminder of how the world must have appeared under Jamshid's peaceful reign. The painting on this folio, spilling out of the text's ruled borders and allowing the image to overpower the text, is ascribed to the Safavid artist Naqdi, known for the elongated torsos and angular, bearded jaws of his figures (Canby 1998, pp. 57-58). LA





115 BIJAN TAKES THE REINS TO AID GUSTAHAM

Folio from an illustrated manuscript of the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi

Iran, Lahijan (Gilan) dated 899 H/1493-94

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper

34.3 x 24.2 cm

LIT.: Welch 1972a, pp. 133 and 135; Canby 1998, pp. 40-41 (no. 19)

AKM 00064

THIS ILLUSTRATION from a *Shahnama* manuscript depicts an episode from the story of the Iranian hero Bijan and his companion, Gustaham. Gustaham once came to Bijan's aid along with the hero Rostam, after Bijan fell in love with Manija, the daughter of Turanian King Afrasiyab. When Afrasiyab discovered this forbidden love, he angrily threw Bijan into a pit, but Rostam and Gustaham came to Bijan's rescue. Later, when Gustaham's life was in danger as a result of his pursuit of two escaped Turanians after the Battle of the Twelve Rukhs, the tables were turned; this time, Bijan saved Gustaham from dying of serious injuries. The Persian text on this page, written in *nasta'liq* script, suggests that the painting depicts Bijan and his father Giv, who tried to discourage Bijan from putting himself in danger in his effort to find Gustaham and transport him back to safety.

Anthony Welch has attributed this folio to the same school of painting as the illustrations of the well-known "Big-Head" *Shahnama*, believed to have been produced in Lahijan in 1493-94 for Sultan 'Ali Mirza, ruler of the Kar-Kiya dynasty of Gilan (Welch 1978a, p. 56). While the paintings in the Gilan manuscript have been executed by different hands, thus exhibiting a variation in styles, Canby acknowledges that many paintings in the "Big-Head" *Shahnama* do include figures with disproportionately large heads not unlike the ones shown here (Canby 1998, pp. 40-41). Indeed, a comparison of this painting to some of the ones from the Gilan manuscript reveals a close relationship between the large-headed figures and their unusual, somewhat comical display of teeth (see Lowry and Nemazee 1988, pp. 96-109, esp. pls. 107 and 109). Canby also notes that, while this painting style would have been considered "naïve" and "primitive" by the Timurids' (r. 1370-1506) codified aesthetic standards, it did have some impact on Safavid painting in the sixteenth century (Canby 1998, p. 41). LA



Left-hand folio of a double-page painting from an illustrated manuscript of the *Baburnama* (Memoirs of Babur)

India, Lahore, Mughal, *circa* 1589

Ink, opaque watercolour, silver and gold on paper

26.5 x 15.7 cm

LIT.: Goswamy and Fischer 1987, pp. 198-99 (no. 98); Canby 1998, pp. 114-15 (no. 83)

AKM 00129

THIS VIBRANTLY COLOURFUL, action-filled painting depicts a battle recounted in the emperor Babur's (r. 1526-30) memoirs, the *Baburnama*. Babur spent the first years of the sixteenth century unsuccessfully fighting the Uzbeks in Central Asia (Uzbekistan) until he decided to move into Afghanistan, where he was able to take control of Kabul and found the Mughal dynasty. This scene illustrates an episode in March 1505, when Babur and his men reached the Indus River south of Peshawar, arriving at the town of Bilah. Some of the townspeople managed to escape to a small island across the river, but Babur's army jumped into the water and pursued them.

