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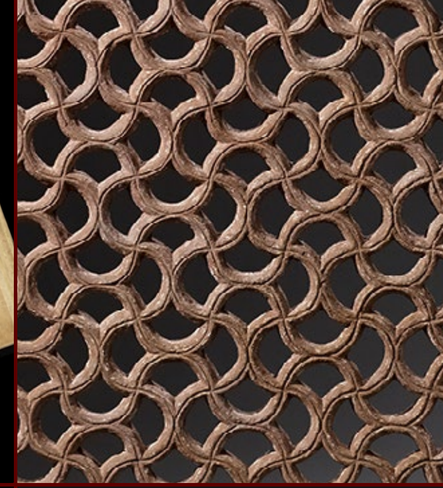










1

Wrestler's weight
Golconda or Hyderabad, Deccan, 17th Century
Carved basalt
D 19 cm; Dia. 27 cm

Gymnastics, martial arts and physical training were important to the warrior class and nobility of the different courts of India. This round heavy stone dumbbell (*nal*) carved from a single piece of stone has an open centre and horizontal grip for the wrestler to hold it. These 'dumbbells' come in progressive weights and are used in the development of biceps, triceps and leg muscles. Less refined *nals*, of varying sizes are illustrated in the *Encyclopedia of Indian Physical Culture* (ed. Mujukmdar 1950).

These objects are rare, however, there are illustrations of similar 'dumbbells' held by bare chested acrobats and wrestlers in *Ragamala* paintings (*Desakya Ragini*) from Mughal India, Rajasthan, the Deccan and particularly from the Punjab Hills. Black basalt was used for interior architectural decoration in 16th century Bidar in the Deccan. According to Jagdish Mittal these wrestler's weights date from the 17th century and come from Golconda/Hyderabad in the Deccan.

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Carved ivory jewellery box
Sri Lanka, Kandy, early 17th Century
Ivory and gilt silver
H 13 cm; Dia. 9.5 cm

Provenance
From the collection of Commander Sir Robert Micklem CBE (1891–1952), naval officer and submariner, and thence by descent.

This rare and exceptional box was carved in a workshop in Kandy for the European export market in the early seventeenth century when Portuguese influence in the island of Ceylon (present-day Sri Lanka) was on the decline, and the nascent Dutch Republic was ambitiously expanding its overseas trade networks throughout Asia and the Far East. The Dutch East India Company (the VOC) was established in 1602, and this box was acquired after this date for a discerning consumer in the Netherlands. The form is Sinhalese in design (Jaffer 2002, pp. 52–53), elaborately and finely worked by a craftsman specialized in ivory carving. In early modern Sinhalese society, the ivory carver occupied an important position, acquiring the status of a master in one of the four workshops, the *Pattāl-hatarā*, to which the best painters, gold and silversmiths likewise belonged. The ivory carver was a multi-faceted craftsman of high rank, belonging to an élite social group, the *Attatkatayatkarāyō* (Coomaraswamy 1956, p. 55), and the superb execution of this box reflects an expert at work here.

The decorative silver-gilt mounts which serve as hinges on the front and back of this box, are ornamented with three distinctive, stylized flowers, imitating the flowers of the Temple or Araliyā trees (*Apocynaceae*) native to Sri Lanka, where these scented blossoms are used as offerings to Buddha. This same motif is decoratively mirrored in reverse on the mount underneath. The domed lid comprises of a finial, a finely carved budding lotus, with minimal traces of black pigment in the grooves, crowned by a deep red cabochon ruby or spinel set into a gold beaded setting added by a Sinhalese goldsmith. When opened, the box reveals a highly polished gilt-metal interior. The delicate, gilded link chain ingeniously inserted into the mechanism of the reverse hinge, attaches around the finial above, to ensure the lid remains secured to the bowl.

The precise purpose of this box is not known, but it has been proposed that in Sinhalese culture similar ivory boxes were implemented for religious rituals (Jaffer 2002, pp. 52-53). For the former Dutch owner, it was an expensive luxury object imported from Asia, perhaps earmarked to store jewellery and other precious items, and proudly displayed either in a private chamber or a collector's cabinet of curiosities (*Wunderkammer*) (Swan 2021, pp. 91-97).

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The bowl and lid are carved from a single piece of ivory (the central section of a tusk), intricately displaying mythical creatures and deities in a dense pattern of vines, foliage, and scrollwork (*Liya-vela*); motifs typically characteristic of Kandy. Lotus blossoms (*nelum mala*) encircle the base, a flower associated with Buddha, and a symbol of purity, universal life forces and spiritual awakening. The grooves of the petals show slight traces of black lac, a pigment that is distinctive in Sinhalese Buddhist ritual ivory objects, in particular, the carved ivory fan handles (*chauri*) with coloured lac (red and black) reserved for senior Buddhist monks (Jordan Gschwend and Beltz 2010, p. 79, cat. 25).

The left and right sides of the bowl, reading from the bottom to the top, depict a Sri Lankan giant squirrel (*Ratufa macroura macroura*), prevalent in the Kandy area, which holds in each paw two mythical vines extending outwards. Two furry companions in rosettes are visible to its left and right. Above the rodent's head, is a naked half-figure growing out of the tendril, the traditional *Nari-lata-wela*, or "flower in the shape of a woman", symbolizing beauty and grace (Coomaraswamy 1956, pp. 91-92). Flanking her, are heraldic symbols, two lion-dogs (*raja-simha*), symbols of the Kings of Ceylon. *Simha*, the mythological lion ancestor of the Sinhalese, stands for majesty and power. Interspersed in between, are lion-dogs and *vidalas* (mythical creatures part lion/part griffin) emerging out of the lush vegetation.The front and the reverse, with the mounts, repeat these motifs of squirrels and lion-dogs minus the *Nari latha*.

The exquisitely carved lid presents a complex juxtaposition of stylized lotus petals, *Nari latha* in vines, with Rati, the Hindu goddess of love, passion and lust, in the middle (and repeated on the opposite side), seated in the lotus (*Padmasana*) position, holding a bow in her right hand and a long-stemmed flower arrow in her left. She is surrounded by four of her five female attendants, two of which have their legs intertwined to serve as her vehicle.

Two other ivory boxes are comparable in quality, style, execution and iconography. Both are in the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin (inv. nos. MIK I 384/I 383). MIK I 384 was first recorded in the 1694 inventory of the *Kunstkammer* of Frederik Wilhelm, Elector of Brandenburg.

