Discovering Mughal painting in Vienna by Josef Strzygowski and his circle: the historiography of the Millionenzimmer ¹

Ebba Koch

This paper is dedicated to the memory of J. P. Losty, who most unexpectedly passed away in September 2021. In 2014 he visited the Millionenzimmer at Schönbrunn with the author; a joint publication is now impossible.

In the later 1970s, after having studied European art history at Vienna University, the circumstances of my life were bringing me to India, and I wanted to write my dissertation on Mughal architecture. Before my departure I made inquiries in Vienna about research on Mughal art and how this would be received at the University. When I asked Dr Herbert Fux, then curator at the Museum für Angewandte Kunst (Museum of Applied Arts), who taught aussereuropäische Kunst (non-European art) at the Institute of Art History at Vienna University in broadly designed lecture courses that covered all art between Turkey and Japan, his reaction was rather discouraging: 'Da is nix und es wird schon an Grund geben, das da nix is' (There is nothing about it and there must be a reason why there is nothing about it). I found a more open ear in the architectural historian Professor Wagner-Rieger. She had been a doctoral student of Karl Maria Swoboda. Although Swoboda's main interest was European art, he had also published on Islamic art, and in 1955/56 brought out an extensive critical bibliographical review of publications on Islamic art between 1950 and 1956.2 He also supported several doctoral dissertations on the subject.3 Wagner-Rieger encouraged me in my plan to work for my doctoral dissertation on Mughal architecture because she thought it important to revive the largely abandoned tradition of studying the arts of Islam in Vienna. There had been no basic research in the field recently, with the exception of Dorothea Duda's work

¹ I thank Elfriede Iby, scientific director of Schloss Schönbrunn for allowing me to study the cartouches of the Millionenzimmer in the reserve collection and the permission to publish the photographs of cartouche Schönbrunn 002650 and Schönbrunn 002638. I also thank the readers of this paper Jos Gommans and Simone Wille for comments and suggestions.

² Karl Maria Swoboda, 'In den Jahren 1950 bis 1956 erschienene Werke zur Kunst des Islam', *Kunstgeschichtliche Anzeigen, Neue Folge,* 1, 1955/56, 63–111.

³ Herbert Fux, 'Zur Frage des islamischen Einflusses auf das frühe chinesische Blau-Weiß', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 1959; Dorothea Duda, 'Die Buchmalerei der Ğalā'iriden', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 1964.

on Syrian townhouses (1971)⁴ and Max Klimburg's art-historical and ethnological field investigations in Afghanistan.⁵ Wagner-Rieger first suggested to work on the Taj Mahal, but when the American art historian Wayne Begley claimed that subject quite aggressively for himself, she agreed to supervise a dissertation on Mughal palace architecture.

In my inquiries neither Josef Strzygowski (1862–1941) nor his followers were mentioned. The *damnatio memoriae* that Strzygowski and his group suffered in the 1970s in Vienna, and with them their work on Mughal art, can be explained: after World War II Strzygowski, the leading historian of non-European art in Vienna and since 1909 holder of one of the two chairs of art history at the University, had become *persona non grata* because of his racist ideology, his rigid methodology, and his genius at making personal enemies. There was also a general reluctance to expand art history beyond Europe and take in much of Asian art.

The hostile attitude towards everything connected with Strzygowski endured. Several years after my habilitation in 1992, in 1994 I gave a lecture course at Vienna University on the artistic connections between Mughal India and Europe entitled 'Orientmode-Europe Mode', which included the so-called Millionenzimmer in Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. When I walked through the Institute with the large volume of Strzygowski and Glück (about which more later) under my arm I was accosted by my colleagues with the question: 'Was, Du liest Strzygowski?!' (What, you are reading Strzygowski?!) It was only when I met members of the English-speaking academic world like Jas Elsner at Oxford or Christopher Wood at Yale that I got a more balanced view. Since then Strzygowski has been re-evaluated for his and his students' contributions to Armenian, Early Christian, Byzantine, Coptic, Syrian, Turkish and Islamic art history, and he is also seen as a pioneer in the global history of art. Even Vienna is relenting. In the past two decades a dissertation and two masters' theses were dedicated to Strzygowski; in 2012 the Gesellschaft für

⁴ Dorothea Duda, *Innenarchitektur syrischer Stadthäuser des 16. bis 18. Jahrhunderts: die Sammlung Henri Pharaon in Beirut*, Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1971.

⁵ Max Klimburg, 'Der 2.indo-iranische Stil von Kutscha [Xinjiang]', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 1970, abbreviated publication in *Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients* 5, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1974.

⁶ See, for instance, Christina Maranci, 'The Historiography of Armenian Architecture: Josef Strzygowski, Austria and Armenia', *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, 28, 2001–02, 287–307 with further literature.

⁷ Heinz Schödl, 'Josef Strzygowski – Zur Entwicklung seines Denkens', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 2011; Andreas Früchtl, 'Strzygowski als Wegbereiter einer vergleichenden Weltkunstgeschichte? Untersuchung zur Genese der Strzygowskischen kunstwissenschaftlichen Methode von 1885–1889', Master's thesis, Vienna University, 2006;

Vergleichende Kunstforschung (Society for Comparative Art Research) in Vienna, founded by Strzygowski, co-organised a symposium on the occasion of his 150th birthday,⁸ and in October 2021 a small workshop arranged by Friedrich Polleroß for the Gesellschaft at the Institute of Art History was dedicated to Strzygowski's contribution to Armenian architecture and his newly acquired *Nachlass* (estate).⁹

