A series of thirty-five illustrations of omens (Falnama) with descriptive Persian quatrains, provincial Mughal, c. 1580

35 leaves, 2 lines to the page written in two columns of nasta‘liq script above and below illustrations, double intercolumnar rules in gold, margins ruled in red, blue and gold, gold-splattered cream-coloured borders, some crude repairs, worming sometimes affecting illustrations, creased, slight rubbing and flaking, loose, boards, detached, stained, 495 by 350mm.

The illustrations are as follows:

1. The Moon depicted with a human face
2. The Sun depicted with a human face
3. The planet Mars depicted in human form with five arms bearing emblems
4. The planet Mercury depicted as a scribe at work
5. The planet Jupiter depicted as an astrologer
6. The planet Venus depicted as a female harpist
7. The planet Saturn depicted as a seven-armed figure
8. Angels attending a courtyard enclosing the Prophet’s footprints
9. Treasure guarded by a dragon
10. A veiled prophet on horseback saving souls from the devil
11. Ibrahim (Abraham) surrounded by fire
12. Ali slaying a tiger before Solomon
13. Ibrahim about to sacrifice Isma‘il
14. Ayyub (Job) cleansing himself, aided by his wife
15. Khizir and Ilyas (Elias) at the Well of Life
16. The Ka‘ba
17. Jonah rescued from the mouth of the whale
18. A miracle at a tomb
19. Ali combatting a dragon
20. Amir al-Muminin attacking a fortress
21. Daulah and Qamar
22. The staff of Moses becomes a dragon before Pharaoh
23. A camel and his groom
24. Ali Abu Talib slaying a demon
25. Gog and the prophet Moses
26. Nuh (Noah) in the ark
27. Salih (Isaiah) and the miracle of the emerging camel
28. The prophet Zacharias sawn in half in the tree
29. The Virgin Mary and the Child Jesus
30. The Day of Judgement
31. Yusuf in the pit with prisoners
32. The seven sleepers with their dog Quitmir in the cave on Mount Rakim
33. A div descends to attack a mounting horseman
34. A dragon in a cave
35. Layla and Majnun
The interpretation of dreams and omens was of considerable importance in both Iran and India in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many series of illustrations must have been produced, mostly at a popular level, as aids to the understanding of remarkable events and dreams. The preservation of such illustrations under conditions of frequent consultation and handling is not surprisingly poor, and this series of thirty-five pictures is thus a rare survival of what may well be an entire set. Fragments of comparable series from Mughal India survive in small numbers, the earliest, and closest in style to the present series, being four illustrations painted on cloth which were exhibited in London in 1979 (Digby, 1979, nos. 1-4). Four pages from a popular Mughal series of c. 1630 were exhibited at the same time (nos. 5-8).

Perhaps the only instance of these subjects being illustrated by court artists is found in the series of large illustrations to the *Fālānamah* now thought to have been made for Shah Tahmasp at Tabriz in the mid-sixteenth century (Welch, 1985). This manuscript, perhaps never stitched in codex form, treats many of the same themes on an elaborate scale. Any similarity in subject treatment between the Shah Tahmasp series and the present one is probably to be explained by the existence of an earlier Iranian tradition of omen illustration of which examples are now mostly lost.


£10,000-20,000
143 A struggle between a bearded demon and dragon, Persia, early seventeenth century
ink drawing on cream-coloured paper, browned, laid down on an album page, inner border
with pieces of verse in nasta‘liq divided by small panels of illumination, outer margins of
dark blue paper with finely painted animals and birds in their natural habitat in gold and
some colour, drawing 142 by 90mm., album page 465 by 335mm.
£800-1200

144 A bearded dervish standing by a tree, Isfahan, early seventeenth century
drawing in ink and some colour, rather browned, scoring with loss of small area of
drawing, laid down on an album page with borders decorated with floral motifs in colours
and gold, verso with nasta‘liq calligraphy written diagonally on gold ground decorated with
floral motifs, insect damage with loss of large area of borders, in mount, drawing 112 by
54mm.
£300-400

