

KENT ANTIQUES

ISLAMIC & INDIAN ART

WORKS OF ART FROM
THE ISLAMIC WORLD
& ORIENTALIST PAINTINGS





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PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to present private collector and museums our new selection of Islamic works of art and Orientalist paintings which have been gathered with extreme care for their quality, provenance and condition. The catalogue demonstrates expressions from almost all of the traditional Islamic art forms. We have taken care to select works of art that will not only attract the attention of collectors but will also introduce the reader to the extraordinary richness and beauty of Islamic art. Every single work of art published in this catalogue can be appreciated for its formal and decorative property as well as its art-historical, cultural and/or religious value.

The accompanying texts are meant to provide a basic description of the piece and information about its functional and artistic background as well as bibliographic information about published comparable pieces in world museums and international collections. It is a delightful privilege for me to offer such a broad spectrum of rare and fresh-to-the-market objects to both institutional and private collectors.

Mehmet Keskiner
Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are indebted to many distinguished scholars for their assistance during the preparation of this catalogue. Mr Tim Stanley from the Victoria and Albert Museum kindly helped with the translation of Persian verse to English. David Alexander generously shared his opinion identifying the workshops of some objects. Special thanks are due to Mr. Nabil Saidi for his assistance and valuable remarks especially on works on paper. Distinguished epigraphist Mrs. Manijeh Bayani-Wolpert kindly offered her help for deciphering Persian and Turkish inscriptions and seals. We also would like to thank Dr Nikolaos Vryzidis for generously sharing his expert opinion on Ottoman textiles. We are grateful to Mr. Garo Kürkman for his insightful comments on Ottoman metalwork.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my brother Dr Bora Keskiner who worked on the texts of the catalogue. The presentation of the materials would not have been possible without the participation of Peter Keenan, whose design served both elegance and clarity, and fine art photographer Alan Tabor.

1

AN IMPORTANT KUTAHYA CERAMIC ROSE-WATER SPRINKLER

Turkey
18th Century
Height: 18.9 cm

This rare rose-water sprinkler belongs to a small group of 18th century Kütahya rose-water sprinklers renowned for gracefully combining pale blue, light manganese purple, yellow, dark coral red. The incised appliction vertically dividing the body into six elliptic sections is a rare appliction which adds depth to the surface of the bulbous body. These sprinklers were used for serving rose-water following ceremonial events.

A comparable 18th century rose-water sprinkler is published in Garo Kürkman's *Toprak, Ateş, Sır*, 2005, p. 215. For a similarly incised rose-water sprinkler please see; *Toprak, Ateş, Sır*, 2005, p. 191. Şebnem Akalın & Hülya Bilgi, *Yadigar-ı Kütahya - Suna ve İnan Kıraç Koleksiyonundan Kütahya Seramikleri*, Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Araştırma Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 42-51. Also see the exhibition catalogue: *Splendeurs de la Cermamique Ottomane des Collections Suna-İnan Kıraç et du Musée Sadberk Hanım*, Musée Jacquemart-André – Institut de France, Istanbul, 2000, pp. 126-131.







2

A RARE AND IMPORTANT OTTOMAN DECOUPAGE CALLIGRAPHY, SIGNED FAHRI OF BURSA

Turkey
Second half of
the 16th Century
Dimensions:
28.3 x 19.1 cm

The present cut-paper calligraphy is a rare work by the Ottoman decoupage master Fahri of Bursa. It displays his mastery in executing cut-paper calligraphy without interfering with the proportions of the letters. See; Blair, Sheila. *Islamic Calligraphy*, Edinburgh University Press, 2006, p.56.
A remarkable collection of Fahri's cut-paper calligraphies is found in the calligraphy album of Sultan Ahmed I in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library (TSMK H. 2161). A comparable decoupage by the celebrated master is published in Süheyl Ünver – Gülbün Mesara's *Türk İnce Kağıt Oyma Sanatı*, Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, Ankara, 1980, p. 12.

FAHRI OF BURSA (d. 1617)

The greatest of Ottoman paper-cutters Fahri of Bursa is best known for his extraordinary *decoupage* composition, known as *Gülistan* (the rose-garden), presented to Sultan Ahmed I (r.1603-1617), now located in the so-called Album of Murad III, in Vienna, Austrian National Library (Cod. Mixt. 313). The same album also includes other fine examples executed by Fahri. He is the only paper-cutter (*qa'ati*) mentioned by the Ottoman chronicler Mustafa 'Āli in his history of calligraphers and artists (*Manāqib-i Hunarwarān*) written in 1580 and one whose work deemed worthy of royal albums. The artist was celebrated for his unparalleled skills in executing garden scenes and floral compositions. His works have been praised by many authorities and considered unsurpassable. He passed away in 1617.

Provenance:
Private French Collection







3

A BLUE AND WHITE IZNIK TAZZA

Turkey
Second half of the
16th Century
Height: 5.5 cm
Diameter: 17.5 cm

With sloping rim on short foot, the white interior painted in cobalt blue and black with a central flowerhead in a roundel within a ring of cusped panels, the rim with stylised wave and rock motif, the exterior with alternating motifs. For a comparable blue and white Iznik tazza please see; Atasoy & Raby's *Iznik*, 1989, p. 241.

Provenance:
UK Private Collection





4

THE SÜLEYMANIYE MOSQUE IN ISTANBUL BY AMADEO PREZIOSI

Watercolour
Signed and Dated 1852
Height: 35 cm
Width: 53.5 cm

In the present painting, Count Amadeo Preziosi depicted one of the outstanding historical monuments of Istanbul, the Süleymaniye Mosque. This imperial mosque was built on the order of Sultan Süleyman I also known as Süleyman the Magnificent, by the genius architect Mimar Sinan. The construction work began in 1550 and the mosque was finished in 1557.

As has been beautifully depicted by the artist, the mosque combines tall, slender minarets with a large central dome supported by half domes with direct reference to the great Byzantine church of Istanbul, the Hagia Sophia. The design of the Süleymaniye plays on the Sultan's self-conscious representation of himself as the 'second Solomon'. It references the Dome of the Rock, which was built on the site of the Temple of Solomon, as well as Justinian's boast upon the completion of the Hagia Sophia: "Solomon, I have surpassed thee! ". For comparable watercolours by Preziosi, please see the exhibition catalogue *Amadeo Preziosi.*



COUNT AMADEO PREZIOSI (d. 1882)

Amadeo Preziosi was born in 1816 to a noble family in Malta. His father, Giovanni Francesco Preziosi had high-level functions in the local administration and represented the Maltese people at the negotiations of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, while his mother, Margareta née Reynaud was of French origin. Amadeo, the first child of the Preziosi family, was baptised in thePorto Salvo Church in Valletta and given the name Aloysius-Rosarius-Amadeus-Raymundus-Andreas. Amadeo was attracted by the arts from early age and was taught by Giuseppe Hyzler, a very appreciated painter in Malta. While his father wanted Amadeo to study law, sending him to study at the Law School in Sorbonne, Amadeo was more interested in arts and continues his painting studies at the École des Beaux-Arts.

After his return home, Amadeo did not find in Malta a suitable environment for an artist, especially since his father disapproved his chosen career. As such, Amadeo chose to leave the island and move to Near East, an area lauded by the fellow artists in Paris. The year when he left Malta for Istanbul is not known, but is thought to be between 1840 and 1842. The earliest drawings of Istanbul are dated November 1842. Two years later, in 1844, Preziosi was commissioned by Robert Curzon, the private secretary of the British Ambassador to Istanbul, Lord Stratford Canning, 1st Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe to create an album called *Costumes of Constantinople*, which now is located in the collections of the British Museum.

In 1858, he decided to publish the most popular works as lithographs at the Lemercier workshop in Paris. The chromolithography album, named *Stamboul, Recollections of Eastern Life* and re-edited in 1861 as *Stamboul, Souvenir d'Orient* was drawn on the lithography stone the by Preziosi himself. He published a second album, Souvenir du Caïre, comprising drawings he made during a trip to Egypt. Preziosi married a Greek woman of Istanbul, with whom he had four children: Mathilde, Giulia, Catherine and Roberto, living in Hamalbaşi Sokagi in Pera and later in the quiet village of San Stefano (today Yeşilköy), away from the agitation of the city.

Preziosi was proficient in the languages of the region (Greek and Turkish), as well as major European languages (English, French, Italian) and he worked as deputy of the dragoman of the British Embassy as well as the First Dragoman of the Greek legation. His workshop was routinely visited by tourists wishing to return home with a souvenir of Istanbul, and among his guests was, in April 1869, Edward VII of the United Kingdom, then the Prince of Wales, who bought several watercolours from him. In 1866, as the new Prince of Romania, Carol I visited Istanbul, he met Preziosi and invited him to Romania to make watercolours of the landscapes and people of the country.

Preziosi came to Romania in June 1868 and began drawing scenes from Bucharest as well as several others across the country, including a few which depict Prince Carol I. The sketches he draw were later turned into watercolours in his workshop in Istanbul, which he would then sell to the Prince of Romania for prices ranging from 300 to 1200 Francs. The following year, between May 30 and July 15, Preziosi spent time again in Romania, his drawings, in pencil, ink and watercolours are found in a sketchbook *La Valachie par Preziosi*, now found at the Municipal Museum in Bucharest. After his return from his last trip to Romania, little is known of Preziosi. He continued his art in Istanbul. He was buried in the Catholic cemetery of Yeşilköy, Istanbul.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



5

AN IMPRESSIVE OTTOMAN PALATIAL GOLD BOX DECORATED WITH DIAMONDS AND THE TUGHRA OF SULTAN ABDULHAMID II (R. 1876-1909)

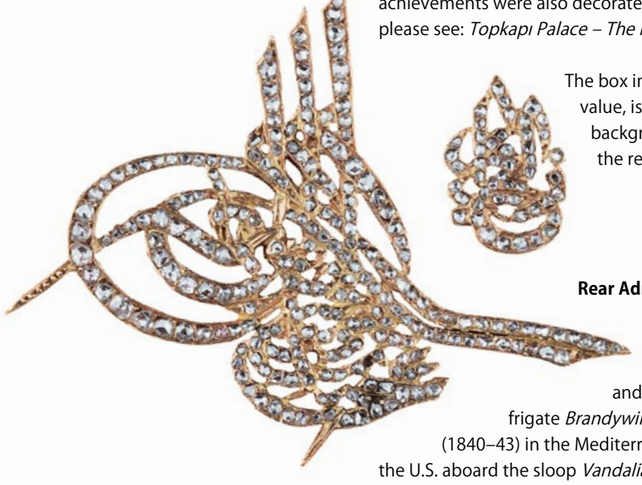
Turkey
Length: 9.4 cm
Width: 5.3 cm
Weight: 135 gr

Presented by
Sultan Abdülhamid II
(r. 1876-1909)
to
Rear Admiral Charles
H. Baldwin (1822-1888),
U.S. Commander of the
Mediterranean Squadron
in 1883.

Rounded rectangular, the cover applied with diamond strapwork border, centering cartouches engraved with foliate scrolls and applied with a diamond-set *tughra* of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909), the base engraved with foliate strapwork and central cartouche enclosing fruit and flowers, the cover with hinge clasp.

The *tughra* located on the cover of the present box is the stylised calligraphic representation of the name and titles of the Ottoman sultans. *Tughras* were primarily employed on coins, seals and official sultanic decrees, and endowment documents. Its application on a work of art indicates palatial background and royal patronage. Regalia and royal gifts from the Ottoman palace presented to distinguished foreigners as diplomatic gifts or mementos of friendship were also adorned with the imperial monogram.

A comparable palatial object similarly adorned with the *tughra* - of Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) - is an enamelled hanging ornament, preserved in the Imperial treasury of the Topkapı Palace Museum (inv. no. 7616). Another ceremonial pendant bearing the *tughra* of Sultan Selim III (r.1789-1808) is also is in the Imperial Ottoman treasury. For the illustrations of both please see: *Topkapı – the Treasury*, 1987, pl. 13-14, p.189. Orders and medals granted to individuals for their remarkable achievements were also decorated with the *tughra* of the reigning sultan, please see: *Topkapı Palace – The Imperial Treasury*, 2001, pp. 93-95.



