


9. The present portrait (previously unknown).

There are rumoured to be three other related paintings in private collections which remain so far unpublished. When P. & D. Colbaghi catalogued and published their five paintings in 1976 (nos. 2, 4, 44 above) they commissioned extensive research from Dr Eleanor Searle, and for a full account of the historical and artistic background and for analyses of the five Colbaghi portraits we would offer readers to Dr Searle's article in the catalogue 'Persian and Mughal Art', as published by Colbaghi, London, 1976, pp. 253-252.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In 1508 the Persian emperor Shah Abbas moved his capital from Qazvin in the North-west of Iran, to Isfahan, in the centre. He did this essentially for reasons of security, but having done so, set about creating at Isfahan a cosmopolitan capital to rival any other, a centre of political and military power, of monumental architecture, of culture and the arts, of fashion and eclectic internationalism. His efforts to glorify his nation and himself coincided with other political and commercial developments which helped establish Isfahan as a major world city. The activities of the English and Dutch East India Companies were expanding in the east, the European distillers of the Ottoman Empire were in the west and the Persian Gulf ports were open and free from Portuguese control. Cautiously too, there were diverse influences. There was a strong exchange of ideas between Safavid Persia and Mogul India which in the seventeenth century and the second quarter of the eighteenth century it was a strong interest in the culture and art of Europe, which was aided by the constant stream of European envoys and delegations arriving at Isfahan, and there was a steady stream of European dignitaries arriving at the court of Shah Abbas. The tradition amongst European envoys and soldiers for commissioning portraits of themselves dressed in Oriental costume is well-known. Sir Robert Shirley, who, with his brother Anthony, had come to Persia in 1598, was painted dressed in Persian costume by Van Deren in 1615 and the painting is preserved at Penrith House, West Sussex (see Barlow and Wheeler, no. 1) and Tavernier, the well-known French merchant-traveller had a similar portrait painted by L'Augier. Thus the subject of the portrait is probably a visiting European courtier or, perhaps a Georgian or Circassian courtier at the court of Shah Abbas II (1642-66) or Shah Suliman I (1666-94).

EUROPEAN ARTISTIC INFLUENCE AT ISFAHAN IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The introduction in the seventeenth century of the European aesthetic came about in two ways. First, European paintings were much sought after at the Safavid court, and, second, European artists came to work in Isfahan for Persian patrons. Initially this was due to the intellectual curiosity and patronage of Shah Abbas I. A key factor was the settlement in Isfahan in 1644 of a large colony of Armenian merchants, from old Jolfa on the River Araxus. Under the patronage of Shah Abbas they were housed in a suburb south of the town, across the River Zanderdooz, close to Jolfa which the Armenians now a monastery of monastic cloistered paintings and magnificent private houses similarly embalmed. As few Persians knew European languages, it fell to the Armenians to act as interpreters for foreign missions to the Persian court. As non-Muslims, the foreign visitors were invariably put up with the Armenians in New Jolfa, and many of them settled permanently and eventually intermarried with the Armenian community. For example, in 1660, John de Gezis the elder, 1666 (Hearn, no. 125); Sir Edward Pococke, 1661, (Hearn, no. 125); Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset, attributed to William Larkin, 1673 (ibid, no. 135); Charles I attributed to Jacob van Deventer, circa 1624 (ibid, no. 135); Portrait of Robert Peake of 1613 (ibid, no. 128); a portrait of Diana Cecilia, Countess of Oxford attributed to William Larkin, 1614-15 (ibid, no. 130); a self-portrait by Nathaniel Bacon, circa 1620 (ibid, no. 146); a portrait of Anne of Denmark by Marcus Glavnius the Younger, circa 1611-14 (ibid, no. 100); another of Anne of Denmark by Paul van Somer, circa 1617 (ibid, no. 139); Sir Charles and Lady Vere of 1669 by John James of Wales by Hendrick van Steenwijk the Younger, 1620 (ibid, no. 142). In addition, the figure in the present portrait, wearing a red (ruby) ring of distinctly European form on the little finger of his right hand.

PERIAN FEATURES IN THE PAINTING

The most striking feature of the portrait is the only truly Persian feature and, interestingly, the textile of which the coat is made is only to the Golghati portrait of the gentleman in Persian costume with large, boldly coloured flowers on a gold ground (no. 2 above). Furthermore, the two coats share the same type of collar and lining. The textile itself is typical of Safavid dawn fabrics but the fourteenth century and a closely woven coat of similar design is in the Textile Museum, Washington D.C. (W. A. Alipour, no. 13) while numerous related fragments survive (see Neumann and Murza, nos. 47-12, pp. 192-203). The turban is a typically Safavid, both in terms of the textile, with its chequered pattern, and the style of tying, which mirrors the court fashion of Shah Abbas II's reign.

