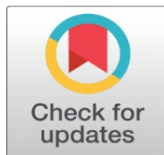
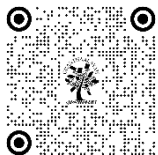


## BORDER DESIGNING AND IT'S DECORATION IN MUGHAL MINIATURE PAINTINGS

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### ABSTRACT

The Mughal emperors had a keen interest in painting, due to which, under their rule, painting again started progressing rapidly on the development side. The development of painting began with the rule of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, and continued till the end of Shah Jahan's reign. The development of painting started during the reign of Akbar and the painting reached its climax during the reign of Jahangir. Border designing or hashiya of Mughal paintings were also made by skilled artists, who were perfect in making only hashiya. Along with the picture, there was a practice of tying the picture to the khat all around. [Pratap \(2017\)](#). These khats were decorated with beautiful ornate designs. In addition to bell-boots, these borders had anthropomorphic or hunting related designs. Often the gold or silver plates were sprinkled on the hashiya or they were divided into small and large khat in flat two-three colors.

**Keywords:** Akbar, Jahangir, Border Design, Hashiyan, Mughal, Miniature Painting

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Mughal school of painting represent one of the most significant phases of Indian art. In fact, the school developed as a result of happy blending of Persian and Indian painting both of which had made remarkable progress independently of each other. Persia first learnt the art of painting from China and Mangolia but later persian painting made itself free from foreign influences. Babur and Humayun met the persian art and tried to introduce it in India. [Dwivedi \(1991\)](#)

The earliest paintings of the Mughal style are of Iranian style. There is no element of Indian style mixed with Iranian style. The painters who came with Babur were very fond of Iranian art and had no contact with Indian painters. Hence this style became prevalent in India. The pictures available of that period of this style

are very beautiful. Red, blue, and gold colours are in abundance in these paintings and their lines are also graceful and strong. The costumes of that period have been displayed in these paintings and Iranian Pechwan hookah has also been depicted.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O433939/painting-/>

This style is ornamental, and ornaments have been worn in it, which were prevalent in that period. Schulberg (1958) The pictures of natural beauty were not only created by Iranian painters, but they have also marked the paintings of famous Persian poets. The main themes of these paintings were based on Rubais of Shiri-Farhad, Laila-Majnu, and Omar Khayyam.

## 2. BORDER DESIGNING AND THEIR DECORATION

In Mughal art border designing or hashiya was supposed to be an indispensable element of the paintings. Moreover, it is a secondary part of it. The utmost role of this border was to produce an artistic finish to the miniature as well as to regularize the outlines of it. The border was painted around the miniature on previously drawn black and white lines enhance the aesthetic appeal of the miniature painting, tried to display freely with tremendous skill, all that he knew. For this he selected beautiful contrasting motifs with delicate matching colour scheme, adding to its artistic appeal and to emphasize the main theme. Mehta (1926)

The tradition of fringes around the miniatures actually started during the reign of Akbar and became much more developed during the reign of Jahangir. And it is also seen that Shahjahan especially asked his painters to embellish the margins around the pictures more and during the period of Shahjahan, the margins were most developed, and beauty is seen. The bail or ornamental design used by the painter is consisted of creepers, leaves, flowers, and designs of different types, which reflects the artist's aesthetic sense as well as his patron's inclination towards decorativeness.

This border decoration in gold as an artistic tradition had started in fifteenth century in Shaibanid Turkistan, which was further spread to Bhokhara and various Persian art centres, and at last reached India. Though this border decoration began during Akbar's reign, the most beautiful borders were decorated in the miniatures reproduced under Jahangir.

The lines inside which the design was supposed to be drawn, were called by some 'Jadval' and by others 'Khat', while the design with flowing pattern of flowers and leaves, itself is known as bail. But if the ornamental pattern was repeatedly executed by detached flowers and leaves at intervals was called by the name Phulkari or flower pattern. This ornamentation of the hashiya was done by the artist known as naqshanavis. His field of specialization was totally different from the other artists who painted the main miniature. When the painting is completed, it is handed over to the wasligar who did mounting, afterwards it was passed on to the line drawer. Several line drawers were engaged in the Akbari atelier. Thus, the border decoration was the joint responsibility of an artist and a decorator. Krishna Chaitanya observes, "The artist first spaced and placed his figures all-round the border and the sheets were then worked on by the illuminator who sketched a completely connected design and painted it in gold."

