

COURT PAINTING FROM INDIA





## COURT PAINTING FROM INDIA

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COVERS: DETAIL NO. 9  
INSIDE FRONT: DETAIL NO. 43  
INSIDE BACK COVER: DETAIL NO. 4

1. FOLIO FROM THE FIRST OR 'SOUTH KENSINGTON' BABURNAMA  
**BABUR HUNTING RHINOCEROS NEAR SWATI**  
 ASCRIBED TO THE ARTISTS L'AL AND SARWAN  
 MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1589

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, eight and a half lines of *nasta'liq* on recto, fourteen on the verso; artists' names inscribed in red on lower margin, gold border ruled in blue and green 9½ by 5½ in.; 24 by 13.7 cm. painting  
 10½ by 6½ in.; 26.3 by 17.3 cm. folio

**THE MANUSCRIPT**

The *Baburnama* is one of the most all-encompassing and engaging pre-modern autobiographies. Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire (r.1526-30), records all the adventures and turmoil in the life of an itinerant prince. He also writes about his reaction on arriving in India, with details of the people, flora and fauna, which are some of the most revealing parts of the text.

It was not until the reign of Emperor Akbar (r.1556-1605) that the *Baburnama* was translated into Persian from Turki, the ancestral language of the Mughals, by Mirza 'Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan. Court artists produced the first illustrated copy soon after the Persian translation was completed in 1589. Our folio belongs to this copy that was broken up in 1913 and dispersed. It is sometimes referred to as the 'South Kensington' *Baburnama* as twenty folios are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Stronge, pp.86-91 and Smart, 1977). Three other royal copies survive: one dating to the early 1590s, now in the British Library, with 143 illustrations and 40 or so missing (Suleiman; Losty & Roy, pp.39-45). A further copy is divided between the Moscow State Museum of Eastern Cultures and the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. The only one in a near-complete state is now in the National Museum in New Delhi (Randhawa, 1983) and all four manuscripts were studied by Ellen Smart in 1977 (Smart, 1977).

**SUBJECT**

This scene shows Babur hunting rhinoceros near Swati. Babur tells us that he went hunting in Kargkhana (rhino home), where the forest was dense, and it was challenging to drive the animals out, so some of the forest was set alight. Babur describes a calf being killed as it lay scorched by the fire, and everyone taking a share of the spoils. This is the moment illustrated here where the scorched animal is being pulled apart by the hunting party which Babur observes on horseback to the left. Babur was evidently interested in the rhinoceros, as it appears again later in the memoir: an episode with his son Humayan and a hunt near Bigram (Peshawar) in December 1526. A rhino was pursued across a plain, and Babur notes that Humayan and others were very entertained, as they had never seen one before. Both these episodes were popular subjects for illustration. There are two other paintings of Babur hunting rhinoceros at Swati, from additional copies of the *Baburnama*, that share a similar composition to one another but differ from this earlier version: one in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (W.596.21B) and another in the British Library, London (f.305b), both full-page paintings with text.

**BABUR'S DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT DEPICTED**

The text describing the episode (Thackston, pp. 269-270):

Babur writes:

*'I myself went towards Swati, which is also called Kargkhana, to hunt rhinoceros. Several were found, but they did not come out of the thick forest. One with a calf ventured into the open and began to run away. Many arrows were shot at it, but it*





managed to get itself back into the thicket. Even when fire was set to the forest it could not be caught. A calf was burned, however, and lay there writhing. It was slaughtered and everybody took a trophy share.'

#### THE ARTISTS

This painting is emblematic of the refined Mughal style that developed in Akbar's studio in the late 1580s and 90s. The use of shading and the distant glimpse of a city point to the assimilation of elements from European prints, whereas the overall composition, page layout and iconography are rooted in the Sultanate, Persian and Indic traditions that were successfully amalgamated early in Akbar's reign. As the first of the four primary court copies of the *Baburnama*, the illustrations have lively and fresh compositions with a lighter, more softly painted style.

La'l was one of the premier artists in Akbar's atelier and was responsible for this folio's overall design or composition ('*tarh*'). He also designed no fewer than nineteen paintings in another major manuscript from Akbar's studio, the earliest copy of the *Akbarnama* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, painted at a similar time, circa 1590-5 (Stronge, p.45).

Sarwan painted and completed the execution of La'l's composition for our folio. He also worked on the earliest copy of the *Akbarnama*. In all five paintings in this volume, he collaborated with the great artist Miskin, such as the right side of a splendid double-page image of a hunt (Stronge, p.63). Sarwan likely completed his contributions to the *Akbarnama* just after the *Baburnama* in the early 1590s. Little is known about these artists. However, as an apprentice working exclusively

with such prestigious artists as Miskin and La'l, Sarwan was most likely regarded as a junior master who had already reached a high level of competence.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

In the lower margin:

*tarh-i la'l 'amal-i sarwan* "Designed by La'l, painted by Sarwan"

#### PROVENANCE

Manuscript dispersed 1913

Probably Luzac & Co., London

H. Kahn Monif (1888-1964), New York

Private collection, London, circa 1950s-60s

Thence by descent to a private collection, London until 2022

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Smart, E., 'Six folios from a dispersed manuscript of the Babur-Nama,' in Colnaghi & Co., *Indian Painting*, London, 1978

Stronge, S., *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: the Art of the Book: 1560-1660*, London, 2002

Suleiman, H., *Miniatures of the Babur-Nama*, Tashkent, 1970

Thackston, W. (translator), *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, reprint, New York, 2002

## 2. EMPEROR JAHANGIR'S SEAL IMPRESSION (SHAMSA) MUGHAL INDIA, DATED REGNAL YEAR 6 (1611-12 A.D.)

Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper,  
laid down in a now reduced album page  
2½ in.; 5.3 cm. diameter calligraphy  
15¼ by 10½ in.; 38.8 by 27.4 cm. folio

In the centre of this *shamsa* (sun or sunburst in Arabic) is Emperor Jahangir's seal impression encircled by an illuminated medallion. A design of gold floral scrolls on pale paper surrounds the *shamsa*, all contained in a rectangular panel. This central area is further framed by borders of polychrome paper, each with other gold-illuminated designs. The format of the seal impression is of distinctive Mughal design that features the ruler's name in the central circle surrounded by small circles containing the names of all his ancestors. Timur is positioned at the top, and the seal reads clockwise, starting with the ruling emperor's name and moving to the outer circles (Gallop, p.77). The number of outer rings naturally increased with each ruler, with Akbar's seal featuring seven and Jahangir's eight, or 'nine-fold' – one in the centre and eight smaller ones. Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire and Jahangir's great-grandfather, instigated this type of design. Thereafter, Mughal rulers used their version of this design for official orders (*farmans*).

The protection of the seal was crucial. Therefore, a court official or a royal lady in the harem often guarded it. No sources tell us who held Jahangir's seal, but the *Padshahnama* tells us that his son Shah Jahan kept it first with Mumtaz Mahal until his coronation when she requested it be transferred to her father, Asaf Khan (Gallop, p. 86). Many of the seals featured a date, but not all of Jahangir's seals were dated. This seal bears the regnal year 6, which correlates to 1611-12 A.D.

The illuminated medallion that frames the seal impression has a series of cartouches, one in each of the sixteen points, painted in lapis with touches of red, yellow and green. Tiny interlocking floral scrolls connect these. This type of densely packed floral design characterises many *shamsas*, which often form the opening or closing folios of Mughal albums.

A splendidly illuminated *Shamsa* of Shah Jahan, circa 1645, is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Kossak, no.26, pp. 53, 56). The verso has some associated calligraphy of Arabic verses from al-Busiri's *Qasidat al-Burda* (Ode of Mantle) that was separate from the original page. For another, circa 1650, in a private collection, see Pal, p.126, no. 128.



**INSCRIPTIONS**

Seal impression, starting in the centre and then going clockwise from the upper right, with the genealogy of Jahangir going back to Timur:

*'Abu'l-Muzaffar Nur al-Din Jahangir Padshah Ghazi ibn Akbar Padshah ibn Humayun Padshah ibn Babur Padshah ibn 'Umar Shaykh Mirza ibn Sultan Abu Sa'id ibn Sultan Muhammad Mirza ibn Miran Shah ibn Amir Timur Sahib-Qiran'*

At the bottom of the roundel in the centre, beneath Jahangir's name and titles: '(Regnal) year 6 (1611-12)'

Verso:

Arabic verses from al-Busiri's *Qasidat al-Burda* (Ode of the Mantle)

**PROVENANCE**

Professor Rudolph Gelpke (1928-72), Switzerland (part lot)  
Christie's, London, 26 October 2017, lot 23

**REFERENCES**

Gallop, A.T., "The Genealogical Seal of the Mughal Emperors of India", in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, April 1999, Third Series, vol. 9, no. 1, London, April 1999  
Kossak, S. M., ed., *Indian Court Painting 16th-19th century*, New York, 1997  
Pal, P., ed., *Romance of the Taj Mahal*, Los Angeles, 1989

E.S.



3. **PORTRAIT OF A STANDING NOBLEMAN OF THE REIGN OF EMPEROR JAHANGIR**  
**ATTRIBUTABLE TO BISHANDAS OR NANHA**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1615-20**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, ruled in colour and gold, laid down in a saffron album page painted in gold with birds in flight amidst clouds and foliage  
5¾ by 3 in.; 14.5 by 7.5 cm. painting  
11½ by 7½ in.; 29 by 19 cm. folio

This painting was attributed to either Bishandas or his uncle Nanha when it was sold as part of the Gahlin Collection in 2015 and its subject tentatively identified as either Asaf Khan or Sayf Khan Barha. The catalogue described Bishandas's style as being marked by the use of shadowy, dark faces and hands and a certain intensity. However, this portrait is also close to two by Nanha in the Kevorkian Album, one depicting Sayf Khan Barha, the other Raja Bhim Singh, where the same dark features and use of shadow are employed. The facial profile here is also close to the two Nanha works, despite their being different sitters (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, see Welch *et al.*, pp.123, 151, nos.21, 33).

If this portrait is of Asaf Khan, it is an early work likely to have been painted at the time of Jahangir's marriage to his sister Nur Jahan in 1611, when Asaf Khan was forty-two. However, the face here bears only a passing resemblance to Asaf Khan, who, even when young had a fuller, more thick-set face and noticeably paler skin.

It is also possible that the portrait depicts Sayf Khan Barha, whose portrait was painted by Nanha around 1610-15, and whose features and skin tone are close to those of the present portrait (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 55.121.10.4v; see Welch *et al.*, pp.122-123, no.21).

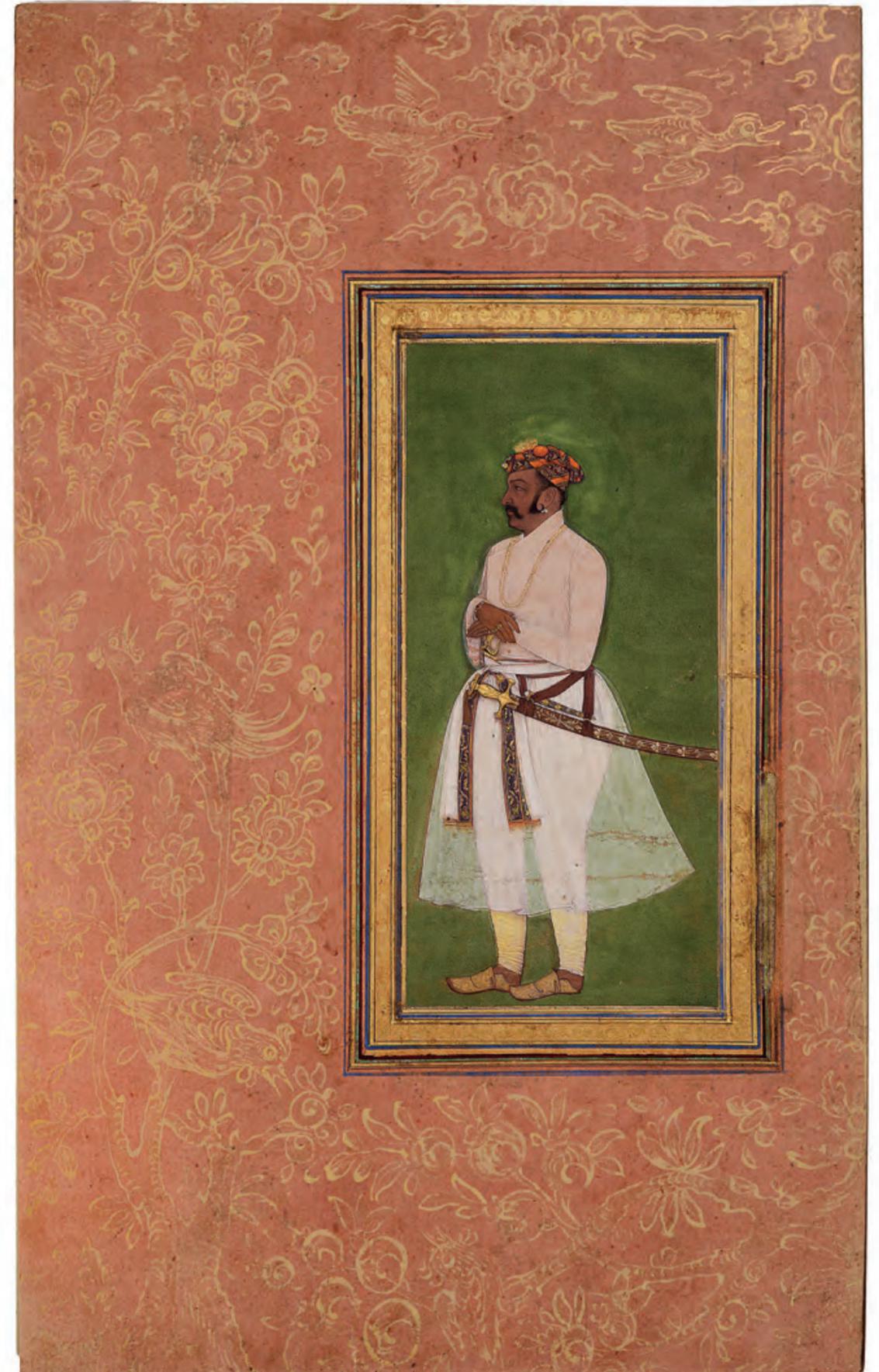
**ASAF KHAN**

Asaf Khan (1569-1641) was the brother of Nur Jahan, the wife of Jahangir. He succeeded his own father, I'timad al-Daula, as vizier at the end of Jahangir's reign, by which time he had married his

daughter, Mumtaz Mahal, to the future Emperor Shah Jahan. He was thus one of the most intimately connected noblemen at the Mughal court, brother-in-law to one emperor and father-in-law to another. Jahangir bestowed on him the titles I'tiqad Khan (1611-12) and Asaf Khan (1614-15) and, as First Lord of the Realm and Commander-in-Chief under Shah Jahan, he became Yamin al-Daula (1627-28) and Khan Khanan Sipahsalar (1634-35), with a *mansab* (rank) of 9,000, the highest ever attained. On his death in 1641, Shah Jahan gave instructions "... that he should be buried close to the late Emperor Jahangir's mausoleum, and a lofty domed edifice should be erected over his tomb." (Begley-Desai, p.282). He left a vast and valuable estate, receiving numerous mentions and much praise in both the *Tusuk-i-Jahangiri* and the *Shah Jahan Nama*. For Asaf Khan, see Beveridge-Prashad, pp.287-295; Leach, vol.I, pp.451-3; Welch *et al.*, pp.299-303. Among the many works that include a portrait of Asaf Khan, the majority show him in old age with a fuller grey beard and a rather aquiline nose. Those that show him earlier in life (some retrospectively) include: Leach, vol.I, pp.451-3, no.3.63; Beach, Koch and Thackston, pp.92-97, 198-203, nos.37-39.

**SAYF KHAN BARHA**

Sayf Khan Barha (Sayyid Ali Asghar) was from the family of Barha Sayyids, who played an influential role in Mughal court circles. He was a favourite of Jahangir and in 1606 Jahangir recorded in the *Jahangirnama* that "I have bestowed on 'Ali Asghar Barha, who has not a rival in bravery and zeal, ... the title of Sayf Khan and thus distinguished him among his equals and peers. He seems to be a very brave youth and was always one of those few confidants who went with me on hunts and other places." (*Jahangirnama*, p.19, quoted in Welch *et al.*, p.122). He distinguished himself in battle on several occasions, fought with Prince Khusrau in the campaign against Amar Singh of Mewar and went on campaign in the Deccan with Prince Parviz. He died young, of cholera, in 1616.



#### THE PAINTER BISHANDAS

Bishandas, the nephew of the painter Nanha, began his career under Akbar around 1589-90, contributing to the *Baburnama* (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, IM.276,276a-1913, the double-page illustration of Babur supervising the laying out of the *Bagh-e Wafa* ('Garden of Fidelity'), see Stronge, pp.90-91, pl.59). He quickly became respected for his skills as a portraitist and in 1600 moved with Prince Salim to Allahabad, continuing in his employ after Salim succeeded to the throne as Emperor Jahangir (r.1605-27). He was one of only five artists to receive a mention in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (translated by Rogers, vol.II, pp.116-7), where Jahangir writes that he was "unequaled in his age for taking likenesses". He was selected by Jahangir to travel with his embassy to Shah Abbas of Persia in 1613 in order to take likenesses of the Shah and his court. He continued painting for Shah Jahan (r.1627-58), his career coming to an end around 1640. For further discussion of Bishandas and examples of his work see Beach, pp.107-111; Das in Das et al., pp.112-133; Leach, vol.II, pp.1100-01; Okada, pp.154-163; Das in Beach, Fischer and Goswamy, pp.259-278.

#### THE PAINTER NANHA

Nanha, uncle of Bishandas, was himself a highly skilled and innovative artist. Leach (vol.II, p.1114) notes that he merits inclusion in Abu'l Fazl's list of eminent Mughal artists. His career began during Akbar's reign, when he contributed to the *Darabnama*, the *Timurnama*, the *Jaipur Razmnama*, the *Baburnama* and the *Chingiznama*. His early delicate style developed in Jahangir's reign into a more rich and confident but nevertheless delicate mode that was well suited to portraiture, in which context he painted several of Jahangir's courtiers. He may be synonymous with the artist Kanha.

For further discussion see Leach, p.1114, Welch et al. 1987, pp.122, 148, 151, 194-5; Beach, pp.149-50.

#### PROVENANCE

Anonymous collection, England, 1960s: Sotheby's, London, 12 December 1966, lot 58  
Sven Gahlin (1934-2017), London, 1966-2014: Sotheby's, London, 6 October 2015, lot 21  
H.H. Sheikh Saud Al-Thani (1966-2014): Christie's, New York, 19 June 2019, lot 324

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Welch, S.C., Schimmel, A.M., Swietochowski, M. L., and Thackston, W. M., *The Emperor's Album, Images of Mughal India*, New York, 1987



#### 4. PORTRAIT OF A SUFI DERVISH PROBABLY BIJAPUR, DECCAN, CIRCA 1630-40

Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
6¾ by 3¾ in.; 17.2 by 9.5 cm.

A Sufi with exaggerated facial features, a distinctive blue robe and a striped turban kneels on the ground. He has an elongated nose, arched eyebrows and a somewhat menacing grin revealing both rows of teeth. In his left hand, he holds a long staff with curved terminal; in his right hand, he holds prayer beads. Dangling from the sash around his waist are several Central Asian style accoutrements with tasselled ends, and he wears a large hoop earring in his left ear. The landscaped background, with distinctive tufts of grass and flowering plants, resembles a similar landscape setting in a painting of a dancing dervish from a *Diwan of Urfi*, dated 1637, one of nine paintings remaining in the manuscript. It is possible that our painting originated in this volume. This collection of poems was made for Muhammad Adil Shah of Bijapur (r.1627-56) and is now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (Quintanilla, pp.241-3, cat. 56 and Fraser, pp. 54-56).

The paint of the vivid sky-blue *jama* worn by the dervish is thickly applied and has tiny marks on the surface that brings to mind Zebrowski's comment that it was a trait of Bijapur artists to layer the paint so thick it later cracked (Zebrowski, p.92). Brilliant blue pigment often appears in Bijapuri paintings along with bright orange and moss green, as we find in our painting. Another image of a kneeling dervish attributed to Bijapur, circa 1610-20, from the *Gulshan* album in the Gulistan Palace Library

in Tehran, has a similar way of depicting his hand holding prayer beads where the little finger extends, just like the right hand of our dervish (Zebrowski, p.84). Sufi saints or mystics forged strong allegiances in Bijapur and could become as powerful as rulers. Depictions of kings visiting holy men were a frequent theme in Mughal paintings, and these images also spread to the Deccan (Haidar & Sardar, p.109). However, this figure has been caricatured and has a comedic quality that brings to mind a particular genre of paintings that depict gatherings of mystics that also became popular under the Mughals. These figures are often shown in an intoxicated state and have a satirical nature that has its roots in Safavid Iran (Topsfield, pp.42-3).

#### PROVENANCE

Hutchinson Scott Auctioneers, Yorkshire, 19 June 2020, lot 180  
Private collection, London, 2020-23

#### REFERENCES

Fraser, M., *Deccan and Mughal Paintings: The Collection of Catherine Glynn Benkaim and Ralph Benkaim*, Cleveland, 2013 (online publication)  
Haidar, N. N. and Sardar, M., *Sultans of Deccan India 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, New York, 2016  
Quintanilla, S., *Mughal Paintings: Art and Stories*, Cleveland, 2016  
Topsfield, A., *Vision of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, Oxford, 2012  
Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, London, 1983

E.S.



5. **FOUR PIGEONS IN FRONT OF A DOVECOTE**  
MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1650

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in an album page; on the verso Layla and Majnun in a landscape, circa 1740; with blue border and black and white rules  
7½ by 5¼ in.; 19.1 by 13.3 cm. painting.  
7¾ by 4¾ in.; 18.9 by 12.2 cm. painting on verso  
12½ by 10¼ in.; 31.8 by 26 cm. folio

On a buff-coloured ground four piebald pigeons, two pink and two black, peck about in a courtyard, their feathers skilfully detailed. Beyond is a double-domed blue-and-white pottery or porcelain dove-cote with a lotus finial, painted with a landscape of trees. Behind is a rectangular brown pigeon-house, designed in the form of a garden pavilion. Of coffered form, it is painted in white with seven windows composed of cusped arches, two with hinged doors to admit the birds. On the roof are cusped foliate medallions with eaves and borders of foliate scroll.

