Befitting the Mughal 'Eternal Spring':
The Nascent *Buta* Pattern in Kashmir Shawls

A Study in the Light of the Mughal Islamic and Central Asian Heritage

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Pre-Master's Thesis – South and Southeast Asian Studies

University of Leiden – Faculty of Humanities

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30th July 2020

Word count: 9.895

Cover Image

Fragment of Shawl, Loom-woven, warp and weft in goat-fleece, weave 2x2 twill tapestry, Kashmir, *c.* 1680. This is the earliest fragment of a Kashmir shawl to be preserved. It happens to feature the nascent *buta* pattern. Currently at Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad. From Irwin J. 1955, plate I.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

> *It was broad, and plain after plain, and mead after mead, of flowers. Sweet-smelling plants of narcissus, violet, and strange flowers that grow in this country, came to view. [...] The flowers of Kashmir are beyond counting and calculation. Which shall I write of? And how many can I describe?*
> (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* I, 134)[1]

These are the words of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (reign 1605-1627) describing the spring in Kashmir in 1620, when he visited the garden of Hari Prabat at Srinagar, the garden that had been designed by his father, Akbar (reign 1556-1605). Overwhelmed by the beautiful flowers of the valley, he will ask his court painter Mansur to depict all the species he had seen. Although floral motifs reminiscent of Persian Islamic decorations were already extremely popular among the Mughals, from this moment onwards the flowers of Kashmir will increasingly permeate Mughal paintings, manuscripts, and textiles. With Jahangir's successor Shah Jahan (reign 1628-1658), this vision, entailing paradisiac beauty and a permanent spring, will be embodied in a floral motif. This flowering plant will soon evolve into the nascent *buta* pattern, which we can see woven into the Kashmir shawls—a key luxury item of the time—produced from the 1680s onwards.

This thesis focuses on the nascent *buta* pattern, as woven into Kashmir shawls from the 1680s until the end of the 17th century. It argues that Shah Jahan's flowering plant motif played a crucial role in the development of the nascent *buta* pattern. Consequently, this thesis argues that the development of the nascent *buta* may have been shaped as much by contemporary Iranian and European stylistic influences—as is often argued—as by the Mughals' own Islamic and Central Asian heritage. This thesis also makes an iconological contribution. Following the aesthetic development of the shawls—still plain, under Akbar—I aim to investigate how each Mughal emperor articulated his quest for royal identity. In this context, I study this royal pattern—and its success—as a symbol of the Mughal garden, which is an expression of the Qur'anic *al-janna* (the Paradise Garden), as well as of the Timurid garden. Additionally, my purpose is to highlight how Kashmir shawls, and the nascent *buta* pattern, came to be considered extremely valuable and sophisticated items, by focusing on Islamic gift-giving practices.

[1] Translated quote from Alexander Rogers.

1.1 State of the Art

1.1.1 Defining the *Buta* Pattern

There is limited literature that focuses exclusively on the *buta* pattern. Therefore, a logical starting point for this thesis is literature on the textiles in which the *buta* pattern was used, such as *patkas* (waist-sashes) and Kashmir shawls. These are the only works that systematically explore the pattern, its origin, and development.[2] It is worth noting at this stage that the 'Kashmir shawl' is a term that obscures more than it reveals. In this context, the work carried out by Janet Rizvi and Monisha Ahmed (2009, 12-3) is of great relevance to help understand the distinction between the meaning of the term 'Kashmir shawl' as we intend it today and what it referred to during the Mughal period. According to them, likely the Farsi term *shal* in the Mughal period referred generically to a type of textile made of fine wool in twill-tapestry, or *kani*-woven, technique. The production of these woollen textiles was restricted to the Kashmir Valley. These textiles were employed in the production of different items, in particular *doshalas* (shoulder-mantles) and *patkas* (waist-sashes). *Doshalas,* when imported by Europeans through commercial and gift exchanges, were referred to as 'shawls.'[3] In the remainder of this thesis, I will refer to *doshala* and *patka,* whenever a specification is needed, while I will use the term Kashmir shawl when referring to these textiles more generically.

The *buta* pattern has been subject to different stages of development which largely altered its shape. The point of departure for my research is the analysis offered by John Irwin (1955, 11-2).[4] The *buta*, meaning 'flower' in Hindi, first appeared during the 1680s as 'a slender flowering plant with roots' (fig. 1).[5] It then evolved into an increasingly more stylised pattern, especially by the first part of the 18th century.[6] This process of stylisation is well illustrated by a series of drawings commissioned by Irwin (fig. 2). According to Irwin, it is likely that around the 1770s, the history of the *buta* pattern merged with the Persian *boteh*—a drop-shaped pattern—especially when the plant roots were substituted by

[2] See, for instance, Ames 1997; 2010; Cohen 2002, 124; Pathnak 2003, 141; 2006, 136. Unfortunately, I will not be able to refer the pages of Ames 1997; 2010, since I consulted these texts at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti's library, in Como (Italy), which currently I cannot access

[3] Rizvi and Monisha 2009, 77-8.

[4] John Irwin (1917 - 1997) was a textile scholar and art historian. He is the first scholar who carried out a systematic research on Kashmir shawls and their design. He was Keeper of the Indian section at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, for almost twenty years. For a short biography and overview of his research, see: http://ignca.gov.in/on-the-life-and-works-of-john-irwin/

[5] Irwin 1955, 11.

[6] Irwin 1955, 11-2.

a vase and the number and species of flowers increased. This thesis studies the *buta* pattern at its earliest stage (between the 1680s and 1700), which I will call 'nascent *buta* pattern'. Moreover, it investigates the links between the nascent *buta* pattern and a flowering plant motif that preceded it.

Fig. 1—Fragment of Shawl with nascent *buta* pattern, Kashmir, *c.* 1680.
Calico Museum of Textiles, Ahmedabad

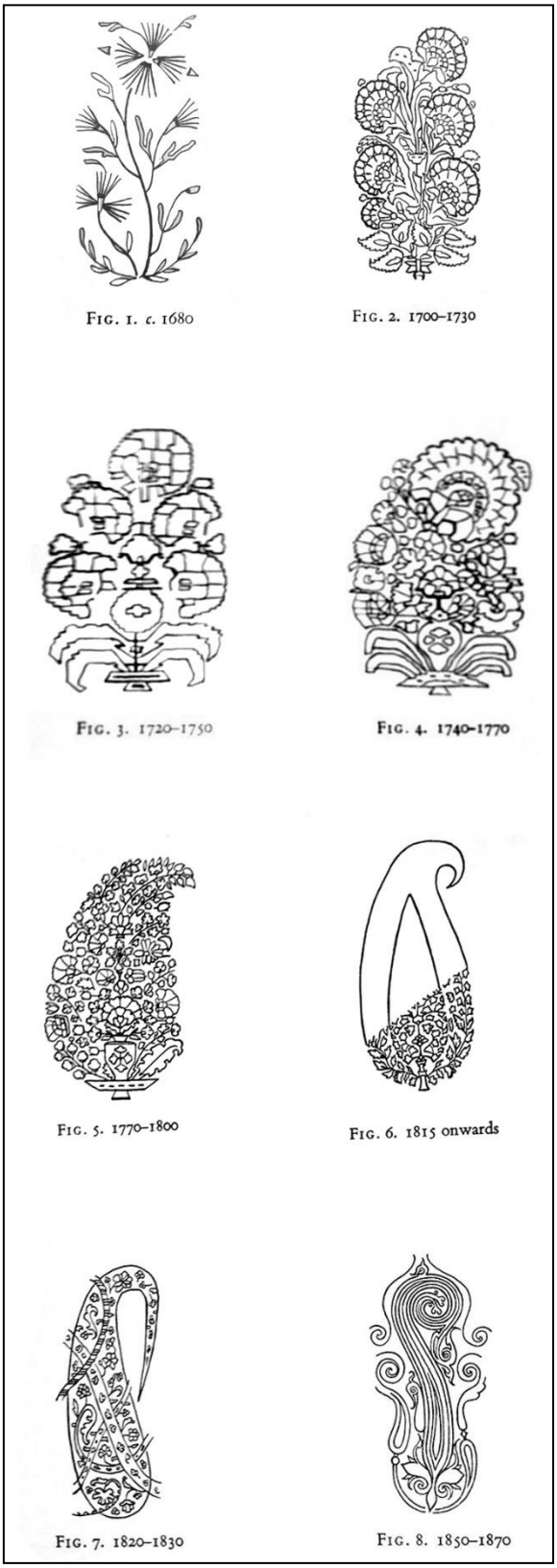

Fig. 2 —The development of the *buta* pattern of Kashmir shawls.

This thesis focuses on the first stage of this development, corresponding *circa* to the 1680s

By contrast, most of the studies on Kashmir shawls refers to the *buta* pattern as the Indian version of the *boteh*, thus they investigate the *buta*'s origin together with that of the *boteh*. In particular, according to Valery Reilly, as well as Francina Chiara & Margherita Rosina, the *buta* or boteh shape would derive from the date palm sprout, considered sacred in ancient Chaldea (Babylon). [7] The *buta*'s origins would have to be found in Zoroastrian imagery, which then spread in India and Europe.

I would argue that these scholars aimed to trace the common origin of the drop-shaped *buta-boteh*, which was later known in Europe as the 'Paisley' pattern. They tried to offer a cohesive narrative of the history of the Paisley pattern and the shawls in the West. When the shawls started to be imported and then re-produced by the French and the British, at the end of the 17th century, they became an extremely popular and fashionable accessory for European women.[8] The number of shawls produced in Paisley's factories, in Scotland, was so large that the pattern woven in them—in fact a later *buta*—acquired the town's name.[9] For this reason, many studies on Kashmir shawls focus on this latter part of the shawls' design history, during which they acquired their highest popularity in Europe.[10]

Among recent interpretations, Janet Rizvi and Monisha Ahmed (2009, 76-86) offer the most comprehensive analysis of the *buta* pattern. They recognise the difficulty of employing a single term, *buta*, for patterns that are so different from one another.[11] They define the *buta* pattern as a 'classic bouquet', with flowers rendered in a naturalistic way, although not always of existing species.[12] Moreover, while the previous scholars investigated the development of the *buta* mainly starting from the 1680s, they try to study in greater detail what was there before. They argue that the *buta* pattern was possibly preceded by an earlier, smaller single-flower pattern, named *buti* (fig. 3), already part of the Indian and Iranian brocades design.[13]

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[7] Reilly 1987,10; Rosina and Chiara 2016. Unfortunately, I will not be able to refer the pages of Chiara & Rosina 2016, since I consulted this text at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti's library, in Como (Italy), which currently I cannot access.

[8] Thanks to the new textile technologies developed during the Industrial Revolution, such as the Jacquard loom, both the British and the French attempted to reproduce the Kashmir shawls. Although they never achieved to perfectly replicate the original hand-made shawls with the machine-looms, however, these European versions, more affordable and more readily accessible relative to their Indian counterparts, became extremely widespread (Irwin 1955, 12; Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 228-9).

[9] Ames 1997; Irwin 1955, 12; Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 228-9.

