

## Mughal Occidentalism

# Studies in Persian Cultural History

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# Mughal Occidentalism

*Artistic Encounters  
between Europe and Asia at the  
Courts of India, 1580–1630*

By

Mika Natif



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Cover illustration: Detail of *A Sinner's Passionate Plea to God*, fol. 75v from a *Kulliyat* (collection of poetry) by Sa'dī, Mughal, ca. 1604. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. © The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM00284.

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This book is printed on acid-free paper and produced in a sustainable manner.

*To all my cats, big, small and tall*





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- 84 *Akbar with Lion and Calf*, a posthumous portrayal of Akbar at an old age, by Govardhan, ca. 1630, folio from the Shah Jahan album, Mughal India. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.10.22 228
- 85 *Akbar Ordering the Slaughter of Animals to Cease in 1578*, attributed to Miskina, folio from the *Akbarnama*, ca. 1590, Mughal India; pasted into the Johnson album. British Library J.8, 4 235
- 86 *Portrait of Prince Danyal*, by Manohar, ca. 1595, folio from the Shah Jahan Album, Mughal India. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.10.32 238

- 87 *Portrait of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II of Bijapur*, by Hashim, ca. 1620, folio from the Shah Jahan Album, Mughal India. Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.121.10.33 240
- 88 *Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II of Bijapur*, ca. 1615, folio from an album, Bijapur, Deccan. British Museum 1937,0410,0.2 241
- 89 *Jahangir Shoots the Head of Malik Ambar*, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1616, probably Ajmer, folio from an album, Mughal India. Chester Beatty Library, 07A.15 246
- 90 *Abdullah Khan Uzbek Hawking*, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1618, Mughal India. Victoria and Albert Museum, IM.20-1925 250
- 91 *Asaf Khan Wearing a Portrait Miniature*, ca. 1615. The Chester Beatty Library, CBI In 45.2 252
- 92 *A Woman Holding a Portrait of Emperor Jahangir, or Nur Jahan Holding a Portrait of Emperor Jahangir*, attributed to Bishan Das, ca. 1627, Mughal India. The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2013.325 254
- 93 *Lady with a Portrait of Jahangir*, ca. 1603, Mughal India. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, LTS1929.8.354 255
- 94 *Jahangir Looking at a Portrait of his Father Akbar*, by Abu'l Hasan and Hashim, ca. 1614, folio from an album, Mughal India. Musée du Louvre, OA3676b 256
- 95 Crispin de Passe, *Portrait of King Philip II of Spain*, 1598, from *Effigies Regum ac Principum*, Netherlandish. Library of Congress, The Hans P. Kraus Collection of Sir Francis Drake, rbdk d059 257
- 96 *Jahangir Holding a Picture of the Virgin Mary*, after 1614, folio from an album, Mughal India. National Museum, New Delhi, no. 58.58.31 259
- 97 *Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II Smelling a Rose*, attributed to Sinan Bey or Sibilzade Ahmed, ca. 1480-81, Ottoman period. Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Museum Library, Album H. 2153, fol. 10r 266
- 98 *Portrait of Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara*, ascribed to Bihzad, ca. 1500-1525, folio from an album, Herat, Central Asia. Harvard Art Museums, # 1958.59 267
- 99 *Shah Abbas I Embracing One of his Pages*, signed by Muhammad Qasim, 1627, Isfahan, Safavid period. Musée du Louvre, MAO494 268
- 100 *Kamsa Receiving His Minister*, folio from a *Bhagavata Purana* (Ancient Stories of the Lord) circa 1640, India, Rajasthan, Kota. Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.74.5.13) 269

## Abbreviations and Conventions

- Ain-i Akbari* (Persian) Abū'l Faḏl ibn Mubārak. *Ā'in-i Akbarī*. Edited by Henry Blochmann. 2 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77.
- Ain-i Akbari* (English) Abū'l Faḏl ibn Mubārak. *The Ain-i Akbari*. Translated by Henry Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett. 3 vols. 1867–77. Reprint, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2010.
- Akbarnama* (Persian) Abū'l Faḏl ibn Mubārak. *Akbarnāma*. Edited by Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim. 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–87.
- Akbarnama* (English) Abū'l Faḏl ibn Mubārak. *The Akbarnāma*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. 3 vols. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- Haft Iqlim* (Persian) Amīn Aḥmad Rāzi. *Tazkere-ye Haft Eqlim*. Edited by Mohammad Reza Taheri. 3 vols. Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999.
- Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (Persian) 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī. *Muntakhab al-Tavārikh*. Edited by Captain W. N. Lees and Munshi Ahmad Ali. 2 vols. Calcutta: College Press, 1865.
- Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī. *The Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*. Translated by George S. A. Ranking, Sir Wolseley Haig, and W. H. Lowe. 3 vols. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1884–1925.
- Jahangirnama* (Persian) Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī*. Lucknow: Naval Kishore, 1863.
- Jahangirnama* (English) Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahangirnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*. Translated and edited by Wheeler M. Thackston. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

### Note to the Reader

Persian and Arabic are transliterated according to the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) system of transliteration. The IJMES Word List has also been followed for the spelling of widely known terms that maintain 'ayn and hamza, but omit diacritics (for example 'ulama', Shi'i, Shi'ism). Places and names of Islamic dynasties, instead, follow English usage. Throughout the book, dates are given in CE years and, when available, in the hijri (AH) calendar.

Unless otherwise stated, all translations in the essays are by the author.





FIGURE 1 The Virgin and Child, by Basawan, ca. 1590 (album page ca. 1610). Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 21.7 × 13.7 cm. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection, The San Diego Museum of Art, 1990.293.

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BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

# Introduction

On a lavish golden carpet laid down in a garden, a languid light-skinned woman reclines while nursing an infant (Fig. 1). Amid the heavy folds of her sixteenth-century European garb, her full white breasts are exposed. The painting appears in a folio from a Mughal album, and the Persian couplet above the picture identifies her only as a moon born in beauty from the sun, a beautiful idol that gives milk. The Persian lines below the image call her a rose sprung from the waters of beauty. In the background of the painting, the perspectival depiction of the red sandstone pavilion and the faraway view into a lush landscape emphasize the richness of the composition.

Most discussions of the picture postulate that it portrays a Mughal version of the Virgin and Child.<sup>1</sup> Upon a closer look, however, the painting entices us to seek more intricate possibilities. As we examine it more intently, we realize that the female figure is not the Nursing Madonna, and the infant is not the Christ child. The pose of the woman lounging on a golden carpet and breastfeeding is not the typical manner in which the Virgin is depicted nursing Christ. In the Renaissance Christian tradition, Mary typically sits upright and cradles the baby in her arms or holds him close to her body. She only exposes her nursing breast, while looking at the child with loving motherly eyes. In the Mughal painting, the female figure turns her head away from the baby and does not seem to be emotionally engaged with him/her. Unlike the Christ child that cuddles with Mary, the baby in the Mughal picture lies on the ground next to his mother, who idly supports him with just one hand.

As our reading of the image reveals, the Mughal artist transformed Renaissance visual idioms to embody Persian and Arabic literary motifs as well as painting, eliciting an erotic charge from imagery of Christian origin. Through the complex process of repurposing European elements, the painting exemplifies the creation of a capacious indigenous visual language that resonated with the cultural pluralism of the Mughal nobility. I posit that the choices patrons and artists made regarding the inclusion of European elements in Mughal painting were intentional and involved processes of fragmentation and transformation.<sup>2</sup> In the painting of the woman and child (Fig. 1), the artist extracted elements that s/he considered useful, such as the representation of

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1 Michael Brand and Glen B. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985), 101, 153; Amina Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1992), 87–88.

2 It is quite rare to find a complete one-to-one Mughal copy of a European picture.

three-dimensional space in the background, the woman's dress and its voluminous folds, the form of her body beneath the fabric of her gown, and her exposed breasts. Concurrently, the painter rejected other features that did not fit with Mughal ideological and aesthetic ideas, like the traditional pose of the Virgin nursing Christ, adhering to a one-point perspective, and the interaction between the figures. Within this critical apparatus of parsing and selecting, we may notice acts of repurposing, adaptation, appropriation, co-option and transformation. Identifying these mechanisms at work adds a critical layer of complexity to the final product and helps us understand what Mughal patrons and their artists thought about European art and how they wanted these elements to function. To describe these intricate processes, I have adopted the term "Mughal Occidentalism" as a useful shorthand. A discussion of this term appears later in this chapter.

This book investigates the complex relationships between Mughal court painting and European visual culture from the 1580s to the 1630s. The contact between Mughals and Europeans on the Indian subcontinent occurred at different socioeconomic levels, from the ruling class to traders, artisans, and even porters. This network of interactions has fascinated scholars through the twentieth and twenty first centuries. The aim of this book is to reframe the discussion in ways that confer agency to Mughal court patrons and artists, and take into account the broader cultural politics underlying the processes of purposeful use and adaptation of European elements. The book emphasizes the Mughals' selective interests in European culture and art, and showcases the artists' abilities to master and transform European pictorial elements and techniques into Mughal idioms. As we saw in Figure 1, these processes of Mughal repurposing and co-option often retain conscious traces of the original referents but layer them with additional meanings that were specific to a Mughal visual vocabulary.

The sophisticated visual language that the artists created served the broad cultural horizons of the Mughal aristocracy. The cosmopolitan tendencies of the Mughals are examined in relation to the politico-religious policies of Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) and his son and successor, Jahangir (r. 1605–27). Rather than providing an overview of the historical and artistic development of East-West relations, this book examines the deliberate processes of technique and iconography co-option as motors of transformation. It is a complex phenomenon with several different causes and interpretations that will be discussed in the following chapters.

Recent studies of Mughal painting have emphasized the concepts of hybridity and fusion, arguing that the European tradition was only one of several visual modes that Mughal artists used in their compositions, in addition to the

existing amalgam of Persian and Indian styles.<sup>3</sup> This book argues, rather, that the relationship with Christian iconography and Renaissance technique was unique in Mughal culture. It is easy to understand why the Mughals engaged with Persianate and Indic visual language. While the Persianate tradition was part of the Mughal world since its inception, the Indic tradition was local and accessible. European art was neither. In order to understand the engagement of the Mughals with European idioms, I focus on the founding principles that distinguish these Mughal paintings from other works of art. Therefore, the book presents case studies from illustrated manuscripts and album pages that analyze the variety of ways in which the Muslim and Hindu artists, who worked at the Mughal royal workshops, integrated European features into their compositions.<sup>4</sup> It explores why the Mughals selectively and purposefully appropriated European modes and what made that appropriation possible.

### Brief Historical Background

India under the Mughal rule of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was notable for openness to the multiple ethnicities and religions within the empire: the Turkic, Persian, and Indian populations included Hindus, Muslims, Jains, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Christians, and Jews. For reasons of

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3 Gregory Minisalle, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India, 1550–1750* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006); Valérie Gonzalez, *Aesthetic Hybridity in Mughal Painting, 1526–1650* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015); Kavita Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Research Institute, Getty Publications, 2017).

4 At that time, the royal workshops employed artists from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities and religious persuasions. The majority were either Hindu or Muslim. Since they were working for the Mughal elite, they are referred to interchangeably as “Mughal” or “Muslim and Hindu” painters. On the biographies of Mughal artists see Som Prakash Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work: a biographical survey and catalogue* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994).

The European visual tradition was present in India at least as early as the time of Alexander the Great. Some scholars have attempted to link the Gandhara style of representation with Mughal art, seeing parallels in particular between the Mughal version of the Virgin and Child and Hariti with Children. See, for example, Gerald James Larson, Pratapaditya Pal, and Rebecca P. Gowen, eds., *In Her Image: The Great Goddess in Indian Asia and the Madonna in Christian Culture*, exh. cat. (Santa Barbara, CA: UCSB Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara, 1980). As attractive as it may be, this theory needs to be better substantiated. We do not know how much of the Gandharan material was available to the Mughals, since it was discovered in archeological excavations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

both religious belief and expediency, Emperor Akbar, grandson of the dynasty's founder, Zuhir al-Din Muhammad Babur, initiated a policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* ("peace with all") that made coexistence within India feasible while opening up possibilities for cultural exchanges with Europe. His policy of tolerance led to interactions with visiting Europeans and those living in the Portuguese colony of Goa. This cultural, ethnic, and political openness persisted under Jahangir.<sup>5</sup>

The Mughal lineage itself varied, having originated in Central Asia, in what is today Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. The Mughals were descendants of both the Timurids (from Timur, or Tamerlane) and the Mongols (from the line of Chingiz Khan). Babur (1483–1530), the dynastic founder, who had a Timurid father and a Chingizid mother, competed with the other Timurid princes for the throne in a region that the Romans called Transoxiana (Beyond the Oxus) and the Arabs called Mawarannahr (Beyond the River). Defeated, Babur fled south to what is now Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, claiming those territories as part of his Timurid inheritance (Fig. 2). By 1526 he had established himself in Delhi and Agra, following his triumph over Ibrahim Lodi, the Muslim ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. Babur's dynasty, which was originally Sunni Muslim and Central Asian (Turko-Mongol), became partly Indian through intermarriage with the local aristocracy. Once again, the varied but mostly Hindu population of northern India came under Muslim rule.<sup>6</sup>

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5 On the history of the Mughal dynasty see John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire, The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Also see the general discussion by Catherine Asher and Cynthia Talbot regarding the adoption of *ṣulḥ-i kull* by Akbar and Jahangir. Catherine B. Asher and Cynthia Talbot, *India before Europe* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 124, 129–30, 146, 226. In the final stage of the book production I became aware of the article by Ebba Koch "Visual Strategies of Imperial Self-Representation: The Windsor Pādshāhnāma Revisited," *The Art Bulletin* 99, no. 3 (2017): 93–124. Although she attempts to introduce the role of *ṣulḥ-i kull* in Mughal painting, she considers it in universal terms, as an unchangeable continuum from the time of Babur to Shah Jahan. For an indepth discussion of the various stages and changes to the policy under different Mughal emperors see Muzaffar Alam, "Akhlaqī Norms and Mughal Governance," *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*. eds. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise "Nalini" Delvoye, Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2000), 67–95; Rajeev Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility: The Global Historical Legacy of Mughal *Sulh-i Kull*," *The Medieval History Journal* 16, no. 2 (2013): 251–95.

6 As early as the middle of the twelfth century, the Ghurids, a Muslim dynasty from eastern Iran, conquered and ruled over northern India.



FIGURE 2 Map of the Mughal empire 1526–1707

From the time of the Emperor Babur (r. 1494–1530, with interruptions), art under the Mughals reflected a diversity of visual traditions. While still in Kabul in the early sixteenth century, Babur most likely commissioned paintings from local and Timurid artists, and he brought with him to India books and illustrated manuscripts from Central Asia and Iran.<sup>7</sup> The lavishly illustrated *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), that was made for the Timurid prince Muhammad Juki, ended up in the Mughal libraries of Babur and his successors Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Awrangzib.<sup>8</sup> Babur also employed Central

7 On likely commissions, see Chahryar Adle, “New Data on the Dawn of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy,” in *Making of IndoPersian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, eds. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise “Nalini” Delvoye, and Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar/Centre des sciences humaines, 2000), 173–76.

8 Barbara Brend, *Muhammad Juki’s Shahnamah of Firdausi* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, Philip Wilson Publishers, 2010); Priscilla P. Soucek, “Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformations,” *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 166. For a discussion regarding the collection of Timurid artifacts and manuscripts by Akbar see Brand and Lowry, *Akbar’s India*, esp. 87–106.

Asian designers and architects for his gardens on the subcontinent.<sup>9</sup> Humayun, whose library included Indian and European specimens, invited Safavid artists and calligraphers such as Mir Sayyid Ali, Abd al-Samad, and Mulla Fakhr to join his atelier and come under his patronage in northern India.<sup>10</sup> While Humayun established diversity, it was only under Akbar that the political situation stabilized, the economy flourished, and artistic production proliferated. Akbar's ateliers were among the largest known at the time, employing more than one hundred artists.<sup>11</sup>

It was during this time as well—the last quarter of the sixteenth century—that Muslim and Hindu painters began to integrate European elements more regularly into earlier traditions of Persianate, Islamic, and Indian painting. As will be seen below, Central Asian and Persianate cultures did have a history of using European and Christian elements in their art—but never with this intensity or sophistication. Here was a Muslim dynasty ruling over a diverse population in northern India and selectively manipulating not only Christian iconography but also painting techniques of the European Renaissance—light and shade, volume, receding perspective, sfumato—in their own artistic creations. The meaning of these amalgamations becomes clearer, however, only in the context of Mughal writings on policy, law, literature, religion, and philosophy. In that context, as this book argues, the Mughals saw in elements of European art opportunities to display the dynasty's broad intellectual identities, cultural pluralism, state policies, and openness to other artistic traditions—all facets of their own cultural superiority.

European sources promoted the view that Mughal paintings incorporating European motifs and techniques were poor copies of Renaissance art, implying Mughal cultural inferiority and ignorance of European tradition. Particularly complacent were the detailed reports of Jesuit missionaries in India.<sup>12</sup> Even previous scholarship focused upon identifying the European models used in Mughal painting, and various scholars employed a language suggesting

9 Catherine B. Asher, "Babur and the Timurid Char Bagh: Use and Meaning," in *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1–2, ed. Attilo Petruccioli (Rome: Dell'oca Editore, 1991): 46–55; Howard Crane, "The Patronage of Zahir al-Din Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 1, n.s. (1987): 95–110.

10 Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i Humayun va Akbar*, ed. M. Hidayet Hosayn (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1941), 27–29. On the Iranian artist Muwllana Dost Musavvir (or Dust Muhammad) Bayat remarks that he "has long been in our retinue." *Ibid.*, 28–29.

11 Abū'l Faḏl ibn Mubārak, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77), 1:116–17.

12 See the discussion in chapter 1.

that Mughal court painting was in some sense derivative.<sup>13</sup> From a Mughal perspective, however, it is clear that Mughal artists were not copying European art. Their selections may at times appear radical—take for example the image of Emperor Jahangir who is hierarchically positioned above Jesus, and holds the globe, an iconographic symbol of power traditionally associated with Christ (Fig. 3). The artists were transforming European and Christian elements into Mughal constructs to represent Persian and Arabic literary themes, ideas of kingship, policy, and religious authority.

### Defining Mughal Occidentalism

For the current discussion, “Mughal Occidentalism” denotes modes of pictorial representation that use and repurpose European and Christian motifs, themes, and techniques within a variety of Mughal contexts. “Occidental” means “Western,” but, like “oriental,” it has acquired social and political associations over time.

The term “Occidentalism” was used by anthropologist James Carrier in the mid-1990s to describe societies that define themselves by rejecting the West and Western traditions. Elliot Sperling’s application of the term characterizes the ways in which the Chinese exoticized and denigrated the West in the late eighteenth century. Like Edward Said’s Orientalism, his usage refers to the creation of stereotypes to imaginatively control the “other.”<sup>14</sup> Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit in 2004 defined a more extreme expression of Occidentalism as “the dehumanizing picture of the West painted by its enemies” and the phenomenon of “hating the West.” They point out that in Europe and beyond, the term has been used to denote Western societies as decadent, materialistic, mechanical, and soulless, posing counter-Enlightenment and anti-modern

13 For example, Stuart Cary Welch states that Akbar “directed his artists to copy pictures of Christ and of the Virgin Mary” from the Polyglot Bible. Stuart Cary Welch, *India, Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1985), 164.

14 See James G. Carrier, ed., *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 6–8, 26–27. Sperling argues that the Chinese did not define themselves through these negative relationships, but used Occidentalism to imagine political power they did not have. See Elliot Sperling, “‘Orientalism’ and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition,” in *Mythos Tibet: Wahrnehmungen, Projektionen, Phantasien*, eds. Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (Cologne: DuMont, 1997), 267–68. On controlling knowledge by controlling the image, see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered,” *Race and Class* 27 (Oct. 1985): 1–15.



FIGURE 3 Jahangir, and Jesus, by Hashim above and by Abu'l Hasan below, ca. 1618–20, ca. 1610–15, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 17.7 × 9.2 cm. Chester Beatty Library, acc. 07A.12.

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views.<sup>15</sup> I use the term Mughal Occidentalism to denote the repurposing and re-coding of intentionally selected European elements and techniques in Mughal painting. Yet, it is useful to see Mughal Occidentalism in a multivalent context, as distinctly imbricated in a projection of international cosmopolitanism and a politics of cultural superiority on the part of the Mughals.

Since adapting various visual traditions into Mughal idioms was an established practice on the subcontinent before the arrival of Babur, Mughal Occidentalism might be regarded not as the vexed binary phenomenon of “self” and “other,” but as part of a more complex cultural movement. Yael Rice identifies a range of interactions between Mughal artists and European materials, from full copies of European prints to more specific alterations of motifs.<sup>16</sup> The Mughal practice of incorporating European elements and techniques also continued well into the late nineteenth century, as Partha Mitter observes in *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*. Even in times of conflict, he writes, “Indian colonial art ... represented a dialogue between western ideas and a search for Hindu identity.”<sup>17</sup> Art historian Stephen Vernoit applies the term “Occidentalism” to nineteenth-century art produced in the Muslim world under colonial rule, noting “the increased appearance of European or Europeanizing features in some forms of Islamic art,” but he associates it with

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15 Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalism: A Short History of Anti-Westernism* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), 1–12; quotations 1–2, 5.

16 Yael Rice, “The Brush and the Burin,” 305; Idem, “Lines of Perception: European Prints at the Mughal kitabhana,” *Prints in translation, 1450–1750: image, materiality, space*, eds. Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Edward H. Wouk (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 202, 205. This is not the case in which the encounter produced identity via difference-making, but rather through cultural hierarchy. Carina Johnson, *Cultural Hierarchy in Sixteenth-Century Europe: The Ottomans and Mexicans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 16.

17 Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India, 1850–1922: Occidental Orientations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8. Mitter refers to a practice tinted by the colonial presence in the subcontinent, and therefore cannot be equated with Mughal Occidentalism, which comes from a position of power. Recognizing the connection between the British Raj period during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the earlier Mughal period, Mitter notes that during the seventeenth century, Mughal artists were “incorporating elements from Mannerist art in their work in a playful disregard of Christian iconography, of whose meaning they were in any case ignorant.” *Ibid.*, 12. However, as will be seen in the current volume, Mughal artists and patrons were well aware of Christian iconography, even though they chose to clothe it in other garbs. Mitter also states that “there was a world of difference between the two periods in the reception of European art,” which he claims was primarily “exotica” to the Mughals, rather than “part of a comprehensive package that sought to reproduce the cultural values of the West during the Raj period.”

“the political prostration of the region.”<sup>18</sup> Vernoit links these styles in Islamic art to shifting political allegiances and the blurring of identities among elites, mostly in Iran and Ottoman Turkey, with those of their European colonizers.

In discussing pre-colonial times, scholars of art history have used a number of terms to describe the reconfiguration of European motifs and techniques. Some adopt a Eurocentric view of the paintings and interpret them as expressions of spirituality. Gauvin Bailey refers variously to “the Occidental mode,” “Europeante style,” and “the European mode.”<sup>19</sup> He characterizes works of art done in this European mode in India during the third quarter of the sixteenth century as “adapting Western conventions to mainstream Mughal painting.”<sup>20</sup> Milo Beach describes the phenomenon as a growing interest in naturalism on the part of Mughal artists.<sup>21</sup> Jeremiah Losty and Malini Roy employ the term “Occidentalism” to reflect “the influence of European art on Mughal artists.”<sup>22</sup> Others too, like Ebba Koch and Gauvin Bailey, regard the phenomenon as an “influence” of European and Catholic art on Mughal painting.<sup>23</sup> The term “influence” alludes to imbalanced power relationships in which the “influencer” appears active and powerful and the party being “influenced” is passive and therefore weaker. In more contemporary scholarship Mughal Occidentalism

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- 18 Stephen Vernoit, *Occidentalism: Islamic Art in the 19th Century*, Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol. 23 (New York: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University, 1997). Quotation, 8. Venoit further states that “for most of the 20th century such art was felt to be decadent, ill-formed, inauthentic.” *Ibid.*
- 19 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 19–20; Bailey, “Counter Reformation Symbolism and Allegory in Mughal Painting” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1996), esp. chap. 5; “Supplement: The Sins of Sadiqi’s Old Age,” in *Persian Painting: From the Mongols to the Qajars*, ed. Robert Hillenbrand (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 264.
- 20 Bailey, *Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 12.
- 21 Milo Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 20–21. John Seyller refers to these works simply as “Christian-Mughal miniatures,” thereby conflating different materials and concepts under a single religious/cultural designation. John Seyller, *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Conrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures* (Zürich: Museum Rietberg, 2010), 20.
- 22 Jeremiah Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: art, culture and empire: manuscripts and paintings in the British Library* (London: British Library, 2012), 78–79.
- 23 For example, Ebba Koch, “The Influence of the Jesuit Mission on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors,” *Islam in India: Studies and Commentaries*, ed. Christian W. Troll, 1 (1982): 14–29. Revised, in *The Phenomenon of “Foreign” in Oriental Art*, ed. Annette Hagedorn (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2006), 117. Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*.

falls under the larger umbrella of transculturalism—and more specifically, theories of cross-cultural image use.<sup>24</sup> This book builds upon such cross-cultural theories and moves away from the traditional binaries, seeing greater complexity in the ramifications of these cultural encounters.

In their own literature, how did Persianate or Mughal authors characterize the presence of European motifs in works of art? Key to the understanding of cross-cultural relations is an examination of whether and how Persianate and Mughal writers themselves noted the adaptation and transformation of European motifs. As early as the late fifteen-century, Timurid authors within the Muslim sphere, such as the historian Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi (d. 1482) and the intellectual vizier Mir Ali Shir Nava'i (d. 1501), mention the term *farangī* (Frankish or European) with respect to a Europeanized design style.<sup>25</sup> In the middle of the sixteenth century, Persian authors like Abdi Beg Shirazi, Sadiqi Beg, and Dust Muhammad had identified a “European” style of decoration and, to some extent, painting.<sup>26</sup> Although the style is not clearly described, this awareness suggests a conscious selection of European elements and not the merely derivative production that Western culture often assumes. When the Mughals developed their relationships with works of art from Renaissance Europe, the notion of an artistic meeting between East and West was not novel. Moreover, cross-cultural connections

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24 My approach advances the claims of historians Muzaffar Alam, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Corinne Lefèvre, as well as art historians Gulru Necipoglu and Finnbar B. Flood. Pertinent books and articles include Finnbar B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Gulru Necipoglu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 1–81; Sheldon Pollock, ed., *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Corinne Lefèvre, “The Majālis-i Jahāngīrī (1608–11): Dialogue and Asiatic Otherness at the Mughal Court,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 255–286.

25 Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi’s account was composed in Persian, while Mir Ali Shir Nava’i’s was written in Chaghtai. See the discussion by Gulru Necipoglu, “Persianate Images between Europe and China: The “Frankish Manner” in the Diez and Topkapı Albums, c. 1350–1450,” *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, eds. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 541–42.

26 Yves Porter, “From the ‘Theory of the Two Qalams’ to the ‘Seven Principles of Painting’: Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting,” *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 113.

also extended eastward. Persian sources held Chinese art in high regard, and it inspired aesthetic practices in Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey.<sup>27</sup>

The Persian term for incorporating European style was *farangī-sāzī* (Frankish manner), found in sixteenth-century writings in Iran under the Safavid dynasty (1502–1736) and in Turkey under the Ottomans (1299–1922).<sup>28</sup> *Farangī* connotes one of the seven design principles (*haft asl-i naqqashi*) in Persianate art, probably a nonfigurative European-style vegetal motif.<sup>29</sup> When Akbar's chief secretary and chronicler, Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubarak (1551–1602), referred to European artists, European styles of painting, or occidental works of art as *farangī* (Frankish), he used long-established terminology for an existing practice.<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that in his discussion of Akbar's *kitābkhāna* and the artists working at the royal workshops, Abu'l Fazl does not mention their ability to paint in the Frankish manner (*farangī-sāzī*).

### Christian and European Elements in Islamic Art

Since its beginnings in the seventh century, Islamic art utilized iconographic and stylistic elements from the Hellenistic world. For example, the city

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- 27 Yves Porter, *Peinture et arts du livre: Essai sur la littérature technique indo-persane* (Paris: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran; Leuven, Belgium: Diffusion Peters, 1992); David Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Necipoglu, "Persianate Images between Europe and China," 531–591.
- 28 Amy S. Landau, "Farangī-sāzī at Isfahan: The Court Painter Muhammad Zaman, the Armenians of New Julfa, and Shah Sulayman (1666–1694)" (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2006), 44–51; Porter, *Peinture et arts du livre*, 111–15; Necipoglu, "Visual Cosmopolitanism," esp. 2 and n. 6; Necipoglu, "L'idée de décor dans les régimes de visualité islamiques," in *Purs décors? Arts de l'Islam, regards du XIXe siècle: Collections des arts décoratifs*, ed. Rémi Labrusse, exh. cat. (Paris: Les Arts Décoratifs and Musée du Louvre Editions, 2007), 10–23.
- 29 These design principles refer to styles and types of illumination. Timurid authors mention some of the terms, but it was the Safavids who discussed and expanded them. See Porter, *Peinture et arts du livre*, 111–15; Gulru Necipoglu, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, 1995), 111–24; Porter, "From the 'Theory of the Two Qalams,'" *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 109–18; David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: The Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 142; Necipoglu, "L'idée de décor," 10–23.
- 30 Among the Safavid writings are Qazi Ahmad ibn Mir Munshi, *Gulistān-i hunar* (1352; repr. Tehran: Instisharat-i Bunyad-i farhang-i Iran, 1974), 132; *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir-Munshi (circa A.H. 1015/A.D. 1606)*, trans. Vladimir Minorsky and T. Minorsky, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, vol. 3, no. 2 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1959). See *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:118–19.

iconography in the wall mosaic at the Great Mosque of Damascus and the representations of builders in the wall paintings of the palace of Qusayr Amra in Jordan—both structures created under the Umayyads in the early eighth century—are closely related to Late Antique forms (Fig. 4).<sup>31</sup> Yet another wall painting from Qusayr Amra shows signs of divine intervention in human life by depicting the Quranic version of the Nativity of Jesus, who is viewed as a prophet of God and a forerunner to Muhammad in Islamic tradition.<sup>32</sup> The artists repurposed elements from the Greek mythological themes and Christian iconography to create a visual and mental allusion to an Umayyad Islamicate notion of an unbroken chain of divine message manifested by a lineage of prophets and culminating in Muhammad.<sup>33</sup>

European elements in Muslim art and architecture were not necessarily tied to Christianity. Examples of the Europeanizing style appear in paintings from the Jalayird period (1335–1432) and later, pasted into the so-called Diez and Topkapi Saray albums in Berlin and Istanbul. One pen and ink drawing made in Baghdad or Tabriz ca. 1370 shows a line of standing European-looking figures dressed in European costumes. The artist used a European technique of light color washes to create subtle modeling and provide a sense of volume to the figures. An inscription on the painting identifies the style of the work to be in the “Frankish manner”.<sup>34</sup>

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- 31 The champion of these ideas was Oleg Grabar in his book *The Formation of Islamic Art*, rev. ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987). For in-depth interpretations of these examples in Islamic art and their classical connections, see Nasser Rabbat, “The Dialogic Dimension in Umayyad Art,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (Spring 2003): 78–94; Garth Fowden, “Late-Antique Art in Syria and Its Umayyad Evolutions,” *Journal of Roman Archeology* 17 (2004): 282–304; Hana Taragan, “Constructing a Visual Rhetoric: Images of Craftsmen and Builders in the Umayyad Palace at Qusayr ‘Amra,” *Al-Masaq: Islam and the Medieval Mediterranean* 20, no. 2 (2008): 141–60; Nadia Ali, “Processus de fabrication de l’iconographie omeyyade: L’exemple des décors palatiaux du Bilād ash-Shām” (PhD diss., University of Aix-en-Provence, 2008).
- 32 See the interpretation suggested by Nadia Ali, “The royal veil: early Islamic figural art and the Bilderverbot reconsidered,” *Religion* 47, no. 3 (2017), 9, and Fig.1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0048721X.2017.1319992>
- 33 Ali, “The royal veil,” 12–17; quote from p. 17.
- 34 Gulru Necipoglu, “Persianate Images between Europe and China: The “Frankish Manner” in the Diez and Topkapı Albums, c. 1350–1450,” *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, eds. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 531–591, esp. 544–548. Friederike Weis also notices that in a 15th century Persianate drawing of the Tazza Farnese cameo from Antiquity, the artist attempted to create a sense of volume in the draperies by using wash. Friederike Weis, “A Persianate Drawing of the *Tazza Farnese*: A Work by Muhammad Khayyam?,” *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, 417.



FIGURE 4 The Builders, wall painting from Qusayr Amra, Jordan, early 8th century. Umayyad period.

In the Ottoman realm, Mehmed II (r. 1444–46 and 1451–81) chose a Europeanized visual language and technique for his portraits, and his preferred artist, Sinan Beg, was taught by a European painter named Maestro Pavli.<sup>35</sup> Ottoman artists also used European techniques of receding landscape in the upper register of paintings, as can be seen in an illustration to the *Rawda al-Ushshaq* (Garden of Lovers) of Arifi from about 1560, which shows a peasant working the land, a traveler crossing the plains, and a city in the background (Fig. 5).<sup>36</sup> In comparison to Mughal receding landscapes from the 1590s (discussed in chapter 4), the Ottoman work is flatter, more focused, and contains less detail of figures, architecture and vegetation.

Though not all pre-Mughal European motifs were Christian, many were. Two centuries before the Madonna reclined on a Mughal carpet and Jahangir had himself positioned above Jesus, Christian iconography was present and circulating throughout diverse communities in Muslim Asia. Several inlaid metalwork objects, made under the Ayyubids in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq of the

35 Necipoglu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation,” 4. Necipoglu also notes that for Mehmed II’s official representations, the sultan’s artists used oil painting and medals, “two media that had only recently been invented in the Latin West.” Ibid.

36 The manuscript is at the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA (1985.216.41).

thirteenth century, display scenes from the New Testament and ecclesiastical figures. In the central medallion of the so-called Freer Canteen, the Virgin and Child sit on a throne flanked by angels (Fig. 6). Around them are scenes from the Life of Christ that include the Annunciation, Nativity, and the Presentation in the Temple. Christian elements also appear in Persian and Arabic illustrated manuscripts of nonreligious texts. Those produced in the Ilkhanid sphere, as the Mongols expanded their control of Iran, Iraq, and Central Asia (1256–1353), show striking examples of borrowed and reinterpreted Christian images.<sup>37</sup> The *Jami al-Tawarikh* (World History) was composed in the early fourteenth century by Rashid al-Din for the Mongol khans of Iran. A copy of the work from about 1314 includes an illustration of the *Birth of the Prophet Muhammad* that is clearly modeled after the Nativity of Christ (Fig. 7). Casting the *Birth of the Prophet* in the same light as the miraculous birth of Jesus enhances Muhammad's role as the "seal of prophecy" and the last among the chosen ones to transmit the divine message.<sup>38</sup>

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37 Under the Mongols, various Christian communities, especially of Jacobites, Nestorians, Greek Orthodox and Armenians, were present in these areas. Intermarriage between Mongol men and Christian women (Byzantines and others) has been documented. Christian objects also circulated via diplomatic exchanges. For example, King Louis IX sent gifts, including a tent with Christian images and books, to the Mongol Khan in 1249. A second delegation, with the Flemish Franciscan envoy presented an illustrated Bible and breviary to the Mongol ruler Mongke Khan (r. 1251–59), who reportedly "made a diligent inquiry as to the meaning of the pictures." See "The Journey of William of Rubruck," in Christopher Dawson, *Mission to Asia* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press in association with the Medieval Academy of America, 1980), 162–80. Quotation, 162; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005), 98–100.

38 For the connections between some illustrations in Rashid al-Din's *Jami al-Tawarikh* and Christian Bibles, see J. G. M. Meredith-Owens, "Some Remarks on the Miniatures in the Society's *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 2 (1970): 195–99; Terry Allen, "Byzantine Sources for the *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh* of Rashid al-Dīn," *Ars Orientalis* 15 (1985): 121–33; Sheila. Blair, *A Compendium of Chronicles: Rashid al-Din's Illustrated History of the World* (London: Nour Foundation in association with Azimuth Editions and Oxford University Press, 1995), 60–90.

On the link between Muhammad's birth scene and the Nativity see Mika Natif, "Between Heaven and Earth: The Illustration of the Death of Moses in Rashid al-Din's *Jami al-Tawarikh* (World History)," in *Exodus: Border Crossings in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Texts and Images*, ed. Annette Hoffmann (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University; Florence: Kunsthistorisches Max Planck Institut, forthcoming 2018). For a study of contacts between the Ilkhans and Europe, see John A. Boyle, "Rashid al-Din and the Franks," *Central Asiatic Journal* 14 (1970): 62–67; Charles. Melville, "The Mongols in Iran," in



FIGURE 5

Fox Disguised as a Dervish, fol. 4v from the *Rawda al-Ushshaq* (*Garden of Lovers*) of Arifi, ca. 1560, Ottoman. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.1 × 17.1 × 1.3 cm. Harvard Art Museums 1985.216.41.

PHOTO: IMAGING DEPARTMENT  
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Timurid artists continued the practice of incorporating and recoding Christian iconography.<sup>39</sup> In a double-page painting from an anthology dated 1411, the New Testament scene of the Adoration of the Magi was reconfigured to depict

*The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courty Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353*, eds. Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 37–61; Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

39 The Timurids were a Turco-Mongol dynasty that ruled Central Asia and Khurasan from about 1370 to 1506 and became the other major branch of Mughal ancestry. Although Fredrik Martin often presents Eurocentric views, it is worth mentioning his comment about early Timurid painting—that “European artists and their work were known” in the artistic urban centers of Timurid Herat and Samarqand. Frederik R. Martin, *Miniature Painting and Painters of Persia, India, and Turkey from the 8th to the 18th Century* (London: Quaritch, 1912), 31; Necipoglu “Persianate Images Between Europe and China,” 531–591.



FIGURE 6 Canteen, mid-13th century, Syria or Northern Iraq. Brass, silver inlay. 44.7 × 36.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art. Fig.41.10.

FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.: PURCHASE—CHARLES LANG FREER ENDOWMENT, F1941.10



FIGURE 7 The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad, Jami al-Tawarikh (*World History*) by Rashid al-Din, ca. 1314, Tabriz, Ilkhanid period. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper. Edinburgh University Library (Arab ms. 20).

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an event from the life of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>40</sup> Several figures on the left side of the double-page illustration seem to intentionally represent Europeans or Christians (Fig. 8). The ones in the foreground bow and kneel before Muhammad and his family, similarly to how the Magi approach Christ.<sup>41</sup>

Far more popular in Islamic art are depictions of Mary (Maryam). The Virgin enjoyed a long established practice of textual and visual representations in the Muslim world, ranging from a sura (chapter) in the Quran named after her to illustrations in manuscripts of *Stories of the Prophets*. A tradition regarding an early picture of the Virgin that was known to the Prophet Muhammad appears in several Muslim sources. It describes the time Muhammad's armies were victorious and took over the city of Mecca. Upon entering the Ka'ba, the site of holy pilgrimage in Mecca, the Prophet saw a picture of the Virgin and Child on one of the pillars. He ordered his followers to leave it untouched.<sup>42</sup> In doing so, the Prophet demonstrated his familiarity with such images and his personal admiration for Mary, who is a prominent female figure in the Quran with close connections to the Almighty.<sup>43</sup> In the Quran, she is connected to

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40 Priscilla Soucek identifies the scene as "The Christians of Najran Recognize the Prophet." It appears in an anthology produced in Shiraz for the Timurid governor Iskandar Sultan (Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, MS L.A. 161, fols. 265v–266r). See Priscilla P. Soucek, "The Manuscripts of Iskandar Sultan: Structure and Content," in *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, eds. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 130. On the link between this illustration and Christian iconography, see Maria Vittoria Fontana, "Muhammad and an *Adoration of the Magi* in the Gulbenkian Anthology of 813/1411," in *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology: A Scholarly Investigation*, eds. Christiane J. Gruber and Avinoam Shalem (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 77–96.

41 The European/Christian figures in the background are engulfed by fire, representing Hell. Fontana, "Muhammad and an *Adoration of the Magi*," 81, 89–91.

42 According to the story, the Muslims were purifying the Ka'ba from idols when they found this image. The icon of the Virgin and Child was probably painted by a local Christian artist. Martin Lings discusses 8th–9th century Arabic sources that include this episode, such as al-Waqidi, *Kitab al-Maghazi*; al-Azraqi, *Akhbar Makkah*; and Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasulallah*. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: The Islamic Text Society, 1983), 17, 300.

43 For example, see Quran 3:41; 66:12. Mary is mentioned seventy times in the Quran. Jane I. Smith and Yvonne Y. Haddad, "The Virgin Mary in Islamic Tradition and Commentary," *Muslim World* 79 (July–Oct. 1989), 161–87; Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "Mary," *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'an*: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/mary-EQCOM\\_0013](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-the-quran/mary-EQCOM_0013) (accessed April 11, 2015); Penelope C. Johnstone, A. J. Wensinck, "Maryam," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maryam-COM\\_0692](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maryam-COM_0692) (accessed April 11, 2015).



FIGURE 8 The Christians of Najran Recognize the Prophet, *Anthology made for Iskandar Sultan*, fols. 265v–266r, 141v, Shiraz, Timurid period. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Lisbon, Gulbenkian Museum, Ms. L.A. 161, fols. 265v–266r. LISBON, GULBENKIAN MUSEUM, MS. L.A. 161, FOLS. 265V–266R

the divine lineage of prophets, as the mother of Isa (Jesus), who is recognized as a messenger and a prophet of God, but not as the Messiah or the Son of God.<sup>44</sup>

Considered a chaste and pious woman, portrayals of Mary appear in historical Islamic texts such as the *Jami al-Tawarikh* (World History), mentioned above for its Nativity-like image of the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>45</sup> Mary is also depicted in a number of illustrated codices, such as *Qisas al-Anbia* (Stories of the Prophets) and *Falnama* (Book of Omens), dating from the sixteenth century. Produced in Iran and Ottoman Turkey, these manuscripts include paintings of Maryam nursing her son (Fig. 9).

In this painting, the figure of Mary weaves together Christian and Persianate elements. In accordance with Christian iconography, she dons a red and blue garb and exposes only the nursing breast to feed her child (Fig. 9). Baby Jesus sits on her lap and turns his head toward his mother, as she looks back in his direction. However, crouching on the ground with one knee up is a pose related to the Persianate world. Additionally, her facial features and costume, the landscape, and style of the composition are very much part of the Ottoman-Safavid tradition of the sixteenth century.

Images of “ordinary” Europeans also appear in a range of contexts in Islamic art. By the fourteenth century in Nasrid Spain, representations of European women were painted on the ceiling in the Alhambra’s Hall of Justice. One of these figures may embody several virtuous females, including Layla, the heroine of a traditional love story, and the Prophet’s daughter Fatima.<sup>46</sup> The appearance of Europeans in Persian illustrated manuscripts provides an even closer antecedent to Mughal practice. In a copy of the *Zafarnama* (Book of Victory) made for the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524–76), one picture shows the son of the Ottoman ruler Sultan Murad standing beside two European envoys

44 Michael Marx, “Glimpses at a Mariology in the Qur’an: From Hagiography to Theology via Religious-Political Debate,” *The Quran in Context*, eds. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 552.

45 An Annunciation scene appears on fol. 22r. For a somewhat different Annunciation scene, see a fourteenth-century copy of al-Biruni’s *Chronology of Ancient Nations* (*Kitab al-athar al-baqiya*), fol. 141v. Both manuscripts are at the Edinburgh University Library, Or. Ms 20 and Or. Ms 161, respectively.

46 For an innovative interpretation of this female figure, see Cynthia Robinson, “Where Have All the Boys Gone? The Lady of the ‘Sala de Justicia’ Ceilings and Nasrid Poetics of Sacred and Profane Love,” in *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art*, eds. Francesca Leoni and Mika Natif (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 65–98.



FIGURE 9

Mary and the Infant Jesus,  
fol. 32v from the *Fahnama*  
(*Book of Omens*), ca. 1570–80,  
Ottoman or Safavid. Ink,  
opaque watercolor and gold  
on paper. 49 × 36.4 cm.

TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM,  
ISTANBUL, H.1703, F.32V

as they present him to Timur. The Safavid artist chose to distinguish the European men through facial features, beard shape, hair color, and clothing.<sup>47</sup>

Considering the numerous examples of incorporating Christian and European elements in Islamic art, what is unique about Mughal Occidentalism? How is it different? The Mughals, building on these long traditions, incorporated not only European motifs, but also European techniques in their expressions of cultural cosmopolitanism and universal order. The sheer volume,

47 See Basil Gray, *Persian Painting from Miniatures of the XIII–XVI Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), 132; Sa’id Mahmudi Azaneveh, Mohammad-Hasan Semsar, and Karim Emam, *Golestan Palace Library: A Portfolio of Miniature Paintings and Calligraphy* (Tehran: Zarrin and Simin Books, 2000), pl. 87. The *Zafarnama* recounts the history of Timur and some of his descendants. The text was composed by Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi in 1427–28 at the court of the Timurid prince Ibrahim Sultan ibn Shahrukh, grandson of Timur. The manuscript is at the Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.

intense selectiveness, and intellectual and visual refinement of their repurposing of European idioms make Mughal Occidentalism unique. Some of the effects can be seen by comparing figures 1 and 3, with their smooth incorporation of receding perspective and three-dimensional modeling, to an earlier Mughal painting, made by Mir Sayyid Ali 1555–56 (Fig. 10).

The earlier work represents a handsome young courtier, perhaps the artist himself, judging by an inscription visible on the white paper next to him.<sup>48</sup> Unlike the portrait of Emperor Jahangir, this man's facial features are generic, devoid of identifying traits (Figs. 3, 10). The landscape around him consists of flat areas of color, with no attempt to show depth. In comparison to the pavilion behind the reclining woman in Figure 1, which shows a receding landscape and dramatic three-dimensional architecture, Mir Sayyid Ali's background is basic and limited in view. A decade after his death in 1572, Mughal artists and patrons were experimenting in full with Mughal Occidentalism.

### Organization of the Book

The concept of Mughal Occidentalism unfolds through five chapters that present case studies demonstrating the choices artists made and selected to employ in their compositions. By relying mostly on formal analysis and critical reading of primary sources, the book offers a broad avenue of investigation. The chapters are thematically organized to address the historical and intellectual environment under Akbar and Jahangir that made Mughal Occidentalism possible. Chapter 1 explores Akbar and Jahangir's policy of tolerance as a key to the creation of Mughal Occidentalism. The principle of *ṣulḥ-i kull* (often rendered as 'absolute peace' or 'Universal Conciliation') enabled an atmosphere of openness and curiosity about other cultures that played an important role in the creation of a pluralistic artistic language. By examining Mughal and European original sources, the chapter contextualizes the relationship of the Mughal royal family with Christian images of Mary and Jesus, and questions the "impact" of certain European and Christian articles that were brought to the Mughal courts.

Thinking in terms of the Mughals' own "Occidentalism" as a framing mechanism, the following four chapters center on the different repurposing processes and their meanings. Chapter 2 focuses on the co-option of European

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48 The piece of paper has a verse in Persian at the top and the artist signature at the bottom, linking him to Emperor Humayun. Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Mir Sayyed 'Ali: Painter of the Past and Pioneer of the Future," *Mughal Masters: Further Studies*, ed. Asok Kumar Das (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1998), 30–51; Brand and Lowry, *Akbar's India*, 24–25, 137.



FIGURE 10 Self-Portrait of Mir Sayyid Ali, 1555–1556, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 19.05 × 10.48 cm. Los Angeles County Museum M.90.141.1.

and Christian motifs within a broader Persianate tradition of the master artist. In order to assert their mastery, Mughal artists at the royal workshops of Akbar and Jahangir had to demonstrate their knowledge and mastery of past traditions. By inserting visual quotations from well-known compositions and gesturing to previous masters, Mughal artists simultaneously linked themselves to tradition and introduced innovation. They presented new elements, techniques, and meanings that demonstrated their skill, intellectual power, creativity, and success. I argue that repurposing and reconfiguring European features by Mughal artists was part of this same practice. The chapter presents three case studies of Mughal Occidental paintings and their European counterparts in order to analyze the specific ways in which the Mughal painters transformed elements of European art. It does so by bringing together two strands of argumentation, the first takes on the conceptual issue of what constitutes a “copy,” and the second deals with how the Mughals engaged specifically with Christian iconographies. This chapter provides a more nuanced engagement with the specific ways in which a ‘master artist’ was understood within the Mughal world. Understanding these relationships can complicate traditional interpretations of how Mughal painters engaged with works by European masters.

Turning to the appearance of European articles in Mughal painting after the 1580s, Chapter 3 highlights practices of reusing European prints in Mughal album pages as well as re-contextualizing European articles into new Mughal pictorial environments. Drawing on cross-cultural interaction, the chapter explores the theory of boundary objects in Mughal painting and how this concept illuminates aspects of the works that otherwise would remain hidden. Examples range from the tangible repurposing of European prints cut and pasted into album pages, to the appearance of a European pipe-organ in an illustration to the *Khamisa* of Nizami. These examples demonstrate how the Mughals cultivated heterogeneous visual idioms that resonated with their global identity and pluralistic policy.

Chapter 4 takes on the topic of landscapes, both natural and urban. By situating the two within the context of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, I suggest that their inclusion produced scenes that reinforced Islamic, and even more specifically Mughal, notions of “just rule.” Landscapes—both natural and urban—thus were employed for political ends, in order to produce an image of Mughal India that was peaceful, economically prosperous, and cosmopolitan. By using European techniques and compositional elements from Netherlandish painting, the artists created harmonious and balanced settings of the built world and the cultivated natural realm, that call upon Mughal urbanism and garden traditions.

The final chapter of the book takes on the topic of portraiture and Mughal attitudes towards physiognomy and likeness. Partly due to connections with Renaissance Europe, portraiture flourished and became one of the most significant genres at the Mughal courts, playing an important role in politics and administration. This chapter focuses on the idea of portraiture in Mughal textual sources and the adaptation of European motifs and techniques in the development of portrait painting. Mughal rulers, like Akbar and Jahangir, were well aware of the embedded potential of utilizing portraiture for representing authority and projecting their dynastic image. Their artists used European painting techniques to convey the complexities of people—their outer appearance and their inner character. The innovative use of modeling, with light and shade to create a sense of volume, contributed to the portrait's life-like qualities.

My goal in this book is to introduce a new range of questions and possibilities regarding the usage of European material in Mughal painting and its significance. This process will allow for the identification of patterns that emerged from the intentional choices made by artists and patrons. Throughout the book, I aim to maintain a balance between the role of the patrons and the insights of the artists. Mughal Occidentalism was not a top-to-bottom phenomenon. Even though policy, cultural atmosphere, and a growing economy created the conditions for these artistic interactions, the actual interpretations and adaptations of the European elements into Mughal paintings were realized by the artists themselves, resulting in a bold new visual language.

## Mughal Tolerance and the Encounters with Europe

This chapter serves as an introduction to the political and cultural environment at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir that shaped the complex interactions between Mughals, Europeans, and other diverse groups. I argue that at the crux of these cultural encounters lies the concept of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, the Mughal policy of tolerance and social balance. Examining the basic tenets of *ṣulḥ-i kull* may enable us to grasp more fully the Mughals' attitude of openness to other traditions. Using the Mughal policy as a framework, the first part of the chapter focuses on the meaning of *ṣulḥ-i kull* and how it came to be practiced as a court policy. The chapter proceeds to a brief selective chronology of Mughal-European encounters that were informed by this ideology of tolerance. Through the accumulation of encounters, we can trace the ever-evolving relationships of trade and cultural exchange, from which new artistic sensibilities seem to have emerged. The discussion of period texts and the presence of certain Christian images and articles at the Mughal courts introduces the complexity of primary sources, especially with respect to Jesuit accounts. My overall aim is to open up the possibilities for multiple narratives of Mughal engagement with European artistic tradition and consider them as nuanced and negotiated processes.

### Religious Tolerance under Akbar and Jahangir

In the first decades of the sixteenth century, the *fīrangīs*, or Franks, as Europeans were generically called in Persian, were already present in the subcontinent in various capacities as the Mughals began to establish themselves in north India. Contact with the Europeans (mainly from Portugal, Italy and Spain) occurred within different strata of Mughal society, ranging from the ruling elite to tradesmen, artisans and service persons. By the time of Akbar and Jahangir, the Mughals were primarily engaged with Safavids, Ottomans, and Uzbeks in the international arena and with other Indian rulers domestically. Only in the 1570s did they begin to pay more attention to the Portuguese colony in Goa and to other European entities.<sup>1</sup> This interest in Europeans was likely related

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1 Humayun and his Mughal army encountered the Portuguese of Goa earlier during the campaigns to capture Gujarat and Bengal in the 1530s. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Frank Disputations," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 46, no. 4 (2009): 462.

to Akbar's new policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* ("peace with all," "absolute peace" or "Universal Conciliation"). Its goal was to create stability and a balance of power among the different religious, social, and ethnic groups in the empire, thus enabling the Mughal emperors to broaden their base of support, making the empire a place of refuge for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The policy contributed and coincided with Mughal openness to and curiosity of other cultures and played an important role in the creation of a pluralistic artistic language.

Akbar, who ascended the throne in 1556, dismissed his regent in 1560–61 when he was eighteen. Newly independent, he faced the challenge of a Muslim king ruling a population that was multilingual and multiethnic, but mostly Hindu—infidels (*kāfirūn*) in the eyes of Islam.<sup>2</sup> Simply put, according to strict Islamic law (*sharī'a*), infidels who come under Muslim rule must either convert to Islam (there were in fact instances of forced conversion) or be executed or killed in a holy war (*jihad*). Early in his reign Akbar adopted a harsh line toward Hindu and other non-monotheist subjects. But ultimately he recognized that since Hindus outnumbered Muslims, he had to devise a different strategy.<sup>3</sup>

In the early period, he imposed heavy taxes on Hindus, excluded them from high administrative positions at the court, and, for the most part, kept them at a distance from Mughal political and intellectual life.<sup>4</sup> In 1568, following a Mughal victory over Hindus at Chittor, in Rajasthan, western India, Akbar issued a decree (*fathnama*) referring to the campaign as a jihad against infidels.<sup>5</sup> Around that time Akbar's nobility was composed mainly of Central Asian Turks (Sunnis) and Persians (Shi'is), with a small percentage of Indian Muslims and Rajput chieftains, who were Hindus.<sup>6</sup> Even though Akbar identified himself

2 *Kāfirūn* and *kuffār* are the plural forms of *kāfir*. These terms, meaning "infidels" or "unbelievers," appear in numerous verses of the Quran; sura 109 is called "al-Kāfirūn." There is a long discussion on the subject in Islamic theology and law.

3 According to the historian Nizami, there were few instances in which Akbar forced people to convert, and he later regretted the forced conversions. See Nizami's quotation from the *Ain-i Akbari* in Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Akbar and Religion* (1989; repr., Delhi: Idarah-i-Adabiyat-i-Delli, 2009), 109. On relations between previous Muslim rulers in India and their non-Muslim subjects, *ibid.*, 9–99.

4 They were subjected to a burial tax, a pilgrimage tax, and the *jizya* (a poll-tax on non-Muslims), all later abolished. See Abū'l Faḍl ibn Mubārak, *The Akbarnāma*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 2:295.

5 See a facsimile of the document in Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, appendix 13, 385–99.

6 See Iqtidar Alam Khan, "The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of His Religious Policy, 1560–80," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1, no. 2 (April 1968): 29–30, 35.

often as Timurid, the disloyalty and repeated revolts among his Central Asian amirs caused the emperor to draw closer to the Persian elite and the Indian local forces under his control.<sup>7</sup>

As it became clear that the local Hindu population was not likely to convert, Akbar shifted his policy and adopted the *dhimma*, a more flexible Islamic attitude toward non-Muslims.<sup>8</sup> Striving to achieve balance and harmony among his subjects, he gradually diversified his power base within the nobility.<sup>9</sup> Bayram Khan, Akbar's regent and chief minister (1556–60), was among those who criticized the emperor's tolerance toward Hindus, but over the next few decades Akbar repeatedly defied powerful political and religious figures by advancing a policy of inclusion.<sup>10</sup> While still expanding his empire, he banned the enslavement of conquered peoples (1562) and gradually abolished discriminatory taxes and tolls (1579–81).<sup>11</sup>

Concurrently, Akbar was developing intellectual and spiritual connections with non-Muslims as well as Muslims. He visited shrines, tombs, and religious centers of shaykhs and saints, in particular forming ties with the Chishtiyya order of Sufis. But he also sought out the teachings of yogis and other Hindu ascetics.<sup>12</sup> Not surprisingly, the orthodox Muslim leadership (*'ulama'*) in his realm did not look favorably upon such connections. According to Mughal sources, their conservatism, as well as the greed, dishonesty, and disloyalty

7 For a thorough discussion of the shift in Akbar's nobility circles, see *ibid.*, 29–36.

8 *Dhimma* designates “the sort of indefinitely renewed contract through which the Muslim community accords hospitality and protection to members of other ... religions, on condition of their acknowledging the domination of Islam.” See Claude Cahen, “*Dhimma*,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dhimma-SIM\\_1823](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/dhimma-SIM_1823) (accessed April 28, 2015). Previous Muslim rulers in India who faced a similar situation also resigned themselves to accepting more practical and tolerant policies. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century* (1961; repr., Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1974), 152, 315–16.

9 Khan, “Nobility under Akbar.”

10 Bayram Khan composed a *divan* (a collection of poems) in Chagatai and Persian in which he voiced disapproval of Akbar's policy of tolerance toward Hindus. See Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, 103 (particularly n. 2).

11 He abolished the *jizya* tax in 1564, reinstated it, and abolished it again in 1579–80. According to Nizami, the date provided by Abu'l Fazl in the *Akbarnama* is unreliable. See Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, 107–8. Akbar rescinded the commercial tolls *baj* and *tamgha* in 1581. Abū'l Fazl ibn Mubārak, *Akbarnāma*, ed. Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–87) 3:295–96; 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *The Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Sir Wolseley Haig, and W. H. Lowe (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1884–1925), 2:284.

12 *Akbarnama* (Persian) 2:153; *Akbarnama* (English) 2:236.

they exhibited, caused the emperor to distance himself from them more and more, until he formulated his new across-the-board political reforms and dynastic vision.<sup>13</sup>

The construction in 1575 of a forum for religious and philosophical debate, much in the tradition of Akbar's Mongol ancestors, marked the next step in his policy of tolerance (Fig. 11).<sup>14</sup> The *'ibādatkhāna* (Hall of prayer or house of religious debate), at the court in Fatehpur Sikri, was initially open only to

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- 13 Among the figures who resisted Akbar's policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* was the Naqshbandi Sufi master and theologian Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi. He wrote in the early seventeenth century that under Mughal sovereignty, Islam was weakened in India, and the faith was under threat. For Sirhindi, as Muzaffar Alam notes, the true meaning of living under *shari'a* law was "not only total dominance by Muslims but also the humiliation of infidelity and infidels—if not their elimination and annihilation." Among other things, Sirhindi mentioned the destruction of a mosque in Thanesar and the building of a Hindu temple in its stead. See his letter to Mir Muhammad Nu'man as discussed in Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 77–78. Another strong opposition to Akbar's policy came from the historian 'Abd al-Qadir Bada'uni. Employed at the court, he opposed any religious sentiments that were not in accordance with strict Sunni Islam. Criticism is implied in his statement that "Hindustan is a wide place, where there is an open field for all manner of licentiousness, and no one interferes in another's business, so that one can do just as he pleases." Badauni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, 2:253, quoted in Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 76; For other accusations of Akbar and his policy see Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 141–42. On the behavior of shaykhs, there are several references in Mughal sources regarding incidents with Abdallah Sultanpuri and Abd al-Nabi. See Nizami, *Akbar and Religion*, 114–16.
- 14 On religious debates at the Mongol courts, see Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, ed. Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 245–90; Devin DeWeese, "'Ala' al-Dawla Simnani's Religious Encounters at the Mongol Court Near Tabriz," in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 35–76; Judith Pfeiffer, "Confessional Ambiguity vs. Confessional Polarization: Politics and the Negotiation of Religious Boundaries in the Ilkhanate," in *Politics, Patronage, and the Transmission of Knowledge*, 129–68; Johan Elverskog, *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010); Benjamin Z. Kedar, "The Multilateral Disputation at the Court of the Grand Qan Mongke, 1254," in *The Majlis: Interreligious Encounters in Medieval Islam*, ed. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, et al. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999): 162–83. In the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* (The Humayunian Ethics), the author, Ikhtiyar al-Din al-Husayni, mentions learned debates and discussions in Babur's court in Kabul. See Muzaffar Alam, "Akhlaqi Norms and Mughal Governance," in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Nalini Delvoye, Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 74–75.



FIGURE 11 Religious Debates at the Ibadat khana, by Narsingh, from the Akbarnama, ca.1600–03, Mughal India. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper. Folio size: 43 × 26 cm. Chester Beatty Library, acc. In 03.263.

