“Manuscript Illumination in Mughal Painting”

Dissertation

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by
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under the Supervision of

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To whom it may concern

This is to certify that Ms. Annu Manuja, student of M. Phil, has completed her dissertation entitled "Manuscript Illumination in Mughal Painting" under my supervision.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work is based on the investigations made, data collected and analysed by her and it has not been submitted in any other University or Institution for any degree.

Professor Ashfaq M. Rizvi
Supervisor

10th May, 1995
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Thesis is essentially an investigation; a research for a purpose
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Chapter I

Introduction
Historical Survey of Mughal Painting.
The Mughal art is a combination of Indo-Persian style of painting which developed in India. Mughal School of painting was not a new style introduced without, but a combination of the Indian Rajput school refined of the strong Persian influence.

Mughal painting has evoked considerable interest among the Connoisseurs of art all over the world. Babar was the founder the Mughal Empire in India. He seems to have developed a great taste for the art of painting of which he was a connoisseur. Mughal paintings are a class by themselves, distinct from all other styles and techniques of pre-Mughal or Contemporary Indian art. Akbar was the first Mughal monarch who took a deep interest in the promotion of painting and following the Mongol and Timurid example he commissioned the work of illustrating number our manuscript. When he was a child at Kabul with his father Humayun, he had the opportunity to study Persian painting in the company of the Persian painters Khawaja Abdus Samad and Mir Saiyid Ali.

STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

The artist of Akbar's court were drawn from within the country and also from Iran. The style that developed was the best of Bihzad School and pre-Mughal Indian art.

The Mughal art of painting may well be known understood in the light of Abu'l Fazl definition. Abu'l Fazl suggests further standard for evaluating the best execution. Basically, these included the depiction of minutest details, boldness of expression, frankness of lines, the truthful representation of form and colour, and lastly, the general finish. It combined the skills of laying the pigments shading and lining and ornamenting the object. These very standards are the basic elements which shaped the style of miniature-painting under the Mughal. The Persian tradition makes it self emphatically felt in the aerial perspective deep blue skies flat intone occasionally sprayed with a flight of bird or stars, figure imposed on one author, a group of figures over a landscape background: the representation of object

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1 S P Verma—Art and Material Culture in the painting of Akbar's Court.
Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd New Delhi
following a continuously rising view paint; the method of dividing up the picture plane into small spaces; bright colour elaborate embellishment of costumes. Mughal artist draw inspiration from the Iranian stylistic peculiarities, accompanied by a very modest our Indian tinge on the whole.

The method of shading employed is similar to that in Ajanta painting though the European technique also begins to show with deep and thick shading Mughal art during Akbar’s time experience the most significant of which is the introduction of perspective. On this smooth surface the artist sketched the theme. The primary sketch was drawn in softlines suggesting the outer form of the figure; the ground colour used are not necessarily light but are lighter than those to be applied in subsequent filling.

The outline of individual figure receive utmost care from the artist. The painting is begun with a sketch defining the limits of the object within which the brush must move after colouring and shading these lines are finally confirmed in a darker tone and the figure given a defined from. In the matter of colouring it is possible to discern a certain productive the human figure being the main object of representation were treated first, animal figure came next and the background was coloured last of all. This shows that the artist began work without any definite colour scheme in mind.

**Akbar’s Reign**

The art flourished under Akbar did not entirely stem from painters such as Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abu’s Samad Shiri. Akbar created a new synthesis of art with the combination of Indian Chinese’s Europen art. Hamza paintings belonged to tradition of tent hanging. It was mainly the work of Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abdu’s Samad, assisted by several other artists.

The representation of building and landscape is similar to that in the Hamza painting. The drawing of animal and birds blended with a more distinctly Indian feel indicate the emergence of the Mughal school art. Under Akbar, painting seems to have been confined to the illustration of manuscript. Abu’l Fazl has mention only a few of the illustrated manuscript though several volumes of such manuscript and stray folios have survived to this day.

Ibid
Several artists were employed at the court to paint the great treasure of Mughal miniature. Abu'l Fazl has given a brief list of only 17 artists. Among the artists Hindu were in a greater number. Abu'l Fazl has specially praised the work of the Hindu artist. He says, "Their picture surpass our conception of things; few indeed, in the whole world are found equal to them". The Hindu painter laid much emphasis on the representation of human character. He excelled in the painting of the background, the drawing of feature the distribution of colour and portraitture miniature are the example of the contemporary nature of the work of both Daswanth and Basawan. Basawan shows greater interest in decoration of the scenes, heavy fold in the flowing costumes and a thick shade which appear occasionally in Daswanth miniatures though his works represent a greater sense of depth and the background is mostly drawn with a hazy landscape.

Mughal period is the richest in the respect, while turning over the leaves of Mughal album, one is struck by the persistent uniformity of the shape and form of articles of utility, cultural interest and institution, which analyzed and put together, enable us to comprehend medieval life more intimately. They are representative to a certain degree of the level of culture. The work is broadly divided into part dealing with the art and technique, on the one hand and the historical aspect, on the other. Akbar gave rise to new form of art; the famous painting of Akbar can be divided into four parts:

1. Illustration of Persian subjects such as "Hamzanama" etc.
2. Illustration of Indian epics and romance such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc.
3. Illustration of historical interest such as Tarikh-i-Alfi etc.
4. Portraits—In the work of Abu'l Fazl his majesty got himself portrayal and ordered that portrait of all the noble men should be prepared. The Mughal painting of Akbar period comes before in the shape of painted manuscript. The main illustrated manuscripts of Akbar's period are-Dastan Amir Hamza, Ramayan, Akbar Nama, Katha Sarit Sagar.
“It has long been recognized that the form and style of painting known generally as mughal paintings was essentially a product of the Mughal Court.

Mughal painting, in form and content, happens to be a departure from this collective community tradition, just as Maurya art was more than a millennium and a half before.”^2

It is true, therefore that in Mughal Court painting it is not difficult for a pair of discerning eyes to distinguish an Akbari painting from a Jahangir one, or the latter from a Shah Jahan one, but what is more interesting and perhaps more important is the fact that a strong common denominator remains throughout to distinguish the form and style from earlier and later ones as well as from those others of contemporary times which originated elsewhere than in the Mughal Court, for instance, in the Courts of the Sultans of the Deccan or in those of the contemporary and later Rajput kings and princes.

There are other instances as well, and from amongst the Indian artists recruited and patronized by Akbar. The upper right corner of this relatively large painted textile piece is occupied by the composition of an inconsequential rural scene which must have been and even more is very common anywhere in northern India, but which has nothing to do, thematically or otherwise, with the larger composition which covers roughly speaking, five-sixth of the painted surface. The small corner piece is altogether different in form and style not only from those of the rest of the particular piece but also from those of all other pieces of Hamza known to us so far, here was a style and form that was current in contemporary India, evidently this small corner composition was drawn and painted by an artist of the court of Akbar, but his was not the style and form that was favoured, and adopted and made current at the court.

“MUGHAL NOBLE”

Portraiture occupies a significant position in the Mughal painting. A large number of portrait of the Mughal Emperors and the nobility etc, were executed during the Mughal period.

^2 N.R. Ray—Mughal Court Painting
The Portrait three quarter profile represents an intimate study of a Mughal noble standing with his left hand stretched out making a gesture which the other hand rests on the hilt of a dagger turked to his sash light green background.

Although very little is known about individual artists in Mughal India, there is considerable information about their techniques and methods. Akbar started a karkhana to originate a new style of painting. The main purpose was to produce illuminated manuscripts which was an elaborate production, refining the cooperation of calligraphers painters, preparators for various accessories such as colour grinder, gold workers, leather workers, book binders and many more. The book to be copied and illustrated were often very long and only by the strictest cooperation among all these different craftsmen and artists-some of whom were certainly Prima donnas could a beatiful work be produced in time.

"Mughal artists were due to new and more sophisticated techniques, learned both from the Persian and European traditions while some research has been done on the technique of Mughal paintings very little is known about the technical aspects of Rajput pictures. Pigments too can contribute significantly to the distinctiveness of a style." In contrast to pre Mughal painting, those of the Mughal and Rajput school reflect an enormous increase in the range of colours.

This is easily confirmed by the frequent copies of the compositions of the masters and the large quantity of Rajput drawings and pattern that have survived. We also know that under Akbar and Jahargir the Mughal artists arsiduously copied European prints and engravings.

The brief discussion of the techniques and practices of the Mughal Rajput artist is meant simply to indicate the need of further work in this area and also to contribute somewhat to the better appreciation of this particular tradition.

(The foundation of the Mughal empire was laid by Babur in 1556 when he defeated the pathan king Ibrahim Lodi. He was also accomplished in the arts of peace. He was a talented poet in Turki and Persian, and "his battles as well as his orgies were humanised by a breath of poetry")
Babur was succeeded by his son Humayun (1530-1556). Who, though charming and cultured, lacked the vigour, administrative ability of his father. At the Court of Shah Tahmasp of Persia, he came in touch with the paintings of the Persian artists Aga Miralac, Sultan Muhammad and Muzaffar Ali. These were pupils of the legendary Bihzad who has also been called "Raphael of the East." 

Later at Tabriz he met the poet and painter Mir Saiyid Ali who had distinguished himself as one of the illustors of Nizami's Khamsah. Then, in 1550 at Kabul, Mir Saiyid Ali and Abdus Samad from Shiraz joined Humayun. He and his son Akbar, took lessons in drawing from the artists, and the two royal wanderers had their interest in painting confirmed. When Humayun regained his throne, both the artists accompanied him to India.

Akbar (1556-1605) is the real founder of Mughal painting. Akbar was a discerning Judge of men, and, in recruitment, ignored consideration of caste, colour and creed.

More than a hundred painters were employed in the royal atelier at Fatehpur Sikri. Most of these were Hindus from Gujarat, Gwalior and Kashmir. They worked, in turn, under the two Persian master artists, Abdus samad and Mir Saiyid Ali but they were encouraged and inspired by Akbar. Abdus Samad was styled Shiringalam, or sweet pen, of him Abul Fazl "his perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look of his majesty, which caused him to turn from that which is form to that which is spirit." 

Abul Fazl tells also that the works of the painters were laid before Akbar weekly and he used to confer rewards according to the excellence of workmanship. Akbar had special admiration for the work of Hindu artists, notably Daswanth and Basawan. "Their pictures" Abul Fazl said, "Surpass our conception of things, few indeed in the whole world are found equal to them."

Akbar was very fond of the Stories of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the prophet. The illustration of these stories, the Hamza-Nama was the first work entrusted to the Persian master Mir Saiyid Ali plans called for 1400 pictures in volumes and the task was completed in 15 years. The pictures

5. M.S. Randhawa—John Kenneth Gilbaut, Indian Painting, The scene themes and legends
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
are of large size 20x27 inches and unlike other mughal paintings, are painted on cloth. They are in Persian safavi Style brilliant red and green colour predominate; the pink eroded rocks and the vegetation planes and blossoming plum and peach trees are reminiscent of Persia. However, Indian tones appear in later work as Indian artists were trained. Akbar’s religious interests led him to the Hindu classics and he ordered his artists to illustrate the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. This led to one of the greatest creations of his period, the illustrated Razm-nama.

It contains 169 full page paintings and was completed in 1589: It is said that 4 lakh rupees were paid to the artists.

Much of the painting of the Akbar Period show a restless energy. The painters in their work reflected the exuberant activity of their patron, figure are shown in hurried movement and the composition are crowded. This is particularly so in the Timur-nama, Babur-nama and Akbar-nama, the great pictorial sagas of the Mughal rulers.

The two Persian artists were the guiding spirit for the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, the first of the great series of paintings which gave the Mughal School its name and reputation. This was produced in the reign of Humayun’s Son, Akbar (1556-1605) The majority of painters in the atelier were Indian who had been trained in the existing school of painting in India.

Other works that were illustated in Akbar’s reign included the khamsa of Nizami, a classic of Persian literature the romantic tale of laila and Majnu shahnamah, the great epic of ancient Persia.

“The works of all painters according to Abu’l Fazl” are weekly laid before his majesty by the Darogah (Supervisor and the clerk)’.

As painting developed in the Mughal atelier it lost it purely persian characteristics and became increasingly Indian by the middle of Akbar’s reign, the skies lost their gold and lapis - Lazuli tones to break out into brilliant Sunset Colours.

Basawan, Daswanth and Bishan Das were some of the most famous painters of Akbar’s court among the names mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari are Kesu Lal, Mukund Miskin etc. Early Mughal art is purely masculine
From this it can be presumed that scenes of pleasure and alliance with the ladies, which abound in later Mughal painting were also imaginary, the women portrayed being not the princesses themselves but the lesser attendants who worked freely in and out of palaces and whose looks where no mystery to anyone.

Akbar created a separate department of painting with Khwaja Abdus Samad as its head. More than a hundred painters, both Hindus and Muslims, mostly from Kashmir, Punjab, Gwalior, Rajasthan and Gujarat were recruited to work under the Persian master. Akbar's patronage attracted the best painters to his court, some of whom immortalised themselves through their paintings “His Majesty writes Abu'l Fazl “from his earliest youth has shown a great predilection for this art, and gives it encouragement, as he looks upon it as a means, both of study and amusement hence the art flourishes, and many painters have obtained great reputation”

The work of all painters are weekly laid before his majesty by the daroghas and the clerks, he then confers rewards, according to excellence of workmanship, increases the monthly salaries.

The art of painting in its general finish and boldness of execution reached perfection during Akbar's reign. Mir Saiyid Ali of Tabriz, Khwaja Abdus Samad, Daswanth and Basawan were the most renowned artists. Besides these four masters, there were thirteen other first rate painters at Akbar's Court, mostly Hindus.

The Persian tradition as it had developed particularly under Bihzad in the later years of the 15th century, was notable for its decorative qualities and its lively sense of colour. The miniatures were usually book illustrations and were two dimensional. The line was calligraphic and the pallet, brilliant and enamel like. The Indian painters who were put under training, under the Persian masters soon mastered the finesse and technical excellence of Persian paintings, both of line and colour. The Persian School of painting gave an initial stimulus to the Mughal style, Mughal Painting started developing on independent line.

The artists representing the different regions of India had brought with them not only the skill in painting but also their conventions in regard

to drawings, use of colour and composition Akbar had left the painter very much to their own devices.

Akbar was very fond of the stories at of adventures of Amir Hamza, an uncle of the prophet. Illustration of these stories Hamza Nama was the first work entrusted to the Persian master, Mir Saiyid Ali, in all, 1400 Pictures were painted by him from 1550 to 1560 A.D. They are in the Persian style in which brilliant red, blue and green colours predominate. Akbar’s deep interest in religion inclined him towards the Hindu classics and he ordered his artists in 1582 A.D. to illustrate the epics of the Hindus.

The other important manuscripts illustrated during the period of Akbar are the Gulistan of sadi dated 1567 A.D. Anwar-i-Suhaili (A book of fables dated 1570 A.D. 12 in the school of oriental and African studies, university of London; another ‘Gulistan of Sadi’, a Diwan of the poet Amir Shahi in the Bibliothèque Nationale; Diwan-i-Hafiz, the Tuti Nama, the Baharistan of Jami dated 1595 A.D., in the Bibliothèque Nationale; Diwan-i-Hafiz, the Tutinama, the Baharistan of Jami dated 1595 A.D., in the Bodolian library; the Darab-Nama 13 the Tarikh-i-Alfi (A History of the world) circa 1590 A.D., the Jami-al-Tawarikh dated 1596 A.D. A number of the Babar-nama manuscripts executed in the last decade of the 16th century; the Twarikh-Khandane Taamuria in the Khuda Baksh Library, Patna, Akbar Nama of circa 1600 A.D. now in Victoria & Albert Museum London; and the Jog Vaishist dated 1602. 14 The classical Persian literature-Khamsa by Nizami, the romantic love poem of Laila & Majnu, the collections of moral tales by Sadi & Jami, were also illustrated. The atelier of Akbar thus created the Mughal style of painting. Certain conventions and types of figures were developed and these principles continued to be followed thereafter. Plate IV is an illustration from the Babur Nama. It shows a happy synthesis of the indigenous style of painting and the Persian art. The Mughal paintings exhibit three dimensional effect in contrast to the Persian one which was two dimensional.

Jahangir (1605-1627 A.D.) Akbar’s son had an advantage over his fathers in so far as he was left with a stable empire and could safely indulge in his favorite pastimes. Jahangir possessed an insatiable curiosity and had records made of all unusual objects and happenings his painters, who accompanied him everywhere made drawings of birds and animals which

12. Ibid
13. Ibid
caught the emperor’s eye. Under him, the beauty of line and delicacy of colors reached perfection, not known before.

Mansur was the painter who excelled in animal subjects in Jahangir’s time. The emperor’s own knowledge, not only of painting but also of the technical excellence of his painter, was so great that he could tell who had done the eyes, the hands, the landscape, and so on. This was a time of specialization, and Mansur was the specialist for birds and animals and Farrukh Beg for traditional Persian motifs so other also had their specialties. In Jahangir’s time miniature came to be done for preservation in folios rather than merely as book illustration. Portraits became increasingly popular and Jahangir presented his Portrait to all those he wished to honour.

The great love of the Mughal for creating gardens gave the painter a chance to study and paint various species of flowers. To these paintings he brings botanical expertise as well as an elevating sense of colour and rhythm. These flower studies were made in large number during the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan.

“A Banquet for Two Spies at Akiknigar”

Akbar’s pictures reflects his achievements as well as moods and interests. Here, the spies and their party are entertained by strange men probably based upon people, Akbar encountered on some expedition. They resemble exponents of tantric religion, perhaps from Nepal or Tibet. One sporting a white plume, has slanted eyes and a flattened Mongol nose. A Tibetan horn is among the weapons and musical instruments strung in an arcade behind the figures. In the background, at the right, other extremists strain bhang, a concoction of marijuana often used by holy men. Surrounded by their mysterious bowls, the busy pair sits beneath a writhing tree, with branches and bark suggestive of hallucinations to come.

Like the other paintings of the Hamza series, this one was designed to be effective across a room or courtyard. The colours are high in saturation and contrast. Whites are dead-white, oranges and yellows leap at us. Similarly, the patterns of tiles, stone work, and ornamentally disposed foliage are daringly bold. Nonetheless, close inspection is rewarding. The characterizations were painted for a man who could size up his fellows at a glance.

Plate: “A Banquet for Two Spies at Akiknigar”.

S.C. Welch—Imperial Mughal Painting, Chatto & Windus London 1958.
and wherever we look, whether at the host's coral and turquoise belt, also
typical of Nepal and Tibet, or at the outlandish gilt-bronze incense burner in the foreground, there is something to surprise and delight. It is no wonder that of all the loot carried off from Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739 (including the peacock throne), it was only the Hamza-Nama, "painted with images that defy the imagination", that Emperor Muhammad Shah pleaded to have returned.

Under the patronage of Jahangir, the art of portraiture attained great excellence. The portraits were painted by the court artist with great care and love of detail and fineness of drawings and modelling. Like his father Jahangir liked European paintings with religious subjects. Sir Thomos Roe, the English ambassador, who spent four years (1615-1619 A.D.) at the court, had many interesting conversations with the emperor far into the night on paintings and art in general.

During this period, European influence manifested itself more and more in paintings. The colours were no longer hard and enamel-like as in the previous period but were softer and melted harmoniously together. This naturalistic influence is best seen in the representation of landscapes.

The important manuscript illustrated during this period are:— an animal fable book called Ayar-i-Danish, the leaves of which are more in the cowasji Jahangir collection; Bombay and the Anwar-i-Suhaili; During Jahangir reign the number of artists had increased beyond the needs of the imperial atelier and Mughal trained painters of inferior merit were driven to seek a livelihood as commercial free lancers without regular patrons.

Shahjahan (1627-1658 A.D.) son of Jahangir, was more interested in architecture and jewellery than paintings. The reign of Shahjahan was marked by a dazzling magnificence. The artists worked in the tradition of the earlier reign, but their work is distinguished by far greater use of gold and colour. The miniatures showing slightly over elaborate court scenes. Together with the lavishness of the court is the ever present mystic element. The splendour of the Mughal court and with it the Mughal portraiture reached its height under him. The tendency to idealize continued and achieved the highest finesse. Many portraits of Shahjahan were painted. Paintings of the members of the royal family and courtiers

15. Dr. N.L. Mathur—Indian Miniatures, Published by Dr. N.L. Mathur
16. Ibid.
gorgeously dressed were produced. Harem scenes and beautiful ladies drinking or serving wine were popular themes.

It was probably considered a more fitting medium for depicting certain movements and mood than the more opulent painting style. Work in this medium can be distinguished from more sketches by the attention paid to detail, and the finished quality of the works. Shahjahan's own love for architecture; beauty of his time are an index of his taste. There is no record of the frank delight in art that his father found. It was inevitable, therefore, that from this time Mughal painting should show a definite decline.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707 A.D.) the youngest son of Shahjahan was little interested in arts in general. The splendour and luxuries of the court of Shahjahan were abolished and the palace was stripped of all its rich furniture. Paintings too suffered a setback due to his puritanical outlook, as he regarded its patronage opposed to the precepts of sacred Islamic Law. His portrait in many situations were also painted. In battles and seiges, he is shown in a prominent position but almost as an old man.

