



The Syncretic Culture of Hindustan



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India is often perceived by the general public as an ancient civilization steeped in age-old tradition resistant to outside influence. History shows the very opposite to have been true throughout the ages.

The remarkable aptitude of India at integrating loans and recasting them on its own terms into thoroughly new creations may owe something to the historical process that led to the make-up of its population: the slow penetration, spread over centuries, of Indo-European speakers arriving amid populations ethnically and linguistically unrelated to them.

The Early Making of Hindustani Culture

From the moment we apprehend the history of India with a measure of precision, India's connection with neighbouring Iran is intimate. In the third century BC, the Maurya Empire, the first clearly defined political entity documented by sources, modelled itself on the Achaemenid Empire of Iran. In Pataliputra, the capital of the Maurya dynasty, a royal palace was erected on a plan inspired by that of the Achaemenid palatial hall at Takht-e Jamshid (Persepolis in Western historiography) in southern Iran.¹ As Hellenistic fashions spread across Iran and northern India in the wake of Alexander's conquest, the Achaemenid legacy merged with loans from Greece and gave rise to the first truly syncretic art in India. The Achaemenid type was eventually transformed and integrated into new creations.

One of the earliest masterpieces of Indian art is a third-century BC capital from Rampurva in Bihar [2].² The distant memory of Achaemenid capitals survives, associated with loans from Hellenism and its naturalistic animal style. The sculptural handling of the humped bull could be that of a Greek master of



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[1] The Sher Mandal Pavilion within the Purana Qila, Delhi, India.

[2] Sandstone capital from Rampurva, Bihar, India, 3rd century BC.

the Classical period. This process of assimilation and fusion of disparate loans was to recur throughout history on the Indian subcontinent.

Buddhism is an Indian philosophy without a god that was born in the Himalayas. As it later extended to East Iranian lands under the Iranian Kushans, who ruled vast areas of eastern Iran and north-western India, Buddhism absorbed Iranian notions. These included the concept of Buddha as the divine Lord of the Universe, central to what effectively became a religion, and, with new ideas, came a whole figural iconography extensively borrowing from Hellenistic Iran.³

Against this early background, the remarkable syncretism that characterized artistic developments in Islamic Hindustan comes as no surprise. It manifested itself as early as the ninth and tenth centuries in Sindh, where excavations conducted at Mansurah in the 1960s revealed four monumental bronze door knockers.⁴ Grimacing human and animal masks adapted from Hindu sculpture hold rings engraved with Arabic calligraphy in a foliated Kufic script that takes its source in the East Iranian province of Khorasan.

When a Turkic-speaking ruler of eastern Iran, Mahmud of Ghazna, led an invading army into north-western India and integrated parts of it into the Ghaznavid Sultanate in the early eleventh century, the process started afresh on a vast scale.

It is one of the greatest paradoxes of history that a Turk, and the equally Turkic-speaking dynasties who succeeded the Ghaznavid Sultanate, all proceeded to establish Persian as the language of polished usage, literature and administration in their domain, which they called Hindustan.

By the late thirteenth century, Persian was so deeply entrenched that Amir Khosrow, born in Delhi to a Hindu princess and a Turkish amir from Delhi, wrote the greater part of his poetry and his major prose works in Persian.⁵

The Mughals, whose name means “the Mongols” in Persian, were the last of the Turkic-speaking clans to invade the subcontinent. While the Mughals traced their ancestry back to Chingiz Khan (Gengis Khan), their clan had long been linguistically turkicized. Like most Turkic groups from Central Asia, they adhered to Iranian culture. Under Mughal rule, the imprint of

Persian as a language became deeper than ever before. It was an important component of the new Indian language, Hindi, which, while Indian in structure, is heavily persianized in its cultural vocabulary.

A huge volume of purely Persian literature was produced in Hindustan during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This ranges from poetry to historical accounts and includes the most remarkable dictionary ever of the Persian language.⁶

The fate of the Memoirs of the very first Mughal ruler, Babur, who established the dynasty after defeating the last Lodi sultan at Panipat in 1526, sums up the ever-widening hold of Persian over Hindustani culture. Written in Turki, Babur’s Eastern Turkic mother language, his Memoirs were translated into Persian under the title *Babur-Nameh* in 1589 and 1590 at the request of Emperor Akbar. By then, few at court still understood Turki. Persian effectively remained the *Kultursprache* of Hindustan used even by Hindus and Sikhs. When the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, fought back against the Mughal emperor ‘Alamgir (known as Aurangzeb), he wrote a versified pamphlet entitled the “Book of Triumph” (*Zafar-Nameh*) which imitates the Persian style and metre of the Iranian “Book of Kings” (the tenth-century *Shah-Nameh*).⁷ Persian retained its position as the ultimate language of cultural communication for all Hindustanis until its ban in 1837 by the British colonial authorities.

Hindustani Painting: Where East Meets West

The evolution of art offers a marked contrast with that of language and literature. Throughout the Islamic period, Indian aesthetics subsumed loans from Iran into profoundly different art forms. The paintings and monuments of Hindustan depart more radically from the Iranian models that inspired them than, for example, the pictures and churches of Baroque Germany or France do from those of Italy.

A spectacular demonstration of the assimilation powers of the Hindustani creative genius was provided under the second Mughal ruler, Humayun, the son of Babur. During a brief interlude, Hindustani painting seemed to be heading for total persianization. Humayun had spent seven years in exile at the

Iranian court of Shah Tahmasp before recovering his throne. As he headed for home, the Mughal emperor called in two major masters of Iranian manuscript painting, Sayyed 'Ali and 'Abd os-Samad.⁸ They took turns in heading the imperial "House of the Book" (*ketabkhaneh*), an Iranian institution functioning both as the Royal Library and the Royal Painters' Studio.