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Sunni Muslims, but soon expanded to include prominent court figures (jurists, mullahs, scholars) and leaders of other Islamic sects (including Shi'i and various sufis), as well as Hindus, Jains, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. The assembly, usually on Thursday nights, was summoned on the order of the emperor to discuss important spiritual topics and relevant books were distributed among the participants.<sup>15</sup> The custom spread to other venues and was continued by Emperor Jahangir.<sup>16</sup>

The success of these philosophical debates, along with some political maneuvering by Akbar's secretary and chronicler Abu'l Fazl, whose writing showed the religious establishment to be self-indulgent and unsupportive, eventually made it clear to Akbar that his schism with the *'ulama'* was beyond repair. In fact, the issue of the famous *mahzar* (edict) in 1579, that was (forcedly) signed by the leading *'ulama'*, granted Akbar judicial authority (*sultan-i 'adil*) that exceeded any of his Muslim jurists. He was accorded with supreme legal-religious oversight of all the different communities in the empire. Knowing this, he took further steps toward equality and harmony among the religious communities in his empire.<sup>17</sup> Aside from rescinding discriminatory taxes, he opened both his administration and the army to Hindus and other non-Muslims. His intention was to create what Muzaffar Alam calls a "non-sectarian and open-ended cultural politics."<sup>18</sup>

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- 15 Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign, with Special Reference to Abu'l Fazl (1556–1605)* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1975), 111–40. Abu'l Fazl documented these gatherings in the *Akbarnama*; see for example *Akbarnama* (Persian) 3:112–13; *Akbarnama* (English) 3:158–60. See also *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 2:201–3, 3:129.
- 16 Abd al-Sattar, who was an official at Akbar's and Jahangir's courts, reported on the devastating experiences of the Jesuits during these sessions. See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700," *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): 39–83; Corinne Lefèvre, "The *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* (1608–11): Dialogue and Asiatic Otherness at the Mughal Court," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 255–86, esp. 260–61.
- 17 For a discussion of the decree see Francis William Buckler, "A New Interpretation of Akbar's "Infallibility" Decree of 1579," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, New Series*, 56, no. 4 (1924): 591–608. According to Abu'l Fazl, any ruler who (like Akbar) could implement this idea was the Perfect Man (*insan al-kamil*), the Philosopher King. *Akbarnama* (Persian), 3:274. On Abu'l Fazl's Platonic concepts, see Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History*, 197, 355–57, 366–69. Azfar Moin links the *mahzar* to Akbar's messianic claims in light of the coming of the Islamic millennium (1591–92). Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 130–169.
- 18 Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 168. Rajeev Kinra comments that *ṣulḥ-i kull* was aimed at establishing civility and respect among the different Muslim sects in India as much as with the

Side by side, beginning in the 1580s, the Mughal elite close to Akbar had come to interpret *shari'a* as part of the broader idea of divine law (*namus-i Ilahi*), whose focus was to create equilibrium and harmony among people of different creeds and ethnic groups, and to protect their freedom of religious practice.<sup>19</sup> Although some modern scholars have praised the policy for its all-encompassing, loving principles, they have tended to view it from a spiritual perspective, neglecting to contextualize it within a broader sphere.<sup>20</sup> In the Muslim world of knowledge, *ṣulḥ-i kull* rested on a well-established tradition of *akhlaqi* (ethics) literature that provided guidance for moral rule, just governance, and social order.<sup>21</sup> In the case of Akbar, for a period of time this ideology also coincided with the upcoming Muslim millennium and the arrival of the Mahdi, the Islamic Messiah. One of the important roles of the Mahdi is to reform religious law in order to bring just social order to the world, a role Akbar assumed as the *sultan-i 'adil* and a *mujtahid*. Amīn Aḥmad Rāzī, one of Akbar's historians, explains the socio-political economic benefits of this policy. He writes that "Those who call Hindustan their homeland (*mutuvattīnān-i Hindustān*) from the time of creation until now have never experienced such fortune and comfort (*rifāhiyat*). The grandees and worthies are given the privilege of high rank and the rest of the people (*sā'ir al-nās*) are free from the nuisance of *jizya*, *zakāt*, and other levies."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, *ṣulḥ-i kull* was a more extensive policy than

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non-Muslim communities. Rajeev Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility: The Global Historical Legacy of Mughal *Sulh-i Kull*," *The Medieval History Journal* 16, no. 2 (2013): 261.

19 Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam*, 168.

20 Audrey Truschke rightly points out that "scholars have frequently conflated *ṣulḥ-i kul* with modern ideas of toleration that prioritize respecting different positions without assenting to them.... No doubt many definitions of tolerance are at work in modernity, but non-interference is generally a crucial component." Audrey Truschke, "Cosmopolitan Encounters: Sanskrit and Persian at the Mughal Court," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2012), 263–64.

21 See Alam, "Akhlāqi Norms and Mughal Governance," 67–95. On Akbar's policy, see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, "Dimensions of *Sulh-i Kul* (Universal Peace) in Akbar's Reign and the Sufi Theory of Perfect Man," in *Akbar and His Age*, ed. Iqtidar Alam Khan (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1999), 3–22; John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire, The New Cambridge History of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 36–41; Iqtidar Alam Khan, "Tracing Sources of Principles of Mughal Governance: A Critique of Recent Historiography," *Social Scientist* 37, no. 5/6 (2009): 45–54; Stephen Frederic Dale, *The Muslim Empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 251–95.

22 Amin Aḥmad Rāzī, *Tazkere-ye Haft Eqlīm*, ed. S. M. R. Taheri (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999) 2:596. Translated by Ali Anooshahr, "Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History

merely pertaining to matters of religion and spirituality. Its goal was to create a balanced, peaceful, stable society that could flourish.<sup>23</sup> Akbar's embrace of tolerance must be understood also as a result of political exigencies—the need for broad support in a predominantly Hindu land. However, he could not have acted alone. The success of *ṣulḥ-i kull* was due to the wide acceptance of the policy and the wide cooperation of court ministers, officials, local governors, lower-level bureaucrats and others who implemented it.<sup>24</sup>

One effect of *ṣulḥ-i kull* was that the Mughal empire became a place of refuge for Muslims of different sects who were persecuted by other rulers. In his memoirs, Jahangir praises his father's policy of inclusion:

Followers of various religions had a place in the broad scope of his peerless empire—unlike other countries of the world, like Iran, where there is room for only Shiites, and Rum, Turan, and Hindustan, where there is room for only Sunnis. Just as all groups and the practitioners of all religions have a place within the spacious circle of God's mercy, in accordance with the dictum that a shadow must follow its source, in my father's realm, which ended at the salty sea, there was room for practitioners of various sects and beliefs, both true and imperfect, and strife and altercation were not allowed. Sunni and Shiite worshiped in one mosque,

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of the Islamic Millennium," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 230. Also see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Turning the Stones Over: Sixteenth-century Millenarianism from the Tagus to the Ganges," *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 40, no. 2 (2003): 129–61, especially pp. 145–154.

23 Muzaffar Alam argues that *ṣulḥ-i kull* was possible in Mughal India not only because of Akbar's ideas, but also because of the tradition of diversity on the subcontinent, where communities of different "beliefs and social practices had learnt to live together, their clashes notwithstanding." Muzaffar Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics," *Modern Asian Studies* 32 (May 1998): 321. For a similar analysis of political conflicts and tolerance during earlier periods in India, see Alyssa Gabbay, *Islamic Tolerance: Amīr Khusraw and Pluralism* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 66–67, 108n6.

24 Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 256–58. Akbar's religio-political policy during the 1580s was quite different from his positions and actions during the 1560s–1570s. For an interesting analysis of both periods, see Khan, "Nobility under Akbar," 29–36. The process of drawing the Hindu Rajputs to the Mughal side did not always go smoothly, and Akbar resorted to military measures in addition to policy change. As soon as he had crushed an Uzbek rebellion in the second half of the 1560s, he forced the Rajputs into submission. The demographic change among the Mughal nobility occurred after Akbar's forces stormed the Rajput fort at Chittor in 1567–68. Khan, "Nobility under Akbar," 31–32. As part of Akbar's harsh policy toward the Rajputs, he reinstated the *jizya* in 1575–76, but soon abolished it again. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 2:213.

and Frank and Jew in one congregation. Utter peaceableness was his established way. He conversed with the good of every group, every religion, and every sect and gave his attentions to each in accordance with their station and ability to understand.<sup>25</sup>

Jahangir boasted about the same policy of tolerance during his own rule, when, unlike subjects of the Uzbeks, Safavids, and Ottomans, people of different faiths were free to practice as they saw fit.<sup>26</sup> Like his father, Jahangir also maintained mostly friendly relations with missionaries from the Society of Jesus and showed an interest in European painting and artifacts, as part of a global vision for his realm. He also continued with the tradition of holding philosophical debates at his court. During his rule, the discussions with the Jesuits were even more substantial due to the existence of Persian translations and commentary on Christian texts.<sup>27</sup>

Akbar and Jahangir's policy of tolerance and openness had profound effects on Mughal culture. Classical texts of diverse traditions—including Indic, Islamicate, Persianate, Central Asian, and Greco-Roman—were collected, translated, and studied at the court. Some of these books were illustrated and

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- 25 Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahangirnāma: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 40. Muzaffar Alam and Rajeev Kinra discuss this passage in their respective works: Alam, "Akhlāqī Norms and Mughal Governance," 86; Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 263–64. In the *Ta'rīkh-i alfi*, Ja'far Beg writes about Akbar's court that "It is no secret to the inhabitants of the world, from east to west, that the fallen of the world have only to seek refuge at his court, and no one returns from his threshold disappointed." Translated by Anooshahr, "Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History," 242.
- 26 Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*, 69. Edward Terry, chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe, wrote about Jahangir's reign: "In that empire, all religions are tolerated." Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India* (1655, rep. London: Printed for W. Cater, S. Hayes, J. Wilkie, and E. Easton, at Salisbury, 1777), 418 (viewed in an electronic version). Jahangir exhibited intolerance toward non-Muslims on occasion; several times he ordered the destruction of Hindu temples and statues. When he visited Pushkar, near Ajmer, he ordered a statue of Varaha (an incarnation of Vishnu) to be removed and thrown into the nearby water tank. He also ordered the removal of a yogi shrine in the vicinity. *Jahangirnāma* (English), 153. On the pursuit of *ṣulḥ-i kull* under Jahangir and Shah Jahan see Rajeev Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 251–95; Idem, *Writing Self Writing Empire: Chandar Bhan Brahman and the Cultural World of the Indo-Persian State Secretary* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), esp. 16–32.
- 27 The relationship with the Jesuits was affected by the political engagements with the Portuguese, and thus had its ups and downs. See Alam and Subrahmanyam, "Frank Disputations," 469, 505.

copied several times at the Mughal workshops.<sup>28</sup> By supporting the patronage of multifarious artistic and intellectual traditions, the Mughals continued their Mongol ancestors' practice of political tolerance and cultural diversity. Demonstrating their awareness of the connection, in the Mughal "History of a 1000 years" (*Tarikh-i Alfi*), Mulla Ahmad Tattavi compared Akbar's tolerance policy with an earlier tradition implemented by the Mongol khan Mongke (r. 1251–59).<sup>29</sup> In the spirit of cosmopolitanism, Mongke collected artifacts from European, Arab, and Chinese lands, and he employed artists and artisans from everywhere.<sup>30</sup> It appears that the Mongols' cultivation of cultural diversity had a long lasting impact on the subsequent Muslim dynasties in Central Asia, such as the Timurids. The Timurids, who were the paternal ancestors of the Mughals, also developed a "taste for foreign styles and visual hybridity" in painting that likely had its roots in the visual pluralism of the Mongols.<sup>31</sup>

As heirs to Timurid, Mongol, and other ancient traditions, the Mughal elite recognized the continuity and innovation in their cultural pluralism.<sup>32</sup> Adopting the policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* was at the core of cultural interaction. It

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28 One example is the *Razmnama*, a rendering of the Hindu epic the *Mahabharata*, to which Abu'l Fazl wrote an introduction. Akbar's illustrated copy of the *Razmnama* is at the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur, India (AG 1883). The images are published and discussed in Thomas H. Hendley, *Memorials of the Jeypore Exhibition, 1883*, 4 vols. (London: W. Griggs, 1884). For a discussion and translation of Abu'l Fazl's introduction, see Carl W. Ernst, "Muslim Studies of Hinduism? A Reconsideration of Arabic and Persian Translations from Indian Languages," *Iranian Studies* 36 (June 2003): 173–95. Also see Audrey Truschke, *Culture of Encounters: Sanskrit at the Mughal Court* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). On the relationships among the various illustrated manuscripts, see John Seyller, "Model and Copy: The Illustration of Three "Razmnāma" Manuscripts," *Archives of Asian Art* 38 (January 1985): 37–66; Asok Kumar Das, *Paintings of the Razmnama: The Book of War* (Ahmedabad, India: Mapping, 2005).

29 For a translation and discussion of this passage see Anooshahr, "Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History," 243–44.

30 The historian Juvayni mentions diverse artisans and craftsmen who constructed Mongke's palace and embellished it with pictures. See 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, trans. John Andrew Boyle, 2 vols. (Manchester, Eng.: Manchester University Press, 1958) 1:236–39.

31 Gulru Necipoglu refers to other dynasties as well, including the Ilkhans, Jalayirids, Aq Quyunlus and Qara Quyunlus. Gulru Necipoglu, "Persianate Images between Europe and China: The "Frankish Manner" in the Diez and Topkapı Albums, c. 1350–1450," *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, ed. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 535–36.

32 Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 253.

is in this context that we need to consider Akbar and Jahangir's interests in European art and their complex relations with the Jesuits.

### Mughals and Europeans: The Encounters

Among the Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards present in the subcontinent by the early sixteenth century were merchants sent by the Medicis to report, mostly from Goa and southern India, on the prospect of regulating commercial relations.<sup>33</sup> The Portuguese established their Estado da Índia, with a center first in Cochin and by late 1510 in Goa. By the time Babur captured Delhi in 1526, the Portuguese spread their control over Indian Ocean trade routes, competing with the Mamluks, Ottomans, and Venetians. To that mix, we can add the arrival of Jesuits in 1542.

We do not know in what capacity Babur and Humayun interacted directly with Europeans, but we do know that the latter possessed articles made in Europe, such as textiles, clothing, and drawings or prints. Some of these objects were gifts the Safavids bestowed upon the young exiled Humayun, when he took shelter in Iran (1540–55) after his defeat by Sher Shah Sur. Other articles were purchased from European merchants in India. The Portuguese historian Diogo do Couto recounts that Humayun acquired a *Book of Hours*, the traditional medieval manuscript of prayers arranged in seasonal cycles, from a Portuguese man. To assess the emperor's knowledge of the Bible, the man showed Humayun illustrations, especially those of King David and Bathsheba. To his great surprise, the Muslim ruler was well versed in the story and explained the iconography.<sup>34</sup>

Akbar formed connections with the Europeans that ranged from diplomatic and cultural to economic and military, resulting in increases in Renaissance materials at the Mughal libraries and workshops. In the 1570s, the Mughals established their dominance over large portions of India, pushing back against the Portuguese presence. Looking to connect Delhi-Agra with the ocean trade,

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33 For the presence of Italian merchants and travelers in India in the thirteenth through seventeenth centuries, see Rosa Maria Cimino and Fabio Scialpi, *India and Italy: Exhibition Organized in Collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations* (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1974), 49–74.

34 The passage by Diogo do Couto is translated and discussed by Sanjay Subrahmanyam. See Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 258–59, 264; Subrahmanyam “Roomful of Mirrors,” 44–45.

Akbar conquered Gujarat in 1572 and Bengal by 1575–76, gaining access to sea-ports in the western Indian Ocean as well as in the Bay of Bengal (Fig. 2). The addition of these new territories to the Mughal Empire undermined European power on the subcontinent and beyond.<sup>35</sup>

At the time of these military tensions Akbar began to express more clearly his interest in European intellectual and material culture.<sup>36</sup> The *Akbarnama* reports that during the siege of Surat in 1573, a large number of Christians [نصاری] from Goa and environs came to Akbar and “presented themselves as ambassadors....”<sup>37</sup> What follows is illuminating about the Mughal view of *firangīs*:

They produced many of the rarities of their country, and the appreciative Khedive [Akbar] received each one of them with special favour and made inquiries about the wonders of Portugal [عجایب و غایب پرتگال] and the manners and customs of Europe [واوضاع فرنگ].... [The emperor] “did this from a desire of knowledge, for his sacred heart is a depôt of spiritual and physical science [داناى صوری و معنو]. But his [Akbar’s] boding soul wished that these inquiries might be the means to civilising (istīnās, i.e. familiarity or sociability) this savage race [گروه وحشی].”<sup>38</sup>

Akbar’s interest in the Europeans was therefore self-serving, mixed with notions of intellectual curiosity and cultural superiority.

Envoys to Goa (Haji Habibullah in the mid-to-late 1570s and Tahir Muhammad in 1580–81) had orders to bring back specific articles as well as

35 During Akbar’s time the Mughals also gained control of major land and river routes, connecting inland and maritime trade and presiding over commercial networks on the subcontinent and beyond. Douglas E. Streusand, *The Formation of the Mughal Empire* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 72–81; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Portuguese Empire in Asia, 1500–1700: A Political and Economic History*, 2nd ed. (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 155–56.

36 It is worth noting that Akbar was also interested in the Ottoman cannons that he captured as war booty during the siege on the fort of Surat. *Akbarnama* (English) 3:39.

37 The embassy was sent by Antonio Cabral. See note 1 by Beveridge, *Akbarnama* (English) 3:37.

38 *Akbarnama* (English) 3:37. For the Persian text see Abū’l Faḡl ibn Mubārak, *History of Akbar*, ed. and trans. by Wheeler M. Thackston (Murty Classical Library of India, Harvard University Press, 2018) 5: 33. A similar notion of the Mughals “civilizing the savages,” referring to some Rajput tribes of Hindustan, appears in ‘Abd al-Sattār’s *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*. See Lefèvre, “*Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*,” 278.

expert artisans and musicians. The first embassy to Goa in 1575 included artists, musicians, and craftsmen who remained for a year or two to learn the styles and techniques of European art and artifacts.<sup>39</sup> In 1576 two Jesuits, Antonio Vas and Pedro Dias, met the Mughals in Bengal, but it did not amount to anything substantial.<sup>40</sup> A few years later, the Portuguese commander of the port of Hugli in Bengal, Pero Tavares, or Partāb Tār Feringi, as Abu'l Fazl calls him, came to pay homage at Akbar's court.<sup>41</sup> Following Akbar's inquiries about Christianity, Tavares suggested that he invite a priest named Gil Eanes Pereira. Arriving at Fatehpur Sikri in 1578, Pereira felt ill-equipped to satisfy the emperor's intellectual and spiritual curiosity, and encouraged the Mughal ruler to summon the Jesuits.<sup>42</sup> In the same year, Antonio Cabral, who met Akbar in Surat in 1573, was dispatched to the Mughal court as an ambassador of the Portuguese Viceroy Dom Diogo de Meneses. He arrived with two other Portuguese men. According to European sources, Akbar was said to be so impressed with Cabral's Christian behavior and intrigued by their conversations about faith and law, that he followed the envoy's advice to invite the Jesuits.<sup>43</sup> However, it is also possible that Akbar intended to use the Jesuits as leverage for his economic and political interests when dealing with the Portuguese in Goa.<sup>44</sup>

Akbar's invitation to the Jesuits from Goa was delivered in spite of (or perhaps as a result of) his heightened tension with the Portuguese. The first of three Jesuit embassies arrived in 1580, summoned to participate in religious

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39 One of the Jesuits in Goa describes this embassy in a letter, stating that the envoy arrived with "many Mughals who stayed for one year and learnt almost all our crafts." Quoted in Nuno Vassallo e Silva, "Precious Stones, Jewels and Cameos: Jacques de Coutré's Journey to Goa and Agra," in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 118, 208n6.

40 Alam and Subrahmanyam, "Frank Disputations," 463.

41 Abu'l Fazl states that Tavares arrived at the court in Akbar's 23rd regnal year (1578), however, Hoyland suggests that he was there already by 1576. *Akbarnama* (English) 3:349–50; Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S. J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annot. S. N. Banerjee (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922; New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 1.

42 Pereira was stationed in Satgaon in Bengal, and was probably not a Jesuit. For his letter to the Archbishop of Goa see Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 256; John Correia-Afonso, *Jesuit Letters and Indian History, 1542–1773*, 2nd ed. (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1969), 5; Pierre Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits, an account of the Jesuit missions to the court of Akbar*, translated with introduction and notes by Charles Herbert Payne (New York, London: Harper & Brothers, 1926), 214n8.

43 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 14–15.

44 Pius Malekandathil, *The Mughals, the Portuguese, and the Indian Ocean: Changing Imaginaries of Maritime India* (Delhi: Primus Books, 2013), 13–38.

and philosophical debates at the forum in Fatehpur Sikri. The second arrived in 1591, and the third, the longest, came in 1595. They not only brought their philosophical arguments to the court's intellectual forum, but also were engaged to provide some teaching to siblings of the royal family, including Akbar's son Prince Murad, who was a pupil of Fathers Antonio Monserrate and Rudolf Acquaviva in 1582.<sup>45</sup> Emperor Jahangir continued to receive a constant stream of envoys from the English, such as William Hawkins (1606–11), Sir Thomas Roe (1616–19) and other European rulers, and he also maintained contact with the Jesuits.<sup>46</sup>

To understand these interactions, it is vital to see, in their own words, what the Mughals thought of the *fīrangīs*—sometimes also called “hat-wearers (*kulah-poshān*)”—or the Europe from which they came. Tahir Muhammad, a courtier in Akbar's service who spent a year in Goa in 1580–81, saw them as unclean people, reluctant to use water, especially with respect to bodily functions. On the other hand, he noticed that they like to wear elegant clothes. He recognized European expertise in operating ships and using firearms, but remarked that they were weak in battles on land.<sup>47</sup> In other testimonies, such as a series of accounts written by the scholar named Abd al-Sattar Lahori in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the interactions with the Jesuits is given in some detail.<sup>48</sup> Aside from writing about European philosophy in *Samrat al-Falāsifa*, Abd al-Sattar (‘Abdus Sattar) helped translate European Christian texts into Persian at the Mughal courts, working closely

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45 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 24–25. The second Jesuit mission provided some education to minor Mughal princes. Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 260.

46 For the relationship of Jahangir and the Christians see Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 249–310.

47 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Taking Stock of the Franks: South Asian Views of Europeans and Europe, 1500–1800,” *Indian Economic Social History Review* 42, no. 1 (2005): 86–87. Edward Terry, the chaplain of Sir Thomas Roe's embassy to the court of Jahangir, observed that the Muslims in India washed their bodies, hands and feet often, shaved their heads and in general kept high standards of cleanliness. Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India* (London: Printed by T. W. for J. Martin, and J. Allestrye, at the Bell in St. Pauls Chutch-Yard [sic], 1655), 126–27. Viewed electronically.

48 Perhaps one of the reasons art historians have ignored as important a treatise as the *Majalis-i-Jahangiri* is that there is no English translation of the Persian text. I am indebted to the work of historians such as Muzaffar Alam, Sanjay Subrahmanyam, and Corinne Lefèvre, who brought this significant text to life and began to change the cross-cultural conversations about Mughal-European encounters.

with Father Xavier.<sup>49</sup> In his *Majalis-i Jahangiri* (Assemblies, or Conversations, with Jahangir), Abd al-Sattar provides a crucial anti-Christian view of the religious debates that took place at Akbar and Jahangir's courts. In one of his accounts, Sattar criticizes the Christians, pointing out how they contradicted themselves in claiming that Jesus was God, but refusing to admit that their God had been humiliated, stripped naked, spat on, bitten, and eventually killed on the Cross.<sup>50</sup> Another account from the time of Jahangir describes one of the Jesuits, Francesco Corsi, as a person of "harsh speech, bigotry (*ta'assub*), and sharp temper." The Mughal author ridiculed him for being a Cross-worshipper, a suggestion that his religious observance was idolatrous.<sup>51</sup>

Although invited by the Mughal emperors, the Jesuits not always enjoyed a welcoming atmosphere at the north Indian courts. Father Christoval de Vega, from the second Jesuit Mission, states in his letter (dated Dec. 2, 1593) that Akbar behaved in a very arrogant manner toward them.<sup>52</sup> Similar sentiments were voiced by members of the third Jesuit mission, who stated that the Mughals were generally arrogant and had a "supreme disdain to us."<sup>53</sup> Both Akbar's mother, Hamida Banu, and his aunt, Gulbadan Begum, were suspicious of the Jesuit presence at the court, and they were perhaps partially responsible for Acquaviva's recall in 1583.<sup>54</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that on the surface, the Mughals conjured up an image of the Franks as an "untrustworthy and slippery lot," but one that aroused curiosity and possessed exotic objects that elicited wonder.<sup>55</sup> One such wondrous item was an organ that Akbar's envoy to Goa brought back to the Mughal court in the late 1570s (see chapter 3).

49 Arnulf Camps, "Abd-al-Sattār Lahūrī," *Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abd-al-sattar-b-qasem-lahuri-early-mughal-period-author-and-translator> (accessed April 9, 2015).

50 Alam and Subrahmanyam, "Frank Disputations," 494–96.

51 Translated by Subrahmanyam in "Roomful of Mirrors," 48.

52 "... the haughtiness of this barbarian [i.e., Akbar] had attained to such a degree that ..." Arnulf Camps, *Studies in Asian Mission History, 1956–1998* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 50.

53 In a letter quoted by Father Guerreiro regarding events in 1602, Agra, he states that the Mughals "showed they had a high opinion of the things of our Faith, a remarkable and quite novel phenomenon, seeing their general arrogance, and supreme disdain of us." Quoted in Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932), 233. Originally from Guerreiro's *Relacam II*, part II, 52–56; translated by Hosten, published in *The Examiner*, Bombay, November 22, 29, 1919.

54 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 19.

55 Objects of wonder and rarity (*'ajā'ib-o-gharā'ib*). Subrahmanyam, "Taking Stock of the Franks," 75–76. For an interesting anecdote at the court of Jahangir regarding the medicinal use of Tabaco and European knowledge see *Ibid*, 77.

The combination of fascination and playfulness that the Franks aroused in the Mughals is demonstrated by an anecdote in the *Akbarnama*. Abu'l Fazl tells us that when Haji Habibullah, leader of the embassy to Goa, returned from there around 1577, he went to pay homage to Akbar and made a grand entrance at the court, “attended by a large number of persons dressed up as Christians and playing European drums and clarions.”<sup>56</sup> Costuming also occurred during the Jesuits’ first interview with Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. The missionaries were invited to the *dawlat-khana* (imperial court), “where [Akbar] seized the opportunity, presented by a sudden rain-storm, to put on Portuguese dress—a scarlet cloak with golden fastenings. He ordered his sons also to don the same dress, together with Portuguese hats. This he did in order to please his guests.”<sup>57</sup> Parading around the court in European clothes reveals a sense of humor and an atmosphere of revelry in the Mughals’ relationship with the Europeans, not the awe and solemnity we would expect given Jesuit reports of Mughals’ near-conversion experiences.<sup>58</sup>

It is clear, though, that Akbar was interested in the Jesuits’ insights; he had invited them to reside at his court. As the fathers were well versed in Greco-Roman literature, rhetoric, and philosophy—subjects familiar to an educated person in the Muslim world—the emperor was attracted to their highly-trained

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56 *Akbarnama* (English) 3:322.

57 *The Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 28. According to Beveridge, Diogo do Couto describes a meeting between Akbar and Portuguese merchants at Cambay, in 1573, at which Akbar donned Portuguese dress. *Akbarnama* (English) 3:1138. Banerjee notes that Akbar would continue to do so “on suitable occasions,” and refers to the same incident: “He put it on for the first time probably in the course of his negotiations with the Portuguese through Antonio Cabral in 1573.” *The Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 28n63. Sir Thomas Roe reported that when he visited Jahangir’s court, he brought three European hats as gifts, “for that his women liked them.” The emperor then asked Roe to give him his own hat, just because he fancied it. Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619: As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), 2:386.

58 Pedro de Moura Carvalho holds that Akbar loved Portuguese clothes and that his dressing up as a European should be understood in light of his admiration for European fashion, appearance, and culture. See Pedro de Moura Carvalho, “‘Rarities from Goa’ at the Courts of Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir (1530–1627),” *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 118. In contrast, Alam and Subrahmanyam write that the Mughals under Akbar and Jahangir “dealt with them [Europeans] playfully, as a powerful monarch could.” Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 310. Azfar Moin claims that donning the Jesuit clothes was Akbar’s way of understanding them, since he was illiterate and a “hands-on” person. Akbar also put on a Zoroastrian costume once. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 151–52.

manner of debate. Their principles of *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (“for the greater glory of God”) and *Soli Deo gloria* (“glory to God alone”) also aligned with Akbar’s concept of the *Din-i Ilahi* (“divine faith”), at least on a superficial level. The Jesuits practiced a method of accommodation with divergent ideas that on the surface resembled Akbar’s tolerant approach to various religions in his realm. But, unlike him, they were not open to accepting other traditions; it all came down to conversion.<sup>59</sup> Although the Jesuits urged Akbar to choose one religious path—Catholicism—he preferred to learn from different traditions. Some scholars have argued that *Din-i Ilahi* amounted to a new religion, but others say Akbar simply did not adhere to Islamic orthodoxy. In period texts he clearly identifies himself as a follower of Muhammad’s religion.<sup>60</sup>

On some level, it appears that the Mughals regarded the Europeans as part of the subcontinent mixture of nations, languages, religions and ethnic groups. They were not particularly interested in hearing about the land from which the Europeans had arrived and perhaps were considering the Franks as part of India’s natural pluralism.<sup>61</sup> But Subrahmanyam argues that what seems like only superficial mention of European lands and culture in Mughal court histories should not be taken at face value. He points to the numerous European articles, including maps, globes, atlases, and paintings of kings and queens, that were brought to the Mughal courts of Akbar and Jahangir, and the selective adaptation into Mughal visual culture of some of the ideas they embodied.<sup>62</sup> Political and economic reports on the Europeans were procured by several

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59 On the Jesuits’ training and schools, see Gianni Criveller, *Preaching Christ in Late Ming China* (Taipei; Brescia, Italy: Taipei Ricci Institute in collaboration with Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana, 1997), 4–9.

60 Akbar performed his prayers regularly, read himself the *khutba* (congressional sermon) on Fridays, and regarded himself as a Muslim ruler. He was also appointed a *mujtahid*, which allowed him to interpret and judge in matters of *shari’a* law. Badauni argues that by doing that he followed his Timurid ancestors. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 2:213. On the term “Mujtahid,” see Jean Calmard, “Mudjtahid,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maryam-COM\\_0692](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/maryam-COM_0692) (accessed April 11, 2015).

61 Jahangir held a similar attitude towards the Franks: on the surface, ignoring their background and larger context of their presence, while focusing on more immediate interactions in India. The emperor, like his father, was interested in the rarities from Goa, while at the same time he describes the Franks as untrustworthy. Subrahmanyam, “Taking stock of the Franks,” 77.

62 *Ibid.*, 78–79.

envoys that Akbar and Jahangir sent to Goa over the years, hence an awareness existed, even if not well reflected in the sources.<sup>63</sup>

### The Challenge of Primary Sources

Primary sources available for the study of Portuguese–Mughal relations in Asia include contemporary and retrospective chronicles, transcribed oral sources, diplomatic and private correspondence, administrative documents, memoirs, travel literature, poetry, and literary prose.<sup>64</sup> Each must be read critically, accounting for the author’s intention and when and where the text was composed. Equally important is maintaining a balance between Mughal and other sources, such as European, Central Asian, Ottoman, and Safavid. The same considerations apply to the study of Mughal painting, but art historians have too often taken the primary sources—whether European or Mughal—at face value. Jesuit sources had their proselytizing interests in mind, and Mughal histories such as the *Akbarnama* and the *Jahangirnama*, which provide the other side of the story, were official court propaganda.<sup>65</sup>

Mughal official histories provide rather concise descriptions of the encounters with Europeans and the reception of their artifacts at the court. One reason is that the Mughals, at that time, were more concerned with the Safavids, the Uzbeks, and the Ottomans. From the *Humayun-nama*, a history of Akbar’s father, Humayun (r. 1530–56), we learn of the presence of Portuguese traders at the Mughal court as early as 1531, but the text does not elaborate on encounters with them.<sup>66</sup> In a 1552 letter from Humayun to Abd al-Rashid Khan of Kashgar

63 One example is Tahir Muhammad’s account of his year in Goa, about 1580–81, as discussed by Subrahmanyam.

64 Subrahmanyam, “Through the Looking Glass: Some Comments on Asian Views of the Portuguese in Asia, 1500–1700,” in *As Relações entre a Índia Portuguesa, a Ásia do Sueste E O Extremo Oriente*, ed. Artur Teodoro de Matos and Luís Filipe F. Reis Thomaz (Macau; Lisboa: [Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações dos Descobrimentos Portugueses: Fundação Oriente], 1993), 377–403, esp. 382–86.

65 The *Jahangirnama*, or *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, is Emperor Jahangir’s personal memoir, starting with his accession to the throne in 1605. By 1622 he was too ill to write and commissioned Mu’tamad Khan to complete the task. Khan’s addition extends to 1624, when it suddenly stops. In the eighteenth century the historian Muhammad Hadi continued the account up to the death of Jahangir, in 1627, and the accession of his son, Shah Jahan, in 1628. See Wheeler Thackston’s preface in *Jahangirnama* (English), ix.

66 Gulbadan Begam, *Humayun-nama: The History of Humayun*, trans. Annette S. Beveridge (1902; repr. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2002), 114, 114n1. Portuguese merchants were also in

(r. 1533–1565/70), the Mughal emperor mentions five European line drawings (perhaps engravings) he is sending as gifts.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, the text provides no further details.

In spite of recent studies, a few scholars have continued to emphasize the impact of the Jesuits because of the relative paucity of Mughal documentation, the success of Christian propaganda, and a persistent Eurocentrism in some academic writing. Coming to India as an organized group with a clear missionary agenda, the Jesuits produced numerous colorful accounts of their interactions with the Mughal imperial courts and the upper strata of society. They tended to elaborate on East-West encounters, and their narratives often overflow with details about issues and events that the Mughal chronicles leave out. These texts are especially valuable for recording Jesuit interactions with Akbar and Jahangir and for documenting the presence of specific works of art that the missionaries brought with them.

Aside from Jesuit narratives, few accounts were written in English during Jahangir's reign. The best-known one is by Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador under King James I.<sup>68</sup> Roe was in Jahangir's court between 1615 and 1619 to secure commerce for the East India Company.<sup>69</sup> In his writings, the Englishman displayed an interesting ambivalence concerning his experience in the Subcontinent. Nonetheless, he was impressed with the Mughal policy of tolerance (*ṣulḥ-i kull*), and used it as a model to suggest socio-economic re-

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contact with other Indian courts in the north when Humayun was in exile, between 1540 and 1555. Flores and Vassallo e Silva, *Goa and the Great Mughal*, 106n35.

67 The Persian text reads: "*Panj safiḥat-i taswir qalam-i siyahī az karḥai firangianast.*" Humayun sent Rashid Khan other works of art as well. The letter appears in the account of Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i Humayun va Akbar*, ed. M. Hidayet Hosayn (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1941), 68–69. Abd al-Rashid Khan (1533–60), ruler of Moghulistan, was a cousin of Babur. The *Tarikh-i Rashidi* by Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat is dedicated to him.

68 Roe was not the first Englishman King James I sent to the Mughal court. In 1608 William Hawkins arrived as the representative of the English king and the East India Company. His mission, to obtain permission for trade and to establish a permanent base for the English merchants, was unsuccessful. Hawkins's firsthand account appears as "William Hawkins," in *Visions of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing*, ed. Michael H. Fisher (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 59–75. Earlier, John Newberry, Ralph Fitch and William Leedes arrived at Agra in 1584 with letters from Queen Elizabeth to Emperor Akbar requesting to establish commercial relations. Newberry and Fitch left Fatehpur Sikri on September 28, 1585, while Leedes, a gemstone expert, stayed at the court to work for Akbar. "Ralph Fitch, 1583–91," *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619*, ed. William Foster (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921), 1–47.

69 See Roe, *Embassy*.

forms in England.<sup>70</sup> While the Jesuits' agenda focused more on religious matters, Roe's agenda was political and economic. From these accounts we gain important information regarding diplomatic gift exchanges, the circulation of European artifacts, their reception by the Mughal elite, and the interactions of Mughal artists with Renaissance art.

However, the missionary language that the Jesuits used to describe and explain various occurrences at the Mughal courts led to some misinterpretations regarding the reception of Christian art by the Mughal elite and their artists. According to one Jesuit account, when visiting the Jesuit chapel at Fatehpur Sikri, Mughal artists were "all wonderstruck and said that there could be no better painting, nor better artists than those who had painted the said pictures."<sup>71</sup> Ironically, the English William Edwards writes similarly about the Mughal artists' response to a portrait of Sir Thomas Smith, Governor of the East India Company, that he brought as a gift to Jahangir in 1614.<sup>72</sup> "I presented the Mogul with your Worship's picture, which he esteemed so well for the workmanship that the day after he sent for all his painters in public to see the same, who did admire it and confessed that none of them could anything near imitate the same which makes him prize it above all the rest, and esteems it for a jewel." Scholarly works often quote these accolades for European artists while ignoring Abu'l Fazl's statement that it was the artists at the Mughal workshops who had reached perfection.<sup>73</sup> In their encounters with the Europeans, clearly, the Mughals had their own interests at heart.

70 In 1641 Roe gave a speech in the English Parliament, using the Mughal example to better England's position in the international trade market. Kinra, "Handling Diversity with Absolute Civility," 256–58. For an analysis of Roe's ambivalence toward India see Rahul Sapra, *The Limits of Orientalism: Seventeenth-century representations of India* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 60–88.

71 John Correia-Afonso, ed., *Letters from the Mughal Court: The First Jesuit Mission to Akbar (1580–1583)*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources; Anand, India: G. S. Prakash, 1981), 3; Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: the Art of the Book, 1560–1660* (London: V&A Publications; New York: Distributed by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2002), 102, 186n62.

72 A letter from William Edwards to Sir Thomas Smith, Governor of the East India Company, Dec. 26, 1614, written in Ahmadabad and Ajmer. Frederick Charles Danvers and William Foster, eds., *Letters Received by the East India Company from Its Servants in the East: Transcribed from the "Original Correspondence" Series of the India Office* (London: S. Low, Marston, 1896–1902), 2: 246.

73 Abū'l Fazl ibn Muḃārak, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77) 1:116–17. In his English edition, Blochmann has a different translation for these passages. Idem, *The Ain-i Akbari*, trans. Henry Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (1867–77. Reprint, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2010) 1:107.

Some of the misrepresentations in Jesuit published accounts about Mughal India resulted from the layered bureaucracy that governed communication.<sup>74</sup> Missionaries in the field sent letters to the regional administrator in Goa, who then wrote to the chief administrator (Superior General) in Rome and to various other Jesuit centers. This epistolary tradition was established early on by Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556), the founder of the Jesuit order.<sup>75</sup>

The Jesuits used these letters to report on spiritual challenges, to learn from one another's missionary experiences, and to draw the attention of a diverse and intellectually curious audience in Europe, thereby attracting positive attention to the Society itself.<sup>76</sup> They edited the letters and published them in books that circulated throughout Europe. The decision to control the content and dissemination of these documents after 1581 was a response to criticism of the inconsistent and even contradictory voices and information in earlier published letters from missionaries in India.<sup>77</sup>

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74 For an interesting work that relies on the Jesuit point of view, see Correia-Afonso, *Jesuit Letters*.

75 Unfortunately, many of the original letters have either been lost or are so fragile as to be almost illegible. *Ibid.*, 18; Charles Herbert Payne, introduction to Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, vi; Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 6–17.

In his book about Father Jerome Xavier, Arnulf Camps describes the whereabouts of the Jesuit archives in Goa and the arrival of some of these letters and documents in London. He also discusses copies and translations of reports that the Jesuits sent to Rome, Lisbon, and the Spanish king. Arnulf Camps, *Jerome Xavier S. J. and the Muslims of the Mogul Empire: Controversial and Missionary Activity* (Schöneck, Germany: Nouvelle revue de science missionnaire suisse, 1957), 40–50; Correia-Afonso dedicates chapter 12 in *Jesuit Letters* to this subject.

Some material related to the Jesuits in Goa during the time of Akbar and Jahangir is part of the Marsden Collection, now at the British Library (MSS 9854, 9855). See Ross E. Denison, "The Manuscripts Collected by William Marsden with Special Reference to Two Copies of Almeida's 'History of Ethiopia,'" *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies* 2 (January 1922): 519, 532; Charles Ralph Boxer, "More about the Marsden Manuscripts in the British Museum," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (April 1949): 67–71.

76 Ignatius of Loyola expressed these sentiments in a 1542 letter to Father P. Farber. According to Correia-Afonso, Ignatius sent out specific instructions regarding the letters: *Jesuit Letters*, 3.

77 *Ibid.*, 15–17. The letters were often translated into different European languages. See Donald F. Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 1:314–19, esp. 318. "In contrast to the discrete letters sent annually with the fleet to Portugal, [the edited reports] were published in Europe separately as the official statement of the mission's progress." Lach, *Asia in the Making of Europe*, 1:318.

A book about the Mughals by a Jesuit who never visited India demonstrates some of the complexities of gleaning information from Jesuit reports. For a volume published in Rome in 1597, Giovanni Battista Peruschi drew on the writings of Father Monserrate during the first mission, plus letters that missionaries had sent to Goa during the third mission.<sup>78</sup> Peruschi summarized and modified the original sources, mixing them together to create a smooth narrative of his own. His version was then revised by Claudio Acquaviva, the Superior General.<sup>79</sup> Such publications attempted to present the Catholic agenda in the best possible light, especially given the challenge of the Reformation.

Another example of multilayered reporting is the work of Father Pierre Du Jarric, a source that art historians often rely on to interpret Mughal Occidental painting. Du Jarric, based in Bordeaux, wrote a four-volume *Histoire* (1608–14) tracing the growth of the Christian Catholic faith, including the Jesuit mission to India. Charles Herbert Payne translated and edited the work, which was published in 1926 as *Akbar and the Jesuits: An Account of the Jesuit Missions to the Court of Akbar by Father Pierre Du Jarric*, S. J. Payne notes in his introduction that the book is not a history per se and is “in no sense an original work.” Rather, it is a “compilation” based upon various sources in different languages, and can be seen as “a guide to the spirit rather than to the events of the time, to the characters of men rather than to their actions.”<sup>80</sup> Hence, it is no surprise that Du Jarric asserts that the Mughal emperor “appeared ... to be strongly attached to the Christian faith and to those who preached it, being convinced, as we may suppose, of its manifest truth.”<sup>81</sup> This perspective has been brought to discussions of Christian elements in Mughal painting, when in fact neither

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78 Ibid., 452, 452n814.

79 Ibid.

80 The full title is *Histoire des choses plus memorables advenues tant ez Indes Orientales, que autres païs de la decouverte des Portugais, en l'establisement et progresz de la foy Chrestienne et Catholique: Et principalement de ces que les Religieux de la Compagnie de Jésus y ont fait jusques à l'an 1600* (History of the most memorable things that occurred in the East Indies and other countries discovered by the Portuguese during the establishment and progress of the Christian and Catholic faith: especially the religious deeds of the Society of Jesus to the year 1600). A Latin translation was published in 1615 in Cologne. See Auguste Carayon, *Bibliographie historique de la Compagnie de Jésus: Ou catalogue des ouvrages relatifs à l'histoire des jésuites depuis leur origine jusqu'à nos jours* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1970), 112, cats. 791–92; Payne, introduction to Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, xxxv–xxxvi; xxiii–xxvii; quotes from xxiv and xliii. Du Jarric's text is based on the works of Luis de Guzman with notes by Albert Laertius, Fernand Guerreiro, and Jean de Lucena, and he ends his history in around 1610 (xviii).

81 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 51.

emperor made any attempt to adopt Christianity.<sup>82</sup> It was the Mughals' policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* and their political messianic pretensions that made them intellectually open to other traditions, therefore, creating social harmony and balance, and fulfilling the ultimate goal of a just Muslim ruler, based on *Akhlaqi* norms.

### Diplomatic Gifts and “Special” Christian Articles

A number of scholars have linked the appearance of European motifs in Mughal art to the gifts offered by the Jesuits to Akbar in 1580.<sup>83</sup> Yet it is important to remember that Akbar already possessed European articles through his embassy to Goa, and Mughal artists were repurposing European elements in Mughal painting from the late 1570s onward.<sup>84</sup> Even the Jesuits themselves documented Mughal depictions of Christian religious images that predated the arrival of their mission. Father Monserrate, who participated in the first mission to Akbar and described the emperor's donning of Portuguese dress, noted that in the dining hall of the palace at Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar “had pictures of Christ, Mary, Moses and Muhammad.”<sup>85</sup> The Italian merchants who visited the subcontinent attempting to establish trade relations in the early part of the sixteenth century most likely brought Renaissance art objects and artifacts with them.<sup>86</sup> Other European articles may have come through the exchange of gifts with the Safavids, as mentioned earlier.

82 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 12, 19–20; Idem, “Between Religions: Christianity in a Muslim Empire,” *Goa and the Great Mughal* ed. Jorge Flores and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 150.

83 For example, Ebba Koch, “The Influence of the Jesuit Missions on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors,” in *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, ed. Ebba Koch (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001): 1–11; Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 112–43; Amina Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (New York: Abrams, 1992), esp. 95–103.

84 See also the convincing argument made by Som Prakash Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 131.

85 *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 29.

86 See Rosa Maria Cimino and Fabio Scialpi, *India and Italy: Exhibition Organized in Collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations*, exh. cat. (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1974), esp. 49–74.

Gifts from other Europeans came from an expedition supported by Queen Elizabeth that reached Akbar's court to negotiate trade privileges. Upon hearing of the presence of a jeweler among the English men, the Emperor seized the opportunity to offer employment to William Leedes. Leedes, a gemstone expert, arrived together with John Newberry and Ralph Fitch at Akbar's capital Fatehpur Sikri in 1584.<sup>87</sup> Later European embassies to the court of Jahangir also brought a variety of artifacts, including paintings.<sup>88</sup> These became a source of entertainment for the Mughal emperor, as, for instance, he tested the connoisseurship of the English and their knowledge of European iconography. As European books arrived, the Mughals initiated their translation into Persian and composed their own treatises on Latin works, such as Abd al-Sattar Lahori's *Samrat al-Falāsifa* (The Fruits of Philosophers).<sup>89</sup>

Bearing gifts, the Jesuits, who came to convert the Mughal elite, also brought appropriate presents to the north Indian courts.<sup>90</sup> These included

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- 87 "Ralph Fitch, 1583–91", *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619*, 18. It is unclear what happened to William Leedes and we hear nothing about him other than Fitch's account. J. V. S. Wilkinson suggested that he may be depicted in crowd in a folio from the *Akbarnama* showing the celebrations at Akbar's court for the birth of prince Murad, his second son. See Thomas Arnold, revised and edited by James Vere Stewart Wilkinson, *The Library of the A. Chester Beatty, a Catalogue of the Indian Miniatures* ([London] Priv. print. by J. Johnson at the Oxford university press and pub. by E. Walker, limited, 1936), 1:9.
- 88 In about 1614 Nicholas Downton compiled a list of gifts for the English to bring to the Mughal court. Danvers and Foster, *Letters Received*, 2:173–74.
- 89 The Mughals also translated texts from Sanskrit, Arabic, Chagatai and other languages into Persian. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 2:344. See Muzaffar Alam, "The Pursuit of Persian: Language in Mughal Politics" in *Modern Asian Studies* 32, no. 2 (May 1998): 326–27; Qamar Adamjee and Audrey Truschke, "Reimagining the 'Idol Temple of Hindustan': Textual and Visual Translation of Sanskrit Texts in Mughal India," in *Pearls on a String: Artists, Patrons, and Poets at the Great Islamic Courts*, ed. Amy Landau (Baltimore: Walters Art Museum; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 141–65; Carl Ernst, "Muslim Studies of Hinduism," 173–95; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Love, Passion and Reason in Faizi's *Nal-Daman*," *Love in South Asia: A Cultural History*, ed. Francesca Orsini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 109–41. On *Samrat al-Falāsifa*, see Subrahmanyam, "Roomful of Mirrors," 47.
- 90 The gifts the Jesuits offered—including books and prints—were brought from Europe, manufactured in Goa, or made by other Europeans at the Mughal court. For example, we hear about a Jesuit Portuguese artist who was present at the court in Lahore for a short time in the 1590s. A painting of a Madonna and Child with angels at the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, is attributed to this unidentified Jesuit artist (1958.233). Milo Cleveland Beach and Stuart Cary Welch, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 51, 53, 56, fig. 9; Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 28, fig. 19. The Jesuits also

illustrated copies of Abraham Ortelius' atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570), seven of the eight large volumes of Christopher Plantin's Polyglot Bible (1567–72) and the *Adnotationes et Meditationes in Evangelia* by Jerome Nadal (1595).<sup>91</sup> Some art historians believe that these books had a particular deep effect on Mughal art.<sup>92</sup> For example, the Polyglot Bible was a gift to Emperor Akbar from the first Jesuit mission in 1580.<sup>93</sup> Jesuit writings describe the multi-volume book as a "Royal Bible, in four languages, sumptuously bound, and clasped with gold."<sup>94</sup> Edited by Benito Arias Montano and printed in Antwerp between 1569 and 1572 by Christophe Plantin, it contained figural

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made illustrated manuscripts for the Mughal elite, such as the *Mirat al-Quds* (Mirror of Holiness), a story of the life of Christ. Pedro de Moura Carvalho, *Mir'at al-quds (Mirror of Holiness): A Life of Christ for Emperor Akbar: A Commentary on Father Jerome Xavier's Text and the Miniatures of Cleveland Museum of Art*, trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2012).

In 1583 an English painter settled in Goa, opened up shop and "got plenty of employment," according to the Dutch merchant John Huighen van Linschoten. See Robert Kerr and F. A. S. Edin, *A General History and Collection of Voyages and Travels* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1811–24), 7:520.

- 91 These books were printed in Antwerp. Jesuit documents from 1595 and later record the presence of these and other books in India. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America*, 116–17; Idem, "The Truth-Showing Mirror: Jesuit Catechism and the Arts in Mughal India," in *The Jesuits: cultures, sciences, and the arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 385–6, 398–99. Yael Rice discusses the European prints that were present at the Mughal court of Jahangir. Yael Rice, "Lines of Perception: European Prints at the Mughal kitabkhana," *Prints in translation, 1450–1750: image, materiality, space*, ed. Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Edward H. Wouk (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 202–233.
- 92 Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology*; Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 25; Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, 86–90. Also see Verma's critical review of Koch's claims regarding the role of the Polyglot Bible in Mughal painting in *Journal of Islamic Studies* 14, part 3 (2003): 402–406.
- 93 Scholars have linked this Bible to the one produced under the sponsorship of King Philip II (r. 1554–98). See for example Francis Goldie, *The First Christian Mission to the Great Mogul, or, The Story of Blessed Rudolf Acquaviva, and of his Four Companions in Martyrdom, of the Society of Jesus* (Dublin: M. H. Gill, 1897), 63. Du Jarric's account also does not mention the existence of images in this book. Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 19.
- 94 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 19; Giovanni Battista Peruschi, *Informatione del regno e stato del gran rè di Mogor* (Brescia, Italy: 1597), 33. Peruschi's text is based on letters from Father Monserrate. See *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 36–37.

Abu'l Fazl does not refer to such a monumental book, but on another occasion he remarks that "a large number of Firinghīs [Europeans] and Armenians arrived and brought with them China cloths and other goods of that country. Some time was spent in admiring them." *Akbarnama* (Persian) 3:602; *Akbarnama* (English) 3:873–84.

and architectural illustrations, maps, and ornamental details.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, the emperor appears to have returned it and other gifted books to the third Jesuit mission by 1595.<sup>96</sup>

Images in Plantin's Bible, particularly those of the Virgin Mary or Virgin and Child, were said to be the main source of influence on Mughal paintings of a mother and child type, such as Figure 1 and Figure 12.<sup>97</sup> However, Plantin's Bible contains no images of the Virgin and Child, and it is difficult to confirm such direct "influence" in either the iconography or the visual treatment of the female figure from the frontispiece known as the *Pietas Regia* (Fig. 13).<sup>98</sup> The most significant similarities seem to lie in the technique for showing light and shade, the treatment of body volume, and the depiction of a fabric's heavy folds. Otherwise, in the example of Figure 1 the woman reclines on a golden carpet, nursing her child. In Figure 12 we see a Mughal woman wearing Mughal clothes, sitting on the ground with her knees bent and open, and appearing

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- 95 Known variously as the *Biblia Regia*, the Antwerp Polyglot Bible, and Plantin's Bible, it was published in eight volumes, but Father Monserrate indicates that Akbar received only seven. *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 37. See Payne's important observation about Monserrate's *Commentary* in Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 221n15. Goldie also mentions that the Mughal emperor received seven volumes. *The First Christian Mission*, 63. Copies of the *Biblia Regia* can be found in several locations, including the Divinity School library at Harvard University, whose copy I examined in 2013. According to Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598), editor and supervisor of the Plantin Bible project in Flanders, these images had educational value. Karen Bowen and Dirk Imhof note that it was customary for printed Bibles in the vernacular to have images accompanying the text. Bowen and Imhof, *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 87–88. For more on the production of Plantin's Bible, see Léon Voet with Jenny Voet-Grisolle, *The Plantin Press (1555–1589): A Bibliography of the Works Printed and Published by Christopher Plantin at Antwerp and Leiden*, 6 vols. (Amsterdam: Van Hoveve, 1980), 1:280–381.
- 96 Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 191, subsequent history 164. Milo Beach provides no reference for his statement in an endnote that "Akbar reportedly did not keep the Bible but returned it later to the Fathers." Beach, "The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 63, no. 332 (1965): 63, 91n2. Som Prakash Verma provides no reference for his similar assertion in *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Biblical Themes in Mughal Painting* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2011), 85.
- 97 Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), 164.
- 98 The *Pietas Regia* was further considered to serve as a model for several Mughal drawings of a semi-nude European female figure, dubbed "allegorical." See Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, 87–89. The differences between the European print and the Mughal drawings are significant and their meanings are yet to be explored.



FIGURE 12 *Virgin and Child*, by Ghulam, ca. 1600, made for Prince Salim (inscription), Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 10.1 × 6.9 cm. British Museum, 1942,0124,0.2.

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FIGURE 13 Double title pages from the Polyglot Bible: Pietas Regia (left) and The Various Ways God Spoke to the Fathers (right), printed by Christophe Plantin, 1569–72. Antwerp. Ink on paper. Andover-Harvard Theological Library, R.B.R. port. 303 1569. ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY, HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL, CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS.

relaxed as she looks at her child.<sup>99</sup> The European figure stands in a slight contrapposto with one breast bare among dramatic folds of fabric. She holds an open book, leans against a blazon, and gazes away from the viewer into the distance.

The belief that one artifact—an illustrated Bible—could exert such a tremendous impact on another culture derives primarily from the prestige of that Bible in Europe and the book's perceived spiritual powers. The book's relation to Mughal painting must be evaluated in light of the uncertainty regarding the fate of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible on the subcontinent. If indeed the emperor returned it to the missionaries, his apparent indifference to the gift would have to be reconciled with scholarly claims about the book's influence. And if the Antwerp Polyglot Bible was no longer available at the imperial library after 1595, it would be hard to justify claims of direct visual connections between that Bible and Mughal works of art dating to the early seventeenth century. As with the purported impact of other works, there is a time delay to explain: the majority of Mughal images that can be linked on some level to the Antwerp Bible tentatively date to the mid-1590s or later, though the Jesuits presented the Bible to Akbar in 1580. If we accept the proposition of a direct link between Mughal Occidentalism and the Jesuit gifts of art, then how can we explain the time delay in the chronology of Mughal painting?

There is clear evidence of adapted European elements and features in Mughal painting from the early 1570s, before the arrival of the Antwerp Bible. For example, an illustration from the *Hamzanama* (Adventures of Hamza, ca. 1570) includes figures and buildings that show connections to Christian iconography and European architecture (Fig. 14). These images reveal the use of volume and modeling, and they may be linked to representations of Mary and Joseph on their way to Bethlehem. In addition, at the lower left corner of the composition, the architecture features clay-tiled roofs that may allude to Portuguese style building.<sup>100</sup> It appears that the Mughal interest in

99 Other studies of Ghulam's picture suggest that it is loosely related to an engraving by the Flemish artist Bernard van Orley (1492–1542). Ralph Pinder-Wilson, *Paintings from the Muslim courts of India: an exhibition held in the Prints & Drawings Gallery, British Museum* (London, World of Islam Festival Pub. Co., 1976), 61–62, cat. 88; Michael J. Rogers, *Mughal Miniatures* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 20, 66; Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court*, 114–16.

100 Carvalho, "Rarities from Goa," 103–4. I accept Carvalho's conclusions but do not agree with his explanation. Robert Skelton and Milo Beach state that European works of art were known at Akbar's court before the arrival of the Jesuits and the Antwerp Bible. Robert Skelton, "Europe and India," *Europa und die Kunst des Islam* 5 (Vienna: Internationaler



FIGURE 14 The Spy Zambur Brings Mahiya to Tawariq, where they meet Ustad Khatun, Attributed to Kesav Das and Mah Muhammad, *Hamzanama* (*Adventures of Hamza*), ca. 1570, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on cloth; mounted on paper. 74 × 57.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 23.264.1.

Renaissance art cannot be connected directly to one specific European article and that Mughal Occidentalism deserves a more nuanced understanding.

### The Mughal Elite and Pictures of Mary and Jesus

Upon the arrival of the first Jesuit envoy at the Mughal court, the missionaries certainly noticed a multi-confessional mindset in the way Akbar approached Christian imagery. One missionary, Rudolf Acquaviva, reported in July of that year that upon seeing an image of the Virgin and Child in the Jesuit chapel at Fatehpur Sikri, the emperor “prayed before the picture of Christ and the Virgin, venerating thrice, once in our manner, the other in that of the Muslims and the third, in the Hindu fashion, that is to say prostrate, saying that God should be adored with every form of admiration.”<sup>101</sup> In their wishful thinking, the Jesuits misinterpreted Akbar’s sense of curiosity, tolerance, spirituality and intellectual pursuit as a desire to adopt Christianity.<sup>102</sup> For example, the Jesuits wrote that Akbar was secretly confiding in them that he would have accepted Christianity but was afraid of the reaction of his officials and retinue. This is a highly unlikely proposition, and the scenario is identical to what we find in numerous conversion narratives, such as Marco Polo’s tale about the secret conversion of the last Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, as well as other figures.<sup>103</sup> Some scholars have argued that many of the Occidental-style paintings produced at the Mughal workshops were a result of the emperors’ religious quest. Others claimed that the Mughals used Occidental-style paintings in their spiritual practice.<sup>104</sup> However, such claims merely reflect the Jesuit perspective, unsupported by Mughal accounts.

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Kongress fur Kunstgeschichte, 1983): 34; Beach, *Early Mughal Painting*, 83–84. However, Beach reiterates the importance of this Bible as an influence on Mughal visual language.

101 Correia-Afonso, *Letters from the Mughal Court*, 58.

102 For passages from letters written by Father Jerome Xavier and the administrator in Goa on their disappointment in failing to convert Akbar or any of the other Mughal elite, see Carvalho, *Mir’āt al-quds*, 12.

103 Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo the Venetian* (London: J. M. Dent and sons, reprint 1914), 44–47. Similar narratives appear in Muslim conversion stories. On Heraclius, see Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, “The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet,” *Studia Islamica* 96 (2003): 19–37.

104 Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul: Renaissance Art at the Imperial Court of India, 1580–1630* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution 1998), 19–20. In contrast, Verma states that the Mughals were more interested in the “exotic” aspect of European images rather than their religious values. Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers*, 45.



FIGURE 16 *Madonna del Popolo, print made by Giovanni Battista de' Cavalieri, 1560–1600. Ink on paper. 27.8 × 21.6 cm.*



FIGURE 15 *Madonna and Child ("Madonna del Popolo"), icon, probably 13th century, church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome.*

The missionaries reported on the spiritual effect of their icons on the Muslim Mughals. These reports influenced the ways in which some scholars have interpreted the reception of European art at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir. A case in point is the *Madonna del Popolo*, an icon from the church of Santa Maria del Popolo, in Rome, that was supposedly endowed with the power to convert the subcontinent's gentiles and infidels (Figs. 15, 16).<sup>105</sup>

Jesuit sources recount that in 1602 the fathers exhibited, in the chapel in Agra, a life-size copy of the original painting, which created such a commotion that Emperor Akbar asked them to bring it to his palace for viewing.<sup>106</sup> In his chronicle *Relaçam*, Father Fernão Guerreiro writes that Akbar came down from his throne, examined the picture closely, and "took off his turban half to show it his deep reverence."<sup>107</sup> The response to this miraculous picture on the part of Akbar and his officers, ministers, and nobles "redounded greatly to God's glory and gave much satisfaction to the Fathers."<sup>108</sup> Earlier in the narrative, we hear of a Mughal nobleman who, upon seeing the image, "stood as one in a trance, so overcome was he with admiration."<sup>109</sup> Another of Akbar's high-ranking officers "gazed on it for a long time in silent wonder. Presently, tears filled his eyes and began, one by one, to roll down his cheeks," and he continued to weep for some time without taking his eyes off the painting.<sup>110</sup> The ecstatic language of these narrations raises questions about the veracity of the story. Reports from Jesuit missions in other countries offered similar narratives. Inácio Lobo's description of the impact of an icon of Jesus in China's Fujian province is remarkably like Guerreiro's description of the Mughals' emotional

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105 According to tradition, this icon of the Virgin and Child was painted by Saint Luke. Du Jarric states that the Jesuit copy was obtained in Portugal. Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 160. There are similar stories about copies of the so-called *Salus Populi Romani* image that were brought to China, Japan, and Brazil, among other places. See Steven F. Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 126–27.