[10] The works by Irwin (1955) and Ames (1997) are the most extensive on the topic.

[11] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 86.

[12] Quote from Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 85. See also Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 86 for more information on the pattern.

[13] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 77, 82.

Fig. 3—Mughal shawl with *buti*, fine pashmina in twill tapestry technique, 17th century

Similarly, this thesis aims to study the nascent *buta* pattern, by investigating the floral motifs that preceded it and, I would argue, led to its appearance. Thus, I will support my research with studies on Mughal floral imagery more broadly. Robert Skelton (1972) and Daniel Walker (1997) studied a Mughal flowering-plant motif, first conceived under Jahangir and formalized under his successor Shah Jahan.[14] Skelton (1972, 147) defines this motif as 'the flowering plant, naturalistic in appearance, yet formally posed and arranged at discreet intervals against a plain background'. Within the field of carpet design, Walker (1997, 86) underlines how the major style innovation in the floral imagery under Shah Jahan's rule (1628-58) involved a new style of this flowering-plant motif.

1.1.2 Identifying the Influences on the Nascent *Buta*'s Stylistic Development

Studies on the *buta* pattern and the flowering plant motif of Shah Jahan tried to identify the external forces that played a role in the development of the Mughal floral imagery.[15] These analyses have been partly influenced by trends in academic thinking.

[14] Daniel Walker is a scholar of Indian carpets, Islamic art and museology. He is the curator of the Islamic Art section at the Art Institute of Chicago from 2010. He has been previously director of the Textile Museum of Washington D.C. and Islamic Art curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. For a short biography, see: https://www.sofaexpo.com/daniel-walker

[15] Irwin 1955, 10-1; Skelton 1972, 151-2; Murphy, 1982, 78; Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 78-9.

In the 1950s, John Irwin (1955, 11) highlighted that the floral imagery of Persian manuscripts had a great impact on the stylistic development of the nascent *buta* pattern. However, he did not articulate this subject, as the whole study he carried out focused on the perception and design development of the shawls in Europe. Robert Skelton (1972) too referred to the impact of Persian manuscripts' design, however, he places greater emphasis on the influence of European botanical studies on the floral imagery developed by the Mughal emperors, from Jahangir onwards.[16] Ten years later, Veronica Murphy (1982, 78) still placed at the centre the Mughal emperors' fascination towards European arts.

From the 1990s onwards, with the emergence of Islamic Studies, works on Mughal floral imagery, and on the design of Kashmir shawls, distanced themselves from this Eurocentric perspective and approached the stylistic and cultural forces impacting the development of the shawls' design.[17] Dale Gluckman (1997) is the first scholar to study the shawls' design in relation to the pan-Islamic stylistic floral imagery and its symbolic meaning across Islamic societies. Likely, her work sets a new approach in the literature on Kashmir shawls. For instance, Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 86) identify the *buti* pattern and the floral design motifs of the textiles produced at Isfahan, in Iran, as major sources of inspiration. However, this study does not offer an iconological analysis as Gluckman does. More specifically, Gluckman relates the Qur'anic perception of Paradise as a Garden to the development and the success of the *buta* pattern, which would confer to the Kashmir shawls their precious status.[18]

1.1.3 The Development of the Mughal Royal Identity: A Theoretical Framework

There is scholarly consensus that the Kashmir shawls were markers of status for all the Mughal emperors, although their appearance changed greatly in the course of time. Analysing the development of the Mughal emperors' ideas on royal identity and manliness may shed some light on the reasons why the nascent *buta* pattern, at a certain stage, appeared. To support the analysis of the Mughal emperors' articulation of a masculine and royal identity, I will mainly refer to work carried out by Rosalind O'Hanlon and Ebba Koch.[19] From this theoretical framework, I will be able to investigate two factors, two

[16]Skelton 1972, 151,152.
Robert Skelton is an art historian who focused his research on Indian painting and decorative arts. He has been Keeper of the Indian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum between the 1978 and 1988. For a short biography, see: https://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/events/portraiture-in-south-asia/file58422.pdf
[17] See, for instance, Verma 1999.
[18]Gluckman 1997, 82-3. Dale Carolyn Gluckman is a textile historian and independent curator.
[19]See the studies on the articulation and development of the Mughal royal identity carried out by O' Hanlon 1999; 2007; and Koch 2001; 2002; 2009; 2012; 2017; 2019.

means of displaying royal identity, that may have conferred the Kashmir shawl their status: the Mughal garden and gift-giving practice. Both are expressions of the Mughal Islamic and Central Asian heritage and were developed by each emperor, according to his personality and his ideas on kingship.

1.1.4 The Mughal Garden

Gluckman (1997) analyses the impact of the Paradise as Garden theme on the development of the pattern. However, among the Mughal emperors, the garden was also a relevant expression of patronage and ideas of royalty, thus of political power. My major sources for studying the Mughal perception of actual and ideal gardens and flowers are James Dickie's 'The Mughal Garden: Gateway to Paradise' (1985); Ebba Koch's 'Mughal palace gardens from Babur to Shah Jahan (1526-1648)' (1997); and two studies by Fairchild Ruggles (2008; 2017).[20]

1.1.5 Mughal Gift-giving Practice

The Mughal gift-giving practice played an important role in enhancing the status of Kashmir shawls. The study providing a theoretical framework to my analysis here is *Global gifts: The material culture of diplomacy in early modern Eurasia* edited by Zoltán Biedermann, Anne Gerritsen and Giorgio Riello (2017).

In order to investigate the various contexts where textiles were exchanged at the Mughal courts, I will look at historical and art historical studies on the *khil'at* ('robe of honour'). Gavin Hambly (2003, 33); Sylvia Houghteling (2018, 143); and Stephan Popp (2019, 140-1) underline how the exchange of gifts was a means of establishing both diplomatic and personal connections.

Within the field of textiles studies, the Mughal gift-giving practice has been studied by Louise Mackie (2016, 28), Pathnak (2006, 46-7), and Murphy (1982, 78). However, the exchange of gifts has been less investigated in relationship to Kashmir shawls.[21] So far, only Rizvi and Ahmed (2009) analysed in greater detail the exchange of *khil'at* as confirmation of their precious value. Original Mughal sources reveal that Kashmir shawls

[20] Ebba Koch is an art and architectural historian, with a focus on Mughal architecture, visual art, and history. She is currently professor at the Institute of Art, Vienna. For a short biography, see: https://univie.academia.edu/EbbaKoch

[21] The gifting of shawls has been mainly referred to as a means of bribery, or as diplomatic gifts (Irwin 1955, 10).

were destined to be gifted to Indian royals, Provincial governors, foreign courts representatives, and international diplomats.[22]

1.2 Aim of the Thesis

This thesis studies the nascent *buta* pattern, as woven into Kashmir shawls between the 1680s and 1700, in the light of the Islamic and Central Asian roots of the Mughal emperors. It brings together issues related to the Kashmir *doshalas* and *patkas* and to Islamic influences on Mughal art and identity. I expand two key themes of Dale Gluckman's work: the relevance of Islamic art in the development of the Mughal floral imagery, and that of the Islamic perception of Paradise as Garden.

The first part of this thesis focuses on the origin of the nascent *buta* pattern and the external forces that contributed to shape it. In particular, this part aims to relate the nascent *buta* pattern to Shah Jahan's flowering plant motif. It mainly fits the field of iconographic studies.

The second part of this thesis analyses the reasons through which the Kashmir shawls acquired their status and the nascent *buta* pattern became a symbol of royalty. Here I apply an iconological approach. This section investigates how the design of the shawls evolved from Akbar until Shah Jahan, according to the royal identity and self-perception they aimed to project. I study the relationship between aesthetics and the articulation of Mughal royal identity by looking at the garden culture; and at gift-giving practices. Both contributed to the prestige of the shawls, and, consequently, to the success of the nascent *buta* pattern.

1.3 Sources and Methodology

This thesis fits in the field of textile studies and uses an iconographic and iconological method to combine artistic sources with historical sources.

The primary sources of this study consist of actual Mughal textiles, mainly fragments of Kashmir shawls, but also pashmina carpets and silk *patkas*, all antecedent to the beginning of the 18th century.[23] These textiles are from catalogues and online collection databases of art museums.

[22] Pathnak 2003, 63-5; Hambly 2003, 33; Houghteling 2018, 143.
[23] Other museums preserved only later Kashmir shawls, mainly from the second half of the 17th century, and therefore not fitting my purpose. Among these museums, the most relevant are The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); the Cleveland Museum of Art; and the Islamic Art Collection of The David Collection (Copenhagen); and the Textile Museum (part of The George Washington University Museum).

The shawls in support of this thesis are preserved in different institutions. The earliest, preserved fragment of a Kashmir shawl (fig. 1) dates approximately to 1680, and it is currently at the Calico Museum of Textiles (Ahmedabad).[24] The other fragments I selected date approximately between the 1690s and 1700. One is preserved at the Musée Guimet (Paris), in the Krishna Riboud Collection, which acquired large part of the collection of the former AEDTA.[25] Finally, two shawls in support of this thesis are preserved at the Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum (Varanasi).[26, 27]

The pashmina carpets and silk *patkas* are also preserved in various collections. The mid-17th century carpets I selected are from the Islamic Art's department of The Metropolitan Museum of Arts (New York) and The Frick Collection (New York).[28] The silk *patka* is preserved at The Textile Museum (Washington D.C.).[29]

Because of a lack of actual Kashmir shawls preserved from the period of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, I will support my study of the nascent *buta* pattern through textiles as depicted in Mughal miniature paintings, which will also serve as primary sources. These are preserved in the South Asia collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (London); in the British Museum (London); The Royal Collection Trust (London); the Chester Beatty Library (Dublin); and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles).[30] The illustrated

[24] The Calico Museum of Textiles (Ahmedabad, Gujarat) has been founded by Gautam Sarabhai together with Gira Sharabhai in 1949. It was inspired by the art historical approach of Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy. It holds one of the most relevant collections preserving Kashmir shawls pre-18th century, stored in the section of 'Textiles for the Mughal and Regional Courts'. For more information on the museum, see: https://www.calicomuseum.org/

[25] The Riboud Collection is the textile collection of the Musée Guimet (Paris). It has been mainly founded by AEDTA (Association pour l'étude et la documentation des textiles d'Asie), created by by Krishna Riboud (1926-2000) in 1979. For more information on this collection, see https://www.guimet.fr/collections/textiles/. For an overview of Krishna Riboud's life and work, see: https://www.guimet.fr/blog/un-destin-krishna-riboud/.

