GULSHAN MURAQQA’: AN IMPERIAL DISCRETION

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GULSHAN MURAQQA’: AN IMPERIAL DISCRETION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis researches two folios (pages) from the Gulshan muraqqa’, an imperial album of the Mughal Empire. The two folios, The Poet and the Prince and A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness, are currently in the permanent collection of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Visual descriptions, focusing on style and subject matter, bring to light suppositions regarding artist attributions and a strong sufi connection thus far relatively unexplored and unrealized in relation to these paintings. Technical analyses of the folios are presented and analyzed within context. This investigation demonstrates the amalgamated presence of Indian, Persian, and European influences in these two folios as representative of the Gulshan muraqqa’. Calligraphy panels of the folios and border decorations contribute additional understanding of the sufi underpinning.
APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences have examined a thesis titled “GULSHAN MURAQQA’: AN IMPERIAL DISCRETION,” presented by Hamama Tul Bushra, candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on two folios (pages) from the Gulshan *muraqqa’*, *The Poet and the Prince* recto/verso (Figures 1 and 2) and *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* verso/recto (Figures 3 and 4). These folios are currently in the permanent collection of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri.¹ The subject matter and the style of the paintings, the calligraphy on the reverse sides (Figures 2 and 4), and also the borders framing the images are examined in this thesis. Further examined are the influential elements of Persian culture, Islamic *Sufism*, and Renaissance Humanism, apparent in these two folios. Interesting results from technical analyses of the folios are briefly explored. Existing research is limited, but recent scholarship combined with old research on this album has created enough incentive for international scholars to further examine the magnitude of this album and its significance in the Mughal period. This research contributes to the very limited body of work on the Gulshan *muraqqa’*, specifically in providing in depth analyses of two relatively unexplored folios.

¹ The Gulshan album is now dispersed. Of the collection of 379 known folios, the majority are held in the permanent collection of Golistan Library, Tehran, Iran. Twenty-five pages are in Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, called the ‘Berlin Album’. These pages were brought in from Iran in 1860-61 by a member of Freiherr von Minutoli’s embassy to Iran, Brugsch Pasha. Several additional leaves are in European and American public and private collections. It has been suggested, although without evidence, that the album arrived in Iran after Nadir Shah’s attack on Delhi in 1741. Kambiz Eslami, “Golsan Album,” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater (New York: Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation 2003), 104-108.
The practice of album making finds its roots in Persian tradition. Each page consists of three elements: *khatt* (calligraphy, fine writing), *tasvir* (illustration, drawing or painting, illuminated with gold and/or color), and *hashiya* (borders). Other crafts involved include preparing ink, pigments, or colors; hand making *wasli* (handmade paper); burnishing the *wasli*; mounting the paintings with borders; preparing album covers and binding the albums.

The albums were constructed with paintings on both facing pages followed by calligraphy on the next facing pages. Each leaf has an illustration or combination of illustrations on one side and a piece, or combination of pieces, of calligraphy on the other side. These opulent paintings and fine calligraphy were further adorned with beautifully decorated borders, which were cut from separate sheets of paper. The central image is either placed in the center of the page or placed closer to the bound side so that the outer margin is broader than the inner margin. The size of the top and the bottom margins are uniform. The complete bordered images were bound together luxuriously between two covers after they were considered finished and decorated with lacquered paint and gold. The paintings and calligraphies assembled in the albums were by different artists of different times and places. Sometimes the images were enlarged by adding engravings, paintings, illuminated bands, or sheets of paper on the edges; likewise, oversized paintings were cut down to fit into the conventions of the

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4. The Gulshan album pages all have broader outer margins.
album. It is because of this patchwork construction of cut and paste images the albums were aptly called *muraqqa*. The Gulshan *muraqqa’,* the imperial Mughal album from a grand dynasty of the Indian subcontinent, is marked by its opulence and superior quality. The album is a compilation of eleventh to sixteenth century paintings, drawings, calligraphy, and engravings by Mughal, Persian, Deccani, Turkish, and European artists. This eminent *muraqqa’* was commissioned by Jahangir c. 1588 when he was still a prince. Riza Aqa, an immigrant artist from Persia, managed the studio and oversaw work on the *muraqqa’. The album was finally completed during the reign of Jahangir’s son, Shah Jahan.

Jahangir r. 1605-1627 was the fourth emperor of the Mughal dynasty, founded by his great grandfather, Babur (1483-1530), in 1526 A.D. The dynasty united and controlled the Indian subcontinent for nearly two hundred years. Babur and his descendants transformed their court from its nomadic Central Asian heritage into a refined artistic culture, which was unprecedented in Indian history. Inspired by the rich and luxurious Persian culture, combined with Indian riches, the Mughals proved to be notable patrons of art, specifically exemplified in the art of miniature painting.

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6. *Muraqqa’* is a Persian word and its literal meaning is patched or a patched garment. Such patched cloaks were worn by *sufi* sages as a sign of poverty and humility. The tattered garment was mended with many discordant patches stitched to hold the cloak together. This cloak has a significant value to an initiated or a devout *sufi*, but is worthless to the uninitiated. An initiated would not exchange it for all the material and riches of the world. Hence, in the world of art, *muraqqa’* is a well suited name for a book assembled by ‘patches’ of different paintings and calligraphies collected from various times and different artists. Elaine Wright. *Muraqqa’* (Virginia: Art Services International, 2008), p. xvii.
Babur’s son, Humayun r. 1530-40, 1555-56 laid the groundwork of the Mughal studio, where the art of the Mughal court began. It further developed under the patronage of his successor, Akbar r. 1556-1605, and reached its zenith under Jahangir’s connoisseurship. After inheriting a vast and stable empire from Akbar, Jahangir devoted the time and finances necessary to further refine the quality of artistic production achieved in his father’s taswirkhana (painting studio). Akbar commissioned illustrated historic, dynastic, religious and heroic manuscripts to propagate his reign. Unlike his father, whose tasvirkhana produced significant illustrated manuscripts, Jahangir preferred single page paintings that could later be bound in a muraqqa’ and admired in their own context and framework.\(^8\)

Further, subjects for paintings during Jahangir’s reign were chosen from everyday life rather than the historical or mythological subjects preferred by Akbar. Paintings were commissioned for political motives, to record historical events, as exhibitions of grandeur, as gifts, or simply to add into muraqqa’. The portraits of emperors, courtiers, mystical figures of the East, religious and political figures of the West, plants and animals were included in the patchwork of imagery. These formal, informal, spiritual, worldly, extravagant and historical paintings were kept in albums that were no larger than a medium-size sketchbook.

The Gulshan is an album that holds images selected exclusively from the emperor’s personal collection. As an ardent collector of art, Jahangir is identified as one of the most dedicated patrons of Mughal miniature paintings, and his

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period is revered as the “Golden Age” of Mughal art in India. The emperor's aesthetic sensibility and profound artistic knowledge is reflected in his careful selection of images for the album. Jahangir’s own claim as a connoisseur of art is asserted in his autobiography, *Jahangirnama*:

*I derive such enjoyment from painting and have such expertise in judging it that, even without the artist’s name being mentioned, no work of past or present masters can be shown to me that I do not instantly recognize who did it. Even if it is a scene of several figures and each face is by a different master, I can tell who did which face. If in a single painting different persons have done the eyes and eyebrows, I can determine who drew the face and who made the eyes and eyebrows.*

Whether this statement is true or not, it illustrates the emperor’s passion for paintings, both old and contemporary. The album is known for its fine quality of images and the creativity of its integration, and is regarded as the most famous album of the dynasty. Its exceptional quality is a manifestation of Jahangir’s unprecedented artistic attention and taste, as explored in the following chapters.

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CHAPTER 2

VISUAL DESCRIPTION: THE POET AND THE PRINCE

*The Poet and the Prince* (Figure 1) illustrates a young prince holding a book, leaning against a blossom tree with pink flowers. His attendant is standing behind him holding a scarf. The young men are wearing Mughal attire and Mughal style turbans; the prince has a plume in his turban, indicating his royal status. The young men are in the presence of a bearded old man, who is stooped with age and leaning over his staff wearing Persian headdress and the *chola* with long sleeves covering his hands.¹ The aged man holding a book in his hand appears to be a *sufi*, an ascetic, mystic, and learned scholar; his gaze is directed at the prince.