The box in hand, besides its very high artistic value, is historically important, documenting the background of Ottoman diplomatic gifts under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

Rear Admiral Charles H. Baldwin (d. 1888)

Born in New York City, Baldwin joined the Navy on April 24, 1839, and served as a midshipman aboard the frigate *Brandywine* (1839–40) and the sloop *Fairfield* (1840–43) in the Mediterranean Squadron, before returning to the U.S. aboard the sloop *Vandalia* in 1843 to attend the Naval School at Philadelphia, graduating with the rank of passed midshipman on July 2, 1845. He served through the Mexican–American War on the frigate *Congress* in the Pacific Squadron, serving on operations around Mazatlán, during the time that it was occupied by U.S. naval forces between November 1847 to June 1848. He received his commission as lieutenant in November 1853, but left the Navy on February 28, 1854.



Baldwin re-entered the naval service in 1861, on the outbreak of the Civil War, with the rank of acting-lieutenant. In February 1862 he commissioned the steamer *Clifton*, and sailed from New York to Ship Island for duty with the Mortar Flotilla of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. In April, during the Battle of Forts Jackson and St. Philip, *Clifton* towed 21 mortar schooners into the Mississippi River, and supported them as they bombarded the fortifications below New Orleans. The next month, after the capture of the city, the ship sailed upriver to Vicksburg, Mississippi, where it was damaged by enemy gunfire. Baldwin was promoted to commander in November 1862, given command of the steamer *Vanderbilt* in early 1863 and ordered to hunt down the notorious Confederate commerce raider CSS *Alabama*. Over the next year Baldwin took his ship to the West Indies, the eastern coast of South America, the Cape of Good Hope, St. Helena, Cape Verde, the Canary Islands, Spain and Portugal, but his quarry always eluded him, sometimes only by a few hours. During the voyage *Vanderbilt* also served as the flagship of Commodore Charles Wilkes Flying Squadron in the West Indies, and captured several British blockade runners, including the *Peterhoff*.

Baldwin eventually returned to New York in January 1864 without ever having sighted the Confederate vessel. He was then assigned to ordnance duty, serving at the Mare Island Navy Yard in California until 1867. He returned to sea as the Fleet Captain of the North Pacific Squadron in 1868-9, and received promotion to the rank of captain in 1869. He then served as the Inspector of Ordnance at Mare Island from 1869–71, and commanded the frigate *Colorado*, flagship of the Asiatic Squadron in 1871-73. He was commander of the Naval Rendezvous (recruitment station) at San Francisco in 1873, and was commissioned as commodore on August 8, 1876, serving as a Member of the Board of Examiners from 1876-79. In early 1883 Baldwin was promoted to rear admiral, and assumed command of the European Squadron on 10 March. He then sailed to Kronstadt in his flagship *Lancaster*, and on 27 May he and his staff attended the coronation of Tsar Alexander III in Moscow. He passed away in 1888.



Provenance:
Private U.S. Collection





6

AN IMPRESSIVE VIEW OF THE MOSQUE OF AL-MOURISTAN FROM THE COMPLEX OF SULTAN AL-MANSUR QALAWUN IN CAIRO , SIGNED CARL WERNER, DATED 1872

Watercolour
Signed and Dated: 1872
Dimensions:
Unframed: 66 x 101 cm
Framed: 128 x 92 cm

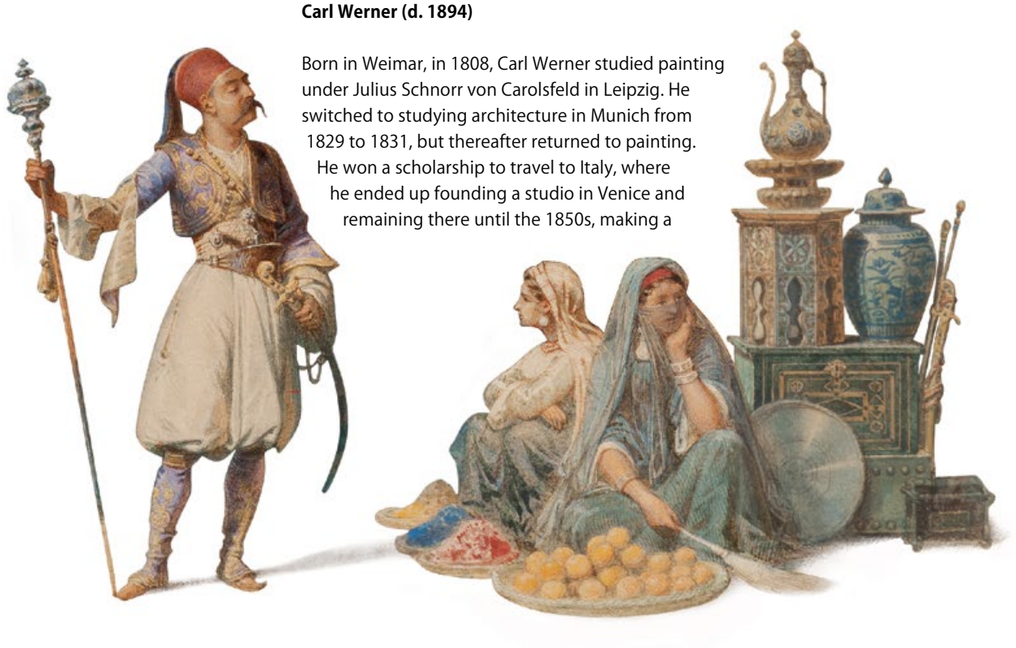


The Mamluk Mosque al-Mouristan of the complex of Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun in Cairo

Attached to the Mouristan of the complex of Sultan al-Mansur Qalawun, the present monument is the mosque of one of the most famous Mamluk architectural complexes in Cairo. It is located in the heart of the city, on the Mu'iz al-Din lillah street. The complex consists of a mausoleum, a madrasa and a hospital. It reportedly took thirteen months to build, from 1284-1285. This fact is remarkable considering the sheer size and scope of the total complex. The hospital took less than six months to complete, the mausoleum and madrasa each taking about four months. The building project was supervised by the Mamluk amir 'Alam al-Din Sinjar al-Shaja'i, who forcefully employed hundreds of Mongol prisoners of war, calling upon workers throughout Fustat and Cairo to aid in the project.

The Complex was considered one of the most beautiful buildings at that time, where it included a school (*Madrasa*), a hospital (*Bimaristan*) and a mausoleum. Historians claim that the columns holding the mausoleum structure were made of granite, marble, and other materials that were taken from another palace in Rhoda island. The complex was built in three stages, where the Hospital was finished first, the Mausoleum the second and then finally the school. The structure was restored several times in the reign of al-Nasir Muhammad, the son and successor of Sultan Qalawun. He restored the minarets after a strong earthquake occurred in 1327. The complex is still visited and revered by general public as one of the highlights of Mamluk architecture of Cairo.

Carl Werner (d. 1894)



Born in Weimar, in 1808, Carl Werner studied painting under Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld in Leipzig. He switched to studying architecture in Munich from 1829 to 1831, but thereafter returned to painting. He won a scholarship to travel to Italy, where he ended up founding a studio in Venice and remaining there until the 1850s, making a name for himself as a watercolor painter. He exhibited around Europe, in particular traveling often to England, where he exhibited at the New Watercolour Society.

He traveled through Spain in 1856 and 1857, and then in Egypt and Palestine from 1862 to 1864. Particularly notable were his watercolors in Jerusalem, where he was one of the few non-Muslims able to gain access to paint the interior of the Dome of the Rock. He published some watercolors from this trip in 1875 as *Carl Werner's Nile Sketches*. He later traveled to Greece and Sicily, and became a professor at the Leipzig Academy. He passed away in Leipzig in 1894. His well-known works include "Venice in her Zenith and Decline," "The Ducal Palace, with a Scene from the Merchant of Venice," "The Triumphal Procession of Doge Cantarini", "The Zisa Hall in Palermo," "The Lions' Court of the Alhambra," and "Jerusalem and the Holy Land".

A comparable view of the Mosque al-Mouristan by Carl Werner is published in *Les Orientalistes des Écoles Allemande et Autrichienne*, 2000, p. 168. For other published works of the artist see; *Les Orientalistes des Écoles Allemande et Autrichienne*, 2000, pp. 158-173.


الدبيا بالأجرة

7

AN ITALIAN VELVET USED FOR A CEREMONIAL OTTOMAN KAFTAN

Italy, probably Florentine
Seventeenth century
122.5 x 58 cm

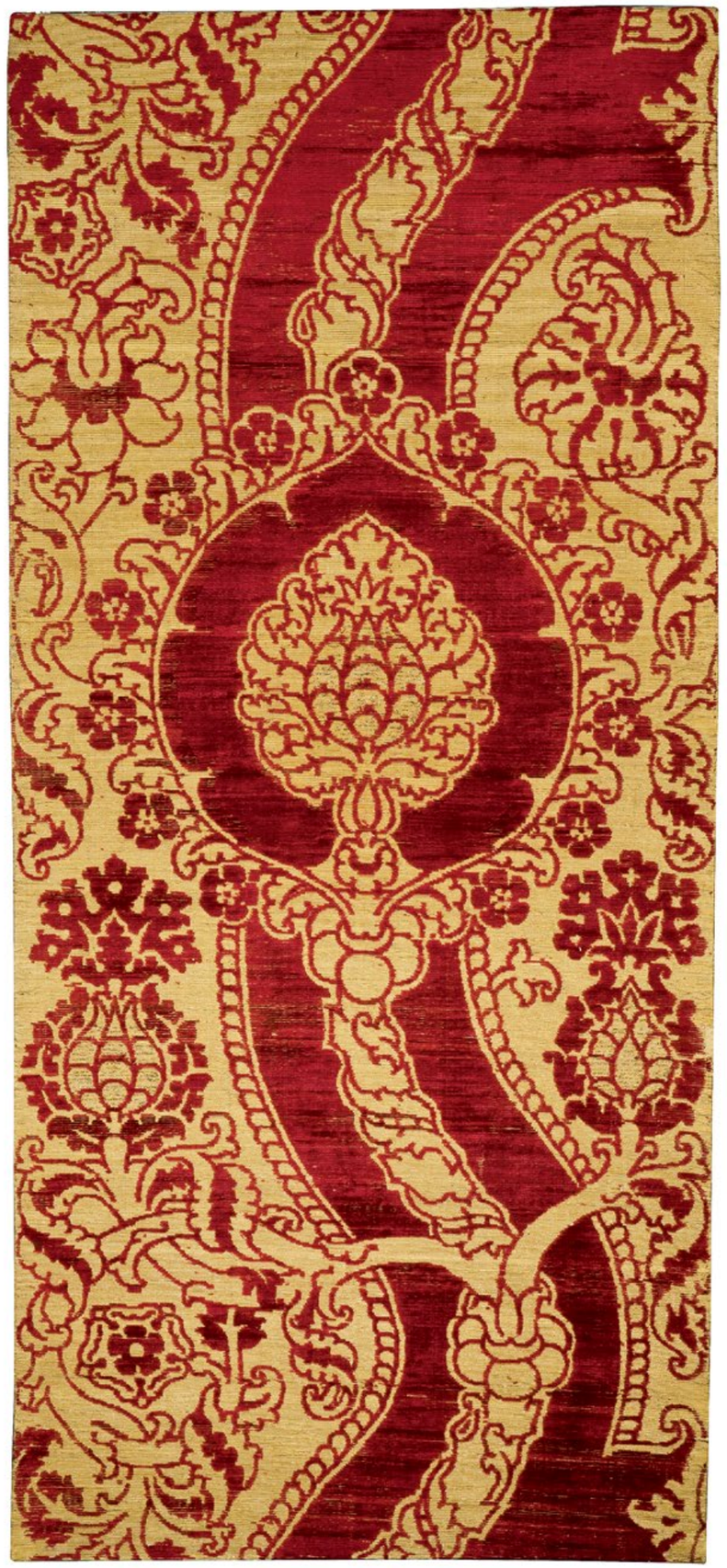


The 'a griccia' design is close to the one we find in the long-sleeved short ceremonial kaftan, associated with Mehmed IV (1648-87). Italian velvets were highly desirable at the Ottoman court for their three-dimensionality and status as prestigious imports. In the textile collection of the Topkapı Palace the velvet kaftans made of Ottoman *kadife* and *çatma* are a minority, as most surviving pieces are European. The initial Ottoman preference for Venetian velvets was probably replaced by Florentine velvets, especially after relations with Venice deteriorated. The association of these velvets with the European upper classes and their use in the Istanbul court show how the Ottomans sought to appropriate European cultural symbols from an early period. The pomegranate motif we see in this fragment repeatedly appears in kaftans worn at court and was equally celebrated by both Italians and Ottomans, despite the different meaning it carried in the two cultural contexts. The luxuriousness of the fabric is complimented by the bouclé effect of metallic thread loops in the red 'pelo'.