Mughal painting declined during the rule of emperor Aurangzeb 1658-1707 who was a puritan and therefore had no liking for fine art. A large number of court painters therefore migrated to provincial courts and continued to practise art under new patronage.

All facts and situations known so far have established beyond doubt that the Mughal painting was essentially a product of the Mughal court, organised and patronized from beginning to end by the emperors themselves. Themes or subjects were selected by the Imperial masters rather than the artists themselves. The thematic contents of the paintings reflect the personal tastes and temperaments, preferences, prides, pleasures, fashion and pastimes etc. of the individual imperial patrons. In every sense, Mughal painting was a court art.

In Mughal court painting, what is more interesting and perhaps more important is the fact that a strong common denominator remains throughout to distinguish the form and style from earlier and later ones. The Mughal court presents the articulation of artistic activities in the field of painting, of a unified and integrated form and style with a sense of purpose and

Brij Bushan Jamila-The world of Indian miniature. Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, New York & San Francisco.

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direction. This implication is by and large upheld by an analysis of the paintings themselves, despite relative variations in style and emphasis on themes conditioned by the tastes and predilections of individual monarchs from Akbar to Aurangzeb.

By and large the narrative-descriptive, dramatic and true-to-appearance aim and purpose remain constant throughout; so do the respective compositional schemes for different themes with but slight variations. The colour schemes also maintain throughout a common denominator as does the character of design and draughtsmanship. It is therefore not very difficult even for one who is not an expert, to be able to look at a given painting and say that it does or does not belong to the form and style of the Mughal court. The stamp of the form and style and the general character of the exercise is too clear and distinct to be missed.
Chapter II

Akbar as Connoisseur of Art
Mughal painting has elicited considerable interest from connoisseurs of art all over the world. Mughal paintings make a class by themselves, distinct from all other styles and techniques of the pre Mughal or Contemporary Indian art. Akbar was the first Mughal monarch who paid special attention to the promotion of the art of painting manuscripts following Mongol and Timurid examples. Akbar has an opportunity of studying the linear grace of the Persian art while he was at Kabul, with his father Humayun-accompanied by the Persian painter Khawaja Abdus Samad and Mir Saiyid Ali. He had independent views and indeed he considered painting as one of the means to recognise God. Similarly the line written about the perfection of Abdus Samad's skill in the Ain-i-Akbari "Mainly due to turn from that which is from to that which is spirit" reflect Akbar's view on art in general. Broadly speaking Akbar speaking, Akbar did not prefer the formal decorative style of Persia. From the very beginning the consideration of Mughal painters to the Persian qualm evidents on the page of the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza.

These illuminated pages are the first example of Akbar art and form the ground of training of the Mughal painters.

The present work was mainly done by the two artists Mir Saiyid Ali and Khawaja Abdus Samad assisted by side artists. It seems that a few creation also belonged to Basawan. The fusion of the Persian and Indian styles may also be seen in the illustrations of the manuscript, Tatinama, newly discovered manuscript. Though it is a undated manuscript but can be safely presumed not to be later than 1560. In the illustrations of the Tatinama artist trained in the different tradition have contributed their pieces of art. Subsequently a few miniatures have associated the Hamza style and other have striking feature of pre Mughal Indian art.

Under Akbar the art of painting seems confined to the illustration work of manuscripts, for which the fable books were equally preferred.

An early dated manuscripts of the Diwan of Anwari-A.D. 1588 is embellished in pocket size represented with birds, animals and flowers etc. The miniature of this manuscript have also combined the styles of Persian and western Indian art. The identity of different styles have survived distinctly where the painters have worked separately on folios.

The other books "Dwan of Shahi Khamsa of Amir Khusrau of Dihalvi and Anwar-i-Suhaili dated A.D. 1996-97"

Abu'l Fazl has referred only a few names of the illustrated manuscript though several volumes of such manuscript and astray fljos have survived to this day. The most illustrious of them may be noted as the Hamzanama, Tutinama, Diwan of Anwari, Anwar-i-Suhaili, Laila-e-Majmun, Diwan-i-Hafiz Rajkumar, Ayar-e-Danish, Razmnama, Akbarnama, Tarikh-i-Khandani, Darabnama.

Hindu themes were equally favoured by Akbar for illustration work and consequently the treat books of Hindus were translated into Persian language.

Several copies of these manuscript conatined with illustration have survived which evident that a number of copies were prepared of a manuscript to meet the demand of the royal library, haram, bobles etc. The manuscripts were adorned with rich bindings and miniatures. A lot of money must have been incurred in the work illuminating these manuscripts.

(The manuscripts of Diwan-i-Hafiz in the collection Sir Chester Beatty is the earliest dated manuscripts known to us.)

'Akbar slays a tigress which attacked the royal cavalcade'

Acc No. 17/17 right half of double page

Inscribed: 97

tarah Basawan amal Tara Kalan nami chehra Basawan composed by Basawan, painted by Tara the elder faces by Basawan.

Text reference: Beveridge II, 222-3, lowe, II, 255

Published: Staude (1932) pls. 5-6, Welch (1960) colour pl. on p.9 welch (1964) pl 11A and Gascoigne (170) pp 112-3.

S.P. Verma—Art and Material Culture in the Paintings of Akbar's Court.
18. The manuscript is preserved at Bharat Kala Bhavan Varanasi.
The royal cavalcade proceeded towards the centre of sovereignty. His Majesty went on stage by stage, hunting and shooting, but also going on rapidly. When his crescent standards cast their rays on the territory appertaining to the fort of Narwar, a tiger, such as might terrify the leopard of heaven, came out of the forest with five cubs and on the track by which the cavalcade was proceeding. His Majesty of shahinshah who had the strength of the Lion of God in his arms and the coat of mail of Divine protection on his breast, went alone and without hesitation in front of that iron-clawed fiery-natured wild animal. When the spectators beheld this, the hair on their bodies stood erect and sweat distilled from their pores. His Majesty with swift foot and alert arm attacked the brute and killed it by one stroke of his sword.

Context: The chronicler introduces this subject as ‘the beast of prey’ which personally attacked by Akbar, which provides sufficient reason for this brilliant encounter. Some recensions of the Akbarnama are at variance, using the term babari; but the text enclosed within this illustrated page clarifies the identity of the animal as a tigress.

Description: The description given of the event is vivid enough to suggest that it derives from an eye-witness report. The landscape suggest that the royal procession is moving through the hilly forests of Malwa state. In the centre of the green clearing Akbar leaps into the air on his horse, and with one long, level swoop of the sword brings down the lethal blow on the tigress. The most dramatic moment of the encounter is seized when her head is severed from the body, the tongue hangs out, blood gushes forth. The fierce vibrations of this encounter are reinforced by the tiger stripes becoming fleeting emanations of rippled energy.

On the left-half page one of the cubs lies dead and sprawled out, a second has badly mauled a man, while a third is being stabbed with a dagger. Movement coils and recoils with that he hath, spring bodies of the cubs and hunters to become a compelling assertion of energy. Again one can sense the terror and fear that the gripped the spectators.

Artist: Among the illustrations to the Akbar Nama this double page is the first to be credited to the hand of Basawan, and it is a dramatic entry. Altogether eleven paintings are assigned to him in this manuscript as well.

Geepi Sen—Painting from the Akbarnama, Roopa Company, Pataudi House.
as three paintings where he is required to retouch the faces. Three of these are double-page compositions where he would seem to deliberately choose to design violent encounters. Brutality is shown with such speed, poise and perfection that the experience becomes sublimated.

Akbar was the real founder of the Mughal school of Painting. Akbarnama or atelier was opened where painters and decorators were employed for the illustration of the manuscripts and no pain was spared by the emperor in giving constant supervision and encouragement to bring the art of painting to a higher level.

In the matter of colouring the painters of Akbar period showed great preference for bright colours the liking for which they got from their brother painters of Persia. Thus bright blue especially ultramarine was profusely used.

The faces of the human figures represented in the painting of this period are either in three quarter view or in profile.

Another remarkable feature of early Mughal Painting is lack of proportion in the delineation of human figures. In the early period however influenced by which he drew human figures and the unproportionate figures it must be admitted that many features of Persian School such as round head etc.

In the representation of the human figures greater attention is paid to proportion, we have already seen the painter of the school of Akbar, who drew much of their inspiration from the school of Herat, were not so much doped in the science of proportion.

The quarter view of Akbar School persists but figure in profile in portraiture become a common feature.

It has yet to be shown whether "Popular Mughal" Painting were produced earlier than the period of Jahangir. This is not the case however with Mughal painting made for court circles.

There is evidence that private establishment were already at work in the last years of Akbar. We are particularly well informed by contemporary writers about the library establishment of Abd-al-Rahim-i-khana (1556-

1627) son of Akbar for and guardian, Bayran Khan. Moreover, there still exists a manuscript of the Persian translation of the Ramayana made for him from Akbar’s own copy between A.H. 996 (1587/88) and 1007 (1598/99). At least fifteen artists contributed the one hundred and thirty surviving miniatures.

The Mughal school of painting owed its origin and development to the enthusiastic patronage of the Emperor Akbar. The imperial library set the standard for the lesser establishments of the great Mughal library, allowing the standard for the lesser establishment of the great Mughal officers. Since these could not command the resources of the emperor, their production lacks the inspiration and finish of the great imperial books. It was through these more modest works that the canons of Mughal taste and style came to be disseminated in the provinces where painting were executed which have been characterised in recent years as “Popular Mughal”.

**Celebrated dancers from Mandu perform before Akbar**

Acc. No. 16/117

Inscribed: 96

Tarah Kesu Kalan amal Dharmdas composed by Kesu the elder painted by Dharmadas

Text reference: Beveridge, II, 221

Published: Pinder Wilson (1976 34).

Next day Mahem Anaga brought the zenana which had remained behind and arranged a great entertainment. Adham Khan was roused from the sleep of negligence by that able dame and recognised the supreme honour of the Khedive of the world. He tendered gifts and prepared a feast. He produced before His Majesty whatever had come into his hands from Baz Bahadur’s estate, whether movable or immovable, as well as all the wives, dancing girls and courtesans. As folly and blindness of heart were the confirmed qualities of Adham Khan he intrigued with his mother’s servants who waited in the royal harem and spirited away from the Shahinshah’s enclosure two special beauties from among Baz Bahadur’s women who had recently been exhibited to His Majesty. When the scandalous proceeding...
came to the royal hearing, an order was given to stop the march and to send off swift messengers to search for the lost ones. Able men undertook the service, and by making proper search they caught both of them and brought them back. Mahem perceived that if these two women were introduced to His Majesty, the veil over her acts would be raised, and her son's treachery revealed. She therefore, caused these two innocent ones to be put to death for "A servered head makes no sound".

Context: The choice of this somewhat unusual theme among the paintings deserves some comment. Mandu was famous for its cultivation of the arts of music and dance, initiated by Sultan Ghiyasuddin and continued by Baz Bahadur. The painting suggests that even thirty years later when the Akbarnama was written, the prize contribution from the Malwa campaign was considered to be the dancers. It is the story of the return of the 'two special beauties' who had been spirited away by the audacious Adham Khan, and the tragic sequel of their death, which forms the basis for this composition.

Description: Ladies were introduced into Mughal painting of the sixteenth century only on occasions of marriage and birth. A quick comparison with other such subjects yields the fact that the costumes worn by the prize dancers is a novel attire, of a layered skirt which flares out as they pirouette, and of close-fitting trousers below with anklets (ghunghrus) to accent the rhythm. The dance performed by them is equally unusual, and not repeated in any paintings from the Akbarnama, the Baburnama or the Timurnama. The cultural implications could be significant. It could be suggested that both the idioms of dance as well as the costumes worn were imported into the Mughal court from Mandu. Looking on at the performance with some interest are two gentlemen who may represent Adham Khan and his senior colleague Pir Muhammed. The senior lady who hold up a cloaked hand may be Mahem Anaga, the dowager who was finally led to conspire the death of these two women.

Artists: The painting is ascribed in the margin to Kesu the elder, mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari. The colourist here is Dharmadas, who modulates the tones of rich browns and blues so as to bring depth to the figures.

It was under Akbar a recognizable Mughal style was formed. The work that emerged were in a new and different style which mixed Hindu Rajput and Muslim Indian elements with those of imperial Safavid Iran all these ingredients seemed to be on equal footing. Indian traits of course reflected the attitudes and taste with which the Mughal were most familiar the Indian style, however, appealed because of their novelty they formed a contrast to the utrasophistication and subtlety of Iranian works, in which colours were set onto the page like Jewels in mounts and high drama conveyed by the raising of an eybrian. His Invention of portraiture and the shift of subject away from the religious and poetic texts common to both Hindu and Muslim traditions and towards historical scenes and natural history subjects are major innovations of Akbar painting from the sixteenth century into the mid-seventeenth. Mughal Painting concentrated on naturalism and in particular, on portraiture.

In the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) the majority of painters in the atelier were Indians who had been trained in the existing school of painting in India. Even though the masters guided these apprentices to produce works using purely Persian Technique, their basic Indian training soon asserted itself and a synthesis of the two styles emerged in their works producing a school of painting which has been the subject of unlimited praise by all critics and connoisseurs.

The artists worked together on a sort of assembly line basis, where each developed his own speciality. The first outline sketch the filling in of colour landscape. When the picture was finished the superintendent would write the names of all the painter responsible on it so the earliest Mughal painting were far from being anonymous.

Akbar himself surprisingly enough could neither read nor write. How this was possible in a man of superb intellect can only be explained by the fact that quite early in life he had consciously blocked out all book learning.

Akbar defended the painter by saying that he had special opportunities for the recognition of god, for the exercise of his art teaches him humility.

Even though he can draw the perfect likeness of human being, he knows that his work must remain without life and so his thoughts turn to god the given of life Akbar had various work illustrated.

22 M.C. Beach—Grand Mughal Imperial Painting in India.
Contributions by Stuart Cary Welch and Glenn Lowry Sterling and Francine Chack Art Institute.
The Dastan-i-Amir Hamaza a massive work comprising 1,400 painting took fifteen years to complete. The canvas teem with life recounting episode in which Amir Hamza battles against various enemies and evil spirits to complete his mission. The Persian flavour is extremely strong but Indian elements are evident in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant.

Other work that were illustrated in Akbar’s reign included the Khamso of Nizami, a classic of Persian Literature. The romantic tale of Laila and Majnu, the great epic of ancient Persia. “The work of all painter according to Abu’l Fazl are weekly laid before his majesty by the supervisor and the clerks.” Much progress was made in the commodities required by painter and the correct prices of such articles were carefully ascertained the mixing of colours has especially been improved.

The miniature of detail the general finish and the boldness of execution now observed in picture are incomparable even inanimate object look as if. They have life more than a hundred painters have become famous masters of the art, while the numbers of those who approach perfection, or those who are middling is very large.

As painting developed in the Mughal ateliers it lost its purely persian characteristics and become increasingly Indian by the middle of Akbar’s reign. the skies lost their gold and lapis-lozuli tones to break out into brilliant sunset colours. The stylized quality of persian painting is replaced by movement and vigor, and the human figure becomes more and more Indian in feature and expresssion. Miniatures become records of the emperor’s activities Akbar supervising the building of his dream city, fatehpur Sikri, receiving the submission of a rebel, hunting tigers Basawan and Daswanth a and Bishan Das were some of the most famous painters ofAkbar’s court. Among the names, mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari are Kesu Lal, Mukund, Miskin, Tara, Sahwlah, etc.

No wonder therefore, that life in the Mughal court from Akbar onwards, was Iranian in its external appearance and behaviour pattern as much as in its innerpsyche and will, nature and Character. Seated on a raised platform, apart and all of, in all regalia of pomp and power in the Diwan-i-Am, and the Diwan-i-Khas, with the nobles and others arranged below in

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the strict order of their given grades, almost as in the army formation, the Mughal monarch derived his authority from a theology of kingship that was as much Achaemenian as scythian, and hence Irano-Central Asian in its origin. They lived in palaces and apartments and reared-up-gardens that were modelled on those of Irano & South Central Asia the ranking of their nables and their army, their art of warfare, their tents and trappings, their carpets and hangings, their harems and their retinue of retainers, servants and slaves, their dress and food were all either modelled on or reminiscent of their Iran-Central Asian origins and cultural affiliations. Like their Iran-Central ancestors, the Mughals too, came to maintain Kharkhanas or workshops for a number of crafts and industries including those for painting and the allied arts and crafts. All these and similar others provided the thematic contents of the Mughal painting along with those usual courtly contents of palace, and court scenes, scenes of hunt, of war and sieges etc. For those who were mystically inclined, assemblages of Sufi saints and mystic Dervishes had a special attraction. Mughal paintings records very faithfully this attachment which characterized the list of more than a couple of Mughal monarchs.

There was, however, one theme which was unknown to & unpractised in contemporary Iran-Central Asian tradition, namely, portraiture of individual human-beings, bird & animals, in the sense of definitely identifiable individualization of external features and inner nature and character not that portraiture as a genre of plastic art was altogether “unknown in traditional and contemporary Iran and Central Asia or in Traditional India, but such art was mainly concerned with types” and abstract than with individuals characterized by their respective features.

The Mughal emperor’s Akbar (1556-1605) was an energetic domineering and creative Political figure. As a patron of the arts, the works he commissioned attest to his involvement with artistic production and his developing respect of technical and aesthetic quality Akbar was the third Mughal emperor of India is the found of the Mughal School.

Many memorable works have been written about Akbar’s importance to the arts India. One recent account described the emperors relation to his painters by saying that he was their creative mind. “Akbar inspired the

painters who gave form to his vision"^{25}. His genius worked through their sensitivity and craftsmanship. In another instance, the greatest of the manuscripts the emperor's commissioned, the physically large and visually turbulent Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, or Hamzanama, was characterized as. "A vision of the world through the eyes of a lion and the lion of course, was Akbar."^{26} The first series of painting executed for Akbar are those of Hamzanama. They were painted by Persian master Mir Saiyid from 1550 to 1560.

During the emperor's lifetime, he commissioned an official biography the Akbarnama, to be written by his friend and confidant Abu'l Fazl the author described the greatness of the Iranian artist AbduS Samad, who had came to India with Humayun.

He discussed the artist Daswanth, whom Akbar considered the greatest of his Indian Painters. "One day the eye of his Majesty fell an him; his talent was discovered in a short time he surpassed all painter, and become the first master of the age"^{27}.

Abu'l Fazl, no less than for twentieth-century art historians, the greatness of Mughal Painter was a direct result of the greatness of their patronge.

Forms are organised to create a rich surface patterns which the colours balance and enliven the skilful artists such a Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad Shirinqualm (Abdus Samad), who were among the matchless ones of this art were in his service and were instructing him.

The scene may allude to this relationship between prince Akbar and Abdus Samad, furthermore, the painting being presented is a minute copy of this very work, as an extraordinary technical tour de force. It well embodies the taste of the time.

The earliest major manuscript attributable to Akbar's patronge is the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza, Hamzanama a project directed in turn by Mir Saiyid Ali, Abdus Samad. The great paintings from the manuscript are of a very different character from any known work by the two Indian artists dateable to the years before their move to India.

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27. Ibid.
The comparison of a Hamza illustration with a work done by Mir Saiyid Ali in Iran, provides an excellent means to define those innovations with which Akbar is credited the work of Mir-Saiyid Ali is one of the most familiar and often exhibited of all Persian paintings.

Akbar’s vital power, harmoniously attuned to nature’s force, was never better expressed than in the illustrations to his Hamzanama. According to Abu’l Fazl, he met with his artists once each week. If this is accurate, and we suspect that it refers to his later, less intense years rather than to the period of Hamza, enough time was provided for him to so inspire his painters that he vitally painted through them, in much the same way that Abu’l Fazl was his painters that he virtually painted through them, in much the same way that Abu’l Fazl was his literary genius. Abdus Samad, the second director of the project, had been a somewhat conventional artist prior to the time when, according to Abu’l Fazl, “he was stirred to new heights by the alchemy of Akbar’s vision, and he turned from outer form to inner meaning”.

Few pictures are more spirited than Mirdukht’s escape with its whiplash division of land and water, dashing figures, and dramatic gesticulations, worthy of the grandest opera. The water is in sinuous madstrom of leaping fish and other aquatic life, pondiring it imaginatively released yet other, wilder forms, converting its turbulence; ape like faces, the profile heads of a ram and and ibex, a lion belloving at a fish, and numerous other grotesqueries. Such hidden images abound in the rocks, water, and tree stumps of early Akbari painting, but become scarces towards the end of the Sixteenth century, when increasing orthodoxy discouraged all that was so earthy, intuitive and “Superstitions.”

Several illustration from the Hamzanama one derived from a quite different Iranian tradition. The first four books done under the superintendence of Mir-Saiyid-Ali contain several scenes obviously painted by artists from Bokhara. MirSaiyid Ali, Abdus Samad had both worked for Shah Tehmasp whose safavid dynasty centered at Tanroz had replaced the Timurids-Akbar’s ancestors in 1502.

