Chapter II
Important Illustrations
During
Akbar's Reign
“The works of all painters are weekly laid before His Majesty by the Darogah. He then confers rewards according to the excellence of workmanship or he may increase the monthly salary”
Many of the paintings of the period were illustrations for books and thus the art of painting became intimately related to writing of books. Akbar, the most famous and enlightened Mughal ruler, introduced several changes in the art. He encouraged the painting of Hindu deities by Mughal artists. The most important development of his reign was however, the inauguration of portrait painting, a trend which continued for centuries thereafter.

The sixteenth century was a period of exciting happenings in Indian history. The ruling dynasty was completely annihilated by the Mughals and Babur established a vast empire. However, the arts and architecture, literature, music patronised by the erstwhile Delhi rulers had spread far and wide in India and flourished in numerous centres of Islamic culture.

Babur was a man of fine tastes and the admired music, painting, architecture and literature.

Succeeding Humayun, Akbar fortified the fledgling empire’s foundation. His immense courage, strength of character, religious tolerance, reformer’s spirit and able administration coupled with a discerning appreciation for arts makes him one of the greatest rulers of India. Having learnt to appreciate the delicacy of Persian painting in his boyhood, Akbar wisely did not want the Indian painters to merely imitate his Iranian counterparts, rather he wanted them to adopt their provincial schools within the parameters of painting.

The majority of the painting on display ranged in date from the mid 16th to the mid 19th centuries A.D. This period known in history as the "late medieval age" saw Indian painting reach the zenith of glory. The advent of the Mughal rule in India brought with it Turkish, Persian art traditions and artists to Agra and Delhi.

In fact, analysis of the illustrations of the *Qissa-i-Amir Hamza,* painted at Akbar's atelier between 1562 and 1577, also apply to his own works now on view. That is why I have borrowed the little of his critical essay for this brief note. Let us recall his observations on the illustrators of the *Hamza-Nama,* who fused the Persian Safavid pictorial idioms with the provincial traditions from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Gwalior, Lahore and Kashmir: their task was "formulating a visual language commensurate with the vicissitudes of historical and material transition of an age." And this brings us to philosophical view of the time-structure of history as formulated by the great French medievalist art historian. "History is a triple sheaf of active forces: tradition, influences, experiments."³

That was the complex structure of 'historical present' which Akbar's artists unconsciously revealed in their folios. And that is the complex structure of time that Sheikh consciously uses to evolve his own pictorial language and structures, varying according to different contexts.

Against the ugly emergence of narrow religious sectarianism which was now sprouting political sinews. Sheikh pictorially interpreted one of the great medieval saints, Kabir, whose devotional songs of mystical humanism are still sung and reponded to by millions of Indians. Abul Fazl, the official chronicler at Akbar's court, placed Kabir's time as during the reign of Sikander Shah Lodhi 1489-1519.

"The series of gouaches as Sheikh observed in connection with the *Hamza-Nama* relates to the polemics⁴ of historical consciousness against a timeless tradition and concept of materiality against ideals of spiritualist persuasions".⁵

And as happened with the *Hamza-Nama* folios, inspiration and influence came from far and near: the Sienese, Ambrogio Lorenzetti Cactive (1319-47), Pieter Bruegel the elder from the Netherlands, from the ateliers of the great Mughals, and the Benode Behari Mukherji's epic mural. The lives of Hindi saints in the Hindi Bhavan, Santiniketan.

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2. Epic Stories in Persian.
4. The Art of Controversial Discussion.
5. Article from "The Hindustan Times".

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That Akbar was the founder of the Mughal school of painting is clearly seen in the illumination of the Hamza-Nama which is a repertoire of the adventures and romantic escapades of Hamza, the prophet's uncle in twelve volumes from which about 200 have survived, "the illustrations of the Hamza show a dramatic precedence of the event, broad handling, deep expressive colours and love for landscape and architecture".

Akbar himself supervised the atelier. Painters were rewarded by conferring awards and titles. Farrukh Beg and the Hindu articles-Baswan and Daswanth amongst others were the leading lights of the atelier.

Abu'l Fazl, the historian, also informs us that Akbar commissioned a huge portrait album, "whereby those who have passed away received new life and those who are still alive have immortality". 6

The delicate miniatures teeming with flora and fauna are enchanting. The brush strokes and details are difficult to see with the naked eye.

To produce this mirror of life within a strictly limited space, the Indian painter used only the most rudimentary materials with which he was completely familiar and which were easily procurable.

The earlier known miniatures found in India are on a palm leaf, these were generally illustrations of the Jain Scripture date back to the eleventh century. Paper started being used in the early 14th century and by the 16th century it was produced in great amounts in India. The quality of the paper was identified by its place of manufacture; for example, Daulatabadi 7 and Nizamshahi. 8 The materials from which it was made also identified the paper; for example, Sanni—from flax, Manjaal from fishnets and nukayyar from water coloured paper. Other paper-making materials were bamboo, jute and waste silk cocoons.

The paper was smoothened by being dipped in a solution of alum, partly dried and then rubbed with agate or touchstone burnisher. Two and more layers of paper were glued together to obtain the requisite thickness.

6. M.S. Randhawa, Mughal Painting, Panorama of Indian Painting. Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting government of India, May, 68.
7. From Daulatabad.
8. From Nizamabad.
An iron low pen, with brush-like, pointed projections on both sides was used by making straight lines on border for geometric patterns. Compasses were used to draw circles, and a flat ruler for drawing the lines on the border.

Manasdla,⁹ lays down the rules to the employed while making painter pens. The tip of the small bamboo pen was attached to a small nail with only the tip extending, the rest embedded in the handle. This instrument might have been used for outlining designs on palm leaves.

The pencils used for making preliminary sketches were made from a ruler of cow dung, old powdered slag, water and made into a paste which was then modelled into 2"-4" long pencils. The colour was light and errors could be erased with a clean rag. Other kinds of pencils were made of lampblack and boiled rice.

A variety of brushes, of different sizes and thicknesses were used. They were made from the soft hair from the ears of donkeys, calves, bullocks, fibres, barks of certain trees. The finest brushes consisted of tail hair of cats, squirrels, goats and musbrats. An ideal brush head was neither too hard nor too soft and drew together when dipped in water.

