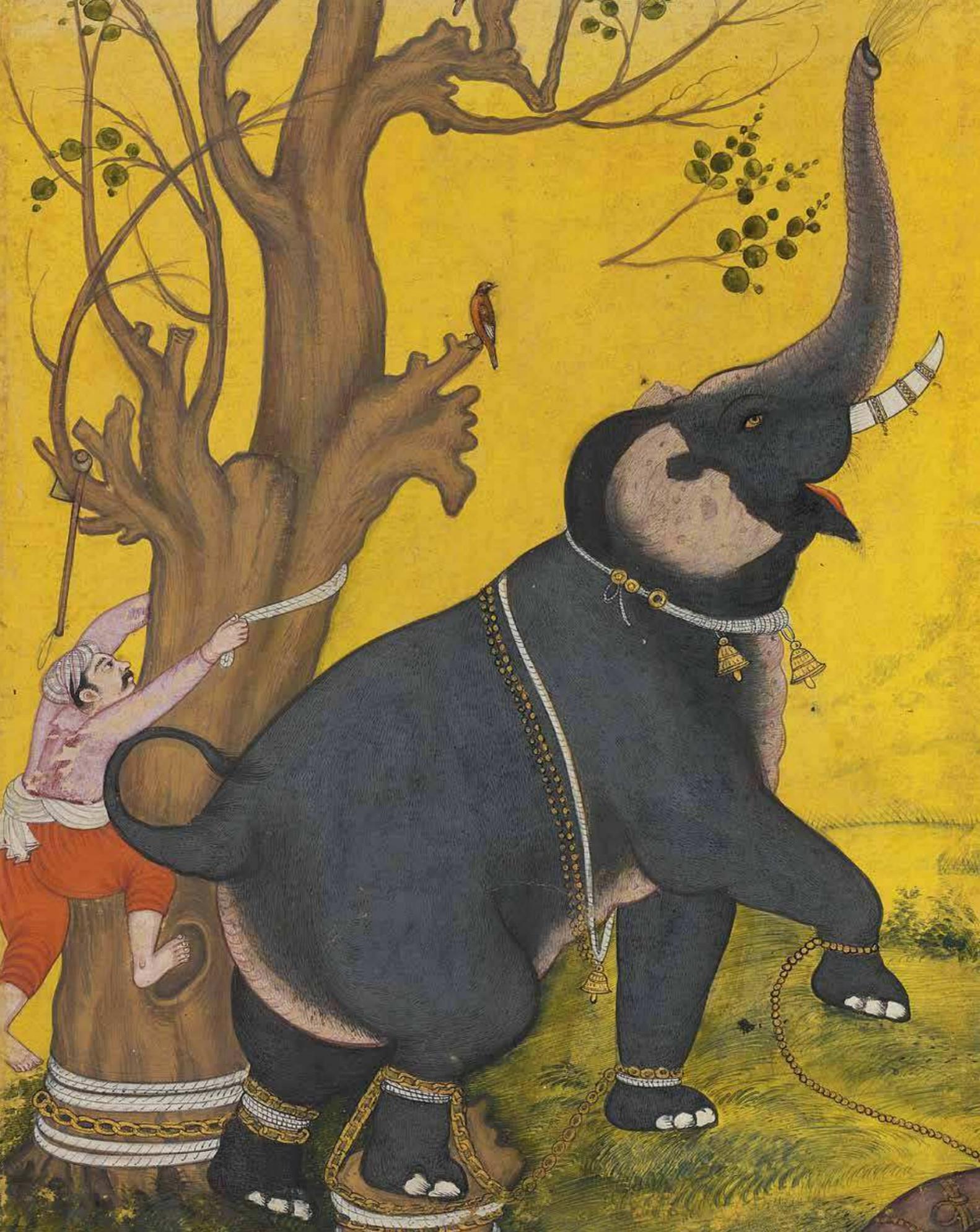


# A Prince's Eye

Imperial Mughal Paintings from a Princely Collection  
Art from the Indian Courts

J.P. Losty

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## Foreword

Imperial Mughal paintings have always been regarded as the 'blue chip' of Indian art – ever rare and ever sought after. Now, when they do appear on the market it is often when an existing famous collection is sold or dispersed – in itself an unusual event. We are proud to be able to present in this catalogue just such a group of outstanding Mughal paintings, assembled by a highly discerning eye at a time when some great collections were being sold. The opportunity to appreciate these as a complete group, originally curated to inform and complement each other, is an important one and it is for this reason, quite apart from their rarity, that we are offering these paintings as a collection.

Along with the Princely Collection, we are also pleased to offer an exciting group of Indian decorative arts, including a number of Deccani bidriware and Mughal daggers from private collections. As individual pieces, we are offering an unusual group of important Mughal paintings, among which are two 18th century versions of lost *Jahangirnama* paintings, originally from a royal Rajput household. Another exceptional piece is the large and complete 17th century summer carpet from the Amber group of chintzes, which has retained its extraordinary vibrancy despite its age. It was probably never used.

We would like to extend our special thanks to J.P. Losty, not only for his research and cataloguing of the paintings at lightning speed, but also for his advice and continual enthusiasm for the project. As always, Misha Anikst has designed this publication with an innovation and subtlety that has allowed the art to take centre stage.

The following people also deserve our gratitude and thanks for their invaluable contribution: John Benjamin, Sheila Canby, Milo Cleveland Beach, Prudence Cuming Associates, Robert Elgood, Gino Franchi, Mary Galloway, Julie Jourdan-Barry, Will Kwiatkowski, Helen Loveday, Nalini Persaud, Matt Pia, Christine Ramphal, Robert Skelton, John Seyller, Ellen Smart, Lucy Southgate, Richard Widdess

*Francesca Galloway, 2013*

This outstanding group of 22 Mughal miniatures was assembled in the early 1970s mostly from the collections of four of the most important earlier collectors of the 20th century. Hagop Kevorkian (1872-1962) was an Armenian dealer and collector who established himself in New York in the late 19th century and was to a large extent responsible for introducing American collectors to Islamic art. His name will always be linked to the great album of Shah Jahan's paintings in the Metropolitan Museum and Freer Gallery, Washington. A.C. Ardeshir, a Parsi from Bombay, put together his magnificent collection in India in the 1920s and 1930s. Today remembered mostly for the race named after him at the Bombay Turf Club, he has also given his name to a splendid album that was once the property of the Maratha Peshwa, Nana Phadnavis. It was sold and dispersed in 1973, along with other individual paintings and manuscripts from his collection, including the exquisite *Khamsa* of Nizami produced for Akbar c. 1585 and now in the Keir Collection. H.P. Kraus (1907-88) from his base in New York was one of the most successful and influential antiquarian booksellers of the 20th century, and also assembled a distinguished collection of Islamic paintings and manuscripts that was published in a catalogue by Ernst Grube in 1972. Finally, Stuart Cary Welch (1928-2008) was one of the pre-eminent connoisseurs and collectors of Indian and Persian paintings during the later 20th century. Items from his collection in the present group were sold from his collection in the early 1970s.

The majority of the miniatures in the collection date from the reign of Akbar (1556-1605) and include magnificent examples of the manuscript illustrations done for that great patron of the arts. Shortly after his accession, Akbar initiated an immense expansion of the studio and recruited artists and craftsmen from all the conquered kingdoms of northern India. He had inherited a small studio led by the two Safavid artists Mir Sayyid 'Ali and 'Abd al-Samad, who drew and painted in the elegant and calligraphic Persian manner of the time, as in the painting of a falconer in the

present collection based on the work of the latter master (cat. 1a, recto). There are several references to Akbar's interest in painting scattered through Abu'l Fazl's *Akbarnama*, the history of Akbar's reign, as well as an account of the painting studio given in Abu'l Fazl's supplement, the *A'in-i Akbari* ('Institutes of Akbar'). Although the latter was written between 1596-1598, Akbar's vigorous defence as reported there of painting, compared with the orthodox Islamic prohibition of images, applied throughout his reign: 'I cannot tolerate those who make the slightest criticism of this art. It seems to me that a painter is better than most in gaining a knowledge of God. Each time he draws a living being he must draw each and every limb of it, but seeing that he cannot bring it to life must perforce give thought to the miracle wrought by the Creator and thus obtain a knowledge of Him.'

It is one of the mysteries of Mughal painting how artists from disparate backgrounds – Rajput, Sultanate, Persian – managed to integrate their different styles into a homogeneous whole by the mid-1570s that was concerned, unlike the earlier schools from which it sprang, with depicting the real world, with a naturalistic approach to the expression of volume and weight in figures and to the depiction of space in their surroundings. Two forces seem to have been at work here. One was Akbar's own inclinations that can be gleaned from the often opaque pronouncements of Abu'l Fazl. He refers to 'the transmuting glance of the king' that raised artists to a more sublime level so that their images became more real. This was a path he was happy that his artists should explore. The other force is the traditional plasticity of earlier Indian painting and sculpture that had long been suppressed in the previous five hundred years of Muslim dominance but which when given free rein burst into life again. About three quarters of the names we know of in the Mughal studio are those of Hindus. These trends towards naturalism were reinforced when examples of European art first came to the Mughal court in 1578. Two years later the Jesuits, being great believers in the power of images, brought

Renaissance prints and paintings to Fatehpur Sikri to help explain Christianity. These were greatly admired but their influence was on Mughal artists and not the conversion rate. European artistic influence gave the artists the technical means to realise their naturalistic aims. Miskina's version of a print of St Christopher with the Christ Child in the present collection shows how Mughal artists transformed their sources into something else (cat. 1d, verso).

At the conclusion of the *Hamzanama* project that had occupied the studio for fifteen years, 1577 at the latest, artists had learnt to differentiate between foregrounds and backgrounds and now, having studied European paintings and prints brought to court by the Jesuits and others, they were increasingly able to make their space recede. They were not interested, however, in creating the type of illusionism that the Renaissance artist achieved through linear perspective. Both traditional Indian and Islamic aesthetics sought the ideal image, created in the mind of the artist and given body in the painting, using stylisations and conventions to avoid the appearance of reality. Such concerns remained central to Mughal painting until the end of the eighteenth century.

Akbar was still young enough at the conclusion of the *Hamzanama* project to relish adventure stories and had his artists illustrate various works that were full of fantastic encounters as well as fable books. These include the *Tutinama* or Tales of a Parrot and similar works, from which pages such as cat. 1b seem to come, as well as the wonderful two pages from an unknown adventure story of a prince being rescued by angels from a well and journeying to the land of the Zangis (cat. 1h and cat. 1i). These are very much in the spirit of the crazy adventures undergone by the hero in the British Library's *Darabnama* manuscript done 1580-85. The collection is rich in paintings taken from story books, of which one of the most memorable is the man leading a fat lady on a camel being bothered by huge flies (cat. 1m).

As he became older, Akbar wanted more sober stuff and it was at this stage that his artists began work on a series of historical works

that lasted throughout the next decade, all arranged in a logical order to a preconceived plan: the histories of Akbar's Timurid ancestors from Timur (sometime before 1584, *Tarikh-i Khandan-i Timuriyya*, now in the Khudbakhsh Library, Patna), of his grandfather Babur (1589, dispersed, from which two pages are in the present collection (cat. 1f and cat. 1g), and of his father's and his own reign, the *Akbarnama* (1590-95, mostly in the V & A). Only after that was the history of the less important, the Genghisid side, of the Timurids taken up, with a *Chingiznama* in 1593 (Gulistan Palace Library, Tehran, and dispersed) and also a history of the previous millennium in 1591-92 (*Ta'rikh-i 'Alfi*, dispersed), marking the 1000 years of the Muslim calendar. At the same time, the Emperor commissioned Persian translations of the two great Hindu epics in Sanskrit, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* (both in the Jaipur royal collection), and his artists worked on illustrated versions of them alongside the historical works. The appendix to the *Mahabharata*, the *Harivamsa*, recounting the genealogy of Krishna and his heroic exploits, was the subject of a separate illustrated manuscript in the later 1580s, now dispersed. Our collection contains a magnificent page from this series showing Krishna's attack on the multi-armed demon Bana (cat. 1e). These manuscripts are on the grandest scale, with an average of 150 full-page paintings each.

While many of the manuscripts illustrated for Akbar survive more or less intact, there were others which have suffered severe mistreatment often at the hands of dealers in the earlier 20th century as they became available in the west and were dismembered or otherwise mutilated. An especially interesting page is in the collection showing two armies confronting each other but waiting for a divine intervention (cat. 1j). Its text panel has been painted over with gold so that its subject remains obscure, like those of other pages from the same and similar series which have been subjected to the same treatment.

The paintings in these manuscripts were usually produced by two or three artists, a master artist drawing the outlines and a



colleague, often of lesser standing but not always, applying the colour. The master would then finish it off. Occasionally a third artist who specialized in portraiture would do the faces. The system that had been used for producing heavily illustrated historical manuscripts was then modified for the production of manuscripts of Persian poetry. Now master artists were required to produce individual work to the most highly finished state and their work was included in manuscripts exquisitely decorated with illuminations and gilded figurative borders. These are painted in the fully mature, eclectic Mughal style, in which all its elements, Iranian, Indian and European, are now fully assimilated into a balanced, harmonious whole. While the collection contains no examples from such manuscripts, an exquisite example from an unknown text (cat.1k) is typical of the harmonious and balanced compositions that adorn these manuscripts in the 1590s.

In the last great manuscript project of Akbar's reign, another *Akbarnama* of 1602-03 (British Library and Chester Beatty Library, Dublin), the exquisite finish of the 1590s poetical manuscripts was allied to the historical method of the 1580s. In the manuscripts after 1600, there is found a change of direction with a cooler palette in transparent blues and greens, while many paintings are in *nim qalam* which are really drawings with washes of brown and highlighting in colours and gold. Perhaps it was the influence of European prints which set Mughal artists off along this path, in reaction to the richly coloured palette favoured hitherto.

In addition to illustrated manuscripts, other individual paintings have survived from Akbar's reign originally kept mounted in albums. These individual paintings were mounted onto larger pages with decorated margins and then bound up. Sometimes the subjects were quite fanciful or derived from earlier Persian examples, as in the poet reading to his pupil while seated in a tree painted by Pemjiv (cat. 1l). A warrior in a landscape perhaps intended for a portrait of Babur is also an album painting (cat. 1c),

mounted on the back of a page containing the St Christopher mentioned above. This album folio suffered the fate of many similar album leaves being disbound and later bound up in a totally different album context in Iran. It must have been part of the booty seized from Delhi by Nadir Shah in 1739 and taken back to Iran. There it was included in an album with leaves decorated by Muhammad Baqir, the artist of the borders of the leaves of the St Petersburg Album.

In the 1590s Akbar's artists started seriously investigating portraiture, under the influence of European portrait prints which had been flooding into the Mughal court. Europeans began to appear at the Mughal court. Artists began to draw them and they became the subjects of album paintings such as cat. 1p. Whether under European influence through the Renaissance medals and cameos that reached the Mughal court or because it was the traditional Indian way of doing so, the subjects of portraits came increasingly to be portrayed only in full profile, and this was particularly so in the case of the Emperors (cats. 1q, 1r, 1s, 1t).

Akbar's son Salim rebelled against his father and set up a rival court at Allahabad 1600-04, where he had his own small studio of artists; there they produced a small number of illustrated manuscripts (of which cat. 1n and cat. 1o are examples) and some portraits and made a start on the production of the beautiful borders that distinguish his personal albums, on which work is recorded from 1599 to 1618. In his youth Salim favoured the work of Iranian émigré artists such as Aqa Riza, who had been in his employ since his entry into India, and he gathered round him a circle of artists of the same mind such as Salim Quli (cat. 1o). The accession of Salim as Jahangir (1605-27) meant considerable change in the royal workshops. Jahangir had little interest in the production of large historical or poetical manuscripts, with which the royal library was already well stocked. Many of the artists who had grown old in his father's service now retired or were dismissed to find employment as best they could in the

bazaars of Agra or with other patrons. The studio was reduced to a much smaller number of artists who would produce nothing but the finest work, principally intended to illustrate his Memoirs. Under Jahangir the surviving artists concentrated on perfecting their techniques so that they could create whatever was wanted, whether it was individual portraits by Bishndas and Govardhan, group portraits by Manohar, flora and fauna by Mansur, or the interpretation of Jahangir's moods by Abu'l Hasan.

Like his father, Shah Jahan (1627-58) had been a collector of paintings and of calligraphies since his youth and possibly had some artists with him when in rebellion from 1622. His principal painterly preoccupation during his reign was with the production of paintings illustrating his official history, the *Padshahnama*, now in Windsor Castle. Other than this manuscript, Shah Jahan was concerned to have his artists produce imperial quality portraits of himself and his sons and of the most important people in the empire which were placed in albums. In Mughal albums pairs of paintings face each other alternating with pairs of calligraphies which could be contemporary Mughal examples but more usually were specimens from the finest earlier Persian masters such as Sultan 'Ali and Mir 'Ali (cat. 1a). Paintings and calligraphies were framed by wide borders which allowed the patron to express his personal taste. The borders of the earlier album pages of the 1630s and 1640s were decorated with the stylised flowers that, immortalised in the architecture of his palaces and wife's tomb, the Taj Mahal, symbolise his reign. The collection contains several examples of these notable floral borders (cat. 1a verso, cat. 1h verso, cat. 1i verso, cat. 1r), as well as much rarer borders that contain animals and birds (cat. 1a) as well as landscape vignettes (cat. 1h and cat. 1i). Jahangir's albums had contained not just new portraits and genre scenes but also earlier paintings from uncompleted manuscript projects. Shah Jahan's albums and other albums put together in this reign also contained much earlier pictures from his grandfather's reign (cats. 1a, 1h and 1i).

Perhaps the last painting project initiated in Shah Jahan's reign was the preparation of an album of portraits of himself and his family, retrospective portraits of his immediate ancestors, and the grandees of the empire, now called the Late Shah Jahan Album. Accurate portraits were required so that those present at important events could be included in historical paintings at the right age. Here the borders of the album pages contain portrait vignettes of people allied to or servants of the principal subjects, as can be seen in the portrait of Rao Chattar Sal of Bundi surrounded by fierce Rajput warriors (cat. 1q). Other portraits were of course done in lesser ateliers or by lower rank artists, since there seems to have been a ready market in album paintings (cat. 1s).

Shah Jahan's debilitating illness in 1657 precipitated a fratricidal war from which his third son Aurangzeb emerged victorious. Aurangzeb (1658-1707) was an orthodox and pious Muslim under whom Mughal painting suffered a lingering decline. At first he seems to have continued the painting studio much as Shah Jahan had left it, since his early imperial portraits (cat. 1r) contain the same kind of symbolism as those of his father and eldest brother Dara Shikoh. In 1668 he banned much that was pleasurable, including the performance of music and dancing. Aurangzeb upset the delicate equilibrium between Hindus and Muslims, re-imposing the poll-tax (*jizya*) on Hindus that had been abolished by Akbar, and made bitter enemies in Rajasthan and in the Deccan, where the various Maratha clans were growing increasingly powerful. Although he never formally banned painting, he did abandon the formal recording of events in his reign and hence the practice of history painting that recorded these events suffered an irreversible decline. The many portraits that survive from his reign suggest that numerous artists found employment elsewhere on an *ad hoc* basis (cat. 1t).

*J. P. Losty*

## 1A A Man kneeling in a Landscape holding a Hawk on his gloved Hand

A leaf from a royal album with an ascription to 'Abd al-Samad, possibly the same album as in 1n and 1j

Mughal, Akbar period, 1560–80

Inscribed: *'amal-i Khvaja 'Abd al-Samad*

Reverse with calligraphic panels including those signed by 'Abdallah al-Husaini and Mir 'Ali

Border decoration with ascription to Manohar, Shah Jahan period, c. 1640

Brush drawing with colours and gold on paper, inscription of attribution to 'Abd al-Samad

at lower right partly rubbed, mounted with borders decorated with animals and birds

amongst trees and rocks, reverse with various panels containing couplets written in

*nasta'liq* script on illuminated floral grounds, borders from a royal Mughal album of Shah

Jahan with flowers in colours and gold on buff paper, numbered '97' in English in pencil

at upper left

Drawing: 18.2 × 8.3 cm

Album page: 39.2 × 24.4 cm

Calligraphy panel (verso): 29.0 × 15.4 cm

A stout falconer kneels in an open landscape holding a falcon on his upraised gloved hand.

He wears a long *jama* lightly tinted in ochre

over a lilac undershirt, a waist band knotted

round his ample form with its ends trailing on

the ground, and a red turban forming a pad on

his head secured by separated bands as was the

fashion in the early Akbari period. He gazes

upwards at the falcon with a look of amusement.

His face is carefully drawn with its wispy hair

and moustache, feathery eyebrows and crows-

feet. Behind him rises a rocky hillside with

gently rounded forms and protruding dead

trees, with Chinese clouds in the sky.

The ascription of the main drawing to 'Abd

al-Samad has been smudged but looks as if it is

from the same hand as the same inscription on

the drawing in the Bodleian Library of the

arrest of Shah Abu'l Ma'ali by Tolaq Khan Quchi

(Topsfield 2008, no. 3), which represents an

event of 1556. There are many resemblances

between the figural drawings in the two works.

These include the thin underdrawing, the pale

washes of colour, the rapid broad strokes

outlining the figures' bodies, the modelling or

lack of it on the figures' *jamas*, waist-sashes and

their knots, the sinuous line of the draperies as

they meet the ground, and the artist's

inadequate representation of hands (overlong

boneless fingers are a feature of both drawings).

The closest resemblance is between the

rendition of our falconer's face and that of the

arresting officer Tolaq Khan Quchi, with the

same feathery eyebrows, wisps of hair in

sideburns and moustache, and crows-feet

radiating from the eyes.

'Abd al-Samad is one of the most elusive of

Mughal artists to pin down, but his work has

recently been thoroughly analyzed by Sheila

Canby (2011), who carefully distinguishes

between his early style in the Safavid manner

done for Humayun and the young Akbar and

the paintings of his old age when he was more

involved in administrative postings. His style

by then had changed considerably and has been

influenced by the work of the *Hamzanama*

artists who were making most progress

towards a more naturalistic style. Despite these

general resemblances, Sheila Canby advises

that although the background rocks have a

general similarity to the rocks in the second

outcropping from the left in 'Princes of the

House of Timur' (Canby 2011, fig. 5), they have

very little in common with 'Abd al-Samad's

other early Mughal works, besides being less

carefully depicted. His rocks typically jut

upwards, and when there are ones that go

sideways, they are always in combination with

upward-jutting ones. Nor have Chinese clouds

been found in any of his works. It seems safest

to attribute the work to a follower of 'Abd al-

Samad rather than to the master himself.

This leaf is from one of the royal albums

compiled for Emperor Shah Jahan in the 1630s

and 1640s. The borders are distinctive in that on

one side they bear scenes of animals and birds

(and in other cases humans), while on the other

side is the purely floral decoration seen on

many of the album leaves of this period made

for Shah Jahan. The attribution to Manohar

written in gold below the brown deer at lower

centre of the border on the recto must be taken

with caution since a similar page from the same

album has a border attribution to Mansur

(Sotheby's 10th July 1973, lot 34). There is no

evidence for either artist working as late as the

date of these album page decorations.

The calligraphy on the reverse is arranged in

several panels. In the central panel are four

lines in praise of a certain Sayyid Muhammad

ibn Sayyid Kamal al-Din ibn Sayyid

Muhammad. On either side of this is text that

appears to be from the introduction to the

Arabic 'Mirror for Princes', Sulwan al-Muta', by

the Sicilian thinker Ibn Zafar al-Saqali (d. 1170

or 1172). Beneath this on the left is a pious

saying in Persian, signed *al-faqir 'abdallah al-*

*husayni* 'the poor 'Abdallah al-Husayni'. There

is a scribe with the name 'Abdallah al-Husayni

who is recorded as a calligrapher of the court of

Shah Jahan. His recorded works are all album

pages and only one has a date 1063/1652–3

(Bayani 1966–69, vol. 2, pp. 354–5). To the right

of this are two couplets, which appear to be

unfinished, signed below, *faqir mir 'ali*: 'the

poor Mir 'Ali'. This is one of the ways in which

the famous Herati calligrapher Mir 'Ali Harawi

signed his work. His work was eagerly collected

by the Mughal emperors and placed in their

albums. He was allegedly one of the scribes

taken by the Uzbek Khan 'Ubaydallah to

Bukhara after his capture of Herat in 1526 (ibid.,

vol. 2, pp. 493–516). Below this are four lines of

Persian prose.

### PROVENANCE

Formerly in the Ardeshir Collection

Sotheby's, London, 10th July 1973, lot 38



Actual size



**1B A Prince riding in a Hunting Party meets a Cowherd in a rocky Landscape**

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1580–85

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, two lines of text in *nasta'liq* script in a panel at top, reverse with a Mughal seal impression dated 1084/1673, numbered in pencil in English 'No. 7877', 'No.181', paper reinforced on reverse

Painting: 21.7 × 12.1 cm

In this seriously abraded but obviously early Akbari painting, a young cowherd dressed only in a loincloth and a shawl confronts a group of horsemen out hunting led by a prince. The text inscribed reads: 'A peasant boy who was watching over the fields came into his sight. Out of kindness or lofty sympathy he called him into his presence and asked him his name, the name of his father, and from where he came....' The horses roll their eyes at seeing the cowherd, while the two cows seem equally surprised by the encounter. One of the cows turns her head to stare at the milking pail that the cowherd has dropped. Unusually for this period, an open foreground has allowed the artist to experiment with receding planes composed of short dashes of colour and cross-hatching, a technique as Welch pointed out (1963, p. 223) borrowed from European engraving. The scene is closed by the vertically striated upturned rocks usual for the 1580s. Three small and one larger tree are rendered naturalistically with impressionistic blots of colour for the leaves.

Welch believed the leaf to come from the manuscript of the *Tutinama* or 'Tales of a Parrot' produced in Akbar's studio around 1580, the largest part of which is now in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Leach 1995, pp. 21–73). While the size of the folio is slightly smaller than those in Dublin, this may be owing to trimming (the dispersed pages of the *Tutinama* came from a dealer in Paris different to the one handling the Beatty manuscript according to Leach 1995, p. 22). The script and spacing of letters seem slightly different, but

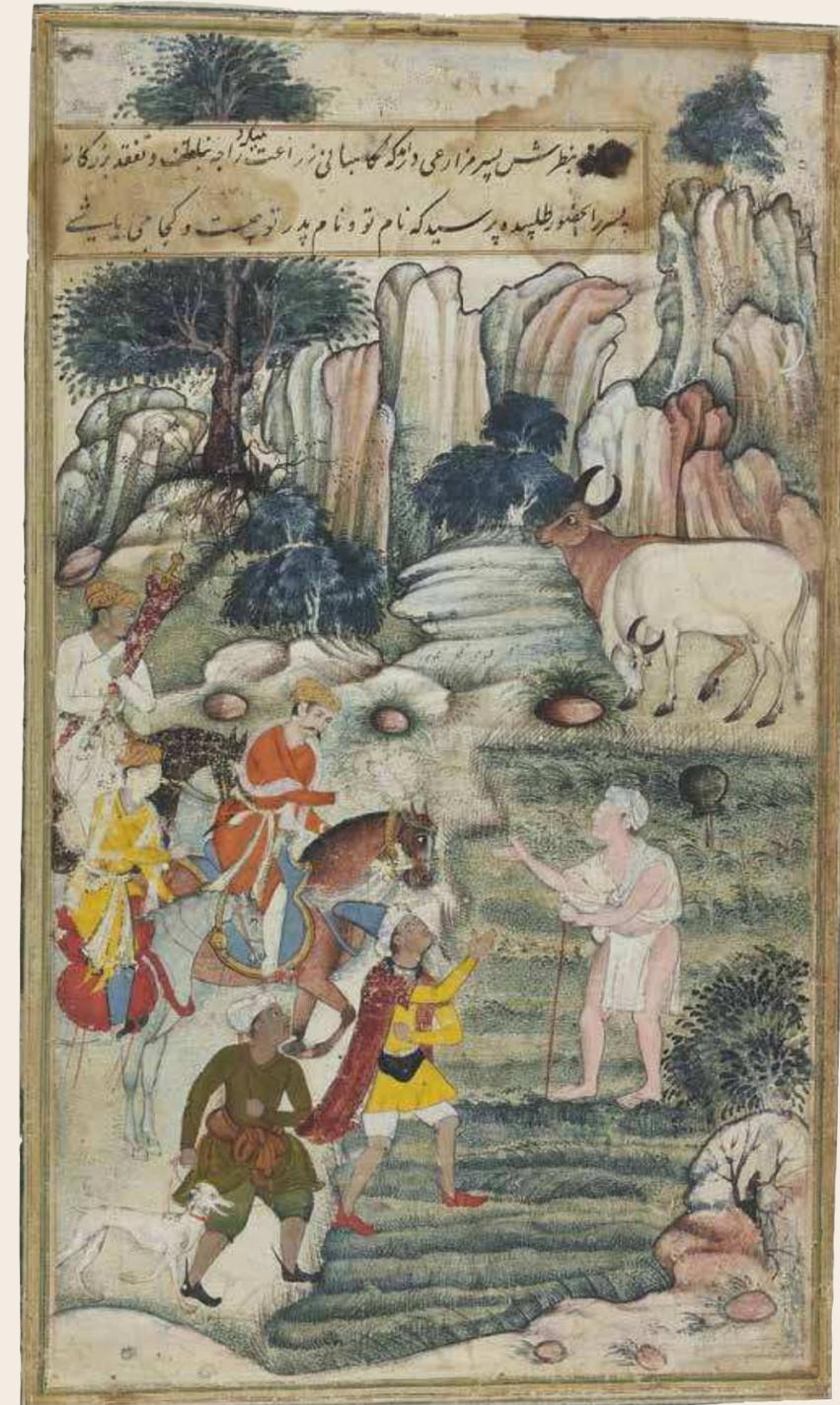
the marginal rulings with an inner band of green are decidedly different from those in Dublin which have a thinner ruling of red. Leach in her listing of known dispersed pages from the manuscript does not include this one.

There are nonetheless considerable resemblances in style between this page and those of the Dublin *Tutinama*. The landscape background of rocks is the same in both and occasionally even the interesting treatment of the foreground landscape is seen in the Beatty manuscript (e.g. Leach 1995, no. 1.24, p. 38, the lower section). While men in the *Tutinama* mostly wear the early Akbari turban which is more like a pad on top of the head secured by separately depicted bands, the men in our painting wear a larger type of turban without the separate bands, but this too is also found occasionally in the *Tutinama* (e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 33, 35).

Our prince's curious moustache, straight and angled at 45 degrees, is also found there occasionally (*ibid.*, pp. 39, 40). On the other hand, trees in the *Tutinama* are normally highly stylised with leaves separately painted against a solid background colour, while only rarely is there an attempt to render the foliage more impressionistically as here. All in all, our page seems slightly later than the *Tutinama* in general.

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Stuart Cary Welch (Welch 1963, pl. 2, fig. 3)  
Sotheby's, London, 12th December 1972, lot 18



Actual size

IC, 1D **An Album Leaf with two important Mughal Miniatures**

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1580–1600, with attributions in the hand of the emperor Jahangir  
Mounted with Persian borders attributable to Muhammad Baqir, Iran, mid-18th century

IC  
RECTO **A Warrior in a Landscape holding a Bow and Arrow, ascribed in Emperor Jahangir's Hand to the Artist Mukund**

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1580-90  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, inscribed in Jahangir's hand in black at top (partly trimmed but legible) *kamandar (?) bovad (?) kar-e mukund* ('This archer is the work of Mukund'), laid down on an 18th century Persian album page with gold-sprinkled blue borders, numbered in blue border in Persian '12'  
Painting: 14.8 × 92 cm  
Album page: 33.2 × 20.7 cm

This painting is from an album of Mughal miniatures compiled in Iran in the 18th century, with borders attributable to Muhammad Baqir. The majority of the album was sold at Hotel Drouot, Paris, 23rd June 1982, but this and at least one other leaf (in the collection of the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Geneva, see Canby 1998, no. 110) had been previously extracted and sold privately in the early 1970s.

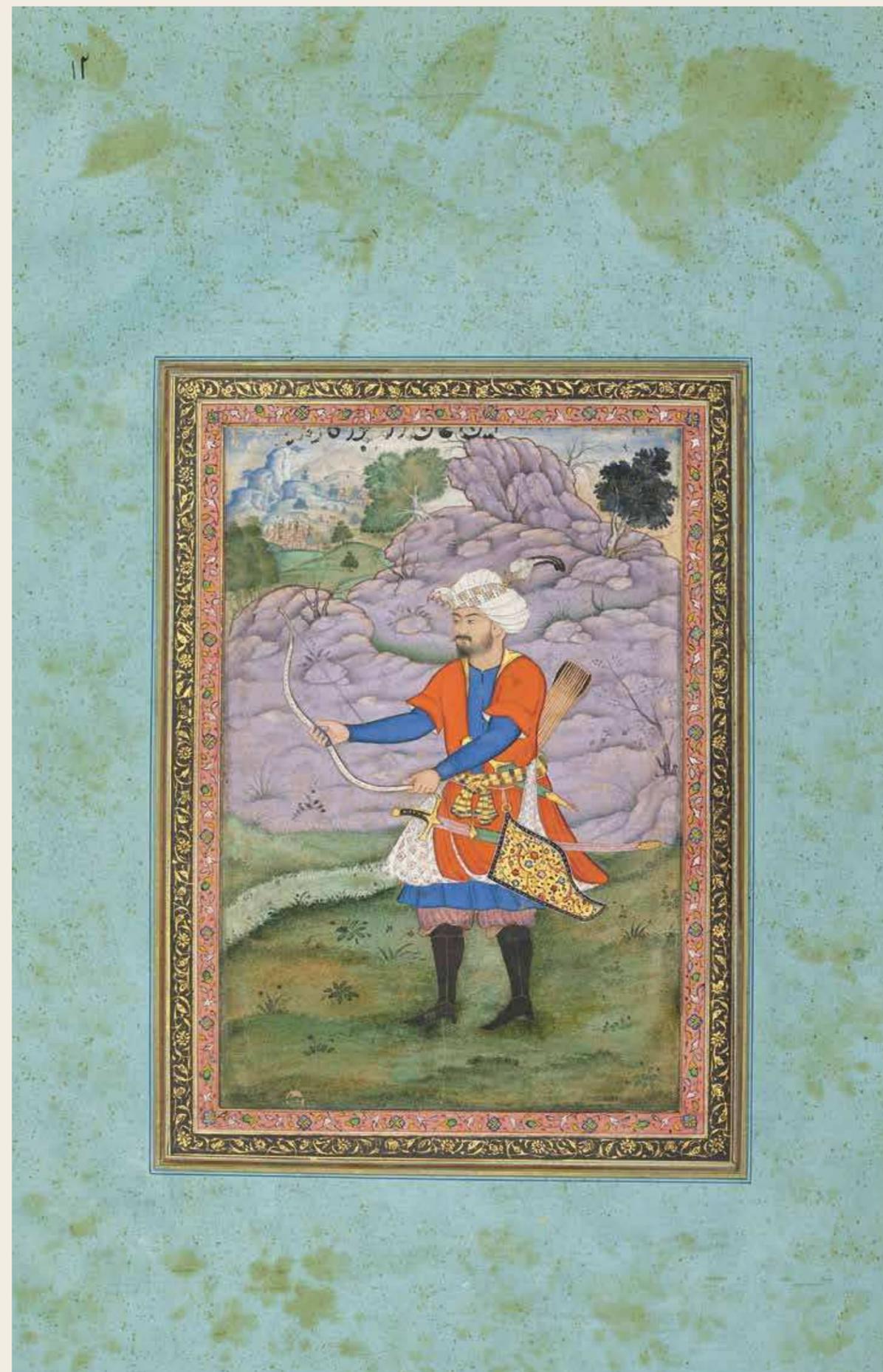
This album leaf contains two miniatures by court artists of Emperor Akbar, both bearing inscriptions of attribution in Jahangir's hand, mounted in an album page with fine borders decorated by the 18th century Persian artist Muhammad Baqir. It is likely that the two miniatures were part of the booty taken by the Iranian ruler Nadir Shah when he sacked Delhi in 1739 and carried off many treasures. Many of these Mughal miniatures were then mounted into Persian albums in the 18th century, the most famous of which is the St. Petersburg Album. This album, for which Muhammad Baqir was also responsible for the borders, would have been compiled at the same period as the current folio (see A. Ivanov in von Hapsburg 1996, pp. 20–32).

The only other published folio from this album (collection of the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Geneva, see Canby 1998, no. 110, pp. 148–149) has an almost identical border design on a pink ground, with a hazelnut branch at the top and flowers identified by Canby as sprays of eglantine on the sides and lower margins, and the same type of floral inner border bands. The Mughal miniatures on

that leaf are a pair of ducks, ascribed in Jahangir's hand to the artist Mansur (recto), and a rotund musician, ascribed in Jahangir's hand to the artist 'Ali (verso).

Perhaps intended for a portrait of Babur, Mukund's painting shows a turbaned warrior standing in a landscape holding a bow. He is heavily armed with a sword hanging from his waistband, a fearsome knife stuck through the latter, and an ornamental gilded leather quiver hanging by his side but with a proper quiver full of arrows on his back. This type of bulbous turban with a brocaded turban band and a large upright feather was normally thought of as Turkish, and was adopted by Babur as can be seen in some of the miniatures of the *Baburnama* (e.g. cat. 1f).

The artist Mukund was a prominent member of Akbar's royal atelier. He was listed seventh out of seventeen royal artists praised in Abu'l Fazl's list of Akbari artists in his *A'in-i Akbari*. He is fairly traditional in style and never pushed the boundaries of Mughal naturalism. He was active from the early 1580s until the end of Akbar's reign in 1605 and was a prolific artist. He contributed to most of the major imperial manuscripts of the later period of the reign.



