

چنین تا بنزدیک پیران سید  
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سید





## INDIA AND IRAN: WORKS ON PAPER

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FRONT COVER: DETAIL NO. 2  
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INSIDE BACK COVER: DETAIL NO. 20



1. ILLUSTRATION FROM THE SHAHNAME  
KING GUSHTASP MOURNING HIS SON ISFANDIYAR  
SHIRAZ, PERSIA, A. H. 975 / 1567-68 A.D.

Opaque pigments and gold on paper, four text panels above and below, a catchword in the foreground; on the verso twenty-five lines of black *nasta' liq* arranged in four columns broken by a gold-ground horizontal panel at the centre  
9¼ by 7¼ in.; 24 by 18.5 cm. painting  
13½ by 8¾ in.; 34.5 by 22.5 cm. folio

Isfandiyar is one of the central characters of the Shahnama. He was ordered by his father King Gushtasp to bring the hero Rostam to his court. Rostam refused and this led to a fight where Isfandiyar was killed.

In this tragic scene set in a sumptuous palace interior, mourning figures surround the bier containing Isfandiyar's shrouded body, laid out on a pink floral carpet with a geometric dado beyond broken by two gilt-bordered windows. The shaven-headed figure of King Gushtasp kneels with hands raised before the coffin, his crown cast aside, to the right stands his son Pashutan. To the left are Isfandiyar's mother and her daughter and at the windows his two sisters. In the foreground stand two grooms with three horses.

In spite of the solemnity of the subject, the artist of this painting – and of the others in the manuscript – has used detailed

architectural elements, geometric motifs, selective gilding and a rich palette of turquoise, yellow, pink and orange to create a vibrant and evocative scene.

**THE MANUSCRIPT**  
Nine miniatures from this distinguished manuscript were sold at Hôtel Drouot in 1996, when the catalogue stated that they were removed from the manuscript in about 1925, when they were mounted in brocade borders for framing.

The colophon, which was set below a depiction of 'Bahram seizing the crown in the lion's den', lot 91G, read: 'This sixth volume of the Shahnama was made with the help of God Almighty in the year 975'.

**PROVENANCE**  
Private collection, Lyon, France, 1920s-1996: François de Ricqlès, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 22 March 1996, lot 91-I  
Private collection, Paris, 1996-2022

**REFERENCES**  
Uluç, L., *Turkman governors, Shiraz Artisans and Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth Century Shiraz Manuscripts*, Istanbul, 2007





2. A HIGHLY IMPORTANT ILLUSTRATION FROM THE ‘ACCESSION’ SHAHNAMA OF SHAH ISMA’IL II  
KAY KHUSRAU RECEIVED BY PIRAN IN KHOTAN  
ASCRIBED TO THE ARTIST ZAYN AL-‘ABIDIN  
PERSIA, QAZVIN, CIRCA 1576-7

Opaque colours with gold and silver on paper, the verso with four columns of text in twenty-two lines, additional verses in the margin, and a gold rubric in mid-page occupying the two inner columns, with rules of blue, black, red and gold  
8½ by 9¾ in.; 21.8 by 24.5 cm. painting  
18 by 12½ in.; 45.8 by 31.6 cm. folio

This lyrical scene is amongst the rarest subject for any *Shāhnāma*, and here it is treated with great delicacy and lightness of hand by Zayn al-‘Abidin. This virtuoso artist’s skill as both a painter and an illuminator have been put to full and splendid use, creating a vibrant work worthy of its imperial patron.

At the centre of a sumptuous pale mauve ground stands the wise and dignified figure of Piran, having descended his gold throne to greet the contrastingly youthful Kay Khusraw at the edge of a meandering stream. Seven secondary figures surround them, all in white turbans and silk brocade robes with swords mostly strung from their belts. The landscape is filled with spring-blossoming prunus, a cypress and to the right a dominant maple tree containing song birds. The vibrancy of the scene is further enhanced by the courtiers’ robes - in a palette of royal and cobalt blue, saffron, chocolate and gold - contrasting with the bright white of turbans and prunus and the startling maple boasting a pale green trunk and leaves of flame, saffron and dark grey. The trunk echoes the green of Piran’s inner garment and the leaves reflect the colours of the courtiers’ garments.

In her essay on this leaf, Dr. Eleanor Sims concludes:  
“This picture from the “Accession” *Shāhnāma* of Shah Isma‘il II Safavi, ascribed to Mir Zayn al-‘Abidin and displaying many of his signature features, is a mature and unmannered example of the Qazvin style of sixteenth century Persian manuscript painting. “Kay Khusrau Received by Piran in Khotan” fits well into just the period of Isma‘il’s short reign, between the late summer of 1576 and November of 1577.”  
Dr. Sims has also tentatively suggested the possibility, on stylistic grounds, that the manuscript could have been conceived before 1557.

THE SHAHNAMA BY ABU’L-QASIM FIRDAUSI TUSI  
The painting comes from a dispersed royal Safavid copy of the *Shāhnāma*, the Persian Book of Kings, one of the world’s longest epic poems, written by the celebrated court poet Firdausi. This epic poem is an account of the reigns of fifty rulers of Iran, from its earliest days down to the Sasanian period, the last pre-Muslim dynasty to rule in Iran before the Arab conquest of 651. A work of at least 50,000 rhyming verses and often many more, the *Shāhnāma* was completed early in the eleventh century and was composed entirely in Persian, with virtually no Arabic word or phrase.

IMPORTANCE OF THE ISMA’IL II ‘ACCESSION’ SHAHNAMA  
It is recognised that the two most important *Shāhnāma* manuscripts of the Safavid period are those commissioned by Shah Tahmasp in 1525 (the “Houghton” *Shāhnāma*) and Shah Isma‘il II’s of 1576-7.

Both are of exceptionally large format, sharing a four-column layout with twenty-two lines of text, Tahmasp’s (47 by 32 cm.) being only slightly larger than Isma‘il’s (46 by 31.6 cm.). The former has around two hundred and fifty paintings as opposed to the fifty-five so far identified from the latter. A distinguishing feature of Isma‘il’s manuscript is the outer marginal ruling enclosing the inner written surface.

Shah Isma‘il II’s inspiration was his father Tahmasp’s 1525 accession *Shāhnāma*, the magnificently illustrated and most famous Persian manuscript extant. Upon the death of Shah Tahmasp in 1576 Isma‘il succeeded to the throne and immediately assembled the finest painters and illustrators of the day to work on his “Accession” *Shāhnāma*.

In 1976 B.W. Robinson wrote the first of two articles attempting the reconstruction of the manuscript by tracing and identifying as many of its paintings as possible. His article lists forty-nine, and this was augmented by a subsequent article in 2005 where he identified six further paintings including the present example, bringing the total known to fifty-five. His relevant comments include:





- Though the colophon does not survive, “the date of the miniatures is fixed by stylistic considerations at about 1575-80” (Robinson, 1976, p.5)
- “It is also clear that it is a royal manuscript; its scale, its lavish and impressive illustrations with their attributions to well-known court artists, leave no doubt on that score”
- Shah Isma‘il II “was an extremely cultured man” and a practiced calligrapher, poet and painter, and Robinson leaves no doubt that he commissioned this manuscript
- He also notes that with his reign cut short “all the surviving miniatures ... are confined to the earlier part of the epic”, coinciding with his death after only fifteen months’ reign, and in view of that “the miniatures may thus be dated with some confidence to 1576-7”

SUBJECT OF THE PAINTING

As Robinson noted, this scene is very rarely illustrated, the only other instance is recorded in the Cambridge *Shāhnāma* database, pp. 355-357, see Sims’s essay. The illustration expands on two of the fundamental themes of the *Shāhnāma*: the first is that of kingly legitimacy and the second is the ancient rivalry between Iran and Turan. Thus it adds detail to the broader story of Kay Khusrau and his pivotal position in the legendary enmity between Iran and Turan.

THE PAINTER MIR ZAYN AL-‘ABIDIN

Tutored by his grandfather, the great painter Sultan Muhammad, who was one of the premier painters of Shah Tahmasp’s *Shāhnāma*, Zayn al-‘Abidin spent his entire life in royal service. Of the forty-nine paintings identified by Robinson in 1976, four are by this artist, at the time all in the Rothschild collection, subsequently sold by Colnaghi’s (pp. 34-35, 37 & 46). Of the six identified by Robinson in 2006, two are ascribed to him. Robinson comments:

- “produced work remarkable for superb execution and rich colouring”
- “as good an illuminator as a painter... a man of great dignity and nobility of character”
- “his work in this manuscript... is all outstanding for its superb execution and rich colouring; faces and rocks are painted with the utmost skill and delicacy, the drawing is always sure and firm”

ROBINSON’S 2005 DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT FOLIO

“Another fine miniature by this excellent painter. Pale mauve ground with no horizon or visible sky. Piran’s throne is set up in a garden; a large maple tree with boldly variegated leaves and frequented by birds, to the right, and a stream running across

the foreground. Six courtiers, grouped in pairs, are wearing Turkish-style turbans, and another courtier, more elderly and carrying a stick, lower right. Piran, with a greying beard, and the pretty little prince, occupy the middle ground. It is perhaps noteworthy that both Piran and Kay Khusraw are wearing crowns (very unusual for the former), the elderly man with one feather and the younger prince with two; one of the courtiers in the lower left-hand pair is depicted in profile in the same style of ‘Ali Asghar (see no.3).”

OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS MANUSCRIPT

- Eight folios:  
Aga Khan Museum of Art, Toronto, formerly in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan (1933-2003)
- Two folios:  
Abolala Soudavar Collection: Art and History Trust
- Five folios:  
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin
- One folio:  
David Collection, Copenhagen
- One folio:  
Freer/Sackler Galleries, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
- One folio:  
Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar: acquired Sotheby's, London, 25 April 2012, lot 475
- Two folios:  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- Double-page frontispiece:  
The Nasser David Khalili Collection, London
- Sixteen folios:  
Riza-yi Abbasi Museum, Tehran
- One folio:  
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle
- One folio:  
De Unger/Keir Collection, London

INSCRIPTIONS

Apart from the main text, additional poetry in eight couplets is written near the bottom of the verso, while the gold rubric at the centre of the page announces Afrasiyab’s consultation with Piran regarding Kay Khusrau. On the recto, the illustrated page, is ascribed the name of the artist, “Zayn al-‘Abidin”, written just above the *chinar* tree. Robinson, (2005, pp.298-9) convincingly argues the case for this (and other signed works in the manuscript) being in fact signatures, not attributions, and here describes his “neat and compact writing” being in character with Zayn al-‘Abidin’s exacting style of painting.







