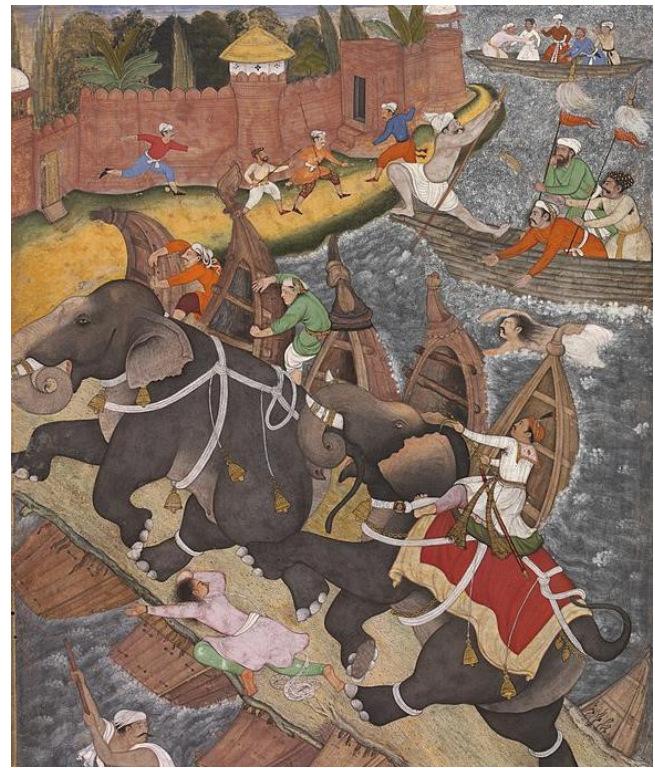


History of the Art of India, Part I: Origins to Mughals



OLLI
Spring 2024

Week 8



Islamic India: Early Mughal Architecture and Painting

Islamic India:

Early Mughal Architecture and Painting

- A. Pre-Mughal: History and Monuments
- B. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Architecture
- C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

A. Pre-Mughal: History and Monuments

A1. Early history of invasion and conquest

A2. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque and Qutb Minar

A3. Later history of pre-Mughal dynasties

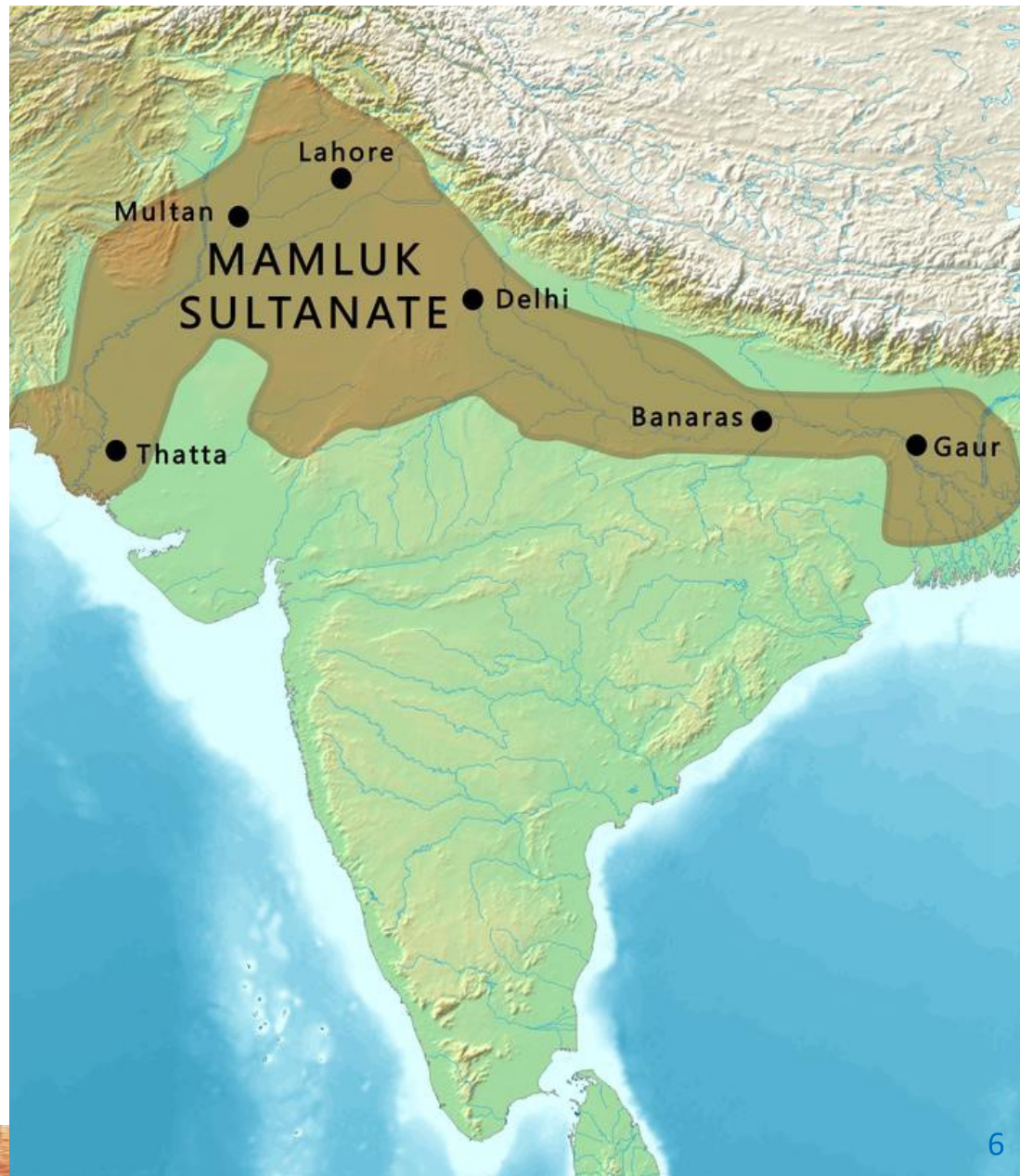
A. Pre-Mughal: History and Monuments

A1. Early history of invasion and conquest

- Early raids (17) into N India by Mahmud of Ghazni (Afghanistan) between 1000-1025
- Mohammed of Ghor's Afghan armies invaded N India and defeated Rajput Hindus, 1192
- In celebration of the victory, Mohammad's general Qutb al-Din Aybak built a mosque in the center of Hindu Delhi
- **SO:** Established new sacred space on top of conquered sacred space
- Not unique: Cf. Christian churches over Roman temples, Córdoba mosque, Aztec temple in Mexico City

A1. Early history of invasion and conquest

- Qutb al-Din Aybak became sultan after Mohammed of Ghor's death, establishing the Mamluk dynasty (or "slave" dynasty)
- First of 5 dynasties to rule Delhi Sultanate, which persisted for 300 years till arrival of the Mughals



A. Pre-Mughal: History and Monuments

A2. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque and Qutb Minar

A2a. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque, 1192-98

- Form of mosque derived from Mohammed's house: open courtyard w/ pillars on 3 sides, wall on side facing Mecca... minaret to call the faithful to prayer



A2a. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque, 1192-98

- Uses pillars taken from 27 Hindu and Jain temples to construct courtyard and wall
- Hindu pillars not tall enough, builders double-stacked them
- Some Hindu carvings left on pillars (tribhanga)
- Dehejia: Cf. Hindu temple: directional, enclosed, dark, introverted
VS Islamic mosque: open, extroverted



A2a. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque, 1192-98

- A sandstone screen wall added with 5 arches... not true keystone arch but arch of corbelled horizontal layers, as used in India; built by Indian craftsmen (later true arch used)
- In front: Iron pillar taken from a Hindu Vishnu temple
- Cf. Augustus taking obelisks from Egypt...; Pope...



