

Court Paintings  
from Persia and India  
1500–1900

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#### Foreword

It is with great pleasure that we present a group of Persian and Indian paintings. Although we are widely known for our expertise in Indian paintings we have over the years handled outstanding Persian folios. This latest selection of Persian paintings contains pages from the 16th and 17th centuries and includes several important manuscript pages as well as drawings to which Persian taste was increasingly turning at this time. There are pages from royal manuscripts believed to have been created for Shah Isma'il II (cat. 3) and Shah 'Abbas I (cat. 5), as well as pages from two important *Shahnama* manuscripts from Shiraz (cats 1 & 2). There are also several drawings including a fine early drawing of figures in a landscape c. 1575 (cat. 9) and an exquisite drawing of a young simurgh (cat. 7). This Persian taste for individual drawings in the early 17th century was certainly felt also in India and especially in Golconda. Pride of place among the Indian rarities must go to a previously unknown painting from Golconda (cat. 11) that has been in a private German collection since the early 20th century. Datable to 1630–40, rather than simply being under the influence of the latest Persian style from Isfahan, the artist attempts to imitate the style of Riza-yi 'Abbasi himself.

Also of great rarity is an exquisite Mughal painting from the 1640s of a prince making ardent advances to a lady (cat. 17), which may actually represent the young Aurangzeb himself. Other Mughal miniatures include a beautiful depiction of a Christian saint attributed to Basawan (cat. 12) and a fine tinted drawing of Akbar on an elephant teasing his attendant soldiers (cat. 14). Among the Rajput miniatures is a fine drawing of Maharaja Bakhat Singh attributed to Dalchand c. 1725 (cat. 19), an important portrait from Guler c. 1765–70 of Raja Kirat Prakash (cat. 31) and an early Mankot drawing of a yogi (cat. 28). Among the later material, there is an exquisite drawing of a rock thrush from Lady Impey's collection attributed to Shaikh Zain al-Din (cat. 37).

We would like to warmly thank J.P. Losty for his expertise and commitment in researching and cataloguing the Indian paintings. Will Kwiatkowski catalogued the Persian section for us and we are very grateful for his enthusiasm and dedication. Misha Anikst has once more designed a beautiful catalogue that has allowed the art to take centre stage.

Francesca Galloway, 2016

### Isfandiyar slays the Dragon, from Firdawsi's *Shahnama*

Iran, Shiraz, c. 1580  
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
Folio 42.5 × 26.4 cm  
Painting 30.5 × 23 cm

This illustration of Prince Isfandiyar slaying a dragon comes from a well-known copy of the *Shahnama*, and displays many of the hallmarks of Shirazi painting at its high point in the last quarter of the 16th century.

Marianne Shreve Simpson has argued on stylistic grounds that the manuscript was made in Shiraz in c. 1575–90 (Simpson 2013, esp. pp. 88–100). In this period, Shiraz manuscript illustration reached a high point; manuscripts reached their largest dimensions in this period, and were typically between 40 and 45 cm tall. Larger dimensions were accompanied by increased pictorial complexity; illustrations frequently extended into the upper and lower margins, architectural settings were more elaborate, and an expanded pictorial cycle resulted in the creation of new compositions for subjects not hitherto usually illustrated (Uluç 2006, pp. 319–21). This period also saw the start of the practice, seen here, of filling the margins of luxury manuscripts with gold floral and animal designs.

The painting is remarkable for the brilliance of the palette and the superb shading of the rocky landscape. These features, as well as the figural type seen here, are already found in luxury Shiraz manuscripts of the 1570s (see e.g. the discussion of a *Khamsa* of Nizami, Rly Pers 856, in Robinson 1980, p. 203). In this painting, however, as in other paintings from the same manuscript the figures are smaller in relation to the landscape and set further back from the plane of the page. In this regard, the painting is closer to illustrations from the Shiraz manuscripts dated from the 1580s, such as a copy in the former India Office Library, IO Isl. 741, 742 (illustrated in Robinson 1976, nos 363–76) and a copy of the *Khamsa* of Nizami dated to c. 1585, now in the Topkapi Palace Library (TSMK B.146, illustrated in Uluç 2006, fig. 246).

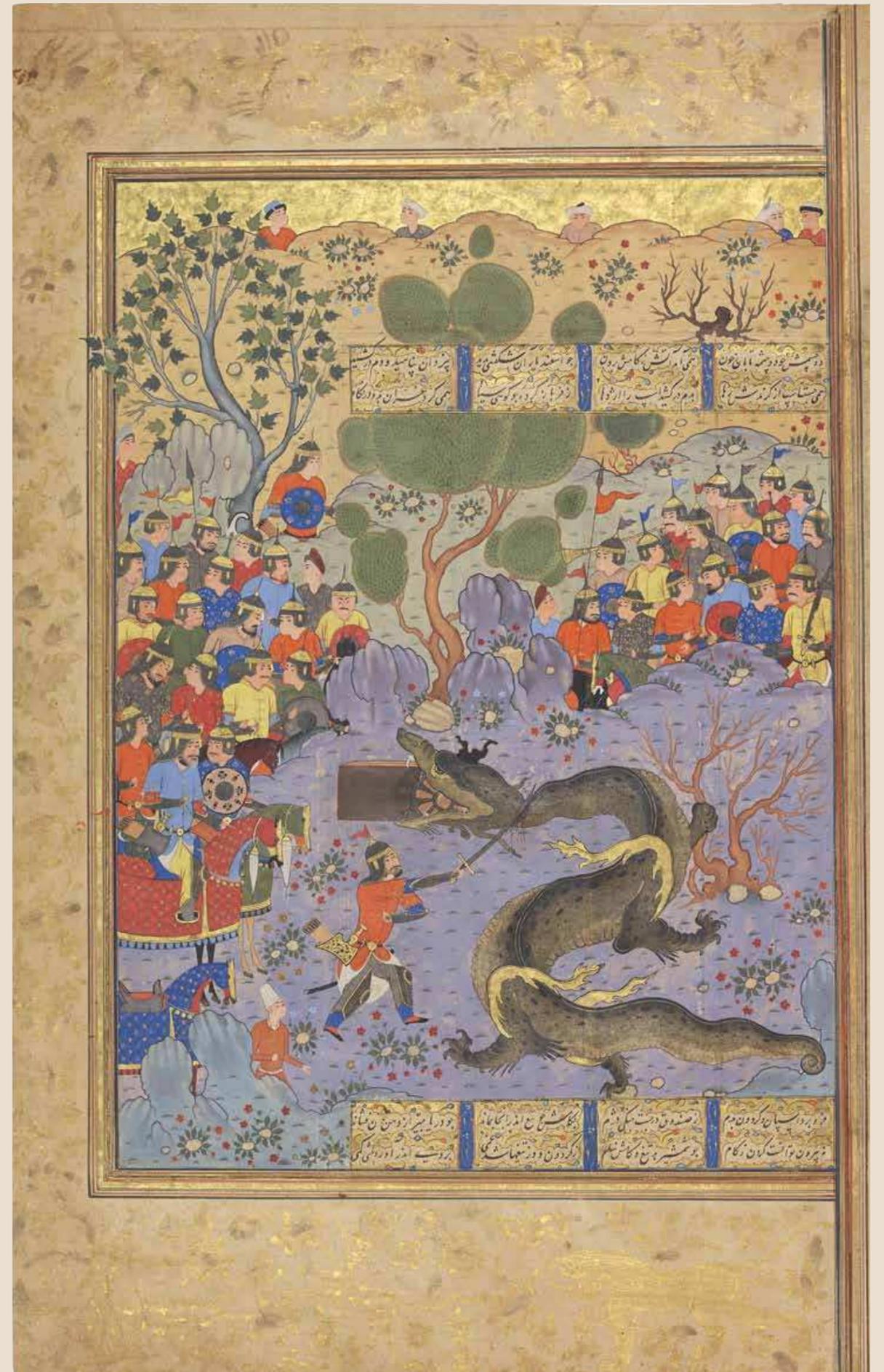
Ten leaves from this manuscript are in the Norma Jean Calderwood collection at Harvard University with further leaves in various collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the David Collection, Copenhagen, the Rietberg Museum and the Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore (see 'Appendix 2' in Simpson 2013, pp. 110–13, for a full list of known illustrations).

In this famous episode from the *Shahnama* the prince Isfandiyar slays a ferocious dragon by inducing it to swallow his spiked chariot and then finishing it off with his sword. This feat was one of the seven trials faced by Isfandiyar in his attempt to reach the Brazen Hold, where his sisters were being kept captive.

*Provenance*  
Private Swiss collection  
Spink & Son 1983

*Exhibited*  
Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

*Literature*  
Robinson, B.W., *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1976  
Robinson, B.W., *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1980  
Simpson, M.S., 'The illustrated *Shahnama* in sixteenth-century Shiraz', in McWilliams, M. (ed.), *In Harmony: The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2013  
Uluç, Lale, *Turkman Governors, Shiraz Artisans, Ottoman Collectors: Sixteenth Century Shiraz Manuscripts*, İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006



Isfandiyar slays the Dragon,  
from Firdawsi's *Shahnama*  
Detail



**Khizr and Ilyas drink from the Well of Life while Iskandar roams the Mountainside, from Firdawsi's *Shahnama***

Iran, Shiraz, c. 1580–85  
Ink, opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper  
Folio 40 × 26 cm  
Painting (including tree) 28.5 × 19.3 cm

Like cat. 1, this leaf comes from a *Shahnama* made at the high point of Shiraz manuscript production in the last quarter of the 16th century. The large dimensions and borders filled with gold and silver mythical beasts, animals and floral designs are typical of luxury Shirazi manuscripts of this period, as is the composition of the painting, in which a colourful, rocky landscape is populated with groups of small figures (see e.g. IO Isl. 741, 742, published in Robinson 1976a nos 363–76, pp. 116–24). Comparison with the illustration of the same leaf from the Calderwood *Shahnama*, however, shows that an artist working in the Qazvin style was responsible for at least some of the figures in this painting (McWilliams 2013, cat. no. 100). This is particularly apparent from the faces of Khizr and Ilyas, which lack the square jaws typical of figures in Shiraz painting and have the plainer features and slanted, almond eyes of some of the manuscripts made in Qazvin in this period, such as the copy of the *Shahnama* made for Shah Isma'il (see e.g. Robinson 1976b, pl. IIa).

The two soldiers in conversation, one of whom is mounted on a black horse, are also the work of a Qazvini artist, as are probably the two figures running frantically among the rocks below them. The willowy, slender-necked, round-cheeked youth carrying the flag high up on the rocky ridge is of a type popularised in single-page drawings and paintings by artists such as Mirza 'Ali, a simplified form of which found its way into illustrated manuscripts from Qazvin and Mashhad (see e.g. *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum*, no. 60, p. 138, and Robinson 2005, Miniature 6, p. 297).

Furthermore, there is also a freer, more energetic feel to some of the details of the painting than is

typical of the jewel-like but somewhat static Shirazi idiom of the period. This is particularly visible here in the humorous depiction of the horses in the bottom-right corner of the painting. The lower pair of horses turn their heads to one another in what is clearly mischievous conversation, while the pair further up the page bray aggressively at the frightened figures running among the rocks.

The painting illustrates the meeting of Khizr and Ilyas at the Well of Life while Iskandar and his troops are lost on the mountainside above. In his search for the Water of Life in the Land of Gloom, Iskandar had engaged the mystical figure Khizr to act as their guide. Having taken a wrong turn, Iskandar became detached from his guide and wandered lost until he came to the top of a mountain where the Angel Israfil informed him of his imminent demise. In the meantime, Khizr had found the Well of Life, where he encountered the Prophet Ilyas. The two bathed in the water and drank from it, thereby acquiring eternal life.

*Provenance*

Private Swiss collection  
Drouot, Paris, 19 November 1990, lot 153  
Spink & Son, 1983

*Exhibited*

Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

*Literature*

McWilliams, M. (ed.), *In Harmony: The Norma Jean Calderwood Collection of Islamic Art*, exhibition catalogue, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Mass., 2013  
Robinson, B.W., *Persian Paintings in the India Office Library: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1976a  
Robinson, B.W., 'Isma'il II's copy of the *Shahnama*', *Iran*, vol. 14, 1976b, pp. 1–8  
Robinson, B.W., 'Shah Isma'il II's copy of the *Shahnama*: Additional material', *Iran*, vol. 43, 2005, pp. 291–99  
*Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum: Arts of the Book and Calligraphy*, exhibition catalogue, Sakip Sabanci Museum, Istanbul, 2010



Khizr and Ilyas drink from the Well of Life while Iskandar roams the Mountainside, from Firdawsi's *Shahnama*  
Detail



### Iskandar comforts the dying Dara, from Firdawsi's *Shahnama*

Iran, Probably Mashhad  
Copied by Qutb al-Din ibn Hasan al-Tuni in 998/1580  
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
Folio 34 × 23.9 cm  
Painting 23.8 × 14.4 cm

This painting is of one of the most frequently illustrated subjects in 16th-century copies of the *Shahnama*. It comes from a manuscript completed in 998/1580 by the scribe Qutb al-Din ibn Hasan al-Tuni that originally had twenty-four paintings in the Safavid court style of the last quarter of the period (Sotheby's, London, 22 April 1980, lot 271).

The manuscript belongs to a small group made for court circles in the troubled period between the reigns of Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576) and Shah 'Abbas (1587–1629). The most celebrated of this group of manuscripts is a copy of the *Shahnama*, thought to have been commissioned by Shah Isma'il II upon his succession in 1576 (Robinson 1976a; Canby 1998, nos 32–7, pp. 56–57).

With paintings from that manuscript, this illustration shares the large, slender figures and landscape of high, mauve rocks. While the style is normally associated with the capital, Qazvin, it is also possible that manuscripts of a courtly quality were produced in Mashhad, where the governor Ibrahim Mirza had assembled an atelier for the production of his superb copy of Jami's *Haft Awrang* between 1556 and 1565. It has been suggested, on the basis of the *nisba* of the scribe who copied this manuscript, al-Tuni, from Tun in Khurasan, as well as the rather baroque, twisted form of the rocks on some of the leaves, that it may have been completed there rather than Qazvin (see Brend and Melville 2010, no. 69, p. 174; Sotheby's, 22 April 1980, lot 271).

Though this aspect is not particularly evident in the rocks in this painting, there is nonetheless a mannerist feel to the figures, particularly evident in the exaggeratedly elongated, outstretched arm of Dara and willowy form of Iskandar, which may point to a Khurasani origin. For the mannerist

tendency in Khurasani painting in the context of a copy of the *Sifat al-Ashiqin* made in Mashhad in 1581, see Robinson 1976b, no. 24.

In this episode from the *Shahnama*, Iskandar comforts the dying Persian emperor Dara (Darius). Though Iskandar's demand for tribute led to war between Rum and Iran, Iskandar was appalled at the assassination of Dara by two of his ministers who decided to betray their master and side with Iskandar, and came to the side of his dying former enemy to offer comfort.

#### Literature

- Brend, B., and Melville, C., *Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*, I.B. Tauris, London, 2010
- Canby, S., *Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, British Museum, London, 1998
- Robinson, B.W., 'Isma'il II's copy of the *Shahnama*', *Iran*, vol. 14, 1976a, pp. 1–8
- Robinson, B.W., *Persian and Mughal Art*, exhibition catalogue, Colnaghi, London, 1976b



### Yazdagird III is murdered by the Miller, from Firdawsi's *Shahnama*

Iran or Afghanistan, possibly Herat, c. 1600  
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
Folio 34.5 × 22.1 cm  
Painting (including tree) 25.5 × 15.3 cm

This leaf from a copy of the *Shahnama* shows the murder of the last of the Sasanian rulers of Iran, Yazdagird III, at the hands of a miller. Having been defeated by the army of the Arabs, Yazdagird fled to Khurasan, where he took refuge in a mill. Having been informed of the king's presence, the treacherous governor of Khurasan ordered the miller to murder him. In the painting, the scene of bustling activity and pastoral life outside contrasts with the grisly action inside the mill.

The leaf is very closely related to a *Shahnama* manuscript that was dispersed in Paris in the early part of the 20th century. Six leaves from that manuscript, now in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C., were published as part of the Vever Collection, where they were attributed to Herat on the basis of similarities with another copy of the *Shahnama* completed in that city in 1600 (Lowry and Beach 1988, nos 152–57, pp. 122–24).

The present leaf shares with the leaves from the Vever Collection identical marginal rulings, text in a neat *nasta'liq* hand within gold cloud cartouches and chapter headings in gold *nasta'liq* on a ground of coloured, spiralling vegetal scroll. A variant of the striking illumination on the recto of the present leaf is also found on the recto of one of the Vever Collection leaves (S1986.224). Every third line of text is placed on the diagonal within green or brown cloud cartouches with the triangular spaces above and below filled with gold and polychrome vegetal scroll. This textual format was used as a method of announcing to the reader the arrival of an illustration, which follows here on the verso of the folio.

The three paintings from the Vever Collection are in a style showing the influence of both Qazvin and north-eastern Iranian models. The turbulent politics

of this era as well as the lack of royal commissions meant that many artists were probably itinerant, resulting in the dispersal of models from Qazvin to other centres such as Mashhad and Herat. The present leaf shares with the leaves from the Vever Collection a similar treatment of the landscape, with colourful rocky outcrops crowned by a tree that extends into the margin and solid gold skies with curling, Chinese-style clouds (see esp. S1986.222, Lowry and Beach 1988, no. 153, p. 123). The costumes of some of the figures as well as the increased presence of cool mint-green and purple in the palette reflect the growing influence of the emerging Isfahan style in the first quarter of the 17th century.

The left-hand leaf of a bifolium from a *Shahnama* manuscript from the Edwin Binney 3rd Collection in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard, has an illustration of the Murder of Iraj in a related style. The illumination and textual layout on the verso of the right-hand leaf of the bifolium is also very similar to those on the recto of the present leaf and on S.1986.224 from the Vever Collection (Binney 1979, no. 42, pp. 72–73). Though the bifolium was published and exhibited as a Turkish painting from the Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, it is now generally believed that the manuscript was produced in Iran.

The exact relationship of the present leaf to those from the Binney and Vever Collections has not been established and still needs further examination. The various leaves are all of similar dimensions.

#### Provenance

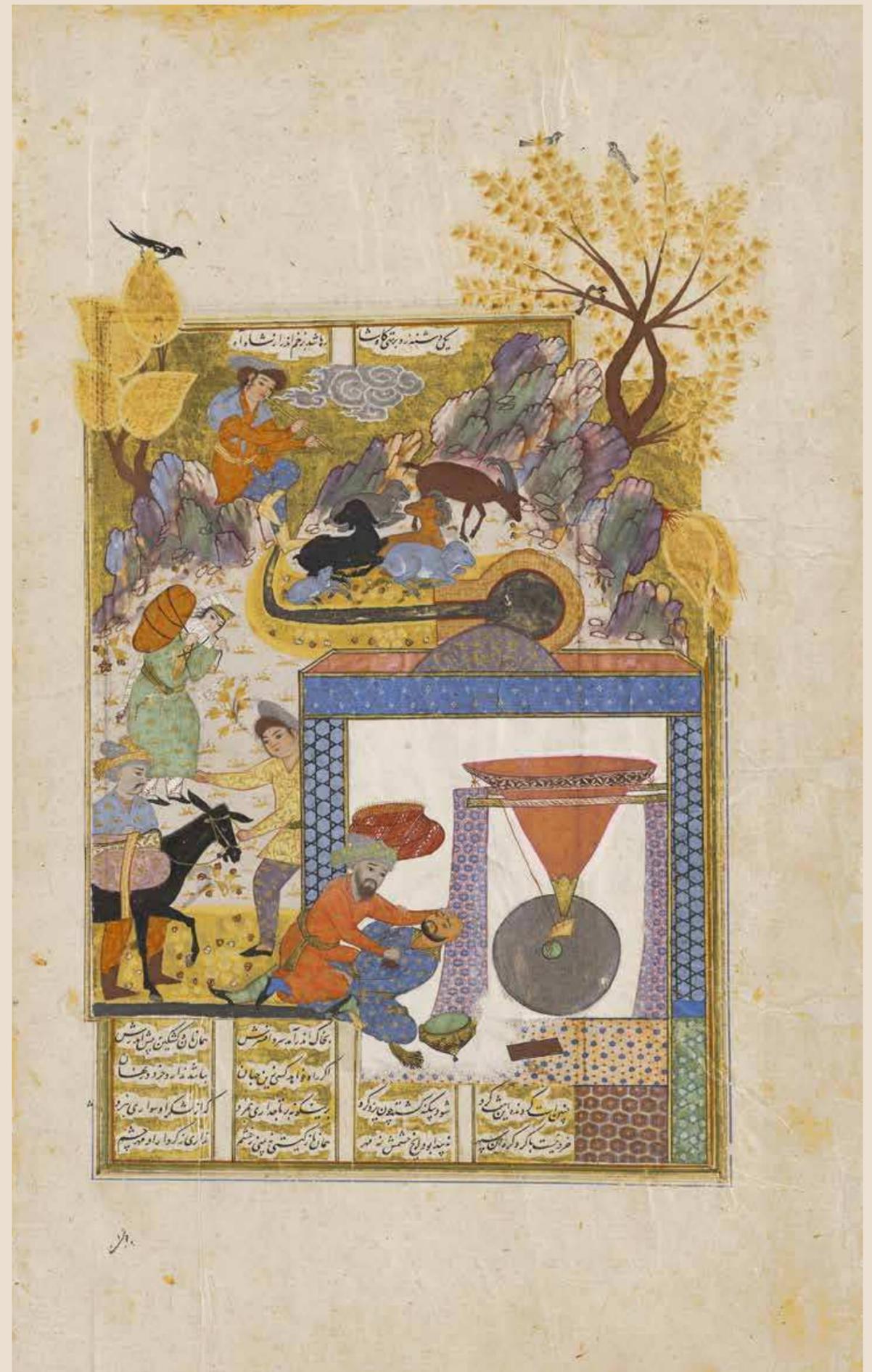
Private Swiss collection  
Drouot, Paris, 28 November 1962,  
lot 45

#### Exhibited

Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

#### Literature

Binney, E., 3rd, *Turkish Treasures from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd*, exhibition catalogue, Portland Art Museum, 1979  
Lowry, G.D. and Beach, M.C., *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1988



**Shah Isma'il defeats the Army of the Aq-Qoyunlu, from Khwandamir's *Habib al-Siyar***

Iran, Qazvin or Isfahan, c. 1590–1600  
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
Folio 42.5 × 28.5 cm  
Painting 26.5 × 15.2 cm

This painting comes from a famous, probably royal manuscript of the third volume of Khwandamir's history, *Habib al-Siyar*. The painting is one of two battle scenes that were removed from a section of the volume, probably at some point in the 19th century when the manuscript was rebound. These two battle scenes were sold together at Sotheby's, London, 1 December 1969, lot 108 and 8 April 1975, lot 190. The remainder of the section, minus the two paintings, was sold in Christie's 20 April 1999, lot 79.