The fourth volume of the Hamza—a painting that is other wise of little artistic interest. An in the Court scene from the filzwilliam Album (figure)
The composition is flat and broken into clearly defined, self-contained and often rectangular compartments. The illustration though not typical of the majority of the ones in the Hamza-Nama is nonetheless important as evidence of the continuing presence of Bakharan artist and the ideas at the Mughal Court.

"The earliest Akbari manuscript with an inscription giving its date of execution is the Deval Devi Khidr Khan of 1567-68."

A second dated manuscript the Anwar-i-Suhaili (Light of canopus) of 1570, contains twenty-seven illustrations for a Persian translation of the Sanskrit Indian tales from which Aesop's Fables were derived format is small and thus for more intimatethan that of the Hamza-nama yet this volume over is considerably more innovative than the Deval Devi Khid Khan.

The several Folios of the Anwar-i-Suhaili, and the forms are some times set against blank, unpainted paper.

Anwar-i-Suhaili, is scarcely less vital and energetic than the Hamzanama even for these illustrations however, the artist often drew on a general repertoire of forms A painting of a man with a Trumpet.

Individual Mughal Painters had subjects for which they were particular well suited, and Daswanth was most often assigned illustrations of horrific unearthly events or of intense the key to in conflict with the realistic.

Ten birds, page from a natural history manuscript Mughal art, late 16th century, Musee Guimet paris. The miniature is signed by Miskin and was made to satisfy Akbar's curiosity concerning animals and various forms of life. With his usual skill, the artist has combined real life birds with other's that appear to belong to fantasy. The work is executed in water colours.

"PORTRAIT OF A COURTIER"

Mughal art British Museum, London. The most salient characteristic of the portrait is the contrast between the dignified immobility of the figure and the undulating flow and wide, sinuous folds, of the draperies. The two birds with outstretched wings in the top of the miniature are extraordinarily effective.


Mario Bussagli: Indian Miniatures

This edition 1969, the Hamlyn publishing Group Limited.
"DANCING DERVISHES"

Mughal art 1610. British Museum, London. Illustration from a copy of the Diwan by Hafiz, the dervishes (from the Persian darvish: A pauper or mendicant were as order of vagrant mystics who attained a form of ecstasy in their dances. In this picture, two old dervishes are executing a whirling dance in a state of acute exaltation while a third sings to the accompaniment of his guitar. In the sky, spirits resembling the cherubs have appeared, drawn by the magical power of the dance.

This desire to confront traditional Islamic attitude (whether artistic, religious, or political) with new challenging concepts is basic to understanding Akbar's early years and the developments of the Mughal Style in both painting and architecture.

Akbar first met Europeans in 1572. These encounters were important for the arts, for Akbar saw and was intrigued by European prints and paintings, which his artists studied and copied.

The most important event and culmination of this period of experimentation and questioning occurred, however, during a gamarge (hunt). Both Abu'l Fazl, and his contemporary Abdu'l Qadir, ibn-i-Muluk sheh, al-badaoni (who is quoted here), refer to it rather obliquely.

It is no surprise, therefore that a painter named Daswanth was particularly important to Akbar at this time, although he is a difficult artist for us to understand.

Very few works are known that can be attributed solely to his authorship, these are early and immature. His greatest contribution was the series of powerful designs he made for the imperial Razm-Nama manuscript begun in 1532. There his sense of the irrational and Visionary must have perfectly complemented Akbar's similar sensibilities—as shown by mystical Jazaba during the late 1570s and early 1580s. He certainly was dominating influence in the Hamzanama. In 1584 however he committed suicide.

Daswanth a son of Kahar (palki bearer) The acuteness & appreciative ness of the world's lord brought his great artistic talents to notice. His paintings were not behind of those of Bihzad (famous Iranian artist).

M.C. Beach—The imperial image-Painting for the Mughal Court. Freer Gallery Art 1991.
With his death and the establishment of the “Din-I-Illahi” 30, Akbar’s own attitude changes for the quieter, the more rational.

The year 1580 initiated a decade of intense activity. In 1582 Akbar commissioned a new history of the Muslim world. During its first millennium which would end in A. H. 1000 (A.D. 1391-92). The was the Tarikh-i-Alfi (History of Thousand).

In the same year, Akbar ordered a translation into Persian of the Sanskrit (Hindu) epic Mahabharta (Great India), which become known as Razmnama (Book of wars) which was followed by translation of the Ramayana. Badaoni who worked on the preparation of both texts.

“The record office established in 1574 was equally important. Every event in the emperor’s life was noted down by 14 clerks” 31.

“SHAH ARDASHIR”

Although undated and bearing neither the name of the scribe nor the place of origin, the Darbnama with its 155 miniatures can be assigned to Lahore, shortly after Akbar moved there in 1585. Many of the miniatures are inscribed by the clerk in charge of the project with the names of notable court artists, including Mishin, Basawan, Farrukh chela, and Abdus-Samad. Several pictures an old-fashioned Persianate style almost uninfluenced by the court idiom bear such names as Ibrahim of Lahore, leading one to further conclude that their style lingered from the days of Lahore’s pre-Mughal rulers.

The paper for this volume is relatively coarse, and its calligraphy is inelegant, perhaps because it was created before the imperial workshops were fully sttled in the new capital. Nevertheless, it contains may exciting pictures, painted somewhat thinly but with enlivening inventiveness. “This painting shows Shah Aradashir, who, while riding in the mountains was surprised from behind by a dragon and devoured in a gulp, when the news of his terrible fate spread all princes of the world went into deep mourning for three months. His son went off to Hindustan and never returned” 32.

Although the artist’s name is illegible, he rivalled Basawan for originality and power of design, with its all-encompassing landscape, the painting seizes the two blocks of text like a dragon, as fiercely as the monster gobbled

30. M.C. Beach—The Imperial Images Paintings for the Mughal Court, Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1981.
31. Ibid.
up Shah Aradashir. Through his total conviction and such subtleties as Ardashir's almost blank expression, a response showed by the utter horror of circumstance, the artist makes us believe a fantastic tale.

Both emperor's and Abu'l Fazl also encouraged the writings of memoris and on one occasion supplied a scribe to take dictation from the superintendent of the Imperial Kitchen, who was paralyzed unable to write himself.

These texts were kept in the record office, as were important chronicles, including the Baburnama, Quanun-i-Humayuni of Khawandamir, Tazkira'tu'l Waqi of Jauhar in 1590.

Akbar commissioned Abu'l Fazl to use these materials to write an official chronicle of his life, the Akbarnama.

These later manuscript projects slowly develop a quite different character from those of early years of Akbar's rule. Where in the Tutinama, Hamzanama, or Darbanama, the emperor is clerly interested in the legendary and fantastic.

The new interest in the rational and historically verifiable can be partly attributable to Akbar's greater maturity in the 1580s, but as well, the Jazaba and the establishment of the Din-i-Ilai, relieved and formally channeled much of the turmoil of Akbar's Youth, and therefore, freed him for new and different concerns.

Paralleling the interest in historical events was a new preoccupation with historical personalities and thus the development of portraiture starts.

Akbar wished his artists to capture the specific appearance of personalities of the subjects. In this he went completely against traditional Islamic attitudes, which held that—

"The painting of a picture of any living thing is strictly forbidden and is one of the greatest because it implies a likeness to the creative activity of God."

A yoga posture Mughal art late 16th early 17 Century chester Beattys Library, Dublin, miniature from a yoga text translated into Persian: Bahar

all Hayat. The work is for removed from the schematic representations of
the same theme in Hindu art, for it is naturalistic not in the body but in the
Surrounding, Landscape.

Official Portrait of Jahangir holding his father Akbar's portrait Mughal
art, C. 1599, Musee Guimet Paris. In large part the miniature is the work
of Abul Hassan (Who signed himself Nadir al Zaman). It was retouched in
about 1605. In the Portrait within the Portrait. Akbar is offering exploited
in order to establish a link of cordial continuity between the two emperor's.

One day at a private party of friends his majesty remarked, "there are
many that hate paintings, but such men, dislike. It appears to me as if a
painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God; painter in sketching
anything that has life, and in divising its limbs, one after the other, must
come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus
forced to think of God, the giver of life, and will this increase in knowledge".

The earliest great manuscript is the Hamaznama. Which was worked
on over 15 year period, between 1562-1577. The text is a lively adventure
story, based Lossely in part on the life of an uncle of prophet
Muhammed and his attempts to convert the world to Islam its kidnappings,
seduction, murders chases, magical journeys, dragons, giants were
immensely appealing to the Young Akbar.

In the Maath'ul-Umara we read that he was very find of the story of
Amir Hamza, which contained 360 tales. So much so that he in the female
apartments used to recite them like a story teller.

"AKBAR HUNTING IN AN ENCLOSURE"

During such a hunt near Bhera when he was thirty six in 1578, Akbar was
disgusted by the slaughter and ordered his men to cease. The carnage had
so disturbed him that it spkatd a religious experience. In the world of Abu'l
Fazl, "A sublime joy overtook his bodily frame. The attraction of congnition
of God cast its ray".

Hunting was an ancient royal activity, perhaps tracable to the need of
villagers for protection against lions and tigers. In time it became ritualized
and took an symbolic meaning.

34. M.C. Beach—The Imperial Image Painting for the Mughal Court, Freer Gallery of Art
Miskin was aware of both the symbolic and worldly significance of his miniature, which ranks artistically with Alamgir hunting Nilgai to which it offers many comparisons.

"NOAH'S ARK"

According to Muslim tradition, Noah's Ark was threatened by Iblis the devil, who was thrown overboard as here by his sons. This delightful retelling of the story can be ascribed to Miskin, one a Akbar's greatest artists whose sleek, often humorous animals are unmistakable, as usual in his work, some of the animals here were studied from life, while others such as the crazy lioness staring at us from the crowded hole emerged from Miskin's inner zoo. Miskin was happiest with a subdued palette, as here to which he added a few bright accents. His compositions are organic bringing to mind such natural patterns as the roots of trees or veins of leaves.

Akbar who had great interest in painting, following Mongol and Timurid tradition, specially encouraged the art of book-illustration, as a result of which numerous manuscripts belonging to different subjects were translated into Persian language and illuminated. The Diwan-i-Hafiz is a collection of qasidas (odes) and ghazals (songs) composed by Muhammad Shamsul-Din, usually known by his title 'Hafiz'. Its several illustrated copies are known belonging to Akbar's and Jahagir's reigns. The Rampur manuscript of the Diwan-i-Hafiz, which is the subject of this paper, was scribed during Akbar's reign and illustrated by his court-painters. The name of the scribe is not given in its introduction which runs into seven leaves (folios 2-8). It is in good condition, though incomplete towards the end. It contains 414 folios including 31 full-page miniatures.

The manuscript is written in nastaliq calligraphic style. Head-lines are not given in the text but spaces are left blank at the end of each qasida or ghazal. Paper used for calligraphy is smooth, well processed, light buff in shade, sprinkled with gold dust and uniform in size. Generally the written surface measures 16 cm x 7 cm. lines (khat) drawn in green, blue, red, black and gold pigment are employed in the border (hashiya) of each folio. Sometimes floral patterns are painted to decorate the bands. The thickness of the border is from 1 to 14 cm. The present copy is remargined and its format is 19.7 cm x 36.3 cm. Generally, the painting covers a full page. Two

Plate: Noah's Ark
or three lines of the text are composed with illustrations on the top, or below, on both places. Thus the length of the miniatures varies from 8.2 cm to 21.3 cm and the width from 7.8 cm to 9.8 cm.

The colophon of the manuscript is missing but it may be ascribed to 1585. The distinct similarities in the setting of the text, in two columns divided from each other by two narrow gold lines, the casual use of red ink in the text, the decoration of margins with conventional motifs of animals and flowers represented in line drawing and painted in gold pigment lying in both the copies of the Diwan-i-Hafiz (Chester Beatty and Rampur) indicate that most probably both belonged to the same era. The decoration of margins has appeared almost indentically in them. It would not be out of place to mention that the opening of the present ms. is done with the term, "Allaho-Akbar". It leads us to think that this copy was scribed after the introduction of the Din-i-ilahi, the short-lived syncretic religion, at Akbar’s court. Further, Farrukh Beg to whom the miniature on folio 314 is attributed, joined Akbar’s court in 1585. Keeping in view the above facts, the miniatures of this copy may safely be assumed as belonging to 1585.

The whereabouts of the manuscript from the date of its completion are not known. It was purchased in 1273 Hijiri Era, corresponding to 31st January, 1857, by Muhammad Kalbe Ali Wali Ahad, Rampur, from Muhammad Akram, grandson of Hafiz Khurshid Khusnavis Lakhnavi. Besides the autograph and the seal of Wali Ahad, Rampur, there are the impressions of other autographs and seals on the first fly-leaf, but these are faded and are illegible (Fig. 1). These faded impressions indicate that the manuscript, before passing into the hands of Muhammad Akram was preserved in some Imperial Library, as the tradition goes up to the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Miniatures

I. Akbar and the learned of his court. Folio 19, artist Kanha.

Greater fascination for thick shaded lines and drapery represented with heavy folds as observed in Kanha’s early work is seen here as well. Upper part of the composition is typically drawn from bird’s eye view and in the lower panel the artist seems positioned on a level with the scene
depicted. Ornamentation of the carpets and floors, octagonal form of tank, long cypresses in the background are typically Persian.

II. Dervishes dancing. Folio, 30, artist's name not given.

Here again, the architectural designs are characteristically Persian in character. They divide the picture plane into parts—a trend borrowed by the Mughal painter from Persian art. Movement represented in the dancing figures, rhythmic flow in their costumes, gestures of hands, etc. and lastly the growth of trees with dense foliage are the elements which drew its art close to the Pre-Mughal Indian tradition. Receding landscape, greatly diminished trees and deep lines are other conspicuous features related to the Western method of producing depth in the painting.

III. A youth in rocky country. Folio 74, artist Sanwala (Fig.2)

Sanwala seems greatly inspired by the Persian concept of landscape where the rocks dominate the scene and are invariably drawn with sparse vegetation and a stream. Modulated contours of the rocks composed one upon the other and painted in varied pigments are reminiscent of fifteenth and sixteenth century Persian painting. Abul Fazl mentions Sanwala among the leading painters of Akbar's court. Other known examples of his work are in the Mss. Razmnama (Jaipur), Baburnama (Br. Mus. Or. 3714), Anwar-i-Suhaili (Varanasi) and Akbarnama (Vie. Alb. Mus.) etc.

Chapter III

Thematic Representation and Classification of Miniature Painting During Akbar’s Reign
The Sixteenth century is an exciting period in Indian History. The old order was disintegrating fast and the new order had not yet been established by the conquering Mughals. It is however, significant that though the sultans spent most of their time in internecine war, architecture, music and literature flourished and some of the provincial courts like Jaunpur, Ahmedabad and Mandu became important centres of Islamic culture. In 1526 however an event of far reaching importance occured in Indian history. Babur, who was a descendent of Chenghiz Khan and Timur, defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the battle of Panipat-Mughal India had begun on that date. Battles followed and by 1530 Babur was in a position to establish an extensive empire.

Humayun who succeeded Babur after his victory in Gujarat settled at Agra and spent his time in composing mystical verses, listening to music and enjoying life. He was impressed by the achievements of the safavi painters and invited at least one of them to join his entourage. Prince Akbar joined him there and the painter Mir Saiyid Ali and Abdus Samad in 1549.

Babur was a man of literary taste and an aesthete who admired the beauties of nature, music and painting and architecture.

After the death of Humayun the reins of the Government passed into the hands of Akbar who by his bravery, strength of character, reformer’s zeal, Spirit of Religious tolerance, wise administration and love for art and literature, became one of the greatest rulers India had even seen. Akbar in his boy hood had learnt to enjoy the linear grace and brilliant colours of Persian painting. In brief, Akbar did not consider the formal decorative style of Persian art well suited to the genius of Indian artists.

To give fullest expression to his views on painting, Akbar ordered in 1567 the illustration of the Hamza-nama which described the adventures of Hamza, uncle of the prophet, in twelve volumes from which about two hundred illustrations have survived. “The illustration of the Hamza show
a dramatic precedence of the event, broad handling, deep expressive
colours and love for landscape and architecture²³⁶.

The illustration of the Tutinama painted in 1566²⁷ now in the Cleveland
Museum, throw fresh light on the assimilative spirit of Mughal School.

Akbar personally supervised their work. Improvement in their technique
was recognised by awards and promotions. The individual style of the
Akbar period became more pronounced with the advancement of time and
Farrukh Beg and the Hindu artists, Daswanth-Basawan, to mention only
a few names, became great stylists of the age. Akbar’s sympathetic
understanding of Hindustan is well known.

Abu’l Fazl, the historian, also informs us that Akbar commissioned an
immense portrait album “whereby those who have passed away received
new life and those who are still alive have immortality”²³⁸.

The delicate miniature paintings in which humans and animals, flora
and fauna were compressed into an incredibly small canvas teemed with
life without ever appearing cluttered. So fine was the brush stroke and
painstaking the detail that a good deal was not visible to the naked eye and
the viewer is always surprised to see how a startlingly good miniature
springs to life when viewed under glass.

“To produce this mirror of life within a strictly limited space, the Indian
painter used only the most rudimentary materials with which he was
completely familiar and which were easily procurable”²³⁹.

The earliest known miniature paintings found in India are those on
palm leaf, which were used as illustrations for Jain scriptures and date
from around the eleventh century. Paper came into use in the early
fourteenth century, and by the sixteenth century was being extensively
produced in India, every quality identified by it’s place of manufacture.
Thus, Daulatabadi came from Daulatabad and Nizamshahi from
Nizamabad. It was also classified according to the material from which it
was made e.g. sanni, (from flax) manajal (from old fish nets) and nukhayyar
(watered paper). Other materials from which paper was made were
bamboo, jute and waste silk cocoons.

³⁶. M.S. Randhawa—Mughal Painting, Panoramas of Indian Painting, Publication Division,
³⁷. Cleveland Museum
³⁸. Ibid.
³⁹. Brij Bhushan Jamiia—Material and Technique used in Miniature Painting, All India Fine Art and Crafts-
Society, Roop Lekha vol. 33-92.
To make for smoothness, the paper was burnished by being dipped in a solution of alum and allowed to become partly dry, after which it was rubbed with an agate or touch stone burnisher. Two or more layers of paper were pasted together to provide the required thickness for painting.

An iron low pen, with pointed brushlike projections on both sides, was used for drawing straight lines on borders and for making geometric patterns. Circles were drawn with the help of a compass. While a flat ruler was used for drawing lines on borders.

The Manasollas, a medieval text, lays down rules for the making of painters pens. To the tip of a small bamboo style was attached a small nail with only the tip protruding, the rest being embedded in the handle. This was probably used for outlining designs on palm leaf.

Pencils used for drawing preliminary sketches were made from a mixture of cow dung, old powdered slag and water, pounded to thick paste in stone mill. When the right consistency was reached it was modeled into pencils of two to four inches in lengths. The colour was light and mistakes could be erased by wiping with a piece of clean cloth. Other sorts of pencils were made of a mixture of lampblack and boiled rice.

Brushes came in a variety of sizes and thicknesses. They were made from the soft hairs from the ears of bullocks, calves and donkeys, and the fibres and barks of certain trees. The finest brushes were made from the tail hairs of cats, muskrats, squirrels and goats. The test to determine which hairs were suitable was that the hairs should draw together when dipped in water, and should be neither too hard nor too soft.

The animal's hair was cut, then wetted and inserted through one end of a feather quill and pulled out from the other. The tips were tied to the quill and strengthened with melted shellac. Quills from the feathers of pigeons and peacock were used depending on whether the brush required was thin or thick. For painting pearls and dots, a brush, sometimes with a single hair, was used. It is interesting to note that most of these items are still manufactured and used in India in almost the same form as they were in those times.

Brij Bhushan Jamila—Materials and Techniques used in Miniature Paintings, All India Fine & Crafts Society, New Delhi, Roop Leela Vol-37 1982
COLOUR PREPARATIONS

Pigments were obtained from minerals and ochres and different shades were obtained from a mixture of the two. Vegetable colours included indigo, lac dye and carmine, while carbon from various sources produced black. Gold and silver powders and black and red ink were used for both writing and painting. Visually the writing was done in black and the borders in red, but certain manuscripts were written entirely in gold and silver. Reading them in a strain on the eyes, and one can only conclude that they were not meant for reading but were objects of devotion and served as a measure of the wealth of the patrons who commissioned them.

According to the Silparatna, a sixteenth century sanskrit treatise, white was obtained from burnt conch shell or white earth, white elephant apple (Seronia elephentum) juice and gum from the neem tree (Margosa indica) served as binding media. The same treatise gives the following recipe for obtaining black pigment. In an earthen cup filled with oil, the wick is saturated with oil and lit. Then a globular earthen pot, with the inside besmeared with dried cow dung, is placed over the flames. The lampblack sticking on the inside of the pot should then be scraped, kneaded in an earthen pot and allowed to dry. It should be mixed with neem water (gum and pure water), and then dried. Another recipe is to take a barley sized grain of element, possibly antimony, grind it to a fine powder, mix it with kapitha (elephant apple) juice and let it dry.