Annemarie Jordan Gschwend

3

Ivory panel depicting Lakshmi, probably from a comb
Sri Lanka, late 16th or early 17th century
Carved ivory
6.5 × 9.5 cm

This finely carved ivory panel, pierced and reversible, probably formed the central panel of a comb. It depicts Lakshmi, principal wife of Vishnu and the goddess of wealth and fertility. She is bejewelled and wearing a tall-tiered crown and is seated on a low double-lotus throne. She holds a branch of leaves and stylized flowers in each hand. The style of carving is reminiscent of a late 16th century ivory comb from Kotte, now in the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde, Munich (Inv.nr 1.2003/1281 Jordan Gschwend 2010, cat. 33). An ivory comb with similar border decoration, depicting a baby suckling at each of his mother's breasts, is in the collection of Cynthia Hazen Polsky (ed. Topsfield 2004, no 53).

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4

Portrait of a princely youth
India, Mughal, c. 1600
Opaque watercolour heightened with gold on paper, laid down on a later album page with inscriptions
Folio 19.3 × 12.8 cm; Painting 18.6 × 15.1 cm

In this sensitive study of a young prince, he stands in the formal court position wearing a diaphanous *jama* over orange pink *paijama* and an undershirt. A tie-dyed *patka* is around his waist with a dagger hanging from it. He wears his *jama* tied in the Hindu fashion under the left armpit.

Portraits of boys are rare in Mughal painting. Two are in the Jehangir collection in Mumbai (Khandalavala and Chandra 1965, figs. 26–27) and another in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin (Leach 1995, no. 3.69). See also Colnaghi 1976, no. 111, for a portrait of Shah Shuja as a boy.

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5

Anthology of Persian works in the ‘Indian’ style
Mughal India, probably Punjab, mid-17th century
Persian manuscript on gold-sprinkled paper, 30 × 17.6cm, 398 folios (all paginated) plus 6 flyleaves; 21 miniatures within text.
The volume was put together from various sources and bound up later in the 18th century.

This anthology (*bayaz*) contains a huge number of extracts from different works of prose and poetry, only part of which are enumerated below. Though they cover a wide range of periods and include texts by classical authors such as Sa‘di and Nizami, they are dominated by poets of the Safavid period (16th–17th centuries), particularly those who found employment in India. The style associated with these poets was dubbed the ‘Indian’ style (*sabk-i hindi*) and was characterised by particularly subtle language and imagery.

Poets writing in this style whose works are found in the anthology include Nur al-Din Muhammad Zuhuri (d. 1616), who was resident at the courts of Ahmednagar and Bijapur; Tughra Mashhadi (died before 1667-8), who served at the courts of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and the latter’s son Murad Bakhsh in Kashmir (see the colophon to the *Risala-yi Sihhat u Maraz* below); Muhammad Quli Salim Tihrani (d. 1647), among whose works figure a *mathnavi* in praise of Kashmir; Mirza Quli Mayli Mashhadi, who died in India in c. 1575; and Muhammad Riza Naw’i (d. 1610), who spent most of his life in India and is chiefly remembered for his *mathnavi* called *Suz u Gudaz* (see below). Additionally, the works of poets from the Safavid period who remained in Iran are also represented such as the extremely popular Vahshi Bafqi (d. 1583).

A rarely encountered work is the extract from a *mathnavi* called *Gawhar-Shahvar* (‘Royal Gem’) by ‘Abdi Gunabadi, a little-known poet attached to the court of the Safavid prince Ibrahim Mirza (d. 1577). Also uncommon is a *mathnavi* called the *Nasab-nama* (‘The Book of Lineage’) of Mir Valihi Qummi, a poet active at the courts of Shah Tahmasp and Shah ‘Abbas.

Such anthologies appear to have been popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, thought they are only rarely illustrated. For anthologies with comparable combinations of fashionable authors, see RAS Persian 322, 333:

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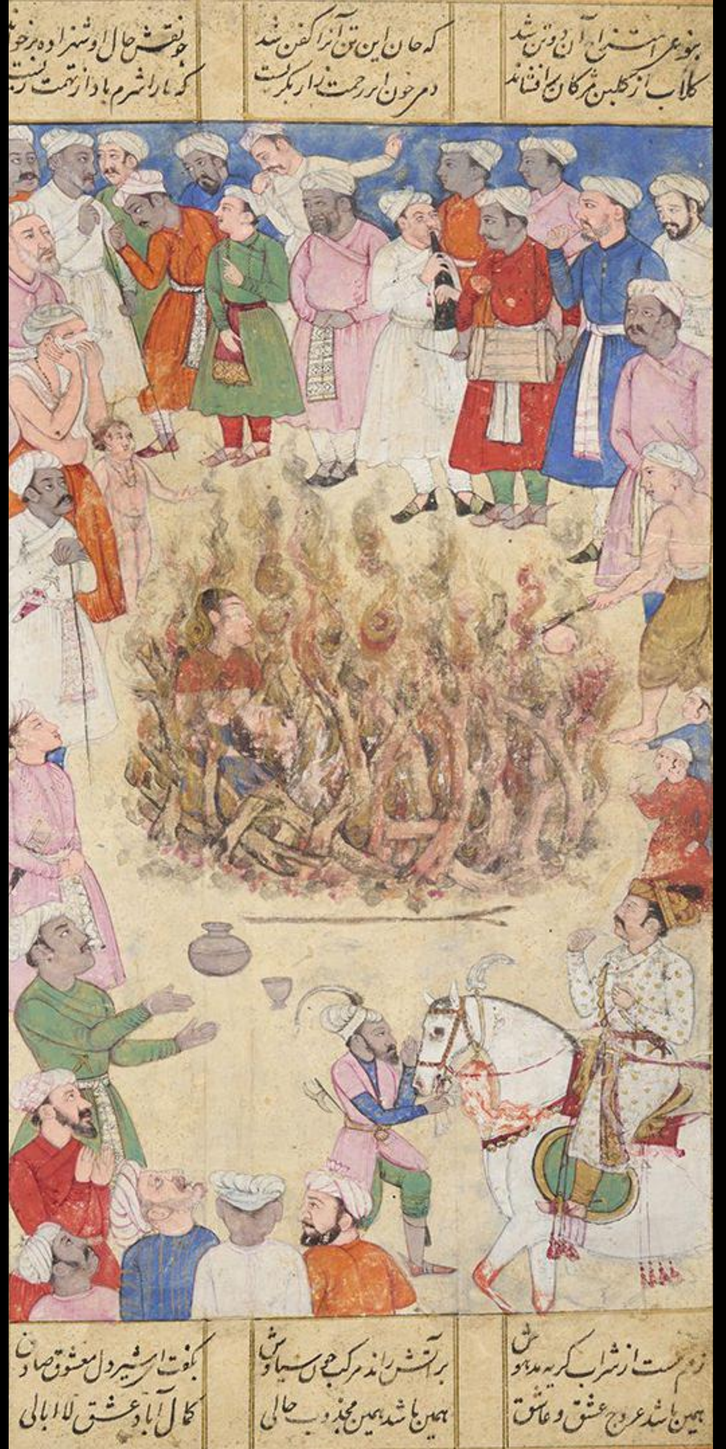

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The Text

The text starts with extracts from the *Munsha'at* (Correspondence) of Nasira Hamadani (d. 1620) (p. 2), a Safavid poet who travelled to India, including letters asking one friend for an astrolabe and another for spectacles. This is followed by the three prose prefaces by the poet Zuhuri to the poetic works, *Khwan-i Khalil* (f. 20), *Gulzar-i Ibrahimi* (p. 21) and the *Divan-i Nauras*.