**PROVENANCE**  
Musée des arts Decoratifs, Paris, 1912, when the manuscript was complete  
Georges-Joseph Demotte (1877-1923), Paris. By 1914 Demotte was offering individual leaves, and at the time of his death still had seven in stock.  
Million family, Paris, until 2006, (one of the six published by Robinson in 2005)  
Sam Fogg, London, 2006  
Private collection, London, 2006-22

**PUBLISHED**  
Robinson, B.W., “Shah Isma’il II’s copy of the Shah-Nama: Additional Material”, in *Iran*, vol. 43, London, 2005, pp.291-99, colour plate 4

**REFERENCES**  
Blochet, E., *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Persian Paintings... at the Galleries of Demotte Inc.*, New York City, 1929, nos. 60-66  
Cambridge Shahnama Database, Warner & Warner, vol. II, pp. 355-7  
Grube, E. J., *Muslim Miniature Paintings from the XIII to XIX Century from Collections in the United States and Canada*, Venice, 1962, no.60, p.82  
Marteau, G. and Vever, H., *Miniatures Persanes*, 2 vols, Paris, 1913  
Robinson, B.W., *Persian Miniature Painting from Collections in the British Isles*, London, 1967, no. 56, p. 62  
Robinson, B.W., “Rothschild and Binney Collections: Persian and Mughal Arts of the Book,” *Persian and Mughal Art*, Colnaghi, London, 1976, cat. 19, pp. 32-47  
Robinson, B.W., “Isma’il II’s Copy of the *Shāhnāma*,” *Iran*, volume XIV, 1976, pp. 1–8, pls. I– VIII  
Robinson, B.W., “Shah Isma’il II’s Copy of the *Shāh-Nāma*: Additional Material,” *Iran*, volume 43, 2005, pp. 291–299  
Sims, E., *The Tale and the Image*, Nasser David Khalili Catalogue of Islamic Art, volume XXV, London, 2018  
Sims, E., ‘A folio from the Isma’il II Shahnama’, commissioned essay on the present work (unpublished), April 2018  
Sotheby’s, London: 7 December 1970, lot 48; 18 October 1995, lots 75-76; 27 April 2005, lot 22; 7 October 2009, lot 37 and 25 April 2012, lot 475  
Welch, S.A., *Artists for the Shah*, New Haven and London, 1976, *passim*

We are grateful to Dr. Eleanor Sims for her assistance and advice in cataloguing this folio.







3. AN IMPORTANT MUGHAL PORTRAIT BY MADHU  
**PORTRAIT OF A EUROPEAN LADY WORSHIPPING THE SUN**  
**ASCRIBED TO MADHU**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1595**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, inscriptions and seals on verso  
6½ by 4¼ in.; 15.5 by 10.4 cm. painting  
8¾ by 16½ in.; 22.4 by 16.6 cm. folio

A woman dressed in a brocade tunic over a long blue dress and with a red scarf draped round her stands in a green flowery meadow. Her hands are raised in prayer to the sun, shown in the top left corner of the painting. Her thick coiled and plaited hair is kept in place with a gold fillet with red feather plume, while a diaphanous muslin cloth is attached to the back of her hair over her neck. A breeze is blowing from the left sufficient for her dress and scarf to billow out behind her.

Sun worship was a practice that appealed to Akbar himself and there are a few paintings that show him standing isolated against a plain ground with hands raised in appeal to the sun. The finest example, from the 1580s, in the Keir Collection (Robinson *et al.*, pl. 16), shows him dressed for worship in the Hindu manner. Solar imagery, with the emperor appearing at the *jharokha* to welcome the rising sun in the morning, became part of the established imperial rituals.

The subject is a close copy of the central figure in a very similar painting from the Gulshan Album, attributed by John Seyller to Basavan, 1590-95 (2011, pp. 119-34, fig. 10), now in the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, save for the omission of its hilly landscape and a child hanging on to the woman’s skirts with a ewer alongside. The costume of the lady in both paintings is what Mughal artists thought European ladies wore, based on their observations of what was worn by saints in the religious engravings and paintings brought to Akbar’s court. Several artists of the Akbari period produced a number of versions of their own work, or slightly different versions of another artist’s work, but to produce a close copy of another artist’s work is rather rare.

**THE ARTIST**  
There were several artists named Madhu in the Akbari studio, three of them with distinguishing epithets – the Elder, the Younger, or from Gujarat.

The artist simply inscribed as Madhu *tout court* is known by his contributions to major manuscripts including the Jaipur *Razmnama*, the British Library *Darabnama*, the Keir Collection *Khamsa* of Nizami, the dispersed *Baburnama*, the Victoria and Albert Museum *Akbarnama*, the British Library (Dyson Perrins) *Khamsa*, the Bodleian Library *Baharistan*, the Chester Beatty Library/British Library volumes of the same work, and the British Library’s *Nafahat al-Uns*. These all date from the second half of Akbar’s reign, 1580-1605, but a single painting in the British Library’s *Anvar-i Suhayli* of 1604-10, from the latter part of the volume, suggests that he continued working into the early years of Jahangir’s reign.

**A COURT ALBUM**  
It is likely that the present work formed part of an album of paintings, many with European subjects, which can be partially re-assembled through the evidence of these idiosyncratic inscriptions. The following paintings from this group all feature a single, rather overscale figure, set against a very simply rendered or monochrome background. Most have been set into undecorated borders with similar inscriptions on both recto and verso.

- Mars by Madhu, Sotheby’s, New York, 20-21 September 1985, lot 372
- Ottoman figure, Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM 733
- European soldier, Sotheby’s, London, 19 October 2016, lot 12
- European seated, Sotheby’s, London, 20 April 2016, lot 49
- St. John the Baptist, by Sadiq, Sotheby’s, London, 23 April 1996, lot 5
- Private collection, Switzerland: five paintings depicting Akbar on an elephant, Darab Khan, Hadarab Khan, Iradat Khan and Safi Khan





Four from the Khosrovani-Diba Collection, Sotheby’s, London, 19 October 2016

- The present painting, lot 1
- Royal horse and grooms, lot 10
- European in a landscape, lot 11, David Collection, Copenhagen
- European, after de Gheyn, lot 12

LIBRARIANS’ NOTES

Also intriguing is the life of the painting after its creation. A wealth of inventory notes and seals are inscribed on the verso, commencing with Akbar in 1598 and ending with those of the Mewar court in 1699-1700.

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 1598:      | Inspected in regnal year 43 of Akbar’s reign   |
| 1613:      | Inspected in regnal year 8 of Jahangir’s reign   |
| 1615:      | Inspected in regnal year 10, oval seal of Abd al-Latif   |
| 1642:      | Property of Asaf Khan Khan-e Khanan, father-in-law of Shah Jahan, entrusted to Muhammad Sharif in regnal year 15 |
| 1644:      | Entrusted to Muzaffar in regnal year 17  |
| 1645:      | Entrusted to Shams in regnal year 18   |
| 1656:      | Entrusted to La’l Chilah (?) in regnal year 29; the grading for this piece was given as ‘third’                  |
| 1659:      | Inspected under Alamgir, accompanied by the seal of Azizullah  |
| 1664-5:    | Seal impression of Sayyid Ali al-Husayni   |
| 1699-1700: | Mewari inventory numbers 17/ and a clerical note dated 1111 A.H.   |

Other notes include:  
‘Image of a woman who is praying to the Lordly Sun’; attribution of the painting to ‘Madhu’; graded ‘avval’ (‘first [class]’) at upper left in a later hand and numbered ‘31’ at lower edge.

For an essay on Mughal and Mewari inspection notes and inventories, see Seyller 1997, pp. 243-349 and Topsfield, pp. 188-199 respectively.

INSCRIPTIONS

Inscribed simply *Madhu* on the lower border in Devanagari and *nasta’liq*, and on the reverse with extensive royal inventory notes and seal impressions, see below.

PROVENANCE

Emperor Akbar, by 1598  
Emperor Jahangir, by 1613  
Asaf Khan Khan-e Khanan, father-in-law of Emperor Shah Jahan, by 1642  
Emperor Alamgir, by 1659  
Royal Mewar Collection, Udaipur, by 1699-1700  
Jaleh Khosrovani-Diba, Geneva, 1970s/80s-2016: Sotheby’s, London, 19 October 2016, lot 1  
Simon Ray, *Indian and Islamic Works of Art*, London, 2017, no. 24  
Private collection, London, 2017-22

PUBLISHED

Löwenstein, S.J.F. zu, *Christliche Bilder in Altindischer Malerei*, 1958, no. 19b  
Seyller, J., “For Love or Money: The Shaping of Historical Paintings Collections in India” in Mason, D., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, Philadelphia, 2001, p. 16, no. 13

REFERENCES

Robinson, B.W., et al., *The Keir Collection: Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, London, 1988  
Seyller, J., “The Inspection and Valuation of Manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal library”, in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 57, no. 3/4, Zurich, 1997  
Seyller, J., “Basawan” in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Zurich, 2011  
Topsfield, A., “The Royal Paintings inventory at Udaipur”, in *Indian Art and Connoisseurship, Essays in Honour of Douglas Barrett*, Middletown and Ahmedabad, 1995



4. FEMALE MUSICIAN PLAYING THE RUDRAVINA  
GOLCONDA, CIRCA 1680

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, gold-ground border with floral motifs enclosed by pale red and blue banding and green and gold rules, laid down in an album page with interlacing scrolls of foliage on an ivory ground  
6¼ by 4½ in.; 16 by 11.7 cm. painting  
12¼ by 7½ in.; 31.2 by 20 cm. folio

Striding intently through an outdoor setting, a beautiful young woman plays the *rudravina*, a plucked string instrument also known as the *bin*. Dressed in a short green *choli*, a transparent gilt-edged *odhni*, and a pleated white skirt with floral motifs and frontal sash, she wears her dark hair in a long plait and plucks her instrument with slender fingers. An allusion may be intended to the goddess Sarasvati, who is frequently depicted with this instrument, as well as wearing hair ornaments representing the sun and the moon, also found here.

However, the painting would appear to follow in a lineage of comely maidens, sketched in grisaille with light washes of colour, that have been attributed to the Deccan in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Very close in theme are ‘Dancing Girl’ (Vasella Collection, Switzerland) and ‘Sleeping Maiden and Maid’ (Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin), see Haidar & Sardar, pp. 252-53, no. 147.

Most of the artists who created these paintings remain anonymous, but the style is associated with Rahim Deccani, a figure whose signature appears in a small group of works. The present image appears in fact to quote the young instrument-playing woman from his best-known painting, ‘Prince Seated in

a Garden’ (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, see Haidar & Sardar, p. 249, no.143). The late Mark Zebrowski (pp. 201-5) first brought these works together and discussed Rahim Deccani’s greater significance, after which time other works have been attributed to his hand, including ‘A Lady in a Garden Surrounded by Birds’ (Losty, p. 17, no. 8; private collection, San Francisco). The latter displays the unexpected juxtapositions and shifts in scale that characterize Deccani painting and that manifest themselves here in the rather incongruous cat and butterfly at the young woman’s feet.

The small later inscription on the bottom right possibly reads ‘*Khairunnisa*’, (the name of a princess thought to have married James Achilles Kirkpatrick (1764-1805), resident at Hyderabad) but the painting is surely not intended as a portrait of a particular figure. The number ‘204’ also been written on the hem of the lady’s skirt. It has later been set in borders somewhat like those given in eighteenth-century Lucknow to a set of late sixteenth century Mughal *Harivamsa* paintings.

PROVENANCE

Sotheby’s, London, 24 June 1929, lot 158 (*unillustrated*)  
Sotheby’s, London, 12 October 1990, lot 98  
Private collection, Norfolk, 1990-2022

REFERENCES

Haidar, N. N. & Sardar, M., *Sultans of Deccan India 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, New York, 2015  
Losty, J. P., *Indian and Persian Painting 1590-1840*, New York, 2014  
Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, London, 1983

MS





5. **PORTRAIT OF A SEATED PRINCE**  
**MUGHAL OR DECCANI, CIRCA 1690-1710**

Ink drawing on paper heightened with colour and gold, narrow gold border enclosed by black and gold rules  
7½ by 4½ in.; 18 by 11.5 cm.

