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MINIATURE FROM A COPY OF *KITAB AL-HASHAISH*, AN ARABIC TRANSLATION OF DIOSCORIDES'S *DE MATERIA MEDICA*. 'THE DOCTOR'S OFFICE'

IRAQ, BAGHDAD?; 1224

LEAF: 32.2 × 24 CM

This miniature is a lovely example of the oldest preserved book painting from the Islamic world. It was made in Iraq by Abdallah ibn al-Fadl, who presumably was responsible for both copying and illustrating it. The style is an example of 'Arab painting,' in which Byzantine and local Christian pictorial conventions were still found, for example in the use of haloes and the folds of garments.

The manuscript contains a number of depictions of medicinal plants. The fact that there are also figurative depictions of more 'unnecessary' scenes, such as this doctor's office, has been considered by many to signify the birth of Islamic book painting.

Published in:

Hugo Buchthal: "Early Islamic miniatures from Baghdâd" in *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 1942:5, p. 29, fig. 23;

Ernst J. Grube: "Materialien zum Dioskurides Arabicus" in Richard Ettinghausens (ed.): *Aus der Welt der islamischen Kunst : Festschrift für Ernst Kühnel zum 75. Geburtstag am 26.10.1957*, Berlin 1959, p. 177, VI:23;

*The arts of Islam : Hayward gallery, 8 April - 4 July 1976*, London 1976, cat. 521;

Lise Manniche: *Sacred luxuries: fragrance, aromatherapy, and cosmetics in Ancient Egypt*, London 1999, p. 58;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Art from the World of Islam in The David Collection*, Copenhagen 2001, cat. 21;

Alfried Wiczorek, Mamoun Fansa, Harald Meller (eds.): *Saladin und die Kreuzfahrer*, Landesmuseum für Vorgeschichte, Halle, Mainz 2005, Abb. 88, p. 158;

Ahmed Djebbar (ed.): *L'age d'or des sciences arabes*, Institut du monde arabe, Paris 2005, cat. 87;

Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat. 3;

Brian Andreasen [et al.]: *litteraturDK*, ed. Benedicte Kieler, [Copenhagen] 2009, p. 127;

Kjeld von Folsach, Joachim Meyer: *The Human Figure in Islamic Art – Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2017, cat. 21;

Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (eds.): *By the pen and what they write: writing in Islamic art and architecture*, New Haven 2017, fig. 113, p. 138 and p. viii;

Joachim Meyer, Rasmus Bech Olsen and Peter Wandel: *Beyond words: calligraphy from the World of Islam*, The David Collection, Copenhagen 2024, cat. 15, p. 139;