Chapter 2

Wild Life in Mughal Paintings: Manuscript Illustrations, Album Pictures and Margin Paintings
WILD LIFE IN MUGHAL PAINTINGS: MANUSCRIPT ILLUSTRATIONS, ALBUM PICTURES AND MARGIN PAINTINGS

The paintings of Mughal period depict wild life in manuscript illustrations, album pictures and margin paintings. These miniatures exhibit a great variety of flora and fauna and provide rich source material for the history of wild life. The paintings of medieval period generated at the Mughal court, exhibit a great variety of flora and fauna. The painters of this period carefully observed nature and especially the habitat of the birds and animals.

During the early period, i.e., before sixteenth century, naturalistic drawings of flowers and plants or of animals and birds as individual studies were not in vogue. But during the late 16th century, the full page characteristic studies of flowers and plants as well as animals and birds appear besides their picturisation in groups, in hunting scenes, etc. During the time of Jahangir (r. 1605-1627), the paintings are, in general, derived from the natural life. These studies of wild life are the result of the most careful and intimate observation of the subject.

Illustration Manuscripts and Album Pictures:

The manuscript paintings are in conformity of the text and depict a theme related to an event. Themes related to hunting, animal-fights and trapping of birds and animals, etc., appear in context of their references in the manuscript. The hunting of animals was a royal game, therefore it is the main subject of several Mughal miniatures. These miniatures exhibit a great variety of animals. Even though in such compositions the animals are drawn in
groups on small scale, these are always identifiable. Besides, various species of plants and flowers are also depicted in the Manuscript illustrations. The album pictures of flora and fauna mainly developed during the reign of Jahangir. Jahangir further encouraged to the already existing importance of pictures as wild life. A large number of pictures of birds and animals, mostly ascribed to Abul Hasan, Govardhan, Inayat, Mansur, have survived. All of them served under Jahangir. We are told that in 1612, Jahangir ordered Mansur to draw the Likeness of a falcon brought from Persia.¹

The independent studies of birds and animals are depicted in profile and generally single in composition, dominating the picture plane. These album pictures, accommodating the central theme more spaciously, allow the maximum details. The drawing of single animal in composition is not violent in action, but it is representative of the technical finesse presented with refined workmanship in the album pictures Jahangir's deep interest in birds, animals and flowers opened a new prospect for the Mughal artists. On account of the emperor's keenness to have a correct pictorial record of the wonders of plant and animal life, which everybody had seen, the artists, who accompanied on his journeys or campaigns, were specially commissioned to paint for him any rare bird or animal which was brought to court. Under Akbar these subjects had received only a secondary place in painting. But under Jahangir the paintings of flower, birds and animals absorbed a whole page, drawing attention to themselves in their own right. In album pictures the figures occupy whole page.

Here my attempt is to deal with important themes which are illustrated in major Manuscripts, i.e., Baburnama, Akbarnama, Anwar-i-suhaili & Ajaib-al-Makhluqat which contain representative examples of birds and animals pictures in addition to the flora of India. These are the important themes include hunting scenes, animal-fights, trapping of birds and animals, Portraits: single or in groups both.

In Manuscript illustrations hunting was one of the main themes and during Akbar's reign the painters mostly concentrated on the hunting scenes. The hunting themes seem handy to the Mughal painters. Keen observation of nature, vivid portrayal of the animal life, violent action reported in human and animal figures, variety of postures, minute depiction of details and the natural surroundings characterize the hunting scenes. The animals belonging to different species are crammed in one place in a qamargah (a hunting circle). Among the animals the deer specially the black-buck has fascinated the painters most and has been sparingly depicted in the outdoor scenes. In the Baburnama manuscripts there are many paintings which illustrate hunting event. An illustration of the Baburnama (f. 283 b & 284a, B.M. London) depicts a qamargah hunt in which Babur riding on the horse back is giving a blow of sword on the neck of Kiang (wild ass). Babar writes that “on this occasion he galloped after a wild ass sot off two arrows one after another but it did not harmed the ass after that he chopped with his sword at the nape of the neck behind the ears and cut throw the wind pipe, this stopped him and after some time, it fell down and died.” In this painting there are also shown

2 Hamid Sulaiman, Miniatures of the Baburnama, Tashkent, 1970, pl. 42.
other animals like deer, *nilgai*, jackal and numerous species of antelopes which were hunted. The *qamargah* is entirely surrounded by men, and the system is well organized. There are a number of hunters, or the helpers who made efforts to drive the animals by shouting and on other ways in to the hunting circle. (plate 1)

Another illustration of the *Baburnama* (f. 305b, B.M., London) depicts a hunting scene where Babur is shown riding on a white horse and looking at the hunted rhinoceros. A large number of hunters and attendants accompanied him in hunting expeditions. About his hunting campaign, Babur also writes, that on 16th February he went to hunt the rhinoceros on the sides of Swati which was a place of called *Karg-Khana* (rhino-home) by the people.4 Here only a few rhinoceros were discovered since the jungle was dense and they did not come out of it. Suddenly we noticed a calf and started chasing. A number of arrows were shot at it but it rushed into the near jungle, after that the jungle was fired but that same rhinoceros was not found. Then another calf was killed as it layed. Scorched by the fire each person participated in this hunt took a share of the spoil. After leaving Swati, they wandered about a good deal; it was the bed time prayer when we got to camp.5 (plate 2)

Next to it, another *Baburnama* (f. 243, N.M., New Delhi) painting depicts a *qamargah* hunting scene where Babur riding on the horseback is occupied with hunting deer. The emperor is shown using bows and arrows while a large number of companions are also enjoying this *qamargah* hunt.6

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5 *Baburnama*, op.cit., p.378
6 Randhawa, op.cit., pl. 81.
Babur describes this event as follows, “On Saturday 29th we hunted the hill between ‘Ali-Shang and Alangar. One hunting circle having been made on the ‘Ali-Shang side, another on the Alangar in which deer’s were driven down off the hill, and many were killed. Returning from hunting, we dismounted in a garden belonging to the Maliks of Alangar and there had a party”. Apart from this, there are few other animals in the painting like, jungle cats, jackals, and antelopes, etc. (plate 3)

A miniature of Baburnama (f. 193, N.M., New Delhi) depicts a hunting scene represents Babur hunting different kinds of animals on while riding on the horseback. He is shown hunting a black buck with a spear and his attendants also chasing deer and wild ass with their bows and arrows. Babur writes, Sherim Taghai and other observers of Kiyik (wild ass) in Mughalistan said with surprise. “Even in Mughalistan we have seen few kiyik so fat, I shot another wild ass, most of the wild asses and deer brought down in that hunt was fat, but not one of them was so fat as the one I first killed”.

A miniature from the Akbarnama (I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 92/117, V.A. Museum, London) depicts Akbar hunting the black bucks and deer with the help of trained cheetah. In the upper portion of the painting, a horse rider is also shown with a trained cheetah seated on flat wooden platform fastened at horseback. In the lower portion of the painting a bullock cart is further shown carrying the trained cheetah. A few other huntsmen are also shown and they appear busy in hunting campaign. (plate 4)

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7 Baburnama, op.cit., p.357.
8 Randhawa, op.cit., pl.65.
9 Baburnama, op.cit., p.380.
10 Geeti Sen, Paintings from the Akbarnama, New Delhi, 1984, p. 46, pl. 10.
Another miniature of *Akbarnama* (I.S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 17/117, V.A. Museum, London) depicts a scene in which Akbar’s cavalcade was attacked by the tigers near the Narwar. The painting shows the whole dangerous scene in which a tiger advanced towards Akbar and was about to fall upon the emperor. But the emperor attacked on the tiger and cut its neck with a strong blow of his sword. Meanwhile a group of men in the accompaniment of Akbar attacked the tigers with matchlocks, swords, daggers, bows and arrows, etc. The entire scene seems to be like a battle ground between man and animals (tigers).11