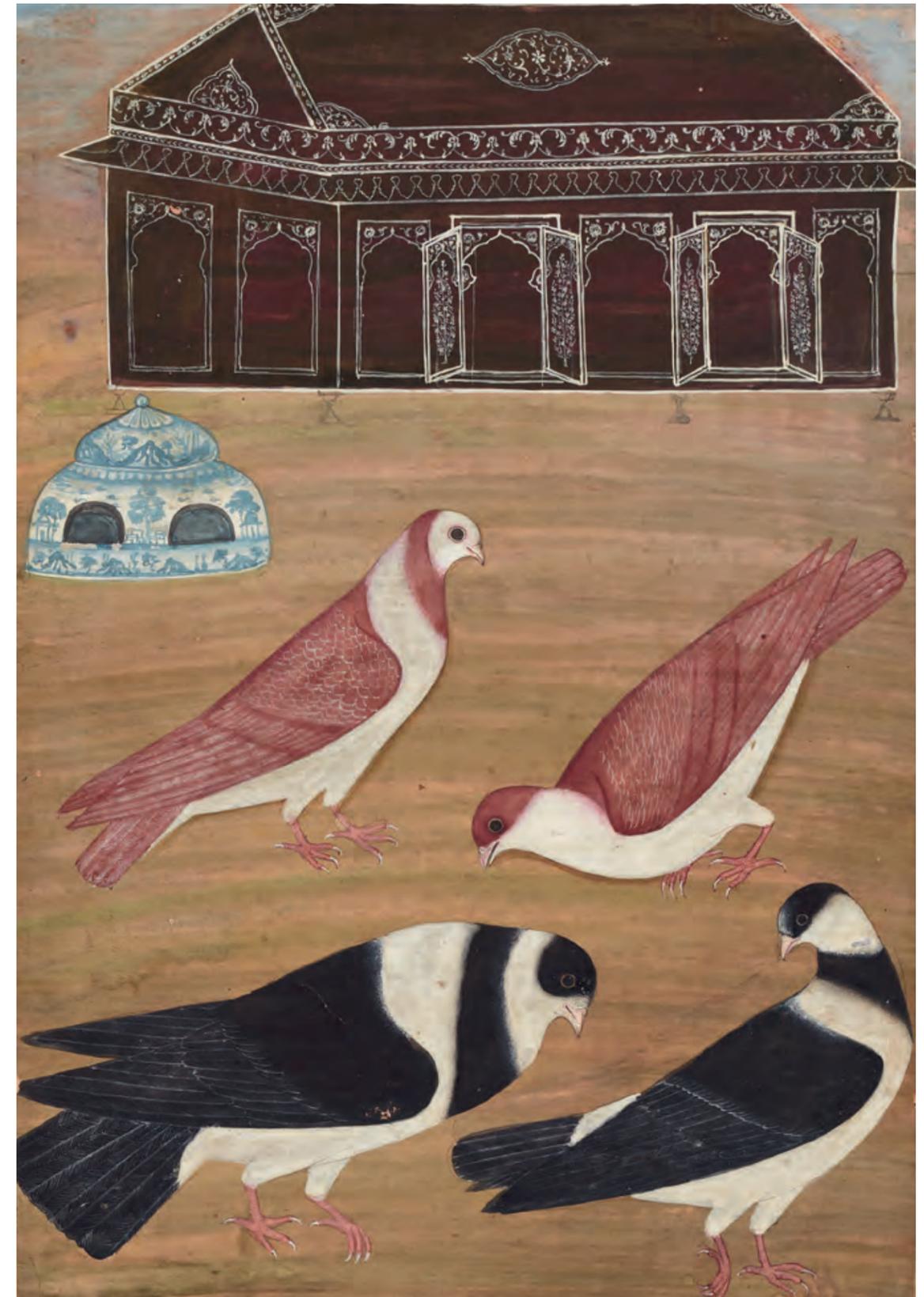
Pigeons have long been considered sacred in India, where they were kept and trained by princes and paupers and considered sacred to both Hinduism and Islam.

At the Mughal court pigeons were bred and imported from abroad. In the *Akbarnama*, Abu'l-Fazl records Emperor Akbar's pleasure at receiving 'fairy-flying' pigeons with a skilled handler, from Farghana where the Mughals originated, in present-day

Uzbekistan. At Akbar's court there were thought to be more than 20,000 pigeons, but only 500 were considered select. When the emperor moved camp, as he did frequently, the pigeons went too, transported by their bearers in portable dove-cotes. In another work, the *Ain-i Akbari*, Abu'l-Fazl describes the breeding, flying and the different colours of the royal pigeons. Birds were trained to perform complicated movements such as turning somersaults or 'the wheel', where a bird would throw itself over in a full circle. A select pigeon could do seventy of the former and fifteen of the latter in one session.

Mughal paintings depicting pigeons are rare. A 1595 portrait of the Governor of Kabul, in the Johnson Album at the British Library, London, has a seventeenth century addition depicting two pigeons and a domed dove-cote, see Sims-Williams. Also in the Library is a *Kabutarnamah*, an illustrated 'Book of Pigeons' written in 163 couplets by the poet Sayyid Muhammad Musavi, known as Valih. It contains information on their categories, colour and characteristics, as well as how to manage, fly and breed the different types of fancy pigeon. It is illustrated with thirteen Hyderabad paintings, circa 1788, showing the pigeons and their keepers.

A painting depicting two pigeons with a portable dove-cote, circa 1635, is in the Dara Shikoh Album at the British Library, see





Falk & Archer, pp.77 & 388, no.68f.31v. For another painting depicting pigeons round a dovecote, circa 1650, now in a private collection and formerly in the Lloyd Collection, London, see Losty 2011, no.5 and Losty 2012, p.120, no.62. Another version of this painting was formerly in the collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan and is now in the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, see Canby, p.153, no.114. For a Mughal portrait of two royal pigeons, circa 1650, in the Hodgkin Collection, another version of which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, (Hurel, no.29), see Topsfield, pp.50-51, no. 14.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

Inscribed on either side, on the foreground, in Devanagari and Persian, reading: 'Shiraz pigeon'

**PROVENANCE**

Sotheby's, New York, 16-17 March 1988, lot 347  
Private collection, New York, 1988-2023

**REFERENCES**

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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., *Indian Paintings from the Lloyd Collection*, Oliver Forge & Brendan Lynch Ltd., New York exhibition, London, 2011  
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Sims-Williams, U., 'Pigeon keeping: a popular Mughal pastime', British Library, blog, 23 February 2013  
<https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2013/02/pigeon-keeping-a-popular-mughal-pastime.html>  
Topsfield, A., *Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, Oxford, 2012



Verso

**6. YOUTH WITH A BLACKBUCK IN A LANDSCAPE**  
**DECCAN, CIRCA 1650**

Ink heightened with colour and gold on paper, laid down in a cropped album page comprising pale pink and pale green with gold decoration; blue, red and black rules  
6¼ by 4 in.; 17.5 by 10.1 cm. painting  
10 by 7¾ in.; 25.4 by 19.7 cm. folio

This fine drawing, with a charming scene of a youth feeding his pet blackbuck with his right hand and leading it with a halter held in his left, is set in a landscape with an ancient tree and vigorously billowing clouds. The youth is dressed in pointed shoes and gauze-like garments comprising short *pajamas*, a *jama* fastened on his right and a shawl draped over his right arm and left shoulder with flared billowing ends. His green turban is encircled by a gold band and has an aigrette finial. The blackbuck (*antelope cervicapra*) is native to India and frequently appears in both Mughal and Rajput painting, being painted by many of the great court artists such as Manohar.

Both tree and clouds are distinctly Persianate. The former, probably a *chinar*, or Oriental plane, is of curving, contorted form, with branches foreshortened from pollarding, two plump birds perched in its upper boughs. To the right is a mass of turbulent scudding clouds, vigorously forming scrolls and cloud-bands. Scattered about the landscape are a number of single flowering plants. Both tree and clouds are stylistically derived from sixteenth century Safavid prototypes.

A strong sense of movement pervades the scene – both man and beast are walking, the former's clothing skilfully caught in the motion of striding. The tree's asymmetrical yet attenuated form is dynamic and the clouds themselves a frenzy of urgent energy.

The artist is showing his skill in these details, while contrasting them with the placid expressions of both youth and animal.

The drawing's combination of Mughal and Safavid influences would suggest an origin in the Deccan and a date in the first half of the seventeenth century. The youth's clothing relates strongly to costume of the early Mughal period, and his facial physiognomy is distinctly Indian, his turban only showing Safavid influence.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

A short *nasta'liq* inscription in the foreground with an attribution to the artist Yusuf, and a spurious date:

'Yusuf drew it, year 16(?)'

The later ink seal impression reads, in Arabic, a Shi'a invocation: 'O 'Ali, help me!'

**PROVENANCE**

Charles Vignier (1863-1934), Paris, before 1912  
Sotheby's, New York, 25 March 1987, lot 39  
Private collection, New York, 1987-2023

**EXHIBITED**

Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1903

**PUBLISHED**

Martin, F.R., *The Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th century*, London, 1912, vol.2, pl.155  
Stchoukine, I., *Les Peintures des manuscrits de Shah Abbas Ier*, Paris, 1964, p.60 (listed)



7. FOLIO FROM AN ALBUM OF PORTRAITS

**PORTRAIT OF A STANDING SAFAVID COURTIER  
DECCAN, PROBABLY GOLCONDA, CIRCA 1680**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in an album page with a lattice of repeating gilt foliate sprigs on a faded red ground, a number (68?) at upper right, with black-edged gold border ruled in black, white and blue; verso depicting a female musician in a palace garden (*Gauri ragini*), appliqué *nasta'liq* above and below

8 by 4¾ in.; 20.5 by 12 cm. painting

6½ by 4½ in.; 16 by 11 cm., painting on verso

13½ by 8½ in.; 33.5 by 21.5 cm. folio

This folio is from an album assembled in Golconda in the Deccan towards the end of the seventeenth century.

On the recto is a portrait of an imposing Persian courtier with an elaborate turban, while the verso depicts a seated female musician in a garden setting. The courtier is wearing a gold *jama* with a repeating single flowering plant design, secured with a blue and gold belt encircled by a looped and knotted saffron *patka*. He has a prominent turned-down moustache and a large bulbous turban. He grasps a long sword in his right hand and holds a white handkerchief in his left. The background is the turquoise often used for portraits of this period. The small flowering plants around his feet recall another Deccani portrait (Pal, p.348). Each painting is laid down on a red-ground album page with reticulated gold floral sprigs, those on the recto contained in a gold lattice. The Ragamala scene depicted on the verso is *Gauri Ragini*, with a love-lorn *vina*-holding lady on a lotus flower reaching up to two birds perched in the branches of a tree, a white garden pavilion to the right.

The distinctive physiognomy of this stout gentleman marks him as a visitor to the Deccan, in particular his pale skin and dropped jawline. He is staring with some intensity and a certain deadness in his eye suggests he would not hesitate to dispatch any perceived foe. His large Safavid style striped turban identifies him as a Persian although his *jama* is Indian in both form and design. Many visitors from Central Asia, Turkey and Persia found positions at the Golconda court. The five kingdoms of the Deccan were Shi'a Muslim, unlike the Mughals who were Sunni, and this encouraged contact and exchanges with Persia. In addition, Persian was the court language and the literature, poetry and courtly traditions of Persia combined with indigenous influences, both Muslim and Hindu, to form the unique culture of the Deccan. A recent book on this subject calls it the 'Persian Cosmopolis', see Flatt (2019).

**OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS ALBUM**

A folio in the British Museum (1920,0917,0.69) and another in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.87.20.1) are likely from the same album. Each of these has a portrait, the former of the nobleman Sayyid Muzaffar, the latter of Sharza Khan, and each has on the verso a calligraphic verse written diagonally on marbled paper (see Pal, pp.350-1). A signature feature of all these pages is the outer margins which are close in palette and design to that of the present portrait. The manuscript must have been dispersed in the early twentieth century, as the British Museum acquired its folio from the same album in 1920.

Zebrowski discusses the production of such albums, composed of portraits of Deccani and Mughal notables by artists who offered them for sale in Golconda. He mentions three such albums in the British Museum (see Zebrowski, p.194 and Jackson & Jaffer, p.16). However, these albums lack decorated borders and do not include alternating pages of calligraphy. The album to which our folio belonged gives the appearance of a more considered layout with finer portraits, perhaps commissioned by an individual rather than produced for the open market.

Interestingly, Zebrowski's discussion focuses on a portrait of Mirza Ilich Khan, now in the San Diego Museum of Art, which he notes is by a court artist (Zebrowski, p.194, fig.160).

**INSCRIPTIONS**

Lines of *nasta'liq* above and below painting on the verso comprise calligraphic exercises unrelated to the painting

**PROVENANCE**

Art Passages, San Francisco, 2020

**REFERENCES**

Flatt, E.J., *The Courts of the Deccan Sultanates: Living Well in the Persian Cosmopolis*, Cambridge, 2019

Jackson, A., and Jaffer, A., (eds.) *Maharaja: The Splendour of India's Royal Courts*, London, 2009

Pal, P., *Indian Painting: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles Museum of Art Collection*, vol. 1, Los Angeles, 1993

Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, London, 1983



8. ILLUSTRATION TO A RAGAMALA SERIES  
**KRISHNA KNEELING ON A LOTUS (MALKAUS RAGA)**  
BILASPUR, 1690-1700

Opaque watercolour with gold on paper, red borders with black and white rules, Takri and Devanagari inscriptions and Mandi royal inventory stamp on verso  
7¼ by 4¾ in.; 18.6 by 12.5 cm. painting  
8½ by 6¼ in.; 21.5 by 15.5 cm. folio

The painting is folio seventy-eight from a now dispersed album of paintings once in the Mandi royal collection, which included a large *Ragamala* and a *Dasavatara* set.

The boy Krishna, peacock-crowned, bejeweled, garlanded and with white talismanic emblems on his dark skin, crouches on a large lotus that arises from a lotus lake flanked by two women. He is helping himself to a *laddu* or rice ball from a gold dish held out by the woman on his right, while the other waves a *chowrie* and holds a white cloth. At the feet of the first woman stands a goat with a snake in its mouth. The dark background gives way above to a strip of tumultuous sky.

Like most of the paintings in this large dispersed series, the inventive iconography is underpinned by beautiful details. The eagerness of the boy Krishna as he leans forward to grab the sweetmeat is suggested by the ends of his diaphanous *dupatta* fluttering out behind him. The *laddu*-bearing lady wears the same diaphanous material as an *ornhi* over her jade green skirt and orange bodice, colours which are reversed in the garments of her opposite number, who also sports a lime green cloak over her head and falling down her back, decorated with flowers along the bottom hem as is the hem of her skirt. Both wear copious amounts of jewellery.

**MALKAUS RAGA**

The compiler of the album, like most Pahari painters, used Ksemakarna's *ragamala* system in which the six *ragas* each have five wives and six sons. Ksemakarna gives visual clues as to the appearance of the *raga* or *ragini* and then adds the sound to which the music is compared. Malkaus *raga* is meant to be a dark-skinned man dressed in a yellow garment and holding a flute. The artist has interpreted these prescriptions as another form of Krishna, perhaps between Yashoda and Rohini. Ksemakarna likens the sound of the *raga* to that of a goat, represented standing here beside one of the women (Ebeling, p. 72).

**THE BILASPUR RAGAMALA**

This brilliant series is heavily influenced by Mughal and/or Deccani painting with modelled, naturalistic forms, three-dimensional eyes, a distinctive and diverse palette and a strong sense of fantasy, all elements perhaps brought into Pahari painting through Deccani artists fleeing north after 1686-87.

The series has been published as both Bilaspur and Chamba (see Galloway & Kwiatkowski, nos. 21-28; Glynn et al., nos. 7-9; McInerney et al., nos. 45-48; and Losty, 2017, pp. 226-33). It seems that the best place for this series is between the earliest of the seventeenth century *ragamalas* from Bilaspur, 1680-90, and the flatter and more obviously Rajput *ragamalas* in the new century.

**OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS MANUSCRIPT**

The series is now widely dispersed in private and public collections, after more than twenty folios appeared on the market between 2005-07, see Galloway & Kwiatkowski, pp.54-69 and Sotheby's, 2006 & 2007. Paintings from this manuscript can be found in public collections including two in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and in private collections including Kronos (McInerney et al., pp. 142-9, nos. 45-48), Seitz (Losty, 2017, pp. 186-7, no.48 & 228-33, nos. 60-62) and formerly Moscatelli (Glynn et al., pp.52-57, nos. 7-9). For *Raga Agada*, now in a New York private collection, see Losty, 2018, no. 13. The majority bear purple ink stamps and inventory numbers that have been identified as being those from the Mandi royal collection.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

On the reverse in Takri and in Devanagari: *Raga Malkausa*  
Above in takri: *prathama raga Malkausa ka 'first [of the group] of Malkaus raga'*, with a Mandi royal inventory stamp and number and the folio number 78

**PROVENANCE**

Royal collection, Mandi, inventory no. 2504  
Private collection, Germany, 1960s-2000s  
Private collection, Europe, 2011-23

**REFERENCES**

Ebeling, K., *Ragamala Painting*, Basel, 1973  
Galloway, F. and Kwiatkowski, W., *Indian Miniatures from the Archer and other private collections*, London, 2005 (nine folios)  
Glynn, C., Skelton, R., and Dallapiccola, A., *Ragamala Paintings from India from the Claudio Moscatelli Collection*, London, 2011  
Losty, J.P., *A Mystical Realm of Love: Pahari Paintings from the Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection*, London, 2017  
Losty, J.P., *Indian and Persian Court Painting*, Oliver Forge & Brendan Lynch Ltd., New York, New York exhibition, London, 2018  
McInerney, T., Kossak, S.M., and Haidar, N.N., *Divine Pleasures: Paintings from India's Rajput Courts, the Kronos Collection*, New York, 2016  
Sotheby's, *Indian and Southeast Asian Art*, New York, 29 March 2006, lots 164-172 (nine folios)  
Sotheby's, *Indian Art including Miniatures and Modern Paintings*, New York, 22 March 2007, lots 152-55 (four folios)



9. AN EXCEPTIONALLY LARGE ROYAL ASSEMBLAGE  
**AN ASSEMBLY OF MUGHAL EMPERORS AND RAJPUT RULERS VISITING TWO HOLY MEN**  
MEWAR, CIRCA 1695-1705

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, white, yellow and black  
rules with red border, inscribed on upper border, inventory  
number on the reverse  
13 $\frac{3}{8}$  by 20 $\frac{3}{8}$  in.; 34.1 by 52.3 cm. painting  
15 $\frac{1}{2}$  by 22 in.; 38.6 by 56 cm. folio

**PAINTING IN THE PERIOD OF AMAR SINGH II**

In the closing decades of the seventeenth century Mughal  
armies repeatedly invaded the Mewar state but were  
repelled by the forces of Maharana Jai Singh (r.1680-98) and  
his successor Amar Singh II (r.1698-1710). Under the latter,  
alliances were made with the powerful fellow-Rajput states of  
Amber (Jaipur) and Marwar (Jodhpur) in order to continue his  
dynasty's century long resistance to Mughal invasion. However,  
to defray the vast cost to the treasury of repelling the Mughal  
armies, he also made secret treaties with the Mughals. For a  
detailed survey of the period see Topsfield, pp. 109-139.

A number of highly finished large scale Mewar paintings of this  
type, with figures from the Mughal court, were commissioned  
during the reign of Amar Singh II. In view of the historical  
context, what appears to be an unusual subject may in fact have  
been painted as a vision of Mughal and Rajput harmony. Here  
we have an imaginary gathering of Mughal and Rajput princes  
visiting two holy men sheltering in a rocky wilderness. A stark  
dark brown treeless ground conveys a desert or barren place  
creating a sobering contrast between the regal splendour of the  
princes and the humility of the two sages.

The bearded shaven-headed Hindu yogi sits cross-legged leaning  
on his mendicant's crutch, naked apart from a blue loin-cloth,  
his eyes closed in deep meditation, at the entrance of the cave.  
Below him the Muslim shaykh, perhaps a Sufi, dressed in a simple  
white cotton tunic and skull-cap, sits cross-legged holding a  
rosary in his raised right hand, gazing intently at the princes.

**IDENTIFICATION OF PRINCES**

The eighteen figures depicted comprise Mughal and Rajput  
princes, dignitaries and courtiers, the upper row commencing  
with Emperors Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. The  
second figure below with greying beard may be Shah Jahan with  
behind him his four sons. The four Rajput princes at the back  
being Hindu have their *jamas* tied on the left, whereas Muslims tie  
theirs on the right. Their suggested identities are: Man Singh of  
Amber, the stout figure in yellow in characteristic pose; Chhatar

Sal of Bundi behind him in gold-striped *jama*; the stout figure  
above him in lilac may be Bhagwan Das of Amber and to his right  
is perhaps Gaj Singh of Marwar in a pale blue *jama*. The absence  
of a Mewar prince may be explained by the dynasty's pride,  
despite various treaties, in never having actually been conquered  
by the Mughals.

The sartorial details are fascinating: all the princes wear turbans,  
close-fitting *paijamas* and silk brocade *jamas* with frontal  
*patka*. The palette of their *jamas*, embellished with idiosyncratic  
repeating floral motifs or stripes, creates a sumptuous effect.  
Noticeable amongst their jewellery is a predominance of pearls,  
a prerequisite of royal princes, most wearing a double string  
around the neck and turban, as well as pearl bracelets. Most also  
sport a gold pectoral, finger- and toe-rings. Some have daggers  
at the waistband and all are barefoot as a mark of respect to the  
sages.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

The Mewar inventory number on the back is 20/6 and the  
valuation is Rs. 25. No date is given. There is also mention of  
the Padshah of Bukhara (?) on the verso.  
Upper border with verses in Mewari Hindi:  
*duha: sore se seli [ta] ji: turi agare ?lakh: sai tere karane: chhora se  
lab lakh// 2?// patasya sri surtan memadi sabi//*  
It has not been possible to interpret this inscription, which  
appears to mention a Padshah Shri Surtan.

**PROVENANCE**

Mewar Royal Library, Udaipur  
Spink & Son, London, circa 1985  
Pierre Jourdan-Barry, (1926-2016), Paris  
Spink & Son, London, 2000  
H.H. Sheikh Saud Al-Thani, (1966-2014), London, 2000-14:  
Bonhams, London, 8 April 2014, lot 257  
Simon Ray, London, 2014  
Private collection, Europe, 2014-22

**REFERENCES**

Topsfield, A., *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the patronage  
of the Maharanas of Mewar*, Zurich, 2000

*We are grateful to Dr. Andrew Topsfield for his assistance in the  
dating of this painting.*



॥ दुसः सोरे सेवे लीजे: दुरी प्रगरे लघ: घाडी ते रे कारणे: दो गो से ल ब ल धा ॥ राजा न क्य घी घ र ना ए मे म दी ब वी ॥



10. ILLUSTRATION TO A RAGAMALA SERIES:  
**NEGLECTED HEROINE (GAURI RAGINI)**  
BIKANER, CIRCA 1700

Opaque watercolour with gold on paper, plain paper borders with black and gold rules  
6½ by 2¾ in.; 15.7 by 7 cm. painting  
8½ by 5½ in.; 21.4 by 13.1 cm. folio

A female figure shown in profile leans against a mango tree with her right leg bent, her right hand held up as she grasps a branch. In her left hand is a garland of flowers. She is finely dressed in pink *paijamas*, a diaphanous muslin robe with gold embroidered stripes and edging, and pearl jewellery. The soles of her feet and palms of her hands are dyed with henna. The finely-delineated tresses of her long hair fan out on either side of her body. The



tree towers above her, covered in tiny leaves and fruit, and five small white birds perch in the branches. The diminutive size of this painting with these minute details give the painting a jewel-like quality. The background is fairly plain with light washes of colour suggesting the grass below her feet and blue sky above the tree. She represents a Ragini, most likely Gauri Ragini, represented by a beautiful heroine in solemn repose who has previously gathered up flowers while pinning for her lover. Furthermore, the trope of a woman nestled in the limbs of a tree, while holding one of the branches, is also associated with the fertility myth. Painted versions of heroines or *nayakas* in this pose were produced throughout the eighteenth century (Hurel, pp.182-3, no. 252).

**ANOTHER BIKANER GAURI RAGINI**

Our figure may derive from a much larger Gauri Ragini on a landscaped ground, circa 1685, formerly owned by Claudio Moscatelli and now in a private collection (Glynn, Skelton & Dallapiccola, cat. 1, pp.40-1; Losty & Galloway, pp.68-72, cat. 27). Here a similar female figure sitting in a near-identical mango tree is also drawn with precision, with each leaf delineated and fruit similarly arranged in groups of three, two diminutive white birds perched in its boughs. This figure is part of a larger scene that includes a sprawling landscape inhabited by multiple animals and birds, which reference paintings from the Deccan (Zebrowski, p.207, fig.180). Both paintings have plain paper borders and black rules.

In the mid-seventeenth century Bikaner rulers and their troops, were assigned strategic roles in the Mughals' Deccan campaigns. Bikaner painting was profoundly changed by the Deccani artists brought back to work in the royal atelier which, combined with Mughal influences, produced a new and exquisite style of painting that spanned the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century. (Glynn, p.65).

