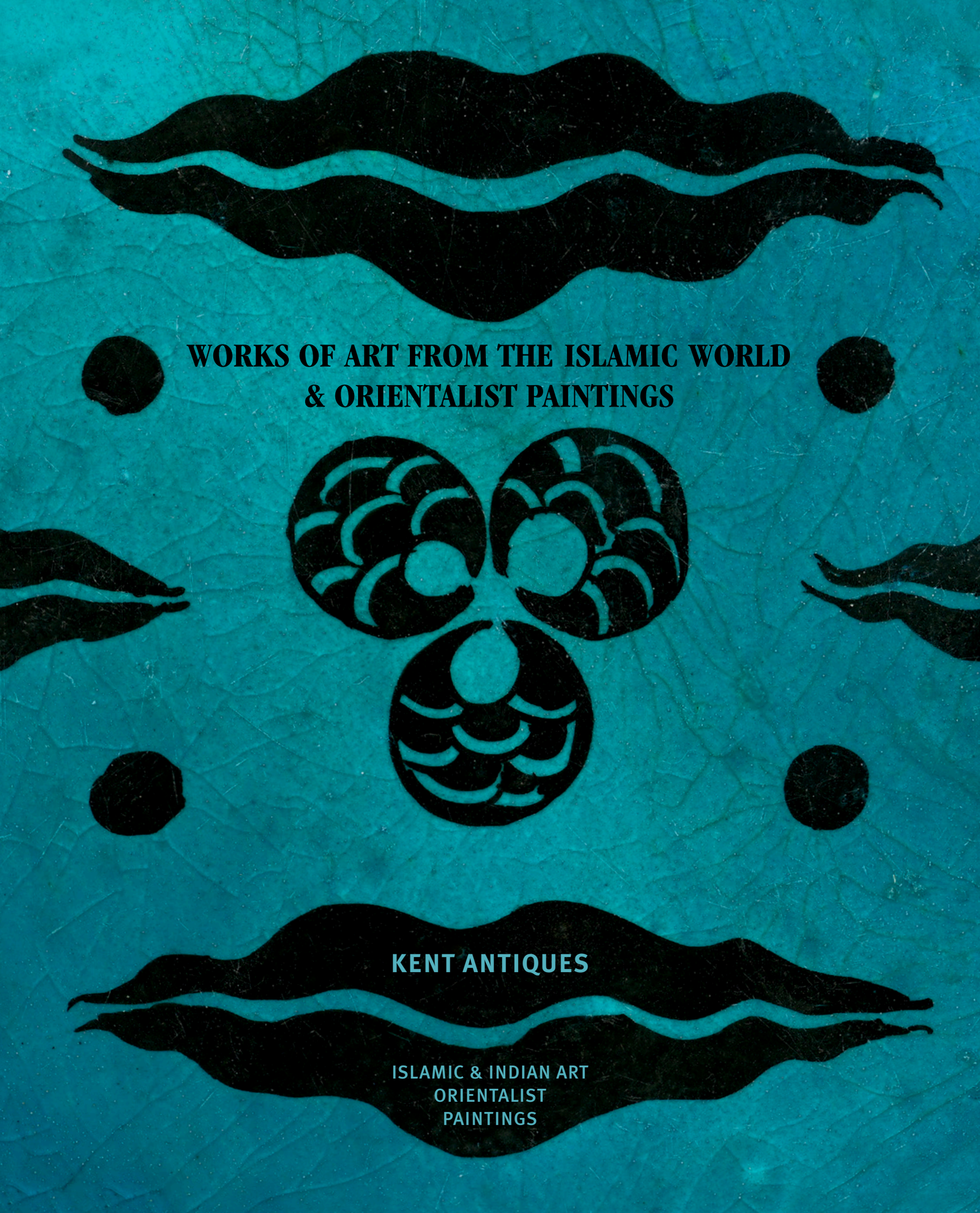
WORKS OF ART FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD & ORIENTALIST PAINTINGS



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I would like to thank Dr. Tara Desjardins of the Islamic Art Museum, Doha, Dr. Sophie Bostock of the Orientalist Museum, Doha, and Ms. Mina Moraitou of the Benaki Museum, Athens, for their kind help during the preparation of the text of the Panorama of Constantinople by Cosimo Comidas de Carbognona. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my brother Dr. Bora Keskiner who did extensive research and wrote the texts. The effective presentation of the materials would not have been possible without the participation of Mr. Peter Keenan, Mr. Richard Harris, and fine art photographer Mr. Richard Valencia.

Mehmet Keskiner
Director

PREFACE

It is a delightful privilege for me to announce our participation as Kent Antiques to the very special 35th anniversary of TEFAF Maastricht between 25-30 June 2022. We are very excited about exhibiting at TEFAF Maastricht and have been taking great care to gather a very special selection. All art works showcased at our stand (Stand No: 247) at TEFAF Maastricht are illustrated in this catalogue.

Our selection includes a group of extremely fine examples of Iznik ceramics, an extremely rare hexagonal tile decorated with Buddha-lips and *cintemanis*, an extremely important Ottoman sword signed by Ottoman Sultan Murad IV's (r. 1623-1640) court swordsmith Davud, a very rare silver nielloed and engraved globe signed by the master silversmith Kevork Kuyumjubashian, an exquisite miniature portrait of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1628-1658), a highly important portrait of Roxelana by a follower of Titian, a monumental panorama of Constantinople by Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano dedicated to King Louis XVI's (r. 1774-1792) minister Guglielmo Maurizio Ludolf, a magnificent Ottoman voided silk velvet and gold and silver-thread panel, as well as other rare and important examples of Islamic calligraphy, metalwork, woodwork.

This catalogue is accompanied with a separate publication entirely dedicated to our latest discovery, the highlight of our stand: Sultan Selim III's (r. 1789-1807) ceremonial saddlery which is the only 18th century imperial Ottoman set of horse furnishings that has survived to this day.

Kent Antiques is a leading art gallery specializing in Islamic and Indian works of art & Orientalist paintings. The company's clients include leading world museums, major institutions as well as private collectors. All works of art offered by Kent Antiques is ethically obtained from national and international private collections and trade. Besides the quality and condition, one of our primary concerns is the provenance of the artworks we offer. The provenance of every single piece is checked. We try to obtain as much information and/or documentation as possible from previous owners to support the provenance and make sure none of the artworks were exported from their country of origin in recent years. The authenticity of every single work of art offered for sale is guaranteed and certificate of authenticity is provided on request. Utmost attention is paid to provide genuine art works of highest quality in good condition. The company is active since 1997, in South Kensington, London. Kent Antiques is a member of BADA Organisation.

It gives me great pleasure to present collectors and museums our new TEFAF Maastricht 2022 selection of Islamic & Indian artworks and Orientalist paintings which have been gathered with extreme care for their quality, provenance and condition.

If you need any further information I will be happy to oblige.

Mehmet Keskiner
Director

1

RARE AND IMPORTANT EARLY IZNIK DISH

IZNIK BLUE AND WHITE DISH

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1530-1535
Diameter: 31.5 cm.

Large, rimless, fritware, underglaze painted in two shades of cobalt blue and turquoise on a brilliant white ground, decorated with rotational designs of scrolling vines bearing palmettes and leaves, around the cavetto a similar continuous floral frieze, below the rim an undulating band with narrow panels of waves. The exterior is decorated with a frieze matching the cavetto.

The designs on this remarkable dish echo those of tilework on the front of the *Sünnet Odası* (Chamber of Circumcision) in the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul. Please see Belgin Demirsar Arli & Ara Altun's *Tiles: Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, Kale Group Cultural Publications, Istanbul, 2008, pp. 127-129, figs. 131, 132, 133. They both feature a similar palette *viz* shades of cobalt blue and turquoise on a brilliant white ground, with rotational designs of scrolling vines bearing palmettes and *saz* leaves. These designs in turn owe their origins to early 15th century Chinese blue and white porcelain.

There is a Chinese rimless dish at the Ardebil Shrine that would have served as a prototype for a dish such as the present example (inv. no. 29.119) please see: John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelain from the Ardebil Shrine*, Smythsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1956. Plate 36.

Rimless Iznik dishes are rare. For the shape please see Julian Raby & Nurhan Atasoy's *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, 1989, p. 38, fig. 27. There are two closely related Iznik dishes. One is in the Gulbenkian Foundation Museum, Lisbon (inv. no. 859), please see Julian Raby & Nurhan Atasoy's *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, 1989, fig. 338. The second is in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum (inv. no. 41/155), please see Esin Atil's *The Age of Suleyman the Magnificent*, National Gallery of Art, Washinton, 1987, p. 248.

Provenance:
Ex-Private French Collection



After John Alexander Pope, *Chinese Porcelain from the Ardebil Shrine*, Smythsonian Institution, Washington DC, 1956. Plate 36.



A LARGE IZNIK DISH WITH FLORAL DECORATION FROM THE REIGN OF SULTAN MURAD III

IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY DISH DECORATED WITH RED ROSES AND BLUE *SAZ* LEAVES

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1575-1580
Diameter: 36 cm.

Fritware, decorated in the '*saz* leaf and rosette' style in coral red, blue, green, black, with a central rosette surrounded by symmetrically organized blue tulips, red roses and blue *saz* leaves. The rim decorated with stylized wave motifs.

Besides its exceptional size, the present dish features a very rare design which gathers different floral elements used in the Ottoman court workshop in the 16th century. Iznik dishes uniting such a variety of motifs, including tulips, roses, *saz* leaves surrounding a central palmette, are rare.

A comparable Iznik dish with floral decoration in the Ex-Adda Collection (Racham Cat. 108) is published in Julian Raby & Nurhan Atasoy's *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1989, pl. 482. A second comparable Iznik dish with blue saz leaves and floral decoration is in the Gulbenkian Museum, Lizbon. See, Julian Raby & Nurhan Atasoy, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1989, pl. 697.

Provenance:
Private Italian Collection



3

RARE AND IMPORTANT IZNIK POLYCHROME DISH DECORATED WITH A LION AND TWO DOGS

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1570
Diameter: 31.5 cm.

Fritware, underglaze painted in blue, coral red, green, black. Depicting a lion and two dogs on green ground. The lion is standing below and the two confronted dogs seated at the top. The rim decorated with stylized wave motifs. The bold effect of the bright green ground is heightened by the potter's decision to leave the cavetto blank, providing breathing room for the composition.

Depiction of wild animals is part of an old iconographic tradition in Anatolia and the present aesthetic can be stretched back to figural Seljuq art. In Ottoman art some of the earliest depictions of animals are found on Iznik ceramics in the 1520s and 1530s. Probably the most famous examples are those on the *Sünnet Odası* (Circumcision Hall) tiles, in the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul.

Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby in *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey* state that "the animals of the 'green-ground group' were a collection of the exotic and the mythical. There were coursing dogs, deer, rabbits, ducks, monkeys, lions, horned snakes, simurghs and confronted harpies. The style has affinities with the 'animal chase' which was a favoured motif in Seljuq metalwork. The mixture of real and fantastic animals was, however, characteristic of the Balkan 'teratological' style, and although there are few precisely comparable objects, it was probably Balkan precious metalwork which inspired the Iznik potters." For further discussion and the illustration of a closely related Ottoman silver tankard which shows dogs chasing rabbits please see, Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1989, p. 276, Fig. 617.

A closely related Iznik dish with an almost identical design, featuring a lion and two dogs, is published in *Exposition d'Art Musulman*, Les Amis de l'Art, Alexandrie, 1925, pl. 30.

An Iznik tankard, in the Topkapi Palace Museum, similarly decorated with animals is published by Katarina Otto-Dorn. See, Katarina Otto-Dorn, *Türkische Keramik*, Ankara, 1957, pl. 81. A further vessel with the same aesthetic is in the Musée National de la Renaissance. Please see, Marthe Bernus-Taylor, *Arabesques et Jardins de Paradis*, exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1990, no.133, p.162. There are also three closely related dishes in the Ashmolean Museum, the David Collection and in the Gulbenkian (Atasoy and Raby, *ibid.*, pls. 546 and 548, p. 257 and Maria Queiroz Ribeiro, *Iznik Pottey*, Lisbon, 1996, no.87, pp. 246-47).

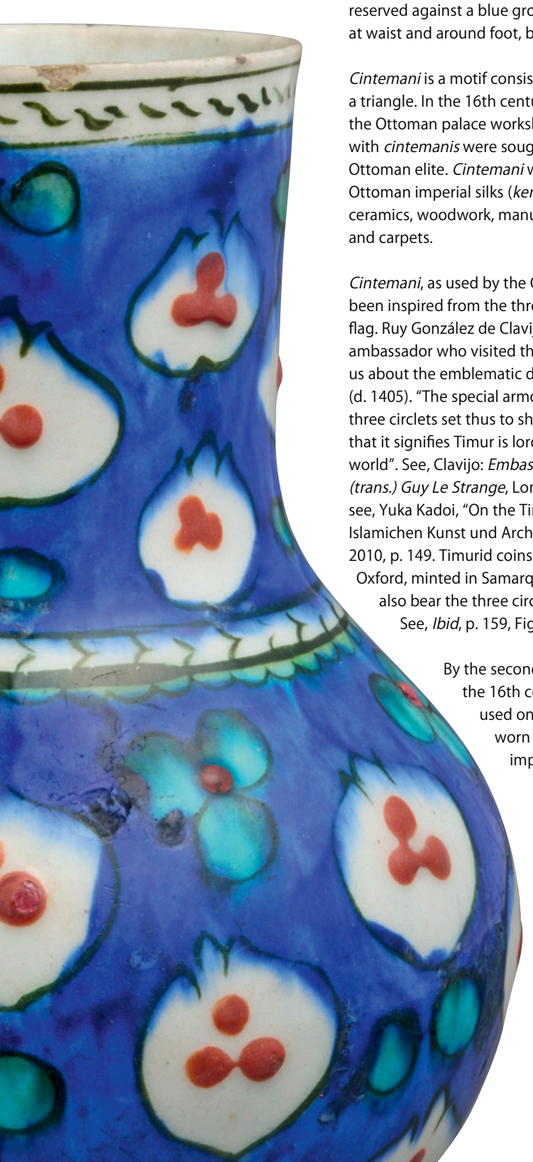
Looking at the group as a whole, one cannot help but wonder whether not just those noted above, but indeed the majority of the group were done by the same inventive artist, with the slight differences accounted for by a development in his style over time. The small number of surviving pieces is such that it is certainly possible that these may be the work of a single individual. In this respect, our dish can be attributed to the artist who produced the Christie's tankard. For a second tankard decorated with dogs, rabbits and deer on a green ground from the Musée du Louvre see, *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi. 3 Capitals of Islamic Art. Masterpieces from the Louvre Collection*, exhibition catalogue, 2008, No. 40/A, pp. 143-44.

Provenance:
Private French Collection



FINE IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY JUG DECORATED WITH RED AND GREEN *CINTEMANIS*

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Height: 19.2 cm



Of baluster form on short foot rising to slightly flaring mouth, with loop handle, painted under clear glaze in cobalt-blue, bole-red, green and black with white stylised pomegranates containing red *cintemani* motifs and alternated with further green *cintemanis*, all reserved against a blue ground, white plaited register at waist and around foot, band of S-scrolls at rim.

Cintemani is a motif consisting of three circlets shaping a triangle. In the 16th century, it was much favoured by the Ottoman palace workshop and art works decorated with *cintemanis* were sought after by members of the Ottoman elite. *Cintemani* was used in the decoration Ottoman imperial silks (*kemha*), velvets (*çatma*), Iznik ceramics, woodwork, manuscript illumination, bindings and carpets.

Cintemani, as used by the Ottomans, appears to have been inspired from the three circlets in the Timurid flag. Ruy González de Clavijo (d. 1412), a Spanish ambassador who visited the Timurid court in 1404, tells us about the emblematic design adopted by Timur (d. 1405). "The special armorial bearing of Timur is the three circlets set thus to shape a triangle and it is said that it signifies Timur is lord of all three quarters of the world". See, Clavijo: *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406, (trans.) Guy Le Strange*, London, 1928, pp. 208-209. Also see, Yuka Kadoi, "On the Timurid Flag", Beiträge zur Islamichen Kunst und Archäologie, Band 2, Weisbaden, 2010, p. 149. Timurid coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, minted in Samarqand, in 785 A.H. / 1383 C.E. also bear the three circlets of the *cintemani* motif. See, *Ibid*, p. 159, Fig. 5.

By the second half of the 15th and in the 16th centuries, *cintemani* was used on imperial Ottoman robes worn by sultans as a sign of imperial authority and power. See, Şükran Bulut, "Çintemani Motifinin Geçmişi ve Bugünü", *Journal of Social and Humanities Sciences Research (JSHSR)*, Vol. 5, 2018, p. 2979. Some of the finest examples of imperial Ottoman robes decorated with *cintemanis* are the robes associated with Ottoman sultans, stretching back to Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror (r. 1444- 1446 and 1451-1481), in the Topkapi Palace Museum [inv. no. 13/6]. Please see, J. M. Rogers *et al, Topkapi – Costumes, Embroideries and Other Textiles*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1986, pl. 2 [Mehmed II], pl. 8, 10 [Selim I], pl. 26 [Murad III].

The present jug belongs to a small group of Izniks which have been decorated with white pomegranates with red *cintemanis*. A closely related jug, identically decorated with white pomegranates with red *cintemanis* and separate green cintemanis on a cobalt blue-background is in the Ömer Koç collection. Please see, Hülya Bilgi's *Ateşin Oyunu: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi ve Ömer Koç Koleksiyonlarından İznik Çini ve Seramikleri*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, İstanbul, 2009, p. 285.

A similar Iznik jug decorated with white pomegranates with red *cintemanis* is in the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation Museum (inv. no. 792). Please see, Nurhan Atasoy & Julian Raby's *Iznik – The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1994, p. 271, pl. 596.

For another Iznik jug decorated with white pomegranates with red *cintemanis*, please see, Bernard Rackham's *Islamic Pottery and Italian Maiolica*, Faber & Faber, London, 1959, pl. 70, No. 98.

The present jug is a rare example of this type, produced only for a short period in the Iznik kilns.

Provenance:
Ex-Private French collection



5

RARE IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY JUG

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1575
Height: 21 cm

The body of globular form supported on a broad foot-ring, the high cylindrical neck slightly everted toward the rim, an s-shaped handle ring from the rim to the shoulder, painted in underglaze with a frieze of wines ending in leaves on a green ground. The large leaves containing arabesques and smaller leaves. The ground decorated with *chintemani* in reserve.

Iznik jugs in the form of the present piece were first produced in circa 1560. See, Julian Raby & Nurhan Atasoy, *Iznik: The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1989, p. 39. A comparable jug decorated with arabesques on a green background is in the Musée National de la Renaissance – Château d'Ecouen. See, *Iznik: L'Aventure D'Une Collection*, Musée National de la Renaissance – Château d'Ecouen, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, Paris, 2005, p. 69, pl. 27.

An Iznik jug in similar form, with Elizabethan silver-gilt mounts (r. 1558-1603) (London, 1586, maker's mark IH in shaped shield) is in the British Museum. See, Nurhan Atasoy & Julian Raby's *Iznik* (Alexandria Press London, 1994, fig. 775). The English silver-gilt mounts on this jug show that Iznik-ware was highly prized in Elisabethan England.