These are followed by numerous letters (pp. 30-113) of various sovereigns, including; Shah Jahan, while still a prince, to Shah 'Abbas; Shah 'Abbas to Jahangir on taking Qandahar as well as Jahangir's reply; a letter from Shah 'Abbas to the Ottoman vizier Siyavush Pasha; a letter from Shah 'Abbas to the Grand Mufti of the Ottoman Empire; the letter brought from Shah 'Abbas to Jahangir by Khan 'Alam; Shah Tahmasp to Suleyman the Magnificent; a letter from Akbar to Shah 'Abbas dated 1005; a letter from 'Abdullah Khan Uzbek to the Ottoman Sultan; Shah 'Abbas to the Ottoman Sultan Selim II; and Shah 'Abbas to 'Abdullah Khan Uzbek.

These are followed by various texts including extracts from 'Attar's *Tadhkirat al-Awliya* (p. 118), sayings of Plato (p. 119), some pages from the *mathnavi* of Vahshi Bafqi *Khuld-i Barin* with gaps left for miniatures (pp. 130–131); extracts from the *Tarikh-i Nigaristan* of Ahmad ibn Muhammad Ghaffari (p. 133); the preface to the *Mi'yar al-Idrak* of Tughra Mashhadi as well as the same author's *'Ibrat-nama*, *Ma'dharat-Nama;* further extracts from collections of correspondence (*Munsha'at*), including those of Nasira Hamadani (d. 1620) and Mir Baqir 'Alawi, as well as a copy of the *Saqi-nama* of Zuhuri opening with an illuminated headpiece (p. 204).

Illustrated *mathnavis*

The middle section of the manuscript is dominated by a series of illustrated *mathnavi*s, interspersed with other unillustrated poetic works. Many of the figures are in Persian costume but with faces and bodies fully modelled in the Mughal manner. The paintings date from the middle of the 17th century. The unillustrated works include the *Saqi-nama* (p. 434) and a *mathnavi* in praise of the garden of Akbarabad, both by Haji Jan Muhammad Qudsi Mashhadi (d. 1646), poet laureate at the court of Shah Jahan, the *Saqi-nama* of Mirza Ibrahim Adham (pp. 440), as well as a *mathnavi* by Khwaja Husayn Thana'i Mashhadi (p. 486). The illustrated portions of various *mathnavi*s are enumerated here below:

Qaza u Qadr of Muhammad Quli Salim Tihrani

1. A man rescues an astonishingly beautiful youth, beloved to the inhabitants of his town, from the sea, brings him to shore, and leaves him in the shade of the wall of a ruin while he informs the grieving locals of the rescue. (p. 391)

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2. By the time the crowd reaches the ruin, it has collapsed on the youth, killing him. The crowd becomes senseless with grief. (p. 393)

***Ilahi-nama* of 'Attar**
3. Abu Sa'id rebukes a Sufi for beating a dog's paw (p. 394)

Unidentified *mathnavi*
Though no division is made between this section and the *Ilahi-nama*, this portion does not belong to standard versions of 'Attar's text
4. A devotee humbles himself at the feet of his spiritual master (p. 395)

***Suz u Gudaz* of Muhammad Riza Nav'i**
5. The widow commits sati on her husband's funeral pyre (p. 401). *This splendid painting in Popular Mughal style, different from the other paintings, depicts the climactic moment in this story when the devoted wife chooses to commit suttee on her betrothed's funeral pyre. The story is a true one that happened to Akbar's son Prince Daniyal. The pair had been betrothed since birth but the bridegroom had died suddenly on his way to the marriage. Not even Akbar could dissuade her from joining her beloved on the pyre and he commanded his son to convey her there. The drawing shows the prince on his horse looking at the burning pyre that is surrounded by onlookers wondering and exclaiming. The composition is based on that in a beautiful little Mughal manuscript in the British Library from about 1630 (Losty 1982, no 81) (JP Losty September 2021).*

***Farhad u Shirin* of Vahshi Bafqi**
6. Shirin's attendants escort Farhad (p. 420)
7. Shirin is entertained in a tent (p. 421)
8. Shirin complains of her unhappiness to a servant (p. 422)
9. Shirin's servants go in search of a delightful location (p. 424)
10. Illustration of a story of a hunter and his bird whose wings were bound (p. 425)
11. Shirin makes merry on horseback (p. 428)
12. Farhad and Shirin converse (p. 429)

Unidentified *mathnavi*
13. Astonished spectactors watch a hungry bird carry off a vicious snake (p. 432)
14. The bird drops the snake on a beautiful youth, killing him (p. 433)

From the *Guhar-i Shahvar* of 'Abdi Gunabadi
15. An ascetic (*zahid*) is converted to the path of love following a dream in which a deceased devotee appears to him (p. 453)