145 Mars mounted holds a scorpion in his left hand, Levant, seventeenth
century
two coloured drawings on a leaf from an unidentified manuscript, some defects, text written in
cursive script, headings in red, margins ruled in red, leaf 300 by 205mm.
£300-500

146 Nine illustrated leaves with plants and trees, from a manuscript of
Qazwini’s Aja‘ib al-Makhluqat, Isfahan, seventeenth century
15 lines to the page written in nasta‘liq script in black, significant words and headings in red,
margins ruled in blue, red and gold, catchwords, slight soiling and creasing, 315 by 240mm.
(9)
£400-600
147 A kneeling youth holding a bottle, style of Riza-i 'Abbasi, Isfahan, c. 1620-30
drawing with gold on paper, slightly soiled, on an album leaf with inner borders of panels of
nasta'liq calligraphy, on the reverse are four lines of diagonal nasta'liq calligraphy signed by
Muhammad Husain and dated Rabii' Thani A.H.972/A.D.1564, on blue paper with
illumination in colours and gold, framed, miniature 140 by 85mm., calligraphy 160 by
85mm.
£1500-2500

148 A youth and a lion resting in a landscape, signed Mu'in Musavvir. The
lion facing right lies recumbent beneath a green shrub, tethered by a gold
chain with rectangular links to the stump of a tree, the youth seated to the
left looks on, Isfahan, dated 27th Ramazan 1038/20th May 1629
signed and inscribed: "mashqat-i Muhammad Mu'in Musavvir-raz shahveh bist va
haftam Ramazan al-Muharab sanaat 1038-ha-tamam rasid", slightly rubbed, on an album
page with inner blue border with floral decoration, plain outer border, framed, 102 by
174mm.
This is possibly the earliest known dated work by Mu'in. Formerly in the
Hagop Kevorkian Collection.
£3000-4000

149 Rustam shooting Ashkabas and his horse, watched by Afrasiyab
mounted on an elephant, rocky landscape with blue sky flecked with
small white clouds, Isfahan, mid-seventeenth century
illustrated leaf with conjugate leaf of text from a manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnama,
creased, some flaking, slight waterstaining, 25 lines to the page written in four columns of
nasta'liq script, interlinear gilt decoration, heading in white on illuminated panel, margins
with animals and foliage in gold, framed, 390 by 245mm.
£300-1000

150 The murder of Iraj, his body lies in the foreground, while the murderous
brothers Tur and Salm are seated on thrones under an awning, warriors
and courtiers in attendance, Isfahan, mid-seventeenth century
illustrated leaf with conjugate leaf of text from a manuscript of Firdausi's Shahnama,
flaked, creased, 25 lines to the page written in four columns of nasta'liq script, interlinear gilt
decoration, heading in white on illuminated panel, margins with animals and foliage in gold,
framed, 390 by 240mm.
£800-1000
The following four miniatures originate from a manuscript in prose chronicling the history of Shah Isma'il (1576-78), illustrated by Mu'in Musawwir, text written above and below each miniature in elegant nasta'liq script in black, interlinear gilt decoration, each leaf laid down on an album page, margins of coloured paper decorated with floral motifs in colours, Isfahan, third quarter of seventeenth century

Property of the Baltimore Museum of Art

151 Shah Isma'il charging the Turkish guns at the battle of Chaldiran, watched by Sultan Selim on the horizon
slight staining otherwise in good condition, in mount
£3000-5000

152 Shah Isma'il, in battle with the Turks, cleaves a Turkish champion, Alquj Oghlu, watched in astonishment by Sultan Selim
in good condition, in mount
£3000-5000

153 The young Shah Isma'il on a hunting expedition, attacking a monstrous bear
one scratch otherwise in good condition, framed
£3000-5000