A closely related jug with very similar decoration is in the Gulbenkian Collection, Lisbon (Inv. No. 796). See, Maria Queiroz Ribeiro's *Museo Calouste Gulbenkian – Iznik Pottery*, Lisbon, 1996, pp. 278-279. Also see, Walter B. Denny, *Iznik – The Artistry of Ottoman Ceramics*, Thames & Hudson, 2004, p. 59 and the exhibition catalogue, *Asirlar Sonra Bir Arada*, Sadberk Hanim Museum, MAS, Istanbul, 2005, p. 71.

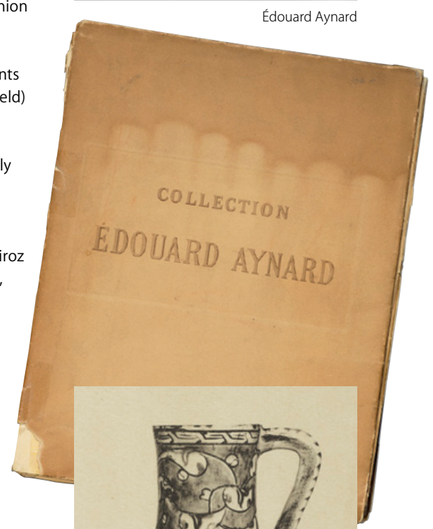
Provenance:
Ex-Stéphane Lagonicos Collection, Alexandria
Ex-Édouard Aynard Collection [Until 1913]
Exhibited at Exposition de Lyon, 1894

Stéphane Lagonicos was a member of the wealthy Greek community of Alexandria whose family settled in Egypt in the late 19th century. His collection of Iznik ceramics was formed after the First World War, comprising mostly plates and jugs from the classic (post 1570) period. At least six pieces from the collection were included in the important 1925 *Exposition d'Art Musulman* in Alexandria.

Published:
Collection Édouard Aynard – Tableaux Anciens, Objets d'Art de Haute Curiosité et d'Ameublement [Lot: 129], 2 December, 1913, Georges Petit, Paris, p. 122.



Édouard Aynard





After *Collection Édouard Aynard – Tableaux Anciens, Objets d'Art*, Galerie Georges Petit, Paris, Sale Date: 3-4 December 1913, No. 129, p. 115.



RARE IZNIK BLUE AND WHITE ‘WHEATSHEAF STYLE’ POTTERY JUG

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Height: 25.2 cm

Fritware, with bulbous body, supported on a broad foot-ring, the high cylindrical neck slightly everted toward the rim, an s-shaped handle from the rim to the shoulder, painted in underglaze with friezes of wheatsheaf on a white ground.

The present jug belongs to a small group of Izniks which have been identified as the “wheatsheaf style” by Nurhan Atasoy and Julian Raby. A closely related Iznik jug decorated in the wheatsheaf style is published in Nurhan Atasoy & Julian Raby’s *Iznik – The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey,* Alexandria Press, London, 1994, pl. 758. The same jug is also published in Hülya Bilgi’s *Ateşin Oyunu: Sadberk Hanım Müzesi ve Ömer Koç Koleksiyonlarından İznik Çini ve Seramikleri*, Sadberk Hanım Müzesi, İstanbul, 2009, pl. 203.

A wheatsheaf-ware jar, featuring similar decoration, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Please see, Nurhan Atasoy & Julian Raby’s *Iznik – The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey,* Alexandria Press, London, 1994, pl. 755. A candlestick with remarkably similar lotus scrolls and wheatsheaf design is published in Bernard Rackham’s *Islamic Pottery and Italian Maiolica*, Faber & Faber, London, 1959, pl. 24, no. 56.

The present jug is a truly rare example of the wheatsheaf style, produced only for a short period in the Iznik kilns.

Provenance:
Private Italian Collection





EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT HEXAGONAL TILE DECORATED WITH BUDDHA-LIPS AND *CINTEMANIS*

HEXAGONAL POTTERY TILE WITH BUDDHA-LIPS AND *CINTEMANIS*

Ottoman Empire
Second Half of the
16th Century
Dimensions: 25.5 x 29 cm.

Fritware, hexagonal tile with black Buddha-lips and *cintemani* design, painted under turquoise glaze.

Tiles with *cintemani* design and Buddha-lips are extremely rare. Tiles of this type are only to be found in six museums around the world; the Louvre Museum, the Museum of Islamic Art Doha, the David Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, the Sadberk Hanım Museum and in a private collection.

- Louvre Museum, three tiles (inv. number: MAO 311 a, b, c), Paris. These are published in *Louvre Koleksiyonundan Başyapıtlarla Islam Sanatının Üç Başkenti: Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, SSM, Istanbul, 2008, p. 158, Catalogued as 'Damascus, Second Half of the 16th Century'. These three tiles are also published in the exhibition catalogue, *Cartier Et Les Arts De L'Islam Aux Sources De La Modernité*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, DMA, 2021, p. 280.



- Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, one tile (inv. no. TI.59.1998). Catalogued as 'Turkey or Syria, 16th Century'.

- David Collection, Copenhagen, one tile (inv. no. 28/1962). Catalogued as 'Syria, Second half of the 16th century'. See, Dr. Kjeld von Folsach's *Art of the World of Islam in the David Collection*, Copenhagen, 2001, p. 193.

- Victoria and Albert Museum, London, a panel of tiles, Museum Number: 1138-1893, 908 to F. 1894 and 894-1897, Catalogued as 'Possibly Turkey or Possibly Syria', '1550-1600'.

- Brooklyn Museum, one tile, Accession Number: 86.227.194, Catalogued as 'Ottoman', '16th century'.

- Sadberk Hanım Museum, Istanbul, one tile. Exhibited in the '*Motif: From the Sadberk Hanım Museum*' exhibition. Published in Venetia Porter's article "Motifs and Motives", Cornucopia, Issue 62, 2021, pp. 8-9.

- Private Swiss Collection, one tile, Unpublished.

Arthur Millner in his *Damascus Tiles* published a counterpart of the present tile with the following remarks; "this type is often described as 'Turkey or Syria', although the latter seems most likely, even though none remain in situ. Ottoman Syria, 16th Century" Please see, Arthur Millner, *Damascus Tiles*, Prestel, 2015, p. 298.

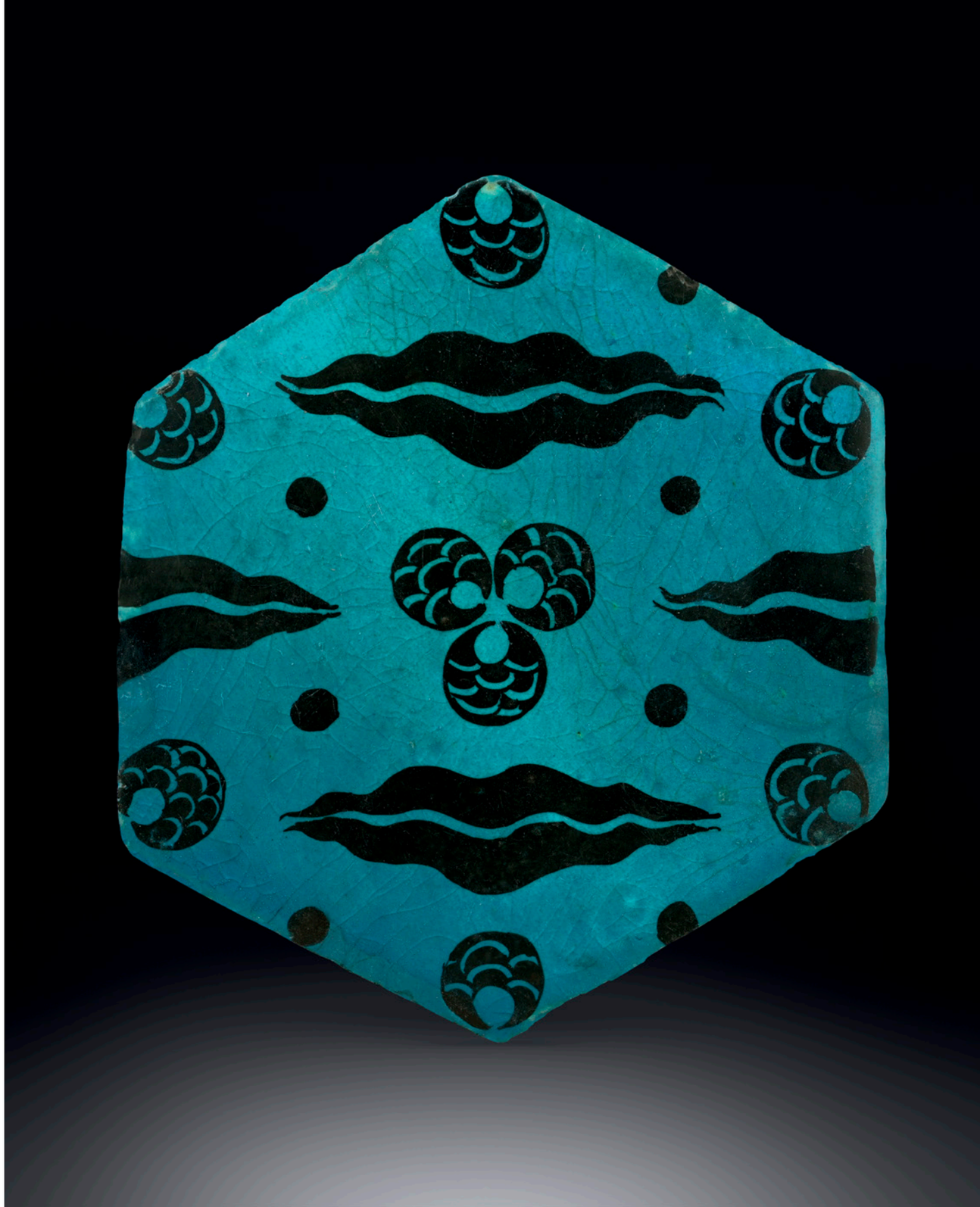
Tiles with the *cintamani* motif are used in the decoration of the Hall of the Mantle of the Prophet (*Hırka-i Saadet Dairesi*) and the library of Sultan Ahmed III in the Topkapi Palace, Istanbul.

The Buddha-lips and *cintemanis* [three-dots] have an important place in the Ottoman decorative repertoire. Art-historians have linked the historical origins of both of these motifs to the far East. Some art-historians associate the Buddha-lips design with tiger-stripes.

Cintemani is a motif consisting of three circlets shaping a triangle. In the 16th century, it was much favoured by the Ottoman palace workshop and art works decorated with *cintemanis* were sought after by members of the Ottoman elite. *Cintemani* was used in the decoration Ottoman imperial silks (*kemha*), velvets (*çatma*), Iznik ceramics, woodwork, manuscript illumination, bindings and carpets.

Art historians who studied the origins of the *cintemani* motif link its roots to the three-dot patterns on leopard skin, and associate it with heroic victory and bravery. See, Gwenaelle Felliner's entry in the exhibition catalogue *Louvre Koleksiyonundan Başyapıtlarla İslam Sanatının Üç Başkenti: Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, SSM, Istanbul, 2008, p. 158. Heroes such as Iskandar, in the *Shahnamah* of Firdawsī, are depicted wearing leopard skin. Similarly, in the West, the divine hero of ancient Greek mythology, Heracles, and Alexander the Great are also traditionally depicted dressed in the Nemean lion's skin.

One of the earliest uses of a similar three-dot motif in Western art is seen on Ariadne's dress, on a Greek



silver bowl, in the Brovo treasury, dated 4th century B.C., depicting Bacchus and Ariadne. See, Şükran Bulut, "Çintemani Motifinin Geçmişi ve Bugünü", *Journal of Social and Humanities Sciences Research (JSHSR)*, Vol. 5, 2018, p. 2982, Fig. 9.

There is a hypothesis linking the motif's origin to China. According to an etymological interpretation, the name "*cintemani*" consists of two joint words: cin (China) and *temani* (dot); meaning "Chinese dot". Please see, *Ibid*, 2018, p. 2982. This approach supports the hypothesis. In Ottoman art, *cintemanis* were frequently used together with two other motifs whose names are



associated with the far East, the so-called Chinese-cloud (*çin bulutu*) and Buddha-lips (*Buda dudağı*).

Cintemani, as used by the Ottomans, appears to have been inspired from the three circlets in the Timurid flag. Ruy González de Clavijo (d. 1412), a Spanish ambassador who visited the Timurid court in 1404, tells us about the emblematic design adopted by Timur (d. 1405). "The special armorial bearing of Timur is the three circlets set thus to shape a triangle and it is said that it signifies Timur is lord of all three quarters of the world". See, *Clavijo: Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, (trans.) Guy Le Strange, London, 1928, pp. 208-209. Also see, Yuka Kadoi, "On the Timurid Flag", *Beiträge zur Islamichen Kunst und Archäologie*, Band 2, Weisbaden, 2010, p. 149. Timurid coins in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, minted in Samarqand, in 785 A.H. / 1383 C.E. also bear the three circlets of the *cintemani* motif. See, *Ibid*, p. 159, Fig. 5.

By the second half of the 15th and in the 16th centuries, *cintemani* was used on imperial Ottoman robes worn by sultans as a sign of imperial authority and power. See, Şükran Bulut, "Çintemani Motifinin Geçmişi ve Bugünü", *Journal of Social and Humanities Sciences Research (JSHSR)*, Vol. 5, 2018, p. 2979. Some of the finest examples of imperial Ottoman robes decorated with *cintemanis* are the robes associated with Ottoman sultans, stretching back to Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror (r. 1444- 1446 and 1451-1481), in the Topkapi Palace Museum [inv. no. 13/6]. Please see, J. M. Rogers *et al, Topkapi – Costumes, Embroideries and Other Textiles*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1986, pl. 2 [Mehmed II], pl. 8, 10 [Selim I], pl. 26 [Murad III].

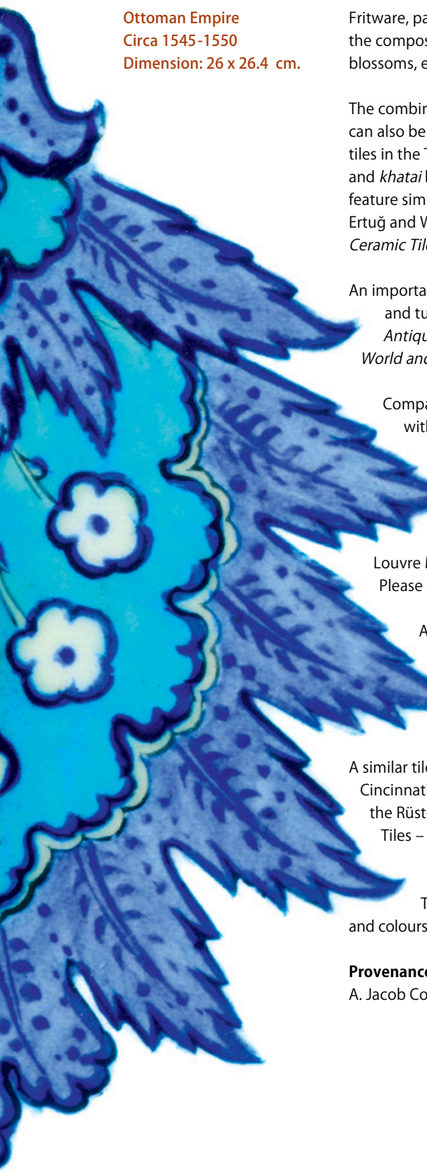
In the arts of the book, the earliest example is found on the margin illumination of a *Mantiq al- Tayr* manuscript in the Topkapi Palace Museum Library [inv. no. E.H. 1512], dated 921 A.H./ 1515 C.E. The *cintemani* motif was continued to be used in Ottoman art throughout the 17th and 18th centuries until the arrival of European motifs which gained prominence in the 19th century.

The *cintemani* design inspired many Western artists and designers including Cartier. Objects decorated with motifs inspired by *cintemanis* are published in the exhibition catalogue, *Cartier Et Les Arts De L'Islam Aux Sources De La Modernité*, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, DMA, 2021, p. 281.

The present tile is an extremely rare and a strikingly beautiful example, uniting the Buddha-lips and *cintemani* motifs. In the present tile the effect of this simple yet extremely elegant composition is enhanced by the use of two harmonious colours: black to highlight the Buddha-lips and *cintemanis*; turquoise for a graceful background.

Provenance:
Ex-Private Dutch Collection

IMPORTANT IZNIK BLUE AND WHITE POTTERY TILE



Ottoman Empire
Circa 1545-1550
Dimension: 26 x 26.4 cm.

Fritware, painted under clear glaze with cobalt blue and turquoise; the composition consists of intertwined *saz* leaves and *khatai* blossoms, each decorated with white flower heads.

The combination of cobalt blue and turquoise seen on the present tile can also be found on the famous *Sünnet Odası* (Circumcision Room) tiles in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul. Especially the *saz* leaves and *khatai* blossoms on the side panels of the Circumcision Room tiles feature similar use of cobalt blue and turquoise. Please see, Ahmet Ertuğ and Walter Denny, *Gardens of Paradise – 16th Century Turkish Ceramic Tile Production*, p. 81.

An important Iznik 'Damascus style' dish with similar cobalt blue and turquoise is published in our gallery's 2017 catalogue *Kent Antiques Islamic and Indian Art – Works of Art from the Islamic World and Orientalist Paintings*, London, 2017, No. 18.

Comparable Iznik dishes and footed bowls similarly decorated with *khatai* blossoms in cobalt blue and turquoise, produced between 1545-1550, are published in Nurhan Atasoy & Julian Raby's *Iznik – The Pottery of Ottoman Turkey*, Alexandria Press, London, 1994, pl. 352 and pl. 358.

