

# A M I R M O H T A S H E M I



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زمین چون بهشتی شد اراسته ز داد و ز بخشش پر از خواسته

‘The earth became embellished like paradise, enriched with wealth of justice and forgiveness.’

Ferdowsi, 10<sup>th</sup> Century

It is with great pleasure to present our latest catalogue to coincide with our fifth year at TEFAF Maastricht. This year there is a particular focus on works on paper. I am especially excited about a set of five botanical watercolours painted by Chinese or Malay artists and four topographical views of Iran by Charles Texier.

Also included in this catalogue is an outstanding Mughal cabinet which was housed in a Private European Collection. This cabinet has survived in remarkably good condition and is one of the best cabinets that I have come across in my career.

One item which stands out in terms of rarity, is the Burmese lacquer headboard commissioned by a wealthy Portuguese patron in the 16th century. This item above all, embodies the extent of the trade between such diverse civilisations. The use of Renaissance prints as inspiration for its decoration by local craftsmen is evidence of this cultural exchange.

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## 1. Kashan Calligraphic Tile

Iran, 13th or 14th century  
Ilkhanid Dynasty (1256 – 1353)  
29.5cm high, 30cm wide

This quadrilateral tile is decorated with a beautiful turquoise blue glaze. At the top of the object there is a frieze of repeated and overlapping tendrils that evoke flowers or plants. The central panel features Persian calligraphy written in the *naskhi* script. The inscription is cobalt blue which contrasts with the turquoise ground and accentuates the chromatic vivacity of the piece. The tile may be translated as follows:

زمین چون

‘The ground, like ...’

This forms part of a verse from Abdul Qasim Ferdowsi’s (d.1010) epic 10th century poem *The Shahnameh*. The poem narrates the history of the ancient kings of Iran from the mythical beginnings to the Arab conquest in 651 C.E. The full verse is as follows:

زمین چون بهشتی شد اراسته  
ز داد و ز بخشش پر از خواسته

‘The earth became embellished like paradise,  
enriched with wealth of justice and forgiveness.’

This verse is part of the story of the legendary king of the Kayanian dynasty, Key Khosrow, who reigned over Iran for about sixty years.

A similar tile, with deep blue calligraphy upon a pale ivory ground, can be found in The Musée du Louvre, France (Accession Number MAO2126). Both tiles appear related in their design and form. The upper band of the Louvre example also features a frieze, which is decorated with an entwining floral pattern akin to the style of our piece. The style of calligraphy is also comparable; striking parallels can be drawn between the long, curved brushstroke of the letter *nun* (ن, ‘n’) on each tile. Beneath the calligraphy of each piece, a straight horizontal line has also been painted. This suggests that our tile may also be attributed to late 13th or early 14th century Kashan.







## 2. Black and Blue Fritware Bowl

Kashan, Iran

13th century

9.8cm high, 21.5cm deep

This bowl is painted on both the interior and exterior in royal, cobalt blue and kohl-black. The interior is covered in a transparent glaze. The bowl rises from a short foot to a round, conical shape. Its interior has been decorated with radial bands, which join in the middle. Four of the bands feature blue circular and fan-like shaped pendants, which are outlined in black. Another four, black bands cut across the dish and contain registers of calligraphy in *naskhi* script. Both the interior and exterior feature beautiful flowers.

Underglaze painted wares began to be produced in Iran in the late 12th and early 13th century. This suggests our bowl probably dates to this period and in particular to Kashan, which was an important centre of ceramics production during this time. A new style of painting was also developed to show off the new innovations in ceramic technology. The artist has depicted fine, crisp motifs in black under brilliant glaze, while cobalt blue has been used to add colour. The beautifully drawn floral sprays in black seem to be exclusive to Kashan underglaze pottery. Wares in this new style and technique are typically dated from 1204 -16 CE and were evidently large-scale in production, only disrupted by the Mongol invasions towards the end of the 1220s.

The Al-Sabah Collection in Kuwait possesses one such Kashan bowl which appears related in size, form and decoration (Watson, p. 339, cat. 7). It has radial bands, again containing calligraphy, and the stylistic similarities between the two bowls are striking. Furthermore, our bowl has been published in the exhibition catalogue *Islamic Pottery 800 – 1400*; the exhibition took place at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1969 (R.H. Pinder-Wilson, p. 46, fig. 152). The bowl was attributed to the 13th century Kashan.

### Literature:

Pinder-Wilson, R.H. *Islamic Pottery 800 – 1400*, London, Victoria & Albert Museum, 1969.

Watson, O. *Ceramics from Islamic Lands*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Provenance: Private UK Collection





### 3. Monochrome Vase with Deep Purple Glaze

Iran

17th century

39cm high

This fritware vase features moulded decoration under opaque blue, turquoise and purple glazes. The vase rises from a flared rim to a globular body which tapers inwards towards the neck, emphasizing its curvature. The neck is angular and flares at the end. On each side of the neck there are elephant head-shaped handles.

The shape of the vase is reminiscent of earlier fourteenth century Chinese altar-vases. Examples can be found in the Percival David Collection, the British Museum, London, which dates to 1351 (Accession Number PDF, B.614). The British Museum vases are blue and white and have strikingly similar handles in the shape of elephants heads. Persian potters seemingly had access to Chinese originals in the 17th century, and they also appeared to have mixed elements from different periods, and it was not unusual for the potters to copy designs several centuries old (Watson, p. 63).

Our monochrome vase in a shade of deep aubergine is both alluring and uncommon. It seems to belong to a particular type of 17th century Safavid ceramics with rich glazes, of which deep purple is sometimes used. Furthermore, the use of opaque glazes gives the blue a turquoise tint, which is another aspect of this style of pottery (Watson, p. 477). The Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait contains a dark purple rosewater sprinkler with turquoise decoration, which is of a similar style to our piece and is also dated to 17th century Iran (Watson, p. 477, cat. 33). The colour is almost identical and at the bottom of the rosewater sprinkler the turquoise glaze appears to have 'melted' into the aubergine body, providing a smudge-like decoration. Similarly, the turquoise used on the elephant head handles of our vase also appears to have run into the predominant purple glaze.

Literature:

Watson, O. *Ceramics from Islamic Lands*, London, Thames & Hudson, 2004.





#### 4. Iznik Dish Decorated with Grapes

Turkey

Circa 1550-1570

36cm diameter

The circular dish is decorated with a central configuration of three hanging clusters of grapes amongst curly vines and leaves painted in cobalt blue and green on a white ground. The cavetto of the dish is painted with bunches of cobalt blue and green floral sprays; the everted rim is decorated with a wide wave and rock pattern border. The back of the dish has blue and green sprigs of flowers. The distinct grape motif depicted in the centre of this dish has been largely inspired by Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) Chinese blue and white porcelains which the Ottoman court prized highly during the 16th century. Although this dish incorporates several Ming-style elements, it also combines the characteristic Iznik-style theme of wave and rock decoration reflected on the rim (Ribeiro, p. 23).

Multiple examples of Iznik dishes with 'Chinese Ming-style' grape motifs can be found in the following collections: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Numbers 91.1.102 and 66.4.10, The Calouste Gulbenkian Collection, Portugal, Accession Number 836, Musée du Louvre, France, Accession Number OA 2402, Musée National de la Renaissance, France, Accession Number E.CI. 8100 (DS 2215), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Accession Number 1978.1470, Sadberk Hanim Museum, Turkey, Accession Number 9292-P.306, The Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar, Accession Number PO.046.99 and an Iznik dish with cobalt blue and turquoise grapes in a Private Collection, circa 1530-1540, published in Bilgi, p. 80, number 18.

##### Literature:

Atasoy, N. and Raby, J. *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1989.

Bilgi, H. *Dance of Fire: Iznik Tiles and Ceramics in The Sadberk Hanim Museum and Omer M. Koc Collections*, Sadberk Hanim Museum, Istanbul, 2009.

Carswell, J. *Iznik Pottery for the Ottoman Empire*, The Islamic Art Society, London, 2003.

D'Orey Capucho Queiroz Ribeiro, M. *Iznik Pottery and Tiles in the Calouste Gulbenkian*, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Portugal, 2009.

Provenance: Private European Collection







## 5. Iznik tile

Turkey

Second half of the 16th century

25cm high, 21.5cm wide

This stunning polychrome tile is decorated with a large red and green rosette amongst scrolling vines and serrated split-palmettes on a cobalt blue ground. The left hand side is divided by a narrow light blue border with cobalt blue and green palmette scrollwork on a bole red ground in the top right hand corner of the window. The interior of the left hand side is decorated with a turquoise *saz* leaf together with a composite blossom and flower heads on a white ground.

This tile would have formed part of a larger panel. There is a 16th century

Iznik tile in the British Museum, London, Accession Number G. 117, which has similarly painted flower heads of cobalt blue petals within smaller white petals with a red stigma to the centre of the flower head. Furthermore, the British Museum tile has a light blue narrow border which also seems comparable to the light blue colour in the narrow border of the window portion of our tile. Another Iznik tile with a large flower head and leaves to one side, but with a narrow border in bole red, not blue, running through the tile separating the other side with grapes and vines is also in the British Museum, Accession Number G. 78, and dates to the 16th century.

Provenance: Private UK Collection





## 6. Iznik Dish

Turkey

Circa 1570

34.7cm diameter

The circular polychrome dish is painted with an asymmetrical composition of two central turquoise-blue and bole red saz leaves with meandering stems and foliage with red carnations and blue tulips on a white ground. The everted rim is decorated with a wave and rock pattern painted in cobalt blue, turquoise and black. The reverse of the dish is decorated with alternating cobalt blue and green flowers and paired cobalt blue tulip sprigs.

An Iznik dish of symmetrical arrangement with two heart-shaped saz leaves and red roses, from the second half of the 16th century, is illustrated in B. Rackham, *Islamic Pottery and Italian Maiolica: Illustrated Catalogue of a Private Collection*, Faber and Faber, London, 1959, Pl. 40C, No. 112.

Provenance: Private European Collection







## 7. Iznik tile

Turkey

Second half of the 16th century

22.6cm high, 19.9cm wide

This polychrome tile is painted with a large bole red, cobalt blue and green lotus blossom together with a green and red *saz* leaf, a small serrated leaf and half-flower heads with a large cobalt blue palmette border. The bottom left hand corner is decorated with cobalt blue, white and green scrolling clouds on a bole red ground.

The tile would have been a part of a larger composition. Two pairs of Iznik tiles in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, dated to circa 1550-1600, Accession Numbers 189:29-1881 and 189:30-1881, depict similar shades of green, bole red, and cobalt blue with split palmette decoration with *saz* leaves and large lotus blossoms.

Provenance: Private UK Collection





## 8. A Rare Blue and White Pen Box of Islamic Form

China, Late 15th century  
Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)  
26.5cm long (box without mounts)

This rare and unusual blue and white porcelain pen box of slender oval form is painted with scrolling lotus motifs in underglaze blue. The sides of the box are fairly straight with rounded corners. The interior is divided into four compartments; the largest compartment is of *mihrab* form. One compartment contains a semi-circular metal inset. The other two compartments hold small metal containers. The metal mounts were probably added in the 19th century in France. The cover of the pen box is missing and the base of the box is unglazed.

The shape of this pen box is based on earlier metal prototypes from the Middle East. The semi-circular metal compartment would have been used as the water pot (for mixing the ink and water). The small container with a covered lid would have functioned as an inkwell, and the other with a pierced lid may have been used to hold sand. This pen box would have been used as a part of a scholar or calligrapher's set.

There is a similar pen box, Hongzhi period, circa 1500, further decorated with Ottoman gold and jewelled insets and fittings in The Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, illustrated in R. Krahl & Erbazar, p. 546, fig. 666 and also in John Carswell, p. 134, fig. 149a,b. The Topkapi Saray Museum's pen box measures only one centimetre longer, 27.5cm, than our pen box and shares similar style of painting seen in the underglaze blue scrolling lotus decoration on the sides of the box. Another Chinese blue and white pen box of similar design and dating to circa 1500, is in The David Collection, Copenhagen, Accession Number 7/1991 (28cm long).

### Literature:

Carswell, J. *Blue & White: Chinese Porcelain Around the World*, British Museum Press, London, 2000.

Krahl R. and Erbazar. *Chinese Ceramics in The Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul: A Complete Catalogue, II, Yuan and Ming Dynasty Porcelains*, Sotheby's Publications, London, 1986.







## 9. Hispano-Moresque Four-handed Jar (*Orza*)

Manises, Spain

16th century

20.7cm high

The ovoid-shaped earthenware jar sits on a short foot. The exterior is painted with golden-brown copper-lustre on a pale cream tin-glaze ground. The body is decorated with six registers of alternating bands of decoration. The larger bands are painted with lustre cross-hatched decoration in ovoid form enclosed by brush strokes of cobalt blue ovoid shapes interchanging with flower heads and meandering stems. The other bands are painted with two or three golden-brown lustre dots on a cream square ground on a lustre band. The inside of the neck painted with stripes of lustre glaze. There are four loop handles attached to the shoulders of the jar.

According to Ray, the form of this jar appears to be characteristic of the Valencian form (Ray, p. 130). See a jar in The Victoria and Albert Museum, Accession Number 574-1884, of similar 'Valencian' form and with four-handles and illustrated in Ray, p. 130, fig. 267. A 16th century Manises jar of similar form and with banded decoration and four loop handles can be found in *Céramiques Hispaniques*, p. 117, fig. 79.