What one notices in the revisionist considerations of Strzygowski is the failure to observe that the wide range of his interests included Mughal art. Characteristically for his object-based approach his attention was drawn to this area by three outstanding holdings of Mughal paintings in Vienna. One group, about 260 Mughal and Deccani paintings which in the early 1760s were used in rocaille cartouches to decorate the so-called Millionenzimmer, one of the audience rooms of the Empress Maria Theresa in the Schönbrunn Palace, was published by Strzygowski and Glück in 1923.¹⁰ The other was a group of sixty-one paintings in a manuscript of the Hamzanama produced some time after the middle of the sixteenth century by the newly formed Mughal court workshop for the young Emperor Akbar (1556–1605). The manuscript originally consisted of 1,400 large pages of illustrations on cloth, each backed by nineteen lines of *nastaliq* text on paper. The sixty-one paintings were acquired during the Viennese World Exhibition of 1873 and are today in the Museum für Angewandte Kunst or MAK (the Museum of Applied Art). They were first published in 1925 in a monograph by Strzygowski's favourite student, Heinrich Glück (1889–1930).¹¹ The third group consisted of two albums with Indian miniatures in the Handschriftensammlung (manuscripts department) of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Austrian National Library). 12 The three

Gabriele Reisenauer, 'Josef Strzygowski und die islamische Kunst', Master's thesis, Vienna University, 2008.

⁸ Von Biala nach Wien: Josef Strzygowski und die Kunstwissenschaften: Akten der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Konferenz zum 150. Geburtstag von Josef Strzygowski in Bielsko, Biala, 29.–31 March 2012 and Vienna, 30 October 2012, ed Piotr Otto Scholz and Magdalena Anna Dlugosz, Vienna: European University Press Verlagsgesellschaft Wien, 2015.

https://kunstgeschichte.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/mitarbeiterinnen/institutsnachrichten/armenien-und-persien/ (accessed on 4 July 2022).
 Josef Strzygowski and Heinrich Glück, Die indischen Miniaturen im Schlosse Schönbrunn,
 Leipzig and Vienna: Wiener Drucke, 1923.

¹¹ Heinrich Glück, *Die indischen Miniaturen des Hamzae-Romanes im Österreichischen Museum für Kunst und Industrie in Wien und in anderen Sammlungen*, Leipzig, Zürich and Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1925.

¹² Codex Miniatus 44 and Codex Miniatus 64. They were published not by the group around Strzygowski but towards the end of the twentieth century by Dorothea Duda, *Islamische Handschriften I, Persische Handschriften, Textband und Tafelband*, ed. Herbert Hunger, Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für Schrift- und Buchwesen des Mittelalters, Reihe 1:

holdings provided the material of the final volume dealing with Mughal paintings, which was written by Strzygowski together with Glück, Stella Kramrisch and Emmy Wellesz under the title Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei im Anschluss an Wesen und Werden der Mogulmalerei (Asian miniature painting in connection with the nature and development of Mughal painting).¹³ The aim of this volume was to present a synthesis of the two earlier volumes, followed by a study placing Mughal painting in the larger context of Islamic and Asian painting according to the organising principles of analysis that Strzygowski promoted: Kunde (fact and figures, basic identifiers of a work of art - artist, provenance and period), Wesen (nature, essence, formal qualities) und Entwicklung (development, global movement and transformation of art forms), followed by Willensmächte (powers of will) and Bewegungskräfte (powers of movement – in this case, the artistic exchange between India and Europe). He felt, for instance, that the composite heads of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1530–93), court painter of the Emperor Rudolf II (1576–1611), were inspired by the popular Mughal genre of paintings displaying composite figures formed of humans and animals.14 Strzygowski's principal aim, he wrote, was

to infuse new blood into the history of manuscript painting [Handschriftenmalerei], which is in a blind alley and perpetually revolves in the same circle, by asking all sorts of new questions. The way to freedom leads from Early Christian, Buddhist and Islamic – in other words from and beyond the art of privileged so-called world religions – to a creative primordial time which as we shall see was for manuscript painting as well the prerequisite and basis for what we take to be self-evident in the first millennium after Christ.¹⁵

The creative primordial time and the enduring basis (*beharrende Untergrund*) was for him – not surprisingly for those who are familiar with his racial ideology – *das nordische Geblüt Irans*, the Nordic blood of (ancient) Iran. Strzygowski recognized the unique syncretism of Mughal art, in which he identified Chinese, Persian, Indian, European and Turko-Mongolian components. For him the Mughals of India were in a line with the Mongols, to whom he attributed Nordic blood. He thought that their art could not be explained by *Lage*, *Boden* and *Blut* – geographical

Die illuminierten Handschriften und Inkunabeln der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, ed. Otto Pächt, Vienna, 1983, text vol., 237–90, ill. vol., pls 446–543.

¹³ Josef Strzygowski, Heinrich Glück, Stella Kramrisch, and Emmy Wellesz, Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei im Anschluss an Wesen und Werden der Mogulmalerei, Klagenfurt: Verlag Arthur Kollitsch, 1933.

¹⁴ Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 223–24, pls 277–80. Strzygowski referred here to the work of his student Josef Zykan which was consequently published under the title 'Der Tierzauber (Animal Magic)', *Artibus Asiae*, vol. 5 (1935), 203–12.

¹⁵ Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 11. This and the following translations from German into English are by the author.

situation, soil and blood – but by the willpower of the new Mughal rulers and their elite.

The most profound art-historical and iconographical contributions to the examination of Mughal painting in its historical context came, however, at least in my view, from Heinrich Glück, who looked at *Kunde* (historical facts), and from Emmy Wellesz who wrote about *Wesen* (formal qualities). Strzygowski, who contributed *Entwicklung* (development, global movement and transformation of art forms), admitted that he did not care so much for Mughal painting because it was chronologically late: his own interest lay in the early periods and in *Ursprungforschung*, tracing the origins of art.¹⁶

Still, Strzygowski directed the interest of several of his students and academic co-workers to Mughal art. Ernst Diez (1878–1961), who wrote the first reference work in German on Islamic art in the series Handbuch der Kunstwissenschaft (1915), 17 also published on the arts of India that he studied on extended field trips. 18 He wrote a monograph on the Emperor Akbar, a perpetual favourite of Indian and Western historiography.¹⁹ Emmy Wellesz (1889–1987), co-author of the Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei and wife of the composer Egon Wellesz, in 1952 published a small volume on Akbar's Religious Thought as reflected in Mogul Painting. 20 Strzygowski's name even drew students from the Indian subcontinent to Vienna. Khwaja Ali Akhtar Ansari – whom I identified with the help of his granddaughter Zarminae (who I met in November 1994 when she was a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) as Deputy Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India active in the late 1920s - felt that Strzygowski was the only scholar in Europe who would provide him with the proper methodological tools to give his study on the Taj Mahal the authority of a doctoral dissertation: he completed it in 1926 in German in Vienna according to Strzygowski's rigid methodological categories Kunde, Wesen and Entwicklung, and the added category Beschauer (viewer).²¹ Because of his language skills Ansari explored the Persian textual sources related to the Taj Mahal,

¹⁶ Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 13.

