CHAPTER IV

THE KITABKHANA AS A CENTER OF COLLECTION

Apart from being a center of manuscript production, Akbar’s kitabkhana was also the principal repository for the imperial collection of manuscripts, and albums of paintings and calligraphies. The emperor acquired his collection in four different ways: inheritance, conquest, purchase, and gifts. Akbar was highly acquisitive, so much so that Monserrate, who never quite approved of the flamboyant, worldly side of the emperor’s character, was led to bemoan in a letter to his superior in Goa that “Akbar does not see a thing without trying to get a similar one!” Although most of the works that Akbar acquired or inherited were of non-Indian origin, once they became a part of the imperial collection, they were enthusiastically studied and enjoyed by the emperor as well as his artists and courtiers.

Akbar’s collection can be divided into two broad categories: Persian manuscripts, paintings and calligraphic folios, and non-Persian (mainly European) books, prints, and paintings. The emperor’s collection of Persian material can be broken down into three further categories. The most precious group consists of Timurid manuscripts from Herat, and was collected with an eye towards the work of great masters of painting and calligraphy illuminating the chief themes of imperial power. The second, and later, category to be collected consists of manuscripts from Bukhara. Here the main interest focused on versions of the standard masterpieces of Persian literature by one particularly admired calligrapher. The last category is comprised of unfinished manuscripts that were subsequently illustrated in Akbar’s kitabkhana.

Works, not always genuine, by the great early calligraphers Ibn Muqall (886-940), Ibne al-Bawwab (d. 1022) and Yaqut al-Mustasimi (d. 1088), and the latter masters of nasta’liq such as Mir Ali al-Tabrizi (ca. 1560-1530) and Sultan Ali al-Mashadi (1442-1530) were highly sought after throughout the eastern Islamic world. Another passion of aesthetically-minded princes was the desire to own works by great individual painters such as Ustad Kamal ad-Din Bihzad (ca. 1453-1502), whose fame was beginning to rival that of the greatest calligraphers. Increased international trade contacts and diplomatic missions throughout the area stretching from Europe to China also stimulated a taste for foreign curiosities and exotica alongside that for past wonders of the Islamic artistic tradition.

The downfall of the Timurids in Herat, which caused the dispersal of many truly extraordinary works of art, provided wonderful opportunities for princely connoisseurs. The death of Sultan Husayn Mirza (the patron of both Sultan Ali and Bihzad) in 1506 was immediately followed by frenzied activity on the part of those seeking to assume the mantle of Timurid political power to obtain Timurid works of art and, if possible, actual artists, the ultimate cultural status symbols of the early sixteenth century. Among the participants in this highly charged art market were the Uzbeks (who captured Herat and its artisans in 1507), the Safavids (who defeated the Uzbeks in 1510 and moved a good deal of the contents of the former Timurid library to Tabriz), and the Ottoman Turks (who sacked Tabriz four times in the first half of the
sixteenth century and carried masses of booty back to Istanbul, where much of it still survives in the Topkapı Saray Library. Luckily for Akbar, Babur also entered the fray and taking full advantage of the situation made some brilliant acquisitions. In fact, both Babur and Humayun were inveterate collectors and connoisseurs of books, especially illustrated manuscripts, and they are the ones who set Akbar on a similar path. Furthermore, what they acquired and passed on formed the basis of Akbar's collection at Fatehpur-Sikri.

It is not known exactly when and where Babur managed to obtain the famous copy of the Shāhnāma prepared and illustrated for Prince Muhammad Juki around 1440 (fig. 10). Muhammad Juki was a grandson of Timur and a brother of the more prolific patron Prince Bayangurch, who wrote the preface for this recension of the Persian "Book of Kings." Babur's seal (at the upper left corner of the flyleaf) is dated "967," which probably stands for the year A. H. 906 (1500-01). A more likely time for him to have acquired this manuscript, though, would have been during his forty-day visit to Herat in late 906, just a few months after Sultan Husayn's death, when it might have been given to him as a gift by his Timurid relations. It is also possible that it was acquired by force at some time after the Uzbek conquest of Herat. Babur notes, for example, that when he re-captured Samarqand in 1511 after a nine-year absence he was accompanied by his "noodle-headed" librarian Darwish-i Ali Beg, the younger brother of Sultan Husyan's famous poet, confidant, and statesman Mir Ali Shir Nawāl (1440-1501). It would have been the librarian's responsibility to find masterpieces such as this Shāhnāma in any recently captured library and add them to his master's collection.

Even before the viewer's eyes fall on the manuscript's thirty-one miniatures and two brilliantly colored and illuminated chapter headings, the Juki Shāhnāma stands out as an extremely impressive object. Approximately thirty-two centimeters (thirteen inches) high and twenty-two centimeters (nine inches) wide, it contains five hundred and thirty-six folios of lustrous pale brown paper set within more recent lighter margins, the fifty thousand or so couplets of the text written in a fine and uncrowded nastaliq hand. The thirty-one paintings, which in most cases occupy at least three-quarters of the page, are truly exciting with their rare combination of narrative power and otherworldly luminosity. Small elegant figures act bravely against expansive backdrops of fantastic architecture and stylized rocky landscapes, rendered in coral, turquoise or lavender, of an intensely hallucinogenic nature. In the folio illustrated here, the final dramatic duel between Prince Islāmshāh and the evil Turanian king Arpaq is almost lost in the huge, open courtyard of the brilliantly decorated palace, which floats on an ethereal cloud of blue-tinged lavender cliffs—a fantastic realm contrasting dramatically with the often stark reality of Babur's native Central Asian environment.

