

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





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## 1. Iskandar Entertains Kanifu

From the *A'inah-yi Iskandari* chapter of Amir Khusrau's *Khamsah*

Attributed to Shiraz, Iran, Mid-Late 16<sup>th</sup> century

Ink, opaque watercolour, and gold on paper

19.5cm x 16cm

Provenance: Private European Collection, last sold at French auction in 1984

This Safavid miniature painting depicts a scene from the *A'inah-yi Iskandari* (Alexander's Mirror), one of five chapters from Amir Khusrau Dehlavi's *Khamsah* (Quintet). Iskandar (Alexander the Great) partakes in a feast with the women from his harem to celebrate his successful campaign in China. Kanifu, a beautiful female warrior who joined Iskandar's retinue when defeated in battle, plays the harp. In addition to describing Iskandar's military conquests, the *A'inah-yi Iskandari* also relates his scientific fascination with measuring the depths of the ocean and his spiritual mission for the 'water of life'.

In this version of the scene Iskandar is depicted centrally sitting on his throne, rendered slightly larger in scale than the others to indicate his status. A tray with pomegranates is presented to him, while surrounding attendants celebrate and drink wine. They sit on the grass among flowers with a stream passing below. The scene is set against a pale



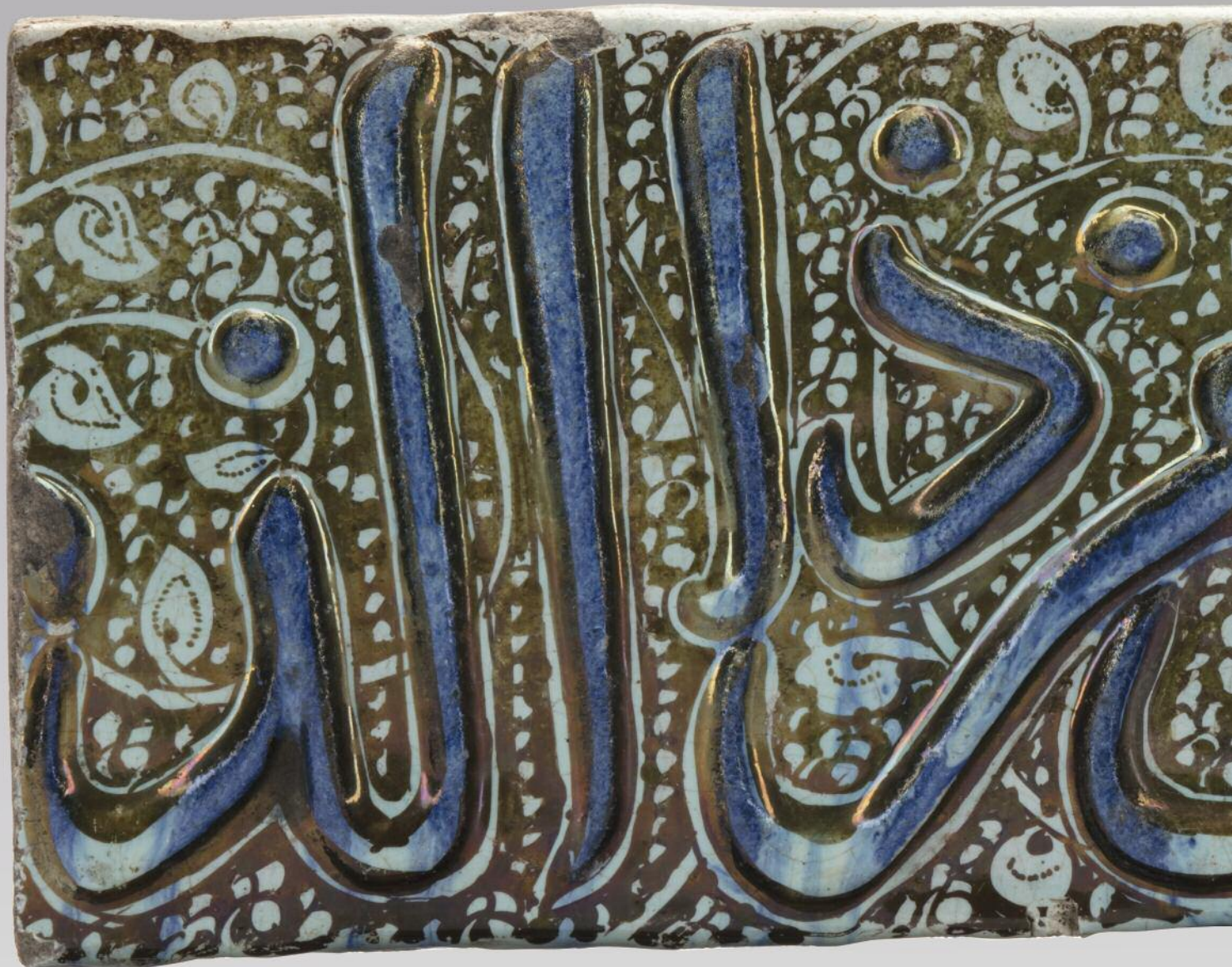
mauve landscape implying rocks, with flowers, small tufts of grass and a gold sky. Four gold columns of script fill the upper and lower field of this painting, containing two lines of *naskhi* script outlined in white.

For examples of this scene from other manuscripts, see Brend, p.132, pl. 33; p. 144, pl. 53; p. 164, pl. 63; p. 222, pl. 90.

Literature:

Brend, B. *Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau's Khamsah*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003.

Sharma, S. *Amir Khusrau: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis*, Oneworld Publications, London, 2005.



## 2. Calligraphic Tile

Kashan, Iran, Late 13<sup>th</sup> – Early 14<sup>th</sup> century

14cm high, 34cm wide

Provenance: Private USA Collection

This rectangular fritware tile features a moulded *naskh* inscription accentuated with a cobalt blue glaze, set against a

background of delicate, scrolling vegetal motifs. Gold lustre decorates the ground, and is painted over an opaque white glaze covering the tile.

Lustre tiles from the Ilkhanid period (1256-1353) could be found surrounding *mibrabs* (prayer niches) or cenotaphs, and as friezes along the walls of tombs, religious structures or palaces. The bold, raised inscriptions meant they could be read from a distance, and generally included verses from the Qur'an. Our piece would have formed part of a row of



tiles, as the text is incomplete, reading:

الارض من ذا الذى [ى]

‘...earth. Who is there...’

This forms part of the *Ayat al-Kursi* or ‘Throne Verse’ (255) from *sura 2 (al-Baqarah)* of the Qur’an. Completed, the two sentences should read: ‘His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth?’ (translation taken from: Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Holy Qur’an: Text, Translation & Commen-*

*tary*, 3rd ed., Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf, Lahore, 1938).

Kashan was an important centre for the production of lustreware ceramics from the late 12<sup>th</sup> to early 14<sup>th</sup> century, many examples of which are now dispersed among collections worldwide. For similar examples to our tile, see the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Numbers 731A-1888 & 1517-1876.

Literature:

Porter, V. *Islamic Tiles*, The British Museum Press, London, 1995, pp. 48-54.







### 3. Safavid *Cuerda Seca* Tile

Iran, 17<sup>th</sup> century

24cm square

Provenance: Private European Collection

This striking tile bears a stylised decorative scheme featuring floral arrangements with long, leafy stems. The lower section with a white ground and green scalloped edges is likely to have formed the top of a larger medallion motif. Above, a scrolling band in yellow recalls the Chinese cloud-band (*tchi*) design. The brilliant glazes have been applied using the *cuerda seca*, or 'dry cord' technique, where a waxy substance is applied between the glazes to prevent the colours from running together when fired. Tiles such as this would form part of a group revealing a much larger design, and would typically adorn grand buildings such as mosques or palaces.

This tile's technique, colour scheme and decorative motifs are characteristic of the production from 17<sup>th</sup> century Iran. The long stemmed flowers set against the blue glaze, for example, can be found on a 17<sup>th</sup> century *cuerda seca* panel housed in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Accession Number VG-1319, and illustrated in Piotrovsky, p. 247, Cat. No. 233. The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Accession Number EA1979.16, has an example of a 17<sup>th</sup> century *cuerda seca* panel displaying a large medallion set over a group of tiles, showing how the top of the medallion on our tile might appear in context.

Literature:

Piotrovsky, M. B. and Vrieze, J. *Arts of Islam: Heavenly Art, Earthly Beauty*, De Nieuwe Kerk and Lund Humphries Publishers, Amsterdam and London, 1999.



## 4. Hispano-Moresque Lustre Albarello

Manises, Spain

Second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century

29cm high, 13cm diameter

This tin-glazed earthenware jar has a tall waisted-form with a thick foot ring and cylindrical neck. The body of the jar is painted on the interior and exterior with a creamy off-white glaze ground. The exterior is decorated with five horizontal registers of alternating cobalt-blue and copper-lustre vine-leaf, fern and dotted patterns.

Albarello jars with this kind of vine-leaf pattern are generally attributed to Manises and may have been used in stately homes for storing dried fruits such as raisins. Quite similar to the 'drug jar albarello' used in pharmacies from this period, the waisted-form of these jars makes their handling easier.

An albarello of similar form and vine-leaf pattern can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number 10-1907, circa 1450-1475 and another similar one in the Tareq Rajab Museum, Kuwait, Accession Number CER0706TSR. Two further comparative examples are in the Islamic Arts Museum, Malaysia. A dish with vine-leaf decoration and depicting a Sicily coat of arms, 15<sup>th</sup> century, is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 56.171.129.