¹⁷ Ernst Diez, Die Kunst der islamischen Völker, Wildpark-Postdam: Athenaion, 1915.

¹⁸ Ernst Diez, *Die Kunst Indiens*, Wildpark-Potsdam: Athenaion, 1925.

¹⁹ Ernst Diez, *Akbar: Gottsucher und Kaiser*, Vienna and Wiesbaden: Rudolf M. Rohrer Verlag, 1961.

²⁰ London: Allen and Unwin, 1952, reprinted Abingdon: Routledge for Taylor and Francis, 2001.

²¹ Khwaja Ali Akhtar Ansari, 'Der Tadsch Mahal und seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der indischen Baukunst', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 1926.

which provided Strzygowski and his team with the historical context of Mughal India.²²

Of the Mughal painting collections in Vienna the *Hamzanama* has received the greatest share of attention. Following Glück's 1925 publication²³ the sixty-one folios were published by Gerhard Egger in 1974 in a facsimile edition.²⁴ There were two major exhibitions. The first was in 2002, *The Adventures of Hamza*, shown in Washington DC, New York, London and Zurich.²⁵ The second was in 2009, when the *Hamzanama* paintings were shown a more general exhibition, entitled *Global Lab*, in the MAK in Vienna.²⁶ This put all the Vienna holdings on view in specially made cases which allowed the folios to be seen from both sides, the painting on recto and the text on verso.

For the holdings of the Millionenzimmer the monograph of Glück and Strzygowski is still the only complete publication and the fundamental work: Schönbrunn still follows its numbering system. Individual cartouches have been shown in various exhibitions and published in the relevant exhibition catalogues,²⁷ recently especially those related to Rembrandt, of which more later.

²² Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 213, n. 1. He regretted that Ansari's dissertation remained unpublished, in the archive of the first Institute of Art History. ²³ See note 11.

²⁴ Gerhart Egger, *Der Hamza Roman: Eine Moghul-Handschrift aus der Zeit Akbar des Grossen*, Vienna: Österreichisches Museum für Angewandte Kunst, 1969; Gerhart Egger, *Hamza-nama: Vollständige Wiedergabe der bekannten Blätter der Handschrift aus den Beständen aller bekannten Sammlungen*, vol. 1: *Die Blätter aus dem Museum für Angewandte Kunst in Wien*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Series Codices Selecti, 1974; vol. 2: *Die Blätter aus dem Victoria & Albert Museum London*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, Series Codices Selecti, 1982. See also Zahra Faridany-Akhavan, 'The Problems of the Mughal Manuscript of the 'Hamza-Nama: 1562–77. A Reconstruction', PhD thesis, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1989.

²⁵ The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and Storytelling in Mughal India, exhib. cat., ed. John Seyller, London: Azimuth Editions, and Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2002. ²⁶ Global Lab: Kunst als Botschaft: Asien und Europa 1500–1700/Art as a Message: Asia and Europe 1500–1700, exhib. cat., with contributions on the Hamzanama by Salman Rushdie, Wheeler M. Thackston, Kathrin Pokorny-Nagel, and Beate Murr, and English translations by Wheeler M. Thackston and their translations into German by Stephan Popp of the texts on the backs of all sixty paintings, ed. Peter Noever, Vienna: MAK, 2009.

²⁷ Maria Flieder and Eva Irblich, eds, *Texte. Noten. Bilder*, exhib. cat., Vienna: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 1984, 89–39; Karin K. Troschke, ed., *Malerei auf Papier und Pergament in den Prunkräumen des Schlosses Schönbrunn*, Wissenschaftliche Reihe Schönbrunn, vol. 3, Vienna, 1997; Elfriede Iby and Ebba Koch, 'Das Millionenzimer' in Elfriede Iby, Martin Mutschlechner, Werner Telesko and Karl Vocelka, eds, *Maria Theresia* 1717–1780: *Strategin*,

Ebba Koch

What then is the Millionenzimmer? The room is situated in the Schönbrunn Palace, the suburban residence of the Habsburgs in the western part of Vienna. In 1692/93 the leading Austrian Baroque architect Johann Bernhard Fischer von Erlach (1656–1723) presented to the Emperor Leopold I (ruled 1658–1705) a plan for a new palace, to be called Schönbrunn ('Beautiful Fountain'). The ambitious project was begun in 1695/96, but it dragged on until Maria Theresa (ruled 1740-80) acceded to the Habsburg throne, and made Schönbrunn the political and social centre of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Maria Theresa renovated what had been built so far and finished the interior from the 1740s onwards.²⁸ Special attention was given to the main floor. The state rooms were decorated in a retrospective manner, with allegorical paintings in the tradition of grand Baroque interiors. In the 1760s several of the smaller rooms were given a more modern, exotic decoration, inspired by French Rococo and the interest in Chinoiserie, favoured in the courts of European absolute rulers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A small audience chamber in the south-east corner was decorated with Indian art - miniatures from Mughal India. This seems to be the only instance where such miniatures were used in a Chinoiserie scheme. The origin and date of its present name, Millionenzimmer – 'Chamber of the Millions' or 'Millions Room' – is unknown. The walls of the room are panelled; set into the panelling are sixty gilded rocaille frames of irregular shape and different size enclosing wooden panels under glass. Displayed in these frames are collages of at least 266 miniatures as well as parts of miniatures. In addition, there are twelve paintings in gilded cartouches in the cavetto cornice which forms the transition between the walls and the flat ceiling that paraphrase the compositions of the collages.29

Mutter, Reformerin, exhib. cat. Vienna: Amalthea, Schloß Schönbrunn and Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2017, 301–2, fig. HM 29.18.