The awe with which Babur and his descendants must have held this manuscript is amply demonstrated by their seals and inscriptions on the burnished gold flyleaf (fig. 9) which stands out as a memorial to the Mughal passion for collecting art. At the upper left corner is Babur's seal, executed in a bold script (tubli) and referring to himself as a quarkan (non-law), alluding to the relationship through which Timur was connected with Chingiz Khan. Across the center of the seal runs a Mongol heraldic device, incorporating the three small circles arranged as a triangle that Timur used as his state or dynastic symbol. 2 At the middle left of the page is a fragment of an early Humayuni seal, in the same style as that of his father and presumably affixed before his exile from India, followed at the top center of the page by a second seal in an elegant nastaliq script that reflects the influence of his stay at the Safavid court in Iran. Below this is Jahangir's seal and then to the right is that of Shah Jahan, in which he again picks up the Timurid connection by describing himself as the second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction of Planets (salāḥ-i qiraq), a title originally adopted by Timur.

In the center of the page, Shah Jahan has left an autograph note recording how the manuscript entered his library on the day of his accession to the throne in 1628. Directly beneath is the seal of Aurangzeb who inherited this Shāhnāma almost a century and a half after it was first acquired by Babur. Although Akbar's own seal is missing from this page, there is no doubt that he too was once its proud owner, for during the 1560s or 1570s one of his artists was commissioned to repaint the background landscape of the miniature illustrating "Yazdigrīd Flaying in the Mill." In 1582 Akbar commissioned a new copy of the Shāhnāma to be transcribed and illustrated in his kutubkhana at Fatehpur-Sikri, 3 but it is doubtful whether this now-lost version ever fully matched the emotional value of the Juki "Book of Kings" first acquired by his grandfather.

Babur's interest in collecting books continued once he entered India. On his way to Delhi at the beginning of 1526 he managed to capture the fort of Milvat from Ghazi Khan, the son of Dawlat Khan Lodī (whose wavering loyalty later caused an exasperated Babur to
describe his as a “rustic blockhead”), Ghazi Khan was an acclaimed poet and man of learning, so it was with great expectation that Babur entered the fort and sought out his library. In the words of his close companion Zayn Khan, “Having cast his glance personally on some of the books, he [Babur] left the work of examination and investigation of the rest to the judges and scholars who had been attending on his victorious stirrups.” The general conclusion was that not many books were of special interest or value, certainly far fewer than they had expected. Nevertheless some of the better ones were presented to Humayun, who had taken part in the initial examination and was referred to in this regard by Zayn Khan as “the true judge of books,” while others were sent to his brother Prince Kamran in Qandahar. Humayun’s original anticipa-
tion must have soured even further when he discovered that his story-teller had been struck by an arrow and killed on the battlefield during the capture of Ghazi Khan’s fort.

57. Timur Greeting an Audience (Zafarnama, ca. 1447).

Expectations of bibliographic loot were again heightened upon the final defeat of Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi at Panipat three months later. While Babur relaxed in Delhi and visited its many monuments and famous tombs, an advance party including Humayun, the treasurer Amir Wali Qiri, and Babur’s long-serving librarian Amir Abdullah Beg was sent to subdue Ibrahim’s fortress in Aga to take charge of its treasures. It is unfortunate that no mention is made in the histories as to what they found in the way of books that belonged to the former sultans of Delhi. If any illustrated manuscript did fall into their hands, however, it is fair to assume that they would have found the paintings crude in comparison with the fine Timurid miniatures in the works they already possessed.

Humayun inherited the inquisitive Maghal collection in 1530. According to Abu Fadl, he regarded the especially rare books as his “real companions” and always kept them with him—in boxes strapped on the back of camels during his many campaigns. How-

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88
ever, because of his increasingly tenuous political status this turned out to be a questionable policy. In late 1534 he set off from Agra in order to conquer Gujarai and first caught up with its ruler, Sultan Bahadur Shah, in eastern Rajasthan. He then pursued him, books in tow, on a triumphant chase through Mandu, Champaran, Cambay, and Diu before he succeeded in driving him out of Gujarat in 1535. It was while encamped at Cambay, savoring this stunning victory, that Humayun's lack ran out. Just before dawn one day a band of five thousand tribal rebels fell upon the Mughal camp and in the ensuing fracas managed to plunder many of the emperor's rarest and most beloved books. Among the works taken, according to the slightly confused account of Abul Fazl, was a copy of "the Timurnama, transcribed by Mulla Sultan Ali and illustrated by Ustad Bihzad, and which is now in the Shahinshah's library (i.e. Akbar's)."

Despite Abul Fazl's description, there can be no doubt that the manuscript in question is actually a copy of Sharaf ad-Din Yazdi's 'Zafarnama' copied by Shir Ali in 1467-68 for Sultan Husayn Mirza and containing miniatures attributed to Bihzad (no. 57). Completed in 1424-25, the 'Zafarnama' is an account of the life and times of Timur, a subject of obvious interest to the Mughals. Surprisingly, in this manuscript the program of illustration consists only of six double-page miniatures, a format that was previously reserved almost exclusively for the frontispiece of a manuscript, but was later widely used by Akbar's artists. This device allows these magnificent miniatures of royal audiences and military engagements an expansiveness, coupled with a wonderful sense of excitement, that would otherwise have proved impossible in a manuscript measuring only about twenty-one centimeters (eight and one quarter inches) high and about twelve centimeters (four and three-quarters inches) wide. The pages illustrated here show Timur granting an audience in a garden at Balkh on the occasion of his succession to the line of the Chaghatai Khans (see above, p. 14), a moment of great political importance for the Mughals. Could the Mughals ever have found an image more to their liking than this spectacular representation of Timur seated on a wooden throne in front of a splendid imperial domed tent or yurt? The idyllic nature of the garden setting is only rivalled by the vibrancy of the assembled textures, the animal head design seen on the roof of the yurt being similar to one that was later used on carpets woven in Akbar's own workshops (see Chapter V).

