

The Manuscript Collection of Tipu Sultan of Mysore

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Etching of Seringapatam

published by D.
Orme & Co. in
1792 and part
of King George
III's Topo-
graphical
Collection

(BL Ktop CXV,
67-2)



A VIEW OF SERINGAPATAM.

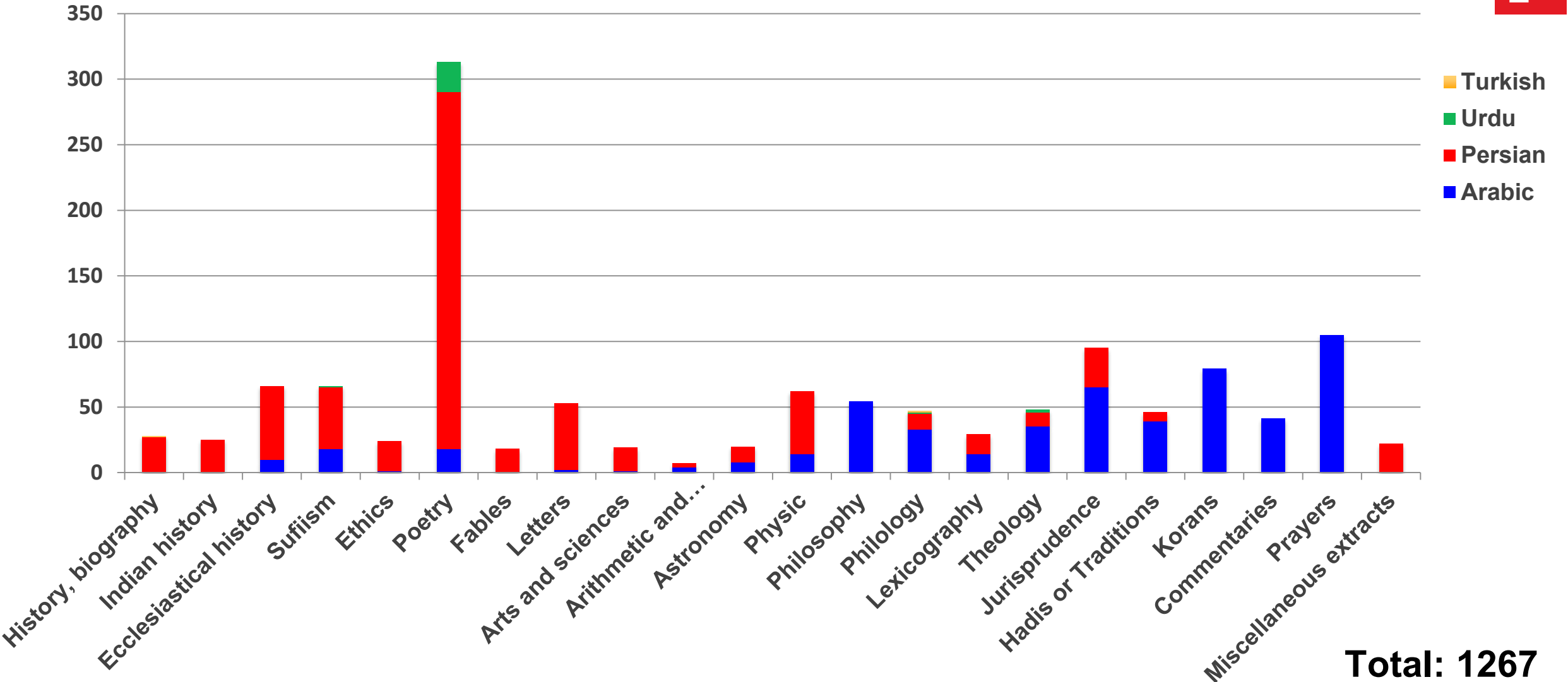
A View of the Isle & Fort of Seringapatam, The Capital of Tippoo Sultan, and in which are contained his Palace and Treasuries. The taking of which was the chief object of our Military movements during the late War in India. And to save which Tippoo Sultan agreed to pay the expenses of the War & relinquish the most fertile Staff of his Territories, and gave his two Sons as Hostages for the performance of the Treaty.

Sold & Publ'd by D. Orme & Co. No. 14. Old Broad Street, London, July 30. 1792.

Description of the Library by Capt. David Price

The library and depôt of manuscripts, was a dark room, in the S.E. angle of the upper virandah of the interior quadrangle of the palace. **Instead of being beautifully arranged, as in the Bodleian, the books were heaped together in hampers, covered with leather; to consult which, it was necessary to discharge the whole contents on the floor.** The selection, which we completed, with all the care and discrimination in our care to bestow, extended, in the whole, to the number of **300**, and something over, all of them manuscripts of the choicest description; whether for matter, beauty of penmanship, or richness of decoration. These were, however, by superior authority, afterwards returned to the general mass...We did not take any account of the remainder, or bulk, of this princely library. **But I should conceive that it must have contained, altogether, from 3 to 4,000 volumes,** or about ten times the number of our selection.

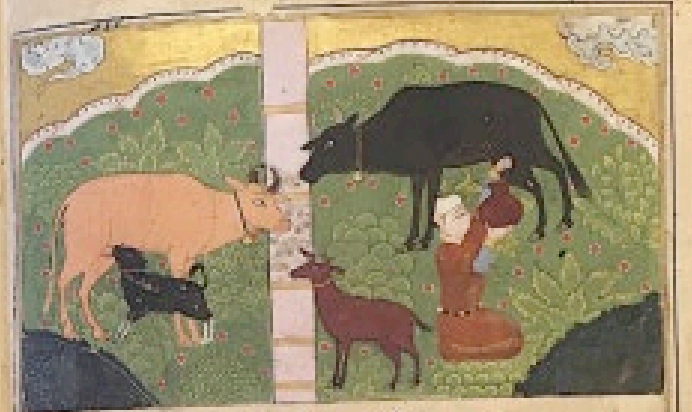
Subject distribution of Tipu Sultan collection based on Charles Stewart's *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809)



Total: 1267

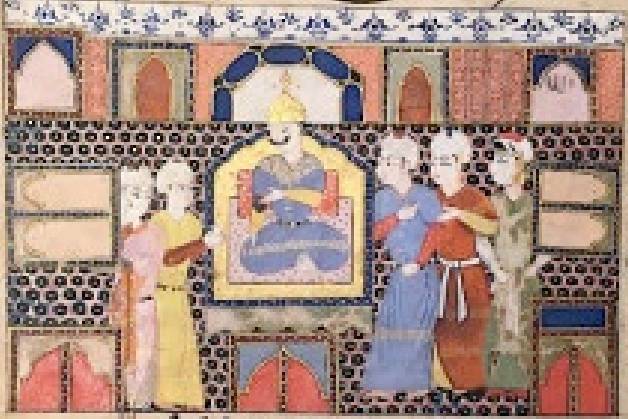
Nasir Shah's Book of Delights

The *Ni'matnāmah-i Nāṣirshāhī* written for the Sultan of Malwa, Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Khilji (r.1469-1500), and completed by his son Nasir al-Din Shah (r.1500-1510).