A self-portrait by Sayyed 'Ali wearing Hindustani attire is strictly composed and painted in his Iranian-period manner [3].⁹ The costume and the formulation of the signature alone reveal that it was executed in Hindustan, which dates the picture to the year 1555.¹⁰

An elaborate scene by 'Abd os-Samad featuring Humayun and Akbar is similarly done in the Iranian manner (see p. 68 [1]).¹¹ Aside from the inscriptions, Emperor Humayun's distinctive headdress is the main feature that gives away the connection with the Mughal ruler. At the same time, a startling innovation heralds the revolutionary turnabout that would soon profoundly alter the Iranian component in Hindustani court painting. The sitters' faces have been painted from life. Vividly aware of this extraordinary break with the Eastern tradition of archetypal faces, 'Abd os-Samad penned a Persian quatrain in which he straightforwardly states the fact. The Iranian master simultaneously reveals that he first portrayed the two shahs and then proceeded to paint the entire banquet:

Shabih-e Shāh Homāyūn-o Shāh Akbar-rā
Negāsh-t khāme-ye 'Abd os-Samad ze rūy-e sar
Namūd tasvīr āngāh tamām-e īn majles
Be safhe-i ke namāyad be-shāh Shāh Akbar

(The pen of 'Abd os-Samad traced the portraits
Of Shah Humayun and Shah Akbar from nature
The figural scene [tasvīr] then showed the whole banquet
[majles[-e tarab]]
On a leaf that Shah Akbar shows to the shah)

This no doubt inspired Akbar who later "sat for his likeness, and also ordered likenesses to be made of all the grandees of the realm," as Abo'l-Fazl writes.¹²



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'Abd os-Samad's innovation was the first step towards the dilution of the Iranian legacy into a very different art that could only have happened in the cosmopolitan environment of the Hindustani court.

At some point, 'Abd os-Samad himself incorporated into his art iconographic details and, more tellingly, Western-inspired shading in order to suggest if not to truly render volume. The rocks in a painting in the *Moraqqa'-e Golshan* are adumbrated in a manner alien to Iran.¹³ The name 'Abd os-Samad "Shirin Qalam", calligraphed in beautiful Nasta'aliq, is from the painter's hand.

In a very short time, the influence of the "House of the Book" set up by the two Iranian masters ceased to be clearly identifiable in the composite art that emerged. Hindustani sources state that Sayyed 'Ali and, after him, 'Abd os-Samad oversaw the execution of the volumes of the *Hamzeh-Nameh*, the most ambitious painters' project undertaken under Akbar (r. 1556–1605).¹⁴ The majority of the surviving painted pages reveals the making of a syncretic school still hesitating between barely compatible

[3] Self-portrait by Mir Sayyed 'Ali in Hindustani attire, datable to 1555. LACMA, Los Angeles: M. 90.141.1. Bequest of Edwin Binney 3rd.



trends. The basic principles of Iranian linear painting are maintained in some. The early signs of European influence result in a certain sense of volume in others, while what appears to be the legacy of indigenous Indian painting surges here and there in the rendition of vegetation.

At one end of the stylistic spectrum, the scene featuring 'Alamshah and Qobad conversing under a tent points to the hand of a master trained in the Iranian tradition [4].¹⁵ At the other end, there is the page that shows Iskandar discovering the infant Darab in a raft (see p. 71 [3]).¹⁶ An early attempt at naturalistic rendition is made in the trees and rocks. The picture is ordained in three slanting parts, almost certainly as a result of the painter's exposure to European art. A Hindustani city looms in the background with a mix of Islamic, West European and Hindu temple architecture, while a river scene defines the foreground. This, too, reveals the seeping European influence that was leading to a new art.

Within two decades, a style emerged in which the lessons of the Iranian masters are no longer clearly perceptible. A certain sense of perspective prevails, closer to that of Flemish art in the mid sixteenth century that the artists discovered through the engravings brought to Akbar's court. The palette has changed. Gone are the Iranian carefully contrasted colours. The pages of the *Babur-Nameh* and the *Akbar-Nameh* painted around the years 1590–95¹⁷ represent the first phase of a new art of the book that would thrive in Hindustan for the next five or six decades.

In a page with two lines that simply mention the arrival of Babur's troops at Kabul through a road buried under snow, the connection with a painting from the *Hamza-Nameh* done in the mid 1570s remains clear.¹⁸ At that point, around 1590, the artist still clumsily struggled to achieve a perspective effect.

Other paintings reveal an astonishing diversity of styles. In some, the integration of perspective effects is definitely more successful. That is the case in a double page in which the lower marginal inscription is contemporary with the script of the page text.¹⁹ This makes the attribution to the two artists, who both have Hindu names, reasonably secure: "design and colour application [*'amal*] by Bishandas, portraiture [*chehreh-nāmī*] by Nanha" [5].

Intriguingly, one page from the *Akbar-Nameh* shows that Hindustani painting at that stage could have turned outright towards Western art. The scene is about Akbar's attack against the Ranthambhor citadel.²⁰ An attribution in the lower margin states "composition [*tarh*] by Khimkaran" and then specifics "design plus colour application [*'amal*] by Khimkaran". The distant plain that can be seen between the two rocky bluffs and the golden sunlight done in shades of decreasing intensity before allowing the pale blue sky to be visible are rendered in the manner of European landscape painting. However, the stormy clouds amassed at the top betray the Hindu artist's slight misunderstanding of the skies that he obviously copied from Western models. There, threatening stormy clouds would not be seen running above a cloudless golden sunset.

The majority of the artists cited in the lower margins in neat Persian inscriptions written in red ink carry names revealing a Hindu allegiance. Among many typical examples as transcribed in their Persian notation and pronunciation, one reads: "*'amal-e Bhūr* [Bhūra in Hindustani pronunciation?], *chehre-nāmī-e Basāvan*" ("The work of [= designed and painted by] Bhur, portraiture by Basavan").²¹ Elsewhere we learn that the plan (*tarh*), that is, the structural disposition and the outlines, are by Kīsū'-e Kalān (Kisu [perhaps pronounced Kīsav/Kishav by Hindi speakers?] the Elder), and the work (*'amal* = the application of paint) is by Mādhū (Mādhav)-e Kalān (Madhu the Elder).²²

The participation in the same manuscripts of artists from different backgrounds, Hindus and Muslims, native Hindustanis and Iranian immigrants, accounts for an exceptional mix of markedly different styles.

In this new environment, the likelihood of the Iranian tradition surviving unadulterated was remote. An *Akbar-Nameh* page in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, credited in the margin to the Iranian painter Farrokh Beg, offers a rare case of almost total faithfulness to the Iranian principle of balanced composition [6]. Several details are typical of Iranian iconography.²³ The postern and the ramparts in the background could be those of an Iranian city, with their brickwork geometrical patterns and the frieze in white Nasta'aliq lettering on deep blue ground, beautifully calligraphed. Farrokh Beg was evidently a

[4] A painted page from the *Hamzeh-Nameh*: 'Alamshah and Qobad conversing. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge: PD. 203.1948.





skilled calligrapher, and that training ensured the flowing quality of the linear design that characterizes his composition.

