

MANIFESTATIONS OF THE INTEREST IN AND CARE FOR CHEETAHS IN THE AGE OF THE GREAT MUGHAL EMPERORS THROUGH PAINTINGS (932–1069 AH/1526–1707 AD)

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ABSTRACT

[AR] مظاهر الاهتمام بالفهود ورعايتها في عصر الأباطرة المغول من خلال اللوحات (932-1069هـ/1526-1707م) تعد الفهود من المفترسات التي تم ترويضها واستخدامها في الصيد، وقد عرف الإنسان القديم في الهند أهميتها بالنسبة له من اجل تأمين الغذاء، وقد وجدت الكثير من الرسوم القديمة في الكهوف المتفرقة في انحاء الهند التي تؤكد الاهتمام البالغ بها منذ القدم، وقد اهتم أباطرة المغول في الهند بالفهود وقاموا باصطيادها وتدريبها بأنفسهم ومنحها الرتب والألقاب ووسائل النقل الفخمة والفرش الثمينة، وقد وصل الاهتمام بها لدرجة كبيرة من الاهتمام حيث كانت تحضر مجالس الإمبراطور، كما أنها اعتبرت من الهدايا الدبلوماسية المهمة، وقد اعتنى فناني العصر المغولي في الهند برسوم الفهود وتصويرها في أوضاع مختلفة بداية من مراقبتها في الطبيعة، وفي أوقات صيدهم وفي براعتهم في الإمساك بالفرائس وقاموا بصنع الألبومات والصور المميزة التي تظهر قوة الفهود ومكانتها، وتنفيذ موضوعاتها التصويرية على التحف التطبيقية مثل السجاد والتحف الأخرى. ومن خلال المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي والتاريخي أظهر البحث مكانة الفهد الصياد في الهند، ومظاهر الاهتمام به كحيوان مميز من قبل أباطرة الهند العظماء، الذين عرفوا صفات هذا الحيوان ودرسوها بشكل مستفيض؛ حتى اضحى أحد أركان قوتهم ورمزا من رموز هويتهم، حيث أكدت التصاوير براعته في الصيد التي تحدثت عنها كتب المؤرخين والعلماء، وأظهرت الدراسة ان أباطرة الهند الستة العظماء قد مارسوا الصيد بالفهود واعتبروها رياضتهم المفضلة؛ وان فضل بعضهم في النهاية استخدام البنادق النارية التي تميزت بدقة الإصابة.

[EN] Cheetahs belong to the predators that are tamed and used for hunting. the ancient Indian man knew their importance and harnessed their power to hunt the prey for him, Many drawings of these animals have been found in ancient caves in various parts of India, which indicates the ancient interest in them. The Mughal emperors in India cared about and trained the cheetahs which they captured. Cheetahs were of great interest, as they attended the emperor's councils and were granted titles and ranks, luxurious means of transportation, and precious furniture. They were also important diplomatic gifts. The artists of the Mughal era in India were interested in drawing and depicting cheetahs in various situations, from observing them in nature and during their capture to their prowess in hunting and catching prey. They made distinctive albums and paintings that showed the strength of the cheetahs and implemented the subjects of their depictions on applied artifacts, such as carpets., By using a descriptive, analytical, and historical approach, the research paper illustrated the status of the cheetahs in India, the manifestations of interest in the cheetah as a distinctive animal, and the Indian emperors' knowledge of the characteristics and extensive study of this animal until it became one of the pillars of their power and a symbol of their identity, as the paintings confirmed its hunting prowess that historians and scholars discussed. It showed that the six great emperors of India practiced hunting with cheetahs and considered this sport their favorite, although some preferred to use firearms, which were distinguished by their accuracy.

KEYWORDS: Indian painting, hunting cheetahs, training cheetahs, Akbarnamah, hunting with cheetahs, chase skills, Shikargah.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cheetah is the fastest land animal on Earth; its speed reaches about seventy miles per hour (112 km/h). It jumps twenty feet 7 m at each step; it lives in a small group on vast pastures, and its areas of influence reach 500 square miles (804 km) of land¹. Cheetahs (*Acinonyx jubatus*) and leopards (*Panthera pardus*) are often confused, as both can be distinguished by their external shape; the cheetah has dark scattered spots on the fur, while those of the leopard are clustered in the form of a rose. The head of a cheetah is longer than that of a tiger. Additionally, the most important characteristic of the cheetah is the presence of a distinctive dark spot under its eyes in the shape of a tear. Cheetah is selective in hunting², and it has partially retractable claws, long legs, a rounded head, and short ears that are sandy-yellow-brown with small black spots like the color of the earth. The cheetah is about 4.6 feet long, and its tail is 2.60 feet long. Additionally, its weight ranges from 100 to 140 pounds³, the cheetah can be trusted never to attack a human and not provoke crowds in cities or processions⁴.

The topic of hunting has received the attention of many researchers⁵. It was one of the most important royal activities in the ancient and Middle Ages, as a picnic for kings; equestrian training and travel and training princes in a difficult life, unlike the hunting of the poor, which was only for food⁶. The emperors In the Indian court were keen to take with them statesmen, hunting and accommodation tools, and they were interested in recording the adventures of the trip by accompanying artists with them⁷.

Cheetah was one of the most famous hunting animals used in India since ancient times. The six great emperors, Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, were professional hunters and considered hunting a royal privilege that enabled them to show their dominance over the empire; they considered Shikargah (hunting land) a place where they could defeat the greedy and warn rebels⁸. Through hunting, the kings forgot their desires, trained their physical muscles and animals, intimidated their enemies, kept the kingdom's borders, and earned glory⁹.

Using the descriptive analytical method, this study focuses on the manifestations of interest in cheetahs through Indian painting¹⁰ during the reign of the six great Mughal emperors. It is one of the complementary studies of previous studies on this important topic, The study organized the content chronologically and thematically.

¹ ESTIGARRIBIA 2005: 5.

² CASTEL 2002: 17-28.

³ AKHTAR 1996: 381-386.

⁴ KHAN 2012: 461– 469

⁵ CABD AR-RAZIQA 1973; AKHTAR 1996; SALAH 2013; PARPIA 2018.

⁶ YÄSYN 2005: 63-71.

⁷ HASAN 2003: 83.

⁸ KOCH 1998: 11.

⁹ CABD AR-RAZIQA 1973: 11-24.

¹⁰ THABET 2021: 174-176.

II. ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY

1- Babur (932–937 AH/1526–1530 AD) and His Interest in Cheetahs

Babur was a statesman who was multi-skilled. He was deeply interested in painting and outdoor activities, such as hunting¹¹. In addition, he wrote in his memoirs a detailed description of the animals in India, such as elephants, rhinoceros, lions, tigers, monkeys, and mice¹². Babur was depicted in *Baburnama* hunting the blackbuck in Shikargah, the hunting land where the cheetahs run next to him¹³.

Babur is depicted in a hunting scene set in a landscape teeming with a wide variety of animals, including blackbucks, goats, and wild boars. A cheetah runs alongside the emperor, attempting to hunt a blackbuck, driven by its instinct for hunting and predation. The emperor wields a sword and rides his horse, which charges after a deer¹⁴ [FIGURE 1].

Realistic colors were used in the depiction of animals, such as the cheetahs with yellowish fur covered in small black spots and the blackbucks with dark fur. Pale tones were applied to portray deer, lions, and other animals. In contrast, bright colors like blue, red, and green were used to illustrate the men's clothing.

One of the manifestations of the care of the cheetah was its use in hunting in the era of Babur, suggesting that the emperor took care of and trained the cheetah himself. He talked in his memories about the events of 935 AH/1529 AD, where he held a feast for his statemen and distributed gifts, including Wali Barchi, the cheetah's guard, who gave a golden dagger¹⁵.



A



B

[FIGURE 1]: A. Babur hunts a blackbuck. *Baburnama* (1008 AH / 1600 AD) © San Diego Museum of Art, Acc. N^o.1990.809 San Diego Museum of Art - Babur kills blackbuck in a hunting circle (sdmart.org), accessed on (01/09/2023); B. Details from A.

¹¹ WELCH 1963: 16.

¹² AKHTAR 1996: 381-386.

¹³ SARDAR 2016: 133.

¹⁴ SARDAR 2016: CAT.75; san diego museum of art - babur kills blackbuck in a hunting circle (sdmart.org), accessed on (01/09/2023).

¹⁵ BABUR 1996: 417.

2- Humayun (937-947 AH/ 1530-1540 AD) - (962-963 AH/ 1555-1556 AD) and his Interest in Cheetahs

Nasir al-Din Humayun took power when he was twenty-two years old. After he was defeated in a battle, he fled to the Safavid court, where he got to know the great Iranian painters, such as Mir Sayyid ^cAli and Abdul Samad, which affected the development of the art of Indian painting¹⁶.

A copy of the *Akbarnamah*, produced in the early seventeenth century, includes a painting of Humayun and Shah Tahmasp hunting with trained cheetahs near Takht Suleiman in Persia. The painting, created by Ganga Sen and Narsingh¹⁷, depicts a cheetah hunting a deer at the top of the scene. The hunting area is surrounded by men on rocky terrain, providing a suitable environment for wild animals.

Emperor Humayun and Shah Tahmasp are shown riding horses and holding their weapons. In front of them is a large group of animals, including rabbits, goats, and dogs, assisting in the hunt [FIGURE 2].

