INDIAN MINIATURES
F THE MUGHAL COURT

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FOREWORD

Numerous books have already been written on Indian painting in general, and many have focused in particular on the Mughal school that flourished in northern India from the second half of the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. Few such studies, however, have attempted to discover or reconstruct the oeuvre of individual artists. Mughal painting has too often been handled exclusively from a stylistic or thematic perspective, and thus has tended to obscure the personal contribution of the great court painters whose names are familiar only to specialists.

Today the work of these talented and prolific painters is becoming more widely known and appreciated, and the artistic evolution of some of the most famous and imaginative painters has been broadly established. Thanks to this volume's resolutely monographic approach, based on the style and work of individual artists, court painters to the Grand Mughal are slowly emerging from anonymity, laying claim to the beauty and virtuosity of their own personal pictorial accomplishments.

Rather than present yet another overview of Mughal painting from the standpoint of chronology and stylistic development, then, it seems appropriate to focus primarily on the personal oeuvre of the finest court painters to the three most eminent emperors of the brilliant Mughal dynasty — Akbar (reigned 1556-1605), Jahangir (r. 1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (r. 1628-1658). These three successive reigns corresponded to the golden age of Mughal art. This book dwells, therefore, on the special relationship that existed between the emperor-patrons and the artists who painted an inspired and indulgent picture of imperial grandeur.

THE ORIGINS OF MUGHAL PAINTING

It was the emperor Humayun (r. 1530-1556) who invited the two Safavid painters 'Abd as-Samad and Mir Sayyid 'Ali to join his court, first in Kabul and later in India when he had reconquered his kingdom. Yet it was Humayun's son and successor Akbar who truly founded and developed the imperial atelier by asking these two Persian masters (originally from the court of Persia's ruling Safavid dynasty) to head a workshop and to train court painters in the Safavid tradition.

Akbar's establishment of a *kitab-khana* (atelier of court painters) on his accession to the throne in 1556 had a decisive impact on the elaboration and definition of a Mughal style clearly distinct from previous painting traditions proper to Turkey and Iran. Akbar took a keen interest in the work of his court painters, urging them to gradually liberate themselves from Persian models in order to produce increasingly personal and eclectic works.

Although exemplary, Akbar's artistic policies were not entirely original. They were largely indebted to his ancient Mongol and Timurid heritage, dynasties in which monarchs were learned patrons surrounded by a brilliant and refined court of poets, writers, artists and musicians. Akbar founded his imperial workshop in imitation of the practice which was then current at Persian courts, and the Mughal *kitab-khana* (see figure 2) was not unlike the atelier of calligraphers, painters, illuminators and binders at the court of Shah Tahmasp Safavi (r. 1524-1576).

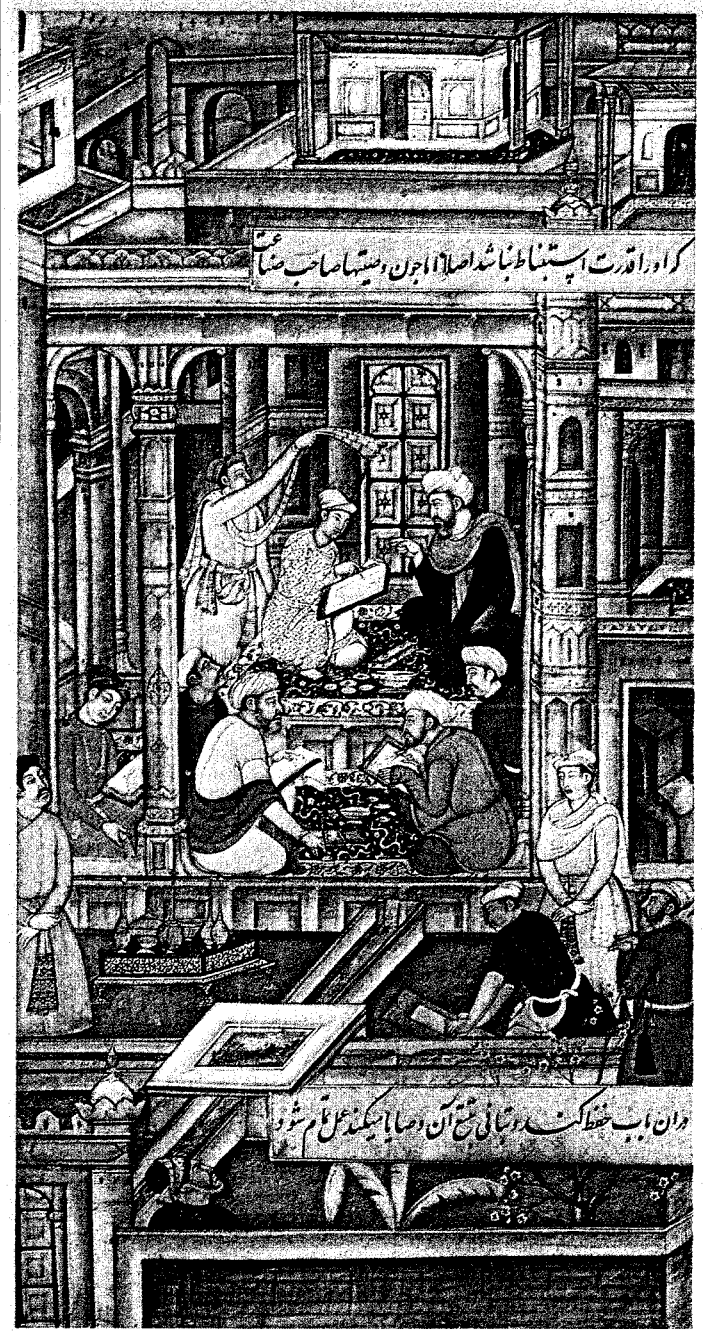
A devotee of the arts, Akbar personally supervised the work of his painters, often choosing the subjects to be illustrated. One of the workshop masters would then assign the project to a given artist based on that artist's special skill. Imperial biographer and royal historian Abu'l Fazl noted in *A'in-i-Akbari* (The Statutes of Akbar):

"The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the *Daroghas* [intendants] and clerks; he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries."

The talent of the most skilled painters did not escape the monarch's shrewd and demanding eye. Akbar immediately perceived the genius of Daswanth, a Hindu painter who had begun as a humble employee in the imperial atelier and whose early death in 1584 brought a promising career to a sudden end.

Akbar, who was less elitist than his son Jahangir, did not restrict access to the *kitab-khana* to a small clique of brilliant artists and great masters; he frequently welcomed less talented painters and younger artists who performed secondary tasks not requiring extraordinary skill. Thus they would handle coloring and assist the more experienced painters who were responsible for drawing, composition and portraiture (fig. 3).

This "collective" approach of assigning two or three artists to a single work obviously facilitated the swift and



3. Painters and Calligraphers Working. *An illustration from the* Akhlaq-i-Nasiri *of Nasir ud-Din Tusi, circa 1590-1595. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection.*

massive production of imperial manuscripts, which was the main activity of the *kitab-khana* during Akbar's reign. Painters were expected to be highly productive, and the traditional system almost inevitably forced them to specialize. Some excelled in court scenes, others in battle scenes, still others painted flora and fauna, while other artists handled only portraits. This led to the relatively homogeneous — indeed, often uniform — style that characterized Akbar's atelier in the 1580s and 1590s (fig. 4).

Guided by the Persian masters 'Abd as-Samad and Mir Sayyid 'Ali, painters from various backgrounds and diverse pictorial traditions doggedly acquired the art of drawing by attempting to outdo one another in faithfully imitating the work of earlier — primarily Persian — masters.

Akbar's son and successor, Jahangir, was even more demanding than his father in terms of artistic excellence. When crowned Grand Mughal in 1605, Jahangir immediately dismissed a large number of painters whom he felt were incapable of doing justice to the dazzling grandeur of a dynasty rising to its pinnacle. Many minor masters in Akbar's atelier thus suddenly found themselves brutally forced into anonymity after having enjoyed a certain notoriety. Meanwhile, a new elite group of painters characterized by more personal and more inventive skills received the praise, favors and protection of the new monarch.

Out of a sincere interest in the labor of his court painters, as well as a concern for efficiency and optimum artistic production, Akbar wanted his artists to be officially credited for their work. Thus *munshis* (scribes) and officials attached to the imperial atelier were instructed to carefully note the name of

each artist in Arabic-Persian lettering. The name was preceded by the role of the artist in the execution of the work — *tarkh Basawan 'amal Hosein Naqqash*, for example, indicated that the composition was by Basawan and the coloring by Hosein Naqqash. These administrative inscriptions by civil servants for the purpose of just recompense were not, by the way, always clear and scrupulously accurate. There were often striking differences in the spelling of names of even prolific, well-known artists.

Due to the emperor's policy and the *munshis'* zeal, over one hundred names of minor and major masters in Akbar's atelier have been preserved for posterity. These names often attest to the Hindu origin of many of the painters, who in fact outnumbered Muslim painters in the Mughal emperor's atelier. The names of Hindu painters often provide clues to their caste. Ibrahim Kahar, for instance, was a convert to Islam, as indicated by the name Ibrahim, yet like the famous Daswanth, he belonged to the humble Hindu caste of *kahar* (litter-bearers). Similarly, the names of Hindu and Muslim artists such as Bhim Gujarat, Haydar Kashmiri and Ibrahim Lahori betray their geographic origins.

Some of these artists whose names indicate that they originally came from Gujarat, Kashmir or Lahore probably joined Akbar's atelier following the annexation of their provinces by the imperial army. The intense activity of the imperial workshop and the ever-increasing number of illuminated manuscripts produced by the *kitab-khana* made the constant arrival of new painters necessary. Local painting schools had flourished in the newly conquered provinces long before the Mughals came to dominate northern India; painters born in the ancient artistic centers of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa were thus recruited by the Mughals. Their artistic background and traditions inevitably provided nascent Mughal art with frames of reference and mannerisms alien to the Safavid

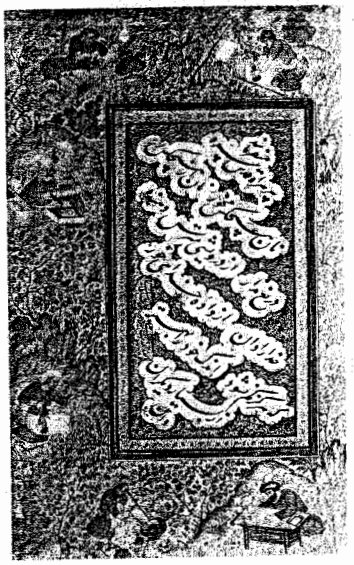
4. Artists Working. *Detail from a page in the* Berlin Album, *circa 1585. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin.*

tradition imposed by atelier masters 'Abd as-Samad and Mir Sayyid 'Ali. The diversity of the artistic contributions of these new painters led to atelier productions characterized by nostalgia and innovation, making this a period of vigorous originality.

5. Emperor Jahangir Receiving an Artist in His Tent, *circa 1605. India Office Library and Records, London.*

Akbar's attentiveness to painters and painting was mentioned in Abu'l Fazl's *A'in-i-Akbari*:

"Great progress was made in the material required by painters, and the exact prices of articles were carefully verified. The mixing of colors was markedly improved and paintings acquired a heretofore unknown finish."



6. Kitab-Khana Artists. *A page from a Jahangir album, circa 1600. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

The emperor's concern for quality led him to ensure that his artists lacked nothing to perfect their art, supplying them with the best pigments, brushes and paper (fig. 6). The importance the monarch placed on the artists in his service also emerges from the list of the seventeen finest *kitab-khana* painters, drawn up by Abu'l Fazl:

"Among the forerunners on the high road of art I may mention:

"1. Mir Sayyid 'Ali of Tabriz. He learned the art from his father. From the time of his introduction at Court, the ray of royal favor has shone upon him. He has made himself famous in his art, and has met with much success.

"2. Khwaja 'Abd as-Samad, styled Shirin Qalam, or 'Sweet Pen.' Though he had learned the art before he was made a grandee of the Court, his perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look [from] His Majesty, which caused him to turn from that which is form to that which is spirit. From the instruction they received, the Khwaja's pupils became masters.

"3. Daswanth. He is the son of a *palkee*-bearer. He devoted his whole life to the art, and used, from love of his profession, to draw and paint figures even on walls. One day the eye of His Majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered, and he himself handed over to the Khwaja. In a short time he surpassed all painters, and became the first master of the age.

"4. Basawan. In backgrounding, drawing of features, distribution of colors, portrait painting, and several other branches, he is most excellent, so much so that many critics prefer him to Daswanth.

"The following painters have likewise attained fame: Kesu, La'l, Mukund, Miskin, Farrukh the Qalmaq, Madhu, Jagan, Mohesh, Khem Karan, Tara, Sanla, Haribas, Ram."

This list of the empire's most accomplished painters is highly unusual in Indian tradition, and is revealing of the relatively privileged status of his court artists. Traditionally, Indian artists executed royal commissions and enjoyed the favor and largesse of a monarch according to the brilliance of their work, designed to enhance the monarch's prestige and the glamor of his court. Yet an artist's talent rarely shattered the anonymity that, in India,

went hand in hand with all artistic creativity; artists created only in the hope of attaining, via their art, a divine state of grace through the abnegation of self.

Painters acquired even more prestige during the reign of Jahangir. In a well-known passage from the emperor's memoirs, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, dated 1618 (the thirteenth year of his reign), Jahangir prides himself on knowing painting so thoroughly that he could immediately discriminate the work of one artist from that of another, even within the same painting.

"When any work is brought before me, either of deceased artists or those of the present day, without the names being told me, I say on the spur of the moment that it is the work of such and such a man. And if there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them. If any other person has put in the eye and eyebrow of a face, I can perceive whose work the original face is, and who has painted the eye and eyebrows."

