may be seen the extent of Lucknow’s surrender to European
taste, in the palaces and their decorations, the chandeliers and the oil-
paintings, and in the Europeanized features of the participants. In
the story, some of whom, the fairies in the former manuscript dated 1879,
have hair styles reminiscent of the young Queen Victoria. In the more
ambitious Nasīm ‘Isḥāqī of 1890–90 the Europeanized surroundings
dominate the participants, the young Wājd ‘Alī Shāh himself and the
bevy of beauties who constantly attended him. The annexation of Oudh
by the East India Company in 1856 put an abrupt halt to the development
of the style, but we get a last echo of it in a de luxe edition of the exiled
king’s letters to his queen in Lucknow, now in the British Library
(Or. 3288). The border illumination is a riotous fantasy on the theme of
mermaids who are the supporters of the royal crown in the arms of Oudh,
and the only miniature, which shows the king enthroned in his court,
seems a travesty of the admittedly heavy style of the Oudh court in its
blurred and furry outline and muddy paint.

Upcountry from Calcutta, other British officials, civilian and military,
found time from their duties to investigate India through its manuscript
tradition. As Sanākītī was a sealed book to all but a few Europeans, they
found it convenient to work through the medium of Persian, still the
official language of India. Charles Bodham, the District Judge in Chapra
in Bihar, translated into English the popular Sanskrit text Adhyātma
Rāmāyoga, via a Persian translation made by a pandit at the Benares
Sanskrit College and had it illustrated by local artists (No. 134), while
another Benares pandit made a succinct account in Persian of the castes
and sects of the Hindus for John Glyn, the Registrar of Benares, a copy
of which the scholar H.H. Wilson had illustrated and on which he based his
published account of what was one of the most fascinating aspects of life
in India for early visitors.

One of the most important Indian manuscripts of the early 19th
century is concerned with this subject. The Tūrāb al-Aqām by James
Skinner is a work in Persian dealing with the castes, tribes and sects of the
Panjab (No. 135). Skinner was half Indian, the son of a Rajput mother,
who was the founder of the family regiment of Skinner’s Horse, his
‘yellow-boys,’ so-called from their uniforms, based at Hansi
Cantonment in the Panjab. He is the author of this as well as another
Persian work on the reigning families in the Panjab and Rajasthan
(No. 136). Both are heavily illustrated with paintings in the Delhi
‘Company’ style practised by Ghulām ‘Alī Khān and others in the first
half of the 19th century, which was the most successful of all the mixed
styles of the period, combining European naturalism in the human figure
with a certain Indian stylization and smoothness of articulation. Work in
this style done for Skinner and his friend John Fraser is one of the high
points of 19th-century Indian painting. Ghulām ‘Alī Khān was one of the
last great Mughal painters, and worked both for the Māhārājā of Alwar
(see No. 138) and Bahādur Shāh II. Other Delhi artists at this period
continued working in the dead, traditional style of the Histories of Shāh
Jahan, with minor concessions to Europeans, such as British officers
disporting on the terrace of the Tāj Mahal in a bosky landscape from the
Home Counties (No. 137), or produced the albums of views of the great
monuments of Delhi and Agra which abound from this date, and in
which the Indian passion for minuteness of detail reaches perhaps its

The greatest height in attempting to render every semi-precious stone in
the fabric of these bejewelled buildings.

None of the manuscripts we have been discussing so far could be
claimed to have made any noteworthy advance in terms of book
production. Fine-quality manuscripts produced for Indian patrons had
reached their final form, Persian and Hindu manuscripts now having
arrived at a near identity. Niceties as to the precise illustration of the
text, the balance between calligraphy and illustration, were now no longer
considered, since the Indian conception of an illustrated manuscript is
even as a set of paintings with accompanying text had finally triumphed
in Persian manuscripts. The pictures were painted as self-sufficient
entities and inserted into the manuscript at the appropriate places, with
maybe a line of description above or below, but separate.

The most successful fusion in this period of European and Hindu ideas
on book-production is found in the Benares manuscript of the 1830s
(No. 140), ostensibly a horoscope in Sanskrit of Prince Navināl Singh,
grandson of Maharājā Ranjīt Singh, the Lion of the Panjab. It is lavishly
illustrated with miniatures, in the Benares ‘Company’ style, of the signs
of the Zodiac, lunar mansions and so on, while every page bears
decoration, much of it of European inspiration, in floral designs and
geometric patterns around the text panels and astronomical tables.

