23 PORTRAIT OF A DECCANI COURTIER, POSSIBLY ADIL SHAH II, ON HORSEBACK, STYLE OF FARRUKH BEG, BUIAPUR, DECCAN, INDIA, CIRCA 1600

pen and gouache heightened with gold on paper, laid down on stout paper with borders incorporating panels of nasta‘liq calligraphy, central panel with a courtier on horseback carrying a hawk on his right hand and riding through a rocky landscape

panel 10 2 by 14cm, leaf 19.5 by 27cm.

This impressive portrait is strikingly similar to a portrait from the Leningrad Album held by Zobrowski as "the most poetic Bijapur portrait to have survived," depicting the Deccani ruler Ibrahim Adil Shah II (r. 1579-1627) hawking (Zobrowski 1983, pl ix, p.86). The central figure with his outstretched arm, blue gauntlet and snowy eagle, centering through a rocky landscape on a piebald horse is closely comparable in both subject matter and style to this example. Other features exhibited in the present lot are comparable to the Leningrad album page and suggest that it too is a royal portrait, the facial type with pursed lips, aquiline nose and rounded cheeks distinctly recalls portraits of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II (see Zobrowski 1983, pl vi, p.54 and pl.50, p.76).

Alfar’s contemporary, Sultan Ibrahim II, was an active patron of the arts who encouraged all manner of artists, whether poets, musicians or painters, in their creative endeavours. A contemporary poem by the sultan’s poet laureate, Zhuhur, describes his support of the arts in fulsome terms, "no thorn in the path of Art ever pierced a man’s foot but he picked up gardens of flowers... from... [Ibrahim’s] favour... and in nothing was the excellence of Art hidden but his discernment openly fell in love with it" (Zobrowski 1983, p.68). This praise is not just the flattery of a courtier, documentary evidence supports these claims through other means. Poets, painters and calligraphers are all recorded as distinguished members of the sultan’s inner circle, and the explicit mention of the painter’s name, Farrukh Hussain, indicates the esteem in which he was held.

The Deccani and Mughal artistic traditions are deeply tied to one another both stylistically and in practice. For example, the nascent Deccani school of the 1600s and 1610s owes much to the Mughal atelier in its representation of body mass and movement, whilst during the following century Mughal artists are known to have specialized in painting in a Deccani style and to have copied Deccani works. However, the Deccani school developed an earthier, more direct expressiveness absent in the restraint and formality of the Mughal type. Deccani masters plunge their portrait subjects into semi-darkness through dramatic shading and sculptural dream-like landscapes from fantastic palaces that recall the earlier traditions of Bijapur.

Whilst this portrait does not exhibit all the distinctive characteristics of the Deccani school and the later portrait of Adil Shah II hawking on horseback, it is possible to suggest that this painting was produced shortly after the artist Farrukh Beg moved from the Mughal court in 1600, imparting a cooler palette with the Safavid aesthetic that he expounded.

£25,000-35,000
€30,400-41,000
24 ALLEGORICAL FIGURE, JIAPUR, DECCAN, INDIA, CIRCA 1635-50

ink drawing of European style allegorical figure with use of colours and gold, in reserve on marbled paper laid down on stout paper marbled in blue and yellow.
paint 14.5 by 6.8 cm.
leaf 17 by 10.8 cm.

This rare and unusual marbled miniature belongs to a group of works attributed to Merck Zebrowski to mid-seventeenth century Bijapur. Zebrowski bases his attribution to the Deccan on several factors including the large number of surviving marbled art works that remain and were discovered in the Deccan, the stylistic similarity between the Deccani rendering of clouds in bright colours and dramatic patterns; and the existence of marbled paper in manuscripts of the Deccan.

