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CAT. 24. "THE JUDGMENT OF SOLOMON." MINIATURE PASTED ON AN ALBUM LEAF. SIGNED SHAYKH ABBASI

IRAN, ISFAHAN; 1664–1665

THE MINIATURE H: 21.6; W: 14.9 CM

Solomon incarnates the divinely chosen monarch both in the Koran and in the other tales in which he appears in an Islamic context. In addition to great wisdom, he also possesses magical powers, rules over animals, especially birds, and supernatural creatures such as angels and the demon-like *jinn*s.

All of these creatures witness "The Judgment of Solomon" in the center of the picture. The king on his throne has raised his arm toward one of two women. Both claim to be the mother of the same baby boy and Solomon resolves the conflict by passing the judgment that the child be cut in half and divided between them. This reveals the real mother. She is the one who gives up her son to avoid his being killed.

In the foreground is a group of men in different kinds of clothing in what looks very much like a scene from the Iranian court in the period

when the painting was made. It shows Iranians in large turbans, Indians in flat turbans, and Europeans in their broad-brimmed hats.