The various shades of red and described as soft red, medium red and deep red. These can be obtained from red lead, red ochre and shellac dye. Red ochre was extensively used in ancient paintings, and red lead was a favourite with Jain painters of western India. To get the colour, white lead was roasted in an open fire until it turned a deep colour. The red coloured bead was then ground for half day in water and the process repeated for twenty four hours after five days. Gum from the neem tree was added to it as a binding medium.

For vermilion, crude cinnaabar was thoroughly levigated in a mortar with the help of sugared water or lime juice. It was allowed to settle and the yellowish water drained off. To obtain the purest colour the process was repeated fifteen times or more, after which it was again levigated with

Ibid.
sugared water or lime juice and gum. After being thoroughly mixed, it was shaped into tablets and left to dry. To ensure that the right amount of gum had been added, the powder was examined several times during the preparation. As a test, a piece of paper was sprinkled with this cinnabar solution, folded and kept in a damp place; if the ends did not stick immediately, the preparation was right. If, after drying, the cinnabar spots on the paper flaked off when touched with the fingernails, more gum was required.

Shellac dye was used for red and was also mixed with other colours to obtain various shades. To prepare it, water was boiled while the powder of lac resin was mixed in gradually and stirred all the times to prevent the resin from solidifying. Then the temperature of the water was raised and lode and borax powders added every few minutes. Dipping a pen in the solution and drawing a few lines on paper was a simple test to see if the colour was right. If the ink did not crack the colour, the colour was ready. The mixture was taken off the fire, and after the water had evaporated the residue was the colour. The following proportions were used: 1/4 seer (1 seer is 2.18 lbs.) of water, 1 tola (80 tolas make a seer) of good dry resin of the pipal tree known as lakhdana, 1/2 tola pathani lode and one anna (1/16 of a tola) borax. If the shellac dye was to be used on palm leaf, then 1/4 tola of madder, a climbing plant with yellow flowers was added to deepen the shade.

For blue, the main materials used was indigo, mixed with other colours to produce various shades. Blue was also extracted from lapis-lazuli, although this was difficult since the stone contains calcite which is white and iron pyrites which has a golden sheen. Methods for extracting blue from lapis-Lazuli were not known before the thirteenth century.

Orpiment was one of the minerals from which yellow was extracted. If was thoroughly levigated to the consistency of fine, white flour and sifted. This was again levigated with a solution of gum arabic. Another method was to boil the urine of a cow that had been fed on mango leaves for a few days. After the water had evaporated the sediment was rolled into balls which were dried first on a charcoal fire and then in the sun.

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Ibid.
Gold, as a colouring agent, was used in Indian from very early times. Gold leaf was first reduced to very small pieces and then mixed with sand and water and thoroughly levigated in a smooth stone mortar. When the gold was reduced to powder, it was put in a glass cup, and the sand and dust were removed by washing after the gold was free to impurities, it was mixed with glue and was ready to use. After the application of gold the surface of the painting was burnished with a boar's tusk to impart gloss. Another method was to first draw the design that required the application of gold, and then cut a similar design from gold leaf. This was applied to the surface and rubbed down with cotton wool.

To prepare gold and silver powders, gold or silver leaf was put in a hard stone mortar and levigated with a dhan (Anogeiss latifolia) gum solution. After the powder was ready, it was dissolved in sugared water and thoroughly stirred. When the gold powder had settled to the bottom of the solution, the water was slowly drained. This process was repeated several times until no trace of gum remained. After drying, the powder was ready for use.

For small quantities, a glass dish was smeared with gum and the gold or silver leaf pasted on it and reduced to a powder with the fingers. It was then dissolved in sugared water and the same process repeated. The Mughal painter used honey instead of dhua gum. After the gold leaf was ground, water was added and the mixture strained through a finely woven cloth, being constantly stirred so that no particles settled on the strainer. The mixture was allowed to stand for fifteen hours and the water was then drained off slowly. The mouth of the basin was covered with a cloth to keep off dust particles. Size was added to this as a binding medium. The exact quantity of size required was added at one time, for if it was less, it would not stick to the painting and if it was more, it could not be burnished and the gold would loose its lustre.

For making the size, the Vishnudharmoltara Purana states: "Pieces of buffalo hide are boiled in water until they become as soft as butter. The water is then evaporated and the paste is shaped into sticks and dried in the sunshine. When required, a stick is boiled with water in a mud vessel. It fixes and tempers colours and stops them flaking. "Gum from the sirdura tree (carislea tomentosa) is recommended as an astringent for the tempering
of colours. In addition to the size, neem gum is suggested as an astringent for conch shell and oyster shell powders. In paper manuscripts, gum arabic was used for all colours, except zinc white and yellow pepri, for which dhan gum was used as the binding medium.

Formulae are laid down to obtain different shades by mixing colours. For example, orpiment mixed with deep brown yields the colour of parrot feather, yellow mixed with lampblack in a proportion of two to one would produce the skin colour of common people; lampblack mixed with shellac dye yields deep purple; lampblack mixed with indigo yields the colour of hair, red ochre mixed with conch shell lime powder yields the shade of smoke as does lampblack yields the colour of flames; zinc white and shellac dye will produce a rose colour. Jatilinga dye, white and vermilion mixed in equal quantities yield the skin colours of members of higher castes.

"Akbar had independent views and indeed he considered painting to be one of the means to recognize God. Similarly the lines written about the perfection of 'Abdus Samad's skill in the Ain-i-Akbari"42.

The veneration which Mughal painters had for the Persian evident on the pages of the Pastami-amir-Hamza43. These illustrations are the first known example of Akbari art form the gi'ound of the Mughal painter.

The miniatures of the Anwar-i-Suhaili (here after Anwar) dated 1570. Preserved in the school of oriental and African Studies are more acclimatized to Indian realism where the animals are portrayed-comparatively more naturally and with a greater sense of movement. The trees also vary and Indian species banyans palms appear frequently. The placement of figures, the depiction of landscape-the sky painted deep blue generally with a tinge of orange and gold remain identitional with the Persian conventions. Action is portrayed in the Hamza paintings, but it is violent where in the Anwar it is natural, of the Mughal manuscripts this one is the most extraordingry no less than 200 folios of it are known to have been preserved in the various collections at Brooklyn BMVA Vienna CB and Varanasi!

Rhythmic and vital, by 1510 the tendency for similarity is very apparent in the works of Mughal artists. Under Akbar, painting seems to have been confined to the illustration of manuscripts though several volumes of such manuscripts and stray folios have survived to this day. The best known may

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43. Ibid.
be noted Hamza, Diwan, Gulistan. There are also the Darabnama Khamsa of Amir Khusrau etc. As a result of Akbar's sympathy for Hinduism and under the policy of encouraging understanding among the people of his kingdom, Hindu themes were equally favoured and consequently the great book of the Hindu were translated into Persian. The Diwan contains the gazals and qasidas composed by Muhammed Shamsuddi commonly known by his title Hafiz. The colophon of the manuscript belonging to the CB collection given on folio 53 as AH 990 A.D. 1582) and the name of copyist is Abdus Samad miniature painting of the Razm state Museum Jaipur (here after Jaipur) the Tarikh oriental Public Library Patna (here after Patna the Anwar Bharat Kala Bhavan Varanasi (“Varanasi National Museum Delhi”) from the second group of Akbari Illustrations. Most of illustrated manuscript belong to the period ranging from 1580 to 1600. The Akbar miniatures came in the last group. Akbar himself.

The Gita Govinda is a Sankrit poem written in the twelfth Century by Jayadeya a poet at the court of Lakshmanasena the last of the sena kings of Bengal “Court painters of the Grand Moghuls” summed up the position when admirably he said- “If Moghul art is less interesting from the aesthetic point of view it has a fascinating human interest of its own and real charm”.

One of the factors that contributed towards the metamorphosis of the Mughal School from it Persian beginnings into indigenous character was the interest of the emperor Akbar in Indian literature, the miniatures of the Razm-Nama, Ramayana, Harivamsa, etc. The large number of the Hindu, artists employed in illustrating the Persian translations of these sanskrit texts would importunate into their concept of each miniature an essentially Indian vision with the result that though in technique and composition the Persian influence was marked, the physical type the handling of Indian costume and drapery, the trees, and atmosphere and spirit of the picture all showed the dominance of an Indian tradition coming to life again under the invigorating patronage of an enlightened ruler.

There is no record either in the Ain-i-Akbari of Abu'l Fazl or in the Muntakhab-ut Tawarikh of Badaoni of Akbar having ordered any translation illustrated or other wise of the Gita Govinda.

Gita Govinda was extremely popular all over the country and that it has been illustrated in the Gujarati Style, Basholi Kalam, late Rajput Mughal style, etc, is well known to all students of Indian painting. The miniatures probably belong to the last decade of the 16th Century (1590-1600 A.D.) though the page on which each is painted is severely plain and the calligraphy some what unrefined the miniature themselves are daintily executed.

"The colour like in the majority of Akbar period miniature is strong and variegated in effect and yet a mellowness pervades the pictures due to the harmony of the colour scheme and colour proportions. "As DR Coomaraswamy point devoted primarily to the analysis of emotional situation the dramatis person are three in numbers the hero, heroine and the Sakhi. The Sakhi not only bears messages between the lovers and discusses situation with them, but also speaks for the heroine in many places.

**CLASSIFICATION OF MINIATURE PAINTING**

The miniature art which flourished under the Mughal emperors Akbar and his successors is essentially an eclectic form. It main roots lie in Persian miniature painting, for it was Persian masters who first taught the artists of Akbar's court. But many of these court artists were themselfe Indian and thus the inheritors of art traditions which had been manifested in such varied form as the exquisite Ajanta frescoes and the highly formalized miniatures of the medieval Gujarati School. "The modifications which this background imposed on the Persian idiom are conspicuous throughout the history of the Mughal School. In addition we find, superimposed on this blend, influences derived from a close study of the European paintings which were brought to Akbar's Court by missionaries and other visitors. The most astonishing feature of the Mughal artists' achievement is the mastery with which the techniques derived from these extremely varied sources were assimilated and fused into a harmonius whole the subjects of the present booklet belong in the main to the period of Akbar (reigned 1556-1605) the accession of Shahjahan, however in, 1627 does not constitute a marked break in the development of the Mughal style, and some of the productions of his reign still retain much of the feeling of earlier period.

S P Verná — *Art and Material Culture in the Painting of Akbar's Court*

Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd., New Delhi, Bombay Bangalore, Calcutta, Kanpur.


Both these miniatures with similar themes and similar in style may be studied together. The central figure shown in the middle top row depicting three men in both the example is that of the same man. Bhagwati’s available work are quite a few, and these two painting are therefore a most welcome addition to his known work Bhagwati has here drawn his figures in varied postures; he gives them expressions and gestures that indicate at the artist’s accomplishment, facial drawings by him are characterised by Flat, long noses. “The composition is animated with human figures; and the artist relies heavily upon for effect.”

Miniature No. 8A (B20): “Music party in the garden”, inscription “Amal-i-Bundi Musauwir” (work of Bundi, the painter).

Minute lines and thin shading employed to execute the miniature are in sharp contrast to the flat, wild strokes (irregular and unmanageable drawn boldly to model the foliage, ground and costumes, etc. The latter seem to have been introduced or rather inflicted on the picture much later. Such strokes are rare and one does not come across them elsewhere in the Sixteenth century. Mughal miniatures with the exception of one miniature in the “Anwar-i-Suhaili” were these appear to suggest shadow. In the present picture the ‘strokes’ were probably executed in the eighteenth Century. One should therefore ignore them if one wishes to study Bundi’s original miniature. The painting shows the water-ducks used in irrigating the garden, a tank with a fountain, musical instruments, and utensils (serving-pots and containers).

The miniatures of the Anwari-i-Suhaili hereafter Anwar, dated 1570,” preserved in the school of oriental and African studies (hereafter so AS) are more acclimatized to Indian realism where the animals are portrayed comparatively more naturally and with a greater sense of movement. Plate V the trees also vary and Indian species banyans plantains, mangoes and plums appear frequently. Nevertheless, the placement figures, the
depiction of landscape—the sky painted deep blue, generally with a tinge of orange and gold—remain identical with the Persian Conventions.

Under Akbar, painting seems have been confined to the illustration of manuscript—Abu’l Fazl has mentioned only a few of the illustrated manuscripts through several volumes of such manuscripts and stray folios have survived to this day the best known may be noted:

Hamza, Diwan, Gulistan Diwan Asand Anwar. There are also the Baburhanma, Akbarnama, Tarikh-i Khandan-i-Timuria, Harivansha and Khamse-i Nizami, “(hereafter Darab, ’lylar, Khamsa Razm, Ram, Baba Akb, Tarikh, Hari and Khamsan respectively”

As a result of Akbar’s sympathy for Hinduism and under the policy of encouraging understanding among the people of his kingdom Hindu themes were equally favoured and consequently, the great books of the Hindu were translated into Persian.

In the present study, a few selected manuscripts belonging to different periods and varying in their themes—fables literary and historical works. Like the Diwan, Razm Tarikh, Babur and Akbar have been especially referred to, beside many other useful works. Several copies of these manuscripts, embellished with paintings, have survived because many copies of a manuscript were prepared to meet the demand of the royal library, harem nobles, etc. Subsequently, the dates of their completion varied. Extensive libraries were established at Agra, Delhi and other places picture of the manuscript on p. 177, painted by Farukh Chela, depicts a background comprising hills, trees and plants and the human figure drawn with three-quarter face, a style associated with the Persian qalam the tendency to use offshades and slithering shapes, specially in the representation of animal figures observed in the present example has also survived in the later works of the artist Plate V Similarly, the profuse decoration the sky painted in Gold.

Objects drawn from bird’s eye view, three quarter faces and two dimensional shapes etc, displayed on p 314, by Farrukh Beg, drew the art of Diwan close to that of the Persain miniatures (PI VI). The painters mostly preferred three quarter faces, long loose costumes reminiscent of the Persian tradition and profuse decoration of the floor-carpets, etc. In the
representation of landscape, too, the artist was mostly inspired by the Persian style.

The Painters of the Diwan of Anwari, “hereafter Diwan-a-Am Dated 1588” have shown further change. There the traits of Pre-Mughal Indian art, find their place with faces in profile, elongated eyes, deep lines, thin shading human figures engaged in a variety of actions more defined frees and crowded animation (Pl. VIII) The depiction of architecture and landscape remain identical with the Persian qalam. The miniature painting of the Razm.

The Tarikh, the Anwar and the Babur, from the second group of Akbari illustrations. Most of the illustrated manuscripts belong to the period ranging from 1580 to 1600. The Akbar miniatures come in the last group only three copies of the Razm, illustrated by the painters of Akbars Court are known to exist in Jaipur, the Baroda state Museum hereafter Baroda” and BM. It is a Persian abridgement of the Maha. Badauni mentions that the learned Hindus were engaged in writing an explanation of the Maha to assist Persian translators. He further writes that Akbar himself explained a few passages to Naqib Khan, a translator. Abul' Fazl clearly states that the translations was made from Hindi into Persian.

The artist must first of all, select from the whole range subjective and objective reality those elements that he intends to use in his work. This initial act of choice however, is in itself a distortion, for it implies that what is selected has significance. The choice of subject matter there fore is in effect the first interpretative function of an art.

It is this first choice already that differentiates the Mughal miniatures from the rest of the Indian painting. In Indian art generally possibly because of its predominantly religious character, the symbolic level is always very strongly implies some general statement.

The Mughal miniature, however, runs counter to this general trend in Indian art. It is non symbolic; It does not imply any reality that it does not orray spiritual and emotional matter never occupied the first place in the Mughal scheme of things.

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47. 48. 49. S. P. Verma — Art and Material Culture in the Painting of Akbar’s Court, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd

This objectivity is the basic aesthetic standard of the Mughal miniature. It is only contravened in works outside the mainstream of the art or in those of same particularly creative artist.

Another stage in the deformation of reality unavoidable for the printer is the reduction of three dimensional reality to the two dimensions of his medium.

The Mughal method of reproducing volume and mass is also similar to that used in the Ajanta cave painting. In both cases a thin shading along the outline is used in some Mughal paintings this shading goes deeper probably as a result of European influence. Colour contrasts frequently used to give relief specially in the case of the head pushed into relief by the darker line of the background. The Mughal miniature is always a folio where as the Medieval illustrations were either in the form of a horizontal oblong or of a square cut from a palm leaf.

The development of the miniature of course brought about changes in the stylization of individual feature and forms such as the nose, the eye and scarf.

Mughal painter never use colour in such a way as to reduce the picture to mere coloured tapestry or mosaic as do the Persian painters do. They beat out the robust rhythm of large coloured areas, so characteristic of some of the local Indian schools. All the rules of artistic deformation and stylization and perhaps even some others, form the main distinctive characteristics of the Mughal miniature.

Akbar was the first Mughal emperor who paid attention to the promotion of the art of painting and commissioned court painters to illustrate manuscripts. Manuscripts chosen included memories, historical monographs, poetry and legends from the persian and sanskrit languages. Books selected for painting included the Razmnama, Ramayana, Naal-Daman, Harivansa, Laila-e-Majmun and Anwar-i-Suhaili, etc. The Anwar-i-Suhaili is the subject of this article. At least four copies of this manuscript, decorated with paintings are known to exist in the various art-collections of the world. These are as follows:

Anwar-i-Suhaili School of oriental and African studies, London (dated 1570); Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi (dated 1596-97) collection of Sir Cowasji Jehangi, Bombay (c. 1606) and British Museum, Add, 1857-79 (dated 1605-10).

"The Anwar-i-Suhaili is a Persian abridgement of the Panchatantra originally written in Sanskrit. Only a few books in the world have achieved so great a success as the panchatantra or have been translated into so many languages. The Panchatantra may be dated not later than the fourth century as it is known to us that on the command of the sasianian king, Khusro Anushirvan (531-579), This work was translated into Pahalvi by a Persian physician named Barzoi. Hence, we may assume that a considerable time must have elapsed before it became so famous that a foreign king desired its translation. The work was entitled kallg and Dimna and was illustrated with miniatures. A syriac version was made about 570 A.D. and called Kalilag and Damnag.

An Arabic version from pahlavi entitled Kalilah Dimnah or 'Fables of pisplay' was made in eighth century and again the Arab Versions were richly decorated with paintings. Arabic translation of Panchatantra is a great importance as it provided a source for versions in Syriac, Greek, Persian, Spanish, Hebrew, German, Latin and Italian.

Earliest of the Persian versions of the Kalilah Dimnah (Arabic) was made by the poet Rudagi under the command of samavai ruler Nasr II (913-942); who, it is said, had invited painters from shing to illustrate it. Next comes the translation made by Nizamuddin Abu'l-Madali Nasru'llah in the twelfth century of an Arabic version of the book Kalilah Dimnah done by Abdu'lllah Inb'u'l Muqaffa in the eigth century. However, the best known Persian version that made by Husayn Naidh-i-Kashifi about the end of fifteenth century, is entitled Anwar-i-Suhaili. Abu'l Fazl court historian of Akbar ostensibly aimed at simplifying the language as the originals were in bombastic language full of rhetoric and metaphors. Abu'l Fazl's version entitled Ayar-i-Danish begins with a preface in which he explains the reasons why Akbar wished a new Persian version to be prepared. He mentions that the original purpose was to present the version in simple style so that the look may be comprehensible to a large number of readers.
It seems that for the compilation of his book Abu'l Fazl used the Persian Versions made by Nasru'llah and Husyan Waidh-i-Kashifi”.

Abu'l Fazl has mentioned Ayari-i-Danish in the list of the manuscripts illustrated with paintings in Ain-i-Akbari. It may be mentioned that the manuscript of Anwar-i-Suhaili taken up for this study is an abridgement of Husyan’s version, copied by Abdur Rahim-al-Harayi at Lahore, several other copies of the Anwari-i-Suhaili illustrated by the painters of the Mughal court are known to exist whereas only two illustrated copies of Ayar-i-Danish are known to us. Husyan's version, though florid in style, was in vogue at the Mughal court.

In Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi the manuscript Anwar-i-Suhaili bears the accession No. 9069. It contains 239 folios and 26 paintings which display names of 15 painters of Akbar’s court. These are given below alphabetically; Anant, Basawan, Dharamadas, Farrukh Chela, Jagannath, Lachhman, Pictorial Colophon of the manuscript is dated 1005 A.H. (1596-7 A.D.) (Fig.I). It appears on folio 242 painted by the Artist Anant representing the scribe with a helper. The text of the colophon reads thus; ‘finished at the hand of the humble and the sinner Abdu'r Rahim a Harari. May God conceal his defects and forgive his sins. Written in the metropolis Lahore, 1005 H. Finish’, the tradition of pictorial colophon in the Mughal manuscripts is an innovation of the painters of Akbar’s court. Other instances are in the Gulistan of Sadi (dated 1581) and Khamsa by Nizami. The former contains a painted colophon representing the scribe of the manuscript. Mohammad Husain Zarrin-qalam, and the self-portrait of the painter Manohar (Son of Basawan). The khamsa manuscripts’ colophon also includes portraits of the calligrapher and the painter himself (Daulat). Location of the manuscript from the date of its colophon is difficult. The records show that previously it was preserved at Oudh State Library from where Maharaja Digvijay Singh of Balrampur (U.P.) acquired it and in 1958 gave it to Dr. Bhagwati Prasad who sold it to Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, unfortunately, the manuscript does not bear any library mark or an autograph. The first painting which is a double-page illustration seems a later insertion. It is an unsigned work depicting a musical party in the garden.

