



# THE NEW CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF INDIA

I : 3

*Mughal and Rajput Painting*

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1. A Manuscript Atelier (detail). From an *Akblaq-i-Nasiri* manuscript, Mughal, ca. 1590-1595

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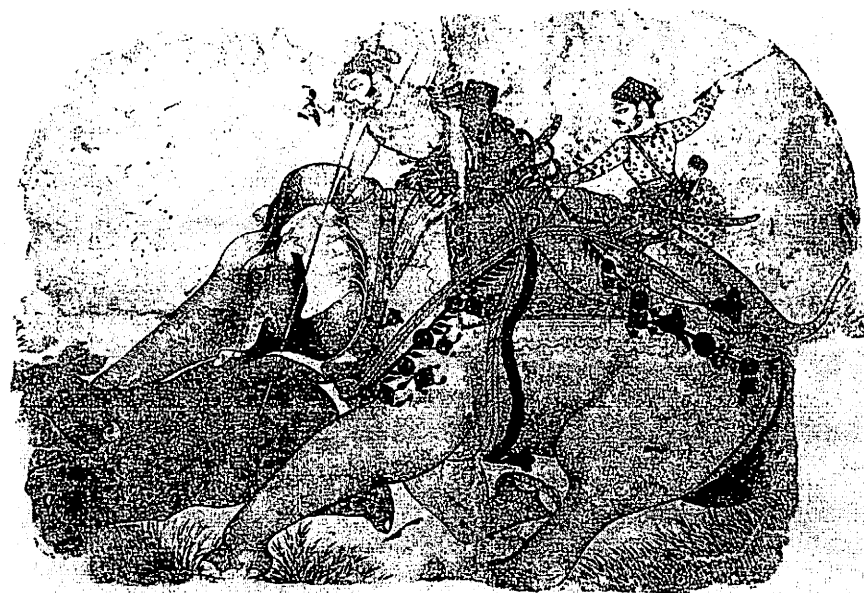


126. Daulatabad Besieged. Rajput, Rajasthan at Kota, ca. 1660

it unquestionable that Kota was the most inventive and experimental Rajput school in the seventeenth century, a position it will hold throughout much of its history.

In contrast to the styles of southern Rajasthan and Central India, court paintings from the region of Jodhpur show a quite different sensibility. Few seventeenth-century works from Jodhpur itself have survived (see figs. 93 and 94), but paintings from the nearby kingdom of Bikaner are known in quantity. Like Jodhpur, Bikaner was ruled by members of the Rathor family. It had been established in 1459 by Bika, the sixth son of Rao Jodha (r. 1453–1489) of Jodhpur, but relations between the two branches of the family were seldom amicable. Rao Kalyan Mal (r. 1539–1571) submitted to Akbar in 1570, and his brother's daughter was married to the emperor. Rai Singh (r. 1571–1612) succeeded to the throne, and in 1586 his daughter married Prince Salim. Bikaner too, therefore, was an important and early presence at the Mughal court, and this certainly affected the artistic taste of the state's rulers.

*Vishnu with Lakshmi and Attendant Ladies* (plate J) is by Ruknuddin, the



127. Maharao Ram Singh I of Kota Pursuing a Rhinoceros. Rajput, Rajasthan at Kota, ca. 1690

most famous of all Bikaner painters, and is dated 1678. When the scene is compared to other Rajput works of the same decade (for example plates H, I, and K; figs. 119 and 123), its Mughal affiliation is obvious, whether due to its airy space, the specificness of the architecture, the careful attention to fabric patterns, or the precise and diminutive figures of the women. The latter are immediately comparable to the women in *Festivities at the Wedding of Dara Shikoh* (figs. 97 and 98), from the *Padshahnama*, or the two ladies in *An Old Man Rebukes a Young Girl* (fig. 104), from the 1629 *Bustan* of Sa'di. This latter manuscript is especially important as illustration of a type of source for the Bikaner style. From a category of manuscript probably made to be given as state gifts, it was not of the highest imperial quality, and therefore represented a level of manuscript production most accessible to Rajput courtiers. Among Rajasthan schools, Bikaner painting remained closest to the Mughal style for the longest period of time.

The evolution of Bikaner painting, however, remains unstudied, although scenes of a similarly Mughalized type are known through specifically dated works as early as the mid seventeenth century. On the whole, Bikaner painting has thorough contemporary documentation: inscriptions are frequently found giving the artist's name, his father's name, and the date. Such historical interests are clearly another link with Mughal attitudes.