The animal’s hair was sheared, wetted, inserted through one end of a feather quill and drawn out from the other. The tips were tied to the quill and reinforced with melted shellac. Peacock and pigeon feather too were used as quills depending on whether thin or thick brushes were required. For very fine detailing, a single hair brush was used. An interesting fact is that those instrument are made to date and in the same form as they were used during Akbar’s reign.

According to Brijbushan, Akbar was the real founder of Mughal painting. He was discerning judge of men and in recruitment ignored, caste, and creed and colour. The hundreds of painters in the royal atelier worked under the master Abdus Samad and Mir Saiyyid Ali. Samad was titled

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Abiil Fazl states, "His perfection was mainly due to the wonderful effect of a look of his majesty, which caused him to turn from that which is from to that which is spirit".

Abu'l Fazl also tells that "the works of all painters were weekly laid before his majesty by the 'Darogah'. Akbar used to confer rewards according to the excellence of workmanship".

Akbar was very fond of the tales of Amir Hamza, the prophet's uncle. The illustration of these stories, the Hamza-Nama was the first work entrusted to the Persian Master Mir Saiyid Ali. It contained 1400 pictures in volumes and the work was completed in 15 years. The paintings are of size 20"x27" and unlike other Mughal paintings, are painted on cloth. It depicts the legendary and romantic story of the prophet's uncle's love for the Persian king's daughter, of the wars he fought for the propagation of Islam, and for the final conversion of his enemies. The Persian flavour is extremely strong but Indian elements are evident in the shape of faces or the vitality and majesty of an elephant. The Persian-Safari style is evident in the brilliant red and green colours are dominant, the eroded pink rocks and vegetation planes and blossoming plum and peach trees are reminiscent of Persia. Akbar's interest in the various religions led him to the Hindu classics and he ordered the artists to illustrate the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Akbar had independent views and indeed he considered painting to be one of the means to recognize god. Similarly the lines written about the perfection of 'Abdus Samad' skill in the Ain-i-Akbari.

The regard with deep respect which Mughal painters had for the Persian evident on the pages of the Dastan-i-Amir-Hamza. These paintings are the first known examples of Akbari art forms.

This is a beautiful painting from Hamza Namah. This is an unrecorded leaf from the earliest illustrated work of the Mughal period, which is also its largest and most extensive one. Its chronological place has recently been
more accurately established by Rai Krishnadasa and Basil Gray. The great
efforts of the 50 painters who produced the 1400 paintings on cloth in the
fourteen volumes were greatly appreciated by contemporary and later
writers; their judgment is shared by modern connoisseurs.

When this painting was remounted in recent years, the inscription below
it and the text on paper on its reverse were covered up so that the details
of the story can no longer be established. A photograph made before the
restoration provided, however, the caption.

The anonymous painter avoided the pitfalls sometimes found in the
illustrations of the Hamza Namah, such as over-crowding, an all-too-detailed
architectural setting, oddly disproportionate figures or their puppetlike
presentation. Here the action is concentrated in one area, set in juxtaposition
to the calm outside the palace walls; the slightly larger size of the prison-
keeper and of the figures around him is not disturbing, as it stresses their
importance; and finally, well-expressed movements and sentiments of the
main actors leave no doubt that we take part in a dramatic event, though
the more passive figures, like the minor attendants and the prisoners, are
still treated like puppets. The heavy Maltas, the prison-keeper, listening
with disbelief and boredom, is remarkably portraitlike and forms a vivid
contrast to the emphatic gesture of the dark-skinned, Zardhank Khatmi and
even more so to the wild movements of the figure turning his head in the
courtyard. All this is presented with the dynamic quality, bursting energy,
and love for detail which distinguishes this manuscript. One can also observe
that the figures are clothed in unadorned carpets and tilework reflect mid-
16th century Persian art. The scene is iconographically related to one in
the Bharat Kala Bhavan.

At least 26 pages of the Hamza Namah are known to be in America: five
in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, four in the Brooklyn Museum, three
in the Freer Gallery, two each in the Boston Museum, in the collection of
J.F. Lewis, Philadelphia, and in another private collection, and one each in

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the Art Institute of Chicago, the Fogg Museum, Cambridge, the Cincinnati and Philadelphia Museums of Art, the Philadelphia Free Library, the Kevorkian Foundation, New York, and the collections of G.P. Bickford, Cleveland, and S. Minkenhof, New York. Most of these belonged to the album which General R.K. Monif bought from a sister of the Shah of Iran in 1912; of these 25 came to the United States and were sold at auction in New York in 1923.

The miniatures of the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* are based on typically Indian parameters, among only a few Persian characteristics. In the Mughal collection, the Hamza paintings are unique for the action shown in them. Approximately 200 folios of its are presented in the various collections at Brooklyn BMVA, Vienna CB and Varanasi.

Painting, during Akbar’s reign was generally restricted to manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza, Diwan, Gulistan, Darab Nama Khamsa of Amir Khamsa* etc. Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated.

The *Gita Govinda* is a sanskrit poem written in the twelth century by Jayadeva, a poet at the court of the last Sena king-Lashmanasena. Court painters of the grand Moghul summed up the position when admirably he said- ”If Mughal art is less interesting from the aesthetic point of view it has a fascinating human interest of its own and real charm”.

Akbar’s interest in Indian literature contributed to the transcedension of the Mughal school from its Persian beginnings into an indigeneous tradition. The Hindu painters fused their provincial skills with the Persian features, with the Indian tradition dominating.

The *Ain-i-Akbari* of Abul Fazl and *Munlaktab-ut-Tawarikh* state that Akbar ordered the translation of illustration of the *Gita-Govinda*. It was however an extremely popular treatise illustrated in various provincial styles.

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"The colour like in the majority of Akbar period miniature is strong and varied in effect and yet a mellowness pervades the pictures due to the harmony of the colour scheme and colour proportions. As Coomaraswamy "point devoted primarily to the hero, heroine and the Sakhi. The Sakhi not only bears messages between the lovers and discusses situations with them, but also speaks for the heroine in many places".15

A MUGHAL MINIATURE

A woman figure is rarely seen in Mughal miniatures. Even when they are assigned any place, conspicuous or otherwise, the authenticity of their features is seldom beyond dispute. The seldom comes across a painting showing or mirroring the literary artistic activities of women in Mughal India.