The painting colors were balanced for the hunting environment, consisting of rugged rocky ground with pale green vegetation and trees with bright green color. Pale yellow was used in drawing cheetahs, deer, and even some foxes; red appeared in hunting dogs and the emperor's horse. The painting shows Humayun's interest in taming and hunting cheetahs.



A



B

[FIGURE 2]: A. Humayun and Shah Tahmasp hunting with trained cheetahs.

Akbarnamah 17 AD /11 AH. © British Library Or. 12988, F.103r;

https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=or_12988_f103r, accessed on (01/09/2023); B. Details from A.

¹⁶ BEACH et Al. 1978: 16.

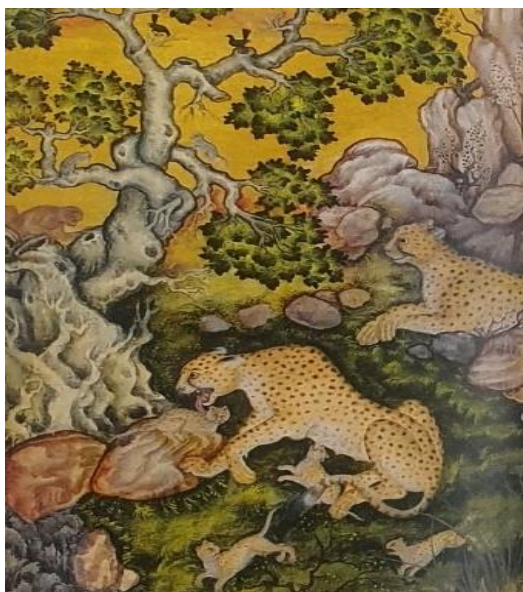
¹⁷ KHAN 2012: 461- 469.

3- Akbar (963-1014 AH/ 1556-1605 AD) and his Interest in Cheetahs

The Mughal emperor Akbar was a warrior, artist, scientist, and inventor. He was brave and intrepidly interested in training wild cheetahs. He kept many cheetahs during his reign and taught them himself¹⁸; Akbar went hunting with his trained cheetahs, which were given ranks and paraded in lines to the beat of drums¹⁹. Abū al-Fadl accurately described most of the anecdotal incidents related to topics such as hunting or traveling in *ʿAin Akbari*, as he did in *Akbarnamah*²⁰; Akbar's court included many artists whom represents all the activities of the emperor, such as Paswan and Miskin, who created distinguished paintings of cheetahs²¹.

Among the most famous paintings depicting the behavior of cheetahs in their natural environment is one that portrays a family of cheetahs in a forest, consisting of a father, a mother, and four cubs. The scene exudes an atmosphere of tranquility amidst dense trees and rocks. One of the cheetahs sits quietly while the mother feeds her cubs and spontaneously licks another. Meanwhile, three of the cubs are seen playing [FIGURE 3].

The artist used realistic colors in the drawings of cheetahs, i.e., pale yellow with black dots on the fur, gray color for tree trunks, pale colors for spongy rocks, and Indian yellow for the background. This realistic view highlights the interest of the emperors in painting cheetahs in nature and studying the various aspects of life. It emphasizes the behavior of animals in living and dealing in the herd and caring for their cubs.



[FIGURE 3]: Family of cheetahs in nature, Album 1580-1585 AD/ 988–993 AH), Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan - Geneva M194. DAS, MANŞÜR & ISRAEL 2012: PL.1.6

Akbar was interested in cheetahs, as reflected in his keenness to hunt on multiple occasions and in places such as Agra, Punjab, and Jodhpur. Once informed that one

¹⁸ PRASAD 2021: 28-35.

¹⁹ KABIR 2019: 65-67.

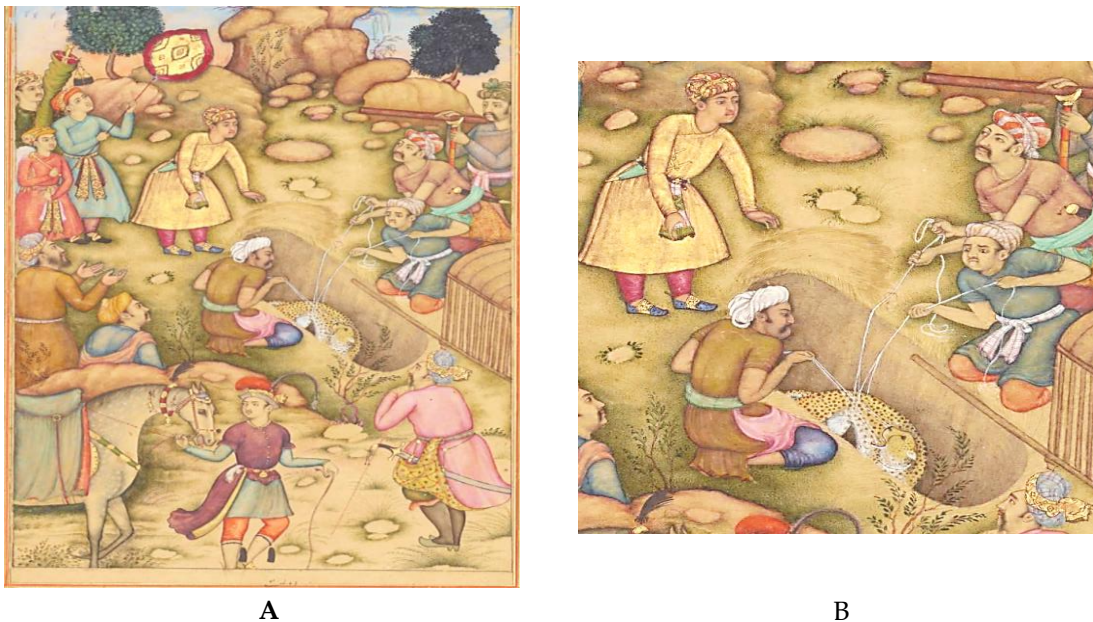
²⁰ LEACH 1995: vol.1, 257.

²¹ WELCH 1978: 27-28.

cheetah had fallen into a trap, he immediately rushed to the hole and pulled it out himself²².

One of the *Akbarnamah* manuscripts, preserved at the Chester Beatty Library, depicts Akbar in his youth inventing a magical trap to capture cheetahs²³. The emperor is shown with his courtiers: one holding an umbrella, another holding the horse's bridle, and a third holding a sword. Additionally, a group of men is depicted holding ropes and lifting a fallen cheetah from one of the traps. Nearby is a cage designed to contain the cheetah once it is retrieved from the hole. The hunting ground, situated near rocky heights, is depicted in pale yellow tones, blending with the colors of the cheetah [FIGURE 4].

The painting shows Akbar's interest in the cheetahs by catching them alive. He instructs his men to accomplish the task thoroughly, which shows in his expressions and body language.



[FIGURE 4]: A. Akbar hunts cheetahs. *Akbarnamah* 1604-1605 AD/1012-1013 AH © Chester Beatty Library, UK In 03.52.1. DAS et Al. 2012: PL.1.6; B. Details from A.

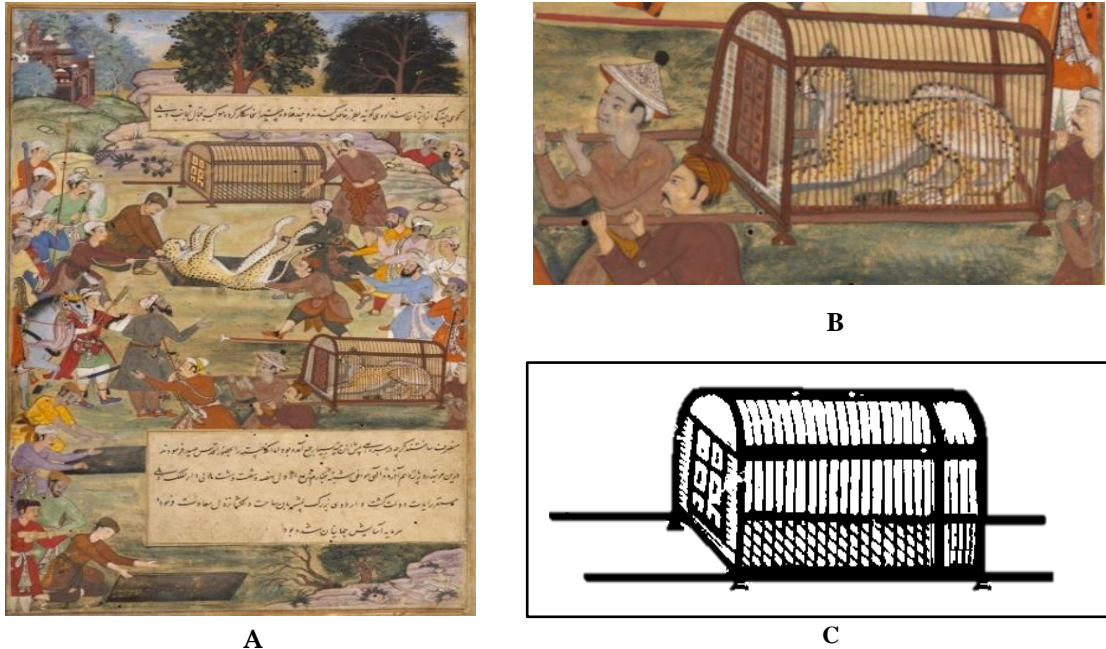
The paintings depict the methods used to transport cheetahs after they were captured. Among them is a painting illustrating the second stage of the cheetah hunting process: transferring the animals to taming pens. In the scene, a large group of men is shown transporting cheetahs from traps to pens using stretchers. The painting features hunters placing a cheetah on a carpet to carry it, followed by a scene showing one cheetah inside a cage being carried by a group of men. Another cheetah, tied with ropes and resisting, is carried on a carpet by four men, with a cage prepared for its transfer visible in the background [FIGURE 5].