[26] The Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum is an art and archeological museum in Varanasi, India. It is the museum of the Banaras Hindu University. For more information on this museum, see: https://www.bhu.ac.in/kala/index_bkb.htm

[27] Another significant selection of Kashmir shawls pre-18th century is that of the Tapi Collection (Surat, Gujarat), assembled by Praful and Shilpa Shah. The Tapi Collection is one of the richest Indian collection of Indian textiles. For more information, see: https://www.tapicollection.com/

[28] For additional information and a short history of the Islamic Art department of Metropolitan Museum of Art, see: https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/curatorial-departments/islamic-art. For more information on the Frick Collection, see: https://www.frick.org/

[29] The Textile Museum (Washington D.C.) was founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers. Today it holds more than 21,000 textiles from all over the world. For additional information, see: https://museum.gwu.edu/textile-museum

[30] The South Asia collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum have been first assembled in the Oriental Repository of the East India Company's Museum. Part of these collections were Kashmir shawls. When the Company has been dismantled in 1858, these items became part of the India Museum, later renamed Victoria and Albert Museum (1899). For more information on the collection of South Asian textiles, see: http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/c/collecting-south-asian-textiles/

copies of *De Materia Medica* and Sa'di's *Gulistan* are currently preserved at The Freer Gallery of Art (Washington D.C.).[31]

The main primary textual sources for this thesis are the *A'in-i-Akbari* by Abū al-Faḍl ʿallāmī—an account of Akbar's administration—and Jahangir's memoir, the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri.* In addition, a collection of *farmans* (or imperial letters) sent by Mughal emperors, at the Rajasthan State Archives, and 'Inayat Khan's *The Shah Jahan Nama* provide evidence of the exchange of shawls through gift-giving practices. All these sources are in official English translation.

The secondary sources for my thesis are the studies on the pattern and the shawls, together with researches on Mughal garden culture, decorative arts, and imperial ideology. I discussed these works in greater detail in the section 1.1.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows.

Chapter 2 investigates the development of the design of Kashmir shawls from Akbar until Aurangzeb's times. It mainly offers an iconographic analysis of the nascent *buta* pattern supported by actual Kashmir shawls, pashmina carpets, and miniature paintings, together with Mughal textual sources.

Chapter 3 outlines the impact of different influences on the stylistic development of the pattern. It evaluates how pan-Islamic, Persian, and European floral imageries were cherished and re-elaborated by the Mughal emperors.

Having analysed the historical and stylistic evolution of the nascent *buta*, Chapter 4 provides a theoretical framework to investigate how the Mughal emperors developed their own idea of royal and masculine identity and how they chose to present it through a luxury item such as the Kashmir shawls. It places their actions within a wider context of an identity shift, from Akbar's minimalism to Jahangir's eccentricity, finally to Shah Jahan's balance between accepting Muslim influences and expressing a new, independent taste.

[31] The Freer Gallery of Art, together with the M. Sackler Gallery, constitute the Smithsonian's national museum of Asian art (Washington D.C.). For additional information on these two collections, see: https://asia.si.edu/about/

Chapter 5 focuses on the presentation of royal identity through the garden. It studies the impact of the Islamic perception of Paradise as Garden and the Timurid garden culture as driving forces behind the selection of the *buta* as a royal pattern.

In Chapter 6 I analyse the articulation of kingship through the Mughal gift-giving, in particular the exchange of shawls through *khil'at.* I highlight how various Mughal emperors perceived and developed the gift ceremonial at their court as a means of constructing diplomatic and affective ties across South Asia.

Finally, the conclusions of this thesis are articulated in Chapter 7.

Chapter 2 – Origin of the Nascent *Buta* Pattern

The history of the design of Kashmir shawls has been studied extensively by textile studies scholars. Not surprisingly, the *buta* pattern plays an important part in this history. Yet the origins of the pattern have remained somewhat confused. This is due to two main factors. First, very few Kashmir shawls from the Mughal era have been preserved. Secondly, Kashmir shawls are rarely depicted in contemporary miniature paintings.[32] To fill these gaps, I would argue that Mughal pashmina carpets and silk *patkas* contribute to highlight how the Mughal emperors developed their floral imagery as decorative art in their textile production. [33] The pashmina carpets were mainly produced in Lahore; however, it is possible that some were also produced in Kashmir, thus possibly impacting on the design of the shawls.[34] On the other hand, *patkas*, regardless of the material of which they were made, may show how the decorative borders on shawls were developed.[35]

Contemporary textual sources may also shed some light on the development of Kashmir shawls' appearance. Only through the combination of all these different sources it is possible to analyse how floral motifs have been increasingly transformed into the nascent *buta* pattern, building a cohesive history.

[32] As already Ames (1997) remarked, Kashmir shawls are rarely represented in Indian paintings before the first half of the 18th century, making hardly possible to identify patterned shawls dating to the end of the 17th century.
[33] The earliest Indian carpet preserved dates to the 1580s and was made of cotton and wool (Walker 1997, 29). Under Akbar the carpet design was still heavenly indebted to Persian models, while with Jahangir it evolved into a peculiar flower style, more independent from the Persian tradition (Walker 1997, 1x). The pashmina carpets were among the most precious in India, and only forty examples survived from the Mughal period, all produced during Shah Jahan's rule. For additional information on Mughal pashmina carpets, see:
https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/445261?searchField=All&sortBy=Relevance&ft=mughal+carpet+pashmina&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=6
[34] Walker 1997, 23. The pashmina fiber was originally from Western Tibet and then traded to Kashmir, where it was mainly used for the production of the shawls. However, pashmina carpets were not exclusively produced in Northern India. The oldest example that has been preserved dates to the second half of the 16th century and is from Persia (Walker 1997, 22-3).
[35] The design layout of pashmina *doshalas* and *patkas* from the Mughal period is extremely similar: the field, generally plain, is enriched with increasingly decorated borders, named *pallav*. (Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 77). Similarly, the silk *patkas* present these elements—although they often feature a striped or geometrically patterned field (e.g. see fig. 13).

2.1 The Nascent Buta Pattern: Kashmir Shawls Before the 18th Century as Primary Sources

The earliest fragment of Kashmir shawl (fig. 4), dated approximately to the 1680s, features a naturalistic, asymmetric flowering plant with the peculiar visible roots and the delicate tilt at its top. This is the nascent *buta* pattern.

Fig. 4—Nascent *buta* pattern (detail of fig. 1)

Another shawl (fig. 5) has been dated from approximately the same period, between 1680 and 1690 and it is part of the former AEDTA archive. In this second example, the flowering plant is enriched with an additional number of blossoming flowers and green leaves.[36] The peculiar asymmetry of the nascent *buta* pattern is present. The increasingly stylisation of the pattern into a drop-shaped silhouette is more evident than in the previous example.

[36] It is unfortunate that this image is cropped, and no other images of this shawl are accessible online. It seems that here the roots are not there, however, it is impossible to state this with certainty.

Fig. 5—End border of a Kashmir shawl, c. 1680-90. AEDTA, 3211

This process of stylisation, leading to an increasingly drop-shaped pattern, is well illustrated by two other slightly later examples (figs 6-7), which have been dated to the end of the 17th century *circa*. Both these Kashmir shawls are currently preserved at the Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum. These shawls (figs 6-7) feature the nascent *buta* as a more stylised pattern relative to the two previous examples (figs 4-5). While they still feature the design of the roots and the tilt at the top like the previous one, their flowers are now no longer identifiable as real flowers, and the whole plant is delicately merging into the drop-shaped silhouette.

By looking at these examples of Kashmir shawls' design, which have been produced before the beginning of the 18th century, it appears that the nascent *buta* pattern of the 1680s shawl fragment (fig. 4) was still a naturalistic flowering-plant with one large blossoming flower slightly bent at the top, few green leaves close to the roots, and two buds—one on each side of the stem—ready to open up. Its stem has already been slightly arranged into a wavy line. In the almost contemporary AEDTA piece (fig. 5) although the stem is straight, this movement has been recreated with the tilt at the top. These design strategies gave the

pattern the asymmetric, slightly drop-shaped silhouette, which in the next ten or twenty years will become increasingly predominant (figs 6-7).

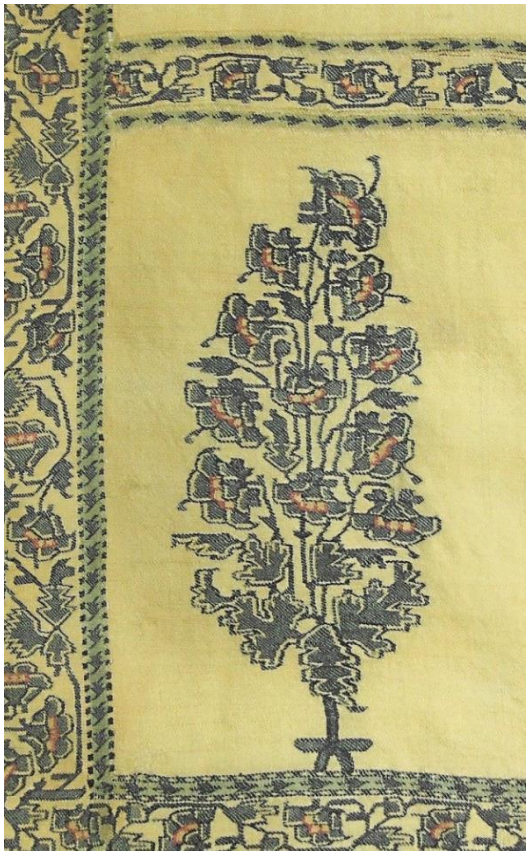


Fig. 6 (left)—Detail of *doshala* or *patka*, pashmina, Kashmir, late 17th century.
Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum, 10.988
Fig. 7 (right)—Detail of *patka*, pashmina or toosh, Kashmir, late 17th century.
Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum, 10.864

2.2 Plain Kashmir Shawls: Humayun and Akbar

One of the earliest textual references to Kashmir shawls dates to 1544, when the ruler of Iran, Shah Tahmasp I, listed such shawls as part of an edict regarding the 'supplies to be provided to the exiled Mughal emperor, Humayun'.[37] However, no information on the shawls' appearance is provided.

In the *Ain-i Akbari* there are two sections that are relevant for our purposes: 'The wardrobe and the stores for mattresses' and 'On Shawls, stuffs, Etc.'[38] The former, informs us that Akbar used a specific term, *parmnaram* ('supremely soft') when referring to the Kashmir

[37] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 149
[38] Abul Fazl I, 93-102.

shawls.[39] In the second section, the author, Abul Fazl, informs us only on the shawls' colours and the innovative mode of wearing the *doshalas* promoted by Akbar: [40]

> *[…] its natural colours are black, white and red, but chiefly black. Sometimes the colour is pure white: This kind of shawl is unrivalled for its lightness, warmth and softness. People generally wearing it without altering its natural colour; his Majesty has had it dyed.*[41]

And it continues:

> *People folded them up in four folds, and wore them for a very long time. Nowadays, they are generally worn without folds, and merely thrown over the shoulder. His Majesty has commenced to wear them double, which looks very well.*[42]

Again, there is no direct reference to the appearance of these shawls. The lack of reference to the design of the shawls may suggest that there were no patterns at all during this period. This is also confirmed by contemporary miniature paintings. A portrait of Raisal Darbari (fig. 8), dated between 1600 and 1605, and currently at the Chester Beatty Library, provides evidence on how Akbar diffused the fashion of wearing *doshalas* in pair.[43] In this painting, we see Raisal Darbari wearing plain *doshalas* in two different colours, the top one being a dark blue, the bottom one, as a doubling, in its natural colour. This would fit with the textual reference to the practice wearing both dyed shawls and in natural shades.