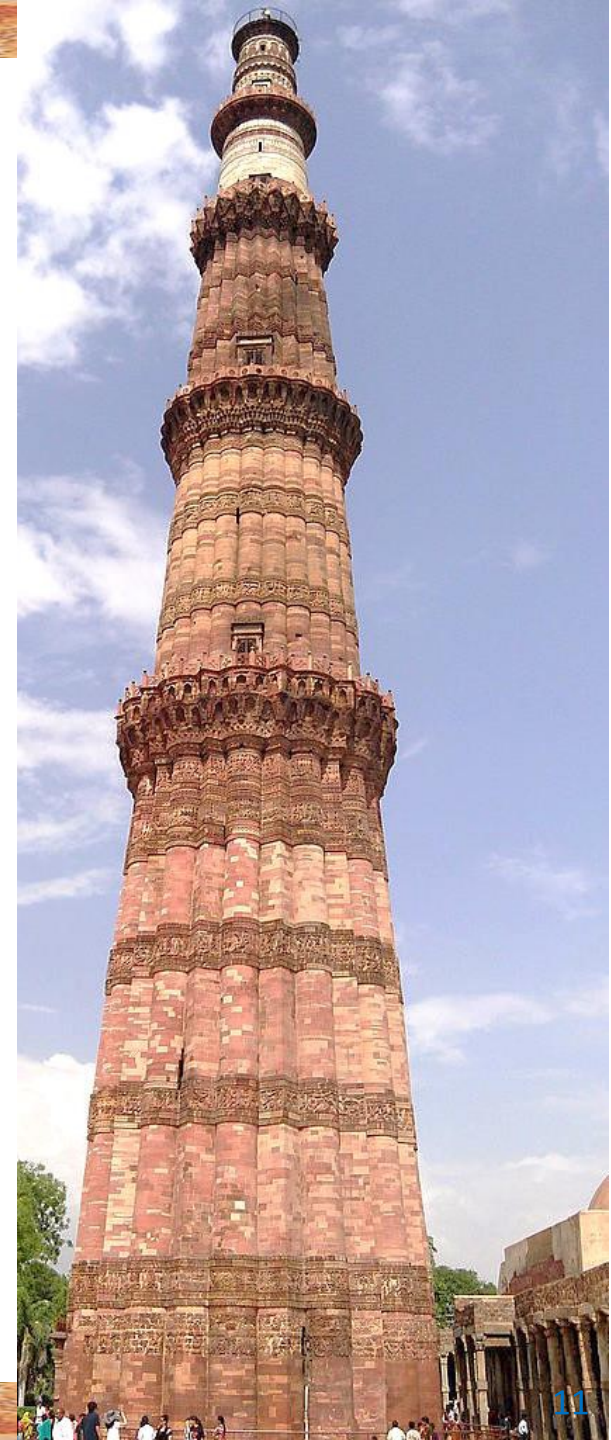
A2a. Quwwat ul-Islam mosque, 1192-98

- Screen wall: Carved bands w/ leaf designs & text from Koran in Arabic calligraphy... Hindu craftsmen
- Leaf designs ~ Hindu temples
- Mosque and minaret built by Hindu craftsmen... Indian corbelling techniques for arches, Persian script for Koran, Indian floral designs
- **SO:** Mix of Hindu and Islamic elements



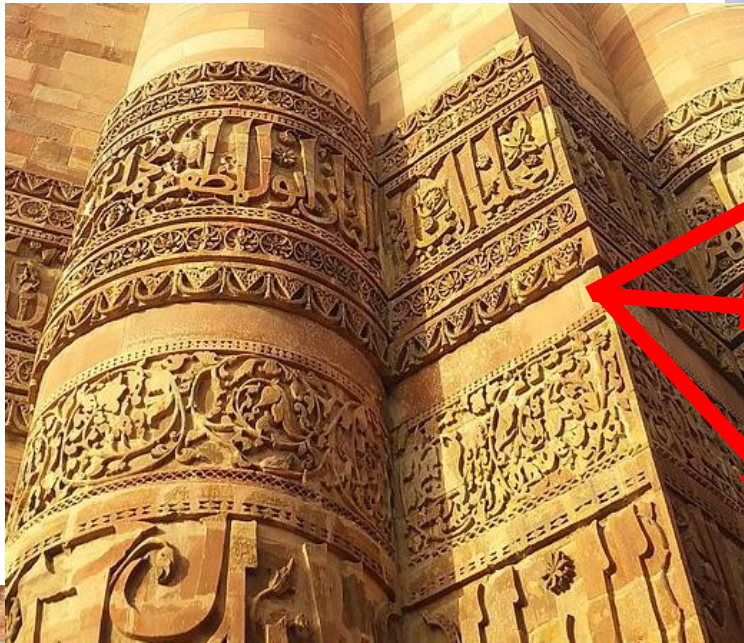
A2b. Qutb Minar

- SE of courtyard of Quwwat ul-Islam mosque is the Qutb Minar (Pole Minaret), 238 ft high, base dia. 47 ft
- Minaret form originally based on pre-Islamic towers in Syria, influenced by Persian circular or fluted burial towers
- Immediate model: Minarets of Ghazni (SW of Kabul) with star-shaped ground plans
- Inscriptions:
 - **Purpose:** Tower of victory to cast a shadow over the conquered city of the Hindus
 - **SO:** Early sultans' view of themselves as rulers of heathen India and also as part of the wider Islamic world



A2b. Qutb Minar

- Current 5-story minaret, in red and buff sandstone, begun 1199 by Qutb al-Din Aybak
- Stories 2-4 completed by Aybak's successor and son-in-law Iltutmish, ca.1220
- Lightning knocked off top (4th) story 1368, then replaced by 2 new stories in white marble and sandstone by a Tughlaq sultan
- Each story has balcony w/ fine carving
- Lower 3 stories:
Alternating round columns and square pillars with bands of carving in Islamic calligraphy



A. Pre-Mughal: History and Monuments

A3. Later history of pre-Mughal dynasties

- Mamluks were the first of 5 dynasties to rule the Delhi Sultanate
- 3d was Tughlaq dynasty, 1320-1413... reached maximum extent
- Tughlaqs built many buildings, e.g., Firuz Shah built palaces, mosques, etc., in Firuzabad



A3. Later history of pre-Mughal dynasties

- In Firuz Shah fort (1351-88), he relocated an Ashokan pillar (ca.250 BCE)
- Script on the pillar was undeciphered at that time
- Firuz Shah did not know its meaning... presumed he was usurping a symbol of Hindu heritage
- **SO: “colonial” re-use**
- Invasion of Tughlaq Delhi Sultanate by Timur (Tamerlane) 1398... plundered Delhi and massacred inhabitants
- **SO: Not just Hindu victims**



A3. Later history of pre-Mughal dynasties

- Lodis: 5th and last dynasty (1451-1526)
- Lodi dynasty kings and aristocrats built many tombs, e.g., Sultan Mohammed Shah Lodi, 1434-44
- One of many precursors to Mughal tombs



A3. Later history of pre-Mughal dynasties

- Delhi Sultanate ended 1526 when Babur, founder of Mughal dynasty, defeated the last Lodi king
- Historians disagree on whether Sultans desired mass conversions of Hindus to Islam, because non-Muslims paid an extra tax
- Destruction of temples during Delhi Sultanate:
 - Iconoclasm; anti-Hindu feeling
 - Temples feared as possible places of insurrection
 - Sultans' attempt to persuade their theologians of their commitment to Islam, thus supporting idea of divine kingship
- But some rulers patronized painting workshops
 - E.g., *Shahnama*, ca.1450 (*History of the Shahs of Persia*)... although probably Hindu artist... ~ Jain paintings at Mt. Abu
 - **SO:** precursor to Akbar's patronage of painting

B. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Architecture

B1. Introduction and History

B2. Humayun's Tomb

B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B4. Red Fort at Agra

B. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Architecture

B1. Introduction and History

- **Early 16C, Lodi dynasty conquered by Mughal Babur (r.1526-30); a soldier but sensitive to scholarly & aesthetic activities**
- **Mughals were of Turkish-Mongolian heritage: Babur descended from Timur (father's side) & Genghis Khan (mother's)**
- **Son Humayun (r.1530-56) became the first Mughal emperor**
- **1540 Humayun driven back to Persia by rebel Sher Shah**
- **Humayun's son Akbar was born during this exile**
- **While in Persia, Humayun developed a love of Persian miniature painting**
- **1555 Humayun returned to reconquer N India; brought with him 2 Persian painting masters**

B1. Introduction and History

- Next year Humayun died and young (14 years) Akbar (r.1556-1605) became emperor
- Would be known as Akbar the Great

Akbar & art:

- Shared father's love of ptg, music, poetry
- Also loved outdoor activities such as hunting



B1. Introduction and History

Akbar & politics

- Sought to solidify his N India empire by receiving cooperation of Hindu Rajput princes
 - prohibited enslavement of Hindus
 - abolished the tax on non-Muslims
 - married a Hindu princess
 - included Hindus among his advisors
- Excellent administrator: divided empire into provinces and districts; established separate armed forces and treasury

B1. Introduction and History

Akbar & religion

- Religiously open-minded; even founded his own religion, Din-i-Illahi, composed of elements from various religions, that he personally followed
- Audacious act... outraged strict Muslim clerics
- Perhaps justified by belief that Mughal emperors radiated from Allah (**SO**: an element of divinity)
- Tolerance for non-Muslims
- Had periodic (weekly?) gatherings with representatives of different religions: Muslim, Hindu, Jain, Zoroastrian, Christian Jesuits
- Commissioned illustrated MSS of Hindu epics in Persian

B. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Architecture

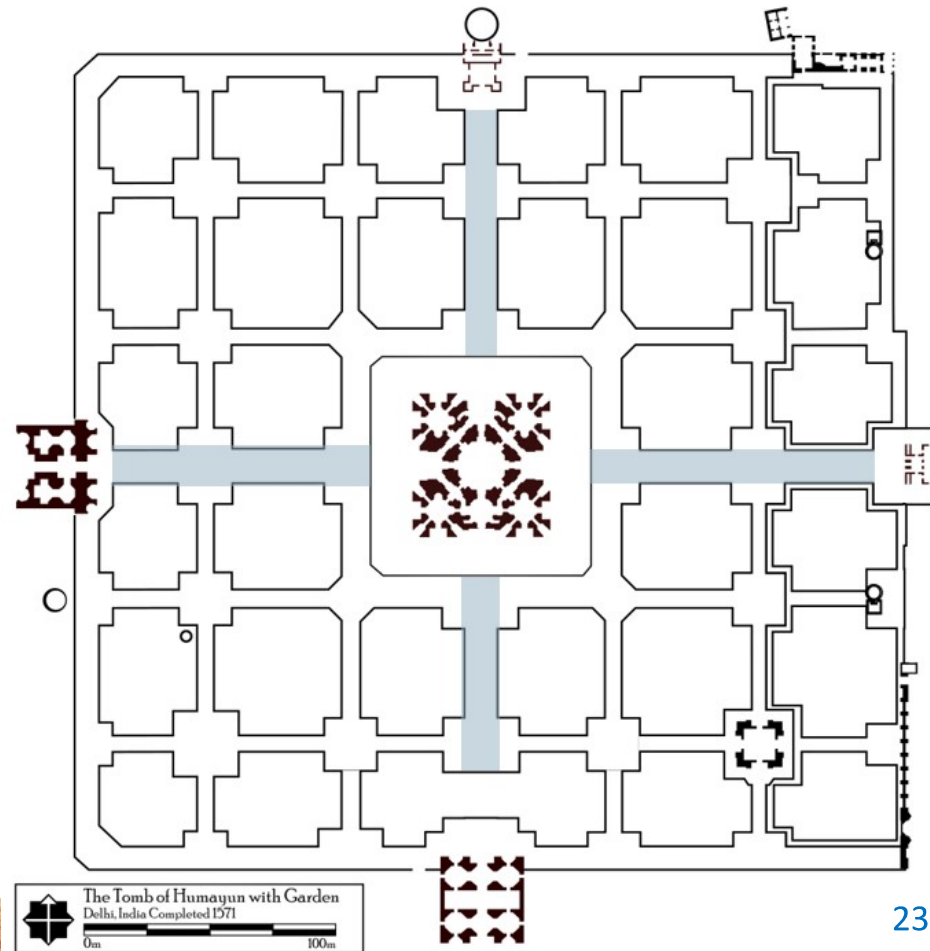
B2. Humayun's Tomb

- Early years of Akbar's reign spent in Delhi
- Akbar (?) builds tomb (?) for father Humayun, 1571
- Red sandstone trimmed with white, on terrace 26 ft high
- Mausoleum 154 ft high, 299 ft square
- High arched portal... dome faced with white marble

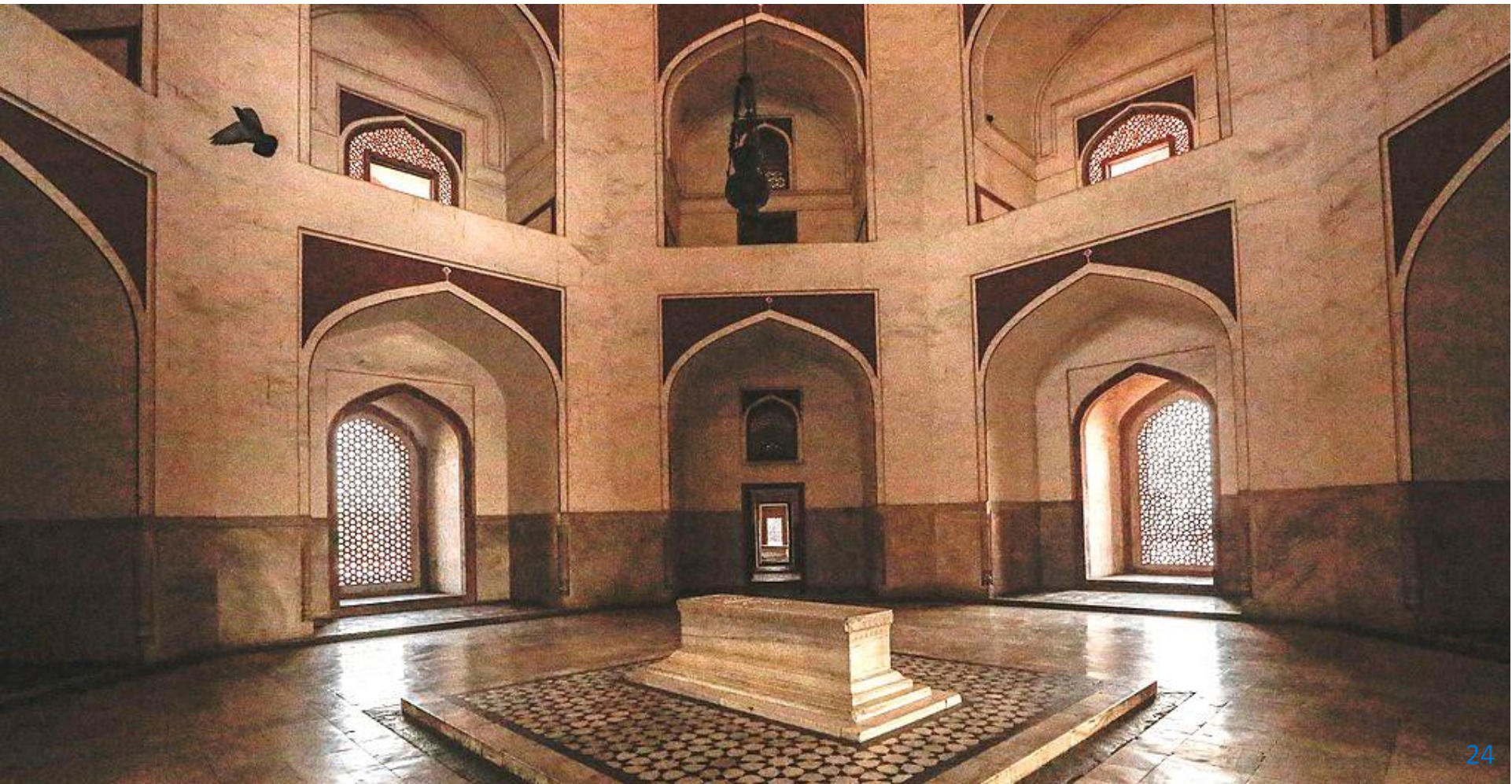


B2. Humayun's Tomb

- Mausoleum in the middle of Mughal garden, **char-bagh**:
- Square (slight octagonal) divided into 4 squares... each subdivided into 9 squares (8 intact, 1 cut off by tomb)
- Divided by 4 water channels... appear to disappear under mausoleum... r/t Koranic verse (4 rivers of paradise)
- Walls on 3 sides, open on 4th (formerly Yamuna R)
- **Ruggles**: Garden r/t sovereignty, mausoleum r/t dynasty
- **SO**: Garden recalls paradise, mausoleum speaks of dynastic sovereignty



- **Octagonal interior around cenotaph, 8 chambers (allowing circumambulation) on sides w/arched opening... pierced screens allow light...**
- **Relatively austere**



B2. Humayun's Tomb

- SO:
- Materials of contrasting color in Islamic style
 - Highly symmetrical
 - Tradition of tomb-building:
earlier tomb of Sultan Mohammed Shah Lodi, 1434-44 & later tomb, Taj Mahal, 1631-53



B. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Architecture

B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B3a. Introduction

B3b. Buland Darwaza (High Gate)

B3c. Tomb of Shayk Salim Chishti

B3d. Panch Mahal (5-story palace)

B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B3a. Introduction

- **Birth of Akbar's son predicted by Sufi mystic shaykh Salim Chishti**
- **After the birth of son Salim (later Jahangir), Akbar began the construction of a new capital, Fatehpur Sikri, ca.26 mi W of Agra, on the site of the holy man's retreat**
- **City 2 mi long and 1 mi wide**
- **Built and inhabited 1571-86... once completed, it was abandoned... lack of water, or Akbar's attentions directed elsewhere**
- **Plateau: Royal mosque and palace; residential town below**
- **Monuments at FS mostly in red sandstone, and mostly constructed by temple builders from W India**