Literature:

Dectot, X. *Céramiques Hispaniques : XIIè-XVIIIè siècle*, RMN, Paris, 2007.

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





## 5. Blue-and-White Albarello

Probably Manises, Valencia, Spain

15<sup>th</sup> century

28.5cm high, 14cm diameter

This rare blue-and-white earthenware albarello, or apothecary jar, features a bold decorative scheme rendered in cobalt blue over an opaque white tin glaze. The motifs are traditionally Islamic in design, referencing manuscript illumination, carved ivory wares and ceramics, among others. Thick, dark blue lines define the overall composition of the design by creating two rows of alternating, pointed-arched compartments. Each row contains four compartments, each bearing scrolling foliate motifs. The motifs featured in the upper row compartments are curly leafy stems, while those in the lower row consist of hanging, symmetrical foliate designs, with occasional blue dots and brush strokes filling the additional space. The neck of the albarello is primarily blue due to the running glaze, however, still visible encircling the shoulder is an interlocking band, or 'spur' ornament. The form of this albarello is waisted with a slightly everted rim and foot, and it is glazed both on the interior and exterior save the edge of the rim and foot.

Albarelli originated in the Middle East and were used in both apothecaries and the home to hold ointments, dry drugs, herbs, dried fruits and spices. These cylindrical ceramic vessels were generally formed with slight inward curves for easy handling, and with wide openings to reach the contents and were stored with parchment tied around the rim to secure the contents. Throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries albarelli were exported in large quantities from Persia, Syria and Egypt to Europe. This resulted in their production later in European countries, in particular Italy and Spain. Already an important ceramic centre, Manises became the main producer of albarelli in Spain from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. The 'spur' motif on our albarello can be found on many 15<sup>th</sup> century Manises examples including a basin in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number 342-1853 (illustrated in Ray, p. 78, Fig. 163) and on a blue-and-white albarello from the Fundación La Fontana, Barcelona, Accession Number FC.2014.02.10.

The hanging symmetrical foliate design on the lower row of compartments on our albarello is similar to that found on another example from Manises in the Louvre, Paris, Accession Number OA 7592 (see *Le calife le prince et le potier*, p. 85). Here the motif has been described as a 'lamp' pendant, and similarly to ours is featured centrally within a register also containing scattered blue dots. In keeping with this style is a motif referred to as a 'tree of life' or 'tree of life - lamp' design found on many contemporary examples. It bears a more rounded foliate design, yet its symmetrical nature extending from a long stem is highly comparable to this albarello's 'lamp' pendant motif. For examples see the Louvre, Paris, Accession Number OA7601 and the Musée national du Moyen Âge - Thermes et Hôtel de Cluny, Paris, Accession Number CI.2119, and illustrated in Dectot, p. 38, Fig. 6.



Literature:

Dectot, X. *Céramiques hispaniques XIIIe – XVIIIe siècle. Musée national du Moyen Âge - Thermes et Hôtel de Cluny*, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2007, pp. 21-9; 140-54.

Drey, R. E. A. *Apothecary Jars: Pharmaceutical Pottery and Porcelain in Europe and the East, 1150-1850*, Faber and Faber, London, 1978.

*Le calife, le prince et le potier : les faïences à reflets métalliques*. Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2 mars-22 mai 2002, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, 2002.

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



## 6. Hispano-Moresque Lustre Bowl

Manises, Spain, circa 1430-1470

10cm high, 16.5cm diameter

Provenance: Alexandre Imbert Collection (1865-1943),  
Private European Collection

The tin-glazed earthenware bowl has gently curved sloping sides. On the interior of the bowl, the high *cavetto* has been painted with cobalt-blue flowers with scrolling vines and leaves among fern-like scrolling decoration in copper-lustre, all on a creamy coloured ground. The centre of the bowl is painted in copper-lustre with the 'IHS' monogram with a flourish over the 'H' enclosed in a cobalt-blue double cable band. Densely painted cobalt-blue curving lines decorate the interior rim of the bowl. The exterior of the bowl is painted with scrolling flowers and leaves also in cobalt-blue and copper-lustre inside a wide band near the rim. Below this border, there are three registers of thickly painted concentric lines in copper-lustre glaze.

This rare bowl was made in Manises around 1430-1470 and typifies the illustrious Valencian tin-glazed lustre wares made during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Christian 'IHS' (Iesus Hominum Salvator) monogram represented inside our bowl implies that it was likely made for public and religious function rather than for personal use. Tin-glazed wares during this period with coats-of-arms or painted with religious monograms would have been commissioned.

The closest example to our bowl, in terms of form and decoration, also bearing an 'IHS' monogram, circa 1440-1460, is in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 56.171.77. A similar Manises bowl with an 'IHS' monogram, circa 1430-1470, but with a flattened rim is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number C.2046-1910. Two footed-bowls with similar decoration can be found in The British Museum, London, Accession Number 1854,0603.2 and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 56.171.76. There is a similar basin with an 'IHS' monogram in The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, see Accession Number 85.DE.441. This type of decoration also exists on 15<sup>th</sup> century albarelli found in the collections of The Hispanic Society of America (Accession Number E598), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, (Accession Number 56.171.91) and two albarelli in The British Museum (Accession Numbers G.563 and G.564).

Literature:

Dectot, X. *Céramiques Hispaniques : XIIè-XVIIIè siècle*, RMN, Paris, 2007.

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





## 7. Hispano-Moresque Lustre Dish

Muel, Aragón, Spain

circa 1550-1600

24cm diameter

Provenance: Private European Collection

A heron-like bird is the main motif on this shallow, tin-glazed dish. Decorated in a brownish lustre, the bird fits within the centre of the dish and is surrounded by four panels set equidistance apart. These panels extend from the centre of the dish to the rim, and each panel contains a bold abstract motif depicted in reserve. Alternating with the panels are four pinecone designs encircled with dots and filled with dotted square patterns. Sketchy motifs of paired flowers fill the remaining spaces, and a large spiral is painted in lustre on the reverse of the dish.

Central bird motifs in the style depicted here are in keeping with contemporary designs of ceramics produced in Muel, Aragón, in the north-east of Spain. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century the production of ceramics had increased in Muel and lusterware in particular was made in great quantity. Similar examples can be found in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (Accession Number E 538-27, and illustrated in *Le calife le prince et le potier*, p. 141) and the Museu de Ceràmica, Barcelona (illustrated in Ray, p. 132, fig. 14); the former particularly close in composition save the upper left corner bearing one large panel instead of two. A further example in the form of a bowl with handles from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Accession Number 31-1907, and illustrated in Ray, p. 133, no. 272) presents a similar bird motif flanked by only two panels and surrounded by vegetal designs.

Literature:

*Le calife le prince et le potier: les faïences à reflets métalliques*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, exhibition catalogue, Lyon, 2002.

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







## 8. Dome of the Rock Tile

Jerusalem, Palestine, Mid-16<sup>th</sup> century

19cm high, 20.5cm wide

Provenance: Private European Collection, last sold at auction in the 1970s

This underglaze-painted tile, beautifully decorated in turquoise, cobalt blue, and black and white, would have formed part of a row of tiles with connecting designs on the Dome of the Rock in Palestine. The slight curve of the tile indicates it would have decorated an archway or window. The full design, as illustrated by architectural examples in situ in Millner (see p. 118, fig. 4.1; p. 121, fig. 4.3), consists of alternating cartouches and four-petalled rosettes, joined by a small knot flanked by palmettes. The cartouches bear scrolling flowers, as shown on this tile, while the rosettes are filled with a symmetrical floral pattern.

The Dome of the Rock was originally built in 691 CE under the order of Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan. This Islamic shrine has been modified several times over the centuries, in particular when the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman I replaced the exterior tiles in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A distinct characteristic of the Dome of the Rock tiles are the holes on the sides to fit metal rods to compensate for insufficient mortar and grout, which are also found on our tile.

Literature:

Millner, A. *Damascus Tiles: Mamluk and Ottoman Architectural Ceramics from Syria*, Prestel, Munich, London, New York, 2015.

Porter, V. *Islamic Tiles*, The Trustees of The British Museum, London, 1995.



## 9. Iznik Dish with a Figure of a Woman

Turkey, First half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

29.5cm diameter

Provenance: Private USA Collection

This deep circular dish features a woman centrally depicted against a turquoise ground, flanked by stems rendered in cobalt blue with brick-red and white flowers. The woman is seated cross-legged wearing a tall head-dress and a kaftan, and holds a blossom in her right hand. The rim bears alternating pairs of green leaves with scrolling stems and cobalt blue rosettes on a white ground, while the underside is painted with turquoise and cobalt blue leaf motifs. All motifs in the composition are outlined in black, as well as the inner and outer borders of the rim. The dish has an earthenware body covered entirely with a white slip and transparent glaze, except the foot.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a decline in Ottoman Court patronage of Iznik ceramics, leading artists to experiment more openly in style and subject matter. Freely drawn figural imagery such as depicted here is quite rare, and developed perhaps in reference to the popular Ottoman costume albums produced at the time. For comparable examples of this dish featuring central figural imagery, see Bilgi, pp. 508-19, figs. 242-247, and the Musée National de Céramique, Sèvres, illustrated in Atasoy & Raby, pp. 282-83, figs. 666-668. For similar examples of the rim design, see Bilgi, pp. 482-85, figs. 227-229.

### Literature:

Atasoy, N. and Raby, J. *Iznik: the Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press in association with Laurence King Publishing, London, 1994.

Bilgi, H. *Iznik: Ömer Koç Collection*, Hülya Bilgi, Ghent, 2015.