نوعی دیگر سنبلوسه غیاث شاهی
 قیمه خوب بخته با هنجند از پیاز قیمه کرده
 و زنجبیل خرد کرده ربع آن و نیم تولچه سیر
 آس کرده همه یکجا میزند و زعفران
 سه تولچه در کلاب آس کرده با
 قیمه میامیزد و از میان شوربا با دجنان

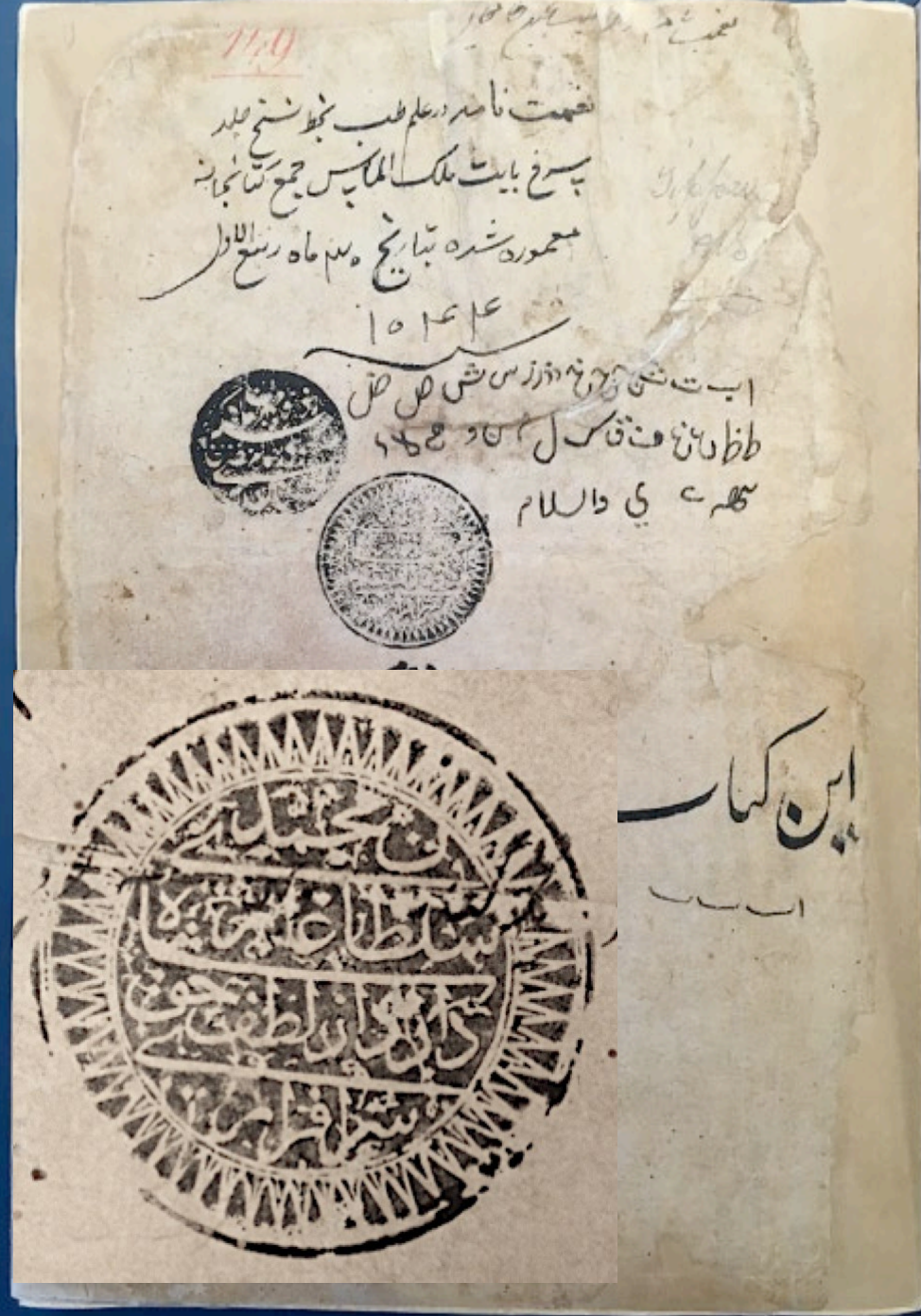
بیرون آرند و با قیمه یکجا کرده در سنبلوسه
 پزک کنند و در میان روغن برشته سازند خواه که



از آن تنک
 خشک
 باشد از آن
 میند یا از

خمیر خام هر سه جنس سنبلوسه ببرد لذیذ باشد
 دیگر کلتوا سر غیاث شاهی وصلهای تنک از گوشت
 بکیرند و در روغن بیک کاه رهنک و میسج
 بدهند و گوشت را با زرد چوبه قدری میامیزند

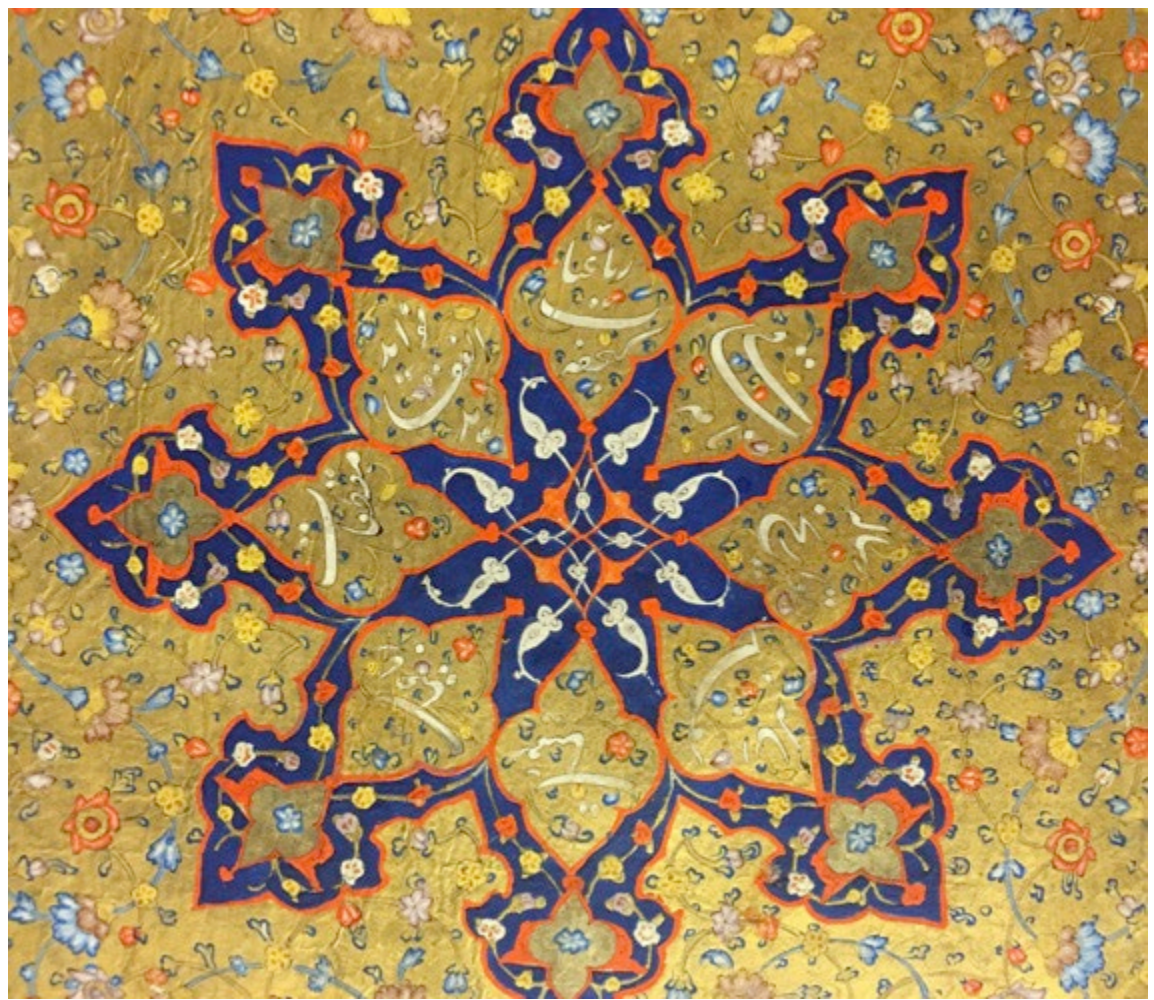
IO Islamic 149



Inscription: “Ni‘matnamah on the science of medicine in naskh script, in a red binding, from the possession of Malik Almās, entered the court library on 30 Rab I 1044 (23 Sept 1634).”