For the ceremonial kaftan associated with Mehmed IV see Tezcan, Delibaş & Rogers 1986,cat. 49. For similar or identical velvets see Davanzo Poli 1998, cats.9 & 10, 31-50; Degl'Innocenti & Lekhovich 2009, cats. 21, 24, 28, 32 & 56; Carboni 2007, cat. 61; Monnas 2012, cats. 24-26. For Italian fabrics at the Topkapı Palace read Sibel Alpaslan Arça 'Osmanlı Sarayında İtalyan İpeklileri' In Osm*anlı Döneminde Venedik ve İstanbul*, pp. 210-225

Provenance:
Private French Collection





8

A PRINCELY OTTOMAN IVORY PIPE WITH TOPHANE PIPE-BOWL

Turkey
19th Century
Tophane pipe-bowl
with gilt-copper
(*Tombak*) mounts
Length: 166 cm

The present pipe is an extremely rare example of Ottoman art of pipe-making which consists of three adjustable pieces carved from single pieces of ivory tusk. In Ottoman art, ivory was favoured and continously used to carve out single objects or decorative elements which were later applied on different media, particularly palatial furniture, wood-ware and ceremonial/luxury objects. A pipe, however, due to its narrow and straight elongated body, must have been seen formidable given the natural concave of elephant tusk.

The third and last section ends with a mouth-piece. Featuring a very unusual application, the main body of the pipe-bowl which is made of Tophane clay (terra cota) is covered with a layer of gilt copper (*Tombak*). This particular application must have been executed on special order since recording the patron's name would have been impossible without it.











Possibly the patron's name, Maror, is incised on the bottom of the pipe bowl. The pipe is a truly rare example of its kind both in terms of its size, material and execution. A similar Ottoman pipe, smoked by French Ambassador Charles Gravier in Turkish costume, painted by Antoine de Favray, is published in *Kesişen Dünyalar – Elçiler ve Ressamlar,* Pera Müzesi, 2014, p. 86. The present pipe is a truly remarkable example of the art of Ottoman ivory carving and Tophane-ware, both in terms of its artistic value and perfect condition.



Provenance:
Private Belgium Collection

بنام خداوند جان آفرین
حکیم سخن در زبان آفرین

خداوند بخشنده دستگیر
کریم خطابخش پوزش پذیر

عزیزی که مرگز در دلش
سر نیاز شاهان گردن فراز

نگردن کشان را بگیرد بفور
کو گر خشم گیرد بگیرد زمشت

اگر باید رجنگ جوید کسی
اگر خویش راضی نباشد زخویش

وگر بیند جانبک نیابد بکار
وگر بر رفیقان نباشی شفیق

بهر در که شد هیچ عزت نیافت
بدرگاه او بر زمین بیفت

نه عذر آورد آنرا براند بجور
جو بازآمدی ماجرا در نوشت

پدر بی گمان خشم گیرد بپسر
چو بیگانگانش براند زپیش

عزیزش ندارد خداوندگار
بفرسنگ بگریزد از تو رفیق

وگر ترک خدمت کند لشکری
شود شاه گردن کشش زیر پی

ادیم زمین سفره عام اوست
بر خوان یغما چه دشمن چه دوست

اگر بر جهانی بشمشیر بستی
یکی از دست قهرش امان یافتی

پری دانش از بیم ضد جنس
قوی هیکلش از طبیعت جن و انس

پرستار امرش همه چیز و کس
یکی آدم و مرغ و مور و مگس

چنان پهن خوان کرم گسترد
که سیمرغ در قاف قسمت خورد

مرو را رسد گر سیه روی نیست
که ملکش قدیمست و دانش غنی

یکی را بسر بر نهد تاج بخت
یکی را بخاک اندر آرد زتخت

کلاه سعادت یکی بر سرش
کلیم شقاوت یکی در برش

گلستان کند آتشی بر خلیل
گروهی بانش بر د زآب نیل

گر آنست منشور احسان اوست
ور اینست توقیع فرمان اوست

پس پرده پیدا و پنهان اوست
هم او پرده پوشست بالای دوست

به تهدید اگر برکشد تیغ خشم
بمانند گردن بیان صم و بکم

وگر دردهد بانگ صلای کرم
عزازیل گوید نصیبی برم

دیگر خداوند در رزق بر کس نبست
بجهد بنده در رزق بر کس نبست

9

A RICHLY ILLUMINATED COPY OF THE *BŪSTĀN* OF SA'DĪ SHĪRĀZĪ, SIGNED 'ALĪ B. SULTĀN-BAKHT AL-KHUSHMARDĀN

Turkey
16th Century
Height: 20 cm
Length: 11.8 cm

'Ali b. Sultan-Bakht al-Khushmardan

Only one piece by this court calligrapher is known to us which is located in an imperial album in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library (H. 2156, fol. 73a), signed with the name of the artist: Sayyid Baba 'Ali Khushmardān. Müstakimzade records that he had seen a manuscript signed by 'Ali b. Sultan-Bakht al-Khushmardan, dated 947 AH / 1540 AD and praises his mastery. According to Müstakimzade he was one of the students of Aqqoyunlu court calligrapher 'Abd al-Rahim al-Anisi. He was member of the naqshbandiyya sufi order. He came to Istanbul under the reign of Sultan Suleyman the magnificent. Müstakimzade also states that the famous *nas-ta'liq* master Imad al-Hassani was one of his pupils. Please see: *Tuhfe-i Hattatin*, 1926, p. 690-91. The manuscript is in its elaborately decorated original 16th century binding, back cover replaced.



THE *BŪSTĀN* OF SA'DĪ SHĪRĀZĪ

Būstān is a book of poetry by the famous Persian poet Sa'dī Shīrazī, completed in 1257 and dedicated to the Salghurid Atabeg Sa'd II. It was Sa'dī's first work, and its title means "the orchard". The book contains the fruits of Sa'dī's long experience and his judgements upon life, and is illustrated by a vast collection of anecdotes. It includes accounts of Sa'dī's travels and his analysis of human psychology. He often mentions his accounts with fervour and advice similar to Aesop's fables. It is composed in *mathnawī* style (rhyming couplets), and has been translated into English.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



10

AN OTTOMAN SILVER PENCASE (*DIVID*) BEARING THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN MAHMUD I (R. 1730-1754), SIGNED ISMAIL B. MEHMED

Turkey
Reign of Sultan Mahmud I
(r. 1730-1754)
Length: 30 cm

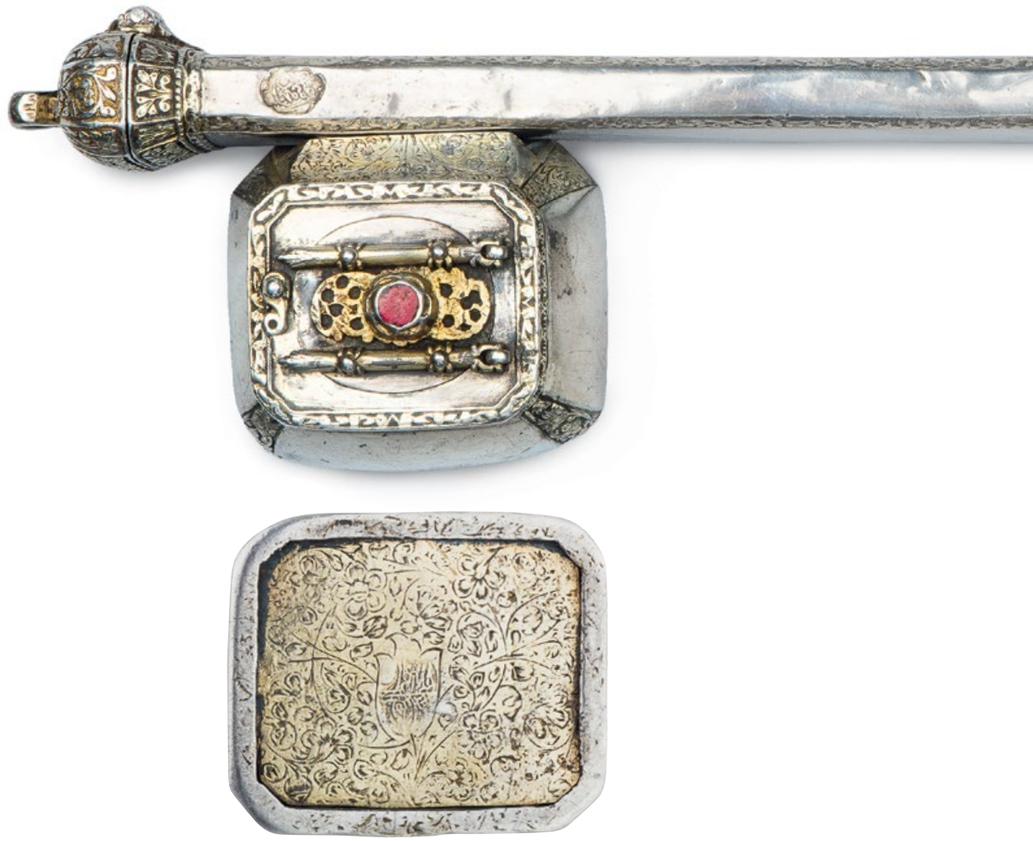


The present pen-case is a rare, signed example of mid-18th century Ottoman metalwork. The artist Ismail b. Mehmed is recorded and his works documented. For the signature of the artist please see Kürkman, 1996, p. 106. The names of the seven sleepers (*ashab al-kahf*: Yamliha – Makthalina – Mislina – Marnush – Dabarnush – Shazanush – Kafashtatayyush – Kitmir) which is believed to have a talismanic value, is incised inside the lid. This inscription is beautifully composed, forming a star of Solomon (*muhr-i Sulayman*) motif in the center. For similar compositions of the names of the seven sleepers applied on Ottomans silver pen-cases please see; Kürkman, 1996, p. 82.



Stylistically it is similar to some published silver pen-cases from the period of Ahmed III (r.1703-30), illustrated in Kürkman ,1996, pp.152-5. The form, comprising a long rectangular holder for the reed pens and cubic-form inkwell diverges from the older pen-box design covered with a concave lid.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection





ضمیرم را سپاس اندیشه گردان
زبانم را ستایش پیشه گردان

بر تقویم خرد دهرو ریم بخش
بر اقلیم سخن فیروریم بخش

دلی دادی که هر کج در کجی
زکج دل را بیارا کن کهر پیچ

آلهی غنچه امید بکشای
کلی از روضه جاوید بنمای

بخندان از لب آن غنچه با غم
وزان گل عطر پرور کن دماغم

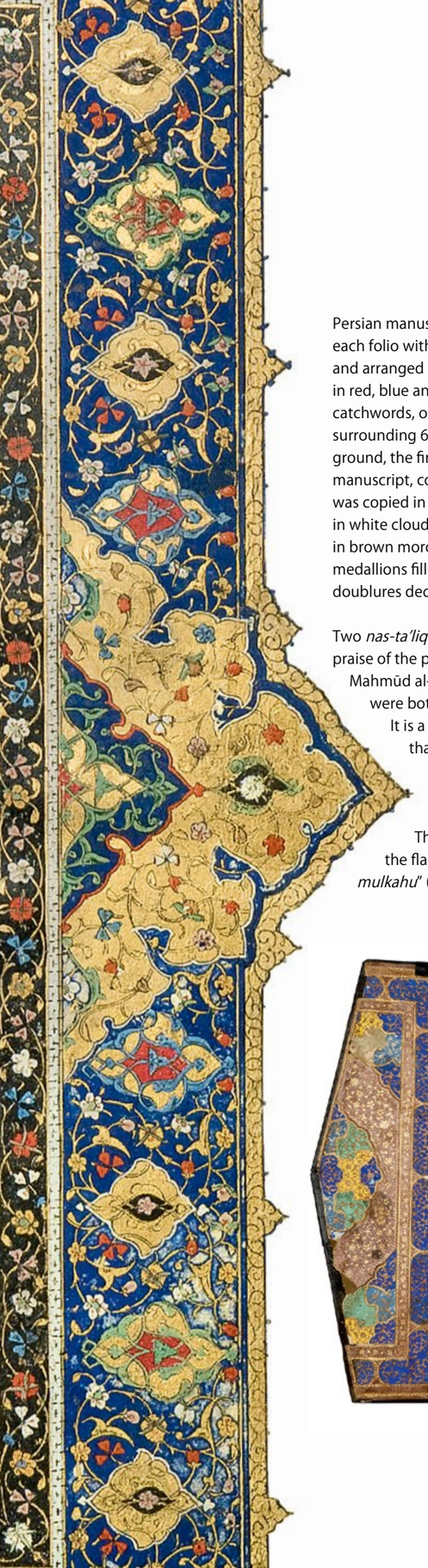
درین محنت سرای بی مواسپا
بنعمتهای خویشم کن شناسپا

11

AN EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT COPY OF ‘ABD AL-RAHMAN JĀMĪ’S YŪSUF WA ZULAYKHĀ, COPIED BY MIR ‘ALI [AL-HERAVI]

Shaybanid Bukhara
Signed: Mīr ‘Alī
[al-Heravi] (d. 1544)
Dated: 938 AH / 1531 AD
Text panel: 15 x 7.5 cm
folio 25 x 17 cm





Persian manuscript on burnished cream paper, 151 ff. plus 5 fly-leaves, each folio with 14ll. of elegant black *nas-ta'liq* on gold-sprinkled ground and arranged into two columns with gold intercolumnar rules, headings in red, blue and gold ink, text panels within gold and polychrome rules, catchwords, opening bifolio with fine gold and polychrome illumination surrounding 6ll. of stepped *nas-ta'liq* in clouds reserved against illuminated ground, the first folio with two *nas-ta'liq* quatrains in praise of the manuscript, colophon signed and dated and stating that the manuscript was copied in the Shaybanid capital Bukhara (*bi dār al-fakhirā Bukhārā*), in white clouds reserved against gold ground with scrolling floral vine, in brown morocco binding with flap decorated with tooled and gilded medallions filled with animals, cloudbands and scrolling arabesques, the doublures decorated in elegant decoupé, later owners seals in the margins.