106 Guerreiro says that the Jesuits had the precious icon in the chapel for two years before they showed it to the Mughal king, in 1602. Guerreiro, *Relaçam*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 52–56, quoted in Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 229. Maclagan notes that "the translation adopted is that given by Hosten in *The Examiner*, Bombay, November 22, 29, 1919." However, he also provides a reference to Payne's translation of Du Jarric's version in *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 160–72. Maclagan 260n46.

107 Guerreiro, *Relaçam*, vol. 2, pt. 2, 52–56, quoted in Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 231.

108 *Ibid.*, 231.

109 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 163.

110 *Ibid.*, 163–64.



FIGURE 17  
*Salus Populi Romani*, icon, church of *Santa Maria Maggiore*, Rome

reaction to the *Madonna del Popolo* in India.<sup>111</sup> Images were one of the tools the Jesuits routinely used in their conversion efforts, and these scenarios can be viewed as a recurring trope, in part a Catholic defense against Reformation's skepticism of icons.

Another incident regarding the reception of special Christian images at the Mughal courts involves the *Salus Populi Romani* (Protector of the Roman People) (Fig. 17). A letter from Father Francis Henriques to Father Lawrence Peres describes Akbar's visit in 1580 to the Jesuits' new residence in Fatehpur

111 Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 96. In general, the different Jesuit missions had similar guidelines and used the same approaches of accommodation and assimilation that Ignatius and Xavier promoted. Learning the local language and customs and using visual material, philosophy, and science were all part of the strategy to gain access to the upper classes in India, China, and Japan. See Criveller, *Preaching Christ*, 33–36. For European images in China, see Paul Pelliot, “La peinture et la gravure européennes en Chine au temps de Matthieu Ricci,” *T'oung Pao* 20 (1921): 183–274; Hsiang Ta, “European Influences on Chinese Art in the Later Ming and Early Ch'ing Period,” trans. Wang Teh-chao, *Renditions* 6 (1976), 152–78; John E. McCall, “Early Jesuit Art in the Far East,” *Artibus Asiae* 11 (1948): 45–69, esp. 47.

Sikri. “On entering he was surprised and astonished and made a deep obeisance to the picture of Our Lady that was there, from the painting of St. Luke, done by Brother Manuel Godinho, as well as to another beautifully executed representation of Our Lady brought by Fr. Martin da Silva from Rome.”<sup>112</sup> Milo Beach notes that there are “several Mughal copies of the Sta. Maria Maggiore Madonna” and underscores the “European influences” perceptible in Mughal painting beginning in the 1560s–1570s. Beach provides one example of a “copy” of this Madonna, found in folio 87r of the Saint Petersburg Album, but the painting in question is quite different from its presumed original (Fig. 18).<sup>113</sup> Other than the fact that the images are reversed, an important difference between them is the child’s hand gesture. In the Christian icon, he forms the common gesture indicating blessing, but in the Mughal picture he simply rests his wrist on his mother’s hand. The placement of the book, under the child’s arm in the icon, versus in front of the child in the Mughal painting, signifies a deliberate shift in iconography and emphasis. In the album page, the child is no longer the Son of God, the Messiah, or Christ, but baby Isa, sitting in Maryam’s lap, in accordance with Muslim belief. In Jesuit reports, however, the Mughal versions of such Christian icons were perceived as failed attempts to replicate what, the Jesuits believed, could not be replicated by a Muslim or a Hindu artist. Father Guerreiro writes that when Akbar was shown the *Salus Populi Romani* icon, he was struck by the technical ability of the European painters. He asked his artists to imitate that, but they did not succeed, admitting that “such perfection of portraiture was beyond their skill, and that they were unable to compete with the Portuguese in this art.”<sup>114</sup> Assuming that Akbar’s artists were not in fact incompetent, why would the Jesuits make such a statement?

Like the *Madonna del Popolo*, the *Salus Populi Romani* is a holy icon said to have been painted by Saint Luke. Because of its supposed divine powers, Christians replicated the picture numerous times, and copies were disseminated throughout the world. The icon, they believed, could protect and assist in

112 Father Francis Henriques refers to a copy of the famous icon from the S. Maria Maggiore church in Rome. See Correia-Afonso, *Letters from the Mughal Court*, 30–31.

113 Beach, *Grand Mogul*, 155, 186n3. The Mughal picture was published in Oleg Akimushkin, *Il Murakka’ di San Pietroburgo: Album di miniature indiane e persiane del XVI–XVII secolo e di esemplari di calligrafia di Mir ‘di M al-Hasani* (Lugano: Fondazione Arch, 1994), 75. Also see Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting During Jahangir’s Time* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1978), 230–240.

114 Du Jarric, *Akbar and the Jesuits*, 169. According to Father Guerreiro, “they achieved very little in the end, and were obliged to confess that they could not come up to the perfection of the model or equal the Portuguese in the art of painting.” Quoted in Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 233.



FIGURE 18 The Madonna of Saint Luke Surrounded by Angels, ca. 1600, Mughal, *St Petersburg Album*, fol. 87r. Opaque watercolor silver and gold on paper. 12.8 × 21.2 cm. *St. Petersburg, Oriental Institute, folio 87 recto.*

© ST. PETERSBURG, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE, FOLIO 87 RECTO

various situations. Jesuits brought reproductions of the Santa Maria Maggiore Madonna to Macao, China, and Japan in an attempt to convert the local population to Catholicism.<sup>115</sup> From a Jesuit perspective, only upon conversion to Catholicism would the Mughal artists gain the true insight necessary to copy such images successfully.

The Jesuits constantly sought signs of conversion in the behavior of members of the Mughal elite. As informed as they may have been regarding the upper class and its institutions, there were historical details and cultural religious nuances that they could not comprehend. These misunderstandings often led to confusion or misrepresentation, as in an incident narrated by Father Monserrate. He tells us that when Akbar went to see the Jesuit chapel, “he prostrated himself on the ground in adoration of the Christ and his Mother.”<sup>116</sup> But how could Monserrate understand the meaning of this gesture in a Mughal context? Given Akbar’s prior familiarity with this Christian iconography, however, the missionary’s account appears exaggerated. Monserrate was well aware that “The Musalmans hate idolatry,”<sup>117</sup> but he still made a claim for a Mughal veneration of Christian images. Putting Jesuit interpretation aside, how can we explain some of the Mughal elite’s interactions with such images?

As seen in examples cited in the introduction, the image of the Virgin and Child was found in diverse Muslim cultures, and similar pictures would have been familiar to the Mughal elite (Fig. 9).<sup>118</sup> The writings of Abu’l Fazl, Akbar’s historian, provide some insight into how Mary was perceived by the Mughal elite. He likens her to Alan Gho’a (Alan-Qo’a/Alanqua/Alanquwa), the legendary ancestor of Chinghiz Khan—a Mughal forebear—who was impregnated by divine light:

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115 See Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality*, 243–45; Pasquale M. D’Elia, ed., *Fonti ricciane: Documenti originali concernenti Matteo Ricci e la storia delle prime relazioni tra l’Europa e la Cina (1579–1615)*, 3 vols. (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1942–49), 1:188–89, 1:193, 2:126, 2:128; Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 70.

116 *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 48. Monserrate notes that the Jesuits gave Akbar a “very beautiful picture of the Virgin, which had been brought from Rome.” *Ibid.*, 49. This gift was also on behalf of the Superior of the Province in Goa.

117 *Commentary of Father Monserrate*, 138.

118 Other examples of Maryam and the Infant Jesus can be found in Massumeh Farhad with Serpil Bagci, *Falnama: The Book of Omens* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2009), 271, 110–11, 303. On images of the Virgin in *Qisas al-Anbiya* stories, Rachel Milstein, Karin Ruhrdanz and Barbara Schmitz, *Stories of the Prophets: illustrated manuscripts of the Qisas al-Anbiya* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 155–58.

One night she, who had been nourished by divine light, was resting in bed, when suddenly a magnificent light shed its rays into her tent. The light entered her mouth, and she became pregnant by the light, just like Mary the daughter of Amram.... Thus that divine light appeared in the world through so many great ones of religion and state without human intermediary. The beginning of the appearance of H.I.M. [Akbar] happened on that day so that after traveling through the various stages he would appear in the world through the pure vessel of H. H. Maryam-Makani.<sup>119</sup>

Abu'l Fazl then includes a verse saying that "if you listen to tales of Mary, then incline likewise to Alanqoa."<sup>120</sup> He is melding different aspects of political and spiritual legitimacy to bolster Akbar's noble genealogy and highlight a preoccupation with divine light that was expressed in the context of the *Din-i Ilahi*.<sup>121</sup> In the Quran, Mary and the miraculous birth of Jesus, albeit stripped of Christological meaning, are considered one of God's signs. They partake in a divinely-crafted genealogy of prophets, ranging from Adam to Muhammad.<sup>122</sup> Jesus was also considered one of God's messengers and the

119 Abu'l Fazl, *History of Akbar*, 1: 217, 219 (English), 1:216, 218 (Persian). Alan Gho'a and the ray of light are mentioned at least ten times in the *Akbarnama*. In Islamic tradition, divine light entering through the mouth is related to prophecy (and the practice of physiognomy, discussed in chapter 5). Timur's genealogy and his connection to Chingiz Khan and Alan Gho'a appears in several inscriptions in Timur's mausoleum and tomb, as well as in treatises, such as the *Mu'izz al-Ansab*. John Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," in *Intellectual Studies on Islam: Essays Written in Honor of Martin B. Dickson, Professor of Persian studies, Princeton University*, ed. Michel Mazzaoui and Vera Basch Moreen (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 85–126. The inscriptions on Timur's tombstone evoke a link between Alan Gho'a and Mary (Maryam). See discussion by Denise Aigle, *The Mongol Empire, between Myth and Reality: Studies in Anthropological History* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 122–23; Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 88.

120 Abu'l Fazl, *History of Akbar*, 1: 218, 219.

121 Bailey considers the comparison between Mary and Alan Gho as reflecting the dynasty's "divine right to rule." Bailey, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 36–37. Gregory Minissale discusses Akbar's links to Mary and Alan Gho in the context of weaving myth and history in court chronicles and painting. Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India 1550–1750* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 151–52.

122 Q 3:33: "Surely Allah chose Adam and Nuh and the descendants of Ibrahim and the descendants of Imran above the nations." Angelika Neuwirth, "The House of Abraham and the House of Amran: Genealogy, Patriarchal Authority, and Exegetical Professionalism," *The Quran in Context*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 506.

closest to Muhammad, since they shared the same seed of prophetic lineage.<sup>123</sup> In a hadith transmitted by Abu Hurayrah, Muhammad states that “I am the closest person to Jesus the son of Mary in this world and in the world to come.” Their connection is shared by all prophets, who have the same father—the one unchanged religion of God—but different mothers. Such concepts resonated well with the ideology of *ṣulh-i kull* and the Mughal emperors’ link to an Islamicate tradition of sacred sovereignty.<sup>124</sup>

Seeing themselves as part of this chosen genealogy, Akbar and Jahangir showed a keen interest in images of the Madonna, but it was purely self-serving.<sup>125</sup> Mary/Maryam is part of Islamic and Quranic tradition, and she

123 Neuwirth, “The House of Abraham and the House of Amran,” 507.

124 For a discussion of this hadith see Uri Rubin, “Prophets and Caliphs: The Biblical Foundations of the Umayyad Authority,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, ed. Herbert Berg (Leiden, Brill: 2003), 84. Regarding the concept of divine kingship, official Mughal sources presented the emperor as a universal manifestation of divine rule. Similar claims have been advanced earlier by the Timurid, the Ottoman and the Safavid dynasties. Cornell Fleischer, “The Lawgiver as Messiah: The Making of the Imperial Image in the Reign of Süleyman,” *Soliman le Magnifique et son temps. Actes du Colloque de Paris 7–10 mars 1992*, ed. Gilles Veinstein, (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 159–77; Kathryn Babayan, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran*, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002. In Mughal India, the enthusiasm for these ideas reached a zenith point around the Islamic millennium (1591–92 CE). Subrahmanyam, “Turning the Stones Over,” 129–61; Idem, “The Politics of Eschatology: A Short Reading of the Long View,” *Historical Teleologies in the Modern World*, ed. Henning Trüper, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Sanjay Subrahmanyam (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 25–45. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, esp. 130–69.

125 On an episode in which Akbar took his artists to observe a large oil painting of the Madonna and Child, see Correia-Afonso, *Letters from the Mughal Court*, 30–31, 33. For a mystical interpretation of Akbar as Jesus and the significance of Alan Gho’a/Mary see Azfar Moin, “Akbar’s ‘Jesus’ and Marlowe’s ‘Tamburlaine’: Strange Parallels of Early Modern Sacredness,” *Fragments* 3 (2013–14): 1–21. Ebba Koch states that Jahangir identified himself with Christ and associated himself with Mary as part of his religious quest and desire to use his portraits “to elicit veneration” like icons. Koch, “The Influence of the Jesuit Missions on Symbolic Representations of the Mughal Emperors,” revised, in *The Phenomenon of “Foreign” in Oriental Art*, ed. Annette Hagedorn (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2006), 125–26. It is important to note that in Mughal poetry and writing, the reference is usually to the Quranic Jesus, not to the Catholic Christ. Bailey views representations of Mary in Mughal painting associated with the royal family genealogy. However, he considers the image of Jesus as part of the emperors’ self-image as messiahs. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 137–39; Idem, *The Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*, 35–37. Muslim concepts of messianism differ from Catholic ones. The relationships of Akbar and Jahangir with political messianism will be discussed in Chapter Five.

is echoed in Timurid and Mughal ancestry through the image of Alan Gho'a. Hence, pictures of the Virgin Mary can be seen as indirect signs and tokens of divine recognition of the dynasty's illustrious lineage and universal power, as acknowledged by the Europeans. It is in this layered context that we should consider the Jesuit reports on Mughal response to paintings of the Madonna and Child.

In wall paintings at Jahangir's palaces, images of Mary and Jesus appeared several times in conjunction with Mughal genealogy. Most of the original palace murals in Agra, Lahore and Ajmer have not survived, but they were recorded by various visitors.<sup>126</sup> William Finch, an English merchant who visited Jahangir's court in 1611, provides a detailed description of the palace murals that included a large group portrait of the emperor, his extended family and retinues:<sup>127</sup>

On the walles is the Kings picture, sitting crosse-legged on a chaire of state; on his right hand Sultan Pervese, Sultan Caroone, and Sultan Timoret [Parwiz, Khurram, and Tahmuras] his sonnes;<sup>128</sup> next these Sha Morat and Don Sha [Shah Murad and Daniyal Shah], two of his brothers ... On the left hand of the King stands Rajaw Bowsing [Bhao Singh], who beats away flies, then Rajaw Ramdas [Ram Das], who holds his sword ... Note also that in this gallery, as you enter, on the right-hand of the King over the doore is the picture of our Saviour; opposite on this left-hand, of the Virgin Mary.

The pictures of Mary and Jesus have been integrated into the upper part of what appears to be the depiction of a *darbar* scene, a formal meeting of the emperor with his court. Projecting a powerful image of Jahangir's political religious authority and illustrious lineage, Mary and Jesus visually have become

126 For a discussion of the Jesuit and English descriptions of the murals at Jahangir's palaces see Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers*, 33–34. Ebba Koch explores the origin of and provides interpretation to the surviving wall paintings with heavenly creatures at the Lahore fortress. Ebba Koch, "Jahangir and the Angels: Recently discovered wall paintings under European influence in the Fort of Lahore," *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, 12–37.

127 Finch was linked to an official commercial expedition to Iran and India. For the full description of all the wall paintings in Jahangir's palace, see "William Finch, 1608–11," in *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619*, ed. William Foster (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921), 162–65. Quotation: 162–63.

128 The last was a nephew, not a son.

part of the ruler's chosen genealogy.<sup>129</sup> Placing the Christian pictures in this grand scheme of things, Jahangir makes an ocular genealogical statement, linking the house of Imran (the holy family, as they are called in the Quran) with his own progeny.

It appears that a similar iconography of Mughal genealogy with the Virgin and Jesus already adorned the walls of Jahangir's palace in Agra. In a letter dated 1608, Father Xavier reports: "In the oriel of the verandah or janela where the King sits, at the sides, on the same wall, were full-sized pictures of his two sons, very splendidly attired. Above one of these was a representation on a small scale of Christ Our Lord and next to Him a Father with a book in his hand: and above the other was Our Lady."<sup>130</sup> Dynastic continuity and, hence, legitimacy occupied an important place in the murals of Jahangir's palaces. Therefore, it is no surprise that images of Maryam/Mary and Isa/Jesus were integrated into the context of the emperor's chosen descendants.

The background of Jahangir's palace walls included quite an international mélange of visual idioms. According to Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador under King James I, at his audience for the Noruz (Persian New Year) in 1616, Jahangir exhibited portraits of the King and Queen of England, which

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129 Like his father, Jahangir also claimed for himself the supreme religious authority of a *mujtahid* and *mazhar-i kull*. See Corinne Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections: The Majalis-i Jahangiri (1608–11) and the Socio-intellectual History of the Mughal 'ulama," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 54, no. 3 (2017): 317–338. It is interesting to compare the description of Jahangir's wall paintings to the ones of Timur's palace, which also included images of his offspring and retinue. See Ahmad Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir*, trans. J. H. Sanders (London: Luzac & Co. 1936), 310. In other parts of the palace, Finch describes murals with portraits of Jahangir's ancestors, Babur, Humayun and Akbar, as well as his sons. "William Finch," 163–64.

130 The murals at the Agra fort had many more paintings of Christian saints and other European figures. Father Xavier was apparently encouraged by the Christian themes though aware that they were integrated with many others. See Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 238–40, who translates from Father Xavier's letter. Muhammad Arif reports in the *Tarikh-i Akbari* that the likenesses (*tamthil*) at the palace at Agra were so excellent that "the soul of Mani is bewildered and stunned." Michael Brand and Glen B. Lowry, eds., *Fatehpur Sikri: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985), 294. Mani was a pre-Islamic prophet and founder of Manichaeism. In Persian sources he is admired as a great painter and master artist of visual deceit. See David Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: the writing of art history in sixteenth-century Iran* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2001), especially 98–103, 174–78.

may have been gifts from Roe.<sup>131</sup> Both Roe and William Finch describe an array of images—Christian saints, Jesus, winged figures, and demons, as well as the family portraits—occupying the palace walls.<sup>132</sup> According to the Jesuit missionary Father Xavier, Jahangir himself decided on the placement of every image, choosing the kinds of paintings he wanted by looking at European prints, which he used as a design book.<sup>133</sup>

Most of the original palace murals have not survived, but if we could judge from illustrations in Mughal histories with representations of various palaces, their wall decorations show a wide range of themes of Persian literature, shaykhs, Christian and European figures, as well as Hindu gods. Contrary to Father Xavier's impressions, Mughal murals were not intended uniquely to honor Christianity or the Jesuits, but were part of a Mughal-Mongol-Timurid-Central Asian tradition of projecting a multifaceted imperial identity of their illustrious lineage.<sup>134</sup>

Following their ancestral practice of political tolerance and cultural diversity, the Mughal policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* lies at the core of the development of Mughal Occidentalism. Most scholars attribute the Mughal elite's interest in Renaissance art to the Jesuits. The physical presence of Europeans at the court and their connection to Akbar did most likely marginally serve as a catalyst for repurposing European painting techniques and subject matter into Mughal art. However, this repurposing occurred only after the Mughals' intellectual engagement and technical analysis of the European materials continued for two decades. Mughal Occidentalism was thus the result of the ideas and policy that Akbar's court advocated and the Mughal elite supported. By understanding their approach to visual pluralism as part of their dynastic legacy and identity, we may gain a more complex understanding of the layered ways in which European elements were recoded into Mughal painting.

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131 Roe, *Embassy*, 394. Maclagan states that these paintings—along with portraits of the governor of the East India Company and other English notables—were “doubtless received” from Sir Thomas Roe. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 225.

132 For a discussion of Roe, see Michael J. Rogers, *Islamic Art and Design, 1500–1700* (London: British Museums Publications for the Trustees of the British Museum, 1983), 52; “William Finch,” 162–63; Roe, *Embassy*, 386–67.

133 See Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 239.

134 On the strong links between the Mughals and the Timurids see Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire* (London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012).

## Mughal Masters and European Art: Tradition and Innovation at the Royal Workshops

The truth is, that the natives of that monarchy [the Mughals] are the best apes for imitation in the world.

EDWARD TERRY, chaplain to English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe, 1655



This contradictory notion towards Mughal creativity was expressed by Edward Terry who visited India between 1616–19 as a member of the English envoy to Jahangir’s court, led by Sir Thomas Roe. Seeing visual connections between Mughal and European art, Terry evaluated Mughal artistic talent through a European lens of original and copy.<sup>1</sup> But seeing the European works as originals and the Mughal works as copies or imitations—following Terry’s cue—fails to engage the essence of the paintings produced in India.<sup>2</sup> Moving away from a binary paradigm, in this chapter I situate the discussion regarding the repurposing of European and Christian motifs within a broader Persianate tradition of the master artist. Ultimately, I argue that in the royal workshops of Akbar and Jahangir, mastery included a process of inserting oneself into a “lineage” (*silsila*) of transmission of artistic knowledge, as well as creating physical connections and meaningful references to works of previous masters. Since the late 1580s, European works of art became part of a Mughal world that promoted creative articulation of global prestige.

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- 1 Although he called Mughal artists and artisans apes, Terry complimented their skill and taste, saying that they were “full of ingenuity,” and their products were beautifully colored and designed. Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East India* (London: Printed by T. W. for J. Martin, and J. Allestrye, at the Bell in St. Pauls Chutch-Yard [sic], 1655), 128–29. Viewed electronically.
  - 2 In earlier academic publications scholars have often judged a Mughal painting’s “success” by its fidelity to an original European image. For helpful discussions of the terms “original” and “copy” in art history, see James Elkins, “From Original to Copy and Back Again,” *British Journal of Aesthetics* 33, no. 2 (April 1993): 113–20; Richard Schiff, “Mastercopy,” *Iris* 1, no. 2 (1983): 113–27, esp. 116.

By closely examining Mughal and European pictures and comparing their details, we can better evaluate how they relate, what the Mughal artists chose to keep, and what they changed. We can then understand how the Mughal painters inserted their own innovations, and how they layered their compositions with meanings that were specific to the Mughal context. To this end, we turn to two strands of argumentation, the first which takes on the conceptual issue of what constitutes a “copy,” and the second which deals with the ways in which the Mughals engaged specifically with Christian iconographies. After exploring the idea of copy and innovation at the royal workshops and how the concept of a master artist was understood within the Mughal world, three case studies of Mughal Occidental paintings and their European counterparts will be presented in order to problematize notions of imitation, replication, and transformation.

Our methodology of close examination of paintings accords with Mughal practice. Praising the accomplishments of Mughal artists during the time of Akbar, the emperor’s chronicler Abu’l Fazl observes that much of the value of their work is in the details: “Delicacy of work (*nazuki-i kar*), clarity of line (*safā’i-i nuqush*), and boldness of execution (*sabat-i dast*, lit., stability of the hand), as well as other fine qualities have reached perfection.”<sup>3</sup> Understanding these relationships can broaden traditional interpretations of how Mughal painters engaged works by European masters. It will enable us to more firmly situate the encounters with European master paintings within the Mughal worldview that rested on the ideology of cultural pluralism.

### Copying and Innovation at the Imperial Workshops

Eighteen years after Abu’l Hasan painted his European youth after Dürer’s St. John (Fig. 19), Jahangir wrote about him: “In this era, he has no equal or peer.... From the earliest time, I have always looked after him, till his art has arrived at this rank. Truly he has become the rarity of his age [*Nadir al-zaman*].”<sup>4</sup> One way to establish an artist’s status as a master at the Mughal courts was

3 *Ain-i Akbari* section translated by C. M. Naim, Appendix C, *Tūti-nāma: Tales of a Parrot = das Papageienbuch: vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift aus dem Besitz des Cleveland Museum of Art = Complete colour Facsimile Edition in Original Size of the Manuscript in Possession of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 2:183.

4 Nūr al-Din Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahangirnāma: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 268.

through a process of evaluation and connoisseurship.<sup>5</sup> Oftentimes, these processes occurred during social and political gatherings where paintings were passed around among the participants for inspection, admiration and discussion. The measure of success for a Mughal artist was being able to paint in the manner of past masters, modify the original compositions, and surpass them. Methods of imitation, emulation, and partial quotation from the original led to innovation and creativity for Mughal artists.<sup>6</sup> As part of such collective constructs of court intellectual entertainment and performance, a similar process occurred in Mughal poetry: Court poets were expected to compose new verses and recite them in assemblies. Their work was critiqued by the emperor and the attendees, while other poets present at the gatherings were expected to respond with their own lines of poetry. Paul Losensky has demonstrated the prevalence of poetic imitation in Safavid-Mughal literary practice, through which poets arrive at their own style by both responding to the poetic tradition and contributing innovations.<sup>7</sup>

To understand the meaning of copying in a Mughal context, it is important to look at the traditional transmission of knowledge from master to student.<sup>8</sup> In primary sources and inscriptions found on paintings, Mughal artists frequently identified with their teachers or masters as well as with their patron. Abu'l Hasan's signature on the painting of a European youth (Fig. 19) identifies him as "Abu'l Hasan son of Riza, a follower" (*Abu'l Hasan ibn Riza murid*).

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5 We learn this from various inscriptions on illustrated manuscripts and paintings.

6 Molly Aitken's book on Rajput painting engages with processes of copying, replication, repetition, reuse and reiteration in Indian painting. Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2010), 155–ff.

7 Paul E. Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī: Imitation and Poetic Individuality in the Safavid-Mughal Ghazal* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998), esp. chap. 3. Gulru Necipoglu identifies a similar creative process in the way Timurid artists and poets introduced innovative elements into their creations while at the same time quoting past tradition. Gulru Necipoglu, *The Topkapi Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, 1995), 214–15, 218.

8 For a similar Safavid notion of the chain of transmission (*silsilah*) between master and pupil, see "The Bahram Mirza Album Preface by Dost-Muhammad," in *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters*, ed. and trans. Wheeler M. Thackston (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 4–16; Qazi Ahmad ibn Mir Munshi, *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir-Munshi (circa A.H. 1015/A.D. 1606)*, trans. Vladimir Minorsky and T. Minorsky, *Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers* 3, no. 2 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1959).



FIGURE 19 Saint John the Evangelist after Dürer, by Abu'l Hasan, 1600–1, probably Allahabad, Mughal India. Brush drawing with gouache on paper. 10.0 × 4.6 cm. Ashmolean Museum EA1978.2597.

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Muhammad Riza (or Aqa Riza) was both his father and his teacher.<sup>9</sup> The term *murid* (follower or disciple) is a humble expression of spiritual and political position that denotes strong allegiance. His father's title *murid* designates Abu'l Hasan as both the disciple of his father and teacher Aqa Riza and a follower of his patron Prince Salim.<sup>10</sup> Abu'l Hasan's mastery can be seen as linked to a constructed social place that an artist occupies within a *silsila*, a chain of transmission of knowledge. In such a place, self-effacement and the acceptance of past authority pave the way for the artist to introduce innovation and emerge as a master in his own right.

Mughal historical sources include several instances of this route to success. In 1618 Emperor Jahangir wrote that Abu'l Hasan's work was "beyond any comparison in any way to his father's [Aqa Riza]; they can't even be mentioned in the same breath."<sup>11</sup> Of the famous calligrapher Mir Ali al-Haravi, Abu'l Fazl remarked that "he brought his art to perfection by imitating the writing of Sultan Ali of Mashhad. The new method that he established is a proof of his genius."<sup>12</sup>

9 It was quite common for student and master to have blood relations, such as father and son or daughter, meaning that progenies were exposed to the secrets of the profession at an early age. From inscriptions on Mughal paintings and other historical sources from the time of Akbar and Jahangir, we learn that the court artist Aqa Riza (Muhammad Riza) was the father of the painters Abu'l Hasan and Abid; that Abd al-Samad was the father of Muhammad Sharif and Bihzad (probably named after the famous Timurid artist); that Basawan was the father of Manohar; and that the Persian calligrapher Mir Ali al-Haravi was the father of the calligrapher Mir Muhammad Baqir, who also came to work for the Mughal emperors.

10 "*mashq-i abu'l hasan ibn riza murid dar sinn-i sizdah salaqi sakhta betarikh yazdahum shahr-i rabi' al-akhir sana 1009 ruz-i jumi' surat itimam yaft.*" Andrew Topsfield, *Indian Art in the Ashmolean Museum* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 1987), 76–77, no. 84; Translated by Wheeler Thackston in *Masters of Indian Painting 1000–1650*, ed. Milo Beach, E. Fischer and B. N. Goswamy (Zurich, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011), 213, no.11. Verma argues that the "*murid*" refers to Abu'l Hasan being a follower or a disciple of his father. However, I argue that it is the father (Aqa Riza) who is identified here as the follower of Shah Salim. This is consistent with his other signatures and with the development of court ideology of 'master and disciple' since the 1590s. Abu'l Hasan signs other works as *murid-zada*, son of the disciple. For the various signatures see Som Prakash Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience* (New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 127–28; Yael Rice, "Between the Brush and the Pen: On the Intertwined Histories of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy," in *Envisioning Islamic art and architecture: essays in honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 148–174.

11 *Jahangirnama* (English), 268.

12 *Ibid.*, 102.

Here too, the emphasis is on excelling at copying the old master, reconfiguring his art, and bringing it to a higher level. Examples of Mughal works influenced by Safavid as well as Timurid models can be seen in a painting of a seated young man by Abu'l Hasan (Fig. 20).<sup>13</sup> Like numerous representations of young men in Timurid and Safavid paintings, Abu'l Hasan's youth is a well-known type: body slender and elongated, head elegantly tilted to his right.<sup>14</sup> Throughout his prolific career, Abu'l Hasan demonstrated his versatility and mastery of the Persianate as well as the European artistic traditions. But for past scholars who relied on Western connoisseurship to explain Mughal Occidentalism, it was difficult to perceive that the incorporation of Renaissance elements was part of a widespread pattern of copying, emulation and innovation applied to multiple traditions.<sup>15</sup>

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- 13 Milo C. Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, rev. ed. (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2012), 169, no. 41; 202.
- 14 For a Timurid example, see the figure of Khusrau in "Khusrau Receives Farhad," fol. 62r from the *Khamsa* of Nizami made for Ismat al-Dunya (wife of Muhammad Juki), Herat, 1445–46 (Topkapi Sarayi Library, Istanbul, H. 781). Thomas Lentz and Glenn Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, exh. cat. (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 108, cat. 32. For a Safavid example, see "Yusuf Gives a Royal Banquet in Honor of his Marriage," from the *Haft Awrang* by Jami, Safavid Iran, 1556–65 (Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC, F1946.12.132). [https://asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.cfm?q=fsg\\_F1946.12.132](https://asia.si.edu/collections/edan/object.cfm?q=fsg_F1946.12.132). Also see Farrukh Beg's and Aqa Riza's portraits of Mirza Muhammad Hakim in *Masters of Indian Painting 100–1650*, 191, 192, 217.
- 15 See David Roxburgh's discussion of Western connoisseurship applied to Persianate painting. David J. Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 121. Karl Khandalavala notes that "attributions to artists in Mughal paintings is a dangerous game" because many of the paintings were inscribed long after their creation. Karl Khandalavala and Saryu Doshi, *A Collector's Dream: Indian Art in the Collections of Basant Kumar and Saraladevi Birla and the Birla Academy of Art and Culture* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1987), 171.

On Mughal Occidental art as simply imitation of European painting, see Hermann Goetz and Ernst Kühnel, *Indische Buchmalereien Aus Dem Jahângîr-Album Der Staatsbibliothek Zu Berlin* (Berlin: Scarabaeus-Verlag, 1924), 10–11. Goetz also asserted that "Mughal painting never broke loose from its traditional conventions. The naturalistic tendencies remained superficial. A realism of details, a study of the characteristic features of all things observed, a wealth of ornament, but never an exploration of space relations, of perspective, of light effects, of atmosphere. It is true, these latter problems were likewise taken up, but merely as tricks superficially imitated from European pictures, yet



FIGURE 20  
Seated Youth, by Abu'l Hasan,  
early 17th century, Mughal India.  
Ink, opaque watercolor and gold  
on paper. 12.4 × 7.3 cm. Freer  
Gallery of Art F1907.16.

FREER GALLERY OF ART AND  
ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY,  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,  
WASHINGTON, D.C.: GIFT OF  
CHARLES LANG FREER, F1907.16

Within Islamic art, the emulation of previous masters was not a Mughal invention. The ateliers of the Timurids, whom the Mughals held in high regard, in turn contained album pages with sketches and pouncing that attest to their use of models. In some cases, the Persianate artists imitated and repurposed European models to create their own cosmopolitan visual idioms.<sup>16</sup> Several

never really understood." Hermann Goetz, "The Early Muraqqa's of the Mughal Emperor Jahāngīr," *East and West* 8 (1957): 153.

16 On the use of European models by Jalayirid and Timurid artists see Gulru Necipoglu, "Persianate Images between Europe and China: The "Frankish Manner" in the Diez and Topkapı Albums, c. 1350–1450," *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, ed. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 531–589. For a discussion of the use of models and the repetition of elements, see Norah Titley, "Persian miniature painting: the repetition of compositions during the fifteenth century," *Akten*

scholars agree with Bernard O’Kane’s assessment that “by the fifteenth-century, it has become commonplace for artists to commemorate the best works of their predecessors by incorporating parts of the earlier compositions within their own.”<sup>17</sup> Eleanor Sims has demonstrated continuity in the Mughal practice, while Yael Rice sees “disjunction” rather than imitation in some of the illustrated manuscripts.<sup>18</sup> The Mughal practice was broad and varied enough to encompass both approaches. Although imitation did not have the same weight and meaning that it did in the Safavid tradition, as Rice correctly argues, copying was not eliminated from the Mughal repertoire, but altered to fit Mughal idioms.<sup>19</sup>

Mughal artists used copying and imitation to reimagine their own prestigious artistic lineage in a presumed *silsila*. Abu’l Fazl mentions in the *Ain-i Akbari* that the renowned Persian calligrapher Sultan Ali Mashhadi “imitated the writing of Maulana Azhar, though he did not learn from him personally.”<sup>20</sup> Similarly, to link themselves to the Timurid tradition, and more specifically to the praised master Kamal al-Din Bihzad (d. 1535/36), artists copied his famous

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*des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Iranische Kunst und Archäologie: München, 7–10 September 1976* (Berlin: D. Reimer, 1979), 471–490; Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, chap. 3 and app. 3; Adel T. Adamova, “Repetition of Composition in Manuscripts: The *Khamsa* of Nizami in Leningrad,” in *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 67–75; David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 85–147; Zeren Tanindi, “Repetition of Illustrations in the Topkapi Palace and Diez Albums,” *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, 163–193; Yves Porter, “Models, Sketches and Pounced Drawings in the Diez Albums: First Steps in the Making of Illustrated Manuscripts,” in *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, 353–370. Without providing sufficient evidence, Gauvin Bailey suggests that Mughal artists colored European prints as a way of learning the technique. Gauvin Bailey, *Counter-Reformation Symbolism and Allegory in Mughal Painting* (PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1996), 108n111.

17 Bernard O’Kane, *Early Persian Painting: “Kalila and Dimna” Manuscripts of the Late Fourteenth Century* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 207.

18 Eleanor Sims, “Ibrahim Sultan’s Illustrated *Zafarnama* of 1436 and Its Impact in the Muslim East,” in *Timurid Art and Culture*, 132–43. Yael Rice argues that “contrast and disjunction, rather than imitation, figured as foundational principles.” Rice, “Mughal Intervention in the Rampur *Jami al-Tawarikh*,” *Ars Orientalis* 42 (2012): 158.

19 Rice, “Mughal Intervention,” 156.

20 Abū’l Fazl ibn Mubārak, *The Ain-i Akbari*, trans. Henry Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (1867–77. Reprint, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2010) 1:101–2; Idem, *Āīn-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77) 1:110.

painting of two camels fighting.<sup>21</sup> The assumption that Bihzad's work was held in high regard is based on the large Mughal collection of his work as well as comments from Abu'l Fazl. Remarking on the state of the arts at Akbar's court, Abu'l Fazl noted: "Such excellent artists have assembled here that a fine match has been created to the world-renowned unique art of Bihzad, and the enchanted works of the Europeans."<sup>22</sup> Abu'l Fazl writes of works that "were not [lesser than those of] Bihzad and the painters of China."<sup>23</sup> Individual artists were compared to Bihzad, the highest possible standard of success, even as other pictorial traditions were also valued.

Bihzad's painting of the camel fight, dated between 1525 and the 1540s, is mounted in what became known as the Gulshan Album (Fig. 21).<sup>24</sup> At least two Mughal artists linked themselves to Bihzad's tradition by painting versions of this work. One image (ca. 1585–90s) is signed by Abd al-Samad, an Iranian artist who was invited to join the Mughal atelier by Akbar's father, Humayun, in 1549.<sup>25</sup> The second image, mounted in the Gulshan Album opposite Bihzad's

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- 21 Whether this work is a Bihzad original or a copy is still a matter of controversy. See Adel T. Adamova, "The Iconography of *A Camel Fight*," trans. J. M. Rogers, *Muqarnas* 21 (2004): 2. The painting bears an inscription with Bihzad's name and various expressions of the artist's humility, as was the custom of the time. See Ebadollah Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1996), 215–16.
- 22 I have changed a few words in Naim's translation for a more nuanced reading. See *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian) 1:116; Naim, in *Tūṭī-nāma*, 1:183. For works of art belonging to the Timurids that the Mughals collected, see Michael Brand and Glenn D. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York: Asia Society Galleries, 1985), chap. 4.
- 23 Abū'l Faḡl ibn Mubārak, *The Akbar-nāma*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 3:651. The praise is for works by Daswanth, a student of Abd al-Samad. *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:118. Abu'l Fazl also writes, "From the instruction they received, the khwaja's [Abd al-Samad's] pupils became masters." *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:107.
- 24 The painting was originally intended to be part of an album made for Jahangir. On the various dates assigned to this painting, see David J. Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad," 19–46; Adamova, "Iconography of *A Camel Fight*," 2. For a discussion of the numerous renderings of this theme in Persian painting, see *ibid.*, 1–14. David Roxburgh discusses the notion of creating historical and conceptual genealogies of artists in the late Timurid and early Safavid periods. He argues that by imitating the artworks and style of their alleged or real teachers, artists made claims about their pedigree, adherence, and success. Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad."
- 25 *Akbarnama* (English) 1:552; Bayazid Bayat, *Tazkira-i Humayun va Akbar*, ed. M. Hidayat Hosayn (Calcutta: Bibliotheca Indica, 1941), 65–69.

painting, was made by the Mughal artist Nanha in 1608 (Fig. 22).<sup>26</sup> An inscription by the emperor on Nanha's image states: "This work of the master Bihzad was seen and copied by Nanha-i Musavvir according to my orders. Written by Jahangir b. Akbar Padshah Ghazi. The year 1017 [1608–9]."<sup>27</sup> In this case, Nanha's picture follows the emperor's order for a copy very closely, creating dynamic relations between present and past. Engaging with earlier masters was thus not only a creative challenge for the artist, but also participation in the broader cultural definition as mandated by the highest political authority.

Although similar in its core composition to Bihzad's *Gulshan* picture, Abd al-Samad's version departs more radically, reflecting new aesthetic choices that became important at the Mughal atelier in the decades since Bihzad made the original painting (Fig. 23).<sup>28</sup> Thus the animals' bodies have weight and volume, the peoples' faces and clothing show tonal transitions of light and shadow, and the rocky landscape conveys three-dimensionality. The artist used European painting techniques to delineate the textures of the animals' hair and bodies and evoke depth in the landscape, enhancing the tension in the composition. By employing Renaissance pictorial techniques to create his own innovative version of the "Camel Fight," Abd al-Samad claimed and proclaimed his place in the Timurid-Bihzadian legacy.

The ability to paint in the manner of past masters and to modify and exceed their work was a measure of success for the Mughal artist of that time. The target audience—court elites and literati—was expected to pick up on these nods to the past, recognize the sources, and understand the sophistication with which the artist remolded these elements into his own innovative work.<sup>29</sup> Sahifa Banu, a female Mughal artist, included all these characteristics in her version of a well-known painting associated with Bihzad and his

26 Adamova, "Iconography of *A Camel Fight*," 1, 6, 7. Adamova argues that Nanha's and Bihzad's images were not meant for the same album, let alone to face each other. On the differences between the versions also see Yael Rice, "Lines of Perception: European Prints at the Mughal kitabkhana," *Prints in translation, 1450–1750: image, materiality, space*, ed. Suzanne Karr Schmidt and Edward H. Wouk (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 215.

27 Adamova, "Iconography of *A Camel Fight*," 6.

28 Ibid., 8, 13n22. Some scholars believe that Abd al-Samad's painting is the reverse of Bihzad's because it was transferred by means of a pounce (powder pressed through a perforated image for outlining). See Sheila Canby, "Abd al-Samad," in *Masters of Indian Painting 100–1650*, 110. Abd al-Samad's moving inscription responds to Bihzad's, although he does not mention him by name. Ibid., 98–99. For Bihzad's inscription, see Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting*, 215–16.

29 Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī*, esp. chap. 3.



FIGURE 21 Camel Fight, ascribed to Bihzad. Herat, 1540s. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 26.0 × 16.5 cm. Muraqqa'-i Gulshan, MS. 1668. Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.



FIGURE 22 Camel Fight, by Nanha, 1608, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.5 × 15.6 cm. Muraqqa'-i Gulshan, MS. 1668. Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.



FIGURE 23 Camel Fight, by Abd al-Samad, ca. 1585–90, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 18.8 × 20.5 cm. Private collection.

Timurid circle (Fig. 24). In “The Building of the Castle of Khawarnaq,” based on a work in a manuscript of the *Khamasa* (Quintet) by the twelfth-century Persian poet Nizami, she situates herself within a prestigious Timurid artistic lineage (Figs. 24 and 25). Like the “Camel Fight,” this subject bore visual and historical resonance for the Mughal elite. The original manuscript, with illustrations attributed to Bihzad, was commissioned by one of the most powerful Timurid amirs, Ali Farsi Barlas, at the court of Sultan Husayn in Herat (r. 1469–1506).<sup>30</sup> From inscriptions and seals on the flyleaf of the manuscript, we know that this *Khamasa* was in Agra in 1564–65 and at the royal Mughal library by the early seventeenth century. Therefore, we can assume that Sahifa Banu had direct

30 Dated 1494–45 by its colophon, the manuscript is at the British Library, London (Or 6810).

access to it.<sup>31</sup> In her version of the painting she modified the façade of the castle to make it appear more three-dimensional. Her addition of openings in the side walls and her depiction of volume and space point to her mastery of European painting techniques, through which she transformed and reenacted the Timurid image into a Mughal work.<sup>32</sup> Another link to European pictorial sensitivities is Sahifa's attention to the diversity of the individual builders and their rearrangement on the page, affirming the Mughal sense of social dynamism and harmony in accordance with *ṣulḥ-i kull*.

In her composition, Sahifa Banu formed other connections to Mughal-Timurid traditions that demonstrate her visual literacy, versatility, and sophistication. The artist inserted a reference that alludes to another illustration attributed to Bihzad, in the manuscript of the *Zafarnama* (Book of Conquest, a history of Timur) made for Sultan Husayn. In the background at left she added an image of the ruler, who wears green and is seated with his legs crossed (Fig. 24). The reference is to a painting of Timur supervising the building of the Friday mosque in Samarqand. Brought to Akbar's royal library in the early 1570s, the book and its illustrations were praised as "unmatched in preciousness" by Emperor Jahangir.<sup>33</sup> The Bihzadian construction scenes of the Friday mosque in Samarqand and the Castle of Khawarnaq had visual and historical resonance for the Mughal artists and their patrons. They were evoked by scenes such as "Akbar Supervises the Building of Fatehpur Sikri" and "The Construction of Agra Fort" (ca. 1586–89) from the *Akbarnama*, in which the Mughals demonstrated cultural continuity with the Timurids

31 Just below her painting, there is an inscription, probably by a librarian, stating that this was "made by Sahifa Banu." The picture is pasted into an album of Persian and Indian painting at the Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran (no. 1645) and published in Mohammad-Hasan Semsar, *Golestan Palace Library: A Portfolio of Miniature Paintings and Calligraphy* (Tehran: Zarrin and Simin, 2000), 290. See also Yedda Godard, "Un album de portraits des princes timurides de l'Inde," *Athar-e Iran* 2 (1939): 266; 268, fig. 110. For the Mughal inscriptions in the Timurid *Khamsa* manuscript see John Seyller, "Inspection and valuation of manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal Library," *Artibus Asiae* 57, no. 3 (1997), 291–92.

32 See Jonathan Hay's perspective on the role of copying and facsimiles in Chinese painting in "The Reproductive Hand," *Between East and West: Reproductions in Art*, ed. Shigetoshi Osano (Cracow, 2014), 319–33.

33 See the inscription by Emperors Akbar and Jahangir on the flyleaf of the manuscript, which is at the John Work Garrett Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore (Gar. 3 c. 1). Mika Natif, "The *Zafarnama* of Sultan Husayn Mirza," in *Papers of the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 213.

while asserting their own preeminence in the subcontinent.<sup>34</sup> Sahifa Banu's painting, with its visual interplay of diverse artistic references, reinforces the Timurid Central Asian tradition, as well as the pluralistic cultural vision of the Mughals. Through allusions to an esteemed Timurid past linked to an even greater Mughal present, the artist situated herself in a familiar path. She competed with the Persianate masters by introducing innovation to their compositions, and by using European technique to express new pictorial sensitivities. Drawing upon various artistic traditions, Sahifa's work appears coherent and whole and it does not give the impression of a pastiche or a hybrid of multiples. Claiming her place in the chain of artistic transmission of knowledge, the painter repurposed certain elements from Timurid and European masters to create a deliberate visual metaphor of the Mughal universe.

Before we turn to the practice and meaning of repurposing Christian images within and among Mughal workshops, one anecdote may shed light on the Mughal attitude toward copying European works: in this exceptional case, precise copying was the intention, and it demonstrates that the rarity of replication was not for want of ability. Sir Thomas Roe told of a competition Jahangir had arranged in 1616, in which he, the English ambassador, was asked to recognize a certain European painting among five copies that Jahangir's artists had prepared for this event. Adding piquancy to the challenge was the fact that the original painting had been a gift from Roe himself to the emperor. When the paintings were laid out in front of the Englishman, he was at first unable to distinguish among them, to the delight of Jahangir.<sup>35</sup> The emperor's aim was to prove the technical superiority of his artists vis-à-vis the European masters and to establish a cultural hierarchy between himself and Roe, between Mughal India and Renaissance Europe.

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34 The *Akbarnama* paintings are at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (1s.2:91–1896 and 1s.2:45–1896, respectively). See Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book, 1560–1660* (London: V&A Publications, 2002), 50, pl. 22; 82, pl. 53.

35 The event took place in Ajmer. Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619: As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), 1:224–26, 1:226n2. According to Roe, Jahangir ordered him to choose one of the copies made by his Mughal artists for exhibition in England, to show that “wee are not soe unskillful as you esteeme us.” *Ibid.*, 1:226. Compare this testimony with the one provided by Father Fernão Guerreiro (see chap. 1), in which Akbar asked his artists to imitate the icon of the *Salus Populi Romani*, but they did not succeed because “such perfection of portraiture was beyond their skill.” Quoted in Sir Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932), 233.



FIGURE 24 The Building of the Castle of Khawarnaq, by *Sahifa Banu*, after Or. 6810, fol. 154v, early 17th century, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor on paper. Indo-Persian album, MS. 1654, Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.



FIGURE 25 The Building of the Castle of Khawarnaq, fol. 154v, *Khamasa of Nizami* made for Amir Ali Farsi Barlas, 1494–95, Timurid Herat. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25 × 17 cm. London, British Library, Or. 6810, fol. 154v.

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What followed, according to Roe, was that he eventually was able to point to his original picture. He commented that “the differences, which were in arte apparent, but not to be iudged by a common eye. But for that at first sight I knew it not.”<sup>36</sup> Edward Terry, Roe’s chaplain, tells a different version of the event. He reported that Roe examined the pictures for a long time and could not tell the difference among them because the copies were “exquisitely done”. The ambassador eventually picked one of the newly made paintings, mistaking it for the English work. Roe confessed to Terry that he “did not flatter, but mistake in that choice.”<sup>37</sup> The discrepancy between Roe’s and Terry’s versions plays into Jahangir’s notion of cultural superiority via mastering the arts of the other.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps Roe tweaked his story because in hindsight the ambassador did not want to present himself ignorant and thus in a weak position to negotiate with the Mughal ruler.<sup>39</sup> After all, his mission to Jahangir’s court was unsuccessful. Whatever his reasons were, this anecdote reveals the important place granted for competing with the works of other artists at Jahangir’s court. In the following section we will see how surpassing the European masters by recoding certain elements of their compositions and selectively using their style were a means to assert control over their cultural identity, technique and subject matter.

### Repurposing the European Masters

We turn our discussion to a core set of analyses of three Mughal paintings and their European counterparts. Exploring Mughal strategies of repurposing will allow us to see how these Christian motifs were understood and transformed to convey a range of intellectual and spiritual meanings related to love, contemplation, and the witnessing of divine beauty, albeit in conceptually very different ways. Comprehending what elements were carried over, left out or changed, will provide insight for the layers of intentionality and meaning in the choices made by the Mughal artists.

A Mughal work that bears a close resemblance to a European print of the “Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia” (ca. 1600–1650) has perplexed contemporary

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36 Roe, *Embassy*, 1:226–27.

37 Terry, *A Voyage to East India*, 128–29.

38 For a different interpretation of this story see Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting*, 82–83.

39 Roe reports another incident regarding his ignorance of the iconography of a painting that he presented to Jahangir. I discuss it in chapter 3 of this book.

scholars (Fig. 26). The painting, by a female artist named Nini (inscribed at the bottom), is surrounded by Persian calligraphy.<sup>40</sup> Some scholars have called the work a copy of an engraving by Hieronymus Wierix, and others argue that it was created merely by coloring an existing print (Fig. 27).<sup>41</sup> While the inscription below Wierix's engraving identifies the saint, the Mughal painting does not include her name or translate the title of the composition. Thus the Indian version de-emphasizes Cecilia's martyrdom and sainthood, removing the image from its Christian narrative and context.<sup>42</sup>

Unlike the depiction in the engraving, the Mughal Cecilia has neck wounds that are barely visible, and her head is turned toward the viewer, her eyes and mouth half open. A cloth cleans her wounds in the European engraving, but not so evidently in Nini's painting. In contrast to the somberness of the European engraving, light and beauty radiate from the Mughal painting, and the figures' facial expressions are soft and even peaceful. By subduing the notion of agony

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- 40 It is unknown whether the image included text in its original setting. The borders and calligraphic panels, consisting of Persian verses and flower decorations, were added when the picture was pasted into an album made for Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58), son of Jahangir. The name of the Timurid calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi (active late fifteenth–early sixteenth century) appears in the text border at the bottom right. Asok Kumar Das reports that there is an “exact replica” of Nini's painting that is unsigned and unattributed in the collection of Maharaja Swai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur. Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1978), 236, 246n56a.
- 41 Wierix's engraving (before 1619) is after a painting by Francesco Vanni (1601) at the Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome. The Victoria and Albert Museum catalogue description of the painting by Nini does not support the idea that the Mughal picture is a colored engraving; Susan Stronge, senior curator of South Asian art at the V&A, calls it a “close copy of an engraving by ... Wierix.” Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor*, pl. 70, 104; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1263551/saint-cecilia-painting-nini/> (accessed Feb. 7, 2014). Other art historians believe that the image was traced from the European engraving. Asok Kumar Das is indecisive on whether the painting is “of excellent quality faithfully copied” from a European engraving or was simply colored by the Mughal artist. Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time*, 236. Gauvin Bailey calls it an “oddly colored painting.” Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 133, 236n157.
- 42 In Cecilia's martyrdom narrative, the Roman governor ordered her beheaded, and a Roman soldier tried three times and failed. The legend explains that according to the law at the time, the soldier was not allowed to strike her a fourth time, so he left her lying on the ground for three days until she bled to death. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend; or, Lives of the Saints*, trans. William Caxton, ed. F. S. Ellis, 7 vols. (1483; repr., London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1900), 6:115–18.

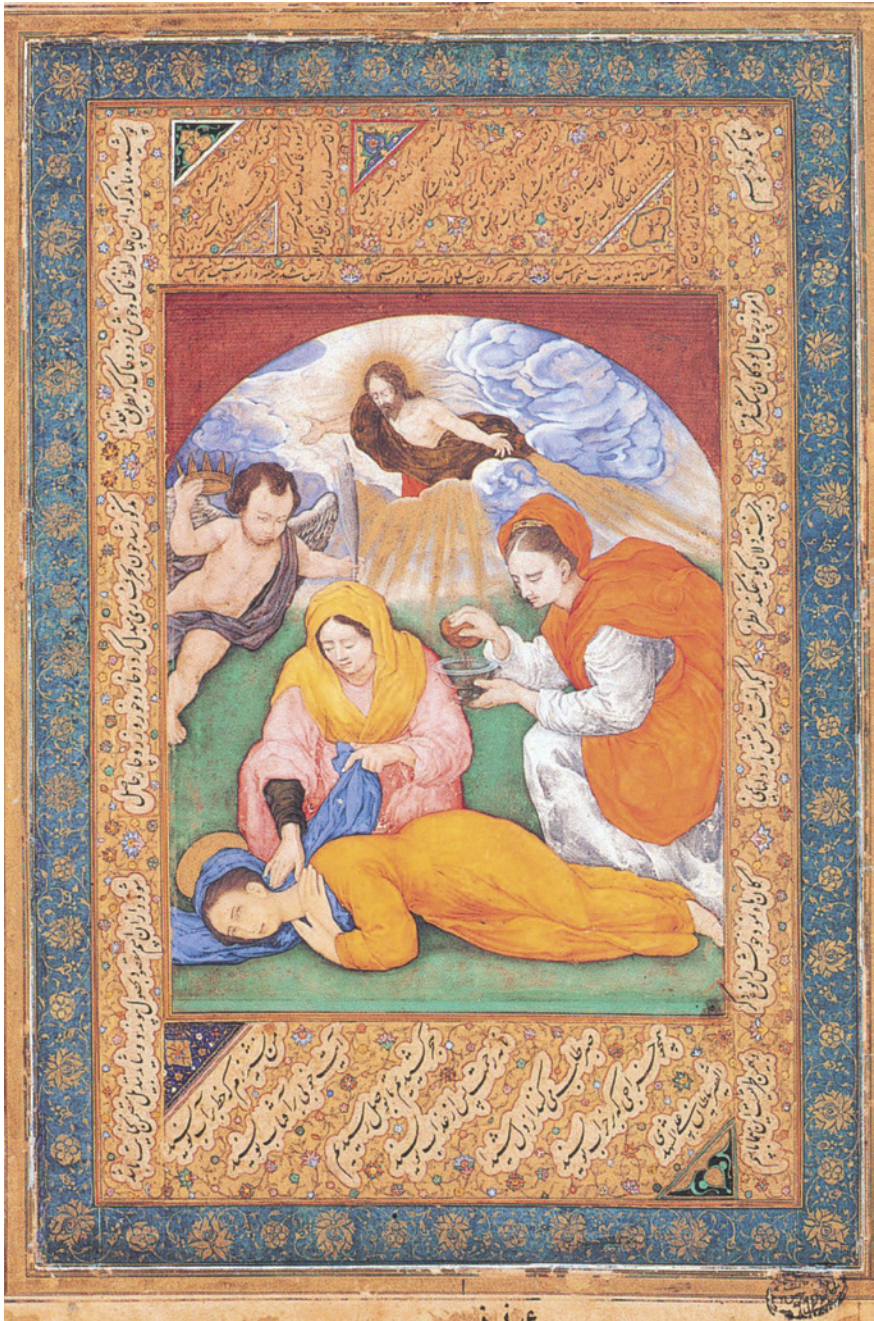


FIGURE 26 Saint Cecilia, by Nini, first half 17th century, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 38.3 × 25.8 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, acc. IM.139A-192.

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FIGURE 27 Death of St. Cecilia, by Jerome Wierix, before 1619, after Francesco Vanni, Antwerp. Engraving, ink on paper. 15.7 × 11.2 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 2012.136.700.

linked to Cecilia's martyrdom, the Mughal artist shifts attention further away from a Christian interpretation of the scene.

The calligraphy inscribed below the painting is a *ghazal* by the Perso-Indian poet Amir Khusrau Dihlavi (1253–1325).<sup>43</sup> The Persian verses evoke abandonment, the suffering caused by love, and the pain of the creative process. A description of the poet as half-asleep is echoed in the figure's languid expression. In the last verse, Dihlavi addresses himself, playing on a metaphorical connection between bloodshed and the amorous glance of the beloved, since a single word (خون‌زین) carries both meanings in Persian. Together, the wound and the female gaze call up expressions of deep yearning in Persian classical literature. This would explain why the central iconographic point in the Christian image has been manipulated and transformed in the Mughal picture: In the print, the three cuts on the martyr's throat are echoed by her own fingers placed close to the wound, and emphasized by the consoling fingers of her companion. In the Mughal painting, this area is much softer, minimizing the martyrdom narrative. Reading the text with the image sheds light on the recoding of such a "Christian" picture and its presumed perception by an audience of Mughal literati: the beautiful woman has been wounded by love.

Although Nini's painting makes no direct reference to the Christian martyrdom aspect of the image, the picture does reveal a confluence of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic ideas that permeated Mughal workshops during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir. According to Abu'l Fazl, a picture leads us to recognize ideas, and truly excellent paintings are like "the elixir of wisdom and cure for the incurable sickness of ignorance."<sup>44</sup> With its harmonious color and proportion, Nini's image brings pleasure to the viewer and induces contemplation of love, its suffering, and beauty.<sup>45</sup> Arguing for the aesthetic compatibility of European prints, Mughal calligraphy, and drawings, Yael Rice claims that the smooth adaptation of Wierix's work into the Mughal album page reinforces notions of juxtaposition.<sup>46</sup> From a conceptual perspective, Nini's picture together

43 The calligraphy includes no date, but it bears the inscription "poor Sultan Ali al-Mashhadi." On Mashhadi's importance in Mughal India, see Priscilla P. Soucek, "Persian Artists in Mughal India: Influences and Transformations," *Muqarnas* 4 (1987): 166–81.

44 From Abu'l Fazl's account of Mughal painting in the *Ain-i Akbari*, translated by C. M. Naim, in *Tūṭī-nāma*, 1:183–84.

45 On the contemplative gaze in medieval and early modern Muslim sources, see Gulru Necipoglu, "The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight, and Desire," *Muqarnas* 32, no. 1 (2015): 23–61.

46 Rice, "Lines of Perception: European Prints at the Mughal kitabkhana," 209. It will be interesting to rethink the connections between prints, line drawing and calligraphy in

with Sultan Ali Mashhadi's calligraphy and Amir Khusrau's poem transcend material form and connect to the soul.

It is no coincidence that the Mughal artist manipulated Christian images to enhance the emotional aspect of her composition. Likewise, Kavita Singh demonstrates how in an illustration from a *Khamsa* of Nizami made for Emperor Akbar, the painters depicted a Mary-looking female figure who lost her son. Her image was deliberately conflated with the Virgin Mary as a reminder of yet another grieving mother. Singh considers the Mughal female figure as a token of the hardship of motherhood.<sup>47</sup> In a parallel way, Nini utilizes European imagery to enhance certain notions of Persian poetry, demonstrating her multifarious knowledge of classical literature, spirituality, Christianity, and European painting techniques.

By intentionally choosing to repurpose European technique and Christian iconography, the artist demonstrated her awareness of the qualities associated with the European pictorial tradition in the minds of the Mughal elite. Abu'l Fazl stated that "Although in general they make pictures (*taṣwīr*) of material resemblances (*ashbāḥ-i kaunī*), the European masters (*kārpardāzān-i firang*) express with rare forms (*ba-shigīrf ṣūrat-hā*) many meanings of the created world (*basā ma'ānī khalqī*) and [thus] they lead those who see only the outside of things (*zāhirnigahān*) to the place of real truth (*haqīqatzār*)."<sup>48</sup> On a superficial level, Nini's painting retains more of its Christian visual details than do other examples of Mughal Occidentalism, but the alterations and the new context result in an original Mughal creation that clearly departs from the "Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia." By manipulating Christian iconography and European techniques to express abstract concepts from classical Persian poetry, the artist asserted her ability to bring novelty into a Persianate tradition.