This finely painted portrait depicts a pensive prince on a palace terrace under an evening sky streaked with gold. He is kneeling on an embroidered summer carpet and resting against a large brocade cushion decorated with floral sprigs. He wears a fine muslin *jama*, the *pajama* gold-striped, a gold brocade *pathka*, and a white turban with feather aigrette encircled by a brocade band. Behind is a marble parapet and the hint of a garden beyond. Delicately rendered in whites and gold, the painting captures the bearded man’s features, especially the slightly weary eyes, the curve of the nose, and the slight pursing of the lips. Also beautifully drawn is the *khanjar* dagger tucked into his sash, its jade hilt with horse’s head pommel. In front of him lies his sword and scabbard, with gold hilt, chape and locket.

These details give a lifelike portrayal, pointing to a specific individual, but the sitter’s identity has been lost in time. He does however bear resemblance to the progeny of Emperor ‘Alamgir (r. 1658-1707), and their depiction in a number of late-seventeenth to early-eighteenth century portraits. Related examples include paintings of his son Bahadur Shah I in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, dated circa 1670, (réserve, OD-51-4, f. 8), his grandson Bidar Bakht in the British Museum, dated 18th century (1920,0917,0.106.2), and an unidentified prince in the Victoria & Albert Museum, dated to the second half of the 17th century (132:29-1885). For other examples see Roy, pp. 232-39.

Following the fall of Bijapur and Golconda to Aurangzeb in 1686-87, a more sober type of portraiture was introduced into the Deccan (see Zebrowski, pp. 209-220). With the delicate rendering of facial features in in ink, and only light washes of colour elsewhere, these paintings have a certain softness not evident in the more formal Mughal portraits completed in layers of opaque paints. For a group made in the Deccan in the early eighteenth century, depicting an array of Mughal officials seated in similar settings, see Zebrowski figs.181-2, 186-7, 190-1. Therefore, the present painting could alternatively be attributed to the Deccan in the period just after ‘Alamgir’s conquest of the sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda in 1686 and 1687, respectively, and the settling of Mughal deputies there.

For a closely related coloured drawing of a prince on a terrace smoking, circa 1700, now in a private collection, see Losty, no.15.

**PROVENANCE**  
Ader Picard Tajan, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 11 May 1982, lot 96  
Private collection, France, 1982-2020

**REFERENCES**  
Hurel, R., *Miniatures et Peintures Indiennes: Collection du département des Estampes et de la Photographie de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, vol. 1, Paris, 2010  
Losty, J. P., *Indian Court Painting*, New York, 2017  
Roy, M., “Historical portraits of Aurangzeb ‘Alamgir I (1618-1707)’” in Ohta, A., Rogers, M. & Haddon, R. W. (eds.), *Art, Trade and Culture in the Islamic World and Beyond: From the Fatimids to the Mughals*, London, 2016  
Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, London, 1983

MS





6. FEMALE TAMBOURINE-PLAYER  
TURKEY, EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Opaque pigments with gold and silver on laid paper, inscribed at upper left in Latin and Ottoman Turkish and with *Dayrezen* in the foreground  
8½ by 6 in.; 20.7 by 15 cm.

The lady is seated cross-legged with a large tambourine raised in both hands. She wears a slender white scarf over her shoulders and a voluminous gold-belted grey tunic with frogged fastenings down the front. Her saffron turban has a large gilt oval finial painted in red with a pomegranate. The drawing is enclosed with a single black rule with inscriptions outside.

Of the seven in the Pozzi sale of 1970, two further watercolours were offered, along with this, by Soustiel in Paris in 1974. Two others from this album are in the Binney Collection, San Diego, see Binney, pp. 94-5, no. 34.

Albums of *kiyafet* or costume appear to have been produced for, or commissioned by, foreign visitors to Turkey in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. They typically depicted people from all walks of Ottoman life. Folios from the Pozzi Collection, as here, are inscribed in Latin, Ottoman Turkish and German, and others are known with French inscriptions, one dated 1660 (Sotheby's, London, 24 April 2012, lot 186). Another album was acquired in 1618 by the Elizabethan traveller, Peter Mundy. For further discussion of such albums see Schick, pp.625-8 and Fleet et al, pp.431 et seq.

**INSCRIPTIONS**  
*Dayrezen* in Ottoman script  
*Mulier à musica Regina matri*  
Female Fusician to the Queen mother

**PROVENANCE**  
Jean Pozzi (1846-1918): Palais Galliera, Paris, 2 December 1970, lot 151  
Joseph Soustiel (1904-90), Paris  
Jean Soustiel (1938-99): *Objets d'art de l'Islam II*, Paris, 1974, no. 31  
Marie-Christine David (1946-2021), Paris, 1974-2021

**REFERENCES**  
Binney, E., *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts from the Collection of Edwin Binney*, 3rd, New York, 1973  
Fleet, K., Faroqhi, S.N., Kunt, I.M. and Kasaba, R., eds., *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, Cambridge, 2006  
Schick, L.M., "Ottoman Costume Album in a Cross-Cultural Context" in *Art Turc: 10e Congrès international d'art turc*, Geneva, 1999





7. **PORTRAIT OF TIMUR**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in an album page with plain, blue and rose-coloured borders and gilt rules  
7½ by 4 in.; 19.2 by 10.4 cm. painting  
11 by 7½ in.; 28 by 19.1 cm. folio

The great Timur (r. circa 1370–1405), conqueror of most of Iran and Central Asia and a famously skilled tactician, known as Tamerlane in the West, forms the subject of this painting. As founder of the great Timurid dynasty that bears his name, from whom the Mughals proudly claimed descent, he sacked Delhi in 1398, and was en route to China when he died in 1405. He was buried at the Gur-i Amir (‘Tomb of the Amir’) in his capital of Samarqand. Though he lived centuries earlier, a number of Mughal portraits feature Timur (or rather, an imagined vision of him) to emphasize his dynasty’s descent as well as the passage of power directly from him to the imperial Mughal family. This was reinforced by other acts: the Mughals referred to themselves as Timurids, adopted the titles Timur had used, such as “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction,” and collected objects once owned by him or his descendants. See Balabanlilar, pp. 1-39.

This image depicts Timur seated on a throne in a landscape setting, passing a gem-set gold crown to an unseen figure. The gesture is explained by reference to other paintings in which Timur appears, passing his crown to the emperors Babur (r. 1526–30), Akbar (r. 1556–1605), or Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58). One

well-known example is a double-page composition made for Shah Jahan. In the right-hand painting, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (IM 8-1925), Timur himself hands the crown to Babur, the first of the Mughal emperors, while Babur’s son, Humayun, observes them. In the left-hand painting, now in the Chester Beatty Library (MS7A, fol. 19), Akbar bestows the crown on Shah Jahan, while Akbar’s son (and Shah Jahan’s father), Jahangir, observes them. This motif was developed late in Akbar’s reign, but images of Timur continued to be made well into the nineteenth century for albums of portraits of the Mughal emperors and their ancestors, such as one in the San Diego Museum of Art, (1990.490). A similar portrait, from the Ardeshir Album (Sotheby’s, London, 26 March 1973, lot 1), is another example of the type. The painting may have been placed, in its original album context, opposite a portrait of one of the Mughal royal family, who would have been depicted receiving the crown.

**PROVENANCE**  
Private collection, France, 1974-2021

**REFERENCES**  
Balabanlilar, L., “Lords of the Auspicious Conjunction: Turco-Mongol Imperial Identity on the Subcontinent,” *Journal of World History*, vol.18, no.1, 2007  
Stronge, S., *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book, 1560-1650*, London, 2002

MS





8. FOLIO FROM A RAGAMALA SERIES: BHAIRAVA RAGA  
A PRINCE SEATED ON A TERRACE WITH A MAIDEN  
BIKANER, CIRCA 1750

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in an album page with rows of repeating floral sprigs, with black double rules enclosing an inner orange-ground floral border  
6¼ by 4 in.; 16 by 10.5 cm. painting  
9½ by 6½ in.; 24 by 17 cm. folio

As befits a morning raga, the dark clouds of night are receding as the streaming golden rays of dawn light a scene on a palace terrace spread with a carpet and stout bolsters. A slender prince, wearing a *dhoti*, *dupatta* and jewellery including a three-pointed gold crown, embraces a young maiden who anoints him with sandalwood paste from a gold cup. A row of white-blossomed shrubs lies beyond the white marble balustrade. They are flanked by two standing female attendants respectively bearing a *chauri* and *morcchal*. In the foreground is a female musician and a maid mixing sandalwood paste.

The god Bhairava is usually identified with the god Siva of the Brahmanical pantheon, that is with identifying attributes including a third eye and a sickle moon on his head.

In the Manley *Ragamala*, Amber, circa 1615 (British Museum), the format for this raga is set, with a prince and a maiden flanked by three attendants, Bhairava being the prince  
“who is getting ready for the enjoyment of love is seated in a palace or on a terrace while his consort or a female attendant applies to his outstretched arm sandal-paste which is being prepared by a woman in the foreground. Sometimes the assembly is enlarged by the presence of female musicians and some more attendants.” See Cran, pp.181-206 and Waldschmidt, pp.85-148.

This was the first of twelve folios from a set sold at Sotheby’s, London, in 1968. For this and three others from it, see Maggs,

pp.169-172, nos. 145-48. Here Bhairava wears a crown, which is not mentioned in the quoted text because here he represents Krishna, as further indicated by his bluish skin and yellow *dhoti*. For another Bikaner depiction of this *raga* in the Goenka Collection, 1675-1700, with Bhairava as Krishna, see Goswamy & Bhatia, p.145, no.114. In our painting, however, some fifty years later, the palette has become lighter in tone, but its evocative mood is still intense.

INSCRIPTIONS  
“bahī rāg samay prā / taḥ kāl” (rest unclear)  
*Bhai[rav] raga for the morning time*

PROVENANCE  
Private collection, England, 1960s  
Sotheby’s, London, 11 December 1968, lot 1 (*unillustrated*)  
Maggs Bros., London, Bulletin 15, August 1969, no. 145 (*monochrome illustration*)  
Private collection, England, 1969-2020

REFERENCES  
Cran, R., ‘The Manley Ragamala: an Album of Indian Illustrated Musical Modes’ in *Music and Civilisation*, British Museum Yearbook 4, London, 1980  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A\\_1973-0917-0-57](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1973-0917-0-57)  
Goswamy, B. N. & Bhatia, U., *Painted Visions: the Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings*. New Delhi, 1999  
Maggs Bros., *Oriental Miniatures and Illumination*, Bulletin No.15, vol. IV, part 3, London, August 1969  
Waldschmidt, E., ‘Ein zweiter Beitrag zur Rāgamālā-Ikonographie’ (A second contribution to Rāgamālā Iconography), in *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen*, Göttingen, 1972

JB





9. PRINCESS WITH HER DUENA  
MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1760

Opaque pigments on paper with gold, the black-ground border with gold meander, laid down in an album page with repeating gold chamfered floral panels on an ivory ground; a panel of cursive calligraphy on the verso  
9½ by 6¼ in.; 24.1 by 16cm. painting  
16½ by 11½ in.; 42 by 29 cm. folio

A young woman in the first flush of youth sniffs a narcissus, whilst accompanied by a woman long past her prime. The two are a study in opposites. The young lady is fresh-faced, heavily bejeweled, and clad in diaphanous clothing that emphasizes her slim curves, her slender fingers henna-tipped. The duenna, on the other hand, has features sagging with extra weight and is wrapped in shapeless robes and shawls, no jewels in sight. As if to reinforce the point, the younger woman holds a flower that appears in early spring.