The ornamentation of border in paintings was not very popular during Akbar's time, moreover we find various examples in the illustrations of Baburnamah manuscripts of British Museum, and the Diwan (Rampur), which are marvellously executed. There are flowers leaves and buds painted in all over the space of the border. A beautiful example of border decoration is the painting from Diwan-e-Hafiz (C 1590 A.D.) in the collection of Raza Library Rampur. There is a delicate floral design around the painting and in between the calligraphy also.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** <https://colletions.vam.ac.uk/item/O433939/painting/>

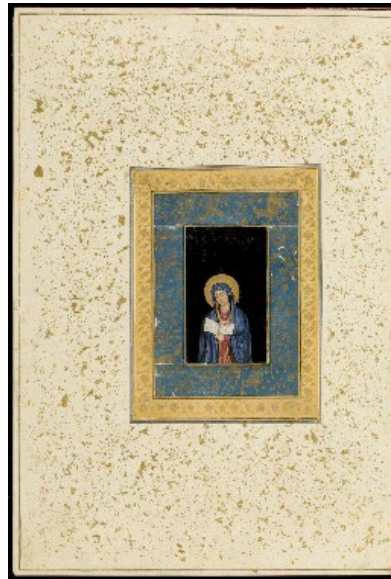
The colours of the background of the border are bright blue with red, white, and yellow flowers drawn with in the circles. In fact, the border is brighter than the miniature. In various paintings, Flowers with three or four petals are executed with in an estimated gap. Agarawala (1965) These flowers relate to each other by stems containing leaves, Jamila Brij Bhushan observes, "Borders were ornamented with running patterns of flowers and leaves or detached flowers repeated at intervals. Some borders were embellished with diagonal lines of writing and human and animal figures, or merely by dotting the surface with gold leaf with the bristles of a stiff brush. Elegant quotes of two or four lines of poetry, written diagonally or a flower motif decorated on the reverse." The flowers and leaves reproduced in the border are painted sometimes in a stylized fashion. In the illustrations of Baburnamah manuscript and khansa, the border facing the binding, is drawn quite

wider in comparison to the other sides of the border. Saxena (2013) The reason is not known as to why artist had adopted this unsymmetrical style of the border. Whatever was the reason of this uneven design this is for certain that it relieves the monotony caused by a plain border line. According to Percy Brown this system was derived from the Persian book illustration.

The highly illustrious borders are of the manuscript khamisa which is in the collection of British Museum Even then the decoration of the border is simple. Usually, the miniatures are surrounded by increased whin strips specially in black, blue, dark-green, white, and gold or yellow colours, those bands vary from four to eight or more than that even. They are drawn along the hashiyān maintaining the correct measurement of length and width. The narrow space left between the two lines is painted with gold colour. But in case the space which is left in between the lines is a bit wider, it is then ornamented with the designs consisting floral motifs. Here the colours used are preferably of deeper and contrasting shades. Agarwal (2018) In this category comes the border decoration of Diwan-e-Hafiz. The border painting under Akbar was generally restricted to the reproduction of landscape consisting plants trees, streams, hillocks, etc. as well as wild life scenes depicting deer, tiger, foxes, and birds etc. This style became more advanced during Jahangir's reign including mostly genre scenes.

In the painting of Virgin Mary, a border decorated with floral motifs is depicted enclosing the miniature. The border design is running along the margins of the illustration.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O392188/the-virgin-mary-page/>

Besides the border decoration the margins of the miniatures in the Diwan-e-Hafiz are also ornamented in various varieties of traditional floral designs being stencilled in gold colour. Sometimes the floral motifs used for the borders are taken straight from nature in a decorative form. Sharma (2019) The inside details of the flowers are depicted through line drawing. The lotus flowers with long petals are depicted in a stylized fashion with five or seven petals. The leave of the flower is bounded with 8 curved lines and the stem is also very popularly used." Apart from these floral motifs as mentioned above very often animal figurines are also painted.

