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A STUDY OF EXOTIC FOWL IN A BUSH, PAINTED IN SILVER AND GOLD ON BROWN PAPER. ATTRIBUTED TO SULTAN MUHAMMAD

IRAN, TABRIZ; C. 1525-1540

LEAF: 22.1 × 14.4 CM

This elegant little painting was only made with two colors, gold and silver, which glitter – or rather glittered – against the brown background. While the gold has retained its intensity, the silver has oxidized and become darker.

One or more fanciful plants grow from a gnarled, half-decayed tree stump or rocks, sprouting curled leaves and large composite flower heads. Four fowl-like birds sit among the plants, three apparently cocks and the fourth a hen.

This masterfully executed painting might be reminiscent of the type that was used as a margin painting around a written text, but it could also be a model for a princely bookbinding.

Published in:
Sotheby's, London, 8/7-1980, lot 201;
Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora islamica: plantemotiver i islamisk kunst*,
Davids Samling, København 2013, cat.no. 32;