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MINIATURE PASTED ON AN ALBUM LEAF. 'PORTRAIT OF A TURKISH AMBASSADOR AT THE COURT OF SHAH JAHAN'

INDIA, MUGHAL; BETWEEN 1651 AND 1654

MINIATURE: 22.8 × 11.2 CM

As a whole, Mughal artists were more interested in a realistic depiction of the world than their Persian colleagues, and portraiture developed into an independent genre after 1600.

Two Ottoman ambassadors visited the Mughal court under Shah Jahan: Muhyi al-Din in 1651 and Zulfiqar Aga in 1654. There are indications that the latter is shown here, and in any case, the artist has imbued the dignified ambassador with an exotic aura that is not expressed only in his turban and fur-trimmed caftan.

The pouch in his hands contains a document. Since the fabric looks Indian, it is undoubtedly a missive from the Great Mughal to the sultan in Istanbul.

Published in:

Sotheby's, London, 22/10-1992, lot 503;

Kjeld von Folsach and Anne-Marie Keblow Bernsted: *Woven Treasures: Textiles from the World of Islam*, David Collection, Copenhagen 1993, fig. 6, p. 42;

Kjeld von Folsach, Torben Lundbæk and Peder Mortensen (eds.): *Sultan, Shah and Great Mughal: the history and culture of the Islamic world*, The National Museum, Copenhagen 1996, cat.no. 386;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat.no. 71;

Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 106;

Linda Komaroff: *Gifts of the Sultan: the arts of giving at the Islamic courts*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles 2011, cat.no. 166;

Linda Komaroff: *The gift tradition in Islamic art*, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Los Angeles 2012, cat.no. 49;

Suraiya Faroqhi: *A cultural history of the Ottomans: the imperial elite and its artefacts*, London 2016, pl. 9 and pp. 72-73;