A double page illustration of the *Akbarnama* (I.S. 2/1897, Acc. 55-56/177, V. A. Museum, London) depicts a *qamargah* hunt. It represents Akbar riding on a horse, and hunting the black buck, deer, antelopes, blue bull, ram wild fox, rabbit and asses also near Lahore. There are some trained *cheetah* as well shown falling upon the deer and black buck. A horse rider and a bullock cart driver are further shown in the lower portion of the painting. There are a number of other animals too. The entire hunting ground is encircled by the commoners.12 (plate 5)

Another miniature of the *Akbarnama* (I. S. 2/1896, Acc. No. 84/117, V. A., Museum, London) shows Akbar hunting the wild asses (*garkhors*) in the desert.13 In the middle portion of the painting Akbar, shown resting for a while seems very exhausted after the hunting campaign. His companions seem to be worried about the condition of the emperor, and are depicted offering him some water to drink. While on the other side hunted wild asses

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11 Ibid., p. 68, pl. 20.
12 Ibid., p. 100-01, pl. 39-40.
13 Ibid., p. 136, pl. 60.
are shown lying on the ground. The marks of the bullet injury can be seen clearly on their bodies. Abul Fazl writes that, "the emperor having the gun in his hand approached for hunting wild asses when he saw the wild asses then he advanced on feet towards them. He killed the asses with his gun but soon because of the thrust he became speech less, all the companions were worried but soon the miracle happened and few divine persons appeared with water for his majesty then thank giving offered to God".14 (plate 6)

A miniature of the *Jahangirnama* (Ms. Douce or a.i, f. 33r., Bodleian Library) also depicts a hunting scene in which a lion is mauling are of Jahangir’s huntsman and the emperor is about to spear the lion through the back, his elephant rushing forward and endeavoring to help with his trunk.15 A sword man, perhaps Prince Parwiz, has already struck the lion with a cutting blow. Other horsemen gallop to the rescue, and the victim’s horse runs loose across the background. A person who is Sohrab Khan, he is on the elephant with Jahangir, carries a bow and arrow instead of a sword, and Price Parwiz normally appears on horseback, but here is on foot. There is also depicted different variety of animals like deer, ram, rabbit, cat, wild dogs and duck also. (plate 7)

Another miniature of the *Jahangirnama* (Ed. win Binney, 3rd collection, Sen Diego) again depicts a hunting campaign, of Jahangir, and the Prince Daniyal is shown as surveying a pair of nilgai shot by him. A trained leopard mauls a horned blackbuck from which he is about to be lured by its

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keeper. A corps of attendants stands behind the prince, same with swords, sticks, small game, cages and some with refreshments.\textsuperscript{16} (plate 8)

An illustration of \textit{Padshahnama} by Balchand (f. 134r., Royal library, Windsor castle) depicts a horrible scene in which Shah Jahan attacking a lion with his sword that has thrown down Anup Singh. It seems that emperor Shah Jahan is on a hunting expedition and there are many attendants and horse riders are well equipped with their weapons like, gun, sword, and bows and arrows.\textsuperscript{17}

In another miniature of \textit{Padshahnama} attributed to Hashim (f.219v, Royal Library, Windsor castle) the emperor Shah Jahan seated on an elephant’s back is shown shooting lions near Palam. Here he is accompanied with Shah Shuja and Dara Shikoh. They are engaged in a hunt of a lion, standing with its female and two cubs. They are using arms including gun, spear etc. The hunting spot, a jungle scene is full of trees, plants and bushes, etc.\textsuperscript{18}

Another hunting scene from \textit{Padshahnama} (f. 164r, Royal Library, Windsor castle) Shah Jahan is depicted hunting deer with his gun near Palam. The land is uneven and crowded identifiable species of trees.\textsuperscript{19}

An another miniature of the \textit{Padshahnama} (f. 11A. 27, Chester Beatty Library, London) depicts Emperor Aurangzeb hunting \textit{nilgais} at night on a hilly plain covered with trees and bushes from which a range of blue hills

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\textsuperscript{16} A.K. Das, \textit{Splendour of Mughal Painting}, Bombay, 1896, pl. IV.
\textsuperscript{17} S.C. Welch, A Schimmel, M.L., Swietochowski and W. Thackston, \textit{The Emperor’s Album, Images of Mughal India}, New York, 1987, pl. 18. p. 290
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pl. 20. p. 291
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pl. 21. P. 291
rises in the distance. His party has apparently come from a large city in the upper left with elegant mosques and palaces. He kneels on a red carpet supporting the barrel of his matchlock on the shoulders of two squatting huntsman. Two other huntsmen below hold male and female decoy nilgais on tethers. The emperor has just shot a male nilgai on the shoulder which rolls and falls as other members of the herd flee in panic. At a distance in the background, the master of the hunt and another officer await emperor’s command. In the background there is another group of huntsmen with a third decoy animal and a large imperial entourage of carts, horses, and elephants.20 (plate 9)

Another illustration of the Padshahnama (11A.28.C.B.Library, London) a fence of netting runs across the hunting ground with huntsmen stationed along the circumscribed area. In the foreground enclosure, the Emperor Aurangzeb, seated on an elephant is a sat called howdah with a young prince and four courtiers, aims his matchlock at a lion and the lioness isolated from their group. Besides, the royal elephant two more elephants also elaborately caparisoned carry four additional officers. In front of the party, a line of spearmen squatting on buffaloes, charging the pair of lions. All along the enclosure’s edge, other lions and antelopes are seeking escape; two lions have attacked elephants ridden by huntsmen. The imperial hunting camp with its many tents can be seen in the distance beyond the fence.21 (plate 10)

The Anwar-i-Suhaili which is an illustrated Persian abridgement of the Sanskrit text Panchatantra also presents a glimpse of the wild animals and

21 Ibid., p. 499., Pl. 4.12
birds. Its illustrations based on wonderful fables represent the habitat on animals, their appearance and a lot of other things of the animal world. During the sixteenth century emperor Akbar took keen interest to in the illustrations of the fables of animal world.

A miniature of *Anwar-i-Suhaili* (f.1.113, C.B. Library, Dublin) presents a beautiful green landscape in which a lion condemns "*Dimna*". The lion and the jackal both seem engaged in a serious discussion. The lion shown seated in a majestic pose reflects his royalty, while the jackal stands before him, seems to be very obedient. In the midground *Dimna* is seen chained, while herons in a pool and frolicking rabbits appear in the foreground. Apart from all these things a number of different trees also identifiable. In the right side of the lower portion there are two birds and two trees of dates.²² (plate 11)

In another miniature of *Anwar-i-Suhaili* (1.133, C.B.Library, Dublin) a crow sitting on a tree seems to address a huge assembly of different birds like vulture, parrot, peacock, duck, cock, crane and many more. Most of the birds are in pair. Some pairs of these birds are shown flying high in the sky and a few are in a position as to descend to attend the assembly. The background is lush green and the depiction of the birds is realistic and they can be easily identified.²³ (plate 12) Another painting (f.1.146), shows a large number of crows assembled near a molly hill where a owl shown perched on the top of the hill in a very miserable condition and a huge flock of crows watches the fire lighted up in front of the owl’s cave.²⁴ (plate 13) A miniature (f.1.157)

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²² Ibid., p. 82, pl. 8.
²³ Ibid., p. 87, pl. 9.
²⁴ Ibid., p. 91, pl. 146.
from the same manuscript depicts the story of a loyal mongoose. In the upper portion of the painting, the composition shows the mongoose has already killed the cobra inside house near the child lying safe in cradle, and at bottom, at entrance of the house, the mongoose is shown beaten to death by his rash master who holds up a brick.\textsuperscript{25} (plate 14)

Trapping of birds is a theme which has been repeatedly drawn by different artists in varying layout and setting in the different Manuscripts. A Manuscript of importance was illustrated again and again whenever it was so needed. Several copies of different manuscript have survived to this day. For instance the numerous copies of the Akbarnama, Baburnama, Anwar-i-Suhali, Razmnama, Diwan-i-Hafiz and Ramayan etc. are known to exist in the different art collections of the world. These contain many miniatures representing common themes, though they invariably differ in their art of representation. The individuality and skill of each artist does not fail to express itself in the treatment of objects. This is more clearly observed through comparison of duplicate reproductions of the same theme. Thirty six of such miniatures are known to us in the three copies of the Baburnama. One theme which is common to all that is the “bird trappers at work” is taken here to explain the above observation.