The lacunae in the section from which these had been removed has allowed the identification of the battle scenes as Shah Isma'il's defeat of Alvand and the Aq-Qoyunlu at Shurur in AH 907/1501 AD, and the victory over Murad Aq-Qoyunlu at Alma Qulaghi outside Hamadan in AH 908/1503 AD. Since the paintings themselves are devoid of text, however, it has not been possible to establish which painting depicts which battle. The other painting of this pair was sold in Christie's 5 October 2010, lot 224. A further section from the same volume, containing three paintings from the Vever Collection, is in the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C. (Lowry and Beach 1988, no. 210, pp. 187–89).

Though no colophon for this manuscript has been found, the quality of the painting and the sumptuousness of the illuminated borders have led to speculation that it was created for the young Shah 'Abbas. The third volume, which deals with Shah Isma'il and the establishment of the Safavid Empire, was of natural interest for the Safavid dynasty. The paintings appear to have been all made by a single artist, though the style of the paintings themselves is somewhat hybrid; they clearly show similarities to manuscripts illustrated in Qazvin in the last quarter of the 16th century such as the *Shahnama* of Isma'il II,

though certain aspects of the palette and the treatment of the landscape and the sky show the influence of the Shiraz style of the 1590s. It is likely that the manuscript was made either in Qazvin, in the early 1590s, or in Isfahan after 1597 when Shah 'Abbas made the city his capital.

In terms of composition, the painting is very close to its sister battle scene. In both paintings Shah Isma'il's army is on the right-hand side of the landscape, preceded by a herald in a dervish costume with a tall cap. High up in the first rank of the army is the figure of Shah Isma'il himself, wearing a wide-brimmed crown. Many of the soldiers have distinctively Turkman features, though, in the present painting the Safavid army lacks the *taj*, the red cap around which Shah Isma'il's Qizilbash (literally 'red-head') Turkman followers wrapped their turbans. In both paintings, the Aq-Qoyunlu army on the left-hand side is led by a commander who is distinguished from the other soldiers by the chain-mail protector hanging from his helmet over his neck and shoulders. Interestingly, in both paintings the standards of the Aq-Qoyunlu and Safavid armies bear different legends; while that of the Aq-Qoyunlu is inscribed only with the word Allah or 'God', the Safavid standard also bears the names 'Ali and Muhammad. The ground between the armies is strewn with severed heads.

Shah Isma'il's battle against Alvand Mirza at Sharur in 1501 was a major victory for the Safavid army and opened the way to Tabriz where Isma'il had himself proclaimed 'Shah', or 'Emperor', for the first time. The battle of Alma Qulaghi, outside Hamadan, in 1503, was also a major victory for the Safavid army, in the course of which an army of just

*Provenance*  
Private Swiss collection  
Kevorkian Collection  
Sotheby's 8 April 1975, Lot 190

*Exhibited*  
Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

*Literature*  
Farrokh, K., *Iran at War: 1500–1988*, Osprey Publishing, London, 2011  
Lowry, G.D., and Beach, M.C., *An Annotated and Illustrated Checklist of the Vever Collection*, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1988



Shah Isma'il defeats the Army of the Aq-Qoyunlu, from Khwandamir's *Habib al-Siyar*  
Detail

12,000 Turkmans supposedly defeated a combined Aq-Qoyunlu and Ottoman army of 120,000 (see Farrokh 2011).

Khwandamir was the grandson of the Timurid historian, Mirkhwand, and consciously modelled his universal history on that of his grandfather's, the *Rawdat al-Safa*. Khwandamir expanded the third volume of the work, a history of the Timurid dynasty, to include events up to his own time, most notably the emergence of the Safavid Empire. He completed the work in 1524, a few months after the death of Shah Isma'il, and dedicated it to the vizier of Herat, Karim al-Din Khwaja Habib Allah Savaji, to whose name Habib Allah (Beloved of God) the title *Habib al-Siyar* (The Beloved of Histories) refers.



**The Uzbek Army storms the Fort of Isfarain, from the *Tarikh-i 'Alam-Ara-yi Abbasi***

Iran, Isfahan, c. 1650  
Ink, opaque watercolour and gold on paper  
Folio 26.4 × 19.4 cm  
Painting 23 × 16 cm

This illustration of the Uzbek army storming the fortress of Isfarain comes from a very rare illustrated copy of Iskandar Munshi's history of Shah 'Abbas, the *Tarikh-i 'Alam-Ara-yi 'Abbasi*. On the whole, the Safavids did not share the Ottomans' and the Mughals' preoccupation with producing illustrated copies of the histories of their own reigns and only very few examples survive.

The history relates how the Uzbek 'Abd al-Mu'min Khan set out in the year AH 1006/1597–98 AD determined to take the fortress of Isfarain in the neighbourhood of Balkh. The governor, a certain 'Abu Muslim Khan, assembled a group of soldiers including Kurds and members of the Ustajlu tribe, strengthened the fortress and over a period of four months valiantly resisted the Uzbek siege until they were unable to hold out any longer. In the painting, 'Abu Muslim Khan, wearing a large, elaborate headdress, typical of the period of Shah 'Abbas, sits next to a soldier in the tower of the fortress. The artist distinguishes the Uzbek soldiers from the defending Persian ones by depicting them wearing turbans as opposed to helmets and giving them distinctly Turkic features.

Stylistically, the manuscript belongs to the tradition of illustrated epics and histories produced in Isfahan in the first half of the 17th century. Typical of this type of illustrated manuscript are the relatively small figures with round, pale faces, the pastel landscape and the dark blue sky filled with energetic clouds. An early example of a manuscript illustrated in this style is a *Shahnama* now in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Mss. or. Suppl. persan 491), copied in Isfahan in 1615–18 (see Richard 1997, no. 151). Even closer in terms of style and composition is an illustration from a copy of the

*Akhlaq-i Muhsini*, copied by a certain 'Abd al-'Aziz in 1640, now in St Petersburg (see Petrosian 1994, no. 46). A group of leaves from a *Timurnama* of Hatifi, once thought to be Ottoman, also belong to this group (see Binney 1973, nos 48a & 48b). The tendency towards plainness in the painting, however, reflects the move away from profuse decoration during the course of the 17th century as seen in the work of draughtsmen like Mu'in Musavvir, and is probably an indication that the manuscript was produced a little later than most of the works belonging to this group.

Though little is known about Iskandar Beg Munshi, his history is the main source for the reign of Shah 'Abbas. He is said to have completed the history in AH 1038/1628–29 AD at the age of seventy, and died in c. AH 1043/1633 AD. As a secretary (*munshi*) in the royal chancellery he witnessed many of the events he described himself.

For another rare example of an illustrated history of Shah 'Abbas, see two paintings from a manuscript in Christie's 6 October 2011, lot 175.

*Provenance*  
Private Swiss collection

*Exhibited*  
Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

*Literature*  
Binney, E., 3rd, *Turkish Miniature Paintings and Manuscripts from the Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd*, exhibition catalogue, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1973  
Richard, F., *Splendeurs persanes: manuscrits du Xlle au XVIIe siècle*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, 1997  
Petrosian, Y.A. (ed.), *De Bagdad à Ispahan: manuscrits islamiques de la filiale de Saint-Petersbourg de l'Institut d'études orientales*, Académie des sciences de Russie, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Petit Palais, Paris, 1994



**Simurgh Chick**

Iran, first half of 17th century  
 Ink on paper, mounted on an album page with  
 illuminated border  
 Album page 32.3 × 20.4 cm  
 Drawing 4 × 8 cm

The flames trailing from this chick's feet and the flickering tendrils on the sides of its face indicate that it is an infant simurgh, the marvellous bird of Iranian mythology. The inspiration for the drawing almost certainly comes from illustrations to the *Shahnama* of Firdawsi. Simurgh chicks are mentioned in several points in Firdawsi's narrative, including the story of the hero Zal, who was raised by the parent Simurgh along with her own offspring, and in the tale of Isfandiyar, who slaughtered the ferocious Simurgh, leaving the chicks orphaned (see e.g. Welch 1976, pl. 11; Melikian-Chirvani 2007, nos 20 & 74).

Here the artist has clearly delighted in the grotesque combination of childish innocence and monstrous form: the chick's bony leg, huge, ferocious claws and large, hooked beak are in almost comical contrast to its otherwise diminutive size and expression of wide-eyed, childish innocence. The artist was clearly concerned as much with texture as with line and movement; the scaly feet, the downy head and prickly feathers of the fantail have been rendered with superb detail.

The drawing is a fine example of how 17th-century artists transformed incidental or decorative models from the manuscript tradition into marvellous individual studies.

*Literature*

Melikian-Chirvani, A.S., *Le chant du monde: l'art de l'Iran safavide, 1501–1736*, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2007  
 Welch, S.C., *Indian Drawings and Painted Sketches: 16th Through 19th Centuries*, exhibition catalogue, Asia Society, New York, 1976

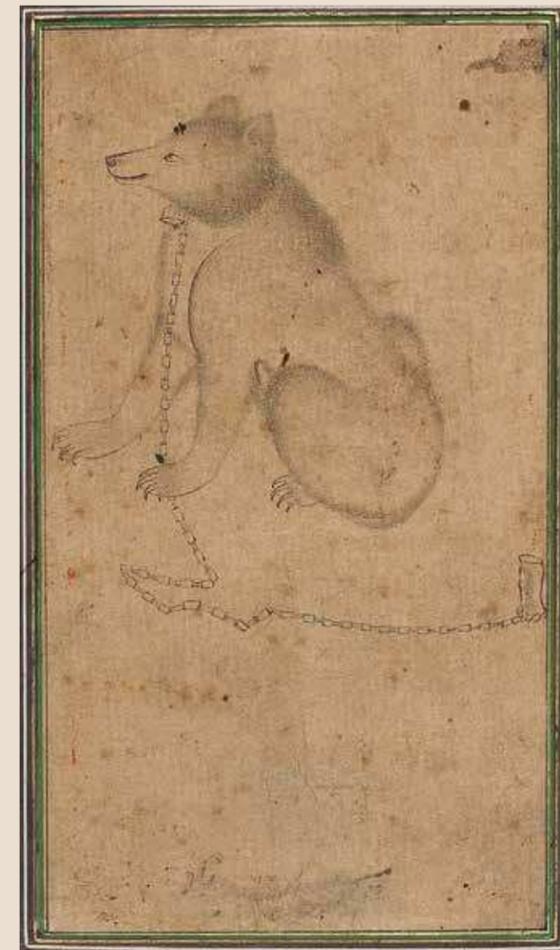
**Tethered Bear**

Iran, 17th century  
 Ink on paper, mounted on album page  
 with coloured borders  
 Album page 32.3 × 20.4 cm  
 Drawing 12.5 × 6.8 cm

Bears were among the inhabitants of Persian illustrated manuscripts that became the subject of individual drawings in the Safavid period, if not as frequently as dragons, lions or camels (see e.g. Welch 1972, p. 123). There is a touching softness about this small bear who, despite his apparent captivity, appears alert and cheerful. For humorous drawings of bears from the period, see a monkey riding a bear in the Hermitage (Adamova 1996, no. 26) and a bear biting a man's leg by Riza-yi 'Abbasi (Canby 1996, no. 19).

*Literature*

Adamova, A.T., *Persian Painting and Drawing of the 15th–19th Centuries in the Hermitage Collection*, State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 1996  
 Canby, S. R., *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi 'Abbasi of Isfahan*, Azimuth Press, London, 1996  
 Welch, S.C., *A King's Book of Kings: The Shah-nameh of Shah Tahmasp*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1972



### Figures in a Landscape

Iran, probably Qazvin, c. 1575  
 Ink and transparent colours on paper, mounted on an album  
 page with coloured, illuminated borders  
 Album page 29 × 18 cm  
 Drawing 16 × 9 cm

Figures relaxing in rocky landscape, typically seated in the shade of a tree beside a running stream, were a popular subject for drawings from the second half of the 16th through the 17th century in Safavid Iran (see e.g. Swietochowski and Babaie 1989, no. 25). This drawing clearly belongs to the beginning of the tradition; though no firm attribution to a particular artist can be made, the facial type, swelling chest, rounded shoulders and narrow waists are clearly related to the Qazvin school of painting as exemplified in the *Shahnama* of Shah Isma'il II, completed in c. 1576–77 (see Welch 1976, pls 1 & 2; Robinson 1976, pls 19.XVII & 19.XVIII; Canby 1998, nos 25–27; Sotheby's 27 April 2005, lot 22). While the various landscape elements, such as the sycamore tree, the rocky outcrop demarcated with a thicker line, and the waterfall cascading into a pool can also

all be found in contemporary Qazvin paintings, the contrast between the more impressionistic landscape and the fine line of the figures presages future developments under artists such as Riza-yi 'Abbasi and is an indication of the emergence of drawing as an art form independent from manuscript illustration (see e.g. Canby 1996 cats 4 & 14). The artist has also clearly relished the opportunity to depict the delicate folds of the figure's robes in a manner that also looks forward to later developments (see e.g. Swietochowski and Babaie 1989, no. 21).

The figures wear Indian-style turbans, though no explanation for this is found in the subject matter. The youthful figure on the right reads verses by the poet Jami, and is distinguished by an unusual flared collar and a finely drawn dagger at his side.

#### Provenance

Private Swiss collection

#### Exhibited

Calligraphie et miniature, l'école du regard, Institut du Monde Arabe, 2001

#### Literature

Canby, S., *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi 'Abbasi of Isfahan*, London, Azimuth, 1996

Canby, S., *Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, British Museum, London, 1998

Robinson, B.W., *Persian and Mughal Art*, exhibition catalogue, Colnaghi, London, 1976

Swietochowski, M.L., and Babaie, S., *Persian Drawings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1989

Welch, A., *Artists for the Shah: Late Sixteenth-Century Painting at the Imperial Court of Iran*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1976



### Courtly Beauty

Iran, Isfahan, first quarter of 17th century  
 Ink and gold on paper, mounted on album page with  
 illuminated, coloured borders  
 Album page 32.6 × 20.6 cm  
 Drawing 18.2 × 10 cm

Portraits of members of the courtly elite were very popular in Shah 'Abbas's burgeoning new capital, Isfahan. This woman's costume, with her cloak hanging from a diadem, and the way in which she draws aside her cloak to reveal her face and loose hair are classic features of this genre (see Canby 1996, no. 33; Robinson 1992, nos 248 & 256). The emphasis on the folds of the woman's costume, her facial type, the subtle red tint of her lips, and the discreet use of gold details on her costume, all bear comparison to a drawing of a monkey tamer by Riza-yi 'Abbasi which has been dated to c. 1625 (Melikian-Chirvani 2007, no. 107).

#### Literature

- Canby, S.R., *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi 'Abbasi of Isfahan*, Azimuth Press, London, 1996
- Melikian-Chirvani, A.S., *Le chant du monde: l'art de l'Iran safavide, 1501-1736*, exhibition catalogue, Musée du Louvre, Paris, 2007
- Robinson, B.W., *Orient d'un collectionneur: miniatures persanes, textiles, céramiques, orfèvrerie rassemblés par Jean Pozzi*, collections du Musée d'art et d'histoire, exhibition catalogue, Musée historique des tissus, Geneva, 1992



### A Youth in Persian Costume

Golconda, c. 1630–40  
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
 Page 28.5 × 19 cm  
 Painting 20.4 × 13.2 cm  
 The painting is surrounded by a salmon pink border and laid down on a buff album page  
 Inscribed indistinctly in Persian on the surface of the painting: *raqam ... 1020 ... [abba]si* ('Drawing ... 1020 ... 'Abbasi 1020/1611–12')

A youthful noble lounges at his ease in a verdant patch of grass. His weight is all pressed down on his right side, as his head inclines towards his right arm that rests on a pair of cushions, while his left arm rests on his right thigh along with the letter he is holding. His legs are spread out comfortably before him but he is clearly not happy, as the whole tenor of his pose suggests melancholy, perhaps as a result of the letter or poem he has been reading. His gaze is directed downwards towards the flasks of wine on the grass beside him. This type of youthful languorous introspection is derived from paintings done by Riza-yi 'Abbasi around 1600 in Iran, e.g. a seated barefoot youth formerly in the Rothschild collection (Colnaghi 1976, no. 41; Soudavar 1992, no. 107), who reclines against two cushions as here. Behind our youth a bare hillside rises to a jagged peak composed of rocks on which is perched a *chenar* tree almost denuded of its leaves as in the frontispiece to a *Gulistan* of Sa'di of c. 1615 of which the design even if not the colouring has been attributed to Riza-yi himself (Soudavar 1992, no. 111c). Tree and hillside follow the youth's inclination and reinforce the notion of melancholy.

Our youth is wearing contemporary Persian costume: a long green robe decorated with gold Chinese cloud motifs tied with a blue sash, and over it a half-sleeved short-collared purple coat decorated with gold birds on trees. Instead, however, of the expected large Safavid-style turban, he wears a fur hat secured by a gold and green scarf terminating in a cockade. His right hand holds a scarf, which is draped languorously over the cushions to his right. One of these cushions is covered with what is meant to be a Safavid velvet, showing a wine-bearer in Mughal costume standing beside a tree. The other

cover has a motif of a bird in a tree decorating it in very light colours. The bird in a tree motif occurs again on the white ceramic wine flask. A gold wine flask of Persian design stands beside it and a dish of fruit. A little stream runs in front of the youth bordered with rocks and leafy plants.

Of the three major Deccani kingdoms, Golconda retained its artistic links with Iran and Central Asia the longest and a distinct strain of Persianate bent can be discerned from the beginnings of manuscript illustration in the 1570s onwards. In the 1620s and 1630s individual album paintings show up-to-date stylistic links with Isfahan especially in the clothes and turbans that the participants wear, as for example (to choose from the very few survivors) in the prince hawking in the British Library (Zebrowski 1983, fig. 138), a pair of lovers in the Sackler Museum, Harvard (*ibid.*, fig. 140) and the courtesan formerly in the S.C. Welch collection (*ibid.*, fig. 148). Despite the clothes, these paintings are still very obviously Deccani.

In our example, the artist has gone further and attempted to imitate the style of Riza-yi, adopting the kind of iconography invented by the Iranian master for one of his languid youths and landscapes. A spurious inscription attempts to give the painting to Riza-yi 'Abbasi himself, but with a date that is too early (1020/1611–12) for other stylistic features. Sheila Canby advises (personal communication) that the paintings with cushions decorated with human figures do not appear in Riza-yi's work until the 1620s, while the effaced octagonal seal above the sitter's head is again inconsistent with Riza-yi's work. The seals on Riza-yi's works are either rectangular, oval or in the shape of a cartouche. Also Safavid in origin is the division between a verdant

#### Provenance

Otto Sohn-Rethel Collection, formed before 1931

#### Literature

Canby, S., *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi 'Abbasi of Isfahan*, Azimuth Editions, London, 1996

Canby, S., *Princes, Poets & Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan*, British Museum, London, 1998

Colnaghi, P. & D., *Persian and Indian Painting*, exhibition catalogue, London, 1976

Haidar, N., and Sardar, M., *Sultans of Deccan India: Opulence and Fantasy*, Metropolitan Museum, New York, 2015

Soudavar, A., *Art of the Persian Courts*, with a contribution by M.C. Beach, Rizzoli, New York, 1992

Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, Sotheby Publications, University of California Press, London and Los Angeles, 1983



green foreground and a dry pink or purple mountainous background (cf. Canby 1998, no. 41). For Riza-yi's own more calligraphic and sinuous example of the contrast between the dry rocks and the almost denuded plane tree, see Canby 1996, cat. 73. The somewhat haphazard and overly detailed placing of the plants and rocks in the foreground on the banks of the stream as well as of the insecure anchoring of the overlapping wine flasks, dish etc. to the ground suggest a Deccani artist not too familiar with Persian spatial conventions. See Riza-yi's handling of this motif in Canby 1996, cat. 7. The artist Afzal, a pupil of Riza-yi, has been suggested as a possible artist of this page, and certainly the foreground arrangements of stream, rocks and plants seem in debt to his work such as in a *Gulistan* of Sa'di from c. 1615 (Soudavar 1992, nos 111c & 111d). Yet his figural style is rather different with heavily outlined eyes and he employs darker colours compared to the Deccani palette of mauve, purple and pale green of our painting.

Golconda paintings of the early 17th century are so few that the addition to this corpus of an important painting such as the present one is a rare event, even more so in that it is a major work of art. The artist has achieved a unity of mood through focusing the youthful noble's gaze, the cushion's fictive cupbearer, and indeed the whole landscape on to the bottom corner of the painting where is placed the potential solution to the youth's troubles, the drowning of his sorrows in wine.

