



Museum of Art and the Freer Gallery, contains original album leaves from the Jahangir and Shah Jahan periods interspersed with copies made about 1650 and others produced in the early nineteenth century, when the album was assembled. In both this and the Late Shah Jahan Album (no. 21), also assembled around 1650, most of the illustrated pages are single portraits. Shah Jahan had neither the eclectic taste nor the intellectual voraciousness of Akbar and Jahangir. *Portrait of Abd al-Rahim, Khan Khanan* by Hashim (no. 24a), one of his greatest artists, is a perfect example of the style he preferred: technically faultless, highly perceptive, and painted with alarming self-confidence. Whether figural or vegetal, all the borders are completely different from the impetuous, spirited borders of Jahangir's albums—they are, instead, jewel-like, exquisite, and very formal (figs. 21 and 22). The scholar Robert Skelton has attributed the profuse floral designs to the inspiration of imported European herbals.⁶¹ Evoking the idea of paradise as a garden, this became the basis for a comprehensive decorative program that dominated textiles, decorative objects, and architecture (figs. 23–25).

Cultural liberalness and intellectual curiosity were, however, traits associated with Dara Shikoh, Shah Jahan's eldest and favorite son, and his intended successor. Murdered by his younger brother Aurangzeb in a bloody war of succession, Dara—like his great-grandfather Akbar—met with and supported important religious figures of the time (no. 37). He sought to understand and reconcile Islam and Hinduism, and this was one cause for his more orthodox brother's enmity.

EMPEROR AWRANGZEB

Taking advantage of his father's seeming ill-health, Aurangzeb (reigned 1658–1707), the emperor's third son, through subterfuge and outright dishonesty, seized control of the empire and imprisoned his father in the fort at Agra, where Shah Jahan remained until his death in 1666. Continuing the momentum of established practice, the earliest artistic works made for Aurangzeb are little different from those created for Shah Jahan. Soon, however, the new emperor's orthodoxy diminished his patronage of the arts. With a reduction of support and resources, a simpler style emerged, one that lessened the distinction between his artists' work and that made for patrons elsewhere in India. Two facing pages mounted in the St. Petersburg Album, one folio of which is now in the Freer (fig. 40 and no. 22h rev), define this style. Absent from these hunting scenes is the rich variety of vegetation, the spatial overlap of figures and foliage, the interplay of forms intertwined in space, the delight in textures and details, and the references to European imagery that enriched even such tiny scenes as *Dara Shikoh Hunting Nilgae* (no. 22j). In *Two Mughal Princesses Hunting Game Birds* (no. 22h rev), the outline of each form is isolated against a plain background, while *The Emperor Aurangzeb in a Shaft of Light* (fig. 26), however grandiose an image, abandoned the surface opulence that was basic to the fabric of paintings created for both his father and grandfather. The pleasures produced by visual richness and complexity, it seems, were to be avoided during Aurangzeb's reign.

Fig. 23 / opposite and left
Shah Jahan with Asaf Khan (detail, no. 21h)