Two *nas-ta'liq* quatrains at the beginning of this manuscript, which are in praise of the penmanship, are signed by Safavid court calligraphers Shāh Mahmūd al-Nishāpūrī and Mālik al-Daylamī. Nishāpūrī and Daylamī were both in the service of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r.1524-76). It is a testament to the skill and elegance of Mir 'Ali's calligraphy that it was praised by two further highly regarded royal Safavid calligraphers, each particularly recognized for their skill in composing *nas-ta'liq*.

The binding has a leather tape inserted into the body of the flap which reads "*⋯ Sultān Abū Sa'īd Kūrkān khalladallāhu mulkahu*" (Sultān Abū Sa'īd Kūrkān may God make his reign eternal).



It appears to have been taken from the flap of a manuscript produced for the library of Timurid sultan Abū Sa'īd. Sultān Abū Sa'īd Kūrkān (d. 1469) was the great-grandson of Tīmūr, the grandson of Mīran Shāh, and the nephew of Ulugh Beg. He was the grandfather of Bābūr, the founder of the Mughal Empire. Sultān Abū Sa'īd Kūrkān reigned in Herat between 1459-1469. The leather tape bearing Sultān Abū Sa'īd's name appears to have been taken from the binding of one of his books moved from the court library in Herat to Bukhara during 'Ubayd-Allāh Khān Uzbek's occupation of Herat in 1528, just three years before the completion of the present manuscript.

The tape bearing the name of Sultān Abū Sa'īd Kūrkān may indicate the value of the manuscript in the eyes of the members of the Shaybanid court atelier in Bukhara. The two quatrains, on fol. 1a, are praising the beauty of the manuscript through the eyes of two Safavid master calligraphers; Shāh Mahmūd al-Nishāpūrī and Mālik al-Daylamī. The manuscript, as beautifully expressed in the poems, is indeed a true masterpiece of Islamic calligraphy.

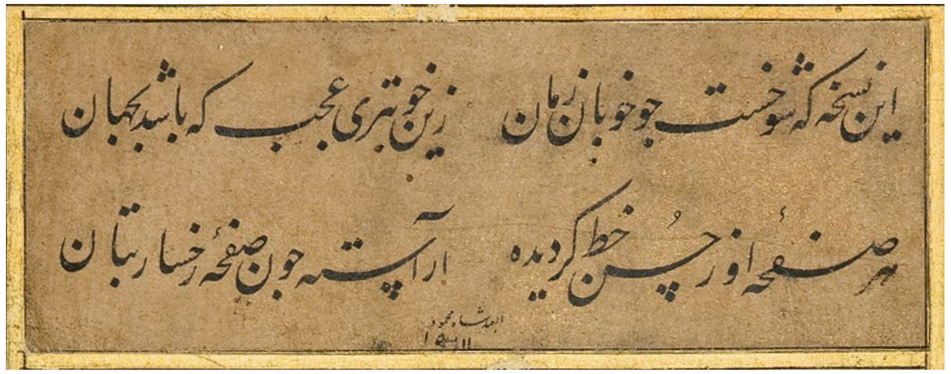
The Calligrapher

Mir 'Ali Heravī, one of the greatest masters of the *nas-ta'liq* script, was born in Herat. As a teenager, he was taught by court calligrapher Zayn-al-Dīn Mahmūd and developed a keen interest in calligraphy, causing him to spend much of his time thereafter mastering his calligraphic skills. Mir 'Ali lived in Herat until he was middle-aged, though he sometimes traveled to nearby cities such as Mashhad. This stability was interrupted in 1528 when 'Ubayd-Allāh Khān Uzbek occupied Khorasan and briefly brought Herat under his control. He then returned to his capital Bukhara, taking a number of artists with him, Mir 'Ali and Shaykhzadeh Naqqāsh ("The Painter") among them. Mir 'Ali spent the rest of his life in Bukhara.



He had many signatures, among them 'Ali, Mir 'Ali, 'Ali al-Kāteb, Mir 'Ali al-Kāteb al-Sultānī, 'Ali al-Husaynī, and 'Ali al-Husaynī al-Kāteb. This is further complicated by the fact that many calligraphers of his time also bore the name 'Ali. Mir 'Ali produced many valuable books, such as Sa'dī's *Bustān*, which he wrote in a graceful *nas-ta'liq* script. These books date from 1508 to 1541. Other parts of Mir 'Ali's precious works are included in the Golshan album (*muraqqa'*). This album was compiled between 1605 and 1629 and includes about ninety of Mir 'Ali's signed works. These pieces were written between 1533 and 1544. Mir 'Ali was also a poet, and some of these works, written in his own handwriting, still survive. Among Mir 'Ali's most distinguished students was Mahmūd b. Ishāq al-Shihābī. Mir 'Ali passed away in 1544, in Bukhara.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



Shah Mahmud al-Nishapuri's quatrain in praise of the manuscript (fol. 1a):

Transliteration:

In nuskha ki shūkhast chu khūbān-i zamān
Z'īn khūbterī 'ajab ki bāshad ba jihān
Her safha-i ū z'husn-i khat gar dīda
Ārasta chun safha-i rukhsār-i butān

Translation:

This manuscript is as full of joy and coquetry as the beauties of our age.
I wonder whether anything finer exists in all the world!
Every page in it is traversed by exquisite calligraphy, Decked [with writing] just as the page-like cheeks of the beauties we worship [are decked with down].





Malik al-Daylami's quatrain in praise of the manuscript (fol. 1a):

Transliteration:
In nuskha ki pur z'muskh-i Chīn āmada ast
Chun khatt-i butān nāzanīn āmada ast
In tarh-i badī' nīst maqdūr-i bashar
Az 'ālam-i ghayb anchinīn āmada ast

Translation:
This manuscript has come [to us] suffused with the musk of China.
The rows of letters have come [to us] moving with attractive elegance, like the lines [of down] on [the cheeks of the youths as beautiful as] idols.
No human could have devised this novel design, so it must have come [to us] from the world [beyond, the world] of the Unseen.



The Colophon

12

A RARE BLUE AND WHITE KUTAHYA CERAMIC ROSE-WATER SPRINKLER

Turkey
18th Century
Height 19.8 cm

This charming rose-water sprinkler belongs to a small group of ceramics used for serving rose-water following ceremonial events. A comparable rose-water sprinkler is published in Şebnem Akalın & Hülya Bilgi, *Yadigar-ı Kütahya - Suna ve İnan Kıraç Koleksiyonundan Kütahya Seramikleri, Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Araştırma Enstitüsü*, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 42-51. Also see the exhibition catalogue: *Splendeurs de la Cermamique Ottomane des Collections Suna-İnan Kıraç et du Musée Sadberk Hanım*, Musée Jacquemart-André – Institut de France, Istanbul, 2000, pp. 126-131.





13

A RARE AND FINE CALLIGRAPHY IN *THULUTH* AND *NASKH* BY OTTOMAN COURT CALLIGRAPHER IBRAHIM DAIMI

Turkey
Dated (11)71 AH / 1756 AD
14 x 19.9 cm

The present, extremely fine calligraphy comprises a *Bismillah* in *muhaqqaq* and *hadiths* of the Prophet Muhammad in *naskh* script. The original illumination reflects the taste of the period with its characteristic floral decorative repertoire applied on a gold background.

Ibrahim Daimi (d. 1756)

In his youth Ibrahim Daimi was one of the servants of Ahmed Ağa who served Grand-vizier Hekimbaşı-zade Ali Paşa. He became a member of the *Mevlevi* sufi order. He studied *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts under the supervision of the master court calligrapher Şeker-zade Mehmed Efendi who worked for the imperial palace during the reign of Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730). Ibrahim Daimi worked in the Galata Sarayı (the Galata Palace) as a scribe and then was appointed as calligraphy tutor to the Topkapi Palace. He passed away in Istanbul, in 1756. He was buried in the Karaca Ahmed cemetery, just next to the grave of the legendary master Sheikh Hamdullah Efendi (d. 1520). A Qur'an copied by this calligrapher, endowed by the chief-eunuch Haci Beşir Ağa, is in the library of the Ayasofya Mosque, Istanbul. Two of his works in *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts have been published by Şevket Rado, in *Türk Hattatları* (1980), p. 158.







بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

قال النبي صلوات الله عليه وسلامه اول ما كتب القلم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

فاذا كتبتم كتابا فاكتبوها اوله وقال كل امر ذي بال

لم يبدا بالبسملة فهو اجزم صدق النبي الاكرم

14

A PAIR OF IZNIK TILES

Turkey
Circa 1600
Dimensions: 25 x 25 cm

Two tiles of identical design with a central rosette bordered with a symmetrical composition of tulips and flowers, in turquoise and cobalt-blue on white ground. Tiles decorated with various elements of Ottoman decorative repertoire were favored and frequently used particularly in the interior decoration of palatial chambers, mosques and mausoleums. The floral motifs on these tiles created scenes of eternally fresh spring gardens indoors which truly fascinated European travelers.

Comparable, symmetrically designed tiles from the *mihrab* of the Takkeci İbrahim Ağa Mosque in Istanbul are published in Belgin Demirsar Arlı and Ara Altun's *Tiles – Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, 2008, p. 265. For similar tiles from the Eşrefoglu Rumi Mosque in Iznik, see; Belgin Demirsar Arlı and Ara Altun's *Tiles – Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, 2008, p. 293.





15

AN OTTOMAN INTERIOR *KAABA* CLOTH

Turkey
19th Century
200 x 88 cm

The cover is green silk, embroidered with gold, zig-zags with inscriptions. “Allah” and “Muhammad” in larger *thuluth* script. The *tawhid* formula of faith is repetitively written in the zig-zag bands, “there is no God but Allah, Muhammad is his Messenger”, also in *thuluth* script.

Comparable fragments are found in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the David Collection. A complete cover made from a similar *Kaaba* cloth can be seen on one of the sarcophagi in the tomb of Sultan Süleyman in Istanbul. See; Petsopoulos 1982, p.183, no. 160. Also see: *Islam – Faith and Worship*, Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, 2009, p. 322-323. For 16th and 17th century fragments of interior *Kaaba* cloths with similar calligraphic zig-zag bands see: *Islam – Faith and Worship*, Abu Dhabi Culture and Heritage, Abu Dhabi, 2009, pp. 310-311 and pp. 316-317.



16

AN EXTREMELY FINE CALLIGRAPHY SIGNED BY OTTOMAN COURT CALLIGRAPHER HASAN RIZA EFENDI

Turkey
Signed and Dated
1326 AH / 1907 AD
27.2 x 33 cm

The calligraphy in hand is a true masterpiece of Ottoman calligraphy documenting the degree of finesse reached in the first decades of the 20th century. It is undoubtedly one of the finest works of the court calligrapher Hasan Rıza Efendi with its extremely sharp, well-proportioned letters and highly finished letter finials both in *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts. The *thuluth* text comprises a *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad; "the degree of knowledge is the highest of degrees".