Miniature actual size

## St Christopher carrying the Christ Child, ascribed in Emperor Jahangir's Hand to the Artist Miskina

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1600

Verso: thin pigments on paper, inscribed in Jahangir's hand in black ink at top: *mar-d-e-pir ast kar-e miskina* 'The old man is the work of Miskina', laid down on an 18th century Persian album page with gold-sprinkled pink borders decorated with flowers and a hazelnut branch

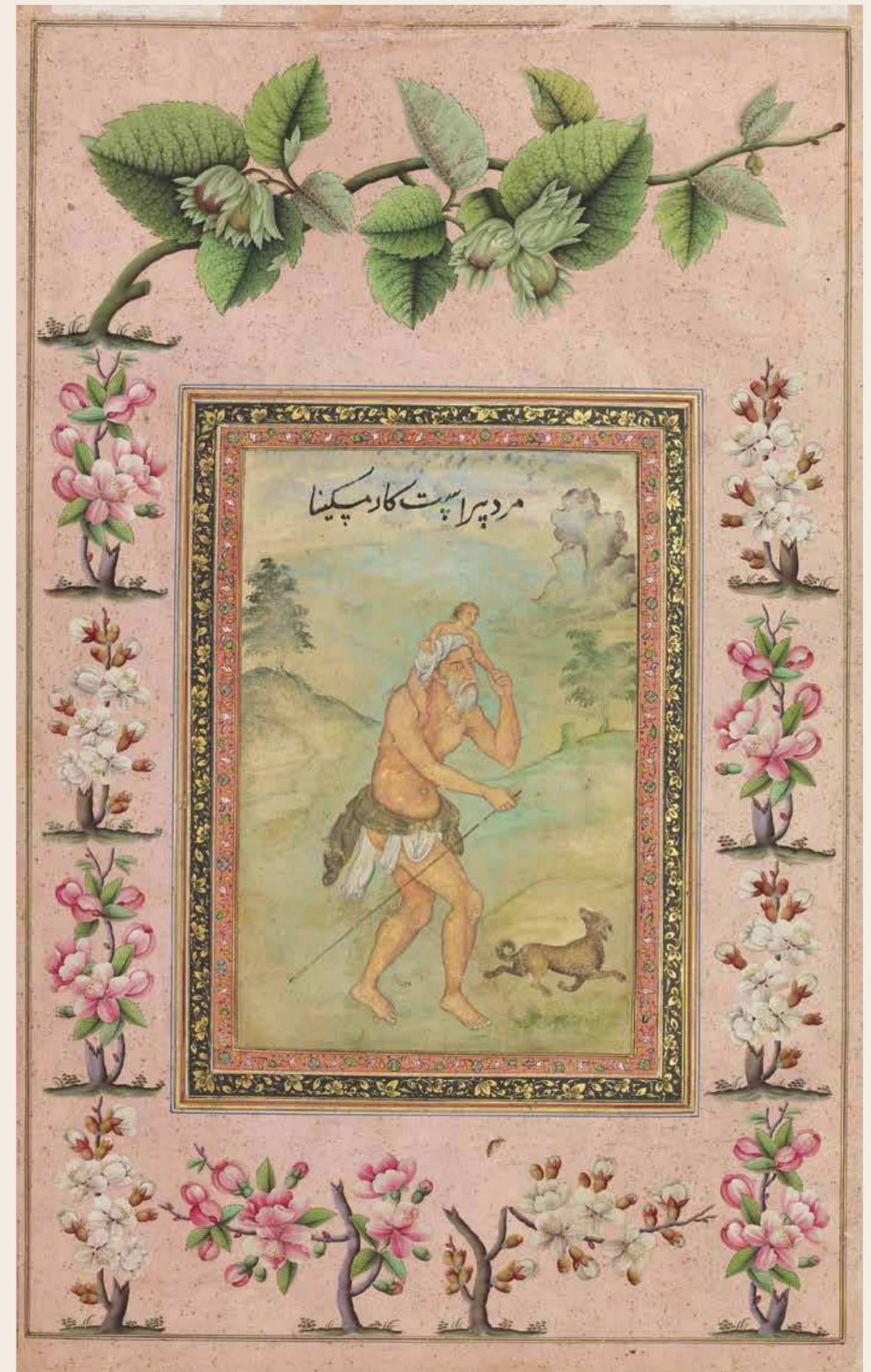
Painting: 14.4 × 91 cm

Album page: 33.2 × 20.7 cm

In Miskina's painting, an elderly man with a white beard and dressed only in a loincloth with his cloak wrapped around his waist strides through a landscape aided by his staff and with a child balanced on his shoulders. The child is naked and clings on with one hand to the old man's upraised hand and with the other to his head. A dog bounds cheerfully along beside them. That this composition is based on a print of St Christopher carrying the Christ Child hardly needs stressing. This was one of the most famous images in Christian iconography and reproduced many times in 16th century prints.

The artist Miskina was one of the leading artists of Akbar's royal atelier and was one of the three most popular for designing miniatures. He contributed to the majority of imperial manuscripts of Akbar's reign and was one of the three artists responsible mostly for composition in the collaborative later manuscripts. Miskina has not been thought hitherto to have been much interested in depicting the nude, which he left more to his elders in the studio such as Basavan and Keshav Das. In fact the sympathetic handling of this subject here and the overall pale tonality recall the study of a Jain monk in the Cleveland Museum (Leach 1986, no. 17; Crill and Jariwala 2010, no. 12) which is of the same dimensions and likewise has (or had before it was mostly erased) an ascription to Basavan in Jahangir's writing. From the matching sympathetic compositions and transparent tonalities with landscapes and trees gently depicted in the background, they might have been paired

originally in one of Jahangir's albums. But whereas Basavan's monk has his feet firmly planted as he walks along, Miskina's do not seem to be connected to the ground. Of course such prints often show St Christopher either in a stream or striding across it, which Miskina may not have realised from a monochrome print. Miskina's handling of naked flesh seems very much modelled on that of the elder artist, as can be seen when comparing the soft roll of the belly over the loincloth in both paintings. Miskina's bouncing dog, an original touch, is masterful and shows yet again his natural sympathy with animals, as can be seen in his many compositions with animals as the protagonists (e.g. Brand 2011, figs. 5, 11–13).



**1E Krishna defeats the thousand-armed Demon Bana**

Illustration from a royal manuscript of the *Harivamsa* made for Emperor Akbar

Mughal, Akbar period, 1585–90

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, verso with seventeen lines of Persian text in *nasta'liq* script with interlinear gilt, laid down within later margins from late 18th century Lucknow decorated on recto with floral decoration in red, blue and gold and on verso with gold sprinkling

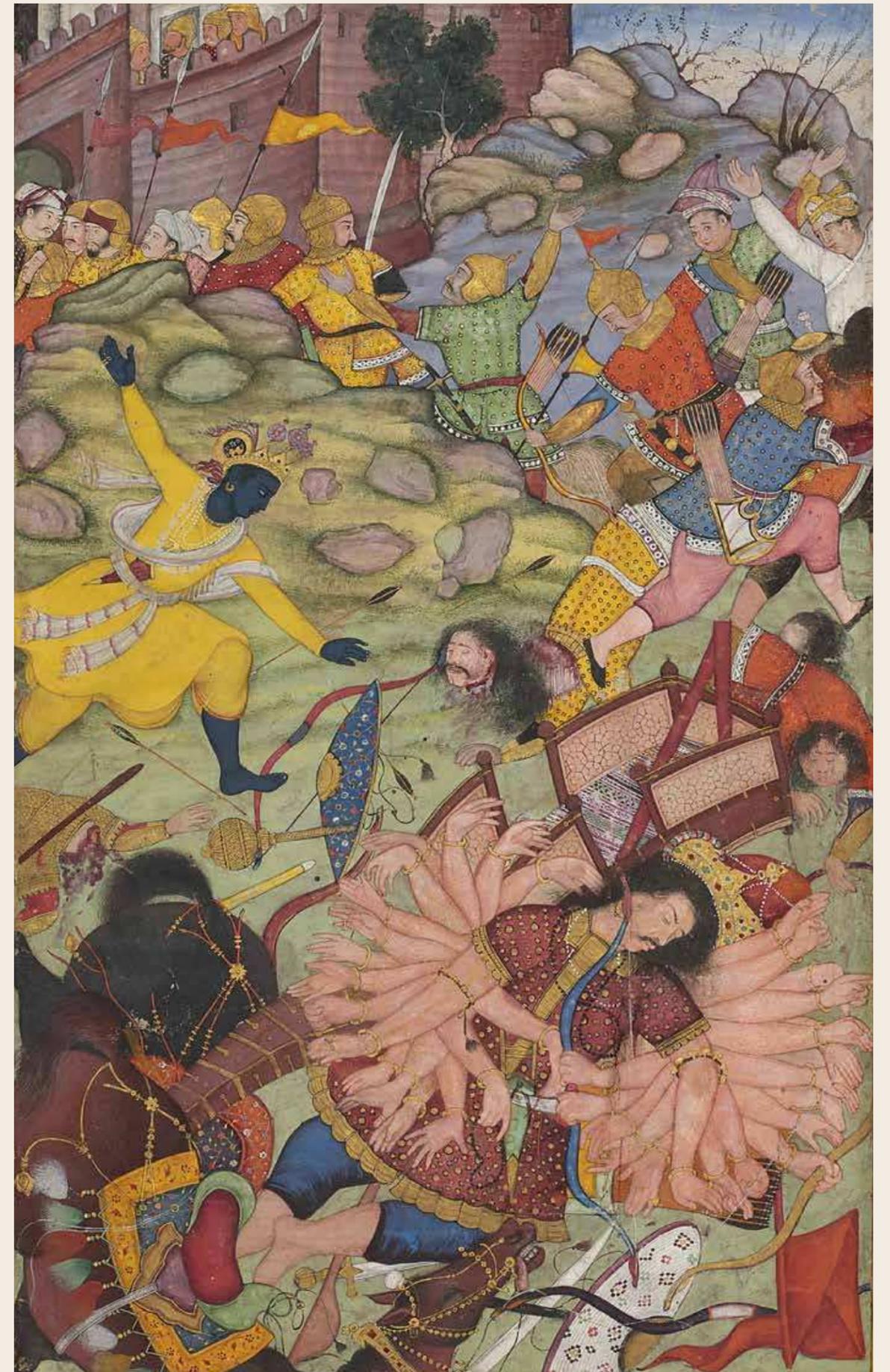
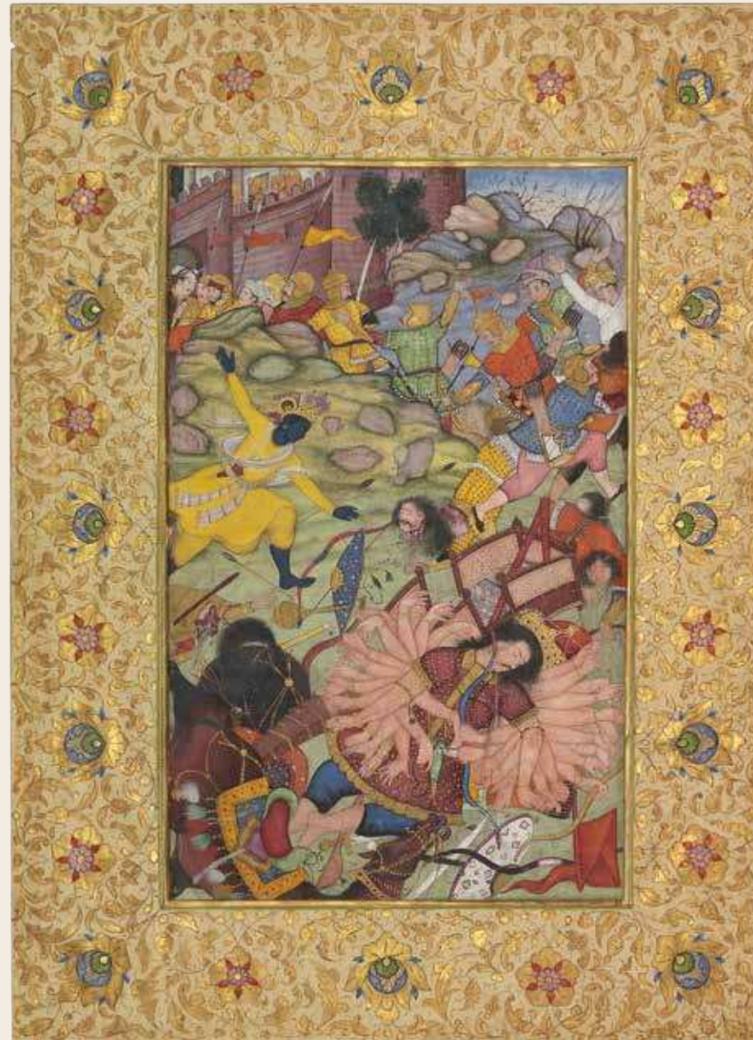
Painting: 28.7 × 17.8 cm

Album page: 41 × 29.5 cm

Text area (verso): 22.1 × 12.1 cm

The *Harivamsa* or 'Genealogy of Hari' (an appellation of Vishnu) is a work concerning the history and genealogy of Vishnu's avatar Krishna, son of Vasudeva. It is an appendix to the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*, which Akbar had ordered translated in 1582/83 under the superintendence of Naqib Khan and others. This was finished in 1584, and then the translation of the *Harivamsa* was taken up as a separate project by Maulana Sheri. It was presumably finished by the time of his death in 1586. Akbar's interest in commissioning the translation and illustration of Hindu works is well attested. Amongst his most famous artistic commissions were lavishly illustrated copies of the *Razmnama* (*Mahabharata*) and the *Ramayana*, the latter finished by 1588, and the *Harivamsa*. The two former works remain sequestered in the royal Jaipur collections, so that the dispersed version of the *Harivamsa* is the only such manuscript available for study demonstrating the exceptional response of Akbar's greatest artists to this quintessential Hindu text. The theme of the text, dealing as it does with the adventures and divine power of Vishnu and his avatars Krishna and his descendants, provides many dramatic episodes that lend themselves to equally dramatic illustrations. Many of the extant miniatures have a pictorial intensity matched by few other Mughal manuscript paintings of the period.

Only about thirty miniatures from this manuscript are known to survive, and pictorially perhaps the finest group (six in total) is in the Victoria and Albert Museum,



Actual size

London (see Skelton 1970 and Stronge 2002, pls. 62–64). The text leaves and six original miniatures are in the State Museum, Lucknow, and other miniatures are presently located as follows: Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Freer Gallery of Art, Washington; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Diego Museum of Art; Virginia Museum of Fine Art, Richmond; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Bharat Kala Bhavan, Benares; and private collections. For a complete list of known pages and their subjects, see Beach 2012, p. 61.

The text on the reverse concerns the story of Aniruddha, Krishna's grandson, and Usha the daughter of the thousand-armed demon king Bana, as recounted in the *Harivamsa*, Visnuparva; chapters 116–28. The two had fallen in love by dreaming of each other. Aniruddha is magically transported to Usha's chambers and there the two were married by the *gandharva* rite (that of mutual consent). When Bana discovered this, he was furious and sent armies of demons against Aniruddha who was able to defeat them all until Bana himself appeared to do battle and rendered Aniruddha powerless by binding him in serpentine spells. Krishna still in his city of Dvarka was alerted to his grandson's disappearance and had Garuda transport him to Bana's city of Sonitapura. Krishna met Bana in a great battle and cut off Bana's thousand arms with his *cakra* (discus). He spared the life of the demon, who subsequently received boons from Siva. Aniruddha was released from the spell and returned to Dvarka with Usha.

Only recently have scholars begun to study the Persian texts of these translations from the Sanskrit in order to determine how exactly such works were altered in translation and the effects of the input of Mughal susceptibilities (for example, see Truschke 2011 on the *Razmnama*). Here the Sanskrit text has been altered, since there Krishna cuts off Bana's arms but leaves him alive, whereas here he seems to have delivered a death blow, although it is by no means clear what weapon Krishna has utilised. Headless demons litter the middle ground while beyond Bana's army flee for protection into the city. All their faces are carefully individualised. The intensity of the lower half of the composition, with a blue skinned, furious Krishna attacking from the left and the multi-armed giant demon Bana falling from his chariot, provides a composition as dramatic and powerful as anything in the Mughal artistic milieu. Noteworthy are the remarkable unconscious face of the demon, his crown askew and his hair cascading freely, his weapons dropping from his myriad arms; the enraged figure of Krishna as he advances his arms outstretched to finish off his prey; and the horses, upside down and terrified, after the demon is thrown from the chariot.

PROVENANCE

Collection of Stuart Cary Welch  
Sotheby's, London, 12th December 1972, lot 22





**1F, 1G** Two Illustrations from a Royal Manuscript of the *Baburnama*

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1589–90

**1F** Babur bidding farewell to the Begams, who depart from Agra by Boat along the River Jumna

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, numbered 100 on prow of smaller boat, folio 493 of the original manuscript (numbered on one of the domes at top), mounted on an album page with Bukhara borders of c. 1600 of cream paper decorated with gold floral motifs and inset cartouches of coloured paper

Painting: 26.3 × 14.7 cm

Album page: 43.2 × 28.5 cm

Babur's Memoirs are one of the greatest and most interesting of pre-modern autobiographical books. He records in detail not only the events of his own tumultuous life, but also his reactions to India on first arriving in that fabled land in 1526, and to its people, flora and fauna. It was written in Turki, the ancestral language of the Mughals, and his grandson Akbar ordered that it be translated into Persian for the better comprehension of his court. The supervision of the work was entrusted to Akbar's friend Mirza 'Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan, who presented the finished translation to Akbar in November 1589. Court artists immediately set about producing an illustrated version. This manuscript was broken up for sale in 1913, but twenty folios are in the V&A (Stronge 2002, pp. 86–91). Altogether about 100 illustrated folios are known, now widely dispersed. At least three additional fully illustrated manuscripts based on this first version were produced within the next ten years for circulation to Akbar's family and principal nobles. The British Library's manuscript is datable to the early 1590s stylistically and presently has 143 miniatures, of which seventy are full page and the remainder are two or more illustrations to a page of the flora and fauna of India. A third incomplete copy, mostly lacking text, is divided between the Moscow State Museum of Eastern Cultures and the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, while a fourth almost complete copy in the National Museum, New Delhi, is dated 1597–8. The manuscripts follow broadly the same pictorial cycle but the compositions differ, although all three later versions owe something to the c. 1589 manuscript.

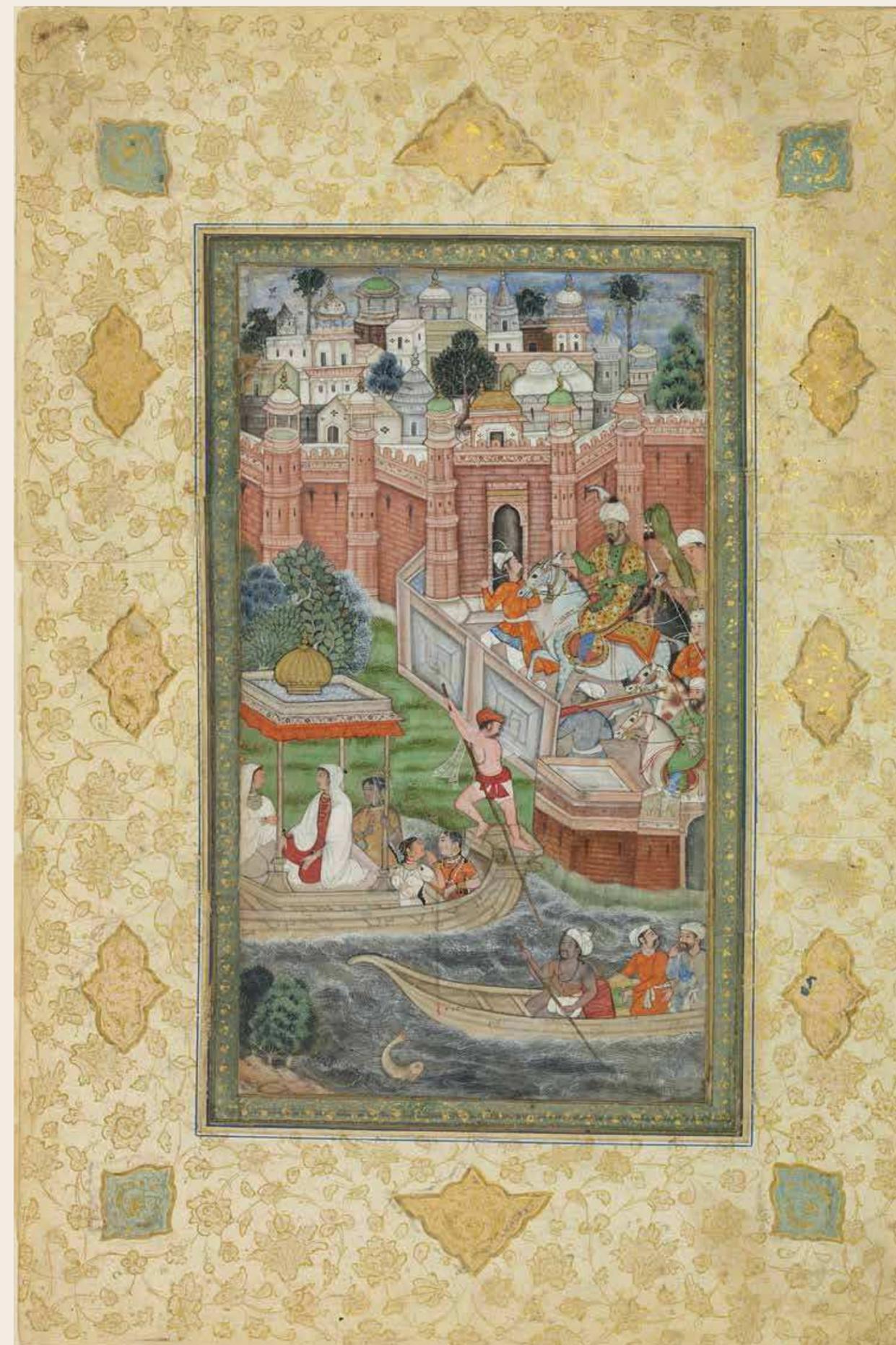
The manuscript was dispersed in 1913 and leaves or groups of leaves are now presently located in the following collections: British Museum, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Musée Guimet, Paris; Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Rhode Island School of Design; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto.

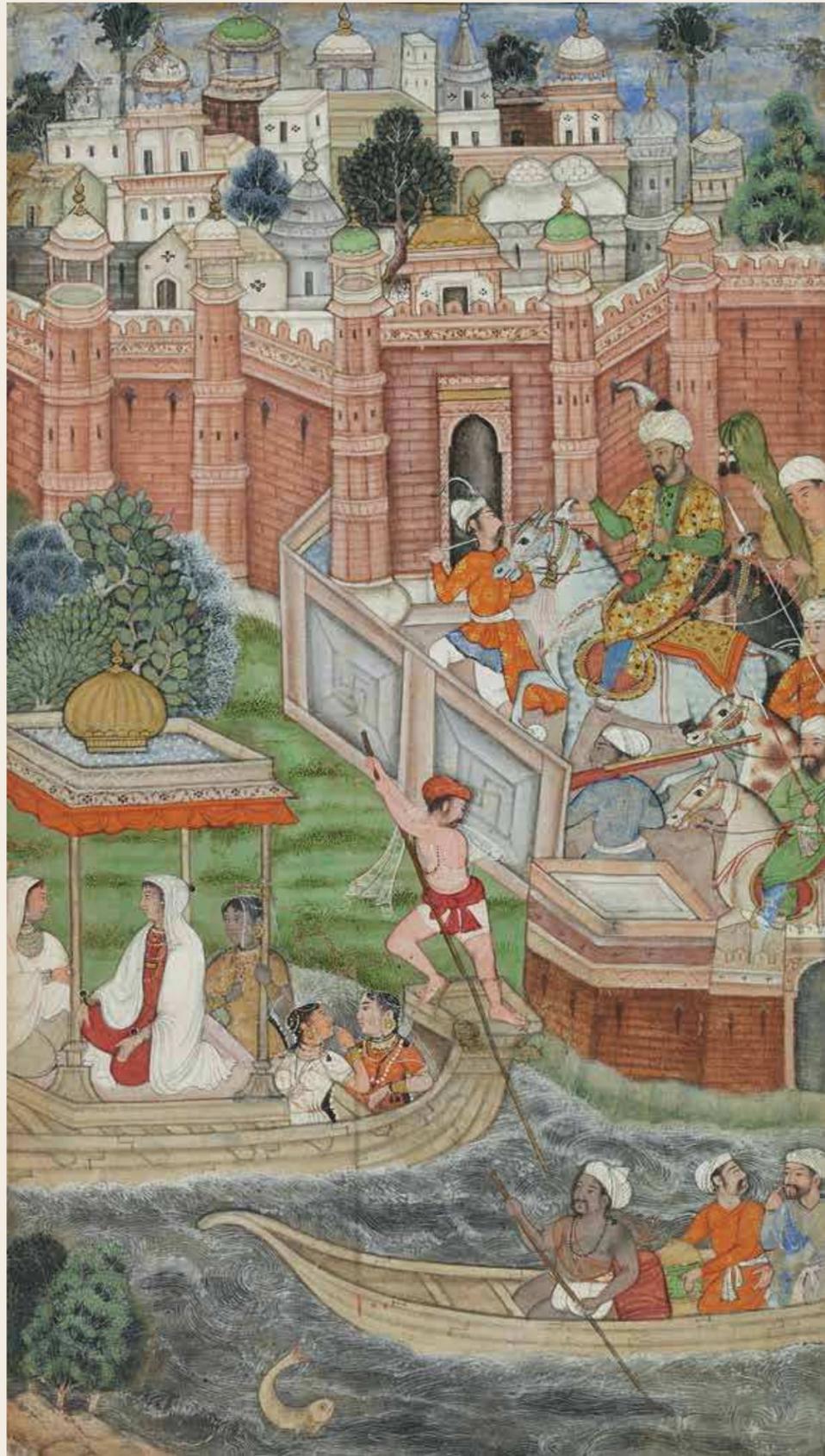
Despite the lack of text, the surviving folio number of 493 enables this leaf to be slotted into its correct place in the dispersed manuscript. This episode comes just before Babur set out from Agra on his visit to Gwalior. Babur is here bidding farewell to his aunts Fakhrijahan Begum and Khadija Sultan Begum who are depicted setting out for Kabul in boats on 20 September 1528 (Babur 2002, p. 412). They had been staying with him since the previous November. In fact Khadija Sultan Begum did not leave on that occasion and was still in Agra when more of Babur's female relatives arrived in October 1528 (ibid., p. 418). The two ladies are depicted seated in their boat with Hindu ladies accompanying them as their boatman stoutly plies his long pole to push them away from the bank. Babur has ridden out from Agra dressed in a gold brocade coat over his *jama* and raises his hand in farewell. Behind the city walls of Agra are depicted as Babur's grandson Akbar rebuilt them with an involved cityscape of domes, towers and spires. The river is depicted as a rushing body of water (perhaps suggestive of the fact that this event took place just after the

monsoon) with an animated fish leaping in the foreground.

**PROVENANCE**

H. Monif Collection, New York, c. 1940  
Collection of Stuart Cary Welch (Welch 1959, fig. 3)  
Sotheby's, London, 12th December 1972, lot 24





Actual size



**1G Babur leading his Army for an Attack on the Hazaras**  
Second illustration from a Royal manuscript of the c. 1589–90 *Baburnama*

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, two separate lines of *nasta'liq* text within picture area  
Mounted with borders from a royal manuscript of the Farhang-i Jahangiri, Mughal, Jahangir period, c. 1608–1623  
Painting: 24.7 × 14.4 cm  
Page: 34.3 × 22.5 cm

This scene shows Babur leading his men to attack the recalcitrant Hazaras in the region of Chitu in modern-day Afghanistan. This occurred just after he captured Kabul in 1504 (see Babur 2002, pp. 170–171). The lower text panel mentions Jahangir Mirza, who was Babur's younger brother and who appears numerous times in the *Baburnama*, often in a military context, but who had just been given Ghazni to govern. Babur and his men are dressed for battle with armour under their surcoats, helmets and shields. The horses too wear their horse-armour. They appear to be passing through a rocky defile guarded by a high fortress.

The miniature has been mounted within borders from the Farhang-i Jahangiri, a royal dictionary completed for the emperor Jahangir in 1608–9 but not presented to him until 1623. The gold-decorated borders are distinctive and were often excised from their text panels and re-used by the early 20th century dealer Demotte as decorative borders for other, unrelated Mughal miniatures. Many such ensembles are known and published, most famously a large number of the dispersed miniatures from the 1602–03 *Akbarnama* in the British Library and Chester Beatty Library. See Leach 1995, pp. 321–24 for a discussion of the dating of the dictionary.

PROVENANCE  
Demotte, Paris, early 20th century



Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1590

These two miniatures are from a fine, large-scale manuscript produced for the emperor Akbar in the 1590s. Both miniatures were formerly in the Ardeshir Collection and were sold at Sotheby's in London in July 1973, along with a third illustration from the same manuscript which depicted a princely figure clinging to the feet of a giant Simurgh above a verdant landscape of an island surrounded by the sea. This latter work was in the collection of the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, Geneva (Goswamy and Fischer 1987, no.21; Welch and Welch 1982, no.57).

Identifying the subjects of these miniatures, and therefore the original text for which they were painted, is difficult. Not only is there no accompanying text within the picture area, but the miniatures have been extracted from their original settings and mounted in a royal album of the Shah Jahan period, with fine but unrelated calligraphy on the versos. The general context of the paintings clearly relates to stories and legends, rather than formal history, since two of the scenes (the youth rescued by the angels and the Simurgh scene) are obviously legendary in content. The principal character in all three illustrations appears to be the same princely youth, and this would seem to indicate that the texts concerned the adventures of a single character.

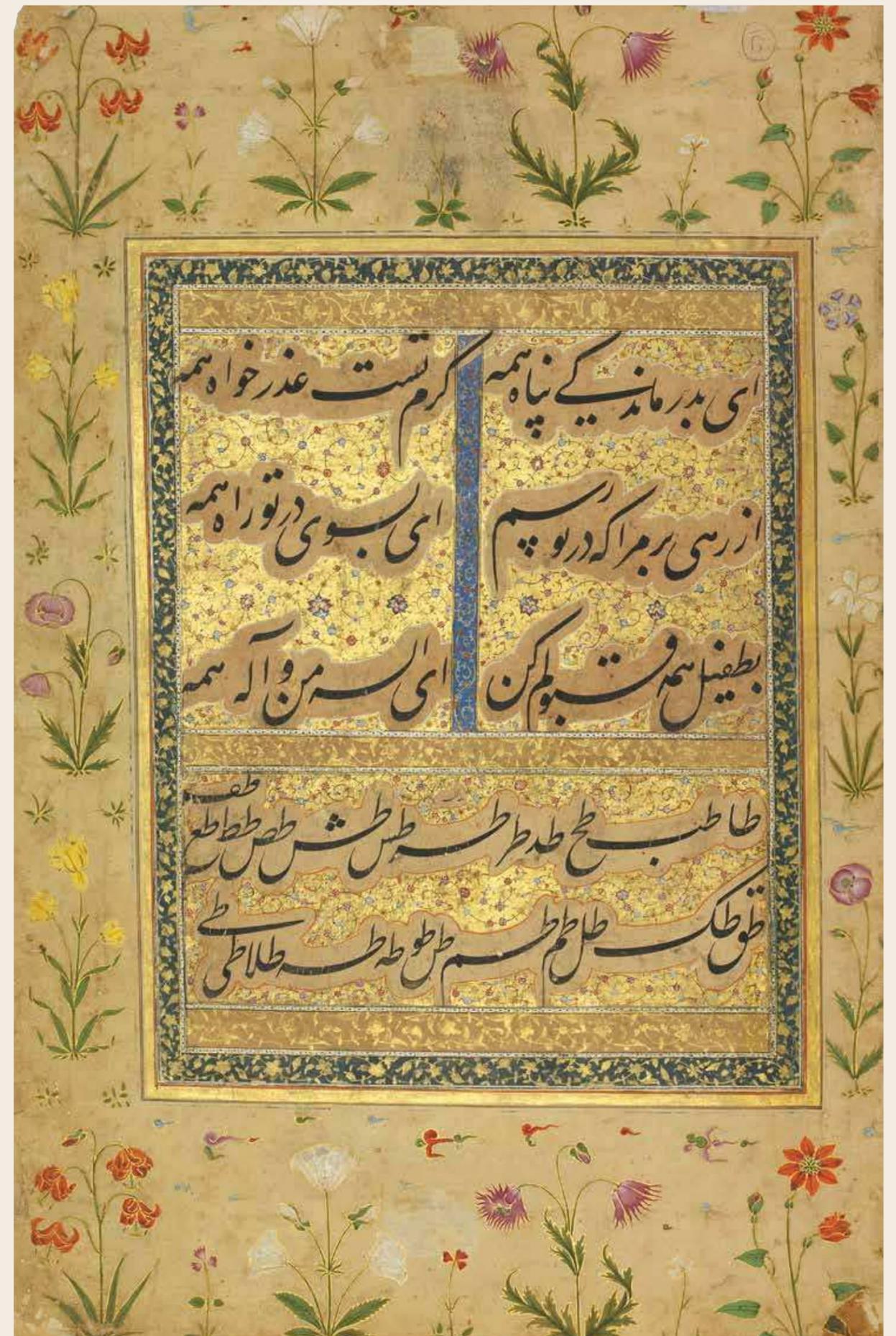
In the auction catalogue of 1973 it was suggested that a text such as the *Sindbadnama* was the original manuscript from which these miniatures come, but in 1987 Goswamy and Fischer suggested Nizami's *Haft Paikar*, since it contains at least one episode where a prince is

rescued from a tall tower by a Simurgh as exemplified in Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan's miniature. There are, however, major discrepancies between that painting and the story told by the Indian princess in Nizami's version, as witnessed by Dharm Das's majestic illustration of the story in Akbar's *Khamsa* of Nizami of 1593–95 (Brend 1995, fig. 24; Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 17).

Little has been published about the *Sindbadnama* or story of Sindbad, which exists in several versions in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. In all these versions Sindbad is a wise minister, not a sea adventurer as in western versions, and takes upon himself the saving of a prince from execution by his father (after a false charge of attempted seduction by his father's concubine) by relating over seven days (together with other ministers) various stories about the untruthfulness of women. Günsel Renda has published a Turkish version of the story (2004) and helpfully listed the subjects of all the miniatures in the most heavily illustrated manuscript of the tale (a Golconda manuscript c. 1575 now in the British Library), from which it is clear that these miniatures cannot come from a *Sindbadnama* either. Their context therefore remains for the moment mysterious.

PROVENANCE

Formerly in the Ardeshir Collection  
Sotheby's, London, 10th July 1973, lots 15 and 16



cat. 1h recto

**1H A Princely Youth with his Hands bound is rescued from a Well by a Band of Angels**

Illustration from a Royal manuscript, with an ascription to the artist Basavan

Mughal, Akbar period c. 1590

Border decoration of animals and birds (recto) and flowers (verso),

Shah Jahan period, c. 1640

Reverse with finely illuminated page of *nasta'liq* calligraphy including a prayer in Persian and a calligraphic exercise beneath

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted on a Shah Jahan period album leaf with borders finely painted with birds fluttering amidst gold vegetation and a scene of ducks, herons and egrets in a reedy stream (lower border); ascription to Basavan on inner lower border in black

Painting: 30.6 × 18.9 cm

Album page: 39.3 × 25.4 cm

Calligraphy panel (verso): 21.8 × 16.5 cm

A young man, his hands in wooden stocks with a chain attaching it to the fetters round his ankles, has been rescued from a well by angels. Two angels walk on either side of him to guide him towards the chief angel who reaches out a hand to him. Other angels are all around. Some in front of him attend on the chief angel, others behind him would seem to have been the ones who rescued him from the well towards which one is gesturing, while another group of angels walk by the river and talk and gesture animatedly among themselves. A foaming river runs along the bottom of the picture with sprightly fish, a turtle and a fearsome crocodile, while a screen of trees divides the foreground from the background rocks and a town with an open gate.

Angels are among the most beautiful creations in Mughal painting. Some of their iconography is derived from earlier Persian painting such as their long gowns and short-sleeved over garment, their long looped and trailing cummerbunds and their dramatically coloured and angled wings. Mughal artists liked to play games with these elements, so that our chief angel here has two pairs of wings in tawny red and green and blue. A Europeanised angel in the Chester Beatty Library likewise has two pairs of wings (Leach 1995, p. 230). Two of our angels have feathered wings resembling those of eagles. They sport a variety of headgear, from crowned helmets to caps decorated with acanthus leaves. One is bareheaded and wears her hair in a top knot, while another has a spectacularly long braid all the way to her knees. Compared with relatively

sexless angels in Persian art, the Mughal artists depict them as definitely female.

The inner lower border of the miniature contains a very plausible attribution to Basavan. Another attribution to Basavan written in the same hand appears in the upper border of the Simurgh miniature in Sadruddin Aga Khan's collection. Basavan was the leading painter of Akbar's atelier after Dasvanth's suicide sometime before 1584 and according to Abu'l Fazl in the *A'in-i Akbari* 'in backgrounds, drawing of features, distribution of colours, portrait painting and several other branches, he is most excellent ...' In the present case the vibrancy of the colour scheme, the masterly composition, the animated and meaningful gestures and expressions, all suggest that this is a plausible attribution. The soft modelling of the rocks and the composition of the landscape may be compared with Basavan's opening painting in the *Divan* of Amir Khusrau of 1597 (in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, see Seyller 2001, no. 1), while the depiction of the water and the fish recall Basavan's painting in the *Darabnama* of 1580–85 (British Library, see Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 2).



**II A Prince is entertained in the Women's Quarters of a House while the Men feast outside the Walls**

Illustration from a Royal manuscript

Mughal, Akbar period c. 1590

Border decoration of birds (recto) and flowers (verso),

Shah Jahan period, c. 1640

Reverse with finely illuminated page of various panels of *nasta'liq* calligraphy, one signed by 'Abdallah and another inscribed by Shah

Sayyid 'Abdallah and dated 1014/1604-5

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down on an album leaf with borders decorated with birds amidst gold vegetation; reverse with panels of calligraphy in *nasta'liq* script, background illuminated in colours and gold, borders decorated with flowers in colours and gold on a plain ground

Painting: 32.3 × 19.6 cm

Album page: 38.8 × 25.4 cm

Calligraphy panel (verso): 28.1 × 14.8 cm

The prince dressed in Mughal costume of an orange *jama* and a turban is kneeling on a floral carpet outside relatively humble buildings within what appears to be a fort on account of its walls with long narrow vertical arrow holes and cross-shaped eye-holes. It seems to be within the women's quarters of the fort, since the prince is being entertained by an older woman seated on the carpet beside him with food between them. Other women stand around talking and gesticulating, while a servant kneels by a further supply of food waving a hand-fan to keep the flies off. The women are mostly dressed in three-quarter length gowns with shawls over their heads. All are conspicuously dark-skinned. The men congregated outside the walls of the fort are seated on a striped durrie feasting on soup and kebabs while other men wait on them and bring more food. These men are dressed mostly in short front-opening gowns over *pajama* and wear tall hats of fur or else caps with broad bands tied round them. They too are all conspicuously dark, suggesting that the prince has landed up in the country of the Abyssinians or Habshis. The modest buildings and the beehive hut indicate a similar location, while the fort wall is definitely un-Indian. An alternative would be the land of the Zangis or cannibals where Darab lands up in the *Darabnama* and in Akbar's manuscript of 1580-85 (Titley 1977, no. 18) in which the Zangis are depicted as here, although there is no corresponding painting. In the *Darabnama*, Darab's beloved Tamrusiya has slaves and pages who are taken away by the Zangis and later eaten, which might explain our prince's apparent reluctance to eat the food in

front of him despite the admonishing figure of the chief lady.