The subsequent history of this manuscript is a testimony to the remarkable adventures that awaited valuable Timurid manuscripts in the volatile sixteenth century—and the seemingly magnetic drawing power of the Mughal library by the time of Akbar. After being looted from Humayun's camp in Gujarat in 1535, its travels remain a mystery until the 1570s, after which a series of seals and autograph inscriptions of the Mughal emperors on the manuscript's flyleaf take over the story. Under the crudely written word "Fawardin" (the first month of the Persian solar year), Jahan-I-rag recorded in his own shaky hand that, "This word is in the blessed handwriting of his late departed Majesty [Akbar], now in heaven, and Mir Jamal ad-Din Husayn Irshaq [who had entered the emperor's service at some time before the battle of Panipat in early 1573]."
presented this copy to his Majesty in the capital of the caliphate, Agra.13 How delighted, and surprised, Akbar must have been to recover such a prized possession of his late father. From a series of notes on the last page of the manuscript, we also know that it was originally appraised, presumably by Akbar’s librarian, at 1,350 rupees, but after Akbar had looked through it he decided that its exceptional quality warranted its value being nearly doubled to 3,000 rupees.14

As was the case with the Juki Shahnama, family appreciation for this copy of the history of their illustrious ancestor continued, and Jahangir’s second note, at the bottom right corner of the flyleaf, reflects that it was transferred into his library during the first year of his reign (1605), and also confirms Abul Fazl’s belief that the miniatures were painted by Bilhad. Later on, Shah Jahan added a more elegantly written note in the top right corner of the page to the effect that the manuscript entered his library on the day of his accession to the throne, the same day on which he inscribed the Juki Shahnama. After the death of Shah Jahan it passed into the possession of Aurangzeb whose seal, dated 1659-60, also figures on the flyleaf.

What was left of the core of the Mughal library survived Humayun’s exile in Iran, largely due to the loyal efforts of the librarian Mulla Balal, who accompanied the emperor throughout his unhappy peregrinations.15 Nevertheless Humayun had not learned a lesson from his disastrous loss at Cambay and in mid-1558 he again sailed onto the battlefield with his camel-back library—this time against his brother Kamran. His forces lost the rather confused encounter and in the ensuing chaos the camels disappeared with the books. As the lost goods presumably included the Juki Shahnama, it is not hard to imagine the grief Humayun felt at this latest in a series of unfortunate setbacks.

Soon, however, Humayun’s situation took a definite turn for the better and a few months later he was able to recapture Kabul, where he had had an emotional reunion with the eight-year-old Prince Akbar who had been held hostage there by Kamran. No sooner had they finished embracing when, in the words of Abul Fazl,

Two camels loaded with boxes and without drivers were seen on the field of battle. His Majesty said "every one is having his plunder, let mine be these two camels!" He went himself and taking their nose-strings, ordered that they should be made to kneel and that the boxes should be opened, so that he might see what was inside. By a beautiful coincidence it was found that special, royal books which were lost at the battle of Qileac were in these boxes and in perfect condition. This was the occasion for a thousand rejoicings.16

The emotions that Humayun exhibited upon the return of these precious manuscripts must have left a lasting impression on Akbar, who was then old enough to recognize that, for his father at least, books had a value far beyond that of the text alone.

Apart from family heirlooms such as the Juki Shahnama and the 1489-98 Zafarnama, Akbar’s hikayat-khana contained a range of Persian material whose time and place of accession into the Mughal collection is more difficult to ascertain. Some of these works might have been procured by Babur or Humayun but others found their way to India as a result of Akbar’s almost insatiable appetite for books. The zeal with which rare manuscripts were chased down in this period is well illustrated by a case involving Abd ar-Rahim Khan Khanan. In an autograph note on a manuscript of the Khamsa of Amir Khusraw Dihlavi he managed to piece together in 1617, Abd ar-Rahim notes how he had first sent one of his librarians (Mir Iqbal Samarqandi) all the way to Gujarat in 1603-04 with a large sum of money and firm orders to buy up any stray folios he could lay his hands on.17

Loose paintings as well as manuscripts were a prime target for collection, and one of Akbar’s most prized possessions must have been a painting by Bilhad of two camels fighting completed when the artist was seventy years old ca. 1525.18 Now in the collection of the Gulistan Museum in Tehran, it is mounted with a later copy made in India for Jahangir, who added an autograph note to the new version saying that Bilhad’s painting “was seen and copied by Naztha the painter according to my orders” in 1608-09.19 Thanks to a recently discovered copy, painted by Abd as-Samad around 1585 (No. 58), it is now evident that Bilhad’s original also once belonged to Akbar. Intriguingly, Abd as-Samad’s version (which is reversed and extended at the top) is a stylistically freer adaptation than that of Naztha, who strived to make an extraordinarily exact copy for Jahangir.20 The heavier shading on the tree in the right background, the heavier human figures, and the less stylized representation of the two camels engaged in battle all stamp Abd as-Samad’s work as unmistakably Mughal. It also shows the great sense of experimentation that characterized Akbar’s khatib-khana at Fatehpur-Sikri, where even works by Bilhad were subject to close scrutiny and subtle re-interpretation as part of the quest to formulate a new mode of painting. An exact copy would have been of no interest to Akbar.

From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, Bukhara replaced Herat as the main source of Persian manuscripts for Akbar’s collection. In 1520, the Uzbek
presented this copy to his Majesty in the capital of the caliphate, Agrā.13 How delighted, and surprised, Akbar must have been to recover such a prized possession of his late father. From a series of notes on the last page of the manuscript, we also know that it was originally appraised, presumably by Akbar's librarian, at 3,500 rupees, but after Akbar had looked through it he decided that its exceptional quality warranted its value being nearly doubled to 3,000 rupees.14

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From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, Bihārd replaced Herat as the main source of Persian manuscripts for Akbar's collection. In 1502, the Uzbek Shaybānī Khan captured most of Transoxiana from the Timurids and followed this up in 1507 with the conquest of Herat. There, the highly literate but in-}

58. Two Camels Fighting (ca. 1520-29).
that was most keenly sought. 23 Mir Ali's acceptance of Babur as the savior of the Timurid dynasty also increased his popularity with the Mughal emperors. But such widespread popularity could be inherently dangerous for a sixteenth-century calligrapher, as one of Mir Ali's own poems poignantly attests:

A long life of exercise bent my body like a harp, Until the handwriting of this unfortunate one had become Of such a canon That all the kings of the world sought me out, whereas In Bukhara, for means of existence, my liver is steeped in Blood.