The artist used realistic colors in the drawings of cheetahs, showing their anatomical features and fine details. The painting had a great diversity of colors in men's clothes, with

²² ABŪ AL-FAZĪ 1873: vol.1, 285-289.

²³ PAL 1991: 92, PL.5.

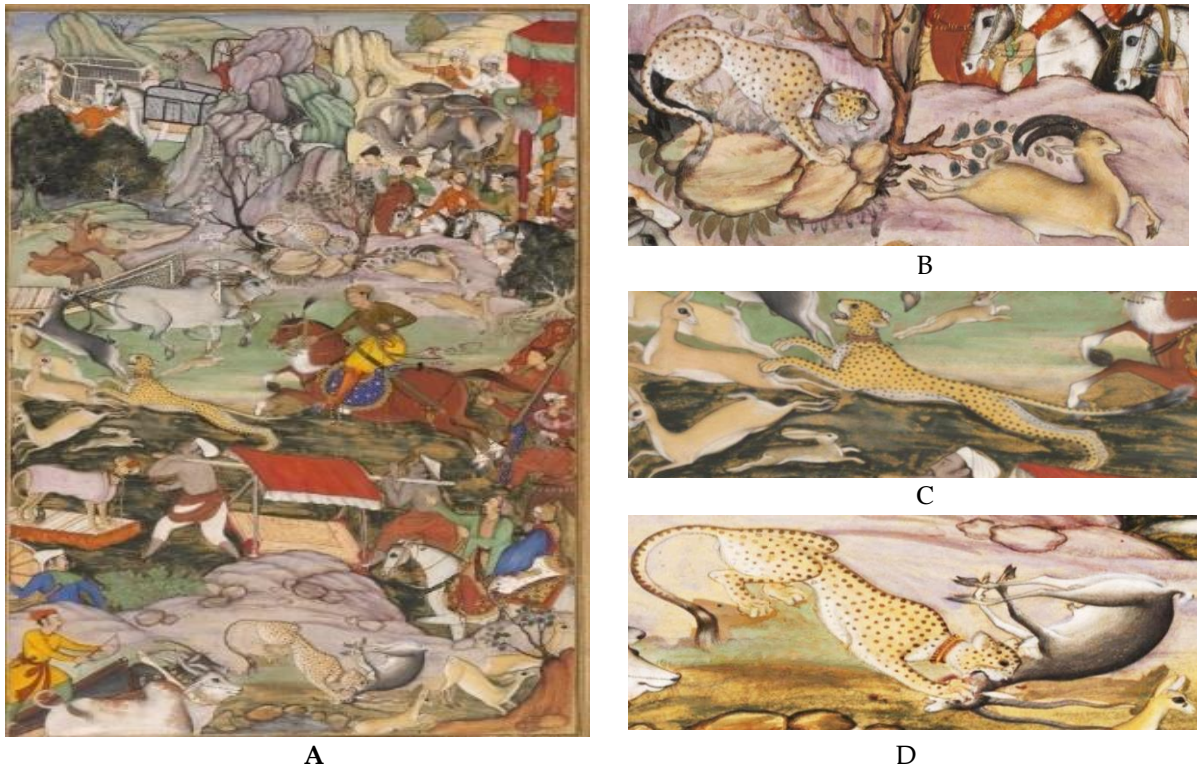
bright colors, such as red, blue, and orange. Additionally, rocks were colored, and trees had large green leaves. The painting showed an interest in transportation as an essential step in training cheetahs, making them quiet by blindfolding their eyes, caring not to injure or torture them, and providing special safe transportation.



[FIGURE 5]: A. Cheetah hunting and transportation, *Akbarnamah* 1590-1995 AD/998-1003AH. PARPIA 2018: FIG.7 © Victoria and Albert Museum–IS.2:2-1896, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9248/akbar-assists-in-capturing-a-painting-tulsi/>, accessed (01/09/2023); B-C Details from A.

The Mughal emperors showed great interest in commissioning paintings of hunting cheetahs during their hunting trips, highlighting the animals' skill and agility. One of the *Akbarnama* manuscripts depicts a hunting scene involving trained cheetahs. In the foreground, an ox cart is shown, with a cheetah chasing a group of deer and capturing a blackbuck. In the second tier of the painting, a knight on horseback carries a blindfolded cheetah covered with a blue blanket. Emperor Akbar is also depicted on horseback, with one of the cheetahs leaping behind three deer in front of him. In the third tier, another cart pulled by oxen appears, with a cheetah lurking behind a tree near two deer. In the background, a group of knights observes the hunt, while horses carry cages for birds and animals behind the rocky hills [FIGURE 6].

The artist succeeded in the excellent color diversity and kinetic expressions accompanying the hunting process. Multicolors were used in this painting; gray was used on spongy rocks, green and red were used in furnishings, clothes, and horses; dark green was used in trees; pale-yellow color was used for cheetahs, deer, and rabbits. The painting showed several manifestations of interest in cheetahs. There were different types of transportation, such as elegant blankets and keepers who took care of the cheetahs. Moreover, the large number of cheetahs in the hunting process suggested great interest in them.

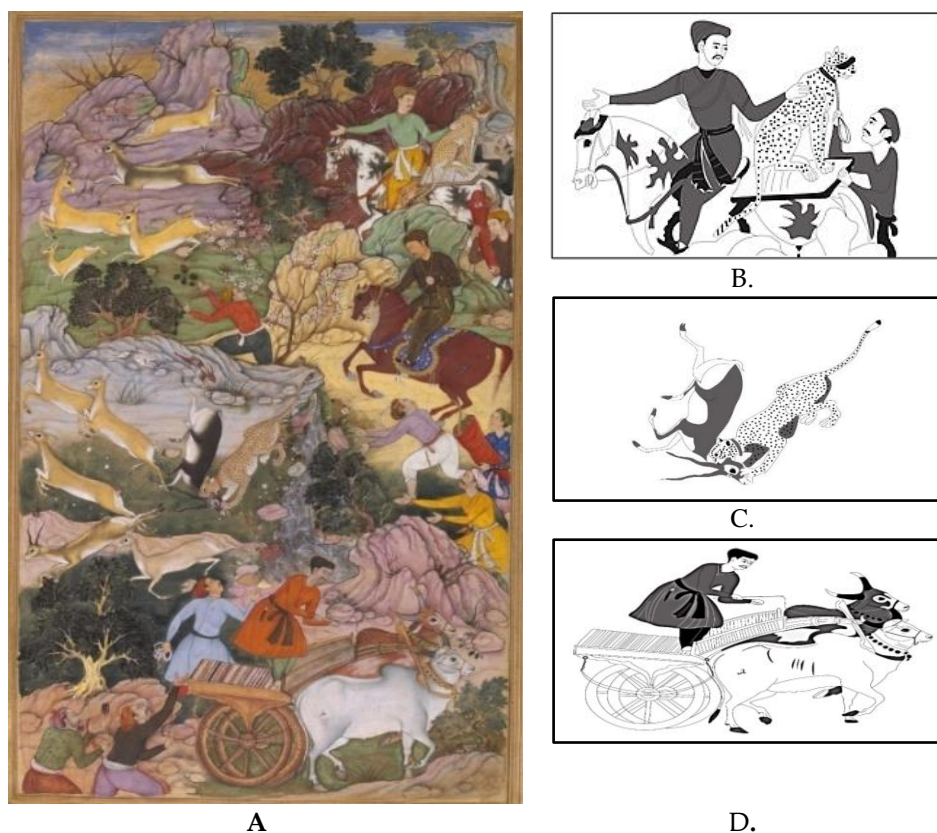


[FIGURE 6]: A. Hunting with trained cheetahs, Akbarnamah 1590-1995 AD/ 998-1003 AH © Victoria and Albert Museum - IS.2:24-1896; LEVINE 1974: vol.1, 200, FIG.28; B-D. Details from A.

Among the paintings depicting hunting activities and the power of cheetahs is a painting from the *Akbarnamah* manuscript, painted by La'l and Kēsav Khord²⁴. This painting represents both the hunting activities and the transportation of cheetahs. The painting features Emperor Akbar hunting with cheetahs and is divided into several levels; In the first level, a decorated carriage is pulled by a pair of bulls, with a driver seated above it and three guards positioned behind and beside the carriage. On the second level, the emperor is shown riding his horse, accompanied by a group of escorts. In front of them, a cheetah chases a group of deer and captures a blackbuck while the emperor observes the hunting process. In the third level, a knight holds a blindfolded cheetah behind him and gestures toward a group of deer with his hand. [Figure 7]

The artist used a variety of colors in the painting, such as purple for the sponge-like rocks. The deer are depicted in realistic colors, such as black and yellow, while the two cheetahs are shown in pale yellow with black spots on their bodies and black, tear-like streaks on their faces. The painting showed the emperor Akbar's care for the cheetahs and their use in hunting, allocating guards, chariots, and knights, providing them with elegant textiles, and giving them ranks as in the neck of the cheetah above the horse and the other cheetah with a red collar on the neck.

²⁴ PARPIA 2019: 39-58.