**PROVENANCE**

Deceased estate, New York, until 2022

**REFERENCES**

Glynn, C., "Bijapur Themes in Bikaner Painting," in Topsfield, A., (ed) *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, Mumbai, 2000  
Glynn, C., Skelton, R., and Dallapiccola, A.L., *Ragamala, Paintings from India from the Claudio Moscatelli Collection*, London, 2011  
Hurel, R., *Miniatures & Peintures Indiennes: Collection du département des Estampes et de la Photographie de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, volume 1, Paris, 2010  
Losty, J. and F. Galloway., *Paintings from the Royal Courts of India*, London, 2008  
Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, London, 1983





11. TWO FOLIOS OF CALLIGRAPHY FROM A  
DISPERSED SHI'ITE MANUSCRIPT  
MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1710

Persian manuscript on paper, the first with 18 lines of black *nasta'liq* within clouds on a pink ground, the reverse with 13 lines of black *nasta'liq* arranged in a *boteh* motif surrounded by poppies against a gold ground; the second folio with two panels of illumination between 4 lines of *nasta'liq* 11¼ by 7 in.; 30.3 by 17.7 cm. each, text panel 16 by 10¼ in.; 40.8 by 27 cm. folio

These two calligraphic folios originate from an album, with paintings of unusual and sometimes extraordinary scenes, assembled in the early eighteenth century and distinguished by its fine pale pink paper borders with stencilled designs of animals and flowers.

The first folio has a striking arrangement of thirteen lines of black *nasta'liq* in a *boteh* motif. This serrated leaf shape is surrounded by delicately-rendered vermillion and pale pink poppies on a solid gold ground. A margin of pink-tinted paper, decorated with floral designs drawn in faint black lines and coloured gold, frames the central rectangular panel. On the reverse are eighteen lines of *nasta'liq* within clouds on a pink ground; the same pink paper can be seen more clearly in the margin, embellished with a geometric floral pattern. The calligraphy on both sides is religious Shi'ite texts. The painting of the poppies surrounding the *boteh* motif is exceptionally well executed in the detail of the drawing and the overall composition and use of saturated colour.

The second folio features rectangular panels containing panels of illumination between four lines of *nasta'liq*. The illuminated designs comprise gold arabesques with three lapis blue cartouches – a cusped lozenge-shaped one in the centre and two triangular cartouches along each vertical side. The margins on both sides are of pink-tinted paper with symmetrical gold floral designs.



**OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS MANUSCRIPT**

Eight further paintings from this album have been sold at auction, four each at Christie's, London, 31 March 2022 and Sotheby's New York, 17 March 1988, two from the latter sale are now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (Quintanilla, pp.339-40, nos. 72-3).

- (i) Emperor Farrukhsiyar in durbar with (identified) princes (Christie's, London, 31 March 2022, lot 74)
- (ii) Mahliqa, daughter of the emperor of China, pointing at the bird-man Khwaja Mubarak (Cleveland, Quintanilla, p.339, no.72; Sotheby's, New York, 17 March 1988, lot 327)
- (iii) A princess before a nobleman surrounded by slain demons (Cleveland, Quintanilla, p.339, no.73; Sotheby's, New York, 17 March 1988, lot 329)
- (iv) Courtiers confronting a giant demon (Christie's, London, 31 March 2022, lot 75)
- (v) Courtiers in discussions with the same demon (Christie's, London, 31 March 2022, lot 75)
- (vi) A forlorn lady on a terrace (Christie's, London, 31 March 2022, lot 76)

- (vii) Noblemen watching a wrestling match (Sotheby's, New York, 17 March 1988, lot 328)
- (viii) Emperor Shah Alam I (r. 1707-12) in durbar with (identified) princes, below him the corpse of his overthrown brother (Sotheby's, New York, 17 March 1988, lot 326)

The years following the death of Aurangzeb (r.1658-1707) were a tumultuous time for the Mughal court in Delhi, with power changing hands several times. Shah Alam's reign lasted only five years, paintings and albums produced during his reign are therefore rare (Dalrymple & Sharma, p.72).

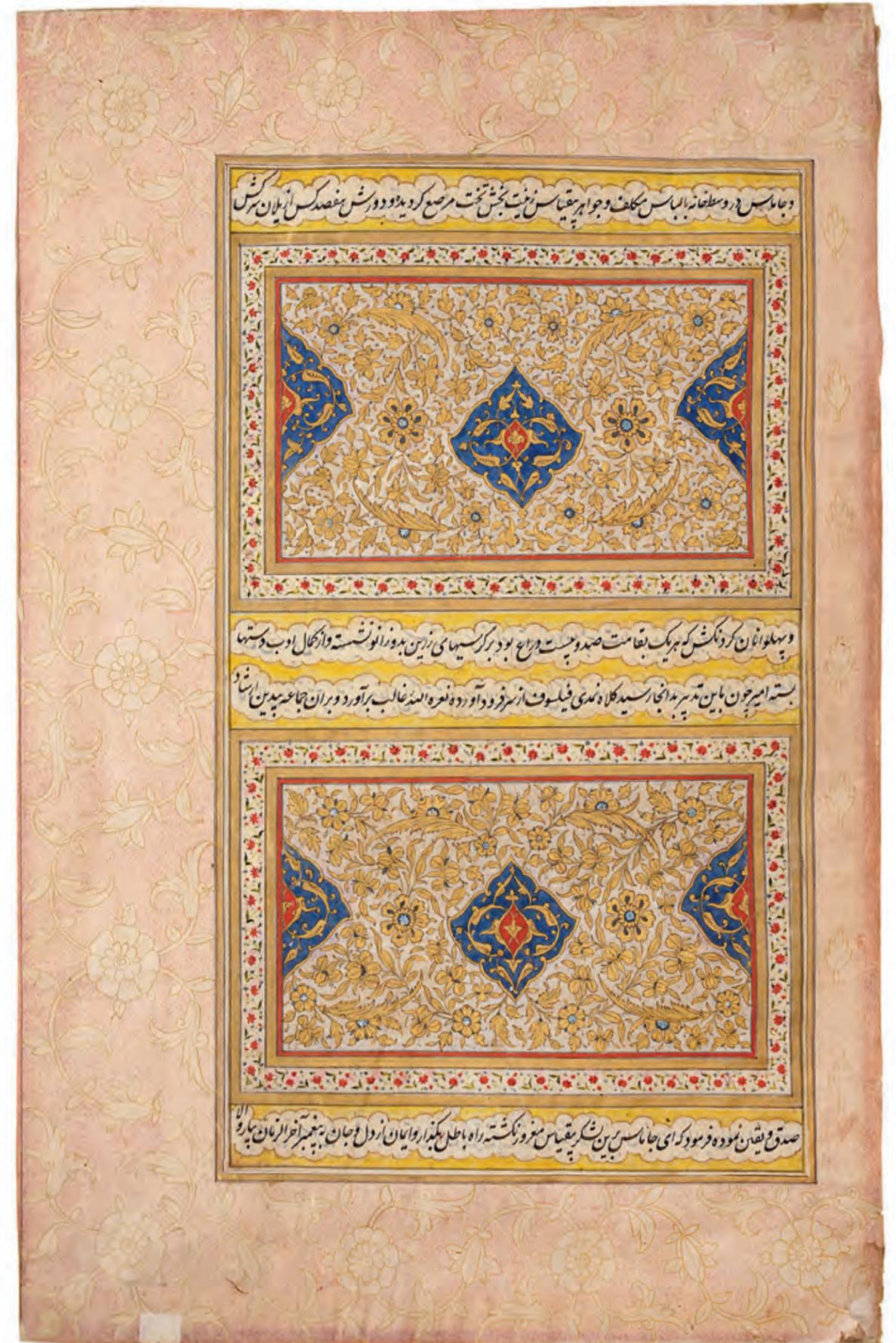
**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, U.S.A. until 2022

**REFERENCES**

Dalrymple, W and Sharma, Y., *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi, 1707-1857*, New Haven and London, 2012  
Quintanilla, S., *Mughal Paintings: Art and Stories*, Cleveland, 2016

E.S.



## 12. WEDDING SCENE AT NIGHT BIKANER, CIRCA 1720

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, narrow paper borders  
7¼ by 10¼ in.; 18.5 by 27.3 cm. painting  
7½ by 11¼ in.; 19.4 by 28.3 cm. folio

This painting depicts the wedding scene of a young princely couple in the evening. The newlyweds kneel beside each other on stacked cushions under a canopy, gazing into a mirror held up by one of the attendants. Despite the gaiety of all the onlookers, including musicians and dancers, the scene focuses on the newlyweds as they contemplate their reflection. Their figures are delicate, and their demeanour is composed. The colours are vibrant, largely vermilion red and yellow, usually associated with weddings. An array of candles is dotted around, and an attendant holds a flare, providing light sources on an otherwise dark evening. All the figures have hennaed hands, which was part of the ritual of weddings, as was the inclusion of a mirror. The moment the bride and groom meet for the first time, they see each other's reflection in a mirror.

Painting in the isolated desert state of Bikaner was transformed under the reign of Karan Singh (r.1632-69) and his youngest son, Anup Singh (r.1674-98). Under the former close relations were established with Emperor Shah Jahan and Mughal influences began to appear in Bikaner painting. It was under the latter however, who became a general in the Mughal army based in Hyderabad, that painters began to migrate from the Deccan to Bikaner. The most famous is perhaps Ruknuddin, who travelled with Anup Singh once he became Maharaja of Bikaner and produced some of the state's finest paintings. Many of the subsequent artists were related to Ruknuddin and scholars are working to establish their names, some of which appear on the back of the paintings along with inventory numbers.

In this painting there is some connection in the horizontal page layout, subject and figure types with a painting by Ruknuddin produced in Bikaner in 1678 (Krishna, p.58, fig.1). For a discussion of painting in Bikaner, see Ahluwalia, pp.96-105.

### INSCRIPTIONS

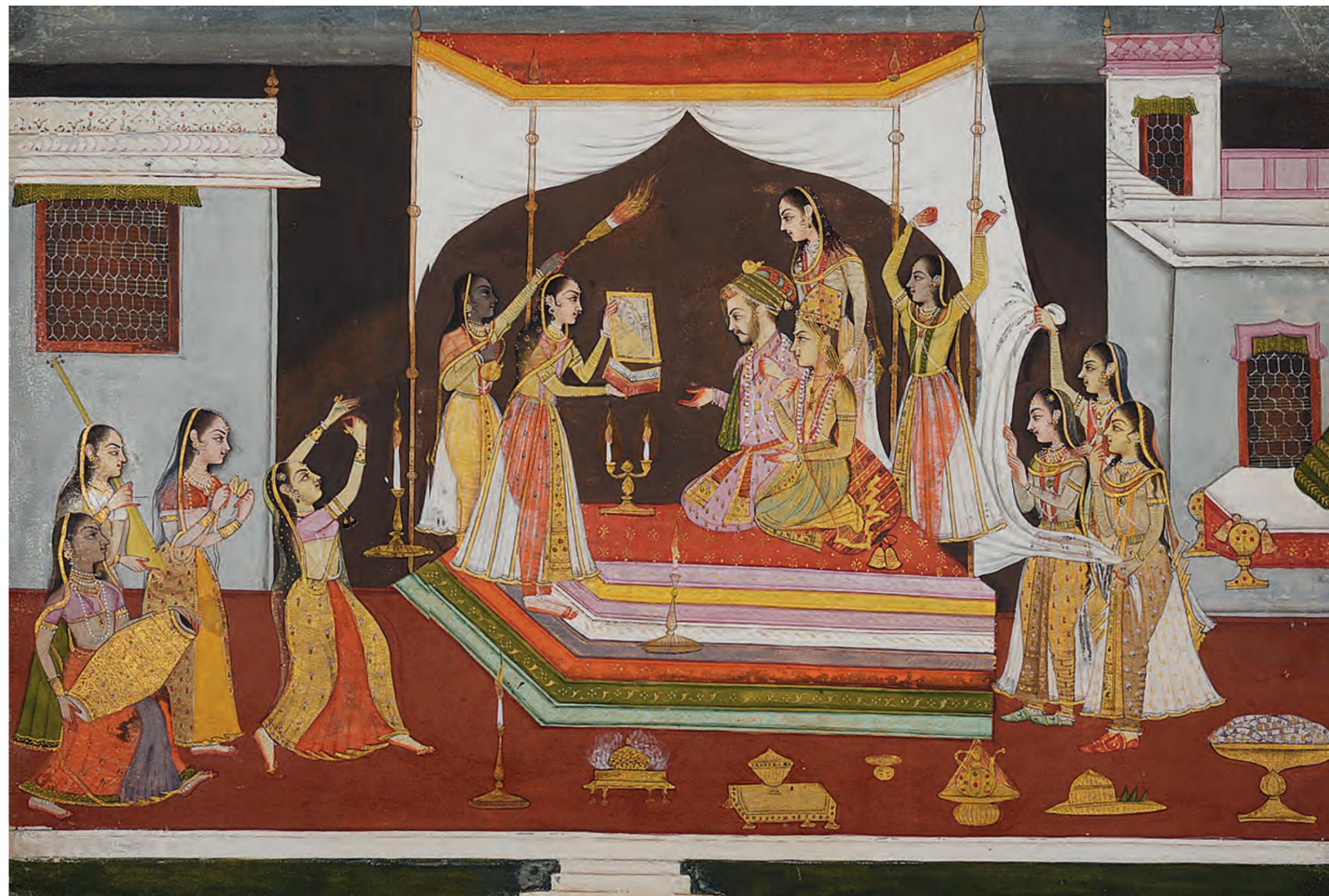
On the verso: Persian inscriptions including: *jilwa-yi nikāh*  
'The meeting of the bride and groom during the wedding'

### PROVENANCE

Christie's, New York, 16 September 2009, lot 875  
Christie's, London, 1 April 2021, lot 66  
Private collection, Europe, 2021-23

### REFERENCES

Ahluwalia, R., *Rajput painting: Romantic, Divine and Courtly Art from India*, London, 2008  
Krishna, N., "The Umarani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and their genealogy," in Topsfield, A., (ed.), *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, Mumbai, 2000



13. FOLIO FROM AN OTTOMAN ALBUM

**TWO NIGHTINGALES IN A ROSE BUSH**

SIGNED BY ABDULLAH BUKHARI (D. 1745)  
TURKEY, CIRCA 1725-45

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in a marbled album page, signed at lower left; on the verso a rose and a tulip and two standing figures

7½ by 4½ in.; 19 by 11 cm. painting  
16½ by 11 in.; 41.4 by 27.8 cm. folio

Two nightingales perch on the branches of a rose bush. The second nightingale is smaller in scale on a lower stem. Hovering above the plant are a mosquito and two house-flies. The larger of the birds occupies the upper branch between a rose in flower and another in bud. The rose heads are elegantly composed and well-observed, with particular attention to the wavy segments of the sepals and the various shades of pink for the petals.

The verso is a collage comprising two paintings and two small sections of illuminated designs. The larger of the paintings is a study of two flowers: a rose stem with one bloom and below it a short-stemmed pale pink tulip. The drawing is detailed with minute black outlines, echoing the style of the Bukhari rose painted on the other side of the album page, and the corners have spandrels of gold split-palmette design. The second drawing, in a less fine hand, depicts two turbaned men in conversation against a red background with a high horizon line. The man on the right is leaning on a staff listening to the other figure who holds a book, perhaps an author expounding on the volume in hand.

**THE ARTIST**

'Abdullah Bukhari has signed his painting in the lower left corner. He was one of the great Ottoman artists of the eighteenth century and was active from about 1725 to 1745. Most of his commissions were for paintings to be mounted in albums, such as this one. He specialised in single female figures and floral compositions (Artan and Schick, p.174; Bağcı et al., p. 276) but is also known for his erotic paintings. He mostly painted for patrons other than the sultan, but much of his work ended up in the royal collections.

**THE ALBUM PAGE**

Both sides of this album page have striking margins of marbled paper (*abri*) in a loose-flecked blue design. The entire surface was considered when designing an album page; a decorative

border often frames the central image. While it is often the case that paintings can be re-margined by later owners, this example is original. This type of loosely-patterned marbling is typical of eighteenth-century designs, and many 'Abdullah Bukhari paintings were mounted with marbled margins before being bound into albums.

Water-based marbled paper first appeared in East Asia about one thousand years ago. However, Benson suggests another form using plant mucilage may have emerged independently in Timurid Iran (Benson, p.157). A well-known Timurid scribe working at the turn of the fifteenth century, and many of his followers, wrote calligraphy on marbled paper. As these works were collected widely, this may have been the dissemination point for marbling techniques from India to Turkey. It became popular across the Persianate world, with the Deccan in India and Ottoman Turkey becoming two of the most prolific producers of marbled paper.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

Signature of the artist 'Abdullah Bukhari at lower left

**PROVENANCE**

Librairie Samuélian, Paris, early 1990s  
Eric Grunberg, Brussels  
Sotheby's, London, 24 April 2012, lot 225  
Christie's, London, 26 April 2018, lot 169  
Private collection, France, 2018-22

**REFERENCES**

Artan, T. and Schick, C., "Ottomanizing pornotopia: Changing visual codes in eighteenth-century Ottoman erotic miniatures", in Leoni, F., and Natif, M., eds., *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art*, Oxford, 2013  
Bağcı, S., Çağman, F. and Renda, G., *Ottoman Painting*, Istanbul, 2010  
Benson, J., "The Art of Abri: Marbled Albums Leaves, Drawings, and Paintings of the Deccan," in Sardar, M. and Haidar, N.A., *Sultans of Deccan India 1500-1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, New York, 2015

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No. 13 verso



No. 13 detail

14. **EMPEROR AURANGZEB AT THE SIEGE OF GOLCONDA FORT OF 1687**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1750**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, gold borders  
with red and black rules  
13 3/4 by 9 3/4 in.; 34 by 24.8 cm. painting  
15 1/2 by 11 1/2 in.; 38.5 by 29.7 cm. folio

**CONQUEST OF THE DECCAN BY AURANGZEB**

This painting depicts the siege of Golconda Fort in 1687 by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (r.1658-1707). Like his forebears, he had been intent on conquering the Deccan since he was a prince. His father, Shah Jahan (r.1628-58), had been sent to Burhanpur, in the Deccan, as a prince and in turn the Emperor appointed his third son, Prince Aurangzeb, as viceroy, who relocated the Deccan capital from Burhanpur to Aurangabad, the latter named after himself. This was strategically important, being near Bijapur and Golconda. Aurangzeb remained there until 1644 and then again from 1653, when he was reappointed as viceroy until he became Emperor 'Alamgir in 1658 (McInerney, p.283). For most of his reign's last decades, he focused on conquering the Deccan. Finally, in 1686, Aurangzeb overcame the Nizamshahis of Ahmednagar and the Adil Shahis of Bijapur. Then in January 1687, he assembled a vast army to begin an assault on Golconda Fort, which he proceeded to conquer.

Golconda fort looms in the background of the painting, a tall turreted wall stretching across the picture with palace buildings and formal gardens visible behind the wall. The particular skill of Indian artists to depict multiple perspectives in the same image allows simultaneous frontal and bird's eye views. A row of armed guards lines the battlement, and at the base of the outer wall is a row of cannon emanating billowing clouds of smoke, activated by teams of diminutive brown-clad men. Behind the cannon are massed rows of armour-clad cavalry, their shields and horses seen from a stylised rear view. Here the dramatic focal point of the battle centres on face-to-face fighting on two red ladders propped against the fort wall. Soldiers in grey climb up brandishing swords while enemy figures in red somersault to their deaths.

As the drama of battle rages, the focal point is the haloed figure of Aurangzeb in the foreground, seated in a gold palanquin supported by eight ceremonial bearers in red coats. He appears slightly larger than his attendants, bent over with age, wearing a white beard and turban tied with a gold band surmounted by a sombre black and white aigrette. To the left a reserve corps of cavalry waits to enter the fray, their mounts colourfully attired in horse-armor, whilst an elephant and mahout attend at lower left. The dominant size of his figure, the halo behind his head, and his position elevated above his encircling attendants and set apart from the other army groups all help accentuate his importance. His hunched pose draws the viewer in as he appears utterly absorbed in the book on his lap, no doubt a Qur'an, on top of which rests a pair of spectacles. This stooped pose became familiar for paintings of Aurangzeb in his old



age, often depicted wearing a white *jama* and turban with a white beard. A portrait in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, circa 1707, shows him attired in this way, holding his hands out (Quintanilla, p.238, fig 4.89). In another painting in the British Library, circa 1700, he gazes down at a manuscript, probably the Qur'an (Losty & Roy, p.159).

Other known versions of this scene demonstrate that this subject matter had long-lasting popularity. One, circa 1750, is in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (see Hurel, p.95, no.96). The closest, however, is another mid-eighteenth-century version, in the Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island (unpublished). Our painting and these other versions derive from an original work, completed soon after the siege of Golconda in the late 1680s, that has yet to be located.

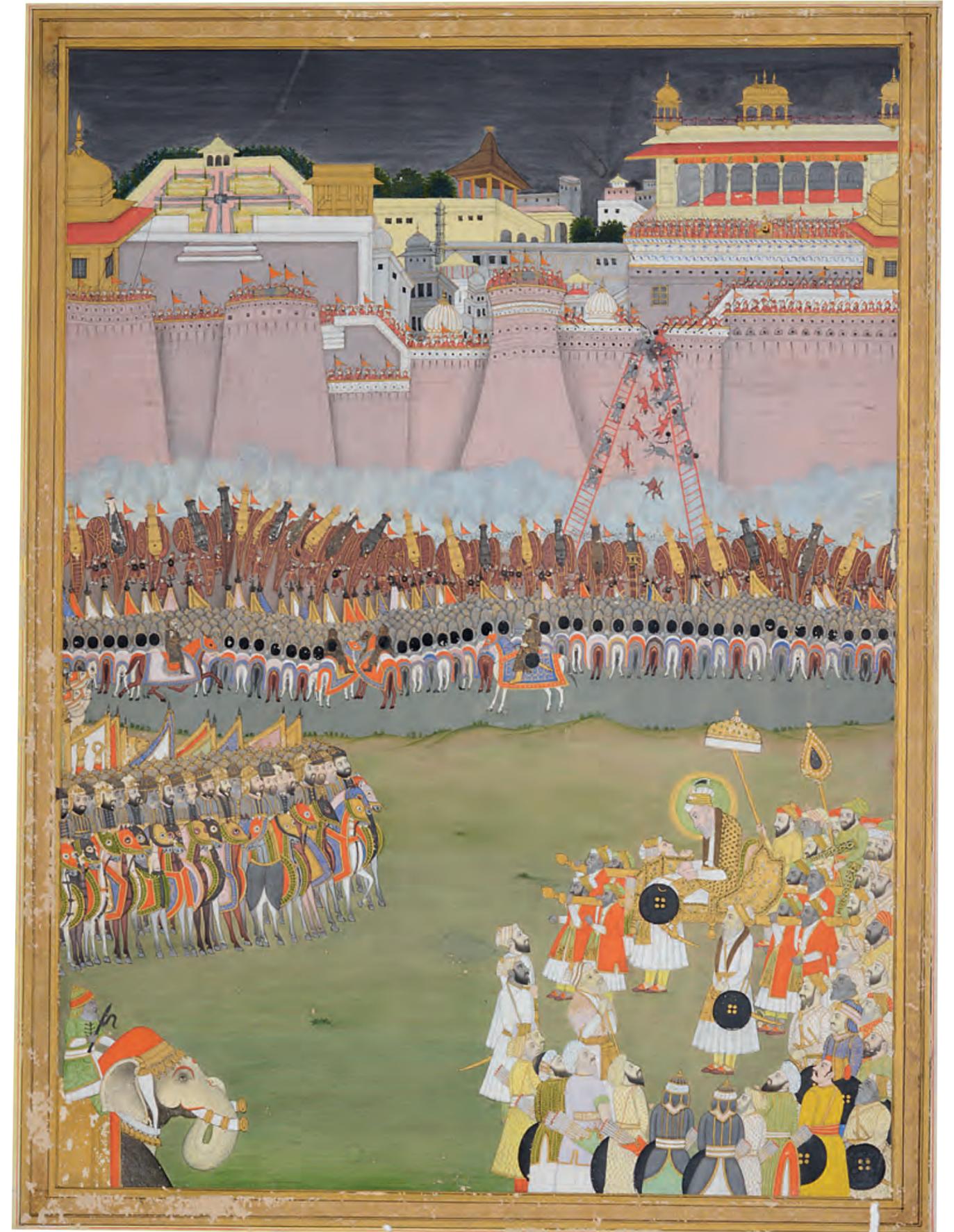
**PROVENANCE**

Christie's, London, 24 April 1990, lot 13  
Private collection, England, 1990-2022

**REFERENCES**

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Quintanilla, S., *Mughal Paintings: Art and Stories*, Cleveland, 2016

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15. **TWO ELEPHANTS IN COMBAT**  
RAJASTHAN, AJMER REGION, CIRCA 1750

Ink and wash on paper  
8¼ by 5 in.; 21 by 12.7 cm.