In view of the many trading and cultural links that existed between Golconda and their co-religionists in Safavid Iran, as well as of the strong Persian element at court, there is no surprise in finding Iranian motifs continually resurfacing in

Golconda paintings, at least until Shah Jahan in 1636 partially subjected Golconda to Mughal rule. Such motifs continued, however, in Golconda's famed *kalamkari* hangings, dotted as they are with languid youths seated or standing based ultimately on models from Riza-yi or other 17th-century artists, as for instance in those made in the mid-17th century that once decorated the royal palace at Amber (Haidar and Sardar 2015, nos 160–62).



### A Christian Saint holding a Book

Attributable to Basawan, Mughal, c. 1585–90  
Brush drawing with opaque pigments and gold on paper  
Leaf 11.9 × 9.3 cm  
Drawing 5.9 × 4.1 cm, laid down in an oval on stout paper

A wide variety of Christian images and iconography entered the Mughal artistic milieu during the second half of the 16th century through European prints and illustrated Bibles brought to India by Jesuit missionaries and other European travellers. The imagery was enthusiastically taken up by Akbar's artists, encouraged by the emperor himself, who was fascinated by Christianity and other religions and by Christian and European works of art. Depictions of the Madonna reading a book, usually with the Christ Child on her lap, abound in European art of the 16th century, and versions of these were made in the Mughal studio. In addition to these mention should be made of the numerous series of *The Liberal Arts* produced by European engravers in the 16th century, many of which featured female figures holding books, as well as of the *Puritas Regia* frontispiece in Plantin's Royal Bible (the Polyglot Bible), which also shows a female figure holding a book. It was a copy of this edition of the Bible that the Jesuits presented to Emperor Akbar in 1580. Basawan based several of his allegorical drawings on the *Puritas Ragia* figure and similar images.

The present example is closely comparable in style to the work of Basawan. Basawan was among Akbar's artists most influenced by European ideas: Western traditions of realism, portraying character, and the use of advanced perspective were soon incorporated into his style. It is in his drawings of Biblical subjects that the influence of European engravings is most clearly visible. In particular, the face here closely resembles those on five drawings signed by or attributed to Basawan of c. 1590, four in the Musée Guimet, Paris, and one in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (see Okada 1991, figs. 9–11; Okada 1992, figs. 85, 89, 90; Pal 1993, no. 54) which

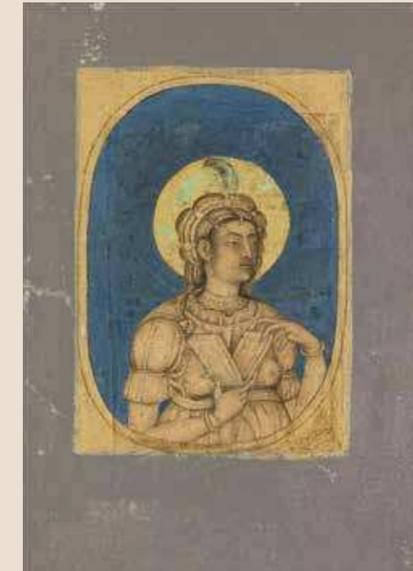
are based on the *Puritas Regia* or similar engraved allegorical figures. Of these, the face in the present figure with her dimpled cheek, small pursed mouth and long pointed nose is almost identical, but in reverse, to that of the drawing in the Musée Guimet of a woman holding an *ektar* and standing on a monster's head, while her upper garment and the way her scarf is tied beneath her bosom are the same in both drawings (Okada 1991, no. 11; Okada 1992, fig. 90; also reproduced in Seyller 2011, fig. 9). The



distinctive puffed sleeves additionally are found on one of the kneeling figures of Basawan's allegorical drawing based around the *Puritas Regia* from Plantin Bible's frontispiece (Okada 1991, fig. 9).

Basawan was one of the greatest masters of the imperial Mughal atelier. Contributing to most of the important manuscripts of the Akbar period, he also produced a number of individual portraits and group scenes, often ink drawings or works in *nim-qalam*, and on several occasions copying, or at least strongly referencing, European prints, of which the present work is an example. For the most recent discussion of his work, see Seyller 2011.

The drawing may have begun life as an allegorical drawing, for Basawan did not add halos to such drawings. It was also originally in a rectangular format probably without colour like the rest of Basawan's studies and was subsequently converted into an oval format with a fictive frame added.



*Provenance*  
Sven Gahlin collection, acquired in 1966  
Stuart Cary Welch collection

*Exhibited*  
*In the Image of Man*, 1982, no. 237  
(attributed to Manohar)

*Literature*  
*In the Image of Man*, The Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1982  
Okada, A., 'Basawan' in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. P. Pal, Bombay, 1991, pp. 1–16  
Okada, A., *Imperial Mughal Painters: Indian Miniatures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century*, Flammarion, Paris, 1992  
Pal, P., *Indian Painting: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collections, Volume I, 1000–1700*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1993  
Seyller, J., 'Basawan' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 119–34

### The Parrot and Khojasta

Folio from the Chester Beatty Tutinama  
Mughal, c. 1580  
Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper  
Folio 25.4 × 16.5 cm  
Painting 19.1 × 8.6 cm

The Tutinama or 'Tales of the Parrot' is a collection of moralising fables compiled by Ziya' al-Din Nakshahbi in Persia in the 14th century. Illustrated manuscripts of this text were twice produced for the emperor Akbar relatively early in his reign (r. 1556–1605). The first version executed in a notably early and simple style c. 1560–65 is known as the 'Cleveland Tutinama' with most of its folios being in the Cleveland Museum of Art. Although of early date, its precise status in the Akbari canon is unclear as the paintings have been shown to be overpaintings of an earlier Sultanate manuscript (Seyller 1992). Our folio is from the second, more refined version of this text, the majority of whose leaves with 102 miniatures are in the Chester Beatty Library and the manuscript has come to be named after it (Leach 1995, pp. 22–74). Another section of the manuscript with 54 miniatures is the source of those paintings not in the Chester Beatty and now scattered in various public and private collections. A third section is dispersed in various Indian collections. All the dispersed pages then known are listed by Leach (1995, pp. 24–26).

The text forms a book of stories told on 52 nights by a talking parrot to his mistress Khojasta in order to keep her amused and engaged and away from an adulterous affair. The various stories are vividly illustrated throughout the manuscript but occasionally there is inserted as here a miniature showing the parrot in its cage and his mistress seated in her chamber illustrating the frame story. Other examples of this frame story are illustrated in Leach 1995, nos 1, 46 and 1, 60. Khojasta's form, wearing bodice, skirt, pompoms and wimple and perched on top of a morha, is obviously derived from the normal female figure seen in Early Rajput

manuscripts but with the angularities smoothed out. The architecture here gives some idea of the decoration of the women's quarters in the palace at Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's principal residence from 1571 to 1585: the small chamber is a simple red sandstone pavilion with painted dadoes, panelled wooden doors, a carpet on the floor and a gabled roof above covered in coloured tiles. The artist cleverly projects the latter into the margin above the text panel, thereby seamlessly integrating text and miniature.

*Provenance*  
Chester Beatty

*Literature*  
Leach, L.Y., *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library*, Scorpion Cavendish, London, 1995  
Seyller, J., 'Overpainting in the Cleveland Tutinama' in *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 52, 1992, pp. 283–318



### Akbar on Elephant back playing a Game with his Soldiers

Brush drawing with wash, colours and gold on paper  
Folio 38.3 × 28.5 cm  
Painting 20.8 × 15.5 cm, within a blue border with gold floral scrolls laid down on an ivory album page splashed with gold  
Inscribed above the emperor in Persian: *tasvir-i Akbar Badshah* ('picture of Emperor Akbar')

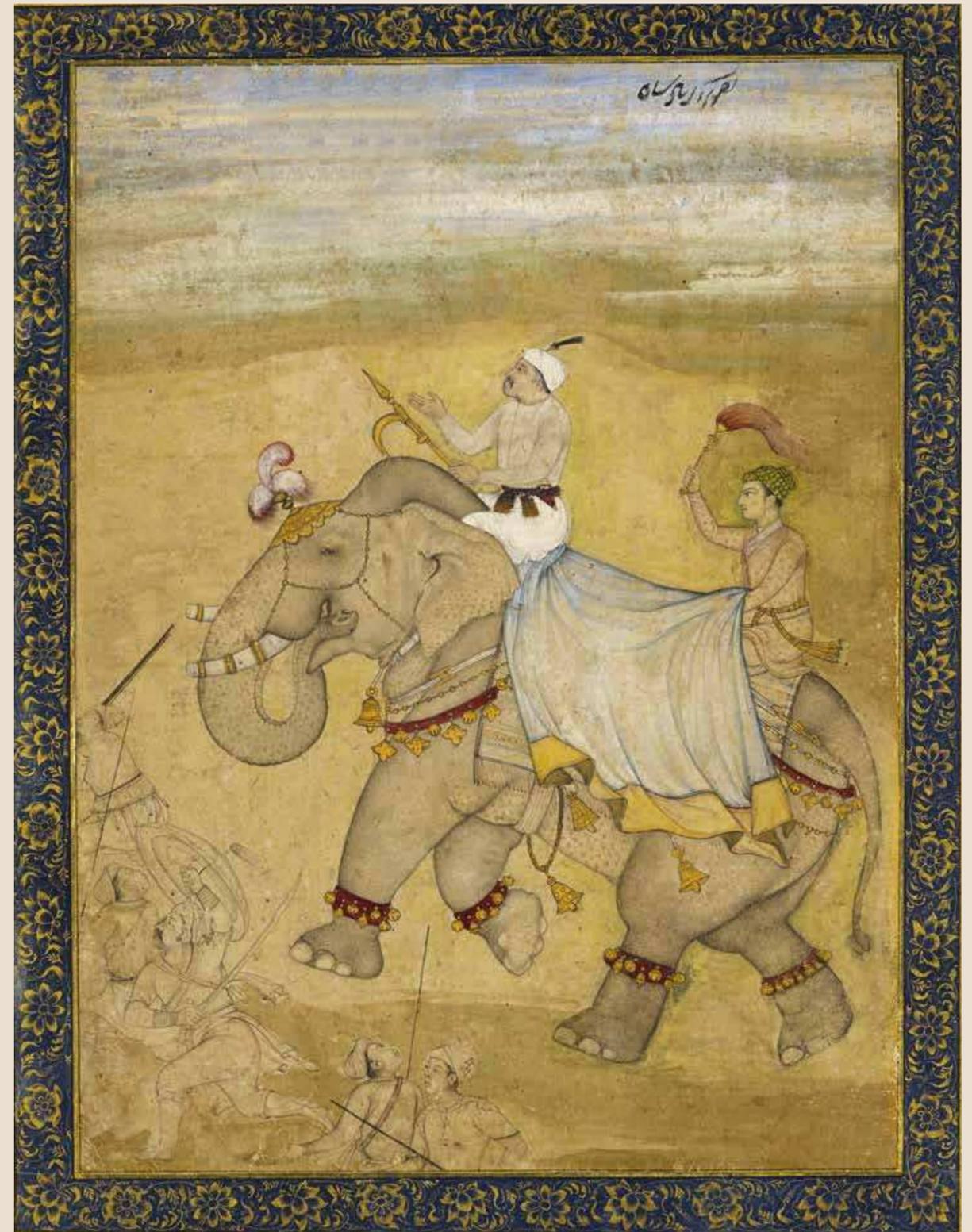
Emperor Akbar (b. 1542, r. 1556–1605) is depicted riding nonchalantly as the mahout on the shoulders of an elephant with his feet tucked securely into the strap behind the animal's ears. A young page behind concentrates on hanging on to the elephant's rump and waves a chowrie towards the emperor. Akbar is already elderly with white hair. He is dressed simply as was his wont in a plain white *jama* with short red *patka* and a white turban with a black eagle feather as an aigrette. The elephant has a large gold ornament decorated with ostrich feathers attached to its forehead and wears straps round its withers and ankles decorated with bells, while other bells hang from round its body, which must have caused a tremendous clanging. According to Niccolo Manucci, the bells were a necessity for elephants to warn people to get out of the way since they could not easily stop when moving fast (quoted in Topsfield 2012, p. 64). The mischievously grinning elephant, its trunk in its mouth 'tongue in cheek' as it were, trots along chasing the running attendants, while his saddlecloth flutters in the breeze from the movement. Akbar with lips pursed seems more interested in studying the sky than in avoiding trampling the running soldiers, who are brilliantly depicted in line, wash and a little colour as they flee for their lives. A rather similar painting is in the Goenka collection in Mumbai (Goswamy and Bhatia 1999, no. 47) with Akbar in a howdah with a grandson and running attendants as here.

Elephants were of course among the most prized possessions of kings and emperors throughout Indian history and the Mughals were no exception. According to Abu'l Fazl, Akbar had 101 elephants for his personal use alone, and he loved riding them especially when there was danger. One of the most

famous of Akbar period paintings, from the first *Akbarnama*, shows the Emperor riding the elephant Hawa'i as it furiously chases another elephant defeated in a fight across a collapsing bridge of boats (Stronge 2002, pl. 49). Portraits of elephants are among the most delightful of all Mughal paintings and the artists who drew them clearly relished their task. Paintings of an elephant under a tree with keepers and mahouts trying to control it are a common feature of several early paintings, but properly inscribed portraits of elephants sometimes without keepers appear from successive reigns throughout the 17th century (for instance Topsfield 2012, nos 20–25).

*Provenance*  
Private Swiss collection

*Literature*  
Goswamy, B.N., and Bhatia, U.,  
*Painted Visions: The Goenka Collection of Indian Paintings*, Lalit Kala Akademi, New Delhi, 1999  
Stronge, S., *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book 1560–1660*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2002  
Topsfield, A., *Visions of Mughal India: The Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2012



**Illuminated Folio from the *Farhang-i Jahangiri***

Mughal, early 17th century  
 Gold, pigments and ink on paper  
 Folio: 34.4 × 22.3 cm  
 Text box: 21.1 × 11 cm, within blue and orange borders with gold floral arabesques

The Persian lexicon known as the *Farhang-i Jahangiri* was prepared by Jamal al-Din Husain Inju at the Mughal court, first under Akbar and finished under Jahangir in 1608/09 (see Leach 1995, p. 321). Probably at that time a presentation copy was prepared, beautifully written and with the outer borders all decorated with gold figures. Some or all of this copy fell into the hands of the Paris dealer Demotte who removed the text panels and substituted single pages from other manuscripts, notably those which he had removed from the 1602–03 British Library/Chester Beatty Library *Akbarnama*. Unaltered pages of the original manuscript are therefore fairly rare: a group of fifteen leaves in the Chester Beatty Library is the major known group of them (Leach 1995, pp. 321–24). The designs round the borders of the dictionary pages picture flowers, animals and birds both real

and fantastic, or humans, who can include Bhils, yogis, Europeans as well as all kinds of Persians and Indians such as cupbearers and scholars as here. The figures are normally arranged five to a page and interacting one with another and are interspersed with plant designs that flow freely between the figures. The decorative idea is of course based on the pages with figures from Jahangir's great album begun in 1599, although in that album the figures are less regularly placed as well as coloured (see Beach 2011, figs 2, 11 & 12, for some of these earlier designs). The decoration of a Hafiz manuscript for Jahangir in 1605–06 (Losty 1985) has five figures arranged to a page but within cartouches, so that the decoration of this dictionary marks a new arrangement freed from the regularity of the cartouches. This remained the norm for Mughal border decoration right up until the time of the *Late Shah Jahan Album* in the 1640s–50s.

**Provenance**  
 Private Swiss collection

**Literature**  
 Beach, M.C., 'Aqa Riza and Abu'l Hasan' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 211–30  
 Leach, L.Y., *Mughal and other Indian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library*, London, 1995  
 Losty, J.P., 'The "Bute Hafiz" and the development of border decoration in the manuscript studio of the Mughals', *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 127, 1985, pp. 855–72



### An Album page with St Agnes holding a Lamb and a Flask

Golconda, c. 1650  
Brush drawing with coloured washes and gold  
Folio 28.2 × 18.3 cm  
Painting 12.3 × 5.5 cm

Mounted in an album page with two quatrains of Persian verses above and below, the latter from ‘Omar Khayyam, and with inner and outer gold-decorated borders, the latter comprising large drawings of flowers and leaves in gold. On the reverse Persian verses written by ‘Ali Fakhr al-Din in clouds surrounded by arabesques of flowers on a gold ground, signed *bande-ye al-e ‘ali fakhr al-din ghafara allah dhanbahu* (‘The slave of the family of ‘Ali, (‘Ali) Fakhr al-Din, may God forgive his sin’), with an inner blue and gold border and an outer border as on the recto.

On the right panel (shown) stands a woman clearly derived from a European print of a saint, who is holding a lamb, the symbol of the young martyred St Agnes. The European influence seems to have been filtered through Safavid Iran, since her pose and clothing reflect the many standing figures of females from that school in the 17th century. European religious prints had some influence on that school as they did on Mughal and Deccani schools – see for instance Mary and Joseph from the school of Riza-yi ‘Abbasi (Christie’s London, 6 October 2011, lot 223). The woman wears a Persian costume of a long-sleeved long inner robe and over this a long sleeveless outer robe fastened down the middle and secured by a cloth round her waist. Her long tresses cascade down her back with some of her hair caught up in the Deccani manner into a chignon on the top of her head secured by a blue ribbon.

Apart from her costume, the Persian influence is reflected in the swaying contrapposto of her pose. The Golconda style for much of its span was under considerable Persian influence in both the 16th and 17th centuries – for the latter see Zebrowski 1983, figs 140 & 148.

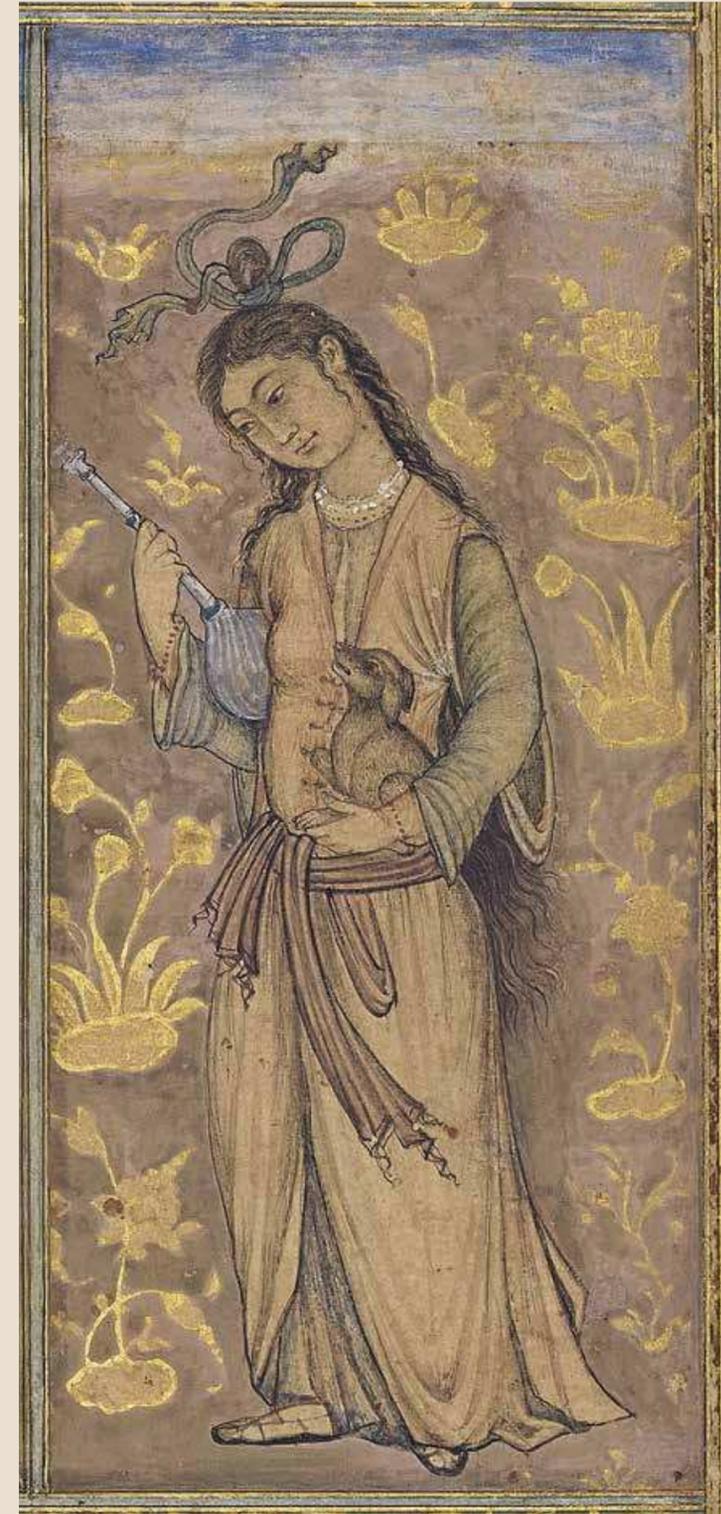
Full-length prints of St Agnes tend to show the lamb at her feet rather than in her arm, but a half-length print of St Agnes by A.B. Bolswert after Rubens seems relevant to our image, with the lamb in one arm and the virgin martyr’s palm in the other with similarly arranged tresses. The palm of the original has here presumably not been understood and has disappeared in favour of what appears to be a rosewater sprinkler with an elegantly twisted ribbed body.

The original outline of the saint was coloured in with light washes and the drawing was then reinforced with a thicker brush line. She stands against a lilac ground extended at the top to include a blue and gold sky, no doubt when the album page was put together, to match that of the adjacent archer portrait. At that time the painted gold flowers were added in imitation of its neighbour. For other Deccani drawings of Christian subjects from the mid-17th century, see Falk and Archer 1981, nos 442–48.