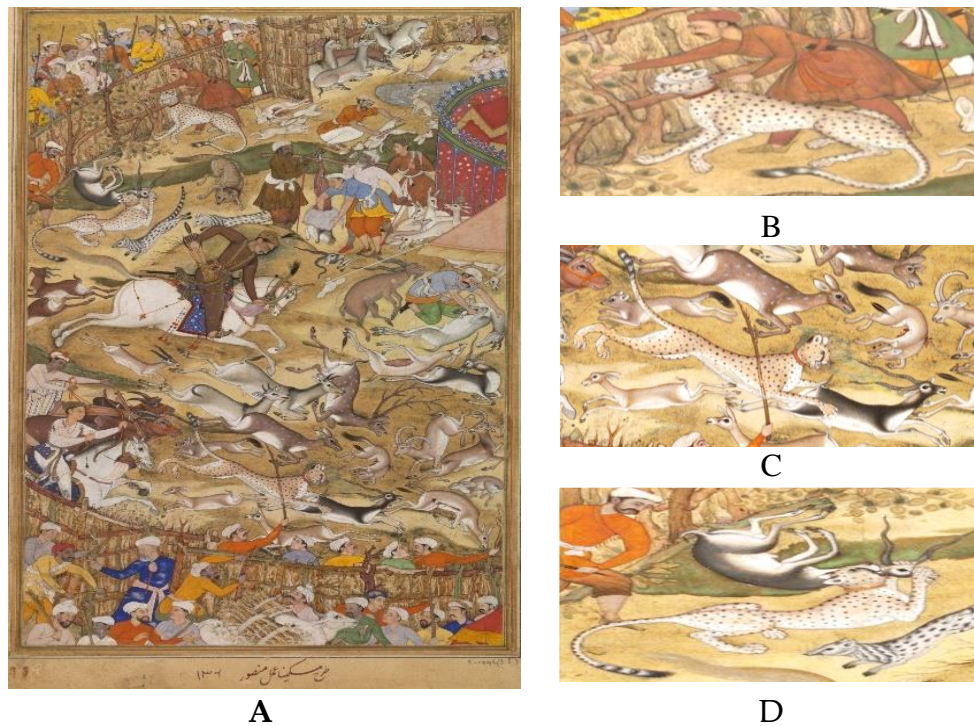


[FIGURE 7]: A. Hunting with trained cheetahs, Akbarnamah 1590-1995 AD/998-1003 AH ©Victoria and Albert Museum - IS.2:92-1896, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9759/akbar-painting-lal/>, accessed on (28/07/2023); B-D Details from A. © Done by the researcher

Emperor Akbar was so fond of hunting that he was depicted in *Shikargah* with cheetahs using a hunting technique known as *Qamargah*²⁵. The scene features a fence of trees, with spectators outside watching the emperor hunt. Inside the enclosure, various activities are depicted, the most prominent being the hunting process itself. The emperor is shown on his white horse, alongside a cheetah chasing a blackbuck. Another cheetah has captured a blackbuck, while a third stands with its guard near the fence. The enclosed area is filled with various animals, including deer, antelopes, rabbits, wolves, and foxes. Additionally, a group of men is shown slaughtering prey that has been caught. On the side of the painting, an ox cart is depicted, used to transport the cheetahs [FIGURE 8].

People outside the hunting circle wear colorful multi-colored clothes. The emperor wears a dark brown costume and rides a white horse. A pale yellow color with black dots is used for cheetahs, as there are many colors of prey, such as deer in pale yellow, antelope in black, and goats in dark brown. One of the manifestations of interest in cheetahs is trusting them in the hunting ring and treating them as a partner of the emperor in the hunting process, as they, along with the emperor's horse and dogs, are the emperor's soldiers inside the hunting circle.

²⁵ WELCH 1978: 68.



[FIGURE 8]: A. Akbar in Shikargah using trained cheetahs, Akbarnamah 1590-1995 AD/ 998-1003 AH © Victoria and Albert Museum - IS.2:56-1896; WELCH 1978: PL.14.; PARPIA 2018: FIG.2 ; B-D Details from A.

Akbar was influenced a lot by the cheetahs, much so that he felt good luck if the cheetah succeeded in hunting²⁶. Moreover, he was keen to have the cheetah in his council as in one of the paintings which represents the court of Emperor Akbar, The emperor sits on the throne chair and receives a child, the son of his Minister Asif Khan, and the courtiers stand around the emperor's council in submission and serenity. Among the audience before the emperor's council is a cheetah with his guard. The entourage is followed by a fence behind which a group of men stands, where one holds hunting falcons, the other holds the reins of horses, others are responsible for oxen carts, and other men are carrying hunting rifles [FIGURE 9] .

The court in view is decorated with bright colors in clothes and buildings and shows the palace decorations: red and white, ornate blue carpets, multi-colored clothes, and a clear blue sky. Two of the cheetahs are colored with a realistic pale yellow color. One of the manifestations of interest is the presence of cheetahs at the emperor's court, denoting his keen interest in and care for them.

²⁶ LEACH 1986: 72.



[FIGURE 9]: A. Trained cheetah in the court of Akbar, Akbarnamah 1590-1995 AD/998-1003 AH ©Victoria and Albert Museum - IS.2:7-1896, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9289/akbar-and-abdur-rahim-painting-anant/>, accessed (26/07/2023); B & C Details from A.

The arts during Akbar were heavily influenced by depictions of cheetahs, particularly in applied arts such as wool-illustrated rugs. One such rug, housed at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, features a design similar to miniatures depicting hunting scenes²⁷. The pictorial carpet includes a narrow border with motifs, a wide frame adorned with floral designs and bird imagery, and another narrow border sandwiched between white stripes. The central painting on the rug painting a hunting scene with a red background decorated with multicolored floral motifs and winding plant forms. The scene includes depictions of chases between lions, cheetahs, and their prey. At the center of the composition is a mythical creature with the head of an elephant and the body of a lion, surrounded by men carrying prey on their shoulders.

In the upper portion, two lions are depicted, one chasing a bull. Additionally, a cheetah chases a blackbuck and a group of deer. Above these scenes are buildings with men sitting inside. Although the pictorial scene appears mythical, the artist rendered the cheetah in pale yellow with black spots and the antelope in black. The red background of the rug enhances the contrast, making the details more vivid [FIGURE 10]. This rug depicted the cheetahs and their transportation process, and even the subtle details, such as the guard of the cheetah behind the ox cart, who guard the cheetah and expelled flies and insects, suggesting the status that the cheetahs had and the levels of interest to the degree of depiction on antiques and textiles.

²⁷ WELCH 1963: 31, PL.22.



A



B

[FIGURE 10]: A. Hunting scenes, pictorial Carpet 1590 -1600 AD/ 998 -1008 AH © Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 93.1480, accessed (02/08/2023); WELCH 1963: 31, PL.22; B. Details from A.

4- Jahangir (1014-1037 AH/ 1605-1627 AD.) and his Interest in Cheetahs

Before becoming emperor, Jahangir was called Salim. He was aspiring to rule. He rebelled against his father and established a court in Allahabad. His father Akbar tried several times to restore him to his authority, but his aspiration to rule was strong. After many skirmishes and because of his father's illness, Akbar handed over power to him in (1605 AD/1014 AH), and Salim took the title Jahangir²⁸.

Emperor Jahangir inherited a large empire; he had much free time, inclination, and talent to go out in nature and hunt. He wrote many descriptions of hunting and animal behavior in his memoirs²⁹. He was also an enthusiastic hunter, fond of hunting cheetahs. Raja Pir Singh brought him a white cheetah, which aroused Jahangir's attention. He also used cheetahs to chase many antelopes in Rumbas (Gujarat) in (1611 AD./1020 AH.)³⁰.

The number of animals in Emperor Jahangir Park in the Red Fort in Agra was astonishing, including four hundred cheetahs, one hundred tamed lions, and large numbers of hunting dogs, tigers, other animals, and birds³¹.

Various influences prevailed during the reign of Jahangir, who was a connoisseur of beauty. His era was dominated by prosperity, luxury, and security. Art witnessed great prosperity as he directed his artists to study nature to make their drawings more realistic

²⁸ BALABANLILAR 2020 :30-38.

²⁹ DIVYABHANUSINH 1987: 269-274.

³⁰ KHAN 2012: 461-469.

³¹ GROOM 2018: 6.

and accurate³². the paintings in the age of Jahangir was influenced by European scientific encyclopedias. Still, his paintings represented a personal work that recorded stories and phenomena as memories³³.

Emperor Jahangir often hunted with cheetahs. In the Aga Khan Museum, there is a painting from *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* that depicts Prince Salim capturing cheetahs himself. At the top of the painting, a group of men is shown carrying hunting tools, with an oxcart in front of them. Prince Salim rides his horse, followed by his entourage. In front of the horse, a group of men is depicted—two of them carrying a stretcher with a cage used to transport cheetahs. Four other men hold a cheetah, placing it on a carpet for carrying and tying it with ropes. The city, with its tall buildings, is visible on the horizon [FIGURE 11]. Pale colors were used in this painting, a method used in that period, where the brown color dominated the painting, and yellow-green was used in tree drawings.

One of the manifestations of interest in cheetahs was that the emperor himself participated in the process of capturing cheetahs, equipping suitable means of transportation such as cages carried by men, an oxcart, and precision in the process of arresting cheetahs so that they were not injured or disturbed.