My entrails have been burnt up by sorrow. What am I to do? How shall I manage? For I have no way out of this town, This misfortune has fallen on my head for the beauty of my writing. Alas! Mastery in calligraphy has become a chain on the feet of this demented one. 24

Many Bukharan works of this period ended up in India, some of them surprisingly soon after they were finished. Two illustrated and beautifully illuminated manuscripts calligraphed by Mir Ali are typical with respect to the path they followed into Akbar's India. The earlier of the two is a Bustan (Flower Garden) of Sadi copied in Bukhara in 1531-32 with three miniatures retouched by artists working for Jahangir in the early part of the seventeenth century. 25 The second is a copy of Jami's Tuhfat al-Abrar (Gift of the Free) apparently copied in Bukhara in the 1540s, also with three miniatures. Both manuscripts carry virtually identical autograph notes by Jahangir giving a partial history of how they came into his collection, but unfortunately he does not explain how or when they left Bukhara. According to Jahangir, they first belonged to his younger brother Murad and then upon this prince's death in 1609 they passed into Akbar's kisahkhana. Jahangir inherited them from his father with the throne in 1605.

How the manuscripts came into the possession of Murad is a mystery. Although there is a purported mark of Akbar's librarian in the Tuhfat al-Abrar dated to the first year of Akbar's reign (1556), 26 this seems to be an almost impossibly early date for it to have left Bukhara. Furthermore, this would require it to have been collected by Humayun, whose seal is nowhere to be found in either this manuscript or the Bustan. None of the histories mention Murad as a bibliophile, but his background and education would not preclude such interests. In fact, he was probably the best educated of Akbar's sons, his formal education having been entrusted both to the poet Faiyzi (when he was eight years old) and shortly afterwards, to the Jesuit fathers who taught him Portuguese over a number of years.

One answer to the puzzle might be that the two manuscripts were presented to Murad in Kabul (the closest he ever came to Bukhara) in 1581 when, as an eleven-year-old, he led the imperial army to victory against Manza Hakan Muhammad. Another possibility is that he came across them after 1587 when he was appointed to manage the administration of the royal household. Significantly, he was aided in this position, which included jurisdiction over the imperial workshops, by Abul-As-Samad. 27 Whatever the case may be, by around 1580 there were enough high-quality manuscripts on the market to ensure that serious book-collecting was no longer the prerogative of emperors alone.

Another Bukharan manuscript to enter Akbar's collection is a copy of the Gulistan of Sadi now in the British Library (no. 59). Its colophon, which is dated 1567, gives the name of its calligrapher as Mir Ali al-Husayni. 28 The manuscript contains thirteen miniatures executed at two different times: six painted in a Bukharan manner contemporary with the date in the colophon, and the remaining seven added by Mughal artists during the first decade of the seventeenth century. Illustrated here is one of the four paintings in the first group, signed by the artist Shahm Muzahib (Shahum the Illuminator). Painted in a manner that clearly belies the artist's Bukharan origins, it illustrates a prince and his courtiers watching a wrestling contest between an old master and his arrogant young pupil. The face of the prince is rendered as a portrait of the young emperor Akbar and the canopied throne in which he sits is inscribed, "It was ordered in the days of the prosperity of the great king Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar, may Allah perpetuate his kingship and sovereignty." 29

This Mughal intrusion, along with the fact that all the paintings are larger than the text panels, allows one to conclude that the seven "Bukharan" miniatures were actually added after the manuscript arrived in India. 30 The existence of another painting in Shahin's hand in Akbar's 1570 Ahsan-ul-Habsi further suggests that the manuscript was illustrated in India around 1570. 31 One wonders, in fact, whether the manuscript might have been brought to India by Shahin himself: an example of an international trade in manuscripts ready for illustration carried out by unemployed artists seeking work at the courts of newly active patrons.

59. The Old Wrestler Wins Overthrow an Arrogant Pupil (Gulistan of Sadi, 1567-68).
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This misfortune has fallen on my head for the beauty of my writings. 
Alas! Mastery in calligraphy has become a chain on the feet of this demented one.\textsuperscript{24}

Many Bukharan works of this period ended up in India, some of them surprisingly soon after they were finished. Two illustrated and beautifully illuminated manuscripts calligraphed by Mir Ali are typical with respect to the path they followed into Akbar's India. The earlier of the two is a Bustan (Flower Garden) of Sadi copied in Bukhara in 1531-32 with three miniatures retouched by artists working for Jahangir in the early part of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{25} The second is a copy of Jami's Tabqat al-Abhar (Gift of the Free) apparently copied in Bukhara in 1545-6, also with three miniatures.\textsuperscript{26} Both manuscripts carry virtually identical autograph notes by Jahangir giving a partial history of how they came into his collection, but unfortunately he does not explain how or when they left Bukhara. According to Jahangir, they at first belonged to his younger brother Murad and then upon this prince's death in 1599 they passed into Akbar's kitabkhana. Jahangir inherited them from his father with the throne in 1605.

How the manuscripts came into the possession of Murad is a mystery. Although there is a purported mark of Akbar's librarian in the Tabqat al-Abhar dated to the first year of Akbar's reign (1556),\textsuperscript{27} this seems to be an almost impossibly early date for it to have left Bukhara. Furthermore, this would require it to have been collected by Humayun, whose seal is nowhere to be found in either this manuscript or the Bustan. None of the histories mention Murad as a bibliophile, but his background and education would not preclude such interests. In fact, he was probably the best educated of Akbar's sons, his formal education having been entrusted both to the poet Fizayi (when he was eight years old) and shortly afterwards, to the Jesuit fathers who taught him Portuguese over a number of years.