However, even this conservative Iranian artist indulged in innovations that run counter to the principles of Iranian painting. On the one hand, colour is laid flat to fill crisply traced contours in the best Iranian tradition. On the other hand, shading is used to render the volume of the elephant's form. The lively expression of the beast's eye also points to the Iranian master's awareness of Western art. Farrokh Beg even makes a misguided attempt at rendering perspective by reducing the size of Akbar's retinue on the left and increasing that of the bystanders watching Akbar's entry into the city of Surat on the right. The artist apparently succumbed to the fashionable Hindustani trend towards realistic effects without being quite able to understand them, so alien were these to the conceptual art of Iran.

Hindu painters took a further step in the assimilation of European models by copying as well as interpreting Christian and mythological scenes from Western Europe. Tracings were used to achieve the flawless accuracy that some copies display. "The Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia" drawn after an engraving by Hieronymus Wierix in mirror reverse was apparently based on a tracing inadvertently turned over [7].²⁴ An intriguing attribution in the lower margin ascribes it to a certain "Ni-Ni", otherwise unknown. The mood in these paintings varies from the formally tragic to the slightly spoofy. The fashion of European derived paintings launched under Akbar continued unabated under Jahangir. A Crucifixion scene in the Aga Khan Museum probably done around 1600–05 interprets a North European work, possibly Netherlandish or German, with tongue-in-cheek naïveté.²⁵

Basavan, who is credited for his role in some *Babur-Nameh* and *Akbar-Nameh* pages, also signed a drawing in grisaille of an allegorical figure looking up at the Apparition of God, which is loosely inspired by the frontispiece of the "Polyglot Bible" printed in Antwerp in 1572 [8].²⁶

Sankar (as the Hindi name Shankar is explicitly transcribed in Persian) also took part in planning (*tarh*) or colouring (*'amal*) *Akbar-Nameh* paintings²⁷ and he too signed drawings in grisaille.²⁸

The works of Basavan and Sankar epitomize the astounding versatility of Hindu masters. These were held in highest regard both in court circles and by the Iranian literati familiar with their work. 'Abd ol-Baqi Nahavandi writing his chronicle about the Mughal prince 'Abd ul-Rahim has this to say on a painter called Madhu: "Mādū *pictor* [*naqqāsh*] is one of the Hindus. In portraiture [*shabīh-sāzī*], 'figural scenes' [*tasvīr*], painting [*naqqāshī*] and structural outlining [*tarrāhī*], he is the Mānī and the Behzād of his time. He has executed superb scenes [*majāles*] and peerless tableaux [*tasāvīr*] for most of this writer's [Nahavandi's] books. He works in the style of those employed in this House of the Book [that is, the one set up by 'Abd ul-Rahim]."²⁹

Hindustani syncretic art entered a classic phase covering the reigns of Jahangir (1605–27) and the first twenty years or so of Shah Jahan's rule. At its apex, the rendition of perspective was greatly improved and came together with a touch of true portraiture that had not yet been seen in the art of the East. A likeness of Shah Jahan enthroned with the young princes of the blood standing in front of him offers a perfect example of the art in its more intimate version [9].³⁰

Syncretism in Architecture

Comparable syncretic tendencies characterized the evolution of Hindustani architecture under the Mughals, with one difference – the structures show no trace of European influence until the middle of Shah Jahan's rule. The impact of European ornament on carved wall patterns was stronger.

Architecture had deep roots in the vernacular traditions of the subcontinent. The early mosques, minarets and mausoleums in the areas where Islam took hold are quintessentially Indian monuments even when the concept comes from Iran. The Qutb Minar in Delhi, which follows an East Iranian type, does not remotely look Iranian with its massive scale and its richly carved detail.³¹ The Arhai-din-ka Jhompra at Amjir built in the early 1200s and the tomb of Iltutmish in Delhi, which dates from 1235, are the creations of an accomplished syncretic art that bears the stamp of Indian aesthetics [10].³²

In the Arhai-din-ka Jhompra, the aisles supported by intricately carved pillars adapt the vocabulary of Hindu temple

[5] Double composition from the *Babur-Nameh*, designed and coloured by Bishandas, with individual characters' faces portrayed by Nanha. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: IM.276&a-1913.

[6] A page from the *Akbar-Nameh*, c. 1590–95. "Akbar enters the city of Surat" painted by Farrokh Beg. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: IS. 2:117-1896.

[7] "The Martyrdom of Saint Cecilia after Hieronymus Wierix" by a Hindustani artist. Attributed in the margin to a certain "Ni-Ni", otherwise unknown. Victoria and Albert Museum, London: IM.139-1921.



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architecture to the requirements of an Islamic religious building. Elements from Hindu structures are actually incorporated into the fabric of the mosque. While the facade with its majestic gate is Iranian in concept, Indian aesthetics account for the vibrant movement of the polylobed arches ending in sinuous cusps and for the carved detail.

Things could have changed under Babur, but did not. Eager to celebrate his 1526 victory, the founder of the Mughal dynasty erected the following year a Friday Mosque at Panipat.³³ The adoption of “arch-netted pendentives,” as Ebba Koch puts it, in order to simulate structural squinches reveals the intention to conjure the image of Samarkand monuments.³⁴ Catherine Asher, in her comprehensive history of Mughal architecture matched by a close analysis of structural characteristics, aptly calls it an “Indian translation” of the type represented in Samarkand by the Mosque of Bibi Khanum.³⁵

Nevertheless, Babur’s Mosque at Panipat has a typical Hindustani look and Ebba Koch notes the discrepancy between

Babur’s intention to follow the Iranian Timurid model and his surviving constructions.³⁶ The artistic character of a monument is essentially determined by proportions, forms and building materials. All are alien to Iran.

The pavilion known as the Sher Mandal within the Purana Qila in Delhi could be seen as a more successful attempt at building in the Iranian style [1].³⁷ It dates from Humayun’s reign as Abo’l-Fazl makes clear in the *Akbar-Nameh* (The Book of Akbar).³⁸ The octagonal plan and the proportions are Iranian. What is not, is the *chattri*, the outsized lantern topped by a very Indian-looking finial. Add the dressed stone and no one could ever mistake the Sher Mandal for an Iranian monument.

Even when Iranian architects were called in, the monuments that they designed took on a character of their own. Humayun’s mausoleum erected in Delhi under Akbar is the supreme achievement of Iranian-style architecture in sixteenth-century Hindustan [11].³⁹ It was completed in 978/5 June 1570–25 May 1571 “under the care of Mirak Mirza Ghiyas after eight or nine

[8] A grisaille drawing signed by Basavan: an allegorical figure looks at the Apparition of God, after the frontispiece of the “Polyglot Bible” printed in 1572 in Antwerp. Musée Guimet, Paris.

