A kneeling youth holding a gold wine-flask and a flower, Persia, Isfahan, early 17th century

drawing with gold on buff paper, uncoloured background decorated with flowers and clouds in gold, inscription at lower left, inner borders of gold-decorated orange and blue paper, outer borders of glazed buff paper decorated with gold flowers, drawing 218 by 150mm., page 321 by 234mm.

This is a fine drawing typical of the Isfahan school of the seventeenth century, but the face of the youth is slightly unusual, with a more rounded nose than normal and wide, almost oriental features. This facial type appears on a drawing of a reclining woman in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (12.223.3 see Swietochowski, 1909, no.39).

There is a semi-legible inscription, probably an artist’s signature, at the lower left which may be ‘Kamal al-karib’ or ‘Jamal al-karib’ (?).

£2,500-3,500

The Property of a Lady

Two kylins in combat, Persia, probably Isfahan, early 17th century

drawing in ink and colours on paper, the background gilded and decorated with gold floral sprays, concentric border bands decorated with floral motifs and calligraphic cartouches, reverse with central panel of matching calligraphic exercises, inner border of floral illumination and calligraphic cartouches, outer border of gold scrolling foliate motifs and coloured flower-bands, in mount, drawing 152 by 84mm., leaf 318 by 194mm.

Formerly in the collection of Dr W.B. Manley.

His sale in these rooms, 14th July 1971, lot 300 (268).

Dr Manley’s interest in oriental arts of the book originated from the period 1962-63, when he served in the Indian Police in the Bombay Presidency and as an officer in the Bengal Lancers, during which he saw active service on the North West Frontier.

The border of the album leaf seems to have been added in India during the eighteenth century.

£1,000-1,500
A prince and a hermit in a landscape, attributable to Afzal al-Husaini, Persia, Isfahan, c.1640

Ink drawing with colours on cream paper, the uncoloured background decorated with rocks, vegetation and clouds in gold, laid down on an album page with inner borders of calligraphic cartouches and illuminated panels and outer borders of stout buff paper decorated with bold scrolling foliate motifs in gold, drawing 97 by 182 millimeters, page 225 by 346 millimeters.

Provenance: Formerly in the Hasp Kevorkian Collection, sold in these rooms, 12th April 1976, lot 32.

This drawing of a prince and a dervish playing a board game relates closely to other drawings of the Isfahan school, including that of Reza Abbasi, and the two figures can be seen separately in other portraits. The dervish appears in a work by Reza, where he faces the other way (India Office Library p.22,23, London, 1996, cat.103, p.139), in a work in the style of Mu'in in which he faces to the right (Sotheby’s, London, 17th April 1975, lot 44) and in an unattributed drawing in which he again faces to the left (ibid, lot 43). The youth appears in a portrait signed by Reza (Sotheby’s, London, 21st April 1980, lot 80), though wearing a fur hat rather than a turban.

It is possible to attribute the present work to Afzal al-Husaini based on the distinctive way he draws the eyes of his figures, with a rather wide almond-shape, which is more rounded than that of other artists of the period, and high eyebrows which meet firmly in the middle. This characteristic appears in at least two of Reza’s works (Cainsy, 1996, cat.115, p.157, 119, p.162, whence Afzal may have acquired this trait) and several works signed by or attributed to Afzal himself (see Scholz, 1964, no.LXXII and Robinson, 1985, nos.61-62, Soultazis, 1992, nos.111, 113, 118, 119 and fig.42).

Other Properties

Lots 50-54

The following five lots are a series of 22 watercolours of famous characters from Persian history, of contemporary rulers, aristocrats and soldiers and of Persian costumes, which must have been collected by an Englishman in the late 1850s. The accuracy of detail given in the inscriptions accompanying the contemporary military figures, and the fact that most of those figures were involved in the skirmishes with the British during the 1850s, indicates that the original collector was probably a British soldier or diplomat. The watercolours were probably intended to be bound into an album, as was the fashion at the time, but never reached that stage. They were recently discovered in an English collection, loosely folded into an album of early photographs of the Middle East by the well-known Italian photographer Luigi Pepe, who at one stage became Commander-in-Chief of the Persian Infantry.