Malik Almas was an official for the Qutb Shahi rulers of Golconda. This manuscript might have been presented to Muhammad ‘Adil Shah on the occasion of a dynastic marriage.

Circular seal of Sultan Muhammad ‘Adil Shah who ruled in Bijapur from 1627-57.



Kulliyāt-i Ahlī Shirāzī containing the collected works of the poet Ahlī (d. 1535) copied, according to a note in a later hand, by the poet himself for Shah Ismaʿil Safavi in 920/1514. Shiraz, 16th century **IO Islamic 550**

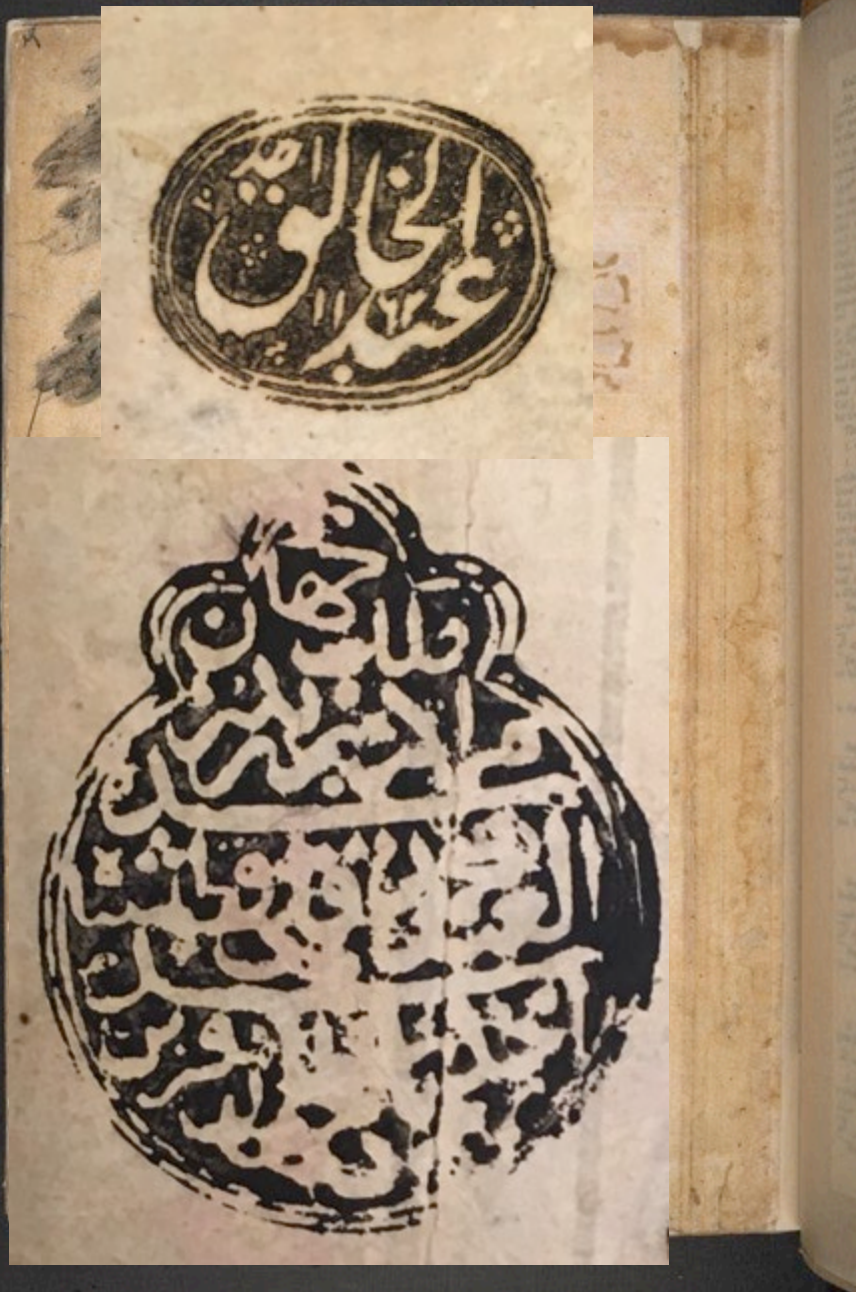
Chronology

Copied in Shiraz in the 16th century

Two seals of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, Sultan of Golconda (r. 1580-1612), one dated 1012 (1603/4)