One answer to the puzzle might be that the two manuscripts were presented to Murad in Kabul (the closest he ever came to Bukhara) in 1581 when, as an eleven-year-old, he led the imperial army to victory against Mira Hakan Muhammad. Another possibility is that he came across them after 1583 when he was appointed to manage the administration of the royal household. Significantly, he was aided in this position, which included jurisdiction over the imperial workshops, by Abd al-Samad.\textsuperscript{28} Whatever the case may be, by around 1580 there were enough high-quality manuscripts on the market to ensure that serious book-collecting was no longer the prerogative of emperors alone.

Another Bukharan manuscript to enter Akbar's collection is a copy of the Gulistan of Sadi now in the British Library (No. 59). Its colophon, which is dated A.H. 971 (1567-68), gives the name of its calligrapher as Mir Ali al-Hunayni.\textsuperscript{29} The manuscript contains thirteen miniatures executed at two different times: six painted in a Bukharan manner contemporary with the date in the colophon, and the remaining seven added by Mughal artists during the first decade of the seventeenth century. Illustrated here is one of the four paintings in the first group, signed by the artist Shahm Muzahhib (Shahm the Illuminator). Painted in a manner that clearly belies the artist's Bukharan origins, it illustrates a prince and his courtiers watching a wrestling contest between an old master and his arrogant young pupil. The face of the prince is rendered as a portrait of the young emperor Akbar and the canopied throne in which he sits is inscribed, "It was ordered in the days of the prosperity of the great king Jalal al-Din Muhammad Akbar, may Allah perpetuate his kingship and sovereignty."\textsuperscript{30}

This Mughal intrusion, along with the fact that all the paintings are larger than the text panel, allows one to conclude that the seven "Bukharan" miniatures were actually added after the manuscript arrived in India.\textsuperscript{31} The existence of another painting in Shahm's hand in Akbar's 1570 Armanshahi further suggests that the manuscript was illustrated in India around 1570.\textsuperscript{32} One wonders, in fact, whether the manuscript might have been brought to India by Shahm himself: an example of an international trade in manuscripts ready for illustration carried out by unemployed artists seeking work at the courts of newly active patrons.

\textbf{59. The Old Wrestler Who Overthrew an Arrogant Pupil} (Gulistan of Sadi, 1567-68).
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Two Persian manuscripts of uncertain lineage are
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tered and embellished by Akbar's artists once it came
into his possession. The first is an exquisite copy of the
Khamsa of Nizami measuring about 16 by 10 cm. and
now part of the Keir collection.\(^{32}\) According to
three colophons found in different sections of the
manuscript, it was calligraphed in the Iranian city of
Yazd by Ali ibn Mubarak al-Farrajî between 1502 and
1506. By the 1580s it was in the hands of Akbar who
ordered that the thirty-five spaces for illustrations, left
blank in Yazd, be filled in by his own painters. These
new Akbari miniatures can be dated to the second half
of the 1580s on the basis of the presence of work by the
artist Farrukh Beg, who only arrived at Akbar's court
from Iran in 1585. If indeed the text and the artist
arrived in India simultaneously, Farrukh Beg's pres-
ence at court with a conventionally unillustrated manu-
script would strike an interesting parallel with the case
of Shahjahan and the unfinished Bukharan Gulistan de-
scribed above.

Another non-Mughal manuscript embellished in
Akbar's kisâbkhana is a Divan of Hafiz (fig. 11), the text
of which is said by Shah Jahan, in an autograph note
on the book's flyleaf, to have been written by the
celebrated Timurid calligrapher Sultan Ali al-
Mashhadi.\(^{33}\) The style of the illuminated frontispiece
confirms a date in the first half of the sixteenth century,
but the manuscript's sumptuously decorated new
margins were only added towards the end of the cen-
tury after it had come into Akbar's possession.\(^{34}\) The
decoration, which closely prefigures the elaborate
margins favored by Jahangir, consists of human and
animal figures portrayed either against highly stylized
landscapes or within small rosettes and cusped meda-
lions. It is almost entirely executed in gold, although
some of the human figures, shown in a variety of
poses, are enlivened with touches of color. Like the
earlier illustrated Timurid manuscripts, this Divan of
Hafiz was dutifully passed down from father to son by
the later Mughal emperors until at least the reign of
Aurangzeb, whose seal surmounts the ornate illumina-
tion on the first page of the text.

Always on the lookout for new sources of luxury
goods and items of curiosity, Akbar took full advan-
tage of the growing European trade with India. While
the most significant outcome of this interest was the
arrival of a Jesuit mission in Fatehpur-Sikri in 1580,
this was by no means Akbar's first contact with Euro-
peans and their art. The initial contact had in fact
been taken place during the siege of Surat in early 1573 when
the inhabitants of the fort sought help from the Por-
tuguese, who had occupied Goa in 1510. But when the
Portuguese reinforcements arrived at Surat they soon
took stock of Akbar's strength and decided instead to
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cording to Abul Fazl's description of this meeting,
"They produced many of the rarities of their country,
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one of them with a special favour and made inquiries
about the wonders of Portugal and the manners and
customs of Europe. It seemed as if he did this from a
desire of knowledge, for his sacred heart is a depository
of spiritual and physical sciences."\(^{35}\) European art, how-
ever, had already made its presence felt in Mughal
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Even in the very earliest productions of Akbar's
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Another non-Mughal manuscript embellished in Akbar's kitabkhana is a Divan of Hafiz (Fig. 11), the text of which is signed by Shah Jahan, in an autograph note on the book's flyleaf, to have been written by Timurid calligrapher Sultan Ali al-Mubarak. The style of the illuminated frontispiece confirms a date in the first half of the sixteenth century, but the manuscript's sumptuously decorated new margins were only added towards the end of the century after it had come into Akbar's possession. The decoration, which closely prefigures the elaborate margins favored by Jahangir, consists of human and animal figures portrayed either against highly stylized landscapes or within small rosettes and cusped medallions. It is almost entirely executed in gold, although some of the human figures, shown in a variety of poses, are enlivened with touches of color. Like the earlier illustrated Timurid manuscripts, this Divan of Hafiz was dutifully passed down from father to son by the later Mughal emperors until at least the reign of Aurangzeb, whose seal surmounts the ornate illumination on the first page of the text.