Literature:

Dectot, X. *Céramiques Hispaniques : Xiiè-xviiiè siècle*, RMN, Paris, 2007.

Ray, A. *Spanish Pottery 1248-1898*, V&A Publications, London, 2000.





## 10. Hispano-Moresque Dish

Manises, Spain

15th century

23cm diameter

The tin-glazed earthenware dish is of shallow form with a moderate outward sloping rim. It is decorated to the front with an armorial crest in the centre. The rest of the dish is painted with large cobalt blue and copper-lustre vine leaves amongst smaller flower heads, scrolling stems and foliage. The reverse of the dish is decorated with stylised leaf shoots inside circles surrounded by dots.

Our dish, unusual for its smaller size, bears a coat of arms or heraldic shield which shares a commonality with copious other larger-sized Manises chargers from this period including armorial coat of arms with grape or bryony leaf patterns. Other 15th century larger examples can be found published in: *Céramiques Hispaniques : Xiiè-xviiiè siècle*, p. 61, fig. 26 (40cm diameter) and *Spanish Pottery 1248-1898*, p. 84, fig. 179, Accession Number 1712-1855. Other examples can be found in the following institutions: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 56.171.71 (45.7cm diameter), The British Museum, London, Accession Numbers G.535 (34cm diameter), G.523 (44.1cm diameter) and G.514 (47.6cm diameter). The most similar 15th century example to our dish in terms of leaf ornamentation to the front and nearly identical style of painting decoration on the reverse - reflected in the leaf shoots - is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 29.100.142 (34.6cm diameter).

### Literature:

Dectot, X. *Céramiques Hispaniques : Xiiè-xviiiè siècle*, RMN, Paris, 2007.

Ray, A. *Spanish Pottery 1248-1898*, V&A Publications, London, 2000.





# 11. Important Mughal Cabinet with Figural Decoration

Gujarat or Sindh, India

Late 17th or early 18th century

52cm high, 62.5cm wide, 42.2cm deep







This art-historically important cabinet is made of wood and inlaid with ivory. The exterior of the cabinet forms a beautiful repeated motif of large flowers and swirling leaves amongst which are small birds. The keyholes are decorated with metal plates in the shape of falcons. A band of cross-shaped flowers decorates the top of the cabinet above the doors. The lid slopes inwards and contains an alternating pattern of trees and wild flowers; their stalks and leaves are portrayed in a formal manner. By opening the doors one is met with further beautiful inlaid decoration in ivory. The centre drawer features a courtly couple seated in conversation on a terrace and surrounded by two attendants. The other drawers – in varying sizes with handles in the shapes of gold pendants – are decorated with other female attendants placed between pointed cypress trees. Here one finds women holding vases, boxes known as *pandans*, flowers, dishes and what appears to be musical instruments. The interior of each door is also decorated with a portrait of a Mughal official carrying a small dagger known as a *katar*, and holding a staff. A tiger attacking a deer is also depicted. The figures are illustrated amongst drooping flowers with long stems and cypress trees, and the scene is framed on all sides by further swirling blooms. The foliage is meant to act as a landscape, a backdrop of the entire scene against which the official and the beast are placed.

As the 17th century progressed, a penchant for two-door cabinets of this type developed in India, which subsequently became the leading form produced during this time. The exterior decoration of this cabinet reflects the high Mughal tastes; there was a widespread proclivity for formally placed rows of plants in alternating patterns against a plain ground, on many different objects and buildings, particularly during the reign of Shah Jahan (1628–1658). The figures inlaid on the interior frequently decorate cabinets of this ilk. The motif of a courtly couple in conversation, often surrounded by attendants, is particularly common on furniture made in Western India

for European patrons (Jaffer, p. 66). Similarly, the size and shape of our object also echo changes in European taste and use of cabinets during the 17th century which further suggests the original patron may have been European (Jaffer, p. 65).

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London houses one such Mughal cabinet which appears closely related in its medium, size, form and decorative style to our piece (Accession Number LOAN:POTELIAKHOFF.1 to 27). The exterior of the cabinet features inlaid ivory work on a plain ground and is decorated with a floral pattern, which seems to be a similar species of plant to ours. Furthermore, the interior of the cabinet features ivory inlay with rows of



maidens carrying objects, along with dancers, musicians and even wrestlers depicted on its drawers. Similarly to our example, in the middle of the cabinet and on the central drawer, the artist has illustrated a couple, but who are relaxing and smoking the *huqqa*. The interior of the doors is also stylistically similar: a man is depicted on the Victoria and Albert Museum cabinet holding a staff and is flanked by two cypress

trees on either side. Our piece also features a portrait of a man who is surrounded on each side by plants and cypress trees below him. The wide range of motifs on both of these cabinets is a common feature of furniture of this type, derived from earlier and contemporary Mughal manuscript paintings. The amalgamation of, for example, Mughal-style portraits with plants and animals, is characteristic of Western Indian furniture made for the European market.

#### Literature:

Jaffer, A. *Luxury Goods from India: The Art of the Indian Cabinet-Maker*, London, V&A Publications, 2002.

#### Provenance:

Private European Collection







## 12. An Exceptional Lacquered Headboard

Kingdom of Pegu (present-day Burma)

Circa 1550-1600

Lacquered and gilded wood

95cm high, 172cm wide







An extremely rare and important headboard, from a once complete bedstead featuring bedposts, following a structure typical of the late Renaissance with later small additions at the sides and top. Probably made from *anjili* wood (*Artocarpus* spp.) and thoroughly carved on the front side, it is coated with Southeast Asian black lacquer, or *thitsi*. While the carved decoration of the front is leaf gilded, the back is minutely decorated with gold against the black background following a Burmese lacquering technique known as *shwei-zawa*: the design, in positive, is painted on the black lacquered ground using a mixture of orpiment, water and gum arabic, with the occasional addition of gamboge (an orange to brown tapping resin from Southeast Asian trees, *Garcinia* spp.), which acts as a resist to gilding, as seen in the *sgraffito*-like inner drawing of the decoration on the present headboard - on Burmese lacquer and its techniques, see Fraser-Lu 1985, Isaacs & Blurton 2000, and Htun 2013.

Intricately and masterly carved, the headboard is decorated following a Mannerist-style design of the mid-16th century, perfectly interwoven with local decorative elements and imagery. Loosely architectural in composition, with an arched central element flanked by fluted columns on top of a pediment, it features a decorative scheme which is typical of late Renaissance *grotesche*, derived from the decorative repertoire, namely strapwork, of the so-called School of Fontainebleau (on Renaissance *grotesche*, see Dacos 1969, Chastel 1988, and Morel 1997; on the School of Fontainebleau, its artists and printed work, see Zerner 1969, and Lévêque 1984). Set with cartouches and *ferroneries* on the pediment, featuring two *tondi* (round medallions) with facing male and female busts clearly stating the, not surprisingly, marital character of the bedstead, the main element is an arched canopy *alla grotesca*. On the centre a standing female figure depicting Victory,

holding a palm leaf on her left hand and a laurel wreath on her right hand, is flanked by two blindfolded *amorini*. Such iconography, coupled with the two *tondi* depicting a couple (male and female), suggests that the bedstead, not unlike other marital objects from the Renaissance, namely *cassoni* (to contain the dowry) or *cassette* and *scrigni da sposa* (boxes and writing cabinets), was intended as an *objet de vertu* (see Syson & Thornton 2001; and Bayer 2008), drawing attention by means of its iconography to the victorious nature of marital love, which triumphs over any adversity.

While the identification of the European visual sources used in the manufacture of this type of objects is challenging given their decorative and ornamental character (without title or iconography to search for), and considering their composite arrangement as seen from the *horror vacui* which characterises this production while drawing from multiple sources, we have been fortunate as to identify some prints, here shown, that in all probability were given to the local artists by the Portuguese aristocratic clientele who commissioned this type of lacquered furniture in Asia. In fact, the overall decorative scheme on the front, with its bizarreness, hybridity and fantastic character, is reminiscent of engravings such as this one [fig. 1] by Hans Vredeman de Vries, a plate from his *Grotesco in diverse manieren* published between 1565-71.

A very similar arrangement of the central figure may be seen from the top section of this engraving by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, one of his *Grandes Grotesques* [fig. 2] from his famous series *Livre de grotesques*, published in 1566 in Paris and which was seemingly known to the Burmese artists (on Du Cerceau, see Guillaume & Fuhring 2010). Although the figure depicted in Du Cerceau's print is not that of Victory, there were plenty of sources for its iconography in Renaissance art, such as this earlier print by Nicoletto da Modena, dated ca. 1500-10.



FIG. 1: Hans Vredeman de Vries, Plate from a suite of sixteen plates of grotesque designs entitled *Grotesco in diverse manieren*, Antwerp, 1565-71. Engraving on paper. Private Collection.



FIG. 2: Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, Plate (detail) from the *Grandes Grotesques*, Paris, 1566. Engraving on paper. Private collection.



FIG. 3: Nicoletto da Modena, *Vitoria*, ca. 1500-10. Engraving on paper. Private Collection.

One other print that was seemingly used by the local Burmese artist responsible for the decorative scheme of the present piece is this grotesque mask by Franz Huys [fig. 4] from his series, *Portraiture ingenieuse de plusieurs facons de Masques* published in 1555. We see how the local carver adapted this design for the large mask which crowns the headboard, depicting almost perfectly the grotesque mask's most prominent features, such the strapwork-type cartouche, the rosette and the scallop shell on top of the mask. Although somewhat similar, the pair of grotesque masks set directly below the top mask are in fact of local origin, depicting the typical Burmese ogre, a protective demon called *bilu* which derives from the Buddhist *yakṣa* (see Green & Blurton 2002, p. 86; and Seekins 2006, p. 110). They are commonly seen on temple platforms and in ornamental wood carvings in monasteries, as they are believed to protect these sacred spaces from evil, something that might explain their depiction in the present headboard and on a previously published cabinet on stand of the same production (Green & Blurton 2002).

The rare group of objects to which the present headboard belongs has defied consensual identification of its place of production (Crespo 2016, pp. 238-261, cat. no. 22). Bernardo Ferrão was one of the first authors to take an interest in this type of furniture, and identified several extant examples in public and private collections which are almost exclusively Portuguese (Ferrão 1990, pp. 153-172). As qualities typical of this production, which he identifies as Indo-Portuguese, based on the alleged Mughal or Persian style of its decoration, Bernardo Ferrão mentions: "the style and decoration, the lacquer coating and in some examples, the presence of coats of arms, inscriptions in Portuguese, figures and mythological scenes, from classical and Christian European culture, carved or painted, all following the canons of Renaissance art, which help us to posit a sixteenth century date for such pieces" (Ferrão 1990, p. 153). Besides these pieces of furniture, there are some bedsteads (such as the present example), trays, chairs and also shields featuring similar decoration which in contrast are objects which can also be found in several international collections (Ferrão 1990, pp. 43-45; Körber 2013; and Körber 2015). One other rare group of writing boxes and fall-front writing cabinets also presents the same type of carved low-relief decoration, lacquered in black and highlighted in gold, with the interiors (and fronts) also carved and lacquered, but completely covered with gold

leaf. The remaining inner sides are lacquered in red with gilded decoration of flora and fauna of typically Chinese repertoire and not of Chinese influence or as mere *chinoiserie* as has been wrongly advocated. In addition, some of these objects have even painted inscriptions in Chinese characters.

These two clearly distinct lacquerware productions, have been grouped into a single one, either according to the type of wood used, the *anjili* (*Artocarpus* sp.), as proposed for the first group by José Jordão Felgueiras for which he proposes Kochi for the place of production (Felgueiras 1994), a hypothesis followed by Pedro Dias (Dias 2013, pp. 90-99) or, based on stylistic and technical aspects, assigning the production to Southeast Asia as advocated by Fernando Moncada and Manuel Castilho

(Moncada 1996; Castilho 1999, pp. 51-59). A more recent hypothesis regarding the origin of this group assigns the production to India, specifically the Bay of Bengal region and the coast of Coromandel (Carvalho 2001, pp. 127-153).

However, much like the Kochi hypothesis, this latter one is not supported by contemporary sources and documents, and is indeed contradicted by the laboratory identification of the type of lacquer used on pieces from the first group, given that scientific analysis has revealed it to be Burmese lacquer or *thitsi*, from the sap of the *Melanorrhoea usitata* used in Southeast Asia (Carvalho 2001, p. 132).

In this regard, it should be emphasised that on the Indian subcontinent none of the species required for the production of "true lacquer" can be found (Körber 2012, p. 317). Not only does the material used originate in Southeast Asia, but so does the technique, as proven by scientific analysis, given that the stratigraphy of the lacquer coatings, and the additives (oils) used, correspond to lacquerware of Burmese and Thai origin (Körber 2012, p. 319). In addition, the decoration and decorative repertoire and the specific technique used (*shwei-zawa*) with gold leaf (*shwei-bya*), point to an exclusive origin in Southeast Asia for the first group, to which the present headboard belongs.

One highly important document gives us to some extent the key to clarifying this situation and to identifying the centres of production for these lacquered pieces, indicating Burma for the first group, and South China (and Ryukyu Islands) for the second. In fact, in the post mortem inventories of Fernando de Noronha (ca. 1540-1608), third Count of Linhares, and his wife Filipa de Sá (†1618), a significant number of Asiatic pieces of furniture is recorded (Crespo 2015, p. 123): one





FIG. 4: Franz Huys after Cornelis Floris, Plate from a suite of eighteen designs for masks entitled, *Portraicture ingenieuse de plusieurs facons de Masques*, Flemish, 1555.