Jahangir furthermore conferred pompous titles on his preferred artists to mark their pre-eminence within the imperial atelier. Abu'l Hasan, one of the emperor's favorite portraitists, was awarded the title of Nadir az-Zaman ("The Wonder of the Epoch"), whereas Mansur, famous for his animal and floral studies, became Nadir al-'Asr ("The Wonder of the Age"). Jahangir also incited some of his painters to execute self-portraits or portraits of their colleagues in the imperial atelier. A heavily decorated page from the *Muraqqa Gulshan*, a royal album in the Gulistan Imperial Library in Teheran, includes portraits of painters Abu'l Hasan, Manohar, Bishandas, Govardhan and Daulat. This latter artist holds a large panel indicating that he was commissioned by Emperor Jahangir to decorate the borders of this page of the album with the faces of the painters familiar to the monarch. Several other portraits or self-portraits of painters and calligraphers at work date from Jahangir's reign. A miniature in the collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris even shows the future emperor admiring a painting being presented to him by the young Abu'l Hasan, one of his favorite artists (fig. 7).

7. The Painter Abu'l Hasan Presents His Work to Prince Salim, the Future Emperor Jahangir, *circa 1600. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.*

Pictorial output in Mughal India depended almost exclusively on the reigning monarch. The emperor's tastes and wishes determined all artistic production and the monarch-patron imposed his views and favorite subjects on artists, who in return received the Grand Mughal's favor and protection. The special relationship between monarch and painters can be explained by a reciprocal dependence — quite simply, artists could not make a living without a patron, yet the monarch himself depended on the skill of his painters to exalt his grandeur and promote his political ambitions.

The evolution of Mughal painting under the successive reigns of Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan is particularly revealing from this standpoint. The growing reputation of artists, begun under Akbar and extended and reinforced by Jahangir and Shah Jahan, would emerge in subtle yet decisive fashion in seventeenth-century imperial iconography. During this golden age of Mughal greatness, painters became the inspired and indulgent servants of monarchs concerned with power and dynastic legitimacy.

8. Babur Meeting Ahmad Khan near Tashkent. *Composition by Nand, son of Ram Das. An illustration from the* Babur-nama, *circa 1589. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

COURT PAINTERS AT THE SERVICE OF IMPERIAL IDEOLOGY

In the early decades of his reign, the emperor Akbar favored the illustration of literary and poetic manuscripts. He was strongly attracted to imaginative, fantastic subjects and was a lover of tales and fables from the Arabic, Persian and even Sanskrit repertoires. The monarch thus asked his painters to illustrate famous works such as the *Hamza-nama* (Story of Hamza, which recounts the semi-mythical adventures of an uncle of the prophet Muhammad). Executed circa 1562-1577, this effort originally contained one thousand four hundred paintings divided evenly into fourteen volumes. Sometime between 1560 and 1566, Akbar also had the famous *Tuti-nama* (Tales of a Parrot) illustrated. This collection of edifying tales based on an original Sanskrit text was highly esteemed throughout the Orient, as well as by the Mughal court.

Many other literary manuscripts were copied and illustrated by the skilled artists in the *kitab-khana* during Akbar's long and fertile reign, including a *Gulistan* (Garden of Roses) of Sa'di, produced at Fathpur-Sikri in 1582; a *Darab-nama* (Story of Darab), circa 1585, a work to which the greatest imperial artists contributed; a *Baharistan* (Spring Garden) of Jami, illustrated at Lahore in 1595; and a *Khamsa* (anthology of five poems) of Nizami, circa 1585. These and other manuscripts indicate the resolutely eclectic nature and the literary role of pictorial art under the early years of Akbar's patronage.

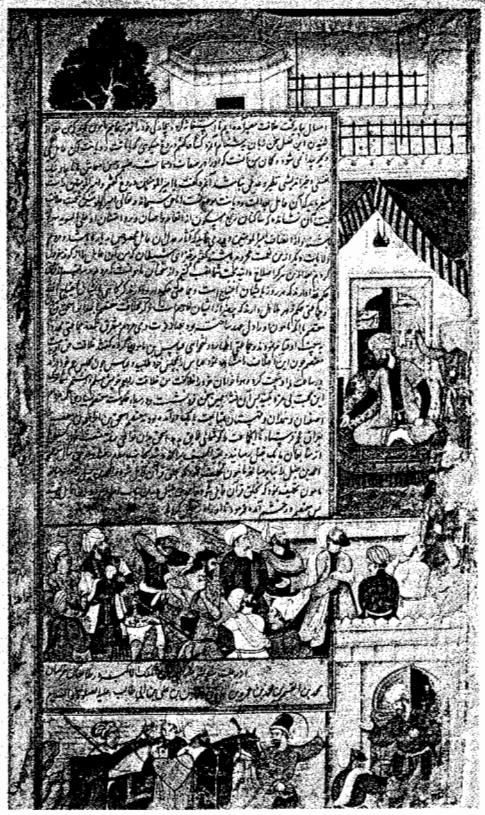
In the 1580s, however, Akbar became interested in history, and alongside the illustration of literary and poetic texts, the emperor had a series of historical texts written and illustrated. These were designed to demonstrate the dynastic and political legitimacy of the Mughals who descended from the illustrious Timurid line, to the vassals of the empire and important court dignitaries. In a subtle and progressive manner, such art would place itself at the service of Mughal ideology, with painters becoming the uncritical promoters of the power and grandeur of a dynasty of emperor-patrons.

In 1581, Akbar ordered court scholars to write a new history of the Islamic world to commemorate the start of the second millennium of the Islamic era (due to occur in 1591-1592). Seven scholars immediately got to work, compiling masses of information "from the date of the death of the Prophet . . . up to the present," according to the historian Badaoni. To eliminate all mythical extrapolations and irrational elements from the final text, the emperor demanded that the authors regularly read him the results of their work, to which he listened with rapt attention.

This compilation of the *Tarikh-i-Alfi* (History of a Millennium), followed by its illustration several years later (circa

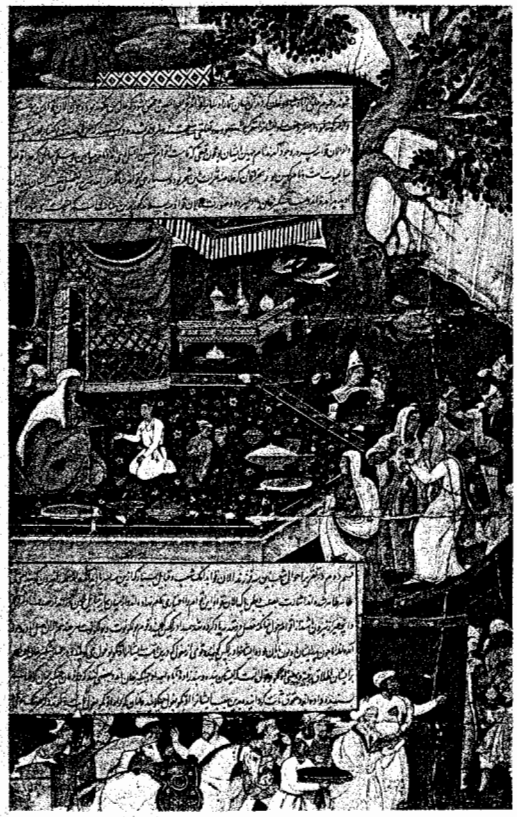
9. The Siege of Baghdad by Tahir. *An illustration from the* Tarikh-i-Alfi, *circa 1592-1594. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

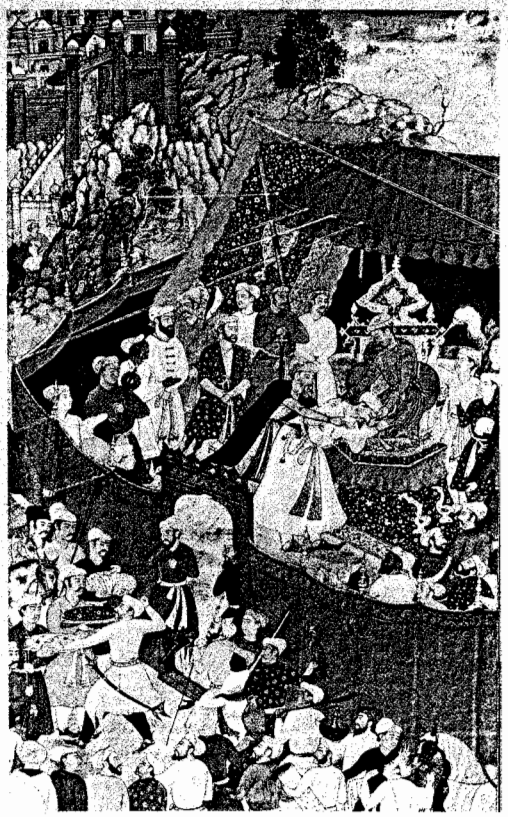
10. Accused of Heresy, the Imam of Baghdad Appears before the Caliph. *An illustration from the* Tarikh-i-Alfi, *circa 1592-1594. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*



11. Abu'l Fazl Presenting the First Book of the Akbar-nama to Akbar. *Composition by Govardhan. An illustration from the* Akbar-nama, *dated 1604. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*

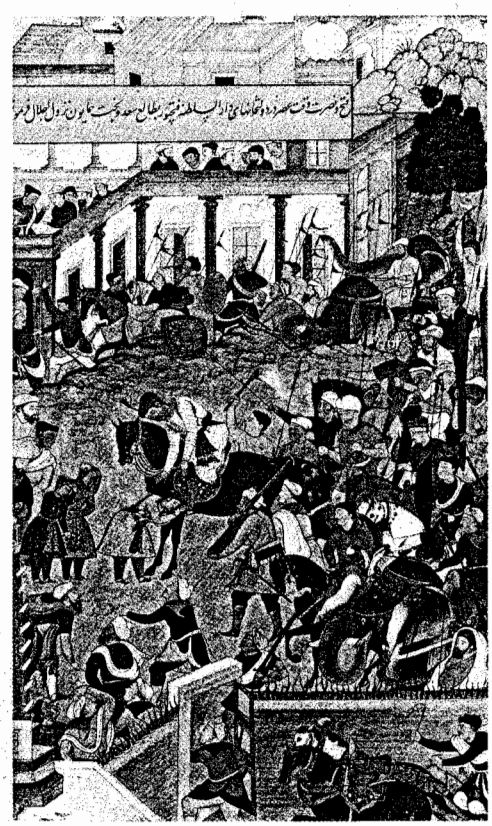
12. Alanquwa and His Three Sons. *An illustration from the* Chingiz-nama, *circa 1596. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*





13. Babur Receiving the Ambassador of Bengal. *An illustration from the* Babur-nama, *circa 1591. British Library, London.*

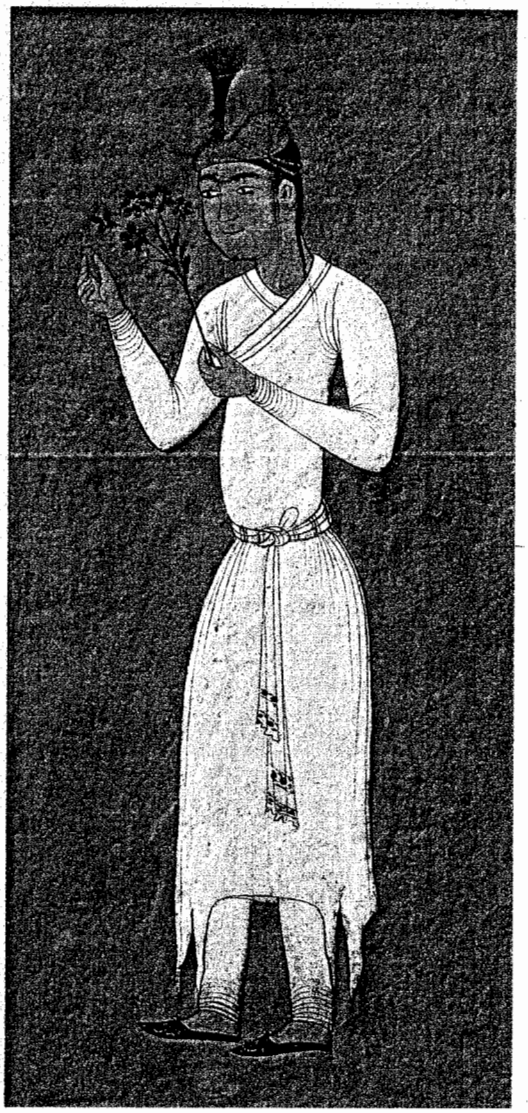
14. Raja Surjan Hada Hands Akbar the Keys to the Ranthambhor Fort. *Composition by Mukund, coloring by Shankar. An illustration from the* Akbar-nama, *circa 1590. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*



15. Akbar's Triumphant Return to Fathpur-Sikri. *Composition by Kesu Kalan, coloring by Nar Singh. An illustration from the* Akbar-nama, *circa 1590. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

16. Ambassadors from Badakshan and the Deccan Pay Tribute to Emperor Akbar. *Composition by Miskin, coloring by Sarwan, portraits by Madhu. An illustration from the* Akbar-nama, *circa 1590. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

1592-1594) provided Akbar with the opportunity to measure his own accomplishments in Mughal India against the yardstick of Islamic domination (figs. 9, 10). In addition to revealing the historical and religious past of fellow Muslims, the work presents the history of the Mughal dynasty through the illustration of manuscripts recounting the exploits of the emperor's most illustrious and most distant ancestors, followed by those of his more recent forebears.



17. Young Man in White, *circa 1565-1570. Mughal copy of a Persian miniature from Khorasan. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

It was sometime around 1584 that Akbar's painters began the illustration of another historical manuscript, the *Tarikh-i-Khandan-Timuriyya*, or *Timur-nama*. This text recounts the story of Timur (or Tamerlane) and his descendants up to the Mughal emperors Babur, Humayun and Akbar. Nearly a third of this manuscript is therefore devoted to a detailed account of the first Mughal monarchs, with over forty folios alone describing the first nineteen years of Akbar's reign. Although the author of this history remains anonymous and his sources unknown, it is nevertheless certain that Akbar considered the *Timur-nama* a major project, and instructed the finest painters in the imperial atelier to illustrate it. Akbar apparently felt a pressing need to define his youthful empire in terms of the one forged by his forefather. A close look at the 137 illustrations shows that the artists sought to establish the Timur-Mughal connection, making the Mughals the rightful heirs to Timur's immense and glamorous empire, and the just and legitimate sovereigns of India. The compilation and illustration of this manuscript glorifying Islamic sovereigns and the Mongol monarchs Genghis Khan and Timur thus enabled Akbar to compare his own accomplishments and exploits with those of his illustrious ancestors. Toward the end of the 1580s, at the same time that he ordered the writing and illustrating of the *Timur-nama*, Akbar commissioned a translation into Persian of the famous memoirs left by his grandfather Babur, founder of the Mughal empire in India.