On the reverse are calligraphic panels. The text at the top consists of lines from a poem of an unknown author. On either side are the details of the contents of a book, which, judging by the extract on no. 1 (cat. 1a) from the same album, is the *Sulwan al-Muta'* of Ibn Zafar al-Saqali. Below on the left are two Persian couplets, signed below *al-haqir 'abdullah ghafara lahu*: 'The lowly 'Abdullah, may [God] forgive him'. Beneath this is part of a story from the *Baharistan* of Jami, a collection of short stories completed in 1487. On the right is what appears to be part of a rough copy of an *'inayat-namah*, a grant or letter of exemption. It reads: *'enayat-nameh dar behtarin sa'at resid [jehat-e?] 'ezzat dastgaha as bara-ye salamti-ye zat-e malaki [va]sefat-e molazeman va ezdeyad-e daulat-e zaheri o bateni fateheh fateheh khand be- ejabat qarir bad v'al-do'a*: 'The grant arrived at the most propitious hour, the fatihah was read [for the sake of] the seat of glory and for the well-being of the angelic being and the attributes of the courtiers and for the increase of esoteric and exoteric good fortune. May it [i.e. the recitation] and the prayer be accepted.' Written in a chancery hand alongside this is a note: *'enayat-nameh-ye efadat va neqabat-panah amir sayyid 'abdallah dar vaqt-e moraja'at az dar al-khilafa agra be-lahur hasb al-hukm-e ashraf-e aqdas-e a'la fi shuhur sana 1014*: 'The grant of the refuge of usefulness and magisterial dignity, Amir Sayyid 'Abdallah [written] at the time of the return from Dar al-Khalifa Agra to Lahore at the most noble, most holy, most exalted

command in the months of the year 1014' (1605-6). As this note is written in a beautiful, professional hand it would be tempting to believe that the 'Abdullah mentioned was the royal calligrapher with the epithet Mushkin Qalam, but it is not stated anywhere that Mushkin Qalam was a Sayyid.





1J **Two Armies confront each other in a Mountainous Landscape**

Illustrated leaf from an unidentified historical or religious text  
Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1590–1595  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, text panel obscured with gold,  
mounted on a modern album page with narrow borders of coloured paper  
Painting: 30.1 × 18.0 cm

Two armies confront each other but have paused in the fighting. The ostensible focus of the picture is on two riderless horses in the centre between the two armies, where a young man is attempting to control them. The attention of many of the warriors, however, is focused on the two leaders of their armies who have retired to the background and gaze upwards, while some of the soldiers have also seen something in the sky. One of the leaders raises his hands apparently in supplication, but the other prepares his bow and arrow to shoot down something in the sky. It is unlikely that it is divine intervention that has caused the battle to cease temporarily if one of the men is prepared to shoot at it. It is a rare thing in Mughal painting for the real subject of the painting to have been removed so far into the background. A mountainous screen of rocks runs right across the top of the painting, beautifully handled, while three deer peer curiously at the goings on of the two leaders. The town in the top corner behind the mountains has pyramidal roofs on the pavilions on top of its towers, including one that is apparently thatched, perhaps meant to represent a town in the hill country below the Himalayas.

Although the subject matter of this miniature does not mark it out as illustrating a specific text, other leaves from the same manuscript depict scenes relating to Old Testament or early Islamic figures. The extant leaves from this manuscript in western collections are all from the collection of Hagop Kevorkian. All have the distinctive feature of the text panel being obscured by gold paint in a crude attempt to convert the illustrations into material more suitable for album paintings. Whereas it has been thought

that the manuscript might be a text such as the *Qisas al-Anbiya*, Linda Leach points out while discussing the two leaves in the Khalili collection (showing Moses and the Israelites and Abraham at the Ka'ba in Mecca) that it is unlikely that Akbar would have had such a Shia text illustrated (Leach 1998, nos. 6–7).

Robert Skelton writes, while discussing a painting from the same group now in the Gulshan Album in Tehran that he attributes to Farrukh Beg, that a better home for some of these paintings would be to illustrate a manuscript of Bal'ami's *Takmila wa Tarjuma-yi Tarikh-i Tabari*, a Persian translation of Tabari's history of the early years of Islam (Skelton 2011, p. 20). He believes that project was abandoned when Akbar decided to concentrate on a history to mark the millennium in 1591–92, the *Tarikh-i 'Alfi*. The finished paintings from the Tabari's series would then have been available for mounting up in albums, as happened with at least one such painting now in Jahangir's Gulshan Album. The other leaves from this group have been listed in Leach 1998, pp. 32–33.

Whereas our painting could be from such a text, other paintings thought to be from this series with the obscured text panels are obviously of a more secular nature. These include two paintings now in Swiss collections which are totally secular and set in Mughal India, including a husband taking revenge on an adulterous wife and her paramour (in the Rietberg Museum, Zurich, see Goswamy and Fischer 1987, no. 60) and a man committing suicide by hanging (in the Bernisches Historisches Museum, *ibid.*, no. 83). It seems very likely that paintings from more than one manuscript are

involved and that they are linked only by the attempt to convert them from manuscript illustrations into album paintings.

A leaf in the Richard Johnson Collection in the British Library has also been linked to this group (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 4; Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 6). The subject is Idris (the Biblical Enoch) showing men how to weave so that they no longer had to wear skins of animals. Its text panels are still intact, showing the script to be *nasta'liq* and the text to be prose, not poetry. The passage unfortunately has yet to be linked to any specific text.

PROVENANCE

Hagop Kevorkian Collection  
Sotheby's, London, 6th December 1967, lot 118  
Collection of H. Kraus, New York (Grube 1972, no. 230)



cat. 1h recto

**IK A Courtier beseeching an Enthroned Prince in a Palace Chamber**

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1595–1600  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted on a later album page with borders of coloured paper  
Painting: 17,5 × 11.6 cm  
Album page: 28,5 × 21.8 cm

A young prince, comfortably seated on his throne with one elbow resting on a large green cushion, is gesturing magnanimously with his other hand to a bearded petitioner who stands before him with his hands outstretched. Beside the prince stand a young *chowrie* bearer and another figure with the prince's wrapped up weapons. This side of the miniature has unfortunately been trimmed and most of the latter figure and of another man kneeling on a rug in front of the dais have disappeared. The scene is set within a small chamber with a tiled dado and a brilliant carpet. Above is a small pavilion on the roof on which struts a magnificent peacock.

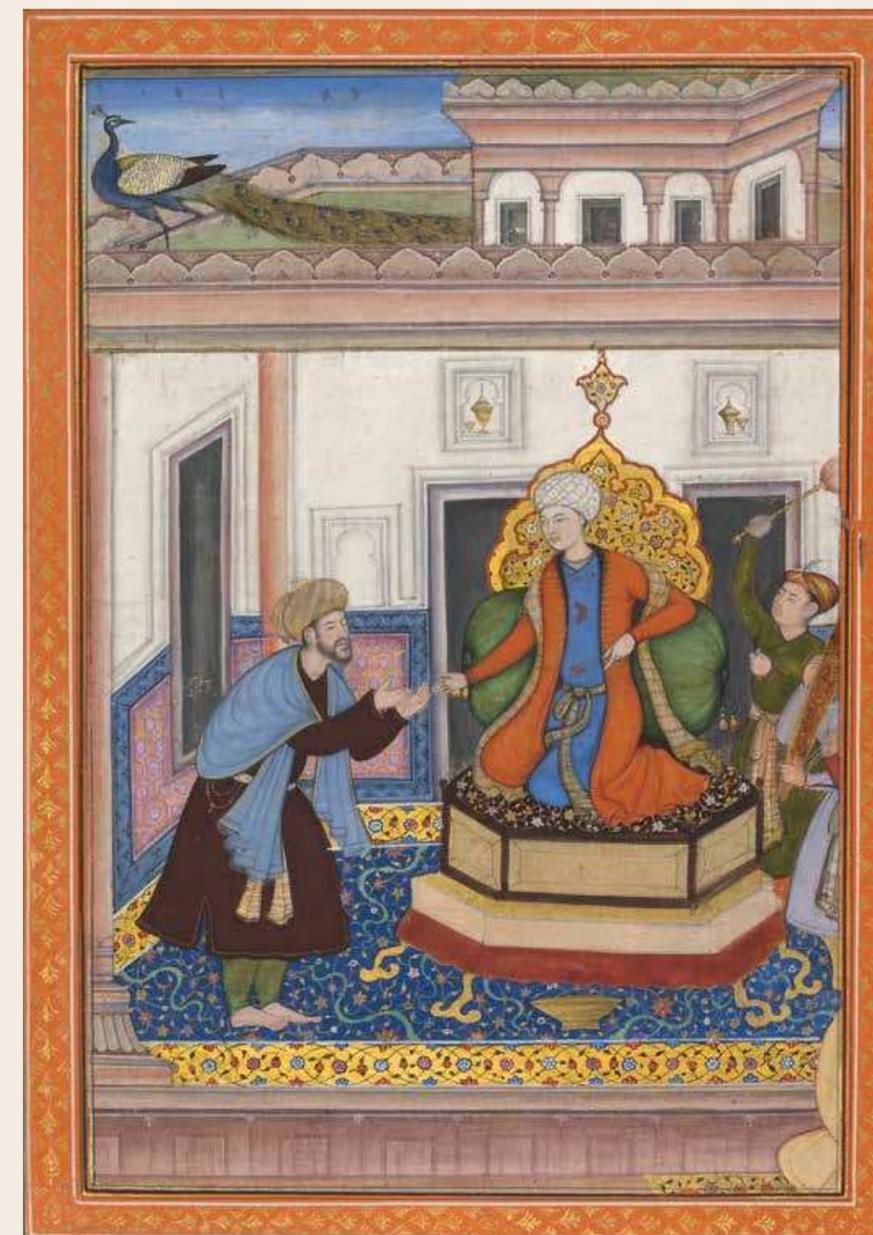
While this type of hexagonal throne perched on splayed feet with a gold cusped back was used in Mughal court ceremony as seen in both the V & A and the British Library/Chester Beatty *Akbarnamas*, the turbans seen here suggest that the painting comes from a manuscript illustrating Persian poetry. In Akbar's *Khamsa* of Nizami of 1593–95, such a throne is occupied by Khusrau (Brend 1995, figs. 11, 13), Bahram Gur (ibid., fig. 23), and Iskandar (ibid., figs. 30, 43), who also sits upon such a throne in Akbar's *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau of 1597 (Seyller 2001, figs. XVIII and XIX). Indeed such a throne is also sat upon by the son of Nizami's own patron, the Shirvanshah, in a painting from Akbar's *Khamsa*. Nizami relates at the beginning of his poem of Laila and Majnun that he gave his own son in service to the young son of the Shirvanshah. The composition of the central portion of Khem Karan's painting illustrating

this scene (Brend 1995, fig. 15), with the bearded poet gesturing to his young son standing before the throne of the young prince, is very close to our own painting, with attendants and courtiers to the side, save of course that the son is missing.

The painting is by an artist of considerable accomplishment within Akbar's studio. The open, generous face of the young prince and that of the beseeching petitioner are particularly well handled.

**PROVENANCE**

Hagop Kevorkian Collection  
Sotheby's, London, 6th December 1967, lot 130  
H.P. Kraus Collection, New York (Grube 1972, no. 241)



Actual size

11 A Poet reading to a Pupil while seated in a Tree by a River

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1595–1600

Ascribed in two places to the artist Pemjiv

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, inscribed twice at lower right (just inside picture area and on inner edge of border) in *nasta'liq*: *Pemjiv*, with the number 2 above the first inscription, mounted on an album leaf with stencilled borders of pink and blue paper

Painting: 18.6 × 12.2 cm

Album page: 36.1 × 23.7 cm

The elderly poet has established himself in the crook of a small plane tree holding his book open as he expounds its contents to the young man standing respectfully and perhaps somewhat nervously before him. At the foot of the tree is a rushing stream and the open landscape behind is closed by beautifully executed trees and a town. Although a simple composition, the painting is remarkably attractive, being given a sparkling surface through the flecks of white on water, trees and rocks.

The artist Pemjiv was recorded at the court of Emperor Akbar in the late 16th century, and contributed two illustrations to the manuscript of the *Iyar-i Danish* made for Akbar around 1595, now mostly in the Chester Beatty Library (In Ms.4, see Leach 1995, nos. 1.175 and 1.175, for the manuscript see *ibid.*, pp.74–104). In one of these scenes by Pemjiv, depicting The Sweet-seller and the Faqir (*ibid.*, p.100), the facial characteristics of the young sweet-seller and the elderly faqir are very close to those of the poet and the youth in the present work. Pemjiv, whose name is also recorded as Premji and Paramju Gujarati, is a rare artist but his work is also known from one occurrence in the V & A *Akbarnama*, the *Timurnama* in Patna (one painting) and the *Baburnama* in the National Museum, New Delhi (two paintings, see Randhawa 1983).

PROVENANCE

Formerly in the Hagop Kevorkian Collection  
Sotheby's, London, 6th December 1967, lot 129  
Collection of H.P.Kraus, New York (Grube 1972,  
no. 242)



Actual size

**1M A Fat Woman riding a Camel loaded with Pots, which have attracted large numbers of Flies**

Illustration from an unidentified story book

Mughal, Akbar period, c. 1595–1600

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down with narrow borders of green paper

Painting: 25.1 × 20.2 cm

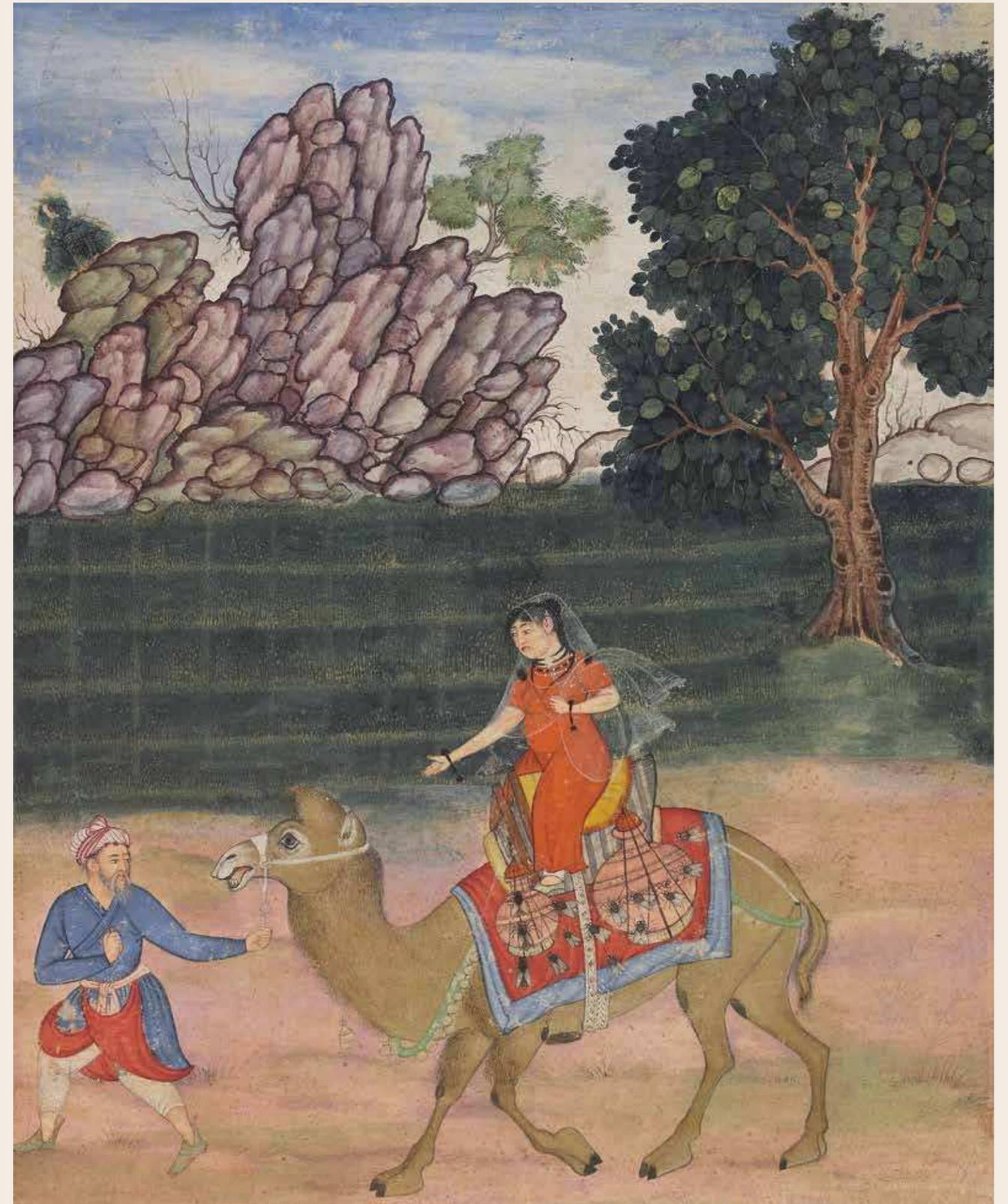
A fat cross-looking woman rides a camel with large pots slung from its saddle which have attracted the attention of huge flies, no doubt because of their sweet contents. She is wearing a long orange gown and a transparent *orhni* with pompoms at wrist and shoulders, a costume familiar from early Mughal manuscripts with Hindu subjects such as the c. 1580 *Tutinama* (Leach 1995, p. 60 for example). A man is leading the camel past a rice field, whilst a large fig tree and piled up rocks close the scene. The somewhat hard treatment of the woman's face and the treatment of the rocks suggest that the miniature is somewhat later than the *Tutinama*, and a date of around 1600 seems appropriate as suggested by Welch (1959, p. 139). The style is somewhat similar to that seen in the Chester Beatty *Iyar-i Danish* from around 1595 (Leach 1995, pp. 91, 97).

The unusual prominence which the artist has given to the flies that cluster round the pots on the camel's saddle indicate that the flies are integral to the subject matter of the scene, rather than simply being a whimsical motif of the artist, and this feature points to a fable-type text as an origin. A possible textual origin is the *Tutinama* of Nakhshabi, which contains an episode in which a wronged princess is found in the desert by a royal camel-driver, who has stopped to water his camel and fill his containers. The camel driver takes the princess back to the palace. The scene in the present miniature may relate to a version of this tale (Leach 1995, p. 74).

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Stuart Cary Welch (Welch 1959, fig. 10)

Sotheby's, London, 12th December 1972, lot 19



Actual size

## 1N, 1O Two Illustrations from a Poetical Manuscript

Mughal, Akbar period, possibly made for Prince Salim (later Emperor Jahangir), 1600–05  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted on album pages, reverse with fragments of calligraphy, one signed by Nasir al-Din 'Ali

## 1N A Battle on a Hillside between two Armies

Painting: 15.1 × 8.5mm

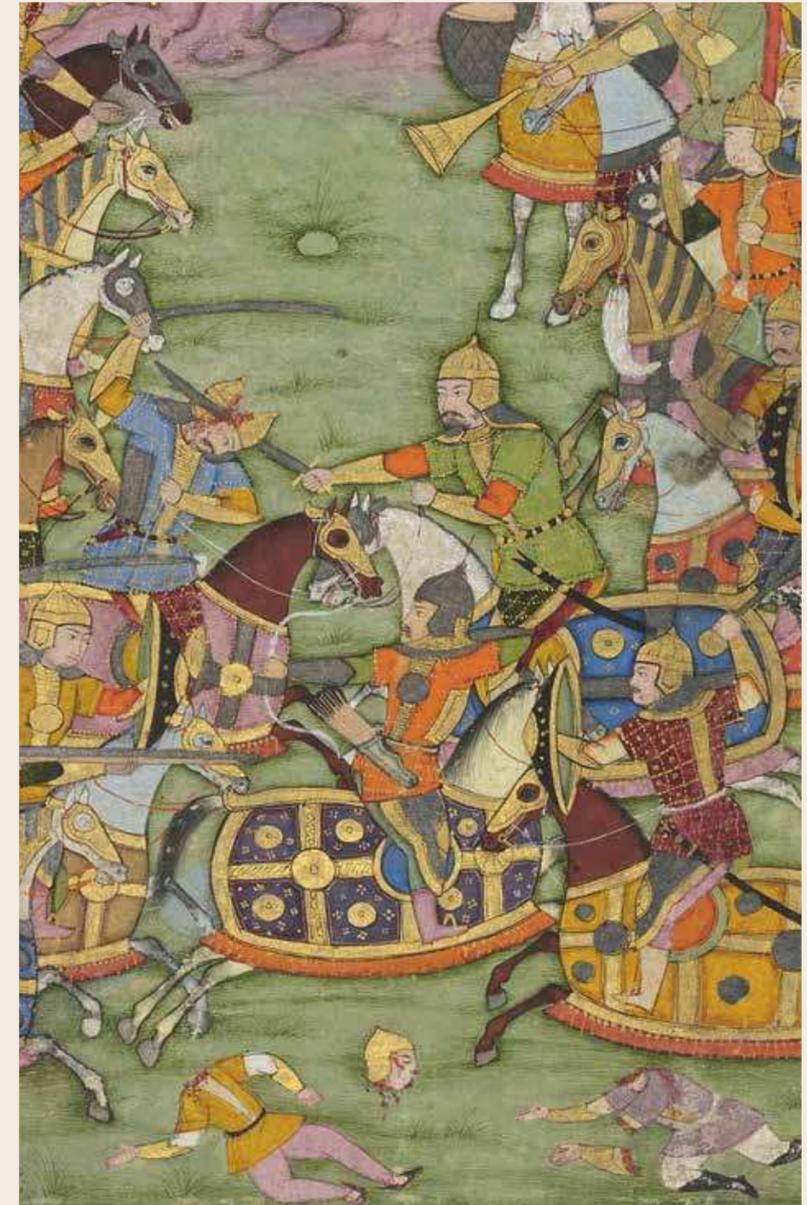
These two miniatures are painted in a style of the late Akbar period which is associated with the court of his son Prince Salim, who succeeded to the throne in 1605 as Emperor Jahangir. They are linked by their relatively simple style and by their size, so that they possibly come from the same manuscript. The small narrow upright format recalls that of the *Anvar-i Suhaili* in the British Library (Losty and Roy 2012, pp. 88–92) which was begun for Salim in 1604.

Salim had had his own small studio of artists since at least the mid-1580s and took them with him to Allahabad in his rebellious period 1600–4, where various manuscripts and album paintings were made for him, of which unfortunately only one (the *Anvar-i Suhaili*) has many attributions to artists. Since that manuscript was not finished until 1019/1610–11, we are dependent on the inscribed dates on two of Aqa Riza's paintings therein of 1013/1604–05 and inscriptions invoking Padshah Salim to associate it with Salim's rebellion. Other manuscripts produced in the Allahabad studio include a minute *Divan* of Hafiz (ibid., pp. 87–88), two in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (189–232), and another in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Seyller 2004). In his youth Salim favoured the work of Iranian émigré artists such as Aqa Riza, who had been in his employ since his entry into India, and he gathered round him a circle of artists of the same mind. Other artists who must have been in Allahabad with Salim are Aqa Riza's son Abu'l Hasan and Bishn Das, who became two of Jahangir's most famous painters, as well as

Mirza Ghulam, 'Abd al-Salim and Salim Quli. The known work of these last three artists is all associated with Salim's studio and shows marked Persian influence.

A ferocious battle is taking place with mounted warriors slashing at each other with their swords while trumpeters and drummers on both sides sound their instruments in the background.

Without texts it is impossible to be certain which manuscript our two paintings might come from. The bearded leader in the centre of the battle scene has something of the air of Alexander the Great, as seen in the manuscript of the *Khamsa* of Nizami (1593–95) divided between the British Library and the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Brend 1995, figs. 29, 32). It is possible that our miniature comes from a manuscript of the same text done for Salim.

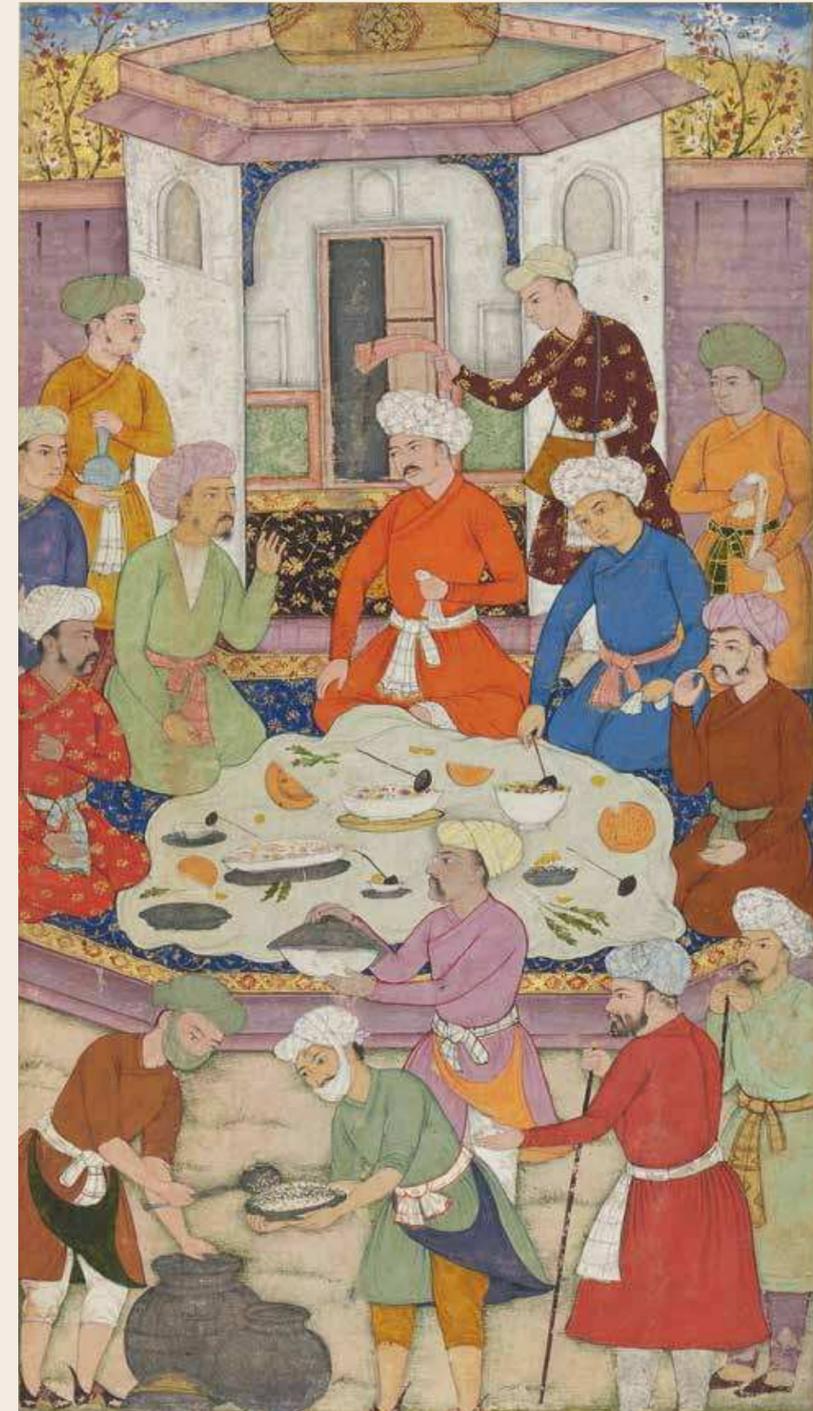


10 A Prince feasting with Courtiers outside a Pavilion

Mughal, Akbar period, 1600–05  
Attributable to Salim Quli  
Painting: 15.2 × 8.7 cm

The picture shows a peaceful banqueting scene in which a group of men sit round a spread cloth while servants ply them with various rice dishes and fruit. The style of this painting recalls that of a miniature signed by Salim Quli depicting the funeral of Alexander the Great in the British Museum (Rogers 1993, fig. 54). Notable parallels include the sky divided horizontally between gold and blue (a somewhat old-fashioned notion by 1600 but still prevalent in the Deccan), facial features particularly those in profile with their somewhat prominent jaws, and the simple type of Persian turban.

Salim Quli's signed or ascribed work is known from the aforementioned British Museum miniature, which probably comes from a manuscript of the *Iskandarnama* of Nizami, and from two miniatures in the manuscript of the *Anvar-i Suhayli*, the fable book by Husain Va'iz al-Kashifi (d. 1504) now in the British Library (Wilkinson 1929, pls. XXXI and XXXIV), which was begun by 1604 for Salim, although not finished until 1612. His name does not appear in any of the other manuscripts done for Salim at Allahabad: John Seyller has attributed one miniature to him in the 1602–03 *Divan* of Amir Hasan Dihlavi in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Seyller 2004, fig. 8), while Linda Leach has somewhat unconvincingly attributed to him three miniatures in the 1603–04 Raj Kunvar manuscript in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Leach 1995, nos. 2.48, 87 and 92).



1P **A European Man and Woman standing in an Embrace**

Mughal, c. 1600–20

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down on an album leaf with border of blue paper decorated with gold foliate tendrils, reverse with 6 lines of Persian poetry in *nasta'liq* script on blue paper decorated with small gold flowers

Painting: 20 × 12.8 cm

Album page: 23.2 × 16 cm

Two European figures stand in front of a green background that does double duty for a landscape as it transforms into a blue sky at the top of the painting. The man is dressed in loose white trousers, *paijama* almost, narrowing at the ankles, a shirt of lilac with white lace ruffles at the wrist and an open fronted lace ruff at the collar, and over it a short-sleeved tunic caught in at the waist with a belt. On his head is a flat, black, round hat with a brim, and a green cloak wound round his body completes the ensemble. This is the normal costume of Portuguese men in India as can be seen in the illustrations to J. van Linschoten's *Itinerario*, the first published illustrated traveller's account of life in the east. He was in Goa as the Archbishop's secretary from 1583 to 1589. His *Itinerario* published in Amsterdam in 1596 contains invaluable prints based on his now vanished sketches documenting life in Goa in the 1580s. The costume worn by some of the men in Goa in the *Itinerario* (others stuff their loose trousers into boots) exactly corresponds to that in the present painting, suggesting that the artist has taken as his model not a living Portuguese visitor to Agra but an uncoloured print. In point of fact, few if any non-religious Portuguese visitors had yet reached the Mughal capital. It may be noted also that an Indian sword has been substituted for a European rapier. Two well-known paintings in the V & A of European men in a landscape are cast in the same mould and have been rightly advanced in date to the early 17th century by Susan Stronge (2002, pls. 105–06). She points out that details of their costume such as the open-fronted lace ruffs suggest a source in the 1580s.

Our European man has an arm round a woman wearing a long loose gown with short sleeves, a voluminous cloak round her shoulders that is caught up at the waist of her dress, and uncovered hair piled up in a loose chignon and decorated with pearls and a feather sarpech. Mughal pictures of European women at this time seem all derived from religious prints, where women normally wear some kind of long gown with a cloak. Here additionally her necklaces, bracelets and mirror ring on her thumb seem peculiarly Indian. Her costume requires a considerable amount of explanation.

Christopher Plantin's Polyglot Bible (Antwerp 1568–72) and other engraved Christian images and paintings were brought over on the first Jesuit mission to Akbar's court in 1580, as well as paintings of the Virgin and Child copied from early Roman icons like the Borghese Madonna. The Jesuit sources reveal that Akbar was captivated by the icons of the Virgin and Child, and ordered his artists to make copies (Brand and Lowry 1985, pp. 98–99). An early Mughal version c. 1580 depicts the Virgin suckling the Christ Child, seated on a huge golden throne, her Indian jewellery (complete with mirror ring) providing a striking contrast to the iconic composition and simplicity of her loose skirt and voluminous cloak (Welch 1978A, fig. 1).

Although van Linschoten's *Itinerario* contains numerous depictions of Portuguese women in Goa, while European paintings including contemporary female portraits were already at the Mughal court by 1614 as we know from Sir Thomas Roe's account of his embassy, Mughal artists refrained from using them as models until

considerably later, since by the early 17th century the female types popularized in Akbar's studio from the 1580s were too ingrained.

Related secular portraits of this type involving both a European man and a woman were popular at the Mughal court. For other examples see Binney 1973, pp. 54–55; Falk and Archer 1981, no. 68, f. 74; Bibliothèque Nationale 1986, nos. 96–97; Gahlin 1991, no. 5; Rogers 1993, nos. 43 and 52; Losty and Roy 2012, pp. 78–79.

PROVENANCE

Kirkor Minassian Collection, New York, mid-20th century

Collection of Stuart Cary Welch (Martin 1912, pl. 171; Welch 1959, fig. 14)

Sotheby's London, 12th December 1972, lot 21



Actual size

## 1Q A Portrait of Rao Chattar Sal of Bundi

Illustrated and illuminated page from the Late Shah Jahan Album  
Mughal, Shah Jahan period, c. 1650–55  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, numbered '14' in lower right corner,  
mounted within an inner peach coloured border with gold scrollwork  
separated by a broad gold band and thinner coloured rulings from an  
outer border finely painted with courtiers holding shields and swords on a  
background of plain buff paper decorated with gold flowers  
Painting: 19.2 × 10.8 cm  
Album page: 37 × 25.3 cm

Rao Chattar Sal was the ruler of Bundi from 1632–1658, almost contemporary with the rule of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1628–58), for whom this album page was prepared. The Rao stands dressed in a plain white muslin *jama* over lilac *paijama* decorated with scrolls. A *patka* whose ends are decorated with single flowers is around his waist, a thin *dupatta* is wound round his torso, a gold brocade turban is on his head, and his ensemble is completed by gold slippers with striking vertically extended backs to the heels. A magnificent shield painted with single flowers hangs from over his shoulder and a long straight sword with gilded and jewelledommel is in a brocaded scabbard attached by a harness round his waist. One of the hilts of the *katar* tucked into his *patka* on the other side is visible just beneath his right hand. He is silhouetted against a plain eau-de-nil background that changes into the sky above with the suggestion of a ground at his feet.

Rao Chattar Sal succeeded to the throne of Bundi as a young man after the death of his grandfather Rao Ratan Singh in 1632, at which time Kota was separated from Bundi and given to Rao Ratan's younger son Madho Singh in reward for his support of Shah Jahan. Chattar Sal in his turn rendered sterling service to Shah Jahan, taking part in many of the campaigns in the Deccan and in the north-west against the Iranians and the Uzbeks. He loyally supported the emperor and his eldest son Dara Shikoh in the succession wars of 1657–58 and literally paid with his life, since he was killed at the Battle of Samugarh fighting for Dara Shikoh. His biography is given in Shahnawaz Khan's

Ma'athir al-Umara under Satrsal Hara (1911–52, vol. II, pp. 722–24).

Shah Jahan in the 1650s commissioned portraits of eminent men of his empire for inclusion in his last major album project that is now called the Late Shah Jahan Album. He also included earlier portraits of dignitaries from his father's and grandfather's reigns. The portrait pages from this album almost always have figural borders, as opposed to the purely floral borders of the calligraphic pages. In many cases the figures in the borders actually constitute secondary portraits and the men depicted can occasionally be identified as favoured servants, minor courtiers or soldiers.

Rao Chattar Sal was awarded the rare honour of having two portraits included in this album. The second one formerly in the Heeramaneck Collection is now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Heeramaneck 1984, pl. 213; Pal 1993, no. 78) and shows signs of being a second version of ours: it lacks some of the detail of the swordommel while the artist seems to have misunderstood the hilt of the *katar* and has the Rao grasp his hands around it. Like ours it has figural borders with Rajput warriors, with two seated figures in the upper and lower borders as is usual in this album, compared with the single figure in our album page. This latter is an unusual feature but not unique (compare Ehnbohm 1985, no. 26). Surrounding Chattar Sal here are five figures of Hindu Rajput warriors, two kneeling with their swords and three standing figures with spears and sword. These are meant to be his Hara retainers, them and their weapons ever ready to come to their lord's

defence and do his bidding, typical of the function of the border figures in this album which comment on and add to the meaning of the central figure. While some of the border figures in this album are stock images, these are rather fine, especially the middle standing figure whose eyes are raised up gazing somewhat quizzically at his master. The figure in the middle of the upper border though somewhat abraded is equally fine as he tests the sharpness of his blade.

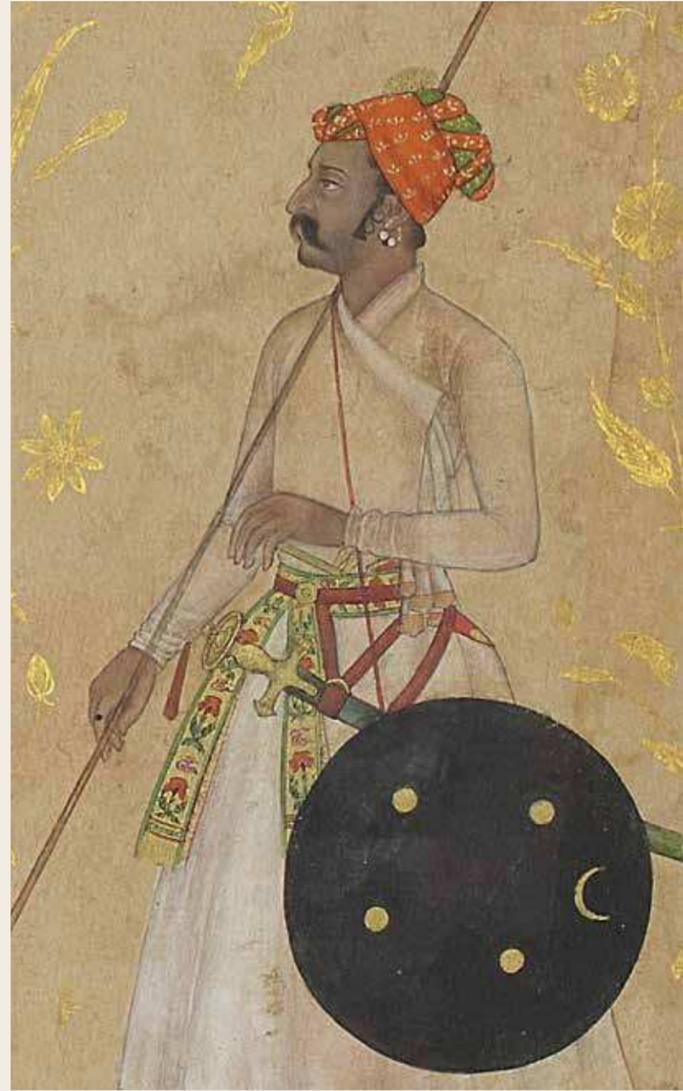
Elaine Wright has listed all the known paintings from the Late Shah Jahan Album (2008, pp. 462–67) and discussed it at length (*ibid.*, pp. 107–39). Chattar Sal is joined by six other portraits of Rajputs in the album, but only one is contemporary, that of Ram Singh of Amber, the others being important to Shah Jahan earlier in his life such as his friend Raja Bikramajit and Rana Amar Singh of Mewar and his sons Karan Singh and Bhim Singh. Chattar Sal appears in one of the detached paintings (now in the British Library) intended for the later volumes of the *Padshahnama*, when he appeared at court in Lahore in 1649 prior to joining the north-western campaign under Aurangzeb (Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 88 and p. 141). There he appears slightly younger than in our portrait and that in Los Angeles, suggesting a date for our portrait about 1655.