The miniature is in many ways a unique specimen of Mughal art. The delicacy and fineness of brushwork, combined with the entity of such a subject in the development of Mughal painting easily assign to the miniature an important place in any art gallery.

After prince Salim's birth (1569 AD), in the 14th reignal year from Agra to Fatehpur Sikri, contemporary sources and researchers which have already been conducted in Mughal painting history, help us deduce that the felt manuscripts were illuminated at Fatehpur Sikri, apart from the mural painting that decorated some of the buildings of the new capital.

The most important manuscript illustrated during the period of Akbar are the Gulistan of Sadi, Anwar-i-Suhaili, Razm Nama, Tuti Nama etc.

Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria (1573-74 A.D.) calligraphed in beautiful and bold Nastaliq script, this manuscript consists of 112 relatively large manuscript paintings. This information is recorded on one of the manuscripts leaves. It records the history of Timur and his descendants upto the 22nd reignal year of Akbar (1578 AD) and the information given to us by Shahjahan,

who had recorded an autographic note to this effect on the fly leaf at the beginning of the manuscript. As per the catalogue of the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, which owns the manuscript, “the history of the house of Timur breaks immediately after the account of Akbar’s second campaign in Gujarat in the 19th year of his reign. The history of the 20th, 21st and 22nd years is wanting.”

In the manuscript itself, the author’s name is not mentioned, neither is the works title - the latter is only known from later endorsement. The artists names are given at the bottom of the paintings, but, sadly, the binder has carelessly left out most of the signature portions of the paintings. Yet the names of the 53 paintings can be clearly read:


Since this manuscript appears to have been left incomplete in the 19th or 20th year of Akbar’s reign, one may assume that the appointments of the aforementioned artists were made during the first fifteen years of Akbar’s reign. Obviously, a lot of them must have illustrated the Hamza too. Incidentally, this is the earliest manuscript with a knowledge where we find, from the signatures written, that more than a single artist worked on the same painting as was the usual practice in the Mughal court, which must have been fashionable when the Hamza was being illuminated.

One of the typical paintings of the manuscript is that which depicts the presentation of Amirzada Mohd’s. sons at a place called Uni. Amirzada was

Timur’s predecessor. This is now in the Khuda Baksh Library, Patna.

**Gulistan-i-Sa’di (1581 A.D.):** There is a copy of this illustrated manuscript at Royal Artistic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London. An entry on the very last page shows that it was calligraphed and painted in 1581 AD at Fatehpur Sikri by Mohammad Hussain Kashmiri, entitled ‘Zarrin Qalam’ at the Royal court. The manuscript consists of 130 folios, every page of which is decorated with paintings of a variety of flora and fauna. Each page is also richly powdered with gold.

Under the text of the last page, there is a painting showing two men, one nearing 40-45 years holding a pen on a piece of paper, clearly in the process of writing the portrait of Husain Zarrin Qalam and other, a relatively younger man of about 16 yrs, also with pen and paper. Both are sitting on a carpet and are attended by a male servant.

Clearly, these two are portrait figures. The elderly one is of Husain Zarrin Qalam and the younger is of Manohar who later became a painter too. Basil Gray has pointed out that “A comparison with a second portrait of the same painter by Daulat in the Murragq-i-Gulshan in the Teharan Museum reveals a definite resemblance of features.”

Portrait painting, happens to be one of the greatest heights that Mughal paintings scaled in the Indian art history. Truly, portraiture appears to have invoked great interest in the Mughal emperors, especially Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. It’s well known that Akbar repeatedly sat for his portrait to be painted and also ordered the portrait of all the grandees of his realm. As a result, a unique portrait album thus gradually built-up and Abu’l Fazl was pleased to remark that “those that have passed away have received a new life and those who are still alive have immortality promised them”.

From the portraits that we can still study, it appears that Jahangir and Shahjahan both followed Akbar’s foot-steps in this regard.

But the evidence of portraiture as a genre of painting is not simply to be viewed in formal portraits alone. Even in historical narrative illustrations,

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18. The second phase: (Fatehpuri Sikri Studio c.1575-85 AD), History and Analysis of Painting.
depicting crowded court scenes, one can clearly note the utmost care and attention with which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, drawing out not only the physiological but also the psychological characteristics. There is, hence, no doubt that the human faces were not of prototype but of human individuals who were identifiable.

It's common knowledge that classical Persian painting also had known of portraiture, and that Bihzad and Sultan Mohammad were superior portrait painters. The Mughal atelier derived its inspiration in form and technique of portrait painting from the Persian traditions.

Viewing the long gallery of portraits in Akbari paintings, one concretely concludes that the Persians could not have been the source of ideological and formal inspiration of the Mughal painters in this context. Persian portraiture shows human types and not individuals. Its primary objective was the creation of a mood and attitude and this was achieved through mannered poses. Technically, the paintings are two-dimensional and rest primarily on fine, linear draughtsmanship and secondarily on contrasts of flat application of colours.

Such portraits in the Persian style are not unknown even in Akbari paintings. There is not doubt that such portraiture were the handi-work of the Persian artists in the Mughal atelier by Indian artists schooled to copy the Persian method and manner.

Broadly speaking, however, Mughal portraiture was quite different from the Persian. From the very beginning, one notes a clear predilection for the rounded, three-dimensional volume in portraiture, modelled lines with shading and that variation of colour. But the important point is that the portraits objective is not to depict types but aims to represent certain individuals with careful efforts towards individual forms and features and bringing out the typical psychological characteristic of each figure. The two portraits that can be seen in the painting being discussed are surely not in the best and finest tradition of Mughal portraiture, but they definitely are

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Abul Fazl states that "Basawan was one of the most skilful portrait artists in Akbar's atelier—he excelled in drawing human features and important painting. Numerous paintings of the Akbari period show that were many others also of equal calibre. The naturalism that is typical of the landscapes in Mughal painting, is a the characteristic quality of Mughal portraiture. They are so true-to-life as to be identifiable even after so many centuries."\(^{19}\)

One now questions as to what was the source of inspiration for the Mughal artist as regards to portraiture. Classical and medieval Indian art did not know portraiture in the respect of individualisation of features. Ancient Indian art knew of portrait statues, inscribed as such, but one all know that these sculptures represented human ideals and not individuals. Yet the Ajanta and elsewhere frescoes, these are scattered examples where one sees very careful and fruitful attempts at individualisation of features and captivating psychological expressions. One can state confidently that these were character studies made of not on the spot, then certainly after very careful and continuous observation. Its likely that the Indian artists in Akbar's atelier knew of this tradition and drew from this source.