RELATED PORTRAIT IN THE GROUP

Of the eight published pictures from this group, the present portrait relates most closely to the two interior portraits exhibited at Colbaghi's in 1969 and now in the National Museum of Fine Arts, Tehran, and to the third interior portrait in a London private collection (no. 135, type A above). The common features are: all four are interior portraits, they all have a window through which a landscape and skycape is visible; they all have a rich textile curtain hanging behind; all four figures are standing in a similar pose - slightly officious (the feet of the present figure and those of the Golghati "ady" are particularly close) - the depiction of the shadows thrown by the figures is extremely close in the present painting and the two Golghati works; the three male figures have similar costumes, including shoes, and the present figure and the Golghati male figure share similar turbans, both with rings on their little fingers and are accompanied by small dogs (white in the present picture, black in the Golghati picture). There are only two major differences between the portraits. Firstly, whereas the two Golghati paintings and the painting in the London private collection depict figures with essentially unfiled faces, the present one depicts a real person. Secondly, the other three pictures contain a variety of objects and interior
features such as a clock, a pocket-watch, a melon and a
gold flask, vases of flowers and heavily decorated
columns, which are absent in the present picture.

THE SEAHAM SCHOOL
The second half of the seventeenth century in Isfahan saw
a remarkable development in painting, from the languid
pastoral luxury and stylised aesthetic of the post-Reza
Abbasi era to a new style showing more attention to
naturalism and the character and individuality of figures,
which was manifestly influenced by European art, with
Mughal influence evident too. The chief proponents of
this new style were Muhammad Zaman, Ali Qoli Jubbahar
and Shyakh Abbasi, but there must have been many more
whose names are not recorded. These artists are known
to have produced watercolours and gouache paintings
along traditional lines and to have produced occasional
works on lacquer, but we do not know of any large-scale
paintings by these men. Indeed the whole concept of
large-scale oil paintings on canvas was more or less alien
to them. However, there are marked similarities between
the female figures of types A and B above, the small-scale
watercolours of Shyakh Abbasi and Ali Qoli Jubbahar and
certain anonymous works such as those in an album
exhibited in London in 1796 (Colnaghi, no.142 lii.) In
addition, in the churches and houses of New Julfa and in
the Chehel Sutun Palace in Isfahan a great variety of
large-scale murals had been painted during the middle
decades of the seventeenth century, showing figures
dressed in both Persian and European costumes. Thus,
though free-standing oil portraits were not common, the
ideas of large-scale portraits, even life-size ones, was not a
revolutionary concept to anyone living in Isfahan from
about 1640 onwards, and the stylistic links between the
large-scale murals of Persian artists of the mid-
seventeenth century are closer than at first appears. Sadly,
some of the surviving murals were signed, leaving us to
guess at the identity of the artists and whether they were
the same as those whose traditional small-scale pictures
are well known and widely disseminated.

It has been suggested, on occasions, that the artists of this
small group of large-scale oil portraits could be European
themselves, and not their European-influenced Persian
contemporaries. However, aspects such as the slightly stiffer
formality of the figures and the stylised facial types would,
in general, point to Persian artists interpreting European
style. A link to Armenian painting in New Julfa has already
been established, but a recent suggestion that this
group has a link with Georgian painting of the late
seventeenth century (Adie, 1996) throws new light on this
fascinating artistic phenomenon.

As well as the publications already mentioned, useful
discussions and illustrations of painting and architecture
of the period can be found in the following publications:
Boose, Julij Carwell, Ars Julij, E.I.A. (east and west)

35 (detail)

$100,000-150,000

35 (detail, note the gilt engraving on the case)

PERSIAN AND TURKISH MINIATURES
The Property of a Lady

36
Faridun seated in a landscape is approached by
petitioners. Illustrated leaf from a Persian
manuscript of Hafiz's Abur' Majma' al-Tavarikh,
Persia, Herat, c.1425

PB

$3,000-4,000

 gouache with gold on paper, text in one and four columns
of naskhi script above and below the miniature, margins
titled in red and blue, some slight abrasions to painted
surface and slight staining of paper, reverse with 33 lines
of text, miniature 190 by 225mm.