[9] Shah Jahan and the young princes of the blood, painting by an unidentified Hindustani artist, c. 1630–35. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto: AKM 124.

[10] The tomb of Iltutmish, Delhi, India, 1235.

years,” as ‘Abd ol-Qader Bada’oni reports in “Selections from History” (*Montakhab al-Tavārīkh*) before expressing the admiration that it inspires.⁴⁰

Another source states that the mausoleum was completed after the architect’s death by his son. Whatever the case, the basic design is assuredly Iranian. Catherine Asher considers that “its Timurid appearance must be credited to its Iranian architect”.⁴¹

However, the monument is unlike any Iranian structure. Even from a distance, the scale is gigantic. For another, the white marble that covers the dome and the sandstone of which the walls are made utterly modify its appearance. Add that *chattris* here, too, introduce another eminently Hindustani feature. Whether or not these were part of the initial design, they strengthen the Hindustani character of Humayun’s mausoleum.

The other monuments erected under Akbar are even further removed from the then contemporary Iranian architecture. Their originality says all about the profound impact of Hindustan surroundings on artistic creation even when Iranian masters held the lead role in their conception.

The mausoleum of Atgah Khan in Delhi ranks among the great achievements in the Hindustani-Iranian style during Akbar’s rule. The name of the architect, Ostad (“Master” in

Persian) Khoda-Qoli is recorded [12].⁴² It points to the Turkic-speaking, possibly Central Asian background, of the artist who was undoubtedly trained in the Iranian tradition of Samarkand and Bukhara. The calligrapher, Baqi Mohammad of Bukhara, represents the Iranian school of Central Asia at its highest.⁴³ But the stone polychromy and the way in which the patterns, geometrical or not, are handled have no parallel in Iran.

Monuments designed in a style clinging to the heritage of the preceding Lodi period have an even more markedly Hindustani character. The mausoleum of Adham Khan, who murdered Atgah Khan and was executed forthwith at Akbar’s behest, stands south of Delhi.⁴⁴ Catherine Asher points out that the octagonal plan and the stucco revetment go back to the architectural practice of the Lodi period.⁴⁵ In her view, these leftovers from the previous dynasty, which the Mughals loathed, reflect Akbar’s intention to express his extreme disapproval of Adham Khan’s crime.

A simpler explanation is perhaps more plausible in the context of Hindustani art. The mausoleum of Adham Khan represents a conservative trend versus a modernist movement. It closely matches the design of Mubarak Shah’s mausoleum erected in Delhi over a hundred years earlier (Mubarak Shah died in 1434).⁴⁶



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[11] Axial view of the mausoleum of Humayun, Delhi, India. Erected “under the care of Mirak Mirza Ghiyas”.

[12] The mausoleum of Atgah Khan, Delhi, India.



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Be that as it may, the structure remains impressive despite its imperfect state of preservation. The square piers supporting the arches of the octagonal colonnade, the double drum and, most of all, the dome with its profile make it a quintessential Hindustani monument even if the concept of the funerary abode originated in Islamic Iran.

The juxtaposition of two fundamental strands in Hindustani architecture, one striving to follow Iranian models and the other steeped in Hindustani aesthetics, culminated under Akbar. It found its most spectacular expression at Sikri, the village where Akbar's son, who would succeed him as Emperor Jahangir, was born in 1569. An imperial decree made it the capital of Hindustan until 1585, when Akbar moved the seat of his empire to Lahore. The new name of the location Fat'hpūr Sikrī – now spelt Fatehpur Sikri, "Sikri the City of Victory", made up from the Arabic loanword in Hindi *Fat'h* plus the Hindi suffix *-pūr*, "city" – itself sends back an echo of the juxtaposition of two radically antithetic architectural traditions and their frequent merger into stylistically hybrid structures.

The Jami Masjid (Congregational Mosque) retains extensive elements of the Iranian architectural models [13].⁴⁷ These are disguised under their Hindustani garb. The truly imperial scale,

the colour scheme of the stone masonry and the adjunction of Hindustani features transform them. Innumerable *chattris* create a rhythm that is unknown in the Iranian world.

Even structures that follow Iranian models relatively closely, such as the Boland Darvazeh (Buland Darwaza in the East Iranian pronunciation prevalent in Hindustan), could not be mistaken for Iranian monuments [14].⁴⁸ The pink and white palette of the masonry and the *chattris* poised on top metamorphose out of recognition the Buland Darwaza as all the other Iranian-type constructions.

While there were many degrees in the assimilation of loans, syncretism forever guaranteed the profound originality of architecture in the Persianate India that Hindustan represented.

Syncretism could not have led to successful formulae had it not been for the unique eclecticism of the Hindustani artistic milieu that was presumably shared by its practitioners and patrons alike. Erecting monuments based on drastically opposed traditions in the same location at the same time apparently posed no difficulty for its architects.

The Panch Mahal with its five superposed levels is a revolutionary creation that surely draws on the heritage of vernacular construction in Sind [15].⁴⁹ The Diwan-i Khass or Private Council

[13] Jami Masjid, Fatehpur Sikri, India, view of the long horizontal facade, with the white marble tomb of Salim Chishti to the left.

[14] Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri, India.





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Hall obviously owes its richly carved central pillar supporting simulated sinuous beams to Hindu architecture (see p. 73 [5]). These must originally have been conceived to withstand the destructive climate of Gujarat. The sinuous S-shaped brackets rising from the pillar of the portico in Sheykh Salim Chishti's tomb proceed even more clearly from a tradition of wooden architecture.⁵⁰

Interestingly, the interiors in some of the Fatehpur Sikri monuments that would seem to be exclusively rooted in the Indian tradition display syncretic carved decoration, some of which is no doubt based on designs produced in the imperial "House of the Book" (*ketabkhaneh*). A stone panel in the so-called "Turkish Sultana's House" depicts a stylized park carved in low

relief [16].⁵¹ The palm trees and a big plant with long leaves must surely be derived from an Indian tradition of mural painting art, possibly through its adaptation to manuscript painting.

The bold juxtaposition of Iranian architectural loans and Indian-inspired structures so striking at Fatehpur Sikri and typical of Akbar's reign did not continue after his death. With the accession to power of his son Jahangir in 1605, Iranian ideals often prevailed, only to be transformed in the Hindustani environment.