B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B3b. Buland Darwaza (High Gate; aka Gate of Victory), 1575

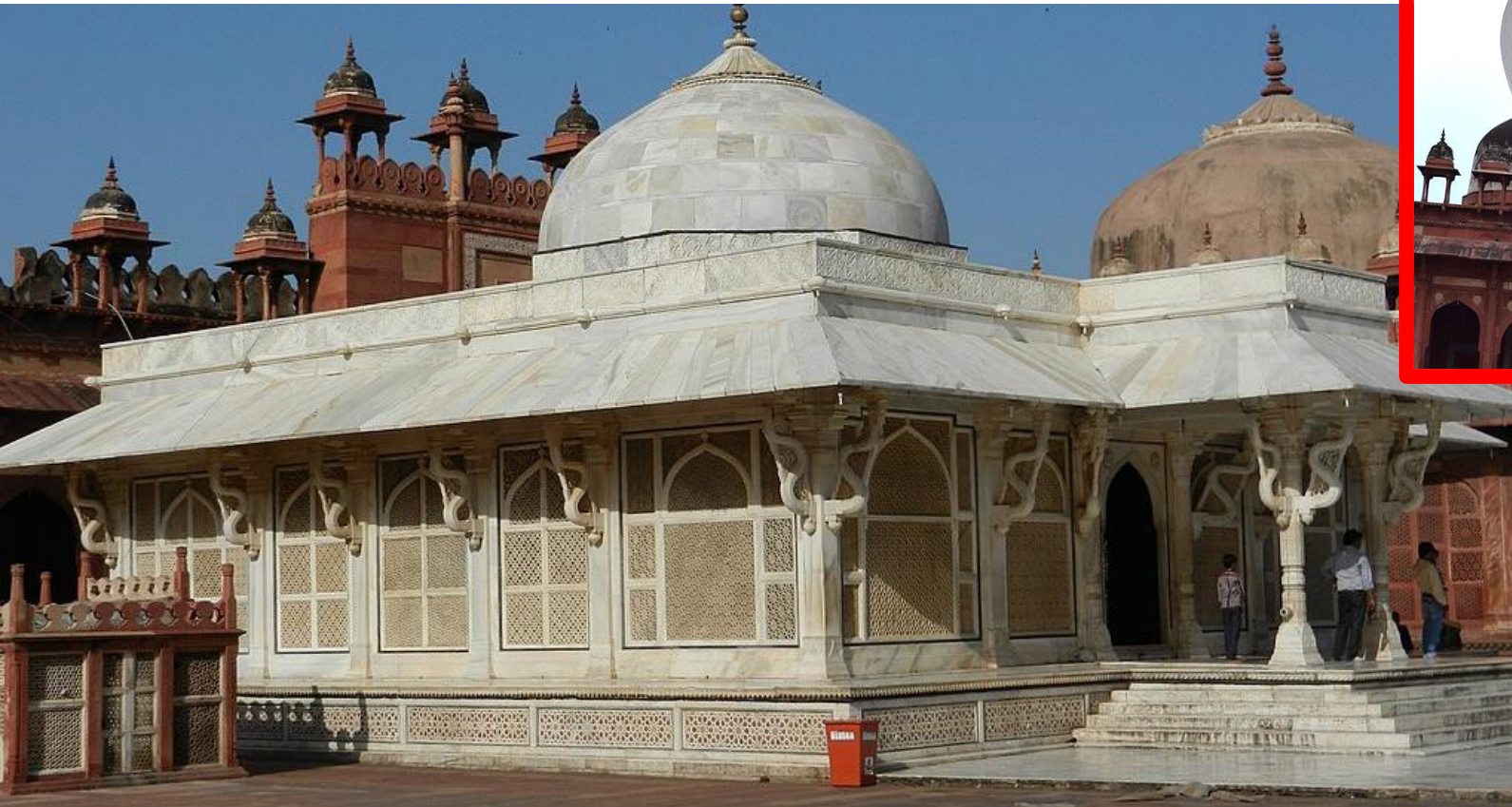
- Long flight of steps leads to gateway; parapet with kiosks; 177ft high; large arched entryway
- Framing the arch is ornamental border with calligraphy of koranic verses...
- Quotes Jesus...
- Behind is a mosque



B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B3c. Tomb of Shayk Salim Chishti, 1580-81

- In courtyard: Marble tomb of holy man
- Brackets w/ serpentine volutes (not figures) carved by the temple builders



B3c. Tomb of Shayk Salim Chishti, 1580-81

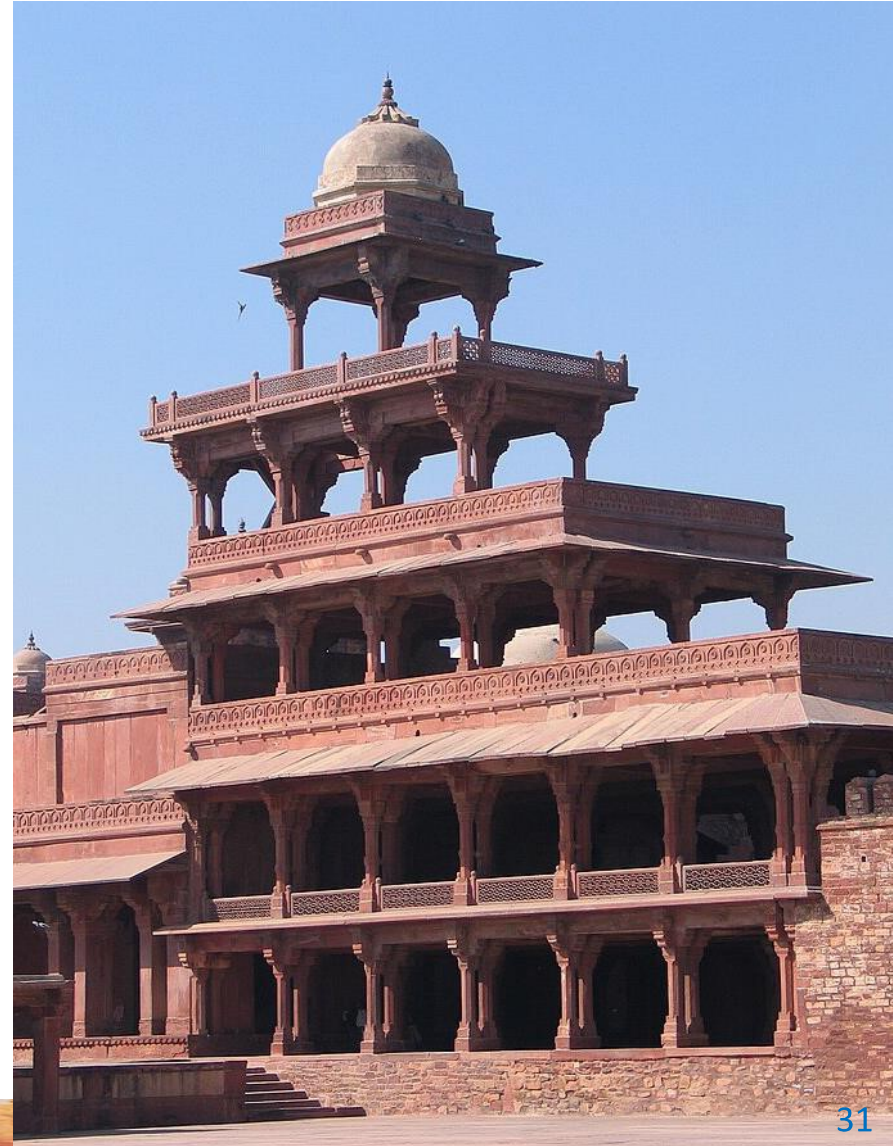
- Interior: Delicate jalis (screens) in geometric patterns



B3. Fatehpur Sikri

B3d. Panch Mahal (5-story palace/mansion), 1571-76

- Building where women of the court can “catch the breeze” and relax behind lattice screens (i.e., without being seen)
- Number of pavilions decrease with each story... lowest story has 84 pillars, uppermost has only 4, topped by a dome
- **SO: Women’s social role**



B4. Red Fort at Agra

- Existed in pre-Mughal days
- Renovated by Akbar, 1564-1570s
- Later renovated by Shah Jahan, 1628-37 (Part II)
- Not to be confused w/ SJ's Red Fort at Delhi (Part II)



C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

- C1. Workshop, style, process, artists
- C2. Pre-Mughal Hindu and Persian painting
- C3. Islamic books & painting: *Hamzanama*, 1562-77
- C4. Mughal books & painting: *Akbarnama*, 1590-95
- C5. Hindu books and painting: *Harivamsa*, ca.1585
- C6. European Christian books & painting
- C7. After Akbar: Jahangir