On 24 November 1589, 'Abd er-Rahim Khan Khanan, commander-in-chief of the Mughal army and an accomplished poet and patron of the arts, presented Akbar with a translation of Babur's memoirs from Turkish into Persian. At least four copies of Khanan's translation (known as the *Babur-nama*), all illus-

18. Genghis Khan Divides His Empire between His Sons. *Composition by Basawan, coloring by Bhim Gujarati. An illustration from the* Chingiz-nama, *circa 1596. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

trated by imperial artists, are known to exist today, testifying to the importance emperor and family placed on these memoirs by the founder of the Mughal dynasty (fig. 8). Sometime around 1590, while they were illustrating the various copies of this text (fig. 13), Akbar's painters began work on the *Akbar-nama* (fig. 14), the official version of the emperor's own reign.

Two copies of the *Akbar-nama* were illustrated in the imperial atelier. The first (circa 1590) — like the second, for that matter (circa 1604) — has the unmistakable feel of propaganda designed to intimidate disloyal vassals and enemies of a manifestly powerful monarch, thus forestalling any rebellion against the empire.

This unprecedented glorification of Akbar's policies and political institutions, uncritical in its praise of the ruling emperor (figs. 14, 15, 16), represented something of a literary monument. Its author, Abu'l Fazl, was also the monarch's minister and best friend, yet he would not live to complete the projected five volumes of the work, for he was assassinated in 1602 on the orders of Prince Salim (the future emperor Jahangir, who had always been hostile to the historian and was at that time in open rebellion against his father). The first two volumes of the *Akbar-nama* were completed in 1597, followed by the drafting of the *A'in-i-Akbari*, which was never illustrated.

19. Portrait of a Mughal Dignitary, *circa 1580-1585. Signed Khem Karan. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

20. Portrait of Tansen, *circa 1580. Chrysler Museum, Norfolk.*

An implacable logic emerges from the methodical drafting and illustration of historical manuscripts during Akbar's reign. The Grand Mughal first sought to glorify Islamic rulers (*Tarikh-i-Alfi*), then Timurid monarchs (*Timur-nama* and especially *Chingiz-nama*, a manuscript dating from 1596 that recounts the life of the great Mongol lord Genghis Khan — see figures 12, 18), and finally the Mughals themselves, descended, as the name suggests, from their Mongol ancestors (*Babur-nama* and *Akbar-nama*). The emperor, followed by his heirs, attempted to establish the historical significance of the Mughal line by comparing his own accomplishments with the grandiose achievements of his ancestors.

Akbar's growing interest in history was accompanied by a related attraction to the men who made history — the empire's dignitaries, governors, administrators and officers. Their brilliant skills and vigorous personalities could reinforce Mughal power in India. It was this curiosity in the people who were building his empire (and the pragmatic desire to know his high civil servants with all their strengths and flaws), that engendered the realistic, psychological art of Mughal portraiture during the final decades of Akbar's reign.

The emphasis on portraits in Akbar's atelier would have a decisive impact on

the subsequent development of Mughal painting, which was characterized by a growing and almost ostentatious realism. Abu'l Fazl described Akbar's interest in the portrait genre in *A'in-i-Akbari*:

"His majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed — those who have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised to them."

21. Mota Raja Udai Singh of Jodhpur, *circa 1580. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.*

22. Zain Khan Kokah, *circa 1595. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

Prodded by imperial exigencies, the painters of the *kitab-khana* adopted an increasingly realistic approach to portraits. This new artistic attitude, so different from that of the original Safavid ateliers that produced stereotypical portraits marked more by aestheticism than naturalism, sought to reveal the sitter's personality and psychology (fig. 19). Most Mughal artists, however, adopted the new approach only gradually, scrupulously modifying their style to meet the new aesthetic demands. Vying with one another to reproduce the iconographic and aesthetic qualities of these new portraits, painters in Akbar's atelier developed specific mannerisms. The subject, for instance, invariably stands before a solid background, often pale green, with the face shown in full profile and the body in three-quarter profile. Although these Mughal works break with Safavid tradition, the subject's features remain impersonal and stereotyped; though no longer idealizing the sitter, the portraits display little psychological insight (fig. 20). This is a common characteristic of the early Mughal portraits of dignitaries and *rajas* (kings) executed on the emperor's orders for inclusion in his own "giant album" or in those *muraqqi* (albums) compiled by high-ranking officials such as 'Abd er-Rahim Khan Khanan and Mirza Aziz Kokah in imitation of their sovereign (figs. 21, 22).

Akbar's penchant for realistic portraits was partly reinforced by the encounter with Western art that would have a crucial impact on the development of Indian painting. Initial contact occurred through the many Flemish and German engravings that made their way to the Mughal court in the hands of Jesuit missionaries. The emperor was immediately seduced by these "exotic" prints from the West, and he ordered his painters to examine them, draw inspiration from them, even copy or adapt them according to their whim (fig. 23).

In 1579, Akbar sent a special envoy to Goa with a *farman* (imperial decree) asking the Jesuit missionaries to come to Fathpur-Sikri. The first Jesuit mission thus arrived at the Mughal capital the following year, led by Fathers Aquaviva, Henriques and Monserrate. Among the gifts they offered the emperor were

23. Birth of the Virgin, *1581. Engraving by Cornelis Cort, after Tadeo Zuccaro. Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York.*

seven of the eight volumes of the *Royal Polyglot Bible* published in Antwerp between 1568 and 1572 by Christopher Plantin, commissioned by Phillip II, king of Spain. Printed in four languages (Hebrew, Chaldean, Latin and Greek), the title pages of this bible, used by the Jesuits for evangelical purposes, were engraved by Flemish artists including Pieter van der Heyden, Pieter Huys, Gerard van Kampen and the Wierix brothers.

24. The Virgin and Child Seated by a Tree, *circa 1600. After an engraving by Albrecht Dürer. Royal Library, Windsor Castle.*

Open-minded and tolerant, Akbar was interested in religious issues and curious about Western art. Abu'l Fazl wrote that in 1575 the emperor had sent a diplomatic mission headed by Haji Habibullah to Goa, with the goal of bringing back material proof of the much-heralded virtuosity of European artists:

"He [Haji Habibullah] was appointed to take with him a large sum of money, and the choice articles of [Mughal] India to Goa, and to bring for His Majesty's delectation the wonderful things of that country. There were sent along with him many clever craftsmen, who to ability and skill added industry, in order that just as the wonderful productions of that country (Goa and Europe) were being brought away . . . so also might rare crafts be imported."

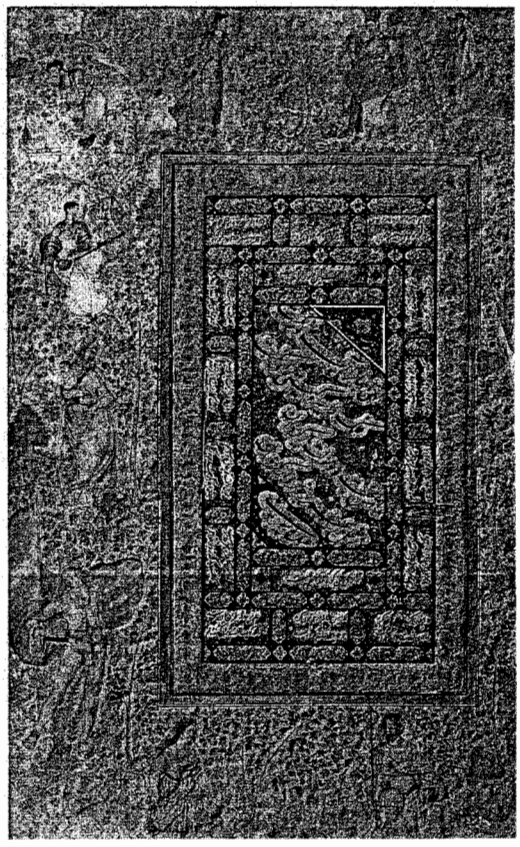
Seduced by these European objects, Akbar ordered faithful copies of gold and ivory crucifixes to be made for him, as well as a gold reliquary. He also asked the artists of the *kitab-khana* to make copies of the altar retable and to reproduce the numerous engravings of religious subjects used by the Jesuits in order to study European style and technique.

Akbar's artists enthusiastically copied the European prints. They were attracted by the exoticism and novelty of the themes handled, even though the religious content held no meaning for them; they attempted to copy foreign models in their own way, either remaining scrupulously faithful or imitating only those aspects considered relevant (figs. 24, 25, 26). These elements would then be artfully transposed

25. Angel of Tobias, *circa 1590. Signed Hosein. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

into a specifically Indian context, giving birth to original and oddly hybrid works.

The encounter with techniques alien to the traditional Indo-Persian repertoire enabled Akbar's painters to discover the concepts of perspective, modeling and volume, thus changing forever the course of Mughal painting. Imperial Mughal iconography was also enriched by this contact with models from abroad; court painters, encouraged by their patron, assimilated Christian iconographic elements (such as haloes, *putti*, the terrestrial globe) into the Mughal repertoire, further glorifying the grandeur of Mughal monarchs. This original approach was begun timidly under the reign of Akbar, and found its fullest and most brilliant expression in the seventeenth century, during the reigns of Akbar's successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.



26. A page from a muraqqa *(album) of Jahangir, circa 1605-1610. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

DYNASTIC PORTRAITS

One of the most significant aspects of Jahangir's patronage was reflected in his patent determination to exorcise his past mistakes, along with his doubts and dark forebodings, through elaborate pictorial representations. The subtle symbolism of such images functioned as the antithesis or negation of inadmissible truths. Through this propagandistic approach, designed both to appease the emperor's own fears and provide a flattering imperial image for posterity, Jahangir used his painters as tools of ideology and imperial wish-fulfillment. Artists at the service of the monarch-patron were expected not only to tirelessly extol Jahangir's grandeur and accomplishments through dazzling works of art, but were also occasionally required to give a glorified interpretation of historical events that often diverged from reality.

One such grim event that Jahangir wanted to banish from memory was his own rebellion as Crown Prince Salim, for it raised the sensitive issue of his accession to the Mughal throne. The final years of Akbar's reign were sullied by the revolt of a son who, thirsting for power and political control, provoked jealousy and rivalries against the aging emperor, ultimately leading to the murder of Abu'l Fazl. Yet once Prince Salim had become Emperor Jahangir, he commissioned works from his painters that showed how loyal he had been toward his father, subtly (if dishonestly) evoking the old monarch's desire to see his son, the former rebel, succeed him in all legitimacy.

A famous miniature in the Musée Guimet in Paris provides a striking illustration of the ambitious yet naive attempt by Jahangir to rewrite history. It was painted by Nadir az-Zaman, who had been known by the name of Abu'l Hasan prior to being dubbed by Jahangir the "Wonder of the Epoch." Along with imperial painters Hashim (who collaborated with Nadir az-Zaman on this miniature) and Bichitr, he was one of the most eminent court portrait painters and one of the unrivaled masters of the famous "allegorical portraits" produced during the second half of Jahangir's reign, born of the monarch's insecurity and his painters' genius.

Seen in profile, encircled by a golden halo, Jahangir is shown at a balustrade from the waist up. He is dressed in rich fabrics, and deferentially holds a portrait of his father in his hands. The late Emperor Akbar, also haloed and dressed in white, holds a globe that he seems to be offering to his son and successor, a gesture that emblematically corroborates the official transfer of imperial power to Jahangir. Like the Timurid crown, the globe was an emblem of temporal power, and Akbar's gesture of handing it over represents a symbolic legitimization of Jahangir's accession. In addition to being granted temporal power,

27. Jahangir with a Portrait of Akbar, *circa 1614. Signed Nadir az-Zaman (Abu'l Hasan) and Hashim. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

28. Jahangir in Darbar (*or* Prince Khurram Leaving on the Mewar Campaign), *circa 1635. Signed Balchand. An illustration from the* Padshah-nama. *Royal Library, Windsor Castle.*

Jahangir benefits from the aura of holiness associated with the late emperor, who is shown dressed in white, a color that Islamic mystical tradition associates with a soul in quest of enlightenment. On the dark green globe that Akbar proffers to his son is the inscription, "portrait of the venerable one 'who sits on the celestial throne,' painted by Nadir az-Zaman."

The Musée Guimet miniature is remarkable not only for its technical mastery and complex symbolism, but also for its calculatedly falsified vision of the relationship between Akbar and his son. The enmity between them emerges in a passage from the *Muntakhab ut-Tawarikh*, a chronicle of Akbar's reign written by the historian Badaoni:

"In this year the emperor's constitution became a little deranged and he suffered from stomach-ache and colic, which could by no means be cured. In this unconscious state he uttered some words which arose from suspicions of his eldest son, and accused him of giving him poison."

In 1600, while Akbar was busy doing battle in the Deccan peninsula, Salim mutinied and unsuccessfully attempted to gain control of Agra and the Punjab. On 23 July, the prince, furious at his failure, headed toward Allahabad, seizing on his path the treasures of Bihar and storming the land from Kalpi to Hajipur. In an attempt to appease the young rebel, Akbar named him governor of Bengal and Orissa. But Salim rejected these paternal efforts at reconciliation, and returned to Allahabad in 1602 to establish an independent monarchy. There the rebel prince assembled his partisans, took the title of *shah* (king), and minted coins in his own name. This final provocation exasperated Akbar, who called on the shrewd and faithful Abu'l Fazl, asking him to intercede with Salim and make the prince see reason. But Akbar overlooked the fact that his son had long hated the historian, whose influence, prestige and — above all — great esteem at court enraged Salim. On 19 August 1602, Rajput Bir Singh Bundela, acting on Salim's orders, murdered Abu'l Fazl and sent his victim's head to the young prince in Allahabad.