This painting represents a genre relatively new at the time it was made. Previously, women of the court were nearly invisible on the page, but they started appearing with increasing frequency from the mid-seventeenth century onwards. A set of early examples may be found in an album in the British Library, created for Prince Dara Shikoh in the 1630s, that is filled with such beauties (Add.Or.MS.3129). Some are recognisable as women from the extended Mughal royal family, but others, like this lady, are anonymous female figures.

For another portrait depicting a lady holding a narcissus, ascribed to Muhammad Afsal, circa 1740, in the British Library, see Losty & Roy, p.183, no.124. A closely related painting in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, further illustrates how this genre looked by the mid-eighteenth century, with its depiction of a lady in profile, with long black hair, similar turban and pearl jewellery, see Gascoigne, p. 137.

INSCRIPTIONS

The panel of *shikasta* script on the verso comprises a description of a royal hunt, possibly that of Shah Jahan, in which a prize falcon called ‘Ali Himmat (‘Lofty Zeal’) distinguishes itself.

PROVENANCE

Dr. Viola Bernard (1907-98), Nyack, New York, daughter of Maurice Wertheim (1886-1950)  
Private collection, New York, 1981-2020

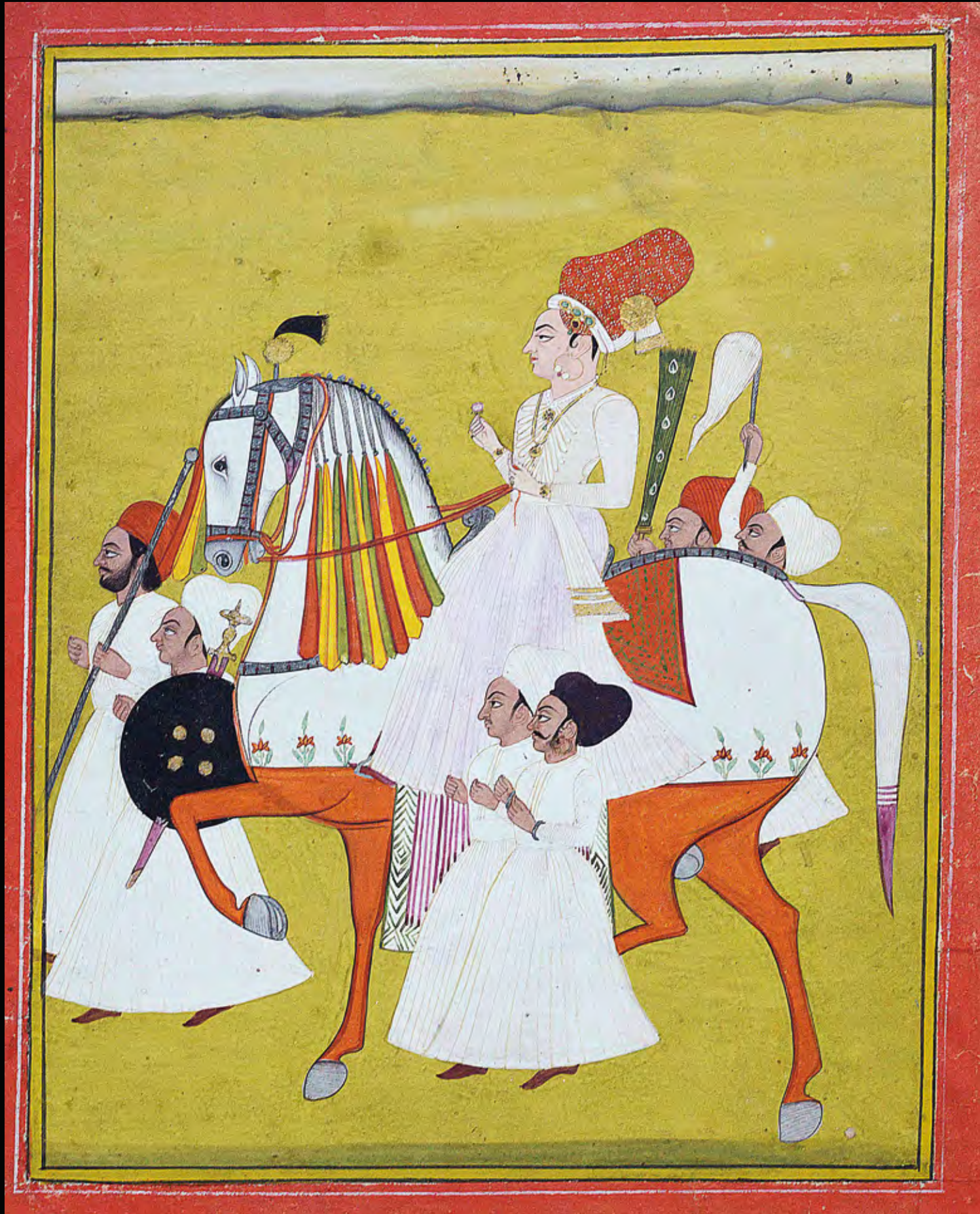
REFERENCES

Gascoigne, B., *The Great Mughals*, London, 1971  
Losty, J.P. and Roy, M., *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library*, London, 2012

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10. EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF PRINCE ZALIM SINGH (1750-1797)  
JODHPUR, DATED SAMVAT 1818 / 1761 A. D.

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, inscribed in Devanagari on the reverse, red border with white rules  
10¼ by 8¼ in.; 27.5 by 21.5 cm. painting  
12½ by 9¾ in.; 31.5 by 25 cm. folio

On a green ground, Zalim Singh faces left riding a white stallion, the underside of which is painted saffron, below a row of irises. His raised right hand holds a flower while his left hand holds the reins. In front of the striding horse a bearded *chobdar* walks beside a bearer with the rider's sword and shield. Two servants holding a *chauri* and a *morcchal* walk on his right, almost hidden by the rear of the horse, and two others on his left. The form of Zalim Singh's turban reflects the Jodhpur court fashion of the mid-eighteenth century, see Crill, fig.77.

**THE SUBJECT**  
Zalim Singh was the third of seven sons of Maharaja Vijay Singh of Jodhpur (r.1752-1793). From the date in the inscription, we can calculate his age in this portrait at eleven, as confirmed by his beardless face. His mother, Shrimati Rani Ratan Sahiba, daughter of Maharana Jagat Singh II of Mewar (r.1734-1751) was the third wife. Being of noble descent, she did not breastfeed her child. Jaipur Anuradh Singh was hence most probably Zalim Singh's foster brother, who was it seems born on the same day as him, which would explain the term “*varasari* / *varşaki*”, translatable

in this context as anniversary. Though Jaipur Anirudh Singh does not appear here, his name would have helped to classify the name of Zalim Singh for future generations of Marwar genealogists. See Ojha, p.760 for further details.

Another equestrian portrait of the same subject (Sotheby's, London, 24 October 2018, lot 98), ascribed to the artist Fazl, shows him later in life with moustache and long sideburns, wearing a similar turban.

**INSCRIPTIONS**  
āp śrī sālām sikhī rī sabī s° 1818 rā barasari [?] jeth sudī 5 / jaipur  
anarad sikhī rai parala [?] jila varasari [?] sabī chai  
*Painting of the honourable Shri Zalim Singh, 5th [day of] the bright half of [the month] Jeth (i.e. May-June), 1761 (A.D.). [This] is a painting of the honourable Jaipur Anirudh Singh [rest unclear].*

**PROVENANCE**  
Boisgirard, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, 28 March 1981, lot 22  
Private collection, France, 1981-2020

**REFERENCES**  
Crill, R., *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style*, Delhi, n.d.  
Ojha, G. H., *The History of the Jodhpur State, Part II* (The History of Rajputana, vol. IV, part II), Ajmer, 1941, in Hindi)



11. **SAADAT ALI KHAN AND SAFDAR JUNG SEATED ON A PALACE TERRACE**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, FAIZABAD, CIRCA 1770-80**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, pale orange borders with white rules and a black inner border  
9½ by 6½ in.; 25 by 17 cm. painting  
15 by 10½ in.; 38 by 27 cm. folio

Saadat Khan (c. 1680-1739) ruled as the Nawab of Awadh (Oudh) between 1722 and 1739. Originally from eastern Iran, he arrived in Bengal in about 1708 and was later appointed by the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah (r. 1719-48) to the governate of Agra, after which he was given control of Awadh in 1722. For these honours he proved a loyal servant to the emperor and fought valiantly against Nadir Shah during the Persian ruler’s infamous raid on Delhi in 1739.

Saadat Khan had no sons and so to ensure his family’s continued possession of Awadh he named as his successor his nephew and son-in-law Muhammad Muqim Ali Khan (ca. 1708-54). Muhammad Muqim rose to the throne of Awadh in 1739 as Safdar Jung, and ruled over Awadh, and briefly Kashmir and Ajmer, until his death fifteen years later. He is buried in an impressive tomb in Delhi, built by his son along the lines of the great Mughal tomb of Humayun (d. 1556).

In composition and coloration, this painting represents a style of portraiture prevalent in the eighteenth century among Indian aristocracy. See Losty, pp. 34–55 and pp. 174–201. The two figures, Saadat Khan on the right and Safdar Jung on the left, are seated on a terrace set at the end of a garden along a river. Surrounded by a wealth of textiles – a velvet awning above, a cotton carpet below, and silk cushions all around – both are dressed simply but richly, with prominently displayed jewels. One might imagine that they are reciting and discussing poetry, reading from the kinds of oblong manuscripts (*safineh*) made

for anthologies of Hafiz and the like. Aside from expressing their cultural aspirations, the portrait also serves to underscore Safdar Jung’s position as heir to Saadat Khan. For a survey of painting at this time see McInerney, pp.51-99.

A date of 1770-80 seems probable as this painting is a copy of one made, circa 1750-60, at Faizabad, where Safdar Jung had moved the capital of Awadh in 1753 (Markel and Gude, p.70, no.5). Here, however, the background has been simplified and two attendants are omitted, but the two sitters are immediately recognisable. The painting was in all likelihood acquired in the 1780s when the Dent brothers were in India.

**PROVENANCE**  
Captain John Dent, Bengal Infantry, 1782-92 or his brother William, who was in Bengal, 1776-96  
Sir Robert A.W. Dent, C.B. (1895-1983), Cumbria, by descent: Sotheby’s, London, 11 April 1972 lot 132  
Maggs Bros., London  
Private collection, New York, 1970s-2020

**REFERENCES**  
Imbert, I., “Patronage and Productions of Paintings and Albums in 18th-Century Awadh,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 12, 2021  
Losty, J. P., ‘Towards a New Naturalism, Portraiture in Murshidabad and Awadh, 1750–80’, in Schmitz, B., *After the Great Mughals: Painting in Delhi and the Regional Courts in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Delhi, 2002  
McInerney, T., “The Patronage of Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh and the Work and Influence of his Principal Court Artists”, *Artibus Asiae*, vol. LXXIX, no.1, Zurich, 2019  
Markel, S. & Gude, T.B., *India’s Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*. Los Angeles, 2010

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12. A FINE LEAF FROM THE IMPEY ALBUM BY ZAIN AL-DIN  
**BLOSSOM-HEADED PARAKEET ON A BRANCH  
OF A KARONDA SHRUB**  
BY ZAIN AL-DIN, PAINTED FOR LADY IMPEY  
CALCUTTA, DATED 1777

Watercolour and gum arabic on Whatman paper, watermarked  
J WHATMAN, the verso with the black ink Impey seal, lined in  
conservation paper, the number 22 written in ink at upper left  
18¾ by 23¾ in.; 47.3 by 60 cm.