But it appears that a more likely source was the contemporary European Renaissance portraiture. If the question of the medium is ignored for the time being, one notices the striking similarity of the ideological approach between Renaissance portrait painting and the Mughal portraiture. Both emphasize the three-dimensional volume, detailed and careful attention to details, the same stress laid on individualisation of features and the psychological characteristic.

The naturalism and treatment that characteristics Akbari landscape and portraiture also characteritics the presentation and treatment of animals, birds, flowers and foliage and the tones are to be found in the illustrations of the *Gulistan-i-Sa’di*. Truely, the concept of portraiture of birds and animals which later evoked great interest in Jahangir came directly from human

\(^{19}\) Azad, Muhammad Husain, *Darbar-i-Akbari*, Lahore, 1921.
portraiture literated by Akbar.

The Gulistan's example referred to here is perhaps one of the earliest attempts at portraiture and thus, is not a very sophisticated piece; but it was surely an excellent beginning, which therefore justifies the attention given to it.

**Tarikh-i-Alfi** *(1582-90 A.D.)*: It is a well known fact that the first day of the Muslim calendar is the day of the flight of the Prophet Mohammad. Akbar issued an order that stated that a new history of Islam should be written by calculating the dates from the date of the Prophet's death and not from the date of his flight. The new history was called *Tarikh-i-Alfi*, i.e., he wanted the reckoning of the date not as A.H, but as A.D.

From the Islamic point of view, this was a revolutionary step. One also estimates that Akbar could not have done this until he had an example of the reckoning of an era from the date of birth or death of a religious prophet. Clearly, the prophet whose example was taken was Christ and the reckoning Christianity. If one keeps in mind, Akbar's relationships with Portugese padres and christianity, his popularisation of christian myths and legends in his court, especially the atelier, this decision of Akbar is justified.

However, seven persons namely: Naqib Khan, Shah Fateullah, Hakim Hamarm, Hakim Ali, Haji Ibrahim Suhindi, Mirza Nizamuddin Ahmad and Badauni were entrusted the task of writing the historical events year by year, beginning from the day of the death of Prophet Muhammad and it was decided to end it by 1592 AD, the thousandth year of Prophet Mohammad's flight.

However, it appears that the manuscript never finished. The folios of the Imperial copy are to be found in the British Museum, the cleveland Museum and the Freer gallery. Most of the surviving illustrations belong to early Islamic history.

**Razm Nama** *(1582-89 A.D.)* Badauni in his *Muntaki-butta-warikh*, describes the event of 1582, among the remarkable events of this year to the translation

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20. World History.
of Mahabharata, which is one of the most famous of Hindu books, and contains all types of stories and moral reflections and advice, and matters relating to conduct and manners, religion, and science and accounts of the religions sects and mode of worship, in the form of a history of the wars of the tribes of Kurus and Pandus, who were the rulers of Hind, according to some more than 4000 years ago, and according to common account more than 80,000.

The Persian translation was completed by the team of Naqib Khan, Abudul Qadir Badauni and Sharkh Sultan Thanesari. As per the preface of this book by Abul Fazl, the work was finished in 1589 AD. Presently, it is preserved in the collection of the city Palace Museum, Jaipur. A handsome sum of rupees 4,00,000/- was paid to the illustrators. The manuscripts consists of 169 full size paintings on a variety of subjects and styles. The painters names are inscribed in the margin of the illustrations by the record officer's clerk.

There are four other pages from the Razm Namah's copy dated 1007AH/1598 AD in the Baroda Museum, illustrated by Dhannu, Pak, Naryan and Khaiman. According to Basil Gray, these pages are from a dispersed album sold in 1921 in London. Three folio in the prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, volume twelve in the collection of Sir Akbar Haidari, three at the British Museum and another three in the Victoria and Albert Museum are scattered folios of the same copy. It's unknown whether the folios of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are from the original copy or from some other. Anybody who has viewed the original Razm Namah
21 folios will be impressed by the Indianness that characterises these paintings. The reasons are not hard to decipher. Firstly, the myths and legends narrated in line and colour are basically Indian. The landscape, environs, the characters, apparel are all Indian. It is obvious that the artists must have made deliberate efforts to give an Indian feeling to the painting, visually.

Besides, there were more important reasons for the Indianness of form and feeling. In the Jaipur copy, there as about 14 miniatures which are painted

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horizontally instead of vertically on the broad side of the book’s spine. The paintings are therefore at right angles to the Persian text. This alignment is very similar to the traditional palm leaf manuscripts, a point made very ably by Basil Grapy.22

Apart from this, the composition of the paintings is rich and crowded, quite unlike the illustrations of the Hamza series but the more important factor is the three-dimensional character of the painting created by the use of shaded lines and colour tonality. The style appears to be a legacy of the remains of the Indian classical tradition of illustration. There are practically non-existent traces of other West-Indian or pre-Mughal Rajasthani painting of medieval India.

**Darab Namah** the illuminated manuscript of Persian legendary romance, copied and illustrated in Akbar’s court is now at the British Museum. It carries no date. But Basil Gray believes that *‘there is some reason to think that the text of the Darabnamah was written before 1583, but the larger number of miniatures would take several years to complete. Some of the painters whose names are written below the miniatures of the Darabnamah are of Lahore which became the principal imperial seat after the abandonment of Fatehpur Sikri in 1585-86”*.23

However, he did not give any reason as to why he feels that the illustration of the manuscript was completed at Lahore. Apart from this, one of paintings is by *Abdus Samad* and the better ones by artists like *Miskin, Bhurah, Nanha and Kanha* who were recruited very much earlier and were already established as artists and had worked on earlier manuscripts, there seems to be no reason to say that the illustrations of the *Darab Namah* could not be painted at Fatehpur Sikri Studio.

Mughal paintings are a class by themselves, unique as compared to all other styles and techniques of the pre-Mughal or contemporary Indian art. Akbar was the foremost Mughal monarch who paid special attention to the art of painting manuscripts following Mongol and Timurid examples.