## 10. Iznik Tile

Turkey

Second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century

27.5cm square

Provenance: Private Collection since the 1950s;

Private Swiss Collection until 1990s;

Private European Collection since the 1990s

This square vivid polychrome glazed pottery tile has a canted top right-hand corner decorated with a key fret border. The tile would have been used as an architectural element and the corner was possibly placed against a window or doorway frame. The rest

of the tile is decorated with two different decorations separated diagonally by a narrow bole red border. The upper side of the tile is composed of serrated leaves springing from a bole red rosette together with small flower heads painted in white and green amidst cloud motifs and leaves on an underglaze-blue ground. The lower side of the tile has stylised cloud scrolls on a bright turquoise ground.

Comparative examples with similar cloud motifs and floral depictions are published in Bilgi, H., *Dance of Fire: Iznik Tiles and Ceramics in The Sadberk Hanim Museum and Ömer M. Koç Collections*, Sadberk Hanim Museum, Istanbul, 2009, see figs. 54 and 101.

## 11. Tile Panel Depicting Virgin Mary and Child

Kütahya, Turkey, 19<sup>th</sup> century

The top tile: 8.6cm high, 23.9cm wide

The lower tile: 8.6cm high, 24.1cm wide

Provenance: USA Museum Deaccession

This panel is composed of two pottery tiles depicting the icon of Virgin Mary holding child Jesus. The Virgin Mary is painted on the top tile in purple, black, green, red and underglaze blue. On her covered head she is wearing a crown, surrounded by an illuminating halo with two angels in the top right and left-hand corners. The child Jesus is seated on the Virgin Mary's lap and is depicted with black hair and an illuminating halo with three Greek characters which translate to 'He Who Is'.<sup>1</sup> The lower tile depicts the Virgin Mary's dress in underglaze blue, yellow and red and the Child is depicted in purple and red dress with the Holy Book in his left hand. Two fingers on his right hand are outstretched in a gesture of blessing. The border of the tile has a red and underglaze blue chevron border.

Following the demise of Iznik pottery and production in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, pottery work continued to be produced in Kütahya (Porter, p. 111). We are reasonably able to determine the various types of Kütahya wares which were produced in this region (in western Turkey on the Porsuk River - about 200km southeast of Istanbul) including bowls, plates, jugs and also tiles with winged angels and icons of the Virgin Mary and Child (Porter, p. 116). The most important works from this series can be found in the Armenian Cathedral of St James in Jerusalem (1718-19; Porter, p. 116).

Two nearly identical Kütahya tiles depicting a closely matching icon (with variations in colours) of the Virgin Mary and Child are in The British Museum, London, Accession Number 1928,1017.1, decorated in underglaze blue, red, yellow and black (see Porter, p. 115, fig. 106).

### Literature:

Kürkman, G. *Magic of Clay and Fire: A History of Kütahya Pottery and Potters*, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation, Istanbul, 2006.

Porter, V. *Islamic Tiles*, The British Museum Press, London, 1995.

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Exodus 3:14 King James Version (KJV): "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."









## 12. Calligraphic Sufi Tile

Kütahya, Turkey

Late 19<sup>th</sup> - Early 20<sup>th</sup> century

24.2cm square

Provenance: Private European Collection

The square pottery tile is decorated with a large central apple with calligraphy enclosed within the body of the fruit. The Arabic calligraphy is shown in white in mirror image on a red ground. The largest, central part of the calligraphy reads 'Muhammad'. Around this, there is smaller text which reads, 'Allah' (God) and 'Madad' (help). The red interior of the apple is enclosed by an underglaze blue border and a thin golden yellow border. The apple hangs from a leafy branch with two small fruits, possibly two halves of an apple. The apple is depicted on a four-legged table covered with a tasseled drape. The scene is framed by blue dotted tasseled curtains. The tile has white borders with splashes of yellow and blue speckles of glaze.

Sufism, also called *Tasawwuf*, is based on an intense devotion

to Islam in which Sufis seek to find divine knowledge through a direct, personal and intimate love of God. Sufis, sometimes referred to as dervishes, also gain this devotion by giving up worldly needs and devoting themselves completely to the will of God. Sufis also believe that the knowledge of Islam should be taught by teachers - not only acquired from books. The Ottoman Empire had close links with Sufism and different orders coexisted within Islam.

There are two similar calligraphic tiles in museum collections: one depicting a centralised *Mevlevi* coin and a black cap with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) which includes a border of draped curtains with tassels in the Pera Museum, Istanbul; the other calligraphic tile is illustrated in Bilgi, p. 127, fig. 165.

Literature:

Bilgi, H. & Akalın, Ş. *Delight of Kütahya: Kütahya Tiles and Pottery in the Suna & İnan Kıraç Collection*, Vehbi Koç Foundation, Turkey, 1997.

Kürkman, G. *Magic of Clay and Fire: A History of Kütahya Pottery and Potters*, Suna and İnan Kıraç Foundation, Istanbul, 2006.





### 13. Two Ambassadorial Scenes at the Ottoman Court

Spain or Istanbul, Late 18<sup>th</sup> century

Oil on canvas

50cm x 70cm (unframed)

Provenance: Private European Collection

This pair of paintings portrays two different stages of an ambassadorial reception at the Ottoman Court. Inscriptions in Spanish on the reverse of each painting identify the ambassador as Juan de Bouligny y Paret from Spain, at audience with the Grand Vizier and Sultan in 1783. Court scenes such as these reflect the growing European interest in cultural and diplomatic relations with the Ottoman Empire throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first painting depicts Ambassador Bouligny presenting his credentials to the Grand Vizier, identified on the reverse of the canvas as ‘al-Haggi Leid Muhamedbaja’. Bouligny and his entourage are clearly identifiable in their western clothing and tri-

corne hats, while the Grand Vizier and members of the Ottoman court wear distinctive conical hats or turbans, and kaftans, some lined with fur.

The second painting depicts Sultan Abdülhamid I (r.1774-89) receiving Bouligny in the Throne Room of Topkapi Palace. Sultan Abdülhamid sits on his elevated throne which is finely fitted with embroidered fabric and a canopy from which ornaments hang. To the right of the throne are the Sultan’s turbans placed in a niche, as he had to wear a special headgear when seated on the throne. Next to the Sultan there is a box into which Bouligny’s credentials were to be placed. Bouligny is now wearing an honorary kaftan as part of the ceremony, and bows before the Sultan. The receptions with the Grand Vizier and the Sultan would adhere to strict protocol, and present for both occasions was a dragoman, or interpreter, who served to translate the structured interactions follow-

*En 1783, el Gran Vizir al-Haggi Leid Muhamedbaja...  
 Juan de Bouligny y Paret, Embajador de España...  
 en la ciudad de Constantinopla...  
 al Gran Vizir al-Haggi Leid Muhamedbaja.*







ing court etiquette. The inscription on the reverse of this canvas makes reference to Boulogny's son, Jose Eliodoro Boulogny y Marconie, who had accompanied him to Constantinople as his secretary. These paintings fall within a particular cycle of ambassadorial scenes that were established by the Flemish-French painter Jean Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737), known for his detailed depictions of life in the Ottoman Empire. As access to the Ottoman court was highly restricted, and as the protocol for reception ceremonies did not change throughout the 15th to 19th centuries, many artists chose to follow a set compositional framework wherein they could insert particular characters while changing only a few figures or costumes. Artists following similar compositions to our paintings include: Antoine de Favray (1706-91), who is believed to have painted the farewell reception of the French Ambassador in 1768 (private collection, see Nefedova, pp. 180-81, fig. 165), and English painter

Francis Smith (fl. 1763-80), who depicted the English Ambassador's reception with the Sultan and Grand Vizier in circa 1764 and 1769 respectively (National Portrait Gallery, London and The British Museum, London, see Nefedova, pp. 182-83, figs. 166-67). Further examples include a pair of reception scenes of European Noblemen at the Ottoman Court by an unknown artist, illustrated in Nefedova, pp. 172-73, figs. 156-57, and the reception scenes of Swedish Ambassadors, formerly in the Celsing Collection at Biby, Sweden.

Literature:

Nefedova, O. *A Journey into the World of the Ottomans: The Art of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737)*, Skira, Milan, 2009.

El Sr. D. Juan de Boulogny y Marconie,  
del Consejo de Estado, primer encajado, secretario  
y ministro Plenipotenciario de S. M. Católica cerca  
de la Sublime Puerta, Exornado a S. M. Imperial  
Otomana. Le acompaña como Secretario su hijo  
el Sr. D. Jose Eliodoro Boulogny y  
Marconie, año de 1783.