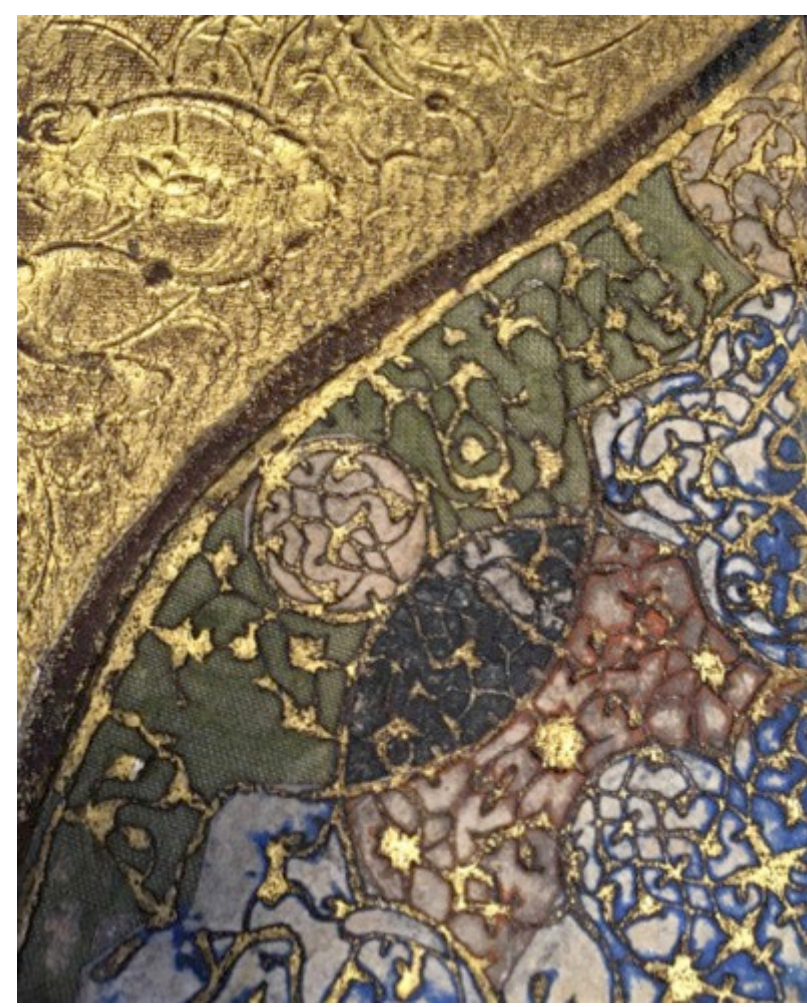
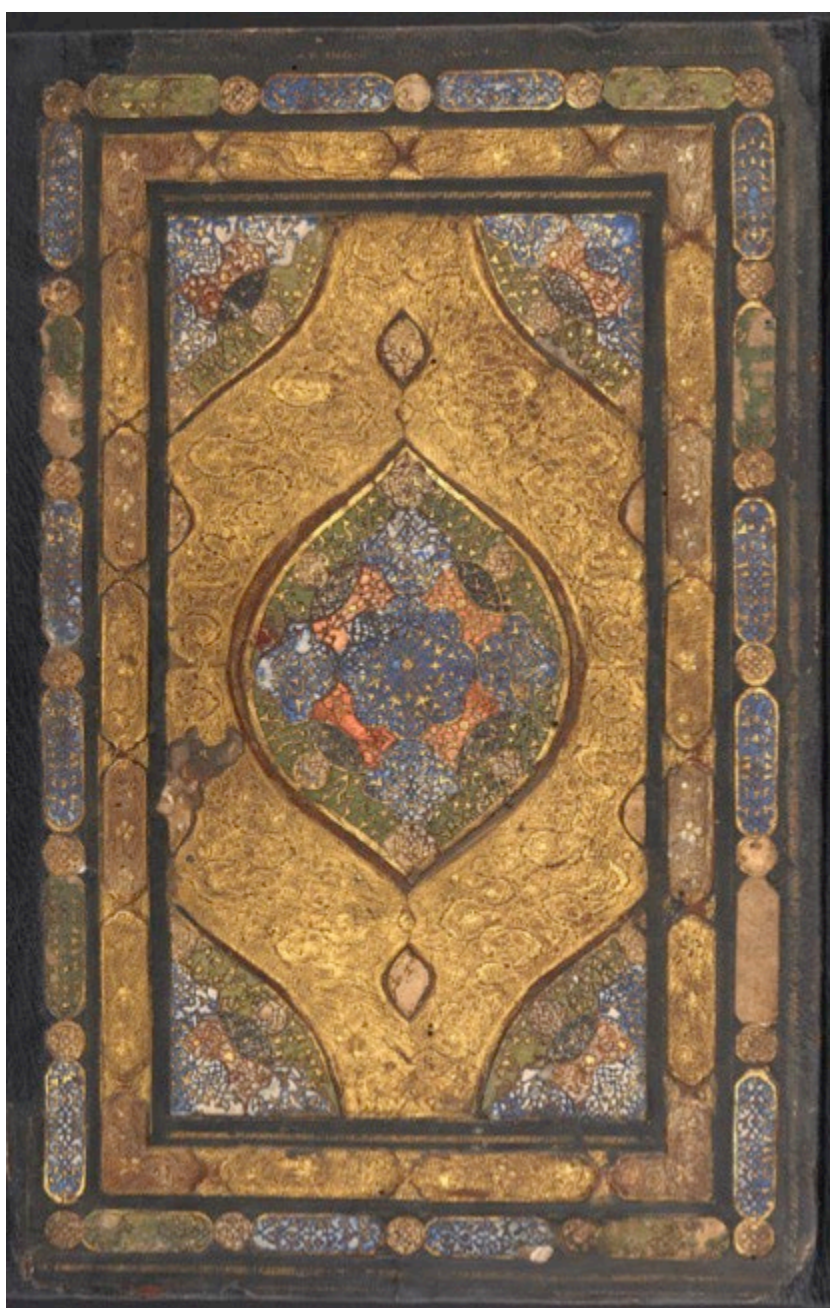
Inscription: Purchased in the reign of Tanah Shah (the last of the Qutb Shahs r. 1672-86) for the sum of 300 hun in 1120 hijri (1708/9)

Seal of 'Abd al-Khāliq, RY 1 [Mughal emperor Ahmad Shah], 1162 (1748/9). He owned at least 5 manuscripts in Tipu's collection. One had belonged previously to the 'Adil Shah rulers of Bijapore



Fine lacquer covers forming a single composition with verses round the edge, contemporary with the manuscript

IO Islamic 550



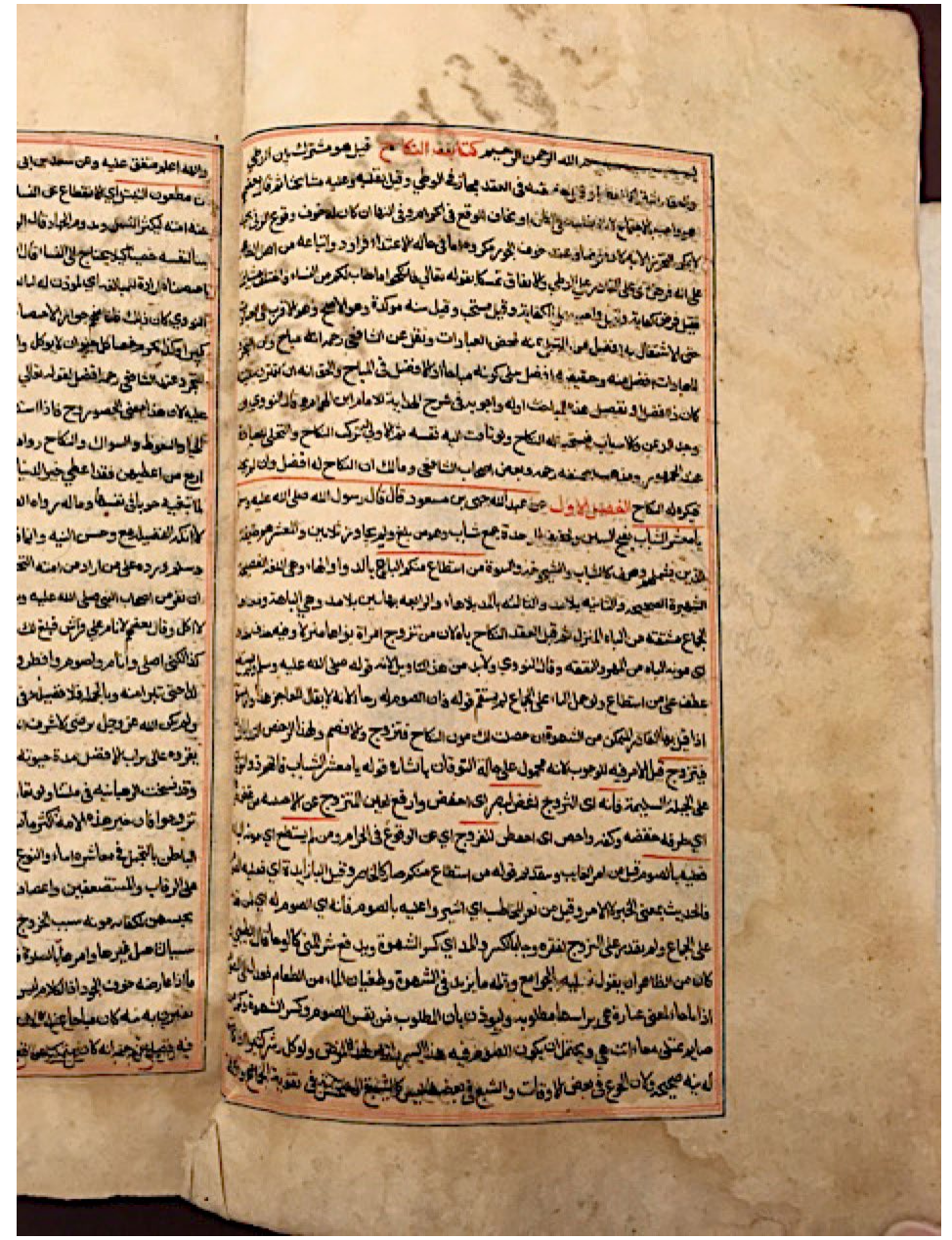
Doublures showing filigree work on a painted fabric ground

IO Islamic 550

A commentary on Hadith

The third quarter of the commentary *Mirqāt al-mafātīḥ: Sharḥ Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ* by ‘Alī ibn Sulṭān Muḥammad al-Qārī al-Harawī (d. 1605 or 6)

IO Islamic 343 (Loth 160)





Inscriptions

'Select'. Entered the state library on 11 Safar 1158 (15 Mar 1745)

Inspected 18 Jum I 1164 (14 April 1751)

Inspected 5 Zu'l-H 1165 (14 Oct 1752)

Seals

Iqtidār Khān, 1179 (1765/6), son of 'Abd al-Vahhab below.