#### PROVENANCE:

Sotheby's, London, 1st December 1969, lot 150  
H.P. Kraus Collection, New York (Grube 1972, no. 249)



Actual size



**1R A Window Portrait of a Mughal Prince, perhaps Aurangzeb**

Mughal, Shah Jahan period, 1655–60

Mounted with floral borders from an imperial Mughal album  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, laid down on an album page  
with inner borders of gilt flowers on pink paper and broad outer  
borders of polychrome flowers on buff paper, the outer borders made up  
from a royal Mughal album of the Shah Jahan period  
Painting: 10.3 × 4.6 cm  
Album page: 29.8 × 19.0 cm

In this sensitive window portrait of a nimbate prince, he appears to be a mature man but not yet showing signs of old age, so perhaps 40 years old at the most. He wears a full beard that is relatively short allowing most of his neck to be visible and that hangs vertically without jutting out at the bottom. His hair is pulled up tight on his neck under his turban. He is dressed in a plain muslin *jama* with embroidered borders and a relatively simple striped turban secured by a brocade band. Three ropes of pearls encircle his neck, one with a pendant carved spinel. He appears at a window, with one hand resting on the parapet that is covered with a rich textile, while a rolled up blind hangs above. This upper portion is a later addition to fit the miniature into its album page.

The identity of this prince is difficult to establish. It was previously published as a portrait of Aurangzeb 1650–60 (Grube 1972, no. 250). That prince was born in 1618, so that his appearance here would then relate the portrait to the period of the war of succession and Aurangzeb's usurpation of the throne from his father in 1658. It was only in 1640 or so that the three eldest sons of Shah Jahan started to grow beards as confirmed by their appearance at court together in a painting in the Windsor Castle *Padshahnama* recording an event of 1640 when Aurangzeb reached the court at Lahore. His three brothers were already there in attendance on their father (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997, no. 44). Aurangzeb, however, is normally depicted with a long and pointed head, a profile reinforced when his beard grew to its full extent by its jutting out at the bottom, while it also grew from his neck beneath his ear. A fine *nim-qalam* drawing of him in the Chester

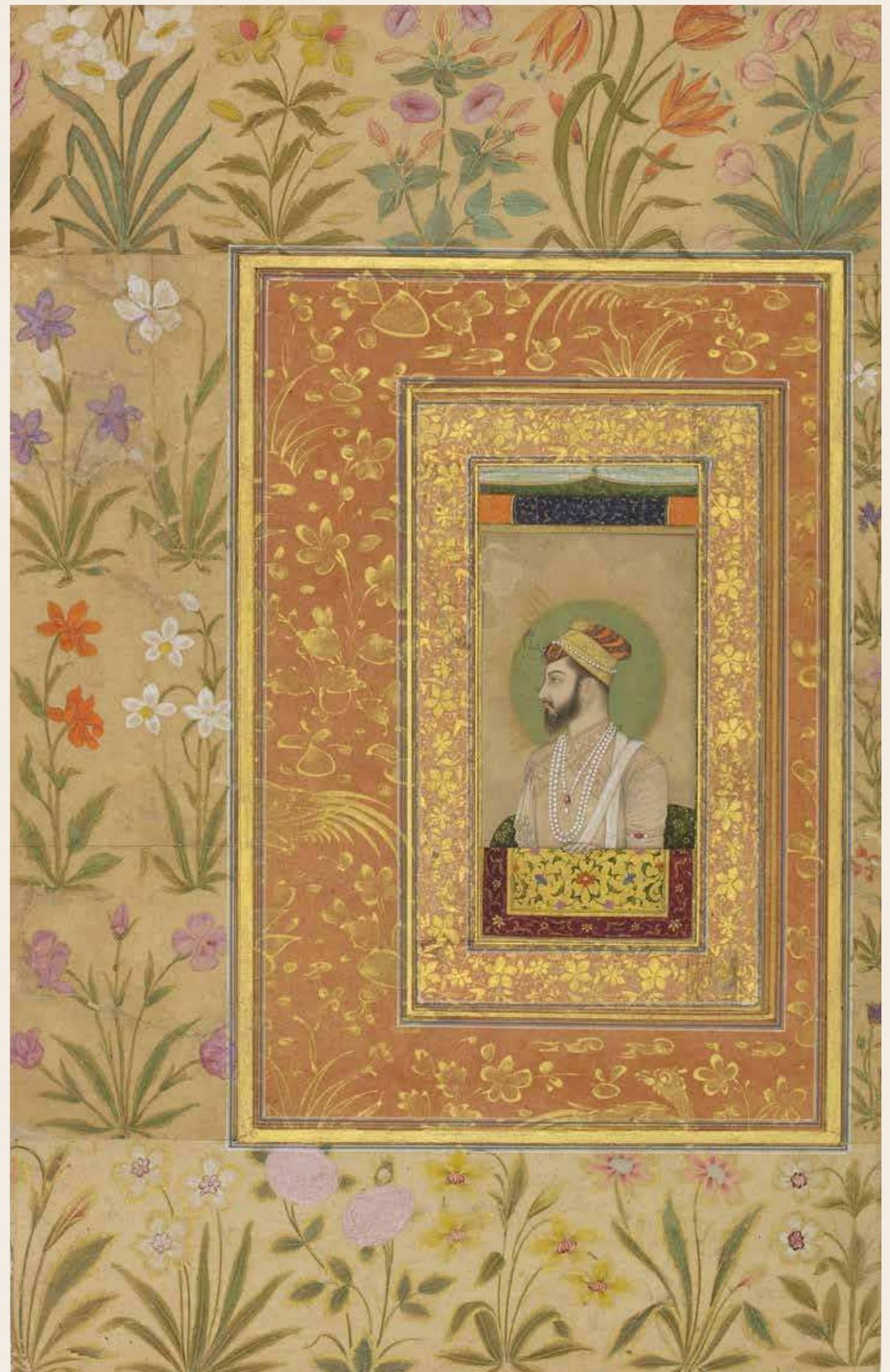
Beatty Library shows him around 1640 just after he grew his beard and seems to bear little relation to our prince (Wright 2008, no. 86). By 1649, when he was again painted reporting to his father in Lahore (Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 88), his beard had assumed its mature shape that did not thereafter vary even when it went grey and then white. Dara Shikoh's beard on the other hand tends to follow just his jawline but it is rarely as full as depicted here (Beach, Koch and Thackston, nos. 33, 41 and 44; Pal 1993, no. 79; Beach 2012, no. 221, p. 139; Leach 1995, no. 33 shows Dara Shikoh with a very full beard), while his hair often curls up on his neck beneath his turban. This cannot be Shah Shuja' either, as it does not conform to his very distinctive profile (Wright 2008, no. 81). As for Murad Bakhsh, he is always depicted beardless in the *Padshahnama* but in later portraits his beard is much fuller (e.g. Bibliothèque Nationale, no. 34, or Gangoly 1961, pl. V-B).

Despite this lack of certainty as regards the appearance of the sitter, once the iconography is taken into account, it becomes easier to identify him. The portrait takes the form of a *jharokha* portrait, a form of iconography strictly reserved under Jahangir and Shah Jahan for the emperor himself, since it records the emperor's daily appearance at the *jharokha* window in the palace to show himself to the populace. Our prince is also nimbate, something that only Dara Shikoh was allowed among the sons of Shah Jahan during his father's reign. If the portrait is indeed of Aurangzeb at around the age of 40, then his attempt to seize the throne would explain his being painted at the *jharokha*, while the nimbus was added then or a little later: the green pigment of the nimbus

can be seen when closely examined to protrude slightly onto his right shoulder. The symbolism of halos and light in Mughal imperial portraits is related to the semi-divine self-image which they had of themselves and which they liked to promulgate in their portraits. Here the emperor's radiance is depicted in several different ways. The green disc around his head has an inner ring of gold from which emanate thin and closely spaced gold rays that reach the borders of the painting. Behind the portrait and centred on the prince's head emanates an uncoloured star shape distinct from the slightly tinted background. Aurangzeb's fascination with the imagery of light is demonstrated by another painting from early in his reign where he is seated on a terrace and caught in a shaft of light emanating from the heavens (Beach 2012, no. 22G, p. 135).

To Aurangzeb's puritanical mind this daily appearance at the *jharokha* smacked of Hindu idolatry and he abolished the practice in 1668–69, although in his portraits he does sometimes appear in this form: he is depicted for example nimbate and with his beard turning grey in a window portrait c. 1670 in a composite page from the St Petersburg Album now in the Sackler Gallery (Beach 2012, no. 22I, p. 139).

PROVENANCE:  
H.P. Kraus Collection, New York (Grube 1972, no. 250)



Actual size

15 **Standing Portrait of Mahabat Khan holding a Hawk and a pink Rose**

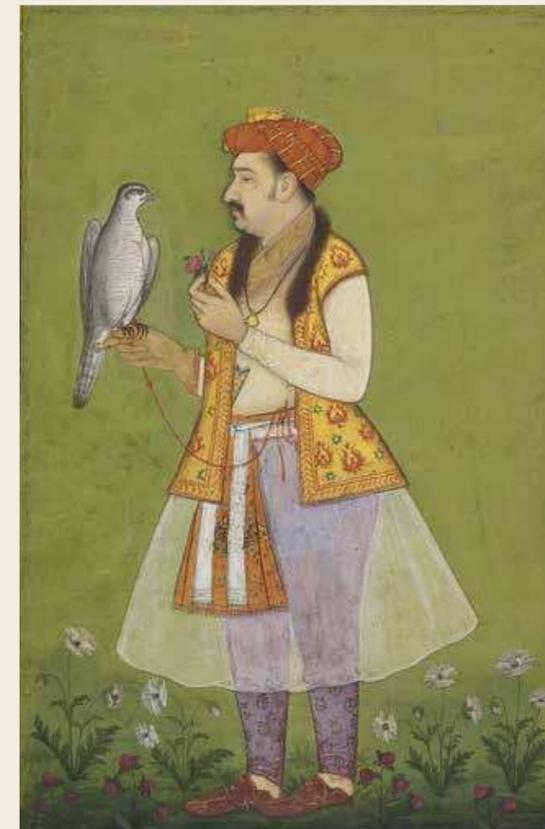
Mughal, Shah Jahan period, c. 1650–60  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, narrow gilt borders  
Painting: 12.9 × 8.3 cm

The nobleman stands facing left with rows of poppies and other flowers growing at his feet. He is wearing lilac *paijama* and a short-sleeved brocaded jacket with a fur tippet at the collar over his plain muslin *jama*. Two *patkas* encircle his waist, while a dagger is tucked into them beneath his jacket. He holds a hawk on his gloved right hand, its leash attached to his *patka*, and a rose in his left. A gold hawk flies in above him. He can be identified as Mahabat Khan (d. 1634) on the basis of a drawing in the British Library (Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 87) where he stands in the same attitude and dressed very similarly, but holds a slender staff in his left hand and a ruby or spinel upon a small dish in his right.

Zamana Beg, his original name, entered the service of Prince Salim as a young man, and his first act of importance was to murder the Raja of Bhojpur for Salim who had been annoyed by the raja. He rose quickly through the ranks as a great general. A portrait in the Kevorkian Album in New York by Manohar shows him at this stage of his career, c. 1610, looking quite short and very pugnacious with his broken nose (Welch et al., 1987, no. 24). After Jahangir's marriage to Nur Jahan in 1611 he felt himself boxed in by her power and that of her brother Asaf Khan until Shah Jahan's rebellion in 1622, when Nur Jahan had need of his military prowess to keep the rebellious prince at bay. In 1626 Mahabat Khan felt himself powerful enough to hold the emperor's person hostage, hoping to outflank Asaf Khan's influence, but his plans went wrong and he had to flee to Shah Jahan, who after his accession the following

year confirmed him as Khan-i Khanan and Sipahsalar or Commander-in-Chief with the rank of 7000/7000, the highest possible for non-royals. He is depicted in the *Padshahnama* many times at court, but also in the field at the moment of his greatest triumph, at the capture of the hitherto impregnable fort of Daulatabad in 1633 during Shah Jahan's campaigns against the Deccani kingdoms (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997, pl. 31): 'The liveliest joy was occasioned in the royal breast' at court and Shah Jahan sent to the Khan-i Khanan 'a handsome robe of honour, with a tunic whose buttons consisted of rubies and pearls', as well as other gifts.

Mahabat Khan is wearing a generalised version of the robe of honour sent to him in 1633, a short sleeveless coat of gold brocade embroidered with flowers with a fur tippet and edging. It resembles the *nadiri*, a short sleeveless coat that was normally reserved only for the emperor and his family. This suggests that the original of this portrait was done when Mahabat Khan was at the peak of his career, just after the triumph of the capture of Daulatabad. He had been made *subahdar* or governor of the Deccan in 1631, when Shah Jahan left Burhanpur for Agra after the death of his wife, and never returned to the south (Shahnawaz Khan 1911–52, vol. II, pp. 9–28). This seems a somewhat later version of the British Library's portrait with the flower arrangements at the bottom more typical of the mid-century portraits.



Actual size

**IT Standing Portrait of a Mughal Courtier holding a Sword**

Mughal, Aurangzeb period, 1660–70

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted on an album page with borders of gold foliate decoration on blue and red paper

Painting: 21 × 13.3 cm

With borders: 32 × 23 cm

The imposing figure of this unknown bearded nobleman stands facing left dressed in a simple white muslin *jama* over brocaded *pajama* embroidered with poppy heads. Round his waist is tied an orange *patka*, whose ends are embroidered with large poppies on a gold ground. He rests his hands on the hilt of his sword which is pointing to the ground, while a *katar* is pushed through his cummerbund. The turban is wound tightly on to his head giving it a slightly conical appearance that became increasingly fashionable in the 18th century (Falk and Archer 1981, nos. 134ii, 211). A thin gold *dupatta* wound round his upper body completes his ensemble. The blue background against which he is silhouetted is probably original; as are the two solitary flowers, but the intersecting planes of the green ground at his feet with their regular tufts of lighter green grass seem to have been added in Lucknow at the end of the next century. For the solitary flowers compare the portrait of Amanat Khan, c. 1660–70 in the British Library (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 105ii).

Despite Aurangzeb's ban on the recording of history and hence paintings of events and their participants, numerous surviving portraits up to the end of his reign (see e.g. Falk and Archer 1981, illustrations pp. 406–17) testify that portraiture remained a flourishing art patronised by princes and noblemen, the artists presumably being those let go from the imperial studio.



Actual size

**IU Princesses visiting a *Yogini* at Night**

Provincial Mughal, Avadh, c. 1770–80

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted with borders of buff and blue paper

Painting: 27.7 × 18.4 cm

Album page: 34.7 × 25.4 cm

A *Yogini* is seated in a grove by night depicted with the traditional accompaniments of a fire and a dog. A candelabrum illuminates the scene. An attendant fans the *Yogini* who is being visited by group of ladies bringing offerings. In the distance is a miniature version of the common 18th century theme of a prince on horseback accepting a drink of water from women at a well (e.g. Falk and Archer 1981, no. 429), while beyond is a little group of marching *sepoys* escorting some horsemen and a man on an elephant. They are heading towards a large fire that seems to come from the town hidden behind the trees. Is this, one wonders, a reference to the wars that engulfed eastern India in the 1760s? Even so, life went on in the timeless Indian way.

The scene seems to illustrate no particular story but serves as an excuse for an artist to demonstrate his painterly skills. The recession of the landscape towards another town and the distant hills is particularly skilfully handled as is the overall darkness. The main theme of women visiting a shrine or a yogi or *Yogini* by night was a particular favourite of the artist Mir Kalan Khan (e.g. Topsfield 2008, no. 70) and his followers often utilised it for their own compositions (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 245; Seyller and Seitz 2010, no. 28). Unusually for this type of scene, the darkness is carried through right into the landscape and the night sky sprinkled with stars. For the latest survey of Mir Kalan Khan's work, see McInerney 2011, and for the artistic ambience of Lucknow painting at this time see Roy 2010.



Actual size

**IV The Prophets Daniel and Zacharias kneeling on a Terrace, with Moses and John the Baptist standing in the Landscape beyond**

Lucknow, early 19th century  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper, mounted with narrow gilt and grey borders  
Inscribed above each of the figures (above): *hazrat Musi*; *hazrat Yahya*; (below) *hazrat Daniyal*; *hazrat Zakariya*  
Painting: 25.1 × 16.4 cm  
Album page: 28.2 × 9.7 cm

Two men in archaic (for the 19th century) costume are seated on a carpeted terrace, their hands raised up and gesturing towards each other. Beyond, a dark landscape with highlights of flowering trees and plants leads back towards hills on which stand two other figures similarly dressed. A golden sky fills the rest of the painting.

Gold inscriptions identify the figures as the prophets Daniel and Zacharias on the terrace while the background figures are intended for Moses on Mount Sinai, his hands gesturing upwards to heaven, and John the Baptist, who holds the sword symbolic of his decapitation. All four are nimbate as befits their status as prophets in Islam.

Their oversized heads with heavy shading are typical of Lucknow painting in the 19th century. For a survey of Lucknow painting at this time see Losty 2003, and for Lucknow art and culture in general, see Markel and Gude 2010.



Actual size

2 **Double Page Album Leaf with Tigers on Recto and an Elephant on Verso**

Recto inscribed with Mewar inventory inscriptions

Bird and animal studies were some of the favourite subjects in early Mughal painting, an area recently revisited by Asok Das in the introduction to his study of the great natural history painter Mansur (Das 2012). These include some of the most magnificent studies in early Mughal painting, such as the pair of cheetahs in the Sadruddin Aga Khan collection, the pair of rosy pastors in the Jahangir Album in Berlin, and the cow and calf attributed to Basavan now in Doha (ibid., figs. 1.6–8).

Recto

**Two Studies of a Tiger**

Mughal, c. 1570–80

Laid down on a brown album page

Inscribed lower right with the album folio number in Arabic numerals 49; with inventory numbers from the royal Mewar collection lower right and above

Painting: 21.7 × 15.2 cm

Album page: 35.9 × 27.8 cm

These two drawings exemplify two different activities of a tiger. At the top, looking like a big cat about to spring, this study from above shows it trying to catch a bird fluttering its wings in the top corner. Below the second study shows a tiger gnawing at its prey, a winged and spotted animal. Behind is a green ground with flowers.

The tiger's prey, which seems a version of the *qilin* or mythical Chinese creature often found in Persian marginal decorations, alerts us that this is not a normal study of living animals but a decorative fanciful piece, of the sort that make up the magnificent border decorations of Mughal manuscripts in the 1590s such as the British Library's *Khamsa* of Nizami of 1595 (Brend 1995). The tiger too has lost something of the fierceness native to the species and changed its colours and appearance into something more appropriate to a big cat, rather as in earlier Safavid marginal decoration of manuscripts such as Shah Tahmasp's *Khamsa* of Nizami of 1539–43 (e.g. Welch 1979, p. 145). It is studies of this type that Humayun's Safavid artists would have brought into India in 1555 and which would have remained in use in the imperial studio.



Actual size



2

Verso

### A Keeper trying to restrain an Elephant

Mughal, c. 1570–80

Laid down on a green album page

Painting: 21 × 15.1 cm

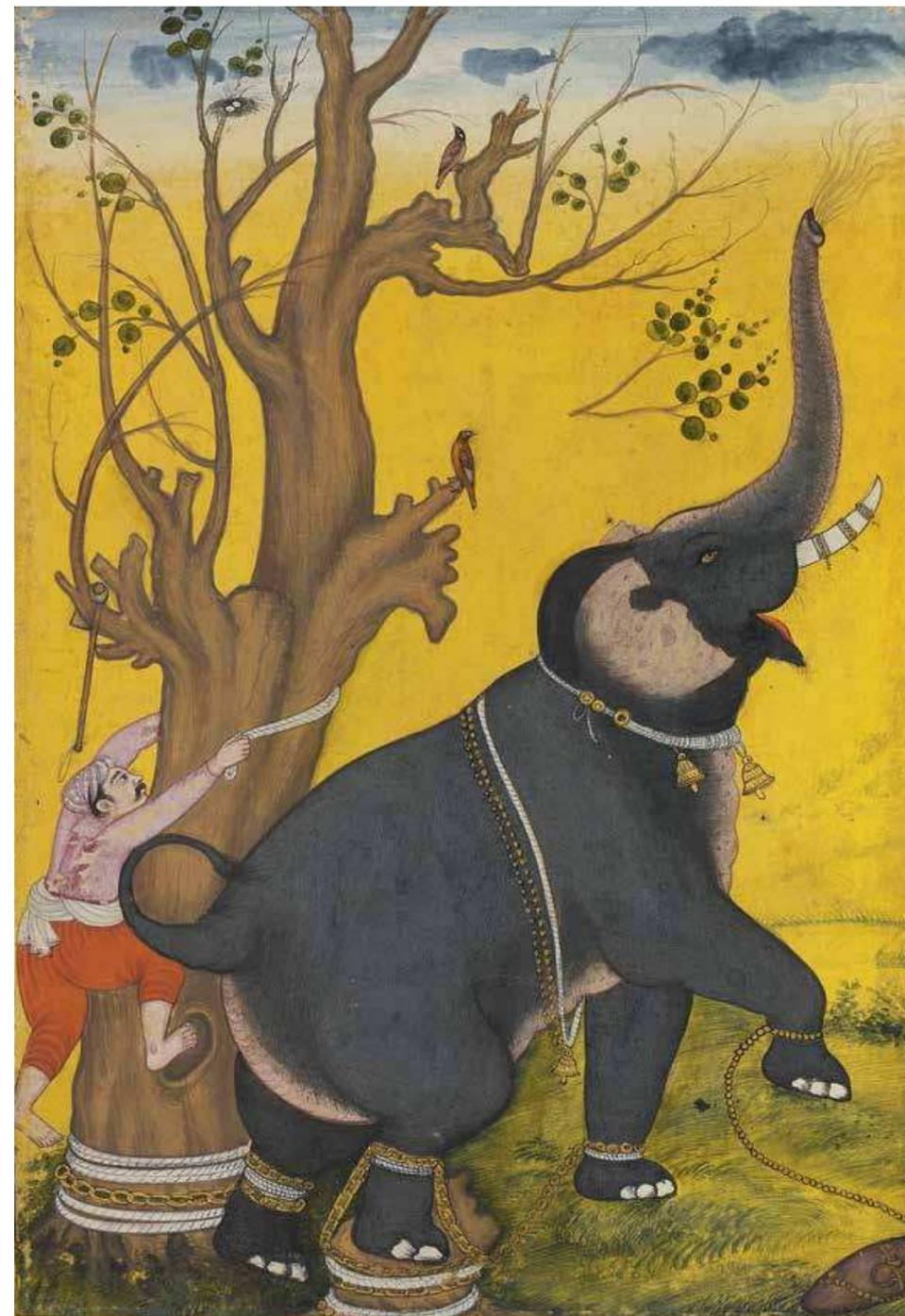
Album page: 35.9 × 27.8 cm

An elephant chained to a tree is playfully blowing water out of its trunk trying to hit the nesting birds in the tree but has merely succeeded in breaking off a branch. The elephant is tied down in several ways, directly with a chain round one rear leg and the tree, while another chain is round his other rear leg attached to a stump and also to his left foreleg, his right foreleg being attached to a log. Its keeper is trying to scramble up the tree by throwing another rope round the trunk in order to get on top of the rearing elephant and to secure it more robustly. He has already placed his adze-like tool over a branch to assist him in hauling himself up the trunk.

Several elements in the painting suggest an early date. The way the grass is depicted suggests the cow and calf attributed to Basavan now in Doha (Das 2012, fig. 1.7), the yellow background recalls the family of cheetahs in the Sadruddin Aga Khan collection (ibid., fig. 1.6), the determined stance of the elephant keeper as he attempts to scramble up the tree to fix his rope recalls the intentness of men doing the work in hand in the later *Hamzanama* pages of the 1570s, in particular the man climbing up a rope to scale a fortress wall in a page now in Vienna (Welch 1978B, pl. 1).

Elephants were of course among the most prized possessions of kings and emperors throughout Indian history and the Mughals were no exception. According to Abu'l Fazl, Akbar had 101 elephants for his personal use alone. An elephant under a tree with keepers and *mahouts* trying to control them are a common feature of several early paintings. One in the Freer Gallery attributed to Farrukh Chela c. 1590 is close in composition to our version, but with a *mahout* mounted and a keeper kneeling at the rear trying to control the beast (Jahangir 1999, p. 16; Beach 2012, no. 20E). There is a striking resemblance between the two paintings in the unusual long sweeping brush strokes used for the rendition of the trunk of the tree. Two other studies of elephants attributable to Farrukh Chela are in the Gulshan Album in Tehran (Beach 1981, fig. 12; Beach 2012, p. 197, n. 19).

Studies of elephants were especially popular in the Deccan, such as one of a *mahout* trying to calm down an enraged elephant c. 1600 (Binney 1973, no. 119) and also another, perhaps more directly comparable to ours, in an early 17th century study of a *mahout* struggling to control an elephant under a tree in the British Library (Seyller 2011, fig. 7).



Actual size

### 3 Virgin and Child

Mughal, c. 1580–85

Opaque pigments with gold

On a later Persian album page of interlacing blue arabesques with gold and blue cartouches

Painting: 27.2 × 20 cm

Album page: 47.9 × 31.6 cm

The most sustained European influence on Mughal painting came from the embassy sent by Akbar to Goa in 1575, where the Portuguese had been established since 1510, to collect and bring back European artefacts and works of art. Craftsmen were also sent in order to acquire European skills. The embassy returned in 1578 laden with choice products, according to Abu'l Fazl, but the only things he particularises are musical instruments including an organ. Then in 1580 three Jesuits, led by Fr Rudolf Aquaviva, arrived at the court in Fatehpur Sikri. They had been specifically requested to come from Goa to talk about Christianity in the 'Ibadat Khana (House of Worship) for Akbar's weekly discussions of religion. This first Jesuit mission brought Christopher Plantin's Polyglot Bible (Antwerp 1568–72) and other engraved Christian images as well as paintings of the Virgin and Child copied from the early Roman icons such as the Borghese Madonna. Akbar we know from Jesuit sources was fascinated by the icons of the Virgin and Child, treated them with the greatest respect, and ordered his artists to make copies (Brand and Lowry 1985, pp. 98–99). One of the earliest Mughal versions c. 1580 shows the Virgin seated on a huge golden throne with the Christ Child suckling at her exposed breast, wearing just a loose skirt round her hips and a voluminous cloak, transformed into something completely different by her Indian jewellery complete with a mirror ring on her thumb (Welch 1978A, fig. 1; Sotheby's 6 April 2011, lot 89).

Mughal artists thereafter played endless variations on two of the European depictions of

women brought in 1580, the Virgin and Child motif and the allegorical figure that opens Plantin's Polyglot Bible. The frontispiece of the Bible, a draped classical figure being crowned with a laurel wreath and a feather by a putto (see Brand and Lowry 1985, no. 61), became the model for many Mughal studies, from Basavan onwards (Okada 1991, fig. 9), who converted the wreath into a jewelled headdress with a *sarpech*. In several other versions the two types of figures have become confused so that the Virgin with her Child is dressed similarly to the allegorical figure and with the same kind of headdress (Losty and Roy 2012, figs. 71 and 74). Our Virgin wears the type of headdress invented by Basavan, with a spray of flowers instead of a *sarpech*. It has become a gold tiara encircling her piled up hair, crowned by delicate finials and with a dependent chain of pearls that goes under her chin. Several gold necklaces encircle the Virgin's extended neck including a solid ring of gold as well as a long chain holding a gold locket, while she wears mirror-rings on her thumbs. She is wearing a loose blue *shalwar* round her hips and legs, a yellow *choli* or bodice and a voluminous red cloak on which she is sitting and which is draped around her shoulders as well. Her bodice is open so that the Christ Child can gain access to her breast. He is dressed in a Mughal little boy costume with a gold cap on his head. He is perched across one thigh, supported by one of her hands, while with the other she offers him her breast. This is a wonderfully tender evocation of motherhood. He looks up at her face, but she is lost in contemplation of her son's forthcoming passion and her own agony as was traditional in European renditions of this scene,

but rarely achieved with such poignancy in Mughal painting.

Various features about the painting are unusual. The Virgin is seated on an extraordinarily large seat, perhaps made of wood, but in the shape of a *morha* or traditional cane seat. Across it supporting the Virgin's back is a huge bolster covered in a jade-green textile with a delicate floral scroll pattern. The shape of chair and bolster may have been derived from a poorly understood *charba* of Welch's early enthroned Virgin. On either side of the figures are three cypresses intertwined with flowering prunus, a Persian symbol of romantic relationships, and one that was especially favoured in the Deccan. The interweaving of the bushes with the cypresses is unusually carefully done, as is the rendering of the rough surface of their stems. A dish of pomegranates is at her feet, a Christian symbol of the forthcoming shedding of Christ's blood, as red as pomegranate juice. The folds of the Virgin's cloak and all the other clothes are modelled simply with darker coloured stripes, a feature of the early Virgin and Child referred to above, suggesting a Mughal artist just getting to grips with this method of modelling draperies. Instead however of a Mughal face or even a European one, the Virgin's face is almost completely Persianate with its slanting eyes. While found in some very early Mughal miniatures, this feature as well as the elongated neck (the Chester Beatty Yogini for example, Zebrowski 1981, col. pl. X) and the rings of necklaces (ibid., figs. 43–45) continued much longer in the Deccan. It is possible that our Mughal artist had recently joined the Mughal studio from the Deccan.



Actual size

#### 4 A Folio from the de Luynes Album

Folio: 46 × 32 cm

The important library of the Ducs de Luynes at their château of Dampierre, at Dampierre-en-Yvelines, between Versailles and Rambouillet, contained an album of Mughal and Indian miniatures, probably held in the château's library since the 18th century when French interest in India was at its strongest. The album, now dispersed, contained a series of Mughal paintings and drawings dating from the late 16th and 17th centuries.

Recto

##### A Prince Hawking

Mughal, attributable to Hiranand, 1600–10

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Numbered top right corner 135

Painting: 31.5 × 21 cm

A young prince is out hunting, riding a stallion with his hawk on his gloved right fist. Behind him rides a crowd of courtiers while he is preceded by huntsmen on foot, one with a matchlock over his shoulder, while another has two leaping hounds on leashes. The scene is set in a rocky landscape with a domed shrine in the top right-hand corner. The cool tonalities of the painting indicate that this is a page comparable to manuscripts such as the *Akbarnama* of 1602–03 and Jami's *Nafahat al-Uns* of 1604. For a comparable hunting scene showing Humayun resting on a hunting expedition, see Losty and Leach 1998, no. 3.

Our artist has a very distinctive method of rendering faces in profile: he draws their eyes small and pushed forward so that he is left with a large expanse of featureless space at the side of the face from the forehead beneath the turban right down to the chin. This may be the work of the artist Hiranand, who is known from his paintings in the *Akbarnama* of 1602–03 (Beach 1981, fig. 13, ascribed and nos. 12e and 12f for two attributed works) and the *Nafahat al-Uns* of 1604 (British Library Or.1362, f. 39v, unpublished, and Leach 1995, nos. 2.171 and 2.173, both attributed).



Left  
Christ before Caiaphas, from  
The Engraved Passion by  
Albrecht Dürer, 1512 (British  
Museum, P & D E, 4.29)



Right  
The Mocking of Christ, from  
The Engraved Passion by  
Albrecht Dürer, 1512 (British  
Museum, P & D E, 4.9)



4  
Verso

**An Enthronement Scene after Dürer**  
Mughal, early 17th century  
Brush drawing with wash and colours and gold  
Numbered 136 top left corner  
Painting: 18 × 11.5 cm

This is a composite image inspired by two European prints, which now looks like a portly ruler being revered by two acolytes. The artist has put together figures from two very different scenes from the Engraved Passion of Albrecht Dürer of 1512. Dürer's Engraved Passion series has long been known to have reached Akbar's court, because the earliest work of Abu'l Hasan, Jahangir's master artist, done in 1600–01, is a beautiful drawing of St. John from the Crucifixion from this series (now in the Ashmolean Museum, see Harle and Topsfield 1987, no. 84). The enthroned robed figure is based on the figure of Caiaphas in the scene of Christ before Caiaphas in Dürer's Passion series. The figures of Christ and the soldiers have been replaced in our drawing by the two foremost figures in Dürer's scene from the Engraved Passion of the Mocking of Christ, one a young man kneeling before Christ and raising his hat in mockery, the other standing with his back to the viewer and holding up a pair of pincers with which he pushes the crown of thorns further onto Christ's head. This object has been replaced by a sprinkler with which the standing man is anointing the Caiaphas figure.

Two other similar Mughal drawings reproduce Dürer's original of the Mocking of Christ more closely. That in the Binney collections in San Diego (Binney 1973, no. 67) is

closest to the original engraving with the two mocking figures overlapping each other, one wielding the pincers to push down the crown of thorns onto the head of the patient figure of the seated Christ, while a fourth figure behind Christ does the same job with a stick. The setting is a courtyard with a view of hills beyond. Another version with the same figures is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale 1986, no. 107), where Christ now wears a hat and the first mocking figure, now separated from his fellow, uses a sprinkler to anoint Christ. The setting is an enclosed courtyard as in our version but without the lower wall, while a recumbent dog has been introduced.

In terms of priority, the Binney page is the closest to the Dürer engraving, both in composition and in intention. Muslims had difficulty accepting the point of the passion and death of Christ, whom they revered as a holy man and a precursor of the Prophet. In tune with Muslim sensibilities the Paris artist and our artist have also toned down the repellent and hate-filled features of Dürer's original torturers, creating a different kind of work of art. Both figures have lost their mocking features. The Christ figure in the Paris version is being revered, not mocked, while our artist has gone further: he has removed the third torturer and substituted the figure of Caiaphas for that of Christ, but has made his features somewhat more agreeable than the demonic figure of Dürer's imagination. The artist has used these two disparate sources to create what looks like a scene of consecration.

The three principle figures in our version are superbly done with the artist transferring the lines of Dürer's prints into wash, faithfully imitating his originals. This is a very different technique from that used by Abu'l Hasan in 1600, since he used mostly line and a very delicate kind of wash. For other Mughal wash and line drawings of the early 17th century using a variety of techniques to reproduce the effects of European prints, see Losty and Roy 2012, figs. 67–74. The scene has been changed to the courtyard of a palace. The composition and in particular the foreground with two figures depicted only from their head and shoulders upwards outside the walled compound conforms to Mughal narrative art at the turn of the century. Two of the subsidiary figures wear the typical hats worn by the Portuguese in India, while cut-off subsidiary figures, only their heads and shoulders visible, wait outside. Our artist was clearly aware of other versions of this scene and has introduced the hound in the Paris version, but made him strangely elevated. Noticeable in our artist's handling of the figures is the delicate use of tooled gold on the hat and jewelled belt of the kneeling figure on the left and on the waistband of the central figure.

PROVENANCE  
Family collection of the Ducs de Luynes,  
Château de Dampierre, Yvelines, France



Actual size

## 5 Portrait of Asaf Khan holding a Jewelled Turban

Mughal, c. 1640

Laid down on an album page with salmon and jade green inner borders and a pink and gold splashed outer border

Inscribed on the verso inaccurately in an early 19th century hand:

*Jehangheer a King of Indistan*

Painting: 14.2 × 8.4 cm

Album page: 36.2 × 24.7 cm

In this sensitive portrait, Asaf Khan (1569–1641) stands facing left, dressed in a yellow *jama* sprigged with irises over lilac *paijama* with a tie-died *patka* round his waist, and a yellow and orange turban. His moustache is still dark but his close-cropped hair is grey and so too is what can be seen of his beard. He is armed with a sword with a gem-encrusted hilt and a shield slung from his shoulder while a cameo portrait pendant of obviously a Mughal emperor (presumably Shah Jahan) hangs round his neck. He holds a jewelled turban and has his gaze fixed across the top of it.

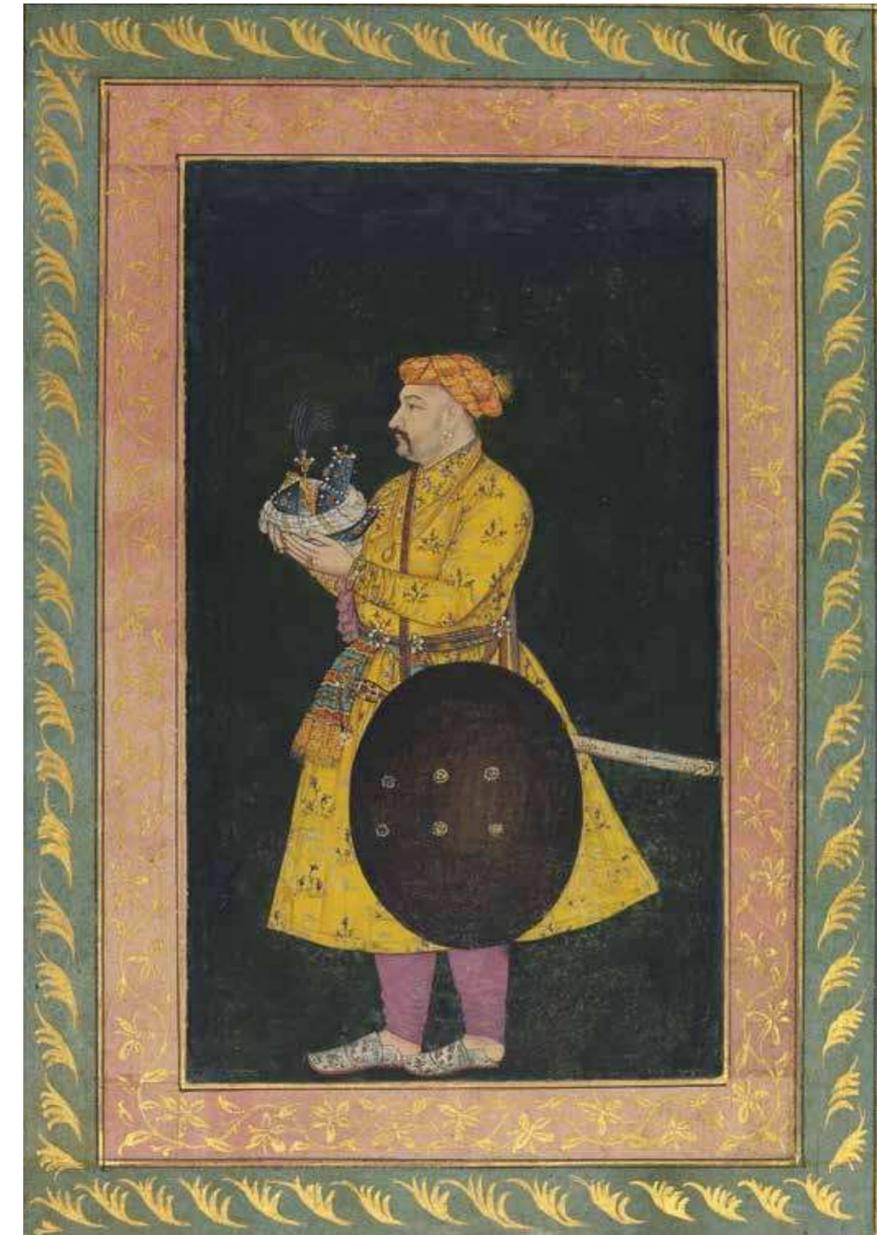
The son of I'timad al-Daula (Ghiyath Beg), Abu'l Hasan (known later as Asaf Khan) became the most significant Mughal courtier of the early 17th century after his sister Nur Jahan married Jahangir in 1611 and his daughter Mumtaz Mahal married Prince Khurram (afterwards Shah Jahan). He was given the high title Asaf Khan in 1614 and succeeded his father as Jahangir's *wazir* in 1621. He is often mentioned in the *Jahangirnama* beginning in 1611 and included in paintings of the imperial *darbars* standing close to the emperor (e.g. in 1611, Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 60, and in 1614, Stronge 2002, pl. 87). When Emperor Jahangir died in 1627, it was Asaf Khan who was responsible for ensuring that Shah Jahan was put on the throne after attempts by Nur Jahan to secure the succession for Jahangir's youngest son Shahriyar, who had married her daughter from her first marriage. Asaf Khan was rewarded with being Shah Jahan's *wakil* for the remainder of his life and advanced to the highest possible ranks in the *mansabdar* system.