Although the painting lacks inscription, which sometimes appears on Mughal paintings, the details suggest what the picture represents. The illustration of the Persian poet and *sufi* is significant for Jahangir, as he and his ancestors took pride in their Persian heritage and its culture of poetry celebrated by Mughal royals and nobles.² Jahangir’s inclination towards the divine appears in a painting by his artist Bitchtr, which shows Jahangir’s predilection for a *sufi* saint over the King of England James I and the Ottoman Sultan (Figure 5). *Sufis* were revered and their company honored, their advice was valuable as they were considered akin to God.

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¹ A *chola* is a typical garment worn over clothes in cold Persian weather.
² The poets were generally patronized by the emperors, as their panegyric works were dedicated to their patrons. Classic Persian poets like Sa’di, Hafiz, and Nizami were well read and well repeated by the emperors.
Jahangir developed his proclivity towards the mystical in his father’s court while growing up. Akbar was curiously interested in the theology of religion, and often hosted scholars from different faiths. They would gather in his Ibadatkhana, or House of Worship, to present their beliefs and engage in debates (Figure 6). This practice liberated Jahangir from the conservative views of Islam. He sought a deeper meaning of the higher Truth offered in the teachings of Sufism.

**Sufism**

Sufis believe the knowledge of God cannot be found through logic or intellectual processes, but only through direct experience. It is not a system built for people to examine and learn from. The wisdom and higher truth of mysticism cannot be taught to the masses. Instead, Sufism can only be understood by means of “human exemplar, the teacher,” attained by a deeper bond between the master and the pupil.\(^3\) Much of Mughal art is secular in nature, concerned with an outward show of power or with the fleeting pleasures of life, yet the emperors and princes also kept an eye turned towards the unseen world of spiritual illumination and wisdom. For that reason, homage to great sufi saints and spiritual leaders was paid and paintings of such subjects were favored.

The significance of the sufi for Jahangir is recorded in Jahangirnama, as he describes his father’s despair for not having an heir to continue the Mughal

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legacy. In desperation, Akbar went to seek sufi Sheikh Salim Chishti’s blessing. The sufi predicted the birth of three sons for Akbar, and his prediction was later fulfilled. An heir, Jahangir, was born and named Salim after the sufi, a gesture of honor and respect. Salim was Jahangir’s birth name, which he changed to Jahangir (World Seizer) when he took the throne. This event established a meaningful place of the holy men for Jahangir, who was a special child, an answer to a sufi prayer.

Akbar paid special attention to Jahangir’s development and education. Cultured Persian tutor, Abdul Rahim Khan Kahanan, was employed for his schooling. As a result, Jahangir was fluent in Turkish, Persian, and Hindi by age thirteen. He was also trained in the art of writing. Writing is considered one of the most exalted pursuits for man in the Islamic world, and as a result, the works of men of letters have contributed immensely to Indian culture. Jahangir memorized works of many poets and it was the religious philosophy within the poetry that interested Jahangir the most.4

Numerous references to the truths of mysticism, divine love, and knowledge from the poetry of celebrated Persian poets like Sa’di and Hafiz are made in Jahangirnama.5

Jahangir was especially attracted to the wisdom offered in the works of thirteenth century Persian poet Sa’di of Shiraz. A scene from Jahangirnama (Figure 7) shows that the most honored guest was Sa’di. He is represented in an

4. William Stoddart, Outline of Sufism: The Essentials of Islamic Spirituality (Indiana: World Wisdom Inc., 2012), 3. The writings were the advice of morality and practice. The Sufis hence, were the icons of knowledge, wisdom, and mysticism.
imaginary portrait and identified by the inscribed book of poems which he presents to Jahangir. The painting dates c. 1615, where he appears to be a very old man, much older than the aged men around him. Sa’di is believed to have lived one hundred and ten years. In this painting, he is singled out by his central location and his characteristic representation later in life. He is shown wearing a chola, holding a staff, and bending beneath the weight of old age. Coincidently, the old man in The Poet and the Prince shares the same characteristics as the old Sa’di. Unlike the generic faces of the young men, the portrait of the sufi depicts individuality. Perhaps the image represents Jahangir’s favorite poet, Sa’di.

**Persian Aesthetics and European Influence**

The figures (Figure 1) are situated in a landscape scattered with beautiful flowers. Two cypress trees stand erect at the edge of an undulating stream that runs through the landscape. The small hill on the right side overlaps the horizon at a distance. The image exemplifies Persian aesthetics, which prevailed in Jahangir’s studio. In addition, the European influence is illustrated in the architecture of the distant city, which spreads across the left background; its buildings are tightly stacked against each other. The high lifted background, the middle ground, and the foreground suggest depth of field. The ambiance is a

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7. Interestingly, cypress trees, which appear so frequently in Mughal miniature landscapes, are also seen in the art of Mesopotamian civilization. The trees continued to appear within Arab, Chinese, and later Indian artwork.
8. Milo C. Beach, Grand Mogul: Imperial Painting in India (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1978), 51.
recall of the romance of Persian poetry, infused with morality and wisdom. Here the sufi scholar teaches the young prince to avail the youth similar to the blossoming flower while it lasts, for time will pass like the water in the stream and will not stay forever.\(^9\)

It is important to recognize the development of Mughal painting in India, where the local tradition of art was deeply rooted. Hindu painting (Figure 8) is characterized by the use of intense colors loosely painted on flat surfaces. Its composition is compartmentalized with strong forms. The visual impact of these paintings is robust, different from the intricate and subtle Iranian works. Rhythmic lines, fine and rich pigments applied carefully on superb surface patterns, minute details, and strong control over technique are among the strong characteristics of Persian art (Figure 9), which became infused in Indian painting under the Mughals.\(^{10}\)

The creation of a specifically ‘Mughal style’ in painting began with Akbar’s inheritance of a large kitabkhana (library) and its tasvirkhana when he took the throne. Two Persian masters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abd-as Samad, were employed as directors of the tasvirkhana.\(^{11}\) Under their guidance, the studio was expanded by hiring skilled local artists qualified in regional painting traditions. Initially the integration of refined Persian aesthetics and the vigor of Hindu art were fused together naively, eventually evolving into a distinct imperial character.


\(^{10}\) John W. Seyller and Wheeler M. Thackston, The Adventure of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India (Washington DC: Freer Gallery of Art, 2002), 44.

\(^{11}\) Humayan brought these Persian painters from the court of Shah Tahmasp with him when he returned from exile in Persia.
Hamzanama, the first huge undertaking of an illustrated manuscript in Akbar’s studio, exemplifies the development of imperial style (Figure 10).  

Each painting was a collaboration of various artists working together on their specified areas of expertise.

During the early period of his reign, Akbar preferred and commissioned illustrated manuscripts of historical, dynastic, and religious narratives about the emperor and his ancestors. During the later and mature part of his life, he focused on commissioning lyrical manuscripts of poetry and prose. The illustrations of earlier manuscripts lack the finesse that is apparent in the later paintings done for poetic manuscripts like the Baharistan of Sa’di. The early compositions were active, crowded, lively, and boldly colored, as seen in Akbar’s biography, Akbarnama, where Akbar is shown heroically taming an elephant or conquering a Rajput fort. Another illustration, Akbar’s Adventure with the Elephant Hawai (Figure 11), represents Akbar and his dynamic personality.

On the other hand, the poetical manuscripts produced later in Akbar’s reign consist of fewer people, have soft color palettes, and wider views of distant hills. There is better sense of perspective in landscape and architecture, borrowed from European prints and engravings. They are more refined than the early paintings. The Poet and the Prince shows all the characteristics of the later Akbari period. Perhaps it was originally painted for a poetic project but never

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12. Hamzanama means stories of Hamza. Hamza was the Prophet Muhammad’s uncle. Hamzanama was painted on fabric instead of paper, and it consisted of 14 volumes, each containing 100 illustrations.
applied to it. The central subject may have been cut out of a larger painting to add to the Gulshan album. The painting is extended from all four sides, as examined in the technical analysis in Chapter 4.