[39] Abul Fazl I, 96; Rizvi and Ahmed, 2009, 150.
[40] As already Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 150) have highlighted in their study.
[41] Abul-Fazl, *A-in-i Akbari* I, 97.
[42] Abul Fazl I, 98.
[43] Raisal Darbari was a Rajput nobleman who served at the court of Akbar and Jahangir. This painting is a folio from the Salim Album, which was originally a small composition of paintings and calligraphy. This album was composed for the Prince Salim (known as Jahangir when became emperor) in Allahabad, between 1600-1605. Today, the Salim Album refers to a group of thirty folios, preserved in various collections. For more information on this painting and the Salim Album, see: https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/object/In_44_2/1/LOG_0000/

Fig. 8 (right)—Portrait of Raisal Darbari wearing double *doshalas* in two different colours, 1600-1605. Chester Beatty Library, 44.2

2.3 A Floral Decoration: Jahangir

The first textual reference to a patterned Kashmir shawl with floral motifs is found in the *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. Here, Jahangir informs us that 'on the 22nd, Mizra Raja Bhao Singh took leave to go to Amber, […] and had given him a special Kashmir *phup* robe.'[44] Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 151-2) suggest that *phup* (or *phul*) means 'flowered'. Unfortunately, this information remains vague: it is impossible to state whether these floral patterns were embroidered or woven into the shawls with the *kani* technique, and also how these floral motifs looked exactly. Irwin (1955, 10) adduced a note by Sebastien Manrique, who, in 1630, described the shawls as decorated with gold and silver threads and floral decorations.[45] Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 158), however, suggest that Manrique's observation

[44] *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* I, 297. Translated quote by Alexander Rogers.
[45] See reference in Irwin (1955): Manrique, Sebastien. *The Travels of Sebastien Manrique, 1629-43*. Hakluyt Society, 2 vols., 1926-7. Manrique was a Portuguese priest (Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 158).

is not fully reliable, as he could not possibly have had the technical expertise to evaluate whether the patterns were embroidered or woven.

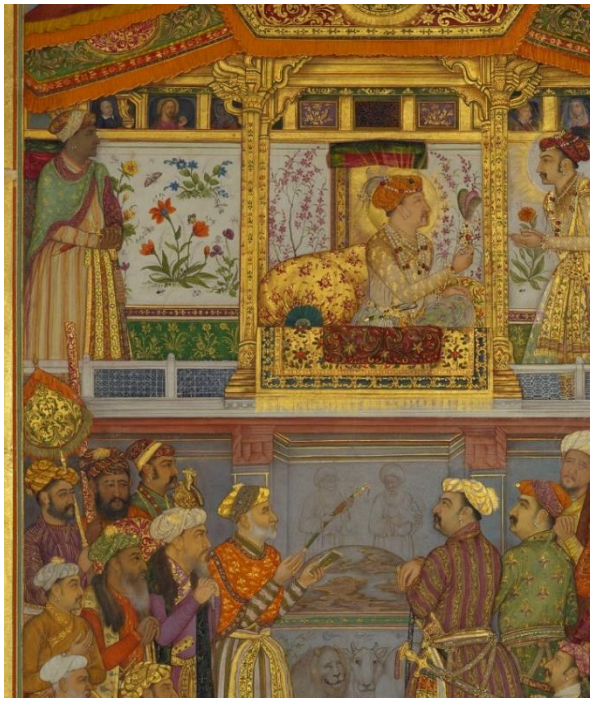


Fig. 9—(Detail) Jahangir presents prince Khurram with a turban ornament, folio from the *Padshahnama,* 1656-57. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 1005025.an

Fig. 10—Detail of fig. 9

If we consider miniature paintings contemporary to Jahangir, some doubts are still left. Rizvi & Ahmed (2009, 154) identify a painting from the *Padshahnama*—currently part of the Royal Collection Trust—which illustrates a court scene from the time of Jahangir (figs 9-10).[46, 47] At the top left corner of this artwork, a male figure is wearing a Kashmir *doshala* decorated with floral motifs.[48] Unfortunately, it is hard to tell whether these patterns were woven or embroidered. We must therefore conclude that, although the shawls of Jahangir's period started to feature floral decorations, these motifs had not yet fully developed into a formal and recognisable pattern.

[46] Although the painting has been made in 1656-57 this scene depicts a ceremony held at Jahangir court on the 12th October 1617. Thus, may shed some light on the appearance of clothing at his times. Prince Khurram will be named Shah Jahan, once became emperor. For more information on this painting, see: https://www.rct.uk/collection/1005025-an/jahangir-presents-prince-khurram-with-a-turban-ornament-12-october-1617

[47] The *Padshahnama* ('Book of Emperors') is a chronicle commissioned by Shah Jahan. This copy, preserved at the Royal Collection Trust, is the only illustrated one that survived from the Mughal period. For additional information on the *Padshahnama*, see: https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/exhibitions/splendours-of-the-subcontinent-four-centuries-of-south-asian-paintings/the-padshahnama-book-of-emperors-of-abd-al-hamid-lahori

[48] Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 154) identify this figure as Itimad-ud-daulah, Jahangir's father in law.

2.4 From Shah Jahan's Flowering Plant to Aurangzeb's Nascent Buta Pattern

The appearance of Kashmir shawls during Shah Jahan's rule remains partly hazy too: I could not find representations of shawls in contemporary miniature paintings, and original textual sources do not offer an insight on shawls' design.[49] To make up to this lack of evidence, I rely on pashmina carpets and silk *patkas* from Shah Jahan's period.

A Mughal pashmina carpet (fig. 11)—currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art—dated *circa* to 1650, features several flowering plants, some of which, I would argue, may be an antecedent of the nascent *buta* pattern that will be woven in Kashmir shawls form 1680s. The two plants shown in detail in fig. 11 feature the iconographic features of the nascent *buta*: the visible roots, the green leaves at the base of the stem, and, more importantly, the bent flower at the top.

Fig. 11—(Detail) Carpet with flowering plant motifs, Kashmir or Lahore, *c.* 1650.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970.321

Similarly, these flowering plants were integrated into silk *patkas*. This is supported by an actual *patka* from the mid-17th century, with its borders decorated with the blossoming plant (fig. 12). Also In a painting by Hunhar depicting Shah Jahan (figs 13-14), from the British

[49] See, for instance, Inayat Khan's *Shah Jahan Nama* 95, 252, 513

Library, the emperor's attendant in the left corner is wearing *patkas* decorated with flowering plants. Although not yet asymmetrical, nor with clearly visible roots, these flowering plants are now clearly arranged into a specific pattern.

With Shah Jahan, the flowering plant started to feature the recognisable roots and tilt at the top in carpets produced in Kashmir, where the shawls were also made. The carpets' floral design may also permeate the design of the shawls. This flowering-plant also became a decoration for silk *patkas'* borders. Likely, it was later integrated also in *patkas* made of pashmina, and, subsequently, *doshalas*.

Fig. 12—Silk *patka* with flowering plant, made in Gujarat, mid-17th century.
The Textile Museum, Washington DC, 6.29

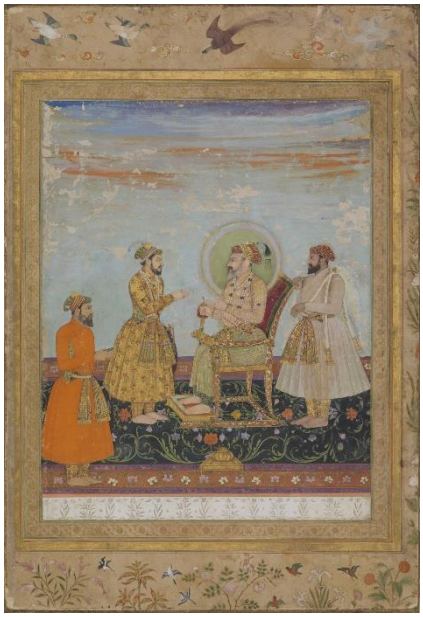


Fig. 13 (left)—Emperor Shah Jahan receiving Dara Shikoh, folio from the late *Shah Jahan Album*, Hunhar, India, *c.* 1650. LACMA, M.83.105.21

Fig. 14 (right)—Detail of fig. 13

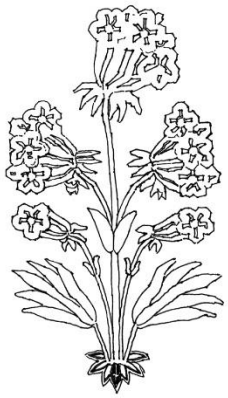
Fig. 15 (left)—Portrait of ʿAbdullah Quṭb. Single-page painting mounted on an album folio, late 17th century, Deccan. British Museum, 1974, 0617, 0.2.7

Fig. 16 (right)—Detail of fig. 15

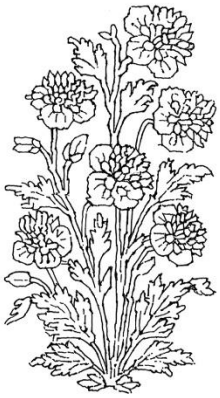
It is only from the second half of the 17th century, under Aurangzeb's rule (1658-1707), that we find Kashmir *doshalas* with the nascent *buta* pattern in miniature paintings, thus approximately coinciding with the earliest fragment of Kashmir shawl that has been preserved, from 1680s-1690s (figs 4-5).[50] A Deccani portrait of ʿAbdullah Qutb-Shah (figs 15-16) features the very first appearance in painting of the nascent *buta* pattern woven into Kashmir shawls: the flowering plant of Shah Jahan is now completely formalised, while preserving its delicacy and naturalism.[51]

By comparing Mughal miniatures from online databases, my findings tend to corroborate the scholarly consensus, that the nascent *buta* pattern appeared on Kashmir shawls in Mughal miniature paintings only after the 1680s, during Aurangzeb's rule.[52] However, I would argue that the nascent *buta* pattern, as featured in the preserved shawls (figs 4, 5, 6, 7) and in the portrait of ʿAbdullah Qutb-Shah (figs. 15-16), likely resulted from the previous developments of the Mughal floral imagery in textiles. This process (fig. 17) started with Jahangir, and was further elaborated by Shah Jahan, who developed a peculiar flowering-plant pattern. This has been a fundamental passage to bring the nascent *buta* pattern to light. Finally, under Auranzeb, the formalisation's process was completed. The nascent *buta* pattern was woven into Kashmir shawls, as supported by actual fragments and miniature paintings.