On learning of Abu'l Fazl's death, Akbar was so distressed that he refused to appear in public for three days. And while the monarch wept over his closest friend and most loyal, reliable minister, Salim continued to lead a dissolute life at Allahabad, taking to opium and alcohol and indulging in debauchery and horrendous atrocities.

Then, realizing that his rebellion

شبیه حضرت جهانگیر پادشاه که شبیه حضرت اکبر پادشاه را می بیند

would lead nowhere, and in fact might lead to the loss of his right to govern the entire empire, the young prince suddenly renounced his show of strength and agreed to submit to paternal authority. On 16 November 1604, Salim returned to Agra, where the emperor officially pardoned his son's extortion and dereliction of duty before an assembly of dignitaries.

In October 1605, Akbar was stricken

29. Akbar and Jahangir, *circa 1630. Signed Balchand. A page from the* Kevorkian Album. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

with acute dysentery and knew his end was near despite all the efforts of Hakim 'Ali, the finest of the court physicians. He summoned to his bedside the rebel son who had so clouded the final years of his life. The emperor, too weak to speak, pointed to the imperial turban and motioned his son to don it, along with the sword of his ancestor Humayun.

Akbar died on the night of October 25-26, and Salim was crowned Emperor Jahangir in Agra on 3 November, at the age of thirty-six.

As this brief account suggests, Jahangir was keen to forget and expunge the dishonorable events that preceded his accession to the throne. The Musée Guimet miniature is intended to show his filial loyalty and the respect in which he held his father, and the authentic if ambivalent admiration he felt for the grand old monarch. Although sullied by jealousy and sapped by rivalry, such admiration could have been none the less sincere.

Jahangir's determination to suppress the fact that Akbar hesitated until the final moments of his life to make the prince his legitimate heir is revealed on a famous page from the *Padshah-nama*, the official chronicle of the thirty-year reign (1628-1658) of Jahangir's successor, Shah Jahan (fig. 28). Although painted during the reign of Shah Jahan, the miniature shows Jahangir taking leave of his son Khurram (the future emperor) during a royal audience, or *darbar*, prior to leaving on a campaign against Mewar. All the great dignitaries of the court are present at the scene, each one meticulously identified by name. In full view above Jahangir, skillfully incorporated into the traditional wall decoration of niches adorned with small bottles and vases, is a portrait of Emperor Akbar, whose studied presence under the imperial canopy condones not only the political legitimacy of the reigning monarch, but also the dynastic continuity of the Mughal line.

This inclusion of Akbar's portrait over Jahangir's throne is in no way an invention of the artist, the court painter Balchand (who can be seen in the lower left corner of the page, drawing board under his arm). An English traveler named William Finch (who lived in India from 1608 to 1611 and visited Surat, Agra, Lahore and Delhi) provides testimony to the authenticity of the artist's rendering. Finch's detailed description of the fort at Lahore and, in particular, the many frescoes decorating the walls of the rooms and galleries is

highly significant in this respect. In addition to the henceforth familiar images of the Virgin Mary and angels inspired by the European engravings so appreciated by Jahangir, Finch noted in several places wall paintings depicting members of the royal family:

"On the wall of this gallery is drawne the picture of the Acabar [Akbar] sitting in his state, and before him Sha Selim his sonne standing with a hawke on his fist, and by him Sultan Cusseroom [Khusrau], Sultan Pervis [Parviz], Sultan Coroome [Khurram], his three sonnes."

Continuing his stroll, Finch also observed that "behind the King's lodgings, very sumptuous the walles and seelings all over-laid with pure gold, and rounde alongst the sides, about a man's height, some three foote distant, are placed faire Venice looking glasses . . . and below these alongst the walles, are drawne many pictures of this man's ancestors, as of Acaber [Akbar] his father, Homowne [Humayun] his grandfather, Babur his great grand-father. . . ."

The impressive illustration in the *Padshah-nama* is not the only occasion on which Balchand decided to make a posthumous and allegorical association between Akbar and Jahangir. A miniature from the *Kevorkian Album*, painted sometime around 1630, echoes the symbolism of the double portrait in the Musée Guimet — Mughal iconography probably associated the falcon perched on Akbar's right wrist with temporal power and the transmission of that power (fig. 29).

The Kevorkian miniature thereby became part of the masterful series of "dynastic portraits" of Mughal emperors and their ancestors, designed to affirm and exalt the power and legitimacy of a dynasty foreign to India yet nearing the zenith of its domination.

As noted above, Akbar had charged the painters in the imperial atelier with illustrating ambitious historical accounts of the ancient exploits of his glorious forebears Genghis Khan and Timur, as well as the more recent founding, in 1526, of the Mughal dynasty by his grandfather Babur (in the manuscripts known as *Chingiz-nama*, *Timur-nama* and *Babur-nama*). Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan, thanks to the talent of his own imperial painters, would impart a new artistic dimension to these political concerns by rendering them more explicit in the famous Mughal "dynastic portraits" with their obvious if complex

30. Timur Hands His Imperial Crown to Babur, *circa 1630. Signed Govardhan. A page from the* Minto Album. *Victoria and Albert Museum, London.*

meaning conveyed by an unchanging, stereotyped iconography.

The Mughals' concern with dynastic legitimacy and their obsession with tracing their line back to Timur was already evident in the composition of the royal seals set by monarchs on the imperial decrees known as *farmans*. These seals listed the names and titles of the ruling monarch's ancestors all the way back to Amir Timur, also known as Sahib Qiran ("Lord of the Astral Conjunction"). Invoking the memory and name of this illustrious warrior who stormed Delhi in 1398 entitled his descendants to share

31. Akbar and Shah Jahan, *circa 1645. A page from the* Late Shah Jahan Album. *Musée Guimet, Paris.*

his prestige and rightfully claim the place history granted them.

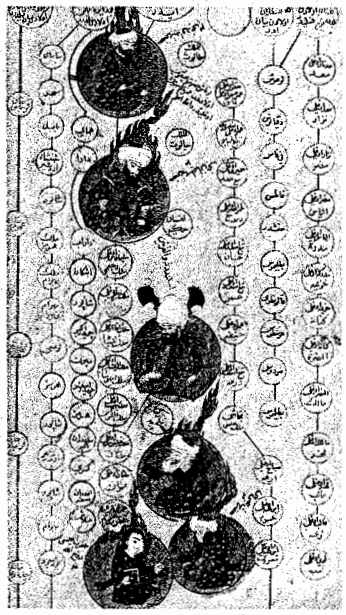
Two pages from the famous *Minto Album* — one of which is now preserved in London and the other in Dublin, although they were originally designed as facing pages — extol the legitimacy of the Mughals and document the symbolic transmission of power from one monarch to his heir. The first miniature, executed by the painter Govardhan around 1630, shows Timur seated between the first two Mughal emperors, Babur and Humayun (fig. 30). Timur is shown handing the imperial crown to Babur. Standing before the three seated monarchs are their viziers (ministers) — Mirza Rustam, Mirza Shah Rukh and Bairam Khan. The second miniature, dated 1631 and executed by the "loyal servant" Bichitr, adopts the same iconography and shows Emperor Akbar flanked by his heirs Jahangir and Shah Jahan (fig. 32). In this allegorical composition, designed to be part of an illustrated imperial album assembled during the reign of Shah Jahan, it is hardly surprising that the artist deliberately depicted Akbar handing the Timurid crown — symbol of power — directly to his grandson rather than to his historical successor, Jahangir. Similarly, in another page (fig. 31) from a manuscript in the Musée Guimet dating from Shah Jahan's reign, the *Late Shah Jahan Album*, Akbar is shown in conversation with his grandson. (This is a purely imaginary conversation, since the old emperor died in 1605.) Yet however fictive, this encounter between the two monarchs is highly edifying and explicit in its political symbolism, which is reinforced by the decoration in the margin of the page. This ornamentation was deliberately conceived as an iconographic extension of the central scene, for in addition to three angels based on European models wielding the globe and crown, the artist includes three figures bearing the emblems of sovereign power — royal standard, sword and shield.

In these allegorical paintings, the symbolic transfer of authority is generally expressed by the gift of an object that traditionally signified sovereignty, such as a globe or crown, or a precious gem,

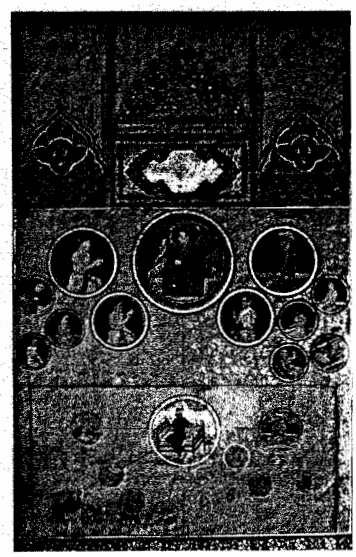
32. Akbar Hands His Imperial Crown to Shah Jahan, *dated 1631. Signed Bichitr. A page from the* Minto Album. *Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*

plume or *sarpush* (turban clasp).

This historical perspective, linked to the obsession with dynastic legitimacy as illustrated by the "dynastic portraits" executed under Shah Jahan, was a constant feature of Mughal art, and found its most dazzling expression in a unique work executed by Dhanraj around 1630 (fig. 34). Although it exists today only in fragmentary form, Dhanraj's ambitious composition was conceived as a veritable genealogical tree. Employing medallions containing carefully executed, realistic portraits, it accurately presents the line of descendants issuing from Miran Shah (lower register) and Jahangir (upper register). It is likely that other sections originally existed, showing Jahangir's immediate ancestors — Babur, Humayun and Akbar — as well as the relationship linking Jahangir to Miran Shah (one of Timur's sons). Although this relationship was indirect, it would have been highly appropriate in further stressing the glorious ancestry of the current lords of northern India.



33. Ottoman Genealogy. *An illustration from the* Silsila-nama, *circa 1598. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*



34. Genealogical Tree of the Timurid Dynasty, *circa 1630. Signed Dhanraj. Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan Collection.*

Dhanraj's genealogical tree shows six sons of Miran Shah and four sons of Jahangir, all identified by inscriptions giving their name above or below each medallion. The artist's skill and talent are manifest in these miniature portraits, for although some of them were apparently based on previous portraits and models, they nevertheless convey the sitter's features with remarkable fidelity despite the reduced scale. Only four of Jahangir's sons are shown in the medallions surrounding the central portrait of the Grand Mughal — Khusrau, Parviz, Shahryar and Jahandar. The monarch's heir, Shah Jahan, would have been represented in a central medallion below the paternal portrait (this section is no longer extant), conforming to the diagram of dynastic and imperial succession. It is also worth pointing out that Dhanraj adopted a convention often found in ancient, medieval and Mughal Indian art — the dimensions of the princes shown in the medallions vary in direct proportion to their "hierarchic" importance.

Dhanraj's composition is noteworthy for its uniqueness. Whereas numerous "dynastic portraits" of Mughal emperors exist today, Dhanraj's fragmentary work is the sole detailed "genealogical tree" known to have been produced by a Mughal painter. Perhaps this isolated artistic effort reflected a passing foreign influence that was integrated into the Mughal pictorial repertoire thanks to an explicit iconography amply suited to the ruling family's dynastic preoccupations.

For it emerges that Dhanraj's genealogical tree is reminiscent of a series of Mongol and Ottoman genealogies drawn up with a goal similar to that

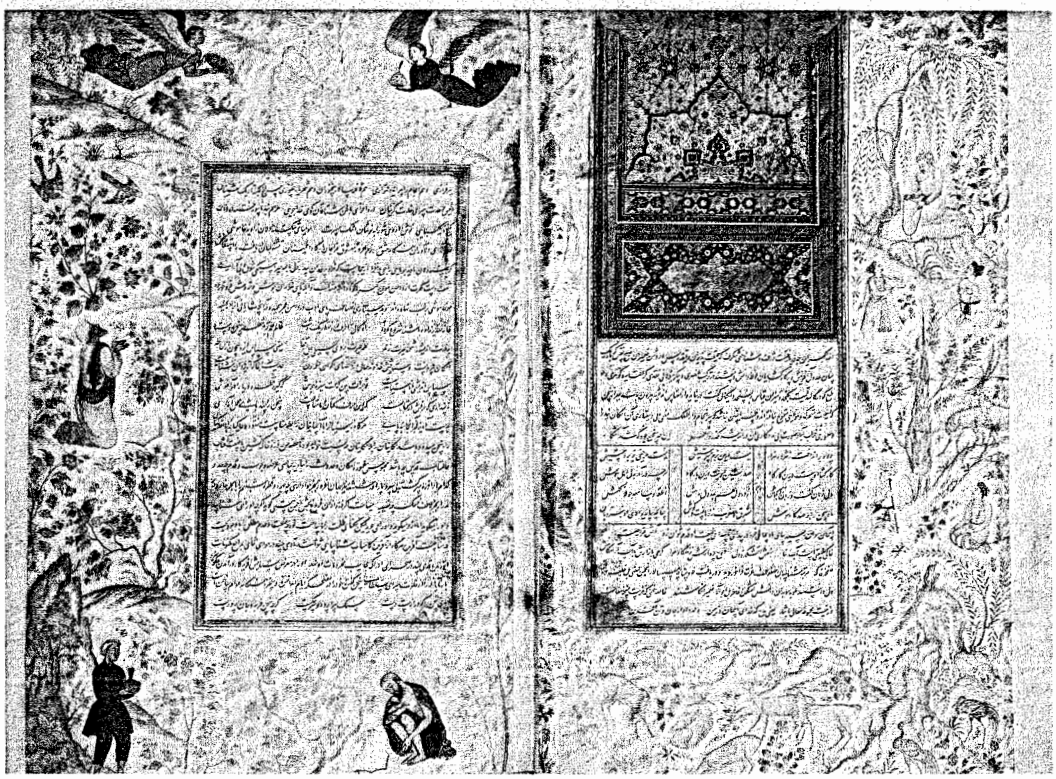
cherished by the Mughals — to demonstrate the legitimate and quasi-divine lineage of Ottoman sultans purportedly descended from prophets and great rulers. In spirit as well as iconography, Dhanraj's painting bears comparison with the illustrations in the *Silsila-nama*, a collection of genealogies copied and illuminated in Baghdad around 1598 and dedicated to Sultan Mahmud III (1595-1603). One of the pages from this manuscript (fig. 33), now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, stresses the Ottoman sultan's glamorous ancestry that purportedly included ancient kings and biblical prophets esteemed by Islamic tradition: David, Solomon, Alexander, Zachary and even Jesus ('Isa). This latter figure, highly revered by Muslims, is shown in the lower medallion, clean-shaven and bareheaded, unlike the bearded, turbaned prophets and kings in the upper medallions. Another illustration from the same manuscript traces the no less noble genealogy of the sultans descended from the four orthodox Muslim caliphs; it also includes a medallion showing the Virgin Mary (Maryam) holding the infant Jesus in her lap.