THE ARTIST AND HIS PATRONS

Shaikh Zain al-Din is sometimes described in the inscriptions on  
the pages from the Impey album as coming from Patna, also  
known as Azimabad. He was trained as a court painter in the  
naturalistic Mughal tradition almost certainly at Murshidabad,  
the capital of the Nawabs of Bengal, where a court studio  
flourished in the 1750s and early 1760s. In a brief war with the  
East India Company 1763-64, Nawab Qasim ‘Ali moved his capital  
to Patna, taking his artists with him, where there flourished for  
a short while a school of painting including presumably Shaykh  
Zain al-Din among the artists, although no work from him is  
signed in this period.

With the defeat of Nawab Mir Qasim in 1764, traditional  
patronage at Murshidabad and Patna came to an end. Many  
Mughal-trained artists in eastern India began looking for  
patronage to the emerging British ruling class. By 1774 Shaikh  
Zain al-Din had moved to Calcutta where he encountered Lady  
Impey and her husband, Sir Elijah, Chief Justice of Bengal, 1774-  
82. The Impeys were fascinated by the exotic flora and fauna of  
India and kept a menagerie and aviary on their estate in Calcutta.  
Lady Impey commissioned three Patna artists, Shaikh Zain al-  
Din being the most gifted, to record meticulously the fauna in  
their garden and menagerie. The birds were her great passion,  
which were to be depicted life-size if possible –and with precise  
measurements if not - and drawn from life, sitting on a branch  
of the tree which they habitually frequented. The bird drawings  
are normally inscribed with the name of the tree as well as the  
bird, in Persian, together with the name of the artist, the date  
and other details of Lady Impey’s patronage and scientific details  
in English. Sometimes only the Persian words were written,  
everything else was meant to be added later but forgotten. The  
album contained some 326 paintings by Shaikh Zain al-Din and  
his contemporaries, Bhavani Das and Ram Das, of which 197  
were studies of birds, 76 of fish, 28 of reptiles, 17 beasts and 8 of  
plants. When the Impeys returned to London in 1783, Lady Impey  
showed her collection to ornithologists, who were quick to  
realise both its scientific and artistic merits (Falk & Hayter 1984;  
Losty 2004).





Paintings of birds, animals and flowers had been an important Mughal genre since the time of Jahangir (1605-27), who was a keen amateur naturalist. Shaikh Zain al-Din’s studies reveal a thorough adaptation of Mughal technique to the conventions of British natural history painting and the larger format of the Whatman paper brought from England. In Indian art, the Impey series of natural history drawings is considered the finest of its kind.

THE PARAKEET

*Psittacula roseata* is one of a group of similarly-marked parakeets, predominantly green in body plumage, but with a conspicuously marked head. The male of this species has a head of rich mauve-pink separated from the green by a black collar and chin. The bird in the painting is the rather more subtle female. Fortunately, the maroon shoulder patch is clearly visible to distinguish her from the near-identical and closely related Plum-headed Parakeet.

Blossom-headed parakeets, also known as rose-headed parakeets, are among the most delicately coloured of the group, and have the most tuneful voice. Although their name refers to their colour, they do in fact feed on blossoms as well as fruit. They inhabit forest edges, clearings and cultivated land and have a wide distribution throughout north-east India to south-east Asia depending on the availability of the fruit and flowers which they like. Karonda or karanda, *Carissa carandas*, is a species of flowering shrub in the dogbane family, *Apocynaceae*. It produces berry-sized fruits that are commonly used as a condiment in Indian pickles and spiced dishes and can be made into tarts as a substitute for apples or gooseberries.

IMPEY PAGES IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Examples from the Impey series are now in many international private and public collections including:

- Wellcome Institute, London
- Victoria & Albert Museum, London
- British Library, London
- Ashmolean Museum, (Topsfield 2008, nos. 78-80)
- Bodleian Library, Oxford
- Radcliffe Science Library, Oxford
- San Diego Museum of Art
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts
- Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

One of the most celebrated of the bird paintings that is rather similar to our parrots is the green-winged macaw in the Binney Collection in the San Diego Museum (Goswamy & Smith 2005, no. 123).

For a recent survey of the work of these artists see Topsfield 2019, pp. 39-76.

INSCRIPTIONS

Inscribed at lower left in *nasta’liq*:  
*Karundika derakht* (‘Karonda tree’). *Faridi tuta*.  
And in English:  
*Parrot of Frid (the Dervise) Female. In the Collection of Lady Impey in Calcutta. Painted by Zain al-Din [in Persian] Native of Patna 1777*

PROVENANCE

Sir Elijah (1732-1809) and Lady Impey (1749-1818), Calcutta and London  
Lady Impey: Phillips, London, 21 May 1810  
Colnaghi, London, 1980s  
Private collection, London, 1980s-2014  
Private collection, Paris, 2015-2022

EXHIBITED

Asia Week, New York 2014, Oliver Forge & Brendan Lynch Ltd., see Losty, pp.48-52, no.23

REFERENCES

Falk, T., and Hayter, G., *Birds in an Indian Garden*, Colnaghi Oriental, exhibition catalogue, London, 12 June – 14 July 1984  
Goswamy, B.N., and Smith, C., *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting*, San Diego Museum of Art, 2005  
Losty, J.P., ‘Mary Lady Impey’, in the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004  
Losty, J.P., *Indian and Persian Painting 1590-1840*, Oliver Forge and Brendan Lynch Ltd., Asia Week New York, 2014  
Topsfield, A., *Paintings from Mughal India*, Oxford, 2008  
Topsfield, A., ‘The natural history paintings of Shaikh Zain ud-Din, Bhawani Das and Ram Das’ in Dalrymple, W. (ed.), *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2019

JPL







13. **TWO LADIES DRINKING WINE**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1780**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in a cropped album page with black-ground border of gilt flowers within gold rules  
6½ by 3¾ in.; 16.7 by 9.8 cm. painting  
7½ by 4¼ in.; 18.6 by 10.6 cm. folio

Standing in a tender embrace, these two courtly women are presented for our viewing pleasure. They are dressed in long skirts and short, translucent *cholis*, their hair and upper bodies draped in sheer, gold-printed and edged *odhnis*. Both wear court jewellery comprising ropes of pearls, nose-rings, rows of gold bangles and *bazu-bands*. The woman on the left holds a gem-set gold bottle in one hand and a shallow drinking cup in the other. The woman on the right is shown nearly frontally, rather than in the more typical profile view, and she gazes at the viewer with a knowing expression, aware of her allure.

The subject matter, dress of the women, and style in which they have been painted are typical of paintings from northern India in the mid-eighteenth century, particularly Delhi or Lucknow. The

painting does not have a narrative function but alludes to the pleasures of the court. An earlier drawing of this subject matter, 1740-50, attributed by the late J.P. Losty to Kalyan Das known as Chitarman, depicts two embracing court ladies drinking wine, see Losty, pp.64, no.28. For a contemporary female portrait in the Polsky Collection, see Topsfield, p.299, no.130.

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Heidelberg, Germany, to 2021

**REFERENCES**

Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, London, 2004

Losty, J.P., *Indian Paintings from the Heil Collection*, London, 2016

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14. PRINCE BEING OFFERED REFRESHMENTS BY A LADY  
KISHANGARH, CIRCA 1780

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, with gold-ruled double borders of foliate motifs on a pink and a blue ground, laid down in an album page with repeating gold leaf motifs on an ivory ground, a blank cartouche at the top  
9¼ by 4¼ in.; 23.5 by 10.9 cm. painting  
17¼ by 11¼ in.; 43.5 by 29 cm. folio

A young prince, possibly Kumar Birad Singh of Kishangarh (1740-88), stands with typical upright posture, exchanging an intense gaze with the female attendant facing him, who offers him a cup and bottle on a tray.

The mustachioed prince stands wearing a long white *jama* and frontal *pathka* with repeating foliate motifs in gold, gesturing with his left hand and grasping the hilt of a straight sword with his right. He wears ropes of pearls and gems, a pearl-fringed *turra* hangs from his turban and a *katar* is tucked into his belt. Two further females stand behind him, carrying a *morchal*, a lidded bowl and a lotus bud. All three female figure reflect court fashions of the period, wearing copious jewellery, long pleated skirts, short *cholis* and transparent gilt-edged *odhnis* over skirt and upper body, their long dark hair following the contours of their bodies, their finger-tips hennaed.

THE SUBJECT

Birad Singh, eldest son of Bahadur Singh (r. 1748-82), became regent of the state during his father’s lifetime, but it is not known exactly when. Succeeding on his death in 1782, this may explain why in our painting he is shown without a halo, his reign lasting a mere six years until his death in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh, in 1788.

During the eighteenth century various past and current rulers, their sons and their enemies were painted by the artists of Rupangarh / Rupnagar and Kishangarh, but rarely dated. See Dickinson & Khandalavala, p.34f, pl. viii, Mathur, p.58f, no.11 and Haidar, pp.531-546, p.540, fig. 8.

Many of these portraits adopted a format similar to that here, with a central standing figure in profile. The complex history of the state – at least two rulers preferred Vrindavan to their seat at Kishangarh – makes precise dating and identification complex.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, California  
Sotheby’s, New York, 21 March 2012, lot 225  
Christie’s, London, 25 May 2017, lot 99  
Private collection, U.S.A., 2012-22

EXHIBITED

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2016

REFERENCES

Dickinson, E. & Khandalavala, K., *Kishangarh Painting*, New Delhi, 1959  
Haidar, N.N., “Bhavanidas” in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E. & Goswamy, B.N., eds., *Masters of Indian Painting - Volume II: 1650-1900*, Zürich, 2011  
Mathur, V.K., *Marvels of Kishangarh Painting from the Collection of the National Museum*, New Delhi, Delhi, 2000

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**15. VISHNU AS VENKATESHVARA  
PROBABLY TIRUPATI, ANDHRA PRADESH  
SOUTH INDIA, LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

Gouache heightened with gold on paper, red pointed arched border with blue banding and black rules  
10¼ by 7¾ in.; 27 by 18.6 cm.

This striking image depicts the four-armed Hindu god Vishnu in his human avatar as Venkateshvara or forgiver of sins. It was painted in Andhra Pradesh, probably at Tirupati, north-west of Madras (Chennai), in the hill country of Chittoor district, where an ancient temple devoted to the god has for centuries been a centre of pilgrimage, as it continues to be today. The school of painting developed around the Vishnu temple that occupies one of the seven hills of the town, so pilgrims could buy a portable image of the temple's namesake.

The style of painting is distinctly Dravidian: unlike the north Indian traditions the figure here is painted in an almost three-dimensional frontal style on a colourless ground with a predominant palette of blue, black, red and gold. White highlights and use of shadow give the deity an immediacy that fulfil its purpose as a religious icon. His hand gestures and attributes – a wheel (*cakra*) and a conch (*sankha*) – obey the Brahmanical rules but the addition of a straight sword is unusual. The bodies of the goddesses Lakshmi and Sarasvati flanking him are painted with greater plasticity, their heads in profile but bodies at a three-quarters angle. Costume, jewellery, foliate detailing, energised sash-ends and headdresses all betray Chola and Vijayanagar period derivation.

