LOT 1182

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF DR. CLAUS VIRCH

A DOUBLE-SIDED ILLUSTRATION TO THE TARIKH-I-ALFI: THE HISTORY OF A THOUSAND YEARS

A large double-sided folio with illustrations and text on both sides. The leaf damp-stained in the lower half as are many of the other known folios. Recto: a ruler with a minister seated within a palace with a bowl of gold coins. Scholars and dignitaries approaching. Verso: a ruler leaning forward as scholars and dignitaries entreat him.

The “Tarikh-i-Alfi” or “History of a Thousand Years” was written for the Mughal Emperor Akbar between ca. 1582-88 and likely illustrated just after ca. 1588, the illustrations surrounding the panels of text.

As described by Akbar’s minister and historian Abu'l-Fazl in his recounting of the history of Akbar’s reign:

“As his Majesty has become acquainted with the treasure of history, he has ordered
several well-informed writers to compose a work containing the events which have taken place in the seven zones for the last one thousand years.” The text recounts a history of the ruling Caliphs through the Islamic period.

The present work is a rare folio. There are only approximately eighteen or so extant leaves known which have been dispersed into museum and private collections worldwide including The Museum of Fine Arts Boston, The Freer Gallery, The British Museum, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The San Diego Museum of Art and The National Museum New Delhi with folios formerly in the collections of Nasli and Alice Heeramanek and Edwin Binney III.


Opaque watercolor heightened with gold on paper
image: 16 1/2 by 8 3/8 in. (41.9 by 21.3 cm);
folio: 18 5/8 by 9 7/8 in. (42.3 by 25 cm) unframed
India, Imperial Mughal, circa 1590

ESTIMATE 20,000-30,000 USD
Lot Sold: 68,750 USD