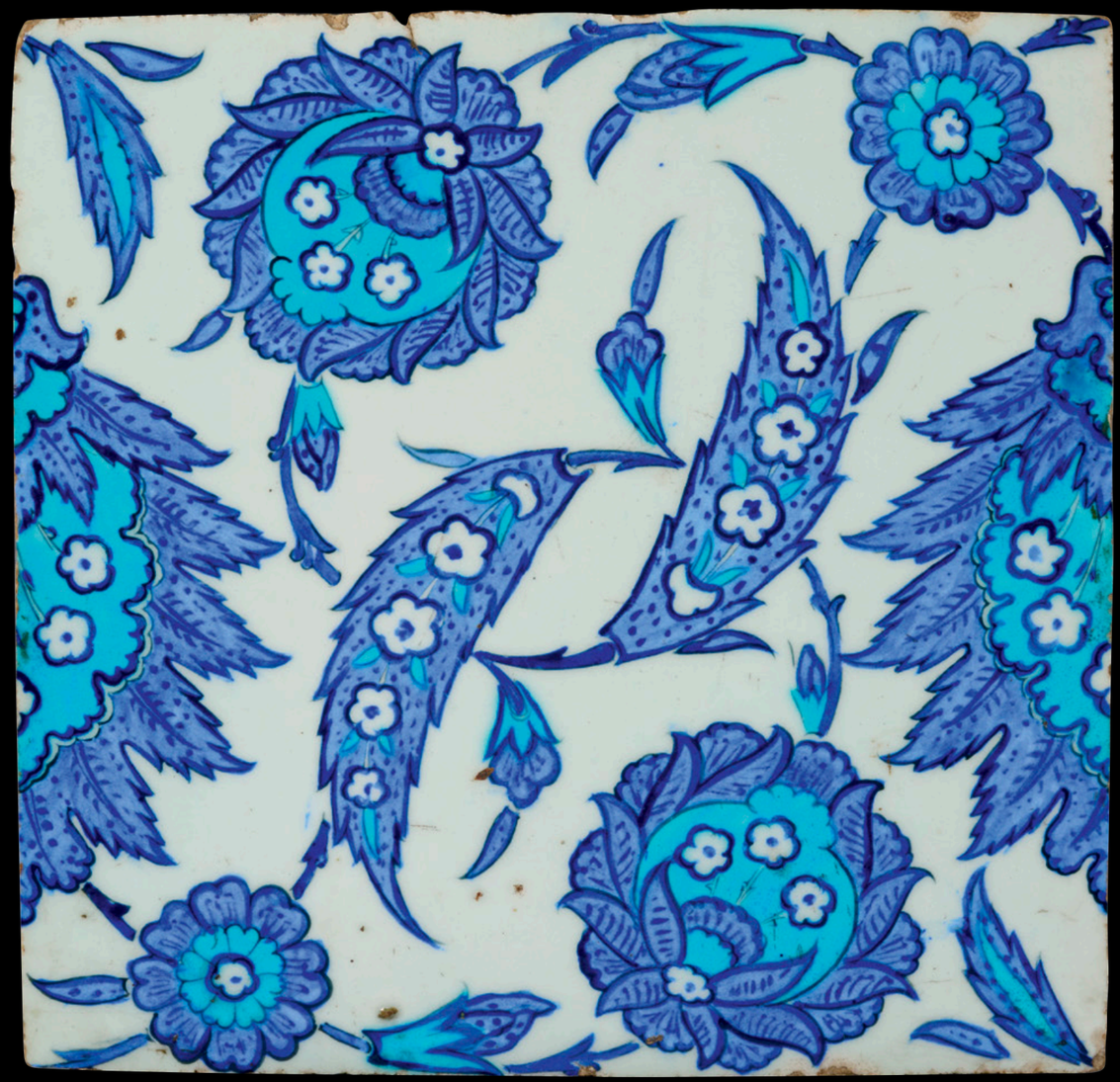
Three Iznik tiles, identical to the present tile, are in the Louvre Museum (Inv. No. AD 5971/1, AD 5971/3, AD 5971/4), Paris. Please see, https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010332784

A counterpart of the present tile is published in *Couleurs d'Orient - Arts et arts de vivre dans l'Empire Ottoman*, Catalogue d'exposition, Villa Empain, Fondation Boghossian, Bruxelles, 18 November 2010 - 27 February 2011, p. 47.

A similar tile decorated with *saz* leaves and flower heads is found in the Cincinnati Museum. Counterparts of the Cincinnati tile are found in the Rüstem Pasha Mosque in Istanbul. See, Ara Altun & Belgin Arlı's Tiles – Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period, Kale Group Cultural Publications, Istanbul, 2008, p. 183, fig. 204.

This is a rare tile displaying wonderful precision in outlining and colours which is a result of masterful brushwork and excellent firing.

Provenance:
A. Jacob Collection (1942-1988), Paris.



RARE AND FINE IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY BORDER TILE

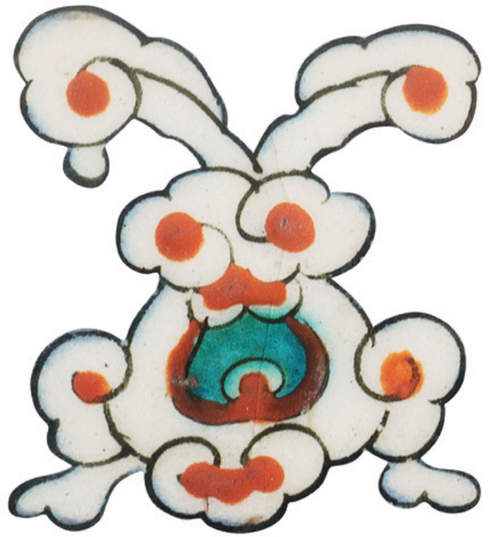
Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Dimensions: 26.5 x 6.5 cm.

Painted under clear glaze with coral red, blue, turquoise and green. Intertwined white Chinese clouds are decorated with coral red dots and outlining. Two loops of two Chinese clouds at both ends of the tile are highlighted with green. The design is bordered by turquoise lines running on both sides.

The Chinese cloud is one of the most favoured motifs of the Ottoman decorative repertoire; frequently used by the artist members of the palace workshop in the 16th century. Chinese clouds were widely used to decorate Ottoman ceramics, textiles, manuscripts, carpets, glass and woodwork. In Chinese art, this motif is primarily associated with the strength of the dragon and represents the smoke coming out of its mouth. However, in Ottoman art, it was generally interpreted as a stylized cloud in the sky. İnci Ayan Birol, "Tezhip", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41, 2012, pp. 65-68. In the present example, for instance, this appears to be the reason why the potter used blue for the background and white for the Chinese clouds.

Comparable, thicker border tiles featuring white Chinese clouds, decorated with red in loops, can be seen in situ in the Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul. Please see, Ara Altun & Belgin Arlı's *Tiles – Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, Kale Group Cultural Publications, Istanbul, 2008, p. 170. Iznik border tiles, decorated with similar Chinese clouds can be found in the Louvre Museum (inv. no. OA 3919/352, AD 6008/11), Paris. Please see, https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010327914 and https://collections.louvre.fr/en/ark:/53355/cl010333209.

Provenance:
Ex-Private French Collection

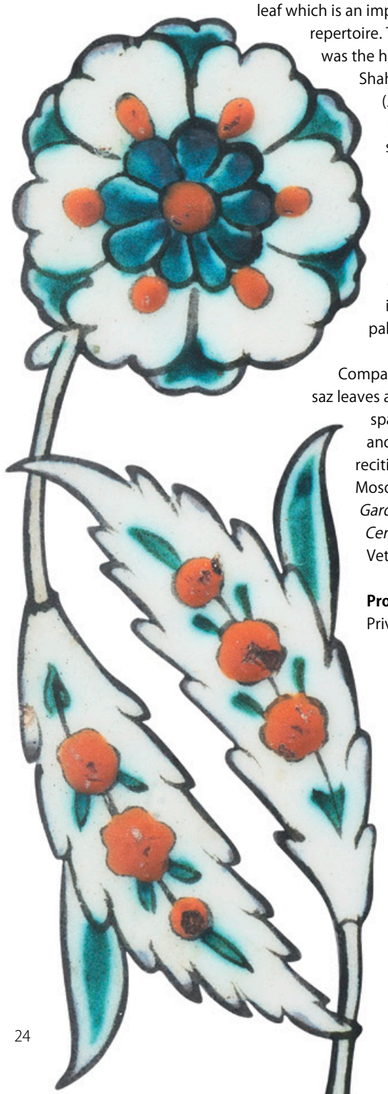




RARE AND FINE IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY BORDER TILE

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Dimensions: 23.5 x 5.2 cm.

Painted under clear glaze with coral red, blue, turquoise and green. Intertwined white *saz* leaves are decorated with coral red flower heads and green sprouts. Each intertwined *saz* leaf is followed by a large flower head decorated with coral red dots. The design is bordered by turquoise lines running on both sides.



The decoration of the tile in hand unites two different elements/styles invented in the Ottoman palace workshop. First is the *saz* leaf which is an important motif of the Ottoman decorative repertoire. The earliest artist specializing in this motif was the head of the palace workshop (*nakkaşbaşı*) Shahqulu ('Şahkulu' tr., d. 1556). The '*saz* style' (*saz üslûbu*) which became fashionable in the 16th century referred to curved, stylized, mostly intertwined leaves. *Saz* leaves were widely used to decorate Ottoman ceramics, textiles, manuscripts, carpets, glass and woodwork. Secondly, the flowerheads on the *saz* leaves were important elements of the so called 'flowerhead style' (*şükûfe üslûbu*), invented by Kara Memi, the head of the palace workshop after Shahqulu.

Comparable Iznik border tiles, decorated with saz leaves and flower heads can be found in the spandrels of the *müezzin mahfili* (screened and elevated loge used by *müezzins* for reciting the call to prayer) in the Rüstem Pasha Mosque, Istanbul. Please see Walter Denny, *Gardens of Paradise: 16th Century Turkish Ceramic Tile Decoration*, Ertuğ & Kocabıyık, Vetsch / Co, 1998, pp. 52 (plate 23a), 55.

Provenance:
Private French Collection



A LARGE IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY TILE SPANDREL

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Dimensions: 29.9 x 30.5 cm

The cobalt-blue ground decorated under the glaze with coral red and white Chinese cloud bands, within turquoise and cobalt-blue lobed borders, intact.

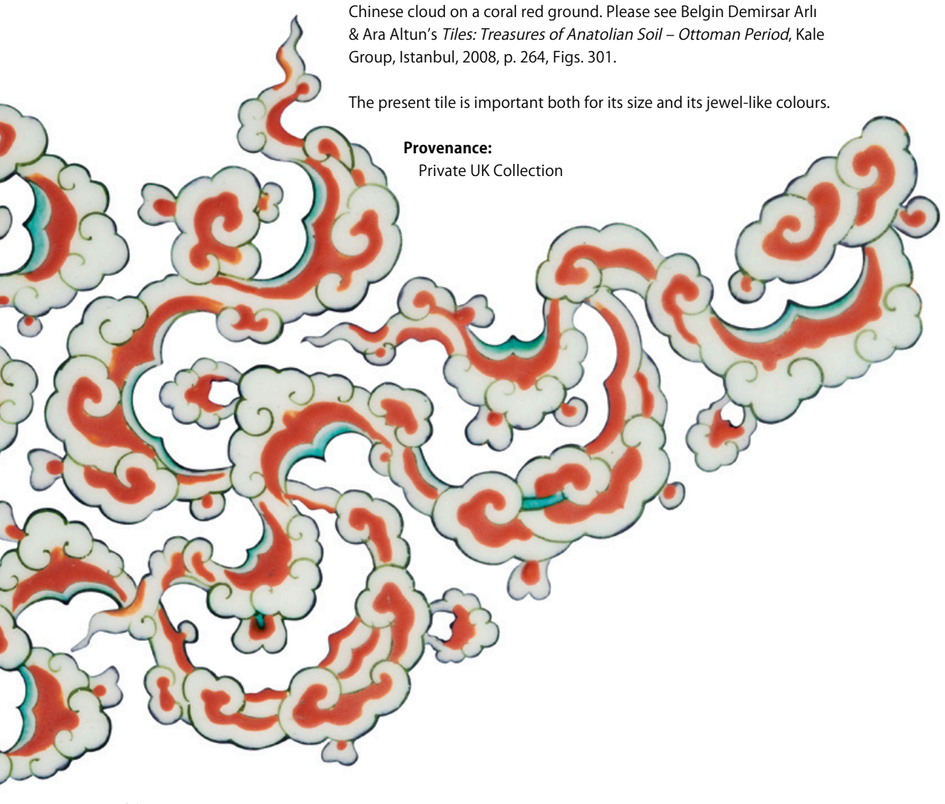
Decorated spandrels were in use in Turkish interior decoration from as early as the Seljuk period, for example those from the Kubadabad Palace in Beyşehir which are in stucco and decorated with peacocks. Iznik tiles later became a popular method of decorating interiors. Iznik tile spandrels exist in several museum collections in Istanbul, New York, Copenhagen, Paris and Kuwait.

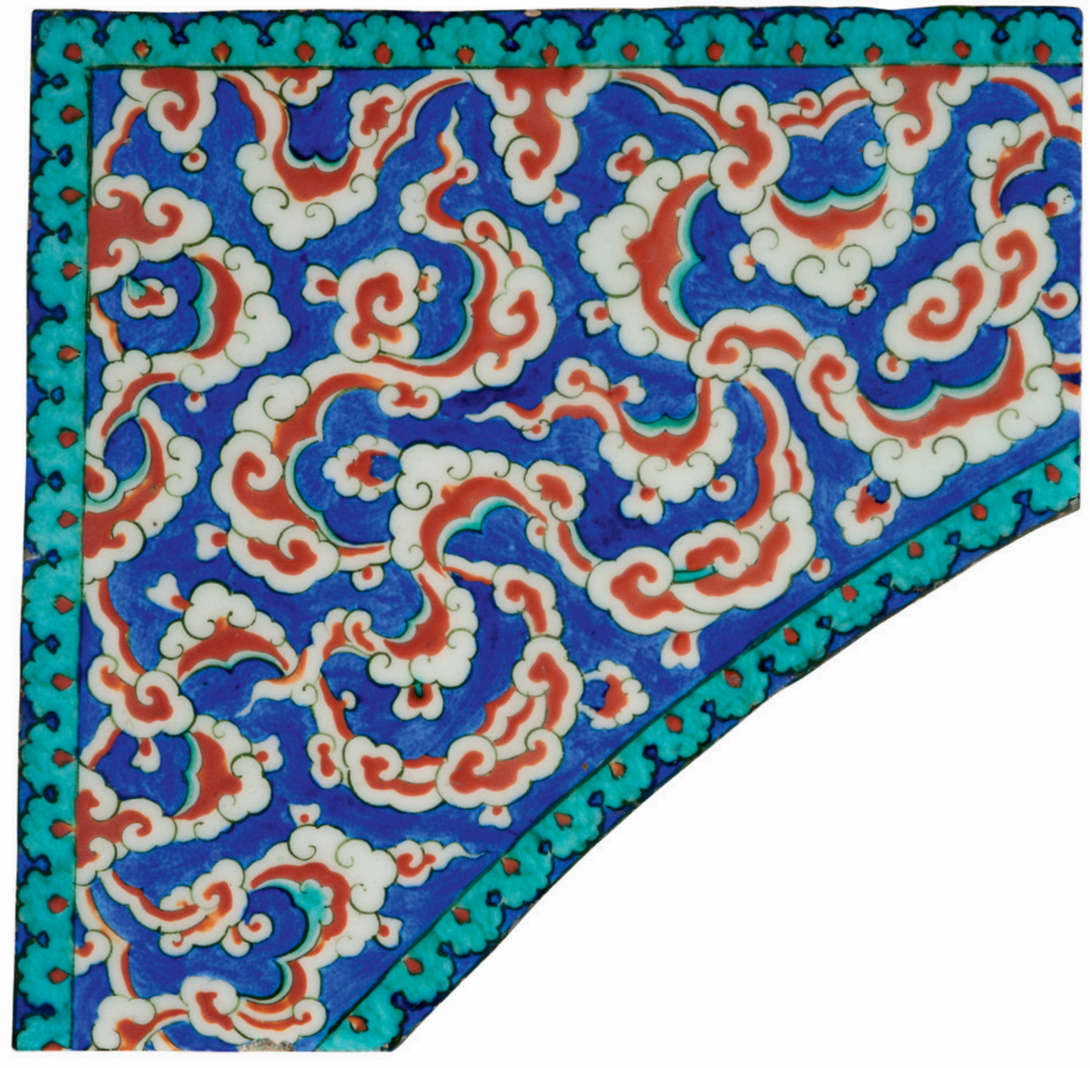
The Chinese cloud was one of the main motifs from the Ottoman decorative repertoire and its was frequently used by the court workshop during the 16th century.

A tile panel decorated with grapes and spring flowers on the east and west walls of the Takkeci Ibrahim Aga Mosque in Istanbul features corners with similar aesthetic. These corners are decorated with white Chinese cloud on a coral red ground. Please see Belgin Demirsar Arlı & Ara Altun's *Tiles: Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, Kale Group, Istanbul, 2008, p. 264, Figs. 301.

The present tile is important both for its size and its jewel-like colours.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection





IZNIK POLYCHROME POTTERY TILE

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1580
Dimension: 23 x 14 cm.

Fritware, painted under clear glaze with coral red, ultramarine, green on white background. Decorated with a central palmette with green and white leaves with partial coral red; on both sides of the central palmette are two white tulips decorated with coral red drops; the white tulips are attached to *khatai* blossoms; the sides highlighted with turquoise borders on both sides.

Tulip has a symbolic meaning in Ottoman art. The letters of the word tulip (*Lâle* [لاله]) in Turkish and Persian are the same letters used for writing the word *Allah* [الله] (God). These two words have the same numerological value in the *abjad* system (a decimal alphabetic numeral system in which the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values). Tulip is one of the leading decorative elements in Ottoman art; frequently used together with roses, hyacinths, *saz* leaves. It is also used with *khatai* blossoms as can be seen in the present tile. Tulip also played a role in imagery in Ottoman poetry. In many poems, tulip leaves are likened to the cheeks of the beloved. The word *lāleh-khad* (*lâle-had*), often used in Ottoman poetry, means 'tulip-cheeked'.

The decorative elements on the present tile are among the most favoured motifs used in the Ottoman court workshops in the 16th century. Besides its wonderful decoration, this tile is exceptional for its jewel like colours and quality of execution.

Examples in situ can be seen on the walls of the Eyup Sultan complex in Istanbul. Please see, Walter Denny, *Gardens of Paradise: 16th Century Turkish Ceramic Tile Decoration*, Ertuğ & Kocabıyık, Vetsch / Co, 1998, p. 110, plate 60.

These tiles were also used in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul. See, Belgin Demirsar Arlı & Ara Altun's *Tiles: Treasures of Anatolian Soil – Ottoman Period*, Kale Group, Istanbul, 2008, pp. 278-279. The Sultan Ahmed Mosque, better known as the Blue Mosque, in Istanbul, was built by the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617), between 1609-1617. The mosque was designed by court architect Sedefkâr Mehmed Agha and its interior decoration was supervised by the Ottoman court artist Kalender Cavush.



Provenance:
Private French Collection



13

EXTREMELY FINE OTTOMAN VOIDED SILK VELVET PANEL WITH GOLD & SILVER THREAD

Ottoman Empire
Bursa
Circa 1650
Dimensions: 158 x 130 cm.

Cut crimson velvet on a silk warp-faced cream ground with six stacked vertical rows of eight-lobed blossoms emanating further foliate details, with gold and silver-thread highlights in central flowerheads; the border with *en-suite* motifs and confronting tulips. This design stands out for its geometric symmetry and the almost abstract quality of the spring flowers and tulips. The vertical and horizontal symmetry in this design is based on the use of a repeated unit.

The large confronting tulips in the border are replaced with smaller confronting tulips in the centre of the composition. This creates an illusion and gives the centre a feeling of depth.

Tulip has a symbolic meaning in Ottoman art. The letters of the word tulip (*Lâle* [لاله]) in Turkish are the same letters used for writing the word *Allah* [الله] (God). These two words have the same numerological value in the *abjad* system (a decimal alphabetic numeral system in which the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet are assigned numerical values). Tulip is one of the leading decorative elements in Ottoman art, frequently used together with roses, hyacinths, *saz* leaves, for decorating ceramics, textiles, metalwork, woodwork and manuscript. Tulip is also used in imagery in Ottoman poetry. In many poems tulip leaves are likened to the cheeks of the beloved. The word *lāleh-khad* (*lâle-had*), means 'tulip-cheeked'.



An identical velvet cover is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (inv. no. M.73.5.686). It is illustrated in Nurhan Atasoy *et al*, J. Raby, A. Effeny (eds.), *Ipek, The Crescent and the Rose, Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets*, Azimuth Editions, London, 2001, p. 318, fig. 349, where it is described as a design of "stacked eight-lobed medallions", woven in Bursa during this period (*ibid* p. 319).

In terms of its design the present panel is also related to a second example in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs (inv. no. 8356), Paris, see, Nurhan Atasoy et al, J. Raby, A. Effeny (eds.), *Ipek, The Crescent and the Rose, Imperial Ottoman Silks and Velvets*, Azimuth Editions, London, 2001, pp. 318-9, fig. 352.