The miniature is further distinguished by the representation of a European figure that is exceptional within this singular group. Part of Zebrowski’s argument for the Deccan as a place of production is based on the parallel between the figural representation found in Deccani miniatures and those on the marbled leaves. Whilst this miniature does not conform to the Bijapur figural style, it is still related to the group and is likely to have been copied from a European print, which Deccan artists would have been acquainted. It is worth noting at this point that some scholars believe the starving horse motif that recurs with regularity in marbled images of this type, to have its origin in European engravings depicting death (Zebrowski 1985, p. 138).

Traditionally early eighteenth century scholars such as F.R. Martin have attributed these works to Ottoman Turkey. This erroneous ascription may have been as a result of the Turkish love of marbling, an early European reference by Lord Bacon in 1627 refers to the Turkish “art of charming or paper, which is not with us in use. They take divers dyed colours and put them severely in drops upon water; and stirre the water lightly, and then wet this paper with it, and the paper will be waved and veined, like chameslet or marble.” (Zebrowski 1985, p.137).

A similar work was sold through these rooms 17 June 1999, lot 28.

£25,000-35,000
$36,400-51,000
AN IMPORTANT ILLUSTRATED LEAF FROM THE LATE SHAH JAHAN ALBUM
25 PORTRAIT OF AMIR SINGH OF MEWAR, ATTRIBUTED IN THE HAND OF THE EMPEROR JAHANGIR TO THE ARTIST BEHN DAS AND DATED A.H. 1044A.D. 1634, VERSO WITH CALLIGRAPHIC PANEL SIGNED BY MIR ‘ALI, IRAN, 18TH CENTURY, MUGHAL, INDIA, CIRCA 1645-50
gouache heightened with gold on paper, the recto with central portrait on mint-green ground, bordered by alternating bands of foliate motifs and cloud scrolls in black against a gold ground, within plain gold outer borders; on buff leaf painted with seven figures and floral sprays in gold, verso with 6 lines of elegant black nasta’liq calligraphy signed by Mir ‘Ali in cloud bands reserved on gold with scrolling foliate motif in colours, margins with floral sprays in colours highlighted with gold panels 22.5 by 18.5 and 14cm.
leaf 38.5 by 27.5cm.

PROVENANCE
From an American private collection

This leaf is derived from the so-called ‘Late Shah Jahan’ album, a significant collection of poetry and portraits, leaves from which give a unique insight into contemporary Mughal polities and artistic traditions. The album is thought to have been taken as booty from Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739. From the Persian imperial collection, during the nineteenth century, around a hundred leaves from the album made their way to Paris via Russia and the hands of an Armenian dealer, where they were dispersed in the early twentieth century by Domotelli. The album title is derived from the period in which it was compiled. It is thought to have been assembled in circa 1645-50 due to the numerous portraits of seventeenth-century nobles and of the elderly Shah, and the absence of royal portraits depicting later rulers. The album pages share several features, such as the borders bearing portraits that are often related to the central figure, or floral sprays in colours and gold, as well as the ornately decorated calligraphic panels.

The Mughal emperors of the seventeenth century were avid collectors of calligraphy from past ages and Mir `Ali of Herat was the most acclaimed Persian calligrapher of the sixteenth century, whose works were highly sought after. Calligraphic pieces and some earlier portraits were often assembled into albums, combined with miniatures by the foremost masters of the day and embellished with finely decorated borders. This approach was particularly popular at the Mughal court, where Shah Jahan (c.1628-58) commissioned several such albums from the court steleer. The present page is an excellent case in point.

The calligrapher Mir `Ali studied under Zayn al-Din Mahirud and Sultan `Ali al-Marshadi. He was employed at Herat until 1598 when he was taken by the conquering Uzbek warlord `Ubayd Khan to Bukhara, where he stayed until his death. The Wir of his death has not been firmly established, but different sources mention 1533, 1544 and 1558. He was highly esteemed in his own day and Qazi Ahmad tells us that he

"carried off the ball of pre-eminence and superiority, for in laying down the foundations of nasta’liq he was the initiator of new rules and of a praiseworthy canon..." (Minorisy 1965, p.126).