²⁸ On the history of Schönbrunn see

https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Schloss Schönbrunn with further literature (accessed on 6 July 2022). On the interior decoration see the pioneering work by Oskar Raschauer, 'Geschichte der Innenausstattung des Lustschlossses Schönbrunn. Eine denkmalkundliche Darstellung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Mariatheresianischen Schönbrunn und mit Ergänzungen zur allgemeinen Baugeschichte des Schlosses', doctoral dissertation, Vienna University, 1926. A brief overview of the interior decoration is by Hans Tietze, 'The Maria Theresa Exhibition in the Palace of Schönbrunn', *Apollo* 12/69, 1930, 186–91. I thank Yuka Kadoi for this reference. Tietze refers to the Mughal miniatures as 'a remarkable series of Persian miniatures of the eighteenth century' (p. 188). To take Mughal miniatures to be Persian is a not uncommon view in his time.

²⁹ First published by Ebba Koch, 'The "Moghuleries" of the Millionenzimmer, Schönbrunn Palace, Vienna', in Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge and Andrew Topsfield, eds, *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, London: Victoria & Albert Museum, and Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2004, 152–67. The paintings are discussed below.

In the introduction to the Millionenzimmer volume Strzygowski points out that the publication was made possible only because he obtained permission from the relevant authorities (the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Preservation of Monuments and the Administration of Schönbrunn Palace) to have the panels taken out of their rocaille frames. Strzygowski and Glück reproduced all the paintings, and provided numbered diagrams of their arrangement in the room. However, the three colour plates and sixty small monochrome steel engravings do not do justice to the originals. The first volume contains a detailed description of the components of the collages. A second volume 'intended to deal with them [the paintings] scientifically'30 was not realised, but the interpretation and analysis of Strzygowski and his co-authors found its way into the volume Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei. The authors were able to recognise the complexity of the arrangement – that not only miniatures or elements of miniatures were pasted onto the wooden panels, but that the collages were heavily overpainted by the artist or group of artists who carried out the decoration scheme. Strzygowski was very critical of the Habsburg intervention. He stated that while the masterpieces of European painting, Titian, Correggio and Rembrandt, had been freed from their fetters, i.e. had been taken out of the decorative scheme of the eighteenth-century galleries in the Stallburg (a palace that forms part of the imperial residence in Vienna),³¹ 'Indian minor art languished even today in the disfigurement imposed on it by European culture (schmachtet die indische Kleinkunst heute noch in der ihr durch die europäische "Kultur" aufgezwungene Verballhornung)'.32 He conceded, however, that what happened in the Millionenzimmer, the 'Geschmacklosigkeit in Wien' (the Viennese lack of taste), had in a way a forerunner in the compiling of Mughal albums: Mughal artists trimmed European engravings and pasted them, together with Timurid, Safavid and their own paintings or newly painted surrounds, into albums, muraqqa's.33 Strzygowski

³⁰ Josef Strzygowski, 'The Indian Room of Empress Maria Theresia', *Rupam*, July–December 1923, 59; Glück in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 18.

³¹ The imperial galleries in the Stallburg were published by Franz von Stampart and Anton von Prenner, *Prodomus, Oder Vor-Licht Des eröffneten Schau- und Wunder-Prachtes Aller deren An dem Kaiserl. Hof In Allerhöchst Seiner Kaiserl. Königl., und Cathol. Majestät unsers glorwürdigst Regierenden Monarchens Carl des Sechsten Haupt- und Residentz-Stadt Wienn sich befindlichen Kunst-Schätzen, und Kostbarkeiten: Sonderheitlichen Deren alldarinnen häuffig aufbehaltenen Bewunderungs-würdigen Schildereyen, Gemählden, Statuen, Bild-Saulen und anderen von denen allervornehmsten Meistern verfertigten Gemächtnüssen, Vienna, 1735.*

³² Strzygowski in *Die indischen Miniaturen im Schlosse Schönbrunn*, 7.

³³ Strzygowski referred here to the album pages of Jahangir's album in Berlin which he knew from the publication of Ernst Kühnel and Hermann Goetz, *Indische Buchmalereien aus dem Jahangir-Album der Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin*, Berlin: Scarabaeus, 1924; English edition *Indian Book Painting from Jahangir's Album in the State Library in Berlin*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1926. A comprehensive study of Jahangir's album is carried out by Milo C.

even thought that the Viennese *modus operandi* might have been inspired by the way Mughal albums were put together.³⁴

The full extent of the Habsburg intervention became apparent only when the Millionenzimmer was restored. In 1976 the alarming condition of the paintings was noticed, and in 1980 the Austrian Bundesdenkmalamt commissioned Karin Troschke and Helga Rosenberger to restore them. The restoration took more than thirteen years to complete; its results were published by the restorers, and by the late Dorothea Duda, who had been cataloguing the illustrated Islamic manuscripts in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.³⁵ She was commissioned to record and analyse the results of the Millionenzimmer restoration from an art-historical point of view. At the time I lived in India, but whenever I came to Vienna I visited the restorers and documented the progress of their work in photographs. Duda's focus was on stylistic and iconographic aspects of the miniatures, to identify them according to the latest state of research on Mughal and Deccani painting. My special

Beach. See his 'The Gulshan Album and Its European Sources', *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 63/332, 1965, 63–91; Milo C. Beach, 'Jahangir's Album: Some Clarifications', in *Arts of Mughal India: Studies in Honour of Robert Skelton*, ed. Rosemary Crill, Susan Stronge, and Andrew Topsfield, London: Victoria & Albert Museum, and Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing, 2004, 111–18. See also Susan Stronge, 'The Gulshan Album, c. 1600–1618', in Elaine Wright, *Muraqqa': Imperial Mughal Albums from the Chester Beatty Library Dublin*, Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 2008, 76–81; Ebba Koch, 'The Mughal Emperor as Solomon, Majnun and Orpheus or The Album as a Think Tank for Allegory', *Muqarnas* 27, 2010, 277–311.