Ibid.
It is not the work of a Mughal court painter and apparently seems to belong to the Abbasid school of art. Long flowing costumes, massive head-gears, musical instruments, utensils represented in the painting all belong to Persia.

“A MUGHAL MINIATURE”

Woman figure rarely in Mughal miniatures. Even when they are assigned any place, conspicuous or otherwise, the authenticity of their features is seldom beyond dispute. Art critics have invariably been faced with the problem of identifying the actual representation from the faked ones. Portraits of likenesses of women are far conspicuous by their absence in the earlier period up to the end of Akbar’s reign. While subjects such as these mentioned above from by far the longest part in any Mughal miniature collection. One seldom comes across a painting showing or mirroring the literary or artistic activities of women in Mughal Indian. The light colours scheme of the miniature is well suited to the treatment of such a subject.

The miniature is in many ways a unique specimen of Mughal art a subject possessed of great charm and distinction. The Sheer delicacy and fineness of brushwork, combined with the rarity of such a subject in the development of Mughal painting world easily assign to the miniature an important place in any art gallery.
Chapter IV

Western Influence in Mughal Painting During Akbar's Period
The art of miniature painting originated in India during the II Century A.D. in the form of illustrations to the palm leaf manuscripts of the Buddhist and Jain religions. Paper was introduced in the latter half of the 14th century and gradually replaced the palm leaf medium.

During the 14th century the Persian style of painting started influencing the western Indian style which is evident from the Persian facial type and hunting scenes appearing on the border of some of the Jain kalapsutra manuscript. The introduction of Persians painting in India was responsible for the evolution of new style of painting. The most remarkable development in the field of painting during the 16th century was the origin of the Mughal school in the reign of emperor Akbar.

1556-1605 Akbar was keenly interested in the art of painting in about 1560 he established an atelier of painting under the supervision of two Persian masters. Mir Saiyid Ali and Abdus Samad Khan who were originally employed by his father Humayun. A large number of Indian painters were recruited from all over India to work in the atelier under the Persian master. It was great experiment which resulted in the origin of new style of painting known as the Mughal style after the synthesis of the Safavid Persian style and the indigenous Indian style of paintings. The Mughal painting is primarily aristocratic and secular in nature. “It is marked by fine draftmanship and supple naturalism based on close observation of nature. Illustrations of the Hamza-Nama showing the exploits of Amir Hamza, uncle of prophet Mohammad represent ambitious project which was undertaken and completed during the early period of Akbar’s rule.”

Akbar’s artists made of the pictorial material from the west that was arriving in their midst is available. Shortly after the Jesuit priests had introduced the Mughals to their collections of religious art and examples of illustrated books, one of Akbar’s kahar artists, Kasava-dasa, or Kesu the elder, began the preparation of a series of miniatures among which were

52. O.P. Sharma—Indian Miniature Painting
Exhibition Compiled from the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, 5-28 October 1974.
53. Ibid.
included copies and imitations of Christian pictures which he presented with a dedication to the emperor in 1588. Miniature copies of sacred pictures during Akbar's reign, and the practice became still more common under Jahangir. They are to be found in many collections of Indian painting, and a good specimen may be studied in the British museum. It depicts the "Scroffing of Christ" and is a careful copy of a European original probably executed by Hindu painter about 1625. Some of these, however, while appearing at first sight to be the Indian painters interpretations of christian subjects are on closer investigation found to be purely Islamic in origin.

Towards the end of the Sixteenth Century therefore, pictures of religious subjects from Europe were not uncommon at Akbar's Court, and these before long were followed by paintings of a secular order. In a copy of the shahnama Illustrated by Akbar's artists is a picture of Humayun watching a number of women dancing. The pavilion in which the emperor is seated is clearly copied from one which the artist had seen, probably a portion of a palace at Fatehpur Sikri. At the back of the throne is a wall, on which, among other decorative effects, is a painted Freize; if the scale of the picture is correct the frieze is about two feet wide, and continues round the four sides of the building. It consists of a series of panels in each of which is a European picture demonstrably of Portuguese origin. There is little doubt that by this time European pictures, religious and secular, were the fashion at the Mughal Court, being displayed in many of the halls and pavilions of Akbar's capital. And it was not long before these European works of art were followed by European artists. The Portuguese nor the English painters, however journeyed as far as the capital of the Mughals, as there was too much work to be done at Goa, in the decoration of churches and the copying of religious pictures, for them to be spared for this purpose. As the scope of the mission expanded and the work increased more artists were sent for from Europe. In 1595 one of these accompanied the third Jesuit mission to Lahore and was the first European painter to arrive at the Mughal court. It was not long before he was summoned by Akbar, and directed to copy in his presence a picture of the Virgin Mary, brought by the priests, which the emperor had much admired. Ten years elapse after the incident here recorded before the long reign of Akbar comes to an end, and

54. Percy Brown—Indian Painting under the Mughal, A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1750, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1924
55. Ibid.
signs are not wanting that western art never lost it attraction to this picture-loving monarch. But the brief outlines already presented of the growth of the relations between the painting of the Mughals and that of Europe are sufficient to show what was taking place. In his zeal for pictures of all kinds Akbar encouraged the introduction of European art into his dominions, and also extended his patronage to its painters. Moreover, he ordered the court artists to copy all those examples of occidental painting which came into his possession, and saw that they made use of them in their work. The pictures from the west that found their way into India seem to have impressed the Mughals and even caused some of the more educated officials to make inquiries concerning the artists who produced them.

Thus we find Abu'l Fazl displaying his newly acquired knowledge when he states that the pictures of the Indian artists 'may be placed at the side of the wonderful works of the European painters who have attained world wide fame; it would be surprising if the result of this interest in occidental art were not reflected in the Mughal miniatures of the time, but the effect, however, although occasionally noticeable is not strongly marked. It is observable in a certain class of painting, the handiwork of the more assimilative of the Hindu craftsmen who seized on some of the features of European art and put them boldly into their pictures. But as a whole the painting of Akbar's time depicts only in a modified degree the influence of the west.

"While Akbar showed a decided proclivity for European pictures, his son was even more interested, and when he came emperor soon appear to have developed into a whole hearted admires of all forms of occidental art."

Portraiture was known to and practised in post-Christian Hellenistic stucco work of India and Central Asia, evidently in imitation of Graeco-Roman portraiture and perhaps occasionally here and there in Indian art, as at Ajanta, for instance—compare, the figure of the toothless short bearded old man in coomaraswamy Anandak, 'History of Indian and Indonesian Art, London, 1927. But there is not much of any evidence to suggest that such practices were known and available to the artists of the Mughal court. What was known and available as models was the art of portraiture of contemporary Italian and Flemish, perhaps also of Dutch artists. "This source of West European inspiration cannot perhaps be denied, since early
and mid-seventeenth century Dutch records, among other European documents, indicate that prints of engravings of Dutch and Flemish masters were sold in south East Asian markets in terms of Dutch guilders according to archival records, at prices ranging from two to seven guilders per copy.” One may not be wrong in guessing that they were available in the markets of Delhi and Agra as well. But apart from this, there is a great deal of internal evidence in the paintings of the Mughal court, executed from 1572 onwards, if not earlier still, to my mind, of the introduction of elements from contemporary European painting and of actual copying of European masters of the Renaissance period, Christian myths and legends being the most popular theme. Historical facts of gifts of paintings to the Mughal monarchs by West European envoys and merchantmen are also on record, and are well known to all students of Mughal history. That Rembrandt used to copy the modes and manners, unsuccessfully to my mind, of Mughal court painting, particularly portraiture, is also well known, and many such copies have been published what has not been noticed, however, was that “Rembrandt’s method was very much different from that of the Mughal court artists”. Used to painting in oils & on canvas Rembrandt tried to bring out in his sketches the individual features by deft strokes of the brush while the Mughal court artists tried to do the same with the help of skillful delineation of the modelled line in short or long draws with their relatively thinner and finer brush. The effect of the two was naturally very different. There is still one more fact, known for more than half-a-century, but not often referred to. This refers to the long series of miniature paintings in the typical courtly Mughal form and style, set in Baroque frames projecting from the walls, that decorate the walls & ceilings of two large rooms of the “Schonbron Palace”^^, not very far from Vienna, of the old Austro-Hungarian emperors. How these paintings came her connot be ascertained with any amount of accuracy. The palace guides say that the paintings were purchased by Maria Theresa from Turkey for a million U.S. dollars, the reason why the rooms are called” Millionen Kamer”. If there is any truth in this statement it may well be that the paintings found their way to Turkey or elsewhere after the sack of Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1793. Be that as it may, it seems that Mughal paintings was not altogether unknown in western Europe in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In any case, West European Renaissance painting

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was known in the Mughal court, and Mughal court painting was vital & receptive enough to absorb a number of elements of contemporary Renaissance painting.

But despite this intimate contact with the West European Renaissance art, and despite their acclimatization in India & acceptance of the life and culture of this land, at any rate from Akbar onwards, the Mughal court, nobility and aristocracy it is now clear from what I have already said, remained, culturally speaking, somewhat Indian to the very end of their days. It is not, therefore, strange that Mughal court painting would retain throughout a somewhat pronounced Iranian note & accent; at its core and that an Iranian source would ever remain as its referent. This was doubtless aided by occasional importation of artists and illustrated manuscripts and albums, mainly from Iran and Iraq, to the Mughal court.

The consequence is that the activity of the Mughal miniatures cannot be measured by the same standards as those used for the elevation of European pictorial art.

“Basawan and Daswanth, won fame and glory highly skilled in the representation of perspective, in drawing, and in the use of colour and in portrait he contested with his unfortunate rival for the first place among the artist in the time of Akbar. Both artists opened the way for a progressive transformation of Mughal art into a purely Indian art”.

It was only later that copies and good quality prints reached India, what is certain is that a European element appeared in Mughal miniature painting at quite an early stage, showing itself mainly in perspective especially in landscape the adaption of European landscape and more especially Italian technique resulted in the elimination. Some of the rigid schemes of Indian art, and artist began to stress the reeding perspective of landscape by means of a new and different visual technique until there was violent contrast with the Gujrat school of painting, with its vertically rendered perspective.

In the Indo-Persian phase of miniature painting, landscape details were inspired by far eastern art; clouds were like those in Chinese painting and mountains were painted in a manner similar if not identical to that in
Central Asian paintings; skies were either dark blue or golden and usually presented a uniform background.

In paintings the line of the horizon was lowered, the sky became tinted with greys pinks azure and gold tones; clouds were represented in the western manner, being shown as masses of vapour and starry night skies sometimes displayed a study of reality that would have been inconceivable a few years previously.

European painting and print had come into India during the reign of Akbar, in 1580, the mission led by the Neapolitan jesuit Rodolfo Acquaviva brought the emperor a copy of the Royal Polygot Bible of Philip II of spain, printed in eight volumes by Pantin at Antwerp, and copy of the Byzantine Madonna from the Borghese chapel at Saint Maria Moggise in Rome, the Bible was also illustrated with fine frontispiece engravings in each value, which naturally aroused great interest; Akbar immediately ordered his painters to make faithful copies of them all, Mughal court soon became interested in European style and techniques. Many indians became able to make a precise appraisal of the technical level and quality of European works. This phase of artistic preparation, also influenced by the great frescoes which decorated christian churches and monasteries in India, was reflected in local artistic production and favoured a kind of fusion between Indian and European and more specially Italian ideals. The some process was reversed in the west where artists like Rembrandt and Sir Joshua Reynolds took a great interest in Indian miniature while on 17th century. Dutch master, William Schellincks, remained greatly impressed by the 'caprices' which recurred in Mughal paintings, such as those in which an image was filled with an enormous number of minor figures until it, became transformed into a swarm of bodies.

"BIRTH OF CHRIST"

The western engravings and illustrated manuscripts started coming in the court of emperor Akbar in about 1680. They not only influenced the Mughal style of Painting but also served as models for preparing their copies by the Mughal artists for the imperial albums. This painting which shows infant Christ in the lap of Mary and other personages, is a copy of a Western original in the late Mughal style.

Plate: Birth of Christ
O.P. Sharma—Indian Miniature Painting
Exhibition Compiled from the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, 5-26 October 1974.
This note and accent, this reference would of course differ from artist to artist, from painting to painting, but there would always be a lowest common denomination which should mark out any painting from the Mughal court atelier as being of Indian inspiration; however distant the echo, it is unmistakable except in portraiture.

What I have just said would perhaps explain why at the beginning of the study of Mughal painting, it was labelled as "Indo-Persian", and there were quite a few scholars who regarded Mughal painting as even a colonial offshoot of medieval Persian painting of the 15th and 16th centuries. The latter interpretation was obviously wrong since the Mughal court and empire in India were not colonies of the Persian empire nor did Mughal court painting at any stage of its' history, depend for its sustenance & growth on Persian painting altogether, in exclusion of any other source or sources of inspiration”. Besides, from the very beginning the number of Indian artists at the Mughal court far out-numbered the imported Irano-Central Asian and it was not the imposition of any external will or pressure that determined or conditioned the thematic and formal nature and character of Mughal painting but the free choice of the Mughal Emperors themselves, a choice conditioned by their ethnic and cultural origins, affiliations and contacts.

Chapter V

European Elements in Mughal Miniature
During
Akbar’s Reign
Percy Brown has written a very interesting book on a very interesting phase of Indian painting. The Mughal school appeals easily to European connoisseurs of art and the fact that too sumptuously produced on the same subject have came out of the Oxford press in the course out of the three years focussed much attention on the part of English critics, although the materials and opportunity for the study have been abundant both in the private and public collection in England.

As early as 1777 Sir Joshua Reynolds himself recorded his appreciation of the beauties of Mughal painting; but his tribute was an isolated one, for in spite of the admiration of the great English artist, the important collection of Mughal paintings in England continued to be ignored and until recently, the products of this school held no place in English connoisseurship.

In the case of Indian painting, at least the Mughal school, something like cartloads of pictures have rested in the archives of the English collections for nearly a century before it can be said to have drawn any attention of English connoisseurship in art.

Before Akbar sits on the Mughal throne there was a living school of Indian painting, both in the realm of book illustration and portfolio pictures, and there were more than one guilds or shrenis of the practicers of the craft of painting, whom Akbar brought together and consolidated. It is not as though, Akbar by the magic wand of patronage brought to existence an art that did not exist; but that his patronage and active interest changed the direction and motive of the native school which was surviving in various parts of the country. "Wholly misses the significance of this tribute, and fails to draw the obvious and legitimate conclusion as to the state and temper of the surviving indigenous school, on which Akbar based his foundation."59.

The Mughal development was a brilliant pose-and an episode in the history of Indian painting. In the Hamza paintings we actually see Mughal

painting in the making. Their true significances, available from a study of their internal evidence, in many details, have been somewhat overshadowed by the belief that they were all the works of imported kalmuck artists. Abu’l Fazl’s rather loose statement has been taken as an authoritative evidence and has thrown students off their scents. There is much in the Hamza painting which speak of the brushes of Hindu painters. It is well known that the Mughal artists freely borrowed many means of expression from European painting, the most important debts being the use of shadows, night effects, and aerial perspective. In later Mughal painting these are very evident. The flat and sometimes decorative cloud effects of the earlier miniatures gave way to solid realistic treatment of landscape, with a sense of depth.

The Mughal style was further influenced by the European painting which came in the Mughal court in about 1580 and absorbed some of the western techniques like shading and perspective. A large number of illustrated manuscript court scenes, hunting scenes and portrait were executed during the period of Akbar.

“Another aspect of European art of interest to the Mughal was its Christian identity knowledge of Christianity was entrenched in the Mughal myth and symbolism long before the arrival of European work of art example are Mughal style work “Such excellent artists have assembled here that a fine match has been created to the world renowned unique art of Bihad and the magic making of the Europeans.”

The great importance for the formation of the Mughal style of the painting was the contact of Akbar’s court painters with European art from European painting. Hindu painters learned about perspective and modeling. They introduced third dimensional landscape and new colour schemes unknown to Persian painters. In some of the miniatures illustrating episodes from Persian poem the Mughal artists introduced Portuguese figures and even Christian saints. The formation of the Mughal style was the creation of the Mughal style was the creation of all the artists working for Akbar. Few of the painters of the Akbar School show an individual style. Among the best known ones is Basawan, a pupil of Abdus Samad whose style is often free from Persian conventions and colour schemes. His miniatures often show a palette of pastel colours, softness of delineation.

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60. O.P. Sharma—Indian Miniature Painting, exhibition compiled from the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, 5-26 October 1974.
Percy Brown—Indian painting under the Mughal A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1750, Oxford at the Clarendon, Press 1924.
and shading which reflect the European influence. On the north-west frontier were the Mughals under Babur, whose progress and whose influences on the art of the country have been already dealt with in the preceding chapter. On the south-west sea board the Portuguese navigator, Vasco Da Gama, had landed, and with his arrival India's direct intercourse with Europe began. The effects that such contact had on the arts of India, and specifically on the painting of the Mughals is a necessary portion of the present study.

"The first monarch to display an interest in the handiwork of the European craftsman was the Mughal emperor Akbar." Comparatively early in his reign in 1572, he had spent a year in the conquest of Gujarat, in close proximity to some of the western seaports, where he made the acquaintance of the Portuguese merchants and learned something about them and their affairs. The Mughal ruler appears to have retained a Portuguese officer in his service; Europeans were not, however, unknown in the cities of Mughals, for there was a fair sprinkling of wandering Poles and Muscovites, Greeks and Levantines, in the bazaars of Agra and Delhi even at this time. In the South of India but outside the sphere of Mughal influence, many more were beginning to arrive, as not only trade but the Christian religion brought by the Jesuit Priests was making steady progress. With the extension of these missions appear the first known examples of western art in India. In 1570 one of the priests at Goa was brother of Aranha of Lisbon, a skilled artist and versatile craftsman, who designed and built many of the original Christian churches in the locality, decorating them with religious pictures painted by his own hands. Akbar seems to have obtained certain vague information, which speedily grew into a desire for more definite knowledge. In 1578, therefore, he specially deputed an agent of his court of the name of Haji Habibullah to proceed to Goa for the express purpose of making investigations.

When the company arrived back at the Mughal court after their expedition, the emperor was much gratified with the manner in which the Haji had carried out his commission. He had actually engaged a number of Europeans to come and carry on their trades at the court of the 'great Mogul' Unfortunately the details that have survived of the results of Akbar's enterprise are meagre, although it is recorded that one article

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61. Ibid.

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which received the special admiration of the church organ "like a great box the size of a man, played by a European sitting inside. One of the court artists Madho Khanazad, subsequently introduced the instrument into a picture he painted of a musician (Plato) charming a large concourse of wild beasts who lie helpless around him".

Mughal emperor's desire for the productions of the west and he soon began to cast about for other methods of securing what he coveted. Whether Akbar in professing an interest in Christianity, was in earnest or merely using religion as a means to an end, will never be known, but that he favoured it at one time in order to get into closer touch with the European in India, and learn from them as much as possible about western culture, is quite clear. The experience of the three priests who made up the party at the Mughal Capital, where they remained for some three years, is a fascinating narrative, most of which lies outside the subject of painting. It was, however through their presence that Akbar made his first acquaintance with European pictures.

In one of the apartments of the "house of Miriam" in Akbar's now deserted Capital, there used to be the much faded remains of a large wall-painting, the subject of which was said to be the announcement. The support of the Mughal emperor was to bring with them many examples of European pictorial art. They came prepared, therefore, with a considerable number of paintings of saints and religious subjects, which seem to have been very well received; these also eventually led to much discussion between the members of the mission and Akbar and his priests. Akbar accepted the gift with evident signs of pleasure, and placed it in his imperial library, where it remained for fifteen years: It was then handed back to a later Jesuit mission which came to the court of Mughal. There is little doubt that during the period that it was in the emperor's keeping the artists studied the illustrations in this book just as carefully as they did those of the Persian schools and the result of their study is plainly observable in some of their miniature. "Among its engravings were some pictorial maps displaying galleys and other mediaeval ships sailing through seas in which aquatic monsters disport themselves".
Akbar was intrigued by the exotic merchant adventurers from the west. He first encountered them at Caubay in 1572. A year later during the siege of Surat a large party of Christian came for an audience with him and was asked to guarantee the safety from pirates of Muslim pilgrims to Arabia. In 1576 Akbar met two Jesuit Priests in Bengal with whom he discussed religion one his favourite topics.

“A European”

This portrait of a European was probably based upon imported prints as well as direct observation. The Christian ladies at worship resemble Hindus bowing before a Sivaite image and their shrine recalls contemporary Hindu architecture.

It may come as a surprise despite the studies in Mughal paintings by a number of Celebrated Scholars that these are still some important collections of the sixteenth century which have gone unnoticed so far although they are lodged in libraries which are well known and are extensively used.