Engraving on paper. Private Collection.

“Chinese lacquered oblong box with two compartments”; “another smaller writing cabinet from Pegu [lacquered] in gold and red fitted with drawers”; “another writing cabinet from China [lacquered] in gold and white which has twelve drawers” and is 44 cm in length; “one box from China [lacquered] in gold and black fitted with its nook”; “one writing cabinet from Pegu gilded throughout”; “two shields from China without arm supports, featuring their coat of arms”, to which were added another sixteen; “four trays from China”, three of them featuring their coat of arms, lacquered in black and gold, to which another three were added; “another writing table from China, very old and featuring the Noronha coat of arms in the middle”; “one gilded bedstead from China which has the Noronha coat of arms on the headboard”; “one small gilded box from Pegu of over a palm in length and its silver lock”; “one gilded bedstead from China [lacquered] in gold and black, with its frame”; “one gilded chair and daybed from Pegu” and another “daybed from Pegu gilded throughout with six feet and headboard”.

The present headboard matches in full the type of record given by the aforementioned Linhares inventory, which strongly suggests the high social level of the Portuguese clients for which this type of lacquered and gilded furniture was produced. Bedsteads of this manufacture are extremely rare. One, very similar to the present headboard, complete with its four original bedposts, based on the same type of engravings and most probably produced at the same workshop, belongs to the Portuguese collection of the Quinta da Bacalhoa, Azeitão (Ferrão 1990, pp. 41-43). Another one (headboard with its flanking bedposts), featuring only floral carved decoration, has a Portuguese coat of arms painted with gold on the back (Ferrão 1990, pp. 43-45). A third bedstead, showing some differences on the depth and type of carving and almost deprived of its gilded lacquer coating belongs to the collection of the Palácio Nacional da Pena in Sintra, Portugal, inv. no. PNP1464 (possibly belonging to the second group and South Chinese in origin).

Provenance: Private USA Collection



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### 13. A Large and Impressive Drop-front Cabinet

Gujarat or Sindh, India

Late 16th or early 17th century

42cm high, 92cm wide, 43cm deep

This drop-front table cabinet of rectangular form is decorated modestly to the exterior with an Islamic-inspired design with thin strips of ivory inlaid on ebony and two carrying handles to each end. The drop-front cabinet opens up to reveal a highly ornamental interior of striking micro-mosaic geometric designs of *sadeli* work comprised of circular designs of inlay work of ivory, stained ivory, exotic woods, ebony and other various luxury materials. The *sadeli* work is displayed on four registers of drawers complete with gilt-bronze and copper fitted handles in the form of grotesque masks all surrounded by a thin band of geometric strap work set within a wooden frame. The inner door of the drop-front is also magnificently decorated with two large six-pointed stars with further detailed inlay work. Although the form of this cabinet is based on European or Portuguese style, according to Jaffer, *sadeli* work of this type was most likely inspired by Mudejar geometric inlaid designs and Italian *alla certosina* work depicted on cabinets which were brought into India by the Portuguese (see Jaffer, p. 31).

This large and impressive drop-front cabinet is one of the best and largest examples of its kind demonstrating superior craftsmanship in the use of the intricate *sadeli* work. It is noteworthy that the cabinet from this early period has survived the course of time in such a wonderful condition. There is a late 16th or early 17th century cabinet on a table stand, possibly from Gujarat or Sindh, in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number IM. 16&A-1931, which shares comparable micro-mosaic work to our cabinet, represented on the drawers of the cabinet and to the interior of the cabinet doors with related *sadeli* decorated stars and concentric circle decoration (see Jaffer, pp. 30-31). Also, a 16th century reversible games board in The Victoria and Albert Museum, probably from Gujarat or Sindh, depicts a similar marquetry work on its reverse, Accession Number 1961-1899. Furthermore, a large cabinet published in *Mobiliario Indo-Portugues*, has *sadeli* decoration (revealed in the middle section of the cabinet on the drawers and interior of the doors) comparable to our cabinet (Dias, pp. 260-261).

#### Literature:

Dias, P. *Mobiliario Indo-Portugues, Imaginalis*, Portugal, 2013.

Jaffer, A. *Luxury Goods from India: The Art of the Indian Cabinet-Maker*, V&A Publications, London, 2002.

Provenance: Private European Collection







#### 14. A Highly Important and Rare Cast Bronze Ewer

Deccan, India

Early 16th century

38cm high

The spiralled body rests on a tall conical foot with a tapered neck, drip guard and bevelled rim. The spout is decorated with a stylised dragon-head including a curved S-handle and hinged lid which has small visible pierced holes.

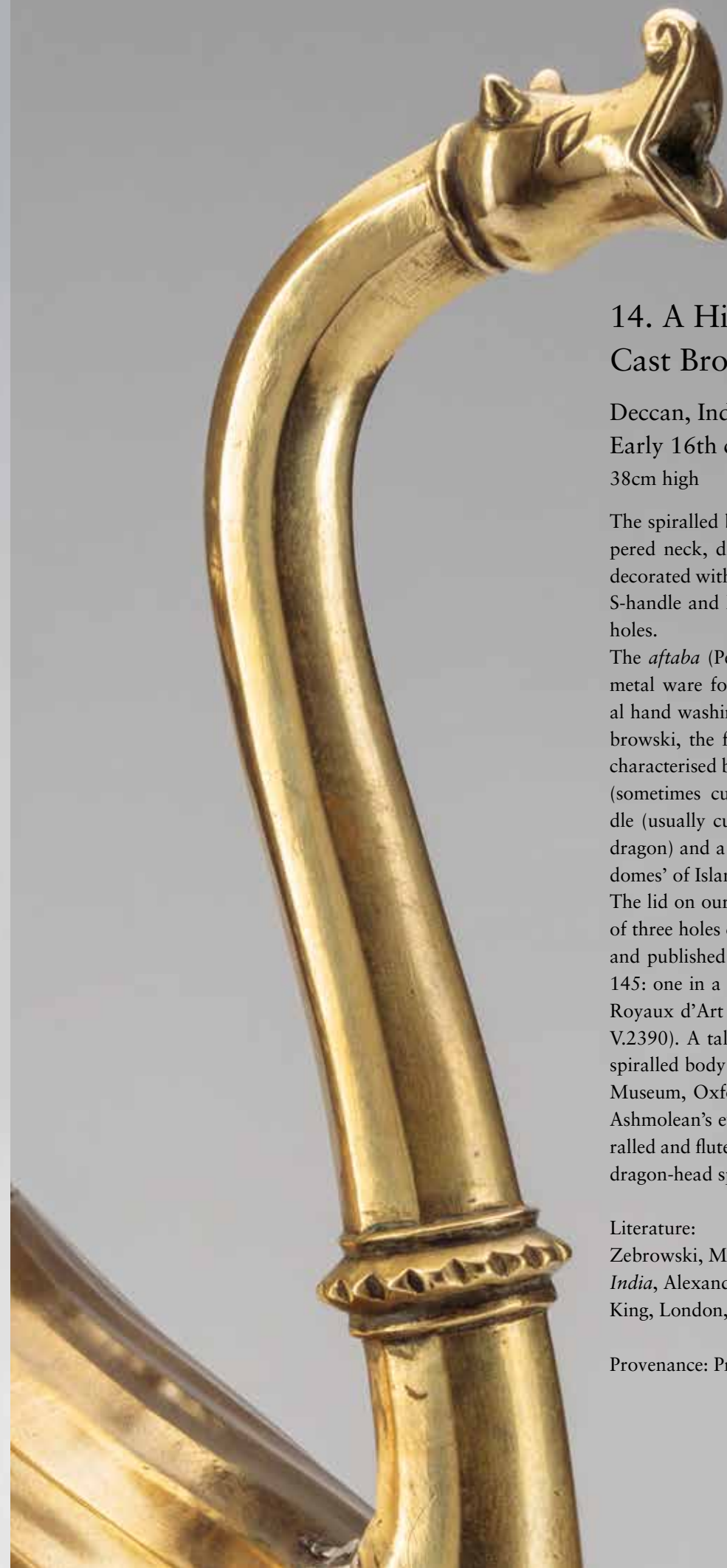
The *aftaba* (Persian word for ewer) derives from earlier metal ware forms used for the Muslim practice of ritual hand washing together with a basin. According to Zebrowski, the form of this Islamic-style *aftaba* is usually characterised by a bulbous body, pedestal foot, long spout (sometimes curved or straight), tall neck, arched handle (usually curved and often elaborated with a stylised dragon) and a stately cap (lid) derived from the 'pleasure domes' of Islamic architecture (Zebrowski, p. 135).

The lid on our ewer is pierced in three places in a cluster of three holes consistent with two other known examples and published in Zebrowski, see figs. 177-179, pp. 144-145: one in a private collection, the other in the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels (Accession Number V.2390). A taller 16th century brass ewer with a similar spiralled body with traces of gilding is in The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Accession Number EA 1976.43). The Ashmolean's ewer shares several similarities with the spiralled and fluted body of our example and also has similar dragon-head spout and dome-shaped lid.

##### Literature:

Zebrowski, M. *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, Alexandria Press in association with Laurence King, London, 1997.

Provenance: Private European Collection







## 15. Powder Flask (*barutdan*) with Mother of Pearl and Ivory Inlay

Etawah in the state of Kota  
Rajasthan, India, 19th century  
18.5cm high

The powder flask has been made from wood into the form of a nautilus shell. The top of the object has been inlaid with mother of pearl against a dark brown ground. The pattern features alternating geometric shapes; on the very top, there are angular undulating lines decorated with eye-like circles, below (and around the body of the flask) a leaf-like pendant and circular dots are arranged in the shape of a cross. The ivory finial on the top of the flask is pumpkin-shaped with vertical engraving. An orange, black, yellow and red string is attached to the finial. The artist has made incisions that follow the natural curvature of the shell-shape.

Powder flasks were used in order to store and carry while protecting gun powder from the damp. Indian powder flasks are often elegant, exhibiting intricate carving and precious inlaid decoration, and are sometimes covered with leather or fabric. Two or three

families that belonged to the Khatri caste often produced this type of inlaid mother of pearl work in Kotah, Rajasthan, India (Jaffer, p. 283). We know that wares from this area of India were sought after in the 19th century, particularly because of their inclusion in exhibition catalogues, such as in Calcutta in 1882-83 and at the Colonial and Indian exhibition in London in 1886.

Similar examples of powder flasks with mother of pearl inlay, and attributed to Kota, can be found in museum and private collections today. A similar flask is illustrated in R. Hales, *Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour* which appears related to our piece in both its form and decoration (Hales, p. 254, fig. 619). The work is decorated with geometric pendant shapes in mother of pearl and is dated to the 19th century. Furthermore, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York also has a powder flask, decorated with inlaid mother of pearl in a manner akin to ours, and attributed to 19th century Etawah.

### Literature:

Jaffer, A. *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*, Delhi, 2001.

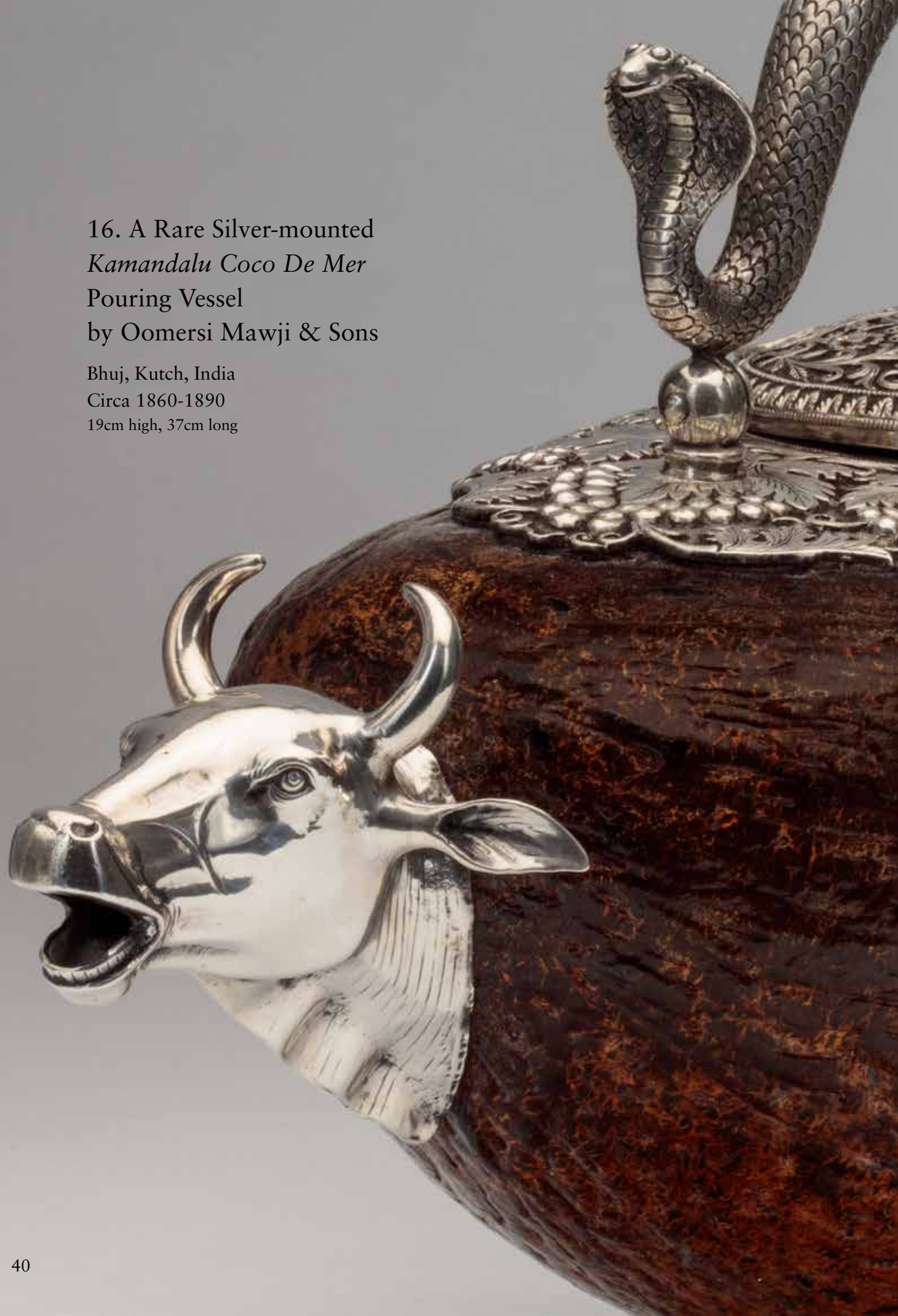
Hales, R. *Islamic and Oriental Arms and Armour: A Lifetime's Passion*, England, 2013.