This skilful drawing has captured the massive volume of the elephants bodies, their wrinkled skin, the pink edges of their ears, the sense of lumbering movement permeating their combat. The plaited ropes strain, their chains sway, the bells around their necks and bodies toll, but only the two *mahouts* are calm and concentrated, each ready with the raised *ankus* if things get out of hand.

Elephant fighting was a popular subject in the Mughal ateliers and also at Bundi in Rajasthan, where court artists created a new genre that produced masterful works. This work would appear to be from one of the neighbouring courts in that sphere of influence.

For other eighteenth century drawings of elephants in combat, from Bundi and Kotah, see McInerney, nos. 20 and 27

**PROVENANCE**

Kenneth Jay Lane (1932-2017), New York, Sotheby's, New York, 21-22 October 1977, lot 311  
Private collection, New York, 1977-2023

**REFERENCES**

McInerney, T., *Indian Drawing: an exhibition chosen by Howard Hodgkin*, London, 1983



16. NAWAB WITH HIS ARMIES ON PARADE, POSSIBLY ALIVARDI KHAN OF BENGAL (1671-1756)  
MURSHIDABAD, CIRCA 1750

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down on card  
11 by 18¾ in.; 28 by 47.5 cm.

The central figure in this extensive painting of an army parade is a nawab riding on an elephant in a domed palanquin, who may be the Nawab Alivardi Khan (1671-1756). Behind him are rows of horseback infantry carrying swords and additional armour. Immediately behind and slightly to the right of the nawab's elephant are four figures grasping tall spears. In the foreground, other attendants on foot hold swords and shields, and one of them bears a hookah – a status symbol of authority and wealth in India. The ruler and his elephant are the focal points, not simply due to their central position but also their large size; all other figures and animals are represented much smaller in scale.

Figures on horseback or on foot lead the parade. In front of the nawab are two figures transported in palanquins by groups of attendants, presumably family members; one is a male figure in a bright saffron *jama*, and the other one is hidden behind the pink canopy, evidently one of the nawab's wives in *pardah*. Flanking these are two figures riding elephants wearing matching grey robes and turbans, giving the appearance of royal guards. The horizon line is high and edged in a row of trees, behind which an elephant leads infantry with triangular battle-standards embellished with a sword with bifurcated blade. They are followed by mounted musicians, a camel corps and finally two elephants bringing up the rear. The formal structure of the parade is animated by the sheer number of figures and the rhythm of the different groups and individuals, each with a coded outfit that reflects their role. While the nawab is the largest figure in the painting, all others are scaled differently, sometimes reflecting their status, for instance the palanquin-bearers are smaller than the figures leading horses at the front of the parade.

A comparison with surviving paintings of Nawab Alivardi Khan (r.1740-56) reveals a strong resemblance to the current image (Losty, 2013, p.83). The overall shape of the beard with an almost-square shape to the chin, the large almond eyes and neatly arched eyebrows, the long straight nose and the turban design all appear to confirm this. Most Murshidabad paintings under his patronage date from the later part of his reign, such as a painting of the nawab hunting, circa 1750, now in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (Losty, 2002, p.36, no.2; Losty & Roy, p.84). Only around 1750, after he had defeated the Marathas, did his realm become politically stable, and he established a thriving cultural centre in Murshidabad. A more detailed Murshidabad army procession, circa 1780, from the collection of Ann and Gordon Getty, was sold at Christie's, New York, 24 October 2022, lot 1103. There is some visual connection with a series of genre scenes that depict daily life with multiple small figures engaged in different activities. Two of these paintings, circa 1760-70, are now in the British Library, London (Losty & Roy, pp.178-9, nos.119-120).

**PROVENANCE**

Monsieur B. de M., Belgium (1945-2021)

**REFERENCES**

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17. ILLUSTRATION TO A RAGAMALA SERIES  
**PRINCESS WITH AN ATTENDANT AND TWO YOGINIS IN A LANDSCAPE (TODI RAGINI)**  
 LUCKNOW, CIRCA 1750

Opaque watercolour with gold on paper, laid down in a now reduced album page with a gold-ground design of repeating poppies and border of foliate scrolls  
 10 by 7 in.; 25.4 by 17.8 cm. painting  
 12¾ by 8¾ in.; 31.5 by 20.6 cm. folio

A wistful love-lorn princess leans against the tree trunk, her head resting on her right arm while gazing down toward the blackbuck sitting nearby. Her attendant stands behind her holding a mirror. Both wear luxurious courtly clothes with diaphanous muslin *cholis* covered by gold-edged *orhnis*, floral brocade *pajamas*, and gold-embroidered *patkas*. Their jewellery - earrings, necklaces, bracelets and armlets - is composed of pearls and precious stones. In contrast, the female ascetics, or *yoginis*, facing the elegantly attired women, are dressed simply in the characteristic pink clothing of religious figures. They wear beaded necklaces, and their long hair (probably *jata*, or dreadlocks) is caught up in a neat topknot. The seated ascetic plays a *vina* while her companion stands behind her, holding a peacock feather fan (*morchhal*). In the foreground a buck and two doe loiter beside a lotus pond, alert to the music. Beyond is the princess's gilt gazebo in a dark grey lake and to the left a hill with a walled fort on the top.

This is a depiction of the musical mode *Todi Ragini*. Each *raga*, or mode, in Indian classical music, invokes a specific *rasa* (mood or essence) through particular scales and performances in certain seasons and times of the day. *Todi Ragini* is a musical mode associated with late morning in the summer. It is the female counterpart to *Hindola Raga*, often shown as a man and woman sitting on a swing in a garden. *Todi Ragini* was a popular subject for painting in the eighteenth century across many regions in the subcontinent. Most depictions show a beautiful, elegantly dressed woman in a landscape setting who has been separated from her lover (Quintinilla, p.255, fig 4.106). She often carries a *vina* and has deer sitting or standing nearby, attracted by the music. The deer or blackbuck can also symbolise the absent lover.

Mughal, Rajput and regional court images of *yoginis* tend to idealise their appearance suggesting a direct link between beauty and the divine. These women were usually affiliated with goddesses associated with the god Siva and were practitioners of yogic (usually Hath yoga) or tantric practices (Ramos, pp.101-103). Paintings of female ascetics were also frequently produced in eighteenth-century India, and many images show princesses or noblewomen visiting ascetics, often at night (Markel, p.164 and Ramos, p.104). Including these figures in a *Todi Ragini* is relatively unusual.

The prototype is likely to be a Bikaner painting, circa 1680, of an almost identical subject, which was sold at Christie's, London, 8 April 2008, lot 261. Many seventeenth century paintings were copied by Mughal artists, who had migrated from Delhi to Awadh, at Lucknow during the second half of the eighteenth century. Patronage from European and Indian collectors was burgeoning and the skilled court artists produced works such as this. Two further eighteenth century versions of this subject are in the Fitzwilliam Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the latter from the Deccan (both unpublished).

**PROVENANCE**

Joseph Soustiel, Galerie Art Musulman, Paris, before 1995  
 Art Passages, San Francisco, 2022  
 Private collection, Europe, 2022-23

**PUBLISHED**

Sigalea, R., *La Medecine Traditionnelle de l'Inde*, editions Olizane, Geneva, 1995, pl. IX, p. 152.

**REFERENCES**

Markel, S. with Bindu Gade, R., *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, Los Angeles, 2010  
 Quintanilla, S., *Mughal Paintings: Art and Stories*, Cleveland, 2016  
 Ramos, I., *Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution*, London, 2020

**18. PORTRAIT OF NAWAB SARBULAND KHAN  
DELHI OR AWADH, CIRCA 1750-70**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in a gold-sprinkled mustard yellow album page, with pink and white border ruled in gold

7½ by 4½ in.; 19 by 11.5 cm. painting

18 by 13¾ in.; 45.6 by 35 cm. folio

Sarbuland Khan stands by a lake with the hilt of a straight sword in his right hand. He is shown in profile dressed in a gold coat with mauve flowers, mauve *jama* with a green leaf design, vermilion and green-striped *pajamas*. His turban is green with a gold brocaded band and a feather aigrette. Suspended from his gold *patka* is another sword. He has a full grey-black beard, an upright stance and a resolute gaze.

Portraits by Awadhi artists follow the Mughal tradition of rulers and nobleman shown in profile, usually against a plain background that contrasts with acutely-observed depictions of their physiognomy and clothing. In the eighteenth century it became more common to add detail to the setting. Here the figure is framed by a simple landscape scene with a lake in the distance and beyond that trees on a gently undulating hills.

**SARBULAND KHAN**

Originally from Iran, Sarbuland Khan arrived in India during the reign of Aurangzeb with his father Mir Afzal who became the *diwan* of Gwalior. He worked under three successive Mughal rulers acquiring the title Sarbuland Khan in the reign of Shah Alam Bahadur Shah I (r.1707-12). He served in Bengal before being appointed governor of Awadh by Emperor Farrukhsiyar (r.1713-19). Later he was made governor of Kabul and under Muhammad Shah (r.1719-48) became governor of Gujarat. He was deemed to be prone to extravagance and was removed from his post and returned to Delhi where he died in 1745 (see Khan & Hayy, pp. 704-708 for a short account of his life).

**NAWAB OF AWADH**

This folio has an interesting provenance having been owned by both a Nawab of Awadh and Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India. On the reverse is the ownership seal stamp of Asaf al-Dawla, Nawab of Awadh (r.1775-97), eldest son of Nawab Shuja' al-Daula (r.1754-75) who inherited the governorship of Awadh following his father's death. He promptly moved the court from Faizabad to Lucknow where he commissioned some of the most prominent buildings in the

city. The date of the seal impression, 1776-7 was not long after his rule began, although it is unclear when he acquired this painting. An album of Mughal portraits in the Royal Collection in Windsor was owned by Asaf al-Dawla and each folio bears his seal impression with the date 1776-7 on the reverse, the same as our folio (Hannam, pp. 84-5, no.15).

**WARREN HASTINGS**

Hastings (1732-1818), served as first Governor General of India from 1773-85, but was also a scholar with a gift for languages (Marshall, 2004). He first arrived in India aged seventeen and throughout his long years in India remained deeply interested in its culture, acquiring many manuscripts and paintings. In 1785, he brought his collection back to England to his home at Daylesford in Oxfordshire. The albums were later sold by his descendants in 1853.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

On the reverse is a single line of *nasta'liq* that reads 'Painting of Nawwab Sarbuland Khan', and a seal impression of Asaf al-Dawla, Nawab of Awadh (r.1775-97) that reads 'Wazir al-Mamalik Asaf al-Dawla Asaf Jah Bahadur, 1190 (1776-77). (Regnal year) 17'

**PROVENANCE**

Asaf al-Dalwa (1748-97), Nawab of Awadh  
Warren Hastings (1732-1818), Daylesford, Oxfordshire, Governor-General of India  
By descent until sold by Messrs Farebrother, Clark and Lye, 1853, lot 862  
Bonhams, London, 29 March 1985, lot 189  
Maggs Bros., London, December 1985, Bulletin no. 39, p.8, no.6  
Anthony Powell (1935-2021), the Oscar-winning costume designer, London, 1986-2021

**REFERENCES**

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Khan, S.N. and Hayy, A., *The Maathir-ul-Umara, Being Biographies of the Muhammadan and Hindu Officers of the Timurid Sovereigns of India from 1500 to about 1780 A.D.*, vol. 2, trans. Beveridge, H., and Prashad, B., Calcutta, 1952  
Marshall P.J., 'Hastings, Warren (1732-1818)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford, 2004

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**19. QUEEN HUNTING IN A FENCED ENCLOSURE  
AWADH, CIRCA 1750-75**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in a reduced album page with gilt borders and black and white rules  
13½ by 8½ in.; 33.8 by 21.4 cm. painting  
15½ by 10½ in.; 39.4 by 26.2 cm. folio

This scene is a witty all-female take on an all-male illustration of the Mughal Emperor Akbar hunting, from the *Akbarnama* of circa 1590-95, in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London (Stronge, p.63, pl.42).

A crowded hunt scene populated entirely by women. The queen, astride a white stallion in the centre, is hunting while her entourage gathers around, occupied in various tasks related to the hunt. She holds a bow in her left hand and reaches behind her to lift an arrow from the quiver attached to her belt. She has just shot two arrows into a stag. Below her is a frantic array of running deer and a leopard who has just caught one of them, pursued by a woman on a cart pulled by two bullocks. In front of the queen, a woman kneels on the ground dispatching another deer with a knife to its neck with two other dead animals lying on either side of her. Above this, a group of women hold up a deer strung up on a branch and are skinning it to eat later. Along the lower edge and upper left further groups of women stand mingling near a fence. The painting is striking in its all-female cast and its distinctive style. The women all have long dark hair and rounded child-like faces. The colours are vibrant, with a predominance of green with shades of pink and vermillion. While there is some modelling to the figures, the landscape is plain. A structure to the top right is a stylised representation of a tent.

**DERIVATION FROM A FOLIO OF AN IMPERIAL AKBARNAMA**  
There are several hunt scenes in the *Akbarnama* but this one is a spectacular double page depiction of a *qamargah*, derived from the Timurids, where a large circular enclosure was created with a fence which was then gradually drawn in, trapping the animals. Our painting mimics the left-hand side, painted by Mansur, who later became one of Jahangir's greatest artists, mostly known for depicting the natural world. Like the queen in our painting, Akbar is the only one hunting. He also rides a white horse and is shown in the act of grabbing another arrow having just shot two into a gazelle before him. An entourage accompanies him, helping facilitate his sport. Part of a tented enclosure is depicted but no women are present. However, the facing page to the right shows the rest of this tent, where a woman stands at the entrance and others are visible inside the tent. Therefore, women are present at the hunt, albeit out of sight and uninvolved in the frantic activity outside their enclosure (Stronge, pl.63, p.42). This copy of the *Akbarnama* was a highly-prized imperial manuscript but

must have left the Mughal court by the early eighteenth century. It was left to the Museum by the widow of Major-General John Clarke, who bought the manuscript in Awadh between 1858-62.

The style is distinctive and does not closely resemble paintings produced in the Awadh region. However, copies of Mughal works were known to have been completed here in the eighteenth century. The only other known painting in this distinctive style is now in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. A date on the reverse of 1785 accompanies the owner's name Colonel Gentil, an avid collector and patron of Indian painting while stationed in Awadh from 1757 to 1777 (Hurel, p.182, cat 250). The Paris painting features similar long-haired women moving through a mountainous landscape. This time the queen is shown in a palanquin carried by camels, and again an entourage accompanies her. Hurel tentatively suggests this is the queen of Sheba. However, she was not known for her hunting prowess. It seems more likely our queen is a Mughal or even Deccani heroine.

One candidate that comes to mind is Chand Bibi, a 16th-century queen renowned for her heroic defence in Ahmadnagar when the Mughals attacked. In the mid-18th century, numerous paintings were produced in the Deccan depicting her out hawking with her long hair flowing (Hutton, pp.50-63). Indeed, Hurel suggests the colours in the Paris painting – juxtaposing green with pink or orange – are Deccani traits. However, given the other links to Awadh, a provenance in this region seems most likely. These two paintings open an exciting avenue of study of regional styles of Indian painting and the depiction of women in active roles, more usually assumed by men, that were relatively prevalent in the eighteenth century.

**PROVENANCE**  
Private collection, U.S.A.  
Christie's South Kensington, London, 11 April 2014, lot 42  
Private collection, Europe, 2014-22

**REFERENCES**  
Hurel, R., *Miniatures & Peintures Indiennes: Collection du département des Estampes et de la Photographie de la Bibliothèque nationale de France*, volume 1, Paris, 2010  
Hutton, D., "Portraits of 'A Noble Queen': Chand Bibi in the Historical Imaginary," in Aitken, M., (ed.) *A Magic World: New Vision of Indian Painting*, Mumbai, 2016  
Stronge, S., *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book 1560-1660*, London, 2002

20. ILLUSTRATION TO A RAGAMALA SERIES

**HOLI FESTIVAL WITH NAWAB SIRAJ AL-DAWLA AS THE NAYAKA (VASANT RAGINI)**  
MURSHIDABAD, BENGAL, CIRCA 1755

Opaque watercolour with gold on paper, laid down in a reduced album page decorated with repeating lotus buds on a gold ground 9¼ by 5½ in.; 23,5 by 15 cm. painting  
11 by 7 in.; 28 by 17.8 cm. folio

This vibrant painting depicts the spring festival Holi in the form of Vasant Ragini, the musical mode from the *Ragamala* that celebrates spring. Here Siraj al-Dawla, Nawab of Bengal (r.1733-57) takes the role of the Nayaka celebrating Holi with a group of court ladies.

Siraj al-Dawla embraces one of the ladies in the centre while the others gather around. The two women in the immediate foreground are armed with syringes of coloured water. One is firing at the embracing couple while the other is reaching into a gold globular vessel to refill her syringe. Some ladies standing to the right and one on the left are clutching coloured powder in their hands, about to throw it, the colour leaking down the palms of their hands. A lady on the right plays an oblong drum, and another on the left holds up a round drum. Four hold up small vases of flowers, including the lady embracing the Nayaka. The background is magenta representing the already-thrown pigment that covers the ground of this landscape setting, and the clothing of all the figures is of shades of magenta and saffron, rendering the entire painting an arresting display of dazzling colour.

**SIRAJ AL-DAWLA, NAWAB OF BENGAL**

Despite most sources condemning his character, Siraj al-Dawla (1733-57) was nevertheless renowned for his good looks. Two fine group portraits of his grandfather, Nawab Alivardi Khan (1671-1756), in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, circa 1750, show Siraj al-Dawla, his favourite grandson, facing him to the far right of each picture; see Losty 2017, pp. 794-5, nos. 31 & 32. The resemblance between the portrait of Siraj al-Dawla here and his depiction in the *Ragamala* painting is unmistakable; large eyes with full lips, a small dark moustache, shadow of a beard, and a similar turban secured with a pearl and emerald band.

Siraj al-Dawla had since childhood been groomed by his grandfather, the powerful Alivardi Khan (1671-1756), Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from 1740, to succeed him, which he did on Alivardi Khan's death in 1756. Intrigue at court and the ever-increasing threat from the British in Calcutta, who were becoming more autonomous, forced the Nawab into action when reinforcements to Fort William were made. Having attacked the city, he took it briefly and imprisoned 150 British and Indian soldiers from the Fort, in the infamous 'Black Hole' incident where over 100 died. Other conflicts followed and, ultimately, after much intrigue on both sides, Siraj ud-Dawla was defeated at the Battle of Plassy in 1757 by Robert Clive ('Clive of India'), after which Bengal passed into the hands of the East India Company. In trying to make his escape to Patna by boat the Nawab was captured and murdered.

Skelton quotes the contemporary historian Ghulam Hussain Khan, who states that his cousin, the Nawab, was known all over Bengal for the "regularity and sweetness" of his looks (Skelton, p.14). His character however was far less appealing, and Ghulam Hussain also wrote a scathing account of his debauched nature and that the nobility disliked him. However, he enjoyed the arts, and Skelton attributed a new 'freshness of vision' within Murshidabad painting to Siraj al-Dawla's pleasure-loving nature and patronage, including this *Ragamala* set. Skelton viewed this series as heralding a new phase of Murshidabad painting with vitality and softer modelling that contrasts with earlier, more formal styles. The style suggests a date of circa 1755 in the last years of the reign of Nawab Alivardi Khan. The horizon is high and curved, somewhat similar to a later set of *Ragamala* paintings from Murshidabad (Losty, 2013, p.91, fig.9).

**OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS RAGAMALA**

A *Ragamala* ('garland of ragas') is a set of paintings, each representing a 'raga' or musical mode depicted as a figure experiencing a particular emotion at a specific time of the day and season of the year. Other images from this *Ragamala* series include: *Bhairava Raga*, where the Nawab appears with a woman





sitting on a low seat in a palace courtyard by candlelight at night (Christie's, London, 25 May 2017, lot 219); *Hindola Raga* with Siraj ad-Daula depicted on a swing with a princess in the garden; and *Kakubha Ragini* showing a lovelorn woman holding two garlands of flowers standing between two peacocks in a landscape setting (Skelton, figs 4 and 5). The latter is in the same gold-ground album page with repeating lotus buds as ours. In 1956 these were both in the collection of a Mrs. D'Arcy Hunt.

The first instance of a prince depicted with a group of ladies from the *zenana* celebrating Holi is probably Jahangir in a painting now in the Minto Album (Diamond, p. 101, fig.1). Several other Holi paintings depict generic figures, often with a prince or Krishna celebrating with a woman or *gopi*. By 1750 depictions of Holi had spread to different genres, including *Ragamalas*. A *Vasant Ragini* painting from Hyderabad of circa 1760 is a Holi scene with a similar arrangement of figures as our folio, with an embracing couple in the centre and a woman with a drum to the right, and a figure bending over a vessel to refill her spray-gun (Diamond, p.10, fig. 7). Diamond points out that most paintings of this subject whether produced in Rajputs courts, Bengal or the Deccan seem to connect back to the Mughal image from Jahangir's court atelier.

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, Kent, 1963-2012; Canterbury Auctions, Kent, 23 October 2012, lot 300  
Peter Blohm, 2012-13  
Claudio Moscatelli, London: Christie's, London, 25 May 2017, lot 20  
Private collection, Europe, 2017-23

#### PUBLISHED

Dalrymple, W., *The Anarchy: The East India Company, Corporate Violence and the Pillage of an Empire*, London, 2019, pp. 102-3

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Losty, J., "Eighteenth-century Mughal paintings from the Swinton collection" in *Burlington Magazine*, vol. CLIX, London, 2017  
Skelton, R., "Murshidabad Painting", in *Marg*, vol. X, Mumbai, 1956

E.S.



21. **MAHAVIDYA GODDESS UGRATARA**  
BILASPUR, CIRCA 1760

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, red border with black and white rules

9¼ by 5½ in.; 23.5 by 14.3 cm. painting

10¼ by 7¼ in.; 27.6 by 18.1 cm. folio

The ten Mahavidya goddesses are tantric deities who represent the ten paths to transcendental knowledge and Tara is the second of these. Unlike Kali, the first of these goddesses, she has gentle and nurturing qualities that coexist with her more ferocious aspect. As Ugratara, or fierce Tara, she can rescue devotees from horrible calamities.

Here the goddess is standing on a dead human corpse on a hillside, with a pair of scissors impaled in his neck, in a ring of flames flanked by two jackals. Flanking her are two trees. Blue-bodied and naked except for a short leopard-skin skirt, she is four-armed, holding a skull-bowl, pair of scissors and a severed human head. She is three-eyed and has fangs, wearing snake

bracelets, earrings, anklets and armbands, with two further snakes encircling her neck and pendulous breasts. Another is coiled around her gold lotus-embellished crown and yet one more emanates from her mouth.

For a Guler, Punjab Hills, depiction of this goddess, circa 1745, in the Binney Collection at the San Diego Museum of Art, see Dehejia, p.240, no.16.

