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Contents

# *King of the World*

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THE PADSHAHNAMA

AN IMPERIAL MUGHAL MANUSCRIPT FROM THE  
ROYAL LIBRARY, WINDSOR CASTLE

MILO CLEVELAND BEACH & EBBA KOCH  
WITH NEW TRANSLATIONS BY WHEELER THACKSTON

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*Europeans bring gifts to Shah-Jahan*

AGRA, DIWAN-I 'AMM, JULY 1633.  
FOLIO 116B, PAINTED CIRCA 1650

The Jesuit missionary John Cabral described the Portuguese trading colony at Hoogly, as he himself saw it in 1632:

OF THE VARIOUS BANDELS or trading ports which the Portuguese had in the kingdom of Bengal during the last fifty years, the richest, the most flourishing, and most populous was that of Hugli. To it, as to the common emporium, vessels of India, China, Malacca, and Manila repaired in great numbers. Not only the natives of the country, but also the Hindustanis, the Mogols, the Persians, and the Armenians came there to fetch goods ....<sup>1</sup>

Because it threatened their own trading activities, the Mughals attacked Hoogly late in 1632 (see the next illustration, 20), with the result that some Europeans were imprisoned and taken to the court at Agra. Their arrival on 18 July 1633 is described in the *Padshahnama*:<sup>2</sup>

... OF THE FRANKISH PRISONERS, four hundred men and women, young and old, along with the idols of those erroneous infidels, were brought before the Islam-nourishing *padshah's* [Shah-Jahan's] view. The religion-propagating infidel-eradicating Emperor gave a command to the lords of the religious law first to invite the miserable group onto the straight path of the Muhammadan nation and the highway of the Ahmadi religion and inculcate in them the precepts of Islam. Some who found it worthwhile to be thus ennobled by accepting the correct religion were shown imperial favor. Most of them, out of implacable ignorance and erroneousness, turned their heads away from attaining this good fortune. They were divided among the amirs, and it was ordered that this miserable group be held in prison and tortured. Any who inclined to Islam were to be reported to the Emperor, and any who failed to accept the honor were to be kept in prison. Most of them perished in prison. Of their idols, those that were figures of the prophets were ordered to be thrown into the water of the Jumna, and the rest were smashed.<sup>3</sup>

Another missionary, Sebastian Manrique, gives an account of the capture of his compatriots:

... THEY DEFENDED THEMSELVES with such valour as to oblige the Nababo himself to send them several embassies promising them on behalf of the Emperor, that if they surrendered all would be given their lives, and liberty to return to Portuguese territory, together with whatever was necessary for the journey. The besieged accepted these terms as Catholics should ... In regard to these terms, none were adhered to except that of sparing their lives, as they were made prisoners and taken to the Court of the Great Mogol at Agra. They spent about eleven months on this journey, owing to the sick people and the women and children who were with them, as well as to the endless toils and difficulties they met with. They suffered unbearable hardships ... they were all brought into the presence of the Mogol Monarch, who ordered them to be distributed, both men and women, amongst the various Princes and Nobles of the Court, he himself retaining the two Augustinian friars and the two Priests ....<sup>4</sup>

This episode is out of sequence; historically it occurred a year later than the attack depicted in 20. Moreover, both scenes have been placed within spaces intended originally for one double-page composition.

1. Manrique 1927, I, pp.392-93.

2. 11 Muharram 1043.

3. *Padshahnama*, I/1, pp.534-35; translated by Wheeler Thackston.

4. Manrique 1927, II, pp.325-26.