34 'Was 1762 in Wien geschah, mag also durch einen indischen Brauch angeregt sein.' Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 12.

35 For the report on the restoration and discussion of the miniatures see Eva Irblich, 'Das Unternehmen der Konservierung und wissenschaftlichen Bearbeitung der indischen Miniaturen des Millionenzimmers von Schloss Schönbrunn in Wien', Karin Jahoda-Troschke, 'Die Restaurierung der Mogulminaituren im Millionenzimmer von Schloss Schönbrunn', Kurt Holter, 'Die indischen Miniaturen des Millionenzimmers im Schloss Schönbrunn', Dorothea Duda, ' Das Millionenzimmer im Schloss Schönbrunn', all in Flieder and Irblich, eds, Texte. Noten. Bilder, 89-39; Karin K. Troschke und Helga Rosenberger, 'Eine barocke Kollage. Die Restaurierung der Mogulminiaturen aus dem Millionenzimmer des Schlosses Schönbrunn', Dorothea Duda, 'Die Kaiserin und der Großmogul. Untersuchungen zu den Miniaturen im Schloß Schönbrunn', both in Troschke, Malerei auf Papier und Pergament, 18–55; Elfriede Iby and Alexander Koller, eds., Schönbrunn, Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 2000, 136–37, 139 where it is stated that the restored collages were not put back into the Millionenzimmer but moved to the manuscript collection of the Austrian National Library and replaced in the room by facsimile prints. The restored collages were pasted on cardboard and placed in large envelopes, together with miniature fragments removed from the backsides of the collages, and were eventually moved back to Schönbrunn where they are kept in the reserve collection.

interest was and still is in the overall scheme – how the miniatures were put together, and the Schönbrunn interventions and recreations.

The restorers began by taking the wooden panels out of the wall and out of their frames. When the glass was removed it became evident that the miniatures were not laid out on the wooden panels but glued on them, which in a way was an advantage because the glue had protected them from the acid of the wood. To remove the miniatures from the panels the restorers had to be inventive. They constructed an apparatus with a pipe and nozzle that made it possible to direct a thin jet of steam in a controlled manner between the wood and the paper; after that the paper could be detached with a spatula. In the course of the work the full degree of what Glück and Strzygowski had already noticed became apparent – that individual miniatures were not only glued together to form a new rocaille-shaped pictorial whole but that parts, especially figures, were cut out from the miniatures and pasted into other pictorial contexts, that the compositions were heavily overpainted by the Schönbrunn artist, and that new landscapes and buildings were added.³⁶ The scheme was incredibly labour-intensive and we can assume that a group of artists must have worked on the project. They have not as yet been identified, and all kinds of speculations have been made about their identity. It has been quite plausibly suggested that Maria Theresa's husband Franz Stephan von Lothringen and the imperial children created the collages together, because they also undertook the decorative painting schemes of the adjoining rooms, the Miniatures Cabinet and the Porcelain Room.³⁷ Glück and Strzygowski thought it might have been the painter Johan Wenzl Bergl (1718–89) and his assistants, who decorated the garden rooms on the ground floor of the palace with exotic landscapes.³⁸

Although Glück had only been able to see the firmly pasted collages, he worked out that for their new creations the Schönbrunn painters used three main procedures, which I was able to study in more detail when the collages were taken apart during the restoration.

1) Joints between miniatures were overpainted with elements copied from the iconography of the Indian images. The horizontal joints were overpainted with

³⁶ The procedure is explained and illustrated by Troschke and Rosenberger, 'Eine barocke Kollage', in *Malerei auf Papier und Pergament*, 18–32.

³⁷ See for example Irblich, 'Das Unternehmen der Konservierung', in *Texte. Noten. Bilder*, 89. For a detailed investigation of the decoration of the Porcelain Room at Schönbrunn by the imperial family see Cornelia Juen, 'Künstlerische Ambitionen innerhalb der Familie: Die Blaugouachen im Schönbrunner Porzellanzimmer unter der Lupe' in *Maria Theresia* 1717–1780, 155–59.

³⁸ Glück in Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei, 19.

golden or red balustrades modelled on those visible in some of the miniatures, with stripes of floor, steps, clouds, rivers, etc. The vertical joints were overpainted with trees, rocks, waterfalls, etc.

2) Individual paintings or cut-outs, usually figures, were set into newly painted surrounds, such as gardens or architectural settings, patterned closely on the Indian models. This practice can be observed especially in the less easily seen upper wall zone, and was obviously devised because there were not enough miniatures for use evenly in the entire decorative scheme. A particularly telling example is the use of a Mughal painting of a tent scene of royal lovers and attendants at the top of Cartouche Collage Strzygowski and Glück no. 50 (fig. 1):³⁹



Fig.1 Prince, court ladies and holy person at camp, top of Cartouche SKB 002650, Millionenzimmer, Schönbrunn Palace, Mughal school, late 17th century with additions of the Schönbrunn artists ©SchloßSchönbrunnKultur-und Betriebsges.m.b.H./Digitalisation: Salon Iris

³⁹ For a colour illus. of the whole cartouche see Iby and Koch in *Maria Theresia* 1717–1780, 302, fig. HM 29.18.

The tent scene is a free late seventeenth-century copy after a mid-seventeenth century original by Shah Jahan's great court painter Payag (fig. 2).⁴⁰



Fig. 2 Prince and courtiers at camp, attributed to Payag, circa 1650.Collection of Terence McInerny, New York (after Dye III 1991).