22. Ashton, Leigh, the art of India and Pakistan (a commemorative catalogue of the exhibition held at the Royal Academy of arts, London, 1947-48, "Painting" by Basil Gray.
The work during his reign was mainly done by the Persian, Mir Saiyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, assisted by side artists. A few works seem to have to drawn by Basawan.

Akbar set up the Mughal school of Painting. The royal atelier was lavished upon under his own supervision. He preferred bright colours, like those seen in the Persian paintings. The human faces were drawn in profile and there was a lack of proportion in the delineation of human figures.

We still do not know whether the "Popular Mughal" paintings were made prior to Jahangir’s reign. This was not so with the Mughal paintings made for the court nobles. The royal library determined the parameters for the lesser establishment of the great Mughal officer. As these officers could not match the emperor’s resources, their production lacked in inspiration and sophistication. It was due to the modest works that the portrait of Mughal style and finesse reached the provincial courts where paintings drawn had the characteristic features of what in the recent years has been termed as the 'Popular Mughal'.

"It was under Akbar that a recognizable Mughal style was born. The product that emerged was new and of a different style which synthesized the Hindu Rajput and Muslim India elements with those of the royal safavid of Iran. All these traits seem to be equally favoured. Indian features reflected the attitude and likes with which the Mughals were already familiar. The Indian style was however more attractive because of their newness and the marked contrast with the ultra-sophistication and subtlety of the Iranian works in which colours were set onto the page like jewels in mounts and high drama conveyed by the raising of an eyebrow. His invention of portraiture and the shift of subjects, away from the religious and poetic texts common to both Hindus and Muslim traditions and towards historical scenes and natural history subjects are major innovations of Akbar. Paintings from the sixteenth century on the mid-seventeenth concentrated on naturalism and in particular on portraiture".

Very many accounts of Akbar’s importance to Indian arts have been penned

24. Provincial Mughal Painting.
25. M.C. Beach-grand Mughal Imperial Painting in India contributions by Stuart Cary Welch and glend, Lowry, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Inst; William Stone, Asia House gallery, New York, between April 19-June 10, 1979.
One recent work describes the Emperor’s relationship with his artist by saying that “he was an extremely creative person. Akbar inspired the painters who gave form to his vision.”

In another place, the Dastan-i-Amir Hamza or the Hamza Nama was characterized as: “A vision of the world through the eyes of a lion and the lion of course was Akbar.”

Abul Fazl also describes the excellence of the Hindu artist Daswant whom Akbar considered the best among his Indian painters. “One day, the eye of His majesty fell on him; his talent was discovered, in a short time, he surpassed all painters and became the first master of the age.”

The first primary manuscript commissioned by Akbar is the Hamza Nama, supervised by Mir Saiyid Ali and Abdus Samad. These paintings are absolutely different from any work previously done in Iran by these two Persian artists.

The comparison of a Hamza illustration of a Hamza painting with those done by Mir Saiyid Ali in Iran, is an excellent means to define the innovations with which Akbar is credited. The illustrations of Mir Saiyid Ali are the most familiar and often exhibited of all Persian paintings.

Abdus Samad, the second director of the project, was a little conventional in his approach prior to the time when according to Abu’l Fazl, “life was stirred to new heights by the alchemy of Akbar’s vision, and he turned from outer form to inner meaning.”

Akbar met the Europeans for the first time in 1572. The meetings were significant for arts, because Akbar was exposed and intrigued by European prints and paintings which were studied by his atelier. Dasawanth was specially important to Akbar, though he committed suicide.

With his death and the founding of the Din-i-Illahi, Akbar’s own attitude changed for the quieter, the more rational.

27. Stuart Cary Welch, the art of Mughal India precious object, New York Asia Society, 1963.
28. Ibid.
30. Religion Introduced by Akbar.
The record office established in 1574 was extremely important. Every happening in the Emperor’s life was noted down by 14 clerks.

Although without any date or name of scribe, the Darab Nama (155 miniatures) can be assigned to Lahore, shortly after Akbar moved there in 1585.

Akbar wanted his painters to capture the typical appearance of the painting’s subjects. To do this, he went completely against Islamic tenets which state that—“the painting of a picture of any living thing is strictly forbidden, and is one of the greatest sins because it implies a likeness to the creature of God”.

As a sort of reply to this, one day, at a private party, Akbar remarked, “there are many that hate paintings, but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, painter, in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the giver of life and will thus increase in knowledge”.

Akbar Nama the illustrations of the Akbarnama form the last group of the miniatures painted at Akbar’s court. Only three copies of the Akbar Nama are known to exist presently:—In the Sir Chester Beatty collection, the victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington Calarke MSS No.117; and the British Museum, London.

The Akbar Nama is a detailed history of Akbar’s reign comprising Akbar’s birth, genealogy of Timurids, reign of Babar and Humayun. Akbar’s reign from the mid 17th year to the end of the 46th. The Chester Beatty copy was purchased from Quaritch in 1923. Probably this is one of the volumes carried off into Persia by Nadir Shah from the Royal Library of Delhi.

“The whole manuscript has been rebound and the folios are set with broad margins of paper which is of a lighter shade than the original sheets”.

The manuscript which is at the Victoria and Albert Museum has survived and is in a relatively good condition though mutilated towards the end. It

has 461 folios and Emperor Jahangir's autograph. Those of the miniature are full page and a few a double spreads. Margins are plain with a band of lines edging the miniatures displaying names of 52 painters.

Like the *Razam Nama*, the illustrations of the Akbarnama are majorly creations of joint artists.

Several artists were employed at the court to accomplish the great treasure of Mughal miniature a part of which is known to this day. Abu’l Fazl has mentioned a brief list of artists comprising of seventeen names only.

Under the present study, a few selected manuscripts belonging to different periods and varying in their themes i.e. fables, literary and historical works have been taken. These include *Anwar-i-Suhaili, Diwan-i-Hafiz, Razm Nama, Trikik-i-Baluri, Akbar Nama* and *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuriya*. Several copies of these manuscripts contained with illustrations have survived from which it is evident that a number of copies were prepared on demand. Subsequently, the dates of their completion varied. The manuscripts were adorned with rich bindings and miniatures. A lot of money must have been incurred in the work of illuminating these manuscripts.