**OTHER EXAMPLES**

For two Tirupati paintings in the British Museum, see Dallapiccola 2010, pp. 154-55, nos. 12.2 & 12.3. Three from the collection of the late Paul F. Walter (1935-2017), were sold at Christie's New York, 21-28 September 2017, lot 642. For four sold by Simon Ray, see Dallapiccola 2014, pp. 109-121. A painting of Vishnu showing Tirupati influences including garlanded lotuses is in the Bodleian Library, see Topsfield, p.146, no.67.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

On the verso in Devanagari: *Shri lacchman ji*

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, England, acquired in New York or London in the 1950s/60s  
By descent to 2021

**REFERENCES**

Dallapiccola, A. L., *South Indian Paintings: a Catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, London, 2010  
Dallapiccola, A. L., "Tirupati Paintings and Srikalahasti Cloths" in Dallapiccola, A.L., Michell, G. and A. Verghese, *Rayalaseema: The Royal Realm - Architecture and Art of Southern Andhra Pradesh*, Mumbai, 2014  
Topsfield, A., *Paintings from Mughal India*, Oxford, 2013



**16. KRISHNA AS RAJAGOPALASWAMY  
PROBABLY TIRUPATI, ANDHRA PRADESH  
SOUTH INDIA, LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

Gouache heightened with gold on paper, red pointed arched border with blue banding and black and white rules  
10½ by 7½ in.; 26.8 by 19 cm.

The Rajagopalaswamy Temple at Mannargudi, Tamil Nadu, is a tenth century Vaishnavite shrine named after the presiding deity Rajagopalaswamy, this particular form of Krishna.

The plump red-bodied god is depicted in a frontal format standing cross-legged on a low stool, holding a lotus and a snake-headed fakir's crutch in his right hand. A bow is slung over his left shoulder, its quiver at his right, whilst his arm is supported by a crutch and in his hand is a punch-dagger (*katar*), with a further dagger and scabbard at his waist. A male attendant stands on his left. The predominant palette here is pinks, black and gold with highlights in white.

**OTHER EXAMPLES**

For a note on Tirupati painting, see catalogue no. 15. Two Tirupati paintings depicting scenes from Krishna's boyhood are in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art, see Leach, pp. 246-7, no.101. For another Tirupati painting depicting Yashoda holding the child Krishna, see Michel, p.261.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

On the verso in Hindustani numerals "67"

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, England, acquired in New York or London in the 1950s/60s  
By descent to 2021

**REFERENCES**

Leach, L.Y., *Indian Miniature Paintings and Drawings: the Cleveland Museum of Art Catalogue of Oriental Art*, Cleveland, 1986  
Michel, G., *Architecture and art of Southern India: Vijayanagara and the successor states*, Cambridge, 1995





17. **PRINCE WITH HIS MISTRESS ON A TERRACE AT NIGHT**  
**AWADH, 1780-90**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, gold, blue and white borders with red rules, laid down in an album page with Polier-influenced foliate decoration  
8½ by 6½ in.; 22 by 17 cm. painting  
14 by 10½ in.; 35.5 by 27 cm. folio

This painting offers an erotic turn on a fairly common subject of Indian painting: lovers in a garden terrace, entwined in each other's arms and being entertained by musicians. Save for this detail, the painting is reminiscent of the scene that usually illustrates Dipak Raga in *Ragamala* sets, an amorous scene of lovers next to a pavilion that is also commonly set at night.

Here the musicians comprise a female quartet: a singer accompanied by a *tabla*, *sitar* and a tambourine player. The pavilion in which the party sits is a study in patterns, from the spiralling vines of the carpets to the floral motifs of the wall paintings, hangings and awnings. They form a rich setting for what was surely intended as the main subject of the painting, the female half of the pair, robe lifted to reveal her almost naked body. Mesmerised by the music, the scent of summer flowers

illuminating the night sky beyond the balustrade, the enthroned prince, in Awadhi turban, fondles his mistress who drops a brocade slipper.

The painting has been placed into a page with borders of a type associated with eighteenth century Avadh, where albums made for Europeans had bright and bold flowering borders, an adaptation of the refined floral album pages common in earlier Mughal albums. Some of the best-known of these were made for the Swiss military engineer and avid collector, Colonel Antoine Polier (1741-95), active in Lucknow in the 1770s-80s, but borders such as these have yet to be traced to a particular patron. For the Polier albums see Hickmann & Enderlein.

**PROVENANCE**

Giles Eyre (1922-2006), London, 1970s  
Private collection, Sussex, 1970s-2021

**REFERENCES**

Hickmann, R. and Enderlein, V., *Indische Albumblätter, Miniaturen unter Kalligraphien aus der Zeit der Moghul-Kaiser*, Leipzig, 1979  
MS





18. **BALARAMA IN THE SRI DAUJI MAHARAJ TEMPLE AT BALDEO IN MATHURA DISTRICT**  
**PROBABLY AWADH, CIRCA 1800**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
13½ by 10 in.; 35.1 by 25.3cm.

A black stone image of Dauji Maharaj, was installed at Baldeo (Dauji) in Mathura district, south of Delhi, in about 1535 A.D. The image was installed in the temple by the grandson of Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhu (1478-1531), the philosopher and founder of a Krishna-centred sub-tradition of Vaishnavism widespread in the Braj region of Uttar Pradesh. See Bautze, pp.226-269.

This highly unusual painting is a depiction of the deity still extant in the temple, down to the distinctive scrolls of hair on the face. The god stands on a stepped plinth with his right hand raised to the hood of the serpents above his head, while his left hand holds a cup of wine. He wears gold jewellery and long pleated garments of fine muslin, with flaring sashes in green and yellow. On his right is his equally dark-faced wife, Revati, wearing a full pleated skirt and shawl.

Balarama, one of the earliest identifiable gods of the Brahmanical pantheon, is the ninth *avatar* in the sequence of *dashavatars* (ten avatars) of Vishnu. He is usually depicted as white-complexioned, unlike his brother Krishna who is traditionally depicted blue. As an exception the image of Dauji Maharaj is always dark, as the stone of the original is in fact black.

This image was painted by artists from Nathdwara and Udaipur, but in contrast to the known renderings from Nathdwara, the present unique painting stands out for its quality in detail as well as line management. A provenance of Awadh is suggested by a painting of Shri Nathji along with the Nidhi-Svarupas, probably on the occasion of the of the Annakut Festival, in the Johnson Album at the British Library, see Falk & Archer, pp.139 & 447, no.339; also see Nardi.

**PROVENANCE**  
Nasli (1902-71) and Alice Heeramanek (1910-93), New York: Parke-Bernet Galleries, Inc., New York, 14 October 1963, lot 160  
Private collection, England, 1960s-2021

**REFERENCES**  
Ambalal, A., *Krishna as Shrinathji: Rajasthani Paintings from Nathdwara*, Ahmedabad, 1987, pp.117 & 155  
Bautze, J.K., “Time of the Maharajas as reflected in Indian Painting from Kota” in Boschung, D. and Wessels-Mevissen, C., *Figurations of Time in Asia*, Paderborn, 2012  
Falk, T. & Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981  
Nardi, I., “Reunion of Krishna Icons: A painting of the Festival of the Seven Svarupas in the Johnson Album”, in *Asian and African studies blog*, 01 November 2020: <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2021/11/reunion-of-krishna-icons-a-painting-of-the-festival-of-the-seven-svarups-in-the-johnson-album.html>

JB





19. **THE TAJ MAHAL AT AGRA**  
**COMPANY SCHOOL, CIRCA 1810**

Opaque pigments on paper, black rules enclosing two borders of black and yellow wash, watermarked RUSE  
13 by 21½ in.; 33 by 55 cm.

For centuries the Taj Mahal at Agra has been an irresistible subject for painters. This is due in part to the magnificence of its architecture, but equally alluring is the romance behind its creation. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) for his wife Arjumand Banu Begum, construction started after her death in 1631, and together with the surrounding gardens and out-buildings took twenty-two years to complete. See Koch, pp. 82-101 and Leoshko, pp.53-87.

Following the British conquest of Agra in 1803, the East India Company ordered the restoration of the city's great Mughal buildings and this led to the training of local draftsmen. Early visitors commissioned large-scale views of the great tombs, often on Whatman paper, but with very few exceptions artists names were rarely recorded.

This watercolour takes a rather unusual vantage point on the monument as its artist observes the tomb chamber from the steps of the adjacent mosque, instead of capturing the more typical vista from the formal gardens fronting it. The shadow of this mosque dramatically intrudes on the foreground of the painting. Beyond the tomb can be seen the lodge that faces the mosque from across the tomb's platform. On the left is the Jumna river and on the right are the gardens preceding the tomb, rather more overgrown than we are used to seeing them today.

The painting beautifully documents the decoration of the white marble tomb down to its inscriptions and floral decoration inlaid in *pietra dura*. To the left one can make out small boats on the water, rough settlements on the opposite banks, and the many garden estates that once lined this liquid spine running through the city of Agra.

On the back is the number '301' in Arabic numerals, which may indicate the sequence of this image in a large architectural series. Such sets were made by both Indian and European artists, most famously the Daniells, starting in the mid-eighteenth century most now dispersed in collections worldwide, see Dadlani, pp. 175-07.

**PROVENANCE**

Bonhams, London, 20 October 1993, lot 297  
Private collection, Norfolk, 1993-2021

**REFERENCES**

Dadlani, C., "The 'Palais Indiens' of 1774: Representing Mughal Architecture in Eighteenth-Century India," *Ars Orientalis* 39, 2011



Koch, E., *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra*, New York, 2006

Lesoshko, J., "Mausoleum for an Empress" in Pal, P., ed., *Romance of the Taj Mahal*, London and Los Angeles, 1989



20. **DANCE PERFORMANCE (NAUTCH) FOR A GROUP OF SEATED GENTLEMEN**  
**COMPANY SCHOOL, THANJAVUR**  
**SOUTH INDIA, CIRCA 1810-20**

Watercolour on paper, pale orange border with black rules  
11 by 18½ in.; 28 by 47 cm.

The scene takes place on a carpet diagonally striped in pale orange, with two *nautch* girls performing, whilst a group of three male musicians and a woman clapping in time to the music stand at the right. At left a group of five gentlemen is seated on a dark red trellis-design carpet with a tray of refreshments including *paan* and rosewater. Each of the dancers is dressed in a cotton *sari*, respectively yellow check and spotted red, over a blue *choli*, their black hair in a long plait garlanded with jasmine, wearing traditional gold jewellery comprising hair-ornaments, earrings, bracelets, armlets, nose- and finger-rings and bell anklets. Each musician wears a turban and long waisted coat, respectively playing the drum, hand-cymbals and bagpipes. The woman clapping in time to the music wears jewellery and a long green sari.

On the left the five Hindu gentlemen exude contented enjoyment. They wear white cotton garments, earrings and turbans, with sectarian markings on their forehead indicating that they are followers of Vishnu or Siva. The youth on the extreme left wears a distinctively tall conical hat with everted rim.

With the banishment of the southern Nayak dynasty by Venkaji, brother of the Maratha leader Shivaji, the Maratha dynasty of Thanjavur was established in 1674. Serfoji (r. 1798-1832), the penultimate ruler, was an enlightenment figure educated at his father's wish by the Danish-Halle Lutheran Mission. Despite or because of being forced to surrender the administration of Thanjavur in 1799 to the East India Company, he developed broad intellectual interests and promoted Western methods of education in his kingdom. He was also a bibliophile and collector of manuscripts. When his son Shivaji II (1833-55) died without a male heir, the Company declared the Thanjavur line extinct and annexed its territory. (See Dallapiccola 2010, p. 12).

This painting is therefore likely to have been painted during the rule of Serfoji and can be seen as the last flowering of what the late J.P. Losty called the Maratha sub-style at Thanjavur, which owes much of its derivation to the northern Deccan and Bijapur in particular (see Topsfield, p.307, no. 134). A closely related scene is one of thirty illustrations in a Tanjore album, circa 1830, at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, see Archer, p. 64, no. 26 (25). For another album, of 53 Tanjore watercolours, circa 1795-1800, in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, see Hurel, pp. 138-144.