## 14. Portable Shrine

South China, Early 17th century

Carved, lacquered and gilded wood; iron fittings

213cm high, 86cm wide, 33cm deep

Provenance: Private USA Collection



A rare and important portable shrine with two doors, decorated in carved, lacquered (in black) and gilded wood. Rectangular in shape, it sits on top of a predella (with a lotus-shaped lappet socle), mirrored on the top by an entablature which is crowned by a pediment. Following the shape of a European architectural altarpiece, the present portable shrine was meant to house a carved religious figure in the round, a devotional Christian statuette (probably that of the Virgin and Child) for private devotion or used for missionary work in Asia. In fact, the iconography featured on the highly elaborate, carved triangular-shaped pediment, the crowned double-headed eagle with a flaming heart pierced with arrows on the chest, served as the emblem of the Catholic Order of Saint Augustine, which in the 16<sup>th</sup> century established several monasteries in Mexico, the Philippines and Macau (in Southern China). Not unlike porcelain and silk lampas produced in Jingdezhen and South China for the Augustinians in Portuguese-ruled Macau, settled by Spanish friars from the Philippines around 1589, the present portable shrine was most probably commissioned by that monastic community (on the monastery, see Hugo-Brunt, 1960). The emblem is carved in high-relief on the central medallion of a Mannerist-style cartouche (*strapwork*), flanked by floral motifs similar to bunches of grapes (possibly a Eucharistic allusion) on a gold-dotted ground. While the exterior sides of the doors are plain and lavishly lacquered in gold and red (gold leaf decoration called *tiē jīn qī*) on a black ground with a typical Chinese repertoire, featuring plum branches (*Prunus mume*) and birds (possibly alluding to the purity of the image of the Virgin kept inside), the interior sides are carved with vases of flowers with *strapwork* ornaments also derived from European prints, on the same gold-dotted ground. When open, the shrine reveals a lobed arch set on double columns, all finely carved with similar Mannerist-style ornaments and with the spandrels carved with large rosettes.

Apart from Namban lacquerware, a Japanese production made for export for the European market and which has been subject to more in-depth study and is somewhat easier to identify from the decorative repertoire and techniques used, other lacquer objects made under Portuguese commission have remained little studied. These so-called Luso-Asian lacquers, which have resisted consensual identification of place of production among art historians, curators and conservators, are somewhat heterogeneous in character and may be divided into two groups (Crespo, 2016, pp. 238-61, Cat. No. 22). While the first has been identified as Burmese in origin, the second is Chinese (Crespo, 2016, pp. 288-303, Cat. No. 25). The second group, mainly composed of writing boxes, fall-front writ-



ing cabinets and also carved trays and portable shrines such as the present one, features a similar type of carved low-relief decoration, lacquered in black and highlighted in gold. Some of the surfaces, namely the interior of the writing boxes and cabinets are lacquered in red with gilded decoration of fauna and flora of typically Chinese repertoire. The similarity between some iconographic motifs and the use of mother-of-pearl inlays, namely on trays, and Namban objects, has previously resulted in the misidentification of some pieces as being made in Japan or on the Ryukyu Islands.

One highly important document gives us significant evidence regarding both productions, indicating Burma (Pegu) for the first group, and South China (and Ryukyu Islands) for the second. In the post-mortem inventories of Fernando de Noronha (c. 1540-1608), third Count of Linhares, and his wife Filipa de Sá (†1618), a significant number of Asian lacquered and gilded pieces of furniture are recorded, such as: *another smaller writing cabinet from Pegu [lacquered] in gold and red fitted with drawers; another writing cabinet from China [lacquered] in gold and white which has twelve drawers; one box from*

*China [lacquered] in gold and black fitted with its nook; one writing cabinet from Pegu gilded throughout; four trays from China, three of them featuring their coat of arms, lacquered in black and gold; one small gilded box from Pegu of over a palm in length and its silver lock; one round box from China with its cover; and one gilded bedstead from China [lacquered] in gold and black, with its frame.* The most frequent pieces recorded in the inventory are in fact Chinese in manufacture, featuring an excessive use of gilding and clearly coated in rich, strong red and black lacquer.

Three surviving rectangular trays, undoubtedly similar to the four Chinese lacquered trays recorded in the Linhares inventory - featuring carved and gilded decoration (rosettes and lotus-petal running friezes) in contrast with flat lacquered surfaces in black decorated with typically Chinese floral and animal motifs in gold leaf (sometimes in combination with mother-of-pearl inlays), which are very similar to what may be seen in the present portable shrine - have been recently analysed regarding the materials (lac-



quer, oils, etc.) and lacquering techniques employed in their manufacture as seen from the stratigraphy of application or lacquer coating (Körber, Shilling, Dias and Dias, 2016). Two belong to the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon (Acc. Nos. 44 Band and 2 Band), and one is from a private collection, all three with documented provenance and from Portuguese monasteries. While the lacquer used was identified with the *Toxicodendron succedaneum*, known as laccol (which grows in Southern China, Vietnam and Japan) and typically used in South China, the Chinese techniques used, namely the gold leaf decoration (called *tiē jīn qī*) and the limited number of coatings and the materials typical of inferior quality lacquerware for export, strongly suggest a South Chinese origin. Similar lacquering methods and materials may also be seen on the so-called «Cardinal Albert's» table top (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Acc. No. 4958), or on the so-called «Pope's chest» (Museum für Angewandte Kunst / Gegenwartskunst, Vienna, Acc. No. MD047590), which features a gold-dotted pattern on the ground of its carved decoration

similar to our portable shrine. Few portable shrines of this origin survive, of which mention should be made of one in a Portuguese private collection (unpublished), modelled after a Japanese Namban prototype, and used to house a devotional painting on copper also of Chinese manufacture.

Literature:

- Crespo, H.M. «Global Interiors on the Rua Nova in Renaissance Lisbon», in Jordan Gschwend, A., K. J. P. Lowe (eds.), *The Global City. On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2015, pp. 121-39.
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- Körber, U., Schilling, M.R., Barrocas Dias, C., Dias, L. «Simplified Chinese lacquer techniques and Namban style decoration on Luso-Asian objects from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries», *Studies in Conservation*, 61, Supplement 3, 2016, pp. 68-84.



## 15. Writing Cabinet

South China, Early 17th century

Carved, ebonised, lacquered and gilded wood

40.5cm high, 57cm wide, 40cm deep

Provenance: Private European Collection



This fall-front writing cabinet is rectangular in shape and has an ebonised wood structure and protruding stepped mouldings covering the edges. The decorative arrangement of the exterior sides consists of a large central field - rectangular on the front, top and back, and square on the sides - with a narrow beaded border. All of the exterior sides, except for the underside and back, are deeply carved, lacquered and gilded, with a similar design: a Mannerist-style rectangular cartouche (*strapwork*) based on late 16<sup>th</sup> century European prints, featuring scallops on the corners, and stylised floral motifs in the central field. When open, the present writing cabinet reveals an exuberant floral decoration. The interior side of the fall-front is lacquered in red and decorated in gold with animals and vegetation of which a large, full-blossomed tree peony on the centre with a pair of pheasants (male and female) stand out. The tree peony (*Paeonia suffruticosa*) or *mūdān*, deemed in China “the queen of flowers” and also known as *fùguìhuā* or “flower of richness and honour”, is the symbol of royalty, prosper-

ity, wealth and honour (see Welch, 2008, pp. 34-36). The pheasant, most probably the golden pheasant or *Phasianus pictus* which occurs in the southern provinces of China, known as *jīnjī*, often used as a substitute for the phoenix and strongly associated with women, is an emblem of beauty and good fortune (see Welch, 2008, p. 80). The present writing cabinet is fitted with four tiers of drawers, with a large central drawer occupying two tiers. The upper tier has three drawers, while the two central tiers have two, placed either side of the central drawer (featuring an arch-like moulding), and the bottom tier has only one wide drawer. The high-relief carved decoration of the fronts consists of highly-stylised plants set in symmetry and is decorated in gold against a red background, possibly repainted. The back is lavishly lacquered in black and decorated in gold with tree peonies set with pairs of animals (phoenixes, hares, long-tailed birds, mandarin ducks and carps) further highlighting the marital character of our writing cabinet, which was probably intended as a marriage gift.

This writing box belongs to a rare group of objects - some with inscriptions in Chinese such as this one - which have been recently studied and exhibited (see Crespo, 2016, pp. 288-303, Cat. No. 25 for a very similar example; and Jordan Gschwend and Lowe, 2017, pp. 226-27, Cat. No. 249). The production of these pieces of furniture, modelled after contemporary European prototypes is almost certainly linked with commissions from Portuguese noblemen and rich merchants living in Asia, namely in the south coastal regions of the Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces (see Krahl, 2007; Crespo, 2015). Some documented examples may be found in the inventory drawn up in 1570, of the estate left by Simão de Melo Magalhães, Captain of Malacca from 1545 to 1548, between his widow and children: *one writing cabinet with silver mountings and also its lock with gilded drawers and silver pullers* (12,000 reals); *one gilded writing cabinet from China* (1,000 reals); and *one old casket from China painted in red and gold* (200 reals). These were certainly embellished with either Chinese decorative schemes and repertoire or with Renaissance motifs and compositions copied from European prints - such as our writing cabinet - all in gold leaf set on a black or red lacquered ground. The origin and style of such pieces is clear, mainly in the examples that show a typical and unmistakably Chinese decorative repertoire, such as the so-called «Cardinal Albert's» table top (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Acc. No. 4958), or the so-called «Pope's Chest» (Museum für Angewandte Kunst / Gegenwartskunst, Vienna, Acc. No. MD047590).

Literature:

Crespo, H. M. «Global Interiors on the Rua Nova in Renaissance Lisbon», in Jordan Gschwend, A., K. J. P. Lowe (eds.), *The Global City: On the Streets of Renaissance Lisbon*, Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2015, pp. 121-39.  
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## 16. A Lacquered Shield with a European Coat of Arms

Second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

The leather shield: Bengal

The lacquer: Japan, Edo period (1603–1868)

57cm diameter

Provenance: Private European Collection

This rare, large leather shield of circular and convex form is decorated in gold *hiramaki-e* (low relief lacquer) and *takamaki-e* (high relief lacquer) with a European coat of arms within a band of scrolling foliage on a black lacquer ground, the concave reverse in black lacquer. The coat of arms and the monogram are depicted within two stylised palm leaves with two branches overlapping at the bottom. The outer narrow border of the shield is decorated with delicate scrolling vines and foliage in gold. A single metal suspension ring is attached at the top.