**Renaissance Humanism**

During the Akbari period, interests in individualism, humanism, and European Renaissance art grew. The Renaissance humanism influences of European images and prints in Mughal art added a new chapter of "naturalism, scientific perspective, and chiaroscuro," bringing figures to a realistic size. The interest in individuality brought a new attitude towards the human figure. This humanistic interest furthered the development of portraiture.

The art of court portraiture began during Akbar’s reign, and the portraiture of nobles, generals, musicians, and other eminent personalities were kept as a record. It is further accounted by the court historian that Akbar sat himself for a portrait painting, and even “ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm” and assembled in an “immense album.” Although no folios from this album survived, there are individual portraits which scholars have suggested were intended for the album. This illustrates the significance of the album for Akbar, along with the production of illuminated books in Mughal court

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14. It was common practice to reuse illustrations or paintings, incorporating them in new projects.
16. Ibid., 95.
as a continuing Persian tradition. This emphasis on portraiture and album creation further developed and flourished during the time of Jahangir. This interest in portraiture is illustrated by the individuality of the sufi in the painting. Given this context, it is reasonable to conclude that the old man with the hunched back and long beard is Sa’di, the great Persian sufi poet of the thirteenth century.

It is hard to separate paintings from the later period of Akbar’s tasvirkhana from Jahangir’s early studio paintings, as both were evolving on similar concepts of humanism. However, Jahangir’s studio paintings quickly evolved to reflect his interests in “visual realism, scientific accuracy, and psychological insight.”

Jahangir was intrigued by the wonders of the world and its peculiarities, and he was known for his unconventional taste and interest in oddities. A unique and curious account in Jahangir’s own words sheds some light on the eccentric side of his personality. In Jahangirnama, the emperor mentions his courtier Inayat Khan, who, weakened and near death from opium addiction, appears asking permission to leave the court because of his deteriorating condition. Being a curious observer of nature, Jahangir wrote that when he saw Inayat Khan,

> He looked incredible weak and thin. ‘Skin stretched over bones.’ Even his bones had begun to disintegrate. It was so strange I ordered the artists to draw his likeness.

Inayat Khan died just days later (Figure 12). Jahangir was interested in paintings that truly capture the human condition.

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Style

There is some information on many of the artists who worked in Mughal India, defining the characteristics of their personal styles may sometimes be possible, it is challenging, especially given the variation in observations by scholars and experts.\textsuperscript{21}

*The Poet and the Prince* was attributed to La’l by Suzanne Marshall, the intern curator at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, in 1977.\textsuperscript{22} La’l was the most prolific painter in Akbar’s *taswirkhana*, contributing more than fifty paintings, more drawings and finished paintings than any other painter.\textsuperscript{23} The style of La’l’s known work is comparable to *The Poet and the Prince*, as exemplified by the consonant formations and rendering of light and dark within the rocks in the backgrounds of both *The Poet and the Prince* and *The Dervish and the King* (Figure 13). The stacked architecture within both skylines is also characteristic of La’l. The rendering of the trees within both paintings is convincingly similar.

John Seyller finds dissimilarities between the facial expressions and their definitions in this painting and those within other known paintings by La’l. Seyller attributes *The Poet and the Prince* to Mukand, another artist active in Akbar’s atelier. Both La’l and Mukand have similar painting styles and both were active during Akbar’s reign. Further research is needed to reach a consensus.


\textsuperscript{22} File 48-12 1 and 2, South Asian Department, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

Notably, the face of the old man appears distinct and is rendered in a personal manner, whereas the faces of the princes are generic. The old man’s face may have been painted by another artist. The style is most comparable with that of Manohar – who, according to Milo Beach, an eminent scholar of Indian art, was “the most brilliant,” and a wonderful Mughal painter.\textsuperscript{24} Manohar is recognized for portrait paintings and his ability to create various expressions and personalities. The sufî’s detailed face in The Poet and the Prince resembles Manohar’s style. The sufî would fit in well amongst the other figures in Manohar’s Akbar Hunting in a Qamargha (Figure 14), a crowded composition with many unique and detailed faces. Noticeable similarities between the sufî and the hunter include the stubbed nose, down drawn lips, and the soft and detailed rendering and shading of the faces, and the precision of painting single hairs with care (Figure 15).

Like his father, Basawan, Manohar was among the most observant portraitists of the Mughal court. He probably worked closely with his father and eventually surpassed him in quality. His figures have far more individuality than those of mature painters of the court.\textsuperscript{25} The role of portraitist was always reserved for senior artists.\textsuperscript{26} For this painting, the necessity of having the portrait done by careful hands reinforces the significant position of the sufî, perhaps as Sa’di.

\textsuperscript{24} Milo C. Beach, Eberhard Fischer and B. N. Goswamy, \textit{Masters of Indian Painting: 1100-1650} (Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011), 135.
\textsuperscript{25} Beach, \textit{Imperial Image}, 112.
\textsuperscript{26} Beach, Fischer, and Goswamy, \textit{Masters of Indian Painting: 1100-1650}, 139.
Border Surrounding *The Poet and the Prince* (recto)

The *hashiya* on the illustration side mainly contain floral, faunal, and abstract motifs. The immediate source of themes and style in Mughal tradition is derived from Safavid period and Bukharan imperial manuscripts. The *hashiya* is an important element in album decoration, not only for its association with illuminating the book and enhancing the beauty of the manuscript, but also in protecting the image.

The early Mughal borders first appear in late Akbari manuscripts, with emphases on human figures. In the early stages of these manuscripts, the border drawings appear rudimentary and the style is loose and careless. The figures appear static and inactive and seem unplanned within the composition. During this time, the artistic style of the Mughal atelier was still evolving (Figure 16).

Likewise, the early *hashiya* from Jahangir’s studio differ from later inventions. They consist of symmetrically placed cartouches with simple patterns and forms of vegetal and rosettes (Figure 17). They appear rough and unpretentious with an absence of finesse.

The later borders produced during Jahangir’s reign were brought to perfection and signified the unprecedented height that border decoration had reached. The manifestation of naturalistic landscape elements like trees,

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28. The Mughal predilection for ‘humanism’ is emphasized by human figures painted in borders of books, as opposed to the prototype idealized imagery of Safavid borders.
29. Jahangir’s son Shah Jahan continued the tradition of paying attention to borders in his albums, but they were repeated and consistent.
animals, birds, and human forms gave significance to the borders. The inclusion of figures and vignettes derived from European prints was Jahangir’s exclusive contribution. Narrative hunting scenes and portraits of princes, often psychologically probing, appear in color washes, contrasted against lustrous gold backgrounds, providing a luxuriant quality. Further, the gold in these lyrical compositions was often enhanced by intensely colored birds.\(^{30}\)

The addition of the fully colored and carefully arranged pairs of birds are another of Jahangir’s novel contributions. These birds seem to flutter out from within the painting and spread through the page, creating a visual relationship with the image. The bright colors of the birds are intensified against the soft rendering of the background, which was painted in a warm luster of gold. The brilliant enhancement of subtle margins decorated with fine arabesque and foliage reflects a traditional style seen in Persian borders. The addition of very naturalistic birds attests to Jahangir’s artistic sensibility and innovation. Among the eight pair of birds in the border surrounding *The Poet and the Prince*, some are shown in graceful movement, while others are simply there to enrich the ambiance.

Each bird is painted in such detail that its specie is easily identified. The birds may have been painted by Jahangir’s favored artist, Masur. He was singled out by the emperor, who described him as “unique in his time,” particularly for his brilliant paintings of birds, animals, and flowers.\(^{31}\) Masur is mentioned by


name in *Jahangirnama* more than any other artist and always by his full title, *Nader al-Asri Ustad Mansur naqqash*.