The painting brings to life the intense chaos of the event through the multitude of animated figures shown attempting to escape in boats while dodging arrows shot by Babur's army. A fortress shown at the top of the page, presumably situated in the distance, might represent the town of Bilah. Rushing water, probably once rendered in silver, now fills the interstices of the scene in lined waves of grey and white. Babur's men are emphasized by their larger size, the centrality of their location and the natural highlight provided by the light, beige-coloured earth under their feet. This dynamic painting, dominating the two blocks of text referring to the battle in Persian (translated from the Chagatai Turkish of Babur's original memoirs), belongs to a double-page illustration, the right-hand side of which is preserved at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Canby has observed that the convention of using differently sized figures to suggest spatial recession might have come from European models (Canby 1998, p. 115). LA





117 BOWL

Egypt or Syria, Mamluk, first half of the 14th century

Brass, inlaid with silver

Ø 18 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 182 (no. 158); AKTC 2007b, p. 185 (no. 158); Makariou 2007, pp. 188-89 (no. 68)

AKM 00610

THE INLAID SILVER INSCRIPTION on this Mamluk brass bowl reads, “For the High Excellency, the Lordly, the Great Amir, the Learned, the Just, the Valiant, the Supporter, the Succour, the Sparkling, the Help, the Orderly, the Responsible, the [officer] of al-Malik al-Nasir.” This is a typical formulaic inscription, meant to bring glory and prosperity to the owner, and it is seen on a variety of artistic media, from ceramic bowls to enamelled glass mosque lamps, during the Mamluk period (r. 1250-1517). Mamluk society thrived on emblems and symbols. The interior of the brass bowl is decorated with a sun disc and six fish. When the bowl was filled with water, the fish and sun would appear to shimmer. The image of the sun may be seen as symbolising the ruler, as well as wealth and the source of life. **AF**





118 DISH

Iran, Kashan style, late 12th-early 13th century

Stonepaste body, painted in lustre on an opaque white glaze

Ø 17 cm

LIT.: AKTC 2007a, p. 182 (no. 159); AKTC 2007b, p. 186 (no. 159); Makariou 2007, pp. 66-67 (no. 19)