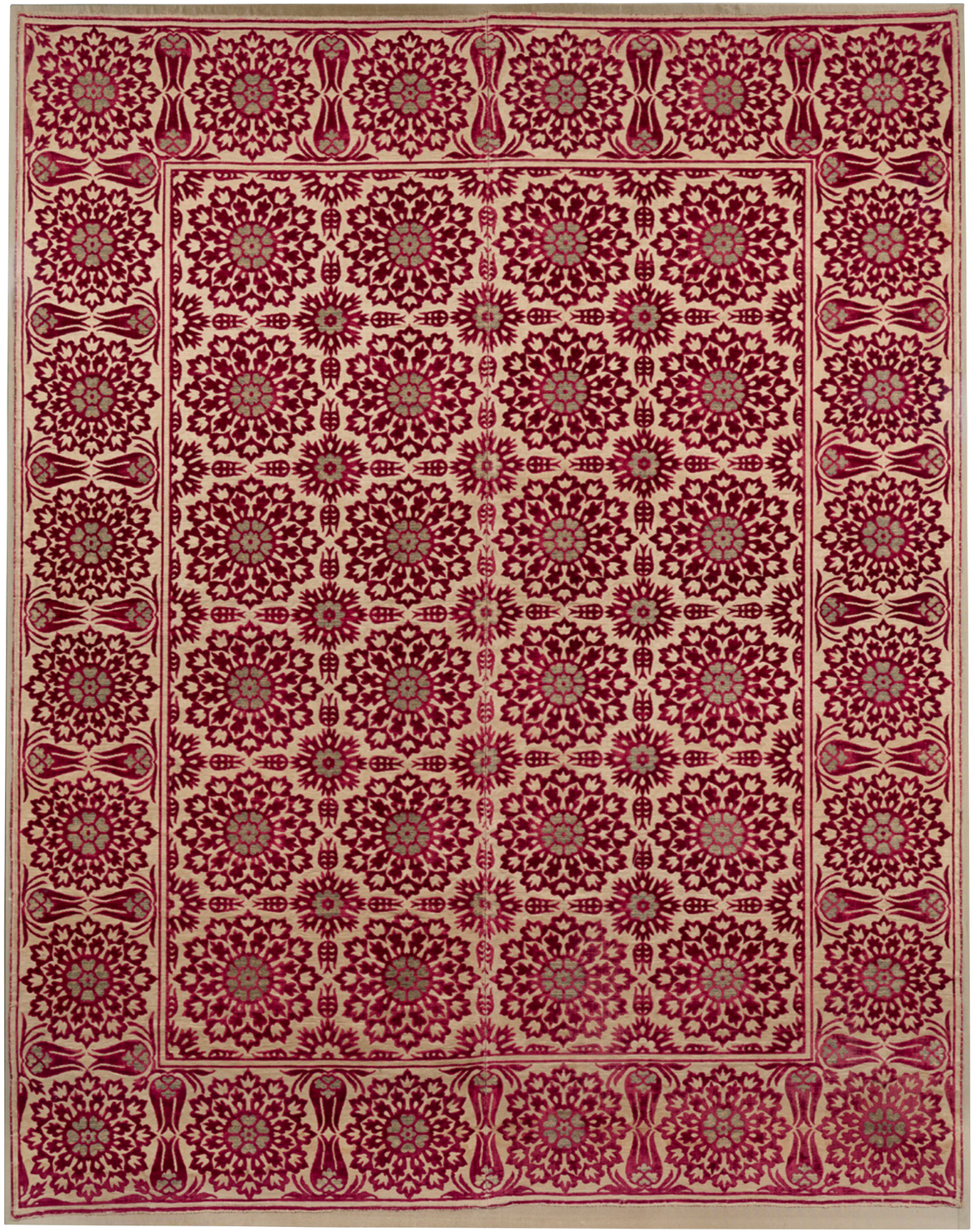
Imperial velvet panels such as the present one were highly favoured by the Ottoman elite. These were produced in workshops in Istanbul and Bursa, working for imperial commissions. They were used as ceremonial covers as well as wall hangings during celebrations and festive gatherings.

This velvet panel is an excellent example of imperial Ottoman textile production in the first half of the 17th century. It is particularly rare to find a velvet panel of this kind in such remarkably good condition.

Provenance:
Ex-Collection of William R. (1915-2007) and Elinor (1920-2020) Appleby, London and New York. The present Ottoman velvet came from the Applebys' Upper East Side home.

Raised in New York, Elinor Appleby attended Julia Richmond High School and graduated from Barnard College. She married William Meyer and later William Appleby. Vivacious to the end, Elly loved bridge, travel, art, opera, golf. Elinor Appleby died on 9 January 2020 in New York. William Appleby lead a distinguished life and is remembered for his elegant style – never without a bowtie- and gentle nature. William R. Appleby died on 14 June 2007 in New York.

The Applebys' enthusiasm for collecting art, which they mainly acquired through auctions whilst living in both London and New York, is testified through their continuous and generous support to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, notably the Asian Art department. Elinor and William Appleby's taste was eclectic. It is interesting to compare a British late 16th-early 17th century Valance tapestry which they gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. no. 1991.316) that belongs to the same period as the present Ottoman velvet panel. Please see, https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/229990





EXTREMELY RARE AND IMPORTANT OTTOMAN SWORD SIGNED BY SULTAN MURAD IV'S (R. 1623-1640) COURT SWORDSMITH DAVUD

Ottoman Empire
Master Davud's Workshop, Istanbul.
Signature: عمل داود 'Amal Davud (Work of Davud)

Blade: Circa 1623-1640
Hilt: 18th Century
Scabbard: 18th Century

Blade Length: 75 cm.
Overall Length with Scabbard: 90.5 cm.

Gently-curved steel blade with flat edge, decorated with extremely fine raised gold Arabic inscriptions in thuluth script running along one side, the horn hilt with gold-inlaid cross guard, the scabbard covered with leather and decorated with two gold-inlaid suspension rings.

The original Arabic text, transliterations and translations of the raised gold inscriptions on the blade are as follows:



INSCRIPTIONS

1. اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

   A'udha b'illāh min al-shaytān al-rajīm.
   I take refuge to God from the accursed Satan.

2. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

   Bism Allāh al-Rahman al-Rahīm.
   "In the name of God the most merciful, the most compassionate".
   [The Qur'an 1:1]

3. نصر من الله و فتح قريب و بشر المؤمنين يا محمد

   Nasrun min allāhu wa fathun qarīb wa bashshir al-mu'minīn ya Muhammad.
   "Victory is from God and the conquest is close. Oh Muhammad, give the good news to the believers".
   [The Qur'an 61:13]

4. يا مالك الملك

   Ya Mālik al-Mulk.
   "Oh [God!], the owner of all possessions".

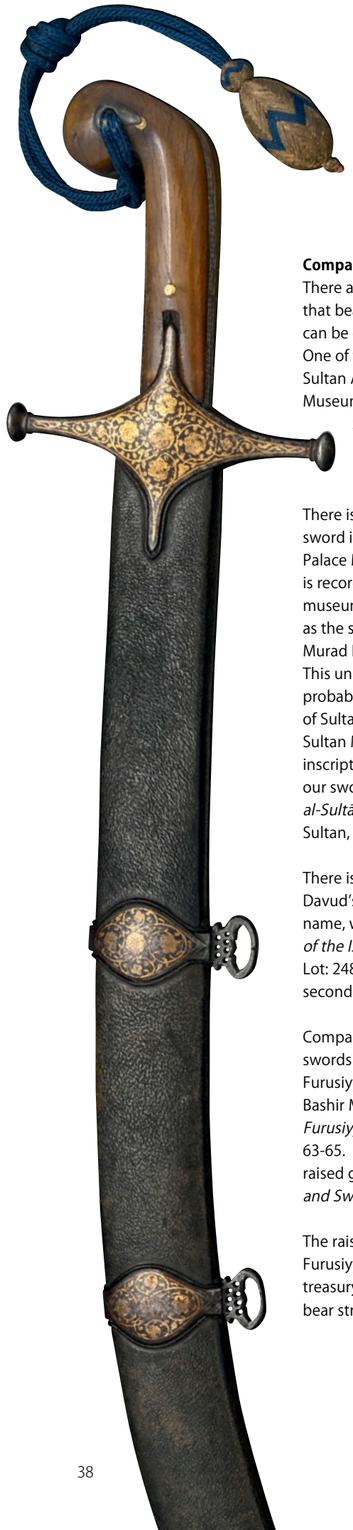
5. الحمد الله الملك الاعلي بحرمت سر محمد بحق سر علي

   Al-hamdu lillāh al-malik al-a'la bi hurmat sirr Muhammad bi haqq sirr 'Alā.
   "Thank God, the king, the mighty, with reverence to Muhammad's mystery with verity of the esteemed confidence".

6. ورد في بعض الكلام جعل الله ارزق المجاهدين عن العباد من سيوف المسيلله فقال ابوبكر الصديق لَاهَا اللَّهِ إِذَا لا يَعْمِدُ إِلى أَسَدٍ مِن أُسْدِ اللَّهِ يُقَاتِلُ عَنِ اللهِ وَرَسولِهِ يُعْطِيكَ سَلَبَهُ صَدق الله الجنت تختَ الظلال السيوف

   Warada fī ba'dal kalām ja'ala allāh arzaq al-mujāhidīn 'an al-'ibād min suyūf al-musaylillāh faqāla Abū Bakr al-Siddīq lā hā allāhi izan lā ya'midu ilā asadin min asadillāhi yuqātilu 'an allāhi wa rasūlihi yu'tīka salabahi sadaqa allāh al-jannatu takht al-zilāl al-suyūf.
   "It has been recorded that God brought provisions of the holy warriors among believers through the swords of the Muslims. Caliph Abū Bakr said: 'I swear to God, such a thing has never happened, a soldier as brave as a lion, one of the lions of God, fights for God and his Prophet, and gives the booty to you'. Verity is with God. Paradise is under the shadow of swords".





Comparisons
There are only a few 17th century Ottoman swords that bear the signature of a court swordsmith or that can be directly associated with the court workshops. One of these is an early 17th century sword, made for Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) in the Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 1/80). See, *Hilmi Aydin, Sultanlarin Silahlari – Topkapi Sarayi Silah Koleksiyonu* (Sultans' Weapons – Arms in the Topkapi Palace Museum), Istanbul, 2007, p. 57.


Signature detail, (work of Davud)

There is a comparable sword in the Topkapi Palace Museum which is recorded in the museum's inventory as the sword of Sultan Murad IV (inv. no. 1/484). This unsigned sword was probably also made by Master Davud, the swordsmith of Sultan Murad IV. On the blade of the sword of Sultan Murad IV in the Topkapi Palace is a raised gold inscription in *thuluth* script, stylistically very close to our sword's inscriptions, which reads "*al-Sultān ibn al-Sultān, al-Sultān Murād Khān*" (the Sultan son of the Sultan, the Sultan Murad Khan).

There is only one other recorded sword bearing Master Davud's signature. This sword, signed with the artist's name, was sold at Christie's, London. Please see, *Art of the Islamic and Indian World*, on 4 October 2012, Lot: 248. Ours, which is previously unrecorded, is the second.

Comparable late 16th, early 17th century Ottoman swords decorated with raised gold inscriptions in the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection are published in Bashir Mohamed's *The Arts of the Muslim Knight – The Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection*, Skira, 2007, pp. 63-65. For other comparable examples decorated with raised gold inscriptions see, Ü. Yücel, *Islamic Swords and Swordsmiths*, IRCICA, Istanbul, 2001.

The raised gold inscriptions of one of the swords in the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection, reading "for the treasury of the great Sultan, the noble, the generous", bear striking stylistic resemblance to the inscriptions on the present sword. See, Bashir Mohamed, *The Arts of the Muslim Knight – The Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection*, Skira, 2007, p. 63, No. 27.

This magnificent sword which was probably made for Sultan Murad IV, belongs to a small group of imperial Ottoman swords. Besides its very fine craftmanship and high artistic value, it is historically important, documenting the artistry of Murad IV's court swordsmith Master Davud.

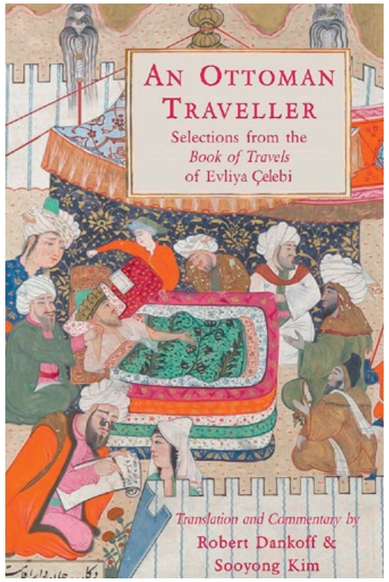
Master Davud in Ottoman Historian and Traveller Evliya Çelebi's (d. 1682) Book of Travels
The famous 17th century Ottoman historian and traveller Evliya Çelebi (d. 1682) praises Master Davud in his famous ten-volume book of travels, the *Seyahatnâme*. We learn from Evliya Çelebi that Davud was Sultan Murad IV's (r. 1623-1640) chief court swordsmith (*kılıççıbaşı*) who was responsible for making his swords.

Evliya Çelebi gives the following information about Master Davud in the first volume of his book of travels, dedicated to Istanbul:

"***⋯ dükkân-ı seyyâfân 205 ve cümle neferât 1007 ⋯ cümle ehl-i hırefe takaddüm olundu. Cümle ehl-i sefer ve ehl-i hazar bu esnafa muhtaçdır ⋯ Bunların ⋯ zamanımızda kârhâneleri Mahmud Paşa hamamı mukabelesinde hâne-i azîmdir. Ser çeşmeleri Dâvud-i Asamîdir ki Sağır Dâvud demekle meşhur-i âfâkdır. Sultan Murâd Han-ı Râbi' ol kadar şemşîrbâz iken bu Sağır Dâvud kılıcından gayrı Ispahan karhânesi kılıcı bile dest-i kuvvetine dayanmazdı. Ol ecilden hatt-ı şerif ile kılıççıbaşı olmuştu***." *Evliyâ Çelebi Seyâhatnâmesi*, transliterated by Robert Dankoff et al, YKY, Istanbul, 2013, Vol I, p. 884.

The translation of this section reads as follows:

"[In Istanbul] ⋯ there are 205 swordsmith workshops and 1007 swordsmiths in total ⋯ These swordsmiths are more popular than all other artists because all soldiers and warriors are in need of a good swordsmith. Today their main workshops are across the Mahmud Pasha bath-house. The leader of these swordsmiths is Davud-i Asamī who is world-famous.



After An Ottoman Traveller - Selections from the Book of Travels of Evliya Çelebi (the cover)

He is also known as Davud the deaf. Sultan Murad IV who was a very skilled swordsman, was never satisfied with his swords, even with those made in Isfahan workshops, and would only use Master Davud's swords. For this reason Davud was appointed chief court-swordsmith (*kılıççıbaşı*) to Sultan Murad IV with an imperial edict."

For references to Evliya Çelebi's entry on Master Davud also see, Hilmi Aydın, *Sultanların Silahları – Topkapı Sarayı Silah Koleksiyonu (Sultans' Weapons – Arms from the Topkapi Palace Museum)*, Istanbul, 2007, p. 66. Also see, Hilmi Aydin's article "Topkapı Sarayı'ndaki Osmanlı Padişah Kılıçları" (Ottoman Imperial Swords in the Topkapi Palace), *Osmanlı*, Vol: 11, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, Ankara, 1999, sf. 561-572.

Swords played an important role both in ceremonies and battles in the history of the Islamic civilisation. The earliest examples of concave edged swords, also-known as Arab or Turkish swords, were found in Jabal (Biblos) and dated to 1800 B.C. Swords were highly prized as gifts and some precious swords were presented to the holy Ka'ba in Mecca as presents. In the 7th century, in Medina, there was a famous swordsmith called Abu al-Sayf (Father of the Sword).

The Prophet Muhammad had nine swords which were named: "*ma'sūr* (inherited from his father), *adb*, *dhulfiqār* (which was later given by the Prophet Muhammad to Caliph 'Ali), *qal'ī*, *hatf*, *rasūb*, *mihzem*, *ma'sūb* and *samsāmah*". See, Nebi Bozkurt's article "Kılıç", TDV *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. XXV, Ankara, 2002, pp. 405-408. The holy relics section in the Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, houses twenty swords, two of which are Prophet Muhammad's. These are straight, double-edged swords. Some of the earliest Muslim concave edged swords were used by the Mamluks. The swords of Sultan Qalawun (inv. no. 1/2524) and Sultan Qaytbay (inv. no. 1/181, 1/182) in the Topkapi Palace Museum are concave edged swords. In the Islamic world, the following cities were famous with their swords; Ubulla (Iraq), Damascus, Kirman, Qum, Khorasan, Isfahan, Cairo, Toledo, Sevilla, Granada.

One of the earliest Ottoman concave-edged swords belongs to Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror which is in the Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 1/90). The sword was one of the main Ottoman signs of sovereignty. Before he was enthroned, every Ottoman sultan was expected to visit the Mausoleum of Eyub al-Ansari (d. 674), one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad buried in Istanbul, and gird his sword in this mausoleum. Muslim dynasties had great respect for swords due to the famous *hadith* (saying) of the Prophet Muhammad which is repeated on the present sword: "Paradise is under the shadow of swords".

Provenance:
Ex Private German Collection

A CROSS-CULTURAL OTTOMAN-ARMENIAN SILVER ECCLESIASTIC CASKET STAMPED WITH THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN ABDULHAMID II (R. 1876-1909)

Ottoman Empire
Reign of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r. 1876-1909)
Stamped with the *Tughra* of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r.1876-1909) and the *sah* mark.
Height: 18.5 cm.
Width: 19.8 cm.
Depth: 15 cm.
Weight: 1531 gr.

Of rectangular form supported on drop-shaped feet, with hinged cover, all sides with rich repoussé and incised decoration, each piece stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r.1876-1909) and *Sah*, the cross, the halos around the Twelve Apostles' heads and the triangle representing the Holy Spirit gilt.

The front, the back and the two side panels of the casket are decorated with repoussé and incised scenes of the Crucifixion and the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist and the Twelve Apostles (Simon, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas Iscariot):

1 **Front:** The Crucifixion and the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist and two of the Twelve Apostles.
2 **Right:** Three of the Twelve Apostles.
3 **Left:** Three of the Twelve Apostles.
4 **Back:** Four of the Twelve Apostles.

Each scene is separated from each other with arched columns. On the four sides and top of the cover, there are scenes from the life of Jesus. These are:

1 **Front:** Jesus carrying the holy cross.
2 **Right:** Jesus with the crown of thorns.
3 **Left:** The flagellation of Christ.
4 **Back:** Theresurrection.



5 **Top:** 'Eye in a triangle' representing the Holy Spirit. The triangle is surrounded by double winged cherubim.

An Armenian enamelled, silver incense container in similar form is in the Kalfayan Collection, please see, *Aspects of Armenian Art – The Kalfayan Collection,* Exhibition Catalogue (June 11-October 10, 2010, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki), No. 76, p. 129.

A silver liturgical bucket, similarly decorated with the twelve Apostles, stamped with the tughra of Sultan Abdulhamid II is in the Sadberk Hanim Museum (inv. no. 15716-M. 1270), Istanbul, please see, Brigitte Pitarakis *et al, A Treasured Memory – Ecclesiastical Silver from Late Ottoman Istanbul in the Sevgi Gönül Collection,* Sadberk Hanim Müzesi, 2006, p. 163, pl. 43.