Given the importance of diplomatic relations linking Mughal India to the Persian and Ottoman empires, it is conceivable that Mughal painters occasionally established artistic links. It has already been pointed out that Akbar and Jahangir encouraged their painters to copy or freely adapt the European engravings that found their way to the Mughal court through Jesuit missionaries. Commercial and diplomatic contacts between Turkey and the Mughal empire were intense during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, and the Turkish, Arab and Persian communities living in sultanates on the Deccan peninsula enjoyed considerable influence. Moreover, the impact of Turkish painting on Deccan art is well established, and certain works executed by Jahangir's artists reveal obvious allusions to hypothetical Turkish originals that may have inspired the court painters (fig. 35). Finally, this hypothesis is further strengthened by the fact that a magnificent manuscript from the *Shahinshah-nama*, copied and illustrated in Istanbul and belonging to the library of Sultan Mahmud III, found its way into the Imperial Mughal library, probably during the first half of the seventeenth century. (The manuscript bears the seal of Shah Jahan's daughter, Jahanara Begum, and is today in the Khuda Bakhsh Public Library in Bankipore.)

35. Darbar of Jahangir, *circa 1615-1616. Left side of double-page composition, signed Abu'l-Hasan. The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.*

Court painters did not hesitate to borrow elements from European imagery and more especially Christian iconography when those elements could be used to reinforce imperial Mughal iconography. In their desire to serve imperial ideology, artists skillfully integrated foreign references (such as haloes, the globe of temporal power, *putti* brandishing royal insignia) into their pictorial repertoire. Such annexation of foreign symbolism enhanced Mughal sovereignty, and the famous "allegorical portraits" of Jahangir and Shah Jahan provide striking examples of the subtle assimilation of such imagery.

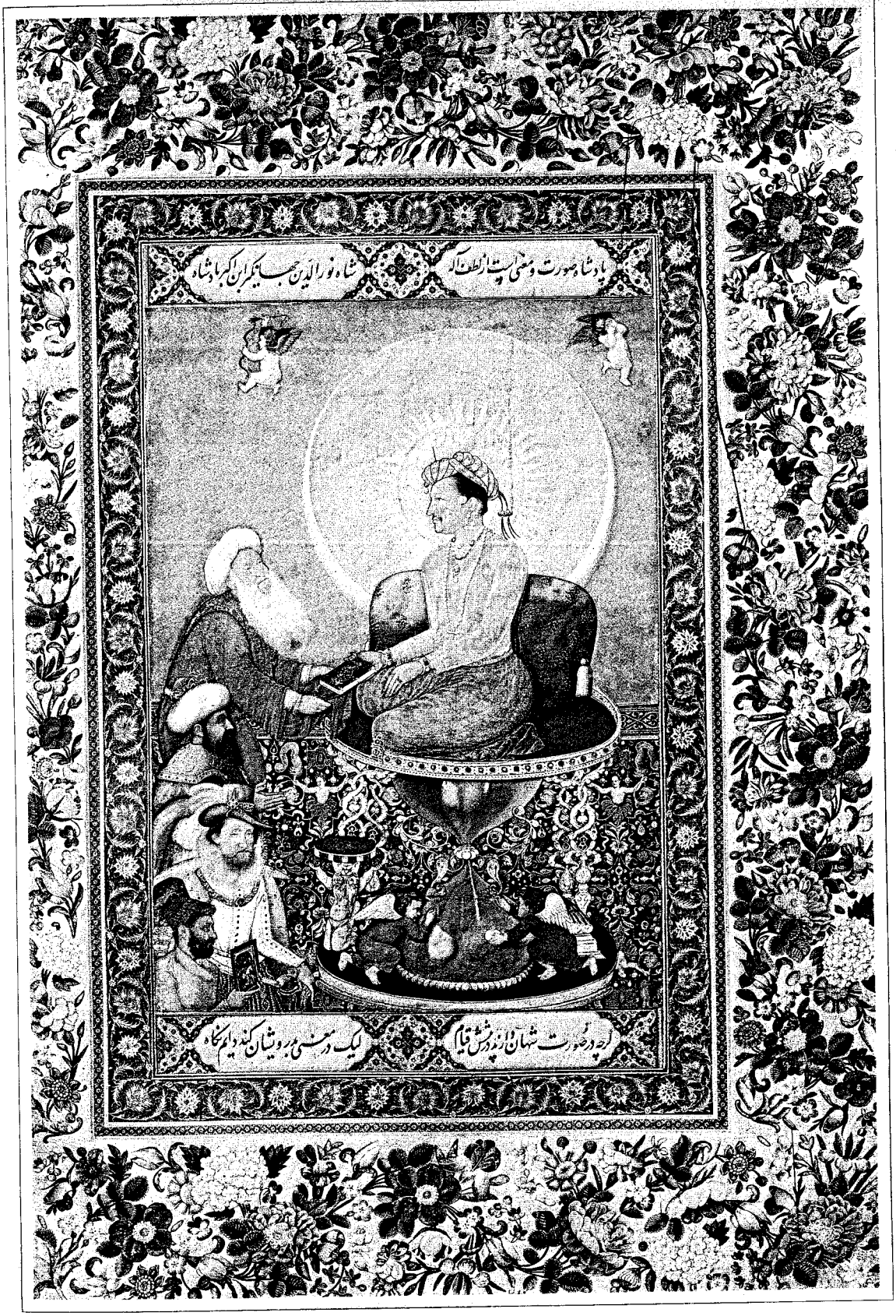
The recourse to Turkish prototypes (such as the genealogies of Ottoman sultans) was less common and obvious than the many allusions to European iconography, and therefore perhaps attests to an episodic feature of Mughal art linked to the glorification of dynastic legitimacy.



36. Angels and Holy Men, *circa 1610-1615. Marginal decoration on the first two pages of the* Akbar-nama. *British Library, London.*

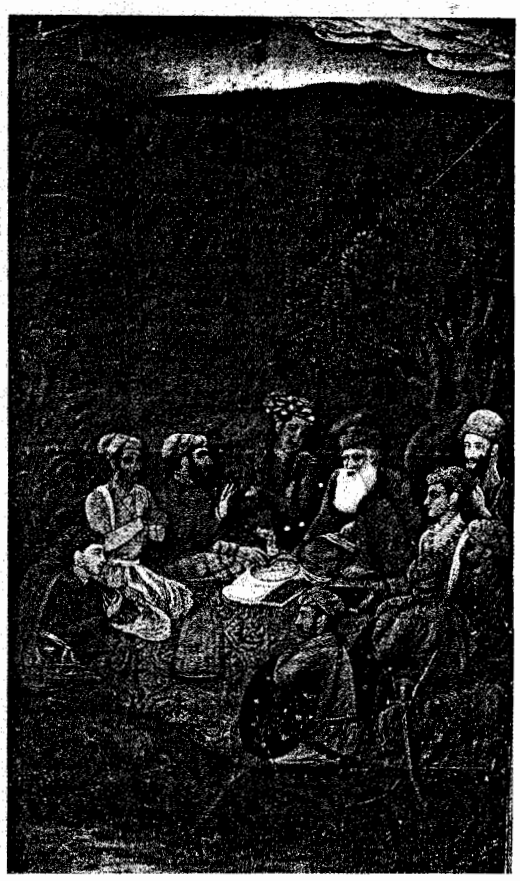
In Ottoman genealogies such as the *Silsila-nama*, the rulers of Turkey are shown to be descended from illustrious ancestors such as ancient prophets and Islamic caliphs. In similar fashion, Mughal emperors decided to underscore the supremacy of spiritual power over temporal power and thereby exalt Islamic religious orthodoxy. This spiritual heritage conferred legitimacy on the temporal power that the Mughal monarchs deigned to exercise over India. In the "dynastic portraits," imperial iconography recorded the official transfer of temporal power by showing the Grand Mughal handing a globe or crown to his successor; the presence of a holy man, or mullah, beside the emperor likewise conveyed the ruler's uncontested spiritual authority.

A page from the *Late Shah Jahan Album*, executed sometime around 1640 and now in the collection of the Musée Guimet, clearly illustrates this ideological position (fig. 41). Emperor Babur, founder of the Mughal dynasty, is shown in a rural setting appropriate to a monarch who loved nature and elaborate gardens. In his right hand, the emperor holds a *sarpush* (royal turban clasp) whereas his left hand is resting on a book, undoubtedly a copy of the famous memoirs that earned Babur the title of the "prince of memoir writers." This central miniature, however, is simply a posthumous, traditional effigy of Babur that was copied for centuries according to conventional patterns, rather than a realistic portrait. The eye is therefore drawn to the decoration in the margins. Extending and developing the central theme — in this instance, a portrait of the first Mughal emperor — these marginal designs reinforce the concept of monarchic power. The symbolism, largely borrowed from Western iconography, is often associated with portraits of Mughal emperors and is notably evident in Jahangir's "allegorical portraits." The angels in the clouds, copied from European models, form a sort of celestial canopy above the



37. Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Sheikh to Kings, *circa 1615-1618. Signed Bichitr. A page from the* Saint Petersburg Album. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

imperial head. The initially startling association of a lion and a yak in the lower border is designed to signify the symbolic harmony between carnivores and cattle under the just and peaceful reign of the emperor. Finally, the presence of three mullahs in the right-hand margin, reading or commenting on the Koran, is to be understood as an attempt to provide theological justification for Mughal dynastic power.



38. Visit to a Holy Man, *circa 1630. Signed Govardhan. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

A similar endeavor to link religion to temporal power emerges in more subtle fashion in the marginal decoration of the first two pages of the *Akbar-nama* (fig. 36).

The marginalia show angels bearing the Timurid crown, plus an ascetic and a holy man in prayer, thereby following the broad lines of the marginal decoration to Babur's portrait in its unambiguous symbolism. The borders of the first two pages of the *Akbar-nama* were obviously illuminated after the text was written; the artwork was executed during the reign of Jahangir, probably prior to 1619, the date at which the Grand Mughal made a handwritten note in the margin of the first folio. This artistic and iconographic glorification of Akbar's exemplary reign, already recorded in minute detail in Abu'l Fazl's text, is not surprising on the part of a son determined to conjure away the disturbing recollection of murder and the struggle for succession. In his own memoirs, *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, Jahangir would once again defend the memory of a father he had once hated and ferociously battled.

Like his father, Jahangir always displayed respect and esteem for the holy men of India, whether Muslim or Hindu. He would occasionally consult with them, far from the pomp and vanity of the court, to profit from their knowledge and wisdom. One such sage was the hermit Jadrup, a Vedantic scholar who lived naked all year round in a cave near Ujjayini. The Grand Mughal had frequent conversations with him between 1616 and 1620 (fig. 40). In his memoirs, Jahangir often refers to the admiration he felt for saintly men as the defenders of a spiritual order and the ultimate recourse of monarchs constantly subjected to the vagaries and vicissitudes of temporal power. Court painters reflected these imperial convictions in the years 1610-1620, when they produced a series of images symbolically showing an emperor, royal prince or other noble seeking out a Muslim (or, occasionally, Hindu) holy man to learn from his teachings (fig. 38). Such works met with great success in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for their stereotyped, conventional iconography highlighted the ideological and political links unit-

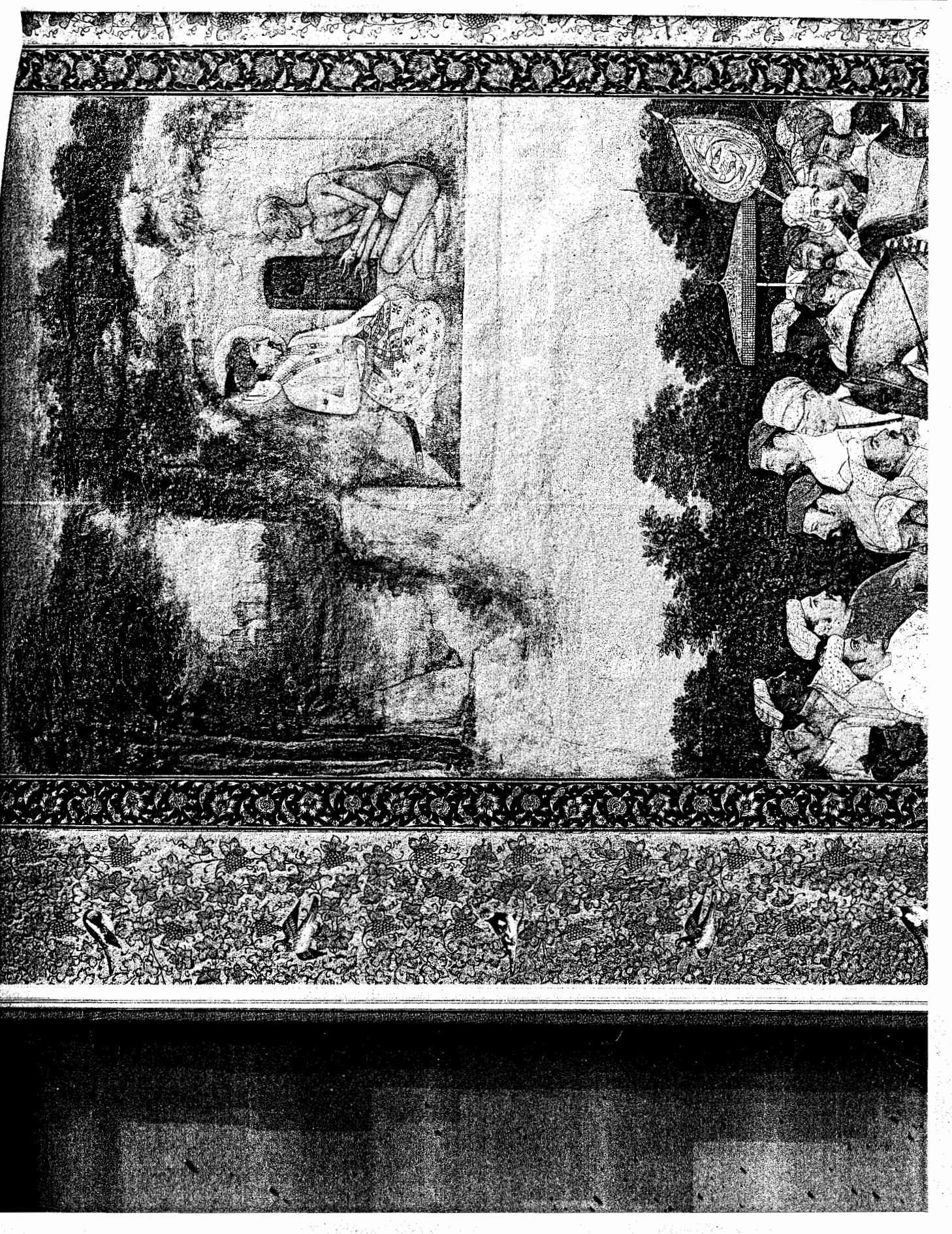
ing Mughal emperors to the Muslim aristocracy, which governed a northern India teeming with advocates of Islamic orthodoxy.