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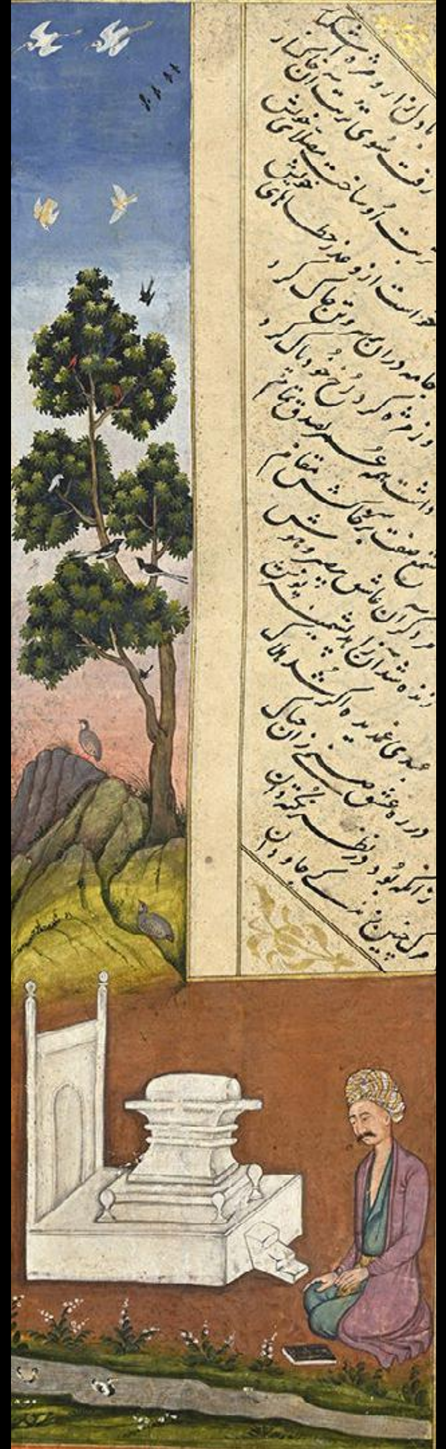

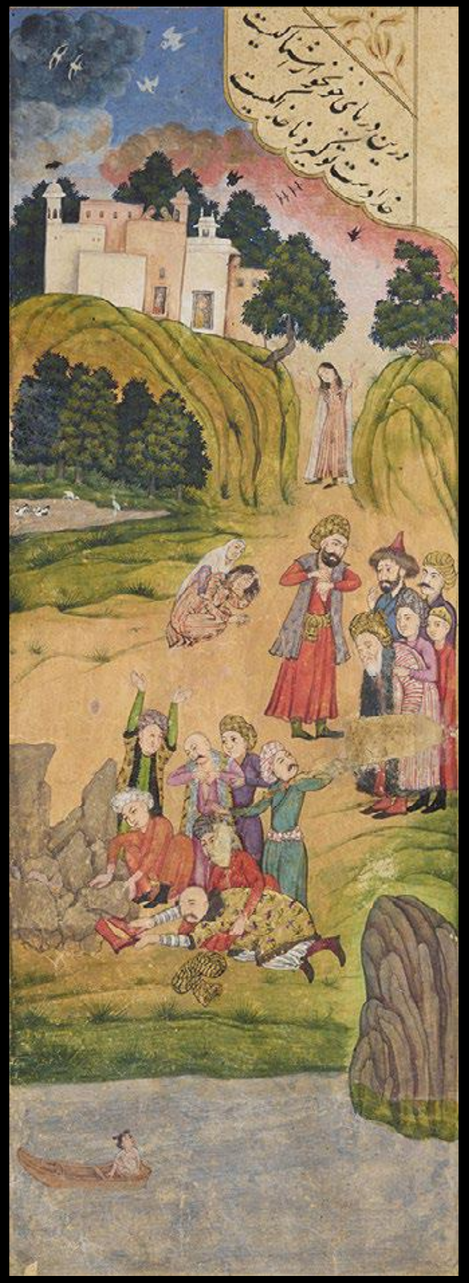

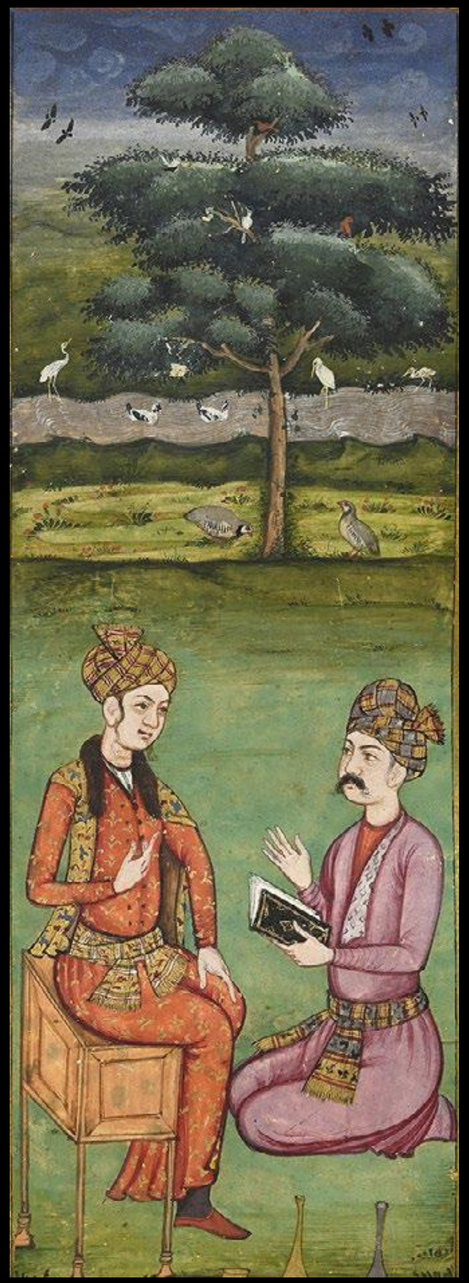

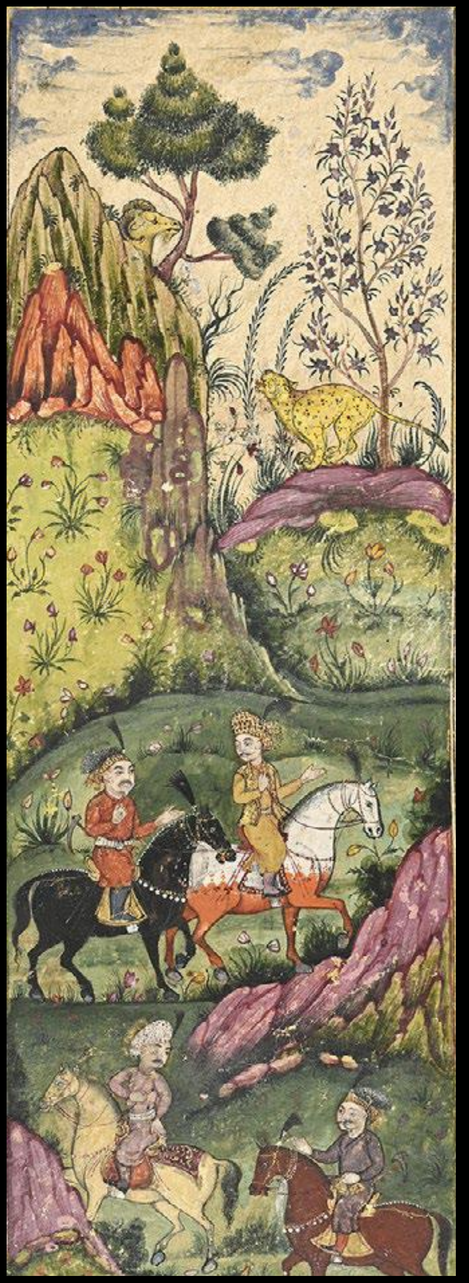

The *Nasab-nama* of Mir Valihi Qumi
16. A Turk, being ashamed of having nothing to offer a generous Persian who is his guest, kills him to avoid losing face
17. An old man falls in love with an ugly shepherdess at a spring

***Tarkib-band*s of Mirza Quli Mayli Mashhadi**
18-21. Illustrations of a poet reciting poems to and gazing at a youth (pp. 545–8). This reflects the subject of the poems, which are in praise of a beautiful beloved.