The ultimate example of this metamorphosis is the mausoleum erected in 1631 over the tomb of Shah Jahan's Iranian spouse, Arjomand Banu Begom known as Mumtaz Mahal. Now known as the Taj Mahal, the monument only briefly evokes an Iranian

[15] Panch Mahal, Fatehpur Sikri, India.

[16] Stone panel carved with a stylized park or *bagh* in the so-called "Turkish Sultana's House".

model, although it was intended to do so, if only in deference to the Iranian origin of Shah Jahan's consort.⁵²

Indeed, the two masters primarily involved in its execution were closely connected to Iran. The architect who designed it, Ostad Ahmad Lahori, was born in Lahore to an immigrant from Herat.⁵³ The author of the admirable calligraphy reproducing Qur'anic verses in the Solos (Thuluth) script, 'Abd ol-Haqq of Shiraz, proudly states his origin on the gateway of Akbar's tomb where he signs himself 'Abd ol-Haqq-e Shirazi.⁵⁴ In the Madrase-ye Shahi Mosque at Agra, his signature at the bottom of the south *mihrab* reads "Amanat Khan ash-Shirazi", with the qualifier identifying his hometown appended to the honorific name of address "Amanat Khan" that Shah Jahan had granted him.⁵⁵

But the endeavours of the architect and the calligrapher did not result in a monument that could pass for Iranian.

White marble covers the Taj Mahal. Its fine polished surface has a gleam that brings to mind the handling of marble in Baroque Italian architecture. The polychrome inlay is derived from the Florentine *pietra dura* technique and the carved floral sprays on the plinths reveal a marked naturalistic tendency that takes its source in European art.⁵⁶

Not least, the vast platform that elevates it above the formal park as if lifting it towards the sky has no equivalent in Iran. Indeed, the monument is unique by any standard.

In the Hindustani environment, the Iranian masters were left free to break from the established rules of tradition, and to turn to every ornamental repertoire and technique that caught the fancy of the internationalist Mughal court.

As time went on, a further jump was made away from the Iranian tradition. Hindustani architecture veered towards an exaggeration of form and a flourish of ornamentation that once more defined a Baroque trend. The domes became more bulbous, often disproportionately so. Polylobed arches with a cusp at the top were made to look like dainty lace carved out of marble. The Diwan-i Khass and the Diwan-i Am in Agra Fort, the Dawlat Khana-i Khass in Shahjahanabad, Delhi (see p.90 [24]), and the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore all illustrate the trend.⁵⁷ It varied in its degrees of fantasy, from the relatively restrained and powerfully majestic, as in the interior galleries of the Moti Masjid [17], in Agra Fort, to the bombast of the facade of the same mosque.⁵⁸ In all, European motifs were integrated into the ornamental panels, as in the marble screen in the Shahjahanabad Fort with its Scales of Justice that interpret a European model.⁵⁹

The eclecticism of architecture became extreme. It is as if any sense of direction had been lost. The third chamber of the Jahangiri Mahal in Agra is, in the words of Martin Hürlimann, "constructed completely in the architectural style of the Hindu Princes".⁶⁰ Outside, the gateway is a Hindustani interpretation of the Iranian model.⁶¹

The Art of the Object

Tellingly enough, this evolution is paralleled in the art of the object. Metalwork reveals comparable trends. The West Iranian style was so faithfully cultivated under Jahangir and during the early years of Shah Jahan that its brass and tinned copper wares actually made in Hindustan have been consistently confused with those of Safavid Iran.⁶² This applies to some tinned copper





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bowls with tall sinuous sides of a type called *badiyeh* in the Persian verses engraved on them and is equally true of some wares cast in golden brass.

The names of historical characters alone disclose the Hindustani provenance of some of the pieces which, on closer inspection, is discreetly borne out by tiny details in the engraved patterns. One of these, in the Hindustan Collection, is inscribed in a single panel of calligraphy to the name of Khwajeh Mohammad Sadeq, and dated AH 1026 (AD 9 January–28 December 1617) [18].⁶³ This is presumably Khwajeh Mohammad Sadeq, the successor of Khwajeh ‘Abd ul-Rahim who died in 1036/1627, or perhaps the year before.⁶⁴

A group of large wine bowls engraved with figural scenes follows the corresponding model from Safavid Iran. But here no confusion is possible with Iranian wares. Iconographic details give away the Hindustani provenance.⁶⁵ They are all engraved with Shiite prayers and, like the *badiyehs*, reproduce verses by Hafez [19]. This suggests that they were destined for Shiite

members of the emperor’s inner circle or perhaps also as gifts for envoys from Iran.

On one of the three large wine bowls so far recorded, the scenes relate to the *Khamseh* romance genre.⁶⁶ Khosrow watching the sculptor Farhad hacking at a rock is thus followed by the episode of Bahram Gur taking his aim at wild asses or onagers. Like the verses by Hafez, their visual reference to the *Khamseh* genre implies that those to whom the wine bowls were destined were at home with Persian literature. This perfectly fits the circle of literati surrounding Nur Jahan.

The same circles may also have patronized the masters who designed bronze wares associating Hindustani forms with calligraphy of the highest order.

An unpublished bowl cover in a private collection which is made of the fine golden multiple alloy conventionally referred to here as ‘brass’ offers an example of the trend, dated 1027/29 December 1617–18 December 1618, one year after the bowl made for Khawej Mohammad Sadeq [20].⁶⁷

[17] The interior galleries of the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort, Agra, India.

[18] Hindustani wine bowl (*badiyeh*). Tinned copper engraved in the West Iranian Safavid style. Commissioned by Khwajeh Mohammad Sadeq in AH 1026 (AD 1617). The Hindustan Collection, London.

[19] Wine bowl (*jam*). Tinned copper engraved in the West Iranian Safavid style, inscribed with Shiite prayers and Persian verses by Hafez, c. 1620–30. Aga Khan Museum, Toronto.

[20] Wine bowl cover (*sarpush*), brass hammered, spun, engraved with a Shiite prayer and a Persian couplet by ‘Ali-Qoli Bek, who commissioned it in AH 1027 (AD 1618). The Hindustan Collection, London.

The profile of the object reproduces on a miniature scale a type of Hindustani architectural dome with a recessed upper section that conjures the image of a parasol.