**PROVENANCE**

Nasli Heeramaneck (1902-71), New York  
Dr. Claus Virch (1927-2012), Paris: Sotheby's, New York, 16 March 2016, lot 842  
Private collection, Europe, 2016-23

**REFERENCES**

Dehejia, V., ed., *Devi: The Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art*, Washington D.C., 1999



22. FOLIO FROM THE POLIER ALBUM  
**PORTRAIT OF A STANDING NOBLEMAN**  
AWADH, CIRCA 1772-85

Opaque watercolour, ink, and gold on paper; the painting and calligraphy laid down in an album page painted with flowering plants including irises, lilies and roses, the blue ground borders with gilt meander, ruled in black and gold; the lower border numbered, '30'

8½ by 4¾ in.; 21.5 by 11.6 cm. painting  
15½ by 11¼ in.; 39.4 by 28.8 cm. folio

A page from an album once belonging to the Swiss engineer Antoine Louis Henri Polier (1741-95), who was resident in India from 1757-89.

**THE PORTRAIT**

The face of the nobleman, who stands in an undefined setting, is expressive with a furrowed brow, lines under narrow-set eyes and a two-tone, neatly contoured beard. The face with black and grey beard, his turban, sword and shoes coloured, leaving the rest monochrome. This drawing is close to several acutely-observed seventeenth century portraits that include more detail on the upper half of the body, such as a drawing of Aurangzeb of 1640-5 by La'l Chand, in the Chester Beatty Library (Schrader, p.123, pl.51) and a portrait by Chitarman, now in the British Library, circa 1670 (Falk & Archer, p.412, no. 107). Our painting was likely a copy of works such as these with a similar finely-drawn head but with crisper outlines to his body. His identity is unknown, but he is likely to be a senior court official.

The technique employed is *nim qalam* (or 'half pen'), drawn with ink applied with a brush with only certain parts highlighted in colour and gold. Formal portraiture of Mughal nobles and officials were often painted in this technique by artists working in the court atelier in the seventeenth century (Leach, p.453). Drawings in *nim qalam* were also used for other Mughal genres besides portraiture and may have been a response to engravings from Europe that were available in the Mughal court from 1580 onwards (Losty & Roy, p.72). The technique became popular again in Lucknow in the 1770s when copies were made of earlier Mughal paintings and drawings. Many of these were commissioned by Europeans, such as Antoine Polier, who assembled them in albums.

**ALBUM PAGE**

The margin on the current folio's recto is typical of Polier album leaves. Likewise, on the reverse, a similar multi-coloured floral border is more expansive, taking up most of the page and surrounding a small calligraphic panel. Both floral margins are edged with a dark blue border and small gold floral scrolls, another distinctive feature of the Polier albums. Particularly close examples include a folio in the British Library (Roy, p.178) and the reverse sides of a group of folios sold at Christie's in London, 12 June 2018, lots 21-3. Many folios from these albums have also appeared on the art market, for example, Christie's, London, 12 October 2004, lot 176.

**CALLIGRAPHY**

The calligraphy on the reverse is diminutive in size but would have been highly prized. It was copied by a renowned calligrapher, Mahmud ibn Ishaq al-Shihabi al-Harawi, and dated A.H. 981 (1573-4 A.D.). Mahmud was originally from a village near Herat, where his father was governor. The family was taken to Bukhara when 'Ubaydallah Khan's Uzbek army seized the city in 1528-9. Here, he was taken on as a pupil of Mir' Ali and became one of his most famous students. (Bayani, pp.876-80; Adamova & Bayani, pp.421-3). He was a celebrated master of *nasta'liq*, of which this is a fine specimen. The practice of creating albums with alternating portraits and calligraphic panels had been established early on in the Mughal atelier (Wright, pp.36-140). Polier's idea to embark on this extensive project was likely in part developed after 1767 when three albums assembled for the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh were gifted to him. Even before this time, Polier has been collecting Persian and Sanskrit manuscripts and individual paintings.

**ANTOINE LOUIS HENRI POLIER (1741-95)**

Polier was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1741 and lived in India from 1757 to 1789. He initially worked as a cadet for the East India Company before being given the role of second engineer in Calcutta. In 1765, he was appointed Chief Engineer overseeing the building of the Company's new Fort William in Calcutta. Two years later, he returned to the military but could not continue his career due to a new order that forbade





foreigners from promotion. His life changed considerably when in 1772, Warren Hastings (1732-1818) sent him to Faizabad, capital of Awadh, as an architect, surveyor and engineer to the Nawab-Vizir of Awadh, Shuja al-Dawla. He was only in Faizabad for two years before being recalled to Calcutta, but in that brief period, he seemed to have settled into Awadhi society, taking two wives.

In 1776 he moved to Delhi to work for the Mughal emperor Shah' Alam II (1728-1806) while remaining closely in touch with his friend Warren Hastings. He also requested the celebrated artist Mihr Chand to leave Faizabad and join him with two other artists (Alam & Alavi, pp.52-4). In 1780, Polier moved to Lucknow to take up the post of architect and engineer for Shuja al-Dawla's son Asaf al-Dawla (r.1775-1797). Being fluent in English and Urdu, Polier moved between Indo-Iranian court life in Lucknow and the European ruling elite. For an account of his life, see Stronge and Atighi Moghaddam, pp.198-9.

#### THE POLIER ALBUMS

Months after arriving in Faizabad, Polier established a small studio and commissioned at least twelve carefully arranged albums over the next thirteen years in Faizabad, Delhi and Lucknow (Roy, p.176). Ten of these are now in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin (Losty, pp.43-44 & 46) and are the subject of a current research project led by Dr. Friederike Weis. The contents included Awadhi paintings, seventeenth-century Mughal and Deccani works and calligraphy specimens. All feature a frontispiece with a medallion or cartouche, and floral margins. These margins are often overlooked, yet they are a striking feature of each page, designed specifically for Polier, and were an integral part of the original plan for the albums. Their muted, warm colours and gently undulating floral sprays lend a distinctive character to the pages and reflect the taste of mid to late eighteenth-century Europeans in Lucknow.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

The calligraphic page on the verso comprises the last line of an unidentified poem copied by Mahmud ibn Ishaq al-Shahabi and is dated A.H. 981 (1573-4 A.D.).

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, England: Sotheby's, London, 12 December 1966, lot 8 (one of 33 folios sold)  
Maggs Bros. Ltd., London  
Asbjorn Lunde (1927-2017), New York, by 1988  
Private collection, New York, by descent, until 2022

#### REFERENCES

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Falk, T. and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981  
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Schrader, S., ed., *Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India*, Los Angeles, 2018  
Stronge, S. and Atighi Moghaddam, B., "An unrecorded Polier Muraqqa' (c.1785): New Insights into British-Hindustani Cultural Interaction", in Anisi, A., ed., *Adle Nāmeḥ: Studies in Memory of Chahriyar Adle*, Tehran, 2018  
Wright, E., *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Virginia*, 2008

E.S.

23. **EGYPTIAN VULTURE (NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS)**

**COMPANY SCHOOL, EASTERN INDIA, CIRCA 1775-1800**

Watercolour and pencil on laid paper  
watermarked MOINIER PATENT  
12¾ by 15¾ in.; 31.4 by 39 cm.

**THE EGYPTIAN VULTURE**

With their white plumage, yellow-skinned face and slender bill, Egyptian Vultures are a stark contrast from their heavyweight archetypal cousins that jostle and tear at the carcasses of large mammals. These are the more solitary vultures and scavengers of scraps. They will join the throng at a feast but wait on the side-lines until the tearing work has all been done, then move in to devour the rest, using their narrow bill to pick the bones clean. Perhaps because of their unsavoury eating habits they have been described as the ugliest of birds, though in flight, with their wedge-shaped tail and contrasting black pointed wingtips, they make a magnificent spectacle. Egyptian Vultures can be found across the Old World, from the Iberian Peninsula eastwards to India where the endemic race, *N. p. ginginianus* can be recognised by its smaller size and yellow bill tip.

For other Company School ornithological paintings of the period see Dalrymple et al., pp. 46 & 54-64 and Losty & Mittal, pp. 95-103.

*We are grateful to the ornithologist Katrina van Grouw for identifying the species and its habitat.*

**PROVENANCE**

Phillips, New York, circa 1985  
Private collection, New York, 1985-2023

**REFERENCES**

Dalrymple, W., et al., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2019  
Losty, J.P. and Mittal, J., *Indian Paintings of the British Period in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2016





24. ILLUSTRATION FROM A DISPERSED RAGAMALA SERIES  
**ATHLETES EXERCISING (DESAKH RAGINI)**  
 AWADH OR BENGAL, SECOND HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, yellow-banded black border with black rules  
 10½ by 6¼ in.; 26.6 by 16 cm. painting  
 11½ by 6¼ in.; 29.5 by 17.6 cm. folio

The subject enacted here is Desakh Ragini. In the glowing light of sunrise, five men in loin cloths assume gymnastic poses as they perform their morning exercise regime. The central figure holds a weight above his head with his right arm, his legs buckling slightly under strain. To the right, a pair is wrestling, to the left, a man is suspending himself upside-down on a pole, and the fifth figure lies on the ground face down, presumably in the act of push-ups. They are exercising on a hexagonal platform in the forest. Trees tower behind them with dark leaves and diminutive leaves and flowers. Beyond the trees, the landscape stretches out into the distance, punctuated only by two gold-domed shrines. A range of mountains silhouetted against the vibrant orange sky occupies the far horizon.

*Ragamala* paintings present, in visual form, modes from Indian classical music, known as *ragas*. The modes are depicted through their associated season, time of the day and emotions of the figures. This painting denotes the mood of vitality and self-discipline through the actions of the men and the morning light. Paintings of *ragas* sometimes represent the Hindu deity grouped with a particular musical mode. Here a connection with spiritual transcendence may be suggested by the two shrines. In a related eighteenth-century painting from Awadh of the same subject, figures visit an ascetic depicted in the background. (Yale University Art Gallery, 1940.24).

The precise origin of the painting is elusive, and other comparative folios from this *ragamala* remain unlocated. The style of the landscape connects with several regional courts. Bundi has been suggested, and in some respects, this painting

fits with the Bundi style that evolved in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. These often include lyrical landscapes, small-scale animated figures and brilliant colours (see Ahluwalia, pp.68-71). However, the closest examples perhaps may be found in Awadh and further east in Bengal. In a painting of a princess and companions produced in Farrukhabad, the body of water in the background is depicted in jagged narrowing segments, a method derived from European painting that is also found in the foreground of our illustration (Markel, p.72). The same exotic flowering trees and jagged water's edge appear in a Murshidabad painting, circa 1775-80 (Losty, p.93, no.12). During the second half of the eighteenth century, artists migrating from Delhi to the regional courts of Awadh and Bengal came to share a visual vocabulary thus somewhat blurring individual court styles.

What is striking in this instance is the successful contrast of the stark exercising figures with a mood of cool early morning tranquillity. With consummate skill the artist creates a gently rippling flower-edged lake, dense verdant blossoming trees, a distant landscape of soaring rock formations and a flame-coloured sky in the precious hours before an Indian summer day dawns.

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired by a diplomat in India in the 1950s  
 Private collection, New York, until 2022

**REFERENCES**

- Ahluwalia, R., *Rajput painting: Romantic, Divine and Courtly Art from India*, London 2008
- Losty, J., "Mushidabad Painting 1750-1820", in Das, N. & Llewellyn-Jones, R., *Murshidabad: Forgotten Capital of Bengal*, Mumbai, 2013
- Markel, S. and Bindu Gade, R., *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, Los Angeles, 2010



25. ILLUSTRATION TO AN ASHTA NAYIKA SERIES

DEJECTED HEROINE

KANGRA, CIRCA 1790-1800

Ink, gouache and gold on paper, dark blue border with double rules in white

6¼ by 4¾ in.; 15.6 by 11.1 cm. painting

7¼ by 5¾ in.; 19.7 by 14.6 cm. folio

The great Sanskrit scholar and poet, Kesavdas (1555-1617) classified the eight types (Ashta Nayika) of romantic heroine, and here we have depicted Utkā (or Virahotkanthita) Nayika, literally 'one distressed by separation'.

Here the heroine is seated, one slipper-less foot raised, in the branches of a flowering cherry tree, dejectedly smelling a single blossom held in her right hand while her left clings to one of the boughs. Dressed in a diaphanous skirt over pink *pajamas*, a grey *choli* and a gossamer yellow *odhni* draped over her hair, breasts and hips, she is in a trance of tristesse. Her jewellery of pearls and gold includes a forehead pendant, nose-ring, necklaces, bracelets and anklets. As spring blossoms she awaits the lover she is dressed for, the otherwise vacant landscape reflecting her melancholy mood.

The Pahari schools of painting, situated in the river valleys of the Western Himalayan range, left an extraordinary corpus of illustrated manuscripts of some of the great Hindu myths. Amongst these are the Gita Govinda, Ragamala and Nayika series such as this painting would have come from. The rulers of these kingdoms patronised generations of artists whose skill produced some of the most refined painting seen in the Indian subcontinent.

For other examples of this *nayika*, see Randhawa, pp.63-67 & 106-109, figs.32-34 & 60-62.

PROVENANCE

Christie's, New York, 20 March 2002, lot 141

Private collection, New York, 2002-23

REFERENCES

Randhawa M. S., *Kangra Paintings of Love*, New Delhi, 1962



26. **PAINTED STORK (MYCTERIA LEUCOCEPHALA)**  
**COMPANY SCHOOL, PROBABLY CALCUTTA, CIRCA 1790-1800**

Ink and bodycolour on laid paper watermarked J WHATMAN  
26½ by 19¼ in.; 67.3 by 50.5cm.

This large and superbly skilled drawing captures with perfect naturalism the image of a standing painted stork. The colouring of the plumage is handled with great sensitivity, descending in size from the white along the neck and upper body to the grey-bordered soot-black wings. Following the example set by Lady Impey in the 1770s many artists were commissioned by individual British patrons who, as here, would have supplied English paper. In the 1780-1810 period, remarkable collections were formed, many now in the British Library, London, including those of Marquis Wellesley (1760-1842), a former Governor-General and Lord Clive ('of India'), see Archer, pp.2-14. Another keen enthusiast of natural history painting was George Annesley, Viscount Valencia (1769-1844), who visited India on his travels in 1802-06 and while in Calcutta formed a highly regarded album of his own, now dispersed. For three of his birds, see Welch, pp.58-59, no.18.

Another stork, by a Calcutta artist, circa 1803, painted on Whatman paper of similar dimensions, was published by Hobhouse, no. 15. For another image of this species from the Impey album, 'Painted stork eating a snail', by Shaikh Zain ud-Din, dated 1781, see Dalrymple, p.58, no.21.

**THE PAINTED STORK**

The aptly named Painted Stork is among the most colourful members of the stork family. It is the Indian representative of the genus *Mycteria* – meaning 'nose' or 'snout' in the ancient Greek – remarkable for their large size, striking markings, bald face and, most especially, their downturned, ibis-like bill

to which their name alludes. The genus has a strictly tropical distribution and is neatly represented with a species each in the Americas, Africa, India, and eastern South-East Asia.

Unlike their straight-billed relatives, *Mycteria* storks are chiefly aquatic and have a highly specialised foraging strategy. They wade through freshwater lagoons sweeping their submerged bill from side to side, open and ready to snap shut the moment contact is made with prey. It is one of the fastest reflexes known in the animal kingdom, though precisely how they distinguish between edible animals and vegetable detritus is still unknown.

*We are grateful to the ornithologist Katrina van Grouw for identifying the species and writing this note on the stork and its habitat.*

**INSCRIPTIONS**

Inscribed *Jaunghil* in English and *janghal* in Persian (stork)

**PROVENANCE**

Sven Gahlin (1934-2017), London, circa 1970  
Private collection, New York, circa 1970-2023

**REFERENCES**

Archer, M., *Natural History Drawings in the India Office Library*, London, 1962  
Dalrymple, W., et al., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for East India Company*, London, 2019  
Hobhouse, N., *Indian Painting for the British 1780-1880*, London, 2001  
Welch, S.C., *Room for Wonder: Indian Painting during the British Period 1760-1880*, New York, 1978





**27. SAINT IBRAHIM VISITED BY PERIS**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1800**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down in an album page rows of polychrome flowering plants on a cream ground, with borders of gilt floral meander on a dark blue ground, rules of black, red and gold  
 9¾ by 6 in.; 23.8 by 15.2 cm. painting  
 16¾ by 11 in.; 42.9 by 27.9 cm. folio

The subject of this charming painting is based on the legend by Farid al-Din 'Attar of Sultan Ibrahim bin Adham (d.776-77 A.D.), who gave up the kingdom of Balkh to become a dervish.

The nine *peris* in this idyllic landscape bring dishes of food and a gilt ewer of water to Ibrahim, inciting the jealousy of another dervish seen here, smoking a *huqqa* in his rustic hut on a rocky escarpment. The bearded Ibrahim sits under a tree, supported on his dervish's crutch, a gilt halo round his head, wearing a blue *dhoti* and white sleeveless shirt, a book on the ground in front of him. The *peris*, all winged, wear elaborate courtly dress and simple jewellery. The landscape is a study in light and shade with flowering plants, detailed rock formations and a pool with lotuses in the foreground.

During the later Mughal period this was a popular subject in Lucknow/Awadh, Faizabad and Murshidabad. Several examples are in the British Library, see Falk & Archer, nos. 325 & 367. Another, attributed to Hunar, circa 1765, is in the Polsky

Collection, New York, see Topsfield et al., pp.196-7, no.80. The floral borders here are inspired by those of the mid-seventeenth century 'Late' Shah Jahan album.

Gavin Bailey has suggested that the derivation of the imagery of the saint has evolved from a figure of Christ, as depicted in the 'Poor Man's Bible' of 1593, which arrived at the Mughal court in 1595, see Bailey, p.80-81, pl.90.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

A line of *nasta'liq* on the upper border reads:  
 'Likeness of His Holiness Sultan Ibrahim, King of Balkh. He forsook the sultanate and chose the privacy of solitude.'

**PROVENANCE**

Ralph and Irene Beacon, U.S.A.: Sotheby's, New York, 25 March 1987, lot 27  
 Private collection, New York, 1987-2023

**REFERENCES**

Bailey, G. in Habsburg, G. von, ed., 'The St. Petersburg Muraqqa', Milan, 1996  
 Falk, T. and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, London, 1981  
 Topsfield, A. (ed.), *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, London, 2004

28. LARGE BOTANICAL FOLIO DEPICTING A YAM (*DIOSCOREA ALATA*)

PROBABLY FROM THE RIND ALBUM  
BENGAL, CIRCA 1800

Opaque pigments on laid paper, watermarked J WHATMAN,  
inscribed in Latin: *Dioscorea Sativa*  
26.5 by 17 in.; 67.3 by 43 cm. folio

This large and exceptionally fine folio in all probability comes from the Rind album. It is close to the near identical folio in the British Library, (Dalrymple, p.100, no.57), though it cannot be traced to any of the auction dispersals from the Rind album. However, scholars who have worked on this area of Company painting inform us that such artists frequently did several copies of a favoured or popular image when requested to do so by a patron.

This folio has tentatively been attributed to the artist Chunni Lall (fl. 1795-1810), by Noltie, pp.81-82, who remarks on the artist emphasising the underground tuber typical of the genus. In both the New and Old World tropics these starchy tubers are eaten as food. The identity of the species depicted is uncertain, but from the shape and large size of the tuber it may be the greater yam, *Dioscorea alata*, rather than *Dioscorea sativa* as it is inscribed.

THE RIND ALBUM

One of the most idiosyncratic Company School botanical albums assembled, often distinguished by very large folios such as ours, the subject matter is marked by Rind's taste for sculptural specimens that are visually arresting. Examples include the 'complex geometry' of the screw-palm, in the Dalrymple Collection, London, and the bright yellow spikiness of the keora plant, in the British Museum, see Dalrymple, pp. 102-3, nos. 59 & 60. Another large folio of the male papaya tree, formerly in the Stuart Cary Welch Collection, (Sotheby's, London, 31 May 2011, lot 116) is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

JAMES NATHANIEL RIND

Rind served in the Bengal Native Infantry, India, from 1778-1801. His album comprised over one hundred folios, seventy-five of which were dispersed in forty-eight lots at Sotheby's in London on 13 July 1971. Another group of sixty-six botanical drawings from the Rind collection was sold at Sotheby's, London, on 23 May 1985, lot 49.

For other drawings from this album see: Hartnoll & Eyre, nos. 1-16 and Sotheby's, *The Stuart Cary Welch Collection, Part Two: Arts of India*, London, 31 May 2011, lots 116-18. Also see Welch, nos. 11 & 12, a-c and Fraser, pp. 126-34, nos.56-60 for botanical watercolours from this album formerly in the Naipaul Collection.

PROVENANCE

Probably Major James Nathaniel Rind (circa 1753-1814)  
Probably Hartnoll & Eyre, London, 1970s/80s  
Samuel P. Reed, U.S.A.: Sotheby's, Estate of Samuel P. Reed, New York, 28th April 2007, lot 130 (part lot)  
Arader Gallery, New York, 2018  
Private collection, London, 2018-23

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Dalrymple, W., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2019  
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Hartnoll & Eyre, *Indian painting for the British, 1770-1880*, catalogue 24, London, 1972  
Noltie, H., 'Indian Export Art? The botanical drawings' in Dalrymple, W., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2019  
Welch, S.C., *Room for Wonder: Indian painting during the British Period*, New York, 1978





29. FOLIO FROM THE KEDARA KALPA  
FIVE SAGES ON PILGRIMAGE IN THE HIMALAYAS WORSHIPPING A LINGAM  
FAMILY WORKSHOP OF PURKHU  
GULER, CIRCA 1810

Opaque pigments and gold on paper, red borders with blue inner border, both with double white rules, the number '13' in the upper margin  
11½ by 16¾ in.; 29.2 by 41.6 cm. painting  
14¾ by 19¼ in.; 36.5 by 48.9 cm. folio

**THE KEDARA KALPA OR 'FIVE SAGES' MANUSCRIPT**

Over twenty years ago Professor B.N. Goswamy (1999, no. 216) identified the manuscript which these folios illustrate, the *Kedara Kalpa*, a little-known Shaiva text that extols the virtues of taking the pilgrimage to the mountainous region of Kedara-Kailasa. This is in fact the medieval Kedarnath Temple, which remains an important shrine and is located high in the Garhwal region of the Himalayas but can only be reached by a fourteen mile trek. In 2021 a complete study of the manuscript was published, recording that there are in fact two quite similar manuscripts, of which thirty-three folios are now known, see Goswamy & Goswamy, pp.11-26.

The text, which the Goswamys discovered in the Biblioteca Bodmeriana in Geneva in 1996, is concerned with the glory of Siva and praises the great merits of pilgrimage to those regions in the Himalayas that are associated with him, principally Kedara and Kailasa. The story is narrated by Siva to his consort Parvati and their son Karttikeya in the form of a series of tales (Mason, no. 86, shows the narrative beginning). One of the tales is about five *siddhas* or sages, who seem to be the protagonists of nearly

all the known pages, who go "on a pilgrimage to the land of Siva through snow-clad mountains, past the domains of the moon, and encountering on the way not only the greatest of difficulties, but also the most wondrous of sights. Golden cities, *apsaras* singing and dancing, young maidens hanging from trees like fruit, roads paved and rocks studded with rubies and emeralds come their way" (Goswamy 1999, p. 280).

In this scene, the emaciated five sages are shown six times in the course of their harrowing journey through the bare hillside and craggy snow-bound mountains. Shaven-headed they are naked except for white shorts and a thin shawl. At centre right we see them paying obeisance, holding *rudraksha* beads in their joined hands, to the large flower-garlanded Siva-lingam, which stands in a waisted blue *yoni* base on a red sandstone platform. Below the platform they are finally depicted seated round a fire, their strained faces still solemn but their long pilgrimage at last complete.

**THE ARTIST**

For Purkhu and his workshop see Goswamy & Fischer (2011), pp.719-32. The blue and red borders with white rules of our set are the same on almost all the epic and puranic series produced in Purkhu's workshop in Kangra, for which see Goswamy & Fischer (1992), pp. 368-87.