The tent of the Mughal copy was copied by the Schönbrunn artists in Cartouche Collage Strzygowski and Glück no. 38 to form the setting for individual male figures which they cut out of Mughal originals (fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Cut out figures of Mughal nobles pasted into a setting painted by the Schönbrunn artists, 1760s, Cartouche SKB 002638, Millionenzimmer, Schönbrunn ©SchloßSchönbrunnKulturundBetriebsges.m.b.H./Digitalisation: Salon Iris

⁴⁰ For discussion and illustration of Payag's painting see Joseph M. Dye III, 'Payag' in *Master Artists of the Imperial Mughal Court*, ed. Pratapaditya Pal, Bombay: Marg Publications, 1991, 119–34, fig. 14 and cover image.

Discovering Mughal painting in Vienna by Josef Strzygowski and his circle: the historiography of the Millionenzimmer

3) Unification of a composition by means of retouching. The Schönbrunn artists would add or reinforce elements such as eyebrows, moustaches, beards, etc.⁴¹

These substantial interventions make it difficult to appraise the Indian originals and analyse them from a stylistic point of view. There is a strange dialectic in the approach of the Schönbrunn artists. On the one hand they appear to disregard the Indian paintings when they cut them up and paint over them, proceeding, as it were, according to the palimpsest principle,⁴² but on the other hand they clearly studied them most carefully and with great sympathy in order to be close to the originals in their additions.

The exact date of the decorative scheme is unknown. Glück and Strzygowski suggested that a terminus ante quem could be established in connection with two albums containing Indian miniatures in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek. In one of them, Codex Miniatus 44, there is a pencil entry that says 'Reçeu [sic] de SMjté le 8 juillet 1762' (Received from Her Majesty on 8 July 1762). This suggests that the paintings were the remains of a collection of miniatures that were no longer needed after the decoration of the room was completed. The connection became evident from iconographic parallels and duplicates. The albums also gave an indication as to the provenance of the miniatures. Codex Miniatus 44 has a Dutch cover, and the Dutch connection was confirmed during the restoration because Dutch and Gujarati inscriptions were found on the backs of the miniatures. A direct purchase would have been possible because the Holy Roman Empire had a shortlived East India Company, the Oostendse Compagnie or Generale Indische Compagnie, with ships sailing under the imperial flag of Charles VI from the port of Ostend in West Flanders between 1722 and 1731. It had factories in the coastal area of Madras and Bengal. 43

Glück and Strzygowski realised that the paintings in the albums and in the Millionenzimmer are a mixed lot of varying quality, executed in different techniques – opaque watercolour, as well as monochrome drawings with light colour washes. A large group is of the Mughal school but not of high quality (known as bazaar ware); there are however several originals of the imperial Mughal court workshop and copies after them. Some of the paintings, mostly in the so-

⁴¹ Glück in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 20–21.

⁴² I owe the idea that the Schönbrunn appropriation of the Mughal paintings is a kind of palimpsest to Jos Gommans.

⁴³ See Günther Hamann, 'Österreich-Ungarns Anteil an Reisen und Forschungen in den Ländern des Britischen Weltreiches' in *Österreich und die Angelsächsische Welt: Kulturbegegnungen und Vergleiche*, ed. Otto Hietsch, vol. 2, Vienna and Stuttgart: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1961, 206–7; Chantal Kozyreff, 'The Ostend Company', *Oriental Art*, 45/ no. 1, 1999, 60–65.

called *nim qalam* technique (ink drawings with light colour washes and highlights in gold), belong to what are now known as Deccani painting schools, of Central India. Most of the paintings date from the reigns of Shah Jahan (1628–58) and Aurangzeb (1658–1707). As to the subjects, portraits of the emperors of the Mughal dynasty and their ancestor Timur (died 1404) feature prominently, which is due to the fact that in eighteenth-century portraits of the Indian house of Timur were popular with European collectors.⁴⁴ There are also court scenes, harem scenes, historical events, hunts, literary subjects, assemblies of sheikhs, and women or princes visiting an ascetic or a holy man.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the Millionenzimmer is its connection to Rembrandt. The Dutch master, and perhaps his pupils, made twenty-five documented drawings (twenty-three of which survive) after Mughal portrait miniatures. Glück first drew attention to the similarities between several of Rembrandt's subjects and paintings at Schönbrunn. He was however aware that Mughal miniatures frequently existed in several versions, so despite their Dutch connection he doubted that the Schönbrunn miniatures had been Rembrandt's models. Mughal miniatures had reached Europe since the early seventeenth century through ambassadors, artists, travellers, and the English and Dutch trading companies. The discussion of which source materials were accessible to Rembrandt and how he responded to the Mughal originals has occupied specialists to this day. It featured prominently in three exhibitions, *Rembrandt and the*

⁴⁴ Corinna Forberg, Die Rezeption indischer Miniaturen in der europäischen Kunst des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts, Petersburg: Michael Imhof, 2015, 134–66, et passim.

⁴⁵ Glück in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 22–23, and Strygowski, ibid., 224.

⁴⁶ Strzygowski in *Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei*, 224–25. The matter has been studied by R. W. Lightbown, 'Oriental Art and the Orient in Late Renaissance and Baroque Italy', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 32, 1969, 228–79; Partha Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters: History of European Reactions to Indian Art*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977; Sanjay Subrahmanyam, 'A Roomful of Mirrors: The Artful Embrace of Mughals and Franks 1550–1700', *Ars Orientalis*, 39, 2010, 39–83; Forberg, *Rezeption indischer Miniaturen*, with further literature.