16. A Rare Silver-mounted  
*Kamandalu Coco De Mer*  
Pouring Vessel  
by Oomersi Mawji & Sons

Bhuj, Kutch, India  
Circa 1860-1890  
19cm high, 37cm long



This unusual container has been perceptively crafted out of a rare species of nut called *coco de mer* ('coco-nut of the sea') originating from the palm trees of Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The extraordinarily large nutshell has been cut in half by the craftsman and cleverly adapted to a container for pouring liquids. The silver bull's head to the front of the vessel has two horns, eyes, ears and a sagging neck with an open mouth serving as a spout. The hinged handle is in the form of a curved cobra's body with intricate work depicted in the carving of the scales on its back, the ribbing on its stomach and even in the portrayal of the cobra's neck. The hinged lid has intricate silver repoussé work carved with coriander flowers, grapes, large leaves and foliage mounted to the top of the shell. The silver-footed base is of oval form and is ornamented with foliage on a punched background. There are two clear marks on the base stamped 'OM' and 'BHUI'.

The design of this container is based on original leather prototypes '*gomukhi*' (cow-face bags) used in India by Hindu *mendicants* (beggars) or *sadhus* (holy men) for carrying sacred water from the Ganges. The use of the *coco de mer* shell has further meaning as the coconut is symbolic of a source of food, coconut milk, and was

thus considered an auspicious fruit (Telinden, p. 170). This rare container was made in Kutch, western India, by one of the most renowned 19th century Indian silversmiths, Oomersi Mawji & Sons. The founder of Oomersi Mawji & Sons, Oomersi Mawji, was active from as early as 1860. Although surviving examples like our *kamandalu* are rare, there is a similar one published in Christiane Terlinden, p. 170, fig. 261, which does not have any marks to the base further exemplifying the significance and rarity of our container. According to Wilkinson, the clarity of the early cameo punches and the style of the writing reflected on the 'OM BHUI' marks on our container indicate an early OM mark, most likely associated with Oomersi Mawji himself, and dating to ca. 1860-1890 (see W. Wilkinson, p. 90, fig. 132).

Literature:

Dehejia, V. *Delight in Silver - Indian Silver for the Raj' Exhibition Catalogue*, Mapin, New York, 2008.  
Terlinden, C. *Mughal Silver Magnificence*, Antalga, 1987.

Wilkinson, W. *Indian Silver 1858-1947*, Wynyard R T Wilkinson, London, 1999.





## 17. Silver Teapot (*Kar Nam Ton*)

Thailand  
19th century  
17.5cm high

The silver teapot (*kar nam ton*) with a rounded, globular shape and elongated 'S' shaped spout is decorated in relief with an ornate pattern featuring blossoming flowers, leaves and amongst the foliage, four fox-like creatures which have nine incisions made on their tails. This suggests they may be related to the *huli jing*, a mythical nine-tailed fox of Chinese origin. The lid of the teapot is particularly distinctive; it features cascading, circular flat domes, reminiscent of Thai architecture such as pagodas with multiple tiers. The teapot has a long, swinging handlebar that forms a rectangular shape with indented or pinched corners.

The dense flora and fauna on this teapot may indicate it is work of a Chinese artist. In particular, its relatively small, compressed globular shape, along with the ornate decorative motifs invoke the diminutive teapots made by Chinese artists in the Straits during the 19th century (present day Malaysia and Singapore) (Meng, p. 149, fig. 120). Thus, it seems possible

that a Chinese artist may have made this teapot for a Thai patron.

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has a similar 18th century teapot from Thailand (Accession Number 476-1894). Although the objects differ in their material – the Victoria and Albert Museum example is made with both silver and gold – and decoration, they appear related both in their form and style. In particular, the two teapots share the swinging rectangular handlebar together with the tiered lids and small vase-shaped finials. Our example is small in comparison to the Victoria and Albert Museum teapot, which is 24cm high, and further conveys Chinese tastes in the Straits: teapots made in this region by Chinese artists, or for the Straits-born Chinese, were surprisingly small and jewel-like (Meng, p. 150).

### Literature:

Meng, H. W. *Straits Chinese Silver: A Collector's Guide*, Times Editions, 1984.







## A Group of Five Botanical Paintings by a Chinese or Malay Artist

These paintings are among a group and style of early 19th century works that depict the colourful flora of Southeast Asia. They were commissioned by European employees of the British East India Company and made by Chinese, Indian or Malay artists. Stylistically, the works are a combination of traditional Chinese painting methods, often employing blue paint around floral details, with European compositions. They provide a unique insight into the penchant for illustrations of animals, fruits, nuts, herbs and spices during the British settlement of the Malay Peninsula. These stylised watercolours of exotic fruit show affinities with drawings in other collections, notably the Janet Hutton Collection of works from Penang, Malaysia, now located in the collection of the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh. Mrs. Hutton lived in Penang with her husband who worked for the East India Company, providing Malay translations to the Prince of Wales (Noltie, pp. 12-13). Similarities can also be drawn with other important collections. For example, the William Farquhar (d. 1839) Collection of natural history drawings, now housed at the National Museum of Singapore, shares the same paper and watermark, 'J Whatman 1774', which suggests these paintings are contemporary with Farquhar's time. Farquhar was also an employee of the British East India Company and the first Resident and Commandant of colonial Singapore. A keen naturalist, Farquhar commissioned Chinese artists to paint 477 drawings of his discoveries. Both the Janet Hutton and William Farquhar Collections may be conceptualized as the 'Straits School' - a term that indicates Chinese artists in the Straits, which today comprises Malaysia and Singapore, of botanical art, which also seems applicable to our five watercolours. This genre of natural history paintings also forms part of the Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (d. 1826) Collection, now located in the British Library, London and the most famed naturalist of the period. An employee of the East India Company, Raffles spent his whole career in what is now the countries of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. He commissioned over 150 natural history and topographical drawings, mostly by Chinese artists. The stylistic similarities to the related Hutton, Farquhar and Raffles Collections, coupled with the species of fruit depicted in these works, suggest they were likely to have been created in the Straits in the early 19th century.





## 18. A Study of a Binjai (*mangifera caesia*)

Probably Penang, 19th century  
42cm high, 53cm wide

A branch is depicted from the bottom of the page; its oval, attenuated leaves spray outwards and fill the composition. Small blue and white flowers with elongated red sepals, along with a new honey-comb shaped bud, are also pictured in their various stages of efflorescence, growing out of the main branch. The plant also bears three elliptical shaped fruit known as the binjai fruit. The artist has also pictured a binjai fruit that has been cut open, revealing its pale white pulp, and the stone of the fruit is covered with a hairy membrane. 'Bunjai' is also handwritten next to the bottom of the branch.

The binjai fruit, also known as the Malaysian mango, is related to the common mango. It is grown across Southeast Asia, but it is considered endangered in Singapore. These sour fruits are often used in place of tamarind in Southeast Asian cuisine.

The Farquhar Collection, Singapore, contains a painting by an unknown Chinese artist, which depicts the same species of mango (Dozier, p. 109).

### Literature:

Noltie, H.J. *Raffles Ark Redrawn: Natural History Drawings from the Collection of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles*, London, The British Library, 2012.

Dozier, L(ed.). *Natural History Drawings, The Complete William Farquhar Collection, Malay Peninsula 1803-1818*, Singapore, National Museum of Singapore, 2010.







## 19. A Study of a Buah Duku (*lansium parasiticum*)

Probably Penang, 19th century  
43.5cm high, 66cm wide

The tropical fruit of the langsats or lazones tree occupies almost half the composition of this watercolour. They grow from vines on the thick branch and are depicted in shades of pale mint green and light brown. The plant has many leaves in dark, apple

and light green, as well as pale yellow. Small shoots bearing fruit buds and unripen fruit grow from the main stalk. The artist has included a study of the fruit as it is peeled, revealing its interior and polychrome seed. There is also a study of the buds and flowers of the langsats tree.

'Duku' is the name given to the largest tropical fruit of the langsats tree. They are often ovoid or round in size and are borne in clusters akin to grapes. They are farmed and consumed in Southeast Asian countries such as Burma, Indonesia and Malaysia.





## 20. A Study of a Langsat Tree (*lansium parasiticum*)

Probably Penang, 19th century  
43.5cm high, 66cm wide

This painting depicts a branch of the langsat tree which bears clusters of spherical golden yellow and pale green fruits. It has large oval-shaped leaves in various shades of green: lime, pale mint, apple and dark, bottle green. Small, new green shoots with small fruit buds appear to be growing out of the thick, brown stalk. Dashes of blue paint have been applied to the bark perhaps to suggest its natural pigmentation. The artist has also illustrated the different layers of the fruit, both its exterior and interior, along with the seeds, buds and petals of the langsat's flowers.

The langsat tree originates from western Southeast Asia and bears an edible tropical fruit, which are covered with a thin, yellow hair giving the fruit a soft, fuzzy texture. Its flowers are the provincial flower for the Indonesian province of South Sumatra.







## 21. A Study of a Rambutan (*nephelium lappaceum*)

Probably Penang, 19th century  
47.2cm high, 64.5cm wide

A large, thick branch with oval-shaped leaves in shades of dark green, emerald, lime and light yellow fills the composition. The artist has painted small, new green shoots with white flowers and small dark green unripened fruit also growing from the branch. Five rambutan fruits weigh down the shoot to the lower right side of the painting. They are a dark orange, pale peach and green with elongated 'spines' which give the fruit a hairy look. The colours of the fruit illustrate the different stages of their ripening process. On the right hand side the

artist has depicted, starting from the left, the half empty husk or outer casing, in the middle is the complete fleshy fruit and then the seed or stone. The rambutan, identified in black ink at the bottom of the image, is one of the most typical of Southeast Asian fruits. It is a medium sized tree, which grows in Yunnan and the Philippines southwards through Indo-China, Malaysia and Indonesia. Many types are farmed for their sweet pulp (or 'sarcotesta'), while the fruits' walls, roots, leaves and bark may be used for medicinal purposes. The Janet Hutton Collection, Edinburgh, of botanical art features a study of a rambutan which is visibly similar to our painting (Noltie, p. 12, fig. 2). The composition and palette are akin to our example; the rambutans are also located in the bottom right hand side of the painting, hanging from a shoot.







## 22. A Study of a Pulasan (*nephelium ramboutan-ake*)

Probably Penang, 19th century  
49cm high, 62.5 cm wide

This painting depicts a branch with elongated, oval-shaped leaves that curl at the tips. The artist has illustrated a few broken leaves to the right of the composition. We can imagine that the painter may have been copying a still life of a Pulasan branch and it is captured here with new and old shoots, together with fruits in various stages of ripening. A shoot with yellow dried out flowers may also represent the fruit formation process, perhaps between a bud and a ripened fruit. On the bottom left hand side of the painting there are three large pulasan fruits which hang as though they are about to fall. They are a shade of burgundy with an orange tint and have small 'spines' which create a 'hairy' effect. The artist has painted a fruit cut in half, showing its fleshy, white interior and almond-shaped seeds at the bottom of the composition. This is a common feature of botanical paintings and drawings. The name of the plant is written below the branch.

The pulasan can be found in north-east India, through Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia to Borneo and the Philippines. It differs from the rambutan in that the 'spines' of the fruits are not fully developed. The seeds can be roasted and used to make a drink.

A painting by Chinese artists in the Raffles Collection, London depicts the same species of fruit (Noltie, p. 122).





## 23. A Lady Looks into the Mirror on a White Terrace

Provincial Mughal, India

Late 18th century

27cm high, 18.2cm wide

A lady rests against the backdrop of a white stone terrace and occupies the centre of the composition; she leans against a bed, decorated with gold panels, green and orange flowers and covered with magenta-coloured cushions. She is looking at herself in a tiny mirror inlaid in her thumb ring, perhaps in order to apply make-up or jewellery with her right hand. She, like her maidens, is dressed in a long transparent dress (*choli*) and veil (*dupatta*). Her attendants clasp many beautiful objects that often appear in Mughal painting, such as a teacup and saucer, a musical instrument and a *pandan*-shaped box. The pulled-up canopy on the right depicts a Mughal luxury textile, while the motifs seen on their textiles and costumes are also typical of the period. The entire scene is set within a palace, and, in the background, the artist has denoted the landscape with a dark expanse and some greenery.