The sole ornament is the band of Nasta'aliq calligraphy. As on the three wine bowls, the Shiite prayer beginning "*Nādi 'Ali-yyan Maz'har al-'ajāyib* [so spelt]" ("Call Unto 'Ali, the epiphany of wonders") is thus represented. The triple invocation to 'Ali at the end appears to echo the patron's Shiite fervour. It is followed by a Persian quatrain in the first person singular [20]. Apparently coined by the patron himself, it records his presence in front of "the Prophet's House" (*Beyt-e Peyk*) [in Madina]:

Ānkeh māndeh qedam-be Beyt-e Peyk
Bande-ye Shāh 'Alī-Qolli Bēk⁶⁸

(He that stood in front of the Prophet's House
The servant of the Shah, 'Ali-Qolli Bek)

An amir called 'Ali-Qoli Durman, alternatively named Ali-Qoli Bek Durman, is mentioned by Emperor Jahangir in his diary of events titled *Jahangir-Nameh*, "The Book of Jahangir".⁶⁹ If "Bek" is dropped once, this is because it is not actually part of the name, but a Turkish title appended to it.

This invites speculation that another "Ali-Qoli" included by the historian 'Abd ol-Baqi Nahavandi among the poets that he records in the *Ma'āser-e Rahīmī* might have been the patron who commissioned the bowl cover.⁷⁰ The historian describes 'Ali-Qoli as a fervent Shiite who enjoyed "a supreme and exceptional prestige among the Qizilbash," the Turkic-speaking fanatic militants who supported the Safavid ruler.⁷¹ That would fit the fervour that comes out in the triple invocation to 'Ali at the end of the "Nadi 'Ali" prayer given such prominence on the cover.

Not least, 'Ali-Qoli was a recognized poet. That makes him the more plausible as the possible patron of the brass cover as it would take the skills and inclinations of a poet to pen a couplet in a highly personal tone.



18



20



19



The details that Nahavandi gives about the poet's life provide additional reasons for identifying him as the owner of the brass piece. 'Ali-Qoli was a Qizilbash descended from an illustrious family whose members had been part of the inner circle of the Aq-Quyunlu shahs of Iran in the fifteenth century. Later his grandfather had been close to Shah Tahmasp of Iran. 'Ali-Qoli was fifteen years old when he left Khorasan for "Eraq" (= 'Erāq-e 'Ajam, that is, western Iran) in 999/30 October 1590–18 October 1591. From there, the young man went to Hindustan where he entered the service of Emperor Akbar.⁷² The Mughal ruler granted him a domain (*jāgir*) in Burhanpur in the northern tip of the Deccan. Nahavandi notes that 'Ali-Qoli fought heroically in Khandis on 10 Ramadan 1019/5 December 1610 during the campaign led by Prince Parviz who conquered the Deccan.⁷³ Nahavandi later observes: "Today in 1024/31 January 1615–19 January 1616, he has entered his [the Emperor Jahangir's] inner circle... He is one of the royal amirs living in Burhanpur. He uses the nom de plume 'Ali and has finished a *Dīvān* [a volume of collected poems] of ghazals and qasidehs."⁷⁴

This punchline to Nahavandi's biographical account of the poet 'Ali-Qoli was thus written in the year following the date inscribed on the bowl cover.

The title "Bēk" was needed at the end of the couplet in order to rime with "Peyk" ("Messenger", the Persian semantic of Arabic *Rasūl*, "Prophet") in the first hemistich. This would explain why the prince (*Mīrzā* in Nahavandi's own words, used repeatedly) chose to refer to himself with this title. As he was a Turkic-speaking Qizilbash, he would have had an additional reason for using the Turkic title "Bēk" in preference to the Persian "Mīrzā".

Needless to say, further evidence is necessary before a definitive conclusion can be reached one way or the other.

What remains certain at this stage is that the cover was made for a Shiite patron who wrote Persian poetry. In other words, the patron belonged to the same highly placed Shiite group of men in the imperial entourage who commissioned the large wine bowls based on Iranian models with royal iconography and inscribed with verses by Hafez. In contrast with these, the brass cover illustrates the association of a Hindustani shape with Persian calligraphy of the highest order. In metalwork as in

architecture syncretism flourished alongside trends that were strictly dependent on the Iranian tradition and others that drew primarily on the ancient repertoire of Indian shapes. The latter were left uninscribed, possibly to make them more attractive to Hindus. However, they were by no means solely owned by them.

A small unpublished ewer in the Hindustan Collection cast in copper is engraved on the sides in extremely fine cursive script inlaid with black paste [21].⁷⁵ The shape of the body, typically Hindustani, is associated with a neck reproducing in miniature size a model from Safavid Iran. The inscription merely gives a name, Molla Borhan, that points to a member of the Muslim literate elite.

Much remains to be discovered in the field of Hindustani metalwork and more broadly *objects d'art* in all media. Few items have reached the West. Many more probably lie, unidentified, across Kashmir, Pakistan and India mistaken for Iranian art of the Safavid period due to their inscriptions – Arabic if religious and Persian if poetical.

As Hindustani metalwares made for the Muslim circles come to be better known, they are bound to shed further light on syncretism in Hindustan. The full scope of the internationalism inherent in the make-up of India may then be apprehended.

[21] Ewer, copper, cast, formerly tinned and engraved with the name of the owner, Molla Borhan. The Hindustan Collection, London.

A note on Transcription

The transcription of all Persian names follows standard Persian pronunciation according to the system adopted in Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, *Islamic Metalwork from the Iranian World 8th–18th centuries* (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 1982). See “Conventions and Standards” pp. 10–11. All sites and monuments are, however, cited in their current English spelling in India and Pakistan: “Buland Darwaza”, not “Boland Darvazeh”; “the mausoleum of Humayun”, not “Homa-yun”; and “Mughal” has been adopted instead of “Moghul”.