Looking at the whole of this period from the late 18th century when
Europeans first came to exercise a decisive impact on the nature and
pattern of patronage, it is obvious that there was a rapid decline in
standards wherever there was too sudden an exposure to European taste.
Indian painting had been nurtured for centuries by discriminating
patrons, who exercised decisive influence on the choice of subjects, the
style and presentation. The art with which we have been concerned is
primarily one of manuscript illustration, and its strengths and weak-
nesses are derived peculiarly from this background. By the late 18th
century this tradition, whose history we have traced for 930 years,
seemed to be inevitably coming to an end, for the Indian patron no longer
wanted illustrated manuscripts or small pictures for mounting into
albums. Where royal patronage was still active, in Rajasthan and
Lucknow for example, it was larger paintings which were required for
festivities or hunts or great occasions of state, perhaps as a reaction
against the sense of dwindling power which the rulers felt. The sudden
invasion of foreign patrons, commissioning mostly minor work but on
a large scale, offered security to artists who anyway seemed about to lose
their livelihood, and it is not to be wondered at that they seized what
opportunities were available. But it was only a few artists who were able
to take advantage of new horizons to add a significant new phase to Indian
painting. For the majority, suddenly exposed to European taste, the
result is an unhappy amalgam; subtle Indian stylizations arrived at
by centuries of experimentation were distorted into approximations to a
naturalism that had no meaning to the artists, while the medium changed
from the pure, opaque gouache, to a softer technique with pale washes of
water-colour combined with muddled admixtures of Chinese white.
Perhaps they would have surmounted these distortions, given time, as
the at first overwhelming Safavid influence in the 16th century had
been absorbed and transmitted into something truly Indian. But the collapse
of native patronage was the death-blow to the various schools, for
without it there was no living for the artists, while British patronage itself
disappeared with the introduction of the camera, which so admirably captured the outward forms of Indian life and civilization. As for the manuscript tradition itself, though not dependent on British patronage, it was nonetheless a victim of the interest of a few men like William Jones, N.B. Halhed, Charles Wilkins and Henry Colebrooke, who were the earliest western scholars to study systematically the languages and literatures of India, and to interpret them properly. It was Jones who first published the relationship of Sanskrit to Greek and Latin, and his translation of Kālidāsa’s dramatic masterpiece, the Subhadra, was admired throughout Europe, not least by Goethe. Such scholars as these naturally collected manuscripts, being concerned to gather together the basic literature of India, and used the printing-press in Calcutta as the means of printing and hence widely disseminating India’s ancient learning. A slow trickle of works in Bengali, Persian and Sanskrit towards the end of the 18th century was succeeded in the new century by a flood of editions of the Indian and Persian classics from presses throughout India. In such conditions the need to have works laboriously copied by hand disappeared, and the manuscript tradition itself had by the middle of the 19th century all but come to an end.

132 ‘Gulzar-i Naṣīm’
Illustrated on p.145.
The Rose-garden of Naṣīm. The romance of Tīj al-Mulk and Bakīvalī, a manuscript in Urdu by Da‘yabuddāna Rau, called Naṣīm (1811–43) composed in 1854/1855, is based ultimately on the Persian version of this famous tale by ‘Yazīd Allāh Bāqāī, who translated the original Hindi in 1153/1742 under the title Gāzi Bakavālī, ‘The Rose of Bakavāl’. Naṣīm was a Persian who settled in Lucknow, and was a learned interpreter of Hindi law, as well as a famous Urdu poet.

This illustrated version of the work appears to be a presentation copy of the work dated in the year of its completion. There are 44 miniatures and shows the influence style of Lucknow of the first half of the 19th century. In the miniatures of this Ms., the people frequently have European features and even hair styles (the nude angels with looped Victorian hairstyles of 1850), many of the buildings are in European style (the hall of 1153), and are hung with European chandeliers. Trees and landscapes are in European style.

The king on 1154 wears the royal crown of Oudh53 and may indeed be a portrait of the contemporary monarch, Muhammad ‘Ali Shāh (1827–42), while the fish emblem of Oudh appear above a gateway on 1154.