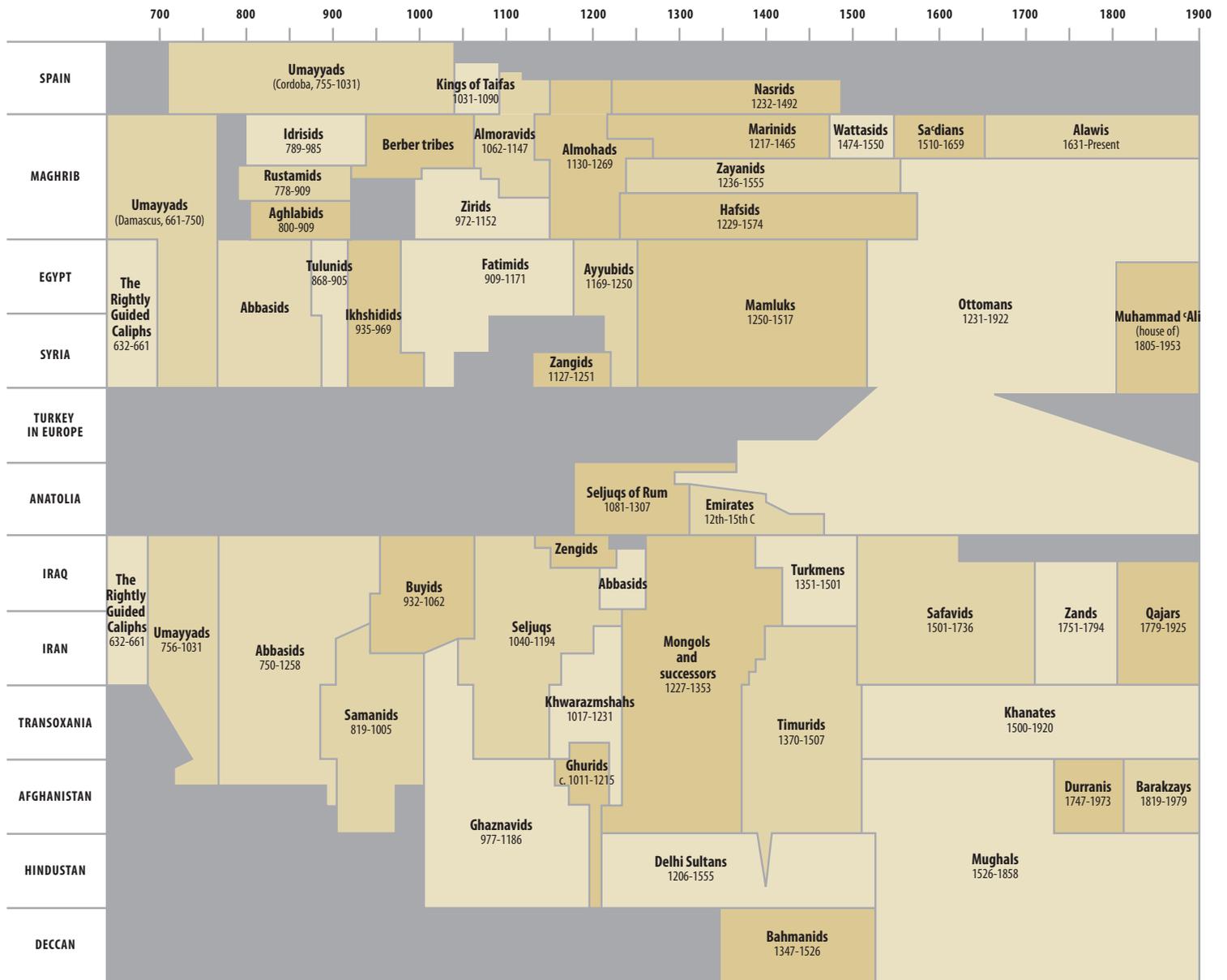
AKM 00559

THIS LUSTREWARE DISH depicts a princely enthronement scene familiar from manuscript frontispieces: a centrally placed ruler is flanked by officials. This venerable tradition traces its roots to enthronement scenes on Sasanian rock reliefs. In this luxury ceramic example, the central figure sits cross-legged, wearing a robe with uninscribed *tiraz* bands. The flanking attendants are noticeably smaller than the ruler. It is customary for all three figures to have aureoles behind their heads. In the classic tradition of the Kashan lustre style, the figures are large and fill the dish. They are painted in reserve and the space between them is taken up by busy patterns of scrolling motifs. The potter has made masterful use of the floral decorative motifs in the patterns of the robes to give volume to the body of each figure beneath them. Note especially the palmette-shaped flowers that accentuate the prince's broad knees. The exterior of the dish contains a band of benedictory inscriptions. AF





Principal Dynasties of the Islamic World



This schematic chart is a very simplified picture of the political complexity of certain periods. Large parts of Central Asia, China, South-east Asia and Africa have been omitted.