50

Four Qajar portraits: Afraisivab; Aqa Mohammad Khan; Fahd Ali Shah Qajar; Abbas Kuli Aga Sultan. Persia, c.1838

Watercolour on cream paper, laid down on two leaves of stout white paper, labelled in English and Persian in ink and pencil, one dated 1838, 202 by 145 millimeters, and slightly smaller.

The subjects of the portraits are as follows:

Afraisivab - the legendary ruler of ancient Turan who features prominently in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, Aqa Mohammad Khan - the first of the Qajar kings of Iran (r.1779-1804), Fahd Ali Shah - the second and greatest of the Qajar kings (r.1797-1834), Abbas Quli Khan Sultan - the commander of the 8th, or Shiraz regiment of the Persian regular infantry during the 1848's and 1830's.

£2,000-3,000
51 Four Qajar portraits: Zabhrak; Kay Khusraw; Timur; Nadir Shah. Persia, c.1855-58
watercolour on cream paper, laid down on two leaves of stout white paper, labelled in ink and pencil in English and Persian, 206 by 144mm, and slightly smaller (2)
From the same series. The subjects of these portraits are as follows: Zabhrak - the ancient king of Persian legend who succumbed to the evil influence of the devil Alvin, and subsequently grew weak from his shoulders which had to be fed with live children every day. He was eventually defeated by the hero Faridun and chained in a mountain cave.
Kay Khusraw - the ancient Persian king who features prominently in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi.
Timur - the emperor and founder of the Timurid dynasty of Iran and Central Asia (c.1370-1405), known as Tamerlane or Tamerlane in the West and the subject of a famous play by Christopher Marlowe.
Nadir Shah - the Afghan ruler (c.1736-47) infamous for sacking Delhi and carrying off vast quantities of loot.
£1,500-2,000

52 Five Qajar portraits of maidens, one with her paramour. Persia, c.1857
watercolour on cream paper, laid down on three leaves of stout paper, labelled in pencil in an English hand and dated 1857, 216 by 157mm, and smaller (3)
From the same series. The English inscriptions accompanying the watercolours give the following descriptions:
Persion ladies of rank.
Persion lady at her toilet - 1857.
£2,500-3,000

53 Four Qajar portraits: the poet Hafiz; the poet Sa'di; a lady of rank; a youth. Persia, c.1855-58
watercolour on cream paper, laid down with two watercolours on each leaf, each watercolour labelled in pencil in a contemporary English hand, 210 by 140mm, and slightly smaller (2)
From the same series. The pencil inscriptions in English name the subjects as follows:
Hafiz: Persian poet and dervish
Meelit Sadeq: Persian poet and dervish
Persian lady of rank
Young Persian
£1,500-2,000

54 Five Qajar portraits: Faridun; mounted combat between Fahamirz and Ranauref; Fath Ali Shah Qajar; Shuja' al-Mulk; Sartaj Jan Khan. Persia, c.1857-58
watercolours on cream paper, laid down on three leaves of stout white paper, labelled in English and Persian in ink and pencil, two dated 1857, 179 by 168mm, and slightly smaller (3)
From the same series. The subjects of the portraits are as follows: Faridun, the hero of ancient Persian legend who defeated the evil king Zabhrak.
Fahamirz, the son of Ranauref, and Kamefar, the son of Shamsfar and companion of Bahram.
Fath Ali Shah, the second Qajar ruler of Iran (c.1797-1834).
Mulla Ali Khan Nuri Shuja' al-Mulk, famous soldier during the war against the British in Fars in the 1809's and later governor of Bushir and other cities.
Sartaj Jan Khan, Colonel of the 'Bahadur' regiment of the Persian regular infantry, killed in action at Mohammara, March 26th 1857.
£1,800-2,200
The Property of a Lady

55 Two portraits of a youth and maiden, signed by Mirza Ramzi Khan (or Jani), Persia, Qajar, dated A.H.1267/A.D.1850

watercolours on cream paper, inscribed at right with artists signature and date, 233 by 243mm. and 230 by 245mm.