British Library, London, Or. 17753.
ff. 116r–117v. portrait various shades of green, yellow, pink and buff; text panels 15.8 mm; margins ruled in gold and colours; text in two columns in elegant Nasta’liq; 44 miniatures of same size as text panels (10 Each) of gold and ultramarine sprinkled with flowers; marginal gold floral arabesques ff. 6r and 9v; red leather binding tooled in gold, with photographs of nauchtes mounted on both flyleaves.

Bibliography: Sotheby, 23 November 1976, lot 366 (illustration of f.194), where the Ms. is attributed to Delhi.

133 ‘Nizâm-i Iskâhpán’
a King’s Book of Letters, a collection of poems in Persian and Urdu, apparently by Wājid ‘Ali Shāh, King of Oudh (1847–56), with 218 paintings illustrating his life. He is referred to throughout under his posthumous name of Sultan ‘Alam and Akhtār. The Ms. is dated 1166/1851–56, and the paintings all bear dates between 1250 and 1257/1835–40, the earliest illustrating the birth of a prince, presumably Sultan ‘Alam himself, although Wājid ‘Ali Shāh was actually born some while before this. We are perhaps meant to take the pictures to represent the ideal life of a king, with lovely ladies to care for him far from affairs of state. The paintings are in the highly Europeanized style of Oudh in the mid-19th century, set in the king’s European palace in Lucknow. It was removed from the royal library after the secession in 1856, a letter tipped in speaks of it illustrating the ‘Customs of the Court of Oudh’, hence its usual title. Royal Library, Windsor Castle.

ff. unnumbered (about 350); 44 x 27cm; paper; two columns of Nasta’liq script in panels 24 x 14 cm; 118 paintings of same height but slightly wider than the text; leather covers blocked in gold, with black decorated silver doublures.


134 ‘Adha‘yām rāmāyaṇa’
Illustrated on p.148.
The Ramāyana of the Supreme Self, from the Sanskrit Brahmajātaka. A work of Vedantic synthesis like the Yājñavalkā, it expounds the Vedanta philosophy in terms of the story of Rāma.

This is in fact an English translation of this extremely popular work, whose purpose was the introduction of the complex philosophy of non-duality to the ordinary Hindu in terms he could understand. The translation is by Charles Bodman, who from 1973–1981 was the District Judge and Magistrate at Churup in Bihar, some 30 miles upstream from Patna, but on the north bank. He translated it from the Persian version made by Arānt Crūs, a pundit of the Benares Sanskrit College. The work was finished in 1864 and two fair copies were made, both copiously illustrated with paintings by local artists under the general direction of the author.

Although the school of artists working for British patrons in Patna was well-
documented, little is known of the artists working at Chhara, who perhaps migrated there in the late 18th century from Patna. The artists of the two copies of the Adhyatma Râmâyana generally employ a weak water-colour, but some of the purely iconographical subjects opening the work are in a stronger idiom.


Two volumes, ff. 347, 350: 18½ x 12½ cm; European paper, watermarked 1833; 21 lines of copperplate; 112 paintings in wide black frames, some of them in horizontal format, 22 x 17½ cm; European bindings.

Bibliography: 1701, 1702, pp. 58-59. 32.

The other is in, MSS. Eur. C. 1: 9-10.

135 ‘Tausir al-Aqâ’im’

Illustrated on p. 148.

A work in Persian, by Col. James Skinner (1787-1851) containing notes of the castes, tribes and sects of the Punjab.

The work is in three sections, of which the first, by far the shortest, deals with the house of Timirm, from whom the Moghuls descended, and is unillustrated; the second section, the bulk of the work, deals with the Hindus castes and sects; the third, with a few Muslim families and tribes, beginning with the Kings of Oudh.

Dated 1835, and copied in a large fair Nastîn’līq, the work is now illustrated with 110 portraits, out of the original 125.

The missing illustrations are scattered throughout the Ms. All of the portraits appear to be studies from life, with a few religious sufficiently famous to have their names inscribed in a new Nastîn’līq in the paintings themselves.