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Chronology

Entries in bold indicate items in the exhibition	808	Foundation of Fez	956	Death of al-Mas ^u di, author of an encyclopaedia on history, geography and sciences
c. 570	Birth of Muhammad in Mecca	829	Mosque of Seville built	
595	Muhammad marries Khadija	830	<i>Bayt al-Hikma</i> (House of Knowledge) established in Baghdad	969-70
610	Muhammad receives first revelation; beginning of the Prophetic mission	839	Exchange of embassies between Cordoba and Byzantium	Foundation of new capital city, Cairo (<i>al-Qahira</i>)
620	Death of Khadija	847	Great Mosque of Samarra built	988-89
622	The <i>Hijra</i> : emigration of Prophet Muhammad to Medina	c. 850	Medical works of Hippocrates and Galen translated into Arabic	1000
	Starting point of the Muslim lunar calendar	c. 866	Death of the philosopher and scientist al-Kindi	1005
624	Expedition of Badr	868	Death of al-Jahiz, litterateur and master of Arabic prose	1006-7
625	Marriage of Fatima and ^u Ali	870	Death of al-Bukhari, author of a respected canonical collection of <i>hadith</i>	1007
630	Bloodless conquest of Mecca	873	Death of Hunayn ibn Ishaq, translator of medical, scientific and philosophical works from Greek into Arabic	Death of Maslama al-Majriti, Andalusian mathematician and astronomer
632	Event of Ghadir Khumm			c. 1010
	Death of Prophet Muhammad in Medina			Firdawsi completes the epic of the <i>Shahnama</i>
632-34	Abu Bakr, first caliph			1022
634-44	^u Umar, second caliph			Death of the calligrapher, Ibn al-Bawwab
644-56	^u Uthman, third caliph	879	Mosque of Ibn Tulun completed in Fustat	1030
656-61	Caliphate of ^u Ali	909	Establishment of the Fatimids in North Africa	al-Biruni completes his work on India
661	Murder of Imam ^u Ali	922	Death of the mystic, Mansur al-Hallaj	Death of the philosopher and historian, Miskawayh
680	Death of Imam Husayn at Karbala	923	Death of al-Tabari, author of important texts on early Islamic history	Death of the Andalusian poet, Ibn Darraj
691	Building of the mosque (Dome of the Rock) in Jerusalem	925	Death of the physician and philosopher, Abu Bakr al-Razi (Rhazes)	1035
c. 696	Monetary reform; replacement of Sasanian and Byzantine coinage by coins with purely Arabic inscriptions	929	Death of the astronomer, al-Battani (Albatenius)	Death of the Andalusian author of works on geometry and astronomical tables, Ibn al-Samh
706	Building of the Great Mosque in Damascus	931	Death of the Andalusian philosopher and mystic, Ibn Masarra	1037
711	Muslim conquest of Andalusia	936	Foundation of the palace city of Madinat al-Zahra	Death of the influential philosopher and physician, Ibn Sina (Avicenna)
714-16	Conquest of western regions of the Iberian Peninsula by Muslim forces	940	Death of the Abbasid vizier and calligrapher, Ibn Muqla	1039
732	Battle of Poitiers	c. 947	Ibn Hawqal visits Spain and North Africa	Death of the astronomer and physicist, Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen)
c. 750	Translation of classical medical and philosophical works into Arabic begins	950	Death of the philosopher, al-Farabi	1052
762	Baghdad founded as capital city of the Abbasids			Manuscript of the <i>Qanun fi'l-tibb of Ibn Sina</i> (cat. no. 73)
765	Death of Imam Ja ^u far al-Sadiq			1064
784-86	Great Mosque of Cordoba built			Death of the Andalusian philosopher and theologian, Ibn Hazm
794	Paper mill established in Baghdad			1067
				Nizamiyya <i>madrasa</i> founded in Baghdad
				1068-69
				Destruction of Fatimid libraries
				1070
				Death of the famous Andalusian poet, Ibn Zaydun
				1081
				Death of the distinguished Andalusian theologian and literary figure, al-Baji