The one composition at the Fog Art Museum has also on this theme. This is the finest example of the bird trapping. In this painting the some fowlers, are depicted, engaged in catching the birds, and their methods and implements are also shown. (plate 15) In the miniature from Moscow MS of

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 94, pl. 1.159
the Baburnama, the foreground is entirely covered by a net with birds trapped in its holes. The four bird trappers engaged in the work are shown in an expectant mood on the left margin. The rest of the space is filled with rocks and sparsely situated trees. It is an intelligent composition is so far as the main object required to be shown dominates the whole scene while the complement Aries are kept in the background.26 Another composition of bird catching is found in the National Museum Baburnama bearing the name of artist Bhag (f. 132). This is also the finest example of the bird catching. (plate 16) This is a very colourful composition and the foreground is entirely covered by a net and birds trapped in its holes. The trapper involved in the work is shown in exciting mood on the left margin. From the point of view of execution the latter is however very clearly superior.27 The miniature of Baburnama in the British Museum (f. 190a) is finest example of bird trapping. (plate 17) The painter of this composition is Shyam. Here the composition is far more imaginative but includes too many complementary objects. A massive castle in the farthest corner balanced by a crooked elevation of a cliff and a black cluster of clouds overhanging the top margin, huge, dense trees overgrowing the varying levels of mounds, a stream in the foreground with ducks swimming and cranes composedly watching, shrubs stretching along the bank, a company of no less than ten attendants wainting at the trap and yet a pair of fox perched fearlessly on the rocks at the bottom—all are crammed up in the picture. Yet a good portion in the middle is left for the action. A cluster of birds is shown descending on net or already trapped

27 Randhawa, op.cit., pl.230
on the left. The artist has tried to be as vivid of as possible and has taken care to show all the implements used in bird catching. These include a thatch screen, a glud strick, a falcon and there are cages and baskets for keeping the trapped birds. Babur himself writes for this incident that “along the Baran people take masses of cranes (turna) with the cord, masses of auqar, qarqara, and qutan also. This method of bird catching is unique. They twist a cord as long as arrow’s flight, tie the arrow at one end and a bildurga at the other, and wind it up, from the arrow end, on a piece of wood, span-long and wrist thick, right upto the bildurga. They then pull out the piece of woods leaving just the hole it was in. The bildurga being held fast in the hand, the arrow is shot off towards the coming flock. If the cord twists round a neck or wing, it brings the bird down. On the Baran everyone, takes birds in this way.” The layout of the illustration contained in the Fog Art Museum is still different. Here a man is shown actually using the glue stick while the landscape is well balanced by a distant plan and thick trees, dividing it into three parts. All this apart, in accuracy of line drawing, creating of the atmosphere, depiction of details, colouring and specially in depicting the various postures excels all others. The human figures here are certainly more varied and characteristic.

As compared to this the other paintings seem not only too simple but also a bit clumsy. The birds are shown mostly in profile. The treatment of trees is fine in all of them and yet a vide conceptual difference sets them apart from each other.

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28 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl.27
29 Baburnama, op.cit., p.230
30 Welch, Art of Mughal India, op.cit., pl. 9.
31 Randhawa, op.cit., pl.29
Trapping of the wild elephants, lions, cheetah, blackbuck, deer, etc., is the other theme of a few illustrations depicting wild life. An Akbari miniature (Acc. No. 39/117) in the Akbarnama, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is the finest example of the trapping of wild elephants, this double-page illustration presents both the preliminary combat, as well as the moments after the wild elephant has been captured and fastened to the trunk of a tree. In scale he is larger than the tree, his condition of being mast being conveyed by the way he greets his royal visitor. The great tusker raises his foot to paw the air, his ears flapping back, and the trunk curling up in anger.  

Another Akbari miniature from the same Manuscript (f. I.S.2/1896, V. A. Museum, London) depicts catching of cheetah by prince Salim near Allahabad. The prince kneels on the ground to lift the blindfolded cheetah by the head, and the two assistants hold by its feet, so that it can be placed in a carrying fold prior to being caged, a servant attempts to wave flies away from the prince's head outside the specially prepared corral, men bring the cage and the bullock cart on which the cheetah is to be transported. The town of Allahabad is visible on the horizon.  

A miniature of the Baburnama (f. 270b, N.M., New Delhi) is an example of catching of black buck. In this painting the hunters are preparing for catching the animals, and they are hidden behind the tree. It is the work of Ibrahim Kahar.  

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32 Sen, op.cit., p. 84, pl. 29.  
33 Folk, op.cit., p. 37, pl. 16.  
34 Randhawa, op.cit., pl. 93.
The themes depicting the animal fights may be taken as a part of animals’ representation and also a source of amusement. Generally, the lions, elephants, rhinoceros, deer, specially the black-buck, bullocks, rams and camels are trained for combat.

The rare representation of the combat between the lion and bullock drawn in the middle part of the painting in which again encircled by human figures keeping emperors, position aside. In this painting the emperor Akbar along with his companions is sitting and enjoying the fight on the suburb area of the town. The fighting spots, seems to be full of greenery and free from human habitation. In the lower part the yogis appear clearly too whom Akbar often visited. The three ascetics with their disciples, they are meditating in the company of goats. This picture can be assigned to Miskin, who often worked in this subdued palette of thin tans, opaque greens, and faint washes of other tints. His rocks challenge us to a game of visual hide and seek, if we look intently enough. We can find in them human and animal profiles that verge on caricature.\textsuperscript{35}

Another miniature of the \textit{Baburnama} (f. I.M. 275/1913, V.A. Museum London), depicts fights of elephants and camels. The celebration depicted here took place at Agra in 1528. Babur had defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the battle of Panipat in 1526. Relations from Persia and Transoxiana as well as envoys from the Persian Shah and the Uzbeg ruler were invited to attend. Here the guests are offering gifts to Babur. In the middle portion of this painting two camels are fighting in the presence of Babur and his companions, while in the

\textsuperscript{35} Welch, \textit{Art of Mughal India}, op.cit., pl. 12.
upper portion of the painting two young elephants are fighting with each other, and Mahawats sitting on their respective elephants are directing their fights.\textsuperscript{36} (plate 20)

The scene represented in Baburnama (f. 352a, B.M., London) may be taken as the best example of depicting the fight between an elephant and a rhinoceros.\textsuperscript{37} Babur states that "I had often wondered how a rhino and an elephant would behave if brought face to face, this time one came out right in front of some elephants the Mahawats were bringing along, it did not face them when the mahawats drove them towards it, but got off in another direction".\textsuperscript{38} In this painting Babur is keenly observing the behaviour of both elephant and the rhinoceros, when they are at fight. The fighting spot entirely encircled by the companions, well equipped with bows and arrows, spear and gun etc. The companions are standing on the ground along with some cavaliers. Babur himself sitting on the horseback is commutating with a foot soldier. The fighting spot is full of natural plantation and fauna. (plate 21)

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 492a, B. M., London) depicts a fight scene between the two ram and the deer. The fights of ram and deer are composed in a closed campus of a garden. The flat deep garden in the background has dominated the whole view and the group of four nobles shown in the distant corner remains isolated of the accident occurring in the centre. Only a few gestures of hands make the scene living. It seems that the painting has been composed in well maintained garden which is full of

\textsuperscript{36} Pinder-Wilson, Paintings from the Muslim Courts of India : British Museum, Kent, 1976, p. 34, pl. 26.
\textsuperscript{37} Sulaiman, op.cit., pl.52
\textsuperscript{38} Baburnama, op.cit., p.380
greenery, colourful flowers, trees and plants. There is a clear depiction of two fights one between two rams and another between two black-bucks. In both the fighting rams clearly appear of the different species.\textsuperscript{39} The other important thing is that all the fighting animals are male. Babur writes that "while the gifts were being brought and before food, fierce camels and fierce elephants were set to fight on an island opposite, so too a few rams, thereafter wrestlers grappled".\textsuperscript{40} (plate 22)