Naṣīr al-Dawlah Bahādur Nuṣrat Jang, 1186 (1772/3), ie. Nawab 'Abd al-Vahhab Khan Nasir al-Dawlah Nusrat Jang Bahadur (d.1803), governor of Chitore and brother of Muhammad 'Ali, Nawab of Arcot (r.1749–1795)

In 1780 Tipu took Nawab 'Abd al-Vahhab prisoner and removed his possessions to Seringapatam

Binding

With the
remnants of a
flap

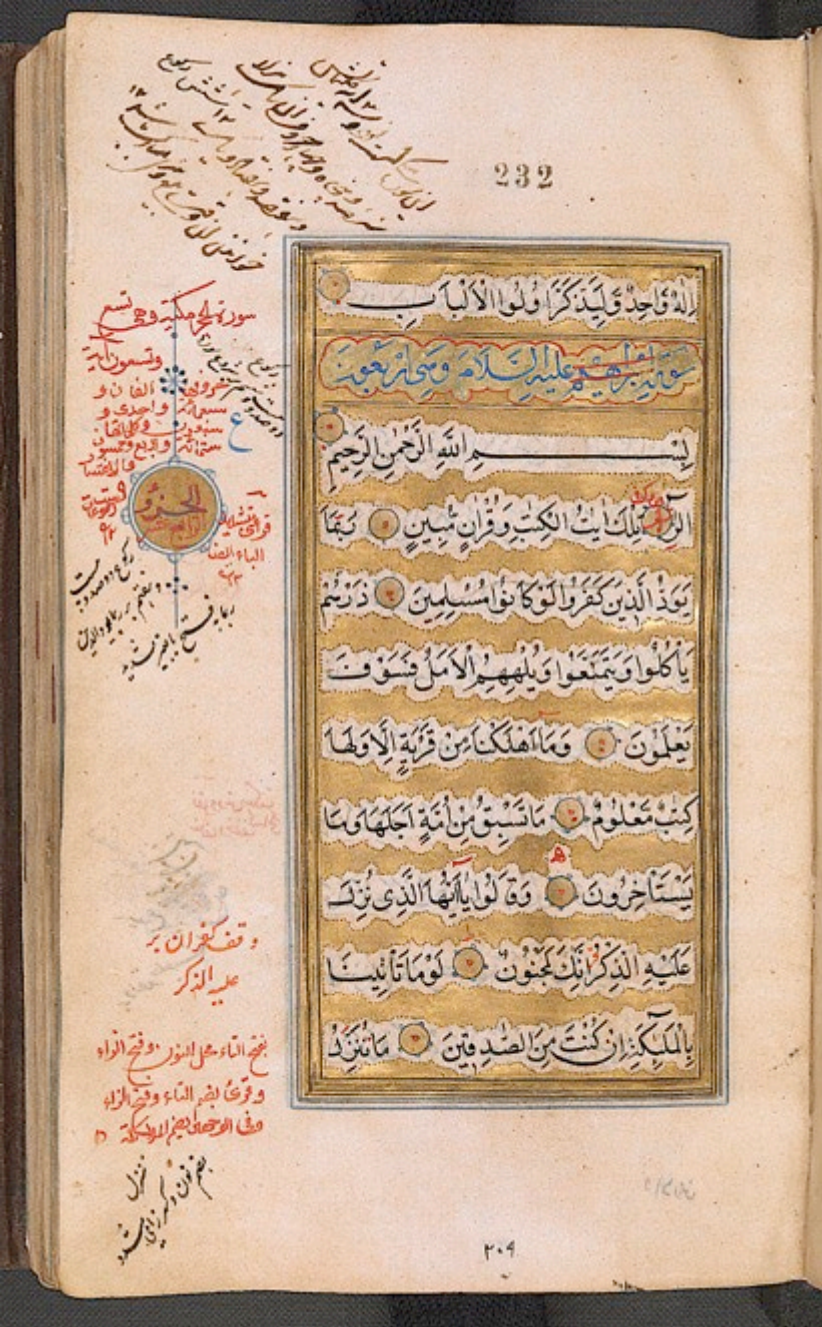
IO Islamic 343