(2)

These watercolours must have been intended as ceiling or wall decoration for a grand house, since they are cut out to a very specific shape. The portraits themselves are finely painted and the townscape backgrounds may well be identifiable.

£3,000-5,000

Another Property

56 A full-length portrait of Alijah Khoda Quli Beg of the Royal Armouries, by Aqa Beglar, son of Muhammad Hassan Afnan Nasrullah-shahi (the deaf), Persia, Qajar, dated A.H.1273/A.D.1856

gouache on stout cream paper, cartouches with inscriptions of identification at upper right and left, slight dampstaining at edges, laid down on stout cream paper, 311 by 211mm., page 439 by 305mm.

Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 9th October 1978, lot 61.

£4,000-6,000
The Property of a Lady

A drawing of three poets seated under a tree in a landscape, attributable to Vaji, Persia or Turkey, c.1570-80; on a contemporary album page with a panel of découpe calligraphy by Fakhrī and a border with drawings of huntsmen in an imaginary landscape with animals, Persia, Tabriz style, c.1550-70.

drawing en paper with slight colour-tinting, mounted with a panel of fine découpe nastāq calligraphy in pink and white on a blue ground with the signature of Fakhrī, lines of nastāq calligraphy on illuminated floral ground above and below, broad outer border with drawings of a hunting scene and mythical beasts in landscapes, drawing 160 x 106mm., inner panel 215 x 110mm., page 336 x 230mm.

Provenance:
Formerly in the Hagop Kevorkian Collection, sold in these rooms 7th April, 1973, lot 30 (verse of an album leaf, the recto being lot 46 in this sale) and from a dispersed album of which another leaf, showing a portrait of Sultan Husain Bayqara, was sold in these rooms, 1st December 1969, lot 68.

This is an important drawing in the style of the Tabriz artist Vaji (also known as Vaji Jam) who was a pupil of the Syyrsh the Georgian and later worked at the court of the Ottoman Sultan Murad III at Constantinople. It compares closely to a drawing signed by Vaji in the Metropolitan Museum of Art assigned to Vaji’s Persian period (85.124.27; Świętowski, 1969, no.25).

The drawing on the wide borders is highly accomplished and shows the strong influence of the Tabriz school of the mid-sixteenth century. The upper half is inhabited by mythical beasts - a sinawīgh and two lytans - in an imaginary landscape with wpianwp trees and monkeys. The lower half contains a hunting scene with a prince on horseback and a sālikī chasing a pair of hares, while a second sālikī has caught a mountain goat. Beyond another wpianwp tree a servant carries a second mountain goat over his shoulders.

The calligrapher Fakhrī was noted for his skill at the art of découpe calligraphy (pist), and was described by Mustafa Ali as ‘an incomparable representative of his art’. For a page of his calligraphy see Islamic calligraphy, no.40.

It is of note that his full name was Fakhrī ibn Vaji, indicating that he was a son of the artist Vaji and therefore that this page may constitute the rare occurrence of a father and son contributing to the same work.

The album from which this page, lot 46, and the portrait of Sultan Husain Bayqara all originate, is a fascinating and somewhat puzzling one. For these three pages alone there have been a wide variety of attributions. The portrait of Sultan Husain has been described as Turkish (an attribution to Vaji is written in the carpet border on which Sultan Husain sits), Persian and Iranian (Grube, Kosar, no.229), the drawing on the present page as Turkish or Persian, the portrait of the musician (lot 46) as Persian or Indian, and within the Persian context the schools of Tabriz, Qazvin, Herat and Khurasan have all been mentioned. The borders in turn have been described as Turkish and Persian. These three pages succinctly display the fluid and exciting artistic developments in Iran, Turkey and India in the second half of the sixteenth century in which the movement of artists and the patronage of three great dynasties created a dynamic environment, and it is apparent that further scholarly analysis of the album would be rewarding.