For example, the *Razma Namah* with it's preface dated AD 1588, now at Jaipur is said to have cost 40,000 sterling, and colonel Traima estimates that his copy of the *Ramayana*, now a Washington, "must have cost quite half that sum".

"The manuscript of Diwan-i-Hafiz in the collection of Sir Chester Beatty is the earliest dated manuscript known to us. The date of the colophon name of the copiest is given Abd-al-Samad".

"Format of the present copy is 14x90 cm and the written surface measures 7.5 cm x 4.5 cm. A full page contains two columns of 9 lines. It is written in beautiful nastaliq style on light brown paper, folio 7 contains full page miniatures. Throughout the volume, there are a number of scattered columns of birds illustrations"
generally drawn in pairs and among the foliage. Among them are the blue jay, the green pigeon etc".

The illustrated chronicles have proved of greater interest of which the miniatures of *Tuzuk-i-Babur* have attracted the most of the critics.

It may be taken the richest collection of Akbari art as we come across the greatest number of its copies, survived to this day. The original member called *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* was written in the Turkish language and covers the biography of its author from his childhood.

Of the several translations of the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* that by *Abdul Rahim Khankhanan*, the scholar-general of the Akbar’s court is the most complete and best known. It was made and presented finally to the king in 1590. In 1583, however one *Paiyanda Hasan* of Ghazna and *Mohd. Quli* of Hisar had taken up the work of translation privately.

These were not completed and the originals are in the Libraries of the *British Museum* and the *Bodelian Library* respectively.

The Mughal miniatures on the whole or even those of the time of Akbar are entirely bereft representations of the lower sections of society, the middle class man, the cultivators, saints etc. In fact, the illustrations of the well-known “dastans” are extensive stores of information relating to the common man. To these books, the artist was indebted in so far as he drew action for a seal.

**Ramayan (1589 A.D.):** The emperor commissioned Persian translations of the two great Hindu epics in Sanskrit (*Mahabharata and Ramayana* in Jaipur) and his artists worked on illustrated versions of them alongside the historical works. The manuscripts are on the grandest scale with an average of 150 full paintings each.

**The Nymph Rambha Approaches Visvamitra:** This is a miniature from a manuscript of the Persian translation of the *Ramayana*. According to a long
Persian inscription on the flyleaf by its erstwhile owner, the great general and scholar Abd ar-Rahim, Muhammad Bairam, the Khan-e Khanan, it was made for him as a copy of Akbar's own manuscript. The volume now look the final pages, but the inscription states that it had originally 135 paintings. Of these 130 are preserved though some in a damaged or worn condition. The flyleaf carries various further entries and two seals of officials of Shah Jahan, one with the date corresponding to 1638/39. In 1890 the volume formed part of an exhibition held in London of "Indo-Persian" pictures and manuscripts belonging to Col. H.B. Hanna. In 1907 the manuscript was bought by Charles Lang Freer of Detroit and was given by him together with his large collection of Oriental and American art to be part of the national museum bearing his name in Washington.

According to the inscription on the flyleaf, the manuscript was started in 1587/88. As Bada'uni completed his translation only in 1591, this would mean, if correct, that each part was at once copied and illustrated after the translator had finished his work. In any case the manuscript took several years to complete as the Khan-e-Khanan states that it was finished only in A.D. 1598/99. The miniatures are possibly in a slightly earlier style as they copy Akbar's version. While the manuscript was being prepared, the Khan-e-Khanan was Governor of Jaunpur, then of Multan and Bhakkar, from where he conquered Sind. Later on the directed military operations in the Deccan. It seems, however, that this has little bearing on the solution of the problem where the manuscript could have been made, as the Imperial model would have hardly been taken to a more distant place and was probably closely followed.

The 130 miniatures are in various styles and of different quality, and they range from rather simple paintings to most elaborate ones. The one here illustrated has no signature or attribution. Although the combination of cypress and almond trees, the forms of the rocks and the body of water in the foreground are originally Persian themes, the all-over treatment, the colour and spirit of the painting are Indian. The juxtaposition of the two
figures in the verdant landscape is rather dramatic, especially in view of
the bright, hot colours of the would-be seducer's garments and the ring of
flames which, though it being summer, the ascetic has lighted as a form
of penance.

*Hanuman carries the mountain of healing herbs:* this miniature shows how
Hanuman brings the top of a Himalayan mountain with healing plants, so
that the killed and wounded of the army of monkeys and bears would be
restored to life. The two-dimensional and decorative treatment has a Persian
quality, but the iconography and the lyricism of the landscape are quite
Indian. Hanuman, bounding into the sky, the restrained yet varied delineation
of nature and the delicate colours combine to make this an unusually
appealing painting.

This miniature is one of the 50 in the volume with an attribution at the
lower edge, on the protective leaf covering the miniature, or in one case
in the painting itself. The following list gives the names of twelve artists
together with the numbers of their paintings: Fadil, Kaleh Bahar, Kamal,
Muhan, Mushaffaq, Nadim, Nadir, Qasim, Sadi, Shyam Sunder, Yusuf Ali
and Zain al-Abidin. Three further names are illegible. In each case only
one name is given. Only five or six of the artists are known from other
manuscripts, some of the names are common or, in the case of Shyam, it
is here combined with Sundar, it is therefore uncertain whether these are
the artists already known. Also, none of them occurs in the list of 17 artists
mentioned in the Ain-i-Akbari. Unlike the attributions in practically all
other Akbari manuscripts, here more names are Muslim. Finally, while the
inscription of the Khan-e-Khanan on the flyleaf mentions no specific artists,
it states that "the work was finished under the supervision of Maula
Shikabi Imami". This was a much appreciated poet; as such he is dealt
with in the A'in-e-Akbari and mentioned in the Ma'athir al-Umara'.

These data lead one to the following conclusions: the Khan-e-Khanan
apparently employed mostly different artists from those working in the
Imperial studios; he recruited them primarily among his coreligionists (possibly because he was not induced quite as strongly as Akbar to do otherwise out of religious and political consideration); this being a minor workshop which furthermore took the imperial manuscript as model, it was not thought necessary to have two or three artists join forces to get a complex, versatile and highly finished picture; and finally, it was, for the same reasons, considered sufficient to have a well-liked poet as head of the studio, rather than a professional scribe or painter, as, e.g., Bihzad had been in the library of Shah Tahmasp Safavi.