C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

C1. Workshop, style, process, artists

Workshop and style

- Recall: Humayun brought 2 leading Persian painters to Delhi... took charge of Akbar's workshop of ca 100 artists
- Akbar defended figurative painting to his theologians
- Opposition from traditionalists: some smeared faces in miniature paintings (in defense of Koranic passages)
- Artists mixed Persian and indigenous Jain and Hindu styles, assimilated some Chinese and Euro Renaissance styles
- Evolution of the style: flat decorative > energetic Rajasthani style > European realism
- From Euro: haloes, putti, atmospheric & linear perspective

C1. Workshop, style, process, artists

Process

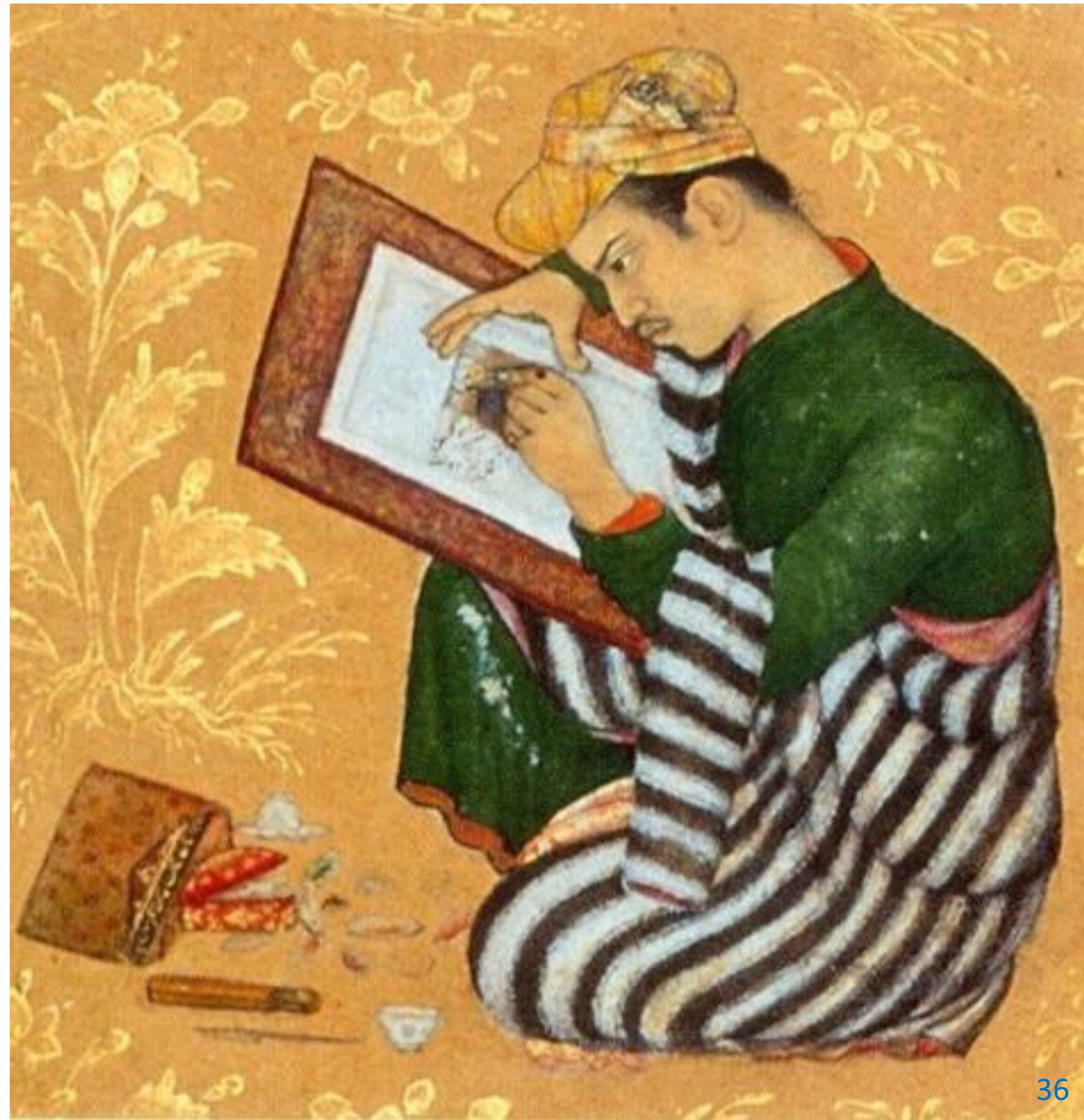
- Brushes from bird quills set with kitten or squirrel hair
- Pigments: mineral, earth, animal (lac insect > crimson, cow urine > yellow)
- Painters applied water-based paint to paper
- Used sketches and tracings
- Completed paintings were burnished (placed painted side down on hard surface, and rubbed on other surface)
- Paintings were mounted on paper with decorative borders and bound into books

C1. Workshop, style, process, artists

Process ... Artists

- While painting, artists sat on the ground with one knee flexed to support a drawing board on which they set a painting
- E.g., portrait of artist Abu al-Hasan painting (later)

*Portrait of Abu al-Hasan
Painting, by Daulat, ca.1610,
Golestan Palace Library,
Tehran*



C1. Workshop, style, process, artists

Artists

- Books that Akbar himself commissioned were in Persian and contained illustrated **miniature** paintings
- Painting collaborative work between master artist who drew composition and artist who added color
- After colors, gold was added if desired
- All artists' names were recorded on the painted page
- **SO:** We know Kesu, Basawan, Abu al-Hasan, Manohar
- Akbar did weekly inspections of his artists' work
- **SO:** Very involved patron

C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

C2. Pre-Mughal Hindu and Persian painting

- Since we've looked at very little painting (but recall the Jain miniature from Week 7), we'll look at a couple of examples of pre-Mughal style paintings
- First example: Hindu painting from Delhi-Agra area early Mughal, at beginning of Akbar's reign
- **SO:** What the Mughals might have encountered when they arrived in Delhi area
- Second example: Persian Safavid dynasty painting, 1548
- **SO:** What the Mughals might have brought with them to Delhi area

C2. Pre-Mughal Hindu and Persian painting

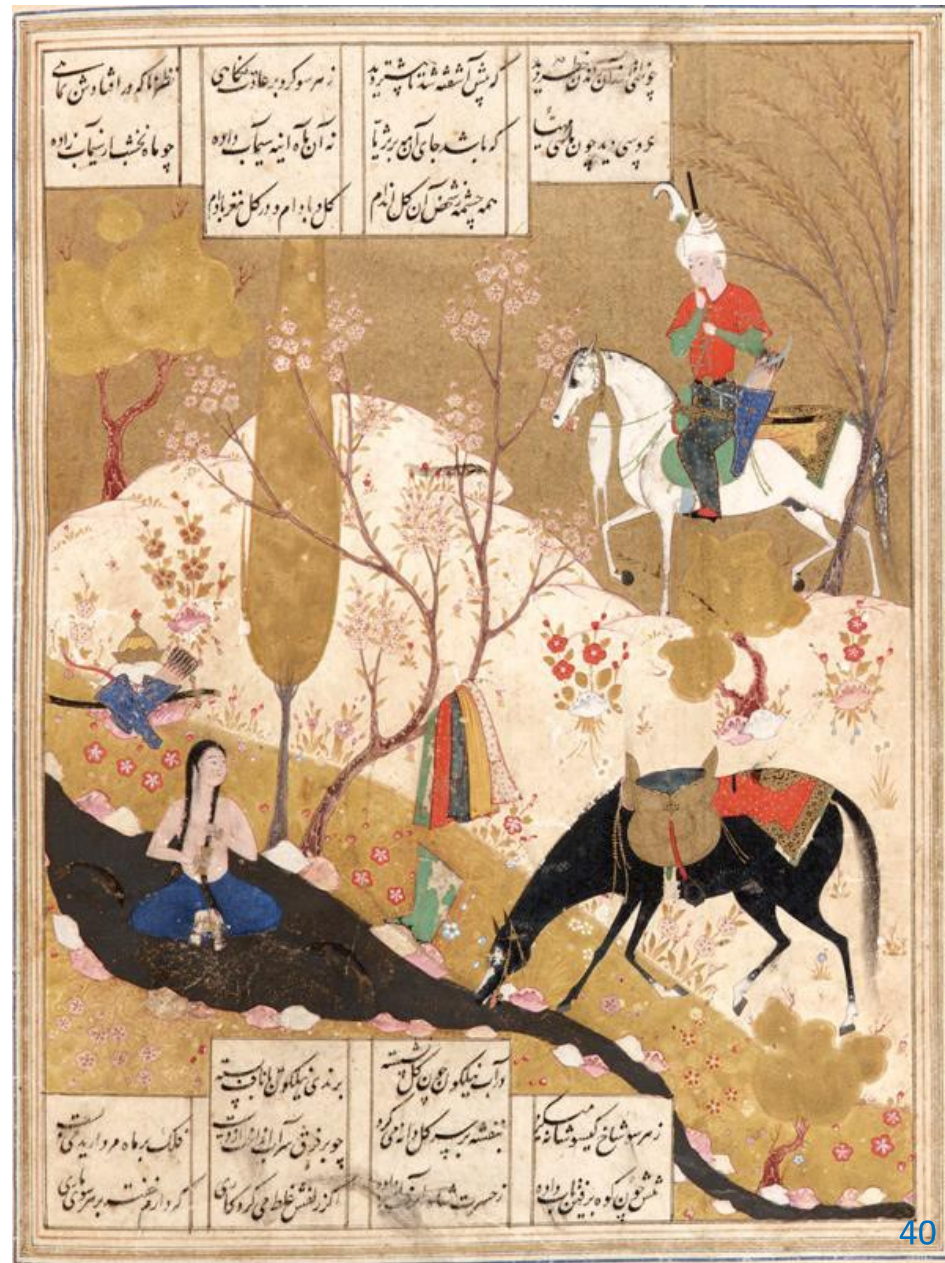
- Red, yellow, blue color palette... stylized trees & water, wavy horizon line... figures in profile, almond eyes... lack of depth/perspective... river breaks the frame



