Art of the Mughal Empire
• Akbar was the first great Mughal patron of the arts and commissioned various building projects

• He created the new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra. It was completed in 1585 and included a residential palace
  • The construction reflected a combination of styles from Iran and Central Asia with indigenous traditions of Hindu and Muslim India.

• Although he is said to have been illiterate, Akbar commissioned numerous illustrated manuscripts that incorporated Persian, Indian, and even European elements.

http://www.metmuseum.org
Jahangir (r. 1605-27)

- Akbar’s son Jahangir had strong artistic tastes, preferring a single painter to work on an image rather than the collaborative method of Akbar’s time.
- He also encouraged careful plant and animal studies, and prized realistic portraiture.
- Jahangir commissioned literary works such as the Razmnama (a Persian translation of the Hindu epic, the Mahabharata)

• This picture is probably from one of Jahangir’s leading painters.
• The Persian influence is strong.

http://www.indianart.ru/eng/mughal/6.php
Discussion Question:

India’s most recognizable building was built during the Mughal Empire. Can you name this architectural gem? What was the purpose of this building?
Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58)

- Shah Jahan is most celebrated for his architectural achievements, including the Taj Mahal.
- He commissioned this tomb for his wife after her death in 1631 and it took sixteen years to complete.
- After moving the capital from Agra to Delhi in 1648, Shah Jahan built a new city there, called Shahjahanabad, and a congregational mosque (1650-56), the largest in all of India.
- Paintings from his reign were characterized by formal portraits and courtly scenes, replacing the more wide-ranging and personal subject matter under Jahangir.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/jeffroesmann/5674811425/
"The Emperor Shah Jahan with his Son Dara Shikoh"
**Artist:** Painting by Nanha  **Calligrapher:** Mir ‘Ali Haravi (d. ca. 1550)

**Medium:** Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

"Shah Jahan on Horseback"
**Artist:** Painting by Payag (Indian, active ca. 1591-1658)  **Calligrapher:** Mir ‘Ali Haravi (d. ca. 1550)

**Medium:** Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

http://www.metmuseum.org
Mughal Motifs

Decline of Mughal Arts

• Shah Jahan’s son, Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), held increasingly orthodox Sunni beliefs.
• His reign saw the decline of Mughal patronage of the arts.
• In 1680 he banned music and painting from his court.
• The emperors who followed him were too weak and the state too poor to support the production of lavish paintings and books as before.
Discussion Question:

• What are similarities in the art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires?

• What are differences?