**Pictures of Birds and Animals**

Apart from all these themes, the portrayal of birds and animals also had great importance during the time of Akbar and Jahangir. But Jahangir had paid great attention to the portrayal of flora and fauna. Emperor Jahangir's vivid and accurate descriptions of several birds and animals undoubtedly present him as a keen observer of nature and indicate his desire for realistic expression. Not satisfied with textual description, he ordered his painters to draw their line nesses from life. Jahangir considered pictorial representation a source of amazement and pleasure, and recognized the importance of the documentation of varieties of species of animal world to be passed on to later generations. Consequently, numerous studies of birds and animals characterized by realism were made at his instance by his painters. It was thus, that with Jahangir a new era in the portrayal of flora and fauna emerged and developed.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{itemize}
\item [39] Sulaiman, op.cit., pl.39.
\item [40] Baburnama, op.cit., p.298.
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The *Baburnama* and *Ajaib-al-Makhluqat* illustrated towards the close of the sixteenth century are significant since these represent a rich variety of flora and fauna of India. Their illustrations may be accepted as trend setter in the course of the development of independent studies of birds and animals at Jahangir's studio. These pictures of birds and animals are examples of vivid and minutely detailed realistic art. The famous painter *Ustad Mansur*, "*Nadir-ul Asr*" ('Unique of the Age'), of Jahangir's studio had an early stint at Akbar's court, and his artistic contributions are available in the *Baburnama* (c.1590-1600) Manuscript.

The illustrations of the *Baburnama* provide a very rich variety of flora and fauna, e.g., birds, animals, equatic animals, trees, flowers and plants. And these are painted in a very realistic and naturalistic form. A miniature of the *Baburnama* (f. 378a) depicts a portrait of lively elephant life. It shows elephants wandering here and there in herd. The elephants are looking very lifelike. At the upper side of the painting a molly hill and a big tree have been depicted. While in the lower portion an identifiable bird is sitting on a small tree. Babur writes, "The elephant is known as *hathi* in Hindustan. It inhabit in the (western?) borders of Kalpi country." (plate 23) A portrait of a wild Indian buffalo (f. 380a) is passing through a meadow. It is drawn in a very naturalistic form. On the upper portion there is a tree. While in the lower portion the two waterfowls are fluttering in the water. The important thing there is a stylized tree is that the buffalo is looking very strong, healthy and big in size. Its long horns and tail are very prominent. Babur writes, "The wild

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42 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 55
43 *Baburnama*, op.cit., p. 488
44 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 57
buffalo is much larger than the (domestic) buffalo and its horns do not turn back in the same way. It is a mightily destructive and ferocious animal.”\(^{45}\) (plate 24) Another illustration of Kalaharan and Zebu Chini (f. 282a) depicts different species of deer and cow.\(^{46}\) In the upper portion there are deer and black bucks, both male and female in different postures are depicted. In the lower portion there is a grassland the cows, both male and female, appear in different postures. Babur writes that, “There is a deer (kiyik) after the male deer there is a black buck originally called Kalaharan in Hindustan. The gini cow, a very small one, perhaps as large as the quchqar (ram) of those countries (Tramontana). It flesh is very tender and savory.\(^{47}\) (plate 25) A separate miniature (f. 383b) depicts a peacock, with peahen in a rocky landscape gulping a snake. This particular folio also contains a picture of two squirrels (galahari) in its upper part. These are depicted in their natural surroundings in a playful mood. The trees shown in the foreground is naturalistic and identifiable.\(^{48}\) Babur writes that, “The peacock is one of the birds of Hindustan. It is a beautifully coloured and splendid, animal. Its form is not equal to its colouring and beauty. A mouse people call galahri (Squirrel) is another. It is just always in trees, running up and down with amazing alertness and speed.\(^{49}\) (plate 26) Another illustration from the same manuscript (f. 354b) depicts a number of parrots perched on a huge mulberry tree. The parrots appear, as if they are communicating with each other. The whole body of the parrots is green and the beak is red.\(^{50}\) Babur writes, that

\(^{45}\) Baburnama, op.cit., vol. II, p. 90
\(^{46}\) Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 59
\(^{47}\) Baburnama, op.cit., vol. II, p. 91
\(^{48}\) Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 60
\(^{49}\) Baburnama, op.cit. vol. II, p. 493
\(^{50}\) Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 61
"The parrot (tuti) is another, they are found in Bajaur, sawad and its neighbourhood. The parrots is it comes into Ninguahar and Lamghanat in the heats when mulberries ripen, it is not there at other times. It is of many kinds. People says that they speak, words, and in Bajaur so much so that 5 or 6000 fly in one flock (Khail)". A miniature (f. 385b) depicts a seen full of natural beauty like trees, grass, mounds of earth etc., while in the upper part there is a big tree on which the bird sharaks are sitting in natural style. In the lower portion two of them are sitting on a tree probably pipal. The colour of the bird is brown and their beaks and feet are yellow in colour. Babur writes, "The sharak is another. It is numerous in the Lamghanat and abides lower down, all over Hindustan. Like the parrot, it is of many kinds. The kind that is numerous in the Lamghanat has a black head, its primaries (qanat) are spotted, its body rather larger and thicker than that of the chughurchuq. People teach it to speak words. Another miniature of Baburnama (f. 1.216, C.B. Library, Dublin) depicts an egret with beige back and white underside approaches. Covered pond in a grassy landscape in upper part and in lower part two white storks with their neck pouches extended approach a tangle of tale plants in a grassy landscape. (plate 27)

Another miniature of Baburnama (f. 1.218 C.B.Library, Dublin) depicts a saras crane with neck arched walks toward a rock in the foreground of a gentle, grassy landscape. In this painting, a saras crane stalking with one leg raised, beak open, and neck bent in a characteristic pose, is one of the

52 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 62
53 Baburnama, op.cit., vol. II, p. 495
54 Leach, op.cit., p. 120, pl. 13.
55 Ibid., pl. 21
most sensitive studies in this manuscript. It is a great deal more naturalistic than the conventionalized rendering of this familiar bird in the British Library Baburnama (f. 390a). Babur writes, “Hindustanis call it tiwa-turna (Camel crane). It may be smaller than the ding but its neck is rather longer. Its head is quite red; people keep this bird at their houses; it becomes very tame.56

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 390b, B.M., London) depicts a pair of manik (crane) standing near the lotus covered pond in a grassy landscape in the upper part of the painting. In the lower part two white storks with their neck pouches extended, approach a tangle of tall plants in a grassy landscape. The very colourful flower plants are also depicted in this painting.57 Babur writes that the manik in stature approaches the saras, but its bulk is less. It resembles the lag-lag (Ciconia alba, the white story) but is much larger, its bill is large and is black. Its head is iridescent, its neck white, its wings partly coloured, the tips and border feathers and under parts of the wings are white, their middle black. The stork has a white neck and all other parts black. It goes to those countries (Tramontona). It is rather smaller than the lag-lag (Ciconia alba).58 (plate 28) Another miniature of Baburnama (f. 387b, B.M., London) depicts a pair of Kanjal which are standing on a hilly rocky landscape near the pond in which fishes are fluttering. An identifiable big tree is also depicted near them in the upper part of the painting.59 In the lower part two phulpaikar with a pale red breast is shown in hilly landscape beside a flower plant. In foreground a big tree is also shown. The phulpaikar

56 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 490
57 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 67
58 Baburnama, op.cit., vol. II, p. 494
59 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 67
which are shown it seems that most probably one is male and another is female. Babur writes, "The Kanjal its bulk may be that of the one already described. There is little difference in colour between the cocks and hen. It is found in Parashawar, Hashnagar and countries lower down, but not higher up. The phulpaikar, its size may be that of the Kabg-i-dari, its shape is that of the house cock, its colour that of the hen. From forehead (tumagh) to throat it is of a beautiful colour, quite red. It is in the Hindustan mountains."  