Miniature No. 1a (B20) “Ascetics in hilly landscape” Inscription “Amal-i-Daswanth” (work of Daswanth)

Daswanth was a painter of Akbar’s court who learnt the art under the guidance of Khwaja Abdus Samad. He is described as a rival of Basawan and is known for his paintings in the Razmnama, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria and in the Ardeshir collection (Bombay). The present miniature is a rare and may belong to the last phase of his career. “A noticeable feature of the miniature is a spaciousness in which the viewer can identify animation, which is contrary to the trend of crowded animation, a trait of the sixteenth century Mughal manuscript painting which is observed in the same painter’s other works. The deep-shaded outlines, the suggestive shading striving for a three-dimensional effect, mounds of earth and simpler contours of the hills. “A trend towards Indianisation of the early Mughal painting, rhythmic heavy folds in the costumes and a hazy distant landscape borrowed from European technique of painting”all these declare a maturer development of Daswanth’s art. The realistic depiction of the saints gives us an important documentation of the sixteenth century ascetics life. As such this piece may be studied along with other illustration

All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi.
containing the depiction of the ascetics, seen in the Tariikh-i-Khandan-i-
Timuria, Baburnama and Akbarnama.

The Hamza Nama illustration on cloth originally consisted of 1400 leaves bound in seventeen volumes. Each leaf measured about 27x20 inches. The Mughal style was further influenced by the European painting which came in the Mughal court in about 1580 and absorbed some of the Western techniques like shading and perspective. A large number of illustrated manuscript court scenes, hunting scenes and portrait were executed during the period of Akbar. According to the Mughal practice a number of painters were commissioned to illustrate a single manuscript “following the example of the Mughal Emperor the courtiers and the provincial officers also patronized painting. They engaged artists trained the Mughal technique of painting. But the artists available to them were of inferior merit, those who could not seek employment in the imperial atelier which required only first rate artists. The work of such painter are styled as popular Mughal or provincial Mughal painting.

Akbar illustrated historical manuscripts are many. The most vivid in Islamic art and his Akbarnama of which “17 folios” is certainly the most compelling among them, although it is uneven in quality. An artist such as Basawan however possessed such a creative imagination that he could envision episodes such as this making every gesture and expression convincing. There he has painted elephants seldom equalled in Indian art a great achievement considering that elephants were a speciality of Indian artist.

“Although this manuscript of the Akbarnama probably completed in about 1590. It is likely that the project began at least five years earlier probably as Abu'l Fazl completed writing his accounts of the episodes. Akbar assigned the subjects to the artists best qualified to depict them. In this picture, Basawan’s boatman with his expressive distortions of Canon harks back stylistically to the Hamza-Nama.

The work of several German and Flemish engravers was known to them, Durer and H.S. Beham, Maerten van Heemskerck and Sadeler, Wiericx and Pieter Vander Heyden are represented by originals or by close copies in the Mughal imperial albums. “The earliest signed and dated copy

63. O. Berrett—Painting of India.
64. O.P. Sharma—Indian Miniature Painting, exhibition compiled from the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, 5-26 October 1974
is by Kesu, after an engraving by Heemskerck of St. Matthew, dated 1587." Two other copies of Christian subjects by this artist signing Kesava Das are known. J Sadeler's pallete of St. Jerome engraved in 1576 was copied by a lady, Nadira Banu at an unknown date but in the correct colouring; while the figure of St. John from Durer's engraving of the crucifixion of 1511 was copied with great skill by the young artist Abu'l Hasan in his thirteenth year in 1600" by Durer's Virgin and child engraved in 1513 was copied by an anonymous hand in the Mughal court about the same date. This is now in the Royal Library at Windsor. All but the St. John which is only slightly tinted, are fully coloured in western taste thus proving that the artists had access to western paintings or to advice from Europeans.

Akbar's interest in Western art is also undeniable but we do not have such detailed information about it. In 1581 he was fascinated by a European organ, we learn from Bada'oni and an organ is represented in one of the margin pictures of Jahangir's album leaves. In 1582 Akbar had European curtains hung in his palace; and these were probably tapestries. At Fatehpur Sikri, in 1582 also copies of pictures of our Lord and the Virgin Mary in the Jesuits oratory were made by Mughal painters; and in 1602 at Agra they copied a replica of the Madonna del Topolo, which Akbar caused to be carried into the palace for the purpose.

The third Jesuit mission conducted by father Jerome Xavier a nephew of St. Francis Xavier reached the court at Lahore in 1595, and he stayed on for twenty two years.

Mughal painting of these twenty year from 1595 to 1615, we can find many instances of a thorough assimilation of Western Pictorial Science.

In the reign of Akbar Daswanth was one of the nine painters, all Hindus, who contributed oblong miniatures to this manuscript aligned with the spine of the book, a shape which obviously, derives from the palm-leaf and early paper manuscripts of western India which develop from it. In other pages, six of them, he seems to show Deccani influence. One of these, which fills a double-page opening of the manuscript, show an army in formation the ranks arranged like a maze, as indeed is required by the text. The only comparable miniature is in the Bijapur manuscript of Nujum-al-ulum of 1570 which is reproduced and discussed below. It is possible that this

D. Berrett—Painting of India.
Assistant Curator and Curator of Oriental Antiquities of the British Museum.
convention was more widespread in pre Mughal India than we can now know.

Daswanth illustrates the salvation of type of all living things from the great universal flood in a boat constructed by the Prophet Manu who is represented in the act of securing it to the peak of the Northern mountain, while it is supported below by a great fish which is an incarnation of Vishnu. The extension of the flood to the four corners of the picture is characteristic of the composition in this manuscript, linking them with the later Hamzanama pages. Next to Daswanth in this achievement in the Jaipur Razm-Nama comes Basawan another of the Hindus of unknown origin who became the leading court painters. Abu’l Fazl account of the imperial library in about 1595 to this style at that time is known from his picture of the Mulla rebuking the Dervish for pride in his patched dress in the Baharistan of Jami in the Bodleian Library dated 1595, he shows his interest in European figure and drapery drawing and his mastery of Chiarosuro. That he was one of the first to show a knowledge of western technique of picture-making is seen in several pages of the Darab-Nama manuscript in the British Museum. A lavishly illustrated manuscript from the imperial Library. Although undated this must surely be almost contemporary with the Jaipur Razm-Nama; but it contains no work by Daswanth, while Basawan in the latter manuscript is less advance and more purely Indian, even when his is the sole author of a miniature. This illustration of the death of Balarama, showing the huge cobra proceeding from his mouth as he lies under a tree, does indeed reveal obviously westernized drapery folds, but the landscape is little changed from the early Mughal form of the 1570, Anwar-i-Suhaili manuscript. In this only miniature in the Darab-Nama illustrating Princess. And the shade the background, here architectural, is much more ambitious in attempting a complete perspective view of a city with the help of a panel of text. Basawan has avoided the difficult transition from the foreground pavilion built on piles over water to the domes and towers of the background.

Some of the painters whose names are written below the miniatures of the Darab Nama are of Lahore, which became the principal imperial seat after the abandonment of Fatehpur Sikri in 1585. The drawing is vigorous and strong sometimes even coarse, and the colours vivid and even crude far

Ibid.
removed from the quiet tones of the Safavi school—all except one leaf which bears the unexpected name of Abdus-Samaad. The more forward-looking artists who participated are Miskin, Nanha, and Bhurah Sarwan and Kanha also depict Deccani Costumes, thus revealing a wider horizon. These are a minority of the illustration, and these artists are mostly represented by only one miniature apiece. Miskin and Basawan were to become two of the leading painters in the last years of Akbar’s reign and Kanha and Sarwan also flourished until the end of that period. The Darab-Nama is thus most significant for its promise for the future and its evidence of the vigour of the school at this time. The bulk of the miniatures are dominated by the harsh reds and greens which seem to characterize the palette of Lahore.

Miniature No. 9A (B20) “Lady and Maids inside the palace” inscription “Amal-i-Mukund” (work of Mukund).

Here too as in miniature from European prototypes placed within an essentially Mughal landscape we have a distant view of building perched against the hills, seen through an arch-gate of Mughal style. A hexagonal tank with a fountain in the centre and an ewer in the foreground sprigged with flowering plants are shown. Ornamentation of the head-gear and the style of the hair of the ladies in the present example is identical with those in Lal’s work (miniature No. 3A); the European examples from which these figures are derived are probably the same. It is the only example of Mukund’s work which has European figures. During Akbar’s time (after 1582) began imitation of European pictures European figures, landscape and motifs being to form the part of the composition. This trend continued in the Mughal school of painting till the late seventeenth century.

It was in 1580 that the first Christian mission arrived at the court of Akbar. This was not the emperor’s first direct contact with Europeans, for in 1573 and again in 1578 a Portuguese embassy led by Antonio Cabral had been sent to the emperor by the viceroy of India, the first to Surat and the second to Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar’s new capital. “On the first occasion the emperor was campaigning and the visit was short, but in 1578 there would have been opportunity for the emperor and his court to learn something of western painting. In the same year a Portuguese merchant named Tavares came to the court from the Bengal Port of Satigam, and a secular priest,
Giuliara Pereira was also received by the emperor. It was in this same year 1578 that Akbar experienced a conversion through an ecstasy of some kind which he suffered in the course of a hunting expedition.

Any influence detected in the work of the Mughal painters during the 1580 must have come through the first mission. Internal evidence reveals that two kinds of European pictorial art must have been available to them; engraving and illuminated manuscripts we find that elements of European painting have affected the indigenous artistic expression of this country. In order to understand that this influence has been and how it has been brought about, one has to study the conditions out of which they have grown.

The direct intercourse between India and England began in the latter part of the 16th century when the Jesuit fathers visted the court of Akbar. Whatever many have been the pretence or motive of the Mughal Emperor regarding the acrimonious debates on different religious beliefs, we find that the visit of the missionaries directly led to the introduction of European paintings in the Mughal courts. We are told that when the Fathers presented the Emperor with a copy of the Bible, he received it with great reverence and “also commanded his artists to copy picture of Christ and the Virgin which the father has with them, and directed a gold reliquary to be made”67. Here we have the earliest evidence of Indian artists being led to copy European paintings. It is quite clear that his order was given not because the painting were worthy of imitation, but because it would demonstrate the respect which the emperor has or pretended or entertain for pictures. Records of such paintings prove that the copying or adaption from European paintings did not influence the early Mughal artists to any visible extent at least they do not seem to have lost sight of their own traditions while engaged in copying or imitating works of European art. On the other hand their works relating to Biblical or other European subjects plainly show that they worked under instructions rather to satisfy their patron’s fancy than to acquire anything new. This is very clearly demonstrated by the fact that very few of the painting of the period of Akbar and Jahangir, when most of the copies of or adoption from European paintings were made, show the influence of European painting.

“MADONNA AND CHILD”

Both Deccani and Mughal artists copied European prints but their interest were distinct and allow us to differentiate these two contemporary Islamic traditions working with Indian. We compare this work with the European copies found in the margins of Jahangir’s albums for example, we see that the Mughal work typically uses cloth to enhance the weight and man of the bodies by highlights and shading, it marks the forms exist in space and this would be close to the intention of the European source which is unidentified. The Deccani artist however, makes a rich pattern of the fold of the drapery and shading is used not to increase own sense of the physical existence of the Madonna but to intensify. The definition of lines in the flat pattern A fully painted version fig 44 of the freer drawing is in the National Museum of India, New Delhi.

Miniature 3A (B20) “Two European ladies in landscape”. Inscription: Ustad Lal (Master Lal).

This is a unique specimen of Lal’s work. The female figures having been directly derived from European art. They are set in a characteristically Mughal landscape marked by the sparsely grown clumps of trees, greatly diminished distant landscape and a stream in the foreground. Female figures are finished in detail with careful shading that proclaims Lal’s understanding of the European technique of shading; Parallel examples may also be seen in his other work, where direct copying of European figures is not involved “e.g. miniature on folio 15 in the Ms Khamsa of Nizam or 12208. Flowing costumes with rhythmic folds too are an adaption of European style. In fact, this composition reminds us of the “Madonna by the tree” theme, but without the infant Jesus.

Miniature 5A (B20) “Two European ladies, one seated the other holding a child” Inscription: Amal-i-Kesu” (work of Kesu)

This is certainly a copy of the common European theme, ‘Madonna and child’. But compared to other works executed by Kesu (or kesav) after European examples, it is inferior in quality. Could we suggest that this is an early specimen of Kesu’s work other works ascribed to this painter based on western themes belong to the late sixteenth century. Here the shading is even and the folds appear restricted in rhythm. The main figure seems to be

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68 S. P. Verma—Some unnoticed Mughal miniatures at the Royal Library Windsor
Roop Lekha vol. 57, 1986. All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi
Plate: Madonna and Child.
unnaturally perched against the flat background. However, the action reported through crisp, distinct lines, enliven the picture.

Percy Brown remarks that since Sir Joshua Reynolds recorded his admiration for some of the Moghul miniatures in the British Museum albums, with occasional interludes of neglect, Indian miniatures have received their meed of estimation from artists, connoisseurs, and students of oriental learning while at the present time the prospect of their attaining a fairly high pace in the sphere of pictorial art seems assured. While there seems to be some grounds for the last observation, few will be able to endorse Mr. Brown's remark that with occasional neglect, Indian miniatures have received its tribute of praise from English critics.

Mr. Havell began to sing their praises, the Moghul miniatures—neglected on the assumption that they represented a decadent branch of Persian painting—had not received any serious attention on the part of the English critics. Mr. Brown is apparently inclined to slur over this piece of neglect, although as an enthusiastic connoisseur and an educated critic of Moghul Painting he must have left that the neglect was indefensible. In some sense Mr. Brown's attitude is right, for rather than reproach his fellow critics, in the aggressive fashion of Mr. Havell, he has preferred to allow his own enthusiasm and the excellent illustrative material which he has collected in his book, to cast their contagious charm over his friends at home. It is not possible to gauge to what extent Mr. Brown's book is winning admiration for Moghul Painting in England. The review published in the Times was certainly a little lukewarm in its appreciation. The publication of the Indian Society, edited by Messrs. Binyon and Arnold, with many sumptuously produced collo-type and coloured illustrations, was designed to evoke the serious attention of the English public. But unfortunately in all matters relating to India that recalcitrant public is very slow to respond. And Mr. Brown must have himself felt that in the form that Mr. Binyon's book was presented sufficient justice was not done to the claims of Moghul Painting.

Dr. Coomaraswamy, the students of this school are, indeed, heavily indebted in many respects; but to Mr. Brown must be given the credit for an attempt to write a monograph on the subject with ample materials. The fact that he comes with greater claims invites a more critical examination.
It is a pioneer work and for the first time initiates a proper survey of the subject, and for that consideration alone he deserves generous indulgence for the imperfections of his works. We should like, therefore, to emphasize the positive contributions of his works, rather than its imperfections. Although he has not been able to lay under contribution all the available collections, the materials that he has actually put forward are of considerable value. It is curious that Mr. Brown draws more on the collections outside England than on the materials near his hand. He is likely to give very pleasant surprises in the illustrations that he cites from the collection of Rothschild, Demotte, Cartier, and Vever. For though the collection of the latter is known to a few—Mr. Brown's selection from the other collections, for the first time, brings forth new materials. But the most important of his discoveries is the selection from the valuable materials hitherto unknown, from the Rampur State Library from which he has given us two-colour plates (both of which we reproduce here). The most valuable of these materials is offered by a page in the Mongolian style from a History of Mongols. Apart from being a picture of exceptional quality, it is an important document for the history and development of Persian Painting, a short, but brilliant, sketch of which Mr. Brown has introduced in Chapter I of his Historical Survey. This was a very relevant introduction, for it is impossible to realise the exact position and the contribution of Moghul Painting without an accurate appreciation of its relation to the Persian schools. For in spite of its many debts to the schools of Central Asia, particularly through the examples of the Timurid school, which the Moghuls sought to transplant in India, the Moghul school stands on its own indigenous qualities.

Mr. Brown wholly misses the significance of this tribute, and fails to draw the obvious and legitimate conclusions as to the state and temper of the surviving indigenous school on which Akbar based his foundation. Mr. Brown confuses the issues by his somewhat vague and innocuous remark: "Undoubtedly the natural genius of these Indian Painters, the result of centuries of experience only required Akbar's patronage and the Persian's guidance to bring it again to a high state of efficiency." An other fact which Mr. Brown very unhappily misses is that the indigenous pictorial tradition in its Rajput phase existed side by side—one flourishing round the throne at Delhi and the other living in the inspiration of the folk-psychology and

the culture of the Hindu population far away from the pomp glory of the Moghul Court. Dr. Goetz has been able to show on a very careful examination of the fashion of the modes, costumes and dresses that figure in many Rajput Painting, that a large number of very characteristic pictures of the Rajput school were actually contemporaneous with the Moghul school, though diametrically opposite and fundamentally different in their technique, subject matter, and temper. It must have been on the basis of these contemporary Rajput pictures that Abu’l Fazal made his remark quoted above. As Mr. Brown himself remarks (p.48): “When the Moghuls began to turn their attention to the revival of painting in India, there still survived a strong living tradition among the people of the country on which the movement that they had in contemplation might be most surely founded”. 70

70. Ibid.
Chapter VI

Work and Style of Paintings of Various Artists
While most of the major manuscripts of the 1580s has illustrations designed by one artist and executed by an assistant that system became less satisfactory in the 1509s when imperial taste was more sophisticated, demanding uniformly high quality. There does not seem to have been any rationale, other than a demand for general consistency with in each individual project, for the assignment of joint, rather than unassisted, workmanship, the major designers were the men listed first in Abul Fazl important discussion of painters, he says.

More than a hundred painters have become famous masters of art, while the number of those who approach perfection, as of those who are middling, is very large. This is specially true of the Hindus, their pictures surpass our conception of things. Few, indeed in the world are found equal to them. Among the forerunners on the high road of art.

Mir Saiyid Ali

He learned the art from his father. From the time of his introduction at court, the ray of royal favour has shone upon him. He has made himself famous in his art, and has met with much success.

Painting begun by the Tabrizi artist Mir Saiyid Ali about the year 1550 in Kabul, at the latter emperor's order, it was probably not finished until twenty-five years later, at Agra, under Akbar's reign. In spite of the long period it took to complete the manuscript, and the great political changes that occurred while it was in progress, the same style of work was maintained throughout the whole series of 1,375 paintings which form its illustrative portion. As would be expected the style is fundamentally Persian, although there is much in it which shows an atmosphere and environment different from the production of either the Timurid or Safavid schools. One of the pages is reproduced on Plate VII, and illustrates the general character of the painting; on the reverse of each folio is a written description of the incident depicted, the whole comprising the story or 'Romance of Hamza'. Hamza was the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, a
dhte 'Romance' is a fantastic narrative founded on the original adventures of this hero. As records of the life and customs of the early Mughals the pictures are unique. Unfortunately in many of the painting the faces have been clumsily obliterated by a later zealot, but except for this they are in an excellent state of preservation. They display quite plainly the circumstances in which they were produced, the general scope of the work being devised by Mir Saiyid Ali in his inimitable Safavid style, but in the actual painting he was assisted by others, either Persians or Indians. Apart from any other qualities that it may possess, the Amir Hamza is of importance in providing that definite connecting link between the Persian and Indian schools.

The pictures of the Amir Hamza, however, stand in a class by themselves; they are too obviously of Persian extraction to be considered as belonging to the Mughal school proper. It is to the other manuscripts in the list of illustrated books prepared under Akbar's order that we must turn for representative specimens of the work of this school. These resolve themselves into groups in the order in which it is presumed they were executed. In the earliest group may be placed the two British Museum manuscripts, the Darabnama and the Babarnama. The next to be produced were no doubt the Jaipur Razmnama and the Bankipur Timurnama, which constituted the second group. Following these come the Bodleian Baharistan and Mr. Dyson Perrins's Khamsah, forming the third group, while last of all, and placed in a class by itself, for reasons which will be explained hereafter, is the South Kensington Akbarnama. Many illustrated manuscript produced in his time, in only three, the Jaipur Razmnama, the Bankipur Timurnama, and the South Kensington Akbarnama.

A general survey of all the paintings contained in these manuscripts reveals the fact that as a whole they illustrate a style of work different from that executed at any other period of the Mughal school. The dominant note is undoubtedly their Indian character. While they owed something to the productions of the Persian, notably for their small size and effect, in every other particular they reflect plainly the temperament of the indigenous artist.

Mir Saiyid Ali, the other member of the Safavid school, does not appear to have attained to the high official position of his colleague Abdus Samad,
although he was probably the better artist. Abu’l Fazl certainly honours him with the first place in his list, and alludes to him in glowing terms. ‘From the time of his introduction at Court, the ray of royal favour shone upon him. He had made himself famous in his art, and has met with much success’. But beyond the historian’s reference to his ability we know nothing further of the Saiyid’s life or his later connexion with the Mughal school.

**DASWANTH**

He is the son of a palkee-bearer. He devoted his whole life to the art, and used from love of his profession, to draw and paint figures even on walls.