**Calligraphy (verso): The Poet and the Prince**

*Nastaliq* script developed in fourteenth century Persia and reached its height between 1400 and 1600 CE. It is considered one of the most elegant and expressive forms of aesthetic refinement in Persian culture. The specimen of calligraphy (Figure 2) on the verso is done by Mir Ali c. 1528, an extremely prolific Persian calligrapher, as indicated by his signature. Mir Ali perfected the *nastaliq* style of writing and was appreciated not only for the content of his work, but also for its technicality and visual quality.\(^{32}\) The specimens of text compiled in the Gulshan *muraqqa*’ are mostly by this eminent artist whose writing was considered, “among other writings as the sun among the other planets.”\(^{33}\)

Mir Ali’s calligraphy was highly esteemed in Mughal courts and many samples were brought to India by his son Mir Muhammad Baqir. Abu’l Fazl, who authored Akbar’s biography, refers to Mir Ali as, “the perfector of the style of calligraphy” and the one who has “left many masterpieces.”\(^{34}\) Another author, Abd al-Baqi Nihavandi, lavishly describes Mir Ali as *qiblat al-kuttab* (the qibla of the scribes).\(^{35}\) To increase the prestige of their libraries, the Mughals collected

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32. Welch, *The Emperor’s Album*, 45.
35. Soucek, “Persian Artists in Mughal India,” 167. Qibla is the direction Muslims face while saying prayers. It is directs towards Kabah, the house of Allah. Calligraphers were
manuscripts that had been copied in *nastaliq* by the master calligrapher. Being trained in this art form, Jahangir held a particularly high appreciation for Mir Ali’s writings and acquired a vast collection of his work.

The text lines in the calligraphy pages of the album are often arranged diagonally on white or occasionally on colored background. In this specimen, the text lines are placed obliquely. The text is cut and pasted and shaped within scattered clouds with smooth but irregular edges, which stand out with effect from the colored and decorated gold background. This detailed decoration balances the negative space around the effervescent clouds and highlights the beauty of the writing and enhances its small size. The size of the text panel is matched with that of its counter, the facing page, by pasting two colored decorated strips of floral designs on the top and the bottom of the central image.

The actual language of the verse itself has been widely overlooked in previous research. Wheeler Thackston, a distinguished editor and translator of Persian text, provides the following translation:

*A sapling of his stature has so taken root in my heart that if they pull the root out a thousand times it will still come back up.*

The text alludes to the *sufi* philosophy of love. The love for the beloved symbolizes the love of God. The poet expresses the divine love for God which is so deeply rooted that it can never die even from constant pain and suffering. In analyzing the meaning of this text, Beach emphasizes the verse’s infusion with particularly exalted for their ability to replicate the Quran, which is considered a transcription of the direct word of God.

37. Seyller, “Folios from Muraqqa’ Gulshan”.
metaphors. He proposes that it is not just a reference to the image of a beloved figure on the reverse of the folio, but that it also has a relationship with the images within the border.\textsuperscript{38} The calligraphy of the folio reinforces the importance of \textit{Sufism} within the Mughal dynasty.

\textbf{Borders Surrounding the Calligraphy (verso)}

The \textit{hashiya} of the calligraphy specimen has a colorful assortment of figures, some of which are portraits of Mughal princes and some are European figures. The imagery within the border on the lower margin shows a man transplanting a sapling. Another man and a woman on the outer side are each holding a potted plant over their head. Out of eight carefully rendered figures, six are individually involved in an activity related to planting. The poetry metaphorically relates the love of the beloved to the tree, which is deep rooted in the heart of the lover. The artist has practically shown the transplanting of the tree in a landscape environment. The imagery of the border that surrounds the text panel directly relates to the content of the text and it seems intentional. The text alludes to the symbolic meaning of a deep-rooted tree, but the trees are held in shallow containers. The symbolic meaning of the text seems to lose its connotation, but its significance is essentially enhanced by the proximity and directness of the imagery. This type of coordination between text and image on the border may be quite rare within the album. Future research on the relationship

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
between the text and the imagery on the reverse or the opposing page may provide a deeper understanding of the album and its patron.

The nim-qalam, or half pen, style of the border painting was particularly exploited brilliantly during Jahangir’s reign, most notably in the Gulshan muraqqa.\(^{39}\) The dyed sepia paper of the border was predominant in traditional border making and was innovatively used in the album. The gold luster used in the central calligraphy panel is enhanced against the sepia color of the border. Another fascinating element is the rendering of figures in the borders. Although the general character of the marginal decoration had been established late in Akbar’s reign in the sixteenth century, the figures become increasingly prominent during Jahangir’s period.\(^{40}\) Eventually, they were highly colored and spatially independent of the flat gold background.\(^{41}\)

On the upper left corner of the border is an enthroned princely figure, identified by his turban with a plume and a rose in his hand. Based on other paintings of Murad, John Seyller, a scholar of South Asian art, identified this figure as Prince Murad, Jahangir’s brother, who died of alcoholism. According to Seyller, it was common practice to give a cameo to members of the royal family, not for propaganda purposes but for nostalgic reasons.\(^{42}\) The figure standing next to the prince wears a peculiar cap; he seems non-Indian and non-Mughal from his

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40. These borders figures are found in several of Akbar’s great manuscripts of the 1590s: the *Baharistan of Jami*, in the Bodleian Library; *Kahmsa of Nizam*, in The British Library; or the *Diwan of Amir Khusrau Dehlavi*, in The Baltimore Museum.

41. Beach, *Grand Mogul*, 46. The tradition of full color portrait painting appealed to the artist working on Shah Jahan’s album.

42. Seyller, “Folios from Muraqqa’ Gulshan”
attire, and the cap was probably borrowed from Europeans or their images that were transported to India.\textsuperscript{43}

A few intriguing details surround the artistry of the border, as mentioned by Marshall in 1977, and by Seyller in 2013.\textsuperscript{44} The signature of the artist, Salim Quli, appears twice, once on the side of the woman (Figure 18a), and again near the man on the outer margin (Figure 18b). The signatures are very small and cleverly hidden. Previously, only calligraphers signed their names on the work, but in late fifteenth century Iran, evidently a new interest developed in the individual and throughout the early sixteenth century most artists signed their work.\textsuperscript{45} This trend was transferred to the south Asian Mughal atelier.

Although it is not unusual by this time to see the artist’s signature, why did Quli sign twice on this piece of work? While the signatures authenticate the artist’s work and help to ascribe other paintings of similar style, they also bring into question the authorship of the remaining figures. The other figures show a different hand in painting. The style of the three figures at the bottom is finer and the color palette softer. All the figures are in action and each one is involved in a significant activity, but they display stiffness in their gestures. The depiction of the figures is more Indianized than Persianate, as reflected in the Indian facial features, clothing, and the rendering of voluminous bodies.

\textsuperscript{43} Stronge, \textit{Painting for the Mughal Emperor}, 115. Good copies of Christian pictures from India or Portugal would be presented to Jahangir, knowing that it would greatly please him.

\textsuperscript{44} File 48-12 1 and 2, South Asian Department, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

\textsuperscript{45} Signatures of many principal painters in Jahangir’s studio, such as Aqa Riza, Bisnhdas, Balchand, Daulat and Govardhan, are found in hashiya. However, the names of three of Jahangir’s best painters, Abu’l Hasan, Manohar, and Mansur, have not been found and their non-participation is unimaginable, but a large number of unsigned folios are painted in their individual styles.
Persian elements and Sufism are two main themes within The Poet and the Prince, infused with subtle influences from Renaissance humanism. The border of the painting is particularly of interest with the later addition of the colorfully painted birds. The calligraphy panel and border text are all authored by Persian calligrapher Mir Ali, while the border of the calligraphy specimen strangely contains two signatures by the same artist.
CHAPTER 3

VISUAL DESCRIPTION: A BUFFALO HUNTING A LIONESS

The verso of the folio, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* (Figure 3), illustrates a tense and dangerous moment where a lioness is being attacked by a buffalo. Its horn has just pierced the lioness, who is about to be stomped on the ground. The rider sits astride the buffalo, controlling the animal by flashing his axe. The action of animal combat is emphasized by its diagonal placement on a vertical format. The slanting lines of the water streams on the foreground and the leaping action of the buffalo add dynamism. Overall, the composition is well-balanced and carefully arranged with its elements and forms complementing the surroundings.

The hunting scene is frequent subject matter used in the artistic vocabulary of Mughal culture. The isolated and unaccompanied scene is set within a rocky landscape without any audience, as opposed to the hunting scenes frequently painted in Akbari tradition, which were idealized and exaggerated with an expanded entourage accompanying the great hunter. The hero either kills his prey or is engaged in a deadly encounter with the ferocious animal (Figure 19). Usually this type of scene is depicted as an imperial hunting scene, in which the emperor is slaying a tiger or the page boy is carrying his kill.