Numerous single portraits of Asaf Khan date from the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. A splendidly intense drawing in the Chester Beatty Library shows him about 1611–14 wearing a portrait miniature of Jahangir round his neck but without the double pearl earrings that Jahangir adopted in 1614 and which many courtiers wore in imitation (Leach 1995, no. 3.63). He is still beardless, as he is in a painting in the Musée Guimet, Paris, from 1615–20 where he has adopted the pearl earrings (Bibliothèque Nationale 1986, no. 11). Balchand did a splendid portrait of him a few years later around 1620 now in the V & A (Pinder-Wilson 1976, no. 128). There he seems to be favouring a very heavy 5 o'clock shadow or perhaps starting to wear a beard, but this was not a very prominent feature until 1633. A window portrait of him dated 1627 in the St Petersburg Album shows him holding the imperial insignia of parasol and crown and surely represents him securing the throne for Shah Jahan in that year (von Hapsburg 1996, pl. 25). He is accorded there the rare honour for anyone outside the imperial family of being portrayed at a window.

His beard or lack of one is a problem in the portraits around 1630. In the *Padshahnama* he is first depicted in 1628 returning his grandsons to Shah Jahan (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1995, pl. 10). There Bichitr depicts him already elderly with grey hair and the beginnings of a grey beard, or perhaps again with heavy 5 o'clock shadow, although with his moustache still dark. This is also how he is depicted in Bichitr's great portrait of him from the Minto Album in 1631 as newly appointed Commander-

in-Chief (Stronge 2002, pl. 118). His portrayal in our painting suggests that it conforms to his appearance in the years around 1630. Curiously another of Bichitr's portraits of him dated 1630 from the Minto Album, where he is depicted as Shah Jahan's chief minister as Akbar hands his master the imperial crown, shows him with a fuller beard that is still black (Leach 1995, no. 3.29; Wright 2008, no. 54), when he was already 61. At least from 1633 his beard is depicted as longer and his moustache turned grey, as in Balchand's *darbar* painting in that year in the *Padshahnama* (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997, pl. 14), and that is how he appears in later representations in that manuscript.

The jewelled turban held by Asaf Khan requires particular attention. If he is depicted here as he was early in the reign of Shah Jahan, then an explanation must be sought for his holding this object: he would presumably be offering it to the person depicted on the opposite page of the album in the normal way of such double portraits in the imperial albums, e.g. Mu'in al-Din Chishti presenting a crowned globe to Jahangir from the Minto Album (Leach 1995, nos. 3.15 and 3.24). It has been surmised that the turban is the *taj-e 'izzati* (Christie's 25 April 2013, lot 160), which is the turban normally worn by Humayun, consisting of a brimmed cap of blue fabric rising to a central high rounded point, with the brim turned up and cut into points through which is woven a brocaded striped turban cloth. A black feather aigrette is fixed in front of the central peak. For good representations of this type of turban worn by Humayun, the young Akbar and



Actual size

others at his court, see Canby 2011, figs. 3 and 5. By Shah Jahan's time, it seems to have become somewhat romanticised and studded with jewels, although the basic shape remains the same, as in a page in the St Petersburg Album (von Hapsburg 1996, pl. 110). Other versions of it as envisioned by Shah Jahan's artists can be seen in the collections of the Freer and Sackler Galleries in Washington (Beach 2012, pp. 12 and 14). In all these versions the upturned but cutaway brim with the turban cloth wound through it is very clear.

In our turban the blue cap has a high central point, but the other parts seem to include a subsidiary peak at the back and a folded back peak at the front to which the aigrette seems to be attached. Although the cloth is wound round the turban, it is not wound through anything that can be interpreted as a brim. It is possible that the artist has become confused with another type of turban, the Persian jewelled turban, which is an elaborate affair of chequered cloth wound round a *kula* or baton, as well as a back projection, with a tall *sarpech* with black feathers erupting from a jewelled holder on top, and the rest of the blue *kula* studded with pearls and gemstones. The Mughal artist Hashim's portrait of Muhammad 'Ali Beg, the Persian ambassador to Shah Jahan in 1631, now in the V & A, shows him wearing an elaborate jewelled turban (Stronge 2002, pl. 127). The ambassador was wearing it when he arrived at Shah Jahan's court at Burhanpur in 1631 (Beach, Koch and Thackston 1997, pl. 17). On that occasion he was presented with, among other things, 'a jewel-studded Qizilbash crown'



(ibid., p. 52), which is possibly what is meant to be depicted here. The Mughals might not have been too familiar with it: it should have a central red baton for instance, as depicted in a late 17th century painting in the Sadruddin Aga Khan collection (Canby 1998, no. 53). In later years these jewelled turbans became even more elaborate, as in a portrait of a prince and his lady friend by 'Ali Quli Jubbadar from about 1670 in the British Museum (Canby 1999, fig. 139).

If Asaf Khan is in fact holding a version of a Persian turban, then it can be surmised that the portrait was placed opposite one of the Persian ambassadors in the original album pairing and that the original portrait of Asaf Khan dates from 1631. If however the artist meant to represent Humayun's turban, then it becomes impossible to explain what he was doing with it and to whom he was presenting it. The largely unsuccessful Humayun was revered but not mentioned much in Jahangir's memoirs, other than his respectful visits to his tomb whenever he was in Delhi. He did however wax enthusiastic about a manuscript written in Humayun's own hand when it was presented to him in 1619 (Jahangir 1999, p. 299).

The solid dark almost black background is unusual for the 1630s. It had first appeared as a background in the Minto Album, behind such portraits as those of Jahangir and Mu'in al-Din Chishti mentioned earlier. Although not unknown in the 1630s (it appears a few times in the Dara Shikoh Album of 1630–31, Falk and Archer 1981, no. 69, ff. 3v, 29v etc.), it was still rare. Altogether the difficulties presented by this

portrait suggest that it was done at a later date than 1631. The unbalanced position of the subject so close to the bottom frame of the miniature indicates that at some later time it was removed from its original Shahjahani mount and remounted in its present album page.

#### PROVENANCE

Clumber Library, sold Christie's 25 October 1937, lot 34  
Collection of Armen Tokatlian

## 6 Pigeons round a Dovecote

Mughal, c. 1650–60

Opaque pigments with gold

Inscribed in Persian on the dovecote: *'amal-i Mansur naqqash*

(‘the work of the illuminator Mansur’)

On an album leaf with florally-decorated and gilt-sprinkled borders

On the reverse is a page of ten lines of *nasta'liq* calligraphy from

a Mughal manuscript, with interlinear illumination

Painting: 18.7 × 11.3 cm

Album page: 46.9 × 31.6 cm

Two pigeons, black save for their heads and ends of their wing and tail feathers, are courting before a small gold portable pigeon house (*kabutar khana*). The male on the right is chasing the female. Surrounding them within a border are fourteen other smaller pigeons of different varieties, mostly in pairs. The inner panel with the main pair of birds is of a more deeply biscuit-tinted paper than the surrounding area. The central portion may be of earlier date and concept than the surround, although the technique and quality of painting in the two zones is identical.

Pigeon flying is thought to have originated with the Mughals' Timurid ancestors in Central Asia. It became a popular sport at the Mughal court, and was called *ishq-baazi* (love-play) by Emperor Akbar, who is said to have kept 20,000 royal pigeons. The birds were bred and trained in the palace and became greatly valued. The pigeons were given names such as Ashki (the weeper), Parizad (the fairy) and Almas (the diamond). It is described in the third volume of the *Akbarnama*, the official history of Akbar's reign, the *A'in-i Akbari* (Abu'l Fazl, pp. 298–303), while a whole manual, the *Kabutarname*, is devoted to the subject (British Library IO Isl 4811). Pigeon keeping and flying remained one of the principal imperial pastimes. In the nineteenth century the courtyard of the Diwan-i Khas in the Delhi palace was filled with *kabutar khana* or pigeon houses (Losty 2012, pp. 66–67) and even in the annual grand 'Id processions the emperors took a great basket full of pigeons with them (Galloway 2009, p. 91)

Studies of pigeons form some of the earliest subjects of Mughal independent natural history paintings, often in pairs with a portable pigeon house as here. An exquisite drawing of these three elements linked by floral sprays is in the Fogg Art Museum (Welch and Masteller 2004, no. 24), there attributed to Abu'l Hasan c. 1610. Our right hand pigeon is possibly based on one of that pair, in mirror reverse. A band with a very similar pair of pigeons and a pigeon house was added to the bottom of one of the portraits from Akbar's first imperial portrait album of c. 1595 in order to fit into a different album format in the seventeenth century (Losty 1986, no. 24). At the same time other pairs of birds (including two pigeons and a dovecot) are found in the Dara Shikoh Album of c. 1633–44 with, unlike here, some indication of landscape (Falk and Archer 1981, illustrated on pp. 388, 400), as also in a painting of a pair of brown and white pigeons in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Hurel 2010, no. 29), which appears to be from Jahangir's reign.

An identically composed version of this subject was with Colnaghi in 1976 and is now in the Aga Khan Museum (Canby 1998, no. 114; Das 2012, fig. V.16). The present version which was with Colnaghi in 1979 differs in that it bears the attribution to the Mughal artist Mansur. It is difficult to accept this attribution when compared with securely ascribed paintings (see Das 1991 and 2012 and Verma 1999 *passim*). The two main pigeons are painted in solidly black hues without any attempt to lay down individual feathers as is usual with Mansur. Asok Das, however, believes the central panel

as well as the marginal birds, are from the hand of the master (2012, fig. V.15), but without apparently seeing the originals. The fact that the format is a replica in miniature of that of the portrait pages of the Late Shah Jahan Album suggests a later dating, since the usual format in that album consists of various figures painted in the borders to reflect something of the character or occupation of the main portrait (see cat. 1q).

### PROVENANCE

Colnaghi, P & D & Co. (Colnaghi 1979, no. 22)  
Lloyd Collection, London

### PUBLISHED

Colnaghi, P & D & Co., *Paintings from Mughal India*, London, 1979, no. 22  
Das, A. K., *Wonders of Nature: Ustad Mansur at the Mughal Court*, The Marg Foundation, Mumbai, 2012, v. 15, p. 93



## 7.8 Two Paintings illustrating the *Jahangirnama*

Mughal, c. 1730–40

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Mounted on late album pages with floral borders and with panels of calligraphy on the reverse

These two paintings show Jahangir at Agra and Ajmer and are probably copies of lost paintings from Jahangir's memoirs, the *Jahangirnama*, which cover the first 19 years of his reign up to 1624. Thereafter he was too much under the influence of alcohol and drugs to continue. The memoirs are very personal and full of Jahangir's own observations about nature and people and not at all filled with the stuff of battles and conquest that fill the pages of his father's history the *Akbarnama*.

These two paintings are not in the contemporary style of the Muhammad Shah period as seen in the work of Chitarman, Govardhan and their colleagues, but rather are couched in an archaic style in the idiom of the originals of the *Jahangirnama*. Various paintings survive that were meant to illustrate the imperial manuscript of the memoirs, but this was never completed and the paintings were later incorporated into albums by his son Shah Jahan. Milo Beach lists them (1978, pp. 61–65) and many of them are included in Wheeler Thackston's translation of the *Jahangirnama* (1999). Perhaps Muhammad Shah encouraged his artists to take up again the work of illustrating the manuscript at this time. A page in the Dorn Album in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg in very similar style with a signature by the artist Miran bears a date of 1147/1734–35 (Tyulayev and Grek 1971, pl. 48). This shows Jahangir at a *jharokha* window looking down at a terrace with a scene of wrestlers surrounded by the members of his court, perhaps the scene referred to in the *Jahangirnama* at Ajmer in 1616 (Jahangir 1999, p. 198). Miran is a problematic artist and is thought by some to be identical to Mir Kalan Khan in his earliest phase in the imperial studio of Muhammad Shah in the 1730s (see McInerney 2011).

### 7 The Death of Mulla 'Ali the Seal Engraver in 1612

Painting: 35.5 × 21 cm

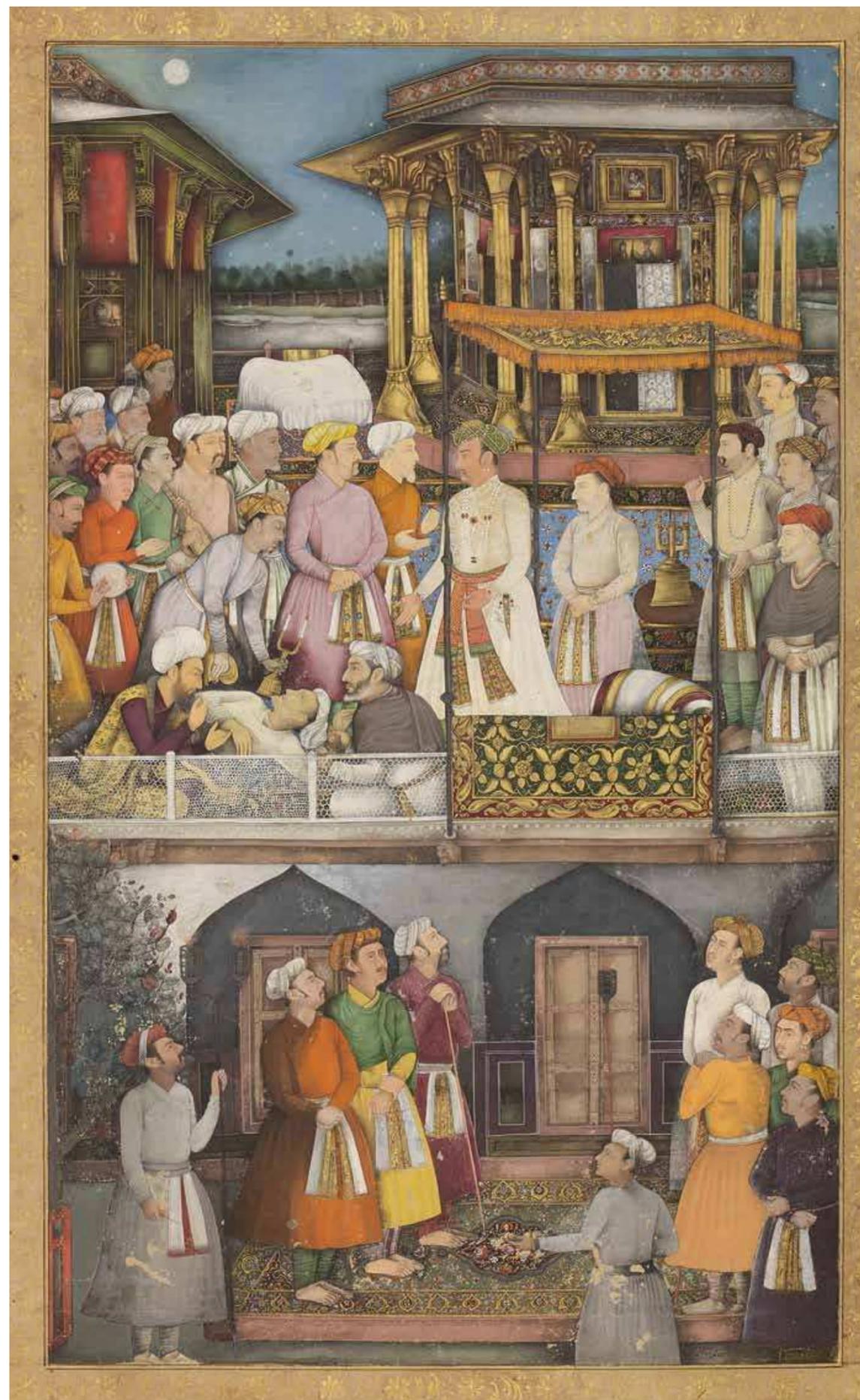
Album page: 52.5 × 37.5 cm

Jahangir records in his memoirs for 12 March 1610 an untoward event when he was enjoying a group of singers performing on the terrace outside the Divan-i Khas at Agra. He writes with reference to a query about the meaning of a verse of Amir Khusrau:

'Some Delhi singers were singing songs in my presence, and Sayyid Shah was, by way of buffoonery, mimicking a religious dance. This verse of Amir Khusrau was the refrain of the song: "Each nation has its right road of faith and its shrine (*qibla*). I've set up my shrine (*qibla*) on the path of him with the cocked cap." I asked what was the real meaning of the (last) hemistich. Mulla 'Ali Ahmad, the seal engraver, who in his own craft was one of the first of the age, and had the title of Khalifa, and was an old servant, and with whose father I had learned when I was little, came forward and said: "I have heard from my father that one day Shaikh Nizam-u-d-din Auliya had put his cap on the side of his head, and was sitting on a terraced roof by the bank of the Jumna and watching the devotions of the Hindus. Just then Amir Khusrau appeared, and the Shaikh turned to him and said: "Do you see this crowd," and then he recited this line: "Each race has its right road of faith and its shrine". The Amir, without hesitating, respectfully did homage to

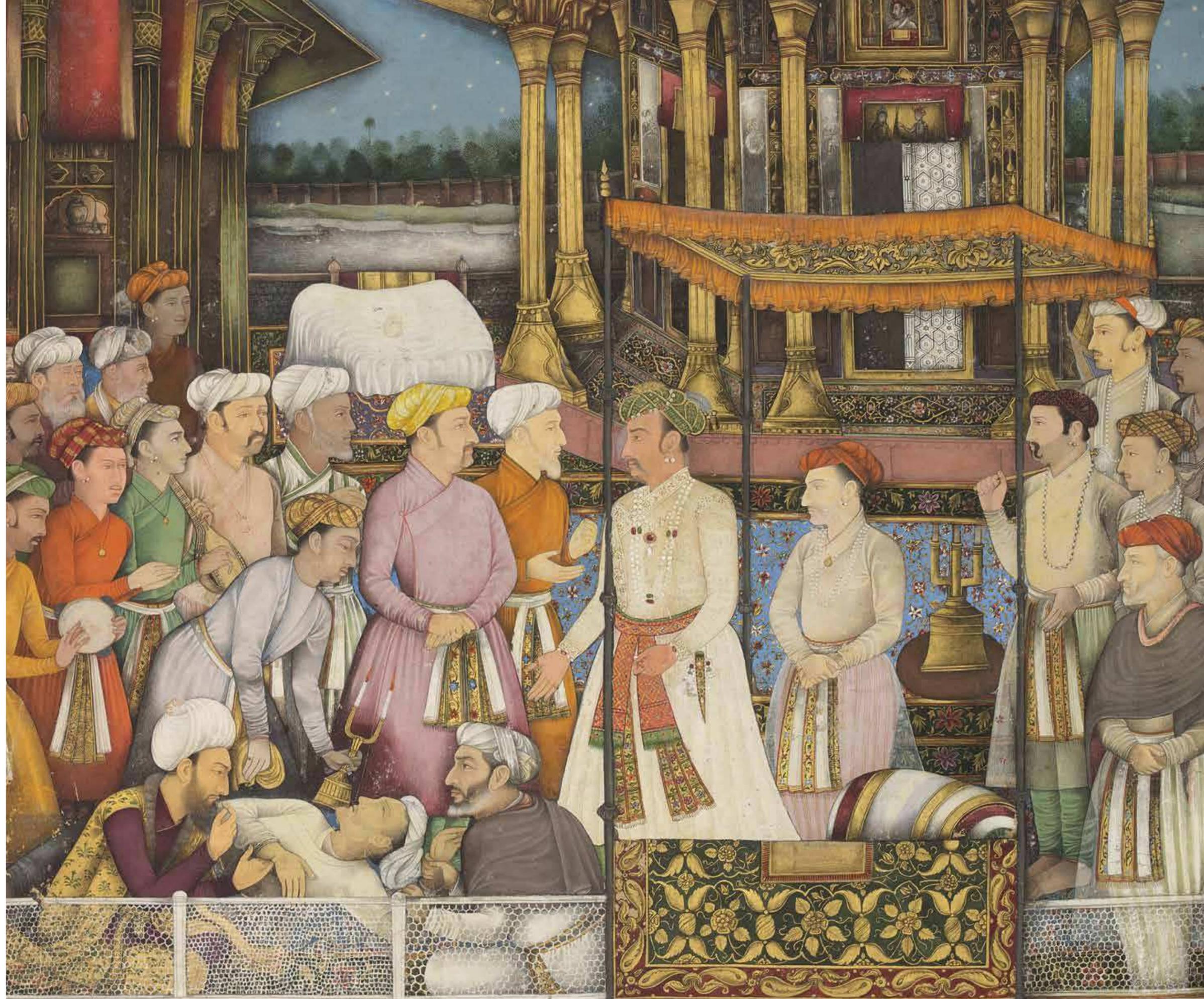
the Shaikh, and addressing him said: "I've set up my shrine in the direction of him with the cocked cap." The aforesaid Mulla, when these words were uttered, and the last words of the second hemistich passed over his tongue, became senseless and fell down. Conceiving a great fear from his falling down, I went to his head. Most of those who were present doubted whether he had not had an epileptic fit. The physicians who were present distractedly made inquiry and felt his pulse and brought medicine. However much they beat their hands and feet and exerted themselves, he did not come to. Immediately he fell he had delivered his soul to the Creator. As his body was quite warm, they thought that possibly some life might be left in him. After a short time it became evident that the thing was all over and he was dead. They carried him away dead to his own house. I had never seen this kind of death, and sent money to his sons for his shroud and burial, and the next morning they sent him to Delhi and buried him in the burial-place of his ancestors' (Jahangir 1909–14, vol. I, pp. 169–70).

The scene is set at night with a full moon illuminating the scene. Jahangir looking perplexed has risen from his seat on the terrace and is approaching the dying man with his son Khurram behind him, while physicians attend to the supine body of Mulla 'Ali by the light of a candlestick held by a young man. The musicians stand behind him. Members of the Mughal nobility stand around including I'timad al-Daula and his son Abu'l Hasan facing Jahangir,



while behind Khurram is Jahangir's favourite attendant Raja Bhao Singh bearing a *chowrie*. Abu'l Hasan (Asaf Khan) is not mentioned in Jahangir's memoirs until 1611 when the emperor married his sister Nur Jahan, so his presence here so close to the emperor is perhaps anachronistic. Down below the terrace a group of attendants look up in mystification from the courtyard that is now called the Macchi Bhavan.

The architectural setting is of great interest as it shows a pair of hypostyle halls with their wooden pillars all gilded, which may be the old Divan-i Khas at Agra and the baths opposite with the terrace between them, before Shah Jahan's remodelling. Jahangir's remodelling of Akbar's palace was in turn swept away by Shah Jahan to build in marble. Hitherto only one *Jahangirnama* page has shown much of the old palace at Agra. This is a scene set on the ground below the palace terrace with Jahangir looking out from the *sharokha* in the Shah Burj with a rather similar wooden hypostyle hall to the right (Goswamy and Fischer 1987, no. 37). Visible also in our painting are the two throne seats on the terrace. Jahangir's white marble seat on the terrace has a rich canopy over it and an equally rich hanging placed over the marble balustrade. At the other side of the terrace is the black marble throne seat that Jahangir had placed there for his appearances looking down on the people gathered on the river bank, here covered with white cushions and with a rich textile hanging over the balustrade.



## 8 Jahangir arrives at Ajmer in 1613

Spurious inscription in Persian at the top of the painting: *Akbar Padshah*; and on reverse in *nagari*: *Man Singh. Jahangir, Shah Jahan* behind the figures, and mistaking Asaf Khan for Raja Man Singh of Amber, along with a value of Rs 500

Painting: 33 × 19.5 cm

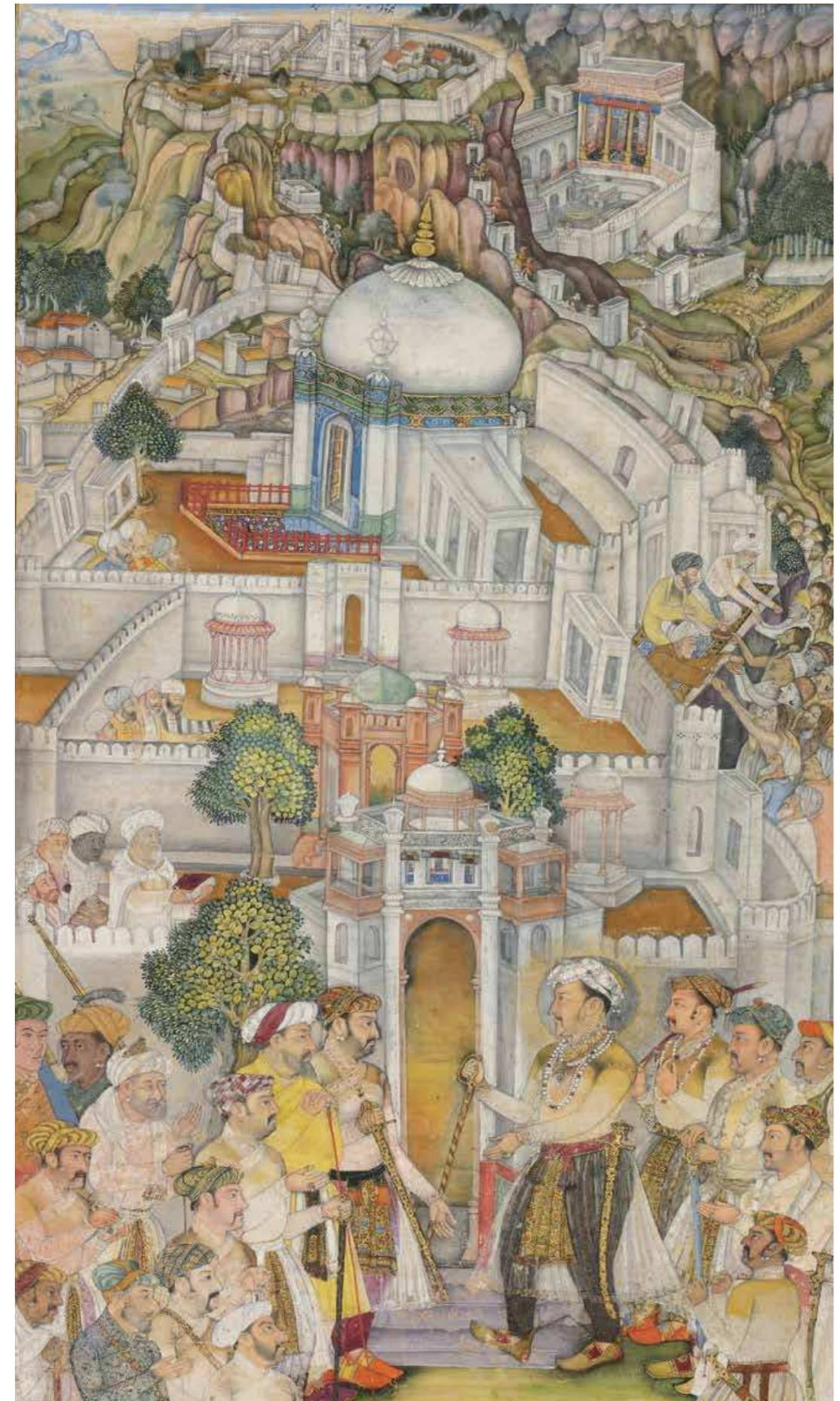
Album page: 51 × 37.6 cm

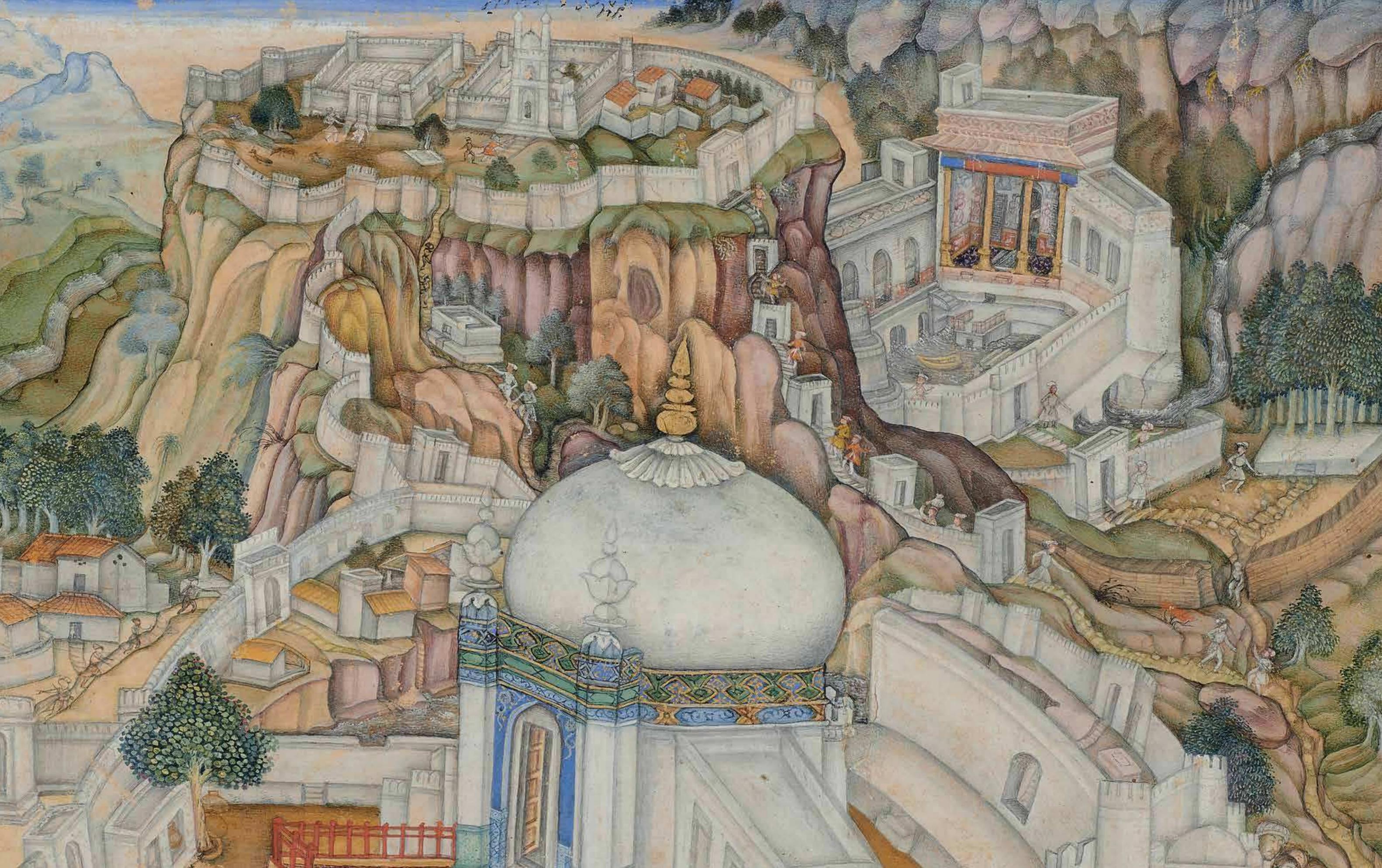
On 8 November 1613, Jahangir arrived at Ajmer from Agra. He writes:

‘That morning I set out. When the walls and buildings of the exalted khwaja’s shrine came into view, I went about a kos on foot and assigned my escorts to give money to the poor and needy as they proceeded. When four gharis of the day had passed, I entered the town, and at the fifth ghari I received the honour of visiting the blessed tomb. After performing a visitation, I set out for the royal palace, and the next day I ordered everyone present at the shrine, young and old, citizen and traveller, to pass before my view so that I could make them happy with abundant gifts according to their merits’ (Jahangir 1999, p. 153).

As described in the text, Jahangir is arriving on foot at the gate of Ajmer with his principal nobles around him. His son Khurram is behind him and Abu’l Hasan (son of Itimad al-Daula, afterwards Asaf Khan) and Khwaja Abu’l Hasan Turbati (recently arrived from Burhanpur, see *ibid.* p. 152) face him. Inside the shrine walls the custodians wait to receive him. The shrine is that of Khwaja Mu’in al-Din Chishti (d. 1236) for whom the Mughals had a special regard and regarded as a spiritual protector and guide of their house. To the right we can see food and alms being handed out to a crowd of indigents, many of whom appear to be Hindu fakirs. Beyond the shrine is the royal palace and further up the hill the ancient fortress. A very similar view showing Jahangir and Khurram

actually in the shrine with almost the same background of palace and fort is in the Raza Library, Rampur, one of the original paintings for the *Jahangirnama* (Jahangir 1999, repro. p. 195; Schmitz and Desai 2006, pl. 2). Another original representation of Ajmer from the *Jahangirnama* showing the distribution of food is in the CMSVS Mumbai (Jahangir 1999, p. 154).





## 9 Amir Khan, 'Umdat al-Mulk, seated on a Terrace

Ascribed to Nidhamal, Mughal, 1740–45

Opaque pigments with gold on paper

Inscribed lower right: [*amal-i Nidha*]mal baradar-i Hunhar

*Muhammadshahi* ('work of Nidhamal, brother of Hunhar, Muhammadshahi')

Formerly on an album page with floral borders and inscribed on reverse

in Persian: *tasvir-i Navab Amir Khan Bahadur Muhammad Shahi*, with a

seal impression of Asaf al-Daula dated 1190/1776–77

Painting: 36.2 × 27.4 cm

Amir Khan 'Umdat al-Mulk (d.1746) was a highly influential nobleman at Emperor Muhammad Shah's court. He was a cultured individual, and attracted scholars, poets and musicians to his palace in Delhi. He was supposed to have encouraged Muhammad Shah to pursue his cultural and pleasure pursuits rather than affairs of state and attracted the jealousy of the high officials of the court, so that he was sent for a time to Allahabad as the *Subahdar* of the province (1739–44). On his return to Delhi he was murdered at the entrance to the Divan-i Khas by a newly appointed attendant to the Emperor (see Shahnawaz Khan 1911–52, vol. 2, pp. 1063–65).

This sumptuous painting of Amir Khan shows him simply dressed all in white seated on a terrace smoking a *hookah*. Only a large jewel suspended round his neck and his brocade turban band hint at his status. One young attendant waves a *morchhal* over him and another stands with a hawk on his gloved hand ready for the nawab's inspection. Both are equally simply dressed in long floor-length white *jamias* but their status is distinguished by the rich *patka* and turban band of the former contrasted with the simple green cummerbund and turban of the falconer. Simple white *jamias* had become the height of fashion in the 18th century following Muhammad Shah's installation (see McNerney 2002, figs. 6–12) and as the decades progressed they simply got longer so that they swept the floor.

Nidhamal was one of the most important artists of the Muhammad Shah period and he also worked in Lucknow after 1760.

The important inscription assigning this painting to him has been corrected and completed by John Seyller, giving us the precious information that he and Hunhar were brothers (2012, no. 21). The suffix *Muhammadshahi* has been added to the artist's inscription in a slightly different hand and it is not clear to which of the brothers this attribution of imperial artistic favour has been given. Nidhamal seems to be the inventor of this type of terrace portrait occupying the whole foreground with a garden and hypostyle pavilion in the background. It grew out of the earlier compositions showing Muhammad Shah or one of his ministers seated in a pavilion favoured by artists such as Chitarman (Topsfield 2008, no. 49; Dalrymple and Sharma 2012, no. 5), before Nidhamal extended the terrace the width of the painting and moved the pavilion to the background as in a painting from around 1735 of Muhammad Shah on a terrace receiving his ministers now in San Diego (Dalrymple and Sharma, no. 10). In our painting he further refines this idea treating the foreground with the greatest simplicity and with increasing elaboration as the picture recedes, firstly through the exquisitely detailed marble balustrade and flower border behind it, then the parterres on either side of the large central pool and fountain, and finally the pavilion at the focal point of the composition surrounded by a brilliant sunset sky and darkly threatening clouds. New too is the concern with what to a western eye seems a more accurate representation of European linear perspective. As Seyller pointed out (2012), the orthogonals

appear to converge in single point perspective, although they do not actually do so, while the start points of the principal orthogonals are reinforced by the figures and the *hookah* at those points.

Nidhamal subsequently left Delhi for Avadh. An oft-quoted letter of 1772, written by a Maratha envoy in Delhi to the Maratha vizier Nana Phadnavis in Poona, states that Nidhamal had some time previously left Delhi for Lucknow and died there. Ascribed or signed paintings from his time in Lucknow are known (Losty and Roy 2012, pp. 186–87). Clearly our painting like the artist journeyed to Lucknow to enter into the collection of Nawab Asaf al-Daula (reg. 1775–97).

### PROVENANCE

Sotheby's, London, 23 April 1997, lot 146 (with details of now vanished inscription and seal on verso)

T. McNerney (McNerney 2002, fig. 14)

Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection (Seyller and Seitz 2012, no. 21)

### PUBLISHED

McNerney, 2002, pp. 12–33, fig. 14

Seyller, J., and Seitz, K., *Mughal and Deccani Paintings: Eva and Konrad Seitz Collection of Indian Miniatures*, Museum Rietberg, Zurich, 2010, no 21



## 10 A Scene with European Figures

Attributed to Mir Kalan Khan, Avadh, 1765–75  
Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper  
Laid down in a later album page with pink and blue  
flowers in a diaper pattern formed by *saz* leaves on a gold ground  
Inscribed on the otherwise blank verso in *nagari*: *patshah firang ko*  
(‘King of the Franks’)  
Painting: 18.5 × 10 cm  
Album page: 51 × 38 cm

A princess seated on a throne is listening to a group of men vigorously debating some issue of importance while a young woman brings in a salver containing the severed head of a goat. Clearly a European source is behind the composition and the latter element inevitably brings to mind the Biblical story of Salome demanding the head of John the Baptist after she had danced for King Herod at a banquet. Numerous prints and paintings from Cranach and Dürer to Rubens divide the subject as here between the three elements of Salome, Herod and the diners, although none precisely fits the format of this painting. In any case the artist has clearly thought the subject to be too gruesome for his patron and decided to play around with it, substituting a goat’s head for that of the Baptist and a princess for Herod.