This leaf is from a manuscript of the Majma' al-Tavarikh,
37 The constellation Gemini, Illustrated leaf from an Arabic manuscript, probably the Kitab Sunar al-Kawakib al-Qubsi of al-Sufi, Persia, early 15th century

Leaf painted on both recto and verso with images of the constellation Gemini in gouache on paper, gold dots representing stars, margins ruled in red, descriptive text above in thuluth and nastaliq in red and black, leaf 214 by 142mm.

Provenance: Formally in the collection of Stuart Cary Welch, his sale in these rooms, 12th December 1972, lot 184.

This leaf is part of an interesting and important group of manuscripts produced at the Inju court at Shiraz in the middle of the fifteenth century. The manuscript from which this leaf originates was central to the whole group for it bears a colophon dated 1414 and a dedication to Qutb al-Din al-Husayn, ruler of the Inju ruler of Fars Abad Bihzad. The style, with its predominate use of red, yellow, and blue, was somewhat old-fashioned for the period, being more closely associated with the earlier Ilkhanid-Safavid school than the fast developing Chinese-influenced work of the Khatam artists in such manuscripts as Rashid al-Din's "Jami" at Fereydun.

£4,000-6,000

38 Jarira dies on the body of her son Farud. Illustrated leaf from a manuscript of Ferdowsi's Shahanma. Injuid, Shiraz, dated 1541

Gouache with gold on paper, text in six columns of nasta'liq script above and below the miniature, margins and intercolumnar rules in red, reverse with thirty lines of text, defaced at lower right margin, in bounds, miniature 111 by 235mm., page 368 by 307mm.

£1,000-2,000

39 The Battle of the Clans, Illustrated page from a Persian manuscript of Nizami's Layla va Majnoon, Turkmamkin, c.1490-1500

Gouache with gold on paper, text in four columns of nasta'liq script above and below the miniature, laid down on an album page with borders of gold-filled green and brown paper, miniature 111 by 160mm., text area 180 by 100mm.

Formerly in the Hagop Kevorkian Collection, sold in these rooms, 7th December 1976, lot 37.

This Turkmen miniature is notable for the highly unusual manner in which the vegetation on background of the scene has been painted. Turkmen artists in general were noted for their attention to the detail of plant-life in natural scenes and many illustrations have an almost "jumpy" feel to them, always painted however, with great care. Good examples can be seen in several illustrations from the 1490 "Bigbey" Shahanma, in particular, one in the Prince Sarriuddin Aga Khan Collection, Geneva (Welch and Welch, no.18), and one formerly in the Vever Collection, now in the Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C. (Lowe and Bich, no.110, p.95). Further examples are a miniature by Shafi in depicting "The Court of Ya'qub Beg" (Topkapı Saray Library, H.2158, f.90b-96a), see

£1,000-6,000

40 Gay, 1979, no.147, p.240) and a manuscript of Nizami's Khamsa dated 1503, sold in these rooms, 25th April 1959, lot 152, and again, 25th April 1975, lot 87. In all these examples the vegetation, although stylised in form, is painted as if it is really growing out of the ground. However, in the present miniature, the artist has altered this convention completely and decorated the hillside with the flat foliate forms of a piece of illumination, the flowers and leaves scrolling and overlapping. The battle scene has then been overlaid on top of this bed of illumination. Furthermore, the exact types of flowers recall a series of early fifteenth century drawings of fantastic plants in the Staatliche Preussischen to Berlin [Bez album, 1738, St.48, no.1], 72S.10.1, no.1, 73S.5.4, no.1, 78S.60.2, 2, see Lowry and Lewis, cat.767, p.927.

£1,800-2,200

Other Properties

401 A prince and princess seated in their garden pavilions are offered refreshments by attendants. Large illustrated double-page frontispiece to a manuscript of Persian poetry, Safavid, Qajar or Isfahan, c.1590

Gouache with gold on paper, surrounded by fine border illumination in colours and gold, some figures and surface abrasion, reverse with a page of nasta'liq calligraphy on gold-speckled green paper with illuminated borders with calligraphic cartouches and a page of blue watered paper, miniature 290 by 182mm., page 436 by 290mm.

This impressive large illustrated double page would have formed the opening or closing of what must have been a very grandiose manuscript. It is not possible to identify the scene specifically, but the prince and princess could represent Khosrow and Shams in a number of different characters in the poetry of Ferdowsi, Hafiz, Sa'di, Nizami or Jami.