£20,000-30,000
58. Portrait of a Musezzin standing on a brick minaret wearing a blue robe and green cloak, Turkey, early 18th century

gouache with gold on paper, in mount, 145 by 60mm.

This miniature and the following two lots must originally have been in an album, of which similar examples have been sold in these rooms, 28th April 1979, lot 90 and 16th April 1985, lot 162. Statistically the painting relates to the work of the artist Lorus, who was the leading portraitist at Constantinople in the first half of the eighteenth century.

£1,000-2,000

59. Portrait of an Ottoman lady of rank, wearing a tall hat and a blue kaftan, Turkey, early 18th century

gouache with gold on paper, in mount, 145 by 62mm.

See footnote to previous lot.

£1,000-2,000

60. Portrait of an Ottoman Sultan reading a book, wearing a blue robe and red, fur-trimmed cloak, Turkey, early 18th century

gouache with gold on paper, in mount, 136 by 70mm.

See footnote of lot 58.

£2,000-3,000
The Prophet Muhammad subdued a dragon in the presence of the archangels Gabriel and Michael. Illustrated leaf from a manuscript of the Siyari Nabi, made for Sultan Murad III, copied by the scribe Mustafa bin Vali, Ottoman, Constantinople, c.1594

gouache with gold on cream paper, text written in fine naskh script in one line above and two lines below the miniature with interlinear decoration in gold, margins ruled in gold, catchwords in black in wide margins, numerous lines written in red at lower right corner, reverse with 13 lines of text in black naskh, margins ruled in gold, miniature 226 x 180 mm, test area 284 x 170 mm, page 373 by 264 mm.

Provenance:


Published: Falk, 1985, no.110, pp.136-7.

MURAD III'S ILLUSTRATED COPY
Sultan Murad III's illustrated copy of Mustafa Dha'tari's Siyari Nabi ('Life of the Prophet') was a monumental commission and one of the most ambitious Ottoman illustrated manuscripts ever produced. In total it contained 814 miniatures contained within six separate volumes. Volumes I, II and VI remain in the Library of the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul, where they would originally have been housed, while volume III is in the Spencer Collections of the New York Public Library and volume IV is in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. Volume V is apparently lost. The exact movements of volume IV since its completion in 1594 are uncertain, but by June 1939 it had surfaced in Cairo, where about 55 leaves were detached and sold to various collectors, principally Major R.G. Gayer Anderson Paush, whose name is associated with a fine house in the old city of Cairo and who was the twin brother of Colonel T.G. Gayer Anderson, C.M.G., B.S.O., who, in turn, noted for his fine collection of Rajasthani miniatures. By the time Chester Beatty was able to acquire volume IV it was already lacking these leaves. Of the miniatures detached from the Beatty volume, twenty-two have been dispersed at auction; fifteen at Drouot, Paris, 23rd March 1984, lots 1-4 (this leaf lot 1); 18th March 1985, lots 12-15; 15th April 1994, lots 1-5 and 8th November 1995, lot 118; ten in these rooms, 12th April 1985, lots 176-182, 14th December 1985, lots 131-135 (previously offered 14th December 1989 lots 131-133), 23rd April 1997, lots 100-102. In addition, two were offered at Galerie Seassat, Paris, 20th March-15th April 1984 (Art Ottoman 7). In addition to the Topkapi Library, the New York Public Library and the Chester Beatty Library, illustrated leaves from the Siyari Nabi are now in the British Museum, London, the Museum of the Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris, the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin-Dahlem and the David Collection, Copenhagen. The present leaf would have been located between folios 57 and 60 of the Chester Beatty volume.

THE STYLE OF PAINTING
Syriacally, the Siyari Nabi is a transcriptional manuscript, showing the influence of both Nakkash Osean, who had dominated Ottoman painting during the 1570s and 1580s and who was responsible for illustrated manuscripts such as the Shamsname of 1579 and the Shamsname of 1581, and of Nakkash Nusret, who was responsible for the Shamsname Sultan Mahmud III of 1600. The sheer number of illustrations in the six volumes (814) must have presented the atelier with an enormous challenge of imagination and on the whole the pictures here hold compositions characterised by simplicity of expression. They are nevertheless extremely effective and the broad treatment, coupled with the use of strong, sensual colouring, gives them a power and directness which is appropriate to their religious theme.