**DANISH EAST INDIA COMPANY**

Established by royal charter in 1616 to encourage trade with India, the Danish crown acquired the village of Tranquebar in 1620, when a contract was signed with Raghunatha Nayak of the Tanjore Nayak rulers. The Tranquebar Mission was established in 1706 and converts to Protestantism began, and preparations were made to translate the Bible into Tamil. Trade continued

until about 1850 when territories were ceded to Britain. Many works of art from south India therefore entered Danish collections via such trade routes.

**PROVENANCE**

Holger Ferlov (1877-1954) Denmark  
By descent to 2021

**REFERENCES**

Archer, M., *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period*, London, 1992  
Dallapiccola, A.L., *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, London, 2010  
Hurel, R., *Miniatures et Peintures Indiennes*, vol. II, Paris, 2011  
Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, London, 2004



21. **THREE STANDING BUTLERS (KHITMAGAR)**  
**COMPANY SCHOOL, THANJAVUR**  
**SOUTH INDIA, CIRCA 1835**

Opaque pigments on paper, watermarked J. GREEN  
18¾ by 11½ in.; 46.8 by 29.2 cm.

Each mustachioed Saivite Hindu bearer stands barefoot wearing a white cotton *dhoti* beneath a flaring outer coat fastened at the chest, respectively wearing a red, a tie-died white and a tie-died red turban and holding a tray, a stack of plates and a spoon. Such servants were employed in Raj period households all over India.

“By about 1830 a most delicate and realistic style had developed, which is unrivalled by any other school of Company painting.” (Archer, p. 45). For an introduction to the Thanjavur school and related contemporary figures from an album of thirty folios, circa 1830, depicting casts, occupations and processional scenes, see Archer, pp. 43-5 and 60-64. Other Tanjore albums are in the British Museum, London and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, see Dallapiccola, pp.165-177 and Hurel, pp.138-144.

**PROVENANCE**

Ferlov Antiques, Copenhagen, 1960s

L. Ekchardt, Solbjerg, near Aarhus, Denmark, 1960s-2022

**REFERENCES**

Archer, M., *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period*, London, 1992

Dallapiccola, A.L., *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, London, 2010

Hurel, R., *Miniatures et Peintures Indiennes*, vol. II, Paris, 2011

Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, London, 2004





22. **THREE STANDING OFFICE PEONS**  
**COMPANY SCHOOL, THANJAVUR**  
**SOUTH INDIA, DATED 1835**

Opaque pigments on paper  
18¾ by 11¾ in.; 46.7 by 29 cm.

Each mustachioed Hindu *peon* stands barefoot wearing a sacred thread and a voluminous white cotton *dhoti* beneath a flaring outer coat fastened at the chest. The turbans of the two flanking figures are tie-died, that of the central figure white. The left-hand figure holding out a letter bearing the date 1835, his forehead with sandalwood paste Vaishnavite markings. The remaining two figures with Saivite markings, the central figure holding a roll of cloth and a knife, the right-hand figure with a leather-bound ledger and a feather quill in his hands.

For related images in Tanjore albums, circa 1830, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London and others in the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, see Archer, p. 64, no. 26 (25), Dallapiccola, pp.165-177 and Hurel, pp. 138-144. Closely related work was produced at Vellore, in northern Tamil Nadu west of Madras, where in the early nineteenth century an artist known as Yellapah of Vellore emerged. For watercolours dated to the 1830s in the British Museum and the Victoria Albert Museum, London, see Harris, pp. 118, 136 & 137.

**PROVENANCE**

Ferlov Antiques, Copenhagen, 1960s

L. Ekchardt, Solbjerg, near Aarhus, Denmark, 1960s-2022

**REFERENCES**

Archer, M., *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period*, London, 1992

Dallapiccola, A.L., *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collection*, London, 2010

Harris, L., "Bespoke: painting to order in 1830s Calcutta and Vellore" in Dalrymple, W., ed., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2020

Hurel, R., *Miniatures et Peintures Indiennes*, vol. II, Paris, 2011

Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, London, 2004





23. **RAMA DASHARATHA SALUTING A SAIVITE MYTHICAL QUADRUPED**  
PAHARI, CIRCA 1850

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, the number 211 inscribed on the verso, red border with white and yellow rules 6½ by 9¾ in.; 16.3 by 25 cm.

The god Rama greets a four-legged composite creature with the head of Siva in a landscape with scattered trees, his attributes of bow and quiver of arrows in the foreground. A hand wearing a gold thumb-ring emerges from the rear leg indicating that Rama should not fear *abhaya mudra* and another below the head in *varada mudra* meaning that a wish will be granted.

From the god's head, which is crowned by three serpents, springs the river Ganga (Ganges), funnelling in an arc into the foreground. Below his neck, around which another snake is coiled, the following can be seen: the sage Narada, the sun and the moon, Vishnu, the seven Rishis, the four-headed Brahma, the four-armed Devi and the six-headed Karttikeya, who constitute the main holy divinities of the Hindu pantheon.

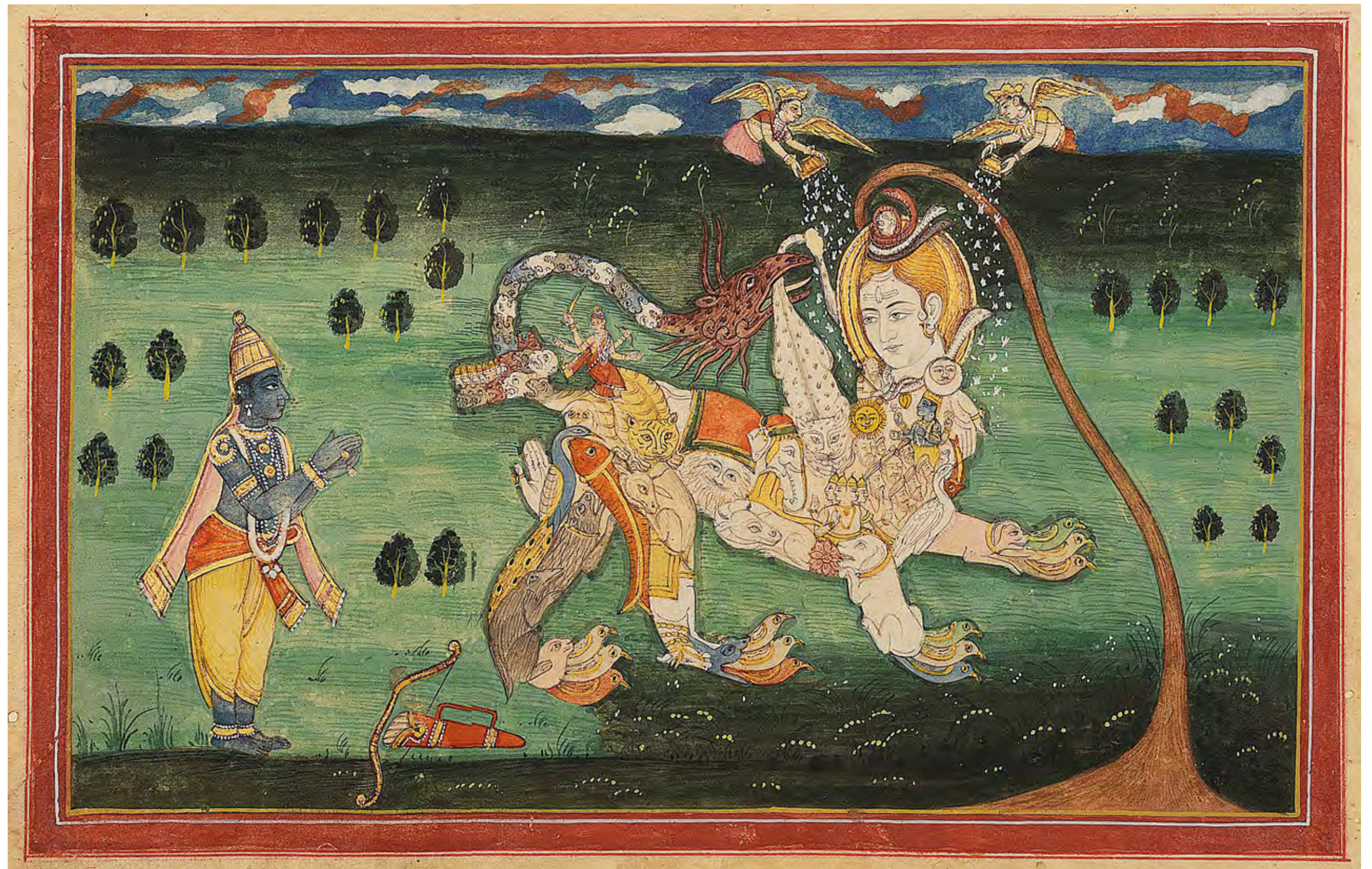
The other creatures completing the mythical creature's body comprise mammals (dogs, tiger, cheetah, elephant, horse, deer, monkeys, mongooses), birds including peacock and peahen, two fish and a lotus. The tail terminates in a speckled and horned head of a griffin. Above in the clouds two winged angels rain flowers down on Siva's head.

The painting is a blend of Vishvarupa Siva (lord of the universe uniting all beings) and a so-called Navagunjara, a creature composed of parts of nine different beings (rooster, lion, snake, peacock, elephant, bull, deer, horse and human), who is greeted with palms joined by the famous archer Arjuna, one of the Pandavas in the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. Rama actually met Siva at the end of the *Yuddha-kāṇḍa* (book of battles) in the *Ramayana* and this conversation may have also inspired the artist of this folio, see Panthey, pl.18.

Composite paintings of diverse animals including those of the human-headed quadruped are known, such as two early eighteenth century examples from Chamba, in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, and the Musée Guimet, Paris, respectively; see Dye, p.335, no.139 and Okada, p.123. Another of Buraq followed by a deer-headed div, circa 1700, is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, see Topsfield, p. 126, no.59. A further comparable creature with the head of a female is in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, see Del Bontà, pp.31-38, fig. 15.

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, London



**REFERENCES**

Dye, J.M., *The Arts of India*, Richmond, Virginia, 2001  
Del Bontà, R. J., "Indian Composite Paintings: A Playful Art" in *Orientations*, vol. 27, no.1, 1996

Okada, A., *La peinture en Inde*, Paris, 2016  
Panthey, S., *Iconography of Śiva in Pahārī Paintings*, Delhi, 1987  
Topsfield, A., *Paintings from Mughal India*, Oxford, 2008

JB



24. **SHMASHANA KALI: THE GODDESS KALI IN THE CREMATION GROUND**  
**PAHARI, CIRCA 1850**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, black ground borders with gold meander and red and white rules, laid down in an album page with gold floral motifs on a dark red ground  
7½ by 4¼ in.; 19.5 by 12.4 cm. painting  
10¼ by 7½ in.; 26 by 18.3 cm. folio

The terrifying goddess stands on the blue prostrate body of Siva/ Mahadeva, four-armed and holding attributes, and at upper left in the sky is the goddess’s male companion, Mahakala. Her vast torrent of hair forms a cloak behind her ash-smeared body, she wears a skirt of human severed arms and a necklace of skulls, her tongue and four hands are blood-stained. She is flanked by the worshipping gods Vishnu and Brahma and is surrounded – this being a graveyard – by numerous severed human heads, headless human bodies and two horses’ heads, all of whom are being devoured by carrion crows, and baying and feasting jackals.