While several other Hindu classics were translated into Persian on Akbar’s instigation, the Ramayana must have been particularly dear to him, as shown by the fact that he issued a half mohur gold coin with the figures of Rama and Sita, the heroes of the epic.

**Anwar-i-Suhaili (1570 A.D.):** This manuscript, a book of fables, dated 1570 AD and belongs to the collection of the school of oriental and African studies, University of London. It is important in the sense that this is the only illustrated manuscript of the early Mughal period which is dated and shows the starting of Indian naturalism introduced into a Persian background. The flush-cut composition is the principal characteristic of these painting as can be seen in the following two selected folios.

1) *Monkey and bears.*

2) *Monkey.*

It seems that initially for the text matter some more space on the left side of the folios was given by the margin drawer, but perhaps the space for the requisite illustration was later felt to be insufficient. Consequently the original middle margin were erased. The impression still exist and can be clearly seen. But in both the compositions two major elements namely the landscape and the animal figuration need to be noticed. The general treatment of hillocks, the use of decorative as well as spray type trees...
going beyond the margin provides enough proof to show that the art
appear to be influenced by Persian traditional norms.

In the context of human figuration there is the figure of a lady in the centre
of the first picture which is traditionally rendered in the Champachasika
style with the transparent odhini, blouse and skirt, the slight modeling of
the face and troso similar to the Hamza’s type. The appearance of big ear
rings signifies the fashion in vogue in Eastern U.P. As such it is supposed
that the artist belonged to the same region and was conversant with the
indigenous, provincial style of painting.

*Basawan*, in his composition depicts a synthetic manner in using the
contemporary Hamza’s style and fusing it western chiarascuro. This can be
particularly noted in the shading of the figure holding a page, in the
centre. However *Basawan* could not maintain a dynamic character by a
imparting certain actions and gestures to the figure in his composition. The
faces and other limbs are harsh and arranged and its lacks maturity in the
general treatment of figures. But the monkey is painted in quite a naturalistic
way. This affect can also be seen in the depiction of a hovering curtain.
The folds are rendered such that they indicate European inspiration. This
makes obvious the fact Basawan was inclined towards naturalistic
representation of both animate and unanimate objects. A close analysis of
the paintings reveal that the general atmosphere and treatment are simpler
compared to those in the persian classical tradition. Numerous decorative
motifs of persian painting have been ignored and very little effort appears
to have been made to produce a pictorial affect.

The obvious aims of the *Anwar-i-SuhaUi* artist seemed to provide the
viewers with paintings of close nature study in as naturalistic manner as
possible. The treatment of the sky is frankly in the wester tradition, the
tonal and textural quality of the tree trucks, effects of light and shades in
the lives are naturalistic and in the western Renaissance and the Indian
classical tradition. The painting possess greater depth, specially the second

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painting and an ambitious attempt as been made to maintain a continuous 3-D effect.

The animals have been all through been depicted as close to life as possible, by use of modelling and tonal values. Here to the glaze and intensity of persian tradition have been quite subdued by the use of white mixed colours, resulting in a shooting, sobre effect.

**Ayar-i-Danish:** Twenty years passed since the preparation of the *Anwar-i-Suhaili* of AD 75 and the following of *Ayar-i-Danish.* In the mean time, the atelier has been exposed to various influences and experiment. It is not surprising that the *Ayar-i-Danish* of AD 1596 had taken long strides ahead of the earlier manuscript in the presentation and technique of its illustrations. The painting show workmanship of a very high order. Mature draughtmanship, skillful composition and striking colours. Generally the main episode is highlighted in the foreground and the receding background recreates the surrounding in which the principal event takes place. For instance we see a farmer tilling land, a women carrying water and further the house of a town or a range of hill. This concept of perspective is clearly due to the European influence which the Mughal artist incorporated into his paintings. In some paintings images of animals and human being from earlier manuscript have been adopted with a certain amount of improvisation.

During Jahangir reign, the number of artist were much more than what was required in the royal atelier, hence the Mughal trained painters of inferior merit had to work as commercial free lancers without regular patterns.

**Tutinamah (1560-1568 AD)** is a romantic composition centering round the story of a parrot. It was written by Ziauddin in the early 14th century and copied in the court in 1560’s. It appears that three copies of this manuscript are extant one in the collection of the *Cleveland Museum of Art*, the other in the *Chester Beatty Library* and the third in the *Library of Baron ES*...
Feuillet de Conches. The Baron’s copy contains 103 miniatures. According to Gray, the Chester Beatty manuscript is also lavishly illustrated and the range of colours appear to be more Indian than Persian. Here, the following three illustrations are reproduced from the Cleveland copy.

i) The lady talking to a parrot.

ii) A fowler extolling the virtues of a parrot by Basawan.

iii) Within a walled enclosure, monkey bites a young man by Daswant.

Compositionally, the first painting frankly reminds us of the painting of the Laurachanda-Charuapanchasika manuscript of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. It is symmetrical in arrangement; the pavillions with projecting cornices; the placement of decorative pots etc. follow convention. In the second painting also, the artist-Basawan, seems to have followed practically the same architectural feature and compositional scheme, though Basawan’s treatment is much more sophisticated than that of the paintings of Laurchanda-Chaurapanchasika manuscripts. It is quite probable that before joining Akbar’s atelier, Basawan belonged to the earlier indigenous tradition.

But Daswant, the painter of the third illustration appears to have been inspired more by the Persian tradition, since he worked under the direct supervision of the Persian Master Abdus Samad from his very early life. The decorative and geometrical elements in his composition are handled very efficiently and depict professional skill. One fact is these paintings which deserve special mention is that the architectural setting is treated in a flat two-dimensional manner, without proper consideration of perspective.

The presentation of landscapes, generally, stick to the Persian tradition. This is very clear in Daswant’s painting where the sky is hired in gold and trees are treated quite decoratively. But Basawan renders the sky and trees somewhat differently; he appears to have adopted the contemporary
European manner in the rendering of the sky and the trees in the background.