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#### OTHER FOLIOS FROM THIS MANUSCRIPT

Goswamy & Goswamy record (2021) that thirty-three paintings are known from the two Kedara Kalpa series. The two sets are “different but clearly related” (*op. cit.*, p.39), one being slightly smaller than the other. The larger of the two tend to be numbered on the upper margin, as here. The National Museum, New Delhi, acquired eleven of these in 1963. For a complete list of the thirty-three known folios, with images, see Goswamy & Goswamy, pp. 11-25 & 40-104. Other leaves from this distinguished series are in private and public collections including: Philadelphia Museum of Art (formerly Bellak Collection); Walters Museum of Art (formerly Ford Collection); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (formerly Hudson Collection); Virginia Museum of Fine Arts; San Diego Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (formerly Walter Collection); Polsky Collection, New York; Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin; Birla Academy, Kolkata; Salar Jang Museum, Hyderabad; Goenka Academy, Kolkata; Bhayana Collection, New Delhi

#### OTHER FOLIOS SOLD AT AUCTION

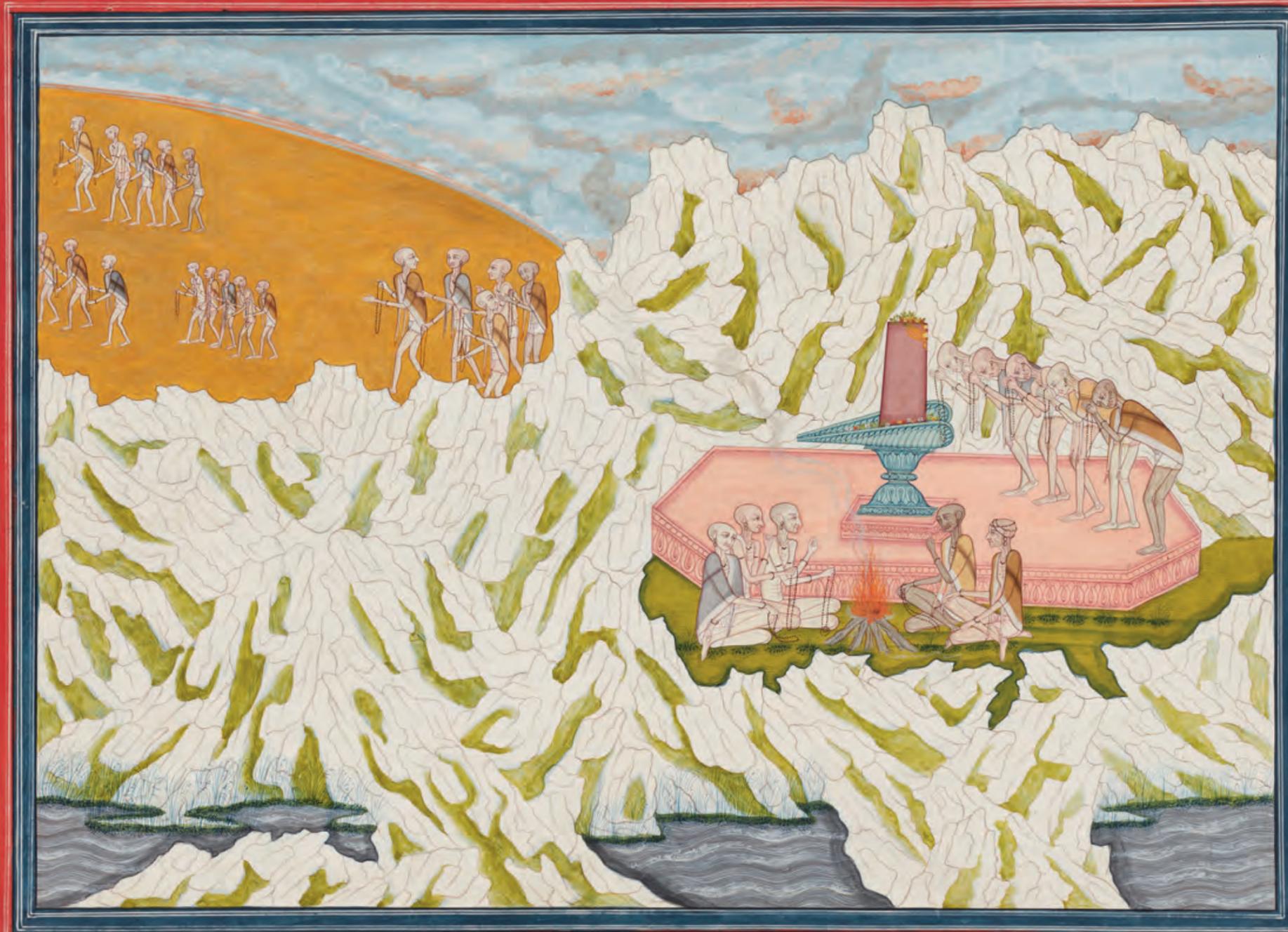
Dr. William Ehrenfeld: Sotheby's, New York, 6 October 1990, lot 57  
Carter Burden: Sotheby's, New York, 27 March 1991, lot 56  
Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck: Sotheby's, New York, 22 March 2002, lot 69  
Paul Walter, Sotheby's, New York, 14 November 2002, lot 83  
Sven Gahlin, Sotheby's, London, 6 October 2015, lot 102

#### PROVENANCE

Sven Gahlin, (1934-2017), London, circa 1970  
Private collection, New York, circa 1970-2023

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Goswamy, B.N. and Goswamy, K., *A Sacred Journey: The Kedara Kalpa series of Pahari paintings and the painter Purkhu of Kangra*, Zurich/Delhi, 2021  
Goswamy, B.N., and Smith, C., *Domains of Wonder: Selected Masterworks of Indian Painting*, San Diego, 2005  
Mason, D., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, Philadelphia, 2001



### 30. PORTRAIT OF THE LAST MUGHAL EMPEROR

#### PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG PRINCE, PROBABLY ABU ZAFAR, LATER BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR II (1775-1862) MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1810

Gouache and gold on paper, gold border  
5½ by 4¾ in.; 14 by 12.3 cm. painting  
8½ by 11 in.; 21.1 by 28 cm. folio

This portrait shows a stout young prince wearing a vermillion robe scattered with tiny dots of gold embroidery and a generous gold knotted *patka*. His domed hat is edged with a thick fur rim and embellished with vertical ropes of pearls and emeralds, with feather aigrette and a gem-set *sarpech* at the front. He grasps the gilded hilt of a sword in his right hand. A similar combination of jewels appears on his necklace. He has a distinctive hooked nose, a neat moustache, a beard, and an abstracted air. His countenance, rotund shape and clothing all strongly suggest that this is a portrait of the young Abu Zafar, who would later become Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar II (r.1837-1857), the last Mughal emperor.

Abu Zafar appears in several group portraits with his father Akbar II, in *darbar*. In a painting in the Cincinnati Museum of Art, Ohio, circa 1811-15, Akbar II sits in a peacock throne with his family and courtiers gathered around (Dalrymple & Sharma, pp.108-9, no.32). The portly young Abu Zafar is standing to the left of the throne in a green *jama*. This painting has been attributed to the well-known court artist Ghulam Murtaza Khan. Numerous later versions of this first *darbar* scene were made. One of these is now in the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, where Abu Zafar again appears to the left of the throne, beside one of his younger brothers (Christie's, London, 21 March 2001, lot 203). The features and clothing bear a strong resemblance to those in our painting. However, the closest image is a *darbar* of Akbar II in the British Library (Dalrymple & Sharma, p.112, no.35), where Abu Zafar is shown in a three-quarter view, wearing the same vermillion *jama* with gold embroidered edging and a fur-trimmed hat with emerald and pearl headpiece. His specific features are easily recognisable: the distinctive nose, the slight shadow under his eyes, the neat mouth and the dark beard.

While the clothing and physiognomy of Abu Zafar are close to the *darbar* scenes, the style of this painting is more comparable to individual portraits of rulers and the royal family. Ghulam Ali Khan (active 1817-55) was commissioned to paint Akbar II and his son Mirza Salim by Lord Amherst, Governor-General of India 1823-28, during his state visit to Delhi. These portraits on ivory depart from a Mughal court scene's formal composition and show Akbar II and his son seated while holding *huqqas* (Losty & Roy, p.220). Overall, these two paintings and that of Abu

Zafar have a greater degree of modelling than the court group portraits, presumably to suit different patrons. Much later, in 1837-8, Ghulam Ali Khan painted the accession portrait of Abu Zafar when he became Bahadur Shah Zafar II, the last Mughal emperor.

#### BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR II

The twentieth and last Mughal emperor, Mirza Abu Zafar Siraj-ud-din Muhammad (1775-1862), an Urdu poet of some standing, was the second son and chosen heir of Akbar II, the penultimate emperor. Although emperor of a much-reduced empire (comprising only Delhi and its environs) that had gradually been eroded by the unrelenting conquests of the East India Company, his court nevertheless continued its traditions, with festivals and ceremonies centred around the Emperor's daily life at the Red Fort and the city of Shahjahanabad. During a tumultuous reign of only twenty years, the Emperor nurtured the arts and, as a poet and writer of *ghazals* himself, he drew artists, musicians, painters and poets to his court, continuing the traditional imperial patronage – albeit on a reduced scale – begun by his ancestor Babur in the sixteenth century.

Following the Indian Uprising of 1857, and the emperor's trial for colluding with the revolutionaries, he was exiled to Rangoon by the British. In a notorious and tragic incident an officer took it upon himself to murder immediate heirs, his two sons and grandson. It was thus that the British extinguished the line of succession of the Mughals, bringing to an ignominious and final end the unbroken rule of the House of Timur. Termination of East India Company rule followed when it was abolished by the British Crown in 1858.

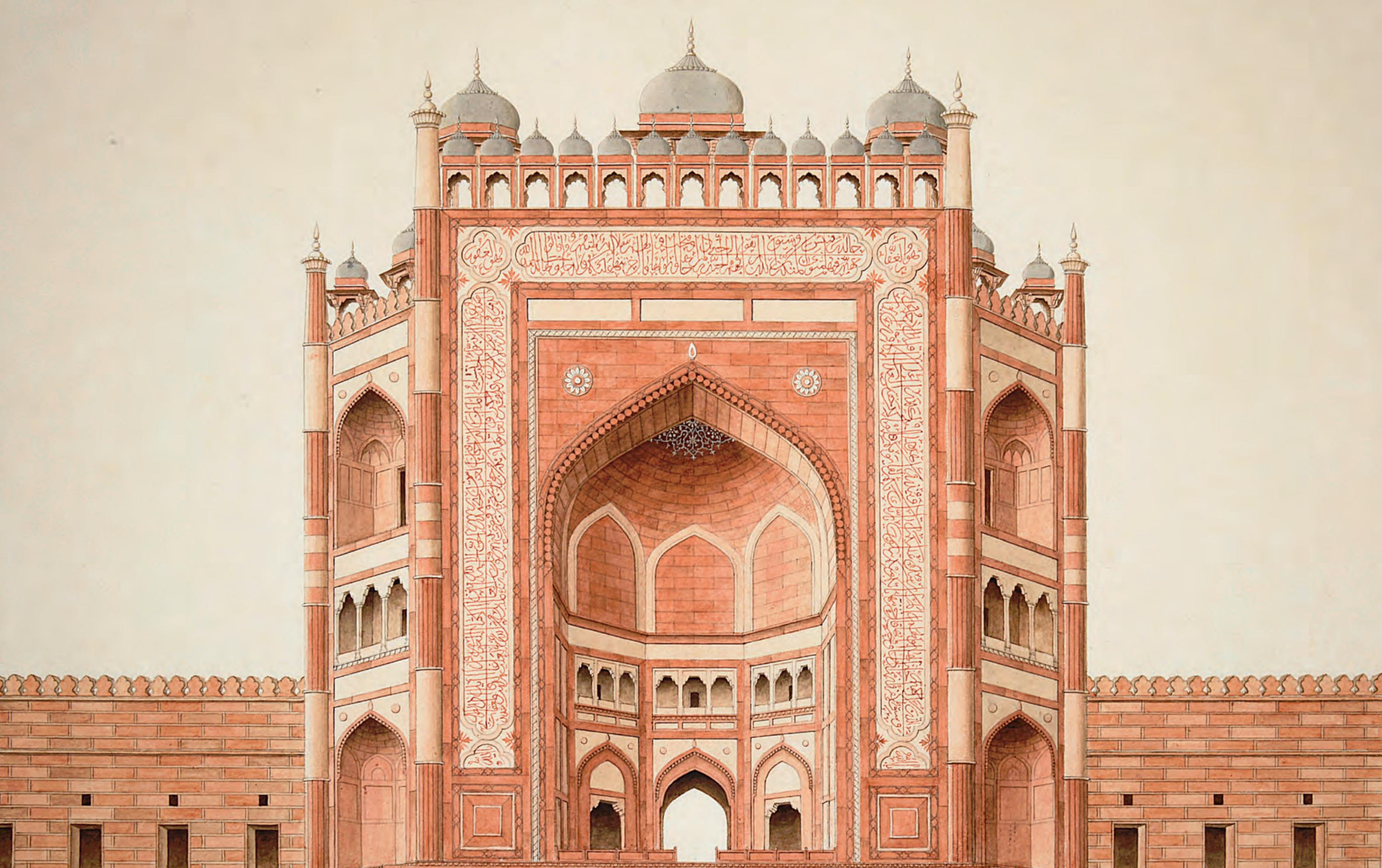
#### PROVENANCE

Evelyn and Peter Kraus, New York: Bonhams, London, 19 April 2016, lot 275  
J.P. Losty (1945-2021), London, 2016-21

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31. **BULAND DARWAZA GATEWAY  
AT FATEHPUR SIKRI**

**COMPANY SCHOOL, AGRA, CIRCA 1815**

Pencil, pen and ink with opaque pigments on laid paper  
watermarked RUSE AND TURNER 1813, black ruled border  
inscribed *The Gateway at Futtypore Sicri*  
18 1/2 by 23 3/4 in.; 46 by 60 cm. painting  
21 by 27 1/2 in.; 53.5 by 70.2 cm. folio

Following the birth of his son Jahangir, Emperor Akbar ordered the construction of a new city, Fatehpur Sikri ("City of Victory") as his capital in 1571, as it was here that the Sufi saint, Sheikh Salim Chishti, predicted the birth of the boy.

The city is a unique and remarkable structure in red sandstone of Timurid inspiration, with both Hindu and Muslim influences, which sits atop a rocky ridge surrounded by a 6 km. (3.7 mile) wall. The 'Buland Darwaza' or Exalted Gate is set into the south wall some 54 metres (177 ft) in height, its grandeur enhanced by a vast flight of steps, leading to a large congregational mosque, the Jama Masjid, with the white marble shrine of Salim Chishti beyond. In addition, it housed a vast number of buildings including various palaces, audience halls, hammams, ministerial buildings, towers and stables, as well as gardens and pools. Akbar occupied the city until 1585 but it was completely abandoned in 1610 apparently due to water shortages.

The painting likely entered the Bute family collection through the marriage of John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute (1793-1848) to Lady Sophia Rawdon-Hastings (1809-59), daughter of Francis Rawdon-Hastings, Earl of Moira who served as Governor-General of India, 1813-23.

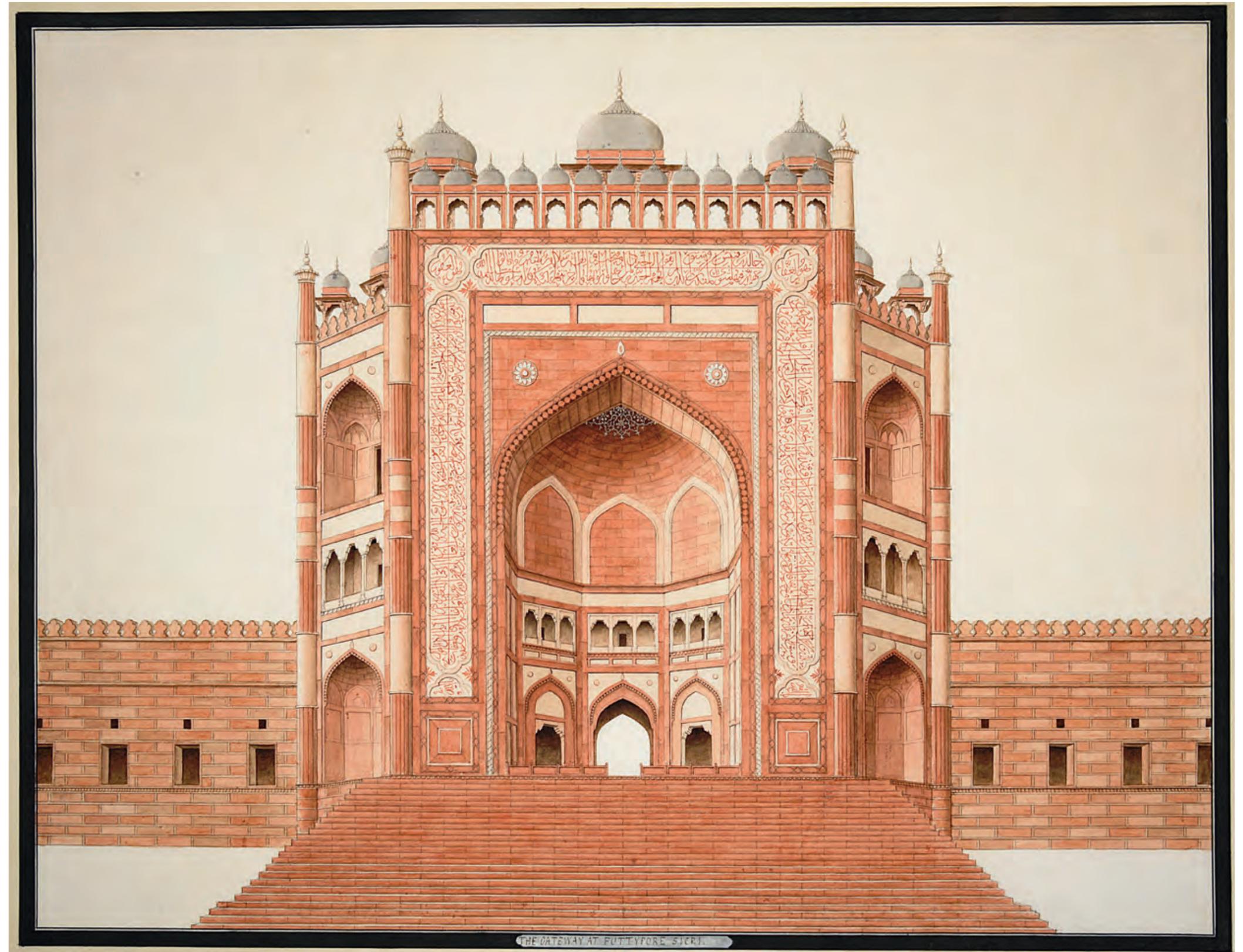
For a watercolour similar in subject and dimensions see Spink, pp.28-29, no.11.

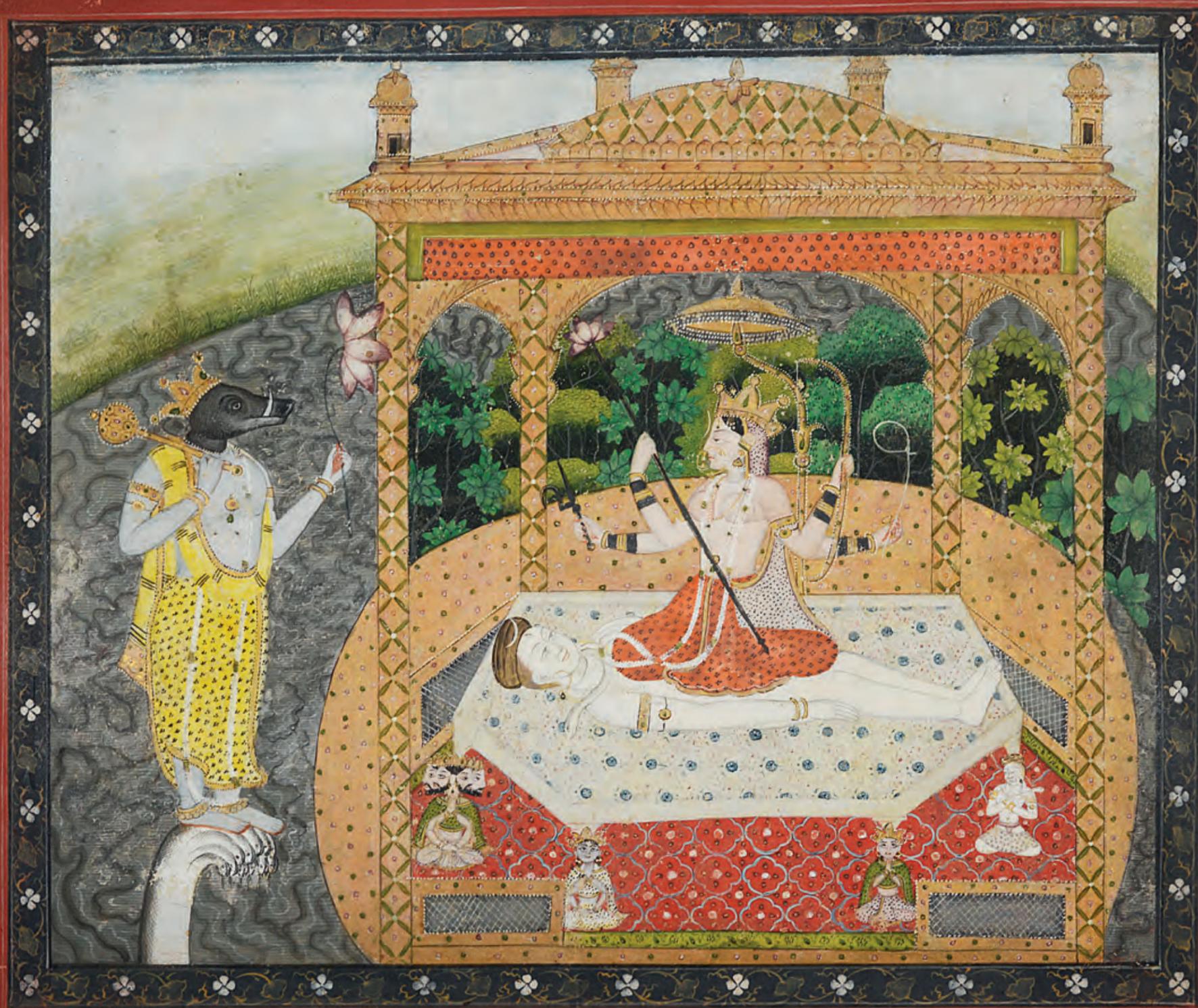
**PROVENANCE**

John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute (1793-1848)  
Paul F. Walter (1935-2017), New York  
Christie's, London 25 May 1995, lot 18  
Private collection, New York, 1995-2000: Sotheby's New York, 22  
September 2000, lot 178  
Simon Ray, London, 2020  
Private collection, Europe, 2020-23

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Spink & Son, *A Journey through India: Company School Paintings*,  
exhibition catalogue, London, 1996





32. ILLUSTRATION TO A DEVI SERIES

**VARAHA WORSHIPPING TRIPURA SUNDARI  
GARHWAL, CIRCA 1820**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, red-edged black-ground border with gold and white flowers and white rules

7½ by 9 in.; 18.9 by 23 cm. painting

9½ by 11 in.; 23.8 by 28.2 cm. folio

The Great Goddess is grandly enthroned in a gold garden pavilion set on an island in a turbulent sea, where she sits on the prostrated body of Siva on a hexagonal throne with feet supported by devotees including Brahma. Four-armed, she holds an elephant-goad, a lotus-tipped spear, a bow and a noose, a pearl-fringed gold parasol shades her. She wears a tiger-skin skirt and a leopard-skin cape, a three-pointed crown and jewellery including a rope of jasmine, rows of bracelets, a nose-ring and pearl earrings. Varaha, the boar-headed avatar of Vishnu, emerges from the sea to her left, on the multiple heads of a cobra, wearing a gold crown and brandishing a mace in his right hand and a lotus in his left.