In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, leather shields of this type were produced in Bengal and taken to Japan by the VOC (Dutch East India Company) to be lacquered and decorated with *maki-e* (Hutt, p. 246). Written records suggest that in 1647, 35 Bengal shields were shipped from Batavia (today's Jakarta) to Japan to be lacquered in black and gold which were then shipped back to Batavia in 1648 (Impey, p. 252). These shields decorated in lacquer with individual family monograms and crests were made to order by mem-

bers from the VOC or the Opperhoofden (the chief traders of the Dutch East India Company) in Deshima, an island in the Nagasaki harbour which was the only trading post between Japan and the outside world during the Edo period (Impey, p. 194). Shields commissioned by the VOC or the Opperhoofden became highly-prized centrepieces often used for official occasions and as showpieces; as a result such shields do not show much wear due to lack of usage by their commissioned owners (Impey, p. 45).

Another shield similarly decorated with the crowned symmetrical monogram of Johan van Leenan (the VOC functionary in Hooghly from 1658 until 1674) within a band of foliage is in the collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Accession Number NG-NM-541, see Impey, p. 45, fig. 40. Two Japanese lacquered wedding plates, one bearing the crowned monogram of Joan van Hoorn and Susanna Angenita van Outhoorn and another of Willem van Outhoorn and Elisabeth van Heijningen, have similar compositional features to those on the present shield (illustrated in Zandvliet, pp. 222-23, figs. 107A and 107B, p. 222).

### Literature:

Hutt, J. "Asia in Europe: Lacquer for the West" in Chapter 18, Jaffer, A. & Jackson, A. (eds.), *Encounters: The Meeting of Asia and Europe 1500-1800*, V&A Publications, 2004.

Impey, O. & Jörg, C. *Japanese Export Lacquer 1580-1850*, Hotei Publishing, Amsterdam, 2005.

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## 17. A Rare Carved Sinhalese Ivory Casket

Probably Kandy, Sri Lanka, 17<sup>th</sup> century

20.5cm high, 20.1cm wide, 11.6cm deep

Provenance: Private European Collection for over 100 years, inherited by descent

This exceptionally rare solid ivory casket is of rectangular form with a domed lid and silver mounts resting on four turned bun feet. The entire exterior of the casket is pierced and magnificently decorated with carved mythical figures, birds, squirrels and scrolling foliage. The ivory is secured in place with tiny nails. The front of the casket has a chased silver key plate and mounts. There is a lower drawer to the front of the casket; the solid domed lid has a chain support inside.

The lower front and back of the domed lid have four frontally depicted figures which are half-female, half-bird,

known as *kinnaris*, the female version of the *kinnara*. *Kinnaras* are mythical celestial beings said to have originated from the Himalayas. They have a protective, benevolent role in South Asian mythology and are sometimes depicted playing musical instruments. The *kinnaris* on this casket have female heads and upper torsos and their feet and tails are those of a *hamsa*-like bird. The plumage on the lower body is carved in fine detail. The central motif on the lid is comprised of carved female deities, called *nari-lata*, mythical celestial nymphs forming a *panca-nari-geta*, or a five-women-knot. On top of the composition, a seated cross-legged deity has both of her arms raised, each holding a flower. She is supported by a centrally seated deity below her, who is flanked by two supple figures holding onto the legs of the main deity above. The fluidity of these two deities is emphasised by each one having one of their feet held by the seated deity at the bottom. This motif of *panca-nari-geta*, or a five-women-knot, is repeated in each cardinal direction on the lid of our casket. The tall headdresses of the top most figures reach up-



wards, meet and form a cross. The symmetry in the depiction refers to an ancient Indian concept of a mandala, albeit in a purely decorative format here. All the deities are voluptuous and wear large earrings and arm bracelets together with necklaces.

The large back panel of the casket has two facing *Serapendiya* figures amongst scrolling foliage, flowers, birds and *dandu-lena* or squirrels. *Serapendiya* are beasts also known as *pakshaya* with the heads of lions and *hamsa* bird-like bodies. The top front panel on either side of the keyhole has another very elaborate depiction of five women. A female central deity is depicted seated with an elaborate bow and flower in her hands and flanked by a seated *nari-lata* on both sides, precariously seated and both stretching one of their arms to form an arch around the main deity whilst their other arm stretches out horizontally, supported by a standing female figure. This motif is known as *catur-nari-palakkuya*, a four-women-palaquin: the four subsidiary females flanking the main deity and carrying her in a royal fashion. An added element of movement is introduced to the depiction by flower heads carved sideways on the top of the panel.

An even more elaborate depiction can be found on both side panels of the casket. Here the main motif comprises no less than eight female figures, in the *ashta-nari ratha*, or eight-women-chariot pose (Coomaraswamy, p. 91).

The flanking, subsidiary females are depicted in various acrobatic poses, all ultimately supporting a seated female deity on top of the composition. The female figures at the bottom of the motif are depicted in a curved pose, thus acting as wheels of the chariot. In the middle, there is a standing female deity, who is the rider of the chariot, and holds a stylised bow in one hand and a flower in another. Their crowns define the divine status of the seated and the standing figures. The panel below the keyhole shows two mythical masks called *Kibibi-muna*, with two stems of flowers stemming out from the open mouths (see Coomaraswamy, pp. 80-93, for a comprehensive description on Sinhalese mythical animals). The border decoration of the casket has three bands, either beaded or enclosing geometric shapes.

According to Coomaraswamy, the depiction of the *panca-nari-geta* or the five-women-knot scene can be found in stone at the entrance to Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) in Kandy, Sri Lanka (Coomaraswamy, p. 91). There is also an example of five entwined youthful maidens depicted in *Panca-Nari-Getaya* carved in ivory above a temple store-room door at Maha Viharaya, part of the the Ridi Viharaya temple complex (Silver Temple) in the village of Ridigama, Sri Lanka (Coomaraswamy, pl. XXXVIII, fig. 1). Door frames decorated with ivory carvings of this eminence are

difficult to find on old Sinhalese architecture – in fact, the original lower ivory panels from this temple’s door frame appear to be missing.

This heavily decorated and artistically complex carved casket is a rare surviving masterpiece made during the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Sri Lanka. Whilst the domed lid and four sides of this solid ivory casket are of substantial and generous volume the artist has innovatively balanced the thick ivory panels with finely detailed, elaborate carvings depicting rare motifs, such as the five-women-knot scene, *panca-nari-geta*. Furthermore, ivory boxes from this period with *nari-lata* figures are quite rare and most surviving examples are of differing form and significantly smaller in size. There are two circular ivory boxes which depict mythical and human figures in museum collections. The closest example of ornamental carving is on a circular Kandy ‘jewellery box’ in the Staatliche Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin, Accession Number MIK I 383 (see Jordan, p. 78, fig. 24). The second example, dating from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number IS 13-1896. The Victoria and Albert

Museum also houses a 17<sup>th</sup> century rectangular and domed ivory casket, Accession Number 38-1868, with similar border decoration to ours, however it does not appear to have any figural decoration. Although the shape of our casket appears European, the unparalleled and rare depiction of complex motifs featuring *nari-lata* figures and mythical animals carved on this casket appear to be representative of Sinhalese taste, derived from the ancient art and architecture of Sri Lanka.

Literature:

Coomaraswamy, A. K. *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1956 reprint of the 1908 edition.

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

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## 18. *Vey Vel Pettiya*

Kandy, Sri Lanka

The casket: 18<sup>th</sup> / 19<sup>th</sup> century

The silver plaque: circa 1912 to 1916

23cm high, 25cm diameter

Provenance: Presented to the Hon. F.H.M. Corbet, Advocate General of Madras

This *vey vel pettiya* or hinged rattan casket is of circular form, comprising sides and a shaped lid finely woven in two types of cane with a geometric design over a wooden base. The casket is fastened with brass fittings comprising a pierced and engraved hinge of foliate form at the reverse, a related three-part puzzle lock at the front and a simple clasp at each side. The lid is surmounted by

a later silver handle and plaque inscribed: 'PRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL OF THE ANANDA PIRIWENA TO THE HON. MR. F. H. M. CORBET, ADVOCATE GENERAL OF MADRAS.'



This type of casket was produced in the Kingdom of Kandy, modern day Sri Lanka, and is known as a *vey vel pettiya* or rattan box.<sup>1</sup> These delicate caskets were developed from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards as containers for jewellery or other valuables, and were high-status items at the Kandyan court. The kingdom was dissolved in 1815 when the British seized control of the territory, uniting the island of Ceylon and marking the beginning of over a century of colonial rule. However, many aspects of the previous courtly culture remained into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the use of *vey vel pettiya*. Indeed, even today these caskets are still exchanged in Sri Lanka as symbolic gifts of high-status and prestige.