On the left panel (not illustrated: Mughal, 1620–30, opaque pigments and gold, 12.3 × 5.4 cm) is an archer wearing a white *jama* over white *paijama* and a heavy brocade *patka* suspended from a belt with gold ornaments. He has a red turban on his head and he holds a bow in his left hand and an arrow in his right, while a dagger with a richly decorated gold hilt is stuck through his waistband. He wears ropes of pearls studded with large gemstones around his neck, indicating that this portrait is meant to be a prince, with a distinctive profile. His neck hair is caught up under his turban. His aquiline nose and small, pursed mouth are very distinctive and he is almost certainly Sultan Parviz, Jahangir’s second son. For an imperial portrait of Sultan Parviz, see Stronge 2002, pl. 87, where his appearance is a close match to ours although without the apparent beard.

#### Literature

- Falk, T., and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1981  
Stronge, S., *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book 1560–1660*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2002  
Zebrowski, M., *Deccani Painting*, Sotheby Publications, University of California Press, London and Los Angeles, 1983



### A Prince and his Mistress in an Embrace

Mughal India, c. 1640  
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
 Folio 26.7 × 17.5 cm  
 Painting 18.8 × 12 cm, surrounded by a border with a gold floral scroll and laid down on an album page with plain red margins

A young prince holds a woman in a close embrace. They gaze ardently into each other's eyes while he places his right hand on her breast and his left hand pulls her closer. She has been pulled off balance and has had boldly to advance her left leg to press more closely up against him, so that her garments float out behind her. It is this behaviour perhaps, unusually forward in a Mughal painting that has made the attendant coyly avert her gaze and make a face, or perhaps even have an attack of jealousy. The figures are all dressed in the lightest of transparent garments, a *jama* for him and *peshwaz* for the women all worn over *paijama* or *shalwar*, with long golden *dupattas* for the women. The scene is set on a terrace with cypress trees intertwined with blossoms, symbolic perhaps of this passionate scene, all framed by willow trees. The green background beyond merges into a sky streaked with gold and other colours in the manner of *Payag* (Seyller 2011, fig. 10), a stormy sky that matches the passions being unleashed below. Such streaked skies became increasingly fashionable towards the end of the century.

The women have the darkly heavy features that *Payag* seems to have made fashionable in Mughal women, as can be seen in a painting of a prince embracing a woman on a bed that has been attributed to *Payag* (Seyller 2011, fig. 11). In that painting, now in the Aga Khan Museum, we can see the same subtle shading of the faces of the women as in our painting. This contrasts with the bold clean lines of the face of the prince, who is perhaps identifiable, as he is surely intended for a portrait of an imperial Mughal prince. With his slim figure, long nose, sideburn curling at the bottom and little moustache he is in fact close to the portrait of the

prince in the Aga Khan Museum painting, whom John Seyller has identified as Aurangzeb around the age of twenty. This seems to be the age of our prince too. Sometime between 1637 and 1640 Aurangzeb grew a beard. At the date of his marriage in 1637 his facial appearance was much as it appears in our painting (see Beach et al. 1997, pls 43 & 45), whereas by 1640 all three of Shah Jahan's older sons had grown beards (*ibid.*, pl. 44). In his younger days Aurangzeb was not so averse to sensual pleasures as he later became. According to Linda Leach he is portrayed as the hero Bahram Gur in a *Khamsa of Nizami* manuscript commissioned by the prince in the early 1640s (Leach 1998, no. 30).

The detail of our painting is very fine, in particular the treatment of the textiles with their intricate floral patterns, and their exquisite hemlines with gold and/or pearl borders, as well as the way their folds are treated. The same composition with similar cypresses and willow trees and blossoms behind is found again in the double portraits of Shah Jahan and Dara Shikoh (Leach 1995, no. 3.33; Wright 2008, no. 77). The length of the hanging *jama*, nearer the prince's ankles than his knees, while more usual later in the century is still not unheard of late in Shah Jahan's reign as in a portrait of Shah Shuja' in Dublin from this period (Wright 2008, no. 81).

The original collector of this painting, Mr Kleon Kittas, spent much of the early part of the 20th century in India. He was reported to have been an adviser on Western art to several royal collectors there and to have received items from a royal patron as a token of thanks for his crucial services.

*Provenance*  
 Kleon Kittas and thence by descent

*Literature*  
 Beach, M. C., Koch, E., and Thackston, W., *King of the World, the Padshahnama*, Azimuth, London, 1997  
 Leach, L.Y., *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library*, Scorpion Cavendish, London, 1995  
 Leach, L.Y., *Paintings from India: The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, vol. VIII, Nour Foundation, London, 1998  
 Seyller, J., 'Payag' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 321–36  
 Wright, Elaine, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library Dublin*, Art Services International, Alexandria, VA, 2008



### A Princess seated on a Throne beneath a Tree, with two female Attendants

Mughal, c. 1675  
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
 Folio 35.7 × 29.3 cm  
 Painting 20.2 × 3.1 cm, with green inner border, laid down on an album page with wide blue outer margins flecked with gold  
 Reverse with a painting of a flower, Mughal, 18th century

A princess is seated in a European-style throne-chair covered in acanthus leaf scrolls and with cabriole legs. She holds out her hand to grasp a wine cup from a tray proffered by an attendant. Behind her another attendant holds a flywhisk. The princess wears a rich brocade *shalwar* embroidered with flower sprigs, a *patka* embroidered with what appear to be red irises, an open-fronted transparent muslin *peshwaz* and a similarly transparent muslin *orhni* draped loosely over her head and shoulders. Her hair is worn loose and falls down over her shoulders in attractive curls. She sits with one leg crossed over the other having discarded her brocade slipper allowing the rich magenta colour of her nail and foot dye to be seen. Her companions are scarcely less richly dressed in striped *shalwar* and similarly transparent overgarments. A row of plants including irises and pinks decorates the foreground. The scene is set under a heavily overhanging willow tree with a flat receding landscape dotted with clumps of grass, that is possibly influenced by a similar landscape in a painting in the *Late Shah Jahan Album* that has been attributed to Govardhan c. 1640 (Leach 1995, no. 3.49; Wright 2008, no. 68).

The powerful presence of the princess in this scene suggests that the artist intends it to be a person of consequence such as Jahanara, Shah Jahan's eldest child and her father's confidante after the death of her mother Mumtaz Mahal in 1633. That the portraiture in our painting is intended for an important personage is indicated by a slightly later but closely related Bikaner version of this painting (Topsfield 1980, no. 16, col. pl. 5). The faces of the women convey their strong characters, with a sense of realism as if painted from life. However, paintings done from life of the ladies of the harem are

extremely rare in Mughal painting, as idealised portraits done by artists who had no access to the royal women were the norm.

The whole atmosphere of the painting suggests the artist was familiar with Payag's later work, although he has not adopted Payag's darkly luminous colours and chiaroscuro effects. For Payag's work see in particular Dye 1991 and Seyller 2011. However, the loose streaky sky, the undifferentiated ground and the somewhat regimented foreground plants suggest for our painting a somewhat later date in the reign of Aurangzeb. A painting of a woman standing in a landscape amid flowers in the Los Angeles County Museum from around 1675 is a good stylistic comparison (Pal 1993, no. 82). This has the woman dressed similarly to our princess in brocaded *shalwar* decorated with flowering sprigs and a heavy *patka* decorated with a row of red flowers. Likewise, the sky is painted in similar streaks of red and gold rather haphazardly applied contrasting with the regimented line of flowers in the foreground.

#### Provenance

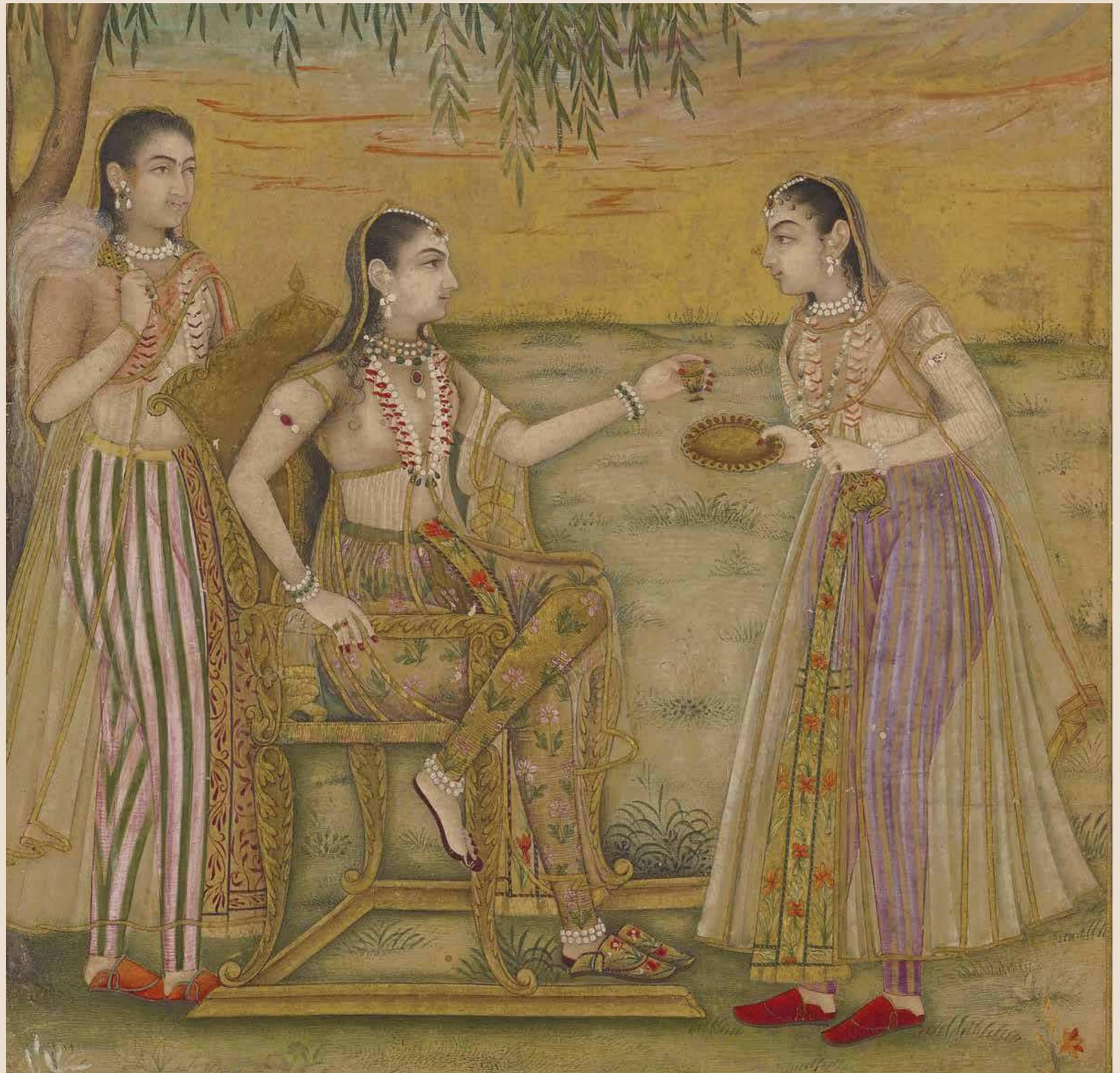
Sven Gahlin collection, acquired 1965  
 Prof. R.A. Dara, London

#### Literature

Dye, J.M., III, 'Payag' in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. P. Pal, South Asia Books, Bombay, 1991, pp. 119–34  
 Leach, L.Y., *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings in the Chester Beatty Library*, Scorpion Cavendish, London, 1995  
 Pal, P., *Indian Painting: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collections, Volume I, 1000–1700*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1993  
 Seyller, J., 'Payag' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 321–36  
 Topsfield, A., *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria*, Melbourne, 1980  
 Wright, E., *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library Dublin*, Art Services International, Alexandria, VA, 2008



A Princess seated on a Throne beneath  
a Tree, with two female Attendants  
*Detail*



### Maharaja Bakhat Singh of Nagaur entering Nagaur on Horseback

Attributed to Dalchand, Mughal style in Marwar, c. 1725  
Brush drawing with pigments and gold on paper  
32 × 22.3 cm

Inscribed in Persian in *nasta'liq* script: *in taswir-i maharaj bakhat singh dar nagaur* ('likeness of Maharaja Bakhat Singh in Nagaur') and on the reverse in Rajasthani in *devanagari* script: *asabi maharajadh(i)raj maharajsri Bakhat Singhji riche* ('the image is of Maharajadhiraj Maharaj Bakhat Singh')

Maharaja Bakhat Singh of Nagaur and Jodhpur (b. 1706, r. 1751–52) was the second son of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur (r. 1707–24), whom he murdered in 1724, at the instigation of his elder brother Abhai Singh, who then claimed the throne (r. 1724–49). Bakhat Singh was rewarded for his murderous role with the rule of the *thikana* (local fiefdom) of Nagaur, ousting the branch of the Rathors that had ruled there for a hundred years. Despite being troubled by rebellions from the other brothers, and by their relations with the other Rajput courts and with Delhi, Abhai Singh and Bakhat Singh 'presided over sophisticated courts which produced some of the finest paintings done in Marwar' (Crill 2000, p. 64). On the death of Maharaja Abhai Singh, the throne passed to his disagreeable son Ram Singh (r. 1749–51). Maharaja Bakhat Singh of Nagaur succeeded to the throne of Jodhpur in 1751 after his nephew was defeated in battle, only to be murdered a year later, according to James Tod, the historian of the Rajputs, by a niece, the widow of Maharaja Iswari Singh of Jaipur, by means of a poisoned robe.

The drawing shows Bakhat Singh riding an elegantly attenuated horse with one attendant walking beside him holding a staff of office and two behind him holding a *morchha* and a royal *pankha* (fan) with a solar standard. A large aureole surrounds the Maharaja's head. The rich jewels on the Maharaja's chest and the silvery sheen imparted to his horse's mane and tail add striking effects to the otherwise subdued colouring of this drawing. The line is firm and assured for the figures, the work of a master artist, while the background ideas have just been brushed in, indicating that this is a study for another work. The study as it is now does not justify the Persian inscription referring to Nagaur, suggesting

that some topographical element has disappeared, probably from the left side. McNerney suggests (2011, p. 571) that the artist Dalchand planned a companion painting to his equestrian portrait of Maharaja Abhai Singh still in Jodhpur (*ibid.*, fig. 4) which has the same attendants in the same positions but with further attendants in front and a view of Delhi in the background. This would date our painting to around 1725 when Bakhat Singh took possession of Nagaur just after his brother had secured his own throne in Jodhpur itself and before they started quarrelling. The Rajasthani inscription on the reverse with the full royal titles must have been added in Jodhpur after he gained the throne in 1751.

Dalchand, the son of the influential Mughal and Kishangarh artist Bhavanidas, probably began his training in Lahore when Prince Mu'azzam was Subadar, moving to Delhi around 1707 when Mu'azzam succeeded as Bahadur Shah, where he worked in the royal atelier (see McNerney 2011, figs 1 & 2, for paintings from his time in Delhi). Recent research (Crill 2000, p. 66; McNerney 2011, p. 571) indicates that he moved to Jodhpur around 1724, working there until 1728, when he went on to Kishangarh, joining his father Bhavanidas, who had moved there from Delhi in 1719. Inscriptions on the *verso* of two Jodhpur paintings refer to Dalchand as *dilli ra chitara Dalchand* ['the Delhi artist Dalchand'], a further confirmation that he was trained at the Mughal atelier (Crill 2000, pp. 67–69, figs 37 & 38).

For other works by or attributed to this artist while working at Jodhpur see Crill 2000, figs 37–42; McNerney 2011, figs 3–7. For other portraits of Maharaja Bakhat Singh, see Crill 2000, figs 67–72; Topsfield and Beach 1992, no. 26; Diamond et al. 2008, no. 9.

#### Provenance

Sven Gahlin collection  
Howard Hodgkin collection

#### Exhibited

*Indian Drawing*, Hodgkin and McNerney 1983, no. 15

#### Published

McNerney 2011, fig. 5

#### Literature

Crill, R., *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style*, India Book House Ltd, Bombay, 2000  
Diamond, D., Glynn, C., and Jasol, K.S., *Garden & Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2008  
Hodgkin, H., and McNerney, T., *Indian Drawing*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1983  
McNerney, T., 'Dalchand', in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 563–78  
Topsfield, A., and Beach, M.C., *Indian Paintings and Drawings from the Collection of Howard Hodgkin*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1992



### Sri Raga

Hyderabad, c. 1760  
 Opaque pigments with gold and silver  
 Folio 40 × 25.1 cm  
 Painting 24.3 × 15.1 cm, within a replacement album page

A prince sits with crossed legs and his knees pulled up supported by a maroon scarf tied round them while listening to the music of a *vina* played by a *yogini* lady with hennaed hands and hair worn long and loose, accompanied by a horse-headed *kinnara* who beats time with little cymbals. The prince is sitting under a domed cupola attended by the usual attendants with *morchhal* and scarf and others bearing dishes. The scene is set on a white marble terrace with parterres of flowers, orange trees and splashing fountains. The terrace overlooks a lake beyond which are hills with distant white buildings. The sun has set and turned the sky pink as well as the clouds in the west while above in the dark sky the stars shine brightly.

This page is closely related to what is called the Hyderabad *Ragamala* in the Richard Johnson collection in the British Library (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 426). This fine set of thirty-six paintings was collected by Johnson during his appointment as Resident at the court of Nizam 'Ali Khan in Hyderabad from 1784 to 1785. Nizam 'Ali (1762–1802) was a patron of music, poetry and painting and it is not surprising therefore that splendid series of *Ragamala* paintings in a delicate and refined court style should have been produced by Hyderabad court artists during the reign of Nizam 'Ali. Closely related are three sets in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaja Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai (22.287–322 and 22.323–358), the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, and the Indian Museum, Kolkata. It is evident that these sets share the sophisticated court painting tradition of the Johnson *Ragamala*, while many other such series from apparently later in the century which share similar iconography are less refined and done

for less discriminating patrons. The five principal court sets as well as the others are treated in tabular form by Ebeling (1973, p. 102), where the conformities of iconography are shown, and discussed individually under his numbers 69–73. Our page comes from a set of six sophisticated Hyderabad court paintings formerly in the Eva and Konrad Seitz collection (Seyller and Seitz 2010, nos 47–52), with two other pages from the same set now in the Linden Museum, Stuttgart, while many other related pages exist (*ibid.*, p. 146, n. 3).

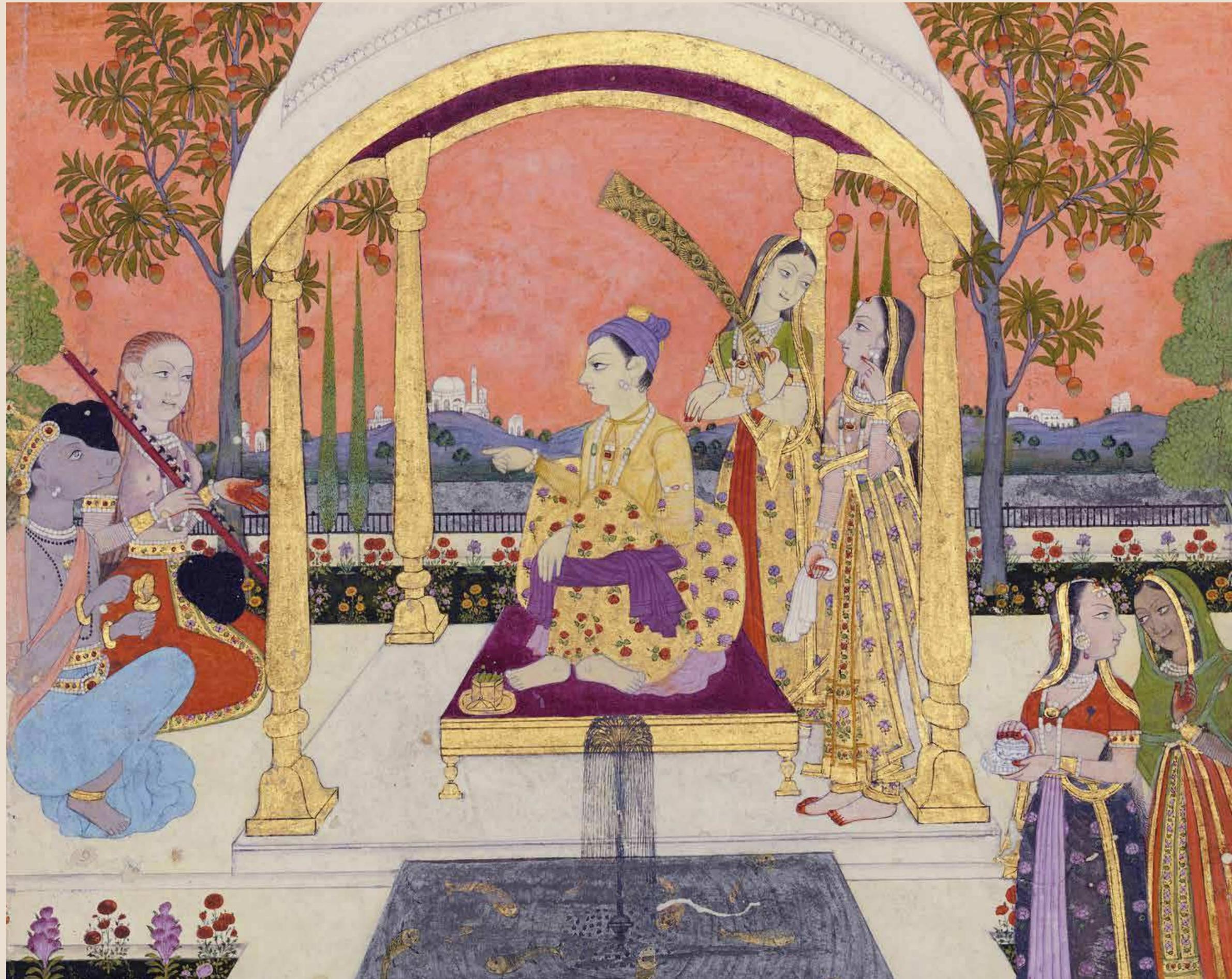
There was apparently no rigid tradition of *ragamala* classification in 18th-century Hyderabad, and the artists seem to have supplemented their series with subjects of uncertain iconography. The Johnson *Ragamala* has no inscriptions at all, while ours sometimes have brief Persian notes on the verso. Our page matches almost exactly the *Sri Raga* in the Johnson set (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 426, xxiii). The architectural settings of these principal court *Ragamala* sets would seem to have been influenced by 18th-century European topographical prints in view of the keen interest they display in 'correct' perspective and vanishing points.