One attendant stands at the back and holds a fan made of peacock feathers over her right shoulder. In *ragamala* paintings the peacock frequently allegorizes an absent lover. A raga (melody) is a style of Indian music, consisting of five, six or seven notes distributed over the octave scale in a particular arrangement. The paintings are illustrations of poems, which visually convey the mood of Raga music and each raga is usually personified by a hero and a heroine (*nayaka* and *nayika*), together with specific Hindu deities attached with the raga (Pratapaditya, p. 7). The act of a lady looking in a mirror and applying make-up or wearing jewelry is a popular scene in Mughal *ragamala* paintings, and in particular the scene evokes the story of the *Vilavala Ragini*.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston possesses an 18th century *Vilavala Ragini* painting, which is attributed to Bundi, Rajasthan (Accession Number 67.798). Although stylistically divergent to our example, it appears related in its iconography, and offers an example of a typical composition of this story: a lady sits amongst her maidens on a terrace and for the purpose of meeting her beloved she is putting on her jewels. However, unlike the Boston example, the elongated figures of the maidens, coupled with their fine facial features, small rosebud lips, and shading around their hair and jawlines, is illustrative of provincial Mughal painting of the late 18th century (Losty, p. 83). The painting typifies the proclivity 18th century artists seem to exhibit for illustrating either Hindu or Islamic sources.

Literature:

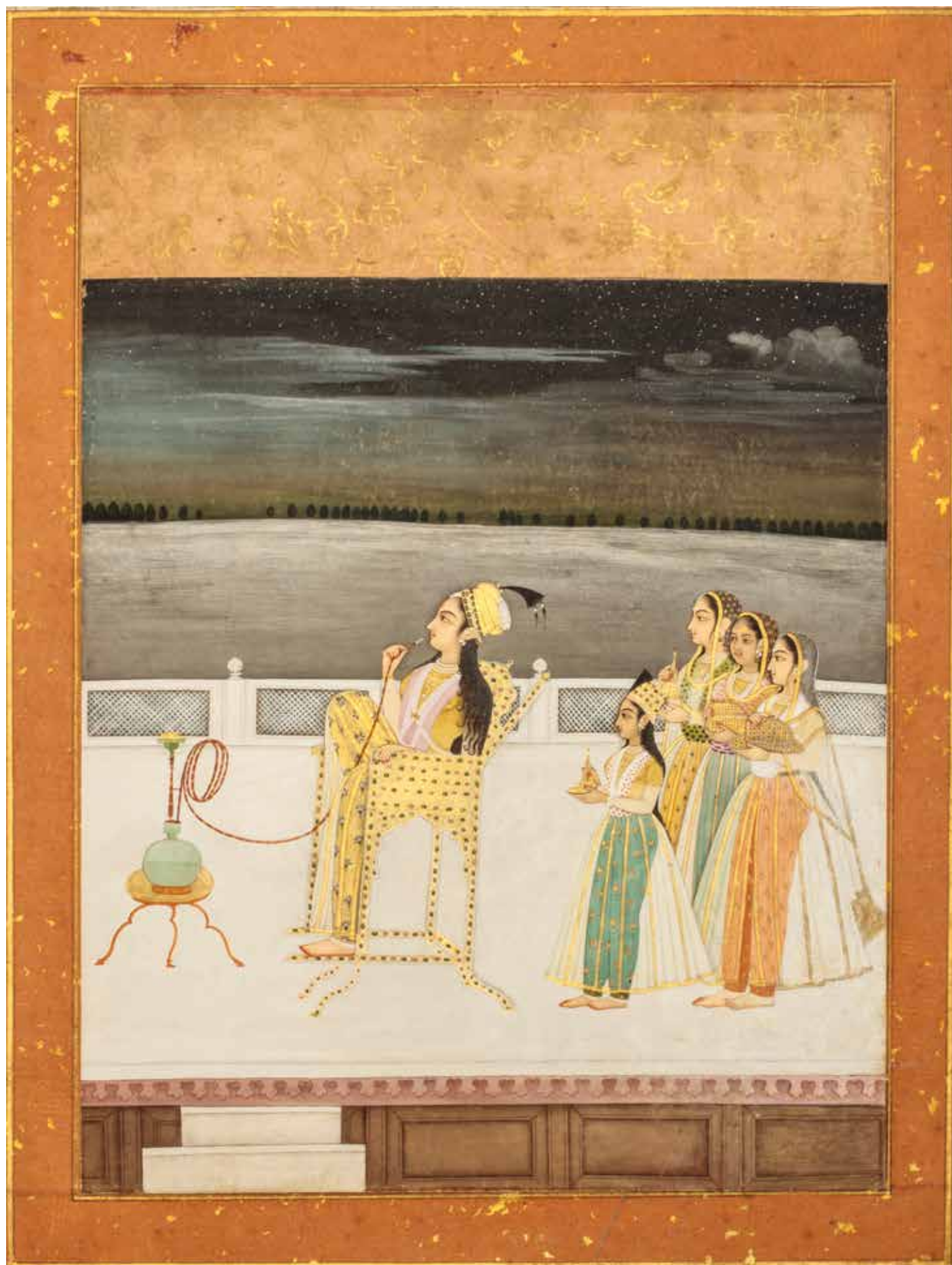
Pratapaditya, P. *Ragamala Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, Boston, The Meriden Gravure Co., 1969.

Losty, J.P. 'Painting at Murshidabad 1750-1820', in, N. Das and R. Llewellyn-Jones, (eds.), *Murshidabad: Forgotten Capital of Bengal*, Mumbai, Marg, 2013, pp. 82-105.

Provenance: Private European Collection, exhibited in Paris 1973







## 24. A Lady Smokes a *Huqqa* Amongst her Attendants

Provincial Mughal  
probably Murshidabad, India  
Late 18th century  
26cm high, 19.5cm wide

A lady reclines on a white terrace, sitting on a gold chair, inlaid with green and magenta precious stones, and holds the tip of the *huqqa* pipe in front of her lips. She has long black tresses and arched eyebrows. She wears gold *churidar pai-jama* trousers, decorated with blue flowers, a lilac top, pearls and an alluring gold hat with a black feather. Female attendants stand behind her, holding gold bejeweled perfume bottles and boxes. They are dressed in patterned turquoise, peach and golden *churidar pai-jama* trousers, semi-transparent saris and headdresses.

Although the scene's overall white palette seems to echo the imperial Mughal style, the artist's liberal use of gold blends beautifully with the ivory terrace. This style of painting is associated with the 18th century Murshidabad Court in north eastern India (Losty, p. 83). The landscape further suggests its connection to Murshidabad; a greyscale valley recedes towards a flat horizon lined with trees, creating the illusion of a three dimensional space. This seems intended to imitate reality, observable from the viewer's eye level, which is characteristic of European art since the Renaissance. It is possible that the artist had studied landscape paintings from Europe. In 1750 there was a discovery of an Italianate landscape study by an unknown artist, either from Bengal or Avadh (Losty, pp. 34-55, fig. 9).

The composition of a portrait on a terrace was popular in Murshidabad painting (Losty, p. 83). The San Diego Museum of Art, California, houses a painting where the ruler Nawab Mir Ja'far is shown smoking amongst his male attendants (Accession Number 1990.428). The horizon is flat with a seemingly shared artistic comprehension of depicting perspective. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, also has two paintings attributed to late 18th century, both depicting lavish men and women smoking on an ivory terrace (Accession Numbers D.1178-1903 and D.118-1903). During this time, women of the harem smoked in palaces and homes of the rich (Habighorst et al, p. 48). The penchant for smoking, along with the formal affinities to Murshidabad painting, suggests this work may be attributed to the late 18th century.

### Literature:

Habighorst, L.V. et al. *Love for Pleasure: Betel, Tobacco, Wine and Drugs in Indian Miniatures*, Germany, Ragaputra Editions, 2007.

Losty, J.P. 'Towards a New Naturalism: Portraiture in Murshidabad and Vadh 1750-1800', in B. Schmidt (ed.), *After the Great Mughals: Painting in Delhi and the Regional Courts in the 18th and 19th centuries*, Bombay, 2002, pp. 34-55.

Losty, J.P. 'Painting at Murshidabad 1750-1820', in, N. Das and R. Llewellyn-Jones, (eds.), *Murshidabad: Forgotten Capital of Bengal*, Mumbai, Marg, 2013, pp. 82-105.

### Provenance:

Private European Collection, exhibited in Paris 1973

(This painting may have been reduced in size.)





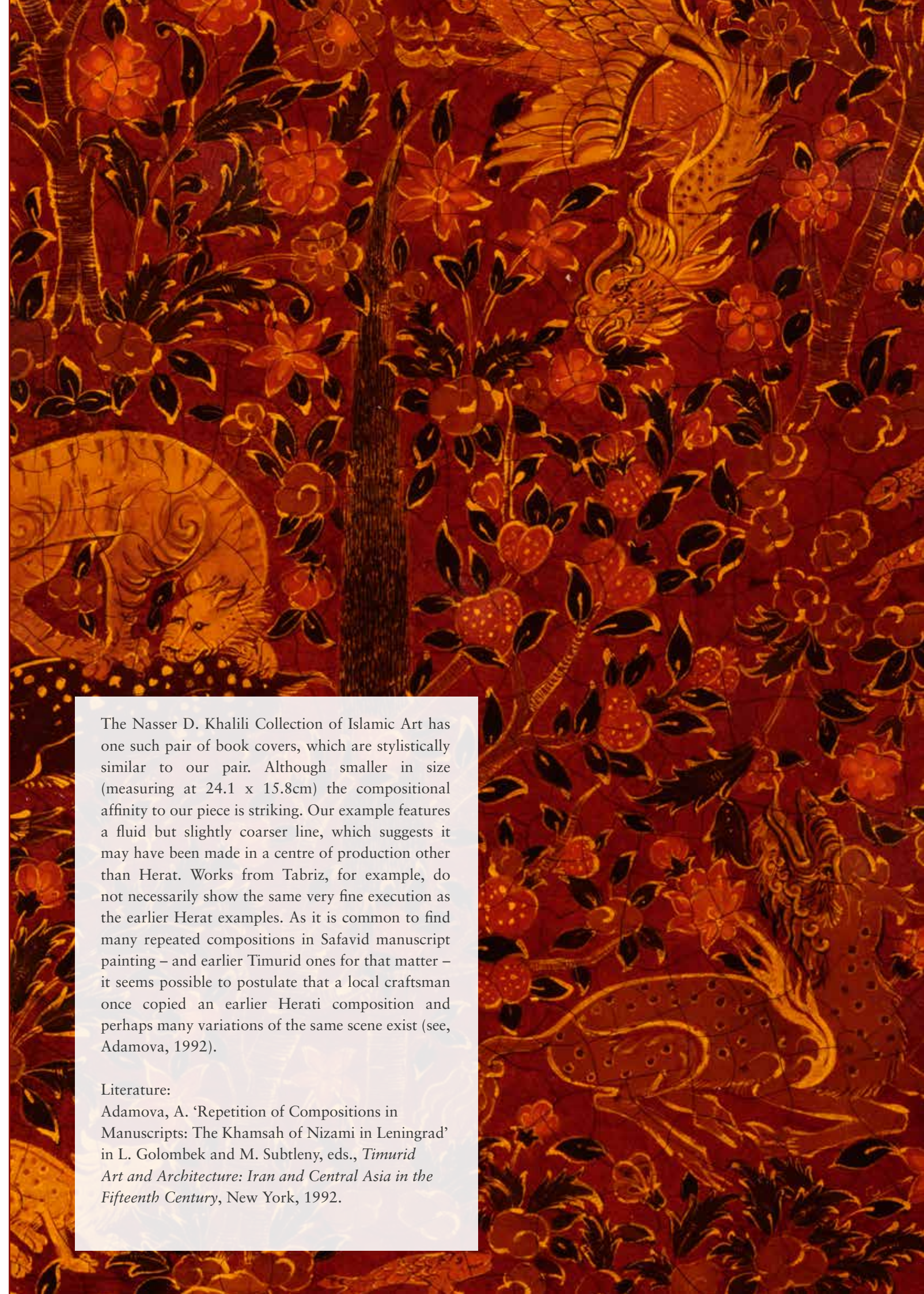


## 25. Pair of Lacquer Book Covers with *Qilin*

Probably Tabriz or Qazvin, Iran  
Late 16th century  
33cm high, 21cm wide

These book covers are decorated with delicate, towering foliage amongst a dense landscape. Fantastic beasts populate the scene, including the mythical bird known as the *Simurgh*, which first appeared in Ferdowsi's (d.1010) epic 10th century prose work the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings). Together with Persian poets, artists frequently depicted the *Simurgh* in their works, which consequently became a popular motif in Persian painting. Ducks with flame-like feathers fly amongst the Chinese-inspired clouds, fish cavort and swim in ponds and tigers attack deer, symbolising the hunt. Jackals and (what appears to be) a pair of *qilins* – a mythical hooved chimerical creature known in Chinese and other East Asian cultures – exchange angry glances with the *Simurgh*. All the pictorial elements are outlined in gold on a dark-maroon background, within slender frames that contain an entwined scrolling floral pattern. The book covers are an example *par excellence* of *horror vacui*, the

filling of the pictorial space to the maximum. The *doublures* are of reddish-brown leather and have lobed medallions of gilt leather filigree on blue, light blue, lime green and orange grounds. Manuscript production in the city of Herat in modern-day Afghanistan during the reign of the last Timurid ruler, Sultan Husayn Mirza (r. 1470–1506) became a principle centre and source of new developments in the arts of the book. One innovation that can be attributed to Sultan Husayn's court is the lacquer binding, in which the traditional leather book covering was replaced by a layer of painted and varnished decoration while the base material (paste board) remained the same. All the early examples of Herati lacquer bindings have a solid black background, while the decoration is mostly executed or outlined in gold. One reason for this penchant for black and gold was a parallel taste for the arts of China, where *qiangjin* wares had been in continuous and uninterrupted production since at least the Song dynasty (960–1279). The gold on black *qiangjin* – and the later polychrome *tianqi* – Chinese styles visibly inspired Persian lacquer paintings. Under the first two Safavid shahs, this new type of book cover became a standard variant of Persian bookbinding.