Gopis Plead with Krishna to Return Their Clothing, page from dispersed *Bhagavata Purana*, unknown artist, 1560-65, Delhi-Agra area, wc & ink on paper, 7 3/8" x 10 1/8", Met Museum, NY

C2. Pre-Mughal Hindu and Persian painting

- Scene from a Persian epic romance: Persian king falls in love with Armenian princess
- Single sheet paintings intended to be placed in an album of pictures
 - Figurative but not extremely naturalistic
 - Use of gold and silver
 - Includes text
- Former art-patron king issued edict against production of book illustrations, 1556; artists moved to Mughal court in India



Khusrow Discovers Shirin Bathing in a Pool; 1548; Shiraz, Persia; 12.2 x 7.7"; wc, silver, & gold on paper; Freer Gallery, Washington

C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

C3. Islamic books & painting: *Hamzanama*, 1562-77

- First illustrated book of the Mughal workshop:
Hamzanama (Tales of Hamza)
- Traditional adventure story about an Arab warrior, uncle of prophet Mohammed
- Large paintings on cloth; text of story is glued to the back
- **SO:** Images were probably intended to be used during storytelling performance
- Originally 1400 paintings, 150 survive

C3. Islamic... painting: *Hamzanama*, 1562-77

- Example: Depiction of a night raid on a prison, with the heroes killing the captors in order to free their comrades.
- Multiple figures in dynamic poses
- Sumptuously decorated courtyard
- Cut-off figures, multiple perspectives of interiors and exteriors



Ayyars Slit the Throats of Prison Guards and Free Sa'id Farrukh-Nizhad, artist unknown, from *Hamzanama*, ca.1562-1577, wc and gold on cotton cloth, ca.27 x 21", Brooklyn Museum

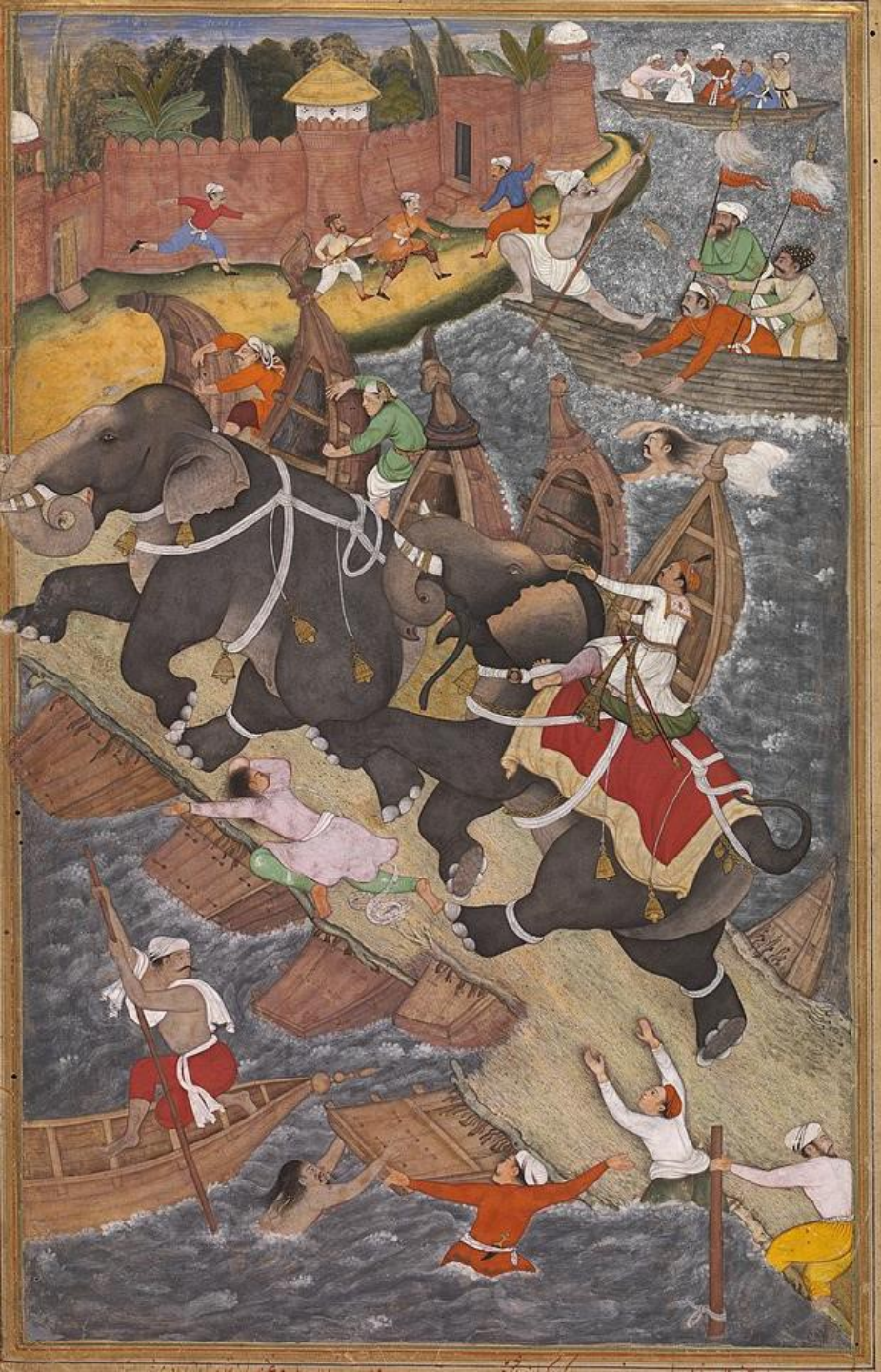
C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