As with lots 4 and 5 of the Berkshire Trust Collection sale held in those rooms 12 October 2004, the hand of the ‘Master of the Borders’ is discernible in the confidence and quality of the decorative features on the verso. The refinement of individual petals, leaves and stems bordered in gold suggests the work of a master. Indeed, according to some scholars, such borders "rank among the highest and most sophisticated works of art created under the emperor’s regalia." (Welsh and Welch 1982; no.73, pp.220-222). It is astonishing that any artist could imbue illustrations on so small a scale with such naturalism, grace and technical precision.

The subject of the miniature, Amir Singh, was defeated by the forces of Prince Khurram - later Shah Jahan, in his father’s ninth regnal year. Amir Singh’s final capitulation came after the Mughal princes stationed his forces at strategic points along the Mewar borders and led a series of crippling attacks against the Rana’s army. As was the tradition of the rajas, Amir pledged his son in service to the Mughals and paid homage to the young Jahan by presenting him with famous jewels, elephants and horses. In the Jahangirnama, the eponymous Shah proudly recalls, "as a sign of favour, my son came forward, and when the Rana grasped my son’s leg and asked forgiveness for his offense, my lucky son took his head in his lap and consoled him in such a way that his distress was soothed. He awarded him a sumptuous robe of honour, a jewel-studded sword, a horse with a jeweled saddle and a royal elephant with silver trappings." (Thackston 1986, p.155).

The long-standing animosity between the two dynasties and the real threat Mewar posed to the Mughals, is captured in the relief expressed by Jahangir in his unusual addition of "Allahu Akbar" to the inscription on this portrait.

25 verso
The artist that Jahangir attributes the painting to is Bhishan Das, whose skill at capturing likeness in portraiture was so highly regarded that he was dispatched by the Shah with the Mughal embassy to Safavid Persia. Indeed Jahangir honours the artist in his memoirs by recording that “Bhishan Das... was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses.” Bhishan Das flourished from circa 1529 to 1550 and was also notable for his convincing group arrangements and the individuality of his female figures. A further page by Bhishan Das included in the Late Shah Jahan Album is located in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. However it differs from the present example in that it is a group scene set in a naturalistic landscape and lacks the date and inscription in Jahangir’s hand (Oikeda 1992, p.168).

Other examples of pages from the Late Shah Jahan album have been sold in those rooms 10 July 1968, lot 16; 1 July 1969, lot 113; 1 December 1969, lots 150, 151 and 152; Sotheby's New York Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art 8 October 1990, lot 16; Christie's, 18 October 1994, lot 34; 21 September 2001, lot 39.

£40,000-60,000
€58,500-87,500
26 PORTRAIT OF A HAREM GIRL, ATTRIBUTED TO MUHAMMAD HASAN, QAJAR, PERSIA, CIRCA 1810-1830
oil on canvas, framed
141 by 89.9cm.

A closely comparable painting to this charming portrait also attributed to Muhammad Hasan can be found in the State Museum of Fine Arts in Tiflis (see Falk 1977, fig. 11, p.43) and shows a similarly Attired maiden kneeling upon a carpet and wearing a dress with a scalloped neck embroidered with roses, and wide-legged trousers with the same scrolling motif. She is clasping a mirror and a jewelled hair ornament, and the painting is executed in the same sweet style as the present portrait. Although inspection under ultraviolet light reveals that the signature ‘Muhammad Hasan’ in the mid-left field on the present portrait has been added at a later date, the attribution is convincing, especially in its similarity to other portraits accredited to the artist.