The later part of the manuscript contains a Persian work called *Risala-yi Sihhat u Maraz* by the Turkish poet Fuzuli Baghdadi (who wrote in Persian and Arabic as well as Turkish). The colophon states that it was completed by Muhammad Baqir, writer of edicts (*nishan-navis*) of Sultan Murad Bakhsh, in Peshawar on the 11th Ramadan 1057 (10th October 1647). I have not been able to identify this calligrapher.

The manuscript ends with a collection of proverbs in Turkish written in alternating red and black.

Colophons and Dating
Certain sections, including the illustrated *mathnavis*, can be on a stylistic basis be dated to the middle of the seventeenth century. The *Risala-yi Sihhat u Maraz* mentioned above, dated 1057/1647, belongs to roughly the same period.

Verses in *shikasta* on p. 675 by an unnamed author who is also the scribe are dated Thursday 25th Sha'ban 1086 (14th November 1675).

Late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sections, often in *shikasta* hand rather than *nasta'liq*, include verses by Muhammad Baqir Khalil (pp. 142-144) a poet of the Safavid Shah Sulayman (r. 1666-1694), as well as verses by the poet Hazin Lahiji (d. Lahore 1766) (f. 544).

A section on prognostication according to the signs of the Zodiac, attributed to Nasir al-Din Tusi, bears a colophon with a dedication to Javad 'Ali Khan Sahib, dated to the end of Rajab 1145 (January 1733), corresponding to the 15th regnal year of the reign of Muhammad Shah, written in Lahore by Muhammad Tahir bin Ibrahim Khan.

On the verso of the final folio is a record of various births, including a Fulad Beg on 27th Rabi' al-Thani 1055 (22nd June 1645) and an 'Ali Akbar Mirza-yi Mirza 'Abd al-Ghani on 23rd Jumada I 1071 (24th January 1661).

Will Kwiatkowski

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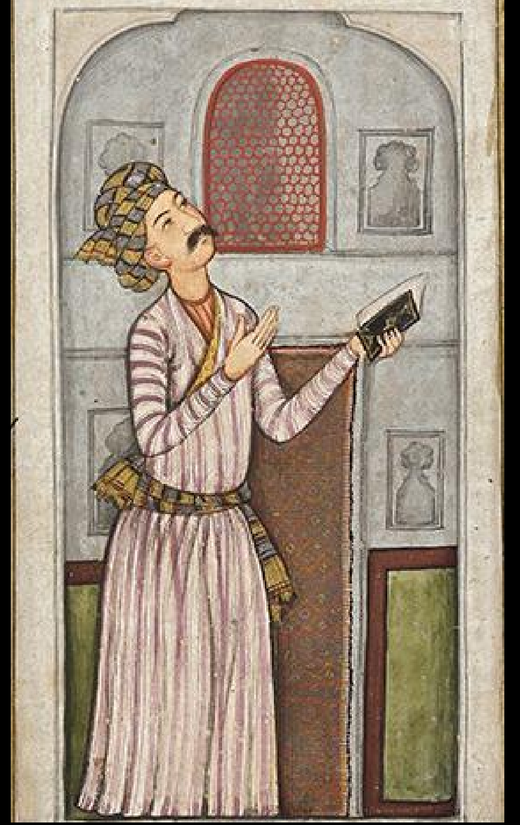