⁴⁷ There is a substantial body of literature on this issue. See especially Friedrich Sarre, 'Rembrandts Zeichnungen nach indisch-islamischen Miniaturen', *Jahrbuch der königlichen preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, 25, 1904, 143–58; Otto Benesch, *The Drawings of Rembrandt*, vols. V-VI: *The Late Period 1650–1669*, London: Phaidon, 1957; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, 'Mogol-miniaturen door Rembrandt nagetekend', *De Kroniek van het Rembrandthuis*, 32, 1980–81, 10–40; Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, 'De Moghul-Miniaturen van Rembrandt' in *Waarom Sanskrit? Honderdvijfentwintig jaar Sanskrit in Nederland*, ed. Hanneke van den Muyzenberg and Thomas de Bruijn, Leiden: Kern Institute, 1991, 95–115; Martin Royalton Kisch, *Drawings of Rembrandt and His Circle*, exhib. cat., British Museum, London, 1992; Forberg, *Rezeption indischer Miniaturen*, 15–45.

Inspiration of India curated by Stephanie Schrader in 2018 in the Getty Museum, ⁴⁸ India and the Netherlands in the Age of Rembrandt curated by Jos Gommans in 2019 in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai, ⁴⁹ and Rembrandt's Orient: West meets East in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century, curated by Gary Schwartz and shown in 2020 in Basel and Potsdam. ⁵⁰ A key image in the discussion is a group of four historically known Muslim sheikhs, an original miniature from Jahangir's court workshop, dated by inscription in one of the books to AH 1037/AD 1627–28), which is pasted into the lower left corner of Strzygowski and Glück Cartouche Collage no. 6/Schönbrunn 002606. From left to right it shows Sheikh Husain Jam (grandson of Hazrat Zindafil Ahmad Jam), Sheikh Husain-i Ajmir (grandson of Khwaja Mu'in al-din Chisti), Sheikh Darwish Muhammad Mazandarani, and Sheikh Miyan Mir. This group was not only copied by Rembrandt but was paraphrased by the Schönbrunn artists in one of the paintings in the cavetto zone (about which more below). ⁵¹

Willem Schellinks (1623–78), a younger Amsterdam contemporary of Rembrandt, shared the great master's interest in copying and reworking Mughal miniatures in his own style, but used them differently. He created five (so far known) oil paintings with imagined scenes of the Mughal court in a 'proto-Orientalist' realistic manner.⁵² His paintings show that he seems to have had access to the same series of Mughal miniatures which Rembrandt copied in the 1650s, and they also include figures which appear in the Millionenzimmer. Rembrandt and Schellinks are considered to have been 'the only two artists who not only

- ⁴⁸ *Rembrandt and the Inspiration of India*, ed. Stephanie Schrader, with contributions by Catherine Glynn, Yael Rice and William W. Robinson, exhib. cat., Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2018.
- ⁴⁹ No catalogue, only a small booklet was published but Jos Gommans dealt with the subject of the exhibition extensively in *The Unseen World: The Netherlands and India from 1550*, Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum Uitgeverij Vantilt, 2018.
- ⁵⁰ Schwartz also contributed to the catalogue edited by Bodo Brinkmann, Gabriel Dette, Michael Philipp and Ortrud Westheider, *Rembrandt's Orient: West meets East in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century* Munich, London and New York: Prestel, 2020.
- ⁵¹ Koch, 'The "Moghuleries" of the Millionenzimmer', 164–65, figs 14, 15 and 16.
- ⁵² Janine Auboyer, 'Un maître hollandais du XVIIè siècle s'inspirant des miniatures mogholes', *Arts Asiatiques*, 2, 1955, 251-73; Forberg, *Rezeption indischer Miniaturen*, 46–63; Subrahmanyam, 'The Artful Embrace', 60–68; Jos Gommans and Jan de Hond, 'The Unseen World of Willem Schellinks: Local Milieu and Global Circulation in the Visualisation of Mughal India', in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna G. Singh, John Wiley-&Sons 2021, 231-249, ProQuest Ebook Central, http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/leidenuniv/detail.action?docID=6579298. Created from leidenuniv on 2021-08-13 08:33:14.

appreciated the aesthetic qualities of this Indian art form, but also incorporated the miniatures into their own work'. 53

While this seems to be true of the seventeenth century, a hundred years later the Dutch translation of Mughal miniatures into the style and idiosyncrasies of their time was echoed by one or several of the Schönbrunn artists in the twelve Mughalising scenes that decorate the cavetto zone of the room.⁵⁴ For Strzygowski they were 'minderwertige Deckenbilder (ceiling paintings of inferior quality)'.⁵⁵ Glück suggested that they were inspired by the cartouches on the walls below and executed by the same hand, namely Johann Bergl.⁵⁶ Duda did not consider them at all.

The scenes in the cavetto are a fascinating and syncretistic response to and commentary on the scissor-and paste and overpainting decoration of the walls, we meet here with the second stage of the emphatic appropriation of the Mughal miniatures. The anonymous artist, and here because of the stylistic unity a single master seems to be likely, created the cavetto paintings anew on the basis of the compositions below.⁵⁷ His creations seem to be the only eighteenth-century European wall paintings after Mughal models so far known. The artist studied the characteristic Mughal iconography and its individual components very closely – the architecture and the landscape, the types of figures and their costumes, the musical instruments, etc. – and reworked them in the style of his time while making use of what he could understand of the vocabulary of Mughal painters. Though he painted the figures fully three-dimensional he did not use cast shadows, and only occasionally added a motif of his own, or interpreted a Mughal element in his own manner.

The Millionenzimmer was created at a time when the fashion for Chinoiserie was weakening, a trend that went hand in hand with a lessening admiration for China. That shift in perception may have provoked this intensive dialogue with art

⁵³ Jos Gommans and Jan de Hond, 'The Unseen World of Willem Schellinks, 235.

⁵⁴ Before the author recorded and studied them in 2004, they had never been published; see Koch, 'The "Moghuleries" of the Millionenzimmer'.

⁵⁵ Strzygowski in *Die indischen Miniaturen im Schlosse Schönbrunn*, 9. He wrongly assumed that they were painted in fresco technique. Cf. note 58 below.

⁵⁶ Glück in Asiatische Miniaturenmalerei, 19–20.