Qajar artists are known to have produced numerous portraits of single sitters, and it is likely that Muhammad Hasan would have painted several portraits in a similar style. Another possibility is that the artist may have produced a series of portraits depicting the same sitter, as with the dual portrait of a harem girl in the collection of Sir Gore Ouseley, Ambassador to the Persian court and founder of the Royal Asiatic Society, and acquired directly from a Persian artist in the early nineteenth century (Diba and Ehtishar 1998, no.57, p.206). The painting displays two almost identical maidens within the same interior that is divided into separate fields by the suggestion of a border at the centre of the canvas, causing Falk to speculate that the canvas is likely to have been cut down from a larger panel (Diba and Ehtishar 1998, no.57, p.206). This separation, combined with the unadorned canvas that extends beyond the margin of the portrait’s background, suggests that artists may have worked on large canvases producing a series of similar portraits. Portraits of maidens and entertainers were often placed in niches as decorative features within a palace, and it is tempting to suggest that an arcade may have been decorated with several paintings from one series. The painting of two harem girls also proves that artists produced multiple versions of certain popular subjects.

The artist Muhammad Hasan was active during the second half of Fath ‘Ali’s reign, and the first part of Muhammad Shah’s reign. He was noted for producing elegant and sensuous paintings of young women such as the present example, and Falk described his pictures as having great charm and a lightness of touch, especially when the sitter was female (Falk 1977, p.42). Here the artist has conveyed the serene aspects of the portrait both overtly through the maiden’s demure dress, and subtly through her pretty face and languid yet appraising eyes.

The sitter’s characterisation as a harem girl is based on the nature of her clothing: the jewelled hair ornaments, transparent shirt and wide-legged trousers that are in evidence in the present example can also be seen in other paintings of harem girls and was their traditional attire. The other decorative features of the background such as the floral carpet and fruit before an arched window are typical of contemporary portraiture and are recurrent elements in many Qajar oil paintings.

A portrait attributed to Muhammad Hasan was sold through three rooms: The Collection of the Berkeley Trust, 12 October 2004, lot 24. For a discussion of the Qajar portraiture of entertainers see the following lot in this sale. A number of works by Muhammad Hasan have survived in museums and private collections, and are reproduced in Diba and Ehtishar 1993, no.27a, p.80; no.29a, p.86; no.47, p.187-188; no.47, p.194-195 and no.58, p.208.

£30,000-40,000
€42,700-56,300
27 PORTRAIT OF A FEMALE ACROBAT PERFORMING A
HANDSTAND, ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ARTIST AHMAD
QAJAR, PERSIA, CIRCA 1830
Oil on canvas, framed
163 by 89.5cm.
This large painting of a female acrobat is typical of Qajar taste,
during the Qajar period depictions of portraits of royalty and
court entertainers were the two main themes of monumental
painting. Falk describes these maidens as "the other man
subject," and it is curious to note that the entertainers should
be as widely produced and receive similar treatment to the
portraits of royal personages. Whilst royal paintings often
follow a political agenda the purpose of paintings of herem
girls and entertainers was largely as decorative elements in
homes and palaces, these therefore provide a certain insight
into Qajar society.
The women in these paintings are largely figures of fantasy,
representing an ideal. The seductive doe-eyed gait arrests
the viewer, their porcelain skin, scattered beauty spots and
long dark hair suggest a hedonistic purpose. Within a society
where women are enigmatic and obscure figures, their value
as entertainers and objects of desire is highlighted by the
contemporary representation of their gender. As Margaret
Miles comments "A visual image repeatedly depicted may be
assumed to... relate to its ability to address... strong
However, whilst the entertainer is within sight, real women
and respectable maidens were swathed in thick fabric that
obscured them completely from the male eye. It is possible
therefore that such figures of entertainment were the only
women accessible to the artists, and that the reason for their
representation lies in this fact. It is likely that the popular
representation of the feminine ideal was a combination of
various social motivations. Whatever the reason for their
representation, the female entertainer with her graceful yet
counterted pose and elaborately embroidered clothing offers
both an alluring and decorative subject with which to
ornament architectural features.
Falk comments further on the "curious group of pictures...
that... depicts the girl-acrobats who played a prominent part
in the entertainment provided at court. Here the artists have
found an opportunity to exercise their ingenuity in depicting
attitudes and postures of the human body for which they
have no models in earlier painting." The present picture shows
the girl standing on her hands, balancing herself by bending
her knees forward over her body. The knees are depicted
bent sideways, both to avoid the difficulty of painting
forbiddent legs, and to show more of the patterning of the
taftia of her wide trousers, which was an important part of
the decorative aspect of these paintings. The maiden poses
before an open window looking out to blue sky, and her hands
support her upon a patterned carpet. This lack of background
detail is not uncommon in Qajar paintings, where the
decorative vocabulary of the painting emulates the
architectural features of its setting.
The girl's face is notable for its languid, seductive look; the
joined eyebrows and almond shaped eyes suggest an early
Qajar date and owes a good deal to the style of Mirza Baqi at
the beginning of the nineteenth century. However with her
freely flowing hair, larger face and forward-facing gaze it is
more like the work of the artist Ahmad. Related paintings are
illustrated and discussed as follows: Diba and Elahi, nos.60
61, p.120, where the background details of open window and
orange brown carpet are closely comparable. Falk 1972 figs.3-
5,9, nos. 18, 31.
£80,000-£20,000
€93,600-172,000
Charles Augustus Murray was the British Chargé d’Affaires during the political upheavals of the mid 1800s and the Crimean war that so damaged relations between Persia and Great Britain. Further strain was placed on the British legation by the Prime Minister under Nasir al-Din Shah, Aga Khan, and the appointment of one of the Prime Minister’s enemies to a post with the British delegation in Shiraz. The controversial appointment led to accusations by Aga Khan that impugned Charles Murray’s moral conduct, and the political episode developed into a major situation involving the Shah, his Herem, the Prime Minister and the entire British legation.