154 Shah Isma'il and his troops capturing a fortress; he directs operations from the left, while prisoners are secured and one of his men mounts a scaling-ladder against a burning building
some oxidation, slight flaking, framed
£2000-3000
155 Portrait of a dervish with a pointed fur hat tied with a band, and a cloak with long sleeves, sitting with his arms folded over his knees in a landscape, bowls and vessels at his feet, Deccan, eighteenth century
drawing on brown paper, rather rubbed and stained, mounted and framed, 162 by 103mm.
£500-600

156 Two girls in Indian costume, the one haloed with a parrot on her hand, the other behind a low wall holding the branch of a tree, signed by Muhammad Ibn Khudadad, Zand, dated A.H.1207/A.D.1793
coloured drawing on paper, some staining and flaking, laid down on card with borders decorated in gold and some colours, inscribed: "nuqam kamiar in Muhammad Ibn Khudadad 1207" framed, 165 by 90mm.
£600-800

157 Dragon-hunting in a rocky landscape, Persia, eighteenth/nineteenth century
tinted drawing on paper, slightly rubbed, discoloration, laid down on an album page, inner borders with inscriptions in naskhi, nastaleq and shikasteh, outer margins of marbled paper speckled with gold, drawing inscribed Housam Munzour Abbass 904(1576), drawing 268 by 165mm, 503 by 350mm,
A simpler version of the same subject, probably the product of the late nineteenth century, is reproduced in A. Cecil Edwards, A Persian Caravan, with the title "Bahram Gur and the Dragon".
£300-500

158 Four illustrated leaves depicting the torments of hell, Turkestan or Persia, nineteenth century
coloured drawings on paper, some defects, one leaf mounted, leaves 230 by 180mm. and smaller
A number of similar drawings are in the Pozzi collection, Musee d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva
P. Pal (editor), Islamic Art, LACMA, 1973, no. 184, pp. 98-99
£300-400

159 Album of fifty-seven portraits of court officials in their costumes, Ottoman, nineteenth century
coloured drawings (and some prints) on paper, each laid down on an album page, some with identification inscriptions in English in pencil, in good condition, modern black leather tooled in blind, album 350 by 250mm.
£1500-2000

160 Bust portrait of a European envoy, he wears a uniform with epaulettes and black cravat, signed by Najaf, Qajar, second quarter of nineteenth century
coloured drawing on paper, slightly creased, inscribed: "mashq-i Najaf", framed, 155 by 90mm.
£300-400

161 A wedding party in a room furnished in European style, the couple are surrounded by ladies and two boys, Qajar, c. 1860-70
coloured drawing on paper, slightly creased, framed, 205 by 305mm.
£300-500
162 Portrait of Mirza Khalil, a young man with a small moustache wearing a tall astrakhan cap and a white abba, he is posed before a colonnade backed by a draped green curtain, signed Mirza Khudadad Hakim, Qajar, dated A.H.1277/A.D.1861

coloured drawing on paper, some flaking, slightly creased, framed 260 by 185mm.

For similar portraits compare with two sold in these rooms on 15th October 1984, lots 143-144

£2000-3000

167 The following ten lots originate from a royal album made for Nasr ad-Din Shah Qajar (1848-1896), probably to commemorate the fourtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne in 1888. The margins of the album pages are of coloured paper richly decorated with découpe calligraphic inscriptions, floral motifs and geometric designs. Two album pages are signed by Muhammad Husain Laleh bin Abdullah Zand Nakleh who was probably responsible for compiling the album, and also for all the découpe work.

163 Two album leaves with a full-face seated photograph of Nasr ad-Din Shah Qajar, c. 1875, and a miniature from a Shahnama manuscript of Isfandiyar and the lions, Qazvin style, c. 1575-80
creased, small areas of découpe decoration in borders damaged, framed, 450 by 600mm.