The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art has one such pair of book covers, which are stylistically similar to our pair. Although smaller in size (measuring at 24.1 x 15.8cm) the compositional affinity to our piece is striking. Our example features a fluid but slightly coarser line, which suggests it may have been made in a centre of production other than Herat. Works from Tabriz, for example, do not necessarily show the same very fine execution as the earlier Herat examples. As it is common to find many repeated compositions in Safavid manuscript painting – and earlier Timurid ones for that matter – it seems possible to postulate that a local craftsman once copied an earlier Herati composition and perhaps many variations of the same scene exist (see, Adamova, 1992).

### Literature:

Adamova, A. 'Repetition of Compositions in Manuscripts: The Khamsah of Nizami in Leningrad' in L. Golombek and M. Subtleny, eds., *Timurid Art and Architecture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, New York, 1992.





## 26. Lacquer Book Cover with Flowers

India

17th or 18th century

18cm high, 29.5cm wide

This lacquer book cover depicts various species of flower in efflorescence. They grow from elegant stems into purple, burgundy and pink-red flora, while many leaves, depicted in shades of dark and light green, surround the blooms. They are all outlined in gold against an ochre background. A slender border frames the scene and features a florid, gold scrolling pattern upon a black ground. Following the invention of bookbinders' lacquer in 15th century Persia, knowledge and expertise of this craft was passed to artists hailing from other parts of the Islamic world, and especially (what is now) Turkey and India. We know that lacquer was introduced to the Mughal court in India in the 16th century, especially during the reign of the Emperor Akbar (1555-1605). He commissioned manuscripts of Persian poets, such as the *Khamseh* (Quintet) of Nizami (d. 1209), which were bound together with painted and lacquered covers (Robinson and Stanley, p. 234). Although it is often difficult to distinguish Indian lacquer of the 17th century from that produced in Iran, due to the constant movement of artists between these

two countries, it appears that this piece may be of an Indian origin.

The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art has a pair of Mughal book covers that are similar to ours in both form and decoration (Accession Number LAQ291). The pair has been dated to the 18th century and depicts a parrot perched on a stump amongst flowers, butterflies and a small bird. Like our cover, they are all outlined in gold against an ochre background, which is also streaked with gold. Although devoid of animals and insects, the shape and style of the flowers in our lacquer book cover are striking in their resemblance to the Khalili example. Similarly, unlike many Iranian or Ottoman lacquer wares, in both instances the different pictorial elements are arranged relatively sparsely. This seems characteristic of Mughal lacquer painting and its compositions. Another pair of book covers in the Khalili Collection, attributed to 17th century India or Iran, features a gold scrolling flower motif on a black ground, surrounding the painting (Accession Number LAQ279). It is visibly related to the border that frames our cover, which suggests that Mughal artists most likely worked on this piece in the 17th or 18th century.

Literature:

Robinson B.W. and Stanley T. *Lacquer of the Islamic Lands*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 234





## A Group of Four Topographical Watercolours of Iran by Charles Texier (d. 1870)

Charles Texier (d.1870) was a French polymath and explorer in the age of colonial expeditions. A trained architect, archeologist and painter who simultaneously held titles such as 'Inspector of the Fine Art Establishments in France' and 'Commissioner of Public Works in Algeria', he also became an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of British Architects (RIBA), which holds many of his original drawings. In the 1830s the French government ordered Texier to travel to the Anatolian peninsula and to document his findings. This resulted in an oversize six-volume work titled *Description d'Asie Mineure 1839 -1848*, complete with lithographs and wood engravings of architecture, ruins, religious monuments and other local scenes. It was during this trip that Texier discovered the famed ruins of the an-

cient Hittite capital of Hattusa and carved his initials into the Lycian temple tombs, which are still visible in Fethiye, present-day Turkey. Later, he also travelled to the Middle East and in particular Iran, where he recorded his journeys with elegant, meticulous prose. This resulted in the publication of his oversize two volume work *L'Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie* in the mid-19th century. As a keen artist, he also painted watercolour views of cities, cathedrals, mosques and palaces, which were copied and reproduced in engravings for this important work. The following four, rare watercolours presented in this catalogue are Texier's original paintings. His immaculately detailed descriptions – along with quick sketches and sensitively rendered watercolours – are some of the only evidence of sites that have since been destroyed. The engravings of the 5th century Armenian church of Dighour, for example, depict the now earthquake damaged building (in present-day Tekor, Turkey) resplendent amongst the arid, mountainous landscape.

Provenance: Private European Collection







## 27. View of Izadkhast Castle

19th century

18cm high, 27cm wide

Two figures, dressed in caftans and wearing turbans, occupy the foreground of this delicate, sepia tone watercolour scene. They are pictured on a river bed. One man sits on the ground and gazes up at the other man who appears to be holding an axe-shaped weapon. An ancient castle complex stands behind them and is surrounded by a defensive wall. A bridge on the left leads to the complex, which is built on bedrock. Texier's delicate shading outlines the reflection of the riverbed plants and small trees on the water and provides the illusion of its gentle currents.

Texier's travels took him from Tabriz in northern Iran, south through Soltanieh, Hamedan and Kangavar, further south to Isfahan and finally to the province of Fars near Shiraz. Texier visited the 6th century BCE Tomb of Cyrus, approximately 1km south west of the palaces of Pasargadae, and

a few lesser known architectural monuments before he reached the famed Achaemenid (c. 550-330 BCE) ruins of Persepolis. This watercolour depicts the town that Texier mislabeled as Yezdi-Kaust, known today as Izadkhast, and located between Isfahan and Shiraz. The Complex of Izadkhast is today a UNESCO world heritage site and contains the Castle of Izadkhast, depicted in the painting, along with a Safavid period caravanserai and bridge. We can infer from his travel documents that Texier visited this area before he reached Persepolis. In Texier's 1842 book, *L'Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie*, an engraver, known as Lemaitre, provided the illustrations that were based on Texier's watercolours. Lemaitre's illustration to Texier's book, entitled, *Yezdi Kaust, vue de la ville*, is very similar to our painting (Texier, pl. 88). One difference, however, is that Lemaitre recorded the scene from further away, thus broadening the horizon of the image. The two men in the foreground are also both standing. Despite these nuances this image suggests that Lemaitre used the watercolour as a prototype for his illustrations.

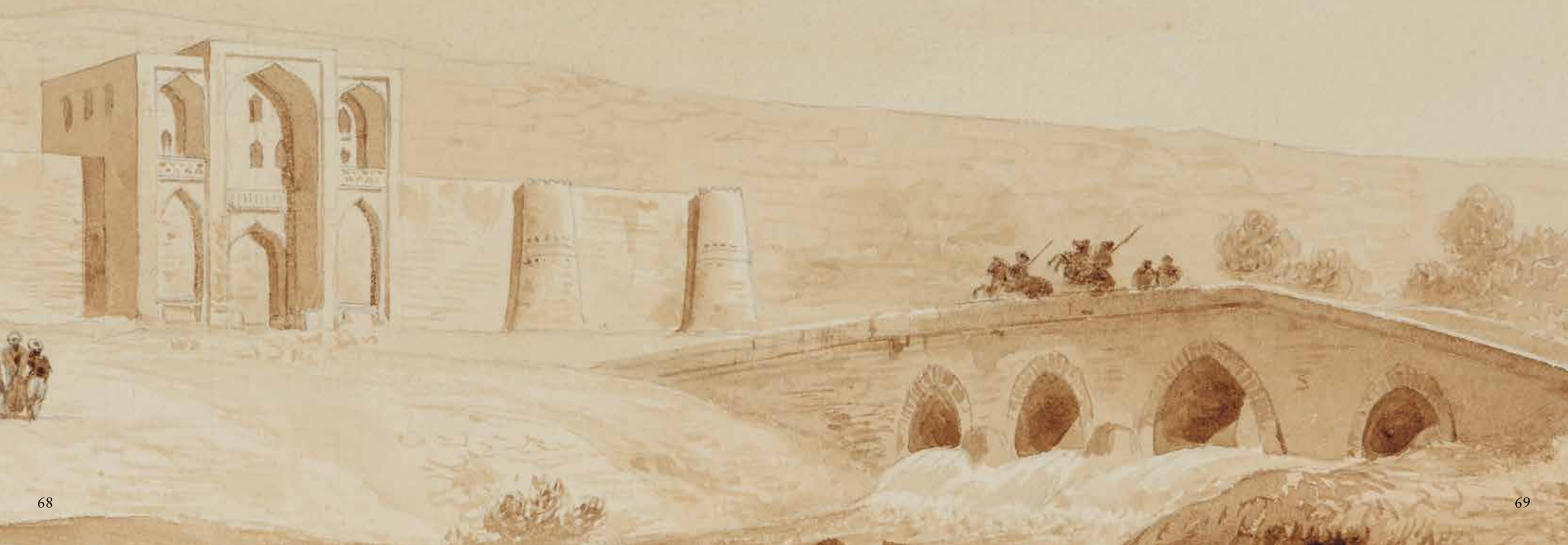


## 28. Caravanserai at Izadkhast

19th century

18cm high, 27cm wide

A large Safavid period (c.1501–1736) bridge on the right supports a group of men on horseback. They are galloping towards the entrance of a large building, known as caravanserai, which were roadside inns where travelers rested and recuperated. The building has circular towers. There are only a few caravanserais with circular buttresses in Iran, the most famous is the Zein-o-Din in Yazd, which was built during the reign of Shah Abbas I. Texier has painted two groups of men in conversation across the valley in front of the building. Lemaitre's corresponding engraving, entitled '*keravan-serai*', depicts the same building and bridge, along with the groups of men (Texier, pl. 89).







## 29. General View of Tabriz

19th century

17cm high, 27cm wide

Texier has painted a delicate watercolour scene, in a sepia palette, of the city of Tabriz, located in north eastern Iran. The large walled city has dome-shaped roofs and mosque minarets that recede towards the mountains faintly lining the horizon. On the right, two men appear to be engaged in conversation; one rests on a rock and the other stands, supporting himself on his staff. On the left of the painting, and opposite the convivial men, there is

a comparatively morose vignette of a figure that kneels, solemnly, in front of a grave amongst other headstones. The graves are clearly outside the city and thus denote a separate, distinct space. In the distance men on horseback gallop on the plains. Lemaitre's engraving that illustrated Texier's book, entitled *Vue générale de Tabriz*, would be identical to our painting if it were not for the absence of the grieving person (Texier, pl. 41). Furthermore, there is only one male rider galloping across the engraving and a group of men and their camels replace the many riders in Texier's original. This appears to be tantamount to the engraver's own artistic license.





### 30. Persepolis

19th century

18cm high, 28cm wide

Three men in Qajar clothing are pictured amongst magnificent ruins of columns and column bases in a desert, against a back drop of tall, sheer mountains. The remains of the city or temple would be unidentifiable if it were not for the beautifully rendered bull sculptures, which would have been originally placed on top of the columns, in the foreground. They alert us to this scene being Texier's impression of the ancient city of Persepolis. Following the French government's decision to send Texier on his travels – and to record his discoveries – it is unsurprising that a large section of his work is dedicated to the ruins of Persepolis. Located at the foot of Kuh-e Rahmat (Mountain of Mercy) in south-western Iran, Persepolis is a world-famous archaeological site. It is considered the gem of Achaemenid (c. 550-330 BCE) architecture, urban planning, construction techniques and art. The painting features the same composition as the engraving that accompanies Texier's book denoting his visit to this ancient site (Texier, pl. 136).

Literature:

C. Texier, *L'Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie*, Paris, 1842, Vol 1-2.





31. A View of Serampore  
from the Park at Barrackpore  
by James Baillie Fraser  
(Scottish 1783-1856)

India, circa 1818-1819  
Oil on canvas  
44cm high, 65cm wide

"I look more and with far different eyes at all that  
passes before me... each tree and shrub, every  
glimpse of landscape gives me a sensation."  
James Baillie Fraser

This painting invites us to step into the dappled shade  
of Barrackpore Park, west Bengal, as our attention is  
diverted toward the riverbank. Under the canopy and  
cascading roots of a *pipal* tree a *chobdar* (a stick holder)  
greets a *faqeer* (an ascetic), while a group of men pull a  
boat ashore. Beyond this, an assortment of other vessels  
drifts along the waters of the Hooghly River. The Dutch  
settlement of Serampore lines the far bank with classical  
architecture befitting the cosmopolitan town.  
James Fraser travelled to India 1813 before he explored  
the Himalayan hill states. Returning to Calcutta, In-  
dia in June 1816, his passion for art flourished under

the guidance of the English landscape painter William  
Havell (1782-1857) and celebrated artist George Chin-  
nery (1774-1852). Fraser's diaries from 1818/1819  
reveal that he received lessons from Chinnery almost  
every day. It is highly likely that Fraser completed our  
work at this time and that it provided inspiration for his  
acclaimed series of 24 watercolours entitled 'Views of  
Calcutta and its Environs'. The painting was then most  
likely shipped to the artist's father in England on 26th  
March 1820, as Fraser noted on the package label: 'The  
small case contains several oil pictures, all painted by  
myself.'