Hasan Rıza Efendi (d. 1920)

Born in the Üsküdar district of Istanbul in 1849, Hasan Rıza Efendi studied the six pens under the famous master calligrapher Yahya Hilmi Efendi. Later on he also studied under the supervision of master Mehmed Şefik Bey. Mehmed Şefik Bey introduced him to the great master of Ottoman calligraphy Kazasker Mustafa İzzet Efendi who hugely inspired the art of Hasan Rıza Efendi. He was appointed court calligrapher after Mehmed Şefik Bey, and taught calligraphy in the palace school called Muzika-i Humayun. He was particularly celebrated for his mastery in *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts. He was responsible from the calligraphies of the Cihangir Mosque, the Mosque of Sultan Selim I in Istanbul as well as the monumental names of the four righteous caliphs in the *maqam al-Ibrahim* in the *Haram al-Sharif* of the holy Kaba in Mecca. He passed away in 1920, in Istanbul.



رتبة العلم اعلى الرتب

قال رسول الله صلوات الله عليه وسلامه انا مدينة العلم وعلي بابها

فمن اراد العلم فليات الباب صدق رسول الله اللهم صل وسلم

على نبي الرحمة وشفيع الامة محمد واله وصحبه اجمعين الطاهرين

حرره الحاج السيد حسن رضا غفر الله ذنوبه وستر عيوبه امين سنه ١٣٢٦

17

A RARE AND IMPORTANT OTTOMAN GEM-SET AND JADE MIRROR

Turkey
Late 17th /
Early 18th century
Length: 22.3 cm

The mirror within a silver-gilt setting decorated with colourful gemstones, incuding rubies, emeralds, turquoise and pearls between embossed motifs, the reverse with a jade flowerhead in the centre encrusted with fine silver-gilt leafy stems and gemstones, on a carved jade handle.

This extremely ornate mirror is a remarkable example of the Ottoman taste for luxury, in which objects of daily use were embellished with expensive materials, notably the inclusion of gem-set jade worked within a gilt setting. Most probably commissioned for a lady of wealth and rank, this mirror can be compared with similarly decorated mirrors in the Topkapi Palace Museum dated to the sixteenth/seventeenth century. Please see Topkapi Palace – The Imperial Treasury, 2001, p. 99. Also see; *Harem - House of the Sultan*, 2012, pp. 240-243.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection









18

A RARE KUTAHYA CERAMIC BOWL

Turkey
18th Century
Height: 8 cm
Diameter: 13 cm

This bowl belongs to a small group of 18th century Kütahya ceramics renowned for gracefully combining pale blue, light green, yellow, dark coral red. The incised application decorating the body surface is rare. It adds depth to the surface of the body. These bowls were used for serving food during and after ceremonial events. It is a charming example displaying distinctive characteristics of 18th century Kutahya ceramics.

A comparable 18th century bowl is published in Garo Kürkman's *Toprak, Ateş, Sır*, 2005, pp. 80-81. Şebnem Akalın & Hülya Bilgi, *Yadigar-ı Kütahya - Suna ve İnan Kıraç Koleksiyonundan Kütahya Seramikleri*, Akdeniz Medeniyetleri Araştırma Enstitüsü, İstanbul, 1997, pp. 26, 32, 34, 36, 37.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection





19

A RARE OTTOMAN IMPERIAL COAT OF ARMS WITH THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN ABDULHAMID II (R. 1876-1909) CARVED ON WOOD

Turkey
Reign of Sultan
Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909)
Dimensions: 49 x 44 cm

The *tughras* of Ottoman sultans were rarely carved on wood and located above the entrances of palatial chambers and in ships of the Ottoman naval forces. Some examples which belong to this small group are preserved in the Naval Museum in Istanbul. The application of the imperial coat of arms on wood, on the other hand, is extremely rare. The only comparable one with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdulhamid II, known to us, is in the reading room of the Rare Manuscripts Library of the Istanbul University. This example is located at the top of the main bookcase, produced by Sultan Abdulhamid himself who was a master carpenter. The book-case was originally located in the Yildiz Palace Library, founded by Sultan Abdulhamid II.

Every sultan of the Ottoman Empire had his own monogram, called the *tughra*, which served as a royal symbol. The Ottoman imperial coat of arms in the European heraldic sense was created in the late 19th century. Hampton Court requested from the Ottoman Empire the imperial coat of arms to be included in their collection. As such an imperial coat of arms had not been previously used in the Ottoman Empire, it was designed on this request, and the final design was adopted by Sultan Abdulhamid II on April 17, 1882. It included two flags: the red flag of the Ottoman dynasty with a star and crescent, and the green flag of the caliphate, largely obscured by a cornucopia. Behind the flags are a number of spears and other weapons representing stately authority. The coat of arms in hand is a finely executed, rare example of its kind. The letters of the *tughra* of the sultan are clear and legible.



سورة تحمد الكاف وهي تسع

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين ۝ الرحمن
الرحيم ۝ مالك يوم الدين ۝
اياك نعبد واياك نستعين ۝
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم ۝
صراط الذين انعمت عليهم غير
المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين ۝

مكية وقيل مدينة

سورة البقرة وهي مائتان وست

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الم ۝ ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه
هدى للمتقين ۝ الذين يؤمنون
بالغيب ويقيمون الصلوة ومما
رزقناهم ينفقون ۝ والذين
يؤمنون بما انزل اليك وما انزل
من قبلك وبالاخرة هم يوقنون ۝

ايات مدينة

20

A HIGHLY IMPORTANT COPY OF THE QUR'AN SIGNED BY HUSEYIN HILMI AL-USKUDARI

Turkey
Signed and Dated
Sha'ban 1249 AH /
December 1833 AD
Text panel: 10.8 x 5.8 cm
Binding: 18.5 x 12.5 cm

A remarkably fine copy, both in terms of its calligraphy and illumination. Arabic manuscript on paper, 309ff. plus six fly-leaves, each folio with 15ll. of crystalline black *naskh* script, the rosette verse markers each worked in a different manner in gold and polychrome, *sura* headings in white *naskh* script on gold ground within illuminated cartouche with floral decoration, text within black-ruled two-colour gold frame, section markers in white *naskh* script within finely illuminated floral medallions, with catchwords, opening bifolio with very finely illuminated margins on gold ground, text followed by a folio decorated with large floral composition, followed by the colophon stating that this is the scribe's eighth copy of the Qur'an, in original green morocco binding with flap, with two-colour gold floral decoration, with gilt brown doublures.

The *nisba* of the calligrapher "al-Uskudari" indicates that he was born in the Uskudar district, on the Asian shore of Istanbul, also known to the West as "Skutari". The crystalline precision of the *naskh* script points the calligrapher's excellent pedigree, linking him to calligraphy masters of Istanbul who almost always share a distinctive, sharp hand, hardly found elsewhere. The *naskh* script does not follow the usual Ottoman standards which are built on the canonical proportions invented by the legendary masters Sheikh Hamdullah Efendi (d. 1520) and Hafız Osman Efendi (d. 1698). The *naskh* script features less soft, more solid and sharp proportions which links the calligrapher to Mahmud Celaleddin Efendi (d. 1829), the founder of this distinctive style. Mahmud Celaleddin Efendi and his student Mehmed Tahir Efendi, the calligraphy tutor of Sultan Abdulmecid (r. 1839-1861), mastered this new style.

The illumination of the frontispiece is remarkable since it displays an eclectic approach, rarely found in Ottoman manuscript illumination, gracefully joining classical Ottoman and European decorative repertoire.

Provenance:
Ex-Mohamed Makiya Collection





بِسْمِ ٱللهِ ٱلرَّحْمٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ٱلْمَلِكِ ٱلسُّبْحَانِ ۞ ٱلَّذِي
نَزَّلَ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ ٱلْقُرْاٰنَ ۞ وَصَلَّى
فِيهِ عَلَيْهِ بِنَفْسِهِ ۞ وَثَنَّى بِمَلٰئِكَةِ
قُدْسِهِ ۞ وَثَلَّثَ بِجِنِّهِ وَإِنْسِهِ ۞ وَعَلَى ٱلِهِ
وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَأَوْلَادِهِ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَكْرَمُ
ٱلْعِبَادِ ۞ وَأَفْضَلُ ٱلْعُبَّادِ ۞ وَبَعْدُ
فَقَدْ يَسَّرَنِي ٱللهُ ٱللَّطِيفُ ۞ بِإِمْلَاءِ هٰذَا
ٱلْمُصْحَفِ ٱلشَّرِيفِ ۞ وَقَدْ بَلَغَ مَا تَقَدَّمَ
مِنْ كِتَابَتِي بِفَضْلِ ٱلدَّيَّانِ ۞ ثَمَانَ
بِلَا نُقْصَانٍ ۞ كَتَبَهُ ٱلْفَقِيرُ
إِلَى رَبِّهِ ٱلْبَارِي ۞ حُسَيْنُ ٱلْحِلْمِيُّ
ٱلْأُسْكُدَارِي ۞

غَفَرَ ٱللهُ لَهُمْ وَلِأَسَاتِيذِهِمْ
وَلِمَنْ عَلَّمَهُمْ بِٱللُّطْفِ وَٱلْفَضْلِ
وَٱلْإِحْسَانِ ۞ بِحَمْدِ ٱللهِ ٱلْمُعْطِي
ٱلْمَنَّانِ ۞ فِي مُنْتَصَفِ شَعْبَانَ ٱلْمُعَظَّمِ
لِسَنَةِ تِسْعٍ وَأَرْبَعِينَ وَمِائَتَيْنِ وَأَلْفٍ
مِنْ هِجْرَةِ مَنْ لَهُ غَايَةُ ٱلْعِزِّ وَنِهَايَةُ ٱلشَّرَفِ

21

AN UNUSUAL TOPHANE-WARE TEAPOT

Signed Lüleci Hüsnü
Workshop address:
"*Istanbul'da Tophane'de Hendek Caddesinde Lüleci Hüsnü Numero 45*"
(Pipe-maker Hüsnü, 45 Hendek Street, Tophane, Istanbul)

Istanbul, Turkey
19th Century
Height: 10 cm
Length: 22 cm

Of oval form, on plain base, the squat body rising to a waisted neck and straight rim, the incised decoration with gilt highlights comprising bunches of hanging leaf patterns beneath an elongated wreath framing a calligraphic cartouche in *nas-ta'liq* script providing the name and address details of the maker; "*Istanbul'da Tophane'de Hendek Caddesinde Lüleci Hüsnü Numero 45*" (Pipe-maker Hüsnü, 45 Hendek Street, Tophane, Istanbul), the flat lid with further similar decoration interspersed with palmettes flanked by crescent moon, with gently curved spout and loop handle with flat thumb rest. For a detailed survey on Tophane-ware please see: Bakla, Erdinç. *Tophane Lüleciliği*, Dış Bank / Antik Aş., İstanbul, 1993. The present teapot is a rare, signed example of Tophane-ware, outstanding both in terms of its form and size.





22

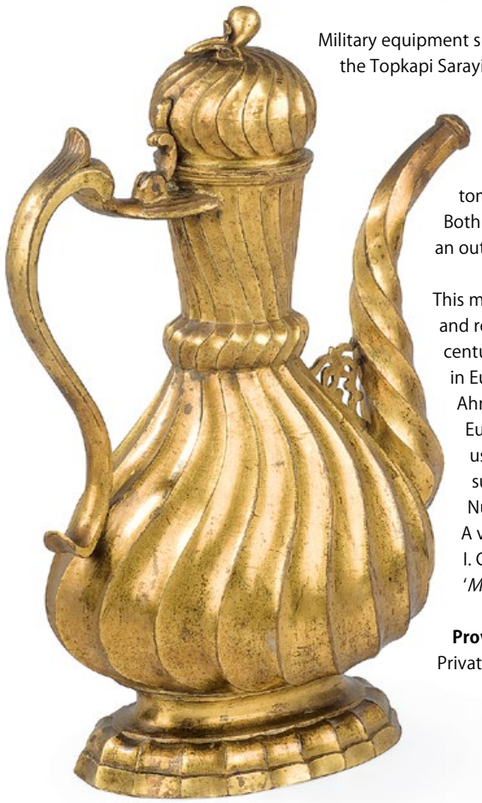
AN IMPRESSIVE OTTOMAN TOMBAK EWER (*ZEMZEMLIK*)

Turkey
First Half of the
18th Century
Height: 35 cm

of baluster form on a slightly splayed, fluted foot, with a tall fluted body, neck and domed stopper, the serpentine spout also fluted.