Tripura Sundari is worshipped as a principal aspect of the supreme goddess Mahadevi, mainly venerated in Shaktisim. For a Mandi depiction of the goddess similarly enthroned, see Deheja, p. 255, no.25

**PROVENANCE**

Anne and Jacques Kerchache, Paris: Hôtel Drouot (Pierre Bergé), Paris, 12-13 June 2010, lot 103

Private collection, Europe, 2010-22

**REFERENCES**

Deheja, V., ed., *Devi: the Great Goddess: Female Divinity in South Asian Art*, Washington D.C., 1999

### 33. FOLIO FROM A SKINNER ALBUM

#### PORTRAIT OF A PARAMAHAMSA, A MEMBER OF THE SAMN YĀSĪ DERVISH ORDER

MUGHAL DELHI, CIRCA 1825

Opaque pigments on paper, inscribed in *nasta'liq* in the foreground

10 1/4 by 4 1/2 in.; 27.4 by 11.2 cm. painting

12 by 11 1/2 in.; 30.3 by 29.5 cm. folio

This painting is from a Skinner album, possibly the *Tashrih al-Aqvam* (An Account of the Castes).

Commissioned by James Skinner (1778-1841) in or near Delhi, the figure depicted is a Paramahansa, a member of the Samnyāsī. The Paramahansas are the highest grade of ascetics in the traditional Brahmanical schema who practise an ascetic life renouncing material desires. He holds his left leg up under his arm and looks down calmly despite the probable discomfort of this pose. This posture is not a classic yogic position but is related to asceticism and mortifying the body, as suggested by James Mallinson. He sits on an antelope skin, entirely naked except for a loosely-worn yellow turban encircled by a white cloth under his chin, tied on top of his head. Before him is a wooden meditation crutch that he would use under his armpit. He also has a coco-de-mer bowl, an antelope horn staff, and a pair of wooden sandals deemed ritually pure which therefore, could be worn indoors. In the immediate foreground is a stream, and behind him are tall trees and another large body of water, a wide river or lake. The setting is peaceful and rural and conveys an ascetic's often quiet, contemplative life.

#### JAMES SKINNER

Skinner was the son of a Scottish father and a Rajput mother. As a young man, he was barred from joining the East India Company due to his birth, so he trained under a French mercenary in Delhi instead. Later, in 1803 he did join the Company, founding a regiment of irregular cavalry (Losty & Roy, p.222), and then worked successfully for the British for the next twenty years. His irregular cavalry unit survives in the modern Indian army, and he is remembered today, above all, as an adventurer who rose above adversity and prejudice to be invaluable to the British. He was awarded land in Hansi, enabling him to establish a large estate, and was also awarded titles at the Mughal court. Skinner was more proficient in Persian than English and became a prominent and entertaining presence at Delhi and Hansi (for a biography, see McBurney, pp.1-3). He grew interested in painting, probably due to his close friendship with the Fraser brothers, and commissioned a group of artists to complete individual images and albums of portraits. He would become one of the preeminent patrons of artists in Delhi, particularly after Fraser patronage ceased with the murder of William in 1835. William Fraser (1784-1835) and his brother James Baillie Fraser (1783-1856) commissioned unique albums of portraits of local people between 1815-19 by some of the most brilliant artists of the period (see Falk & Archer). They must have shared some artists with Skinner as some of the paintings in the British Library's Skinner Album have the same compositions as those in the Fraser Albums (Losty & Roy, p.222).

#### THE SKINNER ALBUMS

Skinner wrote literary texts in Persian that combined topography, biography and ethnography, *Tashrih al-Aqvam* (Account of Castes)

and *Tazkirat al-umara* (Sharma, p.33). The former is a survey of Hindu and Muslim groups and religious figures in the Delhi area, including a section on Hindu, Jain and Sikh religious mendicants such as yogis and *sanyasis*. The earliest copy is now in the British Library. It includes a few superb portraits that convey the sitters' inner life and character, with acutely observed details of their physiognomy and clothing (Losty & Roy, pp.225-6.). They include weavers, a butcher, acrobats, builders, shoemakers, an ear-picker and an artist (Dalrymple, p.22). A nearly identical version of our folio, with the figure's pose in reverse, can be found on folio 370v of the British Library manuscript (unpublished). The figure is in the same position with similar objects on the ground around him and a cloth wrapped around his head, although here, the fabric covers his mouth entirely, which may relate to the vow of silence he took. Bruce Wannell's translation of the inscription on the painting mentions that the ascetic in the image had not spoken for fifteen years (unpublished translation supplied by James Mallinson). The distinctive style is also close with the use of soft greens and browns and a stippled appearance to the trees.

Given the strong resemblance to the British Library folio, our painting was likely from another version of the *Tashrih al-Aqvam*. Skinner made three copies that he gave to friends: the earliest was probably the copy now in the British Library, inscribed to Sir John Malcolm, dated August 1825 (Losty & Roy, pp.225-7); a second copy is now in the Library of Congress, inscribed to Captain J. Watkin (McBurney, p.8). The third copy of the *Tashrih* appeared at Christie's, London, in 1981 (23 April, lot 155), probably presented to Colonel Thoresby at the same time as the previous two. It is to this copy that our folios presumably once belonged.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

In Persian: "Paramahans"

This is a Persianisation of Paramahansa, a Sanskrit title for a yogic master, its literal meaning is "supreme swan"

Pencil inscription in English 'Paramahan – member of Sannyāst Dervish Order'

#### PROVENANCE

Richard von Hünersdorff, Hünersdorff Rare Books, London, 1999

Francesca Galloway, London, 2009

J.P. Losty (1945-2021), London, 2009-21

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Dalrymple, W., ed., *Forgotten Masters: Indian Painting for the East India Company*, London, 2021

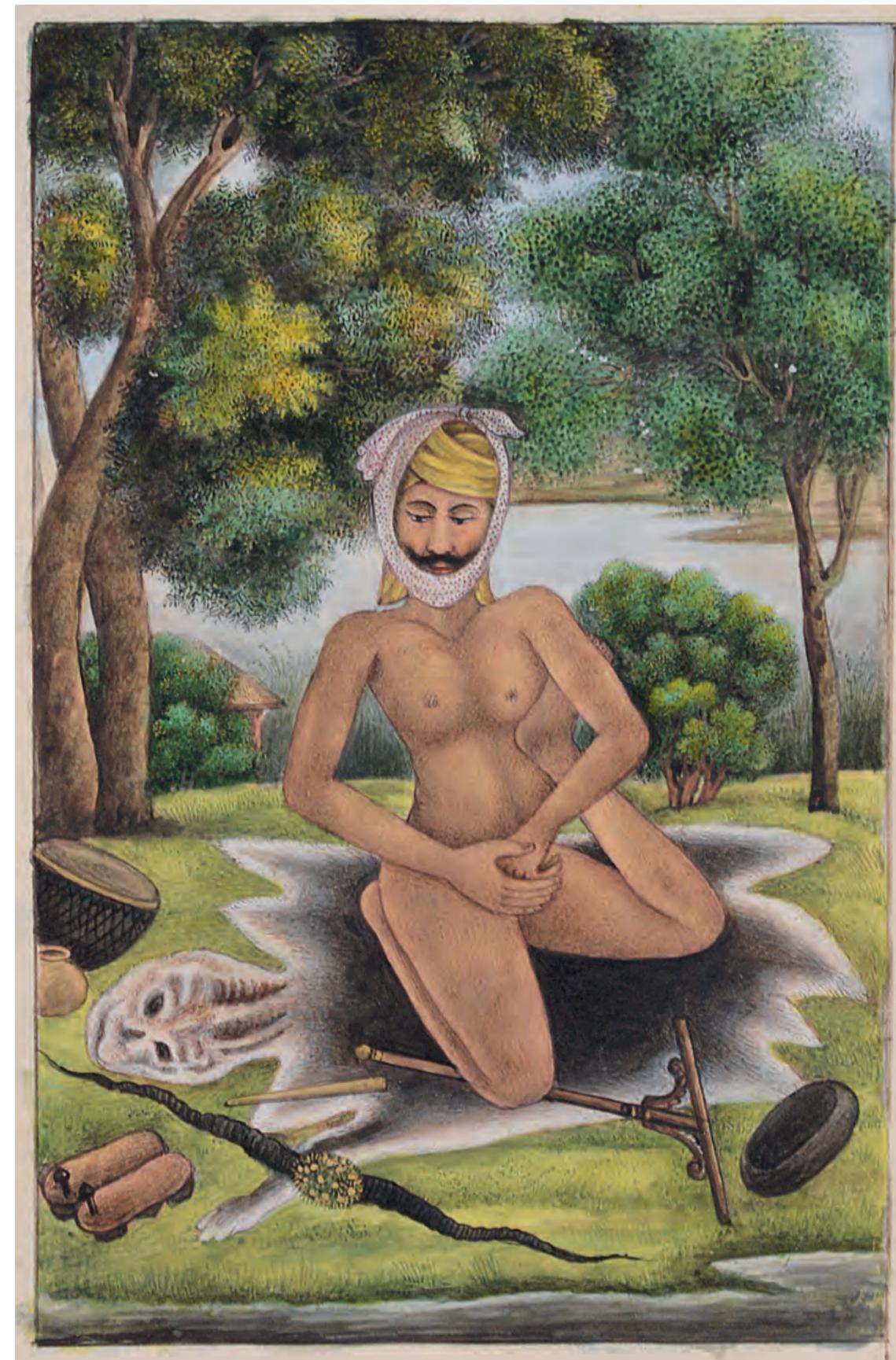
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Sharma, S., "James Skinner and the Poetic Climate of Late Mughal Delhi", in Dalrymple, W. and Sharma, Y., eds., *Princes and Painters in Mughal Delhi 1707-1857*, New Haven and London, 2012



**34. PORTRAIT OF AN EAST INDIA COMPANY OFFICER**  
**PUNJAB, CIRCA 1825**

Opaque pigments and gold on paper, set in a cartouche with foliate spandrels and blue-ground border with repeating gilt leaf motifs on a ground of pale pink marbling  
8¾ by 4¾ in.; 20.6 by 12 cm. painting  
10 by 6¾ in.; 25.4 by 17.1 cm. folio

Against a blue sky on a white marble terrace, the gentleman is seated in a blue-lacquered European-style chair, attired in what may be Bengal Light Cavalry Undress uniform, wearing white trousers, a black cap and a short orange jacket closed at the front with frogging. With short hair and a moustache, his pale face has a dour expression of resigned worldliness, whilst his right hand is poised in a gesture of pleading.

The chair is of a late Georgian type that was much copied in India and that features in paintings of the 1790-1840 period, as depiction of the Indian rulers gradually moved from the indigenous *gaddi* (cushion throne) to English-style chairs. The chairs themselves were made in various parts of eastern India, as the British settled in Calcutta and other cities in the decades

following the East India Company's conquest of Bengal with Clive's victory at Plassey in 1757. Blue and green-lacquered furniture was made at Patna, Benaras and Bareilly, perhaps in imitation of Chinese lacquer goods that reached India via trade routes. See Jaffar, pp.267-8.

The colours and form of framing are typical of Pahari paintings of the 1810-30 period, as found at Hill courts such as Kangra and Garhwal. For other paintings of this type, depicting British subjects, see Aijazuddin, pls. 110-111, nos. 82(ii)-85.

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's, New York, 3 October 1990, lot 61  
Private collection, New York, 1990-2023

**REFERENCES**

Aijazuddin, F.S., *Pahari Paintings and Sikh Portraits in the Lahore Museum*, London, 1977  
Jaffar, A., *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*, London, 2001



35. **GRAND PANORAMA OF THE RED FORT DELHI**  
**BY A DELHI OR AGRA ARTIST**  
**MUGHAL INDIA, CIRCA 1830**

Opaque colour with pencil, pen and black ink on paper, border ruled in black, on three joined sheets of laid English paper watermarked RUSES & TURNER 1824  
12¾ by 95¾ in.; 30.8 by 243.2 cm. painting  
13¾ by 99¾ in.; 35 by 253 cm. folio

The buildings within the fort are identified with a key:

- 1 Vizier Gazuddee Hyder's House
- 2 Gowstana Ka Masjid – A Place of Worship within Burying Ground
- 3 Lall Boorj – Red Bastion
- 4 Delhi Durwaza – Delhi Gate
- 5 Junnah Husjid – A Place of Public Worship
- 6 Zenanah Muhal – Female Apartments
- 7 Dewan Aum Durbar or Levee Rooms
- 8 Lahoree Durwazah – Lahore Gate
- 9 Sonalee Burj – Golden Bastion
- 10 Aum Khaus – Sleeping Apartments
- 11 Mootie Muhul – Apartments of Queen Motee
- 12 Hyatt Bux Baugh – Garden
- 13 Shah Boorj – Royal Bastion
- 14 A Bridge
- 15 Selim Gurh – Fortified Outwork
- 16 The River Jumna

The Red Fort (*Lal Qila*) was commissioned by Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58), when he moved his capital from Agra to Delhi in 1638 as part of his grand plan for the city of Shahjahanabad. It lies on the bank of the Yamuna river, which fed its moats, and was completed in ten years, being dedicated in 1648. Its 1.8 mile (3 km.) boundary walls are asymmetrical, unlike other Mughal forts, in order to contain an earlier fort on the site, which enclosed nearly 25 acres of land. For a description of the buildings of the fort see Asher, pp. 192-201.

With the invasion of Delhi in 1739 by Nadir Shah (r. 1736-47) the city was sacked, the imperial treasury plundered and much damage was done to the fort. With the British defeat of the

Marathas the East India Company took over administration of Mughal territories in 1803. However, many of the marble palace buildings were swept away following the turmoil of the 1857 uprising when the military took over the site, but leaving the defensive walls and towers intact.

This impressively large panorama dating from about 1830 therefore captures the magic of the fort and its palaces before so many of the latter were obliterated forever. Although there were undoubted tensions between the British and the two last Mughal emperors, Akbar Shah (r. 1806-37) and Bahadur Shah (r.1837-57), nevertheless for most of the first half of the nineteenth century court life went on as it always had. Music, poetry and painting continued to find patronage and in the case of the latter the British favoured architectural compositions of this type. Similar commissions produced views of the great Mughal tombs, forts and palaces of Agra and Lahore.

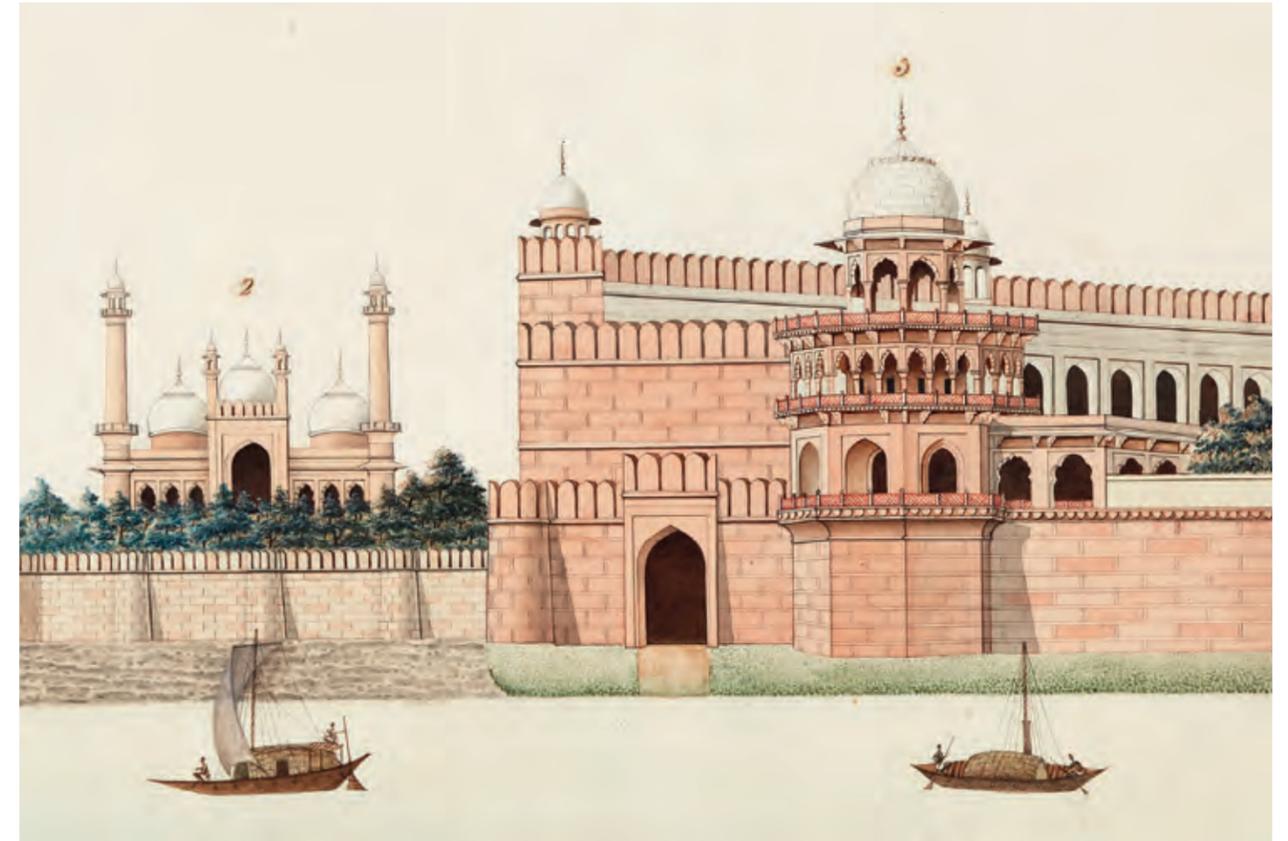
In view of its turbulent history as a centre of power, the Red Fort is one of the most iconic buildings in India and remains an important symbol of Indian identity today.

A near-identical view of the fort is in the British Library, circa 1820, with similar black-ruled border but without any inscriptions, see *Losty*, pp.22-23, fig.9. Also relevant is a unique and vast painting known as 'The Delhi Panorama', a 16 ft. (5 m.) watercolour dated 1846, recording the topography of the city of Shahjahanabad (Delhi) by the master topographical artist Mazhar Ali Khan, in the British Library, London, see *Losty*, pp.37-55.

**INSCRIPTIONS**  
*The Fort of Delhi*

**PROVENANCE**  
Christie's, London, 25 May 1995, lot 138  
Private collection, New York, 1995-2023

**REFERENCES**  
Asher, C., *Architecture of Mughal India*, vol. 1.4, Cambridge, 1992  
*Losty*, J., *Delhi 360°: Mazhar Ali Khan's View from the Lahore Gate*, Delhi, 2012



Fort  
DELHI.

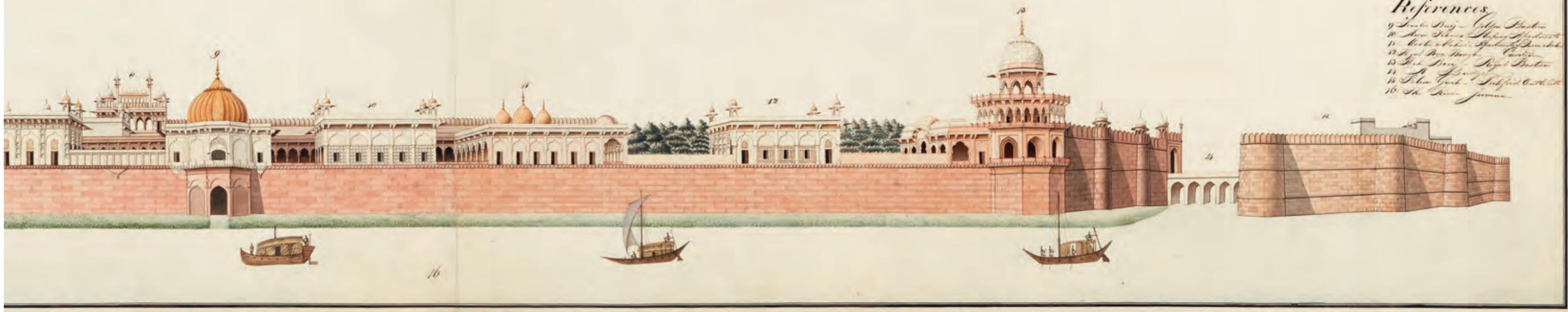
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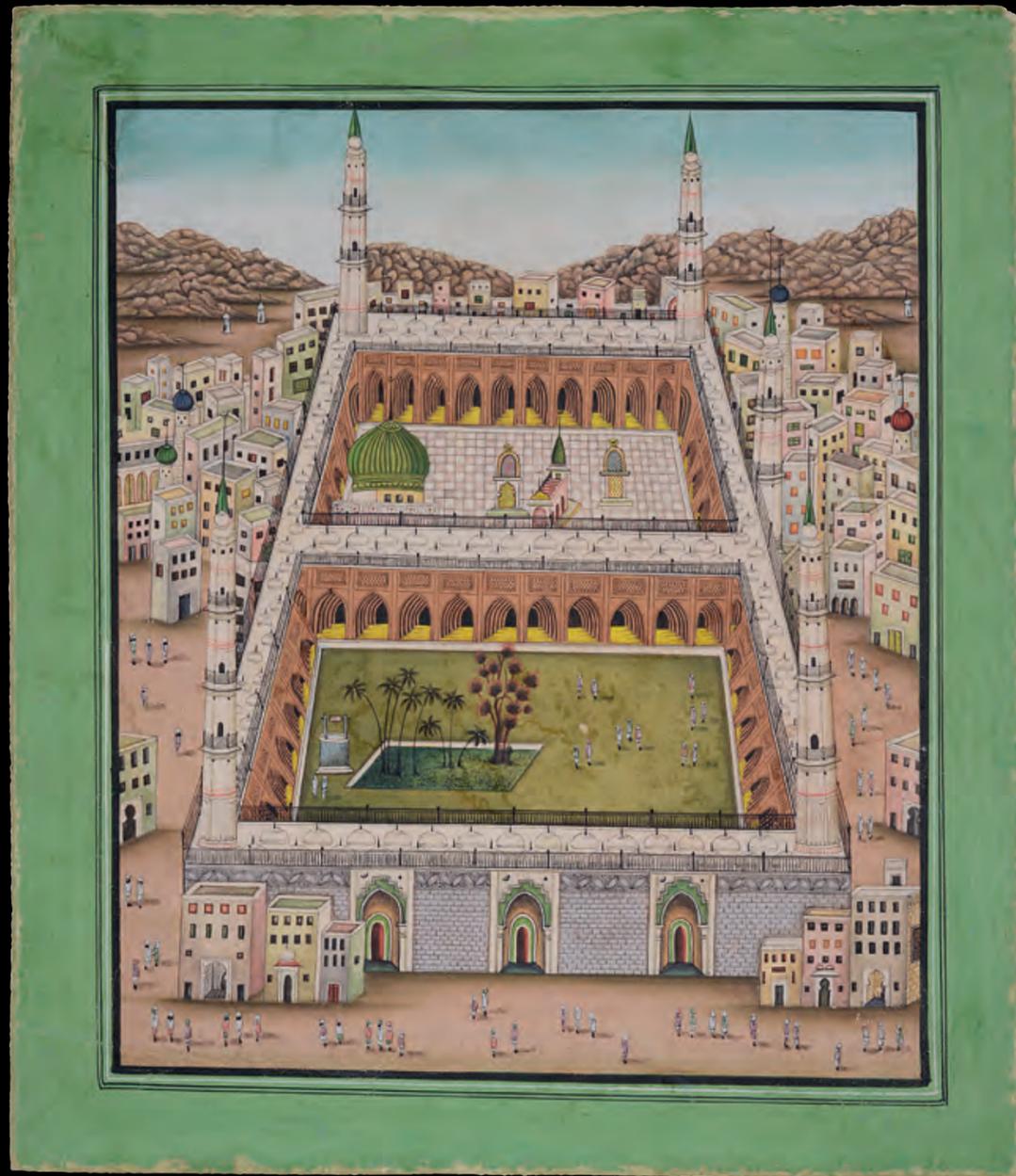
1. Rajah Jagadish Bahadur Singh
2. General de Bussy - *Journal de l'expédition de Delhi*
3. *Le Délivré* - *Le Délivré*
4. *Le Délivré* - *Le Délivré*
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9. *Le Délivré* - *Le Délivré*
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15. *Le Délivré* - *Le Délivré*
16. *Le Délivré* - *Le Délivré*





**36. TWO PANORAMIC VIEWS OF MECCA AND MEDINA**  
INDIA, PERHAPS DELHI, CIRCA 1840

Opaque watercolour on paper, with black rules  
and green borders  
13 by 11 in.; 28 by 33.6 cm. painting  
13½ by 11½ in.; 34.3 by 29.7 cm. folio

One painting depicts a view of Mecca showing the Ka'aba and  
the Masjid al-Haram, the other of Medina showing the open

court and garden of paradise with the well. Each is enclosed by  
walls with tapering minarets and inner and outer arcades with  
domed roofs.