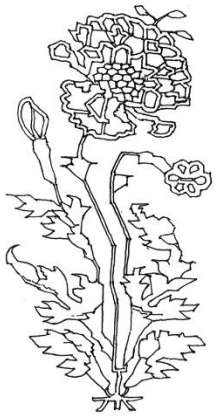
[50] Irwin 1955, 11; Ames 1997; Rizvi and Ahmed, 2009, 163.
[51] Irwin 1955, 11.
[52] Victoria and Albert Museum; The British Museum; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



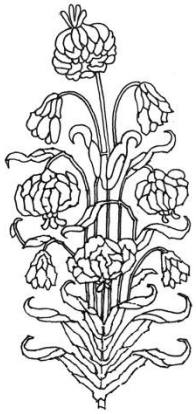
I. *c.* 1650 (carpet)



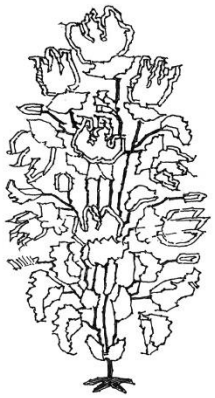
II. *c.* 1650 (silk *patka*)



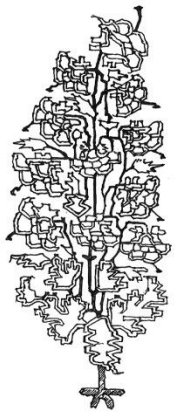
III. *c.* 1680 (the nascent *buta* pattern appears)



IV. *c,* 1690



V. late 1600



VI. late 1600

Fig. 17—The development of the nascent *buta* pattern, from Shah Jahan's flowering plant motif to formalized pattern from 1680 onwards

Chapter 3 - Influences on the Development of the Nascent *Buta* Pattern

The history of the *buta* pattern has been mainly analysed by taking its appearance in the 1680s as point of departure. However, as highlighted in Chapter 2, this narrative started already with Jahangir's floral motifs, later formalized by Shah Jahan into a flowering plant pattern. Thus, the nascent *buta* may be studied as the final stage of a longer process of formalisation. This process of stylisation is, by necessity, endogenous. Every pattern is, after all, the result of the gradual stylisation—on the part of generations of artists and designers—of an initial, often naturalistic shape. However, it is interesting to analyse also the *external* forces which contributed to the nascent *buta* pattern's stylistic development. The external factors entailed the blend of different cultural and artistic influences, a trend that can be traced across all Mughal artistic production.[53]

3.1 The influence of European Herbals

The relevance of European herbals for Mughal naturalistic floral imagery can be highlighted through a comparative analysis of paintings.[54] This reveals similar features between certain floral drawings commissioned by Jahangir from his court painter Mansur (fig. 18)—after the trip to Kashmir—and an engraved herbal drawing by the French artist Pierre Vallet (fig. 19), currently at the University Library of Salzburg.[55] A comparison brings out similarities in subject and style: the butterfly resting on the flower's petal, and the rendering of the leaves at the base of the stem are strikingly similar.[56]

[53] Koch 2012, 198
[54] Skelton 1972, 151-2; Murphy 1982, 78.
[55] Skelton 1972, 151-2.
Mansur was painter at the Mughal court and is famous for his drawings of plants and animals. Jahangir defined him *Nadir al-Asr* ('the Wonder of the Age') in his memoirs (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* Vol. II, 20). In the late 1580s was mainly in Lahore, then in Allahbad, between 1600-1604, and in Agra around the 1620s (Guy 2011, 80). Unfortunately, few of his paintings have been preserved and are currently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and Victoria and Albert Museum (London)
Pierre Vallet (1575-1657) was a French engraver and royal embroider. His major works include botanical drawings. For more information see Robert-Dumesnil, *Le peintre-graveur français, ou Catalogue raisonné des estampes gravées par les peintres et les dessinateurs de l'école française: Ouvrage faisant suite au Peintre-graveur de M. Bartsch.* Vol. 6. See the entire text at:
https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k65576943/f119.item.r=pierre%20vallet.texteImage
[56] Skelton 1972, 151; Losty 2019, 265.

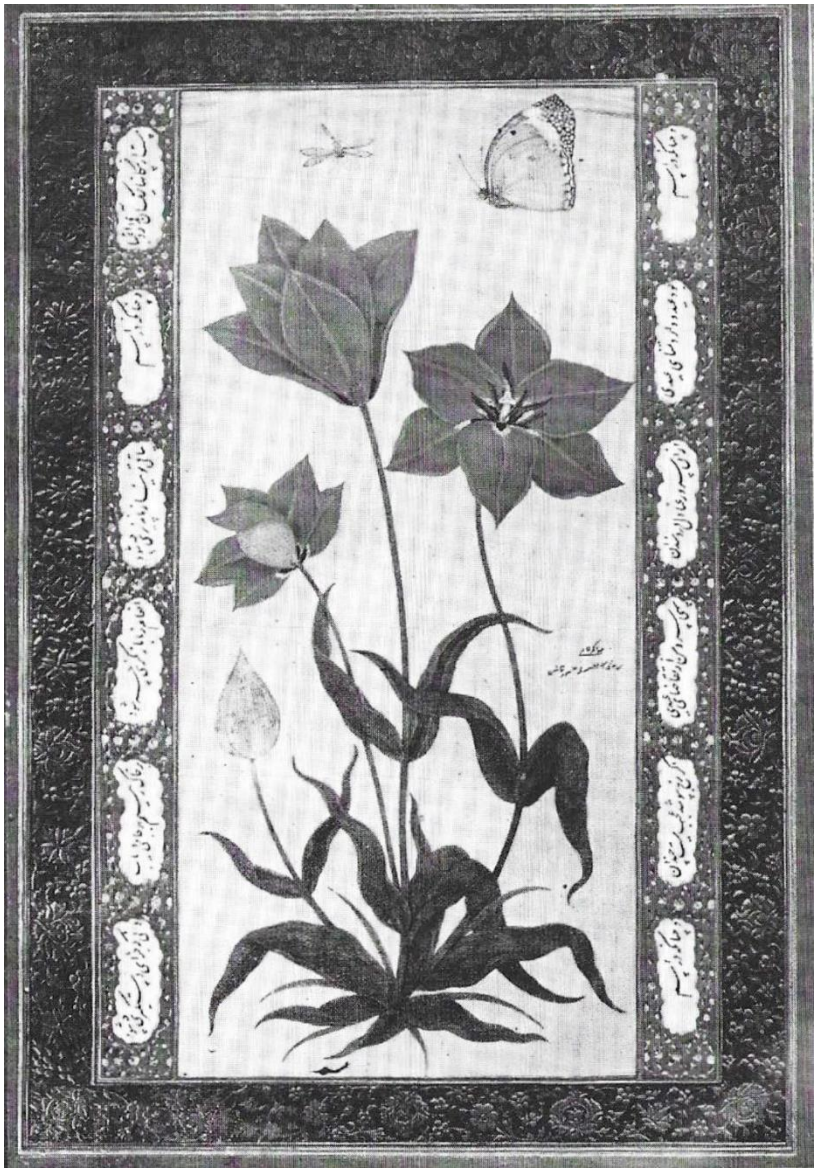


Fig. 18—Red tulips, painting by Ustad Mansur, *c.* 1620. Habibganj Library

But there is more: Skelton (1972, 152-1) found out that a Mughal drawing, from the Small Clive Album and currently preserved at the Victoria and Albert Museum, reproduces quite in detail Pierre Vallet's *Martagon Lily*, thus supporting the theory that European herbals were known at the Mughal court atelier (fig. 20).[57] Jahangir may have asked Mansur to reproduce some Kashmiri flowers in a western style—together with some species not native in India, nor in a near Asian region. These flowers may then have increasingly

[57] The Small Clive Album contains a collection of Indian paintings from the Mughal period. It may have been donated to Lord Clinton during his travel in India (1675-67) by Shuja ad-Daula. For more information and floral studies belonging to this album, see:
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O84615/painting-unknown/ and
https://www.vandaimages.com/results.asp?searchtxtkeys=small%20clive%20album

permeated the decorative arts promoted by him and his successor, Shah Jahan, in a constant process of stylistic formalisation and evolution.[58]

Fig. 19 (left)—*Martagon Lily*, drawing by Pierre Vallet, 1608.
Universitätsbibliothek Salzburg, G 382 II
Fig. 20 (right)—*Martagon Lily*, Mughal drawing from Small Clive Album, first half 18th century.
Victoria and Albert Museum, IS.48:1/A-1956

3.2 The Impact of pan-Islamic and Persian Floral Design

Pan-Islamic artistic trends, articulated through the production of textiles, manuscript borders, and drawings of botanical treatises should also be taken into account.[59] We know that painters and weavers from the Safavid empire were used to work at the Mughal courts, as there was a system of mutual exchange, leading to technical and aesthetic diffusion.[60] At the same time, artistic trends that were shared across the Islamic empires were integrated by the Mughal emperors as part of their own Central Asian heritage.

[58] Skelton 1972, 152; Murphy 1982, 78.
[59] Skelton 1972, 149-150; Gluckman 1997, 82; Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 86; Mackie 2016, 426.
[60] Mackie 2016, 426.

Within this framework, Persian floral imagery—especially that of the silk textiles of Isfahan—permeated the Mughal textiles, and at the same time it was creatively re-elaborated.[61] For instance, both Safavid and Mughal floral patterns were arranged in staggered rows. However, the Safavid flowers are generally facing opposite directions and are symmetric, while their Mughal counterparts are organised in the opposite way and are asymmetric.[62] While such design similarities and differences have been mainly studied with regard to silk textile production, I would argue that it also contributed to the development of the Mughal floral imagery in the design of the Kashmir shawls.

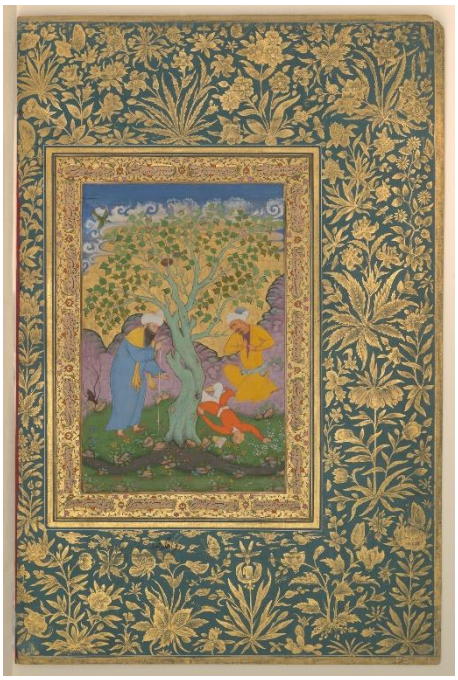


Fig. 21—Borders with floral motifs, folio from the *Shah Jahan Album,* by Aqa Riza, c. 1610. The Metropolitan Museum of Art 55.121.10.20

Fig. 22—Detail of fig. 21

If we look more broadly to decorative arts, and we consider the borders and illustration of manuscripts we can also see relevant source of inspirations. For instance, this is well illustrated by the floral decorations of a folio from the *Shah Jahan Album*, realized by Aqa Riza, an Iranian artist (figs 21-22).[63] Before Shah Jahan, the style of flower motifs in manuscript borders was deeply indebted to Persian models.[64] Across Islamic empires,

[61] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 86.
[62] Mackie 2016, 426.
[63] Aqa Riza was born in Meshhed (Iran), around 1560. He was a painter at Jahangir's court, and his style was deeply indebted to Persian models. For additional information on the painting and this artist, see: https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451266
[64] Losti 2019, 273.

botanical treatises were also extensively produced, copied and illustrated from the Medieval period, inspired by more ancient works—one of the most authoritative being the *De Materia Medica* by Dioscorides (1st century CE).[65] Copies of the section on plants of Dioscorides' work became extremely popular in the Middle East and Central Asia. [66] For instance, a copy written in Persian and made in Deccan, in 1595, (fig. 23) features drawings of flowering plants with visible roots, which may have inspired the nascent *buta* pattern, as likely a similar copy was known by the Mughal emperors and their artists. [67]

Fig. 23—A Persian illustrated copy of *De Materia Medica*, Deccan, 1595.
Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.82

[65] Gluckman 1997, 82; Ruggles 2017, 1-2.
[66] Dioscorides' work shaped a rich tradition of botanical studies across the Near East and western Asia, such as the *Irshad az-Zara'ah* ('Guide for Agriculture') by Qasim b. Yusuf Abu Nasr, written in 1515 in Herat. It merged garden symbolism with actual studies of flowers and garden architecture (Ruggles 2017, 3).
[67] Gluckman 1997, 82; Ruggles 2017, 2.