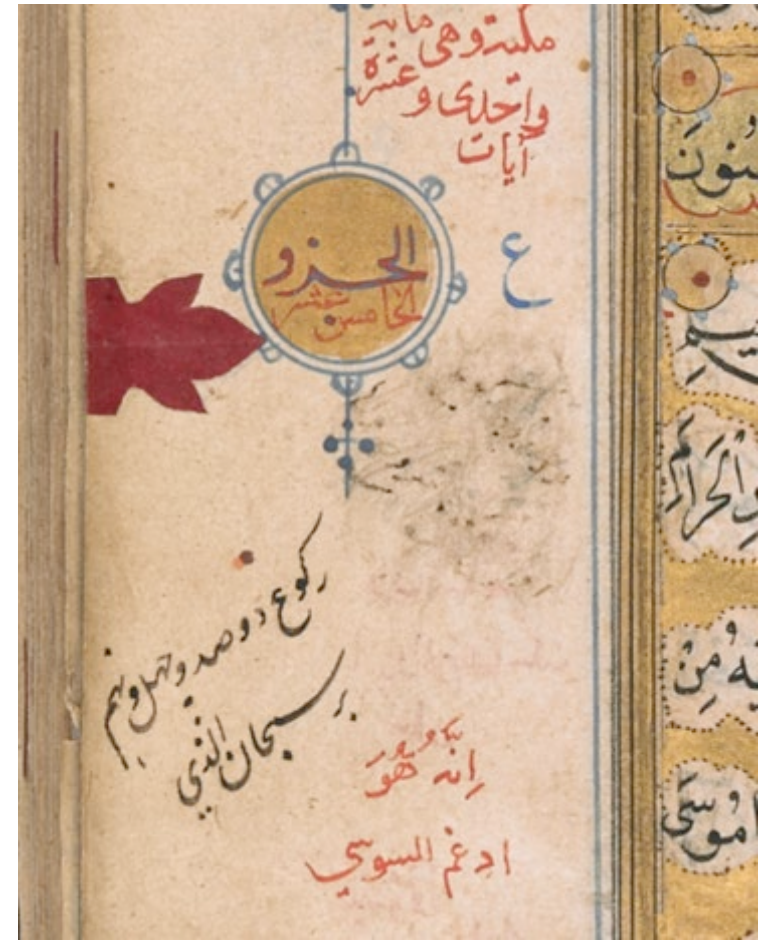
Tipu Sultan's Qur'an

Interventions at various stages

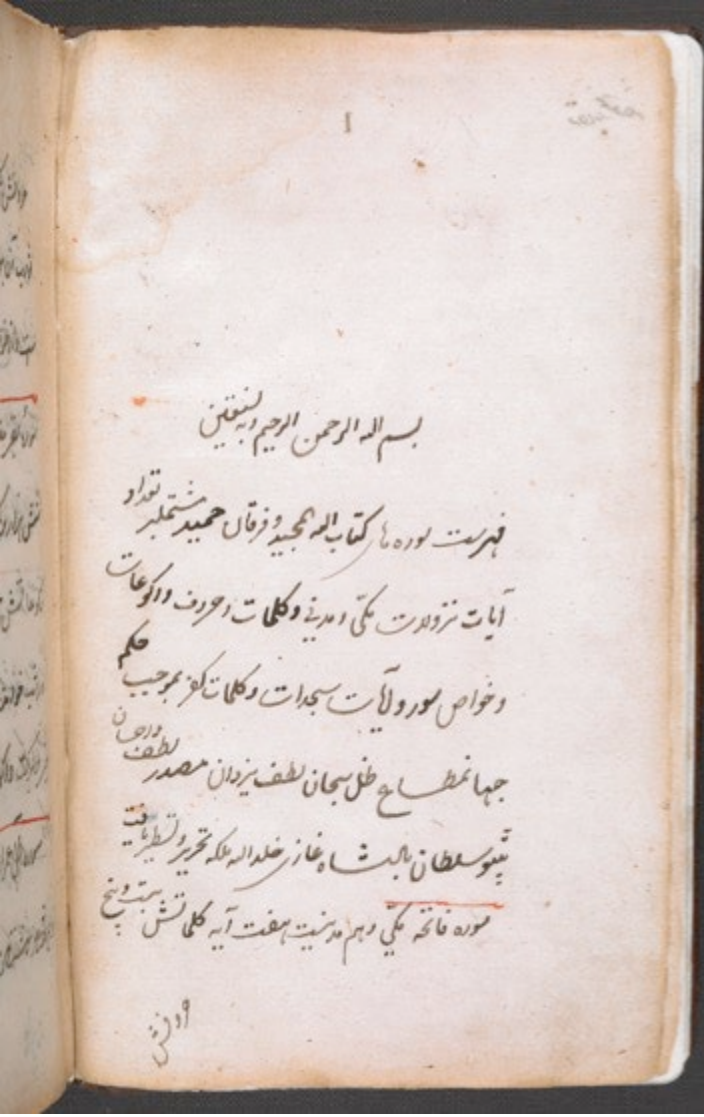
IO Islamic 3562



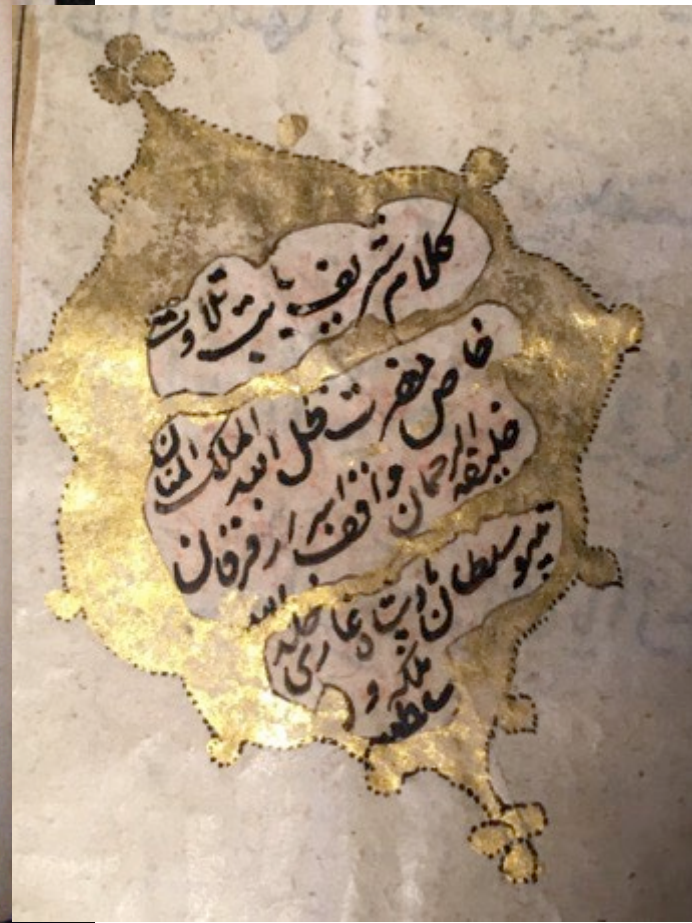
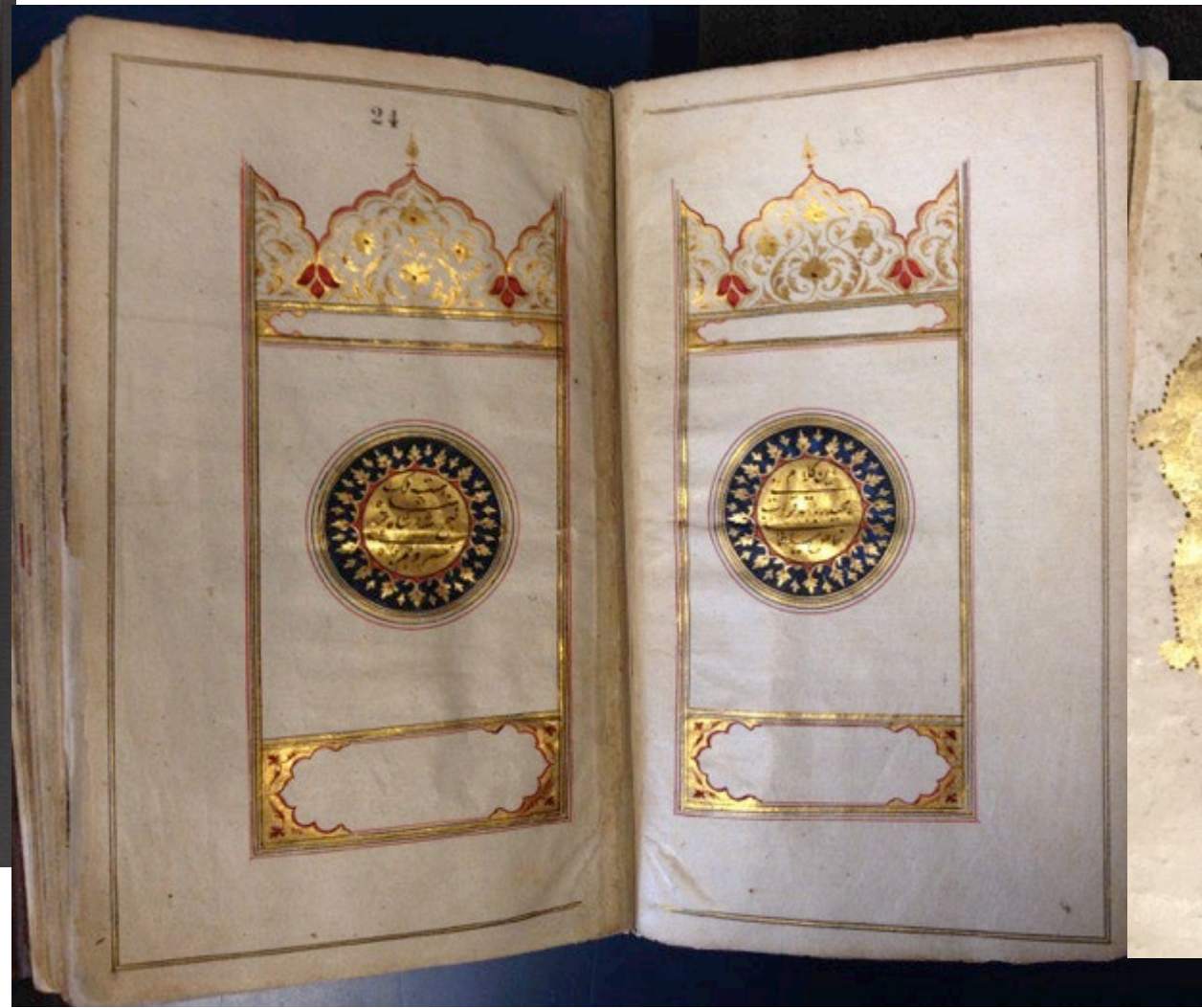
Floral markers indicate every quarter *Juz'* in the first half of the book Later they are undecorated gilt medallions. *Surahs* are usually marked with a paper finger tab.