Beyond the walls are domestic houses of cubist form with  
diminutive turbaned pilgrims robed in white throughout.

Although Mecca and Medina are often depicted alongside one  
another in prayer books like the *Dala-il al-Khayrat*, it is unusual  
to see them painted on this scale as a pair of paintings. From  
the late eighteenth century Indian artists started to produce  
painting of the Holy Sites for sale to pilgrims, many of which can  
be found in the Khalili Collection, London.

**PROVENANCE**  
Private collection, England  
Sotheby's, London, 17 November 2021, lot 79

### 37. EQUESTRIAN PORTRAIT OF RAO RAJA BINNE SINGH OF ALWAR (R. 1815-57)

ATTRIBUTED TO BALDEV OF JAIPUR AT ALWAR, CIRCA 1840-50

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, triangular stamp on verso, now defaced

13¾ by 10¾ in.; 34 by 27 cm. painting

21 by 16¼; 53.2 by 41.4 cm. folio

This is a splendid portrait of Maharao Raja Binne Singh (r.1815-57) riding a magnificent stallion. Binne Singh is dressed entirely in a white robe with gold edging, shoes and jewellery. His courtly dress emphasises his royal status, along with his mount covered in gold trappings and the nimbus behind his head. The horse has henna-dyed legs, which is standard practice in India. Behind him is a river with mountains beyond, derived partly from a European source. The painting was probably executed by Baldev of Jaipur, who worked in Alwar from 1840 to 60. A closely related portrait of Maharao Raja Binne Singh, signed by Baldev, is in the British Library, London (Losty, 2014, p.9). His clothing and physiognomy are identical to the figure in our painting.

#### BINNE SINGH AS PATRON

Baldev was from Jaipur and also worked on a copy of the *Gulistan* of the poet Sa'di with the artist Ghulam Ali Khan, prepared for Binne Singh from 1840-53 (Sharma, pp.47-9).



Ghulam Ali Khan was a prominent artist from Delhi who worked for both the Mughal court and East India Company officials. He adapted his style to produce formal portraits of Mughal emperors while creating topographical images for British patrons. Towards the end of his career, he worked for two regional rulers, the Nawab of Jhajjar and the Raja of Alwar, the subject of our portrait. Binne Singh was a great patron of the arts and employed Ghulam Ali Khan, Baldev and others to work on his luxurious manuscript of the *Gulistan* for twelve years. Alongside this work of classical Persian literature, favoured by Mughal rulers, Binne Singh also patronised topographical views. He commissioned a spectacular view of the Alwar *gaddi*, similar to works completed for the Fraser brothers (Sharma, pp.48-50). Sharma points out that with these commissions, Binne Singh positioned himself as an influential patron allied with Anglo-Mughal centres of power (*op. cit.*, p.48). With these broad interests in mind, our painting reflects an interaction and fluidity of genres, with a Mughal-style equestrian portrait against a more European backdrop.

Another related equestrian portrait, circa 1863, is in the Musée du Louvre, Paris. It shows the young son of Maharao Sheodan Singh, Binne Singh's son, similarly attired in white and gold on a dappled horse against a vibrant green background (Welch, no.16 and Losty, 2010, p.112, no.48). The setting however is not comparable. Still, the depiction of the horse and the portrait of our sitter's son are close, and it has also been more recently attributed to Baldev. Welch first identified the sitter as Rao Patrচিত of Datia (1801-39) but Losty recognised that he was a ruler from Alwar (Losty, 2010, p. 112).

#### PROVENANCE

Private collection, U.S.A., 1990s-2010

Ramesh Kapoor, New York, 2010

Private collection, Europe, 2010-23

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38. FOLIO FROM A SIVA PURANA  
GANESHA ENTHRONED  
PAHARI, CIRCA 1850

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, with dark blue ground borders with gold and white foliage  
7 by 9½ in.; 17.8 by 24.5 cm. painting  
7½ by 10½ in.; 19.9 by 26.9 cm. folio

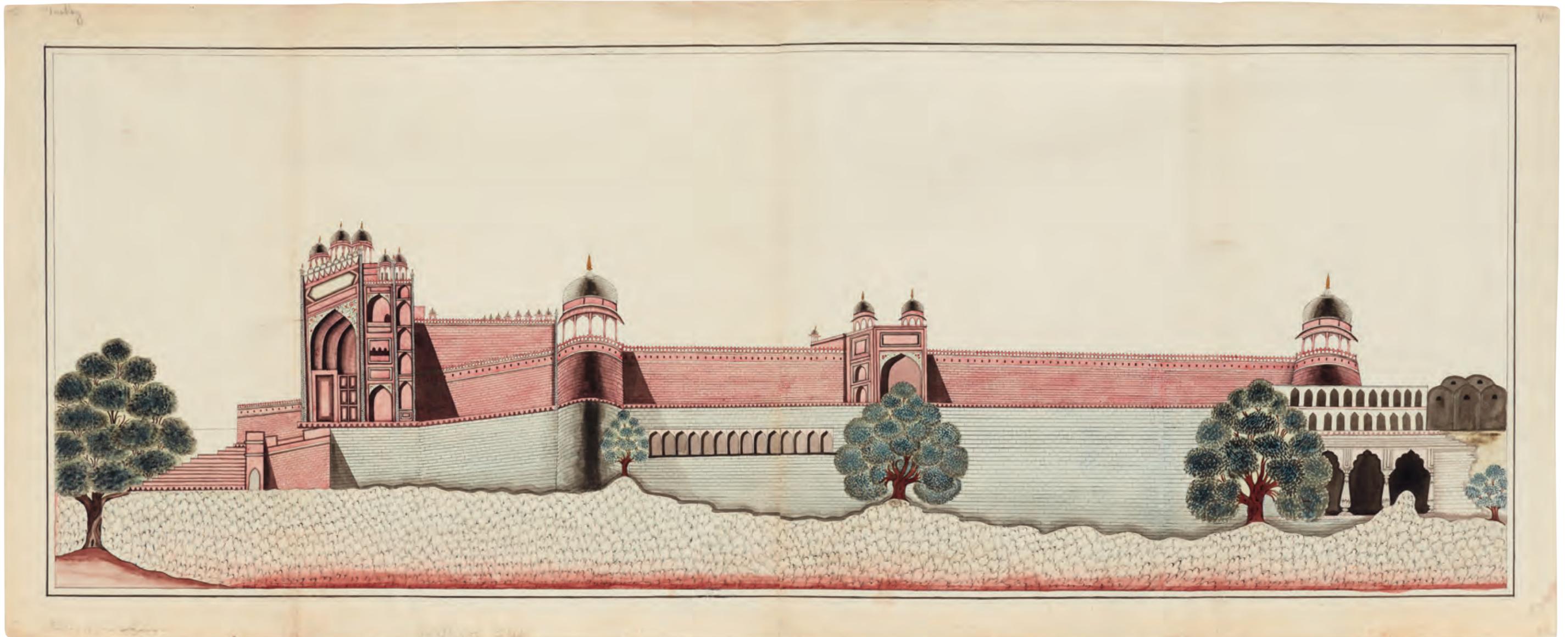
The four-armed red-bodied elephant-headed god seated on a gem-set gold throne on a garden terrace. He wears a green shawl and orange *dhoti* as well as a gold crown surmounted by a gem-set gold parasol. His vehicle, the rat, crouches in front of him, while with his primary hands he feeds himself from a platter of sweetmeats, his upper left hand holds an *ankus*. He is flanked by two female attendants, one holding a *morchhal*, the other pouring water from a gilt ewer into his trunk, trees at either side. The black-ground border, typical of Kangra and Guler paintings, is decorated with gilt and white meandering foliage.

The Siva Purana revolves around the gods Siva and Parvati but also treats of the other Hindu gods. It is one of eighteen major texts of the *purana* genre of Sanskrit texts and an important part of Shaivite literature.

**PROVENANCE**

Francesca Galloway, London, 2010  
Private collection, Europe, 2010-23





**39. PANORAMIC VIEW OF THE SOUTH AND EAST WALLS OF THE ROYAL CITY OF FATEHPUR SIKRI  
AGRA, CIRCA 1850**

Opaque pigments on laid paper watermarked J WHATMAN, ruled in black  
15¾ by 43¾ in.; 39.7 by 109.5 cm. painting  
18¾ by 46½ in.; 47.3 by 118.1 cm. folio

Following the birth of his first son Jahangir, Emperor Akbar ordered the construction of a new city, Fatehpur Sikri ("City of Victory") as his capital in 1571, as it was here that the Sufi saint, Sheikh Salim Chishti, predicted the birth of the boy.

The city is a unique and remarkable structure, of Timurid inspiration with both Hindu and Muslim architectural influences,

constructed of red sandstone, which sits atop a rocky ridge surrounded by a 6 km. (3.7 mile) wall. Akbar occupied the city until 1585 but it was completely abandoned in 1610 apparently due to water shortages.

In this large watercolour, taken from the east, we see the red sandstone walls supported by a white brick substructure sitting on a rocky mound with grassy slopes interrupted by five trees. The buildings depicted are, from the left, the 'Buland Darwaza' or Exalted Gate, which is set into the south wall some 54 metres (177 ft) in height, its grandeur enhanced by a vast flight of steps. From there we can see the east side which is broken

by a gate, surmounted by twin *chattris*, flanked at either end by a corner-tower with its domed pavilion. Below the supporting wall is broken by a single row of arched windows on the left and a double row above a triple arcade on the right. Finally, there is a five-domed building, perhaps the hammam.

The Buland Darwaza leads directly into a large congregational (open-air) mosque, the Jama Masjid, with the white marble shrine of Salim Chishti within. The complex housed a vast number of buildings including various palaces, audience halls, hammams, ministerial buildings, a harem, towers and stables,

as well as gardens and pools. For a watercolour study of the Buland Darwaza see entry no.31.

For a full description of Fatehpur Sikri, see Asher, pp. 51-67.

**PROVENANCE**

Sotheby's, New York, 1 December 1993, lot 391  
Private collection, New York, 1993-2023

**REFERENCES**

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40. **NASSER AL-DIN SHAH QAJAR (R. 1848-96) WITH A CANNON**  
PERSIA, CIRCA 1850

Opaque pigments and gold on paper  
13¾ by 8½ in.; 34.5 by 21.5 cm. painting  
16¾ by 11½ in.; 42.8 by 30 cm. folio

**NASSER AL-DIN SHAH QAJAR**

The second half of the nineteenth century saw great change in Persia as westernisation took hold of everything from architecture, communications, the military, court dress and of course painting. The Nasiri period promoted such innovations



and the Shah (1831-96) himself visited Europe on three occasions and was decorated by Queen Victoria. Nasser al-Din was keen for the painters in his atelier to embrace European innovations and took active steps to ensure this, producing a new less formal type of royal portraiture. As Leyla Diba writes “the [Nasiri] period gave birth to a virtual artistic renaissance” and “images of the ruler convey his cautious modernity, luxurious tastes and autocratic yet melancholy character” (Diba, pp.240-41).

From the late eighteenth century the convention of being painted with a cannon was popular with the shahs and a large oil painting of the Shah by a Georgian painter is just one example (see Diba, pp.245-6, no.76). The Qajar rulers were preoccupied with modernising their army and this portrait gives credence to that idea. He has removed one of his white gloves to touch the cannon to reinforce the point. The young ruler is resplendent in his European-derived military uniform of blue trousers, polished black leather boots and red frock-coat with gold braid epaulettes and embroidery. However, he is above all a powerful ruler and this is conveyed through a tall traditional astrakhan hat with a large emerald and pearl-set aigrette and triple armbands set with very large diamonds, rubies and emeralds. Around his slender waist is a stout similarly gem-set belt, from which a sabre hangs, its chape and locket also encrusted with gems. His finely rendered face has cropped beard and a long moustache but betrays no emotion as he stares into the distance.

For two portraits (watercolour on paper and oil on copper respectively) of Nasser al-Din, in the Louvre, Paris, see Diba, pp. 241-45, nos. 74 & 75. A further portrait, by Abu'l Hassan Ghaffari, dated 1852-53, was sold at Sotheby's, London, 10 April 2014, lot 120.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

The cartouche contains an Arabic inscription:  
*al-sultan ibn al-sultan ibn al-sultan nasir al-din shah qajar khallada  
allah mulkahu wa sultanahu*  
“The sultan son of the sultan son of the sultan, Nasir al-Din Shah Qajar, may God perpetuate his rule and sovereignty.”

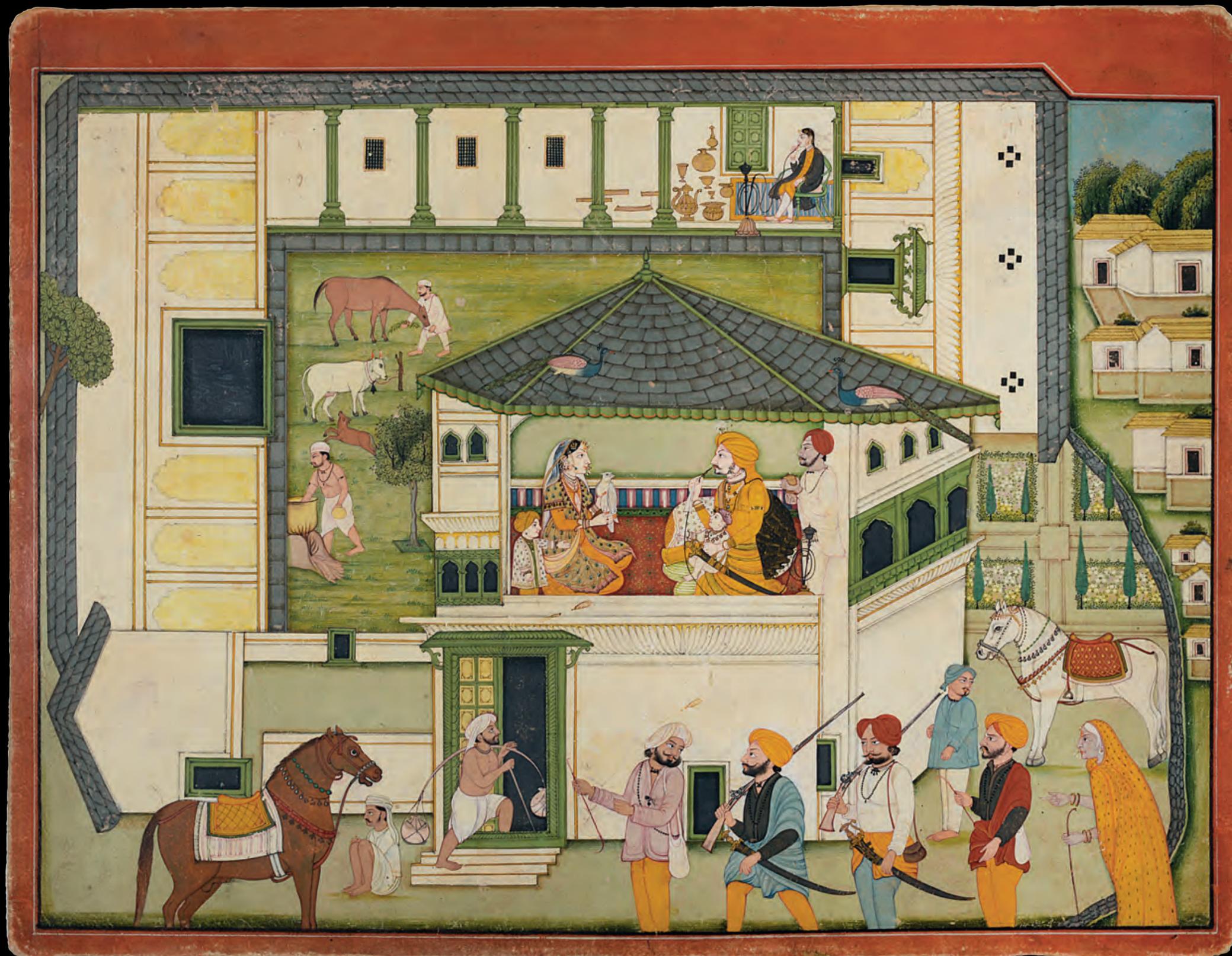
**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, London  
Private collection, France, 2009-23

**REFERENCES**

Diba, L., *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925*, New York, 1998





41. **SIKH RULER AND HIS FAMILY IN A GARDEN PAVILION WITHIN A PALACE COMPLEX**  
**PUNJAB, CIRCA 1860**

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, red borders with black and white rules, the reverse with a short later *nasta'liq* inscription  
 13 by 17½ in.; 33.2 by 44.3 cm. painting  
 14¾ by 18½ in.; 36.6 by 46.5 cm. folio

In a garden pavilion with conical roof the ruler, dressed in turban and jewellery, sits smoking a huqqa with a child on his knee, a standing attendant behind him. Opposite his wife is seated, holding a falcon in her hands, an older child in court dress to the left gesturing. Two peacocks strut about on the tiled roof. In the foreground a tradesman enters the pavilion, two horses and grooms are in attendance, an old woman and four turban-wearing men guard the entrance, two with rifles and swords. In a grass courtyard two men attend a horse and a bull and calf. In a colonnade beyond a lady sits in a European style chair on a striped dhurrie smoking a huqqa, various gilt vessels laid out in front of her. To the right, beyond the palace walls, is a group of small village houses.

In this large-scale painting a scene of domestic contentment is depicted in which a Sikh gentleman, his wife and two children sit at the centre of their world. The relative informality of the scene and the presence of children is unusual and recalls the famous 1838 picture of 'General Jean-Francois Allard and his Family' on loan to the Sackler Museum at Harvard University Art Museums, see Stronge, p.109, no.118. In addition the depiction of a lady unusually holding a hawk is distinctively Sikh and indicates status, as does the dress and jewellery of both figures and their children.

**INSCRIPTIONS**

The reverse with a short later *nasta'liq* inscription reading Gulab Singh, but the subject here is unlikely to be Gulab Singh Dogra (1792-1857), first Maharaja of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's, London, 10 June 2013, lot 176  
 Private collection, Europe, 2013-23

**REFERENCES**

Stronge, S., *The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms*, London, 1999

42. LIBERATION OF GAJENDRA MOKSHA  
ANDHRA PRADESH, SOUTH INDIA, NINETEENTH CENTURY

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, blue border with yellow rules, a short Devanagari inscription on the verso  
11 by 7½ in.; 28 by 19.5cm. painting  
11½ by 8½ in.; 29.3 by 20.8 cm. folio

The Liberation of Gajendra, a Puranic legend from the eighth Skandha of the *Bhagavata Purana*, is considered a sacred text in Hinduism. Its underlying message is that materialistic desire, ignorance and sin create an endless chain of *karma* creating a repeating cycle of birth and death that can only be broken by submission to the supreme being, Vishnu.

The story concerns Gajendra, head of a tribe of elephants living in a garden called Ritumat created by the god Varuna, lord of the sky, ocean and water, on Mount Trikuta, the mythical "three-peaked mountain". Every day Gajendra went to a nearby lake to pick lotus flowers to offer the god Vishnu. One day however he was attacked by a vicious crocodile (*makara*), who, in spite of the efforts of his tribe, would not let go of his leg. Exhausted he finally called to his god Vishnu by raising a lotus in the air. Vishnu came down to earth to save Gajendra, thus allowing him to achieve *moksha*, or liberation from the cycle of birth and death. He then took on a form similar to that of the deity Sarupya Mukti and went to Vaikuntha with Vishnu.

In this painting the narrative is depicted with, in the lower register, the god Vishnu on his vehicle Garuda alighting in a bouquet of lotus flowers beside the lake. He then appears at

lower right with an attendant and Garuda, ready to decapitate the crocodile with his *chakra*, two devotees in a tree above. The upper register again depicts the god with Garuda and an attendant, amidst boughs of foliage, at left and on the right Vishnu is seated under a snake canopy receiving obeisance from the great King Indradyumna, a previous incarnation of Gajendra.

The style reflects influence from the school of painting that developed at the shrine of Tirupati, north-west of Madras (Chennai) during the second half of the eighteenth century. There are close parallels in terms of palette, in particular, but also the facial expression of the main figure of Vishnu and the gold decoration on the *dhotis* and the lotus flowers. See Dallapiccola, p.109, no 1 and p.113, nos.4-7.

INSCRIPTIONS

*Shri gajendra-mokshaji*, 'the auspicious one who liberated the elephant'

PROVENANCE

Acquired in New York, 1960s  
Private collection, England, 1963/4 – 2022

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॥ महाराजाधीराज महाराणजी श्री श्री १०८ श्री भोपालसीहजी खडकजीसु णछे पदारवो प्रासोज सुद ४ को चत्रपट । कलमी चीत्रकार पंनालाल परसराम गोड ,

### 43. PRINCE BHUPAL SINGH OF UDAIPUR RIDING IN A PROCESSION

BY PANNALAL  
MEWAR, CIRCA 1930-35

Gouache on paper, blue and white rules with a tan border, an inscription in white Nagari on the lower border, an inventory number and the artist's name in blue ink on the verso  
29 by 51¼ in.; 73.7 by 131.1 cm. painting  
35 by 56¼ in.; 88.9 by 144.1 cm. folio

H.H. Maharana Sir Bhupal Singh Bahadur, K.C.I.E. (1884-1955) ruled Mewar state from 1930-55.

In a grand scene set at the bottom of what appears to be a hill fort, Bhupal Singh, seated on a ceremonial elephant at the centre of a vast entourage, arrives at a (?) hunting encampment at a place named in the inscription as (?)Kharakji Suncho, in the summer month of Asharh, but the year is not stated. The procession snakes its way through an encampment towards a rocky hillside dotted with trees in a terrain typical of Mewar.

The camp contains various types of hut and tent, while oxen graze and women and children watch the procession. The Rana is encircled with courtiers in white holding banners, fans, *morchhals* and other emblems of state, and around them stand lines of armed soldiers in red. The procession is led by marching infantry followed by mounted troops. A further elephant leads the royal party and a contingent of cavalry in navy brings up the rear. The camp is shaded by mature trees.

Though undated the scene seems to have been painted in the early years of the Rana's reign, when the prince had formally succeeded his father Fateh Singh whose nearly half-century reign finally ended with his death in 1930.

#### THE ARTIST PANNALAL

According to Topsfield, pp.295-301, "the final phase of traditional Udaipur painting, from c. 1910-45, is dominated by Pannalal Parasram Gaur (1860-1935), known as Pannalal, and his son Chaganlal".

For other works by this artist including a Tiger-Hunt, 1911, Bhupal Singh shooting leopard, 1916, the investiture of Bhupal Singh, 1930 and two scenes of the Rana in the royal barge at Gangaur Ghat, circa 1929 and 1935 respectively; see Topsfield, pp. 266-8 & 270-2.

#### INSCRIPTIONS

Bhupal Singh is described in the inscription as *maharajadhiraja maharanaji sri sri 108 sri bhopal singhji...*  
The artist's name is given as Pannalal Parasuram Gaur.  
On the verso, Mewar inventory numbers in blue ink:  
'Number' 1672

....? 229; inv. no. 0/93; valuation Rs. 250

#### PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, New York, 2 June 1992, lot 153  
Private collection, New York, 1992-2023

#### PUBLISHED

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