THE TEXT
The text was copied on the present leaves by the scribe Mustafa bin Vali (the Beatty volume contains a colophon giving the name of the scribe and the date A.H. 1065 (A.D. 1554-5)), is the Kith Siyari Nabi of Mustafa bin Yusuf bin Omeir al-Musalli al-Edrisi, known as al-Dha'tari (the Blindman), who, on the orders of the Mamluk Sultan ibn al-Hajj (c.1376), translated and elaborated the thirteenth century Arabic work of Abu'l Hasan al-Hakm al-Hasawi. Al-Dha'tari's finished work was presented to al-Mansur's successor, Sultan al-Salih Naluk, in 1598. The text is not scripture in the formal sense, but an historical account of the life of the Prophet and events in the early history of Islam.

Murad III's manuscript has been discussed and illustrated in several publications and, in addition to the auction catalogues mentioned above, the following works are useful:


£30,000-40,000
INDIAN MINIATURES
The Property of a Lady

62
A Hunter holding a hawk, India or possibly Persia, c.1500-60

- gouache with gold on paper, some areas of flaking and retouching, margins ruled in colours and gold, border of stilt green paper decorated with animals in wooded landscapes in gold, in mount, miniature 191 by 91mm., page 323 by 188mm.

- Despite the Persian costume, this figure seems to be by a Persian artist working in north India shortly after the Mughal invasion (for comparison, see Blome 1973a, no.8).

- £2,000-3,000

63
A princess in a flowery meadow holding a spray of narcissus, Mughal, c.1630

- gouache with gold on paper, mounted on an album page with concentric border bands of green, buff and blue paper decorated with gold foliate motifs, framed, miniature 143 by 97mm.

- Provenance: Sold in these rooms, 10th October 1988, lot 22.
- The composition of this miniature is similar to several from Prince Daru Shikoh’s Album presented to his wife in 1641/2 and now in the India Office Library (see Falk and Archer 1981, no.68). The pictures of this album are undated with one exception, but appear to have been produced from about 1630-40. Stylistically, the firm drawing of the woman’s profile here and the lack of femininity in the rendering indicate that this illustration was created about 1630. The artist seems more spirited and original than those who executed the works preferred by Daru. In this example, the long flowered sash and the treatment of the overlapped filmy shawl particularly reveal the miniaturist’s skill and sensitively.

- £3,000-5,000

64
Portrait of the courtier Khan Alam ibn Najtab Khan, Mughal, c.1670

drawing with use of colours and gold on buff paper, mounted on an album page with inner borders of black and green paper, wide outer borders of buff paper, inscriptions of identification in borders in Persian and devanagari, in mount, drawing 151 by 90mm., page 208 by 264mm.

- As confirmed by his costume, this man held the title Khan Alam during the reign of Aurangzeb. The Persian inscription on the portrait and the devanagari indicate that the father of this particular Khan Alam had been awarded the title Najtab Khan, who we know was attached to Aurangzeb in the Deccan, and when Prince Aurangzeb decided to make his bid for the throne, Najtab Khan became an adviser (Mankind and Dynas, Vol.II, pp.364-71). His son was serving with his father and accompanied him in Aurangzeb’s push northward. Spending virtually all his life in Aurangzeb’s service, the son became an extremely important officer of that emperor.
- This depiction was probably produced when Khan Alam was about forty years old. A decisively drawn, very strong study, it is one of only a few early Aurangzeb period courtier portraits. (The same courtier is possibly pictured in Fondation Custodia, 1986, no.35).
- This page was taken to Mewar and became part of an album compiled there which is recognizable by the gold devanagari initials written below the pictures (Benjamin 1996, fig. 6; Eltham 1985, no.22; Sotheby’s 25th April 1996, lot 6; Coronation Durbar 1911, pl.XLVII).