The notion of expressing deeper meanings of Mughal culture by repurposing European forms is also visible in a single-page Mughal composition attributed to a woman artist named Ruqaya Banu (Fig. 28).<sup>49</sup> In this work, a single figure, a male nude, was excerpted from a European composition, and is shown

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light of Necipoglu's analysis of Timurid drawings done in a European style. Necipoglu, "Persianate Images between Europe and China."

47 Kavita Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens: Mughal Painting between Persia and Europe* (Los Angeles, California: Getty Research Institute, Getty Publications, 2017), 34–36.

48 *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian) 1:111. Translated by Ebba Koch with the help of Yunus Jafferey in *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* ed. John Seyller (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; London: Azimuth, 2002), 30.

49 Not much is known about Ruqaya Banu. See Som Prakash Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work: a biographical survey and catalogue* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 338.

sitting under a tree with his chin against his shoulder and his elbow on his knee (Fig. 28).<sup>50</sup> This figure bears some relation to Adam in a 1585 engraving by the Flemish artist Jan Sadeler, “Adam and Eve after the Fall” (Fig. 29), which itself is based on a painting by another Flemish artist, Crispin van den Broeck.<sup>51</sup> Thus, like other images in Mughal Occidental painting, Ruqaya Banu’s figure was extracted from a large biblical scene, its associated iconography recoded and reconfigured.

The settings of the Mughal and European images differ. In the engraving, Adam sits with his family—Eve and their two children—among green, hilly meadows and fauna including a turtle, a goat, and a sheep. In the background to the right, people are cooking over a fire, and farther back to the left, a farmer plows a field; the fruits of such labor are seen in the foreground. The setting shows the iconography of the biblical God’s blessings of fertility and sustenance.<sup>52</sup> In the Mughal drawing, the nude male is sitting under a golden tree, accompanied by a dog and a couple of playful ducklings swimming in a

50 The Mughal drawing has no signature or date. On the basis of an inscription on a drawing of a similar figure found on a pastiche Mughal album page, Asok Kumar Das attributes the Chester Beatty drawing to the Mughal artist Ruqaya (or Ruqaiya) Banu. Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir’s Time*, 235. For Som Prakash Verma’s concerns about Das’s attribution of this drawing, see Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work*, 338. Linda York Leach dates this drawing to ca. 1630–40 but without explanation. Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 2 vols., (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 1:458, pl. 3.70. In the previous catalogue of the Chester Beatty collection, the authors do not date the image or suggest any time frame. Thomas W. Arnold, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty: A Catalogue of the Indian Miniatures*, 3 vols., rev. and ed. James Vere Stewart Wilkinson (London: Oxford University Press and E. Walker, 1936), 1:44; 3:pl. 77. Given its similarity to an image in the margins of a folio from an album made for Jahangir, I believe the Chester Beatty picture was also done during the Jahangir era (r. 1605–27).

51 Milo Beach associates the figure in the Mughal drawing with this engraving. See Milo Beach, “The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources,” *Bulletin of Museum of Fine Arts* 63, no. 332 (1965): 88, no. 12a; 91n16. Figure 29 is a colored version of the print and is part of a two-volume illustrated Old Testament entitled *Thesaurus Sacrarum Historiarum Veteris Testamenti*, published by Gerard de Jode in Antwerp in 1585. New York Public Library, Spencer Coll. Neth. 1585, vol. 1, fol. 11.

52 The engraving is surrounded by quotations from Genesis 3:16–17 describing the sorrows God will inflict on Adam and Eve (and all men and women) because they have “eaten of the tree” of knowledge. Two names appear at the bottom of the engraving: Sadeler’s and that of Crispin van den Broeck. In their 1936 catalogue of the Chester Beatty collection, Arnold and Wilkinson suggest that the European engraving may be linked to a work by the sixteenth-century Italian artist Giulio Romano. Arnold, *Library of A. Chester Beatty*, 1:44.

brook. With its elaborate, curving trunk, the golden tree forms a continuum with the man's body, seeming to rise out of his shoulder. Visually dominant and more intricately textured than his form, the tree both subsumes and intensifies the male's physicality.

When we examine the physical traits of the two male figures, several discrepancies come into view. On the whole, the engraved Adam seems more muscular than the male nude in the Mughal drawing, with more emphasis placed on his physical strength and the tonality of his curves—differences that perhaps reflect divergent cultural ideals. The muscles are quite visible in Adam's right arm, shoulders, back, and thighs, while these areas of the body appear smoother and softer in the Mughal drawing. The facial features and expressions of the two figures also differ. Adam's head tilts, and his face is turned slightly away from us as he gazes down at something—his foot, the vegetables on the ground, or perhaps the very earth from which his hardship will spring. His body language presents an interesting mixture of strength and despair. In contrast, the man in the Mughal drawing is shown in full profile, with a less angular face, slightly rosy lips, and puffy hair. Depicted with his eyes closed rather than gazing downward, the figure conveys calmness, as if the artist had caught him in a moment of reflection. Despite these differences, it is still clear that the Mughal drawing depicts a European man.

The comparison prompts us to consider how the differences between the images link them to other concepts. The engraving is a composite image that conflates the biblical with the mythological: the animal skin draped over Adam's shoulder alludes to Hercules. The European engraving also emphasizes Adam's heroic qualities by giving him grand proportions and a pose like that of such classical sculptures as the Belvedere Torso.<sup>53</sup> Thus Sadeler/Crispin van den Broeck created an iconographic blend of biblical, classical, and contemporary European humanistic ideals that reflected the identity of his intended audience.

The Mughal drawing also elicits several concepts, but its imagery is related to Arabic and Persian literature. In the Islamicate tradition Adam is the first man and the first prophet. In illustrations of texts about the angels prostrating before him, Adam is depicted lying naked on the ground, face up. His body appears smooth and slender, with no indication of muscle or volume, and he

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53 The sculpture is at the Vatican Palace. See Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 190–96, ill. 3.79–85.



FIGURE 28 Seated European Nude Man, attributed to Ruqaya Banu, after Engraving by Jan Sadeler, early 17th century or ca. 1630, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 16.9 × 9 cm. Chester Beatty Library, acc. nA.3.

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FIGURE 29 Adam and Eve After the Fall. Engraving by Jan Sadeler, after Crispin van den Broeck, 1585, Antwerp. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper. Engraving (without the text) 17.8 × 26.7 cm. New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, no. S.Coll.Neth 1585.

wears no animal skin.<sup>54</sup> In the Persianate world, the animal skin is associated with heroic figures such as Rustam, from the *Shahnama*, the tenth-century Persian epic by the poet Abu'l Qasim Ferdowsi. Rustam is normally shown with a tiger or leopard skin embellishing his clothes, but he is not nude.<sup>55</sup> He is a man of exceptional strength who fights demons and dragons and kicks boulders out of his path, but his body is not traditionally shown differently from other figures in the composition. Therefore, the artist's lack of emphasis on physical strength in this painting stems not from her failure to understand the nuanced figure in Sadeler's engraving, but from her utterly different point of cultural reference. The Belvedere Torso, the hero as Übermensch with the

54 For examples of Adam depicted naked and admired by the angels see Rachel Milstein, Karin Ruhrdanz and Barbara Schmitz, *Stories of the Prophets: illustrated manuscripts of the Qisas al-Anbiya* (Costa Mesa, Calif.: Mazda Publishers, 1999), 106.

55 See a typical example in "Rustam Fending off the Rock Dropped by Bahman," a folio from the *Shahnama* by Firdausi, dated 1562, Shiraz, Iran. Harvard Art Museums 2002.50.163. <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/collections/object/146270>.

pelvic tilt and arched back of a classical model, meant little to a Mughal audience and would not resonate in the Indian visual mind.

In India, a nude or minimally clad man sitting under a tree with his eyes closed would be readily associated with meditative practice. He could be a Hindu or a Muslim, a practitioner of yoga, a Sufi, or a follower of some other mystical tradition. The enlightened person dealing with “inner work” became a popular subject under the Mughals, and numerous examples of meditating figures were painted under the patronage of Akbar and Jahangir.<sup>56</sup> Examples include a scene in a copy of the *Baburnama* (Memoirs of Babur) produced at Akbar’s workshops in about 1590–93, which shows Babur and his entourage visiting the Hindu monastery Gurh Kattri (Kūr Katrī) in Bigram (Fig. 30).<sup>57</sup> At the center of the composition, two men sit in meditation under a Bodhi tree; they are scantily clad and their bodies are covered with ashes or mud.

Other meditating figures occur in a copy of a Persian text by Muhammad Ghawth of Gwalior called the *Bahr al-Hayat* (Ocean of Life) that Prince Salim, the future Emperor Jahangir, commissioned in about 1600–1604. The illustrations depict single figures practicing yoga *asanas*, or body positions.<sup>58</sup> One yogi, with a cat nearby, sits in front of a structure with a tree beyond it (Fig. 31). His pose, though reversed, is similar to that of the figure in the drawing

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56 This is not a new subject matter in Persianate painting. There are numerous examples of ascetics, hermits and dervishes that were painted by Timurid and Safavid artists. A famous drawing made by Bihzad of a *qalandar* was pasted into the Bahram Mirza album. See David Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*, 284–86; Idem, “Kamal al-Din Bihzad,” 125, 129, 131. In the *Khamsa* of Nizami made for amir Ali Farsi Barlas, one of the illustrations depicts “Iskandar visiting the Hermit.” In this painting the old ascetic sits in a dark cave, half naked, conversing with the ruler. London, British Library, Or 6810, fol. 273r. The painting bears an ascription to Bihzad in the margin. Ebadollah Bahari claims that a second inscription, located between the two text columns and attributing the painting to Qasim ‘Ali, is a later addition. Bahari, *Bihzad: Master of Persian Painting*, 156. For more examples of sufis and dervishes see Ladan Akbarnia and Francesca Leoni, *Light of the Sufis: Mystical Arts of Islam* (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 2010), 32, 36, 50, 52. On representations of yogis and other ascetics in India see Deborah Diamond, ed., *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2013).

57 This copy of the *Baburnama* was made between 1590 and 1593 (British Library, Or. 3714). Some leaves are also found at the V&A museum.

58 The sufi master Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliyari wrote the Persian text of the manuscript around 1550, basing his work on translations of Sanskrit treatises as well as conversations with practitioners of yoga. Ghawth wanted to use yoga to attain spiritual transformation and closeness to God. Diamond, *Yoga*, 157.



FIGURE 30 Babur and his Warriors Visiting the Hindu Temple Gurh Kattri (Kūr Katri) in Bigram, by Kesu Khurd, fol. 320v from the Baburnama, ca. 1590–93. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper. 32.0 × 19.1 cm. The British Library, Or. 3714, f. 320v. © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD, OR. 3714, F. 320V



FIGURE 31  
Alakh yoga posture, a folio  
from the *Bahr al-hayat* (*Ocean  
of Life*) by Muhammad Ghawth  
Gwaliyari, 1600–1604, Allahabad.  
Ink and opaque watercolor on  
paper. Approx. 10.6 × 7.8 cm.  
Chester Beatty Library, Dublin,  
acc. In 16.17a.

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attributed to Ruqaya Banu. The author describes the position in the form of instructions to the sitter:

on both knees, with the left hand clenched in a fist, placing that fist on the right kneecap. One holds the right elbow over the fist. One also clenches the right hand into a fist, leaning on the chin, and tightening up the buttocks (*surin*). One brings the navel toward the back. One brings the breath upward from beneath the navel, which is the house of fire.<sup>59</sup>

59 Muhammad Ghawth Gwaliyari, *Bahr al-hayat*, trans. Carl W. Ernst (2013), chap. 4, in conjunction with the exhibition *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*. See <http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/yoga/chapter-4-bahr-al-hayat.asp#four> (accessed Jan. 22, 2016). Cited with the permission of the translator.

The man in Ruqaya Banu's painting is accompanied by a dog, an attribute that appears in several paintings of yogis from the period of Akbar and Jahangir.<sup>60</sup> A line drawing ascribed to Basawan and dating to about 1590, for instance, shows a dervish with a leopard skin thrown nonchalantly over his shoulder; he wanders the path to enlightenment with a canine companion.<sup>61</sup> In the comparison at hand, just as Sadeler emphasizes aspects of the body linked to the European concept of the hero, Ruqaya Banu emphasizes aspects related to ascetic life and enlightenment. Given these differing cultural attitudes toward the body, we see that the Mughal image is a conscious reconfiguration and recoding of the Renaissance image, fit into a traditional Persianate subject matter.

Finally, a comparison of the texts that form part of the page design: In the Genesis text on Sadeler's engraving, God tells Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception," and tells Adam, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."<sup>62</sup> The text on the Mughal folio, by the twelfth-century Persian poet Baba Afzal al-Din (d. ca. 1213–14), reflects ideas about knowledge of the self, essence (*dhāt* or *howwāyat*) and the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm.<sup>63</sup> The poet expresses the belief that God is the center of a person's being. While the biblical text at the bottom of the European engraving has a narrative purpose that supports the image, the Persian text framing the Mughal drawing is allegorical and iconic:

O you, who became a pearl-diver in the sea of friendship,  
Threading the pearl of loyalty on the strand of sincerity:  
If you respect the sanctuary of bounds of truthfulness  
Then you will be honored at our court.

The poem reflects concepts of social order, hierarchy, and justice that correspond to Jahangir's perception of right governance, his roles as a 'Universal Manifestation' (*mazhar-ikull*), and the 'shadow of God on earth' (*khalifa-ikhuda*). Other verses mention the charity and generosity that were important to his worldview:

60 At least two paintings of yogis from Salim's album include a dog as a companion to the ascetic. The paintings are at the Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

61 Amina Okada suggests that this dervish belonged to the Khaksar order. Amina Okada, *Indian Miniatures of the Mughal Court* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1992), 92. The drawing is in the Musée Guimet, Paris, (3619Gb).

62 Gen. 3:16–17 (King James).

63 I thank Abdullallah Ghuchani for the identification of the poet and help with understanding his poem.

The sea will not disappear  
 if you give away one drop out of generosity  
 And the sun will not vanish  
 if you take away one small flash of light.

Supporting mendicants and ascetics maintains the equilibrium of society and the world. These ideas are directly linked to Akbar's and Jahangir's policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* and the administration of justice by preserving balance among diverse ethnic and religious groups.<sup>64</sup>

Linking the radiant image of the nude, inward-looking ascetic with concepts of the just king brings us back to Adam in Islamic tradition where he is considered to be not only the first prophet but also a *khalifa* (viceroys) elected by God.<sup>65</sup> According to particular sources, after expelling him from Paradise, God forgave his sins, and Adam landed in India.<sup>66</sup> He is described as a man of extraordinary power, spiritual knowledge, and beauty.<sup>67</sup> In the official Mughal history, the *Akbarnama*, Adam is mentioned several times, mostly in the context of the ancient roots of Akbar's lineage and the emperor as the initiator of just rule. Adam is also associated with the philosopher-king and the Perfect Man, two concepts of legitimacy and authority that Akbar and Jahangir adopted.<sup>68</sup> Muslim theologians refer to Adam's prophetic power as a gift of light, where the latter symbolized divine presence. Hence, in illustrated

64 Similar ideas can be found in other poems and texts related to Jahangir's ideology of sovereignty. See Heike Franke, "Emperors of Şurat and Ma'nī: Jahangir and Shah Jahan as Temporal and Spiritual Rulers," *Muqarnas* 31 (2014): 123–49; Corinne Lefèvre, "Recovering a Missing Voice from Mughal India: The Imperial Discourse of Jahāngīr (r. 1605–1627) in His Memoirs," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 50, no. 4 (2007): 452–89; Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections," 322. This was also in accordance with Timurid custom of supporting shaykhs and religious orders. See the relationship with Khoja Ahrar, analyzed and discussed by Jo-Ann Gross, *Khoja Ahrar: A Study of the Perceptions of Religious Power and Prestige in the Late Timurid Period* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985).

65 Qur'an 2:30.

66 A number of Muslim theologians and historians link Adam's arrival from Paradise to India. See Brannon M. Wheeler, *Prophets in the Quran: An Introduction to the Quran and Muslim Exegesis* (London: A&C Black, 2002), 25–26, 32, 34.

67 On Adam's beauty and beard see Meir J. Kister, "Ādam: A Study of Some Legends in Tafsīr and 'Hadīth' Literature," *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 113–74.

68 Abu'l Fazl describes the ideal ruler, like Akbar, as the Perfect Man (*insān-i kamīl*) and the Philosopher King. Abū'l Faẓl ibn Mubārak, *Akbarnāma*, ed. Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–87) 3:274. For a discussion of Akbar and Jahangir as Adam, see Franke, "Emperors of Şurat and Ma'nī," 129–30, 131–33.

*Majalis al-ushshaq* and *Qisas al-anbiyah* he appears with a flame-like halo as his prophetic attribute.<sup>69</sup> The radiance of Adam's figure in the Mughal painting also had contemporary resonance. Through text and image, both Akbar and Jahangir associated themselves with notions of light: Akbar was said to possess *farr-i izadi* (divine light), and Jahangir was often depicted with a halo.<sup>70</sup> By fragmenting the European engraving to focus on a single figure, Ruqaya Banu was free to overlay a Mughal cultural context and infuse a Muslim traditional concept onto the Christian image, while retaining some associations to the Renaissance figure. By choosing this subject matter, she associated her work with the esteemed traditions of Bihzad and Persianate painting, while mastering the incorporation of new idioms and techniques.<sup>71</sup> This recoding created an original painting that reflects the importance of European artistic idioms in the construction of a multifaceted universal imperial identity.

The painting attributed to Ruqaya Banu is echoed in a second Mughal image of a contemplative male nude, this one part of a composite album page (Fig. 32).<sup>72</sup> Although the figure here resembles Ruqaya Banu's male nude, the setting is completely different. This figure sits in a barren landscape with bare shrubs and rocks, looking like a muscular ascetic in meditation. There are no animals or vegetation to enliven the scene. However, as in Ruqaya Banu's painting, the use of gold lends a warmth and illumination that softens the man's figure and suggests enlightenment. The repetition of her recoded European image attests to the artist's success and place in the *silsila* of Mughal masters.

Like the painting by Ruqaya Banu, an ink-and-wash drawing by Abu'l Hasan is based on a Christian figure, in this case Saint John the Evangelist as he appears in a 1511 Crucifixion scene from Albrecht Dürer's "Little Passion" woodcut

69 Roberto Tottoli, "Adam", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, THREE, Edited by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 12 December 2016 [http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_ei3\\_SIM\\_0300](http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0300); Milstein, Ruhrdanz and Schmitz, *Stories of the Prophets*, 106.

70 *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:2. For comparative examples of Jahangir's portrait with a halo, see Bichitr, "Jahangir Holding a Globe" (fig. 43); and "Jahangir and Jesus" (fig. 3).

71 For Bihzad and paintings of ascetics see note 56 above. It is interesting to note that the famous Safavid artist Riza Abbasi (ca. 1565–1635) was also very much interested in portraying ascetics and dervishes. Some of his drawings were pasted into one of Jahangir's albums (discussed in chapter 3). On the artist's work see Shelia Canby, *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi Abbasi of Isfahan* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1996).

72 See Beach, "Gulshan Album," 88; 89, no. 12.



FIGURE 32 Composite Page, with painting by Rofiqeh Banu and Ahmad the painter, folio from the Gulshan album, early 17th century. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 41.7 × 25.5 cm. Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, MS. 1663.

series (Figs. 19, 33).<sup>73</sup> Both works relate to religious images, using Renaissance techniques. However, Abu'l Hasan's creation may be considered here as an exercise in mastery: it is linked to the idea of competing with an established famous master, reinterpreting and exceeding his work, while pledging allegiance to a royal patron with global aspirations.<sup>74</sup>

Significant to the comparison is the context in which each work was created. Dürer's print was part of a series of engravings with a traditional Christian theme: the Passion of Christ, which portrays the major events of his last days on earth. Abu'l Hasan's drawing was probably made for an album far removed from any Christian religious theme. Some Mughal albums contained religious calligraphy and images of prophets and Muslim saints, but even as part of an album, Abu'l Hasan's drawing would not have carried the religious weight of an image in the European sphere depicting the Crucifixion.<sup>75</sup> Abu'l Hasan's drawing was most likely commissioned. Although Dürer clearly had a Christian audience in mind for his "Little Passion" series, the engraving was not commissioned or meant to honor any specific patron. Dürer's engraving was a print, one of multiple copies of the same image, while Abu'l Hasan's drawing was an edition of one.<sup>76</sup>

73 A brush drawing with black ink and light gold and red wash on paper, this type of drawing is known as a *nim-qalam* or *qalam-i siyahi*.

74 On the life and work of Abu'l Hasan, see Milo C. Beach, "Aga Riza and Abu'l Hasan," in *Masters of Indian Painting, 1100–1650*, 211–30; Verma, *Mughal Painters and Their Work*, 47–55; Milo Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 86–92; Jeremiah Losty, "Abu'l Hasan," in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991), 69–86.

75 On albums with religious content, see Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*, 15.

76 It is unclear which version of Saint John the Evangelist Abu'l Hassan had actually seen, since Dürer's design was so popular that other engravers, including Georg Pencz and Girolamo Porro, made copies of it. Georg Pencz's engravings most likely were circulating in Mughal India. See Milo Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," *Oriental Art* 22, no.2 (1976): 180–88. On the subject of sixteenth-century European engravings based on Dürer's "Engraved Passion," see Gallina and Stefania Seccareccia, *Dürer- da Dürer: L'arte in viaggio attraverso l'Europa* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1999), 84; Giulia Bartrum, *Albrecht Dürer and His Legacy: The Graphic Work of a Renaissance Artist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002). On the complicated attitude toward print and printed books in the Muslim world, see Dan Diner, *Lost in the Sacred: Why the Muslim World Stood Still* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). By 1556–57 the Jesuits were running a printing press in Goa. See Pedro de Moura Carvalho, "Rarities from Goa' at the Courts of Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir (1530–1627)," *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Caluste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 106, 207n37.



FIGURE 33 Crucifixion, from the *Engraved Passion* series, by Albrecht Dürer, 1511. Ink on paper. 11.8 × 7.5 cm. London, British Museum, E,2.53.

© THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, E,2.53.

The conditions of their creation aside, perhaps the most obvious contrast between the European and Mughal works is in the composition and surface of the page. Because Dürer's Evangelist is part of a triangular arrangement, his pose is intended to mirror that of Mary. Both heads point toward the engraving's central focus—the body of Christ. Abu'l Hasan's figure is the sole focal point of his composition, and the head remains more vertical. The Mughal artist, as we can see from his apparently close study of Dürer's engraving, also draws different conclusions about the desired proportions of the human figure. Dürer used a head-to-body ratio of 1:6.66 in his depiction of Saint John, bringing it close to the Greek ideal of the golden ratio. Abu'l Hasan, however, opted for a ratio of 1:5.5, thereby emphasizing the figure's head.<sup>77</sup>

The two young men also convey different emotional states: The portrait of Saint John represents one of the most difficult and wrenching moments for any Christian believer. In Dürer's engraving the figure is mourning, his brow furrowed in dismay. Though he is looking up at Christ, the corners of his eyes point downward, and his mouth is slightly open, as if he is murmuring a prayer. The figure in Abu'l Hasan's drawing, however, is a smooth-skinned youth who shows no signs of anguish, sorrow, or tension. His golden curls make him radiant. His gaze is dreamy and unfocused, directed into the distance. The body language of the two images conveys contrasting emotions.

Abu'l Hasan highlighted the head and hands of his subject, rendering the delicate facial features and intertwined fingers with expert brushwork and allowing the body to blend almost entirely into the surface of the page. Dürer's emphasis is on heavy folds and on the solidity of the body. By highlighting the figure's stylized curls with gold, coloring his round lips with red, and drawing his mouth slightly open to reveal his teeth, the Mughal artist created the image of a tranquil, sensuous youth, probably a European. The work is less reminiscent of the Crucifixion, among European sources, than of singing angels, such as those on the *Cantoria* panels by Luca della Robbia.<sup>78</sup>

Abu'l Hasan's figure of a European youth conjures up notions of physical and divine beauty, light and mysticism. The question of how to read this work in a Mughal context brings up Muslim mysticism and other spiritual practices of the time. By altering the face of Dürer's Saint John, the Mughal artist may

77 In 1528 Dürer wrote a treatise on the human body, *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion* (Four Books on Human Proportion), in which he further illustrates the ratio of 1:6.666 between head and body as the perfect human proportions. On proportions and geometry in Islamic art, see Gulru Necipoglu, *The Topkapi Scroll*.

78 Luca della Robbia made the *Cantoria* between 1431 and 1438 for the Florence Cathedral (now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo).

have been giving this Christian image the Islamic meaning of the beautiful *shahid*, or witness. In some mystical circles, it was believed possible to witness the divine while gazing at a handsome youth, an experience called *shāhid-bāzī* or *naẓar-bāzī* (playing the witness). These *shahids* were usually handsome adolescent boys who became objects of passion and desire. Related to this practice was the idea voiced by several Muslim thinkers that seeing the beauty of a youth was almost tantamount to seeing the beauty of the divine. This concept led to the development of the practice of gazing at (usually) young boys as a spiritual exercise focused on glorifying God's beauty. These intermediaries were often referred to as "idols" because of their striking looks.<sup>79</sup> Abu'l Hasan's work may translate this spiritual and literary topos into visual terms, repurposing Dürer's figure. None of the psychological and religious burdens of Dürer's Passion are visible in this reconfiguration. The figure is delicate, idealized, and ephemeral, emanating light and serenity. Almost two decades after Abu'l Hasan's drawing, a similarly idealized curly blond European youth appears on an album page made for Jahangir (Fig. 34). Reclining, nearly nude, and viewed from the back, he is accompanied by four ascetic figures (*qalandars*) in a state of contemplation. The pose is provocative: he flaunts his young body and lush golden curls at the viewer, presumably stimulating both desire and spiritual practice in a manner similar to Abu'l Hasan's figure.

Elements of self-promotion and competition are apparent in the inscriptions on Abu'l Hasan's drawing. One in the lower left corner, for instance, says that Abu'l Hasan made it in his thirteenth year (Fig. 19).<sup>80</sup> This unusual inscription may be related to Dürer's statement on "Self-portrait at Thirteen," in which the artist boasts about his young age at the time when he made the drawing.<sup>81</sup> Dürer's pride and self-consciousness of his artistry and youth further resonated in signatures of European engravers who copied his work

79 On beautiful boys and homoeroticism in Persian literature, see Sirius Shamisa, *Shahid-bazi dar Adabiyat-i Farsi (Shahid-bazi in Persian literature)* (Tehran: Firdows Publications, 2002); Nasrollah Pourjavady, "Stories of Aḥmad al-Ghazālī 'Playing the Witness' in Tabrīz (Shams-i Tabrīzī's Interest in shāhid-bāzī)," in *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought, Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, ed. Todd Lawson (London; New York: I. B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2015), 200–220. For criticism of the practice during the medieval period, see Lloyd Ridgeon, "The Controversy of Shaykh Awḥad al-Dīn Kirmānī and Handsome, Moon-Faced Youths: A Case Study of *Shāhid-Bāzī* in Medieval Sufism," *Journal of Sufi Studies* 1, no. 1 (2012): 3–30.

80 The inscription reads: "Done in his thirteenth year" (*dar sann-i sizdah salagi sakhta*).

81 Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait at Thirteen*, 1484, silverpoint on prepared paper, 27.5 × 19.6 cm. Vienna, Albertina, inventory number 4839. The drawing was copied a couple of times

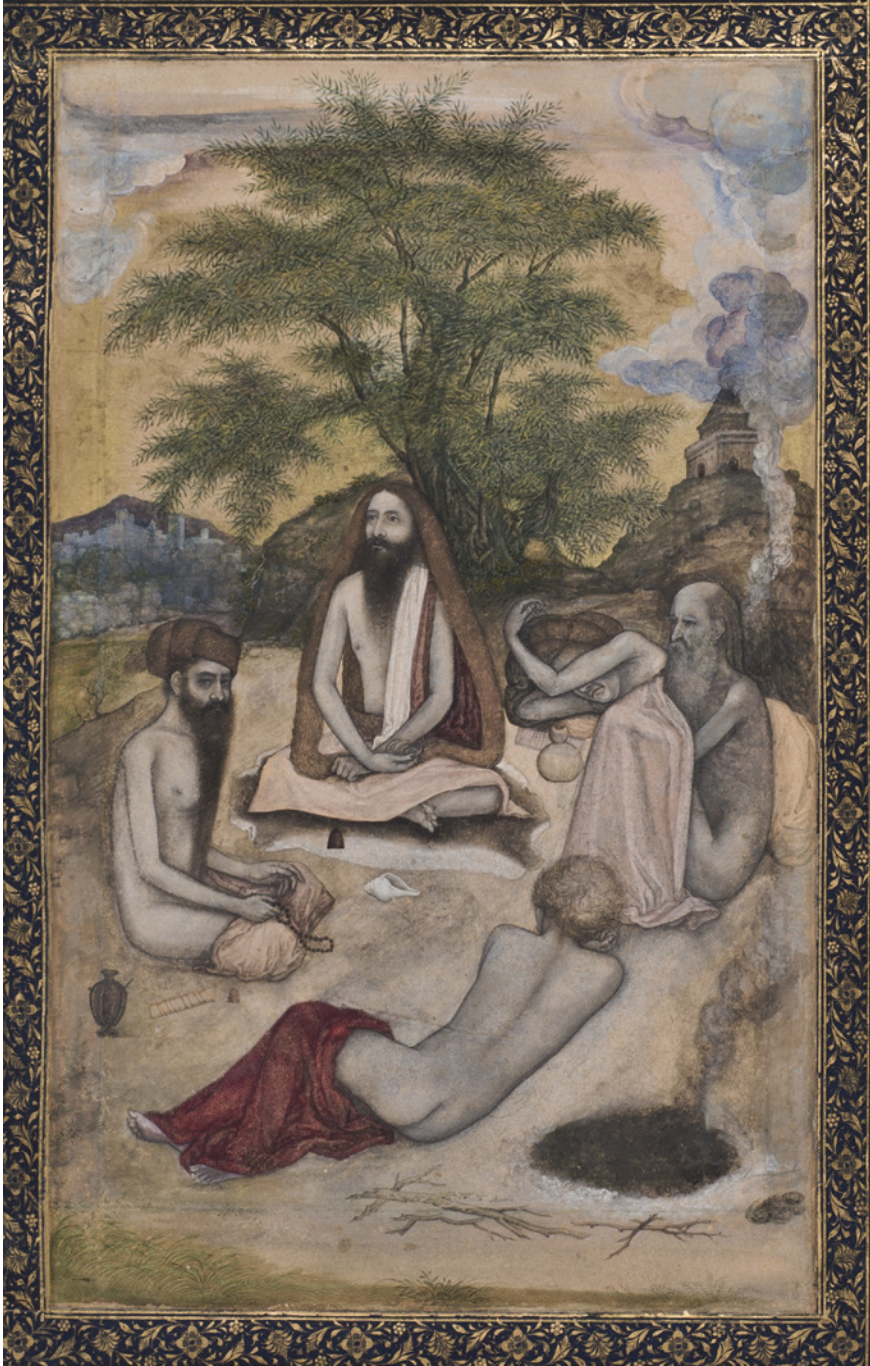


FIGURE 34 Five Holy Men, attributed to Govardhan, a folio from the St Petersburg Album, ca. 1615–25, Mughal India. Ink and opaque watercolor on paper. 24.1 × 15.2 cm. Museum of Islamic Art, Doha.

and, in competition with the Master, also underscored their young age. Anja Grebe suggests that Abu'l Hasan's inscriptions may be related to signatures of such European engravers, like Jan Wierix.<sup>82</sup> However, the unusual wording of Abu'l Hasan's Persian inscription is closely related to Dürer's "Self-portrait at Thirteen," rather than to his followers. In Wierix' replica of Dürer's "Madonna Crowned by Angels," the Flemish artist inscribed the date 1563 on his work, indicating that he was fourteen years old when he made the engraving.<sup>83</sup> Unlike Dürer's explicit claim, Wierix signaled his young age in a subtle way that could be understood only to someone familiar with his date of birth. Therefore, Abu'l Hasan's inscription appears more as a response to Dürer's text rather than to Wierix' date. By boasting about his youth and establishing a clear line of competition, Abu'l Hasan flaunted his talent with respect to the European Master. He may not have seen Dürer's "Self-portrait at Thirteen," but because of the stark similarities between the inscriptions, we can conjecture that Abu'l Hasan was compelled to challenge Dürer. Moreover, the inscription on Abu'l Hasan's drawing may point to one of the ways in which artistic knowledge was transmitted between the Europeans and the Mughals. The text implies some sort of Mughal-European conversation about Dürer's work, in which Abu'l Hasan and perhaps also his father, Aqa Riza, may have participated, or that the information was conveyed to them indirectly.<sup>84</sup> Although no name of a European artist has appeared in Mughal sources from the time of Akbar and Jahangir, this inscription may point to an awareness and knowledge of individual European artists on the part of the Mughal painters.

Although some parts of Abu'l Hasan's text are closely related to Dürer's statement, it is worth noting that in the inscriptions Abu'l Hasan presented

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by artists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Anja Grebe, *Dürer. Die Geschichte seines Ruhms* (Petersberg: Michael Imhof, 2013), 82–83, 210.

82 Anja Grebe, "Albrecht Dürer in Asian Art: Paradigms of Cross-Cultural Reproduction and Transformation," in *Between East and West: Reproductions in Art*, ed. Shigetoshi Osano (Cracow: IRSA, 2014), 398–99, 401n28. Wierix' prints were known at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir from the Polyglot Bible. Some were pasted in Mughal albums like the Gulshan album. See Beach, "The Gulshan Album."

83 See "Madonna Crowned by Two Angels, 1563," by Jan Wierix after Albrecht Dürer. Art Institute of Chicago, # 1960.849.

84 According to Robert Skelton, in 1598, Lahore, Prince Salim, accompanied by two Mughal artists, had a conversation with Father Jerome Xavier about two European scenes: The Annunciation to the Shepherds, and the Descent from the Cross. Based on a letter by Father Jerome Xavier, Salim asked the Jesuit "what these meant and of whom they were likenesses." See quote in Robert Skelton, "Europe and India," *Europa und die Kunst des Islam* 5 (Vienna: Internationaler Kongress für Kunstgeschichte, 1983): 36.

himself as a follower, a disciple of a prince (*murid*), and not as an individual artist who is independent of the emperor or his teacher and father.<sup>85</sup> The artist pledges his loyalty to prince Salim (the future Jahangir) by mentioning him as “Shah Salim” in the top left corner of the painting. The prince assumed the title of Shah, or king, at the time of his rebellion against his father, Akbar, in 1600, so the artist’s statement had political implications.<sup>86</sup> These inscriptions are Abu’l Hasan’s display of accomplishment and loyalty, revealing his status as both an artistic prodigy and the beneficiary of royal patronage.

The Mughal artist fragmented Dürer’s composition and focused on a single figure in a process that involved both imitation and originality. The result is a unique artistic work that in its Mughal context exceeds that of the European master. For a Mughal artist of that time, success was measured by the ability to paint in the manner of past masters, modify their original compositions, and surpass them.<sup>87</sup>

Abu’l Hasan’s image was echoed in the illuminated margin of a page in what has become known as the Berlin Album, made for Emperor Jahangir in the early seventeenth century (Fig. 35). The figure at bottom left presents a body pose, hand gesture, and foot position similar to those of the curly-haired youth in the Mughal painting—but reversed. However, the figure in the Berlin Album differs in details such as the long hair, the tilt of the head, the downward gaze, facial features, and clothing—all marking a further departure from Dürer’s engraving.

The three examples by Nini, Ruqaya Banu and Abu’l Hasan, demonstrate how Mughal artists copied, recoded and reconfigured European art to create something new. Copying and emulating masters, European and domestic, were the ways in which artists at the Mughal workshops established their status—a sophisticated form of competition—and introduced innovations.

We cannot know whether such *frangīs* as Dürer, Wierix or Sadeler were considered artists in a lineage to be emulated, the way Bihzad was. Unfortunately,

85 On Abu’l Hasan’s signatures see Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience*, 127–28; Mika Natif, “Explaining Early Mughal Painting” (PhD diss., New York University, 2006), 225–226.

86 Using the title *shah* (king) instead of *shahzada* (prince) indicates Prince Salim’s challenge to the throne. In July 1009/1600 Salim openly rebelled against his father and fled to Allahabad, where he established his independent court. By August 12, 1600, the prince and his army were in the area of Agra, attempting to take over the capital, while Emperor Akbar was fighting in the Deccan. See *Jahangirnama* (English), 8–9. Abu’l Hasan’s drawing, dated Friday, October 20, was done a few months after the prince and his court left Agra for Allahabad.

87 See Abu’l Fazl’s remarks about the calligrapher Mir Ali Haravi, in the *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian) 1:110; or Jahangir’s statement about Abu’l Hasan, in the *Jahangirnama* (English), 268.

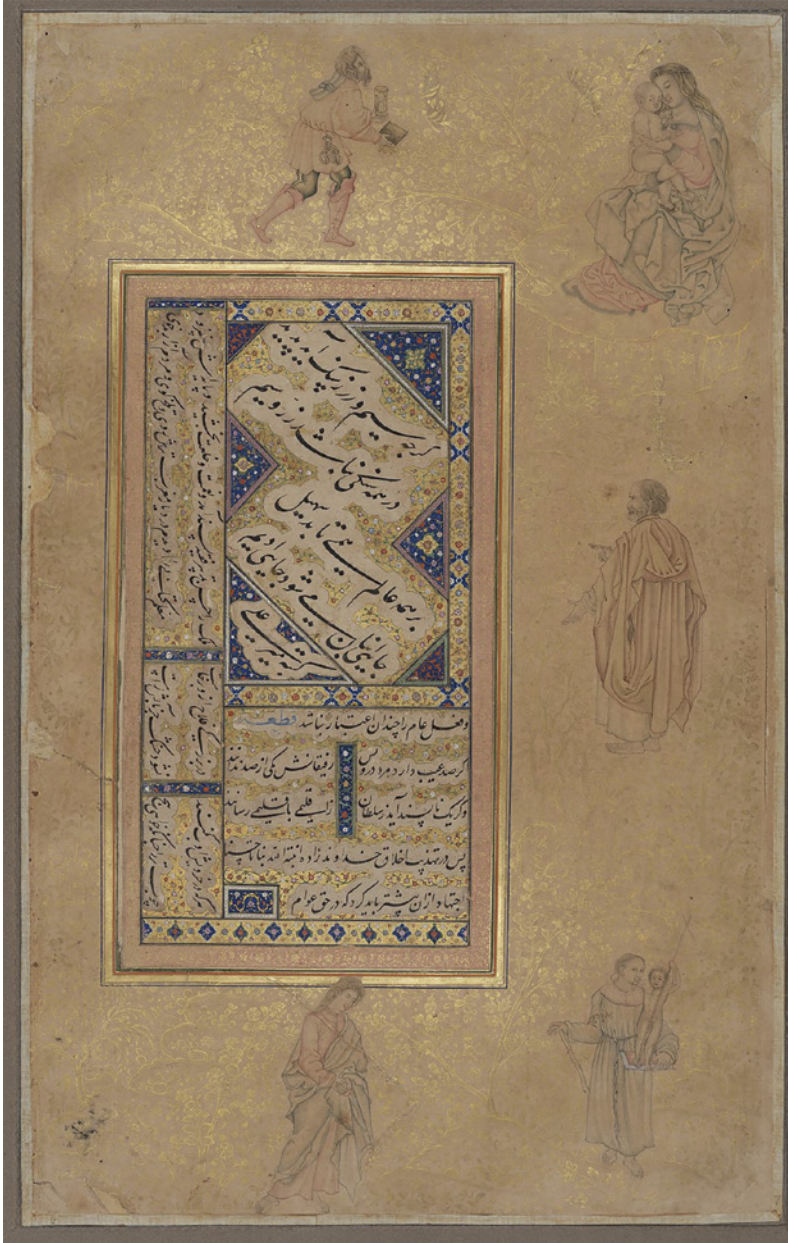


FIGURE 35 Illustrated Borders with Figural Motifs After Albrecht Dürer and Heinrich Aldegrever, folio 5r, *Jahangir's album*, 1608–18, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 40.0 × 26.2 cm. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, *Libr. Pict. A117*, fol. 5r. WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN-PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ, ORIENTABTEILUNG (LIBR. PICT. A117, FOL. 5R)

we have no Mughal sources that tell us how Akbar and Jahangir's artists thought about them. Since Mughal sources do not mention European artists by name, perhaps Mughal artists did not intend to link themselves to a *firangī* artistic genealogy. However, surpassing the European masters by recoding certain elements of their compositions and selectively using their style—and thereby asserting control over their technique and subject matter—was certainly one of their practices. The three examples analyzed above, incorporating aspects of works by Wierix, Sadeler, and Dürer (Figs. 19, 26, 28) demonstrate that the artists were not interested in representing Christianity or paying homage to European art. They were reflecting the sophisticated cosmopolitan identities and culture of the Mughal elites.

From numerous representations in illustrated manuscripts, single-page compositions, and album leaves, it is quite clear that both Akbar and Jahangir intended to represent themselves as Muslim rulers with aspirations that were politically, spiritually, intellectually and geopolitically, universal.<sup>88</sup> Hence, such pictures cannot be perceived as affirmation for their appreciation of Catholicism or an attempt to recreate Renaissance art.<sup>89</sup> The repurposed Christian images in the three case studies presented here show how the artists instilled Christian iconography and European technique with Persianate and Islamic ideas, layering meaning through subtle changes and the addition of inscriptions, poetry and calligraphy. They made conscious choices about what to borrow from the Renaissance pictures, how to modify what they borrowed and for what purposes. The artists demonstrated their ability to adhere to a “classical” tradition, introduce fresh elements into their work, and, from a Mughal perspective, exceed the European masters. At the same time, they humbly claimed their place in a prestigious imagined chain of artistic knowledge.

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88 An overview of artworks produced during their reigns shows an idiosyncratic concentration of images that relate to assertion of cultural self-definition, prestige, and hierarchy. For example, “Jahangir in an Idgah,” attributed to Daulat, a folio from a *Jahangirnama*, ca. 1610.

89 Commenting on a much broader timespan, Gregory Minisalle, Monica Juneja and Kavita Singh correctly argue that in the most part, Mughal artists were not interested in reproducing or replicating European art. Gregory Minisalle, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India 1550–1750* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2007); Monica Juneja, “Circulation and beyond—the trajectories of vision in early modern Eurasia,” *Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (London: Ashgate, 2015), 59–78; Singh, *Real Birds in Imagined Gardens*.

## European Articles in Mughal Painting

This chapter turns to the appearance of European articles in Mughal painting after the 1580s and the reuse of Renaissance prints in Mughal album pages. In some cases, actual Renaissance prints were cut up and reconfigured into composite album pages; in others, European articles, sometimes described as “rarities” or “curiosities,” were depicted in single-page paintings and illustrated manuscripts (see Figs. 36 and 40, for example). Considering both categories as types of “objects”, for this purpose I treat the European prints as articles, since they are material composed of structured substance, portable, and people interact with them physically.<sup>1</sup> In the following discussion I distinguish between two modes of association that serve as the foci of this chapter: The recontextualization of European prints among Persianate paintings and calligraphy, and the visualization of European articles in Mughal painting and illustrated manuscripts.

These two modes of interaction between Mughal artists and European articles are certainly distinct from one another. Yet in the spirit of Mughal Occidentalism both recode and “Mughalize” Renaissance works while maintaining conscious traces of the original referents of the European articles. Creating a multifarious visual understanding of these objects, the artists layered them with additional meanings that were broad, as well as specific, to the Mughal context. This praxis was central to the Mughal construction of an augmented cosmopolitan imperial identity. It is evidence of conscious and nuanced representations of cultural pluralism, and points to a certain level of common intellectual orientation and mutual intelligibility between the Europeans and the Mughal elite.

To explain the intricate transcultural lives of European objects in South Asian visual representations, recent scholarship has drawn on two models, one linguistic and one sociological. In his book *Objects of Translation*, Barry Finbarr Flood uses a linguistic model, translation theory, to open up new ways of thinking about artistic connections in the pre-Mughal Indo-Muslim world. He examines the circulation, reception, and transformation of material

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1 Here, I follow the definition provided by Susan Leigh Star, “This is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept,” *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 35, no. 5 (2010): 603–4.

goods on the subcontinent from the eighth to the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The word “translation” implies a desire by the new owners/users/artists/authors to preserve the original meaning of the object or text.<sup>3</sup> The artistic processes of interest for the current discussion suggest a somewhat different intention, perhaps closer to the term “transculturation.” Although primary sources lack written descriptions of the co-opting and repurposing processes, Mughal production, supported by historical accounts written by Emperor Jahangir, indicates that artists meticulously studied newly arrived works of art, understood their materiality and their meaning in a European context, and subsequently created works of their own that included intentionally recoded features of the European elements—either excerpted sections of a painting, drawing, or print, or a selective adaptation of a painting technique that had been used to produce them. Within the fresh Mughal creation, the European elements preserve some core relation with the previous original work of art, but their meaning is fundamentally altered by the new context. Their uniqueness is perpetuated even as they are “Mughalized.”

Since the intention of the Mughal artists was not primarily to preserve core meaning, the sociological concept of “boundary objects” introduced by Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer, may be a more useful model.<sup>4</sup> Thinking through the model of “boundary objects” enables us to work along the interpretive flexibility of such articles. Rather than marking boundaries and creating a linear view of Mughals versus Europeans, boundary objects combine the function of demarcation with commonality:

Boundary objects are objects which are both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites.... They may be abstract or concrete. They have different meanings in different social

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2 Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval “Hindu-Muslim” Encounter* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). Flood follows John Dixon Hunt, who argues that objects can be considered as translated and reinterpreted cultural signs that reveal diverse identities among communities. John Dixon Hunt, “The Sign of the Object,” in *History from Things: Essays on Material Culture*, ed. Steven Lubar and David Kingery (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 293–98.

3 To make the point of circulation, Flood refers to a series of translations of texts that are built upon one other. *Objects of Translation*, 6–9.

4 Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, “Institutional Ecology, ‘Translations’ and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39,” *Social Studies of Science* 19, no. 3 (1989): 387–420.

worlds but their structure is common enough to more than one world to make them recognizable, a means of translation.<sup>5</sup>

They collapse the difference between a shared object and a locally tailored object. Utilizing the model of “boundary objects” allows our analysis to illuminate aspects of the Mughal works that would otherwise remain hidden. It brings forth notions of interpretive flexibility and shared structure that encourage us to see the layers of meanings that these paintings and album pages convey. Considering these facets may help us understand how represented European articles and reused Renaissance prints in Mughal art bridge some aspects of sociocultural differences between intersecting communities while allowing for the negotiation of meanings and the reconciliation of pluralistic identities of the Mughal royal patrons.<sup>6</sup> These “boundary objects” embody the different perspectives of various groups, such as the Mughal elite, English royalty, or the Portuguese in Goa, while maintaining elements of common character across borders.

The following examples are further evidence of the commercial, political, and cultural exchanges that flourished between the Mughal courts of north India and a variety of Europeans. Some of the artifacts represented were made in and transported from Europe; many more came from Goa, which, under Portuguese rule, was an active center of production.<sup>7</sup>

### European Prints in Mughal Albums

Grouping European prints with Persianate and Mughal pictures and calligraphic works became common practice at the royal Mughal workshops.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Ibid., 393. Flood quotes anthropologist James Clifford, who notes the problematical implications of using the word “boundary” in a cultural context. See Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 3, 272n17.

6 Susan Leigh Star considers the pages of a book as boundary objects. Star, “This is Not a Boundary Object,” 604.

7 See Pedro Moura Carvalho, “Rarities from Goa’ at the Courts of Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir (1530–1627),” in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Nuno Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2004), 98–115.

8 Unfortunately, these albums have not survived intact. Individual pages are in museums and collections around the world. For a summary on Mughal albums see Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa’: Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin*, exh. cat. (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008); Milo Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1981), 156–91; Idem, *Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660*, exh. cat. (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and

One example, a folio from the so-called Gulshan Album, prepared for Prince Salim (the future Emperor Jahangir) in the late sixteenth century, shows the sheer range of cultural sources (Fig. 36). It comprises a calligraphic panel with a line from the *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) of the thirteenth-century Persian poet Sa'di; a European engraving of the Roman moon goddess Luna by the sixteenth-century German artist Virgil Solis; a drawing of a kneeling scribe by the sixteenth-century Safavid artist Riza Abbasi; another drawing of three figures by an unknown, probably Safavid, artist; and a painting of a recumbent lion, also by an unknown artist, though the composition recalls related studies by Bihzad.<sup>9</sup>

In this example we thus have one European specimen, most likely two Safavid drawings, and one example from the wider Persianate realm. At the very least, this wide mix of images shows the breadth of collecting at the Mughal court. Other folios from this album feature European prints with different sources and subject matter framing Mughal paintings (Figs. 37, 38).<sup>10</sup> Perceived

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Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 43–60; 71–77; Stuart Cary Welch, *The Emperor's Album: Images of Mughal India*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987).

- 9 Text and images for this folio and the next are identified, and text is translated, in Wright, *Muraqqa'*, 283–84. The lion drawings ascribed to Bihzad are discussed by David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 284–85, 287; Idem, “Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting,” *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 125, 131, 136. Making a visual reference to a Bihzadian tradition was a practice shared by Mughal and Safavid artists. In the early seventeenth century, the Safavid artist Riza Abbasi copied several works by Bihzad “line for line”. See the discussion by Shelia Canby, *The Rebellious Reformer: The Drawings and Paintings of Riza-yi Abbasi of Isfahan* (London: Azimuth Editions, 1996), 129–136.
- 10 These were probably facing pages. Scholars tend to agree on the general arrangement of folios in the album. Kambiz Eslami writes that the album comprised of alternating double-page compositions of either two folios of calligraphy facing each other or two folios with illustrations. “Golšān Album,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/golsan-album> (accessed Feb. 22, 2012). Beach notes that the pairing of images was done intentionally to “make a specific visual point.” Milo Beach, “Jahangir's Album: some clarifications,” in *Arts of Mughal India: studies in honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew Topsfield (London: Victoria & Albert Museum; Ahmedabad, India: Mapin Publishing, 2004), 114–15. A large number of folios from the Gulshan Album are housed in Tehran and some are in Berlin. Other pages have been dispersed. See Ibid; Susan Stronge, “The Gulshan Album, c. 1600–1618,” in *Muraqqa'*, 76–81, 282–87. Scholars still disagree on the scale of the album and its constituents. Some hold that two contemporary Mughal albums, the Gulshan and the Gulistan, were produced simultaneously at the court atelier. Milo Beach, however, has suggested that they were both part of the same album. See Milo Beach, “The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* 63, no. 332 (1965): 63–91; Idem, “Jahangir's Album: Some Clarifications,” 111–18; and Eslami, “Golšān Album.”



FIGURE 36 A Composite Arrangement of a European Print and Persian Drawings, *folio from the Gulshan album, with images from 15th century-ca. 1610. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 23,1 × 15,0 cm. Chester Beatty library, Dublin, acc. #: CBL In 47.12.*

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by art historians as “bizarre” or “eclectic,” album pages like these juxtapose Christian and secular themes, including mythological scenes and intricate vegetal or geometric designs.<sup>11</sup> Conceiving and mounting this ensemble, with its significant engagement with European material, represents innovation on the northern part of the subcontinent. But to the Mughal eye such a practice would not have been regarded as completely unusual. In fact, it may have been seen as in keeping with the tradition of the Mughals’ Central Asian Timurid ancestors, who compiled composite album pages of painting and calligraphy of various styles.<sup>12</sup>

Albums combining material from different times and locales had been commissioned, for instance, for the Timurid prince Baysunghur Mirza (1397–1433) as well as for the Safavid rulers Bahram Mirza (1517–1549) and Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576).<sup>13</sup> David Roxburgh, who has studied Persian albums extensively, described them as a space of conversation “where images engaged with images” and were assembled into a new comprehensive whole.<sup>14</sup> Like these earlier albums, the *Gulshan Album*, where European specimens are grouped around Mughal pictures, offers conversations among heterogeneous elements. On the periphery of what were likely two facing pages, printed representations of the Seven Cardinal Virtues intersect with two Tritons and St. Mark the Evangelist (Figs. 37, 38). Also featured are a panel of putti with helmets, probably by Allaert Claesz (after Barthel Beham), and an engraving of St. Lucas made by Hans Sebald Beham.<sup>15</sup> Although the “Eastern” and “Western” works of art—to

11 Beach, “The *Gulshan Album* and Its European Sources,” 66; Asok Kumar Das, “Prince Salim and Christian Art,” in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 165. From the latter: “The arrangement is often bizarre as it does not follow any meaningful order but is purely aesthetic in intention.”

12 I am not arguing that the Mughals simply replicated the Timurid traditions because it was in their blood, but that they engaged with their Central Asian heritage in a more complex way. On Timurid albums, see the work of David J. Roxburgh, especially *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*; Gulru Necipoglu, “Persianate Images between Europe and China: The “Frankish Manner” in the *Diez* and *Topkapı* Albums, c. 1350–1450,” in *The Diez Albums: Contexts and Contents*, ed. Julia Gonnella, Friederike Weis and Christoph Rauch (Brill: Leiden, 2017), 531–591.

13 The early Ottoman albums were in essence additions to already existing Timurid and Turkmen albums. See Emine Fetvacı, “Enriched Narratives and Empowered Images in Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Manuscripts,” *Ars Orientalis* 40 (2011): 244, 163n2.

14 *Ibid.*, 309.

15 Nancy Cabot identified the European artists and producers of these prints for Milo Beach. See Beach, “The *Gulshan Album* and Its European Sources,” 65, fig. 2; 67, 71, 73. The panels with putti and tritons may have been wallpaper border design that Sebald Beham made ca. 1520–25. It is interesting to note that he was apprenticing at Dürer’s atelier in



FIGURE 37 A Composite Arrangement of a Mughal Painting and European Prints, folio from the *Gulshan album*, early 17th century. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 41.7 × 25.5 cm. Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, MS. 1663.



FIGURE 38 A Composite Arrangement of a Mughal Painting and European Prints, folio from the *Gulshan album*, early 17th century. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 41.7 × 25.5 cm. Golestan Palace Library, Tehran, MS. 1663, no.94.

categorize them crudely—do not appear to our contemporary eye to share a cultural context, this grouping seems to have worked well for the elite Mughal patrons and painters of the time. These purposeful selections point to the intentional process of adopting and adapting European painterly tools that resonated with the Mughals' own interests. At the same time, patrons and artists rejected practices such as engraving or other kinds of printmaking that were inconsistent with contemporary Mughal goals, even though these techniques and materials were available to them.<sup>16</sup>

A number of scholars have claimed that the Mughals employed the printed European images for their visual appeal.<sup>17</sup> Considering the aesthetic relationship that connected European prints and Mughal line-drawings in album pages, Yael Rice argues for a line-based common appearance between the two

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Nuremberg. Marilyn Oliver Hapgood, *Wallpaper and the Artist: from Dürer to Warhol* (New York, London: Abbeville, 1992), 16–18.

- 16 On the Mughal relationship to print and engravings see, for example, Akbar's reaction to Christophe Plantin's printed Bible, discussed in chapter 1 in the current volume. The Portuguese in Goa started producing their own woodblock engravings in 1539, and by 1556 the Jesuits were operating a printing press there. See Pedro de Moura Carvalho, "Rarities from Goa' at the Courts of Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir (1530–1627)," *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 106, 207n36–37; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks, 1550–1700," *Ars Orientalis* 39 (2010): 42; Charles R. Boxer, "A Tentative Check-List of Indo-Portuguese Imprints," *Arquivos do Centro Cultural Português (Paris)* 9 (1975): 567–99. Jahangir inquired about the possibility of establishing a printing press for books in Persian, but the project never came to fruition. See Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 276. The Jesuit father Jerome Xavier mentions Jahangir's print collection in a letter from 1608. Edward Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul* (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932), 239. According to Alam and Subrahmanyam, Xavier's term *registros* means manuscripts and not prints; this passage has been mistranslated. Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World*, 276 and n. 56.
- 17 Milo Beach holds that the European prints were emptied of iconographic meaning and selected for purely aesthetic and decorative reasons. Beach, "The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources," 73. Yael Rice states that "the incorporation of European engravings into the royal albums of Jahangir had more to do with an interest in the effect and finish—in sum, the look—of prints, in relation to paintings and calligraphies, than in their subject matter." Yael Rice, "The Brush and the Burin," in *Crossing Cultures: Conflict, Migration and Convergence*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Melbourne: Miegunyah Press, 2009), 309. Verma considers their exoticism for the Mughal eye rather than their religious values. Som Prakash Verma, *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Biblical Themes in Mughal Painting* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2011), 45.

techniques that enabled the smooth consolidation of the different materials on a single page.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps for Mughal painters and audience, the notion of a line-guided aesthetic vis-à-vis prints or European drawings resonated with earlier practices in Persianate painting. During the Ilkhanid period (1256–1353) artists used line-drawing technique (*siyah qalam* or black ink) to visually link their work to Chinese woodblock prints. Similarly, the grisaille technique of paintings produced in the Latin West elicited Persianate artists to use line-drawing to feature Europeanized-style images in fourteenth-fifteenth centuries album pages.<sup>19</sup> As progenies of Mongol and Timurid cultural traditions and collectors of art, it is reasonable to assume that the Mughals were aware of these earlier practices. Hence, the fluid relationship between Mughal painting, line-drawing and European engraving is based on dynamics related to visual, iconographic and compositional concerns.

The organization of works in the album pages of Figures 37 and 38 may have been guided by iconographic concepts and style.<sup>20</sup> In each folio the central and larger picture is a Mughal painting of female figures wearing European garments in a garden pavilion, engaged with writing and books, or burnishing paper, while surrounded by luxury objects alluding to the pleasures of wine. In Figure 37, a European-looking man cautiously approaches two women. The seated woman in each image has her head tilted forward, her left leg ahead of the right, and exposes a delicate, bare foot. Thighs and arms are emphasized by prominent gestures and dramatic drapery, leading the viewer's eye across the image to connect with the smaller European printed images. The creators of this double-page composition appear to have inscribed a specific hierarchy into the page groupings, with the Mughal or Persianate work forming the centerpiece and European works in its orbit.<sup>21</sup>

18 Rice, "The Brush and the Burin," 309.

19 Necipoglu, "Persianate Images between Europe and China," 534–35.

20 David Roxburgh mentions iconographic concepts as well as historical perceptions that guided the arrangement of material in the Persianate albums. He sees an emphasis on the creation of tradition and an authoritative chain of transmission (*silsila*) of masters in the Timurid and Safavid codices. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*, 309. It would be interesting to compare these governing concepts with those of the Mughals. Milo Beach is leading a collaborative project on the Gulshan Album, and we await his results.

21 Sometimes other works occupy the middle of the composition. For examples of large European prints placed at the center of Mughal album pages, see Richard Ettinghausen, "New Pictorial Evidence of Catholic Missionary Activity in Mughal India (Early XVIIth Century)," in *Perennitas: Beiträge zur christlichen Archäologie und Kunst, zur Geschichte der Literatur, der Liturgie und des Mönchtums sowie zur Philosophie des Rechts und zur*

Milo Beach comments that mounting European works of art together with Mughal paintings in the albums attests “to the ingenuity of Jahangir in combining such extreme contrasts of style in a single aesthetic whole.”<sup>22</sup> Closer examination of Figures 37 and 38 suggests that these are sophisticated compositions that weave all elements together. Enhancing uniformity of design, the Mughal artists extended patterns of the illumination to balance ornamental units of floral and vegetal motifs in the upper and lower European panels. At the top of these pages putti are inscribed in rich vegetal scrolls, whereas the lower bands display masculine figures engaged in battle. While the Mughal vegetal motifs ensure the smooth integration of the compositions, the different sections act as competing powers, creating tension.<sup>23</sup> The surrounding prints complement the contemplative, perhaps intellectual, mode of the central figures. The lower borders of Tritons and men in battle may represent a corporeal realm that contrasts with the winged creatures of the upper panels, with their lush environment and overflowing horns of plenty. The Mughal vegetal and geometric ornament that adds structure to the page can also be seen as mediating among components, and transcend cultural boundaries.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, delicate features in the cartouches of the ornamental bands appear to have been designed to mitigate the possible “otherness” of the prints, as they visually correspond to elements in the European vignettes.<sup>25</sup>

Alongside the visual appeal of European prints, period texts record Mughal interest in the meaning of such images. Father Monserrate narrates that upon Akbar’s demand, the Jesuit priest opened the Polyglot Bible, “unrolled the book and seizing the opportunity, explained the pictures.” Discussing probably two prints, one of the Ark of the Covenant with cherubim on it, and another showing related objects of the tabernacle, the priest took the opportunity to

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*politischen Philosophie; P. Thomas Michels OSB, zum 70. Geburtstag. Hrsg. von Hugo Rahner und Emmanuel von Severus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963), figs. 4, 5.

22 Beach, “The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources,” 66.

23 Roxburgh suggests that for the Timurid and Safavid albums, pages were further arranged according to style, technique, and medium. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*, 309.