Always on the lookout for new sources of luxury goods and items of curiosity, Akbar took full advantage of the growing European trade with India. While the most significant outcome of this interest was the arrival of a Jesuit mission in Fatehpur-Sikri in 1580, this was by no means Akbar's first contact with Europeans and their art. The initial contact had in fact taken place during the siege of Surat in early 1573 when the inhabitants of the fort sought help from the Portuguese, who had occupied Goa in 1510. But when the Portuguese reinforcement arrived at Surat they soon took stock of Akbar's strength and decided instead to pass themselves off as ambassadors to his court. According to Abul Fazl's description of this meeting, "They produced many of the rarities of their art, and the appreciative Khedive [Akbar] received each one of them with a special favour and made inquiries about the wonders of Portugal and the manners and customs of Europe. It seemed as if he did this from a desire of knowledge, for his sacred heart is a depository of spiritual and physical sciences." European art, however, had already made its presence felt in Mughal painting before this historic meeting.

Even in the very earliest productions of Akbar's patronage one can discern a Mughal awareness of European art. In the "Storm at Sea" from the ca. 1600-65 Thaviriana (no. 10), a blood passenger wears a European-style costume, and a figure at the very bottom left-hand corner of a miniature in the 1608 Asgha is also portrayed in distinctly European garb. More importantly, a painting by Basawan from the same early Thaviriana proves that an anonymous European engraving, dated 1644, after one by Georg Pencz (Nuremberg, ca. 1600-50) had reached Akbar's kitabkhana by at least the mid-1600s. It was the figure leaping on a charger at the right of this print of "Joseph Selling His Dream to His Father" (no. 62) that provided Basawan with the model for a figure of a hunter in the Thaviriana miniature.

The European print presumably reached Mughal India from Goa, which was well connected with Antwerp by ship, but the convincing portrayal of two Europeans in a miniature from a Zafarnama illustrated for Shah Jahan in 1650 leaves open the possibility that this type of material could have been brought to India from Iran, perhaps as part of an artist's scrapbook. The influence of this print went beyond its role as a new source of stock figures for the Mughal kitabkhana, for Basawan, along with certain other Mughal artists, also responded to its technique. This copy after Pencz, and especially the detail of the old man with the crutch, proved to be an extraordinarily popular source of subject matter for artists working in Akbar's kitabkhana throughout the rest of the century. Prior to the time of Fatehpur-Sikri, European prints occupied a rather modest position in the Mughal collection. They were used more as source material for his artists than admired by Akbar as precious objects in their own right.

According to Abul Fazl, one of the outcomes of Akbar's contact with the Portuguese in 1572-73 was a growing awareness on his part of the "curiosities and rarities of the skilled craftsmen of that country." In fact, the earliest European articles ever reached such a level that in late 1573 he dispatched an artistic mission to Goa from Fatehpur-Sikri under the command of Haji Habibullah. In the words of Abul Fazl, he "was appointed to take with him a large sum of money, and the choice articles of [Mughal] India to Goa, and to bring for H. M.'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 imparted (into Akbar's dominions)."

The mission stayed in Goa for almost two years, in a remarkable display of Mughal diplomacy and commercial exchange. In December, 1577 they arrived back and Haji Habibullah, attended by a large number of persons dressed up as Christians and playing European drums and clarions," paid homage to Akbar, who was encamped at the time between Delhi and Fatehpur-Sikri. Abul Fazl's account continues that after the Haji had placed some of the choice articles of Goa before Akbar, "Craftsmen who had gone to acquire skill displayed the arts which they had learnt and received praise in the critical place of testing." An object that might have been made by one of these Mughal artists in Goa is a small, yellowish sandstone plaque showing the head of St. John the Baptist being presented to Salome (no. 60). Miniatures have also been found in Mughal India, but one of the main aims of the mission was just this type of experimentation with new media. In Goa the artist who produced this object had plenty of opportunity to copy his composition from a European representation of the same scene. Nevertheless the way in which he transformed a foreign composition in a strange medium leaves little doubt of his Mughal background, especially in his handling of the drapery and architectural setting. A number of European musical instruments were also brought back from Goa but none of them caused as much excitement as an elaborate organ that was exhibited to the public in Fatehpur-Sikri at the beginning of 1615. According to the description of the event left by a bemused Badauni, "It was like a great box the
size of a man. A European sits inside it and plays the strings thereof, and two others keep putting their fingers on five peacock-wings, and all sorts of sounds come forth. And because the emperor was so pleased, the Europeans kept coming at every moment in red and yellow colours, and went from one extravaganza to another. The people at the meeting were astounded at this wonder, and indeed it is impossible for language to do justice to the description of it.\textsuperscript{43}

In March, 1578, just a few months after the first mission had returned from Goa, Father Pereira, the Jesuit Vicar-General of Bengal, arrived in Fatehpur-Sikri at Akbar's invitation. In many discussions concerning the nature of Christianity, Pereira encouraged Akbar to make contact with the Jesuit missionaries at the College of St. Paul in Goa, to whom an embassy was dispatched soon afterwards. Akbar's embassy, which arrived in Goa in September, 1579, carried a letter from the emperor addressed to the Jesuit fathers and asking them to send to Fatehpur-Sikri, "two learned priests who should bring with them the chief books of the Law and the Gospel... The moment my ambassadors return let them not hesitate to come with them and let them bring the books of the Law.\textsuperscript{744} Eagerly responding to Akbar's invitation, the Jesuit mission, comprised of Fathers Acquasiva, Henriques, and Monserrate, set out from Goa in November, 1579, and reached Fatehpur-Sikri on the last day of February, 1580.