This casket is a fine, richly decorated example of late 19th century Ottoman Armenian ecclesiastic metalwork.

Provenance:
Ex-Private American Collection









AN EXCEEDINGLY RARE OTTOMAN SILVER, NIELLOED AND ENGRAVED GLOBE, SIGNED KEVORK KUYUMJUBASHIAN (D. 1915?), DATED 1315 A.H. / 1897 C.E.

Signed: Kevork Kuyumjubashian
Dated: Van, 1315 A.H. / 1897 C.E.
Height: 30 cm.

Comprising a silver terrestial globe with engraved and nielloed inscriptions in *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts, outlining landmarks and cities, seas and countries, engraved with numerals of meridian lines, set in a foliate crescent-shaped mount, on a tripod stand with compass in a frame, the circular base richly decorated with niello leaves, featuring three medallions; the first including the Ottoman coat of arms with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r.1876-1909), the second is a depiction of the *Bâb-ı Âli* (The Sublime Port, the Grand-vizier's palace in Istanbul) and the third is a view of the Bosphorus with the Galata tower. At the top, there is a peacock-shaped finial. Inside the globe, there are wheels which are not in functioning order. These wheels indicate that it used to operate probably in a similar way as Kuyumjubashian's other silver globe described below.

The present globe belongs to a small group of artworks reflecting the Ottoman court's ongoing interest in the developments in modern Western science and geography throughout the 19th century. Objects such as this globe represent the progressive policy of the Ottomans who were in need of competing with the European powers. The first serious attempt to catch up with contemporary Western scientific knowledge came from the members of the Ottoman army. Scientific books and works of military strategy were translated into Turkish, mostly from French. Globes were used for both geographic consultation and as art works showing their owner's interest in the geography of the world.



There is only one comparable silver globe, produced by Kuyumjubashian. It has been praised as a masterpiece by Osep Tokat in his book *Armenian Master Silversmiths*. Osep Tokat records the following information: "Kuyumjubashian was famous for his silver globe. The globe is carried by the kneeling Altas of Greek mythology. The geographical divisions, latitudes and longitudes, and Russian-language place names are engraved with great subtlety and scientific precision, accomplished through the niello technique. The globe [which has a mechanism inside] completes its revolution in 24 hours. Kuyumjubashian's globe is half meter high and 33 centimeters wide, and weighs nearly eight kilograms". Please see, Osep Tokat's *Armenian Master Silversmiths*, Van Publishing, Los Angeles, 2005, pp. 119. Also see, Osep Tokat's *Armenian Master Silversmiths*, Aras, Istanbul, 2010.

Kevork Kuyumjubashian was one of the leading master silversmiths of Van in the late 19th century. His surname 'Kuyumjubashian' literally means "Head-Goldsmith's son" in Turkish. This name indicates that Kevork was born to a family of goldsmiths/silversmiths. He spent his whole life in the city of Van until 1915. (Tokat, 2005, pp. 119)

The present globe appears to have been produced on private commission, most probably as a gift for a member of the Ottoman court. The masterfully executed Ottoman coat of arms with the *tughra* of Sultan Abdulhamid II (r.1876-1909) on the circular base supports this idea.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection, Acquired in 1962, thence by descent.







MONUMENTAL PANORAMA OF CONSTANTINOPLE BY COSIMO COMIDAS DE CARBOGNANO (1749-1814)

Circa 1778 Engraved by Teodoro Viero in Venice. Dedicated to Guglielmo Maurizio Ludolf, Minister of King Louis XVI (r. 1774-1792) [Bourbons of Naples] in Constantinople between 1747 and 1789.
In its original frame and glass, circa 1820.
Dimensions: Unframed 67 x 196 cm.
(framed 80 x 210 cm.)

Original hand-coloured engraving on paper, the Panorama consists of 4 illustrated sheets and 3.5 text sheets. Titled *Descrizione del Nuova Serraglio* (Description of the New Palace) by Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano captures the heart of the city of Constantinople. It depicts the most important part of the city, the Topkapi Palace and the Hagia Sophia Mosque surrounded by the Byzantine walls (*Suriçi*), with immaculate detail and identifies important monuments.

The Italian Title/dedication at the bottom reads ***"Veduta del nuovo Serraglio tutta l'esattezza da Galata presso dedicate a S. E. il Sig. D. Guglielmo delle due Sicilie e suo Inviato del Gran Signore presa con l'Ospizio de R. R. P. P. Cappuccini de Ludolf Segretario di S. M. il Re Straordinario alla Porta Ottomana"*** (View of the new Seraglio in full accuracy from Galata, dedicated to S. E. D. Guglielmo of the two Sicilies and his Envoy of the Great Lord taken with the Hospice of R. R. P. P. Cappuccini de Ludolf Secretary of H. M. the Extraordinary King at the Ottoman Sublime Port). Continued underneath with smaller letters ***"da D. Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano Costantinopolitano, Giovine di Lingua medesima Corte in Constantinopoli*** (by Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano Constantinopolitano dragoman of the same court in Constantinople)". The name ***"Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano Costantinop.no del"*** is repeated in the left lower corner. The name of the engraver and the location are recorded in the right lower corner ***"Teodoro Viero Scolpi Venezia"***.

DEDICATED TO GUGLIELMO MAURIZIO LUDOLF, MINISTER OF KING LOUIS XVI (R. 1774-1792) [BOURBONS OF NAPLES]



Guglielmo Maurizio Ludolf, between 1747-1789 and his son Guglielmo Costantino, between 1789-1820, were representatives of the Bourbons of Naples in Constantinople. They successfully represented the Neapolitan legation in Ottoman lands. For further information please see, Marcella Boschi's article "Un Tedesco alla Corte del Sultano: Guglielmo Maurizio Ludolf", in the following link: http://studinapoleonici.altervista.org/un-tedesco-alla-corte-del-sultano-guglielmo-maurizio-ludolf/

In front of the cypress forest surrounding the palace is the so-called Basket-weavers' sea-side mansion (*Sepetçiler Kasrı*) and a row of many assorted pavilions and palaces. The Topkapi Palace rises above the cypress trees with its many buildings including the tower of justice (*Adalet Kulesi*) which is clearly visible. On the right is the Hagia Irene Church which is in the first courtyard of the palace. It is one of the


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few Byzantine churches of Istanbul which was never converted into a mosque. At far right, is the world-famous Hagia Sophia Mosque, built in 537 C.E., as a church by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Hagia Sophia is the greatest monument in Constantinople, revered as the sign of the Ottoman conquest of the city.

The translation of the Italian text on the left lower side reads:

"The new palace of the Great Lord is located in the eastern end of the city of Constantinople, in the same place where the ancient Byzantium was located. Mehmed II, enticed by the vagueness of the site, left the first palace which, after the capture of Constantinople, was built in the centre of the city. In 1478 he had another, much larger, palace built; the one mentioned above; and from that time on it served as the Imperial Palace to sovereigns of Constantinople, and to all their numerous courts: but all other sultans and especially Mahmud I expanded its size with the addition of other new buildings. Its circuit is approximately four Italian miles, and has the figure of a triangle surrounded on each side by walls, equipped with towers and being placed between the waters of the Bosphorus and the Marmara sea, this is the most beautiful corner of the city, defended on both sides by a large number of artillery. It has various doors, and of these only eight are used. The common square with Hagia Sophia and the main door called the imperial gate face the south. The whole body of the palace is located on the eminence of a hill to reserve some factories that were later placed at the foot of the sea towards the mouth of the Bosphorus. The materials that compose it are covered with lead, and their chimneys end in golden pyramids. The whole is then surrounded by thick and tall cypresses mixed with all sorts of trees; most of which are on the side of Galata, and that of the sea of Marmara".

Important monuments and prominent buildings in the panorama are numbered from 1 to 80. Each of these eighty buildings are identified in a four-column-list on the lower right corner.

There are two counterparts of the present panorama in world museums. The first is in the Benaki Museum, Athens (inv. no. 25724). Please see, https://www.benaki.org/index.php?option=com_collectionitems&view=collectionitems&id=109267&Itemid=phccollectionitems&view=collectionitem&ampid=109267&Itemid=&lang=en

The second is in the Orientalist Museum Doha (accession no. OM1262). The label on the back of the original 18th century frame reads *"Dorure & Encadrement, Tableaux Modernes, Marchand, Fournisseur du Ministère des Beaux Arts, 15 Rue des Petits Champs, Paris"*. It is rare to find early 19th century frames with their original glass which have survived to the present day. The difficulty of producing such large glass for the present frame, in circa 1820, attests the value in which this panorama was held.

Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano (1749-1814)
Cosimo Comidas de Carbognano is an example of the cosmopolitan *milieu* of Constantinople in the 18th century. Of Armenian origin and residing in Pera (Beyoğlu), a popular borough of the Ottoman capital, his family the Keumurdjians (Kömürciyan [Coal-Seller's Son]) chose Rome and the Catholic faith, ultimately Latinizing their name as "Carbognano". They belonged to the intellectual elite. One of his ancestors, Yeremia Çelebi (1637-95), was a wide-ranging scholar, historian, translator, geographer, grammarian, artist and an unusual diarist.

Because of their controversial faith, Cosimo's grand-father, the eloquent priest Komitas Keumurdjian (also called Der-Gomidas), entered into conflict with Orthodox Armenians, who managed to have the Sultan behead him in 1707. He became a martyr of the Catholic Church and was later beatified. He is the only named person in the lavish work *Recueil de cent estampes representant différentes nations du Levant*, published by Ferriol in 1714, where a full plate is dedicated to him. Later in life, Cosimo will look back to his grand-father's fate and will publish his biography, in Rome in 1807.



Cosimo started working for the Embassy of the Kingdom of Naples in Constantinople in 1778. Originally a translator (dragoman), he developed his artistic talents and began this new side of his career, becoming a painter attached to the Ambassador Count Ludolf. He left this embassy in 1785 to begin a 20-year long career at the Embassy of Spain as dragoman; a key mediation role using his knowledge of languages and cultures of the Ottoman Empire and Europe. During this period Carbognano published his most important works: a Turkish grammar for the Catholic missionaries *Primi Principi della Grammatica Turca*, Propaganda Fide, Roma, 1794, and the same year, a famous description of Constantinople, *Descrizione Topografica dello Stato Presente di Constantinopoli*.

A polyglot and an antiquarian, at ease with many cultures, Carbognano was a multifaceted person. He also belongs to an important group of 18th century artists who brought the architectural beauties of Constantinople to the Western eye. Most of them were his contemporaries and, they were also attached to embassies: the German Antoine Ignace Melling began his career with the Russian Ambassador; the French Ambassadors Ferriol and then Choiseul-Gouffier hired Van Mour first and Louis-François Cassas later; the Italo-German Luigi Mayer mostly worked for his 15-year-long patron the British Ambassador Sir Robert Ainslie.

Teodoro Viero (1740-1819)
Teodoro Viero was a celebrated Venetian engraver and publisher. He was trained under Cavalli in Venice. He produced four plates after Francesco Simonini, in 1766 and other plates after Joseph Wagner in 1778. He was the uncle of Luigi Schiavonetti from his mother's side, who sent him contemporary English prints from London. See, Mario Infelise and Paola Marini (ed), *Remondini, un editore el Settecento*, Milan 1990. He produced etchings and engravings of Renaissance master painters such as the Venetian master Titian (d. 1576). His engraving of Titian's *Three Ages of a Man* is dated 1786. He died in 1819. For further information please see, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG49751

Provenance:
Private French Collection from Tours

WRITING THE WORD OF GOD

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE WORLD OF AN OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHER

"Read! And your Lord is the most generous, who taught (the writing) by the pen, taught humanity what they knew not."

(The Qur'an, 96:3-5)



Calligraphy is one of the fundamental elements of Islamic art. It has retained this prestigious status since the earliest days of Islam. Since God issued his revelation, the holy *Qur'an* to the Prophet Muhammad in the Arabic language, the art of beautiful writing in the Arabic script became of utmost importance for copying and preserving the word of God. Islamic calligraphy has been revered in all Muslim cultures and highly praised with words such as 'spiritual geometry' (*handasat al-rūhāniyyah* Ar.) and 'music to the eyes' (*mūsiqī li al-'uyūn* Ar.).

Besides his personal writing skill, a Muslim calligrapher depended on the skills of myriad artisans, such as smiths, cutlers, paper-makers, gold-beaters, gilders, wire-drawers, makers of pencases and pen-boxes. In addition to the pens, a calligrapher's basic tool kit contained a pen knife, a pen-rest (a small flat slab) known as *makta'* on which the pen would be positioned for cutting and paper scissors. All these with other tools and accessories were preserved in accompanying pencases, pen boxes and chests. For further information and references please see, Mary McWilliams and David J. Roxburgh, *Traces of the Calligrapher – Islamic Calligraphy in Practise C. 1600-1900*, The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 2007, pp. 9-45.

Calligraphy played an extremely important role in the history of Ottoman art. Many members of the Ottoman household were professionally trained calligraphers and some were devoted connoisseurs. Among these, Mustafa II (r. 1703-1730), Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730), Mustafa III (r. 1703-1730), Mahmud II (r. 1703-1730), Abdülmecid (r. 1703-1730) were masterful calligraphers in their own right.

The following section, including a remarkable collection of selected pieces, represents the world of an Ottoman calligrapher. These pieces reflecting the rich and multifaceted nature of this noble art form include:

- **A fine Ottoman Qur'an signed by the calligrapher al-Sayyid Muhammad Tawfiq, dated 1289 A.H. / 1872 C.E.**
- **A highly important Ottoman calligraphy album signed by the master calligrapher Ismail Zuhdi the elder (d. 1731) dated 1138 A.H. / 1725 C.E.**
- **A large Ottoman silver calligrapher's pencase stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754).**
- **A rare Ottoman calligrapher's set consisting of a gold-damascened scissors, a pen-sharpener and a pen-rest, 19th Century.**









FINE ILLUMINATED OTTOMAN QUR'AN COPIED BY AL-SAYYID MUHAMMAD TAWFIQ

Calligrapher: Al-Sayyid Muhammad Tawfiq
Dated: 1289 A.H. / 1872 C.E.
Dimensions: 19.3 x 12.5 cm.

Written on sized paper in extremely fine and sharp *naskh* script. The frontispiece richly decorated on gold background, with symmetrically designed flower arrangements framing the opening verses of the Qur'an, *Surat al-Fatiha* and the beginning of *Surat al-Baqara*. All pages decorated with gold rulings. In its original leather binding.



It is stated in the colophon that the calligrapher Muhammad Tawfiq's father Muhammad Rashid was also a calligrapher. Muhammad Tawfiq mentions in the colophon that he had studied calligraphy under the supervision of his father. An exquisite Qur'an copied by Muhammad Rashid is published in Nabil F. Safwat, *A Collector's Eye: Islamic Calligraphy in Qur'ans and other Manuscripts*, Azimuth Editions, London, 2010, pp. 156-161.

Ibnulemin Mahmud Kemal Inal, in his *Son Hattatlar* (p. 429), a collection of Ottoman calligraphers' biographies, records Muhammad Tawfiq as an important calligrapher. According to Inal, Muhammad Tawfiq was the preacher (*khatib*) of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, Istanbul. He was among the students of the imam of the Sultan Ahmed Mosque Hafiz Husayn Efendi. His date of death is unrecorded.

A comparable Qur'an in *naskh* script with similar frontispiece illumination on gold background in the Istanbul University Manuscript Library (inv. no. A. 1655), copied by Eyub Arif, is published in Ugur Derman, *Doksan Dokuz Istanbul Mushafi*, Türk Petrol Vakfi, Istanbul, 2010, pp. 366-367.

The present Qur'an is an exquisite example which displays the same sharpness and refined flow from the first verse to the last, showing the level of perfection achieved by calligrapher Muhammad Tawfiq.

Provenance:
Private Swiss Collection. Acquired in Mecca in the early 20th century and kept in Switzerland, thence by descent.



سورة الفاتحة وهي سبع آيات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين ۝ الرحمن الرحيم

مالك يوم الدين ۝ إياك نعبد

وإياك نستعين ۝ اهدنا

الصراط المستقيم ۝ صراط

الذين أنعمت عليهم غير

المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين ۝

لا يمسه إلا المطهرون

سورة البقرة مدنية وهي مائتان وست آيات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الم ۝ ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى

للمتقين ۝ الذين يؤمنون بالغيب ويقيمون

الصلوة ومما رزقناهم ينفقون ۝ والذين

يؤمنون بما أنزل إليك وما أنزل من قبلك

وبالآخرة هم يوقنون ۝ أولئك على هدى

من ربهم وأولئك هم المفلحون ۝

تنزيل من رب العالمين

RARE AND IMPORTANT CALLIGRAPHIC ALBUM SIGNED BY OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHER ISMAIL ZUHDI THE ELDER (D. 1731)

Ottoman Empire
Signed: Ismail al-Zuhdi (d. 1731)
Dated: 1138 AH/1725 AD
Dimensions:
Album's Open Size (unframed): 82.5 x 24 cm.
Album's Open Size (framed): 97 x 37.5 cm.



Arabic manuscript on paper, consisting of five rectangular calligraphies, designed as a concertina album, framed; the first opening with *Bismillah* in *muhaqqaq* script, the other four with one line of large, sharp and crystalline *thuluth* script; all five with lines of extremely fine *naskh* script beneath the *thuluth* lines, *hadiths* of the Prophet and other sayings separated by foliate gold roundels, polychrome illuminations with arabesques and flowerheads to the sides of the text, each decorated with outer marbled borders.