As guarantors of imperial dynastic legitimacy, like the glorious Mongol conquerors from whom Mughal emperors claimed descent, famous representatives of orthodox Islam were usually adorned by court painters with the golden halo normally reserved for the monarchs themselves. Fragmentary marginal decoration from the *Berlin Album* (compiled and illustrated for Jahangir between 1608 and 1618) shows the young Prince Salim discussing a theological issue with Sheikh Salim ud-Din Chishti (fig. 39). The head of the holy man, like that of Jahangir, is ringed by a halo, thus indicating the divine nature of both emperor and *sheikh* (the religious title given to Muslim dignitaries). Haloes, which imperial painters had first encountered in European religious engravings, were swiftly incorporated into Mughal iconography, becoming the sole prerogative of emperors and the most eminent religious figures. Jahangir, who was the first to advocate the use of haloes in imperial miniatures, realized that a halo immediately set the monarch off from his subjects and, since it was reserved for the temporal sovereign and the most illustrious members of the spiritual community, symbolically proclaimed the semi-divine status of both monarchy and clergy.

Once the ideological link between the Mughal dynasty and religious orthodoxy was established, emperors hoped to make it ever more explicit and obvious. Court painters consequently produced amazing symbolic compositions combining the glorification of imperial grandeur with the exaltation of spiritual power by showing sheikhs (whose religious eminence endowed them with temporal authority) handing Mughal emperors a globe or crown, those symbols of royalty so often noted in the "dynastic portraits." In his memoirs, Jahangir even recounted that the dying Sheikh Salim ud-Din Chishti removed his turban and placed it on Jahangir's head, thus making the monarch his spiritual heir.

39. Prince Salim and Sheikh Salim ud-Din Chishti, *circa 1610-1615. Detail from the marginal decoration on a page of the* Berlin Album. *Staatsbibliothek, Berlin.*

In a double-page composition in which the central miniatures face one another (figs. 42, 43), the painter Bichitr showed Jahangir on the right-hand page, haloed and holding the orb of power. The left-hand miniature depicts an elderly, haloed sheikh offering the monarch a globe topped by a crown carrying the following inscription: "The key of victory over the two worlds is



40. Jahangir Visiting the Ascetic Jadrup, *circa 1616-1620. Ascribed to Govardhan. A page from the* Jahangir-nama. *Musée Guimet, Paris.*

41. Portrait of Babur, *circa 1640. Ascribed to Payag. A page from the* Late Shah Jahan Album. *Musée Guimet, Paris.*

entrusted to your hands." This inscription is repeated in the upper register of Jahangir's portrait. As is usually the case with holy men pictured in Mughal miniatures, it is difficult to accurately identify the sheikh who invests Jahangir with imperial power. Perhaps it was the famous Mu'in ud-Din Chishti, the mullah from Ajmer who was the patron saint of the Mughals. Mu'in ud-Din Chishti was the saint invoked by Akbar when he had worried about dying without leaving a male heir, and to whose tomb he went on frequent pilgrimages.

The final years of Jahangir's reign were full of bitterness and frustration. With his health on the decline — sapped by alcohol and opium — the Grand Mughal increasingly sought solace in religion. Weary of wielding power, in search of inner peace, the monarch wrote in his memoirs:

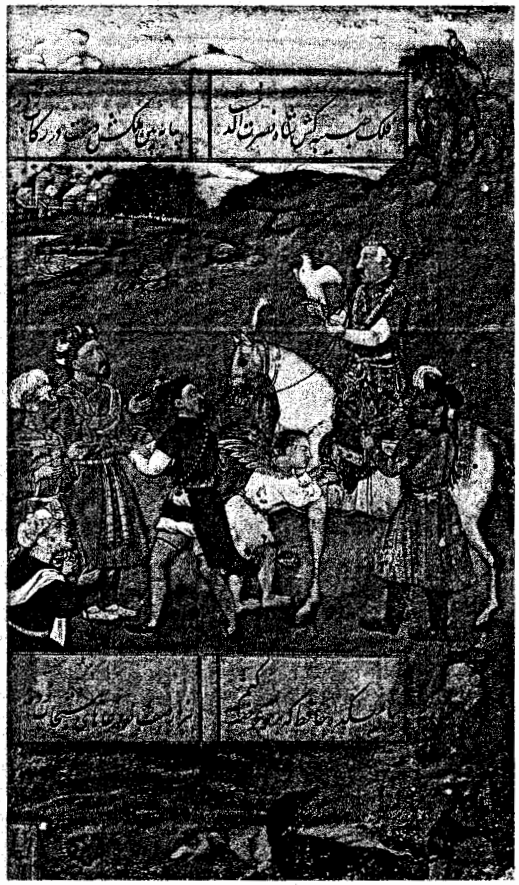
Although we have the business of kingship before us,
Every moment we think more and more on the dervishes.
If the heart of our Dervish be gladdened by us
We count that to be the profit of our kingship.

42. Mu'in ud-Din Chishti (?) Holding a Globe and Crown, *circa 1635. Signed Bichitr. A page from the* Minto Album. *Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*

Numerous portraits painted toward the end of his life show the weak and emaciated emperor, his face lined and haggard, nevertheless brandishing the emblems of power just as he had done in the heroic portraits of his dashing manhood. Other, more complex, court paintings were executed in the years 1615-1618. These were more subtle and ambitious, commissioned by a ruler more than ever concerned to exorcise grim reality and proclaim the hitherto unacknowledged disposition and mystical leanings of his troubled soul. These "allegorical portraits" of Jahangir, which are undoubtedly among the most spectacular and accomplished products of the imperial atelier, are the magnificent reflection of those difficult years. A fine example is the composition by Bichitr, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Sheikh to Kings* (fig. 37), an allegory extolling the supremacy of spiritual over temporal power. There is no better illustration of the ambivalence of an imperial attitude that glorified religious orthodoxy in order to bind religion ever more tightly to the Mughal dynasty.

43. Jahangir Holding the Orb, *circa 1635. Signed Bichitr. A page from the* Minto Album. *Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*

ALLEGORICAL PORTRAITS



44. Akbar with Lion and Calf. *circa 1630. Signed Govardhan. A page from the* Kevorkian Album. *Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*

45. Emperor Jahangir Hunting. *An illustration from the* Diwan *of Hafiz, circa 1605-1610. British Library, London.*

Although unique in the history of Islamic art, the subject of Bichitr's ambitious painting comes as no surprise, given the fertile and complex pictorial tradition that existed in the imperial atelier during Jahangir's reign (fig. 37). The scene depicted in this allegorical miniature, now in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., is obviously fictional, yet it clearly symbolizes a moment of perfect insight on the part of a monarch who chooses the man of God over the famous crowned heads at his feet.

Jahangir is shown here offering a book to Sheikh Hosein, a direct descendant of the venerable Mu'in ud-Din Chishti, patron saint of the Mughals. This pompous, unambiguous gesture symbolizes the superiority of religious souls over the temporal masters of the world, represented here by a Turkish sultan and King James I of England, placed below the old, white-bearded sage. Sheikh Hosein was doubly worthy in Jahangir's eyes because he too was an enemy of the detested historian Abu'l Fazl, who had had the sheikh banished to Mecca. Hosein nevertheless returned to India in 1601 and was placed in charge of the *Ajmer dargah* (sanctuary) from 1613 to 1616. Two bands of calligraphy on the miniature provide a caption that echoes the previously quoted lines from the Grand Mughal's memoirs:

> Shah Nur ud-Din Jahangir,
> son of Akbar, the emperor.
> He is emperor in form and spirit
> through the grace of God.
> Although to all appearances
> kings stand before him,
> He looks inwardly toward
> the dervishes (for guidance).

Numerous foreign elements indisputably add to the iconographic richness of this masterpiece by Bichitr (who

is perhaps himself pictured in the lower left corner of the page, holding a miniature to proclaim his status as painter). The *putti*, who usually bore emblems of imperial sovereignty (see figure 44), are here shown to be upset; they illustrate the absurdity of temporal power when confronted with spiritual truths and revelations, since one *putto* hides his eyes, refusing to witness the emperor's act, while another flourishes a feeble bow with broken arrow. The miniature contains other borrowings from Western imagery, such as the imposing hourglass on which the emperor is enthroned, and on which two angels write, as though exorcising the inevitable, inexorable flow of time, "O Shah, may the span of your life be a thousand years." As to the portrait of King James I, it is certainly based on a European model, probably a portrait of the English monarch executed around 1605 by John de Critz, Sergeant Painter to the king (fig. 46). De Critz's work was often included among the customary gifts carried to foreign countries by English ambassadors. An emissary of James I, Sir Thomas Roe arrived at the Mughal court in 1615, and his detailed memoirs are full of anecdotes and precious information concerning Mughal India and Jahangir's court. Roe noted the emperor's passion for painting and his inquisitiveness concerning the gifts from abroad, as well as his interest in the rare artists who came to India in the ambassador's wake.

"At night I went to the Durbarr [*darbar*] to visit the king. So soone as I came in hee sent Asaph Chan to mee, that hee heard I had in my house an excellent Paynter, and desired hee might see some of his works. I replyed, according to truth, that ther was none but a young man, a Merchant, that for his exercise did with a pen draw some figures, but very meanly, far from the Arte of paynting. The king replyed that I should not feare that hee would take any man from mee by forse: that he would neither doe mee Injurie nor suffer any other; and prayed that hee might see that man and his worke, whatsoever it was."

The East India Company, on behalf of whom Roe was to negotiate trade agreements, had also sent the Grand Mughal a few small gifts of no great value, whose modesty had in fact confounded the emperor. The ambassador reported that Jahangir had asked, not without ingenuity, if "the king of England was a great king, for having sent presents of so little value." Throughout his entire mission at the Mughal court, from 1615 to 1618, Roe constantly requested London to send gifts of high quality, notably paintings on various subjects able to satisfy the emperor's artistic demands as well as his curiosity.

46. John de Critz, King James I of England, *circa 1605. Oil painting. Private Collection.*

47. Whirling Dervishes. *An illustration from the* Diwan *of Hafiz, circa 1605 -1610. British Library, London.*

Bichitr's faithful reproduction of the portrait of James I and the various foreign connotations that feature in this miniature demonstrate that European models, including Elizabethan painting, had to a certain extent inspired court painters in their execution of the famous "allegorical portraits" as well as in the iconographic elaboration of the "imperial image." Thanks to Roe's testimony, we know that a portrait of the king was displayed at court in 1616, during a *darbar* (a royal audience) to celebrate the new year.

48. Jahangir Symbolically Killing Malik 'Ambar, *circa 1615-1620. Signed Abu'l Hasan. A page from the* Minto Album. *Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.*

Mughal "allegorical portraits," uplifting and grandiloquent in tone, were conceived as divine manifestations of the Grand Mughal Jahangir, showing him as an all-powerful monarch steeped in grandeur yet suffering the ineluctable decline of his physical strength. The immense solar halo ringing the emperor is nothing other than an image of the title adopted by Jahangir on his accession to the throne in 1605 — Nur ud-Din ("Light of the Faith").

"When I became king," noted the monarch in his memoirs, "it occurred to me to change my name. . . . An inspiration from the hidden world brought it into my mind that, inasmuch as the business of kings is the controlling of the world, I should give myself the name of Jahangir ("World-Seizer") and make my title of honor Nur ud-Din, since my sitting on the throne coincided with the rising and shining on the earth of the great light (the Sun)."

This subtle process of deifying the Grand Mughal was conducive to a visual form of expression and to the use of a symbolism that broke away from artistic tradition. Even prior to the emergence of these spectacular pictorial apotheoses of Emperor Jahangir, several ingenious visual allusions attest to the growing infatuation of painters (and of the Grand Mughal himself) with a symbolism that probably grew from — indeed, found its original explanation in — the skillful illustration of the florid, lyrical metaphors of Persian poetry and imperial memoirs.

Jahangir was a believer in astrology and the hidden meaning of dreams, and he saw the hand of Fate behind the events surrounding his birth and his accession to the throne. Edward Terry, chaplain to Sir Thomas Roe, noted in his account of his stay at the Mughal court:

"Jahangir's confidence in astrologers was very great. Neither any journey was undertaken, nor any resolve made, nor any undertaking begun unless the astrologer was consulted."

It was also said that Jahangir liked to interpret omens, for which he used a copy of the *Diwan* of Hafiz, a famous anthology of poetry. The celebrated poet Hafiz (d. 1389) was born in Shiraz; his emotional, mystical verses stirred the souls of Mughal emperors and were thought to have divinatory significance. The manuscript (now in the collection of the Khuda Bakhsh Public Library in Bankipore) which Jahangir used to foretell the future had formerly belonged to his grandfather, Humayun, and bears handwritten annotations by both emperors. Other illuminated copies of the *Diwan* exist, however, and one of them (part of which is in the British Library, the other part at the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin) includes six illustrations related to the poetic subjects in the text plus three illustrations depicting

Jahangir performing various imperial activities. One of these miniatures shows the emperor hunting, falcon in hand and escorted by several dignitaries. Although it depicts a conventional Mughal subject, this miniature nevertheless contains an undeniably unique element — an angel bending over to seize one of the emperor's stirrups. The explanation and literal meaning for this original touch are obviously linked to a line in Hafiz's poetry: "An angel seized his stirrup." But in the light of what was discussed above, it is possible that the anonymous painter exploited the line of verse to develop a clear visual allegory, glorifying the very person of the Grand Mughal.