The *zamzam*-ewer in hand is a remarkable and very rare example of tombak workmanship, displaying a rare, simple decoration based on the fluted surface applied on the foot, the body and the spout. The ewer belongs to a small group of containers used for storing the holy *zamzam* water, brought home from Mecca by pilgrims. Similar pieces of Ottoman *tombak* art have been published in the exhibition catalogues *Ab-i Hayat*, 2010, p.151 and *Sultan III. Selim Han*, 2009, p. 243.

Expertly gilded brass and copper wares are called "*tombak*". The earliest examples of Ottoman metalworking are military equipment. Mamluk influence is apparent in 15th-century forms and styles of decoration. The style called "Classical Ottoman" takes shape during the early 16th century. Of special importance during the 16th and 17th centuries are harmoniously-proportioned candlesticks that have austerely-styled forms and are lacking in embellishment but contemporary with them are interesting examples of works whose surfaces are entirely covered with rumi-palmette compositions, braided friezes, delicate saz leaves, and floral motifs. As for the present piece, not infrequently one comes across a *tombak* ewer that has such a extraordinary design.



Military equipment such as helmets, chamfrons, and shields manufactured at the Topkapi Sarayi armory were stamped with a seal resembling the brand of the Kayl clan, of which the Ottomans were originally a member. Pots and pans used in the great kitchens of the Ottoman palace frequently contain inscriptions indicating who they belong to. Objects bequeathed to mosques and tombs also bear mostly *tughra*-like dedicatory inscriptions. Both in terms of its design and condition, the present piece is an outstanding example of Ottoman *tombak* art.

This magnificent tombak ewer illustrates the taste for the baroque and rococo in Turkey during the second half of the eighteenth century as influenced from European models. Ottoman interest in European art and culture flourished under the reign of Ahmed III (r.1703-30), with his promotion of embassies to Europe for scholarship dedicated to art, and the subsequent use of similar models in Istanbul. A particular testament to such development is visible in the sebil and çeşme of the Nuruosmaniye complex, completed by Osman III in 1755. A very similar *tombak* ewer is illustrated in: Kayaoglu, I. Gundag, Tombak, Istanbul, 1992, p.26, described as: '*Mecca-Water Ewer*'.

Provenance:
Private UK collection



23

AN OTTOMAN SILVER GREEK PATRIARCH'S CEREMONIAL STAFF WITH SILVER-GILT DRAGON HEAD FINIAL

Turkey
19th Century
Stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-1861)
Height: 165 cm

The present staff is a rare example of Ottoman ecclesiastic metalwork. It is a Greek patriarch's staff with silver-gilt dragon-head finial, the faceted shaft divided into four sections with raised bosses, the top section with an engraved Greek inscription. The serpents' eyes are masterfully decorated with purple stones, possibly rubies.

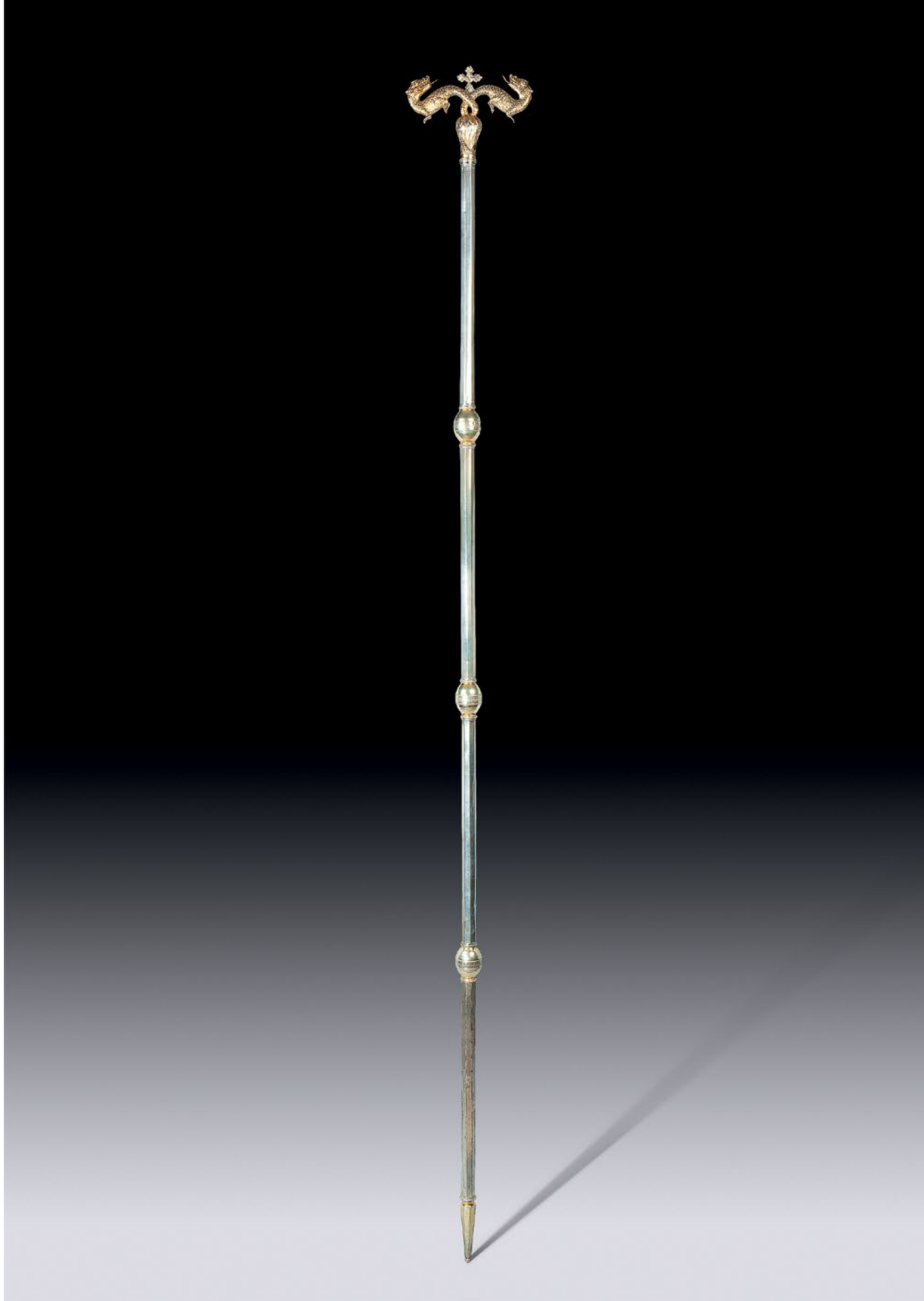
The crosier is the symbol of the governing office of the patriarch. The Eastern orthodox crosier, as can be seen in the present example, has a finial comprising a pair of sculptured serpents or dragons curled back to face each other, with a small cross between them. The symbolism is of the bronze serpents made by Moses in, in the Old Testament, Numbers 21:8-9.

Following the conquest of Constantinople by Mehmed II and his forces in 1453, the city came under Islamic rule after over eight hundred years of Byzantine, Orthodox dominance. The establishment of Constantinople as the seat of the Ottoman Empire held a deep resonance for its new Islamic conquerors, who quickly erected their own spiritual visual language so that Istanbul is now dominated by the minarets of Sinan and its multitude of striking mosques. Relics of its former Byzantine era remain, as throughout Ottoman rule, non-Muslim communities were free to practise their religion and held a certain religious juristic and administrative autonomy, being placed under a special 'protected' status (*dhimmi*)



This silver staff is symbolic of the fusion between Byzantine and Ottoman traditions, and the new aesthetic which formed after the Ottoman conquest. A similar staff, with the characteristic double-headed snakes (a symbolic reference to the wisdom associated with the patriarch's pastoral leadership) is in the State Historical-Culture Museum Preserve, Moscow Kremlin (inv. no. DK-1536, illustrated in Shifman and Walton, 2002, pp.174-5, no.26).

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



24

ENGLISH AMBASSADOR SIR ROBERT AINSLIE (1730-1804) IN THE PRESENCE OF SULTAN ABDULHAMID I (R. 1774-1789) IN THE IMPERIAL COUNCIL IN THE TOPKAPI PALACE, SIGNED LUIGI MAYER

Gouache and Watercolour
Signed: Luigi Mayer Rom[ano] Dipinti (Luigi Mayer of Rome painted it)

Dimensions without the border: 39 x 55 cm
Dimensions with the border: 44 x 60 cm

The title written under the painting is *'SALA DEL DIVAN DOVE IL G. VIZIR TRATTA CON PRANZO PRIMA D'INTRODURLO ALL' UDIENZA DEL GRAND SIG.'* (The Divan hall in which the Grand Vizier held lunch in the presence of the Sultan)

The *Divan-ı Hümayun*, in English the Imperial Council, was the *de facto* cabinet of the Ottoman Empire for most of its history. Initially an informal gathering of the senior ministers presided over by the Sultan in person, in the mid-15th century the Council's composition and function became firmly regulated. The Grand Vizier, who became the Sultan's deputy as the head of government, assumed the role of chairing the Council, which comprised also the other viziers, charged with military and political affairs, the two *kadi-askers* or military judges, the *defterdars* in charge of finances, the *nişancı* in charge of the palace scribal service, and later the Kapudan Pasha, the head of the Ottoman Navy, and occasionally the *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia and the Agha of the Janissaries.

The Council met in a dedicated building in the second courtyard of the Topkapi Palace, initially daily, then for four days a week by the 16th century. Its remit encompassed all matters of governance of the Empire, although the exact proceedings are no longer known. It was assisted by an extensive secretarial bureaucracy under the *reis ül-küttab* for the drafting of appropriate documents and the keeping of records. The Imperial Council remained the main executive organ of the Ottoman state until the mid-17th century, after which it lost most of its power to the office of the Grand Vizier. With the Tanzimat reforms of the early 19th century, it was eventually succeeded by a Western-style cabinet government.

In the present painting, the figure of the Sultan, listening to the discussions below, can be seen behind the grilled window. On either sides of the window are the framed *tughras*, the imperial monograms of the Sultan. In the foreground is a servant preparing coffee. In the background there are members of a European commission, possible French diplomats, discussing stately matters with the Ottoman high ranking bureaucrats.



Sultan Abdulhamid I, behind the grilled window, viewing the audience





SALA DEL DIVAN DOVE IL G.. VIZIR TRATTA CON PRANZO IL MINISTRO PRIMA D'INTRODURLO ALL' UDIENZA DEL GRAN SIGRE

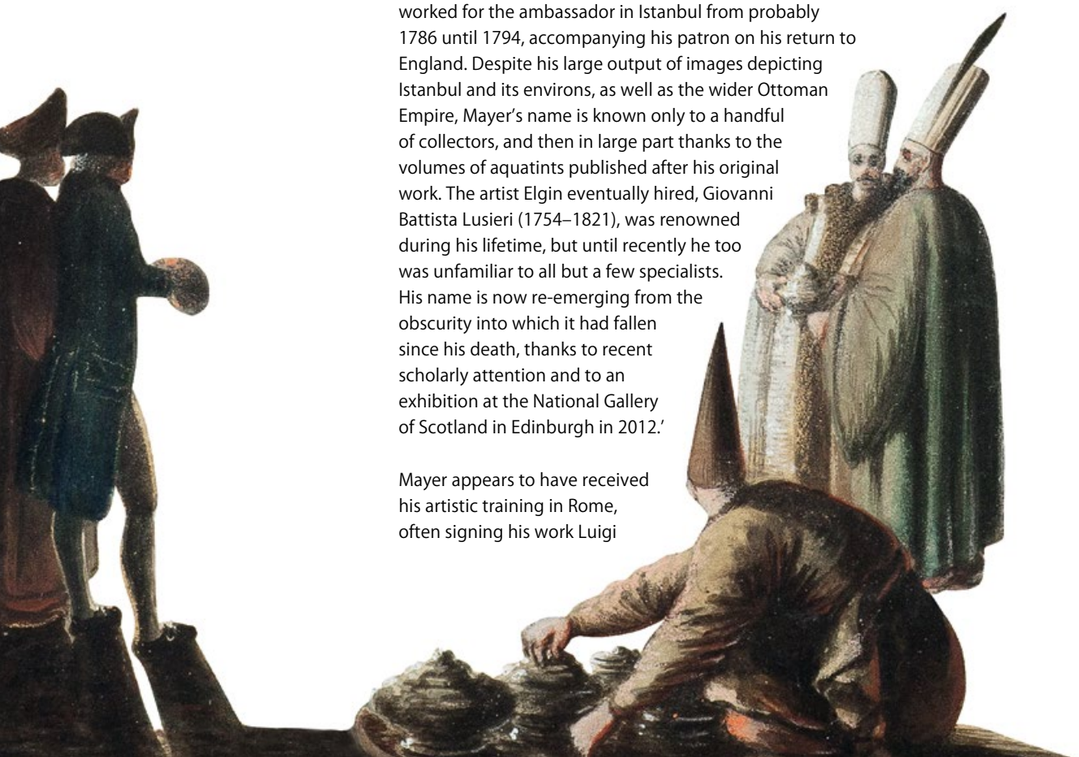
Luigi Mayer Rom.a dipin.