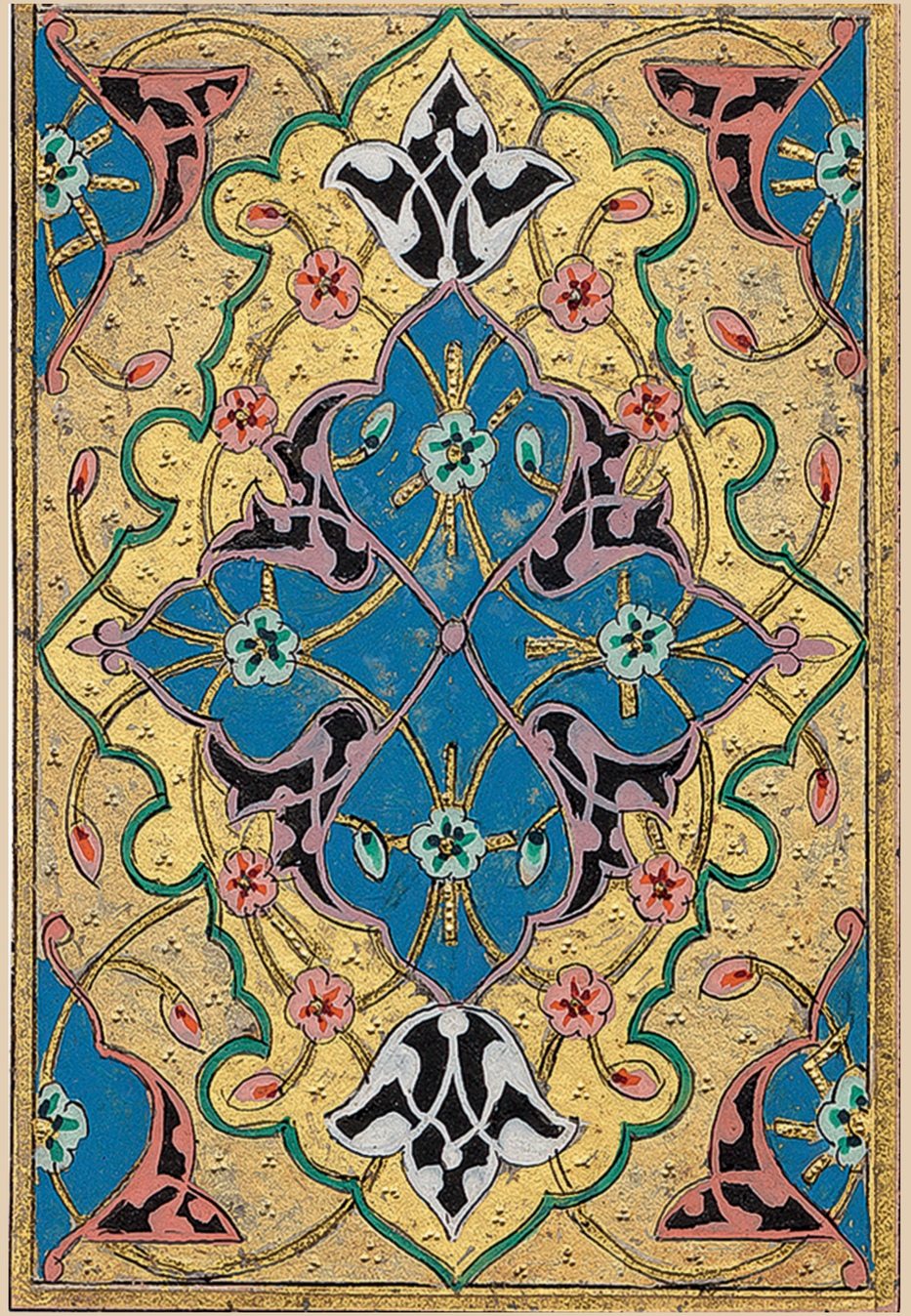
The text opens with the first verse of the Qur'an (*Bismillāh*) and consists of sayings (*hadīths*) of Prophet Muhammad. In the colophon line the calligrapher pays homage to the late 15th, early 16th century master Ottoman calligrapher Sheikh Hamdullah (d. 1520). He states that this album is a facsimile of an album by Sheikh Hamdullah.

Calligrapher Ismail al-Zuhdi the Elder (d.1731)
Ismail al-Zuhdi studied under both the court calligrapher Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi, whilst working as a cobbler, and Anbarizade Dervish Ali. The latter, however, died before granting Ismail Zuhdi with his diploma (*ijazat*), so he asked Suyolcuzade Mehmed Necib to award it in his place. Sadly, few examples of Ismail Zuhdi's calligraphy exists, and it is said that, according to the Ottoman historian Mustakimzade Suleyman Sadeddin Efendi, "... had he lived longer, he would have been among the 'miracle masters' of calligraphy" (cited in Nabil F. Safwat, *Understanding Calligraphy - The Ottoman Contribution*, Part One, London, 2014, p.216). He was celebrated for his mastery in imitating the style of old masters. Beside his works on paper he worked on monumental commemorative inscriptions. His best-known monumental calligraphy is located above the main entrance of the ancient Byzantine walls of Istanbul, which were restored on Sultan Ahmed III's (r. 1703-1730) order, in 1727. His works on paper are very rare. A calligraphic panel by Ismail Zuhdi comprising four lines of bold *thuluth* is in the Collection of Cengiz Çetindogan (*ibid.*, p.216-7, no. 36). This album displays his mastery in both *thuluth* and *naskh* scripts and in both his remarkable skill for interpreting the esteemed style of the late 15th - early 16th century master calligrapher Sheikh Hamdullah Efendi (d. 1520). He passed away in 1731 and was buried in Uskudar, close to the Miskinler dervish-lodge. The inscription on his tombstone was prepared by calligrapher Katipzade Mustafa Efendi.



Provenance:
Private UK Collection
Antiquarian Bookshop, Paris.

Published:
In Dr. Bora Keskiner's, *Yāqūt al-Musta'simī and the Practise of Naql in Islamic Calligraphy*, KACP, London, 2021, pp. 48-49.



AN OTTOMAN SILVER PENCASE (*DIVIT*) BEARING THE *TUGHRA* OF SULTAN MAHMUD I (R. 1730-1754), DECORATED WITH THE NAMES OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS OF EPHESUS

Ottoman Empire
Reign of Sultan Mahmud I
(r. 1730-1754)
Signed: Mehmed bin Ismail
Length: 30 cm.
Weight: 473 gr.

Consisting of an inkwell with a double-hinged lid attached to an elongated rectangular case with a lid, both stamped with the *tughra* of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754), the case stamped with maker's mark which reads '*Amal Mehmed bin Ismail*, the terminals and edges and base of the inkwell gilt, the inkwell's base decorated with carved and incised decoration, the inkwell's lid decorated with a ruby.

Pencases in this form are called *divit* (from the Arabic *dawāt*). One of the earliest surviving examples of this type is late 15th century Timurid pencase consisting of a jade inkwell and a jade pencase for a single reed pen in the Topkapi Palace Museum treasury (inv. no. 2/3080). Please see, Emine Bilirgen & Suheyla Murat, *Topkapi Palace – The imperial Treasury*, MAS, Istanbul, 2001, pp. 102, 103.



Maker's mark

The artist Mehmed b. Ismail is recorded and his works are published. For the signature of the artist please see, Garo Kürkman, *Ottoman Silver Marks*, Istanbul, 1996, p. 106.

The names of 'the seven sleepers of Ephesus' (*Ashāb al-Kahf Ar.*) written inside the inkwell's lid read: '*Yamlīha*, *Maksalīna*, *Mithlīna*, *Marnūsh*, *Dabarnūsh*, *Shazanūsh*, *Kafashtatayyush*' (and their dog *Kitmīr*). In both Christian and Islamic traditions the seven sleepers refer to a legend about a group of youths who hid inside a cave outside the city of Ephesus, around 250 C.E., to escape the prosecutions by the Roman emperor Decius (r. 249-251). In Christian tradition their names are 'Maximian, Martinian, Dionisius, John, Constantine, Malchus, Serapion'.

The names have been written in the form of the star of David, also referred to as the seal of Solomon (*mühr-i Süleyman* tr., *muhr-e Sulayman per.*). These names are believed to have talismanic and prophylactic qualities. For a similar composition with the names of the seven sleepers on an Ottoman silver pencase please see, *Ibid*, 1996, p. 82. The present pencase is a rare, signed example of mid-18th century Ottoman metalwork.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection





The names's of the seven sleepers of Ephesus



The tughra of Sultan Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754)



FINE OTTOMAN CALLIGRAPHER'S SET CONSISTING OF GOLD-DAMASCENED SCISSORS, PEN SHARPENER AND PEN-REST

Ottoman Empire
19th Century
Scissors (Length): 29 cm.
Pen knife (Length): 22.3 cm.
Pen-rest (Length): 17.1 cm.



Comprising of a pair of scissors, a pen knife and pen-rest, each decorated in gold inlay with vegetal interlace.

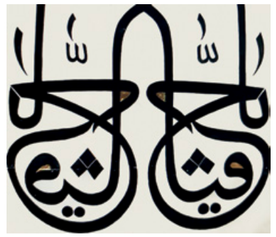
The scissors with handles in the form of a calligraphic composition in *thuluth* script, which reads one of the ninety-nine beautiful names (*al-asmā al-husnā*) of God, *Yā Fattāh* (Oh God, the opener [of doors]).

The pen knife with its original embossed cover decorated with vegetal interlace. The pen knife can be opened by unscrewing the blade from the handle. There is a smaller pen knife hidden in the handle which is called a 'correction knife' (tr. *tashih kalemtrasi*). This was used for sharpening thin reed pens, and correcting the edges of letters while writing.

The Turkish name for the pen-rest is *makta* (reed pen trimming slab). This is the tool on which the reed pen had to be laid to be cut. *Maktas* are usually in the form of a special plate, 10-20 centimetres in length and 2-3 centimetres in width. Besides gold inlaid ones like the present *makta*, they were also made from mother of pearl, bone and tortoiseshell.

For a pair of scissors with similar decoration, in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul, please see Filiz Çağman & Şule Aksoy, *Osmanlı Sanatında Hat*, Istanbul, 1998, p. 32. For comparable Ottoman scissors, pen-knives and pen-rests see the exhibition catalogue, *Ottoman Calligraphy from the Sakip Sabanci Museum* (Real Alcazar, Seville, 4 April – 15 June 2008), Sakip Sabanci Museum, 2008, pp. 72-85.

The fact that the present scissors, pen knife and pen-rest were so finely produced and decorated with gold inlay, indicate court patronage, and attests the great value which the art of calligraphy and calligraphers held in the 19th century.



Mirror image 'Ya Fattah'calligraphy comparison for the scissor handles





A CONQUEROR, POSSIBLY ALEXANDER THE GREAT, OVERSEEING A BATTLE ON AN INDIAN HILLSIDE

Sub-Imperial Mughal,
1610
Folio: 37.3 x 23.3 cm.
Miniature: 26 x 15.5 cm.

Opaque watercolour, ink, heightened with gold on paper.
Mounted on an album page with gilt-sprinkled borders.
Inscribed at a later stage 'Nadir Shah',
in *nasta'liq* script, on the outside mount.

A conqueror, possibly Alexander the Great, leading his army across a rocky hillside, surrounded by an entourage. Alexander depicted on horseback shaded by a gold parasol, the horse fully armoured, banner bearers lead the procession following a *mahout* (elephant rider) astride a fully caparisoned elephant.

In the foreground soldiers on horseback charge in battle brandishing swords and arrows. Musicians performing in full unison against a vivid blue sky, a Mughal palace in the distance beyond.

There are a few details which may support the identification of our conqueror as Alexander the Great (r. 336-323 B.C.E.), known as *Iskandar* in Muslim lands, who founded an empire that spanned from Greece to the north west of India. Alexander's first confrontation with war elephants occurred at the Battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.E.) where the Persians deployed fifteen elephants. Alexander won at Gaugamela, and as he was deeply impressed by the enemy elephants which he later took into his own army. In the present miniature, the elephant leading Alexander's entourage may be linked to this historical anecdote.

Legend has it that Alexander's third and last wish before he died was that both his hands be kept out of his coffin; he said he wished people to know that 'he came empty-handed into this world and empty-handed he left this world'. The standard with a finial in hand form, behind Alexander, might be related to this last wish of his.

Alexander's military campaigns were chronicled in poet Nizami's *Khamsa* (Quintet) in the *Iskandernāma* (the Alexander Romance) and Ferdowsi's *Shahnāma* and were popular subjects in Mughal painting. The 'Alexander Romance' which had an impact on Muslim poetry, probably took shape in Alexandria between the 3rd century B.C.E. and the 3rd century C.E. Exactly how the tale reached Persian and Indian oral and literary traditions is not clear. In this tradition Alexander is portrayed a world hero and sometimes as a sage. See, G. Cary, *The Medieval Alexander*, Cambridge, 1956.

Nizami's Alexander Romance, completed in 1202 C.E., is divided into two books entitled *Sharafnāma* and *Iqbalnāma*. These include a new, Muslim interpretation of Alexander's story. According to Nizami, Alexander's first teacher is Nichomachus and Artistotle is his classmate. On his father Philip's death Alexander becomes king and soon goes to the rescue of the Egyptians who have been attacked by an enemy. He returns victorious and decides to cease paying tribute to the Persian king Dārā. Their armies meet in battle and two traitorous officers slay Dārā. One of Dārā's dying wishes is that Alexander marry his daughter Rowshanak.

Now that Alexander is king of Persia, he sets out to destroy the fire temples of the Zoroastrians. He marries Rowshanak but since he wants to travel the world, he sends her back to Anatolia along with his treasure for safety's sake. He first receives the submission of the Arab lands, and visits the holy Kaʿba. From there he travels to the land of Bardaʿ where he meets Queen Nūshāba, who rules over a court of women. He returns to the East and subdues the fortress of Darband, and then a fortress called Sarīr. He explores the cave of Kay Khosrow and then continues east to India. The Indian king Keyd makes peace by sending the four gifts mentioned by Ferdowsi, and Alexander proceeds thence to China. After considerable negotiations, and a contest between the Greek and Chinese painters, the Chinese emperor submits with dignity to Alexander. He now begins the homeward journey, via the Qipchaq plain and the Russian lands, against whom Alexander must fight seven battles before subduing them.

Alexander's last major adventure before reaching Anatolia is his visit to the 'land of darkness' in search of the water of life. Khizr is his guide, and the results are always the same: Khizr drinks from the spring and becomes immortal and Alexander loses his way and never finds the elixir. The *Sharaf-nāma* ends when Alexander reaches Anatolia. See, William N. Hanaway, "Eskandar-nāma", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. VIII, Fasc. 6, pp. 609-612.





Body armour for horses, known as barding and depicted in this painting on the horse of the main figure, was used during Alexander's reign and went onto to influence armies in the centuries to come from India to Europe and North Africa.

The Indian love for horses and battle scenes gave plenty of scope not only for the Mughal schools but the Deccani and Rajput studios too. Examples of full body armour are rare but can be found in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Wallace Collection, London and the Royal Armouries in Leeds.

The term 'Sub-Imperial' Mughal was used by the eminent scholar of Indian painting, W. G. Archer who used the phrase to describe artists who worked outside the Mughal court for wealthy patrons, both Muslim and Hindu. The choice of subject gives clues to the identity of the patron and in the case of this painting, the patron is likely to be Muslim. A similar battle scene, dated 1608 C.E. from the collection of Edwin Binney 3rd is now in the San Diego Museum of Art. See E. Binney, *Indian Miniatue Paintings from The Collection of Edwin Binney, 3rd, The Mughal and Deccani Schools with Some Related Sultanate Material*, Portland Art Museum, Oregon, 1973, no. 32. There are also illustrated Sub-Imperial Mughal manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. For further discussion, please see Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings*, Dublin, 1995, Vol. II, pp. 529-533.

Acknowledgment:
We would like to thank Margaret Erskine for her expert advice and kind preparation of the material we have used in this catalogue description.

Provenance:
Sotheby's New York, 21 March, 1990, Lot 48.
Acquired by Prominent East Coast Collector, Until 2021.
Christie's New York, 17 March 2021, Lot 435.

23

AN EXQUISITE PORTRAIT OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR SHAH JAHAN (R. 1628-1658)

Mughal India
Possibly from the studio of Hashim.
Circa 1650
Folio: 21 x 33 cm.
Miniature: 7.5 x 14 cm.

Gouache on paper heightened with gold, mounted on an album page, decorated with floral arabesques in colours and gold; margin rules in colours and gold, laid down on card.

A portrait of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (r.1628-1658), possibly from the studio of Hashim, standing facing right, holding a fly whisk in his left hand with a sword in his right hand positioned over his right shoulder; wearing a turban decorated with an aigrette, rubies and pearls, a nimbus about his head, wearing a gold floral brocade coat with a fur collar over a gold striped *jama* tied with a gold floral *patka* over striped trousers; red slippers at his feet, an emerald pendant hanging from a row of pearls about his neck.

The title Grand Mogul, used by Europeans to describe Mughal emperors, comes to mind when looking at this finely executed portrait of a grey-bearded Shah Jahan and gives justice to the title.

Although the Dutch master Rembrandt (1606-1669) never went to India, he was influenced by the Indian miniature paintings, probably in albums, that arrived in the Netherlands from the Mughal court and the artist duly chose Shah Jahan as one of his subjects. The reputation of the wealth of the Mughal dynasty and its gifted royal painters and craftsmen had travelled the seas and when Shah Jahan came to the throne in 1628 at the age of thirty-five, he simply added to his passion for the arts inherited from his grandfather Akbar (r.1556-1605) and father Jahangir (r.1605-1628).

Shah Jahan's love of precious gems resulted in the fabulous jewel encrusted gold Peacock Throne, later to be plundered by Nadir Shah, Shah of Persia (r.1736-1747) at the sack of Delhi in 1739. Architecture was another consuming interest and today the beautiful buildings in Old Delhi, formerly Shahjahanabad, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri still beat to the drums of Shah Jahan's reign and those of his ancestors. The Taj Mahal, built by Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved Mumtaz Mahal following her death was completed in 1652. Considered to be the finest building in the world, this magnificent monument stands as an example of Mughal art at its zenith.

But Shah Jahan not only commissioned architects and jewellers but painters and calligraphers too. As noted by Ebba Koch, he had daily meetings with painters and calligraphers and was an accomplished calligrapher himself and portrait artists were in constant employment at Shah Jahan's court. Payag, Bichitr and Mir Hashim to name but a few and the world–renowned *Padshahnama*, Book of Emperors, now in the Royal Library, Windsor (RCIN 1005025) is one of the finest example of Mughal portraiture of this period with forty-one miniature paintings covering Shah Jahan's youth and the first ten years of his reign. Written by Shah Jahan's court historian Abd al-Hamid Lahori, this fabulous account was first presented by Nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan (r.1798-1818) to the British Governor-General and bibliophile Lord Teignmouth in 1798, before being installed in the library of King George III at the Buckingham Palace.



Although portrait artists were a much-valued part of the Mughal atelier; their work was often unsigned as in the case of this particular miniature painting. However, a comparison can be made with a similar portrait, from the Late Shah Jahan Album and formerly in the Cartier collection, inscribed as the work of Hashim. The borders for the albums of this period are again examples of the high-quality work of the Mughal studios; often depicting portraits and more commonly later in Shah Jahan's reign, exquisite floral arabesques as in the case of this miniature with illumination in colours and gold. This miniature painting depicting Shah Jahan mounted on an album page brings together beautifully the talents of Mughal artists working during this golden age in mid-seventeenth century India.

For comparison and further literature please see:

T. Falk, *Persian and Mughal Art*, P&D Colnaghi, London, 1976, p.121, cat. 96.
M.C. Beach, *The Grand Mogul, Imperial Painting in India 1600-1660* Williamstown, Massachusetts, 1978, no.45.
B.N. Goswamy and E.Fischer, *Wonders of a Golden Age*, Zurich, 1987, cat.no.45.
S. C. Welch, A. Schimmel, M.L.Swietochowski and W.M.Thackston, *The Emperors' Album Images of Mughal India*, New York, 1987.
L. Nicholson, *Delhi, Agra and Jaipur*, London, 1989.
Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings From The Chester Beatty Library*, Dublin, 1995, Vol. I, p. 373, p. 472, Entry Number: 3.83.
Francesca von Habsburg *et al, The St Petersburg Muraqqa'*, Lugano, 1996, pl. 64.
E. Wright, *Muraqqa' Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library*, Virginia, 2008, pp. 424-5, cat. No.77.
J. P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire*, London, 2012, fig. 88.
E. Hannam, *Eastern Encounters*, London, 2017, pp. 28, 108-130, nos. 26-34.
C. Glynn, Y. Rice and W. W. Robinson, *Rembrandt and The Inspiration of India*, Los Angeles, 2018.

Acknowledgement:
We would like to thank Margaret Erskine for writing this article on the present miniature.

Provenance:
Ex-Ludwig Habighorst Collection, Germany.
Pan Asian Collection: Christie's sale, London, 13 June 1983, lot 121.

Exhibited:
Akbar's Golden Legacy, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 6 October, 2015-14 February, 2016.

Published:
C.P. Haase, J. Kroger, and U. Lienert, *Oriental Splendour*, Museum fur Kunst und Gewerbe Hamburg, 1993, no.188.
L. Habighorst, *Blumen – Baume – Gottergarten in Indischen Miniaturen*, Koblenz, 2011, Fig.115.