Amongst them are the figures of a tiger with a dragon like characteristic of Chinese tradition, or a plain tiger or a fox, or an elephant. The decorative designs in gold are sometimes scenes of fighting and animal hunts. Sometimes the border is consisted of beautiful rocky landscape with tree and bushes.

These were done to decorate the folios of the text. Very rarely the head of human beings also appear emerging from the flowers executed in the margin. Likewise in the other copy of the *Diwan-e-Hafiz* in ff 1-2 a human head is painted coming out from the blue petals, and which is bounded with a round sun painted in gold troughing raises. But these examples of margin decoration are only limited to the earlier period of Akbar's time and only in certain manuscripts. [Verma \(1999\)](#)

The sizes of the miniatures as well as the panels of calligraphy varied, collected in the royal albums by the orders of the Mughal emperors. This variation was made due to the hashiyas or borders only. Sometimes the borders are depicted border by the additional inner border of calligraphy or generally a small arabesque or flowered border created the frame of the painting.

As the border design was mainly developed in Jahangir's period, we do not find this style of border ornamentation in many of the Akbari manuscripts. Amongst them are *Razmanamah* (Jaipur, Baroda, *Tarikh* (Patna), *Anwari-e-Shuhaili* (Varanasi), *Baburnamah* (National Museum, Delhi), *Akbarnamah* (Victoria and Albert Museum). Here hashiyas with decorated motifs totally vanishes except the borderline. The illustrations of *Bab* (Moscow) are all made in flush cut. These have neither the hashiya nor the khat or the bands of lines. "But why this type of painting was made, is difficult to ascertain.

The practice of making borders around Iranian paintings was more prevalent. The borders of the paintings were beautifully decorated which were embellished with allegorical motifs, hunting scenes, flowers, leaves, animals, and birds. The humor of the period has originality as well as it reached its peak in the period of Shahjahan. In the period of Shahjahan, the borders show a lot of maturity and beauty. Until the borders were made around the pictures, the picture was not considered complete.

It is concluded that the border design paintings started from the time of Akbar, which was hashiya and which continued from the time of Jahangir till the time of Shah Jahan. Border designing is one of the great features of Mughal miniature paintings, without which there is no originality of Mughal paintings. The subject matter, color scheme and expression of border painting in miniature paintings have been able to differentiate it from all contemporary styles.

With Regarding the material culture in decorative motifs during Akbar's reign, it can be said that it is displayed with tremendous skill on the border designs of the miniatures, articles like utensils and arms, dresses and ornaments ensigns of royalty, architecture, shamiyana, tents and carpets. [Verma \(2014\)](#) Persian tradition is maintained in depicting the decorative motifs. In few of the early illustrations of Akbari period the border design is introduced with beautiful interlacing floral motifs. Sometimes borders were embellished with diagonal lines of writing and human, animal, and bird figures, at times only leaves with gold colour is produced around the miniature.

### 3. CONCLUSION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

- Border designing is a fundamental feature in Mughal miniature paintings.
- A few years back Mughal miniatures were only designs by the European critics. They never accepted them as master pieces and examples of fine

arts and thought that there was no such art as painting in India. These were only regarded as specimen of applied art. But in the recent years various researches were made by the scholars through their writings and long years of study and this misconception of western critics were rejected and proved to be seriously erroneous.

- On the contrary this research work is to strengthen the point of these scholars who proved these miniatures as the most beautiful paintings ever executed.
- Further its aim is also to prove that the Indian artists and their concept about life and painting was totally different from that of the western artists, who believed more in realism in painting than the philosophical aspect of it.
- Again, it is wrong to consider that the Mughal painting was Persian painting which only flourished and executed in India at that time and to establish itself, Mughal painting in the beginning borrowed a few decorative motifs and even themes of Persian paintings but eventually and it evolved it was proved in the real sense to be an Indian school of painting except its nature.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

None.

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