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CAT. 32. A FANCIFUL PLANT

IRAN, TABRIZ; C. 1525-1540

This delicately painted composition features three plants with a number of similar, though highly imaginative, corollas that in some cases seem to be made up of leaves rather than petals. On the two largest, the petals enclose a pomegranate-like body. The painting was executed in gold and silver on paper tinted brown.

Scattered among the plants are three cocks and a hen whose tail feathers could be viewed as part of the already fanciful flowers.

The painting is most closely related to the type made as margin decorations in the most luxurious manuscripts produced under Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-1576). Based on other works, it can be ascribed to Sultan Muhammad, one of the Safavid shah's most trusted and outstanding artists.