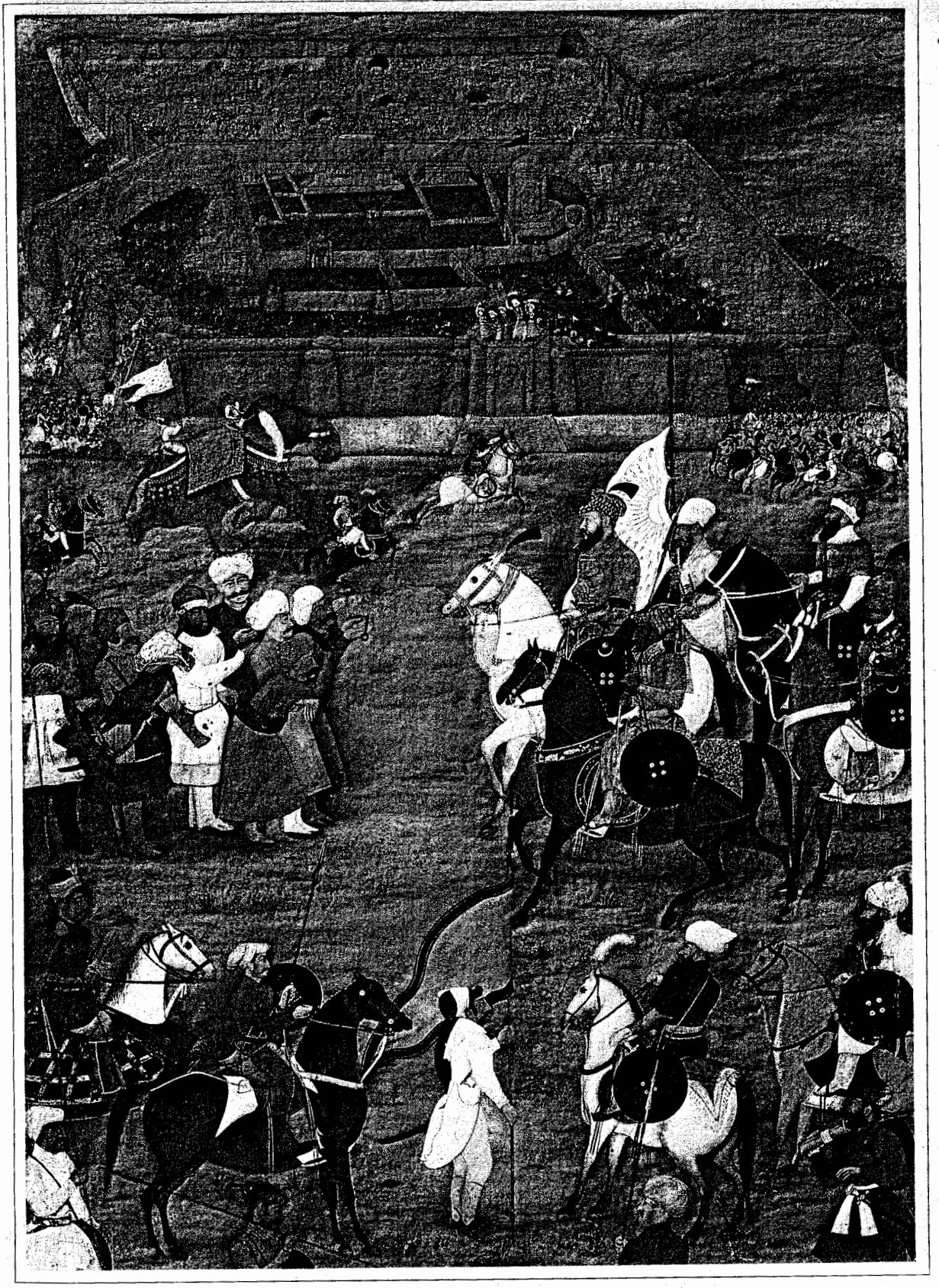
49. Jahangir Standing on a Globe Shooting Poverty, *circa 1625. Ascribed to Abu'l Hasan. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.*

50. Malik 'Ambar, *circa 1620-1630. Signed Hashim. Musée Guimet, Paris.*

Among the other illustrations in this manuscript, probably executed early in Jahangir's reign, around 1610, is an exceptionally accomplished miniature featuring two dervishes dancing and whirling to music (fig. 47). Closer to the spirit of Hafiz's poetry (steeped in Persian Sufi tradition) than the miniatures depicting imperial activities, this illustration nevertheless contains three small angels among the clouds at the top, apparently based on a European religious engraving. The juxtaposition of two themes so alien to one another — European *putti* beholding ecstatic dervishes chanting and dancing (a visual motif commonly handled by Persian and Mughal painters) — testifies to the growing infatuation of imperial artists with Christian imagery and visual motifs imported from abroad, which they subtly and eloquently integrated into the traditional Mughal repertoire via this manuscript so cherished by Jahangir. Similarly, the miniature of an angel clutching Jahangir's stirrup, which both paraphrases the poet's verse and emphasizes the monarch's omnipotence, may well be one of the earliest examples of those symbolic paintings designed to glorify the Grand Mughal, precursors to the "allegorical portraits" that flourished in the years 1615 to 1520.

The latter half of Jahangir's reign occurred under less favorable auspices. A series of events with uniformly negative consequences progressively harmed the monarch's mental state and threatened the political stability and cohesiveness of his empire.

Just one year after Jahangir's accession to the throne, an ill-timed revolt by



51. The Surrender of Qandahar, *circa 1640-1645. An illustration from the* Padshah-nama. *Musée Guimet, Paris.*

Prince Khusrau revived the monarch's guilty conscience over his own years of rebellion in Allahabad and his past hostility toward his father. Khusrau was extremely ambitious, and contested Jahangir's right to the Mughal throne. He left Agra on 6 April 1606 for the Punjab, raising troops along the way. The affliction felt by Jahangir due to Khusrau's insubordination and rebellion emerges from passages in his memoirs. Forgetting his own waywardness and insurrection, Jahangir bitterly confessed that his son, "for no cause or reason," had become his enemy. He also worried that if no attempt was made to capture Khusrau, the prince would ally himself with the Uzbeks or Persians, thereby weakening the Mughal throne.

Khusrau, however, lacked both maturity and experience, and turned out to be incapable of organizing a substantial rebellion. When he arrived at Lahore, the governor closed the gates to the city and put up stiff resistance to the prince's troops. Dreading the imminent arrival of imperial reinforcements, Khusrau lifted the siege of Lahore and tried to cross the Chenab, but his army was defeated at Bhairowal. Khusrau was captured and led back to Lahore. Jahangir had several hundred rebel soldiers impaled, and ordered that his son be blinded in both eyes. Filled with regret, however, the Grand Mughal then placed the unfortunate Khusrau in the hands of a doctor who managed to restore the sight in one eye.

Jahangir's disillusion and insecurity, on a personal as well as political level, along with his increasing awareness of the weakening of his power, led him to take refuge in an imaginary world where he could find comfort and solace. His court painters, notably Abu'l Hasan and Bichitr, began work on a series of outstanding miniatures that glorified the Grand Mughal's sovereignty. Designed to provide the monarch with an indulgent and flattering image of himself, these "allegorical portraits" show Jahangir amid unlikely gatherings, accomplishing brilliant and heroic exploits, prevailing over his harshest enemies, and receiving divine inspiration.

The 1606 rebellion by Prince Khusrau in a way sounded the first false note of a reign that had begun with so much promise. The later years of Jahangir's reign were further darkened by the political rivalry opposing Jahangir and Malik 'Ambar (fig. 50), *peshwa* (minister) to the rulers of Ahmadnagar and staunch enemy of imperial Mughal hegemony.

Malik 'Ambar was one of the *Habshi* (Abyssinians) known for their dynamic personalities and extravagant ambition. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, several nobles and generals of Abyssinian origin rose to fame in the complex and shifting web of sultanates on the Deccan peninsula, for they were steadfast in their resistance to Mughal imperialism. Malik 'Ambar was born around 1549, and as a child was sold to a Baghdad slave trader heading for the Deccan. He rose to a powerful position in the kingdom of Ahmadnagar in 1596, following a civil war in which he allied himself with another Abyssinian, Abhang Khan, against Queen Chand Bibi. Appointed *peshwa* to the Ahmadnagar monarchs, Malik 'Ambar played a key role in the resistance of Deccan nations against the Mughal armies. They were aided in their task by the Marathas, a tribe of warriors also hostile to Mughal hegemony. 'Ambar died in 1626 — one year before Jahangir — at almost eighty years of age, and was buried in Daulatabad.

Malik 'Ambar methodically attempted to recover the lands conquered by Akbar during the military campaigns of 1595, 1596 and 1597. Several Mughal generals were sent to the Deccan to counter the *peshwa's* attacks, and in 1617 Prince Khurram (who would become Emperor Shah Jahan) managed to reach Burhanpur. Faced with the

advancing imperial army, Nizam Shahi of Ahmadnagar agreed to negotiate; Malik 'Ambar was obliged to hand Mughal generals the keys to forts in Ahmadnagar and elsewhere. When the fighting ceased, however, the Mughals had merely managed to recover territories formerly annexed by Akbar, failing to extend their control to other parts of the peninsula. In 1620 'Ambar once again reconquered the disputed territories — a victory that delivered a decisive blow to expansionist Mughal policies in the area. Only the death of the formidable *peshwa* in 1626 enabled the imperial armies to progressively annex Deccan sultanates. It was during the reign of Aurangzeb, in 1686-1687, that the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda were finally brought under Mughal control.

Jahangir's hatred of Malik 'Ambar, a clever adversary able to keep imperial armies at bay, is clearly displayed in a miniature (fig. 48) painted by Abu'l Hasan and now in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin. It shows Jahangir standing on an orb representing the earth, of which he is the undisputed master (as indicated by his epithet, "World-Seizer"). The emperor hardily strings his bow and lets fly an arrow. His target is none other than the decapitated head of *peshwa* Malik 'Ambar stuck on a pike. Near the severed head, pierced by the Great Mughal's arrow, the artist has placed two owls and added the eloquent if sinister caption, "The rebel's head is the abode of owls." Two *putti* emerge from the clouds above the emperor to offer this vigilant lord a sword and additional arrows, a gift representing the oft-noted symbol of divine support (in Bichitr's allegorical portrait, *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Sheikh to Kings* (fig. 37), these same *putti* turn away from the monarch who has rejected them, their martial emblems irrevocably broken).

In addition to the emperor's explicit if symbolic execution of the long-detested Abyssinian, this miniature extols imperial sovereignty and Jahangir's just and fair rule through a number of iconographic elements, such as the majestic globe on which the "World-Seizer" is standing (itself resting on the ox and fish that hold up the earth, according to Islamic tradition). The emperor's sense of justice is evoked by the universal scale, here attached to the row of bells comprising the famous Chain of Justice set up by Jahangir soon after acceding to the throne:

"After my accession, the first order that I gave was for the fastening up of the Chain of Justice, so that if those engaged in the administration of justice should delay or practice hypocrisy in the matter of those seeking justice, the oppressed might come to this chain and shake it so that its noise might attract attention."

This Chain of Justice, symbol of his desire to be accessible to his subjects and to rule in fairness, was made of sixty bells of solid gold. One end was attached to the parapet of the Agra fort, and the other was attached to a column on the bank of the Jumna River.

The Grand Mughal's unceasing preoccupation with dynastic legitimacy once again appears in the depiction of a pedestal bearing a medallion with the names of Jahangir's ancestors, topped by a crown and a flock of birds of paradise. Next to the pedestal appears the following inscription: "Jahangir's nine ancestors were crowned by God."

Another allegorical portrait, similar in composition and iconography (and probably also the work of the skilled Abu'l Hasan), shows *Jahangir Standing on a Globe Shooting Poverty* (fig. 49). The emperor's face is ringed by a large solar halo, and he is shown sending an arrow into the emaciated face of Poverty, represented as a thin, dark figure. As in the Dublin miniature (fig. 48), the Grand Mughal is standing on the earthly globe. Here the artist has added the conventional symbol of peaceful

Following double page: The Surrender of Qandahar *(detail of fig. 51), circa 1640-1645. An illustration from the* Padshahnama. *Musée Guimet, Paris.*

coexistence, a lion and a lamb, as well as a *putto* offering more arrows to the emperor so that he can permanently vanquish the specter of misery. Nor has the painter forgotten to include the Chain of Justice so dear to the monarch, as mentioned in the caption over the haloed head:

"Blessed portrait of His Supreme Majesty who dispatches his eager shafts into Poverty and who, through his rectitude and fairness, is laying new foundations for the world."

Jahangir was long distressed by the tricky question of Qandahar and the intense rivalry for prestige and power between Shah 'Abbas of Persia and the Grand Mughal. The city of Qandahar occupied a strategic position on the Afghan-Indian border, and was a coveted trading center — nearly fourteen thousand caravans stopped there every year. It was therefore a constant issue of dispute between the Safavid dynasty in Persia and the Mughal empire. In 1595, the Persian governor of Qandahar delivered the city into the hands of one of Akbar's lieutenants, and Jahangir's reign began with an unsuccessful Persian attempt to regain it.

Despite Persian designs on Qandahar, the two rulers maintained a friendly relationship, for the shah pretended to be unaware of the tactlessness displayed by his governors near the border. In April 1611, the shah even sent his ambassador to Jahangir's court bearing a message in the florid, bombastic language of the day. It concluded with these words: "May the tree of friendship and hereditary steadfastness, and the garden of intimacy and esteem become even more splendid and green."