This appears to have been the case with the current example, which was presented to F. H. M. Corbet by the prestigious Ananda College in Colombo. The plaque describes Corbet as the Advocate-General of Madras, a position that he acquired in 1912. However, the body of the casket appears to predate this era, relating closely to examples in the National Museum of Kandy that are dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. It thus seems most probable that a new silver plaque was added to the antique casket in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a theory supported by the use of a different metal from the original brass fittings. Barrister Frederick Hugh Mackenzie Corbet (1862-1916) was born in Barcelona to the Corbet family of Moreton Corbet. He spent much of his professional life in the British colonies in Asia, beginning his career as a legal sec-

retary in Ceylon. He was greatly interested in the local Sinhalese culture, for example acting as librarian to the Colombo Museum between 1886 and 1893. By 1912 Corbet had established an illustrious career across the region, and was appointed Advocate-General of Madras on the East coast of India, today known as Chennai. After his death in 1916, he was described by one commentator as ‘a very popular Advocate-General and a sincere friend of India and her aspirations.’<sup>2</sup> Even after he had relocated to India, F. H. M. Corbet retained close ties with Ceylon as is illustrated by this *vey vel pettiya*. It was presented to Corbet by the Ananda *Piriwena*, or Buddhist seminary, a school founded in the 1880s by Col. Henry Steel Olcott. An early Western convert to Buddhism, Olcott intended the college to be a Buddhist alternative to the Christian mission schools that up until then had dominated education on the island. The school remains one of the most prestigious schools in Sri Lanka, and is today known simply as Ananda College.



Literature:

Coomaraswamy, A.K., *Mediaeval Sinhalese Art*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1956 reprint of the 1908 edition.

Notes:

<sup>1</sup> See Coomaraswamy (1956, plate XLIIIA). These caskets are here erroneously referred to as *vel pettiya*, a misnomer that is often repeated in other sources.

<sup>2</sup> p. ii, Travacore Law Journal, Vol. 7 (1917)

## 19. A Rare and Unusual Royal Silver Gift

Commissioned by Pakubuwono X (r. 1893-1939),  
the 10<sup>th</sup> Susuhunan of Surakarta

Probably Solo, Indonesia, circa 1910-1925

21cm high, 43cm long, 16cm wide

Diameter of containers from left to right: 10cm, 11.5cm, 8.8cm

Provenance: Private Collection







These three silver cylindrical containers of varying sizes are attached on top of a silver tray with a silver rectangular handle. The silver tray rests on six lobed feet with leafy floral decoration, the ends of the feet curve slightly inwards. The tray is decorated with carved foliage with blue enamel on top of the silver chasing. The three silver containers and the handle are also finely decorated with carved, elaborate floral scrollwork embellished with blue enamel which further highlights the carved birds, peacocks, foliage and lobed motifs, the latter possibly depicting stylised lotus flowers. The front and back of each container together with each side of the handle bear the carved bold initials 'PB X' enameled in blue; these initials are surmounted by a crown. The central container consists of the coat of arms of Surakarta which includes a six-pointed star to the right of the crown and a crescent moon and sun radiant to the left of the crown. The lower edges of the tray, the handle and the rims of the containers all have beaded decoration. The intricate decoration on all three pieces refers strongly to their royal connection: peacocks symbolize power and royalty, and they are depicted here either on their own or in pairs with their tails fully fanned out, the feathers decorated with deep blue enamel, or resting with tails closed. The skilled execution of the entire piece is evident on the balanced depiction of the different types of vegetation, amongst which the magnificent peacocks and striking lotus-motifs are placed. This rare and unusual piece was most likely made in Solo or its surrounding area, commissioned by the tenth Susuhunan of Surakarta, Pakubuwono X (1866-1939), who reigned Surakarta from 1893 until 1939. Although the original function of these silver containers is unknown, we do know from the 'PB X' royal cypher and the royal *Makuta* of Solo that this item was commissioned by Pakubuwono X himself, most probably to be given as a royal gift. Pakubuwono X had commissioned numerous royal gifts for the Dutch and other guests, for example he commissioned and copied into gold, gifts for the royal wedding (1901) of Queen Wilhelmina and Prince Hendrik which included a betel set, handkerchief box, tobacco jar, sweetmeat dish and a water pot amongst various other gifts (see Wassing-Visser, pp. 150-56). Although we are unsure of the purpose of these royal silver containers, one possibility is that they were used as containers for cigars and cigarettes. Perhaps the central container - being the





shortest and widest – was used to offer either matches or *pinang* (nuts).

Over his 46 years of rule over Surakarta, Pakubuwono X faced many political vicissitudes alongside the undertakings by the Dutch East Indies. Despite this, the reign under Pakubuwono X, is known as one of the most prosperous times for Surakarta, as it grew to become the fifth largest city in the Dutch East Indies. A silver box with decorative motifs strongly resembling those found in the Hindu Prambanan temple complex, now in the Van Gesseler Verschuur Collection (see Kal, p. 108, fig. 5), circa 1930-1932, shares similar stylised lobed, lotus-like decoration as seen on our three containers. The decorative elements on our piece show the rich cultural heritage of Indonesia, evolved over the centuries.

Literature:

Kal, Pienke, W.H. *Yogya Silver: Renewal of a Javanese Handicraft*, Tropenmuseum, KIT Publishers, Amsterdam, 2005.

Taylor, J. G. “Sultans and the House of Orange-Nassau: Indonesian perceptions of power relationships with the Dutch”, in Chapter Six, Aldrich R. and McCreery C. (eds.), *Crowns and Colonies: European Monarchies and Overseas Empires*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2016.

Wassing-Visser, R. *Royal Gifts from Indonesia: Historical Bonds with the House of Orange-Nassau (1600-1938)*, Waanders Publishers, Zwolle, 1995.



## 20. Batavian Carved Ebony Chest

Indonesia, circa 1680-1720

23cm high, 41cm wide, 27cm deep

Provenance: Private UK Collection, inherited by descent

This exceptional solid ebony chest is decorated with deep half-relief carvings of lotus flowers and foliage to the top, sides, front and back of the box. The edges of the chest have been further elaborated with silver rosette-shaped mounts which are attached vertically to the four-corners of the chest. The top of the lid has four large silver rosette mounts. The top lid is depicted with a large central lotus flower in full bloom which is surrounded by partially blooming lotuses and swirling foliage; this half-relief floral decoration continues on the front, back and on all four sides, creating a three-dimensional effect on the entire box. On the front of the chest there is a silver escutcheon embellished with flowers and leaves. To the

front of the box there is a lower drawer with a small keyhole and key. There are two silver handles on each side of the chest. The lid opens up and the interior of the box is lined with green velvet as is the lower small drawer. The base of the chest is ebonised wood.

This type of ebony furniture is closely associated with the Batavian (present-day Jakarta) workshops in Indonesia. From the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Batavian economy had grown stronger and an increase in its population resulted in a higher demand for ebony furniture (van Campen, p. 57). References from estate inventories mention ebony furniture decorated with large flowers from around 1690 (van Campen, pp. 57-8). According to Veenendaal, this new style of ebony furniture from Batavia with 'three-dimensional floral motifs' created in a perspective style - with large floral decoration as the main decorative motif - appeared on ebony furniture from around 1680 - 1720 (see Eliens, ed., p. 30). According to Jaffer, differentiating between ebony furniture from

Batavia, Sri Lanka and the Coromandel Coast can be quite challenging as Dutch merchants moved their Coromandel Coast furniture to other Dutch settlements in Batavia and even in Sri Lanka. As a result, the decorative elements discussed above were extensively imitated by other craftsmen (Jaffer, 2011).

Although comparable examples of chests of this size and decorative quality are very difficult to find, there are two similar extant examples, both in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (see Veenendaal, 1985, p. 62, pl. 54). One of the chests is decorated with brass mounts instead of silver, Accession Number BK-1976-60.

Other similar examples but of differing forms and sizes include a Batavian casket, circa 1706, made of amboyna burl wood with ebony and teak which shares similar silver Batavian fittings and mounts as our casket (see Veenendaal, 2014, p. 67, fig. 99). A large ebony cabinet on a stand, circa 1680-1720, (published in Veenendaal, 2014, p. 25, fig. 23), has large lotus floral carvings similar to the flower decoration on our chest. An ebony miniature cabinet on a stand, late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> century, is published in *Port Cities* (see Lee, p. 158, fig. 90). There is a large ebony four-poster bed, circa 1700, in the Rijksmuseum, Accession Number BK-1994-37, which has large floral motifs carved in relief and according to van Campen this floral decoration was made to fit the style and demands of the senior Dutch officials in Batavia (see van Campen, pp. 54 and 56, fig. 34).

#### Literature:

Eliens, T. (ed). *Domestic Interiors at the Cape and in Batavia 1602-1795*, Waanders Uitgevers Zwolle, Gemeentemuseum, Den Haag, 2002.

Jaffer, A., *Furniture from British India and Ceylon: A Catalogue of the Collections in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum*, Timeless Books, New Delhi, 2001.

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

Lee, P. H. and others. *Port Cities: Multicultural Emporiums of Asia, 1500-1900*, Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, 2016.

Terwen-de Loos, J. *Het Nederlands Koloniale Meubel*, Uitgeverij T. Wever B.V., Franeker, Den Haag, 1985.

Van Campen, J. & Hartkamp-Jonxis, E. *Asian Splendour: Company Art in the Rijksmuseum*, Walburg Pers, Amsterdam, 2011.

Veenendaal, J., *Asian Art and Dutch Taste*, Waanders Uitgevers Zwolle, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, 2014.

Veenendaal, J., *Furniture from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India during the Dutch Period*, Foundation Volkenkundig Museum Nusantara, Delft, 1985.