*Provenance*  
 Eva and Konrad Seitz collection

*Published*  
 Seyller, J., and Seitz, K., *Mughal and Deccani Paintings*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2010, no. 49

*Literature*  
 Ebeling, K., *Ragamala Painting*, Ravi Kumar, Basel, 1973  
 Falk, T., and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1981  
 Seyller, J., and Seitz, K., *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2010





**Kakubh Ragini**

Hyderabad, c. 1760–80  
 Opaque pigments with gold and silver  
 Folio 25.5 × 17 cm  
 Painting 22.5 × 14 cm  
 On the reverse a sheet of Persian calligraphy

A lady sits on a rocky hillock under a tree playing the *vina* to the birds gathered round her. Four peacocks perch in or under a tree nearby and three cranes strut in the lotus pool at her feet.

The subject is the same as the Kakubh *ragini* in the Johnson *Ragamala* (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 426xxi) and other Hyderabad *ragamalas* of the 1760s, although less sophisticated in treatment. In the Johnson page the peacocks are gathered round her without any displaying themselves whereas in our page they are all in front of her and one is in full display mode.

Please read previous entry for further information on Hyderabad *Ragamala* paintings from this period.

*Provenance*  
 Eva and Konrad Seitz collection

*Literature*  
 Ebeling, K., *Ragamala Painting*, Ravi Kumar, Basel, 1973  
 Falk, T., and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1981  
 Seyller, J., and Seitz, K., *Mughal and Deccani Paintings*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2010



### Krishna attempts to placate his annoyed beloved Radha

Andhra Pradesh, probably Tirupati, 1720–30  
 Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper  
 Folio 27.5 × 19.4 cm  
 Painting 26 × 16 cm  
 Inscribed on reverse in Hindi in *nagari*: *sri Thakur Radhika ji kummanava hai* ('the Lord is placating the cross Radha')

Krishna clutches Radha under the chin and grasps her left arm while gazing at her ardently. She meanwhile raises her other arm to ward him off and lowers her gaze avoiding his eyes, thus displaying her displeasure. Radha is often angry with Krishna for the attention he pays to the other *gopis*. The scene is set in an architectural pavilion bedecked with canopies from which hang cascades of jasmine flowers.

South Indian painting at this period is marked by immense round limbs and heads, with heavy modelling, and wide open staring eyes, sometimes with the pupils surrounded by white as here and sometimes resting on the lower lid. Stylistically our painting seems linked to those produced in Tirupati in southern Andhra Pradesh. Tirupati is the pilgrimage town beneath the Tirumalai hill on which is situated the temple of Sri Venkatesvara, a great shrine of pan-Indian importance. Tirupati souvenirs obviously catered for northern pilgrims as well as those from the south, since the inscriptions can be in *nagari* (Dallapiccola 2010, nos 12.2 & 12.3). Here in our painting the language is Hindi but that can differ. For a closely related painting apparently from the same series similarly showing Krishna attempting to appease Radha, see Losty 2010, no. 54, but with a Rajasthani inscription, and for another showing the foster-mother Yasoda with the baby Krishna, see Michell 1995, fig. 194.

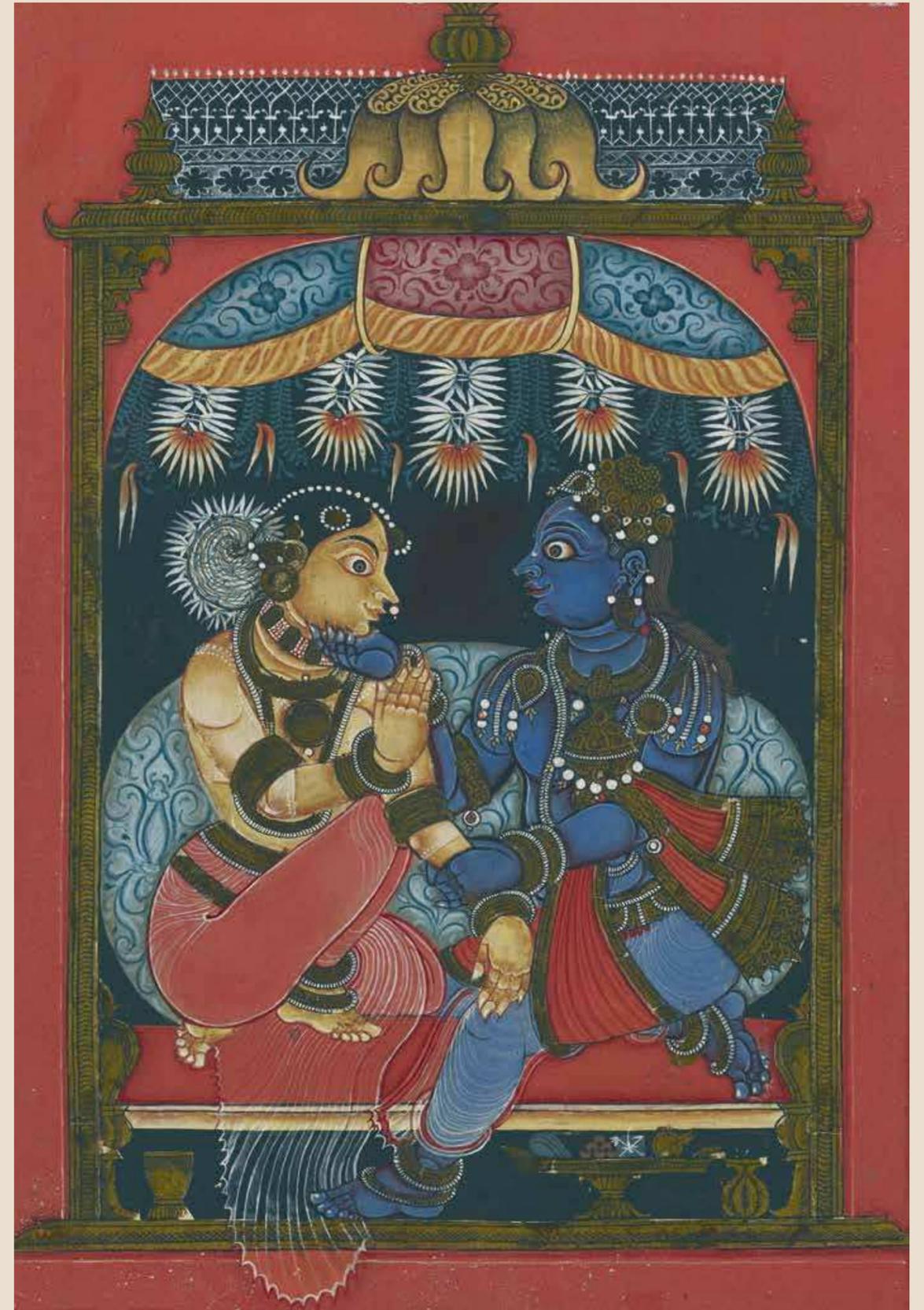
A painting in the British Museum of a devotee paying homage to Sri Venkatesvara with a *nagari* inscription is dated by Dallapiccola (2010, no. 12.3) to the late 18th century. Appasamy, however, on the basis of the painted south Indian shrine of Sri Venkatesvara which had reached the Francke Foundation in Halle by 1734, prefers a date in the

early decades of that century (1980, fig. 10, and pp. 78–79). In the painted panels of the shrine (*ibid.*, figs 4 & 28), the divinities stand within architectural niches from which cascades of jasmine flowers are suspended as in our painting. A somewhat later shrine from the same source now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (*ibid.*, fig. 29) lacks these cascades of jasmine flowers.

In addition to paintings of the deities enshrined there, the artists at Tirupati produced sets of the ten avatars of Visnu (Dasavatara), stories from the life of Krishna as here, and other Vaisnava themes. A series of Dasavatara subjects painted on cloth in the Jagdish Mittal collection in Hyderabad is also relevant to this Tirupati school of painting. Mittal (2007, pl. 34) reproduces one of the set showing Krishna lifting the Govardhan mountain in which Krishna's appearance is closely allied to that in our painting. A series of dispersed small cloth paintings, probably once forming a torana or hanging over a door, with devotional images and repeated images of Sri Venkatesvara, thereby indicating a Tirupati provenance, is also a product of the same school. For the three panels in the Freer/Sackler in Washington D.C., see Vidya Dehejia's note in Lawton and Lentz 1998, pp. 96–97.

*Provenance*  
 Private French collection

*Literature*  
 Appasamy, J., *Tanjavur Painting of the Maratha Period*, Abhinav Publications, New Delhi, 1980  
 Dallapiccola, A., *South Indian Paintings: A Catalogue of the British Museum Collections*, British Museum Press, London, 2010  
 Lawton, T., and Lentz, T.W., *Beyond the Legacy: Anniversary Acquisitions for the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M Sackler Gallery*, Freer/Sackler Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1998  
 Losty, J.P., *Indian Miniatures from the James Ivory Collection*, Francesca Galloway, London, 2010  
 Michell, G., *Architecture and Art of Southern India: Vijayanagar and the Successor States 1350–1750*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1995  
 Mittal, J., *Sublime Delight through Works of Art from Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad, 2007



### The Disgruntled Princes waylay Krishna and his Bride Satya on their Return to Dwarka

A Leaf from the Dispersed Early Rajput *Bhagavata Purana*, possibly from Mewar, painter H, c. 1520–25

Opaque pigments on paper

18 × 22 cm

Inscribed above: ... *yudhu* [battle] / Arjuna and below Sa-

Nana and Hirabhai; on the verso with the text in Sanskrit of *Bhagavata Purana* X, canto 58, vv. 50–55

The series from which this painting comes is the earliest known Rajput attempt at illustrating the *Bhagavata Purana*. The text was written in its present form during the 9th and 10th centuries and comprises 18,000 verses divided into twelve books. The 10th canto, which deals in detail with the life of Vishnu's avatar Krishna, is the heart of the text and most often illustrated as it concentrates on the infant Krishna and his pranks, his overcoming of various demons including finally his wicked uncle Kamsa, King of Mathura, and his growing involvement with the cowgirls or *gopis* as he gradually reveals himself as divine. In his maturity he migrated with his followers to Dwarka on the coast of Gujarat and from there continued with his divine mission to rid the world of demonic kings as well as rescuing from unwanted marriages many maidens who fell in love with him.

The Early Rajput style of the early 16th century is common to a small group of manuscripts that mark the final emergence of a distinctive Rajput style from its tentative forerunners in the various Jain and Hindu manuscripts of mediaeval India. Characteristic of the style are the attractive stylisation of the human figure with faces in profile and huge fish-shaped eyes, the large colourful trees, the solid grounds and the division of the sky by a wavy white line (definitely not a horizon) between blue above and black below. The 10th canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* was illustrated in this style with over three hundred paintings originally, of which some two hundred are known. This is the most important Hindu manuscript painting from the pre-Akbar period, although its exact dating and provenance remain a matter of scholarly debate. For a survey of the relevant material, see Topsfield 2002,

ch. 2, who argues for a provenance in Mewar, and for a contrary opinion see Ehn bom 2011, who prefers the provenance favoured by Indian scholars, i.e. the Delhi–Agra area, more specifically in Ehn bom's case Mathura, the centre of Krishna worship.

Ehn bom distinguishes ten different hands in the extant manuscript pages terming them Hands A–J, who were each responsible for a section of canto X. Our painting comes from the section for which Painter H was responsible, from cantos 50 to half way through canto 59. He is characterised by Ehn bom (2011, p. 86) as a delightful and relaxed artist who takes particular delight in bold juxtaposition of saturated colours and who arranges his compositions around a central point so that they are often fan-shaped. He is with Painter A one of the most compositionally ambitious artists of the entire series, who inventively combines curving lines with rectangular forms. Other pages attributed to him displaying these characteristics are in the San Diego Museum of Art (Archer 1968, no. 1c), in the Bellak Collection in Philadelphia (Mason 2001, no. 9), and in the private collections of Ludwig Habihorst, Horst Metzger and the former Paul Walter collections.

The present page tells the story of Krishna's marriage to Satya, the daughter of Nagnajit, the king of Koshala, who had set as a condition that any prince who wished to marry his daughter should first subdue seven wild bulls. The king was willing to agree to the marriage of his daughter to Krishna, but no prince had previously passed the test of defeating the bulls. Krishna of course was able to do so easily: he divided himself into seven and subdued each bull individually. The king and his queens were delighted. The king gave away ten thousand cows as a wedding gift, along with three thousand maidens,

#### Literature

Archer, W.G., *Rajput Miniatures from the Collection of Edwin Binney 3rd*, Portland Art Museum, Portland, 1968

Ehn bom, D., *An Analysis and Reconstruction of the Dispersed Bhagavata Purana from the Caurapancasika Group*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1984

Ehn bom, D., 'The Masters of the Dispersed Bhagavata Purana', in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 77–96

Mason, D., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 2001

Topsfield, A., *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2002



The Disgruntled Princes waylay  
Krishna and his Bride Satya on their  
Return to Dwarka  
Detail

nine thousand elephants, and innumerable horses and men, who followed the happy couple back to Dwarka. Our painting picks up the story here for on the way the rival princes who had not passed the test of the bulls waylaid them, but they were driven back by Arjuna who had come along as Krishna's companion on this adventure. Krishna and his bride returned to Dwarka where Satya joined the numerous other brides of Krishna, all of whom thought that she alone enjoyed his favours.

The page bears out Ehnbohm's remarks as to this artist's favourite fan-shaped compositional format and in order to do so Artist H has had to bend the text a little. The centre of his fan is a rectangular compartment containing three of the discontented princes marching off to fight and is surrounded by a semi-circle of elephants charging at one another. At the top Krishna in his chariot reassures Satya, then starts aiming arrows at one of the opposing princes who does the same from his chariot. This elevates one of the princes to a champion status facing Krishna in a single combat that is not in the text, while Arjuna, who alone destroyed the opposing forces, is relegated to a subsidiary role in the chariot below Krishna's on the left. Regardless of his fidelity or otherwise to the text, Artist H has produced a wonderfully balanced composition silhouetting some figures against red in the mediaeval manner set against a dark green ground that is crowded with brilliantly coloured and energetic figures and animals.

The *Bhagavata Purana* series is widely dispersed and almost all major public and private collections have examples from it and references to it will be found in all major works on Indian and Rajput

painting. Almost all the pages from this series have either Sa. Nana, Sa. Mitharam or Hira Bai inscribed upon them, either singly or in various combinations, the most likely explanation being the names of owners who divided the series between them, perhaps at different times.



### Shiva and his Family

Mewar, 1730–50  
 Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
 Folio 30.4 × 24.8 cm  
 Painting 27 × 21.8 cm, within red margins  
 Inscribed in Hindi on the reverse: *sriyava Parvati Bekunth bhavan ba(=bi?) raje hai* ('the young? Parvati is seated in the Vaikuntha heaven')

Shiva is seated on a tiger skin as an ascetic in a twisting posture with long matted hair and wreathed in snakes. Parvati sits beside him in a reverent posture while their two sons Ganesh and Karttikeya stand on either side waving flywhisks. Outside the enclosure are the vehicles of Shiva and Parvati, the bull Nandi and a lion, as well as Virabhadra, one of the chief *ganas* or attendants on Shiva whom Shiva created to disrupt the sacrifice of Daksha. A *gomukha* (cow's head) is the source of the water falling into the little pool in front of them as it is of the Ganges in the Himalayas. Behind the divine couple a mountain rises in vertiginous ascent to the palace at its summit. This more resembles Vishnu's heavenly palace on Vaikuntha than it does Shiva's more austere abode on Kailasa, so the inscription has to be taken literally: Shiva and Parvati have taken up temporary residence beneath Vishnu's heaven of Vaikuntha.

The artist presents an engaging mixture of religious and court ceremonial. Shiva's face is finely depicted. He has his large bolster behind him and is seated within an enclosure set off by red railings, of the sort that kept the less exalted outside the favoured areas in court ceremonies. Parvati wears elaborate jewels and a patterned brocade sari. Andrew Topsfield has drawn attention to several other examples in early 18th-century Mewar painting of this 'symbolic fusion or interpenetration of the heavenly and secular worlds' (2002, pp. 148–52). For another painting of Shiva and Parvati attended by deities in a court setting, see *ibid.*, fig. 126.

*Provenance*  
 Galerie Marco Polo, Paris

*Literature*  
 Topsfield, A., *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2002



### A Sketch of Fools

Mewar, c. 1760  
Brush drawing in black over red outline  
heightened with white  
32.3 × 29.2 cm

Mewar artists were exposed to European subjects from the time of the visit of Johan Ketelaar, the representative of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, to Udaipur in 1711 on his way to the north to negotiate trade privileges with the Mughal emperor. From that time on the exotic Dutchman or 'farangi' became a minor but long-lived theme in Mewar painting up to the 19th century. This whole genre has been explored by Andrew Topsfield (1984/85). Somewhat fanciful but elegant representations of Dutchmen in the early part of the century gave way to versions of other European prints transmitted from the port of Surat and increasingly caricatured by Mewar artists.

In our drawing two elderly men with lined and wrinkled faces, hooked noses and protruding Adam's apple are depicted side by side, each holding his left index finger to the side of his nose and laughing. The one on the left holds a cane, while the one on the right has raised his right hand and gesticulates with it. The page is torn at the bottom.

The drawing is based on a related drawing (see Sotheby's, New York, The Doris Wiener Collection, 20 March 2012, lot 223) that is a reasonably close version of the subject of a Flemish painting attributed to Pieter Balten (1529–1584), some of whose work involves similarly grotesque and humorous figures. The painting depicts a rebus on the Dutch proverb 'the world feeds many fools' (reproduced Sotheby's catalogue 2012, p. 198), obviously transmitted to India via a print. The Mewar drawing based on it has a few major differences, such as the shortening of the pointed hood on the left and the substitution of a bald head and a headdress for the grizzled hair of the man on the right. Our drawing makes use of the figure on

the right of the other drawing with his remarkable hooked nose and then reverses it, no doubt via a *charba*, for his companion. The artist then introduces minor variations such as cranial bumps and differences in the positions of the hands, and also the prominent Adam's apples, which are not in the original. The artist has also not understood the clothing and has given both figures robes revealing their bony shoulders rather than European clothes.

The underdrawing is in rough black lines, subsequently gone over and firmed up with confident black brush lines. Lighter and broader black lines present the many wrinkles the artist is anxious to display. Finally white has been used to highlight the eyebrows, the whites of the eyes and teeth. Their laughing eyes and grinning mouths have an undeniable attraction despite the caricatures of other bodily features.

The Doris Wiener Collection also included another version of the first of these drawings, this one done in wash (lot 224), as well as a coloured painting of our hooked-nosed individual with two other companions, a child and a dog (lot 221), which seems to be a collage of different European caricatures. This latter has a counterpart in the Bellak Collection in Philadelphia (Mason 2001, no. 63). Drawings based on these caricatures filtered through to other studios and were freely interpreted: a Jodhpur version (dated to 1820–30 in Crill 2000, fig. 121) has the figure appearing at a *jharokha* window with his finger tapping his nose.

#### Provenance

Doris Wiener Gallery, New York,  
mid-1970s

#### Literature

Crill, R., *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style*, India Book House Ltd, Bombay, 2000  
Mason, D., *Intimate Worlds: Indian Paintings from the Alvin O. Bellak Collection*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, 2001  
Topsfield, A., 'Ketelaar's Embassy and the Farangi theme in the art of Udaipur' in *Oriental Art*, vol. XXX, 1984/85, pp. 350–67



### The Night of Shab-barat – Ladies with Fireworks on a Terrace

By the artist Mola Bagas, Bikaner, late 18th century  
Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper

Folio 24.1 × 16.2 cm

Painting 19.6 × 12.4 cm

Inscribed on the reverse in Rajasthani in *nagari*: *am jalas Abu* [deleted] *Mahamud re beta ri kivi chai // Mola Bagas pasai lini* ('assembled by Abu son of Muhammad ... Mola Bagas (Muhammad Bakhsh) ??...') and the inventory marks of the Bikaner collection

On a terrace at night ladies are amusing themselves with fireworks. One lady stands, her arm round her friend, and holds a sparkler: she directs its glittering stream into a large basin. Another lady seated on the terrace, melancholy since her flask is empty of wine, is gazing fixedly at the basin. A standing attendant holds a morchhal while another lady on the roof of the pavilion also is holding two more sparklers. A double-branched candelabra beside which two cats play is meant to illuminate the terrace, while along the parapet of the roof of the pavilion are arranged little oil lamps. Behind the terrace is a *char bagh* garden with formal parterres of flowers with a river beyond and a palace and city on a hillside illuminated. The stars sparkle and shooting stars enliven the scene.

Although at the Hindu court of Bikaner this scene might be thought to represent Diwali, it is more likely to be a representation of the Muslim feast of Shab-barat, since the artist is following a well-known iconography for this scene. This feast is held on the eve of the 14th day of the month of Shaban on which a vigil is observed with prayers, feasting and illuminations, and Muslims make offerings and oblations in the names of ancestors. On this night the lives and fortunes of mortals for the coming year are registered in heaven. A painting in the Johnson collection in the British Library from the 1730s and attributed to the artist Govardhan is a precursor of the iconography of our painting (J.20,2: see Falk and Archer 1981, no. 171; Losty and Leach 1998, no. 17).