The medium of the paintings is water-colour with some gold heightening. They are on paper pasted on card and bound in, and they vary somewhat in size; a few have been extended to fit the format, somewhat clumsily it must be said, as the colours do not match too well. This is true of two of the superb annotated portraits, which were doubtless in Skinner’s possession before 1835 and incorporated into the album. At least five hands may be distinguished. One of them, a superb portraitist, appears to have done all the annotated portraits, mostly ancestors whose widows or daughters or forceful followers have been painted out from the page. The artist has found a most attractive means of depicting the features of the human body, modelled yet smoothly fluent, with an attractive, free landscape style.

Col. James Skinner was a good artist, and the portraits bring out the wealth in this vein, and contrast with the more formal portraits of his famous musician Miîyûn Himmat Khan on L.43b set against a garbag wall and white ground, as well as other studies of the same type.

The Ajanta painting of the Buddha in the British Library, London, Add. 27754, is devoted to the都市 of Nal(^i)q, with five lines of Nastîn’līq in panels 18 x 22½ cm with margins ruled in gold and colours; one double-page amânat 110 paintings, of varying sizes between 24 x 17 and 18 x 15 cm, on paper pasted on card and bound in, original binding of dark-brown leather painted with gold designs, plain red doublures with ruled gold frames. Bibliography: BM 1879, pp. 66-7. R. 1977, pp. 155-7.

138 ‘Abdur Râza’q al-Usâ’ida’

Illustrated on p. 150.

Historical notices of principal families of Rajputana and the Punjab, written in Persian, by Col. James Skinner, and copied in his hand before 1835. The work is in four parts called Tababar. The first part is on the Rajput families, in four parts, and covers the families respectively of Udaipur (head of all the Rajputas); of Jodhpur and their relatives in Kishangarh and Bikaner; of Jaipur and their 15 feudal chiefs; and

of Newari and Sonipat. The second part is on 12 Sikh families of the Punjab, beginning with Ranjit Singh of Lahore. The third part deals with four Muslim princely families: Farukhnagar, Dujana, Ramis and Bahindpur. The fourth part contains a description of Haryana, to the south-eastern Punjab, and its chief towns of Harayr and Hansi, as well as the latter of which Col. Skinner was based with his irregular cavalry regiment, Skinner’s Horse. With the exception of the first four Rajput families and of the Bahalpur house, all the families noted were in the vicinity of Hansi.

This copy is dated 10 June 1838 and is illustrated with 37 portraits of the current heads of the princely houses, as well as a fine portrait of Col. Skinner himself on f.44a, the most successful work attributable to Ghalam ‘Ali Khan. It is perhaps that of the forceful Jâfûrân Singh, Mahâr raj of Udaipur (1848-58) in full richness, seated on a pile of blue cushions smoking a hookah, while a handsome young attendant waves a chopper over him. The glowing colours of this and the other portraits, thought required by physicians, are untypical of Ghalam ‘Ali who preferred in this date a much cooler and subdued palette for his best work. Another band which may be distinguished is that of an artist who revelled in a deliberate elongation of the human figure, whose work is also in Ms. No. 113 and the Fraser Album. Most of the portraits are in the Company style, but a few are in traditional Indian style standing in full profile holding a flower or a sword. These must be copies of state portraits from the court concerned, rather than taken from life, presumably those who were either dead or who Skinner never met. The greatest meeting at Rooper in October 1835 between the Governor-General Lord Beresford and Ranjit Singh, where most of the troons-Sultâns chief would have been present in Ranjit’s suite and portraits could be taken of the game chiefs or of course Skinner’s neighbours. And a similar group of portraits in 1832 would have provided opportunity to take the portraits of the Rajput chiefs. It is possible therefore that the portraits were not used until the volume in 1832, and were probably collected by Skinner over a period of 15 years.


Provenance: Dedicated to Sir John Malcolm; acquired in 1885.

137 ‘Abubâqar al-Ashâb’

The history of Shah Jahan by Muhammad Sulaimân Kashâz. The author was an important calligrapher at the time of Shah Jahan and son of the famous earlier calligrapher Mir Abdallah Mushtin Qalam (see No. 72). The work is one of the many unofficial histories of the reign.