- 1086 Death of the Andalusian poet, Ibn ʿAmmar
- 1090 Ismaili state established in the fortress of Alamut
- 1111 Death of al-Ghazali, jurist and theologian
- 1122 Death of al-Hariri, master of the literary genre of the *maqamat* (prose poem)
- 1134 Death of the Andalusian poet and writer, Ibn ʿAbdun
- 1139 Death of Ibn Bajja, Andalusian philosopher, poet and musician
- 1143 First translation of the Qurʾan into Medieval Latin by Robert of Ketton
- 1147 Death of the Andalusian poet and anthologist, Ibn Bassam
- c. 1150 Translations of Ibn Sina (Avicenna) into Latin
- 1154 Al-Idrisi completes his universal geography at the court of Roger II in Sicily
Hospital of Nur al-Din built in Damascus
- 1160 Death of the famous Andalusian poet, Ibn Quzman
- 1162 Death of the Andalusian physician, Ibn Zuhr (Avenzoar)
- 1170-80 Construction of the mosque in Seville with its minaret, the present-day Giralda
- 1179 Death of Ibn Khayr al-Ishbili, philologist and traditionist of Seville
- 1185 Death of the celebrated Andalusian physician and philosopher, Ibn Tufayl
- 1187 Farid al-Din ʿAttar writes the allegorical verse epic, *Mantiq al-tayr* (Conference of the Birds)
- 1198 Death of the Andalusian philosopher and physician Ibn Rushd (Averroes), author of important commentaries on the works of Aristotle
- c. 1200 **Folio from a manuscript of *Khawass al-ashjar* (cat. no. 77)**
- 1204 Death of the Jewish philosopher and theologian, Ibn Maymun (Maimonides)
- 1209 Death of the Persian poet Nizami, author of romantic verse epics
- 1217 Death of the Andalusian traveller Ibn Jubayr, author of the *Rihla*
- 1233 Death of Ibn al-Athir, author of a monumental world history
- 1238 Construction of the Alhambra by the Nasrid ruler Muhammad I
- 1240 Death of the Andalusian philosopher and mystic, Ibn al-ʿArabi
- 1248 Death of the Andalusian botanist and pharmacologist, Ibn al-Baytar
- 1258 Destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols
- 1259 Construction of the observatory at Maragha begins
- 1273 Death of Jalal al-Din Rumi, author of mystical didactic poems
- 1274 Death of the eminent philosopher and astronomer, Nasir al-Din Tusi
- 1284 al-Mansuri hospital constructed in Cairo
- 1286 Death of the Andalusian poet, historian and geographer, Ibn Saʿid al-Maghribi
- 1292 Death of the Persian poet Saʿdi, master of lyrical and ethical-didactic poetry
- 1294 Death of the musician, Safi al-Din
- c. 1300 **Gold and silver-inlaid brass pen box (cat. no. 69)**
Folio from a manuscript of the *Manafiʿ al-hayawan* (cat. no. 72)
- 1310 Death of the playwright, Ibn Daniyal
- 1333-54 Expansion of the Alhambra
- 1349 Library of al-Qarawiyyin created in Fes
- 1354 **Folio from a manuscript of al-Jazari's *Kitab fi maʿrifat al-hiyal al-hindasiyya* (cat. no. 75)**
- 1368 Death of the traveller, Ibn Battuta
- 1375 Death of Ibn al-Khatib, historian of Granada
- 1390 Death of the Persian poet, Hafiz
- 1398 Death of the calligrapher, Yaquṭ al-Mustaʿsimi
- 1406 Death of the philosopher of history, Ibn Khaldun
- c. 1420 Observatory at Samarqand founded
- c. 1450 **Folio from a manuscript of the *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (cat. no. 74)**
- 1453 Constantinople becomes the capital of the Ottomans
- 1492 End of Muslim rule in Spain
- 1493-94 **Folio from a manuscript of the *Shahnama* (cat. no. 115)**
- 1498 Ibn Majid guides Vasco da Gama across the Indian Ocean to India
- c. 1520 **Album page of calligraphy (cat. no. 106)**
- 1520-40 **The *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp (cat. nos. 92 and 96)**
- 1536 Death of the painter, Bihzad
- 1537-38 First edition of the Qurʾan printed by Paganino and Alessandro Paganini
- c. 1540 **Verses written by Shah Mahmud Nishapuri (cat. no. 68)**
- 1544 Death of the poet and calligrapher, Mir ʿAli Haravi
- 1550-57 Building of the Süleyman mosque complex in Constantinople
- c. 1570 **Portrait of Sultan Selim II (cat. no. 50)**
- c. 1580 **A hunting scene (cat. no. 86)**
- 1582 **Manuscript of the *Divan* of Sultan Ibrahim Mirza (cat. no. 35)**
Manuscript of the *Tadhkira* of Shaykh Safiʿ al-Din (cat. no. 29)
- 1588 Death of the architect, Sinan
- 1593 **Manuscript of the *Anvar-i-Suhayli* of Kashifi (cat. no. 79)**

