

AMIR MOHTASHEMI



Equestrian Portrait of Rao Ram Singh I of Kota

Kota, India, c. 1700

ink on paper

Provenance: Collection of King Gustav Adolf VI, inventory no. 542

33,5cm high, 34cm wide

Stock no.: A5458

This is possibly a portrait of Rao Ram Singh I of Kota who reigned from 1696 to 1707. There is another drawing that is identified as Ram Singh in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum in Hyderabad that sports similar features (see reference below). The other drawing is not as delicately detailed as this charming sketch which is very carefully drawn with an array of exquisite details. The horse is a real tour de force as is the carefully rendered costume of the ruler. The delicate hairs of the horse's mane fanning out and the scarf wrapped around Ram Singh's shoulder swinging behind him give a sense of swift movement to the drawing. Ram Singh's hand holding the reins is treated with great delicacy and the elephant head on the pommel of the saddle is simply exquisite. The artist has added some white pigment to the face of the rider, giving it a naturalistic look. White pigment also highlights part of his garment while his turban is wholly white. Ochre is used to enhance the silhouette of the face and a pinkish wash has been added to the saddle blanket giving more naturalism to the whole, thus enlivening the drawing. Although facing to the left, a painting contemporary to ours in the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B86D13), depicting Maharaja Anup Singh of Bikaner and dating from the last quarter of the seventeenth century, has a similar feel and pose with the ruler on horseback holding a lance. In our drawing the end of the lance has been torn away. A similar horse is also seen in a Deccani painting "A Mounted Prince holding a Falcon" in the David Collection, Copenhagen (13/2015) which also dates from the same period.

See also Andrew Topsfield and Jagdish Mittal, *Rajasthani Drawings in the Jagdish and Kamla Museum*

of Indian Art, Hyderabad: Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, 2015, no. 42, pp. 96-97 (76.635).

The drawing bears the stamp reading: "Udaipur Wala Mewar" in the centre with "Nur MD Ibrahim Silver Merchant" around the border.