24 Oleg Grabar considered the role of ornament and geometry in linking nature, cultural boundaries, and human perception. Oleg Grabar, *The Mediation of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

25 Such new spaces can be considered in more abstract terms, as in Homi Bhabha’s “third space.” See Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), esp. 53–56. I was intrigued to think about the possibilities of this theoretical model after reading Flood, *Objects of Translation*, 8, 273n57.

present the Catholic position on graven images and idolatry.<sup>26</sup> Other historical evidence suggests that Emperor Jahangir, for whom the album was composed, was keen on understanding the meanings behind works of art. When Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador, brought several pictures to the court, the emperor examined them closely, asked questions regarding the identification of certain female figures, and reprimanded Roe and his chaplain, Edward Terry, for not knowing the interpretation of "Venus and Satyr."<sup>27</sup> The emperor, who held intellectual gatherings at his court on a wide range of topics, probably saw in Roe's and Terry's ignorance a sign of cultural inferiority, weakness, and perhaps even vulgarity. This incident made such a strong impression on Roe that he decided to report it back to England in order to avoid diplomatic friction in the future.<sup>28</sup>

Looking specifically at Mughal adaptation of the iconography of the Christian virtues, these lush female figures in the Gulshan Album may be linked to Wisdom and the image of Christine de Pizan writing *The City of Ladies* (completed in 1405). In various illustrated copies of her work, Pizan appears writing in a pavilion or in an open architectural space. She is surrounded by books and the allegorical figures of Reason, Justice and Rectitude. Similarly, in the Mughal painting the women sit in a pavilion, with open books and writing tools by their side. They are framed by European prints of *Cognio* (cognition), *Prudentia* (prudence), *Caritas* (love, charity) and others. Hence the composition conveys notions of learning, knowledge and intellectual virtues. These ideas relate to just rule and the ability to govern through reason, which were elements that formed the authority of the Mughal emperors. Ali Anooshahar and Corrine Lefèvre have recently demonstrated how Akbar and Jahangir supported the rational sciences in the education of the Mughal elite, as well as the application of rational reforms in the administration of the empire.

26 Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S. J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annot. S. N. Banerjee (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922; New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 138.

27 "The King demanded why hee brought vp to him an inuention wherein hee was ignorant." Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619: As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence*, ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), 2:387. Roe failed to achieve his goal that time. The Jesuit father Jerome Xavier reported that in about 1608 Jahangir asked him to come to his palace in Agra, where the emperor showed him his collection of European prints and engravings, and asked for their meaning. Maclagan, *The Jesuits and the Great Mogul*, 248.

28 Roe writes: "This I repeate for instruction, to warne the company and him that shall succeed me to be very wary what they send may be subject to ill Interpretation." Roe, *Embassy*, 2:387.

Furthermore, we can identify the standing European-looking man in Figure 37 as a Mughal conflation of two figures. One is based on an image of Joseph's brother, repurposed from a 1544 German engraving by Georg Pencz of "Joseph recounting his dream to his father".<sup>29</sup> The other is related to the tarot figure of Misero, the Beggar who embodies poverty (Fig. 39).<sup>30</sup> Leaning on a sword or a staff, wearing European or Indian clothes, this figure appears in several Mughal compositions.<sup>31</sup>

In the Mughal album page he bends at the hip and knee, hands held close to his body as he leans on his staff. This is a gesture of humble listening or approaching someone with reverence. Similar images of dervishes and ascetics in a comparable position can be seen in Mughal art of the period.<sup>32</sup> Thus the European figure of Joseph's brother/Misero seems to have been understood in the context of the path of spiritual quest as practiced in Mughal India. The way the male in Figure 37 inclines toward the woman writing in the pavilion, in a gesture that illustrates humility and admiration, suggests that she may also represent a Mughal understanding of Caritas, one of the Christian Virtues featured in European prints on the opposite page (Fig. 38, third from top in the vertical column). In Christianity, the virtue of Caritas (charity, love) is linked to truth, law, and social order. Therefore, the central female figures in the Mughal album folios may represent notions of learning, knowledge, and just rule, as

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- 29 Christin de Pizan writing her book is illustrated in Paris, BN, MS Fr. 835, fol. 1; and with the virtues in Paris, BN, MS. Fr. 1177, fol. 3v. On Akbar and Jahangir's support of the rational sciences see Ali Anooshahr, "Shirazi Scholars and the Political Culture of the Sixteenth-century Indo-Persian World," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 51, no. 3 (2014): 343–50; Corinne Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections: The Majalis-i Jahangiri (1608–11) and the Socio-intellectual History of the Mughal 'ulama," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 54, no. 3 (2017): 317–338. For the interpretation of Joseph's brother see Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," *Oriental Art* 22, no.2 (1976), 183–86; Das, "Prince Salim and Christian Art," 166. Georg Pencz was a follower of Albrecht Dürer.
- 30 Susanne Polack sees the standing European-looking man in Figure 39 as a Mughal interpretation of the tarot figure of Misero. Susanne Pollack, conversation, April 21, 2012. Pollack wrote her dissertation on the so-called "Tarot cards of Mantegna" ("Bilder für eine neue Welt. Ein gedrucktes Vorbilder-Buch aus Venedig, vor 1467 (die sog. Tarock-Karten des Mantegna)").
- 31 Beach, "A European Source for Early Mughal Painting," 183–86; Das, "Prince Salim and Christian Art," 166.
- 32 For example, "Akbar and a dervish," ca. 1580–90, inscribed to Abd al-Samad, Mughal India. Aga Khan Museum Collection, AKM141.



FIGURE 39  
 Misero (The Beggar), from the *Tarrochi Cards of Mantegna*. After the engraving by Hans Ladenspelder, German, 1530–1561. Ink on paper. 17 × 10 cm.

they are engaged in various stages of writing activities.<sup>33</sup> The inclusion of a conflated Joseph's brother/Misero type figure in the Mughal painting and a print of *Caritas* on the facing page makes it clear that the Mughal artists were aware of the European concepts being represented, but were transforming and recoding them to fit with their own ideas of symbolically representing the enlightened just rule of reason.

European works of art were not only physically recontextualized as they were pasted into Mughal albums, but some of them were colored by Mughal

33 For the interpretation of Misero and Caritas, see Tom Nichols, *The Art of Poverty: Irony and Ideal in Sixteenth-Century Beggar Imagery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007). On the importance and relationship between spiritual, judicial and rationalist elements in Jahangir's imperial persona and state see Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections," 317–38.

artists. Beach claims that such treatment had an instructional purpose, that Mughal artists learned European techniques and iconography through the process of painting over the prints.<sup>34</sup> But the treatment of European works can be viewed in reference to alterations made at the Mughal workshops to materials that arrived from Central Asia, Iran, or other parts of India and were also painted over. There are numerous examples of Mughal interventions, changes and overpainting that artists made to illustrated manuscripts that came from Central Asian, Persian or Indian workshops.<sup>35</sup> Hence, cutting European prints and reusing them to fit into composite album pages can be seen as part of the *kitabkhana* traditional practice.

The examples considered here of reused European prints in Mughal album pages show how these articles maintained some of their original meaning and function as they were fragmented and transformed for a new context and place. These prints were worked on by groups of local artists who created a common identity for the European objects. Such interventions should be viewed as one way in which the Mughals, in a conscious expression of their cosmopolitan culture, inserted themselves into multifaceted compositions and gained ownership of the European artistic idioms, making them more specific. In the next section we will examine representations of two European articles that were depicted in Mughal painting, and uncover their flexibility and shared structure, based on the model of “boundary objects.”

### Visualizing European Articles in Mughal Painting

Representations of European artifacts, considered here as boundary objects, had varying degrees of prominence in Mughal painting and fulfilled different

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34 Beach writes that Abu'l Hasan painted over two European engravings made by Jan Sadeler, now in the St. Petersburg Album (Institute for Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, Russia). Beach, “Visions of the West in Mughal Art,” in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 182.

35 On the practice of painting over illustrations and paintings during the time of Akbar and Jahangir see, for example, Sheila R. Canby, (ed.), *Humayun's Garden Party: Princes of the House of Timur and Early Mughal Painting* (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1994); Mika Natif, “The SOAS *Anvar-i Suhayli*: The Journey of a “Reincarnated” Manuscript,” *Muqarnas* 25 (2008): 331–58; Laura Parodi et al., “Tracing the History of a Mughal Album Page in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art,” *Asianart.com* (2010): <http://www.asianart.com/articles/mughal/>; John Seyller, “Overpainting in the Cleveland Tutinama,” *Artibus Asiae* 52 (1992): 283–318.

functions in the iconography. They could manifest themselves as background elements, as attributes of the main figure in the picture, or as the focal point of the painting. An example of a European object serving as an attribute of the central figure is a terrestrial globe that appears in several paintings of Emperor Jahangir (Figs. 3, 40, 43). In such paintings, the Mughal ruler is depicted holding a globe (or similar orb), standing on it, or resting his feet on it—reflecting his status as universal sovereign, demonstrating the “world domination” that is the meaning of his adopted name.<sup>36</sup> As a boundary object, the globe’s interpretive flexibility is multifaceted, as shown in “The Darbar of Jahangir,” a painting by Abu’l Hasan (Fig. 40). In this painting, the globe manifests links to European, Islamic and Mongol traditions of diplomatic gifts, knowledge and power. It serves not only as a reference to Europe, from which it came, but also alludes more subtly to celestial and terrestrial globes that were made by Muslim specialist artisans and used as diplomatic gifts among the Mongols, the other branch of illustrious ancestors of Jahangir.

Abu’l Hasan’s painting, the right side of a double-page composition, shows Emperor Jahangir in an imaginary audience (*darbar*), surrounded by court officials, princes, world leaders, ambassadors, shaykhs, and poets both contemporary and historical (Figs. 40, 41).<sup>37</sup> The emperor, sumptuously garbed and bejeweled, sits on a canopied throne and gently rests his bare majestic feet on a magnificent globe, which is perched on a stand in the form of a golden vine. The globe shows approximate cartographic details: continents painted in brown and oceans in dark gray, most likely oxidized silver. Some inscriptions on the globe are visible. Below the king’s little toe, a black mark in the shape of a keyhole is clearly seen. The keyhole is strategically placed on the Indian

36 In his memoirs, Jahangir explains the choice and meaning of his name: “When I became emperor it occurred to me that I should change my name [Salim] lest it be confused with the caesars of Rūm (*qayāshirat-i rūm*). An inspiration from the beyond suggested to me that the labour of the emperor is world domination (*jahāngīrī*), so I named myself Jahāngīr:” Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahangīrnama: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22.

37 Attendees are identified in Ivan Stchoukine, “Portraits moghols. 111: Un darbār de Jahāngīr dans le Guz̄l Khanah,” *Revue des arts Asiatiques* 7 (1931): 233–39; Richard Ettinghausen, “The Emperor’s Choice,” *De Artibus Qpuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York: New York University Press, 1961), 112, 112n45; Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir’s Time* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1978), 218; Jeremiah Losty, “Abu’l Hasan,” in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991), 74.



FIGURE 40 Darbar of Jahangir, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1615, album folio, right side of a double-page composition (fig. 41), Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 16.9 × 12.3 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., F1946.28. FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.: PURCHASE—CHARLES LANG FREER ENDOWMENT, F1946.28



FIGURE 40A  
*Detail: Darbar of Jahangir, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1615, album folio, right side of a double-page composition (fig. 41), Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 16.9 × 12.3 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., F1946.28. FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.: PURCHASE—CHARLES LANG FREER ENDOWMENT, F1946.28*

subcontinent, while the key to the globe hangs discreetly from the emperor's sash (Fig. 40a).<sup>38</sup>

The map and the keyhole perhaps indicate that this globe refers to an actual object that included a mechanical box—an automaton or a clock.<sup>39</sup> Terrestrial globes of this type were manufactured in Europe, probably Germany,

38 Ellison Findly, "The Visionary Paintings of Jahangir's Later Years," in *Contacts Between Cultures. Selected Papers from the 33rd International Congress of Asian and North African Studies* (University of Toronto. Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992) 2:206.

39 See, for example, the mechanical terrestrial and celestial globe signed by Christian Heiden (Heyden), Nuremberg, 1570 (The Treasury of the Teutonic Order, Vienna, K-035); the mechanical clock globe made in Kassel, Germany, by Eberhard Baldewein in 1574 (Collection Kugel, Paris); or the one created by Georg Roll and Johannes Reinhold of Augsburg, 1584 (The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 246–1865). Another painting made for Jahangir includes a European automaton. See Nuno Vassallo e Silva, "Precious Stones, Jewels and Cameos: Jacques de Coultre's Journey to Goa and Agra," in *Goa and the Great Mughal*, ed. Jorge Flores and Vassallo e Silva (Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation; London: Scala, 2004), 126–29; Jessica Keating, "Metamorphosis at the Mughal Court," *Art History* 38, no. 4 (Sept. 2015): 732–47. Father Xavier describes automata used at the Christmas celebration in Agra in 1611; one included a globe carried by two elephants. For a translation of Xavier's letter, see Gauvin Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 123, 232n80.



FIGURE 41 Sa'di Presents a Book of his Poems, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1615, *album folio*, left side of a double-page composition (fig. 40), Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 29.5 × 19.0 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W668 f 37a.

in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and were said to have come to Mughal India from there.<sup>40</sup> Beginning in the sixteenth century, these objects were increasingly visible in representations of European rulers, who used commissioned works to symbolize their political power and to mark maritime trade routes under their control (Fig. 42). In this English painting made for Sir Henry Lee, from ca. 1592, Queen Elizabeth I asserts her position as a global ruler. She is on the globe, not holding it, while symbolically placing her feet on Oxfordshire, where she visited Lee. Unlike Jahangir's allegorical portrait (Fig. 40), this picture commemorates a specific event, related to Lee's return to royal grace.<sup>41</sup>

Images of rulers with globes, as well as the maps and globes themselves, became gifts in diplomatic exchanges. The first Jesuit mission to India, in 1580, presented Akbar with a work by the Flemish geographer Abraham Ortelius, *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, which is generally seen as the first modern atlas.<sup>42</sup> Upon meeting Emperor Jahangir in 1617, Sir Thomas Roe brought, as he described it, "Mercators [*sic*] last edition of the maps of the world; which I presented with an excuse that I had nothing worthy, but to a great king I offered the world, in which he had so great and rich a part."<sup>43</sup> Jahangir, world conqueror

40 Augsburg and Nuremberg were important centers of production for luxurious mechanical devices. See Vassallo e Silva, "Precious Stones, Jewels and Cameos," 128, 209n38. On the arrival of European globes in the Mughal empire: Sumathi Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe in Mughal Visual Practice," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49, no. 4 (2007): 751–52; Ebba Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World: European Cartography in Mughal Allegory and History Painting," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 550.

It is worth noting that images of celestial globes are visible in illustrations from earlier Persian and Arabic scientific manuscripts. An interesting example from the period of Akbar is a painting from the Mughal copy of the *Jami al-Tawarikh* (World History) by Rashid al-Din. Dated 1596, the illustration represents astronomers and astrologers at work at the famous observatory in Maragha, Iran. On the right side of the composition stands a large brass-color globe. The painting portrays a retrospective view of the scientists from the time of Hulagu Khan, such as Tusi, Fakhr al-Din Akhlatai, Fakhr al-Din Maraghi, Najm al-Din Qazvini and others. The manuscript is kept at the Golestan Palace Library, Tehran.

41 Robert Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park, PA: Published for the College Art Association of America by the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 177–78; Koch, "The Symbolic Possession of the World," 567.

42 Monserrate, *Commentary*, 28. Gauvin Bailey identifies the atlas, published in Antwerp in 1570. Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 116.

43 Roe, *Embassy*, 2:380. The full title is *Atlas sive Cosmographicae Meditationes de Fabrica Mundi et Fabricati Figura* (Atlas, or Cosmographic Meditations on the Fabric of the World



FIGURE 42  
Queen Elizabeth I (*"The Ditchley portrait"*), by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, ca. 1592. Oil on canvas. 24.1 × 15.2 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 256i.

that he was, apparently enjoyed this idea, but he eventually returned Roe's gift, for reasons that are unclear. Scholars have suggested that the impact of such gifts on Mughal visual language can be seen in the depiction of continents' shapes on painted globes, which provide evidence that contemporary European cartography was available to Mughal artists such as Abu'l Hasan.<sup>44</sup>

A more allegorical rendering of globes appears in a contemporaneous two-page album spread by the artist Bichitr, in which a portrait of Jahangir is shown on the right (Fig. 43), opposite that of a spiritual leader, identified by scholars

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and the Figure of the Fabrick'd); first published in 1595, Duisburg. See Ramaswamy, "Conceit of the Globe," 757n13.

44 It appears that Abu'l Hasan had access to various maps, Mughal and European alike. See Joseph Schwartzberg, "Geographical Mapping," in *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies*, ed. J. B. Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 389–400.



FIGURE 43 Jahangir Holding a Globe, by Bichitr, ca. 1614–18, perhaps Ajmer, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 20.6 × 12.8 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin CBL In 07A.5.

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as Mu'in al-Din Chishti. The king holds in his right hand a globe covered with map markings and a key depicted vertically, partially inserted into a lock. A gold inscription in the upper left corner reads, "The key to the conquest of the two worlds is entrusted to your hand."<sup>45</sup> The word for "victory" or "conquest" (*fath*) also bears the common meaning of "opening," so that image and text together create a pun.<sup>46</sup> On the facing page the shaykh holds an orb with a key topped by a crown.<sup>47</sup> In this case the key is placed on the globe rather than in the keyhole, the same gold inscription appears on the globe rather than in the corner, and the shaykh is shown handing over the crowned globe with key to Jahangir. Since the two globes' terrestrial features are barely visible, they can be seen as orbs representing spiritual and kingly power.<sup>48</sup> Christian iconography has a long tradition of showing Christ as Salvator Mundi holding the orb, and saints, kings, or church officials likewise in possession of this symbol. In Abu'l Hasan's painting, where the depiction seems to be specific, the globe represents a shared space where different worlds intersect, with iconography understood in both universal-international and Mughal contexts. As a supreme religious authority with global prerogatives, it is only befitting for Jahangir to hold such a cosmopolitan object. Mughal artists were faced with the task of reconciling these meanings.

Globes were produced in the Muslim world as early as the eleventh century, but these were mostly celestial spheres, representing astrological/astronomical maps with zodiac signs and constellations.<sup>49</sup> One such sphere made in Iran in 1285–86 of brass inlay with silver (Fig. 44) has images linked to illustrations from the tenth-century *Book of the Fixed Stars*, an expanded and updated version of classical texts in the field by the Persian astronomer Abd al-Rahman

45 Translated in Wright, *Muraqqa'*, 294, cat. 37A. A smaller painting from the Keir Collection, shows a bust of Jahangir in profile, holding an orb in one hand and a key in the other. See Basil Robinson et al., *Islamic Painting and the Art of the Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 258–59, pl. 126.

46 Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," 183.

47 Bichitr, "Mu'in al-Din Chishti Holding a Globe," ca. 1614–18, perhaps Ajmer, Mughal India (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, CBL In 07A.14).

48 On the motif of a key to two worlds as representing religious and political authority, see Heike Franke, "Emperors of Şurat and Ma'ni: Jahangir and Shah Jahan as Temporal and Spiritual rulers," *Muqarnas* 31 (2014): 132–38.

49 Elly Dekker and Paul Kunitzsch, "An Early Islamic Tradition in Globe Making," *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamische Wissenschaften* 18 (2008–9): 155–211. An early eighth-century example of a zodiac map or a celestial globe painted on the interior of a dome can be found at the Umayyad palace of Qusayr Amra.



FIGURE 44

Celestial globe, made by Muhammad ibn Mahmud ibn 'Ali al-Tabari al-asturlabi ('the astrolabist'), possibly from Maragha, north-west Iran, 1285–86. Brass, incised and inlaid with silver. 13.4 cm (diameter). Nasser Khalili Collection, SCI 21.

al-Sufi.<sup>50</sup> Celestial globes were produced in Mughal India under the patronage of Emperor Humayun, Akbar's father, who was, like his Timurid ancestors, learned in astronomy. None of those globes survived, but the son and successor continued in this tradition, and a number of celestial globes have come down to us from the period of his reign.<sup>51</sup>

Globes, both celestial and terrestrial, were important to the court traditions of the Ilkhanid (Mongol) dynasty in western Iran.<sup>52</sup> There too they were used not only as scientific tools, but also as diplomatic gifts. The relationship to Mongol symbols of sovereignty is significant, since the Mughals took pride in their Mongol ancestry. Sources from the Yuan dynasty of China (1271–1368), the Mongol empire established there by Kublai Khan, mention a 1267 visit by a Persian from the famous astrology/astronomy center in Maragha (Iran) to

50 Emilie Savage-Smith, *Science, Tools & Magic*, The Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, vol. 12, Part One (London: Nour Foundation, 1997), 212–13, cat.123. Moya Carey traces the origins of this and two other brass celestial globes from the Ilkhanid period to the area of Maragha. Moya Carey, "Mapping the Mnemonic: A Late Thirteenth-Century Copy of al-Sūfi's Book of the Constellations," in *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, ed. Anna Contadini (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 69–71.

51 By the end of the sixteenth century, brass globes were produced in Lahore and Kashmir for the royal court by Ali Kashmiri ibn Luqman. Sreeramula Sarma, S. M. R. Ansari, and A. G. Kulkarni, "Two Mughal Celestial Globes," *Indian Journal of History of Science* 28, no.1 (1993): 56–57.

52 After the death of Genghis Khan, the Ilkhans ("subordinate khans") occupied the southwestern areas of the Mongol empire (Iran and Khorasan). They were Mongols from the line of Hülagü, Genghis Khan's grandson.

the observatory in Beijing. Among the gifts that the Persian scientist, Jamal al-Din ibn Muhammad al-Najjari, brought to Kublai Khan (r. 1260–1294)—most likely from his patron, the Ilkhan ruler Abaqa Khan—were a celestial sphere of the armillary type (revolving rings) and a terrestrial globe. The latter was “made from wood, upon which seven parts of water are represented in green color, three parts of land in white color, with rivers, lakes, etc.”<sup>53</sup> Although the globe has not survived, it seems to have been similar to the painted globe that Jahangir employs as his footrest. In both examples, the terrestrial globe is used in the context of diplomatic exchange and recognition of power: In the Mughal painting Jahangir is surrounded by rival emperors (the Persian shah and the Ottoman sultan) who appear to be paying him court. In Mongol-Ilkhanid relations, Abaqa would have sent the globe gift in anticipation of Kublai’s official recognition and approval of his position as khan.<sup>54</sup>

The terrestrial globe in Abu’l Hasan’s painting, with its gold stand, was thus far more than a depiction of a precious object; its symbolic significance transcended its economic or physical value. It not only signified recognition according to Mongol and Mughal custom, but also had what has been described as “universal iconographic legibility” that accorded with Jahangir’s political messianism.<sup>55</sup> It was an object of wonder to which the emperor held the key, a manifestation of his (inherited) worldly power, and a unique and precious gift of tribute produced by the Europeans.

The globe’s subordinate position in the painting perhaps expresses some ambivalence toward the object or its style. The emperor’s attention is turned

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53 Willy Hartner, “The Astronomical Instruments of Cha-ma-lu-ting, Their Identification, and Their Relations to the Instruments of the Observatory of Marāgha,” *Isis* 41, no. 2 (July 1950): 185, 190. According to Hartner, it is “uncertain whether Ibn Rusta ..., who flourished c. 903, constructed a terrestrial globe.” *Ibid.*, 191, 191n18. Joseph Needham translated from the *Yuan-shih* (Yuan Annals) the list of objects that the Persian scientist brought to Kublai Khan and to the Yuan observatory. See Joseph Needham, “The Peking Observatory in A.D. 1280 and the Development of the Equatorial Mounting,” *Vistas in Astronomy* 1 (1955): 76, items 5 and 6.

54 Hūlagū died in February 1265, and Abaqa was enthroned in June of that year. However, his position was not officially conferred by the Great Khan (Kublai) until 1270. Peter Jackson, “Abaqa,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/abaqa> (accessed Jan. 10, 2014).

55 Kristen Lippincott, “Globes in Art: Problems of Interpretation and Representation,” in *Globes at Greenwich: A Catalogue of the Globes and Armillary Spheres in the National Maritime Museum*, ed. Elly Dekker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 78. On Jahangir’s universal aspirations and political messianism see Lefèvre, “Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections,” 322–24.

toward his courtiers, the young prince and the shaykhs on the adjacent page, while he ignores the foreign rulers in his vicinity. He is in full control of the European-looking globe, to which he possesses a key. But he uses the globe as a prop, downplaying its importance as a precious object while allowing for its centrality in an imaginary court ceremony. As a boundary object, the globe embodies the different perspectives of intersecting cultures while it maintains selected common identity. In a scene where Jahangir's power and authority are acknowledged by figures from different nations, denominations, and times, the European-style globe conveys his pluralistic cosmopolitan image and—as a footrest—his command over these various worlds.

### The Organ: Plato Making Music

Another type of boundary object, one that serves as focal point, is a representation of a European pipe organ. It appears in a Mughal painting illustrating an episode from the *Khamsa* (Quintet), by the Persian poet Nizami (Fig. 45).<sup>56</sup> The manuscript was made for Akbar in Lahore between 1593 and 1595.<sup>57</sup> In this picture Plato plays a magnificent pipe organ lavishly decorated with images (Fig. 45). Initially, the depiction of such a specific musical instrument can be linked to European organs and other objects of “rarities” that were brought as diplomatic gifts from Goa to Akbar's court. Upon a closer examination, however, the painting reveals more intricate possibilities. The Mughal artists interjected the twelfth-century story of Nizami with a European-looking organ, covered with Persian and Renaissance imagery. Peeling off these layers, in the following section we will discuss how the artists reconciled the organ's diverse meanings, as

56 The five poems by Nizami (1141–1209) were assembled posthumously. The tale of Plato appears in the last part of the Quintet, called *Iskandar-nama* (Stories of Alexander). Domenico Parrello, “*Kamsa* of Nezami,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kamsa-of-nezami> (accessed Nov. 1, 2014).

57 The manuscript is currently divided between the British Library, London (Or. 12208) and the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (MS W.613). This painting is in the British Library, fol. 298r. A tiny crude inscription below the painting identifies the painter as Madhu Khanazad, who belonged to Akbar's cadre of artists. There is some confusion regarding his identity and paintings. Stuart Cary Welch links him to a painting of “King Solomon's Court,” ca. 1600–1605. Collection of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Geneva (Ms. 116). See Stuart Cary Welch, *Indian Painting, 15th–19th Centuries* (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 1965), 5. Som Prakash Verma corrects Henry Blochmann, Percy Brown, and Fredrik Robert Martin's identification of the artist with other painters called Maddu. See Som Prakash Verma, “Painters from the *Ain-i-Akbari*,” *Indo-Iranica* 32 (1979): 25.



FIGURE 45 Plato (Aflatun) Charming the Wild Animals by his Music, by Madhu Khanazad, fol. 298r from the *Khamsa of Nizami*, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 298r.

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they related to past and present Muslim courts, the importance of mechanical and other scientific knowledge, and its embodiment of political and spiritual power in an environment of cultural pluralism.

To understand the organ's multifaceted shared structure, it is important to start with the text that accompanies the illustration. Nizami's story takes place in an imaginary court of Alexander the Great (Iskandar/Sikandar), who has all the great philosophers of ancient times at his service. In one of their assemblies, a competition starts between Aristotle (Aristu) and Plato (Aflatun) to see who is the most learned of them all.<sup>58</sup> Annoyed with philosophers boasting of their wisdom, Plato leaves the court, determined to prove himself the wisest. Going into seclusion, he listens to the spheres and is inspired by their celestial music. He then builds an instrument that can play the most powerful harmonies in the universe and influence all living beings. He uses a gourd, gazelle skin, and strings to construct what Nizami calls an *urghanūn* (ارغنون), translated as "organum" or "harmonium." He tests his invention on wild animals, playing music to summon them into a circle. When he plays in one mode, the beasts fall unconscious, as if asleep. When he plays in another mode, they wake and dance with joy. His music has a similar effect on humans. He can control their behavior, feelings, and intellect with his harmonies. Aristotle makes a similar attempt to influence living beings through music, but manages only to put them to sleep, and needs Plato's help to rouse them. Plato thus proves his superiority and is recognized as the wisest of all.

In the *Khamsa* painting we witness the dramatic moment when Plato hypnotizes the animals with his music (Fig. 45). The artist chose to show the philosopher encircled by a stream, outside of which the various animals assemble: tiger, lion, bull, rhinoceros, deer, gazelle, caracal, rabbit, rooster, heron, and even the fantastical bird known in Persian as a *simurgh*. All the creatures are lying on the ground; some have rolled onto their back or side, eyes closed and mouths open; a few have their tongues sticking out.<sup>59</sup> The body postures

58 Nizami's representation of the court of Alexander the Great is linked to legends and apocryphal stories of a utopian court. See Mario Casari, "The King Explorer: A Cosmographic Approach to the Persian Alexander," in *The Alexander Romance in Persia and the East*, ed. Richard Stoneman, Kyle Erickson, and Ian Netton (Eelde, Netherlands: Barkhuis Publishing; Groningen: Groningen University Library, 2012), 175–204.

59 Nora Titley suggests that the artist, Madhu, could only have modeled the hypnotized state of such ferocious beasts after dead animals. She finds the results a "grim painting." Nora M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting and Its Influence on the Art of Turkey and India: The British Library Collections* (London: British Library, 1983), 205; reiterated by Barbara Brend, *The Emperor Akbar's "Khamsa" of Nizami* (London: British Library, 1995), 58. However, the opportunities to study living wild animals in Mughal India were abundant.

convey a sense of pleasure. The animals are rendered in meticulous detail.<sup>60</sup> The lion, like a big cat, is supine, his jaws slightly parted, his chest exposed, his curled paws waving in the air.

In the illustration Plato has achieved this effect with an instrument that looks nothing like the stringed instrument made of a gourd and animal hide that Nizami describes. Rather, it looks very similar to a European pipe organ. Art historians have argued that pipe organs, brought to the Mughal court by Europeans, were a novelty, and should be understood as an instance of exotica in an illustration to Nizami's story.<sup>61</sup> But the history of organs in the Muslim world suggests a more multivalent meaning.

Rooted in the ancient Greek world and mentioned in Arabic sources are apparently two different musical instruments that share almost identical names. According to Greek and Roman texts, the term *organ* or *organon* may indicate either a "mechanically wind-fed instrument" or "an instrument of many strings."<sup>62</sup> The Baghdadi historian al-Mas'ūdī (896–956) describes the *urghan* as a multistring instrument and differentiates it from the *urghanūn*,

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Wild animals were prestigious possessions of the court: leopards and hawks were used for hunting, lions and tigers were trained, and gazelles, deer, and other species were listed in official documents as royal property. In the *Ain-i Akbari*, a part of Akbar's official history, Abu'l Fazl discusses at length regulations regarding the treatment of imperial elephants, horses, camels, cows, deer, hawks, leopards, and tigers.

60 Other illustrations from the same period show similar groupings in detail. The *Iyar-i Danish*, produced in Lahore in 1596–97, for instance, contains magnificent scenes of animals interacting with one another as well as with humans. The manuscript is now at the Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum in Varanasi, or Benares (ms. 9069). See Mika Natif, "Explaining Early Mughal Painting: The *Anvar-i Suhayli* Manuscripts" (PhD diss., New York University, 2006), esp. chap. 3.

61 Carvalho, "Rarities from Goa," 102–3.

62 The organ or organon is mentioned in the writings of Aristocles, Athenaios, Aristoxenus, and others. Definitions are from Henry George Farmer, *The Organ of the Ancients: From Eastern Sources (Hebrew, Syriac, and Arabic)* (London: W. Reeves, 1931), 3. In the *Republic*, Plato refers to a multistring instrument as an *organon*. Plato, *Republic*, 399 c, cited by Farmer. Also see Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writings: Volume 1, The Musician and His Art*, Cambridge Readings in the Literature of Music, ed. John Stevens and Peter le Huray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 260. Archaeological evidence suggests that a smaller version of the organ was known already in the ancient Middle East. See Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1940), 143 and pl. 8c. Organs were constructed in the Muslim world from at least the ninth century. Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 74–75. It seems that the instrument Nizami describes is related to the *tār* family of string instruments.

which produced sound through compressed air blown into pipes.<sup>63</sup> In classical Persian poetry, authors such as Jalal al-Din Rumi, Abu'l Hasan Ali ibn Julugh Farrukhi Sistani, and Khaqani Shirvani mention the *urghanūn*, as does Nizami.<sup>64</sup> From fourteenth-century Yuan sources we learn about the presence in China of organs that came from the Muslim world.<sup>65</sup> An *urghanūn* also appears in a fourteen-century Persian text called the *Tuti-nama* (Tales of a Parrot), which became popular in pre-modern India. One of the stories notes that a man's character and intelligence can be tested by his reaction to music, especially to the sound of the organ.<sup>66</sup> In the Persian dictionary *Burhān-i qāṭi'* (Conclusive Proof), written in the Deccan in the seventeenth century, the *urghanūn* is identified as a pipe instrument through which air is blown.<sup>67</sup>

Of the two recurring possibilities, pipes or strings, the object Nizami mentions would most likely be the early string instrument, since the event

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- 63 Al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūdj al-dhahab* (*Meadows of Gold*), 7:91–92. See Farmer, "Urghan," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/urg-h-an-SIM\\_7\\_7\\_3\\_7](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/urg-h-an-SIM_7_7_3_7) (accessed Aug. 28, 2014). Farmer also cites a Syriac source from the tenth century in which the two instruments are mentioned. By the tenth century the organ is identified as a musical instrument indigenous to the region by the Ikhwan al-Safa, or "Brethren of Purity," a group of encyclopedists writing in Basra (Iraq). The *Kitab al-Aghani* (Book of Songs), compiled by Abu'l Faraj Isfahani in the tenth century, has a story about a Byzantine (or Byzantine-type) organ (*urghan al-rumi*) at the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun that produced harmonies so magnificent they could cause death ("kill with delight"). Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 57–58. Farmer considers apocryphal a story regarding the gift of an organ from the Abbasid caliph Harun al-Rashid to Charlemagne. Farmer, "Urghan." The philosopher Ibn Sina (d. 1037) also mentions the organ in writing about the science of music. Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 4, 73–74; "Urghan."
- 64 *Dehkhoda Persian Dictionary* "ارغنون". The organ (ارغن) is described as a musical instrument used mostly by Christians.
- 65 The sources are the *Yuán shǐ*, *Cho keng lu*, and *Wang chung-wen kung chi*. See Arthur Christopher Moule and Francis William Galpin, "A Western Organ in Medieval China," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (April 1926): 193–211.
- 66 It appears in the tale of the thirteenth night. The *Tuti-nama* is based on an earlier Sanskrit text. This Persian rendering is credited to Ziya al-Din Nakhshabi. See *Tales of a Parrot: The Cleveland Museum of Art's Tuti-nama*, trans. and ed. Muhammed A. Simsar (Cleveland: The Museum, 1978), 97–101. Also see Bonnie Wade, "When West Met East: The Organ as an Instrument of Culture," in *Festschrift Christoph-Hellmut Mahling zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Axel Beer, Kristina Pfarr, and Wolfgang Ruf, 2 vols. (Tutzing: Hans Schneider, 1997), 2:1484–85.
- 67 Written in 1652 by Muhammad Husayn ibn Khalaf Tabrizi in the Deccan, India. Moḥammad Dabīrsiāqī, "Borhan-e qate" *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/borhan-e-qate> (accessed Sept. 11, 2014). Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 3.



FIGURE 45A *Detail: Plato (Aflatun) Charming the Wild Animals by his Music, by Madhu Khanazad, fol. 298r from the Khamsa of Nizami, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 298r.*

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described supposedly takes place in antiquity, during the time of Alexander the Great, and is associated with Plato. By using the term *urghanūn*, however, the poet allows for an interpretive flexibility regarding the musical instrument. Conflating the two types, Nizami therefore leaves the door open for a later Mughal artist to depict a musical object operated by compressed air.

In the *Khamsa* picture we see an object resembling a positive pipe organ, with the keyboard but missing the bellows (Fig. 45a).<sup>68</sup> By inserting an image

68 Jeremiah Losty and Malini Roy argue that this was a portative organ. Jeremiah P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library* (London: The British Library, 2012), 55.

of a luxurious European instrument into a Perso-Mughal context, the artist is giving the text a playful interpretation, evoking complicity on the part of the viewer. It is through this European-looking article that we learn the language of pleasure, sadness, and delight that music evokes—as if, suspending disbelief, we too might fall under its spell.

A writer on musical instruments known as Muristus in medieval Arabic texts, but thought to have been Greek or Byzantine, describes the powerful impact of organ music upon humans:

And it is that which makes your heart a wonderful sound, causing you to weep violently: And makes you hear a sound compelling sleep, for he who hears it sleeps where he stands: And makes you hear a sound so as to grieve and divert: And makes you hear a sound so as to be merry and to dance: And makes you hear a sound that enchants and carries away the senses.<sup>69</sup>

Muristus's portrayal is almost identical to the scene that Nizami narrates in Persian in the early thirteenth century: "Such melodies caused the children of men to dance and celebrate.... Through these harmonies, wild and tamed animals soon fell asleep and woke up again.... [Plato] produced such sounds so that the heart of a person was shaken." However, Nizami's version further includes a sense of virtue and order that Plato's music disseminates: "[Plato] played on the strings the fulfillment of all voices from animal to men" and "this majestic music brought intelligence/understanding to every person."<sup>70</sup> Similar notions are reiterated in fourteenth-century Yuan Chinese sources, on the subject of an organ brought to the court of Kublai Khan from Arab lands: "With

69 Translated from the Arabic by Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 63–64. Mürīṣṭus, Mūrṭus, or Mīriṣṭus was probably a Greek or a Byzantine who composed two treatises on the construction of organs. His work, known in the Muslim world as early as the ninth century, survived only in Arabic. One treatise was dedicated to the reed-pipe organ (*Risāla ... li-Mūrīṣṭus fī ṣan'at al-urghūn [urghanun] al-zamrī*) and the other to the flue-pipe organ (*Risāla ... li-Mūrīṣṭus fī ṣan'at al-urghūn [urghanun] al-būkī*). On the question of the author's identity and the attribution, see Farmer, "Mūrīṣṭus," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/mu-rist-us-SIM\\_5544](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/mu-rist-us-SIM_5544) (accessed Sept. 18, 2014).

70 Bürgel writes that "the various modes of music affect the human psyche and through it the body in different ways." Christoph Bürgel, "Occult Sciences in the Iskandarnamēh of Nizami," in *The Poetry of Nizami Ganjavi: Knowledge, Love, and Rhetoric*, ed. Kamran Talattof and Jerome W. Clinton (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2000): 133–34.

sounds of the *luan* it puts an end to evil, with notes of the *fenġ* it suppresses carelessness. The influence of its magical notes [makes men] sedate and pure, comfortable and contented; it is like subjects and sons looking up to and serving rulers and fathers.”<sup>71</sup>

Nizami himself observed in the *Khamsa* that Plato’s organ music had universal qualities that crossed borders of time and place and transcended boundaries of nature and culture. The European-looking boundary object in the Lahore manuscript has decoration, including images from Persian literature and Christian iconography, that emphasizes its cross-cultural allegiance. And the Plato who plays the organ is depicted as a Mughal Muslim scholar, with turban, robe, and beard. Such an image represents the prestige of the global ruler for whom it was created—Akbar, whose name in Persian and Arabic means “The Greatest One” and who is described by Abu’l Fazl as “the Perfect Man.” This combination of allusions reinforces Akbar’s status as a cosmopolitan emperor, while the poem, in which Nizami identifies Iskandar as philosopher-king, extends that honor to Akbar by association.<sup>72</sup>

It may be that by the time the Lahore manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami was created, European organs were familiar to a Mughal audience. Portable European organs were used on the subcontinent from the early sixteenth century. They were presented as diplomatic gifts by Portuguese embassies; they were used at churches in Goa among the proselytizing aids of Catholic missionaries.<sup>73</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century they had even been incorporated into the Mughal military orchestra.<sup>74</sup> In the Mughal artist’s picture of

71 For the translation of these texts, see Moule and Galpin, “A Western Organ in Medieval China,” 200–206; quotations are from 204. Farmer is critical of Moule and Galpin’s discussion: “The Organ of the Muslim Kingdoms,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3 (July 1926): 495–99.

72 Nizami Ganjavi, *Iqbāl-nāmah-i Niẓāmī Ganjavī* (*The book of fortune—Iqbalnama—of Nizami Ganjavi*), ed. Barat Zanjani (Tehran: Danishgah-i Tihiran, 1381 [2002]), esp. 46–47. See Abū’l Faẓl ibn Mubārak, *Ā’in-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77) 1:125–26; Abū’l Faẓl describes the ideal ruler, like Akbar, as the Perfect Man (*insān-i kamīl*) and the Philosopher King. Abū’l Faẓl ibn Mubārak, *Akbarnāma*, ed. Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–87) 3:274.

73 Ian Woodfield, “The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520–1620,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 115, no. 1 (1990): 34. On organs in Goan churches from the mid-sixteenth century, see Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “The Circulation of Musical Instruments in the Indian World, 1500–1800,” *Oriente* (Lisbon) 2, (2002): 81.

74 These organs were called *baja* or *peti*. Bonnie Wade, *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 154. Abū’l Faẓl also uses the organ in a metaphor of birdsong: Abū’l Faẓl ibn Mubārak, *The Akbarnāma*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 3:125.



FIGURE 45B *Detail: Plato (Aflatun) Charming the Wild Animals by his Music, by Madhu Khanazad, fol. 298r from the Khamsa of Nizami, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 298r.*  
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Plato charming the animals, the European organ may no longer have been a mere European curiosity.

A closer look at the detail on this representation reveals a much more complicated object (Figs. 45a–c).<sup>75</sup> Above the organ keyboard are several wooden panels with images. The bottom left panel, referencing a story told by Nizami in another of the *Khamsa* poems about the lovers Layla and the madly devoted Majnun, shows an emaciated Majnun in the desert with two deer (Fig. 45b). Above it is a picture of European figures, most likely a representation of the Annunciation (Fig. 45c).<sup>76</sup> The bottom right panel shows two European-looking men, one writing on a large page and the other kneeling in front of him,

75 Titley writes that the organ is decorated with Italian painting, but this is only partially accurate. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting*, 205. Wade calls it a Portuguese organ: “When West Met East,” 1486.

76 The possible Annunciation panel shows a crowned woman in European clothes sitting on an elaborate chair, approached by a woman holding or accompanied by a naked baby, perhaps a putto. The standing woman wears a red-orange shawl; the putto hovers in the



FIGURE 45C *Detail: Plato (Aflatun) Charming the Wild Animals by his Music, by Madhu Khanazad, fol. 298r from the Khamsa of Nizami, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 298r.*

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perhaps holding a wine cup. A large book is placed at their feet (Fig. 45b).<sup>77</sup> The most prominent decoration on the organ occupies the top right panel. It shows

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air and touches hands with the seated female. The setting is architectural, with grand columns and a red curtain.

77 Barbara Brend identifies the scene of the two men as “an artist drawing a European.” Brend, *The Emperor Akbar’s “Khamsa,”* 58. The “artist” pose is similar to European representations of the muse of drawing, such as the one engraved by Jan Wierix in the portrait of Jan van den Straet from ca. 1583 (British museum 1854,0513.121). However, the person depicted on the organ panel is male, the paper he holds shows no painting, and there are no painting tools around him. Therefore, it is more likely that the man is writing; in Mughal painting European figures are often shown writing books or inscribing scrolls. See, for example, Basawan, “Young Woman with Old Man,” Mughal India, ca. 1590 (Musée Guimet, Paris, 3619 Jb); Kesudas, “Saint Jerome,” Mughal India, 1580–85 (Musée Guimet, Paris, MA2476); Basawan or Manohar, “Allegorical Figure,” Mughal India, ca. 1590–95 (Los Angeles County Museum, M. 81-8-8).

a European man from the waist up, with a hat cocked and hovering above his head (Fig. 45c). This curious representation, clearly three-dimensional in its rendition, looking like a figurine standing behind a parapet, may be an allusion to an automaton that was part of the organ apparatus and the music. The man's hat would pop up and down in accordance with the air pushed into the pipes. This would not be surprising, since organs, clocks, and automata shared similar operating mechanisms.<sup>78</sup> By combining a lavishly decorated organ with images of Persianate and European origin, as well as a representation of an automaton, the Mughal artist linked Plato's instrument to the tradition of royal gifts and court power and prestige by showing off technological sophistication and splendor.

Organs including dancing figurines were considered to be gifts of a superior type. One example was the organ sent to the Mongol Great Khan Kublai by Hülagü, the Mongol ruler of Iran, Iraq, and parts of Central Asia (r. 1260–1265). According to descriptions from the period, its mechanism was placed within “carved wooden peacocks decorated with real peacock feathers” and required three men for its operation: “One man set the wind-bags in motion, one man handled the notes, and one man moved the mechanism and then the peacocks flapped their wings and danced in time with the music.”<sup>79</sup>

Diplomatic gifts of organs with automata are more commonly known from the Abbasid and Byzantine periods; Byzantine emperors sent them to the Franks in 757 and to the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813–33) in Baghdad.<sup>80</sup> The Abbasids, too, used such organs in diplomatic exchanges.<sup>81</sup> The glory of

78 Judith Herrin, *Margins and Metropolis: Authority across the Byzantine Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 232–34; Elly Rachel Truitt, *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 4, 20.

79 The description of this gift appears in the *Yuan-shih*; this translation is from Moule and Galpin, “A Western Organ in Medieval China,” 196. The organ reached the Mongol court around 1260–64. It was highly decorated, and was most likely built for the occasion, probably in Syria by Arab engineers. Farmer, *Organ of the Ancients*, 76.

80 Truitt, *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art*, 22; James Trilling, “Daedalus and the Nightingale: Art and Technology in the Myth of the Byzantine Court,” *Byzantine Court Culture from 829 to 1204*, ed. Henry Maguire (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection; [Cambridge, Mass.]: Distributed by Harvard University Press, 1997), 217–30. Also see the story from the *Kitab al-Aghani* in note 63 above.

81 Other lavish organs with automata were used in imperial rituals. One was the throne of Constantine VII, which produced organ music and included mechanical lions and birds. Truitt, *Medieval Robots: Mechanism, Magic, Nature, and Art*, 22–23. A device Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) sent to the Ottoman ruler Sultan Mehmed III (r. 1595–1603) upon his accession to the throne included an organ, a clock, and “an array of complex automata and mechanical toys.” Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 172. See also

the Abbasid court as a cosmopolitan center was not lost on the Mughals, as they compared Agra, the capital city, to “a hundred thousand Baghdads”.<sup>82</sup> Mechanical devices including elaborate clocks, fountains, and moving figurines (animal and human) formed an integral part of Muslim traditions of blending science, skill, ritual, prestige, and court entertainment.<sup>83</sup>

Mughal sources mention an organ brought as a diplomatic gift from Goa to Akbar’s court by the end of the 1570s:<sup>84</sup> Abu’l Fazl writes that Haji Habibullah, Akbar’s envoy to Goa, brought back with him musicians who “breathed fascination with the instruments of their country, especially with the organ. Ear and eye were delighted, and so was the mind.”<sup>85</sup> Even in his short description, Abu’l Fazl conveys a sense of wonderment, spectacle, and intellection regarding the organ and its music. The Mughal historian ‘Abd al-Qadir Bada’uni goes into more detail in his report of the event:

At this time an organ [*urghanun*], which was one of the wonders of creation, and which Ḥájí Ḥabibulláh had brought from Europe [*farangistan*],

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Stephen Bicknell, *The History of the English Organ* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 72.

- 82 This comparison is made by Akbar’s poet laureate, Faizi, in 1585. Translated by Alam and Subrahmanyam in “A Place in the Sun: Travels with Faizi in the Deccan, 1591–1593,” in *Sources and Time*, ed. Francois Grimal (Pondichery: Institut Francais de Pondichery, 2001), 280.
- 83 Examples include an artificial silver tree with chirping birds in the Abbasid palace during the reign of the caliph al-Muqtadir (r. 908–932). Others are described in the *Kitab al-Hiyal* (Book of Ingenious Devices) written around 850 in Baghdad by the Banu Musa (“Sons of Musa”—Muhammad, Ahmad, and Hasan ibn Musa ibn Shakir, three brothers who were astronomers and scientists working at the Abbasid court), and in the 1206 treatise by al-Jazari (Badi’al-Zaman Abū al-‘Izz ibn Ismā’il ibn al-Razāz al-Jazari), *Kitab fi ma’ricat al-hiyal al-handasiyya* (The Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices). For a thorough discussion, see Donald R. Hill, “Hiyal,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hiyal-SIM\\_8624?s.num=1&s.f.s2\\_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=automaton](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxygw.wrlc.org/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/hiyal-SIM_8624?s.num=1&s.f.s2_parent=s.f.cluster.Encyclopaedia+of+Islam&s.q=automaton) (accessed Aug. 13, 2015). Avinoam Shalem mentions the effect of automata and mechanical devices at the Muslim courts. Avinoam Shalem, “Manipulations of Seeing and Visual Strategies in the Audience Halls of the Early Islamic Period. Preliminary Notes,” in *Visualisierungen von Herrschaft (Byzas 5)*, ed. Franz Alto Bauer (Istanbul: Ege Yayinlari 2006), 226.
- 84 Haji Habibullah, whom Akbar dispatched to Goa in 1575, presented the organ at the court upon his return. See *Akbarnama* (English) 3:207, 322; ‘Abd al-Qādir Badā’ūnī, *The Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Sir Wolseley Haig, and W. H. Lowe (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1884–1925) 2:299.
- 85 *Akbarnama* (English) 3:322–23.

was exhibited to mankind. It was like a great box the size of a man. A European sits inside it and plays the strings thereof, and two others outside keep putting their fingers on five peacock-wings, and all sorts of sounds come forth. And because the Emperor was so pleased, the Europeans kept coming at every moment in red and yellow colours, and went from one extravagance to another. The people at the meeting were astounded at this wonder.<sup>86</sup>

Bada'uni's description of an organ that contains parading figures bears close association with performative aspects related to keyboard instruments with automata.<sup>87</sup> The mention of peacock wings, three men employed for operating the device, one who is responsible for "playing," seem similar to the description of the type of organ brought to Kublai Khan, an ancestor of the Mughals. The Mongol source says that Kublai himself modified the organ to suit his divine imperial needs.<sup>88</sup> The *Khamsa* painting, though it depicts a smaller version of the organ with pipes, evokes a similar sense of world order and awareness of authority.

In this context it is notable that although the artist went to great lengths to depict the organ in minute detail, including the wooden pegs that hold the frame together (Fig. 45c), he omitted the bellows. With no visible mechanism for pumping air into the organ pipes, the inference is that the instrument makes no sound. Scholars have remarked that, despite elements of realism,

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86 Words in brackets are author's additions. *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (English) 2:299; 'Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *Muntakhab al-Tavārīkh*, ed. Captain W. N. Lees and Munshi Ahmad Ali (Calcutta: College Press, 1865) 2:202. Sanjay Subrahmanyam writes that the organ may have been two virginals. Subrahmanyam, "Circulation of Musical Instruments," 81. In 1615–16, Emperor Jahangir received two decorated virginals from Sir Thomas Roe. Roe, *Embassy*, 1:97.

87 Henry Miers Elliot translates this passage slightly differently, referring to Europeans in red and yellow who would come in and out of the organ box. Henry Miers Elliot, *Bibliographical Index to the Historians of Muhammedan India*, vol. 1: *General Histories* (Calcutta: Printed by J. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press, 1849), 250. Bailey was also under the impression that this rendering of "Badaoni's description makes it sound like the instrument had mechanical figures who marched in and out of it as it played." Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions*, 114, 228n14. Although it contains an error regarding who brought the organ to Akbar's court, Ian Woodfield discusses the role of organs, music and automata as diplomatic gifts in the East. See Woodfield, "The Keyboard Recital in Oriental Diplomacy, 1520–1620," 33–62.

88 Original text translated by Moule and Galpin in "A Western Organ in Medieval China," 202.



FIGURE 46

Illustrated borders with figural motifs, folio 1r, *Jahangir's album*, 1608–18, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 40.0 × 26.4 cm. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Libr. Pict. A17, fol. 1r. WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN- PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ, ORIENTABTEILUNG (LIBR. PICT. A117, FOL. 1R)

the artist failed to produce a convincing depiction of an actual object.<sup>89</sup> They compare the *Khamsa* organ to a similar organ that appears in the technically accurate border illustration of an album folio made for Emperor Jahangir (Figs. 46, 46a).<sup>90</sup> But the *Khamsa* illustration's "failure" of verisimilitude can be interpreted differently: Since this organ is a unique article with universal powers, specific knowledge is required to make it work. Only Plato can produce music out of this "silent" instrument, a creation that requires "divine skill".<sup>91</sup> In the writings of Abu'l Fazl and Bada'uni, the organ and the spectacle around it are linked to the concept of *aja'ib* (marvels and wondrous things),<sup>92</sup> which can be seen also in Nizami's description of Plato's special powers in the court

89 Also the pipes are not in the right order. Brend, *Emperor Akbar's "Khamsa"*, 58; Wade, "When West Met East," 1480.

90 Its accuracy is confirmed by Bonnie Wade, *ibid.*

91 A reference to Homer's reaction to lavish automata as divine skill rather than magic (Iliad, 18.373–77, 417–21). See Trilling's discussion in "Daedalus and the Nightingale," 223, 223n16.

92 "Urghanun-ra keh az aja'ib makhluqat ast." *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (Persian) 2:202. Subrahmanyam, "Circulation of Musical Instruments," 82.



FIGURE 46A *Detail: Illustrated borders with figural motifs, folio 1r, Jahangir's album, 1608–18, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 40.0 × 26.4 cm. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Libr. Pict. A117, fol. 1r.*

WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN-  
PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ, ORIENTABTEILUNG (LIBR. PICT. A117,  
FOL. 1R)

of Alexander. But beyond wonder, the organ is an instrument of knowledge that enables Plato to control living beings. Just as Plato exerts sovereignty over the animals, Akbar has the Europeans pay him homage at court, as he presides over a ceremony that makes him the possessor of such an instrument of command. The organ in the illustration is thus situated on multiple boundaries. It embodies European, Persian, Ilkhanid, and Mughal meanings that project beyond the borders of this illustration into diverse sociopolitical worlds.

The varied artistic and cultural traditions represented in this illustration have been considered by Monica Juneja to display contrasting and juxtaposing modes that transformed the pictorial space.<sup>93</sup> Enhancing the notion of

93 More specifically, Juneja refers to the style of the paintings on the organ panels. Monica Juneja, "Circulation and beyond—the trajectories of vision in early modern Eurasia,"

intersecting traditions is the setting in which the philosopher and his musical instrument are encircled by a stream (Fig. 45). This peculiar arrangement, according to Gregory Minissale, evokes a magic circle (*khatt-i mandal*) that the magician, in this case Plato, draws around himself in order to initiate a spell by playing the organ. Minissale considers the artist's possible allusion to magic as a reference to Abu'l Fazl's statement regarding the "enchanted works of the Europeans."<sup>94</sup> Yet another suggested interpretation of the landscape arrangement draws upon connections to Solomon's throne in Islamic literary and visual traditions. Ebba Koch and Moly Aitken consider the appearance of tamed animals, hilly landscape and a body of water to represent a royal Solomonic throne, and Plato with his organ as a figure who embodies Solomonic qualities of rulership by propagating peace with his music.<sup>95</sup> In this illustration, however, Plato and the organ are not raised from the animals like a ruler sitting on a throne, but rather they are protected by the circumscribing water.<sup>96</sup> Being in the desert surrounded by wild beasts associates Plato with another literary figure—that of Majnun, who also tames wild animals and retreats to the desert in Nizami's *Khamsa*. In fact, in our illustration, Plato faces a picture of Majnun peacefully accompanied by animals in the desert, which decorates one of the panels in his organ (Fig. 45b).<sup>97</sup> More precisely, the philosopher is looking at two decorated panels: one with Majnun and the animals, and the other with a European scene, likely of the Annunciation (Fig. 45a). It is interesting to note that the painting of Majnun appears flatter and more linear than the "European" panels, perhaps in accordance with Persianate tradition of painting. Pairing the scenes of Majnun and the Annunciation could be

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*Circulations in the Global History of Art*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann (London: Ashgate, 2015), 66.

- 94 Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought: Visuality in Islamic India 1550–1750* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 220. Abu'l Fazl refers to European artists. See *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:116.
- 95 Koch further links Plato to Orpheus. Koch, "Shah Jahan and Orpheus: The *pietre dure* decoration and the programme of the throne in the Hall of Public Audiences at the Red Fort of Delhi," in *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, ed. Ebba Koch (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 116–126. Aitken makes a connection between Plato and Majnun. Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2010), 166–67.
- 96 In Mughal paintings of Solomon or other rulers assuming a Solomonic guise, the human usually sits higher than the animals. See, for example, fol. 14r from a Divan of Hafiz, 1600–1605. British Library, Grenville XLI, f.14r.
- 97 Aitken notices that Majnun is depicted in the same manuscript sitting in a hilly landscape with a stream (fol. 150v). Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition* 164, fig. 4.8; 167.

regarded as moments of enlightenment or episodes of receiving divine knowledge. The Mughal artist created intra-pictorial links between Plato, Majnun, and European art through the image of the organ, suffusing it with multiple references linked to the intellectual cultural ideas of Akbar's policy. The organ embodies sounds and sights of far and near, of the familiar and the exotic. Its interpretive flexibility allows it to adapt to local needs while maintaining a common identity across sites.

The concept of boundary objects is related to Mughal Occidentalism and advances the notion that Mughal identities are contextual. The different modes of engagement with European articles in Mughal painting lead us to more nuanced interpretations of the globe, organ, and prints. We may think about their complex meanings in terms of intervisuality, which Michael Camille describes as "a process in which images are not the stable referents in some ideal iconographic dictionary, but are perceived by their audiences to work across and within different and even competing value-systems."<sup>98</sup> Their rendering within the Mughal pictures is carefully detailed, inviting attentive and educated viewers to take a closer look. Through this calculated process of Mughal Occidentalism, the artists created sites of encounter and contemplation that resonated with the cosmopolitanism of the Mughal elite. Mughal Occidentalism enabled the artists to retain some of the conscious aspects of the European articles, but to layer them with additional meanings specific to the Mughal context. References to ancestral and Islamic traditions, literature, cosmopolitanism and spirituality were explicitly linked to the cultural pluralism of the Mughal elite.

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98 See Michael Camille, "Gothic Signs and the Surplus: The Kiss on the Cathedral," *Yale French Studies*, Special Issue, *Contexts: Style and Values in Medieval Art and Literature* (1991): 151.

## Landscape Painting as Mughal Allegory: Micro-Architecture, Perspective and *ṣulḥ-i kull*

From the late 1580s, intricate urban and rural landscapes featured prominently in the backgrounds of Mughal court paintings (Figs. 47, 47a, 48).<sup>1</sup> Depicted in illustrated manuscripts and album pages made at the royal workshops, the landscape backdrops appear to be specific to the time of Emperor Akbar. This chapter situates the discussion of Mughal receding panoramas, which are often viewed as imitations of European landscape painting, within the context of *ṣulḥ-i kull*. I suggest that the inclusion of such landscape vignettes in Mughal painting produced scenes that reinforced Islamicate, and more specifically Mughal, notions of just rule linked to descriptions of Nasr al-Din Tusi's ideal "Virtuous City." Mughal artists chose, in turn, to express these notions by using European techniques and elements. They manipulated Renaissance pictorial features to project an idealized view of Mughal policy and rule. Landscapes, both cultivated and urban, were thus employed for political ends, to produce an image of Mughal India that was peaceful, economically prosperous, and cosmopolitan.

In "Majnun Visited by His Father in the Wilderness," from the *Khamisa* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, a magnificent view unfolds before our eyes: stately buildings with domes and towers, a gate, paths meandering amid lush foliage, boats sailing on a river, and people coming and going (Figs. 47, 47a). The diverse micro-architecture displays an idyllic, prosperous, pluralistic space by revealing different groups of people, groomed plots of land, representations of India's flora and fauna and safety of passage. Adding to the sense of cultural cosmopolitanism is the use of European style receding perspective that Mughal artists began to employ during this period. In this chapter, I concentrate on the most clear-cut examples of receding landscape elements in Mughal painting, ones that are independent from the text they illustrate. This is a crucial distinction to keep in mind since landscape elements became apparent in all genres of Mughal royal illustrated manuscripts from the late 1580s onward.

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1 What is meant by "landscape feature" or "element" is an instance where landscape appears as a single component or backdrop rather than the main subject of a larger work. "Micro-architecture" is an assemblage of tiny buildings that can be thought of as urban panoramas.

A study of Mughal landscape elements leads us to distinguish between two categories of panoramas. The first includes features, which are part of the narrative and directly related to the content of the story, as in the example from the *Baburnama*. In “Babur Visiting the Hindu Temple Gurh Kattri (Kūr Katrī) in Bigram,” the landscape, which includes a number of temples in the background, may indeed aim to portray the specific locale relevant to the setting of Babur’s visit (Fig. 30).<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the scenery features in the first category can be a result of detailed descriptions of the terrain in the narrative, or inspired by explicit references to the view in the episode. This category of landscape includes, but is not limited to, illustrated histories, such as the imperial memoirs and chronicles titled *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Jahangirnama*, *Timurnama* and the *Tarikh-i alfi* (History of a Thousand Years or Millennial History), as well as various literary texts. Background landscape paintings from these illustrated manuscripts may show dependency on the text; therefore, they are excluded from the current discussion.