Luigi Mayer (d. 1803)

Born in 1755, Luigi Mayer was an Italian-German artist and one of the earliest and most important late 18th-century European painters of the Ottoman Empire. He was a close friend of Sir Robert Ainslie, British ambassador to Turkey between 1776 and 1792, and the bulk of his paintings and drawings during this period were commissioned by Ainslie.

Briony Llewellyn, in her insgihtful article on Luigi Mayer's art 'The Empire Unvarnished' (*Cornucopia*, Issue 53, 2015, pp. 48-63) wrote 'When Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, was appointed ambassador to the Ottoman Porte in 1799, he saw it as an opportunity to record and acquire fine examples of classical antiquities from Greece (hence the Elgin Marbles). To this end he sought advice from one of his predecessors, Sir Robert Ainslie, on the terms of employment for an artist he wished to hire as his draughtsman. Ainslie's response was that he had paid his artist 50 guineas a year, with board and travelling expenses, and "It was clearly understood that the whole of his works, drawings, pictures and sketches were to remain with me, as being my sole property."

Ainslie's artist is not named in the correspondence, but, from the remarkable watercolours that he produced, we know that he was Luigi Mayer (c1750/55–1803), who worked for the ambassador in Istanbul from probably 1786 until 1794, accompanying his patron on his return to England. Despite his large output of images depicting Istanbul and its environs, as well as the wider Ottoman Empire, Mayer's name is known only to a handful of collectors, and then in large part thanks to the volumes of aquatints published after his original work. The artist Elgin eventually hired, Giovanni Battista Lusieri (1754–1821), was renowned during his lifetime, but until recently he too was unfamiliar to all but a few specialists. His name is now re-emerging from the obscurity into which it had fallen since his death, thanks to recent scholarly attention and to an exhibition at the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh in 2012.'



Mayer appears to have received his artistic training in Rome, often signing his work Luigi Mayer Romano, and was reputed to have been a pupil of Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Evidence of a formal association with the celebrated Italian artist has not come to light, but there is no doubt that Mayer's work draws heavily on the example of his more famous predecessor, and in particular the series of 135 etchings, Vedute di Roma, that Piranesi produced from around 1748 until his death 30 years later. The combination of crumbling ancient monuments, encroaching nature and lively local figures, within compositions of sometimes startling perspectives, that characterises Piranesi's work exerted a powerful influence on Mayer.

So too did Piranesi's practice, followed by numerous vedutisti, or painters of views, of integrating text and image by including not merely the title ω itself but an elegant, almost poetic explanation of salient elements in the view. By the early 1770s Mayer was in the employ of a Sicilian scholar and collector of antiquities the Principe di Biscari, in Catania. He remained in Sicily until the prince's death in 1786, meeting some of the northern European travellers who came to explore the island, attracted by its wild landscape, erupting volcanoes and well-preserved Greek temples. How and when he came to the notice of Sir Robert Ainslie is another of the missing pieces in the jigsaw of Mayer's life, but it may have been through the mediation of another Italian, the numismatist and antiquarian Domenico Sestini, author of numerous travel accounts, who was also employed by both Biscari and Ainslie.

It was common practice in the 18th and early 19th centuries for ambassadors and wealthy travellers to employ artists to accompany them abroad. In an age before photography, visual records of significant events and places were as important as textual documentation as markers of authority or achievement. Ainslie was not alone among diplomats in Istanbul in employing an artist to record the events of his office; as Philip Mansel, author of Constantinople: City of the World's Desire, has noted, the city inspired an unusual number of "embassy pictures". Mayer's best-known predecessor as an "embassy artist" was Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, who arrived in Istanbul in 1699 in the suite of the Marquis de Ferriol and spent the next four decades recording both the life and costumes of the city as well as successive sultans' official reception of several European ambassadors. The brothers Gustaf and Ulrik Celsing, Swedish diplomats in the mid-18th century, commissioned a large collection of images, including some extensive views of the city and its shoreline. Ainslie's French opposite number and rival for influence at the court, the Comte de Choiseul-Gouffier, also employed two artists, Jean-Baptiste Hilaire and Louis-François Cassas. While the two ambassadors jockeyed for position, promoting the interests of their respective countries, these artists, although employed in a private capacity, produced images that played their part in the tangled web of political intrigue.

Mayer's work is unusual, Llewellyn remarks, not for his sweeping city panoramas and his recording of official occasions, magnificent as these are, but for his documentation of the more domestic aspects of Ainslie's residency and for his charmingly bucolic renditions of life outside the city. He thus visually underlines for Ainslie's contemporaries and successors the familiarity with Ottoman life for which the British ambassador was noted. Mayer travelled extensively through the Ottoman Empire between 1776 and 1794, and became well known for his sketches and paintings of panoramic landscapes of ancient sites from the Balkans to the Greek Islands, Turkey and Egypt, particularly ancient monuments and the Nile. His images reached a wider audience during the first decade of the 19th century when they were published as aquatints in a series of volumes under various titles, such as *Views in Egypt, Palestine and other Parts of the Ottoman Empire* (1801-04). Many of his works were amassed in Ainslie's collection, which was later presented to the British Museum, providing a remarkable insight into the Middle East of that period. He passed away in 1803.

For comparable Istanbul scenes by Luigi Mayer from the British Museum and the Ömer M. Koç Collection please see Briony Llewellyn's article 'The Empire Unvarnished' (*Cornucopia*, Issue 53, 2015, pp. 48, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59).



25

AN OTTOMAN SILVER MASTIC-HOLDER STAMPED WITH THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN MAHMUD II (R. 1808-1839)

The reign of
Sultan Mahmud II
(r. 1808-1839)
Heigth: 11.8 cm

Of bulbous form, richly decorated with whirling spring flowers worked with the *repoussé* technique. The foot consists of six curved leaves and the holder on the dome-shaped cover is in the shape of a rose bud. The cover, body and foot all have been stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Mahmud II.

It is a beautiful example of 19th century Ottoman metalwork which belongs to a small group of eclectic works displaying a graceful unity of Western and local decorative elements.

Provenance:
UK Private Collection





26

AN UNUSUAL YELLOW ÇANAKKALE POTTERY BIRD

Turkey
19th Century
Height: 22 cm

In the form of a bird with a long curling tail standing on a waisted circular foot, decorated fantastical in relief with a rosette at the chest, with its ridged wings set back, its long neck tapering towards its globular head, slightly tilted to one side, the eyes and ears marked by protruding circles, the nose by two rhombic grooves, its beak in the form of a spout, surmounted by a horn-shaped crest, with a rimmed hole on its back, painted in green, red and black with floral and geometric patterns.

Yellow was rarely applied on Çanakkale pottery. A comparable yellow Çanakkale lion from the Collection of Suna and Inan Kıraç, Istanbul, is published in *Osmanlı Seramiklerinin Görkemi, XVI – XIX Yüzyıl*, 2000, p. 209.





27

AN OTTOMAN SILVER COFFEE-POT STAMPED WITH THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN MEHMED V RESHAD (R. 1909-1918)

The reign of Sultan Mehmed V Reshad (r. 1909-1918)
Height: 8.1 cm
Length: 25 cm

Of conical form, the foot is slightly larger than the diameter of the rim, the cover is attached to the body with hinges. The handle is carved ebony. The cover and body have been stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Mehmed V Reshad. It is a beautiful example of early 20th century Ottoman metalwork which belongs to a small group of silver objects used in the daily life of the Ottoman elite. A comparable Ottoman silver coffeepot from the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul is published in *Istanbul – The City and the Sultan*, 2007, p. 64.

Provenance:
UK Private Collection



28

A RARE GOUACHE PORTRAIT OF SULTAN ABDULHAMID I (R. 1774-1789) DEPICTED RESTING ON THE "IMPERIAL THRONE"

Turkey
First Half of the
19th Century
Dimensions: 54 x 39 cm

The present portrait belongs to a small group of highly important Ottoman paintings, documenting the transition between the traditional, local miniature painting techniques and imported European painting techniques of the first half of the nineteenth century. In terms of organisation, it follows the artistic features of the Ottoman court painter Konstantin Kapıdağlı who was celebrated for his mastery in drawing portraits of Ottoman sultans.

The only two series of early nineteenth-century watercolour portraits of Ottoman sultans comparable to the present portrait are found in the *Kıraç Album* and in an imperial scroll in the Topkapi Palace Museum, inv no. H. 1896 (Please See: *Padişahın Portresi*, Is Bankasi, Istanbul, 2000, p. 503-4). In these series, every sultan has been depicted with his certain characteristic feature; the pious Bayazid II with a saintly beard, Mehmed the Conqueror with his sword, Selim the Grim with his mace, warlord Murad IV with his weapons, the bibliophile mawlawi Mustafa I with *mawlawi* headgear, holding a book. In some of these portraits sultans have been depicted resting on the Imperial Throne (the throne of Ahmed I) and the ceremonial Golden Throne (*bayram tahtı*). In the present portrait Abdulhamid I is depicted resting on the imperial throne, a masterpiece of Ottoman palatial furniture, which is still preserved in the Topkapi Palace Museum, in Istanbul.

For a closely related portrait of Sultan Abdulhamid I, from the Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 2134), please see; *Padişahın Portresi*, Is Bankasi, Istanbul, 2000, p. 432.



29

A RARE VENETO-SARACENIC BUCKET

Venice or the Middle East
Circa 1600
Heigth: 14.3 cm
Diameter: 28.3 cm

The body is decorated overall with elaborate repeating foliate motifs. The handle is decorated with two dragon's heads. Scholarly debate over the group of metalwork known as "Veneto-Saracenic" wares has seen them be attributed to both Venice and the Middle East. In some, the artist Mahmud al-Kurdi presents a particularly interesting and enigmatic figure in this debate, his signature appearing both in Arabic (or Persian) and transliterated Roman script. Although a small number of signed works are securely attributed to the master himself, there remain many more works which could possibly be ascribed to him.

The bucket in hand belongs to a group of rare, Veneto-saracenic metalwork which are very finely executed, manifesting plural influences and speak of the extensive trade network between Renaissance Europe and the Islamic worlds during the 16th century. For further discussion on Veneto-saracenic pieces please see; S. Auld, *Renaissance Venice, Islam and Mahmud the Kurd: A metalworking enigma*, London, 2004.





30

AN OTTOMAN WALL HANGING OR DIVAN COVER

Turkey
Seventeenth
Century
Height: 171 cm
Length: 126 cm

This seventeenth century *çatma* velvet panel is identical to a well-known panel now at the Polish National Museum, Cracow (inv. no. XIX-4525). The exact same design can be found in a fragment at the Victoria and Albert Museum as well (inv.no. 535-1884). The piece in hand is superior to such fragments with its completeness which is proved by the striped rulings framing it.

Such panels were originally used as divan covers in upper class households in Istanbul. Its central fan-shaped carnation palmette is one of the most popular motifs found in *çatma* velvets. In staggered rows and infinitely repeated it creates a highly decorative effect which was embraced both at home and abroad, especially Eastern Europe and Russia. Apart from *kaftans* and furnishing fabrics, Ottoman velvets were also used as ecclesiastical garments, a proof of their versatility.

A *çatma* which is identical to the present one is in the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon (inv. no. 1425), please see; *Lizbon Calouste Gulbenkian Müzesi'nden Başyapıtlarla Doğu'dan Batı'ya Kitap Sanatı ve Osmanlı Dünyasından Anılar*, 2006, p. 27.

