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BRUSH DRAWING HEIGHTENED WITH GOLD AND WATERCOLORS,
PASTED ON AN ALBUM LEAF. 'TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL'

INDIA, MUGHAL; C. 1610
LEAF: 35.3 × 26.5 CM

DRAWING: 11 × 6.5 CM

This little but curiously fascinating drawing seems to have been inspired by depictions of the Biblical story of Tobias and the Angel – a motif that was popular at the Mughal court in around 1600. But in this drawing, it is the boy Tobias who is shown as an angel in a leaf skirt that was typical of the Indian Bhil tribe. The angel Raphael, in contrast, has been transformed into a woman, who in a slightly provocative manner bares her leg, covered with a strange stocking of animal hide. The inspiration for this figure could very well have come from European allegorical depictions of *Infortunium* (misfortune) or *Luxuria* (lust).

The highly detailed and unbelievably finely executed drawing was clearly influenced by the hatching technique that European engravers used to create volume and light and shadow.

The drawing has been attributed to Manohar, who like his father, Basawan, was among the most highly valued artists in the studios of Akbar and Jahangir. Both painters were profoundly captivated by European art, an interest that was actively supported by their princely employers.

Published in:

Amina Okada: "Les peintres moghols et le theme de Tobie et de l'Ange" in *Arts Asiatiques*, 43, 1988, pp. 8-9, fig. 6;

Gauvin Alexander Bailey: *Counter reformation symbolism and allegory in Mughal painting*, Dissertation, Harvard University, 1996, Ann Arbor 1996, fig. 105;

Sotheby's, London, 6/10- 2015, lot 19;