The second category consists of scenic and micro-architecture backdrops that are not directly related to the story or the event represented in the illustration. Artists added these panoramic elements for compositional and ideological reasons. Although the vistas in “A sinner’s passionate plea to God” from the *Kulliyat* of Sa’dī and the illustration of Babur’s visit to the Hindu temple at Bigram may look similar, they function in quite different ways (Figs. 30, 49). One particular scenery may be linked to the area that Babur traveled, while the other is not specific to the tale from the *Kulliyat*. In an attempt to unpack such queries, I have chosen to focus on the second category of landscape painting, in which the background vignettes are not referenced by the text. Their independence raises questions regarding their inclusion in the paintings as well as their function.

The panoramic features became prominent in Mughal painting by the 1590s, and almost all of the dated manuscripts made for Akbar from that period show the detailed receding landscape element in their illustrations.<sup>3</sup>

2 Ahsan Jan Qaisar compares actual sites and their depictions in illustrated Mughal historical manuscripts: Ahsan Jan Qaisar, *Building Construction in India: The Evidence from Painting* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988). Abdul Rehman uses paintings to reconstruct Mughal gardens: Abdul Rehman, “The Miniature Painting as a Source for Understanding Mughal Gardens,” in *Earthly Paradise: The Garden in the Times of the Great Muslim Empires* (Lahore: Habibur Rehman Research Foundation, 2001), 117–37.

3 A partial list of Akbari illustrated manuscripts with receding landscape perspective: *Razmnama* (1584–86; City Palace Museum of Jaipur); *Khamsa* of Nizami (1593–95; British Library, London); *Khamsa* of Dihlavi (1597–98; Metropolitan Museum of Art and Walters Art Museum); *Anvar-i Suhayli* (cataloged as an *Iyar-i Danish*) (ca. 1595; Chester Beatty Library,



FIGURE 47 Majnun is Visited in the Wilderness by his Father, by *La'l*, fol. 100v from the *Khamsa* (Quintet) by Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, 1597–98, probably Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 28.5 × 19.0 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W.624.100B.



FIGURE 47A Detail: Majnun is Visited in the Wilderness by his Father, by *La'li*, fol. 100v from the *Khamasa (Quintet)* by Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, 1597–98, probably Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper: 28.5 × 19.0 cm. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W.624.100B.



FIGURE 48 A European Man, ca. 1610–20, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 29.5 × 18 cm. Victoria & Albert Museum, acc. IM.386–1914.

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Most of the single-page paintings that were produced for albums at the time also display the same perspectival view; however, they are not considered here because they lack definite dates. Of the securely dated illustrated manuscripts, such as the *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi that was made for Emperor Akbar in 1597–98, two-thirds of the illustrations include mini-urban panoramas.<sup>4</sup> In the *Khamsa* of Nizami that was made in Lahore in 1593–95, twenty-five of the thirty-eight paintings have elaborate urban scenes in a receding background.<sup>5</sup> In general, a significant number of the illustrated manuscripts produced at Akbar's royal workshops, from the late 1580s onward, evince these innovative features.

### The Mughal Interest in Topography

In the past, these new landscapes have been interpreted as evidence of the Mughal love of naturalism and European influence in Mughal painting. Art historians have attributed the changes in painting style not only to the encounters with European art, but also to the intellectual curiosity of the Mughal emperors, and specifically their interest in the natural environment. Emperor Babur, Akbar's grandfather, is singled out as the greatest observer of India's topography and wildlife.<sup>6</sup> The vivid descriptions in his memoir, the *Baburnama*, are often considered to have been the impulse for its detailed illustrations of urban and rural settings. Babur's interest had antecedents in the works of Mongol and Timurid authors. Rashid al-Din's *Jami al-Tawarikh* (World History), written under the Mongols in Persia in the early fourteenth century, included an entire volume dedicated to geography, though the work did not survive.<sup>7</sup>

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Dublin); *Iyar-i Danish* (1596–97; Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares); *Kulliyat* of Sa'di (ca. 1604; Aga Khan Museum, Toronto); *Akhlaq-i Nasiri* (ca. 1590–95; Aga Khan Museum, Toronto).

- 4 There are twenty-nine surviving full-page illustrations from this manuscript, nineteen with receding panoramas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (13.228.26–33), and Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (W.624).
- 5 British Library, London Or. 12208. The manuscript is available on-line at [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or\\_12208\\_f5001r](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_12208_f5001r).
- 6 On the misinterpretation of Mughal interest in nature and naturalism in art, see Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought, Visuality in Islamic India, 1550–1750* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), xxv–xxvii, 8–11.
- 7 It is unclear whether Rashid al-Din completed this part of the *Jami al-Tawarikh*, because his text has not come to light yet. Some scholars suggest that it was incorporated into the work of Hafiz-i Abru and Hamdallah Mustawfi Qazvini. See Charles Melville, "Jāme' al-tawāriḳ," *Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jame-al-tawarik>



FIGURE 49 A Sinner's Passionate Plea to God, fol. 75v from a Kulliyat (collection of poetry) by Sa'di, Mughal, ca. 1604. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM00284.



FIGURE 49A Detail: A Sinner's Passionate Plea to God, fol. 75v from a Kulliyat (collection of poetry) by Sa'ûi, Mughal, ca. 1604. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM00284.  
© THE AGA KHAN MUSEUM, TORONTO, AKM00284

The fifteenth-century historian Hafiz-i Abru wrote a treatise on geography that includes world maps. Khwandamir's history *Habibu's-siyar* describes geographical contours, climate, cities, monuments, vegetation, and peoples. Mirza Muhammad Haidar Dughlat's *Tarikhi Rashidi* (History of Rashid) provides numerous descriptions of the regions in Central Asia and Kashmir. Akbar's royal library included texts such as the encyclopedic thirteenth-century *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, by Yaqut al-Hamawi, which, according to the emperor's minister, historian, and confidant Abu'l Fazl, was "an excellent work on towns and countries" that, he also notes, was translated from Arabic into Persian.<sup>8</sup> Writing on geography, which was included in the genre of general and local historiography, emphasized prospects for agricultural production, drawing on such factors as climate, irrigation, and soil type. However, art historian Gregory Minissale convincingly argues that the Mughal interest in nature did not translate into a conscious adoption of a "realistic" or "naturalistic" painting style and notes that in illustrations from the *Baburnama*, attention to animals and plants reveals an aesthetic rather than a scientific approach.<sup>9</sup>

The Mughals' attentiveness to nature and their presumed tendencies for "naturalistic" painting has been further linked to Renaissance art. The Mughal landscape vignettes have been labeled imitations of Netherlandish painting, specifically the Flemish genre of world-landscape and illustrations of "Labours of the Months" in the *Book of Hours*.<sup>10</sup> Paintings of both genres, however, consist of elements linked to European climate, seasons, agriculture, and locale.

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(accessed May 10, 2016). There are several landscape paintings from the fourteenth-century Arabic copy of Rashid al-Din's *Jami al-Tawarikh*. For example, see The Khalili Collection, fols. 261r (K19) and 276b (K26).

8 Abu'l Fazl ibn Mubārak, *The Ain-i Akbari*, trans. Henry Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (1867–77. Reprint, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2010) 1: 106.

9 Minissale, *Images of Thought*, xxv–xxvii, 8–11.

10 Robert Skelton writes that Mughal landscapes were inspired by European works of art, such as paintings by Simon Bening and Pieter Bruegel. Robert Skelton, "Landscape in Indian Painting," in *Landscape Style in Asia: a colloquy held 25–27 June 1979*, ed. William Watson (London: University of London, 1979), 158. Ebba Koch, focusing on formal aspects of the scenes, argues that these images are Mughal versions of the Labors of the Months. Ebba Koch, "The Just Hunter: Renaissance Calendar Illustrations and the Representation of the Mughal Hunt," *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, ed. Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini (London: The Warburg Institute, 1999), 169–172; Idem, "Netherlandish Naturalism in Imperial Mughal Painting," *Apollo* 152.465 (2000): 32, 37m9. Friederike Weis expresses these ideas in more detail: "The Influence of the Flemish World: Landscape on Akbari Miniatures of the Lahore Period," in *Ratnamala: Garland of Gems: Indian Art between Mughal, Rajput, Europe & Far East*, ed. J. Bautze and R. Cimino (Italy: Edizioni del Girasole srl, Luglio, 2010), 19–29.

Additionally, it is unclear how any religio-calendric parallel to the “Labors of the Month” would have operated in Muslim North India, where the Mughals used at least five calendars: Islamic (lunar), Indic (lunisolar), Zoroastrian (solar), Turkic Animal Era (solar), and Ilahi, or Divine Era (solar).<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Flemish world-landscape (*Weltlandschaft*) paintings, such as “Landscape with the Flight into Egypt” by Herri met de Bles or Joachim Patinir’s “The Baptism of Christ,” include Christian religious figures and iconography throughout their compositions. Hence, the landscape in these pictures becomes a sacred panorama, combined with mountains, unnatural rock formations, agricultural works, trade activities, and religious scenes.<sup>12</sup> These compositions portray a Catholic devotion enhanced by the light treatment that illuminates myriad details of Central and Western European environment, climate, and nature.

By contrast, Indian artists used a visual vocabulary based on local, mostly Mughal, architectural idioms for the majority of urban scenes. Though the buildings are invented and no specific locale is shown, many of the architectural elements can be linked to royal buildings and complexes from Akbar’s main cities (or capital cities), such as Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore, Agra, and Delhi. The emphasis in the paintings is not only on individual edifices, but also on urbanism in the form of walled cities, and the cultivation of gardens outside the built environment. The deep red color of buildings indicates the use of local sandstone, the hallmark of Mughal architecture (Fig. 50; compare to Fig. 51). Some structures are white, perhaps representing marble or whitewash, and the form of some of the white buildings suggests Hindu shrines. For example, in the background of the portrait of a European man, women prostrate themselves at the entrance to a Hindu temple (Fig. 48). City walls feature turrets and a main gate, as can be seen in the *Kulliyat* painting (Figs. 49, 49a). They show some similarity to the Red Fort at Agra, including *chattris*, the small elevated domed pavilions (Figs. 49, 49a, 51, 52). Other features of illustrated

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Gregory Minissale has suggested that the Mughal landscapes may be linked to maps and atlases, such as the one by Abraham Ortelius, brought to Akbar’s court by the Jesuits. However, these maps included very few depictions of landscape, boats in harbors, people on the shore, and minimalistic renditions of animals and architecture. See illustrated maps from Abraham Ortelius’s atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Antwerp, 1570). Gregory Minissale, “The Synthesis of European and Mughal Art in the Emperor Akbar’s *Khamsa* of Nizāmī,” <http://www.asianart.com/articles/minissale/> (accessed June 29, 2016).

- 11 Stephen Blake, *Time in Early Modern Islam: Calendar, Ceremony, and Chronology in the Safavid, Mughal, and Ottoman Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 117–32.
- 12 Friederike Weis analyzes the Mughal landscapes with respect to the works of Herri met de Bles and Joachim Patinir in her article “The Influence of the Flemish World,” 19–29.



FIGURE 50 *Detail: Mariyah and the Would-be Alchemist, by Sanvala, fol. 294r from the Khamsa of Nizami, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 294r.*

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architecture are pointed domes, finials, corbels, and a three-dome structure that might be a mosque or a shrine (Fig. 49a).<sup>13</sup> The skyline depicted in the illustration from the *Khamsa* of Nizami shows a variety of such building types with an interesting angular symmetry, similar to examples from Fatehpur Sikri (Figs. 53, 54, 55). Richly ornamented carved piers, columns, and towers can be found in numerous illustrations (Fig. 55). These examples demonstrate the dynastic regional character of the Mughal landscape scenes.

From this brief analysis we can see how European artistic techniques were used to depict Mughal architectural elements and nature. Their adaptation indicates the degree of manipulation by Mughal court artists and the extent of intentionality in depicting such specific vignettes. Given Emperor Akbar's encouragement of artistic interactions with European visual tradition, the question is what meaning do such landscapes have in the context of Mughal culture at this particular time. Considered in conjunction with Mughal writings on topography and descriptions of cities and architecture, these metropolitan vignettes can be seen to reflect the sociopolitical mood that was primarily a result of *ṣulḥ-i kull*. Idyllic and complex, the scenes epitomize the Mughals' sense of ownership, imperial pride, and economic success in the land

13 This type of building is similar to Akbar's Friday mosque at Fatehpur Sikri, which has three white domes over the prayer hall.



FIGURE 51 *Gate from the Akbar period, Red Fort, Agra, Mughal India*  
PHOTO BY ALFRED DE COSTA, 1988, COURTESY OF AGA KHAN  
DOCUMENTATION CENTER AT MIT



FIGURE 52 *Jahangiri Mahal, Red Fort, Agra, ca. 1560–70, Mughal India*  
PHOTO BY TOBY MOUNTAIN



FIGURE 53 *Aerial view of the Miriam house, Sonahra Makan, Fatehpur Sikri, 1569–1574, Mughal India*

JOHN A. AND CAROLINE WILLIAMS ARCHIVE, COURTESY OF AGA KHAN DOCUMENTATION CENTER AT MIT

of Hindustan. Mughal artists depicted concepts of just rule linked to *Akhlaqi* ideas using European elements and painting techniques. The significance of stylistic changes under Akbar becomes clearer when the new style of landscape is contrasted with works made before the pivotal decade of the 1580s.

### Chronology of Change in Landscape Representation

Paintings from earlier periods in Akbar's reign have backgrounds that are less intricate. They are both flatter and more schematic, therefore, seeming to lack elements pertaining to cultural heterogeneity and notions of empire. In an illustration from a manuscript of the Persian story sequence *Tutinama* (Tales of a Parrot) dated about 1565–70, the background landscape consists of two hills and a few trees; the area above is colored in gold (Fig. 56).<sup>14</sup> There is no

14 The *Tutinama* manuscript is a complicated one, with pre-Mughal illustrations and extensive repainting done by Mughal artists in about 1570. See Pramod Chandra, *Tūti-nāma: Tales of a Parrot = das Papageienbuch: vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift aus dem Besitz des Cleveland Museum of Art = Complete colour Facsimile*



FIGURE 54 *Diwan-i Khas, detail of sandstone carving, Fatehpur Sikri, 1569–1574, Mughal India*  
PHOTO BY TOBY MOUNTAIN

sense of a receding panoramic view, and no buildings are represented in the background. Instead, elements of the composition appear to be placed on top of one another. The trees and the flowers are stylized, and there is no notion of geographic specificity. Although the backdrop provides an appropriate frame for the event, in comparison to the *Khamsa* painting, it lacks intricate depth and narrative elements (Figs. 47, 47a, 56).

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*Edition in Original Size of the Manuscript in Possession of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976); John Seyller, "Overpainting in the Cleveland *Tutinama*," *Artibus Asiae* 52 (1992): 283–318.



FIGURE 55 *Detail: Majnun Answers his Father, by Nand Gwaliori, fol. 153v from the Khamsa of Nizami, Lahore, 1593–95, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 153v.*

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In illustrations from the *Hamzanama* (Story of Hamza) dating from about the same period (1562–77), cityscape architecture appears in the background of a composition only when it relates to the narrative (Fig. 57).<sup>15</sup> In this case, the hero of the episode, Umar, who is spying for Hamza, walks around the thick walls and towers of Fulad castle in an attempt to find an entry point. After kicking a foot soldier to the ground and questioning him, Umar learns of a secret tunnel into the castle.<sup>16</sup> Compared with backdrops from the later period, the perspectival effect in the *Hamzanama* composition is bulky and geometric (Figs. 47, 57). Artists employed foreshortening in views of some of the rooftops and houses, such as the one with green tiles, but the overall impression is of strong color blocks (Fig. 57). The cityscape consists of repetitive forms that produce a constricting view of the pictorial space rather than opening up the composition to horizons that create an illusion of depth, distance, and

15 Illustrating the stories of Hamza was an ambitious project in the royal workshops. The paintings, made on cloth mounted on paper, were unusually large, approximately 28 3/4 × 22 1/4 in. (73 × 56.5 cm). In 2002, many of the paintings were shown in an exhibition at the Sackler Gallery, Washington D.C. See catalog by John Seyller et al., *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* (Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; London: Azimuth, 2002).

16 Maryam Ekhtiar, Sheila R. Canby, Navina Haidar, and Priscilla P. Soucek, ed., *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 339, 348–349.



FIGURE 56  
The young man of Baghdad joins the Hashimi's boat as a sailor to find his slave-girl on board, *folio from Tales of a Parrot (Tuti-nama): Forty-eighth night, ca. 1560, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 20.0 × 13.5 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. A. Dean Perry 1962.279.307.a.*

abundance. The absence of figures inside the castle, except for a woman looking out through an opening in the wall, lends an eeriness to the setting. The particular atmosphere in this *Hamzanama* illustration enhances narrative elements in the story, and thus, stands in contrast to the independent idyllic scene depicted in the *Khamasa* roughly ten years later.

In a slightly later example from a 1570–80 manuscript of the *Anvar-i Suhayli* (The Lights of Canopus), a collection of animal fables, the upper register of illustrations still shows little detail and no evidence of receding expansive landscape (Fig. 58). In this scene of a monkey riding on a tortoise's back, the river, trees, and rocks appear to be stacked on top of one other, with only a single structure depicted, perched at the top of a colorful boulder. Though this manuscript was made shortly before the period of change, its illustrations lack the



FIGURE 57 Umar Walks around Fulad Castle, Meets a Foot Soldier and Kicks Him to the Ground, folio from a Hamzanama (*Adventures of Hamza*), ca. 1570, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on cloth; mounted on paper. 73.0 × 56.5 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 23.264.2.

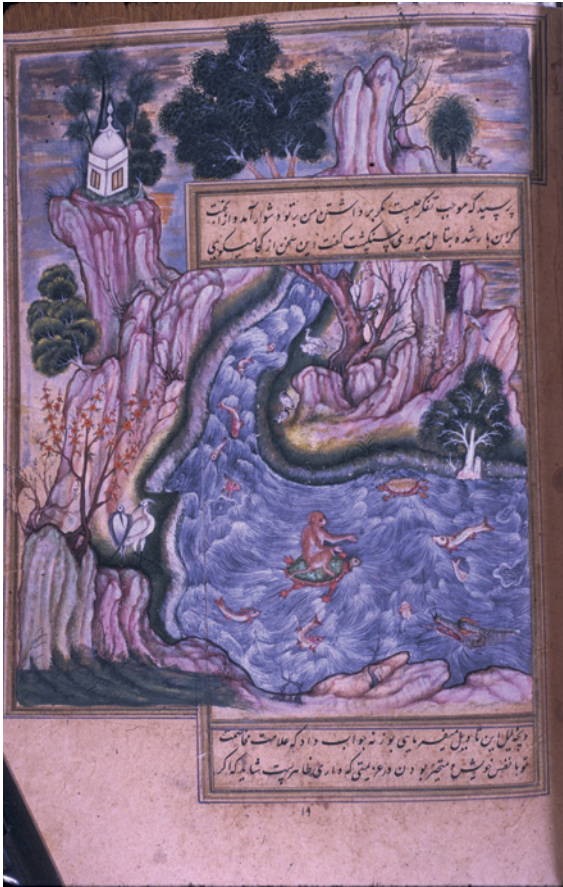


FIGURE 58  
The Monkey and the Tortoise,  
fol. 206r from the *Anvar-i*  
*Suhayli* (*Lights of Canopus*)  
by Kashifi, ca. 1570–80,  
Mughal India. Ink and opaque  
watercolor on paper. 33.5 × 21.5  
cm. SOAS, Ms. 10102, fol. 206r.

open vistas and rich genre scenes presented in the *Khamsa*.<sup>17</sup> Instead, backdrops in the *Anvar-i Suhayli* compositions appear to relate more closely to their respected narratives. In “The Monkey and the Tortoise,” the landscape intensifies the event through a dramatic juxtaposition of the downward flow of the river and the upward shooting rock formations (Fig. 58). While augmenting the mood of the scene, the backdrop presents a restricted view that does not seem to have political or allegorical implications.<sup>18</sup>

17 On the SOAS *Anvar-i Suhayli* see Mika Natif, “The SOAS *Anvar-i Suhayli*: the Journey of a “Reincarnated” Manuscript,” *Muqarnas* 24 (2008):331–358; John Seyller, “The School of Oriental and African Studies *Anvar-i Suhayli*: The Illustration of a de luxe Mughal Manuscript,” *Ars Orientalis* 16 (1986):119–51.

18 Priscilla Soucek distinguishes between two main categories of landscape in Persianate painting from the fourteen and fifteen centuries. One type provides the appropriate

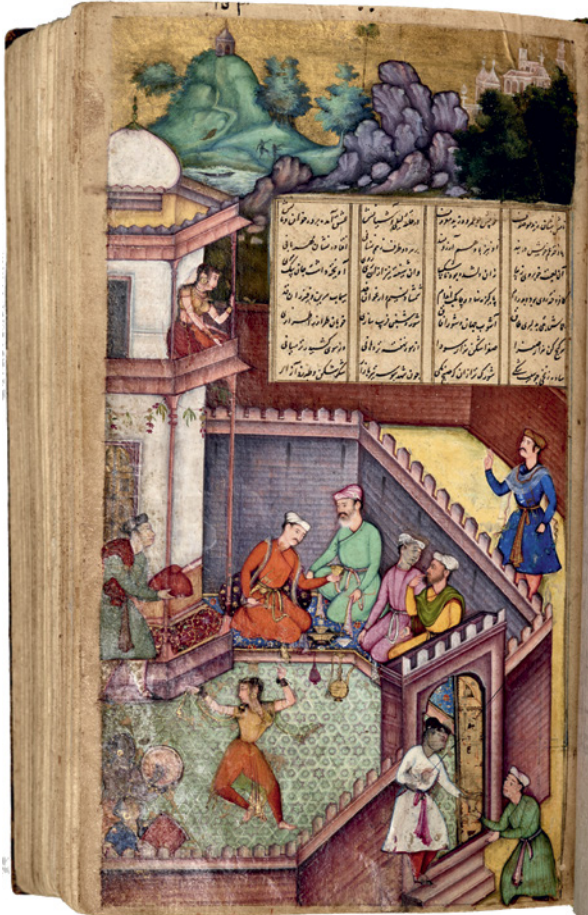


FIGURE 59  
 Marriage of Zanib, by  
 Basawan, fol. 153r from  
 the *Khamsa* of Nizami, ca.  
 1584–86, Mughal India.  
 Ink, opaque watercolor and  
 gold on paper. 15.8 × 8.7 cm.  
 Keir collection of Islamic  
 Art, K.1.2014. 153r.

An early example of the new landscape feature can be seen in “The Marriage of Zanib,” from a manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami dated to about 1584–86 (Fig. 59).<sup>19</sup> The background is opaque, but there is an attempt to render

setting for a narrative, and another reflects the mood of the narrative and the emotions of the protagonists. Priscilla Soucek, “The role of landscape in Iranian painting to the 15th century,” in *Landscape Style in Asia: a colloquy held 25–27 June 1979*, ed. William Watson (London: University of London, 1979), 86–110.

19 The folio measures 15.8 × 8.7 cm. The manuscript is in the Keir Collection, currently on long term loan to the Dallas Museum of Art. Robert Skelton initially dated the paintings to about 1590–95 on stylistic grounds, but after noticing an inscription on one of the illustrations, he changed the date to 1584–86. The note, on fol. 73v indicates that the artist,

architecture on a small scale, with tiny figures walking, and paths marked out through a green meadow. The overall effect of the picture is still of a flat space, but with a high horizon line and hazy green, blue, and purple suggesting a receding view. Even in such a small manuscript, this dynamic and peaceful scenery provides a sense of balance and harmony to the composition.

Other early examples of the new landscape feature come from a manuscript of the *Divan* of Anvari (collection of poems) dated 1588.<sup>20</sup> As seen in “In Praise of the Simple Life,” the backgrounds are more detailed, with an idealized landscape and elements of perspective suggesting distance and three-dimensional space (Fig. 60). Here a faraway city hides behind trees and hills, beyond winding pathways and green meadows dotted with shadows of humans and animals. The scene is rendered in pastel colors with a gradation of blues at the top, all contributing to the creation of an idyllic atmosphere. As the entire composition measures 13.9 × 7.6 cm, the attention given to such minute details is even more remarkable when considering the small size of the manuscript folios. It is possible that the Mughal artists were displaying their mastery of European techniques, like *sfumato* and atmospheric perspective, in this constricted space.

### Images of Urbanism and Agriculture: Diversity and Prosperity

The late 1580s and the 1590s were years of intense building activity for Akbar, who moved his capital from Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore in 1584.<sup>21</sup> James Wescoat notes that Akbar established himself in newly conquered territories by rebuilding and enhancing their citadels. He erected palace-citadels in Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and Lahore, and smaller structures at Gujarat, Allahabad, and

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Muhammad Sharif, son of Abd al-Samad, participated in this project when young. Robert Skelton, “Indian Painting of the Mughal Period,” in *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book*, ed. Basil W. Robinson (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), 238, 240–42, 246–48. Milo Beach dates the paintings on stylistic ground to about 1585–90. Milo Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 50.

20 The paintings and Anvari’s poetry are presented by Annmarie Schimmel and Stuart Cary Welch, *Anvari’s Divan: a Pocket Book for Akbar* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983).

21 Lahore remained the Mughal capital until 1599, when the seat of government moved back to Agra, where it had been before Fatehpur Sikri. See James Wescoat, “Gardens versus Citadels: The Territorial Context of Early Mughal Gardens,” in *Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture 13: Garden History: Issues, Approaches, Methods* (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks; Trustees for Harvard University, 1992): 152–53.



FIGURE 60 In Praise of the Simple Life, fol. 316v from a Divan of Anvari, 1588, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 13.9 × 7.6 cm. Harvard Art Museums, 1960.117.316.

PHOTO: IMAGING DEPARTMENT © PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF HARVARD COLLEGE

Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> These complexes included gardens both within the city and outside the walls. In Lahore, Akbar's amirs built their gardens outside of the walls, linking the city with the outlying suburbs, and the emperor often visited these sites.<sup>23</sup> Many of the illustrated manuscripts under discussion were produced in Lahore, and most likely reflect enthusiasm over Akbar's construction projects in the new capital.

In the background of the paintings, we can clearly discern two main components: the constructed environment (the city or citadel) and the landscape (garden or cultivated land). From Mughal written sources, we know that a city in India would often include walls, gates, green areas, towers, and monuments such as mosques, shrines, and palaces. Many of the background illustrations reflect these characteristics and thus display the typology of an imagined Mughal environment and metropolitanism (Figs. 47, 51, 55, 60).

Moreover, written works of the period praise cities as centers of culture and production. Their appreciation of Indian architecture and cultivated greenery is a departure from practices of earlier times. Babur, who liked to complain about having to escape Central Asia and live on the subcontinent, wrote in his memoirs: "Hindustan is a place of little charm. There is no beauty in its people, no graceful social intercourse, no poetic talent or understanding, no etiquette, nobility, or manliness. The art and crafts have no harmony or symmetry."<sup>24</sup>

By Akbar's time, feelings of pride and belonging prevailed. At the emperor's request, the historian Amin Ahmad Razi in 1594 composed the *Haft Iqlim* (Seven Climes), a biographical dictionary (*tazkirah*) that celebrates the regions of the world and introduces each major city with its outstanding people (especially poets) and unique architectural structures.<sup>25</sup> When the author describes

22 On the main cities, their population and taxation see Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire c. 1595. A Statistical Study* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2015), 303–316.

23 Wescoat, "Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism," 151–53.

24 Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur, *The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, trans and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (Washington, D.C.: Freer Gallery of Art: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 350–51. In his memoirs, Babur expressed a wide range of opinions and emotions regarding the land of Hindustan.

25 Amīn Aḥmad Rāzi, *Tazkere-ye Haft Eqlim*, ed. Mohammad Reza Taheri (Tehran: Soroush Press, 1999). In the *Tārīkh-i alfī*, commissioned by Emperor Akbar in 1585, the authors, especially Ja'far Beg, conveyed a sense of geopolitical pride and Mughal imperial identity regarding the land of Hindustan. See Ali Anooshahr, "Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History of the Islamic Millennium," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 220–254.

Delhi, located in the third clime, he emphasizes its good weather, water, plains, pleasant gardens, and splendid edifices. He even goes on to call Delhi the Garden of Eden and outlines its political and cultural centrality in the history of Hindustan.<sup>26</sup> In the section on Kashmir, the author mentions its magnificent buildings and praises the flowers, trees, fruits, herbs, and landscape.<sup>27</sup> Concerning Ahmadabad, the capital of Gujarat, Razi tells us that “the city is exceptional in the craftsmanship and elegance of its architecture and buildings.... Its bazaar, in contrast to those of other Indian cities, is extremely vast and neat, where perfectly decorated shops of two or three stories have been constructed.”<sup>28</sup> He singles out the beautiful castle and the mosque, among other buildings.<sup>29</sup> The landscape vignettes in the *Khamsa* and the *Kulliyat* may echo similar urban sentiments: In “Majnun is visited in the wilderness by his father,” an array of two-story decorated buildings, towers, pavilions and lush green land appear behind the monumental gate (Fig. 47a). In the *Kulliyat* illustration, the city is surrounded by a large wall, from which diverse types of edifices, including a three-dome mosque, European-style tile roof structures, and buildings with *chatris*, are visible (Fig. 49a).

Descriptions of the abundance and quality of fruit, grains, and flowers are an essential part of Mughal accounts of cities. Abu’l Fazl reports that Allahabad’s agricultural production is thriving, and notes that the city has always had an abundant supply of melons and grapes.<sup>30</sup> About Agra he writes: “Agriculture is in perfection. Fruits and flowers of all kinds abound. Sweet-scented oil, and betel-leaf of the first quality are here obtained, and its melons and grapes rival those of Persia and Transoxiana.”<sup>31</sup> Abu’l Fazl’s words reverberate in the illustration from the *Iyar-i Danish*, a book of animal fables, where we recognize in the background fields of crops, farm animals in the act of plowing, and a woman carrying a basket of large, round fruit, perhaps melons, on her head (Figs. 61, 61a) all signifiers of agricultural abundance.<sup>32</sup>

26 *Haft Iqlim* (Persian) 1:383–84.

27 *Ibid.*, 2:617–19.

28 Translated by Sunil Sharma in “‘If There Is a Paradise on Earth, It Is Here’: Urban Ethnography in Indo-Persian Poetic and Historical Texts,” in *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 244.

29 *Haft Iqlim* (Persian) 1:72–73.

30 *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 2:157–58.

31 *Ibid.*, 2:179–80.

32 The *Iyar-i Danish* is a late sixteenth-century Mughal version of the stories of Kalila and Dimna, composed by Abu’l Fazl (Akbar’s historian). Abu’l Fazl’s version was written with a didactic purpose in mind.

Other key features that emerge from both the paintings and written Mughal sources are the importance of cosmopolitanism and the diversity of the population. After remarking on the buildings, villas, meadows, and gardens in Agra, Abu'l Fazl notes that the city "is filled with people from all countries and is the emporium of the traffic of the world. His Majesty [Akbar] has built a fort of red stone, the like of which travelers have never recorded."<sup>33</sup>

Abu'l Fazl describes the cultural efflorescence of the empire through its architectural magnificence. He is well aware of the sophisticated design of Akbar's buildings and eager to comment on the impact they had not only on international visitors but also on local artists and artisans. In a background panorama of "Alexander is Lowered into the Sea", from the *Khamisa* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, the artists have portrayed boats carrying foreigners, specifically Europeans, sailing on the river while other people make their journey by land, traversing the scenic expanse (Figs. 62, 62a).

The importance of cosmopolitanism also appears in the report of Akbar's poet laureate, Shaykh Abu'l Faiz Faizi, the brother of Abu'l Fazl. During his visit to Agra in the early 1590s he praises the city for its diversity, urbanism, prosperity, and success: "I reached Agra, the city for whose clime a hundred thousand Baghdads and Egypts can be sacrificed. I saw a city full of habitation and wealth, and what can I tell you of the beauty of the noble fort, which protects the high fortune and power of your Excellency, and astonishes world-travellers? And what can I say of the Jamuna river that passes by, kissing the foot of the fort, and which is the pride of seven climes?"<sup>34</sup> Even though by that time Akbar moved his capital to Lahore, Faizi emphasizes the cosmopolitan centrality of Agra as an imperial city.

Muhammad 'Arif, a historian writing during Akbar's period, describes the capital city (*dar al-khilafat*) of Agra as "a flourishing city (*shahr*), the abundant delicacies of which at the time of abundance and hope could provide security for all the inhabitants under the expanse of heaven."<sup>35</sup> He notes numerous monuments, palaces, and gardens, as well as boats cruising on the river, and remarks that "the multitude of foreigners from all sorts of nations, from the

33 *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 2:179–80.

34 The passage is translated and discussed by Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam in "A Place in the Sun: Travels with Faizi in the Deccan, 1591–1593," in *Sources and Time*, ed. Francois Grimal (Pondichery: Institut Français de Pondichery, 2001), 280.

35 Akbar began building in Agra in 1563–64. The quotation from 'Arif's *Tarikh-i Akbari*, or *Tarikh-i Qandahari* (1580–84) is from *Fatehpur-Sikri, A Sourcebook*, ed. Michael Brand and Glenn Lowry (Cambridge, MA: Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1985), 292.



FIGURE 61 The Fish Outwits the Fisherman, fol. 61 from the *Iyar-i Danish*, Lahore, 1596–97, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor, gold and silver on paper. Varanasi, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Ms. 9069.



FIGURE 61A *Detail: The Fish Outwits the Fisherman, fol. 61 from the Iyar-i Danish, Lahore, 1596–97, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor, gold and silver on paper. Varanasi, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Ms. 9069.*

corners of the four sides of the world, have gathered, for trade and fulfillment of necessities, in such a country that the dar al-khilafat of Agra has become all of India.”<sup>36</sup>

Such descriptions of prosperous gardens and public spaces in the capital city enhance our perception of abundance and diversity, not only with respect to Agra itself, but also regarding the empire and the Mughal world as a whole. India’s position as a global international center formed an important part of

36 Ibid., 292–93.



FIGURE 62 Alexander is Lowered into the Sea, folio from a Khamsa (Quintet) of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, 1597–98, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 23.8 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.27.



FIGURE 62A Detail: Alexander is Lowered into the Sea, folio from a Khamsa (Quintet) of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi, 1597–98, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 23.8 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.27.

the ruling elite's vision of themselves and their domains. These notions are reflected in the background views, which encompass religious figures and travelers, like the man crossing the bridge and the mendicant walking toward it in "A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahman" (Figs. 63, 63a). Buildings in the cityscape show features not only of Hindu temples and mosques, but also of European-style structures, like a couple of edifices on the right hilltop with European clay-tiled roofs (Fig. 61a). The impression of a busy international crossroads can be seen in the background of a picture illustrating the story of Layla and Majnun, where figures walk roads and passenger boats traverse the water (Figs. 47, 47a). Although anchored in Mughal architecture and environment, these vistas oscillate between the local and the universal, constructing part of the typology of Mughal metropolitanism. The convergence of the built world, the cultivated environment, and nature has become important in Mughal texts and paintings. These concepts and descriptions of the city as an organism resonate in the receding landscape painting, portraying a walled cluster of edifices, agricultural activities, and lush vegetation, replete with ascetics and other travelers.

Diverse urban centers, flourishing agriculture, and travelers enjoying safe passage conjure up an image related to Akbar's ideology of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, which had crystalized by the 1580s. These years brought changes in the social order and in governance that were at the core of the Mughal elite's vision of India. The political ideology of *ṣulḥ-i kull* formulated views of inclusion, according to which peoples of different faiths were free to practice their own religions. It further coincided with Akbar's claims of sacred kingship, which positioned him beyond religious and other divides, as a universal ruler.<sup>37</sup> The representations of an array of building types in the cityscape, such as Hindu temples, mosques, and European-style structures, represent the diverse population and ethnic groups living in harmony under Mughal rule. Akbar intended for the successful integration of the non-Muslim population into the fabric of his empire and invited some of the local Hindu rulers to join his ranks. Several became part of Akbar's nobility, and a few others were allowed to partake in the political, administrative, and cultural life of the realm. He also married

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37 Abu'l Fazl states that the just ruler will be successful only if he "inaugurate universal peace (toleration) and ... regard all conditions of humanity, and all sects of religion with the single eye of favour, and not bemother some and be-stepmother others." Abū'l Faẓl ibn Mubārak, *The Akbarnāma*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 2:421.

some of the Rajput princesses, therefore securing “by these ties of harmony the peace of the world.”<sup>38</sup> Ja‘far Beg remarks on Akbar’s court that “Everyone from everywhere will find care and tutelage and more, according to his ability.”<sup>39</sup> Rooted in the idea of commanding balance and harmony among the multi-valent religious and ethnic communities within his domain, Akbar developed a more equalized system of government, abolishing various taxes on non-Muslims and opening both his administration and army to Hindus and other non-Muslims.<sup>40</sup>

Evoking abstract concepts related to the new policy, such as harmony and equilibrium, the background landscapes are idyllic. Many of the buildings show a light chromatic system—white colors with little of the red sandstone—a visual effect that enhances the idealization (Fig. 55). The vignettes represent tranquility and harmony between man and nature, specifically the domestication of animals and the cultivation of lands. The safety and security suggested by the portrayal of travelers on scenic roads and boats under sail is linked to the control of trade and economic prosperity, as are the stately architecture and the groomed landscape (Figs. 47, 49, 62, 63, 64). The metaphor of continuity and fluidity between the built and the natural becomes a staple in 1590s landscapes (Figs. 64, 65).<sup>41</sup>

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38 “His Majesty forms matrimonial alliances with princes of Hindustan, and of other countries; and secures by these ties of harmony the peace of the world.” *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:44.

39 Translated from the *Ta‘rikh-i alfi*, by Anooosahr, in “Dialogism and Territoriality in a Mughal History of the Islamic Millennium,” 242.

40 According to Abu‘l Fazl, any ruler who (like Akbar) could implement this idea was the Perfect Man (*insan al-kamil*), the Philosopher King. Abū‘l Faḍl ibn Mubārak, *Akbarnāma*, ed. Maulawi Abd-ur-Rahim (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1873–87) 3:274. These ideas are linked to Platonic concepts. For a discussion of Platonic thought in Abu‘l Fazl’s ideology, see Saiyid Athar Abbas Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar’s Reign, with Special Reference to Abu‘l Fazl, 1556–1605* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1975), 197, 355–57, 366–69. On the idea of “utopia” in Mughal paintings from the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, see Monica Juneja: “On the Margins of Utopia—One More Look at Mughal Painting,” *The Medieval History Journal* 4, no. 2 (2001): 203–240.

41 James Wescoat points out that under Akbar “gardens became extensions of the Mughal palace-fortress.” Wescoat, “*Gardens versus Citadels: The Territorial Context of Early Mughal Gardens*,” 332; quote 357.



FIGURE 63 A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahman, folio from a Khamsa of Amīr Khusraw Dihlavi, Lahore, 1597–98, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.1 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 13.228.29.



FIGURE 63A Detail: A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahman, folio from a Khamsa of Amir Khusraw  
Dihlavi, Lahore, 1597–98, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.1 × 15.9 cm. Metropolitan  
Museum of Art 13.228.29.



FIGURE 64 *Detail: Majnun Mourns his Father's Death, by Manohar, fol. 132r from the Khamsa (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95, Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 132r.*

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### The Virtuous City and the Circle of Justice

Akbar's policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull* was based on the principles of an ideal society formulated, among others, by the medieval philosopher and scientist Nasir al-Din Tusi in the *Akhlaqi Nasiri* (Nasirian Ethics).<sup>42</sup> During Akbar's reign Tusi's

42 The *Akhlaqi Nasiri* was composed in Persian in 1235. Initially, al-Tusi was at the service of the Isma'ili governor of Kuhistan, Naṣīr al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Abī Maṣṣūr at Sertakht, for whom he composed his treatise. With the Mongol conquest of these territories, al-Tusi revised the preface to the *Akhlaqi Nasiri* and the work was rededicated to his new patrons. George Michael Wickens, "Aklaq-e Naseri," *Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/aklaq-e-naseri-by-kaa-nasir-al-din-tusi-the-principal-treatise-in-persian-on-ethics-economics-and-politics-f> (accessed May 10, 2015). Al-Tusi became



FIGURE 65 *Detail: Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman, by La'i, fol. 15v from the Khamsa (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95. Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 31.8 × 19.6 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 15v.*

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text was widely circulated at court; a lavishly illustrated copy that belonged to Akbar's library, with seventeen paintings, is in the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto.<sup>43</sup> At least two other *Akhlaqi* texts, written by late Timurid authors, enjoyed a relatively broad readership among Mughal literati and elites; one of them bears a dedication to Emperor Babur.<sup>44</sup>

In his treatise, Tusi discusses the construction of a social order that culminates in what he calls the Virtuous City (*madīna al-fāḍila*). He outlines the moral behaviors of the individual and of the ruler, and the just organization of the society, the city, and the state.<sup>45</sup> Tusi's work relates to Platonic and

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the vizier and chief astronomer to Hülegü Khan, the Mongol founder of the Ilkhanate. Reuven Amitai, "Hulāgu Khan," *Encyclopædia Iranica*: <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hulagu-khan> (accessed May 10, 2015). A portrait of Hulagu and al-Tusi (and other courtiers) was painted in about 1605–10 by Manohar at Jahangir's royal workshop. The painting is at the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (34.1).

On the impact of Tusi's ideas on Abu'l Fazl, see Rizvi, *Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign*, 366; Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India, 1200–1800* (London: Hurst & Co., 2004), 77; and Idem, "Akhlaqi Norms and Mughal Governance," in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture: Indian and French Studies*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Nalini Delvoye, Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 84–86. For a critique of Alam's arguments regarding the role of the *Akhlaqi Nasiri* in shaping Mughal governance, see Iqtidar Alam Khan, "Tracing Sources of Principles of Mughal Governance: A Critique of Recent Historiography," *Social Scientist* 37, no.5/6 (2009): 45–54, especially 48ff.

- 43 The manuscript, dated about 1590–95, was probably made in Lahore (Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKMoo288). Based on the work of Muhammad Amin bin Isra'il, the eighteenth-century compiler of the *Majma' al-Insha*, Abu'l Fazl recommended that Akbar would have the *Akhlaq* read to him on a regular basis. Alam, "Akhlaqi Norms and Mughal Governance," 84.
- 44 The works from the Timurid period, such as the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* and *Akhlaq-i Muhsini*, were common in Mughal elite circles and at the court. The *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* was composed by Ikhtiyar al-Din Hasan bin Ghiyas al-Din al-Husaini, who served as the chief judge (*qazi*) of Herat and a vizier under the last of the Timurid rulers, Sultan Husayn Bayqara (r. 1470–1506). After the fall of the Timurids in 1506, al-Husaini joined Babur's entourage and rededicated his treatise to the Mughal ruler, calling it *Akhlaq-i Humayuni* (Auspicious Ethics) in Babur's honor. Alam, "Akhlaqi Norms and Mughal Governance," 74–75. The *Akhlaqi Muhsini* was written in Timurid Herat by Husayn Vaiz al-Kashifi. The work is dedicated to Sultan Husayn Bayqar's son—Abu al-Muhsin Mirza (d. 1507), and is dated to 1494–95 or 1501–2 by Maria Subtelny. See Maria Eva Subtelny, "A Late Medieval Persian Summa on Ethics: Kashifi's Akhlāq-i Muḥsini," *Iranian Studies* 36, no. 4 (Dec. 2003): 601–14.
- 45 He also includes the impact of cosmological order upon the world and the individual. Many of Tusi's ideas are linked to the teachings of pre-Islamic Persian and Greek

Aristotelian concepts as well as ideas developed by Muslim thinkers such as Abu Ali Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Miskawayh, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, and Abu Ali Husayn Ibn Sina.<sup>46</sup> Descriptions of the Virtuous City are guided by the general premise that humans are social beings who strive to live in a civil society manifested in urban life. Survival and livelihood depend on cooperation and justice, as administered by the just ruler. In such an ideal society, the challenge is not the ethnic and religious diversity of the population, but maintaining equilibrium among different economic strata of society.<sup>47</sup>

The ideal city is pluralistic: “a combination of people whose aspirations are fixed on the acquisition of goods and the removal of evils.”<sup>48</sup> Although they “appear to differ in community and doctrine, the people of the Virtuous City ... are in reality agreed, for their hearts are upright one towards another and they are adorned with love for each other.”<sup>49</sup> Akbar reiterated these *Akhlaqi* ideas. In a letter to the Safavid king of Iran, Shah Abbas I (r. 1588–1629), Akbar wrote that kings must “pacify the hearts of people of all sects in accordance with the principles of *sulh-i kul* as the Divine mercy attaches itself to every form of creed.... It must be borne in mind that Divine graciousness and mercy are open to all creeds and one should exert oneself to the utmost to bring oneself into the garden of universal concord (“Peace with all” [*sulh-i kull*])... Hence, it is only proper that kings who are the shadows of God should not give up on this practice.”<sup>50</sup>

A return to the manuscript illustrations in light of these writings reveals how these values were conveyed: In some illustrations, yogis and other mendicants walk the roads and European ships arrive at the riverbank while men and women care for domesticated animals and till fields (Figs. 47, 49, 62, 63, 66). Micro-architecture also represents tolerance and cosmopolitanism of the

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philosophers, intertwined with discussions and interpretations of Quranic verses. The genre is that of the mirror for princes, or guidance on successful rule.

46 Ann Katherine Swynford Lambton, “Justice in the Medieval Persian Theory of Kingship,” *Studia Islamica* 17 (1962): 1089; Alam, “Akhlaqi Norms,” 71–72.

47 See the discussions in Subtelny, “A Late Medieval Persian Summa,” 604–5; Alam, “Akhlaqi Norms,” 77–78.

48 Nasir al-Din Tusi, *The Nasirean Ethics*, by Nasir ad-Din Tusi, trans. from the Persian by George Michael Wickens (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 212.

49 Tusi, *The Nasirean Ethics*, 215. Diversity is further advocated in the *Akhlaq-i Humayuni*, in which the author does not distinguish between Muslims and others. Alam, “Akhlaqi Norms,” 78.

50 Abu'l Fazl, *Mukātabāt-i-'Allāmī (Inshā'i Abu'l Fazl): Letters of Emperor Akbar in English Translation*, ed. and trans. Mansura Haidar (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal: Indian Council of Historical Research, 1998), 1:96.

empire: in an illustration from a *Kulliyat* of Sa'dī (Fig. 67) we notice a building on the left with three domes, probably a mosque. Not far from it, set in a garden, is a white domed structure, possibly a tomb or a pavilion, and several houses with angled roofs may represent European buildings. In an illustration from a manuscript of the *Akhlaqi Nasiri* itself, the urban skyline clearly shows diverse architecture with specific types of buildings articulated inside the city walls (Fig. 68). A three-dome structure alluding to a mosque, a European style house with angled roof, and a Hindu temple with pyramidal tower. The same structures, as well as yogis and other travelers, appear in other illustrations as well (Figs. 47a, 48, 49a-b, 63a, 65, 66, 67). All these details suggest an atmosphere of peace, where religious tolerance in the form of *ṣulh-i kull* prevails.

Notions of harmony further extend to the relationship between the built environment and cultivated lands. Gardens and agricultural fields appear in every panorama, often accompanied by peasants and working animals. Men plowing with yoked oxen or riding horses, irrigating, sawing, or harvesting are common features in these vignettes (Figs. 61a, 62a, 66, 67). Plots of land are clearly defined, the terrain is groomed, and scenic paths lead to gates of beautiful cities (Figs. 47a, 50, 64, 66). Gardens within or outside the city walls were places of political and social gathering, what Wescoat calls “an imprint of Mughal territorial authority in the land,” as well as an indication of economic value.<sup>51</sup> These scenes suggest a specific civilized world, one in which walled cities represent just rule and agriculture is the sign of prosperity and a productive population.

These vignettes hark back to Tusi's ideas of the perfect social order, where agriculture and the peasant class occupy a notable place in the hierarchical structure of humanity, as they do in Akbar's society. In the *Ain-i Akbari*, Abu'l Fazl's chronicle, specific orders are given to Mughal governors and officials on how to encourage agriculture production by offering support to farmers: “[The governor] should turn his attention to the increase of agriculture and the flourishing condition of the land and earn the gratitude of the people by the faithful discharge of his obligations and account the befriending of the agriculturists as an excellent service to the Almighty.”<sup>52</sup>

51 Wescoat, “Gardens, Urbanization, and Urbanism,” 141.

52 *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 2:37. The author further remarks that the collector of revenue “should be a friend of the agriculturist.” *Ibid.*, 2:43. On the division of the society into four classes, based on Aristotle, Tusi, and Kashifi, see *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:i–x; 255.



FIGURE 66 *Detail: The King Carried Away by a Giant Bird, by Dharamdas, fol. 195r from the Khamsa (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95, Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 30.0 × 19.5 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 195r.*

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Representations of agricultural work in Mughal paintings, therefore, cannot be interpreted only in light of European calendric scenes of Labors of the Months or Flemish landscape painting. First and foremost, they should be understood as visualizations of governance and the interrelationships that make it work. In *Akhlaqi* literature the “circle of justice” acknowledges the mutual dependency between the just ruler and his army; the army is reliant on the productive population, which in turn depends on just governance to achieve economic stability.<sup>53</sup> Abu’l Fazl explains:

Every man of sense and understanding knows that the best way of worshipping God, consists in allaying the distress of the times, and in improving the condition of man. This depends, however, on the advancement of agriculture, on the order kept in the king’s household, on the readiness of the champions of the empire, and the discipline of the army. All this again is connected with the exercise of proper care on the part of the monarch.<sup>54</sup>

Agricultural production was essential for attaining the goals of *ṣulḥ-i kull*. Indeed, between 1582 and 1584 Akbar established new land regulations to balance revenue and taxation.<sup>55</sup> Flourishing cultivated lands meant political stability, and the agricultural scenes in the receding backgrounds confirm the

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53 This mutual dependency has been described by different authors of *Akhlaqi* literature. See Maria E. Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin: Aspects de l’histoire culturelle de l’Iran médiéval* (Paris: Association pour l’avancement des études iraniennes, 2002), chap. 2, esp. 58–65; Subtelny, “A Late Medieval Persian Summa,” 605–6. A diagram representing the concepts of just rule and the relationship between the sovereign and his dependencies appears in a copy of *Nasa’ih-i Iskandar* (Counsels of Alexander) that was produced in 1425 at the workshop of the Timurid prince Baysunghur Mirza (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ar.4183.fol 12a). See Tom Lentz and Glen Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian art and culture in the fifteenth century* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), 12–13; Subtelny, *Le monde est un jardin*, 62; David J. Roxburgh, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 66. It is interesting to note the similarities between the Mughal seal and this diagram of good governance.

54 See the section on “The Imperial Treasuries,” in *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:2–3.

55 Raja Todar Mal, Akbar’s finance minister, recommended some of these economic changes. *Akbarnama* (English) 3:257–59, 383. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556–1707*, Second Revised Edition (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5, 159, 245–259.



FIGURE 67 *Detail: The Sage who was Attacked by a Drunken Man, fol. 57r from a Kulliyat (collection of poetry) by Sa'di, ca. 1604, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM00284.*

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FIGURE 68 *Detail: Men Disputing with Each Other in Loud Voice, folio from the Akhlaq-i Nasiri (Ethics of Nasiri), ca. 1590–95, Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 23.9 × 14.2 cm. The Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, AKM288.*

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state of prosperity and affirm the success of the just ruler, who adheres to the *Akhalqi* model and *shari'a* law.

How did these ideas, aired in the political intellectual forums of the empire, come to be expressed in the royal workshops? From Mughal primary sources we know of painters, calligraphers, and artisans who were involved in the political and intellectual life of the elite. Some were landowners themselves, an honor bestowed upon them by the emperor, either Akbar or his father and predecessor, Humayun.<sup>56</sup> The practice of including artists among the elite continued during the reign of Jahangir. In a *darbar* the emperor commented to Thomas Roe that an artist they were discussing had the high rank of (according to the English source) “Cauallero,” and thus Roe should offer more money for his work.<sup>57</sup> Some participants in the workshops played active roles in the administrative and political life of the empire, serving as envoys to Shah Abbas in Persia or to the Portuguese in Goa.<sup>58</sup> As court officials, some artists would have been exposed to imperial orders and directives, like the one issued by Emperor Akbar. In a *Dastur al-amal* (Handbook of Practice) dated 1594, Akbar recommended that his officials “study books on ethics and good morals, such are *Akhlaqi Nasiri* ...”<sup>59</sup> Artists may even have been connected to Akbar’s closest circle, the courtiers and officials of the *Tawhid-i Ilahi* (Divine Unity), who were responsible for disseminating ideas—in this case also to other artists, who would express them in their own creations.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps in following the cue

56 On the high status enjoyed by Abd al-Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, for instance, see Abū'l Faḍl ibn Mubārak, *Ā'in-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77) 1:117. Akbar also gifted land to his master dyer, Ustad Ramdas Rangrez, between 1561 and 1569. Paper presented by Sylvia Houghteling, “The Masterly Dyeing of the Ustad Rangrez in Seventeenth-Century South Asia,” Renaissance Society of America, March 31, 2016, Boston.

57 The term “Cauallero,” indicated a gentleman. Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619*, ed. William Foster (London, Hakluyt society, 1899), 2:224.

58 In 1613 Emperor Jahangir sent the artist Bishan Das with Khan Alam emissary to the Safavid court to paint portraits of Shah Abbas and his dignitaries. Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahangirnāma: Memoirs of Jahangir, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 319. Haji Habibullah had several artists in his embassy to Goa, who were to study European artistic techniques. *Akbarnama* (English) 3:322.

59 Abū'l Faḍl, *Mukātabāt-i-'Allāmī*, Dafta 1, 79.

60 On Akbar’s close “disciples” and their role in disseminating his ideas, see *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:166.

of diversity and openness, they chose to reflect Mughal political and ideological ideas of the time by using European techniques and repurposing specific Renaissance elements for their idyllic landscapes.

### European Techniques: *Sfumato* and Atmospheric Perspective

A clearer connection to European works of art is evident in the upper registers of the receding landscape paintings with their hazy blue color. Here artists employed a variety of European techniques, such as *sfumato*, atmospheric perspective, and modeling (Figs. 48, 49, 50, 61, 62). With the chromatic shift in color from dark to pastel tones toward the horizon, light seems to permeate the pictures (Fig. 60). This technique is similar to the one used by Flemish artists like Simon Bening in his *Book of Hours*, where distant hills and trees are shown in blue, and the upper part of the composition is lighter in tonality (Fig. 69).<sup>61</sup>

Ebba Koch and Friederike Weis describe Mughal spatial perceptions as adopted from the Netherlandish combination of a bird's-eye view with atmospheric perspective.<sup>62</sup> A closer look at Mughal paintings reveals that a broader spectrum of techniques is used. The illustration of "The King Carried Away by a Giant Bird" (Fig. 66), for instance, displays the use of atmospheric perspective for a distant view of a city. According to what Gulru Necipoglu calls the "kinetic gaze," it shows additional views, revealing the existence of buildings "hidden" amid hills and meadows.<sup>63</sup> The entire city unfolds before our eyes, inviting us to wander the landscape in different paths, contemplate views of micro-edifices, private gardens, and people within those garden enclosures. As seen in many receding landscapes of the period, this is a calculated, selective use of multiple types of perspective that reveals the seductiveness of these panoramas. In the Flemish world-landscape paintings, like the work of Patinir and Herri met de Bles, the composition as a whole can be characterized as a

61 Robert Skelton and Ebba Koch compare Mughal landscape backgrounds to Simon Bening's work. Skelton, "Landscape in Indian Painting"; Koch, "Netherlandish Naturalism".

62 Koch, "Netherlandish Naturalism," 32; Weis, "The Influence of the Flemish World," 20.

63 On the "kinetic gaze," see Gulru Necipoglu, "The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight and Desire," *Muqarnas* 32 (2015): 40. The use of multiple-view perspective for landscapes and cityscapes is apparent in fourteenth-century Persianate painting. See Barbara Brend, "The Little People: Miniature Cityscapes and Figures in Persian and Ottoman Painting," in *Proceedings of the Third European Conference on Iranian Studies, Cambridge, Sept. 11–15, 1995, Part 2*, ed. Charles Melville (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 1999): 367–68.



FIGURE 69 *Simon Bening, Labors of the Months: May, fol. 6v from the Flemish Book of Hours, Bruges, ca. 1540. München, StB, cod. lat. 23638, fol. 6v.*



FIGURE 70 *Joachim Patinir, Rest on The Flight into Egypt, 1518–20, Belgium. Oil on panel. 121 × 177 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, inventory number Po16n.*

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high viewpoint of unified perspective (Fig. 70). While stylistically Mughal and Netherlandish artists shared in certain techniques, it is important to consider the disparity in scale between the works of artists such as Patinir and Mughal court artists. For example, Patinir’s “Rest on the Flight into Egypt” is nearly six times the size of a typical Mughal manuscript folio (Fig. 70). One must consider not only the atmospheric perspective but also the way in which scale determines the visual force of a work of art.

Unlike Renaissance painters, the Mughals refused to adhere to a single spatial system. As Gregory Minissale notes, European realism was not a primary artistic concern.<sup>64</sup> The goal was not to create a complete illusionistic space, but to symbolically delineate the Virtuous City. In the Panofskian sense, this

64 See the discussion by Gregory Minissale regarding illusionistic space in Mughal painting in his *Images of Thought*, xiv, 11–17.

perspective is not mathematical, but metaphorical.<sup>65</sup> Abu'l Fazl was making the point that pictures go beyond illusionism into the realm of the intellect when he wrote, "It is amazing that from a cultivation of the habit of observing and making of images—which is by itself a source of indolence—came the elixir of wisdom and a cure for the incurable sickness of ignorance." With these words Abu'l Fazl infers a superiority of India and its artistic talent.<sup>66</sup>

According to Abu'l Fazl, naturalism or realism were not the most important criteria for evaluating works of art. Beginning with Babur, in fact, the relationship between art and nature was perceived with some fluidity. When he was under the influence of *majun* (an intoxicating plant, perhaps hemp), the first Mughal emperor compared a beautiful landscape of a blooming field to a painting: "Like a painting [*tarrāh-liq*: drawing], on all sides of the hill yellow and purple flowers in regular clumps were arranged in a hexagon shape."<sup>67</sup> Arranged landscape vistas with mini-architecture and figural representations can be seen in what Barbara Brend calls "naturalistic aerial perspective" of Persianate painting. She demonstrates that the tradition of receding landscape is present in illustrated manuscripts from the Timurid, Aq Qoyunlu, and Qara Qoyunlu workshops of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.<sup>68</sup> Laura Parodi points out that the pastel colors used for rocks in Timurid-period garden paintings create an idealized setting and not a naturalistic one. Parodi's

65 Referring to linear perspective, Erwin Panofsky argued for an interpretation that goes beyond geometry and mathematics into the realm of metaphors and meaning. Panofsky, *Perspective as a Symbolic Form*, trans. Christopher S. Wood (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

66 From Abu'l Fazl's account of Mughal painting in the *Ain-i Akbari*, translated by C. M. Naim, in *Ṭūṭī-nāma = Tales of a Parrot: Complete Colour Facsimile Edition in Original Size of the Manuscript in Possession of the Cleveland Museum of Art/Das Papageienbuch: Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift aus dem Besitz des Cleveland Museum of Art* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 1:184.

67 *Zāhīr al-Dīn Muhammad Bābur, The Baburnama: Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 285. Voicing mixed opinions regarding the relationship between art and nature, on another occasion, upon seeing a branch of an apple tree whose leaves have turned, Babur remarks that "if painters had exerted every effort they wouldn't have been able to depict such a thing." Babur, *The Baburnama*, 302. See the discussion by Chahryar Adle, "New Data on the Dawn of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy," in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, Françoise Nalini Delvoye, Marc Gaborieau (New Delhi: Manohar, 2000), 185–87.

68 Brend, "The Little People," 376–79. The Aq Qoyunlu (white sheep) and Qara Qoyunlu (black sheep) were confederates of Turkmen tribes who ruled parts of Central Asia, Anatolia, and Iran until the early sixteenth century and the mid-fifteenth century, respectively.

observation can apply equally to Mughal works.<sup>69</sup> In fact, these fantastic tectonic structures have a long tradition in Persianate painting, and they are visible in Mughal art from its inception. Consequently, the pictorial effects used by the Mughal artists, such as *sfumato*, tonal blue gradation in the upper part of the landscape scenes, modeling, and atmospheric perspective bear only superficial resemblance to Renaissance pictures. Even where similarities exist, like the hog herder in Figure 62a, the interests and objectives of Mughal artists were ultimately different from those of Renaissance painters.<sup>70</sup> Unlike the Labors of the Months in the European illustrations, the Mughal landscapes were intended to convey a sense of timelessness unrelated to the change of seasons or period-specific agricultural activities.<sup>71</sup>

Perceiving the Mughal vistas as distinct scenes detached from a whole composition seems plausible because of the small area reserved for the middle ground in the pictures, versus the greater elaboration of middle ground in European painting. Consequently, the Mughal landscape appears more independent, nearly standing apart from the body of the composition. The artists created a nesting structure, a meta-picture that dissolves the boundaries between inside and outside, inviting the beholder to immerse themselves in the view.

