



Inv. no. 21b/2006 & 21a/2006

DOUBLE FRONTISPIECE PAINTING FROM A COPY OF FIRDAWSI'S SHAHNAMA. "A PRINCELY COUPLE WITH COURTIERS IN A GARDEN"

WESTERN IRAN OR IRAQ; BEGINNING OF 15TH CENTURY

EACH LEAF: 26 × 14.6 CM

Works of fiction were often introduced with a frontispiece painting whose content had nothing to do directly with that of the manuscript. It might be a "portrait" of the one who commissioned the book, but there are also often depictions of Solomon and Bilqis, the Prophet Muhammad's ascension to heaven on the winged creature Buraq, etc.

This Jalayirid or early Timurid double frontispiece shows a princely couple – perhaps the one that commissioned the work – in what resembles an enclosed garden. The rich vegetation contrasts with the landscape in the background. The elegant couple is the focal point of something that looks like a cross between an audience and a luncheon on the grass.

Published in:  
Sotheby's, London, 1/12-1969, lot 41;  
Kjeld von Folsach: *For the Privileged Few: Islamic Miniature Painting from The David Collection*, Louisiana, Humlebæk 2007, cat.no. 12;

Kjeld von Folsach: *Flora islamica: plantemotiver i islamisk kunst*, Davids Samling, København 2013, cat.no. 3;  
Kjeld von Folsach: "Paradise on earth: water and the Islamic garden" in John Kuhlmann Madsen, Nils Overgaard Andersen and Ingolf Thuesen (eds.): *Water of life: essays from a symposium held on the occasion of Peder Mortensen's 80th birthday*, Copenhagen 2016, pp. 186-187, fig. 2 (only 21a/2006);  
<http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/new/jnama/card/cemanuscript:2143526756>