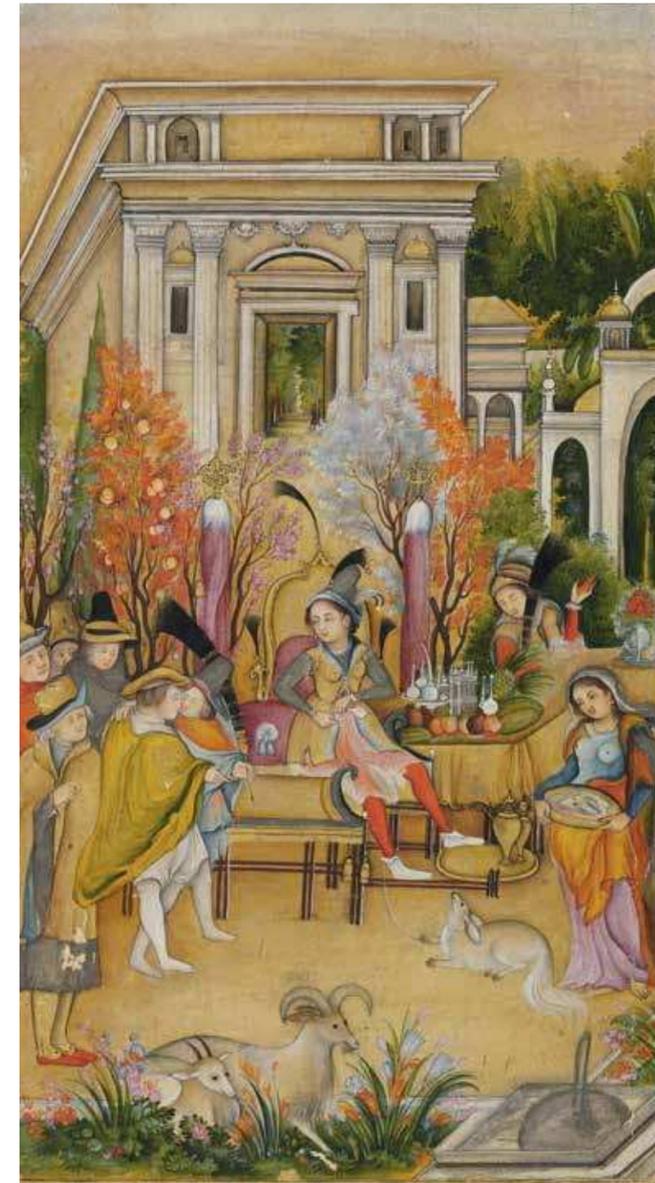
The painting can be securely attributed to the Delhi and Avadh artist Mir Kalan Khan on the basis of two very similar works also in this small format formerly facing each other in the album of Sir Charles Forbes, who was in India in the 18th century. One’s subject is Jesus in the Temple, ascribed to our artist, and now in the Benkaim collection (Markel and Gude 2010, no. 17), and the other is Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, now in the Binney collection in the San Diego Museum (Binney 1973, no. 80). All three works share Mir Kalan Khan’s playful adaptation of European themes, for this artist does not so much copy European works as adapt elements of them for his own compositional purposes.

In this painting the young princess figure who is dressed in a combination of European

and Indian masculine dress is perched on the side of a strange throne with a very wide seat and a shaped, carved back adorned with black eagle feathers. A tall wrapped standard in the Mughal manner but without Mughal finials stands on each side of the throne. The throne is supported by an array of spindly legs which extend to include a round footstool on which the princess is resting her feet but which also does double duty as a tray with ewers on it. The princess is pouring from a decanter into a glass having taken it from the table beside her, which is laden with bottles and fruit. At the other end of the table an attendant with a *morchhal* has fallen asleep. The princess is listening attentively to the conversation among the group of men on the left who are dressed in what appears to be northern European costume of the 17th century. On the right the beautiful Salome figure advances swaying her hips with the tray containing the goat’s head, but she appears to be intent on contemplation rather than seduction. A leash is attached to the throne legs in some way with a mongoose tethered. In the foreground a pair of goats or ibexes is standing in the flower bed beside a little fountain. Behind the figures is a screen of brilliantly coloured trees and shrubs. Beyond is an architectural fantasy based on Renaissance models. An open doorway allows us to see through the main building along an avenue of trees receding into the distance, while a screen of arches to the side encloses a garden well stocked with trees. Many of these details are also found in the two paintings from the Forbes Album mentioned earlier.

Mir Kalan Khan was in his maturity an eclectic artist who borrowed elements from European, Persian and Deccani art in order to create his own painterly fantasies. Apart from the obvious borrowings from Europe in this scene, we note that some of the feathery, brilliantly coloured trees seem to have strayed from early Deccani painting as in the *Pem-nem* from Bijapur of 1591 (cf. Hutton 2008, figs. 3, 5 etc.), while the overall golden tonality of the painting also has a possible Deccani source in that same manuscript. The artist was familiar with early Bijapuri painting as demonstrated by his well-known version of A Princess watching her Maid kill a Snake in the Johnson collection in the British Library (most recently published in McNerney 2011, fig. 7, and Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 133), not so much a copy as an exercise in the Bijapuri idiom.

Mir Kalan Khan’s work in the imperial studio is known from ascribed work in the St Petersburg Album dated to 1734–35 (McNerney 2011, fig. 1), a relatively immature scene of hunting by night. Paintings in the mature Muhammad Shah landscape style in the 1740s have plausibly also been attributed to him (ibid. figs. 3 and 4). Sometime in the 1750s, almost certainly after the flight of the heir apparent ‘Ali Gauhar in 1758 and the murder of his father ‘Alamgir II in 1759, Mir Kalan Khan went as did other Mughal artists eastwards and wound up in Faizabad and Lucknow, the capitals of the autonomous state of Avadh under Nawab Shuja’ al-Daula. There he came under the influence of European prints of the 17th and 18th centuries. Whereas it is not impossible that he knew of



Actual size



such material while still in Delhi, there is no evidence of renewed European influence on Mughal painting in the 1740s and 1750s. It is more likely that this influence was felt after 1765 in Faizabad when the Nawab was made to accept a Resident from the East India Company and when refugee officers from the French Compagnie des Indes such as Col. Jean-Baptiste Gentil settled there in the Nawab's service in 1763. Gentil was joined in 1771 by Col. Claude Martin, who is known to have had a large collection of European prints, and by Col. Antoine Polier in 1773. Such influence from European prints is felt directly in this painting, the two related ones from the Forbes Album discussed above, and the famous Village Life in Kashmir in the British Library (McInerney 2011, fig. 9; Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 130). The beautiful Salome figure in our painting, with her draped Biblical costume, seems a slightly later improvement on the female figures in the latter painting, in which our two goats are also to be seen in the foreground. Salome's contrapposto is surely derived from a Renaissance print of the Virgin. All these paintings share the same treatment of the human figure with small, delicate heads and features, and neatly articulated bodies. In his earlier work in Delhi Mir Kalan Khan mostly used the traditional full profile for his figures but on his move to Avadh, influenced by Deccani, Safavid and European ideas, he switched to three-quarter profile for his main characters.

11 A large, complete Summer Carpet from the Amber Group of Chintzes

North India, c. 1645  
Cotton tabby, painted, resist- and mordant-dyed  
504 × 498 cm  
Loom widths: 79, 76, 78.5, 39, 75.5, 76, 79 cm

Indian textiles, especially cottons, made a major impact on worldwide trade and design during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Intricately coloured, washable cloth was a novelty in Europe in 1600; by 1800 it was found in every household. Indian craftsmen had invented a sophisticated technology for permanently dyeing cotton cloth with many colours to make *chintz*, or painted cotton cloth. The word is most likely derived from a Hindi verb “to paint,” *cītnā*. Chintz was also mass-produced by block printing, but the best chintzes were unique luxury items, entirely drawn by hand, using many processes to achieve many colours on one textile. Millions of yards of Indian cloth were sold throughout the world annually. Home consumption included every type of fabric, but the market for the best grades of textiles, including chintz, was the Indian aristocracy. The seventeenth-century imperial Mughal chintzes known today, though few in number, meet the highest aesthetic standards.<sup>1</sup>

Because securely dated and documented Indian textiles are extremely rare, the understanding of textile production and use during the Mughal era is often conjectural. Even though there are contemporary textual references to seventeenth-century manufacture of chintz in Broach, Delhi, Sironj, Gujarat, Merta, Sangner, Sirhind, Multan, Lahore, Agra and Burhanpur (as well as Golconda and other places in the south), little is known about what textiles were made in any specific place in that century.<sup>2</sup> In 1959 when John Irwin published the then-known twelve chintzes from Amber, he concluded that they

had been made in Golconda.<sup>3</sup> Irwin had worked on South Indian painted cottons and was perhaps unaware that high quality painted cottons were produced in other parts of India. Because of the presence of “foreign” motifs in some of the designs, Irwin thought those textiles had been made for export. He did not consider them to have been made for the Mughal market. There is not one smidgen of evidence that this group of textiles ever saw the light of day in Golconda. Irwin’s proposition that the Amber chintzes came from the Deccan was accepted, until their provenance was reconsidered in light of their inscriptions, their initial ownership, and the fact that excellent painted cottons were made in North India as well as in the south. Abandoning the Deccani attribution is not easy, because the chintzes have been “from Golconda” for such a long time that their decorative vocabulary has been incorporated into the collective scholarly mind as “Deccani.” But if Irwin’s notions are removed and the facts are considered anew, a different conclusion is apparent.

Most of the seventeenth-century painted cottons from the Amber palace have been published, some as eighteenth-century and some as having been made for foreign markets. However, there is hard evidence to show that the 25 known today were made for the Rajput Kachhawaha clan, the modern house of Jaipur, whose seventeenth century palace was at Amber. With the rise of their power in the eleventh century, the Kachhawahas had established their fortress palace at Amber and through the ensuing 500 years expanded their realm and

riches. In 1556 the politically astute and increasingly influential Raja Bihar Mal joined forces with the new Mughal emperor Akbar, and, when he gave his eldest daughter Hira Kumari in marriage to Akbar, was catapulted up the ladder of influence. That union produced Jahangir, who also was wed to two Amber princesses. Thus, not only did a succession of Kachhawaha rajahs (Bhagwant Das, Man Singh, Bhao Singh), serve the imperial court in high military and administrative positions, but the princesses from Amber also wielded power and influence as wives of the emperors and mothers of princes. Long known as an eminent and capable general under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, Mirza Raja Jai Singh (r. 1621–1667) is now recognized as the raja under whose auspices magnificent textiles and carpets were acquired at the Amber palace.

When a textile or carpet was acquired at Amber, the size and date, and, sometimes, the price, were written on the object itself in black ink. Sometimes the raja’s seal was stamped in ink above the first line of the notation. When subsequent inventories were made, the dates were written, and sometimes the measurements and price. Because many of the inscribed carpets are still in Jaipur (although some are not) and because the formulae for writing the notations and the dates are the same as those on the Amber textiles, there is no doubt that the painted cottons were in the Amber storeroom in the seventeenth century. The great art dealers Imre Schwaiger and Nasli Heeramaneck gained access to the Jaipur storerooms around the turn of the twentieth





century and brought out, among other things, a group of Mughal textiles, including this green-ground summer carpet.

The summer carpet is significant not only in its size, design, and provenance, but also because of the inventory notations on the reverse. The six other floor spreads in the Amber group are, or were, rectangles with the main field plain, undyed ground, but with elaborate painted designs.<sup>4</sup> The green ground floor spread has, like the others, a somewhat carpet-inspired border, but, unlike the others, rows of very lively fantastic floral meanders. There has been some damage from the iron oxide used for the black outlines, but otherwise the cloth is in good condition.

Nine inventory notations found on the reverse are now hidden by the backing added to strengthen and preserve this important textile. The inscriptions are written in *Devanagari*, with many abbreviations and in a very hurried, imprecise hand, which is difficult to decipher. Although the Amber Rajputs were Hindu, the dates given are Hijri, i.e., Muslim, dates. It is interesting that the accounting was in this form, an indication of the assimilation of the Kachhawahas into the Muslim culture of the Mughal court. The inscriptions which have been found and read, listed by reign:

Mirza Raja Jai Singh (1621 – 1667)  
29 Rabi us Sani 1055 = 24 June 1645  
3 Safar 1057 = 10 March 1647  
21 Muharram 1066 = 20 November 1655  
present price 30 rupees  
23 Ramzan 1067 = 27 March 1656

29 Sawwal 1076 = 16 April 1666  
edges length 7 gaz 8 girah, width 7 gaz 4 girah<sup>5</sup>  
Ram Singh (1667 – 1688)  
1 Rabi us Sani 1078 = 20 September 1667  
Bishan Singh (1688 – 1699)  
9 Jumada us Sani 1101 = 9 April 1690  
edges length 7 gaz 4 girah, width 7 gaz 8 girah  
price 30 rupees per piece  
Sawai Jai Singh (1699 – 1743)  
2 Rabi us Sani 1113 = 6 September 1701

The measurements are noted twice, and are the same as the present piece, indicating that it is still complete, a testament to the care it received in those storerooms. Also recorded twice, the seventeenth century price was Rs. 30. Above the notation of 9 Jumada us Sani 1101 is a round seal stamp like a stamp on a similarly dated floor spread,<sup>6</sup> which seems to be the seal of Bishan Singh.

The summer carpet is made up of seven lengths of plain-woven cotton tabby. The loom widths, given above, are smaller than usual for this group, which suggests that the floor-covering was ordered to be a particular size, perhaps for a specific room or tent, with the seven pieces woven to add up to the required dimensions. After the woven strips were sewn together into a huge square, the design was blocked out. There must have been measurement and placement to make the regular rows of meandering, fantastic plant forms, but close examination reveals that none is a precise repeat of another. As in the other textiles in this group, stencils were not used, neither was there block printing.

What is quite regular is the placement of the little five-petalled red and white flowers at the centre of the whirling arms of the floral concoctions, which reverse vertically as they dance across the green ground. This suggests that those spots were the design reference points. When the design was thus blocked out, marks were also made where the selvages met in order to reattach them when the dying was completed. The pieces were unstitched. The elaborate processes<sup>7</sup> that resulted in different colours were carried out on the seven lengths of fabric.

Black lines which define every element were drawn and dyed. A resist, probably molten wax, was applied where colour was not wanted in the red, pink or brown areas. A different mordant was painted on for each of those colours, which appeared when the cloth was dyed with madder. Madder does not adhere to fibres where a mordant is not applied, and results in different colours depending on the mordant. The yellow and blue colours were achieved by painting with a brush, which, unlike dipping in a dye bath, results in a mottled effect. Yellow and blue applied consecutively produced the green.

The pieces were then reattached, the freehand designs joining remarkably at the edges. However, one meandering row is quite endearing, as there was not quite enough space. It is smaller than the others, but just as exuberant and full as its neighbours.

There is considerable discussion as to whether the “material culture” of the Kachhawaha Rajputs is “Rajput” or “Mughal.” For example, a painting long thought to be a Mughal painting of the highest caliber is now understood to have



been made for Mirza Raja Jai Singh.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is a Mughal painting of the highest calibre, and was made for a Rajput Mughal courtier. The lives and fortunes of Bihar Mal and his descendants were so closely intertwined with the Mughal court, that they can be and should be seen as participants in and contributors to Mughal culture. Are the “Mughal” carpets with Amber inventory notations “Rajput” because of where they were in the seventeenth century, or “Mughal” because they are decorated with rows of formal naturalistic flowers, the quintessential Mughal motif? Some of the Amber textiles have these rows of formal flowers, too. The Kachhawahas furnished their living spaces and dressed themselves with what was the fashion at the Mughal court.

Where the Amber painted cottons were made is not yet known, but an as yet undiscovered inscription will no doubt tell us. Some of the Jaipur carpet inscriptions include place of purchase, so such a notation on a chintz will not be unexpected.

1 For a detailed description of the group see Ellen S. Smart, “A Preliminary Report on a Group of Important Mughal Textiles,” in *The Textile Museum Journal* 1986, Washington, D.C., 1987  
2 Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 13, 33, 38, 63, 67  
3 John Irwin, “Golconda Cotton Paintings of the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Lalit Kala* 5 (April 1959), pp 8–48  
4 Stewart Culin describes the present Brooklyn Museum panels as a floorspread 24 feet long,

price Rs. 1200. Culin Archive, Expeditions [2.1.020]: Collecting Trip in Japan, Korea, China & India. Volume 2 of 2. (02/1914–05/1914, p. 305)  
5 There were 16 girah in an Amber gaz. A gaz was 67 centimeters  
6 Victoria and Albert Museum IM 160–1929  
7 For a description of the process in the 18th century, see Mattiebelle Gittinger, *Master Dyers to the World*, The Textile Museum, Washington, DC, 1982, chapter 1  
8 It is a painting of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and the Jodhpur Maharaja Gaj Singh, probably painted to commemorate a marriage between the two Rajput families. See Catherine Glynn and Ellen Smart, “A Mughal Icon Re-examined,” *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. LVII, 1 / 2, Museum Rietberg Zurich, with the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC, 1998

Ellen S. Smart



Pierre Jourdan-Barry started to collect Indian courtly arts, particularly metalwork including bidri, in the 1980s, when a small group of collectors, dealers and academics began to take the subject seriously. These objects were given prominence in 1982 by Robert Skelton and his team at the Victoria & Albert Museum in the seminal exhibition *The Indian Heritage - Court Life Arts under Mughal Rule*. Dealers and collectors like Stuart Cary Welch, Simon Digby, John Robert Alderman, Mark Zebrowski, Terence McInerney and Spink & Son were all instrumental in developing an understanding of the subject and creating a market. Other exhibitions such as *India – Art & Culture 1300–1900* at the Metropolitan Museum New York in 1985 put Indian decorative arts into their wider context. The most important and comprehensive publication to date is without doubt Mark Zebrowski's survey *Gold, Silver & Bronze from Mughal India*, published in 1997. Many pieces from the Jourdan-Barry collection are illustrated in this book.

Indian metalworkers of the 16th–19th century not only adapted Persian and Central Asian forms and decoration but they also developed new techniques of manufacture and embellishment of which the most important was bidri. This distinctive type of inlaid metalware was produced only in India and is thought to have originated in Bidar in the Deccan, the earliest known examples dating from the first half of the 17th century. Bidri is made from an alloy that is composed primarily of zinc but may also include smaller amounts of lead, copper and tin. After casting, the surface

of the object is smoothed and temporarily darkened with a copper sulphate solution. The design is then cut into it with engraving tools and inlaid with shaped pieces of silver or brass or both. Once the inlay has been burnished, the surface of the object is covered with a paste which permanently darkens the object without affecting the silver and brass decoration. When the paste is washed off and the piece rubbed with oil to deepen its matte finish, the object dazzles with the contrast of silver and brass against the deep black ground (Dye III, Joseph M., 2001, p. 404).

Indian craftsmen often decorated metal vessels with colourful enamels, of the 'champlevé' type where the oxide paste is applied to the excavated metal surface, usually silver, silver-gilt or copper. The object was then subjected to intense heat in a furnace, each colour fusing at a different temperature, requiring repeated firings to produce the entire colour range. In the 18th and 19th century the Muslim rulers of the court of Oudh favoured champlevé enamelling on silver objects thought to have been made in Lucknow.

The Pierre Jourdan-Barry collection is remarkable for its high quality but also its diversity. It encompasses both Hindu and Mughal courtly and devotional objects, precious and non-precious materials, various techniques and covers a wide geographical area and timespan. The following objects give a taste of the collection.

**12**  
**A spectacular, circular Bidri Tray**  
**Deccan, Bidar, 17th century**

Diameter: 33.5 cm

This tray is inlaid with brass and silver, decorated with large cartouches enclosing flowers, radiating around a central floral arrangement, and linked with a meandering floral and leaf design on thin brass wire stems. This is an excellent example of the voluptuous style of the 17th century Mughal courtly arts.

**13**  
**Small bud or cone-shaped Hookah**  
**Base Deccan, 18th century**

Height: 21 cm

This *hookah* base has a ribbed body with trailing leaf design down each rib, the size of the leaves diminishing as the cone becomes narrower. These hand held *hookahs* derived their shape from the Persian *kalian*. They were in vogue in India in the second half of the 18th and early 19th century. This is an early example of a rare type of bidriware. (Zebrowski, 1997, cats. 403, 405, 406–408; Mittal, 2011, no. 33).

**14**  
**A ribbed brass Pandan of circular**  
**Form**

North India, late 17th–18th century  
Height: 7.6 cm; diameter: 13.3 cm

This brass pandan has large, freely drawn alternating flowering plants around a central circle enclosing a flower head seen from above,

with petals half open. Smaller versions of the same plants are around the body of the pandan. Zebrowski (Zebrowski, 1997, cats. 465 & 468) considers this pandan one of the finest of this group to which a slightly later example in the Victoria and Albert Museum also belongs (inv. no. 747–1889) with its inlaid orange and dark green lac intact.

PUBLISHED  
Zebrowski, M., *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997, cat. 468, see also colour plate 491

**15**  
**Cast Brass Ewer retaining some of its**  
**original red and green Lac**

North India, probably Lahore, late 17th or early 18th century  
Height: 32 cm

According to Zebrowski, (Zebrowski, 1997, cat. 228, pp. 161 & 162) this impressive and thickly cast brass ewer is remarkable for having retained much of its original red and green lac. This ewer relates to another in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Zebrowski, 1997, cat. 227). The pear-shaped form of both, derive from the famous bidri ewer in the Victoria & Albert Museum (inv.1479–1904; Zebrowski, 1997, pl. 225). This ewer is from the same workshop as a pandan in the Victoria & Albert Museum (Zebrowski, 1997, cat. 465 and colour plate 493).

PUBLISHED  
Zebrowski, M., *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997, p. 162, cat. 228

**16**  
**An exceptional refined Bidri Pandan**  
**India, 17th century**

Height: 8.5 cm; diameter: 14.6 cm

This pandan has straight sides and a gently domed lid, inlaid with brass and silver. The domed lid has delicate scrolling stems enclosing a cluster of three flowers, the centre of the lid with circular leaf and flower decoration and the body with similar pattern to the lid but in a smaller format.

**17**  
**Silver-gilt Bottle with Champlevé**  
**multi-coloured Enamel Decoration**

North India, Lucknow, c. 1780  
Height: 17.5 cm

This silver-gilt bottle is decorated with flowering trees, different varieties of birds, peacocks, cranes, doves, ducks and circular bands of water with fish, flowers and lotus plants. This masterly example of Indian enamel work relates to the silver gilt *hookah* base illustrated in Zebrowski (Zebrowski, 1997, p. 85, cat. 71) and a very fine example of a silver gilt domed spice box in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Zebrowski, 1997, p. 84, no. 70; Markel, Gude, 2011, pl. 86).

PROVENANCE  
Simon Digby

**18**  
**Small mango-shaped Bidri Hookah**  
**Base or Container**

Deccan, 17th century  
Length: 11.5 cm

Bidri *hookah* base or container used for lime-paste (*chunam*) covered with large, single flowering plants inlaid in silver and brass. The mango is a pleasing shape which sits easily in the hand. In Mughal decorative arts this form was also made in silver, in brass and in rock crystal.

PROVENANCE  
Stuart Cary Welch

**19**  
**Magnificent Hookah Base**  
**Deccan, Bidar, 17th century**

Height: 19 cm; diameter: 17 cm

This *hookah* base has a compressed spherical body with a squat neck and is decorated in a floral naturalism which is quintessential to Mughal decoration of the 17th century – a style which reached its peak in the reign of Shah Jahan (1628–58). Our *hookah* base is decorated with a row of large, single flowering plants with curling leaves and large and small flower heads which are separated from each other by a variety of smaller flowers. A horizontal border enclosing a floral arabesque runs along the shoulder of the sphere. The neck is decorated with flower buds and flowers growing from a lotus base. The decoration is equally balanced between silver and brass inlay.



20

**Brass Ewer with engraved Fish Scale Pattern**

Deccan, early 18th century  
Height: 32 cm

The ewer is inscribed with a Persian inscription which reads: '*Khairullah*'. The dropped pear-shaped ewer has a sinuous spout and rounded handle, with everted top and lid. The body and lid are entirely decorated with an engraved overall feathered fish-scale pattern. This design also appears on Ottoman Iznik ceramics and metalwork. This ewer is unusual for its Persian inscription which probably refers to an earlier owner's name.

PUBLISHED

Zebrowski, M., *Gold, Silver and Bronze from Mughal India*, London, 1997, cat. 232

21

**Chillam (Fire Cup) made of Silver, with green and dark blue Enamels**

North India, Lucknow, mid-18th century  
Height: 9 cm ; Diameter: 9 cm

An exquisite openwork decoration of birds within foliage, birds together within swirling vegetation and single flowering plants. Questions remain regarding the different centres of production and when the technique first appeared in India. Although extremely high quality enamel was produced for the Mughal and Deccani courts it is thought the technique came from Europe. Jahangir mentions European jewels (at this time

enamelled jewels were prevalent in Europe) from Muqarrab Khan, governor of Surat. The early 17th century gold thumb ring in the V&A (I.M.207–1920) has enamelling on the inside which is strongly influenced by Renaissance jewellery (Skelton, 1982, p. 303). By the 18th century Lucknow had become famed for its silver and silver-gilt metalwork with brilliant blue and green champlevé enamelling. This *chillam* is one of the finest and most delicate examples of its type.

PROVENANCE

Simon Digby

22

**A fine Silver Ritual Tray, used in the Worship of a Shiva Shrine**

South India, 1820–1850  
Height: 28.5 cm; diameter of flower: 23.5 cm

This tray was used either for temple or personal devotion. The Nandi bull is seated on the pedestal and holds a *tazza* or tray on his back. Nandi is the vehicle of Shiva. This ritual object would have been placed next to a *lingam* together with other devotional accessories. It would have belonged to a wealthy or courtly family on account of the high quality of craftsmanship and the use of silver instead of brass.

Francesca Galloway



Cat. 19

## 23 Rustam being hurled into the Sea by Akvan

2 folios from a *Shahnama* manuscript

Bijapur, c. 1610

Opaque pigments with gold and black and red ink on paper

Painting: 9.6 × 9.3 cm approx.

Text panel: 13.3 × 7 cm

Folio: 20.6 × 12.1 cm

This illustration represents an episode from the *Shahnama* ('The Book of Kings'), the epic story of ancient kings and heroes of Persia composed by Firdausi during the first decades of the 11th century. King Khusrau has summoned Rustam to help him stop a demon (*div*) disguised as a wild ass that is ravaging the royal herds. After three days of unsuccessful battle, the hero fell asleep in the grass. Thereupon, the *Div* Akvan cast aside his disguise, resumed his demonic form, and dug up the ground around the sleeping hero. He gave Rustam the choice of being thrown against the mountains, being eaten by lions and onagers, or being cast into the sea. Knowing that the *Div* would do the exact opposite of what he said and thinking that if thrown into the sea, he would have a chance of survival, Rustam asked to be thrown against the mountains. Here the *div* is about to hurl Rustam and the ground on which he was sleeping into the sea. Rustam in fact was able to swim back to the shore and defeat the *div* in combat.

The folios come from a dispersed *Shahnama* manuscript thought to have been prepared in Bijapur around 1610. According to Laura Weinstein's research, sixteen or so folios are known, including the ones in the San Diego Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and various private collections. The text is arranged in four columns of *nasta'liq* script on buff paper sprinkled with gold, with the lines arranged in cloud forms on pages with illustrations; while chapter headings are in panels of red ink on gold. The illustrations occupy only part of the

text panel but can spread out onto the margins of dark brown paper as here.

The artist of the illustrations obviously had a Persian model to follow since in other illustrations the figures wear Persian costume and the latest fashion of turban from Qazwin or Isfahan (e.g. Pal 1993, no. 97). Even there the females have a Bijapuri look about them with their long narrow faces as in the 1591 *Pem-nem* manuscript in the British Library (Hutton 2011). The backgrounds of most of the miniatures are fairly simple, almost Popular Mughal, as in the pages in Los Angeles and the V & A. Our page is different. The scene is one of the most popular in the *Shahnama* and illustrated in most manuscripts. Our artist has kept closely to his 16th century Persian model in the iconography, but provided a beautiful Bijapuri landscape of green- and lilac-edged rocks and small pointed dark trees silhouetted against a gold sky (compare Hutton 2011, figs. 1–9 in particular). He seems to have had his tongue firmly in his cheek in providing a voracious but comical sea monster. Rustam lies back as always his head leaning on one hand seemingly unconcerned, his shield, bow and quiver beneath his head and his animal headed mace in his hand. His garments, armour and weapons are beautifully detailed. Akvan by way of contrast seems worried about being interrupted in his work and looks nervously around him, perhaps in fear lest anyone should see his nakedness!

### PROVENANCE

The Dharma Collection, Israel, acquired in New

York, c. 1995

Spink & Son, c. 1980

### PUBLISHED

McInerney, 1982, no. 18b



Painting actual size

24 An Illuminated Page

Deccan, Bijapur or Golconda, c. 1600  
 Pen, ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper with calligraphic borders  
 Panel: 17.1 × 10 cm  
 Page: 24.5 × 17.1 cm

This page of gold illumination is exquisitely executed and consists of an inner panel of gold designs on red and an outer panel of gold on black, the whole surrounded by a deep red frame with outer calligraphy of Persian verses in *nasta'liq* script with the corners marked by gold designs on blue squares. The central panel on a red ground contains birds perched amidst leaves and flowers; the surrounding areas on black ground contain animals, *qilins*, and birds amongst trees and rocks. The idea is inspired by Safavid Persian work of the 16th century such as the illuminated borders surrounding Shah Tahmasp's *Khamsa* of Nizami of 1539–43 (British Library, see Welch 1979 *passim*) and the earlier borders attributed to Sultan Muhammad round a manuscript of the *Gulistan* of Sa'di, of which several pages were in the Welch collection (Sotheby's 6 April 2011, lots 74–76).

The Safavid work is still comparatively open with larger animals and birds, while the Deccani illuminators created a much denser effect with smaller creatures and trees. As with the Safavid examples, the illuminators employed more than one tone of gold creating a shimmering, almost mesmerising effect as the eye follows the creatures up and down the page. The artist has employed a technique of painting in gold that makes the overall design seem like filigree work and it is possible that the design was originally intended as the doublure of a binding.

For similar examples of illuminated pages from the Deccan, see cat. 25 and cat. 26. A slightly later example is in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York (Schmitz 1997, pl. 27). For other illuminated folios from the

Deccan see Welch 1965, no. 210; Zebrowski 1983, figs. 108, 121.

PROVENANCE  
 Stuart Cary Welch collection (Sotheby's 6 April 2011, lot 102)



Deccan, Bijapur, c. 1600  
 Opaque pigments and gold on *wasli*  
 Painting: 22.2 × 15.9 cm

The main panel contains the Arabic inscription in gold over a black ground, repeated in mirror form:

ال الباقي

*allah al-baqi* "God, The Enduring".

This is framed at top and bottom by two bands that show ornate floral motifs and vines. The layout of the inscription and its appearance of gold over a dark ground resembles that on the *mihrab* wall of the Jami' Masjid of Bijapur built after 1565. The panel is surrounded by a decorated border with vine tendrils and *saz* leaves punctuated by large peony flowers over the same dark background. Derived ultimately from Persian work, this type of border illumination is found in an exuberantly decorated page from a Golconda manuscript dated 980/1572–73 (Losty 1982, no. 47; Leach 1995, 9.420, col. pls. 122–23) and also in painted representations of textiles such as the turban band worn by Ibrahim 'Adil Shah in a painting now in the David Collection, Copenhagen (Zebrowski 1983, pl. VI). For other illuminated folios from the Deccan see Welch 1965, no. 210; Zebrowski 1983, figs. 108, 121; Sotheby's 6 April 2011, lot 102 from the S C Welch collection. All the gold work in our example is richly tooled and scraped away allowing the black background to appear giving an extraordinary richness to the effect. A cloth fixing strip on the left suggests that the board was once part of a binding, perhaps a doublure or the cover of a concertina album.

Attached to the reverse there is written on an otherwise plain piece of paper an inscription in Persian:

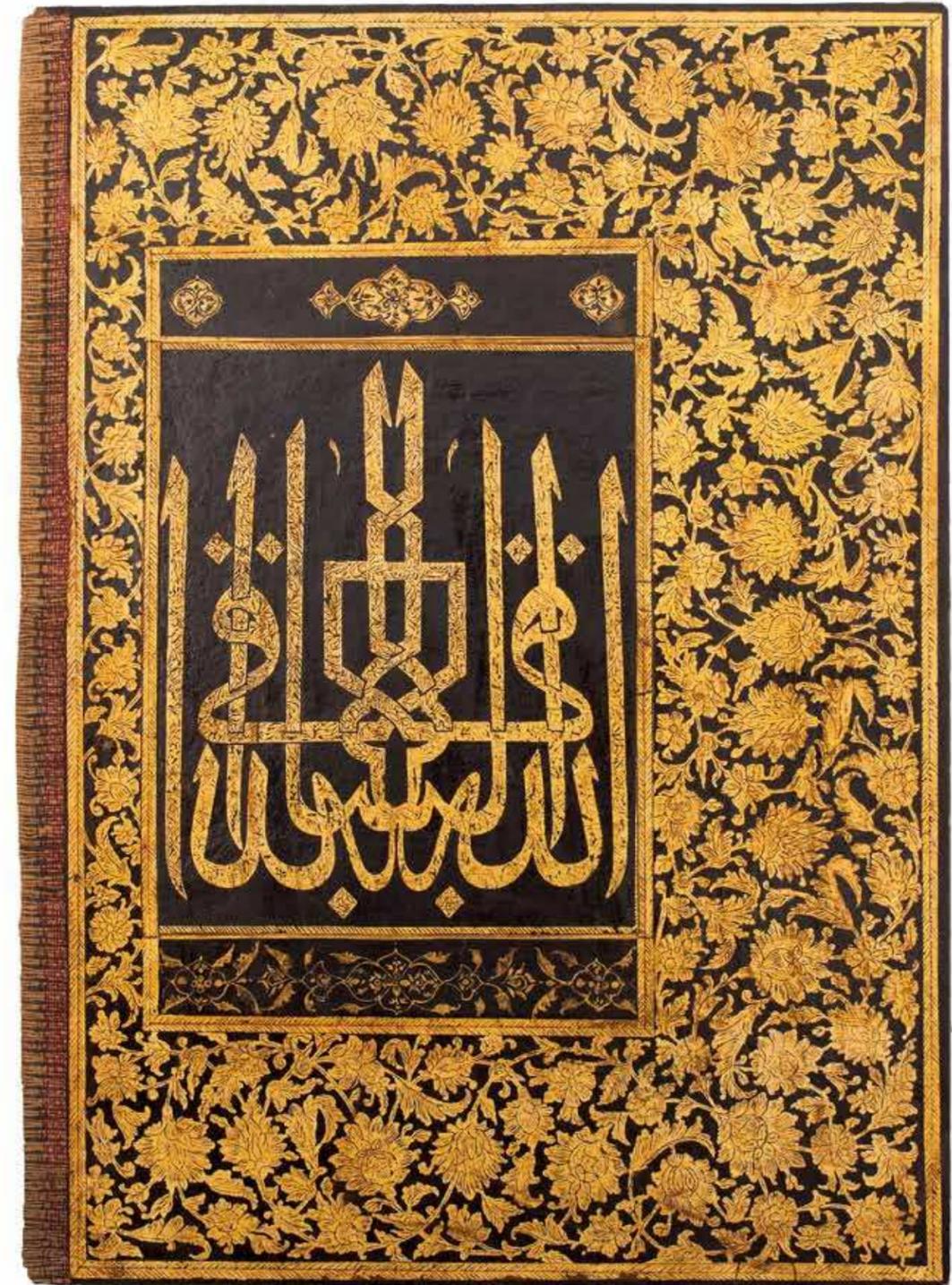
... بهمت خلوت مبارک  
 درجات علقه عمارات دولتخانه مبارکه  
 حضرت پر نور  
 برای نیازی ... حضرت (؟) ال ... بیگم صاحبہ بانو (؟)  
 امرداد ماه الهی / ف

"At the bequest of the blessed sanctuary ...  
 The degrees of attachment of the buildings of  
 the blessed palace precinct.  
 His/Her Enlightened Excellence.  
 For a need ... His/Her Excellence God ... Begum  
 Sahiba Banu, the Ilahi month of Amرداد / Fa."

It is not clear what these notes exactly mean,  
 but it seems that the piece was made for a royal  
 lady, a certain Begum Sahiba. As the Ilahi  
 month is given, this would imply that it was  
 done in the reign of either Akbar or Jahangir.

PROVENANCE

Private collection, New York, before 1979



Actual size

26 A Pair of Illuminated Folios

Deccan, Bijapur or Golconda, c. 1600  
Pen, ink, opaque pigments and gold on *washi*  
Each folio: 17.5 × 11.1 cm

The central panel of the first page bears an elaborate flowering tree in gold and the second arabesques of foliage with birds, both against a black ground. The central panel of each is surrounded by identical borders filled with wild animals and birds frolicking in the forest in gold against a rich red ground.

Sheets of paper attached to the reverse and now apparently varnished are from a manuscript containing Arabic *qasidahs* of 'Ali and his family. On the verso of the first folio is a poem of Imam 'Ali in red *naskh*, preceded by the narration of the events surrounding its utterance in Persian in black *nasta'liq*. On the verso of the second folio is a poem of Fatima addressed to 'Ali. The poem is in black *nasta'liq* in two columns this time. Both versos bear two seal impressions: the square seal reads *Jahangir Khan 1269/1852-3*, the oval seal reads *ahmad khan*.

Formalised but decorative trees seem a feature of Deccani art and design perhaps derived from ideas of the *Parijata* tree or Tree of Paradise. For comparable Deccani paintings and textiles featuring similar sprays and oversize wild life, see Zebrowski 1983 figs. 207 and 233; *The Indian Heritage* no. 211 (central panel); Goswamy and Fischer 1987, no. 33 (also Canby 1998, no. 116); Glynn 2000, fig. 2; and also Binney 1973, no. 156 for 18th century examples.