3.3 The Impact of Kashmiri Landscape: The Poplar

Although architectural decorations, manuscript borders and carpet design under the Mughals were greatly informed by cultural heritages from outside India, the weaving of Kashmir shawls was unique to Kashmir and this geographic factor may have played a role in their design too.[68] The shawls imagery, while mirroring artistic trends in Mughal arts, must have been influenced by local Kashmiri elements.

Gradually stylised into its peculiar asymmetric shape, over the course of its development, the nascent *buta* seems to take on a sort of drop-shaped silhouette, which has been associated with a cypress-like shape (fig. 24).[69] The cypress pattern is typically considered a part of Iranian visual imagery and, as such, was certainly known to the Mughals. Indeed, the cypress features prominently in pashmina pile carpets produced during Shah Jahan's reign, as shown from a carpet made in Lahore and currently preserved at the Frick Collection (New York): four cypress trees are arranged in the lower line of this carpet (fig. 25).[70] When it comes to the silhouette of the *buta* woven in Kashmir shawls, however, it has been suggested that the poplar—tree indigenous to Kashmir—may have been a more likely source of inspiration.[71] Thus, the very landscape of Kashmir also played a role in the early development of the *buta* as a flowering plant.

[68] Rizvi and Ahmed (2009, 88-9) underline that the industry of *kani*-woven shawls was unique to Kashmir during the Mughal period.
[69] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 88-9.
[70] This carpet represents a Mughal garden. Its background color is typical for the Indian carpets of Shah Jahan's period. Eventually, Shah Jahan himself donated this carpet to the to the tomb mosque of Sheikh Safi in Ardabil (Iran). For more information on this carpet, see: https://www.frick.org/sites/default/files/archivedsite/exhibitions/mughal/index.htm
[71] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 89.

Fig. 24—Detail of *doshala* or *patka*, pashmina, late 17th century. The nascent *buta* pattern is increasingly merging into a poplar silhouette

Fig. 25—Fragmentary carpet with tree pattern, pashmina pile on silk foundation, northern India, Kashmir or Lahore, *c.* 1650.
The Frick Collection, New York, 61.10.7

The nascent *buta* pattern appeared in Kashmir shawls as a creative elaboration of local and foreign traditions of floral design. Islamic floral imagery, through Persia and Central Asia, was adopted by the Mughals, already in the time of Akbar, and re-elaborated by Jahangir's court painters, who found also inspiration in European drawing of herbals. However, it was the Kashmiri landscape to first inspire Jahangir:

> *A garden of eternal spring, or an iron fort to a palace of kings—a delightful flower-bed, and a heart-expanding heritage for dervishes. Its pleasant meads*

> *and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet, and the narcissus grow of themselves; in the fields, there are all kind of flowers and all sorts of sweet-scented herbs more than can be calculated.*
>
> *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* II, 143-4 [72]

His words leave no doubt about his passion for the Kashmiri landscape and flowers, but what fuelled Jahangir's interest in flowers and plants, and why did Shah Jahan formalise and transform the flowering-plant motif into his royal pattern? If Kashmir was indeed a 'garden of eternal spring', to what extent did this inform the symbolism embodied into the shawls and their nascent *buta* pattern? To address these questions, we should look at the articulation by royal identity of the Mughal emperors.

[72] Translated quote by Alexander Rogers.

Chapter 4 - Mughal Royal Identity

Worldwide, textiles have always functioned as status markers, from early antiquity onwards.[73] Ideas on status, manliness, and kingship have been conveyed through the choice of specific patterns, associations of colors, and precious fibers. This active, selective process informed also the development of the design of Kashmir shawls. For the Mughal emperors these shawls were among their favorite fashion luxury items.[74] However, if for Humayun and Akbar the precious wool in plain natural and died colors was a sufficient marker of status, for Jahangir and his successors embroidered and woven patterns were also necessary. This development was indeed informed by the image of royalty they wanted to present at court.

4.1 Mughal Royal Ideology

Two core, interlaced themes lie at the foundation of Mughal royal ideology and identity: tolerance and cosmopolitanism, both expressions of a 'multiple identity', and empiricism.[75] Both aspects were central in Akbar's policy and thought and were further expanded by his successors. These themes are revealed by political, religious and artistic agendas, but also by choices in terms of self-representation through clothes and textiles.[76]

Tolerance and cosmopolitanism were strategic means of control to rule over a territory that was vast and extremely diverse in its population. [77] If tolerance was mainly in religious terms, cosmopolitanism had a cultural and artistic character. The history of the Mughal dynasty played a role in the definition of these values: Babur preserved the Central Asian tradition of his Timurid ancestors, while Humayun, after his exile at the Safavid court, looked at Iranian traditions—both those of their contemporaries, and those of the ancient Sasanian empire. Akbar consolidated the blend of these traditions. All these processes took place in the religious framework of Islam, and, with Akbar, of Sufi mysticism. [78] Akbar's religious tolerance was expression of his curious personality, inclined to empiricism:

[73] Guy 1998, 10.
[74] Rizvi and Ahmed 2009, 150-1.
[75] Koch 2002, 2; Koch 2009, 327; quote from Koch 2012, 198.
[76] O' Hanlon 2007, 907. For an extensive study on how the Mughal emperors differently articulated their idea of manliness see O' Hanlon 1999; 2007.
[77] Koch 2012, 194.
[78] Koch 2002, 156-7; Koch 2012, 198.

finding the true religion of man was one of his main goals, and to pursue his research he carried out practical experiments.[79]

The quest for a royal identity evolved further with Jahangir. He combined his own aesthetic sensibility and eccentric personality with his father's empiricism, and his ancestors' openness to multiple cultures. Cosmopolitanism was further expanded by integrating and re-elaborating European imagery and culture, as also discussed in Chapter 3.[80] This new blend emerged in his artistic patronage, and the articulation of court ceremonials.[81] Jahangir's personality emerges also from his observations of nature. He approached his botanical and zoological studies both in the light of his aesthete personality and through a solid methodology. He frequently recorded his observations and requested his court painters to reproduce the objects of his interest.[82] It was this investigative attitude towards the nature, based in attention and sensibility, that motivated the creation of sophisticated floral drawings by his painter Mansur.

Jahangir's son, Shah Jahan, formalised the royal ideology shaped by his predecessors. Ebba Koch (2019, 16) described this process 'not so much as a culmination, but a creative reconceptualization'. Under Shah Jahan's rule the empire administration, the court ceremonials and the articulation of royal identity were reorganised and systematised. [83]

4.2 Presenting Royal Identity Through the Kashmir Shawls

During the process that marked the definition of a royal ideology, the Mughal emperors used and adapted, according to their own personalities and sensibilities, two major traditions: that of their Timurid ancestors and that of Islam. Dress, as a means of displaying ideas of royalty and manliness, evolved accordingly. This is illustrated by the development of the design of Kashmir shawls.

Akbar's authority and strength were conveyed through the image of the warrior and hunter king, while his sobriety and spiritual justice were promulgated through values of modesty.[84] Thus, during his reign, regulations were applied to restrain the extravagances of noblemen,

[79] Koch 2002, 154-5. His most famous experiment, carried out in the 1570s, concerns his research of the true religion of men: he isolated a group of children in order to find out the religion they would spontaneously choose (Koch 2002, 154-5).
[80] Koch 2001, xxvi-xxvii; Koch 2012, 198.
[81] Koch 2001, xxvi-xxvii; Koch 2009, 325, 327; O' Hanlon 2007, 293.
[82] Koch 2009, 325
[83] Koch 2001, xxvii
[84] O' Hanlon 2007, 907. Akbar projected himself as the self-controlled *insan-i kamil*, or 'the perfect man' (O' Hanlon 2007, 901).

by promoting restrictions on the use of luxury textiles and cloths of bright colours.[85] It is not surprising then that in this period the Kashmir shawls were plain, and often worn in natural or sober colours, as dark blue.

By contrast, Jahangir, distancing himself from the modest and self-restrained attitude of his father, developed a new modality of expressing royal identity through luxury, elegance and pleasure, articulating a 'culture of competitive display'.[86] Likewise, the dress of noblemen gradually changed, becoming richer and more decorated.[87] The shawls started to be enriched with floral motifs. This process will be finalised by Shah Jahan, who expanded and refined the nobility's new identity. He employed architecture, paintings, textiles, and court ceremonials to express his sophisticated, multi-faced personality and, consequently, his authority.[88] The floral motifs of Jahangir were thus formalized into the flowering plant pattern, or the predecessor of the nascent *buta* pattern.

The way according to which each Mughal emperor presented the Central Asian heritage and the sense of belonging to a broader Islamic culture, played a crucial role in defining the appearance of Kashmir shawls in their times. These shawls and, from a certain point, their nascent *buta* pattern, conveyed ideas on status, which can be highlighted by studying two means of presenting kingship: the Mughal garden and the gift-giving practice.

[85] O' Hanlon 2007, 901, 907.
[86] Quote from O' Hanlon 1999, 68.
[87] O' Hanlon 2007, 923.
[88] Koch 2001, xxvii.

Chapter 5 – The Mughal Garden

When Jahangir defined the landscape of Kashmir as ‘a garden of eternal spring’, he simultaneously pointed to an actual garden—the Hari Prabat at Srinagar—designed by his father Akbar, and an imaginary garden, the Qur'anic paradise as garden (*al-janna*).[89] In the Islamic tradition, ideal and real gardens often coexisted, each one shaped by the other in a constant exchange. These two gardens were used by the Mughal emperors to project their royal identity. If the imaginary garden of paradise served as a marker of their belonging to a broader Islamic world, the Central Asian garden was an expression of their pride in their Timurid ancestors as well as in their own political power.[90] Through this theoretical framework it is possible to understand why the nascent *buta* pattern was woven into extremely luxury textiles, such as the Kashmir shawls. The selection of this specific pattern, just as the choice to wear any fashion item, served to project identity, heritage and power.