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 394a, B.M., London) divided into two parts: in the upper part a very horrible animal named Siysar depicted which is flottering in the wavy sea. It is looks very colourful and its nail are very sharp and tail is too long. And in the lower part a sea pig is also depicted into the wavy water looking for a fish. Its shape is very different. Both the aquatic animals are looking very real in shape and colour. Babur writes, the Siysar is like a lizard and it found in all rivers of Hindustan. One that was taken and brought in was about 4-5 qari (cir 13 feet) long and as thick perhaps in was about said to grow still larger. It sout is over half a yard long. It has rows of small teeth in its upper and lower jaws. The water hog (sea pig, Plantanista gangetica, the porpoise) is in all Hindustan rivers. It comes up suddenly out of the water, its head appears and disappears, it dives again and stays below, chewing its tail." (Plate 29)

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 394b, B.M., London) depicts a gharial (the crocodile) flottering in the wavy sea. It is also looking very real

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60 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 495  
61 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 72  
62 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 502
in shape and colour. Babur writes, "The gharial (Gavialis gangeticus is said to grow large, many in the army saw it is in the Saru (Gogra) river. It is said to take people, while we were on that river's (934-935 A.H.) it took one or two slave-women (daduk), and it took three or four camp followers between Ghazipur and Banaras. In that neighbourhood I saw one but from a distance only and not quite clearly".

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 1.223, C.B. Library, Dublin) depicts a two horned fish Kakka face in opposite directions in a wavy sea. The horned fish (Kalah) is described by Babur as having bones about three inches long that protrude from its head, which are shaken to make a disturbing sound apparently intended to frighten predators when the fish is caught. Beveridge mistakenly thought that Babur might be referring to some kind of prawn, but the Beatty miniature clearly depicts a fish.

In another case a miniature of the Baburnama (f. 1.224, C.B. Library, Dublin) depicts six frogs with protruding eyes sit on water; one clutches the rock of a shoreline. They are looking very natural and very colourful. Babur comments that though the Indian frog is similar to those he already knows, it differs in being able to move about six or seven yards on the water surface (plate 30).

The miniature of the Baburnama (f. 398a, B.M., London) depicts a Kirni tree which looks very fruitful tree in rocky landscape. In the foreground a temple is also depicted. Babur observes, "The mimusops, (Sans. Khirni, 63 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 73
64 Baburnama, op.cit., vol. II, p. 502
65 Leach, op.cit., p. 129, pl. 1.223.
66 Ibid., p. 129, pl. 1.224. 49
Mimusops Kauki) though not very large, is not small the fruit is yellow and thinner than the red jujube. It has just the grape’s flavour, but a rather bad aftertaste, it is not bad, however, and is eatable. The husk of its stone is thin. 

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 286, N.M., Delhi) depicts a Chirunji tree in the upper part of the painting. It is standing in the hilly rocky landscape and in the lower part of the painting a date tree is shown which is looking very real. And the fruit is also shown. In the foreground a different varieties of flowers is also depicted. Babur writes, “The Chirunji (Buchanania latifolia), this tree had been understood to grow in the hills, but I knew later about, because there were three or four clumps of it in our gardens. It is much like the mahua. Its kernel is not bad, a thing between the walnut and the almond, not bad rather smaller than the pistachio and round, people put it in custards and sweetmeats. The date-palm (P. Khurma, Phochix dactylifera) is not peculiar to Hindustan, but is here described because it is not in those countriews (Tramontana). It grows in Lamghan also. Its, branches (i.e. leaves) grow from just one place as its top, its leaves (i.e. leaflets) grow on both sides of the branches (midribs) from neck (buin) to tip, its trunk is rough and ill coloured, its fruit is like a bunch of grapes, but much larger.”

(plate 31)

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 287b, N.M., New Delhi) depicts an orange tree with much of fruits. It is standing near the running
water and in the foreground the hilly landscape is depicted. Babur writes, "The orange (tyr. Narunj, Citrus aurantium) and orange like fruits are others of Hindustan. Oranges grow well in the Lamghanat, Bajaur and Sawad. The Lamghanat one is Smallish, has a naval, is very agreeable, fragile and juicy. It is not at all like the organge of Khurasan and those parts, being so fragile that many spoil before reaching Kabul from Lamghanat which may be 13-14 (65-70 miles), while the Astrabad orange, by reason of its thick skin and scant juice, carries with less damage from there to samarkand, some 270-280 Yighach."^71

A miniature of the Baburnama (f. 404a, B.M., London) depicts a lemon tree in upper part of the painting. It is standing in hilly rocky landscape. And in the lower part of the painting a citrus tree is shown. It is full of ripen fruits. These trees are identifiable. Babur writes, "The lemon (H.Karna, C. limonum) fruit resembling the orange (naranj), it may be as large as the gal-gal and is also acid. The amal-bid is another fruit resembling the orange. It is as acid, perhaps, as the citron and lemon (turunj and lime)".73

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f. 282b, N.M., New Delhi) depicts a mango tree is represented standing in a hilly rocky landscape. Here in the lower part of the painting a fox is also depicted. Babur writes, "The mango (P.ambah, Magnifera Indica) is one of the fruits peculiar to Hindustan. Hindustan is pronounce the b in its name as though no vowel followed it, this being awkward to utter, some people call the fruit (P.) haghzak Mangoes

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70 Randhawa, op.cit., pl. 35
71 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 510
72 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl. 82
73 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 512
74 Randhawa, op.cit., pl. 115

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when good, are very good, but many as are eaten, few are first rate. They are usually plucked unripe and ripened in the house. Unripe, they make excellent condiments (qatiq) are good also preserved in syrup. Taking it altogether, the mango is the best fruit of Hindustan.”

Yet, another miniature of the Baburnama (f.283a, N.M., New Delhi) depicts a banana tree bearing fruits. In the foreground, a rocky landscape is rendered characteristically. And in the lower part of the painting, ducks and a peahen are shown. Babur writes, “The plantain (Sans. kela, Musa Sapientum) in Arab called Mauz. Its tree is not very tall, indeed is not to be called a tree, since it is something between a grass and a tree., Its leaf is a little like that of the aman-gara but grows about 2 yards (qari) long and nearly one broad, out of the middle of its leaves rises, heart-like, a bud which resembles a sheep’s heart. As each leaf (petal) of this bud expands, there grow at its base a row of 6 or 7 flowers which become the plantains”.

Another miniature of the Baburnama (f.287a, N.M., New Delhi) depicts a fruit bearing tree of coconut. It is shown standing near a hilly rocky landscape. Babur writes, “The coconut palm (P. nargil, cocos nucifera), the Arabs give it Arabic form and sags narjil, Hindustanis called it haler, seemingly by people popular error. Its fruit is the Hindi nut from which black spoons (qura qa shuq) are made and the larger ones of which serve for guitar bodies. The coco palm has general resemblance to the date palm, but has more, and more glistening leaves. Like the walnut the coconut has a green

75 Baburnama, op.cit., p. 503
76 Randhawa, op.cit., pl.116
77 Baburnama, op.cit., vol.II, p.504
78 Randhawa, op.cit., pl.41
outer husk, but its husk is of fibre on fibre. All ropes for ships and boats and also cord for sewing boat seems are heard of as made from these husks”.79

A miniature of the Baburnama (f.406b, B.M., London) depicts a Jason flower plant. It is depicted very beautifully. The flower colour is maroon which pinkish shade. The whole scene is very pleasant.80 Babur writes, “In Hindustan there is a great variety of flowers, one is the jasun (Hibiscus rosa Sionensis), which some Hindstanis call (Hindi) gazhal. It is not a grass (giyah), its tree (is in stem and like the bush of the red rose), it is rather taller than the bush of the red rose. The flower of the jasun is fuller in colour than that of the pomegranate and may be of the size of the red rose, but the red-rose when its bud had grown, opens simply, whereas when the jasun-bud opens, a stem on which other petals grow, is seen like a heart amongst its petals”.81 (plate 32)

Corresponding to it, a miniature of the Baburnama (f.407b, B.M., London) depicts a Kenner flower plant in the upper part of the painting.82 The beautiful red flower is shown. In the lower part of the painting a Kiura flower plant is depicted. It is looking very beautiful. In the foreground the grass land is shown beautifully. The whole scene is very beautiful. Babur writes, “the Kanner (Nerium adorum, the oleander) grows both red and white like the Peach flower, it is five petalled. It is like the peach-bloom, but opens 14 or 15 flowers from one place. so that seen from a distance, they look like one great flower. The oleander-bush is taller than the rose bush. The red oleander has a

79 Baburnama, op.cit., p.505
80 Sulaiman, op.cit., pl.85
81 Baburnama, op.cit., p.513
82 Sulaiman, op.cit., p.86
sort of scent, faint and agreeable. The *Kiura* (Pandanus odoratissimus, the screw pine) has a very agreeable perfume. Most has the effect of being dry, this may be called moist musk a very agreeable perfume. The tree’s singular appearance notwithstanding, it has flowers perhaps 1 ½ to *garish* (13 1/2 to 18 inches) long. It has long leaves having the character of the reed *gharau* and having spines.  