By about 1839, the probable date of this copy, the ‘Abubâqar al-Ashâb’ is a fine Moghul style was incorporating Europeanist, including perspective. About 1820-30 the paintings of the architectural glories of Delhi and Agra done by Indian artists for the British had passed through the stage of strict architectural drawings, and now incorporated landscapes and figures, giving them a more romantic aura in keeping with the times. In this Ms., all the architectural drawings now incorporate these elements, and figures of British army officers may be seen on the terrace of the Taj Mahal, which is seen at the end of a bonny vista, in striking contrast to the more traditional portrait of Shah Jahan on horseback opposite.


ff. 490b; 39½ x 24½: creamy paper; 15

ff. 486b; 30 x 21b: thick creamy paper; nine lines of large Nastîn’līq in panels 18 x 11 cm with margins ruled in gold and colours; elaborate inner, 37 paintings, mostly 20 x 17 cm, in water-colour heightened with gold; contemporary binding, dark-brown, painted with gold designs; arabesques in gold and colours on folio edges.


139 ‘Ashâb al-Mulûk’

A further copy of this text, written in the same hand as the above, with the title written at margin, is in the British Library, Add. 16924, all in the same hand, this suggests that the illustrations were intended at the appropriate places into certain copies and not in others.

ff. 486a, b, h: Shah Jahan in procession, and his tomb the Taj Mahal, being visited by a group of British officers, while angels shower gold on it.

ff. 486b; 30 x 21b: thick creamy paper; nine lines of large Nastîn’līq in panels 18 x 1½ cm with margins ruled in gold and colours; elaborate inner, 37 paintings, mostly 20 x 17 cm, in water-colour heightened with gold; contemporary binding, dark-brown, painted with gold designs; arabesques in gold and colours on folio edges.


133 ‘Ama’l-i Sultân’

The other is in. MSS. Eur. C. 1: 9-10.

The other is in, MSS. Eur. C. 1: 9-10.
The text is a natural representation of the document content. It seems to be an excerpt from a historical text discussing the history and specific details of a particular manuscript or artifact. The text mentions various elements such as different colors, materials, and techniques used in the manuscript, as well as the names of authors and dates related to its creation and preservation. The text also references other manuscripts and their creators, providing a comprehensive overview of the subject matter. The manuscript is described as having multiple colors and materials, with specific techniques such as gold leaf and red ink being used. The text also mentions the dimensions and layout of the manuscript, as well as the names of authors and artists associated with it. The overall tone of the text is informative and scholarly, providing a detailed account of the manuscript's history and significance. The text is not a literal transcription but a natural representation of the document content, adhering to the guidelines provided.
Select Bibliography

All books published in London unless otherwise noted

Abbreviations

AB Artis Bengal, Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1980
AIA Art of Islam, 1978
AIP The Art of India and Pakistan, ed. L. Ashen, 1959
ATL Art Orientalis, Ann Arbor
AMAB Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares, Benares
AMBM Bulletin of the Baroda State Museum & Picture Gallery, Baroda
ANQ The Qu’ran, by Martin Lings and Yasir Quraishi Sattah, 1976
BOI Miniatures from Persian manuscripts: a catalogue and subject index of paintings from Persia, India and Turkey in the British Library and British Museum, by Norah M. Tiddy, 1977
III Catalogue codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo Britannico asservantur. Pars secunda, codices arabici amplissimi, 1846, 1871
IL Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts in the British Museum, by Charles Rieu, 1879-83
IS Supplement to the Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts in the British Museum, by Charles Rieu, 1893
IM Catalogue of the Hindi, Panjabi and Hindustani manuscripts in the library of the British Museum, by J.F. Blumhardt, 1904
IM Catalogue of the Sanskrit manuscripts in the British Museum, by Cecil Bordell, 1902
IM Catalogue of the Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Pahari and Sindhi manuscripts in the library of the British Museum, by J.F. Blumhardt, 1905
IM Indian paintings: a re-appraisal, by K. Khurshidulavala and Moti Chandra, Bombay, 1969
OA Oriental Art
OPL Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library, prepared by Maulavi Abdul Muqaddir, Bankipur, 1968-42
OPUB 1920 Descriptive list of photographic reproductions of illustrations from three Persian manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipur, by Wali ed Din Khuda Bakhsh, [Pattan, 1920]
FFP Paintings from Islamic lands, ed. R. Fidler-Wilson, Oxford, 1989
JAS 1876 Catalogue of Buddhist Sanskrit manuscripts in the possession of the Royal Asiatic Society (Hodgson Collection), in J.R.A.S., vol.8, 1876, pp.1-34
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