- £1,000-1,500
Emperor Bahadur Shah receiving jewels from his son Prince Azim al-Shan, attributable to Bhawani Das, Kishangarh, c.1720

genouche with gold on paper, in a border ruled in gold, outer border of uncoloured silk buff paper, reverse with inscriptions of identification in Persian and devanagari, in mounts, miniature 201 by 282mm., with border 259 by 332mm.

Provenance:


Published: Benney, 1973a, no. 72, p. 98.

This picture is not only visually spectacular but provides important art historical evidence for the development of the early Kishangarh school. Furthermore, it creates a link between the first works of Bhawani Das, a major painter at the court of Emperor Bahadur Shah (c.1707-12), and later works from Kishangarh, some of which are signed by Bhawani Das and have long been claimed to be by the same individual. Bhawani Das was, however, a Hindu name shared by three painters of different eras, so that more evidence has been needed to establish that a Mughal artist actually moved to Kishangarh and continued working in that style.

The Mughal paintings of Bhawani Das are dramatically different, demonstrating that the technical brilliance of seventeenth century Mughal imperial scenes had been carried into the early eighteenth century, despite the upheaval following Aurangzeb's ban on court painting in 1668. Bhawani Das may have been the chief painter responsible for a revival of art under Bahadur Shah; certainly he was influential in reviving earlier compositions to show that the elegant historical traditions of the Mughal dynasty continued into the eighteenth century. His paintings include a record of Mughal ancestors back to Timur, a depiction of the four sons of Shah Jahan with his own patron Bahadur Shah who had been shortly before the murders of three of them by his father Aurangzeb, and a durbar showing Bahadur Shah honoured by Aurangzeb (Maug 1994, pp. 86-87, Benney 1973a, no. 68; Leach 1995, nos. A.7 and 4.25; see also Sotheby's, 12th April 1976, lot 119).

All these works feature very crisp detail in which jewelled objects and decorative carpets are highly important, as they are in this scene. The closest comparison to this miniature is a durbar in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Leach 1995, no. 4.7). In the Chester Beatty scene, the imperial throne and footstool are very similar in appearance and also in perspectival rendering to those pictured here. The three-quarter faces with which Bhawani Das occasionally varied his depictions are also similar in both miniatures. The large, wide open eyes of the subjects are closely related, but the present example shows eyes tilted up at the corners as became fashionable in Mughal painting between 1710 and 1720. This idiosyncratic feature was carried to Kishangarh by Mughal artists such as Bhawani Das and became almost a trademark of mid-eighteenth century Kishangarh painting.

The present example shows the Emperor Bahadur Shah examining a jewelled sword handed to him by his favourite son Azim al-Shan as a servant stands behind the prince displaying a tray of gifts he is presenting to his father. Bahadur Shah died in 1712, and Azim al-Shan was killed later the same year during the struggle for succession among Bahadur Shah's sons. Bhawani Das may have created the composition and a first version of the scene while working for Bahadur Shah. It seems most likely that the artist moved to Kishangarh during the uncertainty and confusion following the death of his patron in 1712, when Azim al-Shan was killed and the succeeding Jashan Shah lasted only one year before being deposed. The present miniature can be confirmed as coming from Kishangarh by the characteristic arrangement of Persian and devanagari inscriptions on the reverse. It must be a transitional work as it features Mughal personalities and a Mughal composition, but is slightly plainer and more vibrantly stylised than the purely Mughal works of Bhawani Das, and therefore was probably painted after his arrival at Kishangarh.

The later drawings attributable to Bhawani Das are much more fluid in style and include the exaggeratedly long-necked horses that became characteristic of the Kishangarh style. Dated from about 1740, they indicate that Bhawani Das had a long career (see Sotheby's, 9th October 1978, lot 202 and Kramm 1985, no. 74 which includes figures comparable with the earlier miniatures of Bhawani Das). $8,000-$12,000