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MINIATURE. "A MOUNTED PRINCE HUNTING WITH A FALCON"

INDIA, DECCAN, GOLCONDA?; 1680-1700

LEAF: 29.9 × 19.8 CM

Although it was painted in the period just around the time when Golconda – the last of the independent Deccan states – was forced to surrender to the Great Mughal Aurangzeb in 1687, this miniature still features the splendor and intense colors that characterized earlier painting from this region.

At the bottom of the foreground are two jackals fleeing and various birds at a watercourse surrounded by lovely flowers. The splendidly rendered prince reflects the formal portraiture of Mughal Delhi that at this point had also made its mark in the Deccan, but the radiant colors of the textiles against the stallion's refined, light-blue tone reveals the painter's southern origins. As the group glides from left to right, it seems to freeze for a second when the orange-clad page makes surprising eye contact with the beholder.

The middle ground is dominated by the curiously shaped cliff

formations that can be seen in the region itself and in its painting. There are various kinds of game as well as a lion and an ox that have almost merged with the cliffs. In the distance, behind a diminutive city, the army is marching with horses, elephants, and camels, fluttering banners, ensigns, kettledrums, and trumpets. As if this wasn't enough, the men are also accompanied by two angels, one holding a sword, the other a trumpet.

There is no information at present about the identity of the artist and the elegant prince, but the painting's fascinating richness of detail and high quality are indisputable.

Published in:

George Michell, Catherine Lampert and Tristram Holland (eds.): *In the image of man: the Indian perception of the Universe through 2000 years of painting and sculpture*, Hayward Gallery, London 1982, pp. 78 and 155, cat.no. 214;

Mark Zebrowski: *Deccani painting*, London 1983, pp. 212-214, fig. 183, p. 229, tav. xxi;

Mark Zebrowski: "Painting" in George Michell (ed.): *Islamic heritage of the Deccan*, Bombay 1986, p. 106, pl. 16;

George Michell and Mark Zebrowski: *Architecture and art of the Deccan Sultanates*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 213-216, pl. 9;

Sotheby's, London, 6/10-2015, lot 46;

Salam Kaoukji: *Precious Indian weapons and other princely accoutrements*, London 2017, p. 477;

Prahlad Bubbar (ed.): *Immaculate conception: desire and the creative impulse 300BC-1930*, 5th October - 22th November 2017, Prahlad Bubbar, London 2017, p. 50;

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat.no. 46;

John Seyller, Jagdish Mittal: *Deccani paintings, drawings, and manuscripts in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art*, Hyderabad 2018, fig. 18, pp. 163-164;