AN IMPORTANT PORTRAIT OF ROXELANA (HASEKI HURREM SULTAN, 1506-1558), BY A FOLLOWER OF TITIAN

Northern Europe
Late 16th / Early 17th Century
Dimensions: 49.5 x 38.5cm.
Oil on panel.
Inscription: 'BIANCKE . ROSA - FIOLA . SOLIMANO', Framed, old collection labels to reverse and in white '3329'.

This portrait depicts one of the most powerful women in Ottoman history, Roxelana (Hurrem Sultan), wife of Sultan Suleyman I ('The Magnificent').

The inscription, 'BIANCKE . ROSA / FIOLA. SOLIMANO', written in gold in the upper left corner, claims the figure to be the daughter to Suleyman, but it is in fact Suleyman's wife, Hurrem Sultan, known in the West as Roxelana.

Born in western Ukraine, Roxelana entered Suleyman's harem, and quickly became his favourite. He was so enamoured of her that he defied convention by allowing her to bear him not one son but four; and he defied convention further by marrying her. He revealed his passion in poetry: "My most sincere friend, my confidante, my very existence, my Sultan, my one and only love···The most beautiful among the beautiful···" She enjoyed influence not only over his heart but on his running of the empire. She corresponded with Suleyman when he was away on campaign, keeping him abreast of developments in the capital, and she corresponded with King Sigismund of Poland. She was a major sponsor of architecture and charitable foundations, including in Jerusalem. Most notoriously, though, she promoted her own son at the expense of Suleyman's oldest, a son by another concubine. Gossip among both the Ottomans and Europeans claimed she had bewitched the Sultan.



Sultan Suleyman wearing his Venetian helmet decorated with pearls which bear similarities to Roxelana's headdress decorated with pearls in the present painting. After *The Sultan's Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman,* catalogue of the exhibition held at the Topkapı Palace Museum between 6 June and 6 September 2000, by Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Julian Raby, Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, Hans Georg Majer, Jürg Meyer zur Capellen, Gülru Necipoğlu, Banu Mahir, Gül İrepoğlu, Günsel Renda, Istanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası, Publishing no: 464, Art Series: 65, 2000, p. 113.

Despite her celebrity, our visual record of Roxelana is erratic. Images of her have been confused with figures as disparate as Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Caterina Cornaro Queen of Cyprus, and even her own daughter, Mihrimah. This has opened the field to speculative identifications of sixteenth and seventeenth-century century portraits of Ottoman ladies which have been labelled "Roxelana" with no supporting evidence.

A recently published article by Dr Julian Raby ("Mistaken Identities", *Cornucopia*, issue 63, 2021, pp. 8-13) has, however, helped clarify matters. He demonstrates that a portrait in the Uffizi associated with Titian's workshop and traditionally labelled Caterina Cornaro is in fact a portrait of Roxelana, as it was modelled on a printed portrait from the 1540s in which the Venetian print-maker Matteo Pagani has clearly identified her as "La Rossa".

Furthermore, there are clear facial resemblances between the Pagani/Titian type and the present Northern School portrait. This helps explains the "Biancke Rosa" element of its inscription, but contradicts the claim that the figure is the "daughter of Suleyman" ("Fiola Solimani"). She is none other than Roxelana, though her headdress here differs from those in both the Pagani and the Titian images, suggesting that there may have another version, traceable perhaps to the unknown artist Pagani relied on.

This painting is an important addition to the small number of images of Roxelana from her lifetime or soon after. In its sumptuous rendering of costume it projects her prestige; and it is possible that the lavish parade of pearls on her headdress is an allusion to the prominent pearls on the fabulous helmet Suleyman purchased from Venetian goldsmiths in 1532. Above all, its forceful rendering of her facial features admirably projects Roxelana's determination and authority. It successfully combines both beauty and strength.

For an authoritative biography of Roxelana, see L. Peirce, *Empress of the East: How a European Slave Girl Became Queen of the Ottoman Empire*, 2018.

We are grateful to Dr Julian Raby for his assistance with the cataloguing of this painting.

Published:
in Dr Julian Raby's article "Mistaken Identities", in *Cornucopia*, issue 63, 2021, pp. 8-13. Please see, https://www.cornucopia.net/roxelana/

Provenance:
Sotheby's, 27 October 2021. Lot 168.



RUDOLF ERNST (1854-1932)

OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE

Signed R. Ernst
(Lower Right)
Oil on Panel 100 x 79 cm.

In this wonderfully rich painting, Rudolf Ernst depicts a scene outside a mosque decorated with vibrant panels of Iznik tiles flanking the entrance. As an avid ceramicist himself, who learnt the technique from potter and glass-maker Léon Fargue in Paris, Ernst depicts the Iznik panels with particular interest and accuracy.

The pale green cartouche in monumental *thuluth* calligraphy proclaims the *shahada*, the Islamic declaration of faith: 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammed is his Prophet.' An old man with a walking cane, his back turned to the door decorated with mother of pearls, walks toward the stairs. A woman to the right, in her pink silk dress, employs the services of a scribe to read or interpret a letter for her. The scribe sits on a wooden two-seater bench decorated with delicate openwork. In front of the scribe, on the floor, is a carpet bag full of documents. A fruit seller sits on the steps offering slices of melon on a carpet to worshippers and passers-by.

In 1880, Ernst travelled to Constantinople, a trip which would have a profound impact on his artistic output. Working from photos or his own sketches and memory, he made a series of paintings of Ottoman monuments seen from outside and inside. The present painting is an outstanding example from this period.

Published:
Caroline Juler, *Najd Collection of Orientalist Paintings*, London, 1991, p. 78, catalogued & illustrated, p. 83, cited.

Exhibited:
Exhibition of Important 19th Century and Contemporary Paintings of Arabia at the Intercontinental Hotel, Riyadh, Intercontinental Hotel, Riyadh, 1984, illustrated in the catalogue.

Provenance:
Sotheby's, New York, 24 May 1984, lot 40
Mathaf Gallery, London
Najd Collection, (Sotheby's, *Important Works from the Najd Collection*, Part II, 11 June 2020, Lot 112).

RUDOLF ERNST (1854-1932)
Born in Vienna on 14 February 1854, Rudolf Ernst is one of the leading painters of the Orientalist movement. He was first inspired by his father who was an architect and an esteemed member of the Vienna Fine Arts Academy. Ernst enrolled as a student of the Academy in 1869. Between 1873 and 1876 he studied history of painting under the supervision of Anselm Feuerbach. In 1875 he received the special prize from the Academy. In Paris he studied with Ludwig Deutch and Johann Discart. He became friends with painters including Charles Wilda, Arthur Ferraris, Raphael Ambros and Rudolf Weiss.

Later he opened his workshop in Rue de Naval. He exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Français in Paris. In the early stage of his career he mostly worked on portraits and genre scenes, turning later to Orientalist subjects. He gained fame for painting with great skill and extraordinary precision. In the first years of his professional life, he was supported by the famous French art dealer Adolphe Goupil, the painter Gerome's father in law. Goupil provided private commissions from the United States for Ernst and helped him to develop an international reputation.

He visited Constantinople in 1880. In 1883 he met Osman Hamdy Bey, a student of Gerome. He achieved great success during his stay in the Ottoman capital. In 1889 he exhibited at Salon des Artistes Français the following works: *'A Guardian in Cairo', 'Portrait of M.C.B.', 'Imperial Guards of the Ottoman Palace'*. In the same year he won the bronze medal at the Exposition Universale in Paris. His portrait of Agop Pasha was included in the German biographical dictionary of artists Thieme-Becker. He painted portraits of members of the Ottoman court. Following his return to France in 1905 he left his old workshop and moved to Fontenay-aux-Roses.

Rudolf Ernst is famed as a master painter of the Orientalist movement, focused on painting scenes he had memorized or photographed during his voyages. Aside from photographs and sketches from his travels, he gathered a large collection of ceramics, tiles, textiles, carpets, daggers and other weapons. He died in 1932. His paintings are preserved in French museums and international museums, foundations and private collections around the world. For a detailed account on his carrier and illustrated works please see: Martina Haja & Gunter Wimmer's *Les Orientalistes des Ecoles Allemande et Autrichienne*, ACR Edition, Paris, 2000, pp. 226-252.



ALEXANDRE BIDA (1823-1895)

CHESS PLAYERS

Signed with initials A.B.
22.5 x 26.8 cm.
Brush and black and gray ink, graphite, and stylus on white wove paper with a white ground.

An almost identical version of this drawing is published in *Album Bida*, Bertsch & Arnaud, Paris, 1855. *Album Bida* included twelve prints of Bida's drawings, each mounted on card. The twelve subjects in this album are titled: Le Dosséh; Le Retour de la Mecque; Chanteurs Arabes; Jouers d'Echecs [the present drawing]; Sentinelle Egyptienne; Le Kief (Arménien); Femme Féllah; Le Barbier; Le Magreb (Prière); Anier buvant; Grec et Arménien; and Marchand Arménien.

In this drawing Alexandre Bida depicts two chess players on the left and the right, and a spectator in the middle; each equally concentrated on the move made by the player on the right. The chess board is resting on an octagonal coffee table. The person in the middle and the person on the right are smoking long, elegant *chibouk* (*çubuk* tr.) pipes. The present drawing makes an interesting comparison with *Café in Constantinople* (Cleveland Museum of Art [museum number: 2008.381]), showing people in a coffee-shop, one of which is smoking the *chibouk* pipe. Please see, https://www.clevelandart.org/art/2008.381

ALEXANDRE BIDA (1823-1895)
Alexandre Bida is a French Orientalist painter celebrated for his oriental scenes, particularly subjects such as oriental markets, odalisques, Turkish coffee-shops. He was born in Toulouse in 1823. Bida studied under the world-famous Orientalist painter Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863). He was also influenced by Decamps and de Raffet. Between 1847 and 1894 he participated 'Salons Parisiens'. He was granted one medal of second class in 1848, and first class in 1855. He was appointed *Legion d'honneur* in 1855. He received the honour of *Officier* in 1870. Occasinally he was tempted by history paintings by Condé à Rocroy. Please see, E. Benezit, *Dictionnaire Des Peintres, Sculpteurs, Dessinateurs et Graveurs*, Gründ, Paris, 1999, vol: II, p. 292. He travelled and sketched in Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Palestine. He later exhibited his work in various Paris exhibitions between 1847 and 1861. Bida worked for patrons such as Charles Darricau (1808-1868) *conseiller d'état*, whose portrait by Bida was exhibited in Paris in 1855. He is celebrated for his oriental scenes, particularly subjects such as oriental markets, odalisques, Turkish coffee-shops. The Louvre Museum houses his following works; *La Bastonade* (inv. no. RF 1436), Entrée de la Mosquée (inv. no. INV 23763.BIS), *L'appel du Soir en Crimée* (RF 138), *Bachi-bozouk* (RF 825). Bida's portrait of Alfred de Musset (1810-1857) is in the Cleveland Museum of Art (museum no. 2019.62). He mastered a special technique in which he used scratching the black layer of graphite and creating a multitude of fine hatchings to reveal the white ground beneath. By doing so in many of his drawings he created a 'chiaroscuro' effect. Bida died in 1895.

Provenance:
Private American Collection



JEAN PORTAELS (1818-1895)

A STORYTELLER IN THE STREETS OF CAIRO

Circa 1854/1855
Oil on canvas, 73 x 60 cm
Signature (lower left):
“J. Portaels”

Jean Portaels (Vilvoorde 1818 - Brussels 1895) was the main orientalist of the Belgian school, in the 19th century. After rigorous artistic training at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels and in the studio of the neoclassical painter François-Joseph Navez (Charleroi 1887-Brussels 1869), he left to perfect his skills in Paris, and worked in the studio of Paul Delaroche. He also entered the École des Beaux-Arts. In Paris Portaels discovered the Orientalist paintings of Horace and Eugène Delacroix. At the age of twenty four, he won the ‘Grand Prix de Rome’ from the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. From Rome, where he arrived in June 1843, Portaels undertook a trip to the East from June 1845 until January 1847. Leaving Sicily, he passed through Malta, Greece, Constantinople, Beirut. He then visited Damascus, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, before settling for four months in Egypt, where he received an order for a bust portrait and a full-length portrait of Viceroy Muhammad Ali. From that moment, Orientalism became one of the major themes of his work (cf. Antoinette de Laet "A biography", in the exhibition catalogue, *Portaels et l’appel de l’Orient 1841-1847, Les Cahiers des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, Brussels, 2015, p. 148).

During his first participation in a Parisian exhibition, the Universal Exhibition of 1855, Portaels wanted to mark the occasion and position himself as a worthy representative of the Orientalist movement. Drawing on the experience of his travels in Turkey, the Levant and Egypt, he wanted to be a painter of oriental reality, but transfigured by a poetic sensibility in keeping with the artistic vein of the "golden mean", i.e. romantic in emotion and academic in form. Of the seven paintings he sent to the exhibition, three illustrate events Portaels witnessed in the East: ‘*A sandstorm in the desert with Caravan in Syria surprised by the Simoun*’ (Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts Arts, inv. 3001), ‘*the accompaniment of a dead man to his final resting place with A Funeral Convoy in the Suez Desert*’ (Private collection) and finally, one of the favorite entertainments of Egyptians with ‘*A storyteller in the streets of Cairo*’.

In *A storyteller in the streets of Cairo*, the painter invites the viewer to a shady square in Cairo where a street storyteller captivates a colorful audience of onlookers. He took care of the staging by subtly capturing the attention of many listeners ; from the smoker seated at the bottom right of the composition, to the two camel drivers whose silhouettes and their shadows stand out against the whitewashed wall of a house. Portaels knew how to make tangible the permanent effervescence that reigns in Cairo. To the compact group of the public listening to the storyteller is added the stream of passers-by -who walk from the alley on the left to the right- to the slow rhythm of the two camel drivers. The attention to detail, the colorful clothing with textures finely rendered by a seasoned pictorial technique, the play of light and shadow, the colored iridescence of the whole contribute to the enchantment of the change of scenery desired by Portaels. For the critic Gautier who visited the Paris exhibition of 1855, "there is spirit and color in the canvas", and for Gebaüer, the painting "shines with a rather rich color".

To create this painting, Portaels used drawings and sketches brought back from his stays in Egypt in 1846 and January 1847, in particular, an important drawing in pencil, wash and white highlights, representing the same theme (Jean Portaels, *A Street Storyteller in Cairo*, ca 1846/1847, pencil, wash and lead white highlights (oxidized) on paper, 16.5 x 13.5 cm, signature and location lower right: “J. Portaels / Cairo.” Private collection). We can see an identical pyramidal layout, with the storyteller seated on the steps of the staircase, the compact group of listeners, the smoker in the foreground and the two camel drivers who dominate the composition and capture the eye. Among the drawings from his travel diaries, we find that of a young woman carrying a cup on her head, visible on the left at the foot of the tree (Jean Portaels, *Egyptian wearing a cup on her head*, ca 1846/1847, pencil on beige paper, 23 x 15 cm, unsigned and undated. Private collection), or even certain pieces of dromedary harness which he painstakingly copied. As for the general atmosphere and the local color of this magnificent evocation of a sublimated Orient, he was inspired by a small sketch also painted on the spot, in an eastern street, probably Constantinople (Jean Portaels, *Street Scene in the East* (Constantinople), ca 1845, oil on panel, 29 x 22 cm, signature lower left: “J. Portaels” Charleroi, Musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. 806).





The interest of this painting by which Portaels hoped to seduce the Parisian public, is to contain some of the recurring figures of his oriental paintings, such as the old pipe smoker in the foreground that we find in the painting of a Abyssinian slave (Jean Portaels, *Sale of an Abyssinian slave* (detail), oil on panel, 48.5 x 62.5 cm, signature and date 1853. Whereabouts unknown) and especially the young woman in the center of the composition who pulls back a part of her veil to hide her face. This picturesque figure that Portaels met in Egypt as this painting proves, he will find similar ones in 1874 during his trip to Morocco, more precisely to Tangier. Having lost none of his fascination for this particular feature of Muslim culture, he drew in his Moroccan notebooks various women similarly dressed and hiding their faces (Jean Portaels, *Sketchbook of Morocco*, 1874, Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv. 10.843/14), a prelude to several beautiful portraits painted in fantasy (Jean Portaels, *Haouisha in Tangier* (detail), after 1874, oil on panel, 55.5 x 45.5 cm, signature lower left: "J. Portaels" Private collection).

Finally, there is a second version of the painting, smaller and on a panel with a smaller number of figures (Jean Portaels, A Storyteller in Cairo, ca. 1847, oil on panel, 39 x 30 cm, signature and location top right: "J. Portaels / Cairo" Brussels, Royal Collection, inv. 0041TA). In this small format, the atmosphere is more intimate, with a young mother holding her child on her lap and all draped in white placed in the center of the composition. We find in the background on the left, the woman carrying a cup on her head, the water carrier in the background on the right, but without the smoker in the foreground who has been replaced by an Arab wearing the *keffiyeh*. The background of the scene is also different. It is closed by a low stone wall under a loggia, above which leans another young mother accompanied by her child, captivated by the storyteller's story. This version can be dated to 1847 when Portaels was still in Egypt; it is therefore prior to the painting that concerns us here and served as a model for the painter to create a more ambitious and elaborate version to be exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1855.

We would like to thank heritage architect Antoinette De Laet and Dr. Alain Jacobs for writing this article for the present painting.

Provenance:
Private French Collection

Recorded:
Ernest Gebaüer, *Les Beaux-Arts à l'Exposition universelle de 1855*, Paris, Librairie Napoléonienne, 1855, p. 228

Théophile Gautier, *Les Beaux-Arts en Europe : 1855*, Paris, chez Michel Lévy Frères, 1856, p. 215

Edmond-Louis de Taye, *Les Artistes Belges contemporains*, Bruxelles, Alfred Castaigne édit., 1894, p. 17 & 20.

Exhibited:

- The Salon de Paris 1855, n° 390 p.40 - Pavillon BELGE (Universal Exhibition of 1855. Explanation of works of painting, sculpture, engraving, lithography and architecture by living foreign and French artists. At the Palais des Beaux-Arts, avenue Montaigne, May 15 1855, Paris, Vinchon, Imprimeur, under the title *A Storyteller in the streets of Cairo*.

- The Salon d'Anvers 1855, n° 549 (National Exhibition: Catalogue of works of painting, sculpture, architecture, engraving and drawing, executed by living artists.

- The Salon d'Anvers by the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts Arts, August 12, 1855, Antwerp, Henri Verberckt, Imprimeur-libraire, p. 86), under the same title.

MASTERPIECE OF SAFAVID METALWORK

MONUMENTAL SAFAVID ENGRAVED BRASS TORCH-STAND

Persia
Circa 1560
Height: 47 cm.

Later date:
18 January 1578
(Recorded in Armenian inscription incised around the rim)

Owner's name: Marut's son Matheos (Recorded in Armenian inscription incised around the rim)

Of faceted columnar form on flaring foot with upper cylindrical band, the main band with very elegant interlaced arabesques and flowering vine around a meandering cusped band of poetry in elegant *nasta'liq* script, a similar band of *nasta'liq* around the mouth between meandering vine and arabesque bands, multiple interlaced arabesque and linked palmette bands around the foot, all on a cross-hatched ground filled with black composition.