The handsome face and well-trimmed mustache of the ‘hunter’ leads Seyller to conclude it is a portrait of Prince Salim.\(^1\) This conclusion is consistent

\(^1\) Seyller, NAMA Symposium, 2013.
with traditional hunting scene paintings, as one would expect the hunter to be royalty. However, it is an unconvincing assumption to associate just a manicured face to the emperor. I argue that the rider is inappropriately dressed to be a prince. It is implausible to have a monarch sitting on a buffalo without any hint of royalty in his attire. In fact, the man’s bare feet, the absence of fine material clothing, and his headdress without a plume emphasize his humble social class. Arguably, one could challenge whether this scene is even a hunting scene to begin with, let alone whether the man on the buffalo is royalty. The absence of an imperial entourage and of spectators or bystanders to the witness attack contradicts the imperial hunting scene, as the audience is critical, as seen in Figure 14. An imperial hunt requires an audience to witness the bravery, skill, and courageousness of the royal hunter. Further, the hunter primarily rides a horse, whereas buffalo are domesticated and mainly used for farming.

**Style**

There is consensus within the existing research that Farrukh Chela painted *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*. The imperial artist Chela was not mentioned in *Ain-i-Akbari* among the seventeen foremost artists of the period, but his individualized and idiosyncratic style in figurative, architectural, and landscape painting is immediately recognizable.² His extremely personal mannerisms are expressed

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through unorthodox and eccentric types of compositions. His attention to forms with strong outlines, and his landscapes are often described as visionary. In this painting, the landscape features luminous, even phosphorus-like water that appears to sparkle.\(^3\) This style is another reason to assume it is authored by Chela.

Rekha Morris, a prominent scholar of Indian art, divides Chela’s work into three distinct phases. These include the early/formative, 1585-1595, the middle, 1595-1600, and the late, 1600-1605. Chela’s early works are simply narrative scenes in mainstream Mughal style, as seen in *Akbarnama* and *Timurnama*. In these early phase paintings, such as *Controlling an Infuriated Elephant* (Figure 20) c. 1590 we see glimpses of the stylistic traits he later developed. These elements include the distorted perspective, flat background architecture with no depth, strong and dark outlines, massive rock formations, and dynamic subject placement.\(^4\)

By the 1590s, his work was well defined and technically strong.\(^5\) Chela’s middle phase paintings are characterized by middle ground architecture and the use of strong outlines subdued with soft tonalities. The result is a unique “synthesis of outline and volume, creating images of considerable evocative force,” as exemplified in *A Ruined Castle* (Figure 21) c. 1595.\(^6\) Morris concludes *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* contains all of the elements evident in Chela’s late

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early phase paintings. The examples of these early and middle phase paintings, *Controlling an Infuriated Elephant* and *A Ruined Castle*, support this late early phase dating, as the stylistic elements seen in *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* are comparable with those in *Controlling an Infuriated Elephant*, and inconsistent with those of *A Ruined Castle*.

Farrukh Chela has eight other paintings in the Gulshan album, among which, *A Chained Elephant* c. 1590 (Figure 22) is most comparable in its style and rendering with *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*. Beach argues the arrangement and order of the images within the Gulshan album are thought out and carefully placed next to each other to make a visual point. He claims that either the facing paintings are the works of the same artist or the same theme by different artists. He proposes the two paintings, *A Hunting Party* by Mohammad Sharif c. 1590 (Figure 23) and *Jamshed Writing on a Rock* by Abd-us Samad c. 1585 (Figure 24) would be facing each other in the Gulshan because they are done by different artists, in this case father and son, but share similar themes (Figure 25).

Keeping that argument in perspective, I propose that *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* and *A Chained Elephant* c. 1590 were almost certainly placed next to each other in the Gulshan album, as both the paintings are attributed to the same artist and share similar styles (Figure 26). Additionally, the outer borders of both

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7. Ibid., 139.
8. *A Chained Elephant* is currently held in the Former Imperial Library, Tehran.
10. Currently held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., respectively.
the paintings are similar. Further investigation on this argument can reveal more facts and evidence.

The four surrounding strips of illumination amplify the central panel of the painting. The vertical strip on the side of the image is decorated with detailed symmetrical floral designs. This method of elaborating the beauty with stylized motifs of flowers, leaves and tendrils, referred to as *bale*, is a Safavid style often imitated by artists in the Mughal court. The vertical strip on the side of the image is decorated with detailed symmetrical floral designs. This method of elaborating the beauty with stylized motifs of flowers, leaves and tendrils, referred to as *bale*, is a Safavid style often imitated by artists in the Mughal court. There are twelve jewel-like brilliantly colored birds of different species, perched on sinuous stems. Paper bands are added separately to enlarge the size, thus maintaining the uniformity of the image within the album. The top and bottom borders of the image consist of medallions and cartouches, typical elements used in Islamic art. Magnificently painted enraged roosters are placed in the top cartouches, directly relating to the fighting impulse of the central image, while the cartouches below have two pigeons within a landscape background, surrounded by a cream color strip with gold floral design.

**Border Surrounding A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness (verso)**

The outer border of *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* is subtly painted a translucent gold over light green color paper (Figure 3). It is among the most traditional borders of the album, filled with animals in action, foliage, and

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landscape; densely filled with a group of real and fantastic predators. There are rabbits, deer, and antelopes being devoured by lions. On the lower left corner of the border, a lion leaps onto a deer, and similar occurrences are illustrated twice on the upper left corner and the outer border, relating to the theme of the central image. This type of border decoration began in Persian paintings of the 1520s and reached its maturity in Mughal manuscripts of the 1590s. Seyller suggests this border painting shows the hands of artist Husayn, who has contributed to independent paintings, illuminations, and border designs in various projects during this period. Husayn has one ascribed border and one attributed pair of birds in this album. Seyller attributes the handling of foliage with strong outlines of animals to him.12

The faces of the lions on the upper right and the left corners of the border are typical representations found within Persian paintings. Even more curious is the deer, just below the lion, with vines budding out of its body and tail. It is shown with an unconventional face that does not resemble a deer, but rather a ferocious animal. A pair of chasing hare is on the top margin. Their ears are more like long horns of deer and their bodies appear to be cat-like.

The animals on the upper half of the margin are fantastical compared to the lower half, which are rendered more realistically and naturally. These uncommon creatures add a slight humor to the action of the border. The rendering of such strange creatures, sometimes obscure at first glance, is a trademark Persian characteristic found in borders, originally adopted from

12. Seyller, “Folios from Muraqqa’ Gulshan”.
Chinese artistic vocabulary. The theme of the outer margin seems intentionally paired with the central panel, but it could certainly be coincidental that the traditional imagery of the border decoration corresponded with the main painting. It is uncommon to see border themes relating to the central image, however, it is not unusual to see a continuous narrative of the border visually connecting it as a whole in Jahangir’s albums. The border themes were carefully composed by the painters and much attention was paid to their execution, as the border was regarded as a significant element within the album.

One of the most outstanding features of Jahangir’s album appears in the form of the tiny colored birds scattered on the margin. Thematically, they are unrelated to the action transpiring, but these birds create another layer of visual meaning to the surface, creating depth. The birds are just there, and in this case, twenty one different kinds are identifiable on the page. On the top right side of the border sits a bird, realistically perched on a branch, its tail breaking into the gold frame around the image. Just below that bird is another, half hidden behind a leaf that overlaps it. It is curious that the birds that are flying with their wings spread in flight are not executed as realistically as the birds that landed, which shows that the artist had better observation of the sitting birds, perhaps using a specimen of a dead bird.