Mola Bagas or Muhammad Bakhsh is a known Bikaneri artist of the later 18th century, see Krishna 2000, pp. 62–63.

#### Provenance

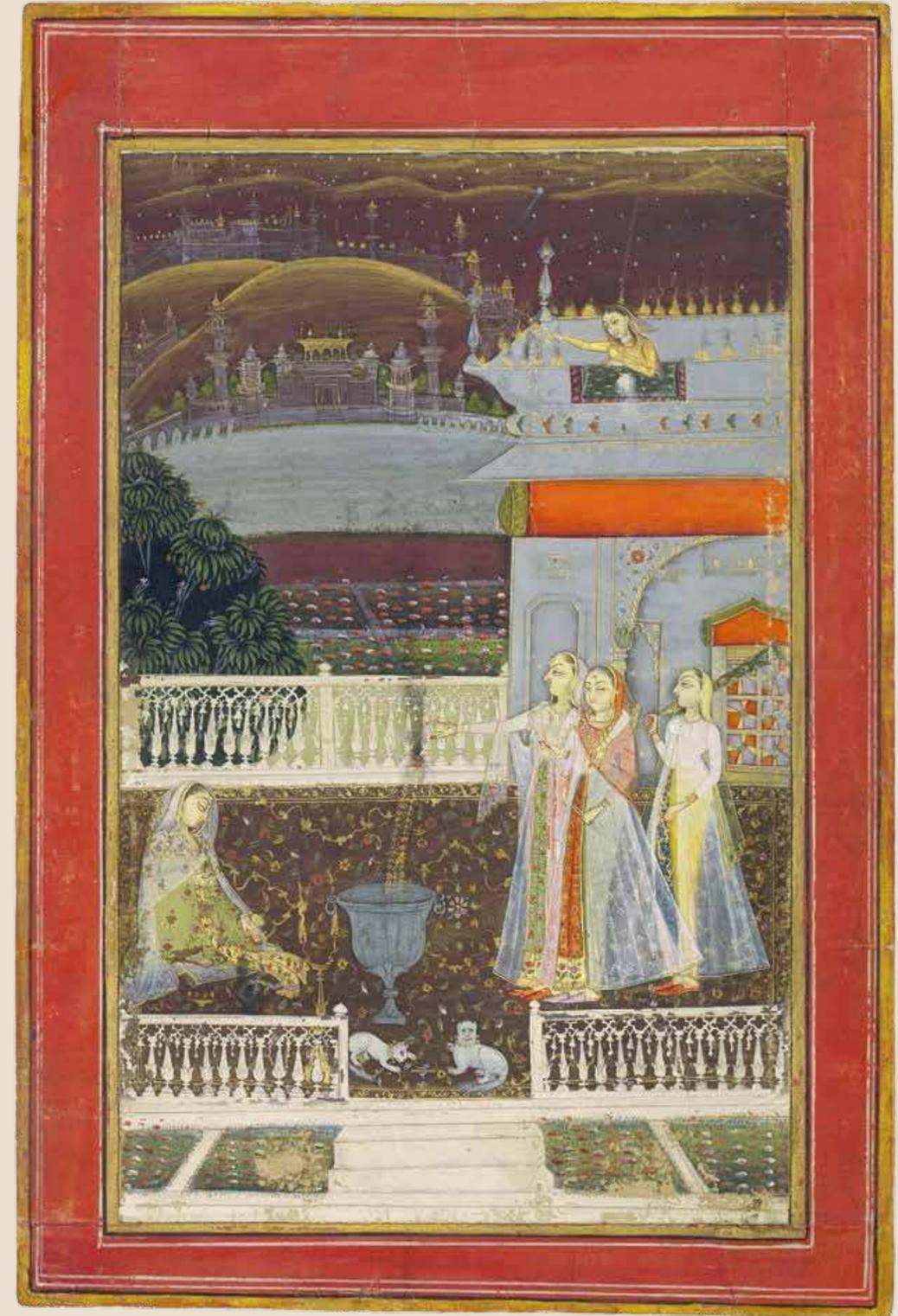
Private collection USA  
Maharajas of Bikaner

#### Literature

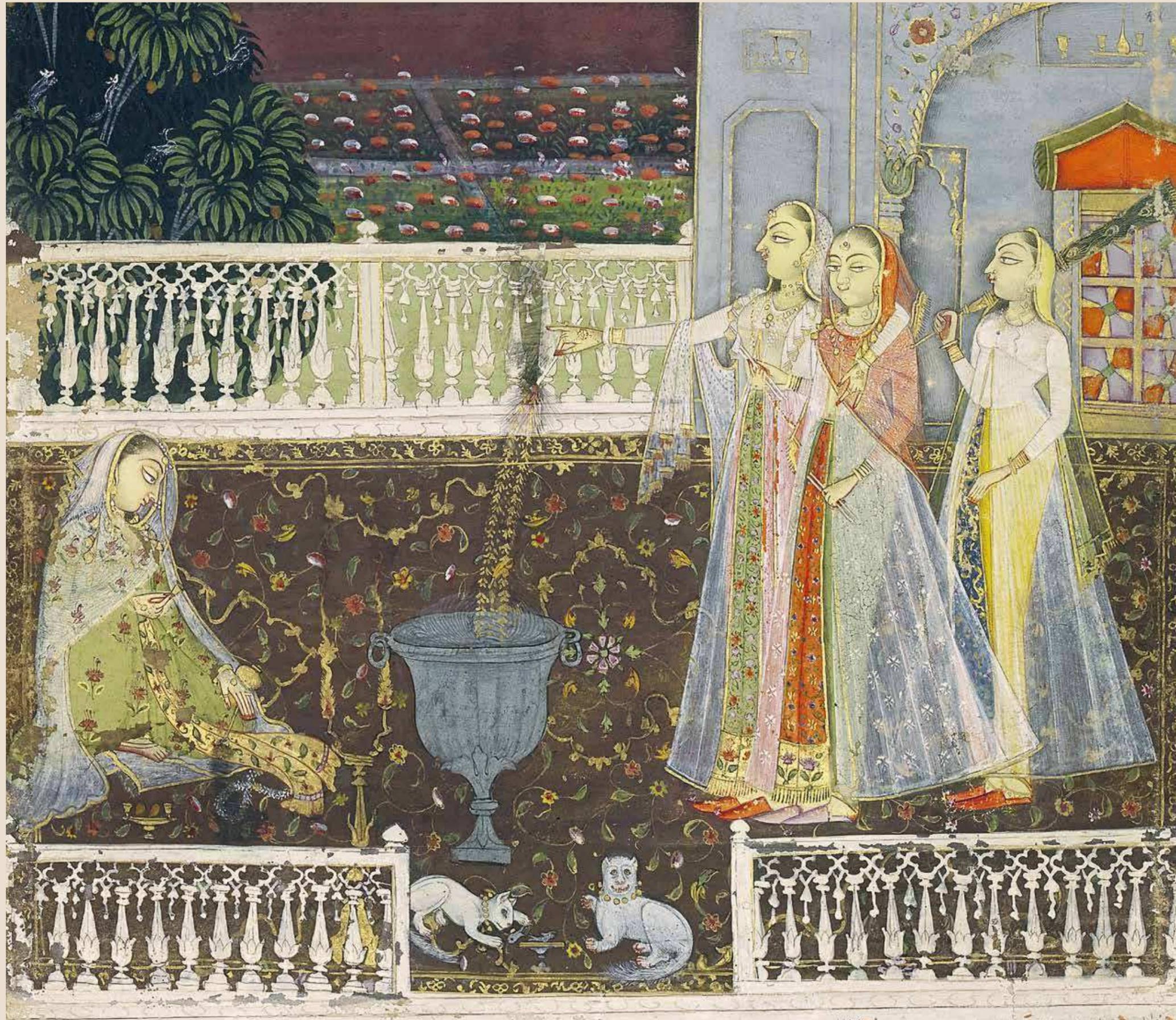
Falk, T., and Archer, M., *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1981

Krishna, N., 'The Umarani Usta Master-Painters of Bikaner and their Genealogy' in *Court Painting in Rajasthan*, ed. A. Topsfield, Marg, Bombay, 2000, pp. 57–64

Losty, J.P., and Leach, L.Y., *Mughal Paintings from the British Library*, Indar Pasricha Fine Art, London, 1998



The Night of Shab-barat –  
Ladies with Fireworks on a Terrace  
*Detail*



### Sita asks Rama to fetch the golden Deer for her

Page from the 'Shangri' *Ramayana* series, Style IV  
By a Pahari artist possibly from Bilaspur, c. 1700–10

Opaque pigments on paper

Folio 21.2 × 31.5 cm

Painting 18.2 × 28.3 cm

Inscribed round the margin with an inscription in Pahari in *takri* script summarising the story.

Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari*: *Aranya* 68

A page from from the Forest Book of the *Ramayana*, the *Aranyakanda*. Rama, Sita and Lakshmana had been living peacefully in the forest for more than twelve years in their exile when they were accosted by the female demon Shurpanakha, who demanded sexual favours first from Rama and then Lakshmana. Both had of course repulsed her, but it was not until she had attacked Sita, thinking that without her around she would succeed with the brothers, that the enraged Lakshmana punished Shurpanakha by cutting off her nose and ears. She eventually appealed to her brother Ravana the king of Lanka, who has come to the forest to exact vengeance and decides to abduct Sita for himself. He sends his minister Maricha disguised as a golden deer in order to tempt Sita to ask Rama if she can have it. Sita stands dramatically in the centre of the painting appealing to the brothers and pointing to what she wants, while the golden deer bounds around behind her in the forest. Rama and Lakshmana are in the hut, armed with their bows and arrows, listening to Sita. The forest is suggested by a few trees scattered over the yellow ground. When the deer has lured both brothers away, Ravana abducts Sita and takes her to Lanka. The painting following our page, when Rama leaves to try to shoot the golden deer, is in the National Museum New Delhi (acc. no. 62.2526 illustrated in Daljeet and Mathur 2013, no. 42).

The painting comes from the famous set of paintings known as the 'Shangri' *Ramayana* series that W.G. Archer thought were executed at Shangri in the eastern Punjab Hills state of Kulu (Archer 1973, pp. 317–30). Archer discerned four major painting styles in the manuscript, of which this is the fourth. More recently, Goswamy and Fischer

#### Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Painting from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, 1973

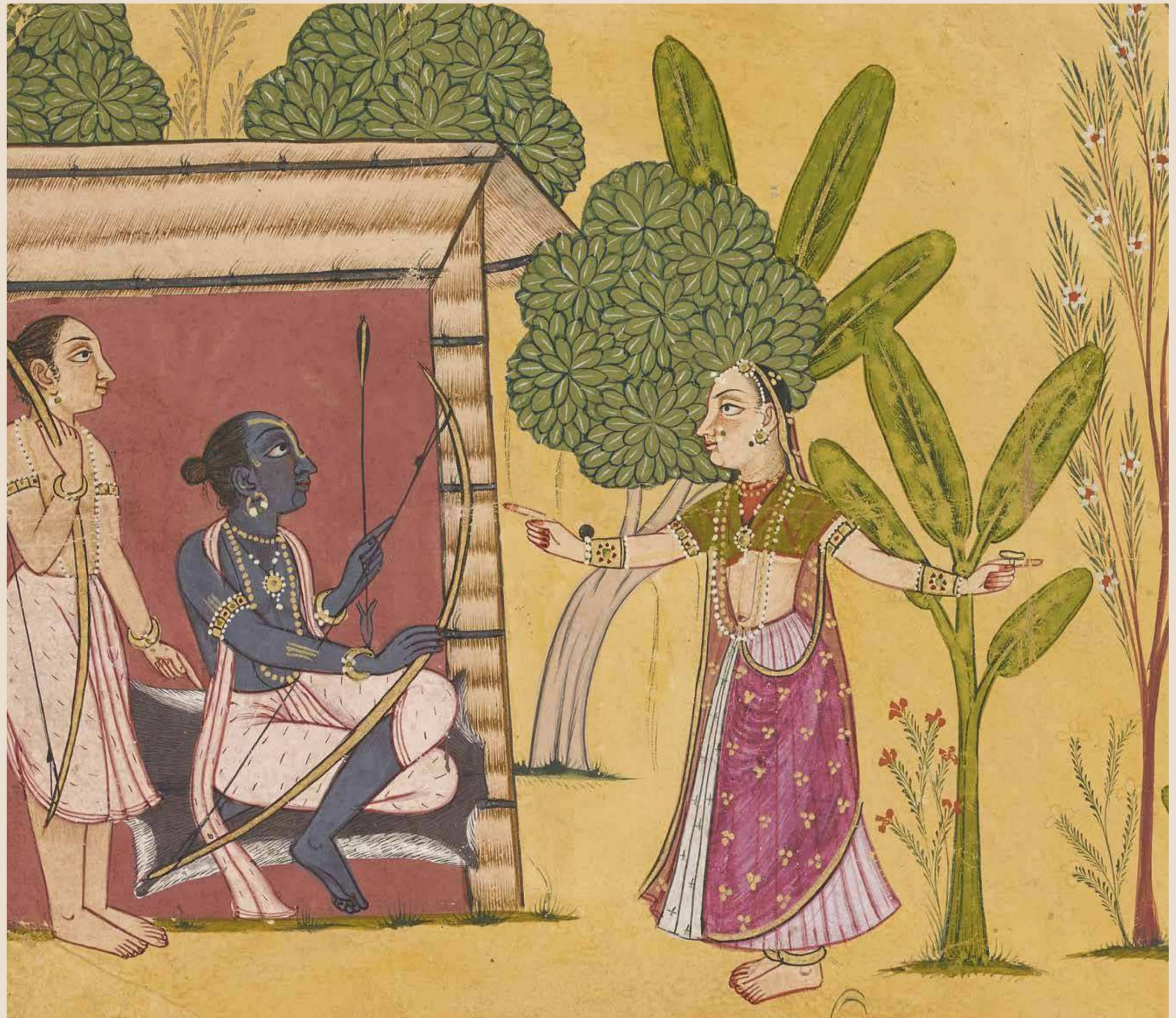
Britschgi, J., and Fischer, E., *Rama und Sita: das Ramayana in der Malerei Indiens*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2008

Daljeet, Dr. Mathur, V.K., *Ramayana in Indian Miniatures – From the Collection of the National Museum*, New Delhi, Brussels, 2013

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009



Sita asks Rama to fetch the golden  
Deer for her  
Detail



(1992, pp. 76–79) questioned this attribution to Kulu and assigned paintings in Archer's first two styles to Bahu near Jammu in the western group of hill states, on the basis of stylistic affinities with a portrait of Raja Kripal Dev of Bahu (one that Archer thought was done by a Kulu artist linked to the Shangri series). They explained the find spot of Shangri, the other end of the Punjab Hills from Bahu, as occasioned by dowry gifts or similar as was often the case with Pahari series. Nevertheless it has not been possible to assign a definite provenance to Styles III and IV, although the latter has, as Archer pointed out, distinct affinities with work from Bilaspur or Mandi. These states are both neighbours of Kulu, suggesting that the unfinished *Ramayana* series left Bahu very early on its journey to the eastern Punjab Hills, for artists from neighbouring states to be called in to finish it soon afterwards.

For discussion as to the disputed origin of the series, see among others Archer 1973, pp. 325–29, Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 76–79, and Britschgi and Fischer 2008, pp. 12–14. Archer's Style IV is found mostly in the Books of the Forest, as here, and of Kiskindha (see Archer 1973, Kulu 5i–iii).

### Gosain Sagargir, a Shaivite Yogi, seated on a Leopard Skin

Attributable to a master of the early Mankot school,  
possibly Meju

Mankot, c. 1700

21.2 × 17.3 cm

Brush drawing with opaque pigments on paper

Inscribed on the recto in *takri* script: *Gosain Sagargir*, the verso  
with a rough tracing in black ink, the mirror-image of the  
recto drawing

The young naked Hindu ascetic sits cross-legged on a leopard skin, his body fully facing the front, his face turned to his left and seen in profile, his hands in his lap concealing his privates. His long hair is piled up on top of his head into a spike, round which a quoit has been placed, and tied up with a cloth. His entire body apart from hands, feet and the lower part of his face has been smeared with white ash. His water-pot and begging bowl are before him and he sits before a fire with the smoke curling upwards. He wears a rosary round his neck and a heavy bracelet adorns his right arm. He is a Shaiva ascetic and appears to be one of the naked *sadhus* who are called Gosains.

Although there are some obvious *pentimenti* in the drawing, its assured line and brilliantly concise rendering of the forms of the male body make for an arresting study. It is close in style to several works attributed to the early Mankot master (active c. 1680–1720) who may be called Meju. The

inscription 'of Meju' inscribed above a portrait in the Chandigarh Museum has caused confusion over the years as to whether it is a portrait of Meju or by him (see Goswamy and Fischer 2011, p. 503, fig. 12, and discussion). The early Mankot master was responsible for two series of *Bhagavata Purana* paintings 1700–10 and a slightly later *Ragamala*, while a whole series of portraits may be attributed to him or are linked to his style (Archer 1973, Mankot 1–23), some of them of great brilliance (Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos 36–39). A particularly arresting image related to our page is his portrayal of the seven great sages (*ibid.*, no. 40) arranged round a sacred fire performing austerities. They are depicted in a variety of postures including one of Jamadagni with full frontal body but his face in profile as is the case with our ascetic. For other comparable Mankot paintings of the period see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, pp. 96–125 and again in their 2011 study.

#### Provenance

Sven Gahlin collection  
Sotheby's, London, 11 December  
1968, lot 92  
W.G. and M. Archer

#### Exhibited

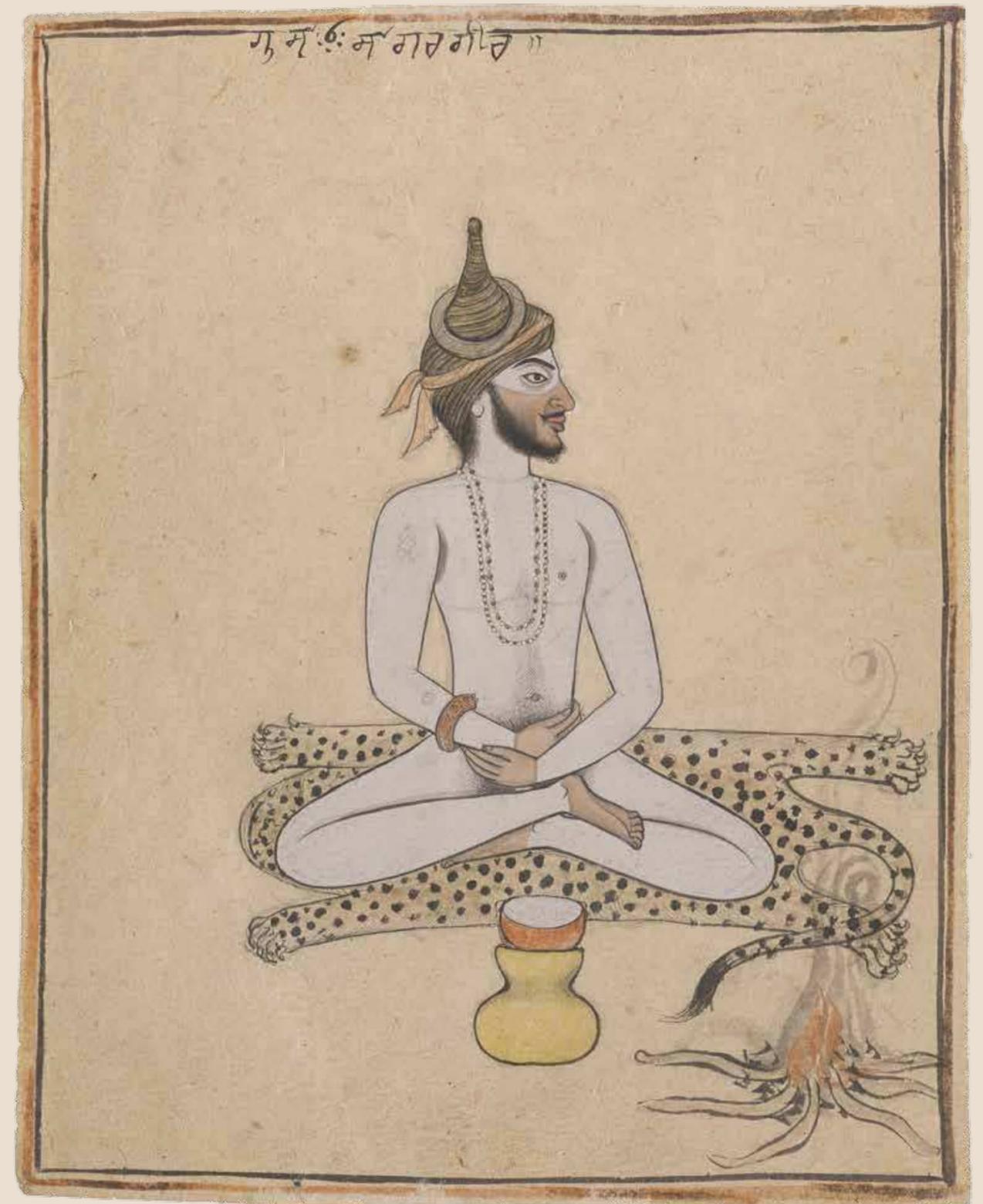
*Tantra*, London 1971  
*In the Image of Man*, London 1982

#### Published

*Tantra* 1972, fig. 362  
Rawson 1973, fig. 137  
*In the Image of Man*, London 1982,  
no. 270

#### Literature

Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, and Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973  
Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009  
Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'The Master at the Court of Mankot, possibly Meju' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 501–14  
*In the Image of Man*, The Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1982  
Rawson, P., *The Indian Cult of Ecstasy*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1973  
*Tantra* [catalogue of an exhibition / organized by Phillip S. Rawson and held at the] Hayward Gallery, London, 30 September–14 November 1971, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1972



### Suhavi Ragini Wife of Megha Raga

Folio from a *Ragamala* series  
 Attributable to an early master of the Bahu school  
 Bahu (Jammu), c. 1700–20  
 Opaque pigments on paper  
 Inscribed above in *takri* script *Suhavi ragini megha di bharaja i* ('Suhavi ragini wife of Megha')  
 21 × 21 cm, with mustard yellow margins,  
 laid down on stout paper

*Ragamala* ('Garland of Ragas') subjects were among the most popular from the earliest times in Rajput painting. Composed of scenes from poetic texts reflecting particular North Indian musical modes, the thirty-six pictures in the plains of India were normally composed of six *ragas*, each with their five 'wives', *raginis*; in the Hills the increased number of eighty-four included the eight 'sons' of each of the *ragas*, *ragaputras*. In this case the illustration is *Suhavi Ragini Wife of Megha*, a seated woman being fanned by another standing with a yak-tailed flywhisk (for another version see Ebeling 1973, p. 285, no. 345, from a contemporary set of drawings from Basohli in the National Museum, New Delhi).