It is worth noting that in comparisons with Netherlandish paintings, the Mughal panoramas are often treated as a separate vignette almost detached from the full-page image. Hence, the art historical comparisons are usually between the upper band of a Mughal illustration and an entire folio by Simon Bening from the *Book of Hours*; one being a backdrop to a main scene and the others functioning as the focal point in and of itself (Figs. 55, 63, 69). Unlike the Mughal compositions, in Netherlandish paintings of the world-landscape type, subsidiary episodes related to the main scene (usually Christian) populate the landscape (Fig. 70). In Joachim Patinir's "The Rest on the Flight into Egypt" (1518–20), the central episode is surrounded by Christian vignettes that

69 Laura Parodi, "Some Observations on the Conception of Landscape and Garden in Timurid Miniature Painting and Its Legacy in Mughal India," in *XIV Türk Tarih Kongresi, Ankara: 9–13 Eylül, 2002*, Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler (Ankara, 2005), 1:242.

70 See the discussions on hybridity and the different aesthetic motivations in Mughal painting by Gregory Minissale, *Images of Thought*, 1–50; Valérie Gonzalez, *Aesthetic Hybridity in Mughal Painting, 1526–1650* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), 208–11.

71 Representing the seasons and calendric activities, like The Labors of the Months, is not a common subject in Persianate painting. See David Storm Rice, "The Seasons and the Labors of the Months in Islamic Art," *Ars Orientalis* 1 (1954): 1–39; Stefano Carboni, "The 'Book of Surprises' (*Kitab al-bulhan*) of the Bodleian Library," *The La Trobe Journal* 91 (2013): 22–34.

enhance the religious experience: the right side of the middle ground shows the Massacre of the Innocents as well as the miracle of the Wheatfield, while the Fall of the Idols of Heliopolis appears on the left. The flora and fauna further carry religious symbolism related to original sin and paradise.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, the focal point of the Mughal painting is not related to the vignettes occurring in the receding landscape. The Mughal panoramas reflect a general North Indian scenery, with a symbolic iconography linked to Mughal just rule and “subtle ecological balance of the land and its people.”<sup>73</sup> Hence, Patinir’s world-landscape is a religious one, in which every detail is connected to the central iconography of the Christian Catholic dogma, while the Mughal panoramas represent *ṣulḥ-i kull* policy and ideology.

In both the illustration of “A Muslim Pilgrim Learns a Lesson in Piety from a Brahman” from Dihlavi’s *Khamsa* and Simon Bening’s “Month of May” we notice a hilly landscape with a meandering body of water, a bridge, people coming and going, and clusters of trees and buildings (Figs. 63, 69). Both Mughal and European artists use a technique of atmospheric perspective, with diffused light and trees and buildings rendered in bluish haze to convey distance.<sup>74</sup> The central distinction between the paintings is specificity. The architecture depicted in Netherlandish paintings can be denotative, related to specific cities, castles, and estates.<sup>75</sup> Although a range of additive elements,

72 Alejandro Vergara, *Patinir: Essays and Critical Catalogue* (Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 182–193. Ebba Koch and Friederike Weis compare Mughal landscapes to other works by Joachim Patinir. Koch, “Netherlandish Naturalism,” 32; Weis, “The Influence of the Flemish World,” 19 and fig. 1.

73 Rosalind O’Hanlon refers to illustrations from the *Akbarnama* representing the emperor hunting, and I would like to extend some of these ideas to landscape background scenes in other manuscripts. Rosalind O’Hanlon, “Kingdom, Household and Body History, Gender and Imperial Service under Akbar,” *Modern Asian Studies* 41, no. 5 (2007), 898.

74 Ebba Koch notes: “Like their European counterparts, Mughal world landscapes exhibit all the features of the genre, namely wide panoramic vistas with multiple view-points, depicting not individual but universal landscapes composed of generic elements, such as naturalistic mountains and fantastical rock formations, valleys, rivers and seas, harbours, castles and villages or cities, with human figures reduced in scale and significance.” Koch, “Netherlandish Naturalism,” 32. She observes that the Mughals were creating their own version of a Netherlandish “world landscape” (*Weltlandschaft*), but does not explain what kind of world it is. *Ibid.*

75 See the identification of palaces and castles owned by the Duc de Berry as they appear in his *Belles Heures*. Milard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Limbourgs and Their Contemporaries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 302–6; Timothy Husband, *The Art of Illumination: The Limbourg Brothers and the Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 336. For similar identifications in Simon

such as city walls, dark red architecture, domes with pointed finials, turrets, towers, Bodhi trees, and yogi figures, effectively inhabit the scene in the Mughal paintings discussed above, there is no reference to a particular locale. The European artist showed a more systematic use of viewpoint, perspective, and volume to record a geographic space and temporal activities, while the Indian painters used illusionism as a metaphor, to convey an ideal of *Akhlaqi* governance. For the Mughals, nature was intellectualized and aestheticized, conquered and cultivated under the authority of the just ruler to represent “Virtuous Cities” and their inhabitants all over the empire.

Although we have focused here on illustrations of literary works, it is noteworthy that these background vignettes were not restricted to a specific genre; they also proliferated in official histories produced at the royal workshops. For example, in “The Battle of Sarnal in Gujarat” from the *Akbarnama*, while the center of the composition depicts the action described in the text—soldiers shooting arrows, throwing spears, and wielding swords—the top left corner shows an idyllic micro-landscape (Fig. 71). Walls, towers, a citadel, all in hazy white, are surrounded by green hills, lush trees, fields, and meandering paths dotted with farmers and travelers. The fact that these idealized panoramas appeared in a variety of manuscripts suggests the extent to which they served Akbar’s interests.

Further evidence for the political nature of the receding landscapes and their association with *ṣulḥ-i kull* is the fact that landscapes changed in works commissioned by Prince Salim, Akbar’s son and the future Emperor Jahangir. In 1600 Salim openly rebelled against his father and fled to Allahabad, where he established an independent court that included his own workshop.<sup>76</sup> While in Allahabad, he commissioned several illustrated manuscripts and paintings in which the background scenes demonstrate an awareness of and divergence from the visual and political concepts represented in the Akbari micro-architecture and receding landscapes.

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Bening’s work, see Thomas Kren, “New Directions in Manuscript Painting ca. 1510–1561,” in *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe*, ed. Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 411–516.

76 In the *Jahangirnama* the dates given for Jahangir’s rebellion are AH 1009, or 1600 CE (*Jahangirnama* (English) 9); on August 12, 1600 (first of Safar 1009) and again in 1601–2 (1010) he gathered his army to march on Agra. The *Akbarnama* attributes Jahangir’s behavior to the fact that he was addicted to opium and wine at that time (like many other members of the ruling elite in India, Central Asia, and Iran). *Akbarnama* (English), 3:1210, 1217.



FIGURE 71 Battle of Sarnal in Gujarat, by La'l and Babu Naqqash, folio from the Akbarnama, 1586–89, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 31.8 × 18.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, acc. IS.2:106–1896.

Relatively few of the illustrated manuscripts made for Prince Salim, such as *Raj Kunwar*, *Yog Vashisht*, and *Bahr al-Hayat*, show architecture in the receding background. In Amir Hasan Dihlavi's *Khamsa* (1602), only three of the fourteen illustrations depict buildings in the landscape (Fig. 72). The panoramas that do appear in the Allahabad paintings lack the diverse repertoire and detailed architecture, lush agricultural lands, agrarian activities, and movement of people seen in Akbar's manuscripts. Where architecture appears, it is limited to one or two plain buildings (Fig. 72).

In contemporary illustrated manuscripts made for high-ranking Mughal officials, the micro-urban panoramas are also reduced in scale and volume. In a Persian translation of the *Ramayana* made for Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan (about 1597–1605), less than ten percent of the paintings display architecture in the background, compared to two thirds of the paintings in Akbar's *Khamsa* of Nizami (Figs. 50, 55, 64, 65, 66) and a similar proportion in the manuscript of the *Iyar-i Danish* made for him in 1596–97 (Fig. 61).<sup>77</sup> One of the most elaborate examples in the *Ramayana* includes a small city complex with different types and styles of building, as well as two separate white shrine-like edifices (Fig. 73).<sup>78</sup> But the architectural segment is relatively small, and the landscape is simplified, without marked paths, agricultural plots, or people. In general, the lower the level of patronage for these images, the less discernible the landscape features. Among illustrated manuscripts produced for sale on the open market, like the *Anvar-i Suhayli*, which was copied in Ahmadabad in 1600–1601, such features do not appear at all.<sup>79</sup>

A possible explanation for the dearth of receding landscapes in works commissioned by Prince Salim is that his artists were limited in their ability to produce them. However, since Salim had some of the most talented artists working for him in Allahabad—including Abu'l Hasan and Nanha, who were well versed in European painting technique (see chapter 2)—it would seem that the background style was a choice. There were even greater changes in landscape treatment during Salim's rule as Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1627).

77 The *Ramayana* manuscript is at the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. The *Iyar-i Danish* manuscript consists of twenty-five paintings, of which sixteen show a background panorama of micro-architecture and landscape. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares (Ms. 9069).

78 John Seyller identifies the architectural background on the upper left side of illustration as Ayodhya. John Sella, *Workshop and Patron in Mughal India: the Freer Rāmāyana and Other Illustrated Manuscripts of 'Abd al-Rahīm* (Zürich, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae Publishers, Museum Rietberg 1999), 96. However, the building cluster appears generic and may not relate to a specific locale.

79 The *Anvar-i Suhayli* is at the British Library, London (Or. 13942).



FIGURE 72 Royal Hunting Scene, fol.109v from a Divan of Hasan Dhlavi, 1602, Allahabad, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 31.5 × 20.5 cm. Walters Art Museum, W.650.



FIGURE 73 Rsyasrnga Travels to Ayodhya with Santa, by Govardhan, vol.1, fol. 22; Ramayana of Valmiki, 1597–1605. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 26.5 × 13.9 cm. Freer Gallery of Art F1907.271.1–172.

FREER GALLERY OF ART AND ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY,  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, WASHINGTON, D.C.: GIFT OF CHARLES  
LANG FREER, F1907.271.1-172

Oftentimes background colors became opaque, the horizon line was lowered, and the receding panorama, if any, displayed different features (Figs. 38, 41). Mini-urban and agrarian scenes seem to have been clearly identified with Akbar's governance.<sup>80</sup>

As Corinne Lefèvre notes, the success of the Mughal empire and the dynasty's own notions of cosmopolitanism were linked to the enthusiasm that Akbar and Jahangir developed for the cultural and natural diversity of Hindustan.<sup>81</sup> The Mughals' attitude toward Hindustan reflects what she calls a "regional enthusiasm."<sup>82</sup> At this time when Akbar saw himself as a cosmopolitan emperor ruling according to *Akhlaqi* norms of universal justice, Mughal artists were giving as much attention to background as to foreground in their compositions, creating discrete visual environments that encompassed their unified cultural multiplicity. Their skillful conscious use of European techniques enabled the Mughal artists to demonstrate their cosmopolitanism and worldliness, as well as to display detailed wide-view panoramas of political ideology. As with other elements linked to European paintings, the Mughals' conspicuous manipulation of background landscapes served their own purposes, here recreating the idealized topoi of Mughal governance.

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80 On the connections between agriculture and conversion in Bengal under the Mughals, see Richard Eaton, *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

81 Corinne Lefèvre: "The Majālis-i Jahāngīrī (1608–11): Dialogue and Asiatic Otherness at the Mughal Court," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55, nos. 2–3 (2012): 282.

82 Lefèvre, "Majālis-i Jahāngīrī," 282.

## Concepts of Portraiture under Akbar and Jahangir

By the end of the sixteenth century, portraiture had become one of the most significant genres at the Mughal courts, playing an important role in art, politics, and administration.<sup>1</sup> Mughal portraits appear in a variety of contexts and media, including illustrated histories and genealogies, wall painting, single-page pictures created for albums, gold coins, and jewelry made for Akbar and Jahangir's close followers, the elect of the *Tawhid-i Ilahi* (or *Din-i Ilahi*). What makes portraits of this period so distinct is the use of European techniques and the repurposing of Renaissance iconography to represent Mughal dynastic identity and ideology.<sup>2</sup>

Portraiture of the late sixteenth century is fundamentally different in concept and execution from that of the period of the Emperor Humayun (r. 1530–56). Mid-century portraits of the royal family and their court circles appear closer in style to Timurid or Persian representations of individuals. In a painting commemorating Akbar's circumcision ceremony, from about 1550, Robert Skelton and Laura Parodi have identified portraits of Humayun (seated at center), his brother Hindal Mirza, the young Akbar, his mother, Hamida

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- 1 The role of portraiture in the art of the book in Mughal India closely reflects the relationship between Persian poetry and portraits. See Yves Porter, "La forme et le sens: A propos du portrait dans la littérature persane classique," in *Pand-o Sokhan: Mélanges offerts à Ch.-H. de Fouchécour* (Téhéran: IFRI, 1995), 219–31. See also Christoph J. Bürgel, *The Feather of Simurgh: The "Licit Magic" of the Arts in Medieval Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 119–58; Priscilla P. Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting," in *Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, ed. Richard Ettinghausen (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1972), 9–21; and David Roxburgh, "Concepts of the Portrait in the Islamic Lands, ca. 1300–1600," in *Dialogues in Art History, from Mesopotamian to Modern: Readings for a New Century*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2009), 118–37. Vincent Lefèvre argues that Mughal portraiture could reach such a highpoint because the subcontinent already had a long tradition of the genre. Vincent Lefèvre, *Portraiture in Early India* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2011), 22.
  - 2 On Mughal portraiture and European art see Susan Stronge, "Portraiture at the Mughal Court," in *The Indian Portrait 1560–1860*, ed. Rosemary Crill and Kapil Jariwala (National Portrait Gallery, London, 2010), 23–32; Jeremiah P. Losty and Malini Roy, *Mughal India: Art, Culture and Empire: Manuscripts and Paintings in the British Library* (London: The British Library, 2012), 75–78; 113–117; 122–124.

Banu, and others (Fig. 74).<sup>3</sup> The scholars base these identifications on costume, headgear, pose and facial features. A comparison between the image of Humayun and that of Jahangir on his throne some sixty-five years later reveals the shift in approach (Fig. 75). Jahangir's artists emphasized facial features, the use of light and shade, and attention to volume and weight of the body, in an attempt to render a life-like representation of the sitter.<sup>4</sup>

These changes and the increasing popularity of portraiture as a genre are related to the contact Mughal artists and patrons had with the artistic tradition of the European Renaissance. But, as we have seen regarding other genres, this was only part of the story. European portraits arrived on the subcontinent as diplomatic gifts brought by embassies to the Mughal courts: likenesses of kings and queens as well as important figures of the Portuguese-held Estado da India or the British East India Company. However, as Priscilla Soucek convincingly demonstrates, portraiture was an organic part of Islamic visual language long before any contact with early modern Europe.<sup>5</sup> What differentiates Mughal portraiture during the late period of Akbar and throughout Jahangir's reign is the primacy given to likeness and character over form.

Mughal painters repurposed European painting techniques to convey the complexities of people and their specificity. Their reconfigurations of European iconography and innovative use of modeling, *sfumato*, and perspective, which served their own ends, resulted in a verisimilitude that distinguished Mughal portraiture from earlier Timurid representations, and even Ottoman examples.<sup>6</sup> The European techniques enabled the artists to convey the goals and values of Mughal portraiture in representing dynastic authority, political ideology, as well as create an imperial "look" through the tradition of physiognomy.

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3 Laura Parodi and Bruce Wannell, "The Earliest Datable Mughal Painting," *asianart.com* (Nov. 18, 2011); Robert Skelton, "Iranian Artists in the Service of Humayun," in *Humayun's Garden Party: Princes of the House of Timur and the Origins of Mughal Painting*, ed. Sheila Canby (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1994), 42–43.

4 Laura Parodi mentions that Humayun's face in Figure 74 was badly damaged when the painting was shipped to an exhibition. Earlier photographs of the painting preserve the original facial features. Parodi and Wannell, "The Earliest Datable Mughal Painting," 6, 24n43.

5 Priscilla P. Soucek, "The Theory and Practice of Portraiture in the Persian Tradition," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 97–108.

6 On the use of Western iconography in Ottoman art, see Gulru Necipoglu, "Süleyman the Magnificent and the Representation of Power in the Context of Ottoman-Hapsburg-Papal Rivalry," *Art Bulletin* 71, no. 3 (1989): 401–27.



FIGURE 74  
 Allegorical Depiction of Celebrations for Akbar's Circumcision at Khoja Seh Yaran. *Attributed to Dust Muhammad, fol. 15r from Jahangir's album, ca. 1550, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 40.0 × 26.4 cm. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, Libr. Pict. A117, fol. 15r.*

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### Mughal Terminology and Praxis

By the 1580s artists in northern India were producing both group portraits and single-figure representations. Depictions of specific individuals—mostly males including the emperor himself, princes of the royal house, high officials, commanders, artists, calligraphers, court entertainers, and others—became part of the empire's administrative apparatus and its socio-cultural life.<sup>7</sup> These

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that there are portraits of calligraphers and painters, and even some self-portraits of artists. However, there are hardly any life-like images of authors or poets. See Som PrakashVerma, *Interpreting Mughal Painting: Essays on Art, Society, and Culture* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84–91; Asok Kumar Das, "Calligraphers and Painters in Early Mughal Painting," in *Chhavi-2: Rai Krishnadasa Felicitation Volume*, ed. Anand Krishna

are often full-body renderings, in profile or three-quarter view, of a person standing or seated (Fig. 75).

A reading of the primary sources and inscriptions on paintings reveals a semantic shift between Persian and Mughal concepts of portraiture. The most general term used for a portrait painting in the pre-modern Persianate world is *ṣūrat* (صورت), which conveys a range of meanings related to form, such as “picture,” “portrait,” or “image.” One portrait of a man standing in profile against a commonly used plain green background bears the inscription “ṣūrat-i ram das kachhwaha” (portrait, or picture, of Ram Das Kachhwaha; Fig. 76).<sup>8</sup> The Mughals, however, preferred the term *shabīh*, which may be understood to emphasize “likeness” over “form.” A portrait of one of Akbar’s closest officials, dated about 1590, is inscribed “shabīh-i raja man sing” (likeness of Raja Man Sing; Fig. 77). The artist used European techniques to delineate the Raja’s heavy body, giving a clear sense of volume and weight. The figure leans on a long staff, communicating a slight impression of fatigue. The carefully trimmed white mustache and the gray hair tucked under his turban insinuate old age. However, the slightly pursed lips and the straight gaze suggest determination, loyalty, and mental acuity in this boon companion of Akbar’s.

In a crowded darbar scene dated about 1620–24, with Jahangir presiding over his court, several of the participants are identified with inscriptions (Fig. 78). The label on the person standing just below the emperor reads “shabīh-i Mahabat Khan,” naming one of the highest-ranking officers at the court (Fig. 78a).<sup>9</sup> At lower left a Jesuit is depicted in the crowd, the inscription

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(Varanasi: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1981): 183–91, figs. 351–63; Mika Natif, “Explaining Early Mughal Painting” (PhD diss., New York University, 2006), 135–43; Yael Rice, “Between the Brush and the Pen: On the Intertwined Histories of Mughal Painting and Calligraphy,” in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 148–74.

- 8 Ram Das Kachhwaha (d. 1613) was a courtier in the service of Akbar and Jahangir. Linda York dates the painting (Chester Beatty Library, 11A.35) to about 1590–95 and attributes it to the Mughal artist Manohar. Elaine Wright dates it to about 1600–1605. Linda York Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 2 vols., (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 1:140; Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa’: Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin* (Alexandria, VA: Art Services International, 2008), 166, 274–75.
- 9 Zaman Beg Mahabat Khan started as a commander under Akbar and quickly rose in rank under Jahangir, becoming a close advisor. Nur Jahan perceived him as a threat, and in 1626 led an attack against him, while attempting to keep Jahangir in power. John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 114–16; Thomas William Beale, *The Oriental Biographical Dictionary*, rev. and enl. by Henry George Keene (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1881), 161.



FIGURE 75 Jahangir and His Vizier, I'timad al-Daula, by Manohar, ca. 1615, recto folio from the *Shah Jahan Album*, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 51.4 × 38.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.121.10.23.



FIGURE 76 Ram Das Kachhwaha, attributed to Manohar, ca. 1590–95, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and ink on paper. 15.5 × 8.0 cm. Chester Beatty Library, number nA.35.

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FIGURE 77 Raja Man Singh of Amber, *album leaf*, ca. 1590, *Mughal India*. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. 23.2 × 14.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 1982.174.



FIGURE 78 Darbar of Jahangir, attributed to Manohar and to Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1620–24, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 35.0 × 20.0 cm. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, accession number 14.654. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON FRANCIS BARTLETT; DONATION OF 1912 AND PICTURE FUND; 14.654



FIGURE 78A *Detail: Mahabat Khan. Darbar of Jahangir, attributed to Manohar and to Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1620–24, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 35.0 × 20.0 cm. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, accession number 14.654. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON FRANCIS BARTLETT; DONATION OF 1912 AND PICTURE FUND; 14.654*

on his white collar saying only “shabīh-i padri,” without providing a specific name (Fig. 78b). Blond and blue-eyed, he is identified by scholars as the Florentine priest Francisco Corsi (1573–1635), who was active at the Mughal court in Agra around the time the painting was made.<sup>10</sup>

Both Akbar and Jahangir examined portraits and commented on them. Jahangir, after inspecting his artist Bishan Das’s portraits of the Safavid Shah Abbas I, remarked that the artist “had drawn the likeness of my brother [*shabīh-i baradaram*] the shah, in particular, very, very well [*besyar besyar khūb*].”<sup>11</sup> The artist, he said, “was without equal in drawing portraits [*shabīh-kashi*].”<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that Jahangir’s assessment regarding the portrait of a man he has never met (Shah Abbas I), was based on the artist’s technique and level of excursion. Portraiture was considered the genre in which artists best demonstrated their mastery of Mughal and European iconography and technique.

10 Milo Beach, *The Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India, 1600–1660* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 63. Simply labeling Corsi as “padri” without providing his name makes it uncertain at what period the labels were added to the picture.

11 Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *The Jahāngīrnama: Memoirs of Jahāngīr, Emperor of India*, trans. and ed. Wheeler M. Thackston (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 319; Idem, *Jahāngīrnamah: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (Tehran: Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1359 [1980]), 323–33.

12 *Jahāngīrnama* (English), 319; *Jahāngīrnamah: Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (Persian) 323.



FIGURE 78B *Detail: Father Corsi. Darbar of Jahangir, attributed to Manohar and to Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1620–24, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 35.0 × 20.0 cm. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, accession number 14.654. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON FRANCIS BARTLETT; DONATION OF 1912 AND PICTURE FUND; 14.654*



FIGURE 78C *Detail: Khawas Khan, Mahabat Khan and Asaf Khan. Darbar of Jahangir, attributed to Manohar and to Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1620–24, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 35.0 × 20.0 cm. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, accession number 14.654. MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON FRANCIS BARTLETT; DONATION OF 1912 AND PICTURE FUND; 14.654*

Closely supervised under the auspices of Akbar and Jahangir, portraiture was a political tool requiring technical expertise and a sharp intellect. Not every artist was accomplished in the genre.<sup>13</sup> An incident in Jahangir's court demonstrates how carefully the emperor controlled the production of portraiture. In one assembly (*majlis*), he inspected portraits of his father, Akbar, that he thought were poorly executed. Angry, he declared that "only a limited number of artists—perhaps only three—should be allowed to make such portraits; other attempts should be cut short—by cutting off the offending fingers."<sup>14</sup> The emperor's vetting of the picture is an indication of the importance such images carried on a dynastic level, as well as his involvement in the process of portrait production.

Evidence of the status of experts in portraiture and the types of specialization it entailed can be found in historical sources as well as in inscriptions at the bottom of illustrated manuscript folios. In a painted folio from the *Akbarnama*, showing Akbar leaning against his gun while being approached by his concerned retinue, an inscription in red appears outside the lower borders. It identifies the artist Kesu as the one who worked exclusively on the faces (*chihra nāmī-i Kesu*), while Mahesh was responsible for the general composition and painting (*amal-i Mahesh*; Fig. 79).<sup>15</sup>

An inscription at the bottom of a depiction of "Tumanba Khan, His Wife, and His Nine Sons," indicates that the design and faces were by Basawan (*tarḥ va chihra-i Basawan*), while Bhim Gujarati was responsible for the rest of the

13 In the Timurid period, Babur criticized the famous painter Bihzad, noting that "His work was very dainty but he did not draw beardless faces well; he used greatly to lengthen the double chin (*ghab-ghab*); bearded faces he drew admirably." Zahir al-Din Muhammad Bābur, *Babur-Nama (Memoirs of Babur): Zahiru'd-din Muhammad Babur Padshah Ghazi*, trans. Annette Susannah Beveridge (London: Luzak, 1922), 1:291.

14 'Abd al-Sattār ibn Qāsim Lāhawrī, *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*, ed. 'Arif Nawshahi and Mu'īn Nizami (Tehran: Markaz-i Pizhuhishi Miras-i Maktub, 2006), 242–43. Cited in Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Catholic and Muslims in the Court of Jahangir (1608–1601)," in *Writing the Mughal World: Studies on Culture and Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 289.

15 Painting discussed by Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor: The Art of the Book, 1560–1660* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum Publications, 2002), pl. 52, 80. Similar designations appear in folios from the *Baburnama*, the Jaipur *Razmnama* (a Persian version of the Mahabharata), and other illustrated manuscripts. For other examples, see John Seyller, "Scribal Notes on Mughal Manuscript Illustrations," 249–50. On the collaboration among artists at the royal workshops of Akbar in the 1580s see Yael Rice, "Workshop as Network: A Case Study from Mughal South Asia," *Artl@s Bulletin* 6, no. 3 (2017): Article 4.



FIGURE 79 Akbar Lost in the Desert While Hunting Wild Asses, by Mohesh and Kesav, folio from the Akbarnama, ca. 1586–89, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 33.4 × 20.1 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, 1S.2:84–1896.

work (*amal-i Bhim Gujarati*).<sup>16</sup> In another illustration from the *Akbarnama*, the inscription in red below the picture credits Madhav as painter of the portraits of the eight main figures, Miskin, as creator of the overall composition, and Sarwan for execution of the rest of the work (*tarḥ-i Miskin, amal-i Sarwan, chihra nāmī-i hasht šūrat Madhav*).<sup>17</sup> The *Ain-i Akbari* implies that these inscriptions were made by the library supervisor (*daroghah*) and secretary, or clerk (*bitikchi*), who credited the artists responsible for the overall design (*tarḥ*) and for the coloring, or the mixing of colors (*rang-āmezi*).<sup>18</sup> Portrait specialists, usually assigned to depict important figures in the picture, were designated as “face painters” (*chihra nāmī, chihra kushāī, or chihra kār*).<sup>19</sup> Basawan’s talent is noted in the *Ain-i Akbari*, where Abu’l Fazl wrote that he excelled in the painting of faces (*chihra kushāī*) as well as in portraiture (*manand nigari*).<sup>20</sup> Here the term *manand nigari* relates to the concept of likeness, while the ability to paint human faces well does not necessarily indicate resemblance to the sitter.

In some instances, we may notice an even more complex praxis of painting production in which several artists contribute to specialized portraits within the same work. One such example is from Akbar’s period, in an illustrated folio from the Chester Beatty *Akbarnama* (Fig. 80).<sup>21</sup> An inscription in red paint in

16 طرح و چهره بساون عمل بهیمجراتی. Identified by the museum catalog as a folio from a *Chingiznama* (Book of Genghis Khan), ca. 1596 (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 48.144).

17 The painting represents the ambassadors of Shahrukh Mirza of Badakhshan paying homage to Emperor Akbar (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 15.2:114–1896).

18 Abū’l Fazl ibn Mubārak, *Āīn-i Akbarī*, ed. Henry Blochmann (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867–77) 1:116.

19 *Chihra* (چهره) can mean face, countenance, complexion, physiognomy, features, or original essence. Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary* (London, K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1930), and Ali Akbar Dehkhoda, *Lughat’namah* (Tihrah: Dānishgāh-i Tihrah, 1946). For the most part, these terms have been used interchangeably, *chihra nāmī* being the most common. *Nāmī* (نامی) means illustrious or famous, so *chihra nāmī* can be understood as the main portraits, or “main faces,” portraits of key characters. In one occurrence, fol. 32v of the Chester Beatty *Akbarnama*, *chihra nāmī* and *chihra kushāī* are assigned to different artists. John Seyller believes that the former term is a “particular aspect” of the latter, but does not provide sufficient explanation. See his note 11 in “Scribal Notes on Mughal Manuscript Illustrations,” *Artibus Asiae* 48, no. 3–4 (1987): 249. Steingass translates the term *chihra kushāī* as “a display.” Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, 405. Dehkhoda says that the term is synonymous with a portraitist or a painter. Dehkhoda, *Lughat’namah*.

20 *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:117.

21 This is part of a double-page composition. “Akbar Rides the Mast Elephant Lakhna, probably in 1558,” *Akbarnama*, ca. 1603–5 (Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, ms.3, fol. 32v). Mast is a man-killing elephant.

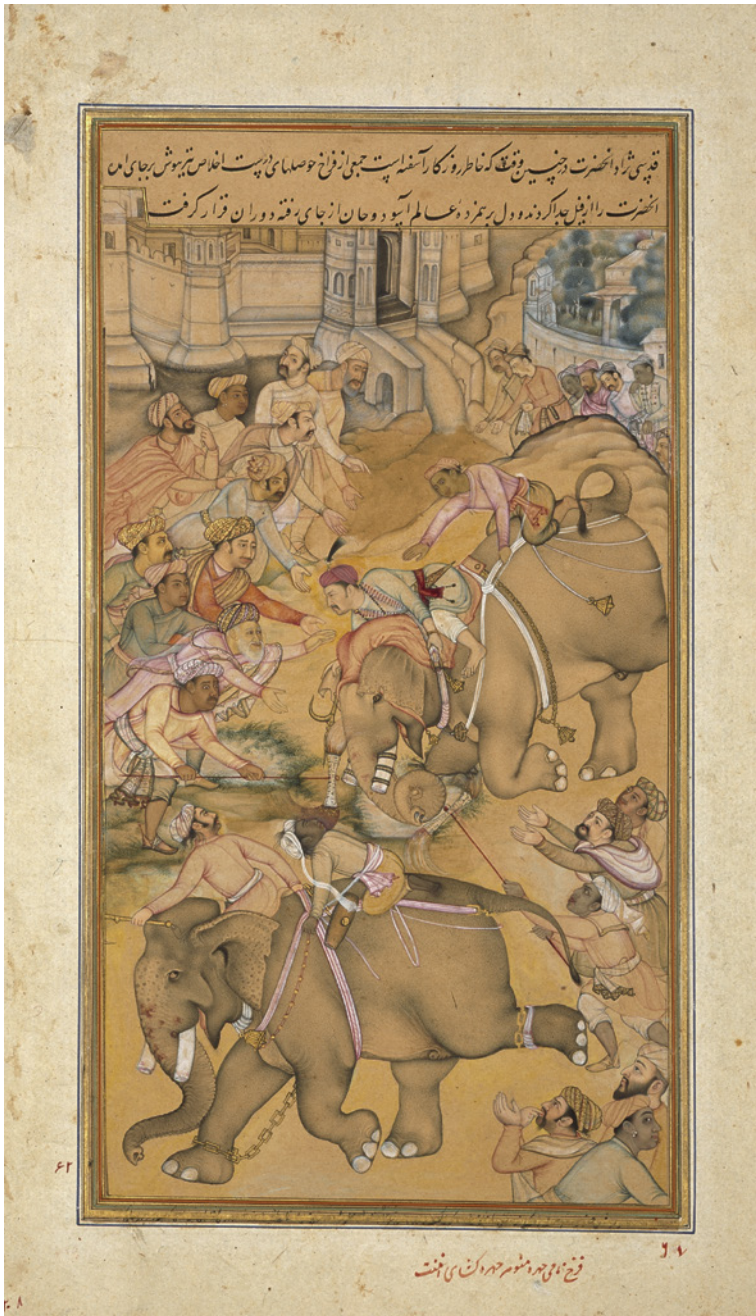


FIGURE 80 Akbar Rides the Mast Elephant Lakhna, probably in 1558, by Farrukh, Manohar and Anant, fol. 32v from the Akbarnama, ca. 1603–5, Mughal India. Ink and watercolor on paper. 43.0 × 26.0 cm. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, ms.3, fol. 32v.

the margins states that the work was done by Farrukh and that the painting of faces (*nāmī chihra* and *chihra kushā'ī*) was assigned to Manohar and Anant.<sup>22</sup> Linda York Leach has argued that the faces of Akbar, the mahouts (elephant tenders), and the spectators were done by different hands.<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the two designated terms for portrait painting—*nāmī chihra* and *chihra kushā'ī*—indicate a hierarchy of tasks, distinguishing between the portrayal of the protagonist and the rendering of lesser figures. In this case, Manohar rendered Akbar's physiognomy and Anant painted the portraits of the mahouts. Jahangir, boasting in his memoir about his connoisseurship, may also have been describing this tradition regarding portrayals of important individuals. He wrote, "even if it is a scene of several figures and each face is by a different master, I can tell who did which face."<sup>24</sup>

Self-portraiture was another category of painting that flourished at the Mughal courts. The artist Dawlat used the term *shabīh-i khūd* (self-portrait) to indicate his image in the colophon of a *Khamsa* of Nizami made for Emperor Akbar (Fig. 81).<sup>25</sup> The picture shows Dawlat and the calligrapher Abd al-Rahim Haravi at work, and the identifying inscription appears on the wall decoration behind them. The painting in progress held by the artist—a picture within a picture—shows an unidentified man in profile (Fig. 81a). It does not seem to be a likeness of the calligrapher Abd al-Rahim Haravi, facing the artist, because the figure in the artist's picture has dark hair and a dark beard. We may also rule out the possibility of a self-portrait within a self-portrait, since the figure

22 Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 1:256. Seyller misread "Mansur" for Manohar. See Seyller, "Scribal Notes on Mughal Manuscript Illustrations," 249n11. The names in Persian differ by only one letter, but the inscription spells Manohar's name more clearly. Since Manohar was responsible for numerous portraits of Akbar, it makes sense that he, not Mansur, be listed as the main portraitist. According to J. V. S. Wilkinson, the margins of this illustration were replaced around the eighteenth century in Iran. Thomas Arnold, *The Library of A. Chester Beatty, a Catalogue of the Indian Miniatures*, rev. and ed. James Vere Stewart Wilkinson (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 1:5. The librarian of Nader Shah (or another keeper of the manuscript), who was probably responsible for the new margins, most likely copied the original Mughal notations into them.

23 Leach attributes Akbar's face to Manohar, and the mahout portraits to Anant. Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 1:256.

24 *Jahangirnāma* (English), 268. Jahangir's statement has been discussed by numerous scholars who considered it an indication of artistic individual styles in Mughal painting.

25 Dawlat uses the same term for another self-portrait, in the margins of a folio from Jahangir's album, now at the Gulistan Palace Library in Tehran. For the inscriptions there, see Yedda Godard, "Les marges du Murakka' Gulshan," *Athar-e Iran: Annales du service archrom. Jahangirra'Iran* (Haarlem: Joh. Enschedeservice ar, 1936), 111–33, esp. 23.



FIGURE 81 Colophon with Portraits of Artist Dawlat and Calligrapher Abd al-Rahim Haravi, by Dawlat, fol. 325v from the *Khamsa* (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95, Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 30.0 × 19.5 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 325v.

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FIGURE 81A

*Detail: Colophon with Portraits of Artist Dawlat and Calligrapher Abd al-Rahim Haravi, by Dawlat, fol. 325v, from the Khamsa (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95, Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 30.0 × 19.5 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 325v.*

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depicted has a light complexion, while the artist's dark skin is clearly indicated in a couple of pictures known to be self-portraits.<sup>26</sup>

The colophon composition is perhaps a clue that, contrary to common belief, the artist was working from memory and not painting from a live model, at least at this stage of his work. After studying several Mughal illustrated colophons in which an artist sits facing a calligrapher and paints, Som Prakash Verma concluded that Mughal painters created portraits from life.<sup>27</sup> Close examination of these images, however, reveals that the picture within the picture is not always of the person sitting in front of the artist. And in the pictorial colophon of a manuscript of the *Gulistan* (Rose Garden) of Sa'di, the young artist (Dawlat) is shown writing, not depicting the calligrapher sitting in front of him.<sup>28</sup>

The question of whether Mughal portraits were painted from life or from memory has occupied art historians for quite some time. Several scholars have argued that the Mughal tendency toward verisimilitude, sometimes referred to as "naturalism" or "realism," is evidence that artists in the workshops painted from live models. A miniature from the Mughal *Khamsa* of Nizami illustrates an episode in which a Russian princess paints her own portrait (Fig. 82).<sup>29</sup> Seen in her fortress, the princess sits in an open pavilion, surrounded by male and female attendants. One of her maids holds up a mirror as the princess draws her own likeness in profile. The illustration emphasizes the princess's face, which bears clear similarities to the likeness the princess is making.<sup>30</sup>

Mughal historical sources mention Akbar ordering his officers to have their portraits made, and Jahangir directing his artists to make pictures of the exotic

26 Pictorial colophon, signed by Dawlat, *Khamsa* of Nizami, dated 1595–96. The painting was added by the order of Emperor Jahangir in about 1609–10 (British Library, London, Or. 12208, fol. 325v). I accept Yael Rice's proposition that the image within the picture corresponds to the prevailing type of court portrayals for high officials. Rice, "Between the Brush and the Pen," 173. These portraits usually show a man standing in profile. See the numerous examples from the Kevorkian Album at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

27 Som Prakash Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), 57.

28 Royal Asiatic Society, London, Ms. Pers. 258, fol. 128v.

29 Nizami, *The Haft Paykar: A Medieval Persian Romance*, trans. Julie Scott Meisami (Oxford University Press, 1995), 162–63.

30 Gregory Minissalle interprets the use of portraiture in this image as a commentary on reflexivity involving concepts of picture making, reflection and illusion. Gregory Minissalle, *Images of Thought, Visuality in Islamic India, 1550–1750* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 236.



FIGURE 82 Detail: "The Princess who Painted a Self-portrait," Told by the Russian Princess, by Jagannath, fol. 206r from the Khamsa (Quintet) by Nizami, 1593–95. Lahore, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Approx. 30.0 × 19.5 cm. British Library Or. 12208, fol. 206r.  
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animals that he received from a European delegation from Goa.<sup>31</sup> These statements complement the numerous surviving portraits of male Mughal dignitaries, which are evidence of close observation and rendering of distinguishing characteristics. They provide further support for the argument that some portraits were made from life, or at least an initial sketch was made in person before the rest of the painting was completed in one of the royal workshops. Jahangir sent his highly regarded artist Bishan Das with the imperial emissary to the Safavid court to paint the likenesses of Shah Abbas I and his officers and entourage (Fig. 83).<sup>32</sup> While the artist probably made some preliminary sketches of the Shah during official audiences, the more fully developed compositions came later, when the embassy returned to India.<sup>33</sup> Another example of a royal portrait painted from life—a likeness of Jahangir himself—was recorded by Sir Thomas Roe in 1618. When Jahangir heard that one of the East India Company employees was a painter, he ordered the Englishman to make his portrait. The painter, by the name of Hatfield, and an interpreter (“Master Steele”), were brought to the private apartments of Jahangir’s palace—albeit with their faces covered until they arrived at the inner sanctum—and the emperor sat for his portrait.<sup>34</sup> We know nothing about the process, the portrait’s

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- 31 Abu’l Fazl tells us that Akbar ordered his administrators “to have the likenesses [تصویر] taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed: those that have passed away, have received a new life, and those who are still alive, have immortality promised them.” Abu’l Fazl ibn Mubārak, *The Ain-i Akbari*, trans. Henry Blochmann and H. S. Jarrett (1867–77. Reprint, Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 2010) 1:107–9; *Āīn-i Akbarī* (Persian), 1:77, 118. Blochmann’s translation of the preceding sentence, “His Majesty himself sat for his likeness,” appears to be incorrect. A more precise translation would be “His Majesty himself indicated/named/described the place to be painted.” This sentence relates to the discussion of illustrated manuscripts that were commissioned at the Mughal workshops under Akbar’s encouragement. I thank Paul Losensky for his enlightening remarks. On Jahangir ordering paintings of animals, see, *Jahangirnāma* (English), 94.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 319. Bishan Das joined the embassy led by Khan Alam to the Safavid court in 1613.
- 33 Several Mughal paintings that were made at Jahangir’s workshops include portraits of Shah Abbas I. See, for example, the one attributed to Bishan Das, Mughal India, ca. 1618 (British Museum, London, ME 1920.0917.0.13.2); or Abu’l Hasan’s allegorical representation of the shah with Jahangir, also ca. 1618, in the St. Petersburg Album (Freer and Sackler Gallery, Washington DC, F1945.9).
- 34 Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615–1619*, ed. William Foster (London: Hakluyt Society, 1899), 2:477. Roe mentions that one of the members of his expedition, a man by the name of Richard Steele, brought a painter with him. Steele knew Persian, and Roe initially used him as an interpreter, until he found out that Steele was working against him and trying to establish his own relationship with

whereabouts, or its reception. Interestingly, Edward Terry, the chaplain who accompanied Ambassador Roe, included in his journey book a copper plate of a portrait of Jahangir, stating that it “was taken from a Picture of his drawn to the Life.”<sup>35</sup> Although Terry’s statement is not to be accepted as fact, it signals the importance assigned to distinguishing details and their (often deceptive) link to the affirmation of truth, something that Mughal artists and patrons were also aware of.<sup>36</sup>

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the East India Company. *Ibid.*, 2:484. Earlier, Roe mentions an amateur painter by the name of Robert Hughes (Master Hewes), whose work interested Jahangir. *Ibid.*, 1: 211–13. Som Prakash Verma mentions these two English artists in his *Crossing Cultural Frontiers: Biblical Themes in Mughal Painting* (New Delhi: Aryan Books International, 2011), 86. On Robert Hughes’s work, see Susan Stronge, “‘Far From the Arte of Painting’: An English Amateur Artist at the Court of Jahangir,” in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge, and Andrew Topsfield (London: Victoria & Albert Museum; Ahmedabad, India: Mapin Publishing, 2004), 129–37. An account of the incident that took place in 1618 mentions

“a painter, whom the Mogol would haue to take his picture; and because hee could not speake the language, Master Steele (who could speake the language of the Court, which is Persian) was admitted (a thing not permitted to Men) into the Mogols lodgings, where he did sit for the said Limner. At his entrance, the chiefe Eunuch put a cloth ouer his head that he should not see the Women (which hee might heare as hee passed, and once also saw woorke) entreauged them and himselfe so info the Kinges seruice that I cannot without hazarding much displeasure enforce them eyther to retyre or to follow that they promised you.”

Samuel Purchas, who wrote a book on English travelers, most likely heard the stories about Jahangir’s court from Richard Steele. Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 534. See also Roe, *Embassy*, 2:500–501.

35 The figure does not resemble other verified portraits of Jahangir. See *Edward Terry, A Voyage to East-India* (1655; reprinted J. Wilkie; and E. Easton, at Salisbury, 1777), 346.

36 The inclusion of Jahangir’s portrait in Terry’s book contributed to the authentication of his narrative, establishing trust and connections to “real” events. The image that appears in Terry’s printed edition is perhaps a melding of images of Jahangir and Prince Khurram that appear in Samuel Purchas’s book on English travelers, originally published in 1625 ([http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.88-2003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:12137](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:12137)). William Foster, the editor of Roe’s memoir, notices the amalgamation of the so-called Jahangir image in Terry’s account, and remarks that it is “based on a couple of Mughal pictures, one containing Jahangir and his attendant, the other Prince Khurram. Jahangir, it will be noticed, has a hawk on his right hand, and grasps a small bird in his left. The Prince holds a small book in one hand and the conventional flower in the other.” Roe, *Embassy*, 2:562.



FIGURE 83 Portrait of Shah 'Abbas I of Persia, attributed to Bishan Das, ca. 1613–19, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor on paper, 18.1 × 9.0 cm. British Museum, ME 1920.0917.0.13.2.

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The Mughal practice of rendering portraits from memory and not through direct observation is also documented. Govardhan's posthumous portrayal of Akbar in old age was made in about 1630, some twenty-five years after the emperor's death (Fig. 84).<sup>37</sup> The emperor is haloed, with gray hair and mustache, dull, wrinkled skin, and sagging chin. His posture is slightly stooped and he is heavily bejeweled. It may be that the artist was working solely from his own memory, since he had been active in the royal workshops during Akbar's lifetime, but he may also have consulted other witnesses or an extant corpus of representations of the Mughal ruler.<sup>38</sup> Abu'l Fazl mentions the depiction of the deceased as both memento and promise of eternity.<sup>39</sup> The paintings of Babur and Humayun, as they appear in numerous illustrations from the *Baburnama*, the *Akbarnama*, and album pages, were done from memory or from earlier existing examples. By the time these likenesses were painted, both Babur and Humayun had died.<sup>40</sup>

Through observation and memory, Mughal artists used European painting techniques to create a delicate dance between the imagination and the aesthetic of verisimilitude, with the assumption that some "truth" or "reality" can be rendered. The poet Nizami (1141–1209) and later Persian authors refer to the portrait as a phantom (*khiyāl*), something created from memory.<sup>41</sup> In his treatise *Gulistān-i hunar* (Garden of Art), composed in about 1596–97, Qazi Ahmad states, "the image [*paykari*] which the portrait-painter [*naqash-i chihra*] reveals on the tablets of the mind cannot be reflected in everybody's mirror of beauty."<sup>42</sup> This is to say that portraiture is not for everyone to understand and enjoy, but reserved for those capable of grasping its multifaceted meaning. Qazi Ahmad tells about a king who rewarded his painter twice, for capturing two aspects of his portrait:

37 The painting was inserted into Shah Jahan's album, now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (55.121.10.22).

38 Susan Stronge describes a similar practice in *darbar* paintings from the time of Jahangir, in which renderings of individuals appear disproportionate and "must all have been traced from extant portraits." Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor*, 122–24. For comparative portraits of Jahangir and their analysis, see Wright, *Muraqqa'*, 168–69.

39 See n. 31 above.

40 The *Baburnama* and the *Akbarnama* were illustrated during the time of Akbar, in the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries.

41 Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting," 18. Soucek's translation.

42 Qazi Ahmad ibn Mir Munshi, *Calligraphers and Painters*, trans. from Persian into Russian, Vladimir Minorsky and from Russian into English, T. Minorsky, intro. B. N. Zakhoder, Occasional Papers, Freer Gallery of Art 3, no. 2 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1959), 175; in the Persian original, Qazi Ahmad ibn Mir Munshi, *Gulistān-i hunar* (Tehran: Iran Cultural Foundation, 1352 [1974]), 129.



FIGURE 84 Akbar with Lion and Calf, a posthumous portrayal of Akbar at an old age, by Govardhan, ca. 1630, folio from the *Shah Jahan album*, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 38.9 × 25.7 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.10.22.

One gift was for the shape of his mastery,  
The other for the play of his imagination.<sup>43</sup>

The intertwining of these concepts—technique and intellection, form and meaning—is part of what makes portraiture so seductive and invites us to gaze intently at the images. The artful and successful combination of these elements enables such pictures to reflect and record the heart, the mind, and the soul of the sitter, meshing the outer with the inner being. Mughal artists achieved this amalgamation by mastering the use of light, shade, tonal transition, volume, three-dimensionality, and attention to detail, evoking firsthand experience and a profound acquaintance with the sitter.

### Form, Essence, and Physiognomy

A precise definition of the term “portraiture” in art remains somewhat elusive, but two approaches have emerged from art-historical debates: One focuses on life-like, physically accurate renderings and the other on conveying the character and personality of the sitter. In both cases, what lies at the core of portrait painting is the intention to create an image that can be associated with a specific individual. Mughal artists often meshed these two approaches to portraiture in their own creations.

Linking form or exterior appearance (*ṣūrat* صورت) with inner meaning or essence (*maʿnī* معنى) is a theme that appears repeatedly in the *Akbarnama*, as well as in Jahangir’s writings.<sup>44</sup> If, to some, there seems to be a contradiction between the desire to duplicate the form of the sitter and the wish to capture the sitter’s essence or spirit,<sup>45</sup> Akbar and Jahangir had no problem seeing these two aspects of portraiture as halves of a whole. Abu’l Fazl comments on the connection between the two and argues that what we call form (*ṣūrat*) guides

43 Qazi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters*, 178; Qazi Ahmad, *Gulistān-i hunar*, 131–32.

44 For the numerous references by Akbar and Jahangir to this concept, see Heike Franke, “Emperors of *Ṣūrat* and *Maʿnī*: Jahangir and Shah Jahan as Temporal and Spiritual Rulers,” *Muqarnas* 31 (2014): 123–49. On the relation of such ideas to Neoplatonism, see Soucek, “Theory and Practice of Portraiture,” 102. For a distinction between the physiognomic portrait and what she terms “signaletic” portrait in Mughal painting see the discussion by Valerie Gonzalez, *Aesthetic Hybridity in Mughal Painting 1526–1658* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate, 2015), 235–36.

45 Yves Porter in collaboration with Richard Castinele, “Le portrait dans l’orient musulman pré-moderne: Une decantation du modèle en son essence,” in *De la figuration humaine au portrait dans l’art islamique*, ed. Houari Touati (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 111–37, esp. 124–26.

us to find an essence or idea (*maʿnī*).<sup>46</sup> Both of Akbar's historians, Abu'l Fazl and Badauni, mention a *risalah* (poetical treatise, now lost) called "Form and Meaning" (*ṣūrat va maʿnī*), written by Pairawi of Sawah, from which Badauni quotes a few lines:<sup>47</sup>

O Lord! I am unable to grasp hidden truth [*maʿnī*]  
 Forgive me, for I am too much of a worshipper of the outward form  
 [*ṣūrat*].

Similarly, Jahangir wrote the following quatrain on a portrait he sent to Ibrahim Adil Shah II, ruler of the Sultanate of Bijapur:

Our merciful glance is always in your direction  
 Rest assured in the shadow of our felicity  
 We have sent you our likeness [*shabīh*]  
 So that you may see our inner self [*maʿnī*] through our external  
 appearance [*ṣūrat-i ma*].<sup>48</sup>

The emperor perceived his own painted portrait as an image embodying both his external appearance and his essence, self and empire. The task of the artist was to go beyond the world of nature into the world of ideas.<sup>49</sup>

46 *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:111.

47 Badauni and Abu'l Fazl concur that Pairawi was a good painter who was interested in "studying the outward form to hidden truths." Abd al-Qādir Badā'ūnī, *The Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, trans. George S. A. Ranking, Sir Wolsley Haig, and W. H. Lowe (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1884–1925) 3:27; Idem, *Muntakhab al-Tawārīkh*, ed. Captain W. N. Lees and Munshi Ahmad Ali (Calcutta: College Press, 1865), 3:135. Abu'l Fazl quotes only the first hemistich. *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:600. He gives the author's name as Amir Beg. See also Yves Porter, *Painters, Paintings, and Books: An Essay on Indo-Persian Technical Literature* (New Delhi: Manohar Centre for Human Sciences, 1994), 105–6; Michael Brand, "The City as an Artistic Center," *Marg* 38, no. 2 (1986): 112.

48 *Jahangirnāma* (English), 276; Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad Jahāngīr, *Tūzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (Lucknow: Naval Kishore, 1863), 246. Text in brackets is the author's addition. Keelan Overton discusses this quatrain in the context of Mughal-Bijapuri diplomatic relationship. Keelan Overton, "Vida de Jacques de Courte," in *The Visual World of Muslim India: the art, culture and society of the Deccan in the early modern era*, ed. Laura E. Parodi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 245.

49 Soucek, "Theory and Practice of Portraiture," 106; Yves Porter, "From the 'Theory of the Two Qalams' to the 'Seven Principles of Painting': Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting," *Muqarnas* 17 (2000): 112. Based on Tusi's *Akhlaqi* philosophy, Abu'l Fazl explains the symbiotic relationship between the emperor's physic, his household, and

As they repurposed iconographic elements and used painting techniques borrowed from European art, Mughal artists transformed the genre of portraiture in the Muslim sphere to an imperative tool of political, ideological, and historical importance. For example, in the portrait of Jahangir done by Manohar, showing the emperor with his chief minister I'timadudawla, the inscription on the paper held by the vizier reads: "God is the greatest. Nur-ud-din Jahangir, son of Akbar Shah, is Padshah [Emperor] in form [*ṣūrat*] and essence [*ma'ni*] through the grace of God" (Fig. 75).<sup>50</sup> Jahangir appears as the 'Universal Manifestation' (*mazhar-i kull*), haloed, with his face, in profile, projecting strength and wisdom. The emperor's firm body, broad shoulders, and jewelry show his royal authority, while the elegance of his hand gesture conveys his sophistication. His almond-shaped eyes gaze into the distance, suggesting far-reaching vision. With his hair tucked under the turban (only a graceful side-curl escaping), his groomed mustache, perfect peachy skin, straight nose, and relaxed, full lips, Jahangir is the embodiment of beauty, riches, and success. He is the physical picture of the just ruler, who follows *Akhlaqi* norms and exemplifies self-control and restraint.<sup>51</sup> Abu'l Fazl remarks that Akbar's court, where Jahangir was brought up and educated, was a place where "real beauty was prized," and further attests to an "outer agreeableness" paired with a "substantive loveliness."<sup>52</sup> The emphasis was on the balance between the two elements.

Some in the Muslim world objected to portraiture, arguing that human beings were created in the image of God, and that attempting to replicate that image was competing with the Creator.<sup>53</sup> To that Emperor Akbar replied:

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- the empire as mutually dependent. For example, *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:9, 163–5. For a discussion regarding Akbar's body and the empire see Ruby Lal, *Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 150–155.
- 50 Translated by Abdallah Ghouhani: <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451269>.
- 51 Nasr al-Din Tusi, *The Nasirean Ethics*, by Nasir ad-Din Tusi, trans. from the Persian by G. M. Wickens (London: Allen & Unwin, 1964), 57. For a discussion of Jahangir as 'Universal Manifestation' (*mazhar-i kull*) see Corinne Lefèvre, "Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections: The *Majalis-i Jahangiri* (1608–11) and the Socio-intellectual History of the Mughal 'ulama," *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 54, no. 3 (2017): 317–338.
- 52 Abū'l Faḍl ibn Muḥārak, *The Akbar-nāma*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010. First published 1902–39 by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 3:105.
- 53 For the idea voiced by Muslim theologians that we cease to be in the image of God when committing idolatry, see Gerald R. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 105. Over the

“I cannot tolerate those who make the slightest criticism of this art. It seems to me that a painter is better than most in gaining a knowledge of God. Each time he draws a living being he must draw each and every limb of it, but seeing that he cannot bring it to life must perforce give thought to the miracle wrought by the Creator and thus obtain a knowledge of Him.”<sup>54</sup> Abu’l Fazl, too, equated making likenesses of people or things with the acquisition of knowledge and a way to ward off ignorance.<sup>55</sup>

Employing sight to obtain knowledge of the sitter can be related to another aspect of portraiture in Islamic art, the practice of physiognomy (*ilm al-firāsa*).<sup>56</sup> According to this practice, considered by the Mughals to be a science and a technique, people’s physical features reflect their inner character, nature, and moral comportment. Reading signs such as color and shape in the face and body, the practitioner of *firāsa* could discern a person’s true mind and soul, predict his performance, and judge his conduct. Emperor Akbar encouraged his officials and commanders to use *firāsa* in judicial investigations, arguing that an arbitrator “should not be satisfied with witnesses and oaths, but pursue them [investigations] by manifold inquiries, by the study

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- centuries religious scholars or other individuals have objected to figural representations and, more specifically, to portraiture, but such objections have been sporadic. Mika Natif, “The Painter’s Breath and Concepts of Idol Anxiety in Islamic Art,” in *Idol Anxiety*, ed. Josh Ellenbogen and Aaron Tugendhaft (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 41–55.
- 54 *Ain-i Akbari* section translated by C. M. Naim, Appendix C, *Tūtī-nāma: Tales of a Parrot = das Papageienbuch: vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift aus dem Besitz des Cleveland Museum of Art = Complete colour Facsimile Edition in Original Size of the Manuscript in Possession of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1976), 2:184. Soucek points to the close parallels between Akbar’s ideas and those in the *Enneads* of Plotinus. Soucek, “Theory and Practice of Portraiture,” 101. By mentioning the notion of the artists failing to bring their images to life, Akbar evokes a famous *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ibn Abbas. About this *ḥadīth* see Mika Natif, “Painters will be Punished”: The Politics of Figural Representation amongst the Umayyads,” in *The Image of Islamic Art*, ed. Stefano Carboni and Christiane Gruber (Ginkgo Library Press, 2018), forthcoming.
- 55 *Ain-i Akbari* section translated by C. M. Naim, *Tūtī-nāma*, 2:184. Much earlier, the philosopher Muhammad b. Zakariyya al-Rāzī (d.923) refers to the healing powers of images and how the mind is “refined and ennobled” by the contemplation of pictures. Quoted by Franz Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1975), 265–66. Even though Abu’l Fazl echoes similar sentiments about painting, it is worth noting that in another section of the *Ain-i Akbari*, he gives preference to the written word as an intellectual means. *A’in-i Akbari* (Persian) 1:111.
- 56 On the history and popularity of *firāsa* in the Muslim world, see Robert Hoyland, “Physiognomy in Islam,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 30 (2005): 361–402.

of physiognomy, and the exercise of foresight.”<sup>57</sup> Jahangir, too, displayed his knowledge of *firāsa*. Describing his father’s appearance and conduct, he observed, “on his left nostril he had a very beautiful fleshy mole, about the size of half a chickpea. Among those who have some expertise in the science of physiognomy such a mole is considered a sign of great good fortune.”<sup>58</sup>

It is interesting to note how in his own portraits Jahangir casts himself in his father’s image. He describes Akbar as follows: “In stature he was of medium height. He had a wheaten complexion and black eyes and eyebrows. His countenance was radiant, and he had the build of a lion, broad of chest with long hands and arms.... In his conduct and manners there was no comparison between him and the people of the world—a divine aura was apparent around him.”<sup>59</sup> This is, in essence, how Jahangir chose to have himself represented in official portraits: with light, radiant skin; dark eyes, eyebrows, and hair; a penetrating gaze; broad shoulders and torso; strong body and arms; and good proportions (see Figs. 3, 40, 43). Comparing Akbar’s portrait from the *Akbarnama* in Figure 80 to the representation of Jahangir in Figure 78, we can see a physical resemblance between father and son, even though Akbar’s portrait shows less attention to detail. By casting himself in his father’s image, Jahangir developed visual links to the imperial figure of his father. He created a “dynastic agenda” in the form of an idealized portraiture, and a visual language that was distinctly reserved for the male members of the Mughal royal family.<sup>60</sup>

The practice of physiognomy, associated with personal morality, was also important to Islamic spirituality. The ability to exercise *firāsa* was an indication of deep religious beliefs, especially in Sufi circles. The Sufi master Abd al-Karim

57 *Ain-i Akbari* (English), 2:38. Akbar’s command follows instructions on the use of *firāsa* that Sufi masters passed on to their disciples. Hoyland, “Physiognomy in Islam,” 389.

58 *Jahangirnāma* (English), 36.

59 *Ibid.*

60 It is also possible that Jahangir was a spitting image of his father. However, their strong resemblance was not noticed in any of the primary sources. Creating a dynastic physiognomic persona may also be linked to the importance of genealogies at the Mughal courts. See Annabel Teh Gallop, “The Genealogical Seal of the Mughal Emperors of India,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Third Series* 9, no. 1 (1999): 77–140; Corinne Lefèvre, “In the Name of the Fathers: Mughal Genealogical Strategies from Bābur to Shāh Jahān,” *Religions of South Asia* 5, no. 1–2 (2011): 409–442; Lisa Balabanlilar, *Imperial Identity in the Mughal Empire: Memory and Dynastic Politics in Early Modern South and Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012). On more traditional images of Mughal sovereignty see Robert Skelton, “Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting,” in *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, ed. Priscilla P. Soucek (University Park: Published for the College Art Association of America by the Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 177–192.

al-Qushayri (d. 1072) held that “its strength is related to that of the possessor’s faith: whoever is stronger in faith is sharper in *firāsa*.”<sup>61</sup> Demonstrating Akbar’s religiosity and outstanding qualities as a just leader and a spiritual guide possessing the *farr-i izadi* (divine light), Abu’l Fazl wrote that the emperor could “discern the value of a man by the lineaments of his forehead, and can therefore increase or decrease his pay. He also distinguishes a tradesman by the look of his face from a soldier, so much so that experienced people are astonished, and refer His Majesty’s power of discernment to ‘hidden knowledge.’”<sup>62</sup>

The study of human corporeality and its relationship to character traits, as practiced by the Mughal elite, may have had an impact on Mughal artists, who developed an intense interest in creating portraits of both body and spirit, capturing *ṣūrat* and *ma’nī*. The application of these principles went beyond the portrayal of people. Father Monserrate, the visiting Jesuit who wrote an extensive commentary on the Mughal culture he encountered, described two life-size sculptures of elephants with their trunks raised, located at the gates of Fatehpur Sikri, as “so majestic and so true to life, that one might judge them to be the work of Phidias.”<sup>63</sup> A true compliment, coming from a European.