C4. Mughal books & painting: *Akbarnama*, 1590-95

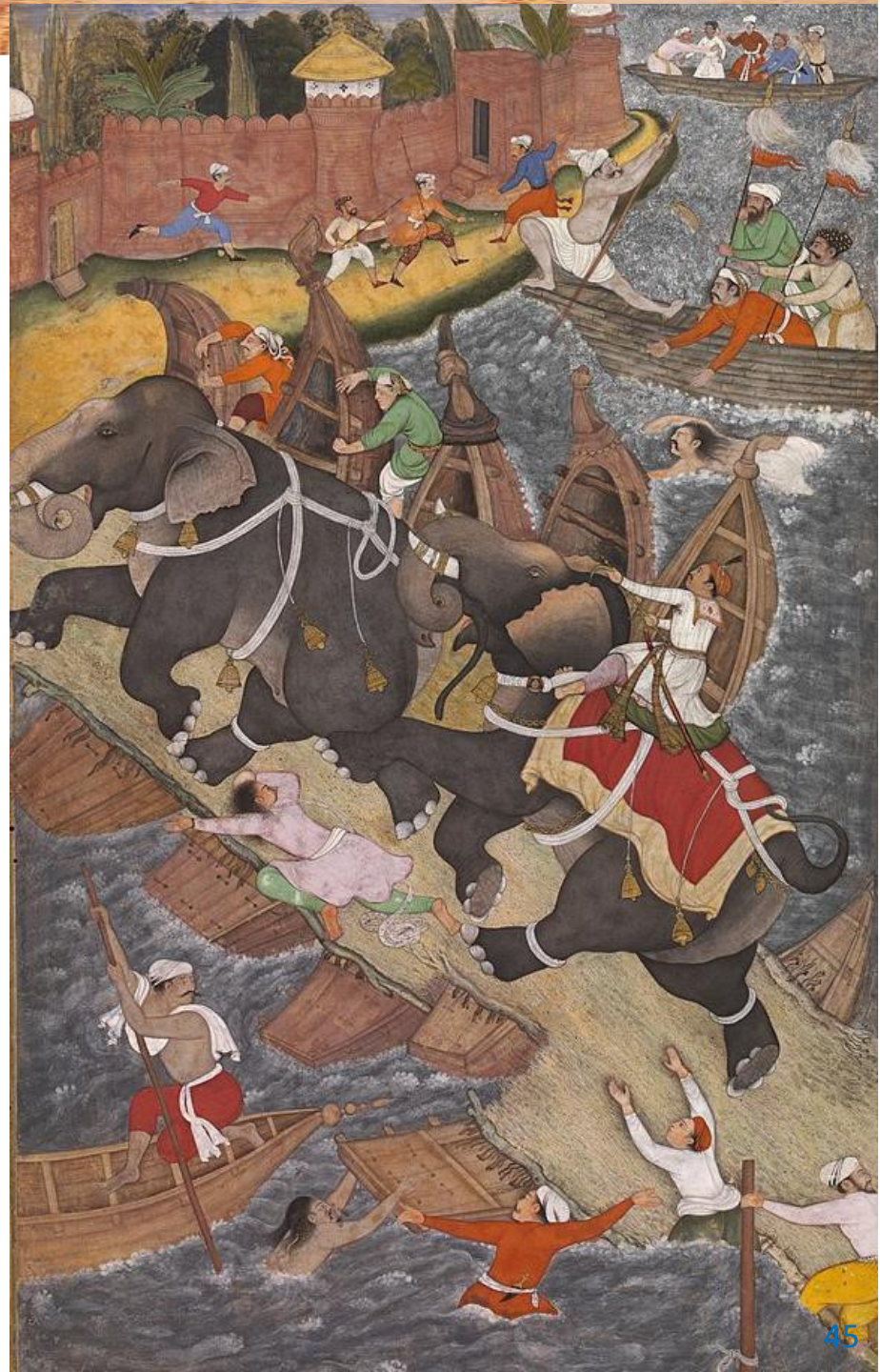
- After Portuguese Jesuits brought paintings: Greater naturalism in ptg of Mughal School; not found in Persian or indigenous ptg
- E.g., illustrated book, *Akbarnama (Tales of Akbar)*, ca.1590-95, biography of emperor Akbar by Abul Fazl; pages of text interspersed with illustrated pages
- Some double-page spreads, e.g., double pages of Akbar riding the elephant Havai
- Story praises Akbar's ability to ride a fierce elephant (thus, to rule an empire)
- Basawan's composition uses diagonals across the pages

Two images on facing pages:

Akbar on Elephant Havai Chases Elephant Ran Bagha across a Pontoon Bridge over the Jamuna R, from *Akbar Nama*, ca.1590-95, ca.14" x 9", water-based paint on paper, outline by **Basawan**, painting by **Chatai**, Victoria and Albert Museum, London



- Dynamism and energy
- Great degree of naturalism
- Not just elephants, but water, animals and people on banks, swimmers, oarsmen all receive careful attention
- Very high horizon
- Perspective created by decreasing size of forms (e.g., boats) with distance
- Buildings are actual monuments at Agra Red Fort



C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

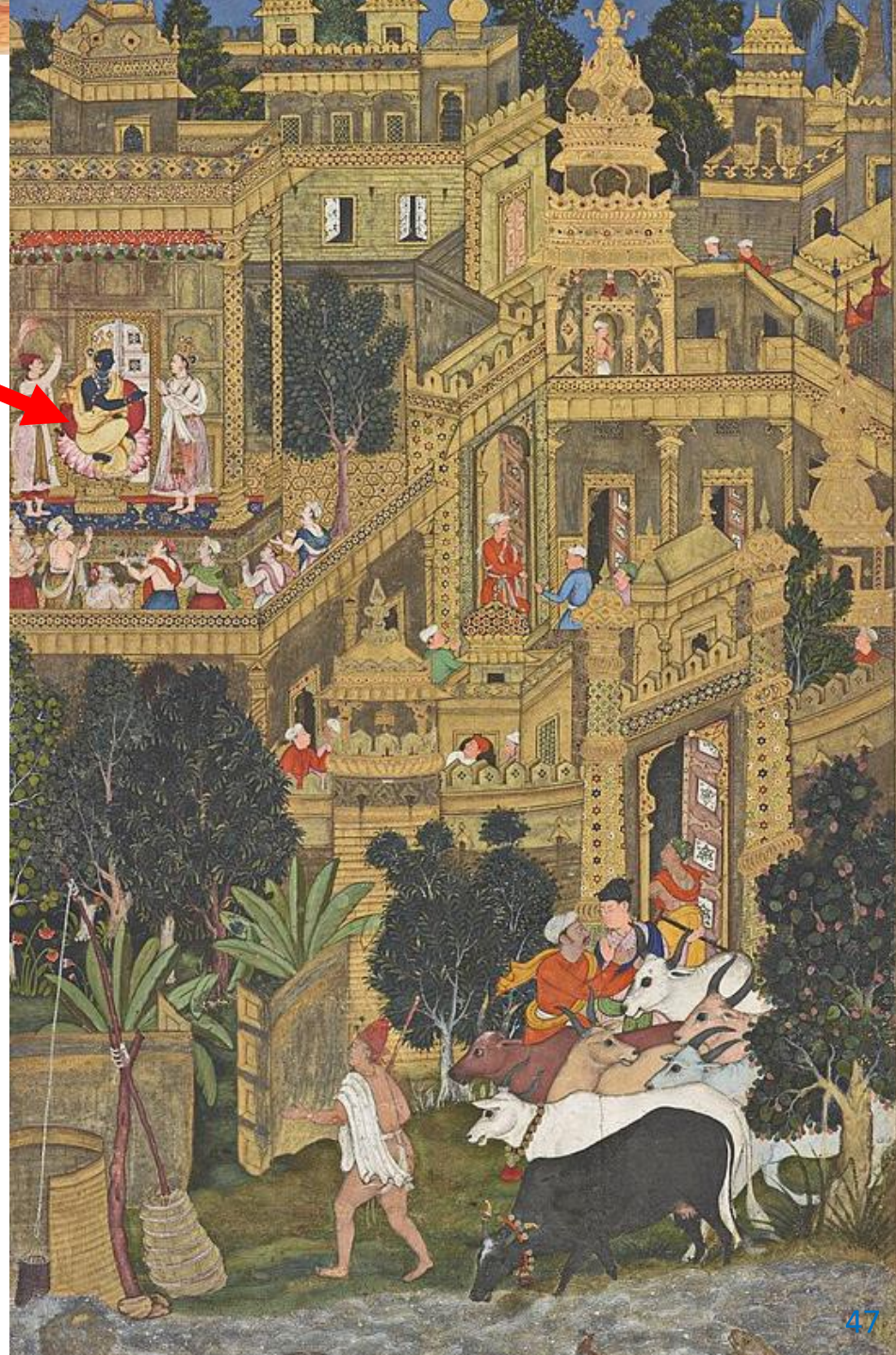
C5. Hindu books & painting: *Harivamsa*, ca.1585

- Akbar's extensive translations (into Persian) of Hindu texts
- E.g., *Harivamsa (Genealogy of Vishnu)*, ca.1585, with episodes from life of Krishna

C5. Hindu... painting: *Harivamsa*, ca.1585

- Krishna with blue skin and yellow attire, in pavilion
- Multiple perspectives for both inside and outside
- Cowherds at bottom... suggest village life and recall Krishna's youth
- Scale of figures decreases from front to back
- High horizon

Krishna Enthroned in the Golden City of Dwaraka, from *Harivamsa*, ca.1585, watercolor on paper, 9 x 6 3/4", Freer Gallery, Washington



C. Mughals: Emperor Akbar's Painting Workshop

C6. European Christian books & painting

- Akbar, and son Salim (later Jahangir), collected European Renaissance paintings
- 1542 Jesuit Francisco Xavier to Goa
- In Jesuit missions to Mughals, paintings, engravings, and illustrated books were brought to Akbar's court
- Several of Akbar's artists worked in a European style after the arrival of these works, e.g., Kesu Das
- Kesu Das understood and appreciated Euro subjects, stylistically and devotionally... copied engravings, entire image or in parts
- E.g., signed painting of St. Jerome, copied from engraving by Mario Cartaro, itself derived (and reversed) from Michelangelo's painting of Noah on Sistine Chapel ceiling