[FIGURE 11]: A. Prince Salim cheetahs, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (1602 AD/1010 AH © Aga Khan Museum, Canada (AKM166), <https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/salim-and-the-captured-cheetah-akm166> , accessed on (30/09/2023); SINGH 2010: PL.19; B. Details from A.

Prince Salim is depicted hunting with trained cheetahs in a painting from an album housed in the Cleveland Museum of Art³⁴. The scene shows a hunting expedition in a natural setting, with animals such as deer, antelope, rabbits, and nilgai running swiftly

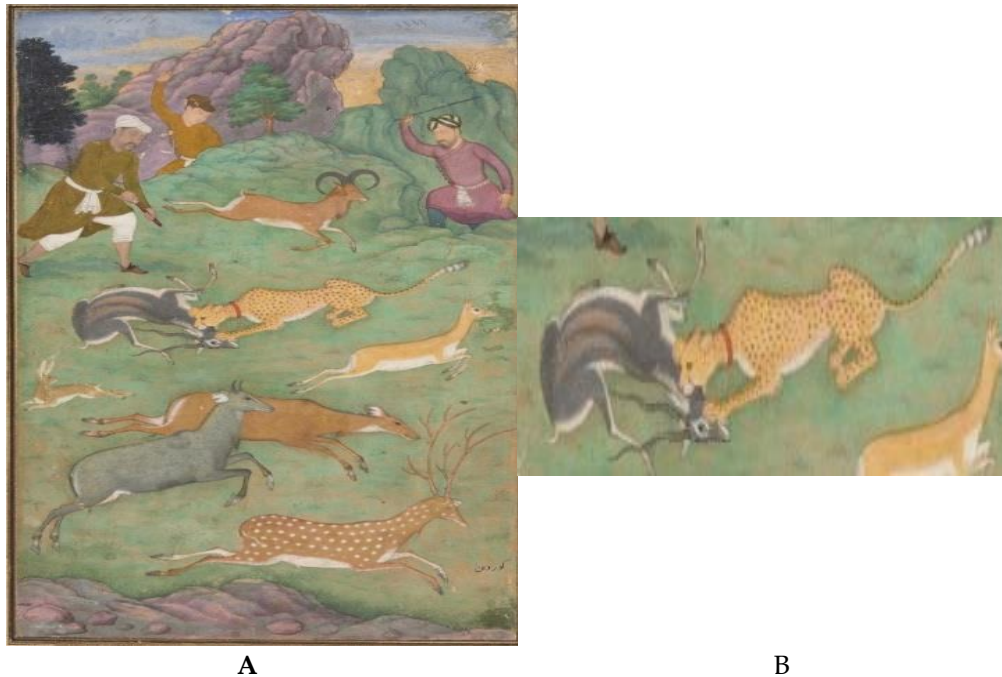
³² BEACH 1987: 27-32; ABBAS & ALMUNEIM 2018: 427-448.

³³ HOPPER 2019: 41-56.

³⁴ MILLIKEN et Al. 1958: cat.N^o.778.

among the trees. One of the cheetahs pounces on a blackbuck, capturing it with its dewclaw and killing it with a stranglehold on its neck. At the top of the scene, three men raise their hands with sticks to distract the prey, and one of them moves to free the blackbuck from the cheetah's grasp [FIGURE 12].

The artist used green colors in the hunting area. He used purple and green for rocks and natural colors for deer, antelope, goats, and even blue nilgai. The cheetah appeared in pale yellow with a white belly. It was even depicted with the distinguishing black line of the eye when catching a black deer. Additionally, three people were dressed in colored clothes. The painting shows Jahangir the interest in the cheetahs through the assigned men for keeping and serving it.

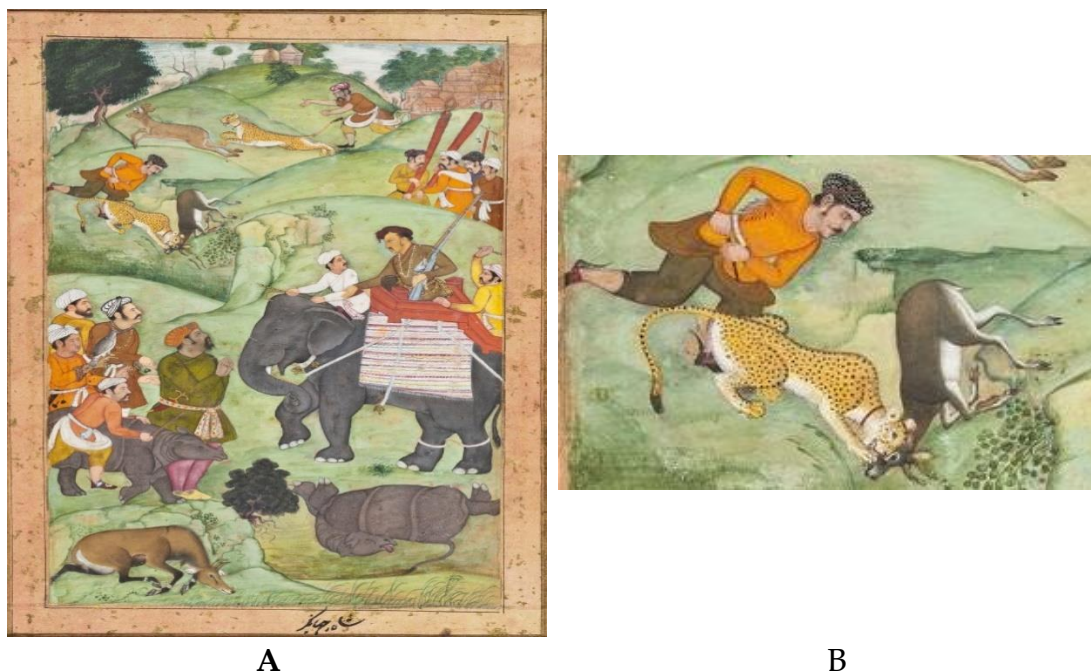


[FIGURE 12]:A. Hunting with trained cheetahs, Album 1600-1604 AD/1008-1012 AH © The Cleveland Museum of Art: 1939.66, <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1939.66>, accessed on (22/08/2023); MILLIKENet al 1958: cat. N^o.778; B. Details from A.

Prince Salim liked to recording his experiences in the fields and forests through paintings. He often went hunting with rifles, arrows, swords, spears, and trained cheetahs³⁵. In this painting, he is shown riding an elephant, holding a hunting rifle, with the elephant keeper seated in front of him. Ahead of the elephant is a group of men hunting rhinoceroses, one of whom carries a hunting falcon. The prince and his escorts are depicted hunting rhinoceroses and antelopes. The second scene features a cheetah pouncing on an antelope. In the third scene, courtiers are shown standing while holding flags. At the top of the painting, a cheetah is seen chasing a deer, following the trainer's instructions [FIGURE 13].

³⁵ PAL et Al. 1993: 65.

The artist used green for light vegetation and dark green for the trees. He painted two cheetahs attacking deer with their distinctive yellow color and having black dots on their fur and white stomachs. Moreover, he painted some animals in black, such as the elephant ridden by the prince and the rhinoceros and the deer hunted by the cheetah. There is a diversity in the colors of clothing for hunting men. The painting shows Prince Salim's interest in cheetahs, caring for them, using them for hunting, appointing guards, and giving them medals and decorations.



[FIGURE 13]: A. Prince Salim hunts with trained cheetahs, *Shikarnama* 1600-1604 AD/ 1008-1012 AH © Los Angeles Museum, USA - M.83.137; PAL et AL. 1993: cat. N°.65; B. Details from A.

Prince Salim commissioned his artists to produce several hunting scenes that depict hunting activities with trained cheetahs, showcasing his skills with firearms and his accuracy in shooting. The San Diego Museum of Art has a painting from the hunting book *Shukranamah*³⁶, which portrays Prince Salim in nature, holding his rifle with a dagger at his waist, shooting two nilgais. Beside him, a cheetah is shown pouncing on a deer. Behind the prince are two of his courtiers, while next to him stand hunters—one carrying birdcages and the other holding small animals. At the top of the painting, a group of men is seen carrying the prince's drink [FIGURE 14].

The hunting environment is covered with green and yellow, which suit the colors of animals such as antelopes and pale deer. The pale yellow cheetah is dotted with black spots, and the huge trees are dark green. The prince's clothes are dark green, and he carries a red gun. The blue sky appears on the horizon with mountain ranges. Despite the prince's use of firearms in hunting, he was interested in cheetahs, shown catching a blackbuck, along with guards caring for them.

³⁶ San Diego Museum of Art - Salim, holding his rifle, gestures at a dead nilgai <https://collection.sdmart.org/objects-1/info/5470>, accessed on (28/09/2023).



A

B

[FIGURE 14]: A. Salim hunting with cheetahs, *Shikarnama* 1600-1604 AD/1008-1012 AH © The San Diego Museum, Edwin Binney 3rd Collection - 1990.316; WRIGHT & STRONGE 2008: FIG.30; B. Details from A.