£4,000-6,000

38
42

A bird perched on the trunk of a tree, attributable to Muhammad Qasim or Muhammad Yusuf, Persia, Isfahan, c.1650

ink drawing with some colour on cream paper, laid down on an album page with borders of gold-sprinkled cream paper, drawing 144 by 73mm.

Provenance:
Formerly in the Haqoo Hovorkian Collection, sold in these rooms, 12th April 1976, lot 45.

This is a rare example of a seventeenth century Persian drawing in which the bird is the main subject of the composition, rather than incidental in the background of another scene. Other examples are few, but include one by Reza-Abbasi in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (Carly, 1998, cat.98, p.131) and two by Mir'Am Musavir, one in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Coover, 1929, no.85) and one sold in these rooms, 20th November 1986, lot 185.

It is difficult to attribute the present drawing on the basis of the bird itself, but close observation of the tree on which it is perched offers more useful clues. The way in which the trunk of the tree is drawn with more or less horizontal rings following the contours of the trunk is distinctive and appears on several other works by Muhammad Qasim and at least one by Muhammad Yusuf. Perhaps the closest comparison can be found in a drawing of diverses in a landscape by Muhammad Qasim in the Metropolitan Museum, New York (11.84.14, Slocum 1939, no.34) and further examples of his distinctive tree style can be seen in a drawing sold in these rooms, 3rd April 1978, lot 40, a miniature in a manuscript of the Shams in the Royal Library, Windsor Castle (MASA/6, Robinson, 1965, no.62) and a drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Cler Alben, School of the late 17th century).

A drawing by Muhammad Yusuf in the India Office Library (f.69, Robinson, 1978, no.3) includes two trees with similar characteristics.

The bird, the tree and the clouds are drawn with some skill, the artist successfully conveying a rather restive feeling of a cool, wintry, sullen winter day, when, as it were, 'the sedge has withered from the lake'.

$5,000-8,000

The Property of a Lady

41

Portrait of a standing youth wearing a green robe, inscribed to Muhammad Qasim, Persia, Isfahan, c.1640

gouache with gold on paper, the uncoloured background decorated with waves and floral sprays in gold, inscription 'Abdul Muhammad Qasim' and seal impression at lower right, laid down on an album page with gold-sprinkled borders, miniature 152 by 75mm.

Muhammad Qasim was a follower of Reza-Abbasi and one of the great artists of the Isfahan school in the mid-17th century. The painting of this rather attenuated youth bears his characteristic rounded face, sleepy eyes and arched eyebrows. For other works by Muhammad Qasim see Robinson, 1965, no.62/3, Souleiman, 1952, nos.120-121.

$2,000-3,000
AN ILLUSTRATED FOLIO FROM SHAH TAHMASP'S MONUMENTAL MANUSCRIPT OF THE SHAHNAMA, KNOWN AS THE 'HOUGHTON' SHAHNAMA

From the Hashem Khorovazian Collection

Kay Khosrow fêtes Rustam under the jewel-tree, attributed to the artist Dust Muhammad. Folio 308 from Shah Tahmasp's Shahnama, Tabriz, c.1530

miniature in gouache with gold on cream paper, text above in four columns of fine nasta’liq script, double interlinear rules in gold, heading written in fine gold thuluth on a ground of pink cross-hatching within a finely illuminated panel, margins ruled in colours and gold, wide margins of gold-spinkled cream paper, catchwords in neat black nasta’liq at lower left, reverse with 22 lines of text in four columns of fine nasta’liq, heading in fine gold thuluth script within an illuminated panel, margins ruled in colours and gold, wide margins of gold-spinkled cream paper in very good condition, miniature 163 by 172mm., text area 276 by 171mm., folio 471 by 319mm.

Provenance:
Commissioned for the Safavid emperor Shah Tahmasp, c.1525-49.
Presented in 1568 to the Ottoman Sultan Selim II (r.1566-74).
Collection of Baron Edmond de Rothschild, 1894-1914.
By descent to Baron Maurice de Rothschild, 1914-1957.
Published: Tale, no.15, Dickson and Welch, vol.II, no.172.