Poems

Two texts have been written on the torch-stand. The first, located on the upper part in *nasta'liq* script, is a poem consisting of four lines, from poet Katebi Torshizi (Please see: Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue – Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World – 8th-18th Centuries*, London, 1982, p. 315):

شبی که ماه رخت شد چراغ خلوت ما
گداخت شمع نیاورد تاب صحبت ما
دمی که از رخ چون مه نقاب برفکنی
بود بر امدن افتاب دولت ما

"On the night when your moon-like face became the light of our solitude
The candle melted down, unable to bear our companionship.
The moment you tear off the mask from your moon-like face,
There rises the sun of our good fortune."



The second poem, located in the middle zigzag band around the body and the base, is from poet Ahli Torshizi (Please see: Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Victoria and Albert*



Museum Catalogue – Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World – 8th-18th Centuries, London, 1982, p. 327):

چراغ اهل دل را روشن از روی تو می بینم
همه صاحبدلان را روی دل سوی تو می بینم
تو ای مقصود عالم کم مبادا از سرت موئی
که عالم را طفیل یک موی سر تو می بینم

"The lamp of those who have heart, I see, is brightened by your face
I see, all those who have a soul turn towards you
You, O purpose of the World's existence (Prophet Muhammad),
may not one hair fall from your head,
For I see the whole World equal to a thread of a single hair
from your head."

A comparable but smaller Safavid brass torch stand with similar decorative layout with arabesques and bands of the same poem around the neck and base in sharp *nasta'liq*, is in the Hermitage Museum, in St. Petersburg. Please see: Mikhail Piotrovsky's *On Islamic Art – The State Hermitage Museum*, St. Petersburg, 2001, p. 32. Comparison should also be borne with an example from the Wildenstein Collection, sold by Christie's 14-15 December 2005, lot: 381.

This is a truly rare and remarkable example of Safavid metalwork. It is the largest recorded Safavid torch-stand, surpassing all its published counterparts in major museums.

Provenance:
Private German Collection



EXQUISITE OTTOMAN *SANCAK* QUR'AN BOX SET WITH JEWELS

Ottoman Empire
17th Century
Dimensions:
9.5 cm x 8 cm x 4.1 cm

The silver gilt body engraved with foliate tendrils (*rumis*). The jade lid set with four emeralds, four pink sapphires, surrounded by plaques set with thirteen emeralds and thirteen rubies. The 'lion and sun' in the centre is set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds. The sides decorated with scrolling tendrils, and set with eighteen emeralds and twenty-three rubies. Velvet-set interior, underside engraved and punched with interlacing scrolling tendrils. Thirty-five emeralds, thirty-six rubies, four pink sapphires in total.

The 'lion and sun' emblem set with rose cut diamonds in the centre of the jade lid is the royal symbol of the Persian Empire, '*sheer o khorsheed*' in Persian. The lion, in front of the sun, holds a sword. This symbol may indicate that the box was sent from the Ottoman Empire to Persia as a diplomatic gift.



The base is decorated with an intricate design of masterfully executed *rumi* scrolls. The settings of the sapphires, emeralds and rubies are particularly Ottoman in style. Jewel-studded courtly objects including Qur'an covers, Chinese porcelain and other courtly objects comparable to the present box circulated among the Ottoman elite as gifts.

Sancak means banner in Turkish. *Sancak* Qur'ans were very small manuscripts (usually with a diameter of 4 cm.) which were intended to be carried on the finial of a banner, hence called a '*sancak* Qur'an'. The present box belongs to a small group of bejewelled, ornate boxes produced for protecting sancak Qur'ans. For a further discussion on a similar Ottoman jewel-studded case for a miniature Qur'an please see, Sheila Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, Edinburgh University Press, 2006, pp. 482-3.

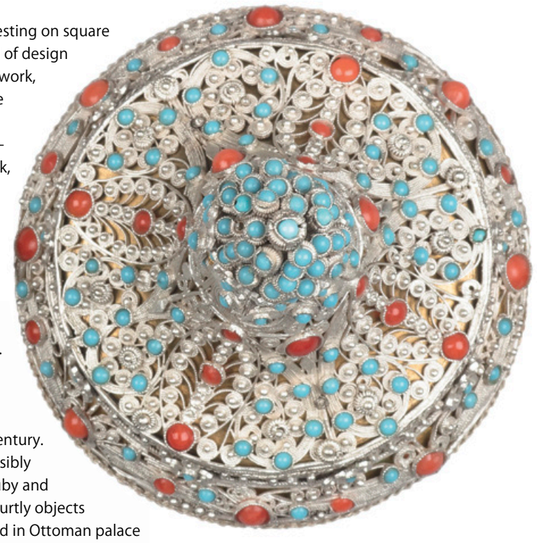


For Ottoman courtly art works similarly decorated with set-jewels from the Topkapi Palace Museum see, Emine Bilirgen *et al, Topkapi Palace: The Imperial Treasury*, Istanbul, 2001, pp. 40-44 and 51. An octagonal jewel-set Qur'an box in the Topkapi Palace treasury bears the inscription "*Mushaf-i Sherif*" (the Nobel Book [Qur'an]). See, J.M. Rogers, *Topkapi: The Treasury*, London 1987, nos: 78, 80. For a comparable jewel-set *sancak* Qur'an box in the Topkapi Palace Museum see, Emine Bilirgen *et al, Topkapi Palace: The Imperial Treasury*, Istanbul, 2001, pp. 112-3.

Provenance:
Ex-Virginia House Museum Collection
Ex-Collection of Ambassador and Mrs. Alexander Weddell, Richmond, Virginia, U.S.A.

EXTREMELY FINE OTTOMAN SILVER-FILIGREE ROSEWATER-SPRINKLER AND INCENSE-BURNER SET

Ottoman Empire
18th Century
Height: 21 cm.



With pointed tops, bodies with two handles, resting on square base on four legs, the pair displays a high level of design and craftsmanship with intricate silver filigree work, mounted with coral and turquoise. In both, the body form is unusual and attention to detail is remarkable. An 18th century Ottoman incense-burner, with identical, high quality filigree work, is in the Heritage Museum, Saint Petersburg. A similar rosewater-sprinklers and incense-burner set is in the Topkapi Palace Museum collections, donated to the Mausoleum of Prophet Muhammad, in Medina, by Khedive Abbas Hilmi Pasha (1816-1854). Please see:

Istanbul – The City and the Sultan, De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, 2006, p. 92.

Coral-set objects were highly favoured and sought after by the Ottoman elite, during the 18th century. This particular aesthetic was possibly inspired by an earlier taste for ruby and emerald-set gold, rock-crystal courtly objects and Chinese porcelains decorated in Ottoman palace workshops, especially favoured during the 16th century. The practise of decorating objects by setting precious stones can be traced back to Byzantine art, particularly for jem-set icons and reliquary.

The design very original and the silver filigree work is of extremely high quality. The only comparative 18th century Ottoman incense-burner, displaying similar high quality filigree work, is in the Heritage Museum, Saint Petersburg.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection



RARE EARLY OTTOMAN *TOMBAK* INCENSE-BURNER

Ottoman Empire
Circa 1600
Height: 21 cm.

Gilt-copper, with hemispherical body and pedestal foot, curved handle and hinged, domed lid decorated with stylised palmettes and arabesques in open work technique, surmounted by a round finial.

Incense-burners were used at ceremonial events and religious gatherings. Incense was believed to purify the air and have protective powers against the evil eye.

Tombak, the technique whereby a gilt and mercury amalgam is applied to copper, and burnt off, leaving gold fused to the substrate, was prized in Ottoman times.

According to teachings [*hadith*] of Prophet Muhammad the use of gold in daily objects represented extravagance and wastefulness. For this reason *tombak* was regarded as a legitimate alternative to gold.

One of the key aspects of Ottoman metalwork is its sculptural form. Prime examples are monumental, often plain *tombak* candlesticks, originally placed either side of the mihrab in imperial mosques of the 16th and 17th century, please see J. M. Roger's *Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman art from the collection of Nasser D. Khalili,* 1995, no. 7, pp. 38-39.

The present incense-burner follows this sculptural aesthetic. The handle acts as a supporting foot, and facilitates the incense-burner to be carried around during ceremonies and the incense to be spread around the room.

The form of the incense-burner stretches back to late antiquity, early Islamic period. For an example of one of these in the David Collection, Copenhagen, and a discussion of the origin of the form, please see Joachim Meyer's *Sensual Delights: Incense Burners and Rosewater Sprinklers from the World of Islam*, The David Collection, Copenhagen, 2015, fig. 6, and pp. 28-29.

Only a handful of this type of incense-burner are known. Foremost is an example from the collection of the late Dr Zia Sofu (1918-1994), a descendent of Ali Pasha of Ioannina (d.1822), renowned collector and connoisseur of Ottoman silver and tombak, published in *Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans – Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire*, London, (ed. Yanni Petsopoulos),1982, pl. 50, (Fig. 1), and a second example also sold at Sotheby's *Arts of the Islamic World*, 8 October 2008, lot 265, (Fig. 2).

Another *tombak* incense-burner in the Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. 16/1564), has a poem about incense engraved on the lid which reads "*misk u anber dimağa gider*" implying the beneficial effect of musk and ambergris on the mind, please see *The Anatolian Civilisations: Seljuk/Ottoman*, exhibition catalogue Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, 1983, p. 258, E. 261 (Fig. 3).

A silver incense burner of almost identical form, dated in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (inv. no. 16) in Istanbul which bears the name "Sultan Mehmed Khan" (Mehmed III) in *thuluth* script indicating that it was owned by the sultan, confirmed by the fact that it was found in Mehmed III's mausoleum please see *The Anatolian Civilisations: Seljuk/Ottoman*, exhibition catalogue Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, 1983, p. 258, E. 260.

Furthermore a *tombak* ewer and basin in the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, with openwork arabesque medallions on the sides, virtually identical to the present piece, is inscribed with the name of the *Valide Sultan*, the mother of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687), please see Tulay Gungen *et al, Tombak, Golden Grace*, Yapi Kredi Publications, Istanbul, 2018, p. 67.

Provenance:
Private UK Collection

Fig. 1: Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans – Decorative Arts from the Ottoman Empire, London, (ed. Yanni Petsopoulos), 1982, pl. 50





Fig. 3: Topkapi Palace Museum (inv. no. E. 261), After The Anatolian Civilisations: Seljuk/ Ottoman, Istanbul, 1983, p. 258

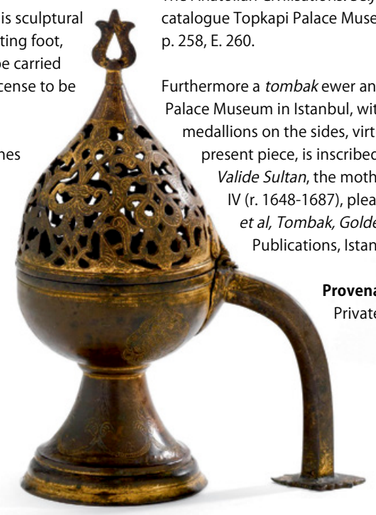


Fig. 2: Sotheby's *Arts of the Islamic World*, 8 October, 2008, lot 92

EXQUISITE ‘TULIP PERIOD’ COFFEE-POT

FINE OTTOMAN *TOMBAK* COFFEE-POT WITH REPOUSSÉ FLOWERS

Ottoman Empire
18th Century
Height: 15 cm.

Gilt-copper, with bulbous body and pointed spout, acanthus scroll handle and hinged, domed lid surmounted by a baluster finial, all surfaces decorated with repousse technique with brunches of roses and floral sprays.

The bunches of roses and floral sprays on the present coffee-pot are very similar to those used in the so-called ‘Tulip Period’, an era of social and cultural enrichment and enlightenment, which took place during the reign of Sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703-1730). The roses and floral sprays can be compared to those decorationg the ‘Fruit Room’ (*Yemiş Odası*) of Ahmed III, in the Topkapi Palace.

Similar roses and floral sprays can also be found as high relief decoration on the marble facades of the two monumental public square fountains built by Ahmed III just outside the Topkapi Palace and in Üsküdar.

Ali Üsküdari, the court painter and lacquer master of the ‘Tulip Period’, also painted closely related roses and floral sprays which can be found in the ‘Selected Poems’ (*Mecmua-i Gazeliyyat*), in the Istanbul University Library, (inv. no. T. 5650), please see: Gülnur Duran’s *Ali Üsküdari*, Kubbealtı, Istanbul, 2008, pp. 140-153.



Turkish coffee (*Türk kahvesi*) is coffee prepared using very finely ground coffee beans, unfiltered. The same method is used in Middle Eastern and eastern European countries. In 1550s Hakem of Aleppo opened the first coffee-shop in Istanbul, the Tahtakale district. Since then coffee-shops became an integral piece of Istanbul’s daily life.

Tombak, the technique whereby a gilt and mercury amalgam is applied to copper, and burnt off, leaving gold fused to the substrate, was highly favoured in the Ottoman Empire from the 15th through to the 19th century.

Aside from its decorative quality it served to allay the poisonous effects of copper for food utensils.

Furthermore, according to sayings [*hadith*] of Prophet Muhammad the use of gold in daily objects represented extravagance and wastefulness. Because of this *tombak* was used as a legitimate substitute for gold.

A *tombak* coffe-pot of similar form is published in Gündağ Kayaoğlu’s *Tombak*, Dışbank, 1992, p. 14.

RARE OTTOMAN *TOMBAK ZAMZAM* (HOLY WATER) EWER

Ottoman Empire
18th Century
Height: 35 cm.

Gilt copper, of baluster form on a slightly splayed, bevelled foot, with a tall waisted neck and domed stopper with chain attached to body, the serpentine spout also with a small stopper and chain, the handle designed as a stylised split palmette, the body and lid engraved with stylised floral sprays.

This *zamzam* ewer is a remarkable and rare example of *tombak* workmanship, displaying the introduction of Europeanized local decorative vocabulary to Ottoman metalwork in the 18th century.

These were used for storing the holy *zamzam* water, brought home from Mecca by pilgrims. According to Muslim tradition, the spring or well of *zamzam* appeared to Hagr and Ishmael after they had been abandoned in the desert by Abraham. Later the spring disappeared and was rediscovered by the Prophet's grandfather Abd al-Muttalib.

One of the rituals of *Hajj* (pilgrimage) is to drink from the spring of *zamzam* and bring the water back to relatives and friends. The containers specially designed for carrying *zamzam* are called *zamzamiyyas*. The water of *zamzam* has been used for other purposes too; Qur'ans were sometimes copied with ink made from it and it was also held to have protective powers. Please see *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*, Ed. Venetia Porter, London, 2012, p. 72

Tombak is the name given to Ottoman mercury-gilded copper wares. Copper is not inert, and food vessels were gilded and tinned so they would not react with the contents. In Islam the use of solid gold (and silk) by men is prohibited, and such plating also circumvented this law.

This magnificent *tombak* ewer illustrates the taste for the rococo in the Ottoman Empire during the eighteenth century. Ottoman interest in European art and culture flourished under the reign of Ahmed III (r.1703-30), with his promotion of embassies in Europe.

A similar *tombak* ewer is published in Gündağ Kayaoğlu's Tombak, Istanbul, 1992, p. 26. Other comparable *zamzam* ewers are published in the exhibition catalogues *Ab-i Hayat*, Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, 2010, p.151 and *Sultan III. Selim Han*, Topkapi Palace Museum, Istanbul, 2009, p. 243.

Provenance:
Ex-Private American Collection



EXTREMELY FINE OTTOMAN *TOMBAK* EWER AND BASIN

Ottoman Empire
18th Century
Ewer Height: 33.5 cm.
Basin Diameter: 37.5 cm.

Set comprising of *tombak* (gilt-copper) lidded ewer, basin and filter; the ewer of truncated pyriform body with tall waisted neck, applied swan-necked spout and handle, hinged domical lid topped by stylised pinecone, hammered, engraved and punched floral garland decoration, together with a large basin and detachable openwork filter.

Tombak, the technique whereby a gilt and mercury amalgam is applied to copper, and burnt off, leaving gold fused to the substrate, was prized in Ottoman times. According to teachings [*hadith*] of Prophet Muhammad the use of gold in daily objects represented extravagance and wastefulness. For this reason tombak was regarded as a legitimate alternative to gold.



One of the key aspects of Ottoman metalwork is its sculptural form. Prime examples are monumental, often plain *tombak* candlesticks, originally placed either side of the mihrab in imperial mosques of the 16th and 17th century, please see J. M. Roger's *Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman art from the collection of Nasser D. Khalili*, 1995, no. 7, pp. 38-39. The present ewer and basin follows this aesthetic. The openwork filter, which acts as a supporting foot, was used as a soap dish (*sabunluk*) as well.

Ewer and basins were used at ceremonial events and religious gathers for washing hands and ablution. Ablution plays an important part in Muslim daily prayers. The face, hands, feet need to be washed before the prayer (*salāt*).

An Ottoman *tombak* ewer and basin in the Topkapi Palace Museum in Istanbul, with openwork arabesque medallions on the sides, is inscribed with the name of the Valide Sultan, the mother of Sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648-1687), see Tülay Güngen et al, *Tombak, Golden Grace*, Yapı Kredi Publications, Istanbul, 2018, p. 67.

Provenance:
Private Belgian Collection



EXQUISITE OTTOMAN SILVER-GILT, GOLD AND ENAMELLED *ASURELIK*

Ottoman Empire
Early 19th Century
Height: 27.6cm.

With bulbous body, the surface with a dark blue enamel layer worked with green enamel and gold arabesques, with medallions featuring painted floral bouquets, gold borders set with pearl-like white enamel dots, elaborately carved handle decorated en-suite.

The present *asurelik* is a rare and extremely fine example of Ottoman manufactured enamelwork of the early nineteenth century, indicating the European influence on Ottoman taste. The origin of late Ottoman enamels is unclear, but it is known that many enamelworkers were invited from Central and Northern Europe. Glass presents the most analogous art form with which to compare the creation of Ottoman enamelwork pieces, both reflective of the cultural exchange between the Ottoman Empire and its neighbours.

The fabrication of enamel consists of crushing glass and applying it to the surface using a binder. The glass is then once again fired so that the crushed glass fuses to the surface by heating the enamel just to the extent of melting to the surface without re-melting it (*Annales du 18e congrès de l'association internationale pour l'histoire du verre*, pp.469-489). The use of this technique by Ottoman craftsmen led them to produce artefacts which could compete against the European imports made for the Middle Eastern market and even surpass them.

Just as Ottoman glassmakers crafted heavily-adorned, sophisticated and challenging objects such as flower vases, kettles, candlesticks, bowls and sweets containers, created to impress their noble of patrons, similar examples exist in enamel. The Topkapi Palace treasury has ornately decorated enamel objects that resemble the present example. For a very similar ewer (inv. no.1886), dated to the 19th century, please see, *The Topkapi Saray Museum: The Treasury*, ed. J.M. Rogers, C. Köseoğlu, Thames and Hudson, 1987, entry p. 204, illustration no. 98.

The painted design is associated with the painted porcelains made at the Imperial factory in Istanbul in the mid-19th century. Further comparable enamelled courtly objects in the Topkapi Palace treasury include: a dessert service which includes a tray, two covered cups, a pot and three spoons (inv. no.7600), a rose-water flask (inv. no.3501), and a writing set (inv. nos.2/769/778). See, *ibid.*, entries pp. 203, 205, illustrations nos. 96, 97 and 113. For further examples see *Istanbul: The City and the Sultan*, exhibition catalogue, De Nieuwe Kerk, Amsterdam, 2006, p.108, no.136. and p.128, no. 183.



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