A cloth fixing strip on the left suggests that the board was once part of a binding, perhaps a doublure or the cover of a concertina album. For other illuminated folios from the Deccan see Welch 1965, no. 210; Zebrowski 1983, figs. 108, 121, and cat. 25. A slightly later example is

in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York (Schmitz 1997, pl. 27).

PROVENANCE

Private collection, New York, before 1979



27, 28 Two Calligraphic Panels written on Marbled Paper

Deccan, mid-17th century

Ink on marbled paper, each with four lines of elegant black *nasta'liq* script written diagonally, with further lines in smaller script around, one panel with lines in clouds outlined in black and gold and smaller lines in cartouches outlined in silver and black, the other panel signed on the lower left hand side corner

Marbled paper became fashionable in the Deccani courts in the first half of the 17th century, when it was used not just for writing on, but for creating individual studies of animals and the like (see Zebrowski 1983, figs. 102–06).

For a comparable page now in the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum of Indian Art, Hyderabad, calligraphed by Faqir 'Arab (Mulla 'Arab Shirazi), see Welch 1985, no. 214, p. 318. Another slightly later page is in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Pal 1993, no. 111).

27  
Calligraphic Panel

28.3 × 16.5 cm

This is a kind of poem known as a *mostazad*, in which a line of poetry is followed by a phrase in *saj'*, or rhyming prose. The author is unknown.

28  
Signed Calligraphic Panel

27.4 × 17.6 cm

This is a quatrain in Persian of unknown authorship with further couplets in the margin. In the margin are further couplets – one of these is the work of Mirza Ibrahim Adham, a Safavid poet who went to India in the reign of Shah Jahan, where he was imprisoned for outrageous behaviour. He died in 1060/1650–51.

The piece is signed: *katabahu faqir muhammad amanullah* ('Poor Muhammad Amanullah wrote it'). Two scribes of this name are known but are either too early, since this one's work is known from 940/1533–34 (Bayani 1966–69, vol. 3, p. 644) or too late, having died in 1219/1804 (ibid., vol. 1, p. 77).



27



28

## 29 Warrior on Horseback

Deccan, 1680–1700  
Opaque pigments and gold on paper laid down  
in an album page with a blue surround  
Painting: 35.2 × 22.7 cm

A mailed horseman holding a lance vertically is shown on a prancing armoured horse surrounded by retainers on foot armed with swords, bows and arrows and in one instance a matchlock. Another retainer holds a *chowrie* and two more hold a *hookah* with its snake coiled up and what appears to be a brazier for lighting the charcoal for the *hookah*. The background is almost totally blank save for a strip of green at the bottom and of pink at the top. The horseman's armour is of chainmail while his horse's armour or bard seems to be of overlapping metal plates attached to the padded fabric beneath. Interestingly its head-guard or chamfron is in the shape of an elephant's head with trunk and miniature tusks – the appearance of elephants was supposed to terrify horses in Indian warfare theory.

This type of portrait format with a ruler on a rearing horse was copied of course from European examples. One of the earliest Mughal examples of the genre is of Aurangzeb c. 1660–70 on a similarly rearing horse, armoured in chain mail, in the British Library (Losty and Roy 2012, fig. 95), while another very similar example of the same ruler is in the Binney collection in San Diego (Binney 1973, no. 69). Both show the subject silhouetted against a plain ground. This portrait format was transmitted to the Deccan as in the portrait of Muhammad 'Adil Shah's chief minister Ikhlas Khan c. 1670–80 now in the British Library (Losty 2013, no. 8): retainers on foot have been added, but the background remains blank. Our painting is in continuation of this format with the subject on his rearing horse accompanied

by retainers on foot but with the background left empty imparting a kind of noble austerity to the portrait subject.

This relative austerity was soon replaced by more elaborate compositions in the Deccan. Noblemen on horseback proceeding across a landscape with retainers on foot became one of the tropes of Deccani painting at the turn of the century as in Atachin Beg Bahadur Qalmaq in the British Museum (Zebrowski 1983, fig. 185) and an unnamed horseman formerly in the Welch collection (*ibid.*, fig. 183). A less elaborate version showing 'Ali Asghar Khan out hawking is in the Rietberg Museum (*ibid.*, fig. 206), while another example showing Muhammad Sa'id appeared recently on the art market (Losty 2013, no. 14). All of these examples show a landscape more or less elaborate, whereas our example impresses by the austerity of the blank paper behind giving the image an iconic quality similar to that of the plain backgrounds for the portrait of Aurangzeb and Ikhlas Khan noted above. The crisp outline of the figures and the sparing use of colour against the blank ground are very impressive as is the careful balance of the composition. This relative austerity combined with the treatment of the hair and beard of all the figures are suggestive of some of the work of the slightly later 'Jaipur painter' e.g. an unnamed nawab in the Fondation Custodia, Paris (Gahlin 1991, no. 47, pl. 46), although that artist's treatment of the eye is different.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, Italy



### 30 Two Door Cabinet with large flowering Plants

Gujarat, Sindh or Deccan, c. 1700

Rosewood, veneered with rosewood and ebony, inlaid with ivory and incised decoration details

Height: 50 cm; width: 96 cm; depth: 51 cm

This unusually large and elegant cabinet is inlaid with ivory and decorated on the outside front and sides with rows of large, sinuous flowering plants, with small birds and butterflies. The panels are surrounded by a wide border of scrolling leaf and floral arabesque. A similar border frames the top of the cabinet around a large oval medallion with flowers. The doors open to reveal a series of narrow drawers of differing sizes placed around a central drawer. They are decorated with inlaid and incised ivory with different varieties of smaller plants.

Hardwood furniture, richly decorated with inlaid woods and ivory were an important part of the luxury trade between India and Europe – initially with Portugal and subsequently with Holland and Britain. By the second half of the 17th century, larger two-door cabinets replaced the smaller portable fall-front cabinet, reflecting changes in Europe in the design and use of cabinets which were increasingly devised as showpieces mounted on European stands. By the early 18th century the manufacture of the more spectacular cabinets ceased with the change of fashion in Europe.

Sindh, Gujarat and possibly the Deccan are thought to have been areas of production. Cambay, Surat and Goa are generally ascribed as the ports of export. Fine examples of these cabinets can be seen in princely and stately homes in various parts of Europe and in museums such as the Victoria & Albert Museum in London and the Museu de Arte Antigua in Lisbon.

The Mughal flowering plant probably originated in the Jahangir period (r. 1604–1628)

but reached its apogee during the reign of Shah Jahan (r. 128–58) where it was associated with all the courtly arts – from architecture to carpet and textile design, manuscript and border decoration, jades, ivories etc. The floral motif continued into the later 18th and 19th century becoming more stylized and hackneyed with the passage of time.

Despite Amin Jaffer's thorough research into the history and different manufacturing centres of furniture made for the British in India and Ceylon some questions remain regarding the centres of production for this particular group of material which is more closely associated with Mughal court style and yet was made for a European clientele. We know from contemporary accounts that the heavy 17th century ebony carved furniture, like the material Horace Walpole had at Strawberry Hill, was made along the Coromandel Coast, specifically at or near Masulipatam. By the end of the century Vizagapatam is thought to have become a major centre for high quality Company School furniture such as the William & Mary style high-backed chairs and daybeds, also of ebony but now inlaid with ivory in Mughal style. By the mid-18th century Vizagapatam was producing furniture with outstanding ivory inlay decoration for high-level British officials in India and aristocratic households in England. Gujarat was a likely centre for the manufacture of the showy, exotic Mughal style ivory inlaid cabinets, such as ours, given that similar decoration appears on late 17th and early 18th century Mughal embroideries from

Gujarat and also because of its history as a centre of cabinet making for Western consumption.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, USA

*Francesca Galloway*





### 31 Cabinet with figurative Ivory Inlay

India, Gujarat or Deccan, for export to Europe, c. 1700  
Rosewood inlaid with ivory  
Height: 41 cm; width: 61 cm; depth: 40 cm

The top, sides and double doors are patterned with a symmetrical design inlaid in ivory in which a palmette is repeated on an arabesque of stems and leaves, centred on a single rosette, within floral scroll borders. The back is more simply decorated with a central oval medallion and identical borders. There are brass carrying handles on either side and hinges and brass escutcheons. The escutcheons appear to be Charles II period (1630–1685), and therefore pre-date our cabinet, they might have been added at the time or later to the cabinet. The other brass fittings are William & Mary period and are therefore contemporary to the cabinet. The doors open to reveal a symmetrical arrangement of drawers, long and short, deep and shallow all with figurative ivory inlay. Attendants dance, play musical instruments, carry trays of drink and food around the large, square central drawer where a courtly couple face each other, seated on a floor-spread. A shallow drawer immediately above it is balustraded to maintain the illusion of architecture. Inside each door the figure of a court official faces towards the central scene, a wand of office in his hand. He is flanked by cypress trees, surrounded by small flowering plants and below him are two wrestlers who also appear in the centre of the bottom drawer. The details of the floral and figurative ivory inlay are incised.

This cabinet belongs to a group of ivory inlaid furniture with similar external decoration and variations on the internal, figurative layout. An example very similar to ours, loaned to the 1982 V&A exhibition 'The Indian Heritage', has

descended in the family of a Bristol merchant who traded with the Indies in the early 18th century (ed Skelton, R. 1982, cat. 556). Another example with similar decoration but of a different shape is in the Musée des arts décoratifs de l'océan Indien (Galloway, 1998, no. 16) while a fourth cabinet with the identical arabesque of stems, leaves and palmettes is in a private collection in Japan.

The large standing figures on the inside of the doors relate to late 17th century Golconda portraiture for the export market which accounts for the Deccani provenance given to this group of cabinets. However, recent scholarship favours a Gujarat or Sindh origin since workshops engaged in this production had been in existence for some centuries in these areas, specifically in trading centres such as Cambay, Surat and Tatta. Also, contemporary accounts make no mention of the Deccan as a centre of production.

The size of our cabinet reflects late 17th century European taste for using large cabinets as showpieces and mounting them on stands in Europe. By the early 18th century demand for this type of cabinet waned as fashions changed.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, Switzerland

*Francesca Galloway*





32 Carved Ivory Element from a stringed Instrument  
(*Rudra Vina*)

South India or Orissa, 16th–17th century  
Carved ivory with remains of pigment  
Height: 9.5 cm; width: 9.5 cm

A superbly carved tailpiece of a stringed instrument, *rudra vina*. This element consists of a rampant *yali*, a mythical beast with leonine head whose attributes sometimes include issuing foliage from its mouth. In this example the *yali* is spewing pearled, ornate vegetation from its mouth. Its claws stand on a lotus flower support which is repeated at either side, above a curved bracket with stylized floral decoration and a small image of Ganesha. A larger carving of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art and science is at the top and small palm trees within framed cusped arches at the back. Saraswati is shown playing a more archaic type of *vina*, which also has a decorative tailpiece, in the form of a *makara*.

Rampant *yalis* are a feature of Orissan and South Indian temple architecture and decoration. The style in which this *yali* has been carved, together with the treatment of other elements of decoration; point to Orissa as the centre of production. Certain details relate to the ivory carvings of Krishna and Radha from Orissa, in the National Museum in New Delhi. Dwivedi dates these ivories to the late 17th century based on similarities with Orissan manuscript decoration (Dwivedi, 1976, p. 119, pl. 101 & Tardy, 1977, p. 157 nos 9 & 10).

The *rudra vina* or *bin* is a large plucked stringed instrument used in Indian classical music. It was the most prestigious instrument of court music until the 19th century, and is still played in North India, primarily for *alap*, the improvisatory exposition of a *raga*. The instrument has a long tubular body made of wood or bamboo, high frets, and two large,

spherical resonators which are attached under the tube. In this example five strings pass over the main bridge, decorated with the Saraswati carving, and three over a secondary bridge, decorated with Ganesha. Our carved tailpiece would suggest that this *rudra vina* was an exceptionally fine instrument, if somewhat smaller than modern instruments.

With special thanks to Richard Widdess for the assistance with the cataloguing of this object.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, France

Francesca Galloway



The following three daggers are from a private European collection of eleven fine courtly daggers dating from the 16th-19th century, predominantly from Mughal India. Many of the pieces were made in the 17th century, when the Muslim courts of India were pre-eminent for their opulence and quality of craftsmanship, and some are decorated with animal heads. This collection was formed over the last thirty years and is for sale as a whole. Further details are available on request.

Left

**Khanjar (dagger)**

Mughal, 17th century hilt with 19th century blade  
Overall length: 48.5 cm  
Blade length: 36 cm

White nephrite hilt of superb quality with finger indents, the hilt set with jewels including a lasque diamond and foiled cabochon rubies and emeralds. The long tapering slightly curved Indian blade is double edged and of watered steel with raised cartouche at the forte containing a *devanagari* inscription: *Shri Ram Sita Ram Jai Jai Rama Sita Ram Jai Ram.*

Centre

**Rare Carved Ivory and Steel South Indian Royal Dagger**

Nayaka period (1600-1645), Mysore or Madurai, early 17th century  
Overall length: 35 cm  
Blade length: 21.5 cm

The ivory handle is carved in openwork with a crouching *yali* with a lion head, feathered body and parrot feet opposite a rampant *yali* with the head of an elephant and a lion's body. The entire surface of the ivory grip is carved with intricate foliate motifs with tiny elephants and entwined pearls. The blade is intricately pierced and chiselled with filigree scrollwork and with mythical birds; the base depicts Siva holding a trident and leaping antelope, trampling a dwarf demon and flanked by his consorts.

This extremely ornate and masterful ivory and steel dagger is published in *Hindu Arms and*

*Ritual* (Elgood, 2004, p174, no 16.23) is one of a pair. They relate to an openwork steel ankus (elephant goad), now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, all having originally come from Spink & Son in London. These masterpieces of Indian ivory and steel are thought to have been made as temple offerings or for ceremonial purposes and would have been commissioned either in Mysore or Madurai at the beginning of the 17th century, possibly for Thirumalai Nayak, ruler of Madurai (1623-59), who was a great art patron of his time.

Right

**Khanjar (dagger)**

Mughal, 18th century (both hilt and blade)  
Overall length: 32 cm  
Blade length: 19.5 cm

This dagger, one of the finest of its kind, consists of a white nephrite hilt with inlaid flowers and foliage, the flowers made of lasque diamonds with square cuts, foil backed cabochon rubies and emeralds and inlaid gold stalks and leaves. The double-edged curved steel blade has a medial ridge and reinforced point.





Early Rajput style, possibly from Mewar, 1520–25  
Opaque pigments heightened with gold

The series from which this painting comes is the earliest known Rajput attempt at illustrating the *Bhagavata Purana*. The text was written in its present form during the ninth to tenth centuries and comprises 18,000 verses divided into twelve books. The tenth canto which deals in detail with the life of Vishnu's avatar Krishna is the heart of the text and most often illustrated as it concentrates on the infant Krishna and his pranks, his overcoming of various demons including finally his wicked uncle Kamsa, King of Mathura, and his growing involvement with the cow-girls or *gopis* as he gradually reveals himself as divine. In his maturity he migrated with his followers to Dvarka on the coast of Gujarat and from there continued with his divine mission to rid the world of demonic kings as well as rescuing many maidens who fell in love with him from unwanted marriages.

The Early Rajput style of the early sixteenth century is common to a small group of manuscripts that mark the final emergence of a distinctive Rajput style from its tentative forerunners in the various Jain and Hindu manuscripts of mediaeval India. Characteristic of the style present here are the attractive stylization of the human figure with huge fish-shaped eyes, the large colourful trees, the solid red ground and the division of the sky by a wavy white line (definitely not an horizon) between blue above and black below. The tenth canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* was illustrated in this style with over three hundred paintings originally, of which some two hundred are known. This is the most important Hindu

manuscript painting from the pre-Akbar period, although its exact dating and provenance remain a matter of scholarly debate. For an up to date survey of the relevant material, see Topsfield 2002, ch. 2, who argues for a provenance in Mewar, and for a contrary opinion see the recent essay by Ehn bom (2011) which is highly useful in distinguishing the different hands but prefers the provenance favoured by Indian scholars, i.e. Delhi-Agra, more specifically in Ehn bom's case Mathura, the centre of Krishna worship (2011, p. 88).

The *Bhagavata Purana* series is widely dispersed and almost all major public and private collections have examples from it. It has been studied extensively by Ehn bom in his unpublished Ph.D. thesis (1984) and references to it will be found in all major works on Indian and Rajput painting. Almost all the pages from this series have either *Sa. Nana*, *Sa. Mitharam* or *Hira Bai* inscribed upon them, either singly or in various combinations, the most likely explanation being the names of owners who divided the series between them, perhaps at different times.

### 34 Krishna defeats the Sons of Maru at Pragjyotisha

Inscribed in *nagari* on the recto: above left: *Garuda ... hathi* and below: *Hirabhai and Sa. Nana*. And on the reverse with the Sanskrit text in *nagari* of *Bhagavata Purana*, X, 59, vv. 19 (3rd foot)–20.

Painting: 17.4 × 22.8 cm

Krishna has arrived with his wife Satyabhama at Pragjyotisha carried there by his eagle mount Garuda, intending to destroy the demon Bhauma or Naraka who had insulted the gods by stealing Varuna's parasol and Aditi's earrings. Having slain the demon Mura who guarded the city, Krishna, here represented in divine form, faces Maru's seven sons who have come out to do battle on their elephants. They are overcome in their turn and they and their elephants and army flee back to the city. There Bhauma's mother Bhumi, the Earth-goddess, confers with her grandson Bhagadatta. On Bhauma's being killed in his turn by Krishna, Bhumi returns the stolen goods and begs Krishna for favour for her grandson whom he places on the throne.

Ehn bom (2011) has isolated the work of the individual artists of this series who each painted different sections. This page is by one of the most sophisticated of the ten artists who worked on this series, called Painter H by Ehn bom (pp. 85–7), responsible for the section dealing with Krishna's weddings, chapters 50–59. An artist of great imagination, for adjacent paintings illustrating this episode he has the city viewed in plan and Krishna and



Satyabhama perched on a lotus seat being carried by Garuda as here (paintings in San Diego, Ehn bom 2011, fig. 11, and Philadelphia, Mason 2001, no. 9). Here the walls are smothered by the demon sons mounted on their elephants as they first of all do battle with Krishna and Garuda and then fly in headlong retreat at the bottom. This is one of the most heavily illustrated chapters in the manuscript with no less than sixteen paintings known (Ehn bom 1984, p. 235).

**35**  
**Uddhava advises Krishna to assist at the *Rajasuya* Sacrifice of Yudhisthira**  
 Inscribed on the reverse with the Sanskrit text in *nagari* of *Bhagavata Purana*, X, 72, vv. 1–11  
 Painting: 17.2 × 22.8 cm

The text on the reverse relates the conversation between Yudhisthira the king of Indraprastha and Krishna after the latter had come from Dvarka to Indraprastha with his wives and retinue. Yudhisthira tells Krishna of his desire to perform the *Rajasuya* sacrifice to confirm his status as king of kings and asks for Krishna's blessing and approval, which Krishna freely gives. The subject of the painting, however, must relate to the previous chapter 71, in the normal manner of *pothi* or loose-leaf manuscripts, whose relevant text would have been on the verso of the previous folio. The top register seems to be showing Uddhava advising Krishna to journey to Indraprastha and assist in Yudhisthira's *rajasuya* sacrifice, since it had been ordained that this would be the means of destroying the powerful king Jarasandha of Magadha who had imprisoned many kings leaving their wives lamenting and longing for their release. In accordance with other folios of the manuscript, Krishna's sons and grandsons are also coloured blue, one of them being behind Uddhava. The middle register seems to refer to Uddhava's prediction that Krishna, Bhishma and Arjuna in disguise had to confront Jarasandha, while the bottom register seems to be the five Pandava brothers in discussion with their advisers with regard to the great sacrifice. The painting however is not very specific.

Krishna brought his wives and retainers from Dvarka to stay with his cousins the five Pandava brothers in Indraprastha. The citizens of the city welcomed them and beautified the city in their honour. They all pay their respects to Krishna's aunt Kunti and his sister Subhadra, wife of Arjuna, and also to the Pandava brothers' wife, Draupadi. They spend several months on this visit, while Krishna touches base with his old chum Arjuna going out riding and hunting, before the beginning of the great *rajasuya* sacrifice.

This page is by the artist called Painter I by Ehn bom (2011, pp. 87–8), responsible for chapters 59–68. He prefers to divide his field into registers (ibid., fig. 13). Two others of his paintings are in the British Museum depicting the newly-weds Aniruddha and Usa entering Dvarka (Ahluwalia 2008, fig. 1) and the marriage of Samba and Lakshmana (Losty 1982, no. 36), the latter being unusually for this artist in a single register.

PROVENANCE  
 Doris Wiener 1980s



### Amsuman retrieves the Sacrificial Horse from the Sage Kapila after the Sons of Sagara had been reduced to Ashes

Bikaner, 1620–30

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Inscribed above in (bad) Sanskrit: 'The lord of the white continent, progenitor of the Sankhya philosophy, king of perfected beings, ... the perfected sage Kapila, son of Kardama, the terrible lord, through the force of his meditation reduced to ashes the sons of Sagara.'

Painting: 13 × 24.1 cm

Folio: 15 × 26 cm

King Sagara performed a horse sacrifice (*Asvamedha yajna*) to assert his supremacy over other kings. In an *asvamedha*, a sacrificial horse was left to wander at will for a year and the kings of the lands where it wandered had either to accept the sacrificer's sovereignty or defeat him in battle. King Sagara's potential power dismayed Indra, the king of the gods, who decided to steal the horse. Indra left the horse at the hermitage of the sage Kapila, who was at the time in deep meditation. King Sagara's 60,000 sons were then sent to find the horse. When they found the horse at Kapila's hermitage, they thought he had stolen it and prepared to attack the meditating sage. Kapila had merely to open his eyes and they were immediately burnt to ashes. Afterwards King Sagara sent his grandson Amsuman to retrieve the horse, which Kapila returned to him, and he told Amsuman that the sons of King Sagara could be redeemed if the heavenly river Ganga could be made to descend to earth and bathe them in its waters. This was eventually achieved by King Sagara's great-grandson, Bhagiratha.

The story is part of the legend of the descent of the River Ganga to earth and is found in various forms in the epics and *puranas*. The painting here would seem to be a one-off production and not part of a manuscript series as there is neither text nor caption on the back of the page. The naked sage Kapila sits in meditation with his fire and water-pot near the ashes of Sagara's sons. Amsuman seems to have come to retrieve the horse from Kapila, but the identity of the other person is not clear. According to the *Balakanda* of the *Ramayana*,

canto 42, Amsuman is told by Garuda of his relatives' fiery end, and the figure with the club may be intended for him.

Bikaner produced many remarkable court painters, many of them known by name, in the course of the seventeenth century. Before it was heavily influenced by the Mughal and Deccani styles in the middle of the century, its earliest productions are in a style very close to that known as Popular Mughal. This was a simplified form of the Mughal style that seems to have been practised by artists trained in the imperial studio but released at the end of the sixteenth century as fashions in the studio changed and the numbers of artists required became smaller. In many ways these artists reverted to the more traditional Indian styles. At first practising their art in the bazaars of Agra, they were employed by noblemen such as the Rajas of Bikaner for whom they produced various paintings illustrating Krishna-lila themes. Their work remained in the Bikaner collection (Goetz 1950, p. 100 and fig. 91) before being dispersed. Examples of their work may be found in the former collections of Paul Walter (Pal 1978, nos. 4–5) and William K. Ehrenfeld (Ehnbom 1985, nos. 17–18) and in the collections of Cynthia Polsky (Topsfield 2004, nos. 56–58), Alvin O. Bellak (Mason 2001, no. 18) and J.P. Goenka (Goswamy and Bhatia 1999, no. 82–85). Our page with its simplified forms and minimal background comes from this tradition.

PROVENANCE

Doris Wiener, New York, 1960s



## 37 Gauda Malhara Ragini

Bundi, c. 1670

Opaque pigments with gold on paper, within a broad red frame

Painting: 20.2 × 11.6 cm

Page: 23.6 × 15 cm

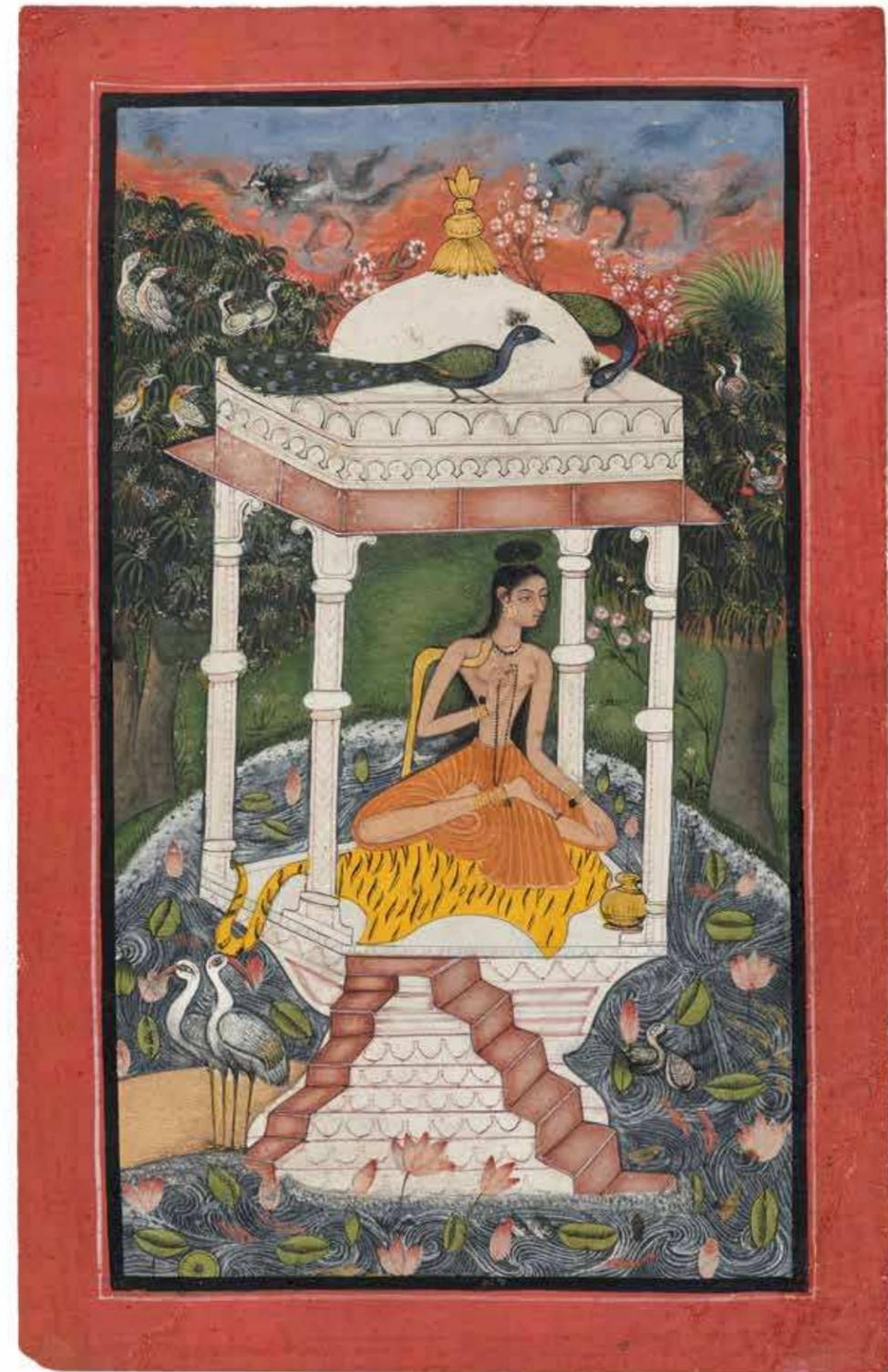
A female ascetic sits on a tiger skin in a pavilion in a lotus-filled lake holding a bead rosary and leaning on a bent stick as a crutch. Her limbs are wasted from fasting. Her hair is caught up in a chignon on top of her head and some of it spills down her back. She wears more beads round her neck and, surprisingly, earrings of gold and pearls. Her pavilion is perched on an hour-glass shaped plinth with two flights of steps rising directly from the waters of the lake. Water-birds are in attendance below while two peacocks strut around the top of the pavilion. Other pairs of birds perch in the mango trees on either side. Above, dark clouds fill the red sky, suggesting the rainy season. One notes the freedom with which the swirling waters and thunderous clouds have been painted as well as the alertness of the pairs of perky birds.

The well-known dispersed set of the Chunar *Ragamala* of 1591 (Skelton 1981), painted by Mughal artists displaced from the imperial atelier, forms the foundation stone on which all later Bundi and Kotah *Ragamalas* are based. For two centuries the Bundi artists of *ragamala* sets followed the same iconography and composition of the 1591 set for their own work. The interest in naturalism expressed in three dimensions that was inherited from their Mughal pictorial ancestry is consistently displayed by early Bundi artists, as is evidenced here in the perspective view of the pavilion and steps and the ascetic figure's face in three-quarter viewpoint.

The earliest known Bundi version of this *ragini* seems to be that from the *Ragamala* set painted on the walls of the Bada Mahal in the

Bundi palace in the third quarter of the seventeenth century (Bautze 1987, fig. 46, pp. 158–64), where the gender of the ascetic is by no means clear. This remains an issue in later versions. Other Bundi paintings of this *ragini* are remarkably similar save that the ascetic is invariably male, such as in the 'Berlin' Bundi *ragamala* of c. 1670–80 (reconstructed in Bautze 1991, pp. 88–94). In that set the ascetic figure is male, but also wears no earrings and has his right hand in *vyakhyana mudra* (the speaking gesture) rather than holding a rosary (Waldschmidt 1975, fig. 137). In the Kanoria Bundi *Ragamala* of c. 1680, the figure is male again, but he holds the rosary in his right hand (Kramrisch 1981, p. 236). Another version in the Madhuri Desai collection, Mumbai, has elaborate corbels supporting the roof of the pavilion, suggesting an earlier date, but there the ascetic has his head in profile (Barrett and Gray 1978, p. 142). The iconography with the male ascetic remains consistent into the eighteenth century (e.g. Waldschmidt 1975, fig. 138; Ebeling 1973, fig. 283), save that in Kotah the ascetic is sometimes female as in a *Gormalar ragini* in the Jagdish Mittal collection (private communication from Milo Beach).

Ebeling states that the iconography of *Gormalar* or *Gaudamalhara ragini* is remarkably fluid (1973, p. 86) and that this particular iconography is unique to Bundi, to which Kotah should be added. For further discussion of the iconography, see Waldschmidt 1975, pp. 382–87.



Actual size

38 Jaitsri Ragini

Bundi, c. 1680

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Inscribed above in Hindi in *nagari* in the yellow panel: 12 malaikosak ki ragani. Jaitsri ragani gavai pahar dedha cathya? (12 Jaitsri ragini of Malakausika raga: to be sung four and a half hours after ?? [this seems incomplete]); and on the red margin above: sri ki dhanasri

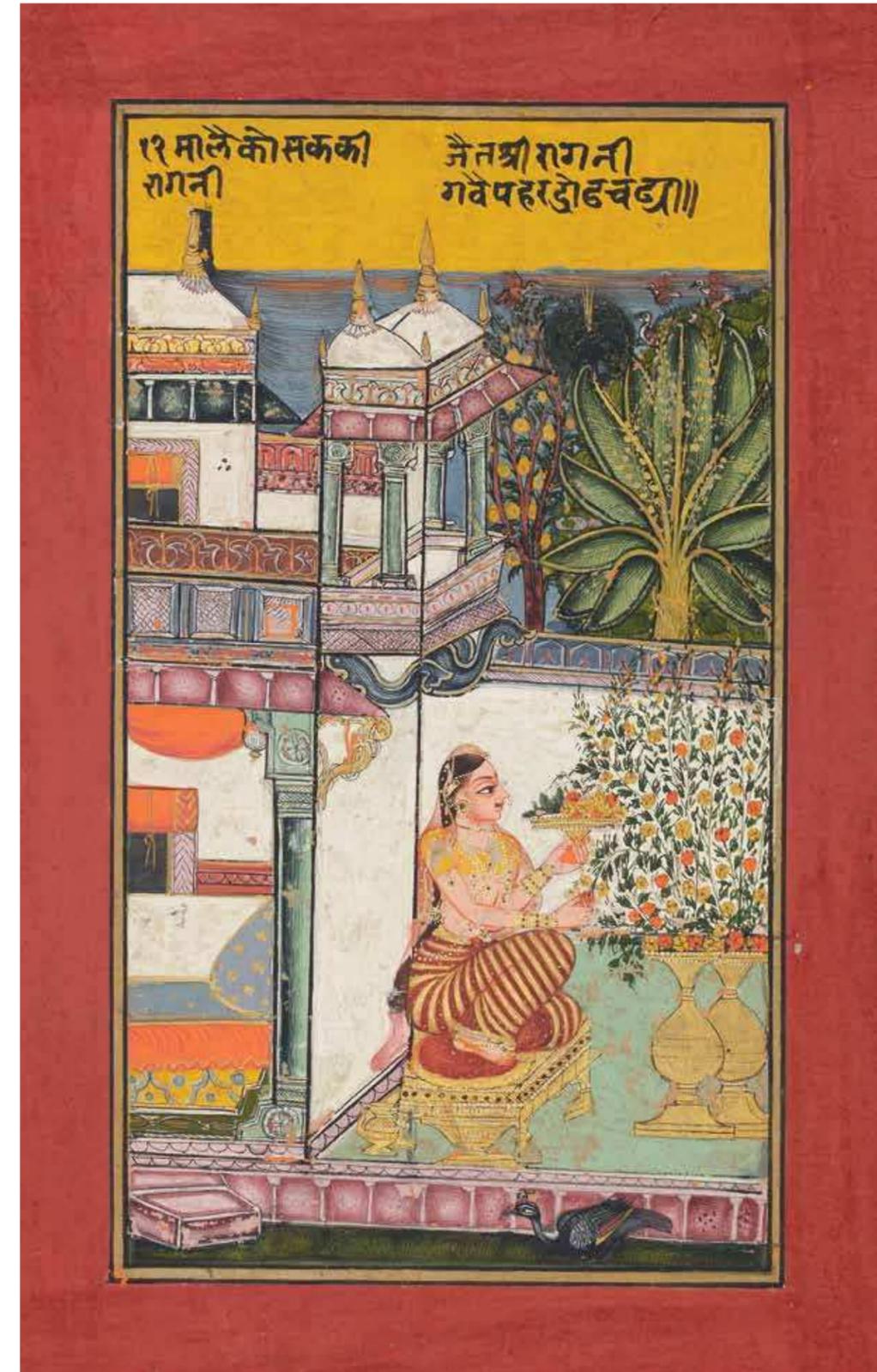
Painting: 21 × 11.8 cm

With broad red borders: 32 × 25.3 cm

A lady wearing a red and cream horizontally striped skirt and a yellow bodice is crouched on a footstool picking flowers from two large gold vases full of flowers to add to the platter that she is holding. She is on a terrace outside a pavilion that forms her bedchamber. A moulted peacock struts on the grass below the terrace while beyond the wall is a garden with trees.

*Jaitsri* is a rare *ragini*, here assigned to the family *Malkos raga*. The upper inscription in all the pages of this set can be disregarded. The iconography of a lady arranging flowers in vases is normally thought of as *Gunakali ragini* (Ebeling 1973, fig. 270), also part of the *Malkos* family. This same subject is labelled *jetsri ragini* in a painting in Berlin (Waldschmidt 1975, p. 304), but part of the family of *Sri raga*. However, in a *ragamala* set from Marwar c. 1675, *Jaitsri* is a seated lady with a *vina* (Ebeling, p. 178).

The perennial Bundi and Kotah interest in three dimensionality (see cat. 37) is evident from the perspective view of the balcony above the bedchamber, yet our artist does not seem very happy with the idea: he has run into difficulties at the corner where the curly corbels supporting the balcony on the side of the pavilion and the *chajja* or heavy eave on the front are clashing. Other pages from this *ragamala* are in the Horst Metzger collection, with similar architectural problems (Bautze 1991, no. 33), the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco and the National Museum, New Delhi. See Bautze 1987, pp. 79–80 for a reconstruction of the set. No. 12, the painting under discussion would then be the last *ragini* of *Malkos raga*. The known examples all have similar inscriptions naming the time of day or night suitable for the *raga* to be sung.



Actual size

39 The *Acharya* Jaijairam Ji and Devotees listening to Devotional Chants

Mewar, c. 1740–50  
Opaque pigments with gold on paper  
Inscribed above in Hindi in *nagari*: *pano bhagat Jaijairama ji ro*  
(‘portrait of the devotee Jaijairam ji’) with Mewar royal inventory inscriptions on the reverse  
Painting: 45.2 × 31 cm  
Album page: 50.9 × 34.8 cm

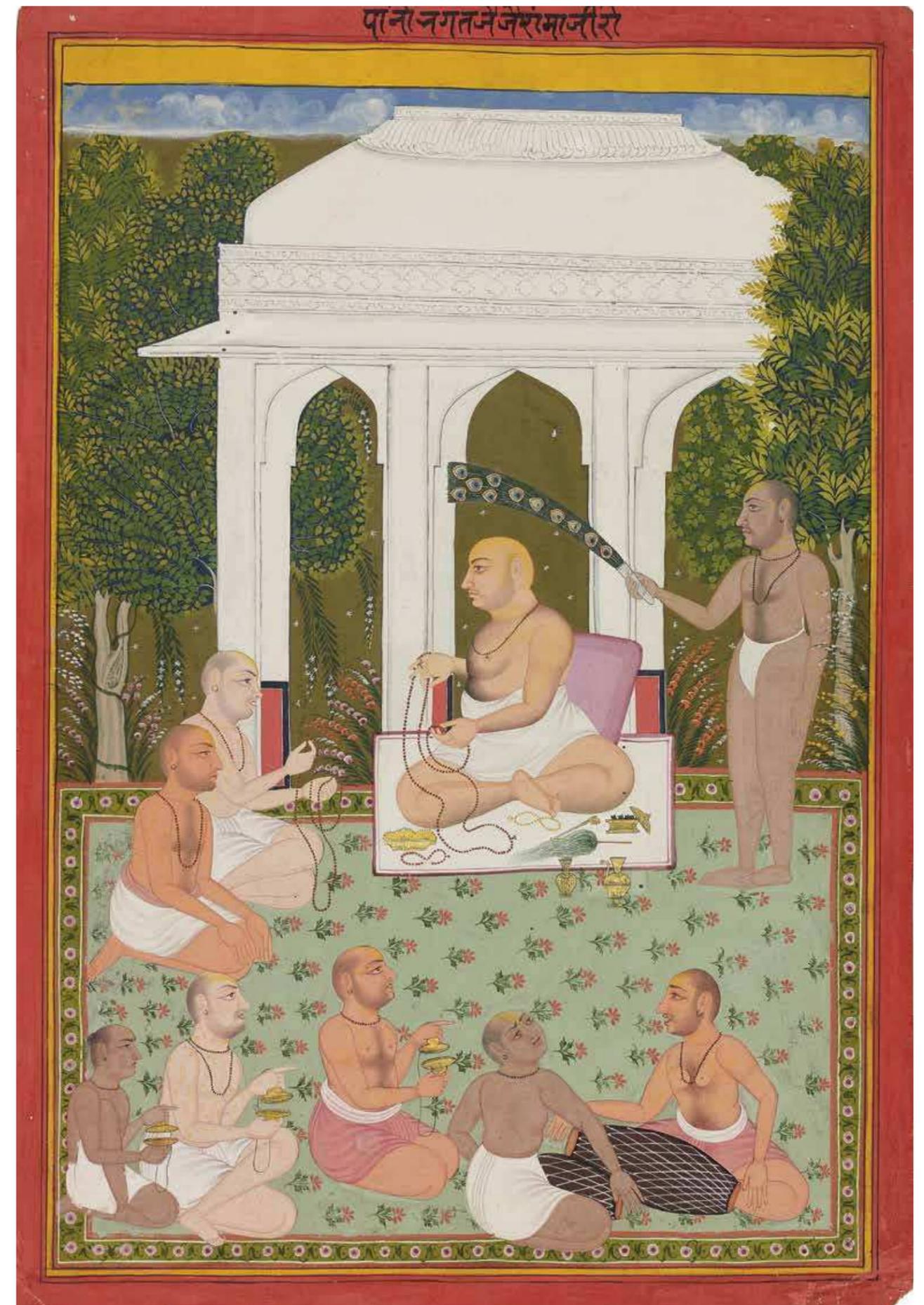
The impressively fleshy figure of Jaijairam dressed only with a wrap round his middle is seated on a floor spread telling his beads. One attendant stands holding a *morchhal* over the *acharya* while others sit beside him, all just with wraps or loincloths round their waists. They are all intent on listening to the *bhajans* or devotional chants that the drummers and cymbal players are chanting in the foreground. The *tilak* marks on all their foreheads of a vertical yellow U with a red stripe suggests that they are Ramanandis or worshippers of Rama, as the name of the *acharya* suggests, but *jai ram jai ram* (Hail Ram!) is an ubiquitous pious invocation for all Hindus. A large *tripoliya* arch rises behind the devotee leading to a garden.