Tipu's personal touch



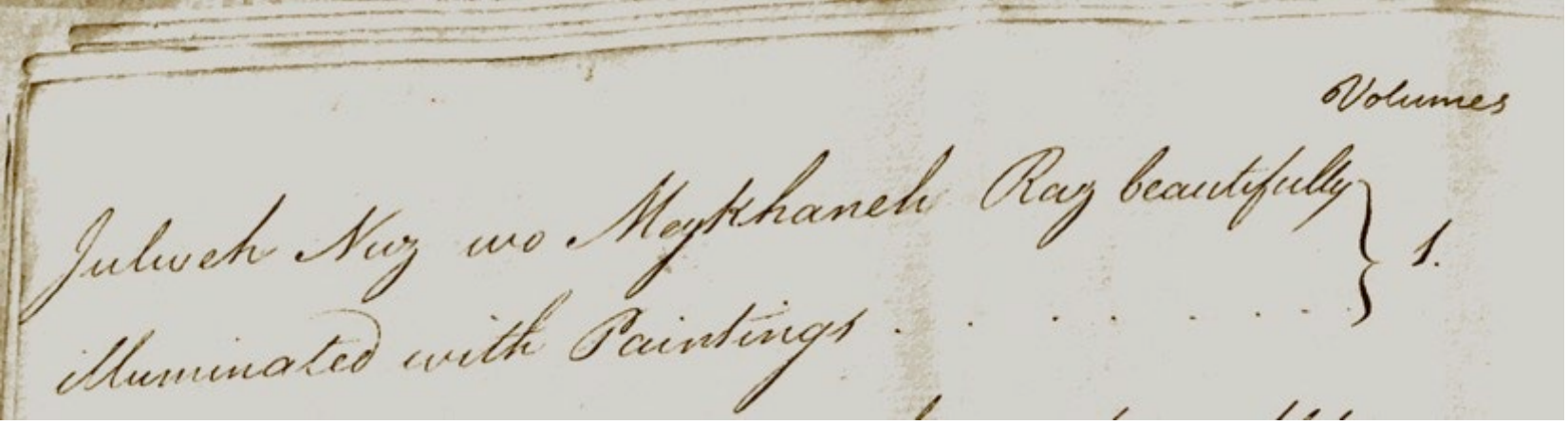
Index of Surahs and places for bowing and prostrating



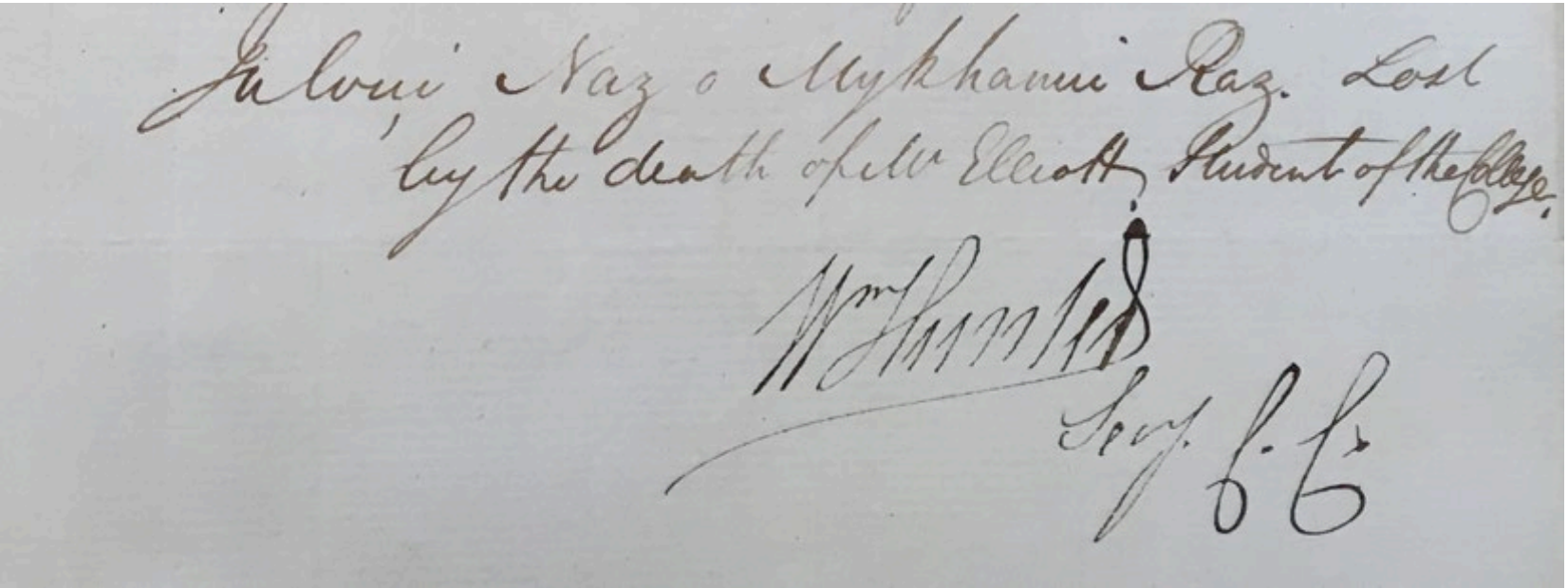
IO Islamic 3562



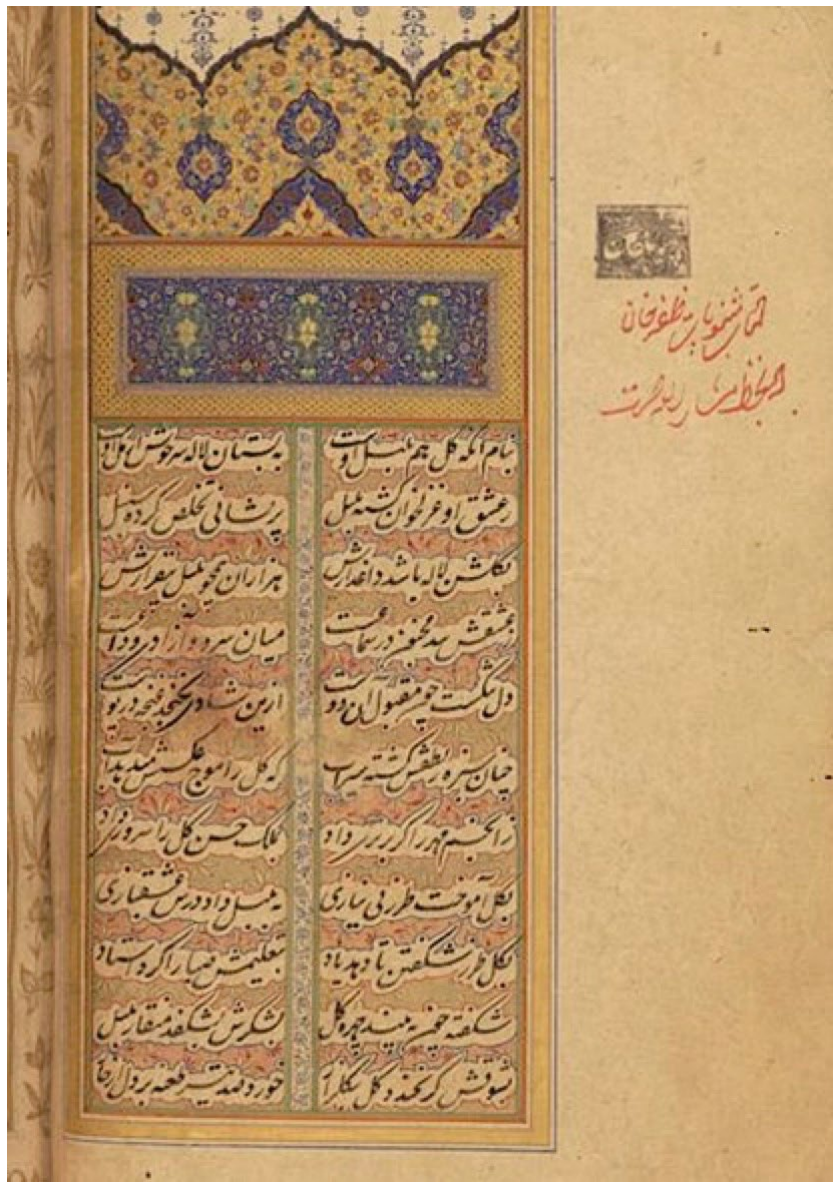
A new discovery



List of Books selected by the Prize Agents for the Honorable Court of Directors dated **1 December 1799**