An attempt to capture both *ṣūrat* and *ma’nī* in the relationship between humans and animals can be seen in an image of Emperor Akbar painted in about 1590 (Fig. 85). It depicts a specific event during a hunting expedition in Bhera, near the Jhelum river in the Punjab in 1578. Akbar had a profound spiritual experience, a trance-like moment of divine revelation that resulted in his order to cease the slaughter of animals.<sup>64</sup> In the illustration, he appears like a sanyasi, an enlightened man, sitting on a boulder under a Bodhi tree. His body language turns inward as he bends slightly forward, gesturing modestly with his palm. Clearly visible on his thumb is an archer’s ring, signifying both

61 Hoyland, “Physiognomy in Islam,” 389, citing al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*, ed. Būlāk (Cairo, 1948), *Bāb al-firāsa*, 137. Also see Toufic Fahd, “Firāsa,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, 2016: [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/firasa-SIM\\_2374](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/firasa-SIM_2374).

62 *Ain-i Akbari* (English), 1:255. The famous compiler of hadith, Abu Isa al-Tirmidhi, notes this tradition, warning: “Beware the *firāsa* of the believer, for he sees with the light of God.” Hoyland, “Physiognomy in Islam,” 365. Abd al-Karim al-Qushayri argues that “*Firāsa* is emanations of light illuminating the heart; it is sure gnosis.” Quoted in *ibid.*, 389. These ideas meld well with Abu’l Fazl’s writings about Mughal views on illumination.

63 Antonio Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., on His Journey to the Court of Akbar*, trans. J. S. Hoyland, annot. S. N. Banerjee (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1922; New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 1992), 31.

64 *Akbarnama* (English), 3:345–48.



FIGURE 85 Akbar Ordering the Slaughter of Animals to Cease in 1578, attributed to Miskina, folio from the Akbarnama, ca. 1590, Mughal India; pasted into the Johnson album. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 30.5 × 18.5 cm. British Library J.8, 4.

the hunt and his military achievements.<sup>65</sup> With his signature mustache and straight nose, the emperor knits his brow, showing regret and compassion for the dead animals lying at his feet. His figure is surrounded by relatively empty space in an otherwise crowded composition. The space suggests a kind of radiance that both Abu'l Fazl and Jahangir mention. It is through the representation of hierarchy and specific facial features combined with the effects of light, shadow, and depth that Akbar's inner and outer physiognomy is expressed.

The scientist and philosopher Ibn al-Haytham (ca. 965–1040) expressed views on the precision of capturing outer appearance or verisimilitude that predated the writings of Abu'l Fazl and Emperor Jahangir by more than half a millennium.<sup>66</sup> Ibn al-Haytham wrote that artists “also make pictures of individual people, imitating what is in their forms of the outlines of their faces and bodies, their hair, the pores and wrinkles in their skin, and the creases in their clothes; thus they represent the roughness visible in their skin on account of the hair and the pores, and the roughness of their clothes due to their creases. Painted pictures will be perceived to be like the forms they represent if those who made them were skilled in the art of painting.”<sup>67</sup> Ibn al-Haytham thus regarded portraiture as a learned expertise: the success of the painted portrait was a direct function of the knowledge, experience, and dexterity of the artist.

In Nizami's poem “Khusrau and Shirin,” the artist Shapur explains to Shirin, “every painting [*ṣūra*] made by a painter [*ṣūrat-gār*] has a reflection [*nishān*] but no soul [*jān*]. They taught me painting, but the garment of the soul is sewn in another place.”<sup>68</sup> For Nizami, the portrait is a reflection of an image, and thus can be deceptive. He seems to agree, however, that the ability to create such an exact likeness is an acquired talent.<sup>69</sup>

Bishan Das, who portrayed the Safavid Shah Abbas I, was not the only artist Jahangir praised for the achievement of a fine likeness. To a portrait of Akbar's son and Jahangir's half-brother Danyal (1572–1604), made by Manohar in about 1595–1600, Jahangir added an inscription stating that the picture was “a portrait of my late brother Danyal—it is quite like him” (Fig. 86).<sup>70</sup> It was valuable praise, since Jahangir had intimate knowledge of the subject, whom

65 Susan Stronge discusses Akbar's appearance as an enlightened being in this painting. Stronge, *The Indian Portrait 1560–1860*, 64.

66 On the transmission of these concepts, see Gulru Necipoglu, “The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight, and Desire,” *Muqarnas* 32 (2015): 23–62.

67 Quoted by Necipoglu, *ibid.*, 35.

68 Soucek, “Nizami on Painters and Painting,” 18. Soucek's translation.

69 *Ibid.* In the story, Shapur makes three identical portraits of Khusrau Parviz, which, thanks to his skill, all turn out exactly alike.

70 “Shabih-i شبيهه) baradaram Daniyal marhum manand ast”. The bottom of the page bears an inscription identifying the artist as Manohar (*raqam Manohar*) (Metropolitan

he describes in his memoirs as “a young man of fine stature, with a pleasing build and good-looking.”<sup>71</sup> Manohar, the artist, depicted a dynastic persona, with a strong body, broad shoulders, and the recognizable facial features of the royal family. Danyal’s head is shown in profile, while his shoulders and torso turn slightly toward the viewer to emphasize his strength and masculinity. Although his clothes and jewelry indicate his royal status, his bearing appears straightforward.<sup>72</sup>

In another instance, Jahangir’s praise for a portrait is puzzling. An inscription on a painting of the ruler of Bijapur (in the Deccan), Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah II (r. 1580–1627) notes that it is “a good likeness” (*shabīh-i khūb*; Fig. 87).<sup>73</sup> The portrait was done in about 1620 by one of Jahangir’s leading artists, Hashim, and was part of an exchange of portraits with the shah.<sup>74</sup> But it bears little resemblance to numerous images of the ruler that were produced at the royal workshops in Bijapur (Fig. 88). What, then, is the meaning of the emperor’s evaluation of Hashim’s work as “a good likeness”? Keelan Overton situates Hashim’s portrayal of Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah II within the specificity of the ruler’s political demise and his surrender to Jahangir. The Mughal artist emphasized the fragility and weakness of Jahangir’s rival, showing his physical and psychological collapse. Therefore, in this case, Jahangir was commenting on the artistic achievement of Hashim to capture the inner and outer qualities of his subject.<sup>75</sup> Unlike the inscription on Danyal’s portrait, in which Jahangir

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Museum of Art, New York, 55.121.10.32). Trans. Maryam Ekhtiar. Also see Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience*, 58.

- 71 According to Jahangir, Danyal was fond of elephants, horses, guns, hunting, drinking wine, singing, and composed passable poetry. *Jahangirnama* (English), 37–39.
- 72 Both Danyal and Shah Murad (Jahangir’s half brothers) died of alcoholism. *Jahangirnama* (English), 37–39.
- 73 This painting is part of the Shah Jahan album (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 55.121.10.33). In Persian, along the left side of the portrait (in Jahangir’s hand): “A good portrait of Ibrahim ‘Adil Khan.” In Persian, under portrait (in Shah Jahan’s hand): “Work of Hashim.” See <https://metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451280?sortBy=Relevance&ft=Ibrahim+%CA%BFAdil+Shah&offset=0&ipp=20&pos=2>.
- 74 Jahangir had in his possession at least one royal portrait of the ruler of Bijapur that was sent as a gift to him. *Jahangirnama* (English), 276. An example from about 1615 is British Museum, London, 1937.0410.0.2. For the poem he wrote on one of the portraits sent to the Bijapuri ruler, see *Jahangirnama* (English), 276; *Jahangirnama* (Persian), 246. For a discussion of other portraits of Ibrahim Adil Shah II and the diplomatic gift exchange with Jahangir see Overton, “Vida de Jacques de Courte”; Navina Najat Haidar and Marika Sardar, *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and Fantasy* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015), 74, 93–96, 108–9, 111–17, 122.
- 75 Overton, “Vida de Jacques de Courte,” 256–57. Also see the brief discussion by John Seyller who states that Jahangir’s comments were symbolic courtly praises for the artist’s



FIGURE 86 Portrait of Prince Danyal, by Manohar, ca. 1595, folio from the *Shah Jahan Album*, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. 38.9 × 26.0 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 55.121.10.32.

referred specifically to the work's verisimilitude, here he comments on the painting as a creation independent of an immediately available specific model.

Memoir accounts of Jahangir's responses to two pictures of his ancestor Timur (r. 1370–1405) shed further light on the role of verisimilitude in that period. In the first account, we are told that the Franks, through the mediation of Muqarrab Khan (a Mughal high official and noble), sent Jahangir a picture of Timur that they claimed had been made when Timur captured the Ottoman Sultan, Yildirim Bayazid (r. 1389–1402), in 1402.<sup>76</sup> Among the emissaries Constantinople sent in submission to the new Central Asian ruler was an artist who “took [Timur's] likeness and brought it away.”<sup>77</sup> After examining the picture, Jahangir dismissed the European narrative, noting that “if this claim has any basis in fact, there will never be a better gift for me; however, since His Majesty's descendants bear no resemblance to the features in the picture, I am unconvinced that it is true.”<sup>78</sup> Had it presented dynastic facial features, the work would have embodied political “truth” and affirmed Mughal authority.<sup>79</sup>

In contrast to the European gift of doubtful verisimilitude, Jahangir recounts the story of another portrait of Timur that the Safavid shah sent him via Khan Alam, the Mughal ambassador, in 1619–20.<sup>80</sup> The picture was said to depict Timur in his battle with his fierce rival Iletmish Khan,<sup>81</sup> and to also include “the likeness [*shabih*] of his mighty sons and grand amirs who participated in the battle.” Next to each image was an identifying inscription.<sup>82</sup> Though Jahangir must have examined the picture closely, he makes no mention of verisimilitude,

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technical ability. John Seyller, “Hashim,” in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. Prapatidya Pal (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991), 111.

76 Thackston (*Jahangirnama* (English) 99–100) provides the date of March 3, 1609, for this event. A report from the East India Company in Surat, dated October 22, 1614, lists gifts brought for Jahangir by Wm. Edwardes, among them “one that will content the Mogul above all, the picture of Tamberlaine, from whence he derives himself.” Record no. 778 in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: East Indies, China and Japan, 1513–1616, Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, and Elsewhere* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1870), 329.

77 *Jahangirnama* (English) 99–100. In recognition of Timur's power, the Byzantines sent an embassy that also included a painter.

78 *Jahangirnama* (English), 99–100.

79 It is also possible that Jahangir shows some bias against the *firangīs*.

80 *Jahangirnama* (English), 319.

81 Iletmish Khan is probably a misspelling of Toqtamish (d. 1406), who was Timur's rival in the Golden Horde khanate.

82 The group painting, with 240 portraits, was signed by the artist Khalil Mirza Shahrukhi. *Jahangirnamah: Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (Persian), 323.



FIGURE 87 Portrait of Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II of Bijapur, by Hashim, ca. 1620, folio from the *Shah Jahan Album*, Mughal India. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper. 38.9 × 25.4 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.121.10.33.



FIGURE 88 Ibrahim 'Adil Shah II of Bijapur, ca. 1615, folio from an album, Bijapur, Deccan. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 17.0 × 10.2 cm. British Museum 1937,0410,0.2.

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and does not seem to doubt the “truthfulness” of the portraits. Perhaps his positive reaction to the picture derives from the path of its transmission, from the Safavid ruler via Jahangir’s own ambassador. Or perhaps it was due to the artist’s skilled execution, which the emperor enjoyed and noted.<sup>83</sup>

### The Politics of Portraiture

Like their Timurid ancestors and Ottoman and Safavid contemporaries, Mughal rulers were well aware of portraiture’s potential for representing authority and projecting a dynastic image.<sup>84</sup> Hence, at the courts of Akbar and Jahangir, portraits and politics went hand in hand. Abu’l Fazl tells us about a portrait album that Akbar had commissioned, representing all the grandees in his service.<sup>85</sup> The album was used as a memento, as well as to take stock of the elite. The practice persisted under Jahangir, who also commissioned portraits of his officials. The emperor studied their pictures, “took them into his hand, one by one, and made comments on them.”<sup>86</sup> According to the *Ma’asir al-Umara*, a biography of figures in the Mughal elite, Jahangir remarked on each person’s character, abilities, lineage, and wealth, as if he were having a

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83 Jahangir compliments the artist by comparing him to Bihzad. The painting has an interesting history: It probably belonged to Shah Isma’il or Shah Tahmasp and then came to the library of Shah Abbas. The librarian of Shah Abbas stole the painting and sold it. When it came on the market, Khan Alam (Jahangir’s envoy) bought it as a gift for the Mughal ruler. Shah Abbas heard that the painting had been found, and asked for it. After several days Shah Abbas returned it to Khan Alam and told the Mughal envoy the story behind its whereabouts. *Jahangirnāma* (English), 319; *Jahangirnāmah: Tuzuk-i Jahangiri* (Persian), 323–24.

84 Soucek suggests that since the Mughals assiduously collected illustrated Timurid manuscripts, “the knowledge that Timurid paintings contained portraits may have been one of the things that encouraged Akbar and his descendants to have themselves and their courts memorialized through portraiture.” Soucek, “Theory and Practice of Portraiture,” 106. The interest in portraiture was also characteristic of Safavid Iran, Uzbek Central Asia, and the Ottomans. See Gulru Necipoglu, “Word and Image in Portraits of the Ottoman Sultans: A Comparative Perspective,” in *The Sultan’s Portrait: Picturing the House of Osman* (Istanbul: Işbank, 2000), 22–59. This interest was also expressed in literature, such as the treatises on painting by Qazi Ahmad and Sadiqi Beg, and in album prefaces. See David Roxburgh, *The Persian Album 1400–1600: From Dispersal to Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

85 *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:118.

86 Shāhnāvāz Khān, *The Maāthir-ul-umarā: Being Biographies of the Muhammādan and Hindu Officers of the Timurid Sovereigns of India from 1500 to about 1780 A.D.*, trans. Henry Beveridge and Baini Prashad (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1941), 1:99.

heart-to-heart conversation with that person rather than merely staring at his image.<sup>87</sup> Although the Mughal portraits from that period are no doubt idealized, they do have more particularized facial features, in part due to the use of European painting techniques, and were seen to convey the character of the sitter.

The portrait of Ram Das Kachhwaha from about 1590–95 (Fig. 76) shows him as a formidable man. His dress, with a transparent *chakdar jama*, purple *paijama*, gold *patka*,<sup>88</sup> turban, jewelry, and dagger, indicates his wealth and success at court. Standing in profile, holding a staff and prayer beads, he appears strong and authoritative, his body modeled to suggest volume and weight. His facial features—furrowed brow and intense gaze—convey seriousness and trustworthiness. The use of European technique, with its abundance of detail and tonality, helps convey the impression of reliability, success, and honesty—at a time when he was rising in rank and gaining Akbar’s favor and respect.<sup>89</sup>

His position at court later changed. In 1612, after Jahangir’s army scattered and suffered defeat in the Deccan at the hand of Malik Ambar, the emperor expressed his rage at a darbar. “Out of anger [he] had portraits prepared of all the officials who had taken to flight. He looked at each and made a remark. When the Raja’s [Ram Das Kachhwaha’s] portrait was taken up, he took it in his hand in the open durbar and said, ‘You were a servant of Rāisāl at a *tankah* a day, my father cherished you and made you an amir. It is a disgrace for a Rajput to run away (from the field of battle). Alas! that you did not even have respect for the title of Raja Karan. I hope that you will lose faith and fortune (*dīn u dunyā*).”<sup>90</sup> Jahangir was using his amirs’ portraits for public rebuke, substituting the picture for the person. The image was for everyone to see, and verisimilitude was crucial. The scale of the portrait enabled the emperor to “hold” Ram Das Kachhwaha in his hand and exercise full control in an otherwise chaotic situation.

Perhaps Akbar set a precedent for Jahangir’s visceral engagement with portraits as surrogates. A story from Akbar’s memoirs reveals how such pictures were thought to have transcendent power: The image of a man was revealed to

87 Shāhnavāz Khān, *The Maātthir-ul-umarā*, 1:99.

88 For the identification of his dress see Wright, *Muraqqa*, 274.

89 On the life of Ram Das Kachhwaha see Shāhnavāz Khān, *Ma’āsir al-Umarā*, ed. Maulavi Abdur Rahim and Maulavi Mirza Ashraf Ali (Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1888–91) 2:587–89.

90 Ram Das Kachhwaha died the next year. Shāhnavāz Khān, *Maātthir-ul-umarā*, 2:588; *Ain-i Akbari* (English) 1:483. In the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri/Jahangirnama* no paintings are mentioned in connection with Jahangir’s rage over the defeat of his army by Malik Ambar. The poor military decisions were attributed to Abdallah Khan Firoz Jang, not Ram Das Kachhwaha. See *Jahangirnama* (English), 135–36.

Akbar when he was a young child, practicing drawing at his father's library in Kabul to sharpen his mind. The emperor-to-be drew "the figure of a man with all his limbs separated." The identity of the person became known to Akbar through, what he believed, divine prescience. The man was Hemu (d. 1556), a high-ranking Hindu officer in the service of the Afghan Sur dynasty, and a rival of the Mughals. Several years later, Hemu was defeated in Panipat by the armies of Akbar, by then a young emperor. Hemu was brought before Akbar, who refused to behead him, arguing that he had already done so through the picture. The task was left to Bairam Khan, Akbar's regent.<sup>91</sup> Akbar's prescience about Hemu, his expression of an omen, was considered a capacity appropriate to the Perfect Man, illuminated by divine light (*farr-i izadi*).<sup>92</sup>

The story of Akbar and Hemu intrigued Jahangir, who repeated it in his memoirs.<sup>93</sup> It may well be that such an event inspired the creation of a series of allegorical paintings with political meaning, in particular one made by Abu'l Hasan titled "Jahangir Shoots the Head of Malik Ambar" (Fig. 89).<sup>94</sup> It shows the Mughal emperor standing on a globe, about to release a second arrow at the severed head of his fierce enemy, identified by an inscription. Malik Ambar (1548–1626) was among the Ethiopian military slaves who were brought to South Asia and eventually rose in rank.<sup>95</sup> He became commander of the army

91 *Akbarnama* (English), 3:67. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 13.

92 In several cases pictures were used for prognostication, including the preparation of spells and amulets. See, for example, the Safavid and Ottoman *Falnama* manuscripts discussed in Massumeh Farhad with Serpil Bagci, *Falnama: the Book of Omens* (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2009). For the Mughal manuscript of "Talisman and Zodiac" see Barbara Schmitz and Ziyauddin Desai, *Mughal and Persian Paintings and Illustrated Manuscripts in the Raza Library, Rampur* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, 2006), 20–27; Yael Rice, "Cosmic Sympathies and Painting at Akbar's Court," *A Magic World: New Visions of Indian Painting in Tribute to Ananda Coomaraswamy's Rajput Painting of 1916*, ed. Molly Emma Aitken (Mumbai: Marg, 2016), 88–99. An image of Hemu was again used symbolically in a victory celebration. To entertain the soldiers, an order was given to prepare fireworks and "make an image of Hemū, fill it with gunpowder, and set it on fire." Abu'l Fazl remarks that in appearance, the pyrotechnic display was "simply keen amusement, in reality it was extinguishing a malevolent life." *Akbarnama* (English), 3:69. Several scenes related to Hemu, including his capture, were illustrated in the *Akbarnama*.

93 *Jahangirnama* (English), 41.

94 Several paintings made for Jahangir between about 1616 and 1620 represent political allegory. For a fascinating interpretation see Richard Ettinghausen, "The Emperor's Choice," *De Artibus Qpuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, ed. Millard Meiss (New York University Press, 1961), 98–120; Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," 177–192.

95 On the life of Malik Ambar, see Richard Eaton, *A Social History of the Deccan, 1300–1761: Eight Indian Lives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 105–28.

and vizier of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmadnagar in the Deccan.<sup>96</sup> After numerous clashes with the Mughals, he was a target of Jahangir's wrath.<sup>97</sup> The painting shows the Mughal emperor standing in profile, adorned and bejeweled. His arched eyebrows, pursed lips, intense gaze, strong, straight nose, and smooth, glowing skin convey his imperial authority and his command of the grand event (the shooting of a rival already dead). The portraits of the two enemies visually and symbolically represent opposites, of light and darkness, justice and malevolence.<sup>98</sup> Ambar's very dark skin, open mouth, rolled-back eyes, and ungroomed facial hair show him to be the antithesis of Jahangir.

When this picture was made, in about 1616, the Mughals had not yet defeated the Nizamshahis, and Malik Ambar was still very much alive.<sup>99</sup> A rather minor victory in 1616 perhaps triggered the idea for Abu'l Hasan's composition, but by and large, it was wishful thinking on the part of Jahangir to have the head of the Deccani army commander on a spear.<sup>100</sup> The painting and its inscriptions connect Malik Ambar with the birds of darkness—owls, one dead and one alive. The text inscribed at the feet of the owl perched on Ambar's head reads: "The head of the night-colored usurper is become the house of the owl."<sup>101</sup> That bird of night is also associated with the defeat of the Deccani enemy in an incident in the *Jahangirnama* around the time that Prince Khurram (Jahangir's son, and the future Shah Jahan) went off to war in the Deccan. The emperor tells of an owl ("ill-omened bird") that he shot at night, killing it as if by "a decree from heaven."<sup>102</sup> This event was perceived as a good omen for Prince Khurram's campaign.

The date of the painting is unknown, but the work clearly expresses Jahangir's desire for a decisive victory in the Deccan. Perhaps, like the image of Hemu painted by Akbar, this picture functioned as an aid in inducing the desired effect.<sup>103</sup> The belief was that it could do so only through life-like renderings of

96 The Nizam Shahs took over the Ahmadnagar Sultanate and ruled in the Deccan between 1490 and 1636.

97 See the aggressive language with which Jahangir refers to him in his memoirs. *Jahangirnama* (English), 165, 187–88.

98 This is also supported by inscriptions on the painting. For their translations, see Wright, *Muraqqa*, 346; Haidar and Sardar, *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700*, 74.

99 Malik Ambar and Jahangir died months apart. *Ibid.*

100 Robert Skelton calls it "Jahangir's hoped-for vengeance." Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," 179; Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 1:400; Wright, *Muraqqa*, 344; Haidar and Sardar, *Sultans of Deccan India*, 74.

101 Wright, *Muraqqa*, 346.

102 *Jahangirnama* (English), 201.

103 Skelton, "Imperial Symbolism in Mughal Painting," 179–80; Leach, *Mughal and Other Indian Paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, 1:400. Azfar Moin also considers the



FIGURE 89 Jahangir Shoots the Head of Malik Ambar, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1616, probably Ajmer, folio from an album, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 25.8 × 16.5 cm. Chester Beatty Library, 07A.15.

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the protagonists: the hoped-for outcome depended on physiognomy, in which the outer features of a person reflect his or her soul.<sup>104</sup> Only through knowledge of *firāsa* could the light of Jahangir be made to prevail over the darkness of Malik Ambar. In Persian literature, too, portraits act as gateways to a person's heart.<sup>105</sup> Images were made to be enchanting (*sihr-i pardaz*) and to seduce the beholder, hence their attraction and vast role in Mughal political life.<sup>106</sup>

As a feature of their political character, portraits were an integral part of diplomatic exchanges. Jahangir wrote about Shaykh Ahmad Lahauri, who was promoted to the position of chief justice, that “from the time I was prince he has been a devoted servant and disciple. Aspirants and the devoted gain access to me through him, and he tells me to whom I should offer my hand and to whom I should present a portrait [*shabīh*].”<sup>107</sup> Portraits of the emperor, part of the diplomatic exchange of gifts, were also provided upon demand. Jahangir wrote about one notable exchange that “ever since Qutbulmuluk [from the Qutb Shahi dynasty of the Golconda] pledged allegiance and became an ally he had been requesting a portrait. At his request I awarded him my portrait along with a jeweled *khapwa* and a *phul-katara* [two types of daggers].”<sup>108</sup>

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similarities between Akbar's story with the image of Hemu and Abu'l Hasan's painting. He links these pictures to the divine powers of the Mughal rulers and their miracles and interprets Jahangir's portrait as reflecting a ritual act. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 189, 196–98.

104 See Hoyland's mention of Zamakhshari and Nuwayri in “Physiognomy in Islam,” 370n27.

105 In the Persian literary tradition, portraits were used as means to transcend reality. See Porter and Castinele, “Le portrait dans l'orient musulman,” 132–36.

106 See, for example, the *Ain-i Akbari* (Persian), 1:116–17. The term *sihr-i pardaz* has been translated as “magic” or “magic-making.” However, I believe that it should be understood as “enchanting”—more a conscious application of skill and knowledge than an invocation of mysterious powers. Members of the Mughal elite were well aware of and involved in the process of illustration. Corinne Lefèvre demonstrates how Jahangir's authority was simultaneously linked to “sacred and mystical idiom” as well as reason. The emperor considered it to be “a new universal law and his own person as its chief apostle, in keeping with the contemporary development of rational sciences and philosophy at work in both Muslim and Hindu intellectual circles.” Lefèvre, “Messianism, Rationalism and Inter-Asian connections,” 333–34. Yael Rice is preparing an essay on talismans at the Mughal court, which addresses the role of European art as ‘bewitching’ and magical. For the link between magic and sacral kinship under the Mughals see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 185–198.

107 *Jahangirnama* (English), 53; *Jahangirnama* Persian, 35–36.

108 *Jahangirnama* (English), 303.

On several occasions Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador, brought portraits from England to the Mughal court, and Jahangir reciprocated. Portraits of past and present rulers from Central Asia and Iran were commonly commissioned by the emperors and circulated at court. Jahangir had at his disposal pictures of the Safavid shah, the Uzbek khans, and their amirs. At one gathering (*majlis*), Jahangir showed the poet Mutribi Samarqandi (born about 1559) two paintings and asked him if he could identify the sitters and comment on the likenesses. Mutribi recognized the images of the Shaibanid Khans of Central Asia, Abdullah Khan II (r. 1583–98) and his son and successor, Abd al-Mu'min Khan (r. 1598–99). Based on the poet's observations, Jahangir summoned his artist and ordered him to make the appropriate changes to the pictures so that they matched Mutribi's description more closely.<sup>109</sup> Corinne Lefèvre suggests that the portrait of Abdallah Khan mentioned by Mutribi is likely to be a picture painted in about 1618 by Abu'l Hasan of a man mounted on a horse with a royal falconer standing by his side (Fig. 90).<sup>110</sup> With his Turco-Mongol facial features, simple dress, and turban, the Uzbek ruler, by then in fact deceased, looks like a weary old man. Although he sits upright on the horse, his head seems slightly bowed. His narrow shoulders and slim body convey an impression of servility. This image stands in contrast to the bejeweled and embellished figure of the Mughal emperor, or even to his courtier Ram Das (Figs. 75, 76, 78, 89). Abu'l Hasan seems to have deliberately emphasized Abdallah Khan's humble comportment and modest dress—a puzzling approach to portraying a great Shaybanid ruler.

Perhaps the humble depiction can be linked to an episode reported by the scholar Abd al-Sattar Lahori. In one *majlis* convened by Jahangir, a courtier

109 Mutribi al-Asamm Samarqandi, *Conversations with Jahangir*, trans. Richard C. Foltz (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998), 76–77; Idem, *Khāṭirāt-i Muṭribī: muṣāḥabah'hā bā Jahāngīr Pādīshāh* (Karāchī: Muassasah-'i Taḥqīqāt-i Āsiyā-yi Miyanāh va Gharbī, Dānishgāh, 1977), 61–63. Samarqandi, a poet and scholar from Central Asia, visited the court of Jahangir in 1626, sought the emperor's patronage, and enjoyed several extensive meetings with him. In his memoir of these audiences, written in 1627, Samarqandi notes another instance in which Jahangir, wanting to test him, had some pictures brought out and asked him to recognize the portrait of Abu'l Biy (governor of Qandahar under Baqi Muhammad Khan). *Conversations with Jahangir*, trans. Foltz, 35.

110 Corinne Lefèvre, "The *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* (1608–11): Dialogue and Asiatic Otherness at the Mughal Court," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 271. Several paintings show Abdallah Khan Uzbek hawking, and it is difficult to know which of these compositions Mutribi may have seen. For the discussion, see Strong, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor*, 133, 184nn73–74; Asok Kumar Das, *Mughal Painting during Jahangir's Time* (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1978), 224, 227n55; Schmitz and Desai, *Mughal and Persian Paintings and Illustrated Manuscripts in the Raza Library, Rampur*, 56.

described Abdallah Khan's feelings of humility toward Timur, the illustrious Mughal ancestor. It was said that when the Uzbek khan (who conquered the Timurid empire) visited Samarqand, which had been Timur's capital, out of respect for the great ruler, he would sit on a carpet on the ground instead of occupying Timur's throne.<sup>111</sup> Upon hearing this, Jahangir praised him, saying that "if 'Abdallāh Khān has acted this way ... it shows his greatness and equity (*buzurgī va inṣāf*)."<sup>112</sup> Jahangir used this narrative to assert his position vis-à-vis the Uzbek rulers and Central Asia; it was evidence that his heritage still prevailed in the "old country," the region of Mughal origin, giving him international status and even control. In the portrait of Abdallah Khan, therefore, the subject's obeisance is an assertion of Mughal domination and territorial aspirations in Central Asia and beyond.

This interpretation of Abdallah Khan's image may well explain the differences between the idealized portrait of Ibrahim Adil Shah II that was made at his own workshop in the Deccan and his Mughal rendering (Figs. 87, 88). In the Deccan portrait he embodies the image of the ideal ruler: grand, powerful, cultured, and generous (Fig. 88). Under the lush white, translucent, and gold textiles he wears, his strong, firm body is apparent. A patron of the arts, he holds a pair of castanets in the elongated fingers of one hand and a handkerchief in the other. His robes sway elegantly against the background of a magnificent blooming garden. And his idealized facial features—thick, dark beard, almond eyes, and arched eyebrows—project beauty and power.

In the Mughal version, Ibrahim Adil Shah II is shown as an old man, with thin, grayish beard, darkish skin, and a smaller frame. He wears plain white clothing and minimal jewelry, looking very unlike the sophisticated patron of music and poetry that he was. No beautiful almond eyes, no arched eyebrows or rosy lips. He appears tired and submissive, stripped of his kingly authority. Like its Deccan counterpart, the Mughal portrait of Ibrahim Adil Shah II is a political statement, but in this case, a testament to Mughal hegemony. In the context of other Mughal portraits of their political rivals, such as Shah Abbas or Abdullah Khan, Hashim's depiction of the Bijapuri ruler fits well the pattern.

The portraits awarded to followers were also political images. The historian Badauni reports that Akbar gave the disciples of the *Tawhid-i Ilahi* his portrait (*shabīh*) encased in jewelry suitable for wearing atop their turbans. These portraits became signs of "loyal friendship, and the advance-guard of righteousness, and happiness."<sup>113</sup> Similarly, Jahangir offered Sir Thomas Roe his portrait

111 Abdus Sattar ibn Qasim Lahauri, *Majalis-i Jahangir*, 277–78.

112 Translated and discussed by Lefèvre, "The *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī*," 272.

113 *Muntakhab al-tawarikh* (English), 2:348–49; *Muntakhab al-tawarikh* (Persian), 2:236. See also Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience*, 73–74. Losty does not believe that the



FIGURE 90 Abdullah Khan Uzbek Hawking, by Abu'l Hasan, ca. 1618, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 28.0 × 16.0 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, IM.20-1925.

on a gold pendant adorned with pearls, on a gold chain.<sup>114</sup> The Englishman explains that such a gift was a special favor bestowed on certain grantees at the court: only those given such a pendant could wear “the kings Image.”<sup>115</sup> Pictures from Jahangir’s time show several court officials wearing the pendants. In a painting of a *darbar* of Jahangir, several of the court’s high officials, such as Mahabat Khan (d. 1634), Khawas Khan III, and Abu’l Hasan Asaf Khan (d. 1641), wear gold portrait pendants as amulets and tokens of loyalty and prestige (Figs. 78, 78a, 78c).<sup>116</sup> Each bejeweled portrait necklace shows the bust of Jahangir in profile, sporting a turban. By including these pendants, the painting offers a view of the bond between the emperor and his select grantees.

According to the eighteenth-century Mughal historian Khafi Khan, in Jahangir’s twenty-first regnal year (1626), the emperor gave an order to increase the size and weight of the portrait pendant from one *tola* to five.<sup>117</sup> A single-page portrait of Abu’l Hasan Asaf Khan shows him wearing the new, larger pendant (Fig. 91; compared with his pendant in the *darbar* scene, Fig. 78c).<sup>118</sup> Asaf Khan holds a turban ornament (*sarpech*) in one hand and touches the portrait pendant with the other, as if to press it to his heart. On the pendant, Jahangir’s face appears in profile, and he is wearing a turban, as in his pendant

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word *shabih* in this case refers to a portrait. He identifies such an Akbari-period token depicted on the turban of Ruzafzun, the son of Raja Sangram, the *zamindar* of Kharagpur (Victoria and Albert Museum # 1M. 111–1921). In this group portrait, painted by Manohar ca. 1605, the youth holds Jahangir’s flywhisk. Jeremiah Losty, “The Carpet at the Window: A European Motif in the Mughal Jharokha Portrait,” in *Indian Painting: Themes, History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of B. N. Goswamy*, ed. Mahesh Sharma and Padma Kaimal (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2013), 55. A couple of courtiers in the “Darbar of Jahangir” (Fig. 78) have a small gold token attached to their turbans.

114 Roe, *Embassy*, 244–45.

115 *Ibid.*, 245.

116 Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodiwalla quotes from the Mughal historian Khafi Khan regarding the use of the pendant as an amulet. See Shahpurshah Hormasji Hodiwalla, *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics* (Bombay, 1976), 148.

117 Verma, *Painting the Mughal Experience*, 73, 84n101. Hodiwalla from Khafi Khan’s *Muntakhab al-Lubab*. In Hodiwalla, *Historical Studies in Mughal Numismatics* (Varanasi: Numismatic Society of India, 1976), 147–48.

118 Based on Khafi Khan’s statement, I suggest that the date of this painting be changed to ca. 1626. Mirza Abu’l Hasan ibn Mirza Ghiyas Beg received the title of Asaf Khan from Jahangir in 1614. He was well connected to the imperial family: his sister was Nur Jahan, Jahangir’s favorite wife, and his father, P’timaduddawla, was Jahangir’s chief minister (*vakil*). Asaf Khan’s daughter, Arjumand Banu Begum, popularly known as Mumtaz Mahal, later married Shah Jahan, and he was appointed to the position of *vakil*. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, 102–103; Wright, *Muraqqa*, 436.



FIGURE 91 Asaf Khan Wearing a Portrait Miniature, ca. 1615. *Brush and ink drawing (with a small touch of color)*. 16.1 × 7.5 cm. *The Chester Beatty Library, CBI In 45.2.*

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portrait in the darbar picture. Asaf Khan's image is strikingly similar to that of the emperor in pose and headgear: he is both demonstrating his loyalty to Jahangir and flaunting his rank at court. His upward gaze alludes to the presence of Jahangir, seated on the throne beyond the pictorial space, perhaps on the occasion of gift-giving.

The custom of holding the emperor's portrait was not restricted to men. Two paintings depict female subjects, probably women of the court, standing with a bust portrait of Jahangir in their hands (Figs. 92, 93).<sup>119</sup> The richness of their costume and jewelry may indicate their status; perhaps they are the emperor's concubines. Jahangir's portrait is held so that it faces us, the viewers, in a similar way an image is presented in a ritual, rather than for private viewing. Gregory Minissale links this gesture to another Mughal drawing that appears in the margins of the Gulshan album. There, a European looking figure carries an icon of Christ in a similar manner to the Mughal ladies with the portrait of Jahangir. It is interesting to note that in the Gulshan album drawing, another person bows to Christ's picture and holds their hands together in supplication.<sup>120</sup> It is possible that, like the men wearing a portrait of Jahangir and the European prostrating in front of an icon, the two Mughal women would be designated "followers" (*murid*) of the emperor in accordance with Jahangir's spiritual political ideology based on master-disciple (*pir-murid*) relationship.<sup>121</sup>

A bust painting of Jahangir with a portrait of his late father conveys messages parallel to those in portraits of his followers—an expression of discipleship and a claim to legitimacy (Fig. 94).<sup>122</sup> The aged Akbar, haloed, his face

119 The female figure in the painting from the Cleveland Museum of Art is identified as Nur Jahan on the museum's website. However, her facial features do not match those of two other known portraits of Jahangir's queen (Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, and the Raza Library, Rampur, Uttar Pradesh, India). Jeremiah Losty identifies her as a Rajput woman from Jahangir's harem. Losty, "The Carpet at the Window," 62.

120 Gregory Minissale argues that the artist who made the Mughal picture from the Gulshan Album used European engravings as models for this composition, most likely of St. Veronica. Minissale, *Images of Thought*, 211–12.

121 On the system of a Master/teacher and a follower/disciple that was developed between Akbar and Jahangir and their close circle see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 143–44, 176–77. Losty argues that Fig. 92 is a commemorative image of Jahangir, done "at the year of his death." In the picture held by the lady, the emperor is depicted old and in full profile, similar to a portrait done in 1627 by Daulat. Losty, "The Carpet at the Window," 62. However, in Fig. 93, the woman holds a bust portrait of a younger looking Jahangir, with his dark moustache.

122 The text on the painting identifies the subjects and the artist, and provides a problematic date. See Kalyan Krishna, "Problems of a Portrait of Jahangir in the Musée Guimet," *Chhavi: Golden Jubilee Volume, Bharat Kala Bhava, 1920–1970*, ed. Karl Khandalavala et al. (Benares: Bharat Kala Bhavan, 1971): 392–94; Seyller, "Hashim," 110–11; Gauvin Bailey, "The



FIGURE 92

A Woman Holding a Portrait of Emperor Jahangir, or Nur Jahan Holding a Portrait of Emperor Jahangir, attributed to Bishan Das, ca. 1627, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Painting: 13.6 × 6.4 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2013.325.

radiant, holds an orb as a symbol of sovereignty. Although that symbolism is linked to European iconography, Jahangir's artists convey a sense of the *silsila* (chain of transmission) and hence legitimacy: the father is passing on the orb and the aura of just rule to his illustrious son, who holds his father's image in admiration.<sup>123</sup> The congruent facial features of father and son carry a dynastic

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End of the 'Catholic Era' in Mughal Painting: Jahangir's Dream Pictures, English Painting, and the Renaissance Frontispiece," *Marg* 53, no. 2 (2001), 58n35.

123 Jahangir seems to have had a complicated relationship with his father. A couple of paintings that he commissioned show him venerating or saluting his father. See, for example, "Jahangir Salutes Akbar," by Manohar, ca. 1620 (Collection of Elvira and Gursharan Sidhu); "Akbar in Old Age Attended by Prince Salim," by Manohar, ca. 1615 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, ms. Douce Ora.1., f. 18b). A painting from the *Padshahnama*, "Jahangir



FIGURE 93  
 Lady with a Portrait of  
 Jahangir, ca. 1603, Mughal  
 India. Opaque watercolor  
 on paper. 18.4 × 13.7 cm.  
 Freer Gallery of Art and  
 Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,  
 LTS1929.8.354.  
 LONG-TERM LOAN  
 FROM THE  
 SMITHSONIAN  
 AMERICAN ART  
 MUSEUM; GIFT OF  
 JOHN GELLATLY,  
 LTS1929.8.354

message, enhancing continuity. A line of poetry inscribed around one of Jahangir's large-scale portraits states: "Look at the Kingly virtues in his face/ His likeness is the mirror of the essence of Akbar Padshah."<sup>124</sup> The poem connects the authority of the ruling members of the dynasty through their essence and appearance.

Receives Prince Khurram at Ajmer on His Return from the Mewar Campaign," shows a portrait of an aged Akbar hanging above Jahangir's head. The work is by Balchand, ca. 1635. Milo Cleveland Beach, Ebba Koch, and Wheeler Thackston, *King of the World: The Padshahnama, an Imperial Mughal Manuscript from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle* (Washington: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1997), no. 5.

124 Franke, "Emperors of *Śūrat* and *Ma'ni*," 126.



FIGURE 94 Jahangir Looking at a Portrait of his Father Akbar, by *Abu'l Hasan and Hashim*, ca. 1614, folio from an album, *Mughal India*. Opaque watercolor and gold highlights on paper. 12.0 × 8.3 cm. Musée du Louvre, OA3676b.

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FIGURE 95  
 Crispin de Passe, Portrait of King Philip II of Spain, 1598, from *Effigies Regum ac Principum*, Netherlandish. Engraving: Ink on paper. Library of Congress, The Hans P. Kraus Collection of Sir Francis Drake, rbdk d059.

The bust portrait, appearing behind a balustrade, surrounded by dynastic emblems of power, is also linked to European iconography.<sup>125</sup> In an engraving of King Philip II of Spain (r. 1556–98), the ruler is shown in three-quarter profile, in full regalia and framed by lions holding a crown, a sword, a scepter, and other symbols of rule (Fig. 95).<sup>126</sup> In keeping with Mughal practice of the time, Jahangir’s face is shown in profile, but the two kings share some features (Fig. 94). Both appear behind a parapet draped with fabric, distancing themselves from the viewer. Though they do not resemble each other, they have a similar, determined appearance of authority that can be seen in the forehead, slightly furrowed brow, and full mustache. Light and shadow lend majesty: Jahangir has a halo that makes him glow, and Philip II is seen against a dark-and-light background that makes his image gleam. The richness of textiles,

125 On the so-called window or *gharokha* portrait see Losty, “The Carpet at the Window,” 52–64.

126 Other engraved portraits of the king show him in full profile.

clothing, jewelry, and emblems denotes sovereignty.<sup>127</sup> Jahangir's portrait demonstrates the repurposing of European iconography, pictorial features, and technique to create a Mughal visual language of power.

Possibly made as a counterpart to Figure 96, the image of "Jahangir Holding a Picture of the Virgin Mary" further manifests ideas of ancestral veneration, genealogy, legitimacy, form, and essence (Fig. 96).<sup>128</sup> The Virgin Mary, associated in Mughal sources with Alan Ghō'a (Alan-Qo'a/Alanqua/Alanquwa), was considered by the royal family to be part of their lineage.<sup>129</sup> Appearing in profile in a setting similar to that of the previous bust portrait, a balcony draped with textile, a haloed Jahangir holds a small picture of Mary in his hand.<sup>130</sup> His radiant image recalls Mary's association with light, and thus endorses the dynastic connection to the divine light (*farr-i izadi*). Like pictures of Akbar or of other venerable Mughal forebears, Mary's image was present in ceremonies of sovereignty. Ancestors could be seen in the wall paintings of Jahangir's palace (discussed in chapter 1) and Mary was represented at Jahangir's darbar (Figs. 78, 78c), assuming that the painting records an actual place.<sup>131</sup> In this context, Mary is the revered ancestor, who, like Akbar and Jahangir, has achieved a high level of spirituality.<sup>132</sup> Intended to mirror Akbar's image held by Jahangir, Mary, too, appears in three-quarter view at bust length (Figs. 94, 96). Lowering her gaze in humility, she appears chaste and haloed. Transformed by the

127 Losty further hypothesizes about possible links between Jahangir's window portrait with a carpet and Gentile Bellini's portrait of Mehmet II (1480, National Gallery, London) through engravings made after Bellini's picture. Losty, "The Carpet at the Window," 61.

128 The image as counterpart is suggested by Bailey, "End of a Catholic Era," 50. Also see Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 210.

129 See discussion in chapter 1.

130 Milo Beach writes that the portrayal of a ruler seated at a window with a swath of lavish textile draped over the railing comes from "European studies of Muslims, such as the *Portrait of Sultan Muhammad II of Turkey* by Gentile Bellini." Beach, "The Mughal Painter Abu'l Hasan and Some English Sources for His Style," *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 38 (1980): 16. Necipoglu holds that Jahangir shifted to new models, away from the prevailing Timurid idioms of royal portraiture. Necipoglu, "Word and Image in Portraits of the Ottoman Sultans," 56–57. For a critique of this argument, see Wright, *Muraqqa'*, 167, 175–76n11.

131 See the descriptions by William Finch, "William Finch, 1608–11," in *Early Travels in India, 1583–1619*, ed. William Foster (London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1921), 162–165; and the paintings in the Windsor *Padshahnama*: Beach and Koch, *King of the World*, 95, 97.

132 On the connection between Mughal genealogy, Akbar, and Jesus, see Azfar Moin, "Akbar's 'Jesus' and Marlowe's 'Tamburlaine': Strange Parallels of Early Modern Sacredness," *Fragments* 3 (2013–14): 1–21.



FIGURE 96 Jahangir Holding a Picture of the Virgin Mary, after 1614, folio from an album, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. National Museum, New Delhi, no. 58.58.31.

PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

Mughal artist, Mary is no longer the Mother of God, but one of the matriarchs of the illustrious Mughal dynasty of Perfect Men.<sup>133</sup>

Under Akbar and Jahangir, portraiture served a variety of functions, ranging from practical to spiritual, from diplomatic gifts to cherished mementos. It became a significant tool of political, cultural and socio-religious powers. Crafting a dynastic image, the emperors and their artists were interested in delineating specific traits of male members of the royal family that emphasized their physiognomic legitimacy. The painters repurposed Christian iconography and symbols to create an image of the Mughal lineage as illuminated, cosmopolitan, and related to ancient traditions and prophets. Paying much attention to detail, the painters used European techniques of light and shadow, depth, volume, distinctive qualities and profile view to represent power relationships, real and presumed, to evoke mental images and to establish a visual presence of the royal persona. By using European elements, they exploited the genre of portraiture to create formal and conceptual possibilities that served the goals and values of their Mughal patrons.

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133 Moin states that this pair of portraits were talismanic and reflected Jahangir's prophetic persona. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 210.

# Epilogue

“Never the twain shall meet,” Rudyard Kipling wrote in his “Ballad of East and West” (1889). Even when power relations shifted dramatically on the subcontinent during British colonial rule, the interactions between an Afghan horse thief and an English officer stationed in the region, as narrated by Kipling, brought forth mutual respect and greater understanding of what had been thought of as two polarized cultures. Under a different set of power relations during the time of the Great Mughals, East and West had already met on the subcontinent, leading to the creation of some of the most pivotal works of art in India’s history. This book has outlined some of the intricacies of artistic relationships between the Mughals and the Europeans in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. The variety of ways and the level of sophistication that Mughal artists and patrons deployed in manipulating Renaissance artistic tradition and Christian iconography have been demonstrated. It is hoped that some of the new questions presented here will initiate a longer discussion.

Historians Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam claim that European material culture formed a source of curiosity and exotica for the subcontinent members of the elite. As such, the Mughal emperors “dealt with them [Europeans] playfully, as powerful monarchs could in the face of what they imagined were quite minor interlocutors.”<sup>1</sup> Similar attitudes can be detected in some of the ways in which Mughal artists and patrons repurposed Renaissance art and co-opted and reconfigured Christian and European iconographic motifs and painting techniques. However, the artistic relations that they formed with European art were more intricate than that. By using Mughal Occidentalism, the artists created a multivalent erudite visual language that served the cultural purposes and artistic cosmopolitanism of the Mughal elite. This *modus operandi* became a hallmark of Mughal painting that reverberated in later Indian courts, preparing, to some degree, a stylistic groundwork for the national paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, Bose, Abnin and others.

One of the basic explanations for Mughal openness to such trans-cultural interactions with Renaissance visual tradition pertains to changes in policy, religion, and social order. These changes impacted the development of north India’s cultural history for centuries. One of the reasons why Christian and European materials resonated so well with Mughal art was because the artists recognized concepts that were already part of Mughal visual and aesthetic

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1 Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Writing the Mughal World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 310.

vocabulary. They had already experimented with these ideas and were eager to explore them further. Hence, the attitudes toward Mughal Occidentalism were conditioned by context, providing different purposes and meanings in specific cases.

In a close comparison of three Mughal paintings with their European counterparts, I linked the concepts of repurposing or partial quotation of European and Christian motifs to the establishment of a master artist at the Mughal royal workshops. In the royal workshops of Akbar and Jahangir, mastery included a process of inserting oneself into a “lineage” (*silsila*) of transmission of artistic knowledge, as well as creating physical connections and meaningful references to works of previous masters. The close comparisons of the pictures by Nini, Abu'l Hasan and Ruqaya Banu with the European prints by Wierix, Sadeler, and Dürer (Figs. 19, 26, 28) reveal that the Mughal artists were not interested in representing Christianity or paying homage to European art. They instilled Christian iconography and European technique with Persianate and Islamicate concepts, layering meaning through subtle changes and the addition of inscriptions and poetry. Through this process, the Mughal artists demonstrated their ability to adhere to a “classical” tradition, introduced fresh elements into their work, and exceeded the European masters from their own perspective.

Mughal artists not only competed with and surpassed European artists, but they also reused their works in Mughal album pages. European prints were fragmented and re-contextualized to form new works of art (Figs. 37, 38). They were used not merely as “exotica”, but to advance the notion of a highly sophisticated multifaceted Mughal culture. The overall composition of these pages indicate that the artists were well aware of the meaning of the European works of art, and that they made purposeful aesthetic and iconographical links within the diverse components of the composite album pages. In this new context, the European prints maintained some of their original meaning and function as they became part of a new whole.

The different modes of engagement with European articles in Mughal painting has led us to suggest more nuanced interpretations of objects such as the globe and the organ (Figs. 40, 45). These renderings within the Mughal pictures were carefully detailed, inviting attentive and educated viewers to take a closer look. By layering these articles with historical, geographical, spiritual and political meanings, the artists created ocular sites of encounter and contemplation that resonated with the cultural pluralism of the Mughal elite.

The depiction of Plato's organ, for example, coalesces different worlds, geographical zones and eras, such as the ancient times of Alexander and the Greek philosophers, the sixteenth century European world that produced musical instruments like this pipe organ, and the Mughal sphere, where the scene takes

place (Fig. 45). Even more intricate are the paintings covering the organ itself, with references to Persian literature, Christian iconography, and court entertainment. The organ unfolds in front of our eyes as a symbol of diplomatic gifts related to Islamicate and Mongol traditions and a reminder of the Europeans who came to pay homage at Akbar's court. It represents a secret instrument of power that only Plato, in the guise of a Mughal scholar, has the knowledge to operate. Hence the philosopher and his European-looking organ emerge as a metaphor for the intellectual cultural ideas of Akbar's policy of tolerance and the boundary-less realms of his authority.

Representations of terrestrial boundaries appear on the globe under Jahangir's feet in a *darbar* scene (Fig. 40). Employing Mughal Occidentalism, the artists retained conscious traces to the European origin of the globe, but layered it with additional meanings that were specific to the Mughal context. References to ancestral and Islamicate traditions, literature, cosmopolitanism and spirituality were explicitly linked to the cultural pluralism of the Mughal elite. In this painting, Jahangir appears as a 'Universal Manifestation' (*mazhar-i kull*) and the 'shadow of God on earth' (*khalifa-i khuda*), in full control of the European-looking globe, to which he possesses a key. The globe embodies the different perspectives of intersecting cultures while it maintains selected common identity.

Mughal Occidentalism appears also in the elaborate landscape scenes of the late sixteenth century. Expressing the Mughals' policy of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, the urban and natural landscape scenes in the upper part of paintings conveyed specific Mughal ideas by using repurposed European elements and techniques. Viewing these rich panoramas within the context of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, I argue that their inclusion produced images of India that reinforced Islamicate, and even more specifically Mughal, notions of "just rule" that transcended religious and cultural divisions. Using European techniques and compositional elements from Netherlandish painting, Mughal artists represented Akbar as the restorer of balance and his empire as peaceful, economically prosperous, and cosmopolitan.

Moving from depictions of the empire to portrayals of the Mughal aristocracy and images of the emperor, Mughal artists used Renaissance techniques and repurposed European elements and Christian iconography to create life-like portraits. Under Akbar and Jahangir, portraiture served a variety of functions, ranging from practical to spiritual, from diplomatic gifts to personal mementos. It became a significant tool of political, cultural and socio-religious powers. Especially under Jahangir, royal portraits presented a wealth of details that symbolized the sacred sovereignty and just rule of the Mughal lineage. Weaving together Islamicate concepts of physiognomy with European techniques, the

emperors and their artists became interested in creating a royal “profile”. They emphasized specific traits of male members of the royal family that legitimized their role as a universal manifestation of divine sovereignty. To that purpose, the painters deployed Mughal Occidentalism to create an image of the Mughal lineage as illuminated, cosmopolitan and loyal to glorious traditions and prophets. By using European elements, the artists exploited the genre of portraiture to create formal and conceptual possibilities that served the goals and values of their Mughal patrons.

Pursuing these ideas, we are faced with the question of how to refer to the final works of art produced by the Mughals. Are they copies, hybrids, composites, or completely new creations? These questions force us to consider the various artistic and intellectual layers, as well as the degree of intentionality that comprise Mughal Occidentalism. Although Mughal Occidental paintings appear distinct from other Persianate pictures, they are, in essence, very much connected to these artistic and cultural traditions.

All three gunpowder empires (Mughal, Safavid, and Ottoman, so called because of their success with firearms in the early modern period) developed various relationships with European art. However, Mughal attitudes appear different from those of Ottoman patrons, specifically Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–81), and his artists. The Ottomans, who were physically and politically part of Europe, established their capital in the former Christian city of Constantinople and considered themselves, to some extent, heirs to the Roman emperors.<sup>2</sup> Mehmed II’s patronage of Italian artists and architects was driven by his political ambitions and artistic cosmopolitanism.<sup>3</sup> In a portrait of the Sultan smelling a rose, Timurid and European conventions are melded into a new whole (Fig. 97). The Ottoman ruler’s pose closely mimics a portrait from about 1500–25 of Sultan Husayn Mirza Bayqara (r. 1469–70, 1470–1506), the last major Timurid ruler of Central Asia and a relative of Babur (Fig. 98). The Ottoman artist used European techniques of modeling and light and shade to render the life-like individualized facial features of Mehmed II. The ruler’s expressive arched eyebrows, bright almond eyes, prominent aquiline nose, thick, brown beard, strong chin, and small red lips convey a sense of command, sophistication, intellect, and both mental and physical strength. While the Timurid and Ottoman portraits show a clear interest in physiognomy and volume, when compared to Jahangir’s portrait of about 1615 (Fig. 75), they

2 Gulru Necipoglu, “Visual Cosmopolitanism and Creative Translation: Artistic Conversations with Renaissance Italy in Mehmed II’s Constantinople,” *Muqarnas* 29 (2012): 4–35.

3 Julian Raby, “Pride and Prejudice: Mehmed the Conqueror and the Italian Portrait Medal,” *Studies in the History of Art* 21 (1987): 171–94.

appear flat and more schematic, and, in the case of the Timurid ruler, lacking in any distinct facial expression of character. Even though Akbar and Jahangir promoted ideas that were seemingly similar to Ottoman cultural pluralism and cosmopolitanism under Mehmed II, Europe was not an immediate physical entity for them, and they were not crowned at the former capital of emperors Constantine and Justinian. In spite of military tensions with the Portuguese of Goa, Europe for the Mughals was a mediated entity.

The Mughals, the Safavid, and the Ottomans each engaged in their own unique way with Renaissance visual materials. The core ideologies, policies, and geopolitical settings and aspirations of each of the empires dictated the ways in which European features and techniques were adapted and repurposed to fit the cultural goals and values of certain rulers in specific times. The Safavids, while geographically removed from Europe, did have contact with the Europeans when the Portuguese held the port of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf, and English merchants visited the courts of Shah Isma'il and Shah Tahmasp. But until the late 1590s to early 1600s, according to Sheila Canby, this contact with Europeans yielded no impact on Safavid art. As in the case of Mughal India with the establishment of *ṣulḥ-i kull*, only when new policies were initiated by Shah Abbas I—in foreign relations and socioeconomics—was the relationship to European art transformed.<sup>4</sup> Contemporary portraits of the ruler made during his lifetime are rare, unlike the case of Mughal India under Akbar and Jahangir. But in an intimate portrait of the Safavid Shah with his pageboy, the ruler is shown almost embracing the handsome youth who is serving him wine (Fig. 99). This example shows Shah Abbas as a virile man with a long mustache and shaved head. Such individualized characteristics are known also from Mughal portraits of him done by Bishan Das (Fig. 83). However, in spite of these similarities and the selective use of European painting technique, the Safavid image appears more linear and transparent, very different from the Mughal depiction. The Safavid artist Muhammad Qasim relied mostly on Persianate models and pictorial techniques, while using very light touches of modeling and light and shadow. The Mughal artist Bishan Das used a richer

4 Sheila Canby, "Farangi Saz: The Impact of Europe on Safavid Painting," in *Silk and Stone: The Art of Asia*, ed. Jill Tilden (London: Hali Publications, 1996), 48–50. For the artistic changes during the second half of the seventeenth century see Amy S. Landau, "Farangi-sazi at Isfahan: The Court Painter Muhammad Zaman, the Armenians of New Julfa, and Shah Sulayman (1666–1694)," PhD diss., University of Oxford, 2006; Amy S. Landau, "Reconfiguring the Northern European Print to Depict Sacred History at the Persian Court," in *Mediating Netherlandish Art and Material Culture in Asia*, ed. Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Michael North (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2014), 65–82.



FIGURE 97  
Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II  
Smelling a Rose, attributed to  
*Sinan Bey or Sibilzade Ahmed*,  
ca.1480–81, Ottoman period.  
Watercolor on paper. Istanbul,  
Topkapi Palace Museum Library,  
*Album H. 2153, fol. 10r.*

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE  
TOPKAPI PALACE MUSEUM  
LIBRARY

palette, but, most distinctively, he created tonal transitions and pronounced facial features—a more intensive application of European techniques.

According to Corinne Lefèvre, the policy differences between the Mughals and the Safavids reflected core beliefs, identities and social order: “Whereas the sacred essence of the Mughals had entitled them to dominion over all mankind, the Safavids’ self-redefinition as mere Imami supporters [believing in a succession to Muhammad of divinely inspired imams] restricted their sovereignty to Shi’i adherents.”<sup>5</sup> The Mughals’ adoption of *ṣulḥ-i kull* in the late sixteenth century and their predilection towards *Akhlaqi* ideology further enhanced that dynasty’s claims to cultural cosmopolitanism and the creation of a pluralistic artistic language.

By the time Shah Jahan ascended the Mughal throne, in 1628, the artistic relationship between Mughal painting and European art had lost its immediacy.

5 Corinne Lefèvre, “The *Majālis-i Jahāngīrī* (1608–11): Dialogue and Asiatic Otherness at the Mughal Court,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 256–57, 267.



FIGURE 98  
Portrait of Sultan Husayn Mirza  
Bayqara, ascribed to Bihzad, ca.  
1500–1525, folio from an album, Herat,  
Central Asia. Ink, watercolor and gold  
on paper. 34.3 × 32.7 cm. Harvard Art  
Museums, # 1958.59.

PHOTO: IMAGING DEPARTMENT  
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HARVARD COLLEGE

It seems that artists and patrons were no longer looking at contemporary European works in the same way that they had done before. Shah Jahan asked the Dutch East India Company to send over artists, and indeed in the 1650s two Dutch painters, employed as agents for the company, reached the Mughal court. But while the Dutch and English presence increased on the subcontinent, the Portuguese and Jesuits lost their appeal to Shah Jahan. The shift in artistic concerns reflected the interest in court formalities and aspirations that created what scholars describe as “jewel-like” quality and precision in painting.<sup>6</sup> By then, the selective use of perspective and the creation of life-like idealized portraits with a psychological dimension had become an integral part of Mughal art.

One of the most striking results of Mughal domination in the subcontinent was the dissemination of Mughal visual language. Some Rajput courts,

6 John Guy and Jorrit Britschgi, *Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India, 1100–1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 53.



FIGURE 99 Shah Abbas I Embracing One of his Pages, signed by Muhammad Qasim, 1627, Isfahan, Safavid period. Watercolor and gold leaf on paper. 27.5 × 16.8 cm. Musée du Louvre, MAO494.

PHOTO: RAPHAËL CHIPAULT. © RMN-GRAND PALAIS / ART RESOURCE, NY



FIGURE 100  
Kamsa Receiving His  
Minister, *folio from a  
Bhagavata Purana (Ancient  
Stories of the Lord) ca. 1640,  
India, Rajasthan, Kota.*  
*Opaque watercolor and gold  
on paper. 34.29 × 21.59 cm. Los  
Angeles County Museum of  
Art (M.74.5.13).*

having adopted certain aspects of European techniques and motifs in painting, considered these features to be “Mughal”.<sup>7</sup> The result was that several Rajput artists amalgamated local pictorial traditions with Mughal Occidentalism. For example, a scene from a *Bhagavata Purana* (ca. 1640) painted in Kota, Rajasthan, shows soft folds and transparent fabrics that emphasize a naturalistic body, a clear attempt to render depth and three-dimensional space in the architecture, and an attentiveness to rendering volume and light and shade in human faces (Fig. 100). The Kota artist added a portrait-like quality to his figures, which further demonstrates the selective use of Mughal elements in this painting. Mughal Occidentalism was thus adapted and reconfigured for new Hindu-Rajput contexts. It is no wonder, then, that the Mughal visual language, with Mughal Occidentalism at its core, had such a strong impact on later generations.

<sup>7</sup> Molly Emma Aitken, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 2010), 83–87.



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