This *Ragamala* illustration is from an important and well-known series produced at Bahu (Jammu) in the early years of the 18th century. Thirty-two illustrations are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Archer 1973, vol. 2, pp. 247–49, under Kulu pls 13(i)–13(xxxii)), six in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Coomaraswamy 1926, pp. 96–99, nos LXVII–LXXII, pls XXXII–XXXIII), and many further examples in private and other institutional collections. A large part of the extant group (including the present miniature) was brought to London by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy before he left with his collections for Boston in 1916. It was said of some of them that while Coomaraswamy was staying with friends in north-west England he befriended their gardener and gave him several miniatures on his departure (see Toby Falk in Sotheby's catalogue, London, 29 April 1992, lot 16).

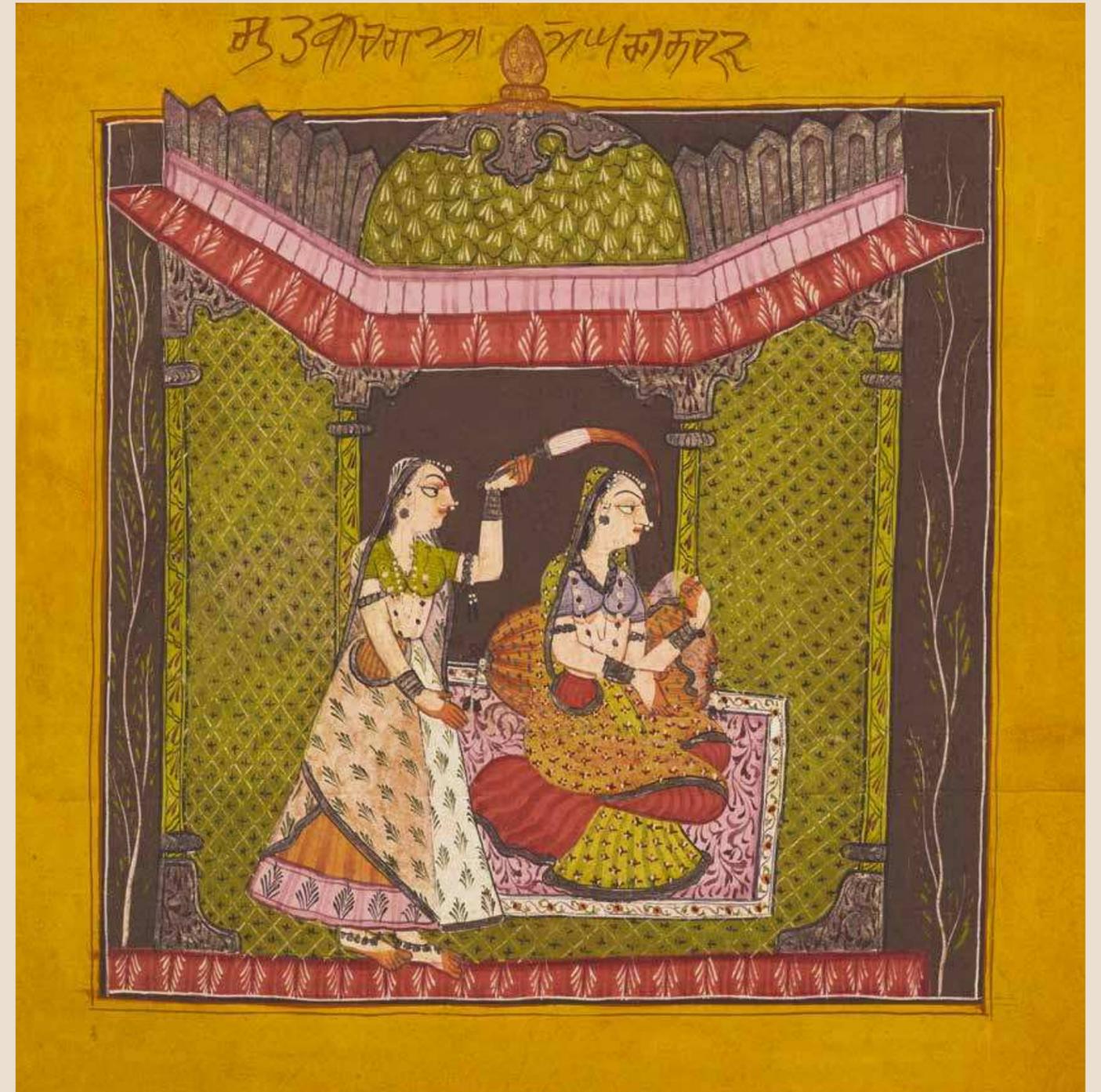
The series appears to have been produced a few years after the first group of illustrations for the so-called Shangri *Ramayana* and may be contemporary with the others within that series, painted after a

break in production (see Kossak 2011, who distinguishes between the artist dubbed by him 'the First Bahu Master' and other masters painting in a closely related style a few years later). The series was first placed in Kulu by W.G. Archer (1973, vol. 1, pp. 331–34; vol. 2, Kulu nos 13(i)–13(xxxii)) in line with its style's resemblance to the first artist of the Shangri *Ramayana*, of which the find spot was Shangri in Kulu. B.N. Goswamy and E. Fischer (1992, pp. 76–93) moved the Shangri *Ramayana* series and its dependent series such as this *Ragamala* to Bahu, a state ruled by members of the royal family of Jammu, mostly because of the portrait of Raja Kripal Dev of Bahu in Seattle matching the portrayal of Dasaratha in the Shangri *Ramayana*. S. Kossak, however, in his discussion of the Shangri *Ramayana* (2011) pointed out some of the discrepancies in the historical record for this reassignment.

Our painting exemplifies this wild and vigorous style with its 'powerful, nervous intensity, using rich and unusual colour combinations and an energetic and wiry line' (Topsfield 2004, p. 379) and totally flat compositions. Here the drab olive green and grey background serves as a foil to the brilliant colours of the two women's garments. The heroine who is obviously meant to be a *virahini*, a woman suffering the pangs of separation from her lover, sits in melancholy holding up the edge of her transparent *orhni* to shield her face from prying eyes.

*Provenance*  
 Sven Gahlin collection, acquired in 1967  
 Maggs Bros, London  
 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

*Literature*  
 Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973  
 Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Catalogue of the Indian Collections in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Vol. V: Rajput Painting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1926  
 Ebeling, K., *Ragamala Painting*, Ravi Kumar, Basel, 1973  
 Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009  
 Kossak, Steven, 'The First Bahu Master' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B. N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 491–500  
 Topsfield, A., ed., *In the Realm of Gods and Kings: Arts of India*, Philip Wilson Publishers, London, 2004



### The Lovelorn Lady

Kangra, c. 1790–1800  
 Brush drawing in black ink heightened with grey wash, white  
 gypsum and touches of colour  
 Folio 21.2 × 16 cm  
 Painting 18 × 14.5 cm  
 Reverse with 6-line inscription in *nagari* script in red ink of  
 two Hindi verses from a text on poetics

This drawing is an exquisitely drawn preparatory sketch for an illustration to a text on courtly love. Three women stroll in the foreground of a palace courtyard. Two maids are in conversation with each other about the third, who walks ahead, her head bowed pensively as lost in contemplation she dreams of her absent lover. In the background a fourth woman unfurls a long shawl onto a table. The two maids are also vividly characterised as they gossip about their mistress.

On the grounds of subject matter, it would be tempting to attribute it to a *Rasikapriya* series, 'The Cultivated Lover' of Keshava Dasa, which was completed in AD 1591 and deals with the classification of heroes (*nayakas*) and heroines (*nayikas*), their mutual fascination, attachments, separations and reunions. No early Pahari version seems to have survived in anything like complete form, the first known series with a large number of paintings being the Kangra oval format series of about 1810 (Archer 1973, Kangra no. 66). The text on the back, however, does not seem to belong to the *Rasikapriya*, although it undoubtedly illustrates a *nayika's* longing in separation. The drawing has been published by Dehejia (2013, p. 278) illustrating a different verse from that text (*Rasikapriya* 11, 3), one of the verses illustrating love in separation, of which this is indeed an excellent example.

This drawing belongs to the same period as the *Kangra Nala-Damayanti* series of drawings and paintings between 1790 and 1810. The rather sharp noses, the girl with her face in three-quarter view, the regular spacing and modelling of the flowing draperies, and the architectural ambience may be compared with paintings from that series, especially 'The Gathering Storm' and 'Damayanti consumed

with Love' from the 1800–10 painted series (Archer 1973, Kangra nos 53iv & 53iii, vol. 2, pp. 221 & 223).

The preliminary broad strokes of the drawing were refined with much cleaner and sharper lines in ink and then wash and some colour added. This drawing is of particular interest as it clearly demonstrates the artist's technique of building up the composition in a series of flowing curves. The roundness of the young women's forms is emphasised by the curve of their wimples, large hoop earrings, and rounded cheeks with contrast provided in their jutting breasts and the long lines of their flowing draperies.

*Published*  
 Dehejia 2013, p. 278

*Literature*  
 Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, 1973  
 Dehejia, H.V., *Rasikapriya: Ritikavya of Keshavdas in Ateliers of Love*, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2013



**Portrait of Raja Kirat Prakash of Sirmur**

Guler, c. 1765–70  
 Opaque pigments with gold  
 Folio 25.8 × 18.3 cm  
 Painting 21 × 13.8 cm  
 Inscribed above in *nagari*: *sri Raja Kirti Prakas ji*

Raja Kirat Prakash of Sirmur (b. 1743, r. 1754–70) dressed sumptuously in red and gold sits at his ease on a white durrie smoking from a hookah while supported by gold brocade cushions. The scene is set on a terrace in front of a balustrade and under a lobed arch. A garden with a bamboo extends beyond but the artist has left the sky blank. The composition typifies the spatial conventions of Guler portraiture around 1770 with their suggestions of depth beyond the fictive framing arch (cf. Archer 1973, Guler nos 48–50). A portrait of Raja Prakash Chand of Guler with a lady has the same tree as in our painting (*ibid.*, no. 50). There is much to admire in this portrait of a man still young caught towards the end of his short life: his handsome face with its keen gaze, the wispy chin beard and the heavier beard towards the back of his jaw, the long elegant fingers, the carefully depicted pleats of his heavy winter gown and of his turban with its dangling pompoms, and the rhythmic patterning of his gown as it folds around him on the carpet.

Another portrait of the Raja is in the Ford collection (Archer 1973, Kangra 8v and Pal 2001, no. 83), one of a series of portraits done in Kangra around 1770–90 that ended up in the Lambagraon collection. The Kangra artist copies this portrait closely but in a harder manner and without the characteristic Guler arch. All four of Kirat Prakash's sons became successive Rajas. Sirmur, a state in the eastern hills next to Garhwal and close to the plains, came to grief in the reigns of the younger sons firstly against Kangra and then the Gurkhas who occupied the state 1803–14. The Gurkha occupation seems to have destroyed any earlier paintings from Sirmur itself.

*Provenance*  
 Eva and Konrad Seitz collection

*Literature*  
 Archer, W.G., *Indian Paintings from the Punjab Hills*, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London and New York, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1973  
 Pal, P., *Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection*, Philip Wilson, London, 2001



### The Asura King Kalayavana receives Salva the Messenger of Jarasandha

Leaf from a dispersed *Harivamsa* series

Attributed to Purkhu and his family workshop, Kangra,

c. 1800–15

Opaque pigments heightened with gold

Folio 39 × 53.3 cm

Painting 36.1 × 50.8 cm within red and blue borders

Inscribed in *nagari* with names over two of the figures: *Sala* and *Kalajamana* and on the reverse with the folio number 26 and 7 lines of Sanskrit in *Devanagari* script with the text of *Harivamsa, Visnuparvan*, ch. 53, vv. 13–21 (online version of the Chitrashala Press edition, 1936).

The *Harivamsa* is an ancient appendix to the *Mahabharata* that reuses the same material as in the epic itself but with more emphasis on the role of Krishna. Kalayavana was a foreign king who was undefeated and unmatched in battle and had been given a boon by the god Shiva that he could not be killed by anyone born in Mathura. Knowing this, and that Krishna had been born in Mathura, Krishna's inveterate enemy Jarasandha sent Salva in his aerial chariot to Kalayavana to urge him to attack Krishna and his forces in Mathura. Jarasandha the king of Magadha was the father of two of Kamsa's wives who, after Krishna had killed their husband, lived quite happily with his slayer. For the immediately succeeding page in this series numbered 27, see Galloway 2011, no. 32.

The scene is set in the courtyard of a palace set in a verdant hilly landscape with ladies looking on from their windows as the meeting unfolds below. The king Kalayavana has risen from his throne to greet his visitor Salva at the entrance to the courtyard. Salva's chariot waits outside. Crowds of gaily dressed courtiers and attendants watch the two men meeting. The conical hats or turbans worn by Kalayavana and his followers are perhaps meant to be Persian, of the type worn by Nadir Shah, suggestive of the foreign affiliations of this king (his name means the 'Black foreigner'). Kalayavana was supposed to have his kingdom in the Himalayas with various foreign tribes subject to him – Sakas, Pahlavas, Yavanas, Turuskas (Scythians, Persians, Greeks and Turks).

The page comes from an exceptionally large *Harivamsa* series once in the possession of the Raja of Nadaun and now widely dispersed. A large group is in the Chandigarh Museum (mostly unpublished,

but see Goswamy and Fischer 1992, nos 164–65, and 2011, fig. 4). One page is in the N.C. Mehta Collection in Ahmadabad (Khandalavala n.d., fig. 83), and another in the Rietberg Museum Zurich (Goswamy and Fischer 2011, fig. 5). Our page is slightly larger than the average size quoted by Goswamy and Fischer.

The latter authors argue for the series to be given to the hand of Purkhu 1800–15, the principal court artist of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra (1780–1823). Our page has many of the characteristics of Purkhu's work as identified by those authors: the fondness for large groups of figures spread over the page, the complex yet curiously flat architecture, the green dimpled hills (cf. Goswamy and Fischer 2011, fig. 5), the squat figures and sharply defined facial features and beards which are both individualised but yet representative of types rather than characters, and such characteristics as the hand in conversation having the forefinger and thumb touching with the palm facing the body.

#### Literature

Galloway, F., *Ivory and Painting: Indian Goods for the Luxury Market*, Francesca Galloway, London, 2011

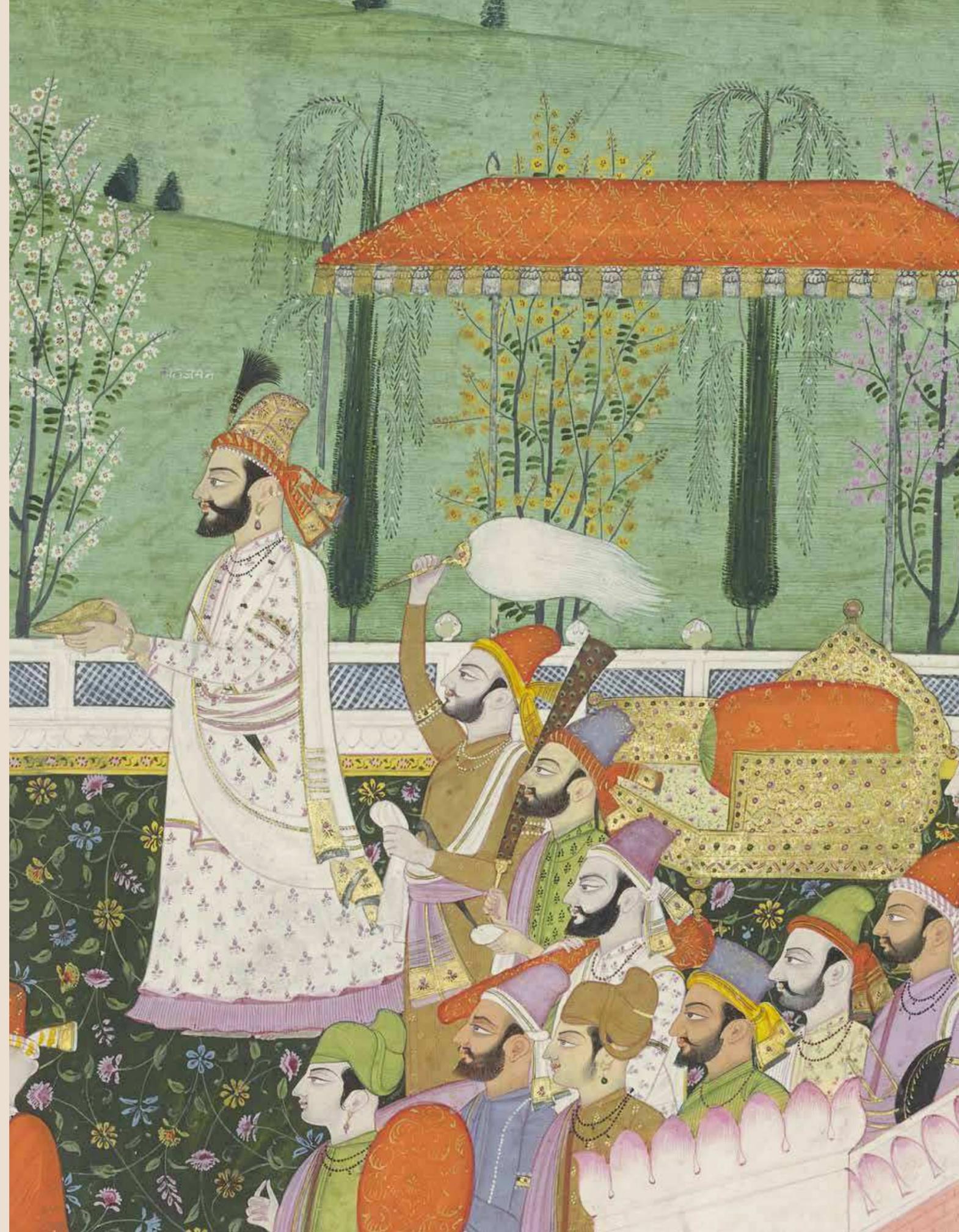
Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992, pp. 367–87

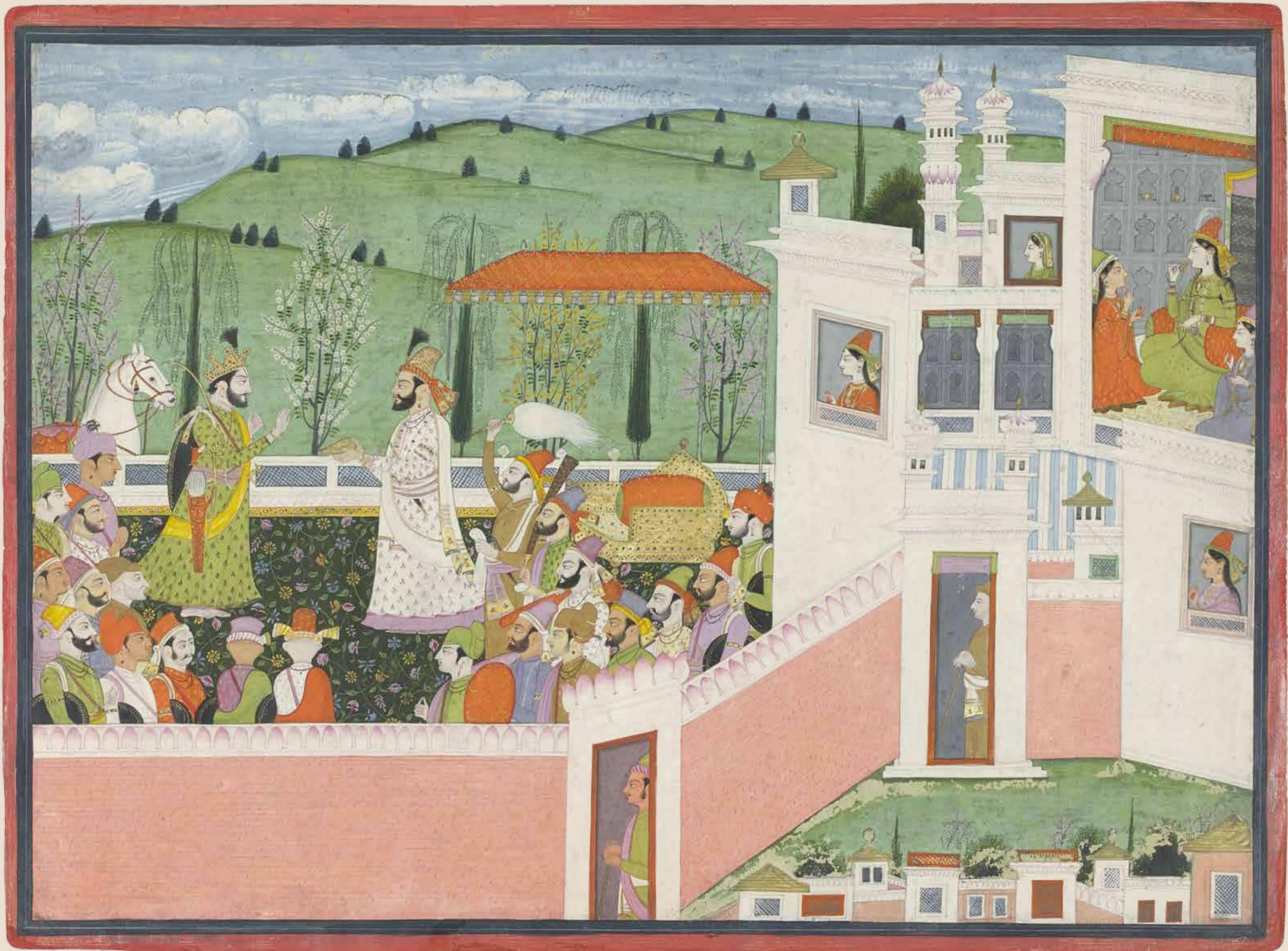
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Khandalavala, K., *Pahari Miniature Paintings in the N.C. Mehta Collection*, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad, n.d.