**Falcon:**

Jahangir was very fond of falcons. He wrote about a falcon which came directly from Persia, "What can I write of the beauty and colour of this falcon? There were many beautiful black markings on each wing, and backsides. As it was something out of the common, I ordered *Ustad* Mansur, to paint and preserve its likeness". In consequence of this liking for falcons many drawings of this bird belonging to the Jahangir’s period are to be found in various collections. A signed example of its likeness by Mansur, is known in the Prince of Wales Museum, Mumbai. Yet another beautiful falcon study is in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. A.K. Coomaraswamy mentions a miniature, “Falcon”, ascribed to Mansur, lodged in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (f.14.683), which could be the most probable likeness of the bird referred to by Jahangir. It represents the bird on its perch, in rigid profile and centrally positioned in the composition. It is the picture of swift, relentness killer whose handsome shape in the most delicate colours, is not

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83 Baburnama, op.cit., p.514  
85 Verma, op.cit., pl. 1.  
able to hide the cruel nature of the bird. Its hard penetrating eyes seem to look through its intended victim. The well defined form of the bird and the remarkable precision of inner details, including the ferocity in the eye and the sharpness of the preying beak, testify to the artist's keen perception. The plain background in contrast to the slow careful work on the figure, as in other bird and animal studies, not only throws the figure in relief to the fore, but would be suitably functional in any bird objective, picture of nature. (plate 233)

**Black Buck:**

A painting of black buck (c.1615-20) is probably by Manohar depicts, glowing sleek, with deftly modulated white, black, and tan coat, this black buck stands a part from Mansur's and Abul Hasan's animal studies as a calculated "work of art" rather than a knowing portrayal of a specific creature. The buck's stylized mask with its crisply rounded eye and firmly set mouth brings to mind the patterned abstraction of Archamenid relief sculpture. Despite this glyptic precision forms are not sharply observed. Beneath the fur, the skull and jaw seem vogue and soft, and the nostrils are ill defined, horns spring illogically from nowhere into amorphous, textureless stubs.

A more finished but strikingly similar miniature in the Victoria and Albert Museum, showing a groom leading a black buck was probably painted by the same hand convincingly inscribed as the work of Manohar are in the *Muraqqa-i-Gulshan*, Gulistan Library, Teheran. (plate 34)

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87 Welch, *The Emperor's Album*, op.cit., p. 185, pl. 50.
88 Ibid., p. 185, pl. 50.
89 Ibid., p. 185, pl. 50.
Spotted Forktail:

Abu’l Hasan honoured with the lofty title Nadir uz-Zaman (‘Wonder of the Age’) has produced an attractive bird in a landscape. An inscription indicates that the bird was admired by Jahangir at Jangespur, and Abu’l Hasan may well have executed the painting on the demand of Jahangir. The slightly stiff drawing of the bird in rigid profile dominates the whole composition. This spotted forktail (Enicurns maculates), outfitted in starkly elegant blacks and whites, is as dignified as any emperor. Its white outlined oval eye, precise as a crescent moon, peers alertly from the brow’s airg, ping pong ball roundness. Abu’l Hasan, a contemporary of Mansur, puts masterly touches to this picture, high lightening liveliness, humor, and agility of expression. The soft, soothing quality of the pigment, the chiaroscuro emerging through the clouds, this is one of Abu’l Hasan’s few natural history pictures, and the only one with a contemporaneous inscription. (plate 35)

Nilgai (Blue bull):

Many of Mansur’s painting of birds and animals still exist today, and his work is well known to specialists in Mughal art. The most highly esteemed paintings include the nilgai from the Kevorkian album painted around 1620. Jahangir’s interest in natural history was surpassed only by his passion for hunting. The large and noble nilgai (Boselaphus trago-camelus),

91 Ibid., pl. 210, Verma, Flora and Fauna in Mughal Art, op.cit., p. 5, pl. 5.
92 Verma, op.cit., p. 5, pl. 5.
93 Okada, op.cit., p. 222, pl. 259.
or blue blue, was a favorite prey. An act revealing the least admirable side of Jahangir's character is recorded in his memoirs. Jahangir mentioned that "this time again I saw that nilgai in the hunting-ground (Shikargah), and the watchman recognized that in the two previous years he had gone away wounded. In short, I fired at him again three times on that day. It was in vain. I pursued him rapidly on foot for three Kos, but however much I exerted myself I could not catch him". 94

This unusually graceful nilgai probably roamed in Jahangir's zoological garden. As painted by Mansur, its sensitively observed fur, cartilaginous ears, velvety muzzle and smooth horns invite stroking. 95 So precise was the artist's observation - down off at the tip - that one can imagine the animal from every angle. But scientific accuracy was not Mansur's sole concern: artful silhouetting against a dusty pink ground enhances the blueness of the fur, amplifies the animal's noble presence, and lends lyricism to a memorable image. (plate 36)

Turkey Cock:

The Turkey cock (Meleagris Gallipavo), a native of Mexico, was introduced into Europe about 1600, and from thence into Asia. The Turkey cock and Himalayan Cheer pheasant were presented to Jahangir in 1612. 96 The Emperor Jahangir records in his memoirs that one of his chief retainers, Muqarrab Khan, brought from the port of Goa, in 1612, 'certain rarities', including 'some animals that were very strange and wonderful'. He adds, "I

94 Tuzuk, op.cit., p.230
95 Welch, op.cit., p. 178, pl. 47.
both described them and ordered that painters should draw them in the *Jahangirnama*...one of these animals (a turkey cock) in body is larger than a peahen and smaller than a peacock; then follows a quaintly worded description of the appearance and actions of this 'Chameleon – like bird'. Jahangir’s impassioned naturalistic description of these is worthwhile, to evaluate by comparison their immaculate reproduction in drawing and colour by Mansur.\(^97\)

The exquisite painting of the Turkey cock by Mansur is a masterly rendering of a strange creature, valued for its novelty by the whole court. Mansur’s *kalam* has been called naturalistic. Actually, this painter is not a portrait maker but an interpreter. The Turkey Cock has become, in his hand, almost a peacock by the exaggeration, of tail, the fine workmanship on the feathers and the heightening of the stance.\(^98\) (plate 37)

**Himalayan Cheer Pheasant:**

The Cheer Pheasant(*Catreus Wallichi*) in found in the outer Himalayas, from Katmandu, Nepal, of Chamba, Punjab, at an elevation ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 feet. The Emperor Jahangir records in his memoirs, in 1621. "Basoi, the Zamindar of Talwara (in Bari Doab, Punjab) brought me a bird which the hill people call *janbahan*. Its tail resembles the tail of the *qirqawul* (pheasant), which is also called the *tadru* and its colour is exactly like that of the hen- pheasant. The circle round the eyes of this bird is red, while the orbit

\(^97\) Ibid., vol.II, p.216.  
of the pheasant is white... Basoi stated that it lived in the snow-mountains, and that its food was grass and other stuff.99

A number of drawings based on earlier works of Mansur, Inayat, Abu’l Hasan etc., were also prepared by the painters of the Shah Jahan atelier. The study of the Himalayan pheasant closely resembles the painting of the same subject in the Wantage Album in the Victoria and Albert Museum and its counterpart in the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum, Jaipur. It shows some details landscape and orchid flowering on the right, which are not found in the signed Mansur drawing in London. There is yet another version of this study where the pheasant is represented in the same posture but in reverse, published by F.R. Martin in 1912, whose present whereabouts is set known.100

In Tuzuk, Jahangir writes that he ordered to keep some male and female in one place, and by degrees they bred. He ordered them to place the egg under hands, and is a space of two years sixty or seventy young were produced and fifty or sixty grew up. (plate 38)

Zebra:

A study of the animal paintings by Mansur, will leave no one in doubt that the Ustad Mansur was as successful in portraying animals as he was in the case of birds. One such painting is that of Zebra101 (f. I.M. 32-1925) from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Jahangir had never seen this animal before. In his Memoirs he describes it thus: “From the tip of the nose to the

100 Das, op.cit., p. 50, pl. 50.
101 Swarup, op.cit., p. 60, pl. 99.
end of the tail, and from the point of the ear to the top of the hoof, black markings, large or small, suitable to their position, were seen on it. Round the eyes there was an exceedingly fine black line. One might say the painter of fate with a strange brush, had left it on the page of the world".  