Endnotes

- 1 Monumental capitals carved with the foreparts of bulls back to back excavated at Pataliputra bear a striking resemblance to the Persepolitan model.
- 2 Leigh Ashton (ed.), *The Art of India and Pakistan*, Faber and Faber, London, 1950, p. 10 and pl. 2 to no. 26.
- 3 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “Recherches sur l’architecture de l’Iran boudhique. I. Essai sur les origines et le symbolisme du stupa iranien”, in *Le Monde Iranien et l’Islam* (Paris-Geneva, 1975, III), pp. 1–61. See particularly pl. III and caption.
- 4 Ahmad Nabi Khan, *Al-Mansurah. A Forgotten Arab Metropolis in Pakistan* (Government of Pakistan, Department of Archaeology & Museums, Karachi, 1990), pls. 77–80. The Hindu source of one of the masks is duly noted, p. 59.
- 5 See Amir Khosrow Dehlavi, *Dīvān-e Kāmel* [The Complete Divan], Sa’id Nafisi (ed.) (Tehran, 1343/1964); and *Khamseh*, Amir Ahmad Ashrafi (ed.) (Tehran, 1362/1983). Amir Khosrow’s important chronicle of the reign of Sultan ‘Ala ad-Din Khalji (16 Ramadan 695 to the year 711) (see English preface p. 13) is written, typically enough, in Persian: *Khazāyen al-Fotūh*, Mohammad Wahid Mirza (ed.) (Calcutta, 1953).
- 6 Mir Jamal od-Din Hoseyn Inju Shirazi, *Farhang-e Jahāngīrī*, Rahim ‘Afifi (ed.) (Mashhad, 1351/1972 – Tehran, 1354/1975, three volumes).
- 7 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “The Shah-Name Echoes in Sikh Poetry and the Origins of the Nihangs’ Name”, in *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, USA, 2006) vol. 16 (for the year 2002), pp. 1–23.
- 8 On Mir Sayyed ‘Ali, see Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “Mir Sayyed ‘Ali: Painter of the Past and Pioneer of the Future”, in Asok Kumar Das (ed.), *Mughal Masters: Further Studies* (Marg, vol. 49, no. 4, Mumbai 1998), pp. 30–51, where the works by Sayyed ‘Ali authenticated by holograph signatures reproduced in full are gathered for the first time. On ‘Abd os-Samad, see Milo Cleveland Beach, *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court* (Washington, 1981), pp. 166–167; and Sheila Canby, “The Horses of ‘Abd os-Samad”, in Das, *Mughal Masters* op. cit., pp. 14–29.
- 9 On the self-portrait and the holograph signature published for the first time, and Persian couplet, previously misread and utterly misunderstood, see Melikian-Chirvani, “Mir Sayyed ‘Ali” op. cit., p. 30, pls. 1 and 37.
- 10 The Hindustani attire proves that the self-portrait was done in Hindustan, not in Kabul, a Persian-speaking city where Iranian customs and fashions prevailed. It is therefore not earlier than 1555. The wording of the signature, on the other hand, proves that Humayun (who died in early January 1556) was still alive. The self-portrait is therefore not later than 1555.
- 11 *Shāhkārā-ye Negārgārī-e Īrān* [Masterpieces of Iranian Painters]/*Masterpieces of Persian Painting* (as translated on back cover). Catalogue of the exhibition curated by Mohammad ‘Ali Rajabi (Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, 1384/2005): p. 70 of the *Moraqqa’-e Golshan*.
- 12 Susan Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor. The Art of the Book 1560–1660* (V&A Publications, London, 2002), p. 100.
- 13 *Shāhkārā-ye Negārgārī-e Īrān* op. cit., p. 453: p. 151 of the *Moraqqa’-e Golshan*. Sheila Canby in “The Horses of ‘Abd us-Samad” op. cit., p. 17, pl. 2, cautiously considers it to be “ascribed to al-‘abd shikasteh raqam ‘Abd us-Samad shirin qalam”.
- 14 See latterly, John Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza. Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India* (Smithsonian Institution in association with Azimuth Editions, London, 2002), pp. 32–36, where a detailed account is given of the Persian sources describing the execution of the manuscript.
- 15 Milo Beach, *Early Mughal Painting* (Cambridge, MA-London, 1987), p. 87, pl. 61, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, PD 203-1948; and Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza* op. cit., pp. 90–91, no. 23.
- 16 *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1982), no. 165; and Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza* op. cit., pp. 172–173, no. 56 (MFA 24-129).
- 17 Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor* op. cit., pp. 42–45.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 87, pl. 56 (V&A IM.271-1913).
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–91, pl. 59 (V&A IM.276 & a-1913).
- 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37, pl. 22. I transcribe the names as they are noted in Persian in the lower margin (V&A: IS. 2-1896 73/117).
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 51, pl. 34 (V&A IS.2-1986 80/117).
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 46, pl. 30 (V&A IS.2-1986 20/117).
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 56, pl. 37 (V&A IS.2-1986 117/117). The name Farrokh Beg, although finely calligraphed, is not introduced by any specification such as “tarh” or “amal”.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 103 and 112–113, pls. 78 and 79.
- 25 Unpublished.
- 26 See Amina Okada, *Miniatures de l’Inde Impériale. Les peintres de la cour d’Akbar* (Musée Guimet exhibition catalogue, Paris, 1989), pp. 188–189, pl. 54; colour plate on p. 36. The single name Basavan, not preceded by any noun, breaks up the ruling, proving that it was calligraphed by the artist himself or a calligrapher while the grisaille drawing was being done.
- 27 Beach, *Early Mughal Painting* op. cit., p. 120, pl. 82 (margins with librarian attributions not shown); and Stronge, *Painting for the Mughal Emperor* op. cit., p. 49, pl. 32 and pp. 68–69, pl. 46.
- 28 For a highly important grisaille Biblical scene by Sankar see Christie’s, *Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds* (London, 17 April 2007), pp. 162–163, signed ‘amal-e Shankar in impeccable Nasta’aliq calligraphy.
- 29 ‘Abd ol-Baqi Nahavandi, *Ma’āser-e Rahimī, bakhsh-e sevvom*, Abd ol-Hoseyn Nava’i (ed.) (Anjoman-e Āsar-o Mafakher-e Farhangi, Tehran, 1381/2002), p. 937.
- 30 See Sheila Canby, *Princes, Poets and Paladins: Islamic and Indian Paintings from the Collection of Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan* (British Museum Press, London, 1998), pp. 147–148, where attributed to Manohar. The mauve strip under the image where the signature and caption appear was cut out from another page in the twentieth-century art trade. It does not belong with the painting. It is therefore no longer necessary to suppose that a portrait originally meant to be Jahangir was later modified by the artist. The painting actually shows no trace of alteration. The hypothesis of the emperor’s face alteration is repeated in all subsequent publications of the painting, including the Aga Khan Development Network exhibition catalogues, for example Sheila Canby, “India and the Mughals” in *Treasures of the Aga Khan Museum. Masterpieces of Islamic Art* (Benoît Junot and Verena Daiber [eds.], Nicolai, 2010), p. 249, no. 191.
- 31 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)* (Calcutta, 1942; Bombay reprint 1956; sixth reprint 1975), pl. V, figs. 1 and 2.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pl. VI, figs. 1 and 2 and pl. VIII.
- 33 Catherine B. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India (The New Cambridge History of India, Vol. 1.4)* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992), pp. 27–28 and pl. 8.
- 34 Ebba Koch, *Mughal Architecture* (Prestel, Munich, 1991), p. 32 and pl. 1.