Within a week of their arrival in Fatehpur-Sikri the priests, with the exception of Father Monserrate, who was ill from the journey, left their noisy quarters in the caravanserai and proceeded up to the palace where they presented Akbar with seven of the eight volumes of the Antwerp Polyglott Bible (vol. 61). According to a joint letter written by the priests shortly after the event, "On the day we made the presentation he [Akbar] performed such an elaborate ceremonial that we were altogether surprised. He caught hold of each individual tome and, after kissing it, placed it on the head with great reverence in front of all his grandees and captains and the rest of the people gathered in the vast courtyard of the palace, and everyone was amazed.\textsuperscript{742} The account is continued in another joint letter written to the Father Provincial in Goa: "Thereafter, while he commanded us to go inside, he leafed through those books with great reverence and delight and wished that it should be left to him. He now keeps it in his residence (where he is most of the time), in a new desk for books, which he ordered specially for this purpose.\textsuperscript{745}

As both a great bibliophile and seeker after knowledge, Akbar not surprisingly was excited about the addition of the Polyglott Bible to his collection. Prepared under the sponsorship of Philip II of Spain and the editorial supervision of his personal chaplain, it was printed in four languages (Hebrew, Chaldean, Latin and Greek) by Christophe Plantin in Antwerp between 1568-72.\textsuperscript{47} The bold juxtaposition of the four different scripts in the text would have immediately fascinated Akbar, but what must have really captured his imagination were the title pages engraved by a variety of Flemish artists such as Pieter van der Heyden, Pieter Huys, and the Wiericx brothers. Even if their complex symbolism needed some explanation in the beginning, they served as useful didactic tools for the Jesuits. Monserrate relates how during the campaign to put down Mirza Hakim Muhammad in 1581, Akbar "ordered the sacred volumes to be brought and the Priest to be called... Then [after a long monologue] the Priest, at the King's command, unrolled the books; and seizing his opportunity, explained the pictures.\textsuperscript{49} There is no doubt that they were also closely scrutinized within the De Taliban.\textsuperscript{54} The Jesuit missionaries brought to Fatehpur-Sikri at least two European altarpieces that were highly admired by Akbar and his courtiers. Approximately a month after the Jesuits arrived in the city, and just one day after they had moved to new quarters within the palace precincts, Akbar came alone to pay them a visit. This was almost immediately recorded in a letter by Henriques: "The first thing he [Akbar] did was to go into the church, which was well appointed with its perfumes and fragrance. On entering he was surprised and astonished and made a deep obeisance to the picture of Our Lady that was there, from the painting of St. Luke, done by Brother Manuel Godinho, as well as to another beautifully executed representation of Our Lady brought by Fr. Martim da Silva from Rome, which pleased him no end.\textsuperscript{49} After stepping outside briefly to discuss these pictures with his attendants, he came back in with his "chief painter" and other painters, "and they were all wondrously struck and said that there could be no better paintings nor better artists than those who had painted the said pictures.\textsuperscript{53} In a letter written a couple of months after the visit, Acquasiva further recalls that Akbar "prayed before the picture of Christ and the Virgin, venerating thrice, once in our manner, the other in that of the Muslims and the third in the Hindu fashion, that is to say prostrate, saying that God should be adored with every form of adoration.\textsuperscript{52} The first painting mentioned by Henriques was copied by Brother Manuel Godinho in Goa\textsuperscript{53} from another copy made in Rome of the Madonna and Child in the Borghese Chapel of the Church of Santa
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further recalls that Akbar "prayed before the picture
of Christ and the Virgin, venerating thriee, once
in our manner, the other in that of the Muslims and
the third in the Hindu fashion, that is to say prostrate, saying that God should be adored with
every form of adoration."51 The first painting mentioned by Henriques was copied by Brother Manuel Godinho in Goa52 from
another copy made in Rome of the Madonna and
Child in the Borghese Chapel of the Church of Santa
Maria Maggiore. The earlier copy of this famous
painting popularly attributed to St. Luke had been
made by order of St. Francis Borgia with the express
permission of Pope Pius V and sent to Goa in 1578.53 A
number of copies were evidently made at the same
time in Rome, for in 1578 Spanish Franciscans arrived
in Macao and one, and then in 1581 another larger
copy arrived in the same Portuguese post on the coast
of China, destined for the Jesuit mission there.54 The
identity of the second altarpiece is less clear, but com-
ments made by one of Akbar's courtiers, on a sub-
sequent visit, to the effect that "it was truly that of the
heavenly queen seated on her throne"55 at least give
a basic idea of the painting's iconography.

The second visit to see the altarpieces took place just
one week after the first one, but this time Akbar was
accompanied by his three sons, Abu Fazl, and three
other senior government officials. He instructed them
to leave their shoes outside and then specifically
warned his sons to behave respectfully inside the
dimly lit chapel. Once in front of the St. Luke
Madonna, however, the young princes, according to
an effusive letter from Henriques, "could no longer
contain their joy at seeing the Infant Jesus in His
Mother's arms, and it seemed as if they would after the
next day after they had moved to new quarters within the
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61. Polygallia Bible (1568-72).
One of the prints brought out again for copying by the Mughal artists was the anonymous European engraving after Georg Pencz's "Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father" (no. 62). This time, Kesu Das, who along with Basawan was one of the artists most responsible for integrating European subjects and techniques into the Mughal idiom, made a full copy of the Pencz composition which can be dated on stylistic grounds to 1560-85. Kesu Das added a new background to this otherwise faithful version, which shows that another painting of the same scene he did only about five years later (no. 63) was recopied from his earlier painting rather than from the print. The second version, which has been extended at the top by the addition of two oversize birds in order to better fit the dimensions of the Jahangir album in which it was later included, shows a more sophisticated integration of European techniques. It appears that after the initial excitement over the Jesuit material had died down following the departure of the first mission from Fatehpur-Sikri in 1583, the mere presence in a Mughal painting of easily identifiable European forms was not enough to satisfy Akbar's continually developing taste. In the case of Pencz's "Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father," it can easily be seen how the influence of just one European print could reverberate throughout Mughal painting for a period of decades, even though the original probably was in the emperor's private possession most of the time.