→

The Asura King Kalayavana receives Salva the Messenger of Jarasandha  
Detail





**Abhimanyu trapped in the *Chakravyuha* formation strikes Asvatthama with his Mace**

Page from a *Mahabharata* series

Kangra, c. 1820

Opaque pigments with gold

Folio 33 × 46 cm

Painting 32 × 44.6 cm

Inscribed with names in small white *nagari*: *Abhimanyu*,  
*Asvatthama*, *Jedratha* and *Kaliketa*

On the 13th day of the Mahabharata war, when the *chakravyuha* troop formation is launched by Drona, Arjuna's young son Abhimanyu (his mother being Krishna's sister Subhadra) manages to enter the formation; he intends for the Pandava forces to follow after him and smash the formation from the inside. But the Kaurava ally Jayadratha moves to close the gap, and is able to hold all the Pandava brothers and their forces at bay as promised to him by Shiva in his boon. Abhimanyu, who does not know how to exit from the *chakravyuha*, is trapped, but defeats all the Kaurava heroes and kills many of their sons. Here he is depicted striking with his mace Asvatthama, who recoils in terror, having already struck down Kalikeya, the son of Suvala. Although laying about him lustily now, Abhimanyu is actually brutally killed by the Kaurava warriors in a combined attack led by Drona and Karna. The story of Abhimanyu's death is told in Book 7 of the *Mahabharata*, canto 47.

The *chakravyuha* formation is represented by the square of mounted soldiers round the battling Abhimanyu. On the right Jayadratha on his elephant confronts the Pandava forces which cannot come to Abhimanyu's aid, because Shiva had promised Jayadratha that he could hold the Pandava forces at bay for one day. The artist has suggested the limitless nature of the *chakravyuha* formation by having the outer warriors disappear under the frame at the top. For the previous page from the series showing Abhimanyu attacking Drona within the *chakravyuha* formation see Sotheby's New York, 15 December 1978, lot 180, where the same device is also deployed. Another similar page from this series is in the N.C. Mehta Collection Ahmedabad (Khandalavala n.d., fig. 85). Khandalavala writes that a page from this series in the National Museum, New Delhi, is dated 1803.

*Provenance*

Eva and Konrad Seitz collection

*Literature*

Khandalavala, K., *Pahari Miniature Paintings in the N.C. Mehta Collection*, Gujarat Museum Society, Ahmedabad, n.d.

→  
Abhimanyu trapped in the  
*Chakravyuha* formation  
strikes Asvatthama with his  
Mace  
*Detail*





### Krishna lures King Kalayavana to the Cave of Muchukunda where he is burnt to Ashes

Illustration from a *Bhagavata Purana* series  
Kangra, c. 1820–30

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, within narrow blue and red borders

39 × 54 cm

Inscribed on the painting with the principal characters' names in white *devanagari* script: *Krishna, Raja Muchukanda, Kalajambhasama* ('ashes of Kalayavana')

Inscribed on the verso in Sanskrit in *devanagari* script with three verses from Canto X, chapter 51 of the *Bhagavata Purana*:

In this scene from the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna lures his enemy, King Kalayavana, to the cave of the giant sage-king Muchukunda. Krishna hides himself there while the sleeping figure of Muchukunda is rudely awakened by the pursuing Kalayavana. Krishna cannot himself kill Kalayavana since the latter was granted a boon that he could not be killed by any person born in Mathura, as Krishna was. According to the power Muchukunda was granted when he fell asleep, any person who wakens him will be burnt to ashes. Now, when Kalayavana wakes him, Muchukunda's fiery glance ignites the king, who is consumed by fire while the hidden Krishna looks on. Krishna then reveals himself to Muchukunda as Vishnu and blesses him.

Our artist has produced a remarkably bold creation very different from earlier treatments of this subject, where Muchukunda is normally portrayed as a kingly figure. What strikes one immediately here in place of Purkhu's cluttered compositions is the bold simplification of forms that allows the simplified curves of the sage's body to dominate the composition. Exuberant candy-striped rocks encircle the angry sage set in a strangely open landscape dotted with just a few trees and disappearing beyond the far curved horizon. Muchukunda is linked to Krishna by the dominant yellow colour of his shawl and the god's dhoti. Who could then resist the sage's angry glare, his screwed up features, as Kalayavana is consumed by the flames and disappears into them. For another painting from the same series, see Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, 15 June 1979, lot 140, in which Krishna entices the army of Kalayavana to follow him.

'(10) And now, bringing me this long distance. He is lying down here like a saint!' Thus erroneously thinking that the man was Acyuta, he struck him full force with his foot. (11) The man woke up after a long period of sleep and slowly opened his eyes. Looking around in every direction, he saw him standing at his side. (12) Oh descendant of Bharata, by the glance the angered man cast on him, he was instantly burnt to ashes by a fire that was generated from within his own body.'

#### Provenance

Sven Gahlin collection  
Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, 15  
June 1979, lot 141

#### Literature

Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 1992, *Artibus Asiae Supplementum* 38, reprint Niyogi Books, Delhi, 2009  
Goswamy, B.N., and Fischer, E., 'Purkhu of Kangra' in Beach, M.C., Fischer, E., and Goswamy, B.N., *Masters of Indian Painting*, Artibus Asiae, Zurich, 2011, pp. 719–32



→  
Krishna lures King  
Kalayavana to the Cave of  
Muchukunda where he is  
burnt to Ashes  
*Detail*



रजसुचरी

रजसुचरी

### The Demon Dundubhi and Bali the Monkey-King

Pahari, Kangra, 1830–40  
Opaque pigments and gold on paper  
Folio 34 × 46.5 cm  
Painting 25.8 × 38.6 cm

The artist has convincingly divided the composition of his picture into two through his use of a great screen of rocks that rise across the centre of the painting. Such devices traditionally divide up not just the space but also the time in Indian continuous narrative techniques. Here in the top right Sugriva is telling Rama and Laksmana about the prowess of his brother Bali who has usurped him as king of the monkeys. He is narrating how Dundubhi, a buffalo demon, challenged Bali to fight and how after Bali had won and killed the demon, he threw the corpse a hundred leagues over the mountains so that it landed in the hermitage of the sage Matanga. This was an unfortunate occurrence as the aggrieved sage cursed the perpetrator that his head would explode if he ever set foot on Matanga's mountain. That is why Sugriva has taken refuge on that same mountain, where he was safe from his brother.

Sugriva here has with him a whole coterie of crowned monkey chiefs as well as Jambavan the king of the bears, which is a little premature in the story. Bali is enjoying sitting outside on a portable throne beside a river with his palace of Kiskindha rising on the other side. Dundubhi, the buffalo demon, is spying on Bali from behind the rocks before challenging him to fight and prove who is the strongest in the world. This was at a time when Sugriva and his brother were still friends and Sugriva is imploring Bali not to fight.

The artist still deploys the whole armoury of lyrical devices typical of Kangra painting, while his studies of the monkeys and the demon are very effective, but the virulent green suggests a date in the mid-19th century. Another page from this set is in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.2006.128).

*Provenance*  
Private UK collection

→  
The Demon Dundubhi  
and Bali the Monkey-King  
*Detail*





**The Giant Kumbhakarna is awakened –  
A Leaf from the *Ramayana***

Pahari, mid-19th century  
Opaque pigments and gold on paper  
Folio 37.5 × 52 cm  
Painting 29.1 × 42 cm

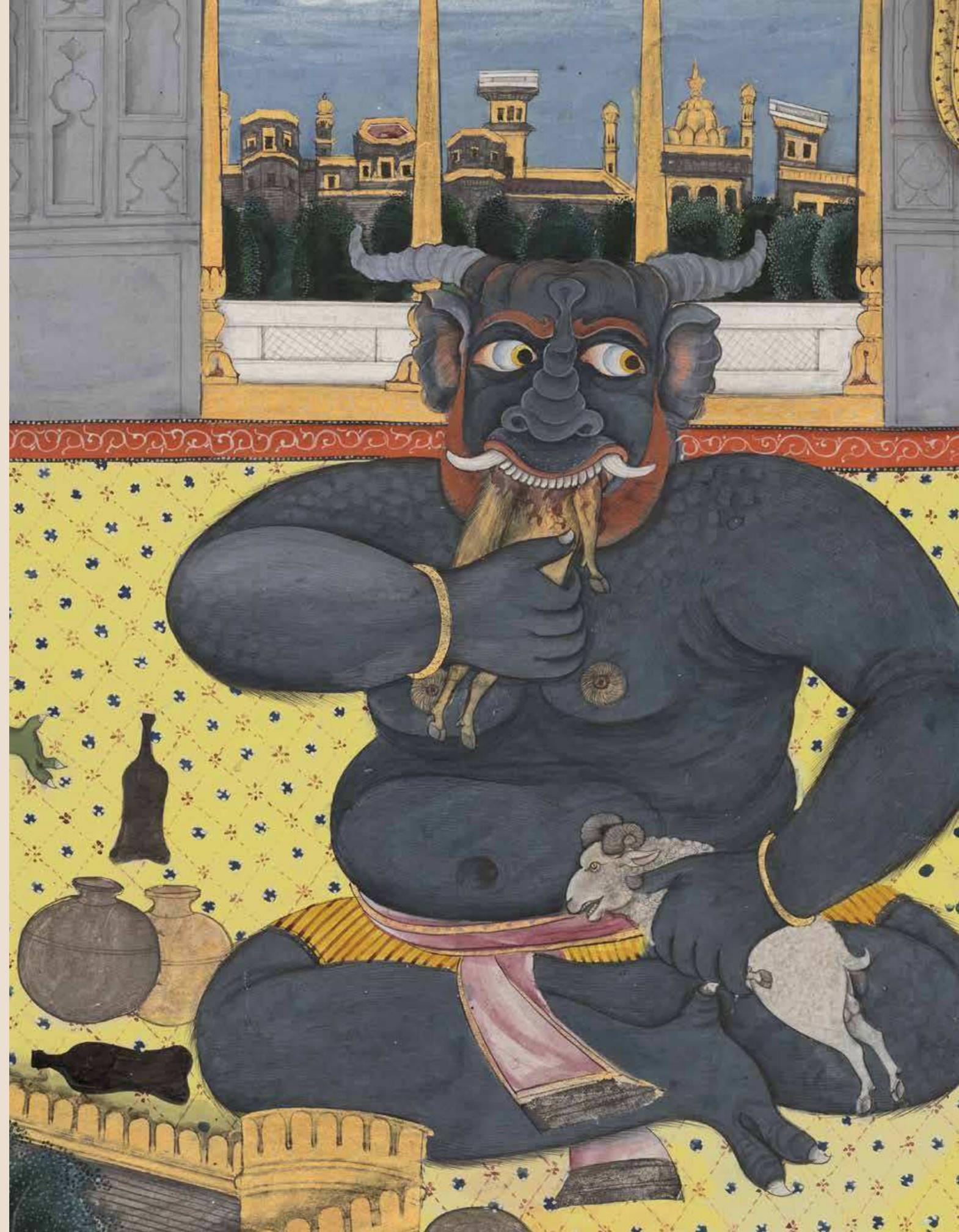
Rama and Laksmana have arrived with their monkey allies on Lanka in their quest for Sita who has been abducted by Ravana. Their efforts have defeated and destroyed a large part of Ravana's army and he has now called on the help of his giant brother Kumbhakarna. He was so terrible a demon that the gods had decreed that he had to spend most of his life asleep. Having been woken from his sleep it took many whole animals and vats of blood and fat to satisfy his hunger. In this amusing take on the story, the demons who had woken him up and fed him seem terrified for their own safety as they flee his bedchamber, as Kumbhakarna was quite capable of catching them up and eating them too.

The normally clean straight lines of Pahari architecture in the 19th century have here been subjected to a baroque experience: a curvilinear staircase ascends to the palace, while Ravana himself sits at an oriel window supported by curvaceous lotus petals.

Another painting from the same set is in the Paul Walter collection (Galloway 2015, cat. 23).

*Provenance*  
Private American collection

*Literature*  
*The Eclectic Eye, Indian Graphic Arts*  
from the Paul Walter Collection,  
Francesca Galloway, London,  
2015



→  
The Giant Kumbhakarna is  
awakened – A Leaf from the  
*Ramayana*  
Detail



### A Blue Rock Thrush

Attributed to Shaikh Zain al-Din, Calcutta, India, c. 1780  
Pencil and watercolour on European paper, with gum arabic,  
heightened with body colour, mounted on card  
47.8 × 60.5 cm

The blue rock thrush is perched on a flowering branch, caught by the artist in a characteristic pose with its head up and alert for possible danger. It is a starling-sized bird, 21–23 cm in length with a long slim bill. The summer male is unmistakable, with all blue-grey plumage apart from its darker wings. Females are much less striking, with dark brown upper parts, and paler brown scaly under parts. The European, North African and Southeast Asian birds are mainly resident, apart from altitudinal movements. Other Asian populations are more migratory, wintering in sub-Saharan Africa, India and Southeast Asia.

This watercolour comes from the set of 326 paintings of natural history subjects, mostly birds, by Shaikh Zain al-Din and his contemporaries, Bhavanidas and Ram Das, commissioned by Lady Impey. Sir Elijah Impey was Chief Justice of Bengal from 1774 to 1782. His wife Lady Mary was fascinated by the exotic flora and fauna of the sub-continent and kept a menagerie and aviary on their estate at Calcutta. Lady Impey commissioned three Patna artists, Shaikh Zain al-Din being the most gifted, as well as Ram Das and Bhavanidas, to meticulously record the fauna in their garden and menagerie and particularly the birds, which she wanted depicted life size if possible (with precise measurements if not) and drawn from life. Many of the paintings are signed and dated 1777–82 as being in the collection of Lady Impey but this one lacks the usual inscriptions, is smaller than other similar ones and appears to have been cut down.

All three artists are described on some of these pages as coming from Azimabad, i.e. from Patna, the Mughal city on the Ganges north-west of Calcutta.

They were trained as court painters in the naturalistic Mughal tradition almost certainly at Murshidabad, the capital of the Nawabs of Bengal where a court studio flourished in the 1750s and early 1760s. In a brief war with the East India Company 1763–64, Nawab Qasim 'Ali moved his capital to Patna taking court artists with him, and it is only then that there flourished for a short while a school of Mughal painting in the city including presumably Shaikh Zain al-Din among the artists.

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

Examples from the Impey series of natural history drawings are now in many public collections around the world including the Wellcome Institute, London, the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, and several international museums and private collections of Indian painting.

#### *Provenance*

Anthony Hobson collection  
Sotheby's, London, 10 June 1963,  
lot 62  
Bequeathed to the Linnaean  
Society 1855  
Archibald Impey  
Sir Elijah and Lady Impey



## Two of the Children of the Nawab of Awadh

Lucknow, c. 1840–42  
Watercolour on ivory  
10.2 × 8.5 cm each

An inscription on the reverse of the frame reads: 'These are said to be the children of the last Nawab of Oude, India. I was given the miniatures by one of his descendants, whose grandfather, after the mutiny, had sought refuge in Bhagdad [sic]. I often visited the giver when I was in Irak in 1902. I believe these miniatures belonged to the Royal family and are of a much earlier date, E.L. Sagastany'

Painting in Lucknow in the last decades of the Nawabi regime steered an uneasy course between trying to maintain an independent style and relying excessively on European models. The last *Padshah* of Awadh, Wajid 'Ali Shah (b. 1822, r. 1847–56), did much to rescue the arts in Lucknow from the second of these courses. Under Wajid 'Ali Shah both as prince and king there was a revival in technique in particular that tightened up on the lively but somewhat coarse productions of the earlier decades and reinstated some of the meticulousness of the previous century (see Losty 2003). He was a famous Urdu poet in his own right, writing under the names of Sultan 'Alam and Akhtar. He was also a great patron and connoisseur of music and dancing. Even after his deposition he continued such patronage until his death in 1887 at the Matya Burj, Kolkata. See Markel and Gude 2010 for a survey of the arts in general in Lucknow.

These charming portraits show a compromise between the two manners. The elder of the two boys is seated on a miniature European chair but the composition of the subject on a terrace with a balustrade and a garden beyond is wholly traditional. The younger boy however is seated on cushions in an even more traditional way. Yet the whole idea of Indian portrait miniatures was of European inspiration from the late 18th century and especially when painted on ivory and of course the boys are shown naturalistically without recourse to the profile portraiture of the previous century.

In between his cultural pursuits, Wajid 'Ali Shah found time to sire no less than forty sons so no certainty is possible with regard to who exactly the subjects of the portraits are. They are dated here to the early 1840s on the basis of a more ambitious but

Another attached note in a later hand reads: 'These are the children of the last King of Oudh who sided against the British in the Indian Mutiny. His Spode tea set with the arms of Oudh painted on them ... was taken from the palace by General Wilkie and is now in his house at Malvern. General Lousada Barrow ... saved the Taluqdars of Oudh, the majority of whom had remained loyal to the Raj ... For this act the Taluqdars in gratitude erected a statue of him in Lucknow. He was the first and probably the only British subject to receive such an honour from the Indian Community, Reginald Lousada Barrow.'

stylistically similar painting on ivory c. 1846 (now in the British Library) of the children of Dr John Spencer Login, the Residency Surgeon at Lucknow 1838–48, playing in their nursery with an ayah in attendance. If, then, our two portraits are slightly earlier, they would seem to be of the second and third of Wajid 'Ali Shah's sons (the first being passed over because he was a deaf mute), namely Javid 'Ali Khan (1838–1849) and Hamid 'Ali (1838–1874).

After Wajid 'Ali Shah's deposition, he moved along with his family to Calcutta where he, his sons and grandsons occupied a large colony at Garden Reach. The only son who did not move with them was the fourth son, Ramzan 'Ali (1845–1893), who was proclaimed King of Awadh by the rebels in 1857, and who subsequently fled to Kathmandu. Pardoned by Queen Victoria he returned to India after the death of his father. Some of the descendants of Wajid 'Ali Shah who were of course Shias may have gone to Iraq on pilgrimage to the great Shia shrines there, hence the Sagastany inscription. The relevance of the Lousada Barrow inscription is not so clear. Major-General Lousada Barrow (1816–1877) took part as a junior officer in the relief of Lucknow and was subsequently Commissioner of Oudh. A marble statue of him was indeed erected in the Senate House, Lucknow, and is now in the Lucknow State Museum.

### Provenance

E.L. Sagastany  
Collection of Roger Bluett, then by descent to the present owner

### Literature

Losty, J.P., 'Painting at Lucknow 1775–1850' in *Lucknow Then and Now*, ed. Rosie Llewellyn-Jones, Marg Publications, Bombay, 2003, pp. 118–33 (reprinted 2010)  
Markel, S., and Gude, T.B., *India's Fabled City: The Art of Courtly Lucknow*, Prestel Publishing, New York, 2010



**Tree of Life (Palampore)**

South-East India, Coromandel Coast,  
1700–25, for the Western market  
Cotton, mordant and resist-dyed  
335.2 × 213.4 cm

A spectacular and finely drawn chintz *palampore* of well-balanced design and dazzling colour. It is a striking example of the flowering tree that dominated chintz textiles throughout the second half of the 17th and the entire 18th century. A serpentine tree with exposed roots grows on a low mound composed of small pyramidal scales, with large, sumptuous and exotic flowers and leaves filling the entire field. A wide border with vases at the four corners spew an arabesque of branches with different flowers and leaves similar but more subdued in style to the central field. The dominant colours are blue, red, pink, dark green and brown. A *palampore* of similar design but quilted is in the Tapi Collection (Barnes et al. 2002, cat. 38). Other examples are in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada.

Although chintz textiles from India had been traded for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans in the late 16th century, they acquired

immense appeal in Europe in the 17th century and throughout the 18th. By the 1660s the East India Company was sending out designs ('musters') to be copied in India by Indian artists and craftsmen. The tree of life design, which we equate with *palampores*, are an Indian interpretation of the European taste for Eastern exotica most fashionable at the time. Chintz had a dramatic impact on European taste, particularly in Britain and Holland. The dazzling colours of Indian chintz did not fade with washing (the technique of resist dye painting/batik being unknown in Europe at the time). Also, their exotic hybrid style combining different sources of design (Chinese, Indian and English) appealed to the British craze for 'chinoiserie'. These chintzes, called *palampores*, were used in Europe as bed curtains, wall hangings and bedcovers. They were often combined with English crewelwork embroidery and with the finer Gujarati chain-stitch silk embroidery on cotton, often mirroring contemporary chintz designs.

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