Eventually Murray’s righteous outrage led to the withdrawal of the British from Persia and the severance of relations between the two countries in 1857/November 1855 (The Cambridge History of Iran, vol vii, p.594). It is possible therefore that this miniature was given to Murray in a gesture of reconciliation, or merely as a memento of his time in Persia and the cloud under which he departed. Either way, the Englishman returned to Tehran in May 1857 when relations were restored.

The artist Abu’l Hasan Ghaffari was one of the foremost masters of the Qajar court, his European training held him in good stead in the increasingly Europeanised court of Nasir al-Din Shah. Apprenticed to the celebrated Mir ‘Ali at a young age, Abu’l Hasan was then sent to France and Italy to study the Renaissance masters. On his return to Persia, the artist was honoured with the title of painter laureate in 1893, shortly before he painted this miniature, and then San’ al-Mulk in 1861. He is known not only for his exquisite miniatures, but also for his large scale portraits that incorporate the technical skills and attention to detail required by miniature painting (see Diba and Ertz 1996, p.241-242, cat.36).

£15,000-20,000
€21,900-29,100
The inscriptions are as follows:

- in the gold cartouches at upper left:
  شاه-ه نوابه اتصابه واقع بالی والدابی و بیکری رحم

  "The portrait of the Highness, the Noble, the Eminent, Jalal al-Dawla, to whom my soul is devoted"

- the artist’s signature:
  "مربی بن مهمند همدانی عایشه" (Mubarak ibn Mahmud al-Qajar)

- on the notebook on the floor, a couplet:
  "دیبری به‌کرتأ استا دانه‌ه به‌خش اگر آگر دانه‌ه به‌خش اگر/ دانه‌ه به‌خش اگر اگر آگر دانه‌ه به‌خش اگر" (Dibari beh-khato asta danesh beh-hush agar / agar danesh beh-hush agar agar danesh beh-hush agar)

  "the secret of successful work is in excellent handwriting, and knowledge and understanding, were you wise would labour in both."

Prince Sultan Husayn Mirza, born in 1881, was the eldest son of Prince Mehmed Zilla Shihab, the governor of Isfahan under Nasir al-Din Shah. The artist, Mubarak ibn Mahmud was himself a member of the royal family and the grandson of Fath Ali Shah. Called Prince Mubarak Mirza Gaja, he was the eleventh son of Mahmud Mirza and is thought to have died in 1886, after which Nasir al-Din Shah issued an allowance for his two sons and one daughter.