Fig. 24 / center
Quatrefoil box.
India, Mughal
dynasty, ca. 1650

Fig. 25 / right
Representation of
a lotus flower at the
Taj Mahal



RELATED TRADITIONS

From the third quarter of the sixteenth century, painting throughout northern India was dominated by the imperial Mughal style, and it became a standard of excellence that other regions and patrons often tried to emulate. Akbar sometimes gave to major nobles copies (occasionally illustrated) of the texts he had translated; this would explain the production of several volumes of the *Baburnama*, for example. At other times, he urged the nobles to have versions made for themselves. The most famous of this latter group is the *Ramayana* manuscript included here (no. 14). It was formed over several years around 1600 for Abd al-Rahim, Khan Khanan, whose portrait in the Kevorkian Album is mentioned above. The inspiration for the *Ramayana* is the imperial copy dated between 1584 and 1589, although the 130 illustrations are new compositions. As might be expected of such an ambitious project for a subimperial patron, the level of quality varies widely among folios. The earliest pages are generally by artists of imperial (or potentially imperial) caliber (e.g., no. 14a), but many are painted by far less competent artists. Several of the painters are known to have worked exclusively for the Khan Khanan (if we can believe contemporary texts), but others were mobile, and some eventually joined Akbar's studios. Artists trained in the imperial workshops were sometimes hired to produce illustrations for texts in which Akbar had no interest. A *ragamala*, the most popular of all Hindu illustrated texts, was assembled in 1591 for Rao Bhoj Singh of Bundi, an important Rajput noble within the Mughal system and one with access to imperial circles (fig. 27). He brought three imperially trained artists to Chunar, outside Varanasi, where he had been appointed governor by Akbar. Working in a slightly outmoded variant of the imperial style, they eventually transported that style back to Bundi (in Rajasthan) when the rao returned there. In this way the Mughal style became influential far beyond the imperial capital. On the other hand, painting at the Rajput court of Mewar, resistant to Mughal

Fig. 26 / opposite
The Emperor
Awrangzeb in a Shaft
of Light (no. 22g rev)

Fig. 27
Kedar Ragini,
perhaps by Shaykh
Hatim (detail)

Fig. 28
Shri Raga, from the
Chawand *Ragamala*,
by Nasiruddin
(detail)

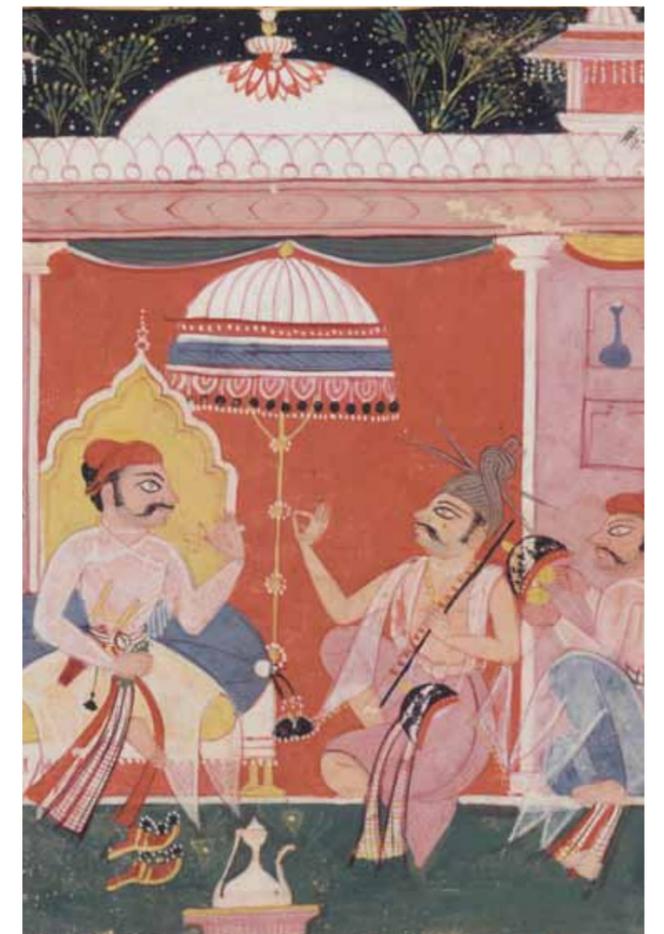
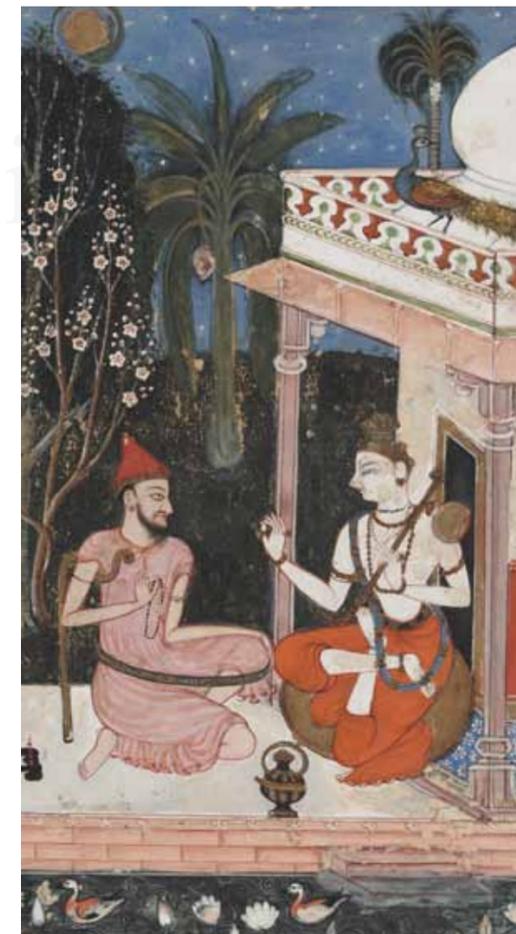




