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MINIATURE PASTED ON AN ALBUM LEAF. 'PRINCE AZAM SHAH ON HORSEBACK'

INDIA, MUGHAL; C. 1690

LEAF: 40.5 × 28.7 CM

The portrait is of the Great Mughal Aurangzeb's third son, Azam Shah. The style is the somber one known from innumerable portraits of Aurangzeb himself on horseback, probably an expression of both the fact that he was a dutiful and pious man and that he and his sons spent most of their life expanding and stabilizing the borders of the Mughal Empire.

The background is almost monochrome, and depth was achieved only by placing some diminutive elephants and a division of cavalry under the rearing horse's forelegs. Azam Shah had waged many wars and ascended the throne shortly after Aurangzeb's death in 1707, but was soon defeated and killed by his half-brother Bahadur Shah.

Published in:

Ravinder Reddy: *Arms and armour of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka: types, decoration and symbolism*, London 2018, p. 153;

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel: *Fighting, Hunting, Impressing. Arms and Armour from the Islamic World 1500-1850*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2021, cat.no. 52;