5- Shahjahan (1037-1068 AH/ 1628-1657 AD) and his Interest in Cheetahs

There were innovations in paintings in the Shah Jahan period. The paintings were a continuation of the tradition of Jehangir; the albums increased, and manuscripts declined. Additionally, most paintings were individual portraits, as Shah Jahan did not have the eclectic taste nor intellectual gluttony of Akbar and Jahangir³⁷. The manuscript of *Badshahnameh* reports the emperor's recreational activities, such as hunting predator animals in Hindustan in (1637 AD/1046 AH), in which the emperor appeared in luxurious clothes and precious jewels. It shows his interest in arts, sports, and musical performances, highlighting his pursuit of pleasure³⁸. Kevorkian's album also contains animal studies, portraits of emperors, and a collection of calligraphy, surrounded by floral borders³⁹. Shah Jahan used cheetahs to hunt blackbuck⁴⁰. He was depicted in hunting scenes featuring trained cheetahs. One such painting, representing Mughal-style naturalism, was created at the Mewar court in Rajasthan at the beginning of the eighteenth century⁴¹. It depicts the emperor riding his horse alongside carriages, with cheetahs walking ahead under the supervision of their guards.

³⁷ BEACH 1981:37.

³⁸ ASGHAR et Al. 2023: 449-460.

³⁹ BEACH 1981:178.

⁴⁰ KABIR 2019: 65-67.

⁴¹ «Shah Jahan Hunting Blackbuck with Trained Cheetahs», <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/38048>, accessed on (28/09/2023).

On the left side of the painting, there is an ox cart followed by two horsemen. At the top of the scene, the emperor is shown riding his horse, accompanied by two escorts and four men walking with four cheetahs ahead of them, prepared to hunt deer and antelopes in a landscape filled with vegetation and water swamps. One of the cheetahs successfully captures a blackbuck [FIGURE 15]. The artist used green for the vegetation in the painting, drew a group of trees, and distributed a group of animals simulating real colors. The painting shows the emperor Shah Jahan's interest in cheetahs, going out hunting with them, preparing carts equipped to transport cheetahs, and taking care of them by its guards. He used them to hunt widely.



[FIGURE 15]: Emperor Shahjahan hunts with trained cheetahs. TOPSFIELD 2004: 278–79,cat. N^o.121. Akbarnamah – Rajasthan 1710 AD/ 1122 AH © Metropolitan Museum – N^o.2019.445.2

6- Aurangzeb (1069-1118 AH/ 1659-1707 AD) and Cheetahs

The Mughal Empire peaked in size and wealth, and the Deccan was annexed to the Mughal Empire during his reign. He spent most of his years struggling to control the sprawling and often rebellious provinces⁴². Various studies of birds and animals dating back to the Aurangzeb era of Rajasthan were preserved in Jaipur, Bikaner, and Muar, showing the spread of Mughal art⁴³.

Aurangzeb was interested in both arts and hunting. He is depicted in hunting scenes, shooting nilgais with firearms⁴⁴. The Chester Beatty Library contain a painting from an album that portrays Aurangzeb and his hunters employing traditional techniques. In this method, two domesticated or captive nilgais were used to attract wild nilgais, facilitating their capture⁴⁵.

⁴² WELCH 1985: 266-270.

⁴³ SOOD 2020: 35-41.

⁴⁴ SINGH 2010: 35.

⁴⁵ SVIZZERO 2016: 53-68.

The painting shows Aurangzeb hunting in the middle of a dense forest filled with trees and grass, where prey is abundant. In the scene, the emperor is seated, resting the barrel of his weapon on the shoulders of two of his men, while many of his escorts stand behind them. In front of the emperor are the domesticated nilgais used to lure wild nilgais, which he is shown shooting. At the top of the painting, a group of elephants and members of the emperor's entourage accompany the hunting expedition. Notably, the painting depicts Aurangzeb hunting without the use of cheetahs [FIGURE 16].

The painting shows a forest with high green trees. Yellow was used in the grassy vegetation. The artist showed the emperor and his men in disguise by wearing green clothes that resemble the environment and painted the nilgai in blue. The lack of paintings showing the use of cheetahs trained during the era of Aurangzeb was because he might consider them a kind of amusement or that he preferred hunting with firearms that were more accurate in hitting, which might be a result of being influenced by Sunni faith, making him oppose music and painting and reduce the paintings and the migration of his studio artists towards the small kingdoms⁴⁶.



[FIGURE 16]: Emperor Aurangzeb hunts Nilgais with firearms, Album attributed to Hashim 1660 AD/ 1070 AH © Chester Beatty Library, Dublin. CBL .in 11A.27; PARPIA 2016: 182, FIG.3.

III.ANALYTICAL STUDY

1- History of Taming Cheetahs

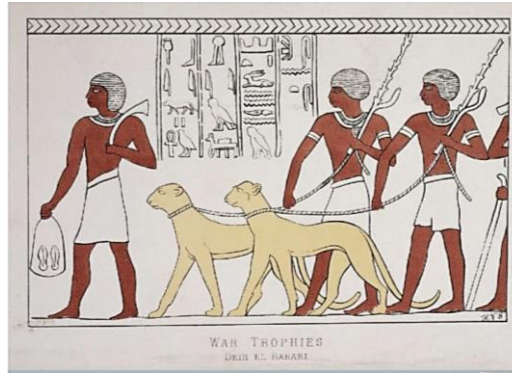
Humans have domesticated animals because of their usefulness as food and to use them to perform some tasks that humans cannot do or to save the effort they expend⁴⁷. The cheetah was one of the oldest animals used by Greeks in hunting, and it was depicted on antiques⁴⁸. In ancient Egypt, the cheetah was depicted with its distinctive features on the

⁴⁶ WELCH 1978: 113.

⁴⁷ SVIZZERO 2016 : 53-68.

⁴⁸ WERNESS 2004: 84-85

temples' walls, including the Dair al-Bahari Temple, attributed to Hatshepsut in mentioning the gifts of the Land of Punt⁴⁹, which shows a pair of cheetahs being depicted with two guards and tied with strong ropes by their necks [FIGURE 17].



[FIGURE 17] Cheetahs in ancient Egypt, Temple of Dair al-Bahari - New Kingdom (circa 1473-1458 BC). PANG et Al. 2017: 18.

The cheetah had religious importance since the early third millennium BC. When the Egyptian goddess Mavidt, which represented justice, protection, and guarding, took the form of a cheetah, the ancient Egyptians believed that the cheetahs carried the souls of the pharaohs after their deaths⁵⁰. In addition, priests used to wear clothes made from the skin of cheetahs as a traditional religious costume in all the Pharaonic eras⁵¹. Cheetah was used for hunting for the first time in Persia, India, or Afghanistan. Persian literary sources attribute the cheetah hunting to the time of the Sassanids. According to *ShahNama* Ferdowsi (twelfth century), the cheetah was used for hunting with King Bahram Gur and was first tamed by the legendary king Tahmurath⁵².

Arabs were well acquainted with hunting and training cheetahs. So, it was reported that the first to train and use cheetahs was Kulaib bin Wael, the first to carry them on horses was Yazid bin Muawiyah, and the most famous for hunting with them was Abu Muslim al-Khorasani⁵³. Furthermore, al-Nuwairi⁵⁴, Ibn Munqid⁵⁵, Āl- Ġāhẓ⁵⁶, and Kushājim⁵⁷, in their writings and the commentators, mentioned them in the interpretation of hunting in the Quranic verses⁵⁸.

Cheetah has also been used in hunting in Europe since the thirteenth century AD. It appeared in the margins of books and many Lombard manuscripts prepared in the court of

⁴⁹ CASTEL 2002: 17-28.

⁵⁰ PANG et Al. 2017: 17-24.

⁵¹ 'ŞFWR 1987: 43.

⁵² HENGERER & WEBER 2019: 19

⁵³ DAMĪRĪ 2003: vol.2, 306.

⁵⁴ AL-NUWAIŘĪ 1933: vol.9, 248.

⁵⁵ IBN- MUNQID 2009: 207.

⁵⁶ ĀLJĀHẒ 2003: vol.4, 283.

⁵⁷ KUSHĀJIM 1954: 183-195.

⁵⁸ ĀL-TBRY 2000: vol.9, 547.

the Visconti between 1375 and 1425 AD⁵⁹. In ancient India, drawings in the caves of the Chambal Valley in Rajasthan depicted cheetahs that lived in grasslands and deserts in the vast area of Rajasthan since ancient times. Words in the Sanskrit language, such as Chitrak and Dvipi, referred to the cheetah⁶⁰. The first textual evidence of training and using the cheetah for hunting in India appeared in Islamic records in the thirteenth century, where it was called Yuz, a Persian name⁶¹.

Since India came under the Mughal rule in (1526 AD/ 932 AH), their empire extended from Bengal to Bihar and from Kashmir to Kandahar. They controlled natural resources, hunted animals, and exported them to different parts of the world. Cheetahs were a highly popular «commodity» for the rulers of this region and occupied a high position on the list of diplomatic gifts⁶².

2- Manifestations of Interest in and Care for Cheetahs in the Mughal era

A. Producing Impressive Paintings of Cheetahs

The Mughal painters were aware of the difference between cheetahs and other animals. They showed the physical characteristics of all of these animals very accurately. For instance, the lion, tiger, leopard, and cheetah could be depicted in one painting attributed to Mādhu Khānazād, representing King Solomon from Diwan Hafez⁶³. Painters succeeded in painting cheetahs when they followed emperors on their hunting trips⁶⁴; they tracked the cheetahs and painted them in the pre-hunting stage to study and understand their behavior through the examination of the cheetahs in their natural environment [FIGURE 3], which is attributed to Basawan⁶⁵.