**Chameleon:**

It would be hard to find any other animal study by Mansur more skillfully done than that of the Chameleon. This miniature is in the Royal Library collection at Windsor Castle, U.K. (f. RL.12081).

Mansur's typical enlargement of the figure in proportion to the space and branches of the tree, and highlighting of details of the main figure to isolate it from the already suppressed background is a special dignity to his object of painting. This is a part, the naturalistic treatment of the tree's structure, with all the details of knots and bulges, and leaves displaying midribs with parallel venation, is thoroughly maintained. The authenticity of the relationship between the Chameleon and its environment is projected in a non-conventional manner by somewhat distorting the proportions. The big figure is delicately balanced on a thin twiggy which is only a section of a big tree.  

**The Markhur or Himalayan wild goat:**

*Markhur* (snake-eater) is the *Pushtu* (Afghan) name of a large species of Himalayan wild goat (*Capra Falconeri*), with spirally twisted horns and

102 Ibid., p. 60, pl. 99.
103 S.P. Verma, Mughal Painters of Flora and Fauna, Ustad Mansur, New Delhi, 1999, p. 115, pl. X.
long shaggy coat; found chiefly in the Pir Panjal range, Kashmir. Jahangir records in his memoirs the same Afghans (Stuvari tribesmen) killed and brought a *markhur*, the like of which I had never seen or imagined. I ordered my artists to paint him. He weighed four Hindustani mounds, the length of his horns was 1 ½ *gaz* less. This painting is attributed to Inayat and painted in 1607 during the reign of Jahangir. (plate 40)

**A pair of Indian Saras:**

The memoir of Jahangir contain several important references to these birds (*Ardea antigone*) including the following entry made in 1618, “The saras is a creature of the crane genus....people keep them in their houses and they become familiar with men. In fact, there was a pair of *Saras* in my establishment to which I had given the name Laila and Majnun. This is attributed to Mansur in the early 17th century”.

**The Indian Red Wattled Lapwing:** This painting, signed, ‘work of the slave of the presence chamber,’ probably portrays one of several birds described by Jahangir in his Memoirs and of which he wrote, “I ordered *Nadir-ul-Asr Ustad* Mansur to draw its likeness”. The Indian variety of lapwing here depicted is the sarcogrammus Indias of the Zoologist.

**Red-headed vultures and Long billed Vulture:**

This portrait is ascribed to Mansur (1615-20). In a fire and Brimstone palette of blacks, grays, and Turkey wattle red, Mansur arranged two

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105 *Tuzuk*, op.cit., p.310
107 Ibid.,No.21,pl.14.
incongruously elegant scavengers, headed vulture (Aegypius Ealvus) and a long billed vulture (Gyps Indian) for the fullest aesthetic and dramatic effect. While contemplating and sketching, he noted beauty in their ugliness and understood their wise patience. Hungry-eyed they stare like cats at goldfish, spellbound by something perhaps enticing carrion arranged by the artist. A few streaks of white and tan rocks for perching, sprigs of foliage, and spare brushstrokes of him qalam (washes of earth pigments, now slightly darkened by oxidization) provide a convincingly natural stage for the macabre pair.

There is a 19th century picture of the red-headed vulture in Kevorkian Album. That it is an early nineteenth century copy, cannot be doubted when compared to this 17th century painting.108

**Great Hornbill**:

The appearance of this great hornbill (Buceros bicornis), measuring about fifty two inches long, with black and white plumage and yellow casque and bill, is striking enough to have attracted the attention of Jahangir perhaps, on the other hand, it was the sound of the bird that was at first riveting, as in flight the wind whistling through its features makes a droning noise that can be heard a mile away. When congregating in groups in the larger trees of the forest, it also emits a noisy barrage of bizarre sounds. If Jahangir watched the hornbill feeding, he must have been amused at the way it tossed fruit or other food into the air with the tip of its bill, catching it in the throat and swallowing.

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108 Welch, *The Emperor's Album*, op.cit., p.175, pl. 45.
While the bird is exquisitely painted, its position at the edge of the rock is somewhat awkward and its feet less suited to this perch than to the large branches of the trees of its forest habitat.

The painting of the hornbill is as splendid as that of the fork tail and would have faced it in the album to which they originally belonged.\textsuperscript{109} (plate 41)

Tulip:

Although Jahangir mentions, more than a hundred flower paintings of Mansur, only four are extent. Nevertheless, whatever little is known from Mansur’s brush could possibly form an album of rare botanical drawings of exquisite. His extraordinary achievement in floral painting is an evidence in the study of the tulip. The accuracy of its detail in the lifelike representation can be seen under a magnifying glass, such as the bends of the stems, the drawing of the leaves, the stages of flowering (from bud to full blossom), shown from different angles, a close up of the pollen grains at the ends of the stamens (six in number), and the delicate venation (in a few leaves), proceeding towards the margin of the leaf blade in a more or less parallel direction (convergent type) – a characteristic of lanceolate leaves of the plants of the lily family (liliaceae). It would seem that the species chosen by Mansur is Tulipa Clusiana.\textsuperscript{110} (plate 42)

The other manuscript illustration is \textit{Ajaib-al-Makhluqat}, which is containing six pages illustrations of the period of Akbar, to a work on natural history. \textit{Ajaib-al-Makhluqat} contains a number of paintings of creatures and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibid., p. 165, pl. 41.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Verma, \textit{Flora and Fauna in Mughal Art}, op. cit., p. 110, pl. 4
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
other natural living beings. One of the paintings sketched by Kanha and painted by Mani, which is mainly divided into two parts, presents a beautiful depiction of nature. The upper portion contain mainly a crane in standing position, naturally seems to be ready for prey (or is about to catch a fish) (f.46). Similarly there are natural plantation, a beautiful pond in which the lotus and the fish can be seen. The portion of the land is naturally looks in ups and downs position. The two trees, one is naturally green and side by side another tree is completely dry.

The lower portion of the painting contains the two domiciles Cranes which are large in size. The colour of both these cranes is white and comprising black shades. The legs and peaks are big and yellow in colour. Probably one of them is male and another is female. Both are standing near the green plants. In foreground there is also a big tree. The depiction of painting is clear and beautiful. The other painting depicted by Kanha and Mani is a clear depiction of two pairs of bustards and of partridges. Again the painting is divided into two portions. In the upper portion the two bustards are shown in a ground. Both these are black and white in colour. The whole painting is also black and white. One of the bustard is stretching its feathers. It seems that one is male and another is female. The sights of the ground look beautiful because of the plants. The sky is depicted well but not clear.

The lower portion of the painting is a depiction of two partridges. Both of them are different in shape, size, colour and style etc., The first one is black

and white, small in size. Its neck and chest is black having white spots. While the remaining portion mainly feathers and legs are completely white. Another partridge is large in size. Somehow different in colour mainly white with black sheds. It seems that both these partridge are of different species. The ground is full of plants grass and a beautiful flower plant can also be seen. It seems the lily flower which is common even today.  