Mansur rendered animals and birds with naturalism, and painted numerous pictures of them. The accuracy of forms and the anatomical details achieved by well-defined lines were defining characteristics of his paintings. Based on his

13. Ibid.
known works, I attribute the painting of these birds to Mansur. Mansur’s true to life depiction of animals and flowers earned him a boastful title from the emperor of Nadir ul Asr, “Unique of the Age.”\textsuperscript{14} So far, no ascription is found on the borders, although it is possible the margin was done by two artists. The gold background may have been done by one artist, and the birds done by another.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Calligraphy (recto): A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness}

The whole text panel is pasted directly on the wasli (Figure 3), whereas traditionally fragments of text are cut out and pasted, burnished, and then decorations are added around the burnished edges. On this panel, however, the decorations are painted directly around the text on the same sheet of paper. The size of the central panel has been enlarged through the addition of twelve smaller cutouts around the main text panel. These smaller cutouts contain verses of Persian poetry surrounded by decorations similar to those of the central panel. These smaller cutouts themselves are separated by individually decorated bands of paper.

On the reverse of A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness (Figure 4), is a specimen of calligraphy signed by Persian calligrapher, Mir Ali. Sheila Blair, an eminent Islamic scholar, translates the text, which is an excerpt from an Arabic love poem:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Alas, from love and circumstances}
\textit{My heart is burning with fever}
\textit{My eyes hasn’t looked at anything but you}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
Borders Surrounding the Calligraphy (recto)

The central calligraphy is surrounded by Persian texts of love verses by Sa’di. The border above the calligraphy is composed of two pairs of flying birds. The outer most border design is a landscape setting with a hunting scene painted in opaque gold and half pen. On the upper right corner, two men try to load a slain tiger onto the crouching elephant. To their left, two mountain goats, realistically painted, are observing something at a distance. They are partially hidden in cloudy foliage. Another attendant holds the reign of the horse for the young prince, astride with a falcon and examining his catch. The plume and fine attire suggests his royalty. Another attendant brings the catch, and the cook is involved in preparing the meal. The two hunters on foot precede a mounted nobleman, who seems to be skillfully handling the cheetah.

The border’s ethereal quality is created by the effect of nim-qalam. The human figures are separately placed throughout the surrounding margins, yet they are not isolated from each other as seen in earlier margins produced in Akbar’s atelier, as these figures interact with one another in this loosely narrated hunting visual. The uneven color washes of bright red and blue under the clothing are not accidental but intentional to enrich the overall rhythm of the border. The contrast of defined shapes and without delineation maintains a regularity of interval. The

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16. File 48-12 1 and 2, South Asian Department, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.
17. Stronge, Painting for the Mughal Emperor, 108.
color and effects of gold change as the page is moved under the light. The color palette is a significant diagnostic feature attributing a painting to a particular artist.

It was a common practice in Mughal border decoration for one painter to execute the landscape and another to execute the figures. This border was attributed to Aqa Riza by Suzanne Marshall. However, Blair and Seyller rule out Aqa Riza as the border artist since the plump and round faces of the figures are non-Persian. They attribute both the landscape and figures to the imperial artist Madhu, to whom manuscript borders of the late 1590s are attributed. The relationship of the content of the text to the subject of its border opens the possibility of conjecture. The text refers to burning love, whereas the illustration in the border shows a hunting scene with animals killed and dragged. If the borders are painted in response to the text in the central panel, then the contrasting elements suggest a metaphor. It is also possible that this border also relates to the image painted on the reverse or the border on the facing page in the spread, now unknown.

__18__ File 48-12 1 and 2, South Asian Department, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art.

__19__ Seyller, NAMA Symposium, 2013.
CHAPTER 4
VISUAL AND TECHNICAL ANALYSES OF THE TWO FOLIOS

The Gulshan folios have been visually and technically analyzed in collaboration with Kimberly Masteller, Elisabeth Bachelor, Kate Garland, Paul Benson, and Joe Rogers.¹ The folios were examined with non-destructive techniques such as raking light, under microscope amplification and X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF). This is a preliminary investigation of the two folios but future comprehensive examination can reveal further details. Overall the folios are in excellent condition and are well-preserved. At first glance, the jewel-like paintings seem a simple technique of opaque washes done with detail and precision on hand-made paper, wasli. With a closer look such as this, one finds intricacies involved in their production that contribute to further understandings of authorship, timeframe, and physical structures of the paintings.

The Poet and the Prince (recto)

According to Marshall’s preliminary report in 1977 and Seyller’s convincing argument, The Poet and the Prince was enlarged to its present size in

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¹ The XRF analysis was conducted on January 7th, 2015. Kimberly Masteller, Jeanne McCray Beals Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art; Elisabeth Batchelor, Director of Conservation and Collections Management (retired); Kate Garland, Senior Conservator, Objects; Paul Benson, Conservator of Objects; Joe Rogers, Conservation Associate, Objects.
1610 by adding vertical paper strips along the sides. A horizontal line just below the feet of old man (Figure 27) marks its enlargement. The paint difference is visible with the naked eye, but the additional joint paper is not. Even under the microscope there is no indication that paper was added to the four sides of the painting. Gold is applied in the sky over the older parts, covering the transition, or joint, and is over-painted with some birds in flight. The magnification was useful in noticing two hands in the painting style of bushes painted in on the lower right bottom, and in the center of the image. In addition, the XRF results show different pigments in both greens used for the grass. The diversion in painting style is also visually noticeable in the rocks painted on the base of the image.

An even more compelling discovery that supports the argument for the enlargement of the painting was shown by the color pigment used in the stream. With XRF it was discovered that the water (turned grey from silver oxidation) painted in the center of the image has 64 percent gold, 3 percent silver and 3 percent lead in its pigments. Whereas, the extended area on the left (Figure 28) from where the stream originates oddly lacks silver and platinum, but contains a very low concentration of copper. Furthermore, the lower portion where the stream ends has no silver, platinum, or lead. There is a clear line (Figure 27) that shows a division verifying a later addition to the painting.

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The grainy, dark blue powder spread over the sky and the three trees clustered together in the background (Figure 29) suggest the use of lapis-lazuli. Under microscopic magnification, however, the XRF showed no signs of calcium that indicates the composition of lapis-lazuli. Calcium, a little bit of copper, which suggests the blue is azurite, and lead mixed in pigments with an overlap of applied gold were found on the sky. Similarly, the yellow cloak of the sufī fluoresces a vivid yellow under the UV rays, which suggests the presence of Indian yellow, which was made with the urine of the cow that was fed mango leaves. The Indian yellow was sometimes used alone and in mixtures to make flesh tones. It was also mixed with indigo to make green. However, the result showed no cow urine. There was Sulphur, no magnesium, and the yellow glowed because of lead pigment in the paint. The orange shirt that the young prince is wearing shows copper, iron, gold, and lead for the red tone but no arsenic. Similarly, the pink color of attendant’s shirt contains no gold, but traces of iron and lead create the red tone.

The central painting is surrounded by the thin ruled lines of black, gold and orange, followed by 1 cm pale pink-gray strip painted in gold floral scroll, cut in full rectangular shape with no seams. It is thinly outlined again with the same colors surrounded by a thick band of gold pigment, then thin black and blue ruled lines on mounting (Figure 30).

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Multiple layers of paper are used for the preparation of the wasli composition. The laminated, tea stained border is in good condition except for the brown stain on the lower left corner (Figure 31) where the color is faded and retouched with paint. The painter had tried to continue the same design by copying it, but the loose brush work suggests that the painter was not from Jahangir’s studio, instead he was probably from a later, perhaps even modern, workshop.

The birds were painted on top of the gold embellished border and their quality and the fresh colors are in good condition, except for the pair of birds at the lower left edge, which have extensive losses in pigmentation. Few small, less noticeable, brown patches are visible throughout the page as it was stained by water and shows some darkening in the upper left corner. The corners show the most damage. A small hole goes through the obverse (reverse) and a small tear runs along the edge, and another crack runs straight along the upper right corner to the edge of the painting. The vertical edge on the right side shows traces of paper, which was used to glue the leaf to its binding.