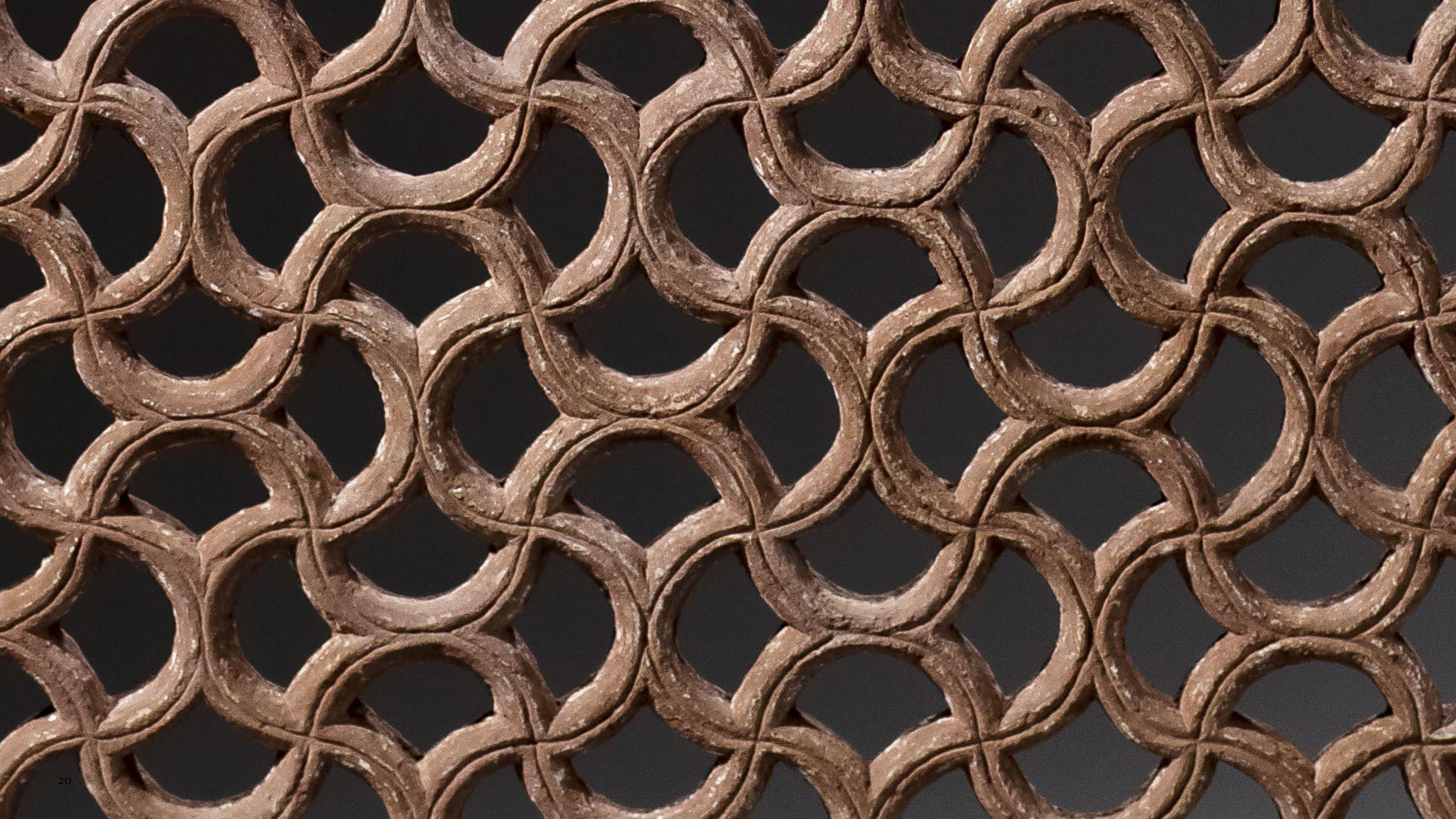
6

Square *jali* with flowering trellis design of intersecting ogival tracery
Mughal, Jahangir – Shah Jahan period, c. 1600–1650
Carved sandstone
114 × 96 × 5 cm

The curvilinear design of this *jali* is a mirrored fish scale pattern that has a long history of use in both Muslim and Hindu culture. Each pair of mirror fish scales is interlocking with an identical pair that is rotated 90 degrees. This design can also be regarded as two superimposed identical ogee patterns, their superimposition creating each individual fish scale element.

Our *jali*, fashioned from mottled red sandstone, a stone quarried at various sites in Northern and Central India, is a characteristic feature of 17th century Mughal building traditions. These architectural screens are by no means unique to India, but in no other place were screens fashioned in perforated stone to such a degree of sophistication and refinement as in Mughal India. In addition to their functional value in terms of controlling light and air, *jalis* also fulfilled a social purpose since they contributed to visual privacy – a fundamental requirement in the palaces of Indian kings and nobles, and the residences of great families.

A painting in our manuscript, cat. 5 (p. 548), illustrates a sandstone *jali* with a repeating trellis pattern (see p. 18).



7

A yogi offered a gift
Mughal style, perhaps at Bikaner, c. 1620
Opaque pigments with gold on paper
Folio 24.2 × 18.3 cm; Painting 19.2 × 13.8 cm, within red and white ruled margins, a red border with white and black rules, and a narrow yellow outer border
Inscribed on the reverse in *nagari*: *kharad*? and with the Bikaner inventory number am. 12

Provenance
Ludwig Habighorst collection

A yogi, from the Nath sect, whose body has been smeared with ash, is seated under a fig tree being offered a dish on a golden plate by a young man.

The subject of this rare and important painting is a little mysterious, since the man offering the dish must be a Muslim judging by the way his *jama* is tied, and is possibly a reference to Jahangir's interest in yogis and their ways. The yogi is relatively young and his well-drawn face looks remarkably like it is a portrait. The style of painting is indicative of the work of a Mughal trained artist, working at a Rajasthani court, such as Bikaner.

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8

A prince from the Junia Court
Rajasthan, Junia, late 17th century
Opaque pigments heightened with gold on paper
27.2 × 40.8 cm

Provenance
Howard Hodgkin collection

This fine but fragmentary painting depicts a young prince in encampment, seated under a canopy, with his court. The scene is framed by a diagonal row of horses to the right and a divisionary wall of tent panels to the left.

Paintings from Junia, a small state in the Ajmer region, are rare. Its painting style is influenced by the major Rathor courts of Jodhpur and Bikaner as well as that of Sawar. Examples of this school and date are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. nos. IS43.1979/IS.16-1983), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (inv. No. 2005.360), the San Diego Museum of Art (inv. no. 1990.887) and in the Howard Hodgkin collection (Topsfield 2012, cat. 87).

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9

Double-sided palm leaf folio
Orissa, 18th/19th century
Opaque pigments on palm leaf
4.5 × 35.5 cm

This refined folio depicts a series of scenes describing the vicissitudes of love on one side, while on the other, a series of charming vignettes illustrate the domestic tasks of palace servants.

Palm leaves were used throughout southern India and Orissa as the normal material for writing manuscripts until well into the 19th century. Only in Orissa however did a late school of illustrating then develop. Text and drawings were incised onto the leaves and inked, by having ink smeared over the leaves and the surplus wiped off. Colour was then applied very sparingly. This is a beautiful and elegant example of the style and for similar manuscripts from Orissa, see Losty 1980; Pathy 1990; and Fischer and Pathy 1980.

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10

Carved relief wall panel – *chini khana*
Mughal, Agra area, Jahangir period 1600–1625
Carved mottled red sandstone
74 × 108 cm

This finely carved red sandstone panel would have been recessed into the walls of a palace, a large mansion or a garden pavilion similar to the protected walls of the Kanch Mahall and the gate pavilion at Suraj Bhanka Bagh, both at Sikandra, near Agra (see Koch, E., *Mughal Architecture – An Outline of its History and Development (1526–1858),* Prestel-Verlag, Munich, 1991, figs 99 & 100).

This type of Mughal decoration is called *chini khana* meaning china room. It refers to the small wall niches in which bottles, vases and other vessels are placed.

11

Globular huqqa base
Deccan, Bidar, 17th century
Bidri alloy inlaid with silver and brass
H 20 cm; Dia 16 cm

Provenance
Zebrowski Alderman collection

The slightly flattened sphere shape of this huqqa was popular during the 17th century. This type of huqqa can be seen in contemporary paintings and the shape was thought to derive from the common globular lota (Zebrowski 1997, p. 228).

Our huqqa is decorated with an unusual and delicate design – alternate rows of a single flower-head seen in profile and fan-shaped, made up of four rows of small heart-shaped petals. A band of interlaced horizontal 'S' scrolls supporting 3 petalled flowers and leaves decorates the shoulder of this huqqa base.