The Shahnama manuscript made for Shah Tahmasp of Persia (1514-1576, reigned 1524-1576) is universally acknowledged as one of the supreme illustrated manuscripts of any period or culture and among the greatest works of art in the world. The key to its brilliance lies in the 258 illustrations and illumination, all executed between about 1530 and 1549 at a time when the art of Persian painting had reached its absolute zenith. Probably no other Persian work of art, save architecture, has ever involved such enormous expense or taken so much artists’ time. No expense was spared on paper, pigments, gold leaf or artists’ time, and for those twenty years it was the Shahnama which primarily occupied the Shah’s entire atelier of master artists.

The Shahnama or ‘Book of Kings’ is the Persian national epic, telling the history of Persia from prehistoric times down to the tenth century. The author, Ferdusi (c. A.D. 933-1020), took up the task of writing the history of the Persian kings in verse in A.D. 978 and devoted the remainder of his working life to composing the 30,000 couplets of the Shahnama, seeking the favour successively of more than one patron in his effort to complete the
work. It was to Sultan Mohammene of Ghurza, that he finally presented the finished text about A.D. 1016. His text was hereafter to become a touchstone of Persian royalty, the text which, above all others, was to be revered by future kings as confirmation of their sovereignty. From the fourteenth century onwards no cultured prince could ignore the obligation to commission his own illustrated version of the national epic.

Shah Tahmasp's Shahnameh is thought to have been begun by his father, Shah Ismail (reigned 1502-1524), the first Safavid Shah of Iran, whose empire took in Herat, Shiraz, and Tabriz where he made the new Safavid capital. The manuscript, which was begun around 1522, has no colophon, breaking off abruptly on fols 789, and the only date is inscribed on one of the miniatures - A.D.1527 (8), but the illuminations dedication on fols 10 states definitely that the manuscript was made for the library of Shah Tahmasp.

This scene Kay Khusrow is seen with the hero Rustam, seated under a magnificently made of gold, hung with bunches of rubies, emeralds and pearls and filled with hooks to give a sweet scent, which Kay Khusroor has specially commissioned for Rustam's visit. From the original 258 illustrations in the manuscript the present miniature is one of only six attributed to the artist Dast Muhammad. This remarkable painter was a pupil of the great Behzad and admired by Shah Tahmasp and his brother Bahram Mirza, for whom he prepared the now famous album of miniatures and calligraphy. In his preface to the album he gives an informative account of the works of past and present painters. Those of Shah Tahmasp's atelier were of course contemporaries of whom he would have worked with and known personally. The album, with Dast Muhammad's nineteen pages text, is in the Topkapı Library (H.1721), formerly 3189, S, for a translation of much of this text see Rintyon, Wilkinson, and Gray, 1983, 183-188. Dast Muhammad subsequently travelled to India where he was employed by the emperors Humayan and Akbar, playing a significant part in the foundation and activities of the renowned Mogul atelier.

When Sultan Saleh Iwan the Magnificent died in Hungary in 1566, there were fears in the Persian capital at Tabriz that the fragile peace with the Ottomans may not survive under the new Sultan Selim II and in 1567 a Safavid embassy led by Shah Quli left for Turkey and met with the Sultan at Edirne in February of 1568. There were then four camels bearing the most magnificent gifts from Shah Tahmasp to the new Sultan. Top of the list of gifts and thus rated the most valuable, were two manuscripts, one a copy of the Qur'an said to have been written by the Imam Ali himself, the other a Shahnameh. Topkapi records show that this was indeed Shah Tahmasp's great volume. The Shahnameh stayed with the Ottomans for over three centuries, preserved in almost miraculous condition.

The manuscript left Istanbul about the end of the nineteenth century and reached France, for in 1905 it was in the possession of Baron Edmond de Rothschild who lent it for exhibition at the Musée des Arts décoratifs in Paris. After Maurice de Rothschild's death in 1927 it was one of a number of outstanding Rothschild books offered for sale, principally in America, and was bought on advice by the collector and bibliophile Arthur A. Houghton Jr., benefactor of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. In 1970, 76 folios with 76 of the 258 illustrations were transferred to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Welch, 1971). In 1970 seven leaves were forwarded to Christie's in London for auction and in 1972 several to Thomas Agnew and Sons, the London Fine Art dealers. A further group, including the present leaf, were forwarded for sale to Christie's in London in 1985. In 1991, after an absence of over 900 years, the body of the manuscript, text, illumination, binding and remaining 118 miniatures - was finally returned to Iranian national ownership by exchange. As reported in the press at the time, the Shahnameh and a Willem de Kooning oil painting were swapped, the final exchange taking place on the tarmac at Vienna airport. Most recently, four leaves from the collection formed by the British Library (acquired through Thomas Agnew in 1972) were sold in these rooms (25th April 1996, lots 11-14). One of these (lot 12) broke all auction records for a single leaf from any manuscript, western or oriental.