Another painting is a depiction of two big fishes, sketched by Miskina and painted by Bhurah. The painting shows that fishes are flottering in the sea. Both the fishes are in opposite directions. The interesting thing about this painting is that both these fishes have long ears which are sharp, big and sometimes look alike horns. The mouth of both these fishes are open, teeth can also be seen clearly. The sea is depicted very clearly, full of waves. Both the fishes seem from the same species because there seems no difference between them.

Another painting which is sketched by Miskin and painted by Bhurah depicts a group of six frogs of different-different species. They are sitting near a big tree which has two branches. It seems that these frogs are interacting with each other in their own language as happens during the rainy season. Two of these seem jumping on the muddy portion of the ground. The big tree which seems has about to touch the sky. The leaves are like beetle leaves. Under the tree the grass can also be seen clearly.  

112 Ibid., p. 51, pl. 6(a).  
113 Ibid. p. 51, 52, pl. 6(b).
Margin Painting

Border on margin painting (Hashiya) was introduced in order to enhance the beauty and elegance of the central picture. Margin painting, developed in last quarter of the 16th century at the Mughal school, became almost an integral part of the one page miniatures or album pictures, commonly in vogue at the beginning of the 17th century. Brown has rightly remarked that margin painting was so deeply associated with the art of painting during the 17th century that no miniature was considered complete unless it was surrounded by a highly ornamented border.114

Margin painting is primarily associated with the art of manuscript illumination. Margins were decorated in gold with different forms of natural and mythical animals in fighting and hunting poses and coloured birds in the foliage. Illustrated margins appeared to differ in purpose from the book illustrations and album paintings. They seem to be decorative in nature.

During Jahangir’s reign the hashiya art or margin painting developed quite independently and managed to reach the highest point of perfection. The borders with superb gold work in decorative designs exhibit flowering plants, fighting and hunting animals and imaginary rocky landscape along with trees and bushes were so elegantly adjusted that they faded the central pictures they enclosed. The paintings and portraits were also embellished with double borders, one inner border with calligraphic specimens arranged in cartouches.

114 Percy Brown, Indian Painting under the Mughals, A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1750, New Delhi, 1981, p. 91.
around it and the other outer border with naturalistic floral compositions and sometimes third border was also adjusted.¹¹⁵

The finest example of the margin painting is the portrait of Sundar Das, Raja Bikramjit (No. 55.121. 10.r, MMA, New York) in which the border scheme is flowering plants in colour on a buff ground for the portraits and flowering plants in gold on a blue ground for the calligraphy. The painter of this folio drew all plants very thin stems varying colour from pale green to dark brown-green to red. The plants were delicately outlined in gold and when gold was used for leaf reins, it was done with such subtlety as to seem a mere suggestion. The leaves also share in a variety of green shades while the flower colors lean to purple and mauves. For all the impression of naturalism, the plants in the border do not on the whole lend themselves to identification with the exception of an iris in the lower right corner, possibly a snow drop at the left edge of the outer margin second row from the bottom, with a Hypoxis above it on the right. Within the portrait area the poppy before the feet and the iris behind are very clear and accurate.¹¹⁶

The other example of the margin is a calligraphic sketch of Persian poetry. This comprises of beautiful borders completely decorated with various flower, plants, birds and animals. The gold on blue inner border of this verso calligraphy page is almost identical to that of the recto (f. 15r). Panels of cut out poetry along the sides form a partial innermost border. The outer border contains flowering plants on a buff ground. An iris is identifiable in the upper left corner, a poppy in the lower left corner, and a narcissus four

¹¹⁵ Verma, Painting the Mughal Experience, op.cit., p. 104.
¹¹⁶ Welch, The Emperors Album, op.cit., p. 150, pl. 32.
plants from the right in the lower border. A Narcissus bulbocodium is the small plant third from the right in the upper border. There is no reason to suppose that Harif was not responsible for this border as well as for that of the painting.

The birds painted around the calligraphy panels may be identified as follows river chat (Chaimarvarnis leucocephaus), at right above the first line of calligraphy, common rose finch (carpodacus erythrinai) above the second the third and fourth lines of calligraphy from the bottom along the central vertical axis, white wagtail (Notocilla alba), at right above the fourth line of calligraphy from the bottom, egret (egretta), bottom right corner. In the upper right corner a black buck (Antilopa Cerricapra) is being attacked by a Cheetah (Acimonyx jubata).117 (plate 44)

Another example of border painting is the portrait of spotted fork tail. It is a very fine and unique painting of fork tail (f.15r. MMA., New York). This magnificent painting has an equally magnificent border, consisting of supremely fine and delicate floral scrolls with much gold brushed into the varicolored petals. At the bottom of the picture an inscription in tiny letters states that the gilding was by Harif.118

The other example is the calligraphic sketch of a Persian verse (f. 10.7V. The MMA., New York). In which the design shows gracefully scrolling palmettes, leaves, flower heads, and buds on delicate stems with

117 Ibid., p. 163, pl. 39.
118 Ibid., p. 166, pl. 40.
different varieties of birds perched at intervals on them with a ribbon band looping and arching above them.\textsuperscript{119}

The other example is the portrait of Zebra (f. I M 23-1925, V.A. Museum, London) which is the wonderful creation of Mansur in 1621. In this the delightful border, a spiraling arabesque of vines and blossoms, was added to the painting before it was bound into one of the royal albums.\textsuperscript{120}

The simplest form of border illumination seen in the \textit{Baburnama} (B.M.) comprises the unit: a leaf or a flower set with wavy tendrils in a pattern described as \textit{bel}, a running pattern. A single leaf is also used as a unit repeated diagonally in between narrow bonds of the margin. In some cases variety is sought by an arrangement of alternate leaf and flower. Sometimes these motifs are spot set. It is notable that drawings of flowers and leaves are invariably executed in a thinly-shaded gold pigment with deep outlines.

The margins of the Manuscripts Bahristan, Diwan of Anwari, and Khamsa, referred above are also indicative of a change in theme of border decoration and also in treatment. They have highlights in colour and use tones of gold pigment. In them, the margins, comprising wildlife set against a hilly landscape, are thematically more elaborate. They depict hunting scenes, chasing wild animals, and very often birds and animals in a resting position. Fabulous animals, most strikly a lion with the characteristic flame like lines emanating from the body, too are depicted. A tiger or a lion hunting deer, the latter fleeing or wandering, or resting unaware of threat is a favourite theme

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 35, pl. 27.
\textsuperscript{120} S.C.Welch, \textit{Imperial Mughal Painting}, London, 1978, p. 92, pl. 27.
of the Mughal artists depicted in a variety of composition in the wide margins.\textsuperscript{121}

Mughal artist preferred a naturalistic portrayal of objects. His work is characteristic and takes the form of portrait studies. In the motifs of flowering plants the pattern of the leaves spreads out from the base of the plant. In general, the drawings are very fine and the details of leaves and flowers are very crisply executed, identifiable, are treated as nature studies. Here the depiction of butterflies, bees and other insects hovering around the flowers adds to the natural surrounding and rhythm in composition, reminiscent of the traits of Mansur's flower painting. In an embellishment form, the plants with blossoms are executed in a gold on pink, deep blue, or a buff ground.

The plants ordinarily depicted in the margin decorations are poppies, lilies, irises, narcissus, tulips, daisies, borages, and similar common flowers of the hills and plains of India and also found in Persia, although at times these are so much conventionalized that it becomes difficult to identify them. One the edges of illustration 70 from Chester Beatty collection, some of the love list Kashmir flowers like the borage, lily, tulip, oleander, aquilegia, narcissus, and ranunculus are very clearly identifiable we have a painting by Govardhan, one of the best of Jahangir's painters. From the same collection we have a painting by Bichitra, on the margins of which are white, pink purple lily, tulip and borage flowers, all very naturalistically rendered.

The border pictures are complete works of art in themselves. Truly in their perfection they stand almost, alone in Indian miniature painting. As

\textsuperscript{121} Verma, \textit{Painting the Mughal Experience}, op.cit., p. 104.
Percy Brown observes, "It is difficult to imagine a richer or more glorifying work of pictorial art than one of these flower framed miniatures of the Jahangir court painters. Certainly these borders give the miniatures a beauty and impressiveness which were hitherto unknown in miniature painting". 122

122. Ibid., p. 106.