The famous Hindu artist Daswanth who, having been ‘handed over to the Khwaja, in a short time surpassed all painters, and became the first master of the age’. Afterwards his services seem to have become so valuable that he was withdrawn from the school, and promoted about the year 1577 to the appointment of Master of the Mint, which distinguished position he filled with great credit for several years. The result of his association with this department may be observed in the high character of the Mughal coinage of the period, which is not only remarkable for the purity of its metal and fullness of weight, but for its very fine artistic appearance. It is not difficult to see how such perfection was attained. In its production the leading poet was commissioned to compose the couplet, the most skilful calligraphist inscribed it, the ablest sculptor modelled it, and the best engraver fashioned the die. And over all was placed the first artist of the state so that the coin should be the most finished artistic production of its kind. Under such unique conditions it is not surprising that the work of Akbar’s mint is considered superior to that of any other country of the period. The action of the Mughal emperor in this connexion is significant of his attitude generally towards the subject of art, and his application of it to such practical purposes. Abdus Samad completed his career by becoming Diwan or Revenue Commissioner of Multan, apparently an honour given to him in his old age.

**Daswanth are not uncommon, there is no specimen of his painting which is the sole product of his own hand. In all his designs some portion of the work, either the drawing or the painting, was entrusted to other**

72. Ibid.
exponents, whose names, included with Daswanth's, are written on the margin. The Razmnama is an illustrated adaptation of the Hindu epic the Mahabharata, and, as its story contained much that was foreign to the Muhammadans, the pictorial part is, with few exceptions, the work of Hindu artists. Akbar showed an active interest in the ancient Sanskrit literature of India, which was manifested in his demand for the preparation of Persian translations of several Hindu classics, among these being as Abu'l Fazl states, the Razmnama and the Ramayana. Several copies of both works with illustrations appear to have been produced at this time, as Akbar in his zeal required some of his nobles to order them for their own use.

Daswanth, Basawan, and Lal were the three experts who were concerned in the majority of the paintings but in each case they collaborated with another artist so that the work as a whole occupied a large staff. In the two manuscripts comprising this group the method of employing more than one painter on the same composition is most pronounced, very few of the pictures in either being the work of one individual. From the nature of its contents it will much that is unreal and fantastic, and some of the scenes must have tried severely the ingenuity of the artists in representing them on paper with any degree of success.

At least four of the Akbar's artists were of the Kahar, or palanquin-bearer caste, including the famous Daswanth. But Daswanth rose superior to his humble birth and by sheer genius came to be regarded as the ablest painter of his time. His artistic gift displayed itself early in life, and in his efforts to find expression he used 'to draw and paint figures even on walls'. By accident his natural ability was first revealed to the emperor himself, for 'one day the eye of His Majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered', and he was handed over to Abdus Samad for training. In a short space of time he surpassed all the other painters and became 'the first master of the age'. Unhappily he was subject to fits of depression, and finally his mind became unhinged. One day he stabbed himself with a dagger, and died two days later. This tragic circumstance apparently took place in the year 1584, although he barely attained to middle age, yet he 'left many masterpieces'. It is to be regretted that no works by the hand of this artist alone have survived, but there are many in which he has collaborated with others. In

73. Ibid.
the Jaipur Razmnama at least twenty-four pictures bear his name, and there is also one in the Bankipur Timurnama (fol.2), in which he combined with Jag Jiwan, but none of these is a convincing example of his art. Daswanth's caste-fellows all distinguished themselves in their profession, as the Kesus, father and son, are both mentioned in the Ain, while Paras and Ibrahim, also did good work; their picture may be studied in the Baburnama and Darabnama in the British Museum and in the Bankipur Timurnama. An artist who completed with Daswanth for the premier place in the school was his co-religionist Basawan.

**ABU’L FAZL**

Its against this interest in historical documentation that we view Abu’l Fazl’s entry on the stage, and more specifically his or as a historian. Born in 1551, as the second son of Shaikh Mubarak, he is reported to have been gifted from birth with an extraordinary memory. The intellectual climate in his father’s house certainly influenced him to acquire information, and by the time he was fifteen he had mastered the subjects known as ‘Manquil’

By the machinations of my extraordinary soul, the picture of ambition had been erased from the porch of my mind and longing for asceticism exhibited its power. I was on the point of treading the desert of frenzy with bared head and foot, breaking to pieces the enclosing wall of my environment, and taking the path of liberation.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

In certain cases the chronicle is written in such a way as though he were supplying visual notes for the artists. The author focuses on the imagery in creating a ‘Pictorial Environment’ rather than on narrating the causes for such and such a happening. In the battle waged between two groups of sanyasis at Thanesar, he reports every detail on the field of massacre, beginning with words that could be considered as addressed to the artist.

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74. Geepi Sen—Paintings from The Akbar Nama
by Roopa Company, Pataudi House.
All the details of this drama are depicted by the master Basawan in one of the most unforgettable double compositions in the manuscript. Moving from the imperial encompment, the ritual bathing of pilgrims in the tank, to the alms giving, the banyan tree and ghat under dispute, the picture gradually builds up to the blowing of conch shells as the yogis prepare for battle.

In many such masterpieces, for e.g. in the celebrated painting on the punishment of Adham Khan, the close correspondence between the narrative text and the illustration can only be explained by the fact that the artist had access to the text or that the passage had been read aloud to the artist. At the same time, the painting possesses an extraordinary power and immediately that gives its advantage over the text, summing up four or five pages of prose and introducing the locale and 'Dramatis Personae' of the tragedy in one comprehensive statement. The masterful treatment of the subject by Miskin was certainly recognized, since the painting served as the model for a drawing done at least fifteen years later, and now preserved in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin.

The importance which Abu'l Fazl attached to painting, and his admiration for the royal studio of painters is attested in the tribute he pays to them in chapter 34 of the ‘Ain-i-Akbari. It will be observed later in this volume that a remarkable coincidence occurs between the names of the master artists mentioned in the 'Ain and those assigned to the major share of work in the Akbarnama paintings. The masters recommended by Abu'l Fazl in the 'Ain-in-Akbari monopolise four-fifths of the work in the royal manuscript since Abu'l Fazl is the author of both the Akbar Nama and the ‘Ain-i-Akbari. It seems possible to infer that he may have preferred the work of those masters and so employed their talents in the illustration of his chronicle.

Finally our further point would help to establish this hypothesis. From Abu'l Fazl's own statements it appears that his chronicle was presented daily to the emperor for his scrutiny and encouragement when Abu'l Fazl concludes writing the history of thirty years of Akbar's life and first seventeen years of the reign, he provides us with a date to this first volume of the Akbarnama.

Ibid.
Jahangir referred very briefly to Aqa Riza, during his discussion of Abul Hasan in the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri.

His [Abul Hasan's] father, Aqa Riza of Herat (or Merv) at the time when I was a prince, joined my service. There is, however, no comparison between his work and that of his father.

"The statement is more in praise of Abul Hasan than purposely derogatory to Aqa Riza, but it establishes the elder man as an important personality, whatever our view of the visual rewards of his work." He brought to India direct knowledge of the most current Iranian artistic styles; he served as a painter for Prince Salim and is therefore important to an investigation of Salim's taste and patronage before the imperial workshops came under his control. Of course, he was enormously influential as the father and presumably early teacher of Abul Hasan and, as various inscriptions inform us, of Abid.

We know that Aqa Riza was in India by the time of Abul Hasan's birth in 1588-89, and his earliest known works are probably two pages in the Muraqqa-e-Gulshan which are almost purely Iranian. They indicate that Aqa Riza was a thoroughly trained Safavid (Iranian) painter at the time of his arrival at the Mughal court, and it is informative to see what happens to his style under the Mughal impact.

Jahangir's memoirs state that he came from Herat or Merv, but inscriptions on two paintings refer to Abul Hasan as 'Al-Mashhadi' (of Meshhed). As one of these inscriptions is by Abul Hasan himself, the other by Abid, the Meshhed affiliation of the family seems unquestionable. And indeed, the great Haft Aurang of Jami manuscript, made at Meshhed between 1556 and 1565, is a perfect stylistic source for Muraqa-e-Gulshan pages by Aqa Riza referred to above.

We have no definite information on the painter's activities before his appearance in India, however, nor do we know why he left Iran.

It seems that he is not to be identified with either Maulana Muhammad Riza of Meshhed or Muhammad Riza of Meshhed, the pupil of Mir Saiyid Ahmad, both known from contemporary texts. That he is also distinct from

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75. M.C. Beach—Grand Mughal Imperial Painting in India (1600-1660). Contributions by Stuart (Art Welch and Glenn D., Lowry Sterling and Francis Clark Art Institute; William Stowns, Massachusetts Asia House Gallery New York City between April 19, June 10 1973.
the late sixteenth-century Iranian court painter Aqa Riza has long been accepted, although the seeming commoness of the name has caused considerable confusion.

Aqa Riza’s Iranian origins are also clear in the “Portrait of a Courtier”, for the pose, such details as the bench, and the languorous mood are duplicated in innumerable safavid illustrations. What defines the work as Mughal is the degree of modelling in the face, and of course the inscription. This latter refers to Aqa Riza as ‘murid’ (disciple), a term found in inscriptions by both Aqa Riza and the young Abul Hasan and used by Mughal courtiers to indicate their subsevience to the wisdom of the emperor (or in this case, the prince) Above this the name sultan Salim appears in gold, so there can be no doubt to whom the painter is paying homage.

That Salim is titled sultan allows us to date the illustration before 1599-1600, at which point the rebellious prince took the title ‘Shah’.

The major paintings by Aqa Riza are in an ‘Anwar-i-Suhaili’ manuscript in the British library which has an inscription slating that it was finished in 1610. Two of Aqa Riza’s illustrations, however, are independently inscribed with the date 1604. The book, which was thus begun for Jahangir before his accession, has two types of illustration works of a very Iranian character by Aqa Riza and painters under his influence (e.g Abul Hasan & Mirza Ghulam); and paintings of a more typically Mughal type by Bishan Das, Anant, Nanha etc. The first group is distinguished by brilliant mineral colours, frequent use of gold, carefully organized surface patterns, general spatial flatness, and a detailed, miniaturistic technique; the others tend to show softer earth colours and looser brushwork traits current in imperial Mughal works.

This same stylistic range is found in other major manuscripts made at the same time and serves to emphasize Aqa Riza distance from mainstream, Mughal tradition. It may have been this inability to adapt, even more than the quality of individual illustrations, that caused Jahangir’s comments on the painter’s work.

The margins of a page from one of Jahangir’s albums show this phase of Aqa Riza’s style, for, while unsigned, the figures are identical to those in

76. Ibid.
‘the Anwar-i-Suhaili’. It is a superbly decorative border & shows episodes that occurred during a hunt. Individual faces are defined and modelled far more smoothly than in portrait of a courtier and the overall action has an immediacy that was not present in Aqa Riza’s earliest work. This development came about through the painters increasing familiarity with Mughal attitudes and through his study of European prints of the Muraqqa-e-Gulshan, for e.g., signed by Aqa Riza, uses European motifs in the margins.

Nonetheless, despite the surface ‘Mughalization’ of the painter’s work, the figures lack individuality or interior life. A comparison with the marginal figures by Goverdhan (no 5 verso) makes clear the degree to which Aqa Riza was unable to go beyond traditional attitudes to human form. This is no judgement on the painting per se, it is simply that the meaning of the figures does not accord with contemporary Mughal imperial ideas.

The Iranian orientation of Aqa Riza’s style was an important ingredient in the evolution of Prince Salim’s taste, it may be found on imperial manuscripts of the mid 1590s, as well as on the earliest Jahangir album pages were due to ideas introduced by Aqa Riza his specific influence, however, is not found about 1605, and it seems that his style went quickly out of date once Jahangir has the full imperial workshops at his command that Aqa Riza’s activity was not confined simply to painting is shown by his reported responsibility for the design of Khusran Bagh, the garden at Allabhabad in which Salim’s wife, shah Begum, was buried in 1604.

[ABDUS SAMAD]

Abdus Samad was one of a group of major Iranian painters that either accompanied or followed Humayun to India after his visit to Tabriz in 1544 and whose activity and prestige were important elements in evolving Mughal style. Reference in the Akbarnama provide us with a summary of his career of the year 1544 for example, when Humayun was in exile and seeking help from the Iranian Shah Tahmasp, Abu’l Fazl wrote,

“His majesty Humayun first proceeded to view Tabriz, and when he came near it the governors and grandees came out to welcome him. The exquisite and magical Khâwaja Abdus Samad Shirin qualm (Sweet pen) also entered into service in this city and and was much esteemed by that

Ibid.
connoisseur of excellence. But from the hindrances of fate he could not accompany him.”

Humayun eventually setup an interim capital at Kabul where in 1550 “Know Abdus Samad and Mir Saiyid Ali who were celebrated for their skill in painting came and were graciously received. In 1556 Humanyun returned to Delhi and the young Akbar. The Skillful artists such as Mir Saiyid Ali and Khawaja Abdus Samad who were among the matchless one of this art were in his service and were instructing him.

The Hamzanama manuscript was begun about 1562 and Abdus Samad served as supervisor of that project in 1577, the year of its probable completion.

Abdus was made director of the imperial mint at the capital, Fatehpur Sikri and in 1582, he was appointed an overseer. Abdus Samad was a man of considerable administrative talent, His painting during these years in India were few and highly conservative or so it would seem from the remaining works known to us.

Abdus samad was a conservative. It would seem from the remaining works known to us. Jamshid writing on a rock, for example, shows none of the interest in liveliness of colour, originality of composition or European techniques of modeling and perspective that were imbedded in the general vocabulary of Mughal painting by the 1580s, “His compositions are flat and decorative superbly composed and filled with flawlessly executed minute detail human figures are relatively expressionless, care fully framed and set off by landscape elements. He tends to use densely packed mountain forms of a dark tonality.

Abdus Samad served as a continuous model of technical skill and control. In fact it is the combination of sheer energy found in such painters as or in the Hamza Nama manuscript and the control and technical refinement of Abdus Samad that produced the great manuscript illustration of the 1590s.

Additional works with inscriptions of Abdus Samad during his year in India.

1. Two young men in a Garden

77. M.C. Beach—Imperial Image Painting, for the Mughal Court Freer Gallery of Art, 1981.
from the Murqqa Gulshan
Dated 1551
former Imperial Library Tehran

2. Akbar Presenting a painting to Humayun
from the Muraqqa Gulshan
former Imperial Library Tehran

3. A Horse and Groom
From the Muraqqa Gulshan
former Imperial Library Tehran

4. The Arrest of shah Abu'l Maali
Bodleian Library Oxford

5. Darab - nama
circa 1580
British Library, London

6. Razm-nama
Circa 1582-86
City Palace Museum Jaipur

7. Hunting Scene
from an album of Jahangir
Los Angeles Country Museum of art.

**BISHAN DAS**

Bishan Das's career inevitably divides itself into two parts. In 1613, he was chosen to accompany the embassy of Khan Alam to the court of the safavid shah Abbas at Isfahan. Jahangir, anxious to persuade his Iranian rival of the wealth and power of the Mughals, arranged for the mission to be
ostentatiously grand, and its success, in this regard, is related in a contemporary Iranian account.

The highly placed king Salim Shah, ruler of Hindustan, sent Mirza Barkhurdar, entitled Khan Alam, who is a great noble of that court and is styled 'bhai' or brother by the shah, as ambassador. The day when Khan Alam entered Qazvin, the writer was present in the city, and himself beheld the great magnificence of the ambassador's train. He also made enquiries of the old men, who had beheld other embassies in the days gone by, and all were agreed that from the beginning of this divine dynasty, no ambassador ever came from India or Rum with such splendid and lavish equipments.

He had with him 1000 royal servants, his own private servants, and 200 falconers and hunters. He also had mighty elephants with golden ornaments and turrets of innumerable kinds, and Indian animals—many singing birds, and beautiful palkis.

Khan Alam remained until AH 1029=AD 1620, and upon his return was lavished with honours. Jahangir mentions this event in a passage of interest to us:

"At that time when I sent Khan Alam to Persia, I had sent with him a painter of the name Bishan Das, who was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the shah and the chief men of his state, and bring them. He had drawn the likenesses of most of them and had especially taken that of my brother, the shah exceedingly well, so that when I showed it to any of his servants, they said it was exceedingly well drawn."78

The emperor further notes of the events of the embassy's return that "Bishan Das, the painter was rewarded with the gift of an elephant". What is important at this point, however is simply to realize that Bishan Das was absent from India during the middle artistically rich years of Jahangir's reign. A famous group of pictures, attributed traditionally and by inscription to Bishan Das, relates to this trip, for it includes paintings of the meeting of Khan Alam and Shah Abbas as well as portraits of the shah and members of his family. One such illustration from the late Shahjahan album, is included here. None of these works seems to be of sufficient quality or

78. Ibid.
immediacy to guarantee Bishan Das actual authorship, neither the figures nor the landscape, shows the vitality and aliveness that distinguishes "The Birth of Jahangir, one of the artist's greatest works. Certainly, many copies of this Iranian subject matter would have been made at the emperor's behest to distribute in celebration of the success of the embassy.

An inscription in the borders of the 'Muraqqa-e-Gulshan' tells us that Bishan Das was a nephew of the painter Nanha whose work is also included here. His earliest known commissions were included in two imperial manuscripts of the 1590s, and by the first decade of the seventeenth century he had attained sufficient eminence to be included among the portraits of painters found in the margins of the Gulshan Album. There is really only one painting presently known that can explain the basis for this reputation at such an early date, however. This is 'The House of Sheikh Phul' a signed work that in gentleness of colour, simplicity of composition and intensity, relates to other paintings of about 1605. Together with his relatively modest contribution to the 1604-10 'Anwar-i-Suhaili', this is the basis for understanding Bishan Das's style, for there are few other major signed works. His style is sufficiently recognizable and consistent, however, to assure confidence in further attributions.

Such an attributed page from the Jahangir-nama showing 'The Birth of Jahangir', is seen here. The painter used a palette of dark earth colours, and draws with a free and seemingly unselfconscious line (unlike Mansur or Hashim) that gives his figures warmth and animation. The variety of personalities he depicts is extraordinary, confirming Jahangir's praise of his portraits. This is particularly notable among the harem women in the top-half, for stock formulas were more customary when showing groups of female figures. Court ladies were in rigid seclusion (purdah), and visible only to members of their immediate families; and consequently there was little chance for true portraiture—compare the difference in treatment of the women here and by an anonymous artist, for example. Bishan Das is also far less concerned with the use of space generally, or shading to give physical bulk to his forms, than Abul Hasan, for example, or Govardhan. It is characterization and gesture, not modelling, that gives his figures life. The painter's works—especially his later illustrations—are occasionally even spatially inconsistent, as can be seen in another Jahangir-nama page, a
Processional scene which exhibits Bishan Das's characteristic color, brushwork, and character types. Here, however his tendency to cluster figures is more pronounced, and the line work is harder. The extreme contrasts in the proportions of both these miniatures may be studied together.

Miniature No. 20 (B 20) “Prince with scholars”. Inscription “Amai-i-Lal (Work of Lal)”. Miniature No. 4a (B 20) “Poetry recital and female musicians”. Inscription “Ustad Lal” (Master painter Lal).

Tall cypresses, plants with branches laden with flowers, a small tank (drawn from a bird's eye-view) in the foreground, with ducks swimming in it, ground sprigged with small plants (following the Persian style) are elements shared in these two compositions. The central figures (the prince) in both of them is painted in identical pose and possibly represent the same individual. Here, the motifs employed in depicting the carpets and tents further testify to the proximity of Lal’s work to Persian art.

These miniatures are significant also for the study of the costumes of the female musicians and their instruments; as also for the costumes of men of different strata the fountain with four spouts may be of interest in any study of 'water-work's' in 16th century.

KESU

Kesu Das was one of the greatest of Akbar’s artists and is placed just following Basawan in the list of painters that Abu’l Fazl gives in the Ain-i-Akbari. He is best known for his copies and adaptations of European prints and this interest in turn affected his work on the major Akbari manuscripts in the Darab-nama for example is a scene identified by Norah Titley as the water maiden's husband tearing their children's bodies apart in which a frontal male nude is modeled in such a way that the figure has a weight and mass unparalleled in other work of period.

At the time of the Razmnama, Kesu was already an important artist. He worked unassisted on three illustrations and designed four others “three of which were completed by the young Miskin”. “he also executed a design by Daswanth, Akbar’s greatest Painters while hardly rivaling in quality the thirty-eight illustrations designed by Lal for the manuscript”

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79. M.C. Beach—Imperial Image Painting, for the Mughal Court Freer Gallery of Art, 1981
his talent was clearly acknowledged in the Jaipur Ramayana which followed immediately. The Razm-nama project, Kesu's assignment were increased, and by the time of the first Akbarnama he was the third most important designer only two illustrations in the Tehran section of this Jamial-Tawarikh one innovative adaptor of European ideas are recent article on his career and on European influence in particular, a discussion. Kesu is a brilliant technician.