There was a wide variety of topics in Mughal painting, and which necessitated specialization in drawing scenes of courts, animals, or plants. The idea was chosen, and the blueprint was created by master painters like Basawan and Daswant in the age of Akbar. About 115 images were attributed to Paswan, who implemented the outline for twenty-two of them, and some paintings were attributed to Daswant⁶⁶. The Mughal artist produced many images of animals. Babur directed his artists to read books and study animals, and his successor Jahangir also took an interest in drawing animals and taking an interest in photographing them. A large number of these animals were photographed, such as lions, leopards, wolves, etc⁶⁷.

One of the paintings produced in the Akbar workshop was the capture of the cheetahs in which was outlined by Tulsi and painted by Narayan, as stated in the lower

⁵⁹ BUQUET 2011: 12-47.

⁶⁰ SOOD 2020: 35-41.

⁶¹ HENGERER & WEBER 2019: 19.

⁶² GROOM 2018: 8.

⁶³ AKHTAR 1996: 381-386; GRAVES & JUNOD 2011: 280-281, PL.89.

⁶⁴ HASAN 2003: 83.

⁶⁵ UKĀSHAH 1995 :13, pl 61.

⁶⁶ VERMA et Al. 1994: 19.

⁶⁷ IBRĀHĪM' ALI et Al. 2022: 215- 237.

margin of the painting. The two painters showed how the hunters handled the cheetahs after hunting and put them in the cage professionally [FIGURE 5]. Another painting was made by La'l and Kēsav Khord⁶⁸. It showed the means of transporting cheetahs in hunting, such as oxcarts and carrying the cheetah on horseback. One of the cheetahs appeared hunting blackbuck and gripping its neck [FIGURE 7/A] .

When Jahangir established his court in defiance of his father, he persuaded Govardhan and some artists to join him. Govardhan reached a high position in the Jahangir court. He painted a scene of a cheetah hunting an antelope as an optical metaphor that corresponded to Prince Salem's desire to seize the throne from his father, Akbar⁶⁹ [FIGURE 12]. The production of paintings of cheetahs was the greatest during the reigns of Akbar and Jahangir throughout the Mughal era in India.

B. Studies and Knowledge about the Taming and Training of Cheetahs

Hunting with cheetahs was one of the favorite methods of the Mughals, which resulted in studying the cheetahs in terms of anatomical nature, behavioral and skill patterns, and the details of their hunting. This was reflected in their training methods, food allocation, and transportation. Studies on capture, training, diet, and disease treatment added another link between hunting and the pursuit of scientific knowledge. The Mughal emperors' deep connection with the natural world also allowed them to learn about and treat diseases affecting animals in veterinary hospitals called Pinjarapoles. The emperors also carried out and benefited from experiments to learn the behavior of animals. Consequently, they knew the cheetah's ability to jump in Akbar chases with the cheetah Chitr Najan and Jahangir's experiments on animals during hunting. They were interested in the anatomy of animals and knew their physical and behavioral characteristics⁷⁰.

The Mughals also realized that hunting is an acquired behavior in carnivores, emphasized by modern studies⁷¹. They benefited from previous experiences of taming the cheetahs. After hunting a cheetah, they blindfolded their eyes, then placed them in the bag with their heads facing out, and water was given to them if needed. They then placed a metal leash around their neck with a strong rope, and the guard fed them by his hand to become familiar with them, then he made a seat for cheetah like a horse's back, covered with a cloth, and placed food for it on top of this seat. After that, the guard presented them with a calm horse to climb on its back⁷². The cheetahs calmed down when the guard put his hand on their body⁷³. The female cheetah is stronger and bolder than the males, and the old cheetah accepts the training more than the small one and more loyal to their keeper⁷⁴.

⁶⁸ PARPIA 2019: 39-58.

⁶⁹ «Govardhan», <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1939.66>, accessed on (29/09/ 2023) .

⁷⁰ PARPIA 2019: 39–58.

⁷¹ HILBORN 2012: 701-706.

⁷² BĀZ YĀR 1953: 118-120.

⁷³ AL-NUWĀIRĪ 2002: vol.9, 249.

⁷⁴ ĀLJĀHZ 2003: vol.4, 283.

Cheetahs were trained within two to three months. A cheetah used to hunt three antelopes in the chase. After improving the training method in the era of Akbar, who limited the training period to eighteen days, the cheetah hunted twelve antelopes. Furthermore, Akbar worked on raising the antelopes with cheetahs, but when he released cheetahs to hunt, they hunted only wild antelopes⁷⁵. Through the Shikargah technique, the emperors made certain cheetahs loyal, as only the emperor's family and those he trusted were allowed to enter the ring. Cheetahs and dogs were trusted more than other animals to help the emperors in hunting⁷⁶ [FIGURES 1-2 & 8]. The Mughals also realized the ability of the cheetah to hunt, launch against the direction of the wind, lurk, and issue dust with their feet to confuse their prey. Such experiments were used in taming and training⁷⁷.

The Mughals knew the techniques used by cheetahs to hunting: first was stealth; the cheetah kept near the hunters in an inconspicuous place, directed against the wind to smell the prey or hear its sounds; the cheetah attacked in silence with all its rushes strength to catch the deer with their strong claws⁷⁸; the second type was confronting with prey; and the third way was releasing the cheetah in the wake of prey to catch it. The cheetah does not breathe while hunting and should be fed by its prey; it may hunt about 20 times a day but should not be assigned to hunt more than ten times a day⁷⁹. As soon as the cheetah catches its prey, the guard clogs its nose to force it to quit prey⁸⁰ [FIGURE 7/C].

C. Granting of Ranks, Names and Amenities

Abou El Fadl describes these precious animals, their food and care, showing great interest in the cheetahs as hunting animals⁸¹. Each cheetah has a name that indicates some qualities. Akbar had a cheetah called Samand Manik, riding a chau-dol, a chariot advancing in great pomp and beating drums in front of the cheetah⁸². Its guards were keen on its comfort and care. Cheetahs were divided into groups according to ranks for easy feeding and care; one group was called Khasaa⁸³, and guards were allocated to them. Each cheetah had three to four men assigned to it when taking it to hunting or showing. Additionally, the cheetahs got embroidered fabrics, jeweled chains, and mattresses to sit on⁸⁴. The paintings of cheetahs showed their means of transportation, such as the cylindrical or square cages, which were made of bamboo sticks and were carried by wooden supports installed at the bottom of the cages [FIGURES 5/C, 11 & 19].

During hunting, the cheetah was transported on stretchers carried by men or on suspenders hanging on the backs of elephants, horses, or camels. There were carriages

⁷⁵ ABŪAL-FAZL 1873: vol.1, 285-289.

⁷⁶ KOCH 1998: 15.

⁷⁷ PARPIA 2019: 39-58.

⁷⁸ ABŪAL-FAZL 1873: vol.1, 288.

⁷⁹ KUSHĀJIM 1954: 183-195.

⁸⁰ BUQUET 2011: 12-47.

⁸¹ LEACH 1995: vol.1, 269.

⁸² KHAN 2012: 461-469.

⁸³ RANGARAJAN & SIVARAMAKRISHNAN 2014: 4.

⁸⁴ ABŪAL-FAZL 1/1873: 285-289.

dedicated to this animal, pulled by horses or cattle or carried directly on the backs of horses⁸⁵. The cheetah behind its owner on the back of a horse also appeared on porcelain belonging to Nishapur, indicating that transporting cheetah on horseback behind its guard was common⁸⁶. The oxcart was the most popular means of transporting cheetahs [FIGURES 6-7, 10-11 & 15] and [FIGURE 7/D], horseback used also to transported cheetahs to the hunting area [FIGURE 7/B].

D. Depictions and Artistic Characteristics

The drawings showed many artistic characteristics related to the depictions of cheetahs, including the behavior of cheetahs and the movement and colors that worked to add vitality and realism to these depictions, as follows:

1. Behaviors of Cheetahs

The paintings showed many movements and behaviors that the artists were interested in depicting, which expressed the reality of the activities associated with hunting, training, and using cheetahs. These behaviors appeared in multiple stages of using cheetahs, including:

A. The Cheetah's Behavior in Nature

The paintings showed the behavior of cheetahs in nature, governed by some adaptive behaviors, such as food, sex, and fighting, and other behaviors that controlled the life of this animal and satisfied its needs⁸⁷. Therefore, the behavior appeared according to these behaviors. Cheetahs are one of the wild creatures that live in nature in groups that feed on the prey they hunt. Thus, they live freely in a herd and move in a vast area for their speed in running. They make a great effort to reach their prey. The deer was the main meal for cheetahs, but over time, cheetahs have adapted to the environmental situation and have hunted mountain ungulates, goats, and other relatively small prey. Sometimes, cheetahs become a meal for other wild predators, such as lions⁸⁸. The cheetahs sleep straight and do not put their shoulders completely on the ground; they are always in a state of anticipation and alertness⁸⁹ [FIGURE 3], the painter showed the behavior of the cheetah in its natural environment. He showed a great deal of love and affection that these creatures showed with their cubs.

B. The Behavior of Cheetahs during Capture

Cheetahs were obtained by hunting in the wild in three ways: the first was to make traps like deep holes along their paths; the second was to chase them for a long time to become exhausted and surrender to hunters; and the third was to make traps in some trees

⁸⁵ ABŪAL-FAZL 1/1873: 285-289.