In spite of this earnest speech, however, Shah 'Abbas took umbrage at his Mughal neighbor's growing prosperity and at the expansionist policies adopted by Akbar (and followed, less vigorously, by Jahangir). Thus in 1622, Persian troops overran feeble Mughal resistance and captured Qandahar, to the great satisfaction of Shah 'Abbas (who had long entertained hopes of extending his empire to the right bank of the Indus River). Qandahar nevertheless fell under Mughal control again in March 1637 without a fight, when Persian governor 'Ali Mardan Shah handed the keys of the city to Qulij Khan, one of Shah Jahan's officers (fig. 51). The Mughal occupation was short-lived, however, and the Persians managed to permanently annex Qandahar despite three successive expeditions mounted by Shah Jahan in 1649, 1652 and 1653.

When Qandahar was first taken by the Safavids in 1622, the hitherto pleasant relations between neighboring empires began to deteriorate. Appalled at being bested by the man he had once called "my brother Shah 'Abbas," Jahangir found an outlet for his bitterness and resentment in the contemplation of allegorical paintings expressing the superiority of the Grand Mughal over the Safavid monarch.

Two of these works, *Jahangir Welcoming Shah 'Abbas* (fig. 53) and *Jahangir's Dream* (fig. 54), were probably executed around 1618, at at time when the rivalry between the two monarchs, though real, had not yet reached the intense state provoked by the annexation of Qandahar. In these miniatures, Jahangir is shown to be majestic, fully conscious of his power and prestige, and therefore condescending toward the shah who would deliver a stinging defeat several years later.

The first of these two allegorical subjects, *Jahangir Welcoming Shah 'Abbas* — possibly painted by Abu'l Hasan, the emperor's favorite portraitist — shows an imaginary encounter between the Mughal and Safavid monarchs. Jahangir, on the left, is drawn perceptibly larger than the shah at his side, and is seated on a slightly raised throne. Overhead, two *putti* symbolically enumerate the traditional litany of Jahangir's noble forebears, whereas to the right of Shah 'Abbas figures the simple caption,

"portrait of my brother Shah 'Abbas."

Two high-ranking Mughal dignitaries are also depicted in this solemn, imaginary encounter. Asaf Khan, the emperor's brother-in-law and vizier, stands next to Jahangir and offers wine in a golden goblet. Khan Alem is also present at this august assembly in his capacity as ambassador to the shah of Persia from 1613 to 1620.

The emperor's majesty is underscored by the numerous jewels bedecking the magnificent and generous host, as compared to the more soberly dressed shah of Persia. The lavish hospitality offered by the Grand Mughal sets him above the Safavid monarch. An Italian table bearing Venetian and Chinese glassware conveys the cosmopolitanism of the Mughal court and the refinement of the gifts presented to the emperor by foreign ambassadors.

52. Darbar of Jahangir, *circa 1615-1616. Right side of a two-page composition, signed Abu'l Hasan. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

The second miniature, signed by Abu'l Hasan and probably also executed around 1618, is even more explicit and spectacular. Entitled *Jahangir's Dream*, it shows the emperor embracing the shah, and transforms an encounter imagined in a dream into a supernatural event. The enormous halo ringing the two monarchs' heads is simultaneously solar and lunar, adding to the unreality. Although the composition is based on European allegories and probably on English models introduced at court by Sir Thomas Roe (which may explain the relative geographic accuracy of the globe on which the two emperors stand), it nevertheless re-employs elements of traditional imperial iconography such as the lion and lamb lying side by side. The intensely symbolic nature of this work should not be overlooked, however, for although it shows the Great Mughal giving his Persian rival a protective embrace, Shah 'Abbas is depicted in a docile, submissive pose with his feet on the lamb, whereas Jahangir's feet are on the lion. The peaceful and unnatural coexistence between an herbivore and a carnivore, feasible only during the prosperous reign of a fair-minded monarch (and therefore a constant theme in imperial Mughal iconography), should in this instance be seen as a parody of the imperial embrace threatening the vulnerable shah of Persia, here compared to a lamb. This scene, completely devoid of historical fact, is the brilliant if naive expression of Jahangir's anxiety and insecurity when confronted with the thorny question of Qandahar.

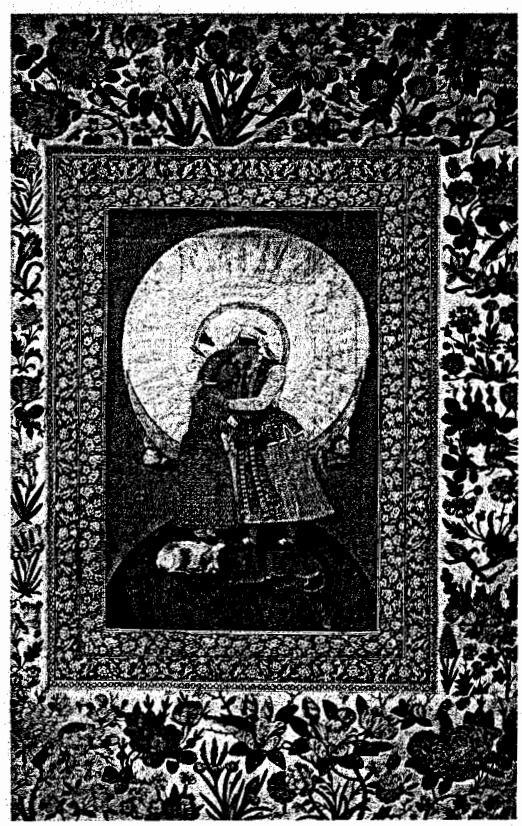
One of the most accomplished and superb "allegorical portraits" of Jahangir is once again the work of Abu'l Hasan. It is also the most glorious pictorial disavowal of one of Jahangir's most bitter disappointments (fig. 55). In 1623, as we know, Prince Khurram rebelled against his father and unsuccessfully attempted to capture Agra. While withdrawing toward Delhi, the rebel prince and his troops were defeated by the

53. Jahangir Welcoming Shah 'Abbas, *circa 1618. A page from the* Saint Petersburg Album. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

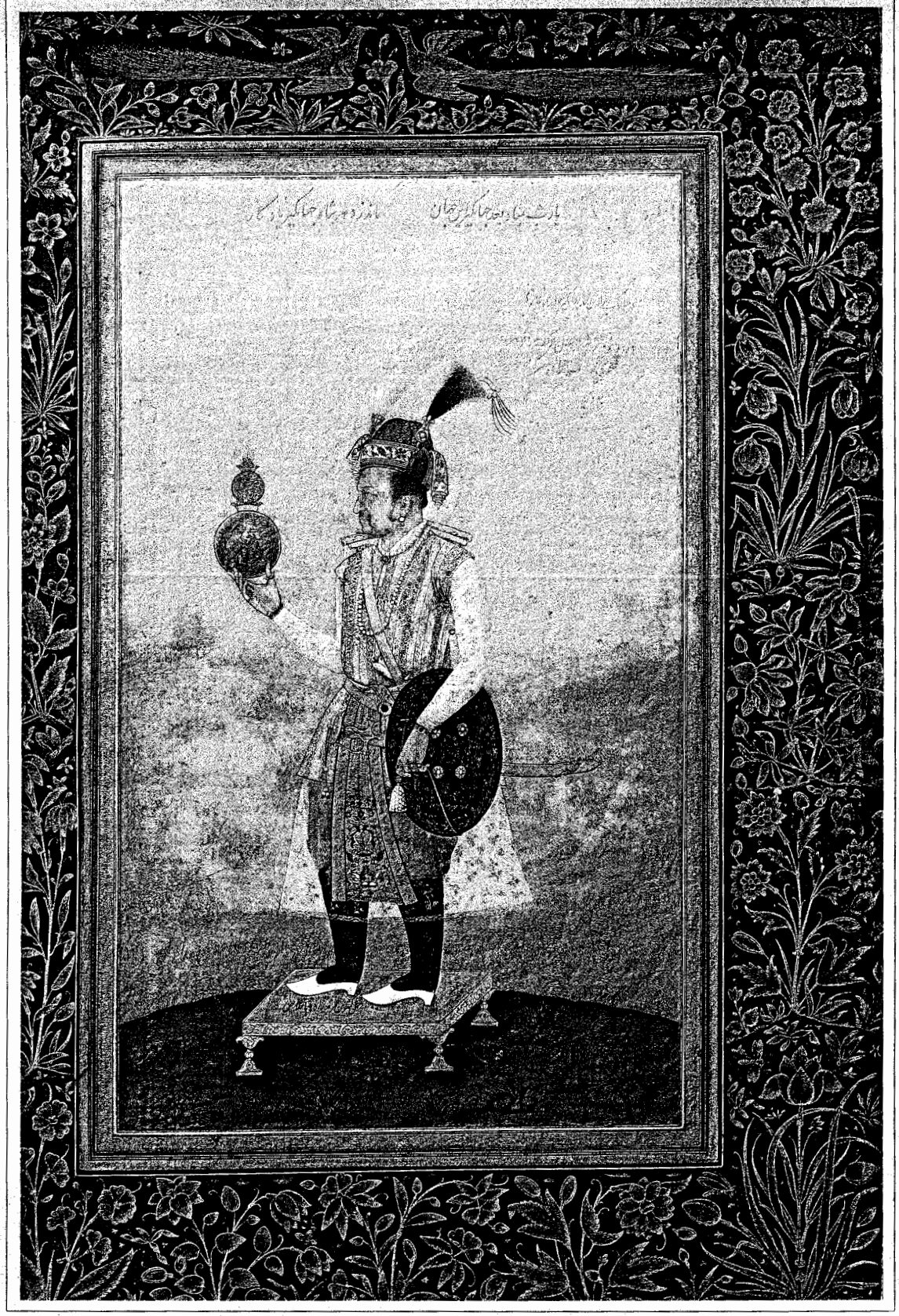
Imperial army not far from Balochpur. Khurram — formerly the Great Mughal's favorite son and subsequently nicknamed *be-daulat* ("wretch") in Jahangir's memoirs — was thus obliged to retreat to Malwa and down into the Deccan.

Abu'l Hasan depicted only two aspects of this cruel treason against an emperor in declining strength and health (which explains the young prince's precipitateness): the victory of the Imperial army led by Mahabat Khan (seen in the background) and Jahangir's triumph over Khurram's revolt. The emperor's face expresses his omnipotence and determination, yet also the bitterness and contempt of a father for his wayward son. As lord of the earth, Jahangir lifts the orb of sovereignty topped with the royal seal and crown. The Grand Mughal bears weapons and wears a helmet rather than a turban, emphasizing the monarch's warlike attitude and the allegorical meaning of Abu'l Hasan's masterpiece. The painter managed to grasp the psychological as well as political importance of Jahangir's victory over Khurram; indeed, the emperor's chronicle of events for the year 1623 begins with a detailed description of the defeat suffered by Prince Khurram's troops at the hands of Mahabat Khan.

From this point on, imperial painters regularly produced brilliant and grandiloquent allegorical works to laud the greatness of Jahangir, and later of Shah Jahan. Sometime around 1615, Abu'l Hasan produced the astonishing *Darbar of Jahangir* (fig. 52), a depiction as symbolic as it was genuine, once again a proclamation of the sovereignty and omnipotence of the emperor. The feet of the seated "World-Seizer" ostentatiously rest on a globe with a lock, the key for which hangs from the monarch's richly embroidered *kamarband* (belt). Illustrious figures surround



54. Jahangir's Dream, *circa 1618. Signed Abu'l Hasan. A page from the* Saint Petersburg Album. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*



55. Jahangir Suppressing Prince Khurram's Rebellion, *circa 1623*. *Signed Abu'l Hasan. A page from the* Kevorkian Album. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

56. Emperor Timur, His Descendants and the Poet Sa'di, *circa 1650. Signed Hashim. India Office Library and Records, London.*

the Great Mughal. These include his two sons Parviz and Khurram (in striped gown, to Jahangir's left), his prime minister I'timad ud-Daulah, and Asaf Khan, Mahabat Khan and Mirza Rustam Khan (nephew of Shah Tahmasp of Persia). Prince Karan Singh of Mewar, who joined the Mughal court in 1615 following the annexation of his kingdom by Prince Khurram, can be seen to the right of the emperor, in a red turban. To Jahangir's left, standing behind the fan bearer, is a figure apparently copied from a European painting or engraving. The presence of this Western monarch (the caption identifies him as "the emperor of Rum," i.e. the West) symbolizes the Christian world, just as Prince Karan Singh's Rajput origins suggest that he personifies Hinduism. This ambitious work thus presents Jahangir not merely as sovereign over the august assembly of his own darbar, but also as lord of the universe, including Christians and Hindus.

The *Darbar* of Jahangir constitutes the right half of a double-page composition, the left part of which is today in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (fig. 35). The circle of dignitaries surrounding the emperor in the center is here extended to include two Turkish sultans, one of whom is Beyazid Yildirim, the Ottoman ruler defeated by Timur in 1404. In the center, bent with age and deferentially bowing before the emperor, is the eminent thirteenth-century Persian poet Sa'di, perfectly incarnating the mystical, spiritual universe to which Jahangir aspired. Dervishes behind the poet raise their hands in a sign of veneration. Sa'di's purely symbolic association with Mughal monarchs appears again in a "dynastic portrait" executed by the painter Hashim around 1650 (fig. 56). The poet is depicted along with Timur, glorious forebear of the Timurid dynasty, and the emperors Babur, Humayun, Akbar and Jahangir.

The "allegorical portraits" also highlight the link between Mughals and mullahs, dervishes and Sufis (as epitomized by Bichitr's famous *Jahangir*

57. Shah Jahan Standing on a Globe, *dated 1629. Signed Hashim. A page from the* Kevorkian Album. *Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.*

Preferring a Sufi Sheikh to Kings — see figure 37). In depicting Shah Jahan ("Ruler of the World") in 1629, the year following his coronation, Hashim carefully added a group of holy men to the traditional iconographic emblems on the globe dominated by the emperor (fig. 57). Two scrolls held by the mullahs contain the explicit prayer:

O God, preserve this king,
this friend of dervishes,
In whose shadow the peaceful
existence of men unfolds,
[Preserve him] at the head of
his people for a many a year;
And by the sustenance of obedience
he displays toward You, keep his
heart imbued with life.