Following spread

12

Bidri spittoon
Deccan, Bidar, 18th century
Bidri alloy inlaid with silver and brass
H 7.4 cm; Dia 12.5 cm

Provenance
Zebrowski Alderman collection
Acquired from Sven Gahlin in 1977

The slightly concave circular top of the spittoon is finely drawn with ten radiating cusped arches. There are five different varieties of flowering plants, repeated mirror image within the circle. The body of the spittoon tapers slightly towards its top and is decorated in similar style to the lip, but here there are eight cartouches. The quality of decoration is very refined and the silver inlay is combined with accents of brass.

Along with pandans and lime boxes, spittoons were indispensable accoutrements of a refined lifestyle and are often depicted in paintings showing noblemen relaxing on terraces (Zebrowski 1997, pp. 179 & 180).

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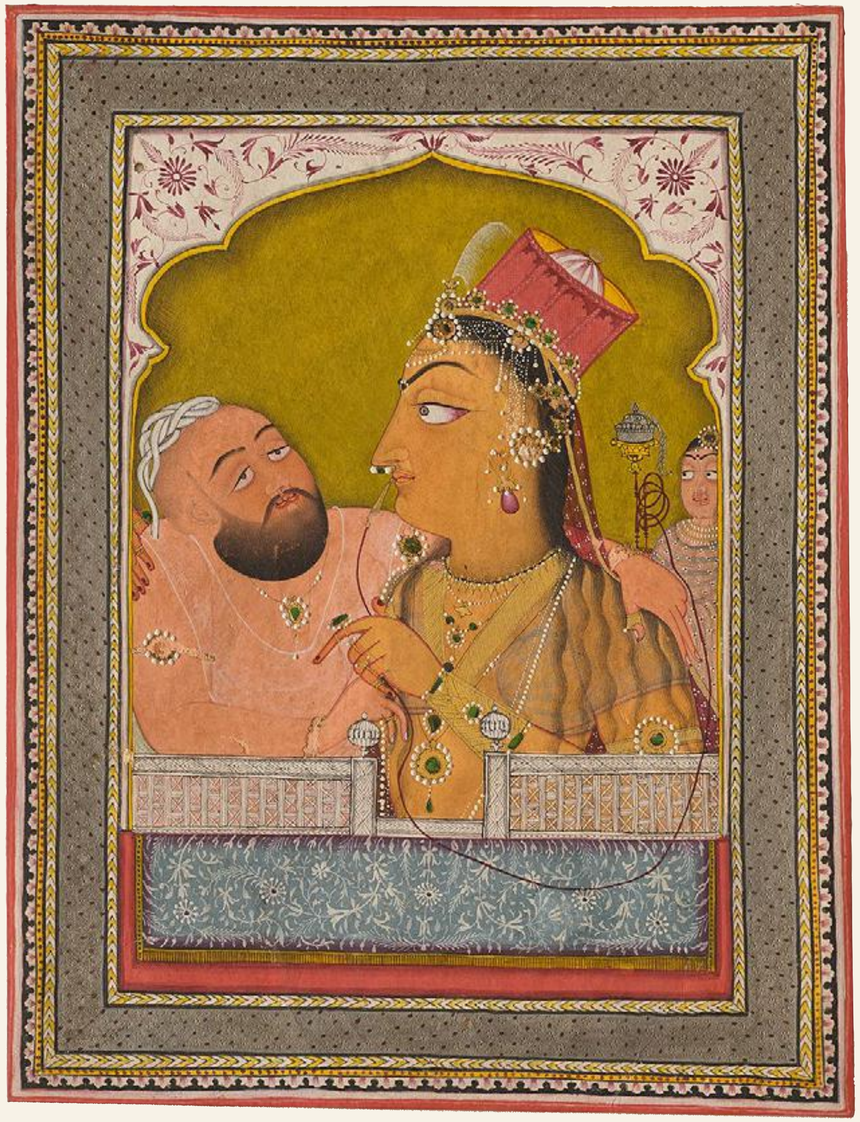
13

A lady with an admirer at the balcony
Pahari, Jammu, 1720–50
Opaque pigments with gold and beetle wings on paper
15.9 × 12.1 cm

A lady, apparently intended for a princess from her attire and jewels, is calmly smoking from a hookah held by her attendant in the background, while she embraces an ardent admirer with her right arm round his shoulders. Her neatly bearded lover has in his turn his left arm round her shoulders while his right hand fondles her breast. The lady is about to place in her mouth the mouthpiece of a hookah, which is held by a wide-eyed female attendant behind her. So calm is her gaze and unruffled her demeanour that she seems uninvolved. Not so her lover, who gazes at her ardently from slightly behind and below as if he had crept up on her, and so is depicted in three-quarter viewpoint. His slanting eyes and dishevelled stringy turban give the impression of his total devotion to her. She is depicted as in a *jharokha* portrait of an emperor or raja, calmly static and in profile, so that her admirer seems something of an intruder. They appear beneath a cusped arch with painted spandrels and behind a stone parapet. Her jewels are mostly emeralds depicted by beetle-wing cases.

More recent research has relocated many related paintings from Kulu to the other end of the Punjab Hills, and to Bahu or its related court of Jammu – see Cummins 2004, pl. 98, Kossak 2014, McInerney 2016, nos. 64–65.

At first restricted to members of the Imperial Mughal family, replicating their appearance at the *jharokha* (balcony window) at the Agra and Delhi palaces, portraits at *jharokha* had by the later 17th century become more and more a symbol of status among both the Mughal and Rajput elite. In the 18th century they become a relative commonplace of portraiture, even in the Punjab Hills.



14

The Sage Medhas begins to relate the *Devi Mahatmya* to Suratha and Samadhi – folio 4 from the 'Blue-bordered Guler *Devi Mahatmya*' series
Family workshop of Nainsukh of Guler, circa 1790
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
Folio 21 × 28.6 cm; Painting 18.7 × 26 cm

Inscribed on the recto with the number 4 and on the verso with the Sanskrit text in nagari script in 21 lines of the *Devi Mahatmya*, canto i, vv. 27–48.

The Sanskrit hymn *Devi Mahatyma*, the great text summing up the creation and worship of the Goddess, is one of the most frequently illustrated puranic texts particularly in the Punjab Hills. Like all Puranic texts, a sage, in this instance Medhas, tells the story of the Goddess and her triumph over different demons to interested hearers, in this case two distressed travellers: Suratha the king exiled from his own country and the merchant Samadhi who was betrayed by his family. Here the two are seated listening reverently to Medhas as he begins to tell them the triumphs of the Goddess. The sage is seated outside his hut with a disciple beside him in a hermitage where deer and big cats co-exist peaceably.
Various series of this key text were prepared in Guler including a series divided between the Lahore Museum and Chandigarh Museum and dated 1781 (Aijazuddin 1977, pp. 29–33, illustrated Guler 41i–xxxiv).