When the goddess Devi, variously also called Durga or Ambika, was challenged by a great army of demons (*asuras*), what happened? The *Devi Mahatmya*, a Sanskrit text from about the sixth century, gives the answer:

“Thereupon *Ambikā* became terribly angry with those foes, and in her anger her countenance became black as ink. Out from the surface of her forehead, fierce with frown, issued suddenly *Kālī* of terrible countenance, armed with a sword and a noose.” See *Jagadisvaranda*, chapter VII, verses 6 and 7

In course of time, Kali became one of the ten *Mahāvidyās* (great Wisdoms, a group of ten Tantric goddesses) and is described in various Sanskrit texts like the *Kālī-Stotra* (‘Song of praise to *Kālī*’) and several others. For a comprehensive description and quotation of relevant texts describing the scene here see *Satpathy*, pp. 118-123 and *Kinsley*, pp. 67-91.

A text from the *Mantramahodadhi* may serve as a description of the present painting:

“I worship the goddess *Kālikā*, who holds with (her) hands a recently severed head, a sword, (and makes) the gesture of protection (and) the wish(-granting) gesture, whose face is frightening, who shines brightly with a garland of heads, whose mane (of) hair is disheveled, who has blood flowing from the corners of (her) mouth, dwells in the cremation grounds, has corpses (of two children) as ornaments on (her) ears, whose body is dark (and) who has a belt made of the hands of corpses.” (*Bühnemann*, p. 93)

Since almost all comparable works originate from the Pahari area and were painted at the courts of Mandi and Kangra, it is likely that our example was also created there in the first half of the nineteenth century. For comparable paintings see *Bühnemann*, p.94, no.15b, *Suwarcha*, pls. 1860 & 1863 and *Pal*, p.122f, no.53.

**INSCRIPTIONS**  
At the top of the album page in gold Devanagari: *kālī*

**PROVENANCE**  
Theo Müller (1923-84), resident in Bangalore, India, 1963-66  
By descent, Switzerland, to 2021

**REFERENCES**  
*Bühnemann*, G., *The iconography of Hindu Tantric Deities: Volume 1: The Pantheon of the Mantramahodadhi*. Groningen, 2000  
*Jagadīśvarāṇḍa* (ed., transl.): *The Devī-Māhātmyam or Śrī Durgā-Saptasatī*. Madras, 1972  
*Kinsley*, D., *Tantric Visions of the Divine Feminine - The Ten Mahavidyas*, Delhi, 1998  
*Pal*, P., *Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection*, Baltimore, 2001  
*Paul*, S., *Devi Miniatures in Chandigarh Museum - A Hand List*, Chandigarh, 2001  
*Satpathy*, S., *Sakti Iconography in Tantric Mahāvidyās*, Calcutta, 1991

JB





25. **VIEW OF PUDU MANDAPA OPPOSITE THE MEENAKSHI TEMPLE AT MADURAI COMPANY SCHOOL, SOUTH INDIA, CIRCA 1854**

Pencil and watercolour on paper  
10 by 16½ in.; 25.5 by 42 cm.

The Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple in Tamil Nadu, south India, was built by King Kulasekara Pandya (1190–1216 A.D.). It is dedicated to the goddess Meenakshi, a form of Parvati, and comprises a vast temple complex that later rulers continued to repair and embellish. It boasts towering *gopurams*, squares, tanks, corridors and shrines to different Hindu deities and its annual festival attracts over one million pilgrims.

Under the Nayaka kings in the sixteenth and seventeenth century further embellishments were made to the temple and a remarkable palace was also built there. The ‘Pudu Mandapa’ or new mandapa, opposite the Meenakshi Temple, was built by King Tirumala Nayaka, (r. 1623-59), circa 1630 and the statues at either side are portraits of the Nayaka kings and their wives.

From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century European travellers were drawn to visit the great temple-city of Madurai and architectural sketches in ink were drawn by local draftsmen. Many of these are now in the British Library. The most extensive series was done in the 1780s and comprises 143 drawings commissioned by Adam Blackader, Resident at Madurai, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?q=adam%2oblackader&page=1> Also see Archer, pp. 40-43.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

Verso with three ink inscriptions:

“No.2 An other view of the same Choultry at Madura also by a native”

“The great Choultry at Madura .... page No 1. From the interior of the central nave Drawn by a by a native of Madura April /54”

“Granite columns from the great temple at Madura (drawn by a native)”

**PROVENANCE**

Conway Mordaunt Shipley (1824-88), who joined the Navy in 1837 and travelled in India in 1853-54

Christie’s, London, 25 April 2012, lot 224 (an album)

Martin Gregory: *From China to the West: Historical pictures by Chinese and Western artists 1770-1870*, London, 2012-13, no. 104

**REFERENCES**

Archer, M., *Company Paintings: Indian Paintings of the British Period*, London, 1992





BY PARASURAM

Stippled drawing with colour and gold on paper, integral border with pigeons perched amidst meandering foliage, inscribed in panel on upper border

12 $\frac{4}{5}$  by 8 $\frac{4}{5}$  in.; 32.5 by 22.5cm. folio

“Of these few experiments in a Westernising grisaille mode, the most assured and successful is Parasuram’s portrait of the Rana on horseback, dated in February 1859. This is far more than a technical exercise ... But it is here reinterpreted in a most accomplished way, using ... a subtly gradated fine stipple technique adapted from contemporary engraving models. There is a sparing use of red and gold on costume and harness and the elegantly attenuated poppies in the foreground.

He goes on to mention European influence in the border and the banked cloudscape and concludes “a technical exoticism is consciously absorbed and elegantly reinterpreted to a traditional expressive end”.

The reign of Sarup Singh (1844-61), is known for innovation in absorbing Western styles and ideas into traditional Mewar court painting. This he did with some success, with artists such as the prolific and highly accomplished Tara, Sivalal and Parasuram being recognised for their skill and originality. As well as painting himself, designing coins and urging his painters to adopt new techniques, he unwittingly witnessed the last flowering of Mewar court painting.

'Maharajadhiraja Maharana Shri Shri Shri Sarup Singhji on horseback; presented as nazar on Magha, bright half 2, VS 1915, by the artist Parasuram [*'prarasaram'*].

## PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 26 April 1994, lot 54

**PUBLISHED**

Topsfield, A., *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, Zurich, 2000, pp.266-67, no.245







27. PORTRAIT OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JAMES TOD (1782-1835) TRAVELLING ON AN ELEPHANT  
MEWAR, CIRCA 1890

Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
11¼ by 15¼ in.; 29 by 39 cm. painting  
13¼ by 17 in.; 34.5 by 43.5 cm. folio

The scene depicts Captain James Tod travelling through a green hilly landscape in Rajasthan on an elephant followed by the “yellow boys” on horseback and accompanied by mace bearers (*chobdars*), two scouts on camels and other attendants appropriate to this eminent dignitary.

Tod is unmistakable, sitting in the howdah on the back of the elephant, wearing a black coat, white gloves, black boots and a tall black hat known from an earlier painting by the Mewari artist Ghasi, see Cousens, pp.219-222, illustration, p.220. The mahout holds an ankush in his right hand, while brandishing a black yak-tail chowry, a symbol of state, with his left, whereas the khavasi behind Tod holds a white yak-tail whisk.

The six horsemen following in the rear are dressed in a distinctive saffron-yellow coat, known from another painting of Tod on an elephant in the Binney Collection at the San Diego Museum of Art, see Williams, p.152f., no.29. This painting enables us to date the event depicted in this painting as the Binney painting is dated by inscription to October 1822. The horsemen belong to the 1st irregular cavalry of Skinner’s Horse, raised by Colonel James Skinner (1778-1841) in 1803. They were identifiable by their distinctive part-yellow uniform as shown by contemporary paintings, hence the sobriquet, a term thought to have been in use by 1805. See Kaye, p. 43 and Archer & Falk, p.44, no.18.

Tod went to India as a cadet in the East India Company aged seventeen. After a career in the military and in intelligence, he was appointed political agent in Rajasthan where, based at the Mewar court in Udaipur, his myriad skills advanced relations

between the leading Rajput rulers and the E.I.C. However, following criticism of his perceived sympathies with several of the Rajput princes, he resigned and returned to England in 1823. He remains lauded as a writer, geographer and historian, in particular for his two-volume *Annala and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 1829 & 1832. He not only brought Rajasthan to the Western mind, but was also a keen collector of miniature paintings. For details of his collection, see Skelton, pp.5-11 and Topsfield (2007). He died in 1835 aged fifty-three.

**INSCRIPTIONS**  
Inscribed in the lower border in Devanāgarī:  
*kaptān ṭaḍ sāhab rī chabī*  
‘Picture of Captain Tod’

**PROVENANCE**  
Giles Eyre (1922-2006), London, before 1975  
Private collection, Sussex, 1975-2021

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**28. EIGHT PRINCELY HORSEMEN RIDING FOUR HORSES**  
MEWAR, CIRCA 1890

Opaque pigments and gold on paper, red border with white rules  
10¾ by 8½ in.; 27.6 by 21.6 cm. painting  
12¼ by 9⅞ in.; 31.1 by 25.1 cm. folio

In a central medallion fringed in white scrolls on a cobalt ground, four conjoined horses intersect on a green ground to form a revolving circle, ridden alternately by four turbaned riders around the perimeter alternating with four more joined at the centre to form a cross.

For a related painting with a circular composition of four conjoined wrestlers, Jaipur, circa 1850, see Losty, no. 26.

**PROVENANCE**

James (1913-90) and Marilyn (1925-2019) Alsdorf, Chicago, 1970s-2021

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29. **PORTRAIT OF MAHARAO UMED SINGH II OF KOTAH (R.1889-1940)**  
**RAJASTHAN, CIRCA 1900**

Opaque watercolour with gold impasto and appliqué coloured stones and fragments of pearl on paper, green and tan borders with coloured rules  
28¾ by 23¾ in.; 73 by 60.4 cm.

The portrait depicts the Maharao (1873-1940) at the time of his investment with full ruling powers on 5th December 1896 and it appears to be based on a photograph taken on the occasion. In a photograph recording the occasion of his enthronement in June 1889, he is visibly younger and more simply dressed, see Bautze, pp.100-133, pl.126. Another photograph (sold, Bonhams, London, 8 October 2008, lot 208), of the seated Maharao, wearing much the same turban, robes and jewellery, but also the Star and Badge of a Knight Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India (GCIE), conferred on 28 January 1908, can therefore be dated accordingly. A hand-coloured photograph taken by Bourne & Shepherd also records the occasion, see Bautze, p.131.

Although Umed Singh's II predecessor, Maharao Chhattar / Shatru Sal of Kotah (r.1866-1889), was married to three royal princesses, he died childless. On the day of his death Chhattar Sal adopted Kumar Udai Singh of Kotra, who became Maharao Umed Singh II of Kotah. The Kotah royal line is descended from the second son of Rao Ratan of Bundi (r.1608-1631), Rao Madho Singh (r.1631-1648), who became the first ruler of Kotah.

The intense colours of this large and visually striking painting, with its clashing colours and patterns and typically stylised vase of flowers, point to a skilled Indian artist whose identity remains unknown. For another photographically-inspired portrait, of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Marwar, attributed to the painter Narsingh, Jodhpur, circa 1880, see Desai, p.43, no.39.

**PROVENANCE**

Francesca Galloway, London, 2010  
Christie's, London, 18-25 May 2017, lot 6 (online auction)

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