£1000-1500
164 Two album pages with Rustam, cooking his supper, kicks back the rock thrown by Rahman, Raksh standing by right; Piran pursued up the mountain by Gudarz, two miniatures from a manuscript of Firdausi’s Shahnama, Qazwin style, 1575-80
crease, small areas of découpe decoration in borders damaged, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£1500-2000

165 Two album pages with two watercolours after European originals: standing figure of a man dressed as a hussar, and Christ crucified, Qajar, nineteenth century
slight soiling, small areas of découpe decoration in borders damaged, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£800-1200

166 Two album pages with two watercolours after European originals: Christ blessing the bread and cup at the last supper and Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, Qajar, nineteenth century
slight discolouration, creased, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£800-1200

167 Two album pages with two drawings after European originals: The Blessed Virgin seated under a tree asleep, pillared building in background, Persia, eighteenth/nineteenth century; a young man seated on a bank in a landscape, accompanied by three large dogs, inscribed “ya sabih al-zaman”, Persia, late seventeenth century
faded, slight rubbing, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£2000-3000

168 Six album leaves with four watercolours of flowers and birds signed or attributed to Lutf Ali Khan of Shiraz, one drawing dated A.H.1278/A.D.1862, and two miniatures from a manuscript of Firdausi’s Shahnama of a young prince enthroned and Giw finds the young prince Kay Kusrau, Qazwin style, 1575-80
slightly creased, framed, 1 metre 80cm by 45cm.
£4000-6000
169 Two album pages with panels of naskhi calligraphy, signed by Muhammad Ibrahim al-Qumi, dated A.H.1101/A.D.1689
slightly faded, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£700-900

170 Two album pages with large panels containing bold découpée calligraphy of white paper on blue ground, signed by the artist Muhammad Husain Laleh Abdullah bin Zand Nakleh
small area of découpage decoration in borders damaged, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£700-900

171 Two album pages with central rectangular panels of black paper decorated with bold découpage Qur'anic verses of white paper copied from originals attributed to Yaqui al-Musta'imi
slightly creased, discoloration, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£1000-1500

172 Two album pages with two panels of calligraphy written in nastaliq and shikasteh scripts, Persia, late eighteenth century
small areas of découpage decoration in borders damaged, framed, 450 by 600mm.
£500-600

173 Portrait, possibly of one of the daughters of Nasr ad-Din Shah Qajar (reigned 1848-96), signed by Abd al-Husain Sani’ Humayun, Qajar, dated A.H.1311/A.D.1894
watercolour on paper, some creasing, in mount, 261 by 194mm.
£400-600

174 Two oval portraits of maidens in European attire, Ottoman, nineteenth century
oil on canvas, borders richly decorated with intertwining floral motifs in gold on red and green grounds, some flaking, creased, relined, 84 by 95cm. and slightly smaller
(2)
£400-600
AN IMPORTANT AFSHARID OIL PAINTING

A young couple, Afshar Period, Persia, c. 1735-45

both standing, and between them a low table on which stands a large gaiwan and a dish with a cup on it, the girl wears an elaborately frogged dress of brocade, below which are narrow trousers with a diagonally striped design, her embroidered white head-cloth is secured by a tiara of jewelled gold with an aigrette, the youth wears a fur-trimmed coat of rich gold brocade, in late Safavid style, over a red frogged garment brocaded with golden flowers, his head-dress consists of a small turban around round a tall white cap terminating in four points, both wear richly jewelled gold belts, oil on canvas, cracked, darkened, slight retouching, restricted to background, probably trimmed, 115 by 97 cm.

This painting may possibly be a marriage portrait of one of Nadir Shah’s sons. Paintings of the period of Nadir Shah (reigned 1736-47) are extremely rare, and apart from the two portraits of the great conqueror, in the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Victoria and Albert Museum, this is the only oil painting so far recorded. It forms a most interesting bridge between the handful of late Safavid oil paintings and those executed later under the Zand and Qajar dynasties. Compare the style of this painting with that of five earlier seventeenth-century Persian oil paintings which were the subject of an article by Eleanor G. Sims in Persian and Moghal Art (Colnaghi exhibition catalogue), London 1976, pp. 225-248.

£15,000-20,000