Calligraphy (verso) The Poet and the Prince

Under enlargement, the reverse page shows the calligraphy of the central panel is cut out, which is applied on a sheet of paper and burnished to prepare a smooth surface for decoration. The writing is in black ink on paper, which has

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4. Kim Masteller reported that 40 pieces of paper were used in a Persian album page at Harvard.
turned yellow with age. The text is old and faded as compared to the fresh and bright colors used in the surrounding patterns. Traces of gold leaf are found in various places as if spattered or dropped on paper. The space around the cloud shaped text is intricately designed with floral scroll patterns, painted with gold and watercolor with a single hair brush. The blue in lower corner triangle shows calcium in XRF results, which indicates a good possibility of lapis-lazuli. Two rectangular strips with geometric and floral designs painted with watercolor, gold leaf, and lapis are pasted on top and bottom and thinly outlined with gold, orange, and green paint. The flaked grey painted strip edging the calligraphy is gold painted with no silver in it, probably the improper ratio of binder to pigment has turned it grey. The thin blue ruled line surrounding the whole central panel is painted directly on the mounting.

The laminated border is meticulously painted. Trees, plants, and figures are rendered with gold and washes of light colors distributed all around the margin, creating a soft nuance around the text panel. The signature of the artist Salim Quli is visible twice under magnification (Figure 18). Above the head of the woman, in the middle of right side of the margin, there is a small crease with staining around it and a brown stain in front of her skirt. However, the overall condition is good. The hole described on the obverse is visible on this side on the lower left corner, right in front of the man digging (Figure 32). The page also shows paper loss, cracks, and abrasions. Another cracked line described on the obverse is visible on top left corner and a small wormhole on the top. There is
slight staining all around the corners and edges and some gold is lost on the lower right edge.

_A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness (verso)_

A striking fact under magnification in the painting of the second folio, _A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness_, is that the smooth textures of the buffalo and lioness skin are not washes of colors, as they may seem, but are created by individual brush-strokes. The painting is in excellent condition, surrounded by thin blue and gold lines and two vertical panels (14.8 x 1.5 cm) symmetrically painted floral scrolls and birds with gold and bright watercolor. The top and bottom panels (4 x 11.7 cm) are pasted and painted with watercolor, gold, and lapis-lazuli. The patterned strips have two cartouches each, on which the birds were added later and probably were not part of the design. The feathers of the bird on the top left of the cartouche (Figure 33), overlap the edges of the cartouche. The under drawing is revealed, making it quite possible that the patterned strip was reused and the birds were painted on it later. The lower patterned strip shows paint flaked from the left corner near the pigeon exposing the gold underneath, which suggests the gold base was painted and burnished to make the surface smooth for a fine finish. Further magnification reveals that the sides of the flaked area were re-touched with gold paint by another workshop or one of Jahangir’s painters. A thin blue and gold line is outlined around the central panel and it is surrounded by another 1 cm strip painted with gold floral scroll.
The floral patterned strip surrounding the central panel shows two strips attached together on the lower right corner (Figure 34). The pattern is continuous on the attachment. The pattern was painted with gum and gold powder splattered on it, as revealed on a strip where the gold is rubbed off and the gum exposed. Thin ruled lines of green, gold, and orange ink surround it, followed by a wider, gold border-line, which is then outlined by a thin, ruled, blue ink line drawn directly on the mounting.

The addition of full colored birds in watercolor throughout the border seems to be done by Jahangir’s painter on an archaic, or previously painted, border. An interesting attempt by the artist to make the presence of birds even more realistic is the overlap of foliage on one bird perched on a stem (Figure 35). Another bird, resting on the stem on the upper right edge of the central panel, has its tail breaking the gold strip of the border (Figure 36). Some mistakes on the birds are corrected with gold painted on the edges over the leaked paint. Dark stains along the vertical edge of the lower right side have been retouched with gold. All four sides of the border are slightly rubbed and stained.

Calligraphy (recto) A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness

The whole sheet of calligraphy (15.2 x 7.3 cm) is pasted directly on the panel. It is embellished with gold leaf around the writing, probably with gum-arabic, and decorated with floral designs and birds painted on top with watercolor.

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5. Marcella Sirhandi stated that Bashir Ahmed told her about this method that was used by the Mughals, November 2014.
The designs on the two triangles on the upper right and lower left corners have more lapis-lazuli in them. It is surrounded by ruled lines in black and gold and a .45 cm cream color strip painted with floral scroll in gold is pasted around the edge. Cut edges of the strip are visible at all corners, surrounded by more ruled lines in gold and black.

The twelve rectangular panels of calligraphy are cut out from another folio and burnished individually. There are three strips on each of the four sides surrounding the central panel, forming a 2.4 cm thick strip beyond the ruled lines. Each bit of writing is cut and glued individually in place. There are two strips of writing per rectangle. A cut between two separate sheets is detectable under the microscope, it is decorated with mineral pigments. The lower left corner strip is painted with blue lapis-lazuli and applied gold leaf. Each rectangular text panel is separated by decorative bands painted with lapis-lazuli, gold, and watercolor, and again thinly outlined with black and gold. At the top, two panels of paper are painted with a gold floral design with two birds on each panels. It seems that the birds are also cut out from another page and pasted on top of the calligraphic panel. Although the size of all four birds are the same, the background pattern is different and a separating line of sheet is visible in the center (Figure 37).

The blue bird on the upper right panel shows very little lead in its pigment from the XRF result. There are small amounts of copper, gold, and calcium and the blue is acquired from copper sulfate, suggesting azurite. There is slight staining creating light brown spots on the far right side of the blue bird under the wing, and on the breasts of the other two birds on the left end. Few spots are
visible throughout the two panels from either ink or water. The thin black and gold lines are followed by a .85 cm strip of border, painted in gold floral scroll on green paper, cut and glued in place and ruled by black and orange thin lines. A gold border surrounds the lines followed again by blue, thin, ruled lines directly on the mounting.

The laminated board of the mounting is light beige in color, and painted landscapes, human figures, and hunting scenes with horses and birds fill the border throughout. The horse in the lower right corner shows presence of a little copper, iron, and gold, but no silver, platinum, or lead is detected. A curious discovery on the border is found under magnification. The rifle in the hand of the hunter with a kill (Figure 38) shows that the red tip of the barrel overlaps the border line, which suggests the border painting is done later. It is painted with washes of color, giving a subtle effect without overpowering the central panel of writing.

The most peculiar finding on this page is a nearly transparent mark, like a water mark of gold brush strokes, on top of the central calligraphy. It is not visible with the naked eye, but through the raking light, the gold impression is illuminated. At first glance, it seemed like damage but upon further examination, the mark appears intentional. This raises questions for further investigation as to what these golden strokes mean, if they were painted intentionally, and when it was marked. If they were not apparent without the sharp light, then how did Mughals enjoy this distinct feature? In addition, if it was intentional, then other folios of this album should be examined to see if they appear in other places.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Through detailed descriptive and technical analyses of *The Poet and the Prince* recto/verso (Figures 1 and 2) and *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* verso/recto (Figures 3 and 4), this thesis adds to the existing research on the Gulshan *Muraqqa*. Focusing on style, subject matter, and iconography, descriptive analyses of the folios illuminate the artistic and cultural context in which the Gulshan album was created. Also considered is the attribution of work within the folios to potential artists. The Mughal style of art developed as a synthesis of Persian traditions, transferred to India with the arrival of Babur from Central Asia, and the existing painting style of India. Further, the recurrence of *sufi* subject matter in Mughal paintings echoes Persian and Islamic convention. Later, elements of European realism become influential within the Mughal style.

The analysis agreed with the observations of Marshall and her attribution of *The Poet and the Prince* to the imperial painter of the Akbari period, La’l, as evidenced by the similarity of the rendering of trees and rock formations with other known paintings by La’l. My further observation suggests that the face of the old man may be painted by a different artist, Manohar, since he was recognized for painting convincing portraits, and it may be intended to depict Sa’di.
According to Morris’s division of Chela’s work into three phases, *Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* is dated within the late early phase of his artistic career. Based on Beach’s ideas about the pairing of two images together in the album, I propose that *The Chained Elephant*, by Farrukh Chela, faced *Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* in the album. The painting style, the angular placement of the subject, and the modulation of color are similar both paintings. Additionally, the visual unity of the borders evidently supports that their placement was not random.