While artistic activity in the reign of Rana Jagat Singh of Mewar (1734–51) was largely characterised by large scale paintings of hunts and festivities, there was also a strain of introspective works involving more intimate portrait studies in the last decade of his reign (Topsfield 2002, figs. 161–68). The double portrait study of Baba Bharath Singh clothed and half-clothed in the Bellak collection in Philadelphia is a case in point (*ibid.*, figs. 165–66). The intention may have been to mock this vastly overweight and rebellious *thakur*, but the artist still manages to imbue him with a certain dignity. As in our portrait, he is painted with more careful attention to the modelling of flesh than was normally the case in Mewar at this period. The same is true of a small window portrait of Kumar Sagat Singh in the Ashmolean Museum (*ibid.*, fig. 168). In that painting the lotus pond below the *jharokha* fills

the bottom third of the painting rather as the floor spread does in ours.

Topsfield has charted the careers of various court musicians in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, through their representations on inscribed paintings, in which they sit decorously in the Rana’s presence (Topsfield 2004B). Our musicians instead are lustily singing and vigorously drumming, in contrast to the intense meditation that is going on with the devotees.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, England



Pahari, from Bahu or Kulu, Style III, 1700–10  
Opaque pigments and gold on paper

These two paintings come from the famous set of paintings known as the 'Shangri' *Ramayana* series that W.G. Archer thought were executed at Shangri in the eastern Punjab Hills state of Kulu (Archer 1973, pp. 317–30). Archer discerned four major painting styles in the manuscript, of which this is the third.

Style III of this dispersed series including these wonderfully humanized portraits of the monkeys is found mostly in the Book of Kiskindha and Book of Battles. For discussion as to the disputed origin of the series, see among others Archer, vol. 1, pp. 325–29; Goswamy and Fischer, pp. 76–91 (who place Style I and II in Bahu, although they do not take a view on the place of origin of Styles III and IV); and Britschgi and Fischer 2008, pp. 12–14 (who attribute the entire series to Bahu).

#### 40 Hanuman spies Sita in the Ashoka Grove

A page from the *Sundarakanda*, Book 5  
of the *Ramayana*

Inscribed on verso in *nagari*: 37 *Sundara*;  
and also: 34

Painting: 28.6 × 18 cm

Folio: 31.6 × 21 cm

Sita has been captured by Ravana and taken to Lanka. He places her in the *ashoka* grove near a temple within his palace at Lanka, where she is guarded by female demons. There Hanuman, who has greatly enlarged himself to jump across the ocean, now shrinks to a tiny size and waits in a tree to observe what is going on with Sita before he makes himself known to her. Sita is alone bent over in her grief after the demonesses had tried to get her to marry Ravana and now they mock her. Hanuman has heard all that Sita has had to put up with and is about to make himself known to her as Rama's messenger.

Pages of the *Sundarakanda* are rare from the Shangri *Ramayana*, and are illustrated in Style III, characterised by Archer as notable for 'the impish treatment of the monkeys, the rioting exuberance with which the trees are depicted and the bold gusto which is everywhere apparent' (Archer 1973, vol. I, p. 328). Here this riotous exuberance is seen in the vividly depicted female demons with their huge animal heads and ears and mouth full of cruel teeth and the vividly coloured trees, all of them surrounding the still small figure of the desolate Sita crouched by the temple.



#### 41 Battle between Monkeys and Demons

A page from Book 6, the *Yuddhakanda* or *Lankakanda* (Book of Battles or Lanka), of the *Ramayana*

Inscribed on the verso in *nagari*: 23 ?Lanka and

23 in Arabic numerals

Painting: 29.2 × 19.4 cm

Folio: 32.1 × 22.2 cm

One of the demon chiefs has come out in his battle chariot and surrounded by other demons prepares to offer battle. The monkeys wielding rocks and trees have attacked, and using rocks and fists are overcoming the demons. One of the monkeys has smashed his rock down on the head of an animal-headed demon that has fallen from his chariot and is visible at the bottom of the page in continuous narration. The demon champion could be one of several slain by a monkey chief with a rock, for instance Dhumraksa is so slain by Hanuman and Prahasta by the monkey general Nila, both quite early on in this book as suggested by the figure 23 on the verso. Other monkeys here wield their rocks or trees or weapons with great force and determination as great quantities of blood are spilt in this exuberant picture.



Actual size

## 42 The Golden City of Dvarka

A Painting from the 'Large' Guler-Basohli *Bhagavata Purana* series

Guler or Basohli, c. 1760-65

Inscribed on the reverse: *Citra 174* (picture 174), *adhyaya* (chapter) 50, and nine verses numbered 147 of chapter 50 of the 10th canto of the *Bhagavata Purana* in Sanskrit, with a chapter colophon *dvarkavarnanam* 'the description of Dvarka'. The paraphrase above in Takri script is numbered 50 (chapter), 170 (picture) and 142 (verse) and would seem to refer to the previous illustration in the series.

Opaque pigments with gold on paper within a blue border

Painting: 27.3 x 37.5 cm

With border: 29.7 x 40 cm

According to W.G. Archer (1973, vol. 1, pp. 49-51, vol. 2, pp. 36-39) this large series (variously called the 'Large' Guler-Basohli *Bhagavata Purana* or the 'Fifth' Basohli *Bhagavata Purana*, Archer having identified four earlier ones from Basohli) shows the early vigorous Basohli style succumbing to the charms of a softer, Mughal-influenced type of painting style from Guler. He points out the obvious dependence of some of the pages in the *Bhagavata Purana* on the earlier *Gitagovinda* from 1730 by Manaku. Archer considered Manaku to be a Basohli artist and hence he considered Basohli was the place of origin of the *Gitagovinda*. Archer speculates that the basic idiom of the *Bhagavata Purana* is that of a pupil of Manaku, perhaps his son Fattu, who had come under the influence of Manaku's younger brother Nainsukh. After the death of his great patron Balvant Singh in 1763, Nainsukh took service with Amrit Pal of Basohli and seems to have remained there for the rest of his life.

Goswamy and Fischer (1992, p. 314), however, believe Manaku to have been purely a Guler artist and see his *Gitagovinda* of 1730 as having been done there. They likewise acknowledge his influence on the *Bhagavata Purana* and also that of Manaku's brother Nainsukh. Like Archer they agree that this is possibly in part the work of Fattu, Manaku's son, who had come under his uncle Nainsukh's influence at Basohli. Fattu was charged with taking Nainsukh's ashes to the Ganga at Kuruksetra in 1778 presumably because he lived at Basohli also and worked with his uncle. Nothing however is at present definitely known of

Nainsukh's work for Amrit Pal. Clearly several different hands were involved in this extensive series. Some of the paintings are bordered in red, others blue.

This dispersed series of the *Bhagavata Purana* is one of the most important achievements of Pahari artists and the most influential in determining the development of Pahari painting at Guler and Kangra in the illustration of poetical Vaishnava texts. It is also among the most controversial. Khandalavala and Ohri took different views to those of Archer and of Goswamy and Fischer. The series is discussed in every major book on the subject. It is widely dispersed among many public and private collections including the former Archer collection (Archer 1976, nos. 8-10), the V & A Museum (Archer 1973, vol. 1, pp. 49-50, vol. 2, pp. 36-38), the British Library (Falk and Archer 1981, no. 543), the former Ehrenfeld collection (Ehnbom 1985, no. 112), the Binney collection in San Diego (Goswamy and Smith 2005, nos. 93-94), the Philadelphia Museum (Kramrisch 1986, nos. 102-04), the Cleveland Museum (Leach 1986, no. 106i-iv), the Bellak collection (Mason 2001, no. 80), and the Brooklyn Museum (Poster *et al.* 1994, no. 193).

The verses on the reverse of this painting describe the founding by Krishna of the city of Dvarka. Krishna protects the inhabitants of Mathura and the Yadu race, including their king Ugrasena, from Jarasandha's powerful armies by moving them into a fortress which he builds in the sea at Dvarka.

Our painting depicts the golden city of Dvarka rising straight from the sea, as the text prescribes,



with its walls, terraces, gardens and gateways. Its sole occupant at the moment is Ugrasena, king of the Yadus, who had been transplanted thither through Krishna's divine powers along with all the inhabitants of Mathura.

This painting owes a debt to the golden city of Lanka in the earlier 'Siege of Lanka' series as is evident in the way the city is depicted (e.g. Goswamy and Fischer 2011 'Manaku' fig. 3;

Archer 1973, vol. 2, pp. 98-99). The former authorities give the authorship of the Siege of Lanka series to Manaku in Guler around 1730, while Archer also believed in a Guler provenance for that series at the same date. In that series too, the viewpoint is sometimes lifted to be able to see over the walls and what is going on within as is also the case in our painting. Archer's fig. 9(ii) on p. 99 from a painting from

the Siege of Lanka series now in the Cleveland Museum is particularly close. There too the walls run zigzag across the page with the sea lapping them at the base.

PROVENANCE  
Mrs F.C. Smith  
Sotheby's, London, 1 February 1960, lot 39  
(among 63 lots, each lot between 2-4 paintings of this series)

Private Collection, England

43 Ladies worshipping a Siva *Lingam*

Suket, c. 1800

Opaque pigments and gold on paper

Painting: 22.86 × 15.88 cm

With red border: 28.5 × 21 cm

Three women bearing offerings visit a shrine to Siva under a tree. The *lingam* is set on a pedestal under a tripod which supports a pitcher from which water is supposed to drip to bathe the *lingam* in perpetuity. Interestingly a snake, one of the emblems of Siva, is coiled round the *lingam*. The composition of this painting is very old fashioned for the period showing awareness, as Archer points out, of Mandi and Kulu painting at this period rather than the more up to date painting of Kangra. As in early Pahari painting, the artist has no interest in spatial representation but juxtaposes his architectural forms and his figures as if all were in the same plane. The result is an attractive composition in which white marble architecture in the form of a pavilion and a long horizontal wall contrasts with the inky black background and sky and the colourfully clothed women, bejewelled in gold, who take centre stage.

Paintings from Suket are rare. J.C. French when visiting Suket in the late 1920s wrote that he saw no collection of pictures although he acknowledged that a school of painting had existed (Archer 1973, vol. 2, p. 422). W.G. Archer viewed the ancestral collection of the Raja of Suket in the company of M.S. Randhawa in 1960 and again in 1966 (*ibid.*, p. 420). At that time, there were barely 20 paintings to be seen. Archer has suggested that most of the Suket paintings collection might have been destroyed during the burning of Kartarpur (Prana Nagar) by Kangra forces in the late 18th century.

PROVENANCE

Raja of Suket, Sundarnagar  
Collection of Mildred and W.G. Archer

PUBLISHED

Archer 1973, vol. 1, p 423 & vol. 2, p 334



Actual size

44 Arjuna and Uttara recover the stolen Cows

Folio 70 from a manuscript of the *Virata Parvan* of the *Mahabharata*

Southern India, late 17th century

Text colophon from Maharashtra dated 1669–70, paintings added

1680–90 probably at Tirupati

Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper

Inscribed in *nagari* with the Sanskrit text of the *Virata Parvan*, canto 62,

folio numbered 70, and inscribed above the illustration in Sanskrit:

*etah gavah* ('these are the cows') and *Uttara* above the prince

Painting: 11 × 15.4 cm

Folio: 20.5 × 49.3 cm

The *Mahabharata*, the great epic of India, is based round the war between the Pandavas and their cousins the Kauravas. In the *Virata Parvan*, the fourth book of the epic, the Pandavas have completed their twelve years in exile, imposed as a result of losing at dice to their cousins, and have to spend the thirteenth year disguised so that no one knows their true identity. They spend the year at the court of Virata, king of the Matsyas. When the king's cattle are stolen by the Kauravas, Virata's son, Uttara, sets off in pursuit of them with the disguised Arjuna as his charioteer. The episode illustrated here is from canto 62 of the Sanskrit text. Arjuna, having utterly routed his Kaurava cousins, is asked for mercy by some of the defeated Kuru soldiers, which Arjuna grants them. Arjuna then resumes his disguise and the pair return to Virata's capital city driving the cattle before them.

This manuscript is reported to have a colophon with a date equivalent to 1669–70. It is quoted in Karanth 1973 (p. 89), who notes that most of the two known books of this *Mahabharata* manuscript (*Sabha* and *Virata parvans*) are in private collections in Karnataka. The place of production of the manuscript is given as Chalisgaon and the patron Timaji Pandit, obviously a Brahmin who is depicted on one of the colophon folios, albeit in a more conventional Deccani style (*ibid.*, pl. 30). The most likely Chalisgaon is a town in Maharashtra about 35 miles north of Aurangabad.

The illustrations all show the same type of squat figures with heavy limbs and torsos with musculature emphasized, heavy and somewhat arbitrary modelling of draperies and of bodies, and very large eyes with the pupil surrounded by white. The style of painting was long thought to be

that of Mysore (Karnataka): the Wodeyar capital of Srirangapattanam has been suggested as a provenance by Jagdish Mittal (in Welch 1985, no. 21) and supported by other earlier scholars. This now seems unlikely on several grounds. Dallapiccola points out (2010, pp. 16–17) that the style has nothing in common with earlier Vijayanagar painting as at Lepakshi nor with definite Mysore paintings in manuscripts of the 19th century, and she stresses the stylistic resemblance to the leather shadow puppets of north-east Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Crill has proposed (2011, p. 165) to transfer the provenance to Tirupati, the great pilgrimage centre in southern Andhra Pradesh, whose importance in the production of pilgrimage paintings is slowly becoming recognized (Losty 2010, nos. 54–56). The publication of the extraordinary collection of albums of 18th century south Indian paintings in the Cabinet des Estampes in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Hurel, vol. 2, 2011), gives this speculation some foundation. An early 18th century album of Hindu divinities with inscriptions in Telugu, Tamil and French (*ibid.*, no. 293a,b) from southern Andhra Pradesh is stylistically very close to the paintings in the *Mahabharata* but their lighter colouring suggests a date probably a few decades later.

While *nagari* inscriptions have been found on paintings from Tirupati (e.g. Losty 2010, nos. 54, 56), these are strictly identifications for pious pilgrims from the north visiting the great shrine of Sri Venkatesvara at Tirumala on the hill above Tirupati. Almost all paintings from Andhra Pradesh with inscriptions use the Telugu language

and script, whereas Maharashtra to the north uses *nagari*, which gives credence to the provenance of the manuscript as Chalisgaon in Maharashtra. Timaji the patron is a Maratha name. The manuscript was perhaps taken south in Sivaji's campaign to conquer the Carnatic in southern India in 1677–78, when his route from Hyderabad would have taken him past Tirupati and Madras on his way to capture the great fortress of Gingee (Jinji) south of Madras in 1677 (Srinivasan 1944, pp. 154–63). Since in our manuscript the text was written before the paintings were added to the boxes left blank for illustration, it is possible that Timaji had the manuscript written in Chalisgaon and then the paintings were added at a slightly later date at Tirupati. Maratha influence continued in the far south of India even after Sivaji's death and the resurgence of local Muslim rulers: the Marathas had established themselves at Tanjore where the Rajas commissioned Sanskrit and Marathi works using the *nagari* script but illustrated by local artists until the end of the dynasty in the 19th century.

Pages from this *Mahabharata* are in the National Museum of India (Sharma 1974, pl. 24, and Crill 2011, fig. 10), Victoria and Albert Museum (Crill 2011, fig. 8), the Gulbenkian Museum, Durham (Michell 1995, fig. 193), the Brooklyn Museum (Poster 1994, no. 248), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (Dye 2001, no. 163), the San Diego Museum of Art (Goswamy and Smith 2006, no. 114), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Michell 1995, fig. 163) and the Jagdish and Kamla Mittal Museum in Hyderabad (Welch 1985, nos. 21a,b), as well as other public and private collections. See Crill 2011 pp. 170–71 for a fuller list.



Nagpur, 1750–75  
Ink, opaque pigments and gold on paper  
Painting: 33 × 18 cm

This rare and beautiful folio comes from a Marathi text dealing here with poetic figures of speech. The verses run from vv. 25 to 36/1 on the recto and vv. 36/2 to 37 of chapter 9 of the text on the verso, then begins chapter 10 after the red chapter colophon at the bottom of the verso, but the name of the work is nowhere given. The folio number 3 appears at the bottom right in the margin of the verso as does *a[dhyaya] 10* in the top left meaning chapter 10. Text and illustrations are enclosed within compartments by gold margins, with a gold margin surrounding the whole.

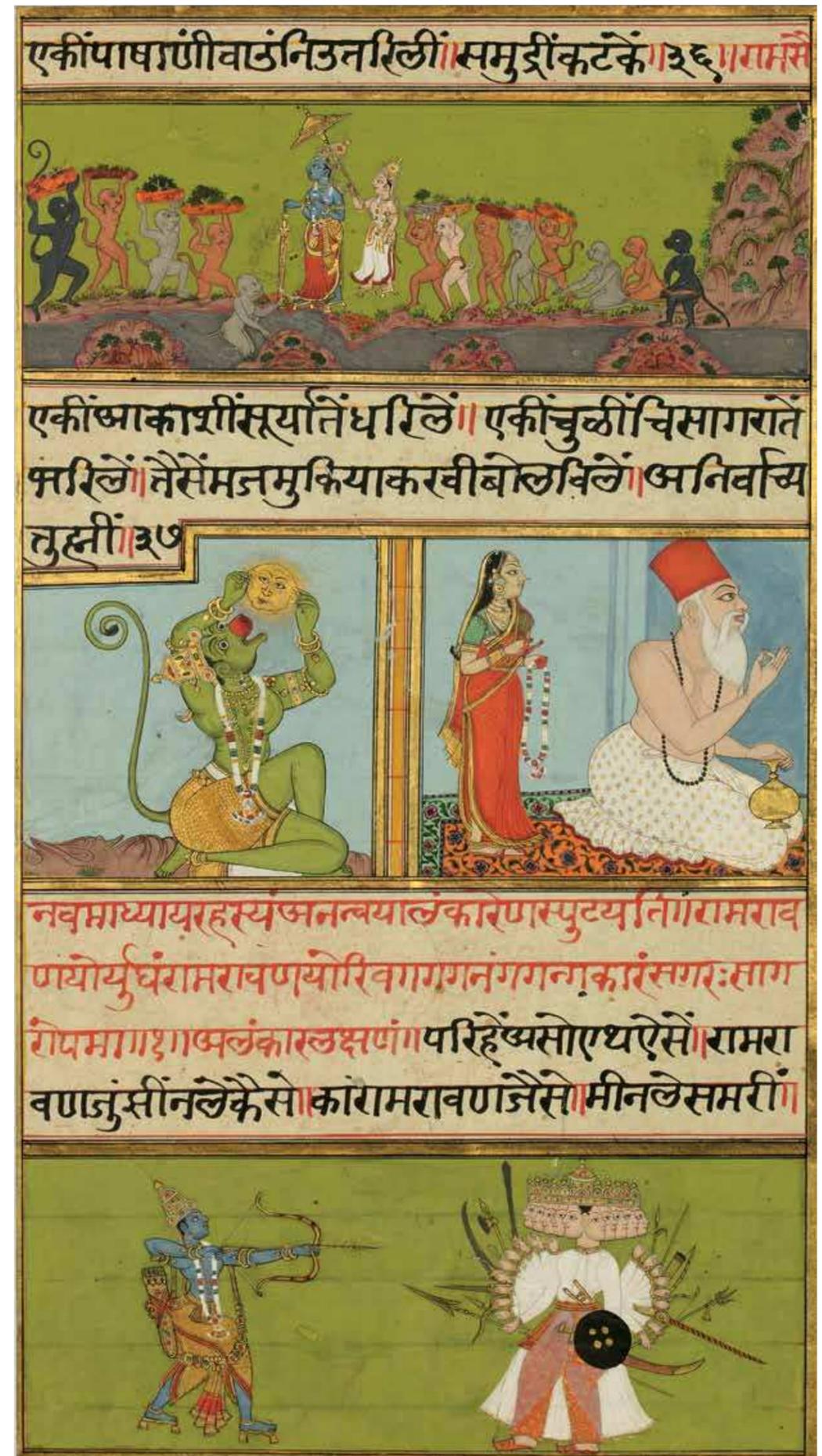
The recto deals with verses illustrating the theme of the figure of speech that discriminates between different kinds of knowledge. It has two small illustrations at the foot of the page depicting the chariot drawn by a seven-headed horse of Surya the Sun-god, here meeting Krishna/Vishnu, while the other panels show a variety of animals. The verso uses themes from the *Ramayana* to illustrate figures of speech such as *ananvaya* (comparison of an object with its own ideal) and *upama* (simile). The several depictions illustrate scenes from the *Ramayana* including the building of the bridge across the ocean, Hanuman as a child grabbing the Sun as a toy and the fight between Rama and Ravana. The standing lady is perhaps Sita with a guru. She is wearing a Maratha type of nine-yard sari caught up between the legs. All these images are invoked as illustrations of poetical figures of speech (*alamkaras*). Regardless of why they are there, these are delightful vignettes. One admires especially the lively long-tailed monkeys in the building of the bridge, the gleeful surprise on young Hanuman's face as he catches the Sun (his

features with their huge eyes are reminiscent of the shadow puppets from northern Karnataka and Andhra), and the intensity of the beautifully modelled guru as he looks across at no doubt a similar figure on the opposite page.

The style of painting relates closely to mid-eighteenth century Hindu Hyderabad painting with the heroes wearing the tall crowns typical of that style (for instance Falk and Archer 1981, no. 427iv). Our solitary heroine strikes a chord with a group of ladies worshipping a *lingam*, all of them wearing the Maratha nine-yard *sari*, a painting thought by Zebrowski (1983, fig. 235) to possibly be Maratha. Very little has been published on Maratha painting, which seems to have centred at this date round Nagpur. Pages of a loose-leaf dispersed *Bhagavata Purana* have been attributed to that city by Dr Moti Chandra (Falk and Archer 1981, nos. 561–62), with a similar manuscript in the Mumbai CSMVS Museum (54.2(1–4)). More importantly for our purposes a complete manuscript of the Marathi classic text, Jnanadeva's *Jnanesvari*, a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*, in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, is profusely illustrated in a richer but similar style to our page (Dye 2001, no. 162, pp. 370–74). It is dated 1763 at Nagpur and copied by the scribe Narayana for a patron who is named as the son of Sri Gopinath. Its calligraphy is extremely fine and virtually identical to that on our page, suggesting the latter is from the same atelier and possibly by the same scribe. Ladies worshipping Ganesh at the beginning of the manuscript (ibid., no. 162, 1) wear the same kind of sari as our Sita, while little vignettes are interspersed with the text (nos. 162, 3–6) with the figures silhouetted against a coloured ground as in our page.

Nagpur, originally the centre of a Gond kingdom and never Mughalized, was taken over by Raghoji Bhonsle, a Maratha general governing Berar for the Peshwa, in 1743. After his death he was succeeded by his son Janoji (1755–73). They and their eighteenth-century successors were roughly spoken warriors, continually fighting, who were uninterested in the arts, and certainly never founded a court studio. Such artistic patronage as there was at Nagpur must have been from wealthy merchants such as presumably Sri Gopinath, who had possibly been exposed to the sophisticated court at Hyderabad and was stirred into emulating its artistic productions.

It was not until the eighteenth century that Hindu patrons became aware of the possibilities of creating manuscripts that matched their Muslim counterparts in the beauty of their calligraphy and binding as well as in their paintings. Little attention had been paid by such patrons or scribes previously to the possibilities of beautiful calligraphy, which hitherto was at best a workmanlike production no matter how wonderful the paintings. Hindu manuscripts had also been traditionally in loose leaf 'landscape' format, but now in imitation of Islamic manuscripts they began to be made in upright 'portrait' format and bound, normally in brocaded cloth. Kashmir and Jaipur have hitherto been considered the centres of where such fine work was produced (Losty 1982, pp. 118–21), but clearly Nagpur has now joined them. According to Mate and Ranade (1982, p. 4), Maratha families of the eighteenth century made it a practice to collect richly illustrated manuscripts of religious and literary texts (see Dye 2001, p. 374, n. 9, for more details).



## 46 The Conclave of the Gods

An Illustration to the *Devimahatmya*

Mysore, c. 1840

Inscribed on the back with the text in Kannada script of the *Devimahatmya*

Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper

Painting: 25 × 15.8 cm

Folio: 30 × 20.5 cm

The *Devimahatmya* (the 'Glorification of the Goddess') is a Sanskrit text in 700 verses that form the earliest codification of *Sakta* or Goddess worship in Hinduism (see Thomas Coburn in Dehejia 1999, pp. 37–57, for an analysis of the text). The Goddess is called into being from the combined essences of the gods in order to deal with a most potent threat from the demons, who threaten the right order of the world and to whom the gods in their foolish masculine way have given boons that mean that they cannot kill them. After disposing of various demons including the Mahesasura or Buffalo demon, whose despatch by the Goddess's trident while riding her lion forms one of the most potent images in Hindu art, the demon brothers Sumbha and Nisumbha come up against her. Needless to say, first Nisumbha is killed and then Sumbha.

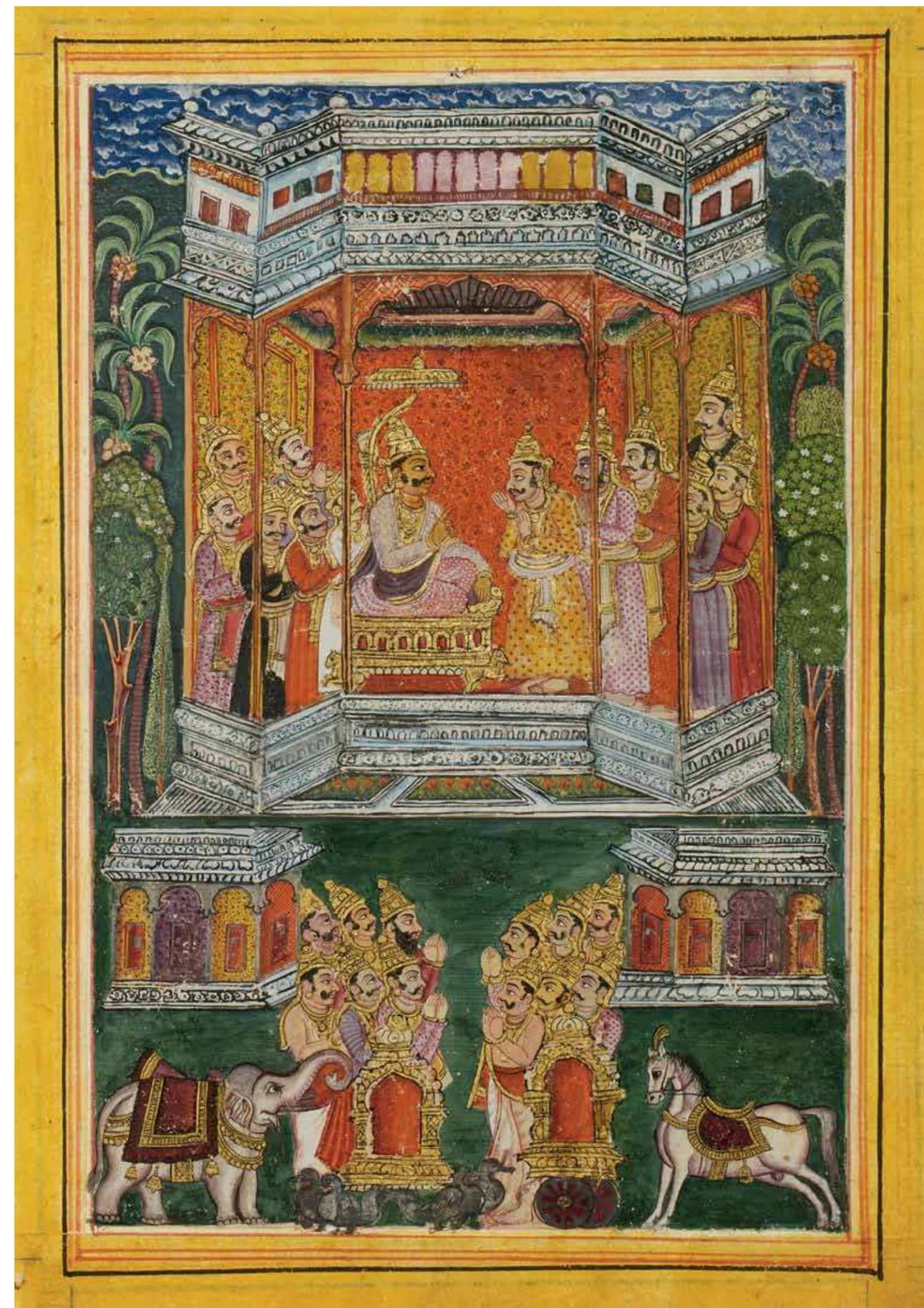
The two demonic brothers have conquered the entire world and rule the heavens of the gods. As it is written at the beginning of the fifth canto of the *Devimahatmya*: 'In olden days the demons Sumbha and Nisumbha, due to the power of the boon from Brahma, obtained by them through penance, drove away Indra from his heaven and became the overlords of all the worlds. They controlled the positions of Surya, Yama, Varuna, Agni and all other gods. They began to do the work of Wind even and so there was no work for the gods who were forcibly driven out from their posts. The *vahanas* or vehicles of some of the gods are parked at the foot of the page: visible are the *Puspaka* or flying chariot (powered by birds) of Kubera, the god of wealth, the elephant of Indra, the horse of Vayu the wind god, though

the other chariot remains obscure. The gods would seem to be in conclave to decide what course of action to take, although none of them are recognisable through their usual attributes. The text on the reverse deals with the beginning of the episode of the Goddess's destruction of the demon Sumbha, when he tries to woo the Goddess in her form of the beautiful Ambika (Coburn in Dehejia 1999, pp. 48–49).

After the death of Tipu Sultan at Srirangapattanam, the child Krishnaraja Wodeyar III was placed on the throne of Mysore by the victorious British in 1799 at the age of five. He was deprived of ruling power in 1831 on the grounds of maladministration but was allowed to remain in the palace at Mysore and retained certain privileges. He spent the next thirty years engaged in cultural pursuits relating to Kannada literature, theatre, music and painting (Dallapiccola 2010, pp. 12–13). Despite the presence of the British political establishment in Mysore city and the cantonment at Bangalore, Mysore artists never seem to have developed the sort of westernised painting that would have appealed to the British. Instead such artists worked for the Maharaja in developing their traditional style. During Krishnaraja's long reign, lavishly illustrated manuscripts of the Hindu religious classics were produced under royal patronage, as well as manuscripts relating to board games on which the Maharaja was an expert. All of these made use of the Kannada script whether for Kannada or for Sanskrit manuscripts.

One such lavishly illustrated *Bhagavata Purana* is in the Binney collection in San Diego

(Goswamy and Smith 2005, no. 115) to which our page is closely related stylistically. Pages from another dispersed *Devimahatmya* are in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Dehejia 1999, no. 10). Certain features of our painting are standard for Mysore paintings of this period such as the rigidly schematised figures in profile wearing their tall conical headdresses, but the artist brings spontaneity to his treatment of the sky and landscape. The ribbon clouds in the sky and the trees on either side are found in the Binney *Bhagavata Purana* (nos. 115.1 and 2), while the artist's handling of the palace architecture is a conceptualised marvel.



Actual size

## 47 Visnu in Cosmic Form

Mysore, second half of the 19th century  
Opaque pigments and gold on paper  
With numerous inscriptions of identification in Kannada  
Painting: 46.3 × 35.2 cm  
Folio: 50.4 × 39.2 cm

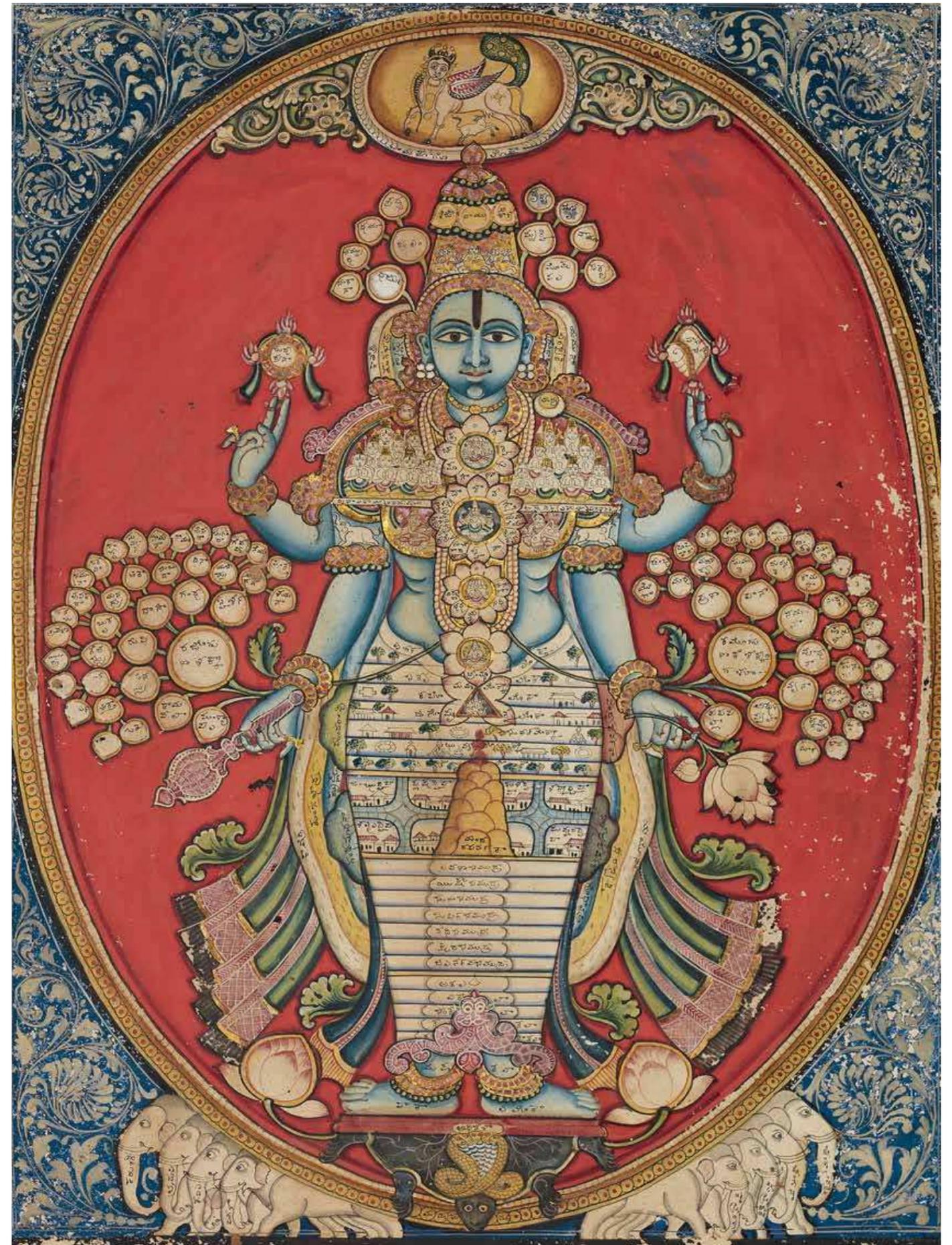
In chapter XI of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna is granted a vision of Krishna in his cosmic form as Visnu Visvarupa encompassing the entire universe and everything within it. This vision combined with the legacy of the Vedic hymn of the cosmic *purusa* out of whom mankind was created underlies this schematic image of Visnu as the Supreme Being. The manifest form of Visnu with his four arms bearing their traditional symbols (club, discus, conch and lotus) at the level of his thighs contains *Jambudvipa*, the visible universe, surrounding Mount Meru. Above it are the seven heavens and below it the seven hells (although others are also present here). Gods inhabit the upper part of the cosmic being. Leaves emanating from his navel and head contain inscriptions of the forms that are created from Visnu at the beginning of each of the cycles of the universe.

This scheme has been combined with another from *Kundalini yoga* symbolising the awakening of consciousness through the successive *cakras* envisioned as lotuses rising up the body. The lotus that traditionally is placed above the being's head is here replaced by the *Kamadhenu*, the wish-fulfilling cow. Below the being's feet are arranged the cosmic turtle that supports the entire universe, looking decidedly unhappy at being so squashed, the *Sesa* or *Ananta*, Visnu's snake that contains the matter that forms the universe in the periods of the dissolution of the world, and the elephants of the quarters. In the traditional scheme, the world rests on the backs of the four elephants that are in turn supported by the turtle, but the artist has rearranged the scheme

and added four extra elephants in the intermediate quarters. The whole image is contained within an oval frame in a rectangle with foliate sprays in the spandrels that seem under European influence.

For painting in Mysore, see cat. 46.

PROVENANCE  
Private Collection, England



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