Mubarak ibn Mahmud was renowned for his pen boxes, and his sophistication was battle scenes. However, he was also infamous for his unruly behaviour and genial nature. Mu'ayr al-Malik relates an incident when the minister of science, Prince 'Ali Qai Mirza, ordered a pen box decorated with battle scenes from the artist, with part of the payment forwarded in advance of completion. The advance was fruited away on alcohol and other equally irresponsible pastimes and Mubarak ibn Mahmud was forced to return to the minister several times over two or three months to ask for more funds. Eventually the minister was provoked to anger and threatened Mubarak ibn Mahmud with punishment if he did not accomplish the project within a certain time, so the artist withdrew to work on the pen-box. When he returned to the minister, Mubarak Mirza was shocked to find a pen-box decorated only with landscapes and confronted the artist with his observation. Mahmud replied "You highness, nothing was left out in completing the task, but the battles are taking place behind the mountains and hills." This characteristically mischievous response was what so endeared him to his family and friends, and in this case, what brought him forgiveness.

For an example of a pen-box in the hand of Mubarak Mirza see Khalil et al., 1997, no. 389, p. 158.

**£4,000-6,000**

**€5,900-8,600**

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30 ILLUMINATED ROYAL DOCUMENT OF A MARRIAGE CONTRACT BETWEEN MUHAMMAD REZA, SON OF MUHAMMAD HUSAIN, AND BIBI SHAHIBANOU, DAUGHTER OF AMIR BABA KHAN, QAJAR, PERSIA, DATED 19TH AUGUST 1866

17 panels of nasta’i script in black ink on folio paper, intercolumnar rules in gold, inner border of gold cartouches on a ground of reds and gold, the outer border of a scrolling foliate motif, the right-hand border stylized with medallions, the top-most section of the central panel with a scrolling foliate motif and minor panels of text on cotton, framed 109 by 66cm.

This document is the marriage contract between a certain Muhammad Reza son of Hajj Muhammad Husayn and Bibi Shahibanou, the daughter of Amir Baba Khan. The exact identity of Amir Baba Khan is puzzling. The emperor Fath Ali Shah went by that name, but only before he came to the throne, and this document dates from after that. It is possible that because it is a marriage document, and therefore essentially private, he is still referred to in this case by his less formal name.

**£6,000-8,000**

**€13,000-17,500**

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31 ILLUMINATED PAGE OF NASTA’LIQ CALLIGRAPHY WRITTEN FOR NASIR AL-DIN SHAH QAJAR, COPIED BY THE COURT CALLIGRAPHER MAHMUD IBN MIRZA NASSRALLAH MUSTAFAI, PERSIA, DATED A.H. 1278/A.D. 1861

25 lines of text from the Gulistan of Sa'di, an excerpt on 'Wealth and Poverty' written in fine nasta’liq script in black ink on gold-spinkled cream paper, interlinear decoration in gold, signed and dated in two lines written diagonally at lower right and left, upper illuminated panel containing the name and titles of Nasir al-Din Shah, two triangular panels of illumination at lower right and left, margins, ruled in colours and gold alternating with bands of coloured paper, wide borders of stout pink paper.

paper: 43.3 by 26.6cm.

beige paper: 60.5 by 40.3cm.

This large page from an album is an interesting example of the age-old tradition of advice for princes. In this case the compiler has chosen a pertinent passage from Sa'di’s Gulistan on wealth and poverty. The Gulistan was in general very practical, full of wise observations about life, power, kings, tyrants, education and other empirical matters. Indeed, E.G. Browne describes it as 'Machevelian' and full of 'worldly wisdom' (vol I, 1964, p.520). The present text is incomplete at the beginning, suggesting that the opening passages of the pertinent extract would have begun on the previous page of the album, making a double page of text, as was the tradition when gathering a Muragg.

The calligrapher Mahmud ibn Mirza Nassrallah Musta'fai is probably the same as the script of the A.H. 1291/A.D. 1875 fair copy of Nasir al-Din Shah’s states of his visit to Europe.