1602	Manuscript of the <i>Mathnavi</i> of Rumi (cat. no. 26)	1842-45	Owen Jones' <i>Plans, Elevations, Sections and Details of the Alhambra</i> published	1977	Establishment of The Aga Khan Award for Architecture
c. 1610	A dragon in a landscape (cat. no. 83)	1861	Travelogue by Ma Fuchu (cat. no. 22)	1979	Abdus Salam awarded Nobel Prize in Physics
c. 1615	Jahangir's lion hunt (cat. no. 93)	1865	Lacquer pen box (cat. no. 61)		Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) established at Harvard-MIT
c. 1620	Portrait of 'Isa Khan (cat. no. 56)	1866-67	Manuscript of the Qur'an on two pages (cat. no. 8)		Al Qal'a of Beni Hammad in Algeria added to World Heritage List
1628	Portraits of Jahangir and Shah Jahan (cat. no. 63)	1869	Opening of the Suez Canal	1980	Medina of Fez in Morocco, and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan added to World Heritage List
1632-54	Building of Taj Mahal at Agra by the Mughal ruler Shah Jahan	1876	Exhibition of Persian art at the South Kensington Museum in London	1981	Old Walled City of Shibam in Yemen added to World Heritage List
c. 1635	Portrait of a young prince with mystics (cat. no. 27)	1885	Exhibition of Persian and Arab art at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London	1982	Agra Fort and Taj Mahal in India added to World Heritage List
1640	Death of the theologian and philosopher, Mulla Sadra	1893	Exposition d'Art Musulman at the Palais de l'Industrie in Paris	1983	Alhambra in Granada and the historic centre of Cordoba added to the World Heritage List
c. 1650	Portrait of Akbar in old age (cat. no. 64)	1903	Exposition des Arts Musulmans at the Pavilion de Marsan in Paris	1985	Historic mosque city of Bagerhat in Bangladesh, Qusayr Amra in Jordan, the Great Mosque and Hospital of Divrigi in Turkey, and the Medina of Marrakesh in Morocco added to World Heritage List
1658	Death of the Turkish cosmographer and encyclopaedist, Hajji Khalifa	1905	Exposition d'Art Musulman in Algiers	1986	Fatehpur Sikri in India, and the Old City of San'a' in Yemen added to World Heritage List
1663	Dervish in a landscape (cat. no. 28)	1910	Exhibition on Islamic art (Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst) in Munich	1987	Death of the dramatist, Tawfiq al-Hakim
c. 1670	Sages in religious discussion (cat. no. 30)	1911	Excavations initiated at Madinat al-Zahra by Ricardo Velásquez	1988	Timbuktu and Old Towns of Djenne in Mali, and Kairouan in Tunisia added to World Heritage List
1727	Ibrahim Muteferriqa sets up first Ottoman printing press	1912	Exposition d'Art Persan at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris		The Aga Khan Trust for Culture founded
1778-79	Pilgrimage certificate (cat. no. 19)	1914	Death of the novelist, Jurji Zaydan		Naguib Mahfouz awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature
1798-	French expedition under Napoleon to Egypt	1920	Aligarh College upgraded to the status of University	1989	Death of the architect, Hassan Fathy
c. 1800	Calligraphy by Fath 'Ali Shah (cat. no. 62)	1931	Exhibition of Persian art at Burlington House in London	1990	Itchan Kala in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List
1805	Manuscript of the Qur'an (cat. no. 9)	1935	Exhibition of Persian art at the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (St. Petersburg)		
c. 1805	Portrait of Selim III (cat. no. 52)	1938	Death of the poet and philosopher, Muhammad Iqbal		
1813	James Murphy's <i>The Arabian Antiquities of Spain</i> published	1956	Establishment of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation		
1821	Setting up of the Bulaq printing press in Cairo	1969	Opening of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon		
1828	Appearance of the first Arabic newspaper	1973	Death of the writer, Taha Husayn		
1836-37	Girault de Prangey's <i>Souvenirs de Grenade et de l'Alhambra</i> published	1976	Exhibition on the Arts of Islam at the Hayward Gallery in London		
1839	Girault de Prangey's <i>Monuments arabes et moresques de Cordoue, Séville et Grenade</i> published				