"The Views of Calcutta" watercolour series was later re-  
produced as aquatints in England between 1824-1826.  
Our oil painting corresponds with plate 21 from this set,  
perhaps providing inspiration for these later works (see  
plate 21 from J. Baillie Fraser, London, 1826).  
While Fraser's series has been praised for containing  
'some of the most beautiful depictions of Calcutta ever  
made', it is unusual to find an early source of inspiration  
for the images. However, this painting conveys Fraser's  
typical veneration for landscapes, while its execution in  
oil affords the painting an intriguing quality.

Literature:

James Baillie Fraser, 'Views of Calcutta and its Envi-  
rons', London, dated 1826, British Library, Shelfmark:  
X644(21).







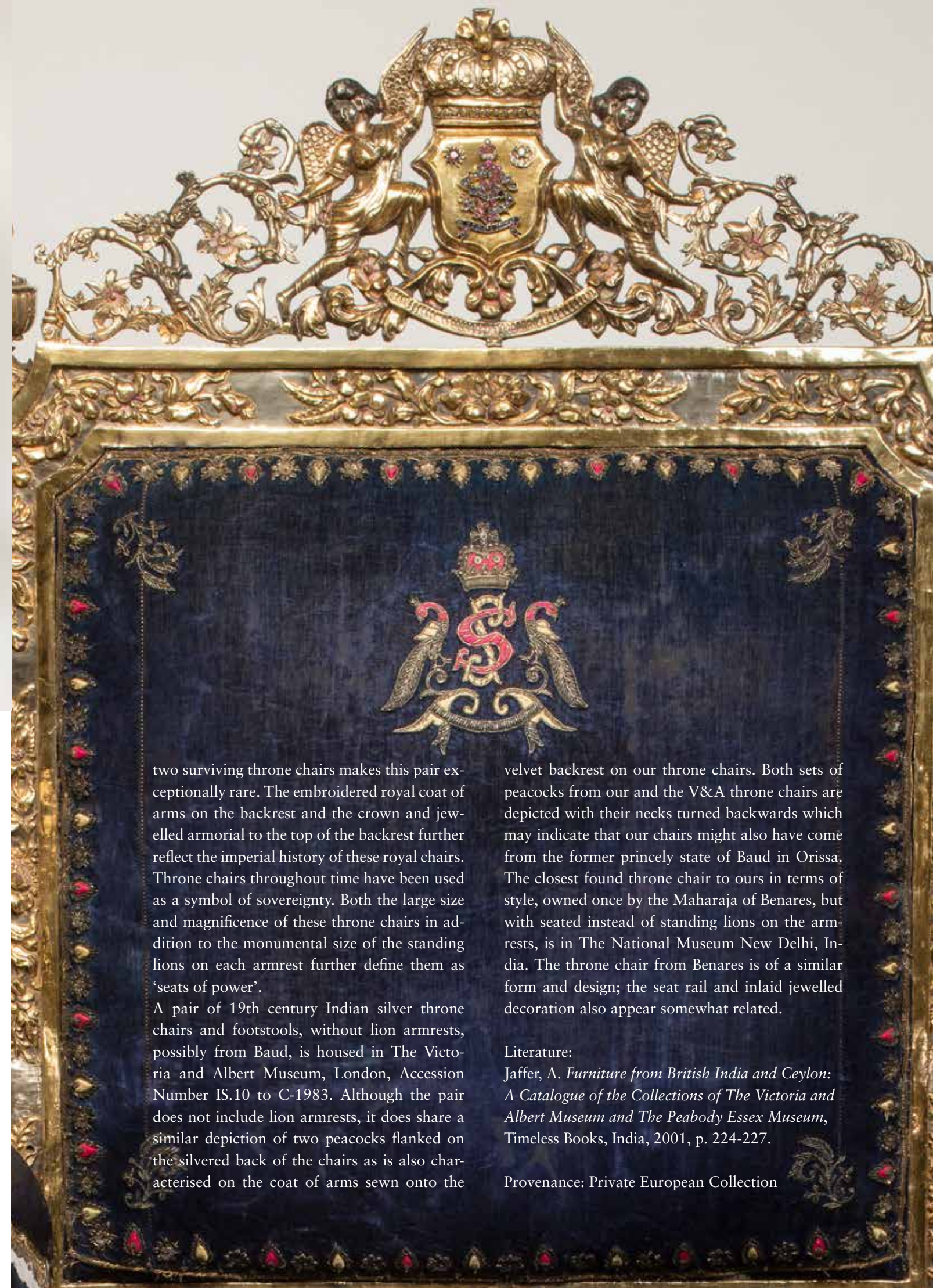
## 32. Pair of Magnificent Royal Throne Chairs

Probably Baud or Benares, India  
Second half of the 19th century  
149cm high

The pair of imperial throne armchairs is made of highly detailed silver repousse work with floral and foliate designs. Each of the armrests is surmounted with large and impressive silver lions, which function as actual arms of the chair. The seat rail has a central lion mask amongst ornate flowers and foliage and the front cabriole legs terminating with lion paw feet. The backrest is ornately decorated with a coat of arms ornamented with a crown, blazon and two stylised *apsaras* (angels) to either side. The backrest also has delicately inlaid precious and semi-precious jewels including bright rubies, sapphires and coloured glass. The padded velvet back has a sewn central coat of arms with the letters 'SS' with an embroidered red and gold crown surmounted

by a cross above the letters and flanked by two red and gold peacocks. The seats and backrests are covered entirely with original blue velvet upholstery. The front of the velvet seat cushion is heavily embroidered with couched metal thread and sequins with remnants of the original embroidered colours including red, yellow, blue and gold. The back of the chair is also covered in blue velvet with a small embroidered floral emblem of gilt metal thread purl work with coloured floral heads sprouting gracefully from a vase.

Indian furniture makers were highly influenced by British and European-style furniture during the 19th century. As a result, Maharajas and other royal figures in India began to use elevated European-style throne chairs, often based on European designs, such as cabriole legs and Rococo style. Furthermore, furniture made in India was also in the height of demand as luxury goods in Europe. The Maharaja of Travancore even commissioned a throne chair to be presented to Queen Victoria during the Great Exhibition in 1851. Indian throne chairs from this period and of this grandeur are rare and thus the presence of not one but



two surviving throne chairs makes this pair exceptionally rare. The embroidered royal coat of arms on the backrest and the crown and jewelled armorial to the top of the backrest further reflect the imperial history of these royal chairs. Throne chairs throughout time have been used as a symbol of sovereignty. Both the large size and magnificence of these throne chairs in addition to the monumental size of the standing lions on each armrest further define them as 'seats of power'.

A pair of 19th century Indian silver throne chairs and footstools, without lion armrests, possibly from Baud, is housed in The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number IS.10 to C-1983. Although the pair does not include lion armrests, it does share a similar depiction of two peacocks flanked on the silvered back of the chairs as is also characterised on the coat of arms sewn onto the

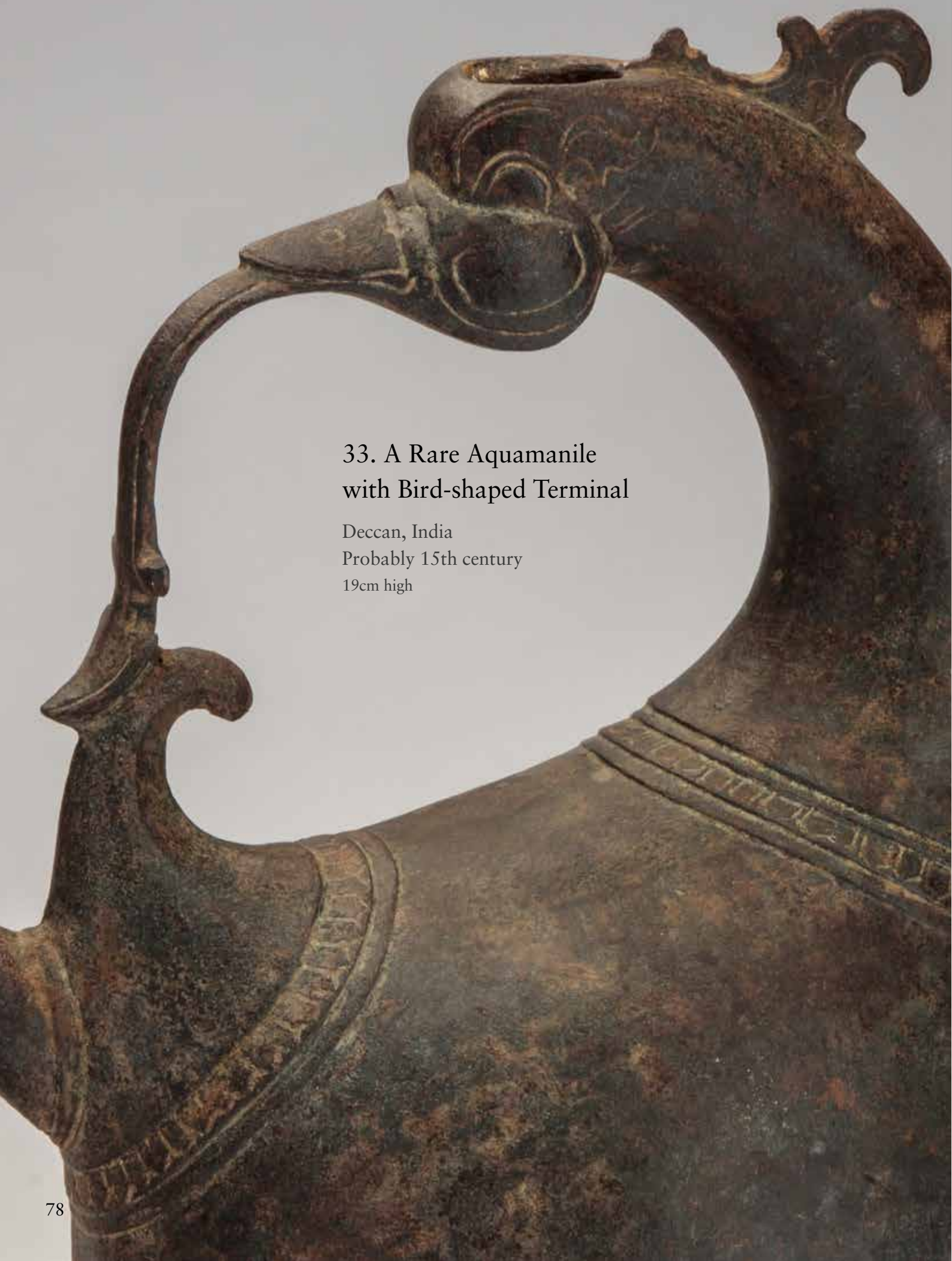
velvet backrest on our throne chairs. Both sets of peacocks from our and the V&A throne chairs are depicted with their necks turned backwards which may indicate that our chairs might also have come from the former princely state of Baud in Orissa. The closest found throne chair to ours in terms of style, owned once by the Maharaja of Benares, but with seated instead of standing lions on the armrests, is in The National Museum New Delhi, India. The throne chair from Benares is of a similar form and design; the seat rail and inlaid jewelled decoration also appear somewhat related.

### Literature:

Jaffer, A. *Furniture from British India and Ceylon: A Catalogue of the Collections of The Victoria and Albert Museum and The Peabody Essex Museum*, Timeless Books, India, 2001, p. 224-227.