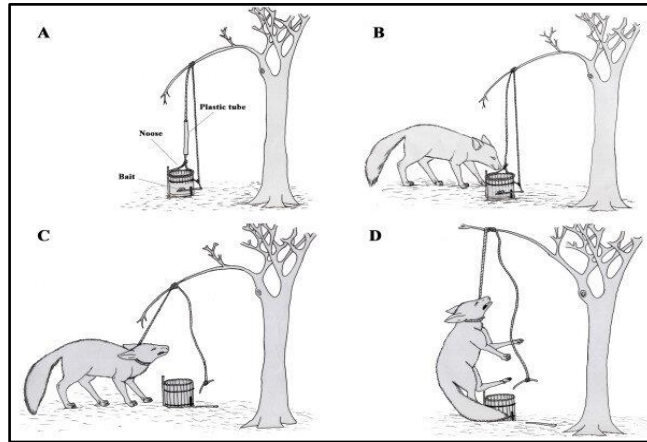
⁸⁶ YĀSYN 2005: 79.

⁸⁷ AL-ḤSYNY 2020: 15-17.

⁸⁸ DUGATKIN 70/2001: 512-525.

⁸⁹ BRADFORD-WRIGHT et Al. 2013: 37.

that cheetahs used to rub their bodies on⁹⁰ [FIGURE 4], there was a trap in the ground that was used to capture the cheetah, the nose trap which was an ancient method of capturing animals⁹¹ [FIGURE 18], The paintings carried remarkable realism and showed the behavior of this animal during its capture, which sometimes seemed nervous and sometimes appeared as if it had capitulated.



[FIGURE 18]: Nose trap. ALVES et AL. 2009: FIG.8.

The figures showed the moment of capturing the cheetah. In this case, the cheetah was rebellious and unaware of what happened to it by the hunter, whether the cheetahs hunted by traps or chases; it turned to defend itself or attack the hunter. So, the capture process was governed by violent behavior on the part of the animal and trickery and firmness on the part of the hunter who took care of the cheetah and kept it blindfolded. [FIGURES 4-5 & 11]

C. Cheetahs' Behavior after Training

The behavior of the cheetah changed after training, as the training needed patience for several months, where the keeper remained with the cheetah day and night to feed and show tenderness to it until the cheetahs got used to his presence⁹². The paintings showed the trained cheetahs in the hunting field quite calmly [FIGURE 7]. When the cheetah hunted the prey, it felt selfish and did not give it up easily. Therefore, the hunter dealt with it accurately. Ibn Shakajem says about the psychological state of the cheetah at the time of hunting, «If the cheetah jumps on its prey, it will not breathe until killing the prey; its lungs are filled with the air that it has held; the hunter should rest the cheetah until it is quiet and cools its upset; it should also eat from the prey»⁹³.

⁹⁰ ABŪAL-FAẒL 1873: vol.1, 285-289.

⁹¹ ALVES ET AL. 2009: 1-16.

⁹² BĀZ YĀR 1953: 118-119.

⁹³ KUSHĀJIM 1954: 184.

D. Cheetahs' Behavior with Humans

It is difficult to give a fair idea of the strange intimacy with animals found in India among those who take charge of it, as the bed of a cheetah is like a guard's. When a cheetah is tamed, we see a cheetah and a human under the same cover⁹⁴. The cheetah was one of the predators that humans have tamed since ancient times. Mughals and others subjugated wild cheetahs using nets, ropes, and their bare hands. Yet, no records indicate that the cheetah killed its captor in self-defense, although it can overcome a man if it wants⁹⁵. Ibn Munqidh reported a girl who was serving the cheetah; she scolded it sometimes, but the cheetah obeyed her with reverence and humiliation. Despite the cheetah's strength⁹⁶, this relationship between the cheetah and the girl emphasizes the loyalty of the cheetah to the people who care about it. The paintings showed the human connection with the cheetahs through signals exchanged between them, a language understood by the cheetahs, which listened to their guards' instructions, whether verbal or physical. The communications between the cheetah and their guards can be seen in [FIGURES 9 & 13].

2. The Movements in the Paintings

The paintings show a lot of movement stemming from hunting, which consists of prey and predator. Here, they express a state of pursuit and flight. A lot of movements shows inside hunting ring; as the emperor's pursuit the prey with the help of a cheetah and dogs, as well as the launch of prey in front of them at the same speed [FIGURE 1], the same movements representing the hunting ring in [FIGURE 2]. In addition to tightness of movement within a closed ring inside which a prey is. In the paintings in which the cheetahs are hunted, confusion is noticed in the movement of people within the pictorial scene, which suggests anticipation and caution [FIGURE 8].

the emperor appears bends with his body to observe the catching of the cheetahs, and two hunters work very hard in [FIGURE 4]. A lot of movements in the painting which represents capturing cheetahs. The scene is watched by the emperor and a group of courtiers and men. It is dominated by caution, attention, and surrender of the cheetahs. [FIGURE 11].

As for hunting in nature, we find large groups of hunters and escorts of emperors, as well as bull carts. The images in those scenes were full of movement and effectiveness in more than one chase within the same painting with more than one cheetah and in more than one way, as the paintings showed cheetahs in different positions. One caught the neck of the prey, the other was preparing to attack, and the third sat off in anticipation towards his prey, and each of them had a trainer who helped it identify the prey [FIGURE 6].

⁹⁴ KIPLING 1904: 296.

⁹⁵ HUNTER 2013 :12-26.

⁹⁶ IBN-MUNQID 2009: 316.

3. Colors and Realism of Paintings

Colors give life to the paintings, especially if they resemble the natural environment and its components. The Mughal painting techniques utilized opaque watercolors on paper or clothes, with artists focusing on paper quality, brush manufacturing, and color preparation from environmental materials⁹⁷. In the age of Humayun, he was influenced by Iranian painters, such as Mir Sayyid Ali and ‘Abd al-Ṣamad Shīrāzī who worked in his court⁹⁸. Consequently, there was a great impact on the appearance of the Persian Safavid style in Mughal paintings, such as brilliant colors, sponge rocks, and vegetation. Jahangir's (1605–1627 AD) period saw significant development in Indian painting, introducing delicacy in subjects, colors, quality, darkness, and radiance⁹⁹. Paintings had a wide variety of colors, making the sight more realistic. The scenes varied between different hunting areas. Colors resembled the actual colors used for animals. For instance, pale yellow was used in the cheetahs, which were distinguished by black dots. To increase realism, the artist colored the bellies of the cheetahs white and drew the distinctive black line on the faces of the cheetahs.

The artist also used different colors to express wild animals, such as black for elephants or rhinoceros [FIGURE 13], black for Indian antelope, known as blackbuck with distinctive long corkscrew horns, white fur for the chin and around the eyes is in sharp contrast with the black stripes on the face. In males, most of the body was dark brown to black, with white ears, tail, belly, and legs [FIGURES 1, 6, 8, 12 & 15]. Females and little animals were yellowish and displayed the same white parts, only with more of a beige tone than the males [FIGURES 1, 2, 7 & 14-15]. The nilgai was characterized by a bluish-grey a, with a white part on the throat and hair along the neck with a tuft, while females and juveniles were brown without horns. They appeared in actual color, as in [FIGURES 12-13 & 16].

Men's clothing was one of the most colorful elements, it was colored in various colors. It was depicted in bright and clear colors, one of the most used things for the diversity of colors as in the paintings [FIGURES 1-2, 9-8 & 14]. The colors of the plants also tended to be dark green, light green, and yellow; the colors of plants in different seasons, which often expressed the hunting environment that resembled the colors of animals.

⁹⁷ WELCH 1978: 12.

⁹⁸ BARRETT & GRAY 1978: 78.

⁹⁹ ‘UKĀSHAH 1995: 117-120.

IV. CONCLUSION

Human interest in cheetahs goes back to ancient civilizations, such as the Greek, Egyptian, and Persian, as depicted on their monuments. India was the home of the Asian cheetah, which has expanded in that food-rich geographical region. Cheetah was mentioned in ancient records back to Ancient India's Chambal Valley caves, which depicted cheetahs, and Sanskrit words like Chitrak and Dvipi referred to these animals.

This research paper showed the status of and the manifestations of interest in the cheetah during the era of the Mughal emperors in India by classifying them and granting them the ranks and titles they deserved in hunting, as well as providing food and methods of care and attention, which were represented in means of transportation, guarding, mattresses, and medical care. Their distinctive paintings indicated increased interest in them during the periods of Akbar or Jahangir.

The paintings showed cheetahs in their natural environment and interest in ways to hunt them safely so as not to get hurt or break their feet during hunting, as Akbar did. The paintings of cheetahs were part of the scientific interest in the cheetah, biologically and artistically. They were painted in nature to study their natural behavior, capture, dressage, and catching prey. The painters used the image of hunting as a metaphor to achieve gains and goals, which is a tradition of Persian literature. For example, it was used by Geffardhan in drawing Prince Salim during a hunt, a metaphor for his aspiration to the throne. The Mughal emperors were interested in hunting with cheetahs. They considered them their favorite sport, but others did not prefer hunting with cheetahs because of the strict religious doctrine that considered hunting with cheetahs fun. The study showed the widespread interest in painting hunting subjects with trained cheetahs, as they were implemented on applied artifacts, such as carpets. The paintings of the cheetah were distinguished by realism, as they showed the behavior of the animal with humans and how humans deal with it at various stages, from its capture to its taming and use in hunting. The artistic characteristics of the depictions were based on the accuracy of the use of colors. For instance, the distinctive colors of cheetahs and their prey were accurately simulated, and the hunting environment and its elements, such as the natural environment or fenced areas, were prepared in advance for hunting.

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