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MINIATURE FROM ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-SUFI'S *KITAB SUWAR AL-KAWAKIB*. 'THE CONSTELLATION GEMINI'

IRAN; BEGINNING OF 15TH CENTURY

LEAF: 21.4 × 14.3 CM

The oldest preserved illustrated manuscript from the Islamic world is a copy of al-Sufi's 'Book of Fixed Stars' from 1009. So that the individual constellations could be recognized, it was natural to show their mutual locations graphically. It soon became equally natural to make simple line drawings with the outlines of the constellations that the Muslims had in many cases adopted from the scholars of Antiquity.

This Timurid miniature depicts the constellation Gemini projected onto a celestial globe. On the other side of the leaf is a mirror image of Gemini as it appears in the sky.

Published in:

Crofton Black and Nabil Saidi: *Islamic manuscripts: catalogue*, Sam Fogg Rare Books and Manuscripts, London 2000, cat.no. 26;  
Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 17;