1993	Humayun's Tomb and the Qutb Minar complex in Delhi, India, the Historic Town of Zabid in Yemen, and the Historic Centre of Bukhara in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List	2000	Stone Town of Zanzibar, and the Historic Centre of Shahr-i Sabz in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List Aga Khan Music Initiative in Central Asia (AKMICA) established	2005	Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kunya-Urgench in Turkmenistan, and the Mausoleum of Öljaıtü in Sultaniyya, Iran added to World Heritage List Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park, Cairo
1996	Ancient <i>Ksour</i> of Ouadane, Chinguetti, Tichitt and Oulata in Mauritania, and the historic city of Meknes in Morocco added to World Heritage List	2001	Lamu Old Town in Kenya, and Samarkand in Uzbekistan added to World Heritage List	2006	Orhan Pamuk awarded Nobel Prize in Literature Muhammad Yunus awarded Nobel Peace Prize
1997	Qila Rohtas in Pakistan added to World Heritage List Death of the musician, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan	2002	Minaret and Archaeological Remains of Jam in Afghanistan added to List of World Heritage in Danger ArchNet, online library on architecture, launched		Death of the writer, Naguib Mahfouz Death of the singer-musician, Ali Ibrahim Toure
1999	Ahmed Zewail awarded Nobel Prize in Chemistry	2003	Shirin Ebadi awarded Nobel Peace Prize Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi in Kazakhstan added to World Heritage List	2007	Mehmed Paša Sokolović Bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Samarra Archaeological City in Iraq and Red Fort Complex in India added to World Heritage List Samarra Archaeological City also added to List of World Heritage in Danger
2000	Historic Town of Zabid in Yemen, and the Fort and Shalamar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan added to List of World Heritage in Danger	2004	Tomb of Askia in Mali added to World Heritage List		

Glossary

Abbasids Dynasty that founded the city of Baghdad and ruled large parts of the Central Islamic lands from 750 to 1258.

Abjad Alphanumeric system in which each letter of the Arabic alphabet is assigned a numerical value.

Almohads Berber dynasty that ruled North Africa and southern Spain from 1130 to 1269.

Almoravids Berber dynasty that ruled North Africa and southern Spain from 1062 to 1147.

Ayyubids Founded by Salah al-Din (Saladin), dynasty that ruled Egypt and Syria from 1169 to 1260.

Basmala The invocation “*Bism Allah al-rahman al-rahim*”, meaning “In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful,” which appears at the beginning of most chapters of the Qur’an.

Bihari Stately cursive script used exclusively in India with thick round bowls for endings and wide spaces between words.

Dhikr Form of prayer, which consists in the constant repetition of a name or formula, performed either in solitude or collectively.

Fatimids Dynasty that ruled large parts of North Africa and the Middle East from 909 to 1171, and founded the city of Cairo.

Firman Royal decree or written edict.

Ghazal Short lyric poem or ode whose form is characterized by rhyming couplets.

Ghaznavids Turkic dynasty that ruled parts of Iran, Afghanistan and India from 977 to 1186.

Ghubari Miniscule script said to have received its name because it resembled motes of dust and to have been invented to write messages carried by pigeon post.

Hadith Report of the sayings of the Prophet, and in Shia Islam, for the traditions of the Imams.

Hajj Annual pilgrimage to Mecca.

Ilkhanids Established by Hülagü, dynasty that ruled Iran from 1256 to 1353.

Imam In general, a leader of prayers or religious leader; used by the Shia to denote the spiritual leaders descended from ʿAli ibn Abi Talib and the Prophet’s daughter, Fatima.