The often overlooked element of the album border is also briefly investigated. Border enhancement, and particularly the addition of realistic birds and figures, were Jahangir’s vital contributions. This research has traced the evolution of Mughal border design throughout the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir, with the later Jahangir period borders characterized by their expansive narrative themes. Further investigation focusing on the Gulshan borders and their development can reveal valuable information on this subject. In addition to the borders, the meaning of the texts pieces and their placement within the album are relatively unexplored elements of the Gulshan *Muraqqa*. The sufi underpinning of the text and its relationship to the pictorial imagery is briefly examined here, but more research is needed.

The technical analyses revealed many things about the creation of the folios and the material used. The yellow color which seems Indian yellow in brightness and intensity is not always made with cow urine in imperial Mughal paintings. Similarly, the vibrant blue is not always a result of using lapis lazuli,
and reveals that azurite was commonly used in paintings, while lapis is used in illuminations. In addition to the colors, the steps in the construction of borders in these folios is revealed. Colored strips are pasted first around the central panel, which is sometimes enlarged, as found in the analysis of *The Poet and the Prince*, and decorated with floral motifs painted in gold. Sometimes old strips, perhaps from previous manuscripts, are pasted and touched with paint or partially painted over, adding new elements to the previous design.

Further research on these two folios and others within the Gulshan album can lead to more accurate understandings of the materials, techniques, and craftsmanship employed by Mughal artists. The Gulshan *muraqqa*’ not only provides a glimpse into the genius of Mughal emperor Jahangir, but also a fascinating record for understanding the artistic and aesthetic culture during his reign. However, the value of such an interesting album remains problematic if its history and genesis remain in obscurity. It is hoped that this thesis will contribute to the growing body of knowledge about the Gulshan album, helping scholars and audiences to recreate and interpret “one of the world’s most beautiful books.”
Figure 1: Page from the Muraqqa Gulshan. The Poet and the Prince, (recto) 1595-97, attributed to La’l. 22.3 x 11.5 cm. Opaque watercolor on paper. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.
Figure 2: Page from Gulshan Album. Calligraphy (verso) 1595-1597. Opaque, watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Mughal India. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Missouri.
Figure 3: Page from the Muraqqa Gulshan. *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*, (verso) 1595-97, attributed to Farrukh Chela. 22.3 x 11.5 cm. Opaque watercolor on paper. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.
Figure 4: Page from Gulshan Album. Calligraphy (recto) 1595-1597. Opaque, watercolor, ink, and gold on paper. Mughal India. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Missouri.
Figure 5: *Jahangir Enthroned on an Hourglass*, Bichitr, c. 1625. Opaque watercolor on paper, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.
Figure 6: Akbar presiding over a Religious Debate in the House of Worship (ibadatkhana) with the Jesuit Fathers Ridolfo Acquaviva and Francis Henriquez in the City of Fathpur Sikri in 1578, c.1578. Ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper. Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, CBL In.03.263.
Figure 7: *Darbar of Jahangir*, Abul Hassan, c. 1615, Mughal India, Opaque watercolor on paper, Heeramanneck, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC.
Figure 8: *Krishna is pampered by his ladies*, folio from a Bhagavata Purana manuscript, 1520–40, North India (Delhi-Agra region), Opaque watercolor and ink on paper, 6 7/8 x 9 3/16 in. (17.4 x 23.3 cm).
Figure 9: Folio 742b from the Shah Tahmasp Shahnama, attributed to Abd as-Samad, Iran, Safavid dynasty, c. 1535, painting 28.4 x 27.3 cm, folio 47 x 31 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., 1970 (70.301.75)
Figure 10: Assad Ibn Kariba Launches a Night Attack on the Camp of Malik Iraj, Folio from a Hamzanama (The Adventures of Hamza), Attributed to Basavana, Shravana, and Tara (Indian, active mid-16th century), c. 1564–69, Mughal India, Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on cloth; mounted on paper, H. 27 in. W. 21 1/4 in., Rogers Fund, 1918, 18.44.1
Figure 11: Akbar's Adventure with the Elephant Hawai, Folio from Akbarnama, Composition by Basawan, c. 1590-95, Ink, opaque, watercolor, and gold on paper, 37.5 x 23.8 cm, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
Figure 12: Dying Inayat Khan, Indian Mughal, circa 1618-19, attributed to Balchand, 10.5 x 13.3 cm. Ink and light wash on paper, accession number 12.14.679
Figure 13: *The dervish and the king*. By Lal, 1595, Mughal. Illustration to the *Baharistan of Jami*. 20.3 x 13 cm, page 30 x 19.5 cm. Ms Elliot 254, f.
Figure 14: Akbar hunting in a qamargha, or the humiliation of Hamid Bhakari: page form an Akbarnama manuscript. Mughal court probably at Lahore, dated by association 1597. Opaque watercolor, ink, and gold on paper; painting: 21.4 x 12.7 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 15: Detail of Figure 1 (left) and Figure 13 (right)
Figure 16: A man hanged, Akbarnama, attributed to Miskin c. 1604, Mughal. 34 x 22.5 cm. Lent by the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.
Figure 17: A Youth with Wine Flask and Cup, circa 1600-1604, The Salim Album, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. From the Nasli and Alice Heeramanick Collection, Museum Associates Purchase, M.81.8.12 (App. 1.26)
Figure 18: Detail of border from page of Gulshan Album. Late 16th century Mughal India. Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Missouri.
Figure 19: *Akbar stages a shikar* near Lahore in 1567, c. 1590-95, 32.1 x 18.6 cm. Akbarnama, composed by Miskina. Painted by Mansur, Victoria and Albert Museum.
Figure 20: *Controlling an Infuriated Elephant* ca. 1590, Mughal India, opaque watercolor and ink on paper, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India.
Figure 21: A Ruined Castle by Farrukh Chela, from lost manuscript based on Anwar-I Suhayli or the Iyar-I Danish, Mughal period, late 16th century, opaque watercolor and gold on paper, image 19.8 x 12.1 cm, page 33.4 x 20.8 cm, Lucy Maud Buckingham Memorial Collection, 1919.951
Figure 22: A *Chained Elephant*, Farrukh Chela. A page from the Gulshan Album, Mughal India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper.
Figure 23: A Hunting Party by Muhammad Sharif (possibly worming with 'Abd as-Samad) Mughal India, c. 1590. From the Jahangir Album. Opaque watercolor on paper. 42.23 x 26.67 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art.
Figure 24: *Jamshid Writing on a Rock* by 'Abd as-Samad (with extensions attributed here to Abu'l Hassan). From Jahangir Album. Mughal India, dated 1588. Opaque watercolor on paper. 42.0 x 26.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.
Figure 25: *A Hunting Party and Jamshid Writing on a Rock*
Figure 26: *A Chained Elephant* and *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*
Figure 27: Detail - *The Poet and the Prince*

Figure 28: Detail - *The Poet and the Prince*
Figure 29: Detail - *The Poet and the Prince*

Figure 30: Detail - *The Poet and the Prince*
Figure 31: Border of *The Poet and the Prince*

Figure 32: Reverse of *The Poet and the Prince*, border detail, calligraphy verso
Figure 33: Detail, central panel band, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*

Figure 34: Detail, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*

Figure 35: Detail, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*
Figure 36: Detail, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness*

Figure 37: Detail, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* (recto)

Figure 38: Detail, *A Buffalo Hunting a Lioness* (recto)
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Hamama Tul Bushra was born on January 29\textsuperscript{th}, 1967, in Lahore, Pakistan where she grew up and received her education. She went on to the National College of Arts to earn her bachelor in Design in 1988. She moved to the United States of America in 1997 after marriage and continued as a homemaker while raising her two girls. Returning back to education, she started her Master’s program in 2012 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. During her studies, she did an internship at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, where she had the opportunity to contribute to an Islamic exhibition, \textit{Echoes}, in 2013. This exposure to Islamic Art led to a deeper interest in the Mughal Art of India, which resulted in the selection of the two pages from the Gulshan album for her thesis research.

Hamama took a photography course at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1999, and computer graphic courses at Johnson County Community College in 2005, while doing freelance design. Before migrating to the US, she worked as a graphic designer in a renowned advertising agency, taught art at a reputed college and worked as a color consultant for a multinational company in Lahore.

Hamama is currently continuing her internship at the museum and hopes to continue her education and expand her field of knowledge through doctoral research. She plans to compile her research in a form of a published book on the Mughal paintings of the Gulshan album.