Provenance: Private European Collection





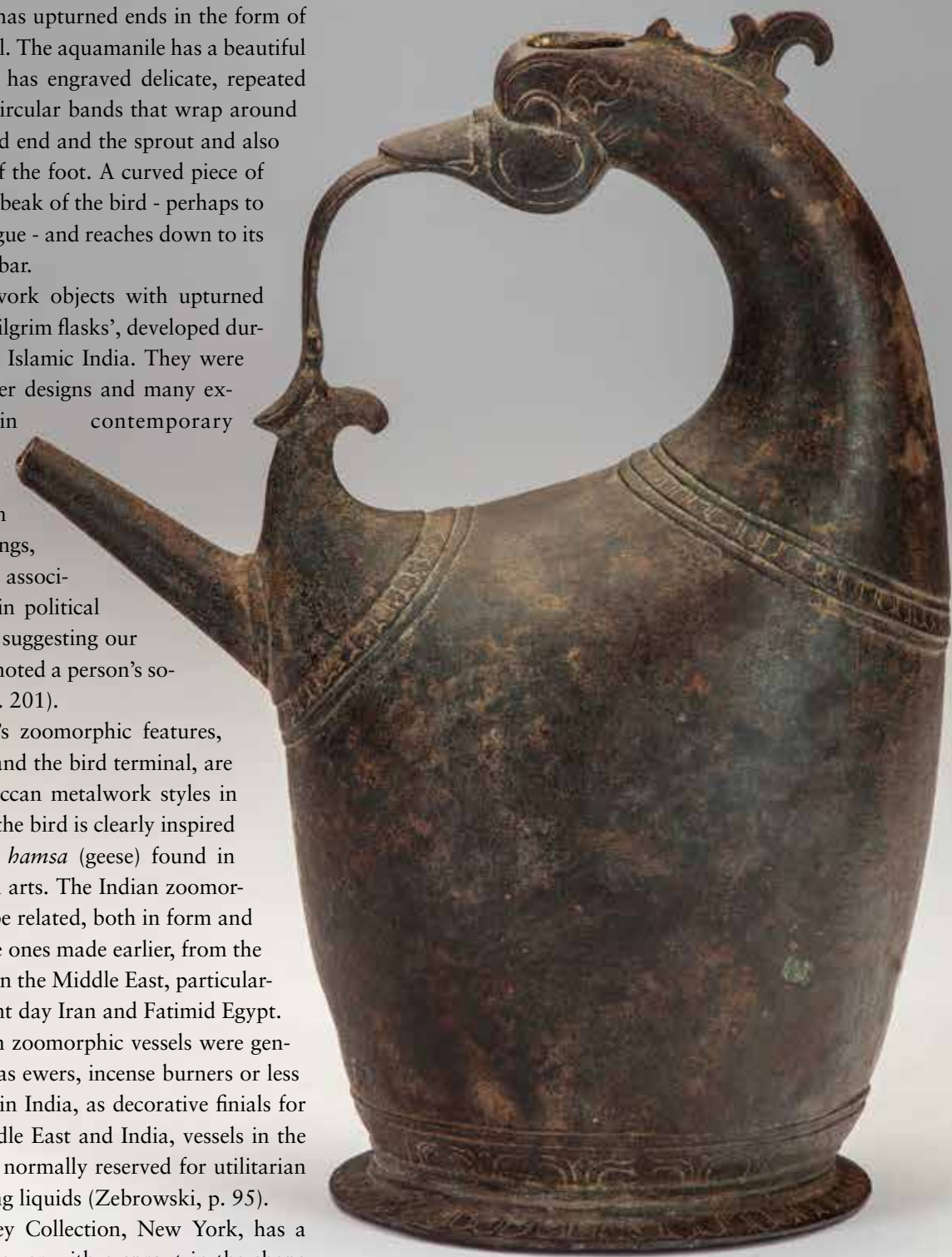
### 33. A Rare Aquamanile with Bird-shaped Terminal

Deccan, India  
Probably 15th century  
19cm high

The cast metal piece rests on a short foot and has a prominent curving shape. It has upturned ends in the form of a duck-like head and tail. The aquamanile has a beautiful dark patina. The artist has engraved delicate, repeated tendril patterns inside circular bands that wrap around the neck of the upturned end and the sprout and also along the outside rim of the foot. A curved piece of metal is attached to the beak of the bird - perhaps to playfully convey its tongue - and reaches down to its tail, forming the handlebar.

A penchant for metalwork objects with upturned ends, often known as 'pilgrim flasks', developed during the 16th century in Islamic India. They were based on existing leather designs and many examples are depicted in contemporary Mughal manuscript paintings (Zebrowski, p. 201, cat. 304). In many of these paintings, the pilgrim flasks are associated with figures high in political or spiritual attainment, suggesting our vessel may have also denoted a person's social rank (Zebrowski, p. 201).

Furthermore, the ewer's zoomorphic features, such as the curved tail and the bird terminal, are a common motif in Deccan metalwork styles in particular. The head of the bird is clearly inspired in its depiction by the *hamsa* (geese) found in various media in Indian arts. The Indian zoomorphic objects appear to be related, both in form and function, to comparable ones made earlier, from the 11th century onwards, in the Middle East, particularly in Khorasan in present day Iran and Fatimid Egypt. Both Islamic and Indian zoomorphic vessels were generally made to be used as ewers, incense burners or less frequently, particularly in India, as decorative finials for oil lamps. In both Middle East and India, vessels in the shapes of animals were normally reserved for utilitarian purposes such as pouring liquids (Zebrowski, p. 95). The Terrence McInerney Collection, New York, has a footed crescent-shaped ewer with a sprout in the shape of an elephant and bird-shaped terminals (Najat Haidar and Sardar, p. 37, cat. 3). The distinctive curved shape of the body is strikingly similar to ours, whilst both objects have a dark grey patina in common. Stylistic similarities can be drawn between the birds - which both boast flame-like combs on their heads - and the scrolling tendril patterns around the upturned ends and feet of the ewers. Thus, this aquamanile may also be an unusual example from the middle of the Bahmani period (1347 - 1527).



#### Literature:

Najat Haidar and M. Sardar, N. *Sultans of Deccan India 1500 - 1700: Opulence and Fantasy*, London, Yale University Press, 2015.  
Zebrowski, M. *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, Alexandria Press, 1997.





### 34. Ivory Portrait of a Sri Lankan Nobleman

Sri Lanka  
18th or 19th century  
19cm high, 6.5cm wide

This ivory figurine dates to the latter part of the Kandyan period (c.1480 – 1815) and depicts a standing Sri Lankan nobleman or dignitary on a small stand. The artist has engraved vertical lines into the figurine's wide, double-layered collar that covers his shoulders, and also on his trousers and shirt cuffs. Wavy, horizontal lines have also been carved into his sleeves. He wears a long tunic (*bo-hettya*) which has five hanging pendants; four rest upon the front and back of his thighs while a larger one hangs upon his back underneath the layers of his collar. The figurine is adorned with three long necklaces with flower shaped pendants and he wears a flower shaped ring on each hand. He has a rotund, rather elaborate hat on his head and his hair is carefully parted and tied in a knot. He wears a benevolent expression, with closed eyes and boasts a magnificent handlebar moustache. His facial expression denotes a devout aspect. The figurine is exquisitely finished on the back, where the careful detailing and depth in carving continues. The relatively small size of the figure emphasizes the artist's masterful skill in carving. Statuettes of kings, other royalty and the nobility – as well as ordinary men and women – are common in ivory dating from this period and were often kept for personal, decorative use (Coomaraswamy, p. 184). They are particularly useful as records of costume of the royalty and nobility.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has one such ivory sculpture, which dates to early 19th century Sri Lanka (Accession Number 2010.142). It is considered to be a portrait of the last Kanyan king, Sri Vikrama Raja Sinha (r. 1798-1815). Like our piece, the king is portrayed wearing a similar *bo-hettya* or tunic, a shirt (*kamisiya*), and a cape (*mante*) over which hangs a floral pendant. He is also depicted barefooted. Such portraits are unusual and may have been produced as presentation gifts for visiting diplomats. Furthermore, we may infer that the model for our piece might have been a member of the royal family, perhaps a prince or king, based on its stylistic similarities to an ivory sculpture of a king, now housed in the Colombo Museum, Sri Lanka (Coomaraswamy, fig. 1). Dating also to the 19th century, this work is of a similar height, the figure wears an almost identical *bo-hettya* with a wide collar and long necklaces. The posture and pose of the king would be the same as ours if it were not for his clenched fist; from which a spear or staff would have once been placed.

Literature:  
Coomaraswamy, A.K. *Medieval Sinhalese Art*, Pantheon Books, 1956.





### 35. Tortoiseshell and Mother-of-pearl Box

Probably Lima, Peru

18th century

16cm high, 23cm wide, 11.5cm deep

The wooden coffer-shaped box decorated on the exterior with veneered tortoiseshell with inlaid mother-of-pearl geometric-shaped flower heads and pendants. The border features repeated triangles in mother-of-pearl, which evokes a tortoiseshell, undulating 'zig zag' pattern. The border frames the design of each four panels and the domed cover. The box has two gilt-bronze handles on each side, a keyhole and rests on four gilt-bronze circular bun feet.

From as early as the 16th century, colonial furniture amalgamated East Asian-style decoration with European forms and motifs, in order to meet the demands of a new, burgeoning market for luxury wares. This type of furniture was highly valued and was contemporary with emerging tastes for East Asian or 'chinoiserie' style furniture and decoration. The artists in South America combined traditions of *Mudejar* inlaid and marquetry work with Asian inspired motifs, in order to create this new style of mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell furniture (Carr, p. 62). A magnificent Peruvian cabinet (*contador*) attributed to mid-18th century Lima and made of wood, mother-of-pearl, tortoiseshell, ivory and silver can be found in the private collection of Richard and



Roberta Huber, USA (Stratton-Pruitt, p.191, fig. 116). It shares the same family of high quality decoration and suggests artists may have been inspired by Korean inlaid mother-of-pearl wares from the Choson Dynasty (1392 – 1910). The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, USA, also has an 18th century Peruvian cabinet (*contador*) of a similar family to the Huber Collection example (Accession Number M.2013.130.1). The LACMA cabinet has an image of Saint John the Baptist, which alerts us to the multiple functions – and popularity – of this style of furniture. The presence of Saint John suggests this work's public and religious function, which was probably placed in a religious building rather than for the private use of an elite Latin American patron. A desk resting on *bufete* in the Museo Pedro de Osma, Lima, Peru, is made of wood, inlaid with tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl and dated to the 18th century. This lavishly decorated *bufete* – with abundance of mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell – demonstrate the large sums of money spent on luxury wares made both locally and globally (Rishel and Stratton-Pruitt, p. 491, fig. VII-IO).

Similarly, striking parallels can be drawn between our piece and a small 18th century coffer formerly in the Don Luis Garcia Lawson Collection, Argentina (Campos Carlés de Peña, p. 285). This coffer is the closest example in terms form and decoration to ours.

#### Literature:

- Campos Carlés de Peña, M. *A Surviving Legacy in Spanish America: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Furniture from the Viceroyalty of Peru*, Ediciones El Viso, Spain, 2013.
- Carr, D. *Made in Americas: The New World Discovers Asia*, MFA Publications, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2015.
- Rishel J. J and S. Stratton-Pruitt. *The Arts in Latin America 1492- 1820*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 2006.
- Stratton-Pruitt, S. L. (ed.), *Journeys to New Worlds: Spanish and Portuguese Colonial Art in the Roberta and Richard Huber Collection*, 2013.





### 36. Colonial Side Table

Viceroyalty of Peru

Second half of the 18th century

86cm high, 117cm wide, 73.5cm deep

This exceptional and rare hardwood side table with scalloped top is fashioned above a frieze drawer with carved figures of winged cherubs amongst flowers and scrolling foliage, lion heads and eagles. The carving has a strong line and an illusion of movement has been created by the dense scrolling motifs, the cherubs being an integral part of the composition. All four knees of the table are festooned with winged cherubs on bird-like bodies on cabriole legs with claw feet; the cherubs resting below the eagles perched on large tropical-looking leaves have a pensive expression and carved sunflower-like motifs with ribbon bows shown on the front of their chests.

This console table appears to have been influenced by the *Mestizo* Baroque artistic carving seen on furniture made under the Viceroyalty of Peru and popular from the late 17th until the late 18th century (de Peña, pp. 38, 186-189). An 18th century Andean Baroque coffer by the Cusco School in the Brazzini Halls of the Basilica Cathedral *Museo de Arte Religioso*, Peru, has similar floral carving and the row of undulating scrolling pattern with spherical indented centres is also quite similar to the band of carved decoration with spherical indents on our side table. A late 18th century carved and polychrome wooden shelf, attributed to Peru and published in *El Mueble Colonial Sudamericano*, has a carved figure of an angel, depicted without wings which shares similar facial features with our cherubs together with leaner physiques than usually seen on angels or cherubs on European works of art/furniture (see fig. 355).



The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, USA, has an oil on canvas painting titled *Doña Mariana Belsunse y Salazar* (Accession Number 1992.212), Lima, circa 1780, either by the artist José Joaquín Bermejo (Peruvian, active circa 1760-1792) or Pedro José Díaz, (Peruvian, active 1770-1810). In this full-length portraiture, the lady, Doña Mariana, is finely clothed and stands next to several luxurious items (a vase with flowers, a book, jewellery, a clock, a gold box, etc.) resting on top of a side table. The side table represented in the painting appears quite similar in its form and decoration to our side table. This portrait was painted in the mid to late 18th century and thus also fits appropriately with the dating of our side table, to the second half of the 18th century.

#### Literature:

Campos Carlés de Peña, M. *A Surviving Legacy in Spanish America: Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Furniture from the Viceroyalty of Peru*, Ediciones El Viso, Spain, 2013.

Taullard, A. *El Mueble Colonial Sudamericano*, Ediciones Peuser S.A., Buenos Aires, 1944.

Provenance: Private European Collection





### 37. *Kilga*

Fatimid period, Egypt

10th -12th century

35cm high, 48cm wide, 33cm deep

Carved from a single block of white marble with grey veins, the jar-stand consists of a hollow interior and rests upon hoof-shaped feet. A tongue-shaped basin juts from the front of the stand. The carved decoration features scallop shaped incisions on each foot, while a seated figure wearing a headdress and holding a drinking vessel is depicted on both the left and right panel. These panels also feature an incised border with pendant shaped medallions in each corner.

The marble jar-stand, locally referred to as a *kilga*, functioned as a water purifier, and was frequently used during the Fa-

timid period (909-1171). The stands were designed to support a large terracotta pot placed above which contained the unpurified water. As terracotta has a porous body, the water would drip down from the base of the pot which acted as a natural water filtration system (Knauer, p. 69). The smoothly worn interior of the jar-stand also indicates that water once filled the basin. The clean water would then be collected directly from the *kilga*.

A similar *kilga* is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, (Accession Number 20.176). It also depicts a seated figure holding a cup in addition to similar fluted decoration on the feet.

Literature:

Knauer, E. R. 'Marble Jar-Stands from Egypt', in, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal*, No.14, 1980, pp. 67-101.





# A M I R M O H T A S H E M I

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