5.1 Mughal Gardens: From the Hortus to the Garden Palace

Islamic and Central Asian cultures produced an outstandingly rich gardening tradition.[91] Mughal gardens shifted from being a *hortus*—a functional garden, which Islamic societies had preserved as part of their gardening heritage—to becoming garden palace. This evolution in the design of gardens took place while preserving their cherished functions of providing the location where emperors could find an affective connection with their ancestors, while also stimulating patronage of the arts.[92]

Babur placed great emphasis on projecting an image of himself as standing close to the Central Asian gardening tradition, perceiving the garden as *hortus*. So much that he described himself in his memoirs as *muhandis,* an Arabic word which could be translated as a geometer, architect, and engineer.[93] The term referred to the ability to structure reality through symmetry, which was strongly reflected in his views on landscape design.[94] This can be seen in a painting from the *Baburnama* (figs 26-27), realized in 1590, where Babur is depicted while supervising the creation a garden geometrically organized in sections.[95]

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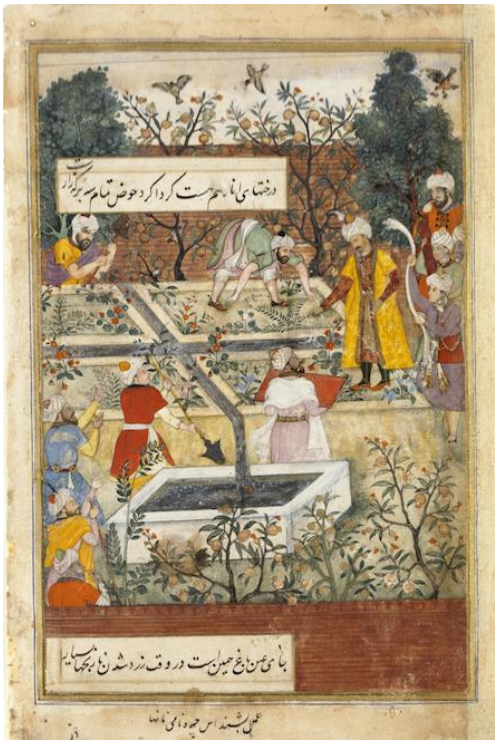
[89] Quote from *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* II, 143.
Dickie 1985, 132; Gluckman 1997, 82-83; Koch 1997, 146.
[90] Gluckman 1997, 82-83; Koch 1997, 158-159.
[91] Dickie 1985, 132; Koch 1997, 143-4; Ruggles 2008, 75-6; 2017, 3-4.
[92] Dickie 1985, 132; Koch 1997, 143-4.
[93] Dickie 1985, 132; Koch 1997, 143.
[94] Dickie 1985, 128.
[95] The garden depicted is the first created by Babur, The Garden of Fidelity (‘Bagh-e Vafa’), in Kabul (present day Afghanistan). This painting is part of the *Baburnama,* (‘History of Babur’),



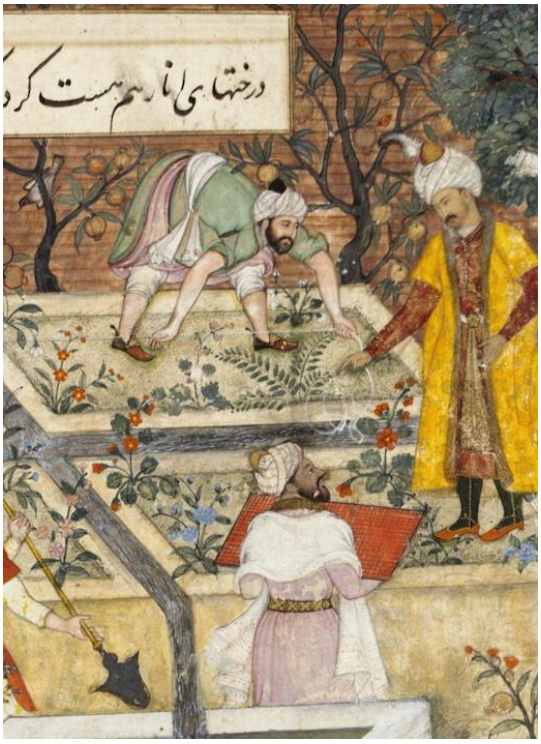


Fig. 26 (left)—Babur supervising the lay out of the Garden of Fidelity in Kabul, a folio from the *Baburnama*, 1590. Victoria and Albert Museum, IM 276-1913
Fig. 27 (right)—Detail of fig. 25

Akbar and Jahangir stayed quite close to Babur's heritage. Gardens played an extremely important role for these emperors as expression of their ambitions and political and artistic claims.[96] Of all the Mughal gardens, that of Hari Prabat at Srinagar, had a deep affective importance for Jahangir, as it has been created by his father Akbar.[97] Not only did Jahangir preserve and partly renovate this garden, but he also wanted to enhance his role of a patron of the arts by renaming it with his wife's name, Bagh-i Nur Afza. This garden was extremely loved also by his son and successor, Shah Jahan, who was captured by the outstanding number of flower species growing in this garden.[98]

The largest innovations happened under Shah Jahan's rule, who first transformed the Mughal garden into a palace—as shown by his garden palaces in Lahore and Agra.[99] The

which Akbar had translated from Turki to Persian. This folio belongs to a lost, illustrated copy dated to 1590. For additional information on this painting and the *Baburnama*, see: https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O17687/paintingbishndas/#:~:text=The%20Garden%20of%20Fidelity%20(Bagh,and%20surrounded%20by%20a%20wall.

[96] Koch 1997, 143-44.

[97] Koch 1997, 146. This garden was defined by Jahangir *baghcha-i dawlat khana* ('little garden of the palace').

[98] Koch 1997, 147.

[99] Koch 1997, 151-3.

peak of this vision is embodied in the palace of the Red Fort (as it is called today), in Delhi, built between 1639 and 1649.[100] Here, through floral paintings, engravings and cypress-

shaped columns, Shah Jahan created the vision of the eternal spring of his reign (fig. 28).[101]

Fig. 28—Detail of Dwan-i-Am ('Hall of Audience'), Red Fort, Delhi

5.2 Ideal Gardens: Qur'an and Islamic Poetry

To understand how the garden acquired both a symbolic and a political meaning across Muslim societies we should also consider ideal gardens. Indeed, although gardens are intrinsically the product of the region where they are designed, the Islamic garden tradition reflects an overall shared vision and imagination.[102] The source of this transnational reference lies in the *Qur'an* itself, as in it, paradise is visualised as *al-janna* (the Garden):

> *The semblance of Paradise promised the pious and devout*
> *(is that of a garden) with streams of water that will not go rank,*
> *and rivers of milk whose taste will not undergo a change,*
> *and rivers of wine delectable to drinkers,*
> *and streams of purified honey,*

[100] Koch 1997, 153, 156.
[101] Koch 1997, 157-8.
[102] Ruggles 2008, 3; 2017, 1-2.

and fruits of every kind in them, and forgiveness of their Lord.

(Surat al-Muhammad 47:15)[103]

Islamic poets have re-elaborated the Qur'anic imaginary by expanding its symbolic meaning and at the same time overlapping it with real landscapes that inspired them.[104] Vice versa, in the literary culture produced under the Timurid empire, which flourished between the 15th and the early 16th century in Herat, gardens were projected as spaces where elites met for reading poetry, a practice preserved by Babur.[105]

Humayun integrated Safavid poetry into the imperial library, thus bringing also Persian ideal gardens into the Mughal imaginary.[106] Of great relevance, for instance, was Sa'di's *Gulistan* ('Rose Garden'), a classical Persian collection of poems making a comparison between poetic compositions and a garden of roses.[107, 108]At The Freer Gallery of Art, there is a copy of the *Gulistan,* originally part of the Mughal Imperial Library. The text, written around 1558, was enriched with illustrations at the end of the 16th century. One of these paintings (figs 29-30) depicts the poet throwing flowers on the grass, while in conversation with another male figure. These flowers are the eternally enduring verses of his poem:

Of what use to you is a natural rose? Take a leaf from my rose garden.
A rose may last for five or six days, but this garden is always fresh.[109]

Sa'di illustrates how poetry, and more broadly art, can be a powerful tool to create an eternal garden.

[103] Translated quote from Ali 1988, 436.
[104] Ruggles 2017, 3.
[105] Sharma 2017, 52.
[106] Sharma 2017, 52.
[107] Sharma 2017, 58.
[108] Little is known of Sa'di's life. All sources agree that he was born and died in Shiraz (present day Iran). The *Gulistan* was completed in 1258 (Thackston 2008, iv).
[109] Translated quote from Thackston 2008, 7.

Fig. 29 (left)—A manuscript of the *Gulistan* by Sa'di, *c.* 1558. Freer Gallery of Art, F1998.5
Fig. 30 (right)—Detail of fig. 29

5.3 The Eternal Spring Woven in Kashmir Shawls

Ideal gardens, expression of the *Qur'an*'s Paradise Garden, together with Persian, Arabic and Turkish poetry, placed elements of real gardens into an imaginative construct. At the same time, the garden culture of Islamic empires was designed partly mirroring the literary inventions, in order to create a space of wonder for the elites.[110] Through time, the Mughal emperors re-interpreted both the pan-Islamic floral decorative tradition and their gardens according to the royal identity they wanted to project. In this process, elements from Central Asian, Persian, and European floral and garden aesthetics were selected and creatively re-elaborated.[111]

Across Islamic empires, poetry, treatises, and visual representations of imaginary gardens used the theme of the eternal garden, untouched by seasons and winds. The Mughal emperors, participating to this imagery, constructed actual gardens, and decorated palaces with paintings and engravings using the symbolism of the paradise garden, thus expressing

[110] Ruggles 2008, 75-8; Ruggles 2017, 2.
[111] Gharipour 2017, 185-6; Ruggles 2017, 1.

the political message of the eternal spring of their empire.[112] The flowers and plants woven into Kashmir shawls could refer to all these visions the Mughal emperors cherished. For this reason, the *buta* pattern, starting as a flowering plant, may have become the royal pattern *par excellence*. The *buta* pattern could carry both spiritual and political meanings: on the one hand fits in the pan-Islamic perception of Paradise as Garden; on the other hand, it fits in an eternal Mughal spring.

[112] Koch 1997, 158-9.

Chapter 6 – Mughal Gift-giving

The circulation of gifts across Islamic lands entailed the development of aesthetics, technologies, and patterns, from the Medieval period onwards.[113] Items selected as diplomatic gifts were considered precious objects by both givers and recipients. In this way, gifts paved the way to new alliances and relationships, as well as, when not appreciated, tensions and misunderstandings. Selecting the "right" item was thus crucial in creating and preserving diplomatic and personal networks. 114

The fact that Kashmir shawls, initially plain and later with the nascent *buta* pattern, were considered suitable items for gift-giving indicates that the shawls were indeed perceived as sophisticated and highly desirable fashion items among the Mughal emperors. Textiles and clothing, especially when part of the donor's own collection, would embody the very image that the emperor, or a nobleman, aimed to project at court, as well as across the wider world. Through this process, textiles and clothing, with their patterns, became markers of status and expressions of royal identity.