⁵⁷ According to the unpublished restoration report by Karin K. Troschke, dated 23 October 2011, kindly provided by Elfriede Iby, scientific director of Schönbrunn, eleven of the cavetto cartouches were painted in gouache on paper, and one in the north-west corner on canvas (Koch, 'The "Moghuleries"', fig. 8), and all were pasted into gilded rocaille frames. Parts were overpainted during restorations in the early twentieth century. The restorers Karin K. Troschke and Rahel Jahoda chemically cleaned and retouched the paintings.

Ebba Koch

from Mughal India. But there could have been more specific reasons for the designers at Schönbrunn to integrate Mughal India in to the decorative scheme of the Habsburg palace and three come to the author's mind. We noted previously a serious political interest in India and the Mughal dynasty when Maria Theresa's father, the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI had granted charters to a newly founded Ostend Company which sailed from Ostend to China and India.58 But the emperor had to give up his colonial ambitions under pressure from the British and the Dutch to secure the recognition of his daughter as his dynastic successor. The integration of art from the East Indies, from the Mughal empire, into Maria Theresa's palace could thus be interpreted as an act of symbolic sublimation. Beyond that, in eighteenth-century Europe in the age of absolutism the Mughals were known as the ultimate Oriental rulers and admired for their power and the splendour of their court. The impression the Mughal emperors made on European rulers motivated Johann Melchior Dinglinger (1664–1731) the court jeweller of the Elector of Saxony August II, called August the Strong (1670–1733), to present his king in 1708 with a goldsmith work showing 'The Court at Delhi on the Birthday of the Great Mogul Aureng-Zeb'. It is on display in the Green Vault at Dresden, with 137 enamelled and jewel-encrusted figures of men and animals, which Dinglinger created without a specific commission, and sold to the delighted Elector for a spectacular 55,485 thaler.59 The precious miniature installation catered to the oriental ambitions of August who was also since 1697 king of Poland. The ties to the Habsburgs were strong, August the Strong married his son Frederic August II, the later king August III, to a Habsburg princess. Thus the Dresdener reference to the Mughal court would certainly have been taken note of at Vienna and could well have inspired the selection of art from the Mughal Empire for the decoration of Maria Theresa's audience room.

And lastly, there is yet another reason for the Habsburg interest in the Mughal emperors. They were known as the House of Timur, and Timur had rendered Europe a great service by vanquishing the Ottoman Sultan Yildirim Bayazid in the battle of Ankara in 1402 which kept the Turks for another fifty years from conquering Constantinople. Since the Ottomans were a rival power and a constant problem, the Habsburgs would have had a special interest in and sympathy for their conqueror Timur and his descendants. The Mughals became a byword in the Habsburg court. Blonde, the maid of the heroine Konstanze in Mozart's opera Die Entführung aus dem Sarai (The Abduction from the Seraglio), would not accept the advances of the eunuch Osmin even 'if he were the Great Mogul'.

⁵⁸ See note 43 above.

⁵⁹ The pioneering and most complete publication is by Joachim Menzhausen, Am Hofe des Grossmoguls, Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1965.

Ebba Koch

If we look for a scientific motivation behind the display of Indian art in Europe in the eighteenth century there is a figure at its end, announcing a new German or wider European Indomania: August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845), a German linguist and Indologist, in Bonn was the first professor of Sanskrit in Continental Europe. His collection of Indian miniatures was recently 'discovered' in the Dresden Kupferstich Cabinet (Print Room), and published by Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick and her team in 2017.60 The Schlegel paintings are set in cardboard imitations of frames of the period, and it is possible that they decorated a room in his house, providing an inspirational setting for his Indian studies. Incidentally, several paintings have the same subjects as those in the Millionenzimmer, including scenes with the Emperor Jahangir.61

In conclusion, one might see a Mughal counterpart of the concept of the Millionenzimmer in the decorative scheme of the wall behind Shah Jahan's throne in the Red Fort of Delhi (completed before 1648), which became the subject of the author's doctoral dissertation. ⁶² In this 'Europerie' 'paintings in stone' – not paintings, but original Florentine *pietra dura* tablets – were set into the marble and surrounded by Mughal creations in *pietra dura* showing related subjects of birds and plants. The composition is crowned by an image of Orpheus playing to the beasts. In contrast to the Millionenzimmer, the Delhi ensemble expressed a highly sophisticated and intellectual programme: the peaceful Solomonic justice under the good reign of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.

Ebba Koch taught at the universities of Vienna, Oxford and Harvard; she specialises in the architecture, art and culture of the Great Mughals of South Asia and their artistic connections to Central Asia, Iran and Europe. Her publications include *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology* (2001) and *The Complete Taj Mahal and the Riverfront Gardens of Agra* (2006). Presently she is working with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture on a Museum for Humayun's Tomb at Delhi, and authored an accompanying book

⁶⁰ Petra Kuhlmann-Hodick, ed., *Indian Paintings: The Collection of the Dresden Kupferstich-Kabinett*, Dresden: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen and Sandstein Verlag, 2017, 137–79.
⁶¹ Compare, for eample, Kuhlmann-Hodick, *Indian Paintings, Darbar of Jahangir* (III), Deccani Mughal, late seventeenth–early eighteenth century, Cat. 47/Ca 119/8, and *Jahangir hunting*, Deccani Mughal, early eighteenth century, Cat. 48/Ca 118/2, with Strzygowski and Glück, *Die indischen Miniaturen im Schlosse Schönbrunn*, Cartouche Collage no. 5 and Cartouche Collage no. 28.

⁶² Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus: The Pietre Dure Decoration and the Programme of the Tthrone in the Hall of Public Audiences at the Red Fort of Delhi*, Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlaganstalt, 1988; reprinted without preface in Ebba Koch, *Mughal Art and Imperial Ideology: Collected Essays*, New Delhi and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 61–129.

Ebba Koch Discovering Mughal painting in Vienna by Josef Strzygowski and his circle: the historiography of the Millionenzimmer

The Planetary King: Humayun Padshah: Inventor and Visionary on the Mughal Throne (2022).

ebba.koch@univie.ac.at



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-

NonCommercial 4.0 International License