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MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF AL-SARAI'S *NAHJ AL-FARADIS* (THE PATHS OF PARADISE)

IRAN, HERAT; C. 1465

LEAF: 41.2 × 29.8 CM

The miniature, which like 13/2012 and 14/2012 comes from a manuscript describing Muhammad's mystical ascension to heaven (*miraj*), shows the Prophet and the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril) at the pond of al-Kawthar before one of Paradise's richly ornamented gates. Both the ribbed domes and tiled walls are covered with rich vegetal ornamentation of various types, in keeping with contemporary architecture from Central Asia. Beside the pond are countless vessels of gold and jade and celadon-glazed ceramics from which the believer can quench his thirst after the tribulations of the Day of Judgment.

The Garden of Paradise itself, with its many spiritual and sensual delights, is not depicted in this beautiful painting, and no artist would probably have been able to describe it to the believer as intensely as accounts in the Koran and later writings.

Of the museum's seven paintings from this manuscript, the refined 'Gates of Paradise' is the one that most clearly points toward the artistic zenith of Timurid painting at the end of the 15th century.

Text page (recto)

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Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora islamica: plantemotiver i islamisk kunst*, Davids Samling, København 2013, cat. 1, pp. 13-14;

Eleanor Sims: "The Nahj al-Faradis of Sultan Abu Sa'id ibn Sultan Muhammad ibn Mirranshah: an illustrated Timurid ascension text of the "Interim" period" in *Journal of the David Collection*, 4, 2014, cat. 9, fig. 27, pp. 132-133;

Kjeld von Folsach: "Paradise on earth: water and the Islamic garden", in John Kuhlmann Madsen, Nils Overgaard Andersen and Ingolf Thuesen (eds.): *Water of life : essays from a symposium held on the occasion of Peder Mortensen's 80th birthday*, Copenhagen 2016, fig. 1, pp. 184-185, 187;

Barbara Drake Boehm and Melanie Holcomb (eds.): *Jerusalem, 1000-1400: Every people under heaven*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 2016, fig. 149e, pp. 295 and 299;

Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen: *Muslimernes Muhammad - og alle andres*, København 2020, p. 71;

Joachim Meyer, Rasmus Bech Olsen and Peter Wandel: *Beyond words: calligraphy from the World of Islam*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2024, cat. 77, pp. 224-225;