## 21. Coverlet (*The Five Senses*)

Ahmedabad (Gujarat), India


First half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

Silk embroidery

268cm x 192cm

Provenance: Private USA Collection





This Gujarati coverlet or *colcha* was made for the European market in dark-blue plain weave silk with polychrome silk embroidery (red, yellow, white, green, orange, blue and brown) in chain stitch and with fringes in two colours. The design of this bedcover is organised around an eight-lobed central medallion enclosed with a border of Renaissance-style grotesque masques interspersed with flowers. This medallion is set within a large rectangular panel surrounded by wide borders featuring hunters some on horseback and animals in symmetrical order. The central field is decorated with a European-style dragon on top and below the medallion flanked by hunters, wild animals and birds, including peacocks on the corners. The figure of Touch, depicted as a red-haired woman stroking a small animal while seated cross-legged, is shown at the centre of the medallion, while female figures in the corners personify the other four senses: Smell (a woman smelling a flower), Sight (a woman gazing at her reflexion in a mirror), Taste (a woman drinking wine from a small goblet) and Hearing (a woman playing a lute), pictured clockwise. Each of the five figures (also the hunters on the borders) is dressed following the characteristic costume and hairstyle of the 1620-1630s. Although the hunting scenes are similar to those featured on earlier Bengali *colchas*, called *de montaria* (with hunting scenes) and made for the Portuguese market from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century until their expulsion by the Mughals in 1632, the depiction of the female personifications in their courtly apparel is reminiscent of a set of prints on the Five Senses (published around 1623-1627) by Johan Bara, or Jan Barra (1581-1634), a Dutch engraver who settled in London in 1627. While the Portuguese were certainly the first to commission luxury goods such as prized silk textiles, directly to the centuries-old textile production centres of India, such

as Bengal and Gujarat, other European patrons soon followed from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards - on these Gujarati *colchas* see Karl, 2016, pp. 41-43; see also Peck, 2013. Apart from the present one, only five other examples of Gujarati coverlets embroidered with the Five Senses are known to have survived: one (273 x 193 cm) in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Acc. No. 1998.587) and a second (284.5 x 218 cm), very similar in its composition and decoration, featuring facing phoenix-like *simurgh* of Persian origin on the four corners on the central field, in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Acc. No. 1988-7-4, see Karl, 2016, pp. 257-58, Cat. No. 35); a third example in the Museu-Biblioteca Condes de Castro Guimarães, Cascais, Portugal; a fourth (278.7 x 197.3 cm), with winged lions and peacocks on the four corners of the inner central field, in the Art Institute of Chicago, Acc. No. 1982.18; and a fifth in the Kunstgewerbemuseum, Berlin. One other example, similar to these Five Senses' *colchas* in composition, colour scheme and decorative repertoire, albeit with the depiction of only one standing female figure with a parrot on the central medallion and double-headed eagles on the four outer corners, belongs to the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Acc. No. Carrand 2258, see Karl, 2016, pp. 255-57, Cat. No. 34.

#### Literature:

Karl, B. *Embroidered Histories: Indian Textiles for the Portuguese Market during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Böhlau Verlag, Wien - Köln - Weimar, 2016.

Peck, A. (ed.). *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800* (exh. cat.), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thames and Hudson, New York - London, 2013.



## 22. Indo-Portuguese Mother-of-pearl Dish

Gujarat, India, Early 17<sup>th</sup> century

20cm diameter, 3.5cm deep

Provenance: Private UK Collection

The mother-of-pearl dish is of shallow rounded form with a short foot and cusped edges. Both the interior and exterior of the dish are comprised of pinned sections fashioned with lobed and rectangular pieces of mother-of-pearl. The central well of the dish forms a stylised rosette while the reverse of the dish has a geometric pattern. The rectangular and lobed pieces are secured by brass bands and pins.

There are two similar objects in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Numbers 4283-1857 and 4282-1857.

According to Jaffer, when the museum acquired these mother-of-pearl pieces in 1857 they were assumed to be Italian in origin because of their European form (Jaffer, p. 39). Documentation from the Green Vaults in Dresden, Germany, proves that Gujarati dishes of this style were imported from Gujarat to Europe as early as the second quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (see Jaffer, p. 39). The commissioning of these particular wares is generally associated with the Portuguese traders who were the earliest merchants in western India (see Jaffer, p. 39). One of the examples in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Accession Number 4283-1857, depicts a very similar style of rosette in the central well. However, ours has a concentric band between the flower-head and the petals.

Literature:

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







23.



## Four Rare Indian Carved Ebony Chairs

These magnificently carved and pierced ebony chairs were made on the Coromandel Coast in south-east India during the 1660s-1680s. The Coromandel Coast was a region known for its active textile manufacturing industry with many factories producing for the European market, and it was also known as a centre for making ebony furniture as confirmed by the inventories from the Dutch East India Company (Jaffer, p.133). Furthermore, many of these pieces of ebony furniture were taken to nearby Ceylon and Batavia where they were replicated. In order to differentiate between these often very similar pieces of furniture, scholars have divided the furniture into five stylistic types (see Jaffer, pp.133-34 for a full description of types A-E). These four chairs fall within the group known as 'type C', characterised by pierced decoration, dense scrolling designs, and motifs from Christian and Hindu imagery. Chairs of this type are elaborate and contain small decorative additions of ivory, and finials often in the shape of birds. According to Jaffer, two documented groups belonging to 'type C' exist in Britain. The first group is from Longleat, the seat of the Marquesses of Bath, in Wiltshire, where an inventory from 1740 has a reference to 24 chairs of this type. The second group was originally in Montagu House, London, mentioned in an inventory in 1746, and the chairs are now in Boughton House, Northamptonshire (Jaffer, p. 133). Furthermore, it would appear that all of the chairs formerly in the collection of Horace Walpole, the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orford, in Strawberry Hill, London, are of the same type. At the sale of Walpole's belongings in 1842, some of these chairs went to Knowsley, Merseyside, the seat of the Earl of Derby, and others to Eaton Hall, Cheshire, the seat of the Duke of Westminster (Jaffer, p. 137). It is very likely that our four chairs belonged to the group bought for the Duke of Westminster at Walpole's sale in

1842. On the inside of the front seat rail on one of the four chairs is an old exhibition label reading 'Art Treasures Exhibition, Wrexham, 1876', and on the back seat rails of all the chairs are numbers (3, 10, 14), one of them now torn off. The Art Treasures Exhibition of North Wales and the Border Counties opened on July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1876 and ran for three months. While the name on the label on our chair is completely faded, the Duke of Westminster opened this exhibition and played an instrumental role in it by contributing many objects from his own collection. Three carved ebony chairs from his collection were published in 1939, each slightly different in style (for an example of the one closest to ours, see Wall, fig. 27). The collection at Eaton Hall was sold in 1960. Examples of 'type C' chairs can be found in the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, Accession Number AE85711.1-2, illustrated in Jaffer, p. 136, fig. 1, and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Accession Number IS.6-2000.

### Literature:

Jaffer, A. *Furniture from British India and Ceylon: A Catalogue of the Collection in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peabody Essex Museum*, Timeless Books, India, 2001.

*Port Cities: Multicultural Emporiums of Asia, 1500-1900*, Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore, 2017  
Veenendaal, J. *Furniture from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India during the Dutch period*, Volkenkundig Museum Nusantara, Delft, 1985.

Wall, Dr. V. I. van der. *Het Hollandsche Koloniale Barokmeubel: bijdrage tot de kennis van het ebbenhouten meubel omstreeks het midden der XVIIIde en het begin der XVIIIde eeuw*, De Sikkell, Antwerpen, Martinus Nijhoff, 'S Gravenhage, 1939.





## 23, 24, 25 (pair).

Coromandel Coast, India, 1660-80

Chair 10: 102cm high, 57cm wide, 48.5cm deep

Chair with missing number: 97cm high, 55cm wide, 47cm deep

Chair 3 and 14 (pair): 104cm high, 55cm wide, 48 deep

Private UK Collection; Probably formerly in the collection of the Duke of Westminster at Eaton Hall, bought from the sale of Horace Walpole's collection in 1842

These four ebony chairs each have carved and pierced decoration, with a re-caned drop-in seat. The crest rail bears a centrally featured, winged, female head with ivory and ebony eyes. On either side there is a *makara* (mythical sea beast) marking the upper edges of the crest rail, depicted also with ivory and ebony eyes. Below each *makara* is a standing nude female. The base of the crest rail is highlighted with carved,

rounded moulding. Below are nine twist-turned balusters with foliate capitals joined together in two, alternating rows. Eight carved acorns decorate the spaces between the balusters. The lower back rail features a smaller scale version of the crest rail, with a winged female head flanked by *makaras*, but without the nude females. The stiles of the chairs are outlined along the corners with carved, rounded moulding, while the front and outer sides differ slightly on the chairs, bearing scrolling vines and/or alternating flowers and leaves. The chairs have on their back sides symmetrically joined carved four-petalled flowers. The stiles are surmounted by finials in the shape of a bird with ivory and ebony eyes. The seat is outlined differently on the chairs, with scrolling vines and/or alternating flowers and leaves, and the caning is attached to ebony blocks. The legs and box stretcher are twist-turned, and where they join are decorative blocks. These blocks feature symmetrically arranged, upward sprouting flowers and leaves, and larger versions of these blocks join the legs with the seat rails.



24.





## 26. Portrait of Sir David Ochterlony

Signed by the Jaipur artist Ram Lal  
India, circa 1830

Gouache on paper

20cm x 14cm

Provenance: Private USA Collection; Maggs Bros. Ltd. London; Sotheby's London; Collection of William Fraser (1784-1835)

This painting portrays Sir David Ochterlony (1758-1825), a Major-General who served for the British East India Company. He lived in Delhi from 1803 to 1825, during which time he was appointed British Resident, or Ambassador, from 1803-6, and again from 1818-22. He was known for his eccentric lifestyle including having thirteen Indian wives, with whom he supposedly paraded around the Mughal Red Fort each evening on elephants.