C6. European... painting

- Nude figure: Kesu practices painting musculature, an element lacking in Islamic art
- Tree, horizon, birds derive from Flemish engravings
- Prominence of the book in Islam & in this painting



^ *Noah*, by **Michelangelo**, 1508-10

St. Jerome, by **Kesu Das**, ca.1580-85, wc on paper, 17x10", Musee Guimet, Paris >



C6. European Christian books & painting

- Antwerp Polyglot Bible presented to Akbar during first two Jesuit missions 1580-91
- Lavish Bible in 5 languages (Hebrew, Latin, Greek, Aramaic, Syriac), with many engraved illustrations
- Akbar's artist Basawan specialized in paintings of woman as devotional object, from Virgin Mary to Sibyl
- Paintings based on engraved pages from Polyglot Bible
- E.g., female figure makes offering to the gods, based on Pietas Regia page from Polyglot Bible... sometimes this same figure is an idol

C6. European... painting



Polyglot Bible, Pietas Regia, from second title page, 1568-1573

* * * *

Allegorical Female Figure, Nar Singh in style of Basawan, ca.1585-90, 8.8 x 5.6", Freer Gallery, Washington



C6. European Christian books & painting

- Prince Salim (Jahangir) was a connoisseur and guided production of Euro-style paintings at his father's court
- Salim demanded exact reproductions of engravings... required that work's devotion and style be kept intact
- Preferred the iconic to the narrative... while his father's tastes were moving toward more pageantry
- Abu al-Hasan (1584-ca.1628) was Salim's best artist
- Also known women artists working under Salim
- Example: Abu al-Hasan's study of John the Evangelist, 1600-01, based on Durer's *Crucifixion* from *The Passion* series, 1511

C6. European... painting



Crucifixion, Albrecht Dürer, 1511, from *The Passion*

* * * *

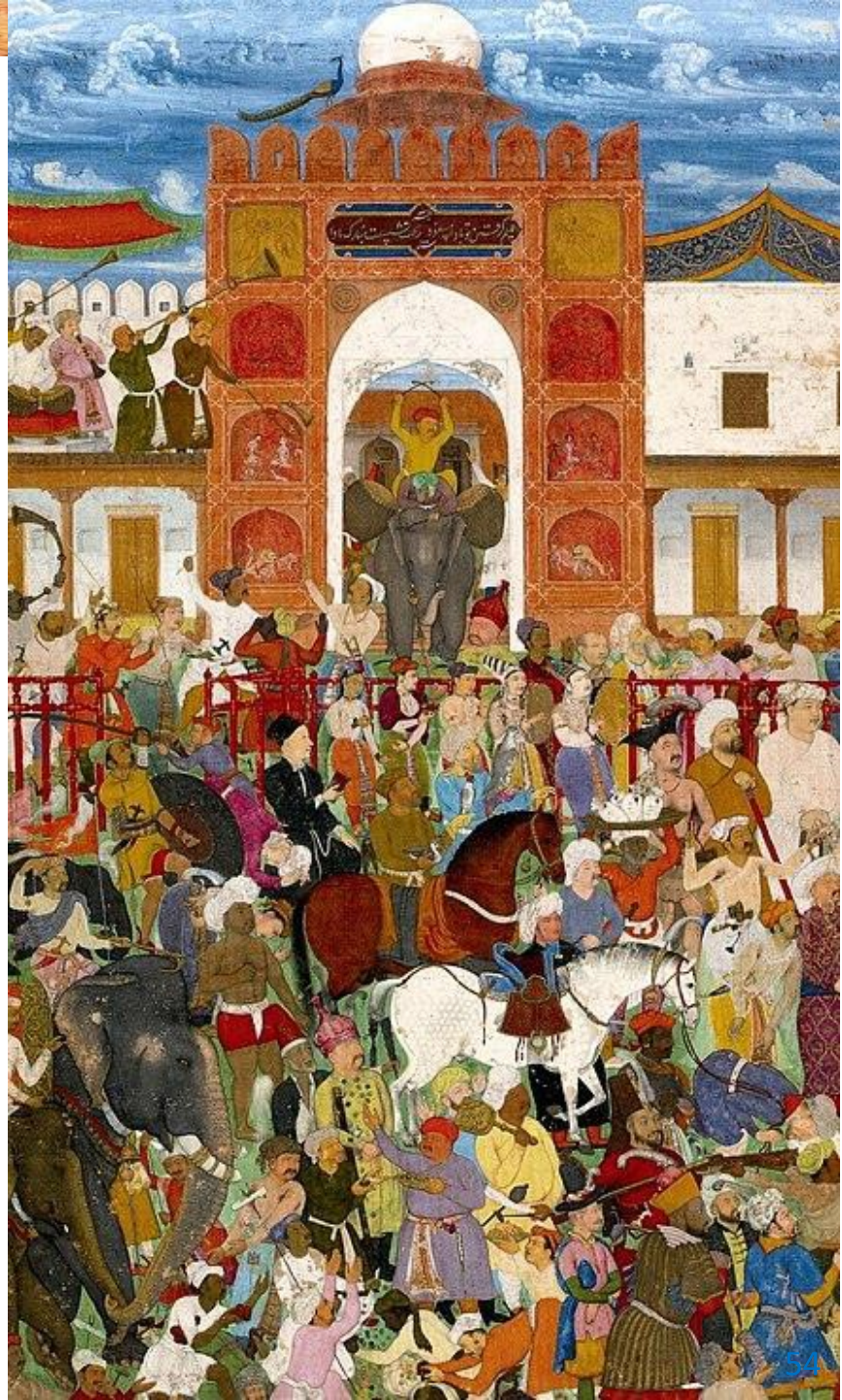
Saint John the Evangelist, by **Abu al-Hasan**, 1600-01,
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



C7. After Akbar: Jahangir

- Akbar the Great died 1605. His son Salim succeeded him as Jahangir.
- Painting of the celebrations at the accession of Jahangir, by Abu al-Hasan (recall earlier portrait)
- Riotously colorful; “cluttered” foreground suggests the festivities and pageantry
- Jahangir and Abu al-Hasan: continued in Part 2 of this History of the Art of India

Celebrations at the Accession of Jahangir, by Abu al-Hasan, from *Jahangirnama*, ca.1615-18, Institute of Oriental Studies, St. Petersburg, Russia



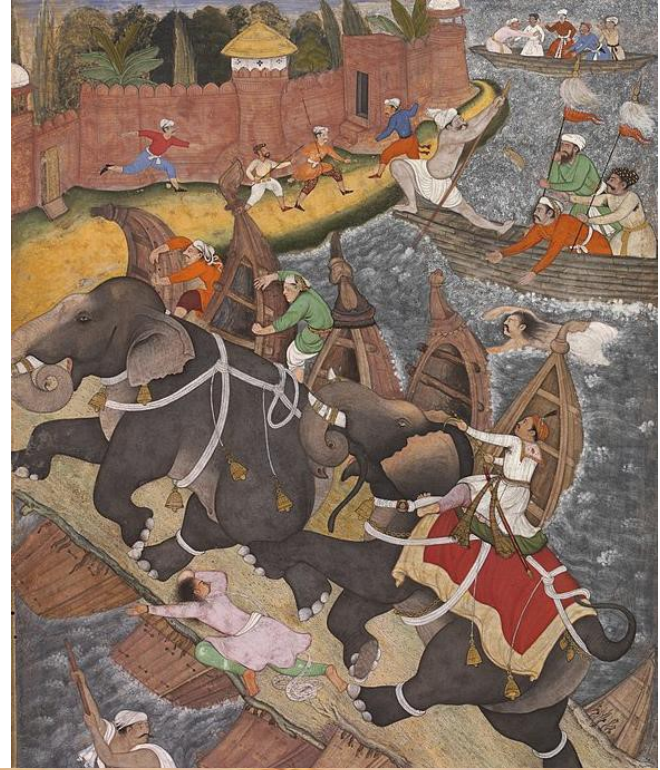
Review of course

- Chronological/stylistic survey: Mohenjo-Daro > Mughals
- Religious themes: Iconography, attributes, symbolism
- Persistence of themes or visual elements across centuries
- Cf. & contrast: India and Euro (Gk/Rom & medieval) art
- Evolution of particular forms (e.g., Buddhist cave chaityas; Orissan temples)
- Starting from art: Religion/philosophy, military, scientific, feminist, economic (all valuable approaches)
- Art in context: Patron, artist, contemporary viewers, scholars, later viewers
- Focus on artistic and aesthetic qualities: Rasa and rasika
- To be continued...

History of the Art of India, Part I: Origins to Mughals

OLLI Spring 2024

Week 8



Islamic India: Early Mughal Architecture and Painting