List of Books selected by the Prize Agents for the Honorable Court of Directors, which are not to be found. Enclosure with letter dated **17 February 1807**



RAS Ms Persian 310



IO Islamic 241



Tipu Sultan's seal placed at the beginning of (left) *Maṣnavī-yi Jilvah-i Nāz* and (right) *Maṣnavī-yi Khurshīd va Māh*. Difficult to recognise at first, it is probably dated 1186 (1772/3)

RAS Ms Persian 310

Maṣnavīyāt-i Ṣafar Khān copied by the author and dated Lahore 26 Zu'l-Hijjah 1073 (1 Aug 1663). The author, Aḥsan Allāh known as Ṣafar Khān, who died very shortly afterwards, was at different times Governor of Kabul, Kashmir and Sind, and was besides noted as a patron of letters, poets and artists and a poet in his own right



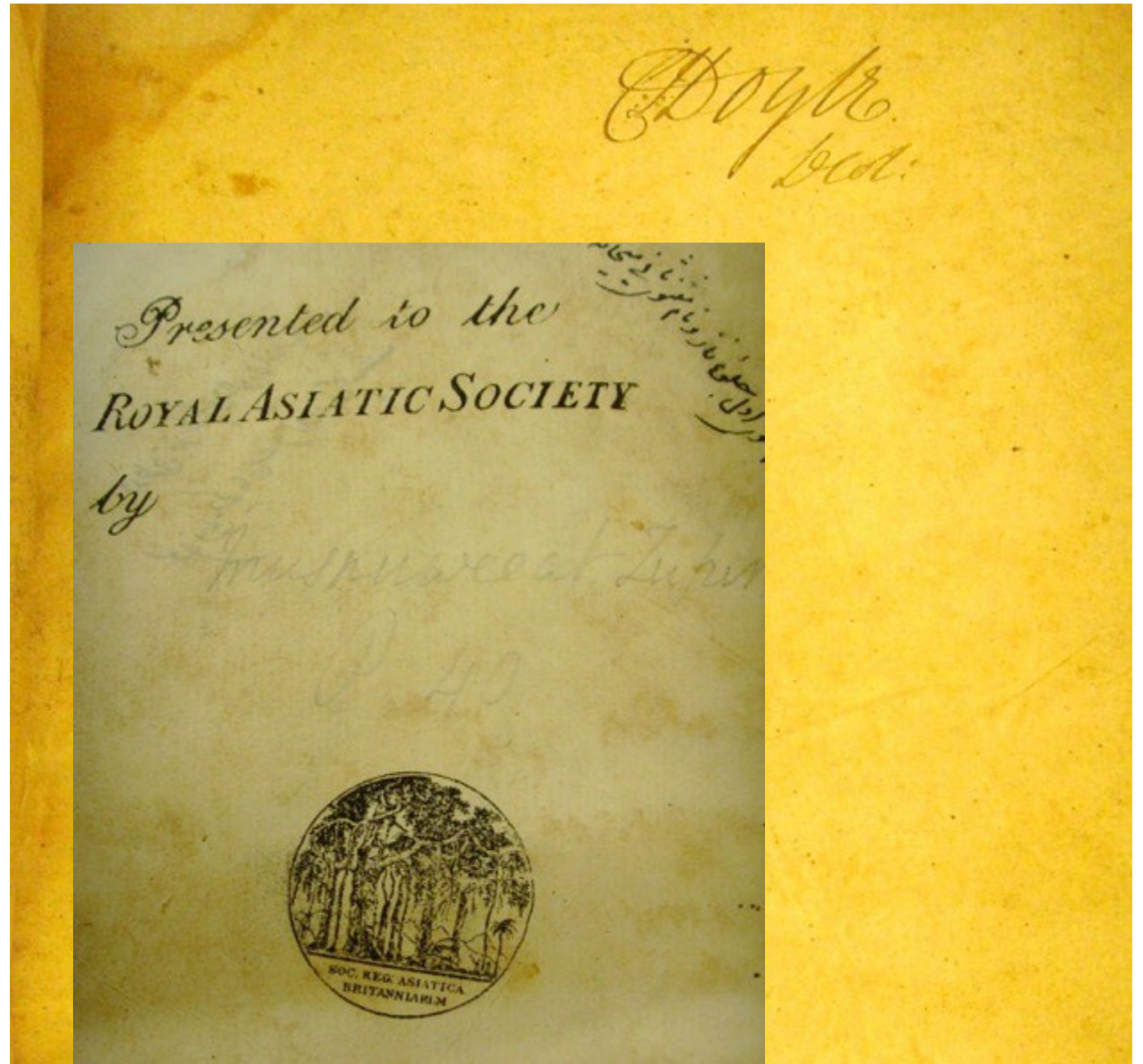
An inscription on the flyleaf by Zafar Khan's son, Shah Jahan's librarian and chronicler 'Ināyat Khān tells us that the paintings were by Bishan Dās 'the traveller' who was an employee of his father.

RAS Ms Persian 310

What happened next?

Charles Joseph Doyle (1787-1848) was in India as Military Secretary to the Governor-General Lord Moira (later Marquess of Hastings) from 1813 to 1823. Possibly he purchased this book in Calcutta from the estate of the unfortunate Mr Elliot.

Doyle presented 18 Persian and 2 Arabic manuscripts to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1834



Keep in touch

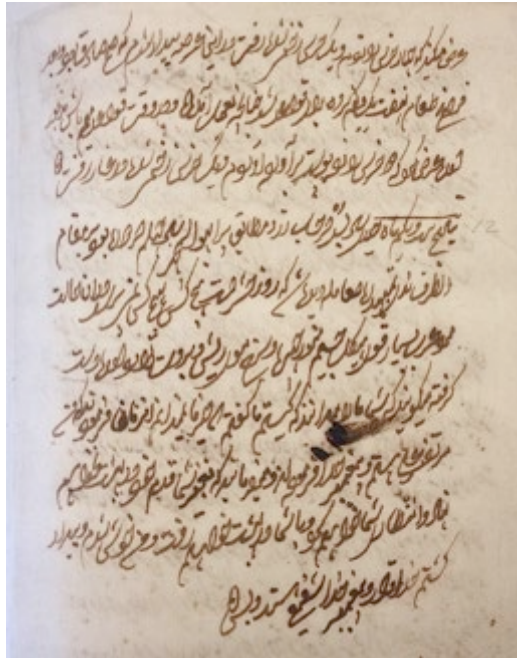
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Ursula.Sims-Williams@bl.uk



The curious tale of Solomon and the Phoenix



The story of Sinbad or the seven sages



Tipu Sultan's dream book



Nasir Shah's Book of Delights



Revisiting the provenance of the Sindbadnamah