In addition to those in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, there are leaves of Shah Tahmasp's Shahnameh in the David Collection, Copenhagen, the Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, the Staatsliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.


See also detail on front cover

£200,000-350,000

Other Properties

44

Youst being comforts by the archangel Gabriel before being rescued from the well by the travelling merchants. Illustrated page from a Persian manuscript of Jami's Youst va Zuleykha, ascribed to Muhammad Youst, Persia, Isfahan, mid-17th century. Gouache with gold on paper, panel at upper right containing a couplet in nasta'liq script and attribution to Muhammad Youst, lower text panel overlaid with fragment from illumination from another manuscript, laid down on an album page with borders of gold-sprinkled blue paper, in mount, miniature 147 by 86mm.

From the same manuscript as the previous lot.

£1,000-1,500

45

Youst's brothers return to Youst with the false news of Youst's death. Illustrated page from a Persian manuscript of Jami's Youst va Zuleykha, ascribed to Muhammad Youst, Persia, Isfahan, mid-17th century. Gouache with gold on paper, upper text panel overlaid with illumination, lower text panel with a couplet in nasta'liq script, laid down on an album page with borders of gold-sprinkled blue paper, in mount, miniature 151 by 85mm.

£1,200-1,500
Portrait of an elderly musician playing the flute while seated on a "Savonarola" chair, Safavid Persia or Mughal India, c.1570

genauer with gold on cream paper, uncoloured background decorated with flowers in silver and gold, illuminated calligraphic panel above the miniature with 8 lines of diagonal nastahq on a gold floral ground, further couplet in neat nastahq on gold ground at lower left, margins ruled in colours and gold, borders of stone blue paper finely decorated in gold and silver with animals and mythical beasts in wooded landscapes, miniature 178 by 104mm., page 336 by 232mm.

Provenance:

Formerly in the Haverford Kervorkian Collection, sold in these rooms 7th April 1975, lot 36 (recto of an album leaf, the verso of which is lot 57 in this sale) and from a dispersed album of which another leaf, showing a portrait of Sultan Husain Bugara, was sold in these rooms, 1st December 1969, lot 68.

This is a fine and rather interesting portrait, showing aspects of both Persian and Mughal painting at a time when the various Persian schools were intricately linked with the emerging Mughal style. There are several characteristics which are found more often on Persian paintings of the period, particularly the gold and silver decoration of flowers and leaves on the uncoloured background, the red shading on the yellow sleeves of the musician's shirt, his feet (where both the shoes and the rather flat painted style are Persian) and the rather moulded, calligraphic style of the drapery. However, several other features are more typical of Mughal work of the period, particularly the strongly modelled face with the furred brows and slightly furry hair, the broad areas of strong red and blue pigment and the "savonarola" type chair, which was picked up by Mughal artists from European prints and can be seen in a late sixteenth century painting of a female musician in the British Museum (Rogers, 1993, no.32). Two other Mughal works which exhibit similar painterly characteristics are a painting in the British Museum of a a mandal-e davrah dated to circa 1570 (360, no.18) and a painting of a Portuguese couple sold in these rooms, 12th December 1972, lot 21 (see also Martin, 1912, vol.II, pl.171).

When the present work was previously sold in these rooms in 1975 it was catalogued as "Qura, c.1560-70". While a Qura origin is certainly plausible, with artists such as Seyfeddin and Naqsh being possibilities, an eastern Iranian origin in Herat or Khurasan, where the Shamsi dynasty were patronising artists at the period, is also a possibility. The second half of the sixteenth century was a time of a great movement of Persian artists to Mughal patronage in India and with the mix of Persian and Mughal characteristics exhibited in this painting, there is a strong possibility that it could be the product of a Persian artist working in India.

The borders of the page are very finely drawn in gold and arc typical of Persian work of the third quarter of the sixteenth century. The page was originally the recto of lot 57 in this sale and the borders of that drawing show stylistic influence from the Tabriz school of the mid-sixteenth century.

Whatever its exact origins, this painting is a rare and fine example of the exciting artistic developments of the second half of the sixteenth century in which influences utilised by the Persian and Indian miniaturists (and indeed the Turkish) were fluid and dynamic.

£18,000-22,000