Iwan Vaulted hall or chamber.

Janna Heaven or paradise in the Qur’an, symbolised by the serenity of a garden.

Juzʿ A thirtieth part of the Qur’an.

Kaʿba Cubic building in Mecca, and the focus of the *hajj*.

Khanaqa Lodge or hospice for Sufis.

Khutba Sermon delivered in a mosque during Friday prayers.

Kiswa Textile covering for the Kaʿba in Mecca.

Kufic Angular script with clear vertical and horizontal lines.

Madrasa College or educational institution, especially for religious studies.

Maghribi Distinctive round style script used in North Africa and in Spain.

Mamluks Turkic dynasty that ruled from 1250 to 1517, with Cairo as the capital.

Mihrab Niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of prayer.

Minbar Elevated pulpit in a mosque from which the Friday sermon is delivered.

Mughals Founded by Babur, a descendant of Timur, dynasty that ruled the Indian sub-continent from 1526 to 1858.

Muhaqqaq Monumental cursive script with well-balanced ascending and horizontal strokes.

Muqam Musical mode in Uighur music combining in suite form sung poetry, popular tales of famous lovers, and dance rhythms.

Muqarnas Decorative vaulting system composed of tiers of small niche-like elements resembling stalactites or honeycombs.

Muraqqaʿ Album with a collection of samples of calligraphy and paintings

Naskh Cursive script used to transcribe texts, and the basis for modern typography.

Nasrids Dynasty that ruled southern Spain from 1230 to 1492.

Nastaʿliq Elegant ‘hanging’ script characterized by short ascending strokes and sweeping elongated diagonal strokes, developed especially for Persian poetry.

Ottomans Dynasty that came to power in Anatolia during the early 14th century, and ruled Turkey, the Balkans, North Africa, Egypt and the Middle East for over 400 years until 1924.

Pir Spiritual guide qualified to lead disciples on the mystical path.

Qajars Dynasty that ruled Iran from 1779 to 1925.

Qasida A poetic genre; in Persian, a lyric poem, most frequently panegyric.

Qibla The relative direction of Muslim prayer towards Mecca.

Rihan Round script, which is the smaller counterpart to *muhaqqaq* and notable for its smooth line, even spacing and balance.

Riqa^c Script *par excellence* for administrative decrees and official letters.

Rukh or roc Mythical bird believed to be an *Aepyornis maximus*.

Safavids Dynasty that ruled Iran from 1501 to 1722 and established Shiism as the official state religion.

Seljuqs Turkic dynasty that ruled parts of Iran and Iraq from 1040 to 1194, as well as Anatolia from 1081 to 1307.

Samanids Dynasty that ruled from 819 to 1005 in Central Asia and Transoxania.

Saz Type of vegetal decoration with serrated leaves unique in Ottoman art of the 16th century.

Shahada The Muslim profession of faith.

Shariah Standard term used for the body of rules guiding the life of a Muslim.

Shikasteh Dense script in which letters and words that should be detached are sometimes joined allowing the calligrapher to complete each word in a single penstroke.

Simurgh Gigantic mythical Persian bird.

Sura Chapter of the Qur'an.

Tawqi Script usually used for administrative documents, the larger counterpart to *riqa^c*.

Tawhid The Oneness of God or belief in Divine Unity, one of the fundamental tenets of Islam.

Thuluth Elegant monumental cursive script often used for inscriptions, the larger counterpart to *naskh*.

Timurids Dynasty founded by Timur that ruled in Central Asia and Afghanistan from 1370 to 1507.

Tiraz Textile with woven, embroidered or painted inscriptions.

Tughra Distinctive and intricately executed monogram of the Ottoman sultan.

'Ulama' Religious and legal scholars.

Umayyads Dynasty that ruled the central Islamic lands from 661 to 750 with Damascus as the capital, and also the Iberian Peninsula from 756 to 1031, with Cordoba as the capital.

Waqf Pious endowment or trust stipulated for a charitable purpose.