The older practice of using single figures, or groups of figures, from European sources as part of larger compositions continued with greater frequency after 1580 as the number of prints available to Akbar's artists in the hizabsana increased. In most cases their foreign

62. Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father (1560).

63. Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father (ca. 1570).
One of the prints brought out again for copying by the Mughal artists was the anonymous European engraving after Georg Pencz’s “Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father” (no. 62). This time, Kesu Das, who along with Basawan was one of the artists most responsible for integrating European subjects and techniques into the Mughal idiom, made a full copy of the Pencz composition which can be dated on stylistic grounds to 1580-85. Kesu Das added a new background to this otherwise faithful version, which shows that another painting of the same scene he did only about five years later (no. 63) was recopied from his earlier painting rather than from the print. The second version, which has been extended at the top by the addition of two oversized birds in order to better fit the dimensions of the Jahangiri album in which it was later included, shows a more sophisticated integration of European techniques. It appears that after the initial excitement over the Jesuit material had died down following the departure of the first mission from Fatehpur-Sikri in 1583, the mere presence in a Mughal painting of easily identifiable European forms was not enough to satisfy Akbar’s continually developing taste. In the case of Pencz’s “Joseph Telling His Dream to His Father”, it can easily be seen how the influence of just one European print could reverberate throughout Mughal painting for a period of decades, even though the original probably was in the emperor’s private possession most of the time.

The older practice of using single figures, or groups of figures, from European sources as part of larger compositions continued with greater frequency after 1580 as the number of prints available to Akbar’s artists in the khattriana increased. In most cases their foreign origin would have been obvious to the Mughal viewer even though they were set in a purely Mughal landscape. Such an example is a painting of ca. 1590 from the Chester Beatty Library of two winged angels attending another one seated in a European chair (no. 64). Here the exoticism of the angels is brought to the forefront of the image, whose appeal would also have been heightened by the amusingly foreign notion of angels engaging in an exchange of fish. Even more exotic to the Indian eye must have been a pastiche, from ca. 1585-90, of at least two separate pairs of figures brought together to form a splendidly incongruous court scene (no. 65). As an amateur shoe designer and fashion innovator (see above, p. 50), Akbar must have keenly relished the golden boots of the seated nobleman! Perhaps the finest painting of this genre, however, is an image of the Madonna and Child reclining on a dazzling gold carpet in front of an open pavilion (no. 66). This miniature, attributed to Basawan, is a glowing testament to the sensitive integration of European subject matter and technique within Mughal painting.

Prints, paintings and other European objects with religious themes were far outnumbered in Akbar’s collection by Mughal and Persian material, even though the former had the edge in terms of novelty. In fact, Monserrate records in one of his letters how in September 1580 a mulla from Mecca presented a Koran “excellently bound and written” to Akbar in Fatehpur-Sikri. The pilgrimage to Mecca was always a prolific source of books and other objects, purchased either during the journey itself, or from other pilgrims in the holy city. One can imagine Akbar eagerly awaiting the return from Mecca each year of the official

67. A Scholar with His Pupil (ca. 1570–80).
pilgrimage leader with gifts ranging from minor trinkets to texts reflecting the latest trends in religious scholarship. Books from India also entered Akbar’s collection in a steady flow, whether as gifts or as the spoils of military campaigns. Although manuscripts were illustrated in the pre-Mughal Islamic courts of India, they must have left Akbar singularly unimpressed, for there is not one record of his depositing any into his kitābkhāna, and indeed none has yet to be found with Mughal seals or inscriptions. As an illustration of the low esteem in which Akbar held Indian books, Badauni mentions that a number of books captured from Itimad Khan, the former governor of Ahmadabad in Gujarat, when he surrendered to the Mughal forces in 1572, were taken out of the library in Fatehpur-Sikri by the emperor one night in 1581 and distributed among the learned and pious men in the House of Worship.68 Gifts of books also flowed in the other direction for, as a sign of respect to the emperor, courtiers with a scholarly or literary bent would never fail to present Akbar with a copy of their latest works. In terms of quantity, however, the biggest windfall for Akbar’s collection came in 1591 when he inherited four thousand six hundred “valuable bound books” from the library of his recently deceased poet-laureate Fayzi, who had carefully catalogued them in three sections: verse, medicine, astrology, and music; philosophy, religious mysticism, astronomy, and geometry; and, finally, commentaries on the Koran, the traditions of the prophet Muhammad, and books on theology, and all other subjects connected with the sacred law.69 Although none of these books is said to have been illustrated, the fact that most of them were autograph copies or at least were written in their authors’ time was thought to significantly increase their value.

When Akbar died in 1605 after a long and active life of patronage and collecting, no fewer than twenty-four thousand volumes were housed in his kitābkhāna, according to an early-seventeenth-century Flemish writer.69 In view of the four-thousand-six-hundred-volume windfall from Fayzi’s library alone, there is little reason to doubt this figure. But Akbar’s library was more than an ostentatious display of accumulated wealth. The stunning array of Persian and European material that Akbar was able to add to the library throughout his reign provides another important clue to understanding his taste and motivation as a connoisseur of painting and calligraphy. The material Akbar collected formed a spectacular complement to the books and albums that were actually calligraphed, illustrated, and illuminated in his kitābkhāna.

One outcome of this passion for collecting was a growing tendency on the part of the Mughal emperors to treat inherited objects as vital components of their imperial and dynastic paraphernalia. Numerous Mughal manuscripts contain handwritten inscriptions by Jahangir and Shah Jahan attesting to the fact that one of their very first acts upon ascending the throne was to formally add their father’s most precious manuscripts to their own libraries. Objects also acquired an auspicious aura beyond their sentimental value. One example is the case of a huge ruby that had been given to Akbar by his mother, Maryam Makani, on the occasion of Jahangir’s birth at Fatehpur-Sikri in 1569, when it had been valued at 15,000 rupees. First Akbar and then Jahangir wore it for many years as a flamboyant ornament on their turbans. But in his memoirs for the year 1617, Jahangir records that “apart from its value and delicacy, as it had come down as of auspici-
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