Fig. 29a, b
Marginal figures of
European women
(details, *A Chained
Elephant*, no. 20 obv)

Fig. 30
Madonna and Child
(no. 51)

authority, developed out of such pre-Mughal traditions as the circa 1520 *Bhagavata Purana* (compare fig. 28 and no. 4). In general, subimperial commissions are rougher in execution, less refined in taste, and more receptive to Hindu sensibilities (as in color or strength of visual impact) than were imperial works of the later sixteenth century—and in these differences lies their power.

Muslim courts in the Deccan, south of the Mughal territories, also had important schools of painting that were perhaps most distinctive before the mid-seventeenth century, when the courts were still relatively independent of Mughal control. Deccani rulers had established cultural and economic ties with Iran and Turkey, and conflict with the Mughals was continuous. Painters such as Farrukh Beg (known also as Farrukh Husain) moved between Persian, Mughal, and Deccani patrons (see especially page 205). For example, one work (no. 8a), included in the circa 1589 *Baburnama* but in a highly Persianized style, was probably painted earlier in Kabul for Akbar's brother Muhammad-Hakim, while another (no. 8b), with its precise depiction of an identifiable historical incident, was made by the same artist in India specifically for the same manuscript. *The Elephant Atash Khan* (no. 50), on the other hand, was a favorite pachyderm of Sultan Ibrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur. That portrait of a prized animal was executed after Farrukh Beg had moved to that court, an event noted in contemporary historical chronicles. While the aesthetic tastes of patrons differed, for many artists such transitions were not difficult since the range of subjects was similar: Persian poetical texts, copies of European prints, and portraiture. It has often been assumed that the interest in prints was derived from the Mughals, whereas such works certainly could have reached the Deccani courts quite separately. *The Madonna and Child* (no. 51) perfectly shows the tension between European attitudes towards shading and the traditional Islamic love of intricate, flat surface pattern. The modeling on the Virgin's face, for example, does little to create a sense of weight, mass, or convincing personality—its usual purpose in Mughal illustrations. Instead it emphasizes surface design (compare figs. 29, 30). This is also true of *The Elephant Atash Khan*, where the rhythmically arranged lines and textures of the natural forms do not create mass or spatial depth. Here is evidence that the patron's taste was quite different from that seen in the almost contemporary Mughal animal studies made to illustrate Babur's memoirs (e.g., no. 8d).

Mughal painting is defined by those works that were created at the central Mughal court—and this could be wherever the peripatetic emperor found himself, whether Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore, Delhi, somewhere in the Deccan, or at any intermediate stop. Deccani and Rajput paintings, however, as well as those termed subimperial, were created at many smaller courts that were often active rivals to the Mughals. Each had its distinctive cultural identity and established interrelationships. In its heyday, imperial Mughal painting exerted a geographical impact, strongly affecting artistic traditions in regions inhabited by these other courts. Its influence also extended temporally. After the powers of the imperial court weakened, new patrons elsewhere encouraged the continuing historical development of artistic traditions that were first established by the Mughals, as well as the copying of earlier imperial images (nos. 24c, 24e).

The British, for example, wanted images to record for themselves, as well as to demonstrate to others, just what they encountered in India. Commissions for visual documentation of houses, servants, crafts- and trades-people, or