Manuscript with inscriptions to Kesu

1. Darab-nama

circa 1580

British Library, London

Beach Mughal Painter Kesu Das”. Pig 15

2. Razm-nama

circa 1582-86

City Place Museum, Jaipur

Beach “Mughal Painter Kesu Das” fig 16

3. Ramayana

Circa 1584-89.

City Palace Museum, Jaipur

4. Akbar-nama

circa 1590 or earlier

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

P- B M. 1976, no 44

5. Diwan of Shahi

circa 1595

Private Collection

“Mughal Painter Kesu Das”.

Ibid.
Miniature 11A(B20): “Two ascetics in the wilderness”. Inscription: Ustad Basawan” (Master Painter Basawan).

The human figures in this miniature have been drawn half naked, and shown shivering in the cold through a realistic depiction of postures. An old tree denuded of leaves in the background and an empty bowl with a dog standing nearby emphasise the grimness of the scene. The delicate handling of the thin shading is characteristic of Indian technique of Painting. Two playful monkeys in the tree relieve the otherwise grave surroundings.

Basawan

Basawan is listed in the Ain-i-Akbari as the greatest of Akbar’s painters after Mir Saiyid Ali, Abdus Samad and Daswanth. Basawan therefore, was the most important, prestigious and influential painter active during the later years of Akbar’s reign. The list of his work given below is virtually a complete list of major Akbar’s manuscripts for illustrations that were collaboration, his assignment were as outliner/designer as befitting his status. Two other artists (Lai and Miskin) were usually given more pages probably as a result of Basawan’s slow and painstaking technique. Basawan studied and learned profoundly from the European prints that circulated in the Mughal empire and consequently his figures are defined by weight and mass and his character studies are unrivaled. Basawan’s achievement was crucial to the development of Jahangir portraiture in the early seventeenth century an astonishing attainment since he was also instrumental in the formation of the quite different early Mughal style.

“They are also significant evidence for the availability of European works as models well before the arrival of the first Jesuit mission in 1580.”

The progress of Baswan’s style shows a continually evolving understanding and adaptation of European principles, unlike such a painter as Kesu Das. In Kesu Das’s work we sense a barrier of full comprehension, for while he dealt inventively with space and modeling, he was an indifferent portraitist, his figures seldom transcending general types, Basawan inevitably used very subdued colours whereas Kesu,
Mahesh or Miskin preferred bright, flat tones that tended to reinforce surface rather than spatial values.

The Tuti-nama, Haniza- Dorab-Nama pages are the best and most comparable example for understanding the progression of Basawan early development. By the 1580 he was fully a mature painter and his later works were essentially refinements of the Darab-nama style.

Manuscript with inscription to Basawan

1. Tuti-nama
   Circa 1560
   Cleveland Museum of Art
   Re- Pramod Chandra Tuti-nama PP 77-78

2. Darab-Nama
   circa 1580
   British Library London
   P-welch "Painting of Basawan

3. Raza Nama
   Circa 1582-86
   City Palace Museum, Jaipur

4. Timur-nama
   circa 1584
   Khuda Baksh Public Library, Bankipore

5. Ramayana
   Circa 1584-88
   City Palace Museum, Jaipur

6. Babur Nama
   Circa 1589 or earlier

Ibid.
Miskin who had worked on the largest number of miniatures seems to have attained perfection in animal drawing. Animal figures represented in vigorous and violent rhythm ascribed to Miskin (sketch only) are hardly seen in any other miniature of the sixteenth century Mughal school. Here he has excelled Basawan who has sketched elephants crossing bridge. A hunting scene sketched by Miskin represents animals in a variety of postures and actions, there Miskin has done the work of colouring. The latter achieved great perfection in bird, animal and flower painting and became an unrivalled painter of his age during Jahangir’s reign (1605-1628).

Animal figures drawn by Farrukh chela are represented in the painter’s individual style where their shape appear suthering and attenuated. This tendency has survived from the very beginning of his works viz; on folio 116 of the ‘Diwan-i-Hafiz’ (Rampur), folio 30 of the Anwar-i-suhaili (Varanasi)

Mansur’s known career began in the late 1580s when he was assigned the painting illustrated here. His designer and collaborator (and immediate superior) was Kanha, who with Miskin must have been considered the major animal painters of the time (these two senior artists contributed the
largest portion of the natural history section of the first Babur-nama). At about the same time, Mansur works on two pages of the Victoria and Albert Akbar-Nama.

The first was an elaborate hunting scene designed by Basawan the greatest figural painter of the period. Mansur was being trained by the major talent in the workshops. In about 1591 he was given sole responsibility for five animal studies in the British Library. Babur Nama, an obvious recognition of his quickly established proficiency with animal subjects.

"His work as a portraitist or a painter of figural composition was in different, as attested by his pages in the second Akbarnama. The basic characteristics of the design—the simple background, with a few typical plants placed in a way that rhythmically enlivens the surface, or the use of plain, uncolor paper to concentrate attention on the animal are probably elements contributed here by Kanha but they continue in Mansur's later natural history works as well the slow careful drawing and thinly applied paint however seem especially distinctive to Mansur. Akbar-period manuscript with inscription to Mansur.

Out of hundreds of painters who worked at the Mughal atelier, only a few are known for specialisation in one or the other aspects of painting. Among them, Abu Hasan, Bichitr, Bishan Das, Goverdhan, Manohar, Mansur and Payag are notable. Mansur seems to have specialised in drawing bird and animal figures, as well as flowers. This earned him fame in 16-17 century India. Jahangir wrote in 1618. "Also Ustad Mansur had become such a master in painting that he has the title of 'Nadirul-Asr, and in the art of drawing is unique in his generation. In the time of my father's (Akbar's) reign and my own these two (Abu Hasan and Mansur) have had no third". However, the exact date when Mansur was awarded this title, that is "Nadirul-Asr", is not clear from Jahangir's memoirs. Most probably, Mansur got this title around 1612 when he portrayed the turkey-cock which has been described in the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (account of the year 1912). This painting bears an inscription, "amal-i-banda-idargah Mansur nadirul-asr, Jahangirshahi" (work of the servant of the court of the emperor Jahangir, Mansur 'unique of the age').

M.C Beach—Imperial Image Painting, for the Mughal Court Freer Gallery of Art, 1881
No information of Mansur’s life is traceable. Perhaps he belonged to the family of a ‘designer’ (ornamental artist) or ‘engraver’ as may be gleaned from some inscriptions, that is, Mansur naqqash. We also know that Mansur did illumination work—a rare specimen of which is in Khamsa—contemporary to his earlier work in Baburnama.

Mansur seems to have joined to Mughal atelier after 1595. Numerous manuscripts illustrated earlier to this date—Razmnama (State Museum, Jaipur), Tarikh-i Khandan-i Timuria (Oriental Public Library, Rampur), Darabnama (British Museum, Or. 4615), etc. — do not contain miniatures ascribed to him. Perhaps the earliest specimens of his work are the illustrations executed by him in the copies of Baburnama (B.M. Or. 3714, circa 1598-1600; National Museum, Delhi, No. 50.326); Jami-ut-Tawarikh (Imperial Library, Teheran, dated 1598) and Akbarnama (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, circa 1600-5; British Museum, Or. 12988). ‘Antelopes’ and ‘water-buffaloes’, illustrations from a dispersed copy of Baburnama (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, no. 54.29a and 655 A.E.) may be taken as one of the earliest examples of his art. On these folios, Mansur has worked as a co-artist and has done the work of ‘colouring’ only. The sketching has been done by Kanha—an established Painter of Akbar’s court. It may be pointed out that the painters, while in the learning stage, worked in general, first as co-artist, and only laid pigments in the drawings outlined by master-painters. But it was not a rule.

Mansur, whose active period as a painter may be fixed after 1597-8 has not been referred to in the Ain-i-akbari by Abu’l Fazl because he rose to the status of a ‘master’ (ustad) painter only towards the end of Akbar’s reign, 1600-5, by which period the Ain had already been compiled. The fact that Mansur had attained perfection in a short time is evident from the inscription given on folio 110b in Akbarnama (B.M. Or. 12988), where the painter’s name is given with an epithet ‘Ustad’ (Ustad Mansur). The term ‘ustad’ was not a title conferred by the Mughal sovereigns. It was a customary epithet employed by the disciples of an artist or his colleagues which in itself testifies to Mansur’s greatness. Other contemporary painters referred to with this epithet are Ustad Husain and Ustad Miskin. Mansur emerges as a co-artist in the illustrated manuscripts of Jami-ut-Tawarikh and Akbarnama where he did the colouring only, while sketches were done

Ibid.
by Nanha, Miskin and Basawan. Miniatures on the folios of Baburnama (Or. 3714) are his independent works. This manuscript contains five folios representing bird and animal drawings ascribed to Mansur Naqqash. These pictures are the testimony of the distinguished quality of the painter: depiction of details, realistic representation, truthful depiction of colour, etc. Bird and animal drawings executed by other sixteenth century Mughal painters—Dhanraj, Shivdas, Jagannath, Makra, Shyam, Surya Gujarat - in the same manuscript look inferior from this point of view.82

Jahangir, who was greatly fascinated by rare birds and animals, insisted on maintaining pictorial records of them, besides giving descriptive notes on their behaviour, life and other details in his memoirs. The task of portraying them seems to have been largely entrusted to Mansur. We come across at least two such occasions in Jahangir’s memoirs when Jahangir commissioned Mansur to paint the likenesses of some birds presented to the Emperor or noticed by him in nature. In 1619, Jahangir ordered Mansur to draw the likeness of a falcon, presented to him by the king to Persia. In the following year, during his visit to Kashmir, he asked Mansur to portray the bird dipper (called saj). Many other birds and animals minutely described by Jahangir in his memoirs were drawn by Mansur probably at the Emperor’s command, namely, turkey-cock, pheasant, zebra. This suggests that Mansur had attained a distinct and unrivalled position amongst court-painters for animal drawings. Mention may be made here of other painters—Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Inayat, Manohar, Miskin, Murad and Pidarath—who also painted animal-life, but in a casual manner. Mansur’s contribution to the treasure of the portrayal of the birds and animals in unique and unsurpassed. Besides the large number of such drawings, his work is distinct for truthful representation, depiction of minute details, realism and accuracy in form and naturalistic distribution of pigments.

Mansur’s drawings drawn from life are the best specimens of realism in the history of art in India. This novel attempt at realism affected the earlier oriental approach of stylized, decorative and symbolic representation of birds and animals. Bird and animal drawings executed as ‘portraits’ was the mainstay of the painters at Jahangir’s atelier. Earlier, in sixteenth century Mughal art, birds and animals appear in connection with an event

or fable; or as illustrations in the manuscripts of Baburnama. The latter, in a limited sense, may however be taken as 'portraits'. Besides Mansur, Muhammad Alam, Abu Hasan, Farrukh Beg, Goverdhan, Manohar, Muhammad Nadir, Murad and others equally contributed to the new trend of realism in art. These realistic pictures exhibiting accuracy of form, colour, minute details and natural surroundings could have assisted in the development of the study of natural science in those times if proper thought and direction had been given to it.

_During Jahangir's period, in the treatment of the main figure as 'portrait', the landscape in its background too had a vital role to play. From this point of view, Mansur's drawings (pheasant, dipper, vulture, hornbill and crane) are the most powerful compositions to enliven the subject. Sometimes, Mansur preferred a plain, flat background where it suited the subject, as in the picture of the zebra. Here the background painted in a tinge of red but with a suggestion of its shade all around the main figure appears in contrast with the rhythmic patterns of stripes on the zebra's skin. It makes the subject more effective and distinct, but the overall effect produced is more of an illustration rather than of a painting._

"Mansur's expertise is in the depiction of the nature of animals. The most rhythmic, powerful lines drawn with shaded, bold strokes in accordance with the external anatomy of the figure 'Salt-water fish' reveal the swift and smoothly curved movement of the aquatic animal." The movement is further emphasised here by leaving a large space for aerial perspective and by composing the figure from end to end horizontally with a slight diagonal bent in the picture planes. It is the most powerfully conceived realistic picture of an aquatic animal, a parallel example of which we do not come across the Mughal school.

The art of book illustration as developed in the safavid and Timurid traditions was adopted by the Mughal artist. Mughal book-illustrations are more descriptive and detailed in content as compared with Jain paintings. Here, a Mughal artist appears as a story-teller close association of calligraphy and painting—a trend of Persian art—is another conspicuous feature of the Mughal book illustrations. Pre-Mughal Indian art, broadly speaking, is confined to the illustrations of the religious books, whereas in Persian and Mughal art both secular and religious books are equally

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83. Ibid.
preferred. The latter includes the historical books, viz Baburnama, Akbarnama, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Jami-ut-Tawarikh, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria, Badshahnama; literary books viz:- Khamsa of Nizami, Khamsa of Amir Khusrau, Diwan of Anwari, Diwan of Hafiz, sacred books from sanskrit & hindi literature and legendary books viz:- Mahabharat, Ramayan, Harivansh, Kathasaritsagar, Raj Kumar, Nal Daman, Iyar-i-Danish Mughal emperors had a wider range of selection as compared to the rulers of Persia Akbar, who attempted to synthesize the cultures of different peoples of the Indian subcontinent ordered for the translation of Hindu sacred books into Persian language and also got them further illuminated in pictures. But this practice seems to have been discarded by the later Mughal emperors. Variety in the selection of books for the purpose of illustration i.e. from different languages, subjects and religions as observed during Akbar's reign, illustrate books of history seems to have become a conventional practice of the Moghal school. It was also done to make them more popular and attractive through the pictorial representation of important events.

Akbarnama compiled by Abu'l Fazl is a detailed history of Akbar's reign, and all includes an account of his predecessors. It is compiled in three volumes (daftars), the first ends with the account of the middle of the 17th reignal year of Akbar. Abu'l Fazl was murdered in 1602 as a result of which Sheikh Faizi Sarhandi undertook to write the account of the years 1602-05. The third volume known as Ain-i-Akbari was completed in 1596-97 and an addition was made to it in 1597-98. It is important to mention that Abu'l Fazl in Ain-i-Akbari has given a list of the manuscripts illustrated at Akbar's ateliers but it does not include Akbarnama. Since Akbarnama was not completed by the time of compilation of Ain-i-Akbari, the question of its reference in the above mentioned list did not arise.

The investigations show that Abu'l Fazl's Akbarnama was not illustrated in its full form. For this purpose, only the section dealing with the history of Akbar's reign (1556-1605) was taken up. That too appears incomplete in known illustrated manuscripts of the Akbarnama. Chester Beatty manuscript of Akbarnama begins with the accession date of Akbar (1556) and ends with the account of 35th reignal year of Akbar i.e 1580-81. Arnold and Wilkinson have reproduced 31 out of 61 illustrations of this copy.

All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi.
The artists who composed objects in diagonal setting. Miniatures from the present manuscript viz “Building of fort at Agra “Bullocks dragging cannon”. “Execution of Khan Zaman’s followers attributed to Miskin (where he has done the work of sketch only) are the best examples. Basawan is another painter who has preferred diagonal compositions “Elephants crossing Bridge”. Naturally in diagonal composition the scope for the effective expression of the violent force and the rhythm becomes immensely increased.

During Akbar’s reign, joint work by artists i.e sketch by one painter, colouring by another and sometimes portrait or figure by a third painter was in vogue. Besides the miniatures of Akbarnama, Razmnama, Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria, Jami-ut Tawarikh are the best known manuscripts, of which illustrations are generally the production of joint work. However, it was not a universal system and a great number of miniatures already in the manuscripts mentioned above and specially in Anwar-i-suhailli (varanasi), Baburnama, Iyar-i-Danish, Diwan-i-Hafiz are the works of individual painters under Jahangir this practice went out of vogue since specialization in a particular branch of painting had become an artist’s mainstay. Under the joint work system, generally the characteristics of individual painters blurred and merged in to common characteristics. But the works of distinguished painters like Baswan, Farrukh chela, Lal, Miskin still remain distinct.

Farrukh Beg’s work has a strong Persian note more akin to 1580’s safavid art tradition. In all the miniatures ascribed to this painter, earliest of which is in Diwan-i-Hafiz (Rampur), his style remains distinct and isolated in the Mughal School.

Females have been represented in no less than 12 illustrations. These include royal ladies, maids, musicians and dancers and woman of the commoner’s class. Their faces are drawn on set lines and hardly appear as their portraits Nevertheless rarely in the representation of women of the commoner’s class faces appear to have been treated as portraits.

Male faces are more characterized and varied in expression Emperor’s face i.e. of Akbar appears identical. His portrait in profile is greatly

86. City Palace Museum, Jaipur.
87. British Museum.
favoured a trend of pre-Mughal Indian art which laterly replaced the Persian tradition.

In other instance, faces of nobles and chieftains are distinguished. Attention was paid to represent contours of face drawing and portrait painting in the miniatures executed by lesser skilled painters.

Male figure also below the waist is stereotype and neutral in attitude with the action reported in figure. For the display of rhythm female figures of dancers and musicians are remarkable.

Margins (Hashiyas) of Akbarnama illustrations are invariably plain similar to those observed in the manuscripts Razmnama (Jaipur), Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria (Patna), Jami-ut-Tawarith (Imperial Library, Tehran), Anwar-i-Suhaili (Varanasi) etc. In them only the bands of lines termed as 'Khat', drawn in different pigments are employed to close either sides of the illustrations. Nevertheless, margin paintings was in practice but was secondary in importance. Margins decorated with floral patterns, viz. in the Baburnama (British Museum) and in its most embellished from in the Khamsa of Nizami (British Museum) set with hunting scenes and wild life etc. painted by the artists of Akbar's court are an outstanding example of margin painting from sixteenth century Mughal art later under Jahangir, importance was attached to Margin painting and it seems to have developed as a separate branch.

Akbarnama miniatures are equally important for the study of sixteenth century Indian society. From this point of view miniatures representing feast and festivities, construction of buildings and out-door scenes are important. In them, masons, labourers, water-carriers, bullock-cart drivers, saints, dancers, musicians, elephant-drivers, boat-men, palanquin-bearers, cooks, stone-cutters, shop keepers are depicted. In the miniatures, ornaments tools, habits, and social life are depicted which make a source of cultural history of the people of those days. Besides a variety of cultural items viz: arms and armour, costumes, musical-instruments, utensils, furniture, water transport, road-journey, animals carrying loads etc are faithfully represented by the artists of Akbarnama, which a historian of Medieval India can ill-afford to pass by.

Journals of All India Fine Art and Crafts Society, New Delhi.
Conclusion
All facts and situations known so far have established beyond doubt that the Mughal painting was essentially a product of the Mughal court and that this art was organized and patronized from beginning to end by the emperor themselves. The artists were recruited and works were assigned to them by the emperors. They were paid and rewarded from the state treasury. Materials were obtained and purchased for them from far and near by the manager of the court atelier. It was in the royal library of manuscripts and albums that the artists had their workshop.

Themes and subjects were selected by the imperial master rather than the artists themselves. Although the nobles of the imperial court, occasionally advised them. The thematic contents of the paintings reflect the personal tastes and temperaments, prides and preferences, fashions, pleasures and pastimes of the individual imperial patterns and their courtly associates. Even in the form and style of the paintings, courtly tastes and preferences become themselves evidence to reveal the compositional scheme of court-scenes, colour schemes and choice of colours.

The form and content of Mughal painting certainly is a departure from the collective community tradition and the primary inspiration came from outside of the land to which the art belonged i.e. from Timurid and Safavid Iran. In Mughal court painting, what is more important and more interesting is the fact that a common feature remains throughout to distinguish the form and style from earlier and later ones.

My study and analysis of Mughal painting also points to the fact that the artists had to conform to the common feature of style and form as long as they were in the employment of the imperial court. The more talented artists of the Mughal court were kept engaged in carrying out the allotted assignments with the help of junior colleagues. The well known, usual method was for the master artist to lay down the design, sketch the outlines and indicate the colours. The junior asso-
ciates handled the details of inner lines, shades and tonalities. Usually more than one copy of an illustrated manuscript was made—one for the royal library and additional ones for gifts to diplomats and favourites.

The Mughal court presents the articulation of artistic activities in the field of painting of a unified and integrated form and style with a sense of purpose and direction based on the themes and tastes of individual Mughal monarchs from Akbar to Aurangzeb. The narrative-descriptive and dramatic aim remain constant throughout. The process of Indianization remained Irano-Central Asia during the first two Mughals. From Akbar onwards, the Mughal court retained a strong Iranian character, the reasons being obvious i.e. by religious affiliation the Mughal monarchs were Muslims. They were closely tied to outside of India by social, political and commercial relations. At times of need-materialistic, cultural and spiritual, they turned to the people of these areas for help and guidance. Persian alone was recognized as the sole language of the court and it was because of the choice of this language, the whole world of creative imagination of history and romance affected and conditioned the minds of the Mughal monarchs.

It becomes highly identified now that the Hindu and Muslim artists at the Mughal court had 'representation' as the chief aim and concerned with the descriptive themes in a dramatic manner and in their utmost visibility. There is a great and authentic inference through my thesis with evidence of the introduction of elements from contemporary European painting and Renaissance period, Christian myths and legends been the most popular theme. In every aspect, Mughal painting was a court art, with a definite character, form and style.
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Photographic Profile of Illustrations
List
of
Illustrations