**£3,000-5,000**

**€4,200-6,200**
32. QAJAR LACQUER MIRROR-CASE, SIGNED BY 'ALI ASHRAF, PERSIA, DATED A.H. 1167/A.D. 1753

The mirror-case is signed and dated by 'Ali Ashraf, a leading lacquer artist of mid-eighteenth-century Persia. His works are highly sought after and the Khaliqi Collection contains only seven signed and dated pieces produced by him. These date from A.H.1168/A.D. 1753 to A.H. 1169/A.D. 1754-5 and include cat. 62 (Khaliqi et al 1996, p. 94) whose signature-type matches that of the current lot in both style and wording, translating as 'Ali the most noble'. Cat. 43 (Khaliqi et al 1996, p. 78) whose finely detailed floral motifs echo those on the present example. Perhaps most telling is the portrait bust of cat. 65 in the Khaliqi collection (Khaliqi et al 1996, p.99) where the maiden's heavy, lidded eyes, twisted countenance and curled locks are closely comparable to the portraits exhibited here.

'Ali Ashraf is an elusive character and not much is known of his life. He is thought to have flourished from the 1730s onwards, although the period of his artistic activity is not easily dated by scholars. Apparently working solely with lacquer, he is most celebrated for his flower and bird designs, but is also known for the work he undertook that incorporated all three genres of landscape portraiture and flower and bird as in the present example. He is thought to have been trained by the Muhammad 'Ali or Haji Muhammad; however, there is no conclusive evidence for either of these masters having been 'Ali Ashraf's teacher.

The interior panel also stands out as a remarkably fine example of lacquer work. The artist has executed the work at a standard suitable for miniature painting, the garden flowers represented in the foreground are rendered in great detail. The figures themselves, principally the maiden, are wearing intricately patterned robes, ornamented at the hem and cuffs, cuffs and waistband. In particular, the alternating bands of floral patterning on the maiden's trousers reveal the hand of a master in lacquer work.

£7,000-10,000
€10,200-14,600

33. TWO QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOXES, PERSIA, 19TH CENTURY

One with a romantic portrait of European ladies in monochrome within cartouches, cartouches separated by flowers and birds and gold ground, sides also with flowers and birds in relief against gold, separated by small roundels bearing naive rural scenes; the other with a full-length portrait of an Indian lady standing in a riverbank with peacocks and deer, the sides with scenes of the hunt, and portrait medallions

21cm.
23cm.

£4,000-5,000
€5,900-7,300

34. Property of a Lady

34. QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOX, ATTRIBUTED TO SANI HUMAYUN, PERSIA, CIRCA 1900

Each surface and the drawer with several cartouches and medallions decorated in gold scrolling vine and bearing densely populated scenes, four single portrait medallions on the sides, the drawer also with single portrait medallions on exterior and interior, the cartouches on a red ground with a gold foliate motif, the interior of the drawer with a gold ground and floral ground 23.7cm.

This pen-box is an excellent example of the type used for presentation, now known as the royal pen-box or qalam-ni-khāyi. Several comparable examples can be found in the Khaliqi collection, London Khalili et al 1997, no.250-254, p.61-64. This specific genre is distinguished by the density of the miniature figures, framed in cartouches by a golden vine motif. As with the present example the figurine scenes usually represent characters from the Shāh nama, and extend to the base of the pen-box as well as the top and sides.

Here the paintings on the top panel illustrate the audience of various kings from the Persian epic the Shāh nāmeh, the central figure is Gāyānshāh, whilst of the other figures gathered around him include legendary kings of old. Along the sides and base of the pen-box are depictions of royal personages from different eras. Each of these figures, whether spiritual or secular, would no doubt have held a certain amount of symbolism for the recipient of the pen-box, tales of honour, justice and piety would have been a reminder of one's duty to king, country and God.

A similar example was offered in these rooms 12 October 2004, lot 63.