- 35 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 28.
- 36 Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., p. 32.
- 37 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 33 and pl. 11.
- 38 Ibid., citing Abo'l-Fazl in H. Beveridge's translation.
- 39 Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pp. 89–90 and pl. LXII for the superb aerial view of the site taken by Indian Air Survey and Transport; Martin Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* (Thames & Hudson, London, 1965, English version of the German original), pls. 34 (close-up view) and 36 (aerial view); and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 43–46.
- 40 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 44, n. 4, cites the translation of Badaoni's chronicle by G. S. A. Ranking, W. H. Lowe and W. Haig: Al-Badayuni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (Patna reprint, 1973, three volumes), vol. II, p. 135. The text in 'Abd ol-Qader Bada'uni, *Montakhab at-Tawārikh*, Mowlavi Ahmad 'Ali Saheb (ed.) (Tehran, 1380/2001, three volumes), vol. II, p. 90, says: "This is a monument that only leaves on the eye of spectators as they study it a burden of amazement" ("ān 'emaratist-ke dide-ye nozaregi dar motale'-ye ān gheyr az heyrat bar na-mi dahād").
- 41 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 44.
- 42 Ibid., pp. 42 and 43, pl. 16; and Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. XXI.
- 43 Or both Khoda-Qoli and Baqi Mohammad. Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 42.
- 44 Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., p. 52, pl. 35; and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 42–43.
- 45 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 43.
- 46 Mausoleum of Sayyed Mubarak Shah: Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. XVI, fig. 2.
- 47 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 52 and 56, pl. 25. Superb plates of Fatehpur Sikri in Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., pls. 126–141. Attilio Petruccioli, *Fathpur Sikri. La Città del sole e delle acque* (Carucci Editore, Rome, 1988) is highly important for its study of the urban complex, its photographs giving new views of well-known monuments. See for example p. 77, pl. 60, for a lateral shot of the Buland Darwaza showing the detail of the grooved engaged columns. Jami Masjid: Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 53–55 and 56, pl. 25; and Hürlimann *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., pl. 140, magnificent view of the west side of the courtyard.
- 48 Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. XXIV, I (exterior facade) and L (interior facade); Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., pl. V (exterior facade), and p. 65, pl. 60 (inner facade); and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 52–53 and 54, pl. 23.
- 49 Central pillar: Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. LXXII, 2a; Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., p. 60 and pl. 50; and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 62–63 and 64, pl. 32.
- 50 Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. LXXIII, 2, showing pillar of portico; Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., pl. 138 (entrance) and pl. 139 (general view); Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., pp. 56–57 and 58, pl. 44 (general view of time); and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pp. 52–53, pl. 26 (outside), and p. 64, pl. 32 (central pillar).
- 51 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 61, pl. 29.
- 52 Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., pl. LXII, I (western facade) and 2 (important aerial view by Indian Air Survey and Transport); and Koch, *Mughal Architecture* op. cit., pl. III (photo 1989). Fundamental study of historical sources accompanied by outstanding photography: W. E. Begley, Z. A. Desai, *Taj Mahal. The Illumined Tomb* (Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture and the University of Washington Press, Cambridge, MA, 1989). The reference book is now: Ebba Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (Thames & Hudson, London, 2006).
- 53 Begley, Desai, *Taj Mahal* op. cit., introduction, XLII.
- 54 Ibid., introduction, XXXVII. See pp. 251–252 for reproductions of his signature.
- 55 Ibid., p. 253, pl. 145 where the photographic plate reads "Katabahu Amānat Khān ash-Shīrāzī". The English translation already misplaced misleadingly reads: "Amanat Khan, the year 1046".
- 56 Koch, *The Complete Taj Mahal* op. cit., pp. 219–221; and Brown, *Indian Architecture* op. cit., XCIII, I (Badshahi Mosque).
- 57 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 198, pl. 121 and p. 199, pl. 122 (Dowlat Khane-ye Khass, Shahjahanabad); and Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., pl. 111 (Diwan-i Am, Agra), pl. 112 (exterior of the Diwan-i Khass, Agra), pp. 202 and 257, 258, pl. 162 and p. 259, pl. 163 (both Badshahi Mosque, in Shahjahanabad in Delhi).
- 58 Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., p. 101 (interior of Moti Masjid); and Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., p. 256, pl. 160 (facade of Moti Mosque) and p. 257, pl. 161 (detail of ornament).
- 59 Asher, *Architecture of Mughal India* op. cit., pl. 122.
- 60 Hürlimann, *Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri* op. cit., pl. 106 (third chamber) and p. 141 caption to pl. 106.
- 61 Ibid., pl. 104.
- 62 Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "The Iranian Style in North Hindustan Metalwork", in Françoise "Nalini" Delvoye (ed.), *Confluence of Cultures: French Contributions to Indo-Persian Studies* (Manohar, New Delhi, Tehran, 1994), pp. 54–81, twenty-two plates, and pp. 58–59 and pl. 3.
- 63 Ibid., p. 58 and pl. 3. And pp. 65–76.
- 64 Mohammad Saleh Kanbu, *'Amal-e Sāleh/Shāh Jahān-Nāmeḥ*, Gholam Yazdī (ed.) with preface by Vahid Qorayshi (Lahore, 1958, three volumes), vol. I, p. 262; and Melikian-Chirvani, "The Iranian Style in North Hindustan Metalwork" op. cit., pl. 18.
- 65 Iran-Zamin Collection, London.
- 66 Melikian-Chirvani, "The Iranian Style in North Hindustan Metalwork" op. cit., pp. 72–79, fig. 17.
- 67 Ibid., pp. 52–59 and fig. 3.
- 68 Ali-Qoli's name must be spelt and pronounced with a geminated lam (L letter) to respect the metre.
- 69 Nur ad-Din Mohammad Jahangir Gurkāni, *Jahāngīr-Nāmeḥ (Tūzok-e Jahāngīrī)*, Mohamad Hashem (ed.) (Tehran, 1359/1980), pp. 84, 201ff.
- 70 Nahavandi, *Ma'āser-e Rahīmī* op. cit., pp. 888ff.
- 71 Ibid., p. 889: "az ghāyat-e 'olow-e hasab va semow-e nasab dar miyān-e Qezelbāshiyeh momtāz-o mostasnast" ("Owing to his extremely high rank and his exalted ancestry, he is distinguished and outstanding among the Qizilbash").
- 72 Ibid., p. 891.
- 73 Ibid., p. 892.
- 74 Ibid., p. 895.
- 75 Height 18.1 cm.