For comparable *çatmas* see Atasoy et al 2001, fig. 348 & Gürsu 1988, cat. 167. For velvets featuring different variations of the carnation palmette as the dominant motif see Atasoy et al figs. 342-347; Ballian 2006, fig. 234; Born, Dziewulski & Messling 2016, cat. 136; De Jonghe, cats. V.2.16 & V.2.17; Gürsu 1988, cats. 103, 122, 129, 137, 138, 166 & 192; Phillips 2016, fig. 3.2

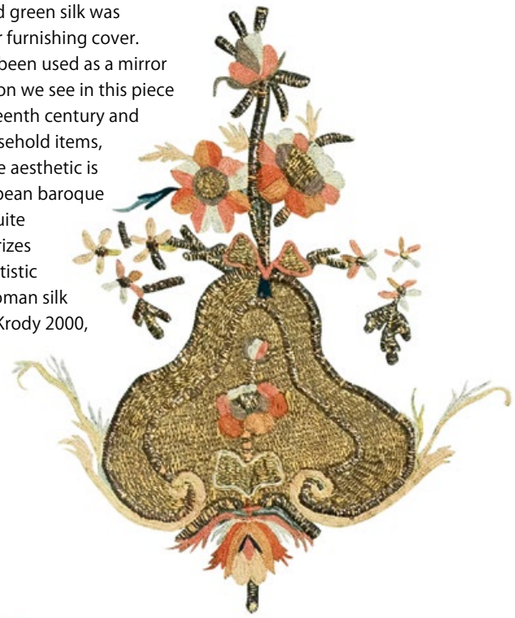


31

A PAIR OF FINE OTTOMAN SILK CEREMONIAL COVERS

Turkey
Late eighteenth or
Early nineteenth century
127.5 x 54 cm

This heavily embroidered in hand green silk was probably used as a ceremonial or furnishing cover. Its shape indicates it could have been used as a mirror cover. The type of floral decoration we see in this piece becomes fashion from the eighteenth century and appears in various luxurious household items, from napkins to towels. While the aesthetic is recognizably Ottoman, the European baroque echoes in the composition are quite notable, a mood which characterizes the later centuries of Ottoman artistic production. For comparable Ottoman silk mirror covers please see; Belger Krody 2000, cats. 27 & 29.







32

THE COFFEE SHOP BY WALTER CHARLES HORSLEY

Oil on Canvas
Signed and Dated: (18)94
Unframed: 69 x 90 cm
Framed: 109 x 87 cm

WALTER CHARLES HORSLEY (1855-1934)

One of the celebrated British painters living in the turn of the 19th century, Walter Charles Horsley was born in London in 1855. He was the son of John Calcott Horsley. His father was an English Academic painter of genre and historical scenes, illustrator, and designer of the first Christmas card. He was a member of the artist's colony in Cranbrook.

In 1874 Walter Horsley was accepted to the Royal Academy of Arts and exhibited his works in many occasions in London. In 1878 Horsley visited Egypt, and thereafter he specialised in Orientalist jenre subjects. He was a fascinating artist on account of the entirely novel imperial themes that he developed. His famous work *Old-time Tuition at Dulwich College* was presented in 1920 by Sir James Leigh Wood on behalf of the relatives of the late Mr Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull, a scholar of Dulwich College from 1881 to 1884; now exhibited Headmaster's study, Dulwich College. His second best known work is *Les Français au Caire*, dated 1884, now preserved in Sheffield. “Fighting his battles o’er again”, dated 1883, has been published in *Popular 19th Century Painting*, by Philip Hook and M Poltimore, p. 41. He passed away in London, in 1934. The painting in hand displays Horsley’s ability to observe and reflect the striking richness of daily life in the Middle East.





33

A RARE AND IMPORTANT IMPERIAL OTTOMAN OR ITALIAN BROCADED SILK (*KEMHA*)

Turkey or Italy
Seventeenth
Century
225 x 58 cm

Brocaded silk with a pattern of palmettes, roses, carnations and other flowers. This decorative repertoire is very similar to, and in some cases has directly inspired, the designs of poly-chrome Iznik ceramics. It consists of a determining floral decoration which has in fact shaped the aesthetics of the so-called Classical Ottoman style. Primarily formed under the supervision of the great court illuminator Kara Memi, this style mainly consists of ogival patterns with *saz* leaves or floral sprays.

This very high quality silk brocade can be paired with an almost identical Ottoman *kemha* from the Swedish Royal Collection in Stockholm (inv. no. 113), which has been published in *İpek – The Crescent and the Rose - Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (2001), p. 248. Geijer has noted that this silk used to cover the 'violet bed' in the Swedish royal household. The initials with which this kemha was stamped are those of Queen Hedvig Eleanora (r. 1654-1660).

Exchange of ideas and inspiration left its mark on local taste which can be clearly observed in works of art such as the pr esent imperial *kemha*. Similar silks, clearly drawing inspiration from Ottoman aesthetic, were favoured in Italy, the Ottoman elite on the other hand was fascinated with Renaissance material culture, please see; Nurhan Atasoy, 2001, figs. 42, 43 & 49 and Gürsu, 1988, cat.131.

Valuable textiles constituted an indispensable element of Ottoman ceremonial, in the forms of costumes, banners, wall-hangings, curtains and ground-coverings they lent visual magnificence to precessions and receptions, and as 'robes of honour' (*hil'at*) bestowed on court servants and foreign diplomats. They were unmistakable signifiers of the sultan's power and generosity. Their symbolic importance was reflected in both the action and language of the court. High Ottoman officials kissed the hem of the Sultan's garment and spoke of 'wearing the robe of continuance of office', while the sultan himself was said to don 'themantle of authority'. The ceremonial kaftans and other garments in the collection of the Topkapi Palace Museum, testify to the dazzling impression that textiles undoubtedly made at state functions. Velvets and silks brocaded with threads of precious metal (*kemha*) were largely worn by the royal family and imperial slave household. Precious silk costumes and textiles were used particularly during the accession of sultans, the ceremony of the girding of the sword (*kılıç kuşanma*), parades, receptions. These have always been treasured and collected by Turkish and foreign patrons as signs of power. Similar ceremonial textiles have been depicted in detail in *Talikizade's Eğri Fetihnamesi* which documents the Ottoman victory against the Habsburgs in 1596. The *Eğri Fetihnamesi*, preserved in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library (TSM H.1609), includes a double page miniature depicting the arrival of Sultan Mehmed III (r.1595-1603) in Istanbul following the victorious campaign. (fol.68b-69a). In the miniature, pages and palatial officials attending the ceremony have been depicted holding juxtaposed brocaded silks before the rest of the attendants (*Osmanlı Resim Sanatı* (2006), p.181. Also see: *İpek – The Crescent and the Rose – Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets* (2001), p. 26-27.).





The details of the decoration on the silks depicted in the miniature draw close resemblance with the present textile. Moreover, even the narrow band running around the edges can be observed on the textiles in the miniature. The piece in hand, is an extremely rare piece, both in terms of its artistic value and perfect condition.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



34

AN EXTREMELY RARE IMPERIAL OTTOMAN JADE ARCHER'S RING (*ZIHGIR*) DECORATED WITH EMERALDS AND DIAMONDS

Jade ring, with emeralds and diamonds set into gold mounts

Turkey
16th Century
Length: 4.7 cm

The *zihgir*, which was worn on the thumb of the right hand of the archer to provide protection as well as to smooth the way for the bow, was an important functional item of imperial jewellery. This ring belongs to a rare group of high quality Ottoman hardstone carvings made for the *hazine*, the Treasury of the Sultans.

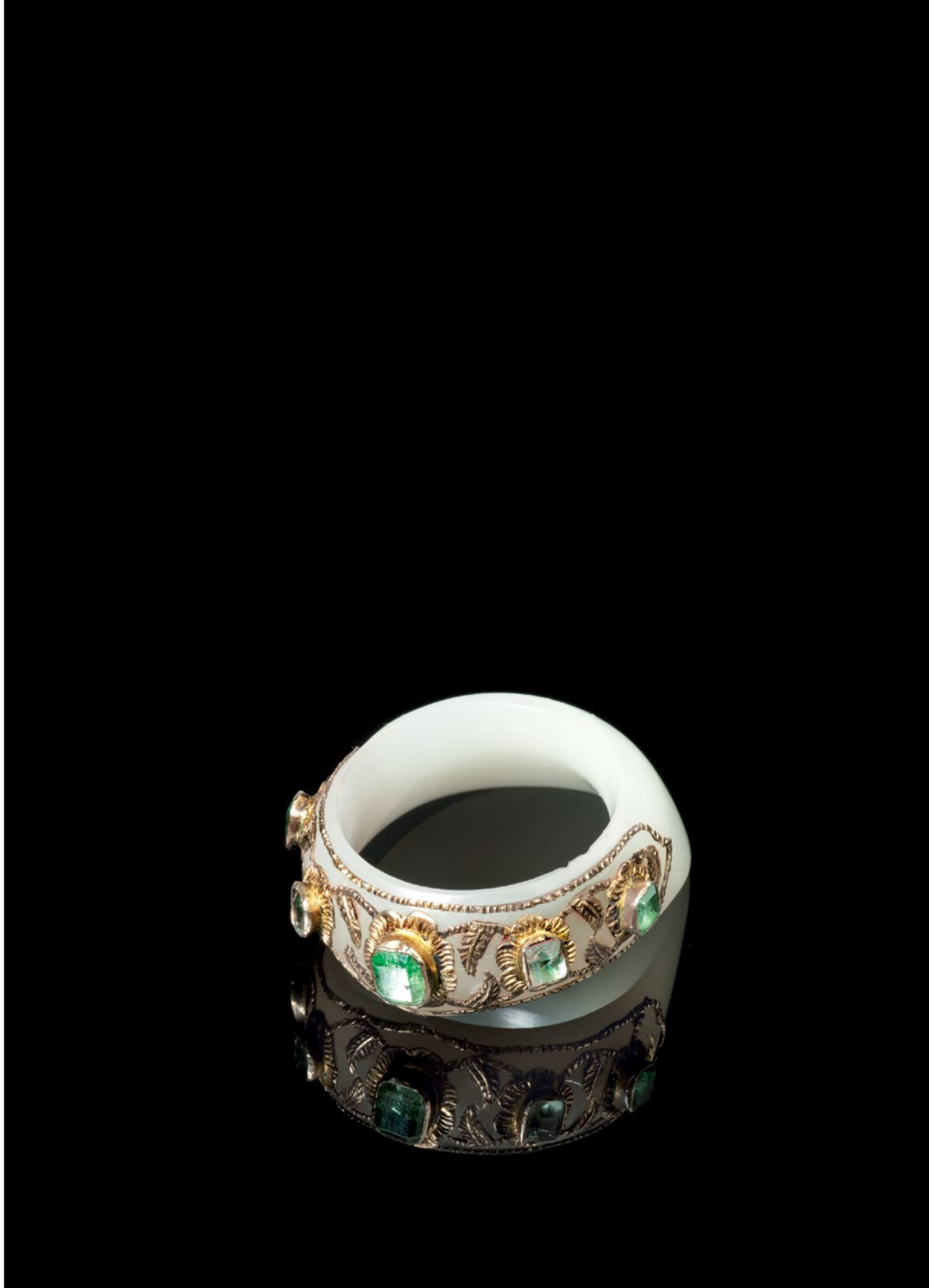
The group consists of personal as well as ceremonial items that include tankards, bowls, drinking vessels and pen cases, as well as plaques for attachment to swords, saddles and horse trappings. A gem-set tankard of this type was recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. no. ME.5-2011, and for further examples, see E. Atil, *The Age of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent*, Exhibition Catalogue, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. 25th January-17th May, 1987, pp.113-175).

Robert Skelton describes how this technique was achieved in his seminal paper on Ottoman jades: "the gems were not set into the jade but were in small cylinders of gold rising from circular plaques of gold foil on the surface of the stone. Thus each gem and its enclosing sheath of gold is like the calyx of a small flower and the effect is confirmed by the connecting stems and small leaves with engraved veins which form a net over the surface of the stone. These stems and leaves are stiffly formalised and the gems are disposed over the surface fairly closely at regular intervals so that the total effect is very rich and stylised." (Robert Skelton, 'Characteristics of later Turkish jade carving' in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art*, Budapest, 1978, p.796).



A portrait of Mehmed the Conqueror smelling a rose, attributed to Shiblizade Ahmed, clearly displays an archer's ring such as the present lot on the hand of the Sultan (Topkapi Palace Museum, TSM H 2153, folio 10a). A small group of similar archer's rings are preserved in the Topkapi Palace Museum treasury (Gul Irepoglu, *Imperial Ottoman Jewellery*, Istanbul, 2012, pp. 236-36, TSM inv. nos. 2/83, 2/76, 2/72, 2/88).

Provenance:
UK Private Collection



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