£3,000-5,000
€4,400-7,300

35. QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOX, PERSIA, DATED A.H. 1272/A.D. 1855

Each panel with cartouches bearing figurative scenes from the story of Shaykh San'an and the maiden, the cartouches delineated with gold scroll work and against a brown ground with scrolling foliate motif, drawer with red ground and gold foliage, interior with silver inkwell 24cm.

This pen-box represents one of the most popular legends of the mid-nineteenth century when numerous pen-boxes, mirror cases and lacquered caskets were ornamented with scenes from the tale of Shaykh San'an and the maiden. A paragon of the sult community, Shaykh San'an was seduced from the path of righteousness by a Christian maiden and renounced Islam for her sake. She demanded that he drink wine, as shown in the central cartouche on the present example, and to keep her pigs, as shown in the top-left panel. Eventually due to the spiritual deprivation he suffered, the Shaykh attained true spiritual enlightenment and the maiden converted to Islam.

The story can be read on several levels, as a straightforward moral tale of the danger of wine and women, as a mystical tale of enlightenment and the union with God, but perhaps most interestingly as a reflection of the social changes and political relationship between Iran and Europe. With the maiden in her European garments representing the west and the Muslim shaykh as Iran. For a full discussion of this refer to Diba and Ehtihar, 1998, pp.33-35. Other scenes ornamenting the pen-box are taken from the Shāh nāmeh and include Shahr Bābūr and Majun in the desert. Comparable examples can be found in the Khalili Collection, Khalili 1997, cat.263 and 264, p.34.

£3,000-4,000
€4,400-5,300
38 TWO QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOXES, BOTH SIGNED BY MUSTAFA, PERSIA, DATED A.H. 1305/ A.D. 1887-8, AND A.H. 1307/ A.D. 1889-90

both decorated in grisaille highlighted with gold, that dated A.H. 1305 decorated with flower and bird motifs and a central medallion bearing a sufi scene, the sides with portrait medallions of sufi clerics, the drawer holding a silver spoon; that dated A.H. 1307 decorated with a wedding scene a central couple and beauties reclining, the sides with musicians, youths and maidens.
23cm.
21.7cm.
(2)

Two comparable examples can be found in the Khalili Collection (Khalili 1997, cat.356 and 359, p.146). As with the current lot, both pen-boxes were executed by the artist Mustafa and decorated in grisaille with gold highlights. Cat. 359 is a particularly close comparison to the present example bearing sufi scenes. These two pen-boxes share a similar decorative vocabulary with the central oval medallion on the top, and the circular portrait medallions on the sides; the flower and bird groups are comparable too. Although the wedding scenes on the other examples differ from the pastoral scenes ornamenting cat. 359, the unbroken scenes along the sides of both pen-boxes are unusual in the lack of medallions and cartouches; a parallel may be drawn here although the palette and signature are stronger evidence of their relationship.

£3,000-5,500
€3,100-8,100

39 QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOX, SIGNED BY SAMIRUMI, PERSIA, DATED A.H. 1327/ A.D. 1909

narrow pen case with cartouches on a gold and black ground, the cartouches on the top panel bearing a full length portrait of a man - probably the dervish Nār 'Alī Shah, and studies of parrots, the sides with landscapes of rural scenes.
20cm.

EXHIBITED
Treasures of Islam, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, 1985

LITERATURE
Geneva 1985, no.173, p.187

£1,200-1,750
€1,200-2,000

40 A GROUP OF QAJAR LACQUER PEN-BOXES, PERSIA, 19TH CENTURY

one with lid with battle scene in intricate detail and hunting scenes along sides; another with lid with three cartouches, central cartouche with two European ladies reclining, flanking cartouches with swans in a pool, sides with Christian scenes in cartouches; another with medallions of European style portrait busts against a ground of birds and flowers, central cartouches on the sides with rural scenes of Persia.
21.2cm.
23.5cm.
23.4cm.
(3)

£3,000-4,000
€3,400-5,900