In this painting, Ochterlony stands on a terrace in full European costume. His right hand is outstretched as though holding a flower, recalling traditional Mughal portraiture. Inscribed on the reverse in Nagari script is 'Jarnal Akhtar Lani Saheb', and the painting is signed by the Jaipur artist Ram Lal.

This painting was formerly in the collection of William Fraser (1784-1835), who was appointed secretary to Ochterlony in 1805. Fraser was an avid patron of the arts and a great admirer of Mughal culture. He commissioned the well known 'Fraser Album' which contained works by prominent Mughal artists of the time.

A further painting of Ochterlony from the same period is in the British Library, London, Accession Number Add.Or.2, and illustrated in Welch, p. 108, fig. 46. In this painting, Ochterlony sits smoking a hookah in his house in Delhi, wearing Indian dress and watching a *nautch* (traditional dance).

### Literature:

Welch, S. C. *Room for Wonder: Indian Painting during the British Period 1760-1880*, The American Federation of Arts, New York, 1978.







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## 27. Mughal Silver *Pandan*

India, 18<sup>th</sup> century

3.3cm high, 9.5cm wide, 7.5cm deep

Provenance: Private Collection

This octagonal box is decorated in pierced and chased silver. The central oval panel and the inner border on the flat lid are decorated with lotus flowers and birds. The outer border of the lid is embellished with lotus flowers amongst leafy scrolls. The base of the box has another hinged lid which opens up to reveal a hidden mirror inset in the silver. The lid on this side is decorated with an oval and inner border of roses and an outer border of birds amongst leafy scrolls.

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, silver boxes such as this one were

made in a variety of shapes, often with floral and bird decoration. These boxes were used to store *pan*, edible leaves wrapped with lime paste, areca nuts and spices. *Pan* was used for its medicinal, digestive and aphrodisiac properties and was most likely introduced to the Mughal ruling classes by courtiers (see Terlinden, p. 144). The pierced silver work on this box also ingeniously aided to preserve the contents as air could travel through the box (Terlinden, p. 143). A similar example of a silver *pandan* which also has a mirror concealed in its hinged base is illustrated in Terlinden, p. 144, fig. 208.

Literature:

Terlinden, C. *Mughal Silver Magnificence*, Antalga, United Kingdom, 1987.





## 28. Bell-Shaped Glass Huqqa Base

North India, Mid-Late 18<sup>th</sup> century  
18.5cm high, 16cm diameter

This glass huqqa base features an elegant decorative repertoire achieved by wheel-cutting and painting in gilt. The principle motifs comprise six, evenly spaced floral arrangements sprouting from vases, each set within the architectural framework of six columns and arches. A wide band containing vegetal motifs and an undulating line marks the base of this object, and repeats in slightly smaller scale below the base of the neck. The neck bears a protruding folded ring about half way up, above which six singular flowers surround the upper section. Traces of red pigment appear around the base of the neck, and the top holds a thin silver band. The base of the object is flat and shows the pontil mark, suggesting the object was blown freehand.

Bell-shaped huqqa bases first appeared in India in the 1730s-40s, gradually becoming more common than the earlier spherical versions that required an additional ring base upon which to stand. Their decorative schemes are typically in keeping with those found on *bidri* wares, a type of blackened inlaid metalwork from Bidar in southern India where huqqa bases were also produced. For further examples of glass, bell-shaped huqqa bases, see Carboni, p. 380 (Cat. Nos. 104c-e), and Dye, p. 435 (Cat. Nos. 208-9).

### Literature:

Carboni, S. *Glass from Islamic Lands*, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001.

Dye, J. M. III. *The Arts of India: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts*, Philip Wilson Publishers, London, 2001.









## 29. Dagger with a Jade Handle

Bandanwara, Rajasthan, India, 18<sup>th</sup> century

43.5cm long

Provenance: Private Collection

This dagger features a watered steel blade and a jade hilt, embellished with five semi-precious stones inlaid with gold in the *kundan* technique. The jade is carved around the base of the hilt and the pommel, featuring floral and vegetal motifs. Acanthus leaves line the quillon block and terminate on either end with semi-precious stones, while a central lotus flower sprouts centrally among leafy stems. The pommel bears two carved pinnate leaves along its edge, which join at the butt with a semi-precious stone. Further leaves and flowers, including a lotus, curl around the sides of the pommel. The blade has a sunken panel with median ridge and lotus motif, and ends with a swollen tip.

The scabbard, made from wood overlaid with velvet and metal thread trim, bears a matching gold overlay chape and locket with floral motifs differing on either side. The pattern on the front consists of flowers set against a ground of wavy lines symbolizing water, depicted in reserve within gold overlay. This same type of pattern can be found on a 17<sup>th</sup> century *bidri* ware tray from the Deccan, housed in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Accession Number M.89.19, illustrated in Zebrowski p. 258, No. 440 and pl. 508. Attached to the back of the scabbard is a label with the number '3', referring to the Bandanwara arsenal in which it was made.

For further examples of daggers with similar hilts, see Kaoukji, p. 180-81, Cat. No. 62, and Ricketts & Missillier, p. 113, No. 195. For other daggers from the Bandanwara arsenal, see Hales, p. 16, No. 39.

### Literature:

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

Kaoukji, S. *Precious Indian Weapons and Other Princely Accoutrements*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2017.

Ricketts, H. and Missillier, P. *Splendeur des Armes Orientales*, Acte-Expo, Paris, 1988.

Zebrowski, M. *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, Alexandria Press, London, 1997.





### 30. Dagger with a Gold Overlaid Handle

Bandanwara, Rajasthan, India

Dated 1882

44cm long

Provenance: Private Collection

This dagger is beautifully decorated with gold overlay. On the iron hilt are leafy stems and flowers sprouting from the quillon block, curling to the sides and upwards along the grip and around the pommel. With the scabbard on, the pattern continues onto the locket with the stems and flowers sprouting downwards, and again on the chape with the

pattern facing upwards. The same format applies to the reverse of the hilt and scabbard where there is an arabesque pattern. The watered steel blade has a sunken panel with median ridge and lotus motif, and ends with a swollen tip.

The forte bears further gold overlay designs featuring lotus flowers. The wooden scabbard is covered with velvet and has metal thread trim.

Along the base of the quillon block are two inscriptions in Devanagari reading: 'Rai Sahib Raja Shri Ranjit Singh Ji'; 'Dagger made in the armoury 1882'. Rai Ranjit Singh of Bandanwara (b. 1844) was a landowner with a large estate south of the Nasirabad Cantonment, Rajasthan. Further examples of daggers formerly in his collection are illustrated in Hales, p. 16, No. 39.

#### Literature:

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

Bayley, C. S. *Chiefs and Leading Families in Rajputana*, Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1894, p. 109.





### 31. *Kulah Khud* (Helmet)

Iran, 19<sup>th</sup> century  
59cm high

This steel helmet is decorated with alternating rows of lobbed medallions and pendants, raised and set above chiseled arabesque patterns. A band containing six calligraphic cartouches with alternating roundels bearing bird motifs surrounds the lower part, from which the chainmail hangs. Topped with a spike, this helmet has two plume holders and a sliding nose guard. The calligraphy and decorative devices are highlighted with gold overlay.

The *naskhi* inscriptions in the six cartouches read:

این خود مرصع بسر مرد دلاور / خوشتر بود از تاج کی [و] افسر  
 این خود چه خودیست که از کوه / ای خود مگر صیقلی ...  
 تو مگر مهر انوری یا کاسی (؟) / چنان (؟) آبی از دریای اختری (؟)

“This jewelled helmet on the head of the hero  
 Is more beautiful than the crown of king [and] a diadem,  
 What a helmet this helmet is! From the mountain ...  
 O helmet surely you are polished ...  
 O helmet surely you are shining sun or a goblet (?),  
 Like (?) water from a green sea.”

Another helmet from the Qajar era in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Accession Number 02.5.7, bears a similar all-over decorative composition to ours. Although it lacks the chiseled arabesque patterns, there are more figural imagery on the medallions and pendants, and on the ends of the nose guard. Further examples with slight varying decorative schemes can be found at The British Museum, London, Accession Numbers 1878,1230.772 and OA+.6203; and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession Number 91.1.749, illustrated in Alexander, pp. 116-18, Cat. No. 42.

Literature:

Alexander, D. G. *Islamic Arms and Armor in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2015.





## 32. Qajar Headdress Ornament

Iran, 19<sup>th</sup> century  
12 cm long

This exquisite headdress ornament is in the form of a bird of prey with wings outstretched. The bird is finely decorated with enamel, gold-sheet, pearls and semi-precious stones, and is attached with a ring on the back of its neck to a row of five joining plaques. The bird's chest bears a large semi-precious stone, beneath which stylised plumage is depicted in blue enamel. Three smaller semi-precious stones accentuate the wings and tail, with even smaller stones marking the bird's eyes. Delicate enamelled floral and bird motifs embellish the back of the ornament, while pearls surround the bird's neck and also hang from its wings and tail. The five plaques each contain a small, semi-precious stone and are linked by small threaded pearls. The reverse of one plaque bears green and pink enamelling. Jewellery from the Qajar period was often decorated with enamel, a medium which was also frequently used on luxury items including bowls and boxes. Reflecting both earlier Iranian pieces and European influences, enamel work typically includes birds, flowers and human imagery. For similar examples to our piece, see Spink, p. 579, Nos. 469-70.

### Literature:

Spink, M. *The Art of Adornment: Jewellery of the Islamic Lands*, Part Two, Vol. XVII, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, The Nour Foundation, London, 2013.



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