As concerning the human figuration, there is a figure of a lady in the centre of the first picture which is conventionally painted quite like the Chaurapanchasika style with the transparent odhni, blouse and skirt. The slight modelling of the face and toiso is in the Hamzah style. The big earrings indicate the fashion in vogue in Eastern U.P. As such, it is assumed that the artist was of the same region and was familiar with the indigenous style of painting. Basawan in his composition follows a synthetic manner in using the contemporary Hamzah style and synthesising it with the Western light and shade treatment. This specially noticeable in the standing figure holding a cage, in the centre. Daswanf was however not as proficient as Basawan, yet he tried to maintain a dynamic character by imparting actions and gestures to the figures in his composition.

It may, though, be observed that the faces and other limbs are not supple and ill arranged and are deficient in maturity in the general treatment of figures. But the monkey is painted in quite a naturalistic manner. The importance of the naturalistic effect is also witnessed by a hovering curtain shown by Basawan in his picture. The folds of the curtain are rendered in such a way that it appears to be inspired by the European Renaissance paintings. To correspond with the wind bending a tree has been introduced at the right of the artist and his keen study of nature. It is, this, clear the from the very beginning of his artistic career. Basawan was biased towards naturalistic representation of objects whether it was animate or inanimate.

MY FINDING AND CRITICAL EVALUATION

The mughal painting school, which we know today was established by Akbar. It was he who led to the amalgamation of the provincial Indian styles of painting with the existing Persian school to result in a unique and enchanting painting style-the mughal school.
Akbar set up the royal atelier recruiting Indian and Persian artists. He personally supervised their work and lavished wealth and titles on his talented artists.

Akbar pioneered manuscript illustration. The most well known being the *Hamza Nama, Akbar Nama, Gulistan of Sadi, Darab Nama, Ain-i-Akbari, Din-i-Ilahee* etc. Several Hindu manuscripts were also illustrated. His interest in Indian literature contributed to the changing of the Mughal school from its Persian beginning into an indigenous tradition.

The atelier was provided with the best of paper and other materials. Colours and pigments were sourced from natural resources and processed. Painting tools were made using animal hair, quills etc. gold and silver were also generously used to impart a very rich look to the manuscripts.

The most outstanding feature of the Mughal artist's achievement has been the expertise with which the technique derived from completely varied sources were fused into a harmonious whole. The paintings were essentially Persian, synthesized with Indian and European Renaissance styles.

The styles adopted during Akbar's reign were carried on and further developed under Shah Jahan. Presently a few manuscripts of differing periods and of various themes have survived.

We find that unlike the general trend of Indian art, the Mughal miniature does not portray spiritual and emotional matters. This objectivity is the basic aesthetic parameter of the Mughal miniature, which illustrated memoirs, historical monographs, poetry and legends from Persian and Sanskrit literature.

It is interesting to note that though the Mughal miniatures tried to depict reality, nature at its best, true representation in portraiture,
it rarely showed a female figure. Even for those seem their authencity can be seldom verified.

The Mughal court painters excelled in their art. Their delicate miniatures teemed with life, flora and fauna. The brush strokes and details are difficult to see with the naked eye. This can be seen in all the manuscripts illustrated folios.

The *Hamza Nama*, which is a repertoire of the adventures and romantic escapades of Hamza, the prophet's uncle, show a dramatic precedence of the event, broad handling, deep expressive colours and a love of landscape and architecture.

The illustration of the *Tuti Nama* further increases our understanding of the mughal school. Akbar got a new Persian version of the "Ayari-Danish" to be made so as to be understood by numerous readers. The *Tarikh-i-Khandan-i-Timuria* (c. 1573/74 AD) a detailed history of Timur and his descendants upto the 22nd reignal of Akbar (1578 AD), is calligraphed in a beautiful and bold Nastaliq script with 112 large paintings, which were drawn by 53 artists. The *Gulistan-i-Sadi* (1581 AD) was calligraphed and painted in 1581 AD at Fatehpur Sikri. This manuscript is to be specially mentioned for its lavish gold decoration and its portrayal and treatment of flora and fauna.

The Gulistan also shows a couple of figures in portraiture. Portrait painting happens to be one of the greatest heights that Mughal paintings scaled in Indian art history. The mughal emperors had great interest in portraiture and Akbar repeatedly sat for his portraiture as well as of the grandees. As a consequence a unique portrait album was built-up.

Even in historical narratives illustrations, depicting crowded court scenes, one can clearly see the utmost care and attention with
which the individual faces and features were drawn and painted, drawing out both physiological and psychological characteristics which made the individuals drawn identifiable.

Bihzad and Sultan Mohammad were superior Persian painters. Broadly speaking, however, Mughal portraiture differs greatly from Persian. From the very beginning, one notes a clear liking for the 3-D volume in portraiture. The portraits objective is not to depict types but aims to represent certain individuals with careful efforts towards individual forms and features and typical psychological characteristics.

Abu'l Fazl states that Basawan was one of the most skilled portrait artist in Akbar's atelier.

As concerning the source of inspiration for portraiture, one can confidently state that the Indian artists of Akbar's court drew from the Ajanta frescoes.

Thus portraiture was extremely popular. What we now know as the 'Popular Mughal', is the fusion of the court's style of portraiture with the local styles of the courts it later spread to.

Another Hindu manuscript which caught Akbar's fancy was the great epic-Mahabharata, termed the 'Razm Namah' (1582-89 AD). It's folios depict the unmistakable stamp of indianness. It's obvious that the artist deliberately made efforts to visually impart an Indian feeling. The use of shaded lines and colour tonality give a 3-D effect and the style seems to be a legacy of the Indian classical tradition of illustration.

The Darab Nama (c. 1585 AD), a Persian legendary romance was copied and illustrated by master painters at Akbar's court.
The illustrations of Akbar Nama formed the last group of the miniatures painted at Akbar's court. The Akbar Nama is a detailed study of Akbar's reign consisting of Akbar's birth, genealogy of Timurids, reign of Babur and Humayun; Akbar's reign from the mid 17th year to the end of the 46th.

The miniatures are full page and a few are double spreads and are mainly creations of joint artists. Several artists cooperated to render this manuscript with enchanting miniatures.

Akbar's great vision, astute judgement of talent and spendthriftness ensured an atelier of unsurpassed talent. His painters individually and jointly, painted, fusing various techniques, producing masterpieces which entice to-date.

Thus, I conclude by stating that under the great monarch Akbar unique paintings which were a class by themselves were produced, different from pre-mughal or contemporary art. It was Akbar under whom a recognizable mughal style was born. Thus, his contribution to Mughal art can never be underestimated.