Other series were also made between 1780 and 1800 (Goswamy and Fischer 2011, p. 691 and Bautze 1991, pp. 60-67). The dimensions of our painting are identical to a set with blue borders which was dispersed in 1970. Five pages from this set, now in the Rietberg Museum, were in the Metzger Collection (Goswamy & Fischer, 2017, cats. 31-35 and Bautze 1991, cats. 15-18), while others are in the Seitz Collection (promised gift to the Rietberg Museum, see Goswamy and Fischer 2011, p. 692, nos. 16a & 16b) and elsewhere. Our painting is of superior quality to others in the set and is based loosely on an earlier version in the British Museum (Ahluwalia 2008, fig. 103).

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15

A raja receives two courtiers by night
Possibly from the 'Small Guler' *Bhagavata Purana* series
Attributed to the Guler artist Manaku and his family, c. 1740-50
Opaque pigments and gold on paper
17.8 × 28.2 cm, including a narrow orange border
Inscribed in Devanagari on the verso (wrongly): *3 Raga Hindola*

Provenance
Ludwig Habighorst collection

A crowned king, apparently in some reduced circumstances or else on a countryside retreat, is kneeling on a reed mat in a brick-built and thatched dwelling, holding his sword across his knees, and giving an audience to two petitioners, who kneel before him, their eyes fixed on his and patiently waiting for a decision. The king however is looking not at them but into the eyes of the boy standing behind his visitors holding a sword and shield. The scene is set at night under a dark sky, everyone is dressed in contemporary costume of *jama*, *patka*, and turban.

The size of the painting conforms to the dimensions of Manaku's 'Small Guler' *Bhagavata Purana* series of 1740–50 (illustrated in Goswamy 2017, C67 and Losty 2017, cat. 3; this painting measures 18 × 28.6 cm and the folio 21.8 × 32.4 cm). Our painting has vestiges of an orange border, whereas all the other known folios have a red surround with a narrow black and white rule. Many of the other published folios from this series have Sanskrit text in *devanagari* characters on the reverse (see Goswamy 2017).

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16, 17, 18

A rare group of 18th century hybrid small-swords
Whilst much focus has been given to Indian paintings and textiles made for British patronage, other areas of the decorative arts, produced in India for this clientele, have received less attention. An intriguing group of objects, which warrant further study, is this rare corpus of small-swords, which combine Indian manufactured hilts with European blades.

A small-sword is a light one-handed sword which evolved out of the longer and heavier rapier of the late Renaissance. This edged weapon would have been carried by aristocrats and high-ranking officials as part of their fashionable attire in Britain and India throughout the 18th century.

The hilts in our group were made in workshops in Northern India, probably close to East India Company factories around Lucknow and Murshidabad. The hilts' shapes are European, but the koftagari work, a technique by which steel is inlaid with gold, is Indian. The actual inlay is reminiscent of Mughal decoration of the period and sometimes Neo-classical design, which would have been pleasing to the European eye.

Small-swords with hilts made in India do not seem to be particularly numerous or widely published, but neither are they unknown or unrepresented. The Royal Armouries in Leeds has at least one example (Inv. IX137), so has the Victoria & Albert Museum (Inv. 1723-1888) and the Metropolitan Museum (Inv. 26.145.337).

This group gets an early mention in Bashford Dean's 1929 publication, although he calls the small-sword illustrated Russian, 1790 (?) (Dean 1929, no. 95, pl. LXXII). Claude Blair, one of the foremost authorities on historic European metalwork, especially arms and armour, also wrote about this group in his 1962 publication. Both the V&A small-sword and the RA examples are included and he describes them as follows (Blair 1962, p. 86):'151, 152 Hilts decorated in this way were once called Russian, presumably because the designs often include domed buildings resembling the Kremlin! In fact, the decoration is closely paralleled on many swords and daggers from Northern India and there can be little doubt that these hilts were made in one of the European factories there, probably one of those run by the East India Company.' Blair also mentions them in a slightly different context on p.76 where he talks about the inlaid decoration of metal: 'The gold and silver decoration found on many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sword-hilts and gun-barrels may in a few instances be inlaid, but on the vast majority of examples it is 'counterfeit' damascening... The only important exceptions are the steel small-sword hilts inlaid with designs in gold made in India for the European market during the third quarter of the eighteenth century.'

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A rare European small-sword, the hilt of Indian manufacture
Hilt: North India, 18th century
Steel inlaid with gold
Blade 82.5 cm; Hilt 17.5 cm
In its original wood-lined black leather scabbard (lower part missing) with steel locket gold-inlaid en suite with the hilt.
From a group of five small-swords.

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17

A fine European small-sword, the hilt of Indian manufacture
Hilt: North India, 18th century
Steel inlaid with gold
Blade 86.2 cm; Hilt 16 cm
From a group of four small-swords.

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18

A European small-sword, the hilt of Indian manufacture with a Neo-classical design

Hilt: North India, late 18th century
Steel inlaid with gold
Blade 81.4 cm; Hilt 17.3 cm
In its original scabbard.
From a group of four small-swords.

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19

Krishna destroys the Yadavas
Nepal, 1830–40
Opaque watercolour and ink heightened with gold on paper
20 × 31.5 cm

Within a tented enclosure, Krishna is destroying a whole army assisted by two princes. Those fleeing from the carnage are being destroyed by two further princes outside the encampment. The bodies of the slain are being feasted on by various demons and goblins while crows and vultures hover above, all as described in the second portion of the text above.

Reference is made in the text to Kritavarma and Kripacharya, who were along with Asvatthama the only survivors on the Kaurava side of the great battle with the Pandavas in the *Mahabharata*. Asvatthama in revenge for the killing of his father Duryodhana by Bhima in what he considered a treacherous manner slaughtered by night the sleeping Panchala army and the sons of Draupadi and set fire to their encampment (*Mahabharata*, Canto XI). The artist seems to have conflated this episode with the destruction of the Yadava race at Prabhasa by Krishna as detailed in Canto XVI of the *Mahabharata*.

The four princes are distinguished by their costume which is that of the Rana period in Nepal. Although many 19th century Nepalese paintings clothe their protagonists in traditional Newar or Rajput costume, others such as this prefer to illustrate contemporary costumes such as the *Devimahatmya* murals c. 1835 in the Hanuman Dhoka palace in Kathmandu (Pal 1978, figs. 160–61).

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