6.1 Textiles as Gifts: The Mughal Khil'at

Diplomatic gifts had to be 'valuable, rare and impressive'.[115] Textiles and clothing embodied these features, thus playing a central role as items of exchange also thanks to their lightness, portability and global attraction.[116] At the same time, textiles and clothing opened the possibility of a more intimate dialogue, as markers of both personal sensibility and awareness of social codes, enhancing their function of 'vehicles of royal affection'.[117] Their contact with one's skin, their perfume, the very fact of being an expression of beauty and personal identity, often made textiles more than just item of exchange.[118]

[113] Mackie 2016, 28; Biedermann *et al.* 2017, 1.
[114] Biedermann *et al*. 2017, 14-5. The case of Thomas Roe at Jahangir's court in 1614 well explain how relevant was the choice of appropriate gifts (Popp 2019, 133-4).
[115] Quote from Popp 2019, 133.
[116] Guy, 1998, 7.
[117] Houghteling 2018, 125-6, 144.
[118] Houghteling 2018, 142. For instance, Akbar would fit himself the clothes he wanted to donate, as well as he would perfume them by filling their pockets with flowers (Houghteling, 141).

The interconnection between intimacy and the political meanings that may be embodied in textiles and clothing becomes clearer if we look at the origin of gift-giving in an Islamic *milieu*. The gift of clothing—from one person to another of different social rank—within a ceremonial context was known as *khil'at* (or 'robe of honour'). This practice developed during the 'Abbasid period in Baghdad, in the 8th century. The caliph would donate one of his personal clothes to someone of inferior rank, and by doing so created a system of obligations.[119] This practice went back to the times of the Prophet Muhammad, who gave away many of his clothes as gifts.[120] The Prophet's act of taking off his own garments for gifting gave the ritual the name (*khil'at*, which literary means 'to take off') (fig. 31).[121] In the course of time, the number of gifts increased to the point that it became impossible to expect that the transmission always concerned clothing that had previously belonged to the ruler. From the 12th century onwards, the 'Abbasid and Fatimid established *tiraz* workshops, specific centres exclusively producing *khil'at* clothing. By this time, receiving a personal cloth from the emperor was extremely rare and therefore, very special (Hambly 2003, 33).

Fig. 31—Mahmud of Ghaznah receiving a *khil'at* from the caliph in Baghdad (detail), 1314-15 CE. Edinburgh University Library, Or Ms 20.f.121r

[119] Hambly 2003, 32; Mackie 2016, 28.
[120] Hambly 2003, 31; Mackie 2016, 28. The donated garment was believed to be the embodiment of *baraka*, 'the inner radiance which attached itself to his person,' as possessed by the Prophet's family (Mackie 2016, 28).
[121] Mackie 2016, 28.

The *khil'at* ceremony was particularly important for Babur's Timurid and Chaghtayid ancestors, as he was profoundly attached to his Central Asian heritage and ideas of kingship.[122] For Babur, *khil'at* could entail the consolidation of a relationship between kinsmen, it could have a diplomatic function, or it could be a routine act of recognition.[123] Thus, under the Mughals, *khil'at* indeed became a fundamental commodity among court officials.[124] As the 'Abbasid and Fatimid before, the Mughals also established a system of *karkhanas* ('royal workshops') and *tohshkhanas* ('treasure houses') and they defined a classification of diplomatic gifts and *khil'at* categories.[125, 126] The most precious gift, *malbus-i khas*, consisted in clothing worn by the emperor himself, as it was extremely rare and believed to embody the ruler's authority and power.[127]

6.2 Kashmir Shawls Exchanged as Gifts

It is still unclear whether the Mughals established *karkhanas* also for the exclusive production of Kashmir shawls, due to the absence of direct references to this.[128] However, this does not mean that shawls were excluded from the *khil'at*. Quite the contrary, it seems that shawls, which were extremely loved by all Mughal emperors, were often donated.[129] Contemporary literary sources do mention the shawls as items of gift exchange and shed some light on the possible meanings conveyed through these precious items.

Jahangir, in his memoirs, extensively mentions the offering of Kashmir shawls. He donated shawls not only to important courtiers, but also to scholars and fakirs he was devoted to, thus entailing a more personal attitude.[130] Popp (2019, 140) points out that, for Jahangir, the offering and the reception of gifts were greatly informed by his aesthete and charismatic

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[122] Hambly 2003, 35-6.
[123] Hambly 2003, 36-8.
[124] It is worth noting that, unlike European noblemen, in South Asia the high-rank court officials did not inherit their status through titles or land. Only by receiving material gifts they could enhance their status (Popp 2019, 133).
[125] Hambly 2003, 33, 38; Popp 2019, 136-40. In the *tohshkhanas* the gifts were organized and stored
[126] The most common *khil'at* consisted of a set of three garments, with a turban, a long coat, or *jama* and a waist-scarf. More elaborated versions also existed, including additional fashion items. For instance, the five-garments set came with a turban-ornament and a turban-band. A seven-items set also existed, which added to the three-pieces set two pairs of trousers, two pairs of shirts, a scarf, and a belt (Hambly 2003, 39).
[127] Hambly 2003, 39.
[128] Rizvi and Monisha 2009, 149. Although the *Ain-i Akbari* (I, 97) mentions the improvement of shawl-weaving manufacture, there is no explicit definition of the shawl production centers as *karkhanas*.
[129] The donation of shawls has been also studied by Rizvi and Monisha 2009, 151.
[130] Hambly 2003, 40; Rizvi and Monisha 2009, 151-2.
'Mutribi' al-Asamm Samarqandi in *Conversations with emperor Jahangir* writes that: 'Following this discussion, the royal command was issued that I be given a robe of honour. A top-quality turban and Kashmiri shawl were given to me' (translated quote from Foltz 1998, 24).

personality, as he often preferred rare objects, that could capture his personal sensibility. This is supported by two different cases, in which Jahangir donated a Kashmir shawl.

A first instance highlighting how the exchange of gifts in a diplomatic context could also entail intimacy, consists of a letter sent by Jahangir to the prince of Rajasthan, Rai Singh, in 1607.[131] This imperial letter, or *farman*, ends as follows: 'For the time being, as a token of our favours, we are sending him a private shawl often used by us for his elevation and honour.'[132] The fact that the shawl previously belonged to the emperor himself expresses that this gift had a most precious value, because of the rarity of such a gesture. Among the possible gifts, a shawl likely may have been the most personal item, as it is worn over the shoulders, and can thus be regarded as a powerful symbol of personal protection.

A second example, can be found directly in Jahangir's words:

> *On the 9th they brought Khan A'zam […]. Though he had been guilty of many offences, and in all that had done to him I was right, yet when they brought him into my presence and my eye fell on him, I perceived more shame in myself than in him. Having pardoned all his offences, I gave him the shawl I had around my waist.*
>
> (*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* I, 287)

Here, the shawl is a *patka*, and Jahangir donated it out of forgiveness, through a spontaneous and generous act.[133] Again, political ties were interlaced with personal feelings as embodied in the shawls that were made of the softest material.

Shah Jahan continued his ancestors' tradition, preserving the Kashmir shawls as part of the *khil'at*, but enhanced the administrative function of gift-giving as it is mentioned in *The Shah Jahan Nama* by 'Inayat Khan. A first example consists in the donation of shawls by Shah Jahan to his attendants after the commemoration of the Queen's death:

> *'After distributing 25,000 rupees in charity into the deserving of all the male sex and bestowing robes and shawls according to their rank on the numerous ecclesiastics […], he returned to the palace.'*
>
> (*Shah Jahan Nama,* 95)[134]

[131] Houghteling 2018, 143.
[132] Rajasthan State Archives, appendix 19.
[133] Rizvi and Ahmed, 151.
[134] Translated quote from A. R. Fuller.

A second case, still within the administrative context, relates to the appointment of the new Governor of Kashmir:

> *[…] His Majesty with extreme kindness appointed 'Ali Mardan Khan […] to replace Zafar Khan, the author's father, as governor of the delightfully cool province of Kashmir, which can only be compared to Paradise. He moreover bestowed on him […] some gold-embroidered fabrics of Gujarat and pashmina shawls of Kashmir […]*
>
> (*Shah Jahan Nama*, 252)[135]

In both these cases we see that Kashmir shawls were valued as precious gifts and that, in comparison to Jahangir, Shah Jahan formalized the ceremonial protocol.[136] It is also worth noting that in the *Shah Jahan Nama* (252) the landscape of Kashmir is explicitly connected to Paradise. The gifting of shawls may have been rooted both in their economic value as well as in their being the product of a region that was so commonly associated with Paradise at the Mughal times.

[135] Translated quote from A. R. Fuller.
[136] Popp 2019, 140-1.

Chapter 7 - Conclusions

Every Mughal emperor needed to articulate his own specific royal identity through arts, dress, and court ceremonials. The founder of the dynasty, Babur, was strongly attached to his Central Asian roots and Islamic heritage, and both these traditions were elaborated by his successors. Akbar used the image of the self-controlled warrior king, with modesty as one of his fundamental royal values. Jahangir presented himself as an aesthete ruler, by encouraging a luxury and sophisticated life-style at his court. His son Shah Jahan formalized the ideas of kingship elaborated by Jahangir, and further refined the patronage of arts and ceremonials.

Although the Mughal emperors articulated their ideas of kingship and manliness differently, the ways to do were always informed by their Timurid and Islamic heritages, as most evident in garden culture and gift-giving. Both played a crucial role in the development of the design of Kashmir shawls and their function of status markers.

The Mughal garden symbolized the dynasty's eternal spring. Through gardens, the Mughal emperors expressed their concept of royalty, from Babur's *hortus* to Shah Jahan's garden palaces. Ideal gardens also permeated Mughal visual culture, from the floral drawings commissioned by Jahangir and to the new naturalistic flowering plants in the decorative arts promoted by Shah Jahan. The design of the Kashmir shawl was informed by these artistic developments: while still plain under Akbar, the shawls carry floral motifs under Jahangir, flowering plants under Shah Jahan. By 1680s, due to this process of formalization, the nascent *buta* pattern appeared, symbolizing the Qur'anic Paradise as a Garden and the eternal spring of the Mughal dynasty.

The shawls with the nascent *buta* pattern also became status item in Mughal gift-giving, tied to the idea of kingship the emperors wanted to project. From Babur to Shah Jahan, the diplomatic and personal exchange of robes of honor had evolved, and so did the items that were donated. The Kashmir shawls were part of this process. They were exchanged as robes of honor, but their appearance changed depending on the current image of kingship. Under Akbar the shawls donated were without patterns befitting Akbar's worldview. With Shah Jahan, the symbolism of the eternal spring becomes prominent. It permeates manuscript border, paintings, architecture and textiles. The flowering-plant appears